

Introduction

The Chorus in the Augustan Imagination

For dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from a noble upbringing: dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words. Do I have to add that one must also be able to dance with the pen – that one must learn to write?

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols or
 How to Philosophize with the Hammer*

On 3 June 17 BCE, Rome came together to witness a remarkable spectacle. As the culmination of Augustus' three-day 'Saecular Games' (*Ludi Saeculares*), which had included Greek and Roman theatrical productions, sacrifices, and prayers to welcome the dawn of a new age, a chorus of twenty-seven boys and the same number of girls stood in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine and performed a lyric hymn. Singing and dancing through the sacred and civic centre of Rome, the same chorus took to the Capitoline and performed their hymn again. Somewhere in the crowd, or perhaps even directing the children's song, the poet Horace heard more than fifty young voices raise his Sapphic stanzas to the rafters of the gods' homes.

Horace's innovative hymn blends archaic Roman *carmina* traditions with Greek lyric elements that include its Sapphic metre, the hymnic form of the paean, and a group of performers who characterize themselves at the close of the song as 'a chorus taught to speak the praise of Phoebus and Diana' (*doctus et Phoebi chorus et Dianae / dicere laudes*, 75–6). Horace's identity as poet hovers below the surface of these closing lines: he is the unnamed figure who 'taught' the children to sing the gods' praise. But the *sphragis* chooses to foreground the performers rather than the poet, asking the audience to view them as Roman inheritors of a Greek tradition that embodies both musical and social harmony: the chorus.

This book stems, in part, from a desire to understand Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* not just within the traditions of Roman religion or Greek lyric,

but also in the context of a literary landscape at Rome that was in the process of redefining the relationship between performance and authorial identity. It seeks to understand how Augustan poetry assimilates, interprets, and reimagines the idea of the Greek chorus. I see the *Carmen Saeculare* as the most radical and overt expression of an Augustan interest in chorality, part of a wider trend in the poetry of this period towards resurrecting the chorus as a cultural and literary idea.

The central argument of the book is that during a brief but crucial period of literary innovation at Rome in the 20s and teens BCE, the idea of the chorus becomes an active metaphor for the construction of a distinctively Augustan poetics. *Choreia*, the notion of group ‘dance-song’, permeated ancient Greek cultural, social, and political life. Through the continued performance and spectatorship of choral genres such as tragedy, comedy, and lyric hymns throughout the Greek world, individuals performed their place in society and poets located their work within the history of tradition. Among the poets of early Augustan Rome, the chorus is reinvented as a metaphor that articulates and interrogates some of their own most pressing concerns surrounding social and literary belonging in a rapidly changing Roman world.

The chorus’ traditionally civic, collective, and ritual character, as well as its deep and hallowed history as a medium for the production of poetry, allow it to become a space for Augustan poetry to probe the relationship between individual and community, poet and audience, performance and writing, Greek and Roman, tradition and innovation. By weaving an interconnected thread of poetic language around the idea of the chorus – what I call an ‘Augustan choral poetics’ – Propertius, Horace, and Virgil pursue and position this project as a self-reflective dialogue across genres.

Greek Chorus, Roman Chorus

The book as a whole, then, is concerned with the chorus as a cultural and literary phenomenon. Individual sites of allusion to Greek authors will be important too, since the chorus in Augustan poetry is often imagined through detailed and specific allusions to Greek texts. But the idea of the chorus qua chorus is the central focus of this study. What, then, does the chorus mean for Greeks, for Romans, and for us?

The chorus was a fundamental part of the song culture of the Greek-speaking world.¹ It was practised (at least) from the time of the Homeric

¹ On the term ‘song culture’, see Herington 1985. Overviews of Greek *choreia* include Webster 1970, Mullen 1982: 3–89, Henrichs 1996a, and Calame 2001 (1977 edn rev. and trans.). Lawler 1964,

poems and still thrived in Greece under the Roman Empire.² Plato, whose *Laws* represent one of the most important and extensive ancient discussions of Greek *choreia*, gives its broadest and most inclusive definition: ‘*choreia* is the totality of dance and song’ (χορεία γε μὴν ὄρχησις τε καὶ ᾠδὴ τὸ σύνολόν ἐστιν, *Leg.* 654b). Thus, chorality expresses all the components of what Greeks called *mousike*: music, dance, and song, which were considered to be indissoluble parts of a whole musical experience.³

While the practice of choral dance-song varied widely across the Greek-speaking world, two overarching features define the chorus as such: its connection with ritual, and its association with social cohesion. Greek *choreia* was inherently connected with the worship of the gods. In its dramatic forms, centred primarily at Athens, the chorus was the centrepiece of the three genres – tragedy, comedy, and satyr play – that anchored the dramatic festivals of Dionysus. Outside of drama, the ritual chorus tended to be organized around types of religious utterance for the gods: for instance, the paean, the dithyramb, wedding songs, and, more loosely, hymns.

The collective nature of the chorus can be seen at its most literal level in the observation that choral dance is by definition a group activity. There can never be a chorus of one; a group must come together to make the dance through the harmony of their voice and the rhythm of their bodies (dance that is not performed by the group is generally not called *choreia* in Greek, but rather *orchesis*).⁴ This last fact is deeply connected to the role and meaning of the chorus in Greek society. As the concord of bodies and voices, the chorus represented and instantiated the collective nature and harmonious order of the community at large.⁵ Choruses usually performed in a festival setting in which the community shared, and often recounted and re-enacted, through their song and dance, their

Lonsdale 1993, and Naerebout 1997 focus on dance more generally; their discussions frequently encompass the chorus. The recent essays in Murray and Wilson 2004 and Athanassaki and Bowie 2011 treat the chorus’ role in a range of social and cultural contexts. The contributions in Gagné and Hopman 2013 focus on the tragic chorus with many points of connection to wider choral culture; those in Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh 2013 combine ancient choruses and their modern reception.

² On the continuation of Greek choral culture under the Roman Empire, see Bowie 2006.

³ Cf. a Roman inflection of this formulation, Servius *ad Verg. G.* 1.346 (T-H): ‘*chorus proprie est coavorum cantus atque saltatio* (the ‘chorus’ is properly the song and dance of people of the same age group).

⁴ On the distinction between choral and solo dance in Greek culture, see Olsen 2016.

⁵ On the chorus’ deep connection with the creation and maintenance of community, see esp. Bacon 1994–5: 11–20, Wilson 2003, and Kurke 2012. See Kurke 2007 on the social and ritual role of choruses at Thebes, Kowalzig 2007 on the chorus as a social and economic force across the archaic and classical Mediterranean, and Stehle 1997 (chs. 1–3) on how choruses perform the gendered relations of a community.

mythical stories.⁶ Again, Plato puts it most strikingly when, in the same passage of the *Laws*, he says that the gods gave humans the chorus and therefore ‘joined them to each other’ (ἀλλήλοις συνείροντας, *Leg.* 654a). At *Oec.* 8.3, Xenophon gives the chorus as the first in a series of analogies for the kind of order that should also be found in a household:

ἔστι δ’ οὐδέν οὔτως, ὧ γύναι, οὐτ’ εὖχρηστον οὔτε καλὸν ἀνθρώποις ὡς τάξις. καὶ γὰρ χορὸς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων συγκείμενός ἐστιν· ἀλλ’ ὅταν μὲν ποιῶσιν ὃ τι ἂν τύχη ἕκαστος, ταραχὴ τις φαίνεται καὶ θεᾶσθαι ἀτερπές, ὅταν δὲ τεταγμένως ποιῶσι καὶ φθέγγωνται, ἅμα οἱ αὐτοὶ οὔτοι καὶ ἀξιοθέατοι δοκοῦσιν εἶναι καὶ ἀξιόκουστοι.

There is nothing, wife, so useful and fine for mankind as order. For a chorus is composed out of people, but whenever each one does what he likes, then it appears simply as confusion and is unpleasant for the audience. But whenever they compose themselves and give voice in an orderly fashion, these same people seem at once worthy of being watched and heard.

According to Xenophon, the chorus’ harmonious music and movement is a prime example of a community’s greater sense of order.⁷

As a mirror of society and a means by which its norms might be inculcated, the chorus was comprised of performers who represented the community’s hierarchies and distinctions. In archaic and classical Greece, choruses tended to be comprised of citizens, not of professional dancers; thus, the chorus literally put the community itself on stage.⁸ Second, choruses in Greek myth, literature, and social practice were usually segregated by age and gender. Choruses of young men and choruses of young women, for instance, represented a particular segment of society when they performed, highlighting the importance of the chorus as a collective experience for them.⁹ Indeed, chorality and education were deeply intertwined in the Greek imagination, so much so that the Athenian in Plato’s *Laws* asks, ‘So won’t we consider the uneducated man to be without choral

⁶ Nagy 1990 is fundamental on the chorus’ ritual re-enactment of myth through *mimesis*. Cognitive approaches to performance have led to increased interest in the psychological means by which the ancient chorus invites the audience’s identification and participation with the performers through ‘kinesthetic empathy’. See Olsen 2017, and Peponi 2012 on *mousike* and aesthetic response in Greece more broadly.

⁷ As Wilson 2003: 165 notes, this ideal of the chorus as representative of social order remains in Greek culture well into the Roman period. As Wilson puts it, ‘[the chorus] remained for centuries a major cultural institution for social re-creation and reflection, particularly for reflection on issues of social cohesion’.

⁸ Moreover, *choregia* was a public service at Athens, with the city’s wealthiest citizens subsidizing its performance. On the changing role of the chorus and of the practice of *choregia* in Athenian drama, see Wilson 2000.

⁹ See Calame 2001.

training, and the educated man sufficiently chorus-trained?’ (οὐκοῦν ὁ μὲν ἀπαιδευτος ἀχόρευτος ἡμῖν ἔσται, τὸν δὲ πεπαιδευμένον ἱκανῶς κεχορευκότα θετέον; *Leg.* 654b). His interlocutor, Cleinias, fervently agrees. In Greece, learning to join the chorus was equivalent to learning to participate in the community and its values.¹⁰ This even goes as far as equating the performance of *choreia* with the acquisition of civilization at large. As Simon Goldhill memorably puts it, paraphrasing Plato, ‘no chorus, no culture’.¹¹

I have been talking about the chorus as a marker not just of culture, but above all of Greek culture. Since this claim has great relevance to how the chorus was understood by Roman authors, let me unpack it further. In an analysis of the role of chorality in Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, Barbara Kowalzig points out that there is nothing uniquely Greek about the practice of group song and dance. It was part of many ancient cultures, including Hittite and Egyptian – and, as we will see in the next section, it was part of Roman culture too.¹² But crucially, in the Greek imagination their choral culture, as I have characterized it above in the broadest of strokes, was distinctive.

Herodotus, when describing festivals of Dionysus in Egypt, makes the surprising statement that everything is just like in Greece, except that the Egyptians have no choruses (*Hdt.* 2.48). As Kowalzig argues, Herodotus makes this statement because of the Greek cultural values he attributes to the chorus. Choruses for Dionysus, along with those for Apollo, were associated most strongly with community and civic identity in Greece. While Dionysus was in many ways a transcultural god, Herodotus may be emphasizing here that this civic aspect of his character is not celebrated in the same way in Egypt as in Greece. This, Herodotus hints, is because of the different valences of its song culture, which did not emphasize, as Greek *choreia* did, citizenship and participation.¹³

When, after the classical period, Greekness began to be performed on a wider stage, the chorus became part of the practice and rhetoric of Hellenicity. According to Plutarch, Alexander celebrated his return from Egypt with choral festivals – both tragic choruses and dithyrambs

¹⁰ On the relationship between *choreia* and society in the *Laws*, see Prauscello 2014 and the contributions in Peponi 2013. Kowalzig 2004: 48–9 discusses how Plato’s choruses relate to those of Greek polis religion.

¹¹ Goldhill 2007: 48. Cf. the story in Polybius of how the Arcadians turned from savages into a civilized society once they created choral institutions (*Polyb.* 4.20–1).

¹² Kowalzig 2013: 181.

¹³ Kowalzig 2013: 181–2.

(*kuklioi khoroi*) – in terms of a Greek, and specifically Athenian, choral culture.¹⁴ Even more striking is how *choreia* is integrated into Alexander's discourse to Diogenes of Corinth, as reported by Plutarch, about his mission of Greek cultural dominance in the East (*De Alex. fort.* 1.332a–b Nachstädt):

εἰ μὴ τὰ βαρβαρικὰ τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς κεράσαι διενουούμην καὶ πᾶσαν ἡπειρον ἐπιῶν ἐξημερῶσαι, καὶ πέρατα γῆς ἀνερεινῶν καὶ θαλάττης ὠκεανῶ προσερεῖσαι Μακεδονίαν, καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα σπεῖραι καὶ καταχέασθαι γένους παντὸς εὐδικίαν καὶ εἰρήνην, οὐκ ἂν ἐν ἀπράκτῳ τρυφῶν ἐξουσίᾳ καθήμεν, ἀλλ' ἐζήλουον ἂν τὴν Διογένους εὐτέλειαν. νῦν δὲ σύγγνωθι, Διόγενες, Ἡρακλέα μιμοῦμαι καὶ Περσέα ζηλώ, καὶ τὰ Διονύσου μετιῶν Ἰχνη, θεοῦ γενάρχου καὶ προπάτορος, βούλομαι πάλιν ἐν Ἰνδία νικῶντας Ἑλληνας ἐγχορεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς ὑπὲρ Καύκασον ὀρείους καὶ ἀγρίους τῶν βακχικῶν κώμων ἀναμῆσαι.

If I did not intend to mix foreign things with Greek, and to civilize each continent as I advance, and seeking out the furthest reaches of land and sea, to set the boundaries of Macedonia by the Ocean, and to spread the ways of Greece and shower its justice and peace on every nation – I would not sit luxuriating in idle power, but I would strive to imitate the frugality of Diogenes. But as it is, forgive me, Diogenes, that I imitate Heracles and emulate Perseus, and following in the footsteps of Dionysus, my family's first founder and ancestor, I wish for the victorious Greeks to dance in choruses again in India, and remind the savage mountain people beyond the Caucasus of Bacchic revels.

Alexander's words are full of dance language. The dominance of Greek culture over the East is expressed as a choral gesture (ἐγχορεῦσαι). He reverses the traditional mythological narrative, whereby Dionysiac *choreia* came to Greece from the East, to express the chorus as the ultimate performance of Greek civilization in Asia.

Under the Roman Empire, the chorus continued to be perceived as an 'essentially Hellenic' cultural form, even as the idea of being Greek was in the process of being negotiated by different communities.¹⁵ It also intersected with Roman power. The performance of Greek traditional choral forms in honour of new Roman rulers can be seen very early in Greece's encounter with Rome: for instance, the establishment of a paean to be performed by young girls in perpetuity for the Roman general Q. Titus Flamininus attests to the new uses to which the cultural authority of Greek

¹⁴ Plut. *Alex.* 29.1–2. The imitation of Athenian practice is precise: the kings of Cyprus are made to take the place of Athenian aristocrats, each sponsoring a chorus.

¹⁵ Bowie 2006: 61.

choreia was put.¹⁶ Greek chorality in the service of empire continued down into the imperial period; in the second century CE, the founding of new choral cults by elites in Asia Minor demonstrates the new societal role of Greek choral traditions.¹⁷

In the city of Rome, encounters with choruses were part of the city's cosmopolitan culture. The performance of Greek tragedy and its Roman adaptations brought the chorus onstage.¹⁸ Pantomime, which is said to have been invented during Augustus' reign due to the *princeps*' own encouragement, was an even more popular spectacle. Indeed, it has been argued that pantomime was the primary means by which the mythological plots and musical aesthetics of Greek tragedy were kept alive under the Roman Empire.¹⁹ According to Jerome, when the star dancer Pylades brought pantomime to Rome in the 20s BCE his great innovation was to separate music and dance, the previously indivisible components of the choral *mousike* of Greek tragedy: 'Pylades of Cilicia the pantomime, though earlier [performers] sang and danced themselves, at Rome first made a chorus and pipes accompany him' (*Pylades Cilex pantomimus, cum veteres ipsi canerent atque saltarent, primus Romae chorum et fistulam sibi praecinere fecit*).²⁰ The virtuosic solo body of the star dancer now mutely enacted mythical narratives, accompanied by musicians and large groups of singers. This may not have been *choreia* as Plato imagined it, but it must have been an extraordinary spectacle.²¹

¹⁶ The hymn is recorded at Plut. *Flam.* 16 = *CA* 173. On its Hellenistic context see Fantuzzi 2010: 182. Cf. Melinno's hymn to Rome (whose date is uncertain; see Bowra 1957), and the closing reference to Roman prosperity at the end of Limenius' inscribed paean and prosodion to Apollo at Delphi, 128 BCE (Furley and Bremer 2001: no. 2.6.2).

¹⁷ See Goldhill 2001: 8–10. Whitmarsh 2013: 154–75 argues for a choral context for some of Mesomedes' hymns, which he argues were composed as part of Hadrian's imperial cult and invoked a 'rhetoric of community' through their choral language and setting.

¹⁸ Following Hellenistic precedents, Roman comedy usually eliminated choral intermezzi and gave the full purview of lyric song and dance to its protagonists (on the structuring role of dance in Roman comedy, see Moore 2012: 121–34). Roman tragedy, on the other hand, appears to have retained the chorus as an integrated feature of the drama (on the role of the chorus in Roman tragedy, see Hose 1998, Beacham 1992: 125, and Manuwald 2011: 74).

¹⁹ Hall 2008: 8. The study of ancient pantomime is growing rapidly. In addition to the contributions in Hall and Wyles 2008, see the many articles by Jory (esp. 1981 and 2004 on the pantomime's arrival at Rome), Garelli-François 2007, Lada-Richards 2007, and Webb 2008. On Augustus' relationship with pantomime, see Querzoli 2006 and Hunt 2008.

²⁰ Jer. *Chron.* 2.143 (Helm). Macrobius says that Pylades made a similar claim (*Sat.* 2.7.18). When asked by Augustus what he had brought to the genre, he replied by quoting *Iliad* 10.13: ἀλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἐνοπιῆν, ἕμαδὸν τ' ἀνθρώπων (The sound of the aulos and the syrinx, and the voice of men). Like Jerome, Pylades in this anecdote puts emphasis on the great number of singing voices (ἕμαδὸν τ' ἀνθρώπων) that accompanied his dance.

²¹ The *Graeca scaena* at Rome also displayed female choral stars such as Eucharis, whose funerary inscription (*CIL* I.1214 = *CIL* 6.10096) commemorates her as having 'recently adorned the games

It is no simple matter to determine the extent to which all this was considered ‘Greek’ in a culture that was always already Hellenized. The Latin words *chorus* and *chorea* translate Greek χορός and χορεία in an apparently seamless transliteration. Yet it would be naïve to assume that the meaning is stable across time, space, and language systems, let alone that a Latin speaker would always be aware of the words’ Greek origins.²² Still, there is evidence that in the late Republic, the period just prior to the poetic works on which this book will focus, there was – at least for elite writers and audiences – something suspicious yet tantalizing about the chorus, an attitude that was connected to an underlying ambivalence about Greek musical and performance culture in the Roman Republic.

We might start with Cornelius Nepos’ claim at the beginning of his *Life of Epaminondas* (1.2 Marshall):

scimus enim musicen nostris moribus abesse a principis persona, saltare vero etiam in vitiis poni: quae omnia apud Graecos et grata et laude digna ducuntur.

We know that musical talent is, according to our customs, far removed from the character of any major figure, and that dancing is indeed to be counted among the vices. But all of these are considered among the Greeks both pleasing and praiseworthy.

Music (*musicen*) and dance (*saltare*) were noble pursuits for the fourth-century Greek general Epaminondas – a fact of which Nepos feels the need to remind his Roman audience. In drawing attention to the different cultural valences of music and dance in Greece and Rome, and reminding his audience that they could be positive attributes, Nepos responds to a strongly moralizing strain that runs through much late Republican

(*ludi*) of the nobles with choral dancing (*choro*), and appeared first for the public on the Greek stage (*graeca in scaena*). Frascari 1997: 68–71 provides a text, commentary, bibliography, and image of the inscription (plate 6, fig. 18). While the date of the inscription is controversial, its literary style suggests that it is Augustan (Courtney 1995: 239). As for the nature of Eucharis’ performance, it is sometimes said to be a mime (Leppin 1992: 236, Wiseman 1985: 34), but Starks 2008: 129 (following Courtney 1995: 239) argues that she is better considered an early pantomime artist performing a ‘highly gesticulative, interpretative dance’. On female mime artists, see further Ch. 2.

²² A case in point is the shift in meaning between the words χορηγός and *choragus*. Greek χορηγός refers to the leader of a chorus, while the Latin word that derives from it, first attested in Plautus (*Trin.* 858; *Persa* 159), refers not to a choral performer, but rather designates a professional role within the theatre business at Rome – the person who supplied a theatrical troupe with their stage equipment. On the meaning of *choragus* and its associated noun *choragium* in Plautus, see Gilula 1996. This sense seems to have grown out of the specialized classical Athenian use of the term χορηγός to refer to the persons who, thanks to their financial role, were instrumental in getting the show on the road in practical terms.

discourse about Greek *mousike* as a foreign and corrupting influence.²³ Such a negative attitude towards dance is found in the speeches of Cicero.²⁴ For instance, in his speech defending the consul-elect Murena, Cicero is forced to confront allegations of his client's disreputable behaviour in the East, which the prosecution has framed as an accusation of being a 'dancer' (*saltator*). 'No one dances sober, unless he is mad', declares Cicero, calling the accusation an 'insult' (*maledictum*, 13).

One might think that choral dancing, with its associations in Greek culture of public, civic celebration rather than private, lascivious entertainment, might escape such smears. However, later in the same speech of Cicero, the chorus is used as a metaphor against Catiline: he is disreputably 'surrounded by a chorus of youths' (*stipatum choro iuventutis*, *Mur.* 49).²⁵ In contrast to the sharp distinction that held between choral and solo dance in Greek culture, Cicero's insults, emanating from an elite Roman perspective, suppress cultural nuance in the pursuit of negative stereotyping.

In the fifth Philippic, Cicero uses similar but stronger language to castigate Antony. In a section that blames Antony for passing a judiciary law that brings onto juries gamblers, exiles, rogues, and *Graeculi* (13–14) – including people who did not know Latin! – he sums up the kind of people Antony is selecting: 'know that dancers, lyre-players, and indeed the whole chorus of Antony's debauchery have been thrown into the third panel of jurors' (*saltatores, citharistas, totum denique comissionis Antonianae chorum in tertiam decuriam iudicum scitote esse coniectum*, 15). In addition to tarring Antony with a general smear of Hellenism, through the language of Greek performance culture, Cicero's words evoke more specifically Antony's suspiciously flamboyant incorporation of Greek spectacle into his public persona.²⁶

These examples suggest that, if and when a speaker chooses, the chorus in Latin can recall its Greek origins and associations, often for negative,

²³ On elite Roman discourse surrounding dance, see Garelli-François 1995. On the connection made during the Roman Republic between dancing and social crisis, see Corbeill 1996: 135–9. In this vein, cf. Sallust's comment that Sempronia played the lyre and danced (*saltare*) more elegantly than a decent woman should (*Cat.* 25.2) and Scipio Africanus' anxiety, reported by Macrobius, that the dancing schools were attracting too many young Roman nobles (*Sat.* 3.14.6–8).

²⁴ In addition to the passages cited here, 'dance' is used as a derogatory term at Cic. *Cat.* 2.23 (*saltare*), *Dom.* 60 (*saltator*), *Planc.* 87 (*saltator*), *Red. sen.* 13 (*calamistrati saltatoris*), *Pis.* 22 (*nudus ... saltare; saltatorium ... orbem*), *Verr.* 2.3.23 (*saltare ... nudus*).

²⁵ Ronconi 1953: 173 notes the deliberately foreign valence of the term *chorus* here.

²⁶ Cf. Plut. *Ant.* 24 (Antony's entry into Ephesus staged as a Dionysiac procession) and 56 (his carousing on Samos with musicians, theatrical productions, and competitive χοροί).

culturally stereotyped effect. That is, while it is not always a culturally marked term, it carries such potential within it. Let us now approach this markedness of the chorus from a different perspective, that of its relationship with ‘native’ Roman performance culture. Despite the disavowals of Nepos and Cicero, Rome itself possessed longstanding traditions of group song and dance, analogous in many ways to Greek *choreia*, which were considered indigenous to Italian culture. Indeed, such traditions underwent a nativist revival under Augustus even as Hellenized performance forms like pantomime were also being popularized.²⁷

In Roman cult, group song and dance was associated most often with male performance.²⁸ The priestly college of the Salii, named for their leaping dance (*salire*), danced through the streets of Rome clanging their shields in military formation and singing the *carmen saliare*. So strongly did the Salii’s performance represent Roman tradition that, as part of his revival of ancient Roman practices, Augustus had his name inserted into their hymn.²⁹ Another priestly *collegium*, the Arval brethren, performed a hymn that was accompanied by a three-step dance (*tripudium*) like that of the Salii.³⁰ A fascinating exception to this male-dominated Roman ritual performance landscape is a series of episodes beginning in 207 BCE, when maiden song and dance was used to expiate a number of prodigies, and for which Livius Andronicus was said to compose a hymn. As Livy records it, the maidens (*virgines*) sang a hymn in procession to the temple of Juno and also performed a rope dance: ‘passing a rope through their hands, the maidens marched along, accompanying the sound of their voice with the beating of their feet’ (*per manus reste data virgines sonum vocis pulsu pedum modulantes incesserunt*, 27.37.14).³¹

²⁷ Zorzetti 1991 draws attention to the shared ‘cultural morphology’ between early Roman song and dance culture and archaic and classical Greek choral culture. Feeney 2016, which returns to the long-standing question of early Roman literature’s Greek origins, unfortunately appeared too late for me to take into account. Wille 1967: 187–202 is valuable on dance in Roman life, as is *ThesCRA*, which devotes a short but helpful final section of its entry on ‘dance’ to the Roman world. Naerebout 2009 and Alonso Fernández 2011 emphasize the sheer range of evidence still to be taken into account.

²⁸ On Roman ritual dance and the performance of masculinity, see Alonso Fernández 2016.

²⁹ *Res Gestae* 10.1, Dio Cass. 51.20.1. Although viewed by many Roman writers as part of their indigenous dance culture, the dance of the Salii and other Roman military dances also had much in common with the *pyrrhiche*, a Greek war dance. On Greek and Roman military dances, see further pp. 175–84.

³⁰ *carmen descendentes tripodaverunt in verba haec* (dividing up the song, they danced to these words, *CIL* 6.02104 = Scheid 100a, line 32, 218 CE). Unlike the Salii, their performance took place in a sacred grove rather than in public space. On the Arvals, see Scheid 1990.

³¹ As scholars have noticed (Wissowa 1912: 191, Gruen 1990: 86), the expiatory rite incorporates many different elements including Greek ones, stemming from the Greek Sibylline books that provided the rites’ instructions. The events of 207 BCE set off a series of prodigies during the following century, which were expiated in a similar way (MacBain 1982: 127–35 collects the evidence). In 200 BCE,