The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives
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Introduction
Naomi Speakman

Since its first known mention in Sir John Hawkins’s *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* of 1776, the British Museum citole has been a source of interest and also confusion. Hawkins described it as a violin ‘of a very singular form…encumbered with a profusion of carving’ ([Pl. 1]), and in the centuries that followed this unique instrument has been called a violin, fiddle, viol, gittern and finally citole, with some terms used interchangeably. As the only substantially extant instrument of its kind to survive from the Middle Ages, this citole has been collected by aristocracy and proudly displayed in a number of exhibitions prior to its acquisition by the British Museum in 1963.

A brief introduction to the history of the citole will assist the reader in understanding the complex story of this particular instrument. The citole is a plucked stringed instrument used in Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries, which was held by means of the thumbhole in its short neck. The British Museum citole dates from the early 14th century, a dating that will be discussed within this volume. Made of boxwood, the instrument is playfully and delicately carved with dense woodland scenes reminiscent of medieval marginalia, the iconography of which will also be analysed in the following chapters. The citole however has not survived in its original state and in the late 16th century it was transformed into a violin. It has since been linked to Queen Elizabeth I and her favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, due to the addition of the arms of Elizabeth and Leicester on an inserted silver plate as well as the engraved initials and year ‘IP 1578’.

While the whereabouts of the British Museum citole for the first 450 years of its life remain uncertain, we can follow its trail fairly completely from the late 18th century. From the accounts of music historians John Hawkins and Charles Burney, we learn that it was sold at the auction of the late Duke of Dorset’s effects which followed his death in 1769 and was displayed in the music shop of Robert Bremner. A notice in the *Morning Chronicle* of 3 June 1803 records that it had been part of the music collection of the Hon. Smith Barry and was now available for sale again. Finally, in 1806 it is recorded in an inventory of Warwick Castle where it stayed within family ownership until it was acquired by the British Museum in 1963.

Interest in the citole as an instrument of Elizabeth I, the ‘Virgin Queen’, remained high and the loan registers of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) show a series of loans to the Victoria and Albert Museum for exhibitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
Museum) note that it was received on loan from the Earl of Warwick on 7 July 1865 (Pl. 2). The citole remained in South Kensington for 24 years until 23 December 1889, when it was lent to the ‘Exhibition of the Royal House of Tudor’ held at New Gallery, London, from where it appears to have returned to Warwick Castle. Whilst at the South Kensington Museum the citole was photographed for the first time, an electrotype was made in 1869 and the instrument was displayed in their ‘Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’ in 1872. In the exhibition catalogue the error surrounding its date is clearly expressed. It is accorded a date of 1578 and the maker is hesitantly suggested as J. Pemberton, but the earlier style of the carving is acknowledged and the entry concludes that ‘the violin may therefore be a reconstruction of an older instrument of the violin kind’. Subsequent exhibition catalogues of the New Gallery (1890) and the ‘Music Loan Exhibition’, coordinated by the Worshipful Company of Musicians and held at Fishmongers’ Hall (1904), both echo the South Kensington text.

The instrument was evidently held in high regard: it was described in 1903 by the Countess of Warwick as ‘Queen Elizabeth’s Viol’ and at the opening of the 1904 exhibition at Fishmongers’ Hall attended by Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, ‘their royal highnesses were especially charmed with…the artistically carved Violin presented by Queen Elizabeth to Earl Leicester’. In 1910 the eminent musicologist Canon Francis Galpin finally identified the medieval origins of the instrument, describing it as a ‘gittern’ and thus creating the title by which it was known for much of the 20th century: ‘The Warwick Castle Gittern’. Even after this redefinition, however, the citole continued to be displayed in its Elizabethan context. In 1935 the instrument was lent to Eastbury Manor, Barking, at their inaugural exhibition to launch the opening of the museum. In keeping with the date of the Manor the curator proposed an exhibition on ‘Queen Elizabeth and her court’ and notes that the Earl of Warwick held a particularly interesting collection on that topic. The paperwork for the loan refers to the citole as a ‘fiddle’ or a ‘violin’ interchangeably. The Galpin Society exhibition of 1951 served to bring the Warwick Castle Gittern to wider public attention through its arrangement with the Arts Council of Great Britain, and when the citole returned to Warwick Castle it appears to have been displayed in the Red Drawing Room in the mid-20th century.

The object was formally acquired by the British Museum in October 1963 with financial assistance from The Pilgrim Trust and the National Art Collections Fund. The then keeper of the department of British and Medieval Antiquities, Rupert Bruce-Mitford, was the driving force behind the acquisition (Pl. 3). Interestingly, it would appear that other parties were also very much in favour of the citole joining the British Museum rather than any other collection. A report by Bruce-Mitford to the Trustees of the British Museum on 11 July 1963 noted that the ‘seller is not interested in selling to any British Institution other than the
British Museum’, Bruce-Mitford also notes the concern that the Victoria and Albert Museum might be interested in acquiring the citole. However the age and history of the piece was sufficient for it to be classified ‘as an antiquity in this category’ with the result that ‘the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum… was good enough to say that, because of its uniqueness, early date, and character as an historical relic, he considered the gittern, “a British Museum object”’. Not everyone appreciated the unique importance of the instrument, however, and one dissenting letter to Bruce-Mitford from musicologist Robert Thurston Dart included the following comment: ‘the gittern is – from the craft historian’s point of view – a bit of a mess, isn’t it?’

At the British Museum the citole has been displayed in three galleries. It first appeared in the King Edward VII gallery, where it was displayed ‘on the middle shelf of case 11’. In the late 1970s a new gallery dedicated to the history of medieval Europe was developed, Room 42, and the citole was one of the three highlight objects which were accorded their own island case so that they could be seen up close and in the round (Pl. 4). The opening of the Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery of Medieval Europe in 2009 allowed the citole to be redisplayed again. Now it is exhibited thematically amongst objects relating to hunting and feasting in the Middle Ages. Today, the instrument continues to be recontextualised and most recently it was to be found in a new 16th-century setting, the Forest of Arden, for the 2012 British Museum exhibition ‘Shakespeare: Staging the World’.

The essays within this volume represent a collective effort in recent years by academics, curators, conservators and scientists to reinterpret and fully understand this beguiling instrument. Presented at a conference held at the British Museum on 4 and 5 November 2010, ‘The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives’ was the first international symposium on the object and fostered an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the citole. The following chapters take such a direction, analysing the instrument from its medieval and Elizabethan contexts in addition to an examination of its technical and performance practice. The invaluable work by the British Museum’s conservators and scientific researchers is represented in an article from the British Museum Technical Research Bulletin published in 2008 which can be found reprinted here as Appendix A.

The path to the 2010 conference was laid in 2003 when attendants to an informal seminar held jointly with the British Museum and London Metropolitan University agreed to use the term ‘citole’ in relation to the instrument. A 2005 conference hosted by the Schola Cantorum and Historisches Museum in Basel, ‘Citole, Guiterne, Chitarra saracebuca? “Peripheral” Plucked Instruments of the Middle Ages: Key Research Questions’, provided additional impetus for a holistic re-examination of how these instruments are defined and studied. The final catalyst was the refurbishment of the British Museum’s medieval gallery, the Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery of Medieval Europe, which opened in March 2009 (Pl. 5). This provided the opportunity for extensive scientific examination and conservation work which took place whilst it was not on public display.

The first section of this volume brings together the medieval history of the citole. Phillip Lindley and Alice Margerum provide a reanalysis of the British Museum citole itself and of the instrument type in general. Lindley opens with an art-historical analysis of the carved decoration on the instrument and re-examines the dating of the object, which has long been attributed to the early 14th century, and locates the maker in East Anglia. Margerum presents a broad study of the instrument type in a range of visual and textual sources covering a 200-year period. Focusing more specifically on the role that the citole held within courtly society, Andrew Taylor draws on poetry and romantic literature to examine what type of person may have played the citole and in what context, arguing that the citole may indeed have been a suitable instrument for a gentlewoman. Within this discussion of medieval performance Richard Rastall identifies citolers who worked in the households of the English kings Edward I, II and III through a thorough assessment of the financial accounts. Finally Carey Fleiner draws a thread from the Middle Ages to the modern day by examining parallels between performers as ‘medieval guitarists’ and their reputation within society as being much like the rock stars of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The 16th-century context of the citole and its role in Queen Elizabeth’s court is presented by Benjamin Hebbert...
In conclusion, this volume will address a range of aspects of the British Museum citole and, it is hoped, prompt further study and continued appreciation of this truly fascinating instrument.

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The theme of the third section surrounds the technical and performance practice of the citole. John Koster addresses the technical elements of strings and theories of stringing. Koster takes as a particular focus the materials of strings in the period of the citole and cittern and a contemporaneous understanding of the physical laws of stringing. Crawford Young examines a question of terminology, asking whether the term ‘citole’ was applied in the Middle Ages to all variants of the instrument and the role that the thumbhole takes in the identification of the citole. The final paper by Mauricio Molina reconstructs the performance practice of the citole through an analysis of the performer’s technique, the acoustic environment of the music and descriptions in textual sources. Two appendices will prove invaluable to the reader. In addition to the British Museum Technical Research Bulletin 2008 study is an article by Kate Buehler-McWilliams from 2007 which considers the citole from an organological standpoint, and includes a detailed analysis of the piece in comparison to the electrotype held at the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Egerton for agreeing to the reproduction of their 2008 article as an appendix to this volume. Finally, the authors are indebted to Sarah Faulks for her skilful editing and her calm and encouraging management of the publication throughout.

Notes
1. Hawkins 1776.
2. The often murky subject of what defines a citole will be discussed in this volume by Alice Margerum and Crawford Young.
3. See Phillip Lindley in this volume.
5. For a full account of the terminology and provenance of the citole, see Appendix 1 in Buchler-McWilliams 2007 (reproduced in this volume in Appendix B on p. 137) and Kevin et al. 2008 (reproduced in this volume as Appendix A on pp. 111–24).
6. Victoria and Albert Museum archives, Loan Register MA/31/2, p. 453. The entry in this loan register also records that when the South Kensington Museum received the citole it was described as an ‘Ancient carved boxwood violin and case (2 pieces appear to be missing from head)’. On 19 February 1868 the museum also received from the Earl of Warwick, ‘A glass case with metal framework for the violin entered above’, which presumably was the means by which the instrument was displayed whilst at Warwick castle.
12. Curator’s Report, 1 March 1935, BDP/P/1/1, Barking and Dagenham Archives and Local Studies Centre.
14. Warwick Castle 1953, 35. The citole was also included in an exhibition at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1957; Warwickshire County Museum in 1964; and the Musée du Louvre, Paris, in 1967.
Plate 6 General view of the British Museum citole, c. 1280–1330, h. 61cm, w. 18.6cm, d. 14.7cm. British Museum, 1963,1002.1

Plate 7 Right-hand side, general view of the citole

Plate 8 Left-hand side, general view of the citole
Plate 9 Back view of the cithole

Plate 10 Detail of the cithole showing left side of neck with dragon, hunt scenes and thumbhole
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Plate 16 Detail of the citole showing mid-left side of the body with grotesque and hybrid archer
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Plate 22 Detail of the citole from above showing trefoil and lion’s head pin.

Plate 23 Detail of the citole from behind showing trefoil and silver washer reading ‘IP 1578’.
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Plate 25 (left) X-radiograph through the side of the neck showing current pegs and pegbox, original citole peg holes (spaces aligned vertically in front of the dragon’s mouth), thickness of the dragon’s head and body and undercut ivy foliage along back of the neck

Plate 26 (below) X-radiograph through the top of the neck revealing slenderness of the neck and upper latticework walls of the instrument
Plate 27 X-radiograph through the top of the citole revealing the grace of its internal shape, even thickness of the back with a slightly thicker ridge down the centre, as well as details of the violin setup: bass bar, internal back, pins and repairs made to the soundboard.

Plate 28 X-radiograph through the side of the citole showing the internal false back (A) and excavated violin pegbox (B).
Chapter 1
The Decorative Sculpture of the British Museum Citole and its Visual Context

Phillip Lindley

Introduction
The British Museum citole, an extraordinary survival from the Middle Ages, is a uniquely important cultural artefact. The fact that it is now the sole remaining example of its genre certainly does not mean that we should despair about locating it in the wider cultural context in which it was produced. On the contrary, it could be argued that the citole’s very uniqueness makes it even more important that we try to identify this background. As a contribution to this objective, I shall aim here to situate the instrument in its original visual context. A number of studies have already indicated that close comparisons for its superb decorative carvings can be found in English sculpture and manuscript illumination from the first half of the 14th century. Such comparisons will help us determine the chronological parameters for the making of the citole and identify the geographical area within which the sculptor had his artistic formation. Or, to put it both less cautiously and more succinctly, they establish when the citole was produced and where its sculptor was trained and probably worked.

Consideration of the instrument’s size, the way it was constructed and the character of its relief carvings supports the premise that a single individual, rather than two or more sculptors, was originally responsible for carving the whole instrument. The tapered body of the citole is shaped from a single piece of boxwood; the (partially restored) trefoil with which it terminates at the bottom end and both flanks of the double-shouldered instrument as it widens up to the deep neck with a hole for the performer’s thumb are carved in relief (Pl. 1). On the instrument’s back, the carving extends down the neck to culminate in a decorative terminal: the rest of the keeled back, which would have rested against the musician’s body, is left plain below this point, down to the reverse of the trefoil at the bottom, which is again carved with foliage. Each of the lateral shoulder panels, however, was carved from a separate piece of wood as an open-work relief, set against the interior wall of the citole, which was apparently gilded (Pls 5–6). Both the separately carved and fragile panels suffered damage, to which they are particularly vulnerable, when (or after) the electrotype copy was made in 1869.

The extraordinary level of technical accomplishment exhibited by the citole’s carving proves that its sculptor was a highly skilled instrument maker (but it does not mean, of course, that he only made instruments, nor that he only worked in wood). Apart from the plain back, every original surface is carved with reliefs intended to delight and entertain the viewer (the soundboard and other elements which are later alterations to the instrument are excluded from my analysis and are discussed in other essays in this volume). The sheer density of virtuosic sculptural enrichment and undercutting highlights the citole’s status as one of the greatest surviving works of the ‘Decorated Style’, a stylistic term widely used to describe English art and architecture of the period from roughly 1250 to 1350. There is no need to look outside this country for its sculptor or production, given the very close comparisons which can be drawn with contemporary medieval English art. This was a period when the large majority of elite art production featured religious imagery, so the apparently secular nature
of the citole’s reliefs makes it even more interesting and valuable to us. At the same time, we need to remember that the instrument’s cost would have been a fraction of that of precious metalwork, and that the modern hierarchy of arts, as well as the high value we attach to artistic innovation and stylistic individuality, differ from those of the early 14th century when the citole was made.7 Then, the cost of the medium from which art works were produced was much more significant than it is today.9 Nevertheless, the citole must always have been an unusually expensive and luxuriously treated instrument. It was, very probably, the most lavishly decorated citole its maker ever produced. The fact that it was so unusual may have been an important factor in its preservation at a time when citoles had fallen out of use.5

Formal disposition: the arrangements and subjects of the sculptured reliefs

Before we can discuss the subject matter of the sculpted reliefs, we have first to map where they are disposed across the citole’s three-dimensional surfaces. The instrument’s complex shape, the manner in which the sculptor subdivided its surfaces into separate but interlinked visual fields and the way he organized the decoration of these fields encourages – indeed, compels – changes of direction in ‘reading’ the sculpture. The carvings reward close visual scrutiny of the instrument and really demand that it be turned round and over by the viewer, to relish the sculptor’s humour and inventiveness.

The tapered and undulating sides of the instrument are dynamically linked to one another as well as to the carving on the back by the way in which the head and neck has been carved and by the symmetry of the relief fields from one side of the instrument to the other. The majority of the individual reliefs on each side are carved with their bases parallel to the instrument’s back but, as we shall see, one on each side, placed under the fingerboard, is turned at right angles in the middle. There are numerous other features, for example the carving of the instrument’s head and the sculpture on the back of the instrument, which ensure that viewers cannot simply read the reliefs in a linear fashion: they must turn the citole in their hands.10 This presents substantial challenges to any attempt to describe the carving and any sequence chosen will only be one of a range of possible alternatives. The point is of more than trivial interest because our hypothesized reconstruction of the way the sculptor conceived the sculptural programme and of the methods he adopted to produce it will shape how we choose to describe the individual reliefs, and how we interpret the instrument’s overall decorative repertoire. The fact that description can never be entirely separated from analysis is particularly evident with this object. Accordingly, the way in which the reliefs are examined below, and my interpretation of their subject matter, presupposes a view of the sculptor’s intentions in carving them and of the way he expected them to be read by contemporary viewers.11

Let us first view the citole resting on its back. What is here called the left-hand side indicates that with the instrument lying on its back, the dragon and thumbhole are to the left, the instrument sloping down to the trefoil terminal to the right. Both sides are given equal visual emphasis by the sculptor, with the carving fields paralleled symmetrically across the instrument: accordingly, I shall describe both sides, moving down from the head towards the trefoil terminal, working across the instrument from left to right, before conceptually turning it over, to look at the citole’s back. The sculptor carefully planned the disposition of the sculptures on the instrument to ensure that the decorative fields on both sides balanced one another visually, with reliefs featuring subjects of the same generic type, but enlivened by differences in detail.

The dominant feature at the head of the citole is a two-legged dragon, its head turned backwards, baring its sharp teeth, with pairs of larger canine fangs at either side (Pls 2, 4).12 It is shown biting the foliage which leads up to the later pegbox (Pl. 3): originally the citole had frontal pegs and two plugged holes can still be seen in the trail of foliage.13 The dragon thus both defines the head of the instrument and links the two sides together. The beast’s double-ridged nose has flared nostrils and its eyes are set with green glass in
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Instrument's neck is carved with deeply undercut ivy foliage which runs up to the beast's neck as if submerging it in foliage, before terminating below its head; the ivy overlaps the foliage at the base end of the right-angled reliefs and the grapevine in the neck field round the thumbhole. On the back of the instrument, the foliage is pierced in an ostentatious display of carving and drilling technique, accentuated by the placing of a small owl carved to stand within it and a squirrel, climbing towards the 'top'.

There is considerable visual play between the different 'levels' of carving, enhancing the sense that the sculpture is multi-layered.

On both sides of the instrument, the right-angled panels demarcate the neck field containing the thumbhole, the dragon and vine foliage. They show hunting scenes. Beneath the fingerboard, on the left-hand side of the neck, the action moves from left to right (i.e. from the head to the tail of the instrument) (Pl. 2). A bearded huntsman wearing a hood kneels to unleash a dog which faces towards him, whilst another hound, facing the opposite direction, bends its head to sniff the scent. On the right of a large leaf, a second hooded huntsman, half kneeling, shoots his crossbow at a doe, separated from him by another piece of foliage, part of which overlaps the border. The deer is rather awkwardly placed on the corner of the angle and its fore legs are positioned in the right-angle itself, lower than the hind legs which overlap the border: this is one of many instances of
such overlapping. The other section of this relief reads from right (the back of the instrument) to left (up towards the fingerboard) and shows a bare-headed man, holding a staff and blowing an inverted hunting horn, whilst a stag, separated from him by foliage in which a bird is perched, trots towards the angle. One of the stag’s fore hooves is also carved on the border. The other side of the instrument (Pl. 4) has a scene in a matching set-square shape, the action this time running from right to left (i.e. again from head to tail of the instrument). A crouching rabbit hides behind foliage, in front of which is a partly kneeling man blowing an inverted horn, with a rabbit hung over his shoulder, and a pack of seven hounds in front of him on the other side of a piece of foliage. In the right-angled section, reading from the back of the citole, left to right, is another sprig of foliage and then a hooded, bearded man kneeling to unleash a hound, which has its forepaws up on a piece of foliage to the right, one leaf of which overlaps the border. On the other side of the foliage, a fox faces towards it, crouching as if hiding among the leaves. Here, then, the chase has moved round the central angle, with the fox heading towards the trap formed by the kneeling man with his dog, as it runs away from the group of hounds round the corner. One hound’s paws overlap the border as does one foot of the kneeling huntsman, as if the field can barely contain the sculpture.

The rest of the neck, inside the border, is covered with foliage of two types: vine foliage, with clusters of grapes in the main fields, and ivy which runs along the bulbous back ridge, overlapping the foliage of the field and the end of the right-angled panels (this is the point, on the rear of the instrument, where it springs from a stalk and will be described shortly). In the grapevine foliage round the thumbhole on the left-hand side (Pl. 2) is a kneeling, long-haired man pulling a dagger, as if preparing to fight a two-legged hybrid creature with a beast’s head turned back across its body and wearing a short cloak; the hybrid appears to be fleeing a goggle-eyed rabbit, behind it, separated from the hybrid by a sprig of foliage. There is quite a marked vertical division across the relief to the left of the hybrid beast, as if this was where a two-dimensional pattern ended and the sculptor then filled up the rest of the space with vine foliage and grapes. Towards the bottom of the whole field, just above the ivy, is a bird leaning forwards pecking at a leaf. All four of these figurative elements are to be viewed with the citole turned at 90 degrees, as if resting on its head, just as one reads the section of the hunting scene, which moves from right to left. On the right-hand side of the citole, the area contains three rabbits, two seen from above (rather than in profile as is the norm elsewhere in the carving), a partially kneeling bearded and hooded man, his garment tied up at the waist, who is harvesting grapes, and a curled-up dog also seen from above (Pl. 4). The citole has to be rotated before they can be seen properly, the difficulty of seeing them enhancing the viewers’ enjoyment when they are first apprehended. In summary, different types of hunting scene – for deer as well as for a fox and rabbits – are shown in the right-angled panels, whilst the rest of the instrument’s neck features a bird and animals, a man harvesting grapes and a hybrid animal’s combat with a man, all set within foliage.

Along the body, each side of the citole is separated into panels, culminating in the long narrow reliefs which occupy the particularly awkward shape down towards the trefoil terminal, separated from them by a small undecorated area.
The subdivided fields of decoration are delineated by ornamental borders. On each side, the visual movement of the relief subjects’ action is from the head towards the tail of the instrument; that is to say on the right-hand side of the cítole they are sequenced from right to left, and on the other side vice versa. However, two of the reliefs have features turned at right angles, again intentionally inflecting the instrument’s viewing with a dynamic movement, before the subjects can be read.

The first panels after the right-angled reliefs just described are the latticework-carved inserts. That on the left (Pl. 5) shows a bare-legged peasant on the left-hand side of the panel, his head in profile, facing to the right, his hooded garment tied up at his waist and wearing a distinctive hat. He uses a long pole to knock disproportionately huge acorns down from an oak tree for his three pigs (also in profile), which face towards him: scale is employed artfully throughout the cítole’s carving and a sprig of foliage can indicate a tree or merely some leaves. On the opposite side of the instrument, a man on the right-hand side of the relief faces to the left, and with a huge axe cuts down a branch of an acorn-laden oak tree (Pl. 6); his head, a darker colour, appears to be have been replaced or refixed. In the upper branches, a large fox-like squirrel with bushy tail can be seen, partially concealed by the main tree trunk. The border on the right-hand side, where it adjoins the hunting scene, has a series of quatrefoil flowers, not the dots between lines found on the other side. This is one of two exceptions to the symmetrical disposition of borders across the cítole’s sides but should not be taken to suggest that this panel is the work of a second sculptor: the border is structurally integral not with this panel but with the hunting scene. This apparent inconsistency is in fact intentional variety, just as one frequently finds in ‘Decorated Style’ architecture.

Next on both sides are three bands of decoration, covering the two protruding, rounded shoulders of the cítole’s body and the space in between them. On the left-hand side (Pl. 7), these bands are separated by borders, first of quatrefoil fleurons; then of dots; followed by one of dots and fleurons; and finally a border of fleurons and dots. The first decorative field comprises hawthorn foliage with the leaves in bands positioned vertically, alternately downwards and upwards; the second has a curious hybrid with a bearded male head, a bat’s wing and another bearded head seen in profile on its rear, and with goat-like hooves, amongst mulberry foliage and berries. This decorative relief is turned at 90 degrees to those on the protruding shoulders flanking it, that is to say it has to be read vertically, from bottom to top of the instrument. The third band shows a dog on the left facing a hybrid two-legged deer with antlers on either side of a stalk with maple foliage above them. In the corresponding positions on the other side of the cítole (Pl. 8), the first panel, on the shoulder, is foliate, again with alternating bands of upwards and downwards-turned foliage; the border between it and the next panel has not been carved with dots although the other two borders correspond with those on the opposite side of the instrument. The second relief has at its base a hybrid with a dragon’s head with long pointed ears, turned over behind its body; it is placed amidst mulberry leaves, one of which overlaps the right hand border. Again, one can
rotate the instrument to read the second relief, although this
hybrid can also be interpreted as recumbent with its head
turned towards the ‘ground’. The third field (Pl. 9) has a dog
on the right facing a rabbit, underneath a hawthorn bush
with leaves overlapping both animals’ heads. In the long,
awkwardly shaped panels which narrow towards the base, on
the left side (Pl. 7) a hybrid bare-headed man with the lower
half of a clawed beast, turned at right angles to his upper half,
has shot an arrow from his bow towards a wide-eyed rabbit.
Foliage fills the rest of the section. On the opposite side of the
citole (Pl. 8) is, on the right, a half-man, half-bird hybrid,
with a tail that terminates in foliage, armed with a small
shield and sword, and his hair covered in a tight bonnet
fighting a long-eared, winged, two-legged dragon or wyvern,
with a knot in its trilobe-end tail. Both this hybrid and that
on the other side have their upper bodies turned at right
angles to their lower halves, a distinctive feature of the
sculptor’s work. The foliage to the left on the right-hand side
has a bird sitting in it (Pl. 11). At the end of the citole is a
trefoil-shaped terminal that has been restored, with foliage in
each compartment, separated by a fictive ribbon in a saltire
cross shape (Pl. 12).

The sculpted reliefs of the British Museum citole –
including the elements carved as separately delineated relief
panels – are then, dominated by scenes showing hunts,
hybrids, combats and animals, all set within foliate
backgrounds, and panels of plain foliage, of very skilfully
varied forms. The decoration of the sides of the body is
disposed in fields which are effectively symmetrical from one
side to another of the citole; the direction of the action, or
flow of the reliefs, moves from the instrument’s head to its
tail but is frequently varied, and the decoration is carefully
and cleverly extended onto the back of the citole (Pl. 10).
This has, at the head end, ivy foliage submerging the
dragon’s head, a tuft or two of its mane showing through.
The ivy, which has some large berries, notionally sprouts
from a stalk springing from a superb terminal comprising a
pair of standing goats, one on either side of a trio of three
seaweedy leaves, represented as continuing under their
bodies. Below them is a pair of crouching lions, also roughly
symmetrical in their arrangement, positioned above a
grimacing, bearded male face, with a heavy brow: he pulls
his left lower eyelid with a finger of his left hand and with his
right pulls his mouth open. The flanking spaces on either
side are filled with trios of the same type of leaves. The rest
of the back is plain down to the reverse of the trefoil
terminal. The foliage on the back of the trefoil is less
undercut and complicated than that on the more easily
visible upper face.

How one views the citole’s overall decorative programme
must shape the interpretation of the separately carved
shoulder panels, which have been identified as representing
the ‘Labours of the Months’ for November and December as
they appear in Psalter calendars. Manuscript
representations of the Labours of the Months undoubtedly
furnished the sculptor with his models, but in this context
there is no reason to believe that the panels retained their
specific identification with individual months for the
sculptor, or for the ordinary 14th-century viewer, any more
than that of the man harvesting grapes represented
September to them. Instead, decontextualized, the panels
have become generic, their subjects chosen by the sculptor
because they could be readily assimilated into the overall
decorative subject matter, in which inhabited foliate forms
are predominant. The meaning of imagery depends on a variety of factors, one of the most important being the context in which it is located. Here, the instrument’s reliefs are all apparently secular in nature, yet some of the closest sculptural comparisons are to be found within ecclesiastical architectural sculpture in the first half of the 14th century. The late 13th and early 14th centuries witnessed the spread of secular imagery into medieval church decoration to an unprecedented degree. It is true that much ostensibly secular imagery was and is susceptible to different Christian moralising interpretations, limited only by the wearisome ingenuity of the interpreter, but it was, and can still be, also relished free of any such gloss. Within and outside the church much imagery was intentionally humorous and even vicars and ministers of cathedral churches laughed, giggled, flicked candle wax at one another, wore masks and disturbed services, to the scandalized displeasure of their bishops.21

The chronological and geographical contexts of the sculpture: visual comparisons

In the British Museum citole’s visual variety, abundance and humour, its demand for the viewer’s active engagement, its ostentatious technical virtuosity and through its deliberate manipulation of different levels of reality, the instrument exemplifies some of the chief features of the ‘Decorated Style’ in architecture. The flowing, undulating shape of the instrument itself provides a perfect example of sinuous three-dimensional linearity, characteristic of the phase of the style which art-historians usually term ‘curvilinear’: this is normally categorized as extending from about 1290 to the middle of the 14th century.22 Within this broad time frame, it is possible to situate some features of the citole’s carving more precisely. The foliage forms can, for example, be placed within the general stylistic development (to which there are admittedly numerous exceptions) of sculpted foliage.23 At the end of the 13th century in England, leaf shapes became highly naturalistic – as they already had, much earlier, in northern France – and the stiff-leaf repertoire of the 13th century was increasingly abandoned.24 The masterpiece of the ‘naturalistic’ phase of foliage carving is famously associated with Southwell Minster’s chapter house and vestibule in Nottinghamshire. In the early 14th century, naturalistic forms were deliberately varied and flowing shapes became increasingly prevalent, until seaweedy or kale-like foliage dominated in the 1330s and 1340s, displacing the earlier variety of forms, in what has been aptly described as a retreat from naturalism into stylization.25 It is, of course, sensible to be sceptical of too tight and precise a chronological sequencing. Typologically ‘earlier’ and ‘later’ forms frequently co-exist. However, it does seem generally to be the case that the naturalistic foliage seen on the citole became rarer in the 1320s and 1330s. The shrine commemorating the burial place of St William in the eastern bay of York Minster’s nave, for

Plate 11 Detail of the right-hand side of citole showing bird in tree

Plate 12 Detail of the trefoil terminal at the bottom end of the instrument, showing restored portion
The Decorative Sculpture of the British Museum Cîtole and its Visual Context

The Cîtole. Hybrid beasts are also common, as for example on the corbels of the *pulpitum* of Lincoln Cathedral, probably dating to the 1330s, or on the reredos of Beverley Minster where a recumbent musician playing a dragon-headed bagpipe is also to be seen: a male fiddler is nearby, as is a mock combat between a man and a simian-like hybrid. The Percy Tomb in the same church, slightly later in date than the reredos, shows a two-legged, scaly dragon fighting a lion on one corbel (Pl. 13). All that can safely be deduced from such comparisons is that there is nothing in the foliage carving of the Cîtole which forces one to date the instrument after c. 1330, and the interest in naturalistic forms seems to predicate a slightly earlier date. The same point can be made about the quatrefoil decoration of the borders, which do not exhibit flowing ogee shapes that are common, although not inevitable, in the 1330s.

The Cîtole’s figures, combat scenes and hybrids set amongst foliage are ubiquitous features of early 14th-century ‘marginal’ sculptural decoration of ecclesiastical buildings. Although there is considerable divergence between different scholars’ definitions of architecture’s ‘margins’, a term borrowed from manuscript scholarship, to which it seems more appropriate, the term ‘marginal’ is often used to denote the decoration of architectural features such as corbels and string-courses, the cusping of arches, spandrels and other areas of architectural decoration, as well as whole categories of sculpture such as misericords (the undersides of the tip-up seats of wooden stalls). Many parallels for the features of the Cîtole can be found in such sculpture. In stone carving, a capital at Southwell of the late 1280s or early 1290s has two hounds attacking a hare which is seen from above, from either side, amidst ivy foliage. Southwell also has two-legged dragons whose tails metamorphose into foliage. The cusps of the arches of the aisle walls in Beverley Minster, East Riding, mainly from the second decade of the 14th century, are filled with crossbowmen and soldiers armed with round shields and short swords, as on the Cîtole. Hybrid beasts are also common, as for example on the corbels of the *pulpitum* of Lincoln Cathedral, probably dating to the 1330s, or on the reredos of Beverley Minster where a recumbent musician playing a dragon-headed bagpipe is also to be seen: a male fiddler is nearby, as is a mock combat between a man and a simian-like hybrid. The Percy Tomb in the same church, slightly later in date than the reredos, shows a two-legged, scaly dragon fighting a lion on one corbel (Pl. 13). Close to it, a man wearing a bonnet sits between two symmetrically positioned lions facing away from one another, each lion having two bodies and one head. In fact, it is relatively simple to find parallels in English sculpture from the second to fourth decades of the 14th century for most of the features of the Cîtole’s carving. The nave aisles of York Minster, for example, usually dated between 1291 and c. 1325, have sculpted stops to the gables over the blind tracery flanking the aisle windows and include amongst the subjects hybrid animals and combat scenes (disposed unprogrammatically) as well as a hunting scene and combats above the aisle doorways (Pl. 14). The remains of such subjects can also be seen on the exterior at the west end. On the lower part of St William’s shrine base
The battle to curtail such invention had been lost by the later Middle Ages and imagery of the type seen on the citole was never more common than in late 13th- and early 14th-century England. In terms of wood sculpture, for example, the variety of foliage forms, naturalistic and seaweedy, seen on the citole reliefs, is strongly reminiscent of the much larger reliefs on the choir stalls at Winchester Cathedral by William Lyngwode and his team dating to c. 1308. Here, for example, can be found huntsmen, a large two-legged dragon whose tail terminates in foliage (Pl. 16), beasts with eyes drilled for glass inserts, men armed with round shields, dogs and rabbits. Another dragon, on a boss over a choir stall, has a pronounced nose and eye ridges similar to the dragon topping the citole, as well as long curly ears, webbed wings and a foliate tail (Pl. 17). Lyngwode hailed from Norfolk, where another comparison for some of the features of the citole—a man armed with a round shield fighting a dragon, and with a lion and a bird, all amongst vine foliage—is provided by the stone spandrels of the St Ethelbert gateway of Norwich Cathedral, which are convincingly dated to c. 1316–17. There, the reliefs are placed below a quatrefoil border exactly like those found on the citole. The vault bosses of the east walk of the cathedral’s cloister (which probably antedated 1316), those of the first four bays of the south walk of c. 1324–5 and of the Ethelbert gateway also provide a large number of comparisons: figures with drilled eyes, lions, hybrids with two heads, combats between men and long-eared two-legged dragons, for example, can all be found in the cloister bosses. A blocked doorway in the north aisle of the cathedral also provides close comparisons for hybrid figures with their animal lower halves at right angles to the human upper halves and for the tail turning into foliage (Pl. 18).

There seems a consensus amongst scholars that the choice of such subjects was made by the artists themselves, not by the patrons. Already in the 12th century, there were complaints—for example in St Bernard’s *Apologia de vita et moribus religiosorum*—about the distracting grotesques introduced into ecclesiastical buildings. The anonymous author of the c. 1200 treatise *Pictor in Carmine* condemns images such as hybrid beasts, four lions with one and the same head, huntsmen blowing their horns and so forth, which he claims were devised by artists free from patronal control. However, the

Plate 15 Detail of gurning man from the Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral

Plate 16 Detail of two-legged dragon with tail terminating in foliage, choir stalls, Winchester Cathedral (photo © Dr John Crook)
referring to the subjects of the historiated initials. Occasionally, the marginal decorations seem to have had no direct connection with the texts at all, instead featuring humorous images, observations on current events and satirical or proverbial stories. Sometimes, they ran in series on consecutive pages, providing a narrative sequence separate from that of the texts and illustrations above. Each case demands individual scrutiny. Perhaps the most famous of these Psalters, the Luttrell Psalter (British Library, Additional MS 42130), has marginal illustrations offering many features exhibited by the citole’s decoration, for example hybrid creatures from whose bodies foliage sprouts, dragons, lions, representations of seasonal activities and so forth. It is also characterized by the depiction of a great variety of musical instruments, which have recently been interpreted as illustrating, through symbolic opposition, the holy and profane use of music. This raises the question of whether the citole’s exclusively secular imagery necessarily indicates its performative functions. However, the temptation to deduce from its ‘marginal’ decoration that the citole was used only for secular music should probably be resisted. The frequent representations of angels playing citoles in art of the period suggests that the instruments were also associated with ecclesiastical music – or at least that the instrument’s connotations were not exclusively profane – and the occurrence of apparently secular scenes in religious buildings or manuscripts warns against a simplistic dichotomy between secular and religious.

The Luttrell Psalter was probably illuminated slightly later in date than the citole was carved. Many other manuscripts feature images which can be compared with the reliefs of the citole. ‘East Anglian’ works such as the Gorleston (British Library, MS Additional 49622) and Ormesby Psalters (Bodleian Library, MS Douce 366), both of which may have been produced in Norwich c. 1310–20, for example, feature directly comparable marginalia. However, the closest comparisons with the instrument’s reliefs are found in a group of manuscripts probably originating in the Fenlands. The Peterborough Psalter now in Brussels (Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 9961-62), in particular, includes a range of subjects which is extraordinarily close to the citole’s reliefs, and the style of some of the artists responsible for the manuscript’s illumination is also very close to that of the sculptor. The Peterborough Psalter antedates 1318, when it was given by the abbot of Peterborough, Geoffrey of Crowland, to the visiting papal nuncio, Cardinal Gaucelin d’Euse, and was probably a work of the immediately previous years. Exactly where the manuscript was produced is not certain, but it is one of a group of closely related manuscripts with lavish decorative qualities, marginal grotesques and hybrids, which seem most likely to have originated in a Fenland or, more generally, a northern East Anglian centre of production. This is consistent with the sculptural parallels adduced above, which link York and the East Riding to centres in the Fenlands such as Ely, and across to Norwich in northern Norfolk, all areas easily linked by sea and river transport.

The very close similarity of the citole’s repertoire to that of the Peterborough Psalter is remarkable. This can readily
an inverted hunting horn; a man with a large axe; an owl; other birds, goats and various foliage types including vine, holly, oak and maple. Within the historiated initial showing King David at his harp are two other musicians, one of whom, wearing a hood, is playing a dragon-headed citole with a trefoil terminal. It is close in form to our citole. Nearby, a squirrel sits at the edge of the text, and hybrids with foliate tails function as line-fillers. Two-legged dragons with foliate tails, painted by the artist’s main assistant, can be found in the calendar, as can a man harvesting grapes, men with axes, hogs, and men with hats like that seen in the relief of the man knocking down acorns. Elsewhere in the manuscript can be found, in the work of another artist, features such as the remarkably distinctive back-turned hybrid shooting an arrow (fol. 34) (Pl. 20), lions, owls, and hounds hunting rabbits. Such comparisons go beyond general similarities and suggest a much deeper relationship. Even bat-winged dragons can be seen in the manuscript: almost every feature of the citole’s repertoire can be found in its illuminations. In the Ramsey Psalter (St Paul in Lavanthal cod. XXV/2, 19), examples such as the crossbowman on fol. 64, or the two lions on fol. 105v by an artist who may later have worked on the Brussels Psalter, provide further comparisons for the citole’s decorative repertoire. The instrument’s near repetition of features from the Peterborough Psalter and its fellows suggests that the sculptor worked in the same area as that in which the manuscripts were produced, that is to say in the Fenlands or northern East Anglia, and at the same time, probably the second decade of the 14th century. The similarities are so close that the carver could even, in fact, have had two-dimensional models produced by the Peterborough Psalter’s designer in front of him.

Many scholars have commented on the relationship between calendar illustrations and the two large reliefs of the peasant knocking down acorns for his pigs and the man chopping an oak tree with his axe; but even more suggestive of two-dimensional models are the right-angled hunting reliefs, which could easily have been derived from
manuscript bas-de-page illustrations, or the hybrid shooting an arrow at a rabbit. The slightly awkward positioning of the deer in one of the two set-square reliefs may even indicate that the sculptor had difficulty transferring his two-dimensional model into this shaped field. The change of direction in the instrument’s decorative reliefs reflect, in effect, the marginal illustrations of a manuscript which are often read across the top and bottom of the page, and up and down the margins at the side; the dynamism of the citole’s reliefs scheme could have been influenced by such a model. Slightly later, in 1346–7, we have a documented instance of an Apocalypse manuscript being purchased to provide the iconographic model for the west walk bosses of Norwich Cathedral’s cloister, and the repetition of subjects in misericords strongly suggests that sculptors often retained two-dimensional models. There is nothing inherently improbable, then, in the suggestion that the citole’s carver had access to illustrations by the Peterborough Psalter master. The recurrence of motifs derived from calendars and marginalia in the citole’s reliefs supports the premise that the sculptor himself selected the subjects. It also further problematizes modern definitions of the ‘marginal’ in sculpture, since here subjects that may have had their origins in manuscript marginalia occupy the centre stage.5

Conclusion

The closest comparisons for the citole’s reliefs are in Fenland and East Anglian manuscripts produced around the second decade of the 14th century; parallels in stone and wood sculpture point in the same direction, both geographically and chronologically. This argument does not, of course, definitively prove that the sculptor carved the citole in the same period as such manuscripts. What it does, however, is to suggest that the sculptor himself selected the subjects. It also further problematizes modern definitions of the ‘marginal’ in sculpture, since here subjects that may have had their origins in manuscript marginalia occupy the centre stage.

Notes

1 Remnant and Marks 1980 (the section on the gittern’s decoration by Professor Marks is pp. 98–101) dated it c. 1300–40 and thought it likely to have been made in England though ‘the possibility of an origin in France or Flanders cannot be entirely discounted’ (p. 100). Dr C. Tracy’s entry on the instrument (cat. no. 528) in Alexander and Binski 1997 described it as ‘probably English, early 14th century’, and the stylistic parallels he adduced date to c. 1300–20. Cherry (1991, 7–9) classifies the instrument as ‘English, early fourteenth century’: the double-page photograph of the citole on pp. 2–3 is unfortunately reversed. Camille (1996, 199) assigned it to c. 1290–1330. Robinson (2008, 214–15) dated it to 1280–1330 and assigned it to English manufacture. Most recently, see Kevin et al. 2008 (Appendix A, this volume, pp. 111–24) who date it to c. 1300–30. The present paper is particularly indebted to the study by Kathrin E. Buehler (Buehler 2002) and to various discussions with Kate from 2001 onwards. I am grateful to Dr Stella Panayotova, Dr Charles Tracy and Dr Lynda Dennison for kindly commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. I have only been able to examine the instrument in the British Museum display case, but I have also benefited from access to photographs by Kate (now Buehler-McWilliams), who examined the instrument off display. My work on the essay was completed during a University of Leicester Research leave.

2 For the restored section of the trefoil, see the X-radiograph in Kevin et al. 2008, fig. 25 (Appendix A, this volume, p. 122).

3 Ibid., 16 (Appendix A, this volume, p. 114), states that the present background is ‘flax fibre paper with a coating of gold-coloured brass paint’, which may not be original. There is no indication that the rest of the woodwork, which must have been much whiter when originally carved, was painted. Although these two panels were probably carved separately specifically in order to set them against a coloured or gilded background, Kate Buehler-McWilliams has suggested to me that it is also possible that they were made separately so that the sculptor had the advantage of carving with the boxwood’s grain. For detailed pictures of the gilt, see Chapter 8, PL. 1, and Kevin et al. 2008, fig. 11 (Appendix A, this volume, p. 116).

4 For this episode and its context, see Buehler 2002, 87–91. See also this volume, Introduction, pp. vi–vii and Appendix B, p. 137. Electrotyping involves the making of a mould, usually of wax, from the model, and this process may have caused damage to the citole.

5 For later changes to the instrument and the violin soundboard, see Ben Hebbert, this volume. See also Buehler-McWilliams 2007 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 125–41).


7 Lindley 2008.

8 Of course, the topos which goes back to classical antiquity that the ‘artist’s skill even surpasses the value of the material’ testifies both to the premium placed on high levels of artistic attainment and to the importance of the medium.

9 For the known and speculative provenance of the British Museum citole, see introduction, p. v; Buehler-McWilliams 2007, 33–6 (p. 137 in this volume) and Buehler 2002, 95–100. For other decorated instruments and how their decoration may have contributed to their preservation, see Glasscock, this volume, pp. 79–83.

10 Or, just possibly, as Jackie Hall has suggested to me (pers. comm.), that several people were looking closely at the instrument at the same time.

11 Maes 2010 is not the last word in the debate about hypothetical intentionalism and moderate actual intentionalism. It is odd that this debate has not intersected with the long-running discussions about intentionalism within art history.

12 The suggestion that this was not a dragon but a wyvern was offered by Chris Egerton in his talk at the British Museum on 4 November 2010. However, two-legged dragons with curled tails were common in manuscript illustration of the period (e.g. those with tails turning into foliage beneath the map of the world on fol. 9r of British Library, Harley MS 3444, 139v). For more detailed pictures of the gilt, see Appendix B, this volume, Introduction, p. v; Buehler-McWilliams 2007, 35–6 (p. 137 in this volume) and Buehler 2002, 95–100. For other decorated instruments and how their decoration may have contributed to their preservation, see Glasscock, this volume, pp. 79–83.

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13 See the discussion in Buchler 2007, 39–41 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 138–9) and Ben Hebbert, this volume, p. 70.
15 Cf the Anglo-Saxon dragon in British Library, Cotton MS Tiberus C. VI, f.116r.
16 These metamorphoses are not Ovidian but humorous, although Ovid’s Metamorphoses was widely read in the Middle Ages. For hybrids, see Bovey 2002, 41–5.
18 The owl became separated from the citole prior to its acquisition by the British Museum. Its original location was identified by Kate Buchler-McWilliams. It has not, however, been possible to restore the owl to its intended position. See Buchler-McWilliams 2007 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 129–30).
19 Cf the crab seen from above in the calendar of the Peterborough Psalter in Brussels discussed below, or the lizard in the earlier Alphonso Psalter, of c. 1284 (Bovey 2002, 50), where an illustration combines the imaginary dragon in profile with close observation of a real reptile.
20 Kevin et al. 2008, 26 notes that some acorns and leaves on the opposite panel are also darker in colour and may also be replacements (Appendix A, this volume, p. 123). Kate has suggested to me that it is likely that these are the original pieces replaced as these are also shown in the electrotype.
21 See Coulton 1928 (vol. 1, 96–9) for Bishop Grandisson’s attempts to stop this behaviour at Exeter in 1330 and 1333. Mummers’ masks seem to be depicted in the Luttrell Psalter.
22 The chronological sequencing of the style tends to disregard the fact that ‘geometrical’ forms co-exist with ‘curvilinear’ in many contexts.
23 This is an angle explored by Marks in Remnant and Marks 1980, 99–100.
24 For French naturalism, see Camille 1996, 134–5.
26 Wilson (1977, 12) dates the shrine to the early 14th century, ‘when the nave was nearing completion’, thus probably the second half of the 1320s or the 1330s. The design is ascribed to Ivo de Raghton by Harvey (1984 s.n.), for whom see also the Beverley reredos, the date of which is discussed in Lindley 2007, 177.
27 E.g. Camille (1992) defines Gothic marginal sculpture as gargoyles, chimeras, corbel-heads and capitals and misericords, but also includes the quatrefoil medallions of the portal des Librairies at Rouen. For sceptical reviews see Baxter 1993 and de Hamel 1992. For a different definition of marginal sculpture from Camille’s, see Kenaan-Kedar 1995, 3–5, 70–3, 77 and 134, reviewed in Morrison 1997. See also Weir and Jerman 1986, 31–5, for the campaigns on the Ormesby Psalter, the relevant one being assigned to c. 1310–20 and 136–8 for the Gorleston Psalter. For comparisons between the citole and the Gorleston Psalter see for example the lion (fig. 342). It does not appear to have been noticed that the dynamic figures of the Ormesby Psalter’s Beatus page can be closely paralleled in the vault bosses of Norwich cloister’s east walk.
28 Pevner 1945, pls 26 and 27. For the date of the chapter house, see also Summers 1988, 39–41.
29 Pevner 1945, pl. 2.
30 Lindley 2007, ch. 5.
31 Oosterwijk 1990.
33 E.g. Wilson 1977, 16–17: ‘There can be little doubt that such a hotch-potch of irrelevant and often irrelevant subjects reflects the choice of the masons, whose main aim was sumptuousness of visual effect.’ Camille 1992, 95, suggested that ‘ecclesiastical patrons left the non-essential parts of programmes to the imaginations of their makers’.
34 James 1951. For a recent analysis of the meanings of marginalia in medieval art, see Mills 2008.
35 Tracy 1987, 16.
36 Sekules 1980 (the bird is tentatively interpreted as a basilisk and the sculpture seen as a moral message to the citizenry, following the riots of 1272).
37 Fernie and Whittingham 1972, 31–3. Their view of the vault bosses of the Ethelbert Gateway as being later than its west facade is disputed by Sekules (1980, 32), who argues that the vault is datable to c. 1316–17. See also Lindley 1987 (especially p. 42, n. 49, citing Professor Christopher Wilson’s work for the dating of the east walk bosses).
38 See n. 25 above. See also Wirth 2003; Jorgensen 2005.
40 Buckland 2003, 94.
41 The latest scholar to study the manuscript, Michelle Brown, dates the pertinent illustrations between 1330 and 1345 (Brown 2006, 22).
42 Marks in Remnant and Marks 1980, 100–1, divides the reliefs of the citole into three categories – Labours of the Months; hunting scenes; and grotesques and hybrids – and cites comparisons in a variety of manuscripts datable to c. 1300–40.
43 Sandler (1974, 125) suggested that both the ‘East Anglian’ and ‘Fenland’ manuscripts might have been produced in London. She points to comparisons between the Gorleston Psalter and the Peterborough Psalter designer (p. 128). For both manuscripts, see Sandler 1986 (vol. 2, 49–51, for the campaigns on the Ormesby Psalter, the relevant one being assigned to c. 1310–20 and 136–8 for the Gorleston Psalter). For comparisons between the citole and the Gorleston Psalter see for example the lion (fig. 342). It does not appear to have been noticed that the dynamic figures of the Ormesby Psalter’s Beatus page can be closely paralleled in the vault bosses of Norwich cloister’s east walk.
44 Brown (2006, 64) states that ‘the stylistic context [of the Luttrell Psalter’s illumination] lies within East Anglia and the Fenlands, especially books made in the 1320s in Norwich whence some of the Luttrell Psalter’s makers may have been drawn, especially the scribe, those responsible for the border and minor decoration...’.
45 For the division of hands in the manuscript, see Sandler 1974.
46 Ibid., 109–10.
47 Darby 1940, ch. 3.
48 Sandler’s ‘Master A’ (Sandler 1974).
49 Sandler 1974, fig. 206.
50 Sandler dates the Ramsey Psalter before 1316 (1974, 117), and probably before 1310 (p. 119).
51 Fernie and Whittingham 1972, 38.
52 The contemporary spandrels of the Ethelbert Gateway in Norwich were placed below and between a series of [now lost] sculpted images whose identity was once unequivocal [a statue of Christ showing his wounds stood in the central niche]. In such a context, the subjects of the spandrels could certainly, as Dr Sekules has suggested, have been intended to convey a moral message to the citizenry. However, if the choice of the spandrels’ subject was left to the sculptors, then their meaning may not have been so fixed or precise. Their interpretation may always have been both richer and less easily defined than the religious statues in the niches.
In 1910, Francis Galpin, the eminent historian of music, commented: ‘In the cito...we have an instrument which has been much misunderstood’. Since then it has been both misunderstood and overlooked. This book aims to improve the understanding of medieval citoles and offer a context for the British Museum’s citole, which, although it has been much altered, is the sole surviving example of this important medieval instrument type.

The title of this chapter quotes a marginal note in a 14th-century manuscript which suggests that the ‘sitola’ was a very common instrument (Pl. 1). Where and when the citole was popular can be gleaned from the large body of literary and pictorial evidence surviving from the late 12th through 14th centuries, although many of these sources are not well known. Before surveying the relevant medieval sources, it is worth examining some current misunderstandings relating to this instrument, including why 20th-century scholars such as Galpin thought that the British Museum citole should be called a gittern. Several medieval sources, however, correlate images of specific instruments with citole-related names and corroborate that we are now assigning the correct name to this instrument type. The subsequent brief survey of citoles in surviving medieval literary and pictorial sources indicates where and when the citole seems to have been popular. Closer examination of the literary references to and representations of human citoles suggests the sorts of people who were associated with playing the citole and their perceived social status. Images of citoles show regional characteristics, but also help to reveal whether the medieval portions of the British Museum citole were usual or not. This chapter will discuss the ways in which modern scholars have been confused about the medieval citole, verify what sort of instrument was called a citole during the Middle Ages and consider where and when it was popular, who might have played it and whether the British Museum citole would have been a typical medieval citole.

Modern confusion relating to citoles

Three of the main causes for the persistent modern confusion relating to citoles are the incorrect attribution of terminology, which led to the misidentification of the type of medieval instrument denoted by the term ‘citole’; a methodological flaw in the dating of literary references, which has clouded knowledge of when the name appeared in different regions; and the lack of any comprehensive study dedicated to this type of instrument, which has meant that assumptions about this instrument type have often been based on a small selection of evidence.

During the past two centuries, the British Museum citole and depictions of similar instruments have been identified by several different vernacular names, most frequently ‘guitarra latina’, ‘gittern’ or ‘citole’. In 1776, because John Hawkins did not recognize that the instrument, now called ‘the British Museum citole’, had been altered from a medieval plucked instrument, he described it as a 16th-century violin of ‘singular form’. In 1855, Mariano Soriano Fuertes associated the term ‘guitarra latina’ used in Libro de buen amor with medieval Castilian depictions of plucked chordophones with incurring sides. A year later, Edmond
An understanding of when the name ‘citole’ appeared in different linguistic regions has been muddled by a methodological flaw in the approach to literary sources. The surviving manuscripts that include citole-related instrument names are often much more recent than the narratives they contain. Although it is not uncommon for literary works to be dated by authorship, if no copy survives from the author’s lifetime, it can be difficult to tell whether an individual word was chosen by the author, an intermediate copyist or the scribe who produced the surviving manuscript. As with any single word, especially when it is not required to complete a rhyme, a later scribe might have added or replaced a citole-related term.

Dating citations by the verifiable evidence offered by surviving manuscripts overturns some previous assumptions about when citole-related terms appeared in different regions and linguistic groups. Daurel et Beton, for example, is often cited as the earliest use of the term ‘citolá’, because a poem with that name is believed to have been composed c. 1130–50.\(^8\) It is impossible to establish, however, whether the sole surviving mid-14th-century copy of Daurel et Beton (Table 1: O.3) is an accurate transcription of the anonymous author’s 12th-century original or if it is even the same story. Comparing multiple exemplars of a particular text can offer some indications about changes in the use of citole-related terms. References to the citolá appear several times in each of the major copies of Libro de buen amor (Table 1: C.6), but it has been suggested that the exclusion of citoles from an extensive list of instruments in stanzas 1228–33 indicates the declining status of the citole in Iberia by the first third of the 14th century. Although the work was compiled around 1330 no copies have survived from that date. If this single omission can be considered evidence that the citole was falling out of fashion, this happened some time between c. 1368 (the date of the earliest surviving copy, the ‘Toledo MS’, in which ‘la citola’ does appear in this passage) and 1380 (the date of the ‘Gayoso MS’ in which it does not).\(^8\) Although it is more difficult to substitute a citole term when it appears in a rhyming position, there is evidence of this as well. Chrétien de Troyes’ Erec et Enide survives in seven more-or-less complete manuscripts dating from the late 12th to the early 14th centuries, but ‘citolá’ appears only in one late 13th-century northern French copy where it is used as a rhyme for ‘viole’ (Table 1: F.5). In the other copies, ‘viole’ does not appear but rather the linguistic variant ‘vielle’ which is rhymed with a wind instrument ‘chalamele’.

Even
Table 1 Manuscripts containing citole-related terminology

Because many of the relevant manuscripts are copies of earlier texts, and it is not possible to verify the exact wording of a lost original, the dates shown below are for the specified manuscript, which is usually the earliest surviving copy of the work confirmed to include a citole. Manuscripts are listed chronologically within each linguistic group. An X in the prefix denotes a manuscript dated after 1400 that is discussed in this chapter.

Anglo-Norman

A.2. – Liber Custumarum: MS: London, Metropolitan Archives, COU/CS/01006 (c. 1324).
A.5. – Mirour de l’Ommme, John Gower: MS: Cambridge University Library, Add. 3035 (end 14th century).

Castilian

C.1. – Primera Crónica General de España (Estoria de España), Alfonso X: MS: Madrid, Biblioteca del Escorial, Y.I.2 (before 1278).
C.2. – General estoria I, Alfonso X: MS: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional (BN), 816 (Olim F-1) (c. 1272–5).
C.3. – General estoria IV, Alfonso X: MS: Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 539 (c. 1280).
C.4. – Libro de Alexandre: MS: Madrid, BN, V-5-10 (end 13th/early 14th century).
C.5. – La estoria de Sennor Sant Millian, Gonzalo de Berceo: MS: Madrid, Real Academia Española, 4 (c. 1325).
C.6. – Libro de buen amor, Archpriest of Hita (‘Juan Ruiz’): MS: Madrid, BN, Va-6-1 (third quarter of 14th century, possibly 1368?) (end 14th century).

English

E.1. – The Knight’s Tale, Geoffrey Chaucer: MS: London, BL, Harlay 7334 (late 14th century).
E.6. – Libeaus Desconus, attributed to Thomas Chestre: MS: Lincoln’s inn, Hale 150; ff. 4r–12v. (end 14th/early 15th century).
E.7. – Kyng Alissander: MS: London, Lincoln’s inn, Hale 150; ff. 28r–90r. (end 14th/early 15th century).

French

F.1. – Li Blaus Descouneüs, Renaud de Beaujeu: MS: Chantilly, Bibli. et Archives du Château, 472 (c. 1250–75).
F.5. – Erec et Enide, Chrétien de Troyes: MS: Paris, BNf, fr. 375 (c. 1288).
F.11. – Li roumans de Cléomadès, Adenet le Roi: MS: Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 3142 (end 13th century).
F.12. – Dumart le Galois: MS: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 113 (end 13th century).
F.13. – Le roman de la Rose, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, MS: Paris, BNf, fr. 378 (13th century).
F.18. – Roman de Renart (Branch XVII): MS: Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Varia 151 (early 14th century).
F.22. – Du loup et de la truie (table XX), Ysopet I: MS: Paris, BNf, fr. 1594 (c. 1325).
F.27. – Li layz dou blanc chevalier, Jean de Condé: MS: Turin, BN Univ., L.1.13 (14th century).
F.29. – Ch’est des maintiens des béghine, Gilis il Muisis: MS: Brussels, BR, IV 119 (c. 1350–2).
F.31. – Le remède de fortune, Guillaume de Machaut: MS: Paris, BNf, fr. 1586 (c. 1350–5).
F.32. – La prise d’Alexandrie, Guillaume de Machaut: MS: Paris, BNf, fr. 9221 (late 14th century).
F.33. – Le livre de ethniques d’Aristote, Nicole Oresme, Bishop of Lisieux: MS: Brussels, BR, 2902 (dated 1372).
F.34. – Le livres de politiques d’Aristote, Nicole Oresme, Bishop of Lisieux: MS: Avranches, BM, 223 (c. 1372–82).
in copies close in date to the life of the author a scribe might alter a reference to a particular instrument. In six 14th-century copies of Guillaume de Machaut’s Le remède de fortune (Table 1: F.3) a ‘citolet’ is mentioned in line 3981, but in one manuscript ‘citolet’ is replaced by ‘viole’. Since it can be demonstrated that some later scribes did add or remove references to citoles, the only reliable evidence of when citole-related terms were used are the surviving manuscripts that contain those terms. Table 1 lists the medieval texts considered in this article and the earliest manuscript copy of each known to include a specific reference to the citoles. Although some manuscripts hint that a citoles-related term was used in an earlier, non-surviving copy, attributing a precise date to a single word in a lost manuscript is speculation. Where several copies of a text mention a citole in a specific passage, and none of these copies is the source upon which the others are based, it is likely that the citoles reference appeared in an earlier exemplar but the exact date of when the relevant term first appeared in that work cannot be verified. This is the case with 12 medieval secular Galician-Portuguese insult poems that mention players of citoles, the only reliable evidence of when citoles must have been relatively uncommon. The hare with ‘une citoles’ mentioned in Branch XVII, however, appears in a unique interpolated passage of 176 verses that can not be traced earlier than the 14th-century manuscript that contains it (Table 1: F.8). Despite these hints at earlier usage, it is worth reiterating that surviving manuscripts provide the only verifiable dates for the use of citoles-related terms.

Finally, some misconceptions about the citoles may have arisen because no general study has been published prior to this volume. In many discussions of this instrument type the same few images and texts are cited, even though they might not be the most characteristic examples. For example, it has been suggested that citoles playing was associated with shepherds, but this is based on only two medieval texts and neither of these describes ordinary medieval music making: one citoles-playing shepherd is part of an allegorical setting and the other shepherd is St Emilian, who is steeped in King David symbolism (Table 1: C.6 and C.5: Pl. 4). Some fine research has been published relating to this instrument type (particularly by Wright and by Young, which will be discussed in detail later), but most of these previous studies have been either brief or narrowly focused. Several modern authors have examined this instrument type in Iberian sources, English art and German literature, or have focused on the only surviving instrument. Although the scholarship is often admirable, these studies devoted to a single region or type of evidence cannot discuss the citoles in a broad context. Often musicologists have relegated depictions of this instrument type to the pre-history of a later instrument, usually the guitar or cittern, rather than treating the citoles as a fully developed medieval instrument type. By considering only a small amount of the surviving evidence, modern scholars have provided the impression that citoles must have been relatively uncommon. Before briefly surveying the more than 60 different texts preserved in manuscripts dating from before 1400 that contain citoles-related terminology, as well as over 180
depictions of distinct necked, plucked chordophones with non-oval body outlines from the same period, it is worth verifying which instrument type was referred to as a 'cistole' during the Middle Ages.

Three medieval texts with illustrations of citoles
Several medieval texts that contain a cistole-related term are illustrated with plucked, necked instruments that have incurving sides. Although a single piece of evidence might be doubted as the opinion of an individual scribe, three unrelated sources corroborate each other and support the current identification of the British Museum's instrument as a cistole. To confirm that the name was applied correctly, it is important to determine that these sources independently identify the same instrument type with a cistole-related term. We will begin with the Franco-Flemish manuscript brought to attention by de Coussemaker and Wright, followed by a consideration of two copies of an earlier illustrated bestiary written by an exiled Florentine and a painting from a framed altarpiece based on a Castilian verse hagiography.

Text one: a marginal gloss on De planctu naturae
The best-known illustrated text that identifies a cistole is a Franco-Flemish marginal text gloss and sketch in a 14th-century copy of Alanus de Insulis' Latin allegorical work, De planctu naturae (MS Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 21069, folio 39) (Pl. 1). Wright offers a concise orthographic interpretation of this manuscript, identifying the handwriting as belonging to several scribes involved in the glossing of the text. He pairs the sketch of the holly leaf-shaped instrument to the extended gloss of the word lira, which he transcribes as:

\[ \text{Lira est quoddam genus cithare vel est sitola alioquin deficeret hic instrumentum illud multum vulgare} \]

Wright concludes that, since the sketch of the holly leaf-shaped instrument was drawn in the same light, loose hand as the extended gloss, it was therefore meant to illustrate the 'sitola'. Some modern scholars have hesitated to accept Wright's interpretation of this gloss, but the other two corroborating texts presented here should assuage these doubts.

Text two: illustrations in Li livres dou tresor
Two medieval copies of Brunetto Latini's Li livres dou tresor contain illustrations of a passage that mentions a cistolet. The encyclopaedic Tresor, written while Latini was in exile in France from 1260 to 1267, contains the most numerous and varied uses of the term 'cistolet' of any surviving medieval text. That the term 'cistolet' was used by Latini, and not merely inserted by a later copyist, is attested to by a late 13th-century manuscript (Madrid, Escorial, L.II.3, referred to as manuscript 'M3') that was produced under Latini's supervision, if not by Latini himself. Often assumed to be the most authentic version of Latini's text, this manuscript includes cistolet-related nomenclature in ten separate passages and in a variety of contexts. Although Latini might have selected the term 'cistolet' merely as a euphonious translation for a Latin instrument name in some passages derived from the Bible, the Physiologus (a popular early medieval Latin translation of a 2nd-century AD Greek text that formed the basis for most medieval bestiaries) or Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, not all of the Tresor is based on earlier sources. The encyclopaedia contains original interpretations of earlier works as well as material authored by Latini. He selects 'cistolet' as the contemporaneous instrument of reference in several metaphors and similes. Latini seems to have believed that the cistolet would be a familiar enough instrument that it would help make the text more understandable to members of the late 13th-century laity, his intended readership.

More than 80 medieval French-language manuscript copies and fragments of the Tresor have survived, in addition to numerous contemporaneous translations, but few of these are illustrated. Typically, the bestiary is the most highly

'Alioquin Deficeret Hic Instrumentum Illud Multum Vulgare' | 19
illustrated section of the illuminated Tresor manuscripts, and at least two northern French copies include miniatures that depict sirens playing musical instruments. Both of these include a variant citole-related term in the text (‘cistole’ and ‘cistoile’),28 and illustrate a siren who is shown in the act of plucking the strings of a holly leaf-shaped necked chordophone with a substantial plectrum.

The earlier of the two relevant illustrated Tresor manuscripts, MS ‘Lz’ (St Petersburg, National Library Fr. Fv.III N 4), is written in the Picard dialect in northern French script and is believed to date from c. 1300 (Pl. 2).29 The text beginning at the bottom right-hand column of folio 47r, line 38, reads:

la premiere cantoit merveilleusement · car l’plusiour dient qui elles cantoient les unes endroite uois de feminine · L’autre en uois de flaut et de canon · La terce de cistole30

Translation:

The first of them sang marvellously, and many said that they sang the one with the voice of a woman; the other with the voice of a flaut and of a canon; the third of a cistole.31

The accompanying miniature on folio 47r shows three sirens, each holding an instrument in a credible playing position. From right to left, the instruments illustrated are a slightly conical end-blown wind instrument (flaut), a triangular frame harp (canon) and a holly leaf-shaped plucked chordophone (cistole). Two of these sirens, those playing the flaut and canon, seem to have been influenced by a pre-existing artistic convention, which associated playing an end-blown wind instrument and a harp with sirens.32 It is the remaining siren (without a recognizable archetype) that is of interest in the study of the citole. Latini seems to have been unique in including a citole-related term in a description of sirens and the images in Plates 2–3 illustrate that text.

The other copy of the Tresor to contain a depiction of siren instrumentalists, MS ‘YT’ (London, British Library, Yates Thompson 19), is also from north-eastern France, probably Pas-de-Calais or Picardy, but has been dated to 1315–29, slightly later than the other copy. The illustration at the bottom of the left-hand column of folio 50v (Pl. 3) is comparable to that in the ‘Lz’ Tresor (Pl. 2). It shows a distinct necked, plucked chordophone and an end-blown wind instrument, but does not include the harp. There are several explanations for why only two instruments are illustrated here, the simplest relating to the word ‘canon’ having been transcribed as ‘canom’: either the illustrator was uncertain how to depict the second siren with both a ‘flaut’ and a ‘canom’, or did not recognize ‘ca-nom’, which is split across a line break, as an instrument name.

The depiction of the third siren and her citole in both of these examples seems to have been influenced by the description in the text rather than being a copy of classical models. That the term citole in this section of the Tresor might have been chosen by the author as a translation for the Latin linea is irrelevant. Both illustrators associated the term ‘cistole’, or ‘cistoile’, with the same type of contemporaneous instrument. Referring specifically to the St Petersburg ‘Lz’ manuscript, Mokretsova comments that the framed miniatures in this bestiary contain no secondary meaning but are direct illustrations of the text; indeed, these miniatures appear to be depictions of the named instruments as the artists understood them.33

**Text three: an altar painting based on La estoria de San Millán**

The 6th-century St Emilian the Cowled, a patron saint of Castile, reputedly played a stringed instrument in his youth. During the 14th century, the monks at the monastery he founded modernized the instrument he played first by giving it a medieval name and then by illustrating it with the corresponding shape.34 Within the space of a few decades, they produced both a decorated copy of Gonzalo de Berceo’s Castilian verse hagiography, La estoria de San Millán (Table r: C.5), which mentions that the young Emilian had played ‘una çitola’, and a painted altarpiece depicting scenes from the saint’s life, which twice shows him with a distinct necked chordophone with a holly leaf-shaped body (Pl. 4).

Although La estoria de San Millán is often described as containing the earliest use of the term çitola in Castilian literature, there is no evidence that the author ever knew or used the term.35 Although Gonzalo de Berceo was one of the most important early authors in Castilian and composed his original version of the text around 1234, no 13th-century manuscript of this work is known to survive and the term çitola has not been identified in any of his other works. Until the early 19th century, two medieval copies of the Estoria resided at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla, one in...
quarto believed to date from c. 1250–60 and one in folio
dating from c. 1295. Since the current location of the earlier
quarto manuscript is unknown, most modern editions are
based on 18th-century transcriptions of it and include the
term çitola not çitola.39 It is the decorated, but not illuminated
14th-century folio manuscript (Table 1: C.5), which Dutton
suggests modernized the language of Gonzalo de Berceo’s
original, that specifically names the çitola. Stanza 7 reads:

Auia otra costumbre el pastor que uos digo:
Por uso vna çitola traya siempre consigo
Por referir el sueño, que el mal enemigo
Furtar non li podissee cordero nyn cabrito37

Translation:
The shepherd of whom I speak to you had another custom,
He always carried with him a [citiola] to use
To banish sleep, so that the wicked enemy
Would not be able to steal from him either lamb or kid38

Later in the 14th century, the monastery produced a
painted altarpiece that includes a depiction of the scene
described above and another of an angel calling the future
St Emilian to be a shepherd of men rather than sheep (Pl.
4). Now in the Museo de La Rioja, the Tablas de San Millán is
believed to date from the mid- to late 14th century.39 On the
left-hand panel, the first of the smaller scenes shows the
future saint playing his holly leaf-shaped çitola by plucking it
with a large, relatively wide tapering plectrum. In the
second, the çitola is resting on the ground. The stringed
instrument here is distinctly different from those shown
being played by angels on other sections of the altarpiece. In
these two scenes, the çitola seems to be used to identify the
saint as well as to illustrate the story.

It seems likely that the painter of the retable would have
carefully chosen how to depict the instrument of his
monastery’s founder and might have consulted the recently
produced luxurious manuscript of La estoria de San Millán,
which named the instrument as a çitola. While the text’s
copyist might simply have inserted a more familiar
colloquial name in place of one with which he was less
familiar (çitola for çitana or çitara), the painter seems to have
had a specific instrument in mind. Although this altarpiece
illustration might not be conclusive evidence on its own that
the holly leaf-shaped plucked instrument was known as a
çitola, it offers support to the other examples.

A modern definition of ‘citole’
The unrelated artists who illustrated the texts discussed
above clearly considered plectrum-plucked instruments
with relatively short necks and holly leaf-shaped bodies to
correlate to the names sitola, cistole, cistoile, or çitola. There
is still, however, some debate among current scholars about
the range of names and physical characteristics that apply
to the study of citoles. The criteria for citoles in this survey
are based on those proposed by Wright (1977) and Young
(1984).40

Wright categorized the terminology he considered
relevant to the study of this instrument type into three
linguistic groups: cithara-related, cetra-related and citole-
related. All of these share a common derivation from the
Latin term cithara, rather than from the Greek kithara or
Arabic qitara. Wright considered two of these groups, the
cithara-related and cetra-related terms, to be ambiguous.
Although a few illustrated medieval texts associate a
plucked, necked instrument with a cithara-related term, these
names were also applied to a wide variety of instruments,
especially in relation to biblical texts.41 As cetra-related
terms were used generically during the Middle Ages, they
will not be considered here to any extent.

Of Wright’s three groups of instrument names, the
citera-related terms cause the most disagreement among
modern scholars. Wright identified a different linguistic
origin for the cetra-related terms recorded in Italian (cetera,
cetera, ceterare), Castilian (cedra, cedreno) and Occitan (cedra, sidra)
manuscripts than the citole-related terms found elsewhere.42
Because cetra-related names were often used ambiguously,
Wright concluded that often ‘one cannot be sure if a
contemporary instrument is referred to, or if so which one’
and cautioned against assuming that cetra-related terms refer
to citoles unless there are ‘clear indications that an
instrument with a neck is implied’. In Paradiso,43 Dante seems
to offer the only clear reference to a ‘cetra’ having a neck. In
some cases the term ‘cetera’ might be a modernization of the
Latin cithara of antiquity, as for example when Dante in his
Convivio paraphrases Ovid’s description of Orpheus44 or in
translations of biblical passages such as in Bono Giamboni’s
II Trattato di Virtù de Vizi.45 A few other sources, such as
Dante’s De vulgari eloquentia and Dino Compagni’s
L’intelligenze, treat the ‘cetera’ or ‘cetra’ as a vernacular
medieval instrument name.46 In some Italian-language
copies of Latini’s Tresor, the word ‘citole’ is replaced with
‘cetera’, suggesting that they might name the same
instrument or, alternately, the name ‘citoles’ was unfamiliar
in Italy and the more recognizable term ‘cetera’ was
substituted to make the meaning of texts clearer.47 In
Castilian sources, ‘cedra’ might be a substitution for the
Latin term cithara since it usually appears in biblical passages
or stories set in antiquity but, given that the other
instruments mentioned in those passages are medieval, cedra
might also be a medieval name.48 Ferreira suggests that the
term ‘cedreno’ in Castilian-Leonese sources might have been
used generically to indicate any itinerant musician who
played a stringed instrument, not specifically players of the
‘cedro’.'49 In Gonzalo de Berceo’s hagiography of Santo
Domingo de Silos, the phrase ‘non joglar nin cedredo’
suggests that a ‘cedredo’ was not the same as a ‘joglar’, but
does not clarify the term any further.49 Two texts suggest that
the ‘cedra’ was not the same as a ‘citoles’. The Occitan poem
Fadet joglar lists both ‘citoles’ (‘playing the citoles) and playing
the ‘cidra’ among the skills expected of a joglar (Table 1:
C.4). In the Castilian Libro de Alexandre a short list of
instruments includes ‘salterio, citoles que mas trota, cedra è
viola’ (Table 1: C.4). Cetera-related instrument names will be
mentioned only briefly in the following survey because it is
not clear whether they were modernizations of the Latin
word cithara, generic terms relating to medieval stringed
instruments, synonymous with citoles, or referred to a
distinctly different type of medieval instrument.

The following survey of literature will therefore focus on
medieval citole-related terms. There are no established
The British Museum Citole

15th-century description of a ‘cetula’. Although some other physical features, such as the tapering body depth, or deep neck with thumbhole, have been suggested as defining characteristics, these are not always discernable, especially in two-dimensional depictions. The general survey here follows Young’s 1984 assertion that the name citole corresponded with depictions of non-oval bodied instruments having the following characteristics: straight or indented sides; relatively short necks; shoulders with or without ornament; a sizable projection at the lower end that often serves as an attachment point for the strings or tailpiece; a pegbox angled back from the fingerboard; an overall depth taper deepest at the neck end; and a neck often with a thumbhole. The relevant citole body outlines will be referred to here as ‘holly leaf’, with pointed upper and lower bouts (Pls 1–4); ‘vase-shaped’, with a pointed upper bout and a rounded lower bout (Pls 5–6); and ‘waisted’, with incurving sides and curved upper and lower bouts (Pl. 13).

In his 1984 article, Young noted that in regions where cetra-related terms were common the short necked, non-oval bodied plucked instruments depicted were morphologically somewhat different from those found in areas where citole-related terms were used. This other type of instrument had bodies with straight, indented or even rounded sides; shoulders with or without projections; a relatively uniform, shallow depth; and a pegbox that was usually flat. In sources before 1400, depictions of this other type of instrument often have body outlines similar in shape to a garden spade (Pl. 7). Some modern scholars consider instruments of this type to be citoles but doubts remain relating to this classification. Shallow bodied, spade-shaped instruments will be included in this survey but with the caveat that they might not be citoles.

The following survey of citoles from literary and pictorial sources dating from c. 1175–1400 will be limited to instrument names related to ‘citole’ and depictions of plucked, short-necked chordophones that have a non-oval form of the medieval citole, we can be certain that the holly leaf-shaped, short-necked, plectrum-plucked instruments shown in Plates 1-4 were thought of as citoles, but there is some debate among modern scholars as to which body outlines are also relevant. Comparison of images in some manuscripts suggests the outline of a citole could have bouts that were rounded rather than pointed. There is some debate among modern scholars regarding which other body outlines typified citoles. Today, medieval citoles are usually considered to have had non-oval body outlines. Although Cerone de Bergamo’s 17th-century comments about the ‘citola’ of his time probably related to an oval-bodied instrument, these are far too late to be pertinent to the study of the medieval citole, as is Tinctoris’s late 15th-century description of a ‘cetula’. Although some other physical features, such as the tapering body depth, or deep neck with thumbhole, have been suggested as defining characteristics, these are not always discernable, especially in two-dimensional depictions. The general survey here follows Young’s 1984 assertion that the name citole corresponded with depictions of non-oval bodied instruments having the following characteristics: straight or indented sides; relatively short necks; shoulders with or without ornament; a sizable projection at the lower end that often serves as an attachment point for the strings or tailpiece; a pegbox angled back from the fingerboard; an overall depth taper deepest at the neck end; and a neck often with a thumbhole. The relevant citole body outlines will be referred to here as ‘holly leaf’, with pointed upper and lower bouts (Pls 1–4); ‘vase-shaped’, with a pointed upper bout and a rounded lower bout (Pls 5–6); and ‘waisted’, with incurving sides and curved upper and lower bouts (Pl. 13).

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body outline with straight or recessed upper and lower bouts (with or without ornaments) and often a projection at the lower end. Whether such features as the overall taper or thumbhole type neck occur frequently will be discussed in comparison with the British Museum citole following the general survey.

Survey of citoles in art and literature c. 1175–1400
Given the large number of relevant sources, this ‘brief’ survey will be long but still somewhat cursory. It will attempt to provide a more complete picture of where and when the citole was popular, with what situations it was associated and who might have played it. Comparing literary and pictorial sources helps to fill gaps in the individual categories of evidence. For example, although citoles in French sculpture are scarce, citations and depictions in French manuscripts are abundant. Conversely, only a few Iberian manuscripts mention or illustrate citoles but sculptures of them in that region are numerous. The survey will begin with a few Latin sources from France, before continuing by region and starting, as the citole seems to have done, in north-western Iberia and then moving east and north. As both the instruments depicted in Italy and the names used there are different, Italian sources will be considered separately.

Although depictions, such as those in the 9th-century French Stuttgart Psalter, hint at earlier possible citole-type instruments, the majority of relevant depictions occur between c. 1175 and 1390. The earliest group of these appears in northern Iberia and dates from the final third of the 12th century (Pl. 5). In other regions, images of citoles appear later and in England they continue through to the third quarter of the 14th century, with one of the latest being a stained glass window at Lincoln Cathedral (Pl. 6). More than 180 images of citolers occur in manuscripts, sculptures, ivories, stained glass, wall paintings, memorial brasses, embroidery and enamel. Plate 8 shows the original locations or regions of origin for these images of plectrum-plucked, distinct-necked, non-oval bodied chordophones.

A wide range of vernacular texts include citole-related nomenclature: epics, romances, chansons de geste, hagiographies, fabliaux, fables, didactic and rhetorical works, as well as in translations of Latin biblical and classical works. The rise in vernacular literature during the later part of the 13th century offered more opportunities to record colloquial instrument names and also helps explain the scarcity of citole-related terms before 1250. Manuscripts from the second half of the 13th century contain references to citoles in Latin, Occitan, French, Castilian, Anglo-Norman and German, indicating that by then the citole was already known throughout a wide geographical area.

Table 1 lists at least one relevant manuscript copy dating before 1400 for each of the 60 plus literary works that include citole-related terms.

In both art and literature, citoles often appear in situations that are consciously different from contemporaneous life: in the hands of biblical figures, angels, human/animal hybrids and animals. Although these extraordinary settings can indicate when and in what regions citoles were known or aspects of their physical form, they are less reliable records of who played the instrument in what combinations. As Bedbrook suggests, instrumental groupings containing biblical figures or non-human musicians are often not reliable indicators of medieval musical practice. Fortunately, although citolers in literature and art appear most frequently in scenes steeped in symbolism, they also appear in ones that were meant to relate true-to-life events. The general survey will give more attention to those sources that indicate the sorts of medieval people and contemporaneous situations associated with the citole.

Latin texts
Probably the earliest surviving evidence for the use of a citole-related term is Johannes de Garlandia’s Dictionarius from the first half of the 13th century (Table 1: L.1). This widely copied handbook of everyday Latin words for university students lists ‘citola’ among the instruments being played at the house of a rich man. A brief gloss in Ms Paris, BnF, lat. 11282 suggests that the term ‘citola’ was a latinized form of the French term ‘citole’, but unlike the ‘giga’, ‘choro’ or ‘tympanum’, for which there are extended glosses, the ‘citola’ seems to have been considered to be familiar enough to require no further clarification. Unfortunately, since the Dictionarius was written in Latin by an Englishman working in Paris, it does not clarify the origins of the terms ‘citola’ or ‘citole’. The only other Latin manuscript from before 1400 to include citole-related nomenclature is a treatise on music written in Paris c. 1270–5, which states that, like the
The British Museum Citole

notably unlike the citoles found in other Iberian sources that usually have vase-shaped body outlines. During the 13th century, depictions of Elders of the Apocalypse with citoles were spread along the pilgrim routes and rivers of the recently united Kingdom of Castile and León, appearing in ecclesiastical sculptures on the churches and cathedrals at El Burgo de Osma, Burgos, Sasamón, León, Ciudad Rodrigo, Toro and La Hiniesta.65 Two human citolers appear among the musicians carved in the synodal chamber of the palace of Archbishop Gelmirez in Santiago de Compostela (c. 1250), but the presence of many crowned figures with instruments suggests this might also be a depiction of Elders of the Apocalypse.

Iberian representations of medieval human citolers occur in four illuminated manuscripts, three of which are known to have been produced for the court of Alfonso X (r. 1252–84): Libro de ajedrez dados e tablas (also known as the Book of Games)66 and two copies of the Cantigas de Santa María.67 The Cancioneiro da Ajuda, the only major collection of Galician-Portuguese secular songs from this period, contains eight depictions of human citole players.68 The frequency with which the citole appears in 13th-century Iberian song

monochord, ‘cythare’ and ‘vielle’, the ‘cytole’ could be used to demonstrate the division of tones (Table 1: L.2).69 Latin was the universal language of western Christendom so, although citoles often appear in illustrated Latin texts, such as Psalters, those images will be considered under their region of production.

Iberian art: Castilian and Galician-Portuguese texts

Iberian art and literature suggest that the citole was particularly popular in the kingdoms of León and Castile during the 13th century. The earliest Iberian depictions of citoles date from the late 12th century: in one copy of the Beatus Super Apocalypsim and on several Galician and Leónese church portals (Pl. 5) citoles are used to represent the citharas of the Book of Revelation.64 The variety of instruments used to represent the citharas of the Elders of the Apocalypse was very diverse on Iberian portal sculptures, often including wind and percussion instruments in addition to stringed ones. A necked chordophone with the less common spade shape also appears in the late 12th century on a church portal much further east, being plucked by an Elder of the Apocalypse at Estella in the Kingdom of Navarre. It is notably unlike the citoles found in other Iberian sources that usually have vase-shaped body outlines. During the 13th century, depictions of Elders of the Apocalypse with citoles were spread along the pilgrim routes and rivers of the recently united Kingdom of Castile and León, appearing in ecclesiastical sculptures on the churches and cathedrals at El Burgo de Osma, Burgos, Sasamón, León, Ciudad Rodrigo, Toro and La Hiniesta.65 Two human citolers appear among the musicians carved in the synodal chamber of the palace of Archbishop Gelmirez in Santiago de Compostela (c. 1250), but the presence of many crowned figures with instruments suggests this might also be a depiction of Elders of the Apocalypse.

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Plate 8 Geographical distribution of the images mentioned in this survey

The points on the map represent the locations of sculptures, stained glass and paintings in situ (or their original locations if they have been moved).

• = plucked, distinct-necked chordophones with waisted, holly-leaf, or vase-shaped body outlines

+ = plucked, distinct-necked chordophones with spatulate body outlines

◦ = related plucked chordophones identified by other scholars (not yet seen by author)

The shaded areas on the map indicate the regions where manuscripts with pertinent images were produced. Illustrations of relevant instruments have been identified in two north-eastern German, four Italian, four Iberian, twenty English and more than thirty manuscripts from northern France or Flanders.
manuscripts suggests that it was considered suitable to accompany the sacred Cantigas de Santa Maria, the secular ‘cantigas de amor’ of the Cancioneiro da Ajuda, as well as possibly the profane ‘cantigas d’escarho e de mal dezir’.

The prologue illustrations of two copies of the Cantigas de Santa Maria show representations of Alfonso X in a courtly setting with his scribes writing and musicians playing their instruments: ‘violas’ and citoles. Although this might be a fictionalized setting rather than an accurate portrait, it is meant to illustrate the king composing his devotional songs at court. One of these Cantigas manuscripts, the Códice de los Músicos, contains images of an unprecedented variety of musicians and seems intended to demonstrate the grandeur of the court. The instruments depicted most frequently in this manuscript, however, are the ones that also appear in the court scene: the ‘viola’ and citole. That Alfonso X might even have had a minstrel known as ‘Citola’ is suggested by a poem credited to the king, Sátira contra el juglar Citola, which addresses a payment dispute between the two, although no medieval copy of this poem has survived nor have any payment records naming this minstrel been identified. This connection of citoles with the royal court is further suggested by a citole depicted in Alfonso X’s Book of Games, the soundboard of which is decorated with castles and lions, the symbols of the united kingdoms of Castile and León.

The incomplete Cancioneiro da Ajuda includes 16 illustrations of musicians, eight of which feature citoles. Although the place of this manuscript’s creation is debated (either Castile and León or Portugal), it probably dates from the third quarter of 13th century. The unfinished drawings of musicians often include three figures and it has been suggested that the seated figure to the left represents a composer (trobar), and the standing central figure a performer (joglar), and the smaller figure to the right an accompanist. In half of the illustrations the standing figure is a citoler. The accompanying figure to the right of the citole in five of these scenes is a percussionist, in one a harpist and in the final two it is a non-instrumentalist who might be a singer or dancer. As with most of the Iberian depictions, the citoles have vase-shaped body outlines, but the instruments are longer and seem to have larger bodies than those seen in other Iberian depictions, suggesting that perhaps the term ‘citolon’ mentioned in the ‘cantigas d’escarho’ indicated a larger ‘citola’.

During the 14th century Iberian representations of citoles appear more often outside of Castile and León, and no longer depict Book of Revelation scenes. In the Kingdom of Aragon, a citole appears in the hands of a sculptural angel at Valencia Cathedral and in a painting of a human musician, possibly one of King David’s musicians, at Teruel Cathedral. Angel citolers also occur in the Kingdom of Navarre in ecclesiastical sculptures at Laguardia and Pamplona. The only 14th-century Leónese or Castilian citolers are two human/animal hybrids at Oviedo Cathedral carved after 1345 and the late 14th-century altarpiece from the monastery of San Millán.

In literary manuscripts of this period, citole-related terms occur in only six Castilian-language and two Galician-Portuguese texts. The three earliest Castilian texts are attributed to Alfonso X (Table 1: C.1–C.3). Two of these also contain a cetera- or cithara-related term (Table 1: C.1–C.3). Most of the Iberian works recount biblical stories (Table 1: C.2–C.3, P.1.) and another is a copy of a hagiography (Table 1: C.5). Two texts that recount tales from antiquity both suggest a connection between ‘joglars’ and playing the citole (Table 1: C.1, C.4). Another 14th-century Galician-Portuguese narrative (Table 1: P.2) is probably fictional history, but suggests that servants who play the ‘citola’, ‘laíde’, ‘rabeca’ and other instruments during meals and other social times might be heard at an imperial court. The latest relevant Castilian text is the aforementioned Libro de buen amor (Table 1: C.6) in which the citole appears several times: in a simile that suggests citoles accompanied dancing, an allegorical story about Lent and in a list of instruments not suitable for playing Arabic songs.

Although Galician-Portuguese was used widely across Iberia as a language of lyric poetry, no medieval copies have survived of the 12 Galician-Portuguese ‘cantigas d’escarho e de mal dezir’ (insult songs) that contain anecdotes about named players of the ‘citola’ and ‘citolon’. This type of mocking song was written about or addressed to real people in the acquaintance of the authors. Most of these references to citolers are complaints about them by the poets for whom they worked. If the 16th-century copies can be trusted (Table 1: PX.3–PX.4), at least four citolers, Saco, Lopo, Citola and Lourenço, were active in certain 15th-century Iberian courts. Medieval copies of love poems authored by Lopo and Lourenço have survived, but no evidence has verified the existence of the other two.

Art in southern France and Aquitaine and Occitan texts
Sources relating to citoles are rare in the region south of the Loire and north of the Pyrenees. Only four representations
of citoles have been identified in this region. Each of these is an angel musician that displays foreign influence. The earliest, dating from after 1240, is a damaged sculpture at the French-influenced Bazas Cathedral. A sculpture at Bayonne Cathedral (1258–99) and a painting at the Abbey of St Savin (14th century) each show a vase-shaped instrument possibly influenced by earlier Iberian sources. The possible influences, however, are even more complicated by Bazas and Bayonne having been part of English territories during this time. The latest representation, a holly leaf-shaped cithola at Vienne Cathedral (1386–1400), shows some striking similarities to a 13th-century stained glass example at Reims Cathedral, but like Bazas, it is also on a pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela (Via Gebennensis).

Citoles have been identified in only four Occitan texts and one of these is debated. Two of the oldest relevant manuscripts are the only medieval copies of the Occitan poem Fadet joglar (Table 1: O.1), in which the ‘joglar’ is told that he should learn certain skills including to ‘citolar’ (‘citolar’) but also play what seems to be a different instrument called the ‘cidra’ (‘sedra’). Modern scholars disagree whether the term ‘si’ula’, which appears in a Latin song devoted to the Virgin Mary, while a small male dancer. A female citoler appears in the initial ‘O’ of a Latin song devoted to the Virgin Mary, while a small male dancer. A female citoler appears in the initial ‘O’ (MS: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 29.1 f. A.), among the earliest relevant French depictions, includes two possible citoles: one of which seems to have a thumbhole type neck and the other an unsupported neck. In a mid-13th-century copy of Aristotle’s Ethics, a historiated initial ‘I’ containing a harper and rare left-handed citoler begins a passage which likens the method of acquiring virtue to the manner by which citharadi (cithara players) acquire their skill – by practice. This suggests that the illustrator might have considered both instruments to be suitable translations of cithara, but also that learning to play them required study and that their players could be associated with virtue. At least ten more human citolers, who are not obviously biblical figures, appear in the margins of manuscripts. Two of these human citolers appear in a copy of the Romance of Alexander each among a multitude of other instrumentalists. It is unclear whether a human citoler in another manuscript is seated alone in the margins or at the feet of Jesus who appears in the adjacent initial. In three further manuscripts, on pages where no other instruments are shown, a citoler and a medieval fiddler both appear in the marginalia. The greatest number of these marginal human citolers play unaccompanied in scenes of dancing (although one of these plays for a dancing dog). Two male citolers play for individual male dancers. Another seems to dance with a female dancer. A female citoler appears in the initial ‘O’ of a Latin song devoted to the Virgin Mary, while a small male figure dances in the margin. The human citolers depicted in French and Flemish manuscripts, although they often seem removed from any obvious context, suggest that both women and men played the cithola and indicate strong links between this instrument and the medieval fiddle and with dancing.

Given the large number of existing manuscript illustrations, it is remarkable how few citoles are found in French and Flemish manuscripts, although they often seem removed from any obvious context, suggest that both women and men played the cithola and indicate strong links between this instrument and the medieval fiddle and with dancing. Given the large number of existing manuscript illustrations, it is remarkable how few citoles are found in artworks in situ in this region. Surviving sculptural examples include a mid-13th-century Elder of the Apocalypse at Reims Cathedral, a late 13th-century human animal/hybrid at Rouen Cathedral and two tiny early 14th-century angels on Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Another tiny angelic citoler appears in a carved ivy triptych from Paris, dated 1300–10. Two Flemish 14th-century memorial brasses...
include citolers among the marginal musicians. Representations of angels with citoles also occur in medieval stained glass at Reims Cathedral (late 13th century) and Évreux (c. 1320–33) (Pl. 10). Given the scale of destruction in this region from military conflicts, as well as iconoclasm, the more immovable depictions of citoles may have been lost during later centuries, or citoles might always have been uncommon in the monumental art of this area.

The citole seems to have been familiar enough to French-speaking authors that they could include it in meaningful ways in texts inspired by classical authors and in metaphors. Two texts loosely based on works by Ovid give indications of medieval musical practice (Table 1: F.14, F.39). Le clef d’amors recommends that it is noble and worthwhile for young women to learn to sing and play instruments such as the ‘psalterion’, ‘timbre’, ‘guiterne’ or ‘citholle’. La vieille includes the ‘cistole’ among the long list of instruments suitable to play a variety of music: ‘motez, balades, virèlais, comedies, rondeaux’ and ‘lais’. When translating Aristotle, both Brunetto Latini and Nicole Oresme choose to use the citole in metaphors relating to a skill which requires practice to master (Table 1: F.4, F.34). Several texts suggest that the sound of the citole is sweet, either overtly (Table 1: F.37) or allegorically (Table 1: F.4, F.28). The phrase ‘à canter sans chistole’ (‘to sing without a citole’), used to indicate hardship or misery in Baudouin de Seboue (Table 1: F.20), strongly indicates that citoling was associated with singing. These sources suggest that the citole was a respected and melodious instrument that required skill to play well.

It is in French-language literary works that the citole is most often included in descriptions of medieval settings, both courtly and more mundane. Citoles frequently appear among extensive lists of instruments used to augment the sense of grandeur at weddings, coronations or other celebrations (Table 1: F.1, F.5, F.13, F.15, F.23, F.24, F.31, F.32). Guillaume de Machaut’s La prise d’Alexandrie (Table 1: F.32) is the only example of this sort of grand list that purports to record a contemporaneous event: the arrival of Pierre of Luxignan, King of Cyprus, with his crusaders at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor in Prague in 1364. That list of instruments resembles one appearing in Guillaume de Machaut’s earlier Le remède de fortune (Table 1: F.31). A similar reception scene is described in the romance Durmari le Galois although in this case the arrival of the king’s son is greeted by a modest variety of instruments including ‘violes’, ‘harpes’, ‘gigues’, ‘psalteres’ and ‘citoles’ (Table 1: F.12). In Li roumans de Citéneades, written by the minstrel-King Adenet le Roi, a famous minstrel is described as owning every sort of instrument that was worth any money and ‘citoles’ are among the ten types of stringed instrument mentioned (Table 1: F.12). Citoles also appear in tales originating from oral tradition such as in a variety of Renart stories, in which animals parody medieval manners (Table 1: F.2, F.9, F.10, F.8, F.21). Gilles li Muisis recalls students having played chistolles in Paris when he was young, in the late 1300s (Table 1: F.29). Citoles also appear in three fabliaux, comic stories about everyday life. One of these uses ‘Ainz li tent com corde a citole’ (‘as tight as a citole string’) in a simile to indicate something that is stretched very taut (Table 1: F.6). Another fabliau mentions ‘violes, tabours et citoles’ in connection with dancing and the delights of minstrelsy (Table 1: F.7). In the third, one of two ‘jongleurs’, debating who is more accomplished, boasts that he can perform all kinds of poetry and play ‘citoles’, ‘viele’ and ‘gigue’ (Table 1: F.8). In a song for which music survives, the narrator recounts playing the citole for a nightingale to make it sing (Table 1: F.16). That the citole was strongly associated with skilled performers is suggested by Le tournoiement de l’Antichrist and Li lays dou blanc chevalier in which souls are described as carrying with them after death the tools of their earthly trade and a ‘jongleor’ and ‘menestrel’, respectively, each have only a citole to symbolize their occupation (Table 1: F.4, F.27). French sources of the period indicate that the citole was a familiar instrument associated with dancing and skilled musicians.

**English art, and Anglo-Norman and English texts**

In England, the citole seems to have been most popular during the reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III, and especially in the first half of the 14th century. Of the two dozen named citolers in English documentary records from 1269–1380, only two appear before 1300. Citoles are found in English art from the mid-13th century until c. 1385. The popularity of the citole in England seems to have waned by the end of the 14th century, but given that authors such as John Lydgate continued to write new works mentioning citoles well into the 15th century, it is difficult to tell exactly when the instrument became obscure. By far the greatest number of citolers depicted in English art are angels, although in manuscripts they are also common among King David’s musicians. Citole-playing humans, animals and human/animal hybrids occur less frequently. The earliest English sculpture of a citoler is a mid-13th-century angel at Westminster Abbey and the latest an angel at the parish church in Thaxted, Essex, which was carved after 1377. Despite extensive destruction of church...
sculptures by 16th and 17th-century iconoclasts, a surprising number of English images of citoles have survived. In a few cases, the instrument remains although the musician has been defaced or decapitated. Unfortunately, later repairs to some of these damaged sculptures, such as at Beverley Minster, seem to have added spurious details to the instruments. A few 14th-century stained glass panels contain images of citolers: a human, a human animal/hybrid and two with angels (Pl. 6). Two remarkable late 13th or early 14th-century Opus Anglicanum embroidered ecclesiastical garments survive, now in Bologna and Madrid, each of which includes a citoler among the musical angels. Images of citolers appear in at least 20 English manuscripts dating from the third quarter of the 13th century to 1362 (Pl. 13). Possibly the earliest of these manuscript illustrations, in a Book of Hours attributed to William of Devon, shows a line of dancers between a citoler and medieval fiddler. When human citolers appear in English manuscripts they are usually in scenes of dancing or among King David’s musicians. The ‘Tickhill Psalter contains one of the few images of a woman playing a citole, but this is in a clearly biblical scene. It is not surprising that a citoler appears in an illustration of instruments suitable to be played before a king in Walter de Milemete’s treatise on good kingship written for Edward III prior to his coronation, since the manuscript was produced at a time when there were at least two king’s citolers in the English court.

Only two English sculptures have been identified that possibly depict contemporaneous humans playing the citole. The most puzzling of these is also the earliest: a sculpture of a human citoler with his feet in stocks at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, dated 1269–70. Henderson suggests this might represent a biblical or allegorical figure. The citoler in the stocks might also be an admonitory figure, either a depiction of a known story, such as a Miracle of the Virgin, or an actual contemporaneous minstrel. The only other human citoler in English sculpture is a solitary figure at Cley next the Sea, Norfolk, who is carved on one side of a pillar with a medieval fiddler on the opposite face. Unfortunately, neither of these reveals much about citolers in England.

Although the earliest surviving English-language manuscripts to include citole-related terms date from the late 14th century (Table 1: E.1–E.4), the earliest Anglo-Norman example is from many decades earlier (Table 1: A.1). Prior to the last third of the 14th century, the language of the English court and much of the literary culture in England was Anglo-Norman. John Gower (c. 1390–1408) offers a useful example of the shift from Anglo-Norman to English as the language of literature; both of Gower’s major vernacular works contain mention of citoles, the earlier of which, Mirour de l’Homme (Table 1: A.2) was written in French and the later, Confessio Amantis (Table 1: E.4), in English. Anglo-Norman citole references can be difficult to differentiate from French ones. For example, a volume of London laws and customs (Table 1: A.2) includes a citole in a metaphor but that phrase seems to have been borrowed from the section on good government in Brunetto Latini’s Tresor (Table 1: E.4).

Probably the earliest surviving relevant manuscript from England is the Anglo-Norman Foule Fitz Warin (Table 1: A.1). Although a fictionalized history based on 12th and 13th-century events, the only medieval copy dates from the early 14th century. This text suggests that male amateurs might also have played the citole. Johan de Rampayne, a knight fighting against King John, is described as knowing enough about ‘tabour, harpe, vle, sitole e juglerie’ (A.1) to be able to impersonate a high-status performer in order to infiltrate the court of King John at Shrewsbury Castle and rescue a prisoner. Johan arrives at the castle disguised as an Ethiopian minstrel, dressed as richly as any court or baron and riding a fine palfrey. The specific instruments named also seem to have been chosen to indicate status as well as occupation. For the narrative to be believable, however, the knight needed to perform well enough on these instruments not to be discovered as a spy. La geste Blancheflour e de Florence also suggests that playing the citole is a genteel pastime but, given the large number of instruments mentioned in succession, it has also been proposed that this might be a vocabulary list (Table 1: A.3). In the Arthurian tale, Eneas Desconus, the dwarf Teodelain, who is renowned for playing citole, sautrie, harpe, fiddle and croupe, dresses in Indian silk like a knight who has never known poverty (Table 1: E.6). In the same way as other regions, the citole is also included in descriptions of festivities (Table 1: E.7–E.8). What is notable about English descriptions of citolers is their relatively high status and expensive attire.

As in French, a few Anglo-Norman and English texts employ citoles in metaphors. Several texts offer comments about the sound of the citole, one suggesting that it is delicate (Table 1: E.3) and two warn against persuasive speech that is sweeter than the sound of a citole (Table 1: A.4–A.5). In an allegory, John Gower suggests that loud instruments are the sounds of Youth, but with Old Age comes more stately dances like the ‘hovedance’ and the ‘carole’ and soft instruments as ‘with harpe and lute and with citole’ (Table 1: E.4).

Although Wright implies that the citole was considered antiquated by the 1380s because it does not appear in scenes of medieval revelry in The Canterbury Tales (Table 1: E.1), it might have been absent because it was a genteel instrument rather than an obsolete one. While the citole only appears once (in the hand of a statue of Venus), by contrast the three occasions on which Chaucer mentions the gittern, it is always associated with the tavern. Venus’s citole in Chaucer’s tale might well be a symbol of culture, virtue or luxury, given the literary convention of the period, whereby an object held by Venus often indicates the facet of her character being presented. Chaucer’s contemporary John Gower mentions the only other female citolers in English literature. Gower’s Apollonius of Tyre, set in antiquity, includes two female citole players both of whom are princesses: Apollonius’s future wife and their daughter. Apollonius’s kidnapped daughter earns her living, and is saved from working in a brothel by teaching other young gentlewomen to play the harp and citole. In a metaphor in his other major work, Gower describes how ‘Lady Avarice keeps a school where everyone goes to study, not to learn to play [la citole]…’ (Table 1: A.5). Gower seems to suggest that teaching the citole would have been a believable occupation for ladies. Although Chaucer and Gower recount classical tales, a few
late 14th-century English texts describe the citone in medieval contexts. While weeping over his lost estates, Sir Cleges seems to hear the sound of ‘dyuerse mynstralsy’, including the ‘sytall’ (Table 1: E.5). Sir Launfal recalls when his court had ‘menstrales of moch honours, fydelers, sytolyrs, and trompours’ (Table 1: E.2). On the other hand, Sir Degrevant, in the eponymous text written shortly after 1400, plays the ‘cetoyle’ and other stringed instruments for his own pleasure (Table 1: E.X.9). This suggests that in late 14th century England the citone might have been considered somewhat old-fashioned, but it had not diminished in status.

German art and German texts

German art and literature suggests that the citone was best known in the north-western part of the Germanic states of the Holy Roman Empire during the late 13th and early 14th century, but images of the citone also appeared sporadically later and further afield. The representations of the citone in this region are diverse in medium and location. No German depictions have been identified before the fourth quarter of the 13th century and most date from before the middle of the 14th century. Probably the earliest German images of citori are the two monumental sculptures among the angelic musicians on the choir pillars in Cologne Cathedral, dating from after 1286. It is worth noting that at Cologne Cathedral the most frequently depicted medieval stringed instrument is the citone (more common even than the harp) and seems to reflect the period of the instrument’s greatest popularity in this region (c. 1286–1340). Inside the cathedral, four citori are carved into the wooden choir stalls (1308–11): a human/animal hybrid on a bench end, a male human on an armrest, the bust of a female human on a misericord and a male playing for a female dancer on a bench end (Pl. 11). Two citone-playing angels appear: one in the stained glass (c. 1330) and another in a choir wall painting (c. 1330). The human/animal hybrid citori cast into the west façade doors and an angelic citone on the south portal, however, are 14th-century creations.

Almost all of the other German depictions are angelic citori, except for a siren on Strasbourg Cathedral (c. 1300). Unfortunately, two frequently published sculptures of angelic citori from the west façade of Strasbourg Cathedral have been heavily restored and may contain erroneous details. Only two German manuscripts are known to contain images of citori, one from Rulle, Lower Saxony, and one from Pirm, Westefel, both of which depict angels. Paintings depict two angels among the angel musicians on an early 14th-century mural in Lübeck, and another on a mid-14th-century altarpiece from Soest, now in the Bode Museum, Berlin. Several angels, with peculiarly rectangular instruments that are possibly citori, appear at Erfurt Cathedral on a bench end and several finials from the mid-14th century. Carved ivory panels from two mid- to late 14th-century German diptychs each show a citone among angel musicians. Only one relevant image seems to date from after the mid-14th century, a Niedersachsen processional lantern, decorated with musical angels, now at Wienhausen Abbey, Lüneburg. With the exception of Cologne, artistic evidence for citori in the Germanic Holy Roman Empire is not very plentiful but occurs in a variety of media and is geographically widespread.

Only five German-language texts containing a citone-related term survive in manuscripts dated before 1400. In German texts citori usually seem to appear in lists of instruments: in settings of grandeur (Table 1: G.1); among pastimes to console ladies while their husbands are on crusade (Table 1: G.2); and in heavenly splendour (Table 1: G.4), but a 14th-century social commentary didactic poem offers a much shorter list of instruments in relation to ‘viedelern’ (fiddlers), specifically ‘ein welhisch videllîn, ein herpîlîn und ein zitîlîn’ (Table 1: G.3). Morant and Galie, written c. 1320–50 but surviving only in 15th-century manuscripts, lists instruments played at a feast including the ‘zitone’ for which one goes to school in Paris (Table 1: GX.6). This might refer to the ‘escoles’ where minstrels from around Europe gathered during Lent to hone their skills rather than a school specifically for playing the citone, but this is not certain. That the players of citori could go to Paris for training, however, suggests some amount of mobility and means.

Italian art and Italian texts

The matter of citori in Italy is contentious. If citori were found in Italy, they were uncommon and physically different from those found elsewhere. Despite the large quantity of surviving 13th and 14th-century Italian art, only a handful of non-oval bodied plucked chordophones has been identified. A sculpture of one of King David’s musicians at the Baptistery in Parma (Pl. 7), dated after 1196, is often considered to be one of the earliest representations of a citone. However, the instrument bears more resemblance to 13th and 14th-century Italian images than to contemporaneous citori found in north-western Iberian sculptures (compare to Pl. 5). Features of the Parma instrument, such as the spade-shaped
The plectra ‘cetra’ commentators on Dante’s *Divine Comedy* replace ‘citole’ found in 13th- and 14th-century translations of Brunetto Latini’s *Livre dou tresor* have been identified as containing references to the ‘citole’ as well.132 Other Italian translations of this work replace ‘citoles’ with ‘cetera’.131 Several 14th-century Italian commentators on Dante’s *Divine Comedy* confirm that the ‘cetera’ was a necked stringed instrument and Francesco da Buti indicates that it was plucked with a quill.130 The plectra of citoles elsewhere are usually depicted as being more substantial than a feather quill (note the arrow-shaped plectrum shown in Pl. 1). Dante clearly considers ‘cetra’ to be a contemporaneous medieval term, since he uses it as an example in *De vulgari eloquentia*, his essay advocating the use of the vernacular.123 It seems logical to suggest that the medieval necked instrument that Dante calls the ‘cetra’ was the shallow bodied, spade-shaped, necked chordophone found in Italy at the same time and that it was this instrument that developed into what Tinctoris calls the ‘cetula’. Unfortunately, no illustrated text or labelled image has yet confirmed what the exact features of a ‘cetra’ were. Although some modern scholars associate these Italian sources with the cetula, there is reason to doubt whether either this instrument type or these *ceto*-related names applied to medieval citoles. As discussed earlier, *ceto*-related terms are often unclear. Morphologically, the shallow-bodied, spade-shaped, plucked instrument found in Italy seems to have been either a regional variant or possibly a distinctly different instrument type. Even if we include these possible variants, the cetula was rare in Italy.

**Regional morphological traits in citoles depictions and the British Museum citoles**

Although a masterwork of medieval carving, in many ways the British Museum citoles is not an unusual instrument. Beneath the elaborate decoration, the form and structure of the medieval portions of the instrument are very much like those of citoles found in art. Although some modern scholars have questioned whether groupings of instruments shown in art accurately reflect performance practice, the 13th-century English Queen Mary Psalter demonstrates that whether citoles appear in the hands of angels, biblical figures, hybrid monsters or human musicians, the physical details of the instruments are often consistently depicted.196 Representations of citoles in the areas surveyed above share some characteristics, but also demonstrate regional traits. The discussion of which of these features were regional and which were widespread is probably most enlightening in relation to the British Museum citoles. Unfortunately, many original parts of the instrument are lost such as the soundboard, fingerboard, frets, strings, bridge and plectrum. The medieval portion of the British Museum citoles is the superb monoxylic body, in which the neck, back and sides of the instrument are constructed from a single piece of wood. This construction method is common amongst the few other surviving medieval stringed instruments and it has been suggested that this might also have been characteristic of citoles. Unfortunately, this can be neither proven nor disproven. According to citoles in art, some of the seemingly distinctive physical features of the British Museum citoles’s body, such as the overall taper, thumbhole type neck, anterior peg placement (which was altered later) and the large tri-lobed end projection, seem to have been quite typical for a medieval citoles.

The tapering depth and presence of a thumbhole seems to have been common on citoles in most regions.197 Clear depictions of citoles with both tapering bodies and thumbhole type necks are found on sculptures in Spain (one of four on the west portal at Toro; one of two at the Gilmirez Palace in Santiago; Valencia; and Pamplona [Pl. 9]).

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Plate 12 A human/animal hybrid with a variant holly leaf citoles that has a thumbhole but no animal head, 1326–36. Cloister roof boss, Norwich Cathedral, Norwich (photo: A. Margerum 2006)
England (Norwich [Pl. 12] and Cley next the Sea), Germany (Cologne and Strasbourg) and France (Rouen), as well as a wall painting in southern France (St Savin) and a stained glass panel in England (Lincoln [Pl. 6]). Both of these details are rarely evident in manuscripts, however, because of a tendency by artists to show only the front view of the instrument. Similarly, it is usually not possible to determine details of the back. Some sculptures show clearly tapered body depths, but details of the neck cannot be determined because the neck is too damaged, poorly defined or obscured by the player’s hand. Citoles with tapering body depth but obscured or damaged necks can be seen in Spain (Toro, one on the north portal, and three out of four on the west portal; Sasamón; León; the other sculpture at Gelmirez Palace; El Burgo de Osma; La Hiniesta; Oviedo; and Laguardia), Aquitaine (Bayonne), France (Reims), England (Exeter and Cogges, Oxfordshire). In fact, the only citole sculpture identified as having a pronounced overall taper but a neck that is obviously not of the thumbhole type is at Burgos Cathedral (Pl. 14), which has an unsupported neck and bent-back pegbox. Three sculptures in Cologne Cathedral (Pl. 11) and two at Tewkesbury Abbey show citoles with clearly depicted thumbholes but, although the instrument is deepest at the neck, it is unclear whether the depth of the body tapers. By their inherent two-dimensionality, manuscript illustrations are usually less clear about whether an instrument tapers in depth but several French, Flemish, English and German examples show necks with round, oval or even triangular thumbholes. Images of thumbholes as handholes are rare and occur only in manuscripts. The British Museum citole confirms another detail that is shown in depictions: oval thumbholes were relatively small and did not extend under the full length of the neck (Pls 6, 11–12).

A description in the poem Le tournoi de Chauvency, which recounts the events of an actual tournament that took place in 1285, suggests that something about the structure of the heads of citoles was distinctive (Table 1: F.17). Although the earliest surviving copies date from a few decades later, that was still during the period of greatest popularity for the citole. In this account, a prop used as part of a pastoral dance is described as having a handle carved like the head of a citole (‘Tailliéz au chief d’une citole’). The instrument that plays for the dancers, however, is a ‘viole’. This indicates that in some way the heads of citoles were noticeably different from the heads of ‘violes’. Although this might merely indicate an animal head finial, it is tempting to suggest that this refers to a thumbhole type neck, since carved heads appear on other instruments, but the thumbhole type neck does not.

It is not surprising that the British Museum citole has a carved head. Citoles with clearly depicted animal heads appear in sculpture in Spain (three citoles on the west portal at Toro have animal heads, the fourth is too damaged to discern) and in France (Bayonne) as well as in stained glass in England (Lincoln) and France (one of the two citoles at Évreux, the head of the other is obscured, and in numerous English and French manuscripts. Although depictions show thumbhole type necks both with and without decorated terminals to the peg end, animal head finials, such as that on the British Museum citole, were probably a common feature of more decorated instruments. As has been discussed by several modern authors, the original placement of the tuning pins on the British Museum citole would have been as anterior insertions into the end grain of the neck. Although details of peg placement are often missing in art, roughly T-shaped anterior pegs are shown at Burgos (c. 1235) [Pl. 14], Exeter Cathedral (1340s), Toro (1284–95), Laguardia (14th century) and Pamplona (mid-14th century) [Pl. 9].

An end projection, like that shown on the British Museum citole, is a common feature of citoles but the trefoil shape seems to be a regional variation. Large three-lobed end-projections occur frequently in English, French, Flemish
and German depictions (Pls 1, 3, 6, 10, 12–13), but not in Iberian art where the end projections are smaller and unornamented (Pls 9, 14).

Body outline is another aspect of cithole morphology that shows regional variation. The British Museum citole, with its rounded lower bout and squared upper bout with small rounded terminations at the shoulders is a variant of the ‘vase shape’. The vase-shaped body outline is non-existent in German depictions, almost all of which display corners to the lower bout (Pl. 11) and are variations of the holy leaf shape. The vase shape is almost ubiquitous for Iberian citoles from c. 1230–1350, although other body shapes appear in some of the earlier and later examples. In the majority of French and Flemish depictions, the shape of the upper bout usually agrees with the shape of the lower bout; therefore if the lower bout is pointed so are the upper bout corners (Pls 2–3). Only a few French depictions that show a rounded lower bout do not have a matching rounded upper bout. Often these have fleury shoulder projections, such as in the stained glass at Évreux (Pl. 10). English citoles show the greatest variety in body outlines from any region, but variations of the vase shape are not uncommon, appearing from at least the c. 1269 sculpture at Higham Ferrers to the c. 1385 stained glass at Lincoln (Pl. 6). One morphological feature of the British Museum citole’s body outline marks it out as English: the bump in the centre bout. These seem to occur only in English images, such as the Opus Anglicanum ‘Bologna Cope’, the Sutton Valence altarpiece and the treatise of Walter de Milemete (fol. 31v).

Medieval depictions of citoles can give some indication of how the British Museum citole probably would have looked before it was converted into a violin. The original soundboard would most likely have had a single round soundhole with a rosette. Several images show the rosette as a different colour from the soundboard, which suggests that the rosette was inset. The citole would also probably have had a fretted fingerboard that was long enough to extend over the soundboard, possibly even as long as half the strings’ vibrating length. The strings would have been strung with a long and relatively substantial plectrum, not a quill. Since the plectra are usually shown touching the strings between the soundhole and the bridge, the bridge would have been placed on the lower third of the soundboard. The strings probably would have been made of gut. The strings are likely to have been grouped into pairs. Some images clearly show pairs of strings (Pl. 4) but others imply this by depicting twice as many pegs as strings (Pl. 6). The strings might have been attached to a tailpiece, but more commonly they are shown as fastened directly to a ring or button on the end projection. Artistic representations suggest that the lower attachment point would have likely been where the later lion’s head button on the British Museum citole is now.

Although the decorative carvings on the British Museum citole make it an extraordinary artwork, many of its morphological features are rather ordinary for a citole. The British Museum citole also corroborates aspects of citole morphology found in art, such as the overall taper in depth, with it thinnest at the large end projection and deepest near the thumbhole, and the relative small size of the thumbhole.

The overall taper, thumbhole, animal head finial and anterior peg placement are found in depictions of citoles regardless of region. A few elements, however, seem to be regional characteristics, such as the large trefoil-shaped end projection. While the style of the carving might be English or French, the overall length and the British Museum citole’s vase-shaped body outline with its centre bout bumps indicates that it was probably made in England.

Conclusion

The citole was a relatively well-known and high-status instrument in certain areas of Europe during the Middle Ages, but since then has been both misunderstood and unfairly neglected by scholars. Illustrated texts from the period verify that plucked instruments with non-oval bodies and short necks were called by citole-related names in the 13th and 14th centuries. References to citoles appear in more than 60 literary texts preserved in manuscripts dated before 1400 (and in a further 40 medieval texts copied between 1400–1550). Images of more than 180 citoles have been identified in artworks in a variety of media. English legal documents and payment records name more than two dozen citolers, at least five of whom were associated with the English royal court. Six citolers have also been identified in French legal documents, one in Navarrese receipts and possibly another four in Galician-Portuguese poetry. Most remarkably, the citole is among the handful of medieval stringed instruments to have survived, and although it has been altered over the centuries, its beautifully carved medieval body can be seen in the British Museum. And yet, until recently, the citole has remained obscure in modern times.

The map in Plate 8 shows that although the citole was well known in several parts of Europe it was relatively geographically contained. References to and images of the citole proliferated after the middle of the 13th century, especially in the sculptures of northern Iberia and England and in manuscript illuminations from England, northern France and Flanders. It is in these areas that the citole seems to have been most popular. In Iberia the citole is rarely found south of the River Duero. In northern continental Europe, the citole appears most frequently north of the River Seine and rarely east of the Rhine. It has been found throughout England, but not in Wales, Scotland or Ireland. In Germany and southern France citoles were much less common. Italian non-oval bodied plucked instruments of the period were physically different from the citole found elsewhere, but even if these were a regional variant of the citole, they appear very rarely. Similarly, citole-related terms are found least often in Italian, Occitan and German-language manuscripts from the period and most frequently in French, English, Anglo-Norman and Castilian texts. In both art and literature the citole was found almost exclusively in Atlantic Europe.

During the period of its greatest popularity, the citole appeared first in north-western Iberia and then spread primarily east and northwards. The Camino Francés, the major pilgrim route from France to Santiago de Compostela, was already dotted with sculptures of Elders of the Apocalypse with citoles by the time citolers began to be
describes it as one of the instruments that would be seen earliest. The manuscript identified as mentioning a citole British Museum citole was made, this is a luxury object. The medieval citole. Although it is not known for whom the citole first appears in English art around this time, no citolers have been identified in royal payment records until the 14th century, many years after Eleanor's death. After northern Iberia, France seems to have been the next region to favour the citole. By the mid-13th century, citolers appear north of the River Seine in sculptures and stained glass as well as in manuscripts and images of them proliferate quickly thereafter. Given that France has often set cultural and artistic trends, it was probably through French influence that the citole was introduced into England and parts of Germany.

The understanding of citoles has been ill served by the citole being discussed as if it were merely a transitional step in the development of some later instrument, usually the cittern or guitar. Images of the citole demonstrate a relatively consistent morphology over a period of two centuries (c. 1275–1385) and the British Museum citole verifies many of those characteristic physical features. Although the citole may have influenced the development of later instruments, that was not its purpose. The medieval citole was a fully developed instrument type in its own right.

The medieval body of the British Museum citole is informative about the physical details of citoles, but also reflective of its social status. Although several physical details of the British Museum citole might seem unusual to the modern viewer, such as the significant difference in depth between the shallow lower end and the thick head end, the relatively small hole cut in the deep neck to allow access for the thumb, pegs that were originally inserted anteriorly into the end-grain of the neck and the large trefoil-shaped projection on the lower end, representations of citoles in art verify that these were typical features of medieval citoles. Although it is not known for whom the British Museum citole was made, this is a luxury object. The earliest manuscript identified as mentioning a citole describes it as one of the instruments that would be seen being played in the house of a rich man (Table 1: L.1). In both literature and art, citoles were also associated with noble households and royal courts. The British Museum citole might have been made for a wealthy amateur citoler, even possibly a noble lady, but it seems most likely to have been made for a wealthy patron and to be played by a trained musician. A skilled minstrel performing on such a fabulous instrument would make an extremely clear statement about the owner’s sense of culture and prosperity. Although it is very tempting to suggest that the British Museum citole was made for one of the English royal citolers since aspects of this majestic instrument seem to indicate an English origin and the courts of Edward II and Edward III had several citolers, there is no irrefutable proof for this. Like many material possessions, the British Museum citole was probably a symbol of wealth and status, but it was not merely for decoration. This masterpiece of medieval carving seems to have been made to be played and the player was most likely someone who was part of, or moved in, affluent society.

When the annotator of MS Brussels, BR 21069 (Pl. 1) commented that the sitola was a ‘very common’ instrument, it seems more likely that he meant ‘frequently occurring’ rather than ‘low-status’. This is confirmed by the sorts of people usually connected with the citole in contemporaneous medieval scenes in art and literature. Although Gilles li Muisis’ poetic reminiscence about university students playing citoles for fun after classes in the streets of Paris was written almost a half century after the incidents he recounts (Table 1: F.29), citoles are mentioned in Parisian teaching texts such as the Dictionarium (Table 1: L.1) and Magister Lambertus’s music theory treatise (Table 1: L.2), which suggests that Parisian students probably had some familiarity with them. Because a university education was rare, these citole-playing Parisian students would have had a relatively high status. Playing the citole seems to be regarded as a taught skill in literary sources. A metaphor used by Gower indicates that there may have been schools for playing the citole (Table 1: A.5) and a German text refers to going to Paris to learn to play it (Table 1: G.X.6). Two possible teachers of the citole appear in tax records, one in Paris and one in Oxford. Although occurring in an ancient setting, Gower also suggests that gentlewomen might have taught other women to play the citole (Table 1: E.4). A few French and German literary sources recommend playing the citole as an acceptable pastime for women (Table 1: F.37, G.2), but otherwise female citolers do not seem to be mentioned in medieval situations. Female citolers are also rare in art, appearing on a misericord in Cologne, in a northern French music manuscript and in a biblical scene in an English Psalter. English and French legal documents demonstrate that some medieval women did play the citole. Some Anglo-Norman and English texts suggest that gentlemen too might have practised the skills of ‘menestralce e de jogelerie’ and played the citole for pleasure (Table 1: A.1, EX.9).

The earliest and most frequent references to citolers in literature, however, relate to musicians. Playing the citole is presented as a desirable skill for performers playing at courts (Table 1: O.1, O.3, F.8) and citoles appear among the instruments of a famous ‘menestrel’ (Table 1: F.11). It seems to have been a very popular instrument with ‘joglars’ who frequented the courts of Iberia (Table 1: PX.3, PX.4). In two texts a citole is used as a symbol of occupation for a ‘jongleur’ (Table 1: F.4) and a ‘menestrel’ (Table 1: F.27). Citoles are described as having been seen in the house of a rich man (Table 1: L.1) and played by ‘menstrales of moch honours’ in a knight’s household (Table 1: E.2), as well as by the servants (‘seruidores’) of royalty (Table 1: P.2) and by ‘menstrales’ in an enchanted castle (Table 1: E.6). Although modern readers often assume that minstrels were superior to ‘joglars’, if that distinction existed during the 13th and 14th centuries it seems to have been limited to French-language...
The late 19th-century Des Taboureurs seems to make no distinction between ‘menestrels’ and ‘jouleurs’, but it does suggest that string players were higher in status than players of wind and percussion instruments, such as ‘tabour’, ‘chalemele’, ‘fléustes’, ‘flajos’ and ‘musele’.[3] Even skilled minstrels still had an intermediate social position, albeit akin to that of a courtly servant. While acting as a spy, Johan de Rampayne exploits this in his disguise as a high-status minstrel, which allows him into the chambers of the nobles to perform for them, but also to pour their wine, to which he adds a sleeping draught (Table 1: A.1).

Citoles are included in several metaphors relating to skills perfected through practice in French-language manuscripts (Table 1: F.4, F.39). When citoles appear in depictions of angels, biblical figures or animals they seems to mirror the social status of the human players in that region. In the scala naturae, the Great Chain of Being, animals are classed as below the common people whereas royalty and angels are above. In northern France, where the citole has not been linked to the royal court, angels are the most common species of citole player but there are also many humans and human/animal hybrids. It is perhaps not surprising that animal/human hybrids, which presumably have a lower status than humans, appear in the same region that has the greatest number of depictions of non-courtly human citoles. In Castile and León as well as England, where there were citoles at the royal courts, the citoles most often depicted are crowned Elders of the Apocalypse and angels respectively. In England when royal citoles are depicted they are almost always among King David’s musicians. Citoles in French and Flemish sources seem to occur in more mundane situations and yet it does not seem to have been an instrument of the common people. Citole playing seems to have been a taught skill, practised by a few amateurs (students, young ladies and gentlemen), but most often by trained musicians, whether itinerant performers or decorous court musicians.

Citoles are often mentioned in extensive lists of instruments meant to demonstrate the grandeur of a wedding, coronation or triumphal celebration. They are not, however, unusual instruments used to pad out these lists. Citoles are sometimes shown as solo performers, but they are often paired with medieval fiddles or found in courtly situations when only a few other instruments appear. We have some idea of the sorts of music that might have been heard on citoles. Texts mention citoles among instruments suitable for playing ‘motez, ‘balades, virclais, comedies, rondesauls, et lais’ (Table 1: F.39), as well as ‘dansses et le caroles’ (Table 1: F.7), and suggest that it might have accompanied the ‘hovedance’ (Table 1: E.3) and ‘trotta’ (Table 1: C.4, C.6). The citole is associated with singing and it seems to have strong associations with accompanying Galician-Portuguese songs, both sacred and secular, but possibly not Arabic songs (Table 1: C.6).

The main purposes of this survey were to help dispel some of the confusion relating to the term ‘citole’; highlight the large amount of surviving medieval sources that relate to it; and offer context for the British Museum citole. Although it is less usual now for citoles to be mistakenly called gitterns, the misidentification of citoles as guitarra latina is still common. When 19th-century scholars searched medieval Castilian images for instruments that might fit the terms guitarra latina and guitarra morisca they believed they found the answer in a copy of the Cantigas de Santa Maria. Although a wide variety of instruments are depicted in the Códice de los Músicos they are not identified by name.[32] The plucked instrument shown in the prologue scene of Alfonso X’s court seemed like an obvious candidate for the term guitarra latina. This is not merely because it had a shape similar to more modern instruments called guitars, but because it was only shown as being played by Christian musicians in this manuscript (in which Christian, Muslim and Jewish musicians can be differentiated by their clothing) this instrument seemed to be ‘latine’ rather than ‘morisca’. We now know these instruments were probably called citolas and the name guitarra latina seems to have been a red herring. Although references to guitars are common in medieval Castilian literature, the specific term guitarra latina was not. Wright suggests that the difference between the ‘Latin’ and ‘Moors’ forms of the guitarra might be as straightforward as to whether the soundboard was made of wood or animal hide. He also concludes that the name guitarra latina probably indicated a gittern, a pear-shaped instrument with a wooden soundboard, like the surviving gittern at Wartburg Castle, Germany.[33] Although extremely rare in medieval texts, the term guitarra latina has appeared frequently in modern discussions of medieval music since 1855 and one of the greatest challenges for current scholars is disentangling the citole from the false identification of it as the guitarra latina.[34]

The lack of late 20th-century scholarly attention to the citole is due, in part, to the confusion caused by earlier musicologists disagreeing about which medieval instrument should be called by which name. Although Wright brought attention to the incorrect use of this terminology, he also instilled doubt. There seems to have been a period of scholarly limbo between when Wright first published his research and when his assertions were generally accepted. The corroborating evidence of the three illustrated medieval texts discussed here should assuage these doubts. We can now be certain that instruments like the one in the British Museum would have been known as ‘citoles’ during the Middle Ages, and scholars (like those who have contributed to this volume) have begun to give attention to this important but often overlooked medieval instrument type.

The British Museum citole is significant as an artistic masterpiece but also as a tangible piece of music history. Although it has been altered, it is one of the very few existing medieval stringed instruments and the sole survivor of its type. Although this instrument has been largely forgotten in modern times, the wealth of medieval evidence suggests that citoles were high-status instruments that were well known in large areas of Atlantic Europe. It was particularly popular in Castile and León during the 13th century, northern France and Flanders in much of the 13th and 14th centuries and England from the late 19th through 14th century. Comparison of the British Museum citole with images of other citoles suggests that the distinctive morphological features of its medieval body were common and, given that they are depicted with some consistency over a period of roughly two centuries, they were characteristic and well understood.
established. The British Museum cithole verifies physical aspects of this instrument type, but also indicates the relatively high status of the cithole in the society of its time.

Notes

1 Galpin actually increased the confusion by misidentifying which medieval instrument had been known as a cithole. Galpin 1910, 25.
2 MS Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 21069.
3 Most of these are discussed in greater detail in my PhD thesis (Margueram 2010).
4 Hawkins 1776, 687.
5 Soriano Fuertes 1853, vol. I, 188.
6 De Coussemaker 1856.
7 Rimbault’s definition was cited in the first two editions of Sir George Grove’s music dictionaries. Rimbault 1860, 23; Hopkins 1899, 339; Hopkins 1904, 539–40.
8 Cerone de Bergamo 1613, XXI, 1054; Galpin 1910, 25.
9 Galpin’s definition also appeared in the third and fourth editions of Grove’s Dictionary: Galpin 1927a; Galpin 1927b; Galpin 1937.
10 Wright 1977.
11 Wright 1984; Wright 2001.
12 Kimmel suggests that the cithole was developed before the cithara; see Kimmel (1971, 54–5).
13 The relevant passage describes the festivities after Lent to welcome the return of the personification of Love. Given the great variation between manuscripts, this is verse: 1232 in concordance numbering.
14 In MS ‘Toledo’ (MS Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Va-6-9), a version of the 1350 redaction, the text reads ‘la çitola albardana entre ellos entremete’. MS ‘Gayoso’ (MS Madrid, Real Academia Española, 19) is also a copy of the 1350 redaction and is dated 1389. It reads ‘la hadura al-bardana entre ellos se entremete’. Willis makes a convincing case for later scribes being responsible for replacing the ‘clownish’ çitola’ with an ‘ill-fated female clown’ in this passage in later copies (Ruiz et al. 1965, 380; Ruiz and Willis 1972, 5x–6x).
15 For a full list of manuscripts and fragments see Créteil de Troyes 2000, xxii.
16 The word ‘cithole’ is replaced by ‘víoie’ only in MS Paris, BNF, fr. 1386, v. 3981; de Machaut 1911, vol. II, 146.
17 Different poems are recorded by each of the collections. When the same poem does appear the transcriptions agree substantially but not exactly, and different internal number systems are used for the poems; Lapa 1970.
19 In addition to being a shepherd musician like the young David, St Bráulio’s description of St Emillian as ‘futurus pastor hominum erat pastor ovium’ evokes biblical references to King David such as 2 Samuel 5:2. Bráulio 1850, 703.
20 Rey and Navarro 1995; Rey 1999; Ferreira 2005, ch. 1.
22 Eitschberger 1999.
23 Remnant and Marks 1988; Buehler-McWilliams 2007 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 123–45); Kevin et al. 2008 (Appendix A, this volume, pp. 11–24).
24 Bellows, Grünfeld and Nickel consider this instrument type to have been an ancestor to the guitar. Wintermirtz and Stauder suggest that it developed into the cittern (Bellows 1970; Grünfeld 1974; Nickel 1984; Wintermirtz 1967; Stauder 1979).
25 Plate 1 shows that another gloss (‘liracvedel’) is in a different colour ink, which supports Wright’s conclusion that it is in a different hand (Wright 1977).
26 Ibid., 48; de Coussemaker 1856, 109.
27 Manuscript MS ‘M3’ (Madrid, Escorial, L-II-3) is believed to have been sent to Alfonso X of Castile by Latini shortly after his return to Florence. Marshall suggests that particular interpolations were certainly added by Latini himself. The specific term used in this manuscript is ‘cithole’. Marshall 2001, 76. For a further discussion of this manuscript see Baldwin and Barrette 2003.
28 The inclusion of the ‘s’ before the ‘t’ in variants of the term ‘cithole’ seems to occur primarily in Picard manuscripts. Other examples include the two copies of Bauduin de Scéhon’s [Paris, BN, fr., 12552 and 12553; Bocca 1841, vol. I, 33].
29 Kisseleva 2000.
30 Thanks to Dr Richard Rastall for his notes on my transcription (pers. comm., Oct. 2014).
31 Translated by Dr Norrie Lacy, Penn State University (pers. comm., Sept. 2008).
32 Several early 13th-century English bestiaries in Latin contain illustrations of three sirens: one without an instrument, the second with tibias (shown as end-blown pipes, often double or triple pipes) and the third with a lira (shown as a triangular frame-harp). Examples include MS Cambridge, University Library, K.k.4, fol. 77v; MS Oxford, Bodleian, Douce 88, fol. 139v and MS Oxford, Bodleian, Bodley 602, fol. 10r (Leach 2006, 194). A similar correlation of vernacular terms to medieval instruments occurs in contemporaneous depictions of the ‘houseine’ and ‘horny’-playing sirens in manuscripts of Richard de Fournival’s Bestiaire d’amour, which seem to have been influenced by the tibias and lira in Isidore of Seville’s Etymologiarum. Fournival 1180, 16; Isidore of Seville 1191.
33 Mokretsova 2000, 102.
34 This 14th-century altarpiece was not the first time that artists at the monastery of San Millán de Cogolló had depicted their founder with a more modern musical instrument. A late 11th-century ivory panel taken from the reliquary of St Emilian was made at the monastery, showing the young shepherd with a long-necked, oval-bodied stringed instrument slung over his shoulder. A 7th-century Latin hagiography by St Bráulio described the youth as having played the ‘çithara’ (Bráulio 1850). This instrument depicted is probably meant to be a variety of ‘çithara’ as mentioned by St Bráulio. The ivory panel is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Cloisters Collection (acc. 1987.80).
35 The generally agreed date of authorship, c. 1245, is cited by numerous musicologists, including Rey and Navarro 1993, 35 and Wright 1977, 37.
36 These transcriptions are attributed to Father Diego de Mecolacta (MS Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 13419, dated 1740–9; Father Martin Sarmiento (MS Valladolid, Archivo de los Benedictinos de Valladolid, dated before 1772); and Father Domingo Ybarreta (MS Santo Domingo de Silos, la Real Absidio de Santo Domingo de Silos, 110, dated 1734–9) (de Berceo 1967, 67–74). Father Ybarreta’s transcription was first published by Sánchez 1780.
37 Marden produced a diplomatic edition of the folio manuscript shortly after it was rediscovered in 1925 (de Berceo 1928, 96). This is Keller’s translation, based on one of the 15th-century transcriptions, in which he uses the term ‘çithara’. Keller 1972, 73.
38 Based on features of the clothing, Trujillano suggests that the Tablaci can be no earlier than the second third of the 14th century and possibly as late as 1390. Trujillano 1983, 83.
39 Although both authors have written several times on this subject, for the purposes of this paper, I will follow their earliest definitions. Wright 1977; Young 1984.
40 ‘Çithara’ when used to label a specific medieval instrument is usually applied to a triangular frame harp, as in the late 14th-century Hortus Deliciarum, fol. 32r, formerly in the Bibliothèque de Strasbourg, now destroyed (van Schaijik 1992).
41 Wright 1977, 23–4.
44 Aliglieri 1996, 152.
46 MS Venice, Bibl. Nazionale Marciana, Marc. ii. II.53 (late 14th or early 15th century); Latini 1899.
47 The term cedra has been noted in a translation of the Bible into Castilian, Alfonso X’s General estoria IV, a life of the Virgin by Gonzalo de Berceo and a poetic account of Alexander the Great. Menéndez Pidal 1965, 70; Kasten and Nitti 2002, vol. I, 420; de Berceo 1775, 42; Sánchez 1782, vol. III, 197.
48 A documentary source regulating cedra survives: MS Madrid, archivo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid, El Fuero de Madrid, transcribed in 1202 (Ferreira 2005, 205; Millares Carlo 1932, 50).
49 De Berceo 1978, 41.
Although Thurlesson lists the Middle English ‘citoler’ phonologically under ‘K’, this seems to be an error given the common use of the alternate ‘sietole’ (Thurlesson 1950, 280).

In the Howard Psalter the instrument on folio 33v is almost identical to the instrument on folio 69v, aside from having rounded rather than pointed bouts (MS London, BL, Arundel 83 part 1, fol. 33v and fol. 69v).

There is disagreement about certain types of oval bodies, however. Wright (2001) suggested that oval-bodied instruments with flattened sides might be citoles. In his 2000 article, Young specifies that the ‘citole and related names’ apply to instruments characterized by ‘straight or in-curving sides’ but, confusingly, the accompanying illustration from a fresco by Girolamo di Benvenuto shows an oval-bodied instrument. Previously Young (1984) had labelled this same illustration as a ‘cetra’ (Wright 2001; Young 1984, 69; Young 2000b, 356).

Cencre de Bergamo 1613, 1554; Baines 1950.

Although Wright mentions many of these features, he does not offer them as defining characteristics. He describes them in terms of how they might have developed into features of the later cittern. In 1984, Young surveyed medieval depictions of plucked instruments, classified them by morphological type and then compared the presence or absence of the vernacular instrument names used in written sources of the same period. This comparison seems to indicate that the terms ‘citole’ and ‘cetra’ correspond to his non-oval groups ‘B.1’ and ‘B.2’ respectively (Wright 1977; Young 1984, 69).

In a later article, Young seems to have disregarded his earlier distinctions and included cetra-related terms and shallow, spade-shaped instruments in his discussion of citoles (Young 2000b, 356). However, in the current volume, Young clearly identifies the citole and the cetra as two distinct instrument types. See Young, this volume.

This definition includes most, but not all, of the features of Young’s non-oval group ‘B.1’ (Young 1984, 69).

MS Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. Fol. 23, c. 1220–30. Among the latest is MS Paris, BnF, latin 18104, fol. 53r. The debated text is Poetria Nova, in which he gives specific examples of how descriptions of feasts may be magnified by including appropriate details (de Vinsauf 1995).

No Aragonese texts have been identified that contain citole-related terms, except for an early 13th-century manuscript of Latinis’s Li lieres dous tresors: MS Gerona, Catedral de Gerona, Archivo del Cabildo, 20.a.5 (Prince 1993).

In each case the cetra- or vernacular cithara-related term has no relation to the citole reference. The citations appear more than 100 pages apart and are probably the work of different scribes.

Bayonne Cathedral was also the site of the christening of Alphonso, ninth child of Edward I of England and Eleanor of Castile, who was born in Bayonne in 1273. His godfather, Alfonso X of Castile and Leon, is known to have attended the christening.

The debated text is Flammia, An additional reference to a ‘cithara’ in an Occitan psalter is mentioned by Nannucci, but the manuscript is not specified (Nannucci 1847, vol. I, 184).

By convention, Belgian sources are often referred to as Flemish even if they are written in French or originate from what would have then been the Duchy of Brabant, as well as the Duchy of Flanders.

Among the earliest is MS Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, 36, Picard Psalter, c. 1220–30. Among the latest is MS Paris, BnF, latin 18104, fol. 53r. Petites Heures de Jehan Duc de Berry, written in 1374–75 (see Chapter 10, Pl. 4).

For full details of these manuscripts see Margerum 2010, Appendix B.

The instructional preface in the Metz Psalter, which was written in the 1370s, seems to indicate that the translator believed that the laity of the area would recognize the term cytolle and would consider the medieval instrument type suitable both in use and status to be associated with King David as Psalmist (Bonnardot 1984).

This does not include Jehan de Brie’s Le bon Berger, which although written in 1379, has not been identified in any copies earlier than 1541.


89 MS Avanches, BM, 0222, fol. 9 (Paris, after 1245) is a copy of Grosseteste’s Latin translation of Aristotelis Ethica ad Niconachum.
97 These are now located in England and Germany: the ‘Braunche brass’ in the church of St Margaret, King’s Lynn, Norfolk, England (Flemish, mid-14th century); the ‘von Bilow Brass’, Schwerin Cathedral, Germany (Flemish, mid-to late 14th century).

98 A number of French manuscripts are not discussed in this section. Although they record the use of a citoler-related term, many of these texts are based on an earlier Latin work (Table 1: F.19, F.30, F.39) and might not be informative about medieval musical practice.

99 Rastall 1868; Bullock-Davies 1986; Mergerum 2010, ch. 4. See also Rastall’s paper in this volume.

100 Although many of the 15th-century works that include citolers recall sculptures of angels in ecclesiastical settings have survived at Cave and Tanner 1934, pl. XI; Margerum 2010, Ill. 141.

101 Defaced citolers occur at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire; and on a limestone altar carving formerly in Sutton Valence, Essex (after 1377); and on a limestone altar carving formerly in Sutton Valence, Essex (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum).

102 A male citoler dancing with a woman occurs in MS Brussels, Bibliothèque de l’Université, 431, fol. 96v. (Mosan or Liège, 1280–90).

103 A male citoler appears above a female fiddler in MS Cambridge, Trinity College, B.11.22, fol. 190v (Ghent, c. 1500).

104 The fragment with a human citoler in the church of St Mary’s Abbey Chapel, York, 14th century, is now in the Yorkshire Museum, York. The other is in the large stained glass panel at Lincoln Cathedral, c. 1385, shown in Pl. 6.


106 The pane with a human hybrid is part of a reconstructed window at the church of St Nicholas, Stanford-on-Avon, Northamptonshire, from the nave, south aisle, east window, c. 1390–50.

107 One of the angelic citolers, in a roundel from St Mary’s Abbey Chapel, York, 14th century, is now in the Yorkshire Museum, York. The other is in a large stained glass panel at Lincoln Cathedral, c. 1385, shown in Pl. 6.


110 Scenes of citolers leading dancers also occur in Queen Mary Psalter MS London, BL, Royal 28 VII, (English, c. 1310–20) fols 173v–174v, 176v–177v, 186r–187v, although this last citoler is an angel. A single male citoler plays for a female dancer in the opposite margin of MS Oxford, Christ Church, 92, fol. 31v.

111 The Tickhill Psalter shows the women of Jerusalem singing and playing instruments, MS New York, New York Public Library, Spenser 26, fol. 17r (Nottinghamshire, 1303–14).

112 MS Oxford, Christ Church, 92, fol. 137v; James 1913.

113 Two court musicians are described as ‘Stoler le Roi’ and ‘cytoler le Ré’ during this period. J. Vala, ‘The Brussels Psalter’, National Archives, E20/80/4, fol. 31r, 11 April, 1925, and Richarson in MS London, Society of Antiquaries 122, p. 50, 30 January 1326.

114 Specifically Jeremiah (Jeremiah 2 Jeremiah 20:2), Manasses (Chronicles II 1:29-30), and perhaps possibly other biblical figures.

115 A popular Miracle of the Virgin relates how a minstrel (although not specifically a citoler), who had been imprisoned for singing seditious songs was set free by the Virgin after promising to henceforth sing only songs in her praise.

116 The date of construction, 1269, is the same year that two pardons were issued for William ‘le Citolur’. The first of these pardons, the London pardon, was made at the request of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, who was at the time titular Lord of Higham manor (Ward 1888–1910; Public Records Office 1913.

117 These carvings at St Margaret’s Church, Cley next the Sea, Norfolk (second quarter of the 14th century) show similarities to a pair of musicians carved in the cloister of Norwich cathedral (1326–36), but the Norwich figures are shown side-by-side and have the legs of animals (Pl. 12).

118 The text in MS London, BL, Royal 12 C. XII, is believed to paraphrase a lost 13th-century couplet romance based on the oral history of the Fitz Warin family; Brandlin 1939.


120 J. Wright 1977, 26.

121 Steadman 1959.

122 ‘Dame Avarice celle escole, Tient, u sempres chascun s’escole, Et entre y pour estudier, Nounpas d’aprendre a la citole’ Gower 1899, 89. Translation from Gower 1992.

123 Tammen 2000.

124 The bronze doors were designed by H. Schneider in 1888 and the south portal sculpture designed by L.M. Schwantaler in 1847–8. In 1793, many of the sculptures on the west façade of Strasbourg Cathedral were destroyed or seriously damaged. The statues of two citolers that are now in the Musée de l’Oeuvre Notre-Dame are very reminiscent of the grand lists of romances.

125 In 1793, many of the sculptures on the west façade of Strasbourg Cathedral were destroyed or seriously damaged. The statues of two citolers that are now in the Musée de l’Oeuvre Notre-Dame are most likely either heavily restored originals or 19th-century replacements. The current statues on the west façade date from the 1880s. Notable differences between two versions of one of these sculptures can be seen in Panum 1940, fig. 304 and Young 1984, 97, as reprinted in Buchler-McWilliams 2007, figs 134–b (Appendix B, this volume, p. 131).

126 Cod. Gitz, MS Osnabrück, Vistumsamich, Inv. Nr. Ma. 101 (Rulle, near Osnabrück, c. 1500) and the Prim Missal, MS Berlin, Staalische Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Theol. Lat. 271 (Prüm, c. 1250).

127 One is in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Clóisters Collection, 1970.324.8a, b. (Cologne, c. 1350). The current location of a late 14th-century German ivory diptych wing (former Frankfurt am Main, Richard von Passavant-Gontard Collection, inv. Koehlin 0216) is unknown but a photo of it appears in Swarzenski 1929, pl. 14 (no. 72).
Spade-shaped bodies appear in a sculpture at Cogges in the 13th century. Although some details are difficult to discern, spade-shaped bodies were depicted but are not visible from a convenient vantage point, as with the oval thumbhole that is clearly shown in the restoration photos from Tewkesbury Abbey. Although one of the citole players at the Archbishop Gelmirez’s Palace in Tewkesbury is described as having a shallow, unsupported neck, the side of the body has more of a waist than is usual in Italian depictions of citoles.

31 Spade-shaped bodies appear in a sculpture at Cogges in Oxfordshire, as well as three manuscripts associated with Jean Pucelle or his school. Citiolé or citole occurs in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 42.19 (late 13th or early 14th century), and MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, III.II.47 (14th century); de Visiani 1860.

32 ‘Citone’ occurs in MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 42.19 (late 13th or early 14th century), and MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, III.II.47 (14th century); de Visiani 1860.

33 De Visiani 1860.


35 Buehler-McWilliams provides a list of thumbhole citoles (Buehler-McWilliams 2007, 38; Appendix B, this volume, p. 138).

36 Stauder discusses the pronounced depth taper and shows several examples (Stauder 1979).

37 Occasionally overall depth taper and thumbhole are shown in manuscripts such as in MS New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 183, fol. 14r/v (Léger, 1260).

38 Sometimes the type of neck was depicted but is not visible from a convenient vantage point, as with the oval thumbhole that is clearly shown on one of the citoles at the Archbishop Gelmirez’s Palace in Santiago, but which can only be seen from above. A photo of this is published in Rey 1999.

39 Sometimes, the body depth of citoles seems to have been distorted so that the front of the player can be more rounded, as on both large musical angels on the canopies above St Philip and St Bartholomew (c. 1280–1300) and the human citole player on a bench end in the choir stalls (PL. 14) (1308–10) in Cologne Cathedral and both of the angelic citoles at Tewkesbury. I would like to thank Dr Mary Remnant for letting me view her copies of the restoration photos from Tewkesbury Abbey. Although one angelic citole was heavily recarved in the 19th century, both instruments retain evidence of thumbhole necks.

40 The following examples distinctly show a thumbhole but whether the body depth tapers is unclear: MS Oxford, Bodleian, Bodleley 661, fol. 14r (Normandy, 14th century); MS New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, 104, fol. 90r (northern France, c. 1300); MS Paris, BnF, fr. 1906r, fol. 49v (Flemish, 1315); MS Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Theol. Lat. 271, fol. 33r and 188v (Prum, Germany, c. 1320); MS London BL, Arundel 83, part 2, fol. 134v (English, c. 1330–9); and possibly MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 29. I. f. A (Paris, 1245–55) although it is not being played.

41 The hole in the neck shown being used as a handhole appears in only a few manuscripts: MS Paris, BnF, Latin 18104, fols 48v and 53r (Paris, c. 1372–80); MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. latin 603, fol. 103r (Parisian, 1310–20); and MS New York, NYPL, Spenser 26, fol. 172r (Nottinghshire, 1365–74).

42 The basic filter appears in a sculpture at Tewkesbury, as well as three manuscripts associated with Jean Pucelle or his school: the Breviary of Blanche de France, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. latin 603, fol. 103r (Jean Pucelle, Parisian, 1310–20; Jean le Noir, school of Jean Pucelle, English, c. 1280–90; and the Pètits Heures de Jehan Due de Berry, MS Paris, BnF, Latin 18014, fol. 48v (Jean le Noir, school of Jean Pucelle, Paris, c. 1372–88). In each of the manuscript examples a thumbhole or handhole type neck is clearly depicted. At Cogges, although the neck type can not be seen due to the placement of the sculpture, the instrument has a pronounced overall taper in depth. As Remnant has pointed out, these English and French examples might be high-waisted variants of the more common vase shape. Remnant and Marks 1980.

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44 Buehler-McWilliams 2007 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 125–41; see Hebbert, this volume; and Kevin et al. 2008 (Appendix A, this volume, pp. 111–24).

45 Several damaged sculptures also suggest anterior pegs, such as one of the figures at Archbishop Gelmirez’s Palace and one of the replaced figures at Strasbourg Cathedral, as do a mid-13th-century manuscript, MS Avranche, BM, 1222, fol. 9 (French, after 1245), and a mid-14th century ceiling painting in Teruel Cathedral (1335). A good detail of the pegs on the Exeter citole can be seen in a photo by Nicholas Toyne on the cover of Early Music 15 (6), February 1987. 148Wright describes the ‘vase’ shape as ‘shoulderless’ shape (Wright 2000).

46 The single exception seems to be the Psalter Missal in which both of the citoles are waisted. MS Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Theol. Lat. 271, fol. 33r and 188v (Prum, Germany, c. 1320).

47 For example, the rosette design on the Lincoln stained glass (PL. 6) is white while the rest of the soundboard is yellow.

48 Johan de Brie’s text that includes ‘cytholes’ among gut-strung strings of brass or iron, his text wasn’t written until the 1480s and refers to instruments used in late 13th-century Italy (de Brie 1879; Baines 1950). For more on stringing, see Koster, this volume.

49 Although the centre hole of the efl projection has been repaired, the original overall length seems to have been two English feet, a measurement which was standardized during the reign of Edward I. In his preliminary survey of 1940, Richard Marks speculated that ‘the possibility of an origin in France or Flanders cannot be entirely discounted’ (Remnant 1980, 100). In the present volume, Philip Lindley argues eloquently that the citole was produced in England.

50 For more information see the chapter by Rastall in this volume (Chapter 4, pp. 45–50) and Margerum 2010.

51 Tax records indicate that two citoles might have been teachers: Mestre Thomas, listed as a citoleur in Paris in 1342, and magister I. Sioter in Oxford in 1343, Gérard 1837; Salter 1921.

52 Two female citolers are named in legal documents, ‘Agn’ la Setoler’ and ‘Agn’ la Citoler in Oxford in 1325 (Géraud 1837; Salter 1931).

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56 Wright 1967.


58 MS London, BL, Arundel 83, part 2, fol. 134v (English, c. 1330–9); and possibly MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 29. I. f. A (Paris, 1245–55) although it is not being played.

59 Wright 1967.

60 See Crawford Young, this volume.
The British Museum citole is both paradoxical and mysterious. Modern consensus suggests that citoles delivered a raucous sound and were frequently associated with revelry and flirtation, and while they were popular at all social levels, the extraordinarily ornate and skilful carving on the British Museum citole might suggest that it was intended for a prestigious patron, and one who could therefore be identified. Yet the carving on the British Museum citole is largely devoid of erotic or aristocratic overtones, and its early provenance is undetermined. It is a rarity; indeed, there are only a handful of other instruments surviving that compare with it, yet its precise original socio-economic milieu remains unknown. However, some progress has been made. The suggested date of 1300–30 for the original carving seems reasonably well established, and perhaps can now even be narrowed slightly. As for the identity of the master carver, Phillip Lindley provides numerous examples of East Anglian work in a similar style, while noting that an East Anglian artisan could, of course, have later worked in London or Westminster. It also appears that the instrument was made to be played. Kate Buehler-McWilliams points out that the great care taken in its construction to produce thin and uniform walls and ribs, combining strength and lightness, suggests that ‘it was created to be a performing instrument, or at least that it was built by a craftsman who was a master citole builder as well as a master carver’.4

As was demonstrated at the 2010 symposium held at the British Museum, in general a citole is a strongly rhythmic and percussive instrument. Mark Rimple, working with Kate Buehler-McWilliams’s reconstruction of the British Museum citole, suggested that the British Museum citole could well have suited the needs of a jongleur as its ‘penetrating percussive timbre’ would ‘easily rise above the ambient noise’. As Mauricio Molina notes, the term employed for this technique in Spanish was *rascar*, and the term ‘citole’ also referred to the noise of the clapper of a mill, which made a loud, rhythmic clattering when the grain had run out. The British Museum citole is no exception; like other citoles, this is an instrument that could have competed for attention in a hall or tavern.

The imaginary world evoked by the carving of the British Museum citole is, however, not raucous, aristocratic or erotic and is consequently not necessarily attuned to its performative environment. There are several hunting scenes, but the hunters (with the exception of a centaur shooting a bow at a hare) are on foot, following hounds, blowing a hunting horn or shooting with a crossbow. These hunters are not aristocrats. Other scenes illustrate some of the traditional labours of the months so often depicted in Books of Hours. One shows a peasant using a long pole to knock down acorns for his swine (a labour associated with November or sometimes December); another a man chopping a branch of an oak tree (a labour of March). There are several fantasy creatures of a kind often found in manuscript marginalia, including a hybrid with a sword and buckler fighting the small dragon known as a wyvern, but there is nothing overtly satirical or overtly sexual. The hunting of a hare does often convey sexual overtones in medieval art and literature, but there is nothing in its depiction on the citole to make such associations explicit.
This restraint is all the more striking because it is not typical of ornately carved early instruments. The examples discussed by Ann Glasscock in this volume are suggestive: the Italian mandora of c. 1420 depicts a man and a woman on its back with Cupid hovering above; the 13th-century Venus rebecchino shows Venus naked; and the extraordinary lira da braccio carved by Giovanni d’Andrea incorporates a woman’s naked body. The British Museum citole, in comparison, is very chaste indeed.

The citole is also chaste in relation to much contemporary manuscript marginalia, with which it has a significant connection. The carving on the citole, as has long been observed, shares a visual vocabulary with the margins of Psalters and Books of Hours and may even have been derived from pattern books used for such illustrations. The margins of these prayer books provide potential models for carving on a small scale and the association would also be symbolically appropriate. The widespread image of David as God’s jongleur, his cithara represented by a harp, gittern or citole and citole players portrayed among his musicians, links the citole and the Psalter. Furthermore, anyone wealthy enough to own the British Museum citole would have owned at least one Psalter or Book of Hours. Psalters, in both Latin and French, had long been at the heart of personal devotion of wealthy lay people. By the time the British Museum citole was made, however, Psalters were beginning to be supplanted by Books of Hours. Many people could manage the Latin of the familiar prayers, and wanted a book that would cover what had become a standardized set of prayers for each of the canonical hours of the day. These concentrated on the seven penitential and fifteen Gradual Psalms, once ‘recited by the infant Virgin Mary as she ascended the steps of the Temple’, and a combination of Psalms, hymns and antiphons forming the Hours of the Virgin (or Little Office of the Virgin as it is sometimes known, in distinction to the Divine Office). The resulting format, the Book of Hours, became ‘the most popular book of the late Middle Ages’. Already by about 1240 a commercial scrivener working in Catte Street in Oxford, one William de Brailles, was preparing for an anonymous laywoman the earliest surviving English example. The margins of these books were frequently lavishly decorated with bizarre images.

Of course images of wyverns, hybrid archers, faces peeping from behind the foliage and other similar figures are not confined to prayer books, or even to manuscripts. We can also find them, as Lindley reminds us, in the marginal spaces of medieval sculpture and carving, on misericords or gargoyles, for example, as well as in less marginal spaces, such as the spandrels of St Ethelbert’s gate at Norwich. However, the richest collection of grotesque imagery comes from the Psalters and Books of Hours. It is one of the great paradoxes of medieval culture that a carnival of monstrous animals, satirical scenes of foxes preaching to chickens, bare buttocks, obscene gestures, fornicating monks and nuns, monkeys parodying human folly as well as numerous illustrations of musicians are all found on the margins of prayer books. This is the paradox of these marginal illustrations: their sexual and scatological license. Examples of similarly extravagant images can easily be found in contemporary works such as the Ormesby Psalter (Bodleian MS Douce 366, c. 1310), the Grey-Fitzpayn Hours (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 242, c. 1300–8) or the Gorleston Psalter (British Library, MS Add. 49622, early 14th century).

The paradox is somewhat mitigated, however, by the fact that Psalters, ostensibly private books that displayed one’s wealth and gentility, had strong associations with love and flirtation. The 13th-century Occitan romance Flamenca develops these associations at length. The eponymous heroine is carefully guarded by her old and jealous husband. The lover, Guillems, at first desists of being able to meet her, but when he prays and then opens his Psalter he finds words of good omen:

Quant Guillems ac l’orazon dicha
Un sautier pren e ubri lo.
Un vers trobet de quel saup bo :
Zo fon Dilexi quoniam.
‘Ben sap ar Dieus que voliam’,
Ha dih soau, el libre serra.

When Guillems had said his prayer, he took a Psalter and opened it. He found a verse there that pleased him greatly. It was the Psalm ‘Dilexi quoniam’. ‘God knows now what I desire’, he said softly, and closed the book.

Psalm 116 (114 in the Vulgate) begins ‘Dilexi, quoniam exaudiet Dominus vocem orationis meae’ (‘I have loved the Lord because he will hear the voice of my prayer’) and, like the other Psalms, was and still is frequently identified by its opening words. By themselves, however, the two words can suggest an obscene pun (which works as well in Provençal as it does in Middle English). As the courtship advances, the Psalter acts as a crucial intermediary. Following the mass, Guillems contrives to hold the Psalter that Flamenca has just kissed and kisses it himself a thousand times. Eventually, with the aid of bribes, he manages to take over the duties of the clerk and carries the Psalter around to give the kiss of peace throughout the church, coming at last to Flamenca, to whom he whispers ‘Alas!’ while she kisses the book (line 3951). A week later, after much discussion with her two ladies in waiting as to how she might make an appropriate response, she replies with the single phrase ‘Que plains?’ (What are you grieving for?, line 4346). So the conversation proceeds week by week until they eventually arrange an assignation. It is, therefore, entirely fitting, as Geoff Rector notes, that when Flamenca replays the courtship before her ladies in waiting, they use a copy of ‘le romanz de Blancalflor’ (line 4479), the popular Floire et Blancheflor, to stand in for the Psalter. Here the Psalter is serving, as romances often did, to promote courtship. The license of the marginalia in so many Psalters is thus in keeping with the Psalter’s status as an expensive fashion accessory for the wealthy, especially wealthy women. Books of Hours were eventually produced in large numbers to match all incomes, but the expensive ones had an equally worldly reputation as luxury commodities and objects of self-display.

Given the kinds of carving on other extant instruments, it is therefore somewhat surprising that the British Museum citole is devoid of overtly erotic imagery, and perhaps this restraint offers a clue as to its patron or recipient. Admittedly, if the artist picked the scenes from a pattern
book, working largely without the patron’s direction, then perhaps the message is that there is no message, or only a very generalized one, that the carving simply reinforces the citole’s status as a luxury object and it is merely a coincidence that the artist just happened to avoid scenes that were overtly erotic. However, in comparison with the license shown by the marginalia of contemporary Psalters and Books of Hours, the British Museum citole is anomalous. The question then becomes what kind of patron or recipient might suit such an instrument?

There has long been a general sense that the medieval instrument would befit a monarch, and Buehler-McWilliams has even raised the possibility that Edward II might have been the patron, although Alice Margerum observes that the absence of heraldic insignia might argue against the citole being intended for a royal patron. More generally, we might consider two categories of possible patrons: minstrels and courtly amateurs.

The first possibility, suggested as a speculative conjecture by Margerum, is that the citole might have been intended for one of Edward II’s citolers, a kingly instrument for a king’s minstrel. It would seem unlikely that any minstrel could have afforded such an instrument by himself, but is it possible that a minstrel might have been given such an instrument as a tribute to his patron’s status? As Richard Rastall has shown, minstrels could become symbolic representatives of their lord: ‘A herald represented his master, and it therefore became sacrilege to offer violence to a royal officer of arms: in the case of a King of Heralds this principle was taken a step further, and he not only wore the coat of arms of the monarch whose proxy he was but in addition was crowned and consecrated.’ Some confirmation of this practice is offered by John Barbour in The Bruce (composed c. 1375) in a passage describing how Gib Harper, herald-minstrel of Edward the Bruce, brother of the famous Robert, is killed in battle against the English while wearing his lord’s surcoat. The story may be entirely apocryphal, but Barbour found it credible, which suggests it may bear at least some resemblance to contemporary practice.

It certainly seems that in the first decades of the 14th century the citole was a fashionable instrument at court. Edward II employed at least two citolers for most of his reign, as Rastall notes in his contribution to this volume. However, Edward II’s harpers seem to have been of higher dignity: the harper William de Morley, for example, became Roy de North, one of the King of Minstrels or King of Heralds (the terms being used synonymously), whose chief duty was the regulation of coats of arms. It seems doubtful that the association between the monarch and his citolers, a less prestigious group, would be sufficient to account for the purchase of such an elaborate instrument, although as Buehler-McWilliams notes, the king was clearly fond of his citolers.

An amateur who wished to accompany himself or herself while singing love songs seems a more likely possibility. The literary references collected by Laurence Wright and Alice Margerum suggest that the citole was regarded as well suited for a range of people, including jongleurs and students, but also gentlefolk, both men and women, who wished to demonstrate their cultural sophistication. Le cléf d’amors, a 14th-century manual on courtly seduction based on Ovid’s Ars amatoria, advises young women to learn to sing and to play the psaltery, tambourine, gittern or citole, for this ‘most drives us men mad’ (‘c’est cen qui de tout nous afole’). Another suggestive account comes from Gilles li Muisis (d. 1352), who became abbot of St Martin in Tournai and wrote satires on the moral corruption of his day. In his account of the Beguines, lay women who lived a semi-monastic life (a group which on the whole he praises), he says that in his childhood he saw students in Paris playing citoles to amuse the Beguines and using them for caroles (circle dances):

Je vic en men enfâns festyer de chistolles
Les clers parisyens revenant des escolles,
Et que privémen on fasio des caroles:
C’estoit trêstout reviaus, en riens n’estoien folles.

I saw in my childhood the students of Paris celebrating with citoles as they came back from the schools, and I saw that in private they held round dances. It was a great amusement, but the Beguines did not commit folly.

This kind of behaviour might have been acceptable in earlier times, but it clearly makes Gilles uneasy, and while he admits that one must allow some relaxation (for a bow bent too far will be damaged) he goes on to stress the need to monitor the young Beguines more closely.

If we turn to English texts of the period, we will find something of the same ambivalence, with the citole being associated with social accomplishment and even courtly flirtation as well as with moral probity. There are two texts in particular that may shed some light on the paradox of the restrained subject matter of the British Museum citole’s carving, although they do not resolve it: an Anglo-Norman dialogue known as La geste de Blancheflour et de Florence and the tale of Apollonius of Tyre and his daughter Thaisis, John Gower’s Confessio Amantis.

La geste de Blancheflour et de Florence is a short poem that is ostensibly devoted to a debate over who makes a better lover, a knight or a clerk, and was translated at some point in the second half of the 13th century into Anglo-Norman by a man known only as Brykulle. The debate is conducted by two ladies, Blancheflour and Florence, giving the poem its name. (It bears no connection to the much better known romance read by Flamenc, Floire et Blancheflor.) Much of Brykulle’s poem, however, is actually devoted to long lists of precious stones, birds, trees and musical instruments, as if the poet’s intention was linguistic instruction. The poem begins when the narrator enters a garden of love and there hears a range of music:

Delez en un jardin entroi,
D’amour estoit plein e de joye,
Si come vous ert ja coutée:
Citéle i ot e vielle
E synphan, qu’amour novele.
Qe doucement i font menée;
Tabours, trompe e la ffleût
Flour de lice, gitere e devte
Q’au delit furent somée,
Rubâbe, qoor e sautrie,
Harpe, tymbre tot autresie,
Of le chaunceon coronné,
whereas Wright believed that it should be baffled by estru, Oulmont suggested that estru should be some kind of musical instrument and lists no other examples, but does identify the busines (or bubines) as trumpets. Oulmont suggested that estru was simply some kind of instrument. With these additions, the passage might be translated as follows:

From there I entered into a garden that was filled with love and joy, just as I have told you. There I heard the citole and the symphony, which renews love, all of which were sweetly joined together. There were tabors, the trumpet and the flute, the fluer-de-lis, the gitere and the lute, all of which were played aloud delightfully. The rebec, the horn and the psaltery, the harp, the tambourine and all the others, with songs in doubled rhymes, sung out in harmony in the sweet motets and instrumental playing of the tumbler and the jongleur. The tambourine, the organ, and trumpets, the bagpipes, trumpet, pipe and cymbals all made most sweet notes. The horn, Saracen horn, clarion, fiddle and the sweet-sounding estru were playing all around. There was a fountain that sprang up there and spread out into four streams whose stones were of great brilliance.

With this last couplet, the poet shifts from a catalogue of musical instruments to one of precious stones.

The didactic intent of this poem is in keeping with the single manuscript that preserves it, which was formerly in the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps at Cheltenham (as MS 25970) and is now in Princeton University Library (Taylor MS 12). It is a collection of Anglo-Norman verse that was copied in the second quarter of the 14th century, and thus at least half a century after the poem was composed. As Meyer noted, what has survived is actually the end of a manuscript; it is in gatherings of eight, and the quire numerals indicate that the first 13 gatherings (104 folios) are missing. The manuscript now consists of seven items, the first being an Anglo-Norman French verse translation of three letters pertaining to the rights of King Edward I in Scotland. In this manuscript these letters are ascribed to Pierre de Langtoft and they accompany his chronicle in the two other manuscripts that preserve them.

It seems likely then, as Meyer first suggested, that the missing gatherings were devoted to part of de Langtoft’s Chronicle. The second item, Les sept choses que Dieu hait (The Seven Things that God Hates), is a short allegory of 99 lines describing the seven ministers of the devil, each of whom embodies one of the seven things hated by God as listed in Proverbs 6: 17–19: pride, lying, shedding the blood of innocents, plotting villainy, running quickly into evil, bearing false witness and sowing discord between brothers. The third item is La house partie (The Divided Blanket), a moral exemplum of 274 lines, in which a greedy man whose father has given him all his wealth sends his own son to drive him from the house. The lesson comes when the boy cuts a blanket in two and gives half to his grandfather, explaining that he is saving the second half for his father when he is driven out in his turn. The fourth item, Les trois saviors, is another short moral story in which a bird wins his freedom by promising three pieces of knowledge to a peasant who has trapped him: don’t believe everything people tell you; don’t desire what you can’t have; and don’t lament things you have lost. The fifth item is the Doctrinal sauvage, a popular moral treatise on court virtues and manners that survives in nearly 40 manuscripts, six of them Anglo-Norman. The sixth is Blancheflour et Florence. The last item is the satirical allegory, the Lettre de l’Empereur Orgueil written by the Franciscan Nicole Bozon. Someone has also copied onto blank pages some maxims warning women to keep themselves chaste and lovers to avoid third parties.

The collection would appeal to a serious minded cleric or courtier, a man who could appreciate the court satire and the strictures against women, perhaps someone not unlike de Langtoft himself. The vocabulary lists, however, raise the possibility that the material was intended for instruction. By the early 14th century, Anglo-Norman was often a learned language. What M.D. Legge says of Blancheflour et Florence might be said of the manuscript as a whole: “apparently the didactic intention was twofold: to teach French and morality at one and the same time by means of a sugared pill”. Although the scribe’s difficulties with the names of so many of the instruments suggest that he himself was not a particularly enthusiastic musician, the inclusion of this musical list in Blancheflour et Florence, and the inclusion of that poem in the collection as a whole, does imply that some knowledge of music was considered a fitting part of the culture and moral education of young gentlefolk.

There are many references to the citole in the literature of the period. They can be found in French romances such as Adenet le Roi’s Cléomadès or Blancheflour et Florence, and in Middle English romances such as Sir Cleges and the Land Troy Book. They also appear in works such as Robert Mannyng’s Chronicle, which includes a long account of Arthur’s coronation feast, although most of the references seem formulaic, part of a topos of plenitude which insists that a proper feast must have music and the music must be from as many different instruments as possible. One account that goes beyond these conventions, although it comes at the very end of the century, is the tale of Apollonius of Tyre and his daughter Thaisis (or Thaise in the Middle English) in Book VIII of Gower’s Confesso Amanitis (The Lover’s Confession), completed in 1390.
Apollonius, having revealed King Antiochus’s incestuous relation with his daughter, flees Antioch and arrives in Pentapolis, where he wins the favour of the king for his skill in the athletic games and is welcomed to the court. When Apollonius is overcome by his memories, the king calls on his daughter to cheer his guest by playing the harp. When she asks him how he likes the performance, Apollonius is critical (in Gower’s version politely critical):

‘Ma dame, certes wel,’ he seide,
‘Bot if ye the mesure pleide
Which, if you list, I schal you liere,
It were a glad thing for to hierc.’ (lines 767–70).

He then performs on the harp with ‘a vois celestial’ (line 780), as ‘thogh that he an angel were’ (line 782), confirming that he is ‘of gret gentillesse’ (789). At the request of the princess, Apollonius becomes her tutor:

He tawhte hire til sche was certein
Of harpe, of citole, and of rote,
With many a tun and many a note
Upon musique, upon mesure,
And of hire harpe the tempure [tuning]
He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe. (lines 828–33)

Apollonius and the princess (whom Gower never actually names) fall in love, marry and have a daughter, Thaisis, but Apollonius (through elaborate circumstances) is separated from his wife, whom he believes to be dead, and later from his daughter who is kidnapped by pirates.

Music plays a crucial role first in preserving Thaisis and ultimately in reuniting her with her father. She is sold to a brothel keeper, but preserves her chastity by reducing her would-be clients to tears with the story of her sorrows. She proposes that her owner should instead hire her out to teach young women.

Sche can the wisdom of a clerk,
Sche can of every lusti werk [desirable skill]
Which to a gentil womman longeth,
And some of hem sche underfongeth [took in as students]
To the citole and to the harpe,
And whom it liketh for to carpe
Proverbs and demandes slyhe [running riddles]
An other such thei neve seyne,
Which that science so wel tawhte. (lines 1483–91)

Thaisis is in effect running a finishing school for young ladies, and she teaches two things: a certain kind of badinage (proverbs and riddles) and how to play the harp and the citole, echoing the musical instruction that her father once gave her mother. The story is completed by music for when Apollonius arrives in the same city after being shipwrecked, its ruler tries to cheer him by having the young woman, by now renowned as a musician, play to him on the harp. She plays ‘lich an angel’ (1671) and then tells him jokes, riddles and proverbs. Although it is not until she tells him her lineage that he finally recognizes her, it is music that brings them together and it is in her mastery of music, specifically the harp and citole, that demonstrates that she shares his moral virtue. As Russell Peck notes, ‘Playing the harp teaches “measure”…that is, proportion, moderation, and harmony, all crucial virtues for good kingship’.25 The crucial virtue of measure is set against the overall subject of Book VIII, the contrast between ordered and disordered love illustrated in the story of Apollonius.

The harp is clearly the dominant symbolic instrument in Gower’s account, as it is in other scenes of recognition in romance. When in the Anglo-Norman Horn the eponymous hero returns in disguise for the last time to rescue his beloved, he and his men claim to play the harp and rote and to sing, while in the Middle English versions of the story they claim to be harpers and gignors (that is, fiddlers).26 When the eponymous heroine of the romance Silence disguises herself as a jongleure she plays on the harp and vile.27 Sir Orfeo, in the Middle English romance of that name, ‘mest of an thing’/Lovede the gle of harping’.28 Gower gives the citole a distinct presence, however, making its mastery both a social accomplishment and a sign of self-control. Gower generally overwrites the Greek customs described in his sources, often drawing upon conventions that were well established in French romances two centuries earlier then when he does so. It is striking then that the reference to the entertaining patter that Thaisis teaches is specific and unusual, as if Gower might actually be reflecting the social mores of his day. But even if his account is shaped more by literary form than by social reality, it still suggests the symbolic value attached to music during the period, specifically the music of the harp and citole, and how it could be associated with social and moral order.

Of course the musical instruction offered by Apollonius and his daughter, a single instance in a literary work, does not establish that in Gower’s day gentlewomen were commonly taught to play the citole. But the story suggests that at least some people would have regarded the citole as a suitable instrument for young gentlewomen. There is no reason to suppose that the instrument’s reputation was lower at the beginning of the 14th century. Many people played the citole, including students and jongleurs, but for gentlewomen its mastery could be seen not just as an amusement but as a virtuous accomplishment. Such associations might induce a wealthy patron to commission for his daughter or niece a citole that was richly carved, but restrained in its subject matter, and indeed it has been suggested that the relatively small size of the citole might make it suitable for a child.29 The British Museum citole then might be seen not so much as an instrument fit for a queen, but as an instrument fit for a princess, or at least for a young gentlewoman from a very wealthy family.

Notes

1 Kevin et al. 2006 (Appendix A, this volume, pp. 111–24).

2 At the 2010 British Museum citole conference, Ann Glasscock noted that the carving of the citole bears a considerable resemblance to that of the stone leaves in the chapter house at Southwell Minster, Nottinghamshire, which is dated to the late 13th century. Also in this volume, Phillip Lindley confirms that the citole matched examples of stone carving from 1280–1340, but notes that work from the end of this period could often draw on earlier forms, concluding that nothing about its carving suggested that the citole was later than 1350, but that the density of its carving might suggest it was later than 1320 (see pp. 1–14).

3 See Lindley, this volume, p. 13.


5 This was demonstrated by Mark Rimple at the 2010 British Museum citole conference in his paper “Techniques for the unaccompanied performance of medieval estampies on a
reproduction of the British Museum citole: a lecture-demonstration.

6 See Molina, this volume, pp. 105, 108.
8 See Glasscock, this volume, p. 82.
9 One example of such a pattern book is the Macclesfield Alphabet Book of about 1500 (British Library MS Add. MS 88887), which contains numerous elaborately zoomorphic initials. As of October 2011 it was on display at the ‘Sir John Ritblat Gallery: Treasures of the British Library’.

10 Remnant and Marks 1980.
11 According to Hunt 2008, 369, ‘about half of the surviving twelfth-century manuscripts containing French texts come from English Benedictine houses and almost half of these are Psalters’.
14 Donovan 1991, 9–24. Morgan Library MS M 739, which dates from before 1219, may be the earliest surviving Continental Book of Hours.
15 Such images have been read as a release of unconscious desires, see Schapiro 1977 and 1979, and as a conscious play reflecting a medieval sense of living in a fallen world, see Camille 1992, 39–40, 50–5.
16 For a selection of such images, see Randell 1906 and Bovey 2002.
17 Porter 1962, lines 2292–7. I have offered a more literal translation.
18 See Hill 1965, who points to an anecdote reported by Gerald of Wales that turns on the deliberate misinterpretation of this line.
19 The process of the courtship and the interplay of religious and erotic language that it engenders is described by Olson 1958, as well as Schapiro 1977 and 1979, and as a conscious play reflecting a medieval sense of living in a fallen world.
20 For a selection of such images, see Randell 1906 and Bovey 2002.
21 On the associations of the Psalter with romantic (i.e. French) and with romance as a literary genre, see Rector 2009.
23 Buehler 2002, 58–9 and private correspondence with Dr Alice Margerum, who I thank for much helpful guidance on the citole.
24 See Margerum, this volume, pp. 32–5.
25 Doutrepont 1890, 57, lines 2605–8. I would like to thank Kate Buehler-McWilliams for this reference.
26 See Rastall, this volume, pp. 46–8.
28 Buehler 2002, 55.
29 See Margerum, this volume, pp. 32–5.
30 Doutrepont 1890, 97, lines 2605–8. I would like to thank Kate Buehler-McWilliams for this reference.
32 The man probably derived his name from the parish of Brickhill in Buckinghamshire. J.C. Russell, in his efforts to identify the poet, tends to assume that he must be one of the men bearing that name who happen to have been recorded in the surviving records: William de Brykhulle, dean of St John of Chester and a royal clerk in about 1295; a contemporary Hugh de Brykhulle, ‘who appears frequently upon both royal and personal business’; and Elias of Brykhulle, a canon of Hereford. See Russell 1931, 259, and 1936, 24, n. 1, and on Banstre, the author of the original English poem, Russell 1936, 183–4.
33 Legge 1963, 335.
34 Meyer 1908, 224–5; Oulmont 1911, 167–83, lines 13–36. I have made one emendation to Meyer’s and Oulmont’s punctuation.
35 Wright 1977, 38. See also Oulmont 1911, 168.
36 Anglo-Norman Dictionary, s.v. flur.
37 The Anglo-Norman Dictionary also notes that the word estra could mean either stirrup or GISARME, a kind of battle axe. The term ‘axe’, in particular, might conceivably be extended to apply to an instrument, as it often has been to the modern saxophone and electric guitar.
38 Meyer 1908; Dean and Bolton 1999. For a more recent description of the manuscript see Bennett et al. 1991 and Skemer 2013.
39 Dean and Bolton 1999, no. 66, listing the known manuscripts of de Langtoft’s Chronicle, which existed in several redactions. A full copy would run to over 9,000 lines and might fill nearly 200 folios, but partial copies were much more common.
42 Sakari 1967, Archivio della liturgia del Medioevo (http://www.arlima.net/ad/doctrinal_sauvage.html).
43 Vising 1919.
44 Dean and Bolton 1999, no. 201.
45 On efforts to identify de Langtoft, see Summerfield 1994, 329 and n. 30.
46 Rothwell 1968, but note the recent qualifications of the view that Anglo-Norman was exclusively a learned language by Ingham 2009.
47 Legge 1963, 335.
50 Ibid., vol. I, 334, note to line 777.
52 Roche-Mahdi 1992, line 3158.
54 A suggestion made by David Charles Roberts in conversation with Alice Margerum and confirmed in private e-mail correspondence of 29 October 2011.
Introduction
The main sources of information about English royal minstrels are the financial records of the royal households. Citolers are found in the king’s household during the 14th century, in the reigns of Edward I (r. 1272–1307), Edward II (r. 1307–27) and Edward III (r. 1327–77). It is possible that citolers were employed earlier than 1296, the starting date for my search, but limited searches before that date suggest otherwise. Records of dependent and related royal households provide no material on citolers, and the same is true of the non-royal households I searched and the household of the King of Scots in the same period.1 While citolers appear only within a limited timeframe and were apparently always few in number, the information gleaned from the royal account books has recently been supplemented (from sources such as the Patent Rolls and coroners’ inquest records) by Alice Margerum.2

We must start with some matters that will explain this material and how it can be used. First, a household is not a building but a group of people, the family (in the modern sense) and their officials, attendants and servants, who form a social and administrative unit. In the English court the principal household was the king’s; but the queen, the Prince of Wales and the younger children of the king normally had their own households, with largely distinct personnel and accounts. These secondary households were financially dependent on the king’s, at least until the principal achieved independence through income from land held. This was usually effected by gift of the king, who provided income for his sons as they became old enough to need their own independent households. For practical reasons, personnel were sometimes transferred from one household to another: this could be permanent, such as promotion to the king’s household, or a temporary borrowing for a certain period of time.3

The king’s household consisted of a large number of departments, each with its own staff.4 Each department kept its own accounts, in the form of receipts, lists of expenses, and so on, and these were submitted at the end of the regnal year to the Wardrobe, the financial office of the king’s household. (The regnal year ran from the day on which the king acceded to the throne, so it is different for each reign: see Table 1). The Wardrobe was originally a repository for the king’s clothing, jewels and other valuables, but it grew into a large department dealing with the household’s finances.5 It was there that the accounts for the year were made into two books, one for the Keeper and one for the Controller (Contrarotulator, or keeper of the counter-roll) as a permanent record to be submitted to the Exchequer for audit.6 The audit was supposed to happen soon after the end of each regnal year, but there was sometimes a considerable delay: for that reason, members of the household were often paid long in arrears, sometimes in the form of part-payments made over a considerable period.

In theory the departmental records from which the Keeper’s and Controller’s books were made up were also retained. In addition to the Keeper’s and Controller’s books for any year, therefore, we might find the journals recording the daily expenses in gifts and small payments for many different purposes, and such materials as receipts. These last documents were small pieces of parchment recording the
delivery of wages or robes, for instance, bearing the seal of the recipient as his signature. The survival of these records is patchy. Most were archived at the Exchequer (in Westminster Hall and then in the Tower of London), but some may not have been sent for audit (those now at Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire are probably examples of this). The archived documents were eventually transferred to the Public Record Office, now the National Archives. During antiquarian activity in the late 18th and 19th centuries, however, records were occasionally borrowed by scholars, and inevitably some were not returned. On the death of the scholar concerned these would be disposed of as his personal property, eventually finding their way into the larger public and private collections. As a result, there are now royal household accounts in the British Library (some of the most visually attractive specimens, formerly in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the John Rylands University Library in Manchester and the library of the Society of Antiquaries in London).

Although the Wardrobe was the main office through which the king made payments, the Chamber (his private apartments, also housing his secretariat in the 14th century) generated its own financial records. During Edward II’s reign, however, many payments of the kind that Edward I generated its own financial records. During Edward II’s which the king made payments, the Chamber (his private property, eventually finding their way into the larger public and private collections. As a result, there are now royal household accounts in the British Library (some of the most visually attractive specimens, formerly in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the John Rylands University Library in Manchester and the library of the Society of Antiquaries in London).

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Wardrobe and Chamber scribes did not always know who people were and what they did, so it is often difficult to identify particular persons. Lively lists are useful in distinguishing minstrels by name and as a group, but isolated payments may cause difficulty. The scribes, after all, were not trying to help present-day researchers. At certain periods, therefore, it is impossible to establish precisely who was among the royal minstrels. This problem affects the information available about the king’s citolers.

The royal minstrels almost all ranked as valetti or scutiferi, lower than the household knights and clerks but higher than the garciones (pages) who probably combined the functions of servant and apprentice to a department or senior member of the household. The rank between, valetus (‘valet’ or ‘yeoman’), was held by the vigilatores (household watchmen, who were often capable of minstrelsy) and some junior minstrels; most minstrels held the rank of scutifer, or ‘squire’. For much of the 14th and 15th centuries, a valetus was paid 4½d a day, while a scutifer took 7½d, so the difference between junior and senior minstrels was considerable.

### Citolers in the king’s household

Six minstrels appearing in the records of the king’s household have been thought to be citolers: the records concerned, with source references, are calendared in Table 2. As we shall see, two of these men were probably not citolers. In the quotations that follow, I have silently expanded scribal abbreviations, while an apostrophe indicates an abbreviation that could not be expanded. In some cases, as is not unusual, a terminal flourish seems to be purely decorative. Sums of money are in pre-decimal currency, in which the pound (libra) was divided into 20 shillings (solidi), each of 12 pence (denarii). Throughout the late Middle Ages the mark, worth 13.4d, was in use as an accounting unit although the coin no longer existed. (The half-mark was still in use as a coin, however, worth 6.8d.)

#### 1) Janyn the citoler

‘Janyn le Citoler’ appears in the list of minstrels rewarded for performing at the Pentecost celebrations in 34 Ed I (on 22 May 1306).\(^6\) He was probably not a royal minstrel, for he appears in a section of mainly non-royal minstrels earning only 1 mark each. Although he has no affiliation noted, he was probably a liveried minstrel employed by a noble. We do not hear of him again.

#### 2) Thomas Dynys

Thomas Dynys was probably not a citoler, but he must be discussed here. He appears only in the record of a payment made on 20 May 6 Ed II (1315):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quidam menestrali Regis Juoni Vala le Cetoler et Thome Dynys socio su duono Regis in precio duorum hakeneiorum emptorum de Willelmo Blaunkpayn et Willelmo le Taverner de Cantuaria et datorum eisdem iv li. xj s. viij d.</td>
<td>Total £4.17.8d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisdem in precio duarum sellarum emptorum apud Cantuaria et datorum eisdem xj s. per manus proprias apud Cantuaria xx die Maij</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summa iv li. xviij s. viij d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We shall return to Ivo Vala below (no. 3).

Thomas Dynys is a name that does not occur again: he is unlikely to be the same as Thomas Citoler (below, no. 4).
Table 2 Citolers in royal records

Documents beginning E101, E403, E36 and C54 are in the National Archives; those from the Additional MSS, Hanley, Stowe and Cotton (Nero section) collections are in the British Library. Most of these items are calendared in Rastall 1968, vol. 2, appendix A. Items not calendared there are those from the Society of Antiquaries MSS 121 and 122, which were transcribed more recently, and those asterisked, which were kindly brought to my notice by Alice Margerum.

34 Ed I 23 May (1306): Janyn le Citoler appears among the minstrels performing at the Pentecost celebrations, when 200 marks (£133.6.8d) were distributed to heralds and minstrels. Janyn was probably not a royal minstrel, although perhaps employed by a noble. (A mark was 13.4d, or two-thirds of a pound.)
E101.369.11 (Keeper), f. 96
E101.369.6: detailed lists

6 Ed II 20 May (1313): payment to Ivo Vala and Thomas Dynys his socius for two horses and two saddles
E101.375.8, f. 29v

10 Ed II 23 January (1317): part-payment of money owed to Thomas, citoler.*
Nero C viii, f. 192v

?11 Ed II 21 July (?1317): part-payment of money owed to Thomas, citoler, minstrel of the king.*
Nero C viii, f. 195v

11 Ed II 22 November (1317): Payment to Ivo Vala for the replacement of a horse.
Soc. of Antiquaries MS 121, p. 57

?11 Ed II 15 April (?1318): part-payment to Thomas, citoler, king’s minstrel, for money owed to him for his war wages and equipment, and for compensation for his horses.*
Nero C viii, f. 196v

11 Ed II 14 April (1320) Payment to Ivo Vala for summer robes.*
Soc. of Antiquaries MS 121, p. 130

13 Ed II A list of squires sine sociis given robes for the whole year includes Ivo Vala and Thomas, citoler. By agreement made anno 16. Add. 17362, f. 57v

17 Ed II 24 June (1324): a gift to Master Richard Dorre (string-player), Vala (citoler) and Henry de Neusom (harper)
E101.380.4 (Chamber accounts), f. 11

18 Ed II 11 April (1325): To Vala the king’s citoler, a gift for his travelling expenses.
E101.380.4, f. 31

18 Ed II 24 August (1324): Thomas the citoler the king’s minstrel?] has a house in the parish of St Bennet Gracechurch in Bridge Ward, London.*
London, Guildhall Library, MS Roll C: calendared in Sharpe 1913, 92.

19 Ed II Ivo Vala among the minstrels receiving clothing for going to France with the king.*
E101.381.11, m. 42

19 Ed II 16 September (1324): Payment to Annete, the wife of Vala the king’s citoler, for her expenses in coming from London to Westminster to speak to her husband, going overseas with the Earl of Chester.
Soc. of Antiquaries MS 122, p. 25

19 Ed II 9 January (1325): Payment to Vala, the king’s citoler, for his expenses in travelling to Lonsdale.
Soc. of Antiquaries MS 122, p. 47

19 Ed II 30 January (1326): Payment to Henry Neusom, the king’s harper, and Richardyn, the king’s citoler, making their minstrelies before the king and the Countess Marshal, who was dining with the king. (Richardyn the citoler is probably an error for Richard the vidulator.)*
Soc. of Antiquaries MS 122, p. 50

20 Ed II Debts for wages, 19th and 20th years: 3.9d owed to Ivo Vala.
E101.381.6, f. 4v

1–2 Ed III 3.9d to Ivo Vala for wages.
E101.383.8, f. 18

4 Ed III 12 July (1330): Livery for Thomas the citoler and Ivo Vala. Then Ivo takes winter robes, anno 3, for himself and Thomas. Vala’s receipt, like those of the gitterner Richard Bottore and the piper John Harding, still has his seal attached.
E101.385.4, first group, no. 30

8 Ed III Debts for wages and robes to Thomas, citoler (£4), and Ivo Vala (60.0d) – separately, and with no distinction of rank.
E101.387.5, ff. 5v, 6v

8–11 Ed III Payment for winter robes, anni 8, 9, 10 and 11, to Thomas, citoler
Nero C viii, ff. 226, 228, 229v and 231

9 Ed III Increased wages in war time to squires of the king’s household, including Thomas, citoler
Nero C viii, f. 239v

9 Ed III 22 October anno 9 (1335), at Berwick-upon-Tweed: payment to Thomas, citoler, to replace a horse
Nero C viii, f. 275

10 or 11 Ed III Petition by Agnes, widow of Ivo Vala, to the King and Council, for payment of £4.8.0d due to Ivo at his death.*
London, National Archives, SC/8/60/3990 (former Parliamentary Petition 8289)

11–12 Ed III Debts to Thomas, citoler, for wages and robes (probably anni 10 and 11)
E101.388.9, f. 32

12 Ed III 11 July (1338): winter and summer robes to Thomas, citoler
E101.388.5, m. 11

12 Ed III 22 July (1338): part-payment to Thomas, citoler, of war-wages owed to him from anno 8 and anno 9.*
E403.300, m. 20

13 Ed III Winter robes anno 12 and summer and winter robes anno 13 to Thomas, citoler
E36.203, f. 123
The scribes evidently distinguished the latter by his instrument. ‘Dynys’ may be a place name, perhaps St Denis in Paris. Vala and Dynys are described as socii (companions), which denotes those in the household who would normally be lodged together, eat together and could act for each other in such matters as receiving payments. The term implies colleagues or close associates, perhaps partners in the sense that they formed a working unit: for minstrels it seems to imply that they performed together. This has sometimes been taken to mean that Thomas Dynys, like Ivo Vala, was a citoler. As will be suggested later, this is unlikely to be the case, for there is no evidence that royal citolers performed together.

3) Ivo Vala

Ivo Vala’s surname may indicate that he came from Valls in Catalonia or one of the areas called Valais (in Burgundy, Switzerland and the Italian Alps), although the forename was popular especially in Normandy and Brittany. Scribes wrote his forename as Ivo: recent alternatives beginning with a J are probably due to misreadings of the dative case (Ivoni, written as Juoni).10

The payment of 6 Ed II (20 May 1313) which is our only record of Thomas Dynys is also Ivo’s first appearance. Ivo was a scutifer (squire) of the household as early as 13 Ed II (apparently at Christmas 1319), and probably much earlier. As he was a socius of Thomas Dynys in 6 Ed II, it is likely that Ivo and Dynys were both squires at that date: socii appear always to have been of equal rank in order to act for one another.

Plate 1 The seal of Ivo Vala, still affixed to a receipt from 1330. The design seems to include foliage and birds

The robes list of Christmas 1319 (13 Ed II) has Thomas Citoler and Ivo listed among squires sine sociis (without companions): this is another indication that Thomas Citoler was not the same as Thomas Dynys, who had presumably died or otherwise left royal service, leaving Ivo without a socius. If I am right that citolers did not perform as a duo (see section on performance, below), Thomas Citoler was unlikely to become Ivo Vala’s socius, for reasons already given. Ivo was paid for the replacement of a horse on 22 November 1317 (11 Ed II); and on 24 June 1324 (17 Ed II) he was rewarded, perhaps for minstrelsy, in company with the string player Richard Dorre and the harper Henry de Neusom:11

Dimeigne le xxiv iour de J[u]yn a Tonebrigge: A mestre Richard Dorre vijler Vala citoler Henri de Neusom harpour de donn le Roi nunciant’ Richard de Mereworth par co’ xl s.

Total 40.0d by gift

Vala was given travelling expenses in 18 Ed II (on 11 April 1325), and again the following year when he travelled independently to Lonsdale. In late September 19 Ed II (i.e. 1325) he went to France with the Earl of Chester (the 13-year-old future Edward III), but he was in England again in early January 1326. Before his departure to France he was visited at Westminster by his wife, perhaps in order to settle financial arrangements during his absence: the king made a gift for her expenses in returning to London, where presumably she and Ivo lived.

Although Ivo and Thomas Citoler are not described as socii, Ivo took robes for himself and Thomas early in Edward III’s reign, on 12 July 4 Ed III (1330). Ivo’s seal is attached to this receipt (Pl. 1): the words are no longer legible, but the main part of the design seems to include foliage and birds (perhaps a visual pun on ivus (yew wood), from which the name Ivo is derived).12

Ivo last appears in a list of wages owed in 8 Ed III (1334–5), but he seems not to have received winter robes that year. He may have been dead by Christmas 1334, by which time he had been in royal service under Edward II and Edward III for over 20 years. At some time in 10 or 11 Ed III

Table 2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13–14 Ed III</td>
<td>Thomas, citoler, among 38 servants reimbursed at one mark each (13.4d) for the transport of two horses to England, January anno 13 and February anno 14 (i.e. 1314)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E36.203, f. 155v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Ed III</td>
<td>Wages to Thomas Citoler for service to the king overseas £6.6.0d*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS4.167(ii), m. 43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–17 Ed III</td>
<td>Winter robes anno 16 and summer and winter robes anno 17 to Thomas, citoler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E36.204, f. 90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–21 Ed III</td>
<td>List of Edward III’s minstrels in France includes 5 trumpeters, 1 citoler, 5 pipers, 1 laborer, 2 clarioners, 1 nakerer, 1 fiddler and 3 waiters.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stowe 570 (17th-century transcript), f. 229 (tentatively dated 16 or 17 Ed III)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harley 782 (17th-century transcript), f. 63, has the same list, here dated 18–21 Ed III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34–5 Ed III</td>
<td>22 February (1361): Christmas robe for John, citoler, one of the king’s minstrels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E101.393.15, m. 3</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(1336–8), Ivo’s widow, Agnes, petitioned for payment of £4.8.0d that had been due to Ivo at the time of his death.¹⁵

A nostre seigneur le Roi et son consail prie Agnes iadis la femme Ivo vala et executrix quelle avoir brief as Tresorier et as chamberleins de son Eschequer de estrre paié de iiij li. viij s. sicome piert par dixe billes de la garderobe nostre Seigneur le Roi quere est que soict’ desves au dit’ Ivo descomie le dit’ Ivo ad servy le pierre nostre Seigneur le Roi et a nostre seigneur le Roi quere est en tout son temps.

To our lord the king and his council, Agnes, formerly wife of Ivo Vala and his executrix, petitions that she wishes to have a writ to the Treasurer and Chamberlains of his Exchequer to be paid £4.8.0d as appears in two bills of the Wardrobe of our lord the king that now is, which is due to the said Ivo for the service of the said Ivo to the father of our lord the king and to our lord the king that now is, for all his life.

This small slip of parchment is endorsed with the following instruction:

[  ] [  ] as Tresorier et Chamberleins del Eschequer que veuez les billes dont ceste peticon fait mention sils troffent’ que la dette soit unquore due et cler e adonques facent paiement ou co[n]venable assignement

[The king sends instruction?] to the Treasurer and Chamberlain of the Exchequer that they view the bills of which this petition makes mention [and that], if they find that the debt is still due and accurate, then they make payment or a suitable assignment.

The two bills concerned, which must have given details of Ivo’s attendance and from which we could have learned the date of his death, have not survived.

4) Thomas Citoler

Thomas is first found in the accounts for 10 Ed II, a part payment being made to him on 23 January (1317). He was almost certainly in royal service then, and it is probably in the following year that he was described as ‘minstrel of the king’. He went to war with the king, apparently as a mounted soldier, and was paid for his service probably in the run-up to the loss of Berwick-upon-Tweed to the Scots in April 1318.

Two years later, Thomas appears in the same list of squires sine sociis as Ivo Vala. He may be the ‘Thomas, citoler’ who held a house in the parish of St Bennet Gracechurch (London) in August 1324 (18 Ed II).¹⁶ Over the next few years he appears several times in the records: he again went to war in 9 Ed III, and was apparently at Berwick-upon-Tweed on 22 October 1335:

Thome citoler pro restauro unius equi sui morliet mortui ibidem codem die xi s.

To Thomas, citoler, for the replacement of his black horse that died, at the same place and on the same day 40.0d

He seems to have returned from abroad in late 13 or early 14 Ed III, for in January or February 1341, with other royal servants, he was paid for the transport of his two horses: he had probably attended the king, who returned from a visit to the Low Countries in December 1340. Thomas is last heard of by name in a livery list for 17 Ed III (1343–4), but he may be the citoler in Edward’s entourage for the major campaign in France that started in the spring of 1346. If so, he was at the battle of Crécy on 26 August that year and, if he survived Crécy, at the capture of Calais on 3 August 1347.

5) Richardyn, citoler

This minstrel appears in a record of gifts for minstrelsy on 30 January 1326 (19 Ed II), made to Henry Neusom, the king’s harper, and ‘Richardyn cytuler le Roi’. There is no other known record of Richard the citoler, however, and the more common use of plucked string and bowed string together would suggest that this is an error for Richard Dorre the violateur, perhaps due to a mishearing of ‘vieler’ as ‘citoler’.

Jeody le xxx iour de Janvye: Paie a Henri Newsom harpour le Roi et a Richardyn cytuler le Roi [written over another word] faissent [?] lour mimestrauncies [sic] devant le Roi et la contesse mareschal qui mange avec [illegible – le ?] Roi ce iour viq’ eor’ de don par com’ xx s.

Thursday 30 January [1326]: paid to Henry Newsom, the king’s harper, and Richardyn, the king’s citoler, making their minstrelies before the king and the Counsellor Marshal, who was dining with the king today, to each of them by gift, by account 20.0d.

6) John

John the citoler, one of the king’s minstrels, appears in the accounts for 34–5 Ed III, where payment for a Christmas robe was recorded on 22 February 1361. Nothing more is known of him.

Performance

How are the royal citolers likely to have performed? There is no specific evidence, but study of the bas (i.e. soft, quiet) minstrels as a whole suggests three possible situations.¹⁵

First, a citoler could presumably perform solo. Payments to harpers point very firmly in this direction, and there is evidence that other instruments, such as fiddles, could be played along. Solo performance seems to have been the most common method among the bas minstrels. For citoles this would still be an assumption, however, and the possibility should be treated with reserve. The citole certainly lent itself to solo performance, however, as practical demonstrations during the British Museum citole symposium (4–5 November 2010) and the subsequent concert showed.¹⁶

Second, some instruments were almost certainly played in pairs: trumpets and fiddles are the most likely examples in the accounts, and there is iconographic and narrative evidence as well. There are items in the records that make pairs of harps a possibility, too, although this is not supported by other types of evidence.¹⁷ Playing in pairs does not seem to have been common practice for other instruments, however, so it seems clear that Thomas Dynys, Ivo Vala’s socius, was not a citoler. What other instrument might Dynys have played in duet with a citole?

The third performance method for a plucked-string instrument is with a singer or a bowed instrument. This method is hinted at in the payment of a gift to Richard Dorre the string player, Vala the citoler and Henry de Neusom the harper on 24 June 1324 (17 Ed II). The fact that the gift is recorded as a single item suggests that they all performed on a single occasion: and although we cannot
assume that they performed duets or as a trio, and they certainly might all have performed solo, the possibility of a plucked-string instrument performing with a bowed instrument is a strong one.\textsuperscript{8}

This third method of performance is strongly hinted at also in the queen’s household, where in the reigns of Edward II and Edward III we find the bowed/plucked combination in a fiddler and a psaltery-player employed together. To these were sometimes added a gitterner (the gittern being another plucked instrument); and the queen occasionally had a harper, although apparently as a solo player. Citolers are notably absent from the queen’s household, however, and one wonders why. Indeed, the citolet is notably absent from all dependent households. There seems to be no obvious reason for this, except that rhythmic and rather percussive music, to which the citolet seems particularly well suited, would be used mainly for social occasions of the type that would normally be hosted by the king. Perhaps this style was considered too harsh for a lady’s private entertainment. In the queen’s household, certainly, the psaltery seems to have been a more acceptable instrument. In any case, the citolet’s absence from any but the king’s household underlines the fact that citolers were a fairly rare breed at the English court.

**Chronology**

The apparent chronology of the citolet at court can be summed up very briefly: citolers appear in the royal records only within a short time span, between 1306 and 1361. To be certain that this is accurate we need to follow up available evidence on two fronts.

First, records from earlier than 25 Edward I (1296–7) need to be searched thoroughly. Although the Wardrobe accounts are particularly informative in the last few years of Edward’s reign,\textsuperscript{9} some records exist for earlier in his reign and a few survive from the reigns of John (r. 1199–1216) and Henry III (r. 1216–72).

Second, a thorough check is needed on more records from the reign of Richard II (r. 1377–99) and throughout the 15th century. Here the minstrels are usually identified by surname rather than by their instrument, and are normally classified only as ‘minstrel’, or at best ‘still minstrel’ (i.e. has minstrel). The result of this is that it is difficult to see precisely what instruments were played by minstrels in the royal households, so that there may have been citolers that are now hidden from us.

The time span of known citolers in the royal records, 1306–61, is broadly supported by records from elsewhere, although these show a longer period. Alice Margerum has found citolers in Spain from the 1240s onwards, in Paris and England from the 1290s and in Orléans from 1306. English locations for citolers, or people named ‘Citolet’ or ‘le Citolet’, include Westminster, Winchester, Oxford, London, Glasgow, Cambridge, Northampton, Reigate and Wells.\textsuperscript{10} The possibility that the royal citoler Thomas was the man of that name who held a house in the London parish of St Bennet Gracechurch in August 1324 (18 Ed II) has already been mentioned; and among the various citolers who held property in Oxford, Agnes la Setoler (September 1310) and I. Setoler (1324–5) could conceivably be Ivo and his wife. In both cases corroborative evidence is needed.

The time span noted for royal citolers is also roughly concordant with the iconographic evidence. English depictions suggest a peak in popularity of the citolet circa 1300–40, but literary and iconographic evidence shows that the citolet was known in various parts of Europe between the late 12th and the late 15th centuries.\textsuperscript{15} At the edges of this period, however, there are often problems in identifying a citolet as distinct from the instruments from which it derived and to which it eventually gave way. These problems provide very good reasons why interdisciplinary activity is much needed in the study of the citolet, as well as in the case of other medieval instruments.

**Notes**


2. I am grateful to Dr Margerum for sharing her findings, some of which are acknowledged individually in this chapter.

3. The working of the royal households and their finances was first explained in Tout 1920–22; for a shorter and updated explanation, see Given-Wilson 1986, passim.


5. For the relationship between Wardrobe and Exchequer, see Ibid., 18–19.

6. The name of the Contrarotulator is a reminder that accounts were originally enrolled: that is, the material was written on one side of a parchment membrane, and as each one was completed it was sewn onto the end of the previous membrane. The result could be rolled up for storage. At the time in question some departmental material was still enrolled, but final accounts for audit were made up as books.

7. As the household records were audited at the end of each regnal year, regnal dating is the system used.

8. For the Chamber, see Given-Wilson 1986, 20. Fourteenth-century Wardrobe records are in Latin, Chamber records in French.


10. See especially Bullock-Davies 1966, 212.

11. It is difficult to know how to translate the equivalent terms ‘vijler’ (French) and ‘vidulator’ (Latin). ‘Gigour’ or ‘gigator’ presumably refers to a player of the smallest fiddle, used for dance music, which implies that Richard played the larger fiddle (‘vielle’) or an instrument of the viole type.


13. I am indebted to Alice Margerum for bringing this document to my attention, and to Jane Oakshott for her advice on the text and translation.

14. Information kindly supplied by Dr Margerum.

15. For performance practices that can be inferred from this evidence see Rastall 1974.

16. At the symposium in the British Museum, Mark Rimple demonstrated the possible playing styles of the citolet; and in the concert on the evening of 5 November, in the church of St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, Dr Rimple and Mary Springfels (together with Shira Kammen) demonstrated these even more clearly.

17. For example, the five harpers who performed for Edward I during a journey in 32 Ed I (on 6 March 1304) perhaps did not play only solos: see Rastall 1968, vol. 2, 32 and 41.

18. See Ibid., 183–5, and Rastall 1974 (2009), passim, especially 68–9. ‘Viel’ and ‘viol’ in these works should be read as ‘fiddle’ and ‘fiddler’.

19. Hence my research started in that period. Such earlier records as I have searched include no citolers, but my examination was far from comprehensive.

20. I am grateful to Dr Margerum for allowing me to use this information in advance of her doctoral submission.

Introduction

In the Middle Ages, string players (‘citharists’) and popular musicians were scorned by both secular and religious authorities. It was, however, a case of ‘can’t live with them, can’t live without them’, especially in the late Middle Ages, when musicians were required to play the new form of music called polyphony and to perform at church feasts and secular court occasions. Despite this need, evidence from contemporary literature and art indicates that much suspicion was cast on the professional musician. This questionable reputation has antecedents back to antiquity in the works of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. The opinions of musicians continued into the Middle Ages with Boethius and his influential 6th-century textbook on music, De institutione musica. Medieval complaints about the ubiquity and inappropriateness of ‘exciting and licentious music’ has continued in almost the same form into modern times, especially when one compares the performance, influence and behaviour of these medieval string players with their 20th-century rock and roll counterparts. This chapter will analyse the causes for the medieval criticism of string players, demonstrate how this attitude came about and draw parallels with the enduring negative opinion of rock musicians in modern times. There are numerous similar reasons for this shared judgement despite the differences and unique character of each period: censure boils down to a sense of a loss of control by authority and a disdain for vulgar entertainment from the intelligentsia.

The reputation of stringed instrument players in the popular culture of western Europe between 1200 and 1400 is the central focus of this chapter. This time period was the heyday of many stringed instruments such as the cithole, vielle, rebec and gittern, the flowering of Gothic art and manuscript illumination and the beginnings of the complexities of the *ars nova* movement in music. These two centuries were also the golden age of the troubadour and *jongleur*, itinerant singer-storytellers, courtly love poems and tales and bawdy vernacular poetry. The wandering musician was to be found at numerous locations and events, performing at church rituals and court feasts and haunting the taverns and brothels. The reputation of the cithole and contemporary musicians in secular society will be discussed, as will the antecedents of this reputation from antiquity. In the Middle Ages, Christianity transformed pagan intellectual criticism of popular music into religious allegory. This chapter will also address how authorities blamed the musician for the physical and moral degradation of their audience, and how their music led to the corruption of God’s image on earth. Where relevant, parallels will be identified between medieval and modern disdain for the popular musician and music.

‘Bits and pieces’: terminology, time frame and texts

A clarification of terms will aid this analysis of the medieval musician. Musical terms, instrument names and musicians are frequently interchanged in contemporary sources; ‘gittern’ and ‘cithole players’ are referred to specifically throughout, but the musicians’ reputation is addressed in general as so few players are specifically identified by name and occupation in the source material. I will also speak of
musicians in the broadest terms: minstrel, histriones, jongleur and troubadour were distinct professions, had specific social rank and formed a hierarchy among performers, but there was no specialization of talent among the entertainers in the late Middle Ages. A troubadour, at the top of the hierarchy, for example, might sing, compose and dance; while a jongleur, at the lowest level, might play an instrument, sing, tumble, dance, practise tricks and tell jokes as a more general entertainer.

These generalities are accounted for through the nature of the sources; it was not uncommon for medieval authors to use archaic terms when referring to contemporary instruments. For example, the word citara, an ancient Greek instrument, was obsolete by Late Antiquity; by the time of Cassidorus (c. 485–c. 585), citara could mean any number of strummed or plucked stringed instruments, and by the 8th century citarizare meant to play many kinds of stringed instrument.

Written sources detailing the musician’s reputation include folktales and fabliaux in addition to moralising and scientific texts on music by a variety of authors from churchmen to university intellectuals. In these texts depictions of musicians may be exaggerated for comic effect, to illustrate moral decay or to reflect the authors’ own attitudes concerning the social status of musicians. Indeed, the following extract from a fabliau provides this image:

He often didn’t own a shoe
Although he dearly loved his pants
And the rags he wore, and if perchance
He had the fortune to possess
A pair of shoes, though hobnaillless
And full of holes as they could be,
He glorified in them shamelessly
And thought himself quite recherchi.

(St Pierre et le jongleur, ll. 14–21)

Finally, many writers were not musicians or not familiar with the composition of music and musical styles (Chaucer being an exception), or even knew what contemporary instruments may have looked like. Similar caveats are found in artwork depicting musicians and instruments.

Nevertheless, plucked instruments such as the citole and the gittern appeared frequently in documents and artwork by the 13th century, and the instruments seem to have been important in contributing to contemporary, fashionable polyphonic music as both rhythmic and sometimes melodic instruments.

‘My bad reputation’: the citole in secular society
The string player was widespread across western Europe by the late Middle Ages. Despite their popularity, these musicians were associated with anti-social behaviour.

Southworth notes, ‘to his contemporaries the minstrel was altogether beyond the pale of social acceptance, worse off than a serf, for at least a serf was the lowest rung on the ladder’. Part of this reputation was because citoles and gitterns were considered lower class instruments. The citole, for example, was associated with peasants as late as the 16th century, despite its obsolescence. The gittern was associated with tavern culture, its inhabitants and their repertoire of bawdy songs; Wright provides examples from the 14th century of patrons performing lusty chansons on the guitar while at the tavern.

Contemporary court records recount anti-social behaviour involving gittern and citole players, which ‘causes no surprise when one considers the association of the gittern with activities which must have been frowned upon by respectable citizens’, and that musicians were frequently associated with violence and theft. Wright notes that there were several law cases in which gittern players were involved in drunken breaches of the peace (Orléans 1362 and Limoges 1379). Elsewhere, Guillemin Geroult, hanged in 1392 for stealing pewter dishes, was identified in court records as a gittern player. Citola, a minstrel from Spain, was so ill behaved that King Alfonso the Wise (r. 1252–84) himself rebuked the man in verse. Even performances could be fraught with peril: Perrin Rouet smashed another man over the head so hard with his gittern that the instrument split in half; a citoler, Lorenzo of Portugal, who performed at the court of Alfonso the Wise appeared in a legal case as a defendant against a knight who had broken Lorenzo’s own citole over the musician’s head. Parallels could be drawn to a more recent incident in 2006 in which the Rolling Stones’ guitarist Keith Richards, faced with a fan lunging at him on stage, clobbered the fan with his guitar and then calmly resumed playing.

A minority of disruptive characters does not necessarily represent the whole, although it could cause an impression of the whole. Not every musician was a criminal, and those musicians with the patronage of the aristocracy maintained a high reputation and were much in demand. For example, trouvères and troubadours were well respected because of the complexity of their verses and because they were part of the court circle. Indeed, the economic position of professional musicians varied. For example, Peters’ study of late 13th-century Montpellier tax records related to musicians indicates that there was some diversity in the status and income of musicians, ranging from itinerant...
outcasts to wealthy professionals enjoying aristocratic patronage. 25

Nevertheless the wandering musician was regarded as someone outside of the social order26 when other itinerant workers were not. These workers and craftsmen were called the vont et vient, that is ‘coming and going’, a class of servants necessary for one-off occasions at court, such as weddings and feasts.27 Musicians in this class of servants were contracted on a short-term basis, and like their peers, travelled to follow employment.28 Unlike other servants, musicians, even those who enjoyed patronage, were seen as vagrants who had no ‘useful’ place in society and practised poor self-control and even less fiscal sense. Jongleurs, for example, were viewed as careless and irresponsible with their money. The jongleur in St Pierre et le jongleur, for instance, not only pawns and loses his vielle while gambling, but ‘so loved the tavern and the dice, he’d blown his pittance in a trice’.29 Indeed, according to Harrison, the medieval version of the expression ‘easy come, easy go’ was ‘minstrel’s money’.30 Additionally, being itinerant also meant entertainers frequently did not pay taxes and were exempt from military service.31 They lived and worked outside of the institutions of society, its obligations and its protection.32 As a consequence, it was assumed that they were outside the social and moral codes of society33 – hence their reputation for amoral and mischievous behaviour.34 Furthermore, the company the musicians kept, the lowest orders of society, also enhanced their reputation as rogues rather than respectable servants.

An illustration from the Queen Mary Psalter (Royal 14 E III f. 89) (Pl. 2) shows the stark difference between the status of a musician and that of a household servant: here King Arthur sits at a banquet, surrounded by his fellows, the scene enclosed by borders which represent the walls of the hall and royal residence. A servant kneels before the table, offering a plate or a bowl; while in a subservient position, he is clearly included in the enclosed banquet hall. The musician, a vielle player, however, stands precariously on a branch which extends outside of the walls of the hall and palace, putting him well into the margin; he is connected to the scene but clearly outside of it.

The placement and use of space on a folio leaf reveals much about the medieval (intellectual) view of society and the desire to maintain hierarchy. Safe places in medieval society had defined borders: cities, churches, monasteries or castles were bound by walls clearly to delineate order from wilderness, community from the outside. It is interesting that even though it is not a hard and fast rule, many illuminated manuscripts placed popular musicians in the margins of illustrations. Respectable musicians, on the other hand, including angels, monks and King David, appear inside borders, margins and the walls of rooms and houses. Monks singing Psalms frequently appear not only inside such distinct boundaries on the page, but often they are given an added layer of safety by being enclosed inside illustrated capitals. For example, manuscripts Arundel MS 89, f. 63v (Pl. 3) and Harley MS 2888, f. 98v both depict singing monks inside of a capital ‘C’. At the bottom of the Arundel leaf, two grotesques caper, one holding a citole and the other a psaltery. This is not a whimsical placement; the text represents orderly space, whereas the margins and their inhabitants exist on the edges of the world of the page, just as real-life marginals existed on the edge of ordered society.

‘Heroes and villains’: the musician in song and story
The repertoire of the musician may have compounded his marginal and disreputable status: not only did he associate with rogues, but he had to survive on wit and charm as he literally sang for his supper, making believable the fantastic, singing obscene songs and telling bawdy stories. Anyone who could speak so knowledgeably of the worst of society surely must be intimate with it! Associating the musician with the content of his songs persists in the modern era of popular music as well. For example, during the Parents Music Resource Center’s hearings in 1985,30 the then United States Senator Al Gore expressed disbelief that Dee Snider, front man of the rock group Twisted Sister, could possibly be a Christian when the group sang songs that ‘glorified violence’ and allegedly degraded women.39
Many medieval musicians recited *fabliaux*, poems filled with foul language and obscene situations; sometimes the title alone is enough, for example, Maurice de Guérin’s ‘The knight who made cunts talk.’ These stories tell rude tales of peasants and rogues who tricked merchants and impoverished nobility. The audience for *fabliaux* were aristocrats, so the situations were for comic effect, reflecting the nobility’s perception of the lower classes and presenting them in a negative light.

Chaucer’s *fabliaux*, showcased in *The Canterbury Tales*, are a rich source. Chaucer seems to have been familiar with complex forms of French music, the polyphony of the *ars nova* and composer Guillaume de Machaut’s innovative use of hockets, short little phrases that can be sung against other voices to produce complex lines of music; a good modern analogy would be Brian Wilson’s vocal arrangements for the Beach Boys, especially in his *Pet Sounds/SMiLe* period in the mid-1960s. Chaucer personally appeared to have preferred French music to the more conservative English styles of the day. His appreciation of this sophisticated music, however, does not mean he avoided lampooning it; he used his knowledge of polyphonic structure to set the comic and vulgar mood of a number of his stories and characterizations. In the *Reeve’s Tale*, polyphonic singing becomes a metaphor for sexual perversion and vulgarity, as Chaucer compares the sighing, snoring and farting of the sleeping family to a polyphonic hymn (*RT* 4163–7; 4170–2). In the *Pardoner’s Tale*, the thieves frequent brothels, betting shops and taverns (*PT* 463–71), where the music played includes ‘harpes, lutes and gyternes’ (*PT* 466), the sort of combo found playing the French-style polyphonic music of which Chaucer was fond – ballads, *roundels* and *virelais*.

The tavern is the ‘develes temple’ (*PT* 470) and filled with gamblers, drunks, prostitutes, gluttons and perjurers.

In *The Miller’s Tale*, two wanderers bring chaos to the life of the miller: Nicholas, an amorous student who ‘pleyth faste, and maketh melodie’ on the psaltery (*MT* 3306) and Absalon, who ‘wel koude…pleye on a giterne, frequents in al the toun [the] brewhous [and] taverner’ (*MT* 3334). Not only does smooth and sneaky Nicholas cuckold his landlord John by bedding his beautiful young wife, but he tricks and humiliates Absalon (who also desires the wife). In the unfinished *Cook’s Tale*, Perkyn, a scruffy, irresponsible shop apprentice and would-be thief, has a whore for a wife. He spends his time dancing and singing at weddings, gambling at the tavern, drinking himself silly and playing the giterne and rebec. Chaucer explains that because Perkin is of such low rank and poor habit, his need to be a reveller prevents him from being a man of honest reputation:

Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degree,

They been ful wrother al day, as men may see. (*CT* 4397–8)

Such tales reinforce the stereotype that those who play stringed instruments bring chaos to the orderly household and cannot be trusted despite initial impressions of faith and goodness.

Finally, on a different note, in *The Knight’s Tale*, Chaucer names specifically a citole as the instrument of Venus, the goddess of love, lust and desire (*KT* 1959). Chaucer makes an interesting choice here as he based Venus on a poem by Berchorius. In Berchorius’s original, Venus holds her usual accessories of a comb and a clam shell, the latter a symbol of both her birth from the sea as well as a representation of female genitalia. Berchorius describes the shell in musical terms to make an association between music and lust, but Chaucer is more explicit by giving Venus the actual instrument.

‘Good vibrations’: the ancient antecedents of cosmic harmony

The reputation of the string player (and instrumentalist in general) as corrupt and a corruptive influence did not appear suddenly in the Middle Ages, but inherited the intellectual legacy of philosophical texts dating back to
Greek antiquity. These works and social attitudes were transmitted to and adapted in the Middle Ages by Christian intellectuals writing on both the structure of music and its spiritual purpose. Plato (c. 427–c. 347 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC), for example, were more interested in the science of music than the performer's art. As educated men, they wrote on the construction of music, its intervals and harmonics and its role in maintaining cosmic harmony. Colouring their commentary was their own disdain regarding professional musicians and their audiences. These philosophers regarded themselves as socially superior to professional musicians because, as educated men, only they understood the theory, complexity and symbolism behind the music. Professional musicians came from the lower classes and were frequently slaves; intellectuals were regarded as higher class and socially superior. Aristotle thus noted that gentlemen played instruments only when intoxicated or as a joke (Politics 1339a–416b). This intellectual contempt of common entertainment persisted into the Middle Ages, although reinterpreted in religious terms. In modern times, it survives among those who attribute a greater intellectual merit to classical over popular music.43

Both Plato and Aristotle felt that common, or popular, music had negative effects; the uneducated man gravitates towards base things and the professional musician becomes a source of danger to this vulgar audience. In the Protagoras (347 c–d)44 Plato warned that musicians who cater to their unlearned audience’s approval must cease this practice, otherwise chaos will ensue as the unlearned audiences will become so uncontrollable when they listen to such music (namely dithyrambs, associated with the Dionysian revelries) that officials must be brought in to beat them with rods to restore order (Laws 700a–701c).45 Aristotle similarly criticized popular music and its performers. While popular music as entertainment had its place, he argued, professional musicians frequently focused too much simply on pleasing their audiences (comprised, according to Aristotle, of slaves, children and ‘even some animals’). Consequently, he believed that musicians forgot the true purpose of education, that is, intellectual self-improvement, and instead they gravitated towards vulgar entertainment, and the cycle of ignorance and cheap thrills continues (The Politics).46

Boethius (AD 480–c. 524) transferred this ancient attitude to both the relationship between cosmic harmony and human behaviour and towards popular musicians mainly through his influential work, De institutione musica (The Principles of Music). This work was widely copied and became a textbook on musical study throughout most of the Middle Ages. Boethius, termed the ‘last great Roman scholar’, wrote extensively about music, and was especially influenced by Pythagoras and Plato on the effects of music on the harmony of the universe47 and the relationship between music and its ability to affect the character of a person. In line with the classical theorists, Boethius did not perceive musical performance to be a valid skill, but instead discussed the scientific and theoretical principles of music as an inextricable part of philosophy and the seven liberal arts. Boethius took Plato’s arguments about universal harmony and positive vibrations one step further and added the dimension that music was vital in blending the incorporeal soul with the physical body.48 Music acted as a catalyst for human behaviour not only physically, but also morally and ethically.

Boethius describes three kinds of musicians: those who compose songs; those who critique songs (poetry); and those who play instruments. The first two are praiseworthy, for they require intelligence and education, and scholars who understood the theory and science behind the music were superior to the ordinary peasant or performer.49 Instrumentalists were the lowest of the three, and Boethius cites cithara players specifically. Citharists devoted their time to showing off their skills on the instruments only to entertain; they are mere slaves to their instruments because performance requires no reason or thought (De institutione musica 1.34.224).

This attitude would persist as instruments were seen simply as a means of accompaniment, and instrumentalists were deemed to have no talent and were not necessary to music. Philo, for example, disliked the use of instruments in the liturgy, and wrote tracts against the corruptive influence of worldly music.50 St Basil argued that instrumental skills were a ‘useless art’.51 John Chrysostom, who was happy to have peasants singing the Psalms,52 had no use for instruments at other religious occasions: weddings, he wrote, were divine events, ruined utterly by music at the reception, which, along with drunkenness and revelry, introduced ‘all the Devil’s great heap of garbage’ (Pl. 4).53

Despite his complaints against instrumentalists and common music, Boethius – like many ancient, medieval and modern critics of popular music – admitted a strong love for the physical sound of music (Consolation IV 6.6).54 Aristotle felt the same, and St Augustine was a rare early medieval champion of beautiful music for pleasure’s sake: he noted that his passion for music was so great, he ‘wavered between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses’ and the spiritual benefits that music could lend to spiritual contemplation (Confessions 10.33.50). In modern times, even the then Vice President of the United States, Spiro Agnew, who hated rock and roll music, had to admit that the Beatles’ song ‘With a Little Help from my Friends’, which he had banned in the United States in 1970 for its alleged drug references ‘was a hell of a catchy tune’.55

‘Here comes your 19th nervous breakdown’: the emotional excitement of polyphony

Classical and medieval censure was not against music or even popular musicians, but against the wrong kind of music. Music in the Middle Ages played an important role in university curriculum, as well as being a vital component of allegorical lessons on the connection between mankind and God, in addition to the order and harmony of the earthly realm and the divine.

A number of early Church writers acknowledged that music had positive spiritual benefits. For example, Basil of Caesarea wrote that singing the Psalms in unison created a bond in the community, calmed the soul and brought both the singer and listener closer to the Divine Message (Basil of Caesarea, Exegetic Homilies).56 John Chrysostom also agreed...
Polyphonic works were a great danger to the soul; complex harmonies distracted listeners from the divine purpose of spiritual music and disrupted the harmony between God’s divine sphere and the human earthly realm. It also did not help that the most fashionable form of polyphony was the motet, a multi-lined song heard in both the church and in the tavern. Motets were all the rage from the 13th century onwards, and, to the horror of churchmen, they distinctively combined melodic lines from hymns and popular songs in the same arrangement. For example, one popular 14th-century motet had the sacred narrative of the Massacre of the Innocents as its top line of melody, with a prostitute’s call on the bottom.

One critic of polyphonic church music was the 12th-century English canonist John of Salisbury. Writing in his Polycraticus (1159), John argued that music in general sullied the Divine Service, but polyphony was the worst of all. The problem for John was the complexity of the music compared to the simplicity of plainsong. Polyphony has, among its characteristics, the use of hockets. Contemporaries criticized hockets for being too fast and exciting, inciting too much passion and emotion: for example, the 13th-century theorist Johannes de Grocheio describes how:

A hocket is a cut-up song, composed of two or more voices. This kind of song is pleasing to the hot-tempered and to young men because of its mobility and speed…like seeks out like, and is delighted by it.

John of Salisbury was educated at Chartres and therefore may come across as another ‘blue-stocking’ lamenting on the state of contemporary music, but despite the extravagance of polyphony, he described how it rendered men senseless:

When this type of music is carried to the extreme it is more likely to stir lascivious sensations in the loins than devotion in the heart (Polycraticus 1.6.42).

Nevertheless:

[If it] is kept within reasonable limits it frees the mind from care, banishes worry about things temporal, and by imparting joy and peace and by inspiring a deep love for God draws souls to association with the angels (Polycraticus Book 1.6.42).

While John criticized specifically the tendency for Church music to be overtaken by polyphonic gymnastics, he was by no means a prude when it came to common music or popular entertainments. He noted in the Polycraticus that there was nothing amiss with an intellectual enjoying vulgar comedies now and then (mentioning Plautus, Menander and ‘our own favourite Terence’ (Polycraticus Book 1.6.42)). Splashes of obscenity and blasphemy were part of medieval entertainments at all social levels and not necessarily a guilty pleasure confined to the metaphoric ivory tower.

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Music had to be kept simple. The ‘wrong kind’ of music was complex, and in the late Middle Ages that was polyphony. Polyphony reached its heights with Guillaume de Machaut and his admirers in the 14th century. Machaut’s music featured multi-part harmonies, syncopation and rhythmic experimentation, constituting exciting new forms of music. Machaut’s followers went even further, writing increasingly extravagantly arranged songs. Contemporary criticism of the fatuous extremes of these imitators is similar to criticism meted out to the empty complexity practised by art and progressive rock bands such as The Moody Blues.

Plate 4 ‘Diabolic temptations’, demons play music around guests at a feast. British Library, Royal 19 C I f. 204v, detail, southern France, early 14th century (© The British Library Board)
both Roman and early Church opinion on Roman/Christian behaviour. John and his peers were outspoken against any music with parallels to pagan practices and rituals, and complained that blatant obscenity appeared to be a reversion to pagan practices.76 Polyphonists distracted ‘spellbound little followers’ with their verbal gymnastics.77 John went on to analyse how the singers ran up and down the scale, fitted together their riffs and melodic runs to the point where ‘simple souls’ were ‘astound[ed], enervate[d] and dwarf[ed] by these wanton tones and the listener forgets his or her spiritual purpose’ (Policraticus and dwarf[ed])

‘Whole lotta shakin’ goin’ on’: moral decay, violence – and dancing

To summarize, the musician in the medieval era had a bad reputation as a rogue who played music which corrupted his audience. Such corruption manifested itself in several ways: dancing, violence and a breakdown of society. These social consequences are probably the firmest common ground between medieval and modern critics of popular music.

Firstly, not only did the new, exciting music render men senseless and distract them from the spiritual purpose of music, it also caused physical corruption through dancing. The musician himself danced and capered as he performed; the small instruments made that easy enough, as myriad illustrations show. Aside from a vulgar physical display, however, dancing had severe moral consequences. Capriciously jumping about and gyrating twisted the body into grotesque shapes and defiled the human form which was created in the image of God.

As Christians believed that the human body was created in the perfect image of God, theologians argued that Christians must strive to maintain its beauty and appear sober, devout, placid and calm. To be grotesque, ape-like or twisted defiled the image of God through ‘wantonness and obscenity of [the body’].75 Indeed, the medieval monster twisted defiled the image of God through ‘wantonness and obscenities of the body and that their gyration defiled the image of God. Finally, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) complained that dancers and acrobats deformed their bodies with indecent gestures in the name of entertainment.

Much censure appears in medieval texts against musicians for inciting corporeal deformity because their music stirred up frenzied emotions, leading to dancing. Dancing exacerbated these emotions, leading to lust, violence and dereliction of civic duty. Modern popular music criticism echoes this sentiment from the censorship of Elvis Presley swinging his hips on US television in 1956,78 to the initial reaction to ‘The Twist’79 as well as the antics of the Rolling Stones, Marilyn Manson and rap artists. Complaints against rock and roll mirror medieval fears of societal reversion to a more primitive time – not paganism, as feared by John of Salisbury, but a reversion to primitive ‘tribal’ emotions. This element of racism that affected the development of American popular music was not evident in its medieval counterpart.80 Rock and roll’s detractors were often white authority figures who feared that the music of black artists would regress their children to an ‘uncivilised’ condition characterized by uncontrollable lust, drunkenness and violence.

Social chaos is thus the second physical manifestation of popular music, with both medieval and modern authorities worried about the violence that would overtake lustful, excited dancers. For example, in 13th-century Montpellier, there were ordinances against having musicians perform at weddings because of the ensuing disorder caused by drunken wedding guests.81 Another law was passed at Montpellier in 1252 that limited the participation of musicians in charivari, a popular pre-wedding ritual in which friends and foes congregated outside the bride-to-be or newlyweds’ house to perform a sort of ritual ‘sneering’.82 These activities would degenerate from dancing, drinking and wearing costumes to physical altercations and acts of vengeance.

Similarly, in the rock and roll era, especially in the ‘breakout’ year of 1955 when the film The Blackboard Jungle was released, police broke up numerous rock and roll concerts when authorities mistook dancing for fighting.83 Adults believed that rock and roll incited violence even in otherwise placid teens.84 This fear led a 1958 Senate Committee to investigate the links between rock and roll and juvenile delinquency.85 As late as 1984, the Dove Christian School (Miami, Florida) forbade its students to attend a Jackson Brothers concert out of concern that the music would lead to irresponsible behaviour and that the students would participate in ‘lewd dancing’.86

The third shared view of popular music in both eras was that it resulted in a dissolute life and neglect of civic responsibility (Pl. 5). A medieval example is found in Chaucer’s Prologue, where the Squire shows an interest in his appearance and music in contrast with his more solemn, dutiful father, the Knight. Similarly, rock and roll critics argued that teenagers were led astray from their civil and religious duties by the siren call of pop music. For example, the American ‘payola’ hearings of 1960 levelled charges against radio DJs that they forced rock and roll music on teenagers to weaken their will; there were also the various complaints in the US that the Beatles posed a Communist threat.87 The ultra-right-wing, conservative Christian group, the John Birch Society, decried the Beatles’ album Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band as not only the work of the Communists, but also a fine example that the pop music industry understood ‘the principles of brainwashing’88 and planned to make American youths mentally unstable and helpless against the inevitable Russian invasion. (The Soviets
countered by claiming the Beatles were a capitalist plot.90 The war in Vietnam led to a close examination of potentially subversive performers as well; Phil Ochs’s FBI dossier file, kept between 1963 and 1976, was eventually more than 400 pages long.91 Another source of social disorder in modern times was drug use, and many authorities believed that popular music would turn the United States into a nation of ‘drugged-out’ youths. Spiro Agnew headed a committee from 1970 specifically to root out songs intended to recruit drug users, firmly believing that rock and roll was a means of destroying ‘our national youth’.92

Conclusion

A change in attitude from authorities and intellectuals towards the performer and his music began when the names of composers appeared in the historical record of the 12th century; Leonin, Perotin and other masters from the so-called Anonymous IV manuscript identified the earlier composers of polyphony (as this manuscript is the lecture notes of a student, its very existence indicates that by this time polyphony was well enough established to warrant study at the University of Paris). When Johannes de Grocheio (c. 1300) wrote his groundbreaking music-theory treatise, he challenged almost completely 1,000 years’ worth of musical interpretation and musical composition. De Grocheio dealt only with instrumental music and argued that the realistic aspect of music was not that the angels performed it, but that musicians should work hard to perfect their craft. Musicians, he argued, were not philosophers, but craftsmen like any other artist. He also emphasized the importance of stringed instruments especially as, in his opinion, good string players could make use of all of the vocal forms of music, the cantus, chanson and so forth.93

From this period onwards, intellectual appreciation of music began to focus on the complexity of composition and skillful playing, as the competition among Renaissance princes as patrons of the arts readily demonstrates. Nevertheless, the descendants of the cithole family – the cittern and simplified guitar (six strings instead of twelve or more courses) remained associated with the lower orders and ‘common folk’ – whether cittern players found in 17th-century barbershops, Black Americans singing the blues in the Mississippi Delta or rock and roll stars from the 1950s through to the 21st century.

Much of the criticism seems to be simply the persistence of social snobbery: the guitar is viewed as an easy instrument for an amateur to learn, and composers and trained musicians will sometimes look down on it for being a rural folk instrument and not an orchestral instrument such as the violin or piano. Just as medieval churchmen and civic leaders criticized popular music as vulgar, dangerous and demoralising, so, too, their modern counterparts have regarded modern rock and roll musicians as terrible role models, and their music as subversive, obscene or just plain noise. There are many similarities between the eras: drunken behaviour and tavern-hopping in the Middle Ages became in the modern era a fear of rock music promoting drug use. Concerns that complex and exciting polyphony and subsequent dancing would lead to a reversion to barbaric, pagan practices parallels the racist view that rhythm and blues music would cause white middle class children to practise ‘primitive’ African rituals and revert to ‘uncivilised’ tribal behaviour. On a more positive note, there is a current trend for academics to study and promote rock and roll and its antecedents as a legitimate branch of ethnomusicology. This has some parallel in the ancient world, as many classical philosophers and churchmen stated that music, even popular music, could be enjoyed, even at a physical level, provided it was kept simple and that the listener did not become carried away by sensation. Probably the only real difference unique to the modern era would be amplification; the medieval authority had to contend with violence, drunkenness, promiscuity and blasphemy, but they did not have to endure recordings of such music easily played back on state-of-the-art sound systems equipped with teeth-rattling subwoofer bass speakers.

There still remains, of course, much criticism of each new pop act and style that comes along – from the same sorts of civic and church authorities and on the same sorts of issues. Indeed, for the last 2,500 years, there have been the same complaints about ‘this new licentious music’ repeatedly – and yet popular music persists, probably for the same reasons – it is new, exciting and a challenge to the status quo.
The string player, whether he plucks a cithara or thrashes on a Gibson Flying V, continues to be a hero to his fans and a villain to the intellectuals, churchmen and parents of children everywhere.

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Notes
3. The subheadings throughout the text reference modern popular songs; they are, with the performer primarily associated with them, ‘The Dave Clark 5’s ‘Bits and Pieces’, Joan Jett’s ‘Bad Reputation’, The Beach Boy’s ‘Heroes and Villains’ and ‘Good Vibrations’, The Rolling Stones’ ‘19th Nervous Breakdown’ and Jerry Lee Lewis’s, ‘Whole Lotta Shakin’ Going On’.
4. On the problems of vocabulary in sources, see, e.g. Wright 1977, 76. Remnant and Marks 1980 and Fleiner 2005. See also Margerum, Jerry Lee Lewis’s, ‘Whole Lotta Shakin’ Going On’.
5. Remnant and Marks 1980 and Fleiner 2005. See also Margerum, this volume.
6. See Salmen 1983, 12–13 on the complexity of this categorization. See also Harrison 1974 (30–5) on classification and description of the different types of medieval musicians.
8. Ibid., 3.
9. Ibid., 36.
10. Quoted in Harrison 1974, 34.
11. Remnant and Marks 1980, 85; for carvings and manuscripts which depict gitterns/citole, see Remnant 1965. Citole iconography includes embroidery, stained glass, brasses and roof bosses (Remnant and Marks 1980, 85).
15. Ibid., 52.
16. Ibid., 14. Wright notes that the association of taverns and guitar playing may be specious, because tavern and gittern are a rhyming pair in Middle English. He counters that Chaucer maintained the association in the Cook’s Tale, but without the rhyme (describing Perkin, who loved the tavern, gambling and playing the gittern and rebec) [Wright 1977, 13]. The association can also be found unrhymed in the old French fabliau St Pierre et le jongleur.
17. Ibid., 15.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., 15.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Video evidence for Richards’s actions during a performance of ‘Satisfaction’ can be found on youtube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7g3s44FZIY, accessed 24 July 2014). Neithe be nor lead singer Mick Jagger miss a beat. A brief rundown of Richards’s rock and roll lifestyle, including a reference to the guitar-clobbering incident, is discussed in Abbot 2011. Final edits to this essay were made, coincidentally, on Mick Jagger’s 71st birthday.
24. See Southworth 1989 (30ff) on royal patronage from Henry III to Edward II; Salmen 1983 (32) on the need for travelling musicians despite disdain for their profession.
27. Southworth 1989, 64.
28. Ibid., 134.
29. St Pierre et le Jongleur, ll. 8–9, 27–8; Harrison 1974, 34.
32. Ibid., 25.
33. Ibid.
34. See Salmen 1983, 46, n.50, on the study of the ‘Mimetic Taboo’ and the association between the assumed amorality of the musician and the subsequent influence on his audience.
35. Alarmed by the lyrics of the music their children were listening to, a group of Senators’ wives and Congressmen’s wives formed the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC). Their plan was to create a means to alert parents and to protect children from the bad influence of heavy metal and rock music lyrics. The hearings in 1985 were their effort to lobby for warning labels on record albums to alert buyers of explicit lyrics (original warnings would include references to violence, sex, drug use, blasphemy and the occult). On the success and consequences of these hearings, see Nuzum 2001, 13–43.
36. Ibid., 33.
39. Hobsinger 2001, 184–5. All citations and line numbers referencing the Chaucer texts are from the Riverside Chaucer (Chaucer 1997).
40. Broenig 1990, 256.
41. For a comparison of Berchorius’s and Chaucer’s versions of the poem, see Steadman 1959, 60–4; on an analysis of Chaucer’s substitution of the shell for citole (and rebuttal to Steadman), see Quinn 1963, 47.
42. See Chadwick 1967, 86.
43. Class distinction between music that is ‘upper class’ and therefore of artistic and culture merit versus popular music, which is simply vulgar entertainment is discussed in recent scholarship on both ancient and modern musicians. For a look at Hellenic elitism, see Power 2010, 82–9. The topic appears more frequently in social and cultural studies of modern pop music; see Frith et al. 2013, Partridge 2014 and Roberts 2014. More work needs to be done to bridge the gap between the ancient and medieval eras with the modern.
44. Weiss and Taruskin 1984, 6.
45. Ibid., 7.
46. Ibid., 9–10.
47. See Chadwick 1967, 78ff.
48. Ibid., 8.2
51. Weiss and Taruskin 1984, 27.
52. Ibid., 26–7.
53. Ibid., 28.
54. See Chadwick 1967, 86.
57. Ibid., 26–7.
58. Ibid., 31–2.
59. Pike 1938, 33.
The British Museum Citole

Cardinal Stritch noted in 1957 that due to its ‘hedonistic, tribal rhythms, rock and roll would be banned from all Chicago Catholic schools (Nuzum 2001, 220). Public (state) school children were presumably beyond redemption.

82 Peters 2000, 208.
83 Ibid., 209.
84 Nuzum 2001, 218.
85 Ibid., 222.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 246.
88 Reverend David Noebel’s Communism, Hypnotism, and The Beatles (1965). Noebel believed that the end of Western civilization was nigh with the release of ‘Back in the USSR’ in 1967, commenting, ‘The lyrics have left even the Reds speechless’ (Schaffner 1978, 113).

90 Even Beatles’ supporters believed ‘Sgt Pepper’ was an excellent means of brainwashing, although rather as a means of spiritual enlightenment than mental destruction; see, for example, Schaffner’s discussion of ‘Sgt Pepper’ and Timothy Leary’s reaction (1978, 81–3); Leary ‘[identified] the Beatles as avatars for the new world order’ (Moore 1997, 61) – the bemused Beatles had no comment. For the Soviets’ claim, see Schaffner 1978, 53.
91 Nuzum 2001, 168–9, 224.
92 Blecha 2004, 75; on the Nixon committee to root out and destroy dangerous songs, see Nuzum 2001, 233–4. The most bizarre result of this hunt for decadent rock stars and their mission to corrupt the nation’s youth was not Nancy Reagan’s rather earnest ‘Just Say No’ campaign of the early 1980s or even Tipper Gore and the PMRC’s record and CD warning label system, but rather when drugged-addled Elvis Presley showed up (armed) at the White House in 1971 to ask the then-President Nixon personally if he could become a ‘Federal Agent-at-Large’ in the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs to save America’s youth. See http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/elvis/elnix.html#docs (accessed 2 October 2010).
93 Johannes de Grocheio, De musica, in Weiss and Taruskin 1984, 65.
The violin fittings on the otherwise excellently preserved medieval body of the British Museum cithole have perplexed and irked many a viewer. Canon Galpin, for instance, declared in 1910 that as a violin the instrument occupied a ‘false and ludicrous position’. However, we must also be grateful for this attempt to modernize the instrument, for without it, this cithole most surely would have been lost as was the case with every other cithole. Since the 16th century, this instrument has been associated with Queen Elizabeth I due to silver mountings bearing her coat of arms and the date 1578. However, the violin elements have previously proven difficult to date and therefore it has not been clear if they are from a much later point in history, for example when the instrument was on the market in the late 18th century. Moreover, the earliest surviving violins made in England that have previously been identified, made by Jacob Rayman in Southwark, cannot be dated before 1640, consequently making direct comparisons with the British Museum cithole extremely difficult. In recent years, however, three early violins have emerged that all contain elements of craftsmanship related to the work on the British Museum cithole. Additionally, an assortment of extant viols and plucked instruments made in London in the late 16th and early 17th centuries incorporate further elements that reinforce dating and identification of the violin elements of this instrument. This chapter brings to prominence these three newly discovered violins of archaic ‘festooned’ form and discusses the strong evidence that attributes them to the Bassano family of Anglo-Venetian musicians and instrument makers active in London in 1578, subsequently arguing for an identical attribution for the belly of the cithole. By situating the fittings and further elements of the violin phase of the British Museum cithole within a nexus of inter-connected instruments made in London around the end of the 16th century, it is possible to argue that the cithole is preserved as a violin largely in the state that it was left following the 1578 conversion.

The violin elements of the British Museum cithole
The violin fittings of the British Museum cithole consist of a soundboard, fingerboard and tailpiece, pegs and the pegbox to hold them, an internal back and the silver mountings (Pl. 1). The soundboard is carefully fitted to the outline of the medieval cithole body. However, in other respects it is what we would expect of a violin belly: it is vaulted, purfled, has f-holes and an internal bass bar. It is made from rather poor quality lowland spruce with wide summer growth which blurs into comparatively broad winter growth. The fingerboard and tailpiece are a carefully matched set, with five-strip purfling arranged in geometric shapes with arabesques and punched circles ornamenting the surface area. The fingerboard is made from virburnum lantana (wayfaring tree) and the tailpiece from buxus sempervirens (boxwood), but these two wood types are very similar and were probably considered interchangeable. The false back is suspended within the body of the instrument to create the vibrating space typical of Cremonese style violins (see Introduction, Pl. 28).
A silver cover over the pegbox is chased with the arms of Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The tailgut securing the tailpiece is looped around a pin
driven through a hole at the base of the trefoil. The top surface of the pin is covered with a cast lion’s head button, and the back surface is secured with a washer marked with the initials ‘IP’ and the date 1578 (Pl. 15).

The broad context: the early history of the violin

We associate the emergence of the violin as an instrument for dance music from the court of Isabella d’Este after 1492, and consider the arrival of the violin in essentially its modern form (with the exception of the specific changes in setup, from the Renaissance through baroque and classical standards to the modern day) to have taken place during the middle of the 16th century. The earliest surviving violins that are familiar to modern eyes are the remainders of the set made by Andrea Amati (his labels read ‘Amadi’) in Cremona for King Charles IX of France. One of these preserved at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (WA1939.20) has an original and legible label providing the date of 1564. From Andrea Amati, the tradition of fine violin making passed directly through four generations of his family into the 18th century. Antonio Stradivari was the pupil of his grandson, Nicolo Amati, and collectively the Cremonese violinmakers working under Amati’s instruction became so influential that their design for the violin came to dominate the European concept of violin design that is still known today. However, during the 16th century the Cremonese design appears to have been one of several competing designs for violinmakers; the 16th-century viewer would have been familiar with a variety of shapes and forms of the violin (and related instruments), and consequently the archaic form of the citole-cum-violin would have been much less out of place than it seems today.

To some extent the enormous range of stringed instrument forms in the first half of the 16th century appears to have been limited only by the imagination of the people who made them. The often cited frescos painted in 1535 by Gaudenzio Ferrari (c. 1471–1546) at the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Saronno give us a remarkably early glimpse of a stringed instrument of modern-day violin shape. While this has been regarded for many years as the standard early evidence for the violin as we know it, a closer look at the frescos reveals much more about the musical world with which Gaudenzio was familiar. Six dozen angels are engaged in celestial music making, singing and playing an assortment of string, wind and percussion instruments. One instrument of recognizable violin form is singled out unjustly within an enormous choir of angels playing a myriad of instruments as early evidence of the development of the violin. While it is true that this shape is essentially the same as the Amati form of 20 years later, there is no evidence that specific importance was placed on it in Gaudenzio’s time. In England, Sir Thomas More’s Utopia describes a similar celestial choir, revealing the motivation for asserting wild and imaginative variations of design: those in the Temple of Utopia ‘all stand up, upon a sign given by the priest, and sing hymns to the honour of God, some musical instruments playing all the while. These are quite of another form than those used among us; but, as many of them are much sweeter than ours, so others are made use of by us.’

Notably, Gaudenzio is careful to depict the decoration of many of the instruments with the ribs or borders delicately ornamented with gold arabesques, seemingly implying the work of a single craftsman across many different shapes of instrument. This attests to an aesthetic that lends itself to variety rather than conformity. A surviving instrument from the early 16th century, a lira da braccio made by Giovanni d’Andrea of Verona in 1511 (see Chapter 8, Pl. 7) provides evidence of a freedom for instrument makers to work artistically. The mannerist decoration of the instrument, in most respects violin-like, attempts to convey the physicality of the human form, thus creating varied and engaging visual forms of musical instrument.

Ultimately, the most successful designs of bowed stringed instruments were those that were of appropriate size for their open string pitches, large enough to provide the optimal size of resonating air cavity to produce the desired sound and yet narrow enough at the waist that a bow could pass over each of the strings individually without hitting the sides of the instrument. Hence, while a variety of competing forms of stringed instrument emerged in the early 16th century, the requirement to produce a certain desired musical purpose meant that as the century progressed, successful and sustaining forms of violin construction ended up being constrained by the same fundamental requirements that brought about the Cremonese designs of Andrea Amati we know today.
Festooned violins
Competing designs existed nonetheless, and amongst these a more sophisticated shape than the conventional violin appears to have achieved considerable popularity from the 16th into the 17th century. This 'festooned' form resembles the modern violin, but the upper and lower 'bouts' are divided into two, giving it a more ornate outline of effectively five bouts rather than the usual three. (Pl. 2). The sophistication of the outline has a certain amount in common with the British Museum citole, in fact it may be reasonable to suppose that the sophisticated outlines originated from a 16th-century experience of much older instruments that were equally complicated.

This specific 'festooned' violin shape appeared across Europe from about the 1560s. Venetian painters were amongst the first to depict this form of instrument, and it is likely that the festooned shape was developed here because Venice was a centre for instrument making and an important trading port, aiding its rapid dissemination around Europe. One such violin is depicted in Paolo Veronese's Marriage at Cana, commissioned by the Monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice in 1562. By the end of the 1560s this particular design was found throughout most of Europe, reaching as far afield as Poland and the Azores islands by the turn of the century. In 1619 Michael Praetorius included the festooned violin in his encyclopedia of scale drawings of musical instruments, labelled 'Discant geige' (Pl. 2).

While 16th-century iconography of stringed instruments is very rare in England, an extremely high incidence of festooned instruments amongst those that survive suggests that the design must have been of particularly acute interest in this country. Hans Holbein provides two sources from the early 16th century that sit within the spectrum of design ideas inhabited by the citole and the modern violin. His design for the triumphal arch erected by the Steelyard to celebrate the marriage of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn in 1533 shows a bowed stringed instrument of a complex form that is extremely similar to the shape of the British Museum citole (Pl. 3). A similar instrument hangs on a wall in Holbein's sketch of Thomas More's family from about 1527, added to the sketch by their colleague, Niklaus Kratzer.

If Holbein's depictions are typical of the instruments familiar to the court of Henry VIII, then it is easy to see how the festooned violin would fit into English design expectations of the Tudor period. Plate 4 shows many festooned violins found in iconography from this time. At Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, the Eglantine Table made for Bess of Hardwick in 1567 provides probably the earliest iconography of this kind of instrument that is firmly locatable in terms of time and place. Other iconographic sources for this kind of instrument include friezes on the ceiling of Gilling Castle in Yorkshire that are dated to the 1570s and a carved polychrome overmantle of Apollo and the Nine Muses said to originate from Toddington Manor (Pl. 5). Three festooned violins are played in an alabaster overmantle from Chatsworth, which bears the cipher of Queen Elizabeth I. A slightly later panel painting forming part of the architectural decoration in the Pillar Parlour of Bolsover Castle from the 1620s provides another English example of this kind of instrument. These representations,
located throughout England, reflect the widespread familiarity with this design through the 1560s–80s. Although in each case they appear to be associated with Elizabethan aristocracy, it would seem that the acceptance of this design existed in the mainstream musical consciousness for it to travel so widely around England.

The Flemish painter Joris Hoefnagel visited England for a few months in 1568–9 during which time he painted *A Marriage Fête at Bermondsey.* The painting includes two depictions of pairs of musicians playing instruments from the violin family. Of the musicians in the foreground, one has a festooned violin and the other a slightly smaller violin of more conventional form. This suggests a kind of violin pairing used for dance music in England, with the contrasting designs of instrument suggesting that they would have different voices, perhaps similar to a pairing of modern-day violin and viola. A stair post at Herstmonceux Castle, once again of late 16th-century origin, shows a similar pair of violins, one of either design.

**Instrument makers in London**

Stringed instrument making in 16th-century London was dominated by the family and workshop of John Rose. Rose first appears in the account books of the London merchant Sir Thomas Chaloner in 1552 “for an other vyall to be made...of the finest sort” and in 1561 he was granted a lease on the Chamber of Presence and its surrounding apartments at Bridewell Palace. The Bridewell Court Record Books...
The British Museum Citole as a 16th-century Violin

are possibly as many as a dozen surviving examples of festooned work. These instruments show how English craftsmen were keen to progress the aesthetics of the festooned viol, and in the decades around the year 1600 these represent the most sophisticated realization of this design concept to be found in Europe.

Although primarily known for their wind instruments, another family of instrument makers is worth introducing here. The Bassano family of musicians and instrument makers originated in Venice and, following several visits to London in the 1530s, settled permanently in London at the invitation of Henry VIII in 1538. They were granted a royal privilege to live and work from the Charterhouse on the northern edge of the City of London. Perhaps as many as 100 Bassano wind instruments survive today, made in a

record his lease for 8 August, stating how ‘the said Rose hath a most notable gift given of God in the making of instruments even soche a gift as his fame is sped through a great part of Christendom and his name as moche and now both for virtue and conning commended in Italy than in this his native contry’. According to the lease, the Rose family was already firmly established at Bridewell, and it seems that they remained there until the death of Queen Elizabeth I, when a review of royal privileges saw the palace turned over to other uses.

Plate 6 A festooned viol showing the hand of John Rose and bearing the arms of the Duke of Beaufort, late 16th century. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. no. WA1939.23 (photo © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)

Plate 7 A tenor recorder made of boxwood and stamped with the silk moths of the Bassano family. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 2010.205 (© Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, www.metmuseum.org)

Rose is credited with inventing several kinds of new stringed instruments, specifically the orpharion and bandora (which had fleeting popularity in the late Tudor and Jacobean periods), and many of his designs focused on his virtuosity as a woodworker. Through John Rose’s workshop, we see the aesthetics of the festooned design reaching a peak of complexity, going far beyond the aesthetics of the violins that are the immediate subject of discussion, situating these as part of the normal visual aesthetic of musical instruments in the Tudor period. A beautiful festooned viol in the Ashmolean Museum can be attributed to John Rose (Pl. 6). It is decorated with the arms of Charles Somerset, the Duke of Beaufort, thus dating it to c. 1600. Other examples survive from his immediate circle (one has the label of John Strong, but is made of identical materials) or made by his successor, Henry Jaye. From this English school of viol making there
continuous tradition up to the middle of the 17th century. The coat of arms of the Bassano family incorporates three silk moths and a mulberry tree, and their instruments are customarily stamped with tiny silk moths (Pl. 7). The majority of these instruments are made from boxwood, laburnum or maple, though one beautiful ivory tenor recorder demonstrates the extraordinary quality of workmanship and materials of which they were capable.  

Further indications of their skill, as well as the fact that they also made stringed instruments, comes from an inventory compiled by Jakob Fugger, superintendent of music at the Bavarian court, attached to a letter dated 26 March 1571. It describes ‘the chest made by the Bassani brothers’ in London that contained ‘instruments so beautiful and good’ recorders. The accompanying letter makes reference to six large viols and a chest of three lutes of black ebony with ivory spacers, all made by the Bassanos in London.

Three festooned violins

In this context, we turn to a group of three surviving instruments that are now preserved in UK museum collections in order to examine their age, nationality and, as far as possible, their attribution. These three violins, Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments (EUCHMI) 329 (Pl. 8), Dean Castle A54 (Pl. 9) and EUCHMI 5851 (Pl. 10), share a similar distinctive festooned shape, with an extra divot or scallop in each of the upper and lower bouts. All three instruments are of rather rough workmanship suggesting that they were never intended to be very fine instruments. They were also built without ribs, so the front and back plates of the instrument are joined directly to each other. Significantly reducing the size of the vibrating air cavity, this has dramatic implications for their sound. Given that bending ribs for an ordinary violin is a complex process requiring specialized tools and skills, it could be argued that the lack of ribs indicates that they must have been made by inexperienced violinmakers. However, fine examples of ribless instruments by violinmakers Mathias Wörle and Gaspar Borbon and workshop drawings from no less a maker than Antonio Stradivari indicate that the design, if not the quality of execution, lies within an accepted European instrument-making tradition. Another similarity between the three violins is that their scrolls have all been replaced. It is quite typical for an old violin’s neck to be replaced in response to modernizing trends, but the head and scroll of the original are nearly always grafted onto the new neck to preserve the identity of the instrument. Each of these instruments, however, has a neck graft and a new head, although at least in the case of EUCHMI 329, this new scroll is in itself quite old. This anomaly will be discussed later in conjunction with the pegs of the British Museum citole.

All three of the instruments have languished under vague catalogue descriptions, causing them to be easily overlooked in any serious study up until now. The historical thread of EUCHMI 329 is perhaps the longest. In 1849 Sir John Dalyell recorded in his Musical Memoirs of Scotland that ‘Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe has a violin not by any means modern, consisting of only back and breast. Sides are wanting’.  

It passed to Sir Herbert Stanley Oakeley who loaned it to the South Kensington Museum in 1872 for their ‘Special Exhibition of Ancient Musical Instruments’, whereupon it was exhibited as item 124: ‘Violin. Ancient form. Flat, without sides. The neck has been altered. Lent by Professor Oakeley, Edinburgh University.’ Remarkably, it was displayed alongside item 125: the British Museum citole. Thereafter it was acquired by the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments through the Reid Bequest, whereupon any significance was lost, earning its more recent attribution as an ‘18th century practice violin’.

The second example, Dean Castle A54 (Pl. 9), is part of a little known Scottish collection of musical instruments at Dean Castle in Kilmarnock. It should be noted that no specific Scottish connection should be applied to the instruments in the collection, which was assembled by Charles Van Raalte and housed at Brownsea Island in Dorset until his death in 1907. The violin has the bridge of W.E. Hill & Sons of New Bond Street in London, showing that it had passed through their hands. In a Sotheby’s valuation of the collection in the 1980s, the violin is described implausibly as a ‘German Mute Violin, 19th Century’.
The third example, EUCHMI 5851 (Pl. 10), has the shortest known provenance. It appeared recently at a London auction house (described as an 18th-century dancing master’s violin) and following our identification of it, was acquired by EUCHMI owing to its significant similarities to the two other festooned violins.

The argument for a radically early attribution for these violins could not be made individually; it is only when they are compared to each other as well as to the violin elements of the British Museum citole that remarkable inferences can be made that date them to the 16th century. As we have seen, it can be reliably said that they follow a design that can be traced back to the 16th century and one that was well developed in England. Elements of their individual decoration, however, also suggest a Tudor origin.

Both Dean Castle A54 and EUCHMI 329 have imitation inked purfling rather than the inlaid wooden strips of proper purfling. A single ink line traces the back, and the belly is decorated with two inked lines (about 5mm apart) embellished with dots and crosses between them (Pl. 13). Of particular note concerning both instruments is the method of attaching the neck with a ‘v’-shaped joint extending into the back of the instrument. (Without ribs, any conventional means of attachment would prove impossible.) With good humour, the maker has embellished the joint with inked stitches – a spurious piece of decoration that compellingly unites the two instruments as by the same hand and made at the same time (Pl. 11).

The Dean Castle violin is also decorated with two roses, one drawn on the belly and the other situated in the same place on the back of the violin (Pls 11–12). The roses are of two different types and size, and their position surmounted on each other is representative of the Tudor roses of York and Lancaster. While the Tudor rose itself cannot be taken as reliable dating evidence (it was used extensively in the 17th century and remains a symbol of English monarchy today), the use of a subtle elaboration on the theme provides strong implications of a date from the Tudor period. The EUCHMI 529 violin has even more compelling decoration: four insects drawn onto each of the four corners of the front of the violin (Pl. 13). When examined closely, these turn out to be anatomically specific, showing the hairy bodies and spotted wings specific to the silk moth. The particular care to apply the symbol of a silk moth onto the corners of this violin appears to be a maker’s signature of the Bassano family. The red varnish covering the instrument is common to some wind instruments made by the Bassanos (for example, the recorder pictured in Pl. 7), providing further supporting evidence of a specific attribution. When observations from both of these instruments are taken together they provide an extremely strong argument for a Bassano attribution and a date earlier than 1600.

These two violins are also related to each other in outline. The Dean Castle example appears to have a very pure outline, but EUCHMI 329 is larger in size. A symmetrical violin form can be made from a ‘half-template’ which can be traced around and then turned over to create the other side of the instrument. It seems in this case that such a template

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Plate 9 A festooned violin without ribs, decorated with inked purfling and roses. Dean Castle, A54 (by permission of East Ayrshire Council / East Ayrshire Leisure)

Plate 10 A festooned violin without ribs with wood purfling. Musical Instrument Museums Edinburgh, EUCHMI 5851 (© University of Edinburgh)
was used for the Dean Castle violin, and the larger Edinburgh example has been enlarged from the same form. This has been achieved by skewing the centre line, to make the form broader, and redrawing the lower bouts (Plate 14). As a result the two marginally different sizes respond to the iconography of the mid-16th century, and reflect other trends in violin making at the same time. The small and large violins of the Charles IX commission made by Andrea Amati in Cremona in the 1560s and the surviving 16th-century works by Gasparo da Salò and Giovanni Paolo Maggini of Brescia all show a variation of sizes being built concurrently. This may also explain the different colours of varnish used for either instrument, as a way of differentiating the two types rather than as evidence that they were made at a different time. The two colours would give a strong visual indicator of the different functions that each size was intended to serve in the performance of music. This is also consistent with the two sizes of instrument found in iconography of the period, and arguably provides a simpler solution than producing instruments of varied design.

Attributing the conversion of the British Museum citole: the silverwork

The citole survives in a violin-like state, with a belly, fingerboard and tailpiece that are in a violin style. Significance has been placed on this state of preservation because of the associated silver cover fitted to the pegbox and accompanying silver fittings attaching the tailpiece to the instrument. The pegbox cover has the arms of Elizabeth I and her favourite, Robert Dudley. The cover is hinged at the end closest to the dragon head, with two arms extending up the edges of the fingerboard to hold a locking pin (see Introduction, Pls 10–14). Scientific analysis reveals that the metal is a silver-copper alloy and gilded by the mercury method. The tailpiece is secured by tailgut wrapping around a pin through the stem of the trefoil with a lion’s head button on the top surface, and a washer on the back (Plate 15). The washer bearing the initials ‘IP’ and the date 1578 is an irregular five-sided shape with notches cut out of it, and can be interpreted as a Tudor rose. The initials ‘IP’ gave rise to an attribution to one John Pemberton in 19th-century sources, although in recent years no evidence has come to light to indicate his existence. In fact, this is not an instrument maker’s signature, but a goldsmith’s mark relating solely to the metal work. A silver cup from 1570–1 stamped ‘IP’ is part of the collection donated by Matthew Parker to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, upon his death in 1575. Of great interest is the cast lion’s head button securing the tailgut, for similar examples can be found on a contemporaneous cittern made in Brescia by Girolamo. The two colours would give a strong visual indicator of the different functions that each size was intended to serve in the performance of music. This is also consistent with the two sizes of instrument found in iconography of the period, and arguably provides a simpler solution than producing instruments of varied design.

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Virchi. This instrument has an unbroken provenance to Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol, to whom it was given in 1574. It is richly decorated with polychrome figures at the head and shoulders as well as a delicately worked soundhole encrusted with jewels. The silver lion heads ornament the joint between the neck and body. Two other citterns by Virchi have similar decorative schemes but differ in the level of realization: they may have the same woodcarving, but it is not painted, or wooden escutcheons in place of the silver ones. It may be speculated that a similar cittern was made for the Elizabethan court, and when for whatever reason the lion’s head became detached it was reused in musical instrument workshops associated with the royal court. The Bassanos gave a ‘fair cittern’ to Queen Mary I as a New Year’s gift in 1556, marking the instrument’s earliest reference within an English court context at a time when it was a relatively recent invention in Italy. A decade later in 1566–7, Mark Anthony Galliardello, a Brescian musician in the English court, gave Elizabeth I ‘a faire Cytrene with a Stone like an Emeralde in the sounde of the bellye’.

The fingerboard and tailpiece form an obvious pair, being well proportioned to one another and showing the same stylistic approach to their making and the same inlaid decoration (Pls 16–17). Once more these can be shown to be consistent with the 1578 date through comparison with other surviving instruments.

The five-strand purfling proves to be a feature of both English and northern Italian work of this period. In England, various early viols have purfling of this type, including the Beaufort Bass (Pl. 6), the similar viol by John Strong in the Folger Shakespeare Library, both of pre-1600 date, as well as a viol by John Hoskin dated 1609 in the National Music Museum, Vermillion. Punched circles forming part of the decorative embellishments are an exclusively English element. These are a significant decorative element on an instrument made by John Rose in 1580, the cymbalum decachordon (the name is inlaid around the ribs). This instrument, a five course wire-strung guitar, was purportedly the gift of Elizabeth I to another of her favourites, Lord Tollemache, in whose family it has remained to the present day at Helmingham Hall in Suffolk.

Other instruments with punched decoration include a cittern of demonstrably English manufacture with the label ‘Petrus Raitta / Anno Domini 1579’, several undated examples and a decorative element of English manufacture through the Jacobean period in the works of Richard Blunt and Henry Jaye. Lastly, the arabesques are stylistically resonant with Rose’s cymbalum decachordon and the Beaufort Bass.

It is evident from the truncated purfling that the fingerboard has been shortened at the end closest to the pegbox. However, the proportions of the fingerboard over the belly of the instrument are as expected for violins of this early period, as is the undercutting of the fingerboard up to the neck. While the shortening could be an indication that it was recycled from another instrument, it is also likely that an instrument maker improvised with pre-made fittings in order to fulfil this special order. Fingerboards and tailpieces are the kind of object that favours production in multiples, so it is likely that a maker would adapt what they already had if it would provide a satisfactory result. Recall that the fingerboard and tailpiece are made from different, though visually similar, types of wood, as though the maker reached into a bin of pre-made parts. Some further evidence of this attitude towards making the instrument is witnessed with the salvaged Brescian lion’s head incorporated into the metalwork of the instrument, suggesting that speed and necessity dictated the decision-making process.

The fingerboard is supported on a pair of wedges (one on either side of the instrument’s neck, which is hollow) in its present configuration (see Appendix B, Fig. 22). Although wedges of this sort would have existed at an earlier time, these appear to be replacements. They are stamped with circular decoration like the surfaces of the fingerboard and tailpiece, but the stamps here are made with a piece of rolled metal, which in some places has come unspiralled, rather than the consistent circular stamp of the fingerboard and tailpiece. Moreover, the punches match the stamping on the pegs, which are extremely unlikely to date before the 19th century. These elements suggest standard maintenance that may have happened around the time that the instrument was first exhibited at the South Kensington Museum, although definitive dating would be impossible.

The tailpiece appears to provide evidence of multiple stages in the conversion of the citole to a violin, creating an...
have three strings, then a new scroll would be necessary to modernize them by adding another string.

The soundboard
One of the problems of interpreting the British Museum citole is the inexplicably poor quality of the violin front that has been applied to it (Pl. 18). The choice of lowland spruce, although abundant in England, is inconsistent with the very fine Alpine spruce present on works by John Rose and his circle, and would have looked inferior to imported instruments of the period. Likewise, the purfling decoration on some of Rose’s instruments represents the virtuosic capability of instrument makers associated with the English court. Contrastingly, the purfling inlay of the belly of the British Museum citole is below the quality normally found in violin making. The soundboard’s three-strip purfling is thick and somewhat rough. Given the overall quality of the instrument this seems to be an unlikely juxtaposition, throwing into question whether this particular violin front has any relevance to the silver mountings from the violin conversion and the goldsmith’s mark of 1578. From visual inspection however, the wood is extremely similar to the choice found on the Bassano violins. Likewise, the purfling on the soundboard of the British Museum citole compares favourably to the purfling on EUCHMI 5851, the only one of the three Bassano violins to have inlaid purfling.

While the quality of spruce for the belly of the citole is out of keeping with its overall presentation, one piece of evidence may provide some reasoning for the lack of necessity to produce a visually more appealing work: a row of tapered wooden pins inserted into the belly along its length are visible in X-ray images of the instrument (See Introduction, Pl. 25, and Appendix B, Figs 28–31). Although several possibilities arise from this evidence, it is perhaps most likely that the citole had an earlier violin-like existence with three strings which was stripped back and overhauled in 1578. The anomaly of the pegbox and its fitted cover could easily be an attempt to preserve as much of the original decoration as possible, since the opening still provides ample access for the modified pegbox for four strings. Another possibility is that it was set up as a three-stringed violin in 1578, and fairly quickly modernized into a four-stringed violin, taking care to preserve the pegbox cover.35

It is important to recall that none of the Bassano violins have their original heads, with EUCHMI 329 seemingly having had its head replaced very early on. Although there are many possible reasons for this, including a common design failure, these may provide growing evidence of an early practice of making three-stringed violins. To replace an entire scroll is rather unusual, but if these violins, like the British Museum citole-cum-violin, were originally made to

The British Museum Citole
The bass bar (an internal brace running the length of the body of the instrument on the bass side) is made from a separate piece of wood from the belly and glued in during the making process. The painstaking process of fitting a bass bar, which has to be precisely shaped to fit the internal contours of the belly, is an indication of a high level of both awareness and skill in the making of stringed instruments. It would be easier to omit a bass bar entirely, or to leave a spine of wood in place as the soundboard is carved, a common technique found in various early instruments. The bass bar is no greater than 4mm in height, about half the expected dimension, and similar bass bars are found in the Bassano violins.

Analysis of soundholes provides further good evidence for similarities between all instruments. Sadly, none of the Bassano violins are in particularly good condition, and no pure soundhole outline has been preserved. Moreover, they all seem to have been made in such a quick manner that it is doubtful that they were particularly accurately cut in the first place. Nevertheless, by transposing the Dean Castle and EUCHMI 329 violin soundholes on top of each other, it is possible to create a reconstruction that shows common gross measurements, alignment and key elements of design (Pl. 19). The soundholes on the British Museum cithole are more refined than the violins, however they have a number of similarities. In each instrument, the tail is much longer than the head, giving them a ‘club-footed’ appearance. The outside curves are identical, and the outer edge of the corpus takes the same orientation.

Conclusion
In this analysis, no single factor is strong enough to determine an absolute connection between the British Museum cithole and the three violins attributed to the Bassanos. However, a reliable method of attribution is built up through recognition of the numerous separate elements with the finest Italian damask or otherwise decorating them in a manner that simulated it.

A most effective example of this is the *cymbalum decachordon* by John Rose, which uses purfled inlay and punchwork to simulate the designs of Venetian damask fabrics. The bass viol bearing the arms of the Duke of Beaufort not only has a purfled damask design, but a brand has been used to burn the wood in a manner that resembles a painterly approach to depicting these expensive fabrics (Pl. 6). A similar argument can be made for the Venetian-made virginals made in the previous year by Giovanni Celestini has remnants of 16th-century velvet covering the exterior. Various warrants survive from the Lord Chamberlain’s office from 1557 to 1596 demonstrating the widespread application of the practice of covering keyboard instruments with fine fabrics. For instance, an entry from 29 September 1592 reads:

Warrant for the delivery of crimson velvet for covering, lining, and ornamenting divers of the Queen’s ‘regalls and virginalls’, and for the covering with velvet four pair of regals and virginals and for ornamenting the same with gold and silver lacquer; for covering and ornamenting divers virginals with green velvet and levant leather, and for iron work for the same; for a wooden box lined with velvet for a pair of virginals.

Hence, it is possible to find a potential rationale to explain both the lack of necessity to source finer wood for the instrument and the tentative function of the pins pressed into the front of the instrument. The presence of arabesques engraved into the wood of the fingerboard and tailpiece of the cithole are consistent with this decorative trend, and may be further evidence of a more extensive arabesque decoration when the instrument was presented in 1578.
of style and construction that can be matched across the four different specimens. This provides a strong process of attribution for the belly of the cittern as the work of the Bassanos, and further provides reinforcing evidence for the attribution of the Bassano violins. In terms of dating, these provide a firm case for a 16th-century date, in line with the 1578 date of the silverwork on the British Museum cittern. The compatibility of conclusions relating to these specimens helps to reinforce one another. Multiple elements place the fingerboard and tailpiece as compliant with an English attribution and broadly the same timeframe as the 1578 date, even if not precisely concurrent. As a result these are the earliest English violin fittings extant, and one of the oldest verifiable sets from anywhere in Europe.

A previous study of the violin state of the British Museum cittern by Charles Beare published in the British Museum Yearbook suggested a very different set of affairs for this instrument, implying that the front was of late 18th-century provincial work and that the old fittings were of little historical significance for the instrument.20 It should be noted that there is a certain similarity between the belly and examples of crude 18th-century work, particularly when gauged against the cheaper works of Charles and Samuel Thompson or Thomas Cahusac. However, a more compelling comparison can be made with the violins attributed to Bassano. By applying a nexus methodology to the identification of these instruments it is possible to find supporting evidence from a wide group of instruments that demonstrates concordances between them on sometimes minute levels of detail. Although there is no single element of the cittern that can assure attribution to the Bassanos, the weight of individual pieces of evidence provides a compelling case for attribution and for understanding the instrument as most probably being in the same state now as it was when Robert Dudley made it a gift to his queen.

Notes

1 Galpin 1910, 24.
3 Carpenter 19th.
4 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. no. 89.
5 Stringed instruments of a festooned outline are not unusual, although now they are very rare. These fit into several traditions – the Nuremberg makers Ernst Busch and Paul Hiltz produced a distinctive shape of instrument in the 1640s, and Milanese instruments by Giovanni Grancino and Carlo Antonio Testore exist in small number from the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Likewise, certain English violists and Henry Javey (among others) also survive. However all of these examples, though distinctive from one another, conform to a teardrop shape, in which the middle bouts continue downwards.
6 Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 142.
7 From Poland, August Sokolowski’s Dieje Polski Ilustrowane (1901) shows a copy of a lost 18th-century manuscript which in turn shows a festooned violin made without ribs, purportedly by Marcin Groblitz in Krakow around 1780, Sokolowski 1901 (V, 82). In the Azores, a festooned violin can be seen in Vasco Pereira Lusitano’s altarpiece of the Coronation of the Virgin, painted in 1605 for the Church of All Saints in Ponta Delgada (Museu Regional Carlos Machado, Azores).
8 Remnant 1896, pl. 48.
9 Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, National Trust, inv. no. 117774. See Wells-Cole 1997, 249.
10 Ibid., 233–4.
11 In the collection of the Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House.
12 The second pair of musicians are less distinct, but there is no reason to imagine they are playing anything different.
13 Strictly speaking, there were two instrument makers named John Rose, a father and a son. Exactly which man is identified in references and on instrument labels remains a matter of scholarly debate. For our purposes we will not attempt to distinguish between them, but speak in the broader sense of the Rose workshop.
14 Pringle 1928, 502.
15 Bridewell Palace had become home to an organ-making workshop some time around 1515, which may have evolved to make stringed instruments as a result of the Reformation.
16 Bridewell Court Record Books, quoted in Pringle 1928, 502.
17 Boydén 1891, 9–10. A second festooned viol attributed to Rose is in the Caldwell Collection. It is lavishly illustrated in Caldwell 2012, 18–23.
18 For more on the Bassanos see Lasocki 1995.
19 This instrument belonged to the Marquess of Baden-Baden and is now in the Edinburgh University collection, inv. no. 3921 (Myers 2000, 48).
21 Dalyell 1849, 26. A provenance sticker on the back of the instrument reads ‘Reid Bequest’ and a second states ‘Curious Old Violin without sides. – see Dalysells Musical Memoirs’.
22 Engel 1872, 20.
23 Dean Castle, Kilmarnock, inv. no. MA/134.
24 The implication of being 17th century and German is that these were mass produced, in which case other examples would be abundant. However, they are not.
25 The Tudor rose as we know it was only one of many ways of using the individual roses in combination to reflect the union of the houses of York and Lancaster, and therefore this is a legitimate Tudor representation. It is commonly found on the faces of English clocks of the Restoration period, and in particular it forms the decoration of two 17th-century violins, one attributed to Jacob Rayman from c. 1643 and the other with the cipher ‘CR’ and the date 1665 inlaid into the back.
30 Lasocki 1995, 213.
31 Ashbee 1992, 18.
32 Hebbett 2009.
33 The punched decoration occurs on the pegbox. National Music Museum, South Dakota, cat. no. NMM 13500 (see Chapter 9, this volume, PI. 2).
34 The many reproductions of the cittern in the late 18th and 19th centuries, including several engravings, photographs and the electrotype copy made in 1869 are inconsistent and inconclusive in their depictions of the fingerboard wedge. See Hawkins engraving and pictures of the electrotype (see Introduction, this volume, Pls 1–2).
35 For another discussion of the violin pegging, see Buchler-McWilliams 2007, 31–41 (Appendix B, this volume, 138–9).
37 Royal College of Music Museum of Musical Instruments, London, inv. no. 176. The catalogue states ‘Velvet has been tacked and glued to the outside of the case, probably during the 19th century.’ Wells 2000 [http://www.cph.rcm.ac.uk/Catalogues/keyboards%20catalogue/Harpichord%20family/RCM%201876%20Virginal.htm]. Contrary to this assertion the velvet is entirely consistent with 16th-century furnishings (such as the Tudor and Early Stuart furniture from Whitehall Palace, preserved in the Long Gallery at Knole in Kent) and was old and very worn when it was photographed for the catalogue of the Vienna Exhibition of Music and Theatre in 1892 (Die Internationale Ausstellung der Musik- und Theatrum 1892 (1894), p. xvii, no. 17, p. 71). Therefore the grounds for this 19th-century attribution is inexplicable. Supporting evidence for the presence of Celestini’s work in England comes from a harpsichord made in 1596 which is preserved in an English fitted wainscot case (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto).
38 Ashbee 1992, 8, 44, 64, 144; Ashbee 1993, 142.
For over 200 years, the British Museum citole has been swathed in a myth. In 1776, Sir John Hawkins devoted part of his voluminous history of music to a description of this instrument, and for the first time in recorded history mentioned the tradition that accompanied the citole: that Queen Elizabeth (r. 1558–1603) gave it to her favourite, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester (see Pls 2–3). The reason for this assumption is clear: the silver plate over the pegbox is engraved with the arms of Elizabeth and Robert Dudley. However appealing the notion of such a gift may be, it has never been proven one way or the other whether the citole really did belong to Elizabeth or Dudley. The origins of the myth, whether based on Elizabethan knowledge or conjecture in the centuries that followed, are unknown. As yet, no records are known that would confirm or negate it; only the silverwork suggests ownership.

The silverwork consists of a gilded plaque over the pegbox engraved with the arms of Elizabeth and Dudley (Pl. 1), a lion’s head pin at the base of the trefoil and a washer on the back opposite the pin, stamped with the initials ‘IP’ and the date 1578 (see Chapter 6, Pl. 15). On the pegbox cover the royal crest is surmounted by a crown and Dudley’s crest (the bear and ragged staff) is topped with an earl’s coronet. Both are encircled in a belt inscribed with the motto of the Order of the Garter: ‘Honi soit qui mal y pense’. A braided decorative border frames each crest, dividing the available space into two equal panels. The silverwork has been judged by experts at the British Museum to be appropriate for the time period: the metal is a silver-copper alloy, gilded in the mercury (fire-gilding) method. The specific fit of the cover over the pegbox makes it unlikely that it was taken from another object.

This constitutes the only surviving evidence that the instrument belonged to Queen Elizabeth. While Ben Hebbert has demonstrated in his chapter that the craftsmanship of the violin parts is wholly in line with an Elizabethan transformation, this study will demonstrate that this citole-turned-violin served an appropriate role in Elizabeth’s court. This chapter will consider the use of the violin at court, particularly to provide dance music; the relationship between Elizabeth and Dudley; and the layers of meaning this object would have had as a gift from one to the other. The date 1578 is particularly curious as it marks not the height of their passionate relationship, but a date some 18 years later when Dudley chose, apparently in secret, to marry someone else.

Violins at court
In Elizabeth I’s time the violin was still a recently invented instrument and it lacked the standardization that now characterizes it. The invention of the violin has generally been accredited to the court of Isabella d’Este in Ferrara in the first decade of the 16th century. From the outset, the violin was a consort instrument and associated specifically with dance music. Its cousin, the viol, which was probably developed only one decade earlier in the same court, was used for contrapuntal music. The viol was introduced into England in the early 16th century. Musicologist Peter Holman argues that the van Wilder family of musicians brought viols with them when they came to England around...
1553. These were versatile musicians who played the lute as well as the viol and were members of the Privy Chamber. However, in 1540 an established consort of string players came to the court of Henry VIII and quickly supplanted the previous heterogeneous groups.5

The string consort consisted of six players who were recruited from Italy, though it is likely that many of them, if not all, were Sephardic Jews. The group was variously identified as players of ‘violles’ and ‘violens’; Peter Holman reasons thus: ‘most likely, the six original members of the group brought complete sets of viols and violins with them when they came to England in 1540, the former to be used for contrapuntal music, the latter for dance music’.6 After Elizabeth’s accession in 1558, the consort was always identified as the ‘violins’ in court treasury books, probably as a consequence of her preference for dance music.7

The popularity of the violin in Elizabeth’s court paralleled her love of dancing. Many ambassadors described how music and dancing were regular occurrences in her court. For instance, in June 1559 a Venetian ambassador wrote: ‘The Queen’s daily arrangements are musical performances and other entertainments, and she takes marvellous pleasure in seeing people dance.8 Elizabeth herself was also an avid dancer. A remarkable report from 1589, when she was 56 years old, states that ‘six or seven galliards in a morning, besides music and singing, is her ordinary exercise’.9

The queen danced both in private and in public. Eyewitness accounts frequently describe her watching other people dance, but occasionally they list her as one of the participants. One Spanish account from 1599 reported that, ‘On the day of Epiphany the Queen held a great feast, in which the head of the Church of England and Ireland was to be seen in her old age dancing three or four galliards.’10 However, at other times she danced in private; her morning exercise would certainly have taken place in the privacy of one of her inner rooms. The records are frustratingly silent about who provided the music for these occasions, but it could logically have been an individual member of the string consort. As royal musicians, they were expected to be in daily attendance at court.11 In addition to playing for late night dances, did they also play for the queen’s morning exercise? There is evidence that musicians did enter a private chamber to accompany dancing. A description from 1541 about Anne of Cleves, newly divorced from Henry VIII, reveals that she was accustomed to have musicians in her chamber so she could dance. After the divorce, ‘when the musicians come they are told that it is no more the time to dance’.12A single violinist, in the role of dancing master, could provide music. Elizabeth, then, probably followed the custom of inviting a violin player into her chamber to provide dance music.

Instruments in the violin family, which were always played standing, remained the realm of professional musicians. The fretted viol, on the other hand, became a popular amateur instrument. Dudley, along with many of his colleagues, owned chests of viols.13 The British Museum cittern, transformed into a violin, would have been played for Elizabeth, but she would not have played it herself. It could have been used to provide music in a private setting for dances, perhaps performed in consort for public dancing, and in either case might symbolize her love of music and dancing. To the modern eye, playing this instrument like a violin appears daunting. Not only does the thick neck look heavy and unmanageable, but the trefoil would run into your neck long before your chin could reach the instrument. However, in the Renaissance, viols and violas were held in a variety of positions, generally with the chin to the right of the tailpiece (opposite from modern technique) and frequently not touching the instrument at all. When holding the British Museum cittern (or technically a copy thereof) in this manner, the trefoil rests comfortably on the shoulder. The thumbhole is large enough for the violinist’s hand and even allows for shifting in low positions.

Elizabeth and Dudley

In the words of historian Derek Wilson, ‘for four and a half centuries people have struggled to explain the special bond which existed between these two young people’.14 William Camden, Elizabeth’s biographer in the early 17th century, ascribed it to ‘a sympathy of spirits between them, occasioned perhaps by some secret constellation’.15

In many ways, their relationship was the product of family ties forged long before Elizabeth ascended the throne. Robert Dudley’s father was influential in the court of Henry VIII, and as a child, Robert was raised with Elizabeth’s younger brother Edward. Robert endured the tumultuous years under the rule of Mary I (r. 1553–8), like Elizabeth spending time in the Tower of London, then supporting Elizabeth and earning her lifelong gratitude. On her accession day (17 November 1558), Elizabeth named him Master of the Horse, a post that kept him involved with progresses, military preparation, entertainment such as music and masques and, perhaps most importantly, as it assured opportunities for private conversation, Elizabeth’s frequent hunting rides. During the next few months and years their friendship grew closer, until Dudley was viewed as the queen’s favourite by all the court. Ambassadorial reports are replete with rumours that the queen would
marry her Master of the Horse. For instance, the Italian ambassador described Robert Dudley as 'a very handsome young man towards whom in various ways the Queen evinces such affection and inclination that many persons believe that if his wife, who has been ailing for some time, were perchance to die, the Queen might easily take him for her husband.' Dudley’s wife Amy Robsart was in fact found dead at the bottom of a staircase in 1560. We can speculate that before Amy Robsart’s death, Elizabeth could flirt with Dudley because marriage was unobtainable. However, now that it was suddenly a possibility, duty and reason set in and Elizabeth backed away. Perhaps Dudley, on the other hand, despite accusations of murder, saw in the death of his wife a chance to consider seriously marriage with Elizabeth. Although this marriage would never take place, they remained devoted friends all of their lives. Elizabeth bestowed a number of honours upon Dudley, the most significant of which was the earldom of Leicester. However, at times their friendship was strained. Elizabeth was notoriously jealous of the women in her councillors’ lives, to the extent that most wives lived in the country while their husbands served at court. Moreover, Elizabeth used her status as a single queen to bargain in the political arena. During the course of her reign, marriage proposals were offered by Phillip of Spain, Charles of Austria and the Duke of Alençon. Dudley, being protective of the queen, tended to disapprove of these proposals, but this did not prevent him from surreptitiously flirting with other women at court. In the early 1570s Dudley had an affair with Lady Douglas Sheffield, which culminated in a secret marriage in 1573. Lady Douglas bore him a son, but when Dudley’s interests took him elsewhere, he bribed Lady Douglas to disavow the marriage and his son was never acknowledged to be legitimate.

The reason for this was that Dudley’s eye had been caught by Lettice Knollys, Elizabeth’s first cousin and reputed to be the most beautiful lady in Elizabeth’s retinue. Along with the obvious physical attraction, he was also led to contemplate marriage because of a sincere desire for a legitimate son to carry on the family name. His only surviving brother, Ambrose, was ageing and did not show any hope of fathering a son. It would be left to Robert to produce an heir. Expressing poignant feelings, he wrote:

"[It] forceth me... to be [the] cause almost of the ruin of my own house. For there is no likelihood that any of our bodies of men kind [are] like to have heirs. My brother you see long married and not likely to have children. It resteth so now in myself, and yet... if I should marry I am sure never to have favour of them that I had rather yet never have wife than lose... yet is there nothing in the world next that favour that I would not give to be in hope of leaving some children behind me, being now the last of our house. But yet, the cause being as it is, I must content myself..."

Dudley realized that his own marriage would put his relationship with Elizabeth at risk. While there was little
likelihood at this late date that Elizabeth would ever consent to marrying Dudley herself, their relationship was still valuable to him personally and certainly politically. However, in 1578, Dudley made his own decision and married Lettice Knollys secretly in the early spring and then in a private ceremony at Wanstead on 21 September 1578, to the insistence of her father, supposedly without informing the queen.

Elizabeth's reaction to Dudley's marriage remains unknown. The first account to mention it is William Camden's History of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1615, nearly 40 years after the event. Camden reported that Dudley's marriage was kept a closely guarded secret from the queen. He maintained that it was not until July 1579—a whole year later—that Elizabeth found out. As Camden put it, Jean de Simier, the ambassador from France, was negotiating the possible marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon. In the attempt to get even with Dudley for opposing the French marriage, Simier supposedly told Elizabeth of Dudley's secret marriage. Enraged, Elizabeth placed Dudley under house arrest, and would have confined him to the Tower had the Earl of Sussex not interceded on his behalf.

There are a number of problems with Camden's account. First, the queen's spy network was so extensive it seems highly unlikely that such an event could have been kept from her for long. A few years before, when Elizabeth had suspected Dudley of courting Lady Douglas, she instructed spies to watch them. Also, as Dudley and Sussex led rival factions (as put by Camden, he was "his greatest and deadliest adversary"), it seems unlikely that Sussex would defend him. Further, Camden's account of the queen's decisive reaction to Dudley's marriage is not corroborated by contemporary ambassadorial reports, which were generally a source of court gossip.

The alternative view widely accepted by modern scholars is that Dudley confessed his plans to Elizabeth privately. A possible scenario is revealed in a report by Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador:

The Queen had fixed the 28th [of April, 1578] for my audience with her, but as she was walking in the garden that morning she found a letter which had been thrown into the doorway, which she took and read, and immediately came secretly to the house of the earl of Leicester who is ill here. She stayed there until ten o'clock at night and sent word that she could not see me that day as she was unwell. I have not been able to learn the contents of the letter, and only know that it caused her to go to Leicester's at once.

Whatever the contents of the note and the revelations that followed, they caused Elizabeth to cancel her plans for the day and spend it with Dudley. Immediately after this meeting, Dudley travelled to Buxton for his health and avoided court until late July, missing much of Elizabeth's summer progress. This seems the ideal situation for him to explain his marital plans, while reaffirming his true devotion to her. After absenting himself from court, he allowed her to mourn in private and waited until she was ready to receive him again. He maintained correspondence with friends at court to gauge her reaction. On 18 June, Christopher Hatton wrote, 'Since your Lordship's departure the Queen is found in continual great melancholy. The cause thereof I can but guess at... She dreameth of marriage that might seem injurious to her.' Unfortunately for us, the letters Dudley wrote directly to Elizabeth during this period have not survived, but ten days later, Hatton was able to report that the queen had joyfully received Dudley's letters, 'because they chiefly recorded the testimony of your most loyal disposition from the beginning to this present time... Her majesty thinketh your absence much drawn in too [great] length.'

Dudley returned to court in late July, and there is no record of disharmony between the two. Indeed, Dudley was able to offer unpleasant political advice to the queen, which few were able to do. Elizabeth, however, banished Lettice from court.

The curious lack of contemporary documents reporting Elizabeth's reaction to Dudley's marriage supports the theory that Dudley told her in private, for everything seems to have been resolved privately without public scandal. Forty years later, the lack of public scandal seems to have perplexed Camden and he therefore invented his own. Instead, actions undertaken by all of the participants are completely in character for such a confession: Dudley absents himself from court and Elizabeth confides a common friend that she is troubled by a marriage. Later Elizabeth banishes Lettice from court and quietly continues as if nothing had changed. It is my theory that the citole, with its modifications dated to 1578, was another protagonist in this private exchange. As a gift from Dudley to Elizabeth, it demonstrated his humility and devotion to her. As a modernized antique, it symbolized the value of their long-standing relationship, while at the same time acted as a reassurance that Dudley's devotion would continue despite the new relationship in his life.

The citole as a gift

In 1578, the citole was already 250 years old and was a rare and beautiful antique. The crowded surface decoration of the citole was characteristic of English art in the 14th century as well as in the 16th century, although there are strong stylistic differences between the two periods. In Elizabeth's time the fashion for surface decoration is manifest in portraiture, where every available space is occupied by embroidery, jewellery or some other garnish (see for example the ornamented fabrics in Pls 2–3). Many times such decoration carried meanings hidden in emblems, and Dudley, who used the oak tree as one of his emblems, would certainly have approved of the abundant use of oak leaves in the decoration of the citole. A musical instrument (known variously as a symphalium decachordon, a pandora or an orpharion) built by the London maker John Rose in 1580 exhibits the same taste for surface decoration. The fingerboard and tailpiece on the citole share these stylistic characteristics. Portions of the soundboard of the Rose instrument are covered with small punched circles, just as on the fingerboard and tailpiece of the citole. Also, the abstract characteristics. Portions of the soundboard of the Rose instrument are covered with small punched circles, just as on the fingerboard and tailpiece of the citole. Also, the abstract patterns on the Rose instrument are similar to those on the citole and on brocaded fabric in portraiture. For a culture that, in the words of Mary Hazard, admired 'luxuriousness of material, curiosity of craftsmanship, and use for garnish', the value of the citole as an object would be high.
No record of the citole as a gift survives, but it fits with the character of other gifts given to Elizabeth by Dudley. In the documented exchanges of the New Year’s gifts, Dudley often gave Elizabeth thoughtful and original presents. In 1580/1 he gave her a small clock on a bracelet, in effect the first known wrist watch in England. In 1573/4, Dudley gave Elizabeth a fan which contained images from both of their badges to portray symbolically devotion and humility. The fan was of white feathers set in a golden handle, each side decorated with a rampant lion (to signify Elizabeth) with a bear (signifying Dudley) muzzled at its feet. In 1574/5 he gave her a doublet, which she later wore while sitting for a portrait commissioned by Dudley. At the legendary celebrations at Kenilworth in 1575, Dudley covered his gifts as well as the castle and garden with images of the bear and ragged staff.77

One gift in particular seems to carry more symbolic than practical significance. In 1579, Dudley’s nephew Philip Sidney angered Elizabeth by criticizing her relationship with her suitor, the Duke of Alençon. Dudley, implicated by his nephew’s actions, presented the queen with two golden bodkins adorned with ‘true-love knots and ragged staves’.86 Dudley could hardly expect Elizabeth to use the daggers herself, yet by giving them to her he was symbolically indicating his subservience and guilt. The true-love knots reasserted his devotion to her and the ragged staves further personalized the gift.

By combining their crests on the citole, Dudley was raising his status. If, as suggested by John Hawkins and others, the citole was a gift from Elizabeth to Dudley, she would have been lowering her status by combining their crests. In her perceptive study of the relationship between Elizabeth and Dudley, Sarah Gristwood uses an episode from 1566 to illustrate how the two saw their relationship. Having been away from court, Dudley made arrangements to meet the queen upon his return to London. He arrived in splendour with a train of 700 people. Elizabeth, in contrast, was rowed upriver with two ladies in waiting. As Gristwood writes, ‘It was in his interest that as many people as possible should know that the Queen was coming to meet him. The Queen, by contrast, had no reason at all to broadcast the fact that she was meeting the Earl of Leicester; her private pleasure, her Robert Dudley.’79

When Elizabeth agreed to sit for a portrait that would be one of a pair with Dudley, she specified that they both be facing the same direction rather than facing each other as couples were accustomed to do.63 While she made many allowances for her favourite, she was careful not to compromise her position. For this reason, it would be out of character for her to join their crests as a pair on the citole.

To support the case further for the gift coming from Dudley, it should be noted that the citole does not appear in the well-known inventories of Henry VIII’s instruments, which Elizabeth presumably inherited, nor is it among the instruments in Dudley’s possession at Kenilworth and Leicester House at the time of his death. However, when mention of the citole appears, it is as part of the Dorset collection, a collection made up primarily of royal discards.39

The strained relationship between Dudley and Elizabeth in 1578 was a private matter. The fact that there was no overt outburst from Elizabeth at the news that her favourite was marrying someone else suggests that it had been resolved privately. Likewise the citole was never a public, recorded gift, though it survives with the crests and the date 1578 to indicate that it too was a participant in the quiet drama.

A later incident, as public as this was private, further illustrates the value of gifts to mollify the queen. Their relationship reached a new low when Dudley went to the Netherlands in 1584. The campaign seemed doomed from the start: Elizabeth was unwilling to get involved in an overseas religious war and was secretly negotiating for peace even while allowing Dudley to take an ill-paid army to the Netherlands. Dudley felt strongly about defending the Protestant cause, and was welcomed like a prince by the people who wanted a strong leader. Cognisant of the delicacy of the situation, Dudley let negotiations continue for a week before accepting the title of ‘governor general’ and sending a messenger home to inform Elizabeth of the success of the campaign.

Unfortunately, his messenger was delayed by the weather, and instead Elizabeth heard third hand that Dudley had accepted absolute power in the Netherlands and, to make matters worse, that his wife Lettice was ‘prepared presently to come over…with such a train of ladies and gentlewomen, and such rich coaches, litters and side-saddles, as her majesty had none such, and that there should be such a court of ladies, as should far pass her majesty’s court here.’30

Incensed, Elizabeth sent a bitter letter of rebuke:

How contemptuously we conceive ourselves to be used by you…We could never have imagined…that a man raised up by ourself and extraordinarily favoured by us, above any other subject of this land, would have in so contemptible a sort broken our commandment…And therefore our express pleasure and commandment is that, all delays and excuses laid apart, you do presently of your allegiance obey and fulfill whatever the bearer herof shall direct you to do. Whereof fail you not, as you will answer the contrary at your uttermost peril.34

A flurry of letters crossed the channel in an attempt to smooth things over, including one letter from Dudley’s brother advising him not to return to England for fear of his life until the queen had been reconciled to him.

Again, reconciliation seems to have come according to the common patterns, though it took a long time and had emotional costs: friends and councillors interceded, Dudley reasserted his devotion and then pleaded ill health. Not before, however, his servant gave him a piece of good advice: to write to the queen and ‘bestow some two or three hundred crowns in some rare thing for a token to her majesty’.30

Was the servant remembering a previous instance when Dudley was able to appease the queen’s anger with the gift of a rare thing?

Conclusion

In 1578, Dudley risked his relationship with Elizabeth by marrying Lettice Knollys. However, he apparently was able to placate the queen for there was no public scandal. So
often today, we have records of gifts, but the objects themselves have been lost. Here we have the opposite problem: an object that appears to have been a gift, but no corresponding record. I suggest that this gift was never recorded because it was part of a private reconciliation. I believe that Dudley chose to give Elizabeth this instrument at a time when he knew he risked her displeasure. He capitalized on its rarity and beauty, and used it to invoke memories of times they had danced to the music of a violin. A modernized antique, it symbolized the longevity of their relationship, which would continue despite the new changes. The citole was an emblem to say what words could not.

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I would like to acknowledge the late Donna Cardamone Jackson, who taught the lively research seminar which resulted in the earliest version of this paper and began my propitious relationship with the British Museum citole. I would also like to thank Alice Margerum, Ben Hebbert and Dan Larson, each of whom participated in many delightfully stimulating citole conversations and helped me develop my thinking.

Notes
1 Hawkins 1776, vol. 2, 687.
2 Kevin et al. 2008, 13 (Appendix A, this volume, p. 112).
3 See Hebbert, this volume, pp. 61–72.
4 Holman 1993, 30.
5 Ibid., 71–7.
6 Ibid., 89.
7 Ibid., 89.
9 Lodge 1838, vol. 2, 386.
10 Hume 1899, vol. 4, 650.

For example, on 17 November 1573, the Lord Chamberlain wrote to the Mayor of London, excusing the court musicians from service in a town office which could potentially conflict with their duties at court. See Holman 1993,420.
12 Gairdner and Brodie 1898, vol. 4, 614.
13 Holman 1993, 123–6.
14 Wilson 2005, 249.
15 Quoted in Gristwood 2007, 19.
18 Camden 1888, 232–3.
22 Dudley Papers at Longleat, III, f. 190. Quoted in Ibid., 230.
24 Hazard 2000, 79.
26 This portrait is now in the Reading Museum. Goldring 2005.
27 For examples of the bear and ragged staff on the castle and gardens, see Nichols 1823, Progresses vol. 1, 423, 473, 476.
29 My thanks to Ben Hebbert for this insight.
30 Gristwood 2007, 235.
31 Goldring 2005, 655.
32 Hawkins 1776, 687. The Dorset collection, kept at Knole House, Kent, is still renowned today for its collection of Stuart furniture. The collection of 17th-century furniture is the result of the efforts of two men: Lionel Cranfield, the Earl of Middlesex, who was Lord Treasurer to James I, and his grandson Charles Sackville, who served William III as Lord High Chamberlain. Through their professional capacities and friendship with their monarchs, both men acquired royal discards.
33 Bruce 1844, 112.
34 Ibid., 110. The bearer of the letter had instructions for Dudley to make a public resignation of the government he had accepted.
Highly decorated medieval and early modern musical instruments are a rarity, and although decoration is secondary to the purpose of an instrument, it reveals an important conjuncture between the aural and the visual. By ornamenting an instrument, through carving, painting or inlay, it blurs the boundaries between the object’s function and aim and has the power to transform it into a decorative work of art. But while a musical instrument can be understood as an object created to produce sound, how do we define the decorative arts? Historically, there has been a divide between the decorative and the fine arts. The latter has been categorized to include paintings, sculpture and architecture – those arts whose function is to embody the beautiful and encourage contemplation. In contrast, the decorative arts comprised manual activities such as woodcarving, glassblowing, pottery, metalsmithing and weaving.

In his 1785 essay ‘Preliminary ideas on the theory of ornament’, Karl Philipp Moritz discusses the decorative or mechanical arts from an aesthetic point of view, noting that they are commonly understood as objects whose purpose is utility while the goal of the fine arts is to please. However, he questions the distinction between the two and proposes that pleasure can be derived from both. In turn, decorative musical instruments have the power to combine art and function in their ability to please and emanate beauty through sight and sound. In this essay, four rare extant musical instruments, comprising the British Museum citole and three Italian stringed instruments, will serve as artefacts that have been transformed through their elaborate carving into sculptural objects, thus blurring the boundaries between the fine and the decorative arts.

The first instrument, the British Museum citole, is an embodiment of the useful and the beautiful. A plucked stringed instrument, the citole was popular in Europe from approximately 1200 to 1400 and may have been used as an accompaniment to songs, perhaps love ballads. The decoration on the citole is primarily rendered on the side panels, headstock and trefoil. The side panels are carved with a dense woodland scene filled with humans, animals, hybrids and wyverns (a dragon-like forest-dwelling creature with wings). Many of these figures are grouped together on the citole to create settings associated with the Labours of the Months. Frequently depicted in medieval visual arts, especially manuscript illuminations, the labours were a cycle of agricultural activities with symbolic undertones connected to the months and seasons of the year. A person pruning trees, for example, represented a prime occupation for the month of March, as seen on one of the citole’s side panels (Pl. 1).

Trimming trees in the spring alluded to new growth, rebirth and fecundity. The scene could also represent November or December, and the figure with the axe may be interpreted as a man chopping down firewood for the winter months ahead. The feeding of pigs was also depicted as an appropriate labour for the colder months, November in particular. On the citole, a swineherd uses a long pole to knock acorns off an oak tree to feed the pigs below thus fattening them for the winter slaughter (Pl. 2). The pig is an icon of abundance, yet it also exemplified overindulgence and lust.

The last month depicted on the citole is that of May. It is commonly associated with the hunt, or, similar in its
objective metaphorically, courting or courtly love. On one of the side panels, a hare (an archetypal symbol of female power and fertility) is being hunted by a hybrid creature (Pl. 3). The depiction of the hare just before it is pierced by the hunter’s arrow suggests in a broader sense man’s dominance. Additionally, the presence of the hybrid creature raises another duality, the idea of the fantastic versus the earthly. As discussed by Edward Alexander Jones, since hybrids are ‘inherently two bodies within a single corporeal boundary, they are neither one thing nor the other’. Moreover, scholars have related the forest (where the hybrids dwell) as not only a botanical phenomenon, but also as ‘the forest of love through which the lover will have to find his way’. These complicated binaries perhaps are meant to represent the multifaceted dualities of love.

Overall, the three labours represented on the citole may at first be seemingly unrelated. However, the citole invites our intimate interaction and reveals a correlation between the purpose of the instrument, which was most probably to accompany love ballads, and the themes of the decorative carving which reveals a series of amorous and symbolic activities. The British Museum citole is an embodiment of love, providing pleasure and reflecting the era’s prevailing style. While the citole is indeed unique, three other extant secular musical instruments dating from the 15th and 16th centuries can also be acknowledged as both decorative works of art and as instruments exhibiting a total visual impact of ornamentation and a veritable triumph of emotions and the senses.

Possibly a bridal gift, the next instrument is a northern Italian *mandora*, or *chitarino*, made in Milan around 1420 (Pl. 4). The decorative carving on the back of the *mandora* depicts a man and woman standing arm in arm beneath a tree. A dog sits at the woman’s feet, perhaps acting as a symbol of fidelity, and a falcon rests on the man’s arm, a sign of nobility and a metaphor of the lover, the lady or even love itself. The falcon could also be a sign of the man’s hunting role in the relationship, his future wife being the prey. Additionally, the man places his hand on his purse as if to indicate his masculinity and fecundity.

Cupid, an allegory of love, hovers above the couple. Armed with his bow and arrow, he fires down at the woman and in turn startles the stag below. In 13th and 14th-century poetry, a stag was a metaphor for one who obediently offered
himself to his lover. The poet Lapo Gianni related the state of being in love to the outcome of a chase; the doe realizes that she will not escape and succumbs to the hunter, just as lovers capitulate to one another. Carved at the top of the neck, a figure holding a scroll stands above the couple as if to sanction their union and to add his blessing. On the front of the instrument surmounting the pegbox a female musician plays a gittern (Pl. 5). Here, as with the citone, we are enticed by the idea of courtly romance, hunting and the visual feast of carvings that elegantly encompass the surface area of the instrument. The mandora has brought together music and love, major components of a wedding celebration, and the instrument itself, if a bridal gift, combines the ideals of love and the courtship process. 

The third instrument, known as the Venus rebecchino, was made in Venice in the 15th century (Pl. 6). Named after the image of the goddess of love that is carved into the body, the nude figure has long, flowing hair and simply wears a pair of sandals and a necklace. The figural pegbox takes the form of a male head, and the side panels are carved with vines and grape clusters, the latter possibly referring to Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, who signifies love, fertility and virility. While the rebecchino does not exhibit a visual explosion of imagery, it illustrates the contribution made by musical instruments to the visual arts. Despite the

Plate 3 Detail of the British Museum citone’s side panel depicting a hare being hunted by a hybrid creature

Plate 4 (left) Mandora or chitarino, northern Italy, possibly Milan, c. 1420, boxwood, rosewood and bone, 36cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 64.101.1409 (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence)

Plate 5 (above) Detail of the pegbox of the mandora (Pl. 4)
fact that the instrument is not complete (as the soundboard and fingerboard have not survived), ‘it is still considered a work of art and one of the few existing of its kind’. Its classification as a work of art attests to its ability to blur the aural and the visual.

The final instrument is a *lira da braccio* carved by Giovanni d’Andrea in 1511 (Pl. 7). It may have been used either as a solo instrument or as part of an ensemble, probably played to accompany dances or the reciting of poetry. Poet-musicians, originating in Italy, were influential in the courts and performed for elite circles. The most popular instrument of these musicians was the *lira da braccio* as it was used to accompany improvised recitations of lyric and narrative poetry.

One of the few extant examples from the Renaissance, the decoration and construction of the *lira da braccio* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum is outstanding. The fingerboard is adorned with inlay in ivory, ebony and green-coloured horn, a technique favoured in northern Italy and known as *certosina*. The two strings projecting from the side of the instrument were employed as drones to strengthen the tone, while the five running over the fingerboard were used for the melody. The overall shape of the *lira* has been designed to take the form of a nude figure – the idea of love and seduction again takes hold. In this case it is not just the subject matter, but also the form and tangibility of the *lira* as well as its smooth surface that invites us to feel and to touch. The front resembles a man, the pegbox a grotesque face and the soundboard a male torso. The reverse, however, takes the form of a female body, with a smiling face carved on the pegbox and the soundboard in the shape of a female torso with clearly rounded breasts and a navel. Superimposed over this, Giovanni d’Andrea has carved a bearded male visage. The carving of this mature character is perhaps meant to represent intellect, as this was a prerequisite for fully appreciating music, whether as a player or a listener.”
Upon examining these four objects, it is clear that they are multifunctional. First and foremost, they were created to be musical instruments and their detailed carving transformed them into decorative works of art. Yet the instruments examined in this chapter are also embodiments of love and are cultural artefacts embedded with symbolic connotations. Indeed, as an object itself can be multifunctional so can its decoration, as noted by the scholar Christoph Rueger who proposes two objectives for the adornment of musical instruments: one he terms ‘showiness’, the other ‘stimulative’. Both suggest their own social and psychological undertones. For the former, he explains that certain instruments ‘were not only to be heard, but also had to impress without being played’. The decorations on the mandora, rebeccino, lira da braccio and the British Museum citole discussed in this chapter support this idea of showiness. The detailed craftsmanship not only enhances the importance of the instrument, but also draws attention to the owner’s status and taste.

The second, stimulative, function of the decoration ‘was intended to influence the player while enhancing the experience of the listener’. This allowed the instrument to be experienced on two levels that consisted of the sound and emotion of the music as well as the sight and emotion of the decoration. We must consider, however, that an audience would not have immediately seen most of the decoration on the four instruments described in this chapter. With regard to smaller instruments, the player or proprietor was the determinate in bringing the viewer’s attention to the object’s detailed visual components.

Overall, the British Museum citole is one of few extant musical instruments of the late medieval period valued for these diverse experiential qualities, thus bringing it effortlessly into both the musical and the art-historical realm. A veritable labyrinth of beauty in which the eye loses itself, the citole is not unlike an expressive passage from Moritz’s theories on the decorative arts in which he describes the pilasters in the loggia on the second storey of the Papal Palace. Executed after designs by Raphael, the painted plasterwork depicts grotesques comprising flowers and foliated arabesques enlivened with animal and human forms. Reflecting on the decoration, he writes:

Nevertheless, even here everything still falls into a certain unity…in some of these combinations there is some sort of plan to be found – but much is the work of caprice, in which no interpretation is possible, and the quirks of the imagination simply spin on their own axis. This is the essence of decoration, which observes no law, because it has no purpose but that of giving pleasure.

This excerpt reminds us that even where meaning and structure can be found, one also must allow for a bit of whimsy and exploration. I would argue, however, that decoration undeniably is multifunctional. In addition to giving pleasure, ornament reflects the prevailing style and taste of the period and it forces the viewer to question categorization. The medieval and Renaissance instruments discussed here are not only musical instruments, they are sculptures and are evidence that music and art share a long history. As their use and context has shifted, they have become valued for their aesthetic purposes, craftsmanship and ingenuity. ‘It is not so much that we need the beautiful in order to delight in it: the beautiful needs us in order to be apprehended. We can survive perfectly well without looking at beautiful works of art; but they cannot well exist, as such, without us to look at them.’ The beauty that emerges from the sculptural decoration carved on the British Museum citole, and the instruments from the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, highlights that it is not only the fine arts, but also the decorative arts, which have the ability to please and to stimulate.

Notes
1 Moritz 2000, 30.
2 Remnant 1986, 19. See also discussion by Phillip Lindley, this volume, pp. 1–8. This was indeed an anomaly considering that the most decorated parts of Renaissance English stringed instruments were usually the tailpiece, fingerboard and pegbox.
3 Another account of this action can be seen in the Luttrell Psalter c. 1325–35 (British Library, Add. 42130 f.59v), a manuscript made famous by numerous depictions of everyday life. It illustrates the task of a human figure in the margin actively engaged in this seasonal labour and attests to the commonality of this subject in art.
4 Jones 2004, 53.
5 Abraham 1963, 591.
6 Camille 1998a, 96.
7 Watson 1979, 38–9.
8 Camille 1998a, 104.
10 The instrument was developed and cultivated chiefly in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries, and it appeared in other European countries only to the extent that Italian culture had an influence.
11 Rueger 1986, 50 and 87. Additionally, the back includes a small ivory plaque placed towards the bottom of the lute, literally in the man’s beard. It includes a Greek inscription (‘ΑΥΤΗΣ ΙΑΤΡΟΣ ΕΞΗΤΙΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ ΩΞΗ’), which can roughly be translated as ‘Men have sung as the physician of pain’ or ‘singing is medicine against human suffering’. It was perhaps a reference to the healing powers of music.
12 Rueger 1986, 12. He also mentions a third function that pertains to stationary musical instruments that serve as part of a room’s interior decoration.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 13.
15 Moritz 2000, 262.
16 Ibid., 31.
The several aspects of stringing, including the materials of the strings, their density, tensile strength and elasticity, the relationship of their length and thickness to pitch and the correlation of these various factors to tone quality are important considerations in the design and use of musical instruments. The present study will explore these issues with reference to the medieval citole and its apparent descendant, the Renaissance cittern. In particular, it will consider the various string materials that were available at those times and will examine the physical laws of strings as they would have been understood by the makers of these instruments. In doing so the discussion will sometimes seem to stray quite far from the citole and cittern. In part, this is necessary because the evidence pertaining directly to these instruments themselves is sparse, especially for the citole.

A wider viewpoint, however, is not just necessary, but is also appropriate. There were surely no citole makers per se, just artisans who made various different types of stringed instruments and who also, in the likelihood of being carvers or woodworkers in general, would have made a variety of other wooden objects. The skills and knowledge of an individual artisan would have been applied, as required, to all the different types of instruments and objects produced side by side. Furthermore, the traditions within which an individual worked would have been handed down through many generations of familial or master-pupil relationships, and many of the technologies developed for one type of instrument would have been applied to newer types as it became obsolescent.

The purpose of this chapter is to assemble and consider the scattered evidence and, where possible, to construct a plausible historical model. Much of the argument is frankly speculative and, were it not stylistically awkward, should largely have been written in the subjunctive, with even more ample use of such qualifiers as ‘perhaps’, ‘presumably’ or ‘seemingly’.

As medieval Europe inherited much of its technology and science from classical antiquity, it is useful to go far back in time to consider the origins of the traditions of instrument making within which the citole arose. Thus, for example, it is appropriate to consider the lyres played in the Germanic regions of northern Europe and in Britain from about the 6th century AD to the 10th or 11th century or so, of which the best known example (if not the best preserved) is from the early 7th-century ship burial at Sutton Hoo, now at the British Museum. These presumably were related directly or indirectly to the ancient Greek and Roman lyres, themselves stemming from older Mesopotamian or Egyptian traditions. Communications and trade in the ancient and medieval worlds were not as limited as one might think. Coptic vessels were interred at Sutton Hoo. A bronze Hindu idol (now in the Historiska Museet, Stockholm) reached Viking Scandinavia and runic inscriptions have been found in Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Similarly, Indian and Persian lutes reached Japan in the 8th century and Arabic manuscripts discuss strings of silk that must have come from China.

Further, if the past is a foreign country, then sometimes a foreign country is the past. For example, the bowed lyres played in the Baltic region into the 20th century most likely...
stems from the Germanic lyre tradition, while the plucked lyres still played in East Africa are presumably closely related to those of ancient Egypt. All of these factors are potential sources of information about how the makers and players of medieval Germanic lyres may have strung their instruments and consequently how citoles may have been strung by their successors. Similar evidence could be derived from other instruments, including harps, lutes and zithers.

The physical characteristics of strings and how they vibrate can be understood or expressed in various ways, ranging from the subjective and qualitative to the objective and quantitative. Although a comprehensive mathematical expression of the vibration of strings (incorporating, for example, the effect of elasticity on tone quality) was not devised until the 20th century, the physical theory of strings has been expressed mathematically—in other words quantitatively—since the time of the legendary Pythagoras in the 6th–5th centuries BC. Exposition of the traditional Pythagorean laws of strings was a common component of medieval and Renaissance treatises on music theory, and in all periods it is likely that current theories of the physics of strings were factored in to the actual instrument-making practice. In medieval and Renaissance Europe this would have come about directly through the participation of so-called learned constructors, scholars knowledgeable about the theory who in one way or another participated in making musical instruments or at least in overseeing their design. A prime late medieval example of such a person was Henry Arnault of Zwolle, who around 1440 produced his well-known treatise on the design of keyboard instruments and the lute. Knowledge or techniques originally devised by such persons would have been transmitted to the artisans assisting them in making instruments and then passed down from the artisan to succeeding generations of artisans. These would have been oral traditions, as most artisans were more than likely illiterate.

The physics of vibrating strings is universal, but the scientific understanding of how strings function was significantly flawed until comparatively modern times, that is until the time of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and Marin Mersenne (1588–1648). Equations based on actual experiments rather than ancient authority were published by Mersenne (1588–1648). Exposition of the traditional Pythagorean laws of strings was a common component of medieval and Renaissance treatises on music theory, and in all periods it is likely that current theories of the physics of strings were factored in to the actual instrument-making practice. In medieval and Renaissance Europe this would have come about directly through the participation of so-called learned constructors, scholars knowledgeable about the theory who in one way or another participated in making musical instruments or at least in overseeing their design. A prime late medieval example of such a person was Henry Arnault of Zwolle, who around 1440 produced his well-known treatise on the design of keyboard instruments and the lute. Knowledge or techniques originally devised by such persons would have been transmitted to the artisans assisting them in making instruments and then passed down from the artisan to succeeding generations of artisans. These would have been oral traditions, as most artisans were more than likely illiterate.

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The first law is the erroneous theory of tension that was current until rectified by Galileo. It states that to raise the pitch of a string by some interval, one would increase the weight stretching the string by the Pythagorean ratio of that interval. Thus, for example, two equal strings would sound a fourth apart if one of them were stretched by a three-pound weight and the other by a four-pound weight. Galileo discovered by experiment, however, that for the desired results you actually have to raise the tension by the square of the traditional Pythagorean ratios. Thus, for an octave four to one, not two to one; for a fourth, sixteen to nine, not four to three. The old erroneous law can be expressed mathematically by stating that frequency varies directly according to tension, while the correct relation is that it varies according to the square root of the tension. This, however, was mainly of theoretical interest, as no one, even today, tunes an instrument by measuring the tensions of the strings.

In Desideria tuo fili it is the third law, pertaining to the thicknesses of strings, which would have been of practical significance in stringing actual instruments. The word grossitudo (here translated as ‘magnitude’) deserves comment. If one were to assume that it meant diameter, then the law would be correct, in that, all else being equal, frequency varies inversely according to diameter. However, grossitudo in this context almost certainly meant ‘magnitude’ in the sense of the size of a string measured according to its cross-sectional area. This interpretation is supported by the treatise’s fifth law, which is essentially its third law of strings applied to organ pipes. Medieval music theorists routinely treated the laws of strings and pipes together as equivalent to each other in order to demonstrate the universal nature of the Pythagorean ratios. For organ pipes, it is carefully explained in the fifth law that the amplitudo, which is clearly analogous to the grossitudo of strings, is proportional to the square of the diameter. (That this fifth law is completely incorrect for organ pipes is not of concern to the present discussion.) Thus, grossitudo, like amplitudo, must mean cross-sectional area, with which the third law of strings is
incorrect. Applying it, for example, to lower the pitch by an octave while maintaining the same tension, one would double the cross-sectional area of the string (at the same time doubling its volume and weight). According to the physically correct understanding introduced by Galileo, one would have to quadruple the cross-sectional area (also quadrupling the string’s weight and volume, but only doubling its diameter); to lower the pitch by a fourth one would increase the cross-sectional area by the ratio of sixteen to nine, the square of the Pythagorean ratio 4 to 3 by which one would increase the area according to the older theory expounded in *Desiderio tuo fili*.

Unlike organ pipes, the diameters of which were readily visible and could be measured and compared with common tools in visibly perceptible units down to, for example, something on the order of a twelfth of an inch, there was not until the 17th century at the earliest any tool available to measure the minute diameters of strings. All that string makers or users could do to specify and compare their sizes was to weigh them or to count the number of strands of organic material twisted together to make an individual string. Both methods are equivalent to dealing with the cross-sectional area. Even the 17th-century scientists who developed the modern understanding of the physics of strings comprehended the size of strings in terms of the number of strands, cross-sectional area and weight: Marin Mersenne observed that the large strings in theorboes and bass viols, made of 48, 50 or 60 strands, were four or five times larger than the 12-strand gut string used for tennis racquets. Similarly, Galileo, discussing strings in general, whether made of gut or metal, compared their size (grossezza) in terms that can only mean cross-sectional area, as if this was the normal manner of thinking that it undoubtedly was. Galileo did not count the strands of gut, a procedure that in any case could not have been applied to metal strings. Rather, as he explained:

... of the three methods for sharpening a tone, the one which you refer to as the fineness of the string should be attributed to its weight. So long as the material of the string is unchanged, the size and weight vary in the same ratio [that is, because the cubic volume of a cylindrical string varies directly according to its cross-sectional area]. Thus in the case of gut-strings, we obtain the [lower] octave by making one string 4 times as large as the other; so also in the case of brass one wire must have 4 times the size of the other; but if now we wish to obtain the octave of a gut-string, by the use of brass wire, we must make it, not four times as large, but four times as heavy as the gut-string: as regards size therefore the metal string is not four times as big but four times as heavy.

Although there is very little direct evidence of medieval stringing practice from Europe itself, there is considerable evidence from other areas which, one can surmise, had deep historical connections with the western European traditions that gave rise to the cithole and cittern. The section on music in the encyclopedia produced by the Ikhwān al-Safā (Brethren of Purity) in Basra (Iraq) in the 10th century specified the stringing of the ‘ūd (the Islamic predecessor of the European lute) with four courses tuned in fourths: the lowest string should consist of 64 threads of silk twisted together, the next string 48, then 36 and 27. Thus, each successive string, according to the classic 3:4 ratio of the fourth, had three-fourths the number of strands of the previous lower string, that is, with three-fourths the cross-sectional area. An equivalent method, described by an 11th-century Cairo musician Ibn al-Tahhān, was that each next string of the ‘ūd, from highest to lowest, should weigh one third more than the previous. Calculating the relative tensions generated by these methods, one finds that the tension on the top course is more than twice that on the lowest course.

The technology of silk strings must have arisen in the Far East, and, indeed, there are similar schemes of counting threads for the strings of the Chinese *gin* (a type of zither) according to the ratios of the intervals: 108, 96, 81, 72, 64, 54 and 48 for open strings corresponding to C, D, F, G, A, c and d. Again, the tension on the highest pitch string would be more than twice that on the lowest string. Horsehair has also been used to make strings in various cultures. It has been reported that the two strings of the *morin khuur*, the Mongolian horse-headed fiddle, a fourth apart in pitch, are made from 130 stallion hairs and 105 mare’s hairs. The latter number is fairly close to the 98 (rounded up from 97.5) that one would expect from taking three-quarters of 130, and, under the assumption that mares’ hairs are somewhat thinner than stallions’, might result in a string close to three-quarters the cross-sectional area of the larger string. If so, the tension on the lower pitch thicker string would be three-quarters of that on the higher pitch thinner string.

A similar method of making horsehair strings with the number of strands varying according to the ratios of the intervals is evident in several bowed lyres collected in Scandinavia and the Baltic region in the 19th century. Although the original tunings are not known with certainty, the strings seem often to have been tuned in fifths. The two surviving strings of 36 and 24 hairs on a three-stringed instrument are exactly in the ratio of a fifth, 3:2. The strings of 31, 22 and 15 hairs on another example are fairly close to the appropriate ratios for the second and third strings to be a fifth and an octave above the first. Although these 19th-century instruments come from a rather remote part of Europe, they, like the Welsh *cwrth* (also a type of bowed lyre), presumably represent a branch of the Germanic lyre tradition stemming from the early Middle Ages.

To judge from written sources, strings were rarely made of silk or horsehair in the vicinity and period of the cithole when gut was the predominant string material of organic origin. Gut strings are made from individual strands of membrane, but since these were much more substantial than silk or horsehair the counts are much lower. These too were counted according to the musical ratios: the 9th-century philosopher al-Kindī, living in Baghdad, wrote of gut strings the size of 1, 2, 3 and 4 strands for the four courses of the ‘ūd (although the smaller two sizes were actually made of silk amounting to the equivalent thicknesses). That strands of gut were counted to make strings in Europe in the period of the cithole is shown by a brief treatise, *Ad faciendum cordas lire* (“To make strings for the “lyre””) found in several 14th and 15th-century English manuscripts instructing one, after preparing the membranes, to ‘join two or three or four together according to the quantity that you wish to have.”
Although Christopher Page has suggested that the *lira* for which these strings were intended might have been the harp, the intended meaning of the term may well be indicated by a note over a drawing of a citoles in a 14th-century manuscript stating that ‘lira ... est sitola’.24 In any case, the gut strings of the same manufacture would have been used for all gut-strung instruments. If one allows for the likelihood that strings were also made from a single strand, as they certainly were in later centuries,25 and perhaps more than four strands for instruments other than the *lira*, whatever instrument it was, the sizes of strings according to their strand counts, could be chosen according to the most common musical ratios: the octave 2:1, fifth 3:2, fourth 4:3, major third 5:4, minor third 6:5 and major sixth 5:3.26 That strings made from one to six strands of gut would be serviceable in small stringed instruments like the citoles is suggested by sizes of gut strings listed in documents dating from the 17th century to the early 19th century: strings made from two to eight strands were used for the D, A and E of the violin, similar sizes were used for the upper courses of guitars and other plucked instruments, and strings of one strand were available for harps.27

While the strand counts of fine silk or horsehair could be made to conform exactly to the musical ratios, some rounding off would at times have been necessary with the single digit numbers counted for gut strands. For example, the six strings of Germanic lyres were tuned, as described (under the name *cithara*) by Hucbald of St Amand (died 930), with a semitone between the third and fourth strings and whole tones between the other pairs, i.e., to a scale like C D E F G A,28 overall with a major sixth (ratio 5:3) in just intonation or 27:16 in Pythagorean tuning) between the two outer strings. These instruments might have been strung with the two lowest strings of five strands, middle strings of four strands and upper strings of three strands. The strand counts of the first and sixth strings would be in the exact ratio, as would those of the third and sixth, while the rest would necessarily be somewhat compromised. Alternatively, with different compromises, strings of two, three and four strands might have been used. The strings for a three-course citoles tuned in fourths might have been made of two, three and four strands.

There has been much talk in recent years about equal tension stringing for Baroque violins, viols and other ‘early’ stringed instruments (but hardly early from the perspective of citoles).29 By the second half of the 17th century, after the scientific work of Galileo and Mersenne and the development of covered strings for the bass, it was possible to achieve equal tension. In theory this makes a certain amount of mechanical and acoustical sense, in that the stresses on the structure of an instrument would be balanced from bass to treble and that the energy required to activate the strings and the energy then emitted by the strings as sound would be even throughout the range from lowest to highest notes. Instrument makers and players of earlier periods, including the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, might likewise have intended to string their instruments with equal tension, but in doing so by applying the laws of strings of their own period they would have obtained very different results. As already mentioned, choosing strings by counting the number of strands or the equivalents of weighing them or measuring their cross-sectional areas according to the musical ratios results in uneven tensions, and were much higher for the higher-pitch strings. Thus, one would expect the trebles to have been louder than the basses. The expectations of medieval musicians and listeners for balance between bass and treble might have been quite different from those of later centuries. Significant in this context is that medieval organ pipes were often made with the same diameter from bass to treble, with which there must have been a similar disparity of loudness.

With equal tension stringing, the diameters vary considerably from treble to bass, as they double for each lower octave. With strings chosen according to the earlier theory relating to the cross-sectional area, the differences are more moderate, with diameters for each lower octave increasing by the square root of two (1.414...). That the diameters of medieval strings did not vary so greatly within an instrument can be inferred from the nicks in bridges to guide the strings. The nicks in the fairly numerous bridges that have survived from Germanic lyres appear not to vary greatly if at all in size from the first to the last.29 Thus, while they could probably accommodate strings varying in diameter by 30 percent (as would be the case with strings made from three to five strands of gut), they may not have been able to carry strings varying by the 70 percent required for equal tension stringing over the interval of a major sixth. Much the same can be gathered from the bridges of other medieval instruments.30

According to *Le Bon Berger*, written by Jehan de Brie in 1379, citoles were among the many instruments strung in gut.29 This treatise on ovine husbandry, however, might have been more promotional than descriptive of actual practice. It is conceivable that citoles, or at least some of them, were strung in metal. Certainly this was the case with the four-course ‘cetula’ described in Johannes Tinctoris’s *De inventione et usu musicæ* (Naples, c. 1481–3).33 This Renaissance cittern, presumably developed out of the medieval citoles, had ‘four brass or steel strings’ (‘quatuor enec vel calibe chorde’; this probably meant that some of the strings in an instrument were of brass while others were steel). The earliest known reference to metal strings is in the definition of ‘similar strings’ in the 11th-century *Desiderio tuo fili*, quoted above (see p. 85). Although this is a theoretical treatise, it hardly seems likely that metal strings would have been mentioned if they were not in actual use making musical tones, both in the monochord as an instrument of musical science and in instruments made for musical performance.

From about the same time as *Desiderio tuo fili*, wire of various metals including brass and silver as well as the drawplates necessary to make it have been found at Viking sites in Scandinavia.34 The drawplate was also described in the well-known early 12th-century treatise by Theophilus, *De diversis aritibus*.35 All this evidence is from continental Europe, but an Irish work, *Colloquy of the Ancients* (*Acallam na Senórach*), compiled in the late 12th century, mentions a three-stringed *cruit* (presumably a lyre) with an iron string, another of bronze and the third of silver.36 If this is not just literary symbolism, metal strings of different densities might have been used for different pitches, with the weights of the...
strings arranged according to the Pythagorean ratios of the pitches. The Irish custom of using strings of ‘bronze’ (aeneis) on the harp (cithara) and timpān (sympanum) rather than ones of ‘hide’ (i.e. gut) was mentioned in the Topographia Hibernica, written in about 1187 by Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales). From the middle of the 13th century there is evidence that psALTERIES were strung in metal, as the encyclopedic De proprietatibus rerum by Bartholomeus Anglicus (c. 1200–72) stated specifically that their ‘strings are best made of brass [auricalco] and even silver’.38

In this early period, the small quantities of wire used for the strings of musical instruments might have been drawn by the same artisans who made the instruments themselves. Such objects as buckets and tankards made of carefully joined wooden staves and bronze fittings indicate that craftsmen skilled in fashioning wood and metal worked in close proximity.39 If the contents of a late Viking Age (approximately 11th-century) chest of wood- and metal fittings were fabricated, metal began sometimes to be used for strings.

There is some evidence that the metal strings on the robustly constructed medieval Irish, or better, Gaelic harps (such as the ‘Queen Mary’ and ‘Lamont’ harps in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh) were quite thick, perhaps half a millimetre or more in diameter.40 Similarly thick strings could also have been used on psALTERIES. For instruments like citoles, however, thinner strings might have been more appropriate. The technology of wire drawing seems to have undergone significant development by the second half of the 14th century, when clavicords and harpsichords were first developed. These instruments require thin iron or brass strings, drawn down to a fifth of a millimetre or less. The earliest references to the clavichord, under the name echiquier, are associated with England in the 1560s.41 Evidently, the craft of wire drawing, formerly just one aspect of the more general trades of metalworking and of silver- or goldsmithing, had already undergone some specialization in certain places: one Ralph de Notingham was listed as a wire drawer in York in 1300.42

After about 1400, the great centre of wire drawing in Europe was Nuremberg, where the drawing of iron and brass wire was divided into several separate trades using different tools to draw wire successively to different stages of fineness. Water power was used to draw rods into thick wire, then heavy duty capstans, followed by lighter capstans.43 At the end of this last stage, the wire was about half a millimetre or so in diameter, useful for binding blades to handles or bristles to brushes and for making pins, needles and cards for processing wool. Wires of this grade, whether made in Nuremberg or elsewhere, could have been used for instruments such as psALTERIES and Gaelic harps.

By about 1370 a new specialized wire-drawing trade, that of the Scheibenzieher (the fine wire-drawer), appeared in Nuremberg.44 This probably came about because of the rising demand for the fine wire used in the newly developed keyboard instruments, although it was also used for such ordinary products as scouring brushes. As there was great continuity in the Scheibenzieher’s trade, which had been conducted over centuries by members of the same families, one can infer from surviving wire made by the Scheibenzieher in the 18th century that they took as their raw material the end product of the old wire-drawing trades, that is wire about 0.55mm thick, which was eventually called gauge zero. The Scheibenzieher drew it one pass finer and called that gauge one; a second pass produced gauge two, and so on eventually to gauge 12, about 0.15mm in diameter. To judge from surviving 18th-century wire, the standard was that each pass should elongate the wire by one-quarter, with a corresponding reduction of the cross-sectional area.45 Thus each gauge was about nine-tenths the diameter of the preceding one. One could plausibly suggest that this standardization of gauge numbers and sizes arising directly from the inherent technological circumstances was in place throughout the entire period, dating back to the origins of the Scheibenzieher’s trade. Although the trade of fine wire-drawing is documented in Nuremberg only in the last decades of the 14th century, the appearance of keyboard instruments requiring such wire a decade or two earlier indicates that at least small quantities were already being drawn, if not yet in the larger quantities justifying the establishment of a specialized trade. It is therefore conceivable that fine wire might have even been available in the first half of the 14th century, when the British Museum citoLE was made.

It happens that the earliest known use of the Nuremberg gauges for fine wire is the stringing scheme given by Michael Praetorius in 1619 for the English Zitterlein (Pl. 1).46 This type of Renaissance cittern, of which an instrument in the
National Music Museum, Vermillion (South Dakota) (Pl. 2), is thought to be the only surviving example, is the closest in size to that of the medieval citole. Praetorius's gauge numbers for the four courses seem to have been chosen so that their ratios would be the closest available approximations of the musical ratios of the intervals between the courses. Thus, for example, if one begins with gauge 11 for the first course, nominally tuned to g², then for the second course, tuned to d², a fourth lower, one would multiply 11 by the appropriate ratio of 3:4, obtaining 8⅓, which would be rounded to gauge 8. Similarly, for the fourth course tuned to f², a tone below the first course, one would multiply 11 by the musical ratio of 8:9, obtaining 9⅔, which would be rounded to gauge 10. For these calculations (which would have been done by the ubiquitous Rule of Three by which proportional values were reckoned), one necessarily inverts the musical ratios, conventionally applied to string lengths which become longer as the pitch is lower but here applied to wire gauges numbers that are lower for the heavier strings. (That is, to lengthen the g² string to sound d², one would multiply by four-thirds, while with the gauge numbers one would multiply by three-fourths). That one could easily become confused in doing this inversion perhaps explains Praetorius's specification of gauge 5 for the third course, tuned to a¹. The string-length ratio between a¹ and g² is obtained by multiplying the ratio of the whole tone between g² and a¹, 8:9, by that of an octave, 2:1. Then one would take the inverse of this, 9:16, and apply it to gauge 11 of the first course, obtaining 6⅔, which would be rounded down to gauge 6. If, however, one mistakenly multiplied 8:9 by 1:2 (instead of 2:1), one obtains 4:9, which, applied to gauge 11, results in 48/9, to be rounded up to gauge 5. The differences between 9:16 and 4:9 or between 6 and 5 are small enough that the error would not immediately be obvious.

It happens that the gauge numbers for the English Zitterlein reported by Praetorius, which as proposed here seem to have been determined by varying the gauge numbers according to the musical ratios, result in more or less equal tensions among the four courses, especially with the correction of gauge 5 to gauge 6 for the third course (see Table 1). If, as proposed above, the standard Nuremberg wire-gauge system already existed in the 15th century, the calculations with gauge numbers might well have been applied to the wire-strung four-course cetula described by Johannes Tinctoris in the early 14th. Whether, as is conceivable, it was applied a century and a half before to the same quality as that used from the 16th to 19th centuries, the top course, ranging from about 30 to 40cm. Perhaps the most plausible estimate would be approximately 32cm, similar to that of Baroque violins. Under the assumption that gut strings of the same quality as that used from the 16th to 19th centuries were available in the 14th century, then the top course of the citole could have been tuned as high as about modern a². (With other bridge positions, this pitch and the following estimates for the pitches possible with other string materials would have ranged from about a semitone higher for the 30cm length to a major third lower for 40cm.) If, however, metal strings were used, the pitch would have been rather lower. With brass strings comparable to those used in harpsichords from the 16th to 18th centuries, the top course, with the 32cm length, could have been tuned to about a modern a¹.

 Doubtless such qualitative judgments of the tone quality of strings had long been made, as is evident from Johannes Aegidius de Zamora's remark, written about 1270, that 'insofar as strings are drier [he was speaking of gut] and more stretched, the sounds are more ample', and from Boethius's comment in the 6th century that lax strings do not vibrate as long as taut ones. Consequently, it can generally be assumed that instruments were designed to be strung and tuned so that their strings were stressed as nearly as practicable to their breaking point, that is, they were tuned to as high a pitch as possible. In instruments like citoles, citterns, violins and lutes, this principle is applicable mainly to the first, highest pitch course. If one knows the length, density and tensile strength of the string material, the pitch to which an instrument was designed to be tuned can be estimated.

For the British Museum citole, the original string length, depending on different possible bridge positions, could have ranged from about 30 to 40cm. Perhaps the most plausible estimate would be approximately 32cm, similar to that of Baroque violins. Under the assumption that gut strings of the same quality as that used from the 16th to 19th centuries were available in the 14th century, then the top course of the citole could have been tuned as high as about modern d-sharp. With other bridge positions, this pitch and the following estimates for the pitches possible with other string materials would have ranged from about a semitone higher for the 30cm length to a major third lower for 40cm.) If, however, metal strings were used, the pitch would have been rather lower. With brass strings comparable to those used in harpsichords from the 16th to 18th centuries, the top course, with the 32cm length, could have been tuned to about a modern a¹. If iron wire was used, as it was in the late 15th century cetula described by Tinctoris, a top course of this

Table 1
The meagre available evidence suggests that the open strings of citoles and other medieval plucked instruments were tuned in intervals of fourths, fifths and octaves, that is, not with whole tones between certain courses, as was common in Renaissance citterns like those described by Tinctoris and by Le Roy and Ballard. Thus, the British Museum citole could have been tuned somewhat higher, to about modern c2. It is possible that such a precious instrument as the British Museum citole was designed for strings of precious metal, silver or gold. With either, the pitch could have been substantially lower than that possible with brass wire.

The choice of string material also affects the practicable difference in pitch between the highest and lowest courses. The medieval Islamic 'ūd and European lute, with as many as five courses tuned in fourths, show that open strings of equal length could, if strung in gut or silk, span a compass of an octave and a sixth. Later lutes of six or more courses spanned even larger compasses with plain gut strings. The compasses possible with plain metal strings are much more limited. From the scaling of various instruments strung in brass and iron, including the early Gaelic harps, Henry Arnault's mid-15th century designs for a keyed dulce melos, 16th- and 17th-century harpsichords and 18th-century English 'guittars', one can infer that for instruments strung in plain wire the compass of open strings of equal length could span only an octave, possibly a note or two more if the upper strings were iron, the lower of brass.

The compass of wire-strung instruments could be extended by the use of twisted strings (i.e. two equal strings twisted around each other, like the hitch-pin loop of a harpsichord string extended along its entire length, and not a cover wrapped around a core). The greater flexibility of two thin twisted strands in comparison with that of a thick plain wire of the same cross-sectional area allows a twisted string to be tuned to a lower pitch without sounding false: thick plain strings tend to sound like clanging rods, with inharmonic overtones. The first known documented use of twisted strings in musical instruments is in Breve et facile instruction pour apprendre la tablature...le cistre, published by Adrian le Roy and Robert Ballard in Paris in 1565. According to their instructions, one string of the three in each of the third and fourth courses of their four-course cittern, tuned to a, g, d1, e1, was twisted (tortilliée), as can be seen in their accompanying woodcut (Pl 3–4). These twisted strings were tuned an octave lower, i.e., to A and G, thereby extending the overall compass of the instrument's open strings to an octave and a sixth. Twisted wire was certainly made much earlier than the 16th century for decorative and possibly other purposes: among the Viking Age finds at Haithabu is a coil of relatively fine twisted brass wire. Available as it was, such wire might occasionally have been used in musical instruments long before the 16th century.

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Table 1 Table of English Zitterlein stringing according to wire gauges specified in Michael Praetorius, Syntagma musicum ii, De Organographia (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), 55

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Pitch</th>
<th>Gauge</th>
<th>Diameter (mm*)</th>
<th>Relative tension†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 g2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 d2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.225</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 a'</td>
<td>(or b-flat')‡</td>
<td>6§</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 a'</td>
<td>(or b-flat')‡</td>
<td>6¶</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 f2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interpretation of the Nuremberg gauges principally after G. O’Brien, ‘Criteria for the determination of original stringing in historical keyboard instruments’.
†If brass wire were used for the third course, the tensions would be about 9% higher.
‡Praetorius gives alternative tunings of the third course.
§Erroneous?
¶Corrected gauge number suggested by the author.
Museum citole, in its probable original state with six strings arranged in three courses, would have had a minimum open-string compass of a seventh if it was tuned in fourths between courses or a maximum compass of a twelfth if it was tuned with an octave and a fifth. Unfortunately for definitive conclusions, the string-making technologies available in the early 14th century would have allowed gut or wire to be used for any of the tunings in this range of compasses. Doubtless much could be learned by trying the different possibilities, including the use of silver or twisted wire for the lowest courses, on modern reconstructions of citoles and other instruments of the Middle Ages. For both metallic and gut stringing, however, it would be appropriate to follow the Pythagorean ratio of interval between those pitches should conform to the Pythagorean ratio of interval between those pitches. Whatever the material, this will have significant bearing on the acoustical balance among the courses and consequently on suitable performance technique.

Notes
1 An up-to-date summary about these instruments by M. Bruce-Mitford is in Sadie and Tyrrell 2001, x., ‘Rotte (ii)’. See also Werner 1944, vol. 1, 10–15; Crane 1972, 10–14; and Homo-Lechner 1996, 78–89. The beautifully preserved Germanic lyre discovered in Trossingen in 2001–2 is described in Theune-Großkopf 2010.
3 See Hayashi 1973, foldout 1, between 128–9.
4 This term is adopted from Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 180. In the original German edition, Die Geschichte der Standige: Uhren und moderne Zeiordnungen (Vienna, 1992), 170, the term is ‘gedehnte Konstrukturen’.
6 Mersenne 1636–7, vol. 3, 123–6 (Le Traité de l’Instrumentes à cordes, prop. VII); Galilei 1638, 99–101. The first actual experiments leading to the correct understanding of strings, however, were actually done by Galilei’s father, Vincenzo Galilei, who reported his analysis most clearly in an unpublished treatise, Discorso particolare intorno alla diversita delle forme del diapason, written about 1598. A transcription and translation is in Palisca 1986, 180–97.
7 Translation by the author. The original text, from Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Barb. Lat. 281, is in Smits van Waesberghe 1981, 12–29 (available online at TML (www.music.indiana.edu/mlm/lat-11thADETRA_TEXT.html). The passage translated here is also found in Sachs 1910, vol. 2, 62. The dating and provenance of the manuscript are by Smits van Waesberghe, who attributed the treatise to Adalbold, Bishop of Utrecht (died 1026). This attribution, however, is disputed in Bragard 1987, 5–29.
8 The theory expounded in Desiderio tue filii was doubtless defended directly or indirectly from ancient Greek and Roman theory. The most thorough surviving classical exposition of the theory of strings, written in the 2nd century AD, is in Claudius Ptolemy’s Harmonics, Book I, chapter 11 (translated in Barker 1989, 198–301), which states that the pitches of strings are proportional to their thickness. Ptolemy’s word for ‘thickness’ is τοπογραφία, which can ambiguously mean ‘circumference’, ‘contents’, or ‘mass’. If Ptolemy had meant ‘circumference’, which is directly related to the more obvious measurement of diameter, it would be difficult to explain why he did not just use that term. Significantly, in Boethius’ 6th-century De institutione musica, which summarized the works of Ptolemy and other authorities and became the principal source of traditional music theory in the Middle Ages, the Latin word used for this quality of a string is crassitudo (Book I, chapter XII), with meanings including ‘thickness’, ‘coarseness’, or ‘density’, essentially equivalent to those of the cognate word grossitudo.
9 See Sachs 1973, 87–100.
10 That this was done already in antiquity can be inferred from the late 1st- or early 2nd-century Harmonikon enchiridion of Nicomachus who, expounding the Pythagorean laws of strings, specified that equal strings should consist of an equal number of strands. The passage is translated in Barker 1989, 237.
12 The original Italian text is available online at http://www.liberliber.it/mediatrice/libri/g/galilei/disorsi_e_dimostrazioni/pdf/disocr_p.pdf (accessed 26 November 2011).
13 Galilei 1638, 100–3.
14 Ibid., 102–3.
15 See Farmer 1939, 92; and Neubauer 1993, specifically 353.
16 See Neubauer 1993, 353.
17 See Sachs 1940, 187; where no source is cited. Similar schemes, however, are found in In-ku-chai-chin’in’u (alternatively transliterated as Taoyü Ch’in P’u) an instruction book for playing the qin by Chou Feng-chiêh, published in Fukien province in 1835. The relevant passage, translated by J. Binkley, is available on his website at http://web.cccs.pdx.edu/~jrb/chin/v39/v39.htm (accessed 22 November 2011). Rather different schemes of string counting evidently not derived from the ratios of the intervals are found in a treatise from the Song Dynasty (960–1279), as translated on the website of J. Thompson, at http://www.silkqin.com/q02pupu/q05yu/q05b.htm (accessed 22 November 2011). Nevertheless, the system reported in the 19th-century source may well have stemmed from an alternative traditional technique.
18 Melvin 2010.
19 See Andersson 1939, 90 and 122–3.
20 Ibid., 128 and 129.
21 See the compilation of sources about string materials in Page 1986, Appendix 4.
22 See Farmer 1939, 91 and Neubauer 1993, 311–12.
23 The original text in British Library mss. add. 18732 and 34622 is transcribed in Handschin 1944–5, specifically 2: jangle 2 vel 3 vel 4 simul secundum quantitatem quam vocantur habere. The version given in Page 1986, 234–5, lacks the number 2 for counting the strands.
24 See Wright 1977, specifically 28–9. See also Chapter 2, PL 1 and Alice Margerum’s discussion of ‘Text one’ (this volume, p. 19).
25 See, for example, Woodfield 1988, 109–11.
26 The ratios for thirds were mentioned already by the English theorist Walter Odington (active 1298–1316), in De speculatione musicae; see the edition by Hammond 1970, 70–1.
27 See Barbieri 2006, especially 165 ff.
29 See, for example, Otterstedt 2000, 246–7.
30 See the illustrations in Werner 1954, pl. 2; Bruce-Mitford ‘Rotte (ii)’, in Sadie and Tyrrell 2001, fig. 2; Homo-Lechner 1996, 85; and Theune-Großkopf 2010, 53.
32 The passage, in an edition by P. Lacroix (de Brie 1879, 33), mentions gut for the strings ‘de vieilles, de harpes, de rothes, de luthiz, de quierties, de rebecs, de chorros, de almaduries, de symphonies, de cytholes et de aultres instruments’.
33 The original text and a translation of the passage in question are in Baines 1950, specifically 25.
34 See Arrhenius 1929, 90–93; Beck and Dresscher 1968 (see especially pl. 12, showing coils of wire found in Haithabu); and Whitfield 1990, 13–28.
35 Theophilus 1961, 68.
39 This has been suggested, with reference to Roman-era British vessels, in Earwood 1993, 217. The same could be said, for example, of a bucket found in a 6th-century grave beneath Cologne Cathedral (in the Diözesan Museum, Cologne), illustrated in Wilson 1960, 31.
40 See Arwidsson and Berg 1999.
41 Albeit somewhat later, Michael Praetorius reported in Syntagma
musicum (1619, 56) that Irish harps had ‘rather coarse thick brass strings’ (‘ziemlich grobe dicke MessingsSäitten’).

42 See Ripin 1975.
43 Harvey 1975, 25.
44 An important study of wire-drawing technology in this period is von Stromer 1977, 89–120, which includes reproductions of the illustrations of the tools of the trade from the account of wire-drawing technology in Birunguccio 1540, book 9, ch. 8.
45 Klaus 1996a, specifically 52. See also Klaus 1996b.
47 Praetorius 1619, 53.
48 This method, also called the ‘Golden Rule’, commonly explained in medieval and Renaissance arithmetic primers, is equivalent to solving $x$ in the equation $a/b = x/c$.
49 Lest the idea of reckoning with wire-gauge numbers appear completely fanciful on the present author’s part, one should note that similar calculations were done for harpsichord stringing, with the extra complication of variable string lengths, in Bendeler 1690, 45–6. A partial translation is in Hubbard 1965, 279.
50 Morley 1597, 166.
52 Johannes Aegidius de Zamora, Ars musica, in Robert-Tissot 1974, 118; Latin text available online at www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/14th/ZAMLIB_TEXT.html (accessed 30 November 2011). Although organic strings are mentioned, the observation actually applies to strings of all materials.
53 Boethius, De institutione musica, Book I, chapter III.
54 Basically the same conclusion was reached in Abbott and Segerman 1974, 54.
55 Twisted strings are discussed ibid., passim.
56 See Beck and Drescher 1968, pl. IXc.
58 See Buehler-McWilliams 2007, 33 and fig. 26 (Appendix B, this volume, pp. 136, 137).
Chapter 10
Cytolle, Guiterne, Morache
A Revision of Terminology

Crawford Young

If organologists have Canon Francis W. Galpin to thank for applying the name ‘gittern’ to the world’s only surviving specimen of a Gothic citole (and thus inadvertently creating the title for the British Museum’s ‘Warwick Castle Gittern’ that was used for much of the 20th century), they must also concede that he was the first commentator in English to have noticed that there were different kinds of ‘gitterns’ to be found in medieval iconography. As seen in Plate 1, some depictions had what Galpin called ‘an oval-shaped hole pierced in it just behind the fingerboard, through which the player’s thumb passed and stopped, when necessary, the fourth string….we are not left in any doubt as to this peculiarity, for there is still an English Gittern of the early 14th century in existence.’ Other depictions, he noted, had a neck ‘free from the body at the back’ and which he called ‘free neck gitterns’, providing the instrument illustrated in Plate 2 as an example. The structural similarity between such ‘free-neck gitterns’ and vielles had already caught the eye of Kathleen Schlesinger by 1910, who duly introduced the term ‘guitar-fiddle’. Both instrument types, the free-neck and thumbhole, are seen in Plate 3, hanging respectively on the wall to the left of the vielle player, in this Parisian miniature from c. 1250.

Were these ‘free-neck gitterns’ or ‘guitar-fiddles’ considered to be citoles in their day and referred to as such? Does the lack of a thumbhole change the citole’s identity? Did a citole player typically play both types of instrument? The purpose of this chapter is to take steps towards answering these questions. The proposed answers necessarily involve a discussion of the gittern, here defined as a member of the lute family, smaller than the lute, with a rounded back, one-piece carved construction, gradual neck joint and sickle-shape pegbox, often depicted with frets, used throughout Europe roughly during the period 1200–1500, that modern organologists and performers have referred to by this term since Laurence Wright’s impressive research published in 1977.

Alice Margerum has cogently summarized the path of research concerning these medieval instrument types from 1776 up to 2010 – first the citole, but by association, also the gittern – that will be standard reading for any student of the subject. For the purpose of this discussion I will give a condensed version of the same research history.

Returning to Galpin, to confuse the names ‘gittern’ and ‘citole’ was, in a way, quite understandable. First, there are instruments in medieval art which, to the eyes of a 20th-century observer, look like small guitars, and the term ‘gittern’ sounds closer to ‘guitar’ than ‘citole’ does. Second, the term gittern (English) and guiterne (French) were, in fact, used from c. 1550 to mean a small Renaissance guitar of four courses, so there would be a certain logic in applying the name to a similar looking instrument from 200 years earlier.

The name ‘citole’ might have been understood sooner in modern research had there been only one ‘gittern’ term to explain. A handful of 14th-century literary sources distinguish between two types of gittern based on their origin. Some gitterns are described as Moorish while others are called Latin (in French and Spanish, guiterne moresche/guitarra morisca and guiterne latine/guitarra latina). Galpin and Schlesinger suggested that guitarra latina was the earliest
medieval name for the guitar or guitar-fiddle, while *guitarras morisco* referred to the long-necked oval lutes found in the Cantigas miniatures.  

Disagreement soon arose regarding the identity of the *guitarra morisca*. Karl Geiringer (1924) agreed with Galpin on the *guitarra morisca* but saw *guitarra morisca* as the *guiterne* of the French manuscript below (see Pl. 8). Although he recognized that the instrument was called *quinterne* in German since the 15th century, he called it *mandola* (by contrast, in 1975 Alexander Buchner referred to the instrument as *guiterne*).  

Two articles appeared in the late 1970s that at least clarified what a citole was and what a gittern was not. The first, by Laurence Wright in 1977, and the second, a research article by Wilhelm Stauder in 1979, correctly identified the citole by name, although two earlier publications by Mary Remnant in 1965 and Heinz Nickel in 1972 had included a number of iconographical sources of citoles without using the term. Two years earlier than Stauder, Wright had re-examined the terms *guitarra latina* and *guitarra morisca*. He concluded that 'only one type is mentioned in the vast majority of references prior to the introduction of the Spanish guitar. It had a rounded back and sickle-shaped pegbox shaped like a Renaissance mandora' and was in fact the 'Latin gittern' (*guitarra latina* or *guiterne latine*), whereas 'the guitarra morisca or guiterne moresche...corresponded to the instrument known in Turkey as the quipuz, and in Middle High German as the kohus, and that it entered Eastern Europe through Hungary (and Bohemia'). Wright concluded by stating that 'the Moorish gittern, at all events, differed both in form and in place of origin from the more widespread Latin gittern, which had strong affinities with the lute.'  

A fresh look at the terms *guitarra latina* and *guitarra morisca* may help us to fine tune our idea of what a citole is and what it is not. The sources given below in Table 1 contain Latin, French and Spanish name forms related to 'gittern' from the 14th century. To illustrate that ‘citole’ is clearly a different instrument type than others named in the following sources, variant citole names are listed below in parentheses when they occur within the same source as gittern name forms.

**Commentary**

**Source 1.** Johannes de Grocheio discussed the practice of music in Paris around 1300 in his treatise *De musica*, in which he named the common string instruments of his time: *psalterium/cithara/lyra/guitarra sarracenica/viella.* To which five instruments was Grocheio referring? *Viella* and *psalterium* are unproblematic, ‘vielle’ and ‘psaltery’. Both *lyra* and *cithara* are more generic and uncertain in reference to a specific instrument type. In three 14th-century manuscript illustrations, *lira* meant ‘harp’ (for one example see Pl. 10a), which seems to have been the more common meaning for
lira. A 14th-century French text by Nicole Oresme confirmed ‘lira, ce est harpe’ and ‘cithare, ce est cythole’. However, Brussels MS 21069 elaborated, ‘lira est quoddam genus cithara’ (‘lira is a certain type of cithara’), and ‘vel est sitola’ (‘or it is a citole’) (see Chapter 2, Pl. 1). Grocheio’s remaining term quitarra sarracenica is strongly suggestive of guiterne moresque or any similar term with the adjective ‘Moorish’ or ‘Arabic’.16

Sources 2–3. Two minstrels (employed by John Duke of Normandy and, later, King Charles V) named Hautemer and Labbé both played guiterne, but the first played the latine type and the second the moresche type. Machaut may possibly have known these musicians for he was in the service of John’s wife Bonne of Luxembourg from c. 1332 until her death in 1349. Both of his poems Remede and Prise are connected with Bonne,7 and contain passages naming musical instruments. Machaut is the only source for the term monache, which might suggest itself as an abbreviation of guiterne moresche.8 If monache was Machaut’s name for what others called guiterne moresche, then this leaves his guiterne to presumably be what others called guiterne latine. It seems more logical, however, that Machaut would have understood and used guiterne in the same way as the rest of his contemporaries, i.e., meaning ‘gittern’. If this was the case, then what was a monache?

Mid 13th-century images of a chordophone type from Moorish Spain (Pls 6–7) are echoed in two later Parisian sources which might cautiously be suggested as candidates for Machaut’s monache. The Spanish images apparently have skin tops with stitching on the edge, a fretless fingerboard and perhaps a rounded back constructed from a gourd, although this is conjecture. Such features are reminiscent of North African lute types, and the general form of these instruments is evoked by the instruments shown in Pls 4–5, although both of these clearly have wooden tops with central soundholes. The first example (Pl. 4) comes from the Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux, a book owned by Charles V, illuminated in the mid to late 1320s by Jean Pucelle in Paris.9 A second depiction dated c. 1405 from the library of Jean, Duc de Berry (Pl. 5), shows that specimens of this type of instrument could still be found in Parisian iconography at a later date. Whether the term monache...
referred to these instruments in 14th-century Paris remains an open question.

**Source 4.** The only non-French source mentioning the Moorish and Latin gittern distinction is the *Libro de buen amor* of Juan Ruiz (c. 1283–c. 1350). While little is known of his biography, it is possible that Ruiz was born in al-Andalus, i.e. Moorish Spain, although he is also associated with the region of Madrid. Ruiz’s list of chordophones includes çitola, guitarrina latina and guitarrina morisca, but also has viüela de péndola. The paired terms guitarrina latina and guitarrina morisca occur in no other Spanish source and do not seem to have been commonly used in that land, whereas viüela, viula or similar terms seem to be encountered more frequently.22

Ruiz was well acquainted with French literature, his own verse being modelled on French verse form. It is possible that he knew something about the fashions of Paris.21 His use of the guitarrina latina-morisca terms may be a reference or joke about the latest French musical fashion. A musical source written c. 1355, the Las Huelgas Manuscript, tells us in a pointed way that in matters of musical style, the Spanish were well aware of the French manner, which was different to their own. On folios 147v, 148 and 148v, there are marginal comments written below the tenor part, ‘manera francesa, hespanona, manera francesa’ (‘French style, then Spanish, then French’).23 Ruiz, writing in c. 1350, is surely alluding to something similar in his poem, and anyone reading or hearing it will get the joke.

In stanzas 1516–17 of his poem, Ruiz further lists those instruments which are not suitable for Arabic music (possibly because they are fretted and cannot play microtones required for Arabic modes). These include çitola and guitarrina without adjective, which may suggest that both types of guitarrina-morisca and latina are fretted. Conversely, the lute lound and viüela de péndola are well suited for Arabic music, by implication, because both are fretless. Ruiz has viüela de arco for the vielle, and as all of the Cantigas vielles are oval-bodied, the term viüela de péndola could perhaps mean oval-bodied, fretless chordophones as seen in the Cantigas miniatures (Pls 6–7), as Ruiz used it.

**Source 5.** The expansive poem *Éeches amoureux* by Évrart de Conty (Paris, 1353–1405) was the subject of a large prose commentary by the same author, the *Livre des éeches amoureux moralisés*, found in seven manuscripts including five in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.24 De Conty lived in Paris and was a physician to Charles V. His commentary contains a large section discussing music as the seventh liberal art. Following an explanation of the division of the monochord, string instruments are described as being of two different types: those with a different length for each string (harp etc.) and those with strings of the same length which can be stopped to produce different pitches (vielle etc.). How a finger is used to stop a string is then described, followed by: ‘Et pour ce sont aucuns telx instrumens signés en plusieurs lieux de cordes au travers en gardant la mesure dessusdite et les proportionis du monocorde pour savoir ou le doy doit touchier sy come nous vemos es guisternes mounesques’ (f. 60v, line 17 – ‘and for this some like instruments are marked across [by frets] in many places of the strings while guarding the measure[d intervals] mentioned above and the proportions of the monochord for to know where the finger must touch the string, as we see on guisternes mounesques’).25

Two later passages from this work mention what is apparently the same kind of instrument. The first passage is found in a discussion of the planets, here the moon, planet of the goddess Diana, which has power over waters and all kinds of moisture and humours, including the sap in trees. For building musical instruments, cutting trees during the time of the full moon was to be avoided as their moisture content was at its peak: ‘Et pour ce aussi dient les philosophes que telx arbres qui sont copés entour la plaine lune ne sont pas profitables pour faire vieles ne guisternes ne nul autre instrument de musique quelconques’ (fol. 102, line 39 – ‘and for this it is also said by the philosophers that such trees which are felled during the full moon are not usable for making vieles and guisternes or any other musical instrument’). The second passage comes in the context of a commentary on chessboard pawns, whose shields show various images which are explained symbolically, in this case a lamb. There is no part of a lamb, the text proclaims, which is not useful for something, including making gittern strings: ‘on fait de ses bouyaux les cordes a guisternes et as autres instrumens de musique’ (fol. 234v, line 13 – ‘one makes of its gut strings for guisternes and other musical instruments’).

**Source 6.** The anonymous Berkeley MS 744, written in Paris in or during the years slightly after 1375, contains a section with a heavily revised account of Boethius’ story of the quadrichord or four-stringed cithara of Mercury.26 In his *De musica* treatise, Boethius described how various ancient Greek musicians each added single strings to the four-string cithara to expand the scale to eleven strings, which are also discussed as configurations of tetrachords. The Berkeley author treats the Boethian material differently, using drawings of contemporary instruments to illustrate the evolution of the four-stringed cithara, from its basic Pythagorean intervals of octave, fifth, fourth and second, to
a tuning in consecutive fourths (which was not mentioned in the original Boethius).

First come four horizontal lines with letters representing the division of the monochord – the four strings, from top to bottom, are thus tuned c e g f (notes are not specified in Berkeley; these are simply relative intervals; the order of the strings is here already different from Boethius’ cithara of Mercury, which is c g f e). The second step in the evolution of the tuning is then shown on a four-string vielle as c d g c’ (see Pl. 8). This new tuning is attributed to Albinus, a Latin translator of the 2nd century who is not found in the Boethius cithara story, and while it is possible that this was a practical vielle tuning of the later 14th century, it may be more likely that it is a theoretical illustration of the same four basic Pythagorean intervals, but in a different order to prepare logically the next step.

The third step shows a gittern with a tuning in consecutive fourths c f b e. The order of the strings is apparently backwards, for they are, from top to bottom, e b f c. However, the accompanying text (also not in Boethius) says: ‘Thebeus the Arab loosened the lowest string, fitting a diatesseron between it and the next one, as here’.26 In other words, the previous vielle tuning of second, fourth, fourth has been changed by lowering the interval between the first two strings to a fourth. It is interesting that the gittern’s tuning is not given as A d g c’, for example, which would more literally illustrate the step described of lowering the first vielle string. Instead, the first string is left unchanged and the other three strings are changed. Further, this new tuning shown on the gittern implies a musica ficta pitch (in modern terms, a pitch that has been chromatically altered by applying an accidental) on an open string, for e above b-flat must be c-flat to make the perfect fourth.27

Following the third step, the Berkeley author picks up the Boethius account again, using two harps, clavisimbalum and psaltery as illustrations. While the illustrative use of contemporary instruments is in itself fascinating, the point here is that the Berkeley author makes a brief attempt to give an account for the difference between modern and ancient citharae tunings, and an otherwise unfounded association of Thebeus as ‘Arabic’ can be explained via his attributed instrument, the gittern.28

**Source 7.** A French translation of 1372 by Jean Corbechon of Bartholomeus Anglicus’ *De proprietatibus rerum* (c. 1240) translates cithara barbarica as guiterne de barbarie.29 Here, ‘barbaric’ paired with ‘guiterne’ may suggest an awareness of the non-Christian heritage of this instrument.

**Source 8.** In a passage from his Latin treatise *Cantuagium* on chant written in Cologne in 1380, Heinrich Eger von Kalkar describes the monochord and related string instruments. He studied and taught in Paris from c. 1352–64 and knew the late 14th-century treatise of Jerome of Moravia on music, including its unique section describing three different tunings of the vielle. Eger von Kalkar gives the guiterne (in his spelling) pride of place among chordophones, mentioning it before the vielle. He describes the possibility of playing five or six notes on one string (ut-re-mi-fa-sol/la) by stopping the string. The attention given to the instrument suggests its importance in Paris amongst educated musicians, as already attested by Grocheio’s treatise of 80 years earlier.30 The use of guiterne without epithet suggests that in this source, the term was used alone to mean gittern.

Grocheio also mentions guiterne and the other three strings are changed. Further, this new tuning shown on the gittern implies a musica ficta pitch (in modern terms, a pitch that has been chromatically altered by applying an accidental). In a passage from his Latin treatise *Cytolle, Guiterne, Morache* of 1390, Grocheio translates cithara barbarica as guiterne de barbarie, suggestive of sarracenia / mousques, and the Berkeley treatise shows a gittern figuratively illustrating a tuning developed by Thebeus arabs.

In summary, the classic gittern as described in the introduction to this essay was referred to by 14th-century Parisians as guiterne moresche / guiterne mousques / gitterna sarracensica or guiterne de barbarie, and the Berkeley treatise gives the gittern as guiterne de barbarie. The guiterne latine, therefore, must be a different instrument type, despite Wright’s claim in 1977 that it was the classic gittern. The sources listed above make it a relatively straightforward task to identify how the French called the gittern in the 14th century: either as guiterne latine, or with mousques, de barbarie, moresche, sarracenia or related adjective for ‘Arabic’ or ‘Moorish.’ A proposal has cautiously been suggested above for the significance of Machaut’s morache.
But what of the instrument called *guiterne latine*, used in Paris during this period?

A ‘Latin’ gittern was associated in some way with Italy. Was it simply the gittern, but of a different size, with a different tuning, or perhaps without frets? The iconographical evidence speaks against these proposals, for Italian gitterns of the Trecento period are often fretted, in the depictions detailed enough to examine the fingerboard configuration, and they show no consistent difference in size from their French counterparts. There is no evidence that the tuning of the gittern in Italy would have been different to its French counterpart.

However, Italy was home to a plucked chordophone not found anywhere else, one of smallish size, like the gittern, but different in shape and tuning. The *cetera* was the only member of the lute family which was native to the Italian peninsula, with a waisted or spade-shaped, flat-backed body, short neck and bulky, wooden frets (see **Pl. 9**). Forms of the *cetera* were known there since at least the 12th century and probably earlier. This instrument was the forerunner to the 16th-century cittern, and it was the only chordophone in the entire medieval period known to have had metal strings – at least in the 15th century – and a different tuning with a much narrower range of pitches than the gittern or lute.

*Cetera* are not found in 14th-century Parisian iconography, but free-neck chordophones can be found there which may have been seen as Italian in heritage and style. Two examples from the 1360s provide candidates for the elusive *guiterne latine*. We may first examine in **Plate 10b** the Parisian treatise c. 1325 of Johannes de Muris’ *De musica speculativa secundum boetium*, copied in 1362, which includes at the bottom of the image an upside-down sketch of an instrument labelled ‘chitara’ (a spelling with a distinctly *latine* flavour). This instrument has a free-neck construction and shouldered body. Like the Italian chordophone in **Plate 9**, it bears a certain resemblance to a vielle.

In fact, MS 7378A shares a marked similarity with the Berkeley manuscript of approximately 13 years later – it illustrates a Boethian-influenced text with exactly the same string instruments, except that the plucked *chitara* in 7378A is replaced with a vielle in Berkeley. Both treatises have much in common, in their list of instruments, with that of Johannes de Grocheio.

Other free-neck chordophones found in French or French-influenced 14th-century iconography may be further candidates for examples of ‘Latin gitterns’, in particular, those featuring sickle-shape pegboxes. This type of pegbox was a salient feature of the gittern, but it is sometimes seen on instruments with a shouldered body shape. The next two plates are taken from the same painting. **Plate 11** shows a *guiterne moresche*, with **Plate 12** illustrating another instrument with the characteristics just described – a plausible *guiterne latine*. Magister Theodoricus, court painter to Holy Roman Emperor Karl IV, decorated the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Karlstejn Castle near Prague. In this Apocalypse fresco painted in the 1360s, Theodoricus’ style displays the influence of ‘the art of Bruges, or, more generally, Franco-Flemish art’, according to Barbara Drake Boehm.33 **Plate 13** shows a surviving instrument with a sickle-pegbox and shouldered body in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, offering some resemblance to the proposed *guiterne latine* example in **Plate 12**. It has been dated variously from the late 14th to the early 15th century and was built either in France (Geiringer) or in northern Italy (Winternitz, Falke, Metropolitan Museum of Art). The
structural similarity with a second surviving bowed chordophone, as well as the echoed form of the instrument in Plate 12, suggest that this is not a gittern.34

So to come back to the questions posed at the beginning of our discussion, were these ‘free-neck gitterns’ or ‘guitar-fiddles’ referred to by the name ‘citole’ in their day? In Paris or Parisian-influenced culture, they may have been called guiterne latine or chitara, as explicitly labelled in Plate 10a–b. Are there any reasons why only an instrument of thumbhole construction should be called a citole?

Over the course of the Middle Ages, no single scene in the visual arts, sacred or secular, generated as many images of musical instruments in sculpture, manuscript illumination, and on painted surfaces as one word in the Revelation of Christ’s prophetic Vision of the Apocalypse. Three passages in the Vulgata translation of the New Testament mention the instrument ‘cithara’, yet in only one of them is the visual image of the cithara a salient element of the content of the scene described (Revelation 5:8, here given within its context, beginning at 4:1):35

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne there is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne there are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, set before the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a cithara [cithania] and golden bowls [julias] full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals.....”36

As a concrete visual component of the drama in the setting of the Throne of God, these citharias are an important part of the soundtrack of the Apocalypse, even though the Elders hold them and do not play them per se. According to Hammerstein, the oldest depiction of the Elders of the Apocalypse is in the 5th-century mosaic of the triumphal arch in the Basilica San Paolo fuori le mure in Rome where the Elders hold their crowns but no citharæ.37 The tradition of Apocalypse manuscript illumination began in the 8th or 9th centuries and can be divided into three subdivisions – Old Italian, Old French and Spanish.38 Instruments appear in the French and Spanish traditions, but not in the Italian.39 As a French example, Hammerstein gives the Trier Apocalypse illumination, showing the Elders holding rectangular string instruments, psaltery-like cithara and vessels (containers) for incense, the julias of the Vulgata text.40 The Spanish tradition, with surviving sources from the 10th to the early 13th centuries, however, tends to feature instruments of the lute family.41 An early Mozarabic example from the 11th century, the Apocalypse of St Sever, shows each Elder offering his vial of incense (which looks rather like a drinking goblet for water or wine) and oval-bodied, chordophone cithara to God.42 In some depictions of the Elders, as in the Gospel of Saint Médard of Soissons from the early 9th century (Pl. 14), it can be difficult to distinguish the vials or containers of incense from the oval-shaped instruments.

There is a good reason behind this physical similarity: both objects – vessels and musical instruments – are related in the history of music theory writings. Two early authorities, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville, set the tone.
for later classifications of instruments when they spoke of ‘musical vessels’ as hollow objects made to sound by air or striking and ‘vessels’ as percussion instruments.\textsuperscript{43} Chordophones were particularly apt to be seen as ‘vessels’ because some had an oval hollow body and a narrow neck. The later theorist Johannes Tintorius reminds us of this in \textit{c. 1481} when he describes the shape of a Turkish chordophone as ‘a large spoon’, while Paolo Cortese (1510) describes a lute as ‘lembus’, a ‘vessel’ or ‘boat’.\textsuperscript{44}

Besides the iconographical game of physical similarity between the \textit{cithara} and \textit{fialas} of the Apocalypse, there was another level to play on, in an etymological sense. The word ‘vial’ (an American-English spelling) was used above in the sense of ‘vessel’ or container. The British spelling of this, ‘phial’, is closer to the Latin \textit{phialem} from which it originates. The Vulgata term from Revelation 5:8, translated above as ‘bowls’, is \textit{fialas}. This is of course suggestive of \textit{viola} or \textit{viola}; indeed, Christopher Page cites \textit{phiala} as a synonym for \textit{vielle} in the high Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{45} It could also apparently carry a meaning of ‘rebec’, as in the \textit{Summa musicæ, c. 1200}: ‘Stringed instruments are those which are played with strings of metal, silk or gut; examples are \textit{cithare}, \textit{vielle} and \textit{phiala}, \textit{psalteria}, \textit{chori}, \textit{monocordium}, \textit{symphonia} or \textit{organistrum} and instruments like these.’\textsuperscript{46}

In addition to \textit{phialem}, a second kind of common container (water bucket), also used in Christian liturgy since the Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque periods, was the \textit{situla}. An intrinsic feature of a \textit{situla} is that it has a form that facilitates carrying it, i.e., a handle.\textsuperscript{47} If ceramically constructed, this meant either one handle spanning the opposite edges of the mouth of the vessel, or one thumbhole on each side of the throat of the container. Handles are naturally found on other medieval containers of liquid (e.g. amphorae, jugs and vases, typically made of ceramic), but a \textit{situla} is the only object of this kind with a specific liturgical identity.

The similarity of the terms \textit{situla} and \textit{sitola} (the instrument name, using the spelling of the manuscript Brussels 21069 discussed under Source 1 above; any number of other phonetic spellings of the chordophone’s name could be referred to here as well) is obvious, just as the physical form of the citoles, including its thumbhole, is suggestive of the vessel or container described above. The rise of the citoles as seen in Spanish sculpture of the 15th century for example, features almost exclusively instruments with thumbholes, because this characteristic, in part, defines the instrument and gives it its humorous name (no pun intended).\textsuperscript{48} This is not to say that the thumbhole construction was a conscious attempt to build a musical instrument as a pun on the \textit{cithara} of the Apocalypse, for the thumbhole body form afforded certain advantages, neck-pegbox stability perhaps as the first.\textsuperscript{49}

The two chordophones, \textit{vielle} and \textit{citoles}, whose identity is rooted in the Bible (specifically Revelation 5:8), have nothing to do with the other two common chordophones of Gothic Europe, lute and \textit{rebec} (gittern), which are non-Christian in origin and of rounded-back form. The \textit{vielle} and \textit{citoles} are certainly not suited for Arabic music, as Ruiz says in his poem discussed as Source 4 above.\textsuperscript{50} They are instruments of Christian culture and took on vernacular names with a direct or indirect connection to the symbolic soundtrack of the Apocalypse.\textsuperscript{51} A \textit{citoles}, therefore, was defined by its thumbhole construction and was properly called \textit{‘citoles’} (or recognizable variant) for that specific constructional feature/body form. Two-dimensional iconographical sources may represent the thumbhole with greater, or lesser, success; the seeming absence of thumbhole construction in a frontal, two-dimensional depiction is not necessarily proof of the depicted artefact’s lack of one. If we did not have an existing citoles with a thumbhole, and had no surviving sculptures of citoles, we might be inclined to think that painters of miniatures had indulged in an ‘artistic convention’, a collective fantasy about the structure of certain chordophones. We have an existing instrument at the British Museum, happily, and it has a thumbhole. And we have the only existing drawing of an instrument explicitly labelled \textit{‘sitola’} – with a thumbhole.\textsuperscript{52}

A plausible artistic convention in manuscript illumination for the \textit{citoles} is the depiction of the thumbhole as a curving neck with a carved head at the end.\textsuperscript{53} This may
be seen as a graphic abbreviation of the curved spine behind the thumbhole shown in the De Lisle Psalter (Pl. 1), the Tickhill Psalter and the Brussels MS 21069 mentioned above, to name but a few examples.\footnote{Following (1), these terms (\textit{guiterne sarracenica}, etc.) did not refer to the large, long-necked Arabic lute that modern interpreters since c. 1970 have used, for example, as a Turkish \textit{saz} with metal strings.} Bowed chordophones with a distinct neck joint (= vielles) are not as a rule represented with carved heads, so that the most common example of a free-neck chordophone – vielle – shows that free-neck construction is not synonymous with a carved head ornament.

Free-neck, shouldered chordophones north of the Alps (and in the context of the sources discussed above, primarily Parisian) could be associated with the Italian peninsula as the place of origin of their instrument type. A Parisian example of an image labelled with an Italianate spelling \textit{chitara} is shown in Plate 10. This source alone should tell us that 14th-century musicians understood the free-neck chordophone as something other than the citoles. Because of the similarity in shape and size to the citoles when seen from the front, in the 14th century it was useful for some Parisians to differentiate this with another name. The thumbhole citoles is not ‘Latin’ at all, for no single reliable example of a thumbhole citole has been found there.\footnote{The upper image in Plate 1 (British Library, London, MS Arundel 83 (Psalter of Robert de Lisle), f. 134v), was most recently reproduced in Margerum 2010, vol. II, Appendix B, 277.}

Did the free-neck \textit{guiterne latine} or \textit{chitara} have a different musical function than the citoles? If the free-neck instrument was in fact influenced by the Latin \textit{cetera}, its tuning, plectrum technique and perhaps string material (metal?) would have combined to produce a radically different sound and presence than the gut-strung citoles, which was also very different to the gut-strung gittern. While the citoles usually seems to have been played with a substantial, broad, straight plectrum made of wood, bone or another solid material, both the \textit{cetera} and the gittern were played with a thin, more flexible plectrum as shown in Plate 9. Materials for this type of plectrum very likely included feather(s), gut strings, perhaps also bark or thick parchment strips. The citoles plectrum, on the other hand, looks more rigid, as in Plate 1 – sometimes of a large enough size to suggest a kind of stick to strike or beat the strings as well as pluck.

This chapter has been an extended discussion of the heritage/identity (\textit{invenzione}) and terminology of plucked chordophone types, in particular, of the citoles and gittern in 14th-century France.\footnote{The Vulgata text concerning the Elders of the Apocalypse was connected with images which manifested themselves in both the visual arts of the Middle Ages and the identity (including name and physical shape) of the vielle and citoles.} It presented the following conclusions:

1. In 14th-century France, the gittern carried a Moorish-Arabic flavour not a Latin one, and was titled \textit{guiterne morsche/guyternes morsues/\textit{guitarra sarracenica}, etc.}, or \textit{gui(s)terne} alone.

2. Following (i), these terms (\textit{guiterne sarracenica}, etc.) did not refer to the large, long-necked Arabic lute that modern interpreters since c. 1970 have used, for example, as a Turkish \textit{saz} with metal strings.

3. The Latin gittern was associated with the Italian \textit{cetera}, having a free neck and articulated or shouldered body shape, rather than the sloping body of the Moorish gittern. It was essentially the ‘guitar-fiddle’ of Kathleen Schlesinger, often resembling – as her term implied – a plucked vielle. Playing it was a different specialization than playing the Moorish gittern, which could imply a different tuning and musical function for the Latin gittern.

4. Such free-neck instruments were not termed ‘citoles’. ‘Citoles’ were defined, in large part, by their thumbholes, just as Moorish gitterns were strictly defined by their sickle-shape pegboxes.

Notes

1. Galpin 1910, 16–17. Galpin found confirmation that the term ‘gittern’ referred to a small, waisted plucked instrument in Michael Praetorius’ \textit{Syntagma musicum} (1619), which shows a ‘Quinterna’ to be of this form (ibid., pl. XVI). For further discussion of the nomenclature of the British Museum instrument, see Buchler 2002, 3–4.

2. The upper image in Plate 1 (British Library, London, MS Arundel 83 (Psalter of Robert de Lisle), f. 134v), was most recently reproduced in Margerum 2010, vol. II, Appendix B, 277.


4. Schlesinger 1910, 243. ‘Guitar-fiddle’ refers of course to the waisted body shape shared by a common type of vielle and the free-neck ‘gittern’ mentioned by Galpin. Two contemporary Parisian music theory manuscripts, reproduced here as Plates 8 and 10a, each contain a series of drawings of five instruments which illustrate material loosely taken from Boethius. The instruments shown in both sources are the same – gittern, harp, eschequer (\textit{clavisimbalum}) and psaltery – with the exception of the fifth instrument, which is shown as a ‘free neck gittern’ in MS 7378 A and as a vielle in the Berkeley MS. In other words, the two sources provide an example of the similarity between the bowed vielle and plucked ‘guitar-fiddle,’ to use Schlesinger’s term.

5. The occasional occurrence of both thumbhole and free-neck instrument types within a group of musicians or instruments within one iconographical source was noted in Young 1984, 76. The sense of the statement was taken in Alice Margerum’s doctoral thesis to mean that the two instruments were ‘an obvious duo’ (suggested musical function) and ‘in conjunction as a contrasting pair’, whereas the German term ‘gepaart’ of the original sentence...
construction simply meant that both as types were found within the same group of depicted instruments. See Margerum 2010, vol. I, 256.

6 The earliest use of the specific term ‘thumbhole’ is in Wright 1977, 31.


8 For an account of the Renaissance guitar, see Tyler 1980, 23–30.

9 Since Galpin found in some examples of medieval chordophones, ‘lute’, ‘gittern’, ‘mandore’ (‘mandora’ or ‘mandola’) and ‘cithole’. Of these four terms, ‘mandore’ was erroneously accepted as a documented medieval term (it came later in the 16th century) and thus became a terminological convention in the 20th century for an instrument which in the Middle Ages had never been called that. See Wright 1977, 6–8, 18–19.

10 ‘...this instrument with vertical incurved sides and flat back was brought into Southern Europe (by the Greeks and Romans, having adopted many instruments which they found in popular use in Asia Minor), the first name given to the Guitar in medieval times being Guitare Latine or Chitarra Latina...’ Galpin 1910, 16. Schlesinger noted: ‘When the Moors introduced their improved Kithara or Githara into Spain, they found that the inhabitants already had a similar instrument obtained from the Romans, which, to distinguish it from that of the Moors, was then called the Latin Guitar. It is probable that the “Guitara Latina” was at first twanged by the means of the fingers or plectrum, and that later, when the bow was applied to stringed instruments such as the crotta, it was also used for the guitar, which we thenceforth designate as the guitar-fiddle....Fig. 29 may be the “Guitara Latina” of the same poem.’ Schlesinger 1910, 243. The figure to which Schlesinger here refers is one of the Cantigas miniatures showing a waisted instrument with a carved head. The Cantigas miniature which Schlesinger made a drawing of in Figure 28 (1910, 243) was sketched from f. 290 of the Escorial manuscript, the oval-bodied, long-necked chordophone with a broad oval peghead with frontal pegs. As Geiringer pointed out in 1949, this miniature in fact provides the sole occurrence within examples of medieval iconography of an instrument that was taken to have been a common chordophone in southern Europe of the Middle Ages. See Geiringer 1929, 53. On Schlesinger’s ‘guitar-fiddle’, see also note 4 above.


12 ‘(Es wird deutlich, dass sich der Name cithole auf die oben besprochenen Instrumente mit unterschiedlicher Zargenbreite aufteilt...diese Cithole entspricht noch nicht der späteren Cister.’ Stauber 1979, 234–5, despite Margerum’s claim to the contrary that he identified the early Spanish citholes as ‘citterns’ (Margerum 2010, vol. I, 31), Remnant 1965; Nickel 1972, pls 42–63.

13 Wright 1977, 8–23, quoted passages above are from 22–3.

14 For the relevant passages in Latin and English, see Page 1993, 30–1.

15 The three manuscripts are British Library, MS Sloane 3983, f.3 (reproduced in Montagu 1976, Plate II), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat 7328A, f. 34v and University of California Music Library, Berkeley, MS 744, p. 53. For the Oresme passage, see Wright 1977, 35.

16 The full passage reads as follows: ‘Est autem et hoc monochordum omnium instrumentorum musicorum fundamentum. Claves enim seu notas, quas ipsum habet in se conjunctum, alia instrumenta habent divisionem, ut patet in psalteriis et citharis organis et alii ludis similibus, in quibus, si chorda vel clavis una sonat re, tertia mi, quarta fa et sic ultra. In guitternis vero et viellis et rebebis et similibus, si superior chorda maximum divisa ab illa sonat re, tertia mi, quarta fa et sic ultra. In guitternis vero et viellis et rebebis et similibus, si superior chorda maximum ascensus digitorum praesentat quinque notas vel sex, altera totidem sonat, et sic usque ad infinitum et semper divisum, quod tantum monochordum facit conjunctum. Quapropter etiam monochordum fideliter examinat omnem cantum.’ Hinsen 1952.

17 This statement is in reference to my own database of citera images assembled from 1976 up until the present.


19ace Buchner 1975, who proposes the same instrument identification as above. For an opposing view, reversing the identification (in my view incorrectly), see Wright 1977, 35.

20 For a summary of datings, see Crane 1972, 16. It is not out of the question that this instrument was played with a bow (?), for it has some resemblance to a slightly later example of a bowed instrument, the so-called almaine of St Caterina de’Vigri of Bologna (this artefact is described in Tiella 1975).

21 The three passages containing ‘cithara’ are Revelation 5:8, 142 and 18:22.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid. Two points should be added here: (1) Hammerstein’s assessment of the lack of instruments in the Italian tradition of Apocalypse illumination does not apply to the later Middle Ages. See, for example, the Elders miniature from the Bible of Clements
At the time of writing I am aware of only one exception in Spanish sculpture, that is, a citole without a thumbhole, which is at Burgos; see Margerum 2010, vol II, Appendix B, 161.

For a discussion of the advantages of thumbhole construction of the citole, see Young 1984, 85.

Wright 1977, 40.

The pairing of viola and situla was noticed by Margerum. See Margerum 2010, 77–8. Wright 1977, 27–8, drew attention to various examples of viole/citole word pairings.

Alice Margerum gives two other examples of illustrations identifying citoles in her study, from *Li livres dou tresor* and the *Tablas de San Millan*. These are miniatures illustrating text passages which can point towards identifying a citole, but they contain inconsistencies, for example, using the image of a harp to illustrate the term ‘canon’, or a shawm or *doucaine* to illustrate ‘flaut’. They are important sources, but in my opinion are not explicitly labelled illustrations like the Brussels manuscript. See Margerum, this volume, pp. 19–20; Margerum 2010, vol. 1, 39.

The images from *Li livres dou tresor* and *Tablas de San Milan* in Margerum 2010 mentioned in note 54 are but two sources for many instruments depicted in this way.

Paolo Cortese’s *De cardinalatu libri tres* (1540) has been published in facsimile and translated into English by Nino Pirrotta in Pirrotta 1984, 99.

Page 1986, 220.

‘Chordalia sunt ea que per chordas metallinas, intestinales vel sericas exerceri videntur; qualia sunt citharre, vielle et phiale, psalteria, chori, monochordium, symphonia seu organistrum, et his similis.’ See Page 1991, 61.

‘Bucket-shaped vessel, often used in a Christian context to contain holy water...The most elaborate surviving situlae are Ottonian, made from a single piece of ivory and lavishly carved.’ Hourihane 2012, 598.

The similarity between the Latin term and the instrument name was pointed out by Alice Margerum. See Margerum 2010, 77–8.

Page 1986, 220.

‘Bucket-shaped vessel, often used in a Christian context to contain holy water...The most elaborate surviving situlae are Ottonian, made from a single piece of ivory and lavishly carved.’ Hourihane 2012, 598.
Chapter 11

Li autres la citole mainne
Towards a Reconstruction of the Citole’s Performance Practice

Mauricio Molina

The study of the art and literature of the late Romanesque and Gothic periods reveals that during the 13th and 14th centuries a guitar-like plucked string instrument known as the citole was particularly popular in Spain, England and France. In the sources this instrument is most commonly found in the hands of jongleurs and clerics, in the context of dance music, and is often paired with another stringed instrument, the vielle. While a reconstruction of some of the citole’s structural features is possible thanks to the study of an existing medieval specimen, the British Museum citole, the reconstruction of its performance practice seems an impossible task since there is no information about the instrument’s musical functions in treatises or any surviving music.

A reconstruction of some basic elements of this practice can, nonetheless, still be attempted by analysing, comparing and putting into context some fragmentary information about the citole that is found both in art and non-musical literature from this period. Factors such as its structural elements, the position of the player’s body and the manner of producing sound, the acoustic needs of performance environments and descriptions of specific music repertoires can help to build a fuller picture of the citole’s role in music of this era.

We should begin this investigation by looking at some performative and structural features of the citole that are commonly portrayed in visual sources. From iconographic sources we learn the following: the citole was played at chest level; in the majority of cases its fingerboard was furnished with frets; and it was invariably played with a plectrum.

The fact that the instrument was held at chest level not only suggests that the performers mostly played standing up, but also most importantly indicates that sound projection was one of the performers’ major goals. Normally an instrument played sitting down and on the lap would project much less sound than in a standing position and at chest level. The shape of the citole appears to facilitate this manner of holding and playing: many depictions of the instrument and the British Museum citole itself present a flattened back and a body that is deep on the fingerboard side but one that narrows down towards the tailpiece more or less forming a 30° angle. It is possible that this narrowing might have been devised to facilitate both the holding of the instrument without a strap and its plucking with the arm relaxed at an acute angle (Pl. 1).

As to the frets, it can be inferred from their normal purpose in other plucked string instruments that their principal function in the citole was to provide a fixed pitch. A concern for precise tuning and the use of musical instruments as guides for proper intonation is well recorded in medieval musical treatises from different periods and musical cultures. For example, the Muslim theorist and performer al-Fārābī (c. 873–950) in his Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-Kabīr informs us that instruments were sought to act as ḥāfẓah (guardians) to keep the voice correctly in tune. Similarly, some five centuries later, Giorgio Anselmi explains in his De musica (1434) that string instruments, once tuned, did not falter in their intonation as the voice did. The use of the citole as a guide for such tuning purposes is recorded in two different musical treatises. One of these sources is the 13th-century De musica by Lambertus in which...
the author recommends his pupils to write the letters of the *Gamaut* on the fingerboards of instruments such as the vielle and the citole for reference purposes. The other treatise is the anonymous 14th-century *Quatuor Principalia Musica* in which the vielle and the citole are proposed as monochord substitutes. The idea that the cithole could function as a monochord surrogate further suggests that its frets could have been positioned to produce a Pythagorean scale. During the Middle Ages the monochord was considered a didactic tool through which pitches created by Pythagorean ratios were laid out and taught.

The cithole's frets, apart from providing secure intonation, also affected the tone produced by the instrument. Frets, acoustically speaking and regardless of their material, would have helped to create a bright and sustained sound since each works as a movable top nut that allows the strings to vibrate freely, even when pressed by the fingers. Moreover, frets emphasize the middle and high harmonics of the notes produced. Since cithole players activated the strings with a plectrum, a rigid or semi-pliable tool that often generates a sharp and crisp tone rich in harmonics, it can be surmised that the interaction between plectrum articulation and the frets generated clearly voiced, bright and sustained tones.

As the production of sound relied on the action of the plectrum we should now turn to the medieval sources for an indication of how it was used. The only literary references that mention how the strings were set into motion are found in some 13th-century satirical texts composed by Galician troubadours. One of them is a poem by Joán García de Ghillalde in which the author spitefully addresses the jongleur Lourenço, a cithole player, by criticizing the way he handles this instrument:

Lourenço, pois te quitas de rascar / E desamparas teu citolon, / Rogo-te que nunca digas meu son, / E ia mais nunca me faras pesar.

Lourenço, you stop scratching / and forsake your big cithole / I pray to you that you never perform one of my compositions / so I don't have to lament such spectacle.

Similar language and imagery are also used by the troubadour Martín Soarez in another satire against a different *jongleur* who was also a cithole player:

Un jograr que dizian Lopo / E citolava mal e cantava peyor / [...] citolon mui grande sobreçado / [...] mais vas no citolon rascar.

A *jongleur* named Lopo / played the cithole badly and sung even worse / [This Lopo] had the big cithole over the arm… / [Lopo] will you scratch your big cithole?

Although it is clear that *rascar* is used by both troubadours in a pejorative way to belittle the manner in which the two *jongleurs* played the cithole, it also describes a specific action that we can visualize much more clearly than the one represented by the simple verb *tocar* (to play). The verb *rascar* is used in modern-day Spain to describe the disorganized and careless strumming of some flamenco guitar players. It is possible that the Galician troubadours used it in a similar manner. Nonetheless, it is important to take into account that in medieval Galician-Portuguese the verb *rascar* described the act of scraping or scratching something.

Although little can be deduced about the specific nuances of the plectrum technique used by cithole players from the verb *rascar*, we can assume that the Galician troubadours used it to refer to a continuous and energetic movement of the plectrum over the strings, a playing technique that would also have contributed to the instrument’s resonance.

As we have seen so far, different structural and performative elements portrayed in art and literature suggest that cithole makers and performers were concerned with sound projection and accuracy of intonation. These concerns are understandable from a functional point of view when we place the cithole in the context of sound space, repertoire and ensemble combination.

In literature the cithole is described as being performed not in quiet environments, but in noisy indoor and outdoor spaces and surroundings. For example, in the anonymous 13th-century poem dedicated to the Spanish hero Fernán González, it is noted that during his wedding citholes were played outdoors in a noisy setting: ‘De otra parte matavan los toros los monteros / avya ay muchas de citoles e muchoes yvoleros’ (‘On the other side there were horsemen killing bulls / there were also many citholes and many vielle players’). Similarly, the Benedictine chronicler and poet Gilles li Muisis (c. 1272–1352) associated the cithole with young clerics who used it to accompany their dances:

Je vic en men enfanche festyer de chistolles / les cler parisylens revenants des escoles, / et que privêtement on faisoit des karolles: / c’estoit trèstout reviaus, en rien n’estoient folles.

In my youth, I saw the Parisian students / celebrating the return to the school with citholes, / and who privately danced carols: / all enjoyable, nothing extravagant.

\[Image\] Plate 1 Elder of the Apocalypse playing a cithole, c. 1235–40. Burgos Cathedral (photo: Pepe Rey)
Moreover, in the 14th-century *Libro de buen amor* by the Spanish cleric Juan Ruiz, a poetic work considered by scholars to be an excellent record of contemporary Castilian customs, the citole is associated with taverns and the dancing of drunkards: ‘cítola e odrecillo... más aman la taverna e sotar con vellaco’ (‘The citole and the little bagpipe...love the tavern and dancing with the scoundrel’). Since the instrument appears to have been used in acoustic environments that included indoor and outdoor events with the likely participation of a noisy audience, we can assume that citoles had to be constructed and performed in the anticipation of a need for volume and projection. As inferred above, the use of a spectrum and a chest-level playing position would have contributed to this objective. Moreover, there may have been one further action that could have helped the players to increase resonance and volume: the strumming of combined strings. However, do the sources give weight to this supposition? There is a description in the literature that suggests that simultaneous strumming was more the norm than not. This reference, already partially quoted above, is found in the *Libro de buen amor* in a passage where the citole is listed as one of the instruments not liked by Muslims:

> Arávigo non quiere la vuela de arco / çinfonia e guiarra non son de aqueste marco / çitola e odrecillo non aman cagüll hallaco, / más aman la taverna e sotar con vellaco.

> The Arab does not like the vielle / the hurdy gurdy and the guitar don’t belong to his sphere / the citole and the little bagpipe don’t love the Muslim, / but love the tavern and dancing with the scoundrel.

In consideration of this rather telling allusion, we need to explore why the citole was not welcomed within the scope of Muslim music. It is possible that this exclusion was related to divergent customs, unwanted symbolism or the association of the instrument with the culture of their Christian enemies. However, since the sharing of musical forms, terms and instruments between the two religions has been clearly highlighted by modern scholars, the answer must lie elsewhere. It is possible that the source of such rejection was related to a structural feature that was common to the bowed string and wind instruments listed by Juan Ruiz: vielles, bagpipes and hurdy-gurdies were all furnished with drones. If we take the use of drones as the reason why the instruments listed above were not favoured by Muslims, then we can hypothesize that the real motive was related to important differences about sound production and musical aesthetics between the two cultures. If this is the case, we could argue that the citoles, the guitarra, the vielle, the bagpipes and the hurdy gurdy were not welcomed in the Islamic world because their performance prescribed the production of drones, an effect created in plucked instruments only through the constant strumming of one or more open strings.

The concept of differing attitudes towards the use of drones in the two cultures might be better supported by the tuning practices of their main string instruments. The medieval Arabic lute, as indicated by Ibn al-Munajjim and the theorist and performer al-Fārābī, did not allow the playing of open strings as drones because it was tuned in consecutive fourths. In other words, it was conceived as a purely melodic instrument. Conversely, a European music treatise known as the *Summa musica* composed c. 1200 informs us that during this time the strings of instruments provided with a fingerboard, including the citole, were tuned with a combination of octaves, fifths and fourths. This arrangement agrees with the tunings of the vielle recorded some 80 years later by Jerome of Moravia in his *Tractatus de musica*. In this treatise the author explains that the tuning of the open strings of the vielle recorded sound of the period in the open strings. With this, players would have found a ‘harmonic pillow’ or a ‘sonorous mist’, to use Christopher Page’s reference to bourdon performance, which served as points of departure for the melodies. Therefore, trusting that the citole was intended to be played with drones, we can propose that players performed melodies in the higher strings, the brighter ones with more projection, while as part of the same strokes they simultaneously articulated the lower open strings or a mixture between low and high strings depending on the tuning. This created constant drones that gave modal support to the melodies and made the instrument vibrate fully, thus contributing to its sound projection.

Other crucial elements of performance can be reconstructed by looking at the instrument’s musical repertoires and its correlation with other musical instruments. In written sources the citole is commonly associated with the performance of dance music, a function that is almost always executed in the company of the vielle.
of young clerics who perform *karolles* or choral dances; and in a passage from the 13th-century *Roman de la Rose* where the citoles and vielles are associated with the same type of participatory dance: ‘E baleries e queroles e ot vielles e citholes’ (‘dances and carols on vielles and citoles’).

Similarly, the two instruments are associated with the *estampie*, a type of courtly dance related to the *estampie* and the ductia, in the late 13th-century *Dit de la panthère d’amours* by Nicole de Margival: ‘En citoles et en vielies / Oï faire notes nouvelles’ (‘In citoles and vielles I heard played new notes!’). The citoles and vielles are further described in the context of courtly dancing in the late 14th-century *Sir Launfal* by Thomas Chestre:

To daunce they wente, alle in same / To se hem play, hit was fair game, / A lady and a knight. / They hadde menstrales of moch honours, / Fidelers, sitolers, and trompours, / And elles hit were unright.

However, courtly and clerical dancing are not the only contexts in which the citoles are described in medieval literature. In the aforementioned passage quoted from the *Libro de buen amor*, the instrument is connected to dance music performed in taverns. Likewise, in Rodrigo de Reinosa’s 15th-century poem *Coplas de un pastor*, performed in taverns. Likewise, in Rodrigo de Reinosa’s 15th-century poem *Coplas de un pastor*, the citoles are placed in the hands of a shepherd and in the context of rural dancing:

Herte he citolada / para que salgas a bailar… / y se her la correntera, / altiba y la cayera, / deleitosa y la trotera / huertes danzas danzar.

I should play the citoles, to invite you to dance… / and I can also play for you the correntera, / altiba y la cayera, / the deleitosa and the trotera / to make you dance.

The function of the citoles or the citoles and the vielles as accompanists to dance music is further documented by visual sources from the 14th century. Examples can be seen in a Book of Hours (British Library, Egerton 1151, fol. 47r) (Pl. 2), in the *De nobilitatibus sapientiis et prudentiis regum* of Walter de Milemete (Oxford, Christ Church Ms. 92 fol. 1r) and in the Queen Mary Psalter (British Library, Royal 2B. vii fol. 189r) (Pl. 3). Further depictions of the two instruments being played together can be found sculpted in the 13th-century Gelmirez Palace in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia) and in the 14th-century roof boss of Norwich Cathedral (see Chapter 2, Pl. 12). Similarly, the two instruments are depicted playing as a duo in illuminations from one of the 13th-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* manuscripts (El Escorial j. b. 2 fols 29r, 39v) as well as in the Tickhill Psalter (New York Public Library, Ms Spencer 26, fol. 171).

It seems clear after scrutinizing 13th–15th century Spanish, English and French sources that one of the most important functions of the citoles in these countries, if not the most central, was the performance of dance music. While we can conjecture how this type of music may have necessitated specific ways of playing the instrument, it is better to return to the sources to see if they offer further information. Fortunately, a specific function of the instrument in the performance of dance music seems to be implied at least in one text, an interesting satirical passage from the *Libro de buen amor* by Juan Ruiz that reads:

Por [entre] el su garnacho tenía tetas colgadas, / Davanle a la cinta pues que estavan dobladas, / Ca estando senzillas darf’ien so las ijadas, / A todo son de citolas andarian sin ser mostradas.

Inside her shirt her tits were hanging / They fell all the way to her waist because they were sagging / But, if they had been firm the story would have been different / As they would have moved correctly to the sound of the citoles.

The implication of this text is vastly important for our reconstruction because it implies that the citoles was associated with the production of rhythm in the context of dance music. Obviously, it is the lack of firmness in the woman’s breasts that did not allow her to keep a rhythmically steady and measured movement of her chest. To make the image much more intense and visceral, Juan Ruiz relates this rhythmic movement to the citoles, bringing to the mind of readers what was probably one of its most imperative performance features: the keeping of time and regular rhythm in the dance.

Another source further supports the practice of keeping time in this context. This text is the *De Musica* of Johannes de Grocheio (c. 1300), which explains that in the performance of dances such as *ductias* and *caroles* (both mentioned in the...
literature in connection to the cítole) it is crucial to keep a strict and controlled beat (recta percussione) to measure...the movement of the one who dances. Thus, we can conclude that in a proper performance of this form of dance music, the role of an accompanying instrument was to supply the dancers with a clear and steady beat and rhythm, a role that was often performed by the cítole, along the lines of the sarcastic text from the Libro de buen amor.

We can easily envision from modern experiences how a steady rhythmic structure can be clearly performed by a plucked string instrument. However, do the sources offer any indication of how it was achieved by medieval players? A popular 15th-century Spanish saying might shed some light on the matter: ‘there is no need of a cítole in the mill if the miller is deaf’. While at first the saying does not seem to offer any firm evidence about the way in which dance music was performed on the cítole, closer analysis provides some concrete information about sound production and rhythm. First, we need to consider that in this medieval Spanish saying the noun ‘cítole’ is not used to describe a musical instrument, but a flat wooden piece that hung over the stone of a mill. The function of this wooden piece was to alert the miller when the grain had run out. When the grain was finished the piece was automatically lowered to make contact with the stone. The result was a constant noise as the mill’s cítole frolicked energetically against the stone until more grain was introduced. Thus, the meaning of the saying is clear: in the same way as a mill’s cítole is of no benefit to a deaf miller, it is no use to give advice to those who do not have the capacity to hear or understand it. While the cítole in the saying is not the musical instrument of our study, it is important to consider that the aural reaction is the most crucial element of the saying, probably its germ, and that the mill’s wooden device and the plucked string instrument discussed here received the same name. Since the name ‘cítole’ was first used in relation to the musical instrument (in Spain since the beginning of the 13th century), it is likely that the use of the same term to describe the mill’s noisy wooden piece had something to do with the acoustic perception of the former. This was the case in England, for example, where the raucous and repeated noise produced by the mill’s wooden piece reminded people of the sound produced by a clapper; thus, the little device was then known as a mill’s clapper. Consequently, we find in an 18th-century Spanish-English dictionary that the Spanish word cítole (cítole) is translated both as a musical instrument known as the cittern and as ‘the clapper of a mill’. There are some other examples in which the name of a musical instrument or the verb that expressed its playing style was related to a specific sound, noise or action ultimately not connected to it. For example, the 17th-century expression ‘dar a la matraca’ (‘to sound the ratchet’) meant the production of an annoying and repetitive sound. Since the incessant sound of the ratchet could be quite irritating, its aural sensation was used as a model for an amusing saying described by Sebastián de Covarrubias in his Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española (1611). In his dictionary the author states that the expression ‘dar a la matraca’ was used to refer to the constant jokes suffered by first-year undergraduates at the University of Salamanca. Similarly, the verb castañear, which literally means to play the castanets, is also used in modern Latin American Spanish to onomatopoeically describe the sound produced by teeth chattering. Moreover, in Catalan the verb atabalar, which refers to the playing of a drum (tabal), is used today to express the action of overwhelming or tiring someone. As we can see, in all these cases the common sound of the instruments mentioned is used to express a type of physical or psychological response similar to the one created in the listener during their performance.

Thus, it seems reasonable to think that in late medieval Spain the noise produced by the mill’s clapper, known in fact as the cítole, was associated with the sound generated during the performance of the musical instrument of our study. This sound, based on what we can gather from the noise produced by a mill’s wooden piece when violently bouncing and striking the stone, was probably then percussive and constant. With this in mind, we can hypothesize that medieval cítole players, in the context of dance music, usually filled in the basic elements of the rhythmic structure of a dance piece with a constant and energetic subdivision of the beat which made the instrument sound somehow raucous, insisting and tense. This type of rhythmic accompaniment can be observed in different plucked and even bowed string instruments of Spain, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Examples are the rabel, a rustic fiddle from Cantabria (Spain), the Peruvian charango and the Romanian lute known as kobza, among others.

We should now turn, or better revisit, one further piece of evidence related to the cítole’s performance practice. As we
have seen, visual and written sources often portray a cítola paired in performance with a vielle.\(^4\) By speculating that the two instruments were primarily paired for some musical and acoustic reasons that fulfilled the expectation of medieval performers and their audience, we have to ask ourselves what the function of each instrument was when performed together and the final aural product of their combination. We might find an answer to all these questions by combining what we know about how bowed string instruments function in general with the different elements of the cítola’s practice, reconstructed so far in this study. Taking into consideration the distinct manner in which strings are set to sound in both instruments, the type of articulation possible on each of them and the way notes are pressed and tuned over their fingerboards, it is tempting to conclude that in the vielle-cítola duo the function of the plucked string instrument was as follows: to help clarify the blurry articulation of the vielle with its sharp attack;\(^6\) tighten ensemble playing through its constant rhythmic subdivision; and secure the intonation of the bowed instrument with its/droning and its frets.

Furthermore, the cítola also helped to increase the projection and volume of instruments through the addition and mixture of harmonics that increased the overall effect of the ensemble. All of these different types of elements can actually still be seen in some modern traditional music duos that are direct descendants of other medieval instrumental pairs. For example, in the bagpipe and pipe and tabor duo from Catalonia (sac de gemecs and flabiol and tambori), the fast, immediate and clean articulation (attack) of the tabor pipe clears and defines the blurry articulation of the bagpipe, an instrument where attack and separation of the notes is only possible through ornamentations since the mouth of the player is not in direct contact with the reed. Furthermore, the tabor, with its constant rhythm, keeps the two wind instruments playing together while marking the beat and its subdivisions for the dancers.\(^8\) Likewise, in the pipe and string drum combination performed by a single player, another ancient instrumental pairing that can still be witnessed in Aragón (Pl. 4), the percussion instrument not only supports the melody of the pipe with a ‘sonorous mist’, a surrounding harmonic sound created by the simultaneous striking of strings tuned in octaves, fourths and fifths, but also provides the rhythm that accompanies dances and processional music.

**Conclusion**

In summary, fragmentary information scattered throughout various sources and the observation of some modern music traditions have helped us to reconstruct different elements of the cítola’s performance practice. Some of these factors, including its playing position, the use of a plucked and the strumming of all strings, seemed to have been directly connected to the need for sound projection in noisy places. At the same time, the use of frets and drones also responded to intellectual and aesthetic tendencies of the era that prescribed tuning and modality. Finally, percussive and continuous rhythmic strumming and drone playing seemed to have been one of the most important elements of the cítola’s performance practice. Together these factors helped to project the cítola’s sound, guided the steps of dancers and, in combination with the vielle, kept ensembles playing tightly by clarifying the attack of the bowed strings and by setting up a conventional model for tuning. Thus, we can imagine that the clerics described by Gilles li Muisis used the cítola to accompany their carolling because with it they could aspire to perform well-projected, precisely tuned, clearly articulated and rhythmically driven music, the type necessary to accompany their choral dances.

**Notes**

1. Good examples are found in the often reproduced depictions of the instrument from the 13th-century *Canonges de Santa Maria* (El Escorial, 3. b. 2 fols 299r, 399v) and the 14th-century ‘Queen Mary Psalter’ (British Library, Royal a B viii, fols 177r, 26ar, 207v). Little Psalter (British Library, Arundel 83 II, fol. 1347r). Ormesby Psalter (Bodleian Library, Douce 366, fol. 96v), *Canzoniere da Ayuda* (Biblioteca da Ayuda, fol. 69) and a stained glass window from Lincoln Cathedral.

2. See Rey 1975, 47–8.

3. I am indebted to Pepe Rey for supplying me with this picture.


5. For this text and its translation, see McGee 1990, 114, 168.


8. For information about the monochord and its use to indicate the pitches in Pythagorean tuning, see Bent 1984, 4–6.

9. For this text and its study, see Rey and Navarro 1993, 36. The translation is mine.

10. For this text and its study, see ibid. The translation is mine.

11. This information was given to me by the Spanish and Oriental music expert Pepe Morales Luna.

12. See *Diccionario do dicionarios do galego medieval* of the Instituto da Lingua Galega (online dictionary; available from sli.uvigo.es/ DDGM/).

13. For the text, see Victorio 1998, 167. The translation is mine.

14. Kervyn de Lettenhove 1392, 240. For the use of the term kanolle in relation to a choral dance and the reconstruction of its choreography, see Mulally 2011, 41–50.

15. For essays on this subject, see de Lope 1984.


17. On the character and behaviour of the audience during this period, see Page 1997, 639–59. It seems safe to assume that the audience during this period and the events mentioned was not quiet.


19. The drone in a musical instrument is an element of the instrument that allows for a specific note or notes to sound continuously.

20. The tuning of the open strings has been reconstructed as g-c-f-sh.

21. Ethnomusicologists have shown that in the ‘sid’ (Arabic lute), the drone string is missing and the rich amalgam of melodic modes of Arabic music are supposed to be played not only on one string, but spread over all the available ones. Gerson-Kiwi 1972, 13.

22. For this text and its study, see Page 1991, 87, 169.

23. For this text and its study, see Page 1979, 83–4 and 1986, 64–9.

The connection with dance music makes us wonder if in other passages where the instruments are described without any mention of dances they are used as an incidental reference to them.

For the use of the term *karolle* in relation to a choral dance and the reconstruction of its choreography, see Mullally 2011, 41–50. De Lorris and de Meung 1979–4, v. 6 (1835).

I have base my translation on the interpretation of the passage given by Alberto Blecua: ‘Her breast hanged under her dress reaching her waist. They moved off beat since they did not learn the sound of the citole’ (‘Los pechos le colgaban debajo del vestido y le daban a la cintura. Se moverían al compás sin haber aprendido el son de la cítola’), See Ruiz 1996, 234.

41 See Wright 1977, 27.

42 ‘Attack’ here refers to the beginning of the sound produced when the plectrum plucks a string or strums multiple strings at the same time. The bright sound produced is a combination of the material of the plectrum, the type and tension of the string and the use of frets.

43 This was explained to me by the Catalan music specialist and bagpiper Francesc Sans i Bonet.
Appendix A
A Musical Instrument Fit For a Queen: The Metamorphosis of a Medieval Citole

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Summary
The British Museum’s citole (1963.1002.1) is one of Britain’s earliest extant stringed instruments. Dating from around 1300–1330, its survival can be attributed to three factors: the quality of craftsmanship with its richly carved decorative elements, its association with Elizabeth I of England (1558–1603) and her favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and its modification to keep pace with changing musical fashion. The refurbishment of the Medieval galleries at the museum during 2007–2008 allowed an opportunity to re-evaluate past treatments of the instrument and investigate its present form scientifically. Throughout its history the instrument has undergone periodic repair, including the replacement of soundboards, finger-boards, strings and other fittings, but its magnificently carved boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) body, neck and headpiece remain virtually intact.

Detailed examination of the citole components prior to and during conservation revealed previously suspected but unseen alterations. Radiography has been used to study features of the original construction as well as internal alterations which show that it could have been played with a bow. The metal elements have been identified by X-ray fluorescence analysis, while microscopic analysis enabled the identification of the wooden components.

Interpreting past restorations and modifications allowed for informed judgements to be made about conservation treatments, while making more accessible important information about the instrument’s past.

Introduction
The British Museum’s citole (1963.1002.1: Figure 1) is an object of extreme rarity. A virtuoso example of the Medieval woodcarver’s craft, it is one of perhaps only four stringed instruments of comparable quality to have survived from the Medieval period. It is, however, a confusing hybrid. Part citole, part violin, it was described as a gittern by Francis Galpin in 1910 [1] and the term stuck until 1977 when Laurence Wright extensively revised the terminology.

Figure 1 The British Museum citole (1963.1002.1) after recent conservation treatment: length 610mm, height 147mm and width 186mm
surrounding the gittern and related instruments.[2] It was described as a ‘gittern’ (in inverted commas) by Mary Remnant and Richard Marks when they published their authoritative work on the instrument in 1980 [3; p. 83]. The inverted commas reflected Remnant’s reluctance to accept Wright’s recent judgement, which she expressed in the following way: “While Wright’s reasons for changing the terminology certainly carry weight, and have been readily accepted by a good many organologists, there are others who feel the need for greater time in which to consider the matter before changing the long-accepted terminology”.

After an extensive period for reflection, the British Museum co-hosted an informal seminar on the subject with the New Metropolitan University of London in 2003 and took the decision to adopt the term ‘citole’. The details of which characteristics precisely define the respective instruments remain subject to a degree of scholarly discussion. However, the citole is a precursor of the modern guitar and is characterized by its flat back made from a single piece of wood, while the gittern is the precursor of the lute and has a rounded back achieved by the use of several jointed flat pieces of wood. Although the back of the British Museum citole is slightly vaulted, it is constructed from only one piece of boxwood (Buxus sempervirens). Indeed, the head, neck and the entire body of the citole are carved from one piece of boxwood; the vaulted back is a design variant rather than a difference in construction.

Alterations have been made to the citole at several times in the past, including its conversion into a violin. Among the changes is the insertion of a silver plate above the pegbox, engraved with the arms of Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603), together with those of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The citole will take a prominent place in the new Medieval gallery due to open in 2009; this has provided an opportunity to improve the display of the instrument and – during the intervening period – permitted both organological study and an assessment of its aesthetic qualities. To these ends conservators, curators and scientists have re-evaluated this unique object, building on previous studies that revealed significant information about the instrument and its conversion, as well as highlighting areas that require further investigation.

The conservation of the British Museum citole allowed a multi-faceted approach involving arresting further deterioration and preparation for display in tandem with the scientific investigation of the materials, original methods of construction and later conversion. X-radiography was used to clarify the internal structure, particularly the evidence for alterations. The X-ray films were scanned using an Agfa RadView digitizer with a 50 μm pixel size and a 12-bit resolution, to allow digital enhancement of the images. To emphasize edges and discontinuities, the images were subject to greyscale manipulation. Tiny wood samples (≤1 mm³) for species identification were taken from as many component parts of the citole as could be sampled unobtrusively. Their anatomical structure was characterized by optical microscopy using a Leica Aristomet biological microscope with a range of magnifications from ×50 to ×800. The other materials were identified by non-destructive X-ray fluorescence analysis (XRF) using a Bruker Artax XRF spectrometer with a molybdenum target X-ray tube rated up to 40 W and operated at 50 kV and 800 μA.

### Medieval musical instruments

Musical instruments are made to be played; they have active lives that can see injury, loss or replacement by a finer model. Each of the known surviving extant Medieval stringed instruments has been highly treasured in its day and by successive generations. All except one, however, has seen alterations reflecting the changing needs of musicians or owners. A violeta from the Convent of Corpus Domini in Bologna dates from the fifteenth century and is preserved there as one of the precious relics that furnish the shrine of S. Caterina de’Vigri. Its relatively obscure location and sacred context account for its preservation, which has left it largely intact with little or no alteration [4]. Two fifteenth-century Italian instruments, a mandora (64.101.1490) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and a rebec (sam. inv no. 433) at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, bear some comparison with the citole, particularly in their elaborately carved surfaces decorated with emphatically secular subject matter and in their handles, which terminate in dragons’ heads. Neither functions convincingly as a musical instrument but they have long been valued as works of art. Both testify to the association between love and music. The back of the mandora is carved with a courting couple beneath a tree that contains a figure of cupid; the back of the rebec is carved with the figure of a naked woman, possibly Venus. The citole’s romantic connotations are firmly fixed in the later period of its existence when it was converted to a violin and exchanged as a gift between Elizabeth I and her favourite, Robert Dudley.

The royal connection is documented in the form of a silver plate covering the pegbox, engraved with the arms of Elizabeth and Dudley, which was introduced in 1578 when the citole was converted into a violin. The year 1578 is provided by a small silver plate, which carries the initials ‘IP’ and the date, Figure 2. The plate is positioned at the back of the citole, above the trefoil where a threaded screw-fixing passes through, securing a lion-headed button on the front. Both were inserted as part of the restringing of the instrument and are essential for keeping the tailpiece in place. The metal of the engraved plate and the lion-headed button was identified by XRF as a silver-copper alloy with trace levels (less than 1%) of lead occurring as an impurity in the silver. Both are gilded by the mercury (fire-gilding) method, and both this and the alloy composition are consistent with the date on the button plate.
The British Museum citole dates from the period around 1300–1330 and is the earliest of the four survivals. Abundant representations of citoles in the visual arts show that the instrument was in use from the late twelfth century in Spain and Italy and from the thirteenth century in northern Europe. The gradual movement of the instrument from south to north may well reflect the influence of Islamic musical instruments on the development of the citole. The culturally mixed communities of southern Spain and Italy, which saw dialogue between Christian, Jew and Muslim, enjoyed a pivotal role in the transmission of ideas during this period. Knowledge of music, mathematics, science, medicine, art and literature was promulgated along the same routes through translated manuscripts, migrant physicians and exported goods. Spain was undoubtedly important in establishing an awareness of the citole; it was connected to the rest of Europe by the vast number of pilgrims who visited Santiago de Compostela, and through the various dynastic marriages that saw royal brides moving to and from Spain with all the diplomatic gifts that attended such transactions. When Eleanor, the daughter of Henry II, married Alfonso VII in 1169 it can only be imagined how the international courtship was conducted, but music, the language of love, must surely have played its part. By the time that Eleanor of Castile married Edward I in 1254, the citole was probably well established in England [5]. A solitary citolist, ‘Janyne citoler’ performed at the ceremony to celebrate the knighting of Eleanor’s son, the future Edward II, at Westminster in 1306 [3; p. 89], although the musician probably did not play solo, as the citole was most frequently used to accompany other instruments. Revealingly, at the ceremony at Westminster there were 19 trumpeters and 16 harpists, instrumentalists of sufficient stature for an event of national importance.

The citole was regarded as a soft or bas instrument and was most usually played in a domestic or courtly setting [6; p. 4]. It was designed to be plucked with a plectrum and most of the depictions show it being played in this way, although other illustrations show it being strummed without a plectrum. Undoubtedly capable of carrying a tune, as modern replicas of the British Museum citole have demonstrated, citoles may have performed a limited repertoire and were probably used mainly to keep time by playing the same few notes repeatedly [7]. This understanding is supported by representations of musicians playing citoles, the majority of which show the player’s hand coming up from under the centre of the instrument. This approach would allow adequate movement only to play the drone chords satisfactorily [3; p. 88]. It is not surprising, therefore, that the citole is usually depicted with other instruments, principally fiddles, Figure 3.

The gifting of the citole between Elizabeth and Dudley and its conversion to a violin demonstrate how the instrument was held in high regard some 250 years after it was made. The value placed on it was not inspired by the expense of the raw material nor by its virtue as a musical instrument (the citole was distinctly out of date by about 1400) but by the extraordinary richness and quality of the carving that covers its neck and sides.

The carvings

The fine, dense structure of boxwood (Figure 4) is ideal for intricate, detailed carving and can be highly polished, Figure 5. There is no narrative to the design of the carvings, which seem to develop in a gravity-defying, proportion-denying mass that emerges from the mouth of a dragon. In general the scenes are intimately connected with the dense, dark forest which was an important feature of Medieval life. Pastoral scenes such as a swineherd tending to his hogs (Figure 6) and a woodman at work with his axe are juxtaposed with vigorous hunting scenes (Figure 7) that dominate much of the composition. Each of these topics had great resonance for a Medieval audience since they signified specific occupations for particular months of the year. The swineherd knocking down acorns to feed his hogs was used to illustrate the months of November or December in the Medieval calendar; the woodman chopping branches was chosen as an appropriate activity for March; while the hunt was regarded as a suitable pastime for May, the month for lovers. The character of the carving contributes enormously to the citole’s popular appeal today; careful scrutiny is rewarded by the discovery of creatures of the forest within a thicket of mulberry, hawthorn, oak and vine leaves in a mysterious world occupied by men and hybrid monsters, Figure 8.
The magnificent carved dragon headpiece can be identified as a wyvern, an ancient variety of the imaginary species ‘draco’ (dragon), Figure 9. The wyvern was originally thought of as a forest-dwelling creature more akin to a snake than the fire-breathing monster normally envisaged as a typical dragon. The four-legged dragon of popular renown seems to have been introduced around 1400 by the English heralds [8]. A wyvern has two wings and only two legs, and is sometimes depicted in manuscripts, carvings and heraldry with a knotted tail known as ‘nowed’ or sometimes noué (from the French for ‘knotted’). A smaller example of the creature is carved on the side panel of the citole doing battle with a half-man, half-bird, Figure 10. The green eyes of the creature are leaded glass and each glass eye is set into metal foil or a cell made of brass (copper-zinc alloy). The orientation of the wyvern headpiece on the citole is that of a wyvern regardant (looking back over its shoulder) with its body and long tail (which trifurcates toward its end) coiling around beneath the fingerboard and around the neck aperture.

Visible through an openwork panel on the side is a somewhat worn, golden-coloured material, tinged green in places. This proved to be a sheet of flax fibre paper with a coating of gold-coloured brass paint, Figure 11. It is by no means certain that it is original; the openwork panel is removable, presumably for the very purpose of accommodating an attractive coloured backing material, which would not have been difficult to replace at any stage.

There is a detached element of carving from the back of the neck panel, an owl, also carved from boxwood. Although its location has been identified, it could not be secured back in place.

**Ethical considerations for restoration**

The conservation of historical musical instruments raises many ethical considerations. To arrest deterioration of what was once a playing object often requires an interventive approach. Caple states that: “restoration can be seen as covering the scars and damage of the past, and thus distorting the past by beautifying it, and denying part of the history of the object. Equally, avoiding restoration leaves every object looking broken or damaged” [9; p. 128].

Musical instruments, by their very nature, have continually been repaired and it is often expected that these objects can be picked up and played even when hundreds of years old. In reality, the overwhelming majority are of course not played; continued use would inevitably lead to the wearing out of parts, and also put many important instruments at considerable risk. Stringed and bowied instruments, particularly violins, have been described as: “almost unique in the way they have lent themselves to continued use, repair, restoration and conservation” [10; p. 98]. The museum as custodian offers the instrument a new life, one of display and interpretation. Barclay identifies three options for care of instruments namely:

- Currency, or maintenance in a working state possibly with modifications or alterations to sustain functionality.
- Conservation or preserving the physical integrity of an instrument using minimal intervention and scientifically based investigation and documentation methods. Restoration or recreation of a known earlier state of an instrument using craft intervention and substitution or addition of materials [11; p. 22].

Barclay’s approach to the care of instruments further argues that it is desirable that treatments should, where possible, encompass combinations of two, if not all three, of these options.

Watson highlights two approaches to the treatment of historical musical instruments, describing the “two voices” of instruments: the musical voice, its musical quality and the experience and emotions that it evokes, and the historical voice, by which the instrument reveals its past through the historical evidence therein [12; p. 15]. The retention or recreation of the musical voice for the citole was not considered a viable option because of the vulnerable condition of the instrument and its uniqueness. The need to protect this ‘historical voice’ was judged to be of paramount importance. It was, however, felt that with minimal intervention, a balance could be struck between the two ‘voices’, by displaying the citole so it appears in a condition that closely resembles a playable instrument. This in turn helps to fulfil an important aim of museums – to enhance understanding and interpretability without compromising historical value. Watson, although referring specifically to organs, suggests a need for urgency that applies to all historical musical instruments: “… that we collaboratively discover ways we can perform restorations of historically significant organs using methods that will respect and
Figure 6. Carving of a swine herder and hogs

Figure 7. Carving of hunting scene including a man, hound and fox

Figure 8. Carving of a hybrid archer and rabbit
The conservation of instruments will often require a restorative approach; likewise restoring an instrument will require consideration of the conservation impact of the chosen techniques. Historical significance, the removal of original material, maker’s intent and the requirements and expectations of curator, owner and other stakeholders must all be taken into account. It is important to consider that objects change over time and this evolution becomes part of their significance and character.

**Conservation assessment**

To assist in identifying the features of the citole referred to in the following sections, an illustrated glossary is provided in Figure 12. Prior to conservation, a number of past repairs and replacements were discussed by conservators, curators and musical instrument specialists and judged to be not in keeping or historically correct for the instrument and its context within the new Medieval gallery. The instrument was dusty, both within the recesses of the carving and below the bridge and strings. There were greasy marks and fingerprints on the soundboard as well as surface dirt. The citole had been strung with a mismatched set of gut strings, which was further confused by the winding of the four strings onto three pegs (one peg head had snapped and the head is lost), Figure 13. Pye states: “poor condition may mask significance” [13]; failure to remove the mismatched strings – which were not, of course, original – and to run each string to an individual peg, would prevent a correct interpretation of the object. The option of retaining the existing strings would serve only to highlight a poorly executed past repair.

The abraded and scratched condition of the varnish layer on the soundboard was considered unsightly and could be misconstrued as evidence of lack of care. If the instrument were in use the varnish might be repaired and, equally, an item of furniture within a collection or museum might have this protective finish retouched to aid correct interpretation. The *National Trust manual of housekeeping* recommends that the finish and appearance of an instrument may “require attention” depending on the context in which it is to be viewed [14]. For the citole this context was as a central focus within the new gallery.

A length of copper alloy wire twisted at the end secured the tailpiece in place, Figure 14. This old repair was judged to utilize a material that was unsuitable for the purpose and would not have been used on a citole or a violin. Furthermore the sharp ends of the wire were abrading the finish below the tailpiece button, so that retaining the wire would lead to further deterioration.

The broken peg end revealed evidence of a previous repair in the form of old proteinaceous glue residues around the break. It is likely that the (now lost) peg head had snapped at the point where it emerged from the pegbox and was adhered in position with this glue. End-grain gluing is prone to failure and once this join failed part of the peg became lost. For future preservation it is important to spread the tension of the strings evenly over the bridge, particularly as the bridge is not fixed but is held in position by the string tension. To continue to secure strings to three pegs would put...
X-radiographs (Figure 16) showed clearly the internal method of conversion, with a false back let into the body of the instrument. It was felt to be too risky to remove the soundboard as the edges were planed or chamfered off to a thin section where they were joined to the body making them extremely vulnerable to breaking. Furthermore, there would be inevitable damage to the finish when large areas of sound glue were softened. The X-radiographs offered sufficient information for the study of the interior and the former state of the instrument, rendering soundboard removal unnecessary.

A number of small inlaid pieces of wood along the fingerboard had lifted and had accumulated dirt underneath. It is essential with all inlays that they be securely re-laid to prevent snagging and subsequent loss. Modern nails had been used to secure the fingerboard to the neck and were visible in the X-radiographs, Figure 17. Although these nails are also evidence of a poorly executed older repair, their removal would have jeopardized the delicate inlaid fingerboard. The heads of the nails had been punched below the surface of the fingerboard and the indentation had been filled with a wax-like substance that now stood out against the colour of the wood.

The glued joint or seam between the body and soundboard had begun to open up and fail on both sides and above the top block near the neck of the instrument, Figure 15. It is important to re-glue failing joints as this “restores the natural integrity” of the instrument preventing further opening up along the seam [14]. This is particularly important if the instrument is strung. Old animal glue will become brittle over time and can often deteriorate further due to microbiological attack in incorrect environmental conditions. Stresses induced by tuning the instrument will also cause glue lines to open up. These stresses are accentuated by the differing materials that are chosen for their acoustic values. For example, the soundboard is made of a softer and more pliable wood (spruce; *Picea abies*), which will vibrate and move under compressive and tensile forces. The option of complete removal of the soundboard to reveal the alterations during the violin conversion was considered.

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The fingerboard is made from wood from the wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*), a tree that was sometimes coppiced to produce straight wood. The fingerboard is wedge-shaped,
The pegbox has been hollowed out and reshaped, changing the original configuration and removing c.25 mm of the neck length. All these modifications have been variously interpreted and constitute a record of this instrument’s historical evolution. Preserving this very early, possibly unique evidence intact is essential for future research.

**Summary of justification and extent of treatment**

The approach to the treatment involved restoring the physical integrity of the instrument, prevention of further deterioration to the finish, and allowing the instrument to be correctly interpreted. The securing of the soundboard to the body was required to prevent further opening up of the joint. A broken peg head was preventing the tensioning of the strings and so unbalancing the bridge. Movement or collapse of the bridge would further damage the area of finish below the bridge feet. It was therefore decided that a fourth working peg would give an even tension across the bridge, and that the remaining broken shaft should be archived after the wood had been identified. The wire attaching the tailpiece to the tailpiece button was also damaging the surface of the trefoil where it was twisted together; the use of wire showed a lack of understanding of the correct method of attaching these components, i.e. with tailgut. The inlay on the fingerboard was lifting and in danger of becoming lost; the re-laying of these inlays was also vital to restoring the physical integrity of the instrument.

Attaching the strings to too few pegs was confusing and misleading for both visitors and organologists. This misleading configuration of the instrument raised a further consideration; that is, should the instrument be seen to be in consistent with sixteenth-century stringed instrument design and construction. Beneath it is another wedge (Figure 18) made from yew (*Taxus baccata*) of uncertain date. It is likely that the surface of the original neck has been planed down in a previous attempt to modify the citole, resulting in the loss of part of the original carving, which now appears truncated, Figure 19.
contact with the fingerboard would exert uneven forces on the bridge. As discussed above, the bridge must be held by an even, controlled downward force from the tensioned strings to avoid potential collapse or movement. It was therefore considered necessary to raise the nut on this instrument (to lift the strings off the fingerboard) for two reasons: to allow the bridge to be held by tension alone and to enhance the understanding of the citole as a playing instrument.

Treatment
The old gut strings (made from sheep intestine) were removed and archived. The surfaces of the soundboard, fingerboard, body and carving were dry cleaned by brushing with a soft (sable) brush and vacuuming with a low-suction vacuum cleaner with nylon net filter. Smaller brushes were required to remove dust from the recesses of the carved areas. Chemsponge® (vulcanised rubber) was used to trap and further remove surface dirt.

The failing glue seam between the soundboard and instrument body was investigated. A thin metal spatula was

Figure 17. X-radiograph through the side of the neck revealing a pin and two large nails that were used to fix the latest fingerboard. The features that appear darker in the image are more dense. The four pegs can be seen end-on behind the dragon, with the broken peg at the top; the edge of the internal false back is the dark feature seen at the bottom, right of centre

Figure 18. Detail of the additional citole fingerboard wedge

Figure 19. Detail of the truncated carving on the neck of the citole

a playable condition (although obviously not playable) to allow a better understanding of the instrument and the maker’s intent? This consideration was balanced with the aesthetic requirement of providing an appropriate level of care to this important instrument. The modern bridge was not in keeping with the style of an early instrument and it was considered a poor replacement. An electrotype dating from 1869 (discussed later) shows a different – equally historically incorrect – bridge, while a photograph of the citole from 1903 showed that the strings were then no longer attached and no bridge was present [15]. On balance, it was felt that making a new replacement in a more suitable form was appropriate, as it would restore the instrument to an earlier state and allow a better appreciation of its form.

The top nut of an instrument elevates the strings above its fingerboard by an amount that allows clear vibration of the strings without hindrance. The citole fingerboard is curved convexly along its length, causing undesirable string contact along the surface. Any instrument in this state would not be playable because the strings could not vibrate freely. The unusual visual appearance of strings lying on the fingerboard would confuse many of those who have some understanding of functioning instruments and how they should look. Furthermore, allowing the strings to remain in
inserted into the open seam and run along it until it met with resistance. The gap was held open with metal spatulas at intervals along the glue line and microcrystalline wax (Renaissance wax) was applied to protect the finish (varnish) on the areas above and below the glue line. (Renaissance wax is used to protect varnished surfaces from moisture [16, 17] and to act as a final protective layer or polish.) A 5% solution of Laponite RD® (a synthetic colloidal thixotropic gel-like clay) in water was inserted into the seam on top of the residual glue and covered with Clingfilm® (low-density polyethylene) to slow down evaporation. After 30 minutes, the Laponite was removed and the glue surfaces cleaned with moist cotton wool swabs. Fish glue (gelatine, water and <1% phenol) was applied to the glue line within the seam and both soundboard and body were clamped in position. When partially gelled, the excess glue was removed from the surface.

**Pegs**

It was necessary to soften the old glue on the broken peg end to enable removal. The surrounding area of wood on the pegbox cheek was coated with Renaissance wax to protect the finish. Laponite was applied and covered as described above. After 20 minutes the Laponite had softened and partially absorbed the animal glue, permitting its easy removal with a moist cotton wool swab. It is advisable to remove tight pegs from their peg holes by rotating and applying a light pulling pressure to prevent damage to the cheeks of the pegbox. However, as the peg head was missing a piece of wood of the same diameter was placed against the narrowest end of the peg and lightly tapped; this freed the broken shaft from the pegbox. A complete peg was removed and a mould was taken for a cast to be made with coloured resin. As the resin proved too brittle to use for the whole peg, a turned wooden shaft was grafted to the resin replica peg head to improve its functional strength. The material of the now-archived broken peg was identified as boxwood.

**Bridge**

The modern bridge made from maple (Acer platanoides) was removed and archived and a period design maple bridge was made and colour matched to the soundboard, Figure 20. The bridge was ‘fitted’ to the curved soundboard surface by carefully sculpting and trimming away its feet using a scalpel, until a good fit with the curvature was achieved. Many modern luthiers use abrasive papers to fit bridges, but Weisshaar and Shipman state “that a bridge should be fitted entirely with a knife” [18]. The correct height and curvature of the top edge of the bridge were determined by fitting the two outside strings temporarily and measuring the heights of the strings above the fingerboard. A working height was estimated and the bridge was trimmed and shaped accordingly.

**Top nut**

Setting up the citole as an ostensibly playable instrument required the ivory nut to be raised by approximately 2 mm by means of a balsa wood block of the same dimensions glued underneath. The ivory nut was then glued into position with cold-setting fish glue, a treatment that is considered to be fully removable. The combination of the raised nut and a replacement bridge of correct height lifted the strings completely clear the fingerboard surface. The only other option of raising the strings would have been by using a much higher bridge, but the resulting appearance would have been strange and outside the normal range of bridge heights. Adjustment of the top nut was the key factor that permitted the instrument to appear playable while allowing it to remain stable when on display.

**Tailpiece and fixing**

The copper alloy wire tie was cut away to prevent the twisted ends of the wire from damaging the finish. The tailpiece button fixing was removed, photographed and replaced after the application of Teflon (polytetrafluoroethylene; PTFE)
tape to the thread to take up slack/play between the screw thread and the barrel nut end. The tailpiece was removed and cleaned. It was measured and photographed, as it is believed that originally the tailpiece terminated in a point, as illustrated in an eighteenth-century engraving, Figure 21. The tailpiece, if contemporary with the initial conversion, is a very rare example of an early violin tailpiece and it is interesting to note that it, too, is made from boxwood. At the bottom edge of the tailpiece (the end tied to the button) are two grooves that are likely to be vestiges of the two original holes through which the tailpiece was secured to the button with the tailgut, Figure 22. At some point in the instrument’s past, perhaps because this area of the tailpiece had become weak or damaged, it has either broken away or was removed. The tailpiece was remounted using a new natural gut tie in a position suggested by Hawkins’s engraving, Figure 21.

**Restringing**

Gut strings were used on early violins and a modern replica set, equivalent in type and thickness to early strings, was obtained from a specialist string supplier. The strings were tied to the tailpiece employing a loop-tie method commonly used with gut strings. The string tension used for set-up was approximately one third of full tension, which was sufficient to hold the freestanding bridge in position under pressure without placing undue strain on the soundboard and exerting undesirable forces on the instrument structure as a whole. No supporting sound post exists; this would sit below the underside of the soundboard at the bridge foot position (on the treble side) and reach to the back of the instrument, in this case the false back. Within the limits of the evidence available and while following the principles of sustainable conservation, it might be considered that the instrument now closely resembles its playing configuration and overall appearance around the time of Elizabeth I.

**Interpreting the modifications**

Interpreting the evolution of a musical instrument from its repairs and modifications is not an exact science. In the case of the cittern, however, there are some features that can assist this process. First, the instrument was clearly converted from a plucked, guitar-like instrument into a bowed instrument, a violin. By the time of Elizabeth’s ascent to the English throne in 1558 the violin was a fashionable instrument used mainly for dance accompaniment in consort with other string and wind instruments [19].

The eighteenth-century engraving mentioned above (Figure 21) clearly shows the low wedge fingerboard, the pointed tailpiece and the modified headstock. The playing configuration of the instrument in the engraving is that of an early violin, fitted with a low bridge and a low wedge fingerboard. Remnant has pointed out some apparent inaccuracies in the engraving [3; p. 96], and we note in addition that the engraving has been laterally inverted and that the fingerboard also appears to be much shorter than in reality. Inaccuracies and distortions are common in early representations, and caution is needed when drawing conclusions from such sources.

Exactly when the cittern was first converted is uncertain but in order to accomplish the conversion the flat fingerboard had to be replaced and a new tailpiece added. The received opinion from an examination made by Charles Beare and Robert Graham in 1979 was that the present soundboard made of spruce, which has characteristic ‘f-shaped’ sound holes and a vaulted profile, dates from the mid-eighteenth century [3; p. 105 (endnote 40)]. It should of course be noted that these informed opinions are based on experience and knowledge rather than arrived at through scientific dating. The surface of the neck and part of the ribs were planed down to make the conversion to a bowed instrument, as can be seen from the truncated carvings, Figure 19. The original flat cittern soundboard may have been retained in the earliest conversion and only ‘upgraded’ to the present, arched violin-type soundboard at some later date. The planed-down neck surface would only have been necessary to obtain correct bridge and string height if still using the original flat soundboard.

Inside the body of the instrument there is a false back inserted to give the appropriate depth for a violin [3; p. 95]. The false back is housed or let into the neck and upper bout; it rests just short of the end of the cittern body and is glued at the sides, Figure 16. There is no sound post, but there is a mark and evidence of glue on the underside of the soundboard near the foot of the bridge. The presence of glue here does not reflect a conventional procedure for fitting a sound post, but is occasionally found. There was a loose piece of yew that had become dislodged and fallen through one of the ‘f-holes’. Whether or not this is from the false back cannot be established with certainty. In addition there is a bass bar planted below the underside of the soundboard as expected in a conventional violin set-up. The cittern’s pegs had originally been frontal and wooden plugs can be seen inserted into the cavities from which the pegs once protruded below the dragon’s mouth. The boxwood pegbox was hallowed out deep enough to accommodate a set of conventional violin-type tuning pegs and given its ornate cover plate advertising the royal link.

An X-radiograph (Figure 23) reveals that the tailpiece, possibly the earliest violin-type tailpiece in existence (extant early tailpieces are rare because they are lost or replaced over time), seems to be the result of adapting a ‘pointed’ design similar to those depicted frequently in book II of *Syntagma musicum* by Michael Praetorius, published in 1619 [20].
The current wedge-shaped fingerboard is constructed from a wooden core, inlaid with a geometric pattern on its upper surface, in a way consistent with late-sixteenth-century stringed instrument-making practice. An additional wedge that has been fitted beneath the fingerboard seems to serve two purposes: to obtain both the correct bridge height and working height of the strings above the fingerboard surface. In the case of the citole, the material removed from the surface of the neck during an earlier conversion was, in effect, replaced by the new wedge along with a further slim insert to achieve the correct string/bridge height. A second wedge that has been fitted beneath the fingerboard seems to serve two purposes. First, it is a means of adjusting the angle of the fingerboard so that the strings are at the correct playing height above its surface. The required angle depends on the bridge height, so the thickness of the wedge on the citole would have been chosen in conjunction with any changes to the bridge height. The second function of the wedge may have been to mimic the modernization of violins in the late eighteenth century. At that time older, straighter necks were being replaced with ‘backward canted’ necks that allowed greater playing fluency [21]. These changes in neck angle, coupled with higher bridges and greater string tension, improved the acoustic response of the instruments. It is also possible that the alterations to the citole were a direct result of the fitting of a new arched-top violin soundboard, which would have required the adjustments discussed.

It is evident from examining the silver pegbox cover plate that the second wedge was not in place when the cover plate was originally made and fitted. The arms of the plate were originally hinged at the sides of the neck at a position that would only allow the fingerboard to be in place. Hawkins describes a plate “… that turns upon a hinge and opens from the nut downwards” [22; p. 342]. Original hinge-pin holes and the carved-out neck areas accommodating the arms can be seen in Figure 24. It is suggested that the current cover plate arrangement, with the hinge-pin set in the pegbox, was configured after the introduction of the additional wedge and that this wedge and arched soundboard were fitted together. The cover plate would presumably have been reoriented after the engraving was rendered. Since the citole was reported as having poor sound quality and playability problems [22; p. 343, 23], these modifications may have also included the introduction of the inner false back in an effort to control and improve the sound.

The magnificent carved dragon headpiece has also been modified. At some point the round neck aperture was roughly carved out to make it larger and crude tool marks are evident, Figure 25. This was probably an attempt to give more hand room for the player, as the original hand-hole of the citole would only have been large enough to accommodate the player’s thumb with space for some limited hand movement. This enlargement could date from as late as the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, when playing styles for the violin demanded more movement of the left hand along the fingerboard. Part of the tail and body of the wyvern carving may have thereby been lost and it is possible that the carved tail was originally nowed, as seen on the small wyvern carved on the side below the proper left ‘f-hole’, Figure 10.
The trefoil has also been altered and reconstructed. The lobe farthest from the soundboard may have been broken, although this is unlikely as boxwood is a strong, dense wood. The lobe may have been worn away, but such extreme wear is not evident elsewhere on the citole. A more plausible reason for its alteration is that it was deliberately ‘rounded over’ to facilitate a conventional violin playing position with the instrument at the shoulder or breast; a flatter trefoil end is illustrated in Hawkins’s 1776 engraving. The trefoil appears complete in an 1874 engraving by Engel and in an electrotype at the Victoria and Albert Museum that is referred to by Buehler-McWilliams [6; p. 15]. An X-radiograph of the trefoil reveals a clear join line around the whole of the bottom lobe and what appears to be a dowel-type fixing to hold a ‘new’ lobe in place, Figure 23. The replacement lobe is finely carved but there are subtle differences in the style of the carving that would indicate it was fashioned by a different hand to the rest of the original carving. It might be, therefore, that a bottom lobe was partially removed or rounded over in the earlier conversion and that this truncated lobe was later cut away completely to allow a well-carved complete replacement lobe to be ‘let in’ to the trefoil. Other elements of carving elsewhere on the citole also lack the fluidity of the original carver’s hand and appear darker, indicating that they could also be replacements by the carver of the trefoil lobe. These include acorns and leaves in the tree above the swine herder and the head of the woodman.

Comments from those privileged enough to play the citole in its adapted state suggest that the experiment failed; Charles Burney stated that it sounded like a ‘mute’ violin (a practice violin), and that “the hand is so confined that nothing can be performed but that which lies within the reach of the hand in its first position” [23]. The density of the boxwood deadened the sound while the thickness of the neck and the constraint of the neck aperture rendered any dextrous manipulation of the strings impossible. That the new violin could not be played satisfactorily probably contributed to the subsequent indifference that surrounded the state of the soundboard and the stringing of the instrument. It should be noted, however, that the soundboard was made from spruce, a wood commonly selected in violin making for the soundboard, sound post, and corner/top/bottom blocks and linings, so it is possible that genuine efforts were made to render it playable. At some point prior to its acquisition by the British Museum in 1963, the citole was given a modern bridge and strung with gut without any attempt to sustain it as a potentially playable instrument.

Conclusions
Among Remnant’s concluding remarks in the 1980 study was the comment: “So far we have considered the external appearance of the instrument; the inside will remain largely a mystery until there is an opportunity to investigate it” [3; p. 95]. As a result of its imminent redisplay, that opportunity has now arisen. The treatment of the citole has been prompted partly by aesthetic considerations: the shabby, deteriorating state of the soundboard; the inappropriateness of the bridge; the broken peg head; and the visual confusion of the pegs and stringing. The accompanying examination has responded to Remnant’s desire to see inside the instrument and has offered long-awaited insights into its construction. These investigations have not only offered an insight into how the false back was fitted, but have also provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the build up below the fingerboard and make some considered judgements as to the reasons for this sequence of alterations. In addition, the original orientation of the citole pegs and the final reconstruction of the trefoil have been verified through X-radiography, shedding light on the stages in their evolution.

The use of X-radiography, coupled with knowledge of early musical instruments, has allowed the best possible explanation of the sequence of alterations throughout the citole’s long life to be pieced together. It is clear that the citole was converted to a violin in c.1578 when a fingerboard, tailpiece and dated tailpiece button plate were fitted. The frontal plugs and X-radiographs of original peg holes suggest that the neck of the citole was hollowed out to take a violin-type pegbox and peg configuration. The original peg configuration and its subsequent alteration have been discussed in great detail by Buehler-McWilliams [24]. The cover plate, hinged from the top nut down towards the bridge (described by Hawkins), has been reoriented. As can be seen from the truncated carving, the neck was planed flat and the wedge-shaped fingerboard fitted to allow a violin bridge to be set up at a height that would accommodate bowing of the instrument.

It has been suggested that the additional wedge is a repair to account for a gap between the fingerboard and the neck caused by the warping of the fingerboard [6; p. 12]. It seems more likely that the wedge was inserted to raise the strings in order to facilitate the fitting of a higher, convex soundboard. The date of this putative second modification is not known, but must have been after the initial conversion in 1578 and prior to Engel’s 1874 engraving. It is also evident from Hawkins’s description of the cover plate that, between 1776 and the production of the electrotype in 1869, the cover plate hinging was reversed. Hawkins’s 1776 engraving also shows a rounded-off trefoil which was reconstructed by the time the Victoria and Albert Museum’s electrotype was made in 1869, as noted by Buehler-McWilliams [6; p. 88].

There are still questions left unanswered; the precise sequence in which other alterations took place, including the opening up of the aperture within the neck and the insertion of the false back, have still to be determined. One suggestion is that the neck aperture modification is likely to date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century when playing styles changed, demanding more access to the fingerboard. The insertion of the false back could have been carried out with the initial conversion or at the time the convex soundboard was fitted (or indeed at any time up to the late eighteenth century). As no method – scientific or otherwise – is available to date the soundboard, it cannot be ascertained whether the existing soundboard is contemporary with the original conversion, or is a later modification that might explain the additional wedge.

A reassessment of past restoration and modification allowed more informed judgements to be made about conservation treatment. Although, after treatment, the citole now appears in a playable condition, this has not been
achieved without further modifying the citole. The top nut has been raised, the broken peg replaced, a new bridge modelled and new strings attached. These alterations have been carried out in consultation with curators, scientists, organologists, musicians and musical instrument makers. Unlike some of the earlier modifications and alterations, these changes are completely detachable and can be removed, should new information come to light or the aesthetic of future display or conservation demand.

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The medieval citole housed in the British Museum is unique, valuable both as a surviving musical instrument and an exceptional work of medieval art (fig. 1). As such, it is mentioned frequently in both musicological and art historical texts. However, these references seldom go beyond a cursory acknowledgement of its existence, or a peek at its long and fascinating history. Similarly, it has been strangely bypassed in the early music revival. Until recently, thumbhole citoles, of which this is a splendid example, were largely ignored by makers, and consequently by players. The present article considers the British Museum citole as having been a functional musical instrument, and attempts to reconstruct its original configuration by studying its structure and the changes that have been made to it. This investigation deepens our understanding of medieval string instruments, and will allow modern-day builders to create viable reproductions of the citole, restoring a voice to an instrument that, in its present state, will never speak again.

A citole is a type of plucked string instrument popular in Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It has a short neck and its body shape is not rounded, instead varying from a pointy holly-leaf shape to a rounded guitar shape, with countless variations in between. Some citoles in iconography are essentially plucked fiddles, with a flat back and simple neck. Others have an unusual tapered body, the deepness of which continues up the back of the neck, with the large expanse thus created being pierced with a hole through which the player’s thumb passes (fig. 2). The majority of citoles in iconography, however, are ambiguous, and could be interpreted either as simple-necked citoles or as crudely depicted thumbhole citoles. Contrary to the impression given by the kinds of reproductions now being built, an enumeration of indisputable simple-necked citoles and indisputable thumbhole citoles in iconography shows that the thumbhole citole was a common and well-established form.

A unifying feature of these varied depictions of citoles is a consistent playing style: the instrument is cradled in the
The walls of this remarkable instrument are covered in ornate, small-scale carvings in high relief. It currently bears a violin soundboard, fingerboard, tailpiece, bridge, and other fittings. A silver plate with the royal coat of arms covering the pegbox and a lion’s head stud securing the tailgut, the stud's anchoring mount engraved with “IP 1578” (see fig. 8), link the instrument to Queen Elizabeth I and provide a date for some of the alterations.

Although the anachronistic violin top draws much attention to itself, it really constitutes a fairly innocuous alteration to the instrument. This is in part due to the original structure of the instrument. As was common for European string instruments in the Middle Ages, the body of the British Museum citole was carved out of one piece of wood: back, sides, neck, and peg area are a single piece of boxwood, with minor exceptions, which will be noted below. The soundboard, fingerboard, bridge, and other medieval fittings were attached to the body. For the most part, it is only these additions that have been replaced and altered through the centuries; the original body remains remarkably intact. Consequently, the changes that have been made to the body, for instance at the peg area, are most informative in creating a chronology for the instrument and determining its original configuration.

The British Museum citole has a complicated form (fig. 3). From the front, it is approximately the same size and shape as a violin: it is 61 cm long and 18.6 cm wide at the lower bouts. It has rounded lower bouts, but lacks C bouts, and its shoulders are angled into the neck. The tailpiece end has an extension in the shape of a trefoil, or three-lobed finial. From the side, however, the citole is very unlike a violin, for it is a wedge shape that is narrowest at the tailpiece end (3 cm) and widest at the nut (14.7 cm). The deep expanse of the neck is pierced by the thumbhole. The sides of the instrument, from the narrow strips near the trefoil to the large surfaces on the shoulders

arms, the right arm coming up from beneath the lower bout to play the strings with a large plectrum. Daunting as the thumbhole may appear, it is surprisingly non-restrictive to playing, even allowing the performer to make small shifts out of first position. Many iconographic thumbhole citoles have short fingerboards with one or two frets above the hand, and it is possible to reach these frets by bringing the thumb to the front edge of the thumbhole. The thumbhole citole is particularly apt for playing while standing up, since the portion of the neck behind the thumbhole rests comfortably against the player’s left arm, providing stability without the use of a strap. Indeed, citoles are often paired with fiddles and portrayed being played by standing minstrels who are accompanying dancers.

The British Museum citole dates from the early fourteenth century, a date coinciding with the zenith of the citole in English iconography and source records. It is the only surviving citole, and the oldest, most intact European necked chordophone to survive through centuries of human contact. The walls of this remarkable instrument are covered in ornate, small-scale carvings in high relief. It currently bears a violin soundboard, fingerboard, tailpiece, bridge, and other fittings. A silver plate with the royal coat of arms covering the pegbox and a lion’s head stud securing the tailgut, the stud's anchoring mount engraved with “IP 1578” (see fig. 8), link the instrument to Queen Elizabeth I and provide a date for some of the alterations.

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Figure 4. Keel-shaped back of the British Museum citole (photograph by Lewis Jones and Alice Margerum)

and surrounding the thumbhole, are carved with figures and foliage. The peg end is surmounted by a magnificent dragon with bared teeth and large, bat-like wings. The back has an intriguing shape, with a central ridge extending from the base of the trefoil up to the back of the neck, gaining prominence and height as it goes (fig. 4). This keel-shaped back is undecorated, with the exception of a small patch of carving at the base of the neck that tastefully relates it to the rest of the instrument.

The British Museum citole has often been condemned as a musical instrument for qualities attributed to its construction and ornate decoration. In his description of 1776, John Hawkins wrote: “Notwithstanding the exquisite workmanship of it, the instrument produces but a close and sluggish tone, which considering the profusion of ornament, and the quantity of wood with which it is encumbered, is not to be wondered at.” Modern writers have continued to question whether the citole could have been successful as a musical instrument, or whether such an instrument was even intended for musical use. However, X-ray images attest to the remarkable care that has been taken to create an instrument both stunning in appearance and refined in construction.

Despite the decorative carving, the walls of the instrument are remarkably thin and uniform [see Introduction, Pl. 27]. The relief carvings are consistently about 3 mm deep, and the solid wall behind them is also about 3 mm thick, resulting in a total wall thickness of about 6–7 mm. Considerable effort has been made to reduce the weight of the carvings: the four bumps along the instrument’s outline are largely undercut, in actuality more air than wood. The lower two bumps, at the waist of the instrument, have been scooped out from the inside as well, minimizing the amount of wood there. Remarkably little allowance has been made for end grain; the walls at the shoulders and approaching the trefoil, which are on the end grain, are essentially as thin as anywhere else [see Introduction, Pl. 26]. The interior walls of the instrument show remarkable grace and elegance in their shape and continuity; the X rays reveal that they are clean and smooth, and generally parallel to the outside surface.

The thickness of the back is harder to gauge from the X rays; however, there are indications that it is very thin. A hole, 5 mm in diameter, has been drilled though the back. The thickness of the wood at the edge of this hole appears to be slightly less than 2 mm. Close examination of the X ray reveals that the spine of the keel-shaped back is slightly thicker than the wood around it, and that the thickness of the wood at the hole is representative of the remainder of the back [see Introduction, Pl. 27]. Indeed, the only parts of the citole that actually consist of thick, solid wood are the trefoil extension and the dragon. The area between the thumbhole and the back edge of the neck (the area shown in fig. 10) is deceptively thin, only about 11 mm across [see Introduction, Pls 25–6]. The back edge of the neck appears thick, but is mostly hollow. The area underneath the fingerboard has been hollowed out. The body cavity is brought to a point as it meets the neck, again minimizing the weight of the entire neck. Only the dragon’s head, wings, and body as it curls toward the fingerboard are thick (25–35 mm) and solid. This solidity is necessary to provide the pegs with a good mount and to support the tension of the strings. The trefoil acts as a counterbalance and provides a solid mount for the other end of the strings.

The construction of the citole is well thought out, combining the strength and lightness required in a good instrument. Solid masses at both ends provide support for the strings, and the thicker ridge down the spine of the back connects them. The rest of the back is thin and undecorated, allowing for good resonance. The walls, or ribs, are decorated, but of consistent thickness. On instruments such as this, the acoustical function of the ribs is to carry the vibrations from the front to the back; the ribs do not provide significant resonance themselves. However, on this instrument the two largest sections of the walls, the shoulders, are constructed with a plain wall, with carvings that are not attached (this is discussed further below); this may be a device to allow them to vibrate unhindered. The builder was careful to reduce the amount of material throughout the citole, minimizing its weight and maximizing its resonance. This implies that the British Museum citole is the product of a master instrument builder, and represents a highly developed instrument.

Study of the British Museum citole is of course complicated by the alterations made to it since its
construction, some intentional, and some accidental. A valuable tool in considering these changes is an electrotype copy made in 1869 (fig. 5). It is a remarkable three-dimensional copy of the citole, made apparently by pressing soft wax onto the carvings and submitting the wax to an electrical process to create an exact replica in brass. The makers of the electrotype were clearly most interested in the medieval carvings, which are duplicated with an astonishing degree of detail. Unfortunately, in the effort to make the electrotype resemble the original instrument, it was painted brown, ironically disguising some of the fine surface detail. The top and back of the instrument are merely approximated in the electrotype. The electrotype is fitted with a curious bridge carved to resemble a stone arch bridge covered with ivy (fig. 6). This bridge was probably made to complement the carvings on the body of the citole, but not intended to be functional. The electrotype provides a valuable bookmark in the citole’s history because it records the state of the instrument in 1869. Remarkably, much of the damage to the instrument has happened since then.

Examples of this modern damage can be seen on the shoulders (fig. 7). These are the exception to the one-piece construction of the instrument, for the decoration there, rather than being carved directly into the wood of the body, is carved on a separate panel of wood for each shoulder, which is set against an integral wall. A small frame around each panel, hidden behind the carvings, is glued to the inner wall. One reason for this construction could be that since these two large panels occur on end grain, the carver chose to insert slab-cut panels to retain a unity of appearance throughout the instrument. Another reason could be to give the shoulders greater resonance, as stated above. The fragility of the carving here is evident: several bits have broken off, some of which have been glued back on. The panels are undamaged on the electrotype, and one large
piece currently missing from the right shoulder of the citole is present in a photo from 1903.23

The walls behind the shoulder carvings are covered with gilding composed of brass paint on paper, which currently has a greenish, wrinkled appearance.24 John Hawkins, writing in 1776, described the carvings on these two panels and noted that “under the carving is a foil of tinsel or silver gilt.”25 This appearance of gilt is maintained on the electrotype, where the shoulders were cast as separate pieces, painted brown, and set against a gold-painted wall. How old the gilt is, and why it should be apparent in 1776 and 1869, but be completely tarnished now, is unclear. No traces of gilt or other polychromy survive elsewhere on the instrument, so these panels are the only places highlighted in this way.26 The gilding could have been renewed (or applied) in the sixteenth century when a new soundboard was made, by removing and replacing the panels. It could be that the process of making the electrotype caused the gilding to tarnish.

Another part of the citole that has been damaged and repaired is the endmost knob of the trefoil (fig. 8). This knob is missing in the engraving that accompanies Hawkins’s description of the instrument [see Introduction, Pl. 1],21 and is present in its current, repaired, form on the electrotype. The high quality of the carving on the knob has led to the assumption that it is the original piece, which was reattached.22 However, the X rays clearly show that the current knob is a replacement [see Appendix A, fig. 23]. The joint between this knob and the rest of the trefoil is set at an angle impossible to cut, angling into the trefoil in a cone shape. Also, the two side knobs of the trefoil are very worn, front and back, while this knob is not. This all suggests that the original knob was broken off and lost at an early date, and that sometime later the broken wood was removed and a replacement piece carved and fitted. Perhaps this was done in preparation for making the electrotype and displaying the instrument in the mid-nineteenth century. The very skilled carver who made the carefully matched replacement piece might also have made the decorated bridge that was copied for the electrotype.

One of the most gratifying results of my study has been the recognition of a lost owl’s rightful place on the citole. The British Museum has in its collection a small, three-dimensional carved owl (fig. 9), which they have assumed belonged in some way with the citole. Comparison to the electrotype reveals that the owl once inhabited the hollow
The changes to the British Museum citole discussed hitherto can be characterized as accidental damage, which in some cases has been repaired to preserve the medieval relic. The following, more substantial, alterations were made intentionally to modify the citole into a violin and maintain it in a playable condition as such. Although some may deem these efforts misguided, they were at least made in a systematic way, and can thus be traced back to reveal the original form of the citole.

The most significant changes to the citole have been made at the peg-box area. Currently, the citole has four pegs inserted laterally as on a violin (fig. 11). The front surface of the pegbox is covered by a silver lid engraved with the arms of Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley. A small hinge attaches the silver plate at the upper edge, and two arms extend down the edges of the fingerboard on either side of the nut. In addition to the four holes with pegs in them, there are two additional holes for pegs. These holes were plugged, although the wooden filler has fallen out of one of them due to the crack in the pegbox wall.23

It is evident that the pegbox and the peg holes that lie beneath it are alterations to the medieval citole. The original builder took great care to arrange the carvings into logical and complete segments, but these peg holes and the silver plate cut mercilessly through the leaves. Again, the craftsmanship is astounding.

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However, the spacing and the angle of these two holes provide clues about the others. The placement of the two holes far back near the dragon’s mouth suggests that the builder wanted to use all the available space, which would allow for a total of six pegs. Since the neck seems too slender to have accommodated six individual strings, these were probably arranged in courses. Two citoles on the Toro west portal (Elders 1 and 18) show five pegs but only three strings, suggesting that the five strings were grouped into three courses.25

The angle of the two old peg holes suggests that some additional alterations may have been made to the peg area. The holes are not perpendicular to the surface through which they are drilled, but parallel to the fingerboard. This is curious, because if the other original peg holes were drilled at the same angle, there would not be enough material for them near the nut to fit securely. However, if some wood has been removed and originally there was a distinct angle between the fingerboard and the peg area, the pegs would fit admirably (fig. 14). The citole carving in Strasbourg clearly shows this arrangement (see fig. 13), and others such as the Norwich Cathedral and Cley-next-the-Sea examples (figs. 2 and 15) have a distinct angle at the nut, rather than the slope suggested by the current arrangement of the British Museum leaves and dragon scales, and slicing away the back of a man. However, on the front surface of the peg area, between the dragon’s mouth and the top of the silver plate, are two round depressions filled with a rough material (fig. 12). These are accommodated by the carving: grape vines and leaves are positioned to curl around them. The X-ray images [see Introduction, Pl. 25] confirm that these are peg holes, and thus that the entire pegbox is a later modification. Although on the surface the two holes are close both to each other and to the outside edge of the citole, they were drilled at an angle so that each peg leaned out, leaving ample room to turn it. On thumbhole citoles, the pegs pierce the peg block from the front surface, and the large expanse of material behind the neck provides a secure mount. This arrangement can be seen clearly in iconography, for instance in the carvings in the Exeter Cathedral Minstrels’ Gallery, at Strasbourg Cathedral (fig. 13), and on the west portal of the Toro Collegiate Church. Pegs splayed out at seemingly haphazard angles are evident in some two-dimensional depictions, such as the citole in the Avranches manuscript (Avranches, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 222, fol. 9).41 All other traces of the original citole pegs are unfortunately lost, having been destroyed when the pegbox was excavated.

Figure 14. Diagram showing the proposed configuration of the peg area
The lower bouts is continuous until it reaches the first of the protruding bumps, where a band of quatrefoils separates it from the next section of carving. Each section is further defined by containing a specific type of foliage: oak trees on the shoulders and maple on the lower bouts, to name a few. In each section, the subject matter is arranged carefully to fit within its prescribed space; leaves always bend to fit rather than being cut off.\textsuperscript{26} This characteristic is critical in understanding the upper edge of the carving, and thus the original rib line of the citole.

Another critical feature is that the decorative banding occurs between segments of carving, but never on the outer edges of the instrument. The bottom edge of the ribs as they meet the back is consistently undecorated, and this is obviously original since the ribs and back are one piece of wood. A ridge of wood is necessary along the bottom edge of each shoulder to secure the panel. However, this ridge is not decorated, maintaining a similar appearance to the bottom edge of the rest of the side carvings.

The lower bouts present a clear example of unaltered ribs (fig. 16). The ribs here are voluted, or scooped out. A constructional technique used in carved-body instruments, voluted ribs allow the maker to thin the walls of the instrument from the outside, while leaving plenty of surface area on the top edge of the ribs to secure the soundboard.

Surviving \textit{lire da braccio} from the sixteenth century,\textsuperscript{27} as well as medieval carvings such as the fiddle in the Lincoln Cathedral Angel Choir, have this feature. The maker of the British Museum citole used this technique on the lower bouts, where the ribs are short, but did not attempt to volute the taller ribs of the shoulders; as these are hidden behind the carvings, there was no need to volute them for the sake of a unified appearance. Both the top and bottom edges of the ribs on the lower bouts as they leave the trefoil are clearly defined by the voluting and the placement of the decoration.

One exception may be some leaf tips that appear to have been trimmed off, on the second and third trees around from the trefoil on the right side. This will be pertinent when considering the original rib line. As the lower bouts curve in toward the waist of the instrument, more significant trimming has occurred on both sides of the instrument (figs. 17 and 18). The voluting has flattened out, but more substantial parts of leaves have been cut away. This trimming was continued over the protruding bumps and up to the shoulder panels.

Due to their special construction, the shoulder panels themselves provide their own clues. Here the carvings are pierced through the wood panels, but the outer edges of each panel are supported by a solid frame. This frame is subtly hidden behind the carvings; it is most visible on the left shoulder panel among the pig’s feet on the bottom edge and the oak leaves in the upper right corner (fig. 19). Its presence helps define the upper edge of the shoulders as the original rib line.

While our understanding of the original rib line is assisted by the decorative carving, it is hampered by the presence of the vaulted violin soundboard, which covers the rib line and also confuses the eye with its many curved lines. However, until such time as additional scientific investigation can be made, we must use the clues we have. I propose that, rather
The shape of the rib line is completely different for a bent top than for a vaulted top. With a vaulted soundboard, the rib line occurs in one plane: set a violin soundboard on a flat surface, and all of its edges will lie flat while its belly arches away from the surface. With a bent soundboard, the rib line dips according to its distance away from the centerline of the instrument (fig. 20). Where the ribs move quickly in or out from the centerline, the dip of the rib line will be most apparent, whereas the portions of the ribs that are more or
less parallel to the centerline will have a flat rib line. On the British Museum citole, the places where the rib line would dip the most are on the shoulders, the bottoms of the lower bouts, and as the lower bouts curve into the waist. These are the places where a maker trying to fit a vaulted soundboard would have the most trouble. We have seen that the rib line of the citole has been lowered as the lower bouts curve into the waist, and possibly as they approach the trefoil (fig. 21). As the shoulders approach the neck, the soundboard has lifted completely away from the ribs, suggesting that the rib line is not flat. It has also pulled away from the ribs at other points. The imperfect fit of the present soundboard and the subtle alterations to the rib line are exactly what one would encounter in attempting to fit a vaulted soundboard onto a rib line shaped for a bent soundboard.

Citoles and other similar medieval instruments have traditionally been assumed to have had flat soundboards. This is in accordance with the recognized development of the vaulted top in the late fifteenth century, leading to the development of the violin. In iconographic sources, an arched top can be indicated by shading, as on Gaudenzio Ferrari’s famous “Paradiso” fresco in the Sanctuary of La Beata Vergine dei Miracoli, Saronno (1534–36). However, without this shading, it is impossible to tell in a painting what kind of subtle shape a soundboard has. Likewise, this kind of subtlety can be lost on a sculpture, unless the sculptor intended to reproduce the instrument exactly and the soundboard is not obscured by the player’s hand. Even so, the observer may not be able to confirm this intricacy without close critical examination, perhaps by holding a flat edge to
Some iconographic citoles have tailpieces, while the strings of others converge to a point at the base of the trefoil. The British Museum citole has several holes through its trefoil (see fig. 8). One hole, 3.7 mm wide, pierces the trefoil at its center, where the carved ribbons intersect. The top surface of this hole is centered while the back is slightly askew. Another hole, drilled straight through the trefoil stem, secures the silver lion’s head on the front surface and a small shield with the date 1578 on the back surface. An earlier hole through the stem has since been plugged (see fig. 8; visible on the back, to the left of the shield); the wood of the plug has a reddish hue, similar to the plugs in the pegbox. This hole was steeply tapered, being 7.9 mm on the front surface and 5.0 mm on the back, and, like the hole where the carved ribbons intersect, was drilled at an angle. The tapered hole, and perhaps the hole where the ribbons

the carving to confirm the soundboard’s shape. The bend in the top I am proposing for the British Museum citole is very slight, perhaps dipping 8 mm at the widest portion of the lower bouts. Such a feature would be hard to establish in the iconographic record, and is precisely the kind of information that makes the study of surviving instruments so valuable.

With the condition of the rib line established, the relationship between it and the neck becomes apparent. There is a distinct step up from the rib line at the shoulders to the neck under the fingerboard, implying that the fingerboard was raised off the soundboard, and resulting in a higher bridge than we normally associate with plucked string instruments. It is worth noting that the edges of the neck are walls themselves, like the ribs, because the neck has been hollowed out (fig. 22).

The walls of the neck have been lowered since their original construction, for significant portions of the carving have been lost (figs. 23 and 24). Presuming that the line of banding underneath the carved hunt scene was parallel to the original top of the neck, as it is to the shoulder when it turns downward, the neck has been lowered fairly uniformly. The missing bits from heads and leaves, and perhaps the antlers on the deer on the left side of the neck, suggest that the original edge was 2–4 mm higher. Restoring this amount to the height of the neck and fitting the ribs with a bent soundboard would create a bridge about 3 cm tall, although the precise height would depend on bridge placement and the angle and height of the fingerboard, both of which are lost to us now. A significant number of iconographic sources show a large, thick bridge (see, for example, fig. 2).
The British Museum citole depicted in the Parma Baptistry and the church of St. Francis of Assisi. A carved citole in Valencia shows curious wide, flat frets with small voids between them (fig. 25). Thus, even though the original fittings of the British Museum citole have been lost, clues left behind on the instrument can tell us things about them. First, the citole’s pegs were originally inserted from the front, rather than laterally, as they now are. The spacing of the surviving peg holes suggests that the instrument originally had six pegs, and the slenderness of the neck suggests that the six strings were grouped in courses. The shape and condition of the rib line indicate that the citole originally had a flat soundboard, bent to shape. The step between the rib line and the neck demonstrates that the fingerboard was raised above the level of the soundboard. This, together with the bent soundboard, suggests that the bridge was high. The tapered hole in the trefoil stem suggests that the strings were affixed there, either by means of a tailpiece or by some other method. Other details of the setup, such as frets, bridge height and placement, string material, and tuning are unfortunately unknown. However, the citole provides enough clues for enterprising builders to start addressing these issues.

Finally, there is a legitimate question as to whether instruments that are highly decorated can be considered representative of their kind. The high survival rate of decorated instruments can be more easily ascribed to artistic qualities than to musical value, and the British Museum citole’s remarkable preservation can of course be attributed to its beauty as a work of art. However, I believe that it was intersect, may have been used to secure the strings in some manner. A peg inserted into the tapered hole could have secured the tailgut in a manner similar to the present arrangement. Alternatively, if there was no tailpiece, all of the strings could have been attached directly to a ring or thong on this peg.

Another setup feature about which the British Museum citole is frustratingly silent is frets. Many manuscript drawings of citoles show frets, usually as parallel double lines. Due to the nature of the British Museum citole’s neck, it could not have accommodated gut frets tied around the fingerboard and neck, as on a lute, so it is probable that it had glued-on wooden frets. These could have been small and narrow, in essence very similar to tied gut frets. Alternatively, they could have been wider wooden frets, as on citoles [more properly identified as ceteres, see Chapter 10, this volume, p. 98] depicted in the Parma Baptistry and the church of St. Francis of Assisi. A carved citole in Valencia shows curious wide, flat frets with small voids between them (fig. 25).

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created to be a performing instrument, or at least that it was built by a craftsman who was a master citone builder as well as a master carver. Granted, this was probably an extraordinarily ornate instrument, intended for a special patron, but that need not detract from its musical value. Wear marks on the neck and trefoil indicate that it was played, although that does not necessarily mean that it had a favorable sound. Features such as the thin, undecorated back and the voluted lower bouts indicate that the builder knew how musical instruments worked. Also, careful attention was given to the balance of the instrument. Even though it is somewhat heavy (certainly not like the featherweight lute), it rides comfortably in the arms. The hollow neck and the thinness of the wood around the thumbhole suggest that the craftsman made adjustments to allow the instrument to balance comfortably. The refined quality of the interior indicates that the citone was not merely a showpiece. And finally, the overall beauty and elegance of design bespeaks a refined instrument representing the height of its development. As such, it provides an invaluable example of the work of a skilled medieval instrument maker, so distant to us today.

Appendix 1

Provenance of the British Museum citole

The first known record of the British Museum citole’s existence is a detailed description of the instrument by Sir John Hawkins in his *History of Music*, published in 1776. Assuming it to be an early and strange violin dating from the sixteenth century, Hawkins describes some of the carving and provides a detailed engraving of the instrument. He comments that it was purchased at the “sale by auction of the late duke of Dorset’s effects,” likely referring to an auction that took place at the death of Charles Sackville in 1769. The Sackville family was known for collecting royal castoffs, and a possible scenario is that Thomas Sackville, Lord High Treasurer to Elizabeth I, acquired the instrument at her death in 1603.

Charles Burney also mentions the citone, in the third volume of his *History of Music*, published in 1789. He notes that the instrument was then the property of Mr. Bremner, who owned a music publishing and instrument business in the Strand. The publisher Robert Bremner (ca. 1713–1789), who had moved his business from Edinburgh to London in 1762, also owned the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book for some years. In 1803, the citone was sold at the sale of the Honourable Smith-Barry’s effects by Christie’s for 30 guineas.

In 1806, the citone appeared in an inventory of Warwick Castle as “Queen Elizabeth’s violin.” It remained in the Warwick collection until 1963, when the British Museum acquired the instrument. In the 1860s, the 4th Earl of Warwick, George Guy Greville, was approached by Henry Cole of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) regarding his collection. This resulted in the making of an electrotype copy of the instrument in 1869 by Messrs. Franchi and Son, and the displaying of the instrument in 1872 at an exhibition of musical instruments at the South Kensington Museum. The citone was subsequently shown at the 1904 exhibition at Fishmongers’ Hall, in Eastbury Manor House, Barking, in 1935, at the 1951 Galpin exhibition, at an exhibition in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1957, and at an exhibition in Paris in 1967.

Appendix 2

Thumbhole citoles in iconography

The study of citoles in iconography is problematic. First, the normal caveats apply: Did the artist know the instrument and care about depicting it accurately? Was the artist working from a pattern book, a description, a memory of an existing instrument, or a real instrument? Does symbolism play a role in the depiction, and, if so, how? How do the limitations of the artistic medium hamper the accurate depiction of a musical instrument? This last issue applies most specifically to the thumbhole citole: most two-dimensional depictions show the instrument directly from the front, and reveal nothing about the depth of the back or the presence of a thumbhole. When viewing a thumbhole citole from the front, the actual thumbhole and unusual neck are completely hidden (fig. 26). Additionally, due to the instrument’s keel-shaped back, the visible depth at the edges of the British Museum citole is significantly less than the full depth at the thumbhole. This means that even a citole depiction that shows a second line giving an impression of the depth of the body (as in the Robert de Lisle Psalter) could represent an instrument with an overall wedge shape.

A few two-dimensional depictions do portray the thumbhole, although the thumbholes swing far to one side in organologically improbable arrangements (Robert de Lisle Psalter, Tickhill Psalter). Others clearly depict a simple neck with a pegdisc on the end (fig. 27). Most other two-dimensional depictions are ambiguous, depicting a

Figure 26. The author playing her reconstruction of the British Museum citole
fingertip that ends without any indication of pegging, or an unusual bent head that curls toward the player, usually terminating in a dragon’s head (both of these can be found in the Queen Mary Psalter). Either of these could, in fact, represent a thumbhole citoles. In the first case, the artist merely drew what was visible from the front and ignored the complicated hodge-podge of wood and pegs beneath the fingerboard. In the second case, the artist was inspired by the dragon’s head curling around the top of the instrument, and drew it in a way that was artistically pleasing, though organologically improbable. It is noteworthy that the forward-bent, curved neck does not occur in three-dimensional media.

Citoles in sculpture have their own advantages and disadvantages for the researcher. Since they occur in three dimensions, the carver can represent the sides of the instrument as well as the front. However, circumstances may have dictated that the instrument be carved in less detail than we could wish, so what appears to be a deep body could simply be a case where the carver neglected to remove excess stone. However, as with two-dimensional depictions, there are clear examples of both simple-necked citoles (Lincoln Cathedral Angel Choir) and thumbhole citoles (figs. 2, 13, 15, and 25). Others have characteristics of a thumbhole citoles, such as a wedge-shaped body or pegs inserted from the front of the peg block, but the area where the thumbhole would be is obscured. Iconographic examples of indisputable thumbhole citoles and indisputable simple-necked instruments that have been called citoles are listed below.

**Thumbhole citoles**

Norwich Cathedral, cloister vault boss (fig. 2)
Cley-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, Church of St. Margaret, label stop (fig. 15)
Tickhill Psalter (New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, MS 26, fol. 17) (R&M fig. 71)
Lincoln Cathedral, stained glass [Chapter 2, Pl. 6]
Beverley Minster, nave label stop (JM pl. 79)
Psalter-Hours (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.183, fol. 141v) (CY fig. 15, corsair.morganlibrary.org) Petite Heures de Jean de Berry, (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. MS. 18014, fol. 53)

Toro Collegiate Church, west portal, Elder 18 (PR fig. 5)
Valencia Cathedral, south door (fig. 25)
Pamplona Cathedral, cloisters [Chapter 2, Pl. 9]
Rheims Cathedral, west façade
Strasburg Cathedral (fig. 13)

**Simple-necked citoles**

Parma, Baptistry, stone carving (R&M fig. 53) [Chapter 2, Pl. 7]
Lincoln Cathedral, Angel Choir (R&M fig. 54)
Gloucester Cathedral, vault boss (R&M fig. 63)
Assisi, St. Francis of Assisi lower church, fresco with Elders (CY figs. 7–11)
Book of Hours (London, British Library, Egerton MS 1151, fol. 47) (R&M fig. 68, www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts) [Chapter 11, Pl. 2]
Warham, Norfolk, Church of St. Mary, stained glass (fig. 27)
Yorkshire Museum & Gardens, stained glass (Age of Chivalry no. 562)

**Abbreviations**


**Appendix 3**

**Transforming the citoles into a violin**

The alterations to the British Museum citoles to transform it into a violin shed light on the place of violins in Tudor England. Setting aside the date of the current fittings, consideration of the pegbox indicates that the instrument was first transformed into a three-string violin, then upgraded to a four-string violin. There are currently holes for six laterally placed pegs beneath the silver plate; four of the holes have pegs, and the other two have been plugged (figs. 28 and 29). I will call the current four peg holes A, B, C, and D, and the plugged holes E and F (fig. 30). The pegbox of the three-string violin ended after F, which fits neatly beneath the silver plate, but it was later excavated more deeply to accommodate holes C and D. The plugged holes are smaller than the current pegs (fig. 31), and are comparable in size to those on the famous instrument made...
by John Rose ca. 1580 (identified variously as cymbalum decachordon, a bandora or an orpharion). It is evident from the direction in which the peg holes were reamed that the pegbox was originally built to accommodate only three pegs: E and F together with B, originally reamed the other way. The reamed direction of A would exclude it from this setup. The orientation of the three pegs, with the peg head closest to the nut extending out on the thumb side, is consistent with other instruments that have pegboxes and three strings.

The size of the original pegbox is defined by the silver plate, which, along with the silver lion’s head stud and date, links the instrument to Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley and the year 1578. I propose that the citole was found in its original form shortly before 1578 and modified into a three-string violin. Shortly thereafter, it was modernized again into a four-string violin by deepening the peg-box, re-reaming hole B, and drilling holes A, C, and D. Because the silver plate carried significance and beauty, the second modifier was careful to hide his work underneath it.

Daunting as it appears when considering violin playing position, the British Museum citole can be played as a violin if a low Renaissance orientation is used. The trefoil rests easily on the shoulder without the use of the chin. The thumbhole is large enough for a violinist’s hand, and even allows for some shifting in lower positions.

Notes

1. British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe, 1963, 10–2, 1. The known provenance of this instrument is outlined in Appendix 1.

Emanuel Winternitz, Musical Instruments of the Western World 
World of Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments (Newton Abbot: 
David & Charles, 1976), 30–33; The New Grove Dictionary of Music and 
Musicians, 2nd ed., s.v. “Citole,” by Laurence Wright; Carey 
Feinstein, “Dulcet Tones: Changing a Gittern into a Citole,” British 
Museum Magazine (2000). A study was commissioned in these 
art historical texts: Fredrick Grunfeld, “Last of the Gitterns,” The 
Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400 (London: 
Royal Academy of Arts in association with Weidenfeld and 
Nicolson, 1987), 426; John Cherry, Medieval Decorative Art (London: 
A conference hosted by the Schola Cantorum and Historisches 
Museum in Basel in May may be a turning point. It brought 
together scholars, builders, and players to consider the theme 
“Citole, Guiterne, Chitarra saracenica? ‘Peripheral’ Plucked 
Instruments of the Middle Ages: Key Research Questions.” 
The British Museum citole is unplayable in its current state. Not 
only is its fingerboard so warped that the strings lie flat against its 
hump, but parts of the instrument are so fragile that it would be 
unwise to subject it to tension. The important historical value of 
the medieval citole lies in all of its later transformations as its best 
role is as a museum piece. The author has created a functional 
replica of the instrument based on many of the theories discussed 
in this paper. 
Rounded-body instruments are categorized as lutes and gitterns. 
For much of the twentieth century the nomenclature of citoles and 
gitterns was confused. Laurence Wright matched the correct 
instrument with its correct name: a gittern has a rounded back and 
body, like a small lute, while a citole can have a variety of shapes. 
See “The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mislabeled 
Identity,” Galpin Society Journal 30 (1972): 8–41. See also Crawford 
Young, “Late, Gittern, and Citole,” in A Performer’s Guide to Medieval 
Music, ed. Ross Duffin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 
2000), 355–73. It is only since August 2005 that the citole in the 
British Museum has been displayed as a citole rather than as a gittern. 
See Appendix 2 for a discussion of citoles in iconography and a list 
of lute/gittern citoles. 
The combination of citole and lute/fiddle occurs frequently in the 
Queen Mary Psalter of the early fourteenth century (British 
Library Royal MS B vii, fols. 3v, 174ir, 203r, 282r, 309r). 
The best evidence for the date of the British Museum citole comes 
from comparing its decoration to that of other surviving medieval 
artefacts. The strongest parallels are found in East Anglian art from 
the early fourteenth century, including the many manuscripts 
produced there and carvings such as the Winchester Choir Stalls, 
made by a Norfolk craftsman in 1309. This subject is explored 
much more fully in the author’s master’s thesis: Kathryn Buehler, 
“Retelling the Story of the English Gittern in the British Museum: 
An Organological Study, ca. 1300–Present” (master’s thesis, 
University of Minnesota, 2002). 
Frederick Crane, Extant Medieval Musical Instruments (Iowa City: 
University of Iowa Press, 1972), 14–15. 
The silver pegbox cover is engraved with the Tudor coat of arms 
and the bear and ragged staff used by Robert Dudley, Earl of 
Leicester, Elizabeth’s court favorite. Although no records exist to 
confirm that the instrument was connected with Elizabeth and 
Dudley, experts at the British Museum have examined the 
silverwork and found it to be appropriate for the time. The pegbox 
suggests an initial conversion into an early three-string violin, 
which would also have been appropriate for the Tudor court at this 
time (see Appendix 5). The social history of Elizabeth’s court, into 
which this instrument could have fit, is explored in Buehler, 
“Retelling the Story of the English Gittern in the British Museum.” 
John Hawkins, A General History of the Science and Practice of Music 
(London: T. Payne and Son, 1776), 2687; Hawkins thought the 
instrument to be an unusual early violin, and did not realize it was 
originally a plucked instrument. Galpin, writing in 1910, agreed 
with Hawkins, but added that if played with a plectrum “it was 
pleasant to hear”: Old English Instruments, 23. 
The British Museum took numerous X rays of the instrument in 
August 2006. I was able to study them in February 2007, but 
unfortunately they were not ready for publication at the time this 
article went to print. They will be published in a forthcoming 
report by the British Museum. 
At least a third of the way up the back of the instrument, and in is approximately the same place as a soundpost in a violin. It 
is unknown whether this hole is original, or a later modification. 
Some iconographic instruments have curious holes in their side, 
such as a citole carving on the Collegiate Church in Toro, west 
portal, Elder 18. 
The pegbox is a later alteration. See Appendix 3. 
The citole (V&A inventory no. 69-66) was made for the 
South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum, 
and is currently kept in storage. Many thanks to James Yorke, 
curator, for allowing me to examine it. 
The electrotype’s bridge, made from the same material as the 
electrotype, is a puzzle in itself. At 64 mm wide and 25 mm tall, with 
an arched top with seven string holes of various sizes and 
placement, it is unlike any violin bridge, and of unsuitable 
proportions for the British Museum citole in its current form. There 
are no particular marks on the British Museum citole’s current 
soundboard to indicate that a bridge like this was ever on it for an 
extended period of time (although a photograph of the instrument 
from the same time period as the electrotype shows the bridge in 
place upon the citole, see Victoria and Albert Museum archives, 
Loan Register MA/31/4, p. 453). It has been suggested that the 
bridge copied for the electrotype was the original citole bridge, but 
it has its highly arched top and the near impossibility that a bridge could have survived with the instrument for centuries after all of the 
fittings had been replaced override this theory. The bridge was 
possibly taken from another instrument, such as a lira da braccio. 
Countess of Warwick, Warwick Castle and its Earls (London: 
Hutchinson & Co., 1909), 353. 
Susan La Niece, scientist at the British Museum (personal 
correspondence, February 2007). 
Hawkins, General History, 2: 687. 
Examples of medieval pierced carving backed with gilding can be 
found on two fourteenth-century carved caskets, pictured in 
Michael Camille, The Medieval Art of Love (London: Calmann & 
King, 1986), 67, 107. Many thanks to John Cherry for bringing 
these to my attention. 
The detailed engraving appears only in the original 1776 edition; it 
is reproduced in Remnant and Marks, “A Medieval ‘Gittern,’” pl. 
75. In the second edition (1853), portraits that had been included 
within the text of the original edition were relegated to a separate 
volume. The 1963 reprint of the second edition (American 
Musical Society Music Library Association Reprint Series 
(New York: Dover)) does not include this extra volume of pictures, 
and contains merely a small, rather inaccurate diagram of the 
citole. 
For example, Mary Remnant and Richard Marks, in “A Medieval 
‘Gittern,’” 97. 
For a discussion of the pegbox and what it reveals about the 
transformation into a violin, see Appendix 3. 
Reproduced in Remnant and Marks, “A Medieval ‘Gittern,’” fig. 
70. 
A reproduction of Elder 18 appears as fig. 5 in Pepe Rey, 
“Cordophones pinçés et styles musicaux,” in Instruments à cordes du 
Moyen Age, ed. Christian Rault (Grâne: Éditions Créaphis, 1999), 
95–113. 
The only exception to this is where a few leaves and feet stick out 
over the banding that defines the bottom of the hunt scenes on 
either side of the neck (figs. 23 and 24). 
See, for example, the lira da braccio by Francesco Linarol, 1569, in 
the National Music Museum, the University of South Dakota 
(NMM 4209). 
Conservators at the British Museum re-glued the soundboard to the 
Color reproductions can be viewed at www.santuariodisaronno.it/ GFerrari.html. 
This lucky combination occurs in Toro, Elder 18 on the west portal, 
where a shallow bend is perceivable in the soundboard. Thanks to 
Alice Margerum for discovering this.
Since the top of the rib line is so clear on the lower bouts, it is extremely unlikely that any other portion of the rib line could have been altered as significantly as would be necessary to create a new clear rib line – for example, by the removal of an entire line of banding. Such an alteration would have required a step in the soundboard, which does, in fact, occur on the violeta of Saint Caterina de’Vigri and is depicted on a citole carving in Beverley Minster, but which does not comply with the other evidence on the British Museum citole. For this reason, I believe the step between rib line and neck on the citole to be original. For a discussion of instruments with double-level soundboards, see Jeremy Montagu, *Minstrels and Angels* (Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1998), 29–30.

Theoretically, it would be possible to drill holes through the back of the fingerboard and thread gut frets through these holes. There is no evidence for this, however.

Alice Margerum has proposed that the frequent depictions of citole frets as double lines could represent the use of a Pythagorean tuning of 24 pitches per octave (correspondence, March 2007).

A gittern near this citole has clearly depicted tied gut frets. Many thanks to Alice Margerum for bringing this to my attention.

Crawford Young briefly addresses issues of frets and tuning of medieval plucked instruments in “Lute, Gittern, and Citole.”


Ibid.


The 1806 inventory lists a “Violin & Case” in the upper room of the Garden Tower (Warwickshire County Record Office, CR 1886/TN1053). An annotated copy of this inventory from 1809 further describes the instrument (in the same room) as “Queen Elizabeth’s Violin” (Warwickshire County Record Office, CR 1886, Box 466).

Object file, British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe, 1963, 10–2, 1.

For example, the Venus rebec in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente [Inv. No. 433] [see Chapter 8, this volume, Pl. 6].
**Glossary**

**Instrument types**

**Bandora**: a metal-strung guitar with a festooned outline invented by John Rose in the 16th century.

**Cetera**: a word used in medieval Italy to identify a plucked stringed instrument. *Cetera* are spade-shaped, flat backed instruments with wide wooden frets found in Italian iconography. They are often confused with citoles; see Chapter 2 and Chapter 10, this volume.

**Cetula**: in the 1480s, Tinctoris described a *cetula* as a wire-strung, fretted plucked instrument invented by the Italians. According to Tinctoris, it was used by rustics to accompany songs and dances.

**Citole**: a plucked chordophone popular c. 1200–1400 and characterized by a non-oval body outline. It is argued in this volume that features such as tapering body thickness and a deep neck with thumbhole are also defining features of a citole.

**Cittern**: a metal-strung plucked instrument of the Renaissance. The cittern has a flat back, with a slightly tapered body, and a long neck with frets. Several 16th- and 17th-century citterns survive.

**Gittern**: a pear-shaped plucked chordophone of the Middle Ages. There are two extant gitterns, one made by Hans Ott in the mid-15th century (Wartburg Stiftung, KH 50) and the other recovered in an archaeological dig in Poland (Elblag Museum of Archaeology and History, EM/IV/1561).

**Harp**: in the Middle Ages, the harp was a small, triangular instrument held in the lap with roughly a dozen strings. The harp is one of the most frequently depicted medieval instruments. Several medieval harps and partial harps survive, with uncertain provenance.

**Lira da braccio**: a bowed stringed instrument of the Renaissance used to accompany poetry. It generally had seven strings, two of which were drone strings running parallel to the fingerboard. Several instruments from the 16th century survive.

**Lute**: the most common plucked stringed instrument of the Renaissance, the medieval lute was present but less popular. It is a descendent of the Middle Eastern ‘ūd, and has a rounded body constructed of many staves.

**Mandora**: misidentified by Galpin to be a kind of medieval plucked instrument, it is in fact a plucked instrument of the 16th century. It is also the name by which a small surviving monoxyle instrument (built from a single piece of wood, see below) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is known (see Chapter 8, Pls 4–5, and Chapter 10, Pl. 13).

**Orpharion**: a type of bandora; a metal-strung plucked instrument invented by John Rose and popular in the
Fret: a raised bar over the fingerboard that is perpendicular to the string length. Frets serve to fix the pitch of a note as well as brighten the sound. They can be made from gut strings tied around the fingerboard and neck or wooden or metal bars fixed into the fingerboard.

Monochord: a mathematical instrument used to calculate the relationship between string length and pitch. Division points along a monochord’s single string show the placement of notes, much the same as frets.

Monoxyle: a term used to describe instruments in which their body, neck, sides and head are carved from a single piece of wood, as opposed to being constructed from separate pieces of wood.

Nut: a small piece of material at the top of the fingerboard which holds the strings in alignment and marks one end of the vibrating length.

Pegbox: the area at the top of the neck to which the pegs attach. A pegbox has two walls through which pegs pass laterally. Some instruments have peg discs, a solid mount through which pegs pass vertically, with their heads either towards the front of the instrument (‘frontal’ or ‘anterior’), or the back of the instrument (‘posterior’).

Ribs: the strips of wood which create the sides of an instrument, connecting the front to the back.

Tailpiece: a means of attaching the strings to the bottom of the instrument. The tailpiece is suspended between the strings after they pass over the bridge, and a loop of gut which is fixed to a button on the bottom of the instrument.

Trefoil: a three-lobed finial, commonly ornamenting citoles in English and French iconography.

Medieval instrumentalists

Jongleur: a travelling entertainer of many talents. A jongleur’s skillset could include juggling, storytelling, singing and playing an instrument, acrobatics, training of dancing bears, among others.

Minstrel: an entertainer with a specialty in music and instruments. Some minstrels were attached to specific courts while others were itinerant.

Troubadour: a type of poet/composer originating from southern France. Troubadours were often aristocrats, or well connected to an aristocratic court. While they may have occasionally performed their own music, generally performance was left to jongleurs and minstrels.
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Birunguccio, V. 1540. De la pirotechnia, Venice.
Bocca, L.N. (ed.) 1841. Li romans de Bauduin de Sebourc. IIIe Roy de Jhérusalem, Valenciennes.
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