

Secular Renaissance Music

Forms and Functions

Edited by
Sean Gallagher



A Library of Essays on Renaissance Music

Secular Renaissance Music

A Library of Essays on Renaissance Music
Series Editor: Stanley Boorman

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Edited by

Sean Gallagher

Boston University, USA

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Series Preface

The contents of these six volumes represent an attempt, by a group of distinguished scholars, to select and present some of the most cogent discussions of key issues in present-day scholarship on Renaissance music. This field has been a central topic of interest among musicologists for at least a century, so much so that it has attracted many of the most thoughtful and perceptive scholars. In recent decades, a wealth of important writing has explored traditional issues, but has also vastly expanded the range of topics and approaches, broadening our understanding of the music itself and of its uses and reception on the part of the Renaissance listener and performer. So rich is this heritage of scholarship that the task we have set ourselves is almost impossible to achieve within the space limitations of these volumes – at least, to the extent of representing the interests and concerns of all our colleagues. Some important topics have not been given the respect which (as some of those colleagues will feel) they deserve: others may have been given too much weight. For, in making these selections, and in trying to ensure that significant concepts and major players in the field have also been fairly represented, we have almost certainly given a skewed impression of current scholarly issues. But we have attempted to present a fair view of what much of the field looks like today, and to offer a stimulus to further thought and research.

A key problem can be presented with one word and its question mark: Renaissance? When was it? How should we define the limits of the present volumes? The lazy answer remains the one that was at first most widely proposed by art historians, including Jakob Burkhardt in the nineteenth century and Bernard Berenson in the twentieth. They, and others, defined the Renaissance as roughly the two centuries encompassed by the dates 1400 and 1600; these are still the boundaries most frequently proposed by texts on the whole history of music, or in accounts designed for university courses. It is obvious that these dates are no more than conveniences, for the idea that any significant part of the musical world changed on the first of January in 1400, or on any other date, is inconceivable. But, for at least the last seventy or eighty years, no art historian, no social or political or literary historian, has been satisfied with even vague generalizations of this sort: many of the characteristics of Renaissance society were already to be found in Florence well before the fifteenth century began, while other parts of Europe did not experience similar developments until near the end of that century, or even later. Similar problems arise at the other end of the epoch, with, for example, elements of manneristic styles emerging well before the year 1600 and prefiguring some of the aesthetic interests of the following century.

Music historians, too, have found it increasingly difficult to assert the same boundaries. When Reinhard Strohm wrote his magisterial *The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), he chose the somewhat earlier date as representing a point at which consistent patterns of change and continuity began to emerge more clearly. Strohm also saw a major turning point in the 1450s, resulting from a ‘synthesis of experiences, a sudden upturn of compositional ambitions, a musical gesture which made all Europe listen and understand’ (see above, p. 9): key to his argument here is the extent to which

he saw this slightly later emergence of common aesthetic and stylistic patterns across the whole of musical Europe. Others date the emergence a little earlier, often drawing attention to the musical results of Dufay's time in Florence in the 1420s. By contrast, Claude Palisca, in his *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), saw the patterns of humanistic influences on music as scarcely emerging before 1500. A similar series of observations could be made about the different aesthetic and stylistic changes at the end of the sixteenth century: musicologists can point up the weakness of assuming a critical divide with the appearance of the first operas and the first presentations of basso continuo (resulting from a clear change in compositional orientations), and can stress, for example, the continuing importance of the style and aesthetics of the *prima prattica* in seventeenth-century Rome.

If it is difficult, then, to accept even approximate decades as setting boundaries for 'the Renaissance' (and therefore for these volumes); it is almost as difficult to draw attention to patterns of consistency within the same two centuries. The most obvious fault-lines can be seen in the early sixteenth century, with the reforming movements associated with Luther and Calvin – so much more influential on musical life than predecessors such as Jan Hus. The impact of the sixteenth-century movements and countermovements can be seen in almost all aspects of musical life – levels of knowledge and of amateur performance, styles of performance practice, use of instruments in the home and church, consequent changes in compositional styles and, particularly, new understandings of the nature and functions of music itself. Much of the change resulted from the extent to which Luther sought to involve the lay congregation in music, not only in the church liturgy, but also often at home: his followers encouraged domestic music-making and furthered the place of practical music in school educational programmes. This resulted in a rich musical life, which, by the end of the century, could already parallel anything the Catholic Church had to offer – indeed, influenced much music for that church – and would eventually lead to the grand musical works of the later Baroque era.

Perhaps as important, even though the results were not seen so quickly, was the emergence of a business of music publishing and printing, which radically changed the relationship of polyphony and art musics to the public at large. The rapidly increasing numbers of editions opened up to new strata of society the possibility of discovering repertoires of which their members had been largely unaware, and allowed them to practise sophisticated polyphony and develop instrumental skills capable of exploring the notated versions of works by contemporary virtuosi. As the same time, as Nino Pirrotta remarked decades ago, previously improvised and oral repertoires came to be notated, printed and imitated in print, in response to the local interests of various sectors of the widening and growing market for printed music.

Between them, these two developments changed almost everything about musical life, and also much about the availability (and therefore the styles) of the music itself. They turned the second half of the sixteenth century, in particular, into a musical world that seems to have few features in common with what we know of the practice of, or access to, music in the early fifteenth century – thus helping to destroy any simple view of consistency over this period of 200 years, so easily called the 'Renaissance'.

There are other significant changes, though most of these seem to us to have happened much more gradually: many are discussed in the essays collected in the present volumes. One is the growth in the recognition of women performers, both professional and amateur

courtly musicians – indeed, by the end of the century the distinction is sometimes hard to maintain. Another is the new position accorded to all sorts of musical instruments: a hierarchy of instruments was established and modified, and compositions specifically designed for instruments appear. This led to an expansion in the nature of much writing about music, to meet the need for instruction in instrumental and vocal practice (including ornamentation and embellishment). These changes go hand in hand with a growing recognition of composition as a skill and craft, and with the status of composers becoming more generally recognized, by themselves as well as by their patrons.

One more series of changes seems to fracture the two centuries into separate periods, and it concerns the styles of music and the presumptions that seem to underlay compositional practice. To oversimplify greatly, the move from a dominance by the tenor voice over the others towards a much more even balance (in which it is clear that composers were able to work with all four or five voices simultaneously, not relying on any one as scaffolding to support the others) reflects more than just a change of technique: it must also have changed listening habits, themselves reflections of changing understandings of sound and the sound-world, and forced new recognitions of the functions of the text in musical settings, of distinctive instrumental sonorities, and of the importance of indicating tempo and underlay in the sources. The later moves towards the strong bass + treble orientation that was to prevail in the following centuries similarly reflect non-musical changes, especially in what the content of an artwork might be, and how it could communicate with the audience or onlooker. Again, this was evidently far from a linear progression: early in the sixteenth century, the styles of the Parisian *chanson*, the *frottola* or the various Neapolitan genres all betray a clear ‘tune and accompaniment’ approach to composition – or at least to the manner of disseminating them through printed editions. At the same time, the controlling tenor and its pre-existing model remained influential compositional tools through much of the same century, and not only in German-speaking territories.

A tentative case can be made for a significant point of transition, by pointing out how many of these changes took place in the three or four decades surrounding 1510. I would not wish to suggest that the ‘Renaissance’ actually consisted of two distinct ‘centuries’, but rather that the progression of musical taste, style and practice that marks the fifteenth century was led in new directions as a result of these events and opportunities. For there are real continuities to be seen as well, more than anything as a result of non-musical social changes. The declining power of the plague (and the slow recovery from the terrible impact of the Black Death) allowed for changes in devotional practice and a concomitant expansion in secular music and culture. Patrons of music, at all social levels, felt more secure (despite the ongoing impact of wars throughout the century) and therefore more able to indulge in social relaxation and entertainment. This can be seen in an expansion in notated musical styles and genres, as much as in the increased commercial availability of music and increased scale of individual performances. At the same time, and also a result of the weakened impact of the plague, and as economies changed and grew, the merchant class became more powerful and much richer, and more able and willing to expend time and money on the arts – collecting curios and paintings, buying books and also buying instruments and music, and meeting to perform among themselves. Finally, the political world also changed gradually through the two centuries – with more centralized power in many areas (France, England, Spain) and more local power in others (Germany, Italy). This power, with its desire to use revenues for

ostentatious display, can be tracked through the musical events and patterns of patronage which become almost continuously more manifest. These continuities underpin the changes I have outlined – for without the new social opportunities and the new political realities, many of the musical changes could not have taken place so easily.

Therefore the six volumes in this series have been organized not chronologically, but thematically, beginning with a study of what we now understand, in musical terms, of the concepts involved in the words ‘Renaissance’, ‘Reformation’ and ‘Counter-Reformation’. Each of the other volumes may seem to focus on a single set of topics – theory, source, patronage, secular or religious music – but each takes a similar wide span, following a group of lines through the 200 years, rather than working across those lines for a shorter time span. The reader is encouraged to read across the different books, as well as along only one at a time, for (to close with one more platitude) the history of music is a history of the interactions of all these diverse elements, and of their impact on the audience.

STANLEY BOORMAN

Series Editor

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Introduction

One recent dictionary defines ‘secular’ as ‘not overtly or specifically religious’. Taken thus, secular music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries encompasses an extraordinarily wide range of works and practices: not just courtly love songs, but music for civic festivities, instrumental music, entertainments provided by minstrels, the unwritten traditions of solo singing and much else. The present collection of essays, while addressing many of these topics, focuses on polyphonic settings of vernacular texts. This is partly for reasons of space and coherence, but also because by examining a host of issues relating to such works – their historical and stylistic contexts, their transmission in written and printed sources, questions of performance, composers’ approaches to text setting – these essays point to the more general significance of secular music within a broad complex of cultural practices and institutions. Although the Church remained a principal site of music making, cities and courts provided increasingly important environments for the cultivation of secular polyphony. The advent of music printing at the beginning of the sixteenth century also made polyphony available to a much wider public, and judging from the number of editions devoted to secular music there was a growing audience eager to acquire these collections of chansons, madrigals and other genres.

The difficulty of yoking the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the single term ‘Renaissance’ has frequently been noted by music historians, increasingly so in recent decades. (For discussions of this issue elsewhere in this series, see the essays in Philippe Vendrix (ed.), *Music and the Renaissance*.) For various reasons the problem is especially acute with respect to secular music. One obvious – and significant – reason is that the kinds of secular texts composers set to music changed over the course of time. This was not true for religious or liturgical music. For all the differences in musical style between a Mass by Du Fay and one composed a century later by Palestrina, the text of the Mass Ordinary remained constant. To a certain extent the same is true of motets: despite changes in literary style and quality, there are strong lines of continuity in Latin motet texts throughout our period. By contrast, the *forme fixe* poems that dominate the chanson repertory through about 1480 presented composers with different tasks and challenges than did the lyric poems of Clément Marot and his contemporaries written just a few decades later. A further potential obstacle to thinking about secular music of the period ca. 1400–1600 under a single conceptual umbrella is the development of distinct ‘national’ song styles (for example, Tenorlied, frottola, cancionero, madrigal). These different genres also varied in their relation to earlier song traditions. *Forme fixe* chansons of the early and mid-fifteenth century constituted a clear continuation of fourteenth-century polyphonic song; the Tenorlied’s use of *Barform* connected it to the medieval Minnelied, and its tenor-based construction distanced it from newer song styles that emphasized the cantus line (see Chapter 7). By contrast, the early Italian madrigal, whatever its musical roots in the slightly earlier polyphonic arrangements of popular chansons (see Chapter 11), clears the path for a new way of joining text and music, a development which would have enormous ramifications later on.

Recognizing this particular ‘Renaissance’ problem does not of course remedy it. But it should alert us to the risks of assuming historical and stylistic continuities where they may not have existed. Or they can be viewed differently: recognizing the genuine disjunctions that occurred in secular music over these two centuries throws into relief those parallels and continuities that did actually exist. Accordingly, in selecting essays for this volume the aim has been both to reflect a wide range of topics that have occupied scholars in recent decades (most were published within the last thirty years), and, where possible, to highlight issues and problems that allow us to consider – and perhaps even discover – threads of continuity in the complex history of Renaissance secular music.

Sources and Transmission

One distinctive feature of secular music in this period is the emergence of genres that had a truly international presence. In the fifteenth century it was the French chanson, in the sixteenth the Italian madrigal. The surviving sources confirm the transmission of many chansons to German-speaking regions (where their original texts were often replaced by devotional Latin words) and even more to the Italian peninsula. Indeed, owing to the heavy loss of fifteenth-century manuscripts from France and the Low Countries our knowledge of the repertory depends largely on Italian sources, with many chansons known only from copies made there. That many Franco-Flemish musicians spent substantial parts of their careers working in Italy (especially during the period ca. 1420–50 and then again from the 1470s onward) doubtless contributed to the transmission of chansons, but there is also evidence of Italians consciously collecting such works. In the sixteenth century the madrigal would effectively reverse this process: Italy became an exporter of secular music to other parts of Europe, most notably to England towards the end of the century, where Italian works sparked the development of a distinctive madrigal type with English texts.

Singers, composers, scribes, collectors – all played a significant role in the transmission of music, as the six essays in this part demonstrate. Northern musicians travelling to and within Italy must often have served as conduits for recent music, and in some cases the musical sources themselves help to confirm this (see Rifkin, Chapter 3 and Gallagher, 2007, pp. 357–60). Collectors of foreign polyphony – be they a small group of Florentines apparently knowledgeable about their preferred style of French chanson, or wealthy German bibliophiles acquiring editions of Italian madrigals – helped determine which works (and which kinds of works) came to be more widely disseminated (see Haar, Chapter 1; Lewis, 2009). Above all, it was a technological development – the emergence of printed polyphony – that altered fundamentally the means by which musical works circulated. The appearance of Ottaviano Petrucci’s first publications (among them his important *Canti* volumes devoted to secular works, see Fallows, Chapter 4) bisect our period chronologically and set the stage for the subsequent prolific growth of editions.

Two essays, ‘Embellishment and Urtext in the Fifteenth-Century Song Repertories’ (Chapter 2) by David Fallows and ‘Composition – Copying: Performance – Re-creation: The Matrix of Stemmatic Problems for Early Music’ (Chapter 5) by Stanley Boorman, consider what the surviving sources can tell us about much broader issues of transmission: the impact that performers and scribes might have had on the written transmission of secular music; the status of an inscribed version of a work as a fixed text; the interrelationships between the

acts of composition, copying and performance and its implications for what Boorman calls ‘the matrix of stemmatic problems’ that scholars face when dealing with early repertoires. Fallows and Boorman come to different conclusions about the degree to which contemporary performers treated the written form of a chanson as a relatively fixed text. Their disagreement opens up further lines of inquiry: in an age in which oral/aural transmission of music (and of information more generally) was so much more common, did the act of inscribing a piece of music carry in itself a significance to which we have become desensitized, since we now regularly write down even the most mundane things? Should the definition of what constitutes a variant be viewed as historically contingent rather than absolute?

Genres

Recent decades have seen extensive research on the various genres of secular music. Some of the most significant work has focused on the question of origins, most notably those of the madrigal. The uncoupling of the early madrigal from the frottola overturned a long-accepted theory (posited by Alfred Einstein) that the former had grown more or less directly from the latter (see Prizer, Chapter 10; Haar, Chapter 11). Stylistic analysis did not support Einstein’s argument for the development of the madrigal, nor did geography, as it became clearer that the two genres had been cultivated in different parts of Italy: the frottola mainly in Mantua and Ferrara, the early madrigal in Florence and Rome. In retrospect, this new sensitivity to the possible relation between genres and specific places seems of a piece with a broader trend of the 1980s to focus on particular musical centres, with book-length studies devoted to cities such as Bruges, Ferrara and Mantua (see Fenlon, 1980; Lockwood, 1984; Strohm, 1985). But the desire to link specific genres or subgenres with a particular city or institution has at times run the risk of obscuring or oversimplifying what now seems a more complex historical reality, as in the case of four-part arrangements of popular monophonic chansons and their purported origins at the French royal court at the end of the fifteenth century. Lawrence Bernstein has offered compelling reasons for modifying this view (Bernstein, 1982, 1986), and in his essay here (‘Josquin’s Chansons as Generic Paradigms’, Chapter 9), he further refines our understanding of song-types cultivated at the French court around 1500 and of the role Josquin’s chansons served as models for composers active there.

The development of various song forms in sixteenth-century France has come into clearer focus, even as our awareness of the extraordinary variety of chanson-types has grown (see van Orden, Chapter 12). By contrast, and despite much recent useful research on German song-types, many questions still remain concerning both the origins of the Tenorlied in the fifteenth century and its transformation into various song types in the second half of the sixteenth (see Staehelin, Chapter 7; Finscher, Chapter 13).

One might reasonably question whether modern notions of genre correspond in any way to the views Renaissance composers held about such matters. When the fifteenth-century theorist Johannes Tinctoris describes the polyphonic genres of his time he gives just three: mass; motet; and ‘cantilena’. About the cantilena he tells us only that it is a small work the words of which can be on any topic but frequently concern love. A contemporary composer’s idea of genre, when setting a virelai or rondeau, might have extended no further than recognition of the poem’s structural constraints. However there is one possible indication that composers of *forme fixe* chansons had a stronger concept of genre, encompassing both musical style

and textual content, and that is the way they at times play with the conventions of such settings. The combinative chansons of Antoine Busnoys and his contemporaries illustrate the point. These bi-textual songs, with their juxtaposition of courtly love songs with the (often humorous and bawdy) texts and melodies of popular *chansons rustiques*, display a knowing, sometimes ironic self-awareness of the genre. Another example might be the motet-chanson, with its combination of Latin-texted tenor and French-texted upper voice, a hybrid song-type apparently pioneered by Guillaume Du Fay, later attempted by Johannes Ockeghem, and further developed by Loyset Compère, Josquin and others of their generation (see Meconi, Chapter 8). By including a Latin text for the tenor, a technique associated with liturgical music, composers altered the usual superius-dominated texture of chansons. A different and more extreme type of textural reconfiguration can be seen in Busnoys's remarkable 'Ha que ville et habominable', which is designed to allow performance either as a 'normal' three-voice rondeau (with the conventional structural duo of superius and tenor), or with the superius taken separately and sung as a three-voice canon.

Composers and Contexts

That Du Fay and Busnoys should have experimented in their songs should perhaps come as no surprise. They were, along with Binchois, the most prolific chanson composers of the fifteenth century, and neither shied away from technical challenges. Of the two, Du Fay's career was the more peripatetic and conformed more to the broader trend of Northern composers spending substantial parts of their careers in Italy. As Lockwood has observed, Du Fay is perhaps the earliest composer to have sustained something of an international career, in part by maintaining contact with past and potential patrons in Italy after his return to the North in 1439 (see Lockwood, 1976, p. 12; Gallagher, Chapter 15). For reasons that remain to be explained, Busnoys, like so many Franco-Flemish composers born in the 1420s and 1430s, seems never to have travelled or worked in Italy. Although the presence of many of their works in Italian sources beginning in the 1470s has prompted speculation that they spent time there, no persuasive evidence for this has yet surfaced. Active as both poet and composer, Busnoys could be seen as a late representative of the long medieval tradition of poet/musicians. At the same time, various technical aspects of his chansons, not least their extensive use of imitative procedures, point to the future and would later influence composers of the Josquin generation.

This last point underscores a striking fact about much secular polyphony in these centuries: many composers – even those whose output in sacred music was considerable – first attempted some of their most innovative techniques in their secular works. These include compositional developments that had far-reaching effects: the use of a low contratenor in three-voice chansons; novel extensions in modal practice; complex types of strict counterpoint, especially double canon (see Bernstein, Chapter 9; Fallows, 2009, pp. 72–4); not to mention the new, affect-laden musical rhetoric of the mature madrigal. That composers lavished such effort on 'small' genres such as the chanson and madrigal seems surprising only if one subscribes to a genre hierarchy that places larger-scale works (for example, the cyclic Mass in the fifteenth century, elaborate five- and six-voice motets in the sixteenth) at the top of the pyramid. But these smaller secular genres include some of the most finely wrought works of the period, and this is not simply because they are elegant 'miniatures'. Rather, in certain chansons and

madrigals one senses a composer attempting to realize a set of aesthetic ideals in an especially concentrated and expressively immediate manner.

Performers and Performance Issues, and Instrumental Music

Beginning in the early 1980s, Christopher Page made a series of recordings of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century secular works with the ensemble Gothic Voices. The performances were all-vocal, one to a part – and compellingly beautiful. They also overturned what had become something of an orthodoxy during the preceding two decades: namely, the combination of voices and (often a wide variety of) instruments in the performance of late medieval and early Renaissance polyphony. The beauty of the Gothic Voices recordings doubtless contributed to their influence in changing the earlier preference for instruments. For while their performances were in effect a realization in practice of textual evidence (much of it literary in nature) which Page himself had presented in a pair of controversial essays (Page, 1977, 1982; see also Page, 1992), for many listeners – even the sceptics among them – it was the sheer skill and persuasiveness of their singing that made this ‘new’ mode of performance nearly irresistible. Subsequently (and tendentiously) dubbed ‘the English *a cappella* heresy’, this voices-only approach has been so widely adopted that it now prompts complaints in some quarters of having become a new orthodoxy, one based on too many assumptions while at the same time neglecting potential evidence for instrumental participation in chansons (Urquhart and de Savage, 2011).

The issue continues to be a live one, and like so many disputes over historically informed performance practice, this one has generated passion on both sides because it directly affects our experience of the works. Page’s original evidence came from late fourteenth-century sources, and matters of terminological ambiguity and literary convention have prompted questions about its interpretation and appropriateness for a wider chronological range of music. More recently, Tess Knighton (‘The *a capella* Heresy in Spain: An Inquisition into the Performance of the *Cancionero* Repertory’, Chapter 19) has presented evidence from Iberian sources concerning the *cancionero* repertory which, while offering support for all-vocal performance, reveals that all-instrumental performance was also an option, as was the use of a voice accompanied by a plucked instrument.

That instrumentalists performed polyphony of various sorts is well attested, as is the fact, noted by Keith Polk (‘Innovation in Instrumental Music 1450–1510: The Role of German Performers within European Culture’, Chapter 24), that in Italy (especially from ca. 1450) German instrumentalists were prized in much the way Franco-Flemish singers were. Keyboard and lute intabulations of vocal works were a well-established practice by 1500, and it seems that small ensembles of instruments could also perform mensurally notated chansons. A related, but more elusive issue is whether composers active in the decades around 1500 were already composing complex polyphony conceived specifically for instruments rather than voices. With this question in mind Warwick Edwards (‘Songs without Words by Josquin and His Contemporaries’, Chapter 25) examines various kinds of works, including a group of textless *trincina* by Isaac, Josquin, Ghiselin and others, and considers the traditions of wordless music to which they might be seen to belong.

Secular music figured prominently at the courts of Europe, both in special celebrations and as part of daily ritual. Much of this music is irretrievably lost, and with it much of what

we can know about its stylistic features and how it was performed. Howard Mayer Brown's identification and ingenious reconstruction of a single piece from the *intermedii* performed in Florence in 1565 following the marriage of Francesco de' Medici and Giovanna d'Austria provides a valuable glimpse of such music. His essay ('Psyche's Lament: Some Music for the Medici Wedding in 1565', Chapter 20) is also a prime example of scholarship actively engaging with details of performance practice.

The performance of music at court – more specifically, the pattern of who performed – underwent a transformation in the sixteenth century. The aristocratic amateur, idealized in Baldassare Castiglione's influential treatise *Il Cortegiano* and other courtesy manuals, gave way over time (especially in polyphonic music) to the professional performer, whose duties were more formalized and whose status at court was low. Jeanice Brooks ('From Minstrel to Courtier – The Royal Musique de Chambre and Courtly Ideals in Sixteenth-Century France', Chapter 21) traces this process of transformation at the French royal court, while Anthony Newcomb ('Courtesans, Muses, or Musicians? Professional Women Musicians in Sixteenth-Century Italy', Chapter 22) examines the situation in Italy, focusing on the problems and opportunities this professionalization posed for female musicians.

Music and Poetry

The relation between music and poetry could be said to be *the* central topic of secular Renaissance music, and indeed many of the essays included in this volume address one or more of its many aspects. The essays in this part focus on two of those aspects, which considered in tandem underscore one of the principal accomplishments of the age. In several publications Nino Pirrotta drew attention to the practice of improvised or un-notated performance of poetry, usually solo or with a single accompanying instrument. In '*Ricercare* and Variations on *O Rosa Bella*' (Chapter 26) he examines one of the most widely circulated polyphonic songs of the fifteenth century (most likely by John Bedyngham), a setting of *O rosa bella*, a text associated with the Venetian tradition of *giustiniane*, and finds in it traces of this unwritten tradition of solo performance. At the other end of the spectrum, despite an equally Venetian orientation, is Martha Feldman's analysis in 'The Composer as Exegete: Interpretations of Petrarchan Syntax in the Venetian Madrigal' (Chapter 27) of the changes in madrigal composition that began in the 1540s as composers active in Venice – in particular Adrian Willaert and Cipriano de Rore – came to grips musically with the serious and syntactically complex poetry of Petrarch, a development that took place in a highly literate environment influenced by the literary theorist Pietro Bembo.

The unwritten tradition of solo song with simple accompaniment was still alive in the sixteenth century, and its influence can even be felt in some lighter forms of written polyphony (Prizer, Chapter 10). The mature madrigal, however, was something different. Composers, though concerned with the poetry, did not allow this to supplant their musical priorities altogether, and what they wrote was not merely a more complex version of the *musica per poesia* associated with the unwritten tradition. Rather, what they invented was an inherently *musical* rhetoric. If one hears a group of fine singers perform a madrigal of Rore or Marenzio without the words, singing only neutral vowels, something important is unquestionably lost. But not everything. In creating music capable of responding to and enhancing poetry of substance composers were also developing a new and expressively charged musical idiom.

To object that taking delight in a textless madrigal is anachronistic and reflects a sensibility conditioned by later ‘abstract’ instrumental music only reinforces the point. For the affective and gestural features of eighteenth-century instrumental music have clear roots in instrumental works of the preceding century, which in turn depend equally clearly on the kind of expressive musical rhetoric first elaborated in the mature madrigal. In this sense at least, secular music of the sixteenth century has always been with us.

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Part I

Sources and Transmission



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[1]

THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPT URB. LAT. 1411: AN UNDERVALUED SOURCE?

James Haar

The manuscript which is the subject of this essay does not enjoy an enviable reputation. To my knowledge there is no special study of it; it is not often referred to, and when there is mention in recent scholarship it is seldom in favorable terms. David Fallows, who has had to write about *RU 1411* because it is after all a mid-fifteenth-century collection of secular song, makes the strongest statement about it; I will therefore start with him. He refers to *RU 1411* as

the messy little songbook now in the Vatican library with a note in the front saying that it had once been owned by Piero de' Medici. It contains only twenty songs, has them in often dismal readings with miserably incompetent texts and a few ascriptions that are demonstrably wrong. It is one of those manuscripts that everybody probably wishes did not exist, a document that established scholars have

studiously avoided ... Nobody can be sure of its provenance or date—though it is undeniably Italian and probably from the 1440s—and it could be argued that the source is of so little value that answers to those questions would not get us far. In any case it would be very hard to prove that it is of Florentine origin.¹

Fallows certainly throws down the gauntlet, and I mean to pick it up and come to the defense of this poor waif of a manuscript. Before I do so I should name a few other scholars who have written about *RU 1411*. It was first noted by the French historian Charles Langlois in 1890.² Its contents and general character were known to Johannes Wolf.³ In 1913 it was briefly described by H. M. Bannister, who included a facsimile of one of its Italian songs.⁴ A description and full list of contents appeared in a Vatican catalogue of 1921, and it is described in more recent bibliographical sources as well.⁵

Editions of the music of Binchois, Ciconia, and Dunstable have cited *RU 1411* as a source, without much editorializing about its quality or reliability. The first comment of this latter kind may be that of Nino Pirrotta, who in 1970 referred to it as “quite inaccurate.”⁶ Dennis Slavin appears to share this negative opinion, for he pays very little heed to *RU 1411* in his dissertation on Binchois chansons, despite the fact that the manuscript contains twelve pieces by Binchois (three of them unica) and despite his observation that *RU 1411* appears related to the “Binchois fragment” (*M 902*) on which he bases much of his work.⁷

¹ DAVID FALLOWS, *Polyphonic Song in the Florence of Lorenzo's Youth*, ossia: *The Provenance of the Ms Berlin 78.C.28: Naples or Florence?* in *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il magnifico*, a cura di Piero Gargiulo, Firenze, Olschki, 1993, pp. 47-61: 48-49. See also DAVID FALLOWS, *Robertus de Anglia and the Oporto Song Collection*, in *Source Materials and the Interpretation of Music. A Memorial Volume to Thurston Dart*, ed. Ian Bent, London, Stainer & Bell, 1981; *ITEM*, *Busnoys and the Early Fifteenth Century: a Note on 'L'ardent desir' and 'Faictes de moy'*, “Music & Letters”, 71 (1990), pp. 20-24: 23; *ITEM*, *Dunstable, Bedyngham and O rosa bella*, “Journal of Musicology”, 12 (1994), pp. 287-305; *ITEM*, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 42.

² *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, vol. 33, Paris, 1897, p. 297.

³ *Geschichte der mensural-Notation von 1250-1460*, 3 vols., Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904, I, pp. 192-194.

⁴ ENRICO MARRIOTT BANNISTER, *Monumenti Vaticani di paleografia musicale latina*, 2 vols., Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1913, I, p. 188; II, tav. 130c.

⁵ *Codices Urbinae Latini*, ed. Cosimus Stornajolo, 3 vols., Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codices manuscripti recensiti, 1902-1921, III, p. 314; *Census*, IV, p. 68; *RISM B/IV/5*, pp. 410-412.

⁶ NINO PIROTTA, *Three Anglo-Italian Pieces in the Manuscript Porto 714*, in *Speculum Musicae Artis. Festschrift für Heinrich Husmann zum 60. Geburtstag*, edd. Heinz Becker and Reinhard Gerlach, Munich, Wilhelm Fink, 1970, 253-261, p. 257n.

⁷ DENNIS SLAVIN, *Binchois' Songs, the Binchois Fragment, and the two layers of Escorial A*, Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1987, p. 162.

66 The Vatican manuscript Urb. Lat. 1411: an undervalued source?

The negative reactions to *RU 1411* come from influential scholars who have used it as a source for readings of individual pieces. A more positive opinion is expressed by William Prizer, who considers the manuscript as a whole. Citing an account of two Medici girls, daughters of Piero di Cosimo, who in 1460 performed a group of songs in Florence for the visiting Pope Pius II — the songs are named, and two are contained in *RU 1411* — Prizer says “if the performance of 1460 is a guide, it may well be that the pieces in Vatican 1411 represent a repertory current among the Florentine elite.”⁸ Prizer’s perceptive remark is one I intend to expand upon as this study proceeds.

A brief description and inventory of *RU 1411* are given in the Appendix. Some of its salient features may be summarized here. It is a small collection, certainly; its nineteen pieces make it seem close to the “fascicle manuscripts” hypothesized some years ago by Charles Hamm.⁹ Small does not necessarily mean unimportant; the Porto manuscript, recognized and indeed praised as an important mid-fifteenth-century source, also contains nineteen songs (along with two treatises).¹⁰ All but two of *RU 1411*’s songs bear ascriptions; *pace* Fallows, only one of these, that of no. 19, *O rosa bella*, to Dunstable, has been seri-

ously questioned.¹¹ With twelve pieces assigned to Binchois (three of them unica) and three to Du Fay (two are unica), the manuscript must be considered an important source for the transmission of the Franco-Burgundian chanson to Italy. *RU 1411*’s inclusion of both three-voice settings of *O rosa bella* (it is the only complete source for Ciconia’s version) is highly unusual, and surely the result of deliberate choice.¹² The quality of both musical and especially textual readings is variable, but, particularly for the Binchois chansons, not nearly so bad as has been claimed.

The manuscript is written on parchment, in black notation with red notes for colored passages. If, as I hope to demonstrate, *RU 1411* was copied in the mid-1440s, this is not unduly late for the use of black notation. *Porto*, which might be ten years later than *RU 1411*, is also a black-note source. Neither manuscript looks like the work of a professional scribe, though the musical hand in *RU 1411* is the better one; perhaps some musicians went on using black notation after others changed to the more workaday void notes.¹³ A peculiar aspect of *RU 1411*’s appearance is the use of large capital letters for the whole of the composer’s names. These ascriptions, which in a number of instances are badly worn, are genuinely odd and indeed rather

⁸ WILLIAM F. PRIZER, *Games of Venus: Secular Vocal Music in the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento*, “Journal of Musicology”, ix (1991), 3–56, p. 5n.

⁹ CHARLES HAMM, *Manuscript Structure in the Dufay Era*, “Acta musicologica”, 34 (1962), pp. 166–184. *RU 1411* if it were made up of small independent fascicles would contain from four to six of them. It may well have been compiled from such exemplars.

¹⁰ Porto, Biblioteca pubblica municipale, ms. 714 (*Porto*). On this manuscript see *Census*, II, pp. 267–268; FALLOWS, *Robertus de Anglia*; BERNHARD MEIER, *Die Handschrift Porto 714 als Quelle zur Tonartenlehre des 15. Jahrhunderts*, “Musica Disciplina”, vii, 1952, 175–197.

¹¹ The attribution was accepted by MANFRED BUKOFZER, editor of *John Dunstable. Complete Works*, Musica Britannica, VIII, London, Stainer & Bell, 1953, and not questioned in the second edition, edd. MARGARET BENT – IAN BENT – BRIAN TROWELL, 1970. It has been challenged by David Fallows, whose preference for John Bedynghe, to whom *O rosa bella* is ascribed in *Porto*, is perhaps the chief reason for his strongly negative opinion of *RU 1411* (see above). See also PIRROTTA, *Two Anglo-Italian Pieces*, p. 257. In NINO PIRROTTA, *Ricerche et variazioni su ‘O rosa bella’*, “Studi musicali”, I (1972), pp. 59–77, published in English translation in *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*,

Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 158, the author doubts both ascriptions: “I would not be surprised if the real author were neither Dunstable nor Bedynghe, but a third, certainly English, composer as yet unidentified.”

¹² The Dunstable/Bedynghe setting is the last piece in *RU 1411*. It is in the same hand as the rest of the manuscript; whether it was added at some point after the rest of the volume was finished is unclear. No text, apart from incipits, is given, possibly because the text can be found in the Ciconia setting (no. 5). The poem, a ballata, is not easily set to the Dunstable/Bedynghe music; see PIRROTTA, *Ricerche*, pp. 149–152.

¹³ There are several void notes in the manuscript, including a minim on fol. 10r (in the Contra of Du Fay’s *Se la face ay pale*) and another on fol. 21v (the *cantus* of Binchois’ *Mon doux espoir*) as well as two in Binchois’ *Mon cuer chante*, fols. 10v, 11. In the opinion of Graeme Boone, *RU 1411* should be considered as written in ‘filled’ notation, that is, with the notes first drawn and then filled in. He thinks that this was sometimes done to give the music a more formal appearance. In *RU 1411* the colored notes are completely red, including the stems of minims. The void notes are outlined (and stemmed) in black, probably in error; to save them as colored notes the scribe left them void, showing that he knew at least this much about uses of void notation.

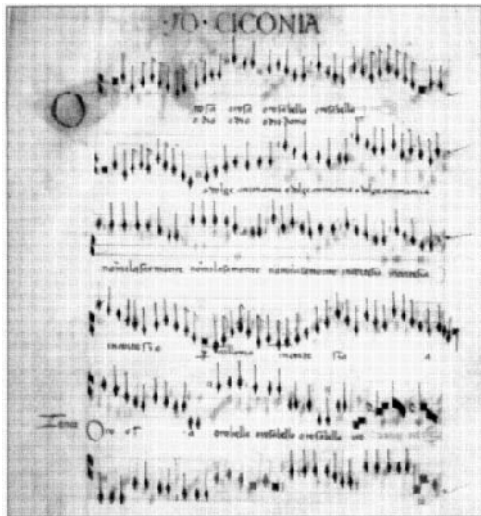


Fig. 1: Ciconia, *O rosa bella* (RU 1411, fol. 7v)

archaic, almost reminiscent of the large composers' names in the Squarcialupi Codex. One can only wonder what the copyist of *RU 1411* had been looking at when he chose this style of lettering, strangely out of scale when compared to the small

inked initials and the very small though rather elegant text hand (see Figure 1).

Two outstanding features of *RU 1411* are the inscription on fol. 1v and the heraldic device on fol. 2v. These are on a bifolio rather roughly sewn into the front of the collection, some time after it was copied but presumably before it was bound (the present binding is of much later date). The inscription (Figure 2) has often been cited, sometimes—considering its perfect legibility—inaccurately.¹⁴ One assumes that “questo libro di musicha” belonged for some period to Piero di Cosimo de’ Medici, in Florence.

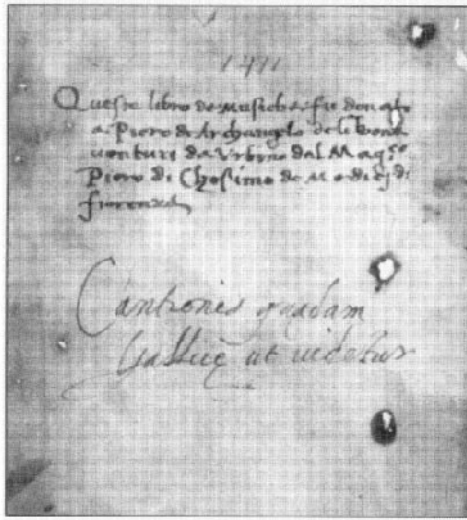
The phrase “di Fiorenza,” identifying Piero as a Florentine, surely indicates that the inscription was not written in Florence but was added after the manuscript came into the hands of Piero de Archangelo de li Bonaventuri of Urbino. Piero de’ Medici (1416-1469), elder son of Cosimo di Giovanni de’ Medici (1389-1464), was a prominent member of the Medici clan during his father’s lifetime and the head of the elder branch of the family after Cosimo’s death. Piero and especially his younger brother Giovanni (1421-1463) were interested in music, as I hope to give evidence of later in this essay; for the moment I will refer to two well-known letters, one from Du Fay to the Medici brothers and one from Antonio Squarcialupi to Du Fay, which give testimony to this interest.¹⁵

The Medici — Cosimo and both his sons — were patrons of virtually all the major and minor arts. They filled their old home and then the new Palazzo Medici on the Via Larga, begun in 1445 and mostly completed some ten years later, with

¹⁴ Under the inscription, in a later (seventeenth century?) hand, is the rather unhelpful ‘title’ *Cantiones quaedam Gallice ut videtur*, perhaps written at the same time as the manuscript number at the top of the page. The fact that this bifolio is an addition to the original manuscript was noted by BANNISTER, *Monumenti Vaticani*, I, p. 188, and by SLAVIN, *Binchois’ Songs*, p. 210, who adds a note of what I think is unnecessary caution: “Although there is no reason to suspect that the inscription does not refer to the chansonnier with which it is presently bound, there is neither paleographical nor codicological evidence to support that assumption.”

¹⁵ The letter from Du Fay to Piero and Giovanni de’ Medici (Archivio Mediceo avanti il principato, henceforth MAP VI, 765), written on February 22 [1454-1456] is often mentioned but rarely printed. It may be found in BIANCA BECHERINI, *Relazioni di musicisti fiamminghi con la corte dei Medici*, “La Rinascita”, 4 (1941), p. 8.

For a facsimile see A.M. FORTUNA and C. LUNGHETTI, *Autografi dell’Archivio mediceo avanti il principato*, Firenze, 1977, p. 104. In it Du Fay talks of recent compositions and appears to be favorably disposed to an offer of employment. Squarcialupi’s letter to Du Fay, dated 1 May 1467 (MAP XXII, 118), asks the composer to do a favor to Piero de’ Medici, a great admirer of the composer, and to his son Lorenzo, who greatly delights in music, by setting an enclosed *canzona* by Lorenzo. For the text see BIANCA BECHERINI, *Antonio Squarcialupi e il codice mediceo palatino 87*, in *L’ars nova italiana del trecento*, 1959, Certaldo, Centro di studi dell’ars nova italiana del Trecento, 1962, pp. 195-196. Both letters are given in OTTO KADE, *Biographisches zu Antonio Squarcialupi, dem Florentiner Organist im xv. Jahrhundert*, “Monatshefte für Musik-Geschichte”, XVII, 1885, pp. 1-7, 13-19. For some interesting examples of Piero and Giovanni’s musical interests see FRANK A. D’ACCONTE, *Lorenzo il magnifico e la musica*, in *La musica a Firenze*, pp. 219-248: 224-226.



■ Figure 2: RU 1411, fol. 1v



■ Figure 3: RU 1411, fol. 2v

an enormous amount of works of art, furniture, clothing—and books.¹⁶ They certainly patronized musicians (on this, see below); did they collect music? There is evidence that they did. An inventory of the library of Piero de' Medici, made in 1456 and revised in 1463 and 1465, lists several music books (as opposed to treatises).¹⁷ The books are not described in very helpful detail, but among them were probably the celebrated

Notre Dame source Pluteo 29.I.¹⁸ One wonders whether the Squarcialupi Codex (*Sq*), copied c. 1410–1415 but probably not in the possession of the Florentine organist Antonio Squarcialupi until the 1450s or even later, might have belonged for a time to the Medici.¹⁹

Both Francis Ames-Lewis and Elisabetta Pasquini think that *RU 1411* is referred to in the Medici inventory, though

¹⁶ See MARCO SPALLANZANI, *Inventari Medici, 1417–1465: Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni, Piero di Cosimo*, Firenze, Associazione Amici del Bargello, S.P.E.S., 1996; FRANCIS AMES-LEWIS, *The Library and Manuscripts of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici*, New York, Garland, 1984; *Piero de' Medici, "il gottoso" (1416–1469). Kunst im Dienste der Mediceer*, edd. Andreas Beyer - Bruce Boucher, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1993; DALE KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000.

¹⁷ AMES-LEWIS, *The Library and Manuscripts*, pp. 124, 272, 290; *Idem*, *The Inventories of Cosimo de' Medici's Library*, "La Bibliofila", LXXXIV, 1982,

pp. 103–142; ELISABETTA PASQUINI, *Libri di musica a Firenze nel tre-quattrocento*, Florence, Olschki, 2000, pp. 71–80.

¹⁸ At the back of Pluteo 29.1 is written "Liber Petri de Medicis Cos fil.". See REBECCA A. BALTZER, *Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Miniatures and the Date of the Florence Manuscript*, "Journal of the American Musicological Society", xxv (1972), pp. 1–18: 16. Baltzer thinks that the manuscript can be identified with no. 105 in the 1456 inventory. This is questioned by PASQUINI, *Libri di musica*, p. 77.

¹⁹ Known through most of his career simply as Antonio degli Organi, Anto-

they do not quite agree on which item is the right one.²⁰ I wonder whether "un libro di musicha piccholo" is enough to identify anything. I also wonder if *RU 1411*, particularly if, as I suspect, it had not yet been bound, was considered important enough to mention. Prizer's account of a 1460 performance by Medici girls of pieces found in *RU 1411* suggests that the manuscript did circulate in Medici circles;²¹ I will presently give some further evidence of this. Thus there is every reason to think that *RU 1411*, whether or not it was listed in any inventory, was in Medici hands, and after the deaths of his brother Giovanni (1463) and his father Cosimo (1464), Piero was the head of the family and the owner of all its possessions.

Piero de' Medici is said (see Fig. 2) to have given *RU 1411* to Piero d'Archangelo dei Bonaventuri of Urbino. The gift is given symbolic illustration in the heraldic device on fol. 2v (Fig. 3).²² Here we see a crowned eagle, an imperial device but also that — along with blue and gold bands — of the Montefeltro family, rulers of Urbino.²³ The eagle seems to be nesting in a

ducal crown worn by a helmeted figure (another eagle?), draped in a blue-and-gold garment with a small black eagle sewn in. This second figure appears to hold the heraldic shield, of which two quarters show the Montefeltro arms, this time indubitably those of Federico (1422-1482), the great condottiere famous for his Urbino palace and his interest in scholarship and the arts.²⁴ The other two quarters show the Medici *palle*, seven of them (a number usual for Piero and his son Lorenzo) on a gold ground. In each quarter six are red, one blue, the latter probably intended to show the fleur-de-lis, an embellishment granted the Medici by Louis XI of France in 1465.²⁵

The usual meaning of arms quartered in this way is to celebrate betrothal or marriage between families. Federico da Montefeltro did just this in a device found in a copy of Juvenal from his library; here the Montefeltro eagles are quartered with the *leon d'oro* of the Sforza di Pesaro, which must commemorate Federico's marriage (1460) to Battista Sforza, daughter of his friend and ally Alessandro Sforza.²⁶ There was no Medici-

nio did not assume the *cognomen* Squarcialupi until c. 1457. See FRANK A. D'ACONE, *Antonio Squarcialupi alla luce di documenti inediti*, "Chigiana", xliii/3 (1966), pp. 3-22: 9. The inscription on the bifolio added at the beginning of Sq: "Questo libro e di mo antonio di bartolomeo schuarcialupi orghanista in sancta maria delfiore," is similar (on a grander scale) in appearance to that in *RU 1411*.

²⁰ AMES-LEWIS, *The Inventories*, pp. 128-141, tentatively equates *RU 1411* with no. 105 in the 1456 inventory; PASQUINI, *Libri di musica*, pp. 76-77, 80, thinks no. 104 ("un libro di musicha piccholo") is *RU 1411*. I am not sure that this identification is correct. I think that the addition of a bifolio at the beginning of the manuscript was done after it left Florence, but presumably before it was bound (no. 104, 150 in the 1465 inventory, is described as bound "sericea rubea fibulis argenteis").

²¹ See above, and fn. 8.

²² The best description to date of the device is that of HENRIETTA SCHAVRAN, *The Ms Pavia, Bibl. Univ., Codice Aldini 362. A Study of Song Tradition in Italy circa 1440-1484*, Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1978, pp. 61-62.

²³ ADRIANA MARUCCHI, *Stemmi di possessori di manoscritti conservati nella biblioteca vaticana*, in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, vol. VII, Studi e testi 237, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964, pp. 29-95: 57, describes a device (no. 97, pictured in Tav. IV, no. 2) in a Vergil (Urb. lat. 642) belonging to Oddantonio da Montefeltro (d. 1444): a shield with two quarters showing large black eagles on gold, and two of blue-and-gold bars with a small black eagle. Oddantonio was Duke of Urbino;

he was succeeded by his half-brother Federico, as Count of Urbino (he became Duke in 1474).

²⁴ See MARUCCHI, *Stemmi*, no. 96 (Tav. xi, no. 5), for a device with the bars and small eagles, from a manuscript of Caesar's *Commentaries* (Urb. lat. 442) which belonged to Federico; see also no. 101 (Tav. xii, no. 1), a collection of classical authors also from Federico's library (Urb. lat. 670), showing a large uncrowned eagle holding a shield with quarters of large eagles and bands with small eagles (cf. fn. 23 above) and bearing the initials C.F. (= Comes Federicus), hence earlier than 1474. For more illustrations of Federico's heraldic devices see ANNAMARIA GARZELLI, *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento*, 2 vols., Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1985, I, pp. 145-152; II, nos. 448-450, 469, 473. Federico's magnificent *Bibbia*, prepared and illuminated in Florence, has a roundel strikingly similar to the device in *RU 1411*, though with the eagle wearing a blue-and-gold *mazzocchio* in place of a crown, and bearing a shield with large eagles and bands—no *palle*.

²⁵ See MARUCCHI, *Stemmi*, no. 132, a copy of Poliziano's translation of Homer (Urb. lat. 3298) given to Federico by Lorenzo de' Medici, has a device with seven *palle*, six red ones surrounding a single blue one topped with three fleur-de-lis. On this Medici device see TIMOTHY WILSON, *Maioliche rinascimentali armate con stemmi fiorentini*, in *L'araldica. Fonti e metodi*, ed. Guido Vannini, Firenze, La Mandragola, 1989, pp. 128-144: 130.

²⁶ MARUCCHI, *Stemmi*, no. 99, a Juvenal (Urb. lat. 658), also contains such a device (Tav. ii, no. 10).

70 The Vatican manuscript Urb. Lat. 1411: an undervalued source?

Montefeltro marriage in the fifteenth century.²⁷ But there were other uses for such quartering; Cardinals, for instance, sometimes quartered their arms with those of their papal patrons.²⁸ The device in *RU 1411* would seem to indicate a linkage of friendship and mutual esteem between the Medici and Federico da Montefeltro. Such a linkage did exist, as we shall presently see. But I doubt very much that the heraldic illustration originated in Florence.

RU 1411 was not given, at least not directly, to Federico; indeed it was probably not considered an object of enough elegance to be a fitting gift for a ruler. It might well have served as a gift for, or perhaps through, a private person; one thinks of Lorenzo de' Medici's gift of a [now lost] manuscript containing music by Isaac to the Venetian connoisseur-statesman Girolamo Donà.²⁹ The person chosen as recipient of the gift, Piero d'Archangelo dei Bonaventuri, should now be introduced.

Born into a family with an established record of loyalty to the rulers of Urbino, Piero d'Archangelo (c. 1410-1474/75) spent his career as a diplomat serving the Montefeltro family.³⁰ His earliest recorded assignment was to Florence, where Duke Oddantonio sent him in 1443 with a safeconduct to negotiate a commercial agreement.³¹ A businessman and banker as well as a diplomat, Piero must have got on well with the Medici from the beginning.³² His diplomatic assignments took him to Milan (1450), Naples (1453-54, 1457), Benevento (1458-60), where he was appointed governor by Pius II, and Rome (1461).

At the end of 1450 Piero was called to Florence by Cosimo de' Medici to arbitrate a dispute over the role of Sigismondo Malatesta, an inveterate foe of Federico, in the service of an alliance between Milan, Florence, and Naples. He may be the "piero doctore de leggie da sco anglo" for whom Federico wrote several letters in 1451, asking that "mio e vostro carissimo partigino" be chosen for an office in the "mercantantia" of Florence.³³ Perhaps associated with the Pazzi bank, Piero made other visits to Florence, one in 1467 when he took part in the affirmation of a *lega* involving the papacy as well as the three powers named above, and with Federico da Montefeltro continuing a ten-year term as captain-general. This might have been as good an occasion as any for Piero de' Medici to have given *RU 1411* to Piero de' Bonaventuri.

A considerable number of letters from Piero to the Medici may be found in the correspondence addressed to the family in the Florentine Archivio di Stato, Archivio Mediceo avanti il principato (MAP).³⁴ The letters, ranging in date from 1454 to 1462, are mostly to Giovanni di Cosimo, younger brother of Piero di Cosimo. They contain expressions of regard for Cosimo, his wife Contessina, and Piero, but suggest that Bonaventura's real friend in the family was Giovanni. The two may have met in Rome and Naples as well as in Florence. Some letters are concerned with matters of business, but political affairs are also mentioned. A large clutch of letters to Giovanni were written in the spring and summer of 1461, when Federico da Montefeltro

²⁷ In 1621 Claudia de' Medici, a daughter of Grand Duke Ferdinando I, married the duke of Urbino; but this date is far too late, and in any event the duke was a member of the della Rovere family, who certainly would have used their own arms.

²⁸ WILSON, *Maioliche rinascimentali*, p. 188.

²⁹ See BONNIE J. BLACKBURN, *Lorenzo de' Medici, a lost Isaac Manuscript, and the Venetian Ambassador, in Musica Franca. Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*, edd. Irene Alm - Alyson McLamore - Colleen Reardon, Stuyvesant, NY, Pendragon, 1996, pp. 19-44.

³⁰ This account of Piero's life is chiefly derived from SARAH DALE, *Un diplomatico urbinato del quattrocento: alcune notizie intorno a Pietro d'Archangelo dei Bonaventura*, "Studi urbinati di storia, filosofia e letteratura", XLVII/1 (1972), pp. 350-365.

³¹ See GIUSEPPE COLUCCI, *Dizionario storico degli uomini illustri di Urbino*, in *Delle antichità picene*, Fermo, 1796, p. 169. I am grateful to Sean Gallagher for checking this source on my behalf.

³² Piero was entrusted with many of the payments made to Federico da Montefeltro in connection with the *condotte* he held from various rulers. See WALTER TOMMASOLI, *La vita di Federico da Montefeltro (1422-1482)*, Urbino, Argila, 1978, pp. 56, 107, 109.

³³ A letter of December 14, 1450, from Giovanni Inghirami to Giovanni de' Medici (MAP VIII, 389) speaks of Piero d'Archangelo's arrival in Florence from Milan. Inghirami, manager of the Medici bank in Florence, was a close friend of the Medici family. The relevant letters of Federico are MAP VIII, 234 (6 May) and I, 251 (10 May), both addressed to Giovanni di Cosimo. In March, 1448, Federico had written to Giovanni (MAP VI, 70) to recommend his "cancellieri," Pierantonio [dei Paltroni] and "Piero da Urbino," who may well be our Piero d'Archangelo.

³⁴ The letters of Piero d'Archangelo to Giovanni de' Medici may be found in *filze* VI, nos. 541, 544, 550, 551, 563, 575, 584, 586, 592, 598, 608, 617, 623, 624, 636, 637, 651; VII, no. 115; IX, nos. 100, 253; X, nos. 44, 224, 248, 404.

and Alessandro Sforza were waging active war on behalf of the *lega italica*, against Malatesta and the condottiere Jacopo Piccinino, who had been an ally of the *lega*.³⁵ Piero provides Giovanni de' Medici with a lot of detail about the war and some exultation at its successful conclusion (on this see below).

I think enough has been said to show that Piero d'Archangelo had close ties to the Medici. The question remains as to when and how *RU 1411* passed from him to Federico da Montefeltro, becoming part of the ducal library and eventually (1657) transferred as part of that library to the Vatican library in Rome. Piero d'Archangelo may have been interested in music, though no evidence for this survives; but his master Federico certainly was, as we shall see. Perhaps he understood the gift as intended to be passed on to Federico. Its contents may have been immediately available to musicians at the court of Urbino. The manuscript itself may have entered the ducal collection in 1474, the year Federico received a ducal crown, allowing the armorial frontispiece to be completed (see Fig. 3). It is time to turn to Duke Federico and his connection with the Medici.

Since the time of Burckhardt, Federico da Montefeltro (1422-1482) has been celebrated as a figure characteristic of fifteenth-century society at its best. A successful and more than usually loyal condottiere; a beneficent ruler of his little city-state; a steady friend and, all things considered, a good husband; a great patron and collector who really seems to have read

books and enjoyed works of art: it is no wonder that he is described by his early biographers in hagiographic language (in Vespasiano da Bisticci's words, "l'età sua non ha avuto il simile"), only surprising that modern scholarship has not noticeably defaced his image.³⁶ Here we will be concerned with only one aspect of his life, but one of central importance to him: his relationships with Florence and the Medici.

Federico's father Guidantonio da Montefeltro was on good terms with the Florentines, referring to himself as a "son of the republic" and being made a "cittadino fiorentino" in 1422.³⁷ In February, 1533, the young Federico was taken to Venice as a hostage (a guarantor of a treaty between the papacy and Milan) and consigned to the procurator Andrea Dandolo. He remained in Venice for fifteen months, in good society and a member of an upper-class boys' club.³⁸ This period coincides with the exile of Cosimo de' Medici and his sons in Venice, and it seems highly probable that Federico knew them there. An exact contemporary of Giovanni di Cosimo, Federico referred to himself in many letters to Giovanni as "fratello," and asked to be remembered to "vostro e mio magnifico padre Cosimo."³⁹

As early as 1445 Federico was in Florentine service;⁴⁰ except for a brief period in the following decade he continued for thirty years to hold *condotte* obliging him to—and rewarding him for—military service on behalf of the Florentine state. During all this period he was in steady contact, in person or, more often, by letter, with the Medici—Cosimo, his sons, and

³⁵ For a detailed, if not entirely objective, account of this campaign see *The Commentaries of Pius II*, transl. FLORENCE ALDEN GREGG, Northampton, MA, Smith College Studies in History, xxii, xxv, xxx, xxxv, xlii, 1937-1957, Books II-V. The Latin text may be found in *Pii II Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt*, ed. Adrian Van Heck, 2 vols., Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1987. A somewhat breezy account of the campaign may be found in GIOVANNI SANTI, *La vita e le gesta di Federico di Montefeltro, Duca d'Urbino. Poema in terza rima (Codice Vat. Ottob. Lat. 1305)*, ed. Luigi Tocci, 2 vols., Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1985, book VII, chapter xxvii.

³⁶ Vespasiano da Bisticci's *Commentario de la vita del signor Federico, duca d'Urbino*, written soon after Federico's death, began this tradition. See GUIDO BALDASSARI, *Alle origini del 'mito' fedresco. La 'Vita di Federico' di Vespasiano da Bisticci, in Federico di Montefeltro. Lo stato, le arti, la cultura*, 3 vols., edd. Giorgio Cerboni Baiardi - Giorgio Chittolini - Piero Flori-

ani, Roma, Bulzoni, 1986, III, 393-406.

³⁷ FRANCESCO FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana anteriore al tempo del Magnifico*, Pisa, Nistri, 1891, pp. 211-217. Guidantonio made the Florentine poet Anselmo Calderoni, who wrote poetry honoring the Medici, his *araldo*.

³⁸ TOMMASOLI, *La vita di Federico*, p. 12; cf. GINO BENZONI, *Federico da Montefeltro*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 45, 1995; FRANCESCO LOMBARDI, *I simboli di Federico di Montefeltro*, in *L'arte di corte a Urbino e a Pesaro*, Exhibition Catalogue, ed. PAOLO DAL POGETTO, Urbino, Palazzo Ducale - Venezia, 1992, p. 140. See also GEOFFREY TREASE, *The Condottieri. Soldiers of Fortune*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991, p. 306.

³⁹ MAP I, 253, a letter of 15 September 1546. On the Medici exile see DALE KENT, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence, 1426-1434*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 289-351. Cosimo and Lorenzo and their sons were received like exiled royalty by the Venetian Signoria.

⁴⁰ See TOMMASOLI, *La vita di Federico*, pp. 58-59.

his grandson Lorenzo; the Archivio Mediceo is full of Federico's letters, ranging in date from 1439 to the end of his life. They are mostly to Giovanni di Cosimo up to the latter's death in 1463, and include a surprising number to Lorenzo, whom Federico seems to have considered almost a son. In a sense he was a client of the Medici, and he sometimes asked them for favors — on behalf of trusted followers such as Piero de' Bonaventuri; for valued artists such as the dancing-master Guglielmo Ebreo; for scholars helping him to assemble his remarkable library.⁴¹

When Federico had time to be expansive he wrote long letters containing repeated protestations of friendship; an example is one directed to Piero de' Medici in May of 1446, with more than a page of such expressions and signed, *manu proprio*, "Federico vostro fratello et compare."⁴² He could also write simply and directly, even dispensing with a secretary and writing in his own hand, as in a note of condolence directed to Giovanni de' Medici on the death of his young son Cosimino.⁴³

If pressed for time or money, Federico could write with a strength bordering on roughness. An example is a letter addressed to Piero de' Bonaventuri during the height of the war against Jacopo Piccinino and Sigismondo Malatesta in the spring of 1461. In this hasty message, opening brusquely with the simple word "Piero" and full of repetitions showing how urgent was his need, Federico asks for money or other assistance to acquire artillery (*bombarde*) in order to prosecute a campaign that without such help will fail, squandering a great opportunity.⁴⁴ Piero de' Bonaventuri was at the time in Rome, Federico's ambassador to Pope Pius II. The letter's presence in the Archiv-

io Mediceo suggests that Bonaventuri sent it to Florence, along with one of his frequent letters to Giovanni de' Medici on the progress of the war (see above). It may have done its work; Federico's campaign was a great success, ending by summer 1461 in resounding victory.⁴⁵

These letters, both those of Federico and of his loyal follower Piero de' Bonaventuri, give ample evidence of their close connection with the Medici (there is unfortunately no equivalent collection in Urbino preserving letters from the Medici). The gift of *RU 1411* to Piero is thus not surprising, nor is its passage into the ducal household in Urbino. Testimony to its presence there is indirect (see above).⁴⁶ I will presently offer a bit more evidence; but a few words on the musical interests of Federico da Montefeltro are in order here.

According to Vespasiano da Bisticci, Federico took great delight in music, had an excellent chapel of singers, could himself sing and play, owned many instruments and kept very capable performers about his court to play them. He is said to have learned music, both Boethian science and practical skills, during his studies with Vittorino da Feltre in Mantua in 1434-1435.⁴⁷ Some of this may be true; but it is also part of a general *lobgesang* extolling Federico in every possible field of physical and intellectual endeavor. Many young Renaissance princes did receive musical training, viewed as an essential gentlemanly skill. Musical understanding, praised by the ancients, was an acquisition prized by humanists. That princes who were the subject of flattering *vite* should have been said to be musically gifted and musically expert is hardly surprising. As Nicoletta

⁴¹ For letters concerning Piero d'Archangelo dei Bonaventuri, see above and fn. 33. A letter to Lorenzo of April 13, 1469 (MAP XXIII, 241), recommends Guglielmo Ebreo, since his conversion known as Giovanni Ambrosio, and the latter's brother Isaaco. Several letters to Lorenzo ask that the Florentine bookman Vespasiano da Bisticci be given access to the library at San Marco in order to have books transcribed and sent to Urbino (MAP XXIV, 423 is one such letter).

⁴² MAP XVII, 49. Federico's letters to the Medici seem warmly personal even after one makes allowances for the epistolary style of the period.

⁴³ MAP VI, 427, dated 5 December 1459. A series of letters from Federico to Lorenzo in the early 1470s is devoted to family births and deaths (Medici and Montefeltro).

⁴⁴ MAP I, 297, written 27 May 1461 "ex castris contra Foranum."

⁴⁵ See above, fn. 35.

⁴⁶ The *vetus inventario* of Duke Federico's library, compiled c. 1490, contains, in a section devoted to "Libri materna lingua," a reference to a book of "Cantiones notatae, in purpureo," which could refer to *RU 1411*. See *Codices Urbinae Graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae*, ed. Cosimo Stornaiolo, Roma, Tipografia Vaticana, 1895, p. clii, no. 7.

⁴⁷ See NICOLETTA GUIDOBALDI, *La musica di Federico. Immagini e suono alla corte di Urbino*, Firenze, Olschki, 1995, pp. 11, 19-21. Guidobaldi's book is a thorough and elegant study of musical imagery as elaborated at Federico's court, finding tangible expression in the decoration of his palace in Urbino and particularly of his *studiolo* there and its slightly later twin in the ducal residence in Gubbio.

Guidobaldi observes, the linking of musicality with nobility and harmony of spirit became a *topos*, whether or not the person being described had real musical interests.⁴⁸

Some Renaissance princes had genuine, indeed consuming musical interests. But for every Alfonso II d'Este, Guglielmo Gonzaga, or Leo X — not to mention Carlo Gesualdo, Principe di Venosa — there were scores of rulers and aristocrats for whom music was a pleasant diversion, necessary only when an adjunct to religious or secular festivities, themselves often highly political in nature. I suspect that this may have been the case with Federico da Montefeltro. He spent much care and much money on paintings, decorative arts, and books; but he did not acquire a first-class chapel of singers like those of the Sforza in Milan or the Estense in Ferrara. It was during the reign of his son Guidobaldo (1482-1508) and his wife Elisabetta Gonzaga that Urbino became a center for poetry and music, celebrated as such by Bembo and Castiglione.

Federico was influenced by what went on in courtly circles in Rome, Milan, Ferrara, and the French and Burgundian courts. Still, Florence is a place he always looked to. The architects, artists, and skilled craftsmen who built and decorated his palace in Urbino were only in part Florentine, but the Palazzo Medici must surely have been in his mind as he built. Many of his books, and their illuminations, came from Florence; and much of the iconographical scheme that underlies the decoration of his palace in Urbino is derived from Ficino and his Florentine circle. This whole subject is covered thoroughly by

Guidobaldi and need not be gone into here, except to emphasize that the *studioli* in Federico's palaces in Urbino and Gubbio were clearly influenced by their equivalents (now lost) in the Medici palace, and to confirm that the Gubbio panelling is now established as having been made in Florence by Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano.⁴⁹

On a more mundane level, Federico may have been interested in the Medici family's use of music, which he might have seen as more relaxed and familiar than, say, that of the Estense court. It is possible that he might have asked, through Piero de' Bonaventuri, for some of the repertory popular among the Medici. *RU 1411* would certainly fit the bill. As we have seen, its contents were still being performed in 1460 and would not have been very out of date half a dozen years later.⁵⁰ At the end of his reign one of his three *cantori della cappella* was Giovanni fiorentino, possibly brought at some period from Medicean circles.⁵¹ On the other hand Carlo de' Medici wrote to Giovanni di Cosimo in 1445 about a "ser Lina" who excelled in *ballo*, *canto*, and "mille altre piacevolezze," adding that "era il tutto col duca d'Urbino," and by implication would be the same for Giovanni and his friends.⁵²

Federico included two pieces of actual music among the many depictions of musical instruments in his *studiolo* in Urbino, completed in 1476.⁵³ A few years later he added a *studiolo* to his palace in Gubbio, an intarsiated room now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.⁵⁴ Here too a piece of music, no longer visible on the now blank opening of a book,

⁴⁸ GUIDOBALDI, *La musica di Federico*, pp. 12ff.

⁴⁹ GUIDOBALDI, *La musica di Federico*, especially chapters two, "Musica nella città ideale" and three, "Imprese musicali." On Federico's *studioli* see below, and fn. 54.

⁵⁰ PRIZER, *Games of Venus*, pp. 3-4. Bianca de Medici sang and played the organ, her sister Nannina pumping the bellows; she performed "Fortuna" and "Duogli' angouseus" (*RU 1411*, no. 4); another young girl sang "Moum cuer chianter ioussement" (*RU 1411*, no. 7). PIRROTTA, *Ricerche*, p. 156, mentions performances of versions of *O rosa bella* in Rome in the 1470s.

⁵¹ See PIERGIORGIO PERUZZI, *Lavorare a corte. 'Ordini et officij'. Domestici, familiari, cortigiani e funzionari al servizio del Duca d'Urbino*, in *Federico di Montefeltro*, I, 225-296, pp. 288-289. Cf. CARLO VITALI, *Musica e musicisti alla corte di Federico III da Montefeltro*, "Il flauto dolce," 9 (1983), pp. 3-6. Vitali identifies Giovanni fiorentino as Giovanni Nicola di Vico.

⁵² MAP IX, 168, dated from Ferrara, 12 July 1445. The use of the past tense and the reference to "duca d'Urbino" would indicate Oddantonio da Montefeltro (d. 1444).

⁵³ GUIDOBALDI, *La musica di Federico*, "Imprese musicali," pp. 49-73, and the ample bibliographical references therein. See also JAMES HAAR, *Music as Visual Language*, in *Meaning in the Visual Arts. Views from the Outside. A Centennial Commemoration of Erwin Panofsky (1892-1948)*, ed. Irving Lavin, Princeton, Institute for Advanced Study, 1995, pp. 265-284: 272-278.

⁵⁴ On the *studiolo* in Gubbio see CECIL CLOUGH, *Federico da Montefeltro's Private Study in his Ducal Palace in Gubbio*, "Apollo," 86, no. 68 (1967), pp. 278-287; OLGA RAGGIO - ANTOINE WILMERING, *The Gubbio Studiolo and its Conservation*, 2 vols., New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999. The work of the da Maiano brothers on the Gubbio panelling (see above) is described in vol. I, pp. 152-157, and, in greater technical detail, in vol. II, pp. 105-120.

was included. It was visible when Federico's biographer James Dennistoun visited Gubbio in 1843. He could not gain access to the *studiolo*, but an English friend who had seen it supplied him with an account including this information:

The small cabinet has shared a better fate than that of the remainder of the apartments, and requires little else than cleaning up to restore it to its original state ... The wainscoted walls are inlaid with *tarsia*, representing bookcases, or rather cupboards, with their contents ... and, as if for the sake of variety only, a few volumes of books, over one of which, containing music with the word ROSABELLA inscribed on its pages, is suspended a crucifix ...⁵⁵

The book (Fig. 4) is indeed now blank. Given the fact that the two pieces of music in the Urbino *studiolo* are actual compositions, faithfully intarsiated, the Gubbio book presumably contained at least one voice — and possibly all three — of *O rosa bella*. The description given above is less detailed than one could wish. Another examination of the *studiolo*, undertaken in 1873, gives no information on the book.⁵⁶

In 1874 the panelling of the *studiolo* was bought by a Roman

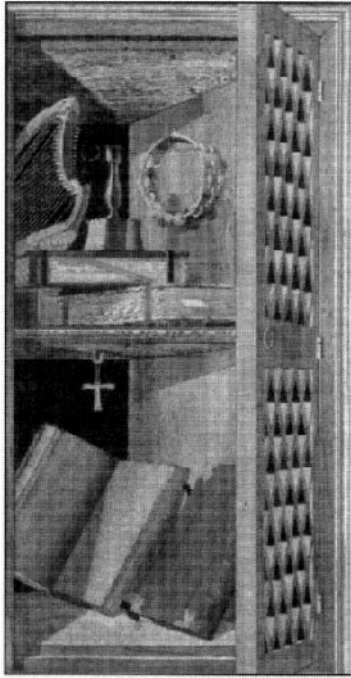


Figure 4: Gubbio studiolo, detail
(Raggio and Wilmering, *The Gubbio Studiolo*, I, p.131)

nobleman, Prince Filippo Massimo Lancellotti. The panels were cleaned and some substantial repairs were made. Prince Lancellotti planned to install the room in his country house, the Villa Piccolomini in Frascati. Owing in part to difficulties with the Italian government over the purchase, the panels may never have been installed, but were stored at the Villa until they were sold to the Venetian dealer Adolfo Loewi in December, 1937. Loewi in turn sold the panels to the Metropolitan Museum in 1939.⁵⁷

The English musicologists Barclay Squire and, possibly, John Stainer, saw the Gubbio panels in Frascati in 1899–1900. At this time something of *O rosa bella* was still to be seen, and Barclay Squire even photographed it (the photographs are apparently lost).⁵⁸ The music may have been rather faint, even scrambled as the result of restoration efforts; the incipits given by Cecie Stainer do not make a lot of sense, though they do suggest that it was the Dunstable/Bedynghe version that had been inscribed.⁵⁹

After more cleaning and restoration, the music disappeared totally; I looked at the panel as closely as I could and saw nothing at all. Nonetheless it was once there, and it must have come from *RU 1411*.

A good deal has been said about the iconographical sig-

⁵⁵ JAMES DENNISTOUN, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, 3 vols., London, Longman, 1851, I, p. 164.

⁵⁶ PAUL LASPEYRES, *Die Baudenkmale Umbriens*, IX, Gubbio, "Zeitschrift für Bauwesen", 31 (1881–1882), cols. 77–80. The description is given, in English translation, in WILMERING, *The Gubbio Studiolo*, II, pp. 202–203.

⁵⁷ A detailed account of the peregrinations of the Gubbio studiolo is given in RAGGIO, *The Gubbio Studiolo*, I, pp. 4–10.

⁵⁸ CECIE STAINER, *Dunstable and the Various Settings of O rosa bella*, "Sammelbände der internationalen Musikgesellschaft", 2 (1900–1901), pp. 1–

15.

⁵⁹ STAINER, *Dunstable*, p. 5. Stainer says, apologetically, "the opening phrases of two of the parts seem to be something like this." The upper part of her example has a slight resemblance to the opening of the Dunstable/Bedynghe setting. The 1840s description of the page as having "Rosabella" written on it (see above) conforms to *RU 1411*'s no. 19, which gives only an incipit of the text. The reason for the disappearance of the music (and of script on other book pages) may be that "their shallow depth of inlay" succumbed to drastic cleaning. See WILMERING, *The Gubbio Studiolo*, II, p. 163.

nificance of the two pieces of music in Federico's *studiolo* in Urbino.⁶⁰ No one has so far asked why he chose *O rosa bella* for the Gubbio *studiolo*. I can think of two complementary reasons. One is that its text, and perhaps the piece itself, which may well have been performed at court after *RU 1411* was given to Piero de' Bonaventuri, may have reminded Federico of his beloved wife Battista Sforza, who died in Gubbio in 1472. The other is that the piece might have been chosen to represent the manuscript itself, and thus to commemorate its Medici donor and his links with Federico.

Having looked at the transfer of *RU 1411* from Medicean Florence to the Urbino of Federico da Montefeltro, we should now look back to see what can be said about the origins of the manuscript and its ownership by Cosimo de' Medici's older son Piero. All of the fifteenth-century Medici seem to have had some interest in music, occasional and in part political — even for Piero's artistically inclined son Lorenzo. This interest took two basic forms: support for music as a cultural resource of the Florentine state; and support of, and some participation in music as private entertainment. These two forms of patronage were, as we shall see, occasionally mixed.

Soon after the Medici were re-established in Florence following their year of exile in Venice (October, 1433–October, 1434), a great occasion calling for music took place: the consecration, on March 25, 1436, of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and the completion of its *cupola*, masterwork of Filippo Brunelleschi.⁶¹ Cosimo played an important, though chiefly

behind-the-scenes role in this event.⁶² He was a friend of Pope Eugenius IV, who had been living in Florence for some time and was persuaded to stay for the ceremony. The papal choir was also there, and its participation in the event was noted and praised.

Whether or not Cosimo de' Medici had anything to do with commissioning Du Fay's dedicatory motet *Nuper rosarum flores*, he must have met the composer at this event if not before, beginning a relationship that was to last (see above, and fn. 15).⁶³ It seems probable that the three Du Fay pieces in *RU 1411*, two of them otherwise unknown, could have been given to the Medici or someone close to them in the early 1430s, or sent to them soon afterwards, when the composer was in Savoy.

In 1438 Cosimo, his brother Lorenzo, and his two sons were all in Ferrara, where Eugenius IV had opened a Church Council (Lorenzo was there officially, as Florentine ambassador to the papacy). By the end of the year the Medici had persuaded the pope to move the Council to Florence, an event that took place in January, 1539. Although the Ferrarese court seems not to have had an organized chapel until a few years after this,⁶⁴ there were musicians present in addition to members of the papal chapel. Before the Medici left Ferrara they had engaged, with the approval of the *operai* of Santa Maria del Fiore, four singers who were to form the nucleus of a Florentine chapel; they came to be known as the *cantori di San Giovanni*.⁶⁵ One of these singers, Benotto, is referred to as "magister"; he had evidently been chosen to head the chapel. Benotto was, despite being termed "da Ferrara," not Italian but a Frenchman, Benoit, who was active as a composer; and who may have been at least briefly in Florence before going to Ferrara; his name will

⁶⁰ See HAAR, *Music as Visual Language*, pp. 272–277; GUIDOBALDI, *La Musica di Federico*, pp. 50–73.

⁶¹ HOWARD SAALMAN, *Filippo Brunelleschi and the Cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore*, London, Zwemmer, 1980; SABINE ZAK, *Die Quellenwert von Gianozzo Manetti's Oratio über die Domweihe von Florenz 1436 für die Musikgeschichte*, "Die Musikforschung", 40 (1987), pp. 2–32.

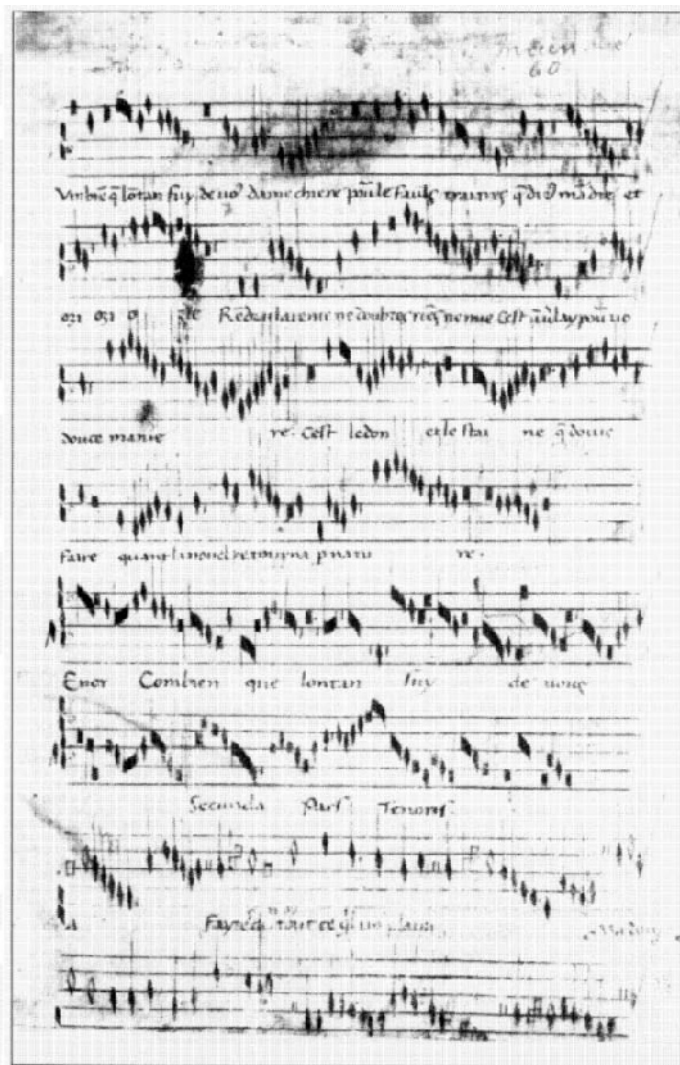
⁶² See KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 122–127.

⁶³ On *Nuper rosarum flores* and the Florentine Duomo see CHARLES WARREN, *Brunelleschi's Dome and Dufay's Motet*, "The Musical Quarterly", 59 (1973), pp. 92–105; CRAIG WRIGHT, *Dufay's Nuper rosarum flores, King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin*, "Journal of the Ameri-

can Musicological Society", XLVII (1994), pp. 395–441; MARVIN TRACHTENBERG, *Architecture and Music Reunited: A New Reading of Dufay's Nuper rosarum flores and the Cathedral of Florence*, "Renaissance Quarterly", 54 (2001), pp. 741–775. Everyone assumes that Du Fay was present for the occasion, though no documentation of his presence has been found.

⁶⁴ See LEWIS LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1984, pp. 54–55.

⁶⁵ The singers engaged on Dec. 9, 1438, were Benottus da Ferrara, Frater Beltramus, Iannes de Monte de Ferrara, and Francischus Bartoli. See FRANK A. D'ACCONTE, *The Singers of San Giovanni in Florence during the Fifteenth Century*, "Journal of the American Musicological Society", XIV (1961), pp. 307–358: 310–311, 351.



Tr 60, guardsheet with the incipit of *Faytes de moy*, concordant with RU 1411, fols. 4v-5

come up again later in this study.⁶⁶

From the beginning the Medici stood behind the establishment of a chapel of trained singers, who would promote the image of Florence as a center for cultivation of the growing Italian interest in Northern polyphony.

At the same time they must have intended to employ, as they certainly did, these same singers to provide music — as performers, perhaps as composers — for private Medici entertainments.⁶⁷ One example of this will suffice for the moment.

Ginevra de' Medici, wife of Giovanni di Cosimo, wrote to her husband (at the time in Milan) on 8 July 1455, to tell him that Piero and Lucrezia [his wife], together with Agniolo della Stufa "e i cantori di San Giovanni," were at Fiesole (presumably at Giovanni's new villa) for a "bella festa".⁶⁸

Cosimo de' Medici cannot have been the easiest of parents. He nevertheless kept the respect and professed affection of his sons as they grew out of adolescence.

They took an increasingly active role, particularly after the death of Cosimo's brother Lorenzo in 1440, in civic and governmental affairs as well as in the Medici bank (Giovanni was especially concerned with banking affairs).

These activities have been much studied, and are not our concern here. We will look instead at the Medici brothers' interest, more recreational than official, in poetry and music.

Piero and Giovanni appear to have led intimately related lives, but their interests and personalities were not identical. Vittorio Rossi, perhaps the closest student of Giovanni — who as the younger son has inevitably received less attention than his

older brother — has this to say about Giovanni:

Endowed with a livelier and readier wit, something indeed noticed by Cosimo, [Giovanni] represents much better than his brother [Piero] the period of transition between the first and second stage of the Renaissance; in certain characteristics he almost prefigured [Lorenzo] il Magnifico.⁶⁹

Giovanni and Piero were of course unaware that their period of dominance in Florentine life would come to be thought of as a transitional period, or that they would stand in the shadows of both Cosimo and his grandson Lorenzo; these were views current in Rossi's time and only now seen as dated and unfair.

They were themselves *magnifici* and they meant to take as much pleasure in their position of wealth and power as their fragile health — in the case of Giovanni leading to an early death — would allow.⁷⁰

Piero put himself on notice as a patron of vernacular poetry when he, along with Leon Battista Alberti, sponsored the *Certamine Coronario* held at the Florentine Duomo in 1441.⁷¹ The poets who read, or had declaimed for them, poems in various forms on the Ciceronian topic of *amicizia*, were engaged in a sort of *questione della lingua*, celebrating the vernacular before a sympathetic Florentine crowd and a less sympathetic tribunal of judges, chiefly humanist scholars who thought nothing — perhaps not even Dante's *Commedia* — written in

⁶⁶ On Benotto/Benoit see PAMELA F. STARR, *The 'Ferrara Connection': A Case Study of Musical Recruitment in the Renaissance*, "Studi musicali", 18 (1989), pp. 3-17. A "Magister Benocto de Francia" was appointed as a singing teacher at Orsanmichele in Florence on November 13, 1436; he may have remained in Florence into 1537. See BLAKE WILSON, *Music and Merchants. The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence, ca. 1270-1494*, Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1987, pp. 143-144. After his appointment as a *cantore di San Giovanni* late in 1438 Benotto stayed in Florence for ten years, returning to Ferrara in 1448 and later joining the papal chapel.

⁶⁷ D'ACCONTE, *Singers of San Giovanni*, p. 308.

⁶⁸ MAP VII, 301. See GABRIELE GIACOMELLI, *Nuove giunte alla biografia di Antonio Squarcialupi: I viaggi, l'impiego, le esecuzioni*, in *La musica a Firenze*, 257-273, p. 267.

⁶⁹ VITTORIO ROSSI, *L'indole e gli studi di Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici*, "Rendiconti della reale accademia dei Lincei, classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche", ser. 5a, vol. II (1893), pp. 38-60: 39.

⁷⁰ On the vexed question of the apparently hereditary disease, at the time chiefly called gout, which plagued the Medici from at least the time of Cosimo onward, see GAETANO PIERACCINI, *La stirpe de' Medici di Cafaggiolo* [1924], 3 vols., Firenze, Nardini, 1986. Giovanni di Cosimo is discussed in vol. I, pp. 78-94. Giovanni was frequently ill, visiting thermal baths with some regularity from the age of 21. He lived in a way reckless of his health, and at 42 died, it was said, from eating and drinking too much "robe calde."

⁷¹ For a full and sympathetic account of the Certame see FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 3-51.

78 The Vatican manuscript Urb. Lat. 1411: an undervalued source?

the *vulgare* worthy of serious consideration.⁷² The idea of having a second *Certame* (on the subject of *invidia*) was abandoned, but this first experiment was not a failure. Word of it, and some of its contents, circulated all over Italy, and Piero became known, along with his brother, as a patron of poets and, by extension, musicians.

Both Piero and Giovanni may occasionally have written [now lost] verses, as indeed did Cosimo; and as a matter of course they were recipients of a good deal of poetry, whether or not directly adulatory in tone, dedicated to them.⁷³ Some of this poetry came from within their circle of friends. They could also tolerate some satirical criticism; Giovanni patronized and sought the company of the notoriously outspoken barber-poet Burchiello.⁷⁴ They went to a good deal of trouble to acquire and make use of musical instruments, including not only the expected lutes and small organs, but winds and other stringed and keyboard instruments as well.⁷⁵ A charming illustration of this is found in a letter to Piero from his thirteen-year-old cousin Pierfrancesco, son of Cosimo's brother Lorenzo. Writing from a country villa, Pierfrancesco asks to be sent "quella cornamusa" since there is none in the area and he wishes to entertain the "molte donne" expected at the weekend.⁷⁶ This is but one indication that there was a good deal of informal music-making, and doubtless declamation of poetry, at private gatherings of the Medici and their circle of friends.

Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco of the Procession of the Magi (1459), covering the walls of the chapel in the Medici palace,

has been shown to include portraits of Cosimo, his sons and other family members, and a number of Medici friends and partisans.⁷⁷ The three kings themselves are not in all probability to be identified as real people but are idealized figures representing three ages of man. Each of them is accompanied by a group of young men forming a *brigata*, a group of friends and supporters. A *brigata* could be a formalized group, set at twelve members.⁷⁸ The term recurs with great frequency in letters to Cosimo, Piero, and Giovanni. In this context the word seems to refer to an informal group, like that of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of family members, including women, and close friends. Inside these groups, gathered at the Medici palace or at one of the Medici villas — many of them north of Florence in the Mugello, the ancestral home of the family — there were readings, game-playing, and performance of music, instrumental and/or vocal, the latter including settings of recently composed vernacular poetry as well as Italian and French songs currently in vogue. The connection of the repertory of *RU 1411* to the activities of these *brigates*, hinted at in the 1460 performances cited by William Prizer, will be further explored here.

The Medici could if they liked make use of the singers of San Giovanni, perhaps to hear some French chansons; we have already noted an instance of this (see above, and fn. 68). Or they could engage one of Florence's celebrated *improvisatori* to entertain them and their guests in a traditional local way. Antonio di Guido, the most famous poet-singer of his day, gave a memorable performance when Cosimo and his sons enter-

⁷² At this time the position that Italian was a descendant of ancient, albeit popular Latin had to contend with the view that Italian *was* the Latin, little changed, of the ancient *vulgus*, hence not a suitable vehicle for artistic expression; see FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 14-17. The judges' decision not to award a prize, bitterly criticized, may have been influenced by this latter view.

⁷³ For a poem attributed to Cosimo and addressed to Francesco Sforza see KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 20. The poem is published in ANTONIO LANZA, *Lirici toscani del quattrocento*, 2 vols., Rome, Bulzoni, 1973-1975, pp. 55-56. Giovanni sent his friend Rosello Roselli in Rome a "canzonetta" [i.e. ballata] of his own, to be sung there (MAP VII, 24, April 24, 1447). On poetry written for Cosimo and his sons see the account in FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 369-383. Some of this verse, such as a sonnet on the death of Giovanni from overindulgence, shows, in Flamini's words, "che sorte di familiarità concedessero i Medici ai loro poeti".

⁷⁴ See KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 49, 410. Giovanni was in contact with

Burchiello in Rome in the spring of 1445; after he returned to Florence he was informed, in a letter of May 22 from Piero Ardinghelli, of a poetic context between Burchiello and Anselmo Calderoni, Medici *araldo* from 1442 to 1446. See FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, p. 223. At one point Giovanni called Burchiello to the Medici villa at Petriolo to read his poetry; see ROSSI, *L'indole e le studi di Giovanni*, p. 50.

⁷⁵ See D'ACCONTE, *Lorenzo il magnifico e la musica*, pp. 224-226.

⁷⁶ MAP XVII, 29, dated at Trebbio, 2 August 1443.

⁷⁷ See CRISTINA ACIDINI LUCHINAT, *La cappella dei Magi*, Milano, Electa, 1993; English translation, by ELEANOR DAUNT, *The Chapel of the Magi. Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi*, Florence, London, Thames & Hudson, 1994.

⁷⁸ As a formal group a *brigata* had eleven members led by a *messere*; this regulated size was dictated by the Florentine Signoria to control what might develop into armed bands. See LUCHINAT, *The Chapel of the Magi*, pp. 39-40.

tained the young Galeazzo Maria Sforza in April, 1459.⁷⁹ It is important to see that for the Medici, as for cultivated Florentines in general, the Italian tradition of improvised song, monophonic but usually performed with some kind of accompaniment, coexisted with the French polyphonic song, fashionable in Italy since the beginning of the century.⁸⁰ Either or both kinds of music were suitable on many occasions; only when there was an attempt to mix the two traditions in a single piece could troubles arise, as we shall see.⁸¹

Some idea of how a group of cultivated Florentines may at this time have entertained themselves with poetry and music is given in an account by Giannotto Manetti of a gathering of young Florentine exiles in Venice in October, 1448. They sang, in solo or group performance with some kind of accompaniment, "Gallicas cantilenas et melodias" which seemed "pene celestes et quasi angelici cantus" to listeners present. Next came "Venetis cantiunculis et symphoniis," performed in some unspecified but appropriate fashion. Finally a youth who had been in Sicily sang and played "nonnullas Siculas symphonias et cantilenas," these liked best of all by those present.⁸²

Descriptions of convivial evenings within Medicean *brigate* are rare; only if an outsider was present, as was the case in the entertainment offered Pius II by the Medici girls in 1460, might an account have been written.⁸³ When one of the Medici brothers was away, letters from Florence could inform him of the activities of the *brigata*. Such is the case in the spring of

1445, when Giovanni was in Rome for three months. Letters from his friends, in particular Rosello Roselli and Ugo della Stufa, kept Giovanni informed about the plans for performance of some *ballate* in musical settings, performances which presumably took place when Giovanni returned to Florence in mid-May, 1445. This episode involves the Medici and members of their circle, several Florentine musicians, and, I will propose, the manuscript *RU 1411*. It will now be discussed in some detail.

First, the protagonists. At their center was Giovanni di Cosimo. Although a younger son, Giovanni was entrusted by his father with substantial affairs of business, culminating in his designation as head of the Medici bank in 1455. Of the extraordinary number of letters directed to Giovanni surviving in the Archivio Mediceo, most are concerned with business matters and requests for assistance of various kinds. But from his adolescence Giovanni was pleasure-loving and fun-loving, more so than his older brother and very unlike his sober parents, who alternated concern for his health with admiration for his evidently attractive personality. Giovanni spent some time in serious study, reading classical literature; but from the start he alternated this with diversions of various kinds, in the words of one scholar 'hanging out' with like-minded friends.⁸⁴

Among these friends was Rosello Roselli (1399-1451), member of an Aretine family with strong connections to Florence. Rosello was a cleric, a doctor of laws, an occasional diplo-

⁷⁹ Antonio sang a long poem on the *impresa* of Francesco Sforza and the virtues of his son Galeazzo Maria, evidently impressing the young man very much. See ROSSI, *L'indole e gli studi di Giovanni*, p. 5; KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 49-50. At this time Benozzo Gozzoli, who included Galeazzo Maria Sforza among the Medici partisans in the Procession of the Magi, painted in the summer of 1459, may have taken the young man's likeness. On Antonio di Guido see BIANCA BECHERINI, *Un canto impanca fiorentino: Antonio di Guido*, "Rivista musicale italiana", 50 (1948), pp. 241-247. A too-common confusion of Antonio di Guido with Antonio Squarcialupi is seen in *Images of Quattrocento Florence*, edd. Stefano Ugo Baldassarri - Arielle Saiber, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 323.

⁸⁰ The extent to which the Florentine polyphonic tradition of the later *Ars Nova*, which does seem to have died out after c. 1420, was known and cultivated in the city at large is a subject that cannot be dealt with here.

⁸¹ I do not refer here to the inclusion of popular melodic elements in a poly-

phonic piece. Both Ciconia and Dunstable/Bedyngnam in my opinion allude to pre-existent tunes in their settings of Giustiniani's ballata *O rosa bella* (nos. 5 and 19 in *RU 1411*). Both are accomplished polyphonic settings; whether they would have been heard, in 1440s Florence, as 'French' or 'Italian' in musical character is a question relevant here but not easy to answer.

⁸² GIANNOZZO MANETTI, *Dialogus in domestic et familiari quorundam amicorum symposio Venetiis habito*, cited by NINO PIRROTTA, *Music and Culture in Italy*, pp. 39-40, 375-376.

⁸³ PRIZER, *Games of Venus*, p. 3, draws on the account of Teodoro de Montefeltro, Apostolic Protonotary in Pius II's court, a letter written to Barbara of Brandenburg, wife of Marquis Lodovico Gonzaga of Mantua.

⁸⁴ ROSSI, *L'indole e gli studi di Giovanni*, p. 40. Rossi, who gives a balanced account of Giovanni's interests, says that "da giovine [Giovanni] bazzicasse" with his "liete brigate."

mat, and a poet who compiled and copied out a *canzoniere* of his own, appending it to a copy of Petrarch.⁸⁵ His letters indicate that his clerical status did not hinder a full enjoyment of many of life's pleasures. Florence was his favorite place of residence; he was a stalwart Medici follower, and although he was a younger contemporary of Cosimo he became a good friend of Piero and a central member of Giovanni's *brigata*. From 1441 to 1444 Rosello was attached to the court of Pope Eugenius IV; he was sent to Avignon and on his return lived (1443) with the court in Siena. During this period he wrote often to Giovanni. His letters, penned in a rapid and sometimes indecipherable scrawl, are full of anecdote and gossip.

By early 1445 Rosello, now feeling his years, was back in Florence. During Giovanni's stay in Rome in the spring of 1445 Rosello wrote to him over a dozen times, on a variety of subjects but always containing news of the *brigata*. Several of these letters will concern us closely. First is a letter of March 6, 1445, which began the 'ballata episode' referred to above.⁸⁶ In this letter (see Plate I), Rosello speaks of a turn, resulting from considerations of age and health, away from human concerns and toward divine matters. We may wonder how sincere and lasting such feelings were — Rosello (see below) may have been striking a literary pose — or whether Giovanni at the age of twen-

ty-two could be expected to have shared them. Evidence of Rosello's feelings, he says, are contained in a ballata which he is sending to Giovanni (it is unfortunately not included in the letter), along with what seems an invitation to him to compose one in similar vein.⁸⁷ If he did so, this would set up a good *giostina*, in traditional Florentine fashion, between the two. This second ballata, as we shall see, Giovanni had already written, and the whole episode developed from his having done so. Rosello writes that his ballata has been set to music in Florence and has been sung with great success ("e suta intonata e cantasi magnificamente"). Only one text by Rosello survives in musical dress: Gilles Joye's setting of *Poi che crudel fortuna e rio destino*, found in the Ms *Porto*.⁸⁸ The text, which is indeed a ballata, is in Rosello's *Canzoniere*, copied at a point close to the date of his letter to Giovanni.⁸⁹ Could this be the text, and its music, that Rosello speaks of in his letter?

The meaning of *Poi che crudel fortuna* (Ex. 1) is not as clear, at least to me, as one could wish. Nonetheless it can be read as related to Rosello's letter. The poem speaks of renunciation and separation from "signor mio," presumably Giovanni; the separation is dictated by "ciel," "fortuna," and "destino." As for what the separation — short of death — was to be, I am not sure. Rosello was trying to obtain, through Medici help, the

⁸⁵ On Rosello Roselli see FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 278-286, 403-410. A full bibliography on Rosello and his poetry is found in GIOVANNI BIANCARDI, *Sull'autografia del Canzoniere di Rosello Roselli*, "Studi e problemi di critica testuale", XLIX (1994), pp. 25-52: 25n.

⁸⁶ MAP VII, 20. The year, here and elsewhere, is given according to the modern calendar (the Florentine year began on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25). Here is the relevant portion of the letter: "Salve diu demidi-um anime mee[.] O ricevuta tua letera la quale viddi di bona volgia vedendo per essa tu essere sano che piu el desidero che di persona che vui. Et piacemi molto che tu abbi abbracciata la colonna la quale t[ib]a liberato dai mali spiriti[.] volgia iddio che tu dica el vero che per me io nol credo perche di queste mutationi te ne ho vedute fare tanta che omai o perduta la fede dei frati tuoi se gia le cose divine non anno avute piu forze che le umane[.] ma quando io el vedere allora el credere, volgio esser di quelli di san tomaso. Di me accio che tu possa el istimare che sono guarito si per letade et si anchora per cognoscere el sugieto a chi homo si soc-tomecetea el potrai cognoscere per questa ballata la quale ti mando[.] Et qui e suta intonata et cantasi magnificamente[.] Quanto tu farai simile per [t]ua potro dire che se buono giostrante[.] Et renditi certo che non o paura di maggio ne di sangiorno alcuno che debba uscir a campo in pero

che mia intentione e di piu non giostrare che non mi sento granche[.] da noi fratello mio io son troppo vecchio et questo basti". In all the passages from letters cited here I have added only some punctuation to aid the reader. Spelling is left almost untouched and accent marks, never present in the original, are not supplied.

⁸⁷ FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 283-284, cites this letter and concludes that this is what Rosello meant. Actually Rosello's phrase "quando tu farai simile" must refer to his desire for Giovanni to have *his* ballata set to music; see below.

⁸⁸ *Porto*, fols. 65v-67.

⁸⁹ The contents of Rosello's *Canzoniere*, found in the autograph Ms Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 1098, are printed in LANZA, *Lirici toscani*, II, pp. 399-456. *Poi che crudel fortuna* is on pp. 433-434. BIANCARDI, *Sull'autografia*, p. 27, cites a date of 31 March 1444, on fol. 149v, with the message "Finis Laus deo... Ego Rosellus scripsi manu propria." This refers to the *Canzoniere* of Petrarch, copied "ab originali" by Rosello. A note at the end of the manuscript (fol. 177) gives, rather obscurely, another date: "M cccc xxxv die xv mensis octobris fanciullo januarij 1435". This seems clearly wrong; perhaps 1445 is what was intended.



Ex 1. Joye, *Poi che crudel fortuna*, ms Porto, fols. 65v-67.

priorate at San Jacopo Oltrarno; perhaps he was thinking of retiring there. He did obtain this position, though if he retired it cannot have been for long.⁹⁰

The music is a competent if slightly rough setting which

could well have been written in the mid-1440s, composed in Florence but the work of a trained Northern musician. Its presence in Ferrara, where *Porto* was copied some ten years later, is nothing strange; there was plenty of contact between the two cities, and one of the cantori di San Giovanni hired in Ferrara in 1438 (see above) returned there in 1448.⁹¹ I see no reason to think, as does Reinhard Strohm, that the piece is a contrafact of an English text set by Joye in Bruges.⁹² More convincing is an alternate explanation offered by Joshua Rifkin, who suggests that Joye "made an otherwise undocumented trip to Italy."⁹³

The trip may not be completely undocumented. Gilles Joye (c. 1424-25 – 1483) spent his career in the Low Countries, much of it in Bruges. If he is the Egidius Joye mentioned in a document of 1439 he was a trained singer by that time.⁹⁴ His first mention as a singer at St. Donatian, Bruges, is in 1449; before then his whereabouts are unknown.

Many Northern musicians were coming to Italy at this time, some for short stays; and Medici connections with Bruges were very close. In the 1460s Piero de' Medici sent a musician-emissary to recruit singers in Bruges and elsewhere — perhaps helped by Du Fay.⁹⁵ This was surely not the first such action of its kind.⁹⁶ I think it not at all unlikely that a Florentine document of March 6, 1445 (the date of Rosello's letter!) mentioning an "Egidio" as a singer of San Giovanni might refer to Egidio [= Gilles] Joye, and that *Poi che crudel fortuna* was com-

⁹⁰ Rosello spent the years 1447-1450 in Rome, continuing to write chatty letters to Giovanni. As late as December 18, 1450, he was serving the Medici, presenting gifts of Polish clothing (acquired on a trip to Poland earlier that year) to Cosimo; this is recorded in a letter of Contessina de' Medici to her son Giovanni (MAP VIII, 140), confirmed in a letter of the same day, to Giovanni from Giovanni Inghirami (MAP VIII, 142), who says "e tornato messer rosello daretto di polonia magro di persona e grasso da la borsa." Rosello died in February, 1451; see FLAMINI, *La lirica toscana*, pp. 285-286.

⁹¹ Benotto, hired in 1538 as *maestro di cappella*, left Florence early in 1448, no longer *maestro* and under some sort of cloud, its exact nature unclear. See D'ACCONTE, *The Singers of San Giovanni*, pp. 314-315.

⁹² REINHARD STROHM, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985, p. 126. The piece does not include a setting of the three-line *volta* of the ballata, nor is this text present as a *residuum*. Presumably the *volta* was sung to the music of the opening *ripresa* (mm. 7-30) or, slight-

ly cramped, to the final section of the music (mm. 47-52). The complete text is as follows: "Poi che crudel fortuna e rio destino / mi costringi a partir signor mio caro, / seguio suo voler con pianto amaro. / Staro tanto lontano dal tuo bel volto, / lasciando a te el mio core, / fin che pietà tu arai del mio languire, / ne per altra già mai ti saro tolto, / se ben volesse Amore, / tenendo sempre in te fermo el disire. / *[volta]*: Molto mi duol da tua beltà partire, / ma contro el ciel non trovo alcun riparo, / che d'ogni grazia in me si mostra avaro".

⁹³ JOSHUA RIFKIN, *Busnois and Italy: the Evidence of Two Songs*, in *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning and Content in Late Medieval Music*, ed. Paula Higgins, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999, pp. 505-571: 510n.

⁹⁴ DAVID FALLOWS, *Joye*, in *New Grove*².

⁹⁵ See D'ACCONTE, *The Singers of San Giovanni*, pp. 321-322.

⁹⁶ D'ACCONTE, *The Singers of San Giovanni*, pp. 314-317, notes an earlier recruitment of Netherlandish singers by Piero, in 1448-1449.

posed by him at this time.⁹⁷

In a letter of March 10, 1445, of which only a fragment survives, Rosello adds this postscript: "Io sollicito la tua ballata. dice che fara – bene."⁹⁸ This is slightly puzzling until one rereads the letter of March 6. There Rosello writes "quanto tu farai simile pur potro dire che se' buona giostrante," this after he has described the success of his ballata when set to music. Giovanni's ballata could not have been written in response to that of Rosello — reaching him from Rome four days after Rosello had written from Florence. It must already have existed and been in Rosello's possession; it is Rosello's ballata that is the *risposta*, and the *giostra* will be between the two poems as set to music. As for "dice che farà," we are not given the subject; who "says he will do it"? We find the answer to this in Rosello's letter to Giovanni of March 18, 1445.⁹⁹ Here we read the following:

Sono molti di non o veduto antonio[.] se lui andra qui ricordaro el facto della tua ballata[.] Se io fuste sano credemi serebbe ora finita ma spero colla gratia di dio che inanzi octo giorni io potro uscir la casa e faro quanto farese per medesimo[.] Credo pero sia finita la prima parte, se mi dica el vero.

It is some time since I have seen Antonio. If he comes here I will recall to him the matter of your ballata. If I were well, believe me, it would be done by now; but I hope with the grace of God to be able to leave the house within a week and will do all that is necessary. I think the first part [of the ballata] is done, if he is telling the truth.¹⁰⁰

Antonio, as we will learn from letters of Ugo della Stufa, is

Antonio degli organi, later to be known as Antonio Squarcialupi. He apparently offered or was asked to set Giovanni's ballata. Rosello as *sollicitatore* of the enterprise was to supervise, but illness slowed him down; on March 13 he had written to Giovanni (MAP VII, 40) that he thought himself near death and could not give any report, adding "la brigata sta bene, io sto molto male."

If he was slow in starting, Antonio seems to have made progress. On March 23 Rosello was able to write Giovanni that

Per lo male mio non ho potuto sollicitare[.] piu tosto hora vedi tu si se ben servito con cotesti cantori[.] Questi di qua mi dichono che sta bene[.] Io ne ho dato la copia a ser Francesco perche la sengni alla Lucretia[.] dice che lo fara di bona voglia[.] Vedi se posso [fare] cosa alchuna che lo faro di core quanto facesse per me medesimo.

Because of my illness I could not further matters any sooner; now see if you are well served by your singers there [in Rome]. Those here tell me that it is good. I have given a copy to ser Francesco so that he can teach it to Lucrezia; he says he will gladly do it. If I can do anything further I will do it as fervently as if I were acting on my own account.¹⁰¹

Evidently a setting of his text by Antonio degli organi was sent to Giovanni in Rome. Meanwhile, Lucrezia, who must be Piero de' Medici's young wife Lucrezia Tornabuoni, was learning to perform the new piece, to be taught her by "ser Francesco." The latter may be Francesco Bartoli, a singer of San Giovanni who had been in Florence since 1438.¹⁰² For Lucretia performing it probably meant singing the piece from memory

⁹⁷ FRANK A. D'ACCONTE, *A Documentary History of Music at the Florentine Cathedral and Baptistery during the Fifteenth Century*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1960, p. 118, points out that Egidio "apparently left Florence in the latter part of 1445," perhaps in company with another singer named Guglielmo who had come to Florence a month before Egidio. An Aegidius is noted in Rome in 1459 and 1461, and may be the Egidius Crispini at St. Peter's (along with Guillelmus Desmares) in 1471. This Egidius is clearly not Gilles Joye, but the Egidio in Florence in 1445 might have been Joye. For now the identification remains hypothetical. A possible if somewhat romantic connection of "Egidio" with Florence and indeed with Rome 1411 is Joye's attachment, in later years, to a mistress known as "Rosabelle" and to the possibility that he composed the "O rosa bella" Masses in *Tr 88*. See REINHARD STROHM, *The Rise of European Music 1380-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 427.

⁹⁸ MAP VII, 28.

⁹⁹ MAP VII, 21.

¹⁰⁰ This letter seems to anticipate the worries about Antonio expressed by Ugo della Stufa (see below).

¹⁰¹ MAP VII, 39. By "cotesti cantori" Rosello must mean a group of Roman singers enlisted by Giovanni.

¹⁰² On Bartoli see D'ACCONTE, *The Singers of San Giovanni*, pp. 310, 313. Bartoli, who was a priest and an organist as well as a singer, was at Orsanmichele in February-August, 1436, when "Ser Francesco Bartoli presbitero, sonatori orghanorem" is documented as organist there (he was replaced by Antonio degli organi). He and Benotto may have moved to Ferrara and then back to Florence together. See WILSON, *Music and Merchants*, pp. 144, 148.

84 The Vatican manuscript Urb. Lat. 1411: an undervalued source?

while accompanying herself, perhaps on a keyboard instrument, as in the 1460 performances reported by William Prizer (see above).

Rosello refers to the valetudinarian themes of his March 6 letter in one (MAP VII, 18) written on April 2, 1445. He continued to interest himself in the ballata competition, but wrote to Giovanni about other things, as did other members of the *brigata*. For example, Pierfrancesco de' Medici, now fifteen, wrote Giovanni on April 4, 1445 (MAP v, 577) about the latter's gift of a horse, adding that Cosimo "e tutti noi" are well and awaiting Giovanni's return, but saying nothing about the ballata. On April 17 Guglielmo da Sommaia wrote (MAP v, 587) a letter to Giovanni that is completely concerned with hunting.

Further information on the ballata — a good deal of it — is given in a series of letters to Giovanni from Ugo della Stufa.¹⁰³ A member of a family with long and close ties to the Medici, Ugo di Lorenzo della Stufa grew up in the family palace, located across from the Medici church of San Lorenzo and very close to the site of the new Medici palace on Via Larga, on which work began in the spring of 1445.¹⁰⁴ Ugo seems to have been one of Giovanni's closest friends. Two charmingly boyish letters written by him to Giovanni in 1434, when the Medici were in exile in Venice, give news of Florence along with eager protestations of friendship.¹⁰⁵ This tone continues through a large number of letters Ugo dispatched to Giovanni over the next twenty years (they were answered; Ugo often speaks of his pleasure at receiving a letter or his eagerness to get one). Examples are a letter (MAP VII, 101, May 29 s.a.) responding to Giovanni's invitation to join him at Trebbio by

saying that if he could don wings he would fly to Giovanni's side; another (MAP VI, 782, s.a.) addresses his friend as "Giovanni diletissimo"; and one written at "hore 4 di notte" tells Giovanni "come fratello carissimo" that he, Ugo, had miraculously been saved in a shipwreck (MAP VI, 192, June 10, 1451).¹⁰⁶

Ugo della Stufa played a crucial role in the ballata *giostra*. Three letters written to Giovanni, still in Rome, in April of 1445 continue Rosello's earlier account and give what seems to be the final solution of the problem caused by Antonio's setting. In the first of these letters, dated 3 April 1445, Ugo tells his absent friend

No[i] siamo quagiu et non domandare con quanto diletto stiamo — hora la facciamo a careggi hora a biviagliano — fugiendo i pensieri piu potiamo. Antonio ancor cogli organi ci da piacere asay che sono forniti queglii dopie sufoli et altro non voresti udir che co mantaci non si puo soperire alla volonta d'antonio di sonare quando gli a tra mano.

We are together here — now at Careggi, now at Bivigliano, and don't ask with what delight we carry on, fleeing care as much as we can. Again Antonio with the organ gives us pleasure enough since it has been equipped with a double rank of pipes, and you don't want to hear more about how, with bellows (pumping), one cannot appease his desire to play whenever he has them at hand.¹⁰⁷

Antonio is, in Ugo's opinion, willing — only too willing — to entertain the *brigata* with his playing. Knowing that Antonio was a friend of the Medici in general and of Giovanni in particular, Ugo seems careful not to seem too critical.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰³ Excerpts from these letters have been published by a number of scholars, including Vittorio Rossi, Gaetano Pieraccini, Bianca Becherini, Luigi Parigi, and Frank D'Accone.

¹⁰⁴ On the closeness of the della Stufa family to the Medici see KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 74, 84, 452–453. It was a member of this family, Sigismondo, who led the successful effort to save his friend Lorenzo de' Medici when the latter's brother Giuliano was murdered in 1478; see KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ MAP v, 286 (March 6, 1434) and v, 358 (April 30, 1434), when Giovanni was twelve and Ugo, judging from his handwriting, the same age if not slightly younger. On the second of these letters see KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁶ Other letters with this kind of language include MAP VI, 782 ("Giovanni diletissimo") and VII, 103 ("chiarissimo piu de fratello"; "tuo piu de mio Ugho").

¹⁰⁷ MAP v, 571. "Antonio ancor cogliorgani" clearly suggests that Ugo was bored by Antonio's apparently endless willingness to entertain his captive auditors.

¹⁰⁸ On Antonio's relation with the Medici, about which more will be said below, see BECHERINI, *Antonio Squarcialupi*; D'ACCONTE, *Antonio Squarcialupi*; GIACOMELLI, *Nuove giunte alla biografia di Antonio Squarcialupi*. Ugo's letters seem to hint that Antonio was not fully accepted as a member of the *brigata*.

next part of the letter also concerns Antonio, but on a different matter, the behavior of the "parte contradia" in preparing for a *squittinio* (balloting), evidently in connection with a Florentine confraternity.¹⁰⁹

The final paragraph of the letter returns to our subject:

Dapoi ti schrissi arai auto la canzona intonata che questo tristo a tanto penato a fare[,] a che ti so dire[,] e gioia che tutti si vorebbono casare che per merito della fatica durammo per lui. Et ci lascia adietro per parecchi nebie — che perche e[ll] facisi la tua gli prestai u[n] libro de canti che me l'an[n]o copiato et poi la davo a messer Rosello tella mandis[,] la quale come ti dico arai auto[.] Aviso se sta a tuo modo et se iscrivi a messere Rosello biasimala non sia tenuta buona cosa.

Since I last wrote you will have received the canzona set by this poor fellow (*questo tristo*) who had I can't tell you how much trouble writing it. We were relieved at the thought of going home, but stayed on out of concern over his struggles. He ended by producing no more than a few wisps (*parecchi nebie*). In order that he might complete the task for you I lent him a book of songs which I had had copied, and then I will have given his piece to messer Rosello to send to you. As I said, you will have received it by now. Let us know if it is to your liking; and if you write to messer Rosello blame the piece if it is not liked there (in Rome).¹¹⁰

"Questo tristo" is evidently Antonio degli organi, who seems to have had great difficulty setting Giovanni's ballata to

music. It is intriguing to read that Ugo lent Antonio a book of songs which he had had copied. The reader may guess what I think this book was; but more evidence is to come. In any event Antonio finished the song and Rosello sent it off to Giovanni in Rome.

Ugo's next report to Giovanni, a letter of April 10, 1445 (MAP IX, 148), speaks briefly of the ballata and then devotes a good deal of space to Antonio, mostly recounting some kind of odd misadventure the latter stumbled into on the outskirts of Florence, and that his troubles continued. Rosello was elected a confraternity captain; but the other party was still working in secret, and if Antonio wanted such a post it seems he did not get it.¹¹¹ Bianca Becherini, who transcribed parts of these letters, found this one particularly obscure.¹¹² I confess that I did also; I give the Italian text of the greater part of it;¹¹³ perhaps an informed reader can make more of it than I could. The part of the letter that pertains to the ballata is its opening:

La ballata ay auto che mi piace. Aviso come ti riesce da seno acio si pos[s]a ringraziare chi ne stato solcitatore che piu duno scandolo ne preso che usato bonta e[-?]

You have received the ballata, for which I am glad. Let me know, speaking frankly (*da seno*), how well it succeeds, in your judgment, so that the person responsible (*chi ne stato solcitatore*) can be thanked; he has endured more than one shock, [he] who treats others with kindness.

The *solcitatore* must again be Rosello; as we shall see from the next letter, Ugo was not in the mood to thank Antonio.

¹⁰⁹ On the *squittino* or scrutiny in confraternities see RONALD WEISSMAN, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, New York, Academic Press, 1982, pp. 59-60.

¹¹⁰ MAP v, 571.

¹¹¹ Ugo speaks of Rosello's success and Antonio's failure in this letter (for the text see fn. 112 below). Rosello's election is confirmed in a letter from Alesso di Matteo Pelli (Galuzzo), Cosimo's household secretary, to Giovanni (MAP IX, 1147, dated 10 April 1445): "questa solo per avisarti come messer Rosello e de capitani della compagnia di san zanobi." On Alesso, for years a key member of the Medici household, see KENT, *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 409 et passim.

¹¹² BECHERINI, *Antonio Squarcialupi*, pp. 192-194. Becherini's transcriptions were helpful; unfortunately she missed the point of the whole episode, and particularly of the letter of 17 April 1445.

¹¹³ MAP IX, 148: "...Direy come fusty avisato. Andavano alle porte el tuo mo

Antonio da te di bucho di sampiero ghatolini che say e luogho abban[donat]o e may vi si vede sole e perche luy vando per tempo e quella breza sanese che na auto gran male che non chelle bugie abino chavato fuori el capitano ma si sono serato in quelle golbe che vi farano quella state e chome sai e mai fa sanza che sarano pegio che comune che gli caverano fuor borlochi che para peggio che hortetica vorebsey che avesti a stare alle manni del cardinale di capoua che lo pascierebe di mele e arebe el compianto suo trovasi per quella andata asai infermo che nella punta del naso e nelle dita delle manni mai puo entrare chaldo. E simile negli occhi che gli tiene sanza vedere punto daria. Are buona stare i nella costa di grana-ta....Del nostro Antonio t'avisai di quanti casi gli sobbondavano che ne preso che disperato di romori stati. Per salvamento loro an[n]o tiratovi molti innanzi che non navevano ufici e fatto chapitani a mano di balia fra quali ano fatto messere rosello et datogli cierti cien quando debe render la fava nera e bianca chometersi cierti benduci in sulla spalla. L'altra parte ancor sempre veghia e quel martello e gimignano speciale che gran lavorare fa[n]no copertamente...."

His letter of April 17, 1445 (for a facsimile see Plate II), is apparently Ugo's last communication on the subject (if a *giostra* was really held, it was after Giovanni had returned to Florence); fortunately it provides some telling detail. About a third of the letter is devoted to what might be called the denouement of the ballata episode:

Piacemi la ballata riesca buona, e si t'avisio la Lucrezia la compiuto daparare 3 di sono e si la canta. Mo Antonio isdegno per tal modo di questa ballata perche avendoti promeso mandartela perfetia e che la proverebbe che a fatica la potesi vedere a lume di lucierna una sera senza udirla cantare, che in veruno modo ne vole fare nulla[,] ma bene vole che alla tornata tua la truovi rintonata da altri migliore che cotesta[;] che vi vole mettere hogni diligenza et insieme con quel benoto et col manacordo li da lanimo apressarsi non caltro ma a binciois. Et io a cio lo conforto po che vego non na il capo a mparare quella[.] Farai tu poi seghuitare quello che meglio ti para.

I am pleased that the ballata turns out well [in your opinion], and as you have been told, Lucrezia finished learning it three days ago and sings it the way you have it. Maestro Antonio has taken a strong dislike to the present form of this ballata because, having promised to send it to you in perfect form, and one that he could approve [try out?], he could only with difficulty see [the page of music] by the light of a lantern and without hearing it sung. He really doesn't want to do anything, but indeed wishes that on your return you will find the song reset (*rintonata*) by others, better than what you have [now]. Every care, he desires, will be spent on it, and together with [the help of] that Benoto and with the *manacordo* it will be given a character approaching something not differing from Binciois. And I comfort him about this since I can see that he doesn't have a head for learning this sort of thing. You will see this through in a way that seems best to you.¹¹⁴

Although Giovanni has found the song satisfactory (presumably after having had it sung to him in Rome) and Lucrezia has learned and is now performing it, Antonio is disappointed in his own work, recognizing it as not what it should be to give to Giovanni. He seems to have labored over it for some time (see Ugo's letter of April 3), finally sending it off after working by lamplight and without having heard it sung. Antonio either will not or cannot do more, but is giving the task to others to complete better than he knows how to do. "Quel benoto" must refer to the *maestro* of the singers of San Giovanni, the Benotto who had been brought from Ferrara in 1438. Benotto, or Benoit, was surely an expert singer and was a composer of some distinction, whose extant works include a motet and an antiphon on texts concerning St. John the Baptist and so possibly written while he was in Florence.¹¹⁵ Whether *rintonata* meant complete recomposition or something less drastic, Benotto seems to have been responsible for the final written version of the song. The *manacordo*, presumably a small keyboard instrument, is mentioned as part of the final product, perhaps some sort of arrangement of the written (three-voice?) piece, meant to be played as the ballata was sung, or even performed on its own.¹¹⁶

The most striking passage in Ugo's letter, "li dà l'animo apressarsi non c'altro ma a binciois," expresses his hope that Giovanni's ballata text, as set by Antonio, when recomposed and arranged by a Northern musician well versed in currently fashionable contrapuntal techniques, will approach the style of Binchois. Use of this name must mean that, at least in Medicean circles, Florentines knew the chansons of Binchois at first hand. Their source in all probability was *RU 1411*, with twelve of its nineteen chansons attributed to "Bincioys." I propose that the repertory of *RU 1411* if not the manuscript itself is the "libro de canti" which Ugo had had "tutto copiato" (see his letter of April 3). If this seems persuasive, *RU 1411* becomes a source of importance in Florentine music history, an indicator of taste and practice in a generation for which such information has been in short supply.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ MAP v, 585.

¹¹⁵ PAMELA STARR, *Benoit*, in *New Grove*²; see also STARR, *The Ferrara Connection*.

¹¹⁶ On the manacordo see LUIGI PARIGI, *Laurentiana. Lorenzo dei Medici cultore della musica*, Florence, Olschki, 1954, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ The Ms *BerK*, according to David Fallows a Florentine source copied c.

1465, is a later such indicator. See FALLOWS, *Polyphonic Song*; cf PETER REIDEMEISTER, *Die Chanson-Handschrift 78.C.28 des Berliner Kupferstichkabinetts*, München, Kitzbichler, 1973. One wonders about the "cierte canzonni" sent to Giovanni in a letter of December 17, 1460 (MAP vi, 529), written by Ambrosio di Taverni on behalf of the Earl of Worcester (*Giovanni Conte de Worcestre*), who thanks Giovanni for Medicean hospitality extended on Worcester's Florentine visit.

It now seems clear that Piero and Giovanni de' Medici and their *brigata* esteemed the Northern singers they continued to recruit as *cantori di San Giovanni*, for their contrapuntal and compositional techniques as well as for their performance skills. Italian singers, always present to some degree in Florence, came to be valued insofar as they possessed these techniques. A letter addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici illustrates this. In 1572 Antonino le Basque, in Urbino, wrote to recommend "un mio scolare" who, although "ultramontano non sia," is no less "docto" or "seguro" than Northern musicians.¹¹⁸ In the 1480s there was, certainly, a big growth of interest in Northern polyphony, sacred as well as secular, in Laurentian Florence as elsewhere in Italy. But this can now be seen at least in part as the culmination of something that started more than forty years earlier in the circles surrounding the parents and grandparents of Lorenzo.¹¹⁹ Franco-Flemish music, like Flemish painting, was observed with interest and approval by Florentine merchants and bankers active in the Low Countries. Works of art in both media were imported into Italy, sometimes along with their makers, and were prized by the *cognoscenti* who could afford them.

In the visual arts Northern techniques and approach-

es influenced but did not replace Italian painting and sculpture.¹²⁰ What about music? As I have said, Florentines, including Medicean circles, continued to listen appreciatively to the work of *improvvisatori* such as Antonio di Guido. *Laude*, often sung to the melodies of well-known secular songs, Italian as well as French, flourished through the whole of the fifteenth century.¹²¹ In the context of this essay the leading musician in the Italian tradition was Antonio Squarcialupi, known for most of his life as Antonio degli organi.

Antonio, organist at the Duomo from 1432 to his death in 1480, has consistently been seen as a central, perhaps the central musical figure in the Florence of his day.¹²² He was a loyal Medicean all his life, and seems to have been especially close to Giovanni, procuring musical instruments for him and accompanying him on a trip to Milan in 1455.¹²³ He may have owed part of his reputation as organist to his privileged position, but there is no reason to doubt his competency as performer. One obvious lacuna in his career is that no music survives bearing his name as composer.¹²⁴

Although nothing very definite is known about his musical training, Antonio may have studied the organ with

¹¹⁸ MAP XXVIII, 526, September 16, 1472. The letter is cited by D'ACCONTE, *Lorenzo il magnifico*, pp. 238-239.

¹¹⁹ See ALEJANDRO ENRIQUE PLANCHART, *Northern Repertoires in Florence in the Fifteenth Century*, in *La musica a Firenze*, pp. 101-112, a careful survey which the present essay aims to complement in a modestly revisionary way.

¹²⁰ See MICHAEL ROHLMANN, *Flanders and Italy, Flanders and Florence. Early Netherlandish Painting in Italy and its Particular Influence on Florentine Art: An Overview, in Italy and the Low Countries - Artistic Relations. The Fifteenth Century*, ed. Victor Schmidt, Firenze, Centro Di della Edifini, 1999, pp. 39-67. Rohlmann's article includes a comprehensive bibliography. See also PAULA NUTTAL, *The Medici and Netherlandish Painting*, in *The Early Medici and their Artists*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis, London, Birkbeck College, University of London, Department of History of Art, 1995, pp. 135-152.

GIULIO CATTIN, "Contrafacta" internazionali: musiche europee per laude italiane, in *Musik und Text in der Mehrstimmigkeit des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, edd. Ursula Günther - Ludwig Finscher, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1984, pp. 411-442; cf BLAKE WILSON, *Song Collections in Renaissance Florence: the Canzoniere Tradition and its Manuscript Sources*, "Ricerche", x (1998), pp. 69-104.

¹²² See especially D'ACCONTE, *Lorenzo il magnifico*, pp. 225-228. Nearly all scholars, beginning with those who wrote laudatory poems about him shortly after his death, have been united in their praise of Antonio, chiefly about his skills as an organist but not restricted to this.

¹²³ See GIACOMELLI, *Nuove giunte*, pp. 266-269. Antonio was not really a member of Giovanni's *brigata* but he was a real personal friend (this may have been resented by Ugo della Stufa among others). On his return from a trip to Naples Antonio wrote to Giovanni (MAP VII, 131, dated Siena, 26 November 1450; Giovanni was in Volterra) that he wanted to tell the latter about all the wonders of the court of Naples but that it would take "almanco xv giorni" for "quanti scriptori sono in corte di roma" to write his account—adopting a jocular tone in imitation of that of the *brigata*. A letter written for Contessina de' Medici (by Giovanni Inghirami) to Giovanni (MAP VIII, 136, 9 December 1450) says that she has told Antonio degli organi about Giovanni's *ambasciata*, apparently referring to his presence in Volterra; Antonio, now back in Florence, would like to go to Volterra but cannot. On Dec. 16 Antonio wrote to Giovanni (MAP VIII, 139, a letter not hitherto noticed) that he has waited to write because he hoped to see his friend soon.

¹²⁴ Among scholars dealing with Antonio only Luigi Parigi seems concerned about this lack. See his thoughtful account of Antonio's career in *Laurentiana*, ch. 3, pp. 51-67.

Giovanni or Piero Mazzuoli.¹²⁵ He had early and long-lasting connections with Orsanmichele and was active in confraternity life in Florence. He doubtless had a repertory of secular music, melodies with simple accompaniment, with which he entertained the Medici *brigata* at some length (see above, Ugo della Stufa's letter of April 3, 1445).¹²⁶ What he seems to have lacked is the kind of compositional training possessed by a *cantore di San Giovanni* such as Benotto. When he tried to compose a song in the style of Binchois he simply could not do so, at least according to the eye-witness testimony of Ugo della Stufa. In other words, the Northern polyphonic style and the native Florentine tradition could not blend successfully, at least not in the person of Antonio degli organi.

Giovanni de' Medici's ballata is not known to survive, either its text or its musical setting. If the version crafted by Benotto were extant, would it be attributed to him, to Antonio, or circulate with no composer named? The third possibility seems to me at least as likely as the first two. In studying ascriptions or lack of them in music of this period we should keep in mind the idea that musical settings, perhaps considered less important than the poetry they resonated, might have been commissioned as a craftsman might be hired. Musicians could be compensated in some way for their work, without their names being attached to the music they supplied. If, for instance, the music for Rosello's *Poi che crudel fortuna* was taken from Florence to Ferrara (where it was copied into *Porto*) by someone like Benotto, it might have acquired an attribution because its composer had been a friend and colleague. What happened to Benotto's own ballata setting remains an unanswered question.

A curious example of a piece, now apparently lost,

which may or may not have acquired an attribution, is provided by a letter from Filippo Martelli, in Rome, to Lorenzo de' Medici (MAP xx, 265), dated 6 February 1467[8]. The relevant portion of the letter (its remainder is concerned with some gloves purchased for Lorenzo by Martelli) is as follows:

Davanti ieri mi capito alle mani cierta canzona suta de costi mandata a mettere in ragione di canto[,] oltre a monti. La quale vi mando in questa insieme con due lettere che l'una si drizzz a mo Antonio degli organi l'altra a un cantore[.] E facil cosa saria fusse vostra invenzione. Non so se questi cantori qui se l'an cantata perche e piu dun mese che l'e qui[.] Costui che me l'a data dice che di la al paese quelle parole non si potevano migliorare....

[The day before yesterday there came into my hands a certain canzona which had been sent from Florence (*di costi*) to be set to music (*a mettere in ragione di canto*) across the mountains. I send this, enclosed, to you, together with two letters, one to Maestro Antonio degli organi, the other to a singer. It would be a simple thing for this to become your invention (*e facil cosa saria fusse vostra invenzione*). I don't know if the singers here have sung it, as it has been here more than a month. The person who gave [the song] to me says that, even going from the north to here at home (*di la al paese*) one could not improve on the words].¹²⁷

One thinks immediately of Squarcialupi's letter to Du Fay (MAP VIII, 131) of May 1, 1467, asking the composer to set to music a *canzona* by Lorenzo, enclosed with the letter, and also thanking Du Fay for having sent some excellent singers to join

¹²⁵ See D'ACCONTE, *Antonio Squarcialupi*, pp. 12-13. If this is true Antonio must have been precocious; Giovanni Mazzuoli died in 1426, when Antonio was ten years old, and Piero died in 1430.

¹²⁶ For a list of popular *componimenti* for music and dance, compiled about mid-century, all of which Antonio presumably knew, see FABIO CARBONI - AGOSTINO ZIINO, *Un elenco di composizioni musicali della seconda metà del Quattrocento*, in *Musica Franca. Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*, pp. 425-487. That fifteenth-century Florentine organists played arrangements of *ballate*, sometimes even in church, is attested to by a complaint about this practice made by Sant'Antonino, archbishop of Florence. See F. A.

Gallo's introduction to *Il Codice Squarcialupi. Ms Mediceo Palatino 87, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze*, a cura di F. Alberto Gallo, Firenze, Giunti Barbèra, 1993, p. 16.

¹²⁷ MAP xx, 265. Filippo Martelli, who worked for the Medici bank in Rome, was a boyhood friend of Lorenzo's; see ANDRÉ ROCHON, *La Jeunesse de Laurent de Médicis (1449-1478)*, Paris, Société d'édition 'Les belles lettres', 1963, p. 42. He and Lorenzo were both members of the Confraternity of the Magi. See RAB HATFIELD, *The Compagnia de' Magi*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", 33 (1970), pp. 107-61.

the Florentine chapel.¹²⁸ D'Accone gives a transcription of Filippo Martelli's letter, saying that it refers to an 'altra poesia di Lorenzo' — other, that is, than *Amore ch'hai visto ciascun mio pensiero*, the one in Antonio's letter to Du Fay.¹²⁹ So it may; but I think it more likely that Martelli's "cierta canzona" is the very one that had been sent to the composer eight months earlier. The piece arrived, along with two letters, in what must have been a packet of letters and business documents sent from Medici agents in the Low Countries to the Medici bank in Rome. It had been there for more than a month, says Martelli; and if time for its transport to Rome and that of Antonio's letter to Du Fay in Cambrai is subtracted, Antonio's commission (on behalf of Lorenzo and his father Piero de' Medici) might have been fulfilled in something like four months' time. The letters mentioned by Martelli, one to Antonio and one to a singer — perhaps one whom Du Fay had procured for the Medici in 1467, could both have been from Du Fay himself. Only one letter from Du Fay to the Medici (that of 1454-1456; see above, and fn. 15) has been preserved, but there surely were more, and perhaps some to Antonio as well; the latter says in the letter of May 1, 1467, "Summa cum animi mei letitia vidi et sepius legi vestras humanissimas literas."

Whether the canzona had been set by Du Fay himself or by an associate or a student we shall probably never know, for both the piece and the letter to Antonio seem to have vanished. It does nonetheless appear that Du Fay did respond and did furnish some music for the young Lorenzo's poem.¹³⁰ How much Filippo Martelli knew about all this — he looked at the music but presumably did not read the letters — is not clear; but it seems as if he is proposing something hard for us to believe, namely that Lorenzo take credit for the music, as well as the text, as his own *invenzione*; Martelli is only concerned that the music might have been sung by some Roman (papal?) musicians and thus become known. The words of the canzona, presumably Lorenzo's, are perfection itself, Martelli adds in a

sycophantic close to the topic.

We may be shocked by this but we should not be. If the music were really Du Fay's this would have been made known as something for Lorenzo and his father to be proud of. If it were the work of an unknown or little-known musician, like "quel Benoto" of the 1445 episode, this need not have been revealed, and Du Fay might not have cared. The passage of twenty years had not, it seems, substantially changed Medicean musical patronage.

By way of conclusion I should say a little more about the contents of *RU 1411* (for a brief physical description of the manuscript see the Inventory in the Appendix). Of the nineteen pieces contained in the book all but the first two have ascriptions. The first two songs, both two-voice settings, are anonymous. No. 1, *Con dollia me ne vo per altro mare*, has only two rhyming lines of text, suggesting that it is the *ripresa* of a *ballata mezzana*. I have so far been unable to find a source for the text, and no concordances for the piece have turned up. One oddity in the song as copied here is that a full stop with a four-stroke bar is found at the end of the first text line in both voices. The piece (Ex. 2) is contrapuntally very rough; there are mistakes in pitch and rhythm in the *cantus*, and the rhythmic movement is quite graceless. This song looks like the kind of "home-grown" music, rising from the vernacular improvisatory tradition, that might have been current in Florence at the same time the chansons of Northern polyphonists were becoming popular. Perhaps this was the sort of written piece that Antonio degli organi produced in the ballata episode described above. The huge gap between the polyphony of the Italian *Ars nova* and the level of vernacular music in the 1440s is graphically demonstrated by this song. It is an odd choice to open the manuscript. Although there is no direct evidence that other music once came before *Con dollia*, one wonders if another gathering once preceded it, perhaps full of locally produced Italian songs; these could have been torn out as unworthy to consort with the French chansons that follow.¹³¹

¹²⁸ On this letter see above and fn. 15.

¹²⁹ D'ACCONNE, *Lorenzo il magnifico*, pp. 227-228.

¹³⁰ The resemblance to the 1445 ballata episode is striking, but so is the difference. Rosello and Giovanni de' Medici were content to use local musicians to set their texts. In 1467 the proud father Piero de' Medici felt able

to ask that Du Fay set his son's ballata.

¹³¹ Perhaps some Italian pieces from the collection that Ugo della Stufa had had copied were detached and given to Antonio. I have even wondered whether *Con dollia me ne vo* might be the fragmentary survival of Antonio's attempt to set Giovanni de' Medici's ballata.



■ Ex 2. *Con dollia me ne vo*, ms RU 1411, fols. 3v-4.

The second piece, *Fay tem [Faites] de moy tout ce que vous playra*, seems to be a *rondeau quatrain*. It has some rough spots but appears musically complete. The text, found in both *cantus* and *tenor*, gives the refrain but no more. There are two concordances for this piece, both fragmentary (see Inventory, no. 2). The incomplete *cantus* part in the Trent fragment shows a number of variants from RU 1411's version, some of them useful as emendations. Its date of copying (probably done in

the Veneto), has been placed in the early decades of the fifteenth century.¹³² The same approximate date and place has been assumed for the Montserrat fragment, which preserves much of the *cantus* part (including a text residuum) and a bit of the *tenor*, along with a nearly complete *contratenor* which works, allowing for variants, with the two voices of RU 1411.¹³³ Another setting of *Faites de moy*, attributed to Busnois, survives in several later fifteenth-century sources, some of them of Florentine provenance (see Inventory).¹³⁴ Here the text is given in a better version. The music is unrelated, and it is possible that the text is not the one to which the music was originally set.¹³⁵

Faites de moy, along with Ciconia's setting of *O rosa bella* (no. 5) and at least one of Du Fay's songs present in RU 1411 (*Se la face ay pale*, no. 6), may have come to Florence from northeast Italy; we should recall that Cosimo and his sons spent their exile of 1433-1434 in Padua and Venice, and that they and Cosimo's brother Lorenzo were in Ferrara for some time in 1438. The other Du Fay pieces in RU 1411, no. 11, *Trop long temps ai este on desplayr* and no. 8, *La dolce vista del tuo viso pio*, both *unica*, could have come directly from the composer, present for some time in Florence in the 1430s and on friendly terms with the Medici from that time on.¹³⁶

The remainder of RU 1411's contents, twelve chansons attributed to Binchois and the Dunstable/Bedyngham setting of *O rosa bella*, may have come *en bloc* from across the Alps, perhaps in the possession of one of the Northern musicians hired as *cantori di san Giovanni* beginning in 1538. At least one of them, *Dueil angoisseux* (no. 4), may have been popular in Florence; it was copied (over an erased earlier piece starting with a 'D') into the Ms Lucca, Archivio di Stato, 184 (*Manci-*

¹³² See MARCO GOZZI, *Un nuovo frammento trentino di polifonia del primo Quattrocento*, "Studi musicali", 21 (1992), pp. 237-251.

¹³³ MARIA CAMEN GOMEZ, *El manuscrito 823 de Montserrat (Biblioteca del Monasterio)*, "Musica Disciplina", xxxvi (1982), pp. 39-93. Gomez's transcription (p. 85) of the fragment places the *tenor* (incomplete in her source) one measure too early.

¹³⁴ The setting ascribed to Busnois is published in HOWARD MAYER BROWN, *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Florence, Biblioteca nazionale central, Ms Banco raro 229*, 2 vols., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983, no. 221. The fifth line of refrain text

in Brown's edition is actually the first line of the stanza as given in the Montserrat fragment.

¹³⁵ The Ms P 4379 gives the piece with the text "Amours me tient en son demaine"; in the opinion of RIFKIN, *Busnois and Italy*, p. 518, "it seems more than likely that this represents the text Busnois actually set."

¹³⁶ The text of Du Fay's *La dolce vista del tuo viso pio* (no. 8) has a particularly Florentine resonance. The capoverso refers to Cino da Pistoia's "La dolce vista e'l bel guardo soave," quoted in Petrarca's canzone *Lasso me ch'i non so in qual parte pieghi* (*Canzoniere* bxx, line 40), and is related to several Florentine *Ars nova* pieces. See GIUSEPPE CORSI, *Poesie musicali del Trecento*, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1970, p. 71.

ni) while this source was in Florence.¹³⁷ It was one of the songs performed by the Medici girls in 1460 (see above), and in *RU 1411* its *contratenor* is headed “doglia angosciosa,” suggesting that it may have been performed in Italian translation. In general the Binchois pieces are given in reasonably good versions. One song, *Filles a marier* (no. 10) seems to have puzzled the copyist, who was not used to four-voice pieces; he copied the

tenor below the first *cantus* on the verso, the *contratenor* with the second *cantus* below it on the recto. Ugo della Stufa’s letter of April 17, 1445, implies that Binchois chansons were known not only to the Medicean *brigata* but also — perhaps through the agency of — the *cantori di san Giovanni*, one of whom may have copied a dozen of them into our manuscript.

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¹³⁷ JOHN NÁDAS - AGOSTINO ZIINO, *The Lucca Codex. Codex Mancini. Lucca, Archivio di stato, Ms 184. Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale “Augusta”, Ms*

3065, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1990, pp. 48, 54-55, 118-119



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EMBELLISHMENT AND URTEXT IN THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SONG REPERTORIES

by DAVID FALLOWS

When Josquin was living in Cambrai and a singer tried to add to his music *colores* or *coloratures* that he had not composed, he went into the choir and scolded him severely with everybody listening: „You idiot: Why do you add embellishment ? If I had wanted it I would have put it in myself. If you wish to improve completed compositions, make your own, but leave mine unimproved.“

The famous anecdote of Josquin's fury at an over-confident singer survives only in a book published forty years after his death, in – as it happens – Basle.¹ This and Zarlino's related comments, published four years earlier,² may be the only clear statements against vocal embellishment from the years before 1600; apart, that is, from Guillaume de Machaut's passing and ambiguous remark in the *Voir-Dit* that Peronne should appreciate one of his songs „just as it stands, without adding or subtracting“.³

As concerns the reliability of the Josquin anecdote, one could note that the book's compiler, Johannes Manlius, claimed to have received most of his information from Philipp Melanchthon, who had a close association both with the music publisher Georg Rhau and apparently with that most problematic of all witnesses to Josquin's life, Adrianus Petit Coclico.⁴ As Helmuth Osthoff says, despite Coclico's demonstrable mendacity on several matters,

¹ Johannes Manlius, *Locorum communium collectanea a Johanne Manlio per multos annos, pleraque tum ex lectionibus D. Philippi Melanchthonis, tum ex aliorum doctissimorum virorum relationibus excerpta, et nuper in ordinem redacta*, Basle 1562, 542; the relevant passage is edited in Helmuth Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez*, vol. 1, Tutzing 1962, 222, with a German translation on p. 82.

² Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le institutioni harmoniche*, Venice 1558, Terza parte, cap. 45 (p. 204): „Cantore . . . primieramente dee con ogni diligenza provedere nel suo cantare di proferire la modulatione in quel modo, che è stata composta dal Compositore; & non fare come fanno alcuni poco aveduti, i quali per farsi tenere più valenti & più savi de gli altri, fanno alle volte di suo capo alcune diminutioni tanto salvatiche (dirò così) & tanto fuori di ogni proposito, che non solo fanno fastidio a chi loro ascolta; ma commettono etiandio nel cantare mille errori.“ (In the widely available 1966 facsimile of the 1573 edition, it is in cap. 46, p. 239-40.) An English translation appears in Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca, *Gioseffo Zarlino: The Art of Counterpoint*, New Haven 1968, 110.

³ Paulin Paris, ed., *Le livre du Voir-Dit de Guillaume de Machaut*, Paris 1875, 69; the long-announced new edition by Paul Imbs is not yet published. The relevant passage is reprinted in Friedrich Ludwig, ed., *Guillaume de Machaut: Musikalische Werke*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1928, 55*: „Si vous suppli que vous le daigniez oïr, et savoir la chose ainsi comme elle est faite, sans mettre ne oster.“

⁴ See Walter Blankenburg, „Melanchthon“ in *MGG*, Victor H. Mattfeld, „Rhau, Georg“ in *The New Grove*, and Marcus van Crevel, *Adrianus Petit Coclico*, The Hague 1940, *passim*.

there is a good case for believing that as a young boy he was indeed a pupil of Josquin.⁵ Given Coclico's birth in about 1500, this can only have been at Condé, where Josquin lived from 1504 until his death in 1521. Coclico, about whose origins we know only his claim to have been Flemish, must definitely have been a choirboy somewhere, and that could well have been at Condé. It is easy enough to imagine the name of Condé being traduced to the more familiar Cambrai in the course of the story's transmission.⁶ There seems a good chance, therefore, that the reminiscence reached Manlius from Coclico via Melanchthon and reflects an actual event.⁷

In any case, alongside its impied discouragement, it obviously offers evidence that some people did embellish polyphony in the sixteenth century. And there is plenty more, much of it relayed in the extensive secondary literature on the embellishment of sixteenth-century music. One of the most telling examples is Francisco Guerrero's ordinance for the instrumentalists at Seville Cathedral in 1586: he states that only one of the two players on the top line may embellish, but that when that line is resting the player on the next line down may „add all the glosses that he desires and knows so well how to execute on his instrument“.⁸ Evidently Guerrero was happy with embellishments from the instrumentalists, while the singers presumably sang the notes unadorned, but merely wanted them kept within certain bounds.

Most musicians today appear to have a deeply ambivalent attitude to embellishment. Whatever they may say in seminars and articles, they are noticeably reticent in practice. It is extremely uncommon to find performances or recordings that introduce embellishment as a matter of course – as

⁵ op. cit., 83f. See also Adrianus Petit Coclico, *Compendium musices*, Nuremberg 1552, fol. B3: „Puer admodum tradebar in fidem nobilissimi Musici Josquini, ex quo cum levia illa artis nostrae praecepta, obiter tantum, nullo ex libro percepissem.“

⁶ The likelihood that Josquin ever lived in Cambrai seems minimal, even though it has recently become clear that we know considerably less about his life than was once thought, see Joshua Rifkin, „A Singer named Josquin and Josquin d'Ascanio: some problems in the biography of Josquin des Prez“, forthcoming in *JRMA* and kindly shown to me by the author in advance of publication. I would reject the other conceivable corruption, namely that the city was indeed Cambrai but that the composer was in fact Dufay. It would have been much harder for Manlius to have access to an anecdote about Dufay. Moreover, as Osthoff argues, op. cit., 82, there is indirect confirmation from Glareanus of the next reminiscence in Manlius's book, which tells how Josquin made a practice of listening carefully to the choir as it tried out a new work of his and then telling them to stop so he could make changes.

⁷ That Coclico, op. cit., fol. H3v, describes how to train a young singer in simple embellishments is no real contradiction of this hypothesis, since there is plenty of evidence that all choirboys were taught to embellish – though it could well explain why our story does not appear in Coclico's book.

⁸ For an English translation of the entire ordinance, see Robert Stevenson, *Spanish cathedral music of the golden age*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1961, 167. The original Spanish is in Robert Stevenson, *La música en la Catedral de Sevilla: documentos para su estudio*, 2nd edition, Madrid 1985, 72.

opposed to the occasional demonstrations that follow note-for-note the written decorative versions of the late sixteenth-century instruction books. Even in the simplest homophonic dance music of a Susato or a Praetorius, decoration these days is apt to be restrained and thin on the ground, in fact rather more so than it was thirty years ago.

A more surprising case is in performances of the English lute and keyboard music of the Elizabethan-Jacobean era. Here the sources are littered with ornaments of apparently good authority, but you rarely hear a performance that is not fairly selective in observing them.

That is not meant as an accusation. It merely underlines that ambivalent attitude. It draws attention to a current set of assumptions about Renaissance music and why people bother to perform it. Thirty years ago the music was in some ways primarily a vehicle for a colourful array of instruments. Embellishment was rife. In recent years, however, musicians have tended to move away from what is now sometimes called the toy-box mentality, partly because they became uneasily aware that these performances made one piece of music sound remarkably similar to any other. It is difficult enough at the best of times to distinguish the style of Josquin from that of Mouton, but it is infinitely more difficult if everything is covered with a mist of embellishment. The need to distinguish one work from another goes hand in hand with a feeling that the performance is wasted if it is not of top-flight music: the quality of the music is the mandate for the effort put into reproducing it.

The prejudice can be stated over-simply as follows: the better the music, the more damage is done to it by embellishment. Many people would probably prefer to reformulate that as: the more *sophisticated* the music, the more damage is done to it by embellishment. In simple homophony it can do little harm, but in complex or imitative polyphony it is a menace.⁹ This is a prejudice that I share with many others, including probably most readers of this article and – if we believe the story – Josquin. Even so, comments like that in Guerrero's ordinance appear to suggest that – at least in Seville Cathedral – instrumental embellishment was normal in polyphony of some complexity, since his reference to passages where the top voice rests implies imitation of some kind. Fifteen years ago Howard Mayer Brown approached the problem by stating that many sixteenth-century elaborations were made in the worst of taste and remarking that bad taste should not be considered a prerogative of the twentieth century.¹⁰ Yet his comment needs to be seen in the context of the early 1970s, when there was a tendency among historians to try to pretend that the issue did not exist.

⁹ That view is in fact relayed in Juan Bermudo, *Declaración de instrumentos musicales*, Osuna 1555, fol. 29v (for vihuela music) and fol. 84v (for keyboard music).

¹⁰ Howard Mayer Brown, *Embellishing sixteenth-century music*, London 1976, 73.

But it cannot be ignored. From the fifteenth century we have two massive sources of elaborated keyboard intabulations: the Italian Faenza codex, perhaps from the 1420s,¹¹ and the even larger German Buxheim manuscript from around 1460.¹² These, along with a handful of smaller tablature sources, offer plenty of evidence that the music was often decorated, at least when played on keyboard instruments; and they offer hints about possible embellishment in other circumstances. It is time to try again to broach the question of when and why, to try to see what can usefully be learned from the available sources.

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Example 1 shows a song by Binchois that happens to survive in two different forms, one more florid than the other. Many other examples could be given. Several Italian trecento songs appear in two differently embellished versions, most famously Jacopo da Bologna's *Non al suo amante*; but the investigation here concerns the fifteenth century. There is also the mid-fifteenth-century song *Aime sospiri* which recurs in a heavily decorated form in one of the Petrucci frottola books;¹³ here the chronological gap of fifty years between the two versions makes it hard to use as evidence of what the performer did or was expected to do when the song was first composed. But the Binchois song offers precious evidence, because the two versions were copied within about ten years of one another: the more florid version is in two sources copied late in the 1430s; the simpler version appears to be a decade or so earlier, to judge from its notation and its one surviving manuscript.¹⁴ The version that

¹¹ Faenza, Biblioteca Comunale, Ms. 117; ed. in Dragan Plamenac, *Keyboard music of the late middle ages in Codex Faenza 117* = *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, ser. 57, American Institute of Musicology 1972.

¹² München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 3725; ed. in Bertha Antonia Wallner, *Das Buxheimer Orgelbuch*, Kassel 1958-59 (*Das Erbe Deutscher Musik*, vols. 37-39).

¹³ Walter H. Rubsamen, "The Justiniane or Viniziane of the 15th century", *AMI* 29 (1957) 172-84.

¹⁴ The earlier source, given in ex. 1 as "Rei", is the final layer of the Reina Codex (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. nouv. acq. fr. 6771, fol. 96v), a group of songs possibly copied around 1430; this group is edited complete in Nigel E. Wilkins, *A 15th-century repertory from the Codex Reina*, = *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, ser. 37, American Institute of Musicology 1966. The later, "Ox", is in the first fascicle of that famous manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Canonici Misc. 213, fols. 9v-10) and probably written in about 1435.

provides the main text in example 1 is in the Reina codex and is in major prolation (with note-values quartered in the example). The florid version, taken from the Oxford Canonici manuscript, is in doubled note-values, that is, in perfect time with minor prolation; to make the two comparable, the notes are reduced to an eighth of their original value here. It is worth superimposing the versions, because the two separate transcriptions offered by Wolfgang Rehm in his edition of the Binchois songs rather disguise the simplicity of the relationship between them.¹⁵ Moreover, aligning them demonstrates that all the sources contain a fair number of errors which can easily be eliminated.

Here and in the other examples I have taken several steps to prune down the information to what is strictly relevant for this inquiry. Not only are source errors quietly corrected (and there is obviously a certain subjectivity in that); ligature signs are also omitted, as are most accidentals and their variants. That is not to say that these matters are uninteresting or unproblematic; merely that their relevance to this topic is minimal. More controversially, texts are omitted: they may be directly relevant in some ways,¹⁶ but they give rise to so many additional questions that they seemed better left out of the equation.

The example shows that the lower voices remain virtually the same in the two versions except at one point, in bar 17. New decoration is confined to the discantus. By and large this is a general pattern and fits curiously well with Guerrero's instructions to his instrumentalists. It is also the case in the Faenza intabulations and in all but the most heavily decorated of those in the Buxheim manuscript.

Both sources were written in the Veneto, which is to say some considerable distance from the Paris-Brussels axis in which Binchois appears to have spent these years. The other source of the later version, „Esc“ (El Escorial, Biblioteca y Archivo de Música, Ms. V. III. 24, fol. 47), contains only the song's tenor: the facing page, which would have contained the discantus, is now lost; more puzzlingly, the contratenor is not added, even though the word „Contratenor“ is entered below the first of two empty staves after the surviving tenor.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Rehm, ed., *Die Chansons von Gilles Binchois (1400-1460)* Mainz 1957 = *Musikalische Denkmäler*, vol. 2, nos. 17 and 17a.

¹⁶ Michael Morrow, who has given me the benefit of his views on this and much else over a period of some twenty-five years, believes that many of the embellishments in Buxheim can be used to derive hints about the correct alignment of text. But that would be hard to demonstrate clearly before there is a far fuller analysis of the various procedures and layers of activity concealed behind the blandly uniform script of the Buxheim manuscript.

Example 1:

Jamais tant

Binchois

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system contains four vocal staves: Ox (soprano), Rei (Discantus), Rei (Tenor), and Ox (Contra). The second system continues the vocal parts and introduces a lute part (J. Esc) on a treble clef staff. The third system continues the lute part and includes a section marked '10. S.' (Soprano) on a treble clef staff, with corresponding vocal parts below it. The score is written in a medieval style with square neumes on four-line red staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The piece is in a 12/8 meter, indicated by the '8' time signature at the beginning of the second system.

Ox
Rei
(Discantus)
Rei Ox
Tenor
Rei Ox
Contra

J. Esc

10. S.

In that context it is relevant that there is just one moment where embellishment of the discantus is entirely avoided, namely in bars 14-15 where there is unison imitation of all three voices. Two possible reasons can be offered. First, that any decoration in the discantus would need to be matched in the lower voices; and if that is the case it emphasises the pattern of avoiding embellishment in the tenor and contratenor. That in its turn may even be taken to suggest that embellishment is to be avoided in all imitative material of this kind. The other explanation could be the obvious musical one that the way the three lines circulate round a triad on middle-C, as so often happens in songs of this era, would be ruined by any embellishment. Apart from anything else, passages of this kind require particular care in balance, tone colour and phrasing; repeatedly in this repertory they present a moment of contrapuntal stillness that would be severely threatened by decoration.

For most of the discantus line the embellishment is of an extremely simple kind that anyone familiar with the repertory could easily have added. Bars 11 to 13 give the basic principles. At the beginning of bar 11 the two semiquavers

bridge the gap of a third, the next added note bridges a falling leap of a third, and the last note in the bar provides an anticipation of the next note. In the next bar the opening pattern simply fleshes out the cadence with a standard pattern. At the end of bar 12 there is something slightly more complex, a dip down to the *A*, evidently made necessary by the need to avoid interruption of the florid pattern at that point. The embellishments in bar 13 are equally simple and more or less inevitable in the context. Much of the rest can be seen in the same way.

Before examining the more difficult passages in *Jamais tant* and asking some of the questions the piece poses, it is worth turning to an entirely different document, shown in figure 1, a sheet of embellishment patterns in the British Library, Ms. Add. 70516, fol. 79.¹⁷

It contains a series of three-note tenors, each followed by four appropriate discantus patterns of increasing complexity, see example 2. No other document from the fifteenth century presents the material in quite this way. The German keyboard *fundamenta* in the Lochamer Liederbuch volume and in the Buxheim manuscript give similar kinds of information; so, reaching back to the 1320s, does the theory treatise of Petrus Dictus de Palma Ociosa, though that would appear to be an instruction book for composers, not performers.¹⁸ But none of these presents a series of different patterns over the same tenor. None, in short, is quite so methodical. In fact there may be nothing comparable until Coclico (1552), Diego Ortiz (1553) and the Italian diminution manuals of the late sixteenth century.

¹⁷ Its dimension are ca. 255 mm across and 216 mm up the right hand edge. This is an isolated leaf presumably taken from a binding in the Duke of Portland's collection, formerly at Welbeck Abbey. In 1947 the collection was deposited in the British Library (then the British Museum) as Loan 29, and this volume (devoted to early binding fragments) had the call-number Loan 29/333, under which the leaf is reported in Pamela J. Willetts, [*The British Museum:*] *Handlist of music manuscripts acquired 1908-67*, London 1970, 79. The collection became the British Library's property only in May 1987 and was subsequently given its present call-number. I am most grateful to Mr Francis Needham, formerly the Duke of Portland's librarian, for permission to photograph this leaf, to Dr. C. J. Wright of the British Library for assigning a foliation to the formerly unnumbered leaf, and to the British Library for permission to publish it. Additionally, I must thank Margaret Bent for checking and annotating my transcription at a time when I was many miles distant from London.

¹⁸ This important and still undervalued treatise is edited from its only known source in Johannes Wolf, „Ein Beitrag zur Diskantlehre des 14. Jahrhunderts“, *SIMG* 15 (1913-1914) 504-534.