



BEMUS - Pietro Bembo's soundscape: a musical tour in the early modern Italian peninsula

The Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo (1470-1547) played a central role in the European Renaissance. His literary works are widely known and his rich epistolary attests both his contacts with all the most important figures of his time, and the variety of his interests, ranging from literature to arts. However, a missing piece precludes the possibility of grasping Pietro Bembo's multi-faceted figure in its complexity: the sound dimension in which he was immersed has never been adequately investigated so far. This project aims to complete Bembo's portrait by reconstructing the soundscape that surrounded him, and his musical interests and networks. His literary works and letters, together with a few dedications in printed musical volumes and letters written by his friends and acquaintances, offer precious material in order to understand his involvement with music. The research will also explore the reception of his poems by composers who set them to music, investigating the reasons of this choice and evaluating Bembo's role in the dissemination of his texts among musicians. All the collected data, read against previous musicological studies about the cities where Bembo lived and the musicians working there at the same time, will contribute to complete Bembo's image from a musical point of view. The main results of the research will converge in a multimedia database which, combining the images of the very places that Bembo frequented and the music he could have heard, will constitute a visual and aural reconstruction of Bembo's experiences of five centuries ago.

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