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# Introduction: Music, Social Identity, Political Cohesion

## Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

performances.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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