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# BEYOND THE COURTIER

Music and Lifestyle Literature in Italy

c. 1480 - 1530

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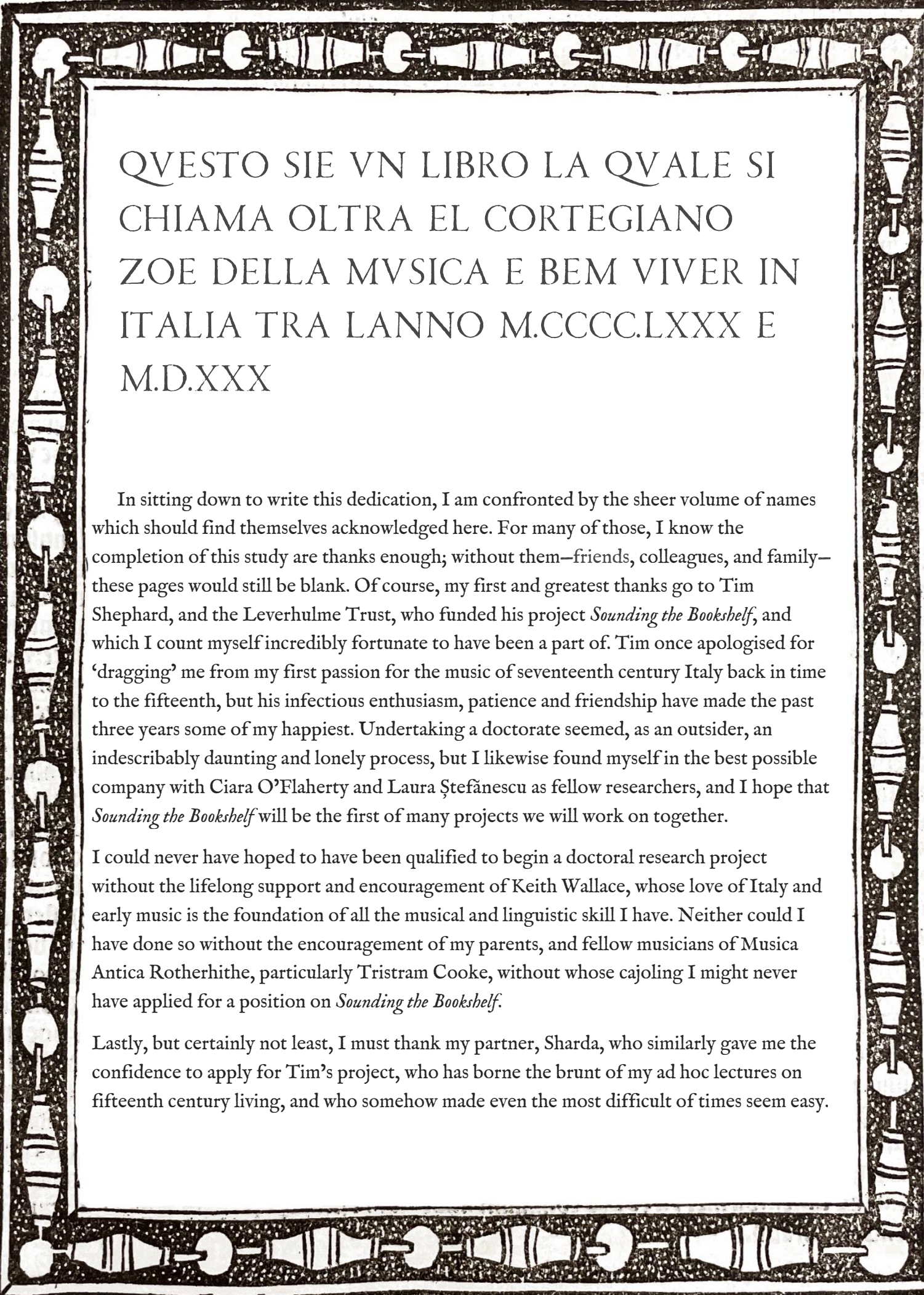


# ABSTRACT

Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*) is undoubtedly the most frequently quoted source in studies of music and lifestyle in the Renaissance. However, it was but one of many printed conduct texts forming part of a wider body of 'lifestyle literature' in circulation during Castiglione's lifetime. This thesis seeks to survey what these texts say about music, and how they might add to our understanding of musical engagement in Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century.

What might be considered 'lifestyle literature' during this period is indistinct; given the belief that a reader's choice of material had an impact on their morality and behaviour, all literature was arguably lifestyle literature. As such, I have surveyed a broad range of texts, the contents of which might have influenced the way people engaged with music or might reflect contemporary views on music. This includes grammatical texts and educational treatises, treatises on pastimes, poetry, conduct literature, literature on health and wellbeing, on astrology, and on music itself. Perhaps owing to the broad nature of this field, and the seemingly tangential relationship of much of it with music, many of these texts have yet to be considered in a musical context. To organise this body of literature into a coherent study, I have decided to follow the scheme of the *ages of man*, tying the musical contents of these texts to an activity or attribute which has traditionally defined each age.

Throughout, I have aimed to use these texts to present evidence of musical thought and engagement across the boundaries of class and gender, namely, *beyond the courtier*, and thence to give a more comprehensive overview of music in the lifestyle literature in circulation during this period than has been attempted thus far.



QVЕСТO SIE VN LIBRO LA QVALE SI  
CHIAMA OLTRA EL CORTEGIANO  
ZOE DELLA MVSICA E BEM VIVER IN  
ITALIA TRA LANNO M.CCCC.LXXX E  
M.D.XXX

In sitting down to write this dedication, I am confronted by the sheer volume of names which should find themselves acknowledged here. For many of those, I know the completion of this study are thanks enough; without them—friends, colleagues, and family—these pages would still be blank. Of course, my first and greatest thanks go to Tim Shephard, and the Leverhulme Trust, who funded his project *Sounding the Bookshelf*, and which I count myself incredibly fortunate to have been a part of. Tim once apologised for ‘dragging’ me from my first passion for the music of seventeenth century Italy back in time to the fifteenth, but his infectious enthusiasm, patience and friendship have made the past three years some of my happiest. Undertaking a doctorate seemed, as an outsider, an indescribably daunting and lonely process, but I likewise found myself in the best possible company with Ciara O’Flaherty and Laura Ștefănescu as fellow researchers, and I hope that *Sounding the Bookshelf* will be the first of many projects we will work on together.

I could never have hoped to have been qualified to begin a doctoral research project without the lifelong support and encouragement of Keith Wallace, whose love of Italy and early music is the foundation of all the musical and linguistic skill I have. Neither could I have done so without the encouragement of my parents, and fellow musicians of Musica Antica Rotherhithe, particularly Tristram Cooke, without whose cajoling I might never have applied for a position on *Sounding the Bookshelf*.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I must thank my partner, Sharda, who similarly gave me the confidence to apply for Tim’s project, who has borne the brunt of my ad hoc lectures on fifteenth century living, and who somehow made even the most difficult of times seem easy.

Non è libro alchuno tanto inepte che di quello qualche fructo staccava.<sup>1</sup>

*There is no book so inept that it cannot yield something of value.*

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<sup>1</sup> John Hothby, *Tres Tractatuli Contra Bartholomeum Ramum*. Florence, Bib. Naz. Cent., Magliabecchiana XIX, 36 fol.74r

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

The popularity of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*) remains ever as it was. Draft copies of it were distributed (with and without Castiglione's permission) by 1518, and in the decades following its first printed edition in 1528, it received no less than six translations, with editions published across Europe.<sup>1</sup> In twentieth-century musicology, it may hold pride of place as the most-cited text of the sixteenth century, whether with regard to the place of music in the education of the courtier, the means by which a woman can perform for an audience without scandal, whether men should play music at all, and the nature of that key ingredient to performance, musical or otherwise: *sprezzatura*.<sup>2</sup>

James Haar was the first to point out in print that *Il Libro del Cortegiano* contained nothing that wasn't available to musicologists elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Its value to the musicologist, rather, is twofold. Firstly, as a piece of conduct literature, it provides exemplars for courtly behaviour through the stipulations made by Castiglione's *brigata* for the ideal courtier, and indeed through their own comportment over the course of the four evenings during which their conversations take place. One might presume that these exemplars reflect the ideal of Castiglione's time, and through the immense popularity of *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, went on to influence the courtly ideal across Europe, and thus the interests and behaviour of its courtiers and the aspiring middle classes.

A second virtue is that Castiglione's *mise-en-scene* places so much pertaining to musical culture and understanding within the world of courtly, postprandial *otium*, a framework

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 1–2. For Vittoria Colonna's distribution of copies, much to Castiglione's consternation, see 38.

<sup>2</sup> See especially James Haar, "The Courtier as Musician: Castiglione's View of the Science and Art of Music," in James Harr and Paul Corneilson, *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 20–37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.



within which the very conversations which make up *Il Libro del Cortegiano* take place. Here music discussed in one of the social settings in which it was also listened to, played, and danced. Castiglione introduces these conversations as part of a wider scheme of evening entertainments, which include games and ‘frequent’ music and dancing, and it should not be forgotten that the conversations are games in themselves: while Castiglione reflects on the traits of the perfect courtier most evidently through the dialogue between his *personaggi*, their behaviour in playing a game of conversation arguably says as much about the nature of the ideal courtier as do their views.<sup>4</sup> One such example is a frequently encountered armament in the musicologist’s arsenal: the debate between the young Gaspar Pallavicino and Count Lodovico de Canossa on whether music is a suitable pastime for the gentleman. When Gaspar Pallavicino charges that music is a ‘vanity’ with the power to ‘effeminise’ the mind, Canossa’s defence of the art is delivered in the form of a classical *laus musicae*, calling on the time-honoured authorities of Plato and Aristotle regarding the importance of music in education, the Spartans and Cretans for its use in war, and Achilles’ use of music in leisure, to refute Pallavicino’s claim: how could anything practiced by the warlike Spartans, Cretans and mighty Achilles be effeminate?<sup>5</sup> Through a display of the classical learning that an ideal courtier should be able to call upon at any time, Canossa presents the younger man with a checkmate. Their debate is not purely an argument between a lover of music and one of its detractors, nor simply a vehicle for Castiglione to propagate music’s importance in the scheme of the courtier’s accomplishments. It is an intellectual game in which the most erudite player wins, and a warning to the young courtier, mirrored, as we shall see, across the literature of the period: speak only when you have something well informed to say. Reading this episode in such a way also offers something else of importance to the musicologist: in one fell swoop, Canossa evidences the importance of *musica practica* in private leisure, and *musica speculativa* in avoiding embarrassment in the learned conversations that were a common form of entertainment amongst the gentility of Castiglione’s day.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On the ludic nature of the *Book of the Courtier*, see Thomas M. Greene, “Il Cortegiano and the Choice of a Game,” *Renaissance Quarterly* vol. 32, no. 2 (Summer, 1979), 173–186.

<sup>5</sup> Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Giulio Preti (Torino: Einaudi, 1965), 78–79.

<sup>6</sup> On learned conversation as *otium* and the role of the plastic arts, music and collectorship in fuelling it, see Chriscinda Henry, *Playful pictures: Art, leisure, and entertainment in the Venetian Renaissance home* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 2, 10–11 and 37–8.

The value of *Il Libro del Cortegiano* to the musicologist studying music in the early sixteenth century court is unquestionable: it places elements of practical and speculative music within a social setting—that of a courtly gathering—and through the course of the text addresses musical topics as diverse as styles of singing; ideal comportment when asked to perform and during performance; issues regarding the age and gender of a performer; the nature of the music most often performed in such a setting, and the value of music education. Coupled with its relative accessibility to modern scholars, however, this arguably precludes the role that any number of other printed sources could play in improving our understanding of music in the life of late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy, not only in the context of the court but at all levels of society. This thesis sets out to address this. What can be learned about music in Italian lifestyle in the decades around the year 1500 when using printed ‘Lifestyle Literature’ published in the 50 years prior to the print publication of *Il Libro del Cortegiano* as a primary source? Perhaps more importantly, what, if anything, can those texts tell us about contemporary attitudes to the role of music in lifestyle—encompassing a range of aspects including music education, performance practice, and the social and medical uses of music—beyond the limited social sphere of the court?

### 0.1 Lifestyle Literature and the reader at the turn of the sixteenth century

This study grew out of research conducted in my role as a researcher on the Leverhulme Trust-funded project *Sounding the Bookshelf 1501: Musical Knowledge in a Year of Italian Printed Books*, led by Professor Tim Shephard at the University of Sheffield. As a team of four researchers, we read every book printed in Italy in 1501 cover-to-cover, searching for references to music, sound and hearing, to ascertain what information pertaining to music a reader might have encountered when browsing the stocks of a Venetian bookseller towards the end of the year.<sup>7</sup> The 358 titles listed on the USTC (Universal Short Title Catalogue; [www.ustc.ac.uk](http://www.ustc.ac.uk)) as being printed in 1501 were accordingly divided into four categories:

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<sup>7</sup> On the premise of *Sounding the Bookshelf*, see Tim Shephard, Laura Ștefănescu, Oliver Doyle and Ciara O’Flaherty, “Reading for Musical Knowledge in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy: Introduction,” *Renaissance Studies* (2023), online pre-print: <https://doi.org/10.1111/rest.12911>.

religious texts, comprising around 30% of the sample; books on the Liberal Arts, including commentated editions of ancient and medieval texts on logic, rhetoric, and astronomy accounted for 20%; legal texts accounted for 10%; literature, including poetry and prose in the vernacular and Latin, another 20%. The final 20% was broadly defined as *lifestyle literature*.<sup>8</sup> As its title suggests, this category included a number of texts addressing how to live well: for example, *Cibaldone* excerpting advice on the benefits and dangers of certain foodstuffs from the third book of the *Almansore* of the ninth-century Persian physician Abu-Bakr Al-Razi; Bonvensin de la Riva's *Vita Scholastica*, a hugely popular text from the late thirteenth century onwards, prepared as a conduct guide for students and teachers; and texts that are now better known to scholars, such as Bartolomeo Platina's cookbook *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine*, and Marsilio Ficino's *De Vita Libri Tres*. Of course, such texts were not alone in defining how the reader lived. Grammars presented those children fortunate enough to receive a Latin education with the foundations for the eloquence which, as we shall see, made them highly prized members of society. Astrological texts, from scholarly tracts such as Abu Bakr al-Hassan ibn al-Khasib's *Liber Nativitatum* to ephemeral prognostica, suggested how the stars might influence the development of a child's character and ultimate fate, as well as the likelihood of wars, famine and other misfortunes. Such texts present a considerable overlap with the category of Liberal Arts literature, but their contents undeniably influenced the lives of a great number of readers, and in the case of astrological and medical literature, non-readers also.<sup>9</sup>

The breadth of texts encompassed by the rather contrived term 'Lifestyle Literature' thus distinguishes itself from and envelopes the more familiar genre of Conduct Literature, of which the *Il Libro del Cortegiano* is the sixteenth century's brightest example. In terms of fashioning a tool for the division of labour necessary for such an ambitious project, the definition of Lifestyle Literature within the confines of *Sounding the Bookshelf* was wholly acceptable, particularly as the outcome of the project was a co-authored book presenting an overview of musical learning across the gamut of texts published in 1501. However, in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter I.

defining the limits of this study I soon concluded that our definition was technically too narrow. Romances, and the poetry of the *cantimpanche* which has come down to us in chapbooks sold by the performer after performances, often have moralising sentiments.<sup>10</sup> In *De Librorum Educatione* (1450) the humanist (and later pope Pius II) Enea Silvia Piccolomini provides detailed instructions as to which of the poets of antiquity should be taught to boys, and which were to be avoided on moral grounds.<sup>11</sup> His contemporary Leonardo Bruni offered similar advice on reading material for women. His first choice of texts for the education of a gentlewoman were sacred, but he also offered Cicero, Virgil, Livy and Sallust as models to read and emulate in writing style, and later the philosophers Epicurus, Zeno and Aristotle, ‘for the guidance they give in life.’<sup>12</sup> Indeed, reading Latin was generally considered to be morally uplifting, but the man or woman lacking a classical education who could nonetheless read in the vernacular might avail themselves of any number of works on the saints, or an array of texts entitled ‘the manner’ or ‘institution’ of *bene vivendi*, offering examples from the lives of the saints on how to live well.<sup>13</sup> One such text, the *Modus bene vivendi in christianam religionem*, purportedly a sermon delivered by Bernard of Clairvaux to a young nun, was printed five times in Venice between 1490 and 1500. In his study of leisure in Italy from the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries, Alessandro Arcangeli notes the wide dispersal of comments and instruction on leisure across literary genres due to the attention it garnered from moralists, jurists and physicians.<sup>14</sup> One could almost argue that, whether through the design of the writer or the interpretation of the reader, almost all literature of the fifteenth and early sixteenth

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<sup>10</sup> Blake Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy: Memory, Performance, and Oral Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 116.

<sup>11</sup> Enea Silvia Piccolomini, “The Education of Boys,” in *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. and trans. Craig W. Kallendorf, The I Tatti Renaissance Library 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 126–259, at 221–3.

<sup>12</sup> Leonardo Bruni, “The Study of Literature,” in *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. and trans. Kallendorf, 92–125, at 97–9 and 107.

<sup>13</sup> On the perceived virtue of reading Latin in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 315.

<sup>14</sup> Alessandro Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.

centuries was lifestyle literature, as so much of it bore moralising undertones, if not explicit instruction.<sup>15</sup>

The benefits to the modern researcher of reading such a breadth of literature are obvious: even setting aside the possibility of discovering previously unknown sources directly pertinent to the study of music, the reader is acquainted with a broad spectrum of topics which influenced daily life, and is better able to situate music within that scheme. The monumental task of systematically surveying musical references in all Lifestyle Literature published between the years 1480 and 1530, however, is not one to which this study can lay claim. Neither would a narrower study of all that could be more specifically termed ‘Conduct Literature’ in this period be practical, considering so much of interest is scattered throughout a wider body of similarly instructive literature, as proved by *Sounding the Bookshelf*. My approach, rather, has been to build on the research undertaken as part of *Sounding the Bookshelf*, limited almost exclusively to texts printed in the year 1501, by cherry-picking texts from the wider period 1480–1530, based in part on the types of texts which yielded the most musical knowledge in our *Sounding the Bookshelf* sample, and in part on those which have already received scholarly attention, but not necessarily musicological attention. The result is a diverse, but I hope not unworkably vast, array of printed texts: prognostica, versified histories and *cantimpanche* chapbooks, medical texts both scholarly and popular, grammars, encyclopaedias, *novelle*, a book of jokes, published letters, ancient and medieval scientific texts, and conduct literature.

The nature of these texts and what we can suppose was their intended readership varies drastically from title to title. The Latin medical and astrological treatises discussed here would almost certainly have had a relatively limited readership of practitioners, university professors, students, and other learned men with a particular interest in purchasing or perusing a copy.<sup>16</sup> Taking two texts from the same fields by way of example, the short vernacular *Cibaldone* compiled from Abu-Bakr Al-Razi’s *Almansore*, mentioned above, and

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<sup>15</sup> Helena Sansom, “Introduction. Women and Conduct in the Italian Tradition, 1470–1900: An Overview,” in *Conduct Literature for and about Women in Italy 1470–1900. Prescribing and Describing Life*, ed. Helena Sansom and Francesco Lucioli (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016), 9–38, at 13.

<sup>16</sup> For one instance of a non-medical professional showing familiarity with the writings of Aulus Cornelius Celsus’ *De Medicina*, in this case the music theorist Nicolò Burzio, see pages 256–8.

vernacular prognostica present more ephemeral forms of print designed to translate scientific knowledge into a form both comprehensible and affordable for the masses.<sup>17</sup> In the field of conduct literature, publications like the collected works of Giovanni Pontano issued by Bernardino I Viani in Venice in 1501—an imposing folio volume of no fewer than ten Latin texts on topics like beneficence, liberality and magnificence—differ sharply from the *Decor Puellarum*, a quarto published by the press of Nicholas Jensen thirty years beforehand, which appears to have been written in a very specific form of the vernacular in an attempt to make it comprehensible by readers of varying levels of ability across Northern Italy.<sup>18</sup>

The diversity of subject matter, language and the materiality of these texts has been at the fore of my attempt to uncover evidence of attitudes to music and musical knowledge on the Italian peninsula irrespective of the boundaries of social class and gender, though any study of the culture of what Carlo Ginzburg refers to as the ‘subordinate classes’ possesses several limitations.<sup>19</sup> With so much of the culture of this period being oral—and particularly that of the lower classes—the only records which survive of that culture were often written by intermediaries whose accounts are distorted by bias and misunderstanding.<sup>20</sup> Any study relying on printed texts as evidence of the promulgation of ideas and conduct during this period must also acknowledge that even vernacular literacy are difficult to estimate, but that literacy rates were certainly low, even in urban areas, and abilities varied. Rosa Salzberg suggests that only 33% of boys, and 12-13% percent of girls received any formal literacy education in Venice during the sixteenth century, and while a much higher percentage might have learned the rudiments of reading at home with their mothers, were able to keep an account book or write their name, that did not guarantee their ability to comprehend more lengthy texts.<sup>21</sup> Roger Chartier’s reflection on the historiography of ‘popular’ print

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<sup>17</sup> On evidence for the use of the vernacular to appeal to a non-Latin readership, especially those of the lower classes, and the price of such texts, see Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 1-28.

<sup>18</sup> On the language of the *Decor Puellarum*, See page 233.

<sup>19</sup> See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), xiii-xv.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>21</sup> Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 9, and Tiziana Plebani, *Alle Donne Che Niente Sanno: Mestieri Femminili, Alfabetizzazione e Stampa nella Venezia del Rinascimento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2022), 27-8.

and culture, “Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France”, likewise serves as an ever-important reminder of the difficulties of relying on printed texts as a means of divining contemporary culture, pointing to the sparsity of books in post mortem inventories made during the early sixteenth century, and the likelihood of their presence in rural households, far removed from booksellers of any kind, was even lower.<sup>22</sup> Even the most frequently printed texts surveyed in this study—their reissue suggesting a degree of popularity—were read by a substantial minority of the population.

Adding some complexity to the issue of book ownership, and some evidence of greater distribution than inventories would impress, is the fact that the cheapest print on the market in the decades around the year 1500—in the case of a collection of poems attributed to Leonardo Giustinian, costing no more than a *soldo*, half the price of a loaf of bread—was so inexpensive that its presence in households was ignored in post mortem inventories, the main purpose of which was to ascertain the value of an estate.<sup>23</sup> Books were also shared widely—the loaning of books being considered a ‘duty of friendship’ in Florentine society of the fifteenth century—their borrowers sometimes copying or commissioning copies, or excerpting passages into commonplace books for reference or to aid memorisation.<sup>24</sup> Neither was this literary culture limited to the upper echelons of society; as Dale Kent notes, many Florentine poets of the fifteenth century were first and foremost tradesmen.<sup>25</sup> The absence of texts from post mortem inventories, then, does not always guarantee that the deceased was not a reader, as the texts they owned might either have been omitted from the record of their possessions, or have been in the possession of a friend at the time of their death. Salzberg’s study of the culture of cheap print in Venice, *Ephemeral City*, gives good reason to believe that short vernacular texts were diffuse and their market large—whether a reader purchasing a printed text or someone listening to a performance, spoken or sung, of its contents—from the end of the fifteenth century onward. Indeed, these texts stand as a

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Chartier, “Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France,” in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven Caplan (Berlin; New York; Amsterdam: Mouton, 1984), 229–253, at 238–240.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 246. On the price of print in early sixteenth century Venice, see Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Dale Kent, *Cosimo de’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron’s Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 74.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

reminder that the printed word and the orality were not at odds, but that a complex relationship existed between the two, the nature of which it is beyond the scope of this study to unpick. In only one instance does a text surveyed in this study refer to non-readers in the context of the dissemination of the printed word; the *Decor Puellarum* suggests several prayers and psalms which the literate girl or woman might learn and say throughout the day, but recommends the illiterate (*chi non sa legere*) limit themselves to the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*.<sup>26</sup> The onus for this was presumably on the reader, who could instruct the illiterate girls and women within her circle. As isolated as this example might be in the scope of this study, it nevertheless evidences the porous walls between written and oral culture, literacy and illiteracy, through which knowledge could pass.<sup>27</sup>

A partner text to the *Decor Puellarum* also issued by the Jensen Press in the 1470s, the *Palma Virtutum*, addresses itself to the strata of literate male urban society, each in turn, in descending order of prestige, beginning with officials, (*officiali*), teachers (*rectori*) and students (*scolari*), and ending with merchants (*mercadanti*), and shopkeepers (*botigieri*).<sup>28</sup> Though far from complete, this list admonishes us that vernacular readers could be found scattered throughout the urban population during this period, and it is on these grounds that I have sought to focus on the broad range of literate society, rather than confining myself to a study of music in courtly or religious circles. As Chartier has noted, these readers would most likely have been city-dwellers, and any mention of members of rural society here is subsequently limited.<sup>29</sup> Of course, whether readers of the *Palma Virtutum*—or of any text—took heed of its advice regarding their musical leisure is a problem long since identified in studies of conduct literature.<sup>30</sup> What such texts do display, as Ginzburg points out, is a need on the part of the author to effect behavioural change, and this is no less valid a line of enquiry.<sup>31</sup> In some cases, the disparity between lived experience and the ideals of

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<sup>26</sup> ‘et chi non sa legere dica septe pater nostri et septe ave marie per compieta’. *Decor Puellarum* (Venice: Nicholas Jensen, [1471]), fol. 46v.

<sup>27</sup> On the interplay between oral culture and the written word, see Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Palma Virtutum* (Venice: Nicholas Jensen, [1471]), fols. 7v–8r.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of discrepancies between urban and rural education and lifestyle through the lens of a contemporary text, see pages 71–3 of the present study.

<sup>30</sup> Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark, “Introduction,” in *Medieval Conduct: Texts, Theories and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), ix–xx, at ix.

<sup>31</sup> Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, xv and xvii.



the author are evident in their very need to be published, and more useful to us, perhaps, than any proof that their writings were taken to heart; a particularly colourful example in the *Decor Puellarum* comes in the form of the author's castigation of musical women, whom he links to 'whores' (meretrici): here is proof of secular women engaging in musical activity, and some of the earliest proof in print of music as a tool of the courtesan, studies of which are normally confined to the sixteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

Of course, considering printed texts, or any literature in isolation of contemporary society would nonetheless stymie any hope of identifying what trace of the intersection between theory and lived reality remains.<sup>33</sup> As such, in the course of writing this thesis I have surveyed music treatises, both printed and manuscript, and a wider body of letters, diaries, archival records, and images, most of which are already known to modern scholars, but without some awareness of which, to my mind, no study of music and lifestyle of this period would be complete. These include the surviving letters of the female humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whose work went unpublished in our timeframe, but which provide an indispensable insight into the leisure of middle and upper-class women. While increasing attention has been paid to the musical lives of noblewomen of this period (particularly Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia), women and girls in religious communities, and courtesans, the experiences of other groups largely fall between the cracks. Tantalisingly, those usually excluded from consideration include the handful of professional female musicians active in Italy during this period whose names have come down to us, including no less than the wife of Marchetto Cara, Giovanna Moreschi, and Anna Inglese, who in spite of not-insubstantial documentary evidence have only received two studies, both by Bonnie Blackburn.<sup>34</sup> While it falls beyond the scope of this study to seek out the documentary evidence which might fashion these names into three-

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<sup>32</sup> *Decor Puellarum*, fol. 57r–v. The literature on musical courtesans is substantial and growing; for a recent work on musical courtesans in the sixteenth century, see Laura Ventura Nieto, "An alluring sight of music: the musical 'courtesan' in the Cinquecento," *Early music*, vol. 51 (1), (2023), 116–125.

<sup>33</sup> Ashley and Clark, "Introduction," xii.

<sup>34</sup> See Bonnie Blackburn, "Anna Inglese and Other Women Singers in the Fifteenth Century: Gleanings from the Sforza Archives," in *Sleuthing the Muse: Essays in Honour of William Prizer*, ed. Kristine K. Forney and Jeremy L. Smith (Hillsdale: Pendragon 2012), 237–52; and Blackburn, "Professional Women Singers in the Fifteenth Century: a Tale of two Annas," in *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 476–485.

dimensional figures, I can, I believe, add to our understanding of the issues they faced in performing music thanks to a selection of sources addressing female conduct, and general conduct in musical performance.

## 0.2 The place of this study within the field of musicology and wider Renaissance studies

This study is far from the first to consider a broad range of literature in constructing the lifestyle of people living in Italy during the Renaissance; in the breadth of literature discussed, in many ways it is a direct response to a call made in 2001 by Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark for studies of conduct, in their case of the middle ages, to look to texts ‘that have not normally been construed as conduct literature.’<sup>35</sup> It is, however, among the first to use the analysis of printed texts across a variety of genres as the basis for a consideration of music in the lifestyle of Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century. In recent years, a number of studies have taken a similarly cross-disciplinary approach to integrating music into the wider culture of Italy during this period, and have served as models for my research. In her recent study *Playful pictures: Art, leisure, and entertainment in the Venetian Renaissance home*, Chriscinda Henry offers a full consideration of the role of music, games, architecture, and the plastic arts within the aristocratic Venetian home (and the home of the courtesan).<sup>36</sup> Marta Ajamar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis’ *At Home in Renaissance Italy* similarly offers a superlative, cross-disciplinary study of the domestic sphere.<sup>37</sup> In *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, Blake Wilson brings together research on cityscapes, politics, memory and otium in examining the practice of the humanist song *ad lyram* and vernacular song *in sulla lyra*.<sup>38</sup> Tim Shephard has published several studies of music and art in Italy before 1540, with *Sounding the Bookshelf* being the first musicological study to cross-section

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<sup>35</sup> Ashley and Clark, “Introduction,” xii.

<sup>36</sup> Chriscinda Henry, *Playful pictures: art, leisure, and entertainment in the Venetian Renaissance home*.

<sup>37</sup> Marta Ajamar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis ed., *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V&A Publications, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*.

the printed word available to an early sixteenth-century Italian by systematically reading all the texts printed on the Italian peninsula in one year.<sup>39</sup>

The first published survey of conduct literature in the Renaissance was Ruth Kelso's *The doctrine of the English gentleman in the sixteenth century, with a bibliographical list of treatises on the gentleman and related subjects published in Europe to 1625*, followed almost thirty years later by her *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*.<sup>40</sup> Drawing on literature published from the advent of printing to the mid-seventeenth century from across Western Europe, she produced exhaustive bibliographies of conduct books that account for almost every aspect of the life of an English gentleman and European gentlewoman of the period. Their exhaustive nature is both a strength and a weakness; Kelso often cites numerous texts from across widely differing geographical regions and chronologies for any given statement, making it difficult to ascertain whether her information was obtained from a text printed in Italy in the sixteenth century or France in the seventeenth (for example). One such instance, found in *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, is particularly pertinent to this study: in discussing the way in which a woman should perform music before an audience—'in a low voice and without oblique looks, but with reverence and shame in her face'<sup>2</sup>—Kelso indistinguishably cites five sources: Giovanni Michele Bruto's *Institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (Anvers: Jehen Bellere, C. Planatain pr, 1555); John Jones' *The art and science of preserving bodie and soul in al health* (London: Ralph Newberie, 1579); Jean Bouchet's *Epistres Morales* (Poitiers: Jacques Bouchet, 1545); Eustorg or Hector de Beaulieu's *Les divers rapports* (Lyon: Pierre de sancta Lucie, 1537); and Luis Vives' *De institutione feminae Christianae* (Basel: Robertum Winter, 1523).<sup>41</sup> In this instance, it is Bruto's advice that most closely matches Kelso's description. Although it could be argued that Kelso's approach shows some continuity of custom across Western Europe during the sixteenth century, taken alone it requires the reader to make some potentially dangerous assumptions: for instance, was

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<sup>39</sup> For Shephard's work on music and art in Renaissance Italy, see in particular *Echoing Helicon: Music, Art and Identity in the Este Studioli, 1440–1520* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*.

<sup>40</sup> Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century, with a Bibliographical List of Treatises on the Gentleman and Related Subjects Published in Europe to 1625* ([Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1929]) and *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Bruto's view on the acceptable circumstances and manner in which a woman might perform music current across the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

Stefano Lorenzetti's *Musica e identità nobiliare nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Educazione, mentalità, immaginario* is perhaps the most thorough discussion of music in Italian conduct literature to have been built explicitly on Kelso's work.<sup>42</sup> Although Lorenzetti considers a number of texts in circulation during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries at the outset of his work, his focus is fixed, first and foremost, on texts published in Italy during the latter half of the sixteenth century, a period he identifies as having experienced a boom in the publication of conduct literature, based on data drawn from the extensive bibliography of conduct texts which Ruth Kelso's work provides.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, part of the motivation of this study is to discuss the period of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries not as a precursor to a late-sixteenth century golden age, but in its own right. Historically, the reasons for the overwhelming popularity of the latter half of the sixteenth century for study by musicologists have been credited to a lack of surviving sources, the unavailability of modern editions of musical sources and, in the case of Italian music history, the 'Segreto del Quattrocento', what was once seen as an almost total pause in musical output in Italy during the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Other recent studies making considerable use of printed texts benefit similarly from modern standards of accuracy but often forego any real consideration of music. Rosa Salzberg's examination of the connections between cheap printed texts and oral culture, particularly that of Venice's *cantimpanche*, is a notable exception.<sup>45</sup> Alessandro Arcangeli consciously places music outside the limits of his consideration, judging it too large an area of study to include in his survey

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<sup>42</sup> Stefano Lorenzetti, *Musica e identità nobiliare nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Educazione, mentalità, immaginario* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2003), 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–6.

<sup>44</sup> This term was coined by Fausto Torrefranco, *Il Segreto del Quattrocento: Musiche Ariose e Poesia Popolare* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1939). For an early refutation of this idea, see Nino Pirrotta, "Music and Cultural Tendencies in 15th-Century Italy," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1966), 127–161. See also James Haar, "The Puzzle of the Quattrocento," in *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350–1600* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1986), 22–48. The wider issues involved in modern musicological study of the fifteenth century are touched upon in the introduction to *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1–18.

<sup>45</sup> Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*.

of recreation in the Renaissance.<sup>46</sup> The works of Paul F. Grendler and Robert Black, required reading for any study of education in Renaissance Italy, similarly exclude music.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, they stand in contrast with the much earlier work of Nan Cooke Carpenter, who strove, often in the face of conflicting evidence, to assert music's place in the curriculum of the University of Padua, providing two starkly opposed views on musical life at universities in Italy to which a third, more tempered approach, has only recently been added in the form of contributions by Paolo Rosso, Paola Dessì and Elda Martellozzo Forin.<sup>48</sup> One final study to mention in this vein is Rudolph M. Bell's *How To Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians*.<sup>49</sup> In much the same way as the present study, Bell structures his survey of the literature into five chapters, tying his texts to various life stages, from the conception of a child to their marriage. However, even in a survey with a strong focus on courtship and seduction - two activities strongly linked to various kinds of musical practice - music receives only four mentions: two regarding its sinfulness, and two its soothing powers.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps such omissions are understandable, as they require knowledge of an area of study that has traditionally been completely separate from that of history or the study of literature. The result of this, however, is highly problematic, as the multitude of ways in which music played a part in daily life fall silent. Looking at the ballad singer in the broader historical landscape of eighteenth and nineteenth century London, Oskar Cox Jensen addresses this, citing the traditional, artificial disciplinary boundaries described by Georgina Born as precluding a relational musicology—and truly interdisciplinary musicology—on the one hand, and a lack of interest in music on the part of historians on the

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<sup>46</sup> Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> See in particular Paul F. Grendler's *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991) and *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001); and Robert Black's *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> See Nan Cooke Carpenter's *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958) and "Music in the Medieval Universities," *Journal of research in music education*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1955), 136–144. It is worth noting that Carpenter includes a great deal of illuminating archival evidence of extra-curricular musical activities at Italian universities. For Rosso, Dessì and Forin's invaluable contributions to the field, see Paola Dessì ed., *Music in Schools from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021).

<sup>49</sup> Rudolph M. Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 185 and 189, 162 and 192. On music and courtship, see Chapter III.

other.<sup>51</sup> Cox Jensen approached his musicological topic as a historian, and here I approach a body of sources comprising mainly of grammars, conduct books, scientific texts ephemeral prints—traditionally the realm of the historian, perhaps—from the perspective of a musicologist. Approaching such sources with a musicological bent can hardly be taken to address this issue entirely, or indeed to reveal the musical practices of this period with complete certitude; the potential gap between written theory and lived experience is ever present.<sup>52</sup> However I do hope to show how printed texts, and particularly those which might seem to be completely irrelevant to the musicologist at first glance, present an under-utilised source which can help to improve our understanding of how music was perceived in this period.

### 0.3 Presenting the literature to the modern reader

Collating material from such a diverse range of sources into a cohesive study presented several challenges. Dividing the literature by category—astrological tract, scientific text, poetry, grammar, medical textbook, novella—was an obvious answer, but not without its shortcomings. For instance, if two sources, one a conduct book for the prince and another a chapbook of poetry performed and sold by a *cantimpanca*, both addressed the study of the Liberal Arts, would analysing them in separate chapters be the best way to consider how the Liberal Arts were seen at the time of their printing? Given that the Renaissance reader might seek moral instruction or general life guidance in a range of sources—Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene*, or a prognosticon bought for loose change in the piazza—would a discourse moving from genre to genre, chapter by chapter, be rendered unhelpful by delineations that artificially segment the far more organic means through which a reader might encounter a text? Writing at a distance of over 500 years, one could argue that any distinctions I were to draw between literary genres in structuring my study would be

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<sup>51</sup> Oskar Cox Jensen, *The Ballad-Singer in Georgian and Victorian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 12–13, and Georgina Born, “For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn: The 2007 Dent Medal Address,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 135, No. 2 (2010), 205–243.

<sup>52</sup> Ulrike Tancke, *‘Bethinke Thy Selfe’ in Early Modern England: Writing Women’s Identities* (Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2010), 12.

artificial, diverging on even the minutest terms from contemporary thought and usage.<sup>53</sup> However, it seemed that a structure which allowed for a continual comparison of texts of all kinds throughout the discourse, and where consideration of the role they may have played in people's lives was employed creatively at a structural level, might make for clearer and more engaging discussion.

The seminal text in devising such a structure was the *Albubather*, a 'book of births' written in the Middle East around the late ninth century, translated into Latin in 1218, published in Venice in 1492, and reprinted in 1501.<sup>54</sup> It offered detailed prognostications for any aspect of a newborn's future life—from the likelihood of baldness to a predilection for sexual depravity—drawn from the positioning of the stars throughout the gestation period. It also offered no small amount of insight into how musical skill might be influenced by the stars, linked, along with any number of other talents and professions, to the character traits, morality and humoral properties associated with the celestial bodies and constellations. The text would most likely have had a limited readership—lecturers and students of astrology, Latin readers with disposable time and a passing interest in the art—but its contents would have been passed on in consultations, used to draw up birth charts, and it presents striking concordances with more accessible forms of ephemeral print, namely prognostica and astrological imagery such as the popular 'Children of the Planets' images, suggesting a degree of currency in contemporary culture. If seeking information of this nature was of such importance to an expectant parent of the period, could the rest of my sample be similarly allotted to key moments in the life cycle, following music in a Renaissance life from conception to the grave?

In structuring my study along such a line, my initial temptation was to use a fictitious or conceptual life as a thread. Fiction has been used by Tess Knighton, and more recently by Tim Shephard (no doubt amongst others) to illustrate aspects of their research, which falls within much the same timeframe as my own.<sup>55</sup> I decided early on, however, that this would

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<sup>53</sup> Sansom, "Introduction", 13.

<sup>54</sup> For a full discussion of this text, see Chapter I.

<sup>55</sup> See Tess Knighton, "A Day in the Life of Francisco de Peñalosa (c. 1470–1528)," in *The Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. Tess Knighton and David Fallows (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 79–84; and Tim Shephard, Sanna Raninen, Serenella Sessini and Laura Ștefănescu, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy* (London: Harvey Miller, 2020), 5–6.

drastically limit the story I wanted to tell. In order to present the texts I have studied at their fullest, my conceptual Renaissance life would necessarily have been lived by a male who was lucky enough to have attended school and attained a high degree of Latin literacy. To examine the impact of these texts on our understanding of music in the lives of women or members of higher or lower levels of Italian society would require a narrative involving multiple characters or vignettes, that would obfuscate a structure that already had potential for a clear narrative and some creative appeal. So instead, I have taken a looser path through a Renaissance life, allowing myself to freely turn my attention from man to woman, *vilano* to *zgentiluomo*, within a framework based on a well-known trope: the *ages of man*. This is a popular though vastly changeable schema.<sup>56</sup> In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Jacques describes seven ages:

All the world's a stage,  
 And all the men and women, meere Players;  
 They have their exits and their entrances,  
 And one man in his time playes many parts,  
 His Acts being seven ages. *At first the infant,*  
 Mewling, and puking in the Nurses arms:  
*Then, the whining schoole-boy*, with his satchell  
 And shining morning face, creeping like snaile  
 Unwillingly to schoole. *And then the lover,*  
 Sighing like furnace, with a wofull ballad  
 Made to his Mistresse eye-brow. *Then, a Soldier,*  
 Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the Pard,  
 Jealous in honor, sodaine, and quicke in quarrell,  
 Seeking the bubble Reputation  
 Even in the Canons mouth: *And then, the justice*  
 In faire round belly, with good Capon lin'd,  
 With eyes severe, and beard of formall cut,

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<sup>56</sup> Sanna Raninen, "No Country for Old Men? Aging and Men's Musicianship in Italian Renaissance Art," in *Music and Visual Culture in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Chriscinda Henry and Tim Shephard (New York: Routledge, 2023), 268–280, at 268.



Full of wise sawes, and moderne instances,  
 And so he plays his part. *The sixth age shifts*  
 Into the leane and slipper'd Pantaloone,  
 With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;  
 His youthfull hose, well sav'd, a world too wide,  
 For his shrunke shanke, and his bigge manly voice,  
 Turning againe toward childish trebble pipes,  
 And whistles in his sound. *Last Scene of all,*  
 That ends this strange eventfull history,  
 Is second childishnesse, and meere oblivion,  
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.<sup>57</sup>

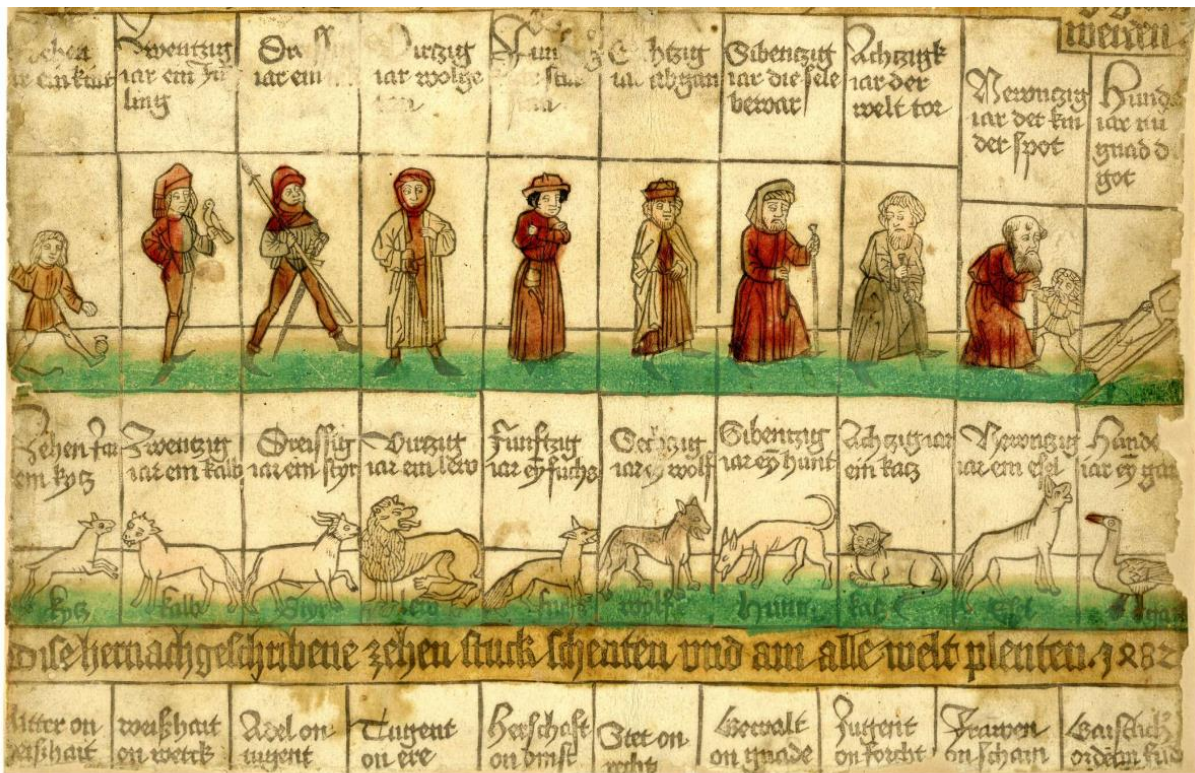


Figure 0.1: *The Ten Ages of Man*, Augsburg(?), late fifteenth century. The British Museum, 1872,0608.351. Here each of the ages is also accorded an animal (for instance, a lion for maturity, a goose for death) and a proverb, something which continued in similar depictions into the nineteenth century.

<sup>57</sup> William Shakespeare, "As You Like It," Act II Scene vii, in *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blout, 1623), 194. Italics to direct the reader to the ages are my own.

Hippocrates also gives seven ages, and so does Proclus on the basis that each age was ruled by a different celestial sphere.<sup>58</sup> Solon gives ten, each lasting seven years, while Aristotle only gives three: youth, prime, and old age.<sup>59</sup> These variants appear across the plastic arts. A late fifteenth-century German print now in the care of the British Museum, gives ten ages including death (fig. 0.1).

A work by Titian housed in the National Gallery of Scotland (NGL 068.46), depicting a sleeping infant, an amorous pastoral couple engaged in suggestive music-making, and a much older man seated alone at some distance from the viewer and contemplating two skulls, has come to be known as *The Three Ages of Man*. A similar fate has befallen a work by Giorgione, displayed in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence; although its original purpose is unknown, it too is commonly described as a depiction of *The Three Ages of Man*.<sup>60</sup>

The scheme I have adopted has four ages: gestation and infancy, childhood and adolescence, young adulthood, maturity and seniority. For each I have adopted a title narrowing my focus to an aspect of music and lifestyle pertinent to that age, namely music in astrological literature (*De Nativitate*); education (*De Educatione Puerorum*); music and love (*De Amore*); and music and judgement (*De Iudicio*). The first three of these titles function as direct references to several pertinent texts: the ‘nativities’, or books of births, in circulation during our timeframe; the profusion of humanistic educational treatises entitled variously as *De Liberos Educatione*, *De Educatione Liberos* or *De generosa liberos educatione*; and a similar profusion of treatises on love entitled *De Amore*. For the fourth chapter, *De Iudicio*, I have chosen to condense the traditional separation of maturity from seniority on two grounds.<sup>61</sup> The first of these is medical; the physician Gabriele Zerbi, who devoted a book to the subject of caring for the elderly, the *Gerontocomia* (Rome: Eucharius Silber,

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<sup>58</sup> For a convenient summary of different schemes in the ancient world see Cornelia G. Harcum, “The Ages of Man: A Study Suggested by Horace, *Ars Poetica*, Lines 153–178,” *The Classical Weekly*, vol. 7, no. 15 (Feb. 7, 1914), 114–118, at 115.

<sup>59</sup> Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, Trans. J. H. Freese. Loeb Classical Library 193 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), II.12.

<sup>60</sup> On the commonality of this assumption, see Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, 8. For an example of this painting’s usage to illustrate the three ages of man in a musicological context, see Raninen, “No Country for Old Men?” 275–6. See pages 265–6 of the present study for a discussion of this image in the context of music in seniority.

<sup>61</sup> On the traditional separation of these ages, see Raninen, “No Country for Old Men?” 268.

1489), suggests that old age can begin as young as thirty years of age.<sup>62</sup> The second is that the development of good judgement was considered, to some extent, a natural part of the aging process—beginning in maturity—but this good judgement was also crucial to living in a way which would mitigate the onset of the effects of aging. The pertinence of each topic to its respective age is testified by sources throughout history too numerous to begin listing, but which is handily summarised above by Shakespeare.

This study's first chapter takes the form of a survey of music in the books of births published in Italy between 1480–1530, including the aforementioned *Alubather* or *Liber Nativitatum*, and in naming it after a period of gestation and infancy I take a further liberty with the traditional ages of man. My reasoning behind this is twofold. Firstly, I felt the 'nativities' literature too important, and as yet too lacking in detailed musicological study, to deny it a dedicated chapter. Secondly, and more importantly, I believe the emphasis placed on the character traits and humoral properties of the stars exposes a worldview which, once understood, surfaces again and again in the lifestyle of the period. It is commonly known, perhaps, that foodstuffs and animals were accorded a balance of the four qualities of matter and four humours, and that Galenic medicine advocated a balance of these for the maintenance of rude health.<sup>63</sup> However, books of nativities make it clear, through the importance placed on the balance of the planets in forming a well-rounded individual, that a balance of the qualities and humours was also crucial in creating a strong and fair mind, and that activities linked to the planets were also seen to bear their qualities. Thus, as we shall see, humoral theory applies to healthy love and unhealthy lovesickness and lasciviousness, to the sound judgement of the patriarchal figure, whether prince, judge, or father, and to the decrepitude of old age. Morally upright music has one quality, and the degenerate, linked to frivolity and *sodomitas*, another; and while the prescription of music to distract oneself from illness, or of practicing music to maintain healthy brain function in older age have a sound empirical basis even by today's standards, humourism provided part

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<sup>62</sup> 'cuius pars una senectus prima appellatur: quem in homine a trigesimo vel trigesimoquinto aut quadragésimo incipiens anno fere'. Gabrieli Gabriele Zerbi, *Gerontocomia* (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1489), fol. 6v; *Gerontocomia: On the Care of the Aged and Maximianus, Elegies on Old Age and Love*, ed. and trans. L. R. Lind (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), 29: 'In man this period (old age) begins from the thirtieth or thirty—fifth or fortieth year more or less.'

<sup>63</sup> See pages 237–8.

of the theoretical underpinning for its efficacy.<sup>64</sup> Naturally, a system based on achieving the optimum balance of elements complements another, oft-quoted basis for the benefits of good music: the platonic conception of the soul itself as harmony, which must ideally be attuned to the wider harmony of the universe. Indeed, Arcangeli notes that the four humours and primary qualities (hot, cold moist and dry) are intimately tied to the four elements, the four seasons and the ages of man, binding the human form and soul to the wider cosmos.<sup>65</sup> Although such theories were far from universally accepted, as demonstrated by contemporary writings decrying the practice of astrology and the polemics between Neoplatonic and Aristotelian thought, I believe it is impossible to begin ‘seeing [hearing] the world through Renaissance eyes [ears]’, as far as that is ever possible, without recognising the importance astrology held in daily life. I hope to demonstrate that this applies equally to music, thanks to the web of positive and negative characteristics that books of births enable us to align with different musical practices of the period.

This structure, then, allows me to collate the study of a wide range of texts into a navigable order, and in turn focus on areas of music in everyday life of the period 1480–1530 which are unstudied, or where sources which have the potential to add to our understanding have been studied thoroughly in one field but not yet incorporated into the musicological sphere. This is particularly true of the elementary grammars. Printed and sold in greater numbers than any other books of this period, they represent one of the only tangible remnants of musical knowledge in the classroom outside of the cathedral school, via chapters on the identification and application of Latin meters. Of course, in terms of deciphering how a child might have learned the rudiments of music, they fall far short of comparably elementary and explicitly musical textbooks from this period, most notably Bonaventura da Brescia’s hugely popular *Regula Musice Plane*.<sup>66</sup> However, in an age in which

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<sup>64</sup> For a recent study on the potential benefits of music to health in older age, see Thomas Schäfer and Jasmin Riedel, “Untersuchung der Nutzungsweisen und psychosozialen Ressourcen. Listening to music in old age: Investigation of utilization and psychosocial resources,” *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, vol. 51 (2018), 682–690.

<sup>65</sup> Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance*, 19.

<sup>66</sup> To this one might add the anonymous and deftly titled *musices non inutile Compendium* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1499) and Francesco Caza’s abridged translation of Franchino Gafori’s *Practica Musicae*, the *Tractato Vulgare di Canto Figurato* (Milan: Leonardo Pachel, 1492). However neither was reprinted, while the *Regula Musice Plane* went through no less than 21 editions before 1530.

improvisatory and *cantasi come* practices prevailed, an understanding of meter was hugely important for the musically minded, whether composer, improviser of Latin lyric, or amateur lutenist, fitting pre-existing music to newly encountered verse.<sup>67</sup> Such practices are well-known to scholars, but how someone might have acquired the necessary skill to fit words to music seamlessly, are among the issues this thesis will newly address.

I believe this study is much needed in our efforts to understand the role music played in daily life in Italy at the end of the decades around the year 1500. On the one hand, it utilises a broad range of literature in circulation during the period to showcase the myriad ways in which music played a part in the daily lives of Renaissance Italians of all ages, and a broader section of society than *Il Cortegiano* considers. On the other, I hope to contribute to the growing body of musicological literature evincing the benefits of studying texts which might have little musical pertinence when taken at face value, but bequeath a wealth of valuable material once read cover-to-cover.

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<sup>67</sup> *Cantasi come*: the practice of singing verse to a melody commonly associated with another text. For a dedicated study of the practice in Renaissance Florence, see Blake Wilson, *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The Cantasi Come Tradition (1375–1550)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009).

# CHAPTER I

## DE NATIVITATE

In his landmark study of *Music in Renaissance Magic*, Gary Tomlinson begins by addressing the ‘otherness’ of his subject—how no quantity of documentary evidence will truly allow us to comprehend the thoughts and experiences, particularly regarding the occult, of those gone long before us.<sup>1</sup> In a similar vein, at a distance of 500 years it is difficult to express, possibly as much as it is for us to understand, the true extent to which astrology permeated everyday life in Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Of course, many people across the Western world today have some idea of their horoscope, birth moons and star signs; on one occasion, after describing this chapter to a friend sometime in 2021, I was even given a cursory account of how the retrograde movement of Mercury was responsible for the general malaise affecting the UK. However, in 2015 a YouGov poll found that, while 55% of people believed in fate, only 20% believed that star signs had any bearing on reality, and only 4% had ever changed their behaviour based on a horoscope.<sup>2</sup> In the late Middle Ages, the positioning of the stars was used as a basis for the timing of any number of activities, from operating on a patient to taking a laxative.<sup>3</sup> Far removed from the vagaries one might find in print today regarding our fortunes, amongst even the relatively small selection of sources which inform this chapter one finds readings pertaining to almost every aspect of life, and more often than not even the most ephemeral material weights its arguments with detailed descriptions of the disposition of the cosmos. With the advent of printing, both weighty astrological tomes written at any point between the first century BC

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1–37.

<sup>2</sup> YouGov Poll, 1–2 July 2015. [https://ygo-assets-websites-editorial-emea.yougov.net/documents/InternalResults\\_150702\\_star\\_signs\\_Website.pdf](https://ygo-assets-websites-editorial-emea.yougov.net/documents/InternalResults_150702_star_signs_Website.pdf). Accessed: 11 January 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Brendan Dooley, “Introduction,” in Brendan Dooley ed., *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance* (Brill: Leiden, 2014), 1.

and the early fifteenth, and more contemporary, evanescent material, became widely encountered staples of the print trade.

The links between music and astrology are far from unknown; Tomlinson's study is but one of several to examine music in the life and work of Marsilio Ficino, and a number of scholars have examined the astrological implications of the depiction of music in the visual sphere.<sup>4</sup> The same attention has not been garnered by the full range of astrological texts, however, and this chapter serves to highlight the contribution which one subgenre of astrological literature might make to our understanding of how music was understood at the turn of the sixteenth century: the *Book of Births*.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1 The Book of Births in fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy

*Books of Births*, or more properly *nativities*, were practical texts, used to decipher how the movements and positioning of the celestial bodies—the sun, moon, Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—affected the development of a child (henceforth referred to as the *native*: the person associated with a birth chart) throughout the gestation period. Many of these were originally composed in Arabic and Persian but relied, to varying degrees, on the writings of the Alexandrian polymath Claudius Ptolemy (c.100–170), whose work was the foundation of much of the Arabic and Persian astrology which filtered into the west via Spain and Sicily, the most direct gates to the Arab world. It wasn't until the early sixteenth century that the Arab divergences from the Ptolemaic bible, the *Tetrabiblos*, began to be recognised and systematically separated.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, see Kristin Lippincott, "Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered: The Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala del Mappamondo at Caprarola," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 53 (1990), 185–207; Tim Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, especially 233–243.

<sup>5</sup> Much of the following is based on my research carried out as part of the Leverhulme Trust-funded project "Sounding the Bookshelf 1501: Musical Knowledge in a year of Italian Printed Books", led by Tim Shephard, the results of which are published in Oliver Doyle, "Musicianship and the Masteries of the Stars: Music and Musicians in the *Liber Nativitatum*," *Renaissance Studies* (2023), online pre-print: <https://doi.org/10.1111/rest.12912>.

<sup>6</sup> Ornella Faracovi, "The Return to Ptolemy," in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Dooley, 87–98, at 89.

The period between the early-twelfth and late-thirteenth century possibly witnessed the greatest interest in the translation of astrological literature from Arabic into Latin, exemplified by the establishment of the ‘School of Translators of Toledo’ under Alfonso X of Castile.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Arabic World, where Hellenistic astrological traditions seem to have remained unbroken from the second century AD, the acceptance of judicial astrology in Western Europe had been erratic before this point, rejected both by Roman Emperors and Christian potentates.<sup>8</sup> Although The School is the most systematic attempt at the wholesale translation of Arabic texts in Western Europe that we are aware of, it represents only a portion of the work carried out by scholars who travelled to Spain to benefit from the presence of Jewish scholars, who had a far greater acquaintance with Arabic texts than the average Latin scholar of the time could have hoped for. These travellers included the famous Michael Scot, who travelled to Toledo around the turn of the thirteenth century, and who completed his work with help from Jewish residents of the city.<sup>9</sup> In this way the *Albubather*, *Albumasar*, *Alfonsine Tables*, *Centiloquium* of Hermes Trismegistus and of Pseudo-Ptolemy, and indeed Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, amongst many other astrological works, were translated into Latin, and in the second half of the fifteenth century were joined by pseudo-Hyginus’ (c. 64 B.C.–17 A.D) *De Mundo et Sphaera* (Ferrara: Augustinus Carnerius, 1475) and Julius Firmicus Maternus’ (fl. early fourth century) *Mathesis* (Venice: Simon Bevilaqua, 1497) in print.<sup>10</sup> They were not necessarily costly: transactions preserved in the *Zornale* of the Venetian bookseller Francesco de Madiis show that a book in folio format could be bought for under 10 soldi, less than a day’s wages for an unskilled labourer living

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<sup>7</sup> Mariano Gomez–Aranda, “The Contribution of the Jews of Spain to the Transmission of Science in the Middle Ages,” *European Review*, 16(2), (2008), 169–181, at 170.

<sup>8</sup> Wolfgang Hübner, “The Culture of Astrology from Ancient to Renaissance,” in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Dooley, 17–58, at 17–18. As Hübner states, organised astrology appears to have originated in Babylon. For a detailed study of the relationship between the Babylonian system and the Ptolemaic system passed via the Arab world to the West, see Kathryn Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia: Hellenistic Intellectual History in Cross–Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). For the possible influence of Babylonian Astrology on early Chinese practice, see David W Pankenier, “Did Babylonian Astrology influence Early Chinese Astral Prognostication “Xing Zhan Shu” “星占術”?” *Early China*, vol. 37 (2014), 1–13.

<sup>9</sup> See José Chabás, “Interactions between Jewish and Christian Astronomers in the Iberian Peninsula,” in *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, ed. Gad Freudenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 147–154, at 149; and Wolfgang Hübner, “The Culture of Astrology from Ancient to Renaissance,” 17.

<sup>10</sup> On the transmission of the *Tetrabiblos* from the ancient world to the Latin Middle Ages, Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ed. and trans. Frank E. Robbins. Loeb Classical Library 435 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1940).



in Venice around the year 1490.<sup>11</sup> However, their format and language make it likely that they would have had a relatively small readership; the *Zornale* lists 62 sales of Michael Scot's *Liber physiognomiae* and only 33 sales of an *Ars ciromantie* between 1484–8, compared to 252 copies of Guarino da Verona's classroom text the *Grammaticales Regulae*.<sup>12</sup> The chief market for texts such as the *Liber Nativitatum* was likely composed of a small number of learned enthusiasts, and a greater body of scholars—both lecturers in and students of judicial and medical astrology. Two surviving copies of the text illustrate this aptly: a copy of the *Liber Nativitatum* is bound in a volume once belonging to Domenico Maria Novara, who taught astrology at the University of Bologna from 1483–1504; and another, preserved in the Wellcome Library in London, is signed by one 'Jo. Mariae Gambaruti', a physician from Alessandria in Piedmont.<sup>13</sup>

Astrologers were a common feature of Italian universities and court entourages, including at the Papal court.<sup>14</sup> However, the currency of astrology was by no means universal. The conflicts between the determinist nature of judicial astrology and the Christian doctrine of free will, as espoused first by St. Augustine, led to periodic clashes between unadulterated Church teaching and the syncretism which defined the Neo-Platonic movement.<sup>15</sup> The most famous case of this within our timeframe was the completion of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Disputationes adversus astrologos* in 1495, which challenged astrological determinism, and was subsequently adapted by Girolamo Savonarola in the vernacular as *Contro gli astrologi* and printed in 1497.<sup>16</sup> The place of astrology within the philosophy of even

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<sup>11</sup> Cristina Dondi, "From the Corpus Iuris to "psalterioli da puti," in Parchment, Bound, Gilt... The Price of Any Book Sold in Venice 1484–1488," *Studi di storia*, 13 (2020), 577–599, at 587.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 598–599.

<sup>13</sup> Novara's copy of the 1492 edition of the *Liber Nativitatum* is bound with a copy the *Liber Quadripartiti Ptholemei* (Venice: Boneto Locatello for Octaviano Scotto, 1493) and is preserved at the Biblioteca Universitaria, Bologna, shelfmark A.V.KK.VI.26.4. While it is the *Liber Quadripartiti* that bears Novara's signature, the *Liber Nativitatum* also bears amendments to the table of contents in his hand. The volume is the only text out of 26 books from Novara's library to have been identified. See Robert S. Westman, *The Copernican Question: Prognostication, Skepticism and Celestial Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 96–7. Gambaruti's copy is preserved at The Wellcome Library, London, shelfmark EPB/D/151.

<sup>14</sup> The courts of the successive popes Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X all included astrologers. Josefina Rodríguez-Arribas, *Astrolabes in Medieval cultures* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Steven Vanden Broecke, "Astrology and Politics," in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Dooley, 193–232, at 225.

<sup>16</sup> Ovanes Akopyan, *Debating the Stars in the Italian Renaissance* (Brill: Leiden, 2021). 128.

such a figurehead of the practice as Ficino has become notoriously complex.<sup>17</sup> In Liber IV of his letters, he references the completion of his *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum* in a letter to Francesco Mareschalchi dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 1477, returning to the ‘vain pronouncements of the astrologers’ (*vana astrologorum iudicia*) as a theme in an undated letter to Francesco Ippoliti.<sup>18</sup> Yet in Liber IX he includes a letter, dated 29 August 1489, to Martin Preninnger, acquiescing to a request for Ficino’s natal chart.<sup>19</sup> In spite of this, the popularity of astrology remained largely undinted throughout much of the sixteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

While the readership of *nativities*, comparably—academic astrological literature, and also the arguments for and against its practice, may have been relatively small, the information contained in astrological tracts filtered down to non—specialists and non—Latin readers (and indeed non—readers) in several ways. The first, and most limited, was through university lectures. The second, with a considerably wider reach, was through prognostica—predictions for the coming year—covering anything from the likelihood of wars to the fortunes of artisans, students, musicians, merchants, and labourers. The University of Bologna had enshrined the need for an annual prognostication, to be produced by a lecturer on spherics and theorics, in its statutes of 1404, and from the mid-1480s these were routinely printed in Latin and also in simplified vernacular translations, a practice adopted across northern and central Italy.<sup>21</sup> These commonly take the form of chapbooks of no more than six leaves, but required the assimilation of a large amount of astrological literature to produce; in 1452, an astrologer in the service of the Sforza, Antonio da Camera, wrote that he would be unable to create an *operetta* (presumably a prognostication) and

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<sup>17</sup> For an in—depth discussion of astrology within Ficino’s philosophy, see Maria Sorokina, “Une Source Inconnue De La Disputatio Contra Iudicium Astrologorum De Marsile Ficin: La Summa De Astris De Gérard De Feltre,” *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2015), 169–189.

<sup>18</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Epistolae Marsilii Ficini Florentini* (s.n. Nuremberg?): Antonio Koberger, 1497), fols. 117r–v and 120v–121r respectively. For English translations see *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. from the Latin by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vol. 1 (London: Shephard–Walwyn, 1981), at 63–4 and 75–6.

<sup>19</sup> Ficino, *Epistolae*, fol. 201r–v. For an English translation see *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. from the Latin by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vol. 8, ed. Clement Salaman, (London: Shephard–Walwyn, 2009), at 25–6.

<sup>20</sup> Graziella Federici Vescovini, “The Astrological Debate,” in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Dooley, 99–140, at 99.

<sup>21</sup> Westman, *The Copernican Question*, 90.

calculations for Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta without travelling from Milan to Ferrara and then to Mantua in order to consult certain books.<sup>22</sup>

An even more accessible form that astrological science took was in the visual sphere. Well-known examples of the application of astrological imagery in the design of private and public spaces include the ceilings of the Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala del Mappamondo at Caprarola, and examples of music-making linked with the planets have been identified in the Sala della Ragione in Padua and the Salone dei Mesi in Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara.<sup>23</sup> Among the most commonly encountered however are *Children of the Planets Prints*. These popular images, first evident in Europe in the fourteenth century, depicted each of the seven celestial bodies, under which were shown the activities and people proper to each.<sup>24</sup> As we shall see later, these are somewhat simplified, being unable to take into account the complex networks of interplanetary relationships that were purported to influence a person's skills or character by Arabic astrology, but they generally concur with the more learned sources, and with similar astrological imagery created for the elite.

The final way in which the contents of *Books of Births* were disseminated beyond their immediate readership was through consultations. These were given by a practitioner in a consultation room in much the same manner as a modern doctor.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in the dedication to his *Iudicio sopra la dispositione de l'anno 1501* (Bologna: Andrea de Bellacorda, 1501), Marco Scribanario mentions such a space, and Pietro Bono Avogario's *Prognosticatio de anno 1497*

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<sup>22</sup> Monica Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Milan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 248.

<sup>23</sup> On the Sala di Galatea and Sala del Mappamondo, Lippincott, "Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered"; on the Sala della Ragione see Eleonora M. Beck, "Representations of Music in the Astrological Cycle of the Salone della Ragione in Padua," *Music in Art*, vol. 24, no. 1/2 (Spring–Fall 1999), 68–84; on the Salone dei Mesi, see Marina Alfano, "L'armonia di Schifanoia: Allegoria musicale nel Rinascimento," in *Lo zodiaco del principe: I decani di Schifanoia di Maurizio Bonora* (Ferrara: Maurizio Tosi, 1992), 71–80.

<sup>24</sup> On this image type see Dieter Blume, "Children of the Planets: The Popularisation of Astrology in the 15th Century," *Micrologus*, 12 (2004), 549–63.

<sup>25</sup> William Eamon, "Culture and Society," in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, ed. Dooley, 141–191, at 150.

(Florence: Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri, c.1496–1497) was printed with a picture of an astrologer in his studio, surrounded by the books and tools of his trade (fig. 1.1).<sup>26</sup>



**D**Remissa la configuratione delli corpi celesti liquali delle cose future danno a noi notitia: a me cresce gran cura di enarrare quello che gli mori minacciano douer uenire. Et chi nō spauerebbe le cose future significare: di quelle nō essendo terminata uerita? Ma pche molti di questo feco lo agli superiori aspetti sono subiecti: & certi effecti p certo moto nascere uediamo: al gran circolo del zodiaco sono significatione/come laereo sopra laere: laqueo sopra lacqua/ dice el figliuolo di Ameto negli capitoli presentati al gran Re de Saracini. Et p tanto per gli moti prenotata la figura puo l'astrologo securamente/ma nō precisamente dire: ma come quello che dal ugi la cosa uede non puo dire esser necessario douer uenire: pche gli giudici

Figure 1.1: The astrologer's studio. Pietro Bono Avogario, *Prognosticatio de anno 1496* ([Ferrara: Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri], c.1495–96), fol. 1r.

<sup>26</sup> 'Et considerando al ponte mi a niuno modo poterte giovare me son reducto al mio delectenole studio della Astrologia.' Marco Scribanario, *Iudicio de Marco Scribanario da bologna sopra la disposition de l'anno 1501* (Bologna: Andrea de Bellacorda, 1501), fol. 1r.

This was perhaps the most common means by which a non-Latin reader could have encountered the knowledge contained in *nativities* in any detail. Records from the late sixteenth century show that the astrologer Simon Forman in London gave some 10,000 consultations between 1596 and 1601.<sup>27</sup> The reasons for wishing to consult an astrologer, preserved in Forman's casebooks, were many, from wanting to know the chances of finding love, to the likelihood of retrieving a lost object. For those wishing to know how the stars would affect an unborn child, or wanting a retrospective natal chart for themselves, *nativities* provided the means for an astrologer to add any amount of descriptive depth to the natal charts they might draw up on commission. A natal chart covered every aspect of the native's life - their physical form, mental aptitude, general fortune, and any disasters that they should be wary of.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, in his *Gerontocomia* Gabriele Zerbi advocates seeing an astrologer to obtain a natal chart, reckoning it the best means of avoiding an early demise and useful in the general prolongation of good health.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, constructing a natal chart appears to have been the first recourse of the astrologer tasked with divining any given matter. When Barbara Hohenzollern Gonzaga wrote to the Agnese del Maiano enquiring after the conduct of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the planned match for her daughter Dorotea, in 1460, Agnese claimed to have asked several astrologers to study his nativity (ho facto vedere la nativitate sua da molti astrologhi) in order to refute any question of his inclination to vice through the disposition



Figure 1.2: 'Dog seated in a cart' signifying a lazy native. Johannes Engel, *Astrolabium Planum* (Venice: per Lucantonio Giunta, 1502), fol. 59v.

<sup>27</sup> Eamon, "Culture and Society", 157.

<sup>28</sup> A compendium of such charts can be found in Johann Engel's *Astrolabium Planum* (Augsburg: Erhard Ratdolt, 1488; Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1502), and a more opulent example, painted by Baldassare Peruzzi c.1511 and possibly depicting the natal chart of Agostino Chigi (1466–1520), adorns the ceiling of the Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina, Rome. For a detailed study of the latter, see Kristin Lippincott, "Two Astrological Ceilings Reconsidered".

<sup>29</sup> 'astrologus enim optimus adversa plurima prohibere poterit secundum stellas ventura'. Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 9r. For a complete rendition of Zerbi's commendation in English, see Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 35.

of the planets (non è per alcuno pianeta inclinato ad alcuno vizio).<sup>30</sup>

Such charts were incredibly complex to execute. Broaching this, and returning to the visual sphere of astrology's influence, in 1488 Johannes Engel published a monumental and highly pictorial guide, the *Astrolabium Planum* (reprinted in Venice in 1494 and 1502) containing astronomical calculation tables and 360 examples of horoscopes with images pertinent to a particular personality trait (see fig. 1.2).

Beyond any practical advice these charts were seen to offer, there is no small evidence that they were also objects of entertainment. In Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna*, a game taking players from one end of a book to the other via chance operations in search of an advisory horoscope, Fanti concludes with no fewer than 1,628 similar charts with accompanying advice in verse, apportioned to 74 notable sibyls and astrologers (several of which are authors of *nativities*).<sup>31</sup> What is more, he also includes a key on how to read these natal charts above the colophon. Although Fanti's inclusion of natal charts in a game—book is, to my knowledge, unique, it is but one of several such games of chance filled with pictorial references to astrological knowledge, showing a certain delight amongst the middle and upper classes in deciphering the importance of such images, to the point where a science was translated into a parlour game.<sup>32</sup> More opulent examples include the aforementioned ceiling of the Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina, Rome, painted by Baldassare Peruzzi c.1511 and possibly depicting the natal chart of Agostino Chigi (1466–1520).

William Eamon posits that the popularity of astrology lay in that it gave people some sense of agency in uncertain times, and prognostica printed in Italy around the turn of the sixteenth century focus overwhelmingly on predicting the possibility and outcome of conflict, a chief preoccupation for people living in a region torn apart by the Italian Wars, and under the threat of Ottoman incursions. In an age of high maternal mortality rates, poverty and violence, *nativities* gave astrologers some authority in assuaging the uncertainty

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<sup>30</sup> Letter dated 27 December 1460, transcribed in Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 259–60. For Azzolini's discussion of the letter see pages 90–1.

<sup>31</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the *Triumpho di Fortuna*, see Annabel Page "Music and love in Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna* (1527)," *Early Music*, vol. 51, (1), (2023), 69–90.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

of everyday life, and the methods of their transmission—from short, vernacular prognostica to viva voce consultations—meant that elements of their contents reached a wider audience than their scholarly Latin might initially imply. Unfortunately, no records that might have been kept by Italian astrologers serving a wider clientele than the court, as Simon Forman’s records evidence, are known to survive, rendering it difficult to know how commonly private citizens would request consultations. We are slightly better served with evidence of the currency of printed prognostica in this period; the Ferrarese courtier Girolamo Ferrarini noted in his chronicle that the people (publice) had credited Pietro Bono Avogario with accurately predicting the assassination of Galeazzo Maria Sforza in 1476 earlier that year, both Ferrari and his fellow chronicler Bernardino Zambotti quoting the relevant passage from Avogario’s prognosticon almost exactly.<sup>33</sup> Evidently, the contents of Avogario’s prognosticon had disseminated, whether in their written form or orally.

The occurrence of musical activities in *nativities* is widespread, though the degree to which music appears in the *nativities* published between 1480 and 1530 is highly variable. In order to survey these occurrences as clearly as possible, I will begin with the *Albubather*, or *Liber Nativitatum* of Abu Bakr al-Hassan ibn al-Khasib, which goes into the greatest detail regarding music while maintaining considerable clarity (something that cannot be said for Firmicus’ *De Nativitatibus*), before noting concurrences and contradictions with other *nativities* and associated astrological material, such as the *Astrolabium Planum*, and several prognostica of the period.

## 1.2 The *Liber Nativitatum* and its transmission

The *Liber Nativitatum*, *De Nativitatibus* or *Albubather* (Venice: Aloviusus de Sancta Lucia, 1492; Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1501) represents the first printed edition of the first-known Latin translation of the *Kitāb al-mawālīd*, or Book of Births, of Abu Bakr al-Hassan

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<sup>33</sup> Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 5. Azzolini provides the relevant passages from Ferrarini and Zambotti’s respective chronicles at 221.

ibn al-Khasib, a Persian astrologer writing at the end of the ninth century.<sup>34</sup> It is one of several *nativities* which had been translated from Arabic into Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and which were published within a half century of the advent of the commercial printing press. Although far from unknown to scholars, modern mentions of the text are often fleeting, dispersed across almost a century of academic writing, and limited to studies on the transmission of scientific texts from the Arabic world to the Latin. It was first translated around 1218 by Canon Salio of Padua, one of the number of scholars who travelled to Toledo in the early thirteenth century to benefit from the aid of Arabic readers there. The Arabic text from which Salio worked, and any Persian versions also created, have yet to be identified. Francis Carmody notes the survival of seven Latin manuscripts predating the first printed edition, with a common *explicit* stating that the work was translated by Salio.<sup>35</sup> Lynn Thorndike points out that one manuscript, Vienna MS. 8124, states that the work was completed in a Jewish quarter with the help of a Jewish scholar named David.<sup>36</sup> The first printing of 1492 was edited by Antonio Lauro and printed by Alovisius de Sancta Lucia in Venice. It was anthologised alongside two other astrological texts: the *Centiloquium Divi Hermetis*, a collection of one hundred aphorisms derived from the Hermetic tradition, translated from the Arabic by Stephen of Messina during his time at the court of King Manfred of Sicily between 1258 and 1266; and a similar summary, the *Almansoris Fudicia seu propositiones*, translated by Plato Tiburtinus sometime after his arrival in Barcelona in 1116.<sup>37</sup> Somewhat like Salio of Padua, Tiburtinus travelled to Barcelona in order to work on Arabic texts (most notably Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*), and collaborated with

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<sup>34</sup> Martin Gansten, "Samarasiṃha and the Early Transmission of Tājika Astrology," *Journal of South Asian Intellectual History*, 1 (2018), 79–132, at 101. The frontispieces of both the 1492 and 1501 editions name the text the *Albubather*, evidently a corruption of its author's name in a similar vein to 'Almansore' but name the text the *Liber Nativitatum* in the *explicit*. The Nuremberg edition of 1540 gives the title of the work as 'Alubatris... Liber genethliacus sive De Nativitatibus' (Nürnberg, Johann Petreius, 1540).

<sup>35</sup> Francis J. Carmody, *Arabic Astronomical and Astrological Sciences in Latin Translation: A Critical Bibliography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), 136–137.

<sup>36</sup> Lynn Thorndike, "A Third Translation by Salio," *Speculum*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1957), 116–117, at 116. This is omitted from the printed editions of 1492 and 1501 however, which simply state that the translation was completed in Padua in 1218.

<sup>37</sup> On the translation of the *Centiloquium Divi Hermetis* see P. Lucentini and V. P. Compagni, *I testi e i codici di Ermete nel Medioevo* (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 2001), 27. On the work of Plato Tiburtinus, see Charles E. Butterworth and Blake Andrée Kessel ed., *The Introduction of Arabic Philosophy into Europe* (New York: Brill, 1994), 11.



the Jewish mathematician Abraham bar Ḥiyya ha-Nasi in producing translations—most likely with Abraham acting as an intermediary, translating from Arabic to the vernacular, which Tiburtinus would then translate into Latin.<sup>38</sup> The three texts were reprinted, alongside Lauro’s preface, by Giovanni Battista Sessa in Venice in 1501.

Very little information pertaining to Antonio Lauro himself survives, though there is some testimony to his interest in astronomy and astrological texts, and the regard in which he was held. The *De rebus Congregationis* lists a comet sighting recorded by ‘Antonio Lauro, a Venetian priest’ on 6 January 1491.<sup>39</sup> He credits himself with having selected the primary sources for the first printed edition of another *nativity*, Julius Firmicus Maternus’ *De Nativitatibus* (Venice: Simone Bevilaqua, 1497); and a prognosticon written by the Moravian scholar Augustus Moravus, *Iudicium anno Domini 1494* (Padua: s.n., 1494), ends with an epistle to Lauro, in which Moravus apologises for abandoning his astrological studies to a young apprentice, but identifies Lauro as the impetus behind a swansong publication in the field.<sup>40</sup> Even this fragmentary evidence is enough to build a picture of the editor: a priest and humanist scholar, and part of a wide-reaching network of scholars with similar interests.

### 1.3 The nature of the celestial spheres in the *Liber Nativitatum*

The schema of characteristics for each celestial body contained within the *Liber Nativitatum* largely follows that found in Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, a debt acknowledged throughout the text and by the frontispiece to the 1501 edition, which depicts Ptolemy seated on a throne, canopied by the zodiac, and flanked by the figures of Astronomy and its Muse, Urania (fig.

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<sup>38</sup> Jean Delisle and Judith Woodsworth, *Translators Through History*, rev. edn. (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012), 123. If the colophons identified by Carmody are to be trusted over that given by the printed editions of 1492 and 1501, this process may well have been the same way in which the Latin version of the *Liber Nativitatum* was completed.

<sup>39</sup> Giovanni Francesco Bernardo Maria De Rossi, *De rebus Congregationis* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1751), 146. ‘Antonius Laurus sacerdos venetus 6 idus Ianuarii 1491 finivit primaque vigilia noctis cometa crinita appARENTE sereno celo spectantibus omnibus.’

<sup>40</sup> Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vols. 3–4, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 463.

Alubather.  
Et  
Centiloquium Diui Hermetis.



Figure 1.3: Frontispiece of the 1501 edition of the *Liber Nativitatum*.  
London, Wellcome Library, EPB/D/151.

<sup>41</sup> The association of Urania with the sphere of Fixed Stars, or ‘*Celum Stellatum*’, positioned above all the celestial bodies, adds weight to Lauro’s claim that astronomy is ‘prince of the liberal arts’ (*‘Astronomie: Omnium liberalium artium Principis’*). *Alubather. Et Centiloquium Diui Hermetis* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1501), fol. rv – and can be seen in the frontispiece of the first edition of Gafori’s *Practica Musicae* (Milan: Guillermus Le Signerre for Johannes Petrus de Lomatio, 1496).

At the simplest level, two of the four qualities of matter—hot, cold, moist and dry—are assigned to each planet, and govern whether each is considered beneficent, granting positive qualities, or maleficent, actively harming the individual influenced by them. Due to their moderately hot or moist nature, Jupiter, Venus and the Moon are beneficent, while the excessively hot and cold natures of Mars and Saturn and their shared dryness, qualities considered destructive, make them maleficent.<sup>42</sup> Thus, according to the *Liber Nativitatum*, while children born in the seventh month of pregnancy, ruled by the Moon, are considered complete, miscarriages are common in the eighth month due to the inhospitable nature of its ruler, Saturn.<sup>43</sup>

The potential impact of these beneficent and maleficent forces is modified considerably by the position of the relevant planet in the sky, with the characteristics of a newborn enhanced or diminished depending on whether a planet is in ascent or descent, is aspected by another beneficent planet, or is positioned in a favourable ‘House’ (the signs of the zodiac, of which each planet rules two).<sup>44</sup> The properties of the celestial bodies not yet mentioned—Mercury and the Sun—are deemed particularly mutable, making them neuter, and especially susceptible to conferring positive or negative characteristics depending on their position.<sup>45</sup> Each body is also gendered, and assigned a diurnal or nocturnal nature along gender lines: Venus and the Moon are feminine and nocturnal, Jupiter and the Sun masculine and diurnal.<sup>46</sup> Mercury again receives aspects of both. Mars and Saturn, although masculine, are assigned nocturnal and diurnal natures respectively in order to moderate their inhospitable natures: the moist night balances Mars’ excessive dryness, and the heat of the day Saturn’s frigidity.<sup>47</sup> With this mutability in mind, the astrologer Abū Ma‘šar, whose writings were circulated in Europe from the twelfth century onwards, cautioned against considering planets purely as good or evil.<sup>48</sup> However, in the *Liber Nativitatum* this does not

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<sup>42</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 39 (I.5).

<sup>43</sup> ‘Et frequenter multi illo mense nascuntur: et statim moriuntur’. *Liber Nativitatum*, fol. 2v.

<sup>44</sup> The ‘aspect’ is the angle planets make between one another in a horoscope. Those angles used by Ptolemy were the conjunction (0°), sextile (60°), square (90°), trine (120°), and opposition (180°). Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 73 (I.13).

<sup>45</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 39 (I.5).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 43 (I.7).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Richard Lemay, *Abū Ma‘šar and Latin Aristotelianism in the Twelfth Century: The Recovery of Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy through Arabic Astrology* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1962), 97–8.

prevent their natures from making Saturn and Mars inimical to musical ability, and indeed to communication in general. Saturn's influence is commonly conceived as detrimental to the native, with few exceptions, and this is no more evident than in passages in which the voice, hearing and musicianship are discussed, and where the favourable positioning of the more temperate and mutable planets grant the most desirable traits.

#### 1.4 Eloquence, hearing and the musician

Jupiter and Mercury are the planets most positively associated with hearing and eloquence, and in consequence with intelligence and musicality of varying levels. Their powers broadly follow those that can be inferred from their roles within the Greco–Roman pantheon—Mercury is associated with loquacity and wit, and Jupiter with a higher 'faith, sense, intellect and knowledge' befitting the king of the gods. In his ascension, Jupiter's beneficence extends elements of each of these to the native, culminating in prophetic powers:

Iuppiter habet dispositionem mensis secundi a casu seminis in matricem et ipse significat fidem: sensum: intellectum: et scientiam. CI Cum ergo in mense secundo fuerit fortis ac in sua ascensione id est ascendens in circulo suo: et addens in numero: disponet sensum nati et eius simplicitatem intellectum et sapientiam: et secundum eius ascensionem et elevationem disponet in eo sapientiam et fidem in dictis suis: et dabit ei scientiam quam non audivit: nec aliquis docuit sibi. CI Et si cum hoc in auge sua fuerit: significat quod erit recitator rerum: quas aliis nesciunt: et ponet in eis radices a se ipso: loquet[ur] cum providentia: et quasi propheta reputabitur.<sup>49</sup>

[Jupiter] will dispose the native's sense and their simplicity, intellect and understanding, and according to his ascension and elevation, he will dispose in them understanding and faith in their speech, and will give them knowledge of that which they did not hear, nor that they have been taught. And if also he is in his apogee, it

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<sup>49</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 3r.

signifies that he will be a reciter of things which others know not; and he will put the root of this in himself: he will speak with providence, and will be reputed to be like a prophet.

Mercury's qualities are no less beneficent. However, his traditional role as messenger of the gods manifests itself in a prediction of the native's servility, and predilection for pleasing others:

[Mercurius] est planeta doctrine eloquentie: ac scientie. Cum ergo in mense .6. mercurius in ascensione sua fuerit: natus erit bone eloquentie: ac hominibus verba eius placebunt: eritque magnorum virorum ac potentum secretarius.<sup>50</sup>

[Mercury] is the planet of teaching, eloquence, and knowledge. When therefore in the sixth month Mercury were in his ascension, the native will be of good eloquence, and his words will please men, and he will be secretary to great and powerful men.

The characteristics of both planets are then elevated or lessened depending on their position in relation to the other celestial bodies and the zodiac. When Jupiter is in the house of Mercury—either Gemini or Virgo—the native will be ‘born of amenable and keen words that attract men to him’.<sup>51</sup> A similar melding of characteristics occurs when Mercury is aspected by or in the house of Jupiter:

Et si mercurio sic disposito Iuppiter ipsum aspexerit: erit eloquentissimus: in libris sapiens et mirabilis sermocinator: ac multa super uno verbo proferens. Et si mercurius in domo vel termino Iovis fuerit: erit eloquentie bone: sapiens ac subtilis ingenii.<sup>52</sup>

If Mercury, so disposed, were aspected by Jupiter, he will be wonderfully eloquent: well-read and a marvellous speaker, and many words over few will he proffer. And if

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<sup>50</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 3v.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Et si in domo vel termino Mercurius fuerit: natus amenitate verborum ac sagacitate eorum attrahet homines ad se.’ *Alubather*, fol. 3r.

<sup>52</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 3v.

Mercury were in the house or bound of Jupiter, he will be well-spoken, knowledgeable and of a keen mind.

In contrast, when Jupiter is in descent, ‘it signifies the detriment of the native and the paucity of his intellect; neither will he do or say that which he has heard or seen in others’.<sup>53</sup> Mercury’s descent, meanwhile, signals one who ‘will be almost mute, especially so if he is in a sign without a voice’.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the text eloquence is portrayed as the most valued product of intelligence, and a lack of the former is often followed by a paucity of the latter, a continuation of ideas from antiquity linking civic virtue and utility with rhetorical prowess.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the *Liber Nativitatum* effectively stratifies society based on eloquence in a single sentence:

Preterea sciendum est quod aliqui sunt qui habent magisteria in loquela uoce et lingua: et alii qui operantur manu sicut scriptor: et alii qui operantur in computationibus venditionibus et emptionibus: et alii sunt qui sunt pigri sine magisterio.<sup>56</sup>

Therefore know that there are those who have majesty in voice and speech; and others who work with the hand, such as a writer; and others who work in the calculation of sales and purchases; and those who are lazy and without instruction.

The influence of the other planets and their houses on eloquence varies, though the effects imposed by Venus and Saturn’s influence are mentioned most frequently. In discussing the month of gestation ruled by Venus, she is given charge only over beauty and happiness. However, her positive influence serves to further ornament eloquence and beautify the voice: when Mercury is in the house or bounds of Venus, the native will be ‘a wonderful

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Et si Iuppiter in eius descensione fuerit: significat detrimentum nati et paucoitatem sui intellectus nec facit aut dicit quicquid ab aliis audivit ac vidit.’ *Alubather*, fol. 3r.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Quando si mercurius sic dispositus in descensione sua fuerit: natus erit quasi mutus maxime si in signis voce carentibus collocent.’ *Alubather*, fol. 3v. Those signs without a voice are described in fol. 10r as Pisces, Cancer and Scorpio.

<sup>55</sup> Most notably in Cicero and Quintilian, but following a chain of political thought extending back to Plato. For an extensive discussion of civic utility and rhetoric in Renaissance Italy, see James Hankins ed., *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>56</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 11v.

speaker, of gentle words'.<sup>57</sup> Saturn's influence is perhaps more complex. In his *De vita libri tres* (Bologna: Benedetto Faielli, 1501—among other editions), Marsilio Ficino considered Saturn, as highest of the planets, to be that which 'carries the investigator to the highest subjects'.<sup>58</sup> Aligned with this view, the *Liber Nativitatum* states that the native will still be of 'sound intellect and good intelligence' should Mercury reside in Saturn's house six months after conception.<sup>59</sup> However, Saturn's cold, dry nature also afflicts the native with 'a speech impediment, so that he will not express himself well.'<sup>60</sup> When in descent, Saturn's influence also contributes to impediments of hearing; in a chapter entitled 'on ailments of the ear', two separate dispositions of Mercury and Saturn result in the deafness of the native.<sup>61</sup> In ascent, Saturn's influence portends an equally negative interest in the arcane. Jupiter's residence in Saturn's house in the second month after conception is described as influencing an 'experimenter, who will seek to work marvels upon men and will trouble them by their wonder, both by lying and his art.'<sup>62</sup> Contemporary conceptions of the iniquitous nature of Saturn's power are exemplified by Scribanario's *Iudicio* for 1501, where he writes that Saturn in the house of Gemini signifies those who are 'prudent in the dark arts ... and that which makes man sad.'<sup>63</sup> Scribanario goes on to equate the study of dark arts with misfortune:

Li studenti de ogni facultade non saranno fortunati: et vederassi alcuni: liquali recitaranno cose incredibile: lequale saranno fincte: et dolose: et mancharanno li documenti: et boni costumi: et li secreti de nigromantia et fascinationi se scopriranno.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> 'Si mercurius in domo vel termino veneris fuerit erit in sermone et lingua mirabilis mansuetus verbo'. *Alubather*, fol. 3v.

<sup>58</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 57 (Tempe: The Renaissance Society of America, 1998), 121.

<sup>59</sup> 'Erit tamen sane cogitationis ac boni intellectus.' *Alubather*, fol. 3v.

<sup>60</sup> 'natus erit impedita lingue: Ita que verba sua explicare bene non poterit'. Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> In both cases Mercury's misfortune or retrograde movement causes Saturn to exert its most malign influence. *Alubather*, fol. 10r.

<sup>62</sup> 'Et si in domo vel termino Saturni fuerit experimenter: et queret facere mirabilis super homines et offendere eos mirabilitas: tam mendacio: quam arte sua.' *Alubather*, fol. 3r.

<sup>63</sup> 'Elquale Saturno essendo nel signo di Gemini monstra questi tali essere traditori. ingannatori. malefici. perivrii. prudenti ne le male arte: et ne le sciente dannate essere perspicari como nigromantia et fascinationi et simile lequale fanno lhomo tristo.' *Iudicio de Marco Scribanario*, fol. 1r.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., fol. 4r.

Students of every faculty will not be fortunate. One will see those who recite incredible things—that are but fiction, and malicious—and they will lose documents, and good manners, and the secrets of black magic and fascinations will be discovered.

The persistent connection made in the *Liber Nativitatum* between Saturn and that which might cut off the native from their fellow human in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century—a lack of ability to communicate verbally, trickery and deceit,<sup>65</sup> hardness of hearing, and esotericism—are strongly tied to the contemporary association of Saturn with melancholy. This connection is well-documented, not least because Ptolemy's Saturn shares the same humoral qualities as the black bile causing melancholy, from which Ficino diagnosed himself as suffering.<sup>66</sup> As such, Saturn's miserly qualities set his influence directly against those planets which have a bearing on the voice. Indeed, Ficino sought to address this imbalance with music, an activity sharing much more in common with the beneficent planets than Saturn, who is wholly at odds with an art for which beauty and expression were deemed essential.<sup>67</sup>

The connections drawn between music, eloquence and rhetoric are ancient. Quintilian suggested that music's expressivity made it a model for the orator, and Raffaele Brandolini traced its lineage back to ancient Greece in his *De musica et poetica* (1513), describing Archytas and Aristoxenus as teachers of both grammar and music, one subject being reliant on the other.<sup>68</sup> This connection also exists in the *Liber Nativitatum*. Venus is the only planet

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<sup>65</sup> In a chapter on the birth of a *hystrio*, Saturn's influence on an otherwise favourable disposition leads to an actor who will 'cheat' (truffabit) his audience: 'When Mars and Mercury are in the house of Saturn and falling from the angles, but with the moon increasing in fortune and light aspecting them, they will be a hystrio for the people, and the people will be amused, and he will cheat them' (Quando Mars et Mercurius in domo Saturni fuerint et ab angulis cadentes necnon luna fortunata ac lumine crescens ipsos aspexerit natus erit populi hystrio et popolis ludet cum eo truffabit.) *Alubather*, fol. 8v.

<sup>66</sup> Angela Voss, "Diligentia et divina sorte: Oracular Intelligence in Marsilio Ficino's Astral Magic," in *Innovation in Esotericism from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Georgina D Hedesan Rudbøg and Tim Palgrave (London: Macmillan, 2021), 33–62, at 43. See also Melissa Meriem Bullard, "The Inward Zodiac: A Development in Ficino's Thought on Astrology," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43.4 (1990), 687–708.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 700.

<sup>68</sup> On Quintilian's reception in the field of music see Patrick McCreless, "Music and Rhetoric," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 847–79, at 847. For Brandolini's discussion of music and grammar in a modern edition, see Raffaele Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Ann E. Moyer and Marc Laureys, (Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 37.



discussed as signifying any sort of music without the additional influence of other celestial bodies, her mastery signifying the birth of a ‘light singer’ (cantor letus).<sup>69</sup> Air signs—Aquarius, Gemini, and Libra—are also described as signifying ‘singers, jongleurs and fowlers’, presumably as each profession relies on the air respectively for vocal production and as a hunting ground.<sup>70</sup> In every other case, the birth of an individual exhibiting any musical tendency relies on the influence of those planets governing eloquence: Mercury and Jupiter.

The most sustained discussion of music is in Chapter 100, ‘On the birth of jongleurs [Ioculatores]’ upon which Mercury, Venus, Mars and the Moon all exert an influence:

Quando Luna et Mercurius cum Marte et Venere fuerint et unus alteri vim suam prebuerit: natus erit citharizator aut rotator. Et si dicti planete ab angulis recedentes fuerint: natus ioculando saltabit. CI Et si Mercurius et Venus in terminis suis fuerint: natus erit saltator maxime si unus eorum in Capricorno fuerit. CI Quando Mars et Mercurius in angulo terre fuerint: natus erit de illis qui vadunt super cordas. CI Quando Venus cum Mercurio in doma sua fuerit, ac in angulis: natus erit mimus aut ioculator talis quod instrumentum manibus et lingua tanget. CI Quando Mercurius et Venus ad invicem se firmaverint et Venus in angulis fuerit aut in 4 domo a Mercurio et Venus in termino alterius aut orientalis existens in domo exaltatione vel triplicitate sua fuerint: natus ioculator vocis et saltator ac palmarum percussor erit.<sup>71</sup>

When the Moon and Mercury are with Mars and Venus, and one to the others has showed its power: the native will be a cithara player or rotta player.<sup>72</sup> And if the said planets were receding from the angles: there will be born one who jokes while dancing. And if Mercury and Venus were in their bounds: the native will be a dancer, especially if one of them is in Capricorn. When Mars and Mercury are in the angle

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<sup>69</sup> *Albubather*, fol. 11v.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Albubather*, fol. 12v.

<sup>72</sup> By 1501, *rotta* was an ambiguous term that referred loosely to stringed instruments.

of the earth: the native will be one of those who goes upon the strings.<sup>73</sup> When Venus is with Mercury in her house, and in the angles: the native will be a mime or jongleur such as play instruments with the hand and tongue.<sup>74</sup> When Mercury and Venus have firmed themselves in turn in the angles or in the fourth house, or Mercury and Venus appear in another's bound or orient, exaltation or triplicity: the native will be a comic, a dancer, and a clapper of the hands.

The benefit of finding such performers discussed in relative detail through the lens of an astrologer lies in their stratification: it is relatively safe to presume that those influenced by the celestial bodies in their most favourable dispositions are considered the most artful. Thus, with the beneficial disposition of the similarly nocturnal and feminine Moon on Venus, balanced by the dryness of Mars and enhanced by Mercury's intellect and eloquence, the entertainer is an instrumentalist. When Venus and Mercury are receding from the angles (in astrological terms, losing their influence on the native), basic musicality and eloquence recede too, the native losing this skill and instead becoming one who merely 'makes jokes while dancing'.

The influence of Mars in this chapter is seemingly linked to the more visual aspects of performance. Ptolemy describes Mars as a lover of dance when allied to Venus,<sup>75</sup> and the planet plays a crucial role in the birth of the enigmatic performers who 'go upon the strings'. Mars plays an equally important role in a chapter describing another entertainer: the *hystrio*. The term is ambiguous, often translated simply as 'actor', and Mars' ability to signify one skilled in imitation when positively disposed with Venus, as also described by Ptolemy, would seem to confirm this.<sup>76</sup> However, both Livy's account of a performance in Book VII of the *Decades* (from whence the term *hystrio* derives) and subsequent uses in the Middle Ages suggest that these could be any manner of performers, and most likely hybrid

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<sup>73</sup> 'Vadunt super cordas'. This seems to refer to a *funambulus*, or tightrope walker. In a letter to Isabella d'Este, reporting on the performance of an ecologue at the Ferrarese court in 1508, Bernardino de' Prosperi mentions that Cardinal Ippolito d'Este had such a performer in his retinue. For the full text of the letter in translation, see Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 63–4.

<sup>74</sup> This seems to imply wind instruments played with both 'hand and tongue', rather than two distinct families of instruments.

<sup>75</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 355 (III.13).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

actors, singers and instrumentalists, perhaps better expressed by the more ambiguous term ‘player’.<sup>77</sup> Whether confirming this tradition or in reference to Livy, Johann Engel’s *Astrolabium Planum* depicts one born a *hystrio* as a walking man, armed with a spear (cuspidem) and holding a shawm (fig. 1.4).

The depiction of the *hystrio* walking perhaps ties into another part of Livy’s account, and to the one who ‘goes upon the strings’ in the *Liber Nativitatum*. Livy describes a *hystrio* troupe as having been Etruscans, and the peregrine status of Mars in the discussions of both the *hystrio* and the ‘one who goes upon the strings’ could denote both trades specifically as travelling entertainers.<sup>78</sup> Mercury’s commonality to all of these performers is perhaps

threefold. As we have seen, Mercury is the planet of knowledge and science, and thus requisite for a theoretical understanding of music, built upon the base musicality provided by Venus. It is also the planet of pleasing and entertaining others. Mercury’s notable role in the Greco–Roman pantheon as god of commerce plays no overt role until chapter 107, when the birth of various merchants is discussed, but in the chapters on the *ioculator* and *hystrio* Mercury affirms that these performers, however skilled or unskilled, are very much professionals, performing to make a living. Although ‘good’ music and performance is

Circuspidem habens in dextera manu et  
fistulam in sinistra. Hystrio erit.

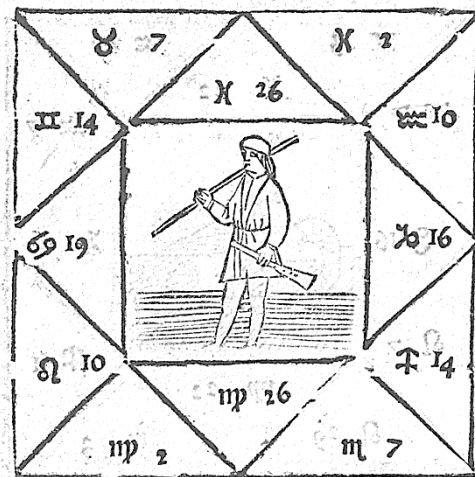


Figure 1.4: The Hystrio as an armed man holding a shawm. Johann Engel, *Astrolabium Planum* (Venice: Johannes Emericus de Spira for Lucantonio Giunta, 1494; repr. 1502), fol. 59v. Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, 9410623. Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine.

<sup>77</sup> Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, VII.2: ‘Accepta itaque res saepiusque usurpando excitata. Vernaculis artificibus, quia ister Tusco verbo ludio vocabatur, nomen histrionibus inditum; qui non, sicut ante, Fescennino versu similem incompositum temere ac rudem alternis iaciebant sed impletas modis saturas descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu motuque congruenti peragebant.’ Livy *History of Rome*, Volume III: Books 5–7, trans. Benjamin O. Foster. Loeb Classical Library 172 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 360. Livy was also printed in 1501 in Italy. For a detailed discussion of cases in which ‘hystro’ and its variant spellings have been used to explicitly denote a musician, see Abigail Anne Young, ‘Plays and Players: The Latin Terms for Performance,’ *Records of Early English Drama*, 9.2 (1984), 56–72.

<sup>78</sup> Planets are considered ‘peregrine’ when outside of their own bounds or triplicity.

inherently linked to the eloquence and intelligence embodied by Mercury, so too is its servile nature as a profession.

Jupiter has so far been conspicuous by his absence in passages pertaining to music. In Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, the positive disposition of Jupiter and Venus is said to produce natives who are 'pure, pleasure-loving, lovers of the beautiful, of children, of spectacles, and of the domain of the Muses, singers, fond of those who reared them, of good character'.<sup>79</sup> The musicality of the native influenced by such a disposition is described twice in the *Liber Nativitatum*:

Et si in domo vel termino Veneris fuerit: natus erit sermocinator et praedicator: pulchriter loquens erit et cantor: ita quod per cantum et verba sua homines ad lachrymas provocabit.<sup>80</sup>

And if [Jupiter] were in the house or bound of Venus: he will be born a giver of sermons and a preacher; he will speak beautifully and be a singer; so that by his song and words men will be moved to tears.

Et si loco Martis Iupiter eos aspexerit libros legis ac eorum lecturam necnon dulces cantus in rebus fidei atque voces quasi flentium et orantium dominum indicat. Et si Mercurius eos aspexerit compositionem instrumentorum musicalium portendit.<sup>81</sup>

And if Jupiter rather than Mars aspected [Venus and the Moon], it indicates legal books and their teaching, as well as sweet songs in matters of faith, with voices almost weeping, beseeching God. And should Mercury aspect them [instead of Jupiter] it portends the birth of a maker of musical instruments.

In both instances, the explicit description of a native's ability to prompt tears in the listener is an addition of the *Liber Nativitatum* not present in the writings of Ptolemy. That such a power is absent from other passages referring to musicianship suggests that it is a combination of Jupiter's intellect, faith and gravitas, and Venus' beauty that renders a musician capable of producing such music. Interestingly, the substitution of Mercury for

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<sup>79</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 349 (III.13).

<sup>80</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 3r.

<sup>81</sup> *Alubather*, fol. 12v.

Jupiter in the second passage signifies the birth of an instrument maker. That this occupation was considered Mercurial is testified by several *Children of the Planets* engravings created in the second half of the fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth. A musical element common to many is the presence of a man playing or tuning an organ under Mercury (fig. 1.5).



Figure 1.5: ‘Mercury’, from *The Planets*, attr. Baccio Baldini, Florence, 1464. London, British Museum. The organist, organ-maker or tuner can be seen in the upper room, right of centre. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Music occurs under Venus' auspice too, however in prints by Baccio Baldini and others, the instruments depicted with Venus are the harp and lute, played in scenes of courtly love.<sup>82</sup> The *Liber Nativitatum* blurs these distinctions considerably through its complex litany of cosmic influences. An alliance between the god of scientific pursuits (scientie) and goddess of beauty results in the construction of beautiful objects manufactured with a high degree of mathematical precision, but not necessarily the ability to play them in a way which moves the soul. This is something only a deeper sense and higher power, that of Jupiter, can imbue.

With this in mind, it is possible to see a tripartite division of music in the *Liber Nativitatum*: light music and base musicality, influenced by Venus; competent musicianship and musical understanding, such as is required for the skilful playing and construction of instruments, influenced by Mercury; and a 'higher', more affective musicianship, influenced by Jupiter. This matches Ficino's division of music as given in the third book of *De triplici vita* almost exactly, where he writes that 'solemn music belongs to Jupiter and the Sun, merry music to Venus, and the middle sort to Mercury.'<sup>83</sup> Read alone, Ficino's comments might seem abstruse, but here the *Liber Nativitatum* provides valuable elaboration, and a gateway to drawing on a wider context of astrological sources to understand how music might have fallen into each category, as well as who might have performed it.

### 1.5 Music in Julius Firmicus Maternus' *De Nativitatibus*

The *Mathesis Libri VIII* or *De Nativitatibus* was composed by Sicilian scholar Julius Firmicus Maternus no earlier than July 334.<sup>84</sup> It was known in the Latin Middle Ages, though apparently in varying states of fragmentation, with the ending of book IV and books V–

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<sup>82</sup> On Baldini's Venus print see Tim Shephard, "24. Venus," in *The Museum of Renaissance Music: A History in 100 Exhibits*, Vincenzo Borghetti and Tim Shephard (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 118–23.

<sup>83</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 255. Ficino's accordance of music with the Sun, absent from the *Liber Nativitatum*, would seem to derive from links between Apollo and the Sun.

<sup>84</sup> Firmicus mentions an eclipse which took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July 334 in the first book of the *Mathesis*. Julius Firmicus Maternus. *Ancient astrology, theory and practice. The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Jean Rhys Bram. (Park Ridge, New Jersey: Noyes Press, 1975). 1.

VIII surviving only in fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscript sources.<sup>85</sup> The *editio princeps* was edited by Antonio Lauro and published by Simon Bevilacqua in Venice in 1497, though in the colophon Lauro wrote that the completion of his edition antedated its publication by three years: ‘Romae ex Archivo Summi pontifices diligenter excerpta per Me Antonium Laurum Patavinum Die Alti Solstitii. 1494’ (Carefully selected from the Archives of the Supreme Pontiffs of Rome by me, Antonio Lauro of Padua, on the High Solstice. 1494).<sup>86</sup> It was followed by another edition (sometimes erroneously referred to as the first printed edition) published in 1499 together with several other astrological works by the Aldine press in an anthology subsequently known as the Aldina.<sup>87</sup> This time, the text was edited by Franciscus Pescennius Niger—Francesco Negri—more famously the author of a *Grammatica* containing the first printed secular music.<sup>88</sup> The table of contents claims that Negri’s source was ‘ex schythicis oris ad nos nuper allati’ (lately brought to us from the mouth of the Scythians).<sup>89</sup> In the opening dedication to Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, he goes on, in racing prose, to describe what he considered a new discovery:

Hinc lucidissimum ab orientali horoscopo tuum fidus emersit, Hippolyte  
 faustissime, quod sicut olim lucifer Aeneam in horas hesparias, cyllenius Persum, ad  
 gorgonea litora, Phoebus Cadmum in haemonios campos, ita me barbaros  
 spoliaturum, ad extremam scytharum fecem deuexit. Ubi detrusus in carcerem  
 gottica feritate Firmicus latitabant. veni. vidi. & vici. mecumque tam preclarum  
 comitem, tuis radiis tutus in patriam deduxi.<sup>90</sup>

From here the brightest star emerged from your eastern horoscope, Hippolyte most  
 fortunately, for as Lucifer led Aeneas to Hesperia, Cyllenius Perseus to the  
 Gorgon’s shores, Phoebus Cadmus to the Haemonian fields, so I the barbarians to  
 deprive, to the ends of Scythia was brought, where Firmicus, pushed into prison by

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>86</sup> Julius Firmicus Maternus. *De Nativitatibus* (Venice: Simon Bevilacqua, 1497), fol. 115v.

<sup>87</sup> Hübner, “The Culture of Astrology from Ancient to Renaissance”, 21–2. Hübner tentatively states that this was the earliest edition, perhaps taking Negri’s claims of its primacy at face-value.

<sup>88</sup> Alexander Hyatt King. *Four Hundred Years of Music Printing* (London: British Museum, 1964). 11.

<sup>89</sup> Julius Firmicus Maternus. *Mathesis (De Nativitatibus)* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1499), fol. 1r.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. fol. 3r.

Gothic ferocity, was hiding.<sup>91</sup> I came, I saw, I conquered. And by your rays escorted home so distinguished a guest [as Firmicus].

It seems evident that Negri was brought eastwards as part of Ippolito d'Este's entourage during his time as Archbishop of Esztergom, though it is difficult to believe that he truly considered himself the discoverer of a text which had already been printed in Venice two years beforehand. Indeed, it would be easy to suggest that the disparity in dates between publication (1499) and the date of Negri's dedication (1497) was an attempt to weight the Aldine edition's claim to being the *editio princeps*.<sup>92</sup> The greatest difference between the two editions at first glance is that Lauro's edition is missing Book VIII. However, on closer inspection one finds material included in Book VIII scattered throughout Lauro's text.<sup>93</sup> What is more, we have evidence placing manuscript copies of all eight books in Italy long before this date. Ignoring the source(s) which Antonio Lauro purportedly utilised in the Papal Library, Ambrogio Platina reported that none other than Vittorino da Feltre was in possession of a copy.<sup>94</sup> Petrarch, Pico della Mirandola and Giovanni Pontano also all read or owned copies.<sup>95</sup> Differences have been noted between Lauro and Negri's edition, including the incorporation of passages from the work of Pietro d'Abano and Albumasar in the latter, rather confounding Negri's claim to have found an unadulterated Latin text with which to 'correct' many centuries of bad astrology.<sup>96</sup> For our purposes, it suffices to say that the majority of passages pertaining to music appear in both copies; I will quote mainly from

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<sup>91</sup> 'The Haemonian fields' (bloody fields) possibly refers to an episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (III:50–94) where Phoebus led Cadmus to found Thebes in a set of fields, but where he first had to slay a giant serpent, who took many of his companions before soaking the ground in its own blood. See in particular lines 85–6: 'And now from his venomous throat the blood begins to trickle and stains the green grass with spattered gore' (iamque venenifero sanguis manare palatocoeperat et virides adspergine tinxerat herbas). Translation in Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1–8*. Trans. Frank Justus Miller. Revised by G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916) 130–131.

<sup>92</sup> Giovanni Mercati, "F. Pescennio Negro veneto protonotario apostolico," in *Ultimi Contributi alla Storia Degli Umanisti*, ed. Giovanni Mercati (Vatican City, 1939), vol. 2, 24–128, at 70.

<sup>93</sup> For instance, information on star signs and their influence found in Book VIII of Negri's edition can be found in Book VII of Lauro's.

<sup>94</sup> William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators: Essays and Versions: An Introduction to the History of Classical Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 70.

<sup>95</sup> Hübner, "The Culture of Astrology from Ancient to Renaissance", 21.

<sup>96</sup> 'Hic est ille Firmicus, qui solus latinam astrorum scientiam fecit. Hic est ille, qui omnem penitus ascholastica turba deinceps errorem eradicabit. Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 3r–v.



Lauro's edition, turning to Negri's only when what he presents cannot be found in Lauro's.<sup>97</sup>

Whilst there are notable differences between the theory presented in Abu Bakr's *Liber Nativitatum* and Firmicus' *De Nativitatibus*, it is the concordances between their respective planetary ethics which are most striking. In Firmicus' defence of astrology, which comprises the first book of *De Nativitatibus*, he writes of astrology's oversimplifying detractors:

De Moribus vero illud addunt. Si Saturnus facit cautos: graves: tardos: avaros & tacitos. Iuppiter bonos: maturos: benignos: ac modestos: Mars crudeles: perfidos: ac feroces. Sol religiosos: noblies: ac superbos. Venus luxuriosos: ac venustos: & honestos gratiae splendore fulgentes. Mercurius astutos: callidos: & concitati animi mobilitatibus turbulentos. Luna acutos: splendidos: elegantes: & popularis splendoris gratia praevalentes. Cur quaedam gentes ita sunt formatae.<sup>98</sup>

As for character, they add, 'If Saturn makes men careful, serious, dull, miserly, and silent; Jupiter, mature, kindly, generous, temperate; Mars, cruel, treacherous, and fierce; the Sun, upright, high-minded, and proud; Venus, pleasure-loving, charming, handsome; Mercury, shrewd, clever, excitable, changeable; the Moon, intelligent, distinguished, well-mannered, capable of dazzling people with brilliance, why do certain human groups appear to produce largely one type?'<sup>99</sup>

Thus, Jupiter is a force for maturity and moderation, Venus of beauty, and Mercury of wit, with the malefic Saturn and Mars being miserly and cruel as they are in the *Liber Nativitatum*. The similarities extend to representations of music. Throughout, Mercury and Venus are the principal planets determining musical leaning. As in the *Liber Nativitatum*, Venus is the primary source for the native's musical tendencies, strongly tied to beauty and to lasciviousness:

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<sup>97</sup> For a brief survey of some of the additions in Negri's text, see Filippomaria Pontani and Elisabetta Lugato. "On Aldus' *Scriptores astronomici* (1499)," in *Certissima signa: A Venice Conference on Greek and Latin Astronomical Texts*, ed. Filippomaria Pontani. (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2017), 265–294, at 275.

<sup>98</sup> Maternus, *De Nativitatibus*, fol. 2r

<sup>99</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 14.

Venus domina geniturae si fuerit effect: facit homines delectabiles: laetos: nobiles: assiduo luxui vacantes: amabiles:gratos: venustos:amatores libidiosos...& institutum musicis semper delectationibus inherescat.<sup>100</sup>

If Venus is the lady of the birth, she will make delectable persons: happy, noble, given to idle luxury, amiable, pleasing, graceful, libidinous lovers...and always delighting in music.

Mercury is likewise complicit in the formation of singers, and players of *Citherae*, *Lyrae* and *Tibiae*. When Venus and Mercury are favourably disposed, musical skill is mentioned in the same breath as such skills as oratory, marking it as something of a learned pursuit. Much as in the *Liber Nativitatum*, Mercury and Venus are also frequently mentioned when discussing the professional musician. Depending on their disposition and other astral influences, these range from famous musicians, through more mediocre talents, to poor players. The full extent of this range is covered in a passage regarding the movement of the moon between Mercury and Venus. If Mercury and Venus are fortunate, the native will also be a great performer; if influenced by Saturn or Mars, they will be destined never to achieve real fame:

In.x. loco Venus ad horoscopo constituta: idest in medio caeli: faciet claros & coronatos: & quibus grandis gloria & fortunata maxima conferatur. C| Si vero hoc loco cum Mercurio fuerit inventa: faciet cordarum & instrumentorum cordatos disciplinae auctores: & quicquid voverint facile consequantur. C| Si nulla Saturnus & Mars se ei radiatione coniunxerint: ipsa vero sit matutina: facit publicos musicos: & quia a populis honorentur. C| Si vero se ei Saturnas aliqua radiatione coniunxerit: faciet infames ... C| Si vero sic positam Venerem Mars fori radiation respexerit: aut si cum ipsa fuerit. Faciet infames famosos.<sup>101</sup>

Venus in the tenth house, that is, in the *Medium Caelo*, renders the native the illustrious and prized, one to whom great glory and fortune will be conferred. If, however, she is found in this place with Mercury, it will make great players of sings and stringed instruments, and they will easily achieve whatever they set out to do. If

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<sup>100</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 48v.

<sup>101</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 28v.

Saturn and Mars are not joined to her by radiation and she is the morning star, she makes public musicians, those that are honoured by the people. However, if Saturn joins himself to her by some radiation, he will make them infamous, and in they will be second-rate artists... Should Mars strongly influence Venus or be found with her, it will make them famous in their infamy.

Of course, Venus' inclination to beauty, and Mercury's changeability also render them liable to lascivious acts:

A Venere defluens Luna si ad Mercuriam feratur: & sit crescens vel plena luminibus... musici frequenter incliti... sed libidinosi: & assiduis amorem cupiditatibus subditi.

If the waning moon is brought from Venus to Mercury, and waxes or becomes full... They will be frequently inclined to music... but libidinous: and constantly subjected to lust.

Unlike the *Liber Nativitatum*, we are also given Mars as a key source of 'talented' musicians. These, however, are also confounded by turbulence caused by their fiery nature:

Si Mars in ipsis finibus fuerit inventus: & sit diurnal genitura repentinae turbationis decernit incommode: & vitae compositos ordines turbat... aut propter foeminaa varia particolorum decernit incommode: faciet sane musicos organis dulcibus semper applicatos: aut poeticis artibus deditos: aut certe sculptores: vel oratores efficient... faciet sane musicos ingenium.<sup>102</sup>

Mars in these terms [the ascendent being in Mars] in a diurnal chart indicates riots, a life disturbed by revolutions or troubles, and dangers because of women. They will be musicians, always playing instruments sweetly, or poets, or sculptors, or orators... they truly make talented musicians.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 59r.

<sup>103</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 164. I have amended Bram's translation to better-reflect Lauro's text.

So far, Jupiter has been conspicuous in his absence. Indeed, Jupiter is directly mentioned almost as infrequently as Saturn regarding music. In one such occurrence, Jupiter serves to raise up the performer to great acclaim:

Si horoscopo Mercurius: & Mars: & Venus: & Luna simul fuerint collocata: vel in M.C. saltatores: pantomimos efficient gratia venustatis ornatos. C| Si vero hos Iuppiter sic collocatos prospera radiation respiciat: his ipsis gloriam ex populari iudicio largitur.<sup>104</sup>

Mercury, Mars, Venus, and the Moon together on the ascendant or the Midheaven will produce dancers or pantomimers noted for grace and charm. If Jupiter is in favourable aspect, they will be famous and popular.<sup>105</sup>

Jupiter's presence is, however, more widespread than it might at first appear. One key difference between the *Liber Nativitatum* and *De Nativitatibus* is in the way that the 'bounds' of each planet are expressed. The *Liber Nativitatum* often mentions the 'house or bounds' of a planet as a source of influence on the planet residing within those bounds. In *De Nativitatibus*, Firmicus goes into far greater detail, often preferring to give the planets 'bounds' of certain degrees (1–30) within each house, meaning a planet may have its bounds in the house traditionally ruled by another planet. The traits of the native can therefore be drastically different between one degree and the next. To illustrate this point, one such case occurs within Taurus, when the ascendant on the 23<sup>rd</sup> degree foreshadows a 'pimp with a harsh voice', and in the 24<sup>th</sup> 'a musician, but who, if the ascendent is aspected by a maleficent planet, will die a violent death.'<sup>106</sup>

In such cases, it is necessary for the reader to learn the bounds of each planet within each sign of the zodiac by rote, or be forced to constantly cross-reference between chapters to ascertain why the degree has the influence indicated. In the example given above, the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> degrees of Taurus fall within the bounds of Saturn. However, many of the effects

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<sup>104</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 82r.

<sup>105</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 218

<sup>106</sup> 'In parte 23. Tauri: quicumque habverit horoscopum erunt voce rauci: lenones... In parte 24. Tauri...erunt musici: sed si hunc eundem locum malivolae stellae radiaverint: Biothanata morte morentur.' Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 107r.

of the ascendant in Taurus that Firmicus describes are negative, and crucially all of those arising from the degree of the ascendant falling within Jupiter (15<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>), showing how complex is the web of influences one must bear in mind. As Firmicus writes, even Jupiter has the power to act as a malefic, particularly in the sixth, eighth and twelfth houses.<sup>107</sup>

One of the cases in which a beneficent Jupiter is most effusive in portending musical skill is when influencing Venus in the Midheaven (Medium Coeli) - the highest point of ascent and thus when a planet is at the height of its beneficence:<sup>108</sup>

Si in M.C Venerem constitutam trigonica Iuppiter radiatione respiciat: vel si cum ea fuerit inventus: & Venus ob omnibus malivolarum fuerit radiationibus separata foeminarum praesidio: ex ista coniunctione maxima foelicitatis insignia conseveruntur: aut ex aliquo foemineo opera initium foelicitatis accipiunt: sed hos eosdem de facit musici carminis modos dulciter flectere: aut cytharam lyramque percutre: aut certe molli corporis flexu cum grata venustate saltare.<sup>109</sup>

If on the Midheaven Venus is established in trine with Jupiter, or is found with him, and Venus is separated from all malevolent influences, [it represents] feminine protection, and from this conjunction the best signs of good fortune are gathered; or from some feminine work fortune will begin. But both of these share the making of musical songs, sweetly performed, or the playing of the cithara and lyre, or at least the soft flexing of the body, with which to dance with pleasant grace.<sup>110</sup>

As in the *Liber Nativitatum*, dancing is placed at an estimation lower than song, and, also as in the *Liber Nativitatum*, Jupiter is responsible for the elevation of a simple act to an affective art. Given this particular conjunction of Venus and Jupiter is described in such favourable terms, the inclusion of the ability to play ‘sweetly’ (dulciter) suggests that it too is a positive trait, rather than the persuasive sweetness seen previously in association with the volatile Mars, and associated throughout the literature of the period with dangerous

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<sup>107</sup> For instance: ‘in. vi. Loco Iuppiter ab horoscopum constitutus maxima mala decernit.’ Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 20v.

<sup>108</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 7.

<sup>109</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 74v.

<sup>110</sup> Bram’s translation of this passage (Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, at 207) lacks detail regarding the sweetness of the music performed.

tempters, like the sirens.<sup>111</sup> Writing two centuries after Firmicus, Venantius Fortunatus wrote on how the *sweetness* of his poems tamed the wilderness in the same way that Orpheus did.<sup>112</sup> As such, one could suggest that the ‘sweetness’ of Jovial music in the *De Nativitate* is equivalent to the tearful music of the *Liber Nativitatum*—music able to move the soul. Indeed, shortly afterwards, Firmicus describes how a conjunction of Venus, Mars and Mercury, with Jupiter and Saturn favourably disposed, formed the basis of the charts of Pindar and Archilochus:<sup>113</sup>

Si in horoscopus in Libra fuerit inventus & Mars: & Venus: & Mercurius in eodem sint horoscopo partiliter collocata. Iuppiter vero in occasu positus: idest in signo arietis collocatus: Martem: Venerem: & Mercurio: & horoscopum diametra radiatione respiciat. C| Sol vero in Scorpione positus in anaphora sit horoscopi constitutus: luna est in Aquario posita: quintum ad horoscopo locum teneat. C| Saturnus vero in .9.ab horoscopum loco constitutus in Geminis sit collocatus: haec genitura divinum poetam lyri carminis reddit: qui choreas libero rithmos: sed et rara religiosi carminis moderatione componat: talis genitura Pindaro & Archilocho dulcissimi carminis modos divina ingenii inspiratione largita est.<sup>114</sup>

If the ascendant is in Libra and Mars, Venus, and Mercury are in conjunction on the ascendant; Jupiter is on the descendant, that is, in Aries, in opposition to Mars, Mercury, and Venus; the Sun is in Scorpio on the anafora of the ascendant; the Moon is in Aquarius in the fifth house; and Saturn is in Gemini in the ninth house: this chart makes an inspired lyric poet who writes choruses for religious poems in

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<sup>111</sup> For instance, in the popular conduct manual for women in holy orders, *De Modus Bene Vivendi in Christianam Religionem*, then attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, the ‘sweetness’ of the siren’s song which tempts sailors to their doom is used to evoke the corrupting influence secular women have on those who have taken vows: ‘Cantat dulce magnis vocibus: & multis modulis: atque cum magna dulcedine dat voces cocordes. Sed per suas dulces cantilenas sepe marinarios decipit: & in discrimine perducit. Sepe naute navigantes mare dulces audiunt voces syrenarum: & per dulces: & suaves cantus earum decipiuntur: & ad mortale periculum perducuntur. Sicut syrena per suos dulces cantus decipit marinarios: ita secularis femina per suos deceptorios sermones decipit Christi servos.’ Pseudo–Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Modus Bene Vivendi in Christiana[m] Religionem* (Venice: Pietro Quarengi, 1501), fol. 62r.

<sup>112</sup> Mary Carruthers, “Sweetness,” *Speculum*, 2006, Vol.81 (4), 999–1013, at 1001.

<sup>113</sup> Firmicus describes Saturn as favourable in the ninth house on fol. 19r of the 1497 edition, portending ‘famous *magi*, philosophers and mathematicians’.

<sup>114</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 77v.

many rhythms. Such charts were those of Pindar and Archilochus, known for the divine inspiration of their sweet songs.<sup>115</sup>

Here the sweetness of Pindar and Archilochus' poetry is said to derive from divine inspiration - something altogether more elevated than the base musical skill given by various other combinations. The elevation which Jupiter can impart in any field is made plain in a brief description of Mercury's benefits to the professions:

In .xi. loco Mercurius ab horiscopo constitutus: faciet ingeniosos: & in omnibus actibus necessarios: & quibus magnarum rationum actus committantur. Sed tunc maiora decernit officia si Iovi fuerit opportune radiatione coniunctus.<sup>116</sup>

Mercury in the eleventh house will make the natives intelligent, and effective in all kinds of professions; those to whom important enterprises are entrusted. However, higher positions are indicated if Jupiter is in favourable aspect to Mercury.<sup>117</sup>

In other cases where sweetness is attributed to music, it is possible to detect less obvious Jovian influence - for instance where the given sign of the zodiac is a Jovial house or when the ascendent falls within Jupiter's *terms*. For example, those with the ascendant in the seventeenth degree of Pisces (ruled by Jupiter, with Mercury having terms between the seventeenth and nineteenth degrees) are described as 'singing sweetly modulated songs' (*carmina dulci modulation cantabunt*).<sup>118</sup> Those with the ascendant in the twentieth degree of Virgo (ruled by Mercury, but with Jupiter having terms between the eighteenth and twenty-first degrees) the musician sings with 'sweetly modulated voice' (*cantica dulci voccis modulation cantantes*).<sup>119</sup> Mercury, the Moon and Venus are described as portending another who can perform with sweetness so long as they are in the eleventh house, the *bonus daemon* or 'house of good spirit', ruled by Jupiter:

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<sup>115</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 209. I have altered Bram's translation slightly to better match the punctuation of the 1497 edition.

<sup>116</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 30r.

<sup>117</sup> Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 102. I have slightly amended Bram's translation to better reflect the structure of the text as presented by Lauro.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 114r.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* fol. 110r.

Si in.11.ab horoscopo loco Mercurius & Luna: & Venus partier fierint collocati: sit foemini generis signum: Mars eos trigona radiatione respiciat: Musicos faciunt qui lyrae: vel aere nervos: dulci semper modulatione percutiant.<sup>120</sup>

If in the eleventh house Mercury, the Moon, and Venus are in conjunction, and in a feminine sign, and Mars is in trine with them: they make musicians who sweetly play the lyre or other stringed instruments.<sup>121</sup>

One notable exception falls on the same folio, where the ascendent in the 4<sup>th</sup> degree of Libra is said to portend a ‘cithara player, musician, with a sweet, ornate voice’ (erit cytharaedus: musicss: dulcisonis vocibus ornatus).<sup>122</sup> In this case, the ascendent falls within the terms of Saturn, however a Saturn who, under this sign, renders ‘every part of the body unharmed’ (omnia corpore incolumnis).<sup>123</sup> Here, perhaps, the sweetness normally stemming from Jupiter instead derives from Saturn who, as Ficino put it, ‘carries the investigator to the highest subjects’.<sup>124</sup> With ‘sweet’ music so often falling to the influence of the highest planets, it is easy to see how a tripartite division of music—the most revered belonging to Jupiter, the most frivolous to Venus and that falling in between to Mercury—might as easily be applied to *De Nativitate* as the *Liber Nativitatum*.

#### 1.6 Music across the astrological literature 1480–1530

The *Liber Nativitatum* and *De Nativitate* contain the most complex representations of the astral influence on music in the astrological literature I have surveyed. Amongst the remainder, Venus’ music is most commonly encountered, not least as music is often placed entirely under her auspice in less detailed astrological texts and literature touching only

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<sup>120</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 82r. The reference to the eleventh house being ruled by Jupiter can be found in the Aldine edition of 1499 at fol. 29v. This is not included in a discussion of the twelve houses in the 1497 edition (fol. 13r) which also lacks degrees for each house.

<sup>121</sup> In Maternus, *The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, ed. and trans. Bram, 218. Bram gives ‘Cithara’ for ‘aere nervos’.

<sup>122</sup> Maternus, *Mathesis*, fol. 110v.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 121.



briefly on the subject.<sup>125</sup> A commentary on Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' popular treatise on women, *De Secretis Mulierum*, also printed in Venice in 1501, states that Mercury's role in the development of the throat and lungs renders those influenced by him in the sixth month of gestation 'good singers', but the original text grants all other musical talent, including dancing, to Venus.<sup>126</sup> The *De Nativitatibus* of 'Abraham Iudei' (Abraham Ibn Ezra, writing around the middle of the twelfth century) published in Venice by Erhard Radolt in 1485, states simply that:

Si in aliqua domorum veneris vel ei adunatus fuerit vel eam ex sexto respicies:  
aliquam simplicem musice appetitivam.<sup>127</sup>

If in any house Venus is joined with him [the sun] or aspects him from the sextile, it indicates some simple musical appetite.

The *Astrolabium Planum* is more nuanced, depicting musicians in several guises throughout, but it is outwardly condemnatory of the *cantor letus* described as being Venus' mastery in the *Liber Nativitatum*, termed by Ficino as 'merry music' (musicam ... levem). Depicting an unfortunate Jupiter as the third decan of Venus' house of Libra, the accompanying caption reads: 'The third face is Jupiter, and [symbolises] gluttony, sodomy, light song, and following bad tastes' (fig. 1.6).<sup>128</sup>

Many contemporary prognostica assign music to Venus and poetry to Mercury, creating an implied social distinction between the lettered poet and 'merry singer'. One such example, Moravus' aforementioned *Iudicium Anno Domini 1494*, assigns a broad spectrum of musical disciplines to Venus' influence, while simultaneously following the *Astrolabium Planum*'s

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<sup>125</sup> Several examples are discussed in Shephard et al, 2020, at 223–243.

<sup>126</sup> Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, with commentary by Henry of Saxony, *De Secretis Mulierum Cum Commento* (Venice: Giovanni Luigi Varisio, 1501), fols. 18v (Mercury's influence on a newborn) and 25r (the influence of Venus). The original text ran to 14 editions before 1560, and was in wide circulation in manuscript form from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century onwards. For a critical edition, see Helen Rodnite Lemay, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' De Secretis Mulierum with Commentaries* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992).

<sup>127</sup> Abraham Ibn Ezra, *De Nativitatibus* (Venice: Erhard Radolt, 1485), fol. 6v.

<sup>128</sup> Engel, *Astrolabium Planum*, fol. 69r.

association of Venus' 'merry music' with wantonness; lute and lira players, bagpipers, singers and even music teachers are mentioned in the same breath as pimps.<sup>129</sup>

**Tercia facies est iouis:et est  
guldofitatis:sodomitatis:can  
tationū hilaritatis:z sequen  
di malos sapores.**



Figure 1.6: Decan of Jupiter unfortunate in Libra. Engel, *Astrolabium Planum*, fol. 69r. Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, 9410623. Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine.

Only in one of the sources which I have surveyed is a basic love of music not assigned to Venus. John of Wales' (d. 1285) *Summa de regimine vitae humanae* (Venice: Giorgio Arrivabene, 1496) assigns it instead to Mars:

Martem respicit musica, non solum humana et mundane, sed instrumentalis, que musicorum instrumentorum sicut tubarum et huiusmodi cocentus incitat homines ad bellum.<sup>130</sup>

Mars governs music, not only human and worldly, but instrumental, that instrumental music of trumpets and the like whose concert incites men to war.

<sup>129</sup> 'Secta Venera. Citharedi Cantores Phonasci Utricularii Lenones Mechi Mirobrecharil Phrigiones'. Augustus Moravus, *Iudicium Anno Domini*, fol. 2r.

<sup>130</sup> John of Wales, *Summa de regimine vitae humanae* (Venice: Giorgio Arrivabene, 1496), fol. 222v.

This passage appears to be derived from the work of another English scholar, Alexander Neckham (1157–1217), who in his *De Naturis Rerum* assigns music ‘not human, not worldly, but instrumental’ to Mars.<sup>131</sup> Oliver. M. Johnson was the first to point out a concordance between Neckam’s attribution and those of Dante in his *Convivia*, where each of the liberal arts is assigned to a planet.<sup>132</sup> Whether reading John of Wales’ garbled paraphrase or Alexander Neckam’s original text, Dante’s reasoning behind attributing music to Mars helps to clarify Wales and Neckam’s rationale:

Et lo cielo di Marte si puo comparare ala musica per due proprietadi. Luna sie la sua piu bella relazione: che annumerado li cieli mobili da qualunque si comincia o dall infimo o dal somo effo cielo di Marte e lo quinto: esso e lo mezo di tutti cio el delli primi delli secondi delli terzie delli quarti. Laltra sie che esso se Marte di secca, et arde le chose perche lo suo calore e simile a quello del fuocho.<sup>133</sup>

The heaven of Mars may be compared to music because of two properties: one is its most beautiful relation, for in counting the moving heavens, from whichever we begin, whether from the lowest or the highest, this heaven of Mars is the fifth and the middlemost of them all, that is, of the first, second, third, and fourth pairs. The other is that Mars dries things out and burns them because its heat is like that of fire.<sup>134</sup>

So Dante equates Mars’ heat with music, giving it a humoral quality.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, were we to think of the music of Venus, Mars and Jupiter as having humoral properties, it becomes clear that the lowest music, ruled by Venus, has the same propensity to lead men astray as Mars’ music does to war, being untempered by the influence of other planets and so linked to Venus’ other attributes of lasciviousness and indulgence. In contrast, Jupiter’s moderate

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<sup>131</sup> ‘Martem respicit musica, non humana, non mundana, sed instrumentalis. Lituorum namque et tubarum clangentium concentus varius invitat armatos ad conflictum.’ Quoted in Oliver. M. Johnston, “Dante’s Comparison Between the Seven Planets and the Seven Liberal Arts,” *Romanic Review*, New York, vol. 21, (Jan 1, 1930), 34–5. At 35.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Convivio* (Florence: Francesco Bonaccorsi, 1490), fol. 26r

<sup>134</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Il Convivio*, trans. Richard H. Lansing (London: Taylor & Francis, 1990), 71. I have altered this translation as the 1490 edition does not include the reference to Ptolemy’s *Quadripartitum*, included in Lansing’s text, as a source for Mars’ heat.

<sup>135</sup> On the evidence for the attribution of qualities to music in medical literature, see Chapter IV.

dryness and heat balance Venus to create a music which is perfectly balanced, and thus in humoral terms *perfect* - able to move the soul, but to more positive ends than rude anger or lust.

### 1.7 *Venereal and Jovial characteristics*

Whilst it is not surprising that echoes of the *Liber Nativitatum*'s musical framework can be found in other astrological products, it is interesting to note that its inflections can also be detected in other kinds of writing about music. In particular, the contrast between Venus' lascivious *cantor letus* and Jupiter's serious, affective musicianship helps to shape the vigorous debate over the morality of musical practice in the period. Concern over the potential for musical pastimes to corrupt morals was widespread. In a letter to Cecilia Gonzaga penned in 1443, celebrating her intention to enter a convent, the Venetian patrician Gregorio Correr compares the soundworld of the court in which she was raised with that of the convent where she had hoped to be cloistered:

Jesters, parasites, seductive lutenists, and such unworthy members of humankind have no place in your home, such people as, I am ashamed to say, are considered to be delights in most princely houses, and domestic vices are considered to be inescapably human. But since even in well regulated princely homes it is not considered improper to dance in elaborate rings to the music of flutes and to sing frivolous songs, you will hear of these things also in your father's house, even if you don't see them. Far be it from me to suppose that a virgin devoted to God in so modest a home is invited to view such things—which appeal to many shameless members of my own class as well. I speak of churchmen. Flee, Cecilia, virgin of Christ, flee, cover your eyes, cover your ears. Flee, if you can, to where neither song nor symphony are heard.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Margaret King and Albert Rabil Jr, ed., *Her Immaculate Hand: Selected Works by and about the Women Humanists of Quattrocento Italy* (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 2000), 98–9. For the letter in full see 93–105.

Correr's view leaves no room for gradation: music is a gateway to sin, and complete avoidance is the best course for a virtuous life. In Paolo Cortese's *De Cardinalatu* (San Gimignano: Simone Nardi, 1510), this view is treated as an entrenched misunderstanding:

many, estranged from the natural disposition of the normal sense, not only reject it [music] because of some sad perversion of their nature, but even think it to be hurtful for the reason that it is somehow an invitation to idle pleasure, and above all, that its merriment usually arouses lust.<sup>137</sup>

A partial refutation of this argument is taken up as the basis for Raffaele Brandolini's *De musica et poetica*, formulated in ways that imply a casual familiarity with the principles described in the *Liber Nativitatum*. Like his brother Aurelio, Raffaele was first and foremost a scholar, but well-known in humanist circles for his performances of Latin verse *all'improvviso* to the accompaniment of the lira da braccio.<sup>138</sup> He addresses his oration to the apostolic protonotary Corradolo Stanga, whom he recalls admonishing him to abandon the practice:

You admonished me in a recent conversation not to employ the lyre and Latin meters at the banquets of high prelates, as things fit only for buffoons, parasites, and men of no intelligence or judgement, those, in fact, whom the poet Aquino [Juvenal] calls abominable beggars, who beg for sustenance and cultivation of the body with the pandering of words.<sup>139</sup>

That Raffaele's refutation is only a *partial* defence of music becomes apparent as his oration progresses. Unlike the near-contemporary defence published by Carlo Valgolio, *Contra vituperatorem musicae* (Brescia: Giovanni Antonio Bresciano, 1509), which celebrates music wholesale, in discussing music's place at banquets Raffaele takes pains to distance himself and the style of his musical performances—that of the humanistic *cantare ad lyram* tradition—

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<sup>137</sup> "multi a communium sensuum natura auersi non modo earn praua quadam nature peruersitate respuunt, sed earn etiam inutilem esse opinantur. Prop tereaue ea quedam sit ignauae uoluptatis inuitatrix, maximeque eius iucundi tate soleat libidinum excitari malum". Paolo Cortese, *De cardinalatu libri tres* (San Gimignano: Simone Nardi, 1510), fol. 72v. Quoted with translation in Tim Shephard, "Constructing Isabella d'Este's musical decorum in the visual sphere," *Renaissance Studies*, 25.5 (2011), 684–706, at 689.

<sup>138</sup> Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Moyer and Laureys, xxviii.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

from the other forms of entertainment one might have witnessed over the course of an evening in the years around 1500:

But if you condemn this manner of taking enjoyment [hearing improvised Latin elegies], of which one, I ask, could you approve? Clowns and Mimes, or drums and cymbals, or trumpets and horns, or none of these, but the meretricious songs and attractions that are employed so frequently at today's banquets? That hardly seems likely to me, when I consider how learned you are. But these are incentives to prodigality, depravity, drunkenness, and lust; not only do they weaken flimsy characters, but they destroy firm ones.<sup>140</sup>

Raffaele continues to present his *cantare ad lyram* practice in opposition to that of the 'mime', whose talents and practice are clearly synonymous with those of the *Liber Nativitatum*'s *Ioculator*; Raffaele's song 'restrains the emotions of the soul that run wild at banquets', whereas the mime enflames the passions with 'effeminate gestures and obscene words'.<sup>141</sup> He goes on to address the sound of his song, another point of contention for Stanga, and in doing so draws another parallel between the music of his day and that described by the *Liber Nativitatum*:

perhaps someone faults the quality of the song and the practice of extemporaneous speaking, claiming that elegiac song, which I have been accustomed to use often with the lyre, is by nature mournful and soft, and not appropriate for the cheerfulness of banquets; and that improvised song is not capable of capturing notice and attention. I claim that elegiac song arose from the soul's strongest and most troublesome emotions, that is, from its pity and tears; further, that an extempore song unquestionably merits greater credit and admiration than one carefully composed.<sup>142</sup>

In explaining that 'pity and tears' are the soul's strongest emotions and the foundation of his song, he elevates them, and with them his craft, above that of the *ioculator*, and draws his

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<sup>140</sup> Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Moyer and Laureys, 33.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 33 and 36 respectively.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

practice into line with that described as bestowed by Jupiter, the greatest of the beneficent planets, in the *Liber Nativitatum*. The link between Jupiter and Raffaele's music is made explicit in a discussion of music's power in the hands of Orpheus and Amphion:

Do you not understand from these inventors of the lyre—whom we have shown to be outstanding—and the highly important reasons for its discovery, which were not earthly but celestial, that no instrument can be played that is more noble and suitable for praise and enjoyment? For it moved stones and forests, made rivers stand still, raised broad city walls, tamed the wild spirits of peoples. And only those born of the gods, or those few whom fair-minded Jupiter loved (as the poet says), of ardent virtue lifted up to heaven, employed it so honourably on earth and carried its image back amongst the stars.<sup>143</sup>

Raffaele clearly sees himself among that happy company beloved of Jupiter who employ the lyre honourably on earth.

One final, discernible link between Jupiter's power (as described in the *Liber Nativitatum*) and Raffaele Brandolini can be found in his dedication of *De musica et poetica* to Giovanni de' Medici, a well-known lover of music. Raffaele had completed an oration, *De laudibus musicae et poetas*, in earlier life, returning to expand it at Giovanni's behest.<sup>144</sup> Giovanni was elected pope before its completion, giving Raffaele the opportunity to write that Giovanni's elevation was something he had foreseen long ago.<sup>145</sup> As a poetic conceit, this foresight reads like any number of stock commendations that pepper the letters of fifteenth century humanists, but as we have seen above it is also one of the gifts the *Liber Nativitatum* describes as given by Jupiter. If Raffaele *did* write this with the influence of the spheres in mind, it suggests a conscious self-fashioning as a child of Jupiter—prophetic, eloquent and intelligent to the point that he can claim descent from the great mythical poets of antiquity, and far-removed from the obscurity of the *ioculator* class, not blessed by Jupiter's influence.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 23. Orpheus, of course, moved the stones and forests, and Amphion the walls of Thebes. The passage of Virgil referenced here is Aeneid 6.129–30.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., vii. The date of this now lost treatise is unknown.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 3.

## 1.8 Conclusions

Musicologists are most familiar with Venus, Jupiter and the other spheres as components of a system dubiously aligning spheres, Muses, and musical modes, developed by music theorists in Italy across the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and most famously represented in the frontispiece to Franchino Gafori's 1496 *Practica musicae*.<sup>146</sup> The wider astrological literature has little to offer such efforts to bridge the gulf between the ancient Greek and the church modes. What it offers instead is an opportunity to think about how astrological views of musical skills and qualities may have inflected the broad conception of the domain of music, and the practical operations within that domain of those performing it, or having been presented with a musically-inclined horoscope for themselves or a child.

The importance placed in both the *Liber Nativitatum* and Maternus' *De Nativitatibus*, both in general and specifically in forming the musician, on eloquence and hearing—together comprising the skill of effective and affecting communication is particularly striking. In the *Liber Nativitatum* eloquence is a highly-prized trait—a singular mark of intelligence, and through that, of civic value. The influence of several favourably-disposed planets might bestow beauty (governed by Venus) and judgement (governed by Jupiter) to enhance it further. In *De Nativitatibus*, Jupiter's influence is frequently tied to the good fame musicians, made superlative by his influence, will accrue. By contrast, difficulty in communicating - epitomised by a lack of eloquence and difficulty hearing - is portrayed as making an individual miserly, ignorant, and, if spared a complete dearth of intelligence, fascinated by dangerous and esoteric arts. At the heart of the birth of a fortunate individual is the importance of balance, linked inextricably with humoral theory: the most fortunate are well-balanced between hot, wet, moist and dry, and those least able to communicate are made so by the excessive cold of Saturn or excessive heat and dryness of Mars. The moderate, eloquent and insightful individual is a producing of moderation and balance, and

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<sup>146</sup> See especially James Harr, "The Frontispiece of Gafori's *Practica Musicae* (1496)," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 27.1 (1974), 7–22; and Claude V. Palisca, "Mode Ethos in the Renaissance," in *Essays in Musicology: A Tribute to Alvin Johnson*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Edward Roesner (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1990), 126–139.



the most likeable and valuable in society. The cold of heart, ignorant and abstruse are the result of imbalance, and consigned to its fringes.

In the *Liber Nativitatum*, attributes of the planets apply similarly to music, binding music closely to those virtues of eloquence, intelligence and judgement. Venus' base musicality is not necessarily beneficial, personified by the *cantor letus*, it represents music at its most contemptible, a frivolous gateway to debauchery. The hot-tempered Martian musician of the *De Nativitatibus* might be an ingenious player, but also inclined to violence. The intelligence of Mercury elevates a base love of music to a degree necessary for commendable skill, though through Mercury's servile nature it is also a trade. Only the influence of Jupiter is capable of making a musician who, through erudition, judgement and sincerity, can move the listener to tears. Here Raffaele Brandolini's comments are invaluable: they clarify that while base music may lead an audience to lascivious behaviour, the power of Jupiter's music to move an audience to tears is a signifier of its foundation in the soul's worthiest emotions. For Raffaele, the lofty morality of this music is tied to a similarly lofty artform: the improvised Latin elegy. Other musical participants who were motivated to valorise different musical practices may have associated the same prestige with different genres.

Through a clear, threefold division of music between the light song of Venus, the affective music of Jupiter, and the professionally competent middle ground influenced by Mercury, the *Liber Nativitatum* and *De Nativitatibus* add context and colour to Ficino's comments on music in *De Vita*, the theory behind which is otherwise obscure. Although it is tempting to analyse links between the planets and modes to try to decipher how the sound of these three styles differed from one another, the labyrinth of possibilities and contradictions posed by mode ethos would seem to point towards a simpler solution. Were the dividing lines drawn, rather, by erudition, eloquence and the sincerity of the performer—rooted in 'faith and sense'—as posited by the *Liber Nativitatum*? For a performer such as Raffaele Brandolini, appropriately—chosen metre, subject matter, gesture, a sound memory and divine *furor*—inspiration attributed variously to Apollo, the Muses and Jupiter—would have been the hallmarks of the highest music, performed in Latin *all'improvviso* and *ad lyram*. But neither does he totally condemn love poetry—which we might naturally assume to be Venus' realm,

and thus ‘light music’—praising its ability to move the soul and win the acclaim of the audience, which he posits as the aim of all performance.<sup>147</sup> As such, in calling Latin elegy the highest music, it might be too simplistic to consign a poet-performer of vernacular love poetry—a Serafino Aquilano or Marchetto Cara—to the lowest bracket alone.<sup>148</sup> Based on Raffaele Brandolini’s remarks about song with obscene words, we could more safely assume that some of the more bawdy songs of the fifteenth century, such as *Meschine su chut chiru*, or *E d’un bel matin d’amore*, fall within that realm, and thus some of the output of the most respected composers of the day.<sup>149</sup> If not in the refined company of Jupiter, it is perhaps among the *Liber Nativitatum*’s *ioculatores* that we find most professional music-making: the most fortunate, gifted with eloquence and intellect, represented by polyphonists, frottolists and instrument makers; below them civic players of wind instruments; and below them the least fortunate, and by the *Liber Nativitatum*’s standards least skilled, namely comics and dancers. Scattered across this wide bracket, we might also place *cantimpanche*, fortunate or unfortunate depending on their skill, but all influenced by Mercury in that they sing for a living.

One wonders how these considerations might have affected the deliberations of a parent in receipt of a horoscope certifying the potential for musical skill in their offspring. For parents of a daughter, the prediction of a penchant for lascivious song, thanks to Venus, without the ameliorating judgement of Jupiter, might easily seem a recipe for scandal, prompting the decision to avoid instruction in music and dance altogether. A family of lower or middling status might view the influence of Mercury’s professional competence as a career opportunity for their son, prompting a search for a piper or instrument builder who might take on the child as an apprentice. The same horoscope might strike a higher status

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<sup>147</sup> *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Moyer and Laureys, 83.

<sup>148</sup> On the style of Serafino Aquilano, and potential fragments of his performance practice, see Anne MacNeil, “‘A Voice Crying in the Wilderness’: Issues of Authorship, Performance, and Transcription in the Italian Frottola,” *The Italianist*, 40.3 (2020), 463–476.

<sup>149</sup> Bonnie Blackburn has identified *Meschine su chut chiru*, a setting of which is attributed to Jacob Obrecht in a copy of the *Odhecaton*, as a garbled transcription of the Flemish song *Meskin es u cutkin ru*, or *Miss, is your cunt dry?* See Blackburn, “Two ‘Carnival Songs’ Unmasked: A Commentary on MS Florence Magl. XIX. 121,” *Musica Disciplina*, 35 (1981), 121–178. *E d’un bel matin d’amore* is seemingly a call to action aimed at an unwilling lover: ‘Meti la sella al vostro bon roncin/e doi sulla gran zoglia, traditoria’ (Saddle your favourite horse and mount for great joy, traitor).

family quite differently, prompting parents to steer their child carefully away from music and instead to lean into Mercury's eloquence as a purely verbal discipline, in the hope of a career as a lawyer, a secretary to the great, or a senior administrator in business or government. Meanwhile, the combination of Venus' beauty and innate musicality with Jupiter's gravitas and authenticity might be thought to create a talent too conspicuous for any family to ignore, and so compelling as to make questions of status seem irrelevant. Perhaps the parents of such a lucky child might consider the church a suitable destination, providing vocal training to discipline Venus' raw musicality, and Latin learning to furnish Jupiter's good judgement with a store of knowledge, ultimately harnessing the child's abilities to the objective of moving hearts to feelings of piety and devotion.

Regardless of whether a parent ever ameliorated their designs on their child's future due to a horoscope, the moral framework of music evidenced in the *Liber Nativitatum* and *De Nativitatibus* is something we will see consistently throughout the sources considered in this study. Within this framework, the most virtuous music—which sooner conduces the listener to tears than to excitement or love—is linked time again to the ability of the musician to exercise moderation and good judgement.

# CHAPTER II

## DE EDUCATIONE PUERORUM

*'Dissi nella soprascritta: nobili viro Maestro Antonio di Musica e di canto in Firenze proprio. Nota ch'io fe' quella giunta a dire di musica e di canto perché avendo detto cantatore solamente, non mi pareo degno titolo, quantunque abbia l'arte somma. Parvemi più onorevole farvi quella giunta, cioè per dire di musica e di canto; e nol dissi per vilipenderlo in verun modo, ché arei mentito, ma per più onorarlo, quantunque della musica non sappia se n'è intendente.'*

*'I spoke earlier of the noble Antonio, Master of Music and singing in Florence. Note that I have made an addendum in saying 'of music and of singing' because having said 'singer' alone, it did not seem to me a fitting title, though he possesses the art in totality. It seemed to me more honorific to make that addition, that is to say 'of music and of singing'; and I did not say it to disparage him in any way, for I would have been lying, but to honour him the more, though I don't know whether he understands music.'*<sup>1</sup>

So Michele del Giogante, an accountant, avid transcriber of the texts sung by *cantimpanche*, and a poet in his own right, wrote of the *cantimpanca* Antonio da Guido in 1445.<sup>2</sup> Antonio was one of the most popular performers of his day in Florence, and thanks to transcribers such as Michele del Giogante, his lyrics were evidently still being performed - however differently they may have actually been sung—over sixty years after his death.<sup>3</sup> Giogante's somewhat nervously written postscript is but one document of a lineage, dating back to antiquity, which distinguishes between the skillset of the *cantor*, one who can perform music, and the *musicus*, one who understands music. In *De institutione musica*, Boethius suggests that the title *musicus* can only be conferred upon one whose interest in music is purely

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Lanza ed., *Lirici toscani del '400*, 2 volumes, (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1973). Vol. 1, 681. This passage is discussed by Blake Wilson on several occasions, but another full translation is offered in Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 133.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 133 and Dale Kent "Michele del Giogante's House of Memory," in *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J Connell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 110–136, at 117.

<sup>3</sup> On Antonio da Guido's popularity, see Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 5.

intellectual.<sup>4</sup> The theorists of the Middle Ages reinterpreted these terms in various shades of grey. Marchetto of Padua equated the *cantor* with an incompetent *musicus* in his *Lucidarium*.<sup>5</sup> In the first book of his *Declaratio musicae discipline*, Ugolino of Orvieto referenced Johannes de Muris' *Libellus cantus mensurabilis* in arguing that the best musician was one who 'keeps to the middle road' between the purely practical *cantor* and the theoretical knowledge of the *musicus*.<sup>6</sup> Giogante was evidently trying to avoid any misconception that his use of the term *maestro di canto* was as pejorative as Marchetto's *cantor*, while also acknowledging that it was perfectly possible to be a praiseworthy performer without any real comprehension of the nuts and bolts of music theory.

In his eagerness to avoid offence, Giogante's comment highlights the fact that then, as now, the level to which an individual can be judged to understand music is rarely clear-cut. The *cantimpanca* or *piffero* may have been capable of displaying an impressive degree of virtuosity without being able to read music, or to read music but not understand the complexities of mensural imperfection.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, an academic as accomplished as Prodocimo de' Beldomandi in speculative music may have been considered able to judge the value of a performance or composition without having the necessary skill to perform or compose to the same level. In the amateur sphere, one might master several instruments over the course of many years, as Isabella d'Este did, or, like Girolamo Bondi in 1465, contract a teacher (in this case, none other than the famous virtuoso lutenist Pietrobono) in order to learn a handful of songs and nothing further.<sup>8</sup> Musical knowledge, practical and theoretical, took divers forms, and the means by which prospective musicians—*cantores* and *musicus*, professional and amateur—learned music were similarly diverse. This chapter will examine the various avenues of musical education at the turn of the sixteenth century, with

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<sup>4</sup> F. Alberto Gallo, *Music of the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, trans. Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 77.

<sup>5</sup> Stefano Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Ugolino of Orvieto, *Declaratio musicae disciplinae*, vol. 2, ed. Albert Seay (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1960) 60–1. For an English translation of the passage in question, see Gallo, *Music of the Middle Ages* trans. Eales, 111–12.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Zazulia has noted that complex exercises and puzzles using prolation and other advanced compositional devices likely lay at 'the extreme end of [musical] literacy'. Emily Zazulia, *Where Sight Meets Sound* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 106–7.

a particular focus on music in the lives of those of school and university age - those whom the pedagogue Stefano Fieschi termed *pueri et adolescentes*.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.1 Avenues of education in late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy

The type, level and quality of education an Italian born in the late fifteenth century might receive was highly dependent on their gender, social situation and geographical location. While free places for poor students at grammar and cathedral schools did exist, the vast majority of families had to pay fees, which increased as the curriculum progressed from the simplest concepts, such as basic reading and phonetics, on to areas requiring greater erudition on the part of the teacher.<sup>10</sup> As a result, being able to complete a programme at a grammar school was very much a preserve of the middle classes. Similarly, while records of female teachers and girls attending school do survive, they were an exception to the general rule that any education a woman did receive was likely to be at home or in a convent. For those fortunate enough to be born into the nobility, patrician class or wealthy merchants, their whole education might be conducted at home, supported by as many teachers as required to cover the liberal arts, practical musicianship, and dance.

Cities boasted any number of schools, as well as grammarians, humanists, musicians and dancing masters drawn by the possibility of patronage and willing to take on private students, enabling relatively easy access to an education for anyone who could afford one. Schools also peppered more modest townships and rural areas across the Italian peninsula, frequently supported by the local commune.<sup>11</sup> Whether the time and financial constraints faced by families eking out a living on the land enabled them to send their children for even the most basic education was a different matter. The idea that cities were bastions of literacy is a far cry from reality—Grendler estimates that, in Florence, only 28% of boys aged between ten and thirteen attended a school around the year 1480—but the

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<sup>9</sup> Black, *Humanism and Education*, 351. Black cites Fieschi's work as the *Synonyma sententiarum*, written in Venice around 1437. This was published frequently across Europe from the 1470s onwards under various names. One such printing was by Cristoforo Pensi (Venice, 1501), and titled *De Componendis Epistolis*. The reference to teaching 'pueri et adolescentes' is found on fol. 55v.

<sup>10</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

contemporary conception of an educational divide between urban and rural dwellers was very real.<sup>12</sup> A number of surviving poems preserved in chapbooks—often undated and anonymous but highly likely to have been printed and sold by *cantimpanche* following their performance, or commissioned as elaborate *canti carnascialeschi* and performed through the streets during carnival—address the differences between town and country life, one going so far as to attack ‘Le malitie dei vilani’: the wickedness of bumpkins.<sup>13</sup> In this case, a relatively complex poetic structure ensues, beginning with quatrains punctuated by the refrain ‘De vilan non te fidare’ (don’t trust the bumpkins) and followed by two sections in free verse entitled ‘Le malitie dei vilani’ and ‘La vita dei vilani’. The latter highlights the difference between the brutish, shoeless (*descalzi*) villager and more refined townspeople who comprised the *cantimpanco*’s audience by alternating Italian and Latin couplets - macaronic insults being entirely beyond the comprehension of countryfolk who aren’t even able to recite an *Ave Maria*, amongst the first practical Latin a student might learn:<sup>14</sup>

Non habetis numos	They hath no money,
& inter dumos	and go ‘twixt the briars
con li pie descalti	with bare feet,
e con le falzi	and with sickles
inciditis herbas	cut the grass,
& inter merdas	and wade through the shit
de le vostre vacche	of their cows
con calli e tacche	with corns and calluses
in corpore toto. <sup>15</sup>	all over.

While *Le malitie dei vilani* is a monologue, the peasant was a stock character in contemporary dramatic representations, mirrored also by the ridicule of the *Bergamaschi*, supposed to be

<sup>12</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> This poem heads the chapbook entitled *Le malitie dei vilani con alquanti stramotti alla Bergamascha* (s.n, undated) preserved alongside several other chapbooks in the British Library, shelfmark C.57.1.7.(18). On the carnival provenance of a similar example, see William Prizer, “Reading Carnival: The Creation of a Florentine Carnival Song,” *Early Music History*, 2004, vol. 23, 185–252.

<sup>14</sup> *Le malitie dei vilani*, fol. iv. ‘el vilan non fa lave maria/ne alcun oration/per sua devotion’. The *Ave Maria* is the very first of a series of prayers, superseded only by the alphabet and phonetics, which Aldo Manuzio includes in the *Rudimenta Grammatices* (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1501), fol. 2v.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 3r.

similarly uncouth. In 1515, Alfonso Facino reported to Isabella d'Este from Rome that he had heard the celebrated singer-poet and actor Niccolò Campani—*Lo Strascino*—perform a ‘bellissima ecloga’ in a private residence, playing several characters including a ‘a certain peasant, that made us die with laughter’.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 Schools in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries

Grendler identifies three types of school active in Italy during this period: communal schools, sponsored by the local government; independent schools, run by a master, and sometimes, as was most famously the case with the schools of the humanists Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino Guarini, with the opportunity for students to board; and ecclesiastical schools, which had waned considerably in number by this point.<sup>17</sup>

What was taught in schools varied considerably from place to place. In cases where the school was at least partially paid for by the commune, teachers were under a contractual obligation to teach what was deemed useful by the commune. Independent masters had greater freedom, but were similarly bound by necessity to teach what was considered useful by local parents in order to maintain their enrolment. *Abbaco* schools were particularly successful in this regard: they held a relatively narrow but intensely practical remit, teaching mathematics and notarial formulae that would be useful to the artisan classes, shopkeepers, and merchants. In 1345, the chronicler Giovanni Villani estimated that as many as 1,200 children were studying *abbaco* and *algorismo* in Florence.<sup>18</sup> The teaching of literacy at school is less easy to define. A master’s offering might range from simple ‘reading’—most probably in the vernacular—such as was taught by Mona Dianora at her school in Florence in 1513, to a full Latin curriculum, beginning with teaching basic grammar to children aged six or seven, and progressing to rhetoric and metrics.<sup>19</sup> This gave students who were able to complete

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<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 377.

<sup>17</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 5–6.

<sup>18</sup> Blake Wilson, *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>19</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 91.



their schooling the level of Latin language necessary to go on to university when they graduated, aged seventeen or eighteen.<sup>20</sup>

The part music may have played in the classroom of a reading or grammar school during the period around 1500 is almost impossible to tell. Several studies over the past decade have found evidence of musical activity at grammar schools, leading Paola Dessì to conclude that ‘grammar schools were also singing schools’, however most of the evidence on which such conclusions are based dates to no earlier than the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

Specialist music schools did exist; a Florentine contract drawn up in 1432 and signed by a lutenist, a harpist, and a singer, established a music school to teach both boys and girls music.<sup>22</sup> In Naples in 1474, two *piffari*, Tommaso Ferrillo di Giuliano and Menichello Menaro formed a fifteen year partnership to teach wind instruments and split the tuition fees between them.<sup>23</sup> In Venice, several schools of fencing, dancing and music were in operation near the Rialto bridge from a similar date.<sup>24</sup> These were evidently numerous and popular; on 21 January 1477, the Council of Ten sought some oversight of their activity, stipulating that they had to limit their activities to daylight hours, and that all teaching should be carried out in a ‘room or portico’ that was visible to the public (*sallam seu porticum ubi omnes publice doceantur*).<sup>25</sup> Evidently, concern regarding how activities as suggestive as music and dancing might be taught and the conduct of teachers was as real for schools as it was for private teachers.<sup>26</sup> The Venetian Senate was more severe in its treatment of Jewish *maestri*; in 1443, Jewish dance masters and musicians were forbidden from opening

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<sup>20</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 148 & 203. All university lectures in Italy were conducted in Latin during this period. Student ages did vary; Grendler cites the case of Francesco Guicciardini who commenced his study at the University of Pisa aged 15.

<sup>21</sup> Paola Dessì, “Docere and discere: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Music in Schools,” in *Music in Schools*, ed. Dessì, 11–19, at 11. For an example of a recent study of music in schooling based on evidence from the very end of the sixteenth century, see Alessandro Ignesti’s paper in the same volume, “Music Teaching in Montagnana: Organization, Methods and Repertories,” 171–190.

<sup>22</sup> Victor Coelho and Keith Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420 – 1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 154.

<sup>23</sup> Allan W. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 113.

<sup>24</sup> Paolo da Col, “Silent voices: professional singers in Venice,” in *A Companion to Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, ed. Katelijne Schiltz (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2018) 231–271, at 237.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 237–8. Da Col omits the date of the Council’s decree from his discussion. For a transcription of the decree, see Francesco Luisi, *Laudario Giustiniano*, vol. I (Edizioni Fondazione Levi Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 1983) doc. 16, 508.

<sup>26</sup> Judith Bryce, “Performing for Strangers: Women, Dance, and Music in Quattrocento Florence,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54 (2001), 1074–1107, at 1091.

schools or teaching Christians in their homes. Sadly, beyond these restrictions we currently know little else of how these schools functioned in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup>

I will return to one major, if tangential way in which we can be certain that music formed part of the Latin curriculum later, but first we must turn to two types of school for which the evidence of music in the curriculum is more concrete: the boarding school of Vittorino da Feltre, active in the first half of the fifteenth century, and the cathedral schools flourishing in the latter part of the century.

### 2.3 The Ca' Giocosa and humanist educational treatises

Some of the only evidence of music in classrooms outside of religious institutions comes from Vittorino da Feltre's *Ca' Giocosa* (or *Zoioza – The Joyful House*), a boarding school founded in Mantua in 1423. The flourishing of the school predates the focus of this study by more than three decades, but it provides invaluable information on the practical application of humanistic attitudes to musical education.

Vittorino came to Mantua most likely at the instigation of the Marquess Gianfrancesco I Gonzaga, who required a tutor for his children, but his tutorship expanded to include children, mostly of noble birth, from across Italy shortly after.<sup>28</sup> Vittorino had previously lectured on rhetoric at the University of Padua, but according to his biographer Bartolomeo Platina, resigned due to the poor behaviour of the students there.<sup>29</sup> If he did leave his position due to the behaviour of the university's students, the programme taught at the *Ca' Giocosa* could easily be read as an attempt to stymie future waywardness with all of the rectitude that Renaissance Humanism could bring to bear. First and foremost, students

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<sup>27</sup> A pending study by da Col (see da Col, 2018, 231) may remedy this dearth of evidence. On the restrictions placed on Jewish teachers see Benjamin Ravid, "From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head-Covering of the Jews of Venice," *Jewish History*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume (1992), 179–210, at 189, and Marianna D. Birnbaum, *The Long Journey of Gracia Mendes* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 36.

<sup>28</sup> *Her Immaculate Hand*, ed. King and Rabil, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 24–5.

—male and female—were immersed in Latin and Greek, to the point where Cecilia Gonzaga was competent in both by the time she was eight years old.<sup>30</sup> This opened the doors to any number of texts that humanists believed to have moral value.<sup>31</sup> The liberal arts, including practical and speculative music, were taught by a mixture of peripatetic teachers and Vittorino himself. One of Vittorino’s students, Francesco Prendilacqua, gave a list of the teaching staff employed by the school, falling short of naming them:

Neque deerant grammatici peritissimi, dialectici, arithmetici, musici, librarii graeci latinique, pictores, saltatores, cantores, citharaedi, equitatores, quorum singuli cupientibus discipulis praesto erant sine ullo praemio, ad hoc ipsum munus a Victorino conducti ne qua discipulorum ingenia desererentur.<sup>32</sup>

Nor was there a lack of the most skilled grammarians, dialecticians, arithmeticians, musicians, specialists in Greek and Latin, painters, dancers, singers, citharists, riding masters, each of whom was available to the students who wanted them without any reward, hired by Vittorino for this very office so that the talents of the students would not be forsaken.

The most detailed testimony to Vittorino’s musical tutelage comes from Johannes Gallicus de Namur. Given a musical education in Namur from a young age, and becoming a Carthusian monk while living in Mantua, it seems unlikely that he was of the same privileged stock as the Gonzaga children. Whether he attended public lectures, received a bursary, or even taught practical music as a young man at the school is unclear, but he is full of praise for the expansion of his musical learning thanks to Vittorino.<sup>33</sup> In the preface to his *De ritu canendi vetustissimo et novo* (completed between 1458 and 1464) Gallicus writes that:<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Her Immaculate Hand*, ed. King and Rabil, 20.

<sup>31</sup> See the recommendations of Leonardo Bruni, in particular, in “The Study of Literature,” ed. and trans. Kallendorf, 97–9 and 107.

<sup>32</sup> Francesco Prendilacqua, *De vita Victorini Feltrensis dialogus*, in *Il pensiero pedagogico dell’umanesimo*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Florence: Coedizioni Giuntine Sansoni, 1958) 660.

<sup>33</sup> Ian Fenlon describes Gallicus as a teacher at the *Ca’ Giocosa* while others, such as Kristeller, describe him as a student. See Ian Fenlon “Music and Society,” in *The Renaissance*, ed. Ian Fenlon (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989) 1–62, at 3, and Paul Oscar Kristella, “Music and Learning in the Early Italian Renaissance,” *Journal of Renaissance and Baroque Music*, vol.1 (1947), 255–274, at 266.

<sup>34</sup> Claudio Gallico, “Musica nella Ca’ Giocosa,” in Claudio Gallico: *Sopra li Fondamenti della Verità; Musica Italiana fra XV e XVII Secolo* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2001) 257–265, at 258.

Gallia namque me genuit et fecit cantorem, Italia vero qualemcumque sub Victorino Feltrensi, viro tam litteris Graecis quam Latinis affatim imbuto, grammaticum et musicum, Mantua tamen Italiae civitas indignum Cartusiae monachum, neque tam doctoris egregii Boetii cultorem in hac re, seu commendatorum, quam et sollicitum proponendae vetustatis in omnibus sectatorem et inquisitorem. Sileant igitur quicumque multas opinari solent esse musicas! Neque doceri posse ferunt hanc universalem scientiam nisi per sex illas syllabas, sed et suam gerant confusionem, qui tam nobilem artem cifris et phantasiis autumant esse subiectam.<sup>35</sup>

France, on the one hand, gave birth to me and made me a singer, but it was in Italy under Vittorino da Feltre, a man well versed in both Greek and Latin letters, a grammarian and musician, that I was truly instructed. In Mantua, a city of Italy, I became an unworthy Carthusian monk, and not so much a worshiper of the excellent teacher Boethius in this matter, or a proponent of his, as one anxious to expound upon antiquity in all pursuits and as a researcher. Let those who think that there are many types of music be silent! Nor let them say that this universal knowledge can be taught through those six syllables [the syllables of the hexachord – ut, re, mi, fa, so, la]: for they carry their own confusion, who think that so noble an art is subject to number and fancy.

He goes on to clarify his remarks in the conclusion to the third book of his treatise. To the end of understanding the moralising aims of Vittorino's curriculum, it is worth reproducing Gallicus' vituperative conclusion in full:

Quid ergo? Musici non sunt hodiernis temporibus nostri cantores, in sex syllabis et duodecim litteris, in quinque vel sex notulis, in variis cyphris ac diversis signis et characteribus, novos tota die cantus lascivos et vanos exquirentes, totque stultas adinventiones in suis quas non intelligunt proportionibus phantasticantes.

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<sup>35</sup> Johannes Gallicus de Namur, *De ritu canendi vetustissimo et novo*, in Richard Vaughan Hughes, *The Ritus Canendi vetustissimus et Novus of Johannes Legrense: A Critical Edition with Translation, Introduction and Notes on the Text* (unpublished doctoral thesis, 2 vols. Glasgow University, 1996) II, 134. The translation is my own.

Quippe qui norunt cantus, quos mensuratos appellant, cyphris ac novis phantasiis adeo plenos saepius fabricare, quod nec ipsi qui fecere valent illos ut plurimum enuntiare, quos nihilominus laudant in re tam vilissima quasi magnum quid egerint gloriantes. Quenam haec vestra dementia cantores? Numquid haec tam nobilis scientia vestris erit subdita cyphris? Absit. Canite, quaeso, canite! Voces quantumlibet frangite, novas quotidie cantilenas suaves et tinnulas excogitate, tempus circa longas breves semibreves ac minimas consumite. Nam cum haec omnia perfecte nec aliud noveritis non dico quidem musici, sed neque veri cantores estis.

Haec omnia Namurci didiceram a cunabulis, quod est oppidum in Gallia, sed cum ad Italiam venissem, ac sub optimo viro magistro Victorino Feltrensi musicam Boetii diligenter audissem, qui me prius musicum aestimabam, vidi necdum veram huius artis attigisse practicam. Vera namque practica musicae, quam funditus tunc ignorabam, haec est: universa, quae scripta sunt hic et e puro fonte Boetii prorsus exhausta velle scire, quae vero supra tetigimus non ignorare.

Verus ergo cantor erit qui totum, quod nunc canitur, ex hac vera practica procedere videbit. Nam ut ad id veniam, pro quo tot et tanta praemissa sunt, hoc est ad angelicum seu ecclesiasticum cantum, quis cantorum scire non debeat omne quod canimus in ecclesia Dei vetus et novum ab ipso ritu vetustissimo, quern e Graeco transtulit Boetius, emanasse philosophorum, immo nil aliud esse vel unquam fuisse nec futurum esse quam id ipsum?

What then do we conclude? Our present-day singers are not musicians: throughout the day they seek out new songs of a wanton and vain kind, while making use of the six syllables and the twelve letters, the five or six notational signs, the variety of symbols, and different devices and characters. They also conjure up foolish innovations, the particular relationships of which they do not understand.

For they know how to compose melodies which they call 'measured', which are quite often so full of strange symbols and novel ideas that very often not even those who composed them can sing them, but nevertheless are full of their praise, boasting in this vulgar stuff as if they have achieved something great. What, singers, is this

madness of yours? Surely, such a noble branch of knowledge should not be subservient to your peculiar signs? God forbid! Sing, I beg you, sing! Warble as much as you like, every day compose new sweet jingling tunes. Occupy your time with the longs, the breves, the semibreves and the minims. For since your knowledge of all this is consummate, but you know nothing else, so far from being musicians, you are not even true singers.

In Namur, which is a town in Gaul, I learnt of all these topics from my cradle. However, after I had come to Italy and carefully studied the *De Musica* of Boethius under that excellent teacher Vittorino da Feltre, I realized that I, whom I earlier regarded as a musician, had not yet attained the true practice of this art. For this is the true practice of music, of which I was basically ignorant at that time: to wish to be familiar with the universal truths which are here written, and which are drawn from the unpolluted well of Boethius, and also to have knowledge of the topics we have touched upon above.

The true singer then will be the one who will realize that everything which is presently sung stems from this true practice. Now to come to that topic on account of which so many things of such significance have been previously said by way of preface, that is, the divine or ecclesiastical chant; every singer should realize that everything - old and new - which is sung in God's church springs from that most ancient scheme of the philosophers, which Boethius translated from the Greek: indeed, that nothing else is relevant, or ever was, or ever will be?<sup>36</sup>

Gallicus' dismissal of the 'wanton and vain' mensural music delighting 'present-day' singers has led Bonnie Blackburn to define his viewpoint as conservative.<sup>37</sup> While Gallicus is dismissive of the tools of mensural notation and singers' preference for songs he deems vain, he is equally dismissive of the solmization syllables, then also fundamental in the teaching of chant. Rather than targeting mensural music itself, his ire seems more properly aimed at those who fuss over the mechanics of mensural notation, with no awareness of the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 366–9.

<sup>37</sup> Bonnie Blackburn, "The Lascivious Career of B-Flat," in *Eroticism in Early Modern Music*, ed. Bonnie Blackburn and Laurie Stras (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015) 19–42, at 32.

‘universal truths’ which Boethius discloses about music’s nature - that which comprises speculative music. In his *Regule*, Guido had termed those who sang without understanding notation ‘beasts’ (*bestia*), but here Gallicus raises the bar dividing the mechanical *cantor* from the rarefied *musicus* to Boethian levels, presumably requiring an informed knowledge of the senses, quality and quantity, ratio and harmonics, discussions of which make up the majority of *De Institutione Musica*.<sup>38</sup> Gallicus was not alone amongst Vittorino’s students in decrying the musical practice of his day; Sassuolo da Prato, who joined the *Ca’ Giocosa* around 1439–40 following a brief spell at the school of Guarino Veronese in Ferrara, similarly dismissed the music of his time as ‘iniquitous, shameless, corrupt and corrupting’ (*inquinata, impudens, corrupta atque corruptrix*).<sup>39</sup> Francesco Prendilacqua’s naming of ‘cithara’ players and singers among the teachers visiting the school makes clear that practical music was very much part of the offering at the *Ca’ Giocosa*. However, the simultaneous grounding of students in speculative music was a crucial part of their moral education, preventing those who were musically inclined from falling to the same, degenerate levels as those whose command of music was only *mechanical* - purely practical.

The testimony of Platina, who was also a student of Vittorino, makes Vittorino’s ideas of the moral value of music grounded in the understanding of the ancients clearer still. Platina tells us that Vittorino’s peripatetic staff included teachers of singing and playing the *lyra*, but that tuition wasn’t offered indiscriminately for the moral betterment of his students: it was reserved for those who he deemed most suited to musical practice (*eos erurdirent, quos maxime idoneos cernebat*):

Magistros item conduxit, qui cantibus et lyra eos erurdirent, quos maxime idoneos cernebat; hac quoque in re, ut in caeteris Atticos doctores imitatus; quod his etiam excitari animos concentu et harmonia ad laudem et pulchritudinem virtutis diceret.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> On Guido’s division between *cantor* and *musicus* see Dolores Pesce, “Guido d’Arezzo, Ut queant laxis, and Musical Understanding” in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Susan Forscher Weiss, Russell Eugene Murray and Cynthia J. Cyrus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010) 25–36, at 26.

<sup>39</sup> Haar, “The Courtier as Musician”, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Eugenio Garin, *Il pensiero pedagogico dello umanesimo. I classici della pedagogica italiana*, vol. 2 (Florence: Giuntine, 1958), 678.

Maestri who gave lessons in singing and the lyre to those whom he saw as the most suitable, imitating in this as in the other things the Greek masters. He said that thus, with song and harmony, the spirits are drawn to the beauty of virtue.<sup>41</sup>

Vittorino too was a practicing musician, playing the *lira da braccio* and singing with a voice—as Prendilacqua writes—‘pleasant and sweet’ (*iucundus ac dulcis*).<sup>42</sup> He clearly also played a role in ascertaining which students were best suited to further study of practical music before passing them on to other tutors. The theologian Ambrogio Traversari, who bore witness to Cecilia Gonzaga’s precocious Greek, noted seeing several treatises on music from antiquity on Vittorino’s shelves – Aristides Quintilianus, Bacchius, Ptolemy and St Augustine.<sup>43</sup> As a teacher versed equally in grammar and music, Vittorino was imitating the practice of two other ancients, Archytas and Aristoxenus, examples used by Raffaele Brandolini, as we have seen, to show that music did not deserve to be roundly condemned as a gateway to immoral behaviour when performed moderately and by those grounded in its proper use.<sup>44</sup> Here it is perhaps worth noting that the pleasant moderation suggested by Prendilacqua’s description of Vittorino’s voice as *iucundus* and its Italian rendering in the very name of Vittorino’s school—the *Ca’ Giocosa*—is tied to Jupiter throughout the Ptolemaic literature.<sup>45</sup> Just as Raffaele Brandolini fashioned himself in the image of the  *jovial* native, so too, perhaps, did Vittorino.

Of course, it should be remembered that the programme offered by Vittorino at the *Ca’ Giocosa* must have been far from representative of the opportunities afforded to most schoolchildren. With a renowned scholar for *magister* and the prestige of Gonzaga endorsement, the school became a popular destination for the children of wealthy families from across Italy, such that Vittorino was able to utilise the school’s financial success to offer bursaries to poorer students.<sup>46</sup> What little we know of musical teaching at Vittorino’s

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<sup>41</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 250. I have slightly amended Wilson’s translation, which does not make it overly clear that Vittorino chose which students were most suitable for musical training based on their aptitude.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 598.

<sup>43</sup> Fenlon, “Music and Society”, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Ann E. Moyer and Marc Laureys, 37.

<sup>45</sup> The most direct quote that can be brought to bear from Ptolemy comes from the *Tetrabiblos*, IV.2: ‘Jupiter aids in the direction of greater decorum, restraint, and modesty.’ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 405.

<sup>46</sup> Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre*, 31 and 79.



school, however, does resonate with the discussions of music's place within the curriculum and ideal lifestyle of a well-educated man found in some humanist treatises on education in circulation during the fifteenth century. Pier Paolo Vergerio, whose treatise on education, *De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis* (On the Manners of a Gentleman and Liberal Studies), was composed in the opening years of the fifteenth century and achieved considerable popularity—being printed in thirty Italian editions before the year 1530—makes it clear that a gentleman's musical education should be composed of both practical and speculative study, and that its end was social refinement, moral edification, and efficacious relaxation:

Proxima huic est poetica, cuius studium, etsi conferre plurimum et ad vitam et ad orationem potest, ad delectationem tamen magis videtur accommodata. Ars vero musicae (nam et ea audientem delectat) magno quondam apud Graccos honore habebatur, nec putabatur quisquam liberaliter eruditus nisi cantu et fidibus sciret. Quamobrem Socrates ut ipse senex didicit, ita ingenuos adulescentes erudiri in his iussit, non quidem ad lasciviae incitamentum, sed ad motus animae sub regula rationeque moderandos. Ut enim non omnis vox, sed tantum quae bene consonat, ad soni melodiam facit, ita et motus animae non omnes, sed qui rationi conveniunt, ad rectam vitae harmoniam pertinent. Verum cum ad remissionem animi sedandasque passiones plurimum valeat modulationis usus, tum vero eius disciplinae cognitio digna est ingenio liberali, secundum quam rationem speculamur sonorum varias naturas ac potestates, et ex quibus invicem proportionibus consonantias dissonantiasque causari contingat.<sup>47</sup>

Next comes poetics, which, even if it contributes a great deal to the life and speech of those who study it, nevertheless seems more suited to pleasure. Indeed the art of music, which also delights the listener, was once held in great honour among the Greeks, nor was anyone considered liberally educated unless he knew how to sing and play the lyre. Socrates himself learned these skills as an old man, and enjoined noble youths to acquire them, not to stimulate licentious behaviour but to moderate the movements of soul under the rule of reason. For just as not every voice makes a

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<sup>47</sup> Pier Paolo Vergerio, "De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis" in Kallendorf, *Humanist Educational Treatises*, 2–91, at 52

melodious sound, but only one that harmonizes well, so also not all movements of the soul, but only those which accord with reason, contribute to a harmonious life. But inasmuch as the use of musical modes is highly effective in relaxing the mind and calming the passions, knowledge of this subject is indeed worthy of a free mind and provides the principles according to which we theorize concerning the various natures and properties of sounds and their mutual proportions, from which are produced consonances and dissonances.<sup>48</sup>

Later expanding upon the theme of music as relaxation, Vergerio returns to the importance of choice and moderation in musical leisure, taking the mode best suited to the occasion, and avoiding the performance of love song, probably equivalent to those which Sassuolo da Prato described as ‘corrupt and corrupting’. Like music, dance too can be both beneficial and dangerous in Vergerio’s eyes, if the dancer is oblivious to or ill armed against its potential for inciting lust:

Sed nec erit quidem indecens cantu fidibusque laxare animum; qua de re superius est habita nobis mentio. Nam et Pythagoreorum mos hic erat et fuit quondam priscis heroibus celebre, ut Achillem Homerus inducit a pugna redeuntem in hac re solitum acquiescere, non quidem amatorias cantiones, sed virorum fortium laudes modulantem. Ita igitur per otium poterimus aut ipsi facere aut alis facientibus indicare et eos modos amplecti qui convenientiores nobis temporibusque videbuntur. Nam Siculi quidem modi ad remissionem animi magis faciunt et quietem, Gallici vero contra ad excitationem et motum; Itali autem inter hos medium tenent. Et item, quae pulsu aut cantu fit melodia decentior est; quae vero spiritu atque ore minus videtur ingenuis convenire. Sed et ad sonos saltare et muliebres ducere choreas, indignae viro voluptates videri possunt, tametsi sit in his rebus fructus aliquis, quoniam et corpus exercent et multam membris dexteritatem adiciunt, si non lascivos iuvenes redderent eorumque mores bonos nimia vanitate corrumperent.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 84–6.

Nor will it be unseemly to relax the mind with singing and playing the lute, as we mentioned above. This was the custom of the Pythagoreans, and it was once a celebrated fact among the archaic heroes that Homer depicted Achilles withdrawing from battle and resting this way—singing praises of mighty men, to be sure, not love songs. For leisure we can, then, either do the same thing ourselves or appreciate others who are doing so, adopting those musical modes which seem most suited to us and our times. Sicilian modes are best for rest and relaxation; French modes, on the contrary, excite and motivate; Italian ones keep to the mean between these two. Likewise, music made by singing or striking [strings] is quite seemly; while blowing [playing wind instruments] is less suitable to gentlemen. Dancing to music and group dances with women might seem to be pleasures unworthy of a man. Yet there might be a certain profit in them, since they exercise the body and bring dexterity to the limbs, if they did not make young men lustful and vain, corrupting good behaviour.<sup>50</sup>

Similar passages can be found scattered throughout the humanistic treatises on education also in circulation during this period. Music appears most frequently as an art to be mastered for the purpose of recreation, while ever mindful that music is a broad field, capable of refreshing the soul or ruining it depending on the type of music turned to. Singing the praise of ‘mighty men’, perhaps highlighting exemplary behaviour worthy of emulation, is beneficial, while the singing of love songs which draw the mind to lascivious thoughts is at odds with the ‘good behaviour’ a man should cultivate. Perhaps basing his discussion on Vergerio’s, Maffei Vegio similarly outlines the power of wanton music to corrupt young minds, in contrast to the edifying power which singing sacred song and the deeds of the great and good held in his *De educatione liberorum* (On the education of children), first printed in 1491:

Quattuor autem precipue que docendi erunt pueri tradiderunt maiores nostri:  
litteras: musicam: gymnasticam: et ut quibusdam placuit figurativam. De prima satis  
superiore libro diximus. Musicam fuerunt qui non reciperent quod lascivie magis

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 85–7. I have amended Kallendorf’s translation, which takes the verb ‘pulsare’ to mean drum playing and ‘spiritu’ to mean ‘whistling’.

causa non pauci in ea erudiantur. In qua re maxima cura adhibenda est: nam propter impudica enervataque carmina multos sepe adolescentes perditos corruptosque ac virilis nihil unquam roboris adeptos fuisse compertum est. Verum ubi ad degendam recte in ocio vitam moderandosque animorum motus leniendasque perturbationes ediscitur. Qualis est maxime qua fortium virorum gesta divineque laudes decantatur: quod pythagoras probat nihil certe cognitione eius utilius: nihil homini libero convenientius: quare merito apud antiquos magno semper in precio et veneratione habita est adeo ut et musici inter vatium et sapientum numerum referrentur: et qui eam artem ignorasset minime ingenuè doctus esse putaretur. Unde et Themistoclem refert Cicero cum imperitum se eius confessus esset indoctiorem habitum fuisse. Ob id eam magni est heroes didicisse neque quod discerent erubuisse memorantur. Philosophi quoque sed presertim Socrates iam senex a quo et philosophia ipsa derivata est quam non modo edidicit sed adolescentibus insuper ediscendam precepit.<sup>51</sup>

Our forefathers, however, handed down four principal things that should be taught to children: literature: music: gymnastics: and, as it pleased some, drawing. We have spoken of the first amply in the previous book. There were those who did not accept music because, more for lasciviousness [than for better ends], not a few were trained in it. In this matter the greatest care must be taken: for on account of their shameless and effeminising songs, it was found that many young men were lost and corrupted, and that they had never acquired any manly strength. It is true that when living a life of honest leisure one learns to regulate the emotions of the mind, and to calm emotional disturbances. This is to be found mostly in the singing of the deeds of brave men and divine praises. As Pythagoras commends, nothing is more useful than the knowledge of it, nothing is more suitable for the free man, wherefore among the ancients it was always held in great esteem and veneration, so much so that musicians even were counted among the poets and wise, and he who was ignorant of that art would be thought of as the least learned. Hence Cicero also relates that

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<sup>51</sup> Maffei Vegio, *De educatione liberorum* (Milan: Leonardo Pachel, 1491), fol. 43r–v.

Themistocles, when he had confessed that he was ignorant [of music], was thought unwise. It is for this reason that the great heroes are remembered to have learned [music] and not to have been ashamed of what they learned. Philosophers too, but especially Socrates, when an old man, and from whom philosophy itself is derived, not only learned [music], but also ordered it to be taught to young people.

Iacopo di Porcia is more colourful in his remarks on fitting recreation for adolescents (de ludus adolescente) in his treatise on education, *De generosa liberorum educatione* (On the noble education of children). He paints music, especially that of his own time, as base and liable to corrupt unless adapted to (presumably Latin) lyric, drawing honest music under the wing of poetics:

At choreas ducere: per sonari: testudinem pulsare: nisi ad poeticam accomodetur: hoc lenonum: hoc plebeionum sit: nam & nequitia & ignavia ex musica: presertim hoc tempore exoriri solent.<sup>52</sup>

But to lead dances, to play [instruments], to strike the lute—unless adapted to poetry—is for pimps and for the plebeians: for both wickedness and laziness are wont to arise from music, especially at this time.

Porcia's distaste for the teaching of instrumental practice to children throws into sharp focus the fact that there was no uniform 'humanistic ideal' on music education during this period; Vergerio, in contrast, is clear that, to his mind, one might play or sing (pulsu aut cantu), so long as the instrument isn't a wind instrument. Less acerbic views on music can be found in Eneo Silvio Piccolomini's *De Liberorum Educatione*. Acknowledging that 'a great variety of views' (in tanta rerum varietate) abound on whether music should play any part in the education of boys, he advocates 'a moderate knowledge of this art... if good instructors can be found', on the grounds that harmony 'which is neither immoderate nor sensuous greatly refreshes the spirit and cheers the mind for enduring hardship.'<sup>53</sup> Perhaps nodding to the argument that music engenders laziness, or that much time spent on musical matters

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<sup>52</sup> Iacopo di Porcia, *De generosa educatione liberorum* (Treviso: Gerardus de Lisa, 1492), fol. 5r.

<sup>53</sup> 'Non esset ergo huius disciplinae mediocris fugienda cognitio, si praeceptores non vitiosi reperirentur. Plurimum namque spiritus reficit et ad tolerantiam laboris exhilarat mentes non immodicus neque lascivus musicorum concentus.' Piccolomini, "The Education of Boys," 248, with translation by Kallendorf on 249.

stands only to distract oneself from more important matters, he also relates an episode found in Plutarch's *Moralia*, in which a musician, whose playing was corrected by Philip of Macedon at a banquet, replies 'may the gods protect you from this evil, O king: that you should have a better grasp of this art than I.'<sup>54</sup> Though Piccolomini, like Vergerio, presents Themistocles as a warning of the ignominy of musical ignorance, he likewise commends that the time spent in acquiring musical learning should be moderated just as one should moderate the type of music they perform or listen to.

What of the practicalities of teaching music to schoolchildren, in a school like Vittorino's or elsewhere? Some clue can be found in Antonio di Pietro Averlino *detto Filarete's* treatise on architecture, composed between 1461 and 1464 in Milan.<sup>55</sup> First and foremost a description of the ideal city, presented in a conversation between architect and potentate, Filarete nevertheless goes into some detail on how an educational building he describes should function, a substantial portion of which deals with the way pupils should be taught, and how they should pass the time when not at study. The building Filarete describes should accommodate the boarding of around twenty to twenty-five students, who must begin education around the age of seven, remaining until their early twenties.<sup>56</sup> His first educational consideration is for a master to teach letters and good morals, aided by an assistant.<sup>57</sup> Accommodation is then made for 'every branch of knowledge and every skill' to be taught, listed - perhaps in order of those which Filarete deemed most important - as law, medicine, canon law, and rhetoric and poetry.<sup>58</sup> Asserting that the building is 'more than a school', he then names a host of 'practical arts', 'though less dignified', which he would wish to be available to students, which include painting, silverwork, turning, carving, pharmacy and glassblowing.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> 'superbi id abs te mail, rex, avertant, ut haec quam ego Melius ipse teneas.' Ibid., 248–9. Piccolomini's source is Plutarch, *Moralia*, F. 68. See Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, vol. 4. Loeb Classical Library 305 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), 426–7.

<sup>55</sup> Antonio di Pietro Averlino (Filarete), *Filarete's treatise on Architecture, Being the Treatise by Antonio di Piero Averlino, Known as Filarete*, ed. and trans. John Spencer, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) vol. 1, xix.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

Music is named quite separately to these; and interestingly, Filarete suggests that singing and instrumental tuition should be given by separate teachers. Throughout, both disciplines are mentioned consistently in the same breath as fencing, suggesting that music's place in the life of his school's students was first and foremost recreational.<sup>60</sup> The union of physical exercise with musical exercise is consummated by the fact that both share the same locus and time for teaching: rooms where teaching can be observed publicly, with lessons given daily, following lunch.<sup>61</sup> Unlike physical exercise, however, Filarete recommends that musical students end their day, having returned to afternoon lessons following their musical tuition, with musical recreation:

Then they go to the fencing school and exercise themselves here for an hour in whatever they are most suited to or like best, whether fencing, dancing, music, or any other skill taught there. After this they return to the school until dinner time. They dine at the twenty-third hour. At the twenty-fourth those who are suited go to music and the others to whatever their spirit or intelligence leads them.<sup>62</sup>

Like the *Ca' Giocosa*, Filarete's school is coeducational, and he gives express instruction that girls are to be taught 'music, singing, and dancing so they can exercise their person and learn the things they ought in a decent fashion.'<sup>63</sup> He is equally clear, however, that when attending church, girls go 'in order to be seen', while on feast days boys should arrive an hour before mass 'that they might sing some *laude* to honour God' (cantino a honore di dio qualche lauda).<sup>64</sup> Even if the music tuition girls received in Filarete's ideal institution was, as was evidently the case in Venice during this period, audible and visible to the public, he drew the line at women engaging in congregational singing. As with boys—and perhaps more so—a girl or young woman's engagement with music required careful moderation to avoid impropriety. For Vegio, female indulgence (*indulgere*) in music is but one of several hallmarks of 'manifest shamelessness' (*manifeste impudicicie*).<sup>65</sup> In asserting his view of how

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 244 and 238. The original passage regarding the festal observances boys should make can be found at Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, codex Magliabecchianus II, I, 140, fol. 137v.

<sup>65</sup> Vegio, *De educatione liberorum*, fol. 49r.

a woman should conduct herself, he turns firstly to Ovid (*Res est blanda canor discant cantare puelle*, ‘song is an alluring thing, let girls learn to sing’) before using Sempronia, the highly accomplished and promiscuous wife of Decimus Junius Brutus, as an example of such immodesty, quoting Sallust’s description of her in *Bellum Catilinae* almost word-for-word:<sup>66</sup>

Magna igitur cura suscepietur: ne adolescentulorum utantur colloquiis eorum maxime qui compti comatuli formosulique sunt ne extranearum puellarum habeant commertium earum precipue que calamistrate que dispalliate incedunt que peregrinos olet odores: que ambitiosius se ornant atque induunt que cultioris forme sue curiosiores videntur: que exquisitioribus medicamentis fucant capillos et faciem: alimenta cuncta libidinum insignisque ac manifeste impudicicie argumenta: que amatoriis cantibus cupide indulgent. ne earum exemplo observare incipiant quod a lascivo poeta lascivis puellis precipitur. *Res est blanda canor discant cantare puelle.* Semovede erunt que iocis et salibus: que blandioribus litterulis: que lyrarum pulsibus saltationibusque delectantur: quas res nihil virtutis in feminis arguere perspicue docet Sempronia illa quam crispus refert multe facecie multique leporis fuisse: ingenio haud absurdo posse versus facere. iocum movere: sermone uti vel modesto vel molli vel procaci: litteris grecis atque latinis doctam: psallere et saltare elegantius quam necesse sit probe mulieri: et multa alia que instrumenta luxurie sint.<sup>67</sup>

Great care must be taken, therefore, that they do not make conversation with young men, especially those who are well-groomed and beautiful, and that they do not have business with girls from without their household, especially those that wander about, hair curled and perfumed: who adorn and dress themselves ostentatiously, whose appearance is laboured, who paint with exquisite substances their hair and face, food for lust and a sign of manifest shamelessness; who indulge passionately in love song, lest by their example they might begin to observe that which the lascivious poet (Ovid) teaches lascivious girls: ‘song is an alluring thing, let girls learn to sing’. They must be set aside from those who joke and wit, whom in flattering letters, the playing of lyres and dances delight, things the example of Sempronia

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<sup>66</sup> Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, Book III 315–6. Sallust’s description of Sempronia can be found in *Bellum Catilinae*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> Vegio, *De educatione liberorum*, fol. 49r–v.



plainly shows are nothing of virtue in women, which Crispus (Sallust) relates: that she was full of wit and charms; that she could compose verses with a not absurd genius; make jokes; could speak modestly, or softly, or frivolously; was learned in Greek and Latin letters; could sing and dance more elegantly than is necessary for an honest woman, and many other things that are the instruments of luxury.<sup>68</sup>

Music emerges from the body of humanistic education treatises as a highly contentious area of study, the estimation with which it was held by the ancient Greeks impossible to untie from the vice it was supposedly wont to arouse in the modern day. For the honest gentleman, for whom some musical knowledge is a necessity, whether to avoid falling into the same ignominy as the musically ignorant Themistocles or in order to utilise its soothing effects in recreation, three guards are issued. The first is to avoid licentious songs, and to emulate the Greeks in listening to or performing songs about great men. The second is to moderate any engagement with music, not letting a desire to master the art distract oneself from more important matters, and even regulating, in Filarete's case, carefully the times at which children could turn to musical study or practice. The third, which strongly informs the first, is to understand *musica speculativa*. For Vergerio and Vegio this is exemplified by Pythagorean doctrine, which, much like Platonic doctrine, held that music's cathartic power was due to the innately harmonic nature of the soul; though divine and immortal, it was susceptible to disorder due to the desires of its corporeal prison, but could be reordered through choice music.<sup>69</sup> In Gallicus' praise of Vittorino, it is Boethius who represents this understanding, but both share a common view: that the 'jingling' (*tinnulas*) of *canto figurato*, as Gallicus puts it, is merely a superficial distraction from the true science and virtue of music.<sup>70</sup> It is for this reason, perhaps, that Piccolomini specifies that instruction in music 'should not be shunned, if good instructors can be found' (*Non esset ergo huius disciplinae*

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<sup>68</sup> This passage is also discussed by Tim Shephard in "Noblewomen and Music in Italy, c. 1430-1520: Looking Past Isabella," in Catherine Haworth and Lisa Colton eds., *Gender, Age and Musical Creativity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 27-40, at 33-4; in Joseph M. McCarthy, *Humanistic Emphases in the Educational Thought of Vincent of Beauvais* (Brill: Boston; Leiden, 1976), at 55-6, and in Lorenzetti, *Musica e identità nobiliare*, 55 and 123.

<sup>69</sup> Hyun-Ah Kim, *The Renaissance Ethics of Music* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016), 24.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 42. Kim uses the example of Plato, decrying the music of his time in *Laws*, 700-1 to illustrate this point.

mediocris fugienda cognitio, si praeceptores non vitiosi reperirentur).<sup>71</sup> A tutor like Vittorino, and presumably the tutors which he employed, and which Filarete imagined teaching at his own ideal school, were able to instil this understanding in their students, providing a moral framework for their musical practice which was as, if not more important than the ability to sing or play an instrument.

#### 2.4 The Scuole Eugeniae

The *Scuole Eugeniae* represented the best efforts of Pope Eugenius IV (r. 1431–1447) to reinvigorate Italy's cathedral schools.<sup>72</sup> Their purpose was essentially threefold: to provide the equivalent of a secondary school education to those who might not otherwise be able to afford one; to establish a steady stream of ordinands from amongst the boys who completed their schooling and were considered suitable for the priesthood, and to train boys to provide consistent musical embellishment for the holy offices. Coinciding neatly with the start of Eugenius' programme, Pietro Emiliani, bishop of Vicenza laid plain the importance of music in worship in an endowment made in 1431, providing a living for three boys versed in *canto figurato* until they were eighteen.<sup>73</sup> He wrote:

It is customary that for their dignity and ornament cathedral churches should be provided with singers, especially at this time when citizens are not moved by devotion and prayer but must be attracted by singing or the sound of the organ or by ceremonies.<sup>74</sup>

Detailed studies of the *Scuole* are precious few, and to my knowledge no dedicated study of these institutions has been produced in English. Through a series of papal bulls, Pope Eugenius instituted fourteen schools across the Italian Peninsula and Sicily—some already in existence, and others new—between 1435 and 1446. These were at Turin (26 March 1435);

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<sup>71</sup> Piccolomini, "The Education of Boys," ed. and trans. Kallendorf, 248–9.

<sup>72</sup> Benjamin Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster: A Portrait of John Hothby at Lucca," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 63 (3), (2010), 754–806, at 762.

<sup>73</sup> Gallo, *Music of the Middle Ages*, trans. Karen Eales, 85.

<sup>74</sup> F. Alberto Gallo and Giovanni Mantese, *Ricerche sulle origini della cappella musicale del duomo di Vicenza* (Venice; Rome: Istituto Per La Collaborazione Culturale, 1964), 28.

Tortona (26 June 1435); Pistoia (29 January 1436); Florence (23 March 1436); Bologna, San Petronio (4 October 1436); Treviso (25 September 1437); Mileto (18 September 1438); Padua (26 September 1438); Bologna, San Pietro (8 April 1439); Castiglione Olona (26 September 1439); Urbino (14 November 1439); Verona (15 June 1440); Venice (29 December 1441); and Catania (4 April 1446).<sup>75</sup> Of these, the schools in Tortona and Catania amounted to very little, and the school in Mileto seems to have similarly faded within 20 years of its foundation.<sup>76</sup> Notable absences from this list include Lucca and Milan, presumably as the cathedral schools there were already functioning satisfactorily.<sup>77</sup> Of the other *Scuole Eugeniae* instituted, many grew and remained operational for centuries, and in the case of the Veronese school, known after the papal bull of 1440 as the *Scuola Degli Accoliti*, we can name at least four composers associated with it, either as students or teachers, between 1470 and 1530.<sup>78</sup>

The basis for how each of the *Scuole* was to operate was defined by its papal bull, but the instructions regarding each school's intake and the nature of its teachers form largely common ground.<sup>79</sup> Students were to be boys born in the city, from a poor background but born of legitimate marriage and without physical disability, and suited to the study of music and letters.<sup>80</sup> Depending on the location of the school, boys were admitted between eight and ten years of age, and given a free education, clothing and books.<sup>81</sup> Given that education started much earlier at other schools, it might be supposed that entrance presupposed a further qualification, namely a family's ability to have paid for the earliest stages of education, or taught their children basic reading and writing at home already. In return, parents agreed to allow the children to remain at school so long as they had a 'boy's voice, apt and sufficient for singing', which equated to a diverse range of ages across Italy, from

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<sup>75</sup> Osvaldo Gambassi, <<*Pueri Cantores*>> *Nelle Cattedrali D'Italia Tra Medioevo e Eta Moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1997), 282–284.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 and 141–146.

<sup>77</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 762.

<sup>78</sup> Gambassi, <<*Pueri Cantores*>>, 195.

<sup>79</sup> I am indebted to Gambassi's study for much of the information presented here on the *Scuole Eugeniae*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 59. The school in Venice was open to any aged eight and over, Padua nine, while Pistoia, Florence, Treviso and Bologna San Petronio admitted children from the age of ten.

fourteen in Treviso, to as late as seventeen at San Pietro in Bologna.<sup>82</sup> Upon completing their studies, the most talented boys were admitted to the chapel attached to the *Scuola*, and recognised as clerics or fully admitted to the priesthood, from whence they could continue to serve at the *Scuola* or seek benefices elsewhere.<sup>83</sup>

In basic terms, teaching at the *Scuole* was commonly divided between Latin grammar and music. Typically, students were taught grammar for four hours in the morning by a grammarian, followed by an hour and a half or two hours of musical tuition by a music teacher; both teachers were selected from amongst the priests attached to the *Scuola* based on their suitability.<sup>84</sup> In the case of San Petronio in Bologna, this is neatly illustrated by the stipend, decreed by the papal bull, to be paid each teacher; sixty lire per annum for the teaching of grammar, and half of that for music.<sup>85</sup> The day was broken up further by obligations to contribute to the daily singing of chant, and *canto figurato* of varying frequency, depending on the *Scuola*; a resolution passed at the Scuola of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence on 13 April 1485 decreed that *canto figurato* was to be sung at every mass and vespers, and that the services of the singers could be called upon for any solemnity.<sup>86</sup>

At face value the use of two different teachers for grammar and music marks a clear division between ecclesiastical practice and the humanist ideal evidenced by Vittorino and Raffaele Brandolini, however it must be noted that being appointed a *maestro di canto* (singing teacher) didn't necessarily preclude also being a grammarian or rhetorician. Franchino Gafori, who received his early education in the Benedictine monastery of St Peter and at Lodi Cathedral, would presumably have taught music within this system during his time at the *Scuola Eugeniae* in Verona, the *Scuola Accolitale*, between 1475–6.<sup>87</sup> He went on to institute

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<sup>82</sup> 'Vocem Puerilem aptam et sufficientem ad cantandum'. Ibid., 60. The reporting of this particular relates to the Scuola dei Pueri Cantus di S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome, in 1591, but is representative of the practice of the *Scuole* from their inception.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>86</sup> 'Item sia tenuto cantare per ogni solennità a perdono et di Sancti con decti fanciugli in decta chiesa et di decto canto figurato ogni messa et vespro, o altro ufficio, inno psalmo o versetto o qualunque altra cosa bisognassi'. Albert Seay, "The 15th-Century Cappella at Santa Maria del Fiore," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring, 1958), 45–55, at 52–3.

<sup>87</sup> Giovanni Zanovello, "The Frottola in the Veneto," in *A Companion to Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice* ed. Schiltz, 395–414, at 399.

a similar division as *maestro di cappella* and *maestro di canto* at the cathedral in Milan, also reducing the number of boys from thirty to around ten, and introducing salaries in an attempt to professionalise the contribution to worship at the cathedral made by boys deemed good enough to join the cathedral choir.<sup>88</sup> Gafori may not have been cut from the same cloth as the most notable humanists of the period, but his humanist leanings show that he would have been equally capable of fulfilling the roles of *Grammaticus* and *Musicus*.<sup>89</sup> Rather, the division enabled the *maestro di canto* to concentrate more fully on the boys' musical education, and particularly their practical musicianship. This highlights perhaps the greatest difference between learning music at an ecclesiastical institution and as part of a more rounded curriculum. The practical and speculative music a wealthy student might have learned at the *Ca' Giocosa* or under a humanist teacher at home was an accomplishment, intended to shape a well-rounded, learned individual, who could subsequently engage in conversation on music, play in private for personal solace or to entertain limited company, and more importantly, whose education in practical music would have aided their ability to master a far more important and public skill: dancing.<sup>90</sup> At a cathedral school, musical education had to produce singers who could perform publicly to the highest possible standard on a daily basis, and for a living.

We know little else about the way in which students were taught music and grammar at the *Scuole Eugeniae*.<sup>91</sup> Surviving examples of exercises penned by students of John Hothby at the cathedral school in Lucca, and the music treatises in contemporary circulation, offer some idea—to be considered in detail below—of how students may have been taught the rudiments of counterpoint and embellishment through the composition of *bicinia*. Given the need for clerics to have a working knowledge of Latin, it is probably safe to presume that Latin was taught to a high standard, if not to the Ciceronian standard of an eminent humanist like Guarini or Vittorino. What is most evident, however, is the importance of the *Scuole Eugeniae*

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<sup>88</sup> William Prizer “Music at the Court of the Sforza: The Birth and Death of a Musical Center,” *Musica Disciplina*, Vol. 43 (1989), 141–193, at 177.

<sup>89</sup> Haar, “The Frontispiece of Gafori’s *Practica Musicae* (1496)”, 8.

<sup>90</sup> This topic will be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>91</sup> Gambassi, <<*Pueri Cantores*>>, 61.

not only in training musicians, but in providing them with the means to secure a reliable income through the benefice system upon graduation.

The benefice system played an integral role in the musical life of Italy during the Middle Ages and Renaissance.<sup>92</sup> On paper, an individual was appointed to ecclesiastical duties in a given parish, and could expect to enjoy property or financial reward, such as tithes or other forms of tax, attached to that parish in payment. In practice, individuals were awarded benefices principally as a source of income, and whether they actually carried out the duties attached to the benefice was incidental.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, it was not uncommon for an individual to hold several benefices, and to exchange or sell them as suited the holder.<sup>94</sup> As such, singers who had taken holy orders, having trained in schools such as the *Scuole Eugeniae*, could be offered benefices—without any expectation that they fulfil the duties attached to them—as a means of securing their services at cathedrals and court chapels through as high a financial reward as could be procured. In Lucca, for instance, it was a group of four *mansionarii* (beneficed singers), rising to six in 1489, who formed the basis for the cathedral choir under John Hothby's leadership.<sup>95</sup>

The sheer number of benefices available in Italy has been posited as one of the chief reasons for the region's popularity amongst the *oltremontani* flocking there in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>96</sup> Amongst the *Scuole Eugeniae*, the *Scuola Accolitale* in Verona stands out for having likely provided a particularly successful locus for musical education, with a great many composers of the *frottole* included in Petrucci's editions hailing from Verona.<sup>97</sup> Of these, the livelihoods of three musicians, now recognised as relatively prolific composers—Marchetto Cara, Michele Pesenti, and Vincenzo Ruffo—relied either wholly or for part of their career, on benefice income.<sup>98</sup> The survival of the *Scuola's* documentation

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<sup>92</sup> The classic study of the importance of the benefice system to patronage of music in this period remains Pamela F. Starr, "Rome as the centre of the universe: papal grace and music patronage," *Early Music History*, vol. 11 (1992), 223–262.

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Reynolds, "Musical Careers, Ecclesiastical Benefices, and the Example of Johannes Brunet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Spring, 1984), 49–97, at 52.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 770.

<sup>96</sup> Reynolds, "Musical Careers, Ecclesiastical Benefices, and the Example of Johannes Brunet", 50.

<sup>97</sup> Zanovello, "The Frottola in the Veneto", 398–9.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 408, and Giuseppe Turrini, *La Tradizione musicale a Verona* (Verona: Stamperia Valdona, 1953), 53.

from 1520 onwards shows that Ruffo spent his entire teenage and early adult education, from 1521–1530, at the *Scuola*, remaining there after ordination for three years before embarking on a career as a *maestro di cappella*.<sup>99</sup> Much less is known of Pesenti's life. He is represented by 23 compositions contained in Petrucci's first book of *frottole* (1504), and we know from exchanges between Pesenti and Ippolito d'Este that he was a singer-lutenist in Ferrarese service in 1504–5, afterwards serving as a chaplain in Verona until around 1525, and dying soon after.<sup>100</sup>

The career of Marchetto Cara was rather different. It is highly likely that he studied at the *Scuola Accolitale* around the same time as Michele Pesenti, perhaps even being taught by Franchino Gafori.<sup>101</sup> He took possession of a benefice in Verona in 1489, around the age of 24, had moved to Mantua by May 1494, but renounced his benefices in 1497, marrying Giovanna Moreschi of Novara, a singer at the Mantuan court.<sup>102</sup> Here it was his popularity with the Gonzagas (and Isabella d'Este) which presumably gave him the financial security to leave ecclesiastical life and the benefice income it could bring. In 1499 Francesco Gonzaga awarded Cara two estates for rental, one of which brought an income of 78 ducats in 1508, leading Prizer to suppose that Cara might have earned as much as 150 ducats per year from his estates alone.<sup>103</sup> Added to the numerous other gifts Cara received during his employment, his earnings might rank amongst the highest for a court musician in Italy during this period.<sup>104</sup> On 30 August 1510, Cara was gifted 120 ducats by Francesco, which Prizer has supposed might have been made in gratitude to Cara for visiting Francesco whilst imprisoned by the Venetians, following the interception of his forces by those of the

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<sup>99</sup> Turrini, *La Tradizione Musicale a Verona*, 31–2.

<sup>100</sup> Francesco Luisi, *La Musica Vocale nel Rinascimento: del Cantar a Libro... o sulla Viola: Studi sulla Musica Vocale profana in Italia nei Secoli XV e XVI* (Torino: ERI, 1977), 325.

<sup>101</sup> Paganuzzi supposes that Cara was born in 1465, and that his absence from the census of 1482 was due to the fact that he was at the *Scuola Accolitale*. If he had joined as a boy aged between eight and ten, he might have been taught by Gafori when aged ten or eleven. Enrico Paganuzzi, "Notizie Veronesi su Marco Cara e Michele Pesenti," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1977), 7–24, at 9.

<sup>102</sup> William Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes: The Frottole of Marchetto Cara* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980), 37.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 53–4.

<sup>104</sup> Cara's earnings might still have fallen well beneath those of the likes of Josquin, who was awarded a salary of 200 ducats per year during his tenure as *Maestro di Capella* at Ferrara from April 1503–4, and Alexander Agricola, who was offered 300 ducats to join Ferrante I's court following his time there in May–June 1492. See Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, at 205, and Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese court of Naples*, at 85 respectively.

Republic as he marched to support the Imperial siege of Padua.<sup>105</sup> In 1511 he was granted the responsibility of *maestro di cappella*, extending his musical control of the Gonzaga court to both the secular and sacred realm, and in 1512 he married one of Isabella's *damigelle*, Barbara Leale, a match which Isabella had herself contrived following the death of his first wife Giovanna in 1509.<sup>106</sup> While the careers of musicians such as Ruffo, Pesenti, and indeed Josquin show how ordination via a cathedral school was an indispensable part of their careers as musicians, Cara's career shows how, far from a life-long vocation, holy orders could provide a source of income that could be dispensed with if fortune allowed. In the secular world, parallels can be drawn with professional musicians like Pietrobono, who worked in any number of roles alongside musical engagements - in his case, as a barber - until his fame was such that he no longer required other work to make ends meet.<sup>107</sup>

## 2.5 Music and the Latin grammar

It is hard to underestimate the importance of the Latin grammar during our timeframe. Its mastery was the gateway to the *Studia Humanitatis*, and indeed to any study at university, but even a basic command of the language seems to have been the dividing line between literacy and illiteracy in some eyes; the poet Serafino Dell'Aquila was but one of many public figures branded illiterate for possessing no Latin, or for using it poorly.<sup>108</sup> As we have already seen, the study of Latin accounted for half of the school day at a *Scuola Eugenia* and perhaps a good deal more at a grammar school. It is unsurprising then, that the grammars in circulation during this period were numerous, and that they accounted for a substantial share of the trade experienced by bookdealers in the decades around the turn of the sixteenth century. During a slow six-month period in 1498, the only sales a bookshop owned by Vincenzo Benedetti in Bologna saw, with few exceptions, were of grammars or

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<sup>105</sup> Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 52.

<sup>106</sup> Katherine Ann Moyles Wallace, *Gender and Genre in Cinquecento Vocal Music* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Alberta, 2002), 110.

<sup>107</sup> Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 102.

<sup>108</sup> Anne MacNeil, "A Voice Crying in the Wilderness", 473.



devotional texts.<sup>109</sup> Almost 40% of the 1483 holdings of a Mantuan Bookshop, inventoried in *Siliprandi-Stellini*, were grammars, amounting to some 245 books.<sup>110</sup> Reading Latin was thought to be edifying, whether by the moral guidance proffered by the examples of antiquity or the fact, touted by Vergerio amongst others, that the study of Latin distracted young people particularly from such idle pleasures as dance, a gateway to lust and premature sexual activity which might debilitate the mind.<sup>111</sup> For the Latin literate, even the most basic humble textbook played a formative role in their moral compass, as well as the way they chose to express themselves in writing and to describe the world around them.

The Latin curriculum, such as was taught at grammar and cathedral schools, was traditionally divided into two: the elementary grammar and secondary grammar. This scheme dates back at least as far as the flourishing of Aelius Donatus (c. mid-fourth century), who composed two treatises, *De partibus orationis ars minor* (The lesser art of the parts of speech) and the *Ars maior*.<sup>112</sup> Of these, the latter was commonly circulated only as a fragment—a chapter on ‘barbarisms’, common grammatical errors for the astute student to root out—and the former was replaced in Italy by a late–medieval text similar in content but falsely attributed to Donatus, now known as the *Ianua*, the very entrance to the study of Latin for beginners.<sup>113</sup>

Through this system, students began with basic pronunciation and reading, moving through declensions and syntax before studying metrics and elements of rhetoric, such as figures of speech, as part of their secondary education provided, if they were studying at a grammar school, that they could afford the incremental fees.<sup>114</sup> Musical references pepper the contents of most grammatical texts, but these are only used to demonstrate declensions or tenses. ‘Cornu’ (horn) and ‘cantare’ (to sing) are among the most frequently occurring

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<sup>109</sup> Angela Nuovo, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 334–5.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>111</sup> Black, *Humanism and Education*, 315, and Vergerio, “De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis” ed. and trans. Kallendorf, 20–21

<sup>112</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 163.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* As Black explains (*Humanism and Education*, 45), the naming of the grammar by pseudo-Donatus *Ianua* was introduced by Remigio Sabbadini in the 1890s to distinguish it from the work of Donatus proper.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Of course, students at a *Scuola Eugenia* would not be faced with this problem, their education being provided for free.

musical words, with an excerpt from the eighth of Virgil's *Eclogues* (VIII. 71) 'cantando rumpitur anguis', a popular demonstration of the gerund, occurring in four of the grammars printed in the year 1501 alone.<sup>115</sup> Agostino Dati uses it in his discussion of the gerund in the *Elegantiolae*, the most popular grammar of the period due to its promise of a quick road to eloquence, thus:<sup>116</sup>

Illud ignorandum non est quod gerundius modus ab omni verbo similiter procreatur si quando nobis eo opus foret ut cantando rumpitur anguis. Est enim ut ait Servius dum cantatur & alio loco active dictum est ut cantando tu illum rumpis idest dum cantas id efficere oratores atque usurpare queunt.<sup>117</sup>

This must not be ignored, that the gerundive form, if ever we should have a need for one, is created from every verb similarly. Cantando rumpitur anguis (the snake is rent in pieces by singing) is in fact dum cantatur (while there is singing), as Servius says. And in another place it is said actively, as in cantando tu illum uinces (you vanquish him by singing). Orators are able to produce this form.<sup>118</sup>

The usage of this snippet of Virgil was perhaps twofold. Firstly, it dovetailed the textbook studies of a student of secondary school age or older (here suggested by the admonition to the reader that anyone aiming for the proficiency of an orator should be able to use the gerund correctly) with their wider reading, heavily inflected with Virgil for its perceived moralising properties.<sup>119</sup> Secondly, but more difficult to prove, it presented a model for the gerund which, through its vividness and the curiosity it must have provoked (why did the snake burst?) was more memorable than a more commonplace example might have been.

The same could be said for the use of musical actions or instruments; in the similarly

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<sup>115</sup> Giovanni Battista Cantalicio, *Summa perutilis in regulas distinctas totius artis grammatices & artis metricas* (Rome, s.n, 1501); Agostino Dati, *Elegantiolae* (Venice: Cristoforo Pensi, 1501); Niccolò Perotti, *Regulae Syppontinae [Rudimenta Grammaticae]* (Turin: Francesco Silva, 1501) and Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli, *Regulae Sulpitii* (Padua: s.n, 1501).

<sup>116</sup> Black, *Humanism and Education*, 360.

<sup>117</sup> Dati, *Elegantiolae*, fol. 18v.

<sup>118</sup> Translation in Christopher J. Warner, "Quick Eloquence in the Late Renaissance: Agostino Dati's 'Elegantiolae'," *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 2012, vol. 61 (2012), 65–240, at 225.

<sup>119</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 237–8. Grendler calls Cristoforo Landino's moral interpretation of the *Aeneid* in the *Disputationes Camaldulenses* of 1472 and commentary on Vigil in 1488 as 'the most important of the period'.

popular *Doctrinale* of Alexander Villedieu, a versified grammar, ‘tibicen’ and ‘tubicen’ (pipers and trumpeters) are used to demonstrate the creation of an agent noun from an object when any number of other objects may have sufficed, something also adopted by Giovanni Tortelli in his *Orthographia*, a vast grammar and Latin dictionary first published in 1480.<sup>120</sup> Musical words provided examples which would have been encountered in daily life, but which were still, perhaps, one step away from the mundane.

In his *Etymologiae*, written in the early seventh century but circulated widely through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Isidore of Seville describes music as a mathematical discipline; as such, the quantitative aspects also shared by the art of grammar, namely rhythm and metrics, are described as aspects of music:<sup>121</sup>

Musice partes sunt tres: id est armonica: rithimica: metrica. Armonica est que decernit in sonis acutum et grauem. Rithimica est que requirit incursione verborum utrum bene sonus an male cohereat. Metrica est que mensura diuersorum metrorum probabili ratione cognoscit: ut verbi gratia Heroicum: iambicum: elagiacum et cetera.<sup>122</sup>

Music has three parts, that is, harmonic, rhythmic, and metric. The harmonic part is that which differentiates high and low sounds. The rhythmic is that which enquires after the impact of words, whether the sound agrees well or badly. The metrical is that which recognises, by means of a demonstrable system, the measure of different meters, as for example the heroic, the iambic, the elegiac, and so on.<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, it is also metrics, rather than practical or speculative music, that is the focus of another widely read text from late antiquity, St Augustine’s treatise *De Musica*. For students in the High and Late Middle Ages, mnemonic verse was such a popular memorisation tool that a basic understanding of metre was unavoidable, even at an early age. Alexander of

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<sup>120</sup> Alexander of Villedieu, with commentary by Ludovico de Guaschis, *Doctrinale cum Comento* (Venice: Lazaro Soardis, 1501), fol. 46v and Giovanni Tortelli *Orthographia* (Venice: Bartolomeo Zani, 1501), fols. 3v and 36v.

<sup>121</sup> On music as a mathematical discipline see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, II.xxiv (Venice: Petrus Löslein, 1483), fol. 12v.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, (III xvii) fol. 16v.

<sup>123</sup> Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J Lewis, J.A Beach & Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 96. I have amended the translation slightly to follow the Latin more closely.

Villedieu's works on grammar, the *Doctrinale*, and arithmetic, the *Carmen de Algorismo*, are versified for this purpose, the *Doctrinale* written in leonine hexameter throughout, and other texts, including the *Ianua*, were adapted into leonine verse in the thirteenth century.<sup>124</sup> The *Doctrinale* continued in popularity into the sixteenth century, printed more than seventy times in Italy alone before 1530. It came under increasing attack in the humanistic purge of medieval scholasticism, seen as a corruption of true Latin which could be resurrected through the study of the authors of antiquity, chief among them Cicero and Virgil. In the preface to his *Rudimenta Grammatices*, Aldo Manuzio bewailed having been forced to memorise Alexander of Villedieu's 'inept' *Doctrinale* (*Alexandri carmen ineptum*) as a young boy, wishing instead he had been able to study Cicero and Virgil.<sup>125</sup> Antonio Moreto levelled similar criticism against the 'inept poem of barbarous Alexander' (*Alexander Barbari carmen ineptum*) in the preface to his edition of Niccolò Perotti's *Rudimenta Grammatices*, also printed in 1501.<sup>126</sup> Perotti, rather, turned to a classical 'question and answer' model, beginning with simple questions and answers, and building in complexity; Manuzio followed his lead closely.<sup>127</sup> Memorisation, however, remained at the heart of learning.<sup>128</sup> Two of the first questions posed by Perotti, before even the letters of the Latin alphabet had been listed, and long before any work on the grammar necessary to comprehend them, were clearly intended as a moralising couplet intended to inform a child's lifetime approach to learning, itself to be memorised as a maxim:

Quod est primum ingenii signum in pueris? Memoria

Quod est secundum? Imitatio.<sup>129</sup>

What is the first sign of intelligence in boys? Memory

What is the second? Imitation.

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<sup>124</sup> Black, *Humanism and Education*, 52–3.

<sup>125</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 139. Manuzio's recollection of his studies can be found in *Rudimenta Grammatices*, fol. 2v.

<sup>126</sup> Perotti, *Regulae Syppontinae*, fol. iv.

<sup>127</sup> Black, *Humanism and Education*, 133.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>129</sup> Perotti, *Regulae Syppontinae*, fol. 3r.

In this classical model, any discussion of metrics is reserved for the final chapters, if mentioned at all. While reading the ancient poets was seen as a worthy pursuit within the humanist schema, the recognition of meters was too advanced a topic for the *Rudimenta*. Rather, it was texts like Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli's *De versuum scansione* and Francesco Negri's *Grammatica* which offered detail on poetics in order to achieve true elegance. Sulpizio begins by providing descriptions of various metres, their usage and their footing, and occasionally, as is the case with the *molossos*, detailing their possible origin, in this case given as Epyrot dance (epytica saltatione).<sup>130</sup> Following the colophon is a parting admonition on the value of learning scansion which points to the fact that it was not knowledge commonly mastered at an early age, analogising written poetry and song:

Adolescens nichil tibi iam ad latinam musicam: hoc est ad rectam proninciationem deest. Habes de syllabarum quantitate opus exactissimum. Habes de pedibus: & de generibus carminum: Habes ex Servii excerpta centimetro: ipsumque epitomen. Habes de accentibus Priscianum. Superest ut iis invigiles & diligenter incumbas: Quod si egeris os tuum stribiligine non foedabis: & carmen compones ac legantissimum.<sup>131</sup>

When you are young, you have no concern with Latin music: but this is what is lacking for correct pronunciation. Here you have a most exact work on the quantity of syllables: on feet and the genres of song: You have from Servius excerpts of the centimetro: and the epitome itself.<sup>132</sup> You have accents from Priscian. It is necessary that you watch over them and pay careful attention to them; if you do this, you will not pollute your mouth with shrillness and compose the most famous [most widely read] of songs.

Of course, an understanding of scansion was as important for singing poets, whether performing in Latin or the vernacular, as it was for poetry written to be read. Although several commentaries on vernacular poetics survive from this period, most notably Lorenzo

<sup>130</sup> Sulpizio, *Regulae Sulpitii*, fol. 19v.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 33r. Some unfortunate and rather ironic typographical errors for a guide to eloquence (such as 'excrepta centimero' and errant punctuation) have been corrected using a later edition (Venice: Guilielmum de Fontaneto, 1520).

<sup>132</sup> I have as yet been unable to decipher which work this refers to.

de' Medici's *Comento de' miei sonetti* and the writings of Vincenzo Colli detto *Il Calmeta*, we have no didactic texts from this period on the subject, and it might be that many *cantimpanchi* simply learned by doing.<sup>133</sup> For the young poet who, having already acquired some musical skill, wished to begin improvising Latin verse *ad lyram*, the contents of texts such as Sulpizio's were an indispensable tool in understanding how to employ and perform metre; Sulpizio's treatise contains little reference to how Latin texts were sung in his day, but we can infer that his admonitions to take good care of syllabic quantity, rhythm and speed were as relevant for the sung word as the spoken.

One grammar published during our timeframe did go so far as to include musical examples for Latin poetry. Francesco Negri's *Grammatica* (Venice: Theodorus Herbipolensis, for Johannes Lucilius Santritter, 1480) provides a complete Latin curriculum, spanning from the rudiments of grammar to scansion and rhetoric. In Liber VIII, *De oratione metrica & carminibus qualitatibus*, following an incredibly detailed account of the various Latin meters, Negri provides five mensural monodies, one for each of the five species of *vocalis harmonia*, which he identifies as 'Heroic Grave' (Heroica Gravis), 'Heroic Bellicose' (Heroica Bellica), 'Elegiac' (Elegiaca), 'Sapphic' (Sapphica) and 'Lyric' (Lyrica).<sup>134</sup> The first two are dactylic hexameters extracted from the *Aeneid* (I:522–3) and, appropriately, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (I:1–3); Ovid's *Fausti* (671–674), provides the text for the elegiac distich, and the Sapphic and Lyric are represented by sapphic and alcmnian strophes from Horace: *O decus Phoebi* (I, 32, 13–16), and *Laudabunt alii* (I, 7, 1–4).<sup>135</sup>

Negri was a priest, grammarian, and a musician, as testified in 1495 by Jacob Locher, who met Negri while visiting Italy and heard him sing and play sapphic odes.<sup>136</sup> As such, it is well within the realm of possibility that these examples were composed by Negri himself, and

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<sup>133</sup> For a modern edition of Lorenzo's commento see Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento de' miei sonetti*, ed. Tiziano Zanato (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1991); for the writings of Calmeta, see Vincenzo Calmeta, *Prose e lettere edite o inedite: con due appendici di altri inediti*, ed. Cecil Grayson (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1959).

<sup>134</sup> Philippe Canguilhem, "Singing Horace in Sixteenth-Century France: A Reappraisal of the Sources and Their Interpretation," in *Horace across the media: textual, visual and musical receptions of Horace from the 15th to the 18th century* ed. K.A.E Enkel and Marc Laureys (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2022), 422–441, at 423.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Fiorella Brancacci, "Dal canto umanistico su versi latini alla frottola. La tradizione dell'ode Saffica," *Studi musicali* 34 (2005), 267–318, at 281.

that in style they reflect a musical practice not dissimilar from that also practiced by other performers of Latin verse.<sup>137</sup> In spite of his detailed account of Latin scansion, and the admonitions of other grammarians such as Sulpizio, it has been noted that Negri's settings do not always conform to the syllabic quantity of his chosen texts.<sup>138</sup> In the edition printed by Jacobus Wolff, in Basel, 1499, for instance, the original example for the Sapphic is replaced by a new setting which matches a setting of another Horace text attributed to Michele Pesenti, *Integer Vitae*, whose rhythm is accentual rather than quantitative, and the original Lyric example is substituted with a new setting of Horace's *Odi prophanum vulgus* (III, 1, 1-4), which is strictly quantitative.<sup>139</sup>

Indeed, this approach is common across almost all remaining printed settings of Latin lyric, with the notable exception of an example composed by Gafori to illustrate Sapphic verse in his *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum* (Milan: Gottardo Pontano, 1518).<sup>140</sup> In his *Practica Musicae*, Gafori had described the process supposedly followed by his contemporaries in setting Latin poetry:

poetae atque musici sano prosequentes iudicio omne vocis tempus breve longumve posuere, omnis inde syllabas vel breves vel longas considerantes. Quare unius temporis mensuram brevi syllabae ascripserunt, longae verum duorum temporum quantitatem. Dualitas enim prima est unitatem subsequenter bis numerans.<sup>141</sup>

Poets and musicians, through careful examination, determine the temporal duration of a sound as either short or long and hence consider all syllables either short or

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<sup>137</sup> Canguilhem's remark that 'Negri's book is a grammatical treatise that has no particular relationship with musical practice' (Canguilhem, "Singing Horace in Sixteenth-Century France", 425) is confusing given his acknowledgement of Negri's performances (426-7).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 424-8. The remarks of Camilla Cavicchi, drawn from Brancacci, on the differences between the 1480 and 1499 editions are misleading; Cavicchi takes the strictly quantitative nature of the 1499 setting of *Odi prophanum vulgus* as indicative of a quantitative approach to all the settings in that edition. Camilla Cavicchi, "The Cantastorie and his Music in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italy," *Troja – Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik*, 13, (2017), 105-133, at 129.

<sup>140</sup> "Musices septemque modos planetae", fol. 89v. This is reproduced by Canguilhem in "Singing Horace in Sixteenth-Century France", 430.

<sup>141</sup> Gafori, *Practica musicae*, fol. aa 1.

long. A short syllable, therefore, is assigned one beat and a long syllable receives two beats, since two is the first number which is twice one.<sup>142</sup>

Other printed sources show that this was far from the case. Francesco Luisi has conclusively shown that the Latin settings appearing in Petrucci and Antico's publications prioritise accent over quantity, the result, in the case of *Integer Vitae* (Venice: Petrucci, 1504) for instance, being the loss of a metric foot, but the careful preservation of caesura.<sup>143</sup> Given Pesenti, who had trained as a cleric at the *Scuola Degli Accoliti*, was Latin literate, we might assume that his setting of *Integer Vitae*, like those composed by Negri for print in 1480, was composed accentually by artistic preference, rather than out of ignorance. Turning to the vernacular, but perhaps just as easily applied to Latin poetry, in his *Comento de' miei sonetti* Lorenzo de' Medici describes how even lacking metric feet, speech can be described as musical when it delights the ears (*diletti li orecchi*), the very point of music being to delight:

E qui è da notare che nel cantare e nel parlare della donna mia sono comprese tre parti, che, secondo Platone, contiene la musica, le quali sono queste: el parlare, armonia e rithmo (che credo sia detta quella che vulgarmente chiamiamo «rima», perché «rithmo» non è altro che un parlare terminato da certa misura, come sono li versi e rime vulgari). Chiamasi el parlare «musico», ancora che non abbi piedi certi, quando è composto in modo che diletti li orecchi, come si vede in quelli che «eloquenti» sono chiamati; l'armonia è una consonanzia di voce umane, o veramente di suoni, come è notissimo; el rithmo abbiamo detto quello sia.<sup>144</sup>

And it is here worth noting that in singing and speaking of my lady there are three parts, which, according to Plato, contain music, which are these: speech, harmony and rhythm (which I think is that which we call in the vulgar 'rhyme', because 'rhythm' is speech defined by a certain measure, as are vulgar verses and rhymes). Speech may be called 'musical', even if it does not have metric feet, when it is

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<sup>142</sup> Franchino Gafori, *Practica musicae*, trans. C. Miller (American Institute of Musicology: 1968). I have slightly adapted this translation from that reproduced, after Miller, in Canguilhem, "Singing Horace in Sixteenth-Century France", 428–9.

<sup>143</sup> Luisi, *La musica vocale nel Rinascimento*, 331.

<sup>144</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento de' miei sonetti*, ed. Tiziano Zanato, 126. This commentary is on Sonnet XXXIII.



composed in a way which delights the ears, as we see in those who are called ‘eloquent’; harmony is a consonance of human voices, or rather of sounds, as is often noted; rhythm we have already explained.

Whether or not metric quantity was observed without fault by the most famous humanists known to have improvised Latin verses, and who may have looked down upon the efforts of mere clerics-turned-composers and users of Antonio Caprioli’s model for adapting to Latin verse, the *Aer de cantar versi latini*, is difficult to say.<sup>145</sup> The variety presented by sources at the turn of the sixteenth century suggests that while accent often prevailed over quantity, a knowledge of the latter was crucial in performing verse with music, even if sacrificing a strictly quantitative approach was necessary for the purpose of a pleasing performance.<sup>146</sup>

Two important sources give some idea of the time at which a student might begin to try improvising their own Latin verse *ad lyram*. The first is Raffaele Brandolini’s account of his brother Aurelio’s mastery of improvising Latin lyric, which he began singing in his late teens:

at about the age of 17, then, he began first with vernacular verses, soon also with Latin ones. And he perfected them with such zeal and commendation at Naples that when he celebrated heroic praises in extemporaneous song at the court of Ferdinand I King of Naples, with Antonello Petrucci, private secretary to that king for confidential affairs, at the court of Giulio Acquaviva, the most excellent count, and the Marquis Andrea Matteo, his son, and at the courts of many noblemen of the kingdom adorned with the most exquisite mind and intelligence, he obtained many praises and thanks in return.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Caprioli’s *Aer de cantar versi latini* was published by Petrucci in *Frottole Libro IV* (Venice: c. 1505). For a discussion of how it was possibly intended to function with a variety of Latin verses, rather than a particular meter, see Luisi, 1977, 355–9.

<sup>146</sup> Cavicchi, “The Cantastorie and his Music”, 129. Cavicchi calls this phenomenon ‘a stylized metric transposition, an up-to-date interpretation of classical metrics, which in all probability reflected a musical practice that had already been consolidated.’

<sup>147</sup> Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Moyer and Laureys, 111.

The second are the letters of Michele Verino, son of the Florentine humanist Ugolino Verino, who was a student at the University of Florence from 1485 until his untimely death, aged eighteen, in 1487.<sup>148</sup> Replying to a question from a fellow student, Pietro Ridolfi, on how he was spending his time while Florence was in the grip of plague, Michele wrote:

I rise at a good hour, and walk through my small garden dressed in my long robe, where I am refreshed by the morning air. I then retire to my little study, scrolling through some poets; I study the precepts of Quintilian, and read not without amazement the orations of Cicero. I draw pleasure from the letters of Pliny, which are my delight. I compose some epigrams, but more willingly some elegiac verses. After lunch I sleep a little. My father, who is here with me, thoroughly addicted to letters as he is, corrects, adds to, ornaments, and reorders my compositions which here and there are in need of it. And after my nap I divert myself with some chess or backgammon. Nearby is a rather large vineyard full of fruit, through which flows a stream of the freshest water; the quantity of small fish is enormous, the hedges incredibly dense, and day and night the nightingales complain, singing of their ancient grievances. In this setting I read something, and then with my lyre I sing some improvised verses [ad cytaram carmen extemporale], and sometimes [sing the verses] I have studied. When the sun begins to decline, I exercise by playing some ball. In this way I pass the whole summer, as long as the city is in the grip of disease. I do not cultivate my fields so much as myself, with literary exercises.<sup>149</sup>

However idealised this description of a young man's otium might be (indeed, it bears remarkable similarities to a letter written by Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 9.36) it gives weight to the idea that beginning to improvise Latin lyric in late adolescence using an understanding of metre, some ability to play an accompaniment on a stringed instrument, and a memory honed from early childhood, was common practice for those of the humanist

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<sup>148</sup> For a brief account of Michele's musical activities as transmitted by his letters from 1485–87, see Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 268–272.

<sup>149</sup> Armando Verde, ed., *Lo Studio Fiorentino, 1473–1503: Ricerche e Documenti* (Pistoia: Presso Memorie Domenicane, 1977), III, 685. Translation in Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 269.

cadre who made *cantare ad lyram* so synonymous with fifteenth-century humanism.<sup>150</sup>

## 2.6 Learning the rudiments of music

As Gambassi has noted, we have little idea of how music lessons were conducted, either in the classroom or at home during this period.<sup>151</sup> We are particularly at a loss regarding instrumental tuition; before the publication of Silvestro Ganassi's *Fontegara*, a division manual for the recorder (Venice: 1535), instructions printed in Italy are remarkably brief, often consigned, as in Franciscus Bossinensis' *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran In canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto* (Venice: Petrucci, 1509), to a single page.<sup>152</sup> In this case, as perhaps in the case of all practical music treatises, it would have been difficult to achieve any proficiency in music with the aid of a book alone.<sup>153</sup> However, the treatises in circulation in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, as well as fragmentary composition exercises, reveal the nature of the curriculum that would be taught to children in cathedral schools, and perhaps also at home, where information on how vocal production or instrumental proficiency were taught is so lacking.

Music as presented in the music treatises in circulation during this period was commonly divided into two: practical music, and speculative, or theoretical music. The latter dealt mainly with the ancient history of music and harmonics, while the former could be broadly divided into two parts: firstly, the teaching of solmisation, the hexachord system and reading plainchant, followed by a lengthier instruction on counterpoint, beginning with the

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<sup>150</sup> See Piccolomini, "The Education of Boys", at 140–143. I am grateful to Tim Shephard for pointing out the striking similarity between Verino's and Pliny's letters.

<sup>151</sup> Gambassi, <<*Pueri Cantores*>>, 61.

<sup>152</sup> Franciscus Bossinensis, *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran In canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1509) fol. 2v. In this case, the 'Regola per quelli non sanno cantare' is a brief guide to reading lute tablature. For a survey of such *regole* for the lute, see Dinko Fabris, "Lute Tablature Instructions in Italy: A Survey of the Regole from 1507 to 1759," in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela: Historical Practice and Modern Interpretation*, ed. Victor Coelho (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16–46. For a translation of the lengthier *regole* found in the Capriola Lute Book, which runs to several folios, see Federico Marincola, "The Instructions from Vincenzo Capriola's Lute Book: A New Translation," *The Lute* 23, pt. 2 (1983), 23–8.

<sup>153</sup> Alessandra Ignesti, "Music Teaching in Montagnana", at 183. Ignesti's comment here pertains specifically Bonaventura da Brescia's *Regula Musicae Plane* and an anonymous *Compendium musicae*, but is arguably pertinent to all practical guides of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

basics of reading mensural notation, proceeding to understanding consonances, and ending with compositional complexities such as proportion and diminution.<sup>154</sup> Some texts, such as Marchetto of Padua's *Lucidarium*, cover both practical and speculative music, written as an attempt to raise the mere *cantor* to the understanding of a *musicus*, and ground the *musicus* in the practical musicianship of the *cantor*.<sup>155</sup> However, doing so earned the ire of the mathematician and author of several music treatises Prosdocimo de' Beldomandi in the following century, who castigated Marchetto for basic miscomprehensions of speculative music and for having the temerity to try to blend the practical and speculative into one treatise: excelling at one, failing utterly at the other, and showing himself to be a mere *cantor* in the process.<sup>156</sup>

The concept of a division between the mechanical *cantor*, able to read and perform music but not understand its speculative aspects, and the refined, all-knowing *musicus* is well-known to modern musicology. Given the regularity of its occurrence in theoretical writings of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, we might presume that a sizeable percentage of even otherwise Latin literate musicians were never taught speculative music in any depth; indeed, Johannes Gallicus' praise of Vittorino is testimony to the fact that it was possible to pass through the curriculum of a northern cathedral school in the early fifteenth century without encountering Boethius at all.<sup>157</sup> Writing his *De ritu canendi* following his enlightenment, Gallicus singles out the importance placed on solmisation and the hexachord - among the very first things a music student might learn - as most symptomatic of the *cantor*:

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<sup>154</sup> Thomas Christensen, "Music Theory and Pedagogy," in *The Cambridge History of Sixteenth-Century Music*, ed. Ian Fenlon and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 414–438, at 425.

<sup>155</sup> Mengozzi, *The Renaissance reform of Medieval Music Theory*, 127.

<sup>156</sup> Prosdocimo de' Beldomandi, ed. and trans. Jan Herlinger, *Plana Musica and Musica Speculativa* (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 158–9.

<sup>157</sup> For Gallicus' praise of Vittorino see page 71. Benjamin Brand has shown how this may also have been true of John Hothby, who, though clearly familiar with the contents of Boethius' work, shows no direct reliance on it in his surviving work. See Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 775–6.

Neque doceri posse ferunt hanc universalem scientiam nisi per sex illas syllabas, sed et suam gerant confusionem, qui tam nobilem artem cifris et phantasiis autumant esse subiectam.<sup>158</sup>

Nor let them say that this universal knowledge can be taught through those six syllables [the syllables of the hexachord – ut, re, mi, fa, so, la]: for they carry their own confusion, who think that so noble an art is subject to number and fancy.

He later criticises the lengths to which singers went in order to master the hexachordal mutations which enabled the syllables to function across the gamut:

Cernis lector vario ritu cecinisse veterese, et ad ultimum modernos ut re mi fa sol la non ea quidem puritate qua confectum est usque nunc exercuisse. Quaere, quaeso, praefatam Guidonis epistolam in qua se nobis illas fabricasse sex syllabas insinuat, et si tot ibi fa ut, ut fa, sol ut, ut sol, aut huiusmodi simile cum naturis illis mollibus et duris nimia verbositate quidem egentibus inveneris, volo me per omnia fuisse mentitum. Quae proculdubio tanto debent aestimari superflua quanto verum obfuscando sensus discentium tedio nimis opprimunt. Quot quaeso viri tonsurati Deum alacriter in ecclesis laudent, ardentique desiderio cantum illum ‘Eis qui Dei sunt’ suavissimum, neque tamen lascivum quem nobis tradidere sancti patienter addicerent, nisi tot ambages verborum, tot varii naturarum, quadrorum et mollium ordines, totve non iam vocum sed syllabarum superfluae mutationes rudium animos ac ingenia fatigando debilitarent? Quidam rem attentare conantes fabulas illas memoriae mandant, sed antequam ad id pervenerint quod discere cupiunt, tanta garrulitate verborum attediati, iam expensis aliquando pecuniis, totum in medio relinquunt. Alii vero philateria illa, ut vulgo loquar, non parvo labore crebri discunt, sed nil praeter fa ut, ut fa, sol ut, ut sol, et his similia totis diebus in ore volventes, affecti quoque taedio, tandem a docente cantore discedunt sicut ante nescii. Aliqui tamen et illam mente tenus habent superfluum sex syllabarum verbositatem, et elevandi vocem atque deprimendi per illas non parvam practicam, verum ultra

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<sup>158</sup> Gallicus, *De Ritus Canendi*, trans. and ed. Richard Vaughan, II, 134. The translation is my own.

procedere volentes, dum verba sacra cum illis syllabis in quo totus fructus est  
accordare volunt, parum aut nihil in tota vita sua proficiunt.<sup>159</sup>

You see, dear reader, that the ancients sang in a different way, and that the moderns have, at the last, made use of *ut re mi fa sol la*, not however with the simplicity with which it was created. And so consult, I beg you, Guido's letter which I have mentioned above, in which he indicates that he invented the six syllables for our benefit: if there you find so many instances of *fa ut*, *ut fa*, *sol ut*, *ut sol*, or other similar examples, together with those natural, soft and hard (hexachords) in need of over-lengthy verbal explanations, I am prepared to be found false in all respects. These things without a doubt should be regarded as unnecessary to the extent that, by obscuring the truth, they confuse the senses of the pupils by their excessive tedium. How many tonsured men would praise God with zeal in their churches, and with a burning desire patiently learn that chant 'Eis qui Dei sunt', beautiful as it is and not wanton, and a chant handed down to us by the saints, if so many syllabic ambiguities, so many different placements of the natural, hard and soft (hexachords), and the unnecessary mutations, not of pitches but of syllables, had not weakened the spirits of simple men by their tedium and dulled their faculties? In their efforts to get to grips with this, some commit these stories to memory, but before they achieve what they set out to learn, here they become bored with this babble of words, and abandon the project in its entirety, in mid-stream, having eventually exhausted their money. And others, with no mean effort, learn these texts—if I may speak in vulgar fashion—in large numbers, and rolling nothing but *fa ut*, *ut fa*, *sol ut* and *ut sol* about in their mouths for days on end, they too are overcome by fatigue, and finally leave the singer who is teaching them as ignorant as they were previously.<sup>160</sup>

Gallicus' advice on this matter was to return to the first known source of solmisation—Guido of Arezzo—and dispense with more recent treatises, which so needlessly complicated

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 518–520.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 519–521.

the rudiments of learning to sing.<sup>161</sup> His admonishment was little followed, as is made apparent by the fact that most, if not all treatises on practical music printed in Italy the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries include a guide to solmisation, the three species of hexachord and mutating between them among their opening chapters.

Modern musicology has tended, inadvertently, to side with Gallicus, treating the Guidonian approach to solmisation solely as Guido describes it—a now-arcane sight reading tool—and the wider hexachord system as an extension of that. As Carol Berger writes:

The syllables, deductions (hexachords), and properties provide knowledge of the network of the affinities between the steps and a method of reading the steps from the notation. To know the hand means to know all the steps commonly used in music as well as their relationships and to be able to write them down and to read them.<sup>162</sup>

Evidence that solmisation may have had other implications beyond the fluid reading of notated music was first brought to light by Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens in 2004.<sup>163</sup> In 2011 Anne Smith brought this evidence into a wider consideration of the performance of sixteenth century music, drawing parallels between a text cited by Blackburn, Elias Salomonis' *Scientia artis musicae* (1274) and Martin Agricola's *Musica Choralis Deudsch* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhaw, 1533).<sup>164</sup> On the subject of solmisation syllables, Agricola writes:

Aus den obgemelten sechs stimmen/werden zwo b molles genant/als/ut und fa/denn sie werden gar fein linde/sanfft/lieblich und weich gesungen. Sie sind auch einerley natur und eigenschafft/darümb wo eine gesungen wird/do mag auch die andere gesungen werden.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>162</sup> Carol Berger, "The Hand and the Art of Memory," *Musica Disciplina*, vol. 35, (1981), 87–120, at 94.

<sup>163</sup> Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford–Strevens, "Fa mi la mi sol la: Music Theory, Erotic Practice," 'Eros and Euterpe' conference, Indiana University, 7 February 2004.

<sup>164</sup> See Anne Smith, *The Performance Of 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Music: Learning From The Theorists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, "Solmization", 20–54.

Re und sol/werden mittelmessige oder natürliche stimmen genennet/drümb  
das sie einen mittelmessigen laut von sich geben/Nicht zu gar linde/odder  
zucharff.

Mi und la/heissen 4 durales/das ist/scharffe und harte syllaben/Denn sie  
sollen und müssen menlicher und dapfferer gesungen werden denn die b  
molles und naturales.

Diese unterscheid/wo sie wol gemerckt/und im gesang recht gehalten wird/macht sie  
alle melody süsse und lieblich/Darümb sol es auch der furnemesten stück eins  
sein/das man den knaben zum ersten einbilden/und sie daran gewehnen sol/das sie  
dieser unterschied fein gewis warden.<sup>165</sup>

Of the above—mentioned six voices, two are called b molles, namely ut and fa, for  
they are sung extremely mildly, gently, sweetly and softly. They are of one nature  
and character; therefore where the one may be sung, so may the other also be sung.

Re and sol are called the middle or natural voices because they emit an  
average sound, not too mild or too clear [scharff]

Mi and la are called 4 durales, that is clear [scharff] and hard syllables. For  
they should and must be sung in a more manly and stronger [dapfferer] way  
than the b molles and naturales.

This difference, when it is well noted and truly observed in singing, makes all  
melodies sweet and pleasing. Therefore it should be the primary matter that one  
should first get into the boys' heads and then get them accustomed to, so that they  
are very sure of this difference.<sup>166</sup>

In discussing the potential spread of this practice Smith limits herself to German sources  
from the mid—sixteenth century. However, similar descriptions of syllable quality are found  
readily throughout Italian theoretical sources of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century,  
too. One of these, Bonaventura da Brescia's *Breviloquium Musicale* (Brescia: Angelo

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<sup>165</sup> Martin Agricola, *Musica Choralis Deutsch* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhaw, 1533), fol. 6v.

<sup>166</sup> Smith, *The Performance Of 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 26.



Britannico, 1497), enjoyed publication throughout Italy for almost a century in its contemporaneous vernacular version, the *Regula Musice Plane*.<sup>167</sup> Chapters I through VI introduce the reader to the solmisation syllables, the Guidonian hand, the three species of hexachord, hard (quadro) beginning on G, soft (molle) on F, and natural (natura) on C, and the importance of the positioning of clefs (chiave). In chapter VII, on the correct inflection of solmisation syllables when singing (De modo cantandi proprietates supredictas), Bonaventura writes:

Nota che .h. quadro e dura proprietade: la quale duro se debe cantare. Item .b. molle e dolce proprietade: la quale dolce se debe pronunciare.<sup>168</sup>

Note that h square is of a hard property, and as such must be sung hard. Likewise, b soft is sweet in property, and so it must be sung sweetly.

At face value, this is a drastic simplification of the properties for the entire hexachord given by Agricola. Indeed, Bonaventura explicitly states in the *Breviloquium* that his instructions are intentionally brief; written not ‘for the best musician, but for the least of the least’ (non ut magnus musicus sed ut cantor inter minores minimus), and in particular for the use of ‘poor and simple people in holy orders’ (li poveri e simplici religiosi).<sup>169</sup> However, in the following chapter on mutation between hexachords (De mutationibus), Bonaventura’s system begins to approach Agricola’s in completeness. First, Bonaventura ranks the possible mutations between the three species of hexachord, calling a mutation from hard to natural or vice versa enacted when ascending the scale ‘most perfect’ (perfectissima); mutation from natural to hard or vice versa on the syllables when descending the scale and from natural to soft or vice versa as ‘perfect’ (perfecta), and mutations from soft to hard or vice versa as ‘imperfect (imperfecta).<sup>170</sup> The reader is then admonished that, just as *b* and *h* are sung respectively as soft or hard, so too are *fa* and *mi*, and the differences between them, as written and sung, mean they do not accord (acorden):

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<sup>167</sup> Ignesti, “Music Teaching in Montagnana”, 183.

<sup>168</sup> Bonaventura da Brescia, *Regula Musice Plane* (Venice: Giorgio Rusconi, 1516), fol. 7v.

<sup>169</sup> Ignesti, “Music Teaching in Montagnana”, 183. Bonaventura, *Regula Musice Plane*, fol. 2r–v.

<sup>170</sup> Bonaventura, *Regula Musice Plane*, fol. 7v.

E questi doi . b. ♮. sono differenti così in figura come in canto: in figura uno e rotondo: laltro e quadro. In canto uno significa dolce: laltro duro. versus. mi dure datur: & fa mollificatur. El dolce e fa. e lo duro e mi: ergo non se accordeno insieme.<sup>171</sup>

And these two, b and ♮, are different both in appearance and when sung: in shape one is rounded, the other square. In song one signifies sweetness, the other hardness. Likewise, Mi hardens, and Fa softens. Fa is sweet, and mi is hard: ergo they do not accord.

A mutation from the soft hexachord to the hard is ‘imperfect’, then, because the *fa* of the soft hexachord and *mi* of the hard are completely different notes.<sup>172</sup> In comparing Bonaventura’s ‘perfect’ mutations with Agricola’s description of the property of each solmisation syllable, it becomes apparent that in mutations, for example, from the natural to the soft, or hard to natural, the *fa* of the former equates to the *ut* of the latter. In these mutations, the *mi* and *la* also accord, matching Agricola’s description of both as hard.

This system does not always accord perfectly; from natural to hard or soft to natural, for instance, *ut* of the latter hexachord accords with *sol*, rather than *fa*, of the former. Similar, if less-detailed passages can be found in most Italian treatises circulating in this period, enjoying in particular the similitude between the shape of *mollis* and *dura* and the way in which they should be sung, but never offering the complete scheme of properties for all six syllables offered by Agricola. Indeed, Adam von Fulda had noted this system in his *Musica* of 1490, long before Agricola, but could not attribute its teaching to any single author:

Hunc antique triplicem esse volerunt, scilicet naturalem, mollem, & durum... Sunt tamen nonnulli, qui unicuique duas quasi sibi convenientes attribunt voces; nam donat b. mollari ut & fa, naturali re & sol, ♮. durali mi & la.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 1516, fol. 8v.

<sup>172</sup> James Haar has drawn attention to this passage previously, but without noting the performance implications of singing mi or fa in “Some Introductory Remarks on Musical Pedagogy,” in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Forscher Weiss, 4–22, at 6–7.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

The ancients wished this [the species of hexachord] to be threefold, that is natural, soft and hard... there are some, though, who assign to each one two syllables agreeing as it were, with themselves; for they give to  $\flat$  soft ut and fa, to natural re and sol, to  $\natural$  hard mi and la.<sup>174</sup>

However flimsy the evidence for the permeance of a theory of properties for all six syllables in Italy at this time, the properties ascribed to *fa* and  $\flat$ -flat were well-known enough to become innuendos of relative popularity, as well as being used in musical word painting to illustrate words evoking pity, the sexual act, or (of course) both.<sup>175</sup> One particularly pronounced example of the use of ‘soft’ notes for this purpose occurs in the Jacques Arcadelt’s famous “Il bianco e dolce cigno” (*Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a Quattro*, Venice:

Cantus  
Altus  
Tenor  
Bassus

Il bian - co e dol - ce ci - gno can - tan - do mo - re  
Il bian - co e dol - ce ci - gno can - tan - do mo - re  
Il bian - co e dol - ce ci - gno can - tan - do mo - re  
et io pian - gen - do giun - go al fin del vi - ver mi - o  
et io pian - gen - do giung' al fin del vi - ver mi - o  
et io pian - gen - do giun - go al fin del vi - ver mi - o  
et io pian - gen - do giung' al fin del vi - ver mi - o

Example 2.1: Jacques Arcadelt, “Il bianco e dolce cigno”, transcribed from *Il Primo Libro di Madrigali a Quattro* (Venice: Antonio Gardano, 1539), nr. 1.

<sup>174</sup> Adam of Fulda, *Adam Von Fulda on Musica Plana and Composito De Musica, Book II: A translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Peter John Slemon (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1994), 176.

<sup>175</sup> On this topic, see in particular Bonnie Blackburn “The Lascivious Career of B–Flat” and Leofranc Holford–Strevens “Fa mi la mi so la: The Erotic Implications of Solmization Syllables,” in *Eroticism in Early Modern Music*, ed. Bonnie Blackburn and Laurie Stras, 43–58.

Antonio Gardano, 1539) where the word ‘weeping’ (piangendo) ushers a pronounced shift to e-flat. In this case, the parallels between swan song and ejaculation are well-known.<sup>176</sup>

The proliferation of the properties of *mi* and *fa* in particular across musical and literary spheres from Guido’s day to the sixteenth century suggest that inflecting *mi* and *fa* differently in performance was fairly widespread in Europe during the Middle Ages and Renaissance.<sup>177</sup> The fact that the syllables and the hexachord were widely acknowledged to be amongst the first things a student learning to sing was taught suggests that many people learning to sing at cathedral schools, monastic institutions and convents were taught how to inflect the singing of chant before even learning to read notation, something they would have carried with them into the realm of mensural music if they went on to study it, or indeed, for graduates of a cathedral school, in their own music teaching in the secular realm. Given that students and teachers were purchasing fresh copies of Bonaventura da Brescia’s treatise as late as the 1570s, it is possible that singers were still performing under his direct influence well into the seventeenth century. While modern musicology has tended to favour the study of counterpoint, it is this manner of infecting the solmisation which, perhaps, has the most to offer to students of historically informed performance.

After mastering solmisation and the hexachords—and if studying at a religious institution, the singing and reading of chant—the next step for those continuing their musical studies was learning the basics of counterpoint. Students first learned the number and nature of the consonances and interval progressions, the meticulous (and perhaps by modern standards, monotonous) detail with which they are replicated in treatises suggesting that these were learned by heart, for ease of replication both when composing parts on paper or a *cartella*, an erasable tablet, or perhaps when improvising.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> See, for instance, Laura Macy, “Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal,” *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 14, no. 1, (1996), 1–34, at 5.

<sup>177</sup> For references to b-flat as sweet or even ‘improper’ in early Medieval commentaries on Guido see Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat”, 25.

<sup>178</sup> On the didactic rationale behind the repetitive nature of music treatises of the Middle Ages, see Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), especially 137–140. On the use of erasable tablets by students and composers, see Jessie-Ann Owens, *Composers at Work: The Craft of Musical Composition 1450–1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75–99.

An important source of evidence for the method of teaching counterpoint in the late fifteenth century is the English Carmelite friar and theorist John Hothby, who enjoyed a tenure of almost twenty years as *maestro di Capella* at San Martino in Lucca, from c. 1467–1486, also acting as *magister puerorum*.<sup>179</sup> Hothby's perceived value to the city can be told in no uncertain terms; he was hired on the basis of his 'singular learning and superb morals', and such was the benefit to the students and clergy of San Martino and the 'entire people' of Lucca, that his salary was paid jointly by the canons of the Cathedral, the nobleman Nicolao da Noceto and the General Council of Lucca, in an effort to secure a sum that would prevent him looking elsewhere for employment. Indeed, he left only at the summons of the newly crowned Henry VII, only to die not long after his arrival in England.<sup>180</sup> His local legacy was long-lasting; as late as 1509, the choir and school were still under the direction of one of his students, a layman named Antonio Peragulfo.<sup>181</sup>

Having learned the seven consonances, intervals and more complex rules regarding diminutions, the next step was their mastery through practical usage. For this purpose, *bicinia*, short pieces of two-part counterpoint, were an oft-used tool, and amongst the first exercises in composition which a student might attempt.<sup>182</sup> The didactic usage of *bicinia* from the sixteenth century onwards is well-known, but it is from Hothby's classroom that the only known examples of musical exercises written by students before the year 1500 come.<sup>183</sup> The final chapter of an anonymous *Tractatus de Contrapunto* linked to Hothby's teaching describes one approach to this process:<sup>184</sup>

Fac tibi unum tenorem in scriptis, unam scilicet antiphonam vel Kyrie vel aliud quodcumque libuerit tibi. Postmodum compone ut volunt praedictae regulae, incipiendo a specie perfecta; dehinc illi speciei requisitum dando discursum per regulas continuando, penultimam imperfectam faciendo, et perfecta specie finiendo.

<sup>179</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 755.

<sup>180</sup> Theodor Dumitrescu, *The early Tudor court and international musical relations* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 197.

<sup>181</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 798.

<sup>182</sup> Christensen, "Music Theory and Pedagogy", 425.

<sup>183</sup> For a survey dedicated to the didactic use of *bicinia* in Italy in the sixteenth century and beyond, see Andrea Bornstein, *Two-Part Didactic Music in Printed Italian Collections of the Renaissance and Baroque (1521–1744)* (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Birmingham, 2001).

<sup>184</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 782.

Et hoc frequenter facias, nam gutta cavat lapidem non vi sed saepe cadendo; faber itaque efficitur non semel sed saepe fabricando. Tu etiam qui cupis habere huius notitiam, similiter facias, et ita cito praticam habebis componendi. Praticaque componendi tibi praticam dabit biscantandi, id quod in praesenti scire cupis.<sup>185</sup>

Make for yourself a tenor in writing, for instance an antiphon, Kyrie, or whatever you like. Afterwards compose according to the aforementioned rules. Begin your phrase with a perfect consonance, extend it according to those rules, make the penultimate consonance imperfect, the final one perfect. Do this frequently, for the drop of water pierces stone by falling not once but many times. Thus the builder is compelled to work not once but often. If you want to know how to compose, take a similar approach. And by composing you will learn how to sing discant, which is what you want to know at present.

The most substantial of the surviving examples from Hothby's classroom show attempts at crafting a discant to a pre-existing melody, identified by Benjamin Brand as linked with 'Verbum caro factum est', and a piece of free counterpoint.<sup>186</sup> The examples, while not entirely successful, give some idea of the musical devices which Hothby's students were attempting to master, from simple note-against-note mastery of consonance in the discant exercises, to imitation, syncopation, and possibly imperfection in the free counterpoint exercises.<sup>187</sup> Sadly, the exercises give little clue as to the age of the pupils, but the florid exercises show ambitious attempts to include complex musical devices in spite of a tendency to lose the thread of the counterpoint, perhaps due to the difficulty of composing in parts. Of course, as the author of the *Tractatus de Contrapunto* states, such exercises were not primarily intended as a means to teach composition in its own right, but rather to aid in the singing of counterpoint.<sup>188</sup> As such, being able to successfully keep track of voices in

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<sup>185</sup> John Hothby, *Opera omnia de proportionibus; Anonymus, Tractatus de contrapuncto*, ed. Gilbert Reaney (American Institute of Musicology: Hänssler-Verlag, 1997), 44-58, at 58.

<sup>186</sup> Brand, "A Medieval Scholasticus and Renaissance Choirmaster", 789. For transcriptions of these exercises, see 790-793.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 796.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 783.

isolation was perhaps part of the challenge, rather than a drawback to be solved by the later proliferation of using scores rather than parts.<sup>189</sup>

The possible use of composition as a teaching tool outside of the classroom has one other intriguing example from our timeframe, found in a chansonnier created between 1500–10 for a Marietta Pugi, possibly the daughter of Francesco Pugi, a Florentine notary.<sup>190</sup> Bonnie Blackburn describes the songbook as constructed from pieces which Marietta ‘and her friends could easily sing and perform’, though given the fact that of the first twenty–two works copied beautifully in red, blue and gold at the same time, the initials of the first eight spell her name, suggests that it might have initially been a gift, and perhaps that the initials of the remaining works also had some significance.<sup>191</sup> Amongst the miscellany, added rather more functionally at a later date, is a work identified by Blackburn as a possible composition exercise, beginning in the same manner as a piece by Heinrich Isaac, but perhaps set by Marietta’s teacher (assuming that she had one) with the goal of completing it.<sup>192</sup> If it was indeed set as a composition exercise, it suggests that teaching the rudiments of music at home may have differed very little from classroom teaching at an ecclesiastical institution, and that the methods were no different for boys or girls.

## 2.7 Learning music at home

For children not entering an ecclesiastical institution, whether cathedral school, monastery or convent, the most common way to learn music must have been at home. This was true at every level of society: as a child growing up in a working or lower-middle class household and learning how to play an instrument from a parent—as seems to have been common for *piffari*—or a member of the relatively wealthy or ruling elite, receiving tutorship from a famous master.

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<sup>189</sup> As Owens notes, only keyboardists appear to have used scores during the timeframe covered by the present study. See Owens, *Composers at work*, 7.

<sup>190</sup> Blackburn, “Two “Carnival Songs” Unmasked”, 122.

<sup>191</sup> Blackburn spotted this fact when returning the proofs for publication. *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 148–9. The piece in question can be found on fols. 36v - 37r. Blackburn points to its ‘awkward constructions’ as evidence that it was an exercise, rather than a copy of another work.

In trying to accurately chart the myriad ways one might be taught music at home we are inevitably brought back to the question of what musical knowledge is. A lullaby, nursery rhyme, carnival song or *lauda* could as easily have been learned from a parent at home as they could have from a *cantimpanca*, *religioso* or carnival reveller, and learning popular tunes and how to sing *in tune* surely still comprise musical knowledge, if at its most basic level. Proof of the methods of institutional music teaching during this period is difficult enough to find, and evidence of how professional instrumentalists learned their craft, let alone how otherwise unmusical people—who never played an instrument but sang popular songs, *laude* and perhaps joined in with a *Salve Regina* or *Ut Queant Laxis* in church—learned the very basics of singing is even more ephemeral.<sup>193</sup> A study of this brevity will undoubtedly fall short of encapsulating every aspect of this field in detail, but the following examples, drawn from across the boundaries of class, give some idea as to how music was taught at home by professional musicians.

We have already seen something of the curriculum for a child drawn from amongst the wealthiest of society through Vittorino da Feltre's *Ca' Giocosa*. As per the recommendation of any of the humanist educators of the fifteenth century, none of the liberal arts would be denied to those of the noblest birth, though mastering grammar should take precedence, and overindulgence in an art at the expense of the duties of state was among the gravest of errors a prince could commit.<sup>194</sup>

As public figures from birth, symbols of a family's virtue and health, and necessary tools in the fabrication of alliances between noble houses through marriage, precocity was highly encouraged. We have already seen this at play in the performative employment of Cecilia Gonzaga's early command of Greek, but dance was perhaps the most important medium of public presentation in this regard. Isabella d'Este danced twice publicly with the dancing master Guglielmo Ebreo, who subsequently became her dance tutor, at a masquerade ball in

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<sup>193</sup> *Ut Queant Laxis* is one of three chants Leonardo Bruni describes as animating for those who might otherwise drift off during Mass. See Bruni, "The Study of Literature," ed. and trans. Kallendorf, 116–7. On the need for a broader conceptual or methodological focus for unwritten music making, see Coelho & Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 2.

<sup>194</sup> For a detailed discussion of this balance between leisure and duty, see Chapter IV.



January 1481, aged just six.<sup>195</sup> The childhoods of the Sforza children are illustrative of how displays of precocity were routine, both on more intimate occasions and in full view of the public. Ippolita Sforza appeared in public several times with her dance tutor, Antonio Cornazano, and danced for the wedding of Tristano Sforza in 1455 aged ten.<sup>196</sup> Ermete Sforza danced a *moresca* for Antonie de Bourgogne, half-brother of Charles the Bold, aged four.<sup>197</sup> Musical training began around the same age; just as Raffaele Brandolini sought to link music with grammar and rhetoric to improve its standing amongst the arts, so Guglielmo Ebreo sought to improve the standing of dance—which outstripped music in the number of detractors decrying its practice as base and lascivious—by tying it with music as a liberal art and all its noble power over the human soul. His admonition that music is ‘not the least’ of the seven liberal arts is acknowledgement that, though music was a liberal art, and dance not, music shared dance’s foes:

La qual arte intra le sette non e la minore annumerata, anzi come scienza liberale se mostra sublime et alta, & da dover seguire come laltre dignissima, et quasi alhumana natura piu che alchuna dellaltre aptissima & conforme. Impero che da quattro concordanti & principal voci formata & composta alle nostre quattro principal compositioni corrispondente porge ascoltando a tutti nostri sensi singular conforto, quasi si chome ella fusse di nostri spiiti naturalissimo cibo, ne par che si ritrovi al mondo alchuna si cruda & inhumana gente: che al dolce canto & al suave suono dalchuno ben concordato instrumento, con summo piacere non si commuova: si come del famoso Orpheo degnamente si scrive: il quale con tanta gratia la sua dolce cithara sonando non solamenti gli humani spiriti a dolcezza commoveva.<sup>198</sup>

[Music] among the seven is not the least, but rather as a liberal science shows itself to be sublime and lofty, worthy to be followed above all others, and to human

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<sup>195</sup> Jennifer Nevile, *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 15. The source for Isabella’s dancing with Guglielmo (referred to as ‘Maestro Ambrosio’), not given by Nevile, is a letter from Guido di Bagno to the Marchese of Mantua (Archivio Gonzaga, Mantua; Busta 1229, c. 205) of 24 January 1481, transcribed and translated in A. William Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises and Collections in the Tradition of Domenico da Piacenza* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1995) 2 vols, vol. 1, xxi.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 and 21.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>198</sup> Guglielmo Ebreo, *De pratica seu arte tripudii*, 1463. BNF, f. ital. 973, fol. 2r–v.

nature more apt and conformed than the others. Know that from four concordances and principal voices it is formed, corresponding to the four principal elements, it yields in listening singular comfort to all our senses, almost as though it were the most natural food of our spirits. Nor does it seem that one finds in the world any people so crude and inhuman that by sweet song and the suave sound of a well-tuned instrument they are not moved to delight, just as the famous Orpheus is worthily written: he that with such grace and playing his sweet Cithara moved not only human spirits to sweetness [but also those of the Inferno].

Ebreo goes on to decry those ‘si cruda & inhumana’ who debase dance, suggesting that the ability to perform dance as a form of art is limited to those educated enough to understand it:

Ma aliena in tutto & mortal inimicha di vitiosi & mechanici plebei: i quali le piu volte con animo corrotto & colla scelerata mente la fano di arte liberale & virtuosa scienza adultera & servile: et molte volte anchora alle lor inhoneste concupiscenze sotto specie di honestate la inducono mezana per poter cautamente al effetto dalchuna sua voluptate danzando pervenire.<sup>199</sup>

But [dance] is totally alien, and a deadly enemy, to the vicious and base common people, who mostly with corrupt souls and ungodly and lewd minds make this liberal art and virtuous science adulterous and servile. And many times, under the semblance of honesty, they make the dance a pimp for their shameful lust in order that they can bastardize it, so that they can cautiously enjoy each voluptuous effect that comes from the dance.<sup>200</sup>

Music, then, was taught by tutors from a similarly early age, in order to understand music’s expressive power and how that could be utilised in choreographies, and the complexities of the four *misure*, roughly corresponding but evidently not adhering to the four mensuration signs: perfect major and minor, and imperfect major and minor.<sup>201</sup> As the most commonly

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., fols. 4v–5r.

<sup>200</sup> Nevile, *The eloquent body*, 71.

<sup>201</sup> For a detailed account of the *misure* in the treatises of Domenico da Piacenza, Guglielmo Ebreo and Antonio Cornazano, see Nevile, *The eloquent body*, 110–116.

encountered form of public *otium*, especially for the elite, graceful dance was a major goal of musical proficiency.<sup>202</sup> Alone, music was to be employed for private enjoyment or the entertainment of small companies.<sup>203</sup> We know that Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Ippolita Sforza also sang; Ippolita, then aged eight, sang French songs for Rene Duke of Anjou in Pavia in 1453, and that Gian Galeazzo had learned eight chansons, ‘every day learning others’, according to his tutor Scaramuccia Balbo, by the same age.<sup>204</sup>

It was common, too, to send servant boys for musical tuition, presumably with the hope of turning them into chamber musicians. In 1460, Ludovico Gonzaga wrote to Niccolò Tedesco, asking him to recommend a singing teacher for one of his servants, to which Tedesco gave Giovanni Brith, a singer adept in ‘modern song, and especially Venetian song (Giustiniane)’.<sup>205</sup> A year later, Francesco Sforza sent a boy named Picenardi to study the lute and singing. His teacher updated Francesco on his progress in glowing terms, writing that ‘in four to six months at the most...he will become a good lutenist’ and that ‘he has learned singing very well, in theory and in practice.’<sup>206</sup>

It seems to have taken Isabella d’Este much longer to achieve musical self-sufficiency, if that was part of what being a ‘good lutenist’ and singer entailed. Her childhood tutor was the polyphonist Johannes Martini.<sup>207</sup> After marrying Francesco Gonzaga and moving from Ferrara to Mantua she was keen to continue tuition. In 1490 she wrote to her father from Mantua bemoaning her lack of a teacher as good as Martini, and his sporadic visits to see her partially filled the void while she found a suitable singing teacher—a soprano, preferably.<sup>208</sup> Later in the decade Bartolomeo Tromboncino became her music tutor. After his departure for Venice, Giovanni Angelo Testagrossa took on the role.<sup>209</sup> On 14 May 1499 she wrote to her brother Giulio to thank him for some songs he had sent her, saying ‘if Tromboncino were not going to Casale, we would already have begun to sing them. But once he has

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>203</sup> This topic will be discussed fully in Chapter IV.

<sup>204</sup> Bryce, “Performing for Strangers”, 1098 and Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 151.

<sup>205</sup> ‘cantare moderno et maxime de l’aere venetiano’. Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 4.

<sup>206</sup> Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 148.

<sup>207</sup> Haar, “The Courtier as Musician”, 25.

<sup>208</sup> William Prizer, “Una “Virtù Molto Conveniente a Madonne”: Isabella D’Este as a Musician,” *The Journal of Musicology*, A Birthday Tableau for H. Colin Slim, winter, vol. 17, No. 1, (1999), 10–49, at 12–15.

<sup>209</sup> Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 43.

returned we will waste no time.”<sup>210</sup> We know that Isabella sang, played keyboard instruments, lute, lira da braccio, and from 1499 (as disclosed in the same letter) took up the viola da gamba. Now aged twenty–five and after decades of musical training, why should she have been unable to even begin learning new songs without the aid of Tromboncino? Laura Jeppesen questions whether it was the lack of an accompanist which prevented her, but with a lute and lira to hand she should have been able to accompany herself, and indeed we know that she did.<sup>211</sup> If the songs had been notated in parts, perhaps she was unwilling to waste time making a tablature reduction when Tromboncino could do so for her, or in spite of her musical training she was still taught songs note-for-note by a tutor. Perhaps a more obvious answer is that between her numerous interests and official duties, musical performance was very much a pastime, and while she may have been able to perform choice songs for an audience when she pleased, she hardly had the time to become a *true* virtuoso. The performative side of her musical practice, such as her singing at the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia and Alfonso I d’Este in 1502, involved the solo performance of music from memory, and perhaps performed with a *sprezzatura* that made the performance seem improvised, an effect rather spoiled by the use of notated music. As such performances seem to have been uncommon for a noblewoman, the need to be able to rapidly master music for anything other than personal enjoyment was entirely removed. In contrast, the servant’s use to their master, and thus their whole livelihood, depended on the satisfactory completion of a given task, and the young Picenardi may have spent much of his day engaged in musical study in the hope of a long and stable career at court. As Laurie Stras has observed, being able to sight–read music is also at its most useful when performing with others, and being able to perform with fellow household musicians on a daily basis would have been key to Picenardi’s success as a chamber musician.<sup>212</sup> It was just as important for musical courtesans such as Tullia d’Aragona, whose ability to sing ‘all motets and songs from the book’ was

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<sup>210</sup> Laura Jeppesen, “Aesthetics of Performance in the Renaissance: Lessons from Noblewomen,” in *Uncovering Music of Early European Women (1250–1750)*, ed. Claire Fontijn (New York: Routledge, 2020) 85–102, at 92.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* The most famous instance being her performance at the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia. For a detailed discussion of this episode see Prizer, “Una “Virtù Molto Conveniente a Madonne”, and Shephard, “Constructing Isabella d’Este’s Musical Decorum in the Visual Sphere”.

<sup>212</sup> Laurie Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2018), 60–1.

perhaps a result of her recreational singing in salon, as Stras puts it, *with* men rather than *to* them, and, freed of the social expectations regarding a woman's activities, was an important tool in ingratiating herself with learned circles.<sup>213</sup>

Music was an equally popular pastime amongst the middle classes, particularly young women. The customs to which women were forced to conform differed from place to place, but it was more common than not for young middle-class women to spend much of the day at home, rarely able to leave—for instance, to visit family friends—without good reason and chaperones.<sup>214</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio dedicated the *Decameron*, which appeared in no less than twenty-four printed editions in Italy before 1530, to these women, who:

ristrette da voleri, da piaceri da comandamenti d'e padri, delle madri, d'e fratelli, et d'e mariti il piu del tempo nel picciolo circoito delle loro camere rinchiusedimorano: & quasi otiose sedendosi volendo, & non volendo in una medesima ora seco rivolgendo diversi pensieri: li quali non è possibile, che sempre sieno allegri.<sup>215</sup>

restricted as they are by the wishes, the whims, the commands of their fathers, their mothers, their brothers and their husbands, for the most part they are closed within the small circuit of their rooms, and sit there more or less idly, wanting and not wanting in a single hour, and turning over various thoughts, which cannot always be happy ones.<sup>216</sup>

As such, performing music became an invaluable way to pass the time for middle-class women, alongside such activities as reading, needlework, playing cards and caring for household pets. From the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century, a small number of middle-class women, such as Ginevra and Isotta Nogarola, Laura Cereta, Alessandra Scala and Cassandra Fedele, took up a complete programme of humanist study, even collating

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>214</sup> Judith Bryce notes that in Florence c. 1470, it was not customary for women to appear on public show, something which was common in Milan. See Bryce "Performing for Strangers", 1074. On the similar experiences of Venetian women of this period, see Henry, *Playful Pictures*, 34–5.

<sup>215</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decamerone* (Venice: Aldo Romano, 1522), fol. 3v.

<sup>216</sup> Henry, *Playful Pictures*, 34–5. I have slightly amended Henry's translation.

and circulating their letters like their male counterparts.<sup>217</sup> Alessandra Scala is notable for having played the title role in a performance of Sophocles' *Electra* at her father's home in Florence in 1493, receiving effusive praise from Angelo Poliziano for her recitation.<sup>218</sup> While middle-class women with an academic public persona were few - perhaps limited to the female humanists, abbesses, and some courtesans - their endeavours are indicative of the education which a greater number of women would have enjoyed privately.

Another reason to learn music—for both men and women—was in order to appeal to potential partners. In his *Ricordi*, first published in Bologna in 1549, Sabba da Castiglione lambasted this fact:

ritorniamo alli padri et madri, li quali vogliono le figliuole musiche, et gli sciocchi, ignorantij, et ciechi non si avedono né si accorgono, che simili arti et simili essercitij sono alle donne naturalmente caduche, labili, inferme, fragili, et deboli, uno aperto precipitio, si à loro come à gli altri, e una manifesta occasione di cadere alla riversa nell'osceno ferido et succido fango della dishonestà con loro vergogna et vituperio. Et se per aventura io come giovane altre volte laudai et commendai nelle donne nobili o ben create queste musiche danze, a si mili altre foglie, hora come vecchio di più giudicio, et di più esperientia, et che meglio conosco gli errori e le pazzie, Sommamente li reprendo, danno, tasso, et vituperò, come irritamenti di molti gran mali, et se vi dirà come la musica non è virtù? non è una delle sette arti liberali? confessarete di sì, ma ben gli risponderete come il sapentissimo Socrate à quel suo discepolo, il quale havendoli recitata quella magnifica, artificiosa, et elegante oratione fatta di sua difensione, e non sodisfacendoli, li disse, o Socrate non è questa una bella oratione? rispose certo sì, mostrandoli esso Socrate una scarpa da donna ben fatta et diligentemente lavorata gli disse, et questa scarpa ancora che sia bella, non dimeno non si conviene et non si confà al piede d'un huomo, et cosi la musica ancora che sia virtie, non bene si conviene ad una donna nobila et ben nata, la quale

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<sup>217</sup> Laura Cereta, for instance, collated her letters into a volume dedicated to Cardinal Ascanio Sfoza in 1488. However, like Cassandra Fedele, her work was not printed until the seventeenth century. King and Rabil ed., *Her Immaculate Hand*, 24.

<sup>218</sup> Lisa Jardine, "O Decus Italiae Virgo", or The Myth of the Learned Lady in the Renaissance". *The Historical Journal*, vol.28 (4), (1985), 799–819, at 809.

facecia professione di honestà o di pudicitia. Et però dice il proverbio, ad ogni capo non sta bene la tigna.<sup>219</sup>

let us return to those fathers and mothers, who want musical daughters, and the foolish, ignorant, and blind who neither see nor realise, that similar arts and exercises are for women naturally short-lived, ephemeral, infirm, fragile, and weak, an open precipice, to them as to others, and a manifest occasion to fall as water into the obscene, murderous mud of dishonesty with their shame and vituperation. And if I by chance as a young man had at times praised and commended in noble women this music and dance, with so many thousand more pages, now as an old man of greater judgement, and of more experience, and who better knows error, and folly, ultimately I reproach, condemn, disparage, and vituperate them, as irritants of great malice. And if they would tell you ‘Is music not a virtue? Is it not one of the seven liberal arts?’ You will confess as much, but would do well to respond as the wise Socrates did to his disciple, who having recited a wonderful, artful and elegant oration in its defence, and not having satisfied his audience, said, ‘O Socrates is this not a good oration?’ he replied ‘Yes, of course’, and showing him a woman’s shoe, well-made and diligently worked said to him, ‘and this shoe too might be beautiful, but that does not mean it will fit a man.’ And so too might music be a virtue, but it does not suit a noble woman well-born, who would profess honesty and modesty. And so was born the proverb, ‘not every head suits a veil.’

Sabba da Castiglione’s castigation of musical women echoes Pietro Bembo’s admonishment to his daughter Elena, in a letter of 1541, not to waste time on music, which was a pastime for ‘vain and facile women’.<sup>220</sup> In spite of the presence of such polemicists, there was no shortage of young women requiring tuition, as evidenced by Tromboncino’s success in Venice. In July 1518, the Ferrarese ambassador to Venice, Giacomo de’ Tebaldi, wrote to Lucrezia Borgia regarding her request for Tromboncino to return to her service:

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<sup>219</sup> Sabba Castiglione, *Ricordi ovvero Ammaestramenti* (Venice, Paolo Gherardo, 1554), fol. 96r. This passage is referred to briefly by Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 89, but without reference to his source.

<sup>220</sup> Shephard, “Constructing Isabella d’Este’s Musical Decorum in the Visual Sphere”, at 689.

Most illustrious and excellent Lady and most worthy patron. No earlier than last Saturday did I receive the letters of your Excellency of the seventh of this month, in which you ask me to inform Tromboncino on your behalf to come to your Excellency for reasons that you would tell him. I have done as you asked with Tromboncino, who told me that he does not know how he can satisfy your Excellency because he has rented a house here and has already begun to teach gentlewomen, so that he makes more money every day and that if he were now to absent himself for six or eight days, he would lose all he has begun.<sup>221</sup>

Neither was there a shortage of peripatetic music teachers, drawn by what could be a lucrative business. The most famous of musicians took on students; Pietrobono taught a handful of songs to the Venetian Girolamo Bondi for the price of a gold ducat and six yards of black cloth; Niccolò Campani tutored the famous Roman courtesan Imperia Cognati on poetry and music; and Tromboncino was successful enough in his teaching studio to reject offers of ducal patronage.<sup>222</sup> Although dance schools existed, occupying rooms and taking walk-in students—as testified most famously in this period by Albrecht Durer during his time in Venice in 1506—musicians could also double-up as peripatetic dance teachers.<sup>223</sup> In Florence in 1460, Francesco di Matteo Castellani employed the *piffero* player Bernardo dei Santi to teach his daughters to dance at their residence.<sup>224</sup> Those teaching music at cathedral schools also took private students. Later in the sixteenth century, the composer and theorist Pietro Pontio, *maestro di cappella* at Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, was faced with legal proceedings in 1566, brought by a number of his students, who alleged that he paid closer attention to the studies of his private students, neglecting to provide individual singing tuition to the boys of the cappella, despite receiving bribes from one of the boy's parents.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Quoted in William Prizer, “Games of Venus: Secular Vocal Music in the Late Quattrocento and Early Cinquecento,” *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Winter, 1991), 3–56, at 7–8.

<sup>222</sup> On Pietrobono see Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 106–7. On Niccolò Campana see Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1975), 37.

<sup>223</sup> Nevile, *The Eloquent Body*, 24. Durer wrote of his dance lessons ‘I set to work to learn dancing and twice went to the school. There I had to pay the master a ducat. Nobody could make me go there again. I would have to pay out all that I have earned, and at the end I still wouldn’t know how to dance!’

<sup>224</sup> Bryce, “Performing for Strangers”, 1091. On Durer’s experience of dance school see Nevile, *The eloquent Body*, 24.

<sup>225</sup> Owens, *Composers at Work*, 13.



That such mercenary behaviour was typical is suggested by the condemnation of music teachers, and indeed any musicians who played for material gain, by Stefano Costa, a professor of canon law at Pavia, in his *Tractatus de Ludo*, dealing with the morality and legality of pastimes, and printed three times in Pavia between 1478 and 1505. His reasoning is largely drawn from Book VIII of Aristotle's *Politics*. He begins by discussing which instruments are 'approved' (approbata) and 'disapproved' (reprobata) of: the 'organ, harp and other similar instruments' (organum alpa lagutum & similia) fall in the first category, and while he acknowledges that there was no modern law which criminalised a particular instrument (ut dixi non habemus legem que dicat quae sint infames), he singles out the 'trumpeters, pipers and drum players of our time' (ut sunt tubicene & piferi nostri temporis pulsantes tympanum) as infamous, based on Aristotle's condemnation of wind instruments in particular, and on the trumpet's modern use in war.<sup>226</sup> Turning to professional musicians themselves, he writes:

Tales persone corpus suum mercenarium faciunt & seruire & appellantur per philosophum ban[u]ci & transmittunt ellegantiam & nobilitatem musice in lucrum in causam questus quia pullant vel pulsare docent causa lucri.<sup>227</sup>

Such persons make mercenaries of themselves, and are servile, and according to the Philosopher [Aristotle] are banausic, transmitting elegant and noble music for profit, playing or teaching to play for the sake of material gain.

The theologian Silvestro Mazzolini expanded upon this in a treatise on canon law, the *Summa Summarum*, or *Summae Sylvestrinae*, first published in Bologna in 1514 and printed frequently in Venice until the early seventeenth century. He excuses those who sing or play any instrument principally for sacred purposes or in honest recreation (honesta recreationem), so long as financial reward is incidental (licet secundario propter lucrum), but

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<sup>226</sup> Stefano Costa, *Tractatus de Ludo* (Pavia: Franciscus de Sancto Petro, 1478) fol. 5v. Aristotle conveys the particular infamy of the pipes through Athena's rejection of them, not based only on the distortion of her face when playing them, but on the fact that flute playing does not increase intelligence (Aristotle, *Politics* Book VIII 1341b).

<sup>227</sup> Costa, *Tractatus de Ludo*, fol. 5v. In this case, 'bannci' is a corruption of the Greek βαναυσικός - *banausikós* - which Aristotle uses in *Politics* to refer to the lowest classes, those who ply a trade for a living. In Book VIII (1341a-b), it is explicitly used to refer to professional musicians. I am grateful to Kenneth Mayer for elucidating the link between the corrupted Latin found in *Tractatus de Ludo* and the Greek.

condemns those who play primarily for money or for lascivious ends.<sup>228</sup> Interestingly, he later deems it necessary to devote a short paragraph to denouncing clergy (inhonestatis clericalis) who play secular lute song in public (de cantu seculari in citharam).<sup>229</sup> Grendler has pointed out that many members of the clergy appear as tutors in this period, and perhaps it is possible that some of these clergymen were products of the *Scuole Eugeniae*, and like Pietro Pontio, took on private students whose repertory interests were hardly likely to be solely sacred.<sup>230</sup> It must also be remembered that not all of the boys attending a cathedral school were deemed skilled enough to sing regularly for holy offices, and still fewer were ordained as priests. This left the vast majority of pupils either renouncing holy orders on leaving school, or remaining a *giovano* or *alunno*, a cleric able to carry out parish duties without being a fully ordained priest. These were by far the most numerous clergymen in urban areas, with as many as twenty or forty attached to Venetian parishes, receiving small fees for singing at services or saying masses for the souls of deceased parishioners who had endowed the parish in their will.<sup>231</sup> Without benefice income or patronage to rely on, it was perhaps from these individuals—musically literate, and in need of extra income—that a notable portion of freelance music teachers were drawn.

We have already seen professional musicians and music teachers condemned by Stefano Costa—following Aristotle’s example—as *banausic*. Indeed, whether they had studied music at an ecclesiastical institution or through more secular means, it was highly likely they were drawn from the *banausic* ‘artisan’ class, comprising families who relied on a trade for income. Marchetto Cara was such a man; the Veronese censuses conducted during his lifetime show that his father Antonio was first a tailor, and had become a barber by 1482.<sup>232</sup> According to

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<sup>228</sup> Silvestro Mazzolini, *Summa Summarum, quae Sylvestrina dicitur* (Strasbourg: Grieninger, 1518), fol. 127r. I have used this edition over an early Italian one due to its digitisation.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 304r.

<sup>230</sup> Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, 11.

<sup>231</sup> Jonathan Glixon, “Music at Parish, Monastic, and Nunnery Churches and at Confraternities,” in *A Companion to Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice* ed. Schiltz, 45–78, at 46.

<sup>232</sup> Paganuzzi, “Notizie Veronesi su Marco Cara e Michele Pesenti”, 8–9.

the chronicler Ugo Caleffini, Pietrobono also worked as a barber before his fame enabled him to live comfortably as a full-time musician.<sup>233</sup>

It is difficult to say how amateurs from amongst the artisan and lower classes - some literate, others not - learned how to play an instrument or sing. The answer may often be as simple as it sometimes is today: that some were self-taught, or learned the basics of playing an instrument from an acquaintance or family member, and of singing from exposure to the melodies of secular songs, perhaps also recycled for dancing *pive* (described as a ‘humble dance...used by peasants’ by the dance master Domenico da Piacenza) and the singing of *laude*, in daily life.<sup>234</sup> Several cases of instrument ownership amongst shopkeepers have been discovered in inventories from fifteenth century Padua, with the only noticeable difference between the type of instrument possessed by an artisan and members of wealthier classes, such as those who were studying at university, or the most affluent courtesans, being the likelihood of owning a keyboard instrument.<sup>235</sup> Tinctoris gives us another exception in his *De inventione et usu musicae* (c. 1481–7), when he claims that the ‘Cetula’ was principally used by ‘rustics’ (*rusticos*) for ‘light song’ (*leves cantilenas*) and dancing.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 102. For a preliminary investigation into the phenomenon of the barber–musician in Italy, see Camilla Cavicchi “Barbieri–musicisti nell’Italia del Quattro e Cinquecento,” in *Pagine d’oro e d’argento. Studi in ricordo di Sergio Torsello*, ed. Paolo Vincenti and Manuel de Carli (Calimera: Kurumuny, 2020) 269–281.

<sup>234</sup> On the Piva as described by Domenico see Nino Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, trans. Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 55. Judith Bryce (Bryce, “Performing for Strangers”, 1095) writes that we can ‘safely assume’ that *laude* would have been in the repertory of the musical and unmusical alike, though as Jonathan Glixon notes, the *lauda* repertory for which music survives - either in *cantasi come* instructions or specially composed music - is incredibly varied, extending from short ‘not very interesting’ settings to works like Cara’s *Ave victorioso e sancto legno* (found in Petrucci’s *Laude Libro I*, 1508), which for its complex and relatively lengthy setting could be better described as a motet. See Jonathan Glixon “The Polyphonic *Laude* of Innocentius Dammonis,” *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter, 1990), 19–53, especially 30. Stras (*Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 28) notes that Savonarola was a particular advocate of communal, rather than professional *lauda* singing as was practiced by *laudesi* companies. Given Savonarola’s hostility towards polyphony (Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 19) it is likely his preference was for simpler settings.

<sup>235</sup> For the musical instruments owned by fifteenth century Paduans see Elda Martellozzo Forin, “Musica tra le Pareti Domestiche a Padova,” in *Music in Schools*, ed. Dessì, 113–142, particularly 126–136. Georgina Masson notes that the famous courtesan Tullia d’Aragona had a harpsichord and twelve books of music on her death, which sold for a total of 12 ½ scudi, along with her other possessions. Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance*, 130.

<sup>236</sup> Robert Crawford Young, *Cetra Cornuta: the Horned Lyre of the Christian World*. (unpublished doctoral thesis, Leiden, 2018) 577. An English edition of this passage from Tinctoris’ treatise (Book IV, chapter v) can be found at [earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deinventioneetusumusice/](http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deinventioneetusumusice/) (accessed 6 April 2023).

It is a little easier to see how professional musicians not trained at cathedral schools learned music; as with other banal trades, it was often hereditary. Of those musicians already named, we know that Tromboncino was the son of a member of Mantua's civic band, Bernadino Piffero.<sup>237</sup> Bernardo dei Santi may likewise have been the son of the Florentine *piffero* Santi di Gherardo, and the Picenardi sent for lute and singing lessons by Francesco Sforza may have been the father of Giovanni Francesco Picenardi, 'Il Poeta', an improviser *in sulla lira*.<sup>238</sup>

One of the most detailed accounts of being raised with the hope of becoming a professional musician comes from the autobiography of the famous goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini. Benvenuto was born to Lisabetta Granaci and Giovanni Cellini, a member of the Florentine civic ensemble from 1480 to 1514.<sup>239</sup> According to Benvenuto, his father was first and foremost a craftsman, building 'wonderful organs...and harpsichords...and he worked wonders in designing all kinds of apparatus. He was also the first to do good work in ivory.'<sup>240</sup> He recalls that music was 'a second wife to him'; he played a *viola da braccio*, sang, and his ability on the recorder 'which he played too much' eventually garnered the attention of the civic ensemble, who asked him to join them.<sup>241</sup>

Cellini's own relationship with music was fraught; his recollection of his father's expulsion from the civic ensemble on the orders of Lorenzo and Piero de Medici for 'neglecting his real talents' and his eventual readmission after crafting an exquisite mirror, read more as a moralising tale than historical record, especially alongside some of Benvenuto's bolder claims.<sup>242</sup> Nevertheless, Benvenuto began to learn the recorder with his father from a very early age, being carried by him to the Signoria to play soprano (*sovrano*) with the signory musicians.<sup>243</sup> His father was determined to make him a musician, and apart from a brief apprenticeship with a goldsmith, Benvenuto continued playing until the age of fifteen,

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<sup>237</sup> Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 55.

<sup>238</sup> Bryce, "Performing for Strangers", 1091 and Prizer, "Music at the Court of the Sforza", 148.

<sup>239</sup> Coelho and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 141.

<sup>240</sup> Benvenuto Cellini, *Autobiography*, trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1956), 20.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–1.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.* Chief amongst the more fanciful of his claims is that he personally fired the fateful shot which killed the commander of the Imperial forces, Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, which led to the sack of Rome in 1527 (recounted on page 71).

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 and 22.

when he placed himself in the shop of another goldsmith, Antonio di Sandro, playing the recorder and cornett only out of pity for his father, who would ‘weep and sigh’ every time he heard him play.<sup>244</sup> In spite of his hatred of playing, Benvenuto continued his studies, perhaps due to the opportunities for preferment it created, journeying with a letter of recommendation from Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici to study with a certain Antonio, presumably a player with a great reputation, also mentioned in a letter of 1523 in correspondence between Giovanni Spataro and Pietro Aaron.<sup>245</sup> He remained in Bologna for six months, finding work with a ‘Maestro Ercole del Piffaro’ and attending daily lessons with Antonio.<sup>246</sup> From thence he travelled around Italy, briefly taking up work with an ensemble playing for Clement VII (whom he had encountered earlier as Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici) around 1525, and remaining in the confidence of the pope until he left Rome after Clement’s surrender to Imperial forces on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1527.<sup>247</sup>

Between Benvenuto Cellini’s more daring recollections, it is the relatively banal details which can be of the most interest to the musicologist. Although, by his own admission, Benvenuto’s father was unusually studious, he writes that his father’s interest in music had stemmed from the importance Vitruvius places in music for the architect (his grandfather, Andrea Cellini, having been an architect—or so he claims) and, following in his father’s footsteps, began to learn both speculative and practical music after first becoming a draughtsman.<sup>248</sup> Benvenuto writes that his father ‘hardly ever left the house’ due to his studies, which suggests that he was self-taught, but sadly how he taught himself is speculation.<sup>249</sup> We are told nothing of the nature of Cellini’s musical education beyond playing wind instruments, save that his father wanted him to become ‘foremost in the

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>245</sup> Coelho and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 142.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 142, and Cellini, *Autobiography* trans. Bull, 25.

<sup>247</sup> Coelho and Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 143.

<sup>248</sup> Benvenuto Cellini, *La Vita*, ed. Guido Davido Bonino (Torino: Einaudi, 1973), 5. Bull (Cellini, *Autobiography*, 18) renders the Italian ‘Giovanni taught himself how to draw well and then began to study the theory of music’, extrapolating that Cellini’s separation of ‘music’ and ‘playing’ (comincio a dare opera alla music, e insieme con essa imparo a sonare molto bene di viola e di flauto) suggests that he learned the speculative music. Timothy McGee notes that in the 1487 *catasto* Andrea Cellini is listed not as an architect but a bricklayer (muratore), reminding us that many of Benvenuto’s claims should be treated with a degree of caution. See Timothy McGee, “Giovanni Cellini, Piffero of Florence,” *Historic Brass Society Journal*, 12 (2000), 210–25, at 211.

<sup>249</sup> Cellini, *Autobiography* trans. Bull, 18.

world' (il maggiore uomo del mondo) through playing (sonare) and composing (comporre).<sup>250</sup> This suggests that his musical education in this regard may have been similar to his near contemporaries in classrooms such as Hothby's, where the most practical elements of music theory—consonances, dissonances, how to embellish upon a pre-existing melody—were partly taught through composition.

Another interesting episode relates to Cellini's re-encounter with Giulio de' Medici as Clement VII:

Occorse in questo tempo che un certo Gianiacomo piffero da Cesena, che stava col Papa, molto mirabil sonatore, mi fece intendere per Lorenzo tronbone lucchese, il quale è oggi al servizio del nostro Duca, se io volevo aiutar loro per il Ferragosto del Papa, sonar di sobrano col mio cornetto quel giorno parecchi mottetti, che loro bellissimi scelti avevano. Con tutto che io fussi nel grandissimo desiderio di finire quel mio bel vaso cominciato, per essere la musica cosa mirabile in sé e per soddisfare in parte al mio vecchio padre, fui contento far loro tal compagnia: e otto giorni innanzi al Ferragosto, ogni dí dua ore facemmo insieme conserto, in modo che il giorno d'agosto andammo in Belvedere, e in mentre che papa Clemente desinava, sonammo quelli disciplinati mottetti in modo, che il Papa ebbe a dire non aver mai sentito musica piú suavemente e meglio unita sonare.<sup>251</sup>

It so happened at this time that a certain Gianiacomo, a *piffero* from Cesena who was in the service of the pope, and a wonderful player, asked me through Lorenzo the trombonist from Lucca, who is to this day in the service of our Duke, if I would help them in the Pope's Ferragosto celebrations, playing soprano with my cornett for some delightful motets, which they had chosen. Although I was so greatly desirous to finish a vase I had begun, as music is a marvellous thing in itself and to satisfy in part my aged father, I was happy to join their company: and for eight days before Ferragosto, each day for two hours, we rehearsed, so that on the day itself we went to Belvedere, and while the pope dined, we played those well-rehearsed motets in

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<sup>250</sup> Cellini, *La Vita* ed. Bonino, 10.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

such a way that the pope said he had never heard music sweeter and better—  
conjoined.<sup>252</sup>

This passage raises several questions: how did they decide which works were most suitable, and how many pieces did they prepare? How much of this time was given to playing from parts, and how much to memorisation? Was Cellini so renowned a musician that he was preferable to other potential stand-ins local to Rome? Coelho and Polk suggest that the music learned amounted to around half a dozen works.<sup>253</sup> The only concrete evidence the passage presents is the amount of time a court ensemble—or at least, one where the players had not all performed together recently—might spend rehearsing for an important event. It is difficult to know whether Clement's praise for their efforts was egotism on Cellini's part, or because they were rehearsed uncommonly thoroughly; a comparable period of rehearsal was suggested to Lorenzo de' Medici by the dance master Filippus Bussus in order for Lorenzo and his sisters to learn 'two or three balli' and 'a few bassedanze' for his wedding in 1469, though his bride, Clarice Orsini, began practicing several months beforehand.<sup>254</sup>

One final, and easily missed episode pertains to the financial security successful *piffari* might enjoy. After Cellini's return to Florence from Bologna we are introduced to a Piero Piffaro, son of the Signory trumpeter Niccolao da Volterra, but an ex-student of Cellini's father.<sup>255</sup> While visiting Piero's house to play the recorder with Piero's brother Girolamo, Piero, who had taken badly to Cellini's return—perhaps due to the competition he posed—suggested Cellini would be better off following his heart's desire in goldsmithing, being a more lucrative trade than 'piffery' (*pifferata*).<sup>256</sup> We are later told that Piero met his end when the floor of one of the houses he owned in the Via dello Studio collapsed during the construction of a cellar; in spite of this dismissal of music as a trade, he was the owner of several properties.<sup>257</sup> Notwithstanding their lowly status in the eyes of a humanist like Raffaele Brandolini or Stefano Costa, good instrumentalists were a sought-after

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<sup>252</sup> This translation is my own, but Bull's can be found in Cellini, *Autobiography*, 45–6.

<sup>253</sup> Coelho & Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 143.

<sup>254</sup> Nevile, *The eloquent body*, 29.

<sup>255</sup> This episode can be found in Cellini, *Autobiography* trans. Bull, 25–7. However, while acknowledging Piero as a former flute student, Bull does not include Piero's status as a *piffero*.

<sup>256</sup> Cellini, *La Vita* ed. Bonino, 14.

<sup>257</sup> Cellini, *Autobiography* trans. Bull, 27.

commodity, and amply rewarded for their service. Court *pifferi* and *trombetti* were better paid from the ducal purse in Ferrara and Milan in the decades around the year 1500 than their chapel counterparts, and the exuberant salary awarded to the Mantuan Bernadino Piffero by Ferrante I around 1488—no less than ten gold ducats per month—suggests the same was also true in Naples.<sup>258</sup> Although chapel musicians could expect to have their income augmented by the gifting of benefices, it was not uncommon for the finest lay musicians to also receive estates to augment their income in the same way that benefices were sought for clerics, Marchetto Cara being but one case in point.<sup>259</sup>

Of course, although technically banal, by casting his father as a craftsman noted by the Medici, Benvenuto places him in the upper strata of the artisan class. Lockwood suggests that many of the players employed at Ferrara were illiterate—both musically and verbally—and from poorer backgrounds than chapel singers.<sup>260</sup> While the selection system employed by the *Scuole Eugeniae* and cases such as that of Benvenuto Cellini suggest that the field was far more even amongst musicians receiving a regular income from the court or signory, the number of illiterate *piffari* and *trombetti* may have still far outnumbered those who had secured the limited number of spaces available at court: Cellini's father was one of only eleven piffari maintained by the Florentine Signoria.<sup>261</sup> These musicians may have been able to eke out a living or take on official roles in smaller communes, whose most gifted musicians often left in search of better fortunes.<sup>262</sup> On entering one such township, Giovanni Pontano gleefully recalls having paid the civic musician sent to render his arrival more honourable not to play and to leave him alone.<sup>263</sup> Rather, it was their literate peers

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<sup>258</sup> On Ferrara see Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 141; on Milan see Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 145–6; on Bernadino Piffero, see Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples*, 111.

<sup>259</sup> Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 145–6.

<sup>260</sup> Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 141.

<sup>261</sup> Richard Wistreich, “The Lives of Musicians,” in *The Cambridge History of Sixteenth-Century Music*, ed. Fenlon and Wistreich, 2019, 288–334, at 313.

<sup>262</sup> On the rural origins of some members of civic ensembles, and the need for courts and cities to maintain the highest possible standards, see Coelho & Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture*, 147–9.

<sup>263</sup> For a detailed discussion of this episode, see Tim Shephard and Melany Rice, “Giovanni Pontano hears the Street Soundscape of Naples,” *Renaissance Studies*, 2023, Online pre-print: <https://doi.org/10.1111/REST.12913>, at 18–20. In contrast, the party sent to Naples to collect Isabella d’Aragona, the future wife of Giovanni Galeazzo Sforza, in 1488, requested Ludovico Sforza send a his (much more accomplished) *piffero* ensemble to render their arrival in Naples more ‘honourable’. Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 181.



who, by the late fifteenth century at least, likely obtained preferment, and taught the children of the more privileged.<sup>264</sup>

## 2.8 Behind the convent's walls

Thanks to the work of several scholars, recently and most notably Laurie Stras, the possible presumption of convent communities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as wholly isolated from the surrounding world—which one might find on admonishments such as that of Gregorio Correr to Cecilia Gonzaga, or of the widely printed *Modus bene vivendi*, for women to flee secular life (and with that, music)—is easily avoided.<sup>265</sup> While evidence of the musical activities of Italian convents is only fragmentary prior to the late sixteenth century, the evidence that does survive points to the importance music held in many institutions, and to the musical activities of girls and women who were educated in convent communities or who joined as adults.<sup>266</sup>

Unlike the vast majority of musical women and girls, whose performances were for personal enjoyment or the entertainment of a select few behind closed doors, the eight offices sung by nuns were open to the public via grates and grilles in a convent's outer walls, and helped divide the day.<sup>267</sup> The singing of plainsong featured at every office, but the last two offices, Vespers and Compline, were the most likely to contain additional music in the form of polyphony.<sup>268</sup> The high quality of musical performance is attested at several institutions in the decades either side of the year 1500. In 1468, Emperor Frederick III visited the Benedictine monastery of San Zaccaria in Venice twice, being so pleased with the singing of

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<sup>264</sup> With limited evidence at hand, it is difficult to ascertain how much musical literacy changed amongst professional musicians during the period 1480–1530. Although Cellini's peers may have benefitted from the availability of printed music, a lack of it did not prevent Cellini's father from learning and subsequently teaching music theory, to the end that Cellini was able to read from a part book.

<sup>265</sup> The sermon 'Ut laice mulieres vitentur' (On avoiding lay women) describes secular women as 'sirens' (syrena), who lure sailors (in this case, women in holy orders) to their deaths (Cantat dulce magnis vocibus:& multis modulis: atque cum magna dulcedine dat voces cocordes. Sed per suas dulces cantilenas sepe marinarios decipit: & in discrimine perducit.) Pseudo-St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *modus bene vivendi*, fols. 61v–62r.

<sup>266</sup> Laurie Stras, "The Performance of Polyphony in Early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents," *Early Music*, vol. 45, no. 2 (May 2017), 195–215, at 195.

<sup>267</sup> Laurie Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, at 11.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

psalms and *laude* by the nuns at a grate that he returned the following Saturday to hear a polyphonic mass and dine at the convent, where he heard additional ‘psalms, *laude* and many devout things.’<sup>269</sup> Almost sixty years later, Marin Sanudo recommended San Zaccaria and the convent of Le Vergine in Venice as tourist attractions, at least partly for this reason.<sup>270</sup> In 1475, Pope Sixtus IV was reported to have wept at the singing of the nuns of San Cosimato, and in 1480, the Ferrarese ambassador to Florence informed Ercole d’Este that the singing and organ playing he had heard at the convent of Le Murate rivalled that of Ercole’s chapel choir.<sup>271</sup> Those living or working in the vicinity of such institutions would have had daily access to some of the highest quality music making outside of the court. The quality of a convent’s musical institutions had its benefits beyond amplifying the glory of God. Women joining a convent were normally expected to pay a dowry, which in the case of patrician women could amount to a substantial gift; when Margarita Paruta entered the convent of Corpus Domini in Venice following the death of her husband Marco in 1397, she gave all her possessions, amounting to a dowry of more than two thousand ducats, which she used during her tenure as vicaress to improve the lives of her fellow sisters through improvements to the fabric of the convent (which included the opening of its outer walls with windows), the purchase of new vestments and of books.<sup>272</sup> By the second half of the fifteenth century it becomes increasingly apparent that convents with the finest musical institutions were among the most capable of attracting such women, perhaps drawn by the opportunity to offer music as part of their duties.<sup>273</sup> Women from the patrician classes such as Caterina de’ Vigri (later St Catherine of Bologna) received musical training as part of their early education, and continued its practice after taking vows.<sup>274</sup> In these institutions the quality of musical offering was supported by the induction of women who were already musically accomplished, and who in turn could train both *educande*—girls who were entrusted to a convent for their education but free to depart upon completion of their studies—and

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<sup>269</sup> Glixon, “Music at Parish, Monastic, and Nunnery Churches and at Confraternities”, 55.

<sup>270</sup> Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony in early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents”, 198.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–199.

<sup>272</sup> Sister Bartolomea Riccoboni, *Life and Death in a Venetian Convent, the Chronicle and Necrology of Corpus Domini, 1395–1436*, trans. and ed. Daniel Bornstein (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 75–6.

<sup>273</sup> Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony in Early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents”, 198.

<sup>274</sup> Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 26.

any other women and girls who wished to learn.<sup>275</sup> On the other hand, the need for a functioning choir enabled women of lesser means to negotiate a smaller dowry; in 1525 a Suor Marta was able to enter with a smaller dowry on account of her rare bass voice.<sup>276</sup>

In the case of Caterina de' Vigri, music making became an important imitation of the divine. In her treatise *Le Sette Arme Spirituali* (1438, printed by Balthasar Azoguidus, Bologna c. 1475 and by Johannes Antonius de Benedictis, also in Bologna in 1500), perhaps the first book authored by a woman to appear in print, an angelic music is described as interrupting and superseding a spoken mass, and lifting her soul to heaven:<sup>277</sup>

Onde dicendo lo sacerdote il prefatio & arivando a dire sanctus sanctus in quello punto essa odi cantare la predica parola a la angelica baronia: la quale precedeva inanci a tanto divino di excellentissimo sacramento. Et di tanto dolce & suave melodia era quello angelico canto che in quello instante che lo comenzo oldire: subito lanima li comenzo a uscire del corpo.<sup>278</sup>

Whence, the priest having said the preface and having arrived at saying sanctus, sanctus, I suddenly heard the same words sung by the angelic host, which preceded the most divine and excellent sacrament. And of such sweet and pleasant melody was that angelic song which I had in that moment begun to hear, that straightaway my soul began to depart from my body.

This episode appears to have provided the basis for Illuminata Bembo's recollection of a vision Caterina had while gravely ill where she again encountered heavenly music, and afterwards requested a violetta be brought to her for her to recreate it, through which 'she seemed to transform herself into God'.<sup>279</sup> This correlation, in which music strives to imitate that of heaven, is perhaps why Caterina was also an advocate of singing *laude* in convent

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 16 and Stras, "The Performance of Polyphony in early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents", 199.

<sup>276</sup> Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 17.

<sup>277</sup> Tim Shephard, Laura Ștefănescu and Serenella Sessini, "Music, Silence, and the Senses in a Late Fifteenth-Century Book of Hours," *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 2 (2017), 474–512, at 480.

<sup>278</sup> Catarina de' Vigri (St Catherine of Bologna), *Le Sette Armi Spirituali* [Bologna: Balthasar Azoguidus, 1475?] fol. 42v.

<sup>279</sup> Illuminata Bembo, *Specchio di illuminazione*, ed. Silvia Mostaccio, (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), 61: 'e pareva tuta se transformase in Dio'. Quoted in translation in Shephard et al, "Music, Silence, and the Senses", 481.

communities.<sup>280</sup> Angelo da Vallombrosa, defending the time nuns spent on performing music other than the chant required for the holy offices in his *Epistola dello heremita de Valle Ombrosa dello stato della Chiesa* (Florence, 1496), recounted that the benefits of teaching music to nuns extended to people beyond the convent's walls, too, writing that 'many, attracted by the sweetness of this music leave their games, their blaspheming, whoring and thieving, and come to hear it: but if it were lacking they would give themselves to vice.'<sup>281</sup>

Of course, not every convent was blessed with inhabitants who were able to perform to a high standard and to teach others, even if they counted from among the middle and upper classes - a prime demographic for having received musical tuition during secular life - amongst their number. In 1512, Isabella d'Este wrote to the Abbot of San Benedetto Po requesting that singing tuition be arranged for the nuns of San Giovanni, whose discordant singing, in spite of the convent's other virtues, left Isabella's ears 'much offended' and her heart 'little consoled'.<sup>282</sup> For this purpose, like much contact with the outside world, musical training was often given to nuns through a grille or grate by a priest, and those nuns who were taught directly were expected to teach their fellow sisters in turn.<sup>283</sup> At the convent of Le Murate in Florence, instruction was first provided in the first half of the fifteenth century by two priests in this manner, then by an organist, and finally, in 1461, by a nun from Viterbo who joined the community and took up the role of *Maestra di Cappello*, from whence the quality of the teaching it offered and quality of musical sisters it attracted led to the performances which the Ferrarese Ambassador in Florence was so complimentary of, some nineteen years later.<sup>284</sup>

What were these nuns taught at the grates, and what might they have thought was most important to pass on to their fellow sisters and *educande* in their care? From the survival of

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<sup>280</sup> Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 26.

<sup>281</sup> Angelo da Vallombrosa, *Epistola dello heremita de Valle Ombrosa dello stato della Chiesa* (Florence, s.n, 1496), fol. 6r: 'per quale cessando ne seguitara grandi delicti, cum sit che molti allecti dalla dulcedine di tale musicha lasciavano li giuochi, bestemmie, lascivie et furti, et andavano a udire quella: il che mancato si danno a vitii.' Quoted in translation in Stras, "The performance of Polyphony in early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents", 199.

<sup>282</sup> 'quando andamo in lo ditto monestero et sentimo tanta discordantia, restamo molto offese nelle orecchie et pocho consolate...'. Letter of 8 May 1512 (Archivio di Stato di Mantova, busta 2996, libro 30, fol. 151r) reproduced and quoted in translation in Prizer, "Una "Virtù Molto Conveniente A Madonne", at 24.

<sup>283</sup> Stras, "The performance of Polyphony in early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents", 199.

<sup>284</sup> Bryce, "Performing for Strangers", 1099.

her *Rosarium Metricum*, we can safely assume that Caterina de' Vigri had a command of Latin.<sup>285</sup> Two sisters described in the *necrology* of the Corpus Domini in Venice between 1397 and 1435 as being especially fine musicians, Sister Diamante (died 1405) and Sister Andreola Tommasini (died 1419) are also described as 'having an excellent intellect for reading, singing and writing' and as knowing 'how to read and sing perfectly' respectively, suggesting an equal command of music and Latin, and that both were considered as equally learned subjects by the necrologist, Sister Bartolomea Riccoboni.<sup>286</sup> As such, a music treatise such as those by Marchetto of Padua or Johannes de Muris, in relatively wide manuscript circulation, may not have posed any problems in comprehension.<sup>287</sup> That there was a market amongst nuns for vernacular music treatises, however, is laid plain in the preface to Gafori's vernacular condensation of his *Practica Musicae* and *Musica Theoretica*, the *Angelicum ac divinum opus musice*:

Perche molti illiterati fano professione de musica: et con grande difficultade pervengano a la vera cognitione de li praecepti harmonici per non intendere le opere nostre et de altri degni auctori latini quale son scripte con qualche ornato et alquanto obscuro stillo: havemo consyderato subvenire non solamente a lor voti et desiderii: ma anchora a la devotione de molte donne religiose intente ad laudare lo eterno Dio con tutta la corte celeste: imitando le angelice Ierarchie: et ad ornamento del culto divino ... descrivaremo in lingua materna con brevitade molte degne consyderatione necessarie a che e studioso de pervenire ad perfecta cognitione de questa angelica doctrina.<sup>288</sup>

Because many illiterate persons make a profession of music, and with great difficulty arrive at the true understanding of the harmonic precepts because they do not

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<sup>285</sup> For a modern edition see St Catherine of Bologna, *Rosarium Metricum. Poema del XV Secolo*, ed. Gilberto Sgarbi (Bologna: Giorgio Barghigiani, 1997).

<sup>286</sup> Riccoboni, *Life and death in a venetian convent*, ed. and trans. Bornstein, at 70 and 82 respectively.

<sup>287</sup> As well as inclusion of their material in later treatises, we know that copies of these two treatises were owned by Pietro de Fossis, a singer at St Mark's in Venice from 1485, serving as Maestro di Capella from 1491 to 1525. See Da Col, "Silent voices: professional singers in Venice", 240 and Jonathan Glixon, "A Musicians' Union in Sixteenth-Century Venice," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 36, no. 3 (Autumn, 1983), 392–421, at 396.

<sup>288</sup> Franchino Gafori, *Angelicum ac divinum opus musice. Franchini Gafurii laudensis Regii musici: ecclesieque Mediolanensis phonasci: materna lingua scriptum* (Milan: Gotardum de Ponte, 1508), fol. 4r.

understand our works and those by other worthy Latin authors that are written in a somewhat ornate and obscure style: we have thought to submit not only to their wishes and desires, but also to the devotion of many women religious [nuns] intent on praising the eternal God with all the celestial court, imitating the angelic hierarchies, and to the ornament of the divine worship ... we will describe in the mother tongue with brevity many worthy considerations necessary to one who is studious to arrive at a perfect understanding of this angelic doctrine.<sup>289</sup>

This suggests that other vernacular treatises, including Francesco Caza's earlier condensation of Book II of Gafori's *Practica Musicae* (Milan: Leonardo Pachel, 1492) and Bonaventura da Brescia's hugely popular *Regula Musice Plane* (first printed Brescia: Angelo Britannico, 1497), may also have been written with the idea that convent communities may have been part of their audience.<sup>290</sup> This would suggest that for nuns who had the ambition, their curriculum would have been no different to their male counterparts: they would have begun with chant, providing an introduction to singing liturgical music with a proper understanding of reading chant and the importance of the hexachords, followed by lessons in reading mensural notation and counterpoint.<sup>291</sup>

It must be remembered that the musical inclinations of a particular convent relied not only on the abilities of its community but on the sensibilities of the diocese under whose authority the convent fell. In 1495, Girolamo Savonarola—who disapproved of polyphony but reserved a particular distaste for its performance by women—described the musical activities of Le Murate as 'satanic'.<sup>292</sup> In 1487, a young nun at the convent of San'Antonio in Ferrara - presumably of a wealthy family given that she owned an organetto - had her instrument taken from her by the governing brothers as she 'played it very well, and

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<sup>289</sup> Quoted in translation in Stras, "The performance of Polyphony in early 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Italian Convents", 200.

<sup>290</sup> On Francesco Caza's treatise in the context of Gafori's work and tutelage, see Clement A Miller, "Gaffurius's "Practica Musicae": Origin and Contents," *Musica Disciplina*, vol. 22, (1968), 105–128, at 108. On nuns as part of its potential readership, see Susan Forscher Weiss, "Vandals, Students, or Scholars? Handwritten Clues in Renaissance Music Textbooks," in *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* ed. Forscher Weiss, 207–246, at 212.

<sup>291</sup> This curriculum is outlined in Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*, 111.

<sup>292</sup> Bryce, "Performing for Strangers", 1099. Savonarola's general dislike of polyphony is well known, but summarised succinctly in *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 2018, 19.

perhaps she did so more than the sisters'.<sup>293</sup> In 1539, the bishop of Verona banned polyphony in convents outright.<sup>294</sup> At a time in which women would routinely be expected to give up their learned pursuits upon marriage—a dilemma discussed by Cassandra Fedele in a letter to Alessandra Scala in 1492—entering a convent might be the only option available to a learned woman hoping to maintain some control over her activities.<sup>295</sup> Indeed, the potential benefits of taking vows both for the richest and poorest women in society meant that by 1530 cloistered women comprised as much as 5% of Florence's population.<sup>296</sup> However, even then she was at the mercy of exterior ecclesiastical authorities. From the 1480s an increasing number of women—perhaps the vast majority—took vows not through religiosity or a want to preserve intellectual pursuits which a husband might deny them, but were forcibly monachised by their families due to inflated dowries and political turmoil across the Italian Peninsula.<sup>297</sup>

## 2.9 Music in university life

Broadly speaking, music was not taught at universities in Italy during this period. In the early 1950s, Nan Cooke Carpenter published two works on music in European universities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, using the figures of Prosdocimo de' Beldomandi and Vittorino da Feltre (who both taught at Padua) to suggest that music must have played some part in the curricula of those reading mathematics, astronomy, rhetoric or medicine.<sup>298</sup> Indeed, from amongst the few texts already discussed we can see that students attending

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<sup>293</sup> Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*, 20.

<sup>294</sup> Stras, "The Performance of Polyphony in early 16th-Century Italian Convents", 206.

<sup>295</sup> Letter of 15 February 1492 from Cassandra Fedele to Alessandra Scala. In *Her Immaculate Hand*, ed. King and Rabil 87–8.

<sup>296</sup> Jason Stoessel, "Uncovering the Musical Life of San Donato in Polverosa: Sister Maria Diacinta Paulsanti's Processional" in *Uncovering Music of Early European Women*, ed. Fontijn, 45–62, at 45.

<sup>297</sup> Sharon T Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>298</sup> Carpenter, "Music in the Medieval Universities", 117 (on Padua) and 214 (on Bologna). Contrary to Carpenter's claims, there is no evidence that Vittorino included Boethius in his lecturing (as Johannes Gallicus' praise of his teaching only pertains to the *Ca' Giocosa*) or that Prosdocimus lectured on music, his treatise on *Musica Plana* having been penned for the benefited of a friend, and on *Musica Speculativa* upon finding Marchetto of Padua's *Lucidarium* while perusing music treatises with his friend Luca di Lendinara, who had become cantor at the Cathedral in Padua in 1412. See Beldomandi, *Plana Musica and Musica Speculativa*, ed. and trans. Herlinger, 35 & 157.

classes in astrology might have encountered the musical contents of books of nativities, or students taking a degree in canon law may have read Stefano Costa's lengthy discussion on the moral implications of playing and teaching music in his *Tractatus de Ludo*.<sup>299</sup> Students of rhetoric would, by Isidore's definition, have studied music through rhythm and metrics. As music was a mathematical art, studying mathematics, too, could have involved some focus on harmonics, perhaps reading Boethius' *De Musica*, as well as his *De Arithmetica*, and shorter introductory treatises to advanced mathematics (rather than the practical kind a merchant might be familiar with, exemplified by Piero Borghi's popular *Libro de Abacho*). A standard mathematics text for university level students was Johannes de Sacrobosco's brief *Algorismus Domini*, which concludes with a discussion of the nature of arithmetic, geometry and music, accompanied by an obscure diagram:<sup>300</sup>

Notandum quod tres sunt medietates famose. f. Arismetrica: Geometria: et Musica. Arismetrica considerat idemptitatem excessus et non idemptitatem proportionis ut 1.2.3. Geometria est quae considerat idemptitatem proportionis et non excessus ut 2.4.8. Musica est quae considerat nec hoc nec illud sed quae est proportio extremorum eadem est et differentiarum ut 6.3.2.<sup>301</sup>

It should be noted that there are three main subdisciplines [of mathematics], Arithmetic, Geometry and Music. Arithmetic considers the nature of extent and not that of proportion, as in 1.2.3. Geometry is the part who considers the identity of proportion and not excess, as in 2.4.8. Music is that which considers neither this nor that but that proportion which is the same as the difference of two extremes, as in 6.3.2.

The lack of printed editions for such an important text is perhaps explained by its brevity: it was easily copied by hand. This passage occurs after the colophon, and there is a possibility that it was excerpted from another treatise as an adjunct to Sacrobosco's. It bears some similarity to Isidore's description of the three arts in the *Etymologiae* (II.xxiv.15), which was

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<sup>299</sup> See pages 123–4.

<sup>300</sup> John North, "The Quadrivium," in *A History of the University in Europe*, ed. Hilde de Ridder–Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 337–339, at 344. Two editions were printed in Venice in 1501 (Bernardino Vitali) and 1523 (Melchiorre I Sessa & Pietro Ravani).

<sup>301</sup> Johannes de Sacrobosco, *Algorismus Domini* (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1501), fol. 6v.



well-known in the Middle Ages and printed in Venice in 1483 by Petrus Löslein: ‘Arithmetica est disciplina quantitatis numerabilis secundum se. Geometria est disciplina magnitudinis et formarum. Musica est disciplina quae de numeris loquitur, qui inveniuntur in sonis.’ (Arithmetic is the discipline of numeric quantity in itself. Geometry is the discipline of size and shape. Music is a discipline which speaks of numbers which one finds in sounds.<sup>302</sup> At III.xxii, Isidore provides a method for finding the harmonic mean, which is perhaps what the adjunct to Sacrobosco’s text refers to in giving the numbers 6, 3 and 2.

This is a far cry, however, from the degrees offered by some *oltremontani* universities, some of which stipulated that degrees were to be awarded only if the student displayed a mastery of speculative and practical music, or gave requirements for treatises on speculative music to be covered in the curriculum of other subjects.<sup>303</sup> Elsewhere, music was a component of a liberal arts programme taught to all students before they progressed onto the higher faculties law, medicine or theology.<sup>304</sup> At the turn of the sixteenth century, students at the university of Leipzig were expected to attend classes in ‘musica muris’—Johannes de Muris’ *Musica Speculativa*—for three to four weeks.<sup>305</sup> The closest an Italian university appears to have come to offering similarly dedicated classes in music was with a bull issued by Pope Nicholas V in 1451, which implemented a professorship ‘ad lecturam musicae’ at the university of Bologna; however the roll for the year 1451–2 shows that no professor was ever appointed, and the position does not appear in later rolls.<sup>306</sup>

This does not mean, of course, that students received no musical education, or forwent musical activity for the duration of their studies. University students were often amongst the most affluent members of European society, able to afford the travel, board and fees required to attend, and, as such, time spent at university presented an opportunity to hone

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<sup>302</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, fol. 12v.

<sup>303</sup> The former was the case at Cambridge, which offered degrees – to none other than Robert Fairfax amongst others - provided they had completed a study ‘in musica speculativa simul in practica’. Carpenter, “Music in the Medieval Universities”, 202.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>305</sup> Matteo Valleriani and Nana Citron, “Conrad Tockler’s Research Agenda,” in *De Sphaera of Johannes de Sacro Bosco in the Early Modern Period: The Authors of the Commentaries*, ed. Matteo Valleriani (Cham: Springer Open, 2020), 111–136, at 115.

<sup>306</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 11. Grendler also points out that while Gafori was technically a lecturer in music at the University of Pavia, he was based very much in Milan and cannot have taught there regularly, if at all.

all of the skills expected of a gentleman, beyond any formal accolade awarded by the university.<sup>307</sup> With a general age range of 18 to 25, for many from amongst the middle classes it would have been their first time away from home, and as today (with the gigantic exception that all students were male) drew together students from a wide range of geographical areas and interests.<sup>308</sup> The fact that many students chose not to graduate, or switched institutions to do so due to the expense of graduating, makes it difficult to estimate student numbers at a particular institution with any exactitude.<sup>309</sup> However it has been suggested that an average of 600–700 students attended the university in Pavia at any one time during the fifteenth century, and a study of graduation records of the University of Bologna between 1500 and 1800 suggests that some 35% of those graduating were *oltremontani*.<sup>310</sup> To this end, cultural circles of students, teachers and other learned gentlemen—functioning much like the *accademie* of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—were important centres for the exchange of extracurricular learning, whether that be in hearing and playing music, dancing or arms.<sup>311</sup> Between 1521 and 1526, Reginald Pole, granted a pension by Henry VIII to maintain the dignity befitting his rank, hosted such a circle at his home in Padua while studying Greek with Niccolò Leonico Tomeo.<sup>312</sup> Its longevity suggests that such circles provided important intellectual exchange (in this case testified by the completion of a translation of a text by Galen by Pole and two other members of the circle in 1524) as well as a pleasant way to pass the time.<sup>313</sup> One might suggest that Prodocimo de' Beldomandi and Luca di Lendinara carried out their survey of music treatises in similar circumstances a century before this, given the amicable, comradely tone

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<sup>307</sup> Martellozzo Forin, “Musica tra le pareti domestiche a Padova”, 113.

<sup>308</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 3.

<sup>309</sup> David Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning in Early Modern Italy: Arts and Medicine at the University of Bologna* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2023), 43.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. Lines’ data is drawn from the findings of the ASFE project (<http://asfe.unibo.it/en/progetto>) which sought to establish the number and nature of the student population of the University of Bologna from 1500–1800. On the estimated average number of students across several Italian universities during this period, see Anthony F. D’Elia, *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2004), at 4.

<sup>311</sup> Kenneth R. Bartlett, “Worshipful Gentlemen of England: The “Studio” of Padua and the Education of the English Gentry in the Sixteenth Century,” *Renaissance and Reformation*, Series, vol. 6, no. 4 (November 1982), 235–248, at 244.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>313</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 151.

adopted by Prodocimus in his preface to *Musica Speculativa*.<sup>314</sup> Ludovico Carboni recalled the playing of music in such circles at the University of Ferrara, noting that the rector of students from 1458–60, Rainaldus de Guarneriis, took up the *lyra* to relax, also praising a student for his visible delight in playing, calling it a ‘praiseworthy activity’ (rebus laude dignis).<sup>315</sup> Returning to Michele Verino’s time as a student at the Florentine *Studio*, it is evident that a considerable portion of his leisure was spent in playing and singing to the lyre, both alone and in the company of fellow students.<sup>316</sup> In a letter to Francesco Pitti, he describes having passed an evening after dinner in ‘playing the *cithara* and singing the praise of heroes in the ancient manner of the Romans’ with fellow students.<sup>317</sup>

After-death inventories have proven to be a valuable window into the musical lives of students and professors, otherwise obscured by the paucity of evidence for music in the curricula they studied and taught.<sup>318</sup> In 1473 an arts student at Padua, Gregorio Aurelio, who was residing with Nicolò Dondi Dall’Orologio, a doctor of law, left clothing, a handful of books, a bowed stringed instrument (viola) and a harp (arpa) on his death.<sup>319</sup> In 1463 the rector of the college of jurists at the university, Giacomo Cicuta, left not one but five crumhorns (cornamuse), evidence, perhaps, of recreational playing amongst groups of friends.<sup>320</sup> In April 1514, a large lute (liuto grande) and three keyboard instruments of varying sizes—a harpsichord (clavicembalo), clavichord with its stand (manacordo con i suoi pedali) and virginal (arpicordo)—were found in the grand home of a long-term resident of the city, Ludovico Baldi.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> See Beldomandi, *Plana Musica and Musica Speculativa*, ed. and trans. Herlinger, 157.

<sup>315</sup> Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS ottoboniano latino 1153, fol. 189r. Quoted in F. Alberto Gallo, *Music in the Castle: Troubadours, Books, and Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Anna Herklotz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 74.

<sup>316</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 269–271.

<sup>317</sup> ‘mox cytharam pulsavimus moreque vetusto Romanorum cum laudibus heroum convivium clamamus’. Verde, 1977, 693. Blake Wilson (Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 270) translates this passage ‘singing praises of the customs of the ancient romans’.

<sup>318</sup> Elda Martellozzo Forin’s essay “Musica tra le Pareti Domestiche a Padova” is the most recent study to take advantage of this resource.

<sup>319</sup> Martellozzo Forin, “Musica tra le Pareti Domestiche a Padova”, 134.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 136.

Baldi was afforded such a collection by his family's permanence in the city. The ownership of smaller, more portable instruments such as lutes, viols and harps was evidently more common amongst students, being more practical both in terms of travelling to university and of lodging with local families, including those of their professors, while studying.<sup>322</sup> Musical tuition, for those missing their studies back home or taking up music for the first time, could be found from amongst private music teachers in the city.<sup>323</sup> Indeed, lute lessons were one of the few expenses allowed to a young Carlo Borromeo, who studied law at Pavia from 1552 to 1558, even when he struggled to afford the texts necessary for his course.<sup>324</sup> Although music as a profession, as we have seen, was very much despised in learned circles, some knowledge of it was very much requisite for the gentleman of education, and time at university allowed those who felt their understanding was inadequate to improve their musical capabilities.<sup>325</sup>

The idea of university as a 'finishing school' with the potential of added social clout from being awarded a degree from a prestigious foreign university, is given weight by the sheer number of students who undertook the long, and potentially perilous journey to study at renowned institutions, like Padua, and with distinguished professors. Padua alone drew students from England, Scotland, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Poland, Hungary and Greece, as well as from Venice's Adriatic and Mediterranean dependencies and the rest of Italy.<sup>326</sup> Such was the draw of Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, who lectured on rhetoric at the university of Bologna from 1479, that on his death in 1505 some 200 students abandoned their studies.<sup>327</sup> Students were just as discerning with regard to less illustrious professors. Honing a refined command of Latin was important to all students as much as a mark of a good, morally upright education as for its utility as an academic *lingua franca*; students were known to abandon professors whose command of Latin was poor, and professors at

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<sup>322</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 162.

<sup>323</sup> Carpenter, "Music in the Medieval Universities", 128

<sup>324</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 167.

<sup>325</sup> Paola Dessì, "The Musical Training of University Students in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and the *Libri Amicorum*," in *Music in Schools*, ed. Dessì, 81–102, at 81.

<sup>326</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 36–8.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

Bologna were incentivised to ensure they remained popular with students by a reduction in their wages should attendance at their lectures fall beneath five listeners.<sup>328</sup>

One notable consequence of the pan-European community that university students comprised was the opportunity for musical exchange, as well as its study. William F. Prizer, Lewis Lockwood and James Cook, among others, have suggested that university students might have been key vectors of songs from their homeland—a possible explanation for the popularity of English songs, such as *O Rosa Bella*, and the cross-pollination of sacred repertoire in the fifteenth century, though this is difficult to prove beyond isolated cases where the identification of manuscript sources with a particular agent is possible.<sup>329</sup> Prizer has noted that the famed lutenist Pietrobono taught students from Milan, Venice and Mantua during his time at Ferrara, a fact that coincides neatly with the success of Leonello d'Este's reopening of the university there, drawing students from the rest of Italy and around Europe, as well as the point at which Pietrobono was able to dispense with being a barber.<sup>330</sup> Indeed, in the eulogy composed for Pietrobono by Aurelio Brandolini in 1473, Brandolini recalls Pietrobono singing songs in English, French and Spanish, as well as his native Italian.<sup>331</sup> Admittedly, Pietrobono was well-travelled, visiting England in 1466 as part of a delegation sent to the court of Edward IV in 1466.<sup>332</sup> Nevertheless, it could be that the influx of foreign students at Ferrara brought new repertoires for Pietrobono to take advantage of, as well as the income, in addition to that which he received in patronage from the Este family, from students keen to be able to claim the great Pietrobono as their one-time teacher, in the same way that they were drawn to the university of Ferrara by the presence of Guarino Guarini, among the most influential scholars of his day.

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 152 and 161.

<sup>329</sup> See Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 58–61 and William F. Prizer, “North Italian Courts, 1460–1540,” in *The Renaissance*, ed. Fenlon, 133–155, at 137. The phenomenon of the popularity of English song is the focus of an article by David Fallows, “The contenance angloise: English influence on continental composers of the fifteenth century,” *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, (October 1987), 189–208. On the dissemination of English sacred music on the continent, see James Cook, *The Cyclic Mass Anglo-Continental Exchange in the Fifteenth Century* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2019).

<sup>330</sup> Prizer, “Music at the Court of the Sforza”, 137, and Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, 42 and 102. Caleffini's remarks on Pietrobono date to the 1450's.

<sup>331</sup> Gallo, *Music in the castle*, trans. Anna Herklotz, 92.

<sup>332</sup> See Evan MacCarthy, “The English Voyage of Pietrobono Burzelli,” *Journal of Musicology*, 35 (4), (2018), 431–459.

The place of music in various ceremonies associated with the university is well-testified by various pieces of university and civic legislation from Padua and Bologna.<sup>333</sup> Identical statutes from 1331 in Padua and 1432 in Bologna state that the start of the academic year was to be marked with a sung mass at the cathedral.<sup>334</sup> Far from relying solely on musicians from other institutions, such as the cathedral choir, or civic bands for special occasions, Bologna appears to have had its own permanent ensemble of trumpeters. In 1405 the statutes of the university of Bologna included an article on *Trombatoribus et eorum Officio et Salaris* (Trumpeters and their duties and salary) which stipulated that players should be prepared to play for festivities and solemnities in the city (*festivitates et solempnitates...per civitatem*) at the call of the rector, on foot or horseback, and by day or night (*pedes et eques, de die et de nocte*); for mounted appearances they were to be paid double the fee given for occasions when players could remain on foot.<sup>335</sup> Such celebrations included festal days, such as the feast of the Assumption.<sup>336</sup> It was apparently also common, at least at the start of the fifteenth century, for other musicians to be hired to celebrate other occasions in the university calendar; in the same year, the university forbade musical entertainments when celebrating the election of a rector, apparently in an attempt to staunch previously lavish expenditure on feasting and dances which offered opportunities for morally dubious behaviour.<sup>337</sup>

Another musical adjunct to ceremony that was forbidden by the university of Bologna in 1405 was the practice of students hiring instrumentalists of any kind to draw attention to themselves when inviting friends to their investment ceremony.<sup>338</sup> Students were still permitted four trumpeters to accompany them from the cathedral, however, following their creation as a doctor.<sup>339</sup> This was also the case at Padua from 1331, when students were

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<sup>333</sup> Carpenter's work in this area has still to be surpassed, and for this section of my study I am entirely dependent on the archival work she carried out. While in many cases university statutes remained current for decades if not centuries, and in some cases, universities shared articles verbatim, a great deal more could be discovered regarding music and ceremony at other Italian universities through more archival research.

<sup>334</sup> Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, 35–7.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

permitted ‘whatever instrument they wished’ (quecumque voverint instrumenta) to escort them home from the banquet honouring their creation as a doctor. However, the civic authorities stepped in to ban music ‘from the sound of the night bell to that of the morning’ (dal suono della campana di notte al suono di quella mattutina) only eight years later, so popular was the practice.<sup>340</sup>

The practice of following newly created doctors with small fanfares is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it mirrors the requirement for music that members of ruling dynasties appear to have felt necessary when entering other cities (and which was graciously declined by Pontano) to render their entrance more ‘honourable’.<sup>341</sup> Secondly, the fact that authorities—town and gown—in Bologna and Padua curtailed the use of instruments by students suggests that such occasions were both frequent and difficult to ignore. Through their frequency even the furthest removed from the processes of the university and the business of its students and professors would have gained some awareness of what the sight and sound of these small processions signified.

## 2.10 Conclusions

The manner in which a child came to and received a musical education in Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century varied highly depending on their socioeconomic background. Attempting to summarise what learning music constituted and how it was taught at different levels of society is rendered ineffably complex by the individuality of personal circumstances; the function of music and understanding of what learning was necessary for a child to carry out that function varied from institution to institution, teacher to teacher, family to family. Indeed, this disparity was one of the reasons behind Pope Eugene IV’s attempts to standardise the education of clerics throughout the Italian peninsula through the *Scuole Eugeniae*, and within that, to bring some consistency to the musical standard of the clergy.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 37–8.

<sup>341</sup> See note 385.

It is with a degree of assuredness, however, that we can bisect the rationale behind the introduction of a child to musical study: in order to provide an accomplishment—used to pass idle time or impress social peers—or as a livelihood. Setting aside the fact that musical aptitude could help an amateur player at court gain preferment, and that the children of the wealthy might assume holy orders and a high level of musicianship in the course of their education, professional musicianship was a trade, and very much the preserve of the artisan class.

The wealthiest in society benefitted from tuition from peripatetic teachers, whether they were taught at home or at a boarding school akin to Vittorino's *Ca' Giocosa*. They might have been taught how to play instruments and singing and, as is suggested by the survival of what seem to be compositional exercises in a songbook belonging to Marietta Pugi, composition may have formed an important tool in teaching students the rudiments of interval relationships, itself seen as integral to attaining proficiency in singing and playing. Musical proficiency was also key to the ability to dance. Dance was a crucial social skill for people of all social strata, but placed the elite under particular scrutiny given its place as an entertainment at banquets and other large scale social occasions, where children might be paraded from an early age. As such, musical training was also commenced at an early age to enable children to dance as gracefully as possible.

Amongst the artisan class, music presented itself as a potential profession. As evidenced by the early life of Benvenuto Cellini, a professional musician might teach their sons music in the hope of giving them the necessary skill to also earn a living. For other boys, musical aptitude was the gateway to a free education at a cathedral school, to a standard otherwise well beyond the means of an artisan, and a living as a member of the clergy.

We currently know too little of the lives of the small number of female professional musicians we can name during this period to make assumptions about their early education. While there was a concerted drive, evidenced by Isabella d'Este's concerns for the quality of music at the convent of San Giovanni in Mantua and the publication of the *Regula Musicae Plane*, to improve musical literacy in monastic institutions—where some girls were entered as *educande*, without any particular expectation of taking vows upon reaching adulthood—it



seems probable that women entering a convent later in life brought any musicality they had acquired with them. It appears that most women learned music at home, though it seems they also had the opportunity to learn music at specialist music schools, such as those in the vicinity of the Rialto in Venice. Unfortunately, we currently know precious little about them, and the Council of Ten's efforts to ensure that lessons were carried out in public view in order to prevent pederasty provide one of the few fragments of evidence which hints at how these schools might have operated.

How did musical tuition differ across this spectrum? For children receiving a humanistic education—most likely the elite—an understanding of *musica speculativa* was an important component in shaping their musical ethic. This was important as for them music was to function primarily as a pastime, and care had to be taken to ensure that their engagement with music was moderate, and that they were acutely aware of its lascivious pitfalls. For an educator like Porcia, this was what defined the upright, liberal man from the ill-educated commoner (plebeionum), and worse yet, bawds (lenones).<sup>342</sup>

A common factor in the musical education of many, whether learning music at home, at a humanistic boarding school or at an ecclesiastical institution, the bedrock of musical literacy was the hexachord. For even the poor *religiosi* to whom Bonaventura da Brescia dedicates the *Regula Musice Plane*, an understanding of solmisation was a crucial tool not only in learning plainchant, but shaping their phrasing of it, too, through an understanding of the significance of the hard, soft and natural hexachords, and how certain solmisation syllables should be similarly inflected. This also formed the basis for teaching mensural music, as evidenced by the fact that solmisation is treated early on in every music treatise in circulation during this period.

Of course, there must also have been those who had no real understanding of music at all, but were able to sing, improvise verse and work out chords on a lute or *lira* to accompany themselves, and it is into this bracket which Michele del Giogante seems to place Antonio di Guido. This supposed lack of total command of music as a liberal art did nothing to prevent Antonio and similar performers from becoming the most popular musicians of their

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<sup>342</sup> Porcia, *De generosa educatione liberorum*, fol. 5r.

day. Indeed, we even have a rather touching tribute to the partial understanding of music which characterised the *cantor*, seemingly in Antonio's own words. An undated collection of verse printed by the cantimpanca Zanobi dalla Barba, *Froctola dilectevole da mandar via lotoi et la malinconia* (Delightful frottola to send away boredom and melancholy) contains a sonnet, 'utile in dispregio del mondo' (useful in this scornful world), which he elsewhere attributes to Antonio di Guido, on the liberal arts, and which consoles the reader that complete mastery of the arts would be superhuman, and that most Renaissance Italians might content themselves with even a partial understanding of one:<sup>343</sup>

Septe son larte liberale: & prima	Seven are the liberal arts, and first
Grammatica dellarte e /via & porta	Grammar to the others is the way and door.
Loyca la seconda: per cui scorta	Logic is the second, by whose law
Il vero del falso si conosce & lima	The true from the false we know and muse.
Rethorica la terza: che per rima	Rhetoric the third, by whose rhyme
Parlando in prosa luditor conforta	Prose is to the hearer comfort.
Arismetrica la quarta /per via torta	Arithmetic the fourth, by whose rule
Per numeri dirizza a vera stima	Number grants true estimation.
La quinta e /chiamata Geometria	The fifth is called Geometry
che ogni cosa con ragion misura	which everything with reason measures.
Musica e /la sexta mellodia	Music is the sixth, that melody
Che suona & canta con gran dirittura	We may play and sing aright.
La septima si chiama Astrologia	The seventh is called Astrology
Chel ciel quaggiu ci mostra per figura	By which the heavens down here are figured.
Sopra ogni creatura	Above every creature
Sarebbe chi sapesse ciascuna arte	Would be he who knows each art
Ma contentar si puo chi ne sa parte. <sup>344</sup>	But be content to know one in part.

<sup>343</sup> A separate publication by Zanobi, also undated, is entitled *Laude devote del dispregio del mondo di maestro Antonio di Guido*. The only known copy is preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, coll/Rarimelzi.076/04, inv. 5 050006376.

<sup>344</sup> Antonio di Guido "sonetto utile in dispregio del mondo" in Zanobi della Barba, ed. *Froctola dilectevole da mandar via lotoi et la malinconia* ([Florence: s.n, c. 1510–20]), fol. 2r.

# CHAPTER III

## DE AMORE

*Res est blanda canor: discant cantare puellae:  
Pro facie multis vox sua lena fuit.*

*An alluring thing is song, so let girls learn to sing;  
For many voice, rather than face, has been their procuress.*

Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, Book III 315–6.

The idea of a connection between music and love enjoyed considerable currency from at least as early as the Classical period onwards.<sup>1</sup> Relying heavily on Humbert de Romans' *Expositio regulae sancti Augustini*, Tinctoris gives music's power to elicit love (*amorem allicit*) as the tenth of twenty–seven 'effects of music' in the first book of his fragmentary treatise *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*, with Ovid used to illustrate this point.<sup>2</sup> It is evidenced in the visual sphere by serenading lutenists, arcadian pipers, and mixed ensembles of men and women singing or playing – in the case of Sebastiano Florigerio's *Musical Entertainment* (c. 1530–40), for instance, with the addition of clues hinting at an erotic subtext.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the

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<sup>1</sup> On the dangers of misinterpreting evidence from earlier times for which supporting testimony is missing, such as the nudity of female musicians in the art of pharaonic Egypt, see Emily Teeter, "Female Musicians in Pharaonic Egypt," in *Rediscovering the Muses*, ed. Kimberley Marshall (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 68–91, especially 86–90.

<sup>2</sup> Shephard, *Echoing Helicon*, 44–5. As Shephard points out, "*amorem allicit*" also appears in the *Complexus Effectum Musices*, completed after Tinctoris' arrival in Naples in 1470. Here it is listed as the seventeenth effect of twenty, rather than the tenth of twenty–seven. See Ronald Woodley, "The Printing and Scope of Tinctoris's Fragmentary Treatise 'De inventione et vsu mvsice' ['De inuentione et usu musicae']," *Early Music History*, 1985, vol. 5 (1985), 239–268, at 251–2. On Tinctoris' reliance on Humbert de Romans' thirteenth century treatise, see Rob C. Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (London: Routledge, 2008), at 53–4, and his later article "Tinctoris's Magnum opus," in *Uno Gentile et Subtile Ingenio: Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Bonnie J. Blackburn*, ed. Gioia Filocamo and Mary Jennifer Bloxam (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 771–782.

<sup>3</sup> Shephard et al, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, 6 and 333–338. For a more detailed analysis of Florigerio's *Musical Entertainment* see Tim Shephard, "Voice, decorum and seduction in Florigerio's "Music Lesson," *Early Music*, vol. 38, no. 3 (August 2010), 361–367.

commonality of amorous texts to song led Castiglione, in the guise of Federico Fregoso, to declare that most of the time (il più delle volte) sung texts were amorous in nature.<sup>4</sup>

Love, of course, is not a singular entity; as Ficino wrote to Giovanni Cavalcanti, it is ‘as manifold as lovers are numerous.’<sup>5</sup> Treatises on the nature of love printed during the Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries are numerous, with authors including Leon Battista Alberti (*De Amore*, 1471) Pietro Bembo (*Gli Asolani*, 1505); Giovanni Dominici (Trattato della sanctissima charita, 1513) Mario Equicola (*Libro de natura de amore*, 1525); Leone Ebreo (*Dialoghi d’amore*, 1535); Tullia d’Aragona (*Dialogo della Infinita d’Amore*, 1547) and Ficino himself (*De Amore*, a translation and commentary on Plato’s *Symposium*, also rendered in Italian as *Sopra lo Amore*).<sup>6</sup> The final book of Castiglione’s *Libro del Cortegiano* also comprises a treatise on love, relying heavily on the presence of Pietro Bembo amongst the *brigata*, who delivers it, perhaps as an homage on Castiglione’s part to *Gli Asolani*. Both derive their structure and general perspective on love from Plato’s *Symposium*, on which Ficino’s *De Amore* represented the first Latin commentary.<sup>7</sup>

These works range in complexity. Alberti’s treatise is the most simple, taking the form of a letter to his friend Paolo Codagnello, in which he admonishes him to avoid becoming involved with women.<sup>8</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, Plato’s *Symposium* and its derivatives are both complex and highly influential considerations of the very nature of love.<sup>9</sup> Falling somewhere in the middle is Equicola’s work, an eclectic anthology of writings on love in all its forms, seemingly compiled over more than thirty years.<sup>10</sup> He begins by

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<sup>4</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Ficino, *Epistolae*, fol. 17r: “Tam etiam multiplex quam multi sunt qui amant” For an English translation see *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. from the Latin by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vol. 1, 91–2.

<sup>6</sup> While Ficino prepared both Latin and Italian commentaries on the *Symposium*, only the Latin addition appeared in print during his lifetime. The first printed edition of *Sopra Lo Amore* was published by Neri Dordelata in Florence in 1544.

<sup>7</sup> James H. Leshner, “A Course on the Afterlife of Plato’s “Symposium,” *The Classical Journal*, vol. 100, no. 1, (2004), 75–85, at 80.

<sup>8</sup> P.G. Christensen, “Friendship and its Limits in Alberti’s *Della Famiglia*,” in *Cygnifiliana: Essays in Classics, Comparative Literature, and Philosophy Presented to Professor Roy Arthur Swanson*, ed. Chad Matthew Schroeder (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 15–45, at 40.

<sup>9</sup> Leshner, “A Course on the Afterlife of Plato’s “Symposium,” 75.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hyde, *The Poetic Theology of Love* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), 97.

outlining writings on love by Italian authors, including those named above, before embarking on a discussion of the nature of love, its causes and physical manifestations, and goes on to devote a chapter to ‘How Latin and Greek poets, Provençal Jongleurs, French rhymers, Tuscan bards, and Spanish troubadours have praised their loves, and their passions described’.<sup>11</sup> Rather than providing a work of original thought, Equicola’s eclecticism results in a sort of reference book on love, covering fields as diverse as philosophy, human anatomy, conduct and literary criticism.

Arguably the most influential description of love in this period, and a helpful guide in understanding how music was supposed to elicit it, is provided by the priestess Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*, 210–12. What has subsequently become known as ‘Diotima’s Ladder’, describing love as ascending in virtue from a base of carnal lust driven by the five senses to a divine love which transcends base desire, forms the core of Pietro Bembo’s *Gli Asolani*, and its paraphrase in *Il Cortegiano*, given by his character at the insistence of Elisabetta Gonzaga.<sup>12</sup> In describing Ficino’s *De Amore*, Equicola condenses the entirety of Plato’s ideas on love into a single folio, but the ordering of his paraphrase is haphazard enough as to give the reader unfamiliar with his source little hope of comprehending it, rendering Castiglione’s realisation the most accessible condensation.<sup>13</sup>

In *Il Cortegiano*, Bembo begins by defining love as the desire to enjoy beauty (un certo desiderio di fruir la bellezza).<sup>14</sup> Beauty can be found in all manner of things, but the soul can only long for the beauty it knows, and to that end is guided by three faculties: the senses, reason (ragione) and intellect.<sup>15</sup> Of these, the senses are most brutish, desiring only what they can comprehend through the sensory organs; reason befits the better, rational man (propria dell’uomo), and intellect is the highest faculty, enabling man to find enjoyment in the contemplation of incorporeal, spiritual things (contemplazion di cose intelligibili), and

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<sup>11</sup> “Como Latini et Greci Poeti, Ioculari Provenzali, Rimanti Francesi, Dicatori Thoscani, & trovatori Spagnoli habiano loro Amante lodato, & le passioni di loro stessi descritto.” Mario Equicola, *Libro de natura de amore* (Venice: Lorenzo Lorio, 1525) from fol. 187v.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the phrase ‘Diotima’s Ladder’ is not a nomenclature that was used before the twentieth century.

<sup>13</sup> Shephard et al, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, 148.

<sup>14</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 364.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

uniting him with the divine.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching beauty that carnal desire is aroused, through reason that desire is overcome, and by the intellect that it is ignored entirely. ‘Diotima’s Ladder’ is climbed as the soul is guided by reason, firstly from desire for one particular person to an appreciation of beauty in the many, and from there to the enjoyment of beauty for beauty’s sake; as beauty is born of God (da Dio nasce la bellezza), it is sacred, and it is in its enjoyment on an intellectual level that one enjoys its eternal form, free from base desire.<sup>17</sup> As an example, he gives the ideal effect of music, played by a beautiful woman, upon the lover who has superseded the corporeal desire driven by the senses:

Rimovasi adunque dal cieco giudizio del senso e godasi con gli occhi quel splendore, quella grazia, quelle faville amorose, i risi, i modi e tutti gli altri piacevoli ornamenti bellezza; medesimamente con l’audito la suavità della voce, il contento delle parole, l’armonia della musica (se musica è la donna amata); e così pascerà di dolcissimo cibo l’anima per la via di questi due sensi, i quali tengon poco del corporeo e son ministri della ragione, senza passar col desiderio verso il corpo ad appetito alcuno men che onesto.<sup>18</sup>

He must distance himself, then, from the blind judgement of the senses and with the eyes enjoy that splendour, that grace, those sparks of affection, the smiles, manners, and all the other agreeable ornaments of beauty; Similarly, with hearing he should enjoy the sweetness of voice, the accord of words, the harmony of music (if his beloved is a musician); and so he will nourish with the sweetest food his soul, by the means of these two senses, which are not bound [like touch] to the corporeal and which are the ministers of reason without being led by desire towards the body, and to appetites which are less than honest.

Through the sense of hearing, then, audible beauty—such as music—was seen as a ready fuel for the lowest form of love, exemplified by lust for the beauty of the human form. The enjoyment of senses is not wrongful in itself—Castiglione renders clear that the visual and

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 376–7.

audible beauty are beneficial (*dolcissimo cibo*) for the soul—but strength of intellect is requisite in preventing the soul from being led blindly by beauty towards base desire. Aristotle proffers a similar example, perhaps also under Plato’s direct influence, when discussing temperance in both the *Nicomachean and Eudemean Ethics*. Aristotle’s temperate soul, like the soul guided more strongly by rationale than the senses in Plato’s *Symposium*, is moved neither to disgust nor profligacy by ugliness or beauty, but rises beyond those instinctive reactions, which are provoked by the senses:

Temperantia igitur non circa anime: sed circa corporis voluptates versatur: non tamen & circa has ipsas omnes: qui namque rebus iis gaudent quae visu percipiuntur: ut coloribus: figuris: pictura: nec temperantes nec intemperantes dicuntur. Et si videntur & his homines & ut oportet & magis quam oportet: & minus etiam gaudere. Simili modo neque qui rebus iis gaudent quae auditu percipiuntur. Nemo enim aut eos qui cantu vel histrionis gaudent voce plusquam oportet intemperantes: aut eos qui vt oportet eisdem gaudent: temperantes appellat: Nec etiam ii qui circa odores gaudent: nisi per accidens. Non enim eos qui malorum aut rosarum aut vaporum: sed eos potius qui vnguentorum aut epularum odoribus delectantur intemperantes dicimus esse his enim intemperantes ex eo gaudent: quia per hos ipsis rerum earum quas cupiunt recordatio fit.<sup>19</sup>

Temperance, then, does not concern the soul, but concerns the pleasures of the body: yet it does not concern all these things: for those who take pleasure in those things which are perceived by sight, such as colors, figures, painting, are neither said to be temperate nor intemperate, although it would be held that these things also can be enjoyed in the right manner, or too much, or too little. In the same way, neither are those who enjoy those things which are perceived by hearing. For no one does not call those who enjoy singing or theatre more than necessary immoderate, or those who enjoy the same things as they ought to temperate: nor even those who rejoice in scents, except by accident. For we do not say that those are intemperate who enjoy the smell of apple blossom, roses or vapours, but rather those who delight

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Burleus Super Libros Ethicorum*, with commentary by Walter Burley and edited by Antonio de Padua, (Venice: Ottaviano I Scoto, 1521), fol. 61r.

in the odors of ointments or feasts, for they take pleasure in it because through these the very things they desire are brought to mind.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, in defending the temperate soul's engagement with music, Aristotle similarly acknowledges that it has the power, via the fallibility of the senses as a guide, to goad the more intemperate to unsavoury behaviour. Ficino describes this lust in the most damning terms in his commentary on Plato's *Symposium*. In the first speech, given by Giovanni Cavalcanti, he describes every love as virtuous (ogni Amore è onesto), but owns that: 'The unbridled fire by which we are dragged to lustful acts also draws us to deformity, which is judged to be the opposite of beauty.'<sup>21</sup> Lust is 'dishonourable' (dishonesta), and dishonourable acts comprise evil (il mal), opposed to God who is the originator of all beauty, and 'given the name of Love by the Christian Theologians' (a Dio il nome di Amore anno attribuito).<sup>22</sup> Even if lust is a form of love inspired by beauty (such as the beauty of music) it is a crime against love, and, God being love and the originator of beauty, consequently a sin. To avoid any confusion, and to clarify how beauty can be both cause and innocent victim of lust, in the second speech of *De Amore* Cavalcanti states:

Se alcuno per grande avidità di generare pospone il contemplare, o veramente attende alla generazione per modi indebiti, o veramente antepone la Pulcritudine del corpo a quella dell'Anima, costui non usa bene la dignità d'Amore... Certamente colui che usa rettamente l'Amore, loda la forma del corpo: ma per mezzo di quella cogita una più eccellente spezie nell'Anima, nell'Angelo, e in Dio: e quella con più fervore desidera. Ed usa intanto l'uffizio della generazione, in quanto l'ordine naturale, e le leggi dai prudenti poste, ci dettano.<sup>23</sup>

If anyone, through their fervour to procreate, neglects to contemplate, or truly engages in procreation for undue reasons, or places the beauty of the body before

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<sup>20</sup> I have based my translation on that found in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 73 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 175–6. The corresponding passage in the Eudemian Ethics, which places more emphasis on music, but which was circulated only in manuscript during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, can be found at Book III 1230b.

<sup>21</sup> "Lo sfrenato incendio da il quale agli atti lascivi siamo tirati, con ciò sia che egli tragga a la deformità, si giudica alla Bellezza esser contrario." Marsilio Ficino, *Sopra Lo Amore* (Florence: Neri Dortelata, 1544), 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 and 18. "God is Love" most famously occurs in the New Testament, 1 John, 4:7–21.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 41–2.



that of the soul, then he abuses the dignity of Love... Certainly even the honest lover praises the form of the body, but by its means contemplates a more noble beauty in the soul, in the angel, and in God, and desires these with more fervour. And he engages with procreation within natural order, and the laws given to us by the prudent.

In evoking the power of beauty on the unwitting beholder, Aristotle uses an example which would become commonplace in the Renaissance: that of the sirens. In antiquity the nature of the sirens differs greatly depending on the authority consulted.<sup>24</sup> Those appearing in the *Odyssey* lure men through the beauty of their song to certain death.<sup>25</sup> Isidore supposed them to be an allegory for prostitutes (meretrices), enticing sailors to metaphorical shipwreck through destitution.<sup>26</sup> In Plato's *Republic*, the sirens are the more benign originators of the music of the spheres.<sup>27</sup> The ability to beguile the listener is a trait common to each, however, and in the case of Isidore's reading of the *Odyssean* sirens, the mortal threat they pose in fable may be equated to the moral danger posed by a loss of self-control—caused by blindly following the senses, and which leads to lascivious acts—in reality. Returning to Renaissance Italy, music, love, and the trope of the siren are neatly tied in a sonnet by Bembo, composed at the very end of the fifteenth century and published in a revised version of his *Rime* in Venice in 1540:

La mia leggiadra e candida angioletta,	My lovely and spotless angel
cantando a par de le sirene antiche,	singing as like the ancient sirens,
con altre d'onestade e pregio amiche	with other honest and esteemed friends
sedersi a l'ombra in grembo de l'erbetta	sitting shaded midst the grass
vid'io pien di spavento:	I saw, full of wonder:

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed account of this subject, see Leofranc Holford-Strevens, "Sirens in Antiquity and the Middle Ages" in Linda Phyllis Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (eds), *Music of the Sirens* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 16–51.

<sup>25</sup> In the *Fabulae* once ascribed to Hyginus, the Sirens are fated to perish should any mortal man hear their song and live to tell the tale. See Mary Grant (trans. and ed), *The Myths of Hyginus* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960), 141.

<sup>26</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, XI.iii, fol. 58r.

<sup>27</sup> Carine Van Liefferinge, "Les Sirènes: du chant mortel à la musique des sphères. Lectures homériques et interprétations platoniciennes," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. 229, no. 4 (Octobre–Décembre 2012), 479–501, at 487–488.

perch'esser mi pareva pur su nel cielo,	For I seemed to be gone up in heaven,
tal di dolcezza velo	of such sweetness was the veil
avolto avea quel punto agli occhi miei.	wrapped at that moment round mine eyes.
E già dicev'io meco: o stelle, o dei,	And I said to myself: oh stars, oh gods,
o soave concento!	oh sweet concord!
Quand'i' m'accorsi ch'ell'eran donzelle,	when I realised that they were women,
liete, secure e belle.	happy, assured and fair.
Amore, io non mi pento	Love, I am not ashamed
d'esser ferito de la tua saetta,	to be wounded by your dart,
s'un tuo sì picciol ben tanto diletta. <sup>28</sup>	if one so small brings such great delight.

Bembo's sirens seemingly offer no tangible threat; honest (onestade), esteemed (pregio) and singing for their own enjoyment in a secluded arcadian setting, their conduct is far from problematic by the standards of Bembo's age. Indeed, the speaker's initial response is to commune briefly with heaven, rather than experiencing lascivious thoughts.<sup>29</sup> However, he still feels it necessary to defend falling in love, the act of declaring his lack of shame (io non mi pento) due to the slightness of Love's dart suggesting that to fall in love would, under normal circumstances, be a more grievous and shameful act. In being beguiled by the sight and sound of his *angioletta* and her companions, he has given in to the senses, something prevented by the more noble faculties of reason and intellect which a man should possess.

That desire for a women is itself a loss of self-control, brought about by the domination of the soul by the senses, is voiced by Castiglione through the mouthpiece of Emilia Pia in *Il Cortegiano*, where she states that once in love, a man must 'accommodate himself totally to the will of his beloved and be governed by her' (accommodarsi totalmente alle voglie della cosa amata e con quelle governare le sue).<sup>30</sup> Emilia's argument appears as the theme of another sonnet, this time by Matteo Maria Boiardo. Written as an apology to the noble

<sup>28</sup> Pietro Bembo, *Rime* (Venice: s.n, 1540), fol. 5v. I am grateful to Tim Shephard for making me aware of this poem.

<sup>29</sup> Tim Shephard, *Alfonso I D'Este: Music and Identity in Ferrara* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2010), 103.

<sup>30</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 290.

women whose praises he would normally sing were he not in the grips of love for another, it describes love as a burning passion which controls his every action, to the extent that his unrequited ardour is totally visible to the courtly society he inhabits:

Gentil madonna che veduto haveti	Gentle ladies, who have seen
Mia vita incesa da superchio ardore	My life consumed by excessive ardour
E cio che fuor mostrar ma fatto amore	And that which love has made me do
Ardendomi vie piu che non credeti	Burning me up more than you can know;
Non scio se nel parlar mio ve accorgeti	I know not if words can tell you how
Remotto da me stesso esser il core	Remote from myself is my heart
E spesso per haver tal parte fore	And often by this token
Io mi scordava quelle che voi seti	I have forgotten what you mean to me.
Voi seti in voce in vice de Syrene	You are in voice as the sirens
Et io vi parlo con rime aspre e verse	And I speak to you in rhyme bitter and verses
Rigidi e nuote di lamenti piene	Rigid and notes filled with lamenting;
Trarami forse anchor mia dia di pene	That Goddess may yet draw me from pain
E canti scopriro ligiadri e tersi	And songs fair and terse
Alhora havreti quel che a voi conviene. <sup>31</sup>	Then will you have, which are your due.

In addressing the differences between ‘simple and reciprocal love’ (Semplice et Scambievole) in his commentary on the *Symposium*, Ficino describes such unrequited love, whether noble or otherwise, as akin to death. As the lover thinks only of the beloved, his soul is removed from his being; in cases of reciprocal love, the lover’s soul resides in the being of the beloved, and vice—versa, whereas in unrequited love it is peregrine. Since a being without a soul is dead, so is the unrequited lover dead (Adunque in nessun luogo vive, chi ama altrui, e non è d’altrui amato: e però interamente è morto il non amato Amante).<sup>32</sup> In

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<sup>31</sup> Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone Del Poeta Larissimo Matheo Maria Boiardo Contedi Scandiano* (Venice: Giovanni Battista I Sessa, 1701), fol. 36r–v. I am grateful to Ciara O’Flaherty for directing me to this poem.

<sup>32</sup> See Ficino, *Sopra Lo Amore*, 42–4: ‘Senza dubbio due sono le spezie d’Amore, l’uno è semplice, l’altro è reciproco. L’Amore semplice è dove l’Amatore non ama l’Amante. Qui vi in tutto l’Amatore è morto, perchè

*Il Cortegiano*, Bembo equates the suffering of such unrequited love with that of the individual driven by lust, always finding themselves repulsed by the thing they had desired upon obtaining it, and so never finding contentment (Non solamente senton sazieta e fastidio, ma piglian odio alla cosa amata).<sup>33</sup> He describes young men as the most affected by the senses, a condition often assuaged once the ‘natural fervour’ (fervor naturale) of youth has cooled with age, allowing reason to take hold.<sup>34</sup>

The lowest form of love represented by ‘Diotima’s Ladder’, then, is a sorry state: its lovers either wilfully give themselves to wanton behaviour or lack the mental capacity to resist temptation. In both cases they are reduced to misery and ignominy. Whether music, through the power its beauty has to *charm the sense*, was a culpable party in depraving listeners, is a source of some division. Castiglione, via Bembo, seems to suggest that the onus is on the listener to avoid being seduced by beauty through strength of character. Bembo’s own opinion, voiced to his daughter Elena in a letter of 1541, was that music was fit only for ‘vain and facile women’, and should play no part in the life of an honest lady.<sup>35</sup> Equicola is unreserved in his praise for music and its importance to lover and laity alike, save for his reservations about enjoying music publicly, and in the lover being too doctored in the art:

Aristotele comanda: Qual piu degna recreatione che la Musica? qual piu suaue riposo che questa? con qual piu honesta & grata arte & noi & l’amata privatamente potemo

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non vive in sè, come mostrammo, e non vive nell’Amato, essendo da lui sprezzato. Adunque dove vive? vive egli in Aria, o in Acqua, o in Fuoco, o in Terra, o in corpo di brutto animale? No: perchè l’animo umano, non vive in altro corpo che umano. Vive forse in qualche altro corpo di persona non amata? Nè qui ancora: imperocchè se ei non vive dove veementemente viver desidera, molto meno viverà altrove. Adunque in nessun luogo vive, chi ama altrui, e non è d’altrui amato: e però interamente è morto il non amato Amante. E mai non risuscita, se già la indegnazione noi fa risuscitare. Ma dove lo Amato nell’Amore risponde, l’Amatore almen che sia nello Amato vive. Qui cosa maravigliosa avviene, quando duoi insieme si amano: costui in colui, e colui in costui vive. Costoro fanno a cambio insieme, e ciascuno da sè ad altri, per altri ricevere. E in che modo e’ diano sè medesimi, si vede, perchè sè dimenticano: ma come ricevono altri non è sì chiaro. Perchè chi non ha sè, molto meno può altri possedere. Anzi l’uno e l’altro ha sè medesimo, e ha altrui: perchè questo ha sè, ma in colui: colui possiede sè, ma in costui. Certamente mentre che io amo te amante me, io in te cogitante di me ritruovo me: e me, da me medesimo sprezzato, in te conservante riacquisto. Quel medesimo in me fai tu. Questo ancora mi pare meraviglioso: imperocchè da poi che io me medesimo perdei, se per te mi racquisto, per te ho me. Se per te io ho me, io ho te prima, e più che me: e sono più a te che a me propinquo. Con ciò sia che io non mi accosto a me, per altro mezzo che per te.’

<sup>33</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 366.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>35</sup> Shephard, “Constructing Isabella d’Este’s Musical Decorum in the Visual Sphere”, 689.

più & meglio delectare? Volemo dunque che in Musica lo nostro amante perito sia, non pero Aristoxeno summo Musico lo desideramo: Lego in Aristotele secondo Euripide, como il somno fa cessare li pensieri, cosi la Musica essere causa de quiete de animo, el simile fare il ballare, & muovere lati & pedi a numeri.<sup>36</sup>

Aristotle commands: what more worthy recreation is there than music? What sweeter repose? With which more honest and acceptable art to us and to the lover privately be more and better delighted? We would wish, therefore for our lover to be expert in music, though we do not desire him to be as consummate as Aristoxenus:<sup>37</sup> I see in Aristotle, that according to Euripides, as sleep ceases thought, so music can rest the soul, and similarly dancing, and moving the sides and feet to rhythm.

The views on music espoused in Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium* are perhaps the most interesting. Unlike his later division of music into three parts, each governed by Venus, Mercury and Apollo in *De Vita Libri Tres*, in *De Amore* he divides music in two, citing Plato for his rationale:

Due sono le generazioni della Musica: l'una è grave e costante: l'altra molle e lasciva. Quella è utile a chi l'usa, questa è dannosa, come Platone nel Libro della Repubblica e delle Leggi giudica; e nel Convito suo propose a quella la Musa Urania: a questa propose la Musa Polimnia. Altri amano la prima generazione di Musica: altri la generazione seconda. All'amore de' primi si debbe consentire: e concedere que' suoni, che essi amano. Allo appetito degli altri si debbe resistere: perchè lo amore di coloro è celeste e degli altri vulgare.<sup>38</sup>

There are two types of music: one is serious and constant: the other soft and wanton. One is useful to those who use it, the other harmful, as Plato in his Republic and Laws judges; and in his Symposium he assigns the first to the Muse Urania, and the

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<sup>36</sup> Mario Equicola, *Libro de natura de amore*, fol. 171r.

<sup>37</sup> The likening of the most doctored *musicus* to Aristoxenus is a trope derived from Vitruvius *De Architectura* 1.1.13, where he admonishes that the architect should understand music but need not master it (*nec musicus ut Aristoxenus, sed non amusus*). Francesco Maria Grapaldi quotes Vitruvius almost word-for-word in his closing remarks on the architect and architecture in *De Partibus Aedium* (Parma: Angelo Ugoletto, 1501), fol. 130r.

<sup>38</sup> Ficino, *Sopra Lo Amore*, 57–8.

second to the Muse Polyhymnia.<sup>39</sup> Some love the first type of music and others the second. The love of the first type must be consented: and the sounds which its proponents love permitted. The appetites of the other type should be resisted: For the love of the first music is divine, and of the other vulgar.

We have already seen this bifold division of music—one part morally degrading, the other morally uplifting—used by Raffaele Brandolini to distinguish his musical-poetic practice from the ‘meretricious songs’ he describes as common entertainments at banquets, and which were ‘incentives to prodigality, depravity, drunkenness, and lust.’<sup>40</sup> Silvestro Mazzolini similarly divides music into honest (*honesta*) and dishonest (*inhonesta*).<sup>41</sup> Like Stefano Costa, he also draws a strong correlation between lascivious music, and that which is played publicly and taught to others, either for material gain or for the musician’s own lascivious ends.<sup>42</sup> It was perhaps because ‘dishonest’ music was so commonly encountered in public life, and the view that it was an ‘invitation to idle pleasure, and above all, that its merriment usually arouses lust’ so entrenched, that Paolo Cortese felt the need to defend music from the unnamed multitude that comprised its detractors.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the learned writings of each of these authors on music and lust are reflected, and in the case of Cortese perhaps in response to, popular sentiment deriving from the abject despoliation of music contained in such texts as the *Fiore di virtù*, perhaps the most popular book in Italy of the fifteenth century, the *De Disciplina Scholarium*, and the *Decor Puellarum*, moralising texts aiming to instil virtue in young men and women.<sup>44</sup> We will turn to these texts in due course.

Of course, music was twice culpable through its association with dance, acknowledged even by such a proponent of the art as Guglielmo Ebreo as a common excuse for lascivious

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<sup>39</sup> The bifold division of music is drawn from Plato’s *Timaeus*, 47 c–d. As discussed in the Prologue, Ficino must have revised his ideas before publishing *De Vita Libri Tres*, perhaps through greater acquaintance with Astrological sources. For a discussion of the *Timaeus* in the context of Ficino’s astro-musicological thought, see Angela Voss, “Marsilio Ficino, the Second Orpheus,” in *Music as Medicine*, ed. Peregrine Horden (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016), 154–172, at 157.

<sup>40</sup> Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, trans. Ann E. Moyer and Marc Laureys, 33.

<sup>41</sup> Mazzolini, *Summa Summarum*, fol. 304r.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 127r and Costa, *Tractatus de Ludo*, fol. 5v.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Propterea que ea quedam sit ignauae uoluptatis inuitatrix, maximeque eius iucundi tate soleat libidinum excitari malum.’ Cortese, *De cardinalatu*, fol. 72v.

<sup>44</sup> Curt F. Bühler, “Studies in the Early Editions of the *Fiore di virtù*,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*. 49 (4), (1955), 315–339, at 315.

conduct. Just as Castiglione acknowledges the pre-eminence of love poetry in song, so too does Ebreo admit that dance, perhaps one of the few occasions in which society permitted women and men to interact physically with people other than their spouses or immediate relatives, was used as an excuse by the 'lewd' (vitiosi) for lascivious behaviour 'more often than not' (le piu volte).<sup>45</sup> It was no doubt the lascivious union of music, dance and feasting, even in rarefied society, that Gregorio Correr had in mind when urging Cecilia Gonzaga to flee 'to where neither song nor symphony are heard' and fulfil her decision to join a convent community.<sup>46</sup>

The philosophical literature discussed at the beginning of this chapter draws some of the blame for lascivious behaviour away from the senses; following Aristotle's reasoning in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is not so much sound, sight or smell which arouse lust as the thought of an object of desire these senses arouse in the intemperate, something which the temperate are impervious to.<sup>47</sup> According to the platonic line of thought taken up by Ficino, Bembo and Castiglione, this temperance is achieved by one who overcomes the base instincts of desire through reason, and who is thus able to enjoy beauty without being controlled by it. However, that such a rationale was a rarified state is perhaps suggested by the fact that, whether an Italian living during our timeframe was conversant with these ideas on music or not, a primary association of music would have been with lust. Those, like Cortese, who gave such a link no credence, would have been no less aware of its existence; as we have seen, the association of softness with the solmization syllable *fa* and b-flat was a source of innuendo that would have been understood by those who had received even the most basic musical training.<sup>48</sup> Those who had no musical training may still have understood innuendo in satirical writings and the plastic arts deriving from the shape of instruments, or the way in which they were played or held. Flora Dennis has identified several analogies between musical instruments and the human body, and innuendo drawn from the actions required to play such instruments (such as 'gentle touching' and 'rubbing'), in a book of

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<sup>45</sup> Ebreo, *De pratica seu arte tripudii*, fol. 4v.

<sup>46</sup> *Her Immaculate Hand*, ed. King and Rabil, 99.

<sup>47</sup> See pages 160-1.

<sup>48</sup> See pages 116-17.

riddles published at the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> Using these as a starting point, she draws attention to similar analogies made in the early sixteenth centuries: between playing the lute and foreplay in Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, and playing fiddles in a carnival song persevered in Magliabechiano XIX. 141, the *Canto di lanzi sonatori di rubechine*.<sup>50</sup> The remainder of this chapter will turn to some of the practical applications of music in the field of *vulgar* love, and the considerations of those wishing for their 'honest recreation' to avoid being misinterpreted.

### 3.1 Love Song: dishonest song

Following Castiglione's assertion that sung texts were amorous in nature *il più delle volte*, the field of *Love Song* is necessarily broad both in subject matter and in register. Chivalric romances narrating the love of Paris and Vienne, Amadis de Gaula or variants of the *Chanson de Roland* were popular subjects for *cantimpanche* and their audiences, their tone and moralising capability highly dependent on the inclination of the *cantimpanca*.<sup>51</sup> The shorter poetic forms of the kind published by Petrucci under the umbrella of *Frottole* from the first decade of the sixteenth century range from *petrarchismo*—adopting the Petrarchan language of courtly love and later Petrarchan forms to praise beauty and lament unobtainable love—and chansons, through to more biting invectives on the part of spurned lovers.<sup>52</sup> Coming last place in order of virtue are the songs which Claudio Gallico, amongst several other scholars, has suggested might represent records of 'popular' (popolare) song—short, sometimes bawdy verse, some of which survive as the basis for the refrains of *barzellette*.<sup>53</sup> Of course, not all popular songs were sexual in nature, but those which are of a sexual character

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<sup>49</sup> Flora Dennis, "Unlocking the Gates of Chastity: Music and the Erotic in the Domestic Sphere in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Italy" in *The Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sarah F Matthews Grieco (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 223–245, at 226. The text Dennis examines is Giulio Cesare Croce, *Ducento enigma piacevoli da indovinare* (Bologna: gli Heredi del Cochi, c. 1600–10).

<sup>50</sup> Dennis, "Unlocking the Gates of Chastity", at 226–7.

<sup>51</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 116.

<sup>52</sup> Prizer, "Games of Venus", 15.

<sup>53</sup> Claudio Gallico, "Alcuni Canti di Tradizione Popolare dal Repertorio Rinascimentale Italiano". In Gallico, *Sopra li Fondamenti della Verità*, 303–18. This is discussed in greater detail below.



are often overtly so, the lover's intentions free from the poetic veil of the loftier metaphors which would come to characterise the language of the sixteenth century madrigal.<sup>54</sup>

The crude nature of these songs puts them at a considerable distance from what we might call *love song*. Rather, they were sung by carousing revellers—towards the middle of the sixteenth century, Anton Francesco Doni wrote to Girolamo Fava describing groups who ‘wasted the day’ (perdi giornata) raucously singing *strambotti* (van cantando strambotti a l’arrabbiata)—and by groups engaging in the practice of *mattinate*.<sup>55</sup> *Mattinate* took various forms, but the most commonly recorded involved the playing of music on whatever instruments a *brigata* had to hand (including improvised ones), and the singing of songs outside the home of a particular target at night.<sup>56</sup> Commonly, the target was a party in an unconventional marriage—a widower marrying a widow, or an aged widower marrying a young bride, for instance.<sup>57</sup> The *brigata*, comprising boys and men of the same neighbourhood as the target, would approach them, and offer to ‘defend’ the *mattinata* for a fee, or risk ‘offending’ it. The target who chose to pay-off his musical assailants—to the tune of more than six ducats in some cases—could expect to be celebrated using the proceeds ‘honourably’ (honorevolmente) and ‘gallantly’ (galatitamente).<sup>58</sup> Those who were disinclined to acquiesce were treated to a cacophony that could feature all manner of noise and continue for several nights.<sup>59</sup>

Thanks to the disturbance *mattinate* caused, the practice was highly controlled by local authorities, and as such is perhaps the most commonly-occurring musical practice found in legislation throughout Italy during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>60</sup> Several examples make express mention of the use of songs with unsavoury lyrics; in Bergamo in 1491, for instance, the civic statutes sought to repress the practice of playing an instrument

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<sup>54</sup> Macy, “Speaking of Sex”, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Letter of 1 March 1550, included in *La Libreria del Doni Fiorentino* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito del Ferrari, 1550), F. 68v. Discussed in Flora Dennis, “Sound and Domestic Space in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, vol. 16, no. 1, (Fall-Winter 2008-2009), 7–19, at 7.

<sup>56</sup> Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, “The Medieval Italian Mattinata,” trans. James Smith Allen. *Journal of Family History*, vol. 5 (1), (1980), 2–27, at 3.

<sup>57</sup> Dennis, “Sound and Domestic Space”, 13–14.

<sup>58</sup> Klapisch-Zuber, “The Medieval Italian Mattinata”, 5.

<sup>59</sup> Dennis, “Sound and Domestic Space”, 14.

<sup>60</sup> See Klapisch-Zuber, “The Medieval Italian Mattinata”, particularly 2–12, for examples of such legislation from the fourteenth century onwards.

or singing *cantilenas* with ‘outrageous or defamatory words’ at the doors of ‘respectable citizens’.<sup>61</sup> As well as the scurrilous nature of the *cantilenas* chosen, the propensity of offensive songs to result in violence—whether by offending their target or disturbing neighbours—was surely another reason that local authorities attempted to control, or even to ban the practice outright, as the statutes of Parma did in 1494.<sup>62</sup> In Modena in 1528, a group who were refused money by a widower proceeded to storm his home, led by none other than the widower’s brother and seemingly with the blessing of the captain of the guard.<sup>63</sup> In 1481, Francesco Gonzaga II wrote to his father Federico that such a group, ‘singing certain dishonest songs’ (cantando loro certe canzone inhoneste) after 10:00 P.M. (pocho nanti le doe hore), when confronted by one Bartolomeo Garzotto da Fontanella in his nightshirt, restrained him and delivered a blow with a stone which killed him shortly afterwards.<sup>64</sup>

Knowledge of such songs was not confined to the street, tavern, or people of a particular social status; for one, their tunes became the basis for dances which crossed the boundaries of class. In July 1494 the poet and courtier Teofilo Collenuccio wrote to Francesco II Gonzaga — perhaps with a degree of facetiousness to reinforce Francesco’s understanding of his idleness — that he had passed his summer at court in Mantua, while most of his peers had left for cooler climes, in teaching *la mazza chrocca* (the breadstick) and *il matterello* (the rolling pin) to Francesco’s daughter, who was no more than seven months old.<sup>65</sup> It is not difficult, even without the texts Collenuccio would have recognised, to spot the potential for thinly-veiled double-entendre. Recounting his work translating for Isabella d’Este and the Archbishop of Gurk in Mantua in 1511, the Ferrarese envoy to Mantua, Luigi Cassola,

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>64</sup> 3. Letter from Francesco II Gonzaga to his father, Federico I Gonzaga. Mantua, 3 August 1481. ASMN–G, busta 2104 (lettere originali dei Gonzaga). Translated and transcribed in Prizer, “Games of Venus”, at 33 and 55 respectively.

<sup>65</sup> Prizer, “Games of Venus”, 36. In an incredibly detailed discussion taking into account numerous occurrences of the word *mazzacrocca*, Liliana Pannella comes to the conclusion that it was a breadstick, with penile connotations. See Liliana Pannella, “L’incatenatura «donna di dentro dalla tua casa» di H. Ysaac,” *Lares*, vol. 23, no. 3/4, (1957), 10–38, at 33.

expressed similar glee at the inappropriate use of a popular song during an official audience:

L'altro giorno il prefato Gurgensis fu a vixitare la Illustrissima Marchexa dove io fui interprete dove si stete in grandissimi piaceri. La interpretatione mia fu di sorte che a ciascuno mai si dixe se non di faceti buzendo. Si cantava una canzon che dicea 'Tolle in mane' et io [diceva] a la Marchexana che' Gurgense la pregava volesse fare quanto che comandava la canzon.<sup>66</sup>

The other day, the aforementioned Gurk went to visit the most illustrious Marchesa, where I acted as interpreter and in which we had great fun. My interpretation was to say nothing unless it were a lie. She sang a song that says 'Tolle in mane' (Take them in your hand), and I said to the Marchesa that the Cardinal begged her to do as the song commanded.

A well-documented means by which such songs seeped into more rarefied cultural strata was through *barzellette*, in which the tone of the verse, which commonly discusses love, or overcoming love in Petrarchan terms, is abruptly shattered by the use of a popular song as a refrain.<sup>67</sup> Antonio Stringari's *Poi ch'io son in libertade*, published by Petrucci in *Frottole Libro VIII* (Venice, 1507) is a particularly striking example of this. In each verse the speaker recounts the torture of love, and celebrates his newly-found freedom from it. However, its refrain takes tune and text from the popular song *Scaramella*, also appending a final verse—unique amongst sources which contain *Scaramella*—which refers to a law passed by the *Quarantia* in Venice in 1429, forbidding fraternisation between Christians and the Jewish residents of the city.<sup>68</sup> Though the speaker frees himself from the danger of love, his lascivious conduct takes him from a metaphorical prison to a real one:

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<sup>66</sup> Letter from Luigi Cassola to Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este, Mantua, 16 March 1511. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Cancelleria ducale. Estero, Ambasciatori, Mantova, busta 1. Translated and transcribed in Prizer, "Games of Venus", at 46 and 56 respectively. I have amended Prizer's translation slightly.

<sup>67</sup> Prizer, "Games of Venus", 38.

<sup>68</sup> Benjamin Ravid, "The Legal Status of the Jews in Venice to 1509," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. 54, (1987), 169–202, at 185. Ravid gives the date for this law as 1424, but his source – 3 ASV, CL, Ebrei; Gianbattista Gallicciolli, *Delle memorie venete*, 2:292, section 907; "Leggi e memorie venete sulla prostituzione fino alla caduta della repubblica", 2 vols. (Venice: M. Visentini, 1870–72), 40–41 - records the

Del mio amor lei se ne acorse  
per mio guardo, ma natura  
né beltà tanto li porse  
ma virtute in quel matura;  
bassò gli occhi tal dea pura  
cum honesto modo e suave  
che ne pose el cor in chiave.  
Hor sum aperto e for devampo.  
Scaramella vase in campo  
cum la spada sopra el fianco  
lazom berum borum bum  
beta lazom berum borum bum bum.

...

Io cridava c'un fortuna  
me menasse in precipicio  
che non fu sotto la luna  
più scontento ad abinicio,  
e Caronte cum suo officio  
me menasse a l'altra riva.  
Ma li ciel mie cridi udiva  
che 'l mio cor riscosse in pria.  
Scaramela va in galia  
per basar una zudia  
lazom berum borum bum  
beta lazom berum borum bum bum.<sup>69</sup>

Of my love was she made known  
by my gaze, but nature  
nor beauty handed so much  
as virtue in that maturity;  
she lowered her eyes such, pure goddess,  
and with honest and sweet demeanour,  
that she placed my heart under key.  
But now I am free, and my fire quenched.  
Scaramella goes to the field  
with his sword at his side  
lazom berum borum bum  
beta lazom berum borum bum bum.

...

I cried that misfortune  
was leading me to a precipice,  
that there was never one under the moon  
more unhappy since time began,  
and Charon, in his office,  
was leading me to the other shore.  
But heaven heard my cries  
and my heart returned itself.  
Scaramella's off to the galley  
for kissing a jew  
lazom berum borum bum  
beta lazom berum borum bum bum.<sup>70</sup>

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date as 19 July 1429. While not detailing any specific punishments, the law makes it explicit that any Christians contravening the ban, male or female, could expect much harsher penalties (*Maiorem Penam*).

<sup>69</sup> *Frottole Libro VIII* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1507), fols. 28v–29r. Here I have excerpted the third and final verses.

<sup>70</sup> The penalties levied against those breaking this law varied depending on their background. Jewish men meeting a Christian prostitute were fined 500 lire and given 6 months in prison, the incarceration doubled if the woman was 'honest'. *Ibid.*, 185–6.

In spite of the vast difference in register represented by these forms, it is not difficult to place all of them within Ficino's realm of *vulgar* music, simply because each deals with the very temporal concerns of romantic love or sex. The potential for disdain to be levied upon each form varied, but the evidence for it is strong enough to suggest that Ficino's division of music was more than speculative. In spite of their moralising potential, the romances performed by *cantimpanche* drew a certain amount of disdain from among the humanist cadre.<sup>71</sup> In his *Facetiae*, widely read in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Poggio Bracciolini took aim at performer and audience alike in a pair of jokes:

Chiriacus anconitanus homo verbosus et nimium loquax deplorabat aliquando astantibus nobis casum atque eversionem Imperii Romani inque ea re vehementius angi videbatur. Tum Antonius Luscus vir doctissimus qui in coetu aderat ridens hominis stultam curam: Hic persimilis est inquit viro mediolanensi qui die festo cum audisset unum e grege cantorum qui gesta heroum ad plebem decantant recitantem mortem Rolandi qui septingentis jam ferme annis in proelio occubuit: coepit acriter flere: atque inde cum uxor domum reversum moestum ac gementem vidisset: rogassetque quidnam accidisset novi heu mea uxor inquit: defunctus sum. Mi vir uxor ait quid tibi adversi evenit? Solare atque ad cenam veni. At ille cum in gemitu perseveraret neque cibum vellet sumere tandem instantius maeroris causam percontanti mulieri. An nescis respondi quae nova hodie audiui. Quenam, vir uxor ait. Mortuus est Rolandus qui solus tuebatur Christianos Solata est mulier insulsam maestitiam viri et vix tandem ad cenam potuit illum perducere.

Subiunxit alter similis fabellam stultitiae quidam inquit vicinus meus homo simplex audiebat quempiam ex eiusmodi cantoribus. qui in fine sermonis ad alliciendam audientium plebem predixit se postridie mortem hectoris recitaturum. Hic noster antequam cantor abiret pretio redemit ne tam cito hectorem virum bello utilem interficeret. Ille Mortem postero die distulit. Alter vero sepius pretium dedit

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<sup>71</sup> Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, 18.

sequentibus diebus pro vitae dilatione & cum pecuniae defuissent tandem mortem eius multo fletu ac dolore narrari audivit.<sup>72</sup>

Ciriaco of Ancona, a terrible bore, was in the habit of deploring the fall and overthrow of the Roman Empire, at which he seemed more grieved than any other. Antonio Lusco, a most learned man, who was with us at the time, laughed at his stupid concerns: ‘Ciriaco’, he said, ‘is just like that Milanese, who, one feast day, was listening to one of that gaggle of singers who recite the deeds of heroes to the plebs; as soon as he heard the tale of the death of Roland, who was killed in battle seven hundred years ago, he burst into tears. When his wife returned home and, seeing him in a state, asked him what had happened, he said, ‘I am dead.’ His wife replied, ‘What’s wrong with you? Lighten up and come to dinner.’ But when he persisted in groaning and wouldn’t eat, at last she inquired more urgently of the cause of the man’s grief. ‘Don’t you know?’ He answered, ‘the news I heard today?’ ‘What?’, asked the wife. ‘Roland is dead, the sole protector of Christendom.’ His wife was so astounded by his stupidity that she could hardly bring herself to feed him.

In another tale of like stupidity: Someone told me that my neighbour, a simple man, had heard another of those singers, who at the end of his recital announced - hoping to bring his audience back – that the following day he would sing the Death of Hector. Our friend wouldn’t let him leave before obtaining his promise, in exchange for hard cash, that he wouldn’t kill off such a valiant soldier so soon. His death was duly put off ‘till the following day. Again and again he paid to prolong his life, and when he finally ran out of money, he wept to hear the news of his death.

It is a small and yet important detail to note that in the Italian translation of the *Facetiae*, first appearing in print in Venice in 1483 (Bernardus Celerinus), the pejorative *ex grege* (flock, or gaggle) is not rendered. Behind a Latin veil, the joke is on the whole practice of *cantimpanche*, and the uneducated mass who go to hear them and are so easily affected by

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<sup>72</sup> Poggio Bracciolini, *Facetiae* (Ferrara: s.n, 1471), fol. 31r–v.

them; in the Italian version, now accessible to the very people enjoying such performances, it is the individual, not the collective, who is the source of ridicule.<sup>73</sup>

Bracciolini makes no mention of any lascivious content, but that these romances, and the other repertory of the *cantimpanche*, often contained lascivious content is evident from the surviving chapbooks which were often sold to the audience following a performance. The widely-travelled *cantimpanca* Niccolò Zoppino is but one example of this practice; in 1510 Zoppino was arrested in Venice after evidence came to light that he had sung and distributed songs criticising the Serenissima while in his native Ferrara, at a time when the two states were at war.<sup>74</sup> The collection of verse *Froctola dilectevole da mandar via lotoi et la malinconia* printed by the Florentine *cantimpanca* Zanobi dalla Barba, contains a frottola, several sonnets attributed to Serafino Aquilano and Dante, a poem by another, long-dead *cantimpanca*, Antonio di Guido, and concludes with a request for the reader to have mercy on his poverty - and presumably thus to buy the pamphlet. Given these performers were well-known street singers and the prints they sold included works by other *cantimpanche*, it seems possible to place both chapbook and its contents firmly in the context of musical performance.<sup>75</sup> Assuming that similar surviving chapbooks were disseminated in like circumstances, the romances and frottole heard on the street ranged from amorous epics such as the *hystoria molto piacevole de doi amanti Paris et Viena* (*The brilliant story of the lovers Paris and Vienne*, undated, c. 1510–30), to the *Hystoria da fugir le Putane* (*Tale [to help you stop frequenting] whores*, also undated, c. 1510–30), which warns the listener or reader of the prostitute's 'sweet words' (*dolze parole*) and admonishes that anyone visiting them is 'sticking money in an asshole' (*in cul gli mette spene*).<sup>76</sup> In the case of *Paris et Viena*, the frontispiece suggests both the potential for the text to be sung and the link between music and love with an image of a lovestruck lutenist (Fig. 3.1), an image also used for a compendium of Il Calmeta's poetry, *Compendio di cose nuove* (Venice: Manfredo de

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<sup>73</sup> Poggio Bracciolini, *Facetie* (Venice: Zorzo [Giorgio] Rusconi, 1505), fol. 12r.

<sup>74</sup> Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 79.

<sup>75</sup> Zanobi dalla Barba, *Froctola dilectevole da mandar via lotoi et la malinconia*, fol. 2v. Zanobi's colophon reads: 'Compilati per maestro Zanobi dalla barba con froctola piacevole & versi sempre pigro & in brieve tempo andra a trovar il suo Bigio: Requiescat in pace: Dio gli habbi misericordia & dio non habbi abbandonato noi al fine nostro.'

<sup>76</sup> *Hystoria da fugir le Putane* (s.n), fol. 1v.

Monteferrato, 1508). Such texts may have been part of the oeuvre which lead Giuliano de' Ricci to write in 1568 that 'the good authors are no longer valued since the ignorant pleb goes more for those books which deal with lascivious things than those which deal with

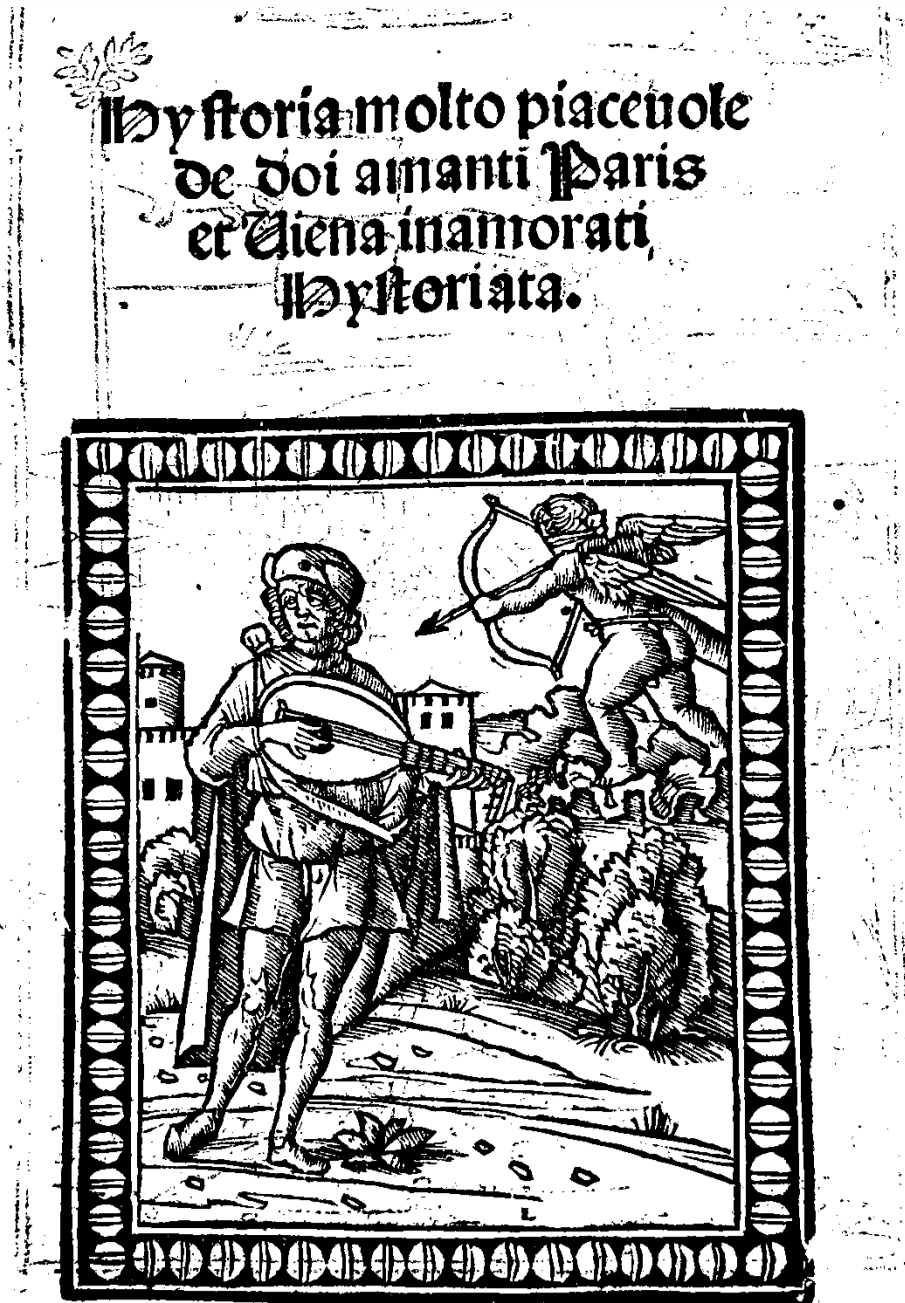


Figure 3.1: The archetypal lovestruck lutenist. *Hystoria molto piaceuole de doi amanti Paris et Viena innamorati hystoriata* [s.n, c. 1510–30]. The same image is used for a compendium of Calmeta's poetry, *Compendio di cose nuove* (Venice: Manfredo de Monteferrato, 1508).



continence and sobriety... the world is filled with despicable and licentious books.<sup>77</sup> Even songs which were not overly licentious drew ire; in 1423 Bernadino of Siena declared that ‘lying singers who sing about Roland ... are the Devil’s preachers’, the following year singling out as sinners those who sing chivalric epics on festal days and during lent.<sup>78</sup> In this instance, secular song was a distraction from sacred obligations, but as Cortese reminds us, it was also seen as an invitation to idleness, itself a doorway to lascivious behaviour.

### 3.2 The wooer’s handbook

As we have seen, the *cantimpanca*’s secular repertory had the potential to be vast: it might include chivalric epics; versifications of recent events, such as the death of Galeazzo Maria Sforza in 1476, surviving as the widely—printed *Lamento del duca Galeazzo da Milano*, or *La obsidione di Padua* — the siege of Padua by French and Imperial troops in 1509; ribald frottole attacking prostitutes and their clients, *rustici*, and satirising poverty; as well as works by poets traditionally considered *più artificiosi*, such as Dante, Petrarch and Serafino Aquilano. In describing the nature and purpose of *poesia per musica* in the vein of the latter authors, William Prizer, following the work of Johann Huizinger and Charles S. Singleton, came to the conclusion that it existed ‘as a refined (or not so refined) entertainment, a game in Huizinga’s sense, that flourished outside, or to one side of, the realities of life in elite culture’, and that, like the *amour cortois* exemplified by Troubadour verse, similar verse in the frottola repertory was also *ennobling* in that, while singing of love, the lover never really expects consummation of their affections.<sup>79</sup> As an example of this we might take Boiardo’s

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Non sono più in pregio li buoni autori perché il volgo ignorante va più drieto a quei libri che trattano di lascivie che a quelli che trattano di continencia et sobrietà, più abbraccia quelli che biasimano che quelli che lodano, et ogni vil pedantuzzo via. mandare a stampa, et non ci si provvede, et son cagione che si riempie il mondo dilibri licentiosi et scelerati’. Giuliana Saporì, “Giuliano de’ Ricci e la polemica sulla stampa nel Cinquecento,” *Nuova rivista storica*, 56, (1972), 151–64, at 154. Quoted in translation in Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 32.

<sup>78</sup> Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Prizer, “Games of Venus”, 10–11. Prizer cites Johann Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A Study in the Play—Element of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955) and Charles S. Singleton, “Dante: *Within Courtly Love and Beyond*” in *The Meaning of Courtly Love* ed. Francis X. Newman (Albany: State University of New York Press 1968), 43–54, as key studies in this field.

*Gentil madonna che veduto haveti*, in which it is made clear that real passion for a woman has interrupted his usual fare of playful praise for the ladies at court.

There is some evidence, however, to suggest that such songs were also wilfully used to *elicit love*. In his biography of Serafino Aquilano, Vincenzo Calmeta describes Serafino's attempts to seduce a married woman while at the court of Lodovico Sforza and Beatrice d'Este.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Serafino evidently built something of a reputation both for his ability to 'attract' (illacquare) people with his music, and for his strong inclination to do so; Calmeta wrote that Serafino was 'so desperate for the praise of the people that he did everything that his ingenuity could afford to draw their admiration.'<sup>81</sup> It is difficult to tell how much of Calmeta's account is apocryphal, but either Serafino's nature or his legend became well-known enough for him to be used as an example of idle behaviour, "always singing and dancing" (che sempre canta o balla), in a *frottola morale* printed in a chapbook headlined by another popular moralising frottola, the *Amaistramenti di Seneca Morale*.<sup>82</sup>

Another source for the practical use of love songs to win affection comes in the form of a series of chapbooks preserved in two collected volumes, and one preserved in a single binding, in the British Library.<sup>83</sup> None of these are dated, however David Paisey has suggested that one of these volumes, shelfmark C.57.1.7(1-50), could have been bound no later than 1533, and the British Library catalogue gives tentative dates for each text of no earlier than 1510, and no later than 1530.<sup>84</sup> These must be treated with caution, however, given that the rough date suggested for the single binding, *Non espetto giamai. Con la Risposta. Et altre belle Canzonette* (Milan: Antonio da Borgo, c. 1510?) predates the (currently) first

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<sup>80</sup> Tim Shephard, "Noblewomen and Music in Italy", 29-30.

<sup>81</sup> "Era tanto avido de rumore popolare che ad ogni cosa che potesse el vulgo tirare in ammirazione lo ingegno accomodava". Quoted in Brian Richardson, "The Social Connotations of Singing Verse in Cinquecento Italy," *The Italianist*, 34:3 (2014), 362-378, at 364.

<sup>82</sup> *Amaistramenti di Seneca Morale* (Venice, s.n. after 1500), fol. 4r: "Tornossi al so pagliaio./quel topo contadino. Facciassi serafino/chi sempre canta o balla"

<sup>83</sup> At the time of submission, I was unfortunately unable to include shelfmarks for the remaining two volumes due to the cyber-attack suffered by the British Library in October 2023.

<sup>84</sup> See David Paisey, "Chiome d'argento: an unpublished early version of Francesco Berni's sonnet, in a volume which may have belonged to the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey," *La Bibliofila*, vol. 115, no. 1 (January-April 2013), 157-166.

known activity of the printer, Antonio da Borgo, in Milan, by more than two decades.<sup>85</sup> For our purposes, it suffices to say that they are symptomatic of a boom in the dissemination of chapbook collections of verse, taking place in the opening decades of the sixteenth century; the collections *Non espetto giamai* and *Frottole nuove composte da piu auttori* seem to have enjoyed particular popularity, surviving in several editions possibly printed over a thirty and an eighty year period respectively, and across multiple cities.<sup>86</sup>

That these texts might have served some practical purpose - beyond providing the *cantimpanca* with a keepsake to offer his audience and prompt their generosity when collecting donations after performing – is sometimes suggested by their titles.<sup>87</sup> One, *Questi Strambotti scrisse de sua mano in preposito de ciascaduno amatore il nobile misser Leonardo Justiniano* (*These Strambotti written by the noble hand of Leonardo Giustiniano, for the use of anyone in love*), even invokes the act of sale with the following admonition, printed before the final poem (in this case, *Venite amanti a pianger sorte*, ascribed to Serafino):

Chi se diletta di sequitar amore.  
per un marchetto dhaver questo non stia  
che son preposito a ciascun amatore.<sup>88</sup>

He who delights in following love,  
for so small a cost can't be without this  
which is useful for every lover.

Another collection is even more descriptive in an effort to appeal to its audience, '*Strambotti Composti Composed newly by diverse authors which are useful for anyone wounded by love*' (*Strambotti Composti*

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<sup>85</sup> Sandra Clerc, "Note Sull'Epistolario di Francesco Ciceri (1527 - 1596)," in *Epistolari dal Due al Seicento: modelli, questioni ecdotiche, edizioni, cantieri aperti*, ed. Claudia Berra, Paolo Borsa, Michele Comelli and Stefano Martinelli Tempesta (Milan: Università degli Studi, 2018), 499–526, at 521.

<sup>86</sup> Donna G. Cardamone evidences a print of *Frottole nuove composte da piu auttori, cioe Tu te parti, ecc.* published as late as 1588 in Pesaro by Gieronmino. See Donna G. Cardamone, "The Prince of Salerno and the Dynamics of Oral Transmission in Songs of Political Exile," *Acta musicologica*, vol. 67 (2), (1995), 77–108, at 98.

<sup>87</sup> Sanudo records having heard the Florentine *cantimpanca* Cristoforo *Altissimo* perform in the Terranova on 10 May 1518, at the end of the performance passing around "a box seeking payment, and when he had collected a certain amount, he performed *all'improvviso* another time." Sanudo, *I Diarii*, vol. 25, col. 391; quoted in translation in Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 163.

<sup>88</sup> *Questi Strambotti scrisse de sua mano in preposito de ciascaduno amatore il nobile misser Leonardo Justiniano* [Venice? S.n, c. 1510–30?] fol. 2v. Salzberg takes the meaning of 'marchetto' literally, suggesting that the collection would have cost the equivalent of a *soldo*. See Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, 20.

*novamente da diversi auctori che sono in preposito a ciaschuno chi e ferito damore*). Whereas *Questi Strambotti scrisse...* contains only two works, a *strambotto* of twenty–seven stanzas ascribed to Giustiniano and a shorter *strambotto* ascribed to Serafino, *Strambotti Composti novamente* contains a total of fourteen poems, four of which are also found in Petrucci’s *oeuvre*: *Pieta cara signora* (*Libro I*, set by Marchetto Cara); *Tu te lamenti a torto* (*Libro I*, set by Michele Pesenti); *Perso ho in tutto hormai la vita* (*Libro III*, set by Marchetto Cara) and *Fammi quanto mal* (*Libro IV*, set by Filippo de Lurano).

Less descriptive in title, but perhaps most suggestive of practical use, is a collection the curation of which is attributed to Antonio Tebaldeo, whose poem *Non espetto giamai con tal desio* headlines the publication.<sup>89</sup> Its contents bear several concordances with *Strambotti Composti novamente...* – notably also containing *Pieta cara signora* and *Tu te lamenti a torto* – but also containing the addition, unique amongst the chapbooks I have consulted, of a model *Letter To Give To a Lover* (*Littera Da Mandare a Una Innamorata*).<sup>90</sup> In language it teeters on the scandalous; while referring to the Platonic concept of the unrequited lover’s death – something only the beloved can prevent by reciprocating their affection (*et cosi facendo farite uno quasi morto tornare in vita*), it also begs an audience with the lady ‘somewhere secret, where I can show my great love for you’ (*potremo parlare in loco secreto acio possi dimostravi el grande amore*). In a similar manner to the *Froctola dilectevole da mandar via lotoi et la malinconia*, the letter precedes the final poem of the collection, and one might be tempted to dismiss it as satirical of the language of love song and lovers, in the same way that Zanobi dalla Barba closed his collections with jesting appeals to the generosity of his potential customers.<sup>91</sup> However, mindful of the importance placed on *imitatio* in education, and the existence of texts such as Stefano Flisco’s *De componendis epistolis* (Venice, Cristoforo Pensi, 1501) which offered the reader example sentences in Italian and Latin grouped by the

<sup>89</sup> Natalie Lussey, *Giovanni Andrea Vavassore and the Business of Print in Early Modern Venice* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2015) 2 vols, vol. 2, 105. I have been unable to find a contemporary source for the attribution of the collection to Tebaldeo.

<sup>90</sup> *Non espetto giamai con la risposta* fol. 4v.

<sup>91</sup> For instance, *Froctola dilectevole* includes, in place of a colophon, the following words: ‘Compilati per maestro Zanobi dalla Barba....sempre pigro & in breve tempo andra a trovar il suo Bigio: Requiescat in pace: Dio glihabbi misericordia & dio non habbi abbandonato noi al fine nostro’ (Compiled by maestro Zanobi dalla Barba.... Always weak, and in a short time he will go to his winding sheet. Rest in peace. God have mercy on him, and prithe, God, do not abandon us at our end. Zanobi dalla Barba, ed., *Froctola dilectevole*, fol. 2v.

situation in which the reader might be writing and the emotion they might wish to engender, it seems very possible that these texts were to be used, either outright or as models, practically.

What did ‘practical’ use of a love song entail? I have already briefly touched on the idea that the poems in these chapbooks may have been intended for performance in order to elicit love, and so performed directly to or within earshot of the beloved. ‘Practical’ applications could also include playing for one’s own solitary *otium*, learning music in order to have something to show should the need arise socially, or for the purpose of catharsis—that is, the act, described by Aristotle in *Politics* 8.7, of purging emotions through their expression.<sup>22</sup> In the latter of the amorous letters exchanged between Pietro Bembo and the noblewoman and poet Maria Savorgnan between 1500 and 1501, Savorgnan wrote ‘I can sing the song that says ‘*Haimé il cor, aimé la testa*’ (*Alas my heart, alas my head*), the first [the heart] for the love of you, since every way is closed to me to see you, the head, because of the pains I have suffered.’<sup>23</sup> As William Prizer, and Colin Slim before him, have pointed out, Savorgnan’s description of her condition allows her to display her knowledge of fashionable poetry and song (Cara’s setting wasn’t to appear in print until 1504, but its presence in a songbook preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gr. Rés Vm7 676, completed no later than 26 October 1502, is proof that it was in circulation much earlier, and that Savorgnan might have known the text in Cara’s setting), as much as it is an inventive conceit for the expression of her feelings.<sup>24</sup> It may also be that she felt singing it might bring her some relief from her anguish.<sup>25</sup>

One final argument to present here in favour of the idea that these chapbooks were compiled with the intention that a lover might perform from them in order to win affection

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<sup>22</sup> For a relatively recent discussion of musical catharsis in Aristotle, see G. R. F. Ferrari, “Aristotle on Musical Catharsis and the Pleasure of a Good Story.” *Phronesis*, 64 (2019), 117–171, especially 130–1.

<sup>23</sup> “Io poso chantare la chancion che dice Haimè il cor, aime la testa, el primo per amore di voi, ché ogni strada mi è chiusa di vedervi, la testa per gli afanni sustenuti...”. Maria Savorgnan and Pietro Bembo, *Carteggio d’amore*, ed Carlo Dionisotti. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1950), 21. Translated and discussed in Prizer, “Games of Venus”, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Maria Luisi, *Il repertorio italiano del Ms Gr. Rés. Vm7 676 della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università di Bologna, 2012), at 3 (dating of the ms.), 45–47 (transcription of the text for *Oimè il core, oimè la testa*) and 179–180 (musical transcription).

<sup>25</sup> Prizer, “Games of Venus”, 9, and Colin H. Slim, “An Iconographical Echo of the Unwritten Tradition in a Verdelot Madrigal,” *Studi musicali XVII* (1988) 35–54.

from their beloved comes in the form of the woodcuts which front each publication. In surveying even a fraction of print from this period, one sees the use of ‘stock images’, imitated, inherited or bought from other printers. Sometimes such imagery bears little relation to the contents—for instance, one edition of the *Cibaldone*, a popular versification of the third book of the *Almansore*, a medical text, is filled with depictions of the Ascension, Christ and the saints, wholly irrelevant to the contents of the book—but in the case of these ephemeral collections of love song, five traditions of imagery connected to love song emerge.<sup>96</sup>

In the first type, the lover is depicted handing a scroll to the beloved (figures 3.2 and 3.3). The right hand of the beloved is raised in a gesture reminiscent of depictions of Christ appearing before Mary Magdalene, where he admonishes her *noli mi tangere* - not to touch him. However, winged Cupid is poised to strike, the lover’s missal working, like Cupid’s



Figures 3.2 and 3.3: The lover hands the beloved a letter. *Non expecto giamai con la risposta* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30]) (above); and *Strambotti novi sopra ogni preposito* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1500]) (overleaf).

<sup>96</sup> *Libro Tertio delo Almansore Chiamato Cibaldone* (Venice: John Tacuinus, c. 1500).

Stramboti noui sopra ogni preposito: Com  
posti per lo eccellentissimo e famoso Poeta  
Seraphino da Laquila.



dart, to overcome her scorn. The second type is the only tradition of imagery to feature a depiction of the lover as a woman, and the beloved as a man; in a woodcut of this type, the female lover presents the beloved, leaning nonchalantly on a lance and clad in full plate—perhaps representing a heart hardened against the assault of love—with flowers, the dog at her feet perhaps also representing the additional gift of eternal fidelity she offers, or of the corporeal pleasures to which she wishes to lure the beloved.<sup>97</sup> Again, Cupid is poised to strike, suggesting that her entreaties are destined to succeed. This image echoes the popular trope of love—in the form of Venus—opposing or disarming war—in the form of Mars—perhaps depicted most famously in Botticelli's *Venus and Mars*, where a sleeping Mars,

<sup>97</sup> On this dual symbolism see Simona Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008) from 136–142.

successfully subdued, and perhaps post-coital, is stripped of his arms by baby satyrs.<sup>98</sup> That the female figure might be Venus herself (and by that token, that the armed man might be Mars) is suggested by the presence of a rabbit—associated with Venus since antiquity and subsequently in medieval Europe—behind her feet.<sup>99</sup>



Figure 3.4: The female lover presents the beloved with flowers. *Non espetto giamai. con la risposta. Et altre belle Canzonette.* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30]).

<sup>98</sup> John Rigby Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 211. In drawing attention to the same image, Richard Wistreich notes the allegorical importance of the fact that Mars' lance is broken. See "Music and War," in *The Cambridge History of Sixteenth-Century Music*, ed. Fenlon and Wistreich, 176–205, at 198.

<sup>99</sup> H. David Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: a Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings* (Chicago; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), 343.



The third type also makes use of winged cupid, but this time as if coming to the lover's defence. Depicted either kneeling, his weapons at his feet and his arms crossed across the chest, or tied to a tree—and thus placing himself entirely at the mercy of the beloved—the lover is faced by the beloved armed with a spear and poised to strike. Adopting the more militant scorn depicted in figures 3.5 and 3.6, the beloved is transformed from a gentle yet steadfast exponent of chastity, such as is described in *Poi ch'io son in Libertate* ('She was not that Roman/that gave themselves cruel death (Lucrezia),/so much as chastity's font, my goddess by my sorry fate'), into the model of *barbara fierezza*, a woman cruel and proud in her disdain for the lover, and untroubled by the affliction affection brings her suitor, actively causing his death.<sup>100</sup> In this context, the works contained in the book are a last-minute reprieve from the certain death of unrequited love, and music a means of turning the beloved from fierce disdain to reciprocated affection.



Figures 3.5 and 3.6: The lover at the mercy of the beloved. *Questi strambotti scrisse Di sua mano in preposito di ciascaduno amatore il nobile Misser Leonardo Justiniano* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30]) (above); *Questi strambotti scrisse Di sua mano in preposito de ciascaduno amatore il nobile Misser Leonardo Justiniano* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1500]) (overleaf).

<sup>100</sup> “Tal non fu quella romana/che si de’ la crudel morte,/qual de castità fontana/fu mia dea per mia sorte”. *Frottole Libro VIII*, 1507, fol. 29r.



The third and fourth types dispense with allegory almost entirely, and depict serenading scenes. The third type is the most unambiguous, showing three men, one of whom is also playing a lute, singing to a woman who looks out through a window. A similar scene is painted in a text set to music by Marchetto Cara, *Udite voi finestra*, where the lover, this time unrequited, sings to an empty window in place of his scornful beloved; as stoney-faced as the woman in the window of Figure 3.7 appears to the modern eye, perhaps her presence at all indicates the success of the lover's musical entreaties.<sup>101</sup> In the fourth type, four men perform on a lute, tambourine, harp and shawm in a garden, while a woman looks over a low wall at them. That the performance is for her benefit is suggested in one production, perhaps the less crude of the two, by the lutenist, who has turned to look at her. In a variant of this image, the four men play a bagpipe, lute, cornet and harp, but a fifth instrument, a viola or *cetra*, lies on the floor; combined with the woman's outstretched arms, this could be read as an offer to join the band, paired with a willingness to accept.<sup>102</sup> In this instance,

<sup>101</sup> Franciscus Bossinensis, *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato*, fol. 40v.

<sup>102</sup> On the use of musical objects and musicians' gaze in visual art as invitations for the viewer to join in music making, see Shephard et al, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, at 103–4 and 329.

perhaps the willingness to join a party making music, in the context of the images discussed previously, represents the acceptance of a lover's suit. All of these woodcut types suggest the power of love lyric to solicit affection, but types three and four (Figures 3.8–9) more specifically reflect contemporary ideas, exemplified by Tinctoris, of music's ability to engender it. They also suggest that these texts were printed in order to provide suitors with verse to sing, either to music of their own, or in *cantasi come* fashion.



Figure 3.7: The lover, accompanied by two fellow musicians, serenades the beloved. *Strambotti Composti novamente da diversi auctori che sono in preposito a ciaschuno che e ferito Damore* (s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30]).



Figures 3.8 and 3.9: A group of male musicians entice a female listener to join them. *Froctole nove composte da piu autori cioe Tu te parti o cor mio caro: con la risposta.* s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30] (above); and *Strambotti Composti novamente da diversi auctori che sono in preposito a ciaschuno chi e ferito damore* s.l.: s.n., [c.1510–30], (below).



### 3.3 The sound of love song

In his essay *Qual stile tra' volgari poeti sia da imitare*, composed around 1500, Calmeta confirms that it was common practice for men to insert (inserire) amorous words into music, and that this music was subject to a great number of diminutions (massimamente diminuito) in order to 'gratify their women' (gratificar la sua donna).<sup>103</sup> Some evidence survives to suggest that a link between amorous sentiments and highly ornamented music had existed long before Calmeta described the practice. Condemning English practice over three hundred years before Calmeta was writing, John of Salisbury is but one writer to have castigated the propensity of singers to distract from, rather than enhance, worship, but the description of vocal embellishment he gives in *Policraticus*, a conduct-cum-political theory manual for the prince and courtier, is unusually detailed.<sup>104</sup> Although *Policraticus* was never printed in Italy during our timeframe, it enjoyed a wide circulation in Italy from the early fourteenth century onwards:<sup>105</sup>

Ipsam quoque cultum religionis incestat quod ante conspectum Domini in ipsis penetralibus sanctuarii lascivientis vocis luxu, quadam ostentatione sui, muliebribus modis notularum articularumque caesuris, stupentes animulas emollire nituntur. Cum praecinentium et succinentium, concinentium et decinentium, intercinentium et occinentium praemolles modulationes audieris, Sirenarum concentus credas esse non hominum, et de vocum facilitate miraberis quibus philomena vel psithacus aut si quid sonorius est modos suas nequeunt coaequare.

Ea siquidem est ascendendi descendendique facilitas, ea sectio vel geminatio notularum, ea replicatio articularum singulorumque consolidatio, sic acuta vel acutissima gravibus et subgravibus temperantur ut auribus sui iudicii fere subtrahatur auctoritas, et animus quem tantae suavitatis demulsit gratia, auditorum merita

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<sup>103</sup> 'Saranno alcuni altri i quali, diletlandosi d'arte di canto, disiderano col cantar, massimamente diminuito, gratificar la sua donna, e in quella musica parole amorse inferire.' Calmeta, "Qual stile tra' volgari poeti sia da imitare", in Calmeta, *Prose e Lettere Edite e Inedite*, ed. Grayson, 21. Quoted in Tim Shephard, "Noblewomen and Music in Italy", 27–8.

<sup>104</sup> Cary J. Nederman, *Medieval Aristotelianism and Its Limits: Classical Traditions in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12th–15th Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), at 215.

<sup>105</sup> On the dissemination of *Policraticus* in Italy, see Christophe Grellard and Frederique Lachaud ed., *A Companion to John of Salisbury* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 413–6.

examinare non sufficit. Cum haec quidem modum excesserint, lumborum pruriginem quam devotionem mentis poterunt citius excitare.<sup>106</sup>

It also dishonours the very practice of religion that in the very sight of the Lord . . . with the lewdness of a lascivious voice and a kind of self—ostentation, with an effeminate style of diminutions, pauses of articulations, they attempt to effeminate the astonished little souls. Could you but hear the effete melodies of those singers who begin before the others, and of those who respond, of those who sing [first] and those who conclude, and those who sing in the middle, and those whose part is sung against their fellows', you would believe it to be a chorus of Sirens, not a choir of men.

Indeed such is their fluency in running up and down the scale, their subdivision or doubling of notes, their repetition of phrases and their combining of individual ones [phrases] — so that the high or even the highest notes are mixed with the low or lowest ones— that the ears of the singers are almost completely divested of their critical power, and the soul; which has yielded to the enjoyment of so much sweetness, is not capable of judging the merits of the things heard. Indeed, when such practices go too far, they can more easily occasion arousal in the loins than devotion in the mind.”<sup>107</sup>

In explaining his division of poetry into two types, one exemplified by Dante and Petrarch, and the other by Serafino and his imitators—namely *strambotti* such as those included in the ephemeral prints discussed above—Calmeta suggests that the latter was inseparable from music, which allowed the words ‘to better impress not only upon the hearts of lovers, but also those of erudite minds’ (per poterle meglio non solo negli amorosi negli eruditi cuori imprimere).<sup>108</sup> Calmeta is not disparaging of this practice nor of the quality of the verse, recommending only that the music should not impinge upon comprehension of the words,

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<sup>106</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. K. S. B. Keats—Rohan. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 118 (Turnholt: Brepols, (1993), vol. 1, 48-9.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Timothy McGee, *The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style According to the Treatises* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) at 23.

<sup>108</sup> Calmeta, “Qual stile tra’ volgari poeti sia da imitare”, 22. Quoted in Stephen D. Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic,” *Italica*, vol. 67, no. 2 (Summer, 1990), 161-172, at 164.

rather serving the text as a servant does their master, when the quality of the text merits clarity (quando [le parole] sono di sustanza).<sup>109</sup> This admonition is the closest Calmeta comes to a critique of the quality of *strambotto* verse. Pietro Bembo has been noted as a severe critic of its worth, and nearer our own time Alfred Einstein quipped, after reproducing the *strambotto* *Se de fede hor vengo a meno* set by Cara, that ‘no one will be inclined to call this stuff poetry.’<sup>110</sup> Perhaps, to Calmeta’s mind, the text alone might beguile a hapless *innamorata*, but the addition of music lent an affective power, particularly if performed with a certain amount of intricate embellishment, which glossed over its literary shortcomings, and without which it stood no chance of impressing a *literato*.

How did highly ornate performances of this verse sound? Walter H. Rubsamen first proposed *Aime Sospir* as an indication, a mid–fifteenth century song which appears in a more elaborate version in Petrucci’s *Frottole Sonetti Stramboti Ode. Iustiniane numero sesante sie* [sic] (Venice, 1506), alongside other ornate songs typical of the *Giustiniana* or *aer Venetiano*, though James Haar has subsequently suggested that it is more likely to be an intabulation for instrumental performance than a record of vocal ornamentation.<sup>111</sup> Such intabulations, whether found in the *Buxheim Orgelbuch* (1460–70), Andrea Antico’s *Frottole intabulate da sonare organi* (Rome, 1517), or Ganassi’s *Fontegara* (Venice, 1535), nevertheless contain examples of diminutions, syncopations and other ornamentations which represent significant embellishments of songs surviving in simpler form elsewhere. How much they reflect the vocal practice of their day is difficult to tell, but the reoccurrence of certain figures throughout these sources and more widely does hint at the variety of figurations which the singer seeking to impress might have employed, based on what they had heard elsewhere, and perhaps they do not differ as substantially from contemporary vocal practice as Haar has suggested. An earlier French example discovered by David Fallows, a copy of Binchois’s *Jamais tant* completed in the 1430s, shows figurations which differ insubstantially from intabulations of contemporary songs for keyboard, the only striking difference being a

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<sup>109</sup> ‘Cosi medesimamente sono da essere essistimati di sommo giudicio coloro che cantando mettono tutto lo sforzo in esprimer ben le parole, quando sono di sustanza, e fanno che la musica le accompagna con quel modo che sono i padroni da’ servidori accompagnati’. Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid; Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal*. 3 vols, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 64

<sup>111</sup> Walter H. Rubsamen, “The Justiniane or Viniziane of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century”. *AMI* 29 (1957), 172–84. For Haar’s reservations on Rubsamen’s conclusions see James Haar, “The Puzzle of the Quattrocento,” 42–3.

Example 3.1: The discantus of Gilles Binchois' *Jamais Tant*, as it appears in two sources, the Reina Codex (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. nouv. acq. fr. 6771, fol. 96v, c. 1430) on the lower staff, and a more florid version found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Canonici Misc. 213, fols. 9v–10r (c. 1435) on the upper. For a complete transcription of both sources and discussion see Fallowes, “Embellishment and Urtext in the fifteenth century song repertories”, 62–6.

rigorous addition of Landino sixths at every cadence, without exception, something that might be considered at odds with the aesthetic of *varietas* (Examples 3.1 and 3.2).<sup>112</sup> Although Landino sixths are more commonly associated with music of the Trecento and Quattrocento, they continue to appear in Petrucci's later *frottola* prints and with some regularity in Ganassi's *Fontegara* (Example 3.3). Indeed, in spite of Martha Feldman's view that ornamentation increasingly tends to stepwise diminutions over the course of the sixteenth century, some of Ganassi's more complex exercises contain articulations and

<sup>112</sup> David Fallowes, “Embellishment and Urtext in the Fifteenth Century Song Repertories,” *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis: Eine Veröffentlichung der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Lehr- und Forschungsinstitut für Alte Musik an der Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel*, 14 (1990), 59–85, 62–6.



disjunct movements which remind us of the practice of using articulations as ornament described by John of Salisbury.<sup>113</sup> Such survivals suggest that ornamentation recorded in fifteenth-century sources continued to be employed in the early sixteenth century. Ganassi also proffers some comparison between instrumental and vocal practice. While not going so far as to link his diminutions to vocal practice explicitly, he is rigorous in reminding his recorder-playing reader that every effort should be made to imitate the human voice, and that it is important to hire a teacher who is an ‘expert singer’ (perito cantore) to that end.<sup>114</sup>

Example 3.2: A partial transcription of the upper voice of Johannes Ciconia’s *Con Lagrime* as it appears in two sources. The lower staff represents a transcription of Pit, Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, fonds italien 568, fols. 52v–53r, and the upper a keyboard intabulation, dated 1455, preserved in the Lochamer Liederbuch, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus.ms. 40613, 86–7. Note the addition of a ‘Landino sixth’ in the keyboard intabulation, bar 9. I have halved the note values found in Pit for the purpose of direct comparison with the intabulation.

<sup>113</sup> Martha Feldman, “The Courtesan’s Voice; Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy and Oral Traditions,” in *The Courtesan’s Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 105–123, at 112.

<sup>114</sup> Silvestro Ganassi, *La Fontegara* (Venice: Silvestro Ganassi, 1535) fol. 79r.



Example 3.3: ‘Landino sixths’ in Silvestro Ganassi’s *Fontegara* (Venice: Silvestro Ganassi, 1535), Regola Prima, fol. 10v.

Aside from the issue of vocal ornamentation, it is worth bearing in mind that, in an age in which self-accompanied song was prevalent, a performer intending to sway the heart of a listener may have employed these embellishments in their instrumental practice, as well as their singing, or may have not sung at all. Playing a stringed instrument, with no mention of accompanying singing, is condoned by some authors, and condemned by others as lascivious; Iacopo di Porcia’s comment that playing the lute (*testudiem pulsare*) when not accompanying poetry is the practice of ‘pimps and plebs’ (*hoc lenonum: hoc plebeionum*) is a particularly succinct example of this point of view.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, as mentioned at the very start of this chapter, the love-struck lutenist—not necessarily a singing one—is a well-known trope of visual art in this period. In their study of *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy, 1420–1540*, Shephard et al present the satirisation of the lute player in the frontispiece to Andrea Antico’s *Frottole intabulate da sonare organi libro primo* (Rome: Andrea Antico, 1517), however there is, perhaps, an amorous subtext to the image, beyond its obvious suggestion of the superiority of the keyboard to the lute.<sup>116</sup> Although Antico’s intabulations include decorated cantus lines for solo instrumental performance, the woman depicted in the frontispiece holds a songbook - suggesting perhaps that she is a singer—dismissing the monkey-lutenist while turning towards the keyboardist who plays, mouth closed, from memory or *all'improvviso*. Just as the keyboard has become an attractive alternative to the

<sup>115</sup> Porcia, *De generosa educatione liberorum*, fol. 5r. For Porcia’s remarks in full, see page 80.

<sup>116</sup> Shephard et al, *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy*, 304.

lute for accompanied song, so too has the keyboardist, and the former allure of the lutenist is reduced to a source of ridicule.

### 3.4 Frena donna i toi bei lumi

The nature of women's engagement in musical activity during this period has been the subject of several studies - or more commonly a prelude to more detailed study of music from the mid-sixteenth century onwards - since the end of the twentieth century.<sup>117</sup> A notable exception to this is Isabella d'Este, for whom the survival of extensive documentation of her musical activity has engendered more studies than have been carried out on any other musical woman of her time.<sup>118</sup> Howard Mayer Brown's supposition that a greater number of women were engaged in making music from the mid-sixteenth century

☉ FROTTOLE INTABVLATE DA SONARE ORGANI  
LIBRO PRIMO.

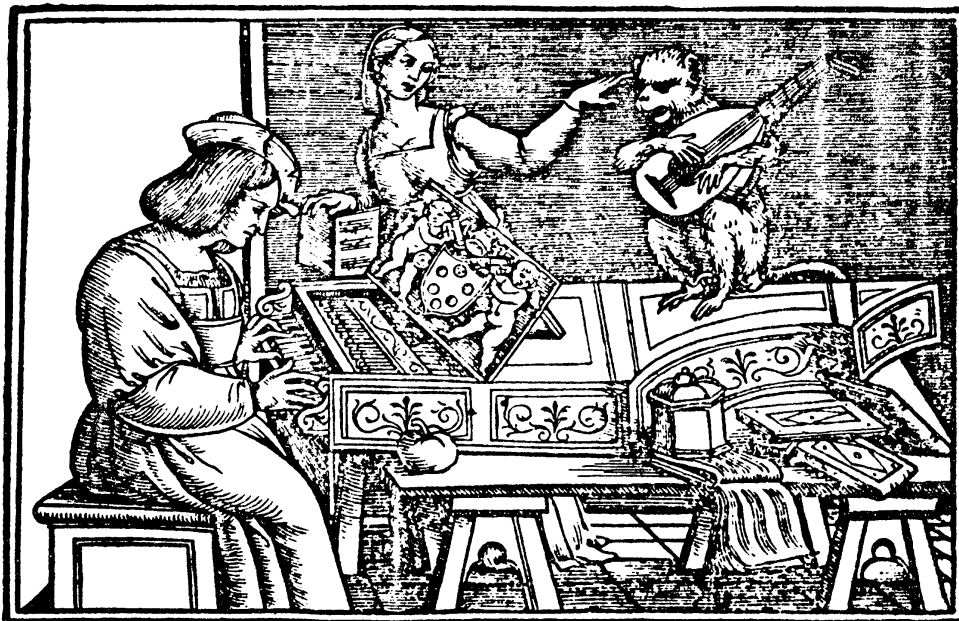


Figure 3.9:  
Frontispiece of  
*Frottole  
Intabulate Da  
Sonare Organi  
Libro Primo*  
(Rome: Andrea  
Antico, 1517).

<sup>117</sup> See for instance, Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*.

<sup>118</sup> Modern scholarship focussing, totally or in part, on Isabella's musical interests is extensive, and the following are merely examples of studies dedicated primarily to her musical identity: William F. Prizer, "Una Virtù Molto Conveniente A Madonne"; "Isabella d'Este and Lorenzo da Pavia, 'Master Instrument-Maker,'" *Early music history*, vol.2, (1982), 87-127; "Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol.38 (1), (1985), 1-33; and Tim Shephard, "Constructing Isabella d'Este's Musical Decorum in the Visual Sphere".

than in previous periods is indicative of this trend, and in part, is well founded.<sup>119</sup> There is evidence to indicate that access to notated music and instruments, particularly stringed instruments and keyboards, grew dramatically over the course of the sixteenth century, causing and in turn driven by the growth of the printing and musical instrument manufacture industries, though this access was equal to men and women.<sup>120</sup> Likewise, we currently have only a handful of names of professional female musicians working during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries - Tullia d’Aragona, Imperia Cognati, Anna Inglese, Giovanna Moreschi, Paola Poccino, Dalidi dei Putti, Barbara Salutati - in comparison to the numerous, and far better-known figures living at the end of the sixteenth century. Of those named who were primarily court musicians, only Anna Inglese has received dedicated studies, both of which were authored by Bonnie Blackburn.<sup>121</sup> Allan Atlas is but one author to put forward evidence that these numbers were much greater, highlighting the fact that special lodgings were built in Naples for female performers in 1499, near the Castelnuovo.<sup>122</sup> That our lack of information on a class of professional female musicians is due to a paucity of documentation rather than a dearth of activity is perhaps borne out by the nature of court record keeping in this period. Karin Pendle has noted that the Venetian singer Virginia Vignoli, active during the mid-sixteenth century, was classed as an ‘adjunct’ to her father, and thus not entered onto payrolls, necessitating other documentary evidence to build a fuller picture of her activities.<sup>123</sup> There may be more to uncover about the names of such women as Giovanna Moreschi and Paula Poccino in archival sources, though such a task lies outside the remit of the present study. There is, however, some indication of the frequency with which one might have encountered amateur female musicians to be found in printed texts of our period, reflecting the popularity of musical tuition for girls described

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<sup>119</sup> Howard Mayer Brown “Singers and Songs in Fifteenth-Century Italy,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150 - 1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 62 - 89, at 64. It seems more reasonable to suggest that a greater number of sources survive for women making music after 1550.

<sup>120</sup> Flora Dennis, “Music,” in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 228–243, at 228.

<sup>121</sup> See Bonnie Blackburn, “Anna Inglese and Other Women Singers in the Fifteenth Century,” and “Professional Women Singers in the Fifteenth Century”.

<sup>122</sup> Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese court of Naples*, 106.

<sup>123</sup> Karin Pendle, “Musical Women in Early Modern Europe,” in *Women & Music: A history*, ed. Karen Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c.1991), 57–96, at 78–9.

by Sabba da Castiglione, and evidenced by Tromboncino's success as a music tutor for Venice's middle-class daughters, mentioned here previously.

In the majority of literary sources published before 1530 (or in Sabba da Castiglione's case, recalling his experiences before that date), the representation of music in female hands is as a tool of seduction. Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* present a similar source to Castiglione's *Ricordi* in that they were published after our timeframe—by Vincenzo Busdraghi in Venice in 1554—but refer to events having taken place before 1537, with some stories penned as early as 1506.<sup>124</sup> Acknowledging the duality of music, as a solitary pastime for the affluent girl or woman and a seductive tool (whether intentionally or not), in *Novella* 1.34, Bandello describes how a girl, Zanina, desiring to learn how to play the lute, spends an hour or two each day in her room practicing, and “often enough” (*bene spesso*) engages in sexual activity with her teacher (*s'interteneva col maestro*), when left alone in a dark corner of a larger *sala*.<sup>125</sup> In *Novella* III.42, Bandello describes the sumptuous rooms of the courtesan Imperia Cognati, who was active at the turn of the sixteenth century, fitted ‘as though it were a princess who lived there’ (*ch'ivi una prencipessa abitasse*) - which included clues as to her musical inclinations:

Si vedeva poi nel mezzo un tavolino, il più bello del mondo, coperto di velluto verde. Qui vi sempre era o liuto o cetra con libri di musica e altri instrumenti musici. V'erano poi parecchi libretti volgari e latini riccamente adornati. Ella non mezzanamente si diletta de le rime volgari, essendolo stato in ciò essortatore e come maestro il nostro piacevolissimo messer Domenico Campana detto Strascino, e tanto già di profitto fatto ci aveva che ella non insoavemente componeva qualche sonetto o madrigale.<sup>126</sup>

One saw in the middle [of the room] a little table, the most beautiful in the world, covered with green velvet. Here there was ever a lute or *cetra* with music books and other musical instruments. There were then many books in the vulgar and Latin

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<sup>124</sup> Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, ed. Luigi Russo (Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1990), 7.

<sup>125</sup> ‘...ella una e due ore con liuto in mano, e bene spesso la sera senza lume e senza compagnia, in un canto di sala s'interteneva col maestro.’ *Ibid.*, 212–213.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

richly adorned. She did not meanly delight in vernacular poetry, having taken in this regard for a teacher our most pleasing Domenico Campana, called Strascino, and so much did she profit from it that she composed some fine sonnets and madrigals.

Describing the opulence of Imperia's home accounts for the better part of the *novella*. For Bandello, the sensual stimulation provided by her home is as beguiling as Imperia herself; we are treated to visual beauty, audible beauty—through music and verse—and arguably even touch is hinted at by the stipulation that her music table was draped in velvet. The fact that music books and instruments were ‘always’ (*sempre*) placed on the table—rather than placed wherever they were last used—suggests the curation of the home as a tableaux to charm would-be clients. In her *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, Tullia d'Aragona presents such sensual stimuli, as countless had done before her, as a threat to the power of reason which separates man from beast.<sup>127</sup> In this instance, music is portrayed as part of a deliberate sensual assault on the rational faculty of the visitor.

Music as a universal courtesan's art has received no small amount of attention, but Bandelli's description of Imperia's rooms as a feast for the senses places in focus the supposed danger which the musical women posed as a whole: they could delight the eye *and* the ear, widening the moral ‘precipice’, as Sabba da Castiglione put it, into which the unsuspecting beholder might fall.<sup>128</sup> The most commonly encountered term for this precipice in literature of the middle ages, inherited from Roman antiquity, is *luxuria*, the excessive indulgence in pleasure, which is itself a prelude to greed, sexual debauchery and the dereliction of duty.<sup>129</sup> A commented edition of the Pseudo-Boethian *Disciplina Scholarium* commonly printed north of the Alps at the turn of the sixteenth century described the constituent elements of *luxuria* as follows:

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<sup>127</sup> ‘Ma come uno; il quale mangia, e be[r]e o piu del dovere, o fuor di luogo e di tempo tanto, che quello che gli dovria giovare gli nocchia, è degno non solo di riprensione, ma di castigo, cosi anzi molto piu, merita castigo, e riprensione chiunque senza regola o misura alcuna si da in preda agli appetiti carnali sotto ponendo la ragione, la quale dovrebbe essere la reina ha il senso, e brevemente diventando di huomo rationale animale brutto.’ Tullia d'Aragona, *Dialogo della signora Tullia d'Aragona, della infinita di amore* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1547), fol. 56r.

<sup>128</sup> On this subject see Nieto, “An alluring sight of music: the musical ‘courtesan’ in the Cinquecento.”

<sup>129</sup> Eoghan Ahearn, “Abundance, Luxuria, and Sin in Late Antique Historiography,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 25, 4, (2017), 605–631, at 605 and 609–10.

Provenit autem luxuria ex multis. scilicet ex ocio et immoderata cibi et potus sumptione. ex vetularum instigatione. ex pravo exemplo ex mulierum aspectu et colloquio. ex musicalium instrumentorum sono. ex turpiloquio.<sup>130</sup>

Luxury is borne of many things. That is to say, from idleness and immoderate consumption of food and drink; from bad example; from looking at and conversing with women; from the sound of musical instruments; from foul language.

Returning to Italy, the *Fiore di Virtu*, a conduct guide for women filled with examples drawn from the lives of saints, and one of the most frequently printed texts of the fifteenth century in Italy, describes *luxuria* in strikingly similar terms in a chapter on chastity:

chi vuole perfectamente la virtu della castita si conviene guardare da sei cose...La quinta sie guardarsi di non stare ne conversare dove si facci overo si parli di luxuria: & pero sancto Silvestro dice. El vitio de la luxuria e dinatura discimia perche ella vuol fare cio che lavede fare adaltri. La sexta si e guardarsi de udire cantare: sonare et ballare. Pithagora dice: lherbe verde nasce apresso lacqua: el vitio della luxuria nasce del ballare cantare et sonare.<sup>131</sup>

she who would perfect the virtue of chastity must take note of six things...The fifth is to neither see nor converse with those who practice or speak of *luxuria*. For as St. Silvester says, the life of *luxuria* is by nature that of a monkey, because it seeks to do that which it sees others do. The sixth is to avoid hearing singing, playing [musical instruments] and dancing. Pythagoras says that ‘the greenest grass grows by the water’, and so the life of *luxuria* too is born of dancing, singing and playing.

These comments are followed by an illustrative example of chaste behaviour, in which women are made to feel as much a part of the problem regardless of whether their behaviour is luxuriant or not:

Della virtu della castita si legge nella vita de santi padri che fu uno cavaliere & signore di terra: il quale era innamorato duna monarca della sua terra: la quale e gli

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<sup>130</sup> Pseudo-Boethius, *De Disciplina Scholarium* (Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 1501) fol. 65r.

<sup>131</sup> *Fiore di Virtu* (Florence: [Bartolommeo di Libri, 1489]), fols. 35v-36r.

haveva facto piu volte richiedere damore & ella sempre negandosi allui el decto signore un giorno si mosse a gran furore & ando al monasterio & trasella fuori per forza per menarla a casa sua: & lei vedendo che non gli valeva niente il gridare & domandare misericordia prego questo signore che almeno per grazia gli dovessi dire perche cagione faceva questo piu allei che allaltri: el signore rispose & disse per gliocchi tuoi che sono così belli: la monaca disse: da poi che questi miei occhi vi danno tanto piacere io determino di satiare & contentare el vostro desiderio: ma priego vi lasciatemi tornare infino alla mia cella per torre certe mie cose & poi vedo al vostro piacere ove volete: el signore la fece lasciare andare: allora la monaca torno nella sua cella e cavossi gliocchi: & fece chiamare el signore & disse: Da poi che sei cosi vago de miei occhi toglì e satiati al tuo piacere. El signore vedendo questo si parte molto smarrito & adolorato: & la monaca salvo la sua virginita volendo inanzi perdere gli occhi che lanima sua come dice Christo nel evangelio.<sup>132</sup>

Of the virtue of chastity we read in the lives of the holy fathers that there was a knight and lord of the land who was in love with a nun of his demesne, to whom he had made many amorous entreaties and who was ever denying him. One day the said lord was overcome by great passion and went to the monastery and drew her out by force to take her back to his home. She, seeing that shouts and begging for mercy were of no avail, asked this lord that he might at least say for what reason he so desired her above all others. The lord replied, saying 'that it was for her eyes, which were so fair.' The nun replied: 'since my eyes give you such great pleasure I am determined to satiate and content your desire, but I prithee let me return to my cell to fetch my belongings, and then I will go wherever your pleasure would will it. The lord let her go. Then the nun returned to her cell and dug out her eyes, called for the lord and said: 'since you are so beguiled by mine eyes, take them and sate your desire.' The lord, seeing this, departed shocked and grieved, and the nun saved her virginity, sooner wishing to lose her eyes than her soul, as Christ says in the Gospel.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., fol. 36r.

<sup>133</sup> Matthew 5:29.



The power of the female gaze to enflame male desire is a constant theme in poetry of this period. The text of the frottola *Frena donna I toi bei lumi* is currently considered lost, having been published in Andrea Antico's second book of frottole (Rome, 1516), the music surviving only as a keyboard intabulation in his *Frottole intabulate da sonare organi, libro primo* (Rome, 1517), but the first line alone betrays a similar conceit: a woman's gaze is full of sexual potency, and in desperate need of bridling. To this end, in the fourteenth century Francesco da Barberino included a passage on the decorum a noble lady should adopt when necessity demanded she should sing before an audience in his *Reggimento e Costumi di Donna*:

E se avien talora le convegna cantare per detto del signore o della madre o dalle sue compagne pregata un poco prima, d'una maniera bassa soavemente canti, ferma, cortese e cogli occhi chinati, e stando volta a chi maggior vi siede. E questo canto basso, chiamato camerale, è quel che piace e che passa ne' cuori.<sup>134</sup>

And if it happens that she is asked to sing by her lord or mother or her friends, having been begged a little first, [it should be] in a manner low and sweetly sung, steady, gentle, and with eyes lowered, and facing the greatest of those seated. And this low song, called chamber song, is that which pleases, and which goes to the heart.

Although Barberino's treatise was never printed, either its contents were well-known in manuscript copies or social convention remained remarkably static in the two hundred years after its publication. Castiglione similarly recommends that, when coming to dance or make music in company, a woman should 'allow herself to be begged a little, and [perform] with a certain timidity which shows noble shame' (Però quando ella viene a danzar o a lassarsene alquanto pregare e con una certa timidità, che mostri quella nobile vergogna) before singing in *Il Cortegiano*.<sup>135</sup> Giovanni Michele Bruto was to suggest a similarly modest decorum when a noblewoman should come to sing, also cautioning that for the lady, music was something only to soothe sorrow or tiredness, and that it would be wholly unfitting for her to try to

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<sup>134</sup> Francesco da Barberino "Reggimento e Costumi di Donna" ed. and trans. Eleonora Stoppino in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youths with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 127–184, at 134. In this instance the translation above is my own.

<sup>135</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 223.

emulate Willaert, Cipriano de Rore, Giaches de Wert, Josquin or Gombert in mastery of the art.<sup>136</sup> In this, the advice Bruto gives for the musically inclined lady is no different from that which Piccolomini offered noble boys in *De Liberorum Educatione*: a gentleman should never emulate the mastery of a manual art exhibited by a tradesman.<sup>137</sup>

Francesco da Barberino suggests that women of lesser means were free to sing as and when they wished, while also recommending that they observe the same customs, even if loosely, depending on their social status: the wealthier the lady, the greater the necessity for modesty.<sup>138</sup> The few comportment guides for women printed during our timeframe leave no room for interpretation, however. The writer of the *Fiore di Virtu* is unequivocal in their disparagement of music and dance. The *Decor Puellarum*, a conduct guide for young women surviving in a single edition printed by Nicholas Jensen in Venice in 1471, assumes a like stance. It condemns the praise (laude) heaped upon women who spend their time in playing chess (zochio de scachi), ‘those who sing and play [music] like whores’ (cantar et sonar come meretrice), and the miserable parents (misero quello padre et miserissimo quella madre) who allow their daughters to divert themselves by such means, particularly those who arrange dance lessons for them.<sup>139</sup>

That the anonymous writer of the *Decor Puellarum* would oppose so sensual a pleasure as music is foreshadowed in the introduction to the text, which also gives us the only concrete information we have regarding the author’s identity:

Et pero beni che nui certosini siamo inimici de le done quanto a lo aspecto exterioire del corpo mortale: semo pero amicissimi de le anime sue immortale per esser ala imagine de lo eterno idio create e facte.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> “Sia concesso l’uso del canto, & di questa lusinghevole armonia, a quelli che stanchi dalle cure noiose & gravi, di ristoro, & di alleggiamento hanno mestiero...” Giovanni Michele Bruto, *La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1555), fol. 36r–v.

<sup>137</sup> See page 81.

<sup>138</sup> “Se figliuola sarà di minore uomo, lavoratore di terra o d’altri simiglianti, poniamo ch’alcuna più e altra meno sicondo lor ricchezza e lor bontà possa ritrar alla buona osservanza, tuttora parlo che, comunemente traendo sé alli detti costumi... E ridere e giucar e piangere e cantar porrà più largamente che l’altre che son dette, e paia ancor ched ella non si curi.” Barberino, “Reggimento e costumi di Donna”, 148.

<sup>139</sup> ‘Misero quello padre..che a sue figliole over a parente tale cosse consente: de imprendere a ballare bem e licito non domentre che sonno donzelle per honesta de la virginita.’ *Decor Puellarum*, fol. 57r–v.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., fol. 1v.

And though 'tis known that we Carthusians are enemies of women concerning the outward appearance of the mortal body, we are dearest friends of her immortal soul, created and made for her in the image of the eternal God.

For the Carthusian author - perhaps the prior of La Certosa and a personal friend of Jensen, Giovanni Corner – the very visage of women, appealing to the sense of sight, was inimical to those of holy orders, who should seek to overcome such worldly temptation.<sup>141</sup> Perhaps the author considered music a means by which women could similarly overwhelm the sense of hearing, whether they intended to or not. Following the assumption that the same author penned the *Palma Virtutum*, a guide for male conduct printed alongside the *Decor Puellarum* and *Gloria Mulierum*, he had no qualms over suggesting the performance of sacred or moralising music as licet *otium* for men, and his issue was specifically with musical women, rather than music itself.<sup>142</sup> Subsequently, much of the regimen the *Decor Puellarum* sets out for the reader is concerned with the prayers which should be said throughout the day. Before the young woman following its advice had even left her bedroom in the morning, she would have already said two: *Benedicamus patrem et filium cum sancto spiritu in saecula saeculorum amen* on rising from bed, and *Agimus tibi gratias omnipotens deus pro universis beneficiis tuis qui vivis et regnas per omnia saecula saeculorum amen* after dressing.<sup>143</sup> Much of her day was spent in prayer, between domestic duties. For the non-reader, unable to remember several Latin prayers or to read holy works, the author recommends that they say the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* at least seven times if they find themselves idle before dinner.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> The text, alongside its companion for married women, the *Gloria Mulierum* and for men, the *Palma Virtutum* (Venice: Nicholas Jensen, [1471]), have been frequently attributed to the Carthusian prior Giovanni Corner, also known as Giovanni di Dio. Modern scholarship often offers little explanation (see for instance, Chriscinda Henry, “Will She or Won’t She? The Ambivalence of Female Musicianship in Two Paintings by Bernardino Licinio (1489–1565),” *Early Music*, vol. 51 (1), (2023), .25–38, at 36), or prefers to consider the authorship anonymous. The most detailed reasoning for Corner’s authorship I could find is contained in a letter of 23 April 1780 from the Dominican R.P. Fabricy, who supposed ‘Giovanni di Dio’ to be the author based on his personal connections with Jensen, and his authorship of *Nosces te* (also published by the Jensen press). See *Le Journal des Sçavans* (Paris, 1781), 235–7.

<sup>142</sup> One passage in the *Palma Virtutum* on fol. 9v, reads ‘Delectabel Exercitio sie quello che le exercita a fin de recreatione si del corpo como ancor del spirito zoe cantar: sonar: leger cosse spiritual over mortal: la qual cossa quanto la sia utile aldi quel che el glorioso facto hieronymo dice.’ On the unity of these three texts see, for instance, Martin J. C. Lowry, “Humanism and Anti-Semitism in Renaissance Venice: the strange story of “Decor Puellarum,” *La Bibliofilia*, vol. 87, no. 1, (January–April 1985), 39–54.

<sup>143</sup> *Decor Puellarum*, fol. 41r.

<sup>144</sup> ‘Si avanti cena havete spacio dite compieta... et chi non sa legere dica septe pater nostri et septe ave marie per compieta.’ *Ibid.*, fol. 46r–v.

Turning to stories, histories or songs containing lascivious behaviour to pass the time instead, or watching the world go by from a balcony—which would also put oneself on public display—are among the other activities which are strongly censured.<sup>145</sup> Summarising ideal female conduct, the author writes that a life engaged in seeking ‘good fame’ (bona fama) through prayer and looking after family was evidence of prudence, and those things which accumulated infamy (infamia) and shame (vergogna) the opposite.<sup>146</sup> For the earnest reader of the *Decor Puellarum*, or the non-reader receiving advice from someone who had read a copy, music making was the realm of the *meretrix*, someone who had accrued both infamy and shame by the necessity of their work. Likewise, listening to love songs, or performances containing amorous episodes, was symptomatic of idleness, time which could have been put to better use in work or prayer.

While condemning the woman who pursues musical pastimes, the *Decor Puellarum* confirms that the number of women who did engage in music and dance was considerable enough for the writer to feel the need to denounce them, and that these women were praised for these accomplishments. It also confirms that a link between female sex workers and female musicianship was commonly drawn, even if it was not universally credited. A common thread it shares with the more nuanced views espoused by Francesco da Barberino and Giovanni Michele Brutto is the importance of modesty to the virtuous woman. Gesture, speech and apparel should all be restrained, with anything that might draw attention being seen as a symptom of pride and thus of shame.<sup>147</sup> Vocal ornamentation of the kind Calmeta describes men using to impress women, a symbol of virtuosity, undoubtedly conflicts with this modesty. Martha Feldman has suggested that such virtuosity may have been a part of

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., fols. 52r and 44r respectively: ‘Per tanto ve priego fugite le fabule et historie: cancone: libri: et parole: che contenga materia de luxuria: de gola; et amor carnali: ni de noze ni de simel vani et sensuali parlari. Ancora guardateve da le murmuratione: & dir mal daltri se volete acquistar bona gratia & bona fama.’ And ‘se vi non starete a zanzar al foco ni doniar a gli balconi: come fanno brute cavestre et deshoneste giotonzella ma come savie prudente & virtuose.’

<sup>146</sup> ‘Prudentia consiste a començar a bona hora a provider le cosse che non se possono fugir acio che non para stranio: et cosi a provider a le cosse da necessita de la famiglia quando avvi apartiene: et maximamente proveder a la bona fama et a la salute de lanima...Advertentia a schivar tutte quelle cosse che per parola o acti over per facti possiate aquistar infamia vergogna danno & de lanima damnatione.’ Ibid., fol. 38r.

<sup>147</sup> The *Decor Puellarum*, for instance, dictates that gestures should be restrained (fol. 52r); speech ‘rare, slow and low’ (raro: tardo: & basso, fol. 51v); that makeup and perfume are for prostitutes (fol. 49r), and unsurprisingly, that a woman should not dress with the intention of making her breasts look big (fol. 49v).

the musical courtesan's practice.<sup>148</sup> Without making reference to the contemporary discourse on *luxuria*, she refers to the 'luxurience' of ornamentation which musical courtesans might have employed, depending on the text they were singing and the image of themselves they wished to convey; a courtesan might wish to emulate the modesty of an honest lady and sing softly, with eyes lowered, or to take advantage of the vocal freedom afforded by her position as need or fancy saw fit.<sup>149</sup> Such speculation aside, the championing of female modesty during performance was very much a concession to the necessity for modesty, whether as a familial diversion or private pastime. Virtuosity was something linked intrinsically with *luxuria*, and thus unbecoming of honest women of standing.

### 3.5 Conclusions

In many ways, the sources considered through the course of this chapter are disparate, perhaps almost to the extent that their relation to one another is only tenuous. However, I believe that consideration of the seemingly separate strands of love theory, ephemeral love song and the shape that music might have taken in its execution are crucial in building an understanding of how love song was perceived during our timeframe, and how it manifested in everyday life. Love theory, as found in philosophical texts by writers such as Ficino, Equicola and Bembo, provides the very rationale upon which the efficacy of love song in winning the heart of the beloved is based: through song, the lover might charm the auditory sense of the listener, inducing them to amorous thoughts, unless they are able to control the command the senses hold over the soul through the power of reason. That this theory was, to a degree, common knowledge, is suggested by the frontispieces to numerous ephemeral collections of vernacular verse printed in the first decades of the sixteenth century, which depict lovers overwhelming the proud defence of the beloved through the love song contained therein, or persuading the beloved to join them through music. If these images are read as an advertisement for the power of the verse to win affection, it suggests that they may have been used practically in courtship. The fact that some of these images depict

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<sup>148</sup> See Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice".

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

the performance of music, and that there are concordances between the contents of these collections and printed music books, also suggests that they might have been sung.

Within this scheme, musical virtuosity, embodied by the ornamentation which Il Calmeta describes men as employing to impress their beloved, takes the role of addition firepower in overwhelming the senses and any fortification which reason might provide the otherwise unwitting soul. In the hands and mouth of a woman, such a weapon became doubly dangerous, as, confronted with visual and audible beauty, the male beholder ran an increased risk of being beguiled. This is one reason, perhaps, why florid singing in sacred contexts received so much ire from moralists for ‘charming’ (demulsit) the senses; not only was it viewed a distraction from the divine, but as a tempter to very human love.<sup>150</sup>

Although I have sought to provide some examples of musical ornamentation from this period to give a sense of how love song might have manifested in performance, there are limitations in the evidence we currently hold: for one, we can never be truly sure whether embellished copies of sources known in plainer form elsewhere represent vocal performance or instrumental intabulation.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, considering love song and ornamentation—if only as a concept—within the sensual framework of love theory, builds some idea of why music makers might have sought to obtain a degree of virtuosity in performance, and why such virtuosity is so often condemned in sources in circulation during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

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<sup>150</sup> This particular description of florid singing is taken from John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 6.11–13, which is quoted fully on pages 184–5.

<sup>151</sup> Haar, “The Puzzle of the Quattrocento”, at 42–3.

# CHAPTER IV

## DE IUDICIO

*Ma sopra tutto accompagni ogni suo movimento con un certo bon giudicio e grazia, se vole meritar quell'universal favore che tanto s'apprezza.<sup>1</sup>*

*But above all [the courtier] should accompany all of his actions with a certain judgement and grace, if he wishes to merit that universal favour which is so prized.*

The importance of displaying good judgement is a topic as complex as it is pervasive in the literature in circulation during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The growth of good judgement with age is an age-old literary trope; we have already read Sabba da Castiglione's castigation of his youthful praise for musical ladies, a position reversed *come vecchio di più giudicio*.<sup>2</sup> It was also believed to be a medical certainty. Gabriele Zerbi accorded increasing 'constancy, strong understanding, and wisdom' (constantiam: fortem apprehentionem: sapientiam) to the aging process, as the human body's excessive heat and moisture—the fuel for changeable whims and desires—cools and dries, leaving the individual less moved by their passions and better able to understand 'the operations of reason and wisdom' (operations rationis.sapientiam).<sup>3</sup> Of course, this isn't to say that the process of obtaining good judgement is left entirely to the aging process. Efforts to instil good judgement in readers began at an early age and were directed at every level of society, albeit with very different rationales regarding why judgement was so important in a particular reader's sphere. Within these schemes, whether crafted for the prince or the housewife, judgement has no small importance when it comes to making and listening to music, and music's place in a life lived prudently.

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<sup>1</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 39.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 121–122 for Sabba da Castiglione's remarks at length.

<sup>3</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 7r; Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, at 30.

Although the age of good judgement in the scheme of the *Ages of Man* presumably amounts to no great advancement of years by modern standards, perhaps thirty or forty years, it coincides exactly with what Gabriele Zerbi describes as the beginning of old age.<sup>4</sup> That is not to say that Zerbi believed the traditional signs of aging—physical and mental infirmity, white hair and wrinkles, to name but a few described in the *Gerontocomia*—occur during this period. Referencing the Carolingian diplomat Isaac Judeus, Zerbi describes the inception of old age as ‘imperceptible’ (*occulte*), accelerating only as the humoral tendency towards the cold and dry, qualities we have already seen described as inimical to life in astrological literature, becomes so advanced that an individual is ‘corrupt’ (*corruptum*), and begins to die.<sup>5</sup> While this process is to some extent unavoidable, Zerbi, armed with the authority of Cicero’s *De Senectute*, asserts that the ‘intemperance of youth’ (*intemperans adolescentia*) play a far greater part in an individual’s decline than advancing years.<sup>6</sup> He gives another example to support his argument: that the fourth century BC philosopher Xenophilus lived with no great decline to the age of 105. That music played some part in this, in spite of its association with lust, the chief of youthful vices, is implied by the fact that Xenophilus is referred to as *musicus*, both by Zerbi and in Pliny’s *Natural History*, most likely Zerbi’s source.<sup>7</sup> Thus judgement was considered as important to health as to conduct, and music, too, might play a part in comfortable longevity. As such, while the first part of this chapter will discuss the importance of judgement in matters of music, the second will address music’s place in the health regime of one seeking to mitigate the onset of the symptoms of aging.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘cuius pars una senectus prima appellatur: quem in homine a trigesimo vel trigesimoquinto aut quadragesimo incipiens anno fere’. Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 6v; Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 29: ‘In man this period (old age) begins from the thirtieth or thirty–fifth or fortieth year more or less’.

<sup>5</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 6v. Here Zerbi references Aristotle’s *Problemata*, 909b, “Is old age a putrefaction?”

<sup>6</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 23r.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Xenophilus’ great age is mentioned by Pliny in *Naturalis Historia*, 7. 50. 51. For an English translation see Pliny, *Natural History, Volume VII: Books 24–27*, Trans. W. H. S. Jones and A. C. Andrews. Loeb Classical Library 393 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 168.



#### 4.1 Iudicium Musicum: the courtier and potentate

Castiglione's musical advice for the courtier is wide-ranging. Throughout the course of *Il Cortegiano*, the ideal courtier is prescribed the judgement necessary to decide which instruments are prized and which are to be shunned; to understand the social conventions of performing for an assembled party; the wisdom to appropriately judge musical performances; the rational capacity to avoid being overcome by musical stimuli; and, through the mouthpiece of Canossa, the ability to cite a number of classical sources regarding the value of music. This collective *iudicium musicum*, however, has but one end: to garner the *universal favore* Castiglione describes as so prized (*che tanto s'apprezza*), and which was necessary for the courtier's advancement.<sup>8</sup> Here it is worth noting that in the modesty with which one was expected to approach performance—never doing so unless having been asked to at least once—Castiglione's advice for the courtier bears remarkable similarity to that which Barberino wrote for the noble lady almost 150 years before.<sup>9</sup> The value of either party to the court was largely ornamental, and the musical lady or courtier played their part best with suitable decorum.<sup>10</sup>

At times, Castiglione's *brigata* perform the very recommendations - and their antitheses - which arise from their discussions; Canossa displays good judgement and learning in his *laus musicae*, just as Pallavicino displays a lack of those qualities in his prior dismissal of music, and Bembo's reticence to commence a learned discourse on the nature of love mirrors that which the courtier is expected to show when asked to perform music. Amidst the flow of conversation, it is easy to forget, perhaps, that the assembled company is comprised of personages of several different ranks, and that such rules might not apply to them all equally, though they all inhabit the same social sphere. Indeed, the contents of handbooks for the prince in circulation in the decades prior to the publication of *Il Cortegiano* paint a very different picture of music's place in the life of the potentate.

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<sup>8</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 39.

<sup>9</sup> See pages 195–6 for Barberino's discussion of the decorum a lady should adopt when performing music.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, 28.

Consideration of music in the context of princely life in conduct manuals in circulation at the turn of the sixteenth century is patchy. Paolo Cortesi's commentary on the ideal household of the cardinal, *De Cardinalatu*, is relatively detailed in its discussion of music, not only recommending the types of musical diversion to which the cardinal might turn, both in private *otium* and on more public occasions, but also discussing the value of certain modes and even the work of a specific composer, Heinrich Isaac.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Niccolò Machiavelli's famous *Principe*, completed before the year 1513, makes no mention of music or *otium* of any kind; perhaps such matters fell within the category of things he omitted on the basis that he felt they had been treated elsewhere, and lay beyond his remit of exploring the realities of conduct over the ideal.<sup>12</sup>

That music was often an accomplishment introduced to future rulers at an early age—in the case of the Sforza children serving partly to display their precociousness to visiting dignitaries—has been established in chapter II.<sup>13</sup> The cleric Giles of Rome, whose *De Regimine Principum* was widely copied and translated during the Middle Ages and printed three times in Italy before 1502, proffers a more moral purpose for musical tuition.<sup>14</sup> In his discussion of the place of the liberal arts in the prince's education, he describes music as a 'harmless' (*inocuae*) means of assuaging sadness and idleness in noble children:

Quarta scientia liberalis dicit esse musica: haec secundum philosophum.yiii.poli. convenit ipsis iuuenibus: & maxime filiis liberorum & nobilium propter rationes multas. Quarum una est: quia pueri nihil tristabile sustinere possunt quare si debent eis aliqua delectabilia concedi dignum est ordinentur ad delectationes inocuas. quare secundum eundem philsofum:musica est consentanea naturae iuuenum: quia habet innocuas delectationes. Secunda ratio ad hoc idem esse potest.quia ut philosophus

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the Aristotelian roots of Cortese's musical analysis, see Fiorella Brancacci, "Musica Classica vs Musica Moderna nel "De Cardinalatu" di Paolo Cortesi," *Il Saggiatore Musicale*, vol.6 (1/2), (1999), 5–22.

<sup>12</sup> "Resta hora a vedere, quali debbano essere gli modi, & governi d'un principe con gli sudditi, & con gli amici. Et perche io so che molti di questo hanno scritto, dubito scrivendone ancor'io, non esser tenuto presumptuoso, partendomi, massime nel disputare questa materia da gli ordini de gli altri. Ma essendo l'ò intento mio scrivere cosa utile a chi l'intende, m'è parso piu conveniente andare drieto alla verita effettual della cosa, che a l'immaginazione di essa." Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe* (sl, s.n, 1537), fol. 28v–29r.

<sup>13</sup> See page 117.

<sup>14</sup> Charles F. Briggs "Life Works, and Legacy," in *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, ed. Charles F. Briggs and Peter S. Eardley (Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 7–33, at 28–32.

inuit: in eodem.viii.poli. Mens humanane scit ociosa esse. Ideo ut videtur ocium bonum est aliquando interponere inter delectationes musicales: quae sunt licitae & inocuae. Maxime autem hoc decensem filiis liberorum & nobilium. qui non vacantes mechanicis artibus remanent ociosi. nisi studerent litteralibus disciplinis. & nisi suis exercitiis interponerent delectationes musicales quae sunt licitae & honestae.<sup>15</sup>

The fourth liberal science is music: according to the philosopher [Aristotle] in book VIII of *Politics*, it is appropriate for the young, and especially for the sons of the free and noble, for many reasons. One of these is that since children cannot endure anything sad, if they must be allowed some pleasures, it is worthy that they should be directed to harmless pleasures. According to the same philosopher, music is consistent with the nature of the young, because it is a harmless pleasure. The second reason for this can be the same, because as the philosopher suggests, also in book VIII of *Politics*: the human mind knows when it is idle. Therefore, as it may be seen, it is sometimes good to interpose musical pleasures, which are licit and harmless. But this is most appropriate for the children of the free and noble, who are not occupied with mechanical arts and remain idle, unless they study literary disciplines, and unless they interpose their exercises with musical delights which are lawful and honourable.

The need to discern between music which is edifying and that which is harmful appears only subtly in this passage, the most extensive in the treatise to deal with music. In a passage dealing with suitable recreation for children of seven years or more, the recitation of fables and histories, and the singing of honest songs (*cantus honesti*) is recommended, so long as the child is able to understand the words, suggesting that both practices were intended to be as moralising as they were restful.<sup>16</sup> ‘Honest otium’ is a topic turned to several times in the treatise’s discussion of the *otium* of the adult prince, though music is no longer

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<sup>15</sup> Aegidius Romanus (Giles of Rome), *De Regimine Principum* (Venice: per Bernardino I Viani iussu Andrea I Torresano, 1502), fols. 45v–46r. This passage is discussed in Lorenzetti, *Musica e identità nobiliare*, at 52.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Sunt etiam pueris recitandae aliquae fabulae vel aliquae historiae. Postquam incipient percipere significationes verborum. Vel etiam aliqui cantus honesti sunt eis cantandi.’ Ibid., fol. 49r.

mentioned by name in these passages; we can only assume that ‘honest song’ remained a part of the recreation of Giles of Rome’s prince in adulthood.

The place of music within the regimen of the adult prince is more fully discussed in another treatise popular in the Latin Middle Ages, the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Regum Regimine*. Following its translation from Arabic to Latin in the thirteenth century, it achieved a circulation unparalleled among Aristotelian texts, real or spurious, during this period, most probably due to the shape it takes: a letter, in the manner of the *speculum principis*, from Aristotle to his student Alexander the Great.<sup>17</sup> Such texts were commonly gifted to rulers upon their accession as an aid to their statecraft; Henry VIII received one shortly after his ascension to the throne in 1509.<sup>18</sup>

A brief chapter on the ‘musical solace of the king’ (*De Regis solatio musicali*) makes it clear that music, whether played by the prince in private, by confidants (*fidelis*), or by both in consort, could play a useful role in the prince’s recuperation:

Decet imperatoriam maiestatem privatos habere fideles cum quibus delectabitur cum variis instrumentis et generibus organorum, cum fuerit tediosus. Anima enim humana naturaliter in talibus delectatur: sensus requiescit: sollicitudo et curiositas evanescit: et totum corpus [vigoratur].<sup>19</sup> Si tu igitur in talibus volveris delctari: ad plus persevera in tali vita tribus diebus vel quatuor secundum quod videris expedire. Et semper melius et honestius et quod hec fiant privatim.<sup>20</sup>

It is proper for his imperial majesty to have private confidants, with whom he will amuse himself with various means and kinds of musical instrument, when he is weary. For the human soul will naturally delight in such things: the senses rest, concern and curiosity disappear, and the whole body is invigorated. If, therefore, you wish to

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<sup>17</sup> Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Stoneman, ed. *Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth* (London: British Library Publishing, 2022), 70.

<sup>19</sup> Given as ‘nigorator’ in the 1501 edition.

<sup>20</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, “De regum regimine,” in *Aristotelis philosophorum maximi secretum secretorum ad Alexandrum* (Bologna: Benedetto Faelli, 1501), fol. 4v.

indulge in such things, continue in such a life for three or four days, according to what you see fit. And it is always better and more honest to do this in private.

Giovanni Pontano's own *speculum principis*, dedicated to his pupil Alfonso II, bears distinct similarity to both the *Regimine Principum* and the *Regem Regimine*, counselling the value of music to refresh the prince when work and literary study have grown tiresome, while stopping short of suggesting that the prince maintain any musical practice of his own to this end:

Et quoniam non semper agendis negociis occupati esse possumus: et a libris secedendum est aliquando: faciendaeque sunt intermissiones: ac quaerenda tum animi tum corporis laxamenta ... In hac cessatione dandus erit locus aliquis iocis: facetiisque quibus animus recreetur. Quodque ait Laberius/facundum comitem in via pro vehiculo esse/ad istam quam dico cessationem transferendum. Adhibendi sunt etiam musici/qui tum cantu tum chordis oblectent animum et curas permulceant.dandum quoque aliquid istrionibus.<sup>21</sup>

As we cannot always busy ourselves in work, and from books we must sometimes retire, we must create intermissions, and seek relaxation of both mind and body ... In such cessation place must be given to pastimes and humour, through which the mind will be refreshed. Thus, Laberius said that 'a companion on a journey serves a carriage', which we might transfer to the cessation I speak of. Musicians are also to be employed who with both song and instruments divert the mind and soothe our cares. Time might also be given to actors.

Pontano likewise echoes the *Regimine Principium* and *Regem Regimine* in a comment on the licit nature of musical pleasures when used to refresh the weary soul in his treatise on obedience (*De Oboedientia*), first published alongside *De Principe* by Mathias Moravus in Naples in 1490:

Verum cum voluptatis commune quidem nomen sit: et voluptas ipsa semper nec ubique sit turpis/non omnes corporis sensuumque voluptates intemperantes nos

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<sup>21</sup> Pontano, 'De Principe', in *Opera* (Venice: per Bernardino I Viani, 1501), fol. 34r–v

efficient:ut dum lyra delinimur:laboremque solamur cantu : aut naribus admovemus  
flosculos: seu in Iocti alíguas/Gentilisue picturas egregias conversi/in spectandis illis  
oculos palcimus: et tanquam ipsi reficimur.<sup>22</sup>

But indeed pleasure is a common name; not all pleasures are shameful, and not all of the pleasures of the body and senses affect us intemperately, such as when we are soothed by the lyre, console ourselves with song, or our noses are drawn to flowers, or we turn to some amusing or noble paintings. In looking at them we nourish our eyes, and are ourselves restored.

Unlike in Pontano's and Giles of Rome's advice, Pseudo-Aristotle places both temporal and spatial boundaries on such diversions, holding music to be an activity best pursued in retreat from the eyes and ears of the wider court, if it is to be *honest* (honestius). Why would the seclusion of music-making render it more honest? Neither Giles of Rome, Pseudo-Aristotle, nor Pontano condemn a predilection for music in their *specula principum*, but the voices regarding music as an 'effeminising' vice, as we have seen, were numerous. Though Machiavelli makes no direct reference to music in *Il Principe*, he does make several references to 'effeminacy' as a source of contempt, 'effeminate' peoples and rulers who were subsequently conquered or deposed, and lists effeminacy and promiscuity—both vices linked with music—amongst those which might cost the imprudent ruler their power.<sup>23</sup> Added to the fact that music was to be the solace of the prince worn-out from the duties of state, engagement in musical activity represented the prince at their weakest, and as such was something to be concealed from public and semi-public view.

An example of a potentate praised for his public and private conduct is found in Federico da Montefeltro. The most famed *condottiere* of his day, his martial prowess made him one of the wealthiest men in Western Europe; as captain of the Italic League, he was paid some

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<sup>22</sup> Pontano 'De Oboedientia', in *Opera*, fol. 118r.

<sup>23</sup> 'Abietto lo fa l'esser tenuto vario, leggiere, effeminato, pusillanimo, irresoluto...' Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, fol. 34v. On effeminacy and promiscuity as vices, see fol. 29. He describes the 'soft and effeminate' (molli & effeminate) nature of the Medes as the reason for their defeat at the hands of Cyrus the Great on fol. 10v, and Severus Alexander's effeminacy as the cause of his overthrow on fol. 37r.

60,000 ducats per year during peacetime, raised to 80,000 in times of war.<sup>24</sup> This wealth manifested itself most publicly in ambitious civic works, but also in prodigious patronage of the visual arts and, somewhat more privately, in the amassing of a personal library of over one thousand manuscripts by 1482, a testimony to his scholarly leanings, perhaps partly founded by his time as a student at the *Ca' Giocosa*, from 1434–6.<sup>25</sup> The extent of his more private interests in the liberal arts is suggested by the decoration of his *studiolo*, the most private of spaces available to the prince.<sup>26</sup> Among a series of seven panels painted by Justus of Ghent between 1474–8 depicting the liberal arts - only four of which are extant - which Cecil H. Clough believes may have once adorned the walls of the palace at Gubbio, Federico is depicted before Rhetoric, with the figures kneeling before Music and Astronomy identified as his brother-in-law, Costanzo Sforza, and long-term ally Ferrante I of Naples.<sup>27</sup> Music also appears in the scheme of the marquetry, with no less than fourteen instruments depicted: two lutes, a cittern, a harp, a rebec and a fiddle; two *cornetti*, a hunting horn, a pipe, and a portative organ.<sup>28</sup> However, that it was study, rather than musical performance, which Federico busied himself with when not engaged in public life is suggested by Cristoforo Landino's praise of him in his *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, dedicated to Federico:

Cuius [Palladis] quidem auxilio cum in difficillimis temporibus ac dubiis rebus veluti alter Ulixes instructus consilio nunquam egueris, eas etiam in maximis ac paene infinitis tuis occupationibus eadem illa duce doctrinas assecutus es, quas multi in summo otio ac rerum omnium affluentia vix degustare potuerunt. Quando enim aut hostilis terror aut tuorum militum auribus undique circumsonans clamor tuam ita mentem unquam avertere potuerunt, ut dies integer tibi vacuus transierit, in quo aut

<sup>24</sup> Cecil H. Clough, "Federigo da Montefeltro's Patronage of the Arts, 1468–1482," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 36, (1973), 129–144, at 130.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 138, and Cecil H. Clough, "Federico da Montefeltro and the Kings of Naples: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Survival," *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2 (June 1992), 113–172, at 139.

<sup>26</sup> Cecil H. Clough, "Art as Power in the Decoration of the Study of an Italian Renaissance Prince: The Case of Federico Da Montefeltro," *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 16, no. 31 (1995), 19–50, at 21. For a detailed study of the contemporary d'Este *studioli*, see Tim Shephard, *Echoing Helicon*.

<sup>27</sup> Clough, "Art as Power", 28, and "Federico da Montefeltro and the kings of Naples," 152.

<sup>28</sup> Clough, "Art as Power", 29. The list which Clough gives is taken directly from Emanuel Winternitz's description of the Gubbio *studiolo* in *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1979), at 121.

ipse aliquid non legeris aut alium legentem disputantemve non attentissime audieris?<sup>29</sup>

As if you were another Ulysses advised by her counsel, you never lacked the help of Pallas Athena in the most difficult times and desperate situations, but amidst your important and almost innumerable public duties you have also striven, with the same goddess as a guide, to attain a degree of learning which many were scarcely able to touch upon when living in the highest *otium* and with everything in abundance. For when could either the fear of an enemy or the shouting of your soldiers resounding in your ears ever distract your mind in such a way that a whole day would pass with you being idle, in which you neither read something yourself nor listened attentively to the reading or disputation of another?<sup>30</sup>

Federico is presented as a man who busies himself virtuously whether in *otium* or *negotium*, an exemplar of both the *vita activa* - public life - and the private *vita contemplativa*.<sup>31</sup> Music may well have played a part in his *otium*, but not to the extent that it distracted from the scholarly endeavours praised by Landino.

Returning to the *Regum Regimine*, similar concerns govern Pseudo–Aristotle’s recommendation regarding the prince’s gesture and speech. In a chapter on the silence of the king (*De taciturnitate regis*), the monarch is counselled that it is ‘beautiful and honourable in a king to refrain from being garrulous’ (*speciorum et honorificum est in rege abstinere a multilogo*), and that silence is a tool by which he might distance himself from the common man and appear more regal, familiarity breeding contempt of honour (*nimia familiaritas hominum parit contemptum honoris*).<sup>32</sup> Frequent laughter (*risu multum*) is similarly censored for ‘stealing reverence’ (*tollit reverentia*) from the monarch, a view echoed in Pontano’s *De Principe* in his description of clapping as ‘entirely absurd’ (*omnino inepta*) and of profuse laughter as ‘shameful’ (*turpes*).<sup>33</sup> Rather, the prince must be able to

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<sup>29</sup> Cristoforo Landino, *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, ed. Peter Lohe (Florence: Sansoni, 1980), 52.

<sup>30</sup> Ben Thompson, *The Virtue Politics of Cristoforo Landino’s ‘Disputationes Camaldulenses’* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2021), 80.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> Pseudo–Aristotle, “De Regum Regimine”, fol. 4v.

<sup>33</sup> Pontano, “De Principe”, fol. 34v.



control his actions and speech, in terms of both tone and content. The *Regum Regimine* proffers advice on how manners of speech betray a speaker's intellect, counselling that those with loud, sonorous voices (grossam vocem et sonogram) are bellicose, those with 'thin' (gracilem) voices stupid and wicked (mendax), and those with sweet voices (dulcem) insidious; the prince must aim to moderate his voice, being neither too loud nor grandiloquent, in order to show his wisdom, perspicuity, truthfulness and justice.<sup>34</sup> What is more, a lack of such control is sometimes described in the literature of this period as a feminine trait. In describing how a *religiosa* should conduct herself, the *Modus bene vivendi* presents a stark contrast between the 'vain and garrulous' (vana et garrula) secular woman who obsesses over the trivial desires of mortal life, compared to the modesty and quiet contemplation which a woman in holy orders should assume.<sup>35</sup> It is perhaps no accident that Pontano chose to name the obstreperous female character in his dialogue *Antonius* - described as disturbing the peace with her unchecked outbursts - 'Euphorbia', the name given to a poisonous plant native to Mauritania during the reign of King Juba II, which in small doses was a well-known emetic and cathartic.<sup>36</sup> In this light, the 'garrulousness' that Pseudo-Aristotle warns the prince to avoid is, like music, a potentially effeminising trait, and the prince who indulges in musical delight too openly, or does not control their speech, runs the risk of being seen as self-indulgent or weak by their subjects.<sup>37</sup> Isabella d'Este, in spite of at least one notable episode in which her public performance raised eyebrows, chose to reflect the prudence of silence musically in an *impresa*, used throughout her rooms in the

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<sup>34</sup> 'vero vox est mediocris in subtilitate et grossitie est sapiens pervidus verax est iustus.' Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Regum Regimine*, fol. 5r.

<sup>35</sup> Pseudo-St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Modus bene vivendi*, fol. 62r.

<sup>36</sup> Euphorbia's sonic presence is described in Pontano, 'Antonius', 1501, fol. 66v. Dioscorides IV.177 describes the uses of the plant *Euphorbia*. Efraim Lev and Zohar Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), 487. Grendler notes that Ermolao Barbaro, who met Pontano during his time in Naples between 1471 and 1473, completed a new Latin translation of Dioscorides around 1481. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 344.

<sup>37</sup> For an overview of the link between silence and prudence in the wider Italian Renaissance, see Giorgio Patrizi, 'Pedagogia del silenzio. Tacere e ascoltare come fondamenti dell'apprendere', in *Educare il corpo, educare la parola: nella trattatistica del Rinascimento* ed. Giorgio Patrizi and Amadeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1998), 415-24.

Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, depicting a series of rests, for which Mario Equicola gave the following reading in a draft copy of his *Libro de natura de amore*:<sup>38</sup>

Habia in memoria il sapientissimo Biante di haver parlato, esserse piu volte pentito ne mai de haver taciuto. Questo in figure ingeniosamente ha significato la prudentissima Isabella da Este de Mantua Marchesa con tucte le pause délia musica pratica le quali ci admoniscono et quelli ad viva voce ne dicono “ad tempo taci”<sup>39</sup>

I remember the very wise Biante having said, that he often regretted not having remained silent. This the most prudent Isabella d’Este, Marchesa of Mantua, has signified in an ingenious metaphor with all the rests of practical music, which admonish us and those who speak boldly, telling them ‘at times, stay silent’<sup>40</sup>

Other musical imagery found in Isabella’s *grotta* might have been intended as a similar reflection on the need to regulate behaviour, this time explicitly regarding engagement with music. Anne MacNeil has suggested that depictions of broken instruments may have been conceived as a warning that there is such a thing as ‘too much music.’<sup>41</sup> Several potentates ruling in the decades around the turn of the fifteenth century were criticised for musical indulgence. The case of Galeazzo Maria Sforza offers the most sensational example, having sometimes been considered one of the transgressions against virtuous governance which cost him his life.<sup>42</sup> Evelyn Welch has questioned this interpretation, which is based on the fact that the chronicler Bernadino Corio, who had served as chamberlain to Galeazzo Maria and was present at his assassination, describes his master’s spending on his chapel choir—a considerable ensemble of thirty adult singers—as a prelude

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<sup>38</sup> On Isabella’s musical conduct, in particular her famous performance at the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia, see Shephard, “Constructing Isabella d’Este’s musical decorum in the visual sphere”, and Prizer, “Una “Virtù Molto Conveniente a Madonne”.

<sup>39</sup> Mario Equicola, *Libro de natura de amore*, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin, cod. N.III. 10, fol. 24or.

<sup>40</sup> Shephard, 2011, 701. I have slightly amended Shephard’s translation. Stephen D. Kolsky first drew notice to this passage, which was struck out of the autograph manuscript and does not appear in the first printed edition referenced here, in Chapter III. See Stephen D. Kolsky, “An Unnoticed Description of Isabella d’Este’s Grotta,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 52 (1989), 232–235.

<sup>41</sup> Anne MacNeil, “Songs for Isabella d’Este” in *Uncovering the Music of Early European Women*, ed. Fontijn, 105–124, at 113.

<sup>42</sup> Wegman, *The Crisis of Music*, 44.

to, but not explicitly connected with, his account of Galeazzo Maria's assassination.<sup>43</sup> However, placed alongside criticism of the spending of other rulers on musicians, the expense lavished upon music at his court might have drawn similar comment. In 1489, Ondadio Vitali wrote of Ercole d'Este that 'all his pleasure seems to lie with music, and with astrology, and with black magic, with little audience given to his people' (tuti li piaciri che lie parso e con musiche e con astrologie e e negromancie con pochissima audienca al suo popolo).<sup>44</sup> The *Diario ferrarese* recorded that Ercole had a school for 'letters, deportment and singing' established, and that the boys there were his principal distraction 'from cares and boredom.'<sup>45</sup> Lockwood interprets this comment as one of disdain, and sees it as evidence of a contemporary perception of Ercole as distracted from duties of government.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, Leo X was described as valuing 'nothing except to sound the lute', and that he, like Ercole, sang with the musicians he employed, Marino Zorzi claiming he paid them as much as 100 ducats for the pleasure.<sup>47</sup>

Of the amount spent by each man on musicians, Galeazzo Maria's expenses are particularly striking; in 1467 he spent 5,768 lire on secular musicians—seventeen ducal trumpeters, five pifferi, a lutenist, a viola player, and a pipe-and-tabor player (tamborino), and in 1473, 12,127 lire on his chapel musicians alone.<sup>48</sup> Ercole—one of Galeazzo Maria's chief competitors for *oltremontani* singers—spent just 38% of the amount disbursed at the Sforza Court.<sup>49</sup> Although most of the account books of Federico da Montefeltro's chancery were destroyed in the nineteenth century, making direct comparisons of spending between these

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<sup>43</sup> See Evelyn S. Welch, "Sight, Sound and Ceremony in the Chapel of Galeazzo Maria Sforza," *Early Music History*, Vol. 12 (1993), 151–190.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Antonio Frizzi, *Memorie per la storia di Ferrara*, vol. 4 (Ferrara: Francesco Pomatelli, 1796) at 147–8. In referencing this passage both Thorndike and Wegman give 'negromancie' as 'necromancy'. See Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 436 and Wegman, *The Crisis of Music*, at 44. I have chosen 'black magic' as a literal translation which allows for a broader scope of possible activity than the term 'necromancy' carries today. For a brief consideration of the ease of conflating necromancy and black magic in the context of a text recorded in an inventory of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga's library, see D.S Chambers, "A Condottiere and His Books: Gianfrancesco Gonzaga (1446–96)," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 70 (2007), 33–97, at 91.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, at 128–9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 127–9.

<sup>47</sup> Kate van Orden, "Domestic Music," in *The Cambridge History of Sixteenth-Century Music*, ed. Fenlon and Wistreich, 335–378, at 339.

<sup>48</sup> Prizer, "Music at the Court of the Sforza", at 146.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

courts difficult, a list of those employed by the court drawn up by Susech of Castel Durante twenty-five years after Federico's death provides a stark contrast with the musical forces of the Ferrarese and Sforza courts.<sup>50</sup> Federico's chapel musicians numbered just three *cantori*, five boys (*putti che cantavano*) and two organists (*sonatori da organo*), and his *trombetti* only six compared to Galeazzo Maria's seventeen.<sup>51</sup> In an age in which princes frequently resorted to underhanded means and substantial sums to attract French and Flemish singers, none of Federico's musicians appear to have come from further afield than Florence, which, in the absence of payrolls, would suggest that they were paid far more modestly.<sup>52</sup> Although music had its uses, as we shall see, as a tool of power as much as it did private *otium*, the discrepancy in spending between the courts of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Ercole d'Este on the one hand, and Federico da Montefeltro on the other, are highly indicative of their personal musical inclinations, suggesting a degree of indulgence on the part of the former - unwise in the eyes of some of their contemporaries - and a virtuous moderation on the part of the latter.<sup>53</sup>

Music's use to the potentate extended beyond relaxation. The first page of the 1501 edition of *De Regem Regimine* features a diagram of a horn supposedly made for Alexander the Great, of enormous size and like resonance, with which he was able to draw together his army. The accompanying description reads:

Hoc aeneo cornu mirabili artificio fabricato Alexander rex magnificus ex.lx.  
Miliaribus exercitum suum convocavit: Quod ob illius inextimabile artificio et  
exendentem magnitudinem.lx.viris regebantur verum multa resonantium metallorum  
genera in eius compositionem concurrebant.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> 129 and 134.

<sup>51</sup> Nicoletta Guidobaldi, *La musica di Federico: immagini e suoni alla corte di Urbino* (Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1997), 84.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Although Clough ("Federigo da Montefeltro's Patronage of the Arts", at 134) states that none of the musicians named by Susech are otherwise known, Guidobaldi helpfully lists them all. On the methods for acquiring *oltremontani* musicians adopted by princes, see Lewis Lockwood, "Strategies of Music Patronage in the Fifteenth Century: The Cappella of Ercole I d'Este," in *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources, and Texts*, ed. Iain Fenlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 227-48.

<sup>53</sup> Clough, "Art as Power", at 47.

<sup>54</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Regem Regimine*, 1501, fol. 1r.

With this brazen horn, made with wonderful craftsmanship, Alexander the Great convened his army at a distance of sixty miles; for its inestimable artifice and great size, it required sixty men to manage it. Very many resonant metals were combined in its manufacture.

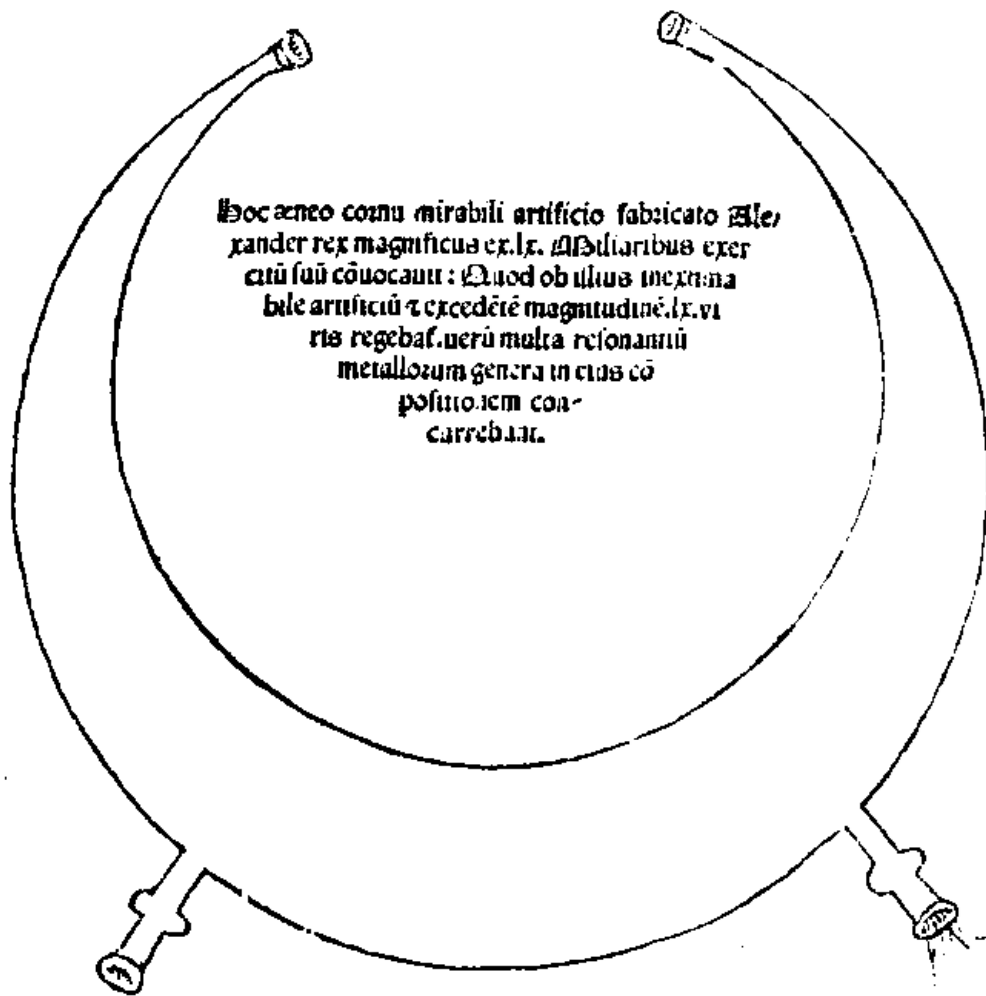


Figure 4.1: The horn of Alexander the Great. Pseudo-Aristotle, *De Regem Regimine*, 1501, fol. 1r.

Later in the text, a comparable legend is related: that of the horn of Themistius, similarly capable of producing a sound calling troops to muster within a radius of sixty miles. Here the description also draws attention to the fear an instrument of such size might inspire:<sup>55</sup>

Oportet etiam tecum habere illud instrumentum quod fecit themistius ad opus exercitus et ad nocendum: et est instrumentum terribile quod dividitur modis multis. Quia forte te oportebit visitare totam provintiam tuam et regnum tuum et congregare subditos et proceres tuos et bellatores in eadem die vel citius vel alio modo prout indiget exercitus magnus et numerosus in huius instrumenti sonus auditur per militaria sexaginta. <sup>56</sup>

It is also necessary for you to have with you that instrument which Themistius made for the work of the army and for harming: and it is a fearful instrument which is divided in many ways. Should it be necessary for you to visit your entire province and your kingdom and assemble your subjects and nobles and warriors on the same day, or sooner or in another way, according to the needs of a large and numerous army, this instrument can produce a sound that will be heard for a distance of sixty miles.

The use of music in war receives only cursory mention in the printed texts circulated during our timeframe, but appears frequently in *laus musice*, such as that given by Canossa in *Il Cortegiano*, where its usage by the Spartans to drill and regulate the emotions of troops is commended.<sup>57</sup> Typically such references are brief, but a notable exception to this rule is a chapter found in Roberto Valturio's treatise *De re militari (Of military matters)*, 'De musica: et in quo cum re militari comercium eius fit' (Of music, and what its pertinence to Military affairs is).<sup>58</sup> Spanning some four folios in its first printed edition (Verona: Johannes Nicolai de Verona, 1472) it utilises an abundance of classical sources and also examples

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<sup>55</sup> M.R. James notes that the horn does not appear in any classical source, noting its description by pseudo-Aristotle as its earliest mention. See Walter de Milemete, *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete*, ed. M.R. James (Oxford: For the Roxburghe Club, 1913), at liv.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 17r.

<sup>57</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, at 78–79. For a detailed study of music and war in the sixteenth century, see Richard Wistreich, "Music and War".

<sup>58</sup> Roberto Valturio, *De re militari* (Verona: Johannes Nicolai de Verona, 1472), fols. 27v - 30v.

contemporary to Valturio's day to display the full range of music's uses, both in peace and war. In the best tradition of the *laus musice*, the chapter is more a display of erudition than a detailed, practical guide to the way music might be used in war. To my knowledge, Machiavelli is one of the few who, in his *Libro dell'arte della guerra* (composed c.1519–20), specifies that fifes and drums should be used to give orders to advance or retreat, or when artillery should open fire, and that different trumpets should be used in signalling for cavalry and infantry in order to avoid one being misled by instructions intended for the other.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, Valturio's first concern seems to have been to make knowledge of each of the liberal arts somehow pertinent to the warfare, with each receiving a chapter in turn. There are considerable parallels between his text and passages pertaining to music found in passages of other fifteenth-century texts already considered here. Valturio describes the Spartans' use of music to control their troops, the Athenian ridicule of the musically ignorant Themistocles, and casts Sigismondo Malatesta, to whom his text is dedicated, as a new Achilles, also utilising song to relax after the strain of battle, while also ensuring that this musical relaxation is well moderated, in order to avoid the licentious behaviour music might engender:<sup>60</sup>

Ceterum Sigismunde Pandulphe ... Nam si uti tu tecum aliquando foles sapientissime princeps: post magnas curas difficiles et illustres bellorum occupationes relaxandi ac reparandi animi gratia vel amicorum vel propter uirtutem quis agat: non illiberaliter sed modeste ab his aliquid voluptatis assumet nec absurd hanc musice partem bellice fortitudini coniunxisse te quispiam admiretur<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, Sigismondo Pandolfo ... If after your great cares and difficult and illustrious occupation, in order to relax your spirit, or that of your friends, or for reasons of virtue, you are sometimes accustomed to take pleasure, not ignobly but

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<sup>59</sup> Wistreich, "Music and War", 193.

<sup>60</sup> Anthony F. D'Elia has linked Valturio's inclusion of the Spartan's musical practice with an attack Malatesta made on papal forces at Nidastore in 1461, where Malatesta ordered his trumpeters and pipers to play to reinvigorate his exhausted infantry. See Anthony F. D'Elia, *Pagan Virtue in a Christian World: Sigismondo Malatesta and the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), at 103.

<sup>61</sup> Valturio, *De re militari*, fol. 30r.

moderately in those sound, let no one unreasonably marvel that you have combined this art of sounds with the force of battle.<sup>62</sup>

Despite military matters falling very much within the realm of the *vita activa*, the prevalence of music as a tool of relaxation makes substantial mention of its place in the prince's private life unavoidable. Discussion of music in the *Regem Regimine* and *Regimine Principium* is similarly focused first and foremost to the prince's *vita contemplativa*. However, scattered throughout the treatises of the humanist Giovanni Pontano one finds further references to music serving recreational and more functional purposes, and a clear demarcation between the nature of the music and musicians fulfilling either role.

Pontano's writings, published in Naples between 1481 and 1498 before their collation into a single volume in 1501 by Bernado Viani in 1501, were not intended solely for the prince, though much of their content pertains if not to the prince himself then to those men who moved in the same sphere. The topics of magnificence (*De magnificentia*) and splendour (*De splendore*) naturally apply only to those with the need to display such qualities, whereas Pontano is explicit in stating that liberality (*De liberalitate*) must be shown by all people, though their generosity should be appropriate to their means. In illustrating the considerations one should make before showing liberality, he recounts encountering a trumpeter sent to greet him upon his entrance to the town of Narni in Umbria:<sup>63</sup>

Quibus tamen minores facultates sunt /hi respicere imprimis debent /ut ipsorum liberalitas quo rarior minusque plane est /eo exactior ab ipsis delectus habeatur eorum in quos pecunias conferunt: nam qui plurimum habent quod dent /iis fortasse concedendum fuerit /si quid dum non multum tamen in delectu peccent /minus autem opulentis in hoc peccare non facile permittitur. Veneram ipse aliquando Narniam: diverteramque ad meritoriam tabernam cum familiaribus qui mecum iter faciebant. Tubicen non malus discumbentibus nobis atrium ingressus est. Invaluit enim mos ut, cum peregrinus quispiam, qui dignitatem prae se ferat aliquam / oppidum ingreditur tubicines postquam tuba eum salutaverint /donari se expectent.

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<sup>62</sup> This translation is taken from Gallo, *Music in the castle*, trans. Anna Herklotz, at 109–10.

<sup>63</sup> This passage is also discussed in Shephard and Rice, “Giovanni Pontano hears the Street Soundscape of Naples”, at 11–12.



Ingredientem igitur tubicinem carleno donavi / atque ut taceret iussi. Causam  
requirenti cauponi / respondi me cum erga tubicinem liberalis esse nequaquam, si  
caneret, eo carleno redemisse / ne illiberalis dicerer et qui cantum non possem /  
silentium eo argento mercatus essem.<sup>64</sup>

Those who are however of lesser means, must be attentive in ensuring that their  
liberality is more elect, and less extravagant, by choosing carefully to whom they  
give, for those who live in abundance may give abundantly, as long as they do not err  
in their choices, but those who are less wealthy cannot permit themselves any error. I  
once went to Narni, and diverted to a reputable tavern with my friends, who had  
made the journey with me. As we sat down a trumpeter - not a bad player – entered  
our room, for the custom prevailed that, when a stranger came into town whose rank  
merited some dignity, he would be greeted by trumpets, who would then expect a  
gift in return. When we entered, I had given the trumpeter a silver coin, and ordered  
him to be silent.<sup>65</sup> When the innkeeper asked why, I replied that, not being able to  
be liberal with a trumpeter by any means, if he had played, I would have  
recompensed him, lest any question my liberality; and because I could not pay a  
player, I paid rather for his silence.

Unpicking the reasoning behind Pontano's simple, and at first glance derisive decision to  
pay for the trumpeter's silence rather than accept the dignity being offered him is no easy  
task. The foundation of Pontano's decision rests in the judgement of his personal means;  
feeling he was unable to reward a half-decent player suitably for saluting his entrance into  
Narni, he nevertheless gave the trumpeter something for his pains to avoid appearing  
miserly. However, this decision also requires a second judgement: whether a trumpeter  
merits reward for this service, thrust involuntarily upon visitors to the town. In *De  
Magnificentia*, Pontano describes performers including *istriones*, *scurras* and *tibicines* as being  
unworthy of such reward, and strongly censures princes of his own time who spend  
exorbitantly on them. Turning to examples from antiquity rather than the princes of his

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<sup>64</sup> Giovanni Pontano, "De Liberalitate," in *Opera*, fols. 86v–87r.

<sup>65</sup> A 'carleno' was a silver currency in the kingdom of Sicily, first minted in the rein of Charles I of Anjou. Giovanni Pontano, *I libri delle Virtù Sociali*, ed. and trans. Tateo (Rome: Bulzone Editore, 1999), 98.

own day to illustrate his point, he cites the hire of foreign dancers by the Athenian politician Demades, and by Caligula on a great pleasure barge replete with singers and dancers, as examples of improper spending.<sup>66</sup>

In *De Liberalitate*, Pontano admonishes the reader to base their decision principally on the merits of the individual, the cordiality of the benefactor's existing relationship with that person, whether they are a foreigner, and the expectation placed upon them by the recipient to give.<sup>67</sup> It is thus that stage performers are singled out as particularly undeserving of reward: though Pontano admits that buffoons (*scurris*) have their place, he nonetheless describes their art as among 'the most shameful', and argues that in giving them large sums, one both undervalues those more deserving of reward and entices others to join their ranks:

Quocirca maxime accusandi videntur qui in prosequendis istrionibus / & donandis scurris multi sunt / qui non solum in eo peccant / quod quibus minime convenit / & supra quam decet / largos sese exhibent / sed quod, cum levi et parum honesta causa moveantur / leves se et parum consideratos ostendunt. Quo in genere horum temporum reguli maxime peccant atque eo magis quod in ornandis bonis ac de se benemeritis mirifice parcunt. Non tamen ii sumus qui nihil istrionibus iisque, qui artes tractant ludicras, conferendum pro tempore ducamus / quandoquidem et his interdum delectari non dedecet / sed ita quidem conferendum, ne bonis ac benemeritis fiat iniuria: allicianturque alii ad id vitae genus infame / dum turpissimas artes in precio esse intelligunt.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> 'nam lege cautum Athenis cum esset / ne qui peregrinus ludis pulicis in theatro saltaret / mille dragmarum multa indicta ei, qui ludos ederet Demades ludis suis centum peregrinos, qui saltarent, mercede conductos in theatrum induxit / centies mille dragmis exolutis. Quid hac profusione improbius? ... 'Caius qui Tiberio Augusto successit intra annum / opes illas immensas a Tiberio congestas ac vicies septies millies sestertium absumpsit. Quid mirum qui Liburnicarum navium gemmatis puppibus / ac diversicoloribus velis uteretur / in quibus etiam thermas porticus ac triclinia magna laxitate statuisset / vitibus etiam ac pomiferis arbusculis dispositis, quarum umbra de die tectus atque inter choros et cantus litora Campaniae comessabundus discurreret.' Pontano, "De Magnificentia," in *Opera*, fols. 97v–98r. Pontano's censure of modern princes is found on fol. 105v.

<sup>67</sup> 'deinde quæ sint illius merita / quæ expectatio / quod sequatur vitæ genus / quibus delectetur / quæ etiam ætas. Item si civis / peregrinus hospes / familiaris...'. Pontano, "De Liberalitate," fol. 82v.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 84r–v.

Therefore those seem worthy of great blame who pursue *hystrios* and give gifts to buffoons, who not only sin because they are generous with those who do not deserve generosity and exceed convenient limits, but because, allowing themselves to be caught up in petty and ignoble interests, they reveal themselves to be petty and ignoble. In this respect, the lords of our times behave badly, especially since they make an excessive effort to save when it comes to honouring the good and those who have earned merit. However, I do not go so far as to think that nothing should be given to mimes and to those who dedicate themselves to the performing arts, because sometimes it is not inappropriate to have fun with their shows; but I believe that in giving to them we must do so in such a way as not to offend the good and deserving, and not to entice others to undertake this infamous way of life, should they realize that the most shameful arts are held in such high esteem.

Pontano's scorn for those who patronise entertainers stands in stark contrast with the treatment of a *lyricen* by members of the Accademia Antoniana in Pontano's dialogue *Antonius*. Singing to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument—something we have already seen Pontano describe as fitting recreation in *De Oboedentia*—with a 'nobility' (nobilitatem) of spirit in spite of his class (he is referred to by the academicians by the diminutive 'hominutio'), and performing Latin lyric when asked without any prior expectation of reward, the *lyricen* represents the exact opposite of the *tubicen* described in *De Liberalitate*.<sup>69</sup> Unlike the *tubicen*, his art, manner, and the lack of expectation for reward make him worthy of both coin and ample praise from the noble academicians.

This is not to say, of course, that *tubicens*, *tibicines* and the other performers disparaged by Pontano were roundly despised. An inventory of Cosimo de Medici's household in 1463 found ten *zufoli*, four of which were Flemish-made, three Italian (nostrali), and three decorated in silver; the last of these appears to have been kept by Lorenzo, appearing in a later inventory of 1492.<sup>70</sup> According to Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, it was as a

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<sup>69</sup> Giovanni Pontano, "Antonius," in *Opera*, fol. 66v–68r. For a detailed discussion of this episode, see Shephard and Rice, Giovanni Pontano hears the street soundscape of Naples", 18–20.

<sup>70</sup> Marcello Castellani, "I flauti nell'inventario di Lorenzo il Magnifico (1492)," in *Sine musica nulla vita: Festschrift Hermann Moeck zum 75. Geburtstag am 16. September 1997*, ed. Nikolaus Delius (Celle: Moeck, 1997), 185–91, at 186 and 189.

cornett player that he found his first great fame, word of his skill having preceded him enough that his help was requested in Clement VII's Ferragosto celebrations of 1524. Ironically - given his description of wind instruments as 'disdained' (perché pare che abbiano del schifo) in *Il Cortegiano* - the only instruments listed in an inventory of Castiglione's house following his death in 1529 are a harpsichord (clavicembalo) and a *cassa da flauti fornita cum la chiavatura*, a chest for storing wind instruments.<sup>71</sup> The postscript of a letter preserved in the Este archives, dated 1530, requests a considerable novelty for the time: two transverse flutes (flauti alemani) 'played in the middle, and not at the head, like ours'.<sup>72</sup> Wind instruments were clearly owned and enjoyed by members of the affluent and ruling classes, and in the case of the silver *zufoli* in the Medici household, were sometimes objects of some value.

The excessive spending on *tibicines* which Pontano describes was perhaps due to their role not only in leisure but in aggrandising civic occasions, diplomatic missions and personages, be that the party sent to Naples to collect Isabella d'Aragona, the future wife of Giovanni Galeazzo Sforza, in 1488, or students who had recently been awarded their degrees.<sup>73</sup> In a chapter on obtaining splendour in banquets (De conviviis splendoris gratia susceptis) in his treatise on conviviality, Pontano describes players of wind instruments as impressive and useful in equal measure, imbuing proceedings with greater grandeur and order by announcing courses as they are brought in:

Recte etiam ac splendide institutum videtur: ut precedentibus ferculis tubae tibiaeque praegrediantur /quae convivas astantesque oblectent cantibus & signum dent incendium ferculorum/ut voluptati etiam ipsi ordo videatur adiunctus: qui si defuerit inter turbari atque confundi necesse est omnia. Ordini quoque illud accedet, ut astantium ac ministrorum ea disciplina sit, quae conviviorum est propria: absint

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<sup>71</sup> Guido Rebecchini, "The Book Collection and Other Possessions of Baldassarre Castiglione," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1998, vol. 61 (1998), 17–52, at 33.

<sup>72</sup> 'Appresso vorrei che mi portassino una cassa o sia coppia di Flauti alemani che si sonano a mezo el flauto, et non in testa, come si fanno li nostri; ma advertite de torli boni et che siano compiti de tutte le voci che vi vanno.' L. F. Valdrighi, *Cappelle, Concerti e Musiche di Casa d'Este dal Sec. XV al XVIII*. Musurgiana 12 (Modena: G. T. Vincenzi e Nipoti, 1884), 48.

<sup>73</sup> On the musical needs of the party sent to collect Isabella d'Aragona, see Chapter II, note 263. On the use of music by new graduates, see pages 151–2.

non modo dicta, verum etiam gestus, qui tristitiam aut turbationem affere habeant aliquam. Qua e re mihi videtur introductum, ut his in conviviis adhiberentur musici, qui non solum oblectarent cantu, verum ut, dum astantes ad se audiendos trahunt, silentium parerent, atque e silentio tranquillitatem.<sup>74</sup>

It also seems to be correctly and splendidly arranged that trumpets and flutes precede the dishes, entertaining the guests and those standing by with songs, and giving the signal for the heating of the dishes, so that pleasure may be united with order: which, if absent, must make for total confusion. In the interest of order, it will also be added that those present and servants should have that discipline which is proper to banquets: not only words, but also gestures which might bring any grievance or disturbance, should be absent. On this account, it seems to me, it was introduced that musicians should be employed at these banquets, who would not only entertain with song, but, while drawing those in attendance to listen to them, they might create silence, and from silence tranquillity.

Trumpets appear more regularly in Pontano's treatises than any other instrument.<sup>75</sup> In almost every case their appearance is functional. In the dialogue *Charon*, a shade's response to Charon asking whether he had ever taken up soldiering is to recall that 'Once I listened to the trumpet' (Semel lituum audii).<sup>76</sup> In *Antonius*, a herald is ridiculed by the academicians for the sheer volume of his playing and his consequent puffed--out appearance, echoing the reason why, in Greco-Roman myth, Athena discarded her pipes after catching sight of her reflection:<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Pontano, "De Oboedentia", fol. IIII.

<sup>75</sup> Shephard and Rice, "Giovanni Pontano hears the street soundscape of Naples", II.

<sup>76</sup> Pontano, "De Fortitudine," in *Opera*, fol. 12V and "Charon," in *Opera* fol. 48r.

<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the implications of this myth during this period in Italy, see Tim Shephard and Patrick McMahon, "Foolish Midas: Representing Musical Judgement and Moral Judgement in Italy c.1520," in *Music, Myth and Story in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Katherine Butler and Samantha Bassler (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 87-104.

Sed praeconem hunc audiamus qui tantam sibi facit in populo audientiam. regium videlicet edictum. nunquam vidi turgidiores buccas. Puto ego hominem fermento vesci. quos clamores dii boni?<sup>78</sup>

But let us listen to this herald who makes such an audience for himself among the people—a royal edict. Never have I seen more distended cheeks. I think the man eats yeast. What a noise, good gods!

Adding to the sense of ridicule Pontano is seeking to engender is the nature of the herald's announcement: new laws regarding the wearing of beards. Unlike the *lyricen's* music, which was performed only after request and artfully executed, the trumpet represents a sonic imposition, and one which calls the academician's attention to an announcement of no real substance. Nevertheless, it is a representation of the use of wind instruments by those in authority who prize it for being able to draw attention to important events, whether new legislation, muster, or a dinner course. As apocryphal as the horns of Alexander the Great and Themistius described in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Regum Regimine* might be, they demonstrate the utility of loud sounds in administration and inspiring awe or fear, and the interest potentates of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries might have had, not necessarily in recreating such instruments, but in matching their efficacy. Here, perhaps, is the chief reason for Pontano and Castiglione's disdain for such instruments; in a world where all professional musicians are banalistic, the trumpet player is the most utilitarian, and thus the farthest removed from the grace of *maniera* and *conoscenza* which a liberal man, such the courtier or prince, should seek to cultivate.

#### 4.2 Iudicium Musicum: the commoner

Although Pontano's treatises and dialogues on conduct and morality were written over the better part of forty years, the publication of five treatises in one volume, now sometimes called the 'five social virtues'—*De liberalitate, De beneficentia, De magnificentia, De splendore and*

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<sup>78</sup> Pontano, "Antonius", fol. 51r.

*De conviventia*—by Johannes Tresser and Martinus de Amsterdam in Naples in 1498, would seem to represent an effort to collate a comprehensive conduct guide for the reader bestowed with the education to read it, and the wealth and position to require its instruction.<sup>79</sup> In 1471, the Jensen press appears to have attempted a set of three conduct guides. Unlike Pontano’s treatises, these are concise, vernacular texts aimed at a far broader range society. Two of them, the *Decor Puellarum* and *Gloria Mulierum*, already mentioned here previously, are addressed to unmarried women and married women respectively, providing intricately detailed advice on living virtuously. A third, the *Palma Virtutum*, contains advice directed at urban, literate male society, from officials (*officiali*), teachers (*rectori*) and students (*scolari*), through merchants (*mercadanti*), to shopkeepers (*botigieri*).<sup>80</sup> This said, the treatises are not necessarily exclusive to those groups; in the *Decor Puellarum*’s fifth book, in recommending other reading suitable for young ladies, the author suggests both the *Gloria Mulierum* and *Palma Virtutum*, as well as the *Fiore di virtu*, ‘stories of various holy virgins, or of the holy fathers’ (‘legende de qualche sancte vergine: over de li sancti padri’), and the Bible.<sup>81</sup> The ‘legende’, referring to the enormous portfolio of saintly biographies then in circulation (including such popular anthologies as the *Legenda aurea* and the *Vita di sancti padri vulgariter*), are particularly recommended for ‘containing nothing of *luxuria*’ (*non se nomia cossa di lussuria*).<sup>82</sup> Such texts were also effectively conduct literature; St Basil commended that the lives of saints served as ‘living images of God’s government, for our imitation of their good works.’<sup>83</sup> Turning to the *Vita di sancti padri*, first published by Christoph Arnold in Venice around 1480 and a further seventeen times by 1519, music features prominently in several *lives*.<sup>84</sup> St Anthony is depicted as singing constantly; when the curious come to the door of his desert cell, expecting him to have died in his solitude

<sup>79</sup> See, for instance, Pontano, *I libri delle Virtù Sociali*, ed. Francesco Tateo, 1999.

<sup>80</sup> *Palma Virtutum*, fols. 7v–8r.

<sup>81</sup> Lowry, “Humanism and Anti-Semitism in Renaissance Venice”, at 40. The passage in question can be found in the *Decor Puellarum*, 1471, fols. 58v and 59r.

<sup>82</sup> *Decor Puellarum*, fols. 58v–59r.

<sup>83</sup> ‘ἐν ταύταις γὰρ καὶ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθήκαι εὐρίσκονται καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀνάγραπτοι παραδεδομένοι, οἷον εἰκόνες τινὲς ἔμψυχοι τῆς κατὰ Θεὸν πολιτείας, τῷ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων πρόκεινται.’ St Basil, letter to Gregory of Nazianzus, in St Basil, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Roy J. Deferrari. Loeb Classical Library 190 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 4 vols., vol. 1, 6–23, at 14–15. This letter is referenced by Serenella Sessini, “*Acts and Signs Pleasing to Children*”: *Musical Angels and Young Viewers in the Fifteenth-Century Florentine Home* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2019), at 22.

<sup>84</sup> I am grateful to Laura Ștefănescu for drawing my attention to this source.

(‘tememdo di trovarlo morto’), they instead find him ‘singing with great happiness that psalm: Let God come to my aid, and be scattered his enemies: and let them be driven from his face as wax from the flame.’<sup>85</sup> On another occasion, his singing has the power to banish demons which appear to torment him, but it is his silence which banishes another, sent to annoy him with singing and dancing (‘standomi elli inanzi saltando e cantando per mia noia’).<sup>86</sup> Lacking the explicit instruction of texts like the *Fiore di virtu*, where the lives of saintly figures are used to illustrate the author’s directives, such passages might have been intended as a commendation of the power of sacred song to distract oneself from temptation - personified by the demons which beset St Anthony - and by that token, protect oneself from evil. In the life of St Paphnutius, secular music, and particularly professional musicianship, is disparaged: upon asking God whether he might see someone of comparable holiness to himself, he is disgraced to be shown to a musician:

una volta prego Idio che gli mostrasse a qual sancto fosse simile in merito. E l’angelo li apparve e disse ch’era simile a uno che andava cantando e sonando certi instrumenti et di quello vivea. Meravegliando Panfutio di questa risposta infreccinando a quella contrada doue colui stava, trovando questo sonatore cautamente comencio a domesticarsi con lui ... Colui cio udendo gitto instrumenti a sonare, ando a fare grande abstinencia confortandosi de’ psalmi e canti spirituali, stando in oratione di e nocte. Et in capo di tre anni, orandi et cantando rendete l’anima a dio fra chori d’angeli che portaron al cielo.<sup>87</sup>

One time he prayed to God that he might show him a saint who was of like merit. And the angel appeared to him and said that there was one similar who went singing and playing certain instruments, and that was how he made a living. Amazed at this response, Paphnutius hurried himself to the place where he was, and finding that player cautiously began to familiarise himself with him ... Then

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<sup>85</sup> ‘udivalo dentro cantare con grande letitia quello psalmo che dice. Levasse Idio in mio adiutorio, sieno sconfiti gli suoi nemici & dispariscano da la faccia sua: come la cera dal fuoco’. *Vita di sancti padri vulgariter historiada* (Venice: Otino Luna, 1501) fol. 9v. The psalm quoted is 68: 1–6.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 13v.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 38r–v.



throwing away his musical instruments, he went to [follow a life] of great abstinence, comforting himself with psalms and sacred songs, and being in prayer day and night. And after three years of praying and singing he rendered his soul to God midst choirs of angels which carried him to heaven.

Such a passage reflects the debasement of professional musicians, as well as the link between musical instruments and *luxuria*; although the musician was not as saintly as Paphnutius when they met, he became so, and was exalted after forsaking his life as an entertainer to sing God's praise as an ascetic. Upon reading this passage, an impressionable reader might have similarly considered forsaking any instruments they had in order to follow the saintly example.

The language shared by these *vulgariter* and the trio of conduct texts published by Jensen in 1471 is incredibly simple. Most discussions of the *Decor Puellarum*—the most famous of Jensen's texts for the simple fact that a missing numeral in the colophon makes it (apparently, but not really) the earliest text ever printed in Italy—describe it as written in Venetian dialect, but Lowry describes it as 'a carefully diluted koinè which could have been understood almost anywhere in northern Italy.'<sup>88</sup> Lowry also notes the possibility that the *Decor Puellarum* and *Gloria Mulierum* may have been conceived of as part of a volume which also included a *contrasto* between the soul and Christ, *Parole devote de lanima inamorata in misser Iesu*.<sup>89</sup> A small indication that at least this work addressed the same readership is found in a copy of the *Parole devote* preserved as part of a miscellany in the Biblioteca Marciana. The final leaf features the name Cecilia, and the additional words 'libor di Cecila' [sic], clearly the work of a very young hand near contemporary with the printing of the book.<sup>90</sup> As well as being easily understood by adult readers of varying levels of literacy, these texts, vernacular, brief, and carefully written for clarity, were also considered suitable material for younger learners.<sup>91</sup> If these texts were indeed the work of the same author, and possibly one who was a friend of Jensen, they might represent a concerted effort on the part of the

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<sup>88</sup> Lowry, "Humanism and Anti-Semitism in Renaissance Venice", 43.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–41.

<sup>90</sup> This copy can be consulted at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MISC.2630.1.

<sup>91</sup> Plebani, *Alle donne che niente sanno*, 16–8.

Carthusian author to take advantage of the relatively new technology of the printing press and ameliorate the conduct and morality of as great a number of people as possible.<sup>92</sup>

Those portions of the *Decor Puellarum* and *Gloria Mulierum* which mention music have already been discussed in Chapter III, female music-making being synonymous, at least to the author's mind, with the very *luxuria* he was counselling them to avoid even reading about.<sup>93</sup> However, two passages in the *Palma Virtutum* place the author far from being one of those castigated by Cortese for considering all music sinful; rather as one who commends it, if with caveats.<sup>94</sup> His first recommendation is to 'sing, play and read spiritual things' for recreation, citing St Jermone and Psalm 95, *Cantate Domino canticum novuum*, as authorities.<sup>95</sup> The second mention of recreational music appears to be more experiential:

Quando si de darsi a lo exercitio corporal delectabile Capitulo.vi.

Dapoi resa gratia a la mensa praesertim da poi cena in estate per recreatione passigiando over standosi de cio ti dilecti potrai cantar over sonar honesti instrumenti & laude spiritual over mortal in laude de lo eterno dio et salute de lanima cum vero timore del signor dio & cum carita vera del proximo: le quale tutte sopradicte cosse seranno facillime ad obseruar a qualunque havera nel suo cor scolpito questi tre aurei sigilli : zoe La morte certa. Lo inferno perpetuo:& il Paradiso a gli boni aperto.<sup>96</sup>

When to give oneself to delightful bodily exercises, Chapter VI.

Then, after giving thanks at the dinner table, and especially after dinner in summer, passing time in that which delights you, you could sing or play honest instruments

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<sup>92</sup> On the debate regarding the authorship of these treatises, see Chapter III, note 139.

<sup>93</sup> See pages 197–199.

<sup>94</sup> For Cortese's castigation of this point of view, see page 56. For a detailed account of the musical contents of Cortese's *De cardinalatu*, see Nino Pirrotta, "Music and Cultural Tendencies in 15th–Century Italy," especially 141–4, and Pirrotta's translation of and detailed commentary on Cortese's discussion of music from 152–161.

<sup>95</sup> 'Delectabel Exercitio sie quello che le exercita a fin de recreatione si del corpo como ancor del spirito zoe cantar: sonar: leger cosse spiritual over mortal: la qual cossa quanto la sia utile aldi quel che el glorioso factio hieronymo dice. Qui assidue assistit lectioni in praesenti quid laboret nescit: sed postea gratulatur cum coeperit de amarissimis seminibus dulces fructus carpere. Quanto al canto e diversi Soni David in piufor psalmi dice. Cantate domino canticum novuum...' *Palma Virtutum*, fols. 9v–10r.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 14–15r.

and spiritual or moralising songs in praise of eternal God and for the wellbeing of the soul, with true fear of the Lord God and with true charity for your neighbour, which will be easy to observe for anyone who has these three golden seals engraved in his heart: certain death; perpetual hell; & Paradise open to the good.

Why the author recommends the singing of spiritual or moralising songs after dinner in the summer especially is hinted at in the *Gloria Mulierium*, where he describes both food and the summer season as making one more likely to give in to carnal temptations; following the example of St Anthony set out by the *Vita di sancti padri*, the performing of sacred music functioned as an honest distraction from the vice which the idle mind, heat of summer, or consumption of food might incite. Indeed, it is perhaps no mistake that Cortese's discussion of music in *De Cardinalatu*, which begins with an admonition that musical leisure should be morally edifying—and which Pirrotta has taken to apply specifically to musical activity after meals—follows on from a discussion on 'avoiding the passions' (*De Passionibus Vitandis*).<sup>97</sup> Of course, in contrast with the primarily male readership envisaged for the *Palma Virtutum*, musical distractions are not permitted to women suffering these thoughts.<sup>98</sup> That such music comes from the heart, and is not merely performative, is of crucial importance, as had been discussed in detail at the beginning of the century by Giovanni Dominici in his *Trattato della sanctissima charita* (*Treatise on the holiest charity*), perhaps a source for the author of the Jensen texts. The printing of this text in 1513 was seemingly organised by the *Mantellate*, an order of nuns based in Dominici's native Siena, to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of its completion:<sup>99</sup>

Nota che il nostro Salvator Iesu Christo: il quale e sapientissimo non canto/& non ballo/o salto: ma spesse volte oro colle scuola sua. Non riprehende canti & balli spirituali: ma quelli che sono fanciulleschi & leggieri facti in palese & al suon daltri.

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<sup>97</sup> Cortese, *De cardinalatu*, fols. 70r–74v. For Pirrotta's interpretation of this passage see Pirrotta, "Music and Cultural Tendencies", at 152.

<sup>98</sup> For instance, 'Item per optimo remedio ad ogni molestia de carne havendo la comodita senza scandalo e secretamente maximamente nel tempo de la estade per una over do volte overe quando la neccessita de la temptatione rechiede per spatio de uno pater nostro ouer uno de profundis darvi dala cintura in zofo la disciplina'. *Ibid.*, fol. 5v.

<sup>99</sup> Giovanni Dominici, *Trattato della sanctissima charita* (Siena: Symeone di Nicolo et Giovanni di Alexandro Librai, ad instantia...Delle...suore decte le mantellate del Paradiso, 1513) The dedication to the treatise sets the original date of composition to 17<sup>th</sup> October 1413.

Fanciulleschi sono in questo che non procedono dallo spirito: ma dalla propria  
volonta: non per destare o excitare in se o in altri lo spirito adormentato: ma per  
have[r] in qual sensual dilecto /sotto loccasione delle parole divine. Tal cosa  
e/riprehensa quando e/facto palese & non occulta: nelle piazze & non nel core.  
Quando tal ballo & canto chiamato spirituale e/mescolato tra maschi & femine &  
huomini & fanciulli e/reprehensibile. Dixe lo apostolo Paulo che si dovesse cantare  
ne cori al signore Psalmi & Hymni & canti spirituali: & non nelle mescolanze: le  
quali cominciano in/laudato sia Christo: & forniscano in/vulnerato sono dellamor  
tristo. Reprehendesi simili acti quando sono al suono daltri: cio e/entrar nel ballo &  
canto/comprendosi che altri habbi facto cosi. Li exempli di pochi non si debbono  
usare per tutti. Quando non suona larpe/o viola di drento: al suon di fuor non si salta  
se non forzatamente. El sordo non balla bene al suon del buon liuto. Quando  
adunque lo spirito soprabonda tanto che per divino amor fa risonar nuovi  
canti/quando la carne non puo il pasto suo putrido trovare.<sup>100</sup>

Note that our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the most wise, does not sing or dance or  
jump, but oftentimes prays with his disciples. He does not reprehend spiritual  
singing and dancing, but those which are puerile and inconstant, performed in  
public and to the sound of others. They are puerile in that they do not proceed from  
the spirit, but from desire, not to awake or excite or otherwise adorn the spirit, but  
to find in them sensual delight, occasioned by divine words. Such a thing is  
reprehensible when it is done publicly and not in private, in the squares and not in  
the heart. When such dance and song called sacred [is performed] by a jumble of  
male and female and young men and maidens it is reprehensible. The apostle Paul  
said that one should sing in the heart to the Lord psalms and hymns and spiritual  
songs, and not midst a hodgepodge of people, who begin in praise of Christ, and  
end vulnerable to the sadness of [worldly] love. Similarly reprehensible are acts  
made to the sound of others, that is entering in dance or song, understanding that  
others do as much. The example of the few should not be followed by the many.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., fols. 142v–143r.

When the harp or viola isn't played indoors: don't dance to its public sound unless forced. *The deaf man does not dance well to the good lute.*<sup>101</sup> When, therefore the spirit overabounds in love divine may new songs resound, when the flesh cannot find its putrid meal.

As well as confirming the importance of sincere performance for spiritual wellbeing, Dominici offers a wealth of information suggesting a desired standard for musical conduct across society, while also corroborating that reality fell far short. Dominici—and presumably also the *mantellate* who commissioned the first printed edition of his treatise—considered all public music and dance shameful, but believed that sacred music and dance performed in private were licit activities, so long as the intentions of the performers were sincere; such sincerity did not, however, permit the comingling of men and women in even sacred music and dance. Reasoning that God and the Angels are omniscient and omnipresent, the rule of St Benedict similarly commends that benedictines should always 'ensure that their voice and heart are of accord' when singing (*si fatto modo stiamo a psalmizar che le voce nostre se acordino con el cuore nostro*).<sup>102</sup>

At this stage it becomes obvious that those texts written with a view to a wider subset of the population than just the ruling class are motivated first and foremost by the spiritual wellbeing of their readers. This is less an oversight of the secular conduct sources aimed at the common man or woman, and more a reflection of the fact that, for many, their moral compass was influenced first and foremost by the church.<sup>103</sup> This perspective can be juxtaposed with the classicising nature of the humanist educational treatises encountered in Chapter II, and, returning to the realm of political theory, a treatise like Machiavelli's *De Principe*, which states that it is more necessary for the prince to *seem* devout than to be so.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> One cannot help but wonder at whether this was a maxim of Dominici's invention or common parlance.

<sup>102</sup> *Questa sie la Regula del gloriosissimo confessore miser sancto benedetto vulgarizata* (Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1501), fols. 45v - 56r. I am grateful, once again, to Laura Ștefănescu for bringing this passage to light.

<sup>103</sup> On the use of the printing press by religious orders to disseminate moralising literature, see Brian Richardson, *Women and the Circulation of Texts in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2020), at 141–148.

<sup>104</sup> 'Deve adunque havere un principe gran cura, che non gli esca mai di bocca una cosa, che non sia piena de le soprascritte cinque qualita, & paia a vederlo & udirlo, tutto pieta, tutto fede, tutto integrita, tutto humanita, tutto religione, & non e cosa piu necessaria a parere d'havere, che questa ultima qualita'. Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, fols. 33v–34r.

Indeed, Machiavelli's famously wily philosophy notwithstanding, the chief concern with treatises for the prince and courtier is for self-fashioning in order to obtain advancement or maintain power through image - for instance, partaking in music recreationally, but doing so in private in order to maintain a sense of masculine majesty. In the public sphere, music could also be a means of projecting both magnificence and piety.<sup>105</sup> The use of 'loud' instruments such as trumpets and some wind instruments in projecting magnificence has been discussed above, but mindfulness of the necessity of magnificence to the prince has also been suggested as a reason for the significant expansion of the musical forces of court chapels, most notably in Milan, Ferrara and Naples, in the second half of the fifteenth century, as well as of patronage of the arts more generally.<sup>106</sup> This concern might have been one of the reasons driving Galeazzo Maria Sforza's obsession with the size of his court chapel. A letter of 1473 to Ludovico Gonzaga, the Mantuan ambassador in Milan, describes Galeazzo Maria's efforts to build a choir able to produce an unmatched volume. In the context of Galeazzo Maria's rule, marked by often sadistic violence in the face of perceived transgressions, it is easy enough to dismiss his efforts as Caligulan in vanity. But his aim to project the appearance of 'sustaining music' in a peninsula where rulers frequently jostled with and relied upon one another for musicians speaks to the political benefit he might have believed his endeavours could bring, both impressing his counterparts and providing a means to show grace when musicians were requested of him:<sup>107</sup>

scritto a Roma per poter impetrare dal Papa che ogni vescovo di queste sue città principali, che erano: Milano, Pavia, Novara, Cremona, Piacenza, Parma, potesse conferire beneficii per fin alla summa di 300 ducati per città a fine di poterli dare a cantori per far che ogni città di queste avesse una cappella di cantori nel duomo; ed .., oltre li 300 ducati de'beneficii prometteva d'aggiunger egli delle entrate sue

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<sup>105</sup> On music as a projection of the prince's piety, see Tim Shephard, "Princely Piety and Political Philosophy in Italy, ca. 1430–1530". *Viator* 46, no. 2, (2015), 375–94.

<sup>106</sup> On artistic patronage as a tool of magnificence see A. D. Fraser–Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53 (1990), 98–113.

<sup>107</sup> Such requests were frequent during this period. Prizer notes that, long after a decline in the level of musical patronage shown by Galeazzo Maria, Massimiliano Sforza borrowed musicians, both players of loud instruments and singer–lutenists from the Gonzaga court. See Prizer, "Music at the Court of the Sforza", at 191.

di quelle terre il resto della provvisione che bisognerà a' detti cantori. Starebbe poi a lui di eleggere sempre di tante cappelle li migliori cantori., ed a questo modo verrebbe ad avere la sua cappella avvantaggiata e migliore dell' altre; e poi, quando gli venisse voglia di sentire un grande romore, manderebbe per tutti e li farebbe gridare ad un tratto per modo che le voci n'anderebbero fino al cielo.<sup>108</sup>

he has written most insistently to the [papal] court [requesting an induct to confer more benefices] and says that he wants to sustain music in Italy. And then his Excellency will be able to choose from these *cappelle* the best singers and in this way will have the best chapel of all, and then when he wants to hear a great noise, he will send for all [the singers] and have them shout at once in such a way that their voices will go up to heaven.<sup>109</sup>

The fact the Mantuan ambassador was kept so close to the musical happenings of court, ready to report in wonder all he had witnessed to his master, is perhaps evidence in itself of Galeazzo Maria's designs. Tim Shephard has shown how Ercole d'Este used similar displays of magnificence in order to project the image of his piety among his subjects; in response to a cult which developed around an image of the Madonna from 1471, up to twenty masses a day, supported by Ercole's newly-instituted chapel choir, were sung before the image with large congregations in attendance, the image being moved in 1474 from a mere archway around which a makeshift church had been built to a publicly accessible court chapel.<sup>110</sup>

Patronage on this scale was out of the question for the average commoner wanting to display their piety, though displays of generosity to that end were also of importance to them: in *De Liberalitate*, Pontano describes as 'not few' (*nec vero pauci*) those who, in order to appear pious, give their money to priests while their families starve.<sup>111</sup> When it comes to

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<sup>108</sup> Letter of 7 February 1473, partially transcribed in Pietro Canal, "Della Musica in Mantova," *Memorie del R. Istituto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, XXI (1879), 660–1.

<sup>109</sup> Translation in Prizer, "North Italian Courts, 1460–1540", 1989, at 138–9.

<sup>110</sup> See Shephard, "Princely Piety", 376–7. This example is also used in Vincenzo Borghetti and Tim Shephard, "Politics: Staging Power," in *A Cultural History of Western Music in the Renaissance*, ed. Jeanice Brooks and Richard Freedman; vol. 2 in *The Cultural History of Western Music*, ed. David R. M. Irving and Alexander Rehding. 6 vols. (London; New York; Dublin: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023), 91–120.

<sup>111</sup> 'Nec vero pauci inveniuntur qui ut sacerdotes opipare pascant familiaribus suis alimenta subducunt'. Pontano, *De Liberalitate*, fol. 85v.

treatises seeking to influence the conduct of the common man or woman however, the focus is drawn away from how their conduct might influence others, and instead rests on ensuring that the piety evidenced by their actions is borne of real conviction, and is not mere show. This leads to some interesting implications regarding the virtue of musical performance, most intriguing of which, perhaps, is the commendation of playing (sonar), rather than singing, sacred music, so long as it is performed with good intent.<sup>112</sup>

Throughout the literature in circulation during this period, regardless of whether the author might have been a *religioso* or classicist, music is often described as honest only when set to honest words, whether the praise of great men or God. Perhaps, for the author of the *Palma Virtutum*, the sacred *song without words*, when as well harmonised with the heart as the rule of St Benedict demands of the voice, had much the same power as silent prayer: perhaps not as powerful as *viva voce* oration, but still meaningful. Another similarity between the religious conduct treatises intended for the commoner and those intended for the elite is the commendation of music as a distraction from vices otherwise born of idleness. However, while the conduct literature for the elite cites music overwhelmingly as a source of respite, in the literature for the common man, performing sacred music is necessary for the health of the soul (*salute de lanima*).<sup>113</sup>

#### 4.3 Gerontocomia

To the mind of a *gerontocomos*, one who Zerbi describes as tasked with caring for the aging, healthy longevity was linked intrinsically with good judgement.<sup>114</sup> The cause of the aging process was believed to be the gradual cooling and drying of the body, to the point where life cannot survive; Zerbi illustrates this process eloquently by comparing the body to the ‘flame of the lamp which is extinguished because it consumes the material which feeds the flame’ (*sicut lampadis flamma que extinguitur propterea quae suam consumit materiam*).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *Palma Virtutum*, fols. 9r–10v.

<sup>113</sup> *Palma Virtutum*, fol. 9r.

<sup>114</sup> For a description of the *gerontocomos* and their role in English translation, see Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 78.

<sup>115</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 9v; Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 35–6. Quoted in Cynthia Skenazi, *Aging Gracefully in the Renaissance: Stories of Later Life from Petrarch to Montaigne* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) at 198.



As such, the good judgement and willpower to follow a lifestyle which slowed this process as much as possible—that is, a lifestyle involving a high degree of restraint when it came to carnal indulgences—were indispensable. Both Zerbi and Ficino, whose *De Vita* also addresses the health of the ‘elderly’, question whether people who live intemperate, pleasure-seeking lives even deserve long life, preferring that longevity remain the exclusive realm of the prudent.<sup>116</sup>

The regimen and diet which comprised this farsighted lifestyle were rooted in a theoretical framework set out in Greek antiquity by Hippocrates, Aristotle, and most importantly, Galen, whose writings represent Greek practice at its most consummate.<sup>117</sup> No less important, however, were Arab authors writing in the centuries around the first millennium: Al Rhazes (known as *Almansore* in the west), Haly Abbas, Ibn Sina (known as *Avicenna*), Ibn Rushd (known as *Averroes*), and Abu Qasim Khalaf Ibn Abbas Al Zahrawi (known as *Albucasis*). These writers benefited from access to Greek texts, at that point largely lost to the Latin west, which were translated into Arabic from the early ninth century under the patronage of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun.<sup>118</sup> Their treatises were, in turn, translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and printed copiously in Italy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; the USTC records no fewer than forty-three publications containing works by Avicenna alone printed in Italy before the year 1531.<sup>119</sup> The impact of these texts on Italian medical treatises authored in the fifteenth century is evident even at the most cursory of glances. Taking Zerbi as an example, in the course of his *Gerontocomia* he makes over seventy references to Avicenna, and one hundred to Galen.<sup>120</sup> Zerbi’s access to Galen was still most likely through a Latin translation of an Arabic translation; even the first complete edition of Galen’s works, edited by Diomede Bonardo and printed by Filippo Pinzi in Venice in 1490, relied heavily on translations from the Arabic by Gerard of

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>117</sup> Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>118</sup> Amnon Shiloah, “Jewish and Muslim Traditions of Music Therapy,” in *Music as Medicine*, ed. Peregrine Horden (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016), 69–83, at 76.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 11–12 and Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 315. <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>, accessed 08/01/2024.

<sup>120</sup> Chris Gilleard, “Renaissance Treatises on ‘Successful Ageing’,” *Ageing & Society*, 33, (2013), 189–215, at 197.

Cremona.<sup>121</sup> Efforts to free medicine of its reliance on Arabic intermediary authors, fuelled by an increasing awareness of inaccuracies introduced after translation from Greek to Arabic to Latin, and possibly with other intermediary translations occurring between Greek and Arabic, came to a head at the end of the fifteenth century, finally realised with the publication of an *editio princeps* of Galen, translated by the longevous Niccolò Leonico, in 1525 by the Manuzio press.<sup>122</sup>

#### 4.4 The health of the humoral being

Possibly the most important element of this Galenic framework was humoral theory.<sup>123</sup> Galen's model - in contrast to other systems in circulation during antiquity which his theory eclipsed - gives four humours, each a bodily fluid intrinsic to the function of a given organism: blood, phlegm, bile—variously called red or yellow, and black bile (also called melancholy).<sup>124</sup> Each of these comprises an associated blend of the four qualities—hot, cold, moist and dry—and the balance of these within an individual were thought to affect their complexion, or temperament, and render them more liable to certain behaviours, to mental and physical illness, and to aging. The innate balance of the qualities and humours differed from one person to the next, described as their 'complexion', and it was commonly believed that women and men differed substantially in their makeup. The widely circulated *De secretis mulierum*, a guide to female anatomy attributed during our timeframe to Albertus Magnus, but possibly written by one of his followers for the benefit of clergymen, describes the natural balance of qualities found in women as 'cold and humid' (*frigida & humida*), while men are 'hot and dry' (*calidus & siccus*).<sup>125</sup> This difference was sometimes used as medical

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<sup>121</sup> Stefania Fortuna, "Editions and Translations of Galen from 1490 to 1540," in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. Petros Bouras-Vallianatos and Barbara Zipser (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019), 437–452, at 437–8.

<sup>122</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 325–6.

<sup>123</sup> The following summary is based on that given by Siraisi in *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 100–6.

<sup>124</sup> On divergences in humoral theory between Galen and earlier writers, see Helen King, "Female Fluids in the Hippocratic Corpus: How Solid was the Humoral Body?" in *The Body in Balance: Humoral Medicines in Practice*, ed. Peregrine Horden (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 25–52.

<sup>125</sup> Pseudo-Albertus, *De secretis mulierum*, fol. 9v. On the possible motivation behind the text's composition, see see Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Woman's Secrets*, ed. and trans. Lemay, 16. Commentary A of Lemay's edition also posits this, writing that the book was composed at the behest of a priest in order to understand the

grounds for the innate inferiority of women to men in both intellect and ability, but was far from unchallenged.<sup>126</sup> In Mario Equicola's *De Mulieribus*, a collection of short word portraits of famous women, he questioned why a cow's vocalisations were indistinguishable from a bull's if the coldness of the female body resulted in a higher pitched voice, going on to argue that the virtuous actions and conduct of his subjects served as 'evidence of greater heat and dryness [than men]' (pec plane conspiciamus plurium mulierum actiones argumenta maioris caliditatis & siccitatis), and, as such, questioning whether there was any innate humoral difference between the male and female body, and if there was, whether it mattered.<sup>127</sup>

Of greatest importance to someone living in Italy during our timeframe, man or woman, was how the balance of qualities within the body could be altered, for good or ill, by things external to the body.<sup>128</sup> These were defined as six 'non-naturals', comprising a broad range of activities, substances and affects: air, food and drink, exercise and rest, sleep and waking, excretion and sex, and 'accidents of the soul', often referred to as 'passions'.<sup>129</sup> How these might alter an individual's complexion is rendered most plainly in the case of food and drink. Much like the human body, foodstuffs were also attributed complexions, which defined the effect they would have on the body when ingested. The common interest in this

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'poisonous' nature of menstruation. See Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Woman's Secrets*, ed. and trans. Lemay, 59–60.

<sup>126</sup> Gail Kern Paster, "Unbearable Coldness of Female Being: Women's Imperfection and the Humoral Economy," *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 28, no. 3, (1998), 416–440, at 418.

<sup>127</sup> 'Syllius de Xantippo canunt: Frigiditas & humiditas coniectantur quod pilis ad exeundum denegetur (fol. 4v) accessus: & humor arteriam – per quam sonus vocis ascendit – crassiorem efficiens vocis angustet meatum: [C] ac si Alae & feminae pilis vacet – & vacca non gravius tauro sonet: pec plane conspiciamus plurium mulierum actiones argumenta maioris caliditatis & siccitatis – quem virorum: Nihil est quod id pro certo nobis naturales affirmant: scimus enim huiusmodi de rebus physicorum concertationes variasque quae nam Animalia – membrae calida sint quae ve frigida: Et enim non nullis aquatilia terrestribus esse calidiora placet – Argumento quod naturae frigiditas calore eorum naturae compensetur: Parmenides (referente Aristotele) Mulieres esse viris calidiores auctor est: quod idem quibusdam alius placuit: si calidum igitur & frigidum tantam recipiunt abiguitatem & controversiam – quid de caeteris debemus arbitrari?' Mario Equicola, *De Mulieribus* (Mantua, s.n., 1501), fols. 4r–v. In understanding Equicola's antipathy toward the idea of significant humoral differences between male and female, Stephen Kolsky quotes from the beginning of Equicola's argument (fol. 2v) 'qua re eandem originem idemque habere principium viri feminaeque animam et corpus non video posse dubitare' (in which case I do not see that it can be doubted that the soul and body of man and woman have the same origin and the same principle). Stephen Kolsky, *Mario Equicola: The Real Courtier* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991), 71.

<sup>128</sup> Remi Chiu, *Plague and Music in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), at 14.

<sup>129</sup> Saul Jarcho, "Galen's Six Non-Naturals: A Bibliographic Note and Translation," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 44, no. 4 (July – August 1970), 372–377, at 372.

area of humoral theory is hinted at by the proliferation of editions of the *Hystoria d'Almansore philosopho*, otherwise known as the *Libro terzo d'Almansore* or simply *Cibaldone*, which ran to fifteen printed editions in Italy before the year 1530. A vernacular versification of the third book of Al Rhazes's medical treatise *Kiṭāb al-Manṣūrī*, it functions as a commonplace book of ingredients and their effects on the body, its versification rendering it easy to memorise, and perhaps also lending it to sung performance. The foodstuffs mentioned differ substantially from one edition to the next, but a common feature is the inclusion of the balance of qualities for the majority of items. In illustrating this we might take a food long held to be beneficial to the voice: the chive. In book 19 of the *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder describes it as integral element of Emperor Nero's regime of vocal care:

Diremo ancora de porro maxime: perche Nerone imperadore novamente ha dato auctorita alporrho sectivo: perche con lolio ogni di distate nemangiava senza pane o altra cosa per havere optima voce.<sup>130</sup>

We will speak also of the leek, especially as emperor Nero has newly given importance to the chive: for on certain days he would eat them with oil, and without bread or anything else, to have the best possible voice.

Pliny's evidence for the efficacy of chives, whether apocryphal or not, is also used by Bartolomeo Platina when discussing leeks (porri) in *De honesta voluptate*:

Porri sonovi di duo sorte: cioe sectivo & capitato: il sectivo Nerone cesare. Li diede auctorita mangiandovi ogni giorno cum olio per cagione di conservarsi la voce cantava lui non solamente privatamente. Ma et in publico. & in elle scene cioe inele feste solemne si ralegrava cum il cantare diceva essere molto obligato al porro cunciosia che el canto e bene & conserva la voce.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Libro De Lhystoria Naturale*, ed. and trans. Cristoforo Landino (Venice: Ubertino da Vercelli, 1501), fols. 141r–142v.

<sup>131</sup> Bartolomeo Platina, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (Venice: Giorgio Rusconi, 1501), fol. 26r.

Leeks are of two kinds: cut and headed.<sup>132</sup> The cut kind emperor Nero gave importance, eating them every day with oil in order to preserve the singing voice [for use] not only in private, but also in public. And in theatrical representations and the solemn feasts in which he loved to sing it was said that he was indebted to the cooked leek, which is good for singing and conserves the voice.

The *Cibaldone* confines the vast majority of its descriptions of foodstuffs to a single tercet, rendering the space available for elaboration slight. It makes no distinction between chives and leeks, but does group leeks (porri) with other alliums, garlic (allio) and onion (cipolla). All plants of this genus share hot and dry qualities which would, in galenic terms, combat the congestion which might hamper the voice caused by a cold, moist complexion:

Il porro e caldo e secco da appetito  
il capo fa doler e fa soniare  
e chi dal caldo offeso non de usare<sup>133</sup>

The leek is hot and dry to the appetite  
the head hurts and brings on sleep  
and he by heat offended shouldn't use it

Given that all things animate and inanimate were thought to have their own balance of qualities, and that an imbalance within the individual could lead to illness, it is hard to overstate how strongly humoral theory must have shaped conceptions, of both physician and patient, of the world around them. Even more importantly, it placed salubrity entirely in the hands of the individual: the most efficacious medicine was a lifestyle and diet which maintained a healthy balance of the humours, preventing illness, mental or physical, from taking hold.<sup>134</sup>

Music, too, could play a part in altering the complexion of the body through its ability to influence the passions. Galen wrote of the importance of avoiding emotional extremes in

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<sup>132</sup> 'Cut leek' (sectivo) was the term used for chives, and 'headed' (capitato) for the leek proper.

<sup>133</sup> *Libro tertio Delo Almansore Chiamato Cibaldone*, fol. 2v.

<sup>134</sup> Peter Murray Jones, "Music Therapy in the Later Middle Ages: The Case of Hugo van der Goes," in *Music as Medicine*, ed. Horden, 120–144, at 135.

order to maintain balance within the body: ‘Obviously it is necessary for people to keep away from the imbalance of all the psychic affections—anger, grief, joy, passion, fear and envy—for these bring changes and also change the normal composition of the body.’<sup>135</sup> In medical treatises in circulation during our timeframe, sadness and fear are often described as causing, and in turn being caused by, a cooling effect on the body, with joy and anger provoking the opposite reaction. In his study of music and medicine in the Renaissance, Remi Chiu has drawn links between the power of these passions in medical literature and that of the imagination: in short, believing oneself to be sick was considered enough to actually make one sick.<sup>136</sup> Worrying had the power to fundamentally alter the complexion of the body, cooling it to the point where a physical malady might worsen or other symptoms set in. Provided this framework, it is easy to see why Giovanni Matteo Ferrari, who taught medicine at the university of Padua around the mid–fifteenth century, recommended a litany of pleasant distractions, music among them, to a patient otherwise occupied with very physical digestive and renal problems in his *Tabula Consiliorum*:

Passiones est que in frigidant et convertunt mas ad interius etiam nocent ut est timor et tristitia. Proinde in istro casu magis convenit letari gaudere cum dilectis et caris amicis et audire sonos et cantus delectabiles et loqui de rebus gratis et placibilibus et bene sperate.<sup>137</sup>

Passions which cool and turn [heat] most towards the interior are fear and sadness. Therefore, in this case, it is most appropriate to rejoice with beloved and dear friends and listen to pleasant sounds and songs and talk about agreeable and pleasant things, and keep good hope.

Believing mental and physical wellbeing to stem from the same source - a healthy balance of the qualities - Ferrari’s advice addresses the physical causes of the patient’s fear, as much as

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<sup>135</sup> ‘Abstinere vero manifestum est quoniam ab intemperantia oportet omnium anime passionum sicut ire tristitie et guadii et furoris et timoris et invidie et sollicitudis. Exterminant enim hec in mutant corpora ab ea que est secundum naturam consistentia’. Galen, *Commentum in veterem librorum Techni Galeni translationem* (Pavia, Michele & Bernardino Garaldi, 1501) fol. 49v. Translation in Galen, “The Art of Medicine,” in *On the Constitution of the Art of Medicine. The Art of Medicine. A Method of Medicine to Glaucon*, ed. and trans. Ian Johnston. Loeb Classical Library 523 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 137 - 320, at 245.

<sup>136</sup> Chiu, *Music and Plague*, 12–15.

<sup>137</sup> Giovanni Matteo Ferrari, *Tabula consiliorum* (Pavia: Giovanni Andrea Bosco, 1501), fol. 42v.

the fear itself: excessive worry might cause excessive cooling, which might slow recovery or lead to other complaints. Distraction from fear through conviviality, song and positivity would play a significant role in the recovery process by effectively preventing that cooling.

In several sources, most famously Ficino's *De Vita*, the cogitation involved in study is similarly linked to melancholy.<sup>138</sup> Ficino notes that melancholy is a common ailment of the scholar, and gives three reasons for this. The first is that scholarship is governed by the planets Mercury and Saturn, whose influence on a newborn imbues them with the aptitude for scholarship as well as their dry disposition. The second is that the contemplation involved in understanding complex issues accumulates black bile. The third, 'human cause' (*humana causa*), is closely related to the cooling effect on the complexion that Ferrari attributes to consternation:

Humana vero idest ex nobis causa est. Quoniam frequens agitatio mentis cerebrum vehementer exsiccate: igitur humore magna ex parte consumpto quod caloris naturalis pabulum est: calor quoque plurimum solet extinguui. Unde natura cerebri sicca frigidaque evadit. Quae quidem terrestris: et melancholica qualitas nominator.<sup>139</sup>

The human cause, that which comes from ourselves, is as follows: Because frequent agitation of the mind greatly dries up the brain, therefore, when the moisture has been mostly consumed - moisture being the support of the natural heat - the heat also is usually extinguished; and from this chain of events, the nature of the brain becomes dry and cold, which is known as the earthy and melancholy quality.<sup>140</sup>

Ficino has sometimes been held as the primogenitor of this conclusion.<sup>141</sup> However, Ferrari also devotes a chapter to the wellbeing of the scholar in his *Tabula Consiliorum* (Pro

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<sup>138</sup> This is the subject of *De Vita* I.4, 'Quot sint causae quibus litterati melancholici sint vel fiant' (How many are the causes which cause the learned to be melancholy or become so). See Ficino, *De Vita*, fols. 6r–7v.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., fol. 7r.

<sup>140</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 115.

<sup>141</sup> Penelope Gouk, "Harmony, Health, and Healing: Music's Role in Early Modern Paracelsian Thought," in *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine, and Science, 1500–2000*, ed. Margaret Pelling and Scott Mandelbrote (London: Routledge, 2005), 23–42, at 31.

scolaribus studere volentibus coniuncta dispositione communiter eis contingente) in which first and foremost addresses how the scholar can correct ‘a certain coldness’ (aliquali frigiditate) through regimen.<sup>142</sup> In later describing how to cure melancholy (Pro parato ad melancolicam passionem), he cites Al-Rhazes as saying that ‘men of fine intellect are disposed to melancholy through too much [mental] exercise and study’ (Et dicit [Rasis] etiam que homines subtilis ingenii disponuntur ad melancoliam propter exercitium et studium nimium).<sup>143</sup> In both the case of the fatigued scholar and the melancholic, Ferrari contrasts the damaging passions, or ‘accidents of the soul’ (accidentia animi) - ‘sadness, anger, hate, cogitation, especially of unpleasant things’ (tristiciam iram odium cogitationes multas maxime in rebus displicibilibus) - with ‘thinking of moderately pleasant things, and especially joy and happiness’ (cogitare circa res delectabiles mediocriter esset utile immo gaudium et letitia maxime), which can bring the complexion of the tired soul back to a healthy *krasis*.<sup>144</sup>

In this instance, explicit mention of music is noticeably absent, especially given its prominence in Ficino’s advice for the melancholic scholar, to which we will turn shortly. Considering Ferrari’s tabula contains one hundred and nine case studies and cures (*consilia*), the degree of detail into which he delves when it comes to controlling the passions, a crucial aspect of every cure, varies considerably; more often than not, his advice is formulaic, signposted ‘In passionibus autem animalibus’ (In the case of the passions of the soul) for the reader, and contrasting negative emotions with *gaudium* and *letitia*. It becomes evident, especially after surveying several medical texts in circulation in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, that *gaudium* in particular is intended less as a commendation for the patient to ‘be joyful’ than as an umbrella term for things which might provoke joy. In describing a cure prescribed for a Venetian patrician, Dominico Moro, suffering with dropsy (ydropsie asclite), Ferrari breaks down the activities which constitute *gaudium*:

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<sup>142</sup> Ferrari, *Tabula Consiliorum*, fol. 3r. Ferrari died in the first half of the 1480’s, whilst the first edition of Ficino’s *De Vita* was printed in 1489 (Florence, Antonio di Bartolommeo Miscomini).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., fol. 7r.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., fol. 3r.



animales passiones lectificantes et virtutem confortantes ut est gaudere bene sperare convertentes spiritum ad exterius cum manebus faciunt singularissimam utilitatem in casu nostro et ita letari et gaudere cum dilectis et induere vestes scarlatinas et desirico et deferre annulos gemmatos et loqui de rebus placibilibus et audire sonos and cantus delectabiles et gratos et speculari in pulchris formis hec omnia multum in casu iuvant.<sup>145</sup>

the animal passions are rectified and strengthened by joy and hoping well, turning the spirit outward, and are of the most singular use in our case. Thus to make glad and rejoice with dear ones, and to put on scarlet garments and silk, and to wear jewelled rings, and to speak of pleasant things, and to listen to pleasant and agreeable sounds and songs, and to look at beautiful forms, all help a lot in this case.

In those cases in which *gaudium* appears as a cure, we can be reasonably sure, therefore, that music was envisaged as part of that cure and, given the frequency with which *gaudium* is prescribed, that music was itself a common prescription. What is more, the activities which the term *gaudium* encapsulated might be employed as preventative measures as much as corrections for the disordered patient. Carried out mindful of their benefit to health, they could prevent an individual from having to consult a physician as, for as long as the patient maintained a healthy balance of the qualities, they would never fall ill. The importance of regimen in maintaining good health is the chief concern of Maimonides' *Regimen Sanitatis*. Composed in the twelfth century and translated into Latin by John of Capua at the end of the thirteenth, it survives in several manuscripts circulated prior to its first publication in Florence around the year 1481.<sup>146</sup> On the benefits of *gaudium* to wellbeing, he writes:

Similiter quoque confortet virtutem vitalem et naturalem cum instrumentis musice et cantis et recitando sermones qui ipsum letificant et eius animam dilatant. Societate

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., fol. 36v.

<sup>146</sup> Rabi Moysi (Maimonides), *De Regimine Sanitatis* (Florence, Apud Sanctum Jacobum de Ripoli, [c. 1481]). On the history of the composition and transmission of Maimonides' medicinal works, see Ariel Bar-Sela, Hebbel E. Hoff and Elias Faris, "Moses Maimonides' Two Treatises on the Regimen of Health: *Fī Tadbīr al-Sihhah* and *Maqālah fī Bayān Ba'd al-A'rād wa-al-Jawāb 'anhā*," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 54, no. 4 (1964), 3–50.

gaudeat. Omnia hec oportet esse in quodlibet egro quando medicus non est ad disponendum necessaria que quidem iusserunt antiqui cuilibet medico.<sup>147</sup>

In like manner he reinforces his vital strength and his nature with musical instruments and singing, and reciting speeches which delight him and magnify his soul. He enjoys company. All these must be observed when there is no doctor nearby, as the ancients commended to every physician.

Of course, in order to enjoy a healthy balance of the qualities, pleasure had to be regulated, and excessive or immoderate *gaudium* also appears as the cause of illness. In his *Practica Nova Medicine*, Giovanni da Concoreggio, a contemporary of Ferrari who taught medicine at the studio in Pavia, writes that the excessive heat of indulgent *gaudium* is as likely to cause a fever as the cold generated by sadness (illo gaudio simul aliqualis tristitia insurguret in eo), and should consequently be ‘tempered’ (temperata).<sup>148</sup> Indeed, Benvenuto Cellini attributes to excessive heat, in his case caused by anger following an encounter with Cardinal Salviati, the inflammation which damaged his eyesight, and prevented him from completing a commission for Pope Clement VII.<sup>149</sup> The line between moderate and excessive *gaudium* is often ill-defined. A vernacular guide to avoiding plague written by one Giovanni Battista Napolitano and published by Bernadino Vitali in Venice in 1527 gives music and song (soni & canti) as beneficial, while also admonishing the reader not to inhale too much pestilential air through abundant laughter (superchio ridere); the damage done here is due to external factors, and not any imbalance in the body caused by too much fun.<sup>150</sup> In describing how to cure a patient of a ‘vehement desire to copulate’ (De Satyriasi quod est disposition sive vehemens desiderium contrahendi cum actu coitus), generally thought to be caused by excessive heat (caliditate), Ferrari recommends ‘some sadness or at least moderate *gaudium*’

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<sup>147</sup> Rabi Moysi (Maimonides), *Regimine Sanitatis* (Pavia: Giovanni Andrea Bosco, 1501), fol. 85v.

<sup>148</sup> Giovanni da Concoreggio, *Practica nova medicine* (Venice: s.n., 1501) fols. 108r and 137r.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Io non credo che di questo mio gran male ne sia causa altri che il Cardinal Salviati, perché e’ mandò per me subito che Vostra Santità fu partito, e giunto allui, pose alla mia opera nome una cipollata, e mi disse che me la farebbe finire in una galea; efu tanto la potenza di quelle inoneste parole, che per la estrema passione subito mi senti’ infiammare il viso, evennemi innegli occhi un calore tanto ismisurato, che io non trovavo la via a tornarmene a casa: di poi a pochi giorni mi cadde dua cataratti in su gli occhi; per la qual cosa io non vedevo punto di lume, e da poi la partita di Vostra Santità io non ho mai potuto lavorare nulla’. Cellini, *La Vita*, ed. Bonino, 119.

<sup>150</sup> Giovanni Battista Napolitano, *Opera et Trattato che Insegna molti Dignissimi Secreti contra Peste* (Venice: Bernadino Vitali, 1527), fol. 6r. This passage is also discussed in Chiu, *Music and Plague*, at 24.

(Aliqualis tristitia vel saltem moderatum gaudium) as beneficial, but cautions that the sensual delight of thinking about sex, looking at women (especially if they were naked), and hearing sexual acts were harmful pleasures.<sup>151</sup> A division between sensual delights and such sexual pleasures was drawn by Seneca through the use of the terms *gaudium* for virtuous, restrained pleasure, and *voluptas* for dishonest and immoderate pleasure.<sup>152</sup> A key to what moderate *gaudium* might have entailed is provided by Concoreggio, who in advising on cures for a fever admonishes that ‘temperate gaudium is most suited, such as seeing beautiful things and hearing melodies’ (ut gaudia temperata convenire possunt ut obiectorum delectabilium visiones aut melodiaram auditus).<sup>153</sup> Michele Savonarola, who like Ferrari taught medicine at Padua until the year 1440, refines this still further, in *De Febris* (On Fevers) describing music’s place in moderate *gaudium* (gaudio utatur temperato) as exemplified by ‘good singers and players of stringed instruments’ (cantoribus bonis pulsatoribus).<sup>154</sup> There are no shortage of precedents for this advice in the ancient world, whether in Pythagoras singing to the accompaniment of a lyre to soothe his followers, or David’s use of song and a stringed instrument to heal Saul, but it nevertheless represents an uncanny likeness to the moderate musical leisure advocated by the authors of contemporary educational treatises; perhaps the advice of the educationalists - although they never say it in as many words - was as much a pragmatic medical recommendation as morally motivated.<sup>155</sup>

Another consideration which governed how music was to be used in the scheme of a healthy regimen was at what times it should be turned to, and in medical literature this is defined first and foremost by the energy and time required by the digestive process. In *De Vita*,

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<sup>151</sup> ‘Sed meditatio de coitu et speculatio de muliere speciosa et maxime si nuda fuerit ut dicebat Azaranus est de rebus coadiuvantibus ad coitum et auditus vel somnus factus de venereis sunt in casu principui nocumenti?’. Ferrari, *Tabula Consiliorum*, fols. 51v–52r.

<sup>152</sup> Willy Evenepoel, “The Stoic Seneca on virtue, gaudium and voluptas,” *L’Antiquité Classique*, T. 83 (2014), 45–78, at 47. Remi Chiu identifies a similar division in Johann von Glogau’s *Cause et signa pestilentiae* in Chiu, *Music and Plague*, at 24.

<sup>153</sup> Concoreggio, *Practica Nova*, fol. 137r.

<sup>154</sup> Michele Savonarola, “De Febris,” in *Canonica Michelis Savonarole* (Venice: Boneto Locatelli, for Ottaviano Scoto, 1498) fol. 32v.

<sup>155</sup> On the alleged practice of Pythagoras See West, 2000, at 55, and on David’s use of the lyre (kinnor) to cure Saul of an affliction, see Shiloah, “Jewish and Muslim Traditions of Music Therapy”, at 70.

Ficino cites Avicenna as calling digestion ‘the root of life’.<sup>156</sup> Believing this process to involve the ‘cooking’ of food in the stomach, digestion necessarily required a large amount of the body’s heat, as well as time to carry out its function uninterrupted.<sup>157</sup> In the case of a patient suffering with an ulcer, Ferrari suggests that, while music and good company might be beneficial in recovery, the patient should not engage in either until at least three or four hours after dining.<sup>158</sup>

This would seem to be particularly cautious advice. Arnaldo de Villa Nova suggests no such interval when giving music as a useful tool in achieving a good night’s sleep when turned to after dinner in his *Regimen Sanitatis*, composed in 1309 and printed several times in the first decade of the sixteenth century:

sedendo audiat non amara nequam subtilia sed placida. Qua fuerint facilius intellectus ut sunt regum et sanctorum patrum istorie: vel musice melodie.<sup>159</sup>

Being seated, one should hear things neither bitter nor intricate but gentle, by which are rendered more intelligible the stories of kings and sacred fathers, and musical melodies.

Stepping beyond the realm of strictly medical literature, we find similar concerns in Bartolomeo Platina’s *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (Of honest pleasure and good health), composed around the year 1465 and running to thirteen editions, some in Platina’s original Latin and others in the vernacular, before 1530. Noted for being ‘the first printed cookbook’, a sizeable portion of Platina’s concern is spent on regimen to aid good digestion, and the complexion of various foodstuffs.<sup>160</sup> Like Ferrari, Platina suggests that even the salubrious reader should sit without serious movement or thought for at least two

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<sup>156</sup> ‘Quamobrem Avicenna corrumpi sanguinem inquit: ubi digestio ipsa corrumpitur. secutusque Galienum: appellat digestionem: vitae radicem.’ Ficino, *De Vita*, fol. 26v.

<sup>157</sup> Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, 106.

<sup>158</sup> ‘De animalibus quoque passionibus dicatur breviter que omnes compassiones nocent preter gaudium et leticiam quibus interdum uti convenit. Unde conversatio cum amicis et audire instrumenta sonora et cantus suoaves vel melodias si hora convenient afferantur conveniunt. Non afferantur imediate post cibum sed transactis tribus vel quattuor horis a cibo.’ Ferrari, *Tabula Consiliorum*, fol. 56r.

<sup>159</sup> Arnaldo de Villa Nova, *Regimen Sanitatis* (Pavia, Giovanni Andrea Bosco, 1501), fol. 89v.

<sup>160</sup> Anne Willan and Mark Cherniavsky, *The Cookbook Library: Four Centuries of the Cooks, Writers, and Recipes That Made the Modern Cookbook* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 39.

hours following a meal.<sup>161</sup> When it comes to entertainments which might fill that time Platina does not mention music explicitly, but does warn against the use of mummers (*mumarie*, presumably any form of *ioculator* or *hystrio* whose performances may have included musical elements) for their propensity to incite ire or indignation through their performances—perhaps gags at the expense of members of the assembled party—which would draw heat away from the stomach, leaving digestion incomplete:

Alcuna volta e da adaptarsi a zuocho e piacere a cagione che li sentimenti occupati in troppo cogitatione non siano impediti fare la digestione. Cessi il zuocho chel sia citadinesco face o modesto voglio che sia scaciate ledicacitate : le scurilitate. Non voglio Mumarie : non protervia non diceria: non convitii da liquali la ira & la indignatione . & molte volte grande risse suoleno nascere. Ma che el sia questo cioe. Scachi: carte de varie imagine depincte. Cessi soprattutto in zuocho ogni ingano & avaritia. Per laquale il zuocho si riputato senza alcuna liberalita: & e da sir detestato. & non produce alcune dilecto dil zugare. Concio sia che la paura dil perdere & imensa cupiditate del guadagnare per varii modi crucia li zugatori. Se le da zuzare. non sia doppo il cibo ma doppo che haverai padito. Impero che il calore naturale per commotione & per agitatione de mente si retrato dal stomacho o vero si reducto piu debile a fare la concoctione.<sup>162</sup>

Sometimes one should give oneself to games and leisure so that the senses, occupied with overthought, do not impede digestion. Cease games (which I would have urbane, witty, and modest) that are caustic, biting or scurrilous. I will not have mummers – nothing perverse or foolish – no abuse which provokes ire and indignation, and from which great quarrels arise. What I would have is this: chess; cards depicting various images. Desist, above all in gaming, from all deceit and greed, by which a game loses its fun, becomes detestable, and brings no pleasure to the player; for the fear of losing and immense desire to win by any means might vex the players. If you would play

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<sup>161</sup> ‘Elle da soprassedere per duo hore doppo ricevuto il cibo da ogni movimento corporeo che sia grande. & da agitatione di mente. Almeno fina che la prima concotione si faci.’ Bartolomeo Platina, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, fol. 4r.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

games, do so not after food but after digestion: know that the natural heat, by commotion and agitation of the mind, is taken from the stomach and renders it much weaker for digestion.

Much like Arnaldus da Villa Nova's suggested postprandial activities, and indeed like all of the medical advice on licit *gaudium* we have seen thus far, Platina's first concern is for gentle diversion which runs no risk of upsetting the delicate *krasis* of the body. Although he makes no explicit mention of music as part of his regimen, his guidance does offer some insight into the nature of the performances which mummers or the *hystrio* might give. At this point it is worth recalling the depiction of the *hystrio* in Engel's *Astrolabium Planum*, in one hand holding a shawm and in the other a *cuspidem*, which translates as readily to 'barb', 'sting' or 'point' as it does 'spear'; perhaps this symbolised the derisive nature of the *hystrio*'s performance as much as it might symbolise the part which a peregrine and warlike Mars was thought to play in his development. The music of the *bonus cantor* recommended by Michele Savonarola for moderate *gaudium* was presumably to be quite the opposite.

Another bodily function with weighty implications for health was sex. Each of the medical treatises I have surveyed portrays it as damaging for the male body - a necessary evil when performed to produce children, but dangerous if engaged in recreationally. The chief reason for this was the loss of sperm, the generation of which was believed to require heat and moisture and which, if expelled too frequently, left the body lacking in its vital qualities, and thus physically and mentally weak.<sup>163</sup> Such a problem was not considered applicable to women, and underlines how differently the male and female body were conceived of in humoral theory. Being naturally cold and moist, a woman benefited from the heat received from the male during the sexual act, and without the need to produce semen, her body was free of this particular drain on its resources; thus, at least from a medical standpoint, she could have sex as often as she pleased. As Pseudo-Albertus Magnus describes:

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<sup>163</sup> Ferrari, for instance, writes: 'A coytu maxime cavere debet quam in eo propter magnam spermatis effusionem forte aquisita est in cerebro et membris sibi coniunctis ficitas que non parva est nocuenti causam. Et hiis sum contentus quantum ad regimen in dieta non comemorans plura propter ipsius hominis intelligentiam.' Ferrari, *Tabula Consiliorum*, fol. 6v.

Nota quod quanto mulieres magis coeunt tanto magis fortificatur quia ratione suppositionis calefiunt propter motum qui sit tempore coitus per virum & etiam sperma viri.<sup>164</sup>

Note that the more women have intercourse, the more they are strengthened because they are warmed by the supposition of heat caused by the man's movement during intercourse and also by the man's sperm.

Given the drastic impact intercourse was believed to have on the complexion, it also held implications for the singing voice. Two sources from antiquity, also in circulation during our timeframe, describe the effect of sex on the voice as extremely damaging. Pliny the Elder wrote simply in his *Natural History* that 'with sex one loses the voice' (con venere si rivoca la voce).<sup>165</sup> Juvenal's sixth Satire refers to a singer named Chrysogonus—translating from the Greek as 'golden gonad'—whose singing was brought to an end by female admirers who paid to have a clasp (fibula) which prevented him from ejaculating removed.<sup>166</sup> That this clasp was worn to prevent a singer from ejaculating and thus from losing their voice is explained by several Italian commentators in the second half of the fifteenth century, with varying degrees of detail.<sup>167</sup> Antonio Mancinelli, whose commentary on the Satires first appeared alongside those of Domizio Calderini and Giorgio Valla in an edition published by Giovanni de Cereto de Tridino in Venice in 1492, writes simply that:

Fibula utebantur comœdi & citharedi nontam ut velarent pudenda: quam ut a coitu comprimerentur: ne eo raucescerent ut celsus docet.<sup>168</sup>

The clasp was used by comedians and cithara players not to conceal their shame, but to restrain them from intercourse, so that they would not become hoarse, as Celsus teaches.

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<sup>164</sup> Pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *De Secretis Mulierum*, fol. 44r.

<sup>165</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Libro De Lhistoria Naturale*, fol. 195r.

<sup>166</sup> On the significance of the name 'Chrysogonus' see Chiara Sulprizio, *Gender and Sexuality in Juvenal's Rome: Satire 2 and Satire 6* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020), 107. This passage is discussed in-depth in Ciara O'Flaherty and Tim Shephard, "Commenting on Nusic in Juvenal's sixth Satire". *Renaissance Studies* (2023), at 9–11. Online pre-print: <https://doi.org/10.1111/rest.12914>.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Juvenal, *Juvenalis cum Tribus Comentariis*, with commentary by Antonio Mancellini, Domizio Calderini and Giorgio Valla (Venice: Giovanni de Cereto de Tridino, 1492), fol. 70r.

Both Juvenal and Celsus are used as sources by Nicolò Burzio in a chapter on the ‘conservation of the voice and how it should be managed for singing’ (de vocis conservazione: et qualiter vis ad cantandum se custodire debeat) in his *Musices Opusculum*; to my knowledge, the *Opusculum* is the only music treatise of the fifteenth century which includes a detailed discussion of the singer’s ideal regimen. Much of his discussion concerns the need to stay active and eat carefully and moderately, avoiding anything difficult to digest ‘for they create bad humours’ (malos humores generant) in order to remain healthy and thus maintain a voice which is clear (clara) and pure (pura).<sup>169</sup> On the subject of sexual intercourse, he uses Juvenal and Celsus to construct a brief sexual regimen, should the singer be unable to abstain totally:

Unum tamen subiungam quod quamquam clerici ab omni libidinis vitio totis precordiis abstinere debeant: veruntamen quia vincit sanctos quandoque dira libido: iuxta illud Martialis. Nemo est tam teneris sollicitique pudoris qui non pedicet cantere vel futuat: summopere cavendum est estate et in autumnno: quia utilis non est. iuxta Celsum. Tollerabilior tamen per autumnnum in estate tamen in totum si fieri potest abstinendum est. Que quamuis hyeme conferat utentibus: non tamen religiosis sed coniugatis intelligendum. Nimis frequens coitus debilitat et eneruat corpus atque uocem penitus frangit. Unde Iuvenalis. Sunt que grisogonum cantare vetant.<sup>170</sup>

Let me add one thing more: that clerics must abstain wholeheartedly from every unlawful pleasure, for inordinate pleasure is fearful because it conquers even the holy. According to Martial there is no one of such tender and constant modesty who may not engage in unnatural vice or relations with a woman. Highly dangerous are the summer and autumn, because it is not beneficial then, as Celsus says. Although it is more tolerable in autumn, if possible one should abstain totally in summer. Concerning what is practical in winter, the following concerns not the religious but married persons. Too frequent coitus debilitates and

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<sup>169</sup> Nicolò Burzio, *Musices Opusculum* (Bologna: Ugo Rugerius, for Benedictus Hectoris, 1487), fols. 32r–33r.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., fol. 31r.



enervates the body, and completely ruins the voice. So Juvenal says: They are the women who inhibit the ability of Chrysogonus to sing.<sup>171</sup>

Without rehearsing the link between male ejaculation and a loss of bodily heat explicitly, Burzio confirms that frequent intercourse is debilitating for men, and that this in turn ruins the voice by rendering it hoarse. That a warm complexion was a necessary component of the optimal vocal mechanism was established by Galen; in *De usu partium* (On the use of parts of the body), he describes having revived a patient's voice through 'warming drugs':

I also know of a patient whose recurrent nerves were so damaged by extreme cooling of the neck in the winter time that his voice was almost lost. But when we understood this we heated the vocal organ with warm drugs and thus restored the natural balance of the nerves.<sup>172</sup>

According to Galen, heat also played an important role in keeping the parts of the body involved in vocal production free of the superfluities, namely phlegm, which would be found in abundance in a cold, moist individual.<sup>173</sup> This was particularly important for the lungs, where superfluous moisture would result in obstruction of the voice's clarity.<sup>174</sup> For the trachea, heat prevents constriction which would result in a shrill tone, but care should be taken that it is not overly dry, or the resulting tone of the voice will be rough.<sup>175</sup> In the absence of the attribution of a hot and moderately dry complexion to the prowess of a singer living at the turn of the sixteenth century, we might turn to Giulio Strozzi's description of the soprano Anna Renzi, who rose to fame in the 1640s:

Hà una lingua sciolta, una pronuntia suave, non affettata, non presta, una voce piena, sonora, non aspra, non roca, ne che ti offenda con la soverchia sottigliezza: il che nasce dal temperamento del petto, e della gola, per la qual buona voce si ricerca molto caldi, che allarghi le vie, e tanto humido, che le intenerisca, e mollifichi. Per

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<sup>171</sup> Nicolò Burzio, *Musices Opusculum*, ed. and trans. Clement A. Miller (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1983), 75–6.

<sup>172</sup> Galen, *Galen on the usefulness of the parts of the body*, ed. and trans. Margaret Tallmadge May (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), at 389. Quoted in Bonnie Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women: The Power of Song in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), at 22.

<sup>173</sup> Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women*, 22.

<sup>174</sup> Galen, "The Art of Medicine" in *On the Constitution of the Art of Medicine*, ed. and trans. Johnston, 223.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

questo ella hà il passaggio felice, e 'l trillo gagliardo, doppio, e rinforzato, ed è intervenuto à lei, che ben venti sei volte, con reggier tutto il peso d'un opera, l'hà replicata quasi una sera doppo l'altra, senza perder pur un caratto della sua teatrale, e perfettissima voce.<sup>176</sup>

She has a free tongue, sweet pronunciation, not affected, not rushed, a full voice, sonorous, not bitter, not harsh, nor one that offends you with superfluous subtlety: which is borne of the complexion of the breast, and of the throat, for which a good voice requires a lot of heat, to widen the passageways, and much humidity, which makes them tender, and softens them. Because of this, she makes easy work of *passaggi*, has a strong trill, both double and *rinforzato*, and it has come to her, a good twenty—six times, to bear all the weight of an opera, repeated almost every night, without losing a carat of her theatrical, and most perfect voice.<sup>177</sup>

Strozzi's attribution of great heat and moisture to Anna's vocal facility chimes with Galen's framework, and also with sources such as the *Cibaldone*, which describe the benefits hot foodstuffs, namely alliums, hold for the voice. If we apply the reasoning of Pseudo—Albertus Magnus, it also suggests that sex, while damaging the male voice through a debilitating loss of heat, might have been seen to improve the quality of a woman's singing voice through the imparting of heat from the male body to the female. As we have seen, there was no shortage of voices during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries decrying female musicianship as lascivious, and the idea that sexual profligacy could be behind musical aptitude perhaps lent medical weight to their argument.<sup>178</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that male musicianship is free of lascivious connotations from a medical standpoint. As we have seen in Ferrari's prognosis of a patient suffering with sex addiction (*vehemens desiderium contrahendi cum actu coitus*), an excessively hot

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<sup>176</sup> Giulio Strozzi, *Le Glorie Della Signora Anna Renzi Romana* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Surian, 1644) at 9–10. This passage is discussed in partial translation in Gordon, 2009, at 22, and Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: the Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) at 232. A transcription of this passage is provided by Rosand at 429.

<sup>177</sup> Translation by *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 2009, 232, with slight amendments by the author.

<sup>178</sup> Bonnie Gordon hints at a similar conclusion in Gordon, *Monteverdi's Unruly Women*, 76–7.

complexion was tied to excessive desire.<sup>179</sup> If the vocal faculty required a hot complexion to function optimally - free of superfluities which would mar the clear (*clara*) and pure (*pura*) tone which Burzio prizes in the *Musices Opusculum*—and music was itself capable of warming the complexion, it stands to reason that heightened sexual desire might be conceived of as a side-effect experienced by the singer and music lover, unless they rectified their complexions by careful moderation of their regimen and activities elsewhere. That the singers' diet might have this unfortunate effect is hinted at in the *Cibaldone's* description of garlic—like the chive, a hot ingredient useful to singers—which states that it ‘induces *luxuria* and heats the body’ (*luxuria induce e si riscalda il corpo*).<sup>180</sup> A similar conclusion can be found in Josquin's *El Grillo*, which concludes with the lines ‘When it is hottest/he sings only of love’ (*Quando la maggior el caldo/Alhor canta sol per amore*).<sup>181</sup> *El Grillo* stands as part of a long tradition of associating the chirping of crickets and cicadas with heat, but the sexual undertones which characterise its text suggests the link between heat, love and song applies just as readily to humans, and that this association was sufficiently well-known to function as an innuendo.<sup>182</sup>

Although musical *gaudium* appears most frequently in medical texts as wholly beneficial, the links between music, heat and sexual desire draw obvious parallels between the *gaudium* advocated by physicians and *luxuria* cautioned throughout the wider literature in circulation during our timeframe. The conduct literature surveyed in this study strongly regulates engagement with sensual activities, such as music, in order to prevent an individual being goaded into depravity, and the humoral framework of contemporary medicine provides a discourse which is wholly complementary: immoderate *gaudium* causes excessive heating of the body, which induces sexual desire, which in turn causes weakness of body and mind, and ultimately the premature onset of the signs of aging. For the judicious individual,

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<sup>179</sup> See page 245.

<sup>180</sup> *Libro Tertio delo Almansore Chiamato Cibaldone*, fol. 2v.

<sup>181</sup> Josquin Desprez, “El Grillo” in *Frottole Libro III* (Venice: Ottaviano Petrucci, 1505), fols. 61v–62r.

<sup>182</sup> On the tradition of associating crickets with love song when hot, see Marianne Hund, “Fresh Light on Josquin Desprez's Enigmatic “El Grillo”,” *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, deel 56, no. 1 (2006), 5–16.

engagement with music, then, should not only be regulated in view of moral or social concerns, but with wellbeing and longevity also in mind.

#### 4.5 Music in the regimen of the elderly

The place of music in the life of an elderly man living in Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century is in many ways no different from that of a younger man or woman, in that performing music carried both health implications and, evidently, a degree of social stigma, consistent with the marginalisation of the elderly in social spheres and from some public roles.<sup>183</sup> Baldassare Castiglione's pronouncement against the public performance of music by elderly men, through the mouthpiece of Federico Fregoso, is perhaps the most famous evidence of this stigma, tied to the ridicule of amorous endeavours in old age:

conoscerà l'età sua; ché in vero non si conviene e dispare assai vedere un omo di qualche grado, vecchio canuto e senza denti, pien di rughe, con una viola in braccio sonando, cantare in mezzo d'una compagnia di donne, avvenga ancor che mediocrementemente lo facesse, e questo, perché il più delle volte cantando si dicono parole amoroze e ne' vecchi l'amor è cosa ridicola.<sup>184</sup>

[The courtier] will recognise his age; for it is indeed unseemly and unlovely in the extreme to see a man of any station, old, grey and toothless, full of wrinkles, with a *lira* in arm and singing midst a company of ladies, even if he did so passably, and this is because most of the time in singing the words are amorous, and in old men love is a ridiculous thing.

An earlier example of this pronouncement is found in Pontano's dialogue *Antonius*.<sup>185</sup> An octogenarian (octogenarius) is spotted madly serenading (cantans amore insaniens) a young woman from beneath her window by members of the *Accademia Antoniana*, gathered under a

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<sup>183</sup> Skenazi, *Aging Gracefully in the Renaissance*, 61.

<sup>184</sup> Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. Preti, 109.

<sup>185</sup> This passage is also discussed in Shephard and Rice, "Giovanni Pontano hears the Street Soundscape of Naples", at 7.

nearby portico.<sup>186</sup> In spite of his decorum, referred to by academician Enrico as charming (*blande*) and generous (*larga*), the scene is a source of amusement, Enrico ridiculing the man as ‘delirious’ (*quid hoc sene delirious?*), and taking astonished delight in his tears (*etiam lachrymatur*).<sup>187</sup> When challenged by Enrico on his actions, the old man launches into a defence of love and the new lease of life it has brought him:

gravissimeque obiurgandos censeo/ qui regnum Amoris accusant: bellissimi pueri:  
laenissimi heri/ indulgentissimi dei. Hic munditias: nitorem: ornatum leporem:  
computum: ludos: iocum: carmen: elegantiam: delitias: omenm denique vitae  
suavitatem invenit. Me qui senex sum/ aetatis huius molestiarum oblitum/ non  
tantum non invitum sed volentem quoque ad suavissima quaeque secum trahit.  
Sequor convivia/ cantus/ hymeneos, choreas/ pompas/ festos dies/theatra.<sup>188</sup>

I consider deserving of the harshest censure those who find fault with the rule of Amor—the most beautiful boy, the gentlest master, the most indulgent god. He has devised elegance, style, fine dress, charm, adornment, sport, jest, song, refinement, delight, in short, every pleasant thing in life; he takes me, an old man, forgetting all the troubles of my time of life, not only not against my will, but even with my eager consent, to all the sweetest pleasures with him. I frequent dinner parties, music, weddings, dances, processions, holidays, theatre.<sup>189</sup>

That the elderly should be indisposed to singing and to love is borne out also by the changes an individual’s complexion was thought to undergo through the passage of time; the cooling and drying of the body as its natural heat diminished would hardly be conducive to a pleasant voice, requiring heat and moderate moisture, and neither would the ardour of love, similarly associated with heat.<sup>190</sup> As much as this episode from *Antonius* ridicules an octogenarian in the throes of passion, and who is also attempting to live as involved and public a social life as possible, where the more judicious *senex* might have chosen to retire, it

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<sup>186</sup> Pontano, “Antonius”, fol. 52r.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Giovanni Pontano, *Dialogues, Volume 1: Charon and Antonius*, ed. and trans. Julia Haig Gaisser (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2016), 145.

<sup>190</sup> Raninen, “No Country for Old Men?”, at 268.

also enumerates a litany of activities which could conceivably fall under the umbrella of *gaudium* and which might increase longevity, so long as the *senex* paces themselves.<sup>191</sup>

Pontano might well have been satirising the elderly *quattrocentesco* who lived in that manner in order to prolong youthful vigour, as much as the old man hankering for romance.

The need for a carefully moderated regimen and diet in order to maintain such vigour is central to the two chief texts which dealt specifically with the health of the elderly in circulation at the turn of the sixteenth century, Gabreille Zerbi's *Gerontocomia* and Book II of Marsilio Ficino's *De Vita*. The bulk of Zerbi's treatise comprises an encyclopaedia of foodstuffs and their humoral properties, as well as notes on how easy they are to digest: as we have already seen Bartolomeo Platina suggest, the more difficult a food is to digest, the more heat it requires, and the more burdensome this might be on an ageing individual whose heat is diminishing.<sup>192</sup> In this vein, the amount of food eaten also becomes of crucial importance in Zerbi's advice for the care of the elderly:

nam cibum cum potum distinctum nonnullis conditionibus dotatum enim oportem ... cuius laus precipua consistit in eo quod facile concoctioni obediat: celeriusque descendat. quod quidem sufficienter completur viscositate et crassitie modum non excedentibus. nam sicuti nimia viscositas cibum per venas capillares et angustos corporis meatus cohibet ad extrema corporis vehi. ita moderata cibum disponit ut membris perfectius inhereat. glutinetur. tardiusque dissolvat. Immoderata quod cibi crassitiam pro resumptone senectutis quem maxime damnare, non enim potest senile calidum paucum existens alimentum sube crassioris imutare.<sup>193</sup>

Food and drink must be chosen according to certain conditions or qualities they possess ... The special advantage of food consists in the fact that it is easily digested, descends more quickly and is sufficiently completed with a viscosity and thickness which do not exceed proper measure. Too much viscosity of food in the veins, capillaries, and narrow passages of the body prevents the blood from being carried to the extremities. Thus a moderate amount of food causes it to adhere more

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<sup>191</sup> Skenazi, *Aging Gracefully in the Renaissance*, at 35.

<sup>192</sup> See pages 247–8.

<sup>193</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fols. 48v–49r.

perfectly to the members. An excessive amount of food because of its density is especially harmful for the resumption of the strength of old people for the old man who has little heat in him cannot change the dense food into nourishment.<sup>194</sup>

*Gaudium*, too, plays a role in Zerbi's regimen for the elderly. His advice is heavily influenced by Galen, Avicenna and Abulkasim, and as such differs very little from the importance of emotional regulation described in Ferrari's *Tabula Consiliorum*. However, as the elderly are naturally colder than younger patients, *gaudium* is especially important in bringing their complexion to a healthy mean:

Gaudium illud sensibus utile affirmant. quod animi et corporis angore sive cruciate quocunque repulso ad hilaritatem ducit. Pigritantibus et tristibus iuvamentum prestat senioribus proprie nature frigide tempore frigido et in regione frigida sicuti Albucasim tradit.<sup>195</sup>

Joy is useful for old men because it banishes the pain of the body and mind by driving away its torment and leads the individual to happiness. It lends assistance to sluggish and gloomy old people of a cold nature in a cold season and chilly region, as Abulkasim reports.<sup>196</sup>

Zerbi goes on to state that the heat brought to the body by joy also helps the digestion. However, as with the intake of food, in everything there should be moderation. In spite of the ridicule with which the octogenarian of Pontano's *Antonius* is treated, it is easy to see his conduct as deriving from advice similar to that which Zerbi proffers:

Equale tamen et temperantum gaudium senibus iniugendum preceptum est. si enim moderatum excedet eo contingens est sentores corde imbecilles paucique caloris et spiritus emori ex nimio gaudio... Alias autem anime passions que spirtus et calorem consimilitur gaudio movent motu leni et paulatim senes allici: sicuti sunt spes. et

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<sup>194</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 120.

<sup>195</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 115v.

<sup>196</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind 264.

amor. moderatum non excedentes. Aiunt enim senem deducere ad dispositionem adolescentie quo siquidem nihil prestantius in regimine resumptio.<sup>197</sup>

Hence a moderate and temperate joy is enjoined upon old men. If it exceeds the mean which is set down for them those who are weak in heart and of little heat and spirit die of too much joy ... Other emotions similar to joy warn us that the spirits and heat should be enticed or attracted by old men with a light and gradual movement such as hope and love, not exceeding a moderate norm. They say that this approach induces in old men the disposition of youth, than which there is nothing more valuable in the resumptive regimen.<sup>198</sup>

Ficino's recommendations for the activities which the elderly should engage are similar, if more strongly tied to astrological thought than Zerbi's advice. Advising the elderly to consider that their age is governed by Saturn, and youth by Venus, he seemingly distances the elderly from the planet most frequently associated with music, before counselling them to take up the performance of music, if they had ever stopped:

Qui septimum iam septenarium impleverunt quinquagesimum attingentes annum. cogitent. Venerum quidem significare iuvenes. Saturnum vero senes. atque has apud astronomos stellas inter se maxime omnium inimicas existere. Rem ergo Veneream Saturnii fugiant. quae iuvenibus etiam vitae plurimum detrahit... Vigiliam et inediam sitimque devitent: laborem rursus corporis: atque animi et solitudinem: et maerorem. Musicam repetant: si forte interniserin. nunquam intermittendam.<sup>199</sup>

Those who have already completed their 49th year and are nearing their 50th should reflect that young people are signified by Venus, while old people are signified by Saturn, and that according to astronomers these stars are the most hostile of all to each other. Therefore those Saturnine people should avoid the Venereal act, which takes away most of the life even of people who are young... They should avoid wakefulness, fasting, and thirst, fatigue of body and mind, solitude, and grief. They

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<sup>197</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fols. 115v–116r.

<sup>198</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind 264.

<sup>199</sup> Ficino, *De Vita*, fol. 32r–v.



should take up music again, if perchance they have neglected it, which should never happen.<sup>200</sup>

It later becomes clear that Ficino's caution against Venus, symbolised by the sexual act, on the one hand, and the arduous extremes of fatigue and grief on the other—which one could safely attribute, like old age, to Saturn—is in order to counsel the adoption of habits governed by the Sun and Jupiter situated between those extremes, and which symbolise greater moderation:

Hinc rursus efficitur: ut si quem Saturnia: vel contemplatione nimium occupatam vel cura pressum levare interim: et aliter consolari velimus: per Venereos actus ludos iocos id tentantes tanquam per remedia longe distantia: frustra atque etiam cum iactura conemur: atque vicissim si quem Venereo vel opere perditum: vel ludo iocoque solutum moderari velimus: per Saturniam severitatem emendare non facile valeamus. Optima vero disciplina est: per quaedam Phoebi: Iovisque: qui inter Saturnum: Veneremque sunt medii studia. similiaque remedia homines ad alterutrum declinantes: ad medium revocare.<sup>201</sup>

Hence again it comes about that if we should wish to uplift awhile and otherwise console a person who is too occupied by Saturnine contemplation or oppressed with cares, and should attempt it by the Venereal act, games, and jokes, as a cure through opposites, our effort would be futile and even harmful; and conversely if we should wish to rein in anyone abandoned to the works of Venus or relaxed in gaming or joking, we will not prevail to amend him through Saturnine severity. No, the best discipline is to recall to the mean those declining to either side through certain pursuits and remedies of Phoebus and of Jupiter, who are the middle planets between Saturn and Venus.<sup>202</sup>

Ficino's concern is evidently that the pastimes which he attributes to Venus might be overstimulating for the elderly, drawing a parallel with Zerbi's highly moderated approach

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<sup>200</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 189.

<sup>201</sup> Ficino, *De Vita*, fol. fol. 42r–v.

<sup>202</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 217.

to *gaudium*, designed to avoid causing harm. For Ficino, this moderation is strongly tied to the Pythagorean concept of the harmonic universe, which received its fullest development in antiquity in Plato's *Timaeus*.<sup>203</sup> As the heavens (coelo), body (corpus) and soul (spiritus) are governed, like harmony, by ratios, the body and soul, formed in the image of heaven and yet susceptible to discord caused by the non-naturals, is reminded of and harmonised with the likeness of heaven through exposure to other, similarly harmonic things:<sup>204</sup>

Nihil in mundo temperatius est quam coelum: nihil sub coelo ferme temperatius est quam corpus humanum. Nihil in hoc in hoc corpore temperatius est quam spiritus. Per res igitur temperatas vita permanens in spiritu recreatur. Spiritus per temperata coelestibus confirmatur.<sup>205</sup>

Now nothing in the world is more tempered than the heavens; nothing under the heavens more tempered than the human body; nothing in this body is more tempered than the spirit. Through tempered things, therefore, the life which resides in the spirit is recreated; through tempered things the spirit is conformed to celestial things.<sup>206</sup>

Naturally this leads Ficino to an admonition of music's power to temper the soul. His reasoning for its power is a complex synergy of two systems, the first being the Neoplatonic idea that harmony, through the basis in ratio it shares with the body, soul, and wider cosmos, has the power to temper the body and soul and confirm it to heavenly bodies through imitation, a concept sometimes termed 'sympathy', 'sympathetic magic' or 'resemblance' in modern historiography.<sup>207</sup> The second system is the humoral framework we have seen music applied to in medical texts. However, here Ficino describes music as

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<sup>203</sup> Jacomien Prins, *Echoes of an Invisible World: Marsilio Ficino and Francesco Patrizi on Cosmic Order and Music Theory* (Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2015), at 5.

<sup>204</sup> Maude Vanhaelen, "Cosmic Harmony, Demons, and the Mnemonic Power of Music in Renaissance Florence: The Case of Marsilio Ficino," in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, ed. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (New York; London: Routledge, 2018), 101–122, at 118.

<sup>205</sup> Ficino, *De Vita*, fol. 38v.

<sup>206</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, at 207.

<sup>207</sup> On the roots of 'sympathetic magic' see Voss, "Marsilio Ficino, the Second Orpheus", especially 158–161; on resemblance in Ficino's works, see Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, especially 84–9.

having a complexion of its own, quite distinct from the warming power attributed elsewhere to the sensual delight music provokes in the performer or listener:

Sed longioribus his quandoque interceptis amabagibus: ego quinque medicus huc accessi. Si sapes ex rebus accepti non ultra viventibus item odores ex aromatis iam siccis vitaque vacuis: multum ad vitam conferre cesentur. Quidnam dubitatis odores ex plantis radicibus adhuc suis haerentibus viventibusque mirum in modum vitae vires accumulatuos? Denique si vapores exhalantes ex vita duntaxat vegetali magnopere vitae vestrae prosunt: quantum profuturos existimatis cantus: arios quidem: spiritui prorsus ario, harmonicos harmonico: calentes adhuc: vivosque vivo: sensu praeditos sensuali: ratione conceptos rationali. Hanc ergo vobis a me fabricatam trado lyram: cantumque cum ipsa Phoebum: solamen laborum diuturnae vitae pignus. Sicut enim res qualitate temperatissimae simulque aromaticae: tum humores interse: tum spiritum naturalem secum ipso contemperant. Sic odores eiusmodi vitalem spiritum sic rursus similes quoque concentus spiritum animale. Dum igitur fides in lyra sonusque: dum tonos temperatis in voce: similiter spiritum vestrum intus contemperari putate.<sup>208</sup>

But now that I have intercepted a rather long digression [that of Venus], I also have stepped forward as a doctor. If the savours from collected things that are no longer living and odours from spices now dried up and void of life are regarded as very conducive to life, how can you doubt that the odours from plants still retaining their roots and living are going to multiply the powers of life in some wonderful way? And then, if the vapours exhaling from a merely vegetable life are greatly beneficial to your life, how much more beneficial do you think will be the songs which are made of air to a spirit wholly aerial, songs which are harmonic to a spirit which is harmonic, warm and still living to the living, endowed with sense to the sensitive, songs conceived by reason to a spirit that is rational? Therefore I pass on to you this lyre which I made, and with it a Phoeban song, a consolation of travail, a pledge of long life. For just as things which are most tempered in quality, and at the same time

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<sup>208</sup> Ficino, *De Vita*, fol. 41v.

aromatic, temper both the humours among themselves and the natural spirit with itself, so odours of this kind do for the vital spirit; so again harmonies of this kind do for the animal spirit. While therefore you temper the strings and the sounds of the lyre and the tones in your voice, consider your spirit to be similarly tempered within.<sup>209</sup>

A point of convergence for these two systems is created by Ficino in the gift of ‘Phoeban song’. In astrological texts in circulation during our timeframe, the sun is not often identified with the Greco–Roman deity Apollo, god of the sun, music, medicine and leader of the Muses - and for whom Phoebus was an epithet; however, Ficino’s association of the Sun with Apollo neatly ties music and medicine to the warming nature of the sun, and suggests that imitation of the music embodied by Phoebus Apollo, both as god of music and as a midpoint in the universe between the extremes of Venus and Saturn, is the most conducive to wellbeing. In an undated letter addressed to Antonio Canigiani on the subject of music (*De Musica*) Ficino renders this plainly, while also acknowledging that his identification of Phoebus Apollo as a symbol of beneficial music is drawn from Plato, while in conventional astrology it is epitomised by a conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Venus and Mercury, a disposition which in the *Liber Nativitatum*, as we have seen, portends the most affective musicians:<sup>210</sup>

Quaeris canisiane cur tam frequenter medicine simul et musice studia misceam. Quid nam inquis commertii pharmacis est cum cithara. Astronomi canisiane forsitan duo haec ad concursum iouis et mercurii venerisque referent. Opinantes ab Iove medicinam a Mercurio et Venere musicam proficisci. Platonici autem nostri ad unum Deum felicem apollinem referunt. Quem prisci theologi medicinae inventorem ac citharae pulsande regem existimaverunt.<sup>211</sup>

You ask, Canigiani, why I so often combine the study of medicine with that of music. What, you say, has the trade of pharmacy to do with the lyre? Astrologers might relate these two, Canigiani, to a conjunction of Jupiter with Mercury and

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<sup>209</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Kaske and Clark, 213–215.

<sup>210</sup> See pages 39–41.

<sup>211</sup> Ficino, *Epistolae*, fol. 30r–v.

Venus. They consider that medicine comes from Jupiter and music from Mercury and Venus. Followers of Plato, on the other hand, ascribe them both to one god, Apollo, whom the ancient theologians thought was the inventor of medicine and of the sounding lyre.<sup>212</sup>

Zerbi also includes a chapter dedicated to the place of music within the regimen of the elderly in his *Gerontocomia, That which Delights the Ears of the Elderly* (*De afferentibus delectationem auditui seniorum*).<sup>213</sup> While largely following the same reasoning as Ficino, that the soul, music and wider nature are all harmonically structured, he stops short of suggesting that music's power to soothe the soul lies in its ability to conform the soul to heaven. Rather than adopting this Neoplatonist approach, his aim, rather, is to weight the concept of the harmonic universe by showing its concordance in a host of authorities, including Abulkasim, Aristotle, Plato and Augustine:

Ideoque ad inducendos animos ad salubres mores auctore Albucasim olim ars musica adinventata est. animam enim nam delectari musicis armoniis prodit Aristotelis propter quod in rithimo et cantu et omnino consonantiis gaudent omnes eo quae in motibus qui sunt secundum naturam gaudemus secundam naturam. Causam autem huius dicunt esse armoniam quemdam nobis conaturalem ad similitudinem numeri consoni constructam auctore Platone. quam sententiam sequens Augustinus religionis nostra exemplar singulare qui Platoni pro viribus adhesit excepta fide inquit: Non est armonice compositus qui armoniis non delectatur.<sup>214</sup>

According to Abulkasim music was invented in order to induce the spirit toward healthful customs or habits, for the soul is delighted by musical harmonies, as Aristotle says, because everyone rejoices in rhythm and song and in harmonious sounds since we rejoice in movements which are in accordance with nature. They say that the cause of this is a certain natural harmony within us constructed of the similitude of number and sound, according to Plato; Augustine follows him in

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<sup>212</sup> Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. from the Latin by members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, vol. 1, at 141–2.

<sup>213</sup> See Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fols. 116v–117r, and *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 266–7. This passage is also discussed briefly in Raninen, “No Country for Old Men?”, at 273.

<sup>214</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 116v.

speaking of the singular example of the nature of religion and adheres to his belief with all his might. He says: No one is harmonically composed who does not delight in harmonies.<sup>215</sup>

Having established the reason for music's appeal to the soul, Zerbi proceeds to admonish its value. In doing so he returns to the concept of music as *gaudium*:

Potentissima atrium musica est. et mirificam habet virtutem armonia ad mitigandos dolores animarum humanarum et ad letificandas ipsas: imo ad omnes passions in gerendas eisdem: ita ut dici possit sic se habere tonos sive cantus ad langores animi sicuti medicinas ad egritudines corporis.<sup>216</sup>

Music is the most powerful of the arts and possesses a marvellous virtue for soothing the sorrows of the human soul and bringing it happiness. Indeed, in thus acting upon the emotions it may be said that tunes and songs act upon the ills of the spirit as medicines do upon bodily ills.<sup>217</sup>

Although here Zerbi only cites music's ability to act as medicine for the soul, in discussing the power of *gaudium* earlier in his text, he confirms that the provocation of joy warms the physical body, meaning that in curing the ills of the soul, one also positively affects the body:

Corporis pinguedo atque corpulentia increscunt. precipue extenuati ob tristitiam. senilis corporis equantur humores propellitur dilatator que calor ad extima usque corporis. Propter quod precepit Rasis senes exercendos esse in his quae delectationem inferunt. nam quecumque cogitationum anime gaudium infert eadem robur viribus tribuit atque naturalem excitat. estque illi adiumento in omni eius actione omnibus sanis prestans.<sup>218</sup>

The humours of the aged body are equalised and the heat is propelled and spread out to the extremities. Hence Rhazes prescribed that old men should be exercised

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<sup>215</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 266.

<sup>216</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 117r.

<sup>217</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, ed. and trans. Lind, 266–7.

<sup>218</sup> Zerbi, *Gerontocomia*, fol. 115v.

by or interested in those things which bring them delight, for whatever cogitation of the soul brings pleasure also gives strength to the body's forces and stimulates its nature; it is of assistance in every action of healthy people.<sup>219</sup>

Zerbi is noticeably light on detail when it comes to what the musical *gaudium* of the elderly might involve. In Ficino's case, it seems quite clear both by the advice given in *De Vita*, and the example he himself set and alludes to throughout his writings, that he wanted his reader to engage very practically in making music.<sup>220</sup> Ficino, however, is atypical in the detail with which he elaborates the place of music in a healthy regimen, and Zerbi merely follows established medical tradition in advocating 'music' without stipulating whether acting as a performer or listener produced different effects on the patient.

Satirical remarks on elderly music-makers, such as those by Castiglione and Pontano, suggest that elderly men might indeed have taken to music both for amorous purposes and for their wellbeing, in spite of any criticism they may have received from society around them. Some evidence of a more passive role adopted by the elderly is, however, found readily in paintings from our timeframe. Sanna Raninen has read Giorgione's *Three Ages of Man* (1500–1501) as a manifestation of the passive role the elderly should take in music; it depicts three male figures, the youngest of whom, holding a piece of music, appears to be receiving instruction from a grown man, while the oldest of the three, balding, grey and wrinkled, turns to the viewer, prominently displaying his ear, suggesting his role solely as an observer (Figure 4.2).<sup>221</sup> In Florigerio's *Musical Entertainment*, Tim Shephard has identified a similar possible significance, albeit one which highlights differing expectations of the role elderly women and men should play in music-making: in Florigerio's scene, an older man, seated at the far right of the company, takes an active role in singing from a partbook, while an elderly woman, stood behind the seated company, covers her mouth

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>220</sup> D. P. Walker describes Ficino as 'the earliest Renaissance writer I know of to treat the effects of music seriously and practically, and not merely as a constituent of the rhetorical topic of the *laus musicae*.' While this study is but one of many since the publication of Walker's seminal study to show that music is admonished practically in many earlier texts, Ficino is certainly atypical in the depth of his writing on music and health. See D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London: Warburg Institute, 1958), at 25–6. On Ficino's use of practical music in his own regimen, see Voss, "Marsilio Ficino, the Second Orpheus", at 161.

<sup>221</sup> Raninen, "No Country for Old Men?", at 275.

with a veil, and while present, remains at a considerable distance from proceedings (Figure 4.3).<sup>222</sup> In this instance, her concealment is in contrast with the prominence of a young



Figure 4.2: Giorgione, *Three Ages of Man*, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

woman in the midst of the music making, whose bodice is inscribed with the words ‘Mal sta ascosto un bel sereno’ (it is wrong to hide a beautiful face).<sup>223</sup> This recalls Castiglione and Pontano’s particular care in describing, with no lack of repulsion, the ravages of old age, made especially visible as an older person draws attention to themselves through making music. In concealing herself, the elderly woman in Florigerio’s scene is acting with decorum, and the elderly man, resolving rather to join the company in singing, is perhaps a subject of ridicule.<sup>224</sup> Of course, these concerns apply first and foremost to those for whom music is merely a pastime, and those relying on music for a living—particularly those who,

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<sup>222</sup> Shephard, “Voice, decorum and seduction in Florigerio’s “Music Lesson”, at 366.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 363, and Drew Edward Davies, “On Music fit for a Courtesan: Representation of the Courtesan and her Music in Sixteenth Century Italy,” in *The Courtesan’s Arts*, ed. Feldman and Gordon, 144–158, at 147.

<sup>224</sup> Shephard, “Voice, Decorum and Seduction in Florigerio’s “Music Lesson”, 365–6.





Figure 4.3: Florigerio, *Musical Entertainment*, Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

like musical clerics, performed sacred rather than amorous music—were free of such cares.<sup>225</sup> In 1528, Giovanni Spartaro used his advancing years—he was then seventy—to relinquish himself of the need to respond to Giovanni del Lago’s suggested revisions to a treatise on mensural music he had composed for Ermes Bentivoglio and long left incomplete, but noted that he was still actively involved in teaching choirboys.<sup>226</sup> Turning to the secular realm, Marchetto Cara was still singing publicly at the age of sixty, and Guglielmo Ebreo was at least that age when he was described as ‘seeming much younger than he is’ (*assai piu che non sei convene ala etate sua*) by Guido di Bagno, who witnessed him dancing with a young Isabella d’Este in 1481.<sup>227</sup> Evidently, public displays of music and dance were

<sup>225</sup> Raninen, “No Country for Old Men?”, at 276.

<sup>226</sup> Forscher Weiss, “Vandals, Students, or Scholars?”, at 236.

<sup>227</sup> Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, at 36. Guido’s remarks are preserved in a letter from Guido di Bagno to the Marchese of Mantua (Archivio Gonzaga, Mantua; Busta 1229, c. 205), and transcribed in Smith, *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music*, at xxi. Barbara Sparti supposes Guglielmo to have been sixty, based on a supposed date of birth of 1420, in “Isabella and the Dancing Este Brides, 1473 - 1514,” in *Women’s Work: Making Dance in Europe Before 1800*, ed. Lynn Brooks (Madison: University of Wisconsin press, 2007), 19–48, at 23.

permissible, and laudable, if the performer had yet to display the missing teeth, wrinkles and greying hair that stood as symptomatic of advancing years. For the socially conscious elderly man or woman playing music for its benefit to health, music might have been most comfortably performed in solitude.

In many ways, the place of music within the idealised regimen of the elderly differed very little from that which medical and conduct literature condoned for younger people. From a medical standpoint, music was beneficial so long as it was engaged with in moderation, the patient mindful of the effects of too much *gaudium* on their complexion. From the point of view of authors seeking to influence the decorum and morality of literate society, musical practice required similar moderation, whether with one's self-fashioning, projection of power, or immortal soul in mind. The admonitions on musical practice expressed by moralists such as Giovanni Dominici suggest that, for the amateur musician at least, musical leisure was best concealed from the public gaze (*occulta*) regardless of the age of the performer, or else it was just as 'reprehensible' (*riprehensa*) as the sight of the elderly male singer, toothless and withered, was repulsive.<sup>228</sup> For these writers, the expectation placed on women to maintain silence in most social situations also applied regardless of age.

Regardless of age, gender, and whether one adhered as strictly to the socio-musical tenets set out by the likes of Giovanni Dominici or the author of the *Decor Puellarum*, *Gloria Mulierum* and *Palma Virtutum*, good musical judgement played a crucial role in one's self-representation and, perhaps more importantly, one's health. The proliferation of sources in the vernacular detailing the complexions of foodstuffs suggests that readers took some interest in self-moderation in order to correct ill-health, or as a form of preventative medicine, and good musical judgement played as keen a role in that moderation as it did in moderating one's behaviour out of social consideration. In this respect, longevity and an uncommonly youthful appearance were as much the prize for judicious behaviour as *universal favore*.

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<sup>228</sup> Dominici, *Trattato della sanctissima charita*, fol. 142v.

# CONCLUSIONS

The present study has sought to establish how our understanding of music in the lives of Italians from across the broad spectrum of urban society at the turn of the sixteenth century might be improved through a study of the printed texts which both reflected and reported lived experience, and sought to influence conduct. It is far from the first study to do so: its foundations were very much laid by the project *Sounding the Bookshelf 1501: Musical Knowledge in a Year of Italian Printed Books*, on which it was my privilege to be involved as a doctoral researcher, and this study represents, first and foremost, a simple expansion of its source material to include detailed analysis of texts published either side of the year 1500.

Where the primary aim of *Sounding the Bookshelf* was to report what musical knowledge could be found across all the books printed in Italy in a single year, here my aim has been to weave these texts and their musical contents into our current understanding of life in Italy during this period, utilising other sources to account for the dearth of information in printed texts on—for instance—how students might be taught music outside of the scheme of the humanist educators and ecclesiastical institutions. Studies on how music might have been taught in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by Carol Berger, Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse-Ann Owens—to name but three which I have referenced here—testify to the fact that aural and oral training and memorisation—whether by rote learning or the memorisation of a text—were dominant in the learning of basic musical skills.<sup>1</sup>

In other areas, I have been able to rely on printed texts to a much greater extent, and this study serves to highlight the potential value that several forms of literature in circulation during our timeframe might hold for musicologists. Chief amongst these is astrological literature, which, unlike astrological imagery, has received scant attention from musicologists to date, with the exception of the work of Ficino. Using books of births as a

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<sup>1</sup> See Berger, “The Hand and the Art of Memory”; Busse Berger *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*, and Owens, *Composers at work*.

key, an ethical framework for musicianship emerges in which types of music and musician are tied to the celestial bodies. Thanks to the positive and negative traits associated with each sphere, grounded both in their role in the Greco-Roman pantheon and their humoral properties, it is possible to determine the types of musicianship which were most and least prized, and the skills and personal traits associated with that musicianship. The result is a clear association of music principally with the beauty signified by Venus, the mechanical skill and eloquence signified by Mercury, and the greater intelligence, judgement, candour and magnanimity of Jupiter. Given Jupiter's role as king of the gods, it is clear that the musician under his positive influence was considered the most edifying, and thus that the traits of good judgement, candour and intelligence were considered constituent parts of the finest musicianship. This said, the principal association of music in astrological literature printed for the masses, i.e. prognostica, was with Venus, with both the mechanical *cantor* and erudite *musicus* appearing alongside the sex workers (*lenones*) also falling under her influence.

The importance of exercising good judgement in engaging in music, as well as noting music's dangerously lascivious qualities when not used judiciously, are key concerns of humanistic education literature of the fifteenth century. Utilising largely Aristotelian reasoning, music—particularly the singing of Latin lyric to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, and to a lesser extent, sacred music—are described as licit forms of relaxation for the liberal man. Given its place as a diversion to fill otherwise idle time, writers such as Piccolomini caution that well-born children should not devote themselves to complete mastery of practical or theoretical music, having more important matters to attend to.<sup>2</sup> Porcia tersely agrees with this, in stating that most forms of music are for the common man and for sex workers (*lenones*) to master. This accords strongly with the Aristotelian view of professional musicians as banausic: music was a trade, and it was the lot of the wealthy to enjoy their own modest capability in moments of rest, and otherwise to judiciously enjoy the mastery achieved by those in their service. Amongst the sources studied here, Filarete's description of music's place in the daily life of students is unique in positing the times at

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<sup>2</sup> See page 81.

which a student might turn to musical *otium*: following lunch and dinner, and after attending mass on feast days.<sup>3</sup> The exactitude of these stipulations conforms to the less descriptive discussions of music's place in a boy's education found in other humanistic treatises, admonishing, like Piccolomini, that mastery of music was far from a boy's main concern. Indeed, a hallmark of the humanistic literature on music is the emphasis placed on the potential of music to affect one's disposition. Such passages have largely been considered as more literary than practical in nature, falling under the topos of the *laus musicae*, however it also suggests that the better part of a wealthy child's musical education was spent on the assimilation of the musical ethics passed down from antiquity, in order to teach them how to use music moderately throughout the course of their lives. In this regard, the interpretation of Antonio di Guido's sonnet on the Liberal Arts (Sonetto utile nel dispregio del mondo) becomes of particular interest; while I have chosen to translate 'dirittura' ambiguously and rather archaically as 'aright', it could equally mean 'correctly' or 'righteously'. If the latter translation is as Antonio intended, for him mastery of music as a liberal art was exactly as the writers of Latin educational treatises intended: learning how to perform music in a way that avoided any comparison with the music of less educated, and more venereal sections of society. Consciously distancing itself from the aim of the liberal man to master all seven arts, it also posits the 'partial mastery' of an art such as music, as a laudable achievement for those, like Antonio himself, who were forced by necessity to work for a living.

My chapter on music education, and namely my study of Bonaventura da Brescia's *Regula Musicae Plane*, permitted a brief foray into the realms of performance practice, namely the practice of inflecting the syllables of the hexachord first discussed at length by Ann Smith in 2011. Smith's study was largely limited to German treatises, and here I have found limited evidence of its application in the performance of plainchant in Italy: although inflections appear to be absent from more famous treatises, such as those by Gafori or Ramos de Pareja, Bonaventura clearly stipulates a differing approach to the inflection of syllables which are *mollis* or *durus*. This accordance begs the question of whether more according or

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<sup>3</sup> See page 82.

contrary systems of inflection exist in Italian sources, providing ample ground for further study.

The literature on love in circulation during this period goes some way to helping us understand how music was thought to be so morally dangerous: in philosophical treatises on love, music is but one form of sensory delight which can induce the soul to lascivious behaviour. In *De Amore*, Ficino, following Plato's *Timaeus*, suggests that there are two forms of music, one beneficial, and one dangerous for the soul, suggesting that the judicious and morally upright individual should conform their tastes to the former in order to avoid impropriety and moral corruption. For Bembo—at least as Castiglione portrays him in *Il Libro del Cortegiano*—the defence of the virtuous against music lies less in avoiding certain types of music as in developing the strength of one's reason over their sensual appetites, which otherwise command the soul. Viewed in this light, love song, and particularly the most impressive displays of musical virtuosity, function as an attempt to overcome this reason and induce love. This argument is supported in my interpretation of the imagery which fronts several popular, ephemeral song pamphlets dating to the first decades of the sixteenth century, all of which show amorous words, in the form of a letter given to the beloved, or music, as being used to call the attention of the beloved or break down the defences they have set in place to protect them from love. This is nowhere more evident than in prints where a man is depicted defenceless in the face of an armed and armoured woman, save for Cupid—the personification of the power of love lyric—flying to his aid.

Those texts dealing principally with the conduct of the adult prince and private citizen—exemplified by the *speculum principis* and conduct treatises penned by clergymen for the consumption of the wider public respectively—present distinct concordances with the humanistic educational treatises discussed in Chapter II. Whether prince or pauper, music should be engaged with judiciously, ever mindful of public appearance on the one hand, and the health of one's soul on the other. In the latter case, sacred music is particularly condoned; following the example set by St Jerome, the singing or playing of psalms can provide a helpful distraction from the vice to which man is tempted in idleness. In condoning the instrumental performance of sacred music, the Carthusian author of the *Palma Virtutum* marks a significant divergence from Porcia's suggestion that only music set

to verse is virtuous, while perhaps also adding evidence to his admonition that instrumental music is for the plebian (*plebeionum*).<sup>4</sup>

In concluding this study with a discussion of music's effect on the body and its prescription as medicine for the soul, we have in many ways come full circle: in the medical literature in circulation during this period, whether that dedicated to the care of the elderly or more generally, music is linked intrinsically to humoral theory. In reasoning that music provokes joy and joy can warm an individual's complexion, musical judgement becomes a matter not only of morality and emotional wellbeing, but of physical wellbeing too, as capable of extending or curtailing life as one's diet. It also becomes evident that, in spite of the broad spectrum of literature considered here, the importance of moderation in engaging with music is a common thread. In books of births, it is the temperate native, influenced by moderately cold and moist Venus and moderately hot and dry Jupiter, who portrays the most prized personal attributes, musical or otherwise. In educational literature for children and young people and conduct literature for adults, choice engagement with music is linked to virtuous conduct and wellbeing. In love theory, and the ephemeral song collections surveyed here, music can be used to overwhelm the listener in order to elicit love. In medical literature, music, if engaged with intemperately, can similarly overwhelm the individual, the heating of their complexion through *gaudium* first causing excessive lust, and if continued—whether through resulting sexual incontinence or continuing musical overheating—to debilitation of the mind and body and the onset of premature aging. This commonality is perhaps a simple reflection of the fact that the philosophical and scientific thought of Greco-Roman antiquity was assimilated into Christian and medieval Arabic tradition, that which was at first lost to Western Christendom being introduced through the translation of Arabic sources from the twelfth century onwards, and from Greek sources from the fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the possibility that this thought permeated and influenced literate society's conception and use of music is perhaps the most tantalising

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<sup>4</sup> Porcia, *De generosa educatione liberorum*, fol. 5r. For a discussion of the musical contents of the *Palma Virtutum*, see pages 229–30.

<sup>5</sup> On the 'de-centering' of the Renaissance to take into account the importance of Islamic, Byzantine and Latin Christian tradition, see William Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2011), particularly 18–22, 40, and 194–8.

conclusion that one could draw from this study. Another conclusion is that literary sources, even when tangentially related or indeed completely unrelated to music at first glance, do indeed offer the potential to add greater colour and depth to our understanding of music in the lifestyle of Renaissance Italians, or, for that matter, of any people of any era.



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