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Commenting on Music in Juvenal's Sixth Satire

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In the first of Juvenal's satires, often labelled 'A justification' by modern editors, the author himself sets out his subject matter and the motivation for his work: Juvenal explains how the corruption and immorality he saw in ancient Rome made it impossible for him not to write satire. Following in the footsteps of satirical predecessors, Lucilius, Horace, and his frequent partner in Renaissance printed editions, Persius, Juvenal's sixteen satires, written in the late first and early second century CE, criticize and attack the follies and vices of Roman society, taking aim at all and any behaviour that deviated from social norms. Juvenal's impact on the satirical genre cannot be overstated, and he, much more than his predecessors, would come to define the satire genre for the early modern period. Used primarily as an educational text, the satires probably also held appeal as a source of reading entertainment in the Renaissance for their witty attacks and vivid descriptions of scurrilous behaviour. Their considerable popularity as print products can be seen in the immense number of printed editions issued across the Italian city states in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. According to the USTC, the satires were printed in their various forms over 70 times in the period 1469–1520. In 1501 alone the satires were printed five times: three times with accompanying commentary, involving five different commentators in two distinct editions; once anthologized with the Satires of Persius; and once alone. This essay focuses on the ways in which the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century commentators represented in these 1501 editions deal with Juvenal's references to music, considered against the broader backdrop of Renaissance commentary, its practices, purposes, and readers.

As the satires wittily attack elements of everyday life, the topic of music appears frequently in different social and occasional contexts, making it easy to see how the moral treatment of music within the satires is broadly integrated with the overall moral tenor of the Satires. In Satire 3, for

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example, which is concerned with the growing internationalisation of Rome, Juvenal uses musicians and instruments to illustrate the 'pollution' of Roman culture by foreign others. In Satire 14, fear at the sound of brass instruments, specifically the *litus* and *cornu*, is used to suggest shrinking away from military life, within the broader context of the undermining of child–parent relations which forms the main topic of the satire.[1] But it is in the sixth satire, the longest of Juvenal's and addressing the morality of Roman wives, that instruments, instrumentalists, and playing practices feature most prominently. From the suggested infidelity of wives with musicians, to the connotations between sexual practices and the playing gestures of musical instruments, the musical elements here are frequently used in *double entendres* connoting lewd acts and infidelity, to comment on morality through the comparison and use of musical elements. There is, then, a wealth of musical references upon which contemporary commentators could comment.

The Juvenal commentaries, like other contemporary commentaries, were intended to function primarily as educational tools. Within the commentary tradition, there are differences between commentators depending on personal style, the purpose of the commentary, the prior commentary tradition associated with a particular text, and of course the content of the classical text being commentated. In the Juvenal commentary tradition, we can see the lasting impact of earlier commentaries on those that followed. The earliest is a classical commentary known as the *scholia vetustiora*, produced around 300 years after the *Satires* themselves.[2] The second, and arguably most influential upon our 1501 commentaries, is a commentary circulated under the name 'Cornutus' by analogy with the *scholia* on Persius' *Satires*, which were spuriously attributed to Persius' friend and teacher Lucius Annaeus Cornutus; the Cornutus material is now assigned to the Carolingian period, and was the most widely circulated Juvenal commentary during the Middle Ages. Though this commentary never featured in a printed edition of the *Satires*, Eva Matthews Sanford notes that the commentaries produced in the second half of the fifteenth century all echo the Cornutus commentary in some passages, without making direct reference to it.[3] The first commentary on Juvenal to be printed appeared in 1474, entitled *Paradoxa in Juvenalem* and written by Angelo Sabino, a Latin poet and professor of rhetoric at the University of Rome in the early 1470s. This was quickly followed, in 1475, by the commentary of Domizio Calderini, also based in Rome at this time working as a

[1] Alan M. Corn, '"Thus Nature Ordains": Juvenal's Fourteenth Satire', *Illinois classical studies*, 17.2 (1992), 309–22, at 310.

[2] Marc D. Schachter, 'On Lesbian Acts and Female Pleasures in Juvenal Commentaries from Antiquity to 1500', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 38.4 (2015), 19–40, at 26.

[3] Eva Matthews Sanford, 'Juvenal', in Paul Oskar Kristeller (ed.), *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance latin Translations and Commentaries Volume I* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1960), 175–238, at 18.

professor of rhetoric and Greek, though he was at the start of his career whilst Sabino was nearing the end. The competition between these two scholars regarding their commentaries, seen in Calderini's attack against the commentary of Sabino in the introduction to his own edition, would suggest that both were produced not long before they were printed. The clear victor was Calderini's commentary, which came to dominate as the most-published commentary for the rest of the fifteenth century, printed over a dozen times further, both alone and in compilation with other Juvenal commentaries. A number of further commentaries followed Calderini's in short order, including those of Giorgio Merula (1478), Giorgio Valla (1485), Antonio Mancinelli (1492) and Giovanni Britannico (1501), all of whom feature in our 1501 editions.

The satires and their Renaissance reception have received limited attention from modern scholars, who have been concerned primarily with their impact on the satirical genre as a whole, rather than with the reception of the satires themselves.[4] Meanwhile, there is a growing body of scholarship on Renaissance commentary more broadly, although very little of it discusses the Juvenal commentaries specifically, in spite of the evidence for their substantial contemporary popularity.[5] Most recently, a selection of Juvenal commentaries was used to form the basis of Marc D. Schachter's exploration of the understanding of lesbian acts and female pleasure as featured in the *Satires* – the only study to address the lewd content of the satires in great detail.[6] The most comprehensive study of the commentaries on the satires of Juvenal to date, however, remains the classic essay by Eva Matthews Sanford, who, in addition to compiling the most comprehensive list of Juvenal commentaries available, is also the only scholar to have discussed all of the late fifteenth-century commentaries that form the basis of this study.[7]

The establishment of humanist education in Italy from the early fifteenth century onward saw a rise in the production of new commentaries. Writing primarily in support of their own teaching work, and in line with new

[4] For the impact of Juvenal on the Renaissance satirical genre, see Anne Lake Prescott, 'Humour and Satire in the Renaissance', in Glyn P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3:284–92; Colin Burrow, 'Roman Satire in the Sixteenth Century', in Kirk Freudenburg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 243–60.

[5] Among a large literature see especially Roy K. Gibson and Christina Shuttleworth Kraus (eds.), *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Marianne Pade (ed.), *On Renaissance Commentaries* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2005); Karl A. E. Enenkel and Henk Nellen (eds.), *Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period (1499–1700)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013); Enenkel (ed.), *Transformations of the Classics via Early Modern Commentaries* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); and Christina S. Kraus and Christopher Stray (eds.), *Classical Commentaries: Explorations in a Scholarly Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[6] Schachter, 'On Lesbian Acts', 26.

[7] Eva Matthews Sanford, 'Renaissance Commentaries on Juvenal', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 79 (1948), 92–112; Sanford, 'Juvenal', 175–238.

perspectives on the humanities curriculum, educators created their own commentaries in order to deliver the educational content they wished to highlight in the classroom when older commentaries were found to be lacking.[8] But with the advent of printing, we can see that these older commentaries had not been abandoned, rather they were printed alongside and used in combination with newer commentaries, suggesting that they retained educational value and functioned as a necessary part of a varied commentary ecosystem associated with a central text. For example, a 1501 edition of Terence, featuring a total of three commentaries, includes the commentary of Aelius Donatus, a Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric in the fourth century, in addition to two contemporary efforts.[9] Even among contemporary commentaries, different scholars had different approaches to commentary-writing, some emphasising a grammatical and etymological approach, others taking particular delight in compiling relevant quotes from other classical sources, and yet others writing miniature treatises on topics raised by the text; the majority, of course, used all of these three approaches, in differing proportions.

The treatment of music and sound in these commentaries is also extremely varied. In Paul Oskar Kristeller's classic study on music and learning in the early Italian Renaissance, he shows how Ficino's commentaries on Plato's *Symposium*, among other works, demonstrate contemporary musical knowledge and ideals.[10] Indeed, to date, examination of Renaissance commentaries from a musical perspective has been largely concerned with identifying links to contemporary music theory, and not with historical musical practices or social perspectives on music.[11] However, when we turn to the commentaries themselves, we can see a vast range of musical elements being discussed, with a particularly large appetite for historical information on Roman musical practices. In the 1501 Terence edition, for example, we can see how, compared to the classical Donatus commentary, the fifteenth-century commentaries are much more concerned to clarify musical concepts, instruments, and playing practices from the ancient world – elements of the text that would evidently be obscure to the contemporary reader. In a 1501 edition of the *Asinus aureus* commented by Philippo Beroaldo, a celebrity professor at the University of Bologna, every single musical reference, including those to religious ceremonies, playing practices, and instruments, and their significance

[8] Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: literacy and learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 1991), 133.

[9] Publius Terentius Afer, *Terentius cum tribus commentis. Videlicet Donati Guidonis [et] Calphurnii* (Milan: Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler and Giovanni Da Legnano, 1501).

[10] Kristeller, 'Music and Learning in Early Renaissance Italy', *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music*, 1.4 (1947), 255–74, at 261.

[11] James Hankins, 'Humanism and music in Italy', in Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 231–62, offers a fresh perspective in relation to humanist writing in general, but is not concerened with commentaries in particular.

within classical culture, is explained in great detail. Commentaries, then, were a way of consolidating knowledge and adapting and expanding upon ancient texts in a manner that made them more accessible to a contemporary audience, with a particular focus on the university student in the processes of being inducted into a richer and more contextualized understanding of classical literature.

The extensive and varied printing history of Juvenal's *Satires* throughout the latter half of the fifteenth century and into the early sixteenth clearly demonstrates their considerable popularity.[12] The first printed edition, issued in Rome in 1469 by Ulrich Han and featuring the *Satires* alone, was rapidly followed by a further fifteen separate editions, ten solo and five in compilation with Juvenal's fellow classical satirist Persius, before the Sabino commentary was printed in 1474. Unusually among classical authors, after the publication of the first printed commentated editions, Juvenal's *Satires* continued to be printed frequently without commentary and, most notably, in Latin. In other classical Latin literature enjoying similar print success in the second half of the fifteenth century, such as Virgil's *Eclogues* and Ovid's *Heroides*, a vernacular edition came to dominate the print market as the most popular edition without commentary. This situation implies that the market bifurcated into commentated Latin editions that were largely produced for use in the classroom, and vernacular editions without commentary for leisure reading at home. Before 1500, there were six vernacular editions of Ovid's *Heroides*, and three of Virgil's *Eclogues*, and these vernacular editions were the only versions of the text to be printed without commentary after their release, with no further uncommentated Latin editions following after the publication of the vernacular translation. In comparison, there was only one vernacular edition of the *Satires* before 1500, printed in Treviso in 1480 by Michael Manzolus. At first glance, this Treviso edition looks like an attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the *Satires* at a time when first editions of vernacular translations of several other popular classical texts were being produced, such as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* printed in 1472, Ovid's *Heroides* in 1474, Livy's *Decades* and Pliny's *Historia naturalis* in 1476, and coming before the vernacular translation of Virgil's *Eclogues* in 1484.[13] But rather than dominating as the most popular version of the *Satires* without commentary, there would be no vernacular version of the text printed again until 1527. The appeal of Juvenal was, then, always in Latin, whether it was encountered in the classroom or during leisure time at home.

[12] For more on the printing of early editions of Juvenal's Satires see the classic study by Curt F. Buhler, 'The Earliest Editions of Juvenal', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 2 (1955), 84–95.

[13] Tim Shephard, 'Musical Classicisms in Italy Before the Madrigal', *Music and Letters*, 101.4 (2020), 690–712, at 694.

The *Satires* was most firmly entrenched as an educational text, likely used towards the end of a student's Latin education, but its place within the Latin curriculum was the subject of great debate on account of its lewd content. The works of Juvenal, as well as those of Ovid and some other classical authors treating saucy subjects, were frequently warned against, either in their entirety or singling out certain passages, by pedagogical theorists, particularly in the first half of the fifteenth century.[14] According to remarks made by Platina in his *Commentariolus Platinae de vita Victorini Feltrensis*, the humanist educator Vittorino da Feltre, best known for running a celebrated school in Mantua in the 1420s, considered it best to use the *Satires* with heavy omissions, and only during the last years of a student's education due to their obscenity.[15] In contrast, Vittorino's successor at the school in Mantua, Ognibene Leoniceno, encouraged the study of Juvenal and went so far as to write a commentary for the use of teachers.[16] But Leoniceno appears to have been in the minority. The Florentine patrician Leonardo Bruni, in his education treatise written c.1405 for the noblewoman Baptista Malatesta, declared that women in particular should not read or even look at the work of any of the satirists.[17] The Parmesan soldier-poet Ugolino Pisani, a law graduate of the Universities of Pavia and Bologna, was also against the Satires, believing that they were only suitable for private study by serious individuals, and should not feature in the general curriculum as they could corrupt young students with their content.[18] By the mid-fifteenth century, however, fears over the effects upon impressionable minds of exposure to Juvenal's obscenity appear to have lessened in their ferocity. For example, in Battista Guarini's suggested syllabus in his *De ordine docendi et discendi* (1459), Juvenal's *Satires* are identified as a text to be studied for elegant speech.[19] This treatise is believed to outline the curriculum followed at the University of Ferrara at which Guarini and his father had taught. Although still with some censoring of some passages, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini included Juvenal among the authors that should be studied in his 1450 educational treatise dedicated to Ladislas of Bohemia and Hungary.[20] In the later fifteenth century, Juvenal's *Satires* became a standard feature in the curriculum, at least in Florence: Juvenal was a key text

[14] Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 237.

[15] Sanford, 'Renaissance Commentaries on Juvenal', 97.

[16] This commentary was never printed, but survives in at least three known manuscript copies; for further information on this, see Sanford, 'Renaissance Commentaries on Juvenal', n. 12.

[17] *De studiis et litteris ad illustrem dominam Baptistam de Malatesta*, cited in Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 236.

[18] Sanford, 'Renaissance Commentaries on Juvenal', 98.

[19] Craig W. Kallendorf (ed. and trans.), *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 133.

[20] Ibid., 65.

in Cristoforo Landino's poetry class at the University of Florence, and there is evidence that Poliziano later taught Juvenal in the mid-1480s.[21]

The presence of Juvenal in the university curriculum could help to explain the large number of commentated editions printed towards the end of the fifteenth century. However, it does not fully explain the continued popularity of the Latin satires without commentary. The large quantity of texts produced without commentary would suggest that the work also had an entertainment value outside of the formal classroom – what Pisani refers to rather pretentiously as 'private study by serious individuals'. As the most influential satirist of the classical tradition, much of what we see in the work of Juvenal has become the defining characteristics of satire.[22] Thus, his influence was central to the growth of neo-Latin and vernacular satirical writing in Italy in the decades around 1500 – exemplified most famously in the equally misogynistic Pietro Aretino, whose *Ragionamenti* comment on the actions and morality of women at great length, and also make use of musical *double entendres*.[23] It would seem, then, that the use of Latin may have acted as a means of gatekeeping the contents of the Satires. Given the continued debate as to the suitability of the Satires for the classroom, by keeping them in Latin the understanding of their lewd content was restricted to those with sufficient erudition to read classical Latin, and therefore, by extension, sufficient ethical formation to read smutty passages in their proper critical perspective. The importance of the musical content of the satires, then, should not be underestimated, given their extensive circulation and presence in teaching curricula, as well as their apparent broader appeal. Through examining the treatment of musical content in commentaries, we can shed further light on the ways in which contemporary commentators worked to make references to ancient Roman musical practices intelligible to Renaissance readers – intelligible both in terms of their historical context, and in terms of their contemporary continuity, or rather their perceived equivalence to elements of a Renaissance musical worldview.

1. THE 1501 COMMENTATED JUVENAL EDITIONS

Five commentaries on Juvenal were printed in 1501 across two different editions. The first edition was printed twice in 1501 and is entitled *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis per Antonium Mancinellum. Cum quattuor commentariis* (Venice: Giovanni Tacuino, 1501; Milan: per Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler,

[21] Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 238; Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 236.

[22] Llewelyn Morgan, 'Satire', in Stephen Harrison (ed.), *A Companion to Latin Literature* (New Jersey: John Wiley, 2005), 174–88, at 184.

[23] Prescott, 'Humour and Satire in the Renaissance', 288; Burrow, 'Roman Satire in the Sixteenth Century', 248.

1501). First published in an identical printing in 1498, this edition contains four commentaries on the *Satires*. The main commentator, as stated in the title, is Antonio Mancinelli, a Latinist qualified in Law (University of Perugia) and Medicine (Padua), who taught in various cities, principally at his native Velletri earlier in his career, and later on at the University of Rome as 'Professor humanitatis'. His commentary was likely produced sometime in the late 1480s after his move to Rome, and was first printed in 1492. The second commentary featured is that of Domizio Calderini, which has previously been mentioned for its dominance as the most-printed Juvenal commentary in the late fifteenth century. In addition to his role as a Professor of Rhetoric and Greek at the University of Rome, Calderini was appointed apostolic secretary in 1471, a post which he held until his death. The third commentator featured is Giorgio Merula, best known for the *Historia Vicecomitum*, a history of the Visconti family, whose career encompassed professorial posts in Venice, Pavia, and Milan. His commentary on the Satires was first published in 1478. The final commentator featured in this edition is Giorgio Valla, a professor of rhetoric in Pavia and then Venice; his commentary dates from before 1486, when it was first printed in Venice.

Our second 1501 Juvenal edition marks a turning point in the printed commentated editions, as 1501 marks the year of first publication of a commentary by Giovanni Britannico, which would come to surpass the popularity of the Calderini commentary across the first decade of the sixteenth century. Britannico taught rhetoric and grammar in Brescia; his works were largely printed by his brothers, Giacomo and Angelo, who were among the city's most important printers. His commentated edition of the *Satires*, entitled *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici in Iuvenalem* (Brescia: Angelo & Giacomo Britannico, 1501), is the latest of the commentaries printed in 1501 to have been written. Indeed, in his introduction to the edition, Britannico acknowledges that he is not the first to have made a commentary on the work, but explains that he felt it necessary as his predecessors had left out important aspects of the text that still needed to be addressed.

The commentaries written by these men pick up on a number of elements, ranging from grammar and the forms of individual words, to comments and explanations of short quotes or even longer passages. The commentaries produced by Valla and Merula, and occasionally that of Mancinelli, often identify the same areas for comment as the Calderini edition, and there are great similarities between these four commentaries in their references to other classical sources, and clarifications of obscure terms and phrases, as well as the aspects of grammar on which they choose to comment. The Britannico commentary differs most obviously in that it is much longer, and as a result has more scope to comment on much more of Juvenal's text. The different strategies of these commentators, and in particular the

different ways in which they seek to make musical meanings in Juvenal's poetry legible to Renaissance readers, are effectively demonstrated by comparing their commentaries on three particular passages involving music from the sixth satire.

2. EXCERPT 1 – WOMEN WHO LIE WITH THEATRE PERFORMERS

The sixth satire, the longest of his sixteen, is full of references to the musically lewd. The author's purpose in this satire is to persuade the addressee, Postumus, away from marrying, by suggesting the lack of morality of rich wives who are promiscuous, and by reflecting on men who have married for money and then allowed their wives to do as they wish. Music is central to his argument, for it is professional musicians whom the wives seduce and with whom they sleep. The first passage to be examined is the first of many mentions connecting the infidelity of wives with musicians, in this case focusing on theatrical productions, and including actors, singers, and some instrumentalists who are given to us by name. The excerpt from the satire goes as follows:

> Solvitur his magno comoedi fibula: sunt quae
> Chrysogonum cantare vetent: hispulla tragoedo
> Gaudet: an expectas ut quintilianus ametur:
> Accipis uxorem de qua cytharoedus echion
> Aut glaphyrus fiat pater: ambrosiusque choraules.[24]

> These women pay a lot to get a comic actor's fibula undone. There are women who stop Chrysogonus from singing. Hispulla is crazy for a tragic actor. Or would you expect them to fall for a Quintilian? You're marrying a wife who'll make the singer-citharist Echion or Glaphyrus or the *choraulēs* Ambrosius a father.[25]

In dealing with this passage, the first objective of all the commentators except Valla is to explain the purpose of the *fibula* (buckle) of the comedic actor or musician, and in so doing they seem largely derivative of one another. In the compilated edition the fullest explanation is given by Merula:

> SOLvitur his magno comoedi fibula: sensus magna persoluta pecunia refibulari vident comoedum: quem vocis servandae gratia Celso tradente infibulare

[24] Satires 6.73–77 as given in *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fol. xlvii r. The text of Juvenal given in this edition does not differ from modern editions except in the smallest details; that in *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis* differs a little more.

[25] English translation slightly adapted from Susanna Morton Braund (ed. and trans.), *Juvenal and Persius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 240–241. The term *citharoedus* refers specifically to a singer who accompanies himself on a cithara. A *choraulēs* is a musician who plays the aulos (a double-reed instrument) to accompany a theatrical chorus. The commentaries on this passage appear at: *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis*, fols. LXXVIr-v; *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fol. xlvii r.

> consueverunt: De huiusmodi infibulatione est Martialis distichon. Dic mihi simpliciter comoedis et citharoedis Fibula quid praestas: carius ut futuant. Et rursum de refibulato adolescente idem ait. Occurrit aliquis. inter ista draucus. Et iam pedagogo liberatus Et cuius refibulavit turgidum faber penem. Adolescentulos autem infibulabant interdum vocis: interdum valitudinis causa: quae infibulatio fiebat perforata utrinque a lateribus cute: quae super glandem extenditur atque superadita fibula. id quod idem Celsus pluribus verbis in medicinae libris explicat. Set quod fibula circulus sit aeneus Columella de bobus loquens significat. ait enim aenea fibula pars auriculae latissima circumscribitur: ita ut manante sanguine tanquam o litterae ductus appareat.
>
> 'Pay a lot to get a comic actor's fibula undone': the sense is that large sums are paid to see the comedian de-infibulated, which is done [i.e. the infibulation is done] in order to preserve his voice, as Celsus says, and they [i.e. the wives] subvert the infibulation in order to have sex. Martial's distich [*Epigrams* 14.215] concerns this kind of infibulation: 'Tell me candidly, fibula, what is it you do for comic actors and singers? "Get them a higher price for their fucking."' And again he says something similar about a young man who was de-infibulated [*Epigrams* 9.27]: 'If, as this goes on, some young athlete comes your way, now freed from tutelage, whose swollen penis has been unpinned by the smith'. Moreover, youths were infibulated sometimes for the sake of their voice, sometimes for the sake of their health, the which infibulation was made by piercing holes in both sides of the skin, which extends over the glans and is raised by a clasp; this is what Celsus explains at length in his *De medicina* [7.25]. And that the buckle is a circle of bronze is explained by Columella in *De bobus* [= *De re rustica* 6.5.4], for he says that 'A line is drawn round the widest part of the ear-lap with brazen pin in such a way that a figure resembling the letter O appears where the blood flows'.[26]

All the texts cited here had received several printed editions by 1501 – in fact, Celsus was the first medical textbook ever to appear in print, in a Florentine edition of 1478. Britannico introduces a refinement by noting that the fibula covering Menophilus' penis seems to be a garment, whereas the fibula described by Celsus is a wire tether attached to the foreskin. He concludes, applying common sense in a manner that often eludes the other commentators, that 'more is known about this type of fibula than about the garment, since this serves better to preserve the voice than a garment, something that can easily be loosened and removed.'[27] All the commentators briefly note the reason why the fibula is necessary: sex makes the voice hoarse, something that is clearly detrimental for those who plan to 'sell their voice in the recitation of plays' (vocem

[26] Translations of Martial from *Epigrams, Vol. 3: Books 11–14*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 321; and *Epigrams, Vol. 2: Books 6–10*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 249–51. Translation of Columella from *On Agriculture, Vol. 2: Books 5–9*, ed. and trans. E. S. Forster and Edward H. Heffner (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 147.

[27] 'Placet magis intelligamus de hoc genere fibulae quem de indumento: hoc enim modo vox magis servari potest quem per indumentum: quiddam facile et solvi et deponi potest.'

suam vendant in recitatione fabularum) as Britannico puts it. Valla, who evidently blushes to discuss the fibula, has a particularly elegant way of putting this:

> SUNT quae chrysogonum cantare vetent: epheborum enim vox per veneris usum solet immutari. Causamque philosophi plaerique tradunt et ipse in primis Alexander Aphrodiseus in libro problematon: quae nos latina olim fecimus.
>
> 'There are women who stop Chrysogonus from singing': the voice of youths is usually changed by the practice of Venus. This is explained by most of the philosophers, and first among them Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *Problemata*, which we once translated into Latin.

Two things seem clear from the comments on the start of our excerpt. The first is that readers in 1501 were expected to be unfamiliar with infibulation; the second is that the negative impact of sex on the voice is taken to be axiomatic, something known from several authoritative texts.

The next priority for the commentators is to deal with the named musicians: explaining that they are named musicians, where possible establishing them as historical personages through cross-references in other texts, and explaining the etymology of their names. All other than Valla have similar comments on these points; Mancinelli can stand for the group:

> ECHIon. hic citharoedi nomen. In metamorphosi. vero cadmi socius in construendis thebis. GLAphyrus: citharoedi nomen: interpretatur autem festiuus iucundus astutus ornatus politus. Martialis libro quarto ait: Plaudere nec cano plaudere nec Glaphyro. … AMBrosius choraules: Ambrosius viri proprium: sed interpretatur divinus aut immortalis.
>
> 'Echion': this is the name of a singer-citharist. But in the *Metamorphoses* [of Ovid, 3.125-30] he was Cadmus' associate in building Thebes. 'Glaphyrus': the name of a singer-citharist, translating [i.e. from the Greek γλαφυρός (*glaphyros*)] as festive, pleasant, intelligent, adorned, polished. Martial, *Epigrams* 4[.5] says: 'nor clap for Canus, nor clap for Glaphyrus.' … 'The *choraulēs* Ambrosius': Ambrosius is a man's name, but it means 'divine' or 'immortal'.

Calderini strikes a note of skepticism concerning the identity of Juvenal's Echion with Ovid's Echion, given that one is a singer-citharist and the other a hero. Valla is extremely terse on these matters, using the formula 'ECHion: proprium' ('Echion': a proper name).

Finally, prompted by Ambrosius, all the commentators explain at some length what a *choraulēs* is. All five are excited to show their Greek erudition by explaining that the word *choraulēs* is a compound of χορός [*choros*], meaning the ancient Greek theatrical chorus, and αὐλός [*aulos*], a wind instrument, thus a *choraulēs* is a wind player involved in theatrical performances with the chorus. Calderini gives the fullest account, contextualising with the help of

the popular biographies of Greek and Roman celebrities written by Suetonius and Plutarch:

> CHOraules: choraule a graecis a nostris Tibicines appellantur χορός [*choros*] enim chorum significat et αὐλός [*aulos*] tibiam magna olim estimatione et mensis principum grati. Tranquillus de Galba. Cano inquit choraulae mite placenti super coenam denarios quinque donavit. Idem Plutarchus in Galba in hoc genere claruerunt Ismenias. Dionysiodorus: Nicomachus: Ambrosiae autem dapes principum dicebantur quibus exhilarandis quem adhibebatur choraules.

> *Choraulēs*: the Greek *choraulae* are called by us 'pipers'. For χορός [*choros*] means 'chorus', and αὐλός [*aulos*] [means] *tibia*, [an instrument] once held in great esteem and welcome at the tables of princes. Suetonius, *Life of Galba* [12.3]: 'when the *choraulēs* Canus greatly pleased him at dinner, he [i.e. Galba] presented him with five denarii'. Similarly Plutarch, *Life of Galba* [16.1]. In this category were celebrated Ismenias, Dionysiodorus, Nicomachus. Moreover, the banquets of princes at which a *choraulēs* was employed to enliven the proceedings were called *ambrosiae*.[28]

The reason for his extra detail soon becomes clear: he wants to show that his rival in Juvenal commentary, Angelo Sabino, who he refers to as 'Fidentini', is wrong in his reading of this passage.

> Quam turpiter errat praeceptor Fidentini quam pueriliter insanit bone deus: ait enim choraulem accipi pro proprio nomine: idque affirmat Tranquilli testimonio in Nerone: qui scribit eum novisse se prodituru: hoc est se exhibiturum hydraulem et choraulem et utricularium hic invertens legit periturum: idest necaturum choraulem quem accipio pro nomine proprio.

> Good God, how shamefully master Fidentini errs, how childishly he raves, for he says that *choraulem* should be taken as a proper name. And he confirms this interpretation with the testimony of Suetonius in the *Life of Nero* [54], who writes that 'he [i.e. Nero] announced that he would present himself' – that is, that he would perform – 'as a player on the water-organ, the aulos and the bagpipes'. Here, turning the passage upside-down, he reads 'going to perish' [*periturum*, instead of 'going to appear', *prodituru*m] – that is, 'going to murder' [someone named] Choraules, which he takes to be a proper name.[29]

Valla is able to add further nuance, having found a more detailed account of the performance practices associated with ancient theatre in a different source:

[28] Translation of Suetonius adapted from *Lives of the Caesars, vol. 2*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 203. In fact it is Plutarch who mentions that the performance took place at dinner, not Suetonius. *Tibia* was the Latin term for the Greek aulos.

[29] Translation of Suetonius adapted from *Lives of the Caesars, Vol. 2*, ed. and trans. Rolfe, 177.

> Choraules a choro et αυλοσ [*aulos*] tibia: nam ut Diomedes refert pantomimus et pyraules [sic: pythaules] et choraules in comoedia canebant. item quando inquit chorus canebat choricis tibiis: idest choraulicis artifex concinebat in canticis autem pyraulices [sic: pythaulicis] responsabat: cum igitur comoediarum membra sint tria: di verbium: canticum: chorus a choro et tibiis choraules dicti.
>
> *Choraulēs* [is derived] from *choro* and αυλοσ [*aulos*], *tibia*; for, as Diomedes [Grammaticus, in *Ars grammatica*] relates, 'pantomimes and Pythian pipers (*pythaulēs*) and chorus pipers (*choraulēs*) performed in comedy'; and also when he says: 'the chorus performed with the choric pipes, that is, the *choraulēs* accompanied the singing and the *pythaulēs* responded'; thus the parts of comedy are three: speaking, singing, and the chorus; and *choraulēs* is derived from *choro* and *tibiis* (pipes).

Britannico clarifies in addition that the chorus is a group of performers who both dance and sing ("nam χορός dicitur tripudium: coetus: chorus").

What is evident in the commentators' treatment of these named musicians is something like an archaeological interest to establish the historicity of both the individuals and their manner of performance, something that characterizes the Latin commentary in our 1501 corpus more generally. Even the disreputable behaviour of the musicians, which drives the moral of the story in this excerpt, is investigated historically, rather than ethically, reconstructing the practice of infibulation. The commentators are certainly not impervious to the ethical dimension: in some way they all briefly acknowledge that Juvenal wants us to see the transaction between the women and the musicians as wicked, as when Britannico writes 'He notes another vice in women. They are captured, he says, by the love of singers' (casually assigning blame to the women, as Juvenal clearly intends).[30] This is obvious to the reader without explanation, however: the concern that professional musicians might be sexual predators who might endanger the chastity of high-status women was shared by Italians of the period.[31]

3. EXCERPT 2: THE RITES OF THE BONA DEA

As the sixth satire continues, Juvenal uses the religious ceremony of the Bona Dea to focus on the depravity of Roman women. This celebration was held once a year in December at the magistrate's house; every male inhabitant, including animals and images, had to leave the premises, and it was one of the

[30] 'Aliud vitium notat in mulieribus. Capiuntur inquit amore scaenicorum cantantium'.

[31] See, for example, Flora Dennis, 'Unlocking the gates of chastity: music and the erotic in the domestic sphere in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italy,' in Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (ed.), *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 223–45, at 234; and for the broader association of music with seduction, Tim Shephard, Sanna Raninen, Serenella Sessini and Laura Ștefănescu, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy 1420–1540* (London: Harvey Miller, 2020), 223–44.

few occasions on which Roman women were permitted to drink wine.[32] This is not the first time that the rites of the Bona Dea are mentioned in the satires: we encounter them first in Satire 2.86–99. However, the focus of the reference in Satire 2 is on men dressing as women so as to gain entry to the ceremony, so the commentators ignore the musical elements (Juvenal mentions the absence of a 'music girl with her *tibia*') and take note instead of the crossing of gender boundaries.[33]

In Satire 6, the rites of the Bona Dea are used to pass comment on the women, who are crazed with lust and drink in celebration, conflicting with the normative view that they should be chaste and sober. Sound plays a key role in Juvenal's description: music is a component of the rites, including horns (*cornua*) and wind instruments (*tibiae*) that are driving the women to their frenzied state, alongside the wine. Even the Latin phrasing of some of this passage carries a feeling of musicality.[34] The beginning of the section is where we find the references to sounds and music:

> Nota bonae secreta deae: cum tibia lumbos
> Incitat: et cornu pariter vinoque feruntur
> Attonitae: crinemque rotant ululante priapo
> Maenades:[35]

> Everyone knows the secret rites of the Good Goddess, when the pipe excites the loins and, crazed by horn and wine alike, the maenads whirl their hair as Priapus howls.[36]

This section of the satire, and some of the associated fifteenth-century commentaries, have been examined for their descriptions of lesbian acts and female pleasure, which feature in explicit detail further on in the verse.[37] However, the musical references have as yet been ignored. Music is integral to the basic characterisation of the rite of the Bona Dea, which is drawn from Macrobius' *Saturnalia* and Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*. Among the commentators of the compilated edition, Mancinelli gives the fullest presentation of his sources, quoting from Guarino da Verona's Latin translation of Plutarch's Greek:

[32] H. S. Versnel, 'The Festival for Bona Dea and the Thesmophoria', *Greece and Rome*, 39.1 (1992), 31–55, at 32.

[33] *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fol. XVIIr; *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis*, fol. xxvi v.

[34] Barbara K. Gold, 'Juvenal: The Idea of the Book', in Susanna Braund and Josiah Osgood (eds.), *A Companion to Persius and Juvenal* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 97–112, at 111.

[35] Satires 6.314–17 as given in *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fol. lv (mislabeled xlix in our copy, with a handwritten correction) r.

[36] English translation from Braund (ed. and trans.), *Juvenal and Persius*, 260–1, amended. The commentaries on this excerpt are at *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis*, fols. LXXXVIIIr-v; *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fol. lv (mislabeled xlix in our copy, with a handwritten correction) r.

[37] Schachter, 'On Lesbian Acts'.

Secreta deae: scribit Macro[bius] horum sacrorum ritum occultiora fuisse: dumque deae ipsi sacra celebrarentur: ut Plutar[chus] scribsit in caesare: neque eo virum accedere neque domi adesse fas erat. In eis sacrificiis ipse inter se mulieres multa orphicis consentanea facere tradebantur: ibi maxima sacrorum pars noctu peragebatur: promiscua sonis et cantibus ioca longas quae exercebant vigilias.

'The secret rites of the Bona Dea': Macrobius [*Saturnalia* 1.21-29] writes that the sacred rites that accompanied the celebration of the goddess were most secret, and Plutarch writes in the *Life of Caesar* [9-10]: 'It is not lawful for a man to attend, nor even to be in the house. The women, apart by themselves, are said to perform many rites during their sacred service which are Orphic in their character. There, the greatest part of the rites is celebrated by night, jocund activities, intermixed with [instrumental] sounds and songs, that they enjoy through long sleepless hours.'[38]

Having established the general character of the rite (either here in Satire 6, or earlier in Satire 2 in the case of some of the commentators), all of our commentators in both editions note specifically the erotic nature of its musical component, glossing the line 'cum tibia lumbos incitat' (when the pipe excites the loins). Mancinelli and Britannico both enlist an intertext here in the shape of a line from Persius' Satire 1: 'as the songs enter the loins' (Quum carmina lumbum intrant), a striking phrase which neatly emphasizes the direct effect of music (or poetry – 'carmina' could be translated either way) upon lust. Britannico, who tends to be fuller and more nuanced than our other commentators in the way he summarizes what he has learned from his sources, adds: 'For lust is greatly excited by lascivious singing and playing of musical instruments'.[39] It is interesting to note that, whereas the descriptions of the rite itself are historical in character, this comment seems more like a general statement of truth; readers in 1501 would have had no difficulty in accepting it as such, given that the erotic charge of music had the status of an axiom in Italian culture at this period.[40]

When the Bona Dea comes up in Satire 2, several of our commentators expend considerable energy in setting out the close links between her cult and the Bacchanalia, delving into the details of the religions of the ancient Mediterranean and their syncretic interrelationships. Our excerpt from Satire 6 strongly reinforces the connection by referring to the devotees of the goddess as 'maenads'. Valla, who often chooses a different point of emphasis from the other commentators in the compilated edition, takes this as an invitation to paraphrase Livy's sensational description of Bacchic rites in *Decades* 39.9–10, giving particular attention to the violent initiation rite masked by loud music:

[38] Translation of Plutarch adapted from *Lives, Vol. 7*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 463.

[39] 'Nam lascivo cantu et sono libido maxime excitatur'.

[40] See, among many others, Dennis, 'Unlocking the gates of chastity'; Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, 223–44.

CUm tybia lumbos incitat: nam non sacrorum casus sed concubitus convenerunt: veterem tangit morem quae postea abolitus fuit: bacchanalia enim romae celebrari mente prorsus insana coeperunt: in quibus omnis generis flagitii fuerat licentia: ut quidquam ad omnem explendam libidinem paratam haberet voluptatem: nec enim unum genus noxae tantum fuit: sed stupra promiscua ingenuorum et foeminarum: tum inter se: tum cum maribus falsi testes falsa signa etiam et testimonia ac falsa iudicia ex illa exibant officina. venena quoque et intestinae caedes ita ut et corpora iam sepulta e sepulchris ad incantamenta eruerentur: cuius mali labes ex hetruria in urbem convecta est in contagionis morem. Nemo ad haec sacra statu maior annis viginti admittebatur: qui introducebatur et velut victima sacerdotibus tradebatur: introductus autem a sacerdotibus priapi et cybelles producebatur in locum qui ululatibus circumsonabat multorum quae cymbalorum et tympanorum et huiusmodi musicorum modulatores instrumentorum in penitiora eius loci agebantur ne quaeritantis vox cum per vim stuprum inferebatur posset exaudiri: quod cum multis palam actum fuisset: idque novum et inusitatum sceleris genus per mulierem hispanam nomine fescenninam et adolescentem ebucium ad senatum delatum et expositum est: in quos morum subversores bonorum a posthumio consule animadversum est ex quibus alii fugientes compraehensi neci dati sunt: alii sibi mortem consciverunt. erant autem virorum ac foeminarum supra decem milia.

'When the pipe excites the loins': for they had assembled not for sacred purposes but for sex. This refers to an old custom which was afterward abolished. For the Bacchanalia began to be celebrated in Rome with complete insanity, in which every kind of debauchery was allowed, such that anyone might have any pleasure satisfied and every lust provided for; nor was there only one kind of crime, but a promiscuous defilement of youths and women, and with each other, and false testimony, forged seals and wills, and false judgements, emerging from the same workshop; likewise poisonings, and murders within families, such that bodies already buried were exhumed from their graves with incantations, the which evils were brought into the city from Etruria in the manner of a contagion. No one over the age of twenty was admitted to these sacred rites; initiates were handed over to the priests as victims, and having been led in by the priests of Priapus and Cybele, he was brought forth into a place resounding with the howls of a multitude, which players of cymbals, drums, and [other] musical instruments of that kind were inciting within its confines so as to drown out the cries of the victim as he was forced to undergo some act of debauchery, which had been done with many [and] in plain view. And this new and unprecedented kind of crime was reported to the senate and exposed by a Spanish woman named Fescenna and a youth, Ebucius. The consul, Posthumius, turned his attention to these corruptors of good morals, some of whom, captured as they fled, were put to death, while others, conscious of their crime, killed themselves – and there were more than 10,000 men and women.

Valla, for whom at this point the Bona Dea has turned entirely into Bacchus, does not cite his source. Livy enjoyed a robust print transmission in Italy around

1501 both in Latin and in Italian translation, and was a treasure trove for Latinists looking for historical information on Roman musical customs – particularly those associated with religious rites, whose inception Livy generally records. Britannico, who gives a more concise paraphrase of the same points, does cite Livy; and he is also careful to explain why he is pivoting from one sacred cult (Bona Dea) to another (Bacchus), glossing the phrase 'ululante priapo Maenades' by explaining that 'the poet wants to show that in the cult of the Bona Dea, women perform rites which are usually associated with the Bacchanalia'.[41]

4. EXCERPT 3: WOMEN WHO LIE WITH MUSICIANS

The final substantive musical reference we find in the sixth satire is a long passage concerning wives having sexual relations with musicians and committing adultery. The opening of this passage in particular draws extensive parallels between the anatomy of the lyre and that of the human body, and uses the physical gestures involved in playing an instrument and the skill of coaxing sound to refer to the skills required for intercourse:

> Si gaudet cantu: nullius fibula durat
> Vocem vendentis praetoribus: organa semper
> In manibus: densi radiant testudine tota
> Sardonices: crispo numerantur pectine chordae
> Quo tener hedymeles operam dedit: hunc tenet: hoc se
> Solatur: gratoque indulget basia plectro.[42]

> If she enjoys singing, no one who sells his voice to the praetors will hang onto his fibula. She's forever handling musical instruments, her thicket of sardonyx rings sparkling all over the tortoise shell lyre, and she strikes the strings rhythmically with the quivering quill used by tender Hedymeles in his performances. This she hugs, this is her consolation, and she lavishes kisses upon the beloved plectrum.[43]

In the compilated edition, the primary focus of the commentators is upon providing definitions for the Latin words that are most likely to be unfamiliar to the contemporary reader. Mancinelli explains that 'testudine' refers to the tortoise-shell lyre, and 'pectinem' is the plectrum 'with which the strings were struck,' adding that this was said to be invented by Sappho.[44] Similar clarifica-

[41] 'vult omnino ostendere poeta in sacris bonae deae: omoina fere fieri a mulieribus quae fieri consueverant in Bacchanalibus'.

[42] Satire 6.380–385, as given in *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fols. lvi v–lvii r.

[43] English translation from Braund (ed. and trans.), *Juvenal and Persius*, 270–1. The commentaries on this excerpt are found at: *Argumenta Satyrarum Juvenalis*, fols. XCr-v; *Comentarii Ioannis Britannici*, fols. lvi v–lvii r.

[44] 'Testudine: cheli cithara'; 'Plectro. ϖληττο [πλήττω (*plētto*): 'strike'] percutio significat: Inde plectrum quo quidem chordae percutiuntur. Id vero Sapho dicitur invenisse.'

tions are also given by Merula and Valla. All of our commentators save Merula, whose comments on this passage are rather terse, note that Hedymeles is a made-up name, compounded from ἡδύ (*hēdu*: 'sweet') and μέλος (*melos*: 'song').

Calderini's commentary on this passage extends beyond these basic points, taking the opportunity to deploy several ancient musical factoids pertaining to the 'inventors' of music derived from Pliny:

> CANTui: idest citharoedo: canere cum cithara docuit amphion: vel ut alii aiunt Livius auctore Plinio.
>
> 'singing': that is, [of] the singer-citharist. Amphion taught how to sing to the harp; or as others say, Livius [= Linus], according to Pliny [*Naturalis historia*, 7.56].
>
> SARdonices: … Tibicines autem et citharoedos gemmis uti primus docuit ismenias choraules et dionisiodorus aequalis eius et aemulus et vicomachus eodem tempore auctor Plinio.
>
> 'Sardonyx rings': … Tibia-players and singer-citharists were first taught the use of gems by the *choraulēs* Ismenias, and Dionysiadorus his equal and rival, and Vicomachus [= Nicomachus] around the same time, according to Pliny [*Naturalis historia*, 37.3].

Pliny's *Natural History* – also printed in 1501, in a vernacular translation by Cristoforo Landino – contained a wealth of musical information, and was often raided by commentators for concise and clear explanations of musicians, musical instruments, and musical practices in the ancient world. In Italian editions of the period, *Naturalis historia* 7.56 is helpfully entitled 'Quae quis invenerit in vita' ('What anyone invented in their life'), or 'Inventori delle chose' ('The inventors of things') in Landino's translation, making it an obvious place to look for this kind of information. *Naturalis historia* 37.3, on the other hand, is about gemstones, so it seems likely that Calderini found his information on Ismenias – a piper with expensive and luxurious tastes – serendipitously while looking for material on sardonyx. Britannico follows Calderini's lead in inserting a reference to musical inventors, but cites a much less obvious source:

> Testudine: idest Cithara quam Mercurius primus Teste Eratosthene ex Testudine fecit: quamquae postea Orpheo: sive ut alii volunt Apollini tradidit: quum ab eo contra dono Caduceum accepisset.
>
> 'Tortoise': that is, the cithara, which Mercury first made, as Eratosthenes testifies, from the tortoise-shell; although afterwards he entrusted it to Orpheus, or, as others would have it, Apollo, after receiving the caduceus from him as a gift.

The source here is a work known in Italy at this date as the *Poetica astronomica* (aka *De Astronomica*; *Poeticon Astronomicon*), a short handbook on the constellations, then attributed to Hyginus, in which Eratosthenes is cited regularly. Although now rather obscure, an attractive edition of the work replete with diagrams, illustrations and decorative initials was printed several times in our period. Seeking information on the cithara, Britannico has looked up the constellation 'lyra' (lyre), and given a close paraphrase of what he has found.

Valla, meanwhile, ever the odd one out, glosses 'organa' with a description of a contemporary church organ, vividly recalling the majesty of the instrument's sound, evidently from personal experience; only afterward does he note that classical authors used the term to refer to string instruments:

> ORGana semper in manibus. per excellentiam dicta musica instrumenta quod multis meatibus quasi cicutis imparibus: unum vox erumpat consurgant et concentum cum bombulo emittant. Veteres tamen organa fidibus obtensa dicitur voluerunt: at ut hic Iuvenalis ita Lucretius. Constare elementis levibus aeque. ac musaea mele per chordas organicique. Nobilibus digitis expergefacta figurant.
>
> 'Forever handling musical instruments': on account of [its] excellence, it is called 'musical instruments' because a single sound bursts forth from many pipes [acting] as passageways; they arise together and send forth harmony with a deep, hollow sound. The ancients, however, applied the name to instruments with strings stretched across them, as here Juvenal, and also Lucretius [*De rerum natura* 2.411-3]: 'Consists of elements as delicate, as the melodies of the Muses from the strings of instruments, which noble fingers awaken and shape.'[45]

Valla's initial gloss here implicitly invites the reader to think of 'handling musical instruments' in terms of fingering a keyboard, something which inverts Juvenal's intention, circling the musical *double entendre* back away from sex and into the practicalities of playing an instrument. This interpretative strategy seems particularly apt for Valla, who is certainly the most prudish of our five commentators. Valla is also attentive to the nature of the tortoise-shell lyre: whereas Braund, the modern translator of Juvenal, reads the passage 'densi radiant testudine tota sardoniches' as referring to sardonyx rings worn by the woman as she handles the instrument, both Valla and Britannico (the only commentators who take a view on this point) read it as referring to 'citharas [that] sparkle with jewels' ('citharae gemmis fulgent'), as Valla puts it.

Among the contributors to the compilated edition, only Calderini registers the central role of the woman in the satirical economy of the passage, glossing the phrase 'Si gaudet cantu' by noting that 'he writes of women who

[45] Translation of Lucretius adapted from *On the Nature of Things*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse, rev. Martin F. Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 127.

desperately love singer-citharists' (hoc notat in mulieribus qui citharoedos perdite ament). However, he takes the mention of singer-citharists as an excuse for an immediate switch back to music-historical matters, noting that the emperor Domitian instituted contests for musicians, as described by Suetonius in his *Life of Domitian*.[46] Britannico writes more extensively about the dynamic between the woman and the singer-citharist, but he does so in order to present an unexpected interpretation of the whole passage. He begins his remarks with the phrase 'Si gaudet cantu', but already bearing in mind the word 'durat' (endure) from the end of the line:

> Si gaudet cantu: Varia mulierum studia percurrit poeta earum semper flagellans impudicitiam: si mulier inquit cytharedis et cantoribus delectatur nullus est qui durare possit: ita defatigantur continuo cantu.
>
> 'If she enjoys singing': The poet runs through the various pursuits of women, always condemning their indecency, and says that if a woman delights in citharists and singers, there is none can that can endure, that is, they are exhausted by continuous singing.

In case the reader assumes that when he writes of 'singing' he is still working within Juvenal's rather obvious *double entendre*, he immediately clarifies his position:

> Nullius fibula durat id est nullus adolescens infibulatus potest tam diutinum canendi laborem perferre.
>
> 'No fibula can endure': that is, no infibulated youth can endure such a long labour of singing.

He is evidently aware that reading this passage as referring straightforwardly to musical performance, rather than via musical performance to sex, will strike his readers as counter-intuitive. Thus, after explaining the fibula (in exactly the same way as the other commentators had in relation to Excerpt 1), he presents his argument in the clearest possible terms:

> Alii interpraetantur que mulieres praetio corrumpant cytharedos et cantores ad coitum et sic fibulam solvere cogantur: quod falsum est: nam non amat eos mulier ut coeat: sed ut voluptatem capiat ex cantu: nam in sequentibus ait: sed cantet potius quam totam peruolet urbem Supra vero taxavitalias mulieres quae cytharedos amarent ad coitum: Solvitur is magno comoedi fibula sint quae Chrysogonum cantare vetent: Ergo poeta notat hic mulierem quae studio Citharedorum canentium teneretur.

[46] 'SI Gaudet cantu hoc notat in mulieribus qui citharoedos perdite ament: quorum certamina instituit Domitianus, ut scribit Tranquillus: victoresque corona quaterna donabantur'.

> Others interpret this as meaning that the women bribe the citharists and singers for sex, and thus they are compelled to loosen their fibulas, but this is wrong, for the woman does not love them for sex, but to take pleasure in [their] singing, for later on he says [Satire 6.398]: 'But it's better for her to be musical than to go all over the city'. Previously, indeed, he condemned other women who love singer-citharists for sex [Satire 6.73-4]: 'These women pay a lot to get a comic actor's fibula undone. There are women who stop Chrysogonus from singing.' Therefore, here the poet mentions a woman who was captivated by the pursuit of singer-citharists singing.[47]

So Britannico finds in Juvenal a hierarchy of women's musical vices, in which having sex with singers is the worst offence, and showing an unseemly love for song the less severe.

Britannico's reading here is creative, but it is deliberately contrary. In fact, the musical eroticism of this passage was probably quite obvious to Italian readers in 1501: sexualized analogies between musical instruments and human bodies, and between playing techniques and erotic gestures, were familiar from numerous contemporary texts and practices, as well as being encoded into instrument decoration and visual representations of music-making.[48] Sexualized readings of women's musicianship were also common currency, and increasingly so thanks to the emerging discourse of the musical courtesan.[49] In the judgement of the other commentators, it was not these aspects that readers would want explaining, but rather the poetical obscurity of Juvenal's musical terminology – *testudo*, usually meaning tortoise, and *pecten*, usually meaning comb.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As educators and scholars, our five commentators were interested above all in classical language and classical history, and it was in teaching classical language and classical history that their commentaries were destined most often to be used. This perspective is evident in their approach to unpacking Juvenal's musical mentions: they want to investigate the etymology of musical terms, and they want to assemble sufficient intertexts to give a coherent historical account of the classical musical practice, instrument, or musician to which Juvenal is referring. They are certainly not deaf to ethical considerations – sound ethical cultivation was a key justification for the new humanities curriculum in fifteenth-century Italy – but the musical-ethical framework driving Juvenal's satire in these excerpts is actually closely aligned with that of Italian musical culture in 1501, thus it required little explanation.

[47] Translations of Juvenal taken from Braund (ed. and trans.), *Juvenal and Persius*, 273 and 241.

[48] Dennis, 'Unlocking the gates of chastity', 226–7.

[49] William F. Prizer, 'Cardinals and Courtesans: Secular Music in Rome, 1500–1520', in Christine Shaw (ed.), *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500–1530* (Boston: Brill, 2006), 253–78, at 272.

The archaeological process employed by the commentators in their music-historical investigations is to assemble intertexts until there is sufficient information on the table to write a coherent summary. Their points of reference in doing so were all quite well known. Martial, Celsus and Columella were all readily available in printed editions, as we have noted already; so were Ovid, Suetonius and Plutarch. Giorgio Valla's translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Problemata* had been printed several times (it is in one of the books discussed in Shephard and Hancock's essay), and so had Diomedes' grammar. Macrobius' *Saturnalia* had appeared in six printed editions in Italy by 1501, and Persius was almost as popular in print as Juvenal himself. Livy and Pliny were among the first Roman authors to be printed in vernacular translation, and were both indispensible reference works. Even Lucretius' *De rerum natura* and pseudo-Hyginus' *Poetica astronomica* – among the more obscure works cited by our commentators in their remarks on music – had been printed several times by 1501.

This list of sources is interesting for the contrast it forms to the classical bibliography used by specialist writers on music in this period, dominated by Boethius, Isidore, Plato and Aristotle, with Quintilian and Cicero newly added, and in the process of assimilating Ovid and Virgil (for their accounts of mythological musicians), whilst getting excited about Vitruvius, and forging bravely forward into the territory of ancient Greek music theory (Ptolemy, Cleonides, Aristides Quintilianus, etc.). Our commentators had a historical interest in the pragmatic and social – rather than the philosophical and technical – dimensions of ancient musical practice, and that motivation sent them in search of different kinds of information in different sources from those beloved of the music theorists.

What we see as a result is two quite different classicising reading lists, amounting to two quite different ways to pursue an interest in music that might loosely be called 'humanist' around 1501. From a musicological perspective, it is of course tempting to see the classical library of the music theorists as normative for musical understanding in the period, and that of the literature professors as secondary or peripheral. But in fact Boethius' *De Musica* and Isidore's *Etymologiae* were hard to find in an Italian bookshop in 1501, whereas our commentators' bookshelves were stacked with bestsellers, several of which were required reading for university students. For our commentators, and for their readers and students, knowing the difference between a *citharoedus* and a *choraulēs*, and being able to differentiate the musical components of various religious rites across the ancient Mediterranean, and knowing which musicians made which contributions in ancient theatre performances, and knowing which Roman emperors had instituted which musical competitions, and other similar things, represented legitimate, relevant and interesting ways to know stuff about music in 1501. In reconstructing the history of musical knowledge in the period, we should attend to their opinion.

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Abstract

The satires of Juvenal were immensely popular in Renaissance Italy, printed in various forms over 70 times in the period 1469-1520, and five times in 1501 alone. The satires contain a wealth of references to instruments, instrumentalists, and playing practices that are frequently used in *double entendres* connoting lewd acts and infidelity, most potently in the sixth satire. The five Renaissance commentaries printed alongside the satires in 1501 editions suggest how much contemporary scholars wished to say, or indeed not say, about these saucy musical passages. This article will examine the ways in which contemporary commentators unpack and explain musical aspects of the sixth satire, their surprisingly detailed and determined efforts adding up to a distinctive strand of music-historical study that is in evidence across numerous books of commentated classical verse from our 1501 corpus.