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Musical Classicisms in Italy Before the Madrigal

Tim Shephard (University of Sheffield)

Dedicating his *Proportionale musices* of 1473-4 to King Ferdinand of Naples, Johannes Tinctoris famously complained that the nature of ancient Greek and Roman music was almost completely opaque to modern musicians. It is clear from Cicero, he writes, that the great musicians of the ancient world had "attained by power of thought a comprehension of almost all its range and infinite subject-matter;" and yet "concerning their methods of performance and notation we are far from unanimous in our opinions."[1] Tinctoris was apparently quite troubled by this circumstance, and returned to it in two subsequent treatises.[2] In the absence of models, how could fifteenth-century musicians hope to match the classicising projects of their literary and artistic counterparts, who benefitted from an abundance of ancient sculptural, architectural and written remains?

Modern evaluations of the relation between music and the fashion for the antique in Italy in the period before the madrigal have tended to proceed from the perspective of intellectual history.[3] This article aims to offer an alternative—although certainly related—perspective, by exploring the circulation of musical classicisms in Italian visual and material culture, roughly from 1450 to 1520. For the purposes of this study, material culture is taken to include the culture of books, so texts are not excluded from this inquiry, but they are considered in relation to their material circulation and visual design as books. This period saw the rise to prominence in Italy of both commercial text printing, and other multiply-copy formats such as the art print, the medal, the bronze plaquette, and a little later historiated maiolica. These technologies offer a particularly compelling lens through which to examine musical encounters with classical antiquity that were, unlike Tinctoris', not motivated by an expert professional interest in either music or classical texts. The term 'classicism' is adopted in this context to characterise an investment in antiquity as a fashionable source of cultural capital, distinct from—if clearly related to—the kinds of focussed intellectual and scholarly engagement with ancient texts for which the term 'humanism' is generally deployed in modern research.

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[1] "quod teste Tullio pene uim omnem ac materiam eius infinitam cogitatione comprehenderint ... tamen qualiter pronuntiauerint aut composuerint scripto nobis minime constat." Ronald Woodley, "The Proportionale musices of Iohannes Tinctoris: A Critical Edition, Translation and Study" (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1982), vol. 1, 166-7; vol. 2, 311 (Prohemium 17-21).

[2] Tinctoris, *De arte contrapuncti*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey J. Dean 2015: http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deartecontrapuncti, Prologue 12; *De inventione et usu musice*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey J. Dean, 2015: http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deinventioneetusumusice, 2.19.16. My thanks to Jeffrey Dean for drawing these to my attention.

[3] Among a large literature, see Gary Tomlinson, "Renaissance Humanism and Music," in *European Music, 1520-1640*, ed. James Haar, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 2-19; James Hankins, "Humanism and Music in Italy," in *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 231-62.

The objects that propel this study—books, printed images, decorated furniture, small bronze reliefs, and maiolica—locate it within what has been called the 'material turn' in historical research. The potential of an object-oriented approach in Renaissance studies has been explored with particular vigour by curators and researchers at the Victoria & Albert Museum, initially in connection with the exhibition *At Home in Renaissance Italy* held in 2006 and the preparation of new Medieval & Renaissance Galleries which opened in 2009.[4] Although musicologists have always dealt with the materiality of musical scores and instruments, it is above all in the work of Flora Dennis, co-curator of *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, that musicology engages fully with this material turn. Dennis' research has focused on sound and music in domestic spaces, and on objects that draw musical sound and its meanings tangibly into the realm of everyday experience in the home, especially in the sixteenth and early seventeeth century.[5]

The discourse on the 'material Renaissance' contends that objects have the potential to bear remarkable witness to people, their experiences and practices, and their sentiments and concerns.[6] Its methods are generally understood to fall into two strands.[7] The first, associated with museums and characterised as curatorial or archaeological, begins with the object and moves outward to broader questions of social and cultural value. The second, located in the academy and in the humanities, begins with research questions which it seeks to answer with the help of different types of evidence, including (but not limited to) objects. Much recent work in this vein has explored the potential of blending these two approaches.[8] An object-oriented approach does not, therefore, preclude iconographical or textual analysis; rather, it brings such methods alongside a consideration of how the nature of an object's manufacture, circulation and use contributed to its perceived meanings and purposes. Similarly, it does not preclude the discussion of types of object in general, but entails traffic between the type and its individual manifestations. Such an approach is enormously assisted by the new availability of large-scale digital catalogues with high-resolution images and rich description, both at the level of the museum or library, and at the level of a whole class of objects as with the Universal Short Title Catalogue. The potential of this last resource to generate quantitative insights into the circulation and significance of books has been demonstrated in several recent studies.[9]

The primary objective of this study is to document the circulation of musical classicisms in Italian visual and material culture in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with a particular focus

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[4] Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis ed., *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A, 2006); Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, Flora Dennis, and Ann Matchette, ed., *Approaching the Italian Renaissance Interior: Sources, Methodologies, Debates* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Glyn Davies and Kirstin Kennedy, ed., *Medieval and Renaissance Art: People and Possessions* (London: V&A, 2009); Peta Motture and Michelle O'Malley, ed., *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects: Design, Function and Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010).

[5] See, most recently, Flora Dennis, "Musical Sound and Material Culture," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (New York: Routledge, 2017), 371-82.

[6] Motture and O'Malley ed., *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 3-4; Ulinka Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance," *Past and Present* 219 (2013): 41-85.

[7] Motture and O'Malley ed., *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 3-4. See also Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, ed., *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[8] Motture and O'Malley ed., *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 4.

[9] Especially Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380-1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

on the multiple-copy media brought to the fore at that time by developing technologies and techniques. At the same time, the article makes a secondary contribution in building upon recent research in the 'material Renaissance', its methods and resources, to demonstrate further the potential of objects and images as sources for the history of music in Renaissance Italy.

The impact of printing on Italian musical culture did not start with Petrucci. Extensive comments on music can be found in the first book to be printed in Italy, a 1465 edition of Cicero's *De Oratore*—the complete text of which had been recovered in 1421, and which by mid-century was taught at several Italian universities. The 19 editions of Cicero's text printed in Italy by 1525, often with a commentary by Ognibene Bonisoli, dwarves the five of Franchino Gafori's *Practica musicae*, and even equals the 19 editions available by 1525 of the first true bestseller of printed music theory, Bonaventura da Brescia's *Regula musice plane*, a work aimed squarely at a monastic readership. The extensive *laudes musicae* included in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*—recovered complete in 1416 and printed in 15 editions by 1525 with commentaries by several authors, and also used as a university textbook—undoubtedly reached a larger readership than its various imitations in the specialist literature.[10]

These two texts present music as an affective practice, attendant to poetics, whose persuasive potential could be valuable to rhetorical *pronunciatio* or delivery, under the umbrella topic of public oratory. The relation of music with rhetoric has generally been discussed in connection with the theory of the affections as a characteristic feature of Baroque musical culture, prefigured in the sixteenth century.[11] But the impact of these two texts was already immense in Italy in the mid to late fifteenth century, establishing or re-enforcing tropes and parameters of musical discourse that can be found across the piste of contemporary intellectual and literary culture.[12] Their influence is felt strongly in the opening chapters of specialist music treatises (e.g. Florentius de Faxolis, *Liber musices* 1.1.10-11; Gafori, *Theorica musice* 1.1.65-7; Pietro Aaron, *Toscanello de la musica* 1.1), but also in the treatments of music found in treatises on different subjects (e.g. Battista Guarino, *De ordine docendi*; Mario Equicola, *Libro de natura de amore*; Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*). The venerable *De musica* of Boethius by comparison, beloved of the theorists, must have been rather obscure, available in print only in the 1491 and 1497 Venetian editions of his complete works; his runaway print successes in Italy were rather the *Consolatio*, and the *De disciplina scholarium* of which he was

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[10] On the use of both texts in university teaching see Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 237-9. On the laudes musicae see James Hutton, 'Some English Poems in Praise of Music', *English Miscellany* 2 (1951), 1-63; Leofranc Holford-Strevens, "The *laudes musicae* in Renaissance Music Treatises," in *Bon jour, bon mois et bonne estrenne: Essays on Renaissance Music in Honour of David Fallows*, ed. Fabrice Fitch and Jacobijn Kiel (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 338-48.

[11] Claude V. Palisca, *Music and Ideas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 179-231.

[12] See especially F. Alberto Gallo, "Pronuntiatio: ricerche sulla storia di un termine retorico-musicale," *Acta Musicologica* 35.1 (1963): 38-46; Gallo, *Music in the Castle: Troubadours, Books and Orators in the Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Anna Herklotz and Kathryn Krug (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 69-112; Palisca, *Music and Ideas*, 207-8. See also, but taking a different tack, Howard Mayer Brown, "Emulation, Competition and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35.1 (1982), 1-48; Ronald Woodley, "Renaissance Music Theory as Literature: On Reading the Proportionale Musices of Johannes Tinctoris," *Renaissance Studies* 1.2 (1987), 209-20.

not in truth the author.[13] Ironically, the few brief comments on music included in the commentary often attached to the pseudo-Boethian *De disciplina*, thought in the period to be by St Thomas Aquinas but now attributed to William Wheatley, enjoyed a larger print circulation than Boethius' authentic text dedicated to the subject.

If the success of the treatises by Cicero and Quintilian promoted a classicising position in which persuasive music was valued first in relation to poetry, and thence to public speaking, such a position was strongly reinforced by the bestselling book on education. Written whilst studying and teaching at the University of Padua around 1402, by 1525 Pier Paolo Vergerio's *De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis* had appeared in an impressive 35 printed editions, often bundled together with St Basil's *Address to Young Men on Greek Literature* and other texts on education by Plutarch, Xenophon and St Jerome. By way of comparison, Martianus Cappella's *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii*, often taken effectively to define late medieval education, was printed just twice in Italy in this period, in 1499 and 1500. Although Vergerio's treatise was written shortly before the complete texts of *De oratore* and the *Institutione oratoria* came to light, he was certainly aware of those works in their fragmentary state, and the priority he gives to literary and ethical study is strongly consonant with them.

Vergerio's description of 'liberal studies' begins with subjects that for him are the most important and all-encompassing: history, philosophy (especially moral philosophy), and eloquence. Then he introduces the Greek *paideia* as a framing device: the Greeks used to teach their boys letters, wrestling, music, and drawing—but drawing is immediately discounted, and wrestling and music postponed to a later section. He takes up the remaining subject of letters, or literature, which is subdivided into the 'rational disciplines' of 'patterns of speech' (*doctrinis*), 'disputation' (*disputandi ratio*), and 'rhetoric'—the Trivium in disguise. Next he recommends the study of poetics and music, discussed as a single item. Music is here a science—actual music-making is discussed in a later section on leisure—but there is no mention of cosmic harmony, instead it is music's ethically affective power that justifies its place in the scheme. There follows the rest of the Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry and astronomy—the latter given more the character of natural philosophy than of divine speculation. Finally, Vergerio lists medicine, law and theology, the subjects traditionally taught in the higher faculties of the universities.

The pairing of music with poetry or poetics, spelled out clearly in all three of these quite widely-read books, was a riotously popular musical classicism in Italy in this period. Of course, music and poetry had always been allied, but in fifteenth-century Italy their alliance was repeatedly and decisively re-presented as the essential classicising musical topos. Its impact is clearly visible in the most widely-distributed visual representations of the Liberal Arts in Italy, the C set from the so-called *Tarocchi di Mantegna*, a suite of printed images made in two versions, probably in Ferrara in the 1460s and 70s.[14] Each version comprises five sets of ten images grouped by type: first the stations of man, then

[13] On the reception of the *De consolatione* and *De disciplina* in Italy see Dario Brancato, "Readers and Interpreters of the *Consolatio* in Italy, 1300-1550," in *A Companion to Boethius in the Renaissance*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Philip Edward Phillips (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 357-411. On the reception of the *De musica* see most recently Ann E. Moyer, "The *Quadrivium* and the Decline of Boethian Influence," in ibid., 479-518. On the *De consolatione* as in itself a musical text, see David S. Chamberlain, "Philosophy of Music in the Consolatio of Boethius," *Speculum* 45 (1970): 80–97.

[14] On the *tarocchi* see especially Kristin Lippincott, "The Frescoes of the Salone dei Mesi in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara: Style, Iconography and Cultural Context," 2 vols., PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1987,

the Muses, the Liberal Arts, the Genii and Virtues together, and finally the spheres leading to the Prima Causa. The intended use or purpose of these images has never been fully explained, but they are clearly related in conception to the various mythographic, astrological and geographical ready-reference publications that circulated in Italy throughout the century, such as Gregorio Dati's *La Sfera*, Baccio Baldini's planets engravings (discussed below), Lodovico Lazzarelli's *De Gentilium deorum imaginibus*, and Niccolò Burzio's *Musarum nympharumque epitomata*.

The C set of ten images adds Poetry, Philosophy and Theology to the usual roster of seven Liberal Arts. Music and Poetry are very clearly paired (figs. 1-2): they are adjacent in the series, they are the only seated Liberal Arts, and they are both represented as women in classicising dress playing the recorder. Poetry faces the last three arts, concerned with higher truths: Philosophy, Astrology and Theology. Music has her body turned to these higher things, but her face looks back to the more mundane concerns of Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Geometry and Arithmetic—she is Poetry's lesser counterpart, caught between heavenly and worldly matters.

Figures 1-2: Ferrarese, *Music* and *Poetry*, c.1465, engravings. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Complete Virgil editions were the bread and butter of the Italian printing industry almost from its inception through into the early sixteenth century: an extraordinary 109 printed Virgils appeared in

1:58-67; Alessandra Mottola-Molfino and Mauro Natali ed., *Le Muse e il Principe: Arte di Corte nel Rinascimento Padano*, 2 vols. (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1991), 2:431-41.

Italy before 1525. Anyone acquiring an education in Latin letters in fifteenth-century Italy perforce also acquired a copy of Virgil, both before and after the advent of printing, because Virgil furnished the standard model of verse style.

The first work in a printed Virgil is usually the Eclogues, and it was the Eclogues too that circulated most extensively in print outside of the complete editions, becoming available in print in vernacular translation by Bernardo Pulci as early as 1484 (much earlier than most other classical literature).[15] The Eclogues are—among other things—poems about the act of presenting poetry as song. From the early sixteenth century the opening of Eclogue 1 was often graced with a woodcut showing two shepherds making music in a rustic setting to illustrate the point (fig. 3).

Printing technology allowed artists as well as writers and publishers to reach wider audiences.[16] As woodcut illustrations became common in printed Virgils, independent art prints showing music-making shepherds also circulated in large numbers (fig. 4).[17] Print runs for such images varied considerably, depending on the individual motivations prompting the production of a particular image, but could run into the thousands.[18] Art prints participated in a culture of collecting embracing medals and reliefs, tabletop statuary, natural curiosities, and other objets d'art, in which permanent display was only one among several possibilities. An engraving might fixed to a panel or canvas and hung on the wall, but it could equally be added an album, or kept in box with a collection of single sheets.[19]

Purchasers of musical shepherd engravings must have overlapped substantially with participants in the growing vogue for vernacular eclogues in Italy in precisely the same decades. The two editions of Pulci's Virgil translation incorporated a selection of vernacular eclogues written by Florentine and Siennese poets between the late 1460s and the beginning of the 1480s. Over the following two decades an illustrious list of elite poets in Naples, Florence, Ferrara, Mantua and elsewhere engaged with the eclogue, the fruits of their activity finding a wide readership in print from around 1500. Among these the work of two poets achieved a particularly impressive distribution. Between the first edition of 1498 and the 1530s, Antonio Tebaldeo's four vernacular eclogues appeared, together with the rest of his collected verse, in more than 40 printed editions in Italy. In the same period, following the first—incomplete and unauthorised—Venetian edition of 1502, Jacopo Sannazaro's twelve vernacular eclogues with narrative prose interludes, the *Arcadia*, were printed more than 30 times. These vernacular eclogues eclipsed even the Italian printed circulation of their Virgilian models in the first few decades of the sixteenth century.

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[15] On the reception of the Eclogues see recently Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 21-34.

[16] The most comprehensive study of printed images is David Landau and Peter W. Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

[17] On such images see, among others, David Rosand, "Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision," in *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape*, by Robert C. Cafritz, David Rosand and Lawrence Gowring (Washington: Phillips Collection, 1988), 20-81; W. R. Rearick, "From Arcady to the Barnyard," in *The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1992), 137-59.

[18] Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 31.

[19] Michael Bury and David Landau, "Ferdinand Columbus's Italian Prints: Clarifications and Implications," in *The Print Collection of Ferdinand Columbus (1488–1539): A Renaissance Collector in Seville*, edited by Mark P. McDonald (London: British Museum, 2004), vol. 1, 188.

BVCOLICORVM ECLOGA PRIMA

P.V.M.BVCOLICORVM TITYRVS.

MELIBOEVS,TITYRVS.

TITYRE TV PATVLAE recubans ſub tegmine fagi ME.
Agreſtem tenui muſam meditaris auena.
Nos patriæ fines,⁊ dulcia linquimus arua.

Figure 3: *Publii Vergilii Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis cum Servii Commentariis...* (Venice: Bernardinus Stagninus and Ioannes Baptista Egnatius, 1507), fol. 13r. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. Figure 4: Benedetto Montagna, *Shepherd with a platerspiel*, c.1500-15, engraving. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Like the *Eclogues*, the *Aeneid*, too, frames itself as a song in its opening line, “Arma virumque cano” (Arms and the man I sing), something that the classic commentary by Servius points out: the framing of verse as song is thus one of the first things the reader is encouraged to notice and know about Virgil’s poem.[20] These gestures were, of course, widely imitated, and had been for many years. In his *Il Morgante*, for instance, first printed complete in 1482 and available in 17 printed editions by 1525, Luigi Pulci claims to be wandering the woods with his bagpipe singing with Damaetas and Thyrsis (28.138), shepherds from Virgil’s Eclogues. Maffeo Vegio, whose continuation of the *Aeneid* was included in many printed Virgils, frames his epics *Astyanax* (which enjoyed a very modest print circulation) and *Vellus aureum* as songs in their opening moments.

Virgil’s texts were not lonely in their complete editions; they enjoyed the company of one or more commentaries, the most common by Servius (generally presented with Filippo Beroaldo’s accompanying notes, once they were available), Donatus and, from 1488, Cristoforo Landino. The

[20] “'Cano' polysemus sermo est. tria enim significat: aliquando laudo, ut 'regemque canebant'; aliquando divino, ut 'ipsa canas oro'; aliquando canto, ut in hoc loco. nam proprie canto significat, quia cantanda sunt carmina.” (‘Cano’ … has three meanings … In this particular instance it means ‘I sing’, inasmuch as a 'carmina' [meaning both ‘song’ and ‘poem’] is that which is to be sung.) *Publii Virgilii Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis Cum Servii Commentariis Accuratissime Emendatis…* (Venice: Bernardino Stagnino, 1507), AA[i]. Digitised source: http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00010391-3.

encyclopedic quality of the entries in these commentaries, and particularly in Landino's, offers momentary glimpses of "approved" (Landino was a university lecturer) knowledge and understanding of musical moments in Virgil's text—and the same could be said for the body of commentary on the classics circulating in Italy more generally at this time.

For instance, the mention of the Muses in line 8 of the *Aeneid* (a point in the text that even the most easily discouraged of readers must have reached) calls forth from Landino a fairly conventional mythographic account of these paradigmatic classical musical characters.[21] First comes a brief resumé of the nine on the authority of Hesiod's *Theogony* (itself printed once, in 1474), establishing that they are nine in number and the daughters of Jove and Mnemosyne (glossed as memory). Next Landino lifts a reading of the Muses as an allegory of the elements of vocal production from Fulgentius' *Mythologies* (which itself was printed in 1498 and 1505). Then the Muses are identified with the celestial spheres in a reading derived from Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, a rather widely-read text that was available in Italy in 11 printed editions by 1525. This reading had a particular resonance in Italian poetics in this period, which in some instances was engaged in a campaign to appropriate for verse music's traditional role of representing the harmony of the spheres.[22] Landino connects it directly with Ficino's theorisation of the "divine frenzy" that grips the poet under divine inspiration.[23] Finally, we are given Diorodus Siculus' etymological reading of the Muses as emblems of study from the *Library of History*, something that could also be consulted in one of the five printed editions (one a vernacular translation) of the *Library* that appeared in Italy before 1525.

Although Landino was no doubt in a position to consult his sources direct, all the necessary material on the Muses could be found collated already in Boccaccio's mythographic encyclopedia, the *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (11.2), which had itself been printed seven times in Italy by the mid-1510s equipped with Domenico Bandini's helpful index.[24] The same material could also be found in Coluccio Salutati's more inaccessible (unprinted) treatise on poetics, *De laboribus herculis*, which espoused a poetic agenda similar to Landino's.[25]

Landino's entry on the Muses is in fact a Latin restatement of material already printed in the vernacular in his commentary on Dante's *Commedia*, which after its 1481 first edition also became a

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[21] Publius Vergilius Maro, *Opera* (Florence: [Printer of Vergilius], 1488), 86v-87r (commentary on *Aeneid* 1.8)—digital source: http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00065268-3. On the mythography of the Muses in Italy in this period see especially Elisabeth Schröter, *Die Ikonographie des Themas Parnass vor Raffael* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1977); Kathleen W. Christian, "The Multiplicity of the Muses: The Reception of Antique Images of the Muses in Italy, 1400-1600," in *The Muses and their Afterlife in Post-Classical Europe*, ed. Kathleen W. Christian, Clare E. L. Guest, and Claudia Wedepohl (London: Warburg Institute, 2014), 103-54; Teresa Chevrolet, "From Myth to Theory: Names, Numbers and Functions of the Muses from Medieval Mythography to Renaissance Neoplatonism," in *Allusions and Reflections: Greek and Roman Mythology in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 45-76.

[22] See especially S. K. Heninger Jr, *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1974); and with a stronger focus on earlier, Italian material, Concetta Carestia Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250-1500* (London: Associated University Presses, 1981).

[23] Ficino's view of the *furore divino* is summarised in his letter of 1 December 1457 to his friend Pellegrino degli Agli: Ficino, *Lettere I: Epistolarum familiarium liber I*, ed. Sebastiano Gentile (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 19-28.

[24] Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods, Volume I: Books I-V*, ed. and trans. Jon Solomon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[25] Coluccio Salutati, *De laboribus Herculis*, ed. B. L. Ullman, 2 vols (Zurich: Thesauri Mundi, 1951), 1:42-3.

standard reference work.[26] The broader significance of the Macrobian planetary Muses for Landino's poetics is much more apparent and explicit in his introduction to this earlier publication, where the influence of Macrobius is very extensive. Explicit also is the struggle with music for the intellectual resources of the heavens. Imitations of divine harmony come in two forms, he notes:

> There are some who delight themselves with the harmony of the voice and of musical instruments, and these are vulgar and shallow musicians; there are others who are of more profound judgement, who with measured verses express the intimate sentiments of their mind, and these are those who, spurred on by the divine spirit, can write the most profound and meaningful verses. And this is called 'poetry' by Plato, which does not only delight the ears with the sweetness of the voice, as does that vulgar music, but as I say describes high and mysterious and divine insights, and on celestial ambrosia pastures the mind.[27]

These points were made by Landino not only in print, but in his work as a university lecturer; and they are consonant with positions already adopted in poetics by Boccaccio and Salutati.[28] The broad success of poetry in this contest is quite plain already in the *Tarocchi* Liberal Arts discussed above, dating from almost two decades before the printing of the Dante commentary.

Musicologists, of course, are familiar with Macrobius and the association of the Muses with the harmony of the spheres from the well-known frontispiece to Gafori's 1496 *Practica musice*, discussed in a classic article by James Haar.[29] However, in the light of Landino's widely-disseminated commentaries, the efforts of Bartolomeo Ramis de Pareia and Gafori to attach Macrobius' planetary Muses to the theory of music take on the character of a rearguard action representing a minority perspective. The case of Niccolò Burzio is probably a better reflection of the norm: the Muses appear only when citing Isidore's account of the etymology of the word 'music' in his *Musices opusculum* (1.2) printed in 1487; and in turn the detailed review of the Muses given at the beginning of his mythographic handbook printed in 1497, the *Musarum nympharumque epitomata*, treats them strictly as a literary topic (despite making use of Macrobius).

And yet, the second half of the fifteenth century in Italy was a period in which visual representations of the Muses as musicians became immensely popular—not least in the D set of the *Tarocchi*. The musical Muses with Apollo were chosen as a decorative scheme, most often for spaces associated with literary study, in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino (1470s), the Castello di San Giorgio in Mantua (1497), the Casa Maffei in Cremona (c.1500), the Castello Visconteo in Volterra (c.1502), the Palazzo dei Pio in Carpi (c.1509), the Palazzo Apostolico in Rome (1511), the papal Villa della Magliana near

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[26] Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, 4 vols. (Rome: Salerno, 2001), 1:336 (on *Commedia* 1.2.7). See also the digitised first edition here: http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00036946-6.

[27] "altri sono che si dilectano del concento della voce et degli strumenti musici, et questi sono vulgari et leggieri musici; altri e quali sono di più grave giudicio, con misurati versi exprimano gl'intimi sensi della mente loro; et questi sono quegli che concitati da divino spirito possono gravissimi et sententiosissimi versi scrivere. Et questa da Platone è decta poesia, la quale non solamente con la suavità della voce dilecta gl'orecchi, chome quella vulgare musica, ma chome dixi alti et arcani et divini sensi discrive, et di celeste ambrosia pasce la mente." Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, 1:260 (11.36-43).

[28] Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics*, 110-45.

[29] James Haar, "The Frontispiece of Gafori's *Practica Musicae* (1496)," *Renaissance Quarterly* 27.1 (1974): 7-22.

Rome (c.1520), the Castello Isolani in Minerbio (1530s)—and these are only the examples that are known to survive.[30]

Raphael's famous fresco of *Parnassus* in the Palazzo Apostolico was surmounted in situ by an embodiment of Poetry. Located within the apartment of the pope, the audience for this image was necessarily rather restricted, but the composition quickly found wide circulation in an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (fig. 5).[31] This large-format image, close but not identical to the composition executed in fresco by Raphael, nonetheless preserves the tops of the windows above and around which the fresco was painted, and includes the legend "Raphael pinxit in Vaticano," allowing the owner unable to access the original still to appreciate the sense of a decorated space.[32]

Raimondi's engraving, in turn, was quickly adopted and adapted as a favourite subject for another developing multiple-copy medium: historiated maiolica plates (fig. 6). Growing in popularity from the late fifteenth century, maiolica earthenware utilised a new tin-glazing technique to achieve an exceptionally lustrous finish and bright colouring, associated especially with busy workshops in Faenza and later Urbino. Although clearly a luxury product, maiolica tableware was comparatively inexpensive, and was subjected to practical use in dining, as well as display on a credenza. Some surviving pieces are pierced for hanging on the wall.[33] Classical subjects and stories became particularly common from about 1520, perhaps intended to prompt elevated discussion on fashionable themes as a component of elite dining practices. The large number of surviving examples adapting Raimondi's *Parnassus* suggests a very substantial distribution in this medium. Through objects such as these, the consumer of more modest means could achieve in their interior spaces the same effect on a smaller scale.

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[30] See respectively Claudia Wedepohl, "La devozione di un principe umanista: Cappella del Perdono e Tempietto delle Muse nel Palazzo ducale di Urbino," in *Il sacro nel Rinascimento: Atti del XII Convegno internazionale, Chianciano, Pienza 17-20 luglio 2000*, ed. Luisa Secchi Tarugi (Florence: Cesati, 2002), 493-515; Tim Shephard, *Echoing Helicon: Music, Art and Identity in the Este Studioli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 63-99; Marcin Fabianski, "The Cremonese Ceiling Examined in its Original Studiolo Setting," *Artibus et Historiae* 17 (1988): 189-212; Giuseppina Vago, P. Zanolini, M. Albasi, E. Boldetti, and F. Bonacci, "Gli affreschi del Castello Visconteo di Voghera: progetti ed interventi," in *Sulle pitture murali: Riflessione, conoscenze, interventi*, ed. Guido Biscontin and Guido Driussi (Venice: Arcadia Ricerche, 2005), 1093-1102; Alessandra Sarchi, "The Studiolo of Alberto Pio da Carpi," in *Drawing Relationships in Northern Italian Renaissance Art: Patronage and Theories of Invention*, ed. Giancarla Periti (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 129-52; Matthias Winner, "Projects and Execution in the Stanza della Segnatura," in *Raphael in the Apartments of Julius II and Leo X*, ed. Roberto Caravaggi and Oreste Picari (Milan: Electa, 1993), 247-92; Anna Cavallaro, *La Villa dei Papi alla Magliana* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 2005), 32-8 and 49-67; Daniela Castaldo, "Amico Aspertini's Apollo and Muses in the Isolani Castle at Minerbio near Bologna," *Music in Art* 37.1-2 (2012): 71-82.

[31] See most recently Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 86-94; Edward H. Wouk and David Morris, ed., *Marcantonio Raimondi, Raphael and the Image Multiplied* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 184-5.

[32] Raimondi's engraving is generally taken to preserve Raphael's initial plan for the fresco, which was varied during execution. See Winner, "Projects and Execution in the Stanza della Segnatura," 280.

[33] Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: British Museum, 2001), 220-28.

Figure 5: Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, *Parnassus*, c.1517-20, engraving. National Gallery of Art, Washington.
Figure 6: Trident Workshop, *Dish with Apollo and the Muses after Raimondi*, c.1525-40, maiolica. British Museum, London.

The mobilisation of the Muses as a very musical classicism pertaining principally to poetry is made particularly apparent on a panel dated c.1480 (fig. 7), on which Apollo and the Muses play in radiant ensemble around a meditative youth who reclines on the steps of the Castalian fountain with a book.

This painting, which has been cut down losing three Muses on the right hand side, is generally identified as a panel from a decorated cassone or domestic chest, executed by the Sienese painter Benvenuto di Giovanni, dating between the 1470s and the end of the Sienese vogue for painted cassoni in the 1490s.[34] Cassoni, and likewise other painted furniture, were often intended to instruct their owners, presenting examples and counter-examples of praiseworthy behaviour for the viewer to reflect upon and seek to emulate.[35] The literary contemplation exemplified on this panel, whose central figure would probably have recalled for viewers contemporary representations of Petrarch, is endowed with a imaginative musical quality but, following Landino's advice, does not debase itself through sounding musical performance.

In aligning with Landino and Virgil rather than Gafori, however, these images did not render the Muses' musicianship hollow. The literary culture in which they sat was one in which the identity of music and poetry was a notion of the highest prestige and a marker of refined taste, as well as—in some circumstances—a practical reality.[36] In addition, such decorative schemes should certainly be seen alongside advice to turn to music when tired from study, found right across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy, advice that is strongly consonant with the treatment of music-making (as opposed to musical study) in Vergerio's *De ingenuis moribus* (69).[37] Such comments usually specify a stringed instrument (lyre, lute or lira), and invite comparison with relevant classical precedents—several of which are mentioned by Vergerio. To a contemporary literary and/or musical enthusiast, the identity of the Muses as both musicians and poets could represent not a dissonance, but a desirably classicising reunification of arts supposedly too long kept apart, to be emulated in their own leisure pursuits.

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[34] Burton B. Frederickson and Darrell D. Davison, *Benvenuto di Giovanni Girolamo di Benvenuto: Their Altarpieces in the J. Paul Getty Museum and A Summary Catalogue of Their Paintings in America* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1966), 24; Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter and Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), 319.

[35] See, for example, Graziano Manni, *Mobili in Emilia: con una indagine sulla cività dell'arredo alla corte degli Estense* (Modena: Articoli editore, 1986), 74-86; Denise Allen and Luke Syson, *Ercole de' Roberti: The Renaissance In Ferrara* (Los Angeles, 1999), xxxii-xxxiii; Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2001), 69-77; Luke Syson, *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City* (London, 2007), 220-45; and Tim Shephard, 'A Mirror for Princes: The Ferrarese Mirror Frame in the V&A and the Instruction of Heirs', *Journal of Design History* 26 (2013), 104-14.

[36] On the practice(s) in question see recently Brian Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 226-58; Francesca Bortoletti ed., *L'Attore del Parnaso: Profili di attori-musici e drammaturgie d'occasione* (Milan: Mimesis, 2012); Stefano Dall'Aglio, Luca Degl'Innocenti, Brian Richardson, Massimo Rospocher and Chiara Sbordoni ed., *Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy*, published as *The Italianist* 34.3 (2014); Luca Degl'Innocenti, Massimo Rospocher and Rosa Salzberg ed., *The Cantastorie in Renaissance Italy*, published as *Italian Studies* 71.2 (2016).

[37] For example: Angelo Camillo Decembrio, *De Politia Litteraria*, ed. Norbert Witten (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2002), 150 (1440s/50s); Antonio Averlino detto il Filarete, *Trattato di Architettura*, ed. Anna Maria Finoli and Liliana Grassi, 2 vols. (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1972), 2:514 (1450s/60s); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ott.lat.1153, fol. 189r (Lodovico Carbone, c.1460); Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Il Magno Palazzo del Cardinale di Trento* (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1539), fol. Ciiir; Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi* (Venice: per Paolo Gherardo, 1554), fol. 51r (Ricordo 109). On the likelihood that such accounts reflect actual practice see Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*: *Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 120-3.

Figure 7: Benvenuto di Giovanni, *Apollo and the Muses*, c.1480. Detroit Institute of Arts.

But Virgil's was not the only Muse in town. Ovid's greatest success in print in Italy was undoubtedly the *Heroides*, a work with little to offer on music; but the *Ars Amatoria* was not far behind, a hugely popular verse treatise on seduction. In addition to 11 complete Ovid editions, by 1525 the Latin had been printed 18 times (from 1494 usually with a commentary by Bartolomeo Merula), and most striking of all 16 editions had appeared of a loose vernacular translation (missing out book 3, which gave advice to women)—before 1500 it was probably the most oft-printed translation of a classical text. At the opening of the *Ars amatoria* Ovid elegantly disowns the usual patronage of rational, virtuous Apollo and the Muses (1.25-8), invoking instead the assistance of Venus and her son (1.21-4; 30) in crafting what he repeatedly calls his 'song' (carmine; canam), the purpose of which is to teach others how to achieve their erotic desires. In a neat conundrum, he names himself Venus' 'vates', claiming her divine inspiration, whilst in the same line citing his experience as the source of the work (1.29)—implying, of course, that his experience in love was itself inspired divinely, by Cupid's arrows. In the third book of the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid notes that girls should learn music as a tool of seduction: "Song is seductive: girls should learn to sing" (3.315-6). This line was commonly adduced as classicising evidence for the link between music and love. For example, it is quoted with disapproval by Maffeo Vegio in his rather conservative *De educatione liberorum et eorum claris moribus libri VI*, printed in 1491; and cited more neutrally in Tinctoris' *Complexus effectuum musices* of about 1471.[38]

That Venus should be a patroness of song would have been obvious to those many readers who also dabbled in astrology. The mid-fifteenth century saw a Europe-wide vogue for so-called 'Children of the Planets' engravings. Essentially such images represent the characteristic activities and behaviours of those living under the influence of each sphere in turn, as a concise and accessible astrological guidebook.[39] A set attributed to the Florentine Baccio Baldini in the 1460s survives in numerous copies. At the top of Baccio's page for Venus (fig. 8), the goddess and her son are drawn

[38] Vegio quoted in Stefano Lorenzetti, "Public Behaviour, Music and the Construction of Feminine Identity in the Italian Renaissance," *Recercare* 23.1-2 (2011), 7-34, at 10; for the Tinctoris see Donald J. Cullington ed. and trans., with Reinhard Strohm. *'That liberal and virtuous art:' Three Humanist Treatises on Music* (Newtownabbey: University of Ulster, 2001), 81 and 64.

[39] On 'children of the planets' images see Dieter Blume, "Children of the Planets: The Popularisation of Astrology in the 15th Century," *Micrologus* 12 (2004): 549-63; and Blume, "Picturing the Stars: Astrological Imagery in the Latin West, 1100-1550," in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Brendan Dooley (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 333-98. From a musical perspective, but focusing on German sources, see Zdravko Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planets' Children, or Medieval Musical Life According to the Housebook's Astrological Imagery," In *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Katherine A. McIver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 241-86. On the Venus images specifically, Gwendolyn Trottein, *Les Enfants de Vénus: Art et astrologie à la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions de la Lagune, 1993).

on a cart by swans and linked with the constellations Taurus, represented by a bull, and Libra, represented by a set of scales. Beneath Venus, occupying the majority of the page, a group of elite men and women in fashionable Burgundian dress make music, dance and embrace in a garden setting near to a fountain and next to a 'castle of love' bearing the inscription 'OMNIA VINCIT AMOR' ('Love conquers all'), from the walls of which women in classicising garb drop flowers onto the revellers. At the foot of the page a further inscription explains that:

> Venus is a feminine sign placed in the third sphere and [of] cold and moist temperament, which, because of these properties, loves beautiful clothes ornamented with gold and silver, and song and festivities and games, and is lascivious. She is sweet in speech and beautiful in the eyes and face, and of graceful body full of flesh and with loosened girdle, given to every work concerned with beauty.[40]

There follows a summary of the times and circumstances under which her influence holds sway. The same information—including the link with music—could be found spelled out at much greater length in mythographic guides such as Boccaccio's *Genealogia*, and in astrological encyclopedias such as Guido Bonatti's *Decem tractatus astronomie* (which was printed in 1506). On the authority of Baccio's set, those with a predisposition toward music and poetry could identify themselves readily as children of Venus (like Ovid), or as children of Mercury, depending on the relevant celestial influences.

[40] "Venere esegno feminino posto nelterzo cielo efreddo e umida tenperata laquale aqueste propieta ama belli vestimenti ornati doro edargento e chanzone egaudii eguchi et elasciva. ea dolce parlare ebella negliochi eiiella fronte edicorpo leggieri piena di carne e dimezana stura da atuttiopere circa allabellezza."

Figure 8: Baccio Baldini? *The Seven Planets: Venus*, c.1464, woodcut. British Museum, London.

Of course, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was also widely read, available in 34 Latin and nine vernacular editions by 1525 (and also in the complete Ovid editions). The moralising abbreviation of the *Metamorphoses* attributed in the period to Lactantius was sometimes included as a commentary, and in addition appeared in three printed editions of its own. From the 1490s, the Latin *Metamorphoses* was usually accompanied by Raffaele Regio's commentary; whilst the first vernacular version to find its way into print—the paraphrase by Giovanni de' Bonsignori, printed in 1497 with woodcut illustrations that were widely copied—offered moral readings for each narrative episode.

Ovid's many readers thus had direct access to pre-digested explanations of the main musical myths, those concerning Orpheus and Apollo. Orpheus' musical journey to the underworld, they would read, should be understood as a Christian psychomachia in which, diverted from wisdom by earthly matters, Orpheus turns away from God but is finally reunited with him through prayer.[41] Apollo's

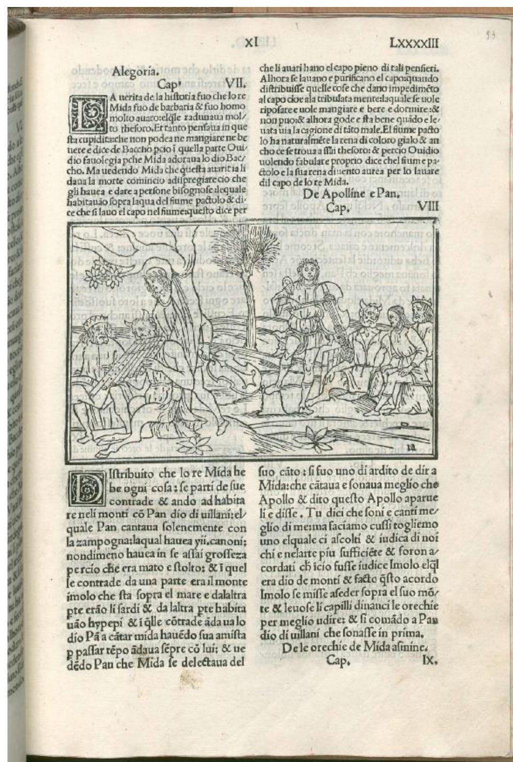
[41] *Ovidio metamorphoseos vulgare* (Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1497), fol.83v ff—digitised source: http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00049624-0. On the commentary tradition surrounding the Orpheus story see John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); Laura Rietveld, "Il trionfo di Orfeo: La fortuna di Orfeo in Italia da Dante a Monteverdi," PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2007.

contests with Marsyas and Pan, meanwhile, the reader would learn to view as emblematising the contest between wisdom and sophistry.[42] Those interested to pursue the matter further could compare these with the fuller accounts given in printed mythographic guidebooks by Fulgentius and Boccaccio.

In addition to verbal commentaries on classical stories, many editions of the *Metamorphoses* also furnished visual commentaries, in the form of woodcut illustrations. In the 1497 *Ovidio vulgare*, the woodcut accompanying Apollo's musical contest with Pan splits the story into two episodes centred on the performances of the contestants, divided visually by means of a tree in the middle distance positioned centrally in the picture space (fig. 9).[43] On the left, goat-legged Pan, seated and leaning against another tree, gives his performance on an instrument that is a hybrid of a syrinx (pipes of different lengths joined together) and a recorder (single pipe with finger holes), a kind of imaginary compromise between Pan's ancient instrument and its modern equivalent. Midas, identified by his crown, watches intently seated on a rock, whilst a laurel-wreathed Apollo watches standing, holding his instrument at rest. On the right, Apollo, standing and facing straight out at the viewer, gives his performance on a lira da braccio. Tmolus, seated on a rock, leans forward to follow Apollo's playing closely, and behind him Midas also gives his attention to the god; but Pan, seated alongside, looks intently at Tmolus, awaiting the verdict, his syrinx laid aside. This image, and likewise the other musical illustrations in the *Ovidio vulgare*, proved immensely influential. Its composition was adapted for an engraving by Benedetto Montagna dated to the 1510s, and also for maiolica.

[42] *Ovidio metamorphoseos vulgare*, fols. 53v-54r and 97r-98r. On the mythography attached to these stories in Renaissance Italy see Edith Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1996).

[43] On contemporary representations of this subject see Tim Shephard and Patrick McMahon, "Foolish Midas: Representing Musical Judgement and Moral Judgements in Italy c.1520," in *Music, Myth and Story in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, edited by Samantha Bassler and Katherine Butler (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), 87-104.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Alegoria.
Cap. VII.

LA uerita de la hiſtoria fuo che lo re Mida fuo de barbaria & fuo homo molto auaro: elqle radunaua molto theſoro. Et tanto penſaua in queſta cupidita: che non podea ne mangiare ne beuere e dice de Baccho pcio i quella parte Ouidio fauolegia pche Mida adoraua lo dio Baccho. Ma uedendo Mida che queſta auaritia li daua la morte cominció adiſpregiare cio che gli hauea e dare a perſone biſognoſe: lequale habitauão ſopra laqua del fiume pactolo & dice che ſi lauo el capo nel fiume: queſto dice per che li auari hano el capo pieno di tali penſieri. Allhora ſe lauano e purificano el capo: quando diſtribuiſſe quelle coſe che dano impedimẽto al capo cioe ala tribulata mente: laquale ſe uole riposare e uole mangiare e bere e dormire: & non puo: & allhora gode e ſta bene quãdo e leuata uia la cagione di tãto male. El fiume pactolo ha naturalmẽte la rena di coloro gialo & ancho ce ſe troua aſſai theſoro: & percio Ouidio uolendo fabulare proprio dice chel fiume pactolo e la ſua rena diuento aurea per lo lauare dil capo de lo re Mida.

De Apolline e Pan.
Cap. VIII

DIſtribuito che lo re Mida hebe ogni coſa: ſe parti de ſue contrade & ando ad habitare neli monti cõ Pan dio di uillani: elquale Pan cantaua ſolenemente con la zampogna: laqual hauea vii. canoni: nondimeno hauea in ſe aſſai groſſeza percio che era mato e ſtolto: & i quelle contrade da una parte era il monte imolo che ſta ſopra el mare e dalaltra pte erão li ſardi & da laltra pte habitauão hypepi & i qlle cõtrade ãdaua lo dio Pã a cãtar mida hauẽdo ſua amiſta p paſſar tẽpo ãdaua ſẽpre cõ lui: & uedẽdo Pan che Mida ſe delectaua del ſuo cãto: ſi fuo uno di ardito de dir a Mida: che cãtaua e ſonaua meglio che Apollo & dito queſto Apollo aparueli e diſſe. Tu dici che ſoni e canti meglio di me: ma faciamo cuſſi togliemo uno elquale ci aſcolti & iudica di noi chi e nelarte piu ſufficiẽte & foron acordati ch icio fuſſe iudice Imolo elql era dio de monti & facto qſto acordo Imolo ſe miſſe aſeder ſopra el ſuo mõte & leuoſe li capilli dinanci le orechie per meglio udire: & ſi comãdo a Pan dio di uillani che ſonaſſe in prima.

De le orechie de Mida aſinine.
Cap. IX.

Figure 9: Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), *Ovidio metamorphoseos vulgare*, ed. and trans. Giovanni de' Bonsignori (Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1497), fol. 93r. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc.c.a. 3517 a.

Some readers in 1497 must already have encountered Apollo's contest with Marsyas in iterations of perhaps the most-copied ancient carnelian, the so-called Seal of Nero, which moved between the collections of several Italian magnates over the course of the fifteenth century.[44] Some of the many, many surviving small bronze plaquettes repeating the seal's composition are worn quite smooth, suggesting that they were handled often and kept about the person. Several have a hole for a chain (fig. 9) indicating that they were worn around the neck, as shown in a portrait of an elite Florentine woman from the workshop of Botticelli (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt). Widespread though this image certainly was, not one of the several fifteenth-century descriptions of the Seal of Nero correctly identifies its subject. Filarete, for example, writing in 1464, describes it as representing "a nude tied by his hands in front of a dry tree, another with a certain instrument in his hand and with a bit of drapery hanging from his waist, and another kneeling."[45] In fact, the period descriptions tend to suggest that the precise subject was not particularly of interest, in an object that was valued—at 1000 florins, in the 1492 Medici inventory—for its material antiquity.[46] Rather, the treatment of this image reflects the broader contemporary tendency to run all the great ancient string players—

[44] See especially Francesco Caglioti and Davide Gasparotto, "Lorenzo Ghiberti, il 'Sigillo di Nerone,' e le Origini della Placchetta 'Antiquaria'," *Prospettiva* 85 (1997): 2-38; Melissa Meriam Bullard and Nicolai Rubinstein, "Lorenzo de' Medici's Acquisition of the Sigillo di Nerone," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 62 (1999): 283-6.

[45] "uno inudo legato colle mani di rieto a uno arbore secchо, e uno con uno certo strumento in mano con uno poco di panno dal mezzo in giù, e uno in ginocchioni." Filarete, *Trattato di Architettura*, 2:679; John R. Spencer ed. and trans., *Filarete's Treatise on Architecture*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 1:316.

[46] Marco Spallanzani ed., *Libro d'inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Amici del Bargello, 1992), 39.

Apollo, Orpheus, Arion, Amphion, Musaeus and so forth—together into a single overarching identity as an ideal prophet/poet/musician.

Figure 10: Anonymous (Rome), *Apollo and Marsyas*, mid-15th century, bronze. National Gallery of Art, Washington.

A more focussed musical classicism is represented by the colossal vogue that ran roughly from the 1490s to the 1530s for images of Orpheus.[47] Spanning bronze roundels, printed engravings, and maiolica, from multiple makers, these must have been the most ubiquitous secular musical images in Italy. Most popular of all were images showing Orpheus seated near a tree or a rock, making music to assembled animals and birds, a scene that is labelled 'Orpheus in silvis' when it is used as part of the decorative ensemble marking the beginning of book 2 in Gafori's *Practica musice*.[48] Art prints of this scene survive in large numbers by Francesco Francia, Nicoletto da Modena, Benedetto da Montagna, Raimondi and others.[49] It circulated also in bronze plaquettes by Pseudo-Melioli, Moderno, the Master of the Orpheus Legend, and the Master of the Orpheus and Arion Roundels.[50] It was popular too in historiated maiolica.[51]

A striking example is a tiny image printed from an engraving by the Bolognese artist Peregrino da Cesena (fig. 10). A second print of similar dimensions and style representing Arion, a mythological figure of near-identical resonance to Orpheus, may be intended as a pair (fig. 11). The technique used in creating these pictures was derived from the practice of setting a black inlay called niello into

[47] On this body of images see Giuseppe Scavizzi, "The Myth of Orpheus in Italian Renaissance Art, 1400-1600," in *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, ed. Warden, 111-62; Rose Marie San Juan, "The Legend of Orpheus in Italian Art 1400-1530," PhD dissertation, Warburg Institute, 1983.
[48] Gafori, *Theorica musice* (Milan: Johannes Petrus de Lomatio, 1492), fol. aair.
[49] Orpheus prints are surveyed in San Juan, "The Legend of Orpheus," 142-67; see also Marzia Faietti, "Orfeo a Bologna e le divagazioni sul mito di Marcantonio Raimondi," in *Il dolce potere delle corde: Orfeo, Apollo, Arione e Davide nella grafica tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, ed. Susanne Pollack (Florence: Olschki, 2012), 124-30.
[50] See San Juan, "The Legend of Orpheus", 168-89; John Pope-Hennessy, "The Study of Italian Plaquettes," *Studies in the History of Art* 22 (1989): 19-32, at 29-30; Douglas Lewis, "The Plaquettes of 'Moderno' and His Followers," *Studies in the History of Art* 22 (1989): 105-41.
[51] See San Juan, "The Legend of Orpheus," 131-41.

engraved silver to produce a high-contrast image. So-called niello printing—or, as some museums more circumspectly term it, printing 'from a plate engraved in the niello manner'—was particularly important in the early history of Italian art prints, and was used for printing on objects such as boxes as well as on paper.[52] Landau and Parshall hypothesise that niello prints offered 'cheaper substitutes for expensive bronze plaquettes'.[53] These two images may therefore have circulated both as independent miniature prints on paper, and as decoration for domestic objects.

Figure 10: Peregrino da Cesena, *Orpheus seated and playing his lyre, charming the animals*, c.1500-20, 5.2 x 3 cm, niello print. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 11: Peregrino da Cesena, *Arion on the Dolphin*, 16th century, 4.3 x 2.9 cm, niello print. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The focus on this particular scene from Orpheus' story fits poorly with the moral interpretation offered in the 1497 vernacular *Metamorphoses*, which would resonate instead with less popular (though still common) scenes showing Orpheus entering and exiting the underworld. On the other hand, Orpheus' example was often adduced in this period as evidence of music's persuasive quality, something that the *in silvis* scene very neatly exemplifies. A fuller interpretation along these lines could be found easily enough in Boccaccio's *Genealogia*, as part of a broader reading of Orpheus as an exemplary orator:

> With this [i.e. the faculty of oratory] Orpheus moves the forests which have roots very firmly fixed in the earth, that is, men of obstinate opinions who cannot be swayed from their stubbornness except through the power of eloquence. He stops rivers, that is, dissolute and wanton men who, unless they are emboldened by demonstrations of strong eloquence that lead them toward manly strength, that flow into the sea, that is, into perpetual bitterness. He tames wild beasts, that is, rapacious and bloodthirsty men, whom very often the eloquence of wisdom redirects into gentleness and humanity.[54]

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[52] Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 98-9; Wendy Thompson, *Poets, Lovers, and Heroes in Italian Mythological Prints*, published as *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 61, no. 3 (2004), 3.
[53] Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 99.
[54] "Hac Orpheus movet silvas radices habentes firmissimas et infixas solo, id est obstinate opinionis homines, qui, nisi per eloquentie vires queunt a sua pertinacia removeri. Sistit flumina, id est fluxos et lascivos homines, qui, nisi validis eloquentie demonstrationibus in virile robur firmentur, in mare usque defluunt, id est in

This reading, derived from Horace's *Ars poetica* (391-3) which itself was available in dozens of printed editions, appears repeatedly in Italian writing on music and poetry in the decades around 1500, from Tinctoris and Gafori to Landino and Pietro Bembo.[55] The notion of Orpheus using his musical skill to make his oratory persuasive obviously fits the popular musical poetics of Cicero and Quintilian like a hand in a glove; he was called a poet in the period at least as often as he was called a musician.

In contrast to the perplexity evinced by Tinctoris in the dedication of his *Proportionale musices*, the artist responsible for the famous woodcut frontispiece of Gafori's *Practica musice* had no difficulty in identifying Apollo as a player of the cetra, a modern instrument whose sound and use would have been familiar to purchasers of the book. In fact, for Italian artists and poets of the period it was perfectly obvious that the practice of Apollo and Orpheus was essentially identical with that of celebrated contemporary string players—especially, though not exclusively, those who used their cetra, lute or lira da braccio to accompany secular solo song. The connection was so entrenched that in the 1520s the Duke of Ferrara's majordomo was able to refer to this performance idiom simply as "singing in the manner of Orpheus" (cantando al modo d'Orfeo).[56]

If the case of Orpheus and the influence of Cicero and Quintilian are emblematic of what Gary Tomlinson has termed 'rhetorical humanism', the full range of musical classicisms visible in Italian domestic objects pulls against neat categorisation.[57] What emerges from the sources surveyed in this essay is not a coherent position on the meaning of music within the classical vogue, so much as a series of fragmentary and overlapping classicising gestures—some new, some medieval, some late antique, some ancient—each easily legible with a relatively superficial grasp of the ancient world and its literary and visual legacy. Music's persuasive capacity may embody leadership, or seduction. Inspiration may come from Apollo, or Eros. The music of the spheres might be a song, or a poem. Orpheus might play a lyre, or a lute. Musical insight might be found in Boethius, or Quintilian. It is in the nature of the objects in a home—assembled piecemeal more often than in a coherent, programmatic campaign—that their diversity is overcome principally and simply through a shared owner and a shared space. Their meaning, one might argue, lies not so much in their content as in their use, in varying combination, by a particular individual in a particular place at a particular time.

Broad themes are nonetheless clear across this material. From the 1460s to about 1520 a growing fashion for images of the Muses and Orpheus swept Italy, in tandem with the print publication success of Cicero's *De oratore*, Quintilian's *Institutione oratoria*, and Vergerio's *De ingenuis moribus*. Over the same period, the avalanche of printed editions of Virgil's *Eclogues* shaded around 1500 into

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perpetuam amaritudinem. Feras mites facit, id est homines sanguinum rapacesque, quos sepissime eloquentia sapientis revocat in mansuetudinem et humanitatem." Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods,* 656-7 (5.12.6).

[55] Tinctoris, *De inventione et usu musice*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey J. Dean, 2015: http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deinventioneetusumusice, 4.5.33-40; Gafori, *Theorica musice*, aiir; Gafori, *Practica musice* (Milan: Johannes Petrus de Lomatio, 1496), fol. Γiiiv; Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, 1:440; *Gli Asolani di Messer Pietro Bembo* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1505), fol. biiiiv.

[56] Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Banchetti, Composizioni di Viviande e Apparecchio Generale*, ed. Fernando Bandini (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1992), 41.

[57] Tomlinson, "Renaissance Humanism and Music," 6-9.

an enormous vogue across multiple media for images of rustic music-making, allied to the popularity of vernacular eclogues. If all of these musical classicisims reflect on the overarching question of the relation of music to poetry, and the broad re-orientation of music from the quadrivium to the trivium, they do not speak with one voice. Music might on the one hand be an abstract quality of poetic inspiration, and on the other a tool of civic leadership, while at the same time being an ideal modality of poetic performance, both real and imagined. However, taken together, the sources discussed here document a literary perspective on music as a pervasive phenomenon in Italy among everyday musical participants from the mid-fifteenth century, and indeed establish that literary perspective (with or without a sophisticated philosophical rationalisation) as in itself the most prevalent classicising gesture in musical culture.