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IPPOLITO TROMBONCINO, CANTORE AL LIUTO

DAVID NUTTER

Ippolito Tromboncino (Trommoncino, Trombozin) was a singer, lutenist, and composer active in Venice during the mid-sixteenth century and a well-known figure in the 'private sector' of Venetian musical life. Most of what is known about him is to be found in Venetian literary sources published between 1545 and 1565. His music survives only in manuscript: six madrigals are attributed to him in Cosimo Bottegari's lutebook dated 1574; one of these, *Donna, se 'l cor*, survives hitherto unrecognized in a mid-century source, MS 223 of the Accademia Filarmonica in Verona.¹ With so few works to his credit, Tromboncino has attracted little attention from historians. Because of the absence of firm biographical data he has been confused with Bartolomeo Tromboncino (died 1535 or later), a composer and singer to the lute of the previous generation. Though they share the same surname, there is no evidence to suggest they were related. Ippolito's works have also been dated far too late in the century with unfortunate results. He was not, as has been suggested, a contemporary of the Florentines Cosimo Bottegari (died 1620) and

¹ The Bottegari manuscript is described and catalogued in C. MACCLINTOCK, "A Court Musician's Songbook: Modena MS. C. 311", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, IX, 1956, pp. 177-192. For a modern edition, see *The Bottegari Lutebook*, ed. C. MACCLINTOCK, (The Wellesley Edition, 8) Wellesley, MA, 1965. Concordances with other song manuscripts are listed in W. V. PORTER's review, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XX, 1967, pp. 126-131, and *idem*, "A Central Source of Early Monody: Brussels, Conservatory 704", *Studi musicali*, XII, 1983, pp. 239-279; XIII, 1984, pp. 139-167. The contents of Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, MS. 223 are listed in G. TURRINI, "Catalogo descrittivo dei manoscritti musicali antichi della Società Accademia Filarmonica di Verona", *Atti dell'Accademia di agricoltura, scienze e lettere di Verona*, XV, 1937, pp. 176-194. MacClintock's edition, which suffers from textual and musical errors, transposes the vocal line to agree with her uniform transcription of the tablature for lute pitched in G. My musical examples are at written pitch and have been newly edited from the original sources.

Giulio Caccini (died 1618), nor did he compose "some of the earliest known monodies".² The difficulty of placing Tromboncino in a proper historical context is compounded by the fact that lute songs comparable to his own are rare. A few songs survive in mid-sixteenth century manuscript sources but no printed Italian lute songs survive from the period 1540-1570. The earliest printed sources, the intabulations of frottole for voice and lute of Bossinensis (1509 and 1511)³ and Antico (1520),⁴ preserve the performing traditions and repertory of singers to the lute of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The advent of the madrigal in the 1520s and '30s and a reinvigorated printing technology is reflected in Adrian Willaert's intabulations for voice and lute of Verdelot's madrigals published in Venice in 1536.⁵ While the lute song's place in the music publishing market was acknowledged by a second edition in 1540, thirty years were to pass before the genre reappeared, but now in prints containing napolitane and villanelle, lute songs of a rather different aesthetic.

² C. MACCLINTOCK, "Bottegari, Cosimo", *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, London, 1980, 3, p. 91. Equally erroneous is MacClintock's view ("A Court Musician's Songbook", *loc. cit.*, [see note 1], p. 182) that Tromboncino's songs are "compositions for voice and lute (or cembalo?), not arrangements of polyphonic pieces".

³ *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto. Libro primo* (1509₁) / *Libro secondo* (1511₁); for a modern edition of both volumes, see *Le frottole per canto e liuto intabulate da Franciscus Bossinensis*, ed. B. DISERTORI, Milan, 1964. Dates with subscript numbers refer to listings in H. M. BROWN, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600: A Bibliography*, Cambridge, MA, 1965.

⁴ *Frottole de Misser Bortolomio Tromboncino & de Misser Marcheto Carra con Tenori & Bassi tabulati & con soprani in canto figurato per cantar & sonar col lauto* (152?₁); on this print, see F. LUISI, "Le frottole per canto e liuto di B. Tromboncino e M. Cara nella edizione adespota di Andrea Antico", *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, X, 1976, pp. 211-258, and *idem*, *Frottole di B. Tromboncino e M. Cara "per cantar et sonar col lauto". Saggio critico e scelta di trascrizioni*, Rome, 1987. On the performance of frottole by lutenists, see W. F. PRIZER, "The Frottola and the Unwritten Tradition", *Studi musicali*, XV, 1986, pp. 3-37.

⁵ *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto, intavolati per Messer Adriano* (Venice, Ottaviano Scotto, 1536₈). The title page of the second edition emphasizes Willaert's prestige: *Intavolatura [...] intavolati per lo eccellentissimo musico Messer Adriano Willaert, maestro di cappella de la illustrissima Signoria di Venegia* (Venice, Girolamo Scotto, 1540₂). For a modern edition, see *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto* (1536), ed. B. THOMAS, (Renaissance Music Prints, 3) London, 1980.

Fortunately, the continuing tradition of the lute song in the intervening years can be traced in manuscript sources, particularly in the songs of the Venetian Ippolito Tromboncino – the ‘other’ Tromboncino.

Ippolito Tromboncino was a *cantore al liuto*. The *métier*, highly valued in humanistic circles, required of the performer that he or she sing and play at the same time. Pietro Aaron in his *Lucidario in musica* (Venice, 1545), for instance, draws a distinction between the singer to the lute, and the singer of polyphonic mensural music, the *cantore al libro*.⁶ Aaron’s discussion of the ethnic (tribal) origins of the Dorian, Lydian and Phrygian modes leads to a topic outside the scope of his treatise: the different manners of singing reputedly characteristic of the French (*il cantare*), the Germans (*l’urlare*), the Spanish (*il piagnere*), the English (*il giubilare*), and the Italians (*il caprezzare*). The precise, 16th-century, significance of *caprezzare* (or *caprizzare*; Aaron gives both) remains obscure – possibly to sing with a tremulous voice like a goat, or singing that is so horrific as to cause the auditor to shiver with disgust. For Aaron the term is not only malicious but untrue: the Italians sing (*cantano*) no less skillfully than the French.⁷ As evidence, he lists thirty-eight “eccellenti cantori”, dividing these into three categories: *cantori a libro*, *cantori a liuto*, and *donne a liuto et a libro*. Among those of the second category

⁶ PIETRO AARON, *Lucidario in musica*, Venice, Girolamo Scotto, 1545; reprint Bologna, 1969, fols. 31-32.

⁷ S. BATTAGLIA’s authoritative *Grande Dizionario della lingua italiana*, Turin, 1961, gives “*Caprizzante*: Part. pres. di un verbo *caprizzare* non altrimenti documentato. Tommaseo registra *caprizzare* ‘cantare con agilità cavallina’;” TOMMASEO’s definition (*Dizionario della lingua italiana*, Turin, 1865) dates from the nineteenth century according to C. BATTISTI-G. ALESSIO (ed.), *Dizionario etimologico italiano*, Florence, 1950. *Caprezzo*, a “shiver” or “shudder,” is an old form of *capriccio* or *raccapriccio*, in the original sense of “horror” or “disgust.” The root of all the forms cited above is *capra*, “goat.” Though Aaron understands *caprizzare* in a pejorative sense, the English style of singing was admired; compare the letter from Nicolò Sagudino to Alvise Foscari, dated 3 May 1515, in *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. F. STEFANI, Venice, 1887, XX, col. 266: “Ditta messa fu cantata per la capella de questa Maestà [Henry VIII], qual veramente à più presto divina che humana; non cantavano ma jubilavano, et maxime de contrabassi, che non credo al mondo sieno li pari.” I owe this reference to D. FALLOWS, “The Performing Ensembles in Josquin’s Sacred Music,” *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse muziekgeschiedenis*, XXXV, 1985, p. 62.

are "Messer Bartholomeo Tromboncino, Messer Marchetto Mantuano [i.e., Cara], Messer Ipolito Tromboncino, Messer Bartholomeo Gazza", and eight other practitioners of this art eminent in their own day but now unknown.

Aaron's list of north Italian and Venetian *cantori al liuto* conveys the impression that singing to the lute was a much admired skill and its practitioners not by any means a vanishing species. Aaron implicitly places its famous practitioners, past and present, in one continuous tradition. While the frottolist composers Bartolomeo Tromboncino and Marchetto Cara had since vanished, their names were not forgotten and their music presumably was still performed. Bartolomeo Gazza and Ippolito Tromboncino were of the newer generation, the latter in particular not infrequently mentioned in a diverse array of contemporary Venetian literary sources. Pietro Aretino, for instance, addressed letters to Tromboncino in the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books of his *Lettere*, and mentions him by name in several other letters written from Venice between 1545 and 1550.⁸

Aretino's letters to Tromboncino, in which it is the writer and not the addressee who is most clearly illuminated, are for the most part merely a pretext for self-aggrandizement. For instance, in a letter dealing with reputation, fame, and the judgement of posterity, he cautions Tromboncino against overly praising his works; love, he says, clouds the judgement no less than envy. Nor will he accept assurances that "il Magnifico Domenico Veniero et insieme con ciascun fratel suo qualunque di sì alta academia", may also affirm that his works are of the merit Tromboncino claims lest "l'errore causato dalla benivolenza nella vostra mente, fa errare né più né meno la loro". He is consoled, however, by Tromboncino's admiration for his plays. And though he has achieved fame in his own time, it is up to the present

⁸ Citations here are from the complete edition of all six books of Aretino's *Lettere* published by Matteo il Maestro at Paris in 1609. For a modern edition of letters cited in notes 12 and 15-17 below, see *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino, commentate da F. PERTILE e rivedute da C. CORDIÉ*, ed. E. CAMESASCA, Milan, 1957, II, pp. 121, 263, 361, 381. In a letter dated 1545 to the sculptor Leone Leoni (*ibid.*, p. 67), Aretino sends greeting to one "messer Ippolito romano;" the "grave etade" of this gentleman suggests he is a different man.

generation to preserve it for posterity; therefore "fa di ciò fede a voi l'arte in cui essercitate non manco la penna et gli inchiostri che la voce et la mano" – prophetic advice given what little of Tromboncino's music survives.⁹

Every exaggeration may contain a half-truth: Renaissance composers were not insensitive to poetry (Tromboncino's poetic choices are discussed below) and he indeed may have busied himself in academic disputation. Veniero's patronage of Tromboncino remains conjectural. Tromboncino is not recorded as performing at Veniero's *salotto*, though it has been assumed that nearly every Venetian musician of the time was involved simply by virtue of their presence in the city.¹⁰ Aretino depicts the composer as engaged in literary controversy, defending his poetry and prose works. Rather surprisingly, there is no evidence in the letters to suggest that Tromboncino ever set to music any of Aretino's verses or that he was requested to do so; if he did, it does not survive. Tromboncino is said to admire certain of Aretino's "capitoli", but the poetry in question is not specified.¹¹ In the few instances where the poetry is appended to the letter, no musical intent seems to be implied. Tromboncino and Count Antonio Porcia were the recipients of the *Dialogo: Amante, Amor*, but the poem seems to be included in the *Lettere* simply as a means of publication.¹² Similarly, Aretino says he is sending several sonnets for Porcia to show to Tromboncino, adding a sonnet in praise of

⁹ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Quarto libro*, fols. 286v-287. *A M. Hipolito*, June 1548.

¹⁰ F. CAFFI, *Storia della musica sacra nella già Cappella Ducale di San Marco in Venezia dal 1318 al 1797*, Venice, 1854; reprint Hildesheim, 1982, I, p. 113; II, p. 49. Apart from Parabosco, the musicians who performed at Domenico Veniero's *salotto* are undocumented; F. BUSSI, *Umanità e arte di Gerolamo Parabosco*, Piacenza, 1961, pp. 35-36, uncritically follows Caffi. Nor is Tromboncino listed among the musicians who frequented the musical gathering sponsored by the numismatist Antonio Zantani mentioned in the dedication of ORAZIO TOSCANELLA's *I nomi antichi e moderni delle provincie* (Venice, 1567; partially reprinted in A. EINSTEIN, *The Italian Madrigal*, 2nd edition Princeton, 1971, I, pp. 446-447). The musicians are Giulio dal Pistrino, Parabosco, Annibale Padovano, Claudio Merulo, Donato, Cambio and Francesco Londarit.

¹¹ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Terzo libro*, fol. 158. *A Messer Hipolito Tromboncino*, July 1545.

¹² *Ibid.*, fols. 274-274v. *Al Tromboncino*, December 1545.

Bembo.¹³ A nobleman from Pordenone, Porcia, whose portrait was painted by Titian (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan), was pursuing musical and literary studies at Venice ("Intanto attendete magnanimo giovane ad accrescere la riputazione della musica, della poesia, e d'ogni altra virtude vostra con il dilettarvi ne loro gloriosi, reali, e laudabili studi").¹⁴ Aretino, it may be surmised, supervised his literary education; it is equally plausible that Tromboncino was Porcia's tutor in music, adding a hardly unsuspected dimension to the composer's activities.

Though fact and fiction in Aretino's letters are not easily disentangled, he admired Tromboncino's musical skill: "Tromboncino, di raro ingegno in ogni oltra virtù oltra la musica nella quale sete solo"; "Hipolito figliuol mio et dell'harmonia delle corde spirito".¹⁵ And in a long poem in terza rima in which Aretino calls upon poets, sculptors, painters, architects, and other artists to exalt Caterina de' Medici, the only musicians are Adrian Willaert, *maestro di cappella* at St. Mark's Basilica, and, assuredly, *il nostro*.¹⁶

In tanto in Musical choro, Adriano,
Et voi, soave Hippolito, esponete
Armonizzando il suo valor soprano.

Here we are presented with a most curious paradox. By linking the names of Venice's most famous musician with one of its (nowadays) most obscure, Aretino infers both men enjoyed similar renown in their respective spheres of musical activity. And he expected his readers to concur, no qualifying surname being necessary. That we do not share the inference or the value judg-

¹³ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Quinto libro*, fol. 41, undated but October or November 1548.

¹⁴ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Terzo libro*, fols. 179v-180, August 1545.

¹⁵ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Quarto libro*, fols. 286v-287; *Quinto libro*, fol. 327v. *Al Tramboncino* [sic], September 1550.

¹⁶ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Sesto libro*, fol. 27. *Ternali in gloria de la reina di Francia*, 1550. Tromboncino never sang in St. Mark's as suggested by R. EITNER, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon*, Leipzig, 1900-1904, IX, pp. 461. See G. M. ONGARO, *The Chapel of St. Mark's at the Time of Adrian Willaert (1527-1562): A Documentary Study*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1986, pp. 10, 205.

ment is perhaps a measure of our ignorance of the role of music in Venetian society and the value accorded professional performers. In this latter regard, a final letter takes us into more intimate surroundings: Aretino's dinner invitation to "Madonna Franceschina" in November of 1548, an event to which Tromboncino's musical presence was requested:

"We shall be expecting you to dinner this evening. Titian, [Jacopo] Sansovino and myself shall expect you tonight but with the proviso that messer Ippolito shall likewise attend, so that where my food may lack flavour you may add the sweetness of your music".¹⁷

The lady in question, Franceschina Bellamano ("E vi bascio quelle sì formose e vaghe mani") is one of Aaron's *donne a liuto et a libro*, and was praised by Aretino for her accomplishments as a singer and instrumentalist.¹⁸ Domenico Veniero's sonnet "Ad una virtuosa donna, che cantava, & sonava eccellentemente di liuto, detta Franceschina Bellamano" confirms her abilities as a singer to the lute and, inevitably, makes a pun on her surname:¹⁹

Con varie voci hor questa, hor quella corda
Tocca da bella man sul cavo legno
Mirabilmente il canto al suon s'accorda.

Tromboncino's relationship to Franceschina, gifted in music no less than he and with whom he was expected to perform at Aretino's house ("la musica vostra"), poses the question of whether we are to understand the gathering literally or figuratively. In

¹⁷ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Quinto libro*, fol. 53. *A Madonna Franceschina*, November 1548: "Vi aspettiamo istasera a cena: istasera vi aspettiamo Tiziano, il Sansovino et io; ma con patto che se ne venga con voi M. Hippolito, a ciò che al dove mancasse il sapore de le vivande mie ce lo aggiunga la dolcezza de la musica vostra".

¹⁸ ARETINO, *Lettere*, cit. (see note 8), *Quarto libro*, fol. 242: "Divina, non che bella, è la mano vostra Signora, ma disforme non pur vaga al paragone della virtù con cui ella dà lo spirito dell'harmonia agli stromenti et la voce al canto"; *Quinto libro*, fol. 25: "Che più? Franceschina, non meno dotta ne la musica che bella in la mano".

¹⁹ *De le rime di diversi poeti Toscani raccolte da M. Dionigi Atanagi libro secondo*, Venice, Lodovico Avanzo, 1565, p. 11: "With various notes played by the beautiful hand ["Bellamano"] on the hollow wood [i.e., lute], the sound of now this, now that string is marvelously brought into tune with the voice". The index gives her name as recipient.

the latter sense, Aretino's feast is an omnibus metaphor for the arts in which the host has gathered representatives from literature (Aretino), painting (Titian), sculpture (Sansovino), and secular music (Tromboncino). Love is represented by the divine beauty of a contemporary Venus. The gathering has also been interpreted literally, and here I cannot ignore the suggestion that Titian's *Venus and Cupid with a man playing the lute* (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) may portray Franceschina Bellamano as Venus, and "messer Ippolito" – assuredly the Ippolito Tromboncino of Aretino's letters cited above – as the lutenist.²⁰

Titian's Venus and lutenist are ideals drawn of experience. She is a Venetian courtesan whose eroticism is reinforced by the symbols of music: she holds a recorder in one hand, and in the foreground the painter has placed an open partbook and a viola da gamba, its back to the viewer. I would suggest the lutenist, who plays from his own partbook, is a *cantore al liuto*; he is shown practising his profession: to sing to the lute songs of unrequited love and sexual longing. He is the signifier and she the signified; for if the profane, sensuous love the Fitzwilliam painting portrays is rooted in the musical culture of contemporary Venetian society, then its literary 'text' is drawn from the poetry of the madrigal in praise of "Madonna".²¹ This is alluded to by the open partbook; though placed in the foreground – for the observer it is upside down – its notation and text are nearly illegible. One can discern the capital letter "O" (still vocative in inversion), the Roman numeral XVI, and the designation "bassus". The musical inscription, notated in bass clef, presents a random and illogically ordered sequence of notes and rests. I have tried without success to trace the music to a source that might provide

²⁰ W. G. STUDDERT-KENNEDY, "Titian: The Fitzwilliam Venus", *The Burlington Magazine*, C, 1958, pp. 349-351.

²¹ A similar relationship of paintings to the madrigal is proposed by G. STUDDERT-KENNEDY, "Titian: Metaphors of Love and Renewal", *Words and Image*, III, 1987, pp. 27-40. The author's insistence on the phallic (recorder) and the obscene (the viola da gamba is played held between the legs) seems overwrought. The viola da gamba may not be hers; tradition (Zanetti, 1771) identifies Titian as playing the huge contrabass viol in Paolo Veronese's *Marriage Feast at Cana*. On Titian's accurate depiction of the viol, see I. WOODFIELD, *The Early History of the Viol*, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 123; 131-132.

a clue to the identity of the painting's subjects.²² Titian may not have intended the partbook as a concrete label to be deciphered literally by the musically-informed viewer any more than he intended the sitters to be identified as known persons.

The profession of the *cantore al liuto* was probably less hedonistically rewarding than Titian's painting might suggest. Aretino implies a harsher reality, that courtesan and *cantore al liuto* occupy similar niches in the social hierarchy dominated by patrons. The Republic of Venice, an oligarchy, lacked the centralized patronage the courts of other Italian city-states could provide. For musicians without an appointment to the official musical establishment of St. Mark's or some other institution (one of the Scuole, for instance), survival was dependent on the whims of private patronage. Tromboncino's social status as performer/artisan is perhaps best revealed by his inclusion among Aretino's dinner guests, a gathering of Venetian artists which excludes the one composer comparable in stature to Titian and Sansovino – the magisterial Willaert.

Aretino's letters suggest that Tromboncino lived by his wits as did, *primus inter pares*, Aretino himself. Occupying a similar niche in this cultural milieu was Andrea Calmo. His Venetian dialect letters published in 1548 lampoon the reputations of his victims to amusing effect (he describes Willaert as "the blossoming, scented jasmine of Parnassus"). The slight twist given the opening salutation plays on opposition; for *il nostro*, it reads "Al vivifi-

²² Alfred EINSTEIN claimed (in a letter appearing in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 2 July 1938, p. 7) to have read the word "bella" after the capital "O" and the reversed name of the composer, Verdelot, identifying the work as Verdelot's *La bella man* which, unaccountably, Titian confused with Petrarch's sonnet *O bella man, che mi destringi 'l core*. STUDDERT-KENNEDY writes (*loc. cit.* [see note 20], p. 351): "Professor Einstein may be correct in his identifications, but I must object that with the help of an ultra-violet photograph, the cleaned picture and the best will in the world, I can make out neither the reversed *Verdelot*, nor *bella*". The Roman numeral XVI is not the number of *La bella man* in any Verdelot print to contain it (*pace* Einstein), nor does what can be discerned of the music resemble the bassus. J. W. GOODISON ("Titian's 'Venus and Cupid with a Luteplayer'", *The Burlington Magazine*, CVII, 1965, pp. 521-522) has established that Titian originally painted the head of Venus in profile but ignores the music for possible *pentimenti*. Professor H. Colin Slim, who has closely examined the musical inscription, believes it to be fictitious (personal communication).

cante suffragio de recreation, M. Ippolito Tromboncin". Master of the facetious *bon mot*, he describes Tromboncino as "altitante glorioso e rarissimo in quel genere de far e cantar e sonar cusì anzelica melodia", the epithet "loud-thundering" (of Jupiter, *altitonante*) reformulated as a pun on the composer's name (Latin: *tuba*; Italian: *tromba* = Tromboncino).²³ And further on one catches a whiff of the heady aromas of Aretino's dinner party: "Should I lie to you, may the tie of my drawers fall off and be lost if you are not the most polished singer, the most experienced master, and also the most perfectly prepared musician [i.e., in the gastronomic sense] that can be found in these salty waters".²⁴

In later decades Tromboncino's name percolates fitfully through the literature, variously the subject of name-dropping, guide books, and encyclopedia entries. Ortensio Landi's 1552 catalogue of all things relevant, for instance, describes Tromboncino as "living in Venice and much beloved for his ability (*virtù*)".²⁵ Francesco Sansovino's *Dialogo di tutte le cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (1560), placed Tromboncino in a more informed context: a foreign visitor asks his Venetian guide to name the most famous musicians of the city. Headed by Willaert and Perissone Cambio, ten of the fourteen listed were in the service of St. Mark's. Of those not employed at the basilica, Tromboncino appears alongside non-establishment instrumentalists like the recorder virtuoso Silvestro Ganassi.²⁶ Though only Tromboncino's songs now survive, to his contemporaries he was better known as a virtuoso lutenist. Lodovico Dolce, in his treatise on the use of color in painting published in 1565, remarked that among the few to have

²³ *Il rimanente de le piacevoli et ingeniose littere*, Venice, 1548; I quote here from the modern edition of *Le lettere di Messer Andrea Calmo*, ed. V. Rossi, Turin, 1888, Bk II, no. 26, pp. 124-125.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125: "onde che si ve mento, che me casca el ligambo de le muande e che nol trova mai, si vu no sè el più forbio cantarin, el pi pratichevole maistro e anche el più sasonao musico, che se possa catar in ste aque salse". On the meaning of "musico sasonao", see G. BOERIO, *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*, Venice, 1856, p. 602, s.v. "Sasonà". The letter is partially quoted in EINSTEIN, *op. cit.* (see note 10), I, p. 49.

²⁵ ORTENSIO LANDI, *Sette libri di cathalogi*, Venice, G. Giolito, 1552, p. 511: "Hippolito Trommonzino habita in Vinetia, & per la sua virtu molto amato".

²⁶ The passage is cited in ONGARO, *op. cit.* (see note 16), p. 10.

truly mastered the playing of the lute, those of former excellence were Francesco da Milano (1497-1543), Marco dall'Aquila (ca. 1480-after 1538) and "nowadays Tromboncino".²⁷ Finally, Tromboncino was one of three lutenists (with Francesco da Milano and Fabrizio Dentice) to have been portrayed in a painting ideally suited to the decoration of musical instruments. The fanciful invention of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo (*Trattato dell'arte de la pittura*, 1584), the painting was to show "the nine choirs of music, three by three, with their instruments and portraits of the men excelling in each of these". This choir-by-choir list of twenty-seven musicians was also the subject of a poem Lomazzo dedicated to Claudio Merulo (*Rime*, 1587).²⁸ These last references cannot be taken to imply that Tromboncino was still alive in the 1580s. Lomazzo's musical Parnassus includes not only the living (the Neapolitan lutenist and composer Fabrizio Dentice lived to about 1601), but also the long dead (among the players of the *lira*, for instance, "il nostro Leonardo Vinci pittore").

These references establish Tromboncino as a figure of prominence in the musical life of Renaissance Venice, but tell us almost nothing about the critical reception of his music. His manuscript works probably had a limited circulation only, since

²⁷ LODOVICO DOLCE, *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona della qualità, diversità e proprietà de i colori*, Venice, G. B. & M. Sessa, 1565: "Cornelio, Tu avrai da sapere che il liuto è istrumento moderno, dico moderno in quanto non si sa, perioché non se ne fa menzione che fosse presso degli antichi, ed è istrumento perfetto e di tanta difficoltà, che come è che barbieri e d'ogni omicciuolo vi soni, pochi sono quelli che vi riescano compiutamente. Vi fu già eccellentissimo Francesco cognominato Dal Liuto, maestro Marco dell'Aquila ed oggidì il Tromboncino". The passage is cited in H. C. SLIM, "Francesco da Milano (1497-1543/44). A Bio-Bibliographical Study. II. Bibliography", *Musica disciplina*, XIX, 1965, p. 127.

²⁸ G. P. LOMAZZO, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura*, Milano, P. G. Pontio, 1584, Libro sesto, Cap. XXV ("Quali pitture vadano dipinte intorno a' fonti, ne' giardini, nelle camere, & altri luochi di piacere, & negli instrumenti musicali"), pp. 347-348: "Et vaga cosa sarebbe anco, & capriciosa il rappresentarvi i nove chori della musica a tre a tre, co' suoi instrumenti, & ritratti de gli huomini eccellenti in ciascuno de quelli, come per esempio ne' tempi nostri [...] nel terzo [cho-ro] de i liuti, Francesco sopranominato il Monzino Milanese, Ippolito Tromboncino da Vineggia, & Fabrizio Dentice". For Lomazzo's poem, see his *Rime*, Milan: P. G. Pontio, 1587, p. 163: "Quindi udia di leuti un dolce coro / Ove il Canova era, che tanto honoro, / Il Tromboncino Hippolito, e 'l Dentici, / Ch'al arte leva i vici".

as a performer they were part of his stock in trade. Yet one young lady was able to imitate his style of singing (*maniera di cantare*) by singing his compositions. Tromboncino's style of singing and his compositions were, therefore, inseparably linked.

The young lady was Irene di Spilimbergo. Born in 1541, she died tragically in 1559, at the age of eighteen. In a posthumous tribute, Vasari described her as "verGINE bellissima, letterata, musica ed incaminata nel disegno", and claimed in his life of Titian that the Venetian master had painted her portrait.²⁹ In 1561 Dionigi Atanagi published in her memory an anthology of poetry by divers hands; as a preface to this posthumous tribute he appended an account of her life. According to the "Vita della Signora Irene" she was raised partly at her birthplace, Spilimbergo, and partly at Venice. As a young girl she learned to sing mensural music, showing a remarkable aptitude for singing with decorous expressivity.³⁰

"As to what Signora Irene subsequently learned to play and sing to the lute, to the harpsichord, and to the viol, and how on each of these instruments, beyond the manners and intelligence [usual] to women, she approached [in skill] the most excellent in those arts, I shall be silent lest its recounting be overlong. I shall say only that under the instruction of Gazza, a musician of no small renown in Venice, she rapidly learned countless madrigals, and odes and other Latin verses to the lute, and she sang them with such ready inclination, delicate

²⁹ GIORGIO VASARI, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori*, ed. G. MILANESI, Florence, 1906, VII, p. 455. The portrait of Irene to which Vasari appears to refer (Washington, National Gallery of Art) is, according to recent opinion, probably not by Titian (who may have had a hand in the background landscape) but by G. B. PASE. There is also a companion portrait in Washington of Irene's sister, Emilia, also proficient in music, by the same artist. Both are reproduced in C. CAGLI-F. VALCANOVER (ed.), *L'opera completa di Tiziano* (Classici d'arte, 32), Milan, 1969, p. 141.

³⁰ *Rime di diversi nobilissimi et eccellentissimi autori in morte della Signora Irene delle Signore di Spilimbergo. Alle quali si son aggiunti versi Latini di diversi egregij Poeti, in morte della medesima Signora*, Venice: appresso Domenico, & Gio. Battista Guerra, fratelli, 1561: "In somma in brevissimo spatio pervenne a tanto che ella cantava sicuramente a libro ogni cosa, accompagnando la prontezza del cantare con accenti sì dolci, et con sì honesta, gratiosa, e soave maniera con quanta altra donzella cantasse giamai". She was the daughter of Giulia da Ponte, whose portrait was painted by Titian (VASARI-MILANESI, *op. cit.* [see note 29], VII, p. 454); see also E. A. CICOGNA, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, II, Venice, 1827, pp. 37-39.

and full of melody, that the most knowledgeable were astonished. Recently, having learned from the singing of a student of Tromboncino, the most perfect musician of our city, that this manner of singing was more harmonious and sweeter than any other, without guidance other than natural instinct and her own judgement, she learned and sang many of his works no less elegantly and sweetly than did the students themselves of the aforesaid maestro".³¹

Atanagi's remarks show that Tromboncino's style of singing or "maniera" could be transmitted orally or emulated "without guidance" presumably by gaining access to the written music. To qualify Tromboncino's "maniera" as more harmonious and sweeter than others is not as significant. The comparison drawn appears to refer to the madrigals and presumably frottolistic repertory of Latin odes and verses Irene had learned earlier from one of Aaron's *cantori al liuto*, Bartolomeo Gazza. Singing madrigals to the lute in the 1550s is not the issue. The frottolist Bartolomeo Tromboncino, for one, had composed as early as 1521 what he himself called "madrigals"³²; Willaert's intabulation of Verdelot's madrigals had been published in 1536, five years before Irene was born. What is at issue is the style of the music itself.

³¹ *Rime in morte*, *op. cit.* (see note 30), "Quello poi che la S. Irene apparò nel suono e nel canto di liuto, d'arpicordo et di viola, et come in ciascun di questi stromenti oltre al costume et l'ingegno delle donne s'appressasse a' più eccellenti di quelle arti, mi tacerò ché troppo lunga historia bisognerebbe. Solo dirò che ella in breve tempo sotto l'ammaestramento del Gazza, musico in Venetia di non picciola stima, imparò infiniti madrigali in liuto et ode et altri versi Latini, et gli cantava con disposition così pronta, delicata, e piena di melodia che i più intendenti se ne maravigliavano. Ultimamente, havendo conosciuto per lo canto d'alcuno scolare del Trommoncino, musico perfettissimo della nostra città, che quella maniera di cantare era più armoniosa e soave delle altre, senza altro indirizzo che quello del suo naturale instinto et del proprio giuditio, apprese et cantò molte delle cose sue non meno gentilmente et dolcemente che si facessero gli scolari del predetto maestro". EINHORN, *op. cit.* (see note 10), I, p. 50, assumes that the Tromboncino in question was the frottolist Bartolomeo who died (or rather, disappeared) in 1535, six years before Irene was born; see W. F. PRIZER, "Tromboncino, Bartolomeo", in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*, London, 1980, 19, p. 161.

³² Tromboncino's 1521 petition to the Venetian senate for a fifteen-year printing privilege described the music he had composed as "molti canti di canzone, madrigali, soneti, capitoli et stramboti, versi latini ed ode latine, et vulgar barzelete, frotte et dialogi"; see K. JEPPESEN, *La frottola*, I, *Bemerkungen zur Bibliographie der ältesten weltlichen Notendrucke in Italien* (Acta jutlandica, XL 2) Aarhus, 1968, pp. 147-148.

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Tromboncino's six extant works survive in two lute manuscripts as follows:

TABLE 1

Modena, Biblioteca estense, MS. C 311 ("Bottegari Lutebook")

No.	Folio	Title	Ascription	Lute Tuning	Verse Type
[59]	23	Vostra beltà si bella	Hipp.to Tromboncino	in D	canzona-madrigal
[67]	26v	Io moro amando	Trombonzino	in G	canzone villanesca
[74]	29v-30	Io son ferito	Hipp.to Trombonzino	in D	strambotto
[76]	30v-31	Perché son tutto foco	del Medesimo	in D	ballata
[78]	31v-32	Donnafi se 'l cor	Tromboncino	in D	ballata-madrigal
[80]	32v	Se voi dolc'et pietosi	Hipp.to Trombonzino	in E	ballata

Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, MS. 223, basso partbook
(vocal bass plus ricercar at end)

No.	Folio	Title	Ascription	Lute Tuning	Verse Type
[4]	4v-5	Donna, se 'l cor	[no ascription]	in D	ballata-madrigal

The four partbooks originally comprising Verona 223 (the alto is now missing) were purchased in 1548, and the first composition, Agostino Bonzanino's eight-voice dialogue madrigal *Chi non conosce amore*, entered shortly thereafter.³³ Verona 223 was compiled by the Accademia Filarmonica for the purpose of concerting each voice of a polyphonic work with its own lute accompaniment. The soprano partbook also contains madrigals unique to it alone apparently intended for solo performance. Tromboncino's *Donna, se 'l cor* is by comparison odd in that the bass partbook preserves only the texted vocal bass part (the ricercar that follows is discussed below). The lute intabulation, as is usual in this manuscript, omits the vocal superius, this latter transmitted uniquely in the Bottegari lutebook.

³³ Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, *Registro dell'Esattoria*, n. 90, fol. 9; "per quatro libri da notar Intabolatura da Liuti et Canti adi 20 marzo 1548", and cited in G. TURRINI, *L'Accademia Filarmonica di Verona dalla fondazione (maggio 1543) al 1600 e il suo patrimonio musicale antico*, Verona, 1941, p. 57. Bonzanino's madrigal text was the subject of an academic disquisition on 18 November 1548: "Alli 18 novembrio 1548 lesse il constante sopra le parolle d'un madrigal del ispedito chi non conosce amore onde ogni bon et ogni bel deriva non si po dir che viva" (Verona, Archivio di Stato, Fondo antico del Comune, registro 603, Atti dell'Accademia Filarmonica, fol. 37v).

The preservation of soprano and bass parts in two different manuscripts shows that *Donna se 'l cor* was originally a four-voice madrigal; it is equally evident that the Accademia Filarmonica had access to a complete copy of Tromboncino's madrigal in the late 1540s when it was copied into Verona 223. We know for certain that Tromboncino's music was orally transmitted to and by his Venetian students. Though we may suppose the existence of manuscript copies it is equally possible that the source of his madrigals in Verona 223 and the Bottegari lutebook may have been one of two now lost prints. Identification of the first of these is tenuous. Among the composers of four-voice madrigal prints ("La Musica Stampata [...] Madrigali a quattro") listed in Antonfrancesco Doni's *Libreria*, first published in 1550, is one listed only as "Tromboncino". James Haar tentatively identified this Tromboncino print with either the *Frottole de Misser Bortolomio Tromboncino & de Misser Marcheto Cara con Tenori & Bassi tabulati*, printed by Antico in 1520, or possibly the now-lost *Intabolatura del Tromboncino da Cantar in Liuto* being offered for sale by the Venetian publishing firm of Gardano in 1591.³⁴

Both of these identifications are suspect. Doni's identifiable prints date from about 1535 to 1550 and it is unlikely that he would have confused a single-volume print of frottole "con Tenori & Bassi tabulati" in oblong quarto format printed in 1520 with a book of four-voice madrigals printed in presumably the same partbook format common to all the identifiable prints in this category. Nor does it seem likely that a book containing instrumental tablature (a category separately listed by Doni) would have

³⁴ J. HAAR, "The Libreria of Antonfrancesco Doni", *Musica disciplina*, XXIV, 1970, p. 108. For the contents of the *Indice delli libri di musica che si trovano nelle stampe di Angelo Gardano. In Venetia, 1591*, see G. THIBAUT, "Deux catalogues de libraires musicaux: Vincenti et Gardane (Venise 1591)", *Revue de musicologie*, XI, 1930, pp. 7-18. See also O. MISCHIATTI, *Indici, cataloghi e avvisi degli editori e librai musicali italiani dal 1591 al 1798*, Florence, 1984. The last section of the *Indice*, devoted to "Intavolature Diverse", includes identifiable prints published from the 1540s to the "Balli d'Arpicordo" of Marco Facoli (1588); the exceptions are the last two items, "Intabolatura di Liuto, di Ieronimo Celidonio Vicentino, sopra Tutti li Madrig: di Cipriano Rome a.4" and the Tromboncino print, both lacking from the list of lost Venetian editions in M. LEWIS, *Antonio Gardane and His Publications of Sacred Music*, Ph. D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1979, I, pp. 301-311.

appeared among the four-voice madrigals. A case can thus be made for the existence of a volume of four-voice madrigals by Ippolito Tromboncino, published prior to 1550 and now lost. And if I am correct in supposing that *Donna, se 'l cor* was entered in Verona 223 about 1548, then Doni's pre-1550 dating finds some corroboration.

As for the dating of the *Intabolatura del Tromboncino da Cantar in Liuto*, Angelo Gardano's trade-list of 1591 provides a *terminus ante quem*. Antonio Gardano, whose publishing career (1538-1569) approximates Tromboncino's life span, seems the most likely member of the family to have published Tromboncino's *Intabolatura*. The Tromboncino may also be a reissue. Angelo's trade-list enumerates stock at hand in 1591, some of it published decades earlier. He also issued Andrea Gabrieli's music after the composer's death and, conversely, reissued in 1593 the *Fantasie ricercari contrapunti a tre voci di M. Adriano* published by Antonio in 1551. And though we may suspect the *Intabolatura* to have been Bottegari's copy text, the date "A dì 4 Novembre 1574" inscribed on the cover of his lutebook, serves only to support an earlier dating already suggested by biographical evidence.³⁵

A survey of intabulation techniques typical of pre-1570s lute-songs allows the time frame to be narrowed yet further. Here the already-lamented absence of comparable publications surviving from the period 1540-1570 can be turned to useful advantage. Following the second edition of the Willaert-Verdelot intabulation of 1540, the next group of lute songs to survive, all published by the Venetian printing firm of Scotto, are from 1570 onward: Giacomo Gorzanis' *Il primo libro di napolitane che si cantano et sonano in leuto* (1570), Cornelio Antonelli's anthology of *Napolitane ariosi da cantare et sonare nel leuto composte da diversi musici* (1570) and the three-voice villanelle of Gasparo Fiorino's

³⁵ BROWN (*op. cit.* [see note 3]) quite reasonably assumes that the *Intabolatura* may have been issued by Angelo Gardano sometime during the 1570s (Brown [157?]₁). Some of the contents of Bottegari's lutebook (it is in fact two manuscripts bound together) may date from before 1574. Bottegari (1554-1620), a Florentine businessman and amateur singer and composer, was at the court of Duke Albert of Bavaria from 1573 to 1575 (for a biography, see MACCLINTOCK, *A Court Musician's Songbook*, *cit.* [see note 1], pp. 177-179).

La nobiltà di Roma (1571).³⁶ These prints stress the lighter forms, and offer a choice of execution by voice(s) and lute, or by lute alone; this trend was to continue.³⁷ In comparison to these dual-purpose prints, the “cantare et sonare” advertised on the title-page of Willaert’s intabulations of Verdelot’s madrigals implicitly excludes a lute-only execution, an exclusion that applies equally to Tromboncino’s lute songs. Thus, if the Tromboncino *Intabolatura* was issued during the 1570s, then it would have appeared at a time oddly, though not impossibly, out of step with prevailing fashion. Textually, stylistically, and in their characteristic intabulation of the three lower voices, Ippolito’s madrigals belong to the late 1540s and the following decades. The Verona 223 version of *Donna, se ’l cor*, which certainly dates from this period, shows that the years 1540-1570 were not so barren as the lack of printed sources might otherwise suggest.

Now let us suppose the *Intabolatura* contained intabulations by Tromboncino of his own madrigals, printed earlier in traditional partbook format and later revised and reissued in his own arrangements for voice and lute on the model of the Willaert-Verdelot publications of 1536-1540. The supposition can be tested by a comparison of *Donna, se ’l cor* in the Bottegari lutebook with the Verona 223 version since these two sources imply quite different modes of performance (a comparative edition of both sources appears in the Appendix to this study). As for their similarities, both sources call for a lute tuned in D and the differences between the two intabulations are slight. The Bottegari version is in general more complex, being intended for performance as a solo lute song. The Verona version’s relative simplicity is suited to its performance with a vocal ensemble. Each supports the opening ‘point’ of the superius before the alto entry. Bottegari doubles the pitch of the superius; the Verona version doubles the superius in parallel fifths, both simple solutions devised by

³⁶ For the contents, see BROWN (*op. cit.*, [see note 3]), 1570₁; 1570₅; 1571₄.

³⁷ For instance, Verovio, *Canzonette* (1586₈); Verovio, *Ghirlanda* (1589₈; reprinted in 3 vols. as *Canzonette [...] composte da diversi auttori*, 1591₁₄₋₁₆); Vecchi, *Selva* (1590₈ “arie” and “canzonette”); Bellasio, *Villanelle a tre voci* (1592₁); Gastoldi, *Balletti a tre voci* (1594₇), and so on. For a general survey of the printed literature, see L. C. HUBBELL, *Sixteenth-Century Italian Songs for Solo Voice and Lute*, Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1982.

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lutenists to accompany the singer's unsupported pitch at the outset. We may note here that the inspiration for the opening gambit was probably a *ricercar*: the point of imitation, later reiterated by the bass, poorly reflects the sense or scansion of the words. A similar point occurs at the opening of a four-voice *ricercar* by Tromboncino's Venetian contemporary, Adrian Willaert.³⁸



Ex. 1

- (a) Adrian Willaert, *Ricercar* (*Musica nova*, 1540, No. 1), mm. 1-11 (halved values)
- (b) Ippolito Tromboncino, *Donna, se 'l cor*, mm. 1-6 (original values)

Overall similarities notwithstanding, the Verona and Bottegari versions do transmit readings which in detail diverge sufficiently to suggest different copy sources. These include harmonic incompatibilities (Verona's D-major against Bottegari's D-minor and F natural in the superius in m. 16), harmonic differences (mm. 32 and 34), the elision of music at mm. 49-50, and possibly the two methods used for notating the triple-meter section. Because *Donna, se 'l cor*, survives in Verona 223 not as a lute song but as a four-voice madrigal, and because Verona 223 was begun in 1548, these variants lend weight to the supposition that the Verona version was copied from the now lost pre-1550 madrigal print listed by

³⁸ For a modern edition, see *Musica nova*, ed. H. C. SLIM, (Monuments in Renaissance Music, I) Chicago, 1964, p. 1, *Ricercar* I.

Doni or from a manuscript copy. These same variants and the difference in performance medium might suggest that Bottegari's source for *Donna, se 'l cor* (and perhaps the other works by Tromboncino) was the now-lost *Intabolatura*. Unfortunately, the evidence for this hypothesis, attractive though it may be, remains inconclusive.

Tromboncino's madrigals are epigrammatically brief, their substantive construct sustained by motivic imitation. Equally, they show an undeniable gift for lyrical, at times highly ornate, melody, surely the *sine qua non* of the *cantore al liuto*. Like others of his generation, he sang of fire and ice, and of the cruelty of a living death: timeless sentiments that express the worldly aspirations of the Renaissance courtier. This type of poetry is common in Willaert's madrigals of the 1530s; his model, like Tromboncino's, appears to have been Verdelot.³⁹ The vogue for the sonnets of Petrarch, established by Willaert and his associates in Venice about 1540, seems not to have touched Tromboncino. Willaert's Petrarch settings (*Musica nova*, 1559) are expansive, motet-like works of an almost neutral melodic cast; the style is innovative, elegant and highly 'literary', but it is not a style suited to the lute song.⁴⁰ Tromboncino's point of departure was the madrigal of the 1530s and the metrical forms of the texts that he set to music that most clearly relate to the early madrigal are the ballata, ballata-madrigal and canzona-madrigal⁴¹; in these forms, symme-

³⁹ A. WILLAERT, *Opera omnia*, XIV, *Madrigali e Canzoni Villanesche*, ed. H. MEIER, (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 3) American Institute of Musicology, 1977, p. X, suggests "Verdelot is Willaert's main prototype", an opinion not shared by H. Osthoff, *Theatergesang und darstellende Musik in der italienischen Renaissance*, Tutzing, 1969, I, pp. 286, 305. A better assessment is offered by H. M. BROWN, "Words and Music: Willaert, the Chanson and the Madrigal about 1540", in *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations. Acts of Two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1976-1977*, Florence, 1980, II: *Cinquecento*, pp. 217-266. J. HAAR's contribution in the same volume, "Music in 16th-century Florence and Venice: Some Points of Comparison and Contrast" (pp. 267-284) touches peripherically on this topic.

⁴⁰ Though, of course, perfectly suited to ensemble performance. Verona 223 contains lute and voices parts for Willaert's five-voice *Rompi de l'empio cor* and the seven-voice dialogue madrigal *Che fai alma*. I plan to publish a full description of Verona 223 in the near future.

⁴¹ See D. HARRÁN, "Verse Types in the Early Madrigal", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXII, 1969, pp. 27-53.

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trical rhyme-schemes may generate parallel musical structures. In the canzona-madrigal *Vostra beltà* (rhyme scheme: aBc aBc/Dd), the music of the second *piede* is an embellished version of the first.⁴²

[piede 1]

Vo- stra bel - tà sì bel- la Che l'oc-chio ab-

5

ba- gl'e to- sto vin- ce'l co- r[e] A qual- un- que lo mi- ri.

10 [piede 2]

Et la dol- ce fa- vel- la Ch'a- pe- n'u- di-

15

ta fe sen- tir d'A- mo- re I più cal- di de- si- ri.

Ex. 2

Ippolito Tromboncino, *Vostra beltà*, mm. 1-17

Similar procedures may be discerned in Tromboncino's ballata settings in which the divisions of the form into *ripresa*, *piedi* and *volta* are clearly demarcated. Frottola composers set the ballata in a large ABA form, repeating the same music for both *piedi*, and musically linking the *ripresa* to the *volta*.⁴³ And madrigalists such as Verdelot often repeated the music of the *ripresa* in the *volta* of a ballata setting.⁴⁴ In different degrees, these traditional structural procedures are still apparent in Tromboncino's ballata settings.

⁴² This text was also set by FRANCESCO PORTINARO, *Il secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci*, Venice, A. Gardane, 1554, p. 11; Portinaro's setting shows that the version of this text transmitted in the Bottegari lutebook is corrupt.

⁴³ See W. F. PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes: The Frottole of Marchetto Cara*, Ann Arbor, 1980, pp. 85-88.

⁴⁴ On musical symmetries in Verdelot's ballata settings, see H. C. SLIM, *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets*, Chicago, 1972, I, p. 180.

IPPOLITO TROMBONCINO, CANTORE AL LIUTO

Se voi dolci, which stands out from Tromboncino's other works because of its semiminim declamatory patterns, is his only madrigal notated in the *note nere* style. It is also the most structured of all his works. Formally a ballata mezzana (aBB/cD cD/dEE), *Se voi dolci* shows a hint of the old frottola technique where the opening two measures of each *piede* are set to a slight variant of the same music. The *ripresa* and *volta* show an unusually high degree of motivic integration. The descending melodic outline of the opening statement provides a three-note motif or 'cell' (the motif X) that inverted becomes an equally-important secondary

a)

Se voi dol- ci et pie-to- si

b)

Mor- te mi da- te et vi- ta dar cre- de- te, mor- te mi da- te

c)

Ma chi la ver'vi cre- de Pie- to- s'al suo do- lor co- sì an- ci- de- te

Ex. 3

Ippolito Tromboncino, *Se voi dolci*, (a) mm. 1-4; (b) mm. 11-18;
(c) mm. 35-42 (original values)

motif, Y, the counterpoint to X. The basic cell can be filled in to form an ascending or descending tetrachord in diminished values and subsequently extended in length by the addition of a consequent phrase. Both of these motifs occur at structurally important points. Motif Y achieves its greatest impact at the words "così ancidete", emotionally the highpoint of the madrigal.

Imitative techniques such as these are by no means foreign to the madrigal. But the development and transformation of contrapuntal motifs over a broad scale recalls less the imitative madrigal (examples include Verdelot's ballate *Donna che sete* and *Lasso, che se creduto*) than the motivic structure informing Francesco da Milano's monothematic ricercars.⁴⁵ The monothematicism of *Se voi dolci* (and the ricercar-like opening of *Donna, se 'l cor*) show that for the lutenist composer of madrigals, motivic construction and text expression are not mutually exclusive compositional elements. As works that reflect both the lutenist's constructive prerogative and the singer's expressivity, these two ballate appear to combine the thematic tendencies of abstract instrumental music and the psychology of vocal text expression.

Perché son tutto foco is a setting of a ballata lacking the second of its *piede*. An earlier setting by Marchetto Cara of a slightly different version of this text was published in the *Libro primo de la fortuna* (Rome, Judici, ca. 1526); because only the altus survives for this print, the text lacks the first line of the *ripresa* (the altus rests at this point). The music (textless save incipit) survives complete in the Venice manuscript partbooks (Biblioteca Marciana, MSS. Italiani, Cl. IV, 1795-1798), the object of a critical study and edition by Francesco Luisi whose edited version of the text I reproduce here:⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II, nos. 18 and 19 contain Verdelot's madrigals. For motivic analyses of Francesco da Milano's ricercars, see O. GOMBOSI, "A la recherche de la forme dans la musique de la Renaissance: Francesco da Milano", in J. JAQUOT (ed.), *La musique instrumentale de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1955, p. 165-175, and *The Lute Music of Francesco Canova da Milano (1497-1543)*, ed. A. J. NESS (Harvard Publications in Music, III-IV), Cambridge, MA, 1970, pp. 3-8.

⁴⁶ F. LUISI, *Apografo miscellaneo marciano: Frottole canzoni e madrigali con alcuni alla pavana in villanesco* (Edizione critica integrale dei Mss. Marc. It. Cl. IV, 1795-1798), Venice, 1979, no. 66. The form of the poem given by

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Libro primo de la fortuna

Perché son tutto foco
e.lla mia donna è un giaccio,
lei non acendo e io me ne disfaccio.
Pur se in me moro io resto vivo
[in ella,
ma non son foco ch'io la scalderei,
né giaccio è quella che me
[estingueria,
anci a mê foco e io son giaccio a
[quella,
onde ella è freda e il sol de li occhi
[mei
che stila in pianto for la vita mia.
[Ahi vita, ahi morte ria,]
ne l'una ardo e agiaccio,
l'altra m'occide e non mi trà de
[impaccio.

Bottegari Lute Book

Perché son tutto foco
Et la mia donna è un ghiaccio,
Lei non accendo et io me ne
[disfaccio.
Pur s'io ne moro io resto vivo in lei,
Ma non son foco ch'io la scalderei,
Né ghiaccio è quella che
[m'estingueria.
Ahi vita, ahi morte ria,
Nell'un ardo et agghiaccio,
L'altra m'ancide et non mi trae
[d'impaccio.

Cara's setting of this text is characteristically schematic. Texturally, it approaches the proto-madrigal style of the 1520s (in this case, four texted voices with instances of voice pairing).⁴⁷ Tromboncino's setting is imitative in style, the imitative sections all occurring at the beginning of structurally important sections. The motifs are related by a common starting note and a similar melodic curve. The opening music of the *ripresa* (A) is mirrored in the imitative structure of the *piedi* (B), the voices entering in the same order, and the duet "Ahi vita, ahi morte ria" which opens the *volta* (C) is distantly related to the *ripresa*. But at the conclusion of the madrigal (D) the composer has contrived a dramatically bold reworking of motif B to the words "L'altra m'ancide et non mi trae d'impaccio".

Luisi (p. CXIII: "canzone") is incorrect; see PRIZER, *op. cit.* (see note 43), pp. 87, 530-538.

⁴⁷ The work is analyzed in *ibid*, pp. 142-143.

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a)

Per- ché son tut- to fo- co Et la mia don- na è un ghiac- cio?

b)

Pur s'io ne mo- ro io re- sto vi- vo in le- i

c)

Ahi vi- ta, ahi mor- te ri- a

d)

-cio, l'al- tra m'an- ci-

de et non mi trae d'im- pac- cio, et non mi trae d'im- pac- cio.

Ex. 4

Ippolito Tromboncino, *Perché son tutto fuoco*, (a) *ripresa*, mm. 1-7; (b) *piedi*, mm. 18-23; (c) *volta*, mm. 32-35; (d) *conclusion*, mm. 41-51

Italian poetry of the period varies in structure and much attention has been paid to derivative text forms and their deviations from normative classifications. This is reflected in the musical settings, but its significance has been perhaps (as here) overstated. For instance, *Donna se 'l cor* combines elements of ballata and madrigal. Though the rhyme scheme (AA/Bc cB/dd) shows the linking rhyme (*concatenazione*) between *pie*di and *vol*ta to be missing, the poem's apparent formal resemblance to the ballata proper is misleading. The internal grammatical sense of the poetry, correctly grouped by the composer in his setting, is in fact AA/Bcc Bdd. Though this explains why the setting should lack the thematic links between sections observed in the other ballate, a vestige of its ballata origin is suggested by the double bar-line marking the *ripresa* as a formal unit.

Tromboncino's ballate and ballata-derivatives all share this graphic distinction of the *ripresa*. Similar demarcations, whether a double bar-line, a long marked with a fermata or by a single bar-line, also inform ballata setting in printed sources. If the sign denotes a mode of performance – that the *ripresa* should be repeated, thereby closing the formal structure of the ballata in a manner consistent with poetic theory – then its persistence would make sense. But the evidence for this is confined to a single non-musical source: Antonio Minturno's definition of ballata form (*L'arte poetica*, Venice, 1563) in which he makes the statement that the *ripresa* is so-called because at the end of the poem it is repeated as a (choral?) refrain by those who “sing” it.⁴⁸ Minturno's definition applies to polystrophic ballate – “dance songs” with refrains. Does it also apply to monostrophic ballate? As a hypothesis, the recapitulation of the *ripresa* can be tested for its musical logic and implications for performance practice.

Donna, se 'l cor is not without its musical logic, its only surprise the unexpected final closure on the non-tonic chord of E-major, the only cadence on this pitch in the entire madrigal. To exit from the mode is, as Vicentino relates, justifiable should

⁴⁸ ANTONIO MINTURNO [Sebastiani], *L'arte poetica*, Venice: G. A. Valvasori, 1563, libro terzo, p. 247: “B: Quante sono le parti di lei? M: La prima delle quali è chiamata per nome antico Ripresa, perciocche nel fine da quei che cantano, si riprende a cantare”. HARRÁN's (*loc. cit.* [see note 41], p. 29, note 7) reference to this passage is misleading.

the demands of the text warrant it.⁴⁹ A perfect pretext for this procedure is provided by the death imagery of the concluding words "chi può far ch'io non mora?"; music and text leaving auditor and performer alike hanging, as it were, on a rhetorical question mark. To pursue the recapitulation hypothesis, a return to the tonic D sonorities of the tonally-balanced *ripresa* would produce an ABA structure, musically mirroring the return to the *ripresa* that gives the ballata its symmetrical textual structure.

This may be to force unintended symmetries. The tonal direction is reversed in the *ricercar* that follows *Donna, se 'l cor* in the Verona manuscript (edited in the Appendix). Its points of departure and arrival, E to D, reverse those of the madrigal, D to E; thus, it could precede and/or follow the madrigal with perfect 'tonal' logic. Equally feasible is that it could lead back to a repeat of the *ripresa*.

Disturbing the functional practicality of the *ricercar*'s tonal design is the appearance of a repeat sign in the second half of measure 18.⁵⁰ To return to the beginning of the *ricercar* from the repeat sign makes little musical sense, and to repeat the ending little more. The repeat sign may signpost a more complex, though perfectly logical, performance of *ricercar* and madrigal. First the *ricercar* is played up to the repeat sign; this prepares for and leads directly into the beginning of the madrigal. At the conclusion of the madrigal the *ricercar* is played again, this time in its entirety. If the double bar-line of the *ripresa* is indeed a prescription for performance, then one could repeat the *ripresa* and, after its closure, play the *ricercar* from the repeat sign to the end as follows:

<i>ricercar</i>	<i>ripresa</i>	<i>piedi volta</i>	<i>ricercar</i>	<i>ripresa</i>	<i>ricercar</i>
form: A:	A	B C	A: :B	A	:B
key: E-D	D-D	D- -E	E- -D	D-D	D-D

⁴⁹ NICOLA VICENTINO, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica*, Rome, Antonio Barré, 1555, fol. 48.

⁵⁰ I know of only one example in the solo literature, Giovanni Maria da Crema's *Recercar* [*sic*] quarto (*Intabolatura de lauto*, 1546₁₀), an arrangement of Giulio Segni's *Ricercar* IX from *Musica nova* (1540₃). The repeat sign makes little sense musically and does not appear in the same *ricercar* in da Crema's *Libro terzo* (1546₁₁); see SLIM, *loc. cit.* (see note 38), pp. XXXIV, 42.

Warren Kirkendale has shown that for sixteenth-century translators of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the proem of ancient rhetorical theory was equated with the contemporary *ricercar* (see, for instance, Annibal Caro, *La Rettorica d'Aristotile fatta in lingua toscana*, Venice, 1570, p. 246: "Ma la ricercata è simile al proemio del genere dimostrativo. Che sicome i sonatori sonando prima qualche bel gruppo di fantasia, entrano successivamente nel tuono del mottetto, o del madrigale, che intendono di sonare").⁵¹ This and other citations from the rhetorical literature that make the Aristotelian analogy (as well as the majority of actual examples of paired works in the instrumental literature),⁵² suggest that the *ricercar* functioned as a prelude to an intabulation of a motet, chanson or madrigal.

Donna, se 'l cor shows the practice was also applied to ensemble madrigals concerted with lutes. This practice is corroborated by two other madrigals prefaced or followed by *ricercars* in Verona 223: *Dei vicin boschi* (Tenor partbook, fols. 2v-3; Bass partbook, fols. 2v-3, preludial *ricercar*), *Haimè, ch'affan'è questo* (Soprano partbook, fols. 4v-5; Tenor partbook, fols. 4v-5, postludial *ricercar*). The prelude (rubricated "*ricercar*" in the manuscript) to *Dei vicin boschi*, ending as it does on the dominant before the entry of the voices on the tonic, takes the analogy of the Aristotelian exordium a step further. The introductory *ricercar* is not only a practice associated with instrumentalists and instrumental works, but also with concerted vocal works.

Haimè, che affan'è questo occupies the same opening in the soprano and tenor partbooks of Verona 223 as *Donna, se 'l cor* in the basso partbook (fols. 4v-5). Both are in the same hand and the formal similarities are striking: *Haimè, che affan'è questo* is a ballata with a triple-meter section towards the end, and it

⁵¹ See W. KIRKENDALE, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians on the *Ricercar* as Exordium", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XXXII (1979), p. 42. However, precisely the opposite arrangement of *ricercar* and intabulation is also known (*ibid.*, p. 8, n. 44); another example not cited by Professor Kirkendale is Francesco da Milano's *Fantasia de mon triste*, which in most sources follows Francesco's intabulation of Richafort's chanson *De mon triste desclairir*; the fantasia derives its thematic material from the chanson's opening bass and tenor lines; see NESS, *loc. cit.* (see note 45), p. 4.

⁵² Kirkendale, *loc. cit.* (see note 51), pp. 7-9.

is followed by a similarly constructed *ricercar*, unequivocally postludial in function. The two works also show common stylistic traits: Tromboncino's characteristic duet between soprano and alto at the beginning of the *piedi* (though no double bar-line separates the *ripresa* from *piedi* and *volta* because the work lacks a firm cadence at this point), and the equally characteristic descent of the superius to the major third at the final cadence. The feminine cadences, homophonic texture, and the elegiac character of this work recall Verdelot (though this work, like the authenticated works of Tromboncino, eschews Verdelot's usual concluding pedal-point cadence). The placing of *Haimè, che affan'è questo* and *Donna, se 'l cor* in the partbooks, their stylistic affinities and postludial *ricercars*, suggest that *Haimè, che affan'è questo* is quite possibly another work by Tromboncino.

To judge from the surviving tenor and bass parts, these stylistic affinities seem less convincing for *Dei vicin boschi*. But a rather more probable attribution to Tromboncino can be suggested for another anonymous work in Verona 223: *De homai pon fin amor*, copied into all three partbooks on the same opening (fols. 3v-4); that is, between *Dei vicin boschi* and *Haimè, che affan'è questo*. *De homai pon fin amor* is transmitted in piecemeal fashion. The soprano partbook contains the texted superius alone; the tenor partbook contains the tenor with an inexplicably different text ("Deh perché pari alla bellezza") that breaks off after two lines of text; and the basso partbook contains only the textless bass part. The tenor partbook alone preserves the lute intabulation. Again the stylistic similarities of this work to Tromboncino's other ballate is noticeable: it is a ballata with a concluding triple meter section, the *ripresa* is symmetrically structured, and the opening motif shows a similar melodic contour to that of *Vostra beltà sì bella*. Moreover, though common enough to be early madrigal, the texts of these works pursue the same metaphoric death imagery:

De homai pon fin amor
(AbbA/cD cD/EE)

volta: Così perché la pena sia infinita,
Il viver morte e 'l morir mi dà vita.

Haimè, che affan'è questo
(aBb/cd cd/EE)

volta: Ma poi che così vol l'empia mia sorte,
Andrò penand' infin giongh'alla morte.

Vostra beltà sì bella
(aBc aBc/Dd)

stanza: Ben m'impiegar gl'è ver, ma somm'accorto
Che sol gratia m'ha morto.

The issue of plausible attributions aside, of more moment are the specific pairings of *ricercar* with madrigal noted for three works in Verona 223. If upon reflection these show the hardly-surprising persistence of a performing tradition first documented by the *ricercars* Bossinensis composed for the frottola repertory, they also show that postludial *ricercars* were more common than hitherto believed.⁵³ Rhetoricians after all may not be the best judges of musical practices, and performers were free to ignore Aristotelian analogies. A no less suggestive example of madrigal-*ricercar* pairings is furnished by Bottegari, who copied into his lutebook an anonymous solo-lute “fantasia”⁵⁴ between two of Tromboncino’s ballate, *Perché son tutto foco* and *Donna, se ’l cor*. The placement of this imitative fantasia, the only work of its type in his lutebook, may be merely accidental. On the other hand, the fantasia suits rather well the ballata it follows: it is related by mode to *Perché son tutto foco*, and is equally imitative in style. As a postlude, the fantasia could follow *Perché son tutto foco* or, given that the *ripresa* of this ballata ends on the dominant, serve as a conclusion if the *ripresa* is repeated.

These madrigal-*ricercar* pairings reflect performing traditions. As well, they suggest that the traditional preludial or postludial function of the *ricercar* is typologically inherent to lute *ricercars* published independent of the lute song repertory. The imitative *ricercars* of the generation of Francesco da Milano ‘seek out’ motifs within the context of a particular mode or ‘key’. Though the exploration of modally defined musical space was a challenge to the musical and technical prowess of the lutenist-composer, the grouping of *ricercars* by modal type in printed sources sug-

⁵³ Bossinensis does not specify that his *ricercars* “li quali serveno a le frottole” are preludes or postludes, and a number of them are modally ill-suited to the frottole they are to accompany; see H. C. SLIM, *The Keyboard Ricercar and Fantasia in Italy c. 1500-1550 with Reference to Parallel Forms in European Lute Music of the Same Period*, Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1960, pp. 247-249. Otto Gombosi was the first to propose that the *ricercar* could be played before and after a vocal composition as a ritornello between stanzas (*Compositore de meser Vincenzo Capirola*, ed. O. GOMBOSI, Paris, 1955, pp. XXXI-XXXII).

⁵⁴ This fantasia also appears without ascription in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS. II 275, the lutebook of Raffaello Cavalcanti (dated January 1590), as a “*ricercha*” on fol. 95v.

gests that this hierarchical arrangement was a means of readily locating a suitable *ricercar* for performers wishing to add an instrumental prelude or postlude to a vocal work.⁵⁵ Of course, the *ricercars* of Francesco da Milano can and do stand on their own considerable merits. But many of his shorter and less complex *ricercars* are quite suitable for use as preludes. One ends on the dominant (Ness edition, no. 5) like the preludial *ricercar* to *Dei vicin boschi*. In sum, the pairing of madrigal and *ricercar* in Verona 223 establishes a historical precedent that, as an aspect of performance practice, requires no reconstruction (as do vocal ornamentation practices), but only construction: pairing together what already exists.

The remaining works of Tromboncino, setting texts of local and important origin, draw on and elaborate geographically distinct song traditions. The import was Neapolitan popular song. Tromboncino's canzone villanesca, *Io moro amando*, while linked textually to the *canzoni villanesche alla napolitana* of Gian Domenico da Nola, is more specifically indebted to examples of the genre recast in a four-voice madrigalesque idiom by Willaert in the 1540s.⁵⁶ *Io moro amando*, without musical reference to the villanesca's bipartite metrical form (AB [stanza] bcc [refrain]) is through-composed in Willaert's manner:

Io moro amando et seguo chi m'occide,
Et perch'io mor'ogn'hor, d'amar non resto.
Non è miracol questo:
Ch'Amor mi fa morire
E pur il vo seguire?

A similar example of the through-composition of one stanza and refrain of the normally multistanzaic canzone villanesca is found

⁵⁵ The *ricercars* of Francesco da Milano printed in the 1536 Marcolini print are grouped by modal types. GIOVANNI MARIA DA CREMA's *Intabolatura de lauto* [...] *Libro primo*, Venice, 1546; facsimile edition, Geneva, 1981, shows a similar grouping of *ricercars* by mode.

⁵⁶ For an assessment of Willaert's role, see N. PIRROTTA, "Willaert and the Canzone Villanesca", in his *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, Cambridge, MA, 1984, pp. 175-197. For a modern edition of works in this genre by Willaert, Cambio, Corteccia, Silvestrino and Nola, see *Adrian Willaert and His Circle: Canzoni villanesche alla napolitana and villotte*, ed. D. G. CARDAMONE, (Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, XXX) Madison, 1978; Willaert's works also appear in MEIER, *loc. cit.* (see note 39).

in Baldassare Donato's setting of the following text, first published in 1550: ⁵⁷

Occhi, lucenti assai più che le stelle,
Riguarda homai il tuo servo fidele.
Deh, non esser crudele
E non voler ch'io mora;
Baciami, vita mia, baciami anchora.

The first two lines of *Occhi lucenti* are identical to a strambotto sung to the lute in Andrea Calmo's comedy *Il potione* (1552), and to which has been added a refrain, *Deh, non esser crudele*, that distinguishes this villanesca from its parent form, the strambotto.⁵⁸ The refrain was not necessarily linked by rhyme and sense to the hendecasyllabic pairs of lines it follows, but expressed a generalized sentiment 'rustic' in its flavor and language. *Occhi lucenti* shows how a refrain could be attached to a pre-existent strambotto. *Io moro amando* appears to constitute a parallel case. Its telltale refrain, possibly of popular origin, also occurs in a madrigal by the Neapolitan poet Dragonetto Bonifazio:

Amor mi fa morire
E pur il vo seguire.
Non è gran duol il mio, tenac' e forte,
Conoscer ch'io vo dietro alla mia morte?
Sotto ch'acerba sorte
Nacqui nel mondo, che morir mi sento,
E d'abbracciar mi piace 'l mio tormento.
Deh, voi ch'udite 'l mio grave lamento,
Dite, per Dio, se 'l dir non v'è molesto:
Non è miracol questo:
Ch'Amor mi fa morire
E pur il vo seguire?

Bonifazio's hybrid villanesca-madrigal, betraying its origins in the Neapolitan popular literature, was set as a through-composed

⁵⁷ Di Baldissera Donato *il Primo libro di canzon villanesche alla napoletana a quattro voci*, Venice, A. Gardane, 1550, p. 1, and cited in D. G. CARDAMONE, "Forme musicali e metriche della canzone villanesca e della villanella alla napoletana", *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, XII, 1977, p. 32.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32, n. 11.

madrigal for four voices by Willaert (*Il secondo libro de madrigali di Verdelot*, RISM 1534¹⁶).⁵⁹ Though sharing the same refrain, Willaert's and Tromboncino's settings bear no musical relationship beyond the common stamp of generic similarity. And for once, however minimally, Tromboncino contributes to our understanding of Willaert.

As for local traditions, Tromboncino's setting of *Io son ferito*, a strambotto by the poet and *citharedo* Serafino Ciminelli dall'Aquila (1466-1500), ties him into a line of evolution harking back to the 'unwritten traditions' of this illustrious fifteenth-century predecessor in his art.⁶⁰ But the link with the past has been attenuated by the winds of changing fashion. Vincenzo Calmeta, Serafino's contemporary and biographer, remarks that in singing to the lute the music should be "semplice e non diminuito", criticising those who "taking pleasure in the art of song, desire above all to please their lady by embellished melody and, in that music, to convey amorous sentiments".⁶¹ The diminutions of which Calmeta speaks do not survive. But something of their manner may be preserved in the four ornamented giustiniane published in Petrucci's *Frottole Libro Sexto* (1505).⁶² The running figura-

⁵⁹ Modern edition in MEIER, *op. cit.* (see note 39), p. 4. Willaert's text shows slight variants from the version edited in ERASMO PERCOPO, "Dragonetto Bonifacio, Marchese d'Oria, rimatore napolitano del sec. XVI", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, X, 1887, p. 219.

⁶⁰ For a modern edition, see B. BAUER-FORMICONI, *Die Strambotti des Serafino dall'Aquila*, Munich, 1967, p. 406. *Io son ferito* was also set by Palestrina (1561) and Nola (1564) for five voices, and by Capuano (1574) for three. These settings by south Italian composers, presumably later than Tromboncino's, also transmit contaminated versions of Serafino's text. EINSTEIN, *op. cit.* (see note 10), II, pp. 590-592, suggests that because these settings share the same motifs, an "old ottava tune" may lurk undetected. Tromboncino's setting is unrelated musically and the version of the text he set, closest to Serafino's original text. Apart from the opening words, Marenzio's setting of the villanella *Io son ferito e chi mi punse il core* is textually unrelated (see the modern edition in *ibid.*, III, p. 233).

⁶¹ VINCENZO CALMETA, *Prose e lettere edite e inedite*, ed. C. GRAYSON, Bologna, 1959, pp. 21-22: "dilettandosi d'arte di canto, disiderano col cantar, massimamente diminuito, gratificar la sua donna, e in quella musica parole amoroze inferire".

⁶² This is the only book of frottole published by Petrucci to contain works for three voices; the four that open the book are unique in their melismatic style. *Moro de' doglia* and *Aimè ch'a torto* are settings of isolated stanzas from sirventesi by the poet and singer Leonardo Giustinian (ca. 1383-1446); *Aimè*

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tion of the *passaggi* type applied to these giustiniane may have been common practice among Venetian *cantori al liuto*, though Tromboncino makes sparing use of it.

a)

e la mia vi- ta

b)

[re-]gno Hor se'l bel vi-so vo- stro, hor se'l bel vi-so

Ex. 5

(a) Anon., *Chui dicese* (Frottole libro sexto, 1505, fol. 2), mm. 34-39

(b) Ippolito Tromboncino, *Donna, se 'l cor*, mm. 31-37

Calmeta's remarks suggest that individual styles of virtuoso ornamentation were as idiosyncratic as the personalities of its practitioners. Tromboncino's ornate setting of *Io son ferito*, separated by a half-century from its progenitor and full of what seem to be uniquely personal mannerisms, appears aesthetically the opposite of Serafino's accomplished renditions to the lute of his own poetry. Calmeta's defensive strictures against inappropriate ornamentation – the poet's protest that words are the master of harmony and not viceversa – precisely define the aesthetics of embellishment current in Tromboncino's Venice.

We are largely ignorant of embellishment practices of the 1540s and 1550s. Italian sixteenth-century ornamentation practices are transmitted by ten books of instruction written between 1535 (Silvestro di Ganassi, *Opera intitulata Fontegara*) and the end of the century (Aurelio Virgiliano, *Il Dolcimelo*, ca. 1600). While evenly applied *passaggi* are characteristic of treatises of the early part of the century, those published in the 1580s and 1590s show

sospiri and *Chui dicese* are likewise classified as giustiniane by W. H. RUBSAMEN, "The Justiniane of Viniziane of the 15th Century", *Acta musicologica*, XXIX, 1957, pp. 174-175. *Aimè sospiri* also survives in simpler form in Escorial M. IV.a.24 (see RUBSAMEN's comparative edition, *ibid.*, pp. 180-182). All four are edited in DISERTORI, *op. cit.* (see note 3), pp. 248-263. See also N. PIRROTTA, "Ricerare and Variations on *O rosa bella*", in his *Music and Culture*, are "only reflections of real giustiniane", and more characteristic of what he calls "a strambotto attitude".

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a preference for extravagant bursts of ornamentation.⁶³ Though ornamentation was widely practised, few examples of embellished solo lute songs survive. Girolamo Dalla Casa, in the second book of his treatise, *Il vero modo di diminuir, con tutte le sorti di stromenti di fiato, & corda, & di voce humana* (Venice, 1584₂), includes the texted and embellished superius parts of five "madrigali da cantar in compagnia, et anco co'l liuto solo". Dalla Casa's suggested use of these parts "to sing with solo lute" is easily realized by combining his ornamented superius with Bottegari's arrangement for voice and lute.⁶⁴

a) An- cor che co'l par- ti- re io

b) mi sen- ta mo- ri- re Par- tir vor- rei

Ex. 6

Cipriano de Rore, *Ancor che co 'l partire*, mm. 1-8

(a) Girolamo Dalla Casa, ornamented superius (*Il vero modo di diminuir*, 1584, p. 35)

(b) Cosimo Bottegari, lute intabulation (Modena, Biblioteca estense, MS. C311, fols. 34v-35)

⁶³ For a comprehensive survey, see H. M. BROWN, *Embellishing 16th-Century Music*, London, 1976.

⁶⁴ See my edition of *Anchor che co'l partire*, which superimposes Dalla

The madrigals selected by Dalla Casa, four by Cipriano de Rore (published between 1547 and 1557) and one by Palestrina (*Vestiva i colli*, published in 1566), are not contemporary with his treatise, nor is Dalla Casa's style of ornamentation that practised during the 1540s and 1550s. No printed instruction books survive for these decades. But examples of mid-century north Italian ornamentation practices do survive in the two manuscript sources preserving Tromboncino's music: Verona 223 and the Bottegari lutebook. Ornamentation in Tromboncino's *Vostra beltà* has been mentioned above (see Ex. 2). Even more lavish ornaments appear in his setting of *Io son ferito*, though whether the ornaments are his own or Bottegari's is uncertain. The vocal ornaments that Bottegari sketched beneath *Per pianto la mia carne distilla* (no. 12, fol. 5v) are characteristic of the late sixteenth century. But Tromboncino's works in Bottegari's lutebook show no signs of tampering, and the ornaments of *Io son ferito* are stylistically consistent with Tromboncino's other embellished works. Whatever Bottegari's source, he appears to have copied the superius, and presumably Tromboncino's original ornamentation, *verbatim*.

We can be sure that Tromboncino's art, his personal "maniera", achieved its full expression in performance. Pietro Bembo similarly remarked of Leonardo Giustinian that he "was appreciated in his own time as well as in ours more for the style of his singing (*per le maniere del canto*) in which he made his poems known than for the style of writing (*scrittura*)".⁶⁵ Tromboncino's "maniera di cantare [...] più armoniosa e soave" may refer to a manner of singing, a style of composition, or both. But it is unlikely that "maniera" refers exclusively to the practice of singing madrigals to the lute. Irene di Spilimbergo was already singing 'madrigals' to the lute prior to her acquaintance with Tromboncino's music.

Casa's ornamented superius over Bottegari's intabulation of the same madrigal, published in the *Newsletter of the Lute Society of America*, XVII, no. 3, 1982.

⁶⁵ *Prose della volgar lingua*, ed. C. DIONISOTTI, Turin, 1960, p. 112, and cited in PIRROTTA, *loc. cit.* (see note 62), pp. 402-403, note 10. Bembo suggests that singing giustiniane was still fashionable in the early sixteenth century, but not that Giustinian's style of singing survives in Petrucci's giustiniane. The works are, however, noticeably archaic in style and were published at a time when, according to Bembo, poetry in Venetian dialect was no longer being written.

And Verdelot's madrigals, though presumably sung by Venetian *cantori al liuto* like Gazza, his pupil Irene and Tromboncino himself, were not new when Willaert intabulated them for voice and lute in 1536, nor were they newly conceived of as suitable to the idiom. Rather it was the traditions of an 'unwritten' method of performance that Willaert precisely formalized in print.⁶⁶

Pietro Aretino, "scourge of princes" and *roué extraordinaire*, appears to have known one of Verdelot's madrigals well enough to expect the same of the readers of Book One of the First Day of his *Sei Giornate*, a scurrilous dialogue in which the prostitute Nanna "recounts under a fig tree in Rome" her former life as a "cloistered" nun to her daughter and protégée, Antonia. In one of her nocturnal adventures, Nanna tells how she was escorted by her lover to a secret salon where it was promised she would hear "angelic music" and a *comedietta*. After telling of the whispered compliments paid to her, Nanna remarks: "And thus while engaged in endearments, music's virtue appeared which, to the bottom of my soul, brought me to my senses; there were four [singers] looking over a book [of music], and one, with a silvery lute in tune with their voices, sang *Divini occhi sereni*".⁶⁷ Perhaps the music was Verdelot's, whose setting of this text is compatible with the date of Aretino's dialogue, 1534.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ During the eleventh course of a banquet held at Ferrara in 1529 the musical entertainment was provided by "una Damigella ricchissimamente vestita che sonò et cantò nel Lauto Madrigal divinamente" (CRISTOFORO DA MESSISBUGO, *Banchetti*, Ferrara, 1549; I quote from a later edition: *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivanda*, Venice 1557, fol. 13). See also H. M. BROWN, "A Cook's Tour of Ferrara in 1529", *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, X, 1975, p. 232.

⁶⁷ PIETRO ARETINO, *Sei Giornate*, ed. G. AQUILECCHIA, Bari, 1969, pp. 45-46: "E stando in sui vezzi, arrivò la virtù della musica che mi fece risentire fino alla anima; erano quattro che guardavano sopra un libro, e uno, con un liuto argentino accordato con le voci loro, cantava *Divini occhi sereni*". I cite from the now authoritative edition of what used to be called the *Ragionamenti*. Aquilecchia and subsequent editors all ignore Verdelot's setting of *Divini occhi sereni* (see the following note). Its citation is hardly flattering to poet or composer in the context in which it is quoted, a spoof on the therapeutic effects of music.

⁶⁸ First printed in *Del primo libro de madrigali di Verdelotto*, Venice, 1553, p. 17, *Divini occhi sereni* was one of the madrigals intabulated by Willaert in 1536. EINSTEIN must have known this passage, since he claims this text is by

Singing madrigals to the lute was, therefore, no novelty, and in itself cannot account for Atanagi's praise of Tromboncino's "maniera". The elusiveness of the term's meaning, a style or manner of performance, is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, analysis of Tromboncino's music suggests that his "maniera di cantare" is stylistically a hybrid creation in which a largely unwritten extemporizing tradition has been grafted onto a sophisticated framework, the madrigal, nourished into Italianate modernity by the continuing fashion for ornate singing. Though excessive ornamentation was railed against by theorists, it excited rhapsodies of praise when properly executed: "As for your singing", wrote Calmo in praise of a certain Signora Calandra, "I have never heard better: oh what a beautiful voice, what style (*maniera*), what trills (*gorza*), what divisions (*diminution*), what sweetness, enough to soften the cruelest, hardest, most wicked heart in the world!"⁶⁹ And for the Neapolitan physician and singer Giovanni Camillo Maffei there was no question that "il vero modo di cantar cavaleresco, e di conpiacere all'orecchia, è il cantar di gorga".⁷⁰

Despite the fashion for embellishments, practices varied. There is a real difference between the continuous ornamentation recommended by Maffei for solo singing, and ornamentation applied to carefully chosen musical phrases, clearly an important component of Tromboncino's style. Equally diverse was their choice of a repertory suited to embellished solo singing; for Maffei this was the 'air', the traditional stock in trade of the *cantore al liuto*. Practised throughout the sixteenth century (Bottegari, for instance, includes in his lutebook a number of such formulaic melodies, the so-called *arie da cantar*, suitable for singing a given

Aretino "the author of the notorious *Ragionamenti*, who though a declared enemy of the sentimental untruth of the Petrarchists, had himself provided contemporary musicians with one of the most famous sentimental madrigals, *Divini occhi sereni*" (*op. cit.* [see note 10], I, p. 173). It is ascribed to Dragonetto [Bonifazio] (though not in PERCOPO, *loc. cit.* [see note 70]) in F. LESURE-C. SARTORI (ed.), *Il nuovo Vogel. Bibliografia della musica italiana vocale profana pubblicata dal 1500 al 1700*, Pomezia, 1977, III, p. 203.

⁶⁹ ROSSI, *op. cit.* (see note 23), Bk IV, no. 19, p. 295, and EINSTEIN, *op. cit.* (see note 10), II, p. 843.

⁷⁰ Maffei's discourse on singing, contained in his *Libri due*, Naples, 1562, is reprinted in N. BRIDGMAN, "Giovanni Camillo Maffei et sa lettre sur le chant", *Revue de musicologie*, XXXVIII, 1956, pp. 3-34.

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verse form), the 'air' is primarily a vehicle for textual recitation. The relative simplicity of the music, as Howard Mayer Brown has shown, served to provide a skeletal framework for virtuoso improvisation. The ornaments Maffei added to the superius of an anonymous three-voice setting of Petrarch's sonnet *Vago augeletto che cantando vai*, published in the Neapolitan anthology of *Aeri raccolti* (1577), exemplify how embellishments were applied by singers to simple repetitive schemes.⁷¹ His example is extreme when compared to Tromboncino's more judicious use of ornamentation, which in my view enhances the musico-poetic utterance rather than burying it.

a) ⁵
[va]-ji, O ver pian- gen- do il tuo — tem- po pas- sa- - to

b)
Io son fe- ri- to, ahi las- - so,
ahi las- so, et chi mi die- de? Ac- cu- sar pur vor-

⁷¹ See H. M. BROWN, "The geography of Florentine monody: Caccini at home and abroad", *Early Music*, IX, 1981, pp. 147-168, and his edition of "Vago augeletto che cantando vai", pp. 155-157.

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Ex. 7

- (a) G. C. Maffei, *Vago augeletto che cantando vai* (*Libri due*, 1562), mm. 5-9
 (b) Ippolito Tromboncino, *Io son ferito*, mm. 1-13

Chronologically, Tromboncino's 'manner' lies between the ornamentation manual of Ganassi's *Fontegara* of 1535 and Maffei's letter of 1562, but stylistically it is far less formulaic. As an expressive device, this moderate application of vocal ornaments is reminiscent of the art of a later and more famous *cantore al liuto*, Giulio Caccini. But in his own time, Tromboncino's influence can perhaps be seen in several madrigals embellished by the members of the Accademia Filarmonica. Verona 223 contains an anonymous setting of an ottava from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (XXXII, 19), *Sa quest' altier*, which shows how embellishments were added to the original superius. The unadorned superius was sketched above the staff, and the ornaments, apparently once tested by the singer, then written directly into the vocal line (Ex. 8). Although the setting is not characteristic of Tromboncino's style musically, the ornaments are similarly conceived.



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40

vuo- le, Che per star em- pio'l can-

45

t'u- dir non vuo- le.

Ex. 8

Anon., *Sa quest'altier* (Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, MS. 223, soprano partbook, fols. 10v-11), mm. 36-47

In contrast to *Sa quest' altier*, just how far a singer might go to embellish a madrigal is evident from Verona 223's version of Arcadelt's or de Ponte's setting of *Con lei fuss'io* (stanza six of Petrarch's sestina *A qualunque animal*).⁷² Not content with ornamenting the superius as in the previous example, this *cantore*

⁷² First printed in *Il primo libro d'i madrigali de diversi*, RISM 1542¹⁷, p. 36 where it is ascribed to Corteccia. In later editions it is ascribed to Arcadelt (RISM 1543¹⁷) and Jaches de Ponte (RISM 1546¹⁶). For modern editions, see J. ARCADELT, *Opera omnia*, VII, *Madrigali Miscellanei*, ed. A. SEAY, (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 31) American Institute of Musicology, 1969, no. 37 (after 1542), and *The Anthologies of Black Note Madrigals*, 1/2, ed. D. HARRÁN, (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, 73). The American Institute of Musicology, 1978, no. 36 (after 1543) and *ibid.*, p. LXVI for further concordances.

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a) 5 so- le, E non si ve- der al- tri che le stel-

b) 5 so- le, E non si ve- des- s'al- - tri che le stel-

le,

10 Sol u- na not- te, e mai non fos- se l'al- ba E non si

le, Sol u- na not- te, e mai non fos- se l'al- ba, E non si

Ex. 9

- (a) Arcadelt or Da Ponte, *Con lei fuss'io* (RISM 1543¹⁷, no. 36), mm. 5-13
 (b) *Con lei fuss'io* (Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, MS. 223, soprano part-book, Fols. 10v-11), mm. 5-14.

al liuto has also composed an awkward new melody where the original superius is silent (derived, apparently, from the original tenor voice), ornamented his 'insert aria', and altered the other parts to fit. (See Ex. 9 on p. 167).

Con lei fuss'io shows that singing ornamented madrigals to the lute was not in itself the qualification of excellence of which Atanagi spoke in his praise of Tromboncino's: there is a gulf separating the amateur *cantore al liuto* from a thoroughly professional composer, singer, and lutenist.

Ippolito Tromboncino has left us only six (possibly eight) lute songs; in the context of an otherwise barren mid-century, they show that the 'geography' of pre-monodic embellished singing must include the Veneto as well as its more southerly outposts. In all but ornateness, Dowland's earliest "ayres", four-voice madrigals and/or lute songs, continue the polyphonic traditions of the Venetian *cantori al liuto*. In Italy the tradition was briefly, if splendidly, resurrected in Salomone Rossi's *Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (Venice, 1600): six of these madrigals are provided with intabulations for eleven-course lute in the Canto partbook ("con alcuni di detti Madrigali per cantar nel Chittarone con la sua intavolatura posta nel soprano"). Tromboncino has also left us a glimpse of how a professional musician, composer, and virtuoso performer could begin to unite the art of improvised music to that of the academic and literary composers with which we are more familiar. His admired *maniera di cantare* is lost; and we, like Irene di Spilimbergo, must learn as best we may from his music alone.



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APPENDIX

Ippolito Tromboncino, *Donna, se 'l cor*

(a) Modena, Biblioteca estense, MS. C311, fols. 31v-32

(b) Verona, Accademia Filarmonica, MS. 223, basso partbook, fols. 4v-5

(c) [*Ricercar*] following (b)

a)

Don-na, se'l cor di ghiac-cio non ha-

b)

Don-na se'l

ve-te, Per-ché del mio do-lor, per-ché del mio do-lor non

cor di gh]iac-cio non ha-ve-te, Per-

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vi — do- le- - te, per- ché del mio do-lor

ché del mio do- lor non vi do- le- te, per- ché del mio do- lor non

This system contains measures 1 through 15. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. Measure 15 is marked with a '15' above the staff.

non vi do- le- - - te? Que- sto

vi do- le- - te, non vi do- le- te?

This system contains measures 16 through 20. It continues the vocal and piano parts from the first system. Measure 20 is marked with a '20' above the staff. The piano part includes a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line.

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dis- de- gno vo- stro la mi me- na Co- me di vi-

Que- sto dis- de- gno vo- stro la mi me- na

- ta in-de- - gno Do- v'è di mor- t'il - re-

Co- me di vi- ta in de- - gno Do- v'è di mor- t'il re-

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gno. Hor se'l — bel ————— vi- so vo- - stro, hor se'l —

gno. Hor se'l bel vi- - so vo- stro la mia pe- na, hor

This system contains measures 35 through 38. It features a vocal line with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 35 is marked with a '35' above the staff.

bel ————— vi- so vo- stro la mia pe- na Di pie- tà non co-

se'l bel vi- so vo- stro la mia pe- na Di pie- tà non co-

This system contains measures 39 through 42. It continues the vocal and piano parts from the first system. Measure 40 is marked with a '40' above the staff.

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lo- ra, Chi può far ch'io non mo- ra, chi può

far ch'io non mo- ra, chi può far ch'io non mo- ra?

far ch'io non mo- ra, chi può far ch'io non mo- ra?

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c) [Ricarcar]

5

10

15

20