

POSSESSED BY THE GREAT MOTHER: MUSIC AND TRANCE IN ANCIENT POMPEII AND IN THE POPULAR TRADITION OF SOUTHERN ITALY

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In his *Ab urbe condita*,¹ Livy writes that owing to the unusual number of stones which had fallen from the skies during the year, the Sibylline Books had been consulted. Some oracular verses advised that should foreigners attempt to invade Italy, they could be driven out, and to do this, the *Mater Idaea* had to be brought from Pessinus to Rome. Thus, a famous black stone representing Cybele, the Great Mother, was carried from Anatolia to the capital. This was the year 204 B.C., and the detailed chronicle of the event, as Livy reconstructed it many years later, had become part of the new Roman religion. On top of the Palatine, a temple was erected for the goddess.² Feasts and celebrations were instituted for her cult. But the inclusion of an Oriental divinity in the pantheon which the people had inherited from their ancestors, was certainly not to the taste of all Romans. The senate even forbade its citizens to become part of her clergy, but in time her veneration became rooted in society to such an extent that the divine wind blowing from the East culturally affected every stratum of the population.

In the *Aeneid*,³ Virgil placed her at the very origins of the godly lineage. The Great Mother stood in the *Cibèlo*. She lived there with the bronze cymbals of Coribantes, with the sacred wood of Ida and its arcane Mysteries, with two lions drawing her chariot. Music was present in all public celebrations in her honour, the most important of which being the *Ludi Megalenses*. This included the acting of cultual scenes,⁴ enhanced by the practice of Mysteries. Cybele was represented as goddess of the tambourine. Her partner Attis was also often pictured in connection with music. In his *De errore profanarum religionum*,⁵ Firmicus Maternus writes that the believers ate from the tambourine, and drank from the *kimbalon*. They had become mystes of Attis.

During special esoteric rituals then widespread in Roman society, such as rites for Dionysus, Sabatius, Mithras, and Serapis-Isis from Egypt, the initiated went through a phase during which they experienced some distortion of reality and subsequently entered into a trance. This was induced by a combination of foodstuffs, drinks and drugs, to which spiritual stimuli, such as sound, music and dance, were added. They lost consciousness and entered into a supernatural world. In his *Non posse*,⁶ Plutarch writes that many thought initiation and purification for the people would be helpful as once purified they would believe that they could carry on playing and dancing in Hades, in splendid places, of pure air and light.

These beliefs spread well beyond the walls of the city where secret orgies, sometimes subversive, took place. The practice arose in the provinces which had already experienced cultural exchanges with Mediterranean and Oriental civilisations such as the lands south of the Italic peninsula, the old Magna Graecia. There was much evidence of sects devoted to the cult of Dionysus-Bacchus, as seen on the Dyonisiac frescoes at the Villa dei Misteri, in Pompeii (fig. 1), even long after these practices had been officially banned in Rome.⁷

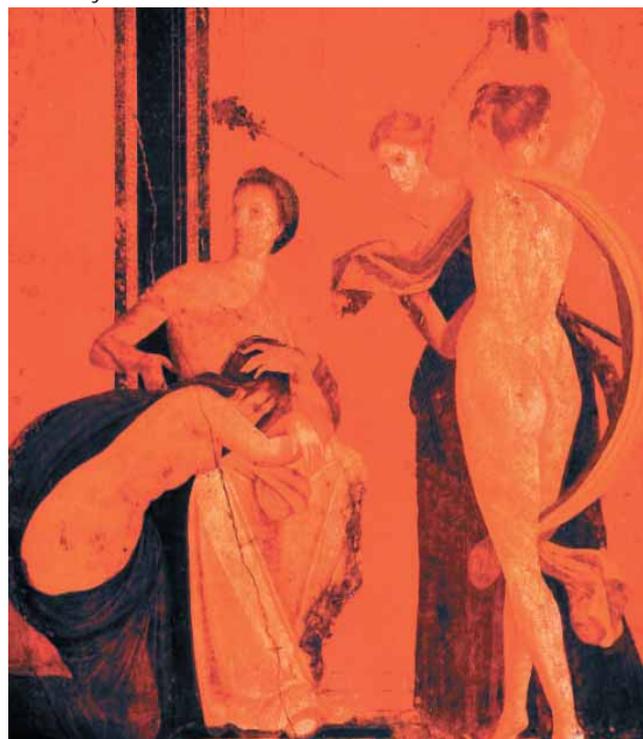


Fig. 1

Pompeii was dominated by the volcano. It had been a cradle of civilisation (the Greeks first landed in the island of Pithecousa, at the beginning of their colonising of the peninsula). The eruption of 79 A.D. buried much evidence of the intense cultural activities which had taken place there. The monuments of glory had disappeared. However, archaeology has yielded a wealth of materials which illuminated all aspects of daily life in Ancient Rome.

Researches in the practice of music allows for a comparative study of ancient rituals with those of modern times. Textual evidence from charred scrolls found in the Villa dei Papiri, in Herculaneum, has confirmed details of beliefs which had been described by Philodemus of Gadara.⁸ He was a master among Epicureans. Additionally, archaeological finds from Southern Italy, such as some golden leaves with orphic inscriptions,⁹ echo his philosophical theories on the existential value of music. Much of the iconography retrieved from the Vesuvian ashes, appears to have been inspired by cult ritual, and staged events where the magic power of sound is clearly attested. In a tangle of faiths and ideas, which sometimes seem inextricable, appear images of various beliefs. Dionysus-Bacchus and his followers, as seen on the fresco in the Casa di Lucretius Fronto, shows the triumphal arrival of the god surrounded by his 'thiasus' (fig. 2) as cymbals and tambourines shaken by quivering hands are played everywhere on the beach.



Fig. 2

In his *Ars amatoria*,¹⁰ Ovid writes that there were maenads with loose hair and nimble satyrs. There was a crowd preceding Bacchus, the God. There is evidence of strange objects, flaunted symbols of Sabatius, a magic vase (fig. 3), the 'pantea' hand¹¹ and Isis, all along with the Great Mother.¹²

Cybele is at the heart of sound along with the musicians participating at her mysterious cults. She is often associated with the tambourine seen on the walls of Pompeii (fig. 4).¹³ She is also represented on fictile terracottae (fig. 5). Attis too, recognizable with his Phrygian hat, is often seen playing the syrinx, an instrument which came from the Orient. Similar figurines were unearthed at Campania as well as in Taranto, in Reggio, and elsewhere (fig. 6).¹⁴ In Pompeii the lifestyle which preceded the eruption would have allowed for widely practised religious syncretism. Much evidence is narrated on the great fresco on a façade at the Via dell'Abbondanza (fig. 7). There worshippers are about to carry a statue of the Great Mother in a procession.



Fig. 3

In his *De Rerum Natura*,¹⁵ Lucretius says that she was adorned with the same elements. She is carried forth, solemnly, in many mighty lands. They are told to listen to the wide nations and their antique rites. They are asked to call for the Idaean Mother with her escort of Phrygian bands. Yet, if the goddess is sitting on her throne, dominating the scene, opposite her, in a small shrine, stands a bust of Dionysus. This well-worn representation shows a wealth of details. Some play the reed-pipes, others the cymbals and tambourine. They might have been *galli*-priests belonging to an exclusive caste portrayed on a funeral relief from Ostia.¹⁶

It is also recorded that on particular occasions their rituals would involve some violence. According to Lucretius,¹⁷ when the *galli* arrived hollow cymbals, and tight-skinned tambourines were played along with the clapping of hands. Fierce horns threatened with their raucous bray, while tubular pipes were played in the Phrygian style. This would excite their maddened minds. They carried knives as well as disturbing emblems. This procedure added to the goddess's power brought panic and terror all around. Along with Cybele's ministers, who were active in the temple, the wandering-priests (*metragyrtes*) played tambourines, cymbals and reedpipes. They also begged on behalf of the goddess. Dioskourides of Samos depicted them on a famous mosaic in Pompeii (fig. 8). The scene is also repeated on paintings, notably from villas in Stabia alongside players of reed-pipes and tambourines.¹⁸ They might have been monks who specialised in this ritual music (fig. 9).



Fig. 4

Some of the iconography at Pompeii has caught female characters in a trance (fig. 10). They might have been maenads or perhaps matrones. It is difficult to say if this depicted reality or whether it reflects fertile imagination, but the obsessional and obstinate rhythm played along with the taking of drugs might have induced exaltation and hallucination among worshippers. Here, life and myth mingled together to the echo of both archaic and invented sounds. On all these representations the figures are seen dancing to their own accompaniment of wind and percussion instruments. Strings were excluded for ideological reasons as well as for practical ones as they would not have been loud enough to be heard in a crowd during the practice of noisy rituals. Idiophones belonged to the Great Mother. In particular, cymbals were played during the liturgy as representing both hemispheres of the heavens surrounding the earth, mother of the gods, as described with Servius.¹⁹

Close to Mount Vesuvius, several pairs of cast bronze cymbals were unearthed in good condition (fig. 11). In Pompeii, in the *praediae* of Julia Felix, another pair was found and (probably by pure coincidence), a similar pair is depicted in a scene on the walls along with other symbols of Dionysus (fig. 12).²⁰ While it might be far-fetched to assume that it had been used as a model by the artist, we can show that such cymbals were used there,

right where they were found. Recently, at the site of the Villa dei Papiri, in Herculaneum, a throne was excavated. It was made of wood and veneered with ivory. Among many objects adorning it was a pair of hanging cymbals (fig. 13).²¹



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

No actual tambourine has ever been found through archaeology, unsurprisingly, since they were mainly made of wood and leather. On the other hand, the literary and iconographic evidence for these instruments is so frequent that there is no doubt about their wide-spread usage (fig. 14).²²



Fig. 7

The playing of these tambourines is an interesting matter. The abundant evidence of its usage in the periphery of Mount Vesuvius, particularly, and of Southern Italy, generally, calls for our attention. The survival, to this day, of age-old socio-cultural practices must be observed in a larger cultural setting. Roberto De Simone, a well-known composer and ethnomusicologist, wrote, after a visit at the Archaeological Museum of Naples, that his particular experience - from the sixties and seventies - involved material from both peasant or pastoral worlds.²³

As he has shown, the playing of specific instruments is still perpetrated in the Campania region in a similar fashion to the musical scenes painted on the ancient frescoes at Pompeii.



Fig. 8

Focusing specifically on the sacred, it is clear that very vivid popular practices arising in this region can be related to ancient cults. Furthermore, in the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche said that either through the influence of narcotic drinks, which is well referenced in popular hymns, or because of the powerful influence of Spring, the Dyonisian spirit arises, and as it intensifies, the subjective fades into complete forgetfulness of the self. During the Middle Ages in Germany, and under the same power of Dionysus, ever-growing hordes thronged from place to place, singing and dancing. St John's and StVitus' dances obviously stem from the Bacchic chorus of the Greeks, once again, with its forerunners deep-rooted in Asia Minor, right back the orgiastic *Sacaea*.²⁴

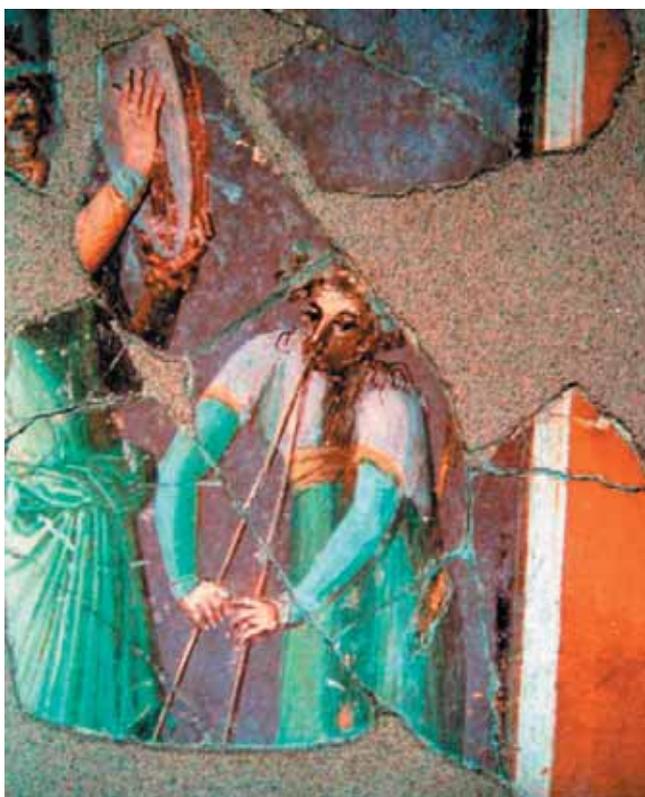


Fig. 9

This inheritance is well documented, especially from a systematic survey on songs and dances of Southern Italy, in Campania, Calabria, Apulia and in Sicily where manifestations of trance and possession could be witnessed until recent times. Some of them could be traced right back to the cult of Cybele.



Fig. 10

In the early days of modern ethnomusicology, these phenomena have been scientifically investigated by many scholars, leading to some milestone publications. For instance, the American ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax travelled to Italy in 1954 in the company of Diego Carpitella. During his field work, he recorded over 3,000 pieces which were put out on acclaimed LPs (fig. 15).²⁵ In 1959, in the region of Salento, the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino, conducted research into the practice of '*tarantismo*' and published *La terra del rimorso*, 'The land of remorse', a work which spearheaded a series of studies on the subject.²⁶ During the following decades, the aforementioned Roberto De Simone researched the historico-mythological roots of musical expressions he gathered in the region of Campania. His legacy included volumes depicting popular and more sophisticated spiritual practices which coexisted in that region.²⁷

However, such intriguing material can lead towards doubtful epistemological interpretation and needs rational evidence in its support. About '*tarantismo*', Ernesto De Martino had witnessed the persistence of the belief that physical and psychical consequences of the tarantula's bite could be cured with musical exorcism. Trances of that nature had already been investigated, at different levels, by more or less objective scholars since the Middle Ages,²⁸ but only the most modern researches, reconsidering the medico-physiological approach have succeeded in the interpretation of its mystico-symbolical meaning. In Galatina, which is a country town in the region of Salento, in Puglia, a peculiar event of devotion and thanksgiving involving people suffering the disease caused by true or alleged bites was still to be witnessed still in recent years.

Every year, on St Paul's Day,²⁹ June the 29th, the saint's chapel hosted scenes where believers reenacted awesome rituals (fig. 16). They thought that the sickness and apathy from which the victims suffered, often women from humble rural background, could be cured by specialised musicians, the '*paranza*', performing specific pieces. They were purposely recruited on that occasion.



Fig. 11

As a part of the liturgy, which also included symbols of water, of swings, of labyrinths and of specific colours, musicians played different melodies, carefully observing which one was more effective. When they agreed, the *tarantolata* ran riot in a frenzied dance (the *pizzica pizzica*) which mimically represented the possessed and, at the same time, the struggle to free from this possession. This, sometimes lasted days, in different stages, till exhaustion (fig. 17).



Fig. 12

During the ritual, the rhythm of the music was prominent. It was played by the tambourine which stood right at the heart of the music. It had become the typical symbol and heir to Cybele's own instrument, the *tympanum*. Euripides tells of the mythic invention of this instrument. He states that the cults of the Great Mother and of Dionysus were considered, even in classical Athens, as almost two aspects of the same creed:



Fig. 13

'O hidden cave of the Curetes! / O hallowed haunts in Crete, that saw Zeus born, where Corybantes with / crested helms devised for me in their grotto the rounded timbrel of / ox-hide, mingling Bacchic minstrelsy with the shrill sweet accents / of the Phrygian flute, a gift bestowed by them on mother Rhea, to / add its crash of music to the Bacchantes' shouts of joy; but frantic / satyrs won it from the mother-goddess for their own, and added it / to their dances in festivals, which gladden the heart of Dionysus, / each third recurrent year'.³⁰ In the South, nowadays, this instrument is known as the *tammorra* and has variations according to different regional cultures (such as, for example, with the dances of *tammorriata*, *pizzica* and *tarantella*...³¹), it keeps on creating pulsations which are the cause of joy, frenzy and sometimes mania (fig. 18).



Fig. 14

The state of trance which arose from these frantic rhythms also took place in Barano d'Ischia (and survives today though perhaps more as an attraction for tourists). Every year, on Easter Monday and also on the occasion of St John the Baptist Day, on the 24th of June, the hamlet of Buonopane is the setting for the '*n'drezzata*' where it is performed.³² Here too, the feast has been assimilated by Christianity from its pagan roots. The '*n'drezzata*' is a ceremonial dance where all the protagonists are males. In the case of couples, one male takes the role of a female (fig. 19). If the recent origin of this tradition can be traced back to blood feuds in the 16th century, even more remote roots can be located among other mythological sources³³ on account of the Greek presence on the island.

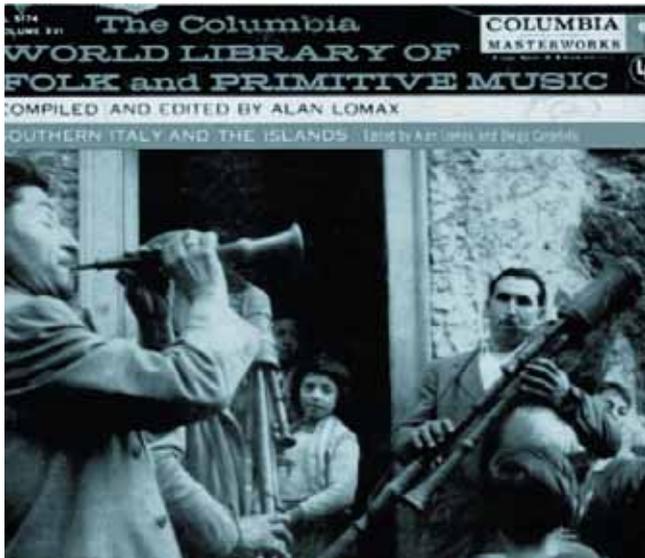


Fig. 15

In his controversial book, Marius Schneider investigated a dance which was performed by armed men simulating fighting (fig. 20).³⁴ This is reminiscent of Lucretius' description of Cybele's ministers: 'Here is an armed troop, which the Greeks/call Phrygians Curetes. Since/haply together they used to play/games of arms and leap in rhythm around/with bloody mirth and shaking/their terrorizing crests upon their heads...'³⁵



Fig. 16

Fig. 17

In this myth, the function of the Corybantes was predominant as was reported by Diodoros:³⁶ 'Corybant named the Corybantes from his own name, and describes all of those falling into divine excitement during the celebration of the Mother's rites...'. In Ancient Rome, it was the *galloi*, the ministers of the cult, who took the place of the Corybantes, and there, as a consequence of the ritual, injuries and mutilations were sustained by the protagonists.

It is obvious that music was an essential component of the rite: '...they were all, possessed by fury, and like the Bacchantes, in an armed dance, between clamours and the noise of tambourines, the noise of the army, the sound of the *aulos* and shouts as the ritual goes on, spreading

fear in its course...'³⁷ This phenomenon is not unique to Southern Italy. There is also the 'dance of swords', which is staged in Torre Paduli, Peninsula Salentina, outside the sanctuary of St Rocco. It runs from sunset on the 15th of August to the following dawn. Here an ancient and symbolic fight ritual is revived in a kind of knife duel enacted by men dancing in pairs.



Fig. 18

The male/female ambiguity persists also in the rites performed at a Marian sanctuary, at the site of Montevergine, in Campania. On the day of the catholic feast of Candelora, the 2nd of February, believers leave for a pilgrimage climbing up the mountain. There is much singing of animated songs of devotion (fig. 21). The main actors for this event are called *femmenielli*, they are male homosexuals, who since time immemorial joined the procession leading to Montevergine. This was an occasion to express their devotion to the *Madonna Nera*, the Black Virgin.³⁸ Here too, musical and choreographic components are at the center of the ceremony: the whole procession is punctuated by the beats of the *tammorre*, and as the sounds reach their loudest, some worshippers may experience a feeling close to a trance (fig. 22).³⁹

The ritual taking place at Montevergine is another example of a Christian rite stemming from pagan sources. The relation with Cybele firstly needs be investigated from the history of the site itself. It is said that a shrine was erected there where a temple dedicated to the cult of the Great Mother first stood. This has been corroborated with the evidence of archaeological finds.⁴⁰ Secondly, the presence of specific symbols makes the connection obvious: the particular usage of carts, for example, or the similarity with the homosexuality of modern believers and the lack of virility of the ancient worshippers (the priests of the goddess wore female clothes in observance of their theology, and emulating Attis, they even emasculated themselves: 'Go together, votaresses, to the high groves of Cybele./Go together, wandering herd of the lady of

Dindymus', 'emasculate your bodies from too much hatred of Venus'⁴²), and above all, the meaning of the music.

Galatina, Barano d'Ischia, Montevergine are three examples of contemporary spirituality coming from past times (figs 23 and 24).

At the end of this path, cross-references between antiquity and the present, the mirroring of reality and myth, and the symbolic weaving of music and poetry, seem so intense that almost we do not understand to whom is directed the pressing call of Catullus:⁴³ 'Overcome your reluctance: together/go to the Phrygian shrine of Cybele, to her groves/where the voice of cymbals sounds, the tambourines rattle,/where the Phrygian piper plays the deep curved pipe,/where Maenads wearing the ivy throw back their heads,/where they practice the sacred rites with sharp yells./Where they flutter around the goddess's cohort:/it is there we must go with our rapid dances'.



Fig. 21



Fig. 19



Ballo T. Tarantella del Affeminati di Napoli.

Fig. 22



Fig. 20



Fig. 23



Fig. 24

Notes

1 Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, XXIX 10, 14: 'Civitate eo tempore repens religio invaserat invento carmine in libris Sibyllinis propter crebrius eo anno de caelo lapidatum inspectis, quandoque hostis alienigena terrae Italiae bellum intulisset eum pelli Italia vincique posse si mater Idaea a Pessinunte Romam advecta foret'.

2 The stone was temporarily housed in an ancient shrine, the *aedes victoriae*, until it was moved into a dedicated temple which was built in 191 BC.

3 Virgilius, *Aeneis*, III, 111-113: 'Hinc mater cultrix Cybeli Corybantiaque aera/Idaemque nemus, hinc fida silentia sacris,/et iuncti currum dominae subiere leones'.

4 Plautus and Terence, among others, wrote comedies for these occasions.

5 Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 18, 1: 'De tympano manducaui, de cymbalo bibi et religionis secreta perdidici...'

6 Plutarch, *Non posse*, 1105b.

7 With the *Senatus consultum de bacchanalibus*, in 186 BC. (Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, XXXIX 18, 3).

8 The scroll *PHerc.* 1497, for example: discovered in 1752, it is the most important.

9 A golden leaf, from Thurii (Calabria), is preserved in the Archaeological State Museum of Naples, no. 1463.

10 Ovidius, *Ars amatoria*, I, 535-536 and 539-540: 'Sonuerunt cymbala toto/litore et attonita tympana pulsa manu'; 'Ecce, Mimallonides sparsis in terga capillis,/ecce, leves Satyri, praevia turba dei'.

11 Both from the *Casa dei Riti Magici (di Sestilius Pyrricus, Pompeii II 1, 12)*, the fictile vase is exposed in the *Antiquarium* of Boscoreale, no. 10529, while the 'pantea hand' is preserved in the Archaeological State Museum of Naples, no. 10845.

12 In Pompeii, despite the absence of epigraphic evidence, the cult for the Great Mother is certainly attested. For instance, it seems that a single lump of black lava, embedded in a niche near the entrance of a thermopolium, was an allusion to the stone of Pessinus.

13 Wall painting: picture portraying Cybele as bronze statue, from Pompeii Casa VII 8, 28 (Archaeological State Museum of Naples, no. 8845).

14 For example the fictile figurine preserved in the Archaeological State Museum of Naples, no. 20313. All the archaeological evidence related to the cult was gathered by Maarten J. Vermaseren in the fundamental work *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque* (CCCA); the finds from Southern Italy are arranged in volumes IV (*Italia-Aliae provinciae*) and VII (*Musea et collectiones privatae*).

15 Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II, 610-3: 'Hanc variae gentes antiquo more sacrorum/Idaem vocitant Matrem, Phrygiasque catervas/dant comites, quia primum ex illis finibus edunt/per terrarum orbem fruges coepisse creari'.

16 *Archigallus coloniae ostienis*: funerary bas-relief from the necropolis of Isola Sacra, in Ostia Antica (first half of the third century).

17 Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II: 618-623: 'Tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum/concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,/et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis,/telaque praeportant violenti signa furoris,/ingratos animos atque impia pectora volgi/conterere metu quae possint numinae divae'.

18 They are exhibited in the Archaeological State Museum of Naples (no. 9034 and no. 20545).

19 Servius *apud* Virgilius, *Georgica* 4: 64.

20 These finds are preserved in the Archaeological State Museum of Naples, no. 10159 (the object) and no. 8795 (the painting).

21 These reliefs could be related to the *Attideia*, the celebrations in honor of Attis introduced by the emperor Claudius.

22 In the catalogue *Pitture e pavimenti di Pompei*, 120 paintings representing tambourines are quoted, but the number is approximated by defect. (Bragantini, I. de Vos M. and Parise Badoni F. (ed.) (1981-Roma) *Pitture e pavimenti di Pompei*).

23 De Simone, R. (1999-Milano) 'La musica nella Pompei romana' in *Homo faber, Natura, scienza e tecnica nell'antica Pompei*: 29.

24 Nietzsche, F. (1872-Leipzig) *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*: 'Auch im deutschen Mittelalter wälzten sich unter der gleichen dionysischen Gewalt immer wachsende Schaaren, singend und tanzend, von Ort zu Ort: in diesen Sanct-Johann- und Sanct- Veittänzern erkennen wir die bacchischen Chöre der Griechen wieder, mit ihrer Vorgeschichte in Kleinasien, bis hin zu Babylon und den orgiastischen Sakäen. Es giebt Menschen, die, aus Mangel an Erfahrung oder aus Stumpfsinn, sich von solchen Erscheinungen wie von 'Volkskrankheiten', spöttisch oder bedauernd im Gefühl der eigenen Gesundheit abwenden: die Armen ahnen freilich nicht, wie leichenfarbig und gespenstisch eben diese ihre 'Gesundheit' sich ausnimmt, wenn an ihnen das glühende Leben dionysischer Schwärmer vorüberbraust'.

25 Parts of these valuable recordings were recently republished in the series 'Italian Treasury' of 'The Alan Lomax Collection': the CD is entitled *Puglia: the Salento* (Rounder 82161-1805-2, Massachusetts 2002).

26 De Martino, E. (2002-Milano) *La terra del rimorso. Il Sud, tra religione e magia*.

27 De Simone, R. (1982-Napoli) *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania*: (1979-Roma) *Il segno di Virgilio*, etc.

28 The oldest text on this subject seems to be from a 16th century erudite (Corrado, Q. M. (1581-1582-Venice) *De copia latini sermonis*), but similar phenomena are told even in the chronicle of the First Crusade (Albertus Aquensis, *Historia Hierosolymitanae expeditionis*); later on, even the Jesuits, within the context of the baroque studies on the 'iatromusic', dealt with (Kircher, A. (1643-Köln) *Magnes sive de arte magnetica opus tripartitum*).

29 It is reported that during his stay in Malta, St Paul cured the effect of a bite and then when he landed in the Italic peninsula, he granted the same privilege to the land of Salento (see *Acts of the Apostles*, XXVIII, 1-10).

30 Euripides, *Bacchae*: 123-34.

31 The revival of pizzica, for instance, has become a sort of emblem of Salento (the *Festival della Taranta*), with considerable repercussions on the cultural, social and economic-touristic plan.

32 The term refers to the braiding made by the movements of the musicians. The event is also called the 'mascarada', the masquerade.

33 There are different versions, involving Apollo, the Nymphs and also Aesculapius: his presence corroborates the thermal vocation, still important in the locality to this day.

34 Schneider, M. (1948-Instituto Español de Musicología) *Ladanza de espadas y la tarantela*. The dancers in the n'drezzata hold a short and sturdy stick (the 'mazza'), in one hand and a longer one, spear-like, in the other.

35 Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II: 629-632: 'Hic armata manus, Curetas nomine Grai/quos memorant Phrygios, inter se forte quod armis/ludunt, in numerumque exultant sanguine laeti...'

36 Diodoros, V 49: 3.

37 Strabo, *Geographia*, X: 3, 7.

38 The complex implications related to the name (Vergine = Virgin = parthenos), and to the figure of the Madonna Nera (Black Virgin), that here is called also Madonna Schiavona (Virgin of the slaves), are very significant.

39 Besides Montevergine, the music of the tammorra is the heart of several other religious events in Campania, for example in those of Somma Vesuviana, Scafati and Maiori.

40 The existence in this area of a sacred structure is attested right from the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* (2nd century); the humanist Flavius Biondo, in *Roma triumphans*, conjectures that a convent dedicated to the Virgin and placed, precisely, above the country town of Mercogliano was in antiquity a temple of Cybele; in 1649 Giacomo Giordano, in *Croniche di Monte Vergine*, writes that during the works at a sanctuary some objects connected to the pre-Christian cults came to light, particularly related to the 'pantheon' of the Great Mother.

41 Varro, *Eum.* fr. 120 Bücheler.

42 Catullus, *Carmen* LXIII: 12-13 and 17: 'Agite ite ad alta, Gallae, Cybeles nemora simul./imul ite, Dindymenae dominae vaga pecora'; 'et corpus evirastis Veneris nimio odio'.

43 Catullus, *Carmen* LXIII: 19-26: 'Mora tarda mente cedat: simul ite, sequimini/Phrygiam ad domum Cybeles, Phrygia ad nemora deae,/ ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant,/tibicen ubi canit Phryx curvo grave calamo,/ubi capita Maenades vi iaciunt hederigerae,/ubi sacra sancta acutis ululatus agitant,/ubi sivev illa divae volitare vaga cohors,/quo nos decet citatis celerare tripudiiis'.

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Sound illustrations

Fig. 17: A 'Tarantolata', excerpt from a film by Gian Franco Gilmozzy.

Fig. 18: PIZZICA from 'La Tarantella-Antidotum Tarantulae', L'Arpeggiata & Christina Pluhar, track 15.

Fig. 19: N'DREZZATA from 'Feste e tamburi in Campania', live recording by Michele Gala, vol. I, track 6.

Fig. 22: Tammurriata, by Lomax recordings, from 'Folk Music and Song of Italy', *The Alan Lomax Collection*, track 13.