

## ENGLISH ABSTRACT

No source explicitly supports the assumption that Greeks and Romans did not practice polyphony, nor does any surviving source point to the contrary. The second remark of Girolamo Mei remains in force nowadays: in contemporary pagan sources this fact isn't mentioned, nor is it in Christian contemporary or later sources after the fall of the pagan world.

After this event, we find a historical gap for almost seven centuries (which not only affects music sources but to a greater extent) regarding the existence and dissemination of devices and instruments. Some of them reappeared with a similar design (bagpipes, lutes), while others apparently had not survived (double aulos).

In musicology the practice of polyphony is presented as a late product resulting from a progressive and linear evolution of musical thinking (cognitive and social), claiming its alleged appearance in the history during Middle Ages in the West. According to this view, before this time humans did not practice polyphony, implying that Greeks and Romans didn't either. But, as we firstly mentioned, no surviving source makes any reference to this fact.

This kind of historical and psychological arguments remain the basis of our vision of the music from these cultures, despite the problems and inconsistencies when confronted with findings from other fields. Archeology, for example, has been recovering mosaics and other pieces that confirm the presence of polyphonic (or multiphonic) instruments for many centuries.

We are also aware of the existence of hundreds, maybe thousands, of festivals, competitions, concerts, and all sorts of group musical activities during the same period. References to many amateur and professional choirs, together with a wide dissemination of theaters and odeums (roofed concert halls), along with festivals and dramatic-musical shows, are indirect evidence of the importance of instrumental and choral music ensembles for Greeks and Romans.

These two major elements — on the one hand, choral music and shows, on the other a broad dissemination of instruments capable of producing different simultaneous sounds — are the central body of our argumentation. This Thesis documents about 240 sources (both literary and iconographic) related to these instruments, along with several hundred allusions or quotations (inscriptions, written works, etc.) to pagan choral practices.

Altogether close to 500 sources are presented, half of them are direct (those involving the instruments), and the remaining are indirect (those involving the choirs). The Thesis assumes that the organized presence of a large number of voices, repeatedly and socially accepted implies the

plurality of sounds (of course, monophonic choral singing not excluded) and also that we cannot base its denial on aesthetic (or cognitive) disability of these peoples.

The presence of polyphonic phenomena in non-Western musical traditions is accredited across different cultures through time and geographical space: diatonic choirs of the Pacific already surprised early Europeans when they arrived there in the XVIIIth century. Epirote singing at Balkans, Georgian singing in the Caucasus, along with many other European folklore traditions with characteristic scales and intervals, as well as polyphonic singing of Aka Pygmies and other African ethnic groups, indicate a poly- or multi-vocal past, independent from the Western music historical development during the last 1.200 years.

This Thesis does not discuss the evolution of Western music from Hucbaldo onwards, but merely some claims related to the music of glorious peoples many centuries ago. On the one hand, we find a historical vacuum regarding non-church music sources (of any kind), and, on the other, a few Christian works of the Vth and VIth centuries and a few late works near the millennium. Those, however, do not provide any practical nor technical related information to daily musical activities in profane domains.

The Classical World was a very musical one that lasted 1,000 years and handed down to us both arts and sciences that were not surpassed until 1,000 years after its fall. Still today they provide the fundament of our own academic disciplines, both artistic and scientific. However, mainly on the basis of the views which will be discussed in Part One, we have relegated our ancestors to a primitive musical art, devoid of any complexity due to

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an alleged monophony based on unclarified reasons and which has absolutely no relation to the rest of their artistic productions.

We are, in fact, also sons of Greece, for the same reasons they exposed: not due to where we are born, but due to the way we look at the world and search for the causes behind natural phenomena. Inquiry about our Greek and Roman musical past must be based on objective data and not on Renaissance, medieval or contemporary beliefs, apart from the alleged powers of some music lost a long time ago, which we will probably never be able to recover.

The Thesis does not consider modes, scales, systems, intervals, and other theoretical and technical concepts because those are likely irrelevant to the simple question of whether several humans can sing at once, and especially since when they do. This seems an obvious fact for any of us in every time and place, beyond cultural or religious constraints, and we will attempt to argue for it in following pages.

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