

# Music, Spectacle, and Society in Ancient Rome, 168 BC – AD 68

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## Abstract

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This thesis explores the cultural history of music in ancient Rome from the mid-second century BC to the death of the Emperor Nero in AD 68. The discussion centres on the role of music in public and private spectacle. Rather than examining the topic in isolation, the thesis seeks to pinpoint the intersections between musical performance and cultural debates about morality, luxury, education, and philhellenism, as a way of situating music within a broader historical context.

The thesis is structured chronologically. Chapter I examines Polybius' narration of the theatrical games staged by the *triumphator* L. Anicius Gallus in 167 BC. Anicius' subversive treatment of Greek musical models is interpreted as a deliberately comical gesture, playing to the theme of military conquest. The second half of the chapter analyses the episode in the light of Greek and Roman debates about musical entertainment in this period. Chapter II focuses on the late Republic. I argue that late Republican writers used music as a way of framing the political conflict between *optimates* and *populares*, associating 'good' music with the aristocratic *mos maiorum* and 'bad' music with a disruptive kind of popular entertainment. Chapter III, on the Augustan period, discusses the assimilation of the *princeps* and Apollo Citharoedus. The Augustan monuments to the lyre-playing god are examined in relation to the Palatine programme, the 'propaganda' campaign against Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and the ideology of the 'Golden Age'. The fourth and final chapter is devoted to Nero, the notorious musician-emperor. Challenging the perception of Nero as a narcissistic tyrant, I suggest that the charismatic *princeps* used his performances on the stage as a political platform, uniting audiences through a shared love of music.

## Acknowledgements

Mozart once said, ‘I pay no attention whatever to anybody’s praise or blame. I simply follow my own feelings.’ Had I chosen to follow Mozart’s example in composing this thesis, the end product would have been not nearly as satisfying. First and foremost, I thank my doctoral supervisor, Nicholas Purcell, for alerting me to the value of reading ancient texts through a microscopic lens, while never losing sight of the bigger picture. His knowledge and intuition have inspired me throughout; I owe him an enormous debt of gratitude.

This thesis is, in many respects, a reflection of my two great passions in life – music and Classics. I first encountered the world of Roman music as an undergraduate at Cambridge, following a series of thought-provoking conversations with Jerry Toner, my supervisor and Director of Studies. I thank Jerry for encouraging me to pursue the topic further, along with the many other wonderful teachers and mentors who have supported me along the way.

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors follow the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2012). Journal titles are abbreviated as in *L'Année Philologique*. All translations of ancient texts are my own unless otherwise stated.

- AE* *L'Année Epigraphique* (1888–)
- BMCRE* H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (1923–)
- BMCRR* H.A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum* (1910)
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (ed. T. Mommsen *et al.*, 1863–)
- EJ* V. Ehreberg and A.H.M. Jones (eds.), *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius* (Oxford, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1976)
- FD* *Fouilles de Delphes* (Paris, 1902–)
- FRHist* T. J. Cornell (ed.), *Fragments of the Roman Historians* (Oxford, 2013)
- FGrH* F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–)
- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae* (1873–)
- ILLRP* *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae* (ed. A. Degraffi, 1957–63)
- ILS* *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (ed. H. Dessau, 1892–1916)
- LIMC* *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (ed. H.-C. Ackermann and J.-R. Gisler, 1981–99)
- LTUR* *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (ed. E.M. Steinby, 1993–2000)
- OGIS* W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig, 1903–05)
- ORF* H. Malcovati, *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta Liberae Rei Publicae* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1976)
- PIR<sup>2</sup>* E. Groag, A. Stein *et al.*, *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I. II. III.* (Leipzig, 1930–)
- RIC* H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham *et al.*, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (London, 1923–67)

- RPC* M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1974)
- SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (1923–)
- Syll.*<sup>3</sup> W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1915–24)
- ThesCRA* *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (2004–2006)

## **Introduction**

### **TOWARDS A CULTURAL HISTORY OF ROMAN MUSIC**

The history of ancient Rome is shrouded in a kind of impenetrable silence. We read the Romans' texts; we marvel at their buildings and their works of art; we can even walk along their streets. And yet, the human beings who read these texts, who populated these buildings and these streets, have vanished; and the sounds they produced have vanished with them. Fortunately, however, all is not lost. The written and material record gives voice to the silence. It speaks of a world that was not only full of noise, but richly musical. Young and old, male and female, rich and poor, every Roman shared in a vibrant musical experience that pervaded almost every facet of their daily lives. Wherever one went in the sprawling city, the familiar echo of singing, piping, drumming, and strumming was never far out of earshot. It could be heard at weddings and funerals, at sacrifices and parades, at work and at play, at gatherings large and small, public and private. Above all, music was spectacular. It brought people together in the pursuit of fun and recreation. Put simply, without music, there was no theatre, no entertainment – indeed, one could argue, no culture at all.<sup>1</sup>

It is a strange paradox, then, that the musicality of the Romans has received less attention from ancient historians than perhaps any other subject. In part, this indifference is justified by the paucity of direct evidence. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans left no trace of musical notation. We do not have the benefit of a score to tell us

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<sup>1</sup> For a whistle-stop tour around the musical sounds and sights of ancient Rome, see Horsfall 2003, 31-47. The pitfalls of this kind of cultural history are discussed below. Vincent 2016 provides a comprehensive and illuminating investigation of the role of musicians in Roman military and civic life. On links between music and religion, see Brulé and Vendries 2001; Fless and Moede 2007.

what a Roman song sounded like.<sup>2</sup> Nor are we able to call upon detailed theoretical treatises in Latin to rival those composed in Greek. At the same time, the scholarly neglect of Roman music is rooted in a deep-seated ideological bias, the origins of which can be traced back to the intellectual currents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The early pioneers of historical musicology lived in an age in which the aesthetic and moral superiority of Greek culture over Roman was taken for granted. It was said that the Romans, being a pragmatic and bellicose people, only developed a taste for music through exposure to the more refined artistic products of the Etruscans and, most of all, the Greeks. Rome's was a tradition based almost entirely upon appropriation and imitation and, as such, it had little to add to the grand narrative of music history. When Sir John Hawkins published his magnum opus in 1776, entitled *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, he summarised the Roman contribution (or lack thereof) in the following terms: 'neither [the Romans'] religious solemnities, nor their triumphs, their shows or theatrical representations, splendid as they were, contributed in the least to the improvement of music either in theory or practice: to say the truth, they seemed scarcely to have considered it as a subject of speculation'.<sup>3</sup> Hawkins' contemporary, Charles Burney, compared the Romans' passivity as musical consumers to that of his British compatriots: 'it was long the fate of our own country, like that of the ancient Romans, to admire the polite arts more than cultivate them'.<sup>4</sup> In the eyes of François-Auguste Gevaert, the renowned musicologist of the nineteenth century, the

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<sup>2</sup> Several of the documents analysed by Pöhlmann and West 2011 date from the Roman imperial period (nos. 23-61); Johnson 2000a and 2000b discusses select fragments in more detail. However, all of the documents are of eastern provenance and are written exclusively in Greek. Although the Romans were apparently aware of a notation system, they do not seem to have held it in high esteem (much like the Greeks), and it does not seem to have been widely used: see West 1992, 254-276.

<sup>3</sup> Hawkins 1776, xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> Burney 1789, 474.

rise of the Roman Empire marked the nadir of music history, punctuating the apogee of Greece and the revival of Christianity.<sup>5</sup>

Such was the orthodox view at least until the middle of the twentieth century. After a point, argues Curt Sachs in *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*, ‘Roman music cannot be separated from Greek music’; it is merely a crude pastiche and, as such, is of little intrinsic historical interest.<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Friedländer, author of the monumental *Sittengeschichte Roms*, bemoans ‘the gradual loss of moral dignity by Roman music, which was used to flatter the senses by gross effects and to tickle the ears of the vulgar’.<sup>7</sup> In the words of James Mountford, writing in 1964, ‘there is no evidence to suggest that Rome contributed much that was vital to the history of musical development’.<sup>8</sup> ‘In the whole range of Latin literature we find only the most commonplace and conventional references to music, and...nowhere is there any indication that the Romans regarded music as anything more than a tolerable adjunct of civilized life.’<sup>9</sup>

A major step forward came finally in 1967 with the publication of Günther Wille’s *Musica Romana: die Bedeutung der Musik im Leben der Römer*. This mammoth volume, which began life as a doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Tübingen in 1951, is the first of two major monographs which Wille composed during his career as a philologist and musician. The second, *Akroasis*, studies perceptions and representations of hearing in Archaic and Classical Greece (it was written as the author’s habilitation in 1959, but was only published posthumously in 2001). Together, these works bear witness to an extraordinary scholarly industry. Without doubt the most

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<sup>5</sup> Gevaert 1875. The rise of Italian nationalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sparked a kind of nativist rewriting of Rome’s musical history, which emphasised the corruption of a primitive and morally pure culture by the influence of degenerate foreign peoples: see Eximeno 1774.

<sup>6</sup> Sachs 1944, 272; cf. Celentano 1913, 245: ‘...la musica romana conserve sempre l’impronta di questo o quel popolo, secondo che fu praticata dagli Etruschi, dai Greci o da altri.’

<sup>7</sup> Friedländer 1936, 347.

<sup>8</sup> Mountford 1964, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Mountford and Winnington-Ingram 1949, 585.

notable feature of *Musica Romana* is its exhaustive documentation – a florilegium of literary texts, some 4,000 in number, which encompasses the entire span of Roman history up to the time of Boethius in the sixth century AD. Wille’s aim in compiling such an extensive corpus is twofold: firstly, to illustrate by sheer weight of evidence the ubiquitous presence of music in Roman society, dispelling previous arguments to the contrary; secondly, and more boldly, to show that the Romans’ musical culture was fundamentally distinct from that of other ancient civilizations, as borne out by their commitment to preserving their native musical heritage and by their efforts to reshape the musical legacy of the Greeks.

The first contention is easily proved. The centrality of music to the ancient Roman way of life had already been asserted by a number of scholars, often motivated by antiquarian interests.<sup>10</sup> The art historian Günter Fleischhauer, a contemporary of Wille, had offered his own riposte to the idea of Rome as a ‘Land ohne Musik’ by publishing a descriptive catalogue of musical images from the Etruscan and Roman periods.<sup>11</sup> It is in advancing the second contention – namely, the distinctiveness of Roman music – that Wille misses the mark. The book as a whole is an object lesson in the privileging of quantity over quality: each page is crammed with copious references to primary source material, and yet the author’s broad thematic treatment of this material allows virtually no scope for analytical discussion. Sensitive issues of literary genre, chronology, and historical context are passed over with either very little comment or none at all. Arguably, this level of detail was always going to be unattainable in a volume numbering just over 700 pages (*Akroasis* is even more ambitious in scope: its

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<sup>10</sup> See Zell 1829, Rowbotham 1888, Machabey 1936, Antcliffe 1949. One popular Victorian periodical even proclaimed, without offering any real justification, that ‘To Rome, the modern musical world owes a vast deal more than it does to Greece’ (‘A Musical Medley’, *All the Year Round*, ed. Charles Dickens Jr., Vol. 40, Iss. 963 (May 14, 1887), 400).

<sup>11</sup> Fleischhauer 1965.

contents are divided between two volumes, with a total length of nearly 1,200 pages!). But some of Wille's hypotheses are plainly illogical, even without recourse to intricate argumentation. His theory that Horace's lyrics were set to melodies, for instance, has been soundly rejected by numerous critics.<sup>12</sup> What *Musica Romana* does offer, however, is a veritable treasure trove of information for the eagle-eyed historian to dissect and re-evaluate. If nothing else, the book is a rallying cry for further research.

In the Anglophone academy, at least, the cry has largely fallen on deaf ears. English readers have had to content themselves, for the most part, with general surveys of ancient music, in which the Romans feature almost as an afterthought.<sup>13</sup> In 1989, Giovanni Comotti published a book entitled *Music in Greek and Roman Culture* (originally released in Italian in 1979). Despite the promise of equal treatment implicit in the title, the chapter on 'Roman music' occupies a mere eight pages – a succinctness that seems especially egregious by comparison with the thirty-five pages devoted to 'Greek music'.<sup>14</sup> A similar bias lurks behind John Landels' book, *Music in Ancient Greece and Rome* (1999). Landels asserts: 'in dealing with the role of music in Roman life we shall not be looking at the emergence of a new and totally different musical culture. It would be fair to say that the Romans did not attempt to develop a musical identity of their own'. The author even feels it necessary to state, quite astonishingly,

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<sup>12</sup> See the reviews of McKinnon 1968 and Borthwick 1969.

<sup>13</sup> The trailblazing research into Greek music conducted by Andrew Barker and Martin West in the 1980s and 1990s failed to spark a sustained interest in Roman music. A recent and notable exception is Moore 2012, focusing on the musical accompaniment of Roman comedy; Laurence 2009 also has some useful material on Roman attitudes to musical performance. Creese 2006 and Rocconi 2015 provide overviews of ancient Greek and Roman music in English, but concentrate largely on the former.

<sup>14</sup> Comotti 1989, 48-55.

that ‘the Romans themselves do not seem to have been troubled or embarrassed by their lack of interest and proficiency in music’!<sup>15</sup>

Curiously, the study of Roman music has fared better in the French academy. During the 1980s, Annie Bélis published a series of articles dealing with various aspects of Roman organology. This project was continued by her students, Valerie Péché and Christophe Vendries, whose doctoral theses focused on wind and stringed instruments respectively.<sup>16</sup> Further work by these and other scholars has explored the role of music in theatrical spectacle and religious ritual.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, the material remains of instruments unearthed in Pompeii and across the Roman Empire have been subject to thorough scientific investigation and have provided an archaeological basis for modern reconstructions.<sup>18</sup>

The presence of musicians in ancient Rome has inspired no fewer than four dedicated monographs: *Musiciens romains de l'Antiquité* by Alain Baudot (1973), *Les musiciens dans l'Antiquité* by Annie Bélis (1999), *Solisti ed esecutori nella cultura musicale romana* by Francesco Scoditti (2009), and, most recently, *Jouer pour la Cité: une histoire sociale et politique des musiciens professionnels de l'Occident romain* by Alexandre Vincent (2016). Vincent's contribution is by far the most ambitious and original of the four. His approach differs from that of his predecessors in several ways.

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<sup>15</sup> Landels 1999, 172; cf. Bonaria 1982, 119-120: ‘A differenza dei Greci, pero, che soprattutto per bocca dei loro filosofi, attribuivano alla musica un carattere etico e educativo, per i Romani la musica ebbe sempre uno scopo di utilita pratica o di divertimento.’

<sup>16</sup> Bélis 1986, 1988a, 1988b; Péché 1998; Vendries 1999. Note also Ziolkowski 1999 on the history of the *tuba*.

<sup>17</sup> Péché and Vendries 2001; Brulé and Vendries 2001. Guidobaldi 1992 flags up relevant sources and themes but offers little in the way of penetrating analysis.

<sup>18</sup> An international team of researchers has been active here. See Castaldi 2012 for a general overview of music archaeology in Italy. The musical instruments from Pompeii (including dozens of *tibiae*, a *tuba*, several *cornua* and *cymbala*) are analysed by De Simone 1999, Melini 2012 and 2014. Braun 2002 and Waner 2014 discuss finds from the Levant. The fragments of two Roman water-organs (*hydraules*) are discussed in Chapter IV.4. In recent years, a number of public concerts showcasing reconstructed Greek and Roman instruments have been held under the auspices of the *European Music Archaeology Project* and *MOISA: The International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music and its Cultural Heritage* (see especially the conference proceedings published in Rocconi 2010).

For a start, Vincent has almost nothing to say about the place of musicians in the Roman entertainment industry. These individuals, who were usually slaves or ex-slaves, tend to be stereotyped in the literary sources in one of two ways: either they are frowned upon as lowlifes or prostitutes, or they are fetishized as celebrities and sex symbols. Wary of this polarising lens, Vincent focuses his attention instead on the musicians ‘in the middle’ – the men, and occasionally women, of free status who plied their trade in the service of the state. To this end, he compiles an impressive dossier of epigraphic texts – epitaphs, honorific inscriptions, and civic decrees – which inform us about the lives of professional musicians in the army and in the cities of the Roman West. Vincent is thus able to examine the agency of musicians within the urban landscape, as active participants in processions, games, sacrifices, political assemblies, and judicial procedures. By acting publicly at the behest of a higher authority, these musicians were exponents of what Vincent calls ‘the music of power’ (as distinguished from music as a form of leisure), in the sense that they transmitted aural signals and instructions to a mass audience.<sup>19</sup>

The fifty years since the publication of *Musica Romana* have therefore witnessed a marked preference for sociological and political approaches to the study of Roman music. Scholars have looked increasingly to isolate the production of music from the cultural and cognitive responses which this music generated. Vincent’s recent contribution is symptomatic of this trend. By narrowing the focus of enquiry to a socially and geographically specific subset of musical practitioners, Vincent sidesteps the controversial issues which Wille had tried, unsuccessfully, to resolve – not least, the relationship between Roman music and Greek music. At a time when many musicians were of Greek ethnicity, and many musical forms derived from Greek models, deciding

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<sup>19</sup> This theory is developed further in Vincent 2017a.

what is ‘Roman’ about ‘Roman music’ is no simple matter. In recent decades, scholarly advances in the disciplines of philology, philosophy, history, and archaeology have opened up a range of nuanced perspectives on the cultural interface between Greece and Rome.<sup>20</sup> The phenomenon of ‘Hellenization’, it is now understood, was not simply the hegemonic appropriation of a subordinate culture, as satirised in the immortal verse of Horace, *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*.<sup>21</sup> It invoked a bilateral relationship between East and West, which developed through a process of mutual borrowing and adaptation. The transmission of culture over time and space changed the way in which that culture was received and reproduced in its new context.

These ideas have a particularly important bearing on the historiography of music. To cite the American musicologist Leo Trietler:

‘Music embodies its historicity when, through its institutions, its functions, its traditions and conditions of performance and transmission, its technologies, its relationships with the other arts, it enacts or mirrors the societal and cultural patterns and practices and the prevailing ideologies that constitute the historical contexts of its creation.’<sup>22</sup>

The cultural history of music, in other words, cannot be reduced to a set of practices and techniques, important though these are to how we reconstruct the soundscapes of the past. We must cast our net more broadly, to look not only at the particular occasions at which music was heard, but also at the experiences and ideas which informed *how* the act of hearing was conceptualised by different people at different times. Thus, to insist on the derivative character of Roman music is not only to cling onto an outdated teleological view of history, but also to ignore the basic fact that music reflects the societal, cultural, and psychological contexts in which it is created. Wille’s concept of a fully autonomous ‘*musica Romana*’ is unsatisfactory, too, in that it obfuscates the Greek

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<sup>20</sup> See, most notably, Gruen 1990, Alcock 1993, Woolf 1994, Wiseman 1994, Purcell 2003, Wallace-Hadrill 2008, Hutchinson 2013, Feeney 2016, Ferrary 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.156.

<sup>22</sup> Trietler 1999, 366.

discourses which informed Roman attitudes to musical practice. Similar criticisms have been levelled against Thomas Habinek's provocative monograph, *The World of Roman Song* (2005), which seeks to locate the origins of Latin literature in an indigenous song culture dating back to the earliest phase of Roman prehistory.<sup>23</sup> Everything we know (or think we know) about the musical culture of archaic Rome is based on what we are told by later writers, who, in relaying this information, were drawing on their own lived experiences, ideological assumptions, and imaginary views of the past.<sup>24</sup>

The recent 'sensory turn' in Roman cultural history has dramatically improved our understanding of how the Romans engaged with the sonic environment.<sup>25</sup> We are now much more sensitive to the ways in which sound, and music especially, structured the Romans' interactions with the physical landscape. At a time before recording technology, music existed only in the moment of live performance; it had a sense of spatiality and temporality.<sup>26</sup> As Ray Laurence puts it, the Romans believed that 'sounds had their place and some places in the city should be kept free of some sounds'.<sup>27</sup> Policing acoustic boundaries mattered. Ancient theorists believed that the act of hearing engendered a powerful psychagogic and physiological response in the listener: sounds 'invaded the body, and they were capable of corrupting – or alternatively, of cultivating – minds'.<sup>28</sup> It was both morally and culturally imperative, therefore, that music was heard in the right places at the right times. Music threatened constantly to break out of its natural confines (essentially, the theatre and the *domus*) and penetrate into public

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<sup>23</sup> See the review by Feeney and Katz 2006. Note also the salient points made by Cole 1991 in response to Zorzetti 1991.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter II.5.

<sup>25</sup> See Devereux 2006, Betts 2011, Hartnett 2016, Vincent 2017b, Laurence 2017, Veitch 2017, Butler and Nooter 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Owens 2006, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Laurence 2017, 75.

<sup>28</sup> Hendy 2013, 80.

spaces where it was unwelcome.<sup>29</sup> In Cicero's eyes, singing in the Forum was a 'great perversion' (*magna perversitas*) of societal norms.<sup>30</sup>

To what extent did the Romans conceptualise 'music' differently from other types of sound? Few of us would categorise the signal of a trumpeter in battle as 'music' in the same way that we would a concert given by a symphony orchestra. That is because we rely on aesthetic criteria to determine what is 'musical' and what is not. However, Quintilian was able to cite the use of *cornua* and *tuba* in the legions to support the argument that music is essential to the orator, since the sounds produced by these instruments inspired Roman soldiers to feats of bravery.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, one could reasonably question whether the Romans would have regarded *cornicines* and *tubicines* as 'musicians' in the modern sense of the word.

The adjective *musicus* is first attested in Latin drama of the early-to-mid second century BC. It occurs five times in the works of Terence, once in Plautus, and once in a fragment of Pacuvius.<sup>32</sup> What is particularly interesting about these attestations is that the meaning of *musicus* fluctuates between 'of the Muses' (as in the Greek μουσικός) and something closer to 'musical' in the modern sense.<sup>33</sup> To my knowledge, *musicus* is never applied to an instrumentalist in a military or civil context. In some cases, the terms *ars musica* and *studium musicum* are used largely synonymously with the Greek μουσική, thereby designating a wide range of cultural activities including poetry, theatre, and dance. In other cases, these terms are applied more narrowly to the particular branch of theoretical learning that encompassed the study of harmonics, rhythmic, and acoustics. When we speak of 'Roman music', therefore, we are

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Cic. *Sext. Rosc.* 134: *cotidiano cantu vocum et nervorum et tiliarum nocturnisque conviviis tota vicinitas personet*. Further examples discussed in Chapters I and II.

<sup>30</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.145: *si qui in foro cantet aut si qua est alia magna perversitas...*

<sup>31</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.14: *quid autem aliud in nostris legionibus cornua ac tubae faciunt?*

<sup>32</sup> Ter. *Haut.* 23, *Eun.* 477, *Phorm.* 17, *Hec.* 23, 46; Plaut. *Mostell.* 728; Pacuvius *trag.* 114.

<sup>33</sup> See Goldberg 2013, 91, on the different meanings of *musicus* in Terence.

effectively collapsing several discrete definitional categories, some of which conform to our own preconceptions of what ‘music’ means and some of which do not. There is still much work to be done in exploring the tensions and slippages between these categories of ‘music’ as *ars* (i.e. the production of aesthetically appealing sound), ‘music’ as culture (i.e. the entire domain of the Muses), and ‘music’ as abstract knowledge (i.e. a form of *paideia*).

The time is ripe, then, for a reappraisal of the evidence. Above all, there is a crying need for a study which illuminates the relationship between practices of music and ideas about music, with a view to understanding how these phenomena shaped the Romans’ perception of themselves and the world around them. That requires us to submit the written testimonia to close scrutiny, paying due attention to the subjectivity of the author as well as to his rhetorical agenda and historical milieu. It also requires us, where possible, to integrate the textual and material records, using the latter to support our reading of the former.

Straightforward insights are admittedly hard to come by. In their eagerness to reconstruct social *realia* using widely disparate sources of information, scholars have typically combined the testimonies of multiple authors writing in different periods and in different genres. As a result, there has been a tendency to treat the evidence synoptically and synchronically. What we are left with is a ‘timeless’ model of Roman musical culture which stresses the continuity of practices and beliefs over the *longue durée*. In his stimulating short book, *The Culture of the Roman Plebs* (2003), Nicholas Horsfall assembles a fascinating miscellany of literary allusions documenting the everyday musical experiences of ordinary Romans. He is particularly interested in the connection between song and memory, and the ways in which song functioned as a

common cultural idiom binding together diverse social groups.<sup>34</sup> These themes hold great promise for future research; indeed, they are developed in several sections of this thesis. However, Horsfall has been justly criticised for promoting a monolithic vision of Roman popular culture which not only obscures instances of regional variation and chronological change but also lumps the *plebs* into a single, homogeneous proletariat.<sup>35</sup> As Jerry Toner writes, ‘the non-elite...inhabited a complex world of different geographies, wealth and status levels that meant that no uniform way of life could ever exist’.<sup>36</sup>

We must therefore be alert to the ways in which music points up *differences* between elite and non-elite culture as well as *commonalities*. On the one hand, music crossed social divides. It had a universal appeal that was grounded in a shared experience of communal life. And yet, for this very reason, it posed problems for an aristocracy which defined itself according to a set of exclusionist cultural practices and ideological values. Negative assessments of popular music are commonplace in Greek and Latin literature, reflecting an elitist disdain for the amusements of the masses. By contrast, the intellectual pursuit of music is valorised because of its association with a rarefied *paideia*, accessible only to a privileged few. Recent scholarship has showed how instabilities in the social and political order were central factors in the Greek ‘New Music’ revolution of the late fifth century.<sup>37</sup> However, it remains to be seen how these factors played out in a Roman setting. Was there a revolution in Roman music comparable to that in Greek music? If so, who were the revolutionaries? Was there a

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<sup>34</sup> Horsfall 2003, 11-19, 31-47.

<sup>35</sup> Subsequent studies by Toner 2009 and Courrier 2014 have highlighted the need for a more theoretically informed set of perspectives on the ‘Roman people’; Purcell 1994 is also important on the identity of the *plebs urbana*.

<sup>36</sup> Toner 2009, 2.

<sup>37</sup> See pp. 39, 77.

tangible difference between the music of the *plebs* and the music of the nobility? And what happened when the notional boundary between the two was violated?

An examination of these questions could take various forms. In view of the methodological and logistical considerations outlined above, there is little to be gained in conducting a holistic survey along similar lines to Wille and Horsfall. I therefore felt it necessary for the purposes of this thesis to impose both a topical and geographical focus: topical, in that I will concentrate mainly on music played in the theatre and at the banquet as a form of entertainment (hence the ‘spectacle’ of my title); geographical, in that I am primarily concerned with the city of Rome rather than with the Roman Empire as a whole. This decision was motivated, in part, by the nature of the evidence. We are uniquely well-informed about the music of Roman spectacle. Historical texts and inscriptions supply valuable evidence about the contexts, details, dates, and locations of certain types of performances within the city. Artistic representations help us to visualise what these spectacles looked like and to imagine how they sounded. Rhetorical and philosophical texts offer insights into what Roman audiences thought about music – its aesthetic quality and social function. In this way, the world of Roman spectacle provides a particularly effective basis for assessing the role of music in ideological debates about morality, luxury, education, and philhellenism.

The thesis is divided chronologically into four chapters. Chapter I takes its starting-point from Polybius’ detailed narration of the *ludi scaenici* celebrated in Rome by the praetor L. Anicius Gallus in 167 BC (quoted by Athenaeus). Anicius’ comedic take on a musical *agon* is interpreted as a subversive political gesture, playing to the theme of triumphal conquest. The second half of the chapter situates the Polybian episode in line with the cultural politics of musical theatre in this period. Chapter II focuses on the late Republic. I argue that contemporary writers – most notably, Cicero –

used music as a way of framing the political conflict between *optimates* and *populares*, associating ‘good’ music with the aristocratic *mos maiorum* and ‘bad’ music with a morally inferior kind of popular entertainment. Chapter III, on the Augustan period, discusses the assimilation of the *princeps* with Apollo Citharoedus, the god of music. The various manifestations of the lyre-playing deity in Augustan media are examined in relation to the Palatine programme, the commemoration of Actium, the ‘propaganda’ campaign against Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and the ideology of the ‘Golden Age’. The fourth and final chapter is devoted to Nero, the notorious musician-emperor. Challenging the popular misconception of Nero as a self-absorbed amateur, I suggest that the charismatic *princeps* used his performances on the stage as a political platform, uniting audiences through a shared love of music.

Naturally, my choice of subject matter was contingent on the availability of written sources. For reasons which I have already alluded to, it is extremely difficult to recover the cultural history of Roman music before the advent of the literary tradition (we can only do so retrospectively through the commentary of later writers). To examine the influence of Etruscan music would have required a very different methodology and a very different (and much more limited) body of evidence; hence, the topic seemed out of place in the present discussion.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, although the period after the Julio-Claudian Principate has supplied us with a plethora of musical testimonia (and we will certainly have recourse to these insofar as they bear upon our topic), these texts pose a specific set of historical questions which lie beyond the scope of this thesis, especially when one factors in the sizeable corpus of early Christian writings on music.<sup>39</sup> The Principate of Nero seemed to provide a natural sense of closure, in that it

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<sup>38</sup> On Etruscan music, see Tobin 2013.

<sup>39</sup> The evidence from the High Empire is discussed, albeit superficially, in most treatments of the topic. Whitmarsh 2004 deals specifically with the Hadrianic material. On performance culture in Late Antiquity,

marked not only the end of an imperial dynasty but also the culmination of a protracted period of ‘Hellenization’, anticipating the cultural florescence of the ‘Second Sophistic’.

Rome’s relationship with Greek *mousike* underwent a series of dramatic transformations in the two centuries between the conquest of the Hellenistic East and the death of Nero. Accordingly, it seemed necessary to submit the evidence to a diachronic analysis, paying close attention to how the Romans’ engagement with musical spectacle related to, and reflected on, the major historical issues of the period in question (namely, the conquest of Greece, the collapse of the Republic, and the self-representation of the *princeps*). The benefit of this approach is that it forces us to interpret musical discourses not in isolation, but as part of an unbroken cultural dialogue between Rome and the East, as it evolved from the mid-second century BC to the mid-first century AD. The diachronic approach also allows us to appreciate the importance of music as a political medium, which could be manipulated and exploited in different ways depending on the context and mode of production. By the end, I hope that this thesis will have succeeded in shedding light not only on the development of Roman musical culture *per se*, but on the broader history of culture, politics, and society in the Republic and early Principate.

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addressing musical themes, see Webb 2008. On Christian responses to music, see Quaesten 1983, McKinnon 1997, Page 2010, Shaw 2011, Grig 2013.

## Chapter I

### THE GAMES OF L. ANICIUS GALLUS AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF MUSICAL THEATRE IN THE SECOND CENTURY BC

In the autumn of 167 BC, the praetor Lucius Anicius Gallus returned to Rome in the wake of a glorious victory in the province of Illyria. Messengers and hostages had already reached the capital, and the general's arrival alongside his lieutenant Octavius was no doubt a great cause for celebration.<sup>1</sup> A triumph was promptly voted by the Senate and referred to the popular assembly for formal ratification.<sup>2</sup> Anicius, however, was not content with this singular honour. He planned to crown the festivities with a theatrical extravaganza. A star-studded line-up of musicians, dancers, and prize-fighters was specially brought over from Greece for the occasion and a massive wooden stage erected in a circus near the Tiber.<sup>3</sup>

The historian Polybius witnessed the spectacle in person and recorded what he saw. His detailed account, contained in Book 30 of the *Histories*, survives only thanks to its preservation in a much later work – the miscellaneous compendium of dinner-party trivia that is Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. I cite the passage here in full:

Λεύκιος δὲ Ἀνίκιος, καὶ αὐτὸς Ῥωμαίων στρατηγῆσας, Ἰλλυριοῦς καταπολεμήσας καὶ αἰχμάλωτον ἀγαγὼν Γένθιον τὸν τῶν Ἰλλυριῶν βασιλέα σὺν τοῖς τέκνοις, ἀγῶνας ἐπιτελῶν τοὺς ἐπινικίους ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ παντὸς γέλωτος ἄξια πράγματα ἐποίησεν, ὡς Πολύβιος ἱστορεῖ ἐν τῇ τριακοστῇ. [2] μεταπεμψάμενος γὰρ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐπιφανεστάτους τεχνίτας καὶ σκηνὴν κατασκευάσας μεγίστην ἐν τῷ κίρκῳ πρώτους εἰσήγεν ἀγλητὰς ἅμα πάντας. [3] οὗτοι δ' ἦσαν Θεόδωρος ὁ Βοιώτιος, Θεόπομπος, Ἑρμιππος, [ὁ] Λυσίμαχος, οἵτινες

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<sup>1</sup> Dispatch of messengers and hostages: Livy 44.32.4-5. Upon receiving news of the victory, the Senate decreed a three-day period of public thanks-giving: Livy 45.3.1-2. Paullus was still touring Greece in autumn 167: Livy 45.27.5; Briscoe 2012, 28-29. He arrived in Rome a few days before Anicius and Octavius, and was met by scenes of jubilation: Livy 45.35.4. Paullus' triumph took place from 27-29 November (3-5 September in the Julian calendar): *CIL I*<sup>2</sup> p. 48. The naval triumph of Cn. Octavius took place shortly thereafter on *kal. Dec.* (i.e. 6 September): Livy 45.42.2; Walbank 1979, 440. For the date of Anicius' triumph (19 November), see p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Livy 45.35.4.

<sup>3</sup> On the venue, see pp. 22-23.

ἐπιφανέστατοι ἦσαν. [4] τούτους οὖν στήσας ἐπὶ τὸ προσκῆνιον μετὰ τοῦ χοροῦ αὐλεῖν ἐκέλευσεν ἅμα πάντας. [5] τῶν δὲ διαπορευομένων τὰς κρούσεις μετὰ τῆς ἀρμοζούσης κινήσεως<sup>4</sup> προσπέμψας οὐκ ἔφη καλῶς αὐτοὺς αὐλεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀγωνίζεσθαι μᾶλλον ἐκέλευσεν. [6] τῶν δὲ διαπορούντων ὑπέδειξεν τις τῶν ῥαβδούχων ἐπιστρέψαντας ἐπαγαγεῖν ἐφ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ποιεῖν ὡσανεὶ μάχην. [7] ταχὺ δὲ συννοήσαντες οἱ αὐληταὶ καὶ λαβόντες [...] οἰκείαν ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἀσελγείαις μεγάλην ἐποίησαν σύγχυσιν. [8] συνεπιστρέψαντες δὲ τοὺς μέσους χοροὺς πρὸς τοὺς ἄκρους οἱ μὲν αὐληταὶ φυσῶντες ἀδιανόητα καὶ διαφέροντες τοὺς αὐλοὺς ἐπῆγον ἀνὰ μέρος ἐπ' ἀλλήλους. [9] ἅμα δὲ τούτοις ἐπικτυποῦντες οἱ χοροὶ καὶ συνεπεισιόντες τὴν σκηνὴν ἐπεφέροντο τοῖς ἐναντίοις καὶ πάλιν ἀνεχώρουν ἐκ μεταβολῆς. [10] ὥς δὲ καὶ περιζωσάμενός τις τῶν χορευτῶν ἐκ τοῦ καιροῦ<sup>6</sup> στραφεῖς ἦρε τὰς χεῖρας ἀπὸ πυγμῆς πρὸς τὸν ἐπιφερόμενον αὐλητὴν, τότε ἤδη κρότος ἐξαίσιος ἐγένετο καὶ κραυγὴ τῶν θεωμένων. [11] ἔτι δὲ τούτων ἐκ παρατάξεως ἀγωνιζομένων ὀρχηστὰι δύο εἰσήγοντο μετὰ συμφωνίας εἰς τὴν ὀρχήστραν, καὶ πύκται τέτταρες ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὴν σκηνὴν μετὰ σαλπικτῶν καὶ βυκανιστῶν. [12] ὁμοῦ δὲ τούτων πάντων ἀγωνιζομένων ἄλεκτον ἦν τὸ συμβαῖνον. περὶ δὲ τῶν τραγωδῶν, φησὶν ὁ Πολύβιος, ὅ, τι ἂν ἐπιβάλωμαι λέγειν, δόξω τισὶ διαχλευάζειν. (Polyb. 30.22 = Athen. 14.615)

After conquering the Illyrians and taking captive their king, Genthius, along with his children, the Roman general Lucius Anicius presented games in Rome in celebration of his victory. He conducted proceedings in a completely ridiculous fashion, as Polybius reports in the Thirtieth Book [of his *Histories*]. For, having summoned the most celebrated performers from Greece and built an enormous stage in the circus, he first brought on all the pipe-players at once. These were Theodorus of Boeotia, Theopompus, Hermippos, and Lysimachus – the superstars of the day. He positioned them centre-stage and ordered them to accompany the chorus all together as an ensemble. While they were performing their routine in harmony with the choral dance, he interrupted to inform them that they were playing badly and instructed them to show a more competitive edge. They were confused as to his meaning, until one of the lictors explained that they should turn around and have a go at each other and make it look like they were fighting. The pipe-players quickly grasped what he meant and, after receiving [an order?] which suited their own penchant for mayhem, created utter pandemonium. They got the group of dancers in the middle to turn *en masse* and face those on the outside. Then, proceeding to blow meaningless and discordant notes on their instruments, they advanced towards each other in turn. The dancers responded to them and, mounting the stage all together, charged at the opposing group and then turned around and retreated in ranks. And when, right on cue, one of the dancers gathered up his robes, spun round and raised his fists in boxing-style against the piper who was advancing towards him, the spectators erupted in rapturous applause and shouting. While the performers were still competing in battle lines, two dancers were introduced into the *orchestra* accompanied by a band, and four boxers mounted the stage along with trumpeters and horn-players. The scene with all these people struggling together was unbearable. ‘As for the tragic actors’, says Polybius, ‘if I tried to describe them some people will think that I am joking.’

What are we to make of this bizarre comedy of errors? The incompetent praetor arrogantly interrupting his headline artists in the middle of their set for no other reason than to criticise their playing; the lictor’s awkward interjection and the chaotic

<sup>4</sup> Walbank 1979, 446: ‘it is not clear whether these are the movements of the musicians or of the dancers’; the latter seems more likely in my view.

<sup>5</sup> There is a small lacuna in the text here, but the meaning of the sentence is clear enough.

<sup>6</sup> I favour the translation ‘right on cue’ (following Franko 2013, 344); the Loeb edition by W.R. Paton gives ‘on the spur of the moment’.

choreography which ensues; the giddy spectators egging on the shenanigans; and the grand finale of boxers and trumpeters, culminating in a scene of ‘unbearable commotion’ (ἄλεκτον...τὸ συμβαῖνον): Polybius’ review is hardly flattering. Modern verdicts have been no less scathing. E.S. Shuckburgh, the great Polybian scholar of the nineteenth century, commented that the episode ‘seems to be part of some strictures of Polybius on the coarseness of the amusements of the Romans’.<sup>7</sup> Ramsay MacMullen cites Anicius’ games as an example of ‘Roman patrons’ ignorance of the arts’.<sup>8</sup> ‘A confused burlesque and near riot’; ‘an undignified masquerade’; a ‘tactless’ production which ‘backfired’: these are just some of the disparaging terms which scholars have used to describe the incident in recent decades.<sup>9</sup>

However, as Erich Gruen realised long ago, there is much more to Polybius’ narrative than meets the eye.<sup>10</sup> Why, Gruen asks, would a supposedly inept Roman general with little appreciation of the performing arts have gone to the trouble of procuring the services of the finest musicians that Greece had to offer (it is stated twice that they were ἐπιφανέστατοι) – only then to let the production be derailed by the whims of his audience? And why, at any rate, should we assume that this audience was on the verge of rioting, as has been suggested? The κρότος ἐξάισιος καὶ κραυγὴ τῶν θεωμένων marks the climax of the charade, when one of the dancers imitates the pose of a boxer and confronts the piper advancing towards him. The noisy outburst of the spectators at this sudden denouement makes much better sense as an expression of approval than of disdain. And in generating this response, as Gruen rightly acknowledges, the organiser himself must ultimately be held accountable: ‘far from

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<sup>7</sup> Shuckburgh 1889, 419, n.1.

<sup>8</sup> MacMullen 1991, 425, with n. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Beacham 1991, 48; Edmondson 1999, 88; Brennan 2000, 337, n. 222; Ferrary 2017, 458.

<sup>10</sup> Gruen 1993, 215-218.

letting matters slip out of his hands, Anicius dictated them from start to finish'.<sup>11</sup> The show was no flop. It was designed to make an impact, and by all accounts it succeeded in doing so.

There are three main issues at stake, therefore, in interpreting Polybius' account of the Roman games of 167. First, we need to take account of the objectives of the praetor in staging a spectacle of this kind. Second, we need to explain why the spectacle outraged Polybius to such an extent that he thought it worthy of inclusion in his *Histories*. Third, we need to consider why this incident piqued the curiosity of Athenaeus some four centuries later. What inspired him to quote the Polybian passage at such length?

'Quote' is a slippery term, of course. It is impossible to know, in the absence of the 'original' text, whether we are reading a verbatim citation of Polybius as opposed to an adapted or abbreviated version. Athenaeus was certainly not interested in presenting his readers with a joined-up historical narrative. Rather, he selected excerpts primarily on the basis of their topical interest.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Athenaeus did not have access to a definitive 'first edition' of Polybius, but made use of later copies which doubtless varied from one to another.<sup>13</sup> Further alterations to the text could have been made by Athenaeus himself, or by a later copyist of the *Deipnosophistae*.<sup>14</sup> Lenfant's study of the Herodotean passages in the work has shown how Athenaeus is prone to changing, adding or removing certain words for reasons of dialect, syntax, and context.<sup>15</sup> Pelling's

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<sup>11</sup> Gruen 1993, 217; cf. Goldberg 1995, 39.

<sup>12</sup> See Pelling 2000, Zecchini 2007, Wilkins 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Walbank (2000, 161) suggests that the Polybian excerpts may have been gathered second-hand from a lexicon of some kind. Polybius is one of the historians most often consulted by Athenaeus, being cited around 30 times in total throughout the work.

<sup>14</sup> Lenfant 2007, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Lenfant 2007, esp. 68-70.

examination of the use of Xenophon has revealed a similar trend.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, however, deviations from the ‘original’ are relatively superficial. It can be seen that, for the most part, Athenaeus presents a version of the text that is quite close to what the author actually wrote, insofar as his writings are transmitted directly through the manuscript tradition.

The narrative of Anicius’ games is framed by two references to the primary source: the first (ὡς Πολύβιος ἱστορεῖ ἐν τῇ τριακοστῇ) gives the exact book in Polybius’ *Histories* where the passage is to be found, while the second (φησὶν ὁ Πολύβιος) purports to be a literal citation. That alone does not prove the ‘authenticity’ of the text. But it seems safe to conclude, on the balance of the evidence considered above, that Athenaeus has preserved the basic structure and content of Polybius’ work. While we must allow for slight linguistic or syntactic modifications here and there, the excerpt as a whole can be regarded as genuinely ‘Polybian’.

This chapter treats the games of L. Anicius Gallus as a case study for examining the cultural politics of musical theatre in the second century BC. The first half of the chapter sets out a detailed framework for interpreting the episode, taking into special consideration the chronology and topography of the *ludi*. The second half of the chapter situates Polybius’ account within a broader historical context. Drawing parallels from elsewhere in Polybius’ *Histories*, as well as from other Greek and Roman writings on music, I will explore the intersections between musical culture and contemporary debates about morality, luxury, and ‘Hellenization’ in the period of Rome’s eastern expansion. Finally, I will look back to earlier trends in Greek musicological thought, in particular, Plato’s concept of *theatrokratia*, as a way of shedding light on Polybius’ (and

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<sup>16</sup> Pelling 2000, 188-190.

Athenaeus’) response to musical spectacles of different kinds, in both the past and the present.

## 1 Triumphs, Trumpery, and Trumpets

The date of Anicius’ *ludi* cannot be established with certainty. Since we do not know exactly where in Polybius’ narrative the episode was situated, we must rely on circumstantial details in Livy to reconstruct a basic chronology. Livy informs us that Anicius’ triumph took place on the Quirinalia of 166 BC.<sup>17</sup> This festival was held each year on 17 February.<sup>18</sup> However, the year 166 was intercalary (cf. Livy 45.44.3), and so the Quirinalia will have fallen in the Julian calendar on 19 November 167, or, if 167 was also intercalary, on 11/12 December.<sup>19</sup> Walbank believed that Anicius’ games ‘were probably the result of a *votum*, and quite distinct from his triumph’.<sup>20</sup> But it seems difficult to explain ἀγῶνας... τοὺς ἐπινικίους as anything other than a direct allusion to the triumph on the Quirinalia: the opening reference to Anicius’ generalship (Ῥωμαίων στρατηγήσας) and the capture of Genthius and his children makes the connection almost explicit.

The chronological relationship between the triumph and the games therefore requires further elucidation. Walbank reached the conclusion that the games must have taken place some time after the triumph. Subsequent scholars have followed suit.<sup>21</sup> And yet, the very assumption that the games served as a sequel to the triumph is problematic, for reasons which have not been sufficiently acknowledged. In presiding over the

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<sup>17</sup> Livy 45.43: *L. Anicius Quirinalibus triumphavit.*

<sup>18</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 2.475; Scullard 1981, 78-79.

<sup>19</sup> Walbank 1979, 445.

<sup>20</sup> Walbank 1979, 446.

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, Gibson 2012, 267, dating the games to 166 BC.

spectacle, the praetor was acting in the capacity of an *imperator*. Not only did he appear as Genthius' conqueror, but he also possessed lictors in his retinue (τις τῶν ῥαβδούχων). The presence of these officials would be extremely odd if the triumph had already taken place and Anicius had formally relinquished his command. What this means is that the games were either held on the same day as the triumph, while Anicius still retained *imperium*, or they were held beforehand, with the Roman army still encamped on the Campus Martius.<sup>22</sup>

The fact that Anicius was acting as *imperator* has further implications for our understanding of where the games took place. Polybius mentions the erection of a large *skene* 'in the circus' (ἐν τῷ κίρκῳ). Scholars have taken this as an unproblematic reference to the Circus Maximus – the place where many of the city's annual festivals were celebrated (including, for example, the *Ludi Romani*).<sup>23</sup> But there are two factors which count decisively against such an association. Firstly, the Circus Maximus lay inside the *pomerium* and so was effectively out-of-bounds for an incumbent *imperator*. Secondly, the architecture of the Circus Maximus in this period would have been ill-suited to the kind of large-scale temporary staging which Polybius describes. Humphrey has shown that by the 160s BC the Circus already possessed permanent tiers of seating, as well as a central enclosure decorated with various monumental structures.<sup>24</sup> There is no reason to assume that Anicius had any intention to 'accommodate the audience in tiered seats', as Goldberg claims.<sup>25</sup> The term *skene* refers simply to a wooden 'stage-

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<sup>22</sup> Livy informs us (45.35.4) that a plebiscite had been passed enabling Anicius and his colleague Octavius to retain *imperium* within the city on the day of their triumph. See Brennan 2000, 337, n.22, for the suggestion that the games took place directly after the triumph on the same day. On the importance of *imperium* and the triumph, see Beard 2007, 204-205.

<sup>23</sup> For recent restatements of this view, see Wiseman 2015, 58 and Feeney 2016, 147. On the general significance of the Circus Maximus, see Manuwald 2011, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Humphrey 1986, 72; *contra* Edmondson 1999, 82. On the development of the Circus Maximus, cf. Livy 1.35.8, 2.31.3, 29.37.2.

<sup>25</sup> Goldberg 1995, 39.

building' and need not imply the existence of a larger *cavea* or 'auditorium'.<sup>26</sup> Livy indicates, at any rate, that it was customary in the mid-second century for Roman theatre-goers to stand rather than sit. This fact is corroborated by later authors.<sup>27</sup>

It should be remembered, of course, that Rome had another circus: the Circus Flaminius, created by the censor C. Flaminius Nepos in 221 BC.<sup>28</sup> In many respects, it would have been an ideal choice of venue. As 'a broad open space unencumbered by *spina*, *carceres* or terraces of public seats', the Circus Flaminius was certainly capable of housing a large *skene*.<sup>29</sup> It also met the necessary criterion of being located beyond the *pomerium*, lying on the Campus Martius near to the river Tiber where Anicius' troops would presumably have disembarked. The function of the circus is somewhat obscure. However, we know that it was used as the setting for the annual *Ludi Plebeii* in November (which included dramatic performances).<sup>30</sup> We also know that it served as the starting point for triumphal processions. In 187, the consul M. Fulvius Nobilior commemorated his victory in Aetolia by presenting his soldiers with military decorations in the Circus Flaminius.<sup>31</sup> A year later, Fulvius presented votive games, which showcased a large number of Greek artists and featured, for the first time in

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. *LSJ* s.v. σκηνή, II.

<sup>27</sup> Livy *Per.* 48: *populusque aliquamdiu stans ludos spectavit*; cf. Val. Max. 2.4.2, Tac. *Ann.* 14.20. Special seating was available for senators following the introduction of legislation in 194 (cf. Livy 34.44.4-5, Ascon. 70C, Val. Max. 2.4.3, 2.5.1). However, even after this point, it is clear that a large portion of the audience had no alternative but to stand. In cases where seating was provided, temporary benches would have been the norm: see Moore 1994; Gruen 1993, 207-208.

<sup>28</sup> Livy *Per.* 20: *C. Flaminius censor...circum Flaminium exstruxit*. On the Circus Flaminius, see Platner-Ashby 1929, 111-113; Wiseman 1974; Wiseman 1976; Richardson 1992, 83; Viscogliosi 1993b.

<sup>29</sup> Wiseman 1974, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Val. Max. 1.7.4, 4.4.8; Manuwald 2011, 43. Livy (41.28.11) confirms that the Circus Flaminius was used for *ludi funebres* in 174.

<sup>31</sup> Livy 39.5.13-17. For the use of the Circus Flaminius in the Macedonian triumph of Aemilius Paullus in 167, cf. Livy 35.39, Plut. *Aem.* 32; Beard 2007, 101-102; cf. also Plut. *Luc.* 37 (Lucullus' triumph in 63) and Sen. *De ben.* 5.16.5 (Caesar pitched camp in the Circus Flaminius in 49).

Rome, a contest of athletes and a wild-beast hunt.<sup>32</sup> Livy unfortunately does not specify where these games were held, but the Circus Flaminius is a strong possibility.<sup>33</sup>

The Illyrian triumph of 167 was the third such event to have taken place in Rome in the space of just three months. The naval triumph of Cn. Octavius was, by Livy's estimate, something of a dull affair, lacking in both prisoners and spoils.<sup>34</sup> But the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus over King Perseus was the polar opposite. Α λαμπρὸς θρίαμβος, in the eyes of Diodorus Siculus, it went down in history as one of the finest spectacles the city had ever witnessed.<sup>35</sup> Incidentally, Plutarch informs us that the populace gathered to watch the procession 'in the horse-racing theatres which the Romans call "Circuses"', meaning presumably the Circus Flaminius and Circus Maximus.<sup>36</sup>

Subsequent *triumphatores* struggled to compete. Paullus' conquest came at the cost of a long and hard-fought campaign. Anicius' subjugation of Illyria, by contrast, was achieved after barely a month of skirmishing.<sup>37</sup> The disparity between the two generals is astutely observed by Livy:

*similia omnia magis visa hominibus quam paria; minor ipse imperator, et nobilitate Anicius cum Aemilio et iure imperii praetor cum consule conlatus; non Gentius Perseo, non Illyrii Macedonibus, non spolia spoliis, non pecunia pecuniae, non dona donis comparari poterant.*  
(Livy 45.43.2-3)

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<sup>32</sup> Livy 39.22.2: *multi artifices ex Graecia venerunt honoris eius causa. athletarum quoque certamen tum primo Romanis spectaculo fuit.* The chronological relationship between the triumph and the games is not mentioned precisely. *Artifices* from Asia took part in the votive games of L. Scipio later that year: Livy 39.22.10.

<sup>33</sup> Fulvius' temple to Hercules Musarum, which was probably inaugurated around this time, overlooked the Circus Flaminius (see Chapter I.5). In 179, Fulvius' colleague in the office of censor, M. Aemilius Lepidus, let a contract for the building of a *theatrum et proscaenium* at the Temple of Apollo Medicus on the Circus Flaminius (Livy 40.51.3).

<sup>34</sup> Livy 45.42.1: *sine captivis fuit, sine spoliis.*

<sup>35</sup> Diod. 31.9.1.

<sup>36</sup> Plut. *Aem.* 32: ἔν τε τοῖς ἵππικοῖς θεάτροις, ἃ Κίρκους καλοῦσι; see Beard 2007, 101-102.

<sup>37</sup> The little information we have of the Illyrian campaign derives mainly from Livy. A helpful synopsis can be found in Wilkes 1992, 173-175. On the triumph itself, cf. Livy 45.39.2-4; Vell. Pat. 1.9.5; App. *Ill.* 2.9.

Men saw in each detail a resemblance, but no equality. The commander himself was the lesser, both in public esteem, as an Anicius compared with an Aemilius, and in rank of office, a praetor rather than a consul. Gentius could not be compared to Perseus, the Illyrians to the Macedonians, nor the spoils of the one to those of the other, nor the moneys, nor the gifts to the soldiers. (Loeb trans.)

Not that there was anything inherently despicable about Anicius' triumph (*nequaquam esse contemnendum*). As Livy points out: 'The Illyrians were a nation formidable both by land and sea, who felt secure in their strong fortified positions, and Anicius had thoroughly subjugated them in a few days and captured their king and all his family'. Nor was the booty unimpressive. The problem, rather, was one of timing, for 'the memory of the Macedonian triumph was still fresh not only in people's minds but almost before their eyes'.<sup>38</sup>

Livy's comments provide a revealing insight into the competitive dynamics of Roman public spectacle in the second century BC.<sup>39</sup> As Rome gradually extended her hegemony over the Hellenistic East, there emerged a small but growing clique of pre-eminent statesmen who vied with one another to win over the hearts and minds of audiences in the imperial capital. As well as having to contend with the recent memory of Paullus' triumph (and the less memorable, but not negligible, triumph of Octavius), Anicius could recall a string of triumphal honours conferred on victorious generals of the not-so-distant past: L. Cornelius Scipio and M. Acilius Glabrio in 190 (Livy 37.46; 58.4), L. Aemilius Regillus in 189 (Livy 37.58.3-4), Q. Fabius Labeo in 188 (Livy 37.60.6; 38.47.5-6), M. Fulvius Nobilior in 187, and Cn. Manlius Vulso in 186 (Livy 39.7) – to name but a few.<sup>40</sup> Having a triumph to one's name was all well and good, of course, but in the crowded arena of Roman politics it was not a guaranteed route to lasting fame. First and foremost, the *triumphator* needed to put on a show, just as

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<sup>38</sup> Livy 45.43.1: *haerente adhuc non in animis modo, sed paene in oculis memoria Macedonici triumphis*. It is possible that Polybius provided an account of Anicius' triumph in a lost section of Book 30.

<sup>39</sup> On this subject, see further Edmondson 1999, 77, and Bell 2004, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Other triumphs are listed in the *Fasti Triumphales*.

Paullus and Fulvius had done. And not just any show: artistry and creativity counted for as much as booty and soldiers. Hence Anicius sought to capitalise on his moment in the spotlight by introducing Roman audiences to the unfamiliar delights of the Greek theatre. It was a gamble that seems ultimately to have paid off: Anicius went on to attain the consulship in 160.

There was a famous maxim, attributed to Aemilius Paullus and widely circulated in later times, that ‘the man who knows how to conquer in war knows also how to organise a banquet and to prepare games’.<sup>41</sup> That Paullus was the one credited with this *bon mot* is no coincidence. Following his stunning victory at the Battle of Pydna, the conqueror of Macedon visited the city of Amphipolis, the cultural epicentre of northern Greece, and presided there over a theatrical bonanza. Paullus replicated, with remarkable precision, the traditional format of a Greek agonistic festival. Livy informs us that Paullus brought together a multitude of artists ‘of every kind’ (*omnis generis*), ‘from all over the world’ (*ex toto orbe terrarum*).<sup>42</sup> The fact that the consul had planned the games ‘a long time in advance’ (*ex multo ante preparato*) stood as a tribute to his *prudentia*, at a time when the Romans were still ‘inexperienced’ (*rudes*) in the theatrical arts.<sup>43</sup>

When, a few months later, another Roman general undertook preparations for a theatrical festival to commemorate a war waged in the East, there could have been little doubt as to its political significance. Unlike Paullus, however, Anicius targeted his games not at a Greek audience in a Greek city, but at a Roman audience in the imperial

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<sup>41</sup> Livy 45.32.11: *vulgo dictum ipsius ferebant et convivium instruere et ludos parare eiusdem esse, qui vincere bello sciret*; cf. Plut. *Aem.* 28.9, Diod. 31.8.13.

<sup>42</sup> Liv. 45.32.9: *quidquid aliud deorum hominumque causa fieri magnis ludis in Graecia solet, ita factum est*. On the games at Amphipolis and their reproduction of Greek agonistic convention, cf. Polyb. 30.14; Plut. *Paul.* 28.3-5; Ferrary 1988, 560-5; Gruen 1993, 247; Edmondson 1999, 79-80. On Paullus’ philhellenism more generally, see Gruen 1993, 245-248.

<sup>43</sup> Livy 45.32; cf. Plut. *Aem.* 28.7-9; Diod. 31.8.9.

capital. He may have done so with the deliberate intention of overshadowing Paullus, as has been argued forcefully by Jonathan Edmondson.<sup>44</sup> After all, Rome was surely a much better place for an ambitious politician to make a splash than the far-flung city of Amphipolis (Fulvius' games provided a distinguished precedent in this regard). Rome was also, more importantly, the place where the triumph took place and, if Livy's comments are to be believed, the praetor had good reason to suspect that this event might otherwise have slipped under the radar.

At the same time, we need to be mindful of how the choice of a Roman setting influenced the power dynamics at play during the performance itself. By presenting Greek artists on a Roman stage, Anicius was able to exploit the conflicting national identities of performer and spectator in a way that Paullus, presenting Greek games to a Greek audience, was not. 'Exploitation' is the operative word here. Gruen describes Anicius' production as 'a stunning display of Roman power to exploit Hellenic culture'.<sup>45</sup> In his view, the degrading treatment suffered by the four auletes at the hands of the praetor was 'conscious parody', intended to be read as such by all who saw it. In effect, the ritual humiliation of Greeks engendered in the Roman audience a 'sense of cultural superiority', born out of a collective solidarity in the face of a foreign enemy.<sup>46</sup>

Gruen's notion of 'conscious parody', while convincing in many respects, has given rise to some questionable interpretations in more recent scholarship. Before I address these, however, I would like to consider how the message of *Graecia capta*, of Greek culture being taken captive, was embedded in the 'soundscape' of the spectacle. What I am interested in here is the capacity for music to connect cultural experiences that are temporally or spatially removed from one another: Roman listeners were

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<sup>44</sup> Edmondson 1999, 83.

<sup>45</sup> Gruen 1993, 248.

<sup>46</sup> Gruen 1993, 217-218.

accustomed to hearing the same sounds (or at least the same instruments) deployed at different times and in different settings. My contention is that Anicius' production, with its variety of musical effects, created an 'audible' juncture between the *ludi* and the *triumphus* which served, albeit artificially, to magnify the scale of the praetor's military achievement.

For there could be no mistaking that this was indeed a military celebration. The lictor initially orders the musicians and dancers 'to simulate a battle' (ποιεῖν ὡσανεὶ μάχην). As the choreography unfolds, the movements begin to resemble those of a battle line (παρατάξις) advancing and retreating in neat array. The musical accompaniment, 'meaningless and discordant' (ἀδιανόητα καὶ διαφέροντες), provides a fitting soundtrack to the physical shenanigans.<sup>47</sup> Then, at the last moment, four boxers (πύκται τέτταρες) enter the fray. They are accompanied by an unnumbered group of brass-players (σαλπικτῶν καὶ βυκανιστῶν, equivalent to *tubicines* and *cornicines* in Latin). The role of these musicians is not immediately apparent. In Rome, as in Greece, brass instruments were synonymous not with the theatre but with the army (see FIGURE 1).<sup>48</sup> It is likely that the trumpeters would have completely drowned out the sound of the pipers, who seemingly kept on playing regardless.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The word ἀδιανόητος ('unintelligible') was commonly associated with dissemblance and false illusions. Polybius (12.4) refers to the historian Ephorus' 'unsubstantiated and completely unintelligible' account of the battle of Mantinea, despite it having the appearance of being detailed and knowledgeable. Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* 8.2.20) expresses disapproval of *adianoeta* as a rhetorical technique – 'expressions which have a clear verbal sense but a hidden meaning' (*quae verbis aperta occultos sensus habent*); perhaps a fitting word, then, to describe the trumpetry of Anicius' *ludi*.

<sup>48</sup> The best account of the use of brass instruments in the Roman army is Vincent 2016, 15-117; see also Ziolkowski 1999 on the origins of the *tuba*. Livy 25.10.4 describes the confusion caused by a *tuba audita ex theatro* during the capture of Tarentum in 211 BC: the trumpet was Roman, but being blown *inscien*ter by a Greek, the soldiers did not know 'who was giving the signal and to whom'. The *tubicen* was presumably employed to call for silence before a theatrical show; in a foreign city, the soldiers must have mistaken this for a call to arms. Livy is not saying that there was a distinctive kind of *tuba* used in the theatre.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Luc. *Rh.Pr.* 13: τούς γε ἄλλους τοσοῦτον ὑπερφωνοῦντα εὐρήσεις ὅποσον ἢ σάλπιγξ τοὺς αὐλοὺς.

Not all of Anicius' audience will have experienced the din of battle (although there were presumably large numbers of soldiers in attendance). But the vast majority will have witnessed a triumph, and it is likely that the sight and sound of the musicians prompted recollections of its distinctive *sensorium*. Polybius' narrative plays out in sequential episodes, each act appearing in turn as though part of a moving procession. The emphasis on collective performance may be relevant here: the triumph was probably one of the few public occasions when Roman audiences would have heard multiple instrumentalists playing at the same time.<sup>50</sup> The third and final day of Aemilius Paullus' triumph opened with a parade of *σαλπικταί*; contrary to expectations, they played not a marching or processional fanfare, but a call to arms, 'such as the Romans use to rouse themselves to battle'.<sup>51</sup> Marcellus' ovation in 211 BC featured 'a very large ensemble of pipe-players' (*αὐλητῶν μάλα πολλῶν*). The use of *auletai* instead of *salpinktai* was, according to Plutarch, one of the things that distinguished the *ovatio* from the *triumphus* ('for the *aulos* is an instrument of peace, *εἰρήνης μέρος*').<sup>52</sup> A sculptural relief from Rome, dating from the first century BC, shows a pair of *tibicines*, a *fidicen*, and a group of armed dancers (*ludiones*) involved in a procession (FIGURE 2). The fact the musicians are crowned and are trailed by three captives with their arms tied behind their backs suggests that we are looking at a scene from a triumph (or possibly an ovation).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> For the *tibicen* as the dominant accompanist of Roman dramatic productions, see Moore 2012, 26. Vincent (2016, 172-182) discusses the role of music in the Roman triumph. Large instrumental ensembles could also be heard at funerals, although this was presumably the privilege of only the very wealthy and therefore perhaps not a common occurrence: see Vincent 2016, 200-205.

<sup>51</sup> Plut. *Aem.* 33.1: τῆς δὲ τρίτης ἡμέρας ἔωθεν μὲν εὐθὺς ἐπορεύοντο σαλπικταὶ μέλος οὐ προσόδιον καὶ πομπικόν, ἀλλ' οἷον μαχομένους ἐποτρύνουσιν αὐτοὺς Ῥωμαῖοι, προσεγκελεύομενοι. The presence of warlike *salpinktai* is also noted by Diod. 31.8.10: προηγούντο δὲ αὐτῶν ὡς ἐν πολέμῳ σαλπικταί.

<sup>52</sup> Plut. *Marc.* 22.2, 22.6.

<sup>53</sup> See Latham 2016, 32-33.

Appian's account of the triumph of Scipio Africanus in 201 BC is particularly informative.<sup>54</sup> Trumpeters (σαλπικταί) led the vanguard. The general was followed by lictors (ράβδοῦχοι), clad in purple robes, and a chorus of citharists and pipers (χορὸς κιθαριστῶν τε καὶ τιτυριστῶν), 'in imitation of an Etruscan procession' (ἐς μίμημα Τυρρηνικῆς πομπῆς).<sup>55</sup> The musicians 'march in regular order with song and dance' (ἴσα τε βαίνουσιν ἐν τάξει μετὰ ᾠδῆς καὶ μετ' ὀρχήσεως). One member of the chorus, positioned 'in the middle' (ἐν μέσῳ) and decked out in a long purple cloak and gold jewellery, 'caused laughter by making various gestures, as if he were dancing in triumph over the enemy' (σχηματίζεται ποικίλως ἐς γέλωτα ὡς ἐπορχούμενος τοῖς πολεμίοις).

Scipio's triumph has several elements in common with Anicius' games: the presence of trumpeters, lictors, and chorus; the martial choreography performed to melodic accompaniment; and, most striking of all, the use of mimesis to provoke laughter. As Beard notes of the chorus-leader, 'the man's actions here cast the celebration of victory as comic parody'.<sup>56</sup> Music, dance, and mime are fused together into a powerful expression of Roman imperial might. We would do well to compare here the famous account of the *ludi Romani* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, derived from Fabius Pictor. Dionysius mentions ἀλχηταί and κιθαρισταί accompanying war-dances.<sup>57</sup> The dancers are equipped with weapons and armour, and are followed by a second chorus of dancers, who impersonate satyrs (in the manner of a Greek dance called the *sicinnis*) and 'ridicule and mimic the serious movements of the others, turning

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<sup>54</sup> App. *Pun.* 66.

<sup>55</sup> The word τιτυριστῶν is a hapax legomenon, probably deriving from τιτύρινος ἀλλός, 'shepherd's pipe'; cf. *LSJ*, s.v. τιτύρινος. However, Wiseman (1994, 76) thinks that they are 'satyr-dancers', based on τιτυρος, 'satyr' (cf. Ael. *VH* 3.40, Strab. 10.466). The unusual word is probably used to evoke the Etruscan origin of the ritual.

<sup>56</sup> Beard 2003, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Dion. Hal. *Rom. Ant.* 7.72.5. Dionysius specifies that they play old types of instruments; see discussion in Barker 2017, 77-80. Note also the use of *mousourgoi* in the sham 'triumph' staged by the Parthians in celebration of their victory over Crassus at Carrhae (Plut. *Crass.* 32).

them into laughter-provoking performances’ (κατέσκωπτόν τε καὶ κατεμιμοῦντο τὰς σπουδαίας κινήσεις ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιώτερα μεταφέροντες).<sup>58</sup> ‘After these choruses came a throng of lyre-players and many pipe-players’ (μετὰ δὲ τοὺς χοροὺς τούτους κιθαρισταὶ τ’ ἄθροοι καὶ αὐληταὶ πολλοὶ παρεξήεσαν).<sup>59</sup> In the course of the narrative, Dionysius draws an interesting link between the ‘satiric’ tradition of the games and the ribaldry of the triumph:

δηλοῦσι δὲ καὶ αἱ τῶν θριάμβων εἴσοδοι παλαιὰν καὶ ἐπιχώριον οὔσαν Ῥωμαίοις τὴν κέρτομον καὶ σατυρικὴν παιδίαν. ἐφεῖται γὰρ τοῖς κατάγουσι τὰς νίκας ἰαμβίζειν τε καὶ κατασκώπτειν τοὺς ἐπιφανεστάτους ἄνδρας αὐτοῖς στρατηλάταις, ὡς Ἀθήνησι τοῖς πομπευταῖς τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαξῶν, πρότερον ἀμέτροις σκώμμασι παρορχοῦμενοι, νῦν 12δὲ ποιήματα ἄδουσιν αὐτοσχέδια. (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.11)

The triumphal entrances also show that raillery and fun-making in the manner of satyrs were an ancient practice native to the Romans; for the soldiers who take part in the triumphs are allowed to satirise and ridicule the most distinguished men, including even the generals, in the same manner as those who ride in procession in carts at Athens; the soldiers once jested in prose as they clowned, but now they sing improvised verses. (Loeb trans.)

The reference to the custom of *carmina triumphalia* is suggestive. Livy records the jovial songs that were sung about Anicius by the soldiers who took part in his triumph: *laetior hunc triumphum est secutus miles, multisque dux ipse carminibus celebratus*.<sup>60</sup>

In a sense, then, Anicius brought the triumph into the theatre. Faced with the embarrassing prospect of being upstaged by rival *triumphatores*, he masterminded a spectacle which, though innovative in its overall design, incorporated musical and comedic elements that were familiar from triumphal ritual. The fact that the games were held shortly before (or on the same day as) the Illyrian triumph on the Quirinalia would have created a strong temporal link between the two events. The triumphal resonance was also underscored topographically by the use of the Circus Flaminius, a performance space with strong links to the *pompa triumphalis*. Anicius paraded his captive

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<sup>58</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.10.

<sup>59</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.72.13.

<sup>60</sup> Livy 45.43.8; cf. Plut. *Aem.* 34 (Paullus’ triumph); Suet. *Iul.* 49, 51, Dio 43.20.2 (Caesar’s Gallic triumph); Guidobaldi 1992, 17.

performers almost as a form of booty. He put Greek culture on show, and proceeded to deconstruct it using the satirical formula of the *carmina triumphalia*. Appian states that ‘in a triumph everybody is free and is allowed to say what he pleases’ (ἀφελῆς γὰρ ὁ θρίαμβος, καὶ ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ λέγειν ὅ τι θέλοιν).<sup>61</sup> Was Anicius taking advantage of this very licence in staging his production? The showy interjection right at the start, the accumulation of performers, and the parodic treatment of ‘serious’ martial dances speak collectively of a desire to evoke the light-hearted atmosphere of the triumph in a theatrical setting.<sup>62</sup>

## 2 Breaking the Rules

In an article published in 2013, George Franko sought to explain the role of parody in Anicius’ games by drawing connections with the theatrical aesthetics of Plautine comedy. Expanding on Gruen’s arguments, Franko sees the ‘barbarization of Greek culture’ as providing ‘raw material for Roman fun’, with the goal of ‘triumphing through subversion and reconfiguration for a Roman audience’.<sup>63</sup> The Quirinalia is assimilated in some ancient texts with the so-called ‘Feast of Fools’ (*feriae stultorum*), which fell on the same date.<sup>64</sup> This festival served, in Franko’s view, as an atmospheric backdrop to the festivities in 167, inspiring and authorising the mayhem. The crux of Franko’s argument is that Anicius, in organising his show, was utilising tried-and-tested comedic modes. In a word, he copied Plautus: he ‘twisted’ Greek culture to suit Roman

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<sup>61</sup> App. *Pun.* 66.

<sup>62</sup> On the visibility of the *triumphator*, cf. Polyb. 6.15.8 (the triumph as a showcase of the general’s achievements); Plut. *Aem.* 34.7 (Aemilius as *peribleptos*); Wiseman 2009, 157-158.

<sup>63</sup> Franko 2013, 348, 353.

<sup>64</sup> Fest. 304L, 418L; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 89.

tastes (*vortit barbare: Trin. 19, Asin. 11*). There is even a suggestion that the praetor cast himself in the role of the *servus callidus*!<sup>65</sup>

Franko's insistence on mockery and comic subversion provides a necessary rejoinder to Linda-Marie Günther's rather weak interpretation of the spectacle as 'parable' rather than 'parody', whereby the Greek artists feebly act out their own political servility.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, one cannot help but feel that the Plautine aesthetic is something of a red herring. Franko is prepared to overlook the fact that this was not a scripted drama in the formal sense, but a piece of non-verbal theatre. Roman comedies were, of course, highly musical affairs, with sung *cantica* and the ever-present accompaniment of the *tibicen*. But it was the spoken word that dictated the meaning and gave the performance its energy. That, in my view, signals a major difference, one which cannot easily be brushed aside.

It is doubtful, at any rate, that the 'Feast of Fools' had the general currency which Franko assigns it. The *feriae stultorum* had a very specific aetiological tradition. Ovid in the *Fasti* makes no attempt to connect it with the Quirinalia (a much more important festival in the Roman calendar). Instead, he relates it to the Fornicalia ('the Feast of Ovens'), the date of which was appointed each year by the *curio maximus*. 'The foolish part of the people (*stultaque pars populi*) do know not which is their own ward (*curia*), but hold the feast on the last day to which it can be postponed', namely 17 February.<sup>67</sup> This hardly seems a likely pretext for the antics of a theatrical performance.

In short, then, while the *fabula palliata* may provide a solid basis for understanding certain aspects of what Anicius was doing, it is only one of several

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<sup>65</sup> Franko 2013, 353.

<sup>66</sup> Günther 2002. Her argument is based upon a series of incorrect assumptions about the date and function of the games.

<sup>67</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 2.513-532; discussion in Barchiesi 1997, 112-114.

possible frames of reference. If we are to go in search of ‘raw material for Roman fun’, as Franko puts it, the conventions of comic drama can only get us so far. In fact, closer re-examination of the Polybian text points us in the direction of a different theatrical genre altogether, one in which instrumental music took centre stage. I am speaking, namely, of the *agon*, that most ancient and revered of Greek cultural institutions. It was to the agonistic culture of the Hellenistic East that Fulvius Nobilior and Aemilius Paullus had looked for inspiration when it came to producing their triumphal games. Anicius, I suggest, continued in the same vein – not, however, by paying homage to the traditional contests of a panhellenic festival, but rather by deconstructing and repackaging their constituent elements.

As the show got underway with the entrance of the four pipe-players, the audience would have been forgiven for thinking that they were about to witness a typical competition between musical virtuosi, following the model adhered to by Fulvius and Paullus. Custom dictated that performers took turns to show off their talents, and as such it was perfectly common to find multiple *technitai* competing at a single event.<sup>68</sup> The fact that Polybius could identify each of the four *auletai* by name suggests that these musicians were already widely known outside Rome. They had probably risen to prominence as competitors on the Greek agonistic circuit.<sup>69</sup> The Roman praetor must have paid handsomely for their services. We are told that they were employed initially ‘to accompany the chorus’ (μετὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἀυλεῖν), which may imply that they specialised as *choraulae* (pipe-players supported by choral singers).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Wescher and Foucart (1863) provide evidence for large numbers of auletes performing at the Soteria festival at Delphi in the Hellenistic period. See also Mitchell 1990, on a second-century AD inscription from Oenoanda, and Vandensteendam 2000, on the musical competitions at Argos.

<sup>69</sup> They may have belonged to the guild of Dionysiac artists: on this organisation, see Le Guen 2001, Lightfoot 2002, Aneziri 2009; Jory (1970) stresses their influence on the development of the Roman *ludi*. For evidence of *salpinx*-players on the Greek competition circuit, see Robert 1969, 1149-1153, no. 29.

<sup>70</sup> On the distinction between the *pythaulae* and the *choraulae*, see West 1992, 93, with n. 63.

On this occasion, however, they were instructed to perform not as soloists but as an ensemble. This broke with established convention in a highly conspicuous way. The presence of four musicians standing next to one another ἐπὶ τὸ προσκήνιον and playing in unison would have startled a Greek spectator accustomed to seeing musicians compete in the *orchestra* (note the emphatic repetition of ἅμα πάντα).<sup>71</sup> Even in Rome, where musicians seem to have shared the stage with actors, the use of homophony could hardly have been expected: audiences of the *fabula palliata* were conditioned to the sound of just a single *tibicen*.<sup>72</sup>

At this point, the praetor suddenly interrupts the performance and calls for something ‘more competitive’ (ἀγωνίζεσθαι μᾶλλον). Might the spectators have anticipated here a return to normal protocol, to something more like an *agon*? Whatever the expectation, it did not matter, for another dramatic twist lay in store. The *auletai*, following the direction of the lictor, took the lead in rearranging the chorus (συνεπιστρέψαντες δὲ τοὺς μέσους χοροὺς). The sense of order that had been preserved in the opening act disintegrated into a discordant heterophony, as each piper began to play ἀδιανόητα καὶ διαφέροντες. And rather than letting the *agon* reach its anticipated conclusion with the crowning of a victor, Anicius proceeded to introduce yet another troupe of performers. The fact that they were trumpeters must have added to the topsyturvy feel of the spectacle: in the triumph, as we saw earlier, the *cornicines* and *tubicines* normally appeared at the start of the procession, and in Greek festivals the contests in trumpet-playing were normally first in the running order.<sup>73</sup> We might

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. Vitr. 5.7.2: <apud> eos [i.e. the Greeks] *tragici et comici actores in scaena peragunt, reliqui autem artifices suas per orchestram praestant actiones*; contrary to Feeney 2016, 147-148.

<sup>72</sup> See Moore 2012, 26-28. Goldberg (1995, 37-38) has suggested that ‘the loud music...conformed to Roman tastes and expectations’. This statement is based on an uncritical of West (1992, 381), who infers from sources much later in date that the Romans possessed a ‘taste for massive sonorities’. Even if such a predilection existed in this period, it was only one factor in determining the response to the spectacle.

<sup>73</sup> See Wörrle 1988, 229-31. Trimalchio introduces trumpet-players as the final unwelcome act of his dinner-party (*novum acroama*, Pet. Sat. 78.5).

estimate that by this point there were several dozen individuals on stage (the size of the chorus is not indicated).

The format of Roman *ludi* necessitated a clear demarcation between different categories of entertainment: musical or dramatic performances (*ludi scaenici*) were kept separate from athletic or gladiatorial performances (*ludi circenses*). When Terence held the premiere of his play *Hecyra* at the *Ludi Megalenses* of 165, the performance was disrupted after a rumour spread that the boxing matches scheduled for later in the day were about to take place.<sup>74</sup> Anicius therefore did something unprecedented. He employed the same variety of performers that had proven popular at previous festivals and packaged them together in an all-singing, all-dancing spectacular. This was a whole day's entertainment rolled into one. But Anicius did not stop there. Having distorted the temporal divisions between the acts, he then conflated the roles of the individual performers: musicians played the part of comic actors; dancers played the part of boxers; and boxers played the part of chorus-dancers. The narrative breaks off before we have time to learn what happened next. But to judge from the final word (*διαχλευάζειν*), the role of the tragic actors was anything but tragic.<sup>75</sup>

Anicius put Greek culture 'on show' for Roman amusement. He demonstrated not only that he commanded the services of Greece's finest artists, but that he had assimilated the traditions of its theatre as well. By subverting these very traditions before the watchful eyes of the Roman public, he exerted his control over them.

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<sup>74</sup> Ter. *Hecyr.* 33-41.

<sup>75</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 2.34.3-4) uses the word *ἐπιτραγοδομένη* (s.v. *LSJ* 'to make a tragic show of') to lament the fact that the triumph in his day had become an 'ostentatious display of wealth' (*ἀλαζών εἰς πλούτου...ἐπίδειξιν*) and had 'departed in every respect from its ancient simplicity' (*καθ' ἅπασαν ἰδέαν ἐκβέβηκε τὴν ἀρχαίαν εὐτέλειαν*). The verb *διαχλευάζειν* appears elsewhere in Polybius at 38.8.13 (the tyrannical behaviour of the Carthaginian general Hasdrubal: *τοὺς μὲν διαχλευάζων, οἷς δ' ἐνυβρίζων καὶ φονεύων*) and at 18.4.4 (Philip's mockery of Phaeneas: *εὖ πεφυκῶς πρὸς τὸ διαχλευάζειν ἀνθρώπους*). For *διαχλευάζειν* meaning 'talk insultingly to', cf. Demos. *Contra Poly.* 49 and Pl. *Ax.* 346b.

However, it would be wrong to imagine that Anicius was simply giving the people a replay of a Plautine *fabula*. This was no ordinary comedy. Breaking the rules at almost every turn, it challenged the very idea of what constituted entertainment in a Roman setting. Anicius presented the semblance of normality only to confound his audience's expectations in spectacular fashion. Such incongruity was a crucial aspect of the show's appeal.<sup>76</sup> Romans laughed at Greeks, but they also laughed at themselves. What made this form of self-mockery acceptable, if not desirable, was the fact that it was framed within the context of a triumphal celebration. At the triumph, the general ritually exposed himself to public ridicule through the medium of song, and in doing so he united his fellow citizens in an expression of national pride. Comedy and music worked together as a powerful binding agent.

### **3 Music, Mimicry, and Morality**

Polybius evidently did not approve of what he saw. Modern commentators have drawn attention to the fact that the comedy was scripted specifically to appeal to the 'chauvinistic' and 'xenophobic' tendencies of a Roman audience.<sup>77</sup> As such, it was bound to offend a cultured Greek observer like Polybius, who was unfamiliar with the Roman theatre and was in any case naturally ill-disposed towards the Romans, having been taken captive by Paullus' legions the previous year and uprooted from his home town of Megalopolis. Rather than seeing the production for the elaborate prank that it really was, Polybius (so it is said) viewed the abuse of the respected Greek artists as an affront to his patriotic values. To quote Goldberg: 'Polybius, as a new and involuntary resident of Rome, was no dispassionate observer, and his own inexperience with Roman

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<sup>76</sup> On the 'incongruity theory' of laughter, see Beard 2014, 27-28, 55.

<sup>77</sup> These are the terms used by Franko 2013, 359.

ways fed a natural but perhaps hasty indignation...It was certainly not a Greek show, which is why it offended Polybius, who came to it with inappropriate expectations'.<sup>78</sup>

The idea that Polybius underwent a 'culture shock' is misleading. Evidence suggests that, far from being diametrically opposed, the theatrical cultures of Greece and Rome were engaged in a lively dialogue in this period. A year or two before Anicius' games, the city of Delphi had put on a festival of auletes, citharodes, comedians and dancers. None of them actually 'competed'; they 'performed' for a fee, just as in Rome.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, an inscription from Delos, dating from around the same time as the Delphic decree (169 BC), records a festival which featured tragic and comic actors, aulodes, citharists and citharodes, dancers, a 'wonder-worker' (θαυμαποποιός), and, most intriguingly, a ῥωμαῖστής.<sup>80</sup> This obscure term has generally been taken to mean 'an actor of Latin comedies or mimes', although Rolando Ferri has attempted somewhat implausibly to derive it from ῥώμη (ῥωμαῖστής thus being 'one who performs feats of strength for entertainment').<sup>81</sup>

The presence of a ῥωμαῖστής on Hellenistic Delos raises the fascinating possibility that Greek audiences in Polybius' day had exposure to a theatrical culture that was identifiably 'Roman'. Recent scholarship has highlighted how the institution of civic festivals provided a central mechanism of cultural and political exchange between local Greek communities and the imperial authorities. In Book 2, Polybius comments on the Corinthians' decision to allow Roman visitors to participate in the Isthmian Games

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<sup>78</sup> Goldberg 1995, 38-39. For Polybius as victim of a 'culture clash', see also Franko 2013, 345: 'Polybius was a hostile witness who likely came to the show with unsuitable expectations that significantly distorted his assessment.'

<sup>79</sup> *SEG* 50, 725. Text, translation, and commentary in Prêtre 2000. Further discussion in Slater 2004, 150-151, and 2007, 43, noting the exorbitant salary of 15,000 drachmas received by the *choraulae*.

<sup>80</sup> *IG* XI.2 133.

<sup>81</sup> Robert 1983, n. 475, 183-184; *contra* Ferri 2008.

of 228 BC.<sup>82</sup> Much has been written about the introduction of ‘Roman games’ (*Romaia*) in places such as Chios, Delphi, Xanthos, and Thebes.<sup>83</sup> The inscription pertaining to the games at Xanthos, set up by the Lycian *koinon* in 188 BC, states that the crowns for each contest were ‘dedicated at the altar of [the goddess] Rome’ (ll. 10-12, 33-34, 36-38, 46-48). We are also given the name of a Roman victor in the chariot-races, Gaius Octavius Pollio, who declares himself a citizen of Telmessos (ll. 40-42). Explaining the significance of these sources is no straightforward matter. For our purposes, it is enough simply to reiterate Otto van Nijf’s point that the *Romaia* ‘complicated any easy distinction between what was Greek and what was Roman’.<sup>84</sup>

Displays of mimetic acting, often by musicians, had been a characteristic feature of theatrical entertainment in the Greek world since the Classical period. Eric Csapo has pinpointed a ‘general trend towards dramatic mimesis in choral and musical performance’ which coincided with the so-called ‘New Music’ movement of the late fifth century.<sup>85</sup> Aristotle complains of ‘vulgar’ pipe-players who wheel about in imitation of a discus, while Theophrastus credits the innovation of musical ‘role-playing’ to the auletes Andron of Catane and Kleolas of Thebes.<sup>86</sup>

In private contexts, musicians regularly accompanied comics or mimes. In around 245 BC, a government official from the Egyptian town of Hibeh wrote to a colleague requesting entertainers and food for an upcoming party: ‘make every effort to send me the aulete Petous with both the Phrygian and other pipes...Send us also Zenobius the effeminate dancer with the drum and cymbals and castanets, for the

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<sup>82</sup> Polyb. 2.12.8: Κορίνθιοι πρῶτον ἀπεδέξαντο μετέχειν Ῥωμαίους τοῦ τῶν Ἴσθμίων ἀγῶνος; further observations in Gibson 2012.

<sup>83</sup> Chios: *SEG* 30, 1073; Salvo 2013. Delphi: *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 611.6. Xanthos: Robert 1978. Thebes: Knoepfler 2004. Further references in Salvo, 2013, 136 n. 44.

<sup>84</sup> Van Nijf 2001, 320.

<sup>85</sup> Csapo 2004, 212-16. On the New Music, see also D’Angour 2011 and Leven 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Aristot. *Poet.* 1461b30; Theophr. fr. 92 Wimmer.

women want him for the festival; and let him be dressed as well as possible.<sup>87</sup> A relief from Mysia dedicated probably in the second century BC depicts a banquet scene with a pipe-player accompanying male and female mime-dancers (FIGURE 3).<sup>88</sup> Some musicians even doubled as successful comedians. The aulete Dorion, who frequented the court of Philip of Macedon, was the author of several jokes which were still well-known in Athenaeus' day.<sup>89</sup>

It is quite possible, then, that the showcasing of musicians in histrionic and comedic roles chimed with Polybius' experiences of Greek entertainment. His hostility to the praetor's spectacle cannot be explained in terms of a straightforward 'Greek versus Roman' dichotomy. Aside from the fact that Polybius was writing for an audience composed of Greeks as well as Romans, he lived at a time when the very concepts of 'Greek-ness' and 'Roman-ness' were converging through the cultural politics of the theatre.<sup>90</sup>

It is instructive here, I think, to look more closely at the treatment of the episode in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. The account of Anicius' games, as retold by the interlocutor Ulpian, forms the centrepiece of a section of Book 14 on jokes and comedy. Following the conclusion of the narrative, the banqueters all burst out laughing, and Athenaeus inserts a rather obvious pun on Anicius' name (*anikios* meaning 'unbeatable' in Greek): πάντων ἀνακαγχασάντων ἐπὶ ταῖς Ἀνικίκοις ταύταις θέαις.<sup>91</sup> Laughter also figures as a motif in the build-up to the passage. Anicius is introduced as the last in a

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<sup>87</sup> *P.Hib.* I.54: ἀπό[σ]τειλον ἡμῖν ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου τὸν αὐλητὴν Πετωῦν ἔχοντα τούς τε Φρυγίους αὐλοῦν καὶ τοὺς λοιπούς...ἀπόστειλον δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ Ζηνόβιον τὸν μαλακὸν ἔχοντα τύμπανον καὶ κύμβαλα καὶ κρόταλα, χρεια γὰρ ἐστὶ ταῖς γυναιξίν πρὸς τὴν θυσίαν· ἐχέτω δὲ καὶ ἱματισμὸν ὡς ἀστειότατον.

<sup>88</sup> The find is presented and discussed by Perdrizet 1899.

<sup>89</sup> Athen. 8.337d-338b; cf. 8.351e-352b.

<sup>90</sup> On Polybius' readership, see Henderson 2001, 30, and Champion 2004, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Athen. 14.615e.

rollcall of notorious *gelotopoi* ('jokesters' or 'comedians'), including Philip of Macedon, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Sulla.<sup>92</sup>

Closer inspection of these surprising exempla points up some interesting trends. Well-known figures from the annals of history, they gained a reputation as 'laughter-makers' not simply because they liked to tell jokes, but because they shared an intimate association with comedic entertainers and musicians whose professional activities attracted criticism from elite moralists. Philip of Macedon was rebuked by Demosthenes for keeping company with 'comic mime-actors and composers of vulgar songs' (μίμους γελοίων καὶ ποιητὰς αἰσχρῶν ἄσμάτων).<sup>93</sup> Dorion, the musician-comedian whom we met earlier, was a member of Philip's entourage.<sup>94</sup> Athenaeus' characterisation of Demetrius Poliorcetes as φιλόγελος is based on a joke about his scandalous liaison with the *auletris* Lamia.<sup>95</sup> Sulla's penchant for comedy is variously attested. Athenaeus cites a passage from the historian Nicolaus of Damascus which describes how 'the Roman general Sulla took such delight in mime-actors and clowns (μίμοις καὶ γελωτοποιῶσι), being fond of laughter (φιλόγελων), that he lavished many acres of public land upon them'; he is even said to have composed his own *satyricae comoediae*.<sup>96</sup> Plutarch, similarly, notes that Sulla was particularly fond of *mimoi* and *gelotopoi* and 'shared their dissolute lifestyle' (συνακολασταίνειν); indeed, after becoming dictator, he would dine alongside 'the most reckless stage and theatre-types' (τῶν ἀπὸ σκηνῆς καὶ θεάτρου

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<sup>92</sup> The section on *gelotopoi* begins at Athen. 14.614c, and forms part of a wider discussion of comedy which – interestingly enough – is framed by two references to *akrōamata*, 'musical performances', enjoyed by the *deipnosophistae* in between conversation (14.613d, 14.616e). On the relation between music and comedy in Book 14, see Ceccarelli 2000.

<sup>93</sup> Demosth. *Or.* 2.19; cf. Athen. 6.260a-b; 10.435b-c (Philip's association with musicians); 14.614d (Philip as joke-collector). The famous *gelotopoi* of Xenophon's *Symposium* has the same name: see below.

<sup>94</sup> Theopompos *FGrH* 115 fr. 236 = Athen. 435b-c.

<sup>95</sup> Athen. 14.614e-f, also involving the 'comic stage' (κωμικῆς σκηνῆς); cf. Plut. *Dem.* 16.3-4, 27.3-6.

<sup>96</sup> Athen. 6.261c = Nicolaus *FGrH* 90 fr. 75.

τοὺς ἰταμωτάτους) and grant largesse to ‘mime-singers and dancers’ (μιμωδοῖς καὶ ὀρχησταῖς).<sup>97</sup>

These anecdotes, strongly moralistic in tone, have several features in common. Their subjects are all men of supreme political authority (a king, a tyrant, and a dictator) – men whose jocular personalities belie their public reputation as rulers not to be trifled with. We might reasonably wonder why Anicius should be included among such lofty company. Powerful he may have been, but he was certainly no autocrat; he was not even a consul at this point. His ‘laughter-making’ is unashamedly democratic in intent. No ancient author bears witness to his personal character.

Examining the representations of non-historical *gelotopoiōi* can provide some clarification here.<sup>98</sup> First, there is the *gelotopoiōs* Philippos who features as a character in Xenophon’s *Symposium*. The description of Philippos’ performance in Book 2 is particularly illuminating. He begins by calling for some pipe music: Ἄγε δὴ, ἔφη ὁ Φίλιππος, καὶ ἐμοὶ ἀύλησάτω, ἵνα καὶ ἐγὼ ὀρχήσωμαι (*Symp.* 2.21). He then gets up and mimics some dancers, turning their every movement into a grotesque parody: ἀνταπέδειξεν ὅ τι κινοίη τοῦ σώματος ἅπαν τῆς φύσεως γελοϊότερον (*Symp.* 2.22).<sup>99</sup> We can compare the similar description of a *gelotopoiōs* in Lucian’s *Symposium*:

οὗτος ὠρχήσατό τε κατακλῶν ἑαυτὸν καὶ διαστρέφων, ὡς γελοϊότερος φανείη, καὶ ἀνάπαιστα συγκροτῶν διεξῆλθεν αἰγυπτιάζων τῇ φωνῇ, καὶ τέλος ἐπέσκωπτεν ἐς τοὺς παρόντας, οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι ἐγέλων ὅποτε σκωφθεῖεν... (Luc. *Symp.* 18)

He performed a dance, doubling himself up and twisting himself around so as to appear more ridiculous, and recited some anapaestic verses while beating time with *crotala* and speaking

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<sup>97</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 2.2-3; cf. *Sull.* 33.2 (largesse to musicians), 36.1 (consorting with harpists and stage-performers); Val. Max. 6.9.6 (love of the *ars ludicra*); Macr. *Sat.* 3.14.10 (Sulla’s excellent singing voice). On Sulla’s connection with spectacle, see Garton 1964 and Sumi 2002.

<sup>98</sup> The term *gelotopoiōs* first appears in the fourth century BC: cf. Xen. *Symp.* 1.11, *An.* 7.3, 7.33; Pl. *R.* 620c. For some interesting remarks on the development of the profession, see Milanezi 2000, 401-403, and Milanezi 2004, 193-195.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Xen. *Symp.* 6.8-9, 7.1. For later references to Philippos as the archetypal *gelotopoiōs*, cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66.27, Plut. *Quaes. Conv.* 710c.

in an Egyptian voice; and finally he made fun of the guests. The others laughed when they were made fun of...

The two spectacles described here feature a familiar combination of music, dance, and mime. Both aim to elicit laughter through the inversion of serious ‘artistic’ modes. The relationship between Lucian’s jester and his fellow symposiasts is strongly reminiscent of that between Anicius and his audience (Polybius, we may recall, anticipates his readers’ aversion to being ‘mocked’, διαχλευάζειν). The performances of *gelotopoi* were apparently renowned for their variety and unpredictability. Silvia Milanezi has described them as ‘one-man shows’.<sup>100</sup> From his reading of Aristoxenus, Athenaeus knew of a *gelotopios* named Eudikos who ‘won his reputation by mimicking wrestlers and boxers’.<sup>101</sup> Clearly, Anicius’ show was not the first time that pugilists had been turned into an object of ridicule.

In fact, the literary trope of the *gelotopios* may shed some light on the meaning behind Anicius’ personal involvement in the spectacle. At the end of his 32<sup>nd</sup> Oration, Dio Chrysostom regales the Alexandrians with a sermon on the ethics of laughter.<sup>102</sup> He cautions against the snide comedy of the *gelotopios* Thersites in Homer’s *Iliad*,<sup>103</sup> and concludes with the story of an Egyptian *mousikos* whose sardonic sense of humour landed him in trouble with the tyrant of Syria:

ἐκεῖνῳ γὰρ τὸ δαιμόνιον ποτε προειπεῖν καθ’ ὕπνον ὡς εἰς ὄνου ὄτα ἄσεται. καὶ δὴ τὸν μὲν ἄλλον χρόνον οὐ προσεῖχεν οὐδὲ ἐφρόντιζε τοῦ ὄνειρατος, ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος. ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ τύραννος τῶν Σύρων ἦκεν εἰς Μέμφιν, ἐκπληττομένων αὐτὸν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἐκάλεσεν. ἐπεδείκνυτο οὖν πάσῃ προθυμίᾳ καὶ τὰ κριβέστερα τῆς τέχνης· ὁ δὲ, οὐ γὰρ ἦν οἱ σύνεσις μουσικῆς, ἐκέλευε παύσασθαι αὐτὸν ἀτιμάσας. ὁ δὲ ἀναμνησθεὶς ἐκείνου τοῦ ὄνειρατος, τοῦτ’ ἦν ἄρα, ἔφη, τὸ εἰς ὄνου ὄτα ἄδειν. ὁ δὲ τύραννος ἀκούσας τῶν ἐρμηνέων οἷα ἔλεγεν ἔδει καὶ ἐμαστίγου τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ τοῦτο πολέμου λέγουσιν αἴτιον γενέσθαι. (Dio Or. 32.101)

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<sup>100</sup> Milanezi 2000, 402.

<sup>101</sup> Athen. 1.19f: Εὐδικὸς δὲ ὁ γελοτοποιὸς ἠδδοκίμει μιμούμενος παλαιστὰς καὶ πύκτας, ὡς φησὶν Ἀριστόξενος.

<sup>102</sup> Dio Chrys. Or. 32.99-101.

<sup>103</sup> The characterisation of Thersites as *gelotopios* is also found in Plato (*R.* 10.590b).

For the story goes that the deity once told that musician in a dream that he was destined to sing into an ass's ears. And for a while he paid no heed and gave no thought to the dream, as being a matter of no consequence. But when the tyrant of Syria came to Memphis, since the Egyptians admired the artist greatly, he summoned him. So the musician gave a performance with all zest and displayed the more intricate phases of his art; but the tyrant—for he had no appreciation of music—bade him cease and treated him with disdain. And the musician, recalling that forgotten dream, exclaimed, “So that was the meaning of the saying, ‘to sing into an ass's ears’”. And the tyrant, having heard from his interpreters what the musician had said, bound and flogged the man, and this incident, they say, was the occasion of a war. (Loeb trans.)

The parallels with the Polybian episode hardly need spelling out: a respected musician summoned by a boorish foreign warlord, cut short in the middle of his performance, and royally stitched up. At first glance, the story may seem apocryphal, but in fact there is a strong case for identifying the Syrian tyrant as the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who invaded Egypt and held a coronation ceremony at Memphis.<sup>104</sup> In that case, the incident Dio describes (or some version thereof) may have taken place in the early 160s BC – that is, at exactly the time that Anicius was celebrating his games in Rome.

We have further reason to suspect that the shadow of Antiochus might be lurking behind Dio's story. In the summer of 166, the suburb of Daphne in Syrian Antioch played host to a succession of extravagant royal banquets, organised by none other than the Seleucid king himself. Revellers were treated to an action-packed programme of musical and comedic entertainment. Antiochus was the life and soul of the party, and we know this precisely because Polybius tells us so – in the very same book in which he comments on the games organised by the Roman praetor in the previous year. Again, in the absence of the original text, we must rely on Athenaeus' citation:

Ὁ δὲ χειρισμὸς ἐγένετο τῶν πραγμάτων δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως...καὶ περιπορευόμενος οὗ μὲν προσεκάθιζεν, οὗ δὲ προσανέπιπτε· καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἀποθέμενος μεταξὺ τὸν ψωμόν, ποτὲ δὲ

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<sup>104</sup> The point was made by Lewis 1949.

τὸ ποτήριον ἀνεπήδα καὶ μετανίστατο καὶ περιήει τὸν πότον, προπόσεις λαμβάνων ὀρθὸς ἄλλοτε παρ' ἄλλοις, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀκροάμασι προσπαίζων. προϊούσης δ' ἐπὶ πολὺ τῆς συνουσίας καὶ πολλῶν ἤδη κεχωρισμένων, ὑπὸ τῶν μίμων ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰσεφέρετο ὅλος κεκαλυμμένος καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐτίθετο ὡς εἷς ὢν δῆτα τῶν μίμων. καὶ τῆς συμφωνίας προκαλουμένης, ἀναπηδήσας ὠρχεῖτο καὶ ὑπεκρίνετο μετὰ τῶν γελωτοποιῶν, ὥστε πάντα αἰσχυνομένους φεύγειν. (Polyb. 30.26.4-9 = Athen. 5.195d-f)

The king handled all the details personally...He walked around and sat next to someone here, or lay down beside someone else there; and sometimes he set down a bit of food when he was in the middle of eating it, or a glass of wine, and leapt up, went off somewhere else, and circulated through the party, receiving toasts standing next to various people, while simultaneously laughing at the entertainment. When the party had gone on for a long time and many people had already left, the king was carried in by the mime-actors with his face entirely concealed, and was set on the ground as if he were actually one of them. When the band summoned him, he leapt up and began to dance and to act along with the *gelotopoi*; everyone was so embarrassed that they tried to flee. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

The banquets capped off a month of public games, gladiatorial shows, and beast fights.<sup>105</sup> According to Polybius, the whole festival had been planned as a response to Aemilius Paullus' games at Amphipolis.<sup>106</sup> The king's adoption of Roman customs is a recurrent theme in Polybius' narrative. The grand procession which opened the games was headed by a 5,000-strong contingent of young men dressed in Roman armour. Elsewhere, in Book 26 (again cited by Athenaeus), Polybius comments disdainfully on how the king 'would frequently take off his royal robes, put on a toga and walk around the marketplace campaigning for office'; and 'after he won the office, he would take his seat in the ivory chair, as is the Roman custom', and pass judgement on legal cases.<sup>107</sup> This behaviour is mentioned in connection with Antiochus' habit of appearing unannounced at drinking-parties 'with a drinking-horn and an orchestra by his side' (μετὰ κερατίου καὶ συμφωνίας).<sup>108</sup> Evidently, the king's inordinate love of wine and music was a symptom of the same mania that drove him to act like a Roman senator.

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<sup>105</sup> Polyb. 30.26.1 = Athen. 5.195c.

<sup>106</sup> Polyb. 30.25.1 = Athen. 5.194c.

<sup>107</sup> Polyb. 26.1.5-6 = Athen. 5.193e-f. Note also the servile behaviour of King Prusias before an audience of Romans at Polyb. 30.18.5.

<sup>108</sup> Polyb. 26.1.4 = Athen. 5.193e. Diodorus (29.32.1) gives a similar version. As Bélis notes (1988, 248), this is the earliest use of *symphonia* to mean a 'band of musicians' as opposed to 'musical harmony' in an abstract sense; I find no support for the interpretation of *symphonia* here as a musical instrument.

Antiochus tried to emulate Paullus' example and failed spectacularly. The contrasting reception of the two figures says it all. Paullus was 'delighted to find that, though the preparations for his entertainment were ever so many and splendid, he himself was the most pleasant sight to his guests and gave them most enjoyment'.<sup>109</sup> In falling short of this example, Antiochus found himself lumped with a lesser Roman counterpart. If Walbank's reconstruction of Polybius is correct, the account of the games at Daphne was situated only three chapters before the account of Anicius' games.<sup>110</sup> It is certainly tempting to read the two together. Both spectacles feature a large cast of performers and deploy the same distinctive combination of music and mimesis. And in both spectacles the organisers play a highly prominent role, cavorting with the performers while poking fun at members of the audience. This is 'laughter-making' in its crudest form.<sup>111</sup> Antiochus is the star of his own farce: he 'jokes with the musicians', 'acts alongside the *gelotopoiōi*', and even plays the part of a mime-actor. Like Anicius, he saves the big musical finale till the last minute (τῆς συμφωνίας προκαλουμένης), and it is at this point that the burlesque reaches its 'show-stopping' climax: the horrified onlookers all head for the exit and the soiree comes to an abrupt end. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Polybius interrupts the narrative of Anicius' games at the very moment when the *symphonia* enters.<sup>112</sup>

One might object, of course, that the assimilation of Anicius with the *gelotopoiōs* is an illusion created by Athenaeus and does not necessarily reflect the

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<sup>109</sup> Plut. *Aem.* 28.9; cf. the positive example of the Spartan king Cleomenes (Athen. 4.142f): ἀκρόαμα δὲ οὐδὲν οὐδέποτε παρεισεπορεύετο, διετέλει δ' αὐτὸς προσομιλῶν πρὸς ἕκαστον καὶ πάντας ἐκκαλούμενος εἰς τὸ τὰ μὲν ἀκούειν, τὰ δὲ λέγειν αὐτοῦς, ὥστε τεθηρευμένους ἀποτρέχειν ἅπαντας.

<sup>110</sup> Walbank 1979, 33.

<sup>111</sup> Diod. Sic. 31.16.3, retelling the same episode, provides additional detail on the kind of dances that Antiochus performed: ὠρχεῖτο τῶν ὀρχήσεων τὰς γέλωτα καὶ γλευασμὸν εἰωθίας ἐπισπᾶσθαι. The adjective γλευασμὸν is cognate with γλευάζειν (see p. 36, n. 75).

<sup>112</sup> For this kind of aposiopesis, caused by banqueters fleeing a feast, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 70, Hor. *Sat.* 2.8, Pet. *Sat.* 78.8, Luc. *Merc. Cond.* 18. Gowers (1993, 197) compares noisy scenes at the end of mimes (Cic. *Cacl.* 65: *scabilla concrepant*).

original function of the episode in Polybius' *Histories*. The initial description of the performance as παντὸς γέλωτος ἄξια may have been added by Athenaeus as a way of creating a seamless transition from the preceding section (on different types of γέλως). The ambiguity of this phrase is underlined by Franko: was the show 'designed to provoke a great deal of laughter' or 'worthy of total ridicule'? That is, are we laughing *with* Anicius or *at* him?<sup>113</sup>

Athenaeus' interest in music was kaleidoscopic. However, the moral exemplarity of musical performance is a theme which links many of the excerpts that appear in his work. We might compare, for instance, the Polybian fragments with those of Posidonius, another Greek historian with Roman connections. Composing his *History* half a century after Polybius, Posidonius gives an account of the debauched banquets celebrated by the people of Syria around the year 130 BC. The Syrians are condemned as a nation of music-lovers, 'continually entertained by pipe-playing accompanied by the sound of the loud-twanging lyre, so that whole cities resounded with such noises'.<sup>114</sup> Athenaeus connects this passage with two other Posidonian anecdotes which illustrate the sympotic mania of the Seleucid kings. We do not know exactly how Posidonius himself presented this material in his *History*. But what is striking is that he elsewhere attacks his own countrymen, the Apameans, for indulging in very similar practices. The Apameans are accused of taking with them on campaign 'donkeys loaded with wine and food of all kinds, beside which lay φωτίγγια (flutes) and μονάυλια (single pipes), instruments of revelry rather than of war'.<sup>115</sup> Although Athenaeus' interest here is

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<sup>113</sup> Franko 2013, 345.

<sup>114</sup> *FGrH* 87 F 10 = F62 Edelstein-Kidd (Athen. 5.210e-f): καταλούμενοι πρὸς χελωνίδος πολυκρότου ψύφους, ὥστε τὰς πόλεις ὅλας τοῖς τοιούτοις κελάδοις συνηγεῖσθαι.

<sup>115</sup> *FGrH* 87 F 2 = F54 Edelstein-Kidd (Athen. 4.176b-c): Ποσειδώνιος δ' ὁ ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς φιλόσοφος ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν διηγούμενος περὶ τοῦ Ἀπαμέων πρὸς Λαρισαίους πολέμου γράφει τάδε... ὄνους ἐφελκόμενοι γέμοντας οἴνου καὶ βρωμάτων παντοδαπῶν, οἷς παρέκειτο φωτίγγια καὶ μονάυλια, κώμων οὐ πολέμων ὄργανα.

organological (namely, listing different categories of wind instrument), Posidonius clearly intended to make a statement about the Apameans' moral laxity, in contrast to the discipline of their opponents, the Larisseans.<sup>116</sup>

In my opinion, Athenaeus was exploiting a connection between music and morality that was already present in Polybius. The narratives of Antiochus' banquet and Anicius' games in Book 30 are not isolated episodes; they serve a complementary function within the overarching framework of Polybius' *Histories*. To understand this function we need to turn to a passage in Book 31. Here, Polybius explicitly singles out the adoption of 'musical entertainments and banquets, and the extravagance they involve' (ἀκροάματα καὶ πότους καὶ τὴν ἐν τούτοις πολυτέλειαν) as key factors in precipitating the moral degeneration of the Roman aristocracy in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War. These were imported eastern luxuries, symbols of what the historian terms 'the licentiousness of the Greeks' (τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων...εὐχέρειαν).<sup>117</sup> Seen in this light, the emphasis on the ἀσελγεία of the Greek performers at Anicius' games seems especially pronounced (and I think we can see this as genuine 'Polybian' emphasis; the corruption of the text, though minor, may obscure further details). Can we really believe, following Denis Feeney, that the pipe-players 'have not the remotest idea what is going on'?<sup>118</sup> Although the musicians appear to be acting at the praetor's behest, it is *they* who are ultimately blamed for creating the pandemonium (μεγάλην ἐποίησαν σύγχυσιν).<sup>119</sup> Far from expressing reluctance or dismay, the musicians readily acquiesce

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. Diod. 33.4a on Larissean discipline.

<sup>117</sup> Polyb. 31.25.4: οἱ μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἐρωμένους τῶν νέων, οἱ δ' εἰς ἑταίρας ἐξεκέχυντο, πολλοὶ δ' εἰς ἀκροάματα καὶ πότους καὶ τὴν ἐν τούτοις πολυτέλειαν, ταχέως ἠρπακότες ἐν τῷ Περσικῷ πολέμῳ τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τοῦτο τὸ μέρος εὐχέρειαν.

<sup>118</sup> Feeney 2016, 149.

<sup>119</sup> The vanity of pipe-players was proverbial: see, e.g., stories about the Theban aulete Ismenias: Plin. *HN* 37.6-8; Plut. *Per.* 1.5.

in the charade, taking a knowing role in the choreography and prompting the rowdy outburst of the spectators. They could hardly have been caught unawares.

Anicius presided over a divisive form of musical comedy, which had a recognised corollary in the entertainment of the Hellenistic symposium, particularly as manifested in the Seleucid kingdom of Syria and Asia Minor.<sup>120</sup> What Polybius took exception to was not the ‘Roman’ aesthetic *per se*, but rather the Roman appropriation of Greek modes of entertainment (ἀκροάματα) that were deemed already to be morally corrupting in their domestic setting. Anicius brought eastern *luxuria* to the heart of Rome, transplanting it from the private sphere into the public sphere. He let ‘Greek licentiousness’ run rampant and encouraged his audience to join in the merriment. And in doing so, he made a mockery not only of himself but of the very institution of public spectacle, just as Greek rulers and peoples had done before him and would continue to do long after.<sup>121</sup>

#### **4      *Theatrokratia and the Arcadian Paradigm***

Polybius’ moralising has its origins in a longstanding philosophical tradition. The idea that musical modes (*nomoi*) had the power to alter the mental constitution of the listener in both positive and negative ways was first propounded by the Athenian philosopher Damon in the fifth century BC and subsequently developed by his intellectual successors, most notably Plato and Aristotle.<sup>122</sup> In the *Laws* and the *Republic*, Plato considers the wider implications of musical *ethos* on the politics of the state.<sup>123</sup> He argues that, for a democratic society to function effectively, it needs to promote a

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<sup>120</sup> On the associations between Syrian culture, mime, and music in the imperial period, see Morgan 2017, 93-98.

<sup>121</sup> Ptolemy XII ‘Auletes’ being a notorious example (see Chapter III.4).

<sup>122</sup> On Damon’s influence, see Wallace 2004.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Plat. *Rep.* 424c, Arist. *Pol.* 1340b-1341b, Ps.-Plut. *De Mus.* 1135c-d.

certain kind of *mousike*, which instils decent civilised values in those who perform and listen to it. Plato believed, like Aristotle, that this ideal *mousike* was born out of the Athenian constitution in its earliest phase of existence. Accordingly, the debasement of musical culture over time had dire consequences for the *polis* as a whole. I cite here a well-known passage from the *Laws*:

τὸ δὲ κῦρος τούτων γνῶναι τε καὶ ἅμα γνόντα δικάσαι ζημιῶν τε αὖ τὸν μὴ πειθόμενον οὐ σύριγξ ἦν οὐδέ τινες ἄμουσοι βοαὶ πλήθους, καθάπερ τὰ νῦν, οὐδ' αὖ κρότοι ἐπαίνους ἀποδιδόντες, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν γεγονόσι περὶ παιδείῃσιν δεδογμένον ἀκούειν ἦν αὐτοῖς μετὰ σιγῆς διὰ τέλους, παισὶ δὲ καὶ παιδαγωγοῖς καὶ τῷ πλείστῳ ὄγλῳ ῥάβδου κοσμούσης ἢ νουθέτησις ἐγίγνετο...μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα προϊόντος τοῦ χρόνου ἄρχοντες μὲν τῆς ἀμούσου παρανομίας ποιηταὶ ἐγίγνοντο φύσει μὲν ποιητικοί, ἀγνώμονες δὲ περὶ τὸ δίκαιον τῆς Μούσης καὶ τὸ νόμιμον, βακχεύοντες καὶ μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος κατεχόμενοι ὑφ' ἡδονῆς, κεραυνύντες δὲ θρήνους τε ὕμνοις καὶ παιῶνας διθυράμβοις, καὶ αὐλωδίας δὴ ταῖς κιθαρωδίας μιμούμενοι καὶ πάντα εἰς πάντα ξυνάγοντες, μουσικῆς ἄκοντες ὑπ' ἀνοίας καταψευδόμενοι...τοιαῦτα δὴ ποιῶντες ποιήματα λόγους τε ἐπιλέγοντες τοιούτους τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐνέθεσαν παρανομίαν εἰς τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τόλμαν, ὡς ἱκανοῖς οὖσι κρίνειν. ὅθεν δὴ τὰ θεάτρα ἐξ ἀφώνων φωνήεντα ἐγένοντο, ὡς ἐπαῖοντα ἐν Μούσαις τό τε καλὸν καὶ μὴ, καὶ ἀντὶ ἀριστοκρατίας ἐν αὐτῇ θεατροκρατία τις πονηρὰ γέγονεν. (Plato, *Laws* 700c-701a)

The authority responsible for knowing [the different *nomoi*], for judging them, once known, and for penalising anyone who disobeyed, was not the whistling or the uneducated shouts of the mob, as it is now, or clappings that signal applause: instead, it was the rule for those in charge of education themselves to listen in silence to the end, while for the children and their attendants, and for the mass of the people generally, there was the discipline of the stick to keep order...But later, as time went on, there appeared as instigators of unmusical law-breaking composers who, though by nature skilled at composition, were ignorant of what is right and lawful in music. In a Bacchic frenzy, and enthralled beyond what is right by pleasure, they mixed lamentations with hymns and paeans with dithyrambs, imitated *aulos* songs with their *kithara* songs, and put everything together with everything else, thus unintentionally, through their stupidity, giving false witness against music...By creating compositions of these kinds and by choosing corresponding words, they inspired the masses with lawlessness towards music, and the effrontery to suppose that they were capable of judging it. As a result the audiences, which had been silent, became noisy, as if they understood what is good in music and what is not, and a musical aristocracy was displaced by a degenerate theatrocracy. (Trans. adapted from Barker 1984)

Plato presents the subversion of musical norms not as the result of some random upheaval, but as a calculated political strategy devised by ποιηταί in the hope of currying favour with the masses (τὸ πλῆθος). *Theatrokratia*, ‘theatre-rule’, is what happens when the people in charge of music put their desire for popularity above the

integrity of the art.<sup>124</sup> What concerns Plato, above all, is the putative correlation between the proliferation of *mimesis* in music and the moral corruption of the *demos*.<sup>125</sup> Instead of promoting *mousike* in its original, unadulterated form, with each *nomos* assigned its own function and setting, the current crop of composers aims to ‘mix everything together’ (πάντα εἰς πάντα ξυνάγοντες), making ‘*aulos*-songs’ imitate ‘*kithara*-songs’ and conflating hymns and paeans with dithyrambs. As a consequence, music has lost its fundamental utility as pedagogical tool; it now serves merely as a stimulus to ‘excessive’ (μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος) hedonism. Moreover, the political character of the *polis* is said to mirror the ‘musical’ character of its citizens: an audience which had previously been ‘silent’ (and by implication obedient) becomes ‘voiced’ and hence unruly (ἐξ ἀφώνων φωνήεντα ἐγένοντο). The discordant music of the stage provokes an equally ‘unmusical’ reaction in those who hear it. Thus, the ἀμούσος παρανομία of the performers acts as a foil to the ἄμουσοι βοαί of the spectators.<sup>126</sup>

The influence of Platonic theory on Polybius’ conception of history is readily apparent.<sup>127</sup> Might the concept of *theatrokratia* have shaped his response to the Roman games? After all, Anicius is shown to flout musical convention by distorting generic boundaries and exploiting novel mimetic effects. He does so ostensibly out of a desire to entertain rather than to edify. In effect, his self-conscious intervention licenses the disruptive κρότος of the spectators (Polybius uses the same word as Plato).<sup>128</sup> The fact that Anicius is seen to offer a verdict on the *quality* of the music seems especially significant. To proclaim that the auletes were ‘playing badly’ (οὐκ...καλῶς αὐτοὺς

<sup>124</sup> For this theme exploited elsewhere, cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1341b; Aristox. *Elem. Harm.* 41.4-5; Plut. *Phoc.* 8.5; Luc. *Harmonid.* 1-3. *Theatrokratia* is a hapax legomenon.

<sup>125</sup> On this theme, see Pelosi 2010, 39-77, and Gülgönen 2014.

<sup>126</sup> On the relationship between performer and public in Plato, see Wallace 1997.

<sup>127</sup> Polybius explicitly acknowledges Plato’s ‘cycle of constitutions’ in his account of the development of the Roman state: cf. Polyb. 6.5.1-6.9.14; Walbank 2002, 201-203.

<sup>128</sup> For uses of κρότος and κροτεῖν to describe audience reactions, cf. Theoph. *Char.* 11.3; Luc. *Harm.* 1-3; Paus. 8.50.3.

ἀλλεῖν), when in reality they were ‘in harmony with the choral dance’ (μετὰ τῆς ἁρμοζούσης κινήσεως) and thus preserving proper musical decorum, is a sure sign of the praetor’s *amouisia*, his lack of cultural sensitivity.<sup>129</sup>

That is not to say that Polybius was opposed to all forms of musical entertainment. In fact, he gives elsewhere in the *Histories* a very clear indication of the kind of *mousike* he endorses. The account in 4.20-21 of the brutish Cynaethans, the first and only people in Arcadia to abandon the custom of musical education (μουσικὴν γάρ...πᾶσι μὲν ἀνθρώποις ὄφελος ἀσκεῖν, Ἀρκάσι δὲ καὶ ἀναγκαῖον), includes a long digression on the ancestral festival of the Arcadians. The text is worth quoting at length:

παρὰ γοῦν μόνοις Ἀρκάσιν οἱ παῖδες ἐκ νηπίων ἄδειν ἐθίζονται κατὰ νόμον τοὺς ὕμνους καὶ παιᾶνας, οἷς ἕκαστοι κατὰ τὰ πάτρια τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους ἥρωας καὶ θεοὺς ὕμνοῦσι. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοὺς Τιμοθέου καὶ Φιλοξένου νόμους μανθάνοντες χορεύουσι κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν τοῖς Διονυσιακοῖς ἀλχηταῖς ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, οἱ μὲν οὖν παῖδες τοὺς παιδικοὺς ἀγῶνας, οἱ δὲ νεανίσκοι τοὺς τῶν ἀνδρῶν. καὶ παρ’ ὅλον δὲ τὸν βίον ἐν ταῖς συνουσίαις ταῖς κοιναῖς οὐχ <οὔτω ποιοῦνται τὰς ἀγωγὰς> διὰ τῶν ἐπεισάκτων ἀκροαμάτων ὡς δι’ αὐτῶν, ἀνὰ μέρος ἄδειν ἀλλήλοις προστάττοντες...καὶ μὴν ἐμβατήρια μετ’ αὐλοῦ καὶ τάξεως ἀσκοῦντες, ἔτι δὲ ὀρχήσεις ἐκπονοῦντες μετὰ κοινῆς ἐπιστροφῆς καὶ δαπάνης κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις ἐπιδείκνυνται. ταῦτ’ οὖν αὐτοὺς εἴθισαν οἱ παλαιοὶ οὐ τρυφῆς καὶ περιουσίας χάριν, ἀλλὰ θεωροῦντες τὴν ἐκάστου κατὰ τὸν βίον σκληρότητα καὶ τὴν τῶν ἡθῶν αὐστηρίαν, ἣτις αὐτοῖς παρέπεται διὰ τὴν τοῦ περιέχοντος ψυχρότητα καὶ στυγνότητα τὴν κατὰ <τὸ> πλεῖστον ἐν τοῖς τόποις ὑπάρχουσαν. (Polyb. 4.20.5-21.9 = Athen. 14.626b-d)

It is a fact that only among the Arcadians does the law require children, from their infancy, to become practised in singing the hymns and paeans with which each group of them celebrates their native heroes and gods, in conformity with the customs of their forefathers. After these, they learn the *nomoi* of Timotheus and Philoxenus, and dance them each year in the theatres to the accompaniment of the auletes of Dionysus, the boys in the children’s contests, the young men in the men’s. And throughout their whole life they make entertainments for themselves in their common gatherings not so much by employing performers brought in to be listened to, as through their own performances, requiring each other to sing in turn...They practise *embateria* [marching songs] in an orderly drill, with the *aulos*; and they work hard at dances and exhibit them in the theatres each year, as a matter of communal concern and public expense. The ancients established these customs for them, not for the sake of luxury and excess, but because they perceived the toughness of each man’s life and the sternness of their characters, which comes to them from the cold and dismal conditions which generally prevail in their country. (Trans. Barker 1984)

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<sup>129</sup> For similar accusations of playing *κακῶς* in the context of a musical competition: cf. Athen. 8.351f, 8.350c-d; LeVen 2012.

The fact that this excerpt is juxtaposed with the account of Anicius' games in Book 14 of the *Deipnosophistae* already hints at a connection between the two episodes. In many ways, the contrast could not be starker. The Arcadian festival epitomises what Polybius considers to be 'real music' (τὴν γε ἀληθῶς μουσικήν). It has no ties to any particular sponsor, but is organised expressly 'as a matter of communal concern and public expense' (μετὰ κοινῆς ἐπιστροφῆς καὶ δαπάνης); it serves to honour the gods, not a mortal benefactor. Its performers are native citizens of Arcadia rather than foreign luminaries. Indeed, the Arcadians take pains to banish all extraneous influences, instilling music in their own young 'from infancy' and thereby extending a venerable indigenous tradition of musical pedagogy. They do not pit the contestants against one another in an outlandish melee, but assign them a rightful place in the programme. There is no pretend fighting, no false impression of τάξις; these war-dances are the real thing, conducted with the utmost solemnity as a corrective to 'luxury and excess' (τρυφῆς καὶ περιουσίας).<sup>130</sup>

As scholars have noted, the Arcadians' veneration of Timotheus and Philoxenus contrasts startlingly with the hostile reception of these composers in the late fifth and fourth centuries.<sup>131</sup> Branded as revolutionaries in their own lifetime, these avant-garde musician-composers came to be associated during the Hellenistic and imperial periods with a lost heyday of Greek *mousike*.<sup>132</sup> Polybius was certainly not the first to acclaim their *nomoi* as 'classics'. In around 170 BC, a citharode from Teos served as a foreign ambassador to Crete, and was honoured by his hosts for having performed a selection of

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<sup>130</sup> For an excellent discussion of the whole passage, see Prauscello 2009, 188-194. War-dances are traditionally associated with conservative Spartan *mousike* (see Csapo 2004, 242), but they also formed an important part of Rome's cultural heritage: cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 2.70.5, 3.32.4, on the ancient martial dances of the Salii, accompanied by the *aulos*.

<sup>131</sup> The Arcadians' long-standing affection for Timotheus is highlighted by Paus. 8.50.3 and Plut. *Philop.* 11, commenting on an acclaimed performance of Timotheus' *Persians* at the Nemean Games of 205 BC.

<sup>132</sup> On the reception of Timotheus in the Hellenistic and imperial periods, see Csapo and Wilson 2009, Prauscello 2009.

Timotheus' repertoire in the theatre, 'as befits an educated man' (ὡς προσήκεν ἀνδρὶ πεπαιδευμένῳ).<sup>133</sup> We can compare an honorific decree from Delphi, also dating from the second century, which praises two visiting musicians for presenting the 'measures of the old poets' (ἀριθμοὺς τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν). The inscription also commends the musicians for their exemplary conduct, their respect for ancestral tradition, and their contribution to the teaching of children (διδασκαλίαν τῶν παίδων).<sup>134</sup>

There is a simple point that I wish to make here. Polybius' depiction of Anicius' games only begins to make sense when considered in relation to the wider cultural debates that informed attitudes to musical performance in the second century. That requires us to look for common ground between Greek and Roman spectacle culture as well as points of divergence. The benefit of this comparative approach is that it allows us to move beyond the reductive notion of a Polybius in 'culture shock' and towards a more integrated model of Greco-Roman culture which takes account of the complex political dynamics of musical theatre and how these shifted through time and space.

Music, for Polybius, was not some incidental fact of life, unaffected by patterns of historical change; on the contrary, it was one of the fundamental building blocks of human civilization. Through a series of interlocking set piece narratives, the historian maps out an ideal vision for the *politeia* in which musical performance has a prescribed functional utility. Not just any music will do, however. Only the right kind can bring about the requisite conditions for a stable democracy. Centuries of Greek philosophizing had built up a rich intellectual store from which Polybius was able to draw historical insights. He looked at Rome's music and saw history repeating itself.

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<sup>133</sup> This information is recorded in two inscriptions, one from Knossos (*I.Cret.* I.viii.11) and one from Priansos (*I.Cret.* V.xxiv.1); see Chaniotis 2009 and Barker 2011 for further discussion.

<sup>134</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 703, ll. 8-10; for the formula ἀριθμοὺς τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν, cf. *FD* III.1 49. Conversely, Timotheus' opponents attacked him for 'corrupting the youth': see Prauscello 2009, 179.

The rulers of the Republic had been infected by the *amouisia* of the Hellenistic peoples who now bowed to their supremacy. Here were the same abuses that Plato had diagnosed as the cause of Athens' moral degeneration. More than ever, it was necessary to hark back to the traditions of the past – to the Arcadian paradigm.

The musical Arcadians, in fact, had a quite specific connection to the Roman *mos maiorum*, which can be teased out of a fragment of Polybius' sixth book, dealing with the origins of the Roman constitution:

ὥς δέ τινες ἱστοροῦσιν, ὧν ἔστι καὶ Πολύβιος ὁ Μεγαλοπολίτης, ἐπὶ τινος μαιρακίου Πάλλαντος αὐτόθι τελευτήσαντος· τοῦτον δὲ Ἡρακλέους εἶναι παῖδα καὶ Λαουινίας<sup>1</sup> τῆς Εὐάνδρου θυγατρὸς· χάσαντα δ' αὐτῷ τὸν μητροπάτορα τάφον ἐπὶ τῷ λόφῳ Παλλάντιον ἐπὶ τοῦ μαιρακίου τὸν τόπον ὀνομάσαι. (Polyb. 6.11a.1 = Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.1)

But some writers, among them Polybius of Megalopolis, relate that the town [of Pallantium] was named after Pallas, a lad who died there; they say that he was the son of Hercules and Lavinia, the daughter of Evander, and that his maternal grandfather raised a tomb to him on the hill and called the place Pallantium, after the lad. (Loeb trans.)

According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who cites this fragment in his *Roman Antiquities*, Rome owed her musical culture to the Arcadians who originally settled in Italy under the leadership of Evander. For the Arcadians brought with them 'music played on instruments which are called lyres and *trigona* (harps) and *auloi*, the previous people [in Italy] having used no musical devices apart from pastoral panpipes; and they established laws, and transformed people's way of life from its pervasive bestiality to a civilized condition'.<sup>135</sup> The tradition connecting Evander and the Arcadians to the founding of Rome went at least as far back as Cato the Elder.<sup>136</sup> It would appear, therefore, that Polybius was doing more than just encouraging the Romans to emulate his Arcadian compatriots. He was exhorting them to recover their own ancestral

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<sup>135</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.4-5: ...μουσικὴν τὴν δι' ὀργάνων, ἃ δὴ λύραι τε καὶ τρίγωνα καὶ αὐλοὶ καλοῦνται, τῶν προτέρων ὅτι μὴ σύριγγι ποιμενικαῖς οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ μουσικῆς τεχνήματι χρωμένων νόμους τε θέσθαι καὶ τὴν δίαίταν ἐκ τοῦ θηριώδους ἐπὶ πλεῖστον εἰς ἡμερότητα μεταγαγεῖν. Trans. adapted from Barker 2017.

<sup>136</sup> Cato *FRHist* F3.

*mousike*, which, though submerged and endangered, remained deeply embedded within the cultural fabric of the Roman state.

## 5 Cato, Scipio, and the Temple of Hercules Musarum

The question of how best to regulate the use of music in civic contexts exercised the political authorities in Rome as well as in Greece. The military expansionism of the late third and early second centuries sparked a moral opposition from conservative senators, who regarded the transfer of cultural ‘booty’ as a threat to the integrity of Roman *mores*. Music, naturally, entered into the discussion. Polybius, as we saw earlier, speaks of the Romans’ predilection for ‘musical entertainments and banquets’ (ἄκροάματα καὶ πότους) in the aftermath of Paullus’ victory over King Perseus. A similar trend is sketched by Livy in connection with the triumph of Cn. Manlius Vulso in 186. Livy singles out the influx of musicians – female string-players specifically (*psaltria sambucistriaeque*) – as a marker of the Romans’ newfound taste for Asiatic *luxuria*, comparable with expensive furniture or refined cookery.<sup>137</sup>

The *psalterion* and *sambuca* had in fact come under attack long before Livy’s time, from a man who shared a personal intimacy with Polybius himself.<sup>138</sup> In his speech against the *lex iudiciaria* of Tiberius Gracchus, dated to 129 BC, Scipio Aemilianus Africanus campaigned against the practice of Roman nobles educating their children in the musical arts (what this had to do with a law on judicial procedure is

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<sup>137</sup> Livy 39.6.7-8. The *sambuca* was a kind of arched harp: see West 1992, 76.

<sup>138</sup> Polybius makes much of his friendship with Scipio Aemilianus at 31.23.1-24.12 and presents him in a very positive light throughout the *Histories*: cf. Polyb. 18.35.9-12, 31.25.1-30.3, 38.19.1; Diod. 31.26.5; Champion 2004, 17, n. 10.

anyone's guess).<sup>139</sup> The passage in question is cited by Macrobius in a discussion of the history of Roman dance:

*docentur praestigias inhonestas: cum cinaedulis et sambuca psalterioque eunt in ludum histrionum, discunt cantare, quae maiores nostri ingenuis probro ducier voluerunt: eunt, inquam, in ludum saltatorium inter cinaedos virgines puerique ingenui. haec cum mihi quisquam narrabat, non poteram animum inducere ea liberos suos homines nobiles docere: sed cum ductus sum in ludum saltatorium, plus medius fidius in eo ludo vidi pueris virginibusque quinquaginta, in his unum (quod me reipublicae maxime miseritum est) puerum bullatum, petitoris filium non minorem annis duodecim, cum crotalis saltare quam saltationem impudicus servulus honeste saltare non posset. (Macr. Sat. 3.14.7 = fr. 30 Malcovati)*

They're taught disreputable tricks, they go to acting school with little *cinaedi* toting this and that kind of harp, they learn to sing – things our ancestors wished to be considered disgraceful for freeborn children. They go to dancing school, I say, freeborn maidens and boys, in a crowd of *cinaedi*! When someone told me this, I could not believe that noble men were teaching their own children these things; but when I was taken to a dancing school, for goodness sake, I saw more than fifty boys and maidens there, and among these—this above all made me grieve for our commonwealth—one of them a boy wearing the amulet of the well-born, the son of an office-seeker, not less than twelve years old, doing a dance with castanets that it would disgrace a shameless little slave to dance. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Of course, we should be wary of taking these words at face value, reported as they are some five hundred years after the initial controversy. Indeed, even if Macrobius' source is accurate, the speech is masked by a thick layer of invective which makes it very difficult to extract reliable historical information. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to assume that Scipio's polemic had absolutely no basis in reality, especially in light of his claim to be drawing on first-hand experience. To speak of a sudden 'craze' for singing and dancing may be going too far. But the growing presence of foreign musicians in second-century Rome is well attested from other sources, and it is quite possible that this phenomenon triggered at least a modest uptake in the number of Roman citizens

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<sup>139</sup> On the context of the *lex iudiciaria*, cf. Plut. *Ti. and C. Gracch.* 16.1-2; Dio fr. 83.7; App. *BC* 1.19.

from wealthy backgrounds who received a musical education, even if this practice never became truly widespread.<sup>140</sup>

Scipio's rhetoric hinges on an implicit set of distinctions (young/old, elite/non-elite, native/foreign) which evidently had a strong foothold in the Greek moralising tradition. The Latin *cinaedus* is a Greek loanword, and seems originally to have signified a kind of professional dancer who performed effeminate gestures.<sup>141</sup> The association between musical pleasure and sexual pleasure had been exploited by Aeschines as early as the fourth century.<sup>142</sup> At the same time, Scipio's comments on music can be situated within a more recent and localised Roman dispute about the long-term effects of 'Hellenization'. What concerned Scipio especially was the fact that the future leaders of the Republic were partaking in trivial and demeaning activities that were practised by the salaried professional or, worse still, the *inpudicus servulus*. These are presumably the same low-status individuals who, according to Polybius and Livy, had been arriving in their droves as the fruits of Roman conquest and who had recently been ornamenting Roman *ludi* of a different kind – as 'captive' performers in theatrical spectacles.

Macrobius invites us to compare Scipio's remarks with an excerpt from a speech by Cato the Elder:

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<sup>140</sup> A *ludus fidicinius*, 'a school for harpists', is mentioned in Plautus' *Rudens* (43) as a training ground for would-be prostitutes. However, this may reflect a Roman impression of a Greek institution; or it may simply be a figment of the playwright's imagination.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Lucil. fr. 33 (Nonius 5.6): *stulte saltatum te inter venisse cinaedos*; Goetz, *CGL*, 5.654: *cynedi qui publicae clunem agitant id est saltatores vel pantomimi*; Plaut. *Mil.* 668: *ad saltandum...cinaedus*; Adams 1982, 194; Williams 1999, 175; Habinek 2005, 177-200.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. e.g. Aesch. *Tim.* 41. Strabo (14.1.41) mentions a pugilist who performed obscene imitations of *kinaidoi*.

“descendit de cantherio, inde staticulos dare, ridicularia fundere.” et alibi in eundem: “praeterea cantat ubi collibuit, interdum Graecos versus agit, iocos dicit, voces demutat,<sup>143</sup> staticulos dat.” (Macr. Sat. 3.14.9 = fr. 114-115 Malcovati)

‘He gets down from his nag, and right there strikes little poses and cracks jokes.’ He [Cato] elsewhere attacks the same man in these terms: ‘Moreover he sings whenever he feels like it, and sometimes performs Greek verses, tells jokes, changes his voice, and strikes little poses.’

Cato levelled these allegations against the plebeian tribune M. Caelius in 184 or 183 BC.<sup>144</sup> The Censor’s opposition to *Graeci versus* is consistent with the ‘antihellenic’ stance for which he became famous.<sup>145</sup> But there is more at stake here than the diffusion of Greek culture. Caelius is accused of indulging in undignified pursuits which are deemed incompatible with his status as a Roman magistrate. Singing, performing lewd dances, cracking jokes, and impersonating characters are the stock trades of the professional entertainer. One category of entertainer comes to mind in particular: whether intentionally or not, Cato seems to be casting his opponent in the mould of the *gelotopoiōs*.<sup>146</sup>

Enrica Sciarrino is probably right to locate Caelius’ misbehaviour in the context of a banquet.<sup>147</sup> Cato’s interest in the musical amusements of the *convivium* is plainly illustrated by the contents of his historical work, the *Origines*, begun in 168.<sup>148</sup> Two references in Cicero warrant our attention:

*est in Originibus solitos esse in epulis canere convivas ad tibicinem de clarorum hominum virtutibus...* (Cic. Tusc. Disp. 1.3)

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<sup>143</sup> The meaning of *voces demutat* is not entirely clear: the ‘changing’ could apply to the character or tone of the voice (i.e. assisting in the imitation), as understood by Habinek (2005, 199), or it could simply refer to changing the pitch of voice in a musical sense, as Sciarrino (2004b, 339) takes it.

<sup>144</sup> On the context of the fragment, cf. Gell. 1.15.9; Cugusi and Sblendorio Cugusi 2001, 304–309.

<sup>145</sup> On Cato’s attitude to Greek culture, see Astin 1978, 157-181; Gruen 1993, 52-83.

<sup>146</sup> Macrobius goes on to mention how Cato thought that ‘even singing was not the mark of a serious person’ (*etiam cantare non serii hominis*). And yet, at least one of Athenaeus’ *gelotopoiōi* was endowed with an excellent singing voice: *L. Sulla, vir tanti nominis, optime cantasse dicatur* (Sat. 3.14.10).

<sup>147</sup> Sciarrino 2004b, 339: ‘the vignette that emerges conjures up a member of the ruling elite in the act of imitating professionals during some sort of convivial situation’. The point of *cantat ubi collibuit* is surely that Caelius is singing in settings where this would normally be considered inappropriate (i.e. outside the *convivium*).

<sup>148</sup> On the date of the *Origines*, see Astin 1978, 212.

It is stated in the *Origines* that it was customary for guests at banquets to sing songs about the virtues of famous men to the accompaniment of a pipe-player...

*gravissimus auctor in Originibus dixit Cato morem apud maiores hunc epularum fuisse, ut deinceps, qui accubarent, canerent ad tibiam clarorum virorum laudes atque virtutes...* (Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.3)

Cato, a most stern author, stated in the *Origines* that it was customary among our ancestors for banqueters to sing, one after another, of the merits and virtues of famous men to the accompaniment of the pipe...

In the *Origines*, then, Cato expressed a marked preference for an austere, native tradition of accompanied song, which, in his view, had benefitted the community by preserving cultural memory and cementing social ties within the ruling elite. One must be careful not to assign too much credence to the historicity of these so-called *carmina convivalia*, especially given our limited knowledge of Cato's literary oeuvre.<sup>149</sup> We are dealing with ideological constructs, not historical truths. What I wish to emphasise here is the way in which Cato's idealistic vision of Rome's musical heritage brings into sharper focus the negative exemplarity of Caelius' behaviour. A year or two after his public denunciation of the tribune, Cato spoke out again in favour of new sumptuary legislation designed to curb the spread of 'luxury' in the *convivium*.<sup>150</sup> Entertainment was not directly addressed by this legislation, admittedly, but it must have been a talking point. By harking back to a time when Rome's musical culture was pure and good, Cato was, I suggest, articulating a view not only of how things *were* but also of how things *ought to be* – just as Polybius, in recalling the traditions of Arcadian *mousike*, was passing judgment on the negative *mousike* of the present day. The *carmina convivalia* were, in essence, a moral corrective for those who 'sang whenever they felt like it'.

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<sup>149</sup> See Chapter II.5.

<sup>150</sup> The *lex Orchia* (182 BC) restricted the number of guests one could invite to a banquet: *ORF*, fr. 139-146; *Macr. Sat.* 3.17. For subsequent legal controls imposed on the *convivium*, see Lintott 1972, 631-632.

The *convivium* was not the sole focus of moral censorship, however. According to Plutarch, Cato attacked Scipio Africanus while on campaign because ‘his boyish addiction to palaestras and theatre’ (διατριβὰς αὐτοῦ μαιρακιδεῖς ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ θεάτροις) made him appear ‘as though he were not commander of an army, but master of a festival’ (ὥσπερ οὐ στρατηγοῦντος, ἀλλὰ πανηγυρίζοντος).<sup>151</sup> In 154 BC, construction work on the first permanent stone theatre in Rome was abruptly cut short when the consul L. Scipio Nasica objected that audiences were becoming accustomed to ‘Greek pleasures’ (Ἑλληνικαῖς ἡδυπαθείαις).<sup>152</sup> That was probably not the only objection; political, economic, and religious considerations were also at play.<sup>153</sup> But it evidently mattered to the senatorial authorities what kind of shows were being put on for public amusement.

An entry in Cassiodorus’ *Chronica* records that the censors of 115 BC took the unprecedented step of banning the *ars ludicra* from Rome completely, ‘with the exception of the *Latinus tibicen cum cantore* and the *ludus talarius*’.<sup>154</sup> Despite longstanding disagreement about what exactly this concession meant (much of it centring on the contested reading of *ludum talarium* and the identity of the ‘Latin pipe-player’), we can be fairly certain about what the censors thought they were doing. Jory has made a persuasive case for interpreting *ars ludicra* as a general term for ‘professional entertainment’ or ‘show business’, that is, as opposed to the amateur performances of *fabulae Atellanae*.<sup>155</sup> He therefore explains the censorial edict of 115 as

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<sup>151</sup> Plut. *Cat. mai.* 3.7.

<sup>152</sup> This is the explanation given by Appian at least (*BC* 1.28): οὐ χρήσιμον ὄλως Ἑλληνικαῖς ἡδυπαθείαις Ῥωμαίους ἐθίζεσθαι; cf. Vell. Pat. 1.15.3; Livy *Epit.* 48; Val. Max. 2.4.2; Orosius 4.21.4; August. *Civ. Dei.* 1.31.

<sup>153</sup> For discussion of these factors, see Morgan 1990, Gruen 1993, 206-210, Manuwald 2011, 333.

<sup>154</sup> Cass. *Chron.* 2 p. 31 f. Mommsen: *his cons. L. Metellus et Cn. Domitius censores artem ludicram ex urbe removerunt praeter Latinum tibicinem cum cantore et ludum talarium*. Jory suggests (1995, 150-151) that Cassiodorus derived this information from either Livy or Varro.

<sup>155</sup> For the *fabulae Atellanae* and its distinction from *ars ludicra*, cf. Livy 7.2.12.

‘a restriction on the activities of professional performers in Rome’.<sup>156</sup> This is an important suggestion, if true, for it implies that the moral concerns voiced by Cato and Scipio prompted a coordinated political response. ‘What the censors were doing was banning from the stage full-scale professional dramatic entertainment, above all comedy and tragedy, the origins of which were not Roman but Greek’.<sup>157</sup>

The Roman character of the *Latinus tibicen cum cantore* is not difficult to discern.<sup>158</sup> The *collegium tibicinum Romanum* traced its origins back to Numa.<sup>159</sup> In 312/311 BC, the pipers went on strike when the censors rescinded their right to an annual banquet in the Temple of Jupiter. Their voluntary exile to Tibur, and the Romans’ duplicity in bringing about their return, highlighted the necessity of the *tibicines* for the proper functioning of civic religion.<sup>160</sup> But the *ludum talarium* poses problems. The manuscript reading *ludum talanum* is almost certainly corrupt. Some scholars have preferred to emend the text to *ludum Atellanum*, but the alternative *ludum talarium*, as favoured by Jory, makes better sense. The *ludus talarius* was known to Cicero, Quintilian, and Fronto, and is thought to refer to ‘a distinct theatrical genre in which the performers wore long robes which reached down to the ankles’ (i.e. the *tunica talaris*).<sup>161</sup> Jory concludes that the *ludus talarius* was, along with the *Latinus tibicen cum cantore*, a form of Italian sub-dramatic performance which provided an important forerunner to the imperial pantomime.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Jory 1995, 145; cf. esp. Cic. *Rep.* 4.10 (= Augustine *de civ. Dei* 2.13), put in the mouth of Scipio Aemilianus: *cum artem ludicram scaenamque totam in probro ducerent, genus id hominum non modo honore civium reliquorum carere, sed etiam tribu moveri notatione censoria voluerunt.*

<sup>157</sup> Jory 1995, 150-151, supported by Moore 2012, 28-29; see also Manuwald 2011, 53, stressing moral and religious incentives.

<sup>158</sup> On the significance of the *cantor*, see Jory 1995, 150-151; Garelli-François 2000, 95-97.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Plut. *Numa* 17.3, *Quaest. Rom.* 55; Pécché 2001, Vincent 2008.

<sup>160</sup> The ancient narratives are Livy 9.30.5-10, Ov. *Fast.* 6.657-692, Val. Max. 2.5.4, Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 55. Problems of interpretation are discussed by Buchet 2010 and Vincent 2016, 149-154.

<sup>161</sup> Jory 1995, 146.

<sup>162</sup> Jory 1995, 146.

It is here that Jory is less convincing. What stands out from the sources on the *ludus talaris* is not its ‘native’ character, but its association with a morally dubious category of popular entertainment. Cicero includes *saltatores totumque ludum talarium* in his list of *sordides artes*, implying that the performers of the *ludus talaris* were seen as socially inferior on account of the fact that they received remuneration for their *ars*.<sup>163</sup> Quintilian, more revealingly, connects the *ludus talaris* with the deplorable ‘sing-song’ style of Asiatic oratory current in his day: ‘If this [style] is held to be at all acceptable, there is no reason why we should not accompany the voice with the lyre, the pipes, or indeed – and this would be more suitable for such atrocities – the cymbals?’<sup>164</sup> The impression of the *ludus talaris* that emerges is thus not dissimilar to the kind of musical variety shows singled out by writers of the second century as a novel and unwelcome addition to Rome’s theatrical scene.

Fronto refers to a censorial ban on *ludi talaris*, but does not specify when and by whom this ban was enacted:

*laudo Censoris factum, qui ludos talaris prohibuit, quod semet ipsum diceret, cum ea praeteriret, difficile dignitati servire, quin ad modum crotali aut cymbali pedem poneret.*  
(Fronto *Orat.* 10 [p. 157 van den Hout])

I praise the action of the Censor, who banned *ludi talaris*, because he said that he found it difficult to maintain his dignity when he passed by a performance and not to dance to the beat of the castanet or cymbal.

If, as seems likely, this is a reference to the censorial ban of 115, then it would entail that the *ludus talaris* was in fact *excluded* in conjunction with the *ars ludicra* rather than exempted, as Jory and others have maintained.<sup>165</sup> This interpretation is certainly

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<sup>163</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.150; cf. *Att.* 1.16.3: *non enim unquam turpior in ludo talaris consessus fuit.*

<sup>164</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.59: *quod si omnino recipiendum est, nihil causae est cur non illam vocis modulationem fidibus ac tibiis, immo mehercule, quod est huic deformitati propius, cymbalis adiuvemus;* cf. Suet. *Cal.* 54.2: *magno tiliarum et scabellorum crepitu cum pallio purpureo talarique tunica versaretur in conviviis muliebribus.*

<sup>165</sup> The fact that Fronto refers only to a single *censor* (capitalised in some editions) has led some to suppose that Cato was the author of the ban. However, this need not pose an insurmountable problem: see

not irreconcilable with Cassiodorus' text: *ludum talarium* can easily be read as an object of *removerunt* rather than as an addition to *Latinum tibicinem cum cantore*.<sup>166</sup> Jory's claim that the genre was Italian in origin is based on a tenuous connection between the *ludus talarius* and the *planipedia* (a Latin mime), which he identifies on the evidence of one or two late-antique grammatical texts.<sup>167</sup> But it is hard to see why the censors would have gone to the trouble of preserving a genre that would be repeatedly vilified by Roman writers in the following centuries (and Fronto explicitly cites moral scruples about music as the major reason for the ban). Garelli-François draws a suggestive link between the *ludus talarius* and the so-called *magoidoi*, a Greek category of lyric mimes who specialised in verse songs accompanied by loud percussive music and comic gestures.<sup>168</sup> It would be unwise, I think, to insist on a direct parallel (our evidence for the *magoidoi* is scarce to say the least), but the idea of the *ludus talarius* as a Greek-inspired type of performance is nonetheless compelling. With its musical and comedic tropes, the *ludus talarius* bears all the hallmarks of a Hellenistic cultural product: one is reminded not only of Antiochus and the *gelotopoioi*, but also of Livy's Asiatic string-players, Posidonius' music-loving Syrians, and the piper-dancer duo from Hibeh. In many ways, then, the *ludus talarius* would have been an obvious target for those who opposed the spread of eastern luxury.

Of course, such opposition did not exist in a political vacuum. Music, as we have seen, was only one factor in a large and complex cultural discourse. There were dissenting voices on either side. Perhaps the most notable champion of Greek culture

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Garelli-François 2000, 101, noting that the censor L. Metellus seems to have taken the lead in promoting the ban.

<sup>166</sup> This reading is advocated by Garelli-François 2000, 88.

<sup>167</sup> Jory 1995, 149-150, with references.

<sup>168</sup> Garelli-François 2000, 99-100: 'Leurs exhibitions sont des parodies...Les magodes chantent et jouent d'un instrument en même temps qu'ils "incarnent" des personnages' – a familiar combo! Our knowledge of *magoidoi* is derived entirely from Athenaeus (14.620e, 621c) and a vague allusion in Strabo 14.1.41.

was M. Fulvius Nobilior, the conqueror of Ambracia, whose votive games involving large numbers of Greek artists were discussed earlier.<sup>169</sup> Fulvius, in fact, played a particularly prominent role in establishing a permanent Roman ‘base’ for the Greek arts, since he was responsible for building a temple to Hercules Musarum in the area of the Circus Flaminius. This temple has generated a great deal of scholarly debate, most of it focusing on the date of the temple’s foundation (the *communis opinio* favours 187 BC, the year of the triumph, but 189 and 179 have also been canvassed) and the nature of the Muses’ cult in Rome.<sup>170</sup>

One thing we know for certain is that the temple was adorned with statues depicting the nine Muses and Hercules playing the lyre, taken as *spolia* during the Ambracian campaign.<sup>171</sup> The presence of these statues begs the question of whether Fulvius was attempting to establish something resembling a Greek ‘Mouseion’ in Rome. There is evidence that the temple served as the headquarters of a *collegium scribarum et histrionum* (that is, an association of playwrights and actors), possibly formed from a merger with the *collegium poetarum* that had previously resided in the Temple of Minerva on the Aventine, but this is far from certain.<sup>172</sup> Architectural interpretations have also been brought to bear on the discussion. Amy Russell, for instance, observes that the enclosure of the temple ‘created a sense of separation from

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<sup>169</sup> See pp. 23-24.

<sup>170</sup> The temple is represented on the Marble Plan and has been subject to limited archaeological investigation, but the reconstruction of the building is much disputed. Servius suggests (*ad Aen.* 1.8) that Fulvius transferred a Numaic bronze *aedicula* of the Muses to the *aedes* of Hercules; again, this has been contested. See Richardson 1977; Viscogliosi 1996; Sciarrino 2004; Rüpke 2006; La Rocca 2006; Hardie 2007; Heslin 2015, 202-207; Russell 2016, 139-145.

<sup>171</sup> For the cult statues, cf. Plin. *NH* 35.66; Ov. *Fast.* 6.812, *Ars Am.* 3.168; Eumenius *Paneg.* 9.7.3; on their identification as *manubiae*, cf. Cic. *Arch.* 27. The statues may be depicted on a coin series minted by Pomponius Musa in 56 BC: *RRC* 410/1, pl. 50; Marabini Moevs 1981. A lyre-playing Herakles appears on Attic black-figure vases from the second half of the 6th century BC, and on southern Italian vase painting from the early Hellenistic age: see Dugas 1944; La Rocca 2006, 103-105; *LIMC* 4.1.810-817, nos. 1438-1474.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Festus p. 333L (*collegium scribarum histrionumque*), Val. Max. 3.7.11 (*collegium poetarum*). See Heslin 2015, 230-237 in support of this idea; *contra* Horsfall 1976, Caldelli 2012.

the surrounding area, delineating a space for arts and scholarship provided with the beauty and calm associated with the Muses'.<sup>173</sup>

Much has been made of Fulvius' patronage of Ennius, especially by those who subscribe to Otto Skutsch's view that the *Annales* ended with Fulvius' dedication of the temple of Hercules Musarum.<sup>174</sup> Cato attacked Fulvius for taking poets with him to Greece, Ennius included, probably in the belief that the general's possession of such an entourage made him look like a Hellenistic dynast.<sup>175</sup> The fact that the *artifices* who came to Rome in 187 did so *honoris eius causa*, as Livy puts it, may suggest that Fulvius was actively cultivating relationships with professional artists of other kinds as well.

Fulvius' project was, if nothing else, a powerful statement of cultural allegiance in the face of the Catonian opposition. Fulvius converted the Circus Flaminius into a monumental arena for his own philhellenic self-fashioning, and in doing so allowed Greek *mousike* to penetrate into the heart of the Roman public consciousness. When, in 167, the citizens gathered in the shadow of the Muses' temple and watched a troupe of world-famous Greek musicians take to the stage, Fulvius' legacy would surely have been foremost in people's minds. Now, at the hands of this latest *triumphator*, the message was once again broadcast for all to hear: the gods of music resided at Rome.

## Conclusion

The games of L. Anicius Gallus were no fiasco. They were masterminded by an ambitious general who sought to articulate Rome's relationship with Greek culture in a

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<sup>173</sup> Russell 2016, 143-144.

<sup>174</sup> Skutsch 1968, 18-21.

<sup>175</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.3.

novel and memorable way. Faced with the ignominy of an inglorious triumph, Anicius seized the opportunity to engage in political one-upmanship of the highest order: he assembled a veritable ‘who’s who’ of Greek artists; he paraded them in a venue with strong ties to the recent triumphal spectacles of Aemilius Paullus and Fulvius Nobilior; and, on the eve (if not the day) of the Illyrian triumph, he made them take part in an uproarious mock battle replete with its own military-style musical accompaniment. Anicius took advantage of the fun-loving atmosphere of the Roman triumph to parody a serious Greek musical contest. In doing so, he created a rule-breaking spectacle that amplified his own achievement both as a general and as a theatrical impresario. What could have been an eminently forgettable occasion proved instead to be a major hit.

Such a deliberate flouting of convention was inevitably going to anger those who saw the subversion of the musical status quo as an assault on the very foundations of society. The idea that Polybius found himself at the centre of a ‘culture clash’ between Greece and Rome is deeply flawed, in that it presupposes an artificial polarity between cultures which were in actual fact engaged increasingly in dialogue with one another. By contrast, I have argued that Polybius’ aversion to the Roman spectacle reflects widely held concerns about the ethical implications of musical performance. These concerns are voiced several times in Book 30 (insofar as it can be reconstructed), as well as in the Arcadian episode of Book 4, but they resonate throughout the *Histories*. Polybius turned to musical philosophy for insights into constitutional politics, and he did so by tapping into a centuries-old tradition that stretched back to Damon and Plato and permeated the cultural memory of the Greek East. With its gleeful subversion of musical norms and its deconstruction of the boundaries between performer and spectator, Anicius’ games pointed up the flaws of a society reduced to a state of *theatrokratia*. In the ‘great and marvellous spectacle’ (παράδοξον καὶ μέγα...θεώρημα)

that is the history of Rome, the events of 167 have much to tell us from a Polybian perspective about the perils of empire and the pitfalls of democracy.<sup>176</sup>

Polybius' concerns about the 'extravagance' of *acroamata* reverberated across the Republican establishment itself. To be sure, the penetration of extraneous musical influences into the heart of civic life generated a broad spectrum of responses from the senatorial elite. Anicius' creative take on a Greek *agon* marked the latest in a long series of Roman 'experiments' with Hellenistic culture, many of them launched by triumphant generals in the flush of victory. And yet, with its combination of loud music, irreverent comedy, and crude mimicry, the praetor's spectacle looked very much like the kind of exuberant Greek-style entertainments that Cato and Scipio branded as infectious and damaging to the state. We can only imagine what these lofty figures would have made of the antics in the Circus, but we can be sure that their response would have been no less incredulous than that of their Greek friend who happened to find himself in the audience.

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. Polyb. 1.2.1.

## Chapter II

### POPULAR MUSIC AND POPULAR POLITICS IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

The late Republican period has handed down to us a plethora of literary texts pertaining to music. Theoretical treatises, philosophical texts, speeches, satires, and poems all provide rich material for historical investigation. In 1948, the American classicist P. R. Coleman-Norton collected and classified over a hundred references to music in Cicero alone, publishing his findings in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.<sup>1</sup> The title of his paper, ‘Cicero Musicus’, is suggestive: already at the turn of the second century AD, Cicero was considered an influential authority on the *ars musica*.<sup>2</sup> Later musicologists, from Augustine to Boethius, drew inspiration from his works.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of this abundance of evidence, however, Cicero’s contribution to musical thought has elicited very little discussion from historically minded scholars. Synoptic treatments of Roman music have tended to divorce Cicero’s writings from their contemporary context, using them instead to reflect on general trends during the imperial period.<sup>4</sup> True, Cicero’s coverage of musical themes is scattered and at times allusive. But that is not to say that his work lacks methodological rigour. The philosophy of music exercised the minds of Cicero and his contemporaries just as it had Polybius, Cato, and Scipio in the previous century. Varro, Cornelius Nepos, Lucretius, Philodemus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus all wrote extensively on musical subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> Coleman-Norton 1948. This figure is based on a rough estimation: the Stellenverzeichnis in Wille’s *Musica Romana* has around 270 entries under ‘Cicero’.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tac. *Dial.* 30.4: *itaque hercule in libris Ciceronis deprehendere licet, non geometriae, non musicae, non grammaticae, non denique ullius ingenuae artis scientiam ei defuisse.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *FRHist* 39 F6a-c, for a fragment of the lost Ciceronian *Consilia*. References to Cicero in Aristides Quintilianus’ *De Musica* are discussed below.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Horsfall 2003, 31-42, and Laurence 2009, 115-125.

Not all of them shared the same notion of what music was, how it should be used, and what separated the ‘good’ kind from the ‘bad’.

As I hope to show in this chapter, the existence of divergent views on music was a by-product of the lively intellectual milieu that Elizabeth Rawson brought to light in her monograph, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (1985). In that influential work, Rawson was content merely to pay lip-service to the *ars musica*, for, in her view, that is all the Romans did:

‘Musical theory was a highly abstract subject, with limited connection with musical practice (to the impoverishment of both). Writing on music consisted largely of theoretical discussion; we do not hear of written ‘methods’ to help players, of criticism of individual pieces or performers, or even of biographies of pure musicians (as opposed to poets).’<sup>5</sup>

Rawson’s arguments have received widespread, if largely tacit, acceptance from the wider academic community. As a consequence, there has been no concerted effort among classicists or historians to bridge the gap between musical thought and practice, to discover how (if at all) Roman systems of performance, patronage, and spectatorship impacted on, and were impacted by, theoretical and philosophical approaches to music. Recent advances in the study of late Republican spectacle have done little to improve our understanding of the complex cultural meanings attached to the musical aspects of theatrical production. This seems to me an unfortunate oversight. Closer inspection of the literary sources reveals that music in the time of Cicero was in fact linked closely to changes in the social and political status quo. For this reason, music offers a fertile topic for examining ancient reflections on the collapse of the *res publica*.

I take my starting-point from the discussion of the *ludi scaenici* in Cicero’s *De Legibus*. This fascinating yet problematic text provides one of the few extant accounts

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<sup>5</sup> Rawson 1985, 167.

of the musical history of the Roman theatre. The narrative of decline that Cicero sketches from the time of Livius Andronicus and Naevius down to the present day is based upon an analogy with the history of Greek music and draws inspiration from Plato's theory of natural law. At the same time, Cicero brings us face to face with the changing cultural landscape of Rome itself. By reading Cicero's comments as a response to contemporary developments in Roman spectacle (such as the building of Pompey's Theatre), and by seeking literary parallels in Dionysius, Varro, and Lucretius, each of whom describes the musicality of the theatre audience in more or less politicised terms, the historical implications of Cicero's musical commentary can be more fully illuminated. The second half of the chapter explores the relationship between musical *ethos* and aristocratic ethics. I argue that the concerns about theatre music voiced by late Republican authors stem from elite anxieties about the growing political influence of the Roman *plebs*, especially as championed by *populares* like Clodius and Julius Caesar. Accusations against dancing and convivial music-making are commonplace in late Republican invective, and reveal a desire among conservative patricians to define appropriate limits for musical consumption. Finally, the frequent allusions to *saltatores* and *symphoniae* (concerts) in the textual sources can be fruitfully contrasted with the idealised view of Rome's musical past promoted by Cicero, Varro, and Dionysius.

## 1 The 'New Music' of the Roman Theatre

In the second book of the *De Legibus*, written probably in the late fifties BC, Cicero discusses the legislation of the Roman games.<sup>6</sup> He divides the *ludi publici* into two

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<sup>6</sup> On the date of the *De Legibus*, see Dyck 2004, 5-7. It is doubted whether the *De Legibus* was ever published in Cicero's lifetime. The *communis opinio* is that he left it incomplete in 51 when he departed for his governorship of Cilicia and never returned to it under the changed political circumstances of the

categories – *ludi circenses* and *ludi scaenici* – and prescribes a basic legal code which, in his view, ought to govern their organisation:

*iam ludi publici quoniam sunt cavea circoque divisi, sint corporum certationes cursu et pugillatu et luctatione, curriculisque equorum usque ad certam victoriam circo constitutis, cavea cantu vacet et fidibus et tibiis, dummodo ea moderata sint ut lege praescribitur.* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.38, ed. Powell)

Since the public games are divided between the theatre and the circus, in the circus let there be athletic contests in running, boxing, and wrestling, and horse-races established with a clearly defined goal, and let the theatre resound with singing, lyres, and pipes, provided that these are regulated in accordance with the law.

Cicero – or, properly speaking, the interlocutor ‘Marcus’ – goes on to explain why the music of the *cavea* must be subject to moderation. He launches into a lengthy philosophical excursus on the nature and causality of musical change, drawing upon the writings of Plato as well as personal observations of theatrical performances in Rome:

*adsentior enim Platoni, nihil tam facile in animos teneros atque molles influere quam varios canendi sonos, quorum dici vix potest quanta sit vis in utramque partem; namque et incitat languentes et languefacit excitatos, et tum remittit animos tum contrahit. civitatumque hoc multarum in Graecia interfuit, antiquum vocum conservari modum; quarum mores lapsi ad mollitias pariter sunt immutati cum cantibus, aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant, aut cum severitas eorum ob alia vitia cecidisset, tum fuit in auribus animisque mutatis etiam huic mutationi locus. quamobrem ille quidem sapientissimus Graeciae vir longeque doctissimus valde hanc labem veretur; negat enim mutari posse musicas leges sine mutatione legum publicarum; ego autem nec tam valde id timendum nec plane contemnendum puto. illud quidem <video>: quae solebant quondam compleri severitate iucunda Livianis et Naevianis modis, nunc ut eadem exsulent, <et> cervices oculosque pariter cum modorum flexionibus torqueant. graviter olim ista vindicabat vetus illa Graecia, longe providens quam sensim pernicies illapsa civium <in> animos malis studiis malisque doctrinis repente totas civitates everteret, si quidem illa severa Lacedaemo nervos iussit, quos plures quam septem haberet, in Timothei fidibus incidi.* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.38-39, ed. Powell)

For I agree with Plato that nothing so easily flows into young and impressionable minds as the various notes of the musical scale; it is hard to express the extent of their power in one way or the other. For music animates the indolent and calms the excited; it causes spirits to relax at one moment and then restrains them the next. Many states in Greece considered it important to preserve the ancient style of music; yet their morals changed along with their songs and slid to decadence as a result. Either they were corrupted by the sweet seductiveness of music, as some people think, or, once the stringency of their morals was undermined by their other vices, then their ears and minds became changed, leaving room for this musical change also.

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40s. It may have been published posthumously: Cornelius Nepos clearly alludes to the work in a fragment of his book *On Latin Historians*, written in the late 30s. See general remarks in Dyck 2004, Caspar 2011, Zetzel 1999, MacKendrick 1989, 77-79.

For this reason the wisest and by far the most learned man in Greece was greatly afraid of this decline. For he denies that the laws of music can be changed without heralding a change in the laws of the state. However, I for one do not think that this should be feared so greatly, although it should not be overlooked either. Indeed, <we see> how the theatre, which once used to be filled with the tunes of Livius and Naevius, pleasing in their simplicity, is now filled with people who leap up and toss their heads and roll their eyes in time with the twists and turns of the music. In the old days, Greece used to punish such behaviour harshly, anticipating far in advance how the deadly plague might sink gradually into the minds of citizens and suddenly overturn entire states with evil pursuits and evil ideas – if, indeed, it is true that stern Sparta ordered the strings above the number of seven to be cut off the lyre of Timotheus.

This is, at first glance, a passage which evades straightforward interpretation. The synthesis of legal theory, moral philosophy, and anecdotal historiography is highly idiosyncratic and has perplexed many of Cicero's modern readers. To be sure, much of the argumentation bears a familiar Platonic stamp.<sup>7</sup> Plato is praised in the most effusive terms, as he is elsewhere in Cicero's oeuvre.<sup>8</sup> The neologism *musicae leges* (as distinguished from *publicae leges*) is especially telling. Cicero takes a broad view of the concept of 'legal authority' that embraces the full semantic range of the Greek term *nomos*. Cicero's *leges* encompass not only institutional procedures and administrative policies, but also cultural and moral norms – that is, the *mos maiorum*. In this sense, the Roman philosopher follows the model set by Plato, who, in the *Laws* and *Republic*, had expounded the view that music was a natural precondition of human civilization and fundamental to the proper functioning of society.

Imitations can only get us so far, however. The comparative analysis of 2.39 is strikingly original, and requires explanation. The Greeks, Cicero states, understood the importance of preserving the ancient style of music (*antiquum vocum conservari modum*), as epitomised by the harsh treatment of the avant-garde citharode Timotheus at

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<sup>7</sup> The theory of musical *ethos* is often deployed by Plato as a means of justifying the intervention of the state in the various forms of public music-making; cf. esp. Pl. *Rep.* 3.401-402, *Laws* 7.800; Rocconi 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 10, describing Plato as *dicendi gravissimus auctor et magister*. For Cicero's engagement with Plato more generally, see Long 1995.

the hands of the Spartans. The Romans, on the other hand, had not been sufficiently alert to the dangers of musical innovation. Whereas the music of the theatre used to be characterised by a ‘pleasant strictness’ (*severitate iucunda*) when Livius Andronicus and Naevius were producing their plays, nowadays the music twists and turns (*modorum flexionibus*), provoking a concomitant ‘twisting’ of necks and eyes (*cervices oculosque...torqueant*)...

Provoking in whom exactly? The manuscripts fail us at this crucial point. The pronoun *quae* must introduce a relative clause, and its missing subject can be inferred from the context: it is obviously the theatre that is being ‘filled with music’ (*compleri...modis*). For the antecedent we can either supply *cavea* from the opening sentence of 2.38 (*cavea cantu vacet et fidibus et tibiis*) to correspond with *solebat* in the singular, or we can supply *theatra* and make the verb plural (*solebant*). The second half of the sentence presents greater difficulties. Recent editions give *ex(s)ultent* instead of *ex(s)ultet*, in agreement with the plural *torqueant*, the reading of which is transmitted securely in the manuscript tradition. The two verbs must follow an *ut* clause, introduced by a missing word after *quidem*: editors have inserted either *video* (Vahlen, Mueller, Powell) or *videmus* (Ziegler). The demonstrative pronoun *eadem* must refer anaphorically to the *quae* of the preceding relative clause; the noun it refers to, either *cavea* (feminine singular) or *theatra* (neuter plural), may have dropped out, and is interpolated by some editors.

The use of *cavea/theatra* to mean ‘audience’ finds several attestations in classical Latin. Cicero uses the phrase *theatra tota* or *cavea tota* no fewer than four times with reference to the clamouring of spectators.<sup>9</sup> But what exactly is meant by

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<sup>9</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.196 (*theatra tota reclamant*); *Orat.* 173 (*theatra tota exclamant*); *De Am.* 24 (*qui clamores tota cavea...!*); *Att.* 2.19.2 (*totius theatri clamore*).

*exsultent*? Are we to imagine the seated audience literally ‘leaping’ to their feet in excitement?<sup>10</sup> Is Cicero thinking of some kind of exuberant dancing, in keeping with the musical theme?<sup>11</sup> Or is he highlighting the excessively passionate nature of the audience’s response, reflecting his use of the verb in the *De Re Publica*?<sup>12</sup> These three interpretations are not mutually exclusive of course. Polybius’ portrayal of King Antiochus IV at dinner provides a useful frame of reference, albeit composed in Greek: ‘When the band summoned him, he leapt up and began to dance (ἀναπηδήσας ὠρχεῖτο)’.<sup>13</sup>

So who is doing the ‘twisting’? Ziegler’s text (1950) contains a lacuna of several words between *exultent* and *cervices*. However, the majority of editors, following Halm’s edition of 1861, have opted to fill in the gap with a single *et*, reading *cavea/theatra* as the subject of both verbs.<sup>14</sup> Dyck notes in his commentary that ‘the *iunctura cervices torquere* is not found elsewhere in Cicero or indeed, according to PHI 5.3, in classical Latin; the zeugma with *oculos torquere* is striking’. He explains that ‘rolling the eyes...is often a symptom of dementia’ and ‘twisting the neck (and thus turning the head) is a sign of antipathy’.<sup>15</sup> This surely misconstrues Cicero’s point. The reaction of the crowd is certainly raucous, but it is a *positive* reaction rather than a negative one. To be sure, references to the audience’s heightened state of agitation at the

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<sup>10</sup> Vitruvius pictures an audience of men, women and children at the *ludi* glued to their seats (*per ludos enim cum coniugibus et liberis persedentes delectationibus detinentur*; Vitr. 5.3.1). The audience got up to applaud Pacuvius’ *Iphigenia in Tauris*, however (*stantes plaudebant in re ficta*; Cic. *De Am.* 24).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Lucr. 2.631: [*Curetes*] *in numerum exsultant*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.40: *Tarquinio exacto mira quadam exultasse populum insolentia libertatis*; *Rep.* 2.25: [*Tarquinius Superbus*] *exultabat insolentia*.

<sup>13</sup> Polyb. 30.26.9 (discussed in Chapter I.3).

<sup>14</sup> See most recently Powell 2006, following Halm 1861, Vahlen 1871, and Müller 1878.

<sup>15</sup> Dyck 2004, 359, citing Cic. *Luc.* 80 (*oculos torsisset*) and Verg. *Aen.* 7.399 (*sanguineam torquens aciem*). Cf. Cic. *Cat.* 2.2: *retorquet oculos profecto saepe ad hanc urbem*.

theatre are fairly commonplace in Greek and Latin literature.<sup>16</sup> Two well-known passages might be cited as comparanda. The first is the younger Pliny's eulogy of the octogenarian noblewoman Ummidia Quadratilla, which tells of certain individuals who, in their enthusiasm for Ummidia's pantomimes, 'used to run to the theatre, jump up and down (*exsultabant*), applaud, marvel and copy the individual gestures [of the dancers] to their mistress along with the songs'.<sup>17</sup> The second parallel is the account of the festival of Anna Perenna in Ovid's *Fasti*. During the celebrations the Roman people gather on the Campus Martius and 'sing the songs they've learned at the theatres' (*cantant quicquid didicere theatri*), while clapping and dancing along with the music (*iactant...manus; ducunt...choreas*).<sup>18</sup>

In neither of these passages, however, do we find mention of eyes, necks, or 'twisting' of any sort. Indeed, even if Cicero *is* envisaging a dancing audience – and even if this dancing *is* presented as a symptom of mental derangement, as Dyck suggests – this would frankly be a bizarre way to describe the collective behaviour of a group of spectators, especially if acting in synchrony. Either Cicero is pushing his readers' imagination to the limits of plausibility, or he is referring to a subject other than *cavea/theatra* which has somehow gone missing from the manuscripts. The lacuna in Zeigler's edition certainly seems to call for something more substantial than a simple connective.

I wish to suggest here a possible alternative. Twisting of the eyes and neck would be an unconventional, if not absurd, way of referring to a spectating crowd, but it

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<sup>16</sup> For example, Philodemus describes in his treatise *On Music* (contemporary with Cicero) how an overabundance of music can 'set in motion an entire theatre' (συμβαίν[ειν...] σύνολον θέατρ[ου]); Phld. *Mus.* 4 col. 37, ll. 16-17 Delattre). Sadly, the text is heavily mutilated and the context is unclear.

<sup>17</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 7.24.7: *at hercule alienissimi homines in honorem Quadratillae — pudet me dixisse honorem — per adulationis officium in theatrum cursitabant exsultabant plaudebant mirabantur ac deinde singulos gestus dominae cum canticis reddebant.*

<sup>18</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 3.535-537.

could be applied quite naturally to the movements of performers on the stage. After all, that is exactly what Pliny's spectators were doing – copying professional dancers (*singulos gestus...reddebant*). Ovid's plebeian revellers, likewise, were not only singing songs from the theatres but also trying to imitate the dance steps of a chorus (*ducunt...duras...choreas*).<sup>19</sup>

It is well documented that the exponents of the Greek 'New Music' used exaggerated movements of the body to heighten the drama of their performances.<sup>20</sup> Given that players of the *kithara* and *auloi* were required to hold their instrument in both hands while playing, the range of physical gestures available to them would presumably have been somewhat limited. The contortions of the musician's face became a focus of attention: witness the famous myth of Athena rejecting the *auloi* on the grounds that the act of playing them disfigured her complexion.<sup>21</sup> The Theban aulete Pronomus is said by Pausanias to have 'afforded an excess of pleasure to the theatres by means of his facial expression and the movement of his entire body' (τοῦ προσώπου τῶ σχήματι καὶ τῇ τοῦ παντὸς κινήσει σώματος περισσῶς δὴ τι ἕτερπε τὰ θέατρα). For this reason, his performances were 'most seductive to the masses' (ἐπαγωγότατα ἐς τοὺς πολλούς).<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Cicero's exemplar Timotheus of Miletus is said to have pioneered the application of mimesis to the practice of lyre-playing.<sup>23</sup> The author of the late Republican *Rhetorica ad Herennium* could imagine a bad citharode as one who

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<sup>19</sup> Note Purcell 2013, 443: 'the audiences of the Roman theatre here extend the life of the theatre, becoming performers themselves.' Wiseman (1998, 69) thinks that Ovid was actually referring to professional performers rather than amateurs.

<sup>20</sup> Power 2010, 136-143; Csapo 2004, 213; Wilson 2002, 61.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Aristot. *Pol.* 1341b, Plut. *Mor.* 456b, Athen. 14.616e-f. Aristotle questions this explanation, arguing instead that Athena rejected the *aulos* because it contributed nothing to the wisdom or skill which were her divine attributes.

<sup>22</sup> Paus. 9.12.5-6. According to Theophrastus (cited by Athen. 1.22c), 'the first pipe-player to move his body to the rhythm as he played' was a certain Andron of Catana, followed by Cleolas of Thebes.

<sup>23</sup> A fellow musician once ridiculed his dithyramb *The Sailor* 'by claiming to have seen a bigger storm in a pot of boiling water' (Athen. 8.338a; cf. 8.352a).

‘emits a very unpleasant voice with the most disgusting movement of the body’ (*vocem mittat acerbissimam cum turpissimo corporis motu*).<sup>24</sup>

The idea of musicians rhythmically ‘twisting’ their bodies recalls Aristotle’s famous criticism of auletes who use complex choreography to imitate the revolutions of a discus.<sup>25</sup> The use of such mimetic effects is construed by Aristotle as an attempt to pander to popular tastes and to destroy the purity of traditional *mousike*. Cicero must also have been familiar with Plato’s comments on the over-the-top mimesis of the ‘vulgar’ musician: ‘He will think nothing unworthy of him, so that he will make great efforts, before large audiences, to imitate (μιμῆσθαι) everything...and his diction will consist entirely of imitation by vocalisms and gestures’.<sup>26</sup> This may help to explain the connection in Cicero between the ‘twisting’ of bodies and the ‘twisting’ of music (*modorum flexiones*), with its attendant effect on the ordinary listener.<sup>27</sup> One is reminded also of Polybius’ account of Anicius’ games, in which the shouting of spectators is configured as a response to the gesticulations of pipe-players and dancers.

Movement of the eyes and neck specifically is a conventional trope in ancient depictions of musical or theatrical performers. *Tibicines* are often represented in art with grossly protruding eyes (see FIGURE 7). Philodemus dedicates one of his epigrams to the harp-player Xanthippe who beguiles with her ‘expressive eyes’ (κωτίλον ὄμμα).<sup>28</sup> Apuleius mentions a skilled dancer who gave the appearance of ‘dancing with her eyes

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<sup>24</sup> [Cic.] *Rhet. ad Herenn.* 4.47. The citharode was assessed by his skill ‘in choosing the right time to walk, stop and move, and in swaying his head in time to the music (τὸ νεῦμα ἐξομοιωῶσαι τοῖς μέλεσιν)’; Nero, of course, ‘sways his head more than is appropriate’ (νεύει μὲν γὰρ τοῦ μετρίου πλέον): Ps.-Lucian *Nero* 6-7. Cf. Athen. 1.21f: Φίλλης ὁ Δήλιος μουσικὸς τοὺς ἀρχαίους φησὶ κιθαρωδοὺς κινήσεις ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ προσώπου μικρὰς φέρειν.

<sup>25</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1461b30-1.

<sup>26</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 397a-b: οὐδὲν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνάξιον οἰήσεται εἶναι, ὥστε πάντα ἐπιχειρήσει μιμῆσθαι σπουδῆ τε καὶ ἐναντίον πολλῶν...καὶ ἔσται δὴ ἡ τούτου λέξις ἅπασα διὰ μιμήσεως φωναῖς τε καὶ σχήμασιν.

<sup>27</sup> The Greek ‘New Music’ had been criticised for its *καμπαὶ* (‘turns’), and it is possible that this idea lurks behind Cicero’s critique of *flexiones*: cf. Plin. *HN* 1.170-171 on the piper Antigenidas; Moore 2012, 140, n. 10; Mankin 2011, 187, on Cic. *De Orat.* 3.98.

<sup>28</sup> Phld. *Ep.* 1.1 ed. Sider (= *AP* 5.131). The word κωτίλον literally means ‘chattering’; like the Latin expression *oculos torquere*, the suggestion is of rapid movements (perhaps flickering of the eyelids?).

alone' (*saltare solis oculis*).<sup>29</sup> The pantomime Hylas was once criticised for 'using his eyes' while playing the blind Oedipus.<sup>30</sup> Cicero himself highlights the importance of the eyes in the vocal delivery of actors, acknowledging how their expression can affect the emotions of the 'uneducated' (*imperiti*) and the 'common people' (*vulgus*).<sup>31</sup> In one passage he states: 'I have often seen myself how the eyes of the actor seemed to gleam at me from behind the mask'.<sup>32</sup> Seneca's *Agamemnon*, notably, contains a reference to Cassandra rolling her eyes (*torquerentur oculi*). Zanobi thinks that this line might have been rendered dramatically 'by emphatic movements of the head, to which a vivid expression of the eyes may have added emotional intensity'.<sup>33</sup> References to neck movements, though somewhat rarer, are equally revealing. In Euripides' *Bacchae* the phrase 'tossing the neck into the air' (δέραν αἰθέρ' ἐς δροσερὸν ῥίπτουσ') is sung by the chorus and may have been enacted simultaneously through the medium of dance.<sup>34</sup> Xenophon in his *Symposium* has Socrates recommend exercise of the neck, legs, and hands as part of the dancer's training.<sup>35</sup> In Greek and Roman iconography dancers are frequently depicted with their neck twisted sideways or bent back with the eyes gazing upwards (see FIGURE 4).

On the basis of this evidence, and taking account of editorial emendations to other parts of the text, I propose the following restoration of the corrupted section of *De Legibus* 2.39:

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<sup>29</sup> Apul. *Met.* 10.32.

<sup>30</sup> Luc. *Salt.* 15; cf. Nonnos *Dionysiaca* 19.201, describing a dancer: 'he moved his eyes about as a picture of the story' (ὄφθαλμοὺς δ' ἐλέλιζεν ἀλήμονας, εἰκόνα μύθων).

<sup>31</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.221-223. On acting and gesture, see Graf 1991, Panayotakis 2010, and Dutsch 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 2.193; cf. Augustine (*De doctrina christiana* 2.45) on actors who *cum oculis eorum quasi fabulantur*.

<sup>33</sup> Sen. *Ag.* 715; Zanobi 2008, 235.

<sup>34</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 864-5.

<sup>35</sup> Xen. *Symp.* 2.16. Lucian (*Salt.* 75) states that dancers require a straight neck.

*illud quidem <video>, quae solebant quondam conpleri severitate iucunda Livianis et Naevianis modis, nunc ut eadem exultent <theatra, et tibicines> cervices oculosque pariter cum modorum flexionibus torqueant.*

My restoration, though speculative, has the benefit of filling the lacuna in Ziegler's text more fully as well as enabling a more effective reading of the difficult phrase *cervices oculosque...torqueant*. In this sense, the reference to rapid movements of the eyes and neck should be interpreted as a sign not of some random 'dementia', but of a particular state of mental agitation induced by the aural stimulus of musical modulation. In ancient physiognomy, uncontrolled eye movements are normally associated with sexual or emotional imbalance.<sup>36</sup> The 'effeminacy', *mollitia*, identified by Cicero as a corollary of musical *mutatio* is thus embodied by the musicians who bring this *mutatio* to fruition. A similar concept is expounded in the *Orator*: Cicero demands that the orator performs 'with manly bend of the body' (*virili laterum flexione*) – that is, he should stand upright; he should display 'no effeminacy in his neck' (*nulla mollitia cervicum*) and should avoid 'the kind of musical delivery' (*in dicendo quidam cantus*) achieved through 'contortions of the voice' (*vocis flexiones*).<sup>37</sup> Musical and physical *flexiones* both amount to the same effect: *mollitia*.

The comparison of 'theatres' and 'musicians' finds support in a passage from one of Pliny's *Letters*, which, as far as I know, has gone undetected by commentators

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<sup>36</sup> See Gleason 1995, 62-63, and Corbeill 2004, 146-147, citing Cic. *Cat.* 2.2 (*retorquet oculos*).

<sup>37</sup> Cic. *Orat.* 57, 59. On the connection between the orator's *gestus* and his manliness, see Graf 1991, 44-45.

on the *De Legibus*. Describing a recent recitation of his *Panegyricus* to a private audience, Pliny remarks:

*sicut olim theatra male musicos canere docuerunt, ita nunc in spem adducor posse fieri, ut eadem theatra bene canere musicos doceant.* (Plin. *Ep.* 3.18.9)

Just as the theatres once used to instruct musicians in how to play badly, now I am led to hope that it might happen that the same theatres teach musicians how to play well.

The idea behind this statement, Pliny explains, is that ‘everyone...who writes to please, writes whatever they see is pleasing’ (*omnes...qui placendi causa scribunt, qualia placere viderint scribent*).<sup>38</sup> So, for Pliny, it is the Roman public, and not the *musici* themselves, who set the standard when it comes to music: the audience responds naturally to the auditory cues that the musicians provide, but the *musici* are in fact ‘instructed’ by their audience in what to play, be it ‘good’ (*bene*) or ‘bad’ (*male*). This striking formulation may derive from the Peripatetic philosophers. Aristotle argued in the *Politics* that ‘the listener, being a low-class man (φορτικὸς), tends to alter (μεταβάλλειν) the music, so that he makes the *technitai* who play for him become like himself in character and in respect to their bodies through the movements that they make’.<sup>39</sup>

My interpolation of *tibicines* as the subject of *torqueant* is, of course, purely hypothetical (one could easily substitute *artifices*, *musici*, or perhaps *tibicines et fidicines*), but it is not without justification.<sup>40</sup> Pipe-players were always the main accompanists in the Roman theatre. It was the *tibicen*, more importantly, who was responsible for determining the character of the *modi*. As Tim Moore notes, ‘the word

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<sup>38</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 3.18.10.

<sup>39</sup> Aristot. *Pol.* 8.1341b15-19: ὁ γὰρ θεατῆς φορτικὸς ὦν μεταβάλλειν εἴωθε τὴν μουσικὴν, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς τεχνίτας τοὺς πρὸς αὐτὸν μελετῶντας αὐτοὺς τε ποιούς τινὰς ποιεῖ καὶ τὰ σώματα διὰ τὰς κινήσεις. Plato (*Laws* 659b-c) makes a similar point in relation to poets.

<sup>40</sup> *Artifices*: Cic. *Mur.* 29. *Musici*: Cic. *De Orat.* 3.174; *Div.* 2.9; *Tusc. Disp.* 1.4. *Tibicines et fidicines*: Cic. *Leg.* 2.38; *Rep.* 2.69; *Div.* 2.9.

*modus* can mean either “melody” or “rhythm”, but the two features of music are seldom distinguished clearly in Roman writing; ‘the entire contribution of the *tibicen*... would involve both melody and rhythm’.<sup>41</sup> Cicero in the *De Oratore* highlights the difference between *ipsi poetae* and *illi...qui fecerunt modos*.<sup>42</sup> A similar distinction is made by the late-antique grammarian Donatus, who writes that *modi* were composed *non a poeta sed a perito artis musicae* (the reason being that a *canticum* often featured more than one *modus*).<sup>43</sup> Cicero notes of Ennius’ iambic *senarii* that ‘without the accompaniment of the *tibicen* the words sound exactly like prose’ (*nisi cum tibicen accessit, orationis sunt solutae simillima*). This proves the point that certain metres seem to lack *modi* when the *cantus*, the melodic accompaniment of pipes and singers, is taken away (*modi* here probably has the general sense of ‘musicality’).<sup>44</sup> It was the *tibicen*, therefore, who conditioned his listeners’ response to the music. Cicero elsewhere marvels at the uncanny ability of Roman theatre-goers to recognise ‘Antiope’ or ‘Andromache’ from the very first note played by the *tibicen*.<sup>45</sup> The accompaniment of the pipe-player shifted the focus from one actor to the next.<sup>46</sup>

Nevio Zorzetti made the point nearly three decades ago, with specific reference to the *De Legibus*, that ‘in Cicero’s time, as for that matter in Plato’s, one did not argue about music for merely abstract reasons’.<sup>47</sup> However, it remains to be seen whether

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<sup>41</sup> Moore 2008, 28. On the ambiguity of the term, see further Mankin 2011, 263-4. In Plautus’ *Stichus* (719), *modus* is used of the rhythmic direction provided by the *tibicen* to the actors (cf. Cic. *Leg.* 1.11 on the actor Roscius).

<sup>42</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.102.

<sup>43</sup> Donatus *De Com.* 8.9. The Terentian didaskaliae inform us that a *tibicen* named Flaccus *modos fecit*.

<sup>44</sup> Cic. *Orat.* 183-4; with Prauscello 2006, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Cic. *Acad.* 2.20, 2.86. Jocelyn (1967, 253-4) has argued convincingly that these are not titles of plays, as often assumed, but names of characters who are about to sing.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Cic. *Mur.* 26: *transit idem iuris consultus tibicinis Latini modo*. This puzzling phrase is glossed by Landels (1999, 187) as an allusion to the *tibicen*’s habit of ‘crossing’ from one actor to another in response to whichever character is singing (cf. Hor. *AP* 215: *tibicen traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem*). However, as Moore (2012, 28) points out, *transit* may be figurative: ‘the *tibicen* does not move, but merely changes whom he is supporting at different moments, providing rhythmic and melodic reinforcement sometimes to one actor, sometimes to another.’

<sup>47</sup> Zorzetti 1991, 325.

Cicero's account of the development of the *ludi* can offer anything of concrete value to the historian of the late Republican theatre. As Moore writes, 'we must always be wary of references to the "good old days" in Roman literature, and Cicero's words are suspiciously reminiscent of the criticisms of the "New Music" made by Plato, Cicero's principal inspiration in the *Laws*, and by other Greek conservatives'.<sup>48</sup>

Such caution is well advised. The circumstances surrounding the date and composition of the *De Legibus* are shrouded in uncertainty. The text that has come down to us is lacunose in many places (2.39 being a case in point). The notion of a Roman public corrupted by music is not expanded in any later sections of the work, nor is it prefigured in previous chapters. That does not rule out the possibility that the subject was treated more fully in a passage which no longer survives (there were at least five books, of which only the first three remain extant).<sup>49</sup> As it stands, though, all we have on Rome's music history is one tantalising sentence; the focus thereafter shifts abruptly back in time to 'ancient Greece' (*Graecia vetus*), and even then there are question marks over Cicero's use of sources. The musician Timotheus, although contemporary with Plato, does not appear at all in the Platonic corpus. Csapo and Wilson note that Cicero is one of six ancient authors who report the story of Timotheus' punishment by the Spartans. The only one earlier than Cicero that we know of is Artemon of Cassandrea, who was writing probably in the second or first century BC, and yet in his version Timotheus is acquitted rather than convicted.<sup>50</sup>

That is not the only cause for suspicion. How much could Cicero actually have known about the musical accompaniments of early Roman drama? There is plenty of

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<sup>48</sup> Moore 2012, 140.

<sup>49</sup> For the overall number of books, cf. Macr. *Sat.* 6.4.8.

<sup>50</sup> Csapo and Wilson 2009, 284. Cicero may have gathered his information first-hand during a visit to Sparta: cf. *Tusc. Disp.* 2.34.

evidence for the revival of old tragedies in the late Republican period.<sup>51</sup> But, as Moore points out, changes in Latin diction and performance conventions would have resulted in a very different ‘musical’ experience.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of these considerations, however, Cicero’s conspectus of the *ludi scaenici* should not be dismissed as reductive, derivative or fanciful. Cicero was certainly familiar with the plays of Livius and Naevius as *written* texts – he rejects Livius’ *fabulae* as ‘not sufficiently worthy of being read a second time’ (*non satis dignae quae iterum legantur*).<sup>53</sup> So he would presumably have had at least some appreciation of their metrical features; and, given that ‘reading’ for the Romans effectively meant ‘reciting aloud’, he must also have recognised how the metres translated aurally into rhythmic patterns.<sup>54</sup> As a result of Moore’s research into the music of Roman comedy, we now have a much better understanding of the relationship between the metre of a text and its musical setting. It seems to have been the case that when the metre remained constant (as we see, for instance, in the longer stichic passages of Plautus and Terence), so too did the accompaniment of the *tibicen*. Likewise, changeable metres meant changeable music. So when Cicero refers in the *De Legibus* to the *severitas iucunda* of Livius’ and Naevius’ *modi*, he may be contrasting the relatively simple and unchanging metres employed by these early playwrights with the modern predilection for rapid fluctuations in metre, changes which in musical terms resulted in a more elaborate and florid style of performance.<sup>55</sup>

In dealing with a philosophical text, it is perhaps unwise to get bogged down in technical niceties. But Zorzetti is right, I think, to insist on the topical relevance of

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<sup>51</sup> See Beacham 1991, 154-198 and Goldberg 1995, 24-5; sources helpfully collected by Prauscello 2006, 61-63.

<sup>52</sup> Moore 2012, 140; see also Moore 2008, 39.

<sup>53</sup> Cic. *Brut.* 18.

<sup>54</sup> On the Roman practice of reading aloud, see Starr 1991.

<sup>55</sup> See Moore 2008, 39, and 2012, 140.

Cicero's remarks: 'What Cicero has to say about stage-music looks less like pure philosophical theory than, more than anything else, a concretely lived preoccupation of the politician'.<sup>56</sup> James Mountford's dismissal of *De Legibus* 2.38-39 as 'a piece of vacillating urbanity' which demonstrates 'no flicker of personal musical experience or conviction' is grossly unwarranted.<sup>57</sup> We know that in Cicero's lifetime the Roman *ludi* underwent a profound transformation that affected not only what audiences saw, but also what they heard. Even without the benefit of extant musical notation, it is clear that the musicians who plied their trade in Rome in the mid-first century BC could benefit from new possibilities for artistic expression.

In 55, a few years before the *De Legibus* is likely to have been written, Pompey the Great dedicated a monumental stone theatre on the Campus Martius.<sup>58</sup> It was the first building of its kind in Rome. At the top of the central part of the *cavea*, looking down on the performance area below, stood a temple to Venus Victrix, and it was as a *templum* rather than as a *theatrum* that the whole complex was dedicated.<sup>59</sup> But first and foremost Pompey's Theatre was a space for spectacle. The inaugural games of September 55, staged in honour of Pompey's victories against the pirates and King

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<sup>56</sup> Zorzetti 1991, 325. Zorzetti goes on to suggest that the passage serves more specifically to define the roles of the aedile in his capacity as organiser of the games. I certainly do not wish to deny that the aedileship figured in Cicero's wider conception of musical decline. But to limit the discussion to this particular magistracy seems overly prescriptive; Zorzetti completely ignores the significance of music in the text.

<sup>57</sup> Mountford 1964, 202. He continues (again wrongly): 'Nowhere else, even in his philosophical works, does Cicero offer anything except conventional and second-hand references to music'.

<sup>58</sup> The Constantinian *Notitia* on *regio X* gives 17,580 as capacity; *contra* Plin. *HN* 36, 115 (capacity of 40,000); Richter 1901, 373. Russell (2016, 155, n. 2) provides a helpful conspectus of the vast bibliography on Pompey's Theatre.

<sup>59</sup> Tert. *De spect.* 10: *non theatrum, sed Veneris templum nuncupavit*; cf. Gell. 10.1.7; Plin. *HN* 8.20; Beard 2007, 23. Traces of the temple may be visible in the Marble Plan, although this has been debated: see Russell 2015, 159, with additional references.

Mithridates, were billed as the greatest in history, of a kind never before witnessed and not to be witnessed again.<sup>60</sup>

Cicero was in the audience, and comments disapprovingly on the day's proceedings in a letter to a friend. He emphasises the hybrid nature of the shows, combining Roman, Greek, and Oscan formats. There were lavish revivals of Accius' *Clytemnestra* and the *Trojan Horse* by Naevius (or Livius Andronicus), each production involving a cast of several hundred actors and live animals, not to mention a prop collection numbering well over a thousand items.<sup>61</sup> There were also mimes.<sup>62</sup> Plutarch and Cassius Dio provide further details. As well as 'gymnastic and musical contests' (ἀγῶνας...γυμνικὸς καὶ μουσικὸς) in the theatre, audiences were treated to a diverse programme of chariot-races and beast-hunts in the Circus Maximus.<sup>63</sup>

The audiences at Pompey's *venationes* may have recoiled in horror at the brutality of the spectacle, but the stage shows were an altogether tamer affair and seem to have been very well received.<sup>64</sup> The popularity of *ludi Graeci* in this period is well documented. Musical artists featured in a theatrical show presided over by the younger Cato in either 53 or 52. The 'agonothetes' on this occasion is said to have distributed crowns of wild olive to the victors, 'as was done at Olympia' – that is to say, the act was

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Cic. *Pis.* 65, with Ascon. 1 Clark, and Nisbet 1961, 199. The suggestion of Gellius (*NA* 10.17) that the complex was actually dedicated during Pompey's third consulship in 52 is not widely accepted: see Russell 2016, 164-5.

<sup>61</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3: *quid enim delectationis habent sescenti muli in 'Clytaemestra' aut in 'Equo Troiano' creterrarum tria milia aut armatura varia peditatus et equitatus in aliqua pugna?* The props had been exhibited previously as spoils at Pompey's triumph in 61: cf. App. *Mith.* 16; Plin. *HN* 37.14; Russell 2016, 163.

<sup>62</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.2: *illi interea qui te istis reliquerunt spectarent communis mimos semisomni.* On the 'public mimes', see Slater 2002. Cicero mentions (*Fam.* 7.3.1) that a number of legendary artists were persuaded to come out of retirement in order to make an appearance; cf. Plin. *HN* 7.158 on the *emboliaria* Galeria Copiola. The evidence for the musical accompaniment of the mime is helpfully collected by Skulimowska 1966 and Wootton 2004; cf. esp. Cic. *Cael.* 65: *scabilla concrepant, aulaeum tollitur.*

<sup>63</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 52.4; Dio 39.38.1. Cicero mentions *ludi Graeci* in his letter (*Fam.* 7.1.3).

<sup>64</sup> Unpopularity of *venationes*: Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3 (*delectatio nulla exstitit*); Dio 39.38.2; Plut. *HN* 8.21. Popularity of shows: Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3 (*quae popularem admirationem habuerunt*); Plut. *Pomp.* 53.1 (ἐπὶ τοῦτοις δὲ θαυμαστωθεὶς καὶ ἀγαπηθεὶς).

performed in imitation of a Greek *agon*.<sup>65</sup> The late Republican mime-actress Eucharis boasted on her epitaph that she had ‘recently adorned the nobles’ games’ (*modo nobilium ludos decoravi*) and ‘appeared before the people for the first time on the Greek stage’ (*Graeca in scaena prima populo apparui*).<sup>66</sup> An ‘association of Greek singers’ (*societas cantorum Graecorum*) and a ‘great association of harpists’ (*synhodus magna psaltum*) are known to have resided in Rome during the first century BC.<sup>67</sup>

Pompey’s *agones* can be seen as part of a continuing trend of Roman *triumphatores* accommodating Greek musical culture through the medium of a bombastic theatrical display. This trend, as we saw in Chapter I, traced its origins back to the early second century with the games of M. Fulvius Nobilior and L. Aemilius Paullus. Crucially, Pompey made it possible, for the first time, for audiences in Rome to hear Greek music performed in the kind of space for which it was originally intended. According to Plutarch, Pompey was inspired to build a theatre based on classical Greek proportions after he visited the Lesbian city of Mytilene in 62 BC and participated in a local festival there.<sup>68</sup> Those who visited the finished monument in the Campus Martius would have been struck by the rich array of Greek artworks which decorated the portico

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<sup>65</sup> Plut. *Cat. Min.* 46.2-3: διδοὺς καὶ τοῖς θυμελικοῖς στεφάνους μὲν οὐ χρυσοῦς, ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ κοτίνων; Cato is said to be ‘playing the *agonothetes*’ (ὑποκρινομένῳ...τῷ Κάτωνι τὸν ἀγωνοθέτην; *ibid.* 46.4). *Ludi thymelici* were based on a Greek agonistic format and probably incorporated choral singing: *LSJ* s.v. θυμελικός; cf. *SIG* 457.1; *IG* 22.1350; *Virtuv.* 5.7.2; *Ulp. Dig.* 3.2.4; *Isid. Orig.* 18.47; Lightfoot 2002, 210; Rocconi 2006, 74-75. On the dating of this episode, see Linderski 1972, 76.

<sup>66</sup> *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 1214. This inscription has generated a great deal of discussion, much of it concerning the ambiguous meaning of *prima* (did Eucharis make her debut on the Greek stage or was she the first to appear on it?): see Wiseman 1985, 30-35; Alonso Fernández 2015, 322-324.

<sup>67</sup> The *societas cantorum Graecorum* is attested uniquely at *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 2519 = *ILLRP* 771; see Jory 1970, 243; Giovagnoli 2014. The origin and function of the *synhodus magna psaltum* is equally obscure: cf. *CIL* VI 33968. On the Republican phenomenon of *ludi Graeci*, see Crowther 1983, though unfortunately ignoring the epigraphic evidence.

<sup>68</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 42.4; Gold 1985, 312-327.

behind the stage-building, including specially commissioned statues of Apollo and the Muses.<sup>69</sup>

One wonders whether the lingering memory of Pompey's tiresomely overblown spectacles prompted in some way Cicero's nostalgia for the simple music of the past. Perhaps Cicero believed that the *severitas iucunda* of the old *modi* had been corroded by the modern urge towards ever-greater refinement, of which Pompey's triumphal *ludi* were a prime culprit (Cicero calls them an 'elaborate production', *apparatus spectatio*).<sup>70</sup> Thus, a play like the *Clytemnestra* or the *Trojan Horse* could be attractively simple in its original, unembellished state, while losing 'all sense of enjoyment' (*omnem hilaritatem*) when tailored to modern tastes. Writing in the mid-50s, Cicero expresses his dislike of citharodes who expend all their energies on attention-grabbing preludes, only then to rush through the remainder of the performance 'in such a way that they seem not to want to be listened to' (*sic ad reliqua transeunt ut audientiam fieri sibi non velle videantur*).<sup>71</sup> These fêted virtuosi may have reduced the snooty senator to a state of ennui, but one can easily imagine the hordes of fans that flocked to see them whenever they gave a public recital. There can be no doubt that the music produced in Pompey's Theatre would have been considerably louder and showier than what audiences had been used to – the size of the venue simply demanded it.<sup>72</sup> Acoustic studies have shown that musical performances in a large stone theatre, with tiered seating and an imposing *scaenae frons*, would have sounded very different from

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<sup>69</sup> On the artworks, cf. Plin. *HN* 7.34 (Alcippe), 35.114 (Cadmus and Europa by Antiphilos), 35.39 ('Shield-bearer' by Polygnotos), 35.132 (Alexander mosaic by Nicias); Beard 2007, 24-26; Russell 2016, 176-178. On the Apollo group, see Fuchs 1982.

<sup>70</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3: *apparatus enim spectatio tollebat omnem hilaritatem*.

<sup>71</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 2.325. On the *citharoedi prooemium*, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.2; Power 2010, 187-200.

<sup>72</sup> Based on residual traces of the ground-plan in the modern cityscape, the stage of Pompey's Theatre is estimated to have been about 70 metres wide. Filling this huge stage, as Wiseman (2015, 89) points out, would have 'demanded music and dance, not just words'.

those in a wooden auditorium, regardless of what the musicians were actually playing.<sup>73</sup> Vitruvius reveals as much when he describes how citharodes performing in wooden theatres would turn to face the doors of the stage-building ‘in order to produce a loud effect’.<sup>74</sup> Amidst the new craze for amplification (both architectural and sonic), the old-fashioned Roman predilection for *severitas iucunda* must have looked increasingly like a relic of the distant past.

## 2 In Search of Popular Musicality

‘The cithara has often been thrown out of Pompey’s Theatre’.<sup>75</sup> So states the poet Martial in his fourteenth book of epigrams (the *Apophoreta*). Martial may have been writing during the Principate, but his words would have resonated strongly with audiences in Pompey’s own lifetime. From the very beginning, the theatre existed as a space for the Roman People to come together and express itself. The *Paradoxica Stoicorum* paints a memorable picture of an ‘out-of-time’ (*extra numerum*) actor being noisily ejected from the stage by a disgruntled crowd.<sup>76</sup> In the *De Oratore*, similarly, Cicero describes how ‘the whole theatre’ would ‘erupt’ (*theatra tota reclamant*) whenever an actor misspoke or got out of time with the music, despite the fact that the people protesting had no understanding of *ars numerorum ac modorum*.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Rocconi 2006 provides an up-to-date and accessible discussion of ancient theatrical acoustics.

<sup>74</sup> Vitr. 5.5.7.

<sup>75</sup> Mart. *Ep.* 14.166: [*cithara*] *de Pompeiano saepe est eiecta theatro.*

<sup>76</sup> Cic. *Parad.* 26: *histrio si paulum se movit extra numerum, aut si versus pronuntiatum est syllaba una brevior aut longior, exsibilatur, exploditur.*

<sup>77</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.196; cf. Colum. *Agr.* 12.2.4: *ubi chorus canentium non ad certos modos neque numeris praeuentis magistri consensit, dissonum quiddam et tumultuosum audientibus canere videtur.* For equally discerning (and vulgar) audiences in Alexandria, cf. Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 32.46 and Athen. *Deipn.* 4.176e; see also Smith 2006 on the behaviour of theatre audiences in Early Modern England.

The musicality of the *cavea* is a subject to which Cicero returns on more than one occasion. Elsewhere in the *De Oratore*, Cicero compares the effect of ‘ornateness’ in oratory and in song:

*quanto molliores sunt et deliciores in cantu flexiones et falsae vocolae quam certae et severae! quibus tamen non modo austeri, sed, si saepius fiunt, multitudo ipsa reclamant.* (Cic. *De Orat.* 3.98)

In singing, how much softer and more pleasant are trills and flourishes than notes firmly held! And yet, the former meet with protest not only from persons of severe taste but, if used too often, even from the general public. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

The opposition between the two pairs of adjectives, *molliores/deliciores* and *certae/severae*, immediately brings to mind the *mollitia/severitas* dichotomy exploited in the *De Legibus*. In both passages, Cicero associates *flexiones* with a ‘false’, and so ‘unnatural’, embellishment which goes against the ideals of austerity and moderation (hence *flexiones* should not be used ‘too often’, *saepius*). ‘Men of severe tastes’ (*austeri*) justly reject such embellishment as unseemly, and even the masses make a fuss when they perceive that natural limits have been transgressed. But the implication, nevertheless, is that the majority of theatre-goers approve of the modern style. People know what is aesthetically ‘pleasing’ but are ignorant of what is artistically ‘pure’ and thus ethically ‘good’; again, when it comes to music, they are ‘artless’. ‘Softness’ in music, moreover, breeds ‘effeminacy’ in listeners; *mollitia* carries this double valence.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing a few decades after Cicero, makes a similar connection in his treatise *De Compositione Verborum*:

ἤδη δ’ ἔγωγε καὶ ἐν τοῖς πολυανθρωποτάτοις θεάτροις, ἃ συμπληροῖ παντοδαπὸς καὶ ἄμουσος ὄχλος, ἔδοξα καταμαθεῖν, ὡς φυσικὴ τις ἀπάντων ἐστὶν ἡμῶν οἰκειότης πρὸς ἐμμέλειαν τε καὶ εὐρυθμίαν, κιθαριστὴν τε ἀγαθὸν σφόδρα εὐδοκιμοῦντα ἰδὼν θορυβηθέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους, ὅτι μίαν χορδὴν ἀσύμφωνον ἔκρουσε καὶ διέφθειρεν τὸ μέλος, καὶ αὐλητὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἄκρας ἕξεως χρώμενον τοῖς ὀργάνοις τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο παθόντα, ὅτι σομφὸν ἐμπνεύσας ἢ μὴ πέσας τὸ στόμα θρυλιγμὸν ἢ τὴν καλουμένην ἐκμέλειαν ἠῦλησε. (Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 11)

Before now I have thought I perceived, even in the most populous theatres, filled with a crowd of men of all kinds with no appreciation of music, how all of us feel naturally at home with tuneful melody and good rhythm. I have seen an able and very renowned citharist booed by the public because he struck a single false note and so spoiled the melody. I have also seen an aulete who handled his instrument with supreme skill suffering the same fate because he blew thickly, or through not tightening his embouchure produced a discordant sound or what is called a “broken note” as he played. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Dionysius wrote these words while employed as a teacher of rhetoric in Rome. Like Cicero, he takes pains to distinguish the critical faculty of the theatre-going *plebs* from that of the skilled musical connoisseur. The former is based on an innately endowed ‘feeling’ (πάθος), lacking in intellectual rigour, whereas the latter requires a technical ‘expertise’ (ἐπιστήμη), which can only be acquired through specialist training. Hence, the ordinary listener (ιδιώτης) can be acutely sensitive to faults in melody or rhythm while still being essentially ἄμουσος, that is, unable to appreciate the relative merits of a musical performance as a whole.

The relationship between music and sensory perception was of particular interest to the Epicurean poet Lucretius. In Book 4 of the *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius describes in evocative terms how the sights and sounds of a theatrical production tend to linger in the spectators’ memory long after the performance has ended, ‘so that even while awake they seem to perceive dancers swaying their supple limbs and to hear in their ears the lyre’s rippling tune and its speaking strings’.<sup>78</sup> In Book 5, Lucretius advances the theory that music was not bestowed by the gods but was invented by mankind and perfected over time through experimentation: first, man learnt to sing by imitating birdsong; then he invented the pipes (*tibiae*); and finally he introduced music and dance to the banquet.<sup>79</sup> Although Lucretius is keen to emphasise that this evolution was driven by an innate human desire to innovate (cf. 5.332-334, 5.1405), and although he recognises

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<sup>78</sup> Lucr. *DRN* 4.979-982: *etiam vigilantes ut videantur /cernere saltantis et mollia membra moventis/ et citharae liquidum carmen chordasque loquentis/ auribus accipere*; cf. Prop. 2.22a.4-6, on the temptations of music and dance in the theatre.

<sup>79</sup> Lucr. *DRN* 5.1379-1404.

music as one of the cornerstones of civilization, he concedes that there are some in his own time who resist musical change: ‘even now the *vigiles* keep up these traditions [i.e. the ancient practice of singing and playing reed instruments], and they have learnt how to preserve the various kinds of rhythm’ (*etiam vigiles nunc haec accepta tuentur et numerum servare genus didicere*).<sup>80</sup>

Who are these mysterious *vigiles*? Surely not military or civic ‘watchmen’, as some translators have naively assumed; these *vigiles* are cultural ‘guardians’, champions of the *mos maiorum* who safeguard Rome’s musical customs from the threat of change. It would be helpful from a historical perspective to know whether Lucretius is alluding here to a mainstream conservatism among contemporary musicians or rather to a small group of traditionalists resisting the tide of modernization.<sup>81</sup> The lines in question are highly ambiguous. Of course, Lucretius’ concern is philosophical, not historical: however complex and sophisticated music becomes, its capacity to provide pleasure is no greater than when it was first discovered in its natural, primitive state. The thrall of the new must be tempered by reverence for the old.<sup>82</sup>

Another author who wrote extensively on musical subjects was Varro. Varro’s most important work on music, the *De Musica*, is sadly lost, but the range of his musicological interests can be gauged from his surviving works and fragments.<sup>83</sup> A stray quotation from one of the *Menippean Satires* stands out: ‘...the minds of the

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<sup>80</sup> Lucr. *DRN* 5.1408-1409.

<sup>81</sup> Whether Lucretius is thinking specifically of *poetae* or of a wider category of *musici* is debatable; see Armstrong 1995, 214, with n. 10, arguing for the former.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Lucr. *DRN* 5.1412-1415.

<sup>83</sup> Testimonia for the *De Musica* are collected by Ritschl 1877. Cf. Var. *LL* 5.91, 5.117, 6.75, on the etymology of certain musical terms; *LL* 9.111, on divergent musical schools of thought. Unplaced Varronian fragments dealing with musical themes include: Cassiodorus *De Musica* 8.15, on the notes of the tetrachord; Martianus Capella 9.928, on the ‘Islands of the Nymphs’ in Lydia moved by the sound of *tibiae*; Augustine *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.16.26, on the tripartite division of sound into vocal, blown, and struck. Augustine’s definition of *musica* as ‘the science of modulating well’ (*scientia bene modulandi*) has also been credited to Varro: August. *De Musica* 1.2.2 = Censor. *Die Nat.* 10.3; Rawson 1985, 167-168.

whole theatre are often moved by the *tibiae*, with their frequent bending (*crebro flectendo*), and their spirits are aroused'.<sup>84</sup> Like Cicero, Varro characterises modern stage-music by its 'bending' (both authors use a form of *flectere*). This 'bending' creates a stirring emotional impulse which alters the listener's mental state (*conmutari mentes*). The response is both universal and uniform (*tota theatra*). The Ciceronian parallel is particularly apt if my reading of *tibicines* in the *De Legibus* is valid.

Varro certainly spent a lot of time thinking about pipes. A passing allusion in the *Res Rusticae* provides important evidence for the interrelationship between the two *tibiae*: one plays the melody (*incentiva*), while the other provides the accompaniment (*succentiva*).<sup>85</sup> According to a scholiast on Horace, Varro had seen an old type of *tibiae* with four holes in the temple of Marsyas and wrote about this instrument in two works, the *De Lingua Latina* and the *Disciplinae*.<sup>86</sup> The context is obscure, since the original texts do not survive, but it is probable that at least one of these works (particularly the *Disciplinae*) dealt with questions of organology and morality. Some insight into the possible nature of Varro's discussion can be gained from an excerpt of Pliny's *Natural History*: 'after variety came into fashion, and luxury even in music' (*postquam varietas accessit et cantus quoque luxuria*), the reeds used to make pipes were optimised 'for modulating sounds, as is still the case today' (*ad flectendos sonos, quae inde sunt et*

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<sup>84</sup> Var. *Sat.* fr. 365: *saepe totius theatri tibiis, crebro flectendo, conmutari mentes, erigi animos eorum*. All references to the *Menippean Satires* are according to the numeration in Astbury 1985 and Krenkel 2002. On the general content of the work, see Coffey 1976, 149-64; Horsfall 1982, 286-290; Wiseman 2009, 131-51.

<sup>85</sup> Var. *R.* 1.2.15-17.

<sup>86</sup> Var. fr. 44 Funaioli = Pseudo-Acro on Hor. *Ars* 202: [Varro] *ait in tertio Disciplinarum et ad Marcellum De Lingua Latina quattuor foraminum fuisse tibiis apud antiquos; nam et ipsum in Marsiae (i.e. Marsyae) templo vidisse tibiis quattuor foraminum*. This would imply that the *De Musica* comprised the third book of the *Disciplinae*; however, the reading *tertio Disciplinarum* is disputed: see Shanzer 2005, esp. 102. Wiseman suspects that the temple referred to in the scholion is the ancient temple of Marsyas at Kelainai (cf. Hdt. 7.26.3, X. *An.* 1.2.8). That would mean that Varro 'had been in Phrygia himself, thinking about musical instruments' (Wiseman 2009, 145); the *tibia Phrygia* appears in another Varronian fragment (Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.61). Cichorius 1922, 204-205 places Varro in Phrygia in 66, during Pompey's eastern campaigns.

*hodie*).<sup>87</sup> For Pliny, as for Varro, ‘modern’ music was characterised by its *varietas* and *flexiones*; and like Cicero, Pliny believed that these ingredients produced a morally inferior kind of music that reflected the general prevalence of *luxuria* within society as a whole.

The fragment from the *Menippean Satires* quoted above is preserved by the late-antique grammarian Nonius and comes from a satire entitled *Onos Lyras* (‘Donkey Hears the Lyre’). This rather unusual title appears to have been inspired by a Greek fable about a donkey who discovers a lyre abandoned in a meadow and attempts in vain to make music on it.<sup>88</sup> Other fragments grouped by Nonius under the same heading give a flavour of what the work contained. There is (unsurprisingly!) a distinct preponderance of musical themes, touching on aspects of history, mythology, and philosophy.<sup>89</sup> The *Onos Lyras* was in this sense a typical Varronian satire, showcasing its author’s encyclopaedic knowledge and inventiveness to full effect. According to Elizabeth Rawson, the *Onos Lyras* probably took the form of a quasi-comical dialogue between a *musicus* and a critic and was ‘largely about music in the theatre’.<sup>90</sup> Peter Wiseman has gone a step further by suggesting that the satire was in fact originally written for the stage, and ended with an actor reciting the traditional exit line: ‘Farewell, and send me away with applause’ (*valete et me palmulis producite*).<sup>91</sup> Wiseman enlists support from the satire *Glory* (*on Envy*), which addresses an audience *in theatro* and

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<sup>87</sup> Plin. *HN* 1.170-171.

<sup>88</sup> On the origins of the fable, see Phaedrus, ‘Perotti’s Appendix’, no. 14, in Perry 1965, 390-91; Adolf 1950. On the satire itself, see text and commentary in Krenkel 2002; brief discussion in Rawson 1985, 168, and Wiseman 2009, 138, 145. An additional Varronian fragment, found in a scholiast on Vergil and describing the aid of the *cithara* in the ascension of souls, was attributed to the *Onos Lyras*, but this attribution has since been disputed: see Nock 1927 and 1929.

<sup>89</sup> Aristoxenus: fr. 360; Amphion: fr. 367; harmony of the spheres: fr. 351; rustic songs: fr. 363; musical criticism: fr. 349, 350, 359; *tibicines* in the *orchestra*: fr. 561.

<sup>90</sup> Rawson 1985, 168.

<sup>91</sup> Varro *Sat.* fr. 355 (Nonius 593L); Wiseman 2009, 138: ‘performance was the primary medium’. Cf. fr. 359 (Nonius 268L), also from *Onos Lyras*: ‘He started to get nasty. “The things you know”, he said, “and publicize to the masses, and that “art without art” you’re putting out...”’ (Trans. Wiseman).

calls on listeners to ‘take literature home from the theatre’ (*domum...feratis ex theatro litteras*).<sup>92</sup> Wiseman suggests, moreover, that the *Onos Lyras* may have incorporated elements of song and dance, reflecting the ‘multi-metric’ character of the dialogue.<sup>93</sup> If so, the actor(s) may well have been accompanied by musicians and dancers.

The prospect of a dramatized debate about music staged before a Roman audience is tantalising indeed, but we should not get carried away. Whether the average Roman theatre-goer in the time of Cicero would have known the difference between the Phrygian and Dorian *harmoniae* or could have recalled the names of the three *genera* is a matter of speculation. Both Cicero and Dionysius make the point that the common *vulgus* could complain when a song sounded wrong without being able to identify exactly what was wrong about it. Elite prejudice aside, there is no obvious reason to doubt this assessment. Philodemus, a contemporary of Cicero, states unequivocally that ‘musical theory is incomprehensible in the eyes of most people’.<sup>94</sup> Many of us today, from our own frequent exposure to music, possess the ability to name countless songs after hearing just the opening melodic or rhythmic hook, without needing to call upon any theoretical or technical expertise. The Romans certainly understood the value of singing as a mnemonic aid, as is brought out suggestively by Nicholas Horsfall in *The Culture of the Roman Plebs*.<sup>95</sup> The idea that Roman schoolchildren were required to memorise the Twelve Tables as a *carmen* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.59) does not mean, of course, that the majority of the educated population was well versed in harmonic or acoustic theory. But the content of Varro’s satire, insofar as it can be reconstructed, does suggest a

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<sup>92</sup> Varro *Sat.* fr. 218 (Nonius 510L): *vosque in theatro, qui voluptatem auribus / huc aucupatum concurristis domo, / adeste et a me quae feram cognoscite, / domum ut feratis ex theatro litteras.*

<sup>93</sup> Wiseman 2009, 143: ‘the *satura* was indeed a “mixed dish”, not only a showpiece for a versatile performer but also a wonderfully entertaining medium for an author who wanted to reach the Roman People.’

<sup>94</sup> Phld. *Mus.* col. 152. 19-21 Delattre: Τὸ δὲ θεωρητικὸν πρὸς τῶν πλείστων οὐ συνιέμενον. Note that Vitruvius prefaces his discussion of music theory with the warning that *harmonica autem est musica litteratura obscura et difficilis, maxime quidem quibus Graecae litterae non sunt notae* (5.4.1).

<sup>95</sup> Horsfall 2003, esp. 11.

widespread participation in, and familiarity with, the intellectual rudiments of musical *paideia*, which may (if Wiseman's conjecture is correct) have penetrated beyond the schools and libraries of the elite and taken hold amongst the wider public. That would contradict the accepted view, espoused most notably by Rawson, that the Romans drew a sharp conceptual distinction between the theory of music and its practical application.<sup>96</sup>

### 3 Musical *Ethos* and Aristocratic Ethics

With these points in mind, let us return to the *De Legibus*. For all Cicero's admiration of Plato, there is one crucial point on which the two men diverge – that is, the relationship between 'musical laws' (*musicae leges*) and 'public laws' (*publicae leges*). Cicero makes his difference of opinion felt in a pointed first-person statement: *ego autem nec tam valde id timendum nec plane contemnendum puto*. At first glance, this seems a rather nebulous response to what was for Plato a fundamental philosophical tenet. How can we make sense of it?

To answer this question, we need to turn to a passage later on in the work:

*nam licet videre, si velis replicare memoriam temporum, qualescumque summi civitatis viri fuerint, talem civitatem fuisse; quaecumque mutatio morum in principibus extiterit, eandem in populo secutam. idque haud paulo est verius, quam quod Platoni nostro placet, qui musicorum cantibus ait mutatis mutari civitatum status. ego autem nobilium vita victuque mutato mores mutari civitatum puto. quo perniciosius de re publica merentur vitiosi principes, quod non solum vitia concipiunt ipsi, sed ea infundunt in civitatem, neque solum obsunt, quod ipsi corrumpuntur, sed etiam quod corrumpunt, plusque exemplo quam peccato nocent. atque haec lex dilatata in ordinem cunctum coangustari etiam potest; pauci enim atque admodum pauci honore et gloria amplificati vel corrumpere mores civitatis vel corrigere possunt. sed haec et nunc satis et in illis libris tractata sunt diligentius. (Cic. Leg. 3.31-32)*

For, if you will turn your thoughts back to our early history, you will see that the character of our most prominent men has been reproduced in the whole state; whatever change took place

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<sup>96</sup> Rawson 1985, 167. For a more nuanced analysis, albeit reaching similar conclusions, see Hagel and Lynch 2015, 408-409.

in the lives of the prominent men has also taken place in the whole people. And we can be much more confident of the soundness of this theory than of that of our beloved Plato's. For he thought that the characteristics of a nation could be changed by changing the character of its music. But I believe that a transformation takes place in a nation's character when the habits and mode of living of its aristocracy are changed. For that reason men of the upper class who do wrong are especially dangerous to the state, because they not only indulge in vicious practices themselves, but also infect the whole commonwealth with their vices; and not only because they are corrupt, but also because they corrupt others, and do more harm by their bad examples than by their sins. But this law, which applies to the whole senatorial order, could be made even narrower in its application. For a few men – very few, in fact – on account of their high official position and great reputation, have the power either to corrupt the morals of the nation or to reform them. But I have said enough on this subject, which is treated even more completely in my former work; therefore let us proceed to what follows. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Although Cicero does not explicitly retrace his prior arguments, the echoes of 2.38-39 are unmistakable. On this occasion, however, a different line of enquiry is pursued. Whereas in Book 2 Cicero follows Plato's reasoning by linking changes in theatre music with the decline of public morals, in Book 3 he is oddly dismissive of this approach, changing tack and shifting the focus onto the question of aristocratic ethics. The causes of *mutatio morum*, Cicero claims, are not to be found in a city's musical institutions at all, but rather in the example of its *principes*, its leading citizens. When the customs and lifestyle of the nobility are moral and dignified, then so too is the state and its people. By contrast, immoral leaders are 'especially dangerous' (*perniciosius*) because they set a bad example for the citizen body (*civitas*) as a whole.

Cicero does not count music specifically among the aristocracy's vices, and if the passage were read in isolation one might easily conclude that music had no part whatsoever to play in Cicero's political philosophy. But we should remember his admonition in the previous book: even if musical change is not to be feared too greatly, it should not be dismissed either (*nec plane contemnendum*). Modern critics have too easily rejected this statement as a blunt equivocation, lacking the analytical scrutiny which Plato and the Greek musicologists had applied to the same issue. And yet, when

read as a prequel to the analysis of 3.32, the rationality of Cicero's arguments can be more fruitfully examined.

Cicero brings the discussion in Book 3 to an abrupt close, stating that he has now said enough on the topic (*nunc satis*). He justifies his succinctness by flagging up a previous work in which the same material (*haec*) is treated more fully (*in illis libris tractata sunt diligentius*). It is left ambiguous as to whether *haec* is supposed to bracket the entire chapter, including the comments on music, or exclusively the commentary of the second half. A stronger case, in my opinion, can be made for the former. The 'books' in question must come from the *De Re Publica*, a treatise which, as Cicero elsewhere makes clear, was composed in conjunction with the *De Legibus*.<sup>97</sup> Like its companion work, the *De Re Publica* is only partially preserved; the passage which Cicero is referring to does not survive. However, a little-known reference in Aristides Quintilianus' *De Musica* reveals that the *De Re Publica* contained 'words spoken against music' (ἐν τοῖς Κικέρωνος τοῦ Ῥωμαίου Πολιτικοῦ τὰ κατὰ μουσικῆς ῥηθέντα).<sup>98</sup> Aristides mentions this fact in order to counter his opponents' claim that these 'words' reflected the true sentiments of Cicero himself. The claim is refuted on the basis that Cicero, in his (now fragmentary) speech on behalf of the actor Q. Roscius, praises his client for his artistic skill, despite the fact that he performed, in Aristides' view, 'in rhythms alone, and ignoble and vulgar ones at that' (ῥυθμοῖς μόνοις καὶ τούτοις ἀγεννέσι καὶ φαύλοις).<sup>99</sup> Aristides proceeds to make the point that even if

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<sup>97</sup> For the relationship between the two works, cf. *Leg.* 1.15, 2.14, 2.23; Lintott 2008, 436-438.

<sup>98</sup> Aristid. Quint. 2.61, with translation in Barker 1989, 465-466. The word ῥηθέντα is daggered in some editions, but I take the reading to be sound (following Barker 1989).

<sup>99</sup> The passage from Cicero's *Pro Q. Rosc. Com.* does not survive.

certain musicians are corrupted by a desire to please the masses, the musical *techne* itself should not be dismissed out of hand.<sup>100</sup>

To what extent do these ideas cohere with the comments made by Cicero ‘against music’ in the *De Re Publica*? There is certainly nothing in the extant text which implies an opposition to music *in general*. On the contrary, Cicero assigns music a paradigmatic role within the overall argumentation. Book 6, the so-called ‘Dream of Scipio’, gives a comprehensive exposition of the Pythagorean ‘harmony of the spheres’.<sup>101</sup> More importantly, Cicero deploys the same concept of musical *harmonia* in Book 2 in order to illustrate the concept of political *concordia*:

*ut enim in fidibus aut tibiis atque ut in cantu ipso ac vocibus concertus est quidam tenendus ex distinctis sonis, quem inmutatum aut discrepantem aures eruditae ferre non possunt, isque concertus ex dissimillarum vocum moderatione concors tamen efficitur et congruens, sic ex summis et infimis et mediis interiectis ordinibus ut sonis moderata ratione civitas consensus dissimillorum concinit; et quae harmonia a musicis dicitur in cantu, ea est in civitate concordia, artissimum atque optimum omni in re publica vinculum incolumitatis, eaque sine iustitia nullo pacto esse potest. (Cic. Rep. 2.69 = August. De Civ. Dei 2.21)*

For just as in the music of lyres and pipes or in the voices of singers a certain harmony of the different tones must be preserved, the interruption or violation of which is intolerable to trained ears, and as this perfect agreement and harmony is produced by the proportionate blending of unlike tones, so also is a state made harmonious by agreement among dissimilar elements, brought about by a fair and reasonable blending together of the upper, middle, and lower classes, just as if they were musical tones. What the musicians call harmony in song is concord in a state, the strongest and best bond of permanent union in any commonwealth; and such concord can never be brought about without the aid of justice. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

The image of a society ‘harmonised’ by the mutual consensus of its citizens provides a striking counterpoint to the images of musical and political dissonance that we encounter in the *De Legibus*. The tripartite division of *cantus*, *fides*, and *tibiae* also structures the legal prescriptions for the *cavea* at 2.38 (*cantu vacet et fidibus et tibiis*). Obviously, Cicero is not suggesting that changes in music lead directly to changes in the

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<sup>100</sup> Aristid. Quint. 2.61: εἴ τινες τῶν τεχνιτῶν διὰ τὸ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀρέσκειν τὰ ἀγεννῆ μελωδοῦσιν, οὐ τῆς τέχνης τὸ αἰτίημα.

<sup>101</sup> Cic. *Rep.* 6.18; with Ronconi 1961, 107-113.

state. His aim, rather, is to show by way of analogy that hierarchies in the musical order (the discrete intervals of the scale) mirror hierarchies in the political order (the constitution of the *res publica*); and so when these hierarchies are not effectively ‘blended’, the process of destabilisation that ensues is one and the same. Just as in music the subversion of established rules is resisted by those with ‘trained ears’ (*aures eruditae*) – we might identify this group with the *austeri* mentioned at *De Oratore* 3.98 or Lucretius’ *vigiles* – so too in politics the dispensers of justice (*iustitia*) must guard against changes to the status quo.

All of this evidence points firmly to the conclusion that Cicero’s polemic in the *De Re Publica* focused not on music in general, but on a particular *kind* of music: the popular music of the theatre; music designed to ‘please the masses’; ‘bad’ music. This is, after all, precisely the line of attack taken in the *De Legibus*, and a correspondence in this regard would certainly not be surprising given what we know about the content of the two works and their relationship with one another.

Generally speaking, the social, economic, and political status of musicians was greatly inferior in late Republican Rome than in fifth-century Athens. This point may seem axiomatic, but it is vital to explaining the conflicting viewpoints of Greek and Roman philosophers. Plato believed that the seeds of moral decay in the *polis* were sown by professional *mousikoi*. By and large, these were freeborn men whose artistic accomplishments conferred on them a great deal of cultural, as well as actual, capital. Throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods, musicians had the opportunity to represent their community on the political stage, whether as competitors at panhellenic festivals or as members of foreign embassies. In return, they could expect to be

honoured by their native *polis* with copious civic honours.<sup>102</sup> In Cicero's Rome, by contrast, stage-performers, or *scaenici*, were almost exclusively of servile origin. They were commonly lumped with prostitutes as persons of *infamia*, marginalised from civic life.<sup>103</sup> In effect, those who made money from the entertainment industry were excluded from the processes of communal decision-making. Actors and musicians certainly played a role in the crowd politics of the theatre, as we have seen, but in the eyes of Roman elites they lacked any real political agency of their own.

There is a simple conclusion I wish to draw from this comparison. If the state was destabilised from its core, the *summi civitatis viri*, the governing elite, were the ones to blame – and not the *scaenici* themselves.<sup>104</sup> After all, the performers who appeared at the *ludi* did so at the behest of the presiding magistrate; it was he who employed their services, and it was he who therefore determined the quality of the show. Music still had to be factored into the equation because it was precisely the upper classes that were tasked with keeping its potentially destructive power in check. It was their misuse of this power, Cicero implies, that in turn unleashed the passions of the music-loving *plebs*. Thus Cicero could imagine a Roman citizenry corrupted by the music of the stage while rejecting a direct causative link between *musicarum leges* and *publicae leges*.

The idea of a Roman state perverted by an 'unmusical' aristocracy is memorably exploited by Aristides Quintilianus in the section which follows his defence of Cicero.

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<sup>102</sup> On the Greeks' respect for *scaenici*, cf. Cic. *Arch.* 10; *Rep.* 4.13 (= August. *de Civ. Dei.* 2.11). In the first century BC, the citharode Anaxenor of Magnesia was honoured with a painted portrait in the market and a statue in the theatre of his city: *I. Magnesia* 129; cf. Strab. 14.1.41; Chaniotis 2009. A statue of the celebrated aulete Pronomos could still be seen in the *agora* of Thebes in the second century AD: cf. Paus. 9.12.5.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 4.10.12 (= August. *de Civ. Dei.* 2.14.ext.): *veteribus displicuisse Romanis vel laudari quemquam in scaena vivum hominem vel vituperari*. On *infamia* and the acting profession, see Levick 1983, 108-110; Edwards 1993, 98-136, and 1997, *passim*; Duncan 2006, 128-131.

<sup>104</sup> On the link between moral authority and political authority in late Republican thought, see Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 11-12.

Aristides conjures up a harrowing image of a city ravaged by violence and internecine strife:

ὁ δὲ δὴ μέγιστον ἀπάντων, ὅτι καὶ κατὰ τινὰς καιροὺς ἀμουσοτέρων τῶν προστατῶν τῆς πολιτείας πεπειραμένη τῶν ὑπὸ Πλάτωνος ἐν Πολιτεία λόγῳ χρησιμωδουμένων ἔργῳ πεπείραται, ἐν μέσαις ἀγυαῖς καὶ ἱερῶν κάλλεσιν ὠμοτάτην τῶν πολιτῶν κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐσιδοῦσα μαιφονίαν. (Aristid. Quint. 2.62)

Most remarkable of all, when at various times Rome had, as leaders of the state, men deficient in musical cultivation, it experienced in practice what Plato in his *Republic* had prophesied, and saw its citizens murdering one another most brutally in the middle of its streets and among the beauties of its temples. (Trans. Barker 1989)

This astonishing vision of the Roman *urbs* locked in a Platonic dystopia has received almost no attention from modern scholars. The obscurity of the author himself has no doubt contributed to this neglect. We do not know exactly when Aristides was writing (the late third or early fourth century AD seems the most reasonable guess), nor do we know who he was writing for. Although Aristides does not refer explicitly to a particular historical event, it seems highly probable that the civil unrest of the late Republic was foremost in the author's mind. The allusion to Plato's *Republic*, coupled with the reference to Cicero's *De Re Publica* in the previous chapter, strongly evokes a republican setting.<sup>105</sup>

The critical word is ἀμουσοτέρων. Aristides is not suggesting that the Roman aristocracy lacked a practical knowledge of music or indeed that there was an absence of music altogether in Rome. What he means, rather, is that the leaders of the state lacked a proper *understanding* of how music should be used; in Barker's translation, they were 'deficient in musical cultivation'.<sup>106</sup> The same must be true of the παντοδαπὸς καὶ ἄμουσος ὄχλος singled out by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The ability of the

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<sup>105</sup> The idea is tentatively advanced by Mathiesen 1983, 126 n. 101 and Barker 1989, 465, but the argument can be made with greater conviction: cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.11.3 on C. Gracchus disturbing the *harmonia* of the state and sowing the seeds of civil discord (discussed below, pp. 109-110).

<sup>106</sup> On the meaning of *amousoi* and *amouisia*, see Harmon 2003.

προστάται (Latin *principes*) to discriminate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ music is thus shown to be essential to the continued stability of the πολιτεία (*civitas*). The nobility sets the example which the general populace follows: what Plato described as the ἄμουσοι βοαὶ πλήθους represents for Aristides the audible corollary of elite ἀμουσία – the sound, no less, of political anarchy.

Cicero perhaps did not think in such stark terms. After all, he makes the point in the *De Officiis* that ‘harmony of actions is greater and better than harmony of sounds’ (*maior et melior actionum quam sonorum concentus est*).<sup>107</sup> However, he did recognise the practical value of a musical education for the aspiring statesman. He believed strongly that good philosophers made good politicians, and in writing about music he was edifying his readers in how to become upstanding pillars of the community. Having ‘trained ears’ obviously did not qualify someone as a suitable candidate for office. But the ability of *musicorum aures* to detect even the slightest solecisms in a *fidicen*’s recital was analogous to the ability of the *bonus vir* to recognise moral defects (*vitia*) in subtle behavioural traits (*ex parvis*).<sup>108</sup> Moreover, at a time when politicians relied heavily on techniques of oratorical persuasion, the ability to ‘charm ears’ was a prerequisite for any elite Roman embarking on a public career. The same basic principles applied to oratory as to music: ‘there are two things which please the ear, sound and number (*duae sunt igitur res quae permulceant auris, sonus et numerus*).<sup>109</sup> ‘For the science of civil oratory’, Dionysius explains, ‘is a kind of musical science’ (μουσική γάρ τις ἦν καὶ ἡ τῶν πολιτικῶν λόγων ἐπιστήμη). ‘In oratory, as in music, the phrases possess melody, rhythm, variety, and appropriateness; so that here too the ear delights in the melodies, is stirred by the rhythms, welcomes the variations, and all the

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<sup>107</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.145.

<sup>108</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.146.

<sup>109</sup> Cic. *Orat.* 163.

time desires what is appropriate to the occasion'.<sup>110</sup> 'The ears of the people', Cicero states in the *Brutus*, are 'a kind of pipes' (*tamquam tibiae*) which the orator must learn to master.<sup>111</sup> The skill of orator and lyre-player alike could be assessed by the *intellegens auditor* on the basis of how they moved their audience (*ex animorum motu*).<sup>112</sup> An orator's words were supposed to play upon the emotions of listeners just as the lyre-player's hand played upon the strings (*tamquam fidibus manum*).<sup>113</sup>

Observing the musician's craft was not only about honing one's ability as a public speaker. Musical knowledge mattered on a deeper level. To understand how harmony worked, how rhythms and scales were governed by natural laws, was to understand the structural forces which bound society together. That is precisely the point made in the *De Re Publica*. And if bad musicians were those who transgressed beyond the limits of moderation in search of popularity with the 'unmusical' masses, then the same thing could be said of bad politicians.

Politicians cared about the way people behaved at the theatre.<sup>114</sup> In the *Pro Sestio*, delivered in 56, Cicero pointed to the *ludi* as one of the three occasions, along with the *contio* and the *comitium*, at which the will of the people was most manifest.<sup>115</sup> Rome's discerning spectators were ready to voice their discontent when an actor hit a wrong note or danced out of time, but they were equally forthright in vocalising their opinion of the powerful official running the show. The fates of performer and producer were closely intertwined. The political success of an aedile or praetor was often

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<sup>110</sup> Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 11.

<sup>111</sup> Cic. *Brut.* 192.

<sup>112</sup> Cic. *Brut.* 199.

<sup>113</sup> Cic. *Brut.* 200; cf. *De Orat.* 3.216-7, comparing an orator's voice to the strings of a lyre (*ut nervi in fidibus*).

<sup>114</sup> On the political dynamics of the late Republican theatre, see Beacham 1999, 45-91, Parker 1999, Flower 2004, Purcell 2013, 451-452, and Wiseman 2017.

<sup>115</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 106. *etenim tribus locis significari maxime de re publica populi Romani iudicium ac voluntas potest, contione, comitiis, ludorum gladiatorumque consessu*; cf. Cic. *Att.* 2.19.3: *populi sensus maxime theatro et spectaculis perspectus est.*

contingent upon his ability to produce attractive *ludi*, and magistrates could measure the behaviour of the *cavea* as a barometer of their popularity with the general public.<sup>116</sup> Actors and musicians were not the only ones who craved the audience's applause.

Cicero's *Pro Sestio* also provides us with our most explicit contemporary definition of the term *popularis*. *Populares*, Cicero explains, are 'those who wanted everything they said and did to be pleasing to the masses' (*qui ea quae faciebant quaeque dicebant multitudini iucunda volebant esse, populares*).<sup>117</sup> The concept of *popularitas iucunda* is particularly striking given Cicero's preference for *severitas iucunda* in music: again, the emphasis is on the effect of a particular sound (or sounds) on the behaviour of listeners. *Optimates* seek a higher calling than mere popularity – *cum dignitate otium*, defined as the respect for the religious, political, legal, and social institutions of the *res publica* (including the *leges* and the *mos maiorum*).<sup>118</sup>

It is instructive, I think, to set the definition of *popularis* in the *Pro Sestio* alongside a passage from the *Tusculan Disputations*, written in the following decade, in which Cicero compares the politician's pursuit of *gloria popularis* with musicians' pursuit of the same goal:

*an tibicines ique, qui fidibus utuntur, suo, non multitudinis arbitrio cantus numerosque moderantur, vir sapiens multo arte maiore praeditus non quid verissimum sit, sed quid velit vulgus, exquiret? an quicquam stultius quam, quos singulos sicut operarios barbarosque contempnas, eos aliquid putare esse universos? (Cic. Tusc. Disp. 5.104)*

Are pipe-players and lyre-players to follow their own tastes, not the tastes of the multitude, in regulating melody and rhythm, and shall the wise man, gifted as he is with a far higher art [i.e. philosophy], seek out not what is truest, but what is the pleasure of the masses? Can anything be more foolish than to suppose that those, whom individually one despises as uncultured labourers, are worth anything collectively? (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.57 (magnificent entertainments expected of *optimi* in the year of their aedileship); cf. *Verr.* 2.5.35: *me quaesturamque meam quasi in aliquo terrarum orbis theatro versari existimarem*. The games were 'a sounding board for political opinion' (Wiseman 2017, 30).

<sup>117</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 96; cf. *Sest.* 140: [*populares*] *imperitae aut concitatae multitudini iucundi esse voluerunt*. On Cicero's use of the term *popularis*, see Seager 1972 and Mackie 1992.

<sup>118</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 98.

Cicero wrote these words in around 45 BC, at a time when the very existence of the Republic was perceived to be under threat from the domination of the *popularis* dictator Caesar.<sup>119</sup> Cicero had suffered personally from the popular politics of the 50s, having been forced into exile by the provocations of the demagogue P. Clodius Pulcher in 58. After his return, tensions in the capital had continued to escalate, culminating towards the end of the decade in the bloody demise of Clodius at the hands of Milo's gangs. Throughout this turbulent period, patterned by recurrent bouts of mob violence, the behaviour of the urban *plebs* at the games was anxiously monitored by members of the senatorial elite whose favour with the people hung in the balance.<sup>120</sup> At the *ludi Apollinares* of 59, the theatre erupted 'with great shouting and clapping' (*magno cum fremitu et clamore*) when a monologue recited by an actor mid-performance was interpreted as a satirical swipe against Pompey. Cicero laid the blame for this outburst specifically with the rabble-rousers Caesar and Clodius, complaining to Atticus that 'these *populares* have now taught even decent people to hiss' (*populares isti iam etiam modestos homines sibilare docuerunt*).<sup>121</sup>

Clodius owed his notoriety to a scandalous incident in 62. The young patrician was caught spying on the secret Bona Dea rites, motivated allegedly by a desire to seduce (or, worse still, rape) Caesar's wife Pompeia. Mindful that the rites were an occasion at which 'there was much music' (μουσικῆς ἄμα πολλῆς παρούσης), Clodius had cunningly disguised himself as a female harp-player (ψαλτρία), not only sporting the correct feminine 'costume' (ἔσθητα) but even bringing his own 'equipment'

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Cic. *Phil.* 5.49 (Caesar's *popularis levitas*). On Caesar as *popularis*, see Yavetz 1969, 44-55, Duplá 2011, 289-290.

<sup>120</sup> The role of the *plebs* in the political life of the late Republic was brought to light by Fergus Millar in the 1990s and has attracted much interest since: see Millar 1995, 1998; Mouritsen 2001. Wiseman (2017) has recently vindicated Millar's arguments by stressing the importance of *ludi scaenici* as a vehicle for popular politics.

<sup>121</sup> Cic. *Att.* 2.19.2-3.

(σκευή).<sup>122</sup> The impersonation backfired, and at the ensuing trial Cicero mocked the aberrant politician for his ‘womanly dress’ (*muliebris ornatus*) and ‘harp-girl’s walk’ (*incessus psaltriae*).<sup>123</sup> A few years later, following Clodius’ controversial adoption as a *popularis*, Cicero played upon the absurd notion of a patrician-musician in a bid to demolish his claims to legitimate popular support.<sup>124</sup>

James Tan has showed how throughout his political career Clodius used the *contio* as a means of breaking down the boundaries between himself and his audience, ‘choreographing’ their performance ‘ahead of time’, so to speak.<sup>125</sup> The events of Milo’s trial in 56 are a case in point. Clodius, then aedile, orchestrated a show of power by getting his supporters to hurl insults at Pompey. ‘Like a chorus trained in responsive song’ (ὡσπερ χορὸς εἰς ἀμοιβαῖα συγκεκροτημένος) is how Plutarch describes the coordinated chanting of the *Clodiani*. Meanwhile, Clodius himself, cast in the role of chorus-master, conducts the assembled choir from the Rostra with the shaking of his toga (τὴν τήβεννον ἀνασεύοντος).<sup>126</sup> The participle συγκεκροτημένος, from the verb συγκροτέω, ‘strike together’, has appropriately musical connotations: it is almost as though the *psaltria*-turned-aedile is playing his audience like an instrument, *tamquam fidibus manum*.

Of course, the musical effect of Clodius’ ‘striking’ was not of the kind that Cicero endorsed. Inveighing against his opponent in the *Pro Sestio*, Cicero is quick to point out the irony that ‘the man who was previously accustomed to celebrate his

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<sup>122</sup> Plut. *Caes.* 9.4, 10.1; cf. Juv. *Sat.* 6.337 (referring to Clodius as *psaltria*). On the citharodic *skeue*, see Power 2010, 11. On the events of the Bona Dea scandal, see Balsdon 1966, Moreau 1982, and Tatum 1999, 62-86.

<sup>123</sup> Cic. *Clod.* fr. 21 Crawford; on the use of *incessus* in Cicero, see Corbeil 2004, 118-120.

<sup>124</sup> Cic. *Har. Resp.* 44: *P. Clodius a crocota, a mitra, a muliebribus soleis purpureisque fasceolis, a strophio, a psalterio, a flagitio, a stupro est factus repente popularis*. Clodius’ intrusion into the rites is also mentioned at *Leg.* 2.36.

<sup>125</sup> Tan 2013.

<sup>126</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 48.7. Waving the toga was a gesture typically used to show support for performers at the games: see Jory 1988, 73 n. 6.

*contiones* with an offensive outburst of singers (*cantorum convicio*), was thrown out by the voices of actual singers' (*cantorum ipsorum vocibus eiciebatur*).<sup>127</sup> This rather unwieldy chiasmus captures a range of negative ideas. On the one hand, Cicero is implying that Clodius 'celebrated' *contiones* as he would a festival, mobilising an army of chanting fans with all the panache of a theatrical diva. On the other hand, the second half of the phrase has Clodius ejected from the theatre like a shoddy actor booed off the stage.<sup>128</sup> Cicero goes on to describe how spectators watched and listened to Clodius as they would an actor reciting a monologue; the sound of his 'rabid voice' (*furialem vocem*) alone was enough to 'defile the Republic' (*maculari rem publicam*).<sup>129</sup> The climax comes towards the end, when Cicero denounces his opponent as an 'arch-performer' (*maxime ludius*), not only a spectator, but an actor and musician (*acroama*), who knows all of his sister's theatrical interludes (*embolia*) and who is brought into a gathering of women in the guise of a harp-girl (*pro psaltria*).<sup>130</sup> Connecting the scandalous episode in 62 with the recent events of Milo's trial, Cicero's words would have issued a potent reminder of the dangerous affinity between the *proscenium*, the *cavea*, and the *contio* as sites where politically-charged songs were performed and disseminated. Spectators in one venue could easily become performers in another; and that blurred the notional distinctions between *nobiles* and *infames*, *honestiores* and *humiliores*, upon which Roman society was built.

Cicero's use of the phrase *cantorum convicium* to describe Clodius' claue of singing supporters seems particularly pertinent here. A fragment from the *Pro Gallio*

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<sup>127</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 118, referring to Clodius' humiliation at the *ludi Apollinares* of 57.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Cic. *Rosc. Com.* 30: *e scaena non modo sibilis sed etiam convicio explodebatur; Parad.* 26: *exsibilatur, exploditur.*

<sup>129</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 106, 108. For a full discussion of theatrical motifs in the *Pro Sestio*, see Leach 2000.

<sup>130</sup> Cic. *Sest.* 116. 'Embolia were balletic interludes, performed between the acts...' (Wiseman 1985, 27, with Schol. Bob. p. 136 Stangl, *pertinent ad gestus saltatorios*). For Clodia's dancing, see pp. 116, n. 158; for Clodia's enjoyment of *cantus* and *symphonia* at Baiae, cf. Cic. *Cael.* 35.

links the ideas of shouting, the intimate gathering of women, and loud music: *fit clamor, fit convicium mulierum, fit symphoniae cantus*.<sup>131</sup> The grammarian Verrius Flaccus, writing towards the end of the first century BC, glosses the word *convicium* as follows:

*“occentassint” antiqui dicebant quod nunc convicium fecerint dicimus, quod id clare et cum quodam canore fit, ut procul exaudiri possit.* (Flaccus ap. Festus 190L)

The ancients used to say *occentassint* (‘they sang against’) to describe what we now call *convicium fecerint* (‘they made an offensive outburst’), because it is done loudly and with a certain musical quality, such that it can be heard from far away.

What we are seeing, then, is a collapsing of the boundaries between popular music and popular politics. By conflating the audience of the theatre with that of the *contio* and *comitium*, and by assimilating the personnel of the stage with the persona of the demagogue, Cicero invests music with a political as well as ideological significance. Traditional, simple music – the kind praised in the *De Legibus* – made the people pliable and placid, aligned with the optimate cause, and thus conducive to the preservation of *concordia ordinum*. The new, modulating music – *modorum flexiones* – made the people immoral and agitated (*improbi* and *furiosi*, to adopt the terminology of the *Pro Sestio*), and thus available as a weapon for *populares* to exploit for evil ends.<sup>132</sup>

Cicero was not the only critic who thought in these terms, nor was Clodius, the harp-girl turned chorus-leader, the only *popularis* deemed to have transgressed the laws of music. In language reminiscent of Aristides Quintilianus, Dionysius recalls how Gaius Gracchus during his tribunate ‘destroyed the *harmonia* of the state’ (διέφθειρε τὴν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἁρμονίαν), from which time the Romans have continually engaged in civil conflict and bloodshed.<sup>133</sup> There is also a story told by Cicero, and

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<sup>131</sup> Cic. *Pro Gallio* fr. 1 Crawford.

<sup>132</sup> At *Sest.* 97, Cicero characterises *optimates* as those *qui neque nocentes sunt nec natura improbi nec furiosi nec malis domesticis impediti*.

<sup>133</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.11.3. One of the first acts of the Senate after Gracchus’ murder was to erect a temple to Concord in the Forum: App. *BC* 1.26; Plut. *C. Gracch.* 17.9-10.

repeated by several later authors, that Gaius Gracchus, while addressing the *contio*, was in the habit of employing a *fistulator* to stand behind him out of sight, ‘in order promptly to blow a note to rouse him when he was getting slack or to check him from overstraining his voice’.<sup>134</sup> The interlocutor Crassus, after explaining the principle behind the *Gracchi fistula*, concludes that ‘you should leave the *fistulator* at home, but take with you to the forum the perception that this man’s custom gives you’.<sup>135</sup> Quintilian’s version specifies that Gracchus ‘took this trouble in his most turbulent speeches (*turbidissimas actiones*), when he was either terrifying the *optimates*, or beginning to be afraid of them’.<sup>136</sup> In effect, the demagogue was harnessing the power of musical *ethos* as a way of maintaining control over himself and his listeners. As a consequence, Gracchus aggravated the conflict between *optimates* and *populares* that would continue to dominate the political scene until the death of Julius Caesar.

#### 4 Bad Men, Bad Music: *Saltatores* and *Symphoniaci*

‘We know that, according to our customs, music is not in keeping with the personality of a leading citizen, while dancing is even counted among the vices; all these things are considered pleasing and praiseworthy among the Greeks’.<sup>137</sup> Thus begins the preface to the *Life of Epaminondas* composed by the historian and biographer Cornelius Nepos. Startlingly few scholars have considered Nepos’ comments in any detail, and too often the passage has been cited uncritically as evidence of the Romans’ antipathy towards

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<sup>134</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 2.225: *qui inflaret celeriter eum sonum quo illum aut remissum excitaret aut a contentione revocaret*; cf. Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 5; Aul. Gel. *NA* 1.11.12; Val. Max. 8.10.1; Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.27; Dio fr. 85.2; Amm. Marc. 30.4.19.

<sup>135</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 2.227: *fistulatorem domi relinquitis, sensum huius consuetudinis vobiscum ad forum deferetis.*

<sup>136</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.27.

<sup>137</sup> Nep. *Ep.* 1.2: *scimus enim musicen nostris moribus abesse a principis persona, saltare vero etiam in vitiis poni; quae omnia apud Graecos et grata et laude digna ducuntur.*

music.<sup>138</sup> But we are much better placed to understand Nepos' cultural relativism when we appreciate both the wider aims of his writing and the intellectual milieu to which he belonged. What is at stake in Nepos' comparison is not the question of Roman 'musicality' in a general sense, but rather the underlying cultural assumptions which determined the limits of acceptable musical practice in Roman society. Dancing and playing the pipes are not simply dismissed as alien (Greek) pursuits but are couched in terms which point specifically to the subversion of behavioural norms. Engaging in music is construed as an act of *infamia*, which incurred the same social stigma as appearing on the stage or prostituting oneself.<sup>139</sup>

The Theban general Epaminondas (418-362 BC) was widely renowned for his musical talents. Nepos gives the names of his teachers at *Epaminondas* 2.1, and returns to the subject again in the preface to his book *On Great Generals of Foreign Nations*:

*non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leve et non satis dignum summorum virorum personis iudicent, cum relatum legent, quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam, aut in eius virtutibus commemorari, saltasse eum commode scienterque tibiis cantasse.* (Nep. Pref. 1)

I do not doubt, Atticus, that many readers will look upon this kind of writing [i.e. biography] as trivial and unworthy of the parts played by great men, when they find that I have told who taught Epaminondas music or see it mentioned among his virtues that he was a graceful dancer and a skilled performer on the pipes. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Nepos expects his readers to judge Epaminondas' expertise in dancing and pipe-playing as unbecoming (*non satis dignum*) for a man of his standing. For a self-respecting Roman to display knowledge of such 'trivial' (*leve*) arts was, by implication, completely unthinkable. The pronounced use of *persona* (literally 'mask') in both

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<sup>138</sup> John Hawkins, the great musicologist of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, cites the biographer as 'the fullest testimony' to the fact that the Romans held the 'science' of music 'in small estimation' (Hawkins 1776, xxvi). There is nothing in either Mountford 1964 or Comotti 1989. Even Wille (1967, 430), dealing precisely with 'sources of musical-historical knowledge in Roman literature', passes over Nepos in a single sentence. The dim view of Cornelius Nepos among classicists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has no doubt contributed to his neglect as a testimony for musical thought in the late Republic (see, e.g., Horsfall 1989). For a survey of modern scholarship on Nepos, see Pryzwansky 2009.

<sup>139</sup> Nep. Pref. 5.

prefaces should not go unnoticed. In the Preface to the *Epaminondas*, Nepos could have written simply *musicen abesse a principe*. The addition of *persona* adds a subtle but important nuance: the implication is not that the *ars musica* should be rejected outright by a respectable Roman but rather that such an individual should not be seen publicly to engage in musical pursuits.<sup>140</sup> A Roman citizen could endure no greater indignity, in Cicero's eyes, than to be caught singing or dancing in the Forum.<sup>141</sup>

Another account of Epaminondas' musical education can be found in the introduction to the *Tusculan Disputations*. Engaging with the problem of translating Greek philosophy into Latin, Cicero acknowledges the cultural debt which his compatriots owed to the Greeks. In the field of literature the Greeks were still pre-eminent, he admits, but the Romans possessed a knack for improving on what their predecessors had given them.<sup>142</sup> Music, exceptionally, stood out as one of the *artes* curiously neglected by the Romans throughout their history. The reason for this neglect, according to Cicero, was that music was perceived to lack the 'honour' (*honos*) and 'esteem' (*gloria*) that had been assigned it by the Greeks:

*summam eruditionem Graeci sitam censebant in nervorum vocumque cantibus; igitur et Epaminondas, princeps meo iudicio Graeciae, fidibus praeclare cecinisse dicitur, Themistoclesque aliquot ante annos cum in epulis recusaret lyram, est habitus indoctor. ergo in Graecia musici floruerunt, discebantque id omnes, nec qui nesciebat satis excultus doctrina putabatur. (Cic. Tusc. Disp. 1.4)*

The Greeks held that the proof of the highest education was found in instrumental and vocal music: thus it is that even Epaminondas, to my mind the leading man in Greek history, was, we are told, an accomplished singer to the accompaniment of the harp, whilst Themistocles, to go back many years previously, was held to show a lack of culture in refusing to play the lyre at banquets. Musicians accordingly flourished in Greece; everyone would learn music, and the man who was unacquainted with the art was not regarded as completely educated. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.124: the magistrate should be aware that he *gerere personam civitatis* (i.e. 'represents the state') by upholding its honour and dignity and enforcing the law. On Cicero's theory of the four *personae*, attributed to the Stoic Panaetius, see Cic. *Off.* 1.107-121; Edwards 2002, 379-381.

<sup>141</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.145, 3.75, 3.93.

<sup>142</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.1: *omnia nostros...accepta ab illis fecisse meliora*.

Like Nepos, Cicero draws a contrast between Greek and Roman attitudes to musical *paideia*. The example of the *princeps* Epaminondas, who maintained his dignity *despite* professing an ability to play the lyre, reinforces the expectation that, for the Roman *princeps*, such accomplishments were totally unbecoming.<sup>143</sup> Again, we should not infer an aversion to music outright; the emphasis is on practical music-making, as distinct from the study of music theory. If one wanted to become a good statesman, Cicero implies, he should devote himself to the philosophical wisdom of the *musici*, just as he himself had done, and not spend his time engaged in the frivolous pursuits of singing and dancing.<sup>144</sup> Themistocles had done the right thing in refusing to play at *symposia*.

The negative associations of practical music-making in the late Republic were manifold. Singing and dancing had been identified since the second century BC with the migration of servile and professional entertainers from the East, and had become embroiled in discourses of luxury and sexual deviance.<sup>145</sup> Nepos' list of disreputable activities sanctioned by the Greeks includes not only music but also incest and polyamory.<sup>146</sup> In fact, Roman assumptions about Theban homoeroticism in the fourth century probably had a significant bearing on how readers responded to the idea of Epaminondas' musicianship. According to Plutarch, lessons on the *aulos* were introduced by the lawgivers of Thebes in order 'to relax and mollify their strong and impetuous natures in earliest boyhood' (τὸ φύσει θυμοειδὲς αὐτῶν καὶ ἄκρατον ἀνιέναι καὶ ἀνυγραίνειν εὐθὺς ἐκ παίδων). This conditioning, we are told, made homoerotic love 'customary' (τῆς...συνηθείας) among the Thebans.<sup>147</sup> In this sense, Epaminondas

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<sup>143</sup> Following Gildenhard (2007, 137-138), I take the *et* in the phrase *igitur et Epaminondas* as adversative ('even') rather than additive ('and'): *even* Epaminondas, the pre-eminent man in Greece, played the lyre.

<sup>144</sup> Cicero lived for many years with the blind Stoic Diodotus, who taught him Pythagorean theory by demonstrating on the lyre: *Diodotus Stoicus caecus multos annos nostrae domi vixit...fidibus Pythagoreorum more uteretur* (*Tusc. Disp.* 5.113).

<sup>145</sup> See Chapter I.5. Note the inclusion of *saltatores* in the list of *sordides artes* at Cic. *Off.* 1.150.

<sup>146</sup> Nep. *Pref.* 1.4.

<sup>147</sup> Plut. *Pelop.* 19.1.

embodied paradoxical Roman ideals – a *princeps* who was also a musician and a *cinaedus* – and that made him a useful model for mapping out the contrasting paradigms of Greek versus Roman.

Anthony Corbeill has demonstrated how dancing is heavily bound up in Roman moral strictures relating to sexual practice, alcoholic consumption, and private expenditure.<sup>148</sup> Cicero uses the image of the ‘dancer’ (*saltator*) to encapsulate what Corbeill calls the ‘immoderate feast’. Catiline, Piso, Gabinius, and Verres are all associated with *saltatores* or given the epithet *saltator* themselves (or, worse still, *saltatrix*); some are censured specifically for dancing naked at banquets.<sup>149</sup> Similar allegations were made against Hortensius, not by Cicero (as far as we know) but by Lucius Torquatus, who at the trial of Sulla in 62 played upon the orator’s reputation for effeminacy by addressing him mockingly as ‘Dionysia’ (Dionysia being the name of a famous female dancer of the time).<sup>150</sup> Sextus Titius, tribune of the plebs in 99 BC, apparently had a dance named after him, while L. Afranius, the consul of 60 BC, is reported by Cassius Dio to have been ‘a better dancer than a politician’.<sup>151</sup> Even the great Cicero himself was accused late on in his career of dressing like a dancer and adopting a dancer’s poses while speaking.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Corbeill 1996, 135-139; see also Naerebout 2007, 149-150 and Laurence 2009, 115-117. At *Mur.* 13, Cicero declares that ‘almost no one dances sober unless he happens to be insane’ (*nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit*). For the association of dance, sex, and wine in Roman art, see Morgan 2017, with FIGURE 5.

<sup>149</sup> Catiline: *Cic. Cat.* 2.23. Piso: *Cic. Pis.* 89. Gabinius: *Cic. Pis.* 18, 22; *Sen.* 13; *Dom.* 60; *Planc.* 87; *Macr. Sat.* 3.14.15. Verres: *Cic. Ver.* 2.3.23. Cicero defended Marcus Caelius and Deiotarus from similar charges: *Cael.* 35; *Deiot.* 26-28; cf. *Macr. Sat.* 3.14.15, adding the name of Licinius Crassus to the roster.

<sup>150</sup> *Gel. NA* 1.5.2-3; Hortensius retorted by calling his opponent (in Greek) *amouosos*, *anaphroditos*, *aprosdionysos* – ‘artless, loveless, and pointless’. The sexual dynamics of this passage are discussed by Gleason 1995, 75, Williams 1999, 155-157, and Gunderson 2000, 128-130. The *saltatrix* Dionysia is mentioned again at *Cic. Rosc. Com.* 23, where she is said to command huge sums of money for her performances.

<sup>151</sup> *Cic. Brut.* 225; *Dio* 37.49.

<sup>152</sup> *Dio Cassius* 46.18.2 (Calenus’ response to Cicero in defence of Mark Antony): ὁ καὶ μέχρι τῶν σφυρῶν τὴν ἐσθῆτα σύρων, οὐ μὰ Δία οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ ὀρχηστὰι οἱ τὰς ποικιλίας τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων διδάσκοντές σε τοῖς σχήμασιν.

There are obvious difficulties in taking these sources as evidence of prevailing cultural fashions among the late Republican aristocracy. By and large, we are dealing with rhetorical set pieces that are prone to exaggerating or distorting the facts. That Roman elites *did* sometimes partake in casual music-making is surely beyond doubt; the weight of allegations speaks to a general tendency, if nothing else.<sup>153</sup> In the *De Oratore*, Cicero contrasts a certain *scaenicus* named Valerius, who ‘used to sing everyday’ (*cotidie cantabat*), with the respectable Numerius Furius, who ‘sings when it is appropriate’ (*cum est commodum cantat*): ‘for he is the head of a household, a Roman knight; he learnt what was necessary when he was a boy’ (*est enim paterfamilias, est eques Romanus; puer didicit quod discendum fuit*).<sup>154</sup> Numerius sang only when it was *commodum* – that is, in private – but he sang nonetheless. The important point, though, is that there were clear limits of acceptability. Tensions arose when these limits were transgressed. To sing occasionally at dinner was one thing; to sing as a routine habit, to dance and play instruments, was something else entirely.

Attitudes towards female music-making were guided by a similar set of principles. Cornelia, the young wife of Pompey the Great, is praised by Plutarch for being a gifted lyre-player.<sup>155</sup> Coupled with an expertise in literature, geometry, and philosophy, this talent bore witness to Cornelia’s superior education and impeccable aristocratic pedigree (for the idealisation of a female lyre-player in a contemporary Roman wall-painting, see FIGURE 6). However, as Alonso Fernández rightly underlines, we should be wary of jumping to conclusions on the basis of this passage alone.<sup>156</sup> Cornelia’s curriculum was evidently unusual. She was not free to practice

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<sup>153</sup> See Horsfall 2003, 35: ‘in the late republic...it is clear that senators and their wives danced with enthusiasm and that Cicero’s expressions of outrage were not enough to stop them.’

<sup>154</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.86-87; with Mankin 2011, *ad loc.*

<sup>155</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 55.1: καλῶς ἤσκητο καὶ περὶ λύραν.

<sup>156</sup> Alonso Fernández 2015, 306.

music whenever and wherever she pleased. Musical activity was strictly confined to the domestic sphere, for women as well as for men. Most importantly, women who aspired to professional levels of musicianship became the target of censure. Thus, the noblewoman Sempronia is singled out by Sallust because of her ability to ‘play the lyre’ (*psallere*) and ‘dance more skilfully than a respectable woman should’ (*saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae*).<sup>157</sup> What Sallust objected to, Macrobius later explains, was not the fact that Sempronia danced, but the fact that she did so ‘with aplomb’ (*optime*).<sup>158</sup>

It was not only by acquiring musical skills that one could attract criticism. We hear of several high-profile individuals who gained notoriety for indulging immoderately in the pleasures of music and dance within the confines of their *domus*.<sup>159</sup> One such individual was L. Licinius Lucullus, the consul of 74, who, according to Plutarch, surrounded himself with choruses and musicians (*χοροῖς καὶ ἀκροάμασιν*) at his daily banquets.<sup>160</sup> The orator Hortensius’ Laurentine estate played host to a dramatic re-enactment of the Orpheus myth, described by Varro in the *De Re Rustica*. A man dressed up as the legendary lyre-player, *cum stola et cithara*, was bidden to sing before the assembled guests. However, rather than playing a tune on the cithara, the musician abruptly picked up a horn (*bucina*) and proceeded to blow a loud note, whereupon ‘a

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<sup>157</sup> Sal. *Cat.* 25.4. On the character of Sempronia, see Syme 2016, 173-181. It may be significant that Sallust opts for the word *psallere* rather than, say, *citharizare* (preferred by Nepos). As Power argues (2010, 130 n. 315), ‘Sallust probably wants the word to evoke the louche world of the professional *psaltria*...and so underline the impropriety of Sempronia’s (Greek) cultural enthusiasms.’

<sup>158</sup> Macr. *Sat.* 3.14.5: *Semproniam reprehendit non quod saltare sed quod optime scierit*. The Bobbio scholiast states, on the basis of unnamed early authorities, that Clodia was ‘given to dancing more extravagantly and immoderately than befitted a matron’ (Schol. Bob. p. 135 Stangl: *veteres litterae tradunt studiosam fuisse saltandi profusius et immoderatus quam matronam deceret*); the scholiast may be confusing Sallust’s Sempronia here. Cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.646, contrasting Lucretia’s wifely virtue (wool-weaving, mourning for her husband’s absence) with the aberrant behaviour of Tullia Minor, who is caught ‘indulging in frivolous songs and dances’ (*cantilenis et saltationibus indulgentem*).

<sup>159</sup> Bonaria 1982 and Jones 1991 offer general discussions of music as convivial entertainment but treat the evidence uncritically and focus predominantly on the evidence from the Principate.

<sup>160</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 40.1.

multitude of stags, boars, and other animals’, bewitched by the sound, poured in from the surrounding countryside and greeted the diners.<sup>161</sup>

Fictionalised though it may be, Hortensius’ mythological charade is likely to have drawn inspiration from the private musical concerts, known as *symphoniae*, which repeatedly come under attack in Cicero’s legal speeches.<sup>162</sup> The *symphonia* spawned its own category of musicians, *symphoniaci/ae*, young men and women of servile descent who served the households of wealthy elites.<sup>163</sup> Gaius Verres, while governor of Sicily, is said to have taken possession of half-a-dozen *symphoniaci homines* from a captured pirate vessel and had them shipped off to Rome as a gift for a friend.<sup>164</sup> He evidently had no need of them himself, for at home he continued to enjoy the luxury of his own musicians, revelling nightly in ‘song and band music’ (*cantu atque symphonia*).<sup>165</sup> Verres’ love of music was apparently matched by that of L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar.<sup>166</sup> Piso also caroused with *servi symphoniaci* during his provincial governorship. Unlike Verres, however, he did not dispatch his musicians to the capital to liven up the banquets of some wealthy dilettante

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<sup>161</sup> Var. *R.* 3.13.2-3.

<sup>162</sup> For the Greek origins of the term, see Chapter I.3. *Symphonia* appears in Latin for the first time in Cicero. The exact make-up of a *symphonia* is uncertain (and probably varied depending on the resources and tastes of the patron). A fresco from Herculaneum, dating from *ca.* 25 BC, depicts a musical concert given by three performers: on the left, a female singer sits holding a scroll; on the right, a female lyre-player stands holding a plectrum; and in the centre, a seated man plays a set of long, thin *tibiae*, his cheeks inflated and his eyes protruding grossly from their sockets (see FIGURE 7). A conventional *symphonia*, then, may have included a pipe-player, a lyre-player, and a small number of dancers, singers and/or percussionists (Bélis 1988, 247-249). The epitaph of one Scirtus Cornelianus *symphonicus* has a set of panpipes inscribed next to it (*CIL* 6.6356). Based on archaeological remains from the imperial period, Dunbabin (1996, 70) argues that most Roman *triclinia* could have afforded space for only ‘a little music’ and ‘a few dancers’. *Symphoniae* could be noisy affairs, however, and the great mansions on the Palatine probably had the space to accommodate larger ensembles; cf. Sall. *Hist.* 2.70, on the private stages built to entertain Metellus Pius in Spain in 74 BC. The six *symphoniaci* dispatched to Rome by Verres may reflect the typical size of a ‘symphonic’ ensemble.

<sup>163</sup> The epitaphs of numerous *symphoniaci/ae* have been preserved: cf. e.g. *CIL* 2.3565, 6.4472, 6.6356, 6.6888, 8.21101, 12.3348. Linderski 2003 discusses an unusually sophisticated epitaph of a *symphonicus* which seems to contain an eschatological injunction.

<sup>164</sup> Cic. *Ver.* 2.5.64, 2.5.73.

<sup>165</sup> Cic. *Ver.* 2.5.92; cf. 2.3.105.

<sup>166</sup> Julius Caesar, for his part, enjoyed listening to the singer M. Tigellius Hermogenes, even introducing him to Cleopatra (Porph. *ad Hor. Sat.* 1.2.2).

but amassed them all for himself. And not only that: Cicero accuses Piso of accepting *symphoniaci* as a token of good faith from a man he was at that very moment conspiring to murder.<sup>167</sup> Back in Italy, Piso continued to indulge his passion for music by hosting lavish parties at the villa of his consular colleague Gabinius. The whole house, we are told, ‘resounded with singing and cymbals’ (*domus cantu et cymbalis personaret*).<sup>168</sup> Most curious of all is the story of an officer serving under the general Marcus Antonius Creticus who requisitioned a band of *symphoniaci servi* belonging to a prominent freedwoman from Lilybaeum. The officer claimed that he required the musicians for use in his fleet. Cicero, unsurprisingly, remained dubious.<sup>169</sup>

All of these vignettes are tied by a common thread. Convivial music-making is seldom presented to us in dispassionate terms. On the contrary, it is framed emphatically in terms which evoke a lifestyle of extravagance and excess. Lucullus’ *convivia* are a case in point, being the unmistakable affectation of the *nouveaux riches* (Plutarch refers to them as νεόπλουτα...δεῖπνα). Exceptional, too, was the setting of Hortensius’ Orphic masquerade, which from its ‘lofty spot’ (*locus excelsus*) commanded a privileged view over the host’s gigantic estate.<sup>170</sup>

As with allegations of dancing and singing, attacks on private musical consumption speak to an elite moral obsession with the markers of domestic luxury and

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<sup>167</sup> Cic. *Pis.* 83.

<sup>168</sup> Cic. *Pis.* 22. Cicero had used similar language to attack Sulla’s freedman Chrysogonus twenty-five years earlier: *animi et aurium causa tot homines habet ut cotidiano cantu vocum et nervorum et tibiarum nocturnisque conviviis tota vicinitas personet* (Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 134; with Dyck 2010, 190-191). The formula with *personare* may be inspired by the Greek prose of Cicero’s mentor Posidonius: τὰς πόλεις ὅλας τοῖς τοιοῦτοις κελάδοις συνηγεῖσθαι (*FGrH* 87 F 10).

<sup>169</sup> Cic. *Caec.* 55. De Souza (1999, 143 n. 197) dates this episode to early 73, shortly after Verres’ arrival in Sicily. ‘Why the prefect wanted the slave musicians is not clear’ (ibid. 143). Dyck (2013, 117) maintains that the *symphoniaci* were requisitioned in order ‘to provide rhythm for the rowers’, and is supported by Pseudo-Asconius *ad loc.*: *cani remigibus celeuma per symphonicos solebat...* (Wille 1967, 103 n. 383). But Cicero’s implication, surely, is that the musicians were put to use as entertainers on board the captain’s ship: for this function, cf. Suet. *Cal.* 37; Sen. *Ep.* 51.4.

<sup>170</sup> Var. *R.* 3.13.2. On Hortensius’ taste for luxury, cf. Var. *R.* 3.6.6, 3.17.5-8; Plin. *NH* 34.48, 35.130.

sexual licence.<sup>171</sup> For this reason, rhetorical claims made in the context of a lawsuit cannot be mapped straightforwardly onto social realities. Cornelius Nepos takes the trouble to clarify in his *Life of Atticus* that his subject (who happened to be his patron) never exhibited a single *acroama* at his dinners – there could be no surer sign of Atticus’ frugality than that.<sup>172</sup> And yet, we know for a fact, thanks to Cicero’s letters, that the philhellene Atticus not only owned his own musician, named Phemius after the Homeric citharode, but also went to great lengths to equip him with a rare musical instrument from Cilicia (almost certainly a *tibia Phrygia*).<sup>173</sup> Indeed, when Cicero wrote to Atticus in July 54 with news of Caesar’s exploits in Britain, he complained of a lack of captives ‘trained in literature or music’!<sup>174</sup>

We should not necessarily conclude, then, that Cicero was opposed to the ownership of *symphoniaci* as such. What he takes exception to in his speeches are the specific circumstances in which the slaves in question exchanged hands – through bribery (in Verres’ case), duplicity (in Piso’s case) and misappropriation (in Antonius’ case). Nevertheless, the *symphonia* was a potent rhetorical symbol because it came with a distinct cultural baggage. As the Greek origin of the word implies, the *symphonia* connoted a peculiarly exotic kind of *luxuria*. It conjured thoughts of the degenerate Hellenistic kings, with their decadent symposia and hordes of effete musicians. It is no coincidence that references to *symphoniaci* in Cicero commonly appear in passages attacking the abuses of magistrates on duty in the eastern provinces. Verres, Lucullus, and Antonius Creticus had all spent a prolonged period of time in the Greek-speaking regions of the empire, interacting with the local peoples and succumbing to their

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<sup>171</sup> The classic treatments of this topic are Wiseman 1987 and Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

<sup>172</sup> Nep. *Att.* 14.1.

<sup>173</sup> Cic. *Att.* 5.50.9, 5.21.9, 6.1.13. The argument is set out in detail in Morgan 2019.

<sup>174</sup> Cic. *Att.* 4.16.7: *etiam illud iam cognitum est neque argenti scripulum esse ullum in illa insula neque ullam spem praedae nisi ex mancipiis; ex quibus nullos puto te litteris aut musicis eruditos exspectare.*

depraved customs.<sup>175</sup> As a consequence, musical concerts represented more than just a form of entertainment; they were potentially detrimental to the political interests of the state. The *symphonia* symbolised the fatal distraction of *otium* in circumstances where the exercise of *negotium* by Roman officials was of paramount importance. So it was with the officer of Antonius Creticus, who, while taking possession of the musicians at Lilybaeum, was serving in an army charged by the Roman people with eradicating the threat of piracy in the East. Indeed, his act of rapaciousness was a crime befitting the enemy themselves: ‘their pipes and harps’, Plutarch states, ‘were a disgrace to Roman supremacy’.<sup>176</sup> The prefect, it would seem, had turned pirate.

Cicero’s denunciation of Piso in 55 BC resonates on an even deeper level. The speech features the only attestation of the adjective *musicus* in Latin rhetoric. For all Piso’s pretensions as an artiste (*ipse nudus in convivio saltaret*), he was ‘neither so stylish nor so musical a glutton’ (*non tam concinnus helluo nec tam musicus*), relaxing all the while in the company of base Greeks (*iacebat in suorum Graecorum foetore atque vino*).<sup>177</sup> The Greek inflection of the term *musicus* is brought out in Cicero’s philosophical writings, and its usage here is probably directed as a jibe against the *sordidissimi greges* of Epicurean philosophers who flocked to Piso’s banquets.<sup>178</sup> Cicero attacks Epicurean views on music explicitly in the *Tusculan Disputations*. He is particularly critical of the idea that the pleasures of music led to a happy life.<sup>179</sup> By labelling Piso as the antithesis of an enlightened *musicus* (effectively, *amouosos*), Cicero

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<sup>175</sup> On Lucullus’ frequent association with Greeks in Rome, cf. Plut. *Luc.* 41-42.

<sup>176</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 24.4.

<sup>177</sup> Cic. *Pis.* 22.

<sup>178</sup> The term *musicus* is used almost exclusively with reference to Greek musical theorists or musicians: cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1.4.12; *Fin.* 3.4.3, 5.7.16, 3.174.1; *Rep.* 2.69.16; *Div.* 2.9.16. For the association with Greek intellectuals, cf. Cic. *Prov. cons.* 14, again attacking Piso: *a suis Graecis subtilius eruditus, quibuscum iam in exoetra helluatur...*

<sup>179</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 43. The passage is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.4.

was thus attacking not only the man himself but also the bogus and harmful philosophy which he used to justify his immoral behaviour.

In fact, we have the writings of one Epicurean who must have been a regular attendee at Piso's *symphoniae*. Fragments from the fourth book of Philodemus' treatise *On Music* have been miraculously preserved on charred scrolls recovered from the Villa of Papyri in Herculaneum. The villa is widely believed to have belonged to Piso himself.<sup>180</sup> Philodemus' treatise is notable primarily for its controversial rejection of the theory of *ethos*, as advocated especially by the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon (ca. 240-152 BC). Philodemus denies music a pedagogical or moral utility. Like Lucretius, he believes that music is not a divine gift but a human invention. In this way, he places a much greater emphasis than Cicero on the value of practical training, arguing that 'to attain theoretical musical knowledge of excellent and bad, of fitting and unfitting melodies does not itself educate, but philosophy working through musical training does'.<sup>181</sup> Hedonism, for Philodemus, was nothing to be feared: music 'is useful for pleasure', especially in the context of the symposium.<sup>182</sup>

It comes as no surprise, then, to find that Philodemus' *Epigrams* are full of references to convivial music-making. The subject of *Epigram 1*, for instance, is a harp-player named Xanthippe, who captivates with 'her talk, her expressive eyes, and her

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<sup>180</sup> Philodemus had taken up residence in Italy by 70, settling eventually in the Bay of Naples, and remained there until his death in the early 30s: see Janko 2000, 5-7. On the relationship between Piso and Philodemus, see Nisbet 1961, 183-186; Sider 1997, 5-12. A link between the Villa of the Papyri and L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus may be inferred from various pieces of circumstantial evidence: see Nisbet 1961, 186-188. A decisive link cannot be proven, however, and even if the villa did eventually belong to Piso, it may not yet have been occupied by him when Cicero delivered the *In Pisonem* in 55 (pace Sider 1997, 16). For Philodemus' *On Music* (dated to 75-50 BC), see introduction, text, and French translation in Delattre 2007. The contents of the work are discussed in detail by Ferguson 2003.

<sup>181</sup> Phld. *Mus.* 4, col. 85, ll. 4-11 Delattre (trans. Ferguson): φιλοσόφους [μηδέ]τι γίνεσθαι τὴν μουσικ[ὴν αὐ]τὴν θεωρητικὴν μελῶ[ν καὶ] σπουδαίων καὶ φαύλω[ν καὶ] πρεπόντων καὶ ἀπρεπ[ῶν, καὶ] μὴ ταύτην, ἀλλ'ἂ τὴν φ[ίλο]σοφίαν δ[ι]ὰ μουσικῆς παι[δεύ]ειν.

<sup>182</sup> Phld. *Mus.* 4, col. 132, ll. 5-7 Delattre: πρὸς τὴν ἡδονήν... χρησιμεύειν ὁμολογήσομεν; cf. col. 132, 1-7 Delattre.

song' (λαλιή καὶ κωτίλον ὄμμα καὶ ᾠδὴ).<sup>183</sup> The character Xantho in *Epigram* 3 is called upon to 'pluck for me with your delicate hands a fragrant song' (ψηλὸν μοι χερσὶ δροσινᾶϊς μύρον).<sup>184</sup> In *Epigram* 27, the poet addresses Piso directly and invites him to attend a feast in honour of Epicurus known as the Twentieth.<sup>185</sup> Philodemus commends himself to his patron as μουσοφιλής. This word, attested uniquely in this poem, suggests according to David Sider that 'among other entertainments at this celebration Philodemus will recite some of his epigrams'.<sup>186</sup> Cicero claims that the poems of Philodemus provide such a faithful insight into the goings-on inside Piso's villa that reading them was like looking in a mirror.<sup>187</sup> This statement is obviously an exaggeration, but it taps into a nexus of assumptions about what a Roman *convivium* entailed, especially a *convivium* held in the villa of a devoted Epicurean. For many, it seems, the provision of musical entertainment was a normal expectation.

What Philodemus reminds us, above all, is that the Roman aristocracy of the late Republic did not share a single vision of what music was or how it should be used. The point is made concisely by Varro: 'in music...writers disagree' (*in musica...discrepant scriptores*).<sup>188</sup> The existence of divergent opinions reflected the diverse philosophical schools to which educated Romans subscribed. At a time when Epicureanism was gaining traction among intellectual circles, not everyone will have shared Cicero's staunch adherence to Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine. I would argue, in fact, that the competition between the different philosophical schools sharpened the impression of an ideological divide between those who thought that music was a harmless pleasure to be

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<sup>183</sup> Phld. *Ep.* 1.1 Sider (= *Anth. Gr.* 5.131). Xanthippe and her harp reappear at *Ep.* 4.5 (= *Anth. Gr.* 11.41): ἄλλ' ἔτι μοι ψαλμός τε λάλος κῶμοί τε μέλονται...

<sup>184</sup> Phld. *Ep.* 3.3 (= *Anth. Gr.* 9.570); cf. *Ep.* 6.1 (ψάλλατα), 6.5 (πλαγιαύλων).

<sup>185</sup> On the historical context of the poem, see Sider 1997, 152-153, and Gigante 1995, 79-90.

<sup>186</sup> Phld. *Ep.* 27.2; Sider 1997, 155-156. Philodemus 'almost certainly recited viva voce before audiences in Herculaneum' (Sider 1995, 40).

<sup>187</sup> Cic. *Pis.* 70.

<sup>188</sup> Var. *LL* 9.111.

taken at liberty and those who thought that music was a potentially corruptive force which should be enjoyed only in moderation and, preferably, as an abstract theoretical pursuit. In this way, musical debates played a key role in shaping the cultural battleground of the late Republic, feeding into wider conversations about aristocratic ethics and the moral responsibility of the politician.

## 5 *Carmina Convivalia*: (Re)imagining the Musical Past

Before summing up, I would like to consider briefly how music influenced ways of thinking and writing about the past in the late Republic. In his seminal article, ‘Poetry and the Ancient City’, Zorzetti posited the existence of an oral song culture in archaic Rome analogous to, and moulded by, the musico-poetic culture of the Greek *polis*. The idea that music had played a formative role in the development of the Roman state was enshrined already in the *Origines* of Cato the Elder, as I discussed in Chapter I. Cato asserted that, in ancient times, Roman elites while reclining at dinner would sing songs to the accompaniment of the *tibiae* in praise of their ancestors. When Cicero examines the influence of Pythagoreanism on Roman culture in the *Tusculan Disputations*, he cites Cato’s *Origines* as proof that musical compositions with ‘fixed’ melodies were part of the *mos maiorum*.<sup>189</sup> Cicero points in the same passage to two further relics of Rome’s ancient musical culture: the law of the Twelve Tables forbidding any Roman from composing a *carmen* to the detriment of another person; and the use of lyres at sacrifices and public banquets.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.3.

<sup>190</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.4.

Cicero had already grappled with the subject of Rome's musical heritage in a previous work, the *De Oratore*, written in 55:

*ars enim cum a natura profecta sit, nisi natura moveat ac delectet, nihil sane egisse videatur; nihil est autem tam cognatum mentibus nostris quam numeri atque voces; quibus et excitamur et incendimur et lenimur et languescimus et ad hilaritatem et ad tristitiam saepe deducimur; quorum illa summa vis carminibus est aptior et cantibus, non neglecta, ut mihi videtur, a Numa rege doctissimo maioribusque nostris, ut epularum sollemnium fides ac tibiae Saliorumque versus indicant; maxime autem a Graecia vetere celebrata. (Cic. De Orat. 3.197)*

For as art started from nature, it would certainly be deemed to have failed if it had not a natural power of affecting us and giving us pleasure; but nothing is so akin to our own minds as rhythms and words – these rouse us up to excitement, and smooth and calm us down, and often lead us to mirth and to sorrow; though their extremely powerful influence is more suited for poetry and song, nor was it overlooked by that very learned monarch, King Numa, and by our ancestors, as is shown by the use of the lyre and the pipes at ceremonial banquets, and by the verses of the Salii; but it was most frequently employed by the Greece of old days. (Loeb trans.)

Cicero here reaffirms his conviction in the power of music to alter the emotional disposition of the listener. He then conjures an image of an archaic musical culture which owes its origins to King Numa, the successor of Romulus.<sup>191</sup> Cicero thus places the inception of musical culture at a formative moment in Rome's history. The comparison with 'ancient Greece' (*Graecia vetus*) is familiar from the *De Legibus* and draws attention to the antiquity of Rome's own traditions. Just as Greek states ought to preserve the *antiquum vocum...modum* (*Leg.* 2.38), so too must the Romans respect their own musical heritage. At the same time, the Romans must strive towards an appreciation and understanding of music's extraordinary power (*illa summa vis*) and so aspire to follow in the footsteps of both Plato, the 'most learned' of Greeks, and Numa, the 'most learned' of kings.<sup>192</sup> However, Cicero goes a step further than this: he actually presents the musical institutions of Numa as an offshoot of Greek *mousike*, which synthesises native and foreign elements. As he makes clear in the *Tusculan*

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<sup>191</sup> A very similar account of Rome's musical history can be found in Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.20.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.23: *sed, ut mihi quidem videtur, non multum discrepat ista constitutio religionum a legibus Numae nostrisque moribus.*

*Disputations*, the sympotic custom of singing to the lyre and pipes originated with the Pythagoreans – a group with which Numa was intimately associated in the historical tradition.<sup>193</sup> Plutarch, who makes much of Numa’s Pythagorean connections and his veneration of the cult of the Muses, credits him with creating the organisation that eventually became the *collegium tibicinum Romanorum*, as part of a general division of the Roman citizen body by trades.<sup>194</sup>

It is important to recognise that Zorzetti’s model of an archaic Roman song culture is less a product of ‘real memories’, passed down in an unbroken tradition from the time of Numa through to Cato and so on, as it is a product of later reconstruction by first-century authors.<sup>195</sup> Cicero had no primary ‘text’ to draw upon in documenting the *carmina convivalia*: when he alludes to the songs a third and final time in the *Brutus* (ca. 46 BC), he expresses a wish that they were still extant.<sup>196</sup> He was thus reliant upon the authority of Cato’s *Origines*, a work which was itself engaged in a creative reimagining of the remote past based upon a conservative view of the present. We need only examine the discrepancies between Cicero’s account of the tradition and Varro’s account in the *De vita populi Romani* to realise the futility of trying to recover the musical culture of sixth-century Rome from first-century sources. Varro claims that the songs were sung not by adult men but by ‘respectable boys’ (*pueri modesti*).<sup>197</sup> Zorzetti refuses to see a contradiction here: ‘There cannot have been music involving adults in Archaic Rome without there having been a corresponding musical *paideia* for the

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.1.3: *quin etiam arbitror propter Pythagoreorum admirationem Numam quoque regem Pythagoreum a posterioribus existimatum*. The purported friendship between Numa and Pythagoras was, of course, anachronistic, as Dionysius realised (*Ant.* 2.59). See further Chapter I.5.

<sup>194</sup> Plut. *Num.* 17.2. On Numa’s Pythagorean connections, cf. *Num.* 1.2-3, 8.4-6, 8.10, 14.2-3, 22.3-4. On Numa’s connection to the cult of the Muses, cf. *Num.* 8.6.

<sup>195</sup> Zorzetti is criticised on this point by Cole 1991 and Feeney 2016, 213-218.

<sup>196</sup> *Brut.* 75.

<sup>197</sup> Varro *De vita populi Romani* (fr. 84 Riposati = Non. Marc. p. 77M): *...in conviviiis pueri modesti ut cantarent carmina antiqua in quibus laudes erant maiorum et assa voce et cum tibicine*.

children'.<sup>198</sup> But to insist on the historicity of the songs is to miss the point: we simply have no way of verifying what is true and what is not. What must be emphasised, instead, is the way in which Cicero and Varro, in tracing the origins of the *carmina convivalia*, are not simply reaffirming traditional ideas about the past but are actively (re)imagining a musical 'prehistory' that acts as a foil to their own lived experience.<sup>199</sup>

What Cicero and Varro were doing, I suggest, is setting up an implicit contrast between the ideal music of the past and the corruptive music of the present. Such a contrast is brought out effectively by Aristides in the *De Musica*, with pointed reference to Cicero:

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ πατρὶς αὐτῶν τοὺς μὲν ἐπὶ Νομᾶ καὶ τοὺς ὀλίγω μετ' αὐτὸν ἔτι τυγχάνοντας ἀγριωτέρους μουσικῆ παιδευομένους εἶχε (καθὰ καὶ αὐτός φησιν), ἰδίᾳ τε ἐν εὐωχίαις κοινῆ τε ἐν ἀπάσαις τελεταῖς σφίσι συνοργαζούση. (Aristid. Quint. 2.61)

In their native land at the time of Numa and a little later (as Cicero himself tells us [*Tusc.* 4.1.3]), the citizens, who were still relatively barbaric, were already being civilised by music, which both accompanied their private merry-making and assisted in the celebration of their public rituals. (Trans. Barker 1989)

This passage immediately precedes the account of Rome's *amouisia* that we considered earlier. The implication is clear: Numa and his successors laid the foundations which future generations would so devastatingly undermine. By 'destroying the *harmonia* of the state', Gaius Gracchus and his successors actively thwarted the legacy of Numa, who, as Dionysius puts it, died 'having attuned the whole people like an instrument, to the sole consideration of the common good' (ἀρμολογούμενος δὲ τὸ πλῆθος ἅπαν ὡσπερ ὄργανον πρὸς ἓνα τὸν τοῦ κοινῆ συμφέροντος λογισμὸν).<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Zorzetti 1990, 292-293.

<sup>199</sup> Bonaria even attempts to reconstruct the subjects of the *carmina*: 'la storia di Roma, le sue lotte con i popoli finitimi, il suo espandersi attraverso l'Italia sino ai confini estremi del Mediterraneo' (Bonaria 1982, 121-129). Needless to say, this is pure fantasy; see Purcell 2003, 37.

<sup>200</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 2.62.5.

Both Zorzetti and his critics overlook an important fact. The ancient authors who engage in the recollection of a ‘pure’ musical past are usually concerned also with condemning the music of their own time. For example, Aristoxenus’ experience of change in the ‘popular music’ (ἡ πάνδημος αὐτὴ μουσική) of the fourth century prompted a desire to recall ‘what music used to be like’ (οἷα ἦν ἡ μουσική) before its ‘total destruction’ (μεγάλην διαφθορὰν).<sup>201</sup> In projecting an image of the *vetus mos*, then, Cicero was attempting to show up flaws in the current system. Late Republican moralising, as is well-known, placed a heavy onus on the sanctity of the law and the conservation of the *mos maiorum*.<sup>202</sup> These were, in Cicero’s view, the very ideals that *popularis* politicians were aiming to subvert. It was morally incumbent upon the present generation to restore musical *paideia* to its former heyday.

### Conclusion

The political and intellectual developments of the late Republic sparked a newfound interest among Roman elites in the functional utility of music. This interest manifested itself in a wide range of contemporary writings, ranging from the theoretical to the metaphorical, from full-blown treatises to circumstantial allusions. Although much of the discussion in this chapter has focused on explicating the comments of one man (albeit a man of exceptional clout), our examination of different authors has enabled us to situate these comments within a larger musical discourse. Pulling together the testimonies of Cicero, Dionysius, Nepos, and Varro has revealed overlapping concerns relating to changing musical styles and the practices of performance. Texts like the

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<sup>201</sup> Aristox. fr. 124 = Athen. 14.632b.

<sup>202</sup> Sallust (*Cat.* 9-10) famously contrasts the onset of Roman *avaritia* and *ambitio* after the destruction of Carthage with the golden age of harmony, justice, and peace that preceded it. See further Lintott 1972 and Levick 1982 on the link between moral decline and the fall of the Republic.

*Onos Lyras*, though difficult for the modern scholar to piece together, shine a light onto the porous boundary between musical praxis and musical thought. At the same time, we have seen that Roman attitudes to music were heterogeneous and shaped by conflicting philosophical allegiances. Those who subscribed to the wisdom of the Epicureans, such as Philodemus, Piso, and Lucretius, looked upon the musical innovations of the age with a profoundly different stance to those who shared the philosophical views of Cicero and Varro. Such disagreement acted as a catalyst for moral debates about music in this period.

Cicero wrote about the *ars musica* for a reason. He believed, above all, that the teachings of music could improve how society functioned. At a time when many saw music as little more than an incidental source of *otium*, Cicero shared with many of his peers a firm conviction in the power of music to challenge behavioural norms and to overturn political systems. The underpinnings of this worldview were undeniably Greek, reflecting an amalgam of Platonic, Stoic, and Pythagorean orthodoxies. But Cicero believed strongly that philosophy could solve present-day crises, and music had a fundamental role to play in putting this belief into practice.<sup>203</sup>

During his lifetime, Cicero had seen a succession of demagogues seize control of the state by championing the cause of the plebs. Now, the Roman people looked up to men whose public reputation was tarnished by the wicked depravity of their private lives. The world of the rich and famous was one in which leisure reigned supreme: the Senate had become populated by dancing consuls and harp-wielding tribunes; the mansions of the Palatine resounded each night with the sound of orchestras and choirs; and the popular assemblies, once a symbol of dignity and unanimity, now played host to

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<sup>203</sup> Philosophy above all served the current needs of the Republic: cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.1; *Fin.* 1.1-10; Long 2003, 73-75, and Long 1995.

histrionic performances and bouts of partisan singing. The *amouisia* that threatened to bring about Rome's self-destruction was plain for all to see. Cicero, the once proclaimed *pater patriae*, took it upon himself to restore order to music, and thus order to society. He wanted the music of the theatre to be moderate and traditional, and he wanted his fellow citizens to engage with music not as an ignorant spectator or performer, but as an enlightened philosopher, a *bonus vir*, detached from the mundane realities of *ludi* and *symphoniae*. Only in this way could there be a return to ancestral customs, to natural consensus and social cohesion.

In the end, it would take the implosion of the entire republican system for Cicero's dream of a 'harmonious' Rome to be realised.

## Chapter III

### AUGUSTUS, APOLLO'S LYRE, AND ROME'S MUSICAL REVIVAL

*in Actiaco litore mare citharam sonat.*

Along the shore at Actium the sea has a sound like that of a lyre.

Martianus Capella, *De Septem Disciplinis* 9.929

One of the most striking features of the early Augustan Principate is the highly stylised and publicised assimilation of the *princeps* with the god Apollo – not just any Apollo, but Apollo in the guise of *citharoedus*, ‘the lyre-player’. This assimilation had already begun to take shape during the Triumviral period, but it became especially important in the aftermath of Octavian’s defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium, culminating eventually in the dedication of the magnificent Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill.

The evolving significance of Apollo in Augustan politics has not gone unnoticed by historians of the period.<sup>1</sup> It has often been argued that Octavian sought to exploit Apollo’s dual identity as archer and lyre-player as a means of negotiating the paradoxical nature of his own self-presentation as both conqueror and civilian. Following Antony’s defeat, the newly proclaimed *princeps* wrote Apollo into the mythology of Actium by locating him at the centre of an eye-catching monumental programme. By flooding his city with images of the musical deity, Augustus promoted a model of autocratic rule based upon the abstract ideals of harmony, culture, and rationality. In doing so, he laid the foundations of a new political system. As Paul

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<sup>1</sup> The nature of Augustus’ interactions with Apollo has generated an impressive body of scholarship: see, most notably, Gagé 1955, 523-581; Zanker 1988, 48-53, 85-89; Gurval 1995, 87-136; Miller 2009; Lange 2009.

Zanker put it in his seminal work, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*: ‘Apollo stood first of all for discipline and morality...Apollo also stood for purification and for punishment of any form of excess...But after the victory was won, then Apollo took on his role as singer, lyre player, and god of peace and reconciliation’.<sup>2</sup>

The basic outlines of this interpretation are sound. However, a vital step in the argumentation seems to have been missed. The fact that Augustus dedicated his first major public building in Rome to the god of *kitharoidia* is significant, not least because it situates Augustan politics at the intersection of moral and philosophical debates about musical culture. The symbolic currency of Apollo’s lyre was realised through a series of cultural encounters between Rome and Greece, which Augustus did much to exploit and adapt. It is therefore misleading to speak of the relationship between god and *princeps* in terms of abstractions alone. We need to ask ourselves how the inhabitants of Augustan Rome were encouraged to buy into a kind of citharodic worldview, which informed their opinion of the new regime and its message of political, social, and cultural renewal. After a prolonged period of musical decline, to what extent did the advent of the *princeps* signal a new ‘Golden Age’ of music – a return to the traditions of Romulus and Numa?

These are obviously difficult questions to grapple with. The evidence is disparate and complex. It must be gone over with a fine-tooth comb if new insights are to be gained. Nevertheless, close examination of the literary, iconographical, and archaeological sources, together with an awareness of the contextual issues at stake in discussing the divine assimilations of the emperor, can offer novel perspectives on a variety of interrelated issues: the significance of the Palatine temple; the commemoration of Actium; Augustus’ self-representation as cultural patron; the

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<sup>2</sup> Zanker 1988, 52-53.

‘propaganda’ campaign against Mark Antony and Cleopatra; and the notion of an Augustan ‘revival’. There is a great deal still to be learned by approaching these themes as part of a broader discussion of Roman musical culture.

## 1 Apollo Citharoedus on the Palatine

In 36 BC, following his defeat of Sextus Pompey at Naulochus, Octavian unveiled plans to erect a temple to Apollo on the south-west corner of the Palatine Hill.<sup>3</sup> The announcement was most likely made in an address to the senate and people upon his return to Rome in November.<sup>4</sup> According to Cassius Dio, the decision to dedicate the temple was made when a bolt of lightning struck an area of land which Octavian had recently procured for his private residence.<sup>5</sup> After duly consulting the haruspices – and taking full advantage of the opportunity for a show of reverence – Octavian declared that this land would be made public property, and that a sanctuary would be built on the very site where the lightning had struck.

It was not until 9 October 28 BC, nearly eight years later, that the new complex was opened to the public. With its elevated position on the Palatine Hill and its expansive portico, adorned with a splendid collection of artworks, the Temple of Apollo quickly gained a reputation as one of Rome’s most spectacular landmarks.<sup>6</sup> It also came

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<sup>3</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.81.3: [*Octavianus*] *templumque Apollinis et circa porticus facturum promisit, quod ab eo singulari exstructum munificentia est*. On the chronology, see Hekster and Rich 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Appian (*BC* 5.130-1) notes that, on the day after his return, Octavian ἐβουληγόρησέ τε καὶ ἐδημηγόρησε, τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν ἑαυτοῦ τὴν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἐς τότε καταλέγων.

<sup>5</sup> Dio 49.15.5: τὸν γὰρ τόπον ὃν ἐν τῷ Παλατίῳ, ὥστ’ οἰκοδομήσαί τινα, ἐώνητο, ἐδημοσίωσε καὶ τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι ἱέρωσεν, ἐπειδὴ κεραυνὸς ἐς αὐτὸν ἐγκατέσκηψε. Octavian had acquired the former house of Hortensius (Suet. *Aug.* 72.1) ‘probably in late 43 or 42 BC’ (Wiseman 2013, 255), and subsequently purchased several neighbouring properties (Vell. Pat. 2.81.3).

<sup>6</sup> The construction of the temple is recorded in the *Res Gestae* (RG 19). Later visitors marvelled at its size and splendour: cf. Jos. *BJ* 2.81; Asconius on Cic. *Tog. Cand.* 90; Suet. *Aug.* 90.

to play an important role in the political life of the city.<sup>7</sup> The temple's poor state of preservation in the archaeological record gives only a faint impression of its former grandeur. Excavation of the site has been ongoing since the 1960s, but it is only recently (and after much controversy) that archaeologists have been able to determine the topographical orientation of the temple.<sup>8</sup>

We are well-informed about the design and decoration of the temple thanks to the detailed observations of Propertius. In an elegy composed shortly after the inauguration of the Palatine complex, Propertius writes to his girlfriend Cynthia apologising for his lateness to a recent rendezvous:

*quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi  
porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit.  
tantam erat in speciem Poenis digesta columnis,  
inter quas Danai femina turba senis.  
hic equidem Phoebus visus mihi pulchrior ipso  
marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra...  
deinde inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem  
Pythius in longa carmina veste sonat.* (Prop. 2.31.1-6, 15-16)

You ask why I come to you a little late? The golden sanctuary of Apollo was opened by great Caesar. It was arranged in remarkable splendour with Punic columns, between which were statues of the female brood of old Danaus. Here a marble statue seemed to me surely to be more beautiful than Phoebus himself, and gave the impression of performing its verses even though its lyre was silent...Then inside the Pythian god himself, standing between his mother and his sister, wearing his long robe, recites his verses. (Trans. Welch 2005)

Propertius pictures the Palatine temple from the perspective of an approaching visitor, focalising initially on the outer portico and then moving sequentially towards the altar, the temple doors, and, finally, to the cult objects within. We seem to be confronted with not one but two statues of Apollo, the first made of marble (*marmoreus*) and situated in the *aurea porticus* in front of the temple (ll. 4-5), and the second (of unspecified

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<sup>7</sup> According to Suet. *Aug.* 29.3, the temple was used for meetings of the senate and for deciding jury lists during the later Augustan Principate. Two inscriptions dating from AD 17 testify to its continued function as a meeting-place for the senate: see *Tab. Hebana* ll. 1-4 (Crawford and Cloud 1996, 519) and *SC Larinum* l. 2 (Rawson 1983, 98).

<sup>8</sup> It now appears that the temple was oriented to the south-west, overlooking the Circus Maximus, and not to the north-east, as previously argued: see Zink 2008 and 2012, *contra* Claridge 2010 and Wiseman 2012.

material) located within the temple itself (ll. 15-16).<sup>9</sup> Both statues represent the god in the guise of *citharoedus*, wearing the distinctive *longa vestis* and singing *carmina* while accompanying himself on the lyre (*lyra* is a poetic synonym for *cithara*). The first Apollo appears as a lone figure, whereas the second is accompanied by his mother Latona and his sister Diana (*inter matrem...interque sororem*).

Modern analyses of Propertius 2.31 have rightly underlined the dangers of reading the poem as an accurate historical account.<sup>10</sup> Aside from the fact that we have only limited archaeological evidence with which to validate the details of Propertius' narrative, we must also remember that the process of ekphrastic composition called for a certain creative industry on the part of the poet himself, which may have resulted in the distortion, elaboration or omission of certain facts. The description of an inanimate statue as being 'more beautiful than Phoebus himself' (*Phoebo visus mihi pulchrior ipso*), even appearing to 'sing' (*carmen hiare; sonat*), is as much a testament to Propertius' powers of imagination as it is a comment on the beauty of a real statue (although, of course, the two are not mutually exclusive).<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, it is striking that both Tibullus and Horace allude to a lyre-playing Apollo in poems mentioning the Palatine temple. In an elegy commemorating the promotion of his patron's son to priestly office of *quindecimvir*, Tibullus evokes the image of Apollo greeting him at the threshold of his temple 'with lyre and with songs' (*cum cithara carminibusque*).<sup>12</sup> Horace, similarly, marks the occasion of the temple's dedication (*dedicatum...Apollinem*) with a prayer that in his old age he may not 'lack the lyre' (*nec*

<sup>9</sup> Butler and Barber (1933, 247-248) make a case for transposing lines 5-8 to follow line 16, assuming that the same statue is referred to in both cases. However, this is an unnecessary amendment (see Last 1953, 27-29 and Rocos 1989, 572). Among other factors, the inclusion of the temporal marker *deinde* at the start of l. 15 (cf. *tum*, 2.31.9) implies a clear 'sequence of viewing' which disassociates the statue of Apollo with *tacita...lyra* (l. 6) from the one *in longa...veste* (l. 16); see Welch 2005, 91.

<sup>10</sup> See especially Isager 1998, 405-406, Welch 2005, 89-96, and Miller 2009, 196-206.

<sup>11</sup> The poem draws inspiration from Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, as noted, for example, by Miller (2009, 202-204).

<sup>12</sup> Tibull. 2.5.2.

*turpem senectam...cithara carentem*).<sup>13</sup> Francis Cairns has argued convincingly that both poets had the cult statues in mind when writing these words.<sup>14</sup>

Pliny the Elder refers in his *Natural History* to a statue of a ‘Palatine Apollo’ attributed to the fourth-century sculptor Scopas of Paros.<sup>15</sup> He also mentions a *Latona in Palatii delubro* by the third-century Athenian sculptor Cephisodotus, as well as a *Diana Romae...in Palatio Apollinis delubro* by Timotheus of Epidaurus, active at the same time as Scopas.<sup>16</sup> These must be the ‘mother’ and ‘sister’ statues mentioned by Propertius (*inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem*). The question is: which of the two Apollos was by Scopas – the one in the outer portico, or the one inside the *cella*? Hugh Last, in an article published in 1953, made a case for the former, citing fragmentary evidence in the *Tabula Hebana* for a *simulacrum Apollinis* covered by a ‘roof’ (*fastigium*).<sup>17</sup> Although the restoration of *fastigium* is credible, it seems more likely that the word is used to designate an *aedicula* within the *cella* rather than a kind of external ‘canopy’ isolated from the temple building itself (as Last argues). It would make most sense for the *Apollo Palatinus* to have resided inside the *cella*, given that this was normally where the most sacred cult images were displayed. The Apollo, Diana, and Latona would thus have formed a triadic group of original statues, each one by a celebrated Greek master. Propertius’ reference to the Apollo in the *cella* as *deus ipse* – the artistic embodiment of ‘the god himself’ – may reflect the superior sanctity of this

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<sup>13</sup> Hor. *Od.* 1.31.20. For other references to Apollo as lyre-player in Augustan texts, cf. Hor. *Od.* 2.10.18-20, 3.3.72, 4.6.25-6, 4.15.1-2; Prop. 2.34.79-80, 4.1.73-74; 4.6.31-32; Ov. *Am.* 1.1.11-12, *Ars* 2.493-4, 3.141-42, *Met.* 2.601-2, 11.165-9; Virg. *Aen.* 12.393-94; *Eleg. Maec.* 1.51-2.

<sup>14</sup> Cairns 1984, 153, comparing also Propertius 4.6.

<sup>15</sup> Plin. *HN* 36.25: *Scopae laus cum his certat. is fecit...Apollinem Palatinum*. The association with Propertius’ statues is supported by, among others, Stewart 1977, 93-4, Calcani 2009, 15-18, and Miller 2009, 188-189.

<sup>16</sup> Plin. *HN* 36.24, 36.32.

<sup>17</sup> *AE* 1949, 215, ll. 3-4: *...imagines ponantur supra capita columna[rum eius fas]|tigi quo simulacrum Apollinis tegitur*; Last 1953.

statue compared with the one in the outer portico, which is contrasted with *Phoebo ipso*, and thus retains the semblance of a decorative artwork.

At some point in 12 BC, Augustus moved the Sibylline Books from the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus to the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine. According to Suetonius, the Books were stored ‘in two golden bookshelves beneath the base of the Palatine Apollo’ (*duobus forulis auratis sub Palatini Apollinis basi*).<sup>18</sup> This comment seems to imply that the cult statues were displayed on a base raised above a large ornamental cupboard. Whether or not this base existed before the relocation of the Sibylline Books is impossible to say. In the last decade, archaeologists working on the Temple of Apollo uncovered a recess at the north-east end of the *cella* which, due to its rectangular shape and prominent location along the main axis of the temple, may have supported the base for the cult statues.<sup>19</sup> A series of tunnels was also discovered beneath the podium of the *cella*. According to the excavator Stephan Zink, these tunnels probably functioned as ‘the temple’s crypt’ and may be identifiable with Suetonius’ *foruli* (*forulus* here taken to mean ‘a narrow passage’ or ‘gangway’).<sup>20</sup> Amanda Claridge points out, however, that the tunnels may simply have served as the trench for the temple’s columnar foundations. And, at any rate, why would Suetonius refer to tunnels as ‘golden’? The evidence as it currently stands weighs in favour of the original hypothesis, namely that the cult statue was mounted on ‘bookshelves’ containing the Sibylline Books.<sup>21</sup>

Little is known about the statue of Apollo by Scopas besides its brief mention in Pliny’s *Natural History*. It is sometimes maintained that Octavian acquired Scopas’ statue from a sanctuary of Apollo at Rhamnous near Athens. This idea is based on a

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<sup>18</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 31.1; cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 6.72.

<sup>19</sup> Zink 2012, 393-399.

<sup>20</sup> Zink 2012, 399-400.

<sup>21</sup> Claridge 2010, 142; her scepticism is shared by Wardle 2014, 248-249.

reference to the Palatine temple as *aedis Apollinis Ramnusi* in two regionary catalogues from the 350s AD.<sup>22</sup> However, there exists not a single scrap of evidence, archaeological or otherwise, for a cult of Apollo at Rhamnous. Wiseman prefers to link the epithet *Ramnusius* alternatively to Apollo's role as an avenging deity, noting that it was 'the regular epithet of the avenging goddess Nemesis'. The representation of the punishment of the Niobids on the temple doors (as described by Propertius) probably showed a vengeful Apollo.<sup>23</sup> But here too we are relying on meagre evidence: Propertius does not specifically identify Apollo as part of the sculptural scene, and even if the god was represented as Wiseman envisages, one can only imagine that this singular image of the avenging Apollo was overshadowed by the more numerous depictions of Apollo in citharodic garb that could be seen elsewhere in the complex.<sup>24</sup> By this logic, it is hard to see why the epithet *Ramnusius* should have lent itself to the entire *aedis Apollinis*. In the end, sadly, no satisfactory explanation can be found.

In 1989, Linda Jones Roccas made a case for identifying the cult statue of Apollo Palatinus not as an original work by Scopas, but as an example of early Augustan 'classicizing', inspired by Hellenistic models. Her argument revolves around the depiction of a citharodic Apollo, flanked by Diana and Latona, on the so-called 'Sorrento Base', which dates from the late Augustan or Tiberian period and is normally associated with Propertius' description of Apollo *inter matrem...interque sororem* (FIGURE 8). Roccas compares the representation of Apollo on the 'Sorrento Base' with a number of imperial statue types, which seem to conform to a Hellenistic style influenced by the fourth-century statue of Apollo Patroos by Euphranor (as represented

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<sup>22</sup> The evidence comes from the *Notitia*, written in 354, and the *Curiosum*, which postdates 357. The Athenian provenance is supported by both Richardson 1992, 14, and Claridge 2010, 143.

<sup>23</sup> Wiseman 2013, 250.

<sup>24</sup> As Miller (2009, 201) points out, Propertius identifies the god of the Palatine only (and twice) as a citharode.

on contemporary Attic coins). Excavation of the Palatine temple during the 1960s brought to light two fragments of a colossal marble statue, one representing the side of a head and the other representing three toes of a left foot projecting from a long garment. Roccas raises the possibility that these fragments, which are ‘characteristic of the late Hellenistic period’, belonged to the Palatine Apollo, although, as she herself admits, the fragments are ‘extremely battered’ and thus far from definitive.<sup>25</sup> However, Roccas’ rejection of Pliny is rash, for why would Pliny identify Scopas’ statue as *Apollo Palatinus* if it were not the cult statue? Furthermore, contrary to what she claims, we have very good evidence for the Roman appropriation of Greek originals prior to the construction of the Palatine Temple: witness the *manubiae* from Ambracia installed in the temple of Hercules Musarum, or the Apollo Citharoedus by Timarchides in the Temple of Apollo Medicus. Ultimately, Roccas’ thesis fails to convince. The traditional consensus that the Apollo Palatinus was an original work by Scopas need not be revised.

There is certainly no reason to assume that the Apollo represented on the ‘Sorrento Base’ accurately reflected the details of the Augustan cult statue. Iconographers in this period were clearly working with multiple images of Apollo Citharoedus, as we shall see. However, this does not detract from the idea that the Palatine programme played a major role in shaping contemporary modes of artistic expression. Studies have underlined how the prominence of Apollo Citharoedus in public art influenced the production of statues and Arretine ware for private consumption (see FIGURE 13).<sup>26</sup> Apollo, Diana, and Latona appear together in

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<sup>25</sup> Roccas 1989, 579. The findings were initially published by Carettoni 1966-1967, 55-75, fig. 13; now housed in the Museo Palatino, Rome, inv. 35749-35750. Further discussion and illustrations in Tomei 1997, 47.

<sup>26</sup> On statues, see Stewart 1977, 141-142, Flashar 1992, Roccas 2002. On Arretine ware, see Castaldo 2017, 97-100.

numerous examples of pottery, statuary, and relief sculpture from the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods. For instance, an imperial relief from the Villa Albani represents a citharodic Apollo, accompanied by his sister and mother, processing towards the goddess Victoria, who appears to be welcoming them to her sacred precinct on the Palatine Hill (FIGURE 9).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, a three-sided Neo-Attic candelabrum base from the early Augustan period has archaizing figures of Apollo (with *cithara*), Artemis, and Leto on each panel (FIGURE 10).<sup>28</sup>

The lyre-playing Apollo appeared in various shapes and sizes even within the confines of the Palatine itself. In 1950, archaeologists uncovered from a secondary deposit situated to the north-west of the temple a large fragment of a wall-painting depicting a semi-nude Apollo seated on a throne and playing a seven-stringed *cithara* (FIGURE 11).<sup>29</sup> The find spot would prove particularly significant, since it lay in the immediate vicinity of a late Republican house soon to be identified by Gianfilippo Carettoni as belonging to none other than Augustus himself.<sup>30</sup> The importance of the discovery was reaffirmed in 1968, when excavators working in the region of the Palatine temple unearthed an extraordinary set of painted terracotta plaques, which probably once decorated the walls of the *cella* (FIGURE 12). The plaques represent Apollo and Diana adorning a betyl with their respective instruments – Apollo the lyre and Diana the bow and quiver.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Miller 2009, 191, fig. 8. The temple of Victoria on the Palatine dated from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (cf. Livy 10.33.9), and it is probably this temple that is shown in the relief.

<sup>28</sup> Musei Capitolini, inv. 2271; found in 1848 at the via della Conciliazone; now displayed at Centrale Montemartini.

<sup>29</sup> Museo Palatino, Rome, inv. 379982; Tomei and Gasparri 2014, 180; Romanelli and Carettoni 1955, 208-214. Miller (2009, 1) raises the interesting possibility that the fragment was part of a larger mythological panel, perhaps representing Apollo and the Muses or Apollo competing against the satyr Marsyas.

<sup>30</sup> Carettoni 1956.

<sup>31</sup> Museo Palatino, Rome, inv. 379051; illustrations and discussion in Tomei and Gasparri 2014, 154. The betyl is an aniconic pillar associated especially with Apollo.

The appearance of the citharodic Apollo in both house and temple seemed, for a while, to confirm the theory that the two buildings were meant to belong together. During his excavations, Carettoni found traces of a ramp which he believed connected the lower residential quarters of the house directly to the terrace of the adjacent temple.<sup>32</sup> This idea was powerfully exploited by Zanker in *The Power of Images* in order to show that Augustus built for himself a unified palace-sanctuary complex on the model of the great Hellenistic centres of Pergamum and Alexandria.<sup>33</sup> However, subsequent exploration of the area has exposed flaws in Carettoni's hypothesis. It now seems that the construction of the temple and the surrounding portico resulted in a large portion of Augustus' house being demolished before completion.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the house was probably considerably smaller than Carettoni and others imagined. This is in keeping with Suetonius' remarks about the emperor's modest living arrangements (*aedibus modicis*).<sup>35</sup>

Visitors to the Palatine must have been struck, nevertheless, by the cohabitation of Augustus and Apollo on the same site. Never before had a Roman leader enjoyed such literal proximity to his patron god. Indeed, the equivalence of emperor and god was made literal through the medium of sculpture. According to a scholiast on Horace, Augustus installed a statue of himself 'with the garb and stance of Apollo' (*habitu ac statura Apollinis*) in the public library next to the temple.<sup>36</sup> Servius may be referring to the same statue when he speaks of a *simulacrum* in an unspecified location depicting the emperor 'with all the attributes of Apollo' (*cum Apollinis cunctis insignibus*).<sup>37</sup> Is it going too far to suppose that Augustus' *habitus* included a *cithara*? That, at least, is

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<sup>32</sup> Carettoni 1983, 7–16.

<sup>33</sup> Zanker 1988, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Iacopi and Tedone 2005-2006, 351–78.

<sup>35</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 72.1; see Wiseman 2013, 255–6.

<sup>36</sup> Ps.-Acro ad Hor. *Ep.* 1.3.17: [*Augustus*] *sibi posuerat effigiem habitu ac statura Apollinis*.

<sup>37</sup> Serv. ad Verg. *Ecl.* 4.10: ...*Augustum, cui simulacrum factum est cum Apollinis cunctis insignibus*.

what Edward Champlin postulates, on the basis of a comparison with the Emperor Nero's statues in *citharoedicus habitus*.<sup>38</sup> Alessandro Barchiesi has even suggested that the statue in the portico of the temple, described by Propertius as being 'more beautiful than Phoebus himself', imitated the likeness of the *princeps*.<sup>39</sup> Such an argument can neither be proven nor disproven, but it is certainly not hard to see how the idealised classicism of Augustus' early portraiture, the serene expression and ageless beauty, could evoke comparisons with the eternally youthful Apollo. We know that Augustus was honoured as 'the New Apollo' in Athens and quite possibly represented in this guise on statues.<sup>40</sup> The famous statue of Augustus from Prima Porta, modelled on a bronze original from *ca.* 20 BC, provides a parallel of a different kind: the lower right flank of the emperor's cuirass is adorned with an image of Apollo riding a griffin with a *cithara* in his hand (FIGURE 14).<sup>41</sup> The simple conclusion I wish to draw from this evidence is that Augustus integrated aspects of the citharodic Apollo into own imagery and, in doing so, fostered a special connection between himself and the god who had guaranteed his rise to power.

## 2 Apollo Citharoedus and the Commemoration of Actium

When did Octavian first decide to adopt Apollo as his patron deity? The answer to this question obviously has important ramifications for our understanding of the political backdrop to the period. Several scholars, including Jean Gagé, have detected a nascent

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<sup>38</sup> Champlin 2003, 142; cf. Suet. *Nero* 25.2. On Nero's relationship with Apollo Citharoedus, see Chapter IV.1.

<sup>39</sup> See Barchiesi 2005, 284.

<sup>40</sup> *SEG* 29, 167 (21/20 BC): [Σεβαστὸ]ν Καίσα[ρα Νέον Ἀ]πόλλωνα | Ποσ[ειδώνι]ος Δημη[τρίου] Φλυεὺς | ἀγωνοθέτης ἐν ἐφήβ[οις] αὐτοῦ; Peppas-Delmousou 1979, esp. 128; Hoff 1992. An Athenian decree from around the same time mentions the foundation of an annual festival in honour of Augustus on Boedromion 12 (the emperor's *dies natalis*), shortly after the annual celebration of Apollo's 'birthday' in Athens on Boedromion 7: cf. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1071 = *SEG* 16 (1960) no. 34 = Stamires 1957, 260ff.

<sup>41</sup> On the statue and its dating, see Zanker 1988, 188-189.

association during the 40s, while Octavian was still acting as triumvir.<sup>42</sup> This notion hinges effectively on three literary testimonies: the so-called ‘Feast of the Twelve Gods’ in Suetonius, in which the young Caesar attends a banquet dressed as Apollo; the rumour reported by Cassius Dio that Octavian’s mother was impregnated by Apollo in the form of a snake; and the reference in Valerius Maximus to ‘Apollo’ being chosen as the watchword at the Battle of Philippi.<sup>43</sup> However, the significance of these passages was dramatically reappraised by Robert Gurval in his book, *Actium and Augustus: the Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (1995). Gurval established a number of salient points: the Suetonian anecdote has the ring of apocryphal Antonian propaganda; the rumour of Atia being impregnated by Apollo could only have gained currency after Augustus’ supremacy was assured; and, according to Plutarch (*Brut.* 24.7), it was Brutus who chose ‘Apollo’ at Philippi, not the triumvirs (and even if Valerius is correct, the watchword would have been used jointly by all three men).<sup>44</sup> Carsten Lange has since challenged Gurval’s revisionism by drawing attention to a fourth piece of evidence: Vergil’s *Fourth Eclogue*, written in 40 BC, speaks of a ‘child’ who will bring an end to civil war and restore the reign of Apollo and the kingdom of Saturn.<sup>45</sup> ‘Most likely’, Lange writes, ‘it all began in the city of Apollonia, the city of Apollo, at some point after 15<sup>th</sup> March 44 BC, when Octavian learned that Caesar had been murdered’.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted, however, that Suetonius assigns no such importance to this moment; and, at any rate, the identification of Vergil’s *puer* as Octavian is by no means unequivocal.

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<sup>42</sup> Gagé 1955, 479-494.

<sup>43</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 70; Dio 45.1.2; Val. Max. 1.5.7.

<sup>44</sup> See Gurval 1995, 94-102; supported by Hekster and Rich 2006, 160-1, and Levick 2010, 203-4.

<sup>45</sup> Verg. *Ecl.* 4.8-10: *tuus iam regnat Apollo*.

<sup>46</sup> Lange 2009, 46; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 8.2.

In my view, the vow of the Palatine temple in 36 must be considered the critical turning-point. This was the moment when Octavian's connection with Apollo first manifested itself in an outward-facing political gesture. The lightning-bolt struck, the haruspices declared that Apollo required a temple inside the *pomerium*, and Octavian seized the moment. With his colleague Lepidus now out of the picture and Mark Antony preoccupied in the East, the young Caesar began to make his mark on Rome's cityscape by conspicuously honouring the god who had guaranteed his victory over Sextus Pompey.

By the time that the temple was finally dedicated in 28, the situation had changed. Octavian's triumph at Actium had elevated him into a position of unrivalled pre-eminence. It had also handed him a golden opportunity to strengthen ties with his patron god. By a fateful coincidence, the gulf of Actium was overlooked by an ancient sanctuary of Apollo. Taking the initiative once again, Octavian ordered a new, larger temple of Apollo to be built on the hill where the ancient sanctuary had stood, and constructed next to it an impressive victory monument consisting of a network of 'boathouses' containing ten ships captured during the battle. Across the Actian gulf, Octavian founded the new city of Nicopolis through a synoecism of neighbouring communities. In its northern suburb, he laid out an expansive precinct with a stadium and gymnasium purpose-built for the celebration of quinquennial games in honour of Apollo. The hill above the precinct ('the spot where he had had his tent', according to Cassius Dio) was adorned with another, even larger, naval monument – this one dedicated to Neptune and Mars, and boasting as many as forty rams – as well as an

open-air shrine to Apollo.<sup>47</sup> Those who looked upon these monuments could have been left in no doubt that Octavian's rise to power had been divinely ordained.

The first performance of the Actian games at Nicopolis has been dated convincingly to September 27 BC.<sup>48</sup> Our fullest ancient account of the Actian games comes from Strabo's *Geography*.<sup>49</sup> Strabo explains that the festival was reinstated on the ancient model of the games at Olympia. The programme, perhaps expanded for the purposes of making the games 'more respected' (ἐντιμότερον), included the three 'Olympic' agonistic categories (musical, gymnastic, and hippic); and the events took place in a specially-designed monumental complex in a suburb of Nicopolis. The city also boasted a large theatre (Augustan in date though not mentioned in the literary sources), and it is probable that some, if not all, of the musical contests took place in this venue. Responsibility for presiding over the contests was granted to the Spartans.<sup>50</sup> Surviving epitaphs and records of agonistic victors highlight the wider geographical and cultural importance of the Actia: many of the same competitors appeared at the ancient panhellenic festivals of Olympia, Nemea, and Isthmia, as well as at the so-called 'Sebastian games' at Naples, founded in AD 2 in response to a petition from the local *demos*.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The literary evidence for Octavian's Actian monuments comes from Strabo (7.7.6), Cassius Dio (51.1.3) and Suetonius (*Aug.* 18.2). Recent excavations by Konstantinos Zachos have yielded invaluable information about the structural and topographical aspects of Octavian's campsite memorial at Actium: see Zachos 2002 and 2007, building on the findings of Murray and Petsas 1989. The date of the Actian monuments remains contested; the chronology in Dio is frustratingly vague (he says only that ταῦτα μὲν ὕστερον ἐγένετο; 51.1.4), while Strabo says nothing about it at all. On the foundation of Nicopolis, see Purcell 1987 and Lange 2009, 99-106.

<sup>48</sup> This point is demonstrated conclusively by Schäfer 1993, 247.

<sup>49</sup> Strabo 7.7.6. Cassius Dio (51.1.2) provides additional details about the content of the games. Suetonius (*Aug.* 18.2) records simply that Octavian *ludosque illic quinquennales constituit*.

<sup>50</sup> This gesture may be explained by the fact that Sparta was the only city in mainland Greece to have supported Octavian at Actium (cf. Paus. 4.31.1-2), as well as the fact that Sparta had given refuge to Livia and the young Tiberius after the Perusine War (cf. Dio 54.7.2). The Spartans were a particularly suitable choice given their reputation as lovers of music: the city boasted among its tourist attractions the cithara played by the legendary Timotheus (Paus. 3.12.10).

<sup>51</sup> On the Sebastian games at Naples, cf. Dio 55.10.9-10, Strabo 5.246, noting gymnastic and musical contests, Vell. Pat. 2.123.1, Suet. *Aug.* 98.5; *IOlympia* 56; discussion in Geer 1935; Gurval 1995, 77;

The challenge facing modern historians is to determine exactly how the memorials at Actium and Nicopolis related to what Octavian was doing in Rome. Gurval's attempt to minimise the association between the foreign and domestic projects has rightly been met with scepticism. News of Antony and Cleopatra's defeat in sight of Apollo's ancient sanctuary must surely have been relayed to citizens in the imperial capital, and that must have significantly altered perceptions of the temple currently taking shape on the Palatine Hill.<sup>52</sup> In addition, Cassius Dio informs us that, following the announcement of the victory at Actium, the Senate decreed 'that a festival should be held every four years in honour of Octavian'. It is highly likely that the first edition of these 'Actian' games coincided with the dedication of the Palatine temple in 28.<sup>53</sup> In the so-called 'Medinaceli reliefs', an early imperial (possibly Claudian) set of panels decorated with major events from the life of Augustus, Apollo sits on a rock next to a tripod and holds a *cithara* while looking down on the ships fighting at Actium (FIGURES 15a and 15b).<sup>54</sup> There remains, however, a lingering doubt as to the relationship between the Actian and citharodic Apollos. To what extent were the two incarnations of the deity conflated in the Roman imagination? Was this conflation already apparent when the Palatine temple opened its doors to the public, or did it only become perceptible in the period that followed, once the historic significance of the Actian conflict had fully sunken in?

The first literary attestation of an 'Actian Apollo' occurs in the famous 'Shield of Aeneas' passage in *Aeneid* 8, which appeared perhaps as late as 19 BC. Here,

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Sarikakis 1965; Merkelbach 1974; Strasser 2002; Swan 2004, 102-103; Spawforth 2007, 388. Augustus attended the games himself in AD 6 and presided over the athletic contests in AD 14: cf. Suet. *Aug.* 98.5, Vell. Pat. 2.123.1; Dio 56.29.2.

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., Pelling 1997 and Hekster and Rich 2008, 164-165.

<sup>53</sup> On the 'Actian' games in Rome, cf. Dio 51.19.2: πανήγυριν οἱ πεντετηρίδα ἄγεσθαι; for the known celebrations in 16 BC and AD 9, cf. Dio 53.1.4-5, 54.19.8; Plin. *HN* 7.158; *CIL* 6.877a; Lange 2009, 168; Hekster and Rich 2006, 165.

<sup>54</sup> See Schäfer 2013, 321-323.

however, it is the bow that is singled out rather than the lyre (*Actius haec cernens arcum intendebat Apollo*).<sup>55</sup> Apollo's lyre is apparently linked with Octavian's military victory in a much-quoted line from Propertius 4.6: 'I have sung enough of war: Apollo the victor now demands the cithara and has laid aside his arms for peaceful dances' (*bella satis cecini: citharam iam poscit Apollo/ victor et ad placidos exuit arma choros*).<sup>56</sup> But Propertius elsewhere in the same poem sets up a contrast between the musical Apollo Palatinus and the martial Apollo Actius, who 'had not come with his locks streaming over his shoulders or brought the unwarlike melody of the tortoise lyre' (*non ille attulerat crines in colla solutos/ aut testudineae carmen inerme lyrae*).<sup>57</sup> It is not until after 8 BC, in the anonymous *Elegia in Maecenatem*, that Apollo Actius is first described explicitly as a lyre-player.<sup>58</sup>

The coinage of the early Augustan Age provides an additional perspective on the relationship between the citharodic and Actian Apollos. An image of a god playing the *cithara* first appears on an Italian denarius from ca. 32-29 BC (FIGURE 16). The god, who is seated and nude, was long thought to depict Apollo, although the fact that he is represented with a *petasus* slung behind his back almost certainly identifies him as Mercury, the mythical inventor of the *cithara*.<sup>59</sup> It is not until circa 19 BC that the lyre makes its next appearance in the numismatic record. In this instance, we find only the instrument alone (a tortoise-shell lyre), with the name of the moneyer P. Petronius Turpilianus imprinted next to it on the reverse (FIGURE 17).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 8.704.

<sup>56</sup> Prop. 4.6.69-70.

<sup>57</sup> Prop. 4.6.31-32. On the contrast between the martial and the citharodic Apollo in Propertius 4.6, see Isager 1998, 402.

<sup>58</sup> *Eleg. Maec.* 1.51-52: *Actius ipse lyram plectro percussit eburno/ postquam victrices conticuere tubae.*

<sup>59</sup> *RIC I*<sup>2</sup> 257; Gurval 1995, 59-60. Mercury as the inventor of the *cithara*: cf. Hor. *Od.* 1.10.6, 1.21.12, 3.11.3-4; Diod. Sic. 1.16.1.

<sup>60</sup> *RIC I*<sup>2</sup> 293.

One coin in particular has been the subject of intense scrutiny in recent decades: the silver denarius minted in Lugdunum in 16 BC by the moneyer C. Antistius Vetus (FIGURE 18).<sup>61</sup> A profile of the emperor appears on the obverse, with his titles emblazoned around the edge of the coin. The reverse shows Apollo, wearing a laurel wreath and dressed in a long *chiton*. He carries a *cithara* in his left hand and a *patera* in his right, from which he pours a libation into a burning altar situated directly beside him. The accompanying legend refers to Apollo explicitly with the epithet ‘Actius’: C ANTISTI VETVS IIIVIR APOLLINI ACTIO. This is an obvious allusion to Augustus’ victory at Actium and to Apollo’s role as the emperor’s protector. But why is the lyre-playing god shown standing atop a raised platform? Some have attempted to identify this structure with the *foruli* inside the *cella* of the Palatine temple, but this is superfluous.<sup>62</sup> The platform clearly represents a *rostra* adorned with *navalia spolia* from Actium. The details of two anchors and three rams are quite easily discernible.

An image of Apollo Citharoedus is depicted along with an inscribed reference to Actium in two further coin types, dating from 15-13 and 11-10 BC respectively (FIGURES 19a, 19b, and 20).<sup>63</sup> On this occasion, the legends read simply ACT. In the first example, Apollo faces forward and holds a plectrum; in the second, Apollo faces to the right and holds a *patera*, just as we see on the denarius of Antistius Vetus.

In total, then, Apollo Citharoedus features on three different Augustan coins minted in the period between 16 and 10 BC. These coins conform to two basic ‘types’ – the Apollo with plectrum and the Apollo with *patera* – which, according to Zanker, correspond with the two statues described in Propertius 2.31: the Apollo with plectrum

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<sup>61</sup> *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 365-6.

<sup>62</sup> See Gagé 1955, 545, and Sutherland, *RIC*<sup>2</sup> I, 365, thus associating the image on the coin with the cult statue inside the *cella*.

<sup>63</sup> *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 170 and 190A.

matches the ‘cult statue’ inside the *cella* (the work of Scopas), while the Apollo with *patera* matches the Apollo in the *porticus* (which Zanker refers to as the ‘Apollo of Actium’). On this basis, Zanker deduces that the statue in front of the temple must have stood atop a platform adorned with the rams and anchors of ships captured at Actium. Accordingly, the Palatine Temple can be seen, at least in part, as a deliberate homage to the victory over Antony and Cleopatra.<sup>64</sup>

On the face of it, Zanker’s argument is compelling. Apollo’s depiction on the coins matches several of the details singled out by Propertius (for instance, the *tacita lyra* and *longa vestis*). However, Propertius makes no mention of either a *rostra* or a *patera* in his description of the statues, and it is hard to see why he should have omitted such a conspicuous aspect of the sculptural configuration. Cassius Dio mentions that the *rostra* of the Temple of Divus Julius was embellished in 29 with rams from Actium.<sup>65</sup> *Actia rostra* also feature in Propertius’ narration of the triumph of 29.<sup>66</sup> But there is no evidence for such a monument at the Temple of Apollo Palatinus. Archaeological excavation of the Palatine has yet to yield definitive proof of an Actian ‘programme’.

For these reasons, Hans Jucker has suggested that the image on the coin of Antistius Vetus alludes not to the cult statue in Rome but to an otherwise unknown statue of Apollo which adorned Augustus’ campsite memorial at Actium. Given the emphasis on Apollo in the literary testimonies for this site, it is likely *a priori* that the god was represented sculpturally in some form.<sup>67</sup> Since the publication of Jucker’s article, important new evidence has emerged from the excavations at Actium. It is now understood that the upper terrace of the naval monument contained a large altar, which,

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<sup>64</sup> Zanker 1983, 31-32, and 1988, 88.

<sup>65</sup> Dio 51.19.2, 56.34.4.

<sup>66</sup> Prop. 2.1.35.

<sup>67</sup> Jucker 1982, esp. 97-100.

according to the excavator Konstantinos Zachos, may well have supported a statue of Apollo. A semi-circular base was also discovered in the vicinity (its original location unknown), representing Apollo, accompanied by eleven other gods, holding a lyre in his left hand and a plectrum in his right hand.<sup>68</sup> These discoveries establish clear link between the decorative programmes of the Palatine and Actian monuments. However, they do not in my view provide solid grounds for an interpretation of the numismatic iconography. For a start, the notion that the statue of Apollo Actius carried a plectrum is contradicted by the imagery of the Antistius Vetus coin, on which Jucker primarily bases his argument. Were there two statues of Apollo at Actium equipped with different paraphernalia? Does one Apollo type refer to a statue in Rome and the other a statue at Actium? Or, as Hekster and Rich ambitiously suggest, might the Augustan coins reflect a newly built monument attached to the Palatine complex which has left no trace in the archaeological record?<sup>69</sup> We are left with more questions than answers.

The reappearance of Apollo Citharoedus on later imperial coins only complicates matters. An aureus series issued during the reign of Commodus carries an image of the god on the reverse with the legend APOLLINI PALATINO (FIGURE 21).<sup>70</sup> Apollo faces forward and holds a plectrum in his right hand, just as he does on the Augustan coin. This would seem to support Zanker's theory that the 'Actian Apollo' with plectrum was the cult statue in the Palatine Temple. However, the iconography of the Commodan coin differs in two respects: firstly, Apollo's head is turned to the right rather than to the left, and secondly, the lyre is shown resting on a column rather than being carried unassisted. The shape of the instrument itself also appears somewhat wider and rounder than it does on the Augustan coin, although in the latter case the

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<sup>68</sup> Zachos 2003, 89-90 (with illustration), and 2007, 414; see also Lange 2009, 107-108, 177-180.

<sup>69</sup> Hekster and Rich 2006, 164.

<sup>70</sup> *RIC* III 197, 197a, 206, 218, 578, 588.

bottom of the lyre is obscured behind Apollo's back. We therefore need to think twice about drawing a direct parallel between the two coins. If the image on the Commodan coin was intended to be an accurate representation of the Palatine cult statue as it appeared in the 20s BC, then we would surely expect the lyre resting on the column to have featured on the Augustan coins.

The second Augustan type – Apollo with *patera* – also finds a potential counterpart in a coin series issued first under Antoninus Pius in AD 140-144 and 145-161, and again under Septimius Severus in AD 193-195 (FIGURE 22).<sup>71</sup> The representation of Apollo here is almost identical to that on the Antistius Vetus coin: laureate, clothed in a long robe, holding a *patera* in the right hand and a *cithara* in the left. The legend reads APOLLINI AUGUSTO – a suggestive epithet, to say the least. On the other hand, there is no hint of a *rostra* or a burning altar. Of course, the moneyers may simply have been replicating aspects of the design of Augustus' coins rather than alluding to any physical monument. But it is notable, nevertheless, that both the Antonine and Severan coins convey images of Apollo that were recognised at the time as 'Augustan'. Both Nero and Hadrian represented Apollo Citharoedus on their coins, and yet the iconography of these coins does not obviously conform to a particular Augustan model; the legends make no reference either to Augustus or to the Palatine.<sup>72</sup> That suggests that the later issues served a specific commemorative function. The reissuing of the coin during the Severan period may have been motivated by the catastrophic fire of 192 which destroyed large swathes of the Augustan Palatine.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *RIC* III 63A-C, 126, 598A-B; IV 40, 345, 682, 699. Apollo Citharoedus appears in other Antonine coins without the legend APOLLINI AUGUSTO: cf. *RIC* III 469A-C, 474A-D, 477A-B, 685, 806, 824A-B.

<sup>72</sup> Nero: *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 73-82, 121-123, 205-212, 380-381, 384-385, 414-417, 451-455; see further Chapter IV.1. Hadrian: *RIC* II 482-3.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Dio 72.24, Hdn. 1.14.2-6.

Taking stock of the evidence, then, it is clear that there *was* a recognised association between the Palatine and Actian Apollos before the end of the first century BC. This association was likely realised at the time that the Apollo Citharoedus coins were first circulated. However, the appearance of *navalia spolia* on the Antistius Vetus coin need not be interpreted as a literal representation of a single statue or monument. Rather, it should be understood as a creative design which could equally have evoked several different Augustan monuments, whether in Rome, Actium, or Nicopolis. Instead of trying to pin each coin to a specific architectural counterpart, we should emphasise the novelty of a composite iconography that fused together the attributes of the musical and martial Apollos. The symbolism of the *cithara* was the same whatever form or medium it took. It is this symbolism to which I now turn.

### 3 Apollo and the ‘Classical’ Revival

Representations of Apollo in Augustan art only begin to make sense in the context of the archaizing and classicizing ‘revival’ that inspired them.<sup>74</sup> The aims of this ‘revival’, as Zanker demonstrated, went far beyond matters of aesthetics: Apollo, the divine champion of *mousike*, became the iconic figurehead of ‘a new cultural agenda’, which balanced aspects of traditional Roman morality and political ideology with the rich artistic legacy of ancient Greece.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> On the ‘archaizing’ architecture of the Palatine temple, see Marchetti 2001 and Zink 2008, esp. 63. In addition to the statues of gods, there were also four bulls by Myron around the altar (cf. Prop. 2.31.5-8), and the pediments of the temple contained works by the archaic masters Bupalos and Athenis (Plin. *HN* 36.11-14). Augustus himself was a discerning art critic and apparently expressed a particular penchant for the fourth-century painter Apelles: Suet. *Aug.* 89.1; Plin. *HN* 35.91.

<sup>75</sup> See especially Zanker 1988, 89.

The cult of Apollo had a long history in Rome, dating back at least to the late sixth century BC.<sup>76</sup> In 431 BC, the consul Cn. Julius consecrated an *aedis* to Apollo Medicus in the area between the Circus Flaminius and the Forum Holitorium.<sup>77</sup> The building served throughout the Republican period as a venue for meetings of the senate outside the *pomerium*.<sup>78</sup> Sometime between 34 and 32 BC, the Antonian partisan C. Sosius began the process of refurbishing the building, perhaps in response to Octavian's project on the Palatine.<sup>79</sup> It was probably not until after the Civil War that the final renovations were completed. Sosius clearly succeeded in ingratiating himself with the victor of Actium, since his restored temple was not only allowed to remain intact, but was integrated into a large-scale construction project in the area of the Circus Flaminius, which included the Portico of Octavia (completed *ca.* 27 BC) and the Theatre of Marcellus (dedicated in 13 or 11 BC). An impressive frieze discovered in the ruins of Sosius' temple contains scenes from Octavian's triple triumph of 29.<sup>80</sup>

A passage in Pliny's *Natural History* mentions a cedar-wood statue of *Apollo Sosianus* which had been imported to Rome from Seleucia.<sup>81</sup> Sosius probably acquired the statue during his governorship of Syria from 38 to 36 BC and dedicated it as the cult statue of the restored temple. However, Pliny also mentions three other statues of Apollo which could be seen in the same temple (that is, *in delubro suo ad Octaviae porticum*). Two were by Philiskos of Rhodes, the first of unknown type, the second naked and accompanied by Latona, Diana, and the Muses. The third was a colossal

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Livy 3.63.7, on the *Apollinaris*; see also Gagé 1955, 155-220, on the origins of the cult.

<sup>77</sup> Livy 4.29.7, 40.51.6; cf. Ascon. on Cic. *Tog. Cand.* 90. The temple was vowed in 433 BC in expiation of a plague (Livy 4.25.3) and was refurbished in 353 BC following the Gallic fire (Livy 7.20.9). On the temple and its early development, see Platner-Ashby 1929, 15-16; Viscogliosi 1993a, 49-50.

<sup>78</sup> Senate-meetings in the temple of Apollo Medicus: cf. Livy 39.4, 41.17; Cic. *ad Quint.* 2.3.2, *ad fam.* 8.4, 8.5.6; Lucan 3.103.

<sup>79</sup> See Hinard 1992, 57-72, Viscogliosi 1993a, 50-53, Rutledge 2012, 244.

<sup>80</sup> Musei Capitolini inv. no. MC 2776 (currently displayed at Centrale Montemartini); Steinby *LTUR*, s.v. "Apollo, Aedes in Circo", 49-54.

<sup>81</sup> Plin. *HN* 13.53: *cedrinus est Romae in delubro Apollo Sosianus Seleucia advectus*.

statue of Apollo ‘holding a lyre’ by Timarchides of Athens.<sup>82</sup> The origin of the three statues is disputed. Filippo Coarelli has suggested that the colossal statue by Timarchides was installed in 179 by the censors M. Fulvius Nobilior and M. Aemilius Lepidus, on the occasion of their restoration of the temple.<sup>83</sup> However, the exact nature of the censors’ intervention is unclear, and Timarchides’ *floruit* has been assigned by some experts to the latter half of second century. If we follow Pliny, we might reasonably conclude that the statues were brought over by Sosius as triumphal booty or perhaps later under the auspices of the *princeps* himself. The Apollo *qui...citharam tenit* has been identified on chronological and stylistic grounds as the model for the Apollo of Cyrene, a late Hellenistic work of ‘neoclassical’ style now displayed in the British Museum, although this interpretation is contested by some scholars.<sup>84</sup>

The Augustan coinage is the first to depict Apollo specifically as a citharode, that is, in the act of singing to the lyre. That is not to say, however, that the association of Apollo with the lyre was a novel feature of Augustan iconography. Statues of Apollo Citharoedus had been adorning Roman villas and monuments since at least the late Republican period.<sup>85</sup> *Citharae*, moreover, had been appearing on Roman coins since the late second century BC.<sup>86</sup> A denarius from 42 BC minted by Brutus in the East shows on

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<sup>82</sup> Plin. *HN* 36.34-5: *ad Octaviae vero porticum Apollo Philisci Rhodii in delubro suo, item Latona et Diana et Musae novem et alter Apollo nudus. eum, qui citharam in eodem templo tenet, Timarchides fecit.* Vitruvius (10.2.13) reports that the *colossici Apollinis in fano basis* underwent repairs sometime ‘in living memory’ (*nostra...memoria*). Some have identified this colossus as the citharodic statue by Timarchides; others link it with the cedar-wood cult statue from Seleucia. Other artworks in the temple included a Niobid group by Scopas or Praxiteles and paintings by Aristides of Thebes (Plin. *HN* 36.28 and 36.99). The pediments, which represent the battle between the Greeks and the Amazons, might have been taken by Sosius from the late Archaic Temple of Apollo Daphnophorus at Eretria; this idea is based on the known architectural proportions of the two temples and the thematic affinity between their respective frontal decorations: see La Rocca 1985, 76-77.

<sup>83</sup> Coarelli 1970, 77-78, 86-87. Livy (40.51.1-5, 52.1) mentions only a *theatrum et proscenium ad Apollinis* and a *porticus <ad> aedem Apollinis*, but archaeological investigation has revealed traces of building work on the temple itself during the first quarter of the second century BC: see Viscogliosi 1993a, 49-50.

<sup>84</sup> See Becatti 1935 and La Rocca 1977.

<sup>85</sup> See Roccas 2002. Note also the statue of Apollo and the Muses in Pompey’s Theatre: see pp. 87-88.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *RRC* 320, 410.1-10b, 416.1, 417, 472.4a, 501.

the obverse a personification of Libertas and on the reverse a plectrum, a rectangular lyre and a laurel wreath (all attributes of Apollo).<sup>87</sup> The head of Apollo is juxtaposed with an image of a lyre on another denarius from the same year.<sup>88</sup>

Although there is some evidence that Brutus cultivated a special connection with Apollo (see above), in all probability he was merely adopting iconographical motifs that were familiar to the peoples he was governing. Greek cities had been depicting Apollo Citharoedus on statues and vases from at least the fifth century BC onward.<sup>89</sup> Images of lyres appear commonly alongside busts of Apollo on coins from the Classical period, but it is not until the second century that we begin to find numismatic representations of Apollo specifically in the guise of *citharoedus*.<sup>90</sup> In 166 BC, the Seleucid King Antiochus IV Epiphanes issued a silver tetradrachm with a bust of Apollo on the obverse and an image of the same god playing the lyre on the reverse (FIGURE 23).<sup>91</sup> Apollo is robed, faces right, and holds both a *cithara* and a *patera* (Greek *phiale*). The legend reads: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΤΗΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΝΙΚΕΦΟΡΟΥ. In all likelihood, the coins were minted specially to commemorate a recent festival of Apollo staged by Antiochus at Daphne.<sup>92</sup> The image on the reverse is generally thought to represent the famous cult statue by Bryaxis which stood in the Seleucid temple at Daphne.<sup>93</sup> The statue was still impressing visitors as late as the fourth century AD:

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<sup>87</sup> *RRC* 501; *BMCR* East, 471 n. 38.

<sup>88</sup> *RRC* 504; *BMCR* East, 476 n. 55. Of the 45 Apollo types listed in Crawford's *Roman Republican Coinage*, only four in total (8%) represent Apollo with the lyre: *RRC* 285.7a, 371, 494, 504.

<sup>89</sup> A famous example is the Calyx krater by the Peleus Painter, dating from *ca.* 430 BC: see Bndrick 2005, 142-150.

<sup>90</sup> See Power 2010, 29 n. 57: examples from Delos, Mytilene, and Methymna. Illustrations in Richter 1965, 68, figs. 269-270.

<sup>91</sup> Houghton 2008, no. 1401.

<sup>92</sup> For more on this festival and its musical entertainments, see Chapter I.3.

<sup>93</sup> The temple of Apollo was destroyed by fire on 22 October 362 AD: cf. Amm. Marc. 22.13.1ff.; Julian, *Misop.* 361b. From Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.10, we learn that the statue was made of wood and gold. Ammianus Marcellinus adds that the statue was as big as the statue of Zeus by Phidias at Olympia (22.13.1: *simulacrum in eo [sc. templo] Olympiaci Iovis imitamenti aequiperans magnitudinem*).

...τὴν φιάλην, τὴν κιθάραν, τὸν ποδήρη χιτῶνα...καί μοι πρὸ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἴστησιν ὁ λογισμὸς τὸν τύπον, ἡμερότητα μορφῆς, ἀπαλότητα δέρης ἐν λίθῳ, ζωστήρα περὶ τῆς στήθαι συνάγοντα χιτῶνα χρυσοῦν, ὡς αὐτοῦ τὰ μὲν ἐνιζάνειν, τὰ δὲ ὑπανίστασθαι. τὸ δὲ ὅλον σχῆμα τίνος οὐκ ἂν ζέοντα ἐκοίμισε θυμόν; ἐόκει γὰρ ἄδοντι μέλος. (Lib. Or. 60.6.9-11)

The offering bowl, the *cithara*, the tunic reaching to the feet...And a mental effort makes the apparition [of Apollo] stand before my eyes – the gentleness of its form, the softness in the stone at the neck, the belt around the chest keeping in place the gold tunic in such a way that some of it is held in tight and some of it billows out. The whole figure might have channelled a living spirit, for he seemed like one who was singing a melody. (Trans. adapted from Pollitt 1990)

The echoes of Propertius 2.31 are immediately striking – not only in the physical appearance of Apollo (long dress, *cithara*, etc.) but also in the emphasis on the statue's epiphanic quality, such that the god even appears to sing (cf. *tacita carmen hiare lyra*, Prop. 2.31.6; *carmina...sonat*, 2.31.16).<sup>94</sup> It would probably be going too far to suggest that Augustus (or his moneyers) modelled the image of 'Apollo Actius' directly on the coins of Antiochus IV. But given the undeniable similarity between the Augustan and Seleucid types, it seems reasonable to suppose that Greek models were used, whether numismatic or sculptural. In addition, the cult statue of Apollo Patroos, as featured on Athenian coinage of the fifth century, may have provided the inspiration for the 'Apollo with *patera*' type discussed above.<sup>95</sup>

The musical culture that Apollo embodied was closely associated in the Roman imagination with the legacy of ancient Greece. Cicero expresses admiration of the *cithara* on the grounds that it was the instrument 'cherished most fondly by ancient Greece' (*maxime autem a Graecia vetere celebrata*).<sup>96</sup> Timothy Power has highlighted how professional citharodes are frequently assimilated with Apollo in Greek and Roman

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<sup>94</sup> For the same metaphor used of a statue of a human lyre-player, cf. Apul. *Flor.* 15: *interim canticum videtur ore tereti semihiantibus in conatu labellis eliquare*.

<sup>95</sup> See Shear 1936, 310-311.

<sup>96</sup> Cic. *De Orat.* 3.197; cf. *Ep. ad fam.* 9.22.3 and *De Sen.* 26 (on Socrates learning the lyre); Cic. *Mur.* 13 (on the Greek saying about bad aulodes who become citharodes).

literary texts, reflecting the god's mythical status as the prototypical *citharoedus*.<sup>97</sup>

Compare, for instance, the evocative description of a lyre-player in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, an anonymous rhetorical treatise from the late 80s BC:

*uti citharoedus cum prodierit optime vestitus, palla inaurata indutus, cum chlamyde purpurea variis coloribus intexta, et cum corona aurea magnis fulgentibus gemmis inluminata, citharam tenens exornatissimam auro et ebore distinctam, ipse praeterea forma et specie sit et statura adposita ad dignitatem...* (*Rhet. ad Her.* 4.47)

Suppose that a citharode has taken the stage, impeccably dressed, kitted out in a gold-embroidered robe, with purple mantle interlaced in various colours, and wearing a golden crown radiant with large sparking jewels, and holding a lyre decorated most ornately with gold and ivory. What is more, the man himself has a beauty, a presence, and a stature fit for a person of dignity.

The Romans celebrated Apollo not only as the inventor of lyre-playing but also as the patron of the games. The *ludi Apollinares* were first held in 212 BC in celebration of the defeat of Hannibal. Following a plague in 208 they were made annual and their date was fixed to 13 July.<sup>98</sup> Livy records that the sacrifices at the games were made 'according to the Greek rite' (*Graeco ritu*).<sup>99</sup> Although he specifies that the *ludi Apollinares* were originally held in the Circus Maximus, it is clear from other sources that theatrical venues were also used, reflecting the growing preponderance of stage performances in the programme.<sup>100</sup> Apollo's games may have held special meaning for Augustus, since Julius Caesar was born during the celebrations in 100 and he himself had paid for the games of 45.<sup>101</sup> The theatre which the *princeps* dedicated next to the

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<sup>97</sup> Power 2010, 28-31.

<sup>98</sup> Over time the duration of the games was extended, so that by the end of the Republic they occupied a full eight days (6-13 July). On the foundation of the *ludi Apollinares*, cf. Livy 25.12.2-15; Scullard 1981, 159-60.

<sup>99</sup> Livy 25.12.10: *decemviri Graeco ritu hostiis sacra faciant*. According to Varro (*LL* 7.88), the *sacra* of the Sibylline Books were also conducted *Graeco ritu*, which makes their relocation to the Temple of Apollo Palatinus in 12 BC particularly significant.

<sup>100</sup> Livy 25.12.14 (Circus Maximus in 212); cf. Macr. *Sat.* 1.17.29. Pliny (*HN* 19.23) tells us that the *ludi Apollinares* of 60 BC were produced *in theatre*; Cicero (*Att.* 2.19) mentions the appearance of a *tragoedus* at the games of 59. A category of mime-actors known as *parasiti Apollinis* is attested in a fragment of Festus (436-438L), as well as in a small number of imperial epitaphs, and it would appear from this latter body of evidence that some of these actors served an additional function as priests of Apollo: see Gagé 1955, 400-407, and Jory 1970, 237-242.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Dio 47.18.6, 43.48.3; Hoff 1992, 225.

Temple of Apollo Sosianus in honour of his nephew and son-in-law Marcellus seems to have been built in accordance with a project conceived by Julius Caesar not long before his assassination.<sup>102</sup>

Apollo and the *Graecus ritus* played an especially important role in the *Ludi Saeculares* of 17 BC. The inscribed *acta* mention, on the night of 31 May, sacrifices to the Moirai conducted ‘in the Greek rite’, followed by games held ‘on a stage without the additional construction of a theatre and without the erection of seating’.<sup>103</sup> On the following day, there were ‘Latin games in a wooden theatre which had been erected on the Campus Martius next to the Tiber’. On the third day, the Roman people watched the *princeps* take part in sacrifices and prayers to Apollo in front of his temple on the Palatine. It was at this point that Horace’s *Carmen Saeculare* was performed by a choir of twenty-seven boys and twenty-seven girls, first on the Palatine and then again on the Capitoline.<sup>104</sup> The song paid tribute to Apollo in his triple role as prophet, archer, and musician (*augur et fulgente decorus arcu / Phoebus acceptusque novem Camenis*, 61-62), the phrase *acceptusque novem Camenis* invoking his traditional Greek epithet *Musagetes* (‘Leader of the Muses’). Apollo is also addressed in his capacity as the

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<sup>102</sup> On the Julian project, cf. Cic. *Att.* 13.20.2; Suet. *Iul.* 44.1; Dio 43.4.1, 43.49.2. On the theatre of Marcellus, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 29.4; Dio 43.49.2, 54.26.1; Plin. *HN* 8.65; Aug. *RG* 4.22. Wiseman (1985, 27) and Claridge (2010, 227) maintain that the theatre of Marcellus was built to serve the temple and/or the *ludi Apollinares* that were held there. Vitruvius, in his treatise addressed to Augustus, maintains that temples to Apollo and Liber should be built ‘next to the theatre’ (*secundum theatrum*; 1.7.1). One wonders whether the appearance of real citharodes (among other musicians) in the Theatre of Marcellus somehow enhanced the religious aura of the citharodic god whose colossal statue stood inside the temple next door.

<sup>103</sup> The inscription can be found at *CIL* 6.32323 = *ILS* 5050; a detailed commentary can be found in Schnegg-Köhler 2002.

<sup>104</sup> *CIL* 6.32323 = *ILS* 5050, ll. 148-9: *[X]XVII quibus denuntiatur erat patrimi et matrimi et puellae totidem carmen cecinerunt; eo[de]m modo in Capitolio. carmen composuit Q. Hor[at]ius Flaccus*. Much has been written on the meaning of *carmen composuit*: see Lowrie 2009, 123-141; Thomas 2011, 55-60. Horace calls himself *Romanae fidicen lyrae* (*Od.* 4.3.23; cf. *Epist.* 2.2.84-86, 143), and some have taken this as a sign that he was directly involved in the composition of the music: see Lyons 2010; *contra* Thomas 2011, 128. Little credence should be given to the notion that Horace actually accompanied the singers on the lyre himself: *pace* Wille 1967, 253; Bonavia-Hunt 1969, 7-14. But we should not exclude the notion that the *Carmen Saeculare* was accompanied by musical instruments: *pace* Scheid 1995, 26; Barchiesi 2002, 112-118; Vendries 2004, 405.

guardian of the Palatine (*si Palatinas videt aequus aras*, 65). The festivities concluded with seven additional days of *ludi scaenici*, including: ‘Latin plays (*ludi Latini*) in the wooden theatre which is next to the Tiber at the second hour; Greek choral performances (*ludi thymelici*) in the theatre of Pompey at the third hour; and Greek city-games (*ludi astici*) in the theatre which is in the Circus Flaminius at the fourth hour’.<sup>105</sup>

A *fidicen* and a *tibicen* appear together in the commemorative coinage from Domitian’s *Ludi Saeculares* of AD 88 (FIGURE 24).<sup>106</sup> The two musicians wear togas and stand behind an altar facing the emperor, who holds a *patera* and performs a sacrifice (possibility to Apollo and Diana). Although we lack a direct Augustan parallel for this coin, it is generally agreed that the Domitianic sacrifices followed an Augustan model. Thus, we can fairly assume that the sacrifices which Augustus himself performed on 3 June in front of the Palatine temple were accompanied by both a *tibicen* and a *fidicen*.<sup>107</sup> The traditional use of the lyre in Roman cultic ritual is attested by Cicero and Horace, who testify to its role in accompanying sacrifices and public banquets.<sup>108</sup> However, lyre-players only rarely feature in religious iconography, and in

<sup>105</sup> *CIL* 6.32323 = *ILS* 5050. *Ludi astici* were dramatic performances, modelled on the City Dionysia at Athens: Manuwald 2011, 21, n. 28. There were also *ludi astici* at the games held in honour of Augustus’ triumph in 29 (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 6.4). On the significance of *ludi thymelici*, see p. 87, n. 65. One of the stars of the games was a dancer called Stephanio, almost certainly of Greek origin, who is credited with introducing a new genre of dance probably derived from the *fabula togata* (Plin. *HN* 7.159).

<sup>106</sup> *BMCRE II* 396, 434 pl. 79, 2; Sobocinski 2006, 586-591.

<sup>107</sup> On the role of music in the *Ludi Saeculares*, see Baudot 1973, 112, Vendries 1999, 203, Vincent 2016, 213-216. Lyre-players may have accompanied the procession from the Palatine to the Capitoline at the *Ludi Saeculares* of Septimius Severus in 204: see *AE* 1932, 70 = *AE* 1935, 26; Vincent 2017a, 158-159. The word *fidicinum* is restored by Pighi 1941, 293. We have, in addition, a Severan *as* from 204 which, like the Domitianic issue, shows a *tibicen* and a *fidicen* accompanying a sacrifice at the *Ludi Saeculares*: *BMCRE* 5, p. 325, no. 810.

<sup>108</sup> Hor. *Od.* 3.11.5-6: *nunc et divitum mensis et amica templis*; Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.4: *et deorum pulvinaribus et epulis magistratuum fides praecinunt*; cf. Porphyrio ad Hor. *Od.* 1.36: *fidicines hodieque Romae ad sacrificia adhiberi sicut tibicines nemo est qui nesciat*. Note also the pairing of musicians on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus: Baudot 1973, fig. 5; Vincent 2016, 162-166.

fact we are able to isolate their appearances specifically to moments where we find the *Graecus ritus* being employed.<sup>109</sup>

Alexandre Vincent has recently written of how the lyre-players who performed in rituals such as the *Ludi Saeculares* ‘devenaient autant de rappels vivants de la présence d’Apollon palatin dans la cite augustéene’.<sup>110</sup> Might the sight of Augustus holding a *patera* and standing next to a *fidicen* have prompted visual comparisons with the statue of the divine lyre-player in the nearby portico (equipped perhaps with a *patera* of his own)? The sonic and the physical environments would thus have worked together to create a powerful sense of convergence between the human and divine realms. Augustus established a sanctuary for Apollo that also served as a sanctuary for the *mousike* he represented. That included not only song and dance but also literature. Cassius Dio makes it clear that Octavian ‘completed and dedicated’ (ἐξέποιήσε καὶ καθιέρωσε) the Palatine library at the same time as the temple, and it was no accident that he chose this as the location for his statue *habitu ac statura Apollinis*.<sup>111</sup> Boasting separate sections for Greek and Latin literature, the *bibliotheca Palatina* stood as a powerful symbol of renewal, both cultural and physical.<sup>112</sup>

Sometime between 23 and 11 BC, Augustus opened a second public library in the Portico of Octavia.<sup>113</sup> This library was dedicated, like the nearby theatre, to Marcellus, and was situated right next to the newly refurbished temple of Apollo

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<sup>109</sup> See Vendries 2004, 407.

<sup>110</sup> Vincent 2016, 319.

<sup>111</sup> Dio 53.1.3.

<sup>112</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 29.3. On the Palatine library and its Republican antecedents, see Horsfall 1993 and Houston 2014, 220-222. The position of head librarian was assigned to the imperial freedman C. Iulius Hyginus (Suet. *Gramm.* 20.1), while the task of ‘organising the libraries’ was given to a certain Pompeius Macer (Suet. *Iul.* 56.7) – perhaps the Pompeius Macer who wrote Greek tragedy, or alternatively the son or grandson of the historian Theophanes of Mytilene, given Roman citizenship by Pompey: see Hutchinson 2013, 144; Bowie 2013, 245-247; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> P 625. Horace (*Ep.* 2.1.218) observed how the library acted as a ‘spur to production’ (*calcar*).

<sup>113</sup> See Houston 2014, 222-224.

Medicus. It also shared a boundary with the so-called Porticus Philippi. This intriguing monument has been the subject of a recent study by Peter Heslin. Erected by the emperor's stepbrother and uncle L. Marcius Philippus and dedicated probably in 28 BC, the Porticus Philippi had several features in common with the Palatine Temple: they were completed at roughly the same time; they are frequently associated in the literary sources; and, most importantly, they were both linked with the cult of the Muses.<sup>114</sup> The Porticus Philippi incorporated the circular temple of Hercules Musarum that had been constructed by M. Fulvius Nobilior in 187 BC.<sup>115</sup> The architectural relationship between Philippus' portico and the original Republican temple remains unclear. However, it does seem that efforts were made to accommodate the lavish collection of artwork which had previously adorned Fulvius' temple, including the cult statue of Hercules Citharoedus.<sup>116</sup> Ovid devotes a short section at the end of the *Fasti* to the *clari monumenta Philippi*, in which he includes a reference to a lyre-playing Hercules accompanied by the nine Muses (*doctae assensere sorores; adnuit Alcides increpuitque lyram*).<sup>117</sup> It is likely that Ovid was evoking a statue in the Porticus Philippi which formerly belonged to the temple of Fulvius Nobilior. This statue may be linked with the image of Hercules Citharoedus which appears on the reverse of a coin minted in 66 BC by the appropriately named Q. Pomponius Musa. Tellingly, a laureate bust of Apollo is depicted on the obverse of the same coin.<sup>118</sup>

Philippus would presumably have needed Augustus' seal of approval in order to undertake such a radical renovation of a pre-existing temple, and it is not hard to see

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<sup>114</sup> Heslin 2015, 202 and 208-9; cf. *Juv. 7.37: Musarum et Apollinis aede relicta*.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter I.5; cf. *Suet. Aug. 29: a Marcio Philippo aedes Herculis Musarum [exstructa est]*; corroborated by fragments of the *Forma Urbis Romae*. On the Porticus Philippi and its relation to the Temple of Hercules Musarum, see Richardson 1977, Martina 1981, Hardie 2007, Heslin 2015.

<sup>116</sup> See Heslin 2015, 214-15. The temple housed one of the most famous paintings in Rome, namely the *Helen of Zeuxis*: *Plin. HN 35.66*.

<sup>117</sup> *Ov. Fast. 6.801-12*; cf. *Ars am. 3.168*.

<sup>118</sup> *RRC 437, 410/1 pl. 50, 21*; the legend reads *HERCVLES MVSARVM*. On Hercules Citharoedus, see p. 65, n. 171.

why the project might have appealed. The Republican temple was renowned as a favourite haunt of poets and artists (a renown which, according to Heslin, endured after the Augustan restoration), and as such the project would have further cemented the emperor's reputation as a leading patron of the arts.<sup>119</sup>

By reducing the symbolic currency of Apollo Citharoedus to the level of basic abstractions, I think that we lose something of its vitality in a contemporary Roman setting. To be sure, Apollo's lyre stood for all that was good about Greek culture – rationality, harmony, order, civilization – but what gave it meaning was its physical embeddedness within the Augustan cityscape. Apollo's lyre created an interface between the visual and the aural, the imagined and the experienced. The message of Apolline *kitharoidia* was communicated not only through marble and paint, through the written and spoken word, but also through rituals and sounds, concentrated at certain times and at certain places where the god's presence was most strongly felt: the *ludi Apollinares*; the *ludi Saeculares*; the monuments of the Palatine; and the building complex fronting the Circus Flaminius.

Art, architecture, literature, and performance combined to create a dynamic 'musical' idiom, which imprinted itself onto the public consciousness through constant repetition and variation. Although this idiom exploited the Roman nostalgia for ancient Greece, it was couched in a way that appealed specifically to native values and customs. Hence, the *Ludi Saeculares* incorporated aspects of a traditional Greek festival (*ludi thymelici*, *ludi astici*, sacrifices 'in the Greek rite') while retaining a quintessentially Roman modality (the *ludi Latini*, the *Carmen Saeculare*, and so on). Similarly, scholars such as John Scheid have emphasised how the *Graecus ritus* served as a means of enhancing the prestige and legitimacy of Roman mores by stressing the assimilation of

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<sup>119</sup> Heslin 2015, 230-237; cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.37-39.

Greek (i.e. foreign) peoples and customs.<sup>120</sup> Its importance lay not in ‘the content of the celebration itself, but in the way of celebrating the ceremonies’ – that is, the *Roman* way.<sup>121</sup> Apollo, then, was not simply a proxy for a lost ‘classical’ ideal; his presence signalled the rediscovery of a morally superior culture achieved through a novel synthesis of Greek and Roman elements.

#### 4 Antony, Cleopatra, and the Triumph over Dionysiac Music

Mark Antony, as is well known, cultivated a special rapport with the god Dionysus. Plutarch suggests that Antony was already styling himself as ‘New Dionysus’ in 41; other sources suggest a date closer to 39.<sup>122</sup> In any case, it is clear that the divine alter egos of Antony and Octavian developed in parallel with one another during the 30s, as the political rivalry between the two men escalated. Apollo and Dionysus made useful foils. Although they occupied overlapping spheres of influence (notably, as patrons of theatre), the qualities they embodied were articulated in strongly oppositional terms: Apollo stood for harmony, order, and moderation, Dionysus for disorder, emotionality, and excess.

This polarity between the two deities manifested itself most frequently in musical terms as a dichotomy between the Apolline *cithara* and the Dionysiac *aulos*.<sup>123</sup> Plato, famously, expressed a preference for Apollo’s instrument on the grounds that its music possessed superior ethical qualities. The raucous tones of the pipes, Plato argued,

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<sup>120</sup> Scheid 1995, 30.

<sup>121</sup> Scheid 1995, 18. In the *Graecus ritus*, the officiating priests performed the sacrifices *aperto capite* and wearing a laurel wreath; otherwise, there is very little to distinguish it from the *Romanus ritus*.

<sup>122</sup> See Pelling 1988, 179; Lange 2009, 42.

<sup>123</sup> On this dichotomy in ancient Greek thought, see Wilson 2004.

engendered an uncontrollable *pathos* in the listener that was detrimental to the state.<sup>124</sup> This influential theory drew inspiration from the myth of Marsyas.<sup>125</sup> A devoted follower of Dionysus, the satyr Marsyas took up the *auloi* after the goddess Athena had rejected them as unseemly. Growing overconfident in his ability, Marsyas challenged Apollo to a musical contest – unsuccessfully, it turned out – and as punishment for his hubris he was skinned alive. There were some in antiquity who argued that Marsyas had not been subject to a fair hearing, that Apollo had acted duplicitously and recklessly. For the majority, however, Marsyas’ punishment stood for the triumph of rational order over uninhibited passion, and that made it a powerful allegory of the struggle between ‘noble’ and ‘inferior’ music.<sup>126</sup>

It was to the latter kind – the ‘inferior’ kind – that Mark Antony surrendered himself. That, at least, is what we are made to think by those who wrote about his life. Plutarch’s biography contains a particularly rich store of anecdotes. The general’s taste for music was apparent already during his time as Caesar’s *magister equitum*, when, leading a life of luxury in Rome, he ‘used the houses of respectable men and women as quarters for common prostitutes and harp-girls’ (σωφρόνων ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν οἰκίαι χαμαιτύπαις καὶ σαμβουκιστρίαις ἐπίσταθμεύμεναι).<sup>127</sup> Music is again brought to our attention during Antony’s tour of Asia Minor in 41 BC:

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<sup>124</sup> At *Rep.* 399c-d, Plato banishes all instruments from his utopian *polis* except for the lyre and the cithara.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Plato *Rep.* 399e: οὐδέν γε, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, καινὸν ποιῶμεν, ὃ φίλε, κρίνοντες τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ τὰ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὄργανα πρὸ Μαρσύου τε καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου ὀργάνων. On the later influence, cf. Arist. *Pol.* 8.1340-1341; Philo *Op. Mund.* 126, *Leg. all.* 1.14.

<sup>126</sup> Rawson (1987, 4-11) observes that Augustan depictions of the myth place an increased emphasis on Marsyas’ hubris, laying the blame solely with the upstart satyr and denying any brutality or duplicity on the part of Apollo (cf. e.g. Ov. *Fast.* 6.706-707). Might we imagine a kind of Augustan ‘rewriting’ of the myth in line with the peaceful image of Apollo promoted by the imperial regime? Octavian would certainly have wished to counter accusations that he was posing as Marsyas’ torturer, Apollo Tortor, in the wake of the scandalous ‘Feast of the Twelve Gods’ (cf. Suet. *Aug.* 70).

<sup>127</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 9.5. For the Asiatic associations of *sambucistriae* (and *psaltriaie*), cf. Plaut. *Stich.* 380-381; Macr. *Sat.* 3.14.7; Livy 39.6.8. On Antony’s penchant for Asiatic oratory, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 86.

ἐν Ῥώμῃ δὲ Καίσαρος στάσεσι καὶ πολέμοις ἀποτρυχομένου πολλὴν αὐτὸς ἄγων σχολὴν καὶ εἰρήνην ἀνεκυκλεῖτο τοῖς πάθεσιν εἰς τὸν συνήθη βίον, Ἀναξήνορες δὲ κιθαρωδοὶ καὶ Ξοῦθοι χοραῦλαι καὶ Μητρόδωρός τις ὄρχηστὴς καὶ τοιοῦτος ἄλλος Ἀσιανῶν ἀκροαμάτων θίασος, ὑπερβαλλομένων λαμυρία καὶ βωμολογία τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας κῆρας, εἰσερρῦη καὶ δῶκει τὴν αὐλήν, οὐδὲν ἦν ἀνεκτόν, εἰς ταῦτα φορουμένων ἀπάντων... εἰς γοῦν Ἐφεσον εἰσιόντος αὐτοῦ γυναῖκες μὲν εἰς Βάκχας, ἄνδρες δὲ καὶ παῖδες εἰς Σατύρους καὶ Πᾶνας ἤγοῦντο διεσκευασμένοι, κιττοῦ δὲ καὶ θύρσων καὶ ψαλτηρίων καὶ συρίγγων καὶ αὐλῶν ἢ πόλις ἦν πλέα, Διόνυσον αὐτὸν ἀνακαλουμένων χαριδότην καὶ μειλίχιον. (Plut. *Ant.* 24.1-3)

While in Rome Caesar was being worn out by civil strife and foreign wars, Antony himself was basking in ample leisure and tranquillity and, stirred by his passions, reverted to his accustomed lifestyle. Citharodes like Anaxenor, choral pipe-players like Xouthos, a certain dancer called Metrodorus, and the rest of that troupe of Asiatic performers, who surpassed in lasciviousness and vulgarity the pests from Italy, flooded into his court and held sway there – it was completely intolerable that everything reached such a point... Indeed, when Antony made his entry into Ephesus, he was led by women dressed as Bacchae, and men and children dressed as Satyrs and Pans. The whole city was filled with ivy, thyrsus wands, harps, panpipes, and *auloi*; and Antony was invoked repeatedly as Dionysus Giver of Joy, the Gracious One.

Later on, while making preparations for war with Octavian, Antony summoned all the Dionysiac artists to Samos for a spectacular theatrical festival (πᾶσι τοῖς περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνίταις ἐπάναγκες ἦν εἰς Σάμον ἀπαντᾶν):

καὶ τῆς ἐν κύκλῳ σχεδὸν ἀπάσης οἰκουμένης περιθρηνουμένης καὶ περιστεναζομένης, μία νῆσος ἐφ' ἡμέρας πολλὰς κατηλεῖτο καὶ κατεψάλλετο πληρουμένων θεάτρων καὶ χορῶν ἀγωνιζομένων. (Plut. *Ant.* 56.4)

And while almost the entire world echoed around with cries of mourning and lamentation, this single island resounded for days on end with the music of pipes and harps; theatres were filled, and choruses performed in competitions.

After the competitions were over, Antony gifted the city of Priene to the Dionysiac Artists, before sailing to Athens and continuing his theatrical escapades.<sup>128</sup>

These snapshots from Plutarch's *Life* highlight the shocking extent of Antony's immorality and extravagance. They also present a harsh indictment of his Asiatic affectations, his total lack of inhibition, and, above all, his pretensions to divinity. Not only is music a source of pleasure for Antony, but it is central to the way in which he *performs* himself as Dionysus incarnate. In true Bacchic fashion, he surrounds himself

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<sup>128</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 75.1.

with loud music wherever he goes. With each successive episode, Plutarch reels off a concatenation of instrumental noises (ψαλτηρίων καὶ συρίγγων καὶ αὐλῶν; κατηυλεῖτο καὶ κατεψάλλετο) which amount to the kind of reverberant cacophony abhorred by Posidonius and Cicero.<sup>129</sup> Antony's musical troupe is likened by Plutarch to a Dionysiac θίασος; their role is not dissimilar to that of the harpists and pipers who participate in the procession at Ephesus.

One could easily discredit Plutarch's colourful testimony as the stuff of fiction, designed to blacken the memory of Augustus' arch-nemesis long after it had been formally consigned to ignominy. In my view, however, this would be a rash approach to take. Pelling has demonstrated that Plutarch, in composing the *Life of Antony*, was drawing on reliable historical information.<sup>130</sup> We hear nothing else about the *choraules* Xouthos or Metrodorus the dancer, but Antony's affiliation with the citharode Anaxenor is corroborated by two pieces of contemporary evidence. Strabo in Book 14 of his *Geography* identifies Anaxenor as a citizen of Magnesia on the Maeander, and writes of him the following encomium:

Ἀναξήγορα δὲ τὸν κιθαρωδὸν ἐξῆρε μὲν καὶ τὰ θεάτρα, ἀλλ' ὅτι μάλιστα Ἀντώνιος, ὅς γε καὶ τεττάρων πόλεων ἀπέδειξε φορολόγον στρατιώτας αὐτῷ συστήσας. καὶ ἡ πατρις δ' ἰκανῶς αὐτὸν ἠὔξησε, πορφύραν ἐνδύσασα, ἱερωμένον τοῦ Σωσιπόλιδος Διός, καθάπερ καὶ ἡ γραπτὴ εἰκὼν ἐμφανίζει ἢ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ. ἔστι δὲ καὶ χαλκῆ εἰκὼν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ, ἐπιγραφὴν ἔχουσα·

ἦτοι μὲν τόδε καλὸν ἀκουέμεν ἐστὶν ἀοιδοῦ  
 τοιοῦδ', οἷος ὅδ' ἐστὶ, θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιος ἀυδῆ. (Strabo 14.1.41)

The theatres exalted Anaxenor the citharode, but Antony exalted him most of all, since he even appointed him as the revenue collector of four cities, arranging a bodyguard of soldiers for him. In addition, his native land greatly increased his honours, clothing him in purple and appointing him priest of Zeus Sosipolis, as his painted image in the agora illustrates. There is also a bronze statue of him in the theatre, which is inscribed as follows:

“Surely this is a beautiful thing, to listen to a singer  
 Such as this man is, like unto the gods in voice.”

<sup>129</sup> Cf. *FGrH* 87 F 10 (Posidonius): καταυλούμενοι πρὸς χελωνίδος πολυκρότου ψύφους, ὥστε τὰς πόλεις ὅλας τοῖς τοιούτοις κελάδοις συνηγεῖσθαι; Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 134: *tibiarum nocturnisque conviviiis tota vicinitas personet*; Cic. *Pis.* 22: *domus cantu et cymbalis personaret.*

<sup>130</sup> On Plutarch's use of sources in the *Life of Antony*, see Pelling 1979.

Remarkably enough, one of these honorific inscriptions actually survives, dedicated by the *boule* and the *demos* of Magnesia.<sup>131</sup> Anaxenor was evidently much more than just a musician. His celebrity brought him to the attention of the *de facto* ruler of Asia, who in turn elevated him to a position of administrative responsibility. Anaxenor's reputation was extraordinary, but he was certainly not the first musician of his kind to benefit from political influence outside the theatre and to be commemorated with statues and civic honours.<sup>132</sup>

Antony's interactions with the Artists of Dionysus at Samos can also be traced back to a contemporary source. A letter sent by Mark Antony to the *koinon* of Asia, preserved on papyrus, records a series of legal privileges conferred on 'the worldwide association of victors in the festival games'.<sup>133</sup> The document confirms the former status of the association while granting additional honours including exemption from military service, immunity from all liturgies, freedom from billeting, a truce during the festival, personal inviolability, and the right to wear the purple (ll. 4-18). Since it is stipulated that the meeting between Antony and the envoys of the *synodos* took place at Ephesus (l. 5), we can deduce that the privileges were granted in either 42-41 or 33-32 BC, that is, on one of the two occasions when Antony is known to have visited the city.<sup>134</sup>

Plutarch clearly states that Antony was already consorting with musicians in Italy during the 40s. Support for this idea is provided by Cicero, inveighing in the *Fifth Philippic* (1 January 43 BC) against Antony's judiciary law. Cicero mocks his opponent for extending membership of the jury to 'dancers, lyre-players, in short, the whole

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<sup>131</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 766.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 2.53, mentioning a statue of a lyre-player from Aspendus.

<sup>133</sup> EJ<sup>2</sup> 300 = Sherk *RDGE* 57.

<sup>134</sup> For the first visit (favoured by Pelling 1988, 177-178), cf. Plut. *Ant.* 24; App. *BC* 5.4.5; Dio 48.24. For the second, cf. Plut. *Ant.* 56, 58.

chorus of the Antonian *comissatio* (*saltatores, citharistas, totum denique comissionis Antonianae chorum*).<sup>135</sup> The *comissatio*, which roughly translates as ‘drinking party’, is closely associated in other texts with Bacchic worship, and it is possible that Cicero’s usage of the term inspired Plutarch’s characterisation of Antony’s *acroamata* as a θίασος, a word with similar connotations.<sup>136</sup> Plutarch does stipulate that Antony brought with him on his Eastern travels a number of performance artists from Italy, with whom he presumably had former acquaintance. The musicians who entertained the triumvir in Asia are positively compared with τὰς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας κῆρας; and we are told in the *Life of Brutus* that Antony had Italian *mimoi* and *gelotopoi* at Philippi.<sup>137</sup> Once again, we are able to draw on contemporary witnesses. In his treatise *On Signs*, Philodemus alludes to some ‘pygmies’ exhibited at Acoris in Egypt, ‘like those which Antony recently brought back from Syria’.<sup>138</sup> Antony must have acquired the pygmies on his visit to Syria in 42-41 BC and returned with them to Italy a year or two later.<sup>139</sup> What did he do with them? The verb δ[εικνύ]ουσιν, if correctly restored, may give us a clue. Literary and iconographical sources attest to the Roman custom of putting dwarfs on show, typically as after-dinner entertainment. In fact, this kind of entertainment seems to have been associated by the Romans specifically with the regions of Egypt and Syria.<sup>140</sup> One can easily imagine Antony’s dwarfs sharing the stage with mimes and musicians in a kind of exotic burlesque.

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<sup>135</sup> Cic. *Phil.* 5.15.

<sup>136</sup> For the Bacchic associations of *comissatio*, cf. Cic. *Mur.* 13, Liv. 40.13, Suet. *Calig.* 55, Mart. 12.48; Manuwald 2007, 608. On the *Philippics* as a model for Plutarch, cf. Plut. *Cic.* 48.3-4; Pelling 1979, 89-90.

<sup>137</sup> Plut. *Brut.* 45.6-9 (the names Volumnius and Saculio suggest Italian origin); cf. Pelling 1988, 178, comparing Plut. *Ant.* 9.4 on the *mimoi* and *gelotopoi* who entertained Antony in Rome. In the early 40s Antony embarked on a scandalous love affair with the mime actress Cytheris: cf. Plut. *Ant.* 9.4; further sources listed in Strong 2016, 71-75.

<sup>138</sup> Phld. *De Signis* col. 2.15-18 De Lacy: οὐ]ς ἐν Ἀκώρει πυγμαί|ους δ[εικνύ]ουσιν, ἀμέλει δ’ ἀν|α[λ]όγο[υ]ς τοῖς οὐ]ς Ἀντώνιος νῦν | ἐκ Συρία[ς] ἐκο]μίσ[ατο].

<sup>139</sup> See Last 1922, convincingly refuting a connection with Antony’s earlier visit to Syria in 54.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. e.g. Prop. 4.8.42; Wootton 2004, 246; Dunbabin 2004, 173-175; Morgan 2017, 87-89.

Further details of Antony's *acroamata* are provided by the historian Socrates of Rhodes.<sup>141</sup> Socrates' history on the *Civil War*, written probably in the early Augustan period, provides the subject of a lengthy citation in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*:

ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Ἀντώνιον ἐν Ἀθήναις μετὰ ταῦτα διατρίψαντα περίοπτον ὑπὲρ τὸ θέατρον κατασκευάσαντα σχεδίαν χλωρᾷ πεπυκασμένην ὕλη, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν Βακχικῶν κᾶντρων γίνεται, ταύτης τύμπανα καὶ νεβρίδας καὶ παντοδαπὰ ἄλλ' ἀθύρματα Διονυσιακὰ ἐξαρτήσαντα μετὰ τῶν φίλων ἐξ ἑωθινοῦ κατακλινόμενον μεθύσκεσθαι, λειτουργούντων αὐτῷ τῶν ἐξ Ἰταλίας μεταπεμφθέντων ἀκροαμάτων συνηθροισμένων ἐπὶ τὴν θεάν τῶν Πανελλήνων. μετέβαινε δ' ἐνίοτε, φησὶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἀπὸ τῶν τεγῶν λαμπάσι δαδουχομένης πάσης τῆς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως. καὶ ἔκτοτε ἐκέλευσεν ἑαυτὸν Διόνυσον ἀνακηρύττεσθαι κατὰ τὰς πόλεις ἀπάσας. (Athen. 4.29b-c = *FGrH* 192 F2)

He [Socrates] also reports that when Antony himself spent some time in Athens after this, he had a roughly framed hut built in a conspicuous spot above the Theatre and covered with green brushwood, as they do with Bacchic "caves"; and he hung drums, fawn skins, and other Dionysiac paraphernalia of all sorts in it. He lay inside with his friends, beginning at dawn, and got drunk; musicians summoned from Italy entertained him, and the whole Greek world gathered to watch. Sometimes, he says, Antony moved up onto the Acropolis, and the entire city of Athens was illuminated by the lamps that hung from the ceilings. He also gave orders that from then on he was to be proclaimed as Dionysus throughout all the cities. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Like Plutarch, Socrates exploits a connection between Antony's carousing with musicians and his divine posturing. Private entertainment and public ceremonial again merge into one, as the home of the Great Dionysia is transformed into a Bacchic grotto and repurposed as a venue for symposia. It seems especially perverse that Antony opts to import second-rate musicians from Italy (presumably the same people labelled by Plutarch as 'pests') rather than make use of local Athenian talent; Athens was, after all, regarded in antiquity as the cradle of *mousike*. More perverse still is the fact that Antony involves 'all of the Greeks' in his depraved spectacle. The word Πανελλήνων is an indication of the kind of productions Antony *should* be sponsoring: traditional panhellenic festivals such as the Panathenaia. The acclamations of 'Philhellene' and 'Philathenian' may have flattered Antony on his previous visits to Athens, but there was

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<sup>141</sup> The writings of Socrates of Rhodes are preserved only in two fragments of Athenaeus: see *FGrH* 192, with Jacoby's commentary. He was probably used as a source by Plutarch: *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Socrates' [8].

no masking the fact that this Roman suffered from a severe lack of musical cultivation – of *amousia*, no less.<sup>142</sup>

Antony's was certainly not the first royal 'court' (αὐλή) to fall under the sway of overweening performers. By presenting himself as the universal patron of artists and musicians, Antony was following ostensibly in the footsteps of the Hellenistic kings. The triumvir's natural affinity with Greek *acroamata*, *mimoi*, and *gelotopoioi* – not to mention his collection of Syrian pygmies – strikes a chord with the negative depictions of Antiochus IV, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Sulla that we encountered in Chapter 1. Particularly notable is the example of Demetrius Poliorcetes, Antony's counterpart in the *Parallel Lives*, who became hopelessly infatuated with the *auletris* Lamia after capturing her from King Ptolemy I – despite the fact that Lamia 'was past her prime and found Demetrius much younger than herself' (λήγουσα τῆς ὥρας καὶ πολὺ νεώτερον ἑαυτῆς λαβοῦσα τὸν Δημήτριον).<sup>143</sup> In fact, liaisons between tyrants and musicians were commonplace throughout the Hellenistic period. Ptolemy II Philadelphus fell in love with the citharode Glauce of Chios.<sup>144</sup> Mithridates doted on the *psaltria* Stratonice.<sup>145</sup> The Samian pipe-player and dancer Aristonica immigrated to Alexandria to work at the Ptolemaic court, probably during the reign of Ptolemy IV.<sup>146</sup> Even Alexander the Great, himself a skilled lyre-player, had a dalliance with the *auletris* Thais.<sup>147</sup>

As we scan through this list of high-profile romances, we cannot help but be reminded of the ill-fated relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. Antony's love of

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<sup>142</sup> Cf. Plut. *Ant.* 23.2 (Antony's acclamation as 'Philhellene' and 'Philathenian').

<sup>143</sup> Plut. *Dem.* 16.3-4; cf. *Dem.* 27.3-6.

<sup>144</sup> Theoc. *Id.* 4.31; Pliny *HN* 10.51; Athen. 4.176c-d; Ael. *NA* 1.6, 5.29, 8.11.

<sup>145</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 36.3.

<sup>146</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 753d.

<sup>147</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 38; cf. *Peric.* 1.5-6. These examples are helpfully contextualised by Loman 2004 in light of the Hellenistic phenomenon of travelling female entertainers.

music, though traceable to the period before the split with Octavian, is generally presented in the sources as a manifestation of a peculiarly Egyptian *luxuria*, to which Antony gradually succumbed as his infatuation with Cleopatra became ever greater.<sup>148</sup> When, in Plutarch's narrative, Cleopatra sets off to meet Antony in Tarsus, we are told that the rowers on board the royal yacht were accompanied not only by the beat of the *aulos*, but also by panpipes and lyres (πρὸς αὐλὸν ἅμα σύριγξι καὶ κιθάραις).<sup>149</sup> This orchestral entourage, clearly a token of exceptional courtly opulence, would later be employed by Antony for his own *adventus* ceremonies (at Ephesus, he is accompanied by ψαλτηρίων καὶ συρίγγων καὶ αὐλῶν).

What is particularly interesting about the literary depiction of Cleopatra is the way in which she is assimilated by virtue of her sexual attraction with the trope of the Hellenistic musician-concubine. As Pelling points out, Plutarch uses the same word, *lamuria*, to characterise both Antony's musicians and Cleopatra herself.<sup>150</sup> More remarkably still, the queen's voice is actually described as having its own distinctive musical lilt:

ἡδονὴ δὲ καὶ φθεγγομένης ἐπῆν τῷ ἤχῳ· καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν, ὥσπερ ὄργανόν τι πολύχορδον, εὐπετῶς τρέπουσα καθ' ἣν βούλοιοτο διάλεκτον... (Plut. *Ant.* 28.3)

There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased. (Loeb trans.)

Later on, as Octavian's prisoner, Cleopatra sought to use her vocal talents to win over her captor's affections. In the words of Cassius Dio, 'she kept turning her eyes toward

<sup>148</sup> His adopted home of Alexandria was famed for its vibrant musical culture: Bathyllus imported comic dance to Augustan Rome after first popularising it in Alexandria (cf. Athen. 1.20d-e); see ch. 4 on the harpist Alexander and Nero's *organa hydraulica*; also Philo *Ebr.* 43.177, *Leg. all.* 2.18.75; Dio Chrysos. 32.45-46, 60-62, 67-68.

<sup>149</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 26.1. Cassius Dio reports (51.5.4) that after the decisive conflict at Actium the fleeing Cleopatra 'crowned her prows with garlands as if she had actually won a victory, and had songs of triumph chanted to the accompaniment of pipe-players' (τάς τε πρόρας ὡς καὶ κεκρατηκυῖα κατέστειπε καὶ ᾠδὰς τινὰς ἐπινικίους ὑπ' αὐλητῶν ἤδεν), hoping thereby to allay fears of her defeat upon reaching Egypt.

<sup>150</sup> Pelling 1988, 178; cf. Plut. *Caes.* 49.2 (Cleopatra's arrival in the carpet): λαμυρᾶς φανείσης.

Caesar and bewailing her fate in melodic inflections (τά τε βλέφαρα ἐς τὸν Καίσαρα ἐπενέκλα, καὶ ἐμμελῶς ἀνωλοφύρετο).<sup>151</sup> Octavian, Odysseus-like, turned a deaf ear to the call of this Egyptian Siren. Antony, the weaker man, was fatally bewitched.

In his exhortatory speech to the troops at Actium, Octavian taunts his rival for having become ‘one of the cymbal-players from Canopus’ (εἷς τῶν ἀπὸ Κανώβου κυμβαλιστῶν).<sup>152</sup> This comment makes sense as an indictment of Antony’s Egyptianizing ways.<sup>153</sup> But the implications of a cymbal-playing Roman are worth unpacking a little further. For, by mocking Antony as a Canopic musician, Dio’s Octavian makes his opponent look rather uncomfortably like a Ptolemy. Cleopatra’s father, Ptolemy XII, was known disparagingly as ‘Auletes’ on account of his habit of performing on the *auloi* in the palace at Alexandria.<sup>154</sup> Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 BC), according to Plutarch, was ‘so corrupted in his soul by women and wine’ (οὗτο διέφθαρτο τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὸ γυναικῶν καὶ πότων) that he would roam around the palace like a crazed worshipper, ‘drum in hand’ (τύμπανον ἔχων), leaving charge of the state to his mistress and mother.<sup>155</sup> His descendant Ptolemy VII Euergetes, who reigned from 145 to 116 BC, was supposedly so committed to *paideia* that he ‘filled the islands and the cities with grammarians, philosophers, mathematicians, musicians (*mousikoi*), painters, athletic trainers, and numerous other professionals’ – this was one of several reasons why he was called *Kakergetes* (‘Malefactor’) by the Alexandrians.<sup>156</sup> Crucially,

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<sup>151</sup> Dio 51.12.4.

<sup>152</sup> Dio 50.27.2; cf. Pet. *Sat.* 22, linking the *cymbalistris* with the Bacchanalian *comissatio*.

<sup>153</sup> At Dio 50.25.3, for instance, Octavian condemns Antony for having ‘gone native’, assuming the title of ‘Osiris or Dionysus’, paying homage to the ‘prostitute’ Cleopatra and abandoning the Roman way of life in favour of ‘alien and barbarian’ customs.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Strabo 17.1.11; Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 3.135, 32.70; Plut. *Mor.* 56f; also Luc. *Cal.* 16, alluding to cymbal-playing in the court of a Ptolemy (probably Auletes). For the relationship between Ptolemy XII and Antony’s great-grandson Nero, see p. 244.

<sup>155</sup> Plut. *Agis and Cleomenes* 54.2: τελετὰς τελεῖν καὶ τύμπανον ἔχων ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις ἀγείρειν.

<sup>156</sup> Athen. 4.184c, based on writings by Meneclēs of Barca (*FGrH* 270 F9) and Andron of Alexandria (*FGrH* 246 F1) from the second or first century BC. Note that Plutarch uses the same metaphor of

both Ptolemy IV Philopator and Ptolemy XII Auletes were worshipped during their lifetime as ‘New Dionysus’.<sup>157</sup> The three figures – Ptolemy IV, Mark Antony, and Ptolemy XII – are explicitly compared by Plutarch as men who learned through flattery to confuse vice with virtue: Ptolemy IV ruined Egypt by his ‘effeminacy’ (θηλότητα), his ‘religious mania’ (θεοληψίαν), and his ‘clashing of drums’ (τυμπάνων ἐγχαράξεις); Antony subverted Roman morals through his ‘luxury’ (τρυφὰς), ‘excess’ (ἀκολασίας), and ‘ostentation’ (πανηγυρισμούς); and Ptolemy XII Auletes brought shame upon his people by taking up ‘the mouthpiece and the pipes’ (φορβειὰν καὶ αὐλούς).<sup>158</sup>

Why Canopus? The ‘Canopic life’ was proverbial in antiquity for hedonism; indeed, it was synonymous with *lamuria*, the very quality that Cleopatra exuded.<sup>159</sup> According to Strabo, who visited the pleasure town not long after Antony, festival-goers would sail down to Canopus from Alexandria to enjoy licentious music and dance.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, Canopus appears to have been the favourite holiday destination of the two royal lovers. Plutarch describes how ‘Antony...was often disarmed by Cleopatra, subdued by her spells and persuaded to drop from his hands great undertakings and necessary campaigns, only to roam about and play with her on the sea-shores by Canopus and Taphosiris’.<sup>161</sup>

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‘filling’ to describe Antony’s music-making at Ephesus and Samos (αὐλῶν ἢ πόλις ἦν πλέα; μία νῆσος ἐφ’ ἡμέρας πολλάς κατηλεῖτο).

<sup>157</sup> Ptolemy IV: Powell 1925, 176 (Euphronius); Clement of Alexandria *Protrep.* 4.54.2. Ptolemy XII: *OGIS* 186.9-10, 191.1, 741.1; *SEG* 8.408; Porphyry *ap. Eus. Chron.* = *FGrH* 260.2 [12] and [15].

<sup>158</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 56e-f.

<sup>159</sup> Strabo 17.1.16: ἀρχὴ τις Κανωβισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖ λαμουρίας; cf. Sil. *Pun.* 11.425-431, associating Canopus with exotic flutes; Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.111; Ov. *Am.* 2.13.6-7; Juv. *Sat.* 6.84, 15.44-46; Sen. *Ep.* 51.3.

<sup>160</sup> Strabo 17.1.17: ἀντὶ πάντων δ’ ἐστὶν ὁ τῶν πανηγυριστῶν ὄχλος τῶν ἐκ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας κατιόντων τῇ διώρῳγι· πᾶσα γὰρ ἡμέρα καὶ πᾶσα νύξ πληθύνει τῶν μὲν ἐν τοῖς πλοιαρίοις καταλουμένων καὶ κατορχομένων ἀνέδην μετὰ τῆς ἐσχάτης ἀκολασίας, καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, τῶν δ’ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Κανώβῳ καταγωγὰς ἔχοντων, ἐπικειμένας τῇ διώρῳγι εὐφροεῖς πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην ἄνεσιν καὶ εὐωχίαν. Hdt. 2.59-60 describes a similar voyage which ended up at Bubastis.

<sup>161</sup> Plut. *Ant. and Dem.* 23: Ἀντώνιον...πολλάκις Κλεοπάτρα παροπλίσασα καὶ καταθέλξασα συνέπεισεν ἀφέντα μεγάλας πράξεις ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν καὶ στρατείας ἀναγκαΐας ἐν ταῖς περι Κανώβον καὶ Ταφόσιριν ἀκταῖς ἀλύειν καὶ παίζειν μετ’ αὐτῆς. Propertius (3.11.39) calls Cleopatra *incesti meretrix regina Canopi*.

Antony could claim, of course, that his patronage of musicians made good political sense – and justly so. The Guild of Dionysiac Artists was an extremely influential organisation in the first century BC, boasting a number of regional branches throughout the Greek world.<sup>162</sup> These branches (known as *koina* or *synodoi*) had the capacity to organise and take part in their own festivals, usually held in honour of local rulers or benefactors.<sup>163</sup> Members of the guild benefited from legal, social, and economic privileges.<sup>164</sup> In Ptolemaic Egypt, where the assimilation of the *basileus* with Osiris/Dionysus was firmly rooted in historical precedent, the Artists of Dionysus figured among the most important officials in the kingdom.<sup>165</sup> There was certainly something to be gained from championing the cause of musicians like Anaxenor, who boasted a large popular following and thus could be useful as political pawns. Alexander the Great, after all, had honoured the citharode Aristonicus with a bronze statue, and included both male and female pipe-players among his troops.<sup>166</sup>

Antony's patronage of musicians and other artists can therefore be seen as a fundamental aspect of his self-presentation as an Eastern monarch. Above all, Antony sought to legitimise his claim to rule by creating a sense of continuity with the dynastic monarchies of Hellenistic Egypt and Asia Minor, and that required him to cultivate a reputation as both a lover and a patron of *mousike* in all its forms. Stationed with his troops on the island of Samos, Antony gave a powerful show of unity by summoning to

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<sup>162</sup> Le Guen 2001 and Aneziri 2003 provide comprehensive studies of the history of the Guild during the Hellenistic period. Further bibliography listed at p. 34, n. 69. Augustus bestowed certain νόμιμα καὶ φιλόανθρώπα on the guild (*BGU* 4.1074; Viereck 1908, 413-426).

<sup>163</sup> Cf. e.g. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1330 (Le Guen 2001, I. 67-74, no. 5); discussion in Aneziri 2007, citing further examples.

<sup>164</sup> On these privileges, which included immunity from taxation (*ateleia*) and priority in litigation (*prodikia*), see Aneziri 2009, 230-232.

<sup>165</sup> On the conflation of Osiris/Dionysus, cf. Hdt. 2.42.2, 2.144.2. On the importance of the Dionysiac *technitai*, cf. Le Guen 2001, I. 348: 'figurent...parmi les personnages officiels les plus importants du royaume'. Their presence in Egypt can be traced back to the third century BC: *OGIS* 50-1; Le Guen 2001, II. 7-9, 34-36. On the Ptolemies' links with the arts, see Csapo 2010, 177-178.

<sup>166</sup> Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 334d-335a; Athen. 12.539a.

his court *all* of the Dionysiac artists at once (πᾶσι τοῖς περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνίταις). For all Plutarch's moral outrage, the gift of Priene was as much a statement of Antony's autocratic intentions as an act of reckless profligacy. Antony need only have looked to the dissensions on nearby Cos, where a fierce struggle for power was being fought out between the tyrant Nicias and his rival Theomnestos, a harp-player (*psaltes*) by trade, to appreciate the value of having the *technitai* on his side.<sup>167</sup>

In light of these considerations, Augustus' continued association with Apollo Citharoedus in the aftermath of Antony's defeat seems to take on an added significance. The symbolic role that music occupies in the Augustan imaginary stands in marked contrast to the symphonic excess which characterises Antony's own dealings with his divine counterpart (at least, as presented in the pro-Augustan sources). Whereas Augustus' *cithara* serves as a metaphor for the 'harmonising' of the state, Antony's *aulos* denotes a more mundane and thus morally ambivalent kind of orchestral *mousike*, evoking the base pursuits of the *psaltria* rather than the noble art of the *citharoedus*. The struggle for political supremacy, in this sense, manifests itself as a battle of one musical ideology over another – what we might call the 'symbolic' versus the 'symphonic'. Whereas in Augustan Rome the *cithara* represents a return to a pure, traditional musical culture, rooted in old-fashioned Roman values, Antony's orchestra mobilises the forces of illicit 'oriental' culture: effeminate, sybaritic, and, perhaps most importantly of all, 'un-Roman'. The call for music in the Augustan elegists is a call for celebration after the conclusion of war (recall Propertius' *bella satis cecini*); Antony's passion for music and dance, on the other hand, is at its most all-consuming when the war is in its critical phase, when the fate of the Roman Empire still hangs in the balance. Both Vergil and Propertius in their depictions of Actium frame the contrast between

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<sup>167</sup> Strabo 14.2.19. Nicias' tyranny should be dated between *ca.* 40 and 31 BC: cf. *Brill's New Pauly*, s.v. 'Nicias' [8].

Antony's *mollitia* and Octavian's *virtus* in terms of an opposition between the Egyptian *sistrum* and the Roman *tuba*.<sup>168</sup> But it is the poet Prudentius, writing in the fourth century, who gets closest to the idea of a full-fledged 'symphonic' resistance: 'on the waves of Actium a *symphonia* gave Egypt the signal for war, while on the other side a trumpet rang out'.<sup>169</sup> Antony's was a call to arms like no other: an orchestral fanfare fit for an oriental queen.

Plutarch states that on the eve of Antony's death the citizens of Alexandria experienced the following portent:

...αἰφνίδιον ὀργάνων τε παντοδαπῶν ἐμμελεῖς τινὰς φωνὰς ἀκουσθῆναι καὶ βοῆν ὄχλου μετὰ εὐασμῶν καὶ πηδήσεων σατυρικῶν, ὥσπερ θιάσου τινὸς οὐκ ἀθορύβως ἐξελαύνοντος· εἶναι δὲ τὴν ὀρμὴν ὁμοῦ τι διὰ τῆς πόλεως μέσης ἐπὶ τὴν πύλιν ἔξω τὴν τετραμμένην πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους, καὶ ταύτῃ τὸν θόρυβον ἐκπεσεῖν πλεῖστον γενόμενον. ἐδόκει δὲ τοῖς ἀναλογιζομένοις τὸ σημεῖον ἀπολείπειν ὁ θεὸς Ἀντώνιον, ᾧ μάλιστα συνεξομοιῶν καὶ συνοικειῶν ἑαυτὸν διετέλεσεν. (Plut. *Ant.* 75.3-4)

...suddenly certain harmonious sounds from all sorts of instruments were heard, and the shouting of a throng, accompanied by cries of Bacchic revelry and satiric leaping, as if a troop of revellers, making a great tumult, were going forth from the city; and their course seemed to lie about through the middle of the city toward the outer gate which faced the enemy, at which point the tumult became loudest and then dashed out. Those who sought the meaning of the sign were of the opinion that the god to whom Antony always most likened and attached himself was now deserting him. (Loeb trans.)

The word ἐμμελεῖς at the start of this passage is immediately arresting. Why does Antony's music suddenly become 'harmonious', when previously it has been so jarring? The answer, I suggest, lies in the meaning attached to the portent by the people of Alexandria: dissonance gives way to harmony at the point at which the balance of power swings irrevocably in Octavian's favour.<sup>170</sup> Antony's impending death marks the

<sup>168</sup> Prop. 3.11.43: *Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro*; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 8.696: *regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro*.

<sup>169</sup> Prudentius *Against Symmachus* 528-529: *fluctibus Actiacis signum symphonia belli| Aegypto dederat, clangebat bucina contra*.

<sup>170</sup> Pelling (1988, 303-304) discusses this episode in the context of a typical *evocatio* ritual (on which, see now Hekster 2010). Cf. Dio 51.17.4, on the portents of Egypt's enslavement: κτυπήματα τέ τινα ἐτέρωθι καὶ τυμπάνων καὶ κυμβάλων καὶ βοήματα καὶ αὐλῶν καὶ σαλπύγγων ἐγίγνετο. Is this the sound of Antony's *symphonia* abandoning him?

start of Octavian's extended coronation. It is only fitting that Plutarch marks this momentous turning-point by redirecting Dionysus' marching band towards Rome, and towards a brighter future.

## 5 A 'Golden Age' of Music?

Octavian assumed the title 'Augustus' in 27 BC, the year after he dedicated the Temple of Apollo Palatinus.<sup>171</sup> It was said that the title he had really desired was 'Romulus', were it not for its kingly associations.<sup>172</sup> 'Augustus' was a new appellation and lacked any such stigma. The name called to mind the immortal line of Ennius on Rome's foundation 'by august augury' (*augusto augurio*).<sup>173</sup> Its adoption by the *princeps* thus had a deep prophetic significance, which tied in neatly with the symbolic message of the Palatine temple. Apollo's *carmina* were 'oracles' as well as 'songs'.<sup>174</sup> It was as *augur* that the god would be invoked in the *Carmen Saeculare* (ll. 61-62); and it was beneath his cult statue that the relocated Sibylline Books would be stored. So when Propertius and his contemporaries visited the *aurea Phoebi porticus* and encountered *Phoebus ipse* engaged in song, they could perhaps imagine him chanting prophetically of the 'Golden Age' to come as well as reflecting back on Rome's illustrious origins.

The location of Apollo's sanctuary had a particular topographical importance, the Palatine being the place where 'according to legend the city of Rome was first settled'.<sup>175</sup> It was from the summit of this hill that Romulus used to address his citizens, and the 'hut' which he had originally used for taking the auspices could still be seen

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. *RG* 34.2; *Vell. Pat.* 2.91.1; *Suet. Aug.* 7.2; *Dio* 53.16.6-8; *Flor.* 2.34.66.

<sup>172</sup> *Dio* 53.16.7.

<sup>173</sup> *Suet. Aug.* 7.2; cf. *Var. Rust.* 3.1.2, *Ov. Fast.* 1.587-616, *Livy Epit.* 134.

<sup>174</sup> *Carmen* as 'prophecy': cf. *Verg. Ecl.* 4.4; *Ov. Met.* 6.582; *Liv.* 1.45.5 and 23.11.4; *Sen. Apocol.* 4.15: *Phoebus adest cantuque iuvat gaudetque futuris.*

<sup>175</sup> *Jos. Ant. Iud.* 19.223: πρῶτον δὲ οἰκηθῆναι τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως τοῦτο παραδίδωσιν ὁ περὶ αὐτῆς λόγος.

from the forecourt of Augustus' residence.<sup>176</sup> In another sense, too, the Palatine made a suitable home for the lyre-playing god: for it was on this very spot, according to Dionysius, that Rome's musical culture was born. Dionysius advances the theory that Rome was founded as a 'Greek city' by relating how Romulus and Remus were 'taken by those who had reared them to Gabii, a town not far from the Palatine Hill, to be given a Greek education (Ἑλλάδα παιδείαν). There they were brought up by some personal friends of Faustulus, being taught letters, music, and the use of Greek arms until they grew to manhood (γράμματα καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ χρῆσιν ὀπλῶν Ἑλληνικῶν)'.<sup>177</sup> The Greek origins of this music can be inferred from what Dionysius has stated previously: the Arcadians, the first settlers of the Palatine, brought to Italy 'music played on instruments which are called *kitharai* and *trigona* (harps) and *auloi*, the previous people having used no musical devices apart from pastoral panpipes'.<sup>178</sup> So not only was Rome founded by a man steeped in Greek *mousike*, but the first traces of music in Italy were to be found precisely in the area where Augustus built his temple to the god of music.

Dionysius 'arrived in Italy at the very time that Augustus Caesar put an end to the civil war'.<sup>179</sup> Even in this period of fragile peace, music remained at the centre of a heated moral and cultural debate. The rediscovery of Rome's musical heritage seems to have been of notable concern to intellectuals and writers of the time. Livy, as we saw in Chapter I, traces the roots of Roman luxury directly to the importing of musicians from

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.5.1-2, 14.2.2. Octavian had been cultivating a connection with Romulus from as early as 43 (cf. Suet. *Aug.* 95) and in 38 there had been some ritual at the *casa Romuli* (Dio 48.43.4). On the 'hut of Romulus' and its topographical relationship to the House of Augustus, see Wiseman 2012, 384-85.

<sup>177</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.84.5; cf. 1.89.1 on Rome as a *polis hellenis*. The explicit suggestion that Romulus learned music is unique; however, Cicero (*Rep.* 2.18) mentions that Romulus' lifetime coincided with a rich period of Greek music, and Plutarch (*Rom.* 6) states that Romulus' curriculum included γράμματα...καὶ τᾶλλα, ὅσα χρῆ τοὺς εἴ γεγονότας, perhaps with *mousike* in mind.

<sup>178</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.4-5 (see p. 55). On the Arcadian settlement of the Palatine, cf. Polyb. 4.20.5-21.9; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.33.5, 1.89.2; Solinus 1.14.

<sup>179</sup> *Ant. Rom.* 1.7.2; cf. 1.70.4.

Asia during the second century.<sup>180</sup> Meanwhile, Horace, in his *Ars Poetica* (composed around 19 BC) sketches a brief history of theatre music that has much in common with earlier assessments: following the expansion of Rome's empire, instrumental technologies had become more sophisticated (ll. 202-205); audiences had become less sophisticated (*indoctus*; 212-213); *tibicines* had learned to prioritise showy movement and dress over artistic integrity (*luxuriam addidit arti tibicen*; 214-215); and new notes had been added to the lyre (*fidibus voces crevere severis*; 216). We should not blame Horace for failing to supply precise chronological details. As Rudd explains, the poet 'has drawn a composite Graeco-Roman sketch, borrowing from Plato and Aristotle but supplying Roman as well as Greek details'.<sup>181</sup> What matters is the ideological force behind Horace's words, not the historical facts they may or may not provide.

The musical discourses with which Dionysius, Livy, and Horace were concerned could hardly have been overlooked by a ruler who made the rehabilitation of Roman morality one of the central pillars of his political policy.<sup>182</sup> Indeed, I would suggest that these discourses were fundamental to how Apollo was read in an Augustan context. By building a temple to the Greek god of music on the site of Rome's foundation, and perhaps even representing himself in the very guise of *citharoedus*, Augustus was proclaiming that the age of *amouisia* was over and that the state of *harmonia* had once again been restored. An *amouosos* like Mark Antony, who had no regard for Roman *mores*, would have further debased the quality of music and thus aggravated the civil discord that had ravaged Roman society for decades.

Apollo's lyre, the physical and symbolic cornerstone of Augustus' rebuilt city, signified the realisation of 'harmony' on a grand scale. By populating his city with

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<sup>180</sup> Livy 39.6.8.

<sup>181</sup> Rudd 1989, 33.

<sup>182</sup> On the moral legislation of Augustus, see Edwards 1993, 34-62; Galinsky 1996, 128-140.

images of the citharodic god, Augustus imbued his actions with a powerful cosmological significance:

μουσικὸς δὲ καὶ κιθαριστὴς παρεισῆκται τῷ κρούειν ἑναρμονίως πᾶν μέρος τοῦ κόσμου καὶ συνφθὸν αὐτὸ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις μέρεσι ποιεῖν, μηδεμιᾶς [αὐτῶν] ἐκμελείας ἐν τοῖς οὕσι θεωρουμένης (Cornutus, *De Natura Deorum*, Lang p. 67)

He [Apollo] has been depicted as a musician and harp-player because he plucks every part of the cosmos harmoniously and causes it to be in tune with all the other parts, and there is no disharmony observed among the things which exist. (Trans. Hays 1983)

The strings of Apollo's lyre sounded a new era of world peace, of *pax Romana*. The grammarian Verrius Flaccus, who acted as tutor to Augustus' grandsons Lucius and Gaius, spotted that the Latin word for 'lyre', *fidēs*, was the same as the word for 'faith'. More than just an accidental homonym, the two words were in Flaccus' view etymologically linked: *tantum inter se chordae eius, quantum inter homines fides concordet*.<sup>183</sup> Augustus was, in this sense, the ultimate champion of *fides*. In the words of Philo, writing nearly half a century later:

οὗτος ὁ τὰς πόλεις ἀπάσας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν ἐξελόμενος, ὁ τὴν ἀταξίαν εἰς τάξιν ἀγαγών, ὁ τὰ ἄμικτα ἔθνη καὶ θηριώδη πάντα ἡμερώσας καὶ ἄρμωσάμενος, ὁ τὴν μὲν Ἑλλάδα Ἑλλάσι πολλαῖς παραυξήσας, τὴν δὲ βάρβαρον ἐν τοῖς ἀναγκαιοτάτοις τμήμασιν ἀφελληνίσας, ὁ εἰρηνοφύλαξ. (Philo *Leg.* 147)

This was the man who reclaimed every state to liberty, who led disorder into order and brought gentle manners and harmony to all unsociable and brutish nations, who enlarged Hellas by many a new Hellas and hellenized the outside world in its most important sectors, the guardian of the peace. (Loeb trans.)

This fascinating passage poses complex questions about the nature of Augustan 'Hellenization'. What kind of action is implied by the verb ἀφελληνίσας? What is meant by a plurality of 'Greeces' (Ἑλλάσι πολλαῖς)? For now, such questions must be left aside. What I wish to single out, instead, is Philo's pointed use of the verb ἄρμωσάμενος. From ἀρμόζω, it means 'to set in order', 'to regulate', or 'to govern': so

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<sup>183</sup> Verrius Flaccus *ap. Festus* 89L; *TLL* s.v. 2. *fides* 'lyre'. On the life and works of Verrius Flaccus, see Conte 1994, 386-387.

‘Augustus restored order to unsociable nations (ἄμικτα ἔθνη)’. But ἀρμονία is, of course, the technical term for a musical ‘scale’, and in fact the primary sense of ἀρμόζω is ‘to tune a lyre’.<sup>184</sup> So Augustus was the man who ‘restored *harmonia* to nations that were out of tune with one another’, just as King Numa was remembered for ‘having attuned (ἀρμოსάμενος) the whole people like an instrument’.<sup>185</sup> It is interesting to note that the verb ἡμερώσας, used by Philo in conjunction with ἀρμოსάμενος, also appears in Strabo’s account of Apollo’s ‘civilizing’ of the Parnassians at Delphi.<sup>186</sup>

What we are dealing with here, I suggest, is not so much a transformation in ways of practising music, but rather a transformation in beliefs and ideas about music. This runs contrary to the view put forward by Alain Baudot in his book *Musiciens romains de l’Antiquité* (1973), namely, that ‘la musique, dans la période qui s’étend de la fin de la République au début du règne du Tibere, se caractérise par un enrichissement général’. This ‘enrichment’, Baudot suggests, was made possible thanks to a series of technological and technical advancements in instrumental performance, which in turn allowed for a more expressive kind of music with greater rhythmic and tonal variety. Crucially, Baudot situates these developments in line with what he calls

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<sup>184</sup> Cf. *LSJ* s.v. ἀρμόζω, 4. ‘set in order, regulate, govern’, 5. ‘tune a lyre’. Philo was certainly aware of the musical connotations of the word and in fact alludes to harmonic theory several times in his works. Cf. esp. *On the Special Laws* 4.102: ‘He [Moses] relaxed the overstrained and tightened the lax, and as on a musical instrument blended the very high and the very low at each end of the scale with the middle chord, thus producing a life of harmony and concord (ἀρμονίαν βίου καὶ συμφωνίαν) which none can blame’; similar ideas expressed at *Spec. leg.* 2.157, *Virt.* 145, *Mos.* 2.7. At *Mut.* 184, Philo states that human beings are mixtures of the divine and the mortal, ‘blended together and harmonised according to the proportions of perfect music’; cf. *Deus imm.* 24-25, *Cher.* 110, *Ebr.* 116. On Philo’s conception of music, see further Feldman 1986-1987, Levarie 1991, and Ferguson 2003.

<sup>185</sup> Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.46.2. For ἄμικτος in the sense of ‘difficult to blend or harmonise’, cf. *LSJ*, s.v.; Aesch. *Ag.* 321: βοῆν ἄμεικτον.

<sup>186</sup> Strabo 9.3.12: ἡμεροῦν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἡμέρων καρπῶν καὶ τῶν βίων; cf. Strabo 10.3.10.

Augustan ‘apollinisation’, which ‘gagne aussi l’art musical et se manifeste au sein même de l’austère religion traditionnelle’.<sup>187</sup>

The evidence for a practical ‘revolution’ in Roman music is meagre, to say the least. It has been noted that the *tibiae* discovered in Pompeii possess a greater number of finger-holes (between ten and fifteen) than our earlier examples of Greek *auloi* (the Brauron, Elgin, Louvre, and Copenhagen *auloi*), which have between five and nine holes.<sup>188</sup> This increase probably facilitated a more virtuosic style of performance. Furthermore, fragmentary *auloi* have been excavated in Sudan and Israel, dating from the first century BC, which show traces of a revolving sleeve that allowed the player to switch between different *harmoniae* in a single performance – again, an indication of complex music.<sup>189</sup> Fragments of musical notation preserved on Egyptian papyri from the imperial period do point towards a more ‘florid and dramatic style’ than is apparent in the musical papyri of the Hellenistic period.<sup>190</sup> However, the documents in question (which are written exclusively in Greek) are far too fragmentary and geographically specific to allow us to pinpoint any precise change over time, and in any case most of the Roman-era papyri date from the second and third centuries AD. It is simply impossible to make the evidence fit a single model of historical change. Instrumental technologies would have developed at different rates depending on a whole variety of factors (geography, resources, etc.), and it is clear from other sources that auletes had been using revolving sleeves long before the first century. To the extent that any measurable progress can be detected around the time of the early Principate (and I do

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<sup>187</sup> Baudot 1973, 130-131; cf. Vendries 1999, 200. Laurence (2009, 117) draws attention to the transformation of musical culture more generally during the first century BC, although he does not link these developments specifically to the aims of the Augustan Principate.

<sup>188</sup> See Creese 2006, 419.

<sup>189</sup> Braun 2002, 223: both instruments might have been made in the same place, possibly Alexandria.

<sup>190</sup> Johnson 2000, 58.

not believe it can), such progress can hardly be ascribed to an ‘Apolline’ vision on the part of the Augustan authorities.

A more fruitful line of argument has been pursued by Alexandre Vincent with regard to the evidence for musicians’ guilds in Rome. His article ‘Auguste et les tibicines’, published in 2008, reassesses the history of the *collegium tibicinum Romanorum* based on a close analysis of epigraphic sources.<sup>191</sup> Vincent pinpoints a significant development in the nomenclature of the guild during the early imperial period. Whereas in Republican inscriptions the association is designated simply as the *collegium tibicinum Romanorum*, from the first century AD onwards the title is extended to *collegium tibicinum Romanorum qui s(acris) p(ublicis) p(raesto) s(unt)*.<sup>192</sup> Vincent suggests that this emphasis on the guild’s participation in *sacra publica* aligns with Augustus’ policy of reorganising and reviving public religion. Suetonius refers to Augustus’ disbanding of all *collegia* except those that were *antiqua et legitima*.<sup>193</sup> Vincent argues that the *collegium tibicinum* was likely exempt from this ban, in view of its ancient association with King Numa.<sup>194</sup> If this was the case, the *collegium* must have been given authorisation to reconstitute itself with immediate effect, taking on the new extended title.

The imperial restructuring of musicians’ guilds is illustrated again in connection with the *collegium symphonicorum*, which, according to one inscription, was founded *e lege Iulia ex auctoritate Aug(usti) ludorum causa*.<sup>195</sup> This new Augustan organisation

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<sup>191</sup> Vincent 2008, revising the findings of P  ch   2001.

<sup>192</sup> *Collegium tibicinum Romanorum*: CIL 1.989; AE 1991, 120; CIL 1.2, 2984b (from Rome); CIL 14.3564 (from Tibur). *Collegium tibicinum Romanorum qui s. p. p. s.*: CIL 6.240, 3.877a (omitting *Romanorum*).

<sup>193</sup> Suet. Aug. 32.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Plut. Num. 17.2-3.

<sup>195</sup> CIL 6.2193: *Dis Manibus collegio symphonicorum qui sacris publicis praestu sunt quibus senatus c(oire) c(onvenire) c(ollegi) permisit e lege Iulia ex auctoritate Aug(usti) ludorum causa*. The *lex Iulia de collegiis* is otherwise unknown – a fact which casts considerable doubt on the meaning of this inscription.

was apparently distinct from the *collegium tibicinum Romanorum*, and may have been formed from the *collegium tibicinum et fidicinum* which is known to us from an earlier republican inscription.<sup>196</sup> Since the phrase *ludorum causa* must refer to the *ludi publici*, we can deduce that the *symphoniaci* who belonged to the guild were not attached to private households as was described in Chapter II; rather, they were enlisted to perform at public occasions at the behest of the emperor himself.

In general, then, the evidence does seem to support the idea of an increased prominence of musicians in the public sphere as a result of direct action taken by the Augustan authorities. Vincent develops this theory more extensively in his recent monograph. Nevertheless, it seems highly unlikely that these developments contributed to a ‘general enrichment’ of musical culture of the kind imagined by Baudot, and it is hard to see how, if at all, the restructuring of musicians’ guilds might be related to the emperor’s attempts to associate himself with the divine.

Alternatively, we might view the expansion of *collegia* as part of a broader imperial investment in musical spectacle. Augustus built two stone theatres in honour of Marcellus and Balbus, adding to the one previously erected by Pompey. He also oversaw the introduction of the pantomime to Rome by the dancers Pylades and Bathyllos.<sup>197</sup> Music was integral to the pantomime’s appeal. Although the solo dancer (*pantomimus*) was mute, his routines were accompanied by large and dynamic orchestral ensembles.<sup>198</sup> An anecdote in Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* makes this clear:

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<sup>196</sup> *CIL* 6.2919; Vincent 2008, 431-433.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Athen. 1.20d-e (Bathyllos as the inventor of ‘comic’ dance, and Pylades the ‘tragic’ dance); Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 6.1; Suda s.v. “Alexandria”, “pantomimos”, and “Bathyllos”. Lucian writes that ‘dance as it now is...began mainly under Augustus’ (*Salt.* 34). On Augustus’ relationship with the pantomime, see Querzoli 2006 and Hunt 2008.

<sup>198</sup> Lucian, for instance, describes the *aulos* and the *kithara* as part of ‘the dancer’s paraphernalia’ (*Salt.* 26); see further Lada-Richards 2007, 41.

*hic, quia ferebatur mutasse rudis illius saltationis ritum, quae apud maiores viguit, et venustam induxisse novitatem, interrogatus ab Augusto, quae saltationi contulisset, respondit: αὐλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἐνοπήν, ὀμαδόν τ' ἀνθρώπων [Hom. Il. 10.13]. (Macr. Sat. 2.7.18)*

Since Pylades was said to have changed the old style of dancing that had had its heyday with our ancestors and to have introduced a charming new style, he was asked by Augustus what contribution he had made to dance and answered: “the sound of pipes and flutes and the din of men”.

In one sense, the allusion to wind instruments and singing neatly encapsulates the novelty of the pantomime as a performance medium. Suetonius, probably drawing on the same tradition as Macrobius, records in his fragmentary work *De Poetis* that ‘although the ancients used to sing and dance themselves, Pylades, the Cilician pantomime, was the first in Rome to have a chorus and a panpipe accompany him’.<sup>199</sup> But what are we to make of the rather puzzling quotation from Homer’s *Iliad*, describing the sounds of Trojan revelry that tormented Agamemnon from afar as he reflected despondently on the dire situation of the Greek army? Was Pylades simply showing off his command of the literary canon, or does his terse riposte have a deeper meaning in the context of his private audience with the emperor? To answer this, I think, we need to examine the story that follows next in Macrobius’ text. It is another pantomime-related sketch, this one involving Pylades’ student Hylas:

*idem cum propter populi seditionem pro contentione inter se Hylamque habita concitatam indignationem excepisset Augusti, respondit, ‘καὶ ἀχαριστεῖς, βασιλεῦ· ἔασον αὐτοὺς περὶ ἡμᾶς ἀσχολεῖσθαι.’ (Macr. Sat. 2.7.19)*

When his competition with Hylas provoked a riot, he replied to Augustus’ outrage with the comment: “You’re being ungrateful indeed, your highness: let them be distracted by us.”

Riots of this kind were all too frequent in the early days of the pantomime’s history. Indeed, Pylades drove his audiences into such a state of frenzy that Augustus had no choice but to banish him from Rome (only to restore him again in 18 BC when

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<sup>199</sup> Suet. *De Poetis* fr. 3 (Rostagni p. 65): *Pylades Cilex pantomimus, cum veteres ipsi canerent atque saltarent, primus Romae chorum et fistulam sibi praecinere fecit*. An imperial relief discussed by Ciotti 1950 represents a *fistulator* in a pantomime show.

faced with a popular backlash).<sup>200</sup> Given the context of the Homeric quotation and the military overtones of ἐνοπή and ὄμαδος (normally referring to the ‘cry’ and ‘din’ of battle), I wonder if the witty pantomime was hinting sarcastically at his less positive contribution to the dance, namely, violence. That is, he had turned the theatre into a kind of mock-epic battleground, with factions fighting for their respective heroes. Incidentally, the very same verse (*Il.* 10.13) is quoted by Dio Chrysostom in a discourse on private luxury: ‘he who courts popular favour must have a whole city’s licentiousness and be a devotee of singing, of dancing, of drinking, of eating, and, indeed, of all such things...At such a person’s house you will always find “the sound of pipes and flutes and the din of men”.’<sup>201</sup> It seems, therefore, that Macrobius was using the story about Pylades as a way of expressing Augustus’ *popularitas* – his willingness, in Tacitus’ words, ‘to mix in the pleasures of the people’ (*misceri voluptatibus vulgi*) – just as the following anecdote hints at Augustus’ desire to keep the people happy.<sup>202</sup>

Pylades performed regularly at Augustus’ banquets, no doubt with his attendant *chorus et fistula*.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, Suetonius observes how Augustus used to entertain his dinner-party guests with musical performers (*acroamata*), along with actors (*histriones*) and itinerant players from the Circus (*triviales ex Circo ludii*).<sup>204</sup> Christopher Jones suspects that ‘this is modest fare’; that is certainly what Suetonius indicates.<sup>205</sup> But the reference to *triviales ex Circo ludii* again points strongly to the popular character of these entertainments.<sup>206</sup> The famous singer Tigellius, the nemesis of Horace and old

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<sup>200</sup> Cf. Dio 54.17.4-5. On pantomime riots, see Jory 1984 and Slater 1994.

<sup>201</sup> Dio Chrysos. *Or.* 66.9-10.

<sup>202</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.54, making reference to the pantomime.

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Dio 54.17.5; Macr. *Sat.* 2.7.17.

<sup>204</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 74.

<sup>205</sup> Jones 1991, 193, citing Plin. *Ep.* 6.31.13: *ibebamur cotidie cenae: erat modica, si principem cogitares. interdum acroamata audiebamus*. Suetonius emphasises the frugality of Augustus’ *convivia* (*non nimio sumptu, Aug.* 74).

<sup>206</sup> See Wiseman 1980, 13.

favourite of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, was allegedly welcomed into Augustus' *familiares domestici*.<sup>207</sup> We can also compare a further anecdote in Macrobius:

*delectatus inter coenam erat symphoniacis Toronii Flacci mangonis, atque eos frumento donaverat, cum in alia acroamata fuisset nummis liberalis: eosdemque postea Toronius aequae inter coenam quaerenti Caesari sic excusavit: ad molas sunt.* (Macr. Sat. 2.4.28)

At a banquet he [i.e. Augustus] was delighted by the musicians of the slave-dealer Toronius Flaccus and, though he had rewarded other entertainers with cash, he gave these the gift of a grain ration. When he subsequently asked for the same musicians to perform at another banquet, Toronius apologised, stating, "They're milling the grain."

The idea that the *princeps* made use of musicians that he did not own himself seems surprising. Augustus could have, and probably did, own countless numbers of *symphoniaci*. His sister Octavia certainly possessed some (the epitaphs of two *symphoniacae Octaviae* survive, one written in Greek).<sup>208</sup> So did Maecenas – if we are to believe the suggestion in Seneca's *De Providentia* that he was lulled to sleep by the music of *symphoniae*.<sup>209</sup> Toronius (or Toranius, as he is elsewhere known) was a famed purveyor of exotic slaves and a proverbial wit.<sup>210</sup> I suspect that Macrobius (or his source) was using the *mango* to make a joke about the inopportune gift of grain to slaves undergoing punishment at a mill, where grain was obviously in abundant supply. Whether truthful or not, the story is a further testament to the fact that 'there was no sharp distinction between court and popular music'.<sup>211</sup> This may have had little to do with the ideology of Augustan 'apollinisation', as Baudot puts it, but we shall see in the following chapter that the image of the *princeps* as someone who shared his musical tastes with the common people played a formative role in shaping the actions of the Emperor Nero.

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<sup>207</sup> Porph. *ad Hor. Sat.* 1.2.2; *Hor. Sat.* 1.3.4-8; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> T 202; Freudenberg 1993, 115-117.

<sup>208</sup> *CIL* 6.33372: *Europe | Octaviae | symphoni|aca*; *CIL* 6.33373: ὀστᾶ | Ἀγαθοῦ|τος σ|μφωνια|κῆς Ὀκτ|αουίας.

<sup>209</sup> *Sen. Dial.* 1.3.10. Bathyllus was Maecenas' slave and paramour: *Dio* 54.17.5; *Tac. Ann.* 1.54. 'It is clear that musicians and performers were an important part of Maecenas' life' (Wiseman 2016, 149).

<sup>210</sup> Cf. *Plin. HN* 7.56; *Suet. Aug.* 69.1; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> T 291.

<sup>211</sup> Horsfall 2003, 34; see also Horsfall 1997b, 112.

## Conclusion

When Octavian returned to Rome in 30 BC, fresh from his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, he faced the unenviable task of restoring order to a society torn apart by decades of civil war. The ruthless image that Octavian had crafted as triumvir was incompatible with the image he now wished to propagate as *princeps*. The Roman people cried out for a leader who would bring lasting peace and stability, and the victor of Actium responded by giving them a symbol to rally behind. That symbol was the lyre.

The texts, images, and monuments considered in this chapter mainly cluster around the first twenty years of Augustus' principate. By the end of the first century BC, Apollo largely disappears from the emperor's public imagery, eventually to be supplanted by the no less imposing figure of Mars Ultor, whose temple crowned the Forum Augustum (completed in 2 BC). Various explanations for this disappearance might be posited: perhaps the persona of the youthful Apollo was deemed unbecoming for an aging *princeps*; perhaps the necessity of foreign wars created an opportunity for the emperor to align himself with a more martial deity; perhaps the Apolline theme was simply getting tired. In any case, the times had changed. The foundations of lasting autocracy had been laid.

But in the climate of uncertainty which pervaded the early years of Augustan rule, the talismanic presence of Apollo Citharoedus was all-important. It provided a sense of permanence, anchoring the fledgling regime in a powerful ideological and cosmological narrative. The literal *harmonia* of the *cithara* was distilled into a metaphor for the new world order. Transcending the realms of speech and imagination, the symbolism of *kitharoidia* was writ large on Rome's monumental landscape and

embedded in its public rituals. In this way, the qualities of Apollo's lyre 'harmonised' with the cultural politics of the Augustan Principate, banishing once and for all the spectre of Antonian Bacchanalia. The sound of Apollo's lyre would be heard echoing along the shores of Actium for centuries to come.

## Chapter IV

### NERO AND THE AGE OF MUSOMANIA

Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ὁ πολίτης μου (οὗτος δ' οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ τετελεύτηκε) δημοσίᾳ ἐπιδειξάμενος ἐν τῷ τριγώνῳ ἐπικαλουμένῳ ὀργάνῳ οὕτως ἐποίησε πάντας Ῥωμαίους μουσομανεῖν ὡς τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ ἀπομνημονεύειν αὐτοῦ τὰ κρούσματα.

My fellow-citizen Alexander (he died not long ago) gave a public concert on the instrument called the *trigonon* and made all the Romans so mad about music (*mousomanein*) that many of them have even memorised his tunes.

Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.184e

Ἡ φωνὴ δέ, Μουσώνιε, δι' ἣν μουσομανεῖ...

Tell me, Musonius, about that voice of his that makes him mad about music (*mousomanei*)...

Pseudo-Lucian [Philostratus], *Nero or on the Digging of the Isthmus* 6

The verb μουσομανεῖν is attested only twice in the entire corpus of Greek literature.<sup>1</sup> The first time we come across it is in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. The interlocutor Alceides tells the story of a musician from Alexandria who migrates to Rome at the turn of the third century AD and bewitches audiences with his triangular harp (known in Greek as a *trigonon*). The second attestation of μουσομανεῖν occurs in a short dialogue entitled *Nero or on the Digging of the Isthmus*, preserved in the manuscripts of Lucian but normally attributed to the writer and sophist Philostratus of Athens.<sup>2</sup> The two characters, a certain Menecrates and the philosopher Musonius Rufus, debate the achievements of the Emperor Nero on his infamous tour of Greece in AD 66-67.<sup>3</sup> The main topic of discussion is Nero's abortive attempt to cut a canal through the Isthmus of

<sup>1</sup> *LSJ* s.v. μουσομᾶνέω; μουσομανεῖ appears in a fragment of Sophocles but is best understood as a dative of the adjective μουσομανής (cf. *Anth. Pal.* 10.16).

<sup>2</sup> For the attribution to Philostratus, see Whitmarsh 1999, 143-144.

<sup>3</sup> Menecrates may be related to the Neronian citharode of the same name: cf. Petr. *Sat.* 73.19; Suet. *Nero* 30.2; Dio 63.1; Whitmarsh 1999, 142, n. 4.

Corinth, but the characters also have much to say about Nero's exploits as a musician. What, Menecrates wonders, is the voice of this tyrant really like?

We all know Nero as the emperor who 'fiddled while Rome burned'. The story owes as much to the imagination of William Shakespeare as it does to the annals of ancient history, yet it has become enshrined in the modern era as a moral axiom, endlessly repeated in satirical cartoons and Hollywood films.<sup>4</sup> Whether the *princeps* really did ascend to the summit of the Palatine in AD 64 and sing a poetic lamentation on the Fall of Troy will forever remain a mystery (there was some doubt even in antiquity), but the insinuation alone speaks of an extraordinary commitment to the performing arts.<sup>5</sup> In a city of musomaniacs, Nero stood out.

'Fiddle' he most certainly did not, but the emperor's enthusiasm for the cithara was all too real, and knew no bounds. That, at least, is the impression conveyed by the three main chroniclers of his reign – Tacitus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio – not to mention the satirist Juvenal, in whose verses Nero is simply *princeps citharoedus*, 'the lyre-playing emperor'.<sup>6</sup> Nero's passion for music was sparked at an early age. As a boy, he took lessons in singing (*cantus*), as well as sculpture, painting, and horse-riding.<sup>7</sup> Thus imbued with a rudimentary knowledge of music, he proceeded upon his accession to the throne to undertake specialist training as a citharode. He summoned to his court the maestro Terpnus and, under his tutelage, began practising all the usual exercises 'for

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<sup>4</sup> The ancient narratives are Tac. *Ann.* 15.39, Suet. *Nero* 38, Dio 62.18.1. Gyles 1947 discusses representations of Nero as 'fiddler' in the Early Modern period and beyond. For Nero's 'fiddling' in modern political satire, see Mitchell 2013, 324-332. Cinematic depictions of Nero are discussed by Wyke 1994, Pucci 2011, and Winkler 2017.

<sup>5</sup> The reference to τό Παλάτιον in Dio (62.18.1) is open to interpretation; Suetonius, by contrast, states that Nero watched the fire from the Tower of Maecenas – that is, in the *Horti Maecenatiani* (*Nero* 38.2). Tacitus is the most sceptical of the three, reporting a 'rumour' that Nero sang the Fall of Troy on a private stage (*domesticam scaenam*; *Ann.* 15.39). See Champlin 2003a, 48-49, emphasising the alarming discrepancy of the ancient narratives.

<sup>6</sup> *Juv. Sat.* 8.198. Pliny calls Nero *imperator scaenicus* (*Paneg.* 46.4).

<sup>7</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.7.

preserving or strengthening the voice' (*vel conservandae vocis causa vel augendae*).<sup>8</sup> Initially, the young ruler confined himself to a private stage in his gardens across the Tiber.<sup>9</sup> It was here, in AD 59, that he celebrated the 'Juvenile Games' (*ludi Iuvenalium* or *Iuvenalia*), a festival marking the first shaving of his beard, at which he gave a concert on the lyre.<sup>10</sup> The experience was exhilarating. Nero started to dream of a career on the public stage.<sup>11</sup> Five years later, in AD 64, the *princeps* made his long-awaited theatrical debut in the 'quasi-Greek city' of Naples.<sup>12</sup> This was followed in 65 by a star turn at the 'Neronian Games' (*Neronia*), a quinquennial festival of music, drama, and athletics held in Rome. Having declined the chance to star in the inaugural contests of AD 60, Nero now entered – and duly won – the prize for lyre-playing. He also recited one of his own compositions to great popular acclaim.<sup>13</sup> This success emboldened him, in 66, to embark on a 'grand tour' of Greece, encompassing all the main panhellenic festivals (the calendars were synchronised in order to allow him to compete).<sup>14</sup> Nero departed in late summer, and would be gone for over a year. His 'triumphal' return, when it eventually came at the end of 67, was celebrated in typically grandiose fashion. Relations with the Senate were already strained, and this latest bout of public exhibitionism only made things worse. Vindex's revolt in 68 triggered a succession of mutinies across the frontiers. Nero fled Rome in ignominy and committed suicide on 9 June AD 68.

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<sup>8</sup> Suet. *Nero* 20.1.

<sup>9</sup> Plin. *HN* 15.33: *theatrum peculiare trans Tiberim in hortis*. A private circus in the Vatican valley provided him ample opportunity to indulge his other passion for driving chariots (Tac. *Ann.* 14.14, Plin. *HN* 36.74, Suet. *Nero* 22.1).

<sup>10</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.15; cf. 15.33.1.

<sup>11</sup> Among friends he would quote the Greek proverb, 'there's no respect for hidden music' (*occultae musicae nullum esse respectum*, Suet. *Nero* 20.1); cf. Gell. *NA* 13.31.3; Luc. *Harm.* 1.

<sup>12</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.44 (*quasi Graeca urbs*); Suet. *Nero* 20.2-3.

<sup>13</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 16.4.2-4; Dio 62.29.1.

<sup>14</sup> Suet. *Nero* 23.1; Philos. *VA* 5.7.

These are familiar and uncontroversial facts. In plotting the trajectory of Nero's musical career, the historians of later periods found an effective strategy for exploring the tensions and ambiguities of his reign. Suetonius introduces a long discussion of Nero's vices with a section on his musical pursuits.<sup>15</sup> Tacitus, similarly, associates the emperor's moral degeneration in the aftermath of Agrippina's murder with his 'disgraceful enthusiasm' (*foedum studium*) for singing to the lyre 'in the stage manner' (*ludicum in modum*).<sup>16</sup> Indeed, for Dio Chrysostom, writing under Domitian, Nero's singing – or, more precisely, his 'tongue' – was to be blamed for the collapse of the entire Julio-Claudian dynasty.<sup>17</sup>

In short, then, Nero's music-making played an instrumental role in shaping the historical memory of his principate. Negative reviews of his performances, whether as singer, actor or instrumentalist, can be seen, on the one hand, as mapping out preconceptions about the man behind the music – his delusions and obsessions, his tyrannical whims and desires. But they also served, on the other hand, as vehicles for *creating* memories, transmitted and transmuted from one generation to the next. Jewish and Christian writers ranked singing and acting among the worst of Nero's sins.<sup>18</sup> In the Fifth Sibylline Oracle, composed around the turn of the second century, a striking connection is formulated between the emperor's musical accomplishments and his crimes of homicide and matricide:

ὄστις παμμούσῳ φθόγγῳ μελιδέας ὕμνους  
θεατροκοπῶν ἀπολεῖ πολλοὺς σὺν μητρὶ ταλαίνῃ.  
(*Oracula Sibyllina* 5.141-142, ed. Geffcken 1902)

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<sup>15</sup> Suet. *Nero* 19.3-20.1.

<sup>16</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.14.1.

<sup>17</sup> Dio *Or.* 66.6; on the date, see Jones 1978. Dio describes Nero's infatuation with music as a 'disease' (νόσος) at *Or.* 32.60.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Jos. *BJ* 2.251; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 5.5; Eutr. 7.14; Sid. *Carm.* 5.1.322; Oros. 7.7. On Nero's reception in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, see Klauck 2001, Champlin 2003a, 17-24, and Maier 2013.

Playing at theatricals with honey-sweet songs rendered with melodious voice,  
He will destroy many men, along with his wretched mother.  
(Trans. Collins 1983).

Understanding the various phases of Nero's hostile reception is vital to understanding the history of his own time. Problems arise when we go beyond simply reconstructing the chronology of Nero's performances and pose questions about what these performances actually entailed: who was present in the audience? How did the spectators respond to the sight (and sound) of the emperor on stage? Was their response in line with or contrary to the emperor's own expectations? Establishing the agency of historical actors is always difficult. The ancient sources are certainly not lacking in circumstantial detail, but the choice and arrangement of material is invariably distorted by the polemical and/or moral agenda of the author in question; and that in turn casts serious doubt on the credibility of the information provided. The loss of contemporary histories by Pliny the Elder, Fabius Rusticus, and Cluvius Rufus, the latter of whom likely promoted a favourable view of the emperor, is regrettable indeed.<sup>19</sup>

It was customary for a long time to speak of Nero's musomania as a symptom of his defective personality. Twentieth-century assessments look remarkably Tacitean in their fixation on the emperor's psychopathology. Miriam Griffin, in her influential biography of Nero, cites a 'weak character and intellect', a 'love of applause' and a 'natural exhibitionism' as afflictions of the stage-struck emperor which precipitated his political demise.<sup>20</sup> Not until the turn of the millennium was this diagnosis called into question. A radical new direction in Neronian studies was signalled in 1994, with the

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<sup>19</sup> Testimonia and fragments in *FRHist* 80 (Pliny), 87 (Fabius Rusticus), 84 (Cluvius Rufus). In Pliny's case, we can at least draw inferences from the eighty or so mentions of Nero in the *Natural History*, most of them highly unflattering: cf. e.g. Plin. *HN* 7.45, 34.45, 35.51, 22.96. On problems of the source material, see Elsner and Masters 1994 and Schubert 1998. The bias of Neronian historiographers is lamented by Josephus, *Ant.* 20.154.

<sup>20</sup> Griffin 1984, 187, 233; cf. Warmington 1969, 113, mentioning Nero's 'addiction' and 'craving for applause'.

publication of the volume *Reflections of Nero*, edited by Jas Elsner and Jamie Masters. In her chapter on ‘theatre and the subversion of imperial identity’, Catharine Edwards recast Nero as a highly self-conscious actor, who exploited the transgressive power of theatricality in order to ‘find new discursive strategies for representing imperial power’.<sup>21</sup> Edwards’ emphasis on the representational aspects of Neronian stagecraft (and statecraft) found an even more powerful expression in Edward Champlin’s monograph of 2003, entitled simply *Nero*. Far from being a maniacal monster, Champlin’s Nero comes across as a consummate showman, a ‘very serious’ performer endowed with a ‘ferocious energy’, ‘passionate determination’ and a ‘fecund imagination’.<sup>22</sup> Above all, the young emperor is portrayed as an expert manipulator of his own self-image, successfully turning popular opinion in his favour by incorporating the language of mythology into his theatrical role-playing. Admittedly, Champlin’s revisionism has not won universal acceptance. In the end, as Keith Bradley reminds us, ‘the monstrosity of the man cannot be dispelled’.<sup>23</sup> But the ‘performative turn’ in Neronian scholarship has undoubtedly helped to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the emperor’s musicianship. The picture that emerges is no longer of a mindless fanatic hell-bent on the stage, but rather of a rational and even talented leader who used the medium of song to make a statement of real intent. Ascertaining precisely what this intent was, how it was articulated, and to what audience(s), is now the primary objective of the historian.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Edwards 1994, 87.

<sup>22</sup> Champlin 2003a, 82.

<sup>23</sup> Bradley 2005, 126.

<sup>24</sup> On the ‘performative turn’ and its impact, see Bartsch, Freudenberg, and Littlewood 2017, 2-3. The revisionist trend in Neronian studies continues to gather steam, as evidenced by the selection of essays in Tomei and Rea 2011 and Walde 2013.

It has long been recognised that Nero's devotion to the musical arts went hand-in-hand with a close attachment to Greek culture.<sup>25</sup> Studies have illustrated how the emperor's philhellenism pervaded the interstices of politics, society, religion, art, and architecture.<sup>26</sup> Susan Alcock, in her contribution to *Reflections of Nero*, takes three key moments from the tour of Greece in 66-67 – namely, the participation at Olympia, the cutting of the canal through the Isthmus, and the liberation of Achaëa – in order to show how Nero used his influence as both artist and ruler to effect a cultural rapprochement between Greece and Rome.<sup>27</sup> The most significant breakthrough in understanding the musical dimensions of this phenomenon came in 2010 with the publication of Timothy Power's monograph, *The Culture of Kitharôidia*. The first part of the book comprises a detailed survey of 'Neronian citharodic politics'. Power rightly acknowledges that previous discussions have tended to lump Nero's artistic endeavours together under the umbrella of 'acting' or 'performance'. The problem with this broad-brush approach is that it risks eliding the complex cultural semiotics which made each mode of performance unique to its given context.<sup>28</sup> By re-examining the ancient testimonies for Nero's lyre-playing in light of the abundant evidence for *kitharôidia* in the Greek and Roman worlds, Power opens up new perspectives on the emperor's 'complex relationship to Greek culture'.<sup>29</sup> Nero's *kitharôidia*, he argues, was both 'genuinely communal in intent' and invested with deep political resonance, mediated through the rich historical and mythological traditions of the genre.<sup>30</sup> In this way, Nero is considered 'the prime instigator of a process of cultural, musical, even political and ideological

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<sup>25</sup> Nero's philhellenism was appreciated already by Schumann (1930, *passim*), Warmington (1969, 108-122), and Griffin (1984, 208-220), though overlooking performative dimensions.

<sup>26</sup> See, most recently, Perrin 2007, Rea 2011, Mratschek 2013, Pautsch 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Alcock 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Power 2010, 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Power 2010, 148.

<sup>30</sup> Power 2010, 149.

translation, a kind of mass-market *paideia* – making the Hellenic language of *kitharôidia* legible and lovable to Romans’.<sup>31</sup>

The lack of interest that Power’s book has garnered in recent works on Nero is disappointing.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, there are benefits to be gained from combining a focus on imperial self-representation with a contextual awareness of how music influenced wider patterns of thought and practice in ‘the age of Nero’. There is a danger that we see ‘musical culture’ as a static entity, undifferentiated by time or place and circumscribed by a fixed set of conventions, which Nero either conformed with or contravened as he saw fit. And yet, our discussion in previous chapters has shown how misleading such a view can be, obfuscating as it does the multiple interfaces which structured musical discourse and praxis in antiquity. It is not enough, therefore, to see Nero simply as responding to a narrowly defined aristocratic concept of what music *was* or *should be*; rather, we must question how he used music in novel ways to speak to a broad segment of the Roman population. Therein, I suggest, lays the key to explaining the magnetic attraction of this most controversial of emperors.

## 1 ‘O Apollo, O Augustus’: Making Sense of a Musical Emperor

Paramount for Nero, and indeed for his later critics, was the question of legitimation. What precedent was there, if any, for a performing *princeps*? In his first address to the Senate as emperor, Nero announced his intention to rule ‘according to the example of Augustus’ (*ex Augusti praescripto*).<sup>33</sup> This was, in a sense, a perfunctory declaration, expected of any successor at the start of his reign. But as the years passed by, Nero’s

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<sup>31</sup> Power 2010, 101.

<sup>32</sup> It does not appear in the bibliographies of the two recent ‘companion’ volumes on Nero: Buckley and Dinter 2013; Bartsch, Freudenberg, and Littlewood 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Suet. *Nero* 10.1.

*imitatio Augusti* proved increasingly idiosyncratic. Nero sought to revive an aspect of Augustus' legacy which seems to have been of little interest to his predecessors, namely Augustus' association with Apollo, god of music. In fact, the sources suggest that Nero actively publicised his connection to Augustus *qua* musician in order to legitimise and celebrate his own musical endeavours. When he took to the stage for the first time in 59, he did so not with the intent of iconoclasm but in the firm belief that he was following in the footsteps of the first emperor. According to Tacitus, he sought justification for his citharodic performances by claiming that 'songs [were] sacred to Apollo, and that this pre-eminent and prescient deity stood with such adornment not only in Greek cities, but in Roman temples too' (*cantus Apollini sacros, talique ornatu adstare non modo Graecis in urbibus, sed Romana apud templa numen praecipuum et praescium*).<sup>34</sup> As Power points out, there was surely one *Romanum templum* foremost in Nero's mind: the Augustan Temple of Apollo Palatinus.<sup>35</sup> Nero could also point to the colossal statue by Timarchides which occupied a prominent position in the Temple of Apollo Sosianus, a building with its own Augustan associations.<sup>36</sup>

Three episodes in Suetonius and Cassius Dio highlight the various ways in which Nero sought to integrate the memory of Augustus into his spectacles. Firstly, at the Juvenalia, Nero is said to have hired a corps of cheerleaders, roughly 5,000 in number, and assigned them the task of orchestrating the applause during his performance. He referred to them as his 'Augustiani' (or Αὐγούστειοι).<sup>37</sup> Their chants, as recorded by Dio, liken the emperor to Apollo, while recalling his dynastic links to Augustus: ὁ καλὸς Καῖσαρ, ὁ Ἀπόλλων, ὁ Αὐγουστος, εἷς ὡς Πύθιος. Following the

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<sup>34</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.14.1.

<sup>35</sup> Power 2010, 362.

<sup>36</sup> See pp. 152-153.

<sup>37</sup> Dio 62.20.4. On the Augustiani, see further pp. 226-227.

show's conclusion, the crowds reconvened for a late-night party at the artificial lake built by Augustus as the backdrop for his *naumachia* in 2 BC.<sup>38</sup>

The second noteworthy episode occurred during the festivities of the Neronia in AD 60. Suetonius comments that when Nero was awarded honorary first place in the contest for lyre-playing (he had not actually competed), he 'knelt before the trophy and ordered that it be laid at the feet of Augustus' statue' (*adoravit ferrique ad Augusti statuam iussit*).<sup>39</sup> It is unclear which statue Suetonius is referring to, if indeed he had a particular statue in mind, but the one of Augustus *habitu ac statura Apollinis* in the Palatine Library might be a possible candidate.<sup>40</sup>

The third and most striking Neronian evocation of a 'musical' Augustus coincided with the *princeps*' return to Rome in December 67, following the tour of Greece.<sup>41</sup> Nero took the opportunity to stage a grand 'triumphal' spectacle to celebrate his artistic and athletic victories. He allegedly rode into the city on the same chariot that had borne Augustus (then Octavian) during his triple triumph of 29 (*eo curru, quo Augustus olim triumphaverat*).<sup>42</sup> By his side stood the 'captive' citharode Diodorus, occupying a position of prominence normally reserved for the *triumphator*'s son.<sup>43</sup> Instead of the customary escort of soldiers, Nero was followed by a large entourage of supporters – the same supporters that had accompanied him on his travels in the East. At the departure of the tour the emperor had equipped them with lyres and plectrums;

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<sup>38</sup> Dio 62.20.4-5.

<sup>39</sup> Suet. *Nero* 12.3-4.

<sup>40</sup> For this suggestion, see Champlin 2003a, 142. Power (2010, 156) argues (unpersuasively, in my view) for the statue of Apollo Citharoedus in the portico, on the dubious assumption that this statue bore a physical resemblance to Augustus.

<sup>41</sup> On the chronology, see Bradley 1978a.

<sup>42</sup> Suet. *Nero* 25.1; cf. Dio 62.20.3: αὐτὸς ἐφ' ἄρματος ἐπινικίου, ἐν ᾧ ποτε ὁ Αὐγούστος τὰ πολλὰ ἐκεῖνα νικητήρια ἐπεπόμφει.

<sup>43</sup> Dio 62.20.3: καὶ αὐτῷ ὁ Διόδωρος ὁ κιθαρωδὸς παρωχεῖτο; Miller 2000, 416. Alternatively, Diodorus may have stood in place of the servile *comes*: see Beard 2007, 85-92, discussing problems of evidence.

no doubt they carried the same paraphernalia upon their return.<sup>44</sup> As they marched joyously through the streets, they proudly announced themselves as ‘Augustiani and the soldiers of Nero’s triumph’ (*Augustianos militesque se triumphi eius clamitantibus*).<sup>45</sup> Dio has the whole population join in the chanting, ‘the senators themselves most of all’. When the imperial convoy passed by, they proclaimed in unison:

Ὀλυμπιονῖκα οὐᾶ, Πυθιονῖκα οὐᾶ, Αὔγουστε Αὔγουστε. Νέρωνι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ, Νέρωνι τῷ Απόλλωνι. ὡς εἷς περιοδονίκης, εἷς ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, Αὔγουστε Αὔγουστε. ἱερά φωνή· μακάριοι οἱ σου ἀκούοντες. (Dio 62.20.5)

‘Olympian victor, bravo! Pythian victor, bravo! Augustus! Augustus! Hail to Nero, our Hercules! Hail to Nero, our Apollo! The only victor of the agonistic circuit, the only one from the beginning of time! Augustus! Augustus! O Sacred Voice! Blessed are those who hear you!’<sup>46</sup>

The parade culminated, fittingly, at the Temple of Apollo Palatinus (*Palatium et Apollinem petit*).<sup>47</sup> This was another pointed departure from ‘triumphal’ convention, which dictated the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus as end-point. At the conclusion of the day’s festivities, Nero ‘placed the sacred crowns around the couches in his bedrooms, along with statues of himself in the guise of citharode, and he also had a coin struck with the same device’ (*sacras coronas in cubiculis circum lectos posuit, item statuas suas citharoedico habitu, qua nota etiam nummum percussit*).<sup>48</sup> He then proceeded to the Circus, dedicating his racing trophies around the Egyptian obelisk in the *spina*, imported to Rome by Augustus in 10 BC.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Dio 62.8.4.

<sup>45</sup> Suet. *Nero* 25.1. Miller (2000, 418) suspects that the shouting of the Augustiani was scripted in advance as a means of ‘commenting on Nero’s Augustan imitation’.

<sup>46</sup> On the significance of περιοδονίκης in the context of the Greek tour, see Kennell 1988. Dio claims to be reporting ‘the very words spoken’ (αὐτὰ τὰ λεχθέντα, 62.20.6); ‘the acclamations themselves...clearly were recorded’ (Roueché 1984, 184). Germanicus was greeted with shouts of οὐᾶ when he visited Alexandria in 13 AD: *P.Oxy.* 25.2435 *recto*, ll. 4-5. Further parallels are noted by Aldrete 1999, 111 and 143. However, it is possible that Dio was drawing inspiration from imperial acclamations in his own time.

<sup>47</sup> Suet. *Nero* 25.2; Dio (62.20.4) states simply τὸ Παλάτιον. On the route of the procession, see Miller 2000, 414-415.

<sup>48</sup> Suet. *Nero* 25.2. The statues in question were probably honorific dedications made to Nero by the Greek cities in which he competed on tour, subsequently brought back to Rome and displayed as trophies.

<sup>49</sup> Dio 62.21.1.

I certainly do not wish to vouch for the literal veracity of each of these details. What is important, for our purposes, is the way in which Nero's *imitatio Augusti* serves in the historical texts as a focalising lens, accentuating his failure to meet the expectations of a suitable ruler. By exposing Nero's *imitatio* as a sham, the texts also expose the fraudulence of his reign. Thus, for Suetonius and Dio, the bombastic ceremony of 67 represented a gross perversion of the hallowed militaristic traditions of the Roman triumph, traditions which Augustus was seen to uphold.

Modern scholars, such as Griffin and Edwards, have argued in favour of a more subtle political motive. They view Nero as the orchestrator of an elaborate parody, which aimed to subvert the primacy of martial achievement over artistic achievement in the Roman imagination.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the most powerful statement of this idea is found in Power's book. Power suggests that Nero misappropriated the imagery of Apollo Citharoedus by investing it with a kind of flawed realism. There was, in his view, a fundamental disconnect between the 'purely symbolic' music embodied by the Augustan Apollo and the 'audible' *kitharôidia* which Nero broadcasted through his own interactions with the god: Nero was 'passive-aggressively remaking the lyric Augustus in his own image, literalizing, and so vulgarizing, making a travesty of, his purely symbolic musicality'.<sup>51</sup>

However, other scholars have sought to play down the element of subversiveness in Nero's actions. Adapting the institutions of the Roman *triumphus* did not necessarily constitute an act of transgression; it was common throughout the Principate for emperors to manipulate aspects of triumphal ceremonial in marking novel

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<sup>50</sup> Griffin 1984, 230-234; Edwards 1994, 90.

<sup>51</sup> Power 2010, 157.

situations.<sup>52</sup> We can point to another Neronian ‘reinvention’ of the triumph in the ceremony held to mark Tiridates’ arrival into Rome in 66.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the idea of Nero as a kind of misguided interpreter of Augustus’ legacy is problematic, in that it risks reducing the Augustan model to a single archetype which subsequent emperors were expected to follow. On the contrary, recent scholarship has stressed that the memory of Augustus was multi-faceted and open to divergent interpretations.<sup>54</sup> The creativity of Nero’s *imitatio Augusti* emerges strongly from Champlin’s discussion.<sup>55</sup>

Negative arguments in favour of ‘parody’ or ‘travesty’ are essentially predicated on two ancient preconceptions, firstly, of the opposition between Nero and Augustus and, secondly, of the likeness between Nero and Caligula (on which, see section 2 below). Dio makes the point that, whereas Augustus visited Greece strictly on official business, Nero visited Greece ‘for the purpose of driving chariots, playing the lyre, making proclamations, and acting in tragedies’.<sup>56</sup> In Dio’s view, the dignity of the imperial office was degraded by the disgraceful appearance of an ‘Augustus’ treading the boards while clad in a citharode’s robe:

ἔσθη τε ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς ὁ Καῖσαρ τὴν κιθαρῳδικὴν σκευὴν ἐνδεδυκώς, καὶ “κύριοί μου, εὐμενῶς μου ἀκούσατε” εἶπεν ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ, ἐκιθαρῳδήσέ τε Ἄττιν τινὰ ἢ Βάκχας ὁ Αὐγούστου. (Dio 62.10.1-2)

The Caesar stood on the stage decked out in the garb of a lyre-player. And this emperor said: ‘My lords, lend me a favourable ear’, and the Augustus sang to the cithara some piece called *Attis* or *Bacchus*.

Dress forms the basis of a similar antithesis in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*. One of the characters speaks of Nero ‘casting off the *skeue* of Augustus and Julius in exchange

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<sup>52</sup> Miller 2000, 417, citing Bradley 1978b, 149.

<sup>53</sup> Suet. *Nero* 13, Dio 63.4. A further example, albeit extreme, is Caligula’s triumph over the Ocean: Suet. *Cal.* 47.

<sup>54</sup> Levick 2010, 297-302; Goodman 2018, 3-6. See also Green 2018 on Seneca’s construction of Augustus as an ambivalent model, and Drinkwater 2012 on the institutional problems for Nero created by the contradictory nature of Augustus’ Principate.

<sup>55</sup> Champlin 2003, 139-144.

<sup>56</sup> Dio 62.8.2; cf. Dio 62.9.3: κιθαρῳδῶν...ἀγῶνα νικήσας ἡττηθῆναι τὸν τῶν Καισάρων.

for that of Amoebeus and Terpnus' (τὴν Αὐγούστου τε καὶ Ἰουλίου σκευὴν ῥίψαντα μεταμφιέννυσθαι νῦν τὴν Ἀμοιβέως καὶ Τερπνοῦ).<sup>57</sup> The *skeue* must be the toga, rendered sacrosanct by the early Caesars and substituted by Nero for the effeminate garb of the professional musician. For Philostratus' speaker, the lapse of the toga signifies a lapse of orderly government: instead of making *nomoi*, Nero sings them (ἀντὶ τοῦ νομοθετεῖν νόμους ᾄδειν). This is, at first glance, a comic conflation of two diametrically opposed spheres – music and politics, signifiers of *otium* and *negotium* respectively.<sup>58</sup> But the opposition is undercut by the use of the term νόμοι, recalling the correlation between *musicae leges* and *publicae leges* that had troubled Cicero centuries earlier (and others before him). Later in the narrative, Apollonius is approached by the newly crowned Vespasian and invited to share his opinion of the deceased Nero. 'Nero may have understood how to tune a lyre', Apollonius replies, 'but he disgraced the empire by letting the strings go too slack and by drawing them too tight' (Νέρων...κιθάραν μὲν ἴσως ἤδει ἀρμόττεσθαι, τὴν δὲ ἀρχὴν ἥσυχονεν ἀνέσει καὶ ἐπιτάσει).<sup>59</sup> The implication of the metaphor is clear: good rulers knew how to 'tune' peoples, not instruments. Augustus was one such ruler; so was Numa.<sup>60</sup> Nero was the antithesis of this ideal: a musician who merely played at being emperor.

These are highly rhetorical passages, and should be treated as such. Hindsight created the impression of a sharp gulf between the first and last of the Julio-Claudians which rendered them useful as moral exemplars. Contemporary writers, on the other hand, enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a *princeps* who rivalled Apollo in beauty and artistic flair. Calpurnius Siculus, in his Fourth Eclogue, presents Apollo as 'Caesar's

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<sup>57</sup> Philos. VA 5.7.2.

<sup>58</sup> For Nero as *gelotopoiος*, cf. Philos. VA 5.7.1: ἀναγέλασας ὁ Μένιππος, ἀναμμένητο δὲ ἄρα τοῦ Νέρωνος; Ps.-Luc. *Nero* 6: οἱ μὲν ἐθαύμαζον, οἱ δὲ κατεγέλων.

<sup>59</sup> Philos. VA 5.28.1.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Philo *Leg.* 147, Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 2.6.25 (discussed in Chapter III.5).

companion' (*comitatus Apolline Caesar*) and imagines his poems (*carmina*) being conveyed 'to the god' (*deo*) who inhabits 'the holy inner shrine of Palatine Phoebus' (*sacra Palatini penetralia...Phoebi*).<sup>61</sup> Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, significantly, has a scene in which Apollo prophesies the future greatness of Nero Caesar with explicit reference to his singing:

*"Ne demite, Parcae"*

*Phoebus ait "vincat mortalis tempora vitae  
ille mihi similis vultu similisque decore  
nec cantu nec voce minor...  
Caesar adest, talem iam Roma Neronem  
aspiciet. flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso  
vultus et adfuso cervix formosa capillo."  
(Sen. Apocol. 4, ll. 20-23, 30-33)*

"Don't make it shorter, Fates," Apollo says.  
"Let him live beyond the span of mortal years,  
That man so similar to me in grace  
And beauty, and no less skilled at singing...  
...such a Caesar now  
Approaches. Such a Nero, now, all Rome  
Will gaze upon. His radiant face blazes  
With gentle brilliance; his lovely neck  
Displays the beauty of his flowing hair."  
(Trans. Nussbaum 2010)

One could argue, of course, that these are not heartfelt expressions of approval, but sycophantic panegyrics in praise of a tyrant. It was long believed that Calpurnius and Seneca wrote their encomiums during the formative early years of Nero's reign, channelling the spirit of optimism that typically accompanied the accession of a new emperor. However, this idea was contested by Champlin in an article published in 2003. A version of the *Apocolocyntosis* must have been in circulation shortly after Claudius' death, but Champlin shows that the passage in question makes better sense as a later interpolation of the 60s.<sup>62</sup> As for Calpurnius Siculus, he was not Neronian at all, but in

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<sup>61</sup> Calp. Sic. 4.87, 158-159.

<sup>62</sup> Champlin 2003b, 279-280.

fact was writing much later, perhaps under the Severans.<sup>63</sup> Champlin can thus assert confidently that Nero's assimilation with Apollo Citharoedus only took shape in the period after 59, with Agrippina now out of the picture and the *princeps* free to indulge his artistic passions. Admittedly, not everyone will agree with Champlin's redating of the *Apocolocyntosis*. But even if we allow the original date to stand, the bulk of the evidence supports the view that Nero's identification as 'New Apollo' coincided with his 'coming out' as a performer. All references to Nero's cultivation of Apollo in Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dio postdate his return from Campania in 59.<sup>64</sup>

The study of numismatics lends weight to this chronology. A series of coins, minted in Rome and Lugdunum between 62 and 65, present a bust of Nero on the obverse and an image of Apollo Citharoedus on the reverse (FIGURE 25).<sup>65</sup> The legends read either AVGVSTVS AVGVSTA or AVGVSTVS GERMANICVS. Suetonius was familiar with these coins (see above), and erroneously identified them as a commemorative issue marking Nero's victories in Greece. He also believed that the lyre-player pictured on the reverse represented the emperor himself.

We are confronted here with a fundamental problem of interpretation. There is obviously a meaningful distinction between an emperor associating himself *with* the divine and an emperor proclaiming himself *as* divine. Augustan coinage combines the image of the *princeps* with that of the lyre-playing 'Apollo Actius', and yet no one would argue that Augustus was thus participating in a deliberate act of self-deification. There is a question, then, of how far Nero's public appearances as a citharode should be linked with his claims to divine status. How much credence should we give to the

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<sup>63</sup> Champlin 2003b, 280-281. Calpurnius' date has been intensely debated: see Champlin 1978; Armstrong 1986; Baldwin 1995; Horsfall 1993, 1997a; *contra* Townend 1980; Mayer 1980. Gowers (1994, 145, n. 8) stresses Neronian resonances regardless of date.

<sup>64</sup> Champlin 2003b, 276.

<sup>65</sup> *RIC* 73-82, 205-212, 380-381, 384-385, 414-417, 451-455.

suggestion that Nero's audiences were forced to worship his 'sacred voice' (ἱερὰ φωνή)?<sup>66</sup>

It is often stated in the scholarship that Nero sought to promote a 'solar theocracy' in the city of Rome. This idea rests largely on the assumption that the famous colossus attested in later sources was erected during Nero's lifetime, and that it depicted the Sun god with the emperor's features. Our most important witness is Pliny, who states that the statue was originally intended (*destinatum*) to represent Nero but was later dedicated to Sol.<sup>67</sup> However, as R.R.R. Smith points out, there is no evidence that the statue was ever reworked. In fact, it is doubtful that the colossus was erected during Nero's lifetime. According to Smith, we are dealing here with a case of wilful distortion by later writers hostile to Nero's memory.<sup>68</sup>

The numismatic evidence must be treated with the same degree of caution. As Howgego notes, 'there is no element of iconography, facial characteristic, or inscription on the coins to indicate that Nero is intended. The coins simply show Apollo.'<sup>69</sup> True, but there is a striking novelty in the way that Apollo is represented: for the first time on a Roman coin, Apollo appears actively engaged in performance – the mouth agape, the body expressively contorted, the plectrum raised towards the strings. The Augustan types, by contrast, depict Apollo in a more static pose, either holding the plectrum away from the body or pouring libation from a *patera*. Propertius, describing the god's statue, places emphasis on the 'silent lyre'. Even if the viewers of Nero's coins had no way of discerning whether the citharode being portrayed was divine or human, the explicit representation of a musician mid-performance would have been highly suggestive. The

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<sup>66</sup> In addition to Dio 62.20.5 cited above, cf. Tac. *Ann.* 14.15 (*formam principis vocemque deum vocabulis appellantes*), 16.22 (*caelesti voce*); Phil. *VA* 4.39 (τῆς θείας φωνῆς), 5.7.3 (οὐκ ἔθυσας ὑπὲρ τῆς φωνῆς).

<sup>67</sup> Plin. *HN* 34.45.

<sup>68</sup> Smith 2000, 536-538, supported by Champlin 2003, 129-131.

<sup>69</sup> Howgego 1995, 79; see also Griffin 1984, 120.

period in which the coins were issued (62-68) marked the climax of Nero's public career as *citharoedus*. And yet, if the coins *did* hint at Nero's divinity, they did so through the veil of Augustan traditionalism. Apollo's temple still stood on the Palatine, as resplendent as ever – indeed, Nero had made it the backdrop to his 'triumph' in 67. Other coins from the same period represent the Ara Pacis and the Temple of Janus, which Nero is supposed to have shut.<sup>70</sup> It seems therefore that Nero was seeking not to move away from the Augustan Apollo but rather to make it a part of his own performative self-fashioning.

Outside Rome, and especially in the Eastern provinces, the assimilation of emperor and god expressed itself more concretely. Suetonius asserts that civic communities in Greece felt no compunction in acclaiming Nero as 'the equal of Apollo in song' (*Apollinem cantu...aequiperare existimaretur*).<sup>71</sup> This idea is well supported. Three inscribed statue bases from Athens identify Nero as 'New Apollo'.<sup>72</sup> We also have a number of coin types issued by Greek *poleis*, many dating from around the time of Nero's visit in 66-67, which directly conflate *princeps* and deity. The city of Nicopolis commemorates 'Nero Apollo the Founder' with (or as?) a lyre-playing Apollo; the term *ktistes* naturally calls to mind the original founder Augustus.<sup>73</sup> In Patras, Nero is shown crowned with a laurel wreath, alongside 'Apollo Augustus' playing the lyre.<sup>74</sup> Apollo Citharoedus also appears on coins minted by Thessalonica and the Thessalian League, honouring 'Nero Augustus Caesar' and 'Nero of the Thessalians'.<sup>75</sup> Similar coins were minted in the town of Perinthos in Thrace: 'Nero

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<sup>70</sup> *RIC* 456-461; 263-271, 283-291, 300-311, 323-328, 337-342, 347-350, 353-355, 362, 366-367, 468-472, 510-512, 537-539, 583-585; cf. *Suet. Nero* 13.2, *Lucan* 1.60.

<sup>71</sup> *Suet. Nero* 53.

<sup>72</sup> *AE* 1929.75, *AE* 1971.435, *AE* 1994.1617. The statues are sadly lost, and the inscriptions cannot be securely dated; 'whether they were public or private is not clear' (Champlin 2003, 117).

<sup>73</sup> *RPC* 1371; cf. 1372-1377.

<sup>74</sup> *RPC* 1275.

<sup>75</sup> *RPC* 1599, 1752, 1439, 1444.

Caesar Augustus' on one side, Apollo with his *cithara* on the other (FIGURE 26).<sup>76</sup> Even in the remote reaches of Asia, coins have been found showing Nero accompanied by Apollo in various citharodic guises: with lyre and *patera*, with lyre and plectrum, or with lyre alone.<sup>77</sup> It would not be unreasonable to suppose that the viewers of these coins recognised in the figure of the lyre-player the godly manifestation of the emperor himself. While the worship of the living *princeps* was still considered taboo in Rome, it had long been accepted in the Greek world. In the city of Athens, at least, the title 'New Apollo' was already associated with the cult of the Deified Augustus.<sup>78</sup>

To sum up: the ancient sources paint a picture of an emperor who was acutely aware of his place in history and the expectations attached to his role. The young Nero, so it is said, tried fastidiously to emulate the example of Augustus as all good emperors had before him, and, as long as his music-making remained behind closed doors, away from the prying eyes of the public, he even enjoyed some success.<sup>79</sup> The turning point came in 59 with the murder of Agrippina and the celebration of the Juvenile Games. With these events any hopes of a new 'Golden Age' were dashed, and a reign of terror descended just as Nero 'outed' himself as an aspiring virtuoso. The *princeps* began to style himself as 'New Apollo' in a bid to reconcile his theatrical ambitions with his previous claims to Augustan legitimacy, but now that his music was out in the open this gesture merely exposed his own tyrannical hubris.

But there is another side of the story which is masked by the written sources. The version that has come down to us insists on a simple dichotomy between Nero and Augustus which obscures real points of continuity in the emperors' self-presentation

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<sup>76</sup> *RPC* 1752.

<sup>77</sup> *RPC* 3045-3046, 3059.

<sup>78</sup> *SEG* 29, 167; Peppas-Delmousou 1979.

<sup>79</sup> Trajan supposedly declared that five years of Nero's reign surpassed the reigns of all other *principes*: cf. *Aur. Vict. Lib. de Caes.* 5.2-4, *Epit. de Caes.* 5.2-5, applying this comment to the start of the reign; discussion in Lepper 1957, Murray 1965, Griffin 1984, 37-38.

and reception. That Nero actively encouraged an association with a musical/solar Apollo through his imagery and pageantry is beyond doubt. In doing so, however, he was in many ways simply extending the policy of Augustus, who – let us not forget – had ordered a statue of himself to be carved with the features of Apollo and displayed in the very heart of Rome.<sup>80</sup>

## 2 The Master’s Songbook: *Otium* and *Popularitas*

Nero was not the first emperor to emerge unfavourably by comparison with Augustus. An antitype already existed in Nero’s uncle, the Emperor Gaius Caligula. Caligula had, notoriously, been a passionate devotee of theatre and the performing arts. Philo of Alexandria, who encountered him on an embassy to Rome, comments on his abnormal predilection for dancers and musicians, to the point that he would sometimes join in the singing and dancing.<sup>81</sup> The same habit is noticed by Suetonius: ‘even at public performances he could not resist singing along with the tragic actor as he delivered his lines (*tragoedo pronuntianti concineret*), or from openly imitating his gestures, to praise or correct them’.<sup>82</sup> He enjoyed nothing more than to sail along the coast of Campania aboard one of his luxury yachts, with the music of choruses and orchestras (*choros ac symphonias*) wafting through his ears.<sup>83</sup> Advisers tried to curb his enthusiasm, stating that ‘it is unreasonable for the ruler of land and sea to be vanquished by a song or dance’ (ἄτοπον γὰρ τὸν ἡγεμόνα γῆς καὶ θαλάττης νικᾶσθαι πρὸς ᾠδῆς ἢ ὀρχήσεως).<sup>84</sup> But in the end their protests came to naught: content at first to remain ‘a spectator and listener’ (θεατῆς καὶ ἀκροατῆς), Caligula eventually ‘came to imitate, and to contend in

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<sup>80</sup> Ps.-Acro *ad* Hor. *Ep.* 1.3.17; Serv. *ad* Verg. *Ecl.* 4.10.

<sup>81</sup> Philo *Leg.* 42.

<sup>82</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 54.1; cf. *Calig.* 11: *scaenicas saltandi canendique artes studiosissime appeteret.*

<sup>83</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 37.3.

<sup>84</sup> Philo *Leg.* 44.

many events, driving chariots, fighting as a gladiator, giving exhibitions of pantomimic dancing, and acting tragedy'.<sup>85</sup> He was fond of dressing up as characters from mythology, sometimes appearing 'in the garb of Dionysus' (τὴν Διονυσιακὴν...σκευὴν) with 'trained choirs' (χοροὶ...συγκεκριοτημένοι) on hand to sing paeans in his honour.<sup>86</sup> He intended to make his stage debut at the *ludi Palatini* of 41, prolonging the games by three days so that he could 'dance and act a tragedy'.<sup>87</sup> On the final day, while inspecting a troupe of dancing boys from Asia, he was assassinated by a member of his Praetorian Guard and his memory swiftly condemned to oblivion.<sup>88</sup>

The immature *princeps* corrupted by a passion for show business; the nervous advisers urging caution; the carefully choreographed mythological re-enactments; the clique of singing supporters; the irresistible, and in the end fatal, attraction of public stardom – these could all be scenes from the life of Nero. The resemblance is uncanny, but easily explained. Most of our information about the reigns of Caligula and Nero derives from a common source; and, in representing the two emperors, Suetonius and Cassius Dio are guided by a singular vision of how a 'bad' emperor should behave.<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, stories told of Caligula frequently show up again in anecdotes about Nero: the expansion of the imperial palace to embrace 'the whole city';<sup>90</sup> the hobby of racing chariots in a custom-built circus on the imperial grounds;<sup>91</sup> the plan to murder prominent senators and migrate to Alexandria;<sup>92</sup> and the impromptu nocturnal concerts

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<sup>85</sup> Dio 59.5.

<sup>86</sup> Philo *Leg.* 79, 96; cf. Suet. *Calig.* 52, Dio 59.26.6-8, Aur. Vict. *De Caes.* 3.12.

<sup>87</sup> Dio 59.29.6.

<sup>88</sup> The Asian boys were expected to perform Pyrrhic dances in the theatre and to participate in the emperor's mystery-cult: Suet. *Calig.* 58; Jos. *Ant.* 19.104.

<sup>89</sup> See Elsner 1994, 118 and Edwards 1994, 87.

<sup>90</sup> Plin. *HN* 36.111; cf. Suet. *Calig.* 22.

<sup>91</sup> Dio 59.14.6; Suet. *Vit.* 4.

<sup>92</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 49.2, Jos. *Ant.* 19.81, Philo *Leg.* 172, 250, 338. Another tradition claimed that he planned to flee as a result of news of a revolt in Germany (Suet. *Calig.* 51.3); 'that was probably influenced by Nero's plan to go to Alexandria in 68' (Wiseman 1991, 56-57).

in the palace (on which, see section 4 below).<sup>93</sup> In fact, there are suggestions that Nero consciously modelled himself on Caligula. It was said that Seneca, upon being appointed Nero's tutor, had dreamt that he was teaching Gaius Caesar.<sup>94</sup> Dio makes the similarity explicit. After Seneca's retirement, Nero 'began to follow in the footsteps of Gaius (πρὸς τὸν Γάιον ἔτεινεν). And when he had once conceived a desire to emulate him (ζηλωῶσαι), he quite surpassed him; for he held it to be one of the obligations of the imperial power (τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς καὶ τοῦτ' ἰσχύος ἔργον) not to fall behind anybody else even in the worst deeds'. This policy apparently won Nero a great deal of popular support (ἐπαινούμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀμίλου).<sup>95</sup>

Dio's analysis raises an interesting question about the role of leisure (*otium*) in shaping perceptions of the emperor. Augustus, famously, had thought it politic 'to mingle in the pleasures of the masses' (*misceri voluptatibus vulgi*), showing himself to be an enthusiastic patron of the theatre.<sup>96</sup> Trajan, likewise, recognised the importance of *ludicra* in keeping the people happy.<sup>97</sup> What set these exemplary rulers apart, in the eyes of elite moralists, was the fact that the political expediency of putting on shows had no bearing on their enjoyment of the spectacle itself. While 'good' emperors spent their leisure time engaged in edifying aristocratic pursuits, such as reading or writing, 'bad' emperors indulged in idle relaxation and *luxuria*. Most importantly, 'bad' emperors were seen to participate in a socially degrading 'plebeian' culture, which centred on the pleasures of the tavern (wine, sex, gambling) and the theatre (singing, dancing, chariot-racing, etc.).<sup>98</sup> In our sources for the Julio-Claudian Principate, therefore, music acts as a kind of proxy for morally questionable *otium*. But the reality was more complex.

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<sup>93</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 54, Dio 59.5.5.

<sup>94</sup> Suet. *Nero* 7.

<sup>95</sup> Dio 61.5.1-2. Pausanias (9.27.4) identifies *asebeia* as a unifying trait of the two 'bad' emperors.

<sup>96</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.54; *Hist.* 1.4.3.

<sup>97</sup> Fronto *Ep.* 2.17.

<sup>98</sup> On popular leisure, see André 1962, Toner 1995, and Fagan 2006.

Music represented a particularly ambiguous form of leisure, in that it was widely enjoyed by Romans of all social classes and was regarded by many serious intellectuals as a valuable object of study. It was not the *studium* itself that earned Nero and Caligula a reputation for immorality, but rather the fact that they took it to extremes: they performed when they should have merely spectated, and made public what should have remained private.

We can get a sense of how these ideas mapped out in a wider setting by examining a passage from Seneca's *De Brevitate Vitae*, composed between AD 49 and 55 while he was serving as Nero's tutor.<sup>99</sup> Seneca coins the phrase *iners negotium* to describe the habit of wasting one's life engaged in idle pursuits. He proceeds to name and shame the different types of people responsible for promoting exactly this kind of misguided *otium* (whom he calls *occupati*). Included in this category are art collectors, devotees of wrestling, hairstylists, and music buffs:

*quid illi, qui in componendis, audiendis, discendis canticis operati sunt, dum vocem, cuius rectum cursum natura et optimum et simplicissimum fecit, in flexus modulationis inertissimae torquent, quorum digiti aliquod intra se carmen metientes semper sonant, quorum, cum ad res serias, etiam saepe tristes adhibiti sunt, exauditur tacita modulatio? non habent isti otium, sed iners negotium.* (Sen. Brev. 12.4)

And what of those who are absorbed in composing, hearing, and learning songs, while they twist the voice, whose best and simplest movement nature designed to be straightforward, into inflections of the most feeble warbling, whose fingers are always snapping in time to some song they have stuck in their head, who are overheard humming a tune when they have been asked to attend to serious, often even unhappy, matters? These people have not leisure, but idle occupation.

Seneca's satirical commentary presupposes the existence of a subculture of musical Romans who were not only keen listeners of songs but also skilled composers and aficionados. It is not the popularity of singing *per se* that Seneca finds offensive, as

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<sup>99</sup> Sen. Brev. 12.4. For issues of dating, see Williams 2003, 19-20.

much as the aesthetic and moral characteristics of the music itself.<sup>100</sup> What Seneca objects to specifically is the pointless and obsessive cultivation of *cantica* such that it interferes with a life of true philosophical *otium*.<sup>101</sup> His targets are members of the educated upper classes: those who possessed the necessary skills of (and time for) composition; those who actually had ‘serious business’ (*res serias*) to attend to. Think of a senate-house echoing to the sound of foot-tapping and finger-snapping, funerals disturbed by the noise of guests humming their favourite tunes! Readers must have been left wondering where all this catchy music was coming from. Seneca doesn’t say, probably because the answer was obvious: it was the theatre that churned out Rome’s greatest hits.<sup>102</sup> Seneca’s phrase *in flexus modulationis inertissimae torquent* is uncannily reminiscent of Cicero’s *cum modorum flexionibus torqueant*. In the *De Legibus*, as we saw in Chapter II, the emphasis is squarely on the theatre and the ‘modulating’ style favoured by the music-loving plebs who frequented it.

Dio was left in no doubt as to the origin of Nero’s popularity: the *princeps* was adored by the mob (ὄμιλος) because he shared his passions with them (ἐδημοσίευσεν).<sup>103</sup> Tacitus reinforces the point at the beginning of the *Histories*, reporting that Nero’s death was mourned most fervently by the ‘plebs accustomed to the circus and the theatre’, *plebs circo ac theatris sueta*.<sup>104</sup> Posthumous tributes paid to Nero by the people of Rome included the placing of his togate images on the Rostra (hardly the token of an emperor who shed his imperial *skeue*, as Dio and Philostratus

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<sup>100</sup> As Williams (2003, 192) points out, the adjective *inertissimae* here combines three distinct meanings: ‘artless’, ‘unmanly/effeminate’, and ‘weak/feeble’.

<sup>101</sup> On this ideal in the context of the *De Brevitate Vitae*, see Williams 2003, 20-25, Leigh 2012.

<sup>102</sup> People took away with them the songs they had learned at the theatres: cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.535, Lucr. 4.973-983; Horsfall 2003, 11-17, 41-42.

<sup>103</sup> Dio 61.5.2 (see n. 95). On Nero’s popularity, cf. Suet. *Nero* 53: *maxime autem popularitate efferebatur*, Philost. VA 4.36.2: χαριζόμενος τοῖς ὄχλοις τὴν ἑαυτοῦ αἰσχύνην. We can perhaps detect a spirit of this *popularitas* in Nero’s claim, while performing in Greece, that he was ‘crowning the Roman people and the whole world’ (Dio 62.14.4; Phil. VA 5.7).

<sup>104</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.4.3.

would later claim!).<sup>105</sup> Stories of captive audiences coerced into acknowledging the emperor's divinity must be read against reports of Otho adopting Nero's name 'in the hope of winning over the common people' (*spe vulgum adliciendi*) and Vitellius honouring Nero with public sacrifices.<sup>106</sup>

There is particularly compelling evidence for Nero's popularity in the East. The liberation of Achaëa in 67 was evidently well received in many parts: Pausanias refers to it as a 'gift' (δῶρον), rashly revoked by Vespasian, while Philostratus describes it as an act of uncharacteristic wisdom (σωφρονέστερόν τι ἑαυτοῦ, literally 'something wiser than he himself [was]').<sup>107</sup> Rumours of Nero's survival lingered for decades, even centuries, after his death. In the words of Dio Chrysostom, 'everybody wishes he were still alive. And the great majority do believe that he is' (καὶ νῦν ἔτι πάντες ἐπιθυμοῦσι ζῆν. οἱ δὲ πλεῖστοι καὶ οἴονται).<sup>108</sup> The three 'false Neros', whose rise to fame is documented in the historical sources, are said to have been endowed with a talent for singing and playing the lyre.<sup>109</sup> Nero may not have been an exceptional musician, but he was certainly not as dreadful as he is often made out to be.<sup>110</sup> 'To make a success of being Nero you clearly needed to look like him and to play the lyre reasonably well, as he had done'.<sup>111</sup>

A less radical, but equally effective, means of usurping Nero's star power was to mimic his performances. It was a mark of the most popular musicians that their music lived on without them. Alexander, the harp-player whom we met in the epigraph of this

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<sup>105</sup> Suet. *Nero* 57.

<sup>106</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.78.2, 2.95.1; Suet. *Otho* 7; Plut. *Otho* 3.1.

<sup>107</sup> Paus. 7.17.4; Philost. *VA* 5.41. Nero's speech is preserved in an inscribed decree from Acraëphia in Boeotia (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 814): Gallivan 1973; Alcock 1994; Bergmann 2002.

<sup>108</sup> Dio *Or.* 21.10.

<sup>109</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.8 (*citharæ et cantus peritus*); Dio 66.19.3 (ἐκτιθαρόδει); Suet. *Nero* 57.2, not mentioning musical accomplishments. On this aspect of Nero's *Nachleben*, see Hedrick 2015.

<sup>110</sup> Positive assessments of his singing: Suet. *Nero* 39.3; Philost. *VA* 4.42; Ps.-Luc. *Nero* 6; Gyles 1962; Bélis 1989.

<sup>111</sup> Champlin 2003, 12.

chapter, proved such a hit with Roman audiences that they ‘even memorised his songs’ (καὶ ἀπομνημονεύειν αὐτοῦ τὰ κρούσματα). Nero’s music seems to have enjoyed a similar fate. In a scene from Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*, the protagonist is travelling to Rome with eight of his most devoted students on a mission to spread the word of philosophy. Stopping at an inn close to the city gates, they stumble across a drunken busker on the hunt for tips:

οὐκ ἀγλευκῶς τῆς φωνῆς ἔχων, περιῆει δὲ ἄρα κύκλω τὴν Ῥώμην ἄδων τὰ τοῦ Νέρωνος μέλη καὶ μεμισθωμένος τοῦτο, τὸν δὲ ἀμελῶς ἀκούσαντα, ἢ μὴ καταβαλόντα μισθὸν τῆς ἀκροάσεως, ξυνεκεχώρητο αὐτῷ καὶ ἀπάγειν ὡς ἀσεβοῦντα. ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ κιθάρα καὶ ἡ πρόσφορος τῷ κιθαρίζειν σκευὴ πᾶσα, καὶ τινα καὶ νευρὰν τῶν ἐφασαμένων τε καὶ προεντεταμένων ἀποκειμένην ἐν κοιτίδι εἶχεν, ἣν ἔφασκεν ἐκ τῆς Νέρωνος ἐωνῆσθαι κιθάρας δυοῖν μιναῖν, καὶ ἀποδώσεσθαι αὐτὴν οὐδενί, ἦν μὴ κιθαρωδὸς ἢ τῶν ἀρίστων τε καὶ ἀγωνιουμένων Πυθοῖ. (Philos. VA 4.39.1)

He had quite a pleasant voice, and went around Rome singing Nero’s songs for pay and making a business out of it. If anybody listened without attention, or refused to pay for the performance, the man was privileged to arrest him for treason. He also had a lyre and all the paraphernalia appropriate for lyre-players. In addition, he kept stored in a box a lyre string that was already strung, which he claimed was from Nero’s lyre. He had bought it for two minae, he said, and would not sell it to anybody unless they were first-class lyre players and planning to compete at the Pythian games. (Loeb trans.)

The historicity of this episode is dubious, to say the least. However, as an imaginative dramatization of a musical encounter in Neronian Rome, the story has much to tell us. On first impression, the itinerant musician seems to be a caricature of an ‘Augustianus’, modelled on the satirical trope of the *delator* (‘informer’). He doubles as an imperial henchman, the impersonal passive construction ξυνεκεχώρητο αὐτῷ suggesting that he has received an official licence ‘from the top’, so to speak. However, upon closer inspection, the character’s anonymity looks increasingly suspect: is this a common entertainer paying tribute to the emperor, or is it in fact none other than the emperor himself, masquerading as a common entertainer? Like all good Neronian impostors, the citharode has a decent singing voice. He shares with Nero an inflated sense of ego and a jealous streak. Most striking of all is the

objectification of the emperor's *cithara*. Nero's lyre-string is both a commodity and a souvenir item, detached from his person yet still invested with his charismatic aura.

It is no coincidence that the episode is set in a tavern, the favourite haunt of the *plebs sordida* and, significantly, of the sordid *princeps* himself. A little later on in Philostratus' narrative, we actually encounter Nero singing 'in a tavern built next to the gymnasium, naked except for a loincloth, like the most shameless shop-keeper' (ἦδε δὲ ἐν καπηλείῳ πεπονημένῳ ἐς τὸ γυμνάσιον διάζωμα ἔχων γυμνός, ὥσπερ τῶν καπήλων οἱ ἀσελγέστατοι).<sup>112</sup> This is pure fiction, of course, but it resonates strikingly with what we read in the historical sources. Early on in his reign, the teenaged emperor would roam around the city under cover of darkness, trailed by gangs of ruffians, and wander in and out of brothels, taverns, and *popinae*, causing mischief wherever he went.<sup>113</sup> Suetonius could just about condone this behaviour as 'the folly of youth' (*velut iuvenili errore*). Yet the association with the seedy underworld of the plebs was one which Nero failed to shake off. When, in 64, Tigellinus staged his notorious floating banquet on the Stagnum Agrippae, he decorated the banks of the lake with taverns and brothels which catered for a mixture of common and aristocratic clientele. Tacitus describes the scene in lurid detail, singling out, among other things, the inappropriate dances (*gestus motusque obsceni*) and loud music (*circumiecta tecta consonare cantu*).<sup>114</sup> One of Nero's favourite pastimes, according to Suetonius, was to board a cruiser and sail along the Tiber or the gulf of Baiae. Not content with the natural landscape, he had rows of makeshift taverns (*deversoriae tabernae*) erected along the shores and banks and staffed

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<sup>112</sup> Philostr. *VA* 4.42.1. On the place of music in tavern culture, see Morgan 2017, esp. 93-95.

<sup>113</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.47; Suet. *Nero* 26; Dio 61.8.1-4, 9.24.

<sup>114</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.37; cf. Dio 62.15.1-6.

them with matrons playing the role of barkeepers soliciting sex (*matronarum institorio copas imitantium atque hinc inde hortantium ut appelleret*).<sup>115</sup>

What we are seeing in Philostratus, then, is the connection between Nero's *popularitas* and his *voluptates vulgi* expressed in musical terms. In the world of Apollonius, if not in reality, there existed a crop of itinerant artists who travelled around the empire singing Nero's songs and trading in Neronian memorabilia. In another scene from Philostratus' work, we are introduced to a *tragoedus* not dissimilar to the citharode we meet earlier. Deemed 'unworthy to compete with Nero',

ἐπήει τὰς ἐσπερίους πόλεις ἀγείρων, καὶ τῇ τέχνῃ χρώμενος ἠὺδοκίμει παρὰ τοῖς ἤττον βαρβάροις, πρῶτον μὲν δι' αὐτὸ τὸ ἤκειν παρ' ἀνθρώπους, οἳ μήπω τραγωδίας ἤκουσαν, εἴτ' ἐπειδὴ τὰς Νέρωνος μελωδίας ἀκριβοῦν ἔφασκε. (Philos. VA 5.9)

he was money-grubbing around the cities of the west. His exhibitions of skill brought him success among the less uncivilized, primarily because of the simple fact that he visited people who had never heard a tragedy, and also because he claimed to be a connoisseur of Nero's songs. (Loeb trans.)

The opportunistic *tragoedus*, in other words, could take advantage of the cultural capital that Nero's music had generated far and wide, among communities who had never even heard him play. Having performed *against* Nero in competition and come off second best, he chose instead to perform *as* Nero and became an overnight celebrity. He gave the people what they wanted: the giddy sensation of witnessing the great man live in concert.

The popular appeal of Nero's melodies is further underscored by an anecdote in Suetonius' *Life of Vitellius*. At the public banquet celebrating Vitellius' accession to the throne, a citharode performed particularly admirably. Impressed, Vitellius asked him to name something *de dominico* – that is, from the imperial patrimony – but the citharode

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<sup>115</sup> Suet. *Nero* 27. These *copae* may have doubled up as musical performers: see Ps.-Verg. *Copa* 1-4; Morgan 2017, 93-94.

deliberately mistook this as a request to play something ‘by the master’. He launched into some of Nero’s songs (*Neroniana cantica*) and was amply rewarded.<sup>116</sup> The unusual substantive *dominico* has been explained as a reference to a *Liber Dominicus*, a kind of Neronian songbook, which was compiled during the emperor’s lifetime and remained in circulation after his death.<sup>117</sup>

Taken together, the evidence adds up to a compelling argument. Nero did more than just promote musical culture; he actively remade it in his own image. He tapped into a population of avid theatre-goers who routinely enjoyed and disseminated songs of exactly the kind that he himself performed. As Ray Laurence puts it, ‘Nero inverted the principles of *virtus* and *dignitas* and engaged with theatre audiences directly. In his performance the audience could identify themselves’.<sup>118</sup> We should not be deceived by the sources into thinking that Nero was some delusional amateur who abused his power to satisfy his craving for applause. More often than not, it seems, his subjects were willing beneficiaries. And it was the Master who called the tunes.

### 3 Musomania in a Young Man’s World

Music was a young man’s game. Its patron god was a model of eternal beauty: flowing locks, radiant complexion, soft skin – Apollo was a natural mascot for the Neronian regime. Nero came to power at the tender age of seventeen. When we first encounter him in Tacitus’ *Annals*, it is as a participant in the *ludus Troiae* (‘Troy Game’), an equestrian exercise performed by young *nobiles*.<sup>119</sup> Nero made his first appearance as a *citharoedus* at a festival celebrating the first shaving of his beard. Wherever he went

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<sup>116</sup> Suet. *Vit.* 11.2. Even Galba, for all his conservatism, evoked memories of Nero when he lavished money on the famous *tibicen* Canus: Plut. *Galb.* 16.1; Suet. *Galb.* 12.3; cf. Philost. *VA* 5.21.

<sup>117</sup> See, e.g., Griffin 1984, 152.

<sup>118</sup> Laurence 2009, 122.

<sup>119</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 11.11.2; cf. Suet. *Aug.* 43.2.

young men followed, from the Greek ephebes enfranchised at the *Ludi Maximi* of 58 to the legion of sturdy Italian *tirones* mustered at the emperor's behest in Achaëa.<sup>120</sup> Nero truly lived up to his title of *princeps iuventutis*.<sup>121</sup> The people idolised him for his youthful good looks, as his aged successor Galba would discover to his detriment.<sup>122</sup>

Musical emperors nearly all have in common the trait of *iuventas*. The music-loving Caligula had succeeded to the throne at twenty-four. Titus is described as an excellent singer and lyre-player, and, although he did not become emperor until his late thirties, his musical talents are presented by Suetonius as a conspicuous feature of his boyhood (*in puero*), which he subsequently developed into adulthood.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, the young Flavian must have received his training around the same time as Nero (he was born only two years later). The fourteen-year-old Elagabalus could sing and dance, and was proficient on several different instruments.<sup>124</sup> His taste for music was inherited by his successor Severus Alexander, who came to power at the age of thirteen.<sup>125</sup> Severus could play the lyre, the pipe, the organ, and even the trumpet, although he gave up the latter when he succeeded to the throne.<sup>126</sup> By contrast, the elderly Tiberius and Claudius seem to have showed little interest in the musical arts.<sup>127</sup> Hadrian is the exception that proves the rule.<sup>128</sup> Playing instruments was a juvenile pastime, acceptable for precocious youngsters but irreconcilable with the serious duties of the mature Roman

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<sup>120</sup> Suet. *Nero* 12.1, 19.2.

<sup>121</sup> Granted in 51: Tac. *Ann.* 12.41. He renounced the title 'Pater Patriae' 'on account of his youth' (*propter aetatem*; Suet. *Nero* 8).

<sup>122</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.7: *ipsa aetas Galbae inrisui ac fastidio erat adsuetis iuventae Neronis et imperatores forma ac decore corporis, ut est mos vulgi, comparantibus*. On Nero's youth as a structural motif in Tacitus' *Annals*, see Henderson 1989, 181-90.

<sup>123</sup> Suet. *Tit.* 3: *ne musicae quidem rudis, ut qui cantaret et psalleret iucunde scienterque*.

<sup>124</sup> *SHA Heliog.* 32.8: *ipse cantavit, saltavit, ad tibias dixit, tuba cecinit, pandurizavit, organo modulatus est*. Herodian (5.5.9) comments on his habit of dancing during sacrifices 'to the accompaniment of all sorts of musical instruments' (περί τε τούς βωμούς ἐχόρευεν ὑπὸ παντοδαποῖς ἤχοις ὀργάνων).

<sup>125</sup> *SHA Alex.* 27.5: *ad musicam pronus*.

<sup>126</sup> *SHA Alex.* 27.9: *lyra, tibia, organo cecinit, tuba etiam, quod quidem imperator numquam ostendit*.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Dio 57.11.5, 60.7.1; Beacham 1999, 157-165, 186-196.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. *SHA Had.* 14.9, with a hint of censure: *iam psallendi et cantandi scientiam prae se ferebat. in voluptatibus nimius*. Hadrian is called μουσικωτάτος βασιλεύς at Athen. 115b.

citizen. Hence the source of much unresolved tension: no one's duties were more serious than Nero's, and yet he failed to outgrow his childish image; indeed, as Gowers stresses, he made a spectacle of his immaturity.<sup>129</sup> When Nero played music, to quote Dio, he 'acted like a child' (ἔπαιζεν).<sup>130</sup>

In reality, Nero's musical education was probably not unusual for a boy of his age and rank. Precisely how unusual is difficult to say on the basis of the extant evidence. However, it is likely that the spread of Greek *paideia* during the early Principate resulted in a steady increase in the number of Roman aristocratic boys receiving instruction in the art of singing, lyre-playing, and dancing.<sup>131</sup> The demand for music and dance teachers in Rome is taken for granted by Columella writing in the mid-first century AD.<sup>132</sup> Suetonius certainly gives no indication that Titus' musical accomplishments were anything out of the ordinary. Britannicus' proficiency at singing, which he acquired during his time as Titus' classmate, is also documented by Suetonius and provides the subject of a memorable episode in Tacitus' *Annals*.<sup>133</sup> In 55, during the festivities of the Saturnalia, Nero exercised his prerogative as Saturnalian King by calling upon his step-brother to 'rise, advance into the centre, and strike up a song' (*exsurgeret progressusque in medium cantum aliquem inciperet*). Much to his dismay, Britannicus got up and ably performed a poem hinting at 'his expulsion from his

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<sup>129</sup> Gowers 1994, 134.

<sup>130</sup> Dio 63.26.5; cf. 62.1.1 (ἔπαιζετο). Caligula, similarly, showed a 'boyish' (μειρακιωδέστερον) enthusiasm for dancers and mimes (Philo *Leg.* 42). According to Julian (*Or.* 3.111b), the kind of people who went to the theatre to gaze at a citharode's dress and lyre (that is, who privileged superficial appearances over musical quality) tended to be either children or adults with childish tastes (παῖδας καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν).

<sup>131</sup> Laurence believes that by the time of Nero 'most young aristocrats gained some knowledge of music, dance and singing as part of their general education' (Laurence 2009, 121); see also the general observations of Wallace-Hadrill (1983, 182), Eyben (1993, 87-88), and Leigh (2017, 21). Hagel and Lynch (2012, 409) are more sceptical, suggesting that 'practical musical skills seem to have been regarded as an extra', but there is sufficient evidence at least to show that Nero's musical education would not itself have been a cause for scandal.

<sup>132</sup> Col. *Rust.* 1.praef.3: *vocis et cantus modulatorem nec minus corporis gesticulatorem scrupulosissime requirant saltationis ac musicae rationis studiosi.*

<sup>133</sup> Suet. *Nero* 33: *Britannicum non minus aemulatione vocis...veneno adgressus est*; cf. Suet. *Tit.* 2.1: *educatus in aula cum Britannico simul, ac paribus disciplinis et apud eosdem magistros institutus.*

father's house and throne'; he left his listeners in raptures and attracted much sympathy to his cause.<sup>134</sup>

In dramatizing the rivalry between Nero and Britannicus, Tacitus was playing out a scenario that would surely have been commonplace in the *convivia* of his own time – that is, educated male youths challenging one another to displays of musical bravado. The *iuvenis* praised for his skill at playing the lyre in the anonymous panegyric known as the *Laus Pisonis* is probably the Cn. Calpurnius Piso who conspired against Nero in AD 65.<sup>135</sup> Even allowing for poetic licence, this idealisation of a Roman aristocrat as an accomplished citharode speaks of a society which valued the acquisition of musical skills as part of a well-rounded liberal education. We might compare, in a more mundane setting, the symposium scene represented in a wall-painting from the House of the Triclinium in Pompeii (FIGURE 27). Above one of the diners is written the caption, *faciatis vobis suaviter ego canto* ('Make yourselves comfortable, I'm going to sing!'), to which his neighbour responds, *est ita valea(s)* ('That's right! To your health!').<sup>136</sup>

Nero took active steps to involve the Roman nobility in his artistic endeavours. He gathered a circle of intimates who possessed 'some faculty for versification but not such as to have yet attracted remark' (*aliqua pangendi facultas necdum insignis erat*).<sup>137</sup> Some of them managed to achieve popular acclaim from a remarkably young age (albeit often short-lived!), such as the twenty-one-year-old Lucan who recited his poetry at the

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<sup>134</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.15.

<sup>135</sup> *Laus Pisonis* 32, 166-172. Calpurnius Piso is said to have enjoyed acting in tragedies: Tac. *Ann.* 15.65.

<sup>136</sup> Clarke 2003, 244, and pl. 22.

<sup>137</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.

First Neronia.<sup>138</sup> At the *Ludi Maximi*, held in honour of Agrippina, upper-class men and women featured in several different events, as Dio describes:

ἐκεῖνο δὲ δὴ καὶ αἰσχιστον καὶ δεινότατον ἅμα ἐγένετο, ὅτι καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες οὐχ ὅπως τοῦ ἵππικοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ βουλευτικοῦ ἀξιώματος ἐς τὴν ὀρχήστραν καὶ ἐς τὸν ἵππόδρομον τό τε θέατρον τὸ κυνηγετικὸν ἐσήλθον ὥσπερ οἱ ἀτιμότετοι, καὶ ἠύλησάν τινες αὐτῶν καὶ ὠρχήσαντο τραγωδίας τε καὶ κωμωδίας ὑπεκρίναντο καὶ ἐκιθαρώδησαν, ἵππους τε ἤλασαν καὶ θηρία ἀπέκτειναν καὶ ἐμονομάχησαν, οἱ μὲν ἐθελονταὶ οἱ δὲ καὶ πάνυ ἄκοντες. (Dio 62.17.3).

Something took place that was at once most shameful and most appalling: both men and women not only of equestrian but also senatorial rank appeared as performers in the *orchestra*, the circus, and the amphitheatre like the most infamous outcasts. Some of them played the pipes and danced or acted in tragedies and comedies or sang to the lyre; they drove horses, slaughtered wild animals, and fought as gladiators, some willingly and some with great reluctance.

We also hear of elite participation at the *Juvenalia*:

τεκμήριον δέ, Αἰλία Κατέλλα τοῦτο μὲν γένει καὶ πλούτῳ προήκουσα, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἡλικία προφέρουσα (ὄγδοηκοντοῦτις γὰρ ἦν) ὠρχήσατο, οἳ τε λοιποὶ οἱ διὰ γῆρας ἢ νόσον ἰδία μηδὲν ποιῆσαι δυνάμενοι ἐχορώδησαν. ἤσκουν μὲν γὰρ πάντες ὅ τι τις καὶ ὅπως οἷός τε ἦν, καὶ ἐς διδασκαλεῖα ἀποδεδειγμένα συνεφοίτων οἱ ἐλλογιμώτατοι, ἄνδρες, γυναῖκες, κόραι, μαιράκια, γραῖαι, γέροντες· εἰ δέ τις μὴ ἐδύνατο ἐν ἑτέρῳ τῷ θεῶν παρασχεῖν, ἐς τοὺς χοροὺς κατεχωρίζετο. (Dio 62.19.2-3)

To give an example: Aelia Catella, a woman who was not only distinguished by virtue of her birth and wealth, but also respected on account of her advanced years (she was an octogenarian), danced in a pantomime, while others, whose old age or ill health prevented them from doing anything by themselves, sang in the chorus. For everyone rehearsed whatever talent each one possessed, as best they could, and the most illustrious attended schools set aside for this purpose – men, women, girls, boys, old women, old men; if anyone failed to provide entertainment of one kind or another, they were assigned to the chorus.

According to Tacitus, large numbers of people put their names forward for consideration, many of high-ranking status:

*...passim nomina data. non nobilitas cuiquam, non aetas aut acti honores impedimento, quo minus Graeci Latinive histrionis artem exercerent usque ad gestus modosque haud virilis.* (Tac. Ann. 14.15)

People nominated themselves on all sides. Neither noble birth, nor age, nor an official career impeded anyone from practising the art of a Greek or Latin actor, even to the point of performing gestures and songs not fit for a man.

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<sup>138</sup> Suet. *Vit. Lucani* 1. The *Vita Lucani* attributed to Vacca credits Lucan with the composition of no fewer than fourteen *fabulae salticae*, presumably pantomime libretti.

Nero's institution of quinquennial games the following year, *ad morem Graeci certaminis*, garnered various opinions (*varia fama*).<sup>139</sup> The arguments on both sides are summarised by Tacitus in an extended *oratio obliqua*. It was claimed by the naysayers that the morals of the *Romana iuventus* would be corrupted 'by foreign pursuits' (*studiis externis*); young *nobiles* would be bullied into competing in the contests, not only by the emperor himself but also by senior members of the Senate; and, most shockingly of all, a generation of Roman knights would be lured away from their civic duties by the 'sweetness' (*dulcedo*) of the music. Upstanding citizens would become addicted to 'unmanly gestures and tunes' (*gestus modosque haud virilis*) and 'emasculated sounds' (*fractos sonos*).<sup>140</sup>

There was nothing novel about this rhetoric. Though situated within a historical narrative, Tacitus' language could almost be lifted straight from a philosophical diatribe. That should come as no great surprise. Like most educated Romans of his time, Tacitus had no doubt read and absorbed a large body of musicological literature.<sup>141</sup> Not that he needed to go all the way back to Republican models in search of guidance, however: the two Senecas offered ample testimony for the continuation of musical discourses throughout the Julio-Claudian period. 'Look at the character of idle youth', complained the Elder Seneca. 'Libidinous delight in song and dance transfixes these effeminates'.<sup>142</sup> Seneca was an old man when he wrote these words, probably during the early part of Caligula's reign. He looked back nostalgically to a time when dancing served to strengthen Roman manliness rather than to undermine it.

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<sup>139</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.20.

<sup>140</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.20: *an iustitiam auctum iri et decurias equitum egregius iudicandi munus expleturos, si fractos sonos et dulcedinem vocum perite audissent?*

<sup>141</sup> Hence, he could defer in the *Dialogus* to Cicero's knowledge of the *ars musica* (*Dial.* 30.4).

<sup>142</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 1.praef.8: *ecce ingenia desidiosae iuventutis...cantandi saltandique obscena studia effeminatos tenant*; cf. *Contr.* 9.2.8: *quid ego nunc referam, iudices, ludorum genera, saltationes, et illud dedecoris certamen, praetorne se mollius moveret an meretrix?*

His nephew was equally troubled by the direction that musical fashions were taking. The degeneracy of popular music is an incessant bugbear in the Younger Seneca's moralising works. Seneca does acknowledge that music, in the right circumstances, can provide a welcome, indeed necessary, diversion from the travails of life. After all, even the great general Scipio 'used to move his body to music'. But he did so 'not with the effeminate contortions that are now in vogue, but in the manly manner with which those men of old were accustomed to dance in times of sport and festivity'.<sup>143</sup> The times had changed. In one letter, Seneca launches a scathing attack on music teachers, who, on account of their own 'effeminacy' (*mollitia*), teach their students 'effeminate movements of the body and effeminate and emasculating songs' (*molles corporis motus...mollesque cantus et infractos*).<sup>144</sup> Elsewhere, he writes: 'The private stage resounds throughout the whole city. Both men and women dance upon it; husbands and wives contend with each other over which of the two can bare their flank more seductively'.<sup>145</sup> In an impassioned critique of Baiae, Seneca rails against 'the nocturnal contests between singers' (*canentium nocturna convicia*) and 'the lakes ringing with the sound of band music' (*symphoniarum cantibus strepentes lacus*).<sup>146</sup> 'Those who have listened to a *symphonia*', he explains in another letter, 'carry with them in their ears that *modulatio* and the sweetness of the songs (*dulcedinem cantuum*), which impedes their thinking and prevents them from concentrating on serious matters'.<sup>147</sup> One is reminded of the comments on compulsive singers in the *De Brevitate Vitae*.

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<sup>143</sup> Sen. *Tranq.* 17.4: *Scipio...corpus movebat ad numeros...ut antiqui illi viri solebant inter lusum ac festa tempora virilem in modum tripudiare.*

<sup>144</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 90.19; cf. *Ep.* 114.1 (*infracta et in morem cantici ducta*); *Tranq.* 17.4 (*molliter se infringens*). On the date of the *Epistulae Morales*, see Graver and Long 2015, 1.

<sup>145</sup> Sen. *NQ* 7.32.3: *privatum urbe tota sonat pulpitem; in hoc mares, in hoc feminae tripudiant: mares inter se uxoresque contendunt uter det latus mollius.*

<sup>146</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 51.4, 51.12.

<sup>147</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 123.9.

It would be easy, and not entirely unreasonable, to dismiss these complaints as rhetorical exaggerations, conforming to generic philosophical tropes rather than to actual lived experiences. Of course, neither the Elder nor the Younger Seneca claimed to be writing history, and so we should not judge them by the same standards as a Tacitus or a Suetonius. But they *were* responding to cultural developments that they perceived as both topical and problematic. At a time when musical performance was very much in the public spotlight, it was only natural that certain individuals felt alienated by, and hostile to, what must have seemed like an increasingly liberal social order. On the other hand, we should remember that the views of one or two philosophers were not necessarily shared by the majority of educated elites, especially those of a younger generation. Although Tacitus alludes to Seneca's mockery of Nero's singing, Dio presents Seneca as an outspoken supporter of Nero's music-making, albeit perhaps a reluctant one. At the Juvenalia, we are told, 'Burrus and Seneca stood beside him, like teachers, prompting him, and they would wave their hands and togas whenever he produced a note, and urged others to do the same'.<sup>148</sup> The encomium of Nero's singing in the *Apocolocyntosis* adds to this picture – especially if we accept Champlin's redating of the passage to the latter part of Seneca's career.

The example of Seneca the Younger highlights the ambiguities inherent in literary representations of Nero as musician. It is essential that we read historical accounts of Nero's reign not as straightforward records of past events but as subjective narratives which are grounded firmly in contemporary debates about music and morality. The genres of historiography, rhetoric, and philosophy were thus in constant dialogue with one another. The concerns about practical music-making that Seneca had

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<sup>148</sup> Dio 62.20.3. Contrast Tac. *Ann.* 14.52: *includere vocem, quotiens caneret*. According to Seneca's detractors, however, this opposition was motivated not by genuine disapproval but by jealousy of his protégé's talent: it was observed that Seneca had become a more prolific composer of *carmina* after Nero himself had confessed a passion for it.

voiced during the 50s and 60s were still very much relevant in Tacitus' own time: witness the comments made by Quintilian about the 'effeminate' and 'emasculated' music of the stage (*effeminata et inpudicis modis fracta*), which 'has destroyed any manly vigour left in us' (*quid in nobis virilis roboris manebat excidit*).<sup>149</sup>

In dealing with accounts of Neronian spectacle, therefore, we must be careful to distinguish representation from reality. Shadi Bartsch has emphasised the fact that, of all the references to aristocratic participation in the sources, only two individuals are specifically named as being negligent or resistant in their acting. These are the senators Thrasea Paetus and Vespasian.<sup>150</sup> And yet, Nero could reasonably accuse Thrasea of hypocrisy, since he 'had sung in tragic costume' (*habitu tragico cecinerat*) at ancient games in his home town of Patavium.<sup>151</sup> Vespasian may not have performed himself, but he took pains during his own principate to revive the *vetera acroamata* popular under Nero: at the dedication of the restored stage of the Theatre of Marcellus, the tragic actor Apelles and the citharodes Terpnus and Diodorus were rewarded with vast sums of money.<sup>152</sup> Whether or not there is any truth to Dio's suggestion that Nero sent his blue-blooded recruits off to music school (*διδασκαλεῖα ἀποδεδειγμένα*), the logical conclusion is that the men, women, and children who starred in his shows already possessed at least a modicum of technical proficiency, especially when it came to dancing (*ὠρχήσαντο*), singing (*ἐχορώδησαν*), and playing instruments (*ἠΰλησαν... ἐκιθαρώδησαν*).

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<sup>149</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.31.

<sup>150</sup> Bartsch 1994, 6. Thrasea: Dio 61.20.4. Vespasian: Tac. *Ann.* 16.5, Suet. *Vesp.* 4.4, Dio 64.11. The historicity of these episodes is questionable: in Tacitus, Vespasian falls asleep during Nero's recital at the Second Neronia, whereas in Suetonius and Dio the incident takes place during the tour of Greece.

<sup>151</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 16.21; Dio 62.26.3-4; as pointed out by Champlin 2003, 66.

<sup>152</sup> Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1.

Clearly not everyone was coerced. Tacitus emphasises the willingness of the majority of the participants at the Neronia.<sup>153</sup> At the Juvenalia, people even ‘put their names forward’ for consideration (*nomina data*). We also encounter specific instances of senatorial support for Nero’s theatrical ventures. The enthusiasm of Seneca and Burrus has already been mentioned. Fabius Valens, consul in 69, had as a young man appeared in mimes at the Juvenalia, ‘apparently under duress, but soon voluntarily’ (*velut ex necessitate, mox sponte*), acting ‘with more style than decency’ (*scite magis quam probe*).<sup>154</sup> Vitellius presided over the contests of the First Neronia and eagerly urged the emperor to perform in the competition for citharodes.<sup>155</sup> In addition, the consular Cluvius Rufus acted as Nero’s herald at the Second Neronia and throughout the tour of Greece. There is no suggestion that he did so reluctantly.<sup>156</sup>

Several of the nobles who featured in Nero’s games may have been enlisted on other occasions to act as members of his organised cheer squad. The details are somewhat hazy in the sources. Tacitus and Dio both state that the Augustiani were originally formed at the Juvenalia.<sup>157</sup> According to Tacitus, the group consisted of Roman *equites*, ‘conspicuous for their youthful vigour’ (*aetate ac robore conspicui*). He provides no indication of number. Dio says that there were 5,000 members in total, but makes no mention of their social status, describing them simply as ‘soldiers’ (*στρατιώται*). Suetonius, on the other hand, refers to the Augustiani only in connection with Nero’s debut in Naples. On this occasion, we are told that the *clagues* consisted of ‘young men of equestrian rank’ (*adulescentos equestris ordinis*), plus an additional 5,000 plebeians ‘of vigorous youth’ (*quinque amplius milia e plebe robustissimae*

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<sup>153</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.21: *pluribus ipsa licentia placebat*. At least *some* of the performers at the *Ludi Maximi* volunteered on their own accord, according to Dio (οἱ μὲν ἑθελονται).

<sup>154</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.62.

<sup>155</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.71; cf. Suet. *Vit.* 11.2.

<sup>156</sup> Suet. *Nero* 21.2; Dio 62.14.3.

<sup>157</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.15; Dio 62.20.3-4.

*iuventutis*).<sup>158</sup> It would appear, therefore, that there were two distinct stages in the development of the organisation, centred on the two performances in 59 and 64. No clear consensus has been reached on the precise nature of these stages. Were there 5,000 Augustiani to begin with, as Dio believed, or does this number reflect the additional plebeian contingent, as Suetonius maintains? And how much credence do we give to the idea that the group started life as an equestrian members' club?<sup>159</sup>

One fact about the Augustiani that emerges patently from all three sources is their age profile. These individuals represented the very finest specimens of *Romana iuventus*. Their dashing appearance (*excellentissimo cultu*) and idiosyncratic style of 'musical acclamations' (*modulatis...laudationibus*) must have been something to behold. Dio mentions, in addition, that the Augustiani were employed as cheerleaders, with the mission of instructing the general populace in the proper forms of applause (ἐξῆρχον τῶν ἐπαίνων). In this way, as Alan Cameron points out, they were usurping the role traditionally played by theatre claque.<sup>160</sup> These claque had been responsible for several violent incidents in the decades prior to Nero's accession. Pantomimes were banned from appearing at the Neronia apparently because of concerns over recent outbreaks of partisan rivalry.<sup>161</sup> The Augustiani put a stop to this factionalism by diverting the audience's attention towards a common goal – the emperor. In the eyes of later critics this was merely partisanship in another form, tyranny disguised as entertainment: a silent, respectful audience becoming vocal through the corrupting impulse of 'modulated' music. When Nero took to the stage for the first time in Rome, his listeners knew exactly how to respond: in Tacitus' narrative, the chanting and

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<sup>158</sup> Suet. *Nero* 20.3.

<sup>159</sup> See Bartsch 1994, 8; Bradley 1978, 127-128; *contra* Mourgues 1990.

<sup>160</sup> Cameron 1976, 234-235; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 16.4: *plebs quidem urbis, histrionum quoque gestus iuvare solita*; 13.25, on Nero's encouragement of *fautores histrionum*.

<sup>161</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.21.

clapping of the urban plebs exhibits all the hallmarks of a trained chorus (*personabat certis modis plausuque composito*), and stands in sharp contrast to the flagging incompetence of the Italian provincials, whose hands could not keep up (*manibus nesciis fatiscerent*); ‘uninitiated’ (*inexpertis*), they were bullied into submission by Nero’s cronies, lest any moment should pass ‘in unsuitable clamour or sluggish silence’ (*inpari clamore aut silentio segni*).<sup>162</sup>

This picture, which calls to mind Plato’s concept of *theatrokratia*, actually promotes a highly misleading impression of the Roman *cavea*. As we saw in Chapter II, Roman spectators were already well-versed in the art of melodic chanting. Moreover, popular acclamations had always been integral to the way in which the emperor communicated with his subjects. According to Suetonius, Augustus was greeted by *modulata carmina* whenever he returned to Rome from the provinces. Caligula, likewise, was used to receiving *laudes* from noble boys and girls, sung *carmine modulato*.<sup>163</sup> We also have the purported words of Tiberius, spoken to the assembled crowds at Augustus’ funeral: ‘I, like the leader of a chorus, merely give out the leading words, while you join in and chant the rest’.<sup>164</sup>

Still, Nero could not afford to take the loyalty of the crowd for granted. Even a man ‘skilled at singing’ (*canendi peritus*), Seneca explains, could be drowned out by the noise of a protesting crowd (*fremitus obstrepentium*).<sup>165</sup> In another work, Seneca recalls walking past the theatre of Naples and eavesdropping on the conversations of the spectators inside: ‘people are deciding, with tremendous zeal (*ingenti studio*), who is entitled to be called a good *pythaulēs*; even the *tubicen Graecus* and the *praeco* draw

<sup>162</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 16.4-5.

<sup>163</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 57.2; *Cal.* 16. For the idea of children as composers and disseminators of songs, cf. Gell. *NA* 4.5.5: *versus scite factus cantatusque esse a pueris urbe tota fertur*.

<sup>164</sup> Dio 56.35.4-5: ἐμοῦ τε ὅσπερ ἐν χορῶντι τὰ κεφάλαια ἀποσημαίνοντος, καὶ ὑμῶν τὰ λοιπὰ συνεπιχοῦντων.

<sup>165</sup> Sen. *Ben.* 4.21.3.

the crowds'.<sup>166</sup> Musonius Rufus, writing around the same time, comments on the shouting and gesticulating of an agitated crowd at the performance of a *tibicen*.<sup>167</sup>

Why, then, should we doubt the popularity of Nero's productions? Even Tacitus is forced to admit that the Neronia passed by without any notable whiff of scandal (*sane nullo insigni dehonefamento id spectaculum transiit*).<sup>168</sup> And Seneca, for all his distrust of *symphoniae*, could still imagine the music of the Roman theatre as being greater than the sum of its parts – singers, trumpeters, and all kinds of pipes and instruments combining in perfect harmony:

*in commissionibus nostris plus cantorum est quam in theatris olim spectatorum fuit. cum omnes vias ordo canentium inplevit et cavea aenatoribus cincta est et ex pulpito omne tiliarum genus organorumque consonuit, fit concentus ex dissonis.* (Sen. Ep. 89.10)

In our entertainments there are more singers than there used to be spectators in the theatres of old. Although a row of singers fills every aisle, the auditorium is surrounded by trumpeters, and the stage resounds with all kinds of pipes and musical instruments, nevertheless a harmony is created out of the dissonant sounds.

It is no coincidence that Tacitus uses the same word, *modi*, to refer to both the chants of Nero's supporters (*Ann.* 16.4) and the actual musical accompaniments of the Neronian theatre (*Ann.* 14.15) – or that Suetonius uses *modulatus* to describe both the acclamations of the Augustiani and the *carmina lasciveque modulata* which Nero sang about Galba (*Nero* 42.2). In other words, there was a sense of harmony between the music being performed on-stage by Nero and his cast, and the music being performed off-stage by the Augustiani and by ordinary theatre-goers.<sup>169</sup> It is said that Nero's songs about Galba were lovingly embraced by the general public (*quae vulgo notuerunt*). But

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<sup>166</sup> Sen. Ep. 76.4.

<sup>167</sup> Muson. fr. 49 (= Gell. NA 5.1): *clamitant...gestiunt...exagitantur*; cf. Plut. *Rect. rad. aut.* 46c.

<sup>168</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.21.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Sen. Ep. 56.2.3 on the *insignita modulatio* of street-vendors hawking their wares.

when it came to Galba's turn to rule, that same public now directed its chants *against* the emperor.<sup>170</sup>

The emphasis in the ancient sources on Nero the performer masks the important role that he played behind the scenes, as producer and choreographer. Aristocratic Romans had been participating in the *ludi scaenici* since Republican times. Earlier emperors (with the exception of Caligula) had attempted to stamp out the practice, apparently with only limited success.<sup>171</sup> Nero, by contrast, made it a cornerstone of his political platform. Like all successful demagogues before him, he collapsed the boundaries between performer and spectator. He styled himself as the champion of a Roman youth culture which had long valorised the display of artistic prowess. In this way, he encouraged his fellow citizens (quite literally) to share in his theatrical adventures, while breaking down the stigma associated with putting oneself on show. Of course, in considering the phenomenon of elite participation, various motivations must be taken into account. No doubt there were many who enrolled as performers in the hope of social advancement or financial reward, or indeed out of fear of incurring the emperor's wrath, as the sources would have us believe. And yet, the disguised motivations of individual actors could hardly have affected the overall impression of the spectacle. Nero's productions enacted social conformity on a grand scale, presenting a vision of young and old, elite and non-elite, united through a shared participation in a new repertoire of cultural expression. The *princeps citharoedus*, 'first of all Romans from the beginning of time', was the charismatic prodigy at the centre of it all.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 13, on the occasion of Galba's entry into Rome.

<sup>171</sup> See Levick 1983, 105-108, and Horsmann 2008. A full list of imperial measures can be found in Bodel 2015, 31, table 1.

<sup>172</sup> At the 'triumph' of 67, men carried inscribed placards which referred to Nero as *πρῶτος πάντων τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος Ῥωμαίων* (Dio 62.20.2-3).

#### 4 Water-Organs and the Lure of Alexandria

Nero was at Naples, happily engrossed in his vocal exercises, when he learned of the revolt of Vindex in March 68.<sup>173</sup> At first, Suetonius reports, he remained ostensibly unmoved by the news, uninterested even; indeed, for eight whole days, he simply ignored the problem, hiding himself away in the local gymnasium. But his demeanour changed radically when he received an edict from Vindex heaping scorn on his family name and, worst of all, insulting him as a ‘bad citharode’ (*malus citharoedus*).<sup>174</sup> This was, for Nero, an offence too grievous to bear. He hurried back to Rome in a fit of frenzy and summoned a meeting of the imperial council in his newly built palace, the Domus Aurea.<sup>175</sup> The councillors nervously assembled in anticipation of a formal briefing. But, as it turned out, the emperor was in no mood to talk politics. According to Suetonius,

*ac ne tunc quidem aut senatu aut populo coram appellato quosdam e primoribus viris domum evocavit transactaque raptim consultatione reliquam diei partem per organa hydraulica novi et ignoti generis circumduxit, ostendensque singula, de ratione et difficultate cuiusque disserens, iam se etiam prolaturum omnia in theatrum affirmavit, si per Vindicem liceat.* (Suet. *Nero* 41.2)

Not even on his arrival did he personally address the senate or people, but called some of the leading men to his house and after a hasty consultation spent the rest of the day in exhibiting some water-organs of a new and hitherto unknown form, explaining their several features and lecturing on the theory and complexity of each of them; and he even declared that he would presently produce them all in the theatre “with the kind permission of Vindex.” (Loeb trans.)

The brief account of this episode in Cassius Dio (as it has come down to us in epitome) contains some notable discrepancies. Not only does Dio set the crisis meeting at night-time (νύκτωρ), heightening the sense of urgency and hysteria (ἐξαπίνης σπουδῆ...μεταπέμψας), but he also foregoes description of Nero’s actions in order to

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<sup>173</sup> The following narrative is based on Suet. *Nero* 40.4-41.2.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Philost. *VA* 5.10.2, stating that Vindex rose up against Nero while he was in Greece: ἔφη γὰρ Νέρωνα εἶναι πάντα μᾶλλον ἢ κιθαρῳδὸν καὶ κιθαρῳδὸν μᾶλλον ἢ βασιλέα.

<sup>175</sup> The date of Nero’s return to Rome is not explicitly stated by Suetonius; cf. Bradley 1978b, 253: ‘The last few days in March appear to be the most reasonable time for the date of this event.’

concentrate on the content of his speech (αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ ῥηθὲν γραφήσεται), quoting his exact words: ἐξεύρηκα...πῶς ἡ ὑδραυλις...καὶ μεῖζον καὶ ἐμμελέστερον φθέγγεται, ‘I have discovered a way by which the water-organ will produce louder and more melodious tones’.<sup>176</sup>

Delighted, the *princeps* hastened to unveil his new organ to the public. According to Suetonius, he began to make arrangements for a lavish festival to celebrate the rebels’ capitulation (inevitable, or so he thought), announcing a varied programme of theatrical entertainments:

*sub exitu quidem vitae palam voverat, si sibi incolumis status permansisset, proditurum se partae victoriae ludis etiam hydraulam et choraulam et utricularium ac novissimo die histrionem saltaturumque Vergili Turnum.* (Suet. Nero 54)

Towards the end of his life, in fact, he had publicly vowed that if he retained his power, he would at the games in celebration of his victory give a performance as an organist, a choral pipe-player, and a bagpiper, and that on the last day he would appear as an actor and dance “Virgil’s Turnus.” (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Much to Suetonius’ relief, Nero’s victory games proved to be nothing more than a flight of fancy. Within a few months of Vindex’s revolt, the emperor was dead.

The water-organ is writ large in the drama of Nero’s demise. Suetonius and Cassius Dio both thought the *hydraulis* sufficiently noteworthy to warrant inclusion in the historical record. (Whether Tacitus made mention of it in his *Annals* we do not know, since the extant text breaks off in 66.) And yet, there are obvious problems in taking the ancient narratives at face value. As Elaine Fantham points out, the Suetonian material is ‘particularly scrappy and disjointed’.<sup>177</sup> The general lack of clarity is alarming: did the demonstration take place during the day (Suetonius) or at night-time (Dio)? Was it conducted over many hours (Suetonius) or ‘in haste’ (Dio)? In Bradley’s

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<sup>176</sup> Dio 63.26.4-5.

<sup>177</sup> Fantham 2013, 20.

assessment, the whole story is ‘no more than a literary representation’, lacking any tangible relation to actual historical events.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, there is something suspiciously apposite about Nero’s ambition to play the doomed Turnus ‘on the last day’ (*novissimo die*) of the games. Suetonius has told us in a previous chapter that, as Nero prepared to flee the city in June 68, one of his officers quoted to him a line from the last book of the *Aeneid*, uttered by Turnus as he is about to die.<sup>179</sup> The Suetonian Nero chooses the role of Turnus as the curtain call on his own *Life*.

But the evidence is worth a closer look. Even if we reject the notion that Nero’s organs were a distraction from civil war, and even if we deny that Nero contemplated games to celebrate Vindex’s defeat, there is still good reason to suspect that his interest in the *organa hydraulica* had some basis in historical reality. Such a specific detail cannot be pure invention, malicious or otherwise. We can be certain, at least, that the idea of Nero as an *utricularius* did not originate with Suetonius, since Dio Chrysostom refers to the bagpipes in a list of Nero’s artistic pursuits (see below). For a musician to apply himself to multiple different instruments at the same time was highly unusual in antiquity. It was certainly not unheard of for citharodes to switch to the *auloi/tibiae*, but this was apparently taken as an admission of failure, since the *cithara* was deemed the more difficult instrument.<sup>180</sup> Nero’s brand of multi-instrumentalism was, in a sense, the first of its kind, and it cannot therefore be brushed aside as a figment of Suetonius’ imagination.

In this final section, therefore, I want to interrogate the significance of the *hydraulis* as a neglected aspect of Neronian ‘performativity’ – that is, the way in which the emperor, in constructing his new instrument, constructed an image of himself. What

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<sup>178</sup> Bradley 1978b, 254.

<sup>179</sup> Suet. *Nero* 47.2, quoting Verg. *Aen.* 12.646: *usque adeone mori miserum est?*

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Cic. *Mur.* 29: *ut aiunt in Graecis artificibus eos auloedos esse qui citharoedi fieri non potuerint.*

was it about this peculiar musical contraption that so captured the imagination of both Nero himself and the later chroniclers of his reign? For a man who spent his entire career aspiring to mastery of the lyre, Nero's decision to take up the organ in the dying moments of his reign represents, I believe, a more surprising and more significant gesture than has previously been recognised.

In the middle of the third century BC, a man named Ctesibius of Alexandria invented the world's first keyboard instrument. The son of a barber, according to Vitruvius (9.8.2), Ctesibius achieved lasting fame as a pioneer in the field of hydraulic engineering.<sup>181</sup> He was credited in later times with the discovery of the piston-pump and water-clock, among various other *hydraulicae machinae*.<sup>182</sup> But the organ was perhaps his most enduring creation of all. It worked by harnessing the air pressure inside a large chamber filled partially with water (hence its name ὕδραυλις, literally 'water-pipe'); two cylindrical pistons on either side worked by levers forced air into an inverted funnel inside the chamber, displacing some of the water and thereby maintaining a constant pressure of air forcing its way upwards. Above the chamber, a row of pipes, arranged 'somewhat like an upside-down panpipe' (as one ancient author put it), could be opened or closed via individual valves attached to a keyboard.<sup>183</sup> The keyboard was operated manually by a player who stood behind the instrument. When a key was depressed, the valve opened and allowed the air to escape freely through the pipe, producing a musical sound.

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<sup>181</sup> It is claimed by Athenaeus (4.174b-c) that Ctesibius was himself a barber by trade, but this is surely mistaken. On the date of Ctesibius, see Drachmann 1948, 1-3.

<sup>182</sup> Vitr. 9.8.4; Plin. *HN* 7.125.

<sup>183</sup> Pollux, *Onom.* 4.70. Philo of Byzantium (*Bel.* 61) describes the *hydraulis* as 'a panpipe played with the hands'.

Extensive modern studies of the *hydraulis* have been undertaken by Jean Perrot and Michael Markovits.<sup>184</sup> Reconstructions have been made possible thanks to detailed technical descriptions of the instrument in Vitruvius and Heron of Alexandria (see FIGURE 28).<sup>185</sup> We are also fortunate to have the fragmentary remains of two ancient water-organs, miraculously brought to light by archaeological excavation – the first from Dion in northern Greece, constructed probably in the first century AD, and the second from the Roman town of Aquincum (modern Budapest), which was donated by a prominent civic official to the local *collegium* of textile-dealers in AD 228 (FIGURE 29).<sup>186</sup>

For the early history of this fascinating instrument we are reliant upon a small number of literary and epigraphic texts. The earliest documented appearance of the *hydraulis* is found 150 years after its invention in an honorific decree from Delphi.<sup>187</sup> Inscribed around 90 BC, the document records the achievements of an organ-player (ὑδραυλος) from Crete named Antipatros. Antipatros had been invited by the Delphic archons to participate in a two-day festival (παρακληθεις ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ τᾶς [πόλιος] ἀγωνίζατο ἀμέρας δύο), and was subsequently rewarded for his efforts with a bronze statue, among other honours (εἰκόνι χαλκῆαι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τιμίσις πάντοις). He is also praised in the decree ‘for his piety and devotion to the god [Apollo], his dedication to his art, and his goodwill towards the city’ (ἐπί τε τᾷ ποτὶ τὸν θεὸν

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<sup>184</sup> Perrot 1971, Markovits 2003. See also West 1992, 114-118, with further bibliography in Markovits. Beschi 2009 offers a useful re-examination of the evidence for the *hydraulis* in the Hellenistic period.

<sup>185</sup> Vitr. 10.8; Heron, *Pneum.* 1.42.

<sup>186</sup> The Aquincum organ has been studied by Hyde 1938 and Kaba 1976; the dedicatory inscription still survives: cf. *CIL* 3.10501. On the Dion organ (discovered in 1992), see Pandermalis 1997, 85; Markovits 2003, 97-98; Beschi 2009, 256-257; Stroux 2009, *passim*.

<sup>187</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 737.

εὐσεβείαι καὶ ὀσιότατι καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς προαιρέσει, αἱ ἔχων περὶ τῶν τέχων διατελεῖ, καὶ ταῖς ποτὶ τῶν πόλιν ἁμῶν εὐνοίαι).<sup>188</sup>

It is generally maintained that Antipatros was a competitive organ-player who made a living by touring the festival circuit of late Hellenistic Greece.<sup>189</sup> This may seem a straightforward assumption, but it actually rests on very shaky evidence. Firstly, the mention of an ἀγῶν need not imply the existence of a formal ‘competition’ between multiple instrumentalists of the same category. By the first century BC, as William Slater has shown, the term had taken on a broader range of meanings, encompassing non-competitive ‘displays’ as well as more traditional agonistic formats.<sup>190</sup> Secondly, the lack of comparative evidence makes it difficult to estimate how many water-organs were in circulation during this period and where their numbers were most concentrated. Can we assume that every major Greek city had a resident organist (or organists)? Is it conceivable that the Delphians hired the services of the Cretan musician not because of his ability *per se* but because he specialised on an instrument that was rarely heard? It is likely that Antipatros brought his organ with him, although this is not stated explicitly in the inscription. We are told that additional honours were conferred on a certain Cryto, the brother of Antipatros (τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ Κρύτωνα, ll. 13-14), as well as on a group of ‘attendants’ (τοὺς μετ’ αὐτῶν, l. 20). What was their involvement? Did the two brothers star in a kind of double act, accompanied by a backing troupe of musicians and/or singers? Did Cryto act as his brother’s manager, or assist him in the operation of the pipes? We cannot be sure.<sup>191</sup> What we can say for certain, though, is that no organ-

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<sup>188</sup> There is an erasure in line 9 of the text. Following Dittenberg, *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 737, we should restore the name of the games (i.e. Pythian) and the total prize money (τοι ἀγων[ι τῶν Πυθίων δραχμαῖς χιλίας καὶ πεντακοσίας καὶ] εἰκονι κτλ., *vel sim.*); for similar erasures, see *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 689, 738.

<sup>189</sup> See, e.g., Perrot 1971, 44-45 and Beschi 2009, 259.

<sup>190</sup> Slater 2007, 41; cf. Robert 1929, 37-38.

<sup>191</sup> See *FD* III 3, 249 = *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 738; Weir 2004, 43; Chaniotis 2009, 88; Beschi 2009, 259. The combination of water-organ and choir is attested in an inscription pertaining to the Rhodian cult of Dionysius, dating from the third century AD: see Reinach 1904, 203-10, and Perrot 1971, 55-56.

players are recorded in agonistic victor lists either from Delphi or from any other *polis*, and that alone casts considerable doubt on the existence of a specific agonistic category of organ-playing. It is far more likely that we are dealing here not with a regular fixture in the programme of the Pythian Games but rather with a special performance given by a noted musical specialist and his troupe.

The water-organ makes its next appearance forty-five years later in the third book of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (written *ca.* 45 BC). This is a particularly valuable text since it provides our first attestation of Ctesibius' instrument in Latin literature.<sup>192</sup> The passage in question forms part of a long diatribe against Epicurean philosophy. Addressing the problem of how to alleviate the suffering of a relative, Cicero vehemently opposes the view advocated by Epicurus that feelings of grief can be mitigated by the experience of sublime pleasure:

*si quem tuorum adflictum maerore videris, huic acipenserem potius quam aliquem Socraticum libellum dabis? hydraulii hortabere ut audiat voces potius quam Platonis? expones, quae spectet, florida et varia? fasciculum ad naris admovebis? incendes odores et sertis redimiri iubebis et rosa? (Cic. Tusc. Disp. 3.43-44)*

If you see someone dear to you prostrated by grief, would you offer him a sturgeon rather than a treatise of Socrates? Would you urge him to listen to the voice of the water-organ rather than that of Plato? Would you have him feast his eyes on flower-beds? Or thrust a bouquet of flowers under his nose? Or burn perfume and order him to wreath his head with garlands and roses?

In this flurry of rhetorical questions, Cicero reels off a list of the most exquisite sensory delights known to man: taste, touch, sight, smell, and hearing are all catered for. The inclusion of the *hydraulis* in this inventory of *res voluptariae* should rightly give us pause for thought. What, we might ask, did the water-organ have in common with the sturgeon (*acipenser*)? Both were obviously regarded in Cicero's day as symbols of exceptional *luxuria*, and that probably derived from the fact that they were extremely

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<sup>192</sup> The reference to *organici* in Lucretius *DRN* 5.334 should not be associated with the *hydraulis* (*contra* Perrot 1971, 46).

rare commodities.<sup>193</sup> This point is apparently overlooked by Markovits, who takes the very allusion to the *hydraulis* as proof of its general currency ('da als Beispiel nur etwas allgemein bekanntes dienen kann').<sup>194</sup> The problem is that we simply do not know where Cicero heard the water-organ (if indeed he heard it at all), how often, and in what setting.<sup>195</sup> In the build-up to the passage he quotes (in translation) the Epicurean mantra that there can be no 'good' in 'taking away the pleasures which derive from listening to music' (*detrahens eas [voluptates], quae auditu et cantibus*).<sup>196</sup> Cicero was certainly not the first to criticise this idea. Of course, the *hydraulis* had not been invented during Epicurus' lifetime, but it may well have found its way into subsequent anti-Epicurean polemic.<sup>197</sup> We saw in Chapter I, for instance, that Cicero's philosophical mentor Posidonius of Rhodes argued in writing against excessive indulgence in loud music; he also appears to have been interested in unusual types of musical instruments.<sup>198</sup> It is quite possible, then, that Cicero was paraphrasing an earlier Greek text mentioning the *hydraulis* rather than reflecting on musical currents within his own society.

But we can at least be confident that by the time of Nero the *hydraulis* had established itself as a permanent fixture of the Roman *ludi*. Petronius provides evidence of a connection between the organ and the arena. In a scene from the *Cena Trimalchionis*, a slave is brought in to carve the meat. He 'came up at once', we are told, 'and making flourishes in time with the music hacked the meat to pieces; you

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<sup>193</sup> Pliny (*HN* 9.17.27) calls the sturgeon *apud antiquos piscium nobilissimus*; Cicero (*Fin.* 2.23-25) associates it with Gallonius, a proverbial gourmand.

<sup>194</sup> Markovits 2003, 41.

<sup>195</sup> Perrot (1971, 45-46) suggests that Cicero first encountered the organ at some point during his travels in Greece from 79 to 77 BC. Equally, Cicero may have been informed about the instrument by the Stoic Diodotus who lived for many years in his house and lectured on music theory (*Tusc. Disp.* 5.113).

<sup>196</sup> Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 3.41, translating the Greek *akroamata* (cf. Athenaeus 7.280).

<sup>197</sup> For polemical views on Epicurean music, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 1095C-1096C; Sen. *Beat. Vit.* 11.4. The Epicurean belief in the human origin of music may have encouraged an association with the water-organ, unusual for being a manmade instrument.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Athen. 5.210e-f (Edelstein-Kidd F62), on the Syrians' penchant for flutes and lyres; Athen. 4.176b-c (Edelstein-Kidd F54), on φωτίγγια καὶ μονάβλια in the baggage of Apamaean soldiers; Athen. 14.635c-d. (Edelstein-Kidd F292), on the history of the *magadis*. For the influence of Posidonius on the *Tusculan Disputations*, see Graver 2002, 215-223.

would have said that a gladiator in a chariot (*essedarius*) was fighting to the accompaniment of a water-organ (*hydraule cantante*).<sup>199</sup> The loudness of the organ was evidently deemed by the Romans well-suited to the acoustic dynamics of gladiatorial spectacle.<sup>200</sup> Seneca the Younger, writing around the same time as Petronius, speaks of the organ as an instrument which ‘by water pressure emits a sound louder than that which can be produced by the human voice’ (*quae aquarum pressura maiorem sonitum formant quam qui ore reddi potest*). In this way, it is comparable with brass instruments such as the *cornu* and *tuba*.<sup>201</sup>

It would appear, then, that Nero adapted an instrument that was already known for its loud volume and charming sound. Pliny the Elder (*HN* 9.8.24) describes how the dolphin ‘is soothed by harmonious music and especially by the sound of the *hydraulis*’ (*mulcetur symphoniae cantu set praecipue hydraulis sono*), while in the anonymous poem *Aetna*, usually dated to the 60s or 70s AD, the water-organ is referred to as a *cortina* (‘vessel’) which ‘with its water-worked song (*carmineque irriguo*) makes music in large theatres’ (*magnis...theatris... canit*), music rendered ‘melodious (*numerosa*) by

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<sup>199</sup> Pet. *Sat.* 36.

<sup>200</sup> All sorts of questions can be posed about the organ’s role in gladiatorial spectacle: was the organist expected to play constantly throughout the fighting, perhaps in order to drown out the cries of the wounded and the dying? Or did the musician play only on cue, as it were, punctuating moments of tension or climax, much like the organists who accompanied silent films in the early twentieth century? We simply do not know; but for some interesting speculation, see Simpson 2000.

<sup>201</sup> Sen. *NQ* 2.6.5. A curious phrase in Seneca’s *Epistle* 56.4 – *qui ad Metam Sudantem tabulas experitur et tibias* – has been understood by May (1988) as referring to ‘a tuner, builder, or repairer of the *hydraulis* [sic]’ (whereby *tabulae* are the ‘boards’ of the organ and *tibiae* ‘the pipes inserted in them’). May argues that the Meta Sudans provided the ideal location for ‘the workshop of a water-organ builder’ since it could furnish the workshop with a constant supply of running water; further, citing Suetonius, he speculates that ‘Seneca had, in fact, been one of the *primores viri* who accompanied Nero on guided tours of his favourite water organs’. Neither of these arguments is convincing, however. Seneca retired from the political scene in 62 and was put to death in 65, long before we find any mention of organs! The reading of *tabulas* is heavily disputed; the alternative *tubulae* is probably to be preferred, following Vendries 1999, 150, n. 6. A number of inscriptions pertaining to the *collegium* of *aenatores*, *tubicines*, *liticines*, and *cornicines* have been found in the area of the Meta Sudans, the most notable being the ones recovered in excavations of the early 1990s (Panella 1996, Morizio 1996); we also have an inscription belonging to a maker of *tibiae* (*tibiarius*) from the Via Sacra (*CIL* 6.9935). This may indicate that the guilds of trumpeters and pipers had their *scholae* in the vicinity of the Meta Sudans, which would explain their conspicuousness in this particular part of Rome; see *ThesCRA*, s.v. ‘Music’, p. 412.

its unequal pipes' (*imparibus...modis*) and 'by the skill of the player' (*arte regentis*).<sup>202</sup> When Suetonius comments that Nero's *organa hydraulica* were *novi et ignoti generis*, therefore, he is not suggesting that the organs were a total novelty as such; rather, the newness lay in the specific technical make-up, the *genus*, of the specimens being presented. In his search for a *hydraulis* that was *καὶ μείζον καὶ ἐμμελέστερον*, Nero aimed to amplify the sonic characteristics of the instrument which were already familiar to audiences in Rome.

Material culture provides our best source of evidence for the form and function of the *hydraulis*. The instrument appears in around forty artistic representations before the end of the fifth century AD. The evidence varies considerably in both geographical and chronological scope. A wide range of media is attested, including pots, mosaics, reliefs, gems, terracotta lamps, and even graffiti. The organ features most commonly in scenes of gladiatorial combat, but it is also associated occasionally with performances in the theatre and in the circus. Moreover, it is nearly always represented as part of a larger musical ensemble: in depictions of gladiatorial combat we find it paired with brass instruments of various kinds, while in scenes pertaining to the theatre it is typically accompanied by pipes, lyres, and percussion.

Unfortunately, none of the iconography can be securely dated to the period before AD 68.<sup>203</sup> It is interesting to note that an organist appears with his instrument on

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<sup>202</sup> *Aetna* 296-297 (ed. Goodyear 1966), with commentary in Ellis and Volk 2008, 141-144; on the date, see Goodyear 1984, 353.

<sup>203</sup> A tiny engraved gem from the British Museum collection shows an organ-player accompanied by two assistants who operate the bellows. Markovits dates it to the first century BC, but does not say on what grounds, while Perrot dates it to the third century AD on the opinion of 'experts at the British Museum' (see Walter's *Cat. of gems* Nr. 1051; Perrot 1971, 84-85, with Plate VIII, no. 2). The dating of terracotta figurines of the organ from Alexandria and Tarsus fluctuates between the first centuries BC and AD: see respectively Perrot 1971, 99-100, with Plate XVI, no. 1; Markovits 2003, Taf. 5; and Perrot 1971, 77-78, with Plate V; Markovits 2003, Taf. 6. Also worthy of note is a small graffito of an organ from a *taberna* in Pozzuoli, found alongside a much larger graffito of a trident; usually dated to the mid-first century AD: see Guarducci 1971, 219-223, with Plate 23a; Langner 2001, Taf. 153, nos. 952, 2362-2363; not mentioned by Perrot or Markovits; however, this dating is questioned by Creese 2009, 571, n. 41.

the reverse of a contorniate medallion of the fourth or fifth century AD, juxtaposed with a bust of the emperor Nero on the obverse (FIGURE 30). However, this imagery should not be assigned undue significance, since we also find the organ associated in other contorniates with the emperors Trajan and Caracalla.<sup>204</sup>

In one sense, of course, Nero's claim to have invented an organ which was bigger and better than anything seen before fits the personality of one of history's most notorious megalomaniacs – the mastermind behind the Golden House and the Colossus, the prospective author of a 400-book epic on Roman history, the winner of 1808 competitive trophies.<sup>205</sup> But minutiae mattered too, especially where technology was concerned. Vitruvius comments at length on the mechanical intricacies of the *hydraulis* in his *De Architectura*, singling out its 'sophisticated design' (*exquisita ratio*, 10.8.4) and ingenious 'complexity' (*subtilitatis*, 10.7.5; *subtiliter*, 10.8.6). This suggests that the water-organ was seen by educated Romans of the early Principate as more than just a form of entertainment. It was, first and foremost, a technological marvel, designed to astonish as well as to entertain. Vitruvius, significantly, calls it an *obscura res* (10.8.6), something difficult for the layperson to understand.<sup>206</sup> For this reason, the cultural capital of the *hydraulis* was clearly distinguished from that of the *cithara* or *tibia*, the instruments which underpinned so much of the ancients' musical experience. The product of human ingenuity rather than divine intervention, the water-organ was unusual in that it lacked a firm grounding in the mythological tradition.<sup>207</sup> It was a man-

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<sup>204</sup> See Perrot 1971, 90-91, with plate IX, nos. 1-2; Markovits 2003, Taf. 26a; Alföldi 1990, 223-224, with additional tables.

<sup>205</sup> Suet. *Nero* 31.1; Plin. *HN* 34.45; Dio 62.29.3; Dio 62.21.1. We might note also Nero's wooden amphitheatre on the Campus Martius, built in 57 but destroyed in the fire of 64, which boasted timbers from 'the largest tree ever seen at Rome' (Plin. *HN* 16.200); cf. Plin. *HN* 19.24; Tac. *Ann.* 13.31.1; Suet. *Nero* 12; Dio 61.9.5; Calp. Sic. *Ecl.* 7.69-72, alluding to the use of automata perhaps in this amphitheatre.

<sup>206</sup> Interestingly, he uses the same adjective *obscura* elsewhere to describe Greek harmonic theory (Vitr. 5.4.1), which could only be grasped with a good working knowledge of Greek. Those interested in pneumatic devices are advised to consult the manuals of Ctesibius himself (Vitr. 10.8.5).

<sup>207</sup> Beschi 2009, 248.

made curiosity, and its secrets could only be disclosed by a select group of learned scholars.

One such scholar was Heron, active in Alexandria at the height of Nero's reign. Heron's attempt to calculate the distance from Rome to Alexandria based upon the observation of a lunar eclipse in AD 62 provides a conclusive *terminus post quem* for his treatise *Dioptra*.<sup>208</sup> It also indicates that Heron had close contacts with like-minded intellectuals in Rome, since, as Paul Keyser points out, he 'could not have been in both places at once. An assistant or colleague must have observed the eclipse in one location, Heron in the other'.<sup>209</sup> Dirk Hansen remarks that Heron 'often explains the Greek names of his devices with Latin terms in order to expand the circle of his readership to Roman professionals'.<sup>210</sup> In his *Pneumatika*, Heron gives an account of various mechanical contrivances which create wondrous effects (ἐκπληκτικόν τινα θαυμασμὸν) through a combination of elemental forces.<sup>211</sup> The water-organ is treated at length in the first book.<sup>212</sup> Although Heron goes into great detail on the minutiae of its construction, he makes no attempt to situate the instrument within a wider cultural context.

However, in a brief note published in 1988, Keyser raised the possibility that Heron may be describing the very *organa hydraulica* that Nero demonstrated to astonished onlookers in 68.<sup>213</sup> The chronology is certainly suggestive, but the argument as a whole fails to convince. Acknowledging that Heron had ties with Rome does not mean that he had personal dealings with the emperor himself. Heron makes no obvious claim to have invented the instrument he is describing. All we have to go on is a vague

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<sup>208</sup> See Neugebauer 1938, 22; Drachmann 1948, 74-77; Sidoli 2011, *passim*.

<sup>209</sup> Keyser 1988, 219.

<sup>210</sup> Hansen 2013, 309.

<sup>211</sup> Heron, *Pneum.* 1.proem.15-20; cf. 1.proem.346. On the importance of 'wonder-making' in Heron, see Tybjerg 2003.

<sup>212</sup> Heron, *Pneum.* 1.42.

<sup>213</sup> Keyser 1988, 220-221; Beacham (2013, 36, n. 2), sensibly, is more circumspect: 'It is at least possible that Heron's work was known to Nero.'

allusion in the proem to ἂ ἡμεῖς δὲ προσευρήκαμεν.<sup>214</sup> More problematically, Suetonius clearly states that Nero showcased *multiple* organs (*organa hydraulica* is plural), whereas Heron describes just a single ὑδραυλικὸν ὄργανον. Tempting though it may be to speculate, it makes little difference to our interpretation whether Nero appropriated the organs from Heron or from ‘an assistant in Rome’ – or, for that matter, whether he brought them back from Greece as ‘triumphal’ booty, as Perrot suspects.<sup>215</sup> What matters is that he presented the discovery as *his own* (note the emphatic ἐξεύρηκα in Dio), and in doing so he was staking a claim to genuine scientific expertise.

In his final moments, Nero is said to have expressed a desire to flee to Alexandria – the home of Ctesibius and Heron – and become a full-time professional musician.<sup>216</sup> This was no mere delusion. Nero had been fascinated by the Egyptian metropolis since childhood.<sup>217</sup> The inspiration for the Augustiani came from the chanting of some Alexandrian sailors who happened to be in the audience when the emperor gave his Neapolitan debut. Nero eagerly summoned more, and subsequently instructed his troupes of cheerleaders in the different Alexandrian styles of applause.<sup>218</sup> Similarities have been noticed between Nero’s *iuvenes Augustiani* and the *basilikoi paides* who served the court of the Ptolemaic kings.<sup>219</sup> Nero chose Alexandria as the destination of his first foreign trip, in 64, only to abandon the idea at the last minute

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<sup>214</sup> Heron, *Pneum.* 1.proem.1-10.

<sup>215</sup> Perrot 1971, 49.

<sup>216</sup> Dio 63.27.2; cf. Plut. *Galba* 2.1; Tac. *Ann.* 15.36.1, mentioning the flight to Egypt but not the musical aspirations. According to Suetonius (*Nero* 47.2), Nero sought an official position, namely the prefecture of Egypt.

<sup>217</sup> The philosopher Chaeremon, who acted as Nero’s tutor, was from Alexandria and composed a theological treatise on Isis and Osiris (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 706); his lyre teacher Terpnus may also have come from Alexandria (cf. *JG* XIV 2088; Power 2010, 96, n. 232). Seneca wrote *de situ et sacris Aegyptiorum* (*Serv. ad Aen.* 6.154). On Nero’s ‘Egyptomania’, see Cesaretti 1989, 53-65, Champlin 2003a, 174, Mratschek 2013, 46-47.

<sup>218</sup> Suet. *Nero* 20.3. Rhythmic hand-clapping was an ancient Egyptian tradition: cf. Hdt. 2.60.1.

<sup>219</sup> See especially Mourgues 1990.

because of an unfavourable portent.<sup>220</sup> Later on, in 68, during a food shortage in the capital, he angered the starving populace by instructing a ship from Alexandria to bring sand for his court wrestlers (*luctatoribus aulicis*) instead of much-needed grain.<sup>221</sup>

Leigh has recently pinpointed a connection between Nero and Ptolemy XII ‘Auletes’, the father of Cleopatra, who got his nickname from his habit of accompanying singers on the *auloi* and competing in musical contests in the royal palace.<sup>222</sup> It may be relevant that Suetonius portrays Nero as a wannabe *choraules*, a musician who accompanied choruses on the pipes.<sup>223</sup> Plutarch links Ptolemy’s pipe-playing with Nero’s exploits as a *tragoedus*, on the grounds that both rulers were encouraged in their behaviour by the flattery of courtiers.<sup>224</sup> Dio Chrysostom, similarly, raises the spectre of the two *basileis mousikoi* in discussing the qualities of good kingship:

ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὸ φθῆς ἀλοῦς μινυρίζων διετέλει καὶ θρηνῶν ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, ἀμελήσας δὲ τῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλείας, τοὺς παλαιοὺς ὑποκρινόμενος ἡγάπα βασιλέας· ὁ δὲ αὐλήσεως ἐραστής ἐγένετο· ὁ δὲ ἀγαθὸς βασιλεὺς τῶν μὲν τοιούτων οὐδέποτε ἀκροᾶται συνεχῶς· (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 3.134-135)

One king, having become enamoured of singing, spent his time warbling and wailing in the theatres and so far forgot his royal dignity that he was content to impersonate the early kings upon the stage; another fell in love with pipe-playing; but the good king never makes a practice even of listening to such things. (Trans. adapted from Loeb)

Dio Chrysostom alludes explicitly to Nero’s pipe-playing in his discourse *On the Philosopher*, composed probably during the early Flavian period.<sup>225</sup> True ‘wisdom’

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<sup>220</sup> Suet. *Nero* 19.1; Tac. *Ann.* 15.36; however, he had already gone to the trouble of having baths built for his personal use, presumably within the palace area (Suet. *Nero* 35.5; Dio 62.18.1).

<sup>221</sup> Suet. *Nero* 45.1.

<sup>222</sup> Strab. 17.1.11; Leigh 2017, 25. Nero and Ptolemy Auletes are associated by Plutarch (*Mor.* 56 F) and Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 32.70).

<sup>223</sup> Choral pipe-playing was a traditional element of Greek theatre. However, the term *choraules* is not found in Greek or Latin until the time of Nero: cf. Pet. *Sat.* 53, 69; Plin. *HN* 37.6.3; *CIL* 6.10120; *AP* 11.11.1 (Lucilius); Plut. *Ant.* 24. Canus, the celebrated pipe-player of the mid-to-late first century AD, specialised as a *choraules*: Suet. *Galb.* 12.3.

<sup>224</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 56f.

<sup>225</sup> Dio *Or.* 71.9, referring to Nero as ‘one of the emperors of our time’ (τῶν νῦν βασιλέων τις); Jones 1978, 133.

(σοφία), Dio argues, lies in recognising not only what one knows, but also what one does not. Nero is singled out at the end of the speech as an example of a man who failed to recognise the limits of his σοφία. He is, in Dio's estimation, the classic jack-of-all-trades: 'acting as a herald, singing to the cithara, reciting tragedies, wrestling, and taking part in the pancration'. It was rumoured that Nero could also paint, fashion statues, and play the pipes (αὐλεῖν), both 'with his mouth' (τῷ τε στόματι, i.e. in conventional fashion) and 'by tucking a skin beneath his armpits' (ταῖς μασχάλαις ἄσκὸν ὑποβάλλοντα).

Precious little is known about the early history of the bagpipes.<sup>226</sup> According to West, 'it may not have appeared at all before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, and even after that it is doubtful how often it was seen.'<sup>227</sup> The instrument is attested iconographically only a handful of times, the most notable example being a terracotta figurine from Alexandria, dating from the third century AD, which shows a male *suristes* (syrinx-player) seated with an inflated skin bag under his left arm. A pipe attached to the bag extends to his right arm, while his right foot is fitted with a *scabellum*. He is accompanied by a cymbal-playing dwarf (FIGURE 31). Comparisons can be made with another terracotta figurine, also from Alexandria and dated to the first century AD, which depicts a woman playing an organ and a macrophallic dwarf blowing into a long trumpet (FIGURE 32).<sup>228</sup> Whether or not Nero was responsible for bringing the bagpipes to Rome, his intention to 'elevate' it to the status of a concert instrument obviously ran contrary to cultural norms. Martial thought it degrading for an esteemed *tibicen* like Canus to 'desire to play the bagpipes' (*concupiscat esse Canus ascaules*).<sup>229</sup> Martial's coinage of

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<sup>226</sup> The term *utricularius* as 'bagpiper' is not otherwise attested (for *utricularius* as 'muleteer', see Deman 2002). The Greek equivalent *ascaules* is found in Mart. 10.3.8, *CIL* 4.636, and *P.Athen.* 43.

<sup>227</sup> West 1992, 107.

<sup>228</sup> See Vendries 2013, 208, noting theatrical influences.

<sup>229</sup> Mart. 10.3.8.

a Greek term, *ascaules*, may suggest that the bagpipes had only recently been introduced to Rome from the East. It probably originated as a low-grade folk instrument in the cities of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor.<sup>230</sup> These factors probably explain why the bagpipes do not appear more frequently in the literary sources. Nero's idea of turning the bagpipes into a high art form evidently struck Suetonius as a ludicrous innovation. Nero, however, sought to profit from investing in the people's pleasures. Once again, it seems, *popularitas* was the aim of the game.

Nero's court was a hub for Alexandrian artists and intellectuals. The citharodes Terpnus and Menecrates both probably hailed from the Egyptian capital.<sup>231</sup> So too did the *tibicen* Eucaerus, who was scapegoated by Poppaea as Octavia's adulterer.<sup>232</sup> Tacitus' account of this incident in 62 implies that Eucaerus was a well-known figure in the imperial household. In addition, several leading Alexandrian scholars can be identified among Nero's courtiers, including Chaeremon, philosopher and former head of the Museum, and the *grammatikoi* Epaphroditus and Heraclides Ponticus the Younger.<sup>233</sup> A particularly intriguing character is one Didymus, son of Heraclides. Didymus is named in the *Suda* as a *grammatikos*, but he was apparently a man of many talents:

Δίδυμος, ὁ τοῦ Ἡρακλείδου, γραμματικός, ὃς διέτριψε παρὰ Νέρονι καὶ ἐχρηματίσατο: μουσικός τε ἦν λίαν καὶ πρὸς μέλη ἐπιτήδειος. (*Suda* δ 875)

Didymus, the son of Heracleides, grammarian. He spent time with Nero and conducted business; he was an exceptional musician, with a talent for singing.

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<sup>230</sup> See Sachs 1940, 141; Baines 1960, 64-66; West 1992, 107-109; Calvo-Sotelo 2015. An Egyptian papyrus from the second century AD mentions nine bagpipers in a list of musicians: *P.Athen.* 43.

<sup>231</sup> Terpnus: Suet. *Nero* 30, *Vesp.* 19; probably the Alexandrian citharode named in *IG XIV* 2088 (Power 2010, 96, n. 232). Menecrates: Suet. *Nero* 20.2; Pet. *Sat.* 73.3.

<sup>232</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.60.

<sup>233</sup> *Suda* α 1128, ε 2004, η 463. Heraclides hailed from Pontus but studied in Alexandria; he became scholarch in Rome under Claudius and Nero. For Alexandrian connections in the Neronian court, see Mratschek 2013, 46-47.

What exactly was the nature of Didymus' relationship with Nero? What kind of business did he do? In what capacity did he demonstrate his excellent musicianship? We may be able to probe deeper into the life of this elusive figure with the help of some ingenious detective work by Andrew Barker. Barker observed that the name of a Didymus *mousikos* appears in the treatises of Ptolemy and his commentator Porphyry on the subject of harmonics. This Didymus must have been an influential theoretician, since his writings on the monochord and divisions of the tetrachord are cited at length.<sup>234</sup> On this basis, Barker makes two leaps of faith: firstly, he argues that the Didymus *mousikos* whose works were known to Ptolemy and Porphyry is probably the same Didymus recorded in the *Suda* as the intimate of Nero. Secondly, he suggests that the Heraclides mentioned as the father of the Neronian Didymus is in fact the Younger Heraclides of Pontus, who studied in Alexandria and is also cited by Porphyry as an authority on musicology. These two likely associations leave us with something close to a biography, albeit a rather sketchy one: 'We have a person brought up in a scholarly family with musical interests, in an erudite Alexandrian milieu, early in the first century AD. Later he moved to Rome, where if the *Suda* is to be trusted he gained something of a reputation, around the mid-century, as a practising musician as well as a scholar. We might guess that his activities, whatever they were, were coloured by his Alexandrian background and responded in some way to the interests of an educated circle in Neronian Rome'.<sup>235</sup>

Barker's speculation may be bold, but it seems to me entirely plausible to suppose that Didymus acquired his reputation as an outstanding musician by combining theoretical study and composition with practical performance. This idea seems

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<sup>234</sup> Ptolemy *Harm.* 2.13-14, Porphyry 5.11-14, 25.3-28.34, 107.15. Text and translation in Barker 1989, 242-244. Discussion in Hagel 2009, 187-94; Creese 2010, 288-92; Barker 2015, 29-30.

<sup>235</sup> Barker 1994, 64.

plausible, not least because it reflects what Nero himself was doing. Suetonius and Cassius Dio could have presented the episode in the Domus Aurea as yet another of Nero's interminable recitals, a sequel to the concert series in Greece, but instead they fashion a more distinctive *mise-en-scène* in which the emperor assumes the persona of scientist as well as musician. In Suetonius' narrative, Nero gathers together several instruments of varying size and design, and takes time to demonstrate the intricate mechanical properties of each one (*ostendensque singula, de ratione et difficultate cuiusque disserens*). Dio similarly conjures an image of a fanatical inventor, tampering obsessively with his gadget in a bid to make it sound 'louder and more musical'.

We might even see Nero being cast here as a kind of Roman Archimedes, with his own water-inspired *eureka* moment.<sup>236</sup> Archimedes was a contemporary of Ctesibius and studied as a young man in Alexandria. There were certainly some in antiquity who claimed, however mistakenly, that the *organum hydraulicum* was the invention of Archimedes and not Ctesibius.<sup>237</sup> There is also something Archimedean about the characterisation of Nero as a devoted academic unfazed by the precariousness of his situation. It was Archimedes' extraordinary *industria* that ultimately cost him his life following the Roman sack of Syracuse in 212 BC.<sup>238</sup> In the words of Cicero, Archimedes possessed such *ardor studii* that 'he did not even perceive that his country had been captured' (*ne quidem patriam captam esse senserit*), while in Plutarch's narrative he refuses to be led off to his conqueror Marcellus 'until he had solved his problem and set up a demonstration' (πρὶν ἢ τελέσαι τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ καταστήσαι πρὸς

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<sup>236</sup> For the 'eureka' story, cf. Vitruvius 9.praef.10; Jaeger 2008, 17-31.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Tertullian *De Anima* 14.4; Perrot 1971, 144. Archimedes and Ctesibius are associated by Vitruvius (1.1.7, 7.praef.14) and Pliny (*HN* 7.125).

<sup>238</sup> Val. Max. 8.7.ext.7, *nimiam cupiditatem investigandi*; Livy 25.31.9, *intantum formis quas in pulvere descripserat*.

τὴν ἀπόδειξιν).<sup>239</sup> Nero too had his *patria* taken away from him; he too had a problem that he needed to solve; *apodeixis* serves as the prelude to his removal.

Should we be surprised to find echoes of Archimedes, who ‘fiddled’ while Syracuse burned, and Ctesibius, the barber’s son turned water technician, in representations of Nero the organist? We are dealing, after all, with a man who grew up under the tutelage of a barber, and who boasted among his proudest achievements the discovery of a new way of concentrating water by boiling it and then rapidly cooling it down with snow.<sup>240</sup> Nero turned his mind to more concrete projects too. His taste for highly complex and innovative constructions provides the subject of countless anecdotes: think, for instance, of the collapsible boat designed to drown Agrippina, supposedly inspired by a mechanical stage prop showcased in the theatre.<sup>241</sup> Suetonius puts it most succinctly: ‘in no other respect was he more ruinously prodigal than when he was building’.<sup>242</sup>

It is said that the architects (*machinatores*) of the Domus Aurea were tasked with creating effects which ‘nature had refused’ (*quae natura denegavisset*).<sup>243</sup> To accomplish this daunting assignment, they exploited a strikingly familiar ploy: Nero’s entire palace stood as a monumental witness to the miraculous potential of hydraulics. The baths were fitted with an intricate network of pipes which pumped out two kinds of water, salt and sulphur; the dining-rooms even boasted a piping system which sprinkled the guests with perfume. Archaeological research suggests that these wondrous effects

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<sup>239</sup> Cic. *Fin.* 5.50; Plut. *Marc.* 19.4.

<sup>240</sup> Nero’s tutors: Suet. *Nero* 6.3. The *decocta Neronis*: Plin. *HN* 31.40; Suet. *Nero* 27.2, 48.3; Dio 63.28.5; Gowers 1994.

<sup>241</sup> Suet. *Nero* 34.2; Dio 61.12.2. Dio, in his own time, witnessed a *venatio* involving a collapsing stage set in the shape of a boat (77.1.4-5). For Nero’s use of water technology in *spectacula*, cf. Dio 61.9.5, 62.15.1; Suet. *Nero* 12.1-2; Hammer 2010, 72.

<sup>242</sup> Suet. *Nero* 31.1-2: *non in alia re tamen damnosior quam in aedificando*. On Nero as builder, see Elsner 1994.

<sup>243</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.42; cf. Suet. *Nero* 55. Seneca (*Ep.* 88.22) uses the term *machinatores* to describe those who design *automata* for the stage.

may have been achieved through the use of Ctesibian force-pumps.<sup>244</sup> A major breakthrough was made about a decade ago, when archaeologists excavating the Vigna Barberini on the Palatine uncovered traces of a deep substructure, which they identified as the foundations of the rotating *cenatio rotunda* described by Suetonius. It is believed that the room possessed a revolving floor, supported on a set of platforms, the movement of which was enabled by a hydraulic mechanism.<sup>245</sup>

Set against this artificial backdrop, the *organa hydraulica* would have seemed not at all out of place. These instruments were much more than mere playthings or distractions. Their installation in the Domus Aurea contributed to an ambitious Neronian project of recreating the atmosphere of the Alexandrian Museum in the heart of Rome. Various points of resemblance have been spotted between the Domus Aurea and the royal palaces of the Ptolemaic kings.<sup>246</sup> Alexandria seems to have provided the blueprint for Nero's project of urban regeneration in the aftermath of the Great Fire: Rome was to become a city of well-ordered streets, grand boulevards, and colonnaded plazas, just like its Egyptian counterpart.<sup>247</sup> Pliny, revealingly, places Ctesibius' invention of the water-organ on a par with the laying out of the city of Alexandria by Dinochares.<sup>248</sup> What better place, therefore, to situate the *organa hydraulica* than at the very centre of 'Neropolis', the city reborn in Alexandria's image? The emperor's dying words, *qualis artifex pereo*, neatly encapsulated what he saw as his final mission: to

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<sup>244</sup> Suet. *Nero* 31.2; cf. Plut. *Galb.* 19.3 for the use of similar pipes by Otho at a banquet for Nero. On the link with Ctesibius' invention, see Tybjerg 2003, 448; Day 2017, 179.

<sup>245</sup> Suet. *Nero* 31.2: *praecipua cenationum rotunda, quae perpetuo diebus ac noctibus vice mundi circumageretur*; Villedieu 2011, 51-52. Alexandria, again, may have been a source of inspiration: cf. Pappus of Alexandria *Collectio* 8.2; Grant 1970, 175.

<sup>246</sup> Voisin 1987, Hemsoll 1990, Perrin 1990, Woodman 1992.

<sup>247</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.43.

<sup>248</sup> Plin. *HN* 7.125: *laudatus est...Ctesibius pneumatica ratione et hydraulicis organis repertis, Dinochares metatus Alexandro condente in Aegypto Alexandriam.*

achieve a marriage of music and craftsmanship that would leave a true, all-encompassing artistic legacy.<sup>249</sup> Alexandria stayed with him until the bitter end.<sup>250</sup>

## Conclusion

Nero lived in an age of musomania. His performances – as singer, actor, and multi-instrumentalist – were not those of a self-obsessed tyrant, although history has remembered them as such. What I have tried to show in this chapter is that Nero’s music-making responded to, and drew energy from, the cultural interests of the Roman people, bringing together different groups of society for whom singing and dancing provided a happy relief from the humdrum monotony of daily life. The ‘New Apollo’ fostered a spirit of *joie de vivre* that combined elements of traditional Augustan imagery with an idiosyncratic imperial persona: youthful, larger-than-life, and, for many, excitingly relatable. In this way, Nero succeeded in creating and disseminating an original musical language (*carmina Neronis*, the ‘Master’s Songbook’), as well as new organological technologies, which repackaged elements of Greek and Alexandrian culture into a distinctly Roman product optimised for mass consumption.

Nero’s music-making was not the primary cause of his downfall, even if it did expose a rift within the Roman upper classes. But music certainly played a role in creating the myth that Nero later became. The ancient authors to whom we owe our image of the man who ‘fiddled while Rome burned’ were, as we have seen, steeped in a centuries-old tradition of musical criticism, and found in this tradition a rich vocabulary of contempt which aided them in their efforts to obliterate Nero’s legacy. But if we are

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<sup>249</sup> On these twin associations of *artifex*, see Champlin 2003a, 51, overstating the case somewhat. For a more traditional reading, favouring the ‘musical’ aspect, see Connors 1994.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Suet. *Nero* 50.1 on the *nutrex* Alexandria.

to have any hope of recovering a faithful image of the man behind the myth – the *princeps* behind the *citharoedus* – we must privilege cultural experiences over ideological paradigms. In short, we must acknowledge the power of the musical movement Nero helped to inspire.

## Conclusion

In 1927, the rector of Exeter College and former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, Dr. Lewis Farnell, was invited to give the welcome address at a summer school for music teachers in Oxford. An outspoken conservative, Dr. Farnell took the opportunity to deliver an impassioned tirade against the latest musical craze sweeping the nation. It was known colloquially as ‘jazz’, and its arrival on British shores presented a grave threat to society. The Oxford don saw it as his duty as the head of a venerable academic institution to prevent the bane of American ‘jazz’ music from corrupting the minds of youngsters everywhere. The day after his much-publicised appearance at the summer school, a brief transcript of the speech appeared in the national press. It read as follows:

*DR. FARNELL FULMINATES ABOUT JAZZ!*

‘Vulgar music might not be as criminal as murder, but it is far more degrading. Our civilisation is threatened by our own inventions, by dreadful noises, our horrible motor traffic, Americanisms and “jazz” music...There is nothing more degrading than vulgar music, which is worse than poisonous drink.’<sup>1</sup>

Aside from his capacity as a university administrator, Lewis Farnell was also a distinguished classical scholar, whose five-volume publication on *The Cults of the Greek States* (1896-1909) remains seminal to this day. Is it possible that, in delivering his invective against ‘vulgar music’, Dr. Farnell was somehow channelling the sentiments of a Plato or a Cicero, whether consciously or unconsciously?

The ancients may have stopped short of calling music ‘more degrading than murder’, but their writings on the subject foreshadow Farnell’s critique of jazz in

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<sup>1</sup> As cited in the popular magazine *Melody Maker* (vol. II. no. 21, September 1927, p.851). I give here only a snippet – other parts of the speech contain highly racist language which I felt necessary to censor. Godbolt (1984, 29) situates Farnell’s remarks in the context of the British anti-jazz movement of the 1920s.

startling ways. Music, for the Greeks and Romans, was not some random fact of life, untouched by the vicissitudes of history. It had a time and a place, a context and a genealogy. Music mirrored the peoples who produced it. It bore their identities and their customs. That was as true in first-century Rome as it was in twentieth-century Britain. In his famous satire on the perils of cosmopolitanism, Juvenal rails against the musical culture from Syria that had ‘long ago’ (*iam pridem*) washed up on the banks of the Tiber. The pipes (*tibiae*), the slanted strings (*chordae obliquae*), and the native drums (*non gentilia tympana*) were a stain on the civilized values that Juvenal held dear: for with the new music came a new language (*lingua*), new customs (*mores*), and new sexualities (*ad circum iussas prostare puellas*) which threatened to subvert the status quo.<sup>2</sup> American ‘jazz’ was no different, in the eyes of its British critics: it had the potential to revolutionise technology, to alter manners of speaking, and to overhaul the national identity.

This thesis has explored the influences of music on Roman society, politics, and culture from the conquest of Greece to the end of the Julio-Claudian Principate. I have focused primarily on the intersections between music and spectacle, in the hope of shedding light on the cultural history of the period under consideration. A wide range of issues has been tackled. We have examined the cultural politics of the Roman *ludi*, delved into literary discourses on luxury and leisure, and looked closely at the (self-) representation of the Roman emperors. We have explored the various occasions on which music was performed, identifying points of contact between the games and the triumph, the *convivium* and the *contio*. We have also mapped musical culture onto the physical landscape, incorporating performance into our reading of architectural spaces,

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<sup>2</sup> Juv. *Sat.* 3.62-65.

including theatres (e.g. the Theatre of Pompey), temples (e.g. Hercules Musarum, Apollo Palatinus), houses, and palaces (e.g. the House of Augustus, the Domus Aurea).

To seek out a common thread linking these various strands would be a reductive exercise. One of the fundamental aims of this project has been to show that the study of Roman music, far from being marginal or irrelevant, can in fact be brought to bear on a multiplicity of historical issues. Nevertheless, our discussion over the four chapters has revolved around around two central themes, which have important implications for the wider discipline. The first concerns the relationship between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ culture. The music of the masses has always been frowned upon by those who would mark themselves out as cultural elites. Throughout antiquity, the champions of aristocracy sought to impose an ideological boundary between their own music and that of the common people: theirs was edifying, moderate, traditional, and patriotic; the people’s was noisy, inventive, immoral, and foreign. This boundary had a spatial dimension, too, in that it cordoned off the world of the banquet, with its air of cultural sophistication, from the world of the theatre. In reality, however, the boundary between ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ music was always permeable, and this permeability generated long-term social and political tensions. There was nothing stopping Anicius, Clodius, Mark Antony or Nero from sharing in the musical pursuits of the plebs. That carried the risk of *infamia*, certainly, but we should not underestimate the ideological contests at stake in these encounters. Practical music-making sparked a dialogue not only between dominant and subaltern groups, but also within the dominant group itself, as philosophically-minded elites clashed over the ethical imperatives of musical performance. As always, recovering the voices of the disenfranchised and disaffected is a task fraught with difficulty. But it is clear that not everyone in ancient Rome danced to the same tune, and that alone speaks of a culture worth studying.

This brings us secondly to the dialectic between Greek music and Roman music. On the one hand, our findings have revealed clear signs of continuity in the way musical culture was experienced and conceptualised from the time of Plato onward. The musical debates that originated in fifth-century Athens went on to influence generations of Roman philosophers, poets, satirists, orators, and historians – even more so than has previously been acknowledged. However, these thinkers did not simply regurgitate the wisdom of the Greeks without questioning the intellectual underpinnings of this tradition (modern scholars have done the Romans a particular disservice in this respect). They took aspects of Greek musical theory – chiefly, the ubiquitous concepts of *harmonia* and *ethos* – and applied them in modified ways to a host of novel situations and subjects: the crisis of the Republic; the competition between Octavian and Mark Antony; the Augustan restoration; the tyranny of Nero; and so on. In this sense, literary responses to music can tell us a great deal about the transmission and transformation of *paideia* under the Roman Empire, and the role of philosophical knowledge in shaping historical memories.

The process of converting Greek *mousike* into Roman spectacle was long and complex. It involved a series of individual acts of cultural improvisation over a period of two centuries. In Republican times, men of the likes of Fulvius Nobilior, Anicius Gallus, and Pompey the Great sponsored elaborate theatrical productions which balanced tradition with innovation, the familiar with the exotic. Nero's performances, similarly, reflected an amalgam of Greek, Roman, and Alexandrian influences, albeit packaged in a highly contentious format. But it was not only in the public sphere that musical exchanges took place. Our investigation into the phenomena of *symphoniae* and *acroamata* has showed how the Romans (and Greeks living under Rome) engaged with the musical products of the Hellenistic East on both a practical and ideological level.

Overall, I hope that this thesis has succeeded in restoring something of the dynamism and creativity of Roman musical culture. No longer can we be content to speak of 'Roman music' as a poor replica of 'Greek music' (as if the two could exist independently of one another). We must be prepared to adopt a nuanced approach to the evidence, which takes into account the subtle ambiguities and complexities which complicate the study of music in historical societies. In this way, we can gain a privileged insight into the experiences and mentalities of the people who inhabited the vibrant soundscapes of ancient Rome.

## Figures

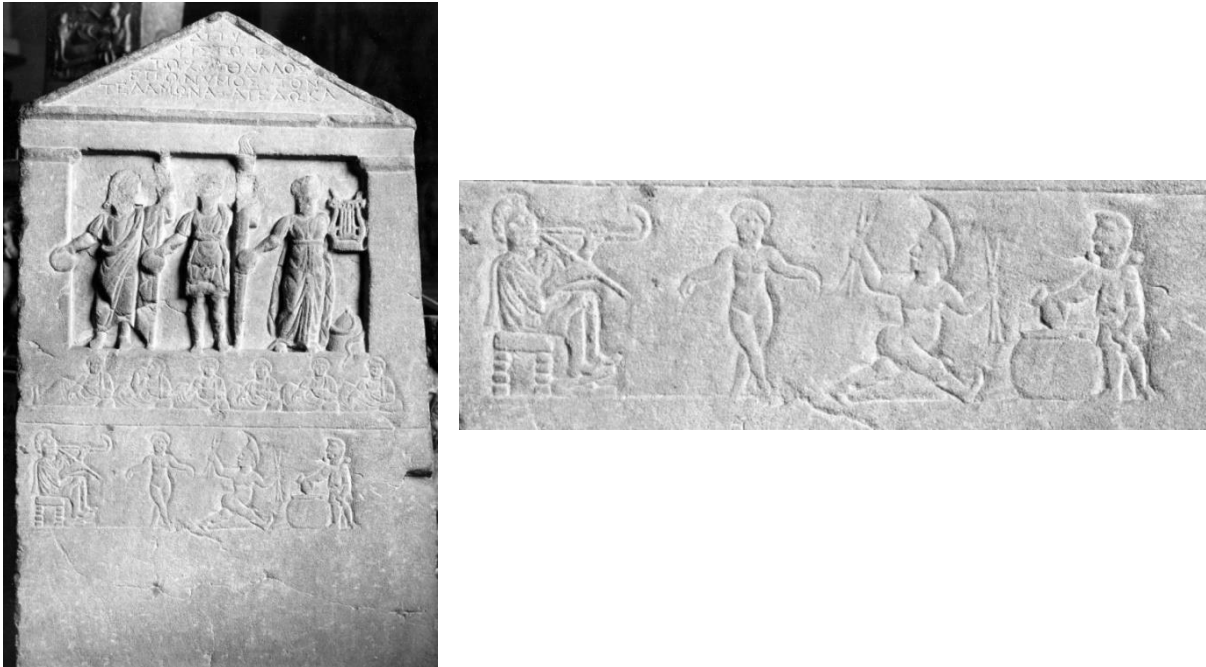
**Figure 1:** Roman soldier playing a horn (*cornu*); bas-relief from an Iberian limestone building; Osuna (Urso), Spain; 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC; National Archaeological Museum of Spain, Madrid. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



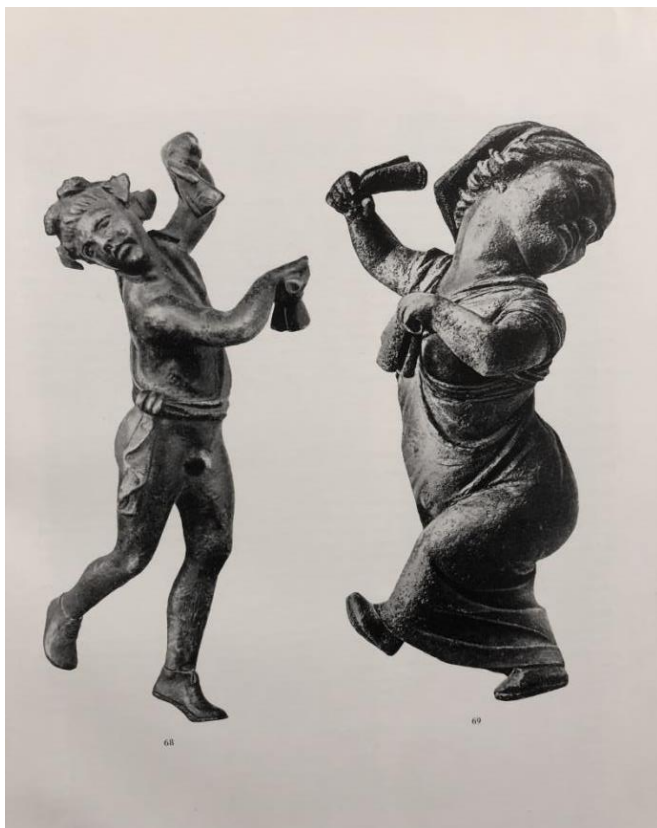
**Figure 2:** Musicians and armed dancers accompanying a triumph (or ovation); marble relief; mid-first century BC; Raccolta di antichità Baldassini-Castelli, Rome. After Latham 2016, 32, fig. 8.



**Figure 3:** Marble votive relief, with symposium scene; detail (*right*) of a player of the Phrygian *aulos* accompanying mime-dancers and a figure drawing wine from a large vessel; Kyzikos, Mysia; 150-30 BC; British Museum 1890,0730.1. Source: British Museum Collection Database.



**Figure 4:** Roman bronze statuettes representing dancers with *crotala*; late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; Staatliche Museen, Berlin, inv. 2120. After Fleischhauer 1965, figs. 68-69.



**Figure 5:** Dancers and *tibicines* flanking a circular dining couch; mosaic from S. Sabina, Rome; ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. After Clarke 2003, 217, fig. 127.



**Figure 6:** Hellenistic queen (or princess?) playing the *cithara*; wall-painting from Room H, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, Boscoreale; ca. 50-40 BC; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 03.14.5. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/03.14.5/>



**Figure 7:** Musical concert involving a lyre-player, *tibicen*, and singer; wall-painting from Ins. Orientalis II.4, 19, Herculaneum; ca. 25 BC; Naples Archaeological Museum, inv. 9021. Source: HerculaneuminPictures (<http://www.herculaneum.uk/index.htm>).



**Figure 8:** The ‘Sorrento Base’; late Augustan/Tiberian period; Museo Correale, Sorrento. After Roccas 1989, 572.



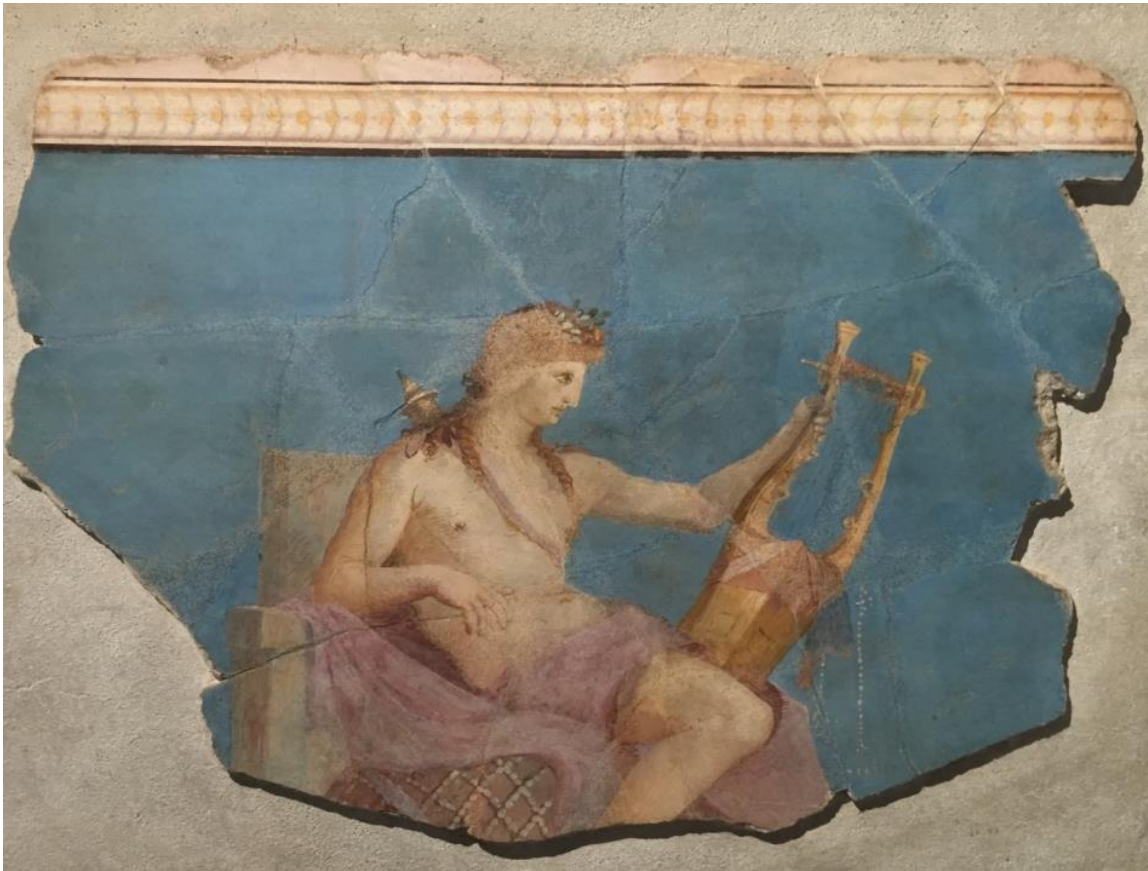
**Figure 9:** Marble relief; 30-20 BC; Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Sk 921. Author's photo.



**Figure 10:** Side panel of candelabrum base; Pentelic marble; early Augustan period; Musei Capitolini, inv. 2271. Author's photo.



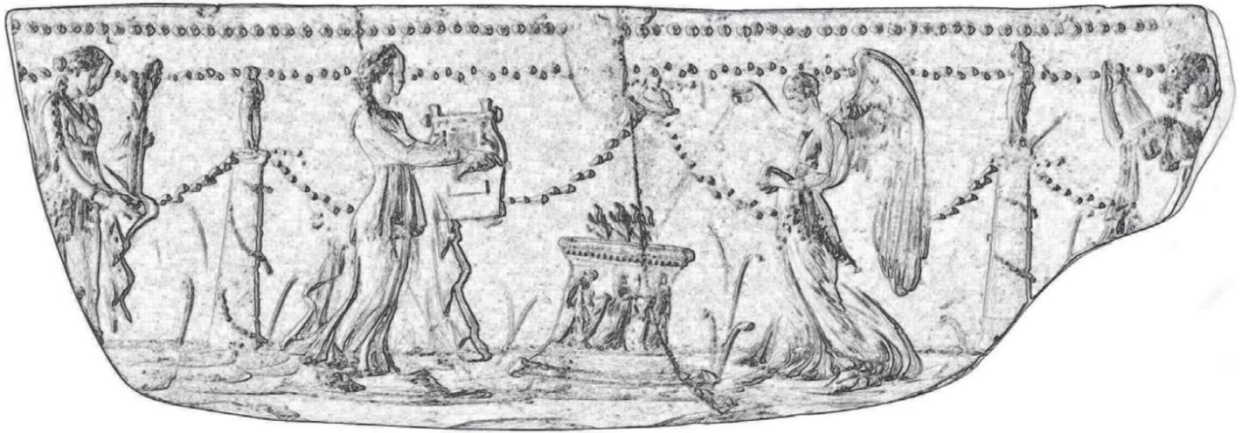
**Figure 11:** Wall-painting from the House of Augustus; Museo Palatino, Rome, inv. 379982. Author's photo.



**Figure 12:** Terracotta plaque from the Temple of Apollo Palatinus; Museo Palatino, Rome, inv. 379051. Author's photo.



**Figure 13:** Apollo Citharoedus and a Victory pouring libation on an altar; fragment of a mould for an Arretine bowl; Augustan period; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 98.876. After Castaldo 2018, 100, fig. 2.



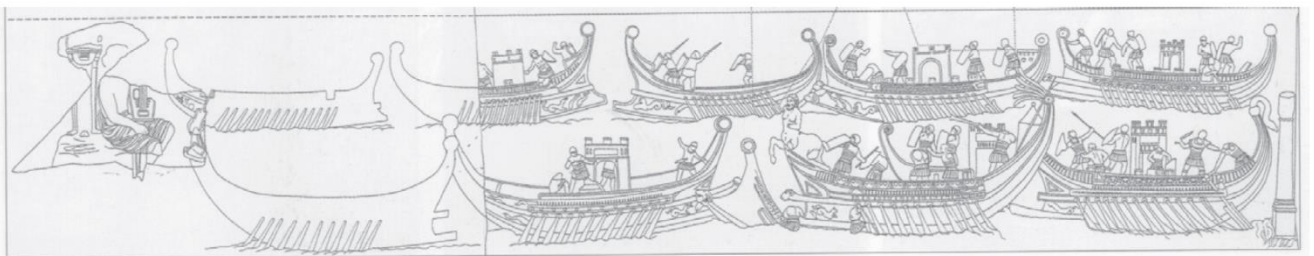
**Figure 14:** Detail of marble statue of Augustus from Prima Porta, showing Apollo riding a griffin; after a bronze original, ca. 20 BC; Vatican Museum, Rome. Source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/roger\\_ulrich/4040782401/in/gallery-22147242@N02-72157649564186049/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/roger_ulrich/4040782401/in/gallery-22147242@N02-72157649564186049/)



**Figure 15a:** Apollo Citharoedus overlooking the Battle of Actium; ‘Medinaceli Reliefs’, detail of panel; Szepmuveszeti Museum, Budapest, inv. 4817.1. After Castaldo 2018, 98, fig. 1.



**Figure 15b:** Apollo Citharoedus overlooking the Battle of Actium; ‘Medinaceli Reliefs’, drawing of panel. After La Rocca *et al.* 2013, 321.



**Figure 16:** Silver denarius; Italy (mint uncertain); 32-29 BC; American Numismatic Society; *RIC I*<sup>2</sup> Augustus 257. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 17:** Gold aureus; Rome mint; 19-4 BC; British Museum; *RIC I*<sup>2</sup> Augustus 298. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 18:** Silver denarius; Rome mint; 16-15 BC; British Museum; *RIC*<sup>2</sup> Augustus 366. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 19a:** Gold aureus; Lugdunum mint; 15-13 BC; British Museum; *RIC*<sup>2</sup> Augustus 170. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 19b:** Silver denarius; Lugdunum mint; 15-13 BC; British Museum; *RIC I<sup>2</sup>* Augustus 171A. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 20:** Gold aureus; Lugdunum mint, 11-10 BC; British Museum; *RIC I<sup>2</sup>* Augustus 192A. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.





**Figure 23:** Silver tetradrachm; Antioch mint; 166 BC; private collection; Houghton 2008, no. 1401. Source: <http://images.goldbergauctions.com>.



**Figure 24:** Dupondius of Domitian; Rome mint; 88 AD; Staatliche Museen, Berlin; *BMCRE* II 396, 434, pl. 79, 2. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 25:** Bronze as; Lugdunum mint; 62-68 AD; Münzkabinett Berlin; *RIC I<sup>2</sup> Nero* 380. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



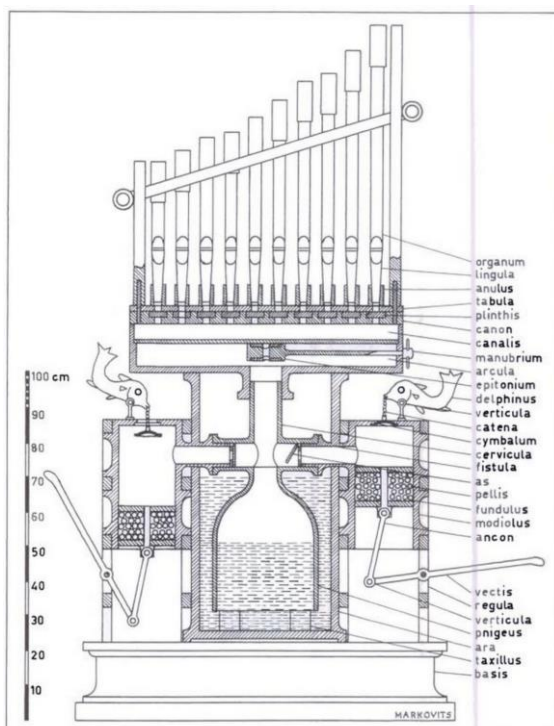
**Figure 26:** Bronze coin; Perinthos, Thrace; ca. 54-68 AD; American Numismatic Society; *RPC* 1752. Source: Corpus Nummorum Thracorum (<http://www.corpus-nummorum.eu>).



**Figure 27:** Banquet scene with captions; wall-painting from House of the Triclinium, Pompeii. After Clarke 2003, pl. 22.



**Figure 28:** Diagram of a *hydraulis* based on Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 10.8. After Markovits 2003, 686, Abb. 3.



**Figure 29:** Remains of the *hydraulis* from Aquincum, Budapest (*left*), with modern reconstruction (*right*); photograph. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



**Figure 30:** Copper alloy contorniate with laureate head of Nero (*obverse*) and a *hydraulis* with a figure standing facing on the left (*reverse*); Rome; 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century AD; British Museum R.4865. Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire.



**Figure 31:** Musician playing *syrinx*, bagpipes, and *scabellum*, accompanied by dwarf playing *cymbala*; terracotta from Alexandria, Egypt; 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD; Neues Museum Berlin, inv. 8798. After Baines 1960, fig. 35.



**Figure 32:** Musicians playing *hydraulis* and *tuba*. Terracotta from Alexandria, Egypt; 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; Louvre, Paris, inv. CA 426. After Vendries 2013, Pl. IX 3a.



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