

a point of reference for artistic representations. Nicephorus writes: "in rebus eius [Virginis] omnibus multa divinitus inerat gratia." Cf. Jessica Winston, "Describing the Virgin," *Art History* 3 (2002): 275–92.

- 45 Cant. 4:1: "Quam pulchra es amica mea, quam pulchra es, oculi tui columbarum, absque eo quod intrinsecus latet" ("How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within.").
- 46 Gilbert, *Sermons*, 1:277–78 (PL 184:116–18).
- 47 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo in Cant.* 80.2, *Opera Omnia*, 2:277–278 (PL 183:1166ff): "Sed dicit mihi aliquis: Quid tu duo ista conjungis? quid enim animae et Verbo? Multum per omnem modum. Primo quidem, quod naturarum tanta cognatio est, ut hoc imago, illa ad imaginem sit. Deinde, quod cognationem similitudo testetur. Nempe non ad imaginem tantum, sed ad similitudinem facta est. In quo similis sit quaeris? Audi de imagine prius. Verbum est veritas, est sapientia, est iustitia: et haec imago. Cujus? Justitiae, sapientiae et veritatis. Est enim imago haec iustitia de iustitia, sapientia de sapientia, veritas de veritate, quasi de lumine lumen, de Deo Deus. Harum rerum nihil est anima, quoniam non est imago. Est tamen earumdem capax, appetensque et inde fortassis ad imaginem. Celsa creatura, in capacitate quidem majestatis, in appetentia autem rectitudinis insigne praefereus. Legimus quia Deus hominem rectum fecit [Eccl. 7:30], quod et magnum capacitas, ut dictum est, probat. Oportet namque id quod ad imaginem est, cum imagine convenire, et non in vacuum participare nomen imaginis, quemadmodum nec imago ipsa solo vel vacuo nomine vocitatur imago. [...] ut supra docui, eo anima magna est, quo capax aeternorum; eo recta, quo appetens supernorum [...]. Quippe de capacitate, ut dixi, aestimatur animae magnitudo." Cf. de Bruyne, *Études*, 3:39. On this see also, in this volume, the paper by C. Stephen Jaeger.
- 48 Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, XX:118–120: the divine grace "da sì profonda / fontana stilla, che mai creatura non pinse l'occhio infino a la prima onda" (surges from a well so deep that no created one has ever thrust his eye to its first source). On the sublime in Dante, cf. Boitani, *The Tragic and the Sublime*, 250–78 and, in this volume, the paper of Eleonora Stoppino.

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF A SINGER IN FIFTH-CENTURY GAUL

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Most professional musicians, even those of high renown, learn at some time how it feels to be denied any claim to grandeur by those who regard a singer or an instrumentalist as a tradesman like any other. In one of the most famous passages ever written about the status of musicians, composed around 500, Boethius takes that disparaging view. Since musical performance requires practical skill and licensed ostentation, it follows that "the study of music as a rational art is much nobler than composition or performance." Using a metaphor derived from the Roman household, Boethius deems that "physical skill serves as a slave but reason rules like a mistress." Many of the instrumentalists and singers whom he heard in Ostrogothic Italy must indeed have been slaves in the juridical sense, placed even lower in the social scale than free workmen and artisans. In this scheme there can be no such thing as an accomplished performer—still less a magnificent one—who understands the rational basis of music, for only those belonging to a class contemptuous of public display receive the necessary education in the intellectual refinements of musical art. The true musician confines his involvement with practical music to criticism. He understands, with John Keats, that "[h]eard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter".¹

Boethius "wrote some pages on Christian theology which are of the greatest consequence,"² and at Ravenna he must have heard the chant of Catholics and Arians in some of the most opulent churches of the Christian West. Nonetheless, the first Book of his *De Institutione Musica* shows very little contact with Christian ritual music or musicians, even though this first part of the work is the least technical of the five. Boethius gives no indication that the literate elites of the West had become extensively clericalized in the fifth century, or that many sons of senatorial families in the provinces were now becoming bishops and presbyters, charged with services for which trained

singers were essential. Some of those singers eventually became presbyters themselves, even bishops. To be sure, the *De Institutione Musica* is concerned with immutable aspects of nature, and only to a lesser extent with the mutable judgments of the ear, but that does not mean the treatise lacks any connection with the musical life of Ostrogothic Italy. One passage mentions the vocal techniques used for the recitation of heroic poems, citing the authority of the Roman music-theorist Albinus and perhaps reflecting Boethius's own experience of public recitations or singing competitions (1.12). Nonetheless, there is no trace in the work of Christian liturgical musicianship, unless it lies in a passing reference to the "harsher modes of the Goths" that are perhaps to be identified with the chants of singers in the Arian church of St. Anastasia at Ravenna.³

In the late 400s, there were provincial and reduced versions of Boethius in many parts of the West: men of senatorial family who shared his fondness (but rarely his ability) for literary studies that might include writings of the Greeks, usually in Latin translation. Their outlook was often profoundly conservative, like his, within the limits imposed by the necessity of accommodation with barbarian regimes, and their letters often show them sustaining their sense of belonging to a privileged and cultured elite. They also shared Boethius's willingness to bring the skills and culture of educated Romans to the service of barbarian monarchs, and like him they gravitated to the royal palaces that had replaced the courts of emperors, Roman provincial governors and urban prefects as centers of political power. Yet there is a striking contrast between these provincial figures and Boethius. Their version of his pedigree, learning, and periods of royal service often encouraged them to view musical skill in a light different from any shed in the *De Institutione Musica*, and the difference has profound implications for the course of Western musical culture in the Middle Ages. In some parts of the Occident around 500, young men of aristocratic family who had entered the monastic or the clerical life could be highly valued if they were gifted singers of ritual music, notably when they passed to the higher clerical grades so often associated with men of their background without relinquishing their involvement in performance or choral teaching.

An outstanding case can be documented in the axial period between 450 and 530 that produced the new political order of kingship in the West. The evidence comes from southern Gaul where a Gallo-Roman elite combined a late *romanitas* (easier to sense than to define) with a sharp sense of what was necessary for accommodation to barbarian rule and for their own advantage in the longer term. The literary sources for his activity principally comprise various letters of Sidonius Apollinaris and his own treatise on the nature of the soul. Sidonius, bishop of Clermont and brother-in-law of a Roman Emperor, has no peer outside Italy in the fifth century for the cultivated urbanity of his correspondence; he mentions a clerical singer who lived and worked in a post-Roman political order but who was valued

precisely because he represented a measure of continuity with the Roman past and the imperial Church by virtue of his Gallo-Roman ancestry, his education, and the material culture of his class. This individual is Mamertus Claudianus, presbyter of Vienne, whose case-history shows an accomplished singer reaching the highest ranks of the clerical *cursus honorum* for the first time on record in any Western kingdom.

Mamertus Claudianus is the only liturgical singer of the late-antique West who has left a corpus of writings. Although their transactions with music are slight, they nonetheless provide a unique opportunity to explore the musical thought of a late-antique singer for whom the public exercise of musical skill was a daily discipline by no means impossible to reconcile with a social status defined by the finest imported Greek or Coptic textiles, by spices brought up from Marseille, and by a relatively scrupulous form of written Latin. Claudianus would probably have concurred with Boethius that many musicians, both among the secular entertainers and the clergy, lacked a true understanding of their art and therefore deserved to be treated with contempt; but he could scarcely have agreed with the Senator that a public display of musical skill was work for a slave. To borrow an expression that Sidonius uses of another correspondent, Mamertus Claudianus was both a clerical singer and a *vir magnificus* (Letters 5.22).

Episcopal Magnificence

Mamertus Claudianus sang the liturgy of Vienne in the service of his bishop. As a presbyter, he was entitled to impart the Eucharist and was therefore decisively separated (in theory, if not always in practice) from the deacons immediately below him in the clerical *cursus*. He communicated prior to the deacons and was entitled to sit when deacons were required to stand, a reflection of palatine decorum. Nonetheless, like any presbyter, his status was inseparable from the spiritual authority and material opulence of his prelate and the cathedral. As many Western cities during the fifth century continued their contraction down to a cathedral complex with interstitial housing and decaying public buildings, the bishops began to emerge as important figures in urban life and politics while the city councils wasted away through truancy and the urban prefects vanished. A bishop was still "an arbiter and an honest broker rather than a civic head who could enforce his decision." But he had the right in Roman law to judge clergy and any layman who wished to be tried before him. He could be an emissary for his city and its representative, especially when a parley might avert some imminent danger. To a king, who might at this date have limited ability with the higher forms of self-expression in Latin, a bishop could be a valuable source of expertise in the Latin language and Roman vulgar law. Holding his office for life, he inherited what could still be maintained of Roman public charges, some of them stable and routine such as control of weights and measures, and others

requiring ad hoc reaction to emergencies like a famine or outbreak of disease. Once in his seat, a bishop might control more financial resources in his city than the count or any other notable, and although his church might date from a period when the relatively good state of temples, theatres and other public buildings in the urban core meant that space was only available near the walls, and so in a peripheral position, the cathedrals tended to gain in importance, and in magnificence, at the expense of the old forum area to the point where there are some Western cities today in which the forum area is scarcely detectable (at Brescia, for example, "the forum is now in a quiet residential quarter of the old town"). In southern Gaul, Arles provides a striking case of a cathedral that was moved from its original and peripheral site to be nearer the old forum area.⁴

Only in the later fourth century could Christian communities and their leaders begin to raise the money, and secure the benefactions necessary, for the creation of an episcopal church with any claim to magnificence, but while many Western cities must have acquired a cathedral by 500, the evidence for these buildings is fragmentary or as yet lies beyond the reach of archaeological investigation. Nonetheless, a very general picture is possible. Where any traces of a structure remain, the building suggested is often comparatively small relative to the magnificence of late structures. Archaeological and literary sources both suggest that the bishop's church and its ancillary buildings, the *domus ecclesiae*, might be the only public structures still maintained to a relatively high standard of craftsmanship save when kings, conscious of Roman precedent, decided to intervene in the cities they had chosen as their capitals. Moreover, the cathedral complex was liable to expand by accretion at a time when many of the older public buildings were receiving an infill of poor-quality domestic building, or what French archeologists call *l'habitat parasite*. At Geneva, where excavations in the cathedral and *domus ecclesiae* have yielded important results, the cathedral grew in a corner of the third-century walls, acquiring many ancillary buildings that included an impressive audience hall of the fifth century, supplied with a heating system with floor mosaics. This is a reminder that a bishop, attended by his presbyters and deacons, exercised what amounted to a magistrature in the service of God, receiving his clients in a ceremony akin to the Roman *salutatio*. Beyond such a hall, a site like this might acquire chapels, reception-rooms, dining rooms served by a kitchen, a baptistery, residences for senior clergy, lodgings for urban ascetics dwelling in *domo ecclesiae*, quarters for the bishop's wife and a lodging house for guests or paupers, a *xenodochium*. Some of these rooms were probably used for training, rehearsing and even lodging the singers since the division between hotel, hostel, and hospital was very flexible at this period and was long to remain so.⁵

By the late 400s, cathedral singers therefore worked in surroundings of some opulence relative to the degradation of older public buildings and the indifferent quality of many new constructions, often in the form of interstitial

housing. The bishops and kings of the early Middle Ages espoused an Asian religion whose ceremonies, in their most exalted form, were associated with the luxurious material culture of sixth-century Italy under Theoderic or with Byzantine Rome and the continuing tradition of imperial gifts. The favored materials of that bounty, like the silken and purple-dyed cloak offered to the Frankish king Clovis by the Emperor Anastasius I (491–518), reflected the vast geographical scope of the Roman Empire's trading links across to India and even to China through nomadic intermediaries. Western kings and bishops of the fifth century inherited from the Roman achievement a sense that liturgical and aristocratic culture at an exalted level should be defined by expensive materials sourced in different climates and brought over long distances, not simply obtained in the local markets where artisans, peasants and domestic staff obtained their farming tools, their cooking pots and their ceramic jars. A team of presbyters from late-antique Gaul, fully vested and ostentatiously sacrificing an expensive imported spice in the form of incense, was no doubt an impressive sight.

Mamertus Claudianus of Vienne (d. 470–1)

Among the inland cities of the Western Mediterranean, those on the banks of the Rhône below Lyon were still relatively well connected during the fifth century. To be sure, the shipping college at Arles may already have been disbanded by as early as c. 400, and the ports at Narbonne and Fos were going into eclipse, but the harbor at Marseille was still a crucial gateway from the Mediterranean into the Rhône-valley route. Bulk goods such as the oil, papyrus "and other wares" mentioned by Gregory of Tours came up from Marseille, together with more luxurious commodities such as the many kinds of spices sought by the Frankish kings at Metz, Rheims, or Trier. There were wealthy churches in southern Gaul, notably at Marseille, Vienne, Aix, Narbonne, and Arles, proud of their deep Roman past and already possessing (or in the process of acquiring) cathedrals enriched by the abundant spoils of Roman public buildings, as in the opulent Gallo-Roman baptistery of Aix-en-Provence. Here, as elsewhere, the status of clergy in minor orders may have generally risen with the formation of a clerical *cursus* in the fourth century, widely regarded as the equal of the secular course in prestige and naturally considered by many clergy to be superior. The implications are nowhere made more explicit than by Sidonius Apollinaris: "The lowest ecclesiastic ranks higher than the greatest secular official."⁶

In the time of Mamertus Claudianus, the city of Vienne was still a major late-Roman site with an imposingly monumentalized center and a continuing tradition of rhetors. The cathedral was of modest size, measuring more than 23 meters by 16 meters and therefore occupying only a small proportion of the later-medieval site, and yet Vienne had every reason to maintain an exemplary clerical establishment. It was locked in competition with Arles,

“the Rome of Gaul,” in a way that shows how easily the kind of rivalry between competing *civitates*, so well known in earlier phases of Roman history, could be translated into fifth-century terms as a rivalry of prelates and their churches. Vienne was a civil metropolis facing the challenge of a metropolitan *ecclesia* that claimed a continuous history reaching back to the apostolic period. Claudianus Mamertus, the brother of the bishop of Vienne, held a secure place in the network of friendships and epistolary connections that kept the higher clergy of Gaul in contact. He corresponded with Sidonius Apollinaris who commemorated his death in a long and revealing letter that includes an illuminating epitaph in verse. In addition, two of Claudianus’s own letters survive, together with an extensive theological treatise, *De statu animae*, which places him in the front rank of contemporary minds.⁷

Sidonius revered Claudianus as a teacher:

Gracious heaven! What an experience it was when we gathered to him for the sole purpose of having discussions! How he would straightaway expound everything to us without hesitation and without arrogance, deeming it a great delight if some questions presented a labyrinthine intricacy that required him to ransack the treasure-houses of his wisdom.⁸

The principal source for the life of Claudianus is the letter and epitaph that Sidonius wrote to a certain Petreius, otherwise unknown. Sidonius describes Claudianus as everything a bishop could reasonably expect from one of his presbyters, and more. He was “a deputy [*vicarium*] in the bishop’s churches” serving as celebrant in the cathedral, when the bishop was absent, and at times in the episcopal foundations *intra muros*. He was also an agent (*procurator*) for the bishop as landlord, and an accountant or *tabularius*, supervising the records of rents and other revenues. He was also a “counsellor in the bishop’s court.” Sidonius also describes him as the bishop’s companion in his private reading and his advisor on matters of scriptural interpretation. Fortunately, the epitaph Sidonius composed for him says more about the musical aspects of Claudianus’s liturgical duties and skills:

psalmodum hic modulator et phonascus;
ante altaria fratre gratulante
instructas docuit sonare classes.
Hic sollemnibus annis paravit
*Que pro tempore lecta convenirent.*⁹

a singer of psalms and choir-director; admired by his brother, he taught the trained companies to sing before the altar. He selected readings appropriate for each season for the yearly festivals.

Claudianus was an orator, a philosopher, a poet, a geometer, and a musician, or *musicus*. All these accomplishments imply the greatness of sentiment that

prompts Sidonius to call a learned and fellow Gallo-Roman “magnificent,” *magnificus*, the term he applies to the scholar and lawyer Leo of Narbonne. But the term also implies greatness of action, and on this count it would be easy to miss what Sidonius admires in Claudianus. The last lines of the passage quoted above imply that Claudianus was involved in the compilation of a lectionary some time in the 450s and 460s. In retrospect, this may seem humble work, but in the context of the fifth-century churches both east and west, it was a great deal more. The Jerusalem lectionary, with a choice of psalmody for each reading and surviving only in an Armenian translation, dates from 417–39, while the liturgical work of Pope Celestine I, which may have been comparable, dates from 422–32. More pertinent still is the lectionary with psalmodic responses prepared by a presbyter during the episcopate of Venerius at Marseille (428–52). Since Sidonius mentions Claudianus’s work immediately after his proficiency as a singer and teacher of psalmody, it seems virtually certain that he was engaged in the work of choosing a schedule of psalmodic responses to the lessons. During the fifth century this work of consolidation, so important to the development of the various liturgies, seems to have been proceeding across Christendom.¹⁰

Sidonius does not call Claudianus a *cantor* in the epitaph. As a term of clerical (or quasi-clerical) office, the term *cantor* does indeed make its first recorded appearance during the generation of Sidonius and in southern Gaul, but Mamertus Claudianus had ascended too far in the clerical *cursus* to be called by the name of a minor order he had long since relinquished, if indeed he had ever held it. Instead, Sidonius gives him the more grandiose and periphrastic title *psalmodum modulator*. The “ranks” or *classes* whom Claudianus teaches “before the altar” are perhaps best interpreted as the other clerics of Vienne, for the expression *ante altaria* was generally used to mean the area of ministry, the sanctuary; the meaning here is probably comparable to the sense implied in the pre-Christian Latin of Juvenal who refers to making an oath before a votive altar in *Satires* 10.268, or in the Vulgate text of Deuteronomy 26.4 which describes the priest’s offering of first fruits. There seems to be no question of any lay presence in the part of the cathedral to which Sidonius alludes. Instead, the work of psalmody is somehow divided between the different ranks of clergy. *Classis* is often used in later Latin to denote a throng ordered into sub-groups or files, whence the “distinct classes” of musicians that Niceta of Remesiana attributes to Moses in his fourth-century treatise *De psalmodio bono*, or Augustine’s reference to the *classes* of string players and singers among the Levites. Two centuries later, Aldhelm of Sherborne refers to psalmody *classibus...geminis*, “with twinned companies.” In all these instances there is a sense of assigned musical functions in worship that involve a division into teams or some kind of sub-groupings, comparable to the divisions of a military company (Isidore defines *classes* as maniples, the small subdivisions of a Roman legion in *Etymologiae*, 9.3.60). Sidonius’s epitaph for Claudianus is probably referring to some kind of divided labor in

chanting, either antiphonal or responsorial psalmody, apparently among the clergy alone.¹¹

In calling Claudianus a *phonascus*, Sidonius uses a rare and grandiose Hellenism that has no doubt been carefully chosen both for its meaning and for its implied compliment to the Greek learning (mostly in Latin translation?) for which Claudianus was known. In Ancient Greek, φωναστικός meant “one who exercises the voice, a singing-master, a declamation master,” and Sidonius could have quarried the word in its Latin guise from Quintilian or Suetonius, two authors whom he names in his letters and evidently admired. Both of them use the word in senses close to the Greek, for it was evidently a specialized term. Suetonius mentions a *phonascus* who taught declamation at the highest level, since he was one before whom an emperor might rehearse his speeches; another is a master given the unenviable task of training Nero for the competitions where he sang, declaimed, and played the lyre. For Quintilian, the *phonascus* was a more exclusively musical figure and certainly more of a Greek: a singing teacher who could “tune his voice at leisure from the lowest to the highest notes” who looked after his body with great care; he could “soften all sounds, even the highest, by a certain modulation of the voice” in contrast to the orator who must often “speak with roughness and vehemence, frequently watch whole nights, imbibe the smoke of the lamp by which he studies, and must remain long, during the course of the day, in garments moistened with perspiration.” In the epitaph for Claudianus, the word beautifully suggests both a precentor who would hear his singers rehearse and a singer in his own right who took such care of his voice as was consistent with his ascetic inclinations.¹²

In part, the interest of the Claudianus dossier lies in the way it shows how a kind of *musicus* who is entirely absent from Boethius’s scheme of things in the *De Institutione Musica* could nonetheless emerge in ecclesiastical milieu where the bishops and presbyters were often reduced and provincial versions of Boethius himself. Claudianus and his brother, the bishop of Vienne, were Gallo-Roman aristocrats and members of a local clerical dynasty with impressive connections, not least because they were friends of Sidonius Apollinaris who had known high civil office in Rome. Boethius had a vocation to translate the riches of Greek philosophy and liberal studies for the Latins, and by the standards of any age had the skills to fulfill it; Claudianus’s reputation for expertise “in three literatures, namely the Latin, Greek and Christian” was exceptional for southern Gaul in his time, and nothing else from there in the later fifth century rivals the ambition of his treatise on the soul, *De statu animae*.¹³

What of Claudianus’s musical learning? How much does Sidonius imply by calling him a *musicus*? Educated Gallo-Romans in the later-fifth century knew, with their contemporary Boethius, that the formal study of music was largely a Greek matter to be conducted with a great wealth of technical terminology. Claudianus certainly knew it. One of his two surviving

letters addressed to a rhetor of Vienne named Sapaudus offers an appropriately rhetorical lament that the liberal studies of music, geometry and arithmetic (*musicen vero et geometricam atque arithmeticam*) “are now cast out as if they were thieves”; the unexpected Hellenism in the form *musicen* suggests that Claudianus had not forgotten where the fount of wisdom in musical matters lay. Claudianus also refers to “Greece the teacher of all studies and arts,” and elsewhere in his writings mentions Aristoxenus on music, geometry and arithmetic (materials he almost certainly did not know first hand), and Varro for writings on the same three subjects.¹⁴

It is difficult to assess what this means for the musical learning of a choirmaster in late fifth-century Gaul, although it is important to avoid the implication that if Claudianus and his friends did not pursue Greek learning in music then they *should have done* for the sake of their craft and its development as a literate and rational art. As far as we may discern, the musical art of the liturgical singer in the time of Claudianus was essentially oral. Only in the sense that there were records of the texts to be sung in psalters and other books was it a literate practice. There is no trace of musical notation in the Occident at this date, with the result that we do not know, and almost certainly never will, what actually happened when Mamertus Claudianus sang a psalm in response to a liturgical reading, for example, at Mass. He and his contemporaries may have been the masters of an extemporized practice, compiling music on the spot from elements, learned during their apprenticeship, that provided them with melodic formulas, with ways to mark a pause in the sense of the text with a musical figure of the appropriate weight, and so on. In that case, the principal constraints were presumably that a singer should voice the appointed text in the expected way and bring his chanting to a satisfactory close. Simply speaking, it is possible for liturgical singing in this manner to contain no melodies if the term “melody” means a contour of pitches judged more appropriate to its ritual purpose than anything likely to be achieved by improvising something on the spot or by making significant changes to the memorized material. The fact that Claudianus was involved in the compilation of a lectionary suggests that important elements in the liturgy of his cathedral of Vienne were still largely unproperised for much of his lifetime, and that the choice of psalm texts for any feast still lay with the bishop. It would not be surprising, in such a context, if the musical materials of the psalmodic response(s) were not fully properised either, and that the liturgical meaning of the music used did not inhere in it being perceived as a fixed, canonical melody in the sense defined above. There is no sure sign in the Claudianus dossier that singers in a wealthy and prestigious see of Gaul in the late fifth century felt either the practical need or the intellectual impetus to codify their materials and practice for the sake of teaching or memorization. If anyone could be expected to reveal that such work had begun, it would be Claudianus, but it seems he does not.

The musical terminology of the Greeks may have done little to commend musical studies to the Gallo-Roman elite of the late 400s, which produced no equivalent to Martianus Capella. Sidonius believed that “the most stony teachings of philosophy” were those that required the student to master words like *diastemata*, a Greek musical term, and he supposed that the only option for a man who did not care for such things was to abandon the study of music altogether:

music... cannot be made intelligible without these terms; and if anyone look down on them, as being Greek and foreign expressions (which they are), let him be assured that he must forever renounce all mention of this sort of science or else that he cannot treat the subject at all, or at least that he cannot treat it completely, in the Latin tongue.¹⁵

Despite the attention Sidonius draws to the Greek learning of Claudianus, fifth-century Gaul was probably not a place where anything more than a shadow of Boethius’s competence could be found. The tone of what survives from the period is mostly Latinate, theological, and literary, not Greek, secular, and technical.

Claudianus has left no treatise on music, but the relatively abundant materials pertaining to his life and work nonetheless provide an opportunity, quite exceptional at this date in the West, to form some general impression of the higher reflections upon music that were of interest and importance to a busy church musician of the later 400s. Claudianus considers music several times in his treatise on the soul, *De statu animae*. Prompted by Sidonius and by the bishop of Vienne, Claudianus wrote this tract towards 470 in opposition to a treatise by bishop Faustus of Riez; Faustus had argued for the corporeal nature of the soul, contrary to the teaching of Augustine (to say nothing of Plato), and Claudianus’s extensive reply caused some disturbance among the friends who dominated the church in later-fifth century Gaul, temporarily ending amicable contact between Faustus and Sidonius. It says much for a set of Gallic churchmen often regarded today as impressive but bland epigones of Roman senatorial culture that the matter aroused such strong feeling amongst them, for anyone who attempts to follow the arguments of *De statu animae* will understand why Sidonius praises the author for being a most demanding teacher and be impressed that busy bishops and presbyters contending with their dioceses (and with their kings or their military representatives) should have found any time for it. Yet they did; Sidonius possessed a copy of Claudianus’s *De statu animae* and valued it, as we know from the letter in which he asks a fellow ecclesiastic to return the copy given to him on loan.¹⁶

De statu animae offers an essentially platonist defence of the proposition that the soul is not a corporeal entity, modulated through a careful reading of Augustine’s *De quantitate animae*. For Claudianus, as for Augustine, the soul

is the incorporeal and immortal source of intellection, memory, and discernment, possessing neither length nor breadth, and having its proper habitation in God. The soul, therefore, is what allows a bodily sensation, such as musical sound, to be remembered and judged in the light of reason that is inherently virtuous, for as Augustine says in *De quantitate animae*, 16, “virtue is a certain equality of a life completely in harmony with reason.” Music is therefore remembered and judged in that part of the human entity that returns to God and is made in the image of his perfection. Since damage to the body, such as the amputation of a limb, does not impair the functions of the soul, it must be dispersed throughout the human organism and possess no precise location. Although Claudianus had probably never read Plato in the original, his view of music is essentially Platonic in that it extends the concept of music to everything that is in due equilibrium and accord. Hence he uses musical terms like *harmonia*, *dissonantia* and *concinientia* for the equilibrium of the four elements which give things their due form and their life, just as imbalance promotes disease and death. Thus a healthy tree is musical in this sense because it shows an integrated harmony of parts (1.21).¹⁷

In one passage concerned with intellection, Claudianus engages in a less allusive way with the materials of the art in which he was so proficient:

Num aliquis cantilenae modificatus et per tempus fluens canor illic [sc in intellectu] insonat...?¹⁸

Surely the ordered melody of any song, flowing by *tempus*, does not sound [in the intelligence]...?

The meaning of the passage in its full context seems to be that a musical sound, like an odor, is not sensed by the intelligence but judged there. The point is a straightforward one and Claudianus does not linger over it, save to remark that an ability to understand the process of understanding is a gift that Man shares with the angels. Fortunately, there is something considerably more specific in his choice of technical terms. Melody is sound that has been *modificatus*, regulated and submitted to rational control, and it flows out through *tempus*. This is a technical term from the vocabulary of metrics, denoting the indivisible unit of time that sounds once in every short syllable and twice in every long. It does not indicate a *pulse* but rather the unitary element from which the calibrated durations of metrical verse and music are made, for both arts share the same ideal of harmonious number or *numerositas*. Claudianus may be referring to the performance of secular Latin poems in meter here, or perhaps to liturgical hymns such as those of Ambrose; alternatively, he may be alluding to subtleties of performance in liturgical chant where the duration of a pitch is precisely calibrated at the ends of phrases (the technique that medieval theorists will call *numerosa canere*) or perhaps continuously so.

When Claudianus speaks of music “flowing,” the most helpful context for clarifying a seemingly impressionistic expression is once again metrical.

Augustine speaks of skillfully made verses “running,” *currens*, the voice encountering no obstruction or disruptive flaw in the craftsmanship. Even when Augustine chooses other language, the prevailing sense is always of fluency and grace unobstructed by ill-chosen or inept effects. “What can I say,” says Augustine’s interlocutor of some metrical verses, “save that they sound pleasing and harmonious?” In another passage, Augustine asks whether his partner in the dialogue has not been cheated by a metrical fault of the “equality and sweetness” he had been expecting. At every point where specific verses are offered for judgment, Augustine endorses a classical (and political) ideal of sound as the expression of equity and decorum. It is no surprise to find Claudianus’s friend and admirer Sidonius describing the experience of reading verse by one of his fellow bishops as akin to passing a finger “over plaques of crystal or onyx.”¹⁹

There are so many medieval discussions of musical sound in terms of metrical poetry that it is easy to forget what a subtle form of ear-training metrical theory could offer. It combined a keen appreciation of rational principles with an appetite for the sheer *lilt* of an intelligent reading with its wealth of unclassifiable nuance. Augustine’s *De musica*, so often misread (when it is read at all) as an essentially non-musical work on the subtleties of metrics, proposes a course of lessons for developing a finer discernment in the judgment of vocal sonorities in which the ideal is always one of elegance and civility because discernment in such matters tempers and civilizes the soul. The music that Claudianus Mamertus taught to the singers of Vienne has vanished forever, but much remains to suggest the sophistication of musical judgment, and perhaps of Latin terminology, that was necessary to reach the summit of a musical art that entitled a cleric to the grand, indeed magnificent, title of *phonascus*.

Notes

- 1 For the *De Institutione Musica* of Boethius see *Anicii Manlii Torquati Severini Boetii De Institutione Arithmetica Libri Duo: De Institutione Musica Libri Quinque*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig: Teubner, 1867), 223–5.
- 2 H. Chadwick, “Introduction,” in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. M. Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).
- 3 Friedlein, *De Institutione Musica*, 181.
- 4 The bishops: Adriaan H. B. Breukelaar, *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours Interpreted in their Historical Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); Martin Heinzlmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien* (Munich: Artemis, 1976); idem, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137–168 (source of the “honest broker” quotation used here); idem, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army,*

- Church and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); R. Lizzi Testa, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica: l’Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d. C* (Como: New Press, 1989); S. T. Loseby, “Bishops and Cathedrals: Order and Diversity in the Fifth-Century Urban Landscape of Southern Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, ed. J. Drinkwater & H. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 144–155; Céline Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir dans l’Espagne visigothique* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion); Ralph W. Mathisen, “Barbarian Bishops and the Churches in barbaricis gentibus during Late Antiquity,” *Speculum*, 72 (1997): 664–97; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); C. Sotinel, “How Were Bishops Informed? Information Transmission Across the Adriatic Sea in Late Antiquity,” in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane*, ed. Linda Ellis & Frank L. Kidner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 63–72; idem, *L’évêque dans la cité du IV^e au V^e siècle. Image et autorité*, ed. E. Rebillard & C. Sotinel (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1998). For the Brescia forum see Christopher Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society 400–1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 83.
- 5 For Geneva, see Ch. Bonnet, “Les salles de réception dans le groupe épiscopal de Genève,” *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 65 (1989): 71–86, and idem, “Éléments de la topographie chrétienne à Genève (Suisse),” *Gallia*, 63 (2006): 111–15. See also J.-Ch. Picard, “La fonction des salles de réception dans le groupe épiscopal de Genève,” *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 65 (1989): 87–104. For the early cathedrals, see especially J. Guyon, “Émergence et affirmation d’une topographie chrétienne dans les villes de la Gaule méridionale,” *Gallia*, 63 (2006): 85–110.
 - 6 For Gregory of Tours and the goods into Marseille, see *Libri Historiarum Decem*, 5.5. Context in S. T. Loseby “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, I: Gregory of Tours, The Merovingian kings and ‘un grand port,’” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. Richard Hodges & William Bowden, *The Transformation of the Roman World 3* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 15–40, and idem, “Marseille and the Pirenne Thesis, II: ‘ville morte,’” in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. I. L. Hansen & C. Wickham, *The Transformation of the Roman World 11* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 167–93. See also P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), *passim*. “The lowest ecclesiastic”: Sidonius, Ep. 7.12.4. For aspects of the clerical *cursum*, see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies of Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), and the essays in *Les Pères de l’Église et les ministères*, ed. P.-G. Delage (La Rochelle, 2008).
 - 7 For Vienne, see *Vienne aux premiers temps chrétiens*, ed. M. Jannet-Vallat et al. (Paris: Ministère de la culture et de la communication, direction du patrimoine, 1986), and J. F. Reynaud and M. Jannet-Vallat, “Les inhumations privilégiées à Lyon et à Vienne (Isère),” in *L’Inhumation privilégiée du IV^e au VIII^e s. en Occident. Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil les 16–18 mars 1984*, ed. Y. Duval and J.-Ch. Picard (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 97–107; André Pelletier, *Vienne gallo-romaine au Bas-Empire, 275–468 après J.-Ch.* (Lyon: Bosc frères, 1974). For trading links, more up-to-date information appears in the collection of essays entitled *Le Rhône romain* published in *Gallia*, 56 (1999). See also Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 77–82. For the Mamertus Claudianus dossier

- see Sidonius, Ep. 4.2 (Mamertus Claudianus writes to Sidonius); 3 (Sidonius replies); 11 (Sidonius's letter to Petreius with the encomium of Claudianus and his epitaph); 5.2 (Sidonius asks Nymphidius to return his copy of Claudianus's treatise *De statu animae*). For the text of the treatise, see *Claudian Mamerti Opera*, ed. A. Engelbrecht, CSEL XI (Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1885), comprising the *De statu animae* and, at 203–6, Claudianus's letter to Sapaudus. Further bibliography is assembled in C. Brittain, "No Place for a Platonist Soul in Fifth-Century Gaul? The Case of Mamertus Claudianus," in *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Danuta Shanzer and Ralph Mathisen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 239–62.
- 8 Sidonius, Ep. 4.11.2.
9 Ep. 4.11.13–17.
- 10 The epitaph, Ep. 4.11.6. For the proposal that the preface to Claudianus's lectionary survives, see Dom G. Morin, "Notes liturgiques," *Revue Bénédictine* 30 (1913): 226–34. For the Jerusalem lectionary and its significance there is P. Jeffery, "Rome and Jerusalem: From Oral Tradition to Written Repertory in two Ancient Liturgical Centres," in *Essays on Medieval Music in Honor of David G. Hughes*, ed. Graeme M. Boone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Department of Music, 1995), 207–48. For the lectionary at Marseille see R. E. Cushing, "Hieronymus liber de viris illustribus—Gennadius liber de viris illustribus," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 14 (1896): 1–112, entry LXXX in the catalogue of Gennadius. Commentary in Kl. Gamber, "Das Lektionar und Sakramentar des Musäus von Massilia," *Revue Bénédictine* 69 (1959): 198–215. For possible traces of Musaeus's lectionary see *Das älteste Liturgiebuch der lateinischen Kirche*, ed. Alban Dold (Hohenzollern: Beuron, 1936). For the account of Celestine see the text in H. Geertman, "Le biografie del Liber Pontificalis dal 311 al 535: Testo e commentario," in *Atti del colloquio internazionale Il Liber Pontificalis e la storia materiale. Roma, 21–22 febbraio 2002*, ed. H. Geertman, Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome: Antiquity, 60–1 (2001–2), 285–355. I interpret the evidence relating to Celestine somewhat differently from P. Jeffery, "The Introduction of Psalmody into the Roman Mass by Pope Celestine I (422–432): Reinterpreting a Passage in the *Liber Pontificalis*," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 26, (1984): 147–65.
- 11 *Ante altarium/a*: see, for example, Ambrose, *De sacramentis*, PL 16:419; Pseudo-Isidore, *Epistola ad Leudefredum*, PL 83:895; Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH, AA 15, 16, line 46 ("Classibus et geminis psalmodum concrepat oda"); Niceta of Remesiana: C. H. Turner, "Niceta of Remesiana II," *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1923): 235. Augustine: *Questiones ex veteri testamento*, PL 35:2247.
- 12 *Phonascus*: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 2.8.15 and 11.3.19; Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Augustus 84.2 and Nero 25.3. See also Tacitus, *Annals*, 14, 15.
- 13 For the argument that Claudianus probably read all his Greek material in Latin translation, see Brittain, "No Place for a Platonist Soul."
- 14 For the Letter to Sapaudus see *Claudian Mamerti Opera*, 204, and for "Greece the teacher," *Claud. Mam. Opera*, 203. For the reference to Aristoxenus see *Claud. Mam.*, 105, and for Varro, 130.
- 15 For Sidonius's letter to Polemius see Carmina, XIV [introductory letter] 1–2.
- 16 *De statu animae*: For details, see n.7 above and Brittain, "No Place for a Platonist Soul." For the dispute (beginning with a work of Bishop Faustus of Riez) that inspired the treatise see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious*

- Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 235–44. The loan: Sidonius Ep. 5.2.
- 17 Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae*, PL 32:1050: "Nunc ergo illud attende, utrum tibi videatur virtus aequalitas quaedam esse vitae, rationi undique consentientis." Musical terminology in *De statu animae, Claudiani Mamerti Opera*, 73, 75 et passim.
- 18 *Claudian Mamerti Opera*, 76.
- 19 Augustine and metrical effects: *Aurelii Augustini De Musica*, ed. G. Marzi (Florence, 1969), 230, 232. Onyx: Sidonius, Ep. 9.7.3.