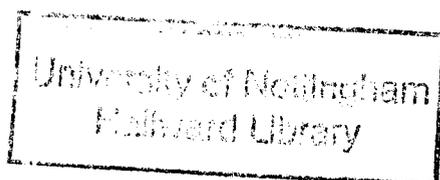


ALFONSO I D'ESTE: MUSIC AND IDENTITY IN FERRARA

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Abstract

Although a great deal of documentation on the patronage of Alfonso I d'Este has already been published, music historians and cultural historians have given little attention to Alfonso's style and importance as a patron of the arts. This study aims to marshal the already-available information to examine Alfonso as a patron of music, placing his interest in music firmly within the context of both his other artistic interests and his role in the turbulent political circumstances of his reign. In so doing it adopts analytical tools developed within the fields of cultural and critical theory and current within literary and art history, although thus far only rarely brought to bear on the history of music in what was once called the High Renaissance. In particular, this study looks at Alfonso's patronage through the thematic of identity, seeking to understand the tasks achieved in the construction of the ruler as a princely persona by both large chapel choirs and private music-making. These concerns will be aligned with the demands placed upon Alfonso by the dynastic, political, military and physical context of his reign. In addressing private music-making at Alfonso's court, this study will seek to make unusually extensive use of the decorations of private courtly spaces – which will be found to offer a frame designed quite self-consciously to give meaning to the musical recreations undertaken therein. The resulting picture will substantially revise our current, somewhat haphazard and uncritical view of Alfonso's music patronage, whilst at the same time proposing new ways to read music's meaning at court.

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Contents

Introduction	5
Part 1 – War and the Chapel Choir: Alfonso between Public and Private	
Chapter I – Chapel Choirs and the Ruler’s Public Identity	12
<i>Identity, Princehood and Chapel Choirs</i>	12
<i>The Chapel Choir in Ercole d’Este’s Rulership</i>	19
Chapter II – Firing the Chapel Choir	30
<i>1502-5: Apprenticeship</i>	30
<i>1505-9: Insecurity</i>	36
<i>1509-13: War and the Firing of the Choir</i>	37
Chapter III – Pastoral and Performance: the Publicness of Private Space	48
<i>After the War: Public to Private</i>	48
<i>Music and Landscape</i>	52
<i>The Publicness of Privacy</i>	55
<i>Music and Identity in Private Space: An Indicative Example</i>	57
<i>Epilogue</i>	60
Part 2 – Music and Identity in the Private Apartments: Alfonso and his Dynastic Models	
Introduction	62
Chapter IV – Isabella and the Virtuous Voice	63
<i>Voice and Decorum</i>	63
<i>Making Isabella’s Studiolo: A Summary</i>	67
<i>Voice and Legitimacy</i>	70
<i>Minervan Equivocations</i>	76
<i>Voice and Agency</i>	80
Chapter V – Alfonso and the Poetics of Agency: the <i>Studiolo</i>	87
<i>Making Alfonso’s Studiolo: A Summary</i>	88
<i>The Andrians and Philostratus’ Music</i>	91
<i>Trouble on Parnassus: Bacchus’ Masculine Eloquence</i>	94
<i>Music, Landscape and Presence</i>	100
<i>Viewing, Performance and Identity</i>	104
<i>Alfonso’s Agency</i>	108
Chapter VI – The Erotics of Song: A Shared Theme	111
<i>Music at Belfiore</i>	111
<i>Calliope’s Song</i>	116
<i>Eros and the Lion: Leonello’s Muse</i>	120
<i>Siren Voices: Borso’s Muse</i>	126
<i>A Courty Eros: Alfonso’s Muse</i>	132
Chapter VII – Conclusions: Living Music at Court	137
<i>Decorated Space and Musical Meaning</i>	137
<i>Objects in Performance</i>	138
<i>Chapel Choirs in Context</i>	142
<i>Music and Alfonso’s Identity</i>	142
Illustrations	145
Appendix – An Inventory of the manuscript London, RCM Ms. 2037	171
Bibliography	179

Introduction

[Alfonso] was neither extravagant nor fond of display, and he cared nothing for a brilliant court. He was indifferent to externals, even to his own clothing. His chief concern was to increase the efficiency of the army, build fortresses, and cast cannon. When the affairs of state left him any leisure he amused himself at a turning-lathe which he had set up, and also in painting majolica vases, in which art he was exceedingly skilful. He had no inclination for the higher culture – this he left to his wife.¹

Such estimates as Gregorovius' have had the effect of forming an almost insuperable barrier to the discussion of Alfonso as a patron of the arts.² Historians of art and music generally prefer their patrons to be of a literary turn of mind, trained in Latin letters, musically literate, exercised by philological and stylistic questions. If they have illustrious humanist educators or retainers, so much the better. We prefer them to be apparently aware of the increasing nobility of the arts and to make space for the emerging self-awareness of their practitioners. We like to frame them as contemplative viewers and listeners, intellectually immersed in a philosophy (or a theology) expressed in artistic terms. By these measures Alfonso was a boor. His interest in the arts was as much physical as thoughtful.³ His paintings are replete with a joyfully Ovidian sensuality. The polyphonic music produced for his court is relatively simple. Nonetheless, the practitioners Alfonso persuaded to service these interests were among the best available: Brumel was among the highest-regarded composers of his day; Bidon the most famous singer in Italy; and Titian, Raphael and Michelangelo were peerless as painters. Alfonso was also among the few patrons of his time to keep a single artist – Dosso Dossi – continuously employed at court.

Alfonso's father Ercole I is by now among the most thoroughly studied of Renaissance music patrons. A huge amount of documentary detail and a reasonably clear picture of his character and purpose as princely patron have been articulated over recent years. Alfonso was both like and unlike his father. After an early involvement in the chapel choir concerning the hiring of Josquin, he maintained his father's large chapel choir until 1510, when circumstances brought about its departure almost *en masse* (the subject of Chapter II). During this period the choir was led first by Jacob Obrecht and then by Antoine Brumel, two of the foremost musicians of the age. Although he was himself an instrumentalist, Alfonso kept fewer instrumentalists on staff than his father; but his brother Cardinal Ippolito and his wife Lucrezia Borgia kept several, and it seems clear that they were shared quite freely between them. During the 1510s the two musicians arrived who would come to define the musical personality of Alfonso's court: Alfonso dalla Viola, one of the earliest madrigalists, and

¹ Gregorovius 1903, 303-4.

² No modern biography of Alfonso has been written. The most detailed and lengthy discussions of his court and his reign are to be found in biographies of the Ferrarese poet Lodovico Ariosto and Alfonso's second wife Lucrezia Borgia – principally: Gregorovius 1903; Gardner 1906; Catalano 1931; Bellonci 1953; Bradford 2005. Many of the points familiar from these sources are synthesised in the chapter on Alfonso in Chiappini 1970, at 211-47 (which, however, is frustrating in its complete silence concerning its sources), and are turned towards questions of patronage in Gundersheimer 2004. Four contemporary biographies were written on the basis of first-hand experience: those of Agostino Mosti, a page in the service of Lucrezia Borgia (Solerti 1882); Bonaventura Pistofilo, Alfonso's secretary (Cappelli 1868); Giovanbattista Giraldi, secretary to Alfonso's son Duke Ercole II (Giraldi 1556); and Paolo Giovio (Giovio 1597).

³ Gundersheimer 2004, 6 sums up the standard view.

Maistre Jhan, a prolific and widely disseminated composer of motets. However, following 1510 Alfonso's choir was considerably smaller than that he had inherited from his father.

The interpretative problems posed by Alfonso's patronage have, I suspect, encouraged scholars to make him the invisible centre of a range of orbiting concerns. Among musicologists, Lewis Lockwood has come closest: his work has covered the period immediately preceding Alfonso with an admirable degree of thoroughness.⁴ George Nugent and Anthony Newcomb pick up the baton at the other end of Alfonso's reign, covering his son Ercole II and his grandson Alfonso II.⁵ Lockwood has in fact published extensively on Alfonso's reign, but has largely avoided confronting the duke himself: he has considered collateral patrons, in particular Alfonso's brothers Cardinal Ippolito and Sigismondo; and he has considered individual musicians, especially Adrian Willaert, Jean Mouton, Jean Michel and Bidon.⁶ Meanwhile, two scholars working on the neighbouring court of Mantua during Alfonso's reign, and therefore on Alfonso's sister Isabella, have touched frequently on Ferrara. Iain Fenlon has discussed Isabella's relationship with her home court and her natal family.⁷ William Prizer has written in detail on the musical interests of Alfonso's wife Lucrezia Borgia, and has given some of the most explicit information on Alfonso's choir, though to the ends of discussing that of his brother-in-law Francesco II Gonzaga.⁸ Notices on the choir and other musical matters were first published by Luigi Valdrighi and Walter Weyler, and have since been fleshed out gradually and haphazardly over the course of the research mentioned above.⁹

⁴ Lockwood 1972; Lockwood 1976; Lockwood 1980; Lockwood 1981; Lockwood 1984. Lockwood's work on the reign of Alfonso's father Ercole includes some information on Alfonso's musical involvements before his reign began. See in particular Lockwood 1976 and Chapter II of the present study.

⁵ Nugent 1990; Newcomb 1980.

⁶ Lockwood 1979 on Jean Mouton and Jean Michel comes closest to a study of Alfonso's patronage, though it also considers Sigismondo – amongst other points of interest see 196-7 and 204 n.31 on Alfonso's patronage before becoming duke, 209-11 on the membership of the chapel between 1506 and 1508, 204 n.32 and 213-4 on the chapel in 1515, and 212-3 on payments made by Alfonso in 1515 to French musicians; Lockwood 1981 addresses music in Ariosto's (i.e. Alfonso's) period but in fact is mostly concerned with Ercole I and Ippolito – see in particular 14-5, including comments on the membership of Alfonso's chapel after 1516; Lockwood 1985 is mostly about Ippolito – see, however, 90-1 on Willaert's employment by Alfonso from 1520, and 91 n.16 for salaries of musicians employed by Alfonso in 1522; Lockwood 1998 gives letters relating to Bidon which are in fact of enormous interest for Alfonso's patronage.

⁷ In particular Fenlon 1986; Fenlon 1990.

⁸ Prizer 1980, 14-28 on the movement of Alfonso's singers to Mantua – see also Chapter II of the present study – here are given lists for Alfonso's chapel membership in 1509 and 1513; Prizer 1985 on Lucrezia's music patronage; Prizer 1987, adding important archival notices concerning Alfonso's early patronage; Prizer 1998 giving the most coherent overview to date of music at Ferrara in Alfonso's reign, though the duke's father and siblings again take centre stage – here are given lists of Alfonso's musicians for 1516 and 1528. Chapel lists have thus been published for 1505 (in Lockwood 1984, Appendix V), 1506, 1508, 1509, 1513, 1515, 1516 and 1528. The 1520s were covered more extensively in Walter Weyler's much earlier article (1939) and Lenaerts' study revealing Willaert's presence in Ferrara in that decade (1945 – supplemented by Lockwood 1985, 90-1). A large body of Alfonso's correspondence relating to music can also be pieced together: correspondence relating to Alfonso's involvement in the choir 1502-5 can be found in Lockwood 1976; correspondence concerning the hiring of Brumel in 1505 in Vander Straeten 1969, 6:94-102; correspondence concerning musical matters at the French camp in Italy whilst Alfonso was with the King in 1507 and 1515 in Lockwood 1979, 200-7; correspondence concerned with the movement of singers between Ferrara and Mantua in 1510-11 in Prizer 1980, 16-7 and Appendix I, Documents 51 and 54; correspondence relating to Alfonso's interest in Jean Mouton in 1515-18, including acquiring his music at the French court through his ambassador, in Lockwood 1979, 212-7; correspondence with Bidon in 1517 in Lockwood 1998; correspondence and other evidence relating to Alfonso's own music-making in Prizer 1982, 104 and Prizer 1999, 17 and 19-21.

⁹ Valdrighi 1884-5; Weyler 1939.

Music sources in Alfonso's Ferrara have been discussed most extensively by Joshua Rifkin, though mostly in a conference paper that has not subsequently been published.¹⁰ Further contributions on this aspect of Alfonso's patronage have been made briefly, and sometimes obscurely, by Edward Lowinsky, Stanley Boorman, Prizer and Lockwood.¹¹ Howard Mayer Brown has discussed the performance practices of the Ferrarese court musicians on the basis of an account written by Alfonso's majordomo.¹² More recently, Camilla Cavicchi has completed a PhD on Maistre Jhan, the principal sacred composer at court for the majority of Alfonso's reign, and Judith Cohen has begun the first systematic work on Alfonso dalla Viola, Jhan's secular counterpart.¹³

The art-historical literature on Ferrara in this period is considerably larger, but similar in its tendency to look around Alfonso rather than at him. General studies were made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and comprehensive documentation has recently been published by Adriano Franceschini.¹⁴ Dosso Dossi, the court painter, languished for decades as an also-ran of the high Renaissance, but has recently seen a surge in interest. An exhibition and two collections of essays have now been followed by Giancarlo Fiorenza's interesting and imaginative work.¹⁵ The other art-historical topic of Alfonso's reign – his *studio* and *camerino* (often, confusingly, called a *studiolo*) and their decoration – has been something of a *cause célèbre*, and has spawned a bad-tempered and incoherent minefield of scholarship. The reconstruction of Alfonso's private apartment, the paintings it contained and the way in which they were hung constitute the main bones of contention. An initial statement by Charles Hope was contradicted by Dana Goodgal and again by Beverly Louise Brown. More recently, the commune of Ferrara has sponsored its own research on the subject, the results of which have only added to the confusion.¹⁶ Research on the paintings themselves has resulted in the publication of a large body of evidence relating to Alfonso's patronage of artists.¹⁷ Amongst all this, however, only one scholar has given a detailed account of either the *studiolo* or Dosso as an aspect of Alfonso's patronage, and her work has not won general currency.¹⁸

¹⁰ Rifkin 2002 is the exception.

¹¹ Lowinsky 1982, 290-7 arguing that Andrea Antico's *Motetti novi e canzoni francoise a quatro sopra doi* (Venice, 15 October 1520 = RISM 1520/3) was produced in collaboration with Willaert whilst the composer was in Alfonso's service; Prizer 1987, a review of Lockwood 1984 in which Prizer presents evidence that Alfonso was among the earliest purchasers of Petrucci's prints (see also the Appendix to the present study); Lockwood 2001 in which are given payment records for music copying found in the court accounts 1503-23; Boorman 2006, 274-8 and 285-6 discussing the possibility of a connection between Alfonso and Petrucci in relation to the Josquin mass books.

¹² Brown 1975.

¹³ Cavicchi 2006; Judith Cohen gave a paper introducing her project at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference 2009 in Utrecht.

¹⁴ Campori 1885; Gruyer 1897; Gardner 1911; Longhi 1934; Franceschini 1993; also now Ballarin 2002.

¹⁵ Mezzetti 1965; Gibbons 1968; Ballarin 1994; Humphrey and Lucco 1998; Ciammitti et al 1998; Venturi 2004; Fiorenza 2004; Fiorenza 2008.

¹⁶ Hope 1971; Goodgal 1978; Hope 1987; Goodgal 1987; Brown 1987; Bentini 1998; Ballarin 2002; Borella 2003. A coherent assessment of previous opinion is Bayer 1998; a summary reassessment in light of new archaeological evidence is Borella 2004. This list is far from complete.

¹⁷ Among others, Campori 1874; Wind 1948; Walker 1956; Panofsky 1969, 4-5 n.3, 7, 96-102, 139-44; Gould 1969; Hope 1971; Fehl 1974; Wethey 1975, 29-41; Goodgal 1978; Marek 1983; Marek 1985; Holberton 1986; Cavalli-Bjorkman 1987; Shearman 1987; Bull and Plesters 1990; Rosand 1990; Colantuono 1991; Sheard 1993; Goffen 1997, 107-26; Christiansen 2000; Rosenberg 2000; Ballarin 2002; Shearman 2003; Colantuono 2005; relevant entries in the catalogues Jaffe 2003; Falomir 2003; and Humphrey 2007.

¹⁸ Michaela Marek: principally Marek 1985; but in summary in Marek 1983.

The period immediately preceding Alfonso's reign has benefitted from several modern studies within the general field of court history, in particular those of Werner Gundersheimer, Trevor Dean, Thomas Tuohy and Charles Rosenberg.¹⁹ Alfonso himself, unfortunately, is not so well served. The growth of court studies in general over the past quarter-century, particularly in Italy, has gone some way to improving the situation.²⁰ However, this literature – sometimes vague, poorly evidenced and in certain respects old-fashioned – has not met with unanimous praise.²¹

The upshot of this large body of work – circling around, but not directly interrogating, Alfonso's patronage – is that the published documentation on his reign is already substantial, albeit disorganised and dispersed. Although no doubt important archival work remains to be done, there is already more than enough evidence available in the literature to attempt a meaningful synthesis of his role and practice as princely patron. This thesis sets out to take advantage of that fact. However, it is emphatically not an effort to systematise all of the available information, nor does it claim to cover every aspect of Alfonso's music patronage – in Chapter VII I will discuss various areas and approaches that I hope to make the subject of future work. This thesis aims on the one hand to contextualise and redraw the broad outlines of Alfonso's music patronage from the point of view of 'identity', and on the other to find new kinds of information on the cultural role and significance of music at his court – in particular, information derived from visual culture.

In both aspects my work is tied inextricably to the theme of identity, whose pertinent concepts and analytics it is worth describing briefly in advance. Following a thoroughgoing critique of prior essentialist ('my true nature') and universalist ('human nature') philosophies, identity has come to be understood within the fields of critical theory and cultural studies as wholly contingent, referring to and emerging from a cultural dynamics of power and desire. Judith Butler famously deployed this position in an influential analysis of gendered identities, questioning the essential validity of a range of purportedly natural identifiers to achieve 'a discursive account of the cultural production of gender':²²

Categories of true sex, discrete gender, and specific sexuality have constituted the stable point of reference ... These constructs of identity serve as the points of epistemic departure from which theory emerges and politics itself is shaped. ... But is there a political shape to "women", as it were, that precedes and prefigures the political elaboration of their interests and epistemic point of view? How is that identity shaped, and is it a political shaping that takes the very morphology and boundary of the sexed body as the ground, surface, or site of cultural inscription?²³

With reference to J. L. Austin's concept of the 'performative' in language, Butler configures this constructed identity as a performance, constituted in the moment of its presentation:²⁴

¹⁹ Gundersheimer 1972; Gundersheimer 1973; Dean 1987; Dean 1989; Tuohy 1996; Rosenberg 1997.

²⁰ On Ferrara see in particular Papagno and Quondam 1982; Pade et al 1990; Bentini 2004; Looney and Shemek 2005. The most recent work on Ferrara in this vein is that of the economic historian Guido Guerzoni – see in particular Guerzoni 2008.

²¹ See in particular Dean 1995.

²² Butler 1990, quote at 53. Butler's perspective is feminist: for an equivalent analysis from the field of masculinity studies see Buchbinder 1998. For an interesting prior attempt to bring Butler to bear on early music, see LaMay 2002, 50-2.

²³ Butler 1990, 128-9.

²⁴ The classic formulation of Austin's 'performative' is to be found in Austin 1962, 4-7. Butler's use of the concept is somewhat different, and influenced also by Foucault's views of knowledge and subjectivity (on which see Foucault 1972).

...acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body ... Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means.²⁵

She notes that this performance, although it may often entail the illusion of interiority, privacy and intimacy, is inherently public – it relies for its identity on a surrounding discourse:

...if that reality [the gendered body] is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body²⁶

Among scholars of the Early Modern period such a conception of identity is usually equated with 'self-fashioning', and its historicity will be discussed in Chapter I.

Butler's view is helpful to the historian of patronage because it offers a way to talk about identity without resorting to amateur psychology. It identifies action, inscription and product as constituent of, rather than merely indicative of, identity; and it describes their environment as a discursive and reactive space designed to give them meaning. Their operation is generally discussed within this analytic in terms of politics with a small 'p', within which are subsumed ideological functions and preoccupations closely integrated with power relations. The task of the historian of patronage is therefore to trace the articulation of contemporary political concerns in the subject's environment, and to examine the ways in which the subject's actions seek to interact with those concerns. Rather than leading to the neat summation of the subject's essence, every element of this analysis passes substantive comment on their identity-in-performance.

Renaissance princes were in an unusually strong position to control their own immediate environment, and thus to manipulate the discursive and representational space that imbued their actions with meaning. The environment in question might be the private and public spaces of the palace, or the city at large; the manipulations might be painted decoration or magnificent buildings. It is in the context of such discursive space that the quotidian (including musical) acts and facts of patronage take on meaning and power. To deal with musical, visual and literary texts in such a way is to approach them not as the expression of a creating artistic personality (though that aspect plays a strong contingent part), but as the effects of what one might call the texts' primary reader, the patron. Within such an approach, the 'meaning' of an artwork lies in the process of experiencing it, and in the reading (or viewing) strategies encoded into it on behalf of its owner – and in this I am somewhat indebted to reception theory.²⁷

In the application of these analytics of identity to the available evidence of Alfonso's music patronage, this thesis will proceed in two distinct phases. Broadly it moves from public to private – terms that I will qualify and explain as I go along. In Part 1 I address various questions and problems in Alfonso's music patronage

²⁵ Butler 1990, 136.

²⁶ Butler 1990, 136.

²⁷ As, for example, Hans Robert Jauss: 'literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject' – Jauss 1982, 15.

from immediately before the beginning of his reign up to the hiatus in the Italian Wars brought about by the election of Pope Leo X in 1513. Chapter I examines the role of music in the public business of rulership in general terms, before offering a substantially revised reading of music's role in Ercole's patronage as a necessary preface to discussion of Alfonso. Chapter II applies the question of rulership and princely identity to three key aspects of Alfonso's early music patronage: his involvements with Ercole's chapel choir following his wedding in 1502; his maintenance of Ercole's chapel choir between 1505 and 1510; and his disposal of the chapel choir during the wars of 1509-13. It seeks thoroughly to revise previous financial and personal readings of his actions, giving the broad sweep of his patronage over these years an entirely new shape. In Chapter III I examine the new face of Alfonso's patronage after the war, integrating music closely with his patronage in other artistic spheres and in particular the private spaces he prepared during the remainder of the 1510s and 1520s. I discuss the role of music in constructing princely identity in the private spaces of the palace, thereby developing a frame for the next section.

Part 2 turns to consider in depth those private spaces, treating (mostly) their painted decoration as an index of the aesthetics and ideologies attached to music in the contexts of Alfonso's patronage after 1513. As a necessary counterpoint, I have placed Alfonso's patronage in this regard alongside that of his dynastic contemporaries and predecessors, with whom he frequently acted in dialogue. Chapter IV gives a relatively brief but substantive re-envisioning of the musical aspects of the *studiolo* and *grotta* of Alfonso's sister Isabella, focussing on the construction of her voice as a central aspect of her musical identity. In Chapter V I turn to Alfonso's *studiolo*, finding that its decoration constructs Alfonso's musical identity in close dialogue with Isabella's, and identifying a self-conscious concern with music's performative aspect. Chapter VI takes a theme closely associated with music in Alfonso's *studiolo* (and to an extent polemically refused in Isabella's), love and the erotic, and traces it through the private spaces of the previous generation of Este rulers, identifying a surprisingly clear line of descent for a musical painting made for Alfonso by Dosso Dossi. In the conclusion, Chapter VII, I offer thoughts on the ways in which music can serve to construct courtly identities, as well as a summary of the position I have reached on Alfonso's patronage in particular. These conclusions consolidate and draw together the strands of interpretation followed throughout this study, while also suggesting the larger horizons they implicitly describe.

Part 1

War and the Chapel Choir: Alfonso between Public and Private

I

Chapel Choirs and the Ruler's Public Identity

During the Renaissance, many princes, and indeed many of the larger ecclesiastical institutions, employed singers to celebrate the divine offices in their often magnificent sacred spaces. These chapel choirs constitute the subject *par excellence* of the historiography of Renaissance music. In them are brought together many concerns inherently attractive to the musicologist: the documentary and artistic biography of musicians; the documentary history of musical institutions; the recovery and analysis of music-theoretically complex and, importantly, notated compositions; and the investigation of music sources, either as the basis for editorial endeavour, or as documents of a musical community. Such study has sometimes dealt cursorily with the patrons who often, especially in the courtly context, facilitated these musical histories. Scholars have also sometimes been guilty of adopting a naive approach when venturing out into cultural contexts and their associated scholarship. Such a historiographic choice assigns to patrons a secondary role, implying, perhaps unintentionally, that the contemporary significance of the chapel choir was primarily purely musical (musical, in fact, in a somewhat reified sense). Whilst self-evidently music merits study in and of itself, to render it more broadly historically meaningful requires a different approach. The focus, in the case of the princely chapel choir, moves from music 'itself' to music as a tool in the arsenal of a patron as he addresses his world; one whose very use already constitutes a political act, motivated not only (in many circumstances, perhaps not primarily – although taste itself carries ideologies) by personal taste, but by efficacy and pragmatism. The end to which the use of a chapel choir pertains, from the patron's point of view, is that of the construction of identity.

Identity, Princehood and Chapel Choirs

In his classic monograph of 1980, Stephen Greenblatt explored the 'self-fashioning' enterprised by several prominent writers of the English Renaissance.¹ To make a career in Elizabethan society, he argued, a man had to grasp the building blocks of his own identity, manipulating his image and his very character to political advantage. In his own words, the 'starting point is quite simply that in sixteenth-century England there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned.'² Though such could be said of any time and any place, he perceived that 'in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.'³ In more detail, 'self-fashioning ... describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one's nature or intention in speech and actions.'⁴ Crucial for the use of this analytic in the discussion of art and culture is this latter aspect of representation: self-fashioning 'invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters,

¹ Greenblatt 1980. For an explication of the term 'self-fashioning' in general terms see in particular 1-9.

² Greenblatt 1980, 1.

³ Greenblatt 1980, 2.

⁴ Greenblatt 1980, 3.

the shaping of one's own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control, the attempt to fashion other selves.'⁵

Greenblatt's analysis set what has become the dominant paradigm in the discussion of Renaissance identities. In the intervening decades, scholars have sought to establish and confirm its validity in different countries and different centuries. Among the most sophisticated discussions of identity within Italian Renaissance culture in the period considered by this study is that undertaken by Patricia Simons in relation to portraiture.⁶ Her avowedly Greenblattian conclusion that 'Portraiture is a fictive, rhetorical device. Characters display themselves in theatrical masks, or don disguises' enjoys strong support from a range of Renaissance voices.⁷ She notes that the arch-humanist Leonardo Bruni, for example, 'acknowledged that "the same man can play many parts [*persone*]" and this "actor" declares that "it was the dignity of the office that made me what I was not before."⁸ Going further, for Leon Battista Alberti 'there need be no face behind the mask, no distinction between truth and deception, since people could "transform themselves" and "wise artifice" feigned any number of appearances.'⁹

It comes as absolutely no surprise to find that Baldassare Castiglione, who writes of 'playing the Courtier', offers more to this purpose in a courtly vein. In a recent formulation, Giancarlo Fiorenza achieves a subtle analysis by pointing to Castiglione's evident paranoia over the disparity between the detailed and difficult accomplishments he requires of his ideal courtier, and the need to appear effortless: 'Castiglione contrasts affectation to *sprezzatura*, or calculated spontaneity, whereby the courtier was enjoined to conceal the laborious social construction of his identity beneath an appearance of easy casualness.'¹⁰

Within such a system it seems obvious that music, tied inescapably to the realm of performance, has a part to play. And indeed, in a surprising moment, Castiglione makes it clear that for his courtiers there was no essential distinction between a persona adopted in musical performance and a 'real' persona. At several points in *The Courtier* his disputants consider the question of an appropriate elderly identity, deciding that the old should be serious and wise.¹¹ However, 'it is certainly most unbecoming and unsightly when an old grey-haired gentleman, who is toothless and wrinkled, takes up the viola and plays and sings in front of a gathering of ladies ... because the words of songs are nearly always amorous, and in old men love is altogether ridiculous'.¹² His implication is that musical performance did not so much take place within a suspension of disbelief (a concept that did pertain in the Italian Renaissance), but rather worked performatively upon the identity of the performer – that the singer of love songs is 'actually' amorous, rather than just a good singer.¹³

⁵ Greenblatt 1980, 3.

⁶ Simons 1995, 267-77, giving references to a wide range of useful related discussions.

⁷ Simons 1995, 268.

⁸ Simons 1995, 270, citing Bruni's *De Militia*.

⁹ Simons 1995, 270, citing Alberti's *Momus*.

¹⁰ Fiorenza 2008, 3. It would be pointless to list the literature on Castiglione and identity in its entirety, but mention should at least be made of Rebhorn 1987. On music and identity in the *Courtier* see Feldman 1995, 12ff; and Lorenzetti 2003, 65-97.

¹¹ Castiglione 1967, 121-3; 322ff.

¹² '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 ... perché il più delle volte cantando si dicono parole amoroze, e ne' vecchi l'amor è cosa ridicola' – text Castiglione 1947, 158; translation Castiglione 1967, 121.

¹³ Castiglione appears not to make a distinction between the 'fictive' space of the performance and the continuing 'reality' of the performer, and with some contemporary intellectual justification: music was supposed both to reflect and to act directly upon the soul.

If Greenblatt's model works well for courtiers, it works equally well for their princes. Modern scholarship on the nature of the despotic state in Renaissance Italy has frequently articulated the conclusion that much of its activity served primarily as a display and demonstration of the power and enlightenment of the prince. In effect, it was through such efforts that the state's efficacy, and consequently its legitimacy, was constructed for the benefit of its subjects. The prince must persuade his nobles, his subjects and the world at large, through various mechanisms, that he does in fact possess the necessary power, might and authority to *be* a prince, regardless of the realities of his situation.¹⁴

Stephen Campbell, for instance, remarks that in fifteenth-century Italy 'Sovereignty had not yet left its mark in all actions of the state or in more minute public and private relations; princely power was more engaged in testing its limits, sharing and compromising authority when expedient, above all in demonstrating its legitimacy'.¹⁵ Christian Reus-Smit, writing to entirely different ends, likewise recognises the centrality of demonstrated legitimacy to the existence of the state: 'The creation of small islands of centralised, autonomous political authority – sovereign city-states – required not only the coercive capacities to establish and defend such rule but also legitimacy, the sense that organising power and authority in this manner was "right"'.¹⁶ Most explicit of all, and most insightful, is the formulation of Lauro Martines: 'Luxurious ostentation at the courts was a display of power. Without such an exhibition, there was somehow no sufficient claim or title to the possession of power. Therefore the need to show. At the same time, to show was to act out a self-conception: I am a prince and I can show it. The more I show it, the more I am what I claim to be. It was a dialectic of ambition and being. Luxurious ostentation was converted into an identity essence.'¹⁷

Scholars have unearthed and discussed a rich vein of Renaissance political theory which seeks to place such demonstrations within the Aristotelian concept of *magnificentia*, establishing conspicuous consumption as a right and even a duty of the wealthy.¹⁸ A. D. Fraser-Jenkins linked such philosophies particularly with the patronage of architecture in the fifteenth century, but more recently Louis Green has traced them to the very foundations of the north-Italian despotic states.¹⁹ The Dominican Galvano Fiamma, whose pen served the interests of Azzone Visconti whilst he created his state of Milan in the first half of the fourteenth century, wrote a chapter 'On the Magnificence of Buildings' (*De magnificentia edificiorum*) in his *Opusculum de rebus gestis ab Azzone, Luchino et Johanne Vicecomitibus*. He formulates explicitly the view that the appropriate performance of

¹⁴ In addition to the scholars to be mentioned subsequently in the main text, Asch and Birke 1991, 1-38, esp. 7-11, gives a not dissimilar analysis of the court as an aspect of the state. The essays collected in that volume present a great deal of evidence to that end, even if it is not always interpreted in exactly the terms I use. Werner Paravicini, for instance, identifies the inspiration of awe as one of the primary functions of the Burgundian court in the fifteenth century (Paravicini 1991, 75-7). Anthony B. Cashman, III (2002) has analysed the ritual and festal life of Mantua in similar terms. Many other references could be added.

¹⁵ Campbell 1997, 6

¹⁶ Reus-Smit 1999, 70. Reus-Smit goes on to establish 'civic greatness' as the 'moral purpose' of the state – the ideology underpinning its legitimacy. From a civic perspective he may be correct, but from the despotic perspective his conclusion makes no sense (as is suggested by his misreading of Machiavelli – at 74). He conflates the republican and administrative with the despotic and princely, drawing both into a frequent but under-examined use of the word 'state'. Nonetheless, Reus-Smit 1999, 63-86 can be read as a convenient and relatively up-to-date summary of opinion on the fifteenth-century Italian state.

¹⁷ Martines 1979, 233. Martines takes Ferrara as a signal example of the necessity of such demonstrations: 'Este brothers and bastards at Ferrara were ready to take power from close relatives, and so they had to *show* power through pomp' (233-4). He discusses the cultural activity of the courts at length as a practice of self-imaging – see in particular 191-217 and 229-76.

¹⁸ In addition to the scholars mentioned here, see on magnificence Clough 1988; Clough 1995b; Syson and Thornton 2001, 23-33; Welch 2002.

¹⁹ Fraser-Jenkins 1970; Green 1990.

power could substitute for, and indeed be identical with, its actual possession: 'it is a work of magnificence to construct a dignified house, since the people seeing marvellous buildings stand thunderstruck in fervent admiration ... And from this they judge a Prince to be of such power that it is impossible to attack him'.²⁰ Paolo Cortese expressed exactly the same view at the beginning of the sixteenth century, writing on the palace appropriate to a cardinal:

...imperitam multitudinem, quae ad senatorum caedem aut ad eorum bona diripienda imminere videantur, potentiae magnitudine opumque admiratione deterreat. ... cum sententiam potentiam aestimet sensus imbecillitate tanti, ut nullo modo locum sibi putet ad eos pellendos aut ad eorum bona diripienda dari.

...the ignorant mob will be deterred from threatening the cardinals with harm and from plundering their goods by the mightiness of the building and through admiration for its opulence. ... since the multitude is guided by the feeble judgement of the senses, it believes the cardinal's power to be so great as to prevent the mob from expelling the cardinals or from plundering their goods.²¹

For Niccolò Machiavelli, an exact contemporary of Alfonso d'Este, the performed nature of princehood was axiomatic, a point revisited in connection with several aspects of his *Prince*. Here he connects it with the virtues necessary to the ruler:

Deve adunque avere un principe gran cura che non gli esca mai di bocca una cosa che non sia piena della soprascritte cinque qualità, e paia a vederlo e udirlo tutto pietà, tutto fede, tutto umanità, tutto integrità, tutto religione. E non è cosa più necessaria a parere d'averlo, che quest'ultima qualità; perchè gli uomini in universale giudicano più agli occhi che alle mani, perchè tocca a vedere a ciascuno, a sentire a pochi. Ognuno vede quel che tu pari, pochi sentono quel che tu sei, e quelli pochi non ardiscono opporsi alla opinione de' molti che abbiano la maestà dello Stato che li difenda

A Prince should therefore be very careful that nothing ever escapes his lips which is not replete with the five qualities above named, so that to see and hear him, one would think him the very embodiment of mercy, good faith, integrity, humanity and religion. And there is no virtue which it is more necessary for him to seem to possess than this last; because men in general judge rather by the eye than by the hand, for every one can see but few can touch. Everyone sees what you

²⁰ Translated in Green 1990, 101. He (Fiamma) argues that the prince should undertake to show his architectural magnificence in the building of a residence and the building of churches. He says later on that Azzone conveyed his magnificence through two key structures: a chapel dedicated to the Virgin and a palace. Fiamma goes on to describe in detail religious festivals and processions equally designed to awe the populace.

²¹ *De cardinalatu libri tres* II.2. Text and translation Weil-Garris and d'Amico 1980, 88-9. Cortese goes on to explain that cardinals with modest palaces, on the other hand, are frequently attacked.

seem, but few know what you are, and these few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many who have the majesty of the State to back them up²²

Importantly, Machiavelli here identifies piety as the foremost princely virtue; but for the failsafe demonstration of effective rulership he looked elsewhere – to war. ‘Nothing makes a Prince so well thought-of as to undertake great enterprises (*imprese*) and give striking proofs of his capacity.’²³ From the lengthy list of Renaissance despots who might conveniently demonstrate this point (including Federico da Montefeltro and Cesare Borgia), Machiavelli chose Ferdinand of Aragon: ‘being thus constantly busied in planning and executing grand designs, he kept the minds of his subjects in suspense and admiration, and occupied with the results of his actions’.²⁴

A perceptive commentator could readily discern the ‘performance’ in the princehood of one of his contemporaries. A striking example is the judgement of Pope Pius II on Alfonso’s uncle, Duke Borso d’Este:

Borsius egregio corpore fuit, statura plus quam mediocri, crine pulchro et aspectu grato; multiloquus auscultavit se ipsum dicentem, ut qui sibi magis quam auditoribus placeret. Multa in eius ore blandimenta commixta mendaciis. Magnificus ac liberalis videri magis quam essere cupiebat ... Statuam sibi viventi in foro erexit, quae sedens ius dicere videretur; adiecti sunt et tituli, quos palpans adulatio excogitavit; nihil enim Borsio laude fuit dulcius. ... numquam non gemmis ornatus in publicum prodit.

Borso was a handsome man, taller than most, with beautiful hair and an attractive face. A garrulous talker, he liked the sound of his own voice... In his mouth, blandishments mingled with lies. He wanted to appear magnificent and generous – rather than genuinely to be so. ... In his lifetime the citizens erected a statue in the piazza representing him seated and administering justice; the inscription dripped with flattery, for Borso loved nothing so much as praise. He ... never appeared in public without jewels.²⁵

Lewis Lockwood interprets this passage as evidence of Borso’s stinginess, but I read it from a different angle.²⁶ Borso was a talented diplomat and cast himself as the peacemaker among his peers, thus effectively cutting himself off from Machiavelli’s preferred, military demonstration of princehood. His efforts to manifest his princely identity were therefore directed towards demonstrations of a more overtly theatrical character. Pius II notes that, with Borso, the performerly source of identity is too transparently obvious and thus vulgar (or, in Castiglione’s terms, lacking in *sprezzatura*).

²² Text Machiavelli 1891, 306; translation Machiavelli 1992, 61.

²³ ‘Nessuna cosa fa tanto stimare un principe, quanto fanno le grandi imprese e il dare di sè esempi rari.’ – text Machiavelli 1891, 337; translation Machiavelli 1992, 75.

²⁴ ‘...e così sempre ha fatto e ordito cose grandi, le quali hanno sempre tenuto sospesi ed ammirati gli animi de’ sudditi, ed occupati nell’evento di esse.’ – text Machiavelli 1891, 339; translation Machiavelli 1992, 76. Machiavelli’s claim is backed up by modern historians’ assessments of European statehood in the Renaissance. See, for example, Mattingly 1955, 48-50 and 115-6: in his formulation, ‘War dramatised the state’. Also, very differently expressed, Reus-Smit 1999, 82.

²⁵ Pius II 2003, II.40.1 (1:360-3). All Pius’ references to Borso in the Commentaries are tinged by a certain retrospective bitterness.

²⁶ Lockwood 1984, 88. In the same passage, Pius II also notes that Borso ‘bought as many precious stones as he could’, that he ‘furnished his household extravagantly’ and that ‘even in the countryside he ate off gold and silver plates’ (Pius II 2003, 1:363), which would seem immediately to contradict Lockwood’s reading.

Art and court historians have long recognised the important role played by visual and material culture in the performance of princehood.²⁷ In Evelyn Welch's summary, 'the possession of a crown ... required an image of rulership which reflected both the institutional nature of kingship (or queenship) and the personal qualities of the incumbent.'²⁸ Such an image was of much more than personal importance: 'In a signorial dominion the lord was the law and the prince's own portrait could stand in for the state itself.'²⁹ The relationship between the ruler and his visual images was thus central to his identity as a ruler, and a matter of survival – 'An attack on the image of the state was equivalent to attacking the state itself.'³⁰ Great care was therefore taken in the design of the court and the city as ritual space, in order to manipulate and display the image of the ruler (meant broadly) to best advantage. Galvano Fiamma, alongside later writers and in concordance with Machiavelli's prescriptions, considered the building of churches and the ceremonies associated with them to be of primary importance in this regard: in his view the key demonstrations of Azzone Visconti's magnificence were his palace and a chapel dedicated to the Virgin.³¹

For several Italian despots of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries who chose to embody the virtue of piety as an aspect of their performance of princehood, the building of a new, large and visible chapel was accompanied by the establishment of a large chapel choir. A large choir – such as those employed by Leonello, Ercole and Alfonso d'Este, Francesco II Gonzaga and Galeazzo Maria Sforza – could play a powerful role in the establishment of a ruler's public image.³² In fact, it is these choirs' very largeness and visibility that gives away their essentially public role: the private chapels attached to the best apartments in the princely residences in Urbino, Ferrara, Mantua and Milan, and the pseudo-princely residence of the Medici in Florence, were barely large enough to fit four, let alone twenty or thirty singers.³³ Certainly under Galeazzo Maria and Leo X, and probably also in Ferrara, the singing forces were split into a large group associated with the 'public' chapel and a much smaller ensemble that served the private requirements of the patron.³⁴

²⁷ Pioneering studies that examine princely patronage in these or similar terms include Clough 1973, taking a materialist view, and Gundersheimer 1976, adopting a more anthropological approach. Helpful overviews of this area of thought and research include Martines 1979, 229-37 and 241-76; Kemper 1992, 219-43; Welch 1997, 211-39; Burke 1999, 131-40; Syson and Thornton 2001, esp. 23-36. The present study will include much discussion and many further references on this subject.

²⁸ Welch 1997, 223.

²⁹ Welch 1997, 219.

³⁰ Welch 1997, 217.

³¹ Green 1990, esp. 101-3.

³² On Leonello d'Este's choir see Lockwood 1984, 41-63. On Francesco Gonzaga's see Prizer 1980, 14-28 and 46-52. On Galeazzo Maria Sforza's see Prizer 1989; and Welch 1993. For the scholarship on Ercole and Alfonso's choirs see the Introduction to the present study.

³³ Federico da Montefeltro's chapel in Urbino was near his studiolo and about half its size – on it and the forces that might have sung in it see Clough 1973, 134; and Clough 1995, n.63. On private chapels in Ferrara see Tuohy 1996, 90 and 110; and later in the present chapter. The Mantuan choir, when it was established, sang not at court but in the cathedral (see Chapter II of the present study, with references). Welch (1993, 174-6) describes the building of several new chapels in Galeazzo Maria Sforza's Milan which were specifically designed to avoid the usual pokiness; Galeazzo Maria was partly inspired by a visit to the palace chapel of the Medici in Florence, which he found to be too cramped for a group of visitors.

³⁴ The distinctions I make here and hereafter between public and private spaces are concordant with those made by contemporary commentators – see in particular the discussion of public and private in Leon Battista Alberti and Filarete found in Rosenberg 1982. On the division of the Milanese singers see Welch 1993, 175; on Leo X's see Frey 1955-6. A hint that a similar arrangement may have been in place in Ferrara, in practice if not in administration, comes from the reign of Alfonso. In a letter of 7 November 1517 the singer Bidon, who had defected from Alfonso's service to that of Leo X a few years before, recommends to Alfonso a friend of his, another singer named Piedrossono. He suggests that if the duke doesn't need him as a regular singer, he might still keep him on a

Eyewitness accounts are perfectly explicit about the essential publicity of a large chapel, and of the choir it housed. Ugo Caleffini, writing during Borso's reign, recalled the crowds who had attended Leonello's chapel:

Tanti cantadori questo signoria havia	So may singers this lord had
Tuta soa capella ni era pi[e]no;	All his chapel was full of them;
E sempre organiti li venia	And always organists came there
Canti e suoni a l'officio divino	They sang and played the divine office
Questa era notabele signoria	This was a notable lord
Tanta zente era a oldire a capo chino	So many people came to hear with bowed heads
Per devotione tuto stava rimesso;	For devotion all stood meekly;
Parea che li anzoli fossoli da presso. ³⁵	It seemed that the angels were nearby

In his account of a miraculous incident in Ercole d'Este's reign, Francesco Ariosti describes the chapel built by Ercole in some detail. As I will later discuss at length, he notes especially that it was designed to accommodate many worshippers. The chapel that housed the choir established by Francesco II Gonzaga in the early sixteenth century was in the cathedral of Mantua, and therefore self-evidently visible. An account of the celebration of Mass there in the presence of the Marchese notes that 'so many people gathered there and in the church of S. Pietro itself, that it was as though it were the day of S. Anselmo'.³⁶ Evelyn Welch aptly characterises the new larger chapels built by Galeazzo Maria at his two principal residences as 'not spaces for private prayer and contemplation but areas of public performance'.³⁷

In their purpose, as in their fate, choir and chapel were evidently closely interwoven. Contemporary praise of large court chapels tended to foreground the richness of their decoration. It was in the richness of a chapel, as much as in the piety of the observance it housed, that it evidenced its patron's power. Writing on the chapel built by Leonello, Johannes Ferrariensis notes, immediately before mentioning the choir, that 'he embellished it most honorably and sumptuously with furnishings, books, and gold reliefs'.³⁸ Similarly Bernardino Corio, describing the chapel built by Galeazzo Maria Sforza, followed a mention of the choir with the information that 'the ornaments in his chapel were such that they could be valued at 100,000 ducats'.³⁹ Perhaps it is appropriate to think of the choirs as integrated into the symbolic economy of a chapel's ornament: an ornament to the words of the liturgy, just as a jewelled cross was an ornament to its symbol and a marble floor an ornament to its ceremonial space. The musician and music-theorist Johannes Tinctoris, a courtly

modest wage for when he required the fuller sound of a large choir ('quando se avesse di bisogno di cantare qualche cosa a piena voce'). Apparently Bidon, who had served several years in Ferrara, understood that it was possible to belong to the ducal choir in a regular or (literally) an occasional capacity. For the text of the letter see Lockwood 1998, 238-9.

³⁵ Text Lockwood 1984, 50. All translations not otherwise credited are my own.

³⁶ 'et tanta gente se gli adunò et ne la Chiesa propria di S. Pietro, como se fusse stato il Zorno di S. Anselmo.' – text Prizer 1980, n.73; translation Prizer 1980, 19.

³⁷ Welch 1993, 174ff. For evidence of the success of Galeazzo's chapel choir in addressing itself to the world at large, see Welch 1993, 167.

³⁸ Lockwood 1984, 44. See below for Latin text.

³⁹ Quoted in translation in Welch 1993, 151-2. The original source is Corio's *Storia di Milano*. The same is true of Fiamma's description of Azzone Visconti's chapel – Green 1990, 102.

contemporary of Galeazzo Maria, listed second among its effects precisely that 'musica laudes Dei decorat' (music decorates the praise of God).⁴⁰

Johannes Ferrariensis conveniently draws together these strands in describing Leonello d'Este's promising beginnings as a ruler. Leonello, following the funeral of his predecessor, sets his own reign off on a fresh footing: he will tie his identity as a prince to his piety; he will build a new chapel, decorate it, and staff it with singers; and he will allot himself a visible role in chapel ceremonial:

Quibus peractis, quo aliquo praeclaro facinore enitesceret (erat enim admodum gloriae cupidus) nomenque maiestatis suae ubivis celebrandum diffunderet, ampliandae religionis atque cultus gratia, miram infra suarum aedium limites capellam construxit ac more regio honorifice ac sumptuosissime paramentis, libris, iocalibus auro caelatis eam decoravit. Cantores ex Gallis accersiri iussit; quorum suavissimo concentu divinae laudes mirifice iugiter celebrabantur. Aderat Principes et sacris misteriis indesinenter astabat...

These things done, in order that the fame of his deeds should shine forth clearly (he was then rather desirous of fame) and the glory of his name would be known everywhere, thanks to his furthering of religion and worship, within his palace he built a chapel and in the royal manner he embellished it most honourably and sumptuously with furnishings, books, and gold reliefs. He ordered singers to be brought from France, who celebrated the divine service marvellously with very sweet harmony. The Prince was in attendance and took part faithfully in celebration of the holy mysteries...⁴¹

Although obviously it was important for contemporaries to take the opportunity of a large and skilful choir to praise a patron's personal expertise and interest in music, the two are not necessarily directly related. A prince's private interest might easily be served to his satisfaction with an ensemble small enough to fit into the private spaces of the court. A large choir placed in the public arena as an aspect of the prince's image achieved a more momentous end: it contributed to the construction of a prince's legitimacy and thus enabled the state to function. To that particular end, as Machiavelli and others make clear, a prince's actual interest in music, as indeed his actual piety, are irrelevant.⁴²

The Chapel Choir in Ercole d'Este's Rulership

Before I turn to Alfonso, it will be valuable to revisit, and somewhat flesh out, our musical view of the court of his father Ercole. Here we will find the model described above exemplified with considerable clarity, although to a large extent it has not previously been interpreted in these terms. Furthermore, the relationship of Alfonso's music patronage to that of his father will turn out to be central to the following two chapters.

⁴⁰ Text Cullington 2001, 76. He is not the only person to use the phrase.

⁴¹ Text and translation Lockwood 1984, 44-5.

⁴² See, for instance, the letter published by Welch pointing up the disjunction between Galeazzo Maria's professed and actual piety – Welch 1993, 164-5. It is not an isolated example.

Ercole succeeded his half-brother Borso as Duke of Ferrara in August 1471 already an experienced mercenary commander. A series of minor military involvements in the 1460s were followed by senior roles in 1467 for Venice against the league of Milan, Florence and Naples; and in 1469 for Venice and the pope in the struggle with Naples for control of Rimini. On both occasions his side was defeated by Federico da Montefeltro, but Ercole won respect for his own contributions.⁴³

His rule, however, began at a moment of relative tranquillity on the peninsula.⁴⁴ In the second half of the fifteenth century, in Garrett Mattingly's summary, 'Wars were less destructive than they had been, absorbed less of men's energies, and consumed less of the social income. No major towns were sacked; no desperately bloody fields were fought. And for three years, almost, out of four there was no fighting anywhere in Italy worth a historian's serious attention.'⁴⁵ The Italian powers were locked in an ongoing attempt to put aside their local differences and unite against the constant threat of foreign interference – French, Imperial or Spanish.⁴⁶ At the moment of Ercole's succession the attempt was enjoying new impetus: During 1470 the energetic and authoritarian Pope Paul II attempted to resurrect the Italian League of 1455. More significantly, the efforts of the newly empowered Lorenzo de' Medici kept Italy in largely peaceful balance from 1470 until the French invasion of 1494.⁴⁷ Ercole reprised a prominent mercenary role only once during his reign, passing two summers of inconclusive campaigning in Tuscany as Captain General of the league of Milan, Florence and Venice against Naples and the pope, in 1478-9 (the 'Pazzi War') – the conflict was resolved away from the battlefield.⁴⁸ He was thus somewhat lacking in opportunities for military display (Machiavelli's preferred strategy of rulership), and Ercole turned instead to the foremost of the princely virtues – piety – to construct the identity of his rule.⁴⁹

Scholars of Ercole's very well-studied reign note with unanimity the energy with which Ercole set about this task, and they are joined in their observation by the duke's contemporary panegyrists.⁵⁰ He built monasteries and imported nuns to fill them, and revised the local observance of religious festivals to place himself and his dynasty at their heart.⁵¹ Among his early ceremonial innovations was the instigation of a Maundy Thursday ritual in which he publicly washed the feet and clothing of poor men, the *Mandaturn*. Rosenberg notes that the ceremony allowed the duke to appear humble whilst associating by his actions himself

⁴³ On Ercole's early military career see Tuohy 1996, 11-3.

⁴⁴ C.f. Gundersheimer 2004, 5: 'Ercole's intellectual formation owed much to the conciliatory diplomacy of the Peace of Lodi...'

⁴⁵ Mattingly 1955, 82.

⁴⁶ On the Italian League see, among others, Mattingly 1955, 71-86; Ilardi 1959; Fubini 1995.

⁴⁷ Mattingly 1955, 78-86; Fubini 1995, esp. 191-9. Mattingly (78) characterises the 'peace' of Italy aptly: 'although the situation in 1454 called for a policy of unity, all that was achieved during the next forty years was a policy of tension'; later (117) he speaks of 'the customary tactics of tension ... the war of nerves, each against all, which was their usual alternative to military action.'

⁴⁸ On the Pazzi War in brief see Mallett 1993, 57-8. On the diplomatic conditions that allowed most military actions of the period of the Italian League to end through negotiation, see in brief Mattingly 1955, 79-82.

⁴⁹ Lockwood (1972, 111) notes that in this Ercole was also concerned to set his reign apart from those of his half-brothers Leonello and Borso. However, Borso was also noted for his piety: see the contemporary report quoted in Rosenberg 1997, 113 n.30; also Rosenberg 1976; and in brief Tuohy 1996, 165, 171.

⁵⁰ For a lengthy discussion of Ercole's piety see Tuohy 1996, 164-85. Of particular note among contemporary writings in their praise of Ercole's piety are Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti's *De Triumphis Religionis* of 1497 (published in modern edition in Gundersheimer 1972) and Francesco Ariosti's *De novi intra ducalem regio ferrariensem delubri in Gloriosissime Virginis Domini Iesu Christi Salvatoris Nostris Matris ecc* of 1477 (Bib. Est. Lat. 309 Alpha W.4.4).

⁵¹ On Ercole's establishment of churches and monasteries, and the importation of nuns see Rosenberg 1997, 145-8. On the revision of local religious observance see, among others, Rosenberg 1997, 147.

directly with Christ.⁵² Joseph Manca has revealed the role of Ercole's portraiture in presenting his piety, noting that – uniquely among fifteenth-century rulers – mass-circulating coins of his reign name him 'Divo Hercules'.⁵³ Ercole was also keen to associate his princehood with miraculous events, as I will shortly discuss in more detail. His intention was evidently to construct himself as a sacred ruler, and his method was both sophisticated and powerful: in Rosenberg's words, his 'sacrality was repeatedly manifested not only by means of his conspicuous acts of public piety, but also, and more tellingly, through ritual associations of the duke with the central images of Christianity and through instances of his selection by God for special protection and favour.'⁵⁴

Whilst no doubt Ercole's piety was genuine, a memo in his own name reveals its more practical significance:

Cognoscendo Nui, altra che a dio sia cosa accepta, de quanta laude et gloria appresso tute le natione del mondo sia state la executione et fundatione di templi... havendo deliberato si como havemo provisto ampliare questa nostra citade de circuito, honorarla de giesie et monasteri...

We, being aware, beyond the fact that it pleases God, of how much praise and glory there has been among all the nations of the world for those who build and establish temples... have thought to arrange for enlarging this city of ours in its circumference, honouring it with churches and monasteries...⁵⁵

Similarly, whilst Ercole appears to have been genuinely interested in philosophy and the arts, it is impossible to imagine that the cultural projects that served his conspicuous piety were undertaken wholly, or even principally, in the spirit of personal interest.⁵⁶

An unexpected occurrence at the beginning of Ercole's reign might have prompted his choice of strategy, and certainly became one of its focal points. A stablehand posted an image of the virgin on a gloomy gateway near the stables (in the palace on the Castel Vecchio side), to prevent littering and bad behavior. In 1471 it began to effect miracles, and quickly became the subject of a popular cult. An account of the image's miracles and its subsequent fate was written in 1477 by Francesco Ariosti, under the title *De novi intra ducalem regio ferrariensem delubri in Gloriosissime Virginis Domini Iesu Christi Salvatoris Nostri Matris ecc.*⁵⁷

⁵² Rosenberg 1997, 113; Tuohy 1996, 168-9 (in more detail, with contemporary accounts).

⁵³ Manca 1989, 529-32 and 536. See also, on other pious coinage from Ercole's reign, Rosenberg 2004, 146-8.

⁵⁴ Rosenberg 1997, 147.

⁵⁵ The memo relates to a grant of land for a new monastery in the *Addizione Ercolea*. Text and trans. Gundersheimer 1976, 6; also, with a different translation, Rosenberg 1997, 145. For similar views, see Rosenberg 1997, 113; Tuohy 1996, 168 (stressing the public nature of Ercole's piety).

⁵⁶ Gundersheimer 1976 strikes this balance very carefully.

⁵⁷ In the absence of a modern edition, the text survives only in manuscript in the Biblioteca Estense (Bib. Est. Lat. 309 Alpha W.4.4). I give here a fairly detailed account of the miraculous Virgin and quote extensively from related documents already published by Thomas Tuohy. I do so for a very good reason: these records were largely not drawn upon in Lockwood's research on Ercole's chapel, and yet they contain a quantity of material that is significant to it. Tuohy himself is not a musicologist and, though he makes a few interesting comments, he does not deal extensively or expertly with musical matters; however, since he published his book no musicologist has attempted to fill this gap, and therefore it is necessary to do so here.

Ercole enjoyed a special relationship with the Virgin: according to legend it was she who inspired Niccolò III to name his son 'Ercole', and she was considered to protect him in times of danger.⁵⁸ The state moved quickly to take advantage of the situation. In June and July the column to which the image was affixed was given a fresh coat of paint, and the area cleaned up.⁵⁹ An outline outdoor 'church' was built around the image at the duke's expense, and Mass was sung there on Saturdays by the chapel choir.⁶⁰ Whilst it is true that Ercole did not actually become duke until August, the apportioning of authority in the city during June and July was far from clear. At Easter Borso had journeyed to Rome to be made Duke of Ferrara by Pope Paul II leaving his preferred heir, Ercole, effectively in charge, and on his return to Ferrara in May he had retired to the villa of Belriguardo, dangerously ill. The city erupted into civil war between the partisans of Ercole and those of his rival, Leonello's son Niccolò – a struggle in which Ercole had the upper hand. Borso rallied and temporarily banished both competitors at the end of July, but his health soon declined once more, and Ercole was not absent long.⁶¹ It is thus difficult to know for certain who was initially responsible for the exploitation of the miraculous virgin, but there is a strong hint: the orders were apparently given by Francesco Ariosti, a dedicated and active partisan for Ercole, from his position as ducal seneschal.⁶²

The building of the outdoor church was noted by the author of the *Diario Ferrarese* in July 1471. He takes care to register the duke's symbolic ownership of the image:

apparse in la corte del duca, apresso le stalle, una N.D. che fece de molti miracoli, dove poi, dipoi fu facta una giesia et gubernata per Baldissera de Montechio, tunc spenditore del duca.

there has appeared in the court of the duke, near to the stables, an Our Lady that does many miracles, where then, there will soon be made a church [constructed] under the management of Baldissera de Montechio, at the expense of the duke.⁶³

The exploitation continued with renewed vigour once Ercole took the throne. It seems clear enough that he set out to appropriate the cult of the image to the ends of the public presentation of his pious rule.

At the beginning of Ercole's reign the palace and castle incorporated several chapels and oratories.⁶⁴ Most were small and truly private, and Ercole's observance, together with his choir, were initially housed in the

⁵⁸ Rosenberg 1997, 113.

⁵⁹ Tuohy 1996, Appendix, document 7: June 1471, payment to Girardo Costa 'per avere da de' bianco cum cholla a doe mane a uno pilastro in Corte donde è fato quella devoçione de comesione del Spetabile Francesco de Ariosti, Sescalcho s dedese' (for having whitewashed ... a column in the Corte where there is made this devotion, by order of the Honourable Francesco de Ariosti, majordomo); Tuohy 1996, 92 n.202, Archivio Estense Munitione e Fabbriche 10.86: 'per portare via ledame che era in la via del N.D. denanzi alla stalla grande' (to carry away rubbish that was in the road of His Lordship in front of the great stables).

⁶⁰ Tuohy 1996, 92. Much later, in the 1490s, Ercole published a book of prayers of his own invention addressed to the Virgin entitled *Corona Beatae Mariae Virginis*, which were evidently used as part of the continuing Saturday Mass (see Lockwood 1984, 136-7 – Lockwood mentions that the second edition was published in Ferrara in 1497, but does not give the date of the first edition).

⁶¹ On these events see Gardner 1904, 108-21.

⁶² See the payment record quoted in n.61 above. On Ariosti as Ercole's agent in 1471 before Borso's death see Gardner 1904, 109 n.1.

⁶³ Text Tuohy 1996, 92 n.202.

⁶⁴ Tuohy (1996, 90 n.191) notes a small chapel previously used by Niccolò III and one made for Ercole's mother. An oratory, and later a small chapel, was also built in the garden used by Ercole's wife Eleanora d'Aragona during the 1480s (Tuohy 1996, 110).

larger chapel built by Leonello in the early 1440s.⁶⁵ Leonello's chapel was located by the Fountain Court, which was on the left as seen from the road that bisected the palace compound when travelling away from the Cathedral. It was altered for Ercole's use in September 1471, with a new altarpiece and grander decoration.⁶⁶ More substantial alterations were made in 1472, involving marble and new windows.⁶⁷ A payment record reveals that at that time twelve stalls were made for the choir:

Zoane de Gomberti, marangone ... 12 sedie del cuore (*sic*) dela chapella del Ill.N.S. ala fontana, cioè 12 tene suso le Gombede [?].

Zoane de Gomberti, carpenter ... 12 seats for the choir in the chapel of Our Illustrious Lord at the fountain...⁶⁸

The number twelve probably reflects the musical forces appropriate to the size of the chapel, as Leonello's choir had also averaged about that number.⁶⁹ However, during the years in which Ercole used this chapel the size of his choir accelerated well beyond twelve: Lockwood lists three members in 1471, seventeen in 1472, twenty-eight in 1473 and thirty-four in 1474.⁷⁰ In the circumstances, it seems most plausible to connect this apparently superfluous expansion with the practical and theatrical demands of the crowded weekly outdoor mass at the miraculous image of the Virgin.⁷¹

A new and significantly larger court chapel was completed in 1474 to house the image, its entrance giving onto the Cortile Grande at the right hand side, close to the entrance arch at the Cathedral end.⁷² The choice of the right-hand side, traditionally the service wing, reveals the importance of public visibility and access to the design of the new chapel. The Fountain Chapel, on the left, had shown its east end to the road running through the Cortile Grande, its entrance plunged into the palace building; moving to the right allowed the facade and entrance of the new chapel to address the world at large. The significance of this reorientation is enshrined even in the new chapel's name: whilst the Fountain Chapel was known as a 'capella', often the 'capella ala fontana', its replacement acquired the church-style title 'Santa Maria del Corte' and was frequently referred to as the duke's 'chiesa'.⁷³

⁶⁵ On the building of Leonello's chapel see Lockwood 1984, 44-5.

⁶⁶ Tuohy 1996, 90.

⁶⁷ Tuohy 1996, 90-2.

⁶⁸ Text Tuohy 1996, 92 n.196.

⁶⁹ For the size of Leonello's choir see the membership lists published in Appendix V of Lockwood 1984. I acknowledge that drawing a direct correlation between choirstalls and choir is potentially contentious. Miniatures showing singers standing round a large choirbook on a lectern are familiar, but there are counterexamples. A miniature in the Hours of Rene d'Anjou, for instance, shows clerics singing from individual parts whilst seated in choirstalls (illustration in Bell 2001, 44). In any case, the singers needed somewhere to sit down whilst they were not actively involved.

⁷⁰ Lockwood 1984, Appendix V.

⁷¹ The building of the temporary outdoor church, which clearly signals the intention to adopt the image, predates Ercole's famous letter to the Bishop of Constance in which he states his intention to establish an excellent court chapel (on which see Lockwood 1984, 131), and may therefore be interpreted as its necessary precondition.

⁷² Tuohy 1996, 93.

⁷³ See the various contemporary references to the chapel in the footnotes of Tuohy 1996, 93-4.

The new chapel, which immediately became the site of the duke's observance and the principal venue for his choir, is described at length by Ariosti:

Quadro in circa braza 28 per quadra esteso; riceva la lume da 5 finestre vitreade, cioè da 2 verso el mezo zorno, dale tre de ver septentrione. La quadra che havea l'aspecta verso occidente teneva como in uno antro concavo quello primo tabernacolo de tanto sacro deposito, disopra coperto de quello primitivo cielo arcuado e stellado in campo celeste, et era circondado e ferrado de quella propria grada di ferro instagnade tanto artificiosa, sopra la intrada dela quale gli pendea uno certo et affilado ordine de lampade continuamente ardente. Haveangli etiamdio adaptade quelle formose e ricche ancone usade per tabernaculo cum quei vodi de ogni facta, pare certo moltountuosa e preciosa, in circa questa sacra ymagene virginala como luoco preparado per so digna sacristia. Ali 2 corni di sopra del'altare eranvi quelli 2 anzoli deauradi cum uno candelieri in mano de continuo fiammezanti. Tra quali quantosi estendea longo l'altare eravi più e più bambinelli adornatissimi cum fermagli diversi al collo gemmadi argentadi, auradi, quali si representavano l'infantia del Glorioso Salvator Nostro. Sopra le portelle dela grada per cui s'intrava del sacello al'altare si gli dimostrava d'una eximia pictura la salutiera Annunciatione Angelica ver la S. Vergine, sopra la qual pictura vi si dechiariva la meravigliosa odumbratione del Spirito Sancto. Ma de uno altro cantone dela grada eravi affixe lamine de ferro dentace cum certi stilli da ferra per la quale attacono candelloti intorno ala grada. Per de fuora ad un cubito e mezo era uno scabello de abede continuo sul quale più e più persone podevano istar in genuflexe orado e comodamente. Entro questo scabello da man rita e manca erano 6 base on pedestalli su quali tegneano 6 cercosti deauradi cum 6 dopie di candissima cera.

The facade is about 28 braccia from the external facade; it receives light from 5 glass windows, that is with two towards the south and three towards the north. The wall that faces west holds in a concave apse this foremost altar with such a sacred burden [i.e. the image]; above, covering this first, an arc of sky and stars in a celestial field; and it [the apse] was enclosed and protected by an iron grille made so skilfully, above the entrance to which there hung a certain and bright order of lamps kept continually aflame. They [i.e. the craftsmen] had adapted such rich and lovely altarpieces for use as [i.e. just behind] the tabernacle, it seems certain most sumptuous and precious, encircling this sacred image of the Virgin as a location prepared for such dignified holiness. On two ledges above the altar were these two gilded angels each with a candle continuously flaming in its hand. Between which there were extending along the whole length of the altar very many little putti, beautifully adorned with different clasps at their necks, set with jewels, or silvered, or gilded, such that they represent the infancy of Our Glorious Saviour. Above the doors of the grille by which one enters into the sanctuary of the altar there is displayed in an excellent picture the happy Angelic Annunciation to the Holy Virgin, above the which picture the miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit declares itself. But at each corner of the grille there were fixed sheets of iron cut as certain styles of hoop to attach candles on the inside of the grille. Outside [the sanctuary] by a cubit and a half was a continuous kneeling bench for the devout on which very many people could be knelt in prayer, and comfortably. Just

beyond this bench on either side there were 6 bases on pedestals on which were supported 6 gilded holders with 6 double [i.e. large size] wax candles.⁷⁴

Ariosti notes that the principal altar was at the west rather than the east end, nearest the door which gave onto the courtyard. Ercole had his own balcony at the east end from which to hear mass.⁷⁵ Evidently the arrangement was designed to allow public access to the image within the duke's building without unduly compromising the duke's convenience. Ariosti is at pains to point out that the needs of the image's devotees were incorporated into the design: they were provided with an exceptionally long and comfortable bench directly in front of the sacellum. The aim, it seems, was to bring the image, together with its popular cult, into a space that could be more effectively stage-managed, and which was more profoundly close to the prince himself. The image, and the building and observance associated with it, became aspects of Ercole's princely identity. In a similar vein, when Sabadino describes the chapel more briefly in the fourth book of his *De Triumphis Religionis*, he does so in the chapter praising Ercole's *magnificentia*.⁷⁶

The miraculous image was moved to its new home in a great procession which, depending on the source, took place on 6 or 7 August 1474. Ariosti reports the event, but Caleffini provides more detail:

In Ferrara cum solenne processione a che fu tuto el Clero de Ferrara et lo Illmo Mr Hercole Duca et Madama Rizarda sua madre fu tolto la N.D. madre del N.S. Mr Yesu Christo de la Corte, cioè de quel loco, ove la era de verso el cortile de dreto la sala grande, et fu portata dal lato denanti de epsa corte sopra la via ove la è. Et fugli tute le Compagnie. Et portata li, fu cantato per lo Episcopo una solenne missa a laude de la N.D.

In Ferrara with solemn procession, in which were all the clerics of Ferrara and the Illustrious Signor Ercole the duke and Madam Rizarda his mother, was taken the [image of] Our Lady mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Corte ... And all the Companies were there. And it having been carried there, the Bishop sang a solemn mass in praise of Our Lady.⁷⁷

Two aspects of the procession thus described bear directly on the choir. Firstly we know that most or all the singers were in the procession, as they would have numbered among the 'clerics of Ferrara', all of whom attended. Secondly we know that mass was sung as part of the event: Caleffini identifies the Bishop as the celebrant, but it would be strange if the choir were not also involved on such an occasion.

⁷⁴ Text Tuohy 1996, 93 n.204.

⁷⁵ Tuohy 1996, 93 with n.206.

⁷⁶ Text Gundersheimer 1972, 51: 'Poi entrando nel palazzo se vedo lo amplissimo cortile de grande splendore ... Et ala dextra mano uno dignissimo sacello a lune, alto voltato de cotta pietra e factoli egregio pavimento a quadri de candidi e russi marmi, intitolato al glorioso e dolce nome de Maria Regina di Cieli.' (Then entering into the palace [Sabadino envisages entering the Cortile Grande on the road from the Cathedral end] one sees the large courtyard of great splendour ... And on the right hand a most dignified sanctuary in an apse, [in a chapel] high-vaulted with brick and equipped with a distinguished floor in squares of white and red marble, dedicated to the glorious and sweet name of Mary Queen of the Skies.) The chapter on *magnificentia* describes the buildings and cultural activities of the Ferrarese court in considerable detail and constitutes about a third of the entire text.

⁷⁷ Text Tuohy 1996, 93 n.203. Ariosti's report can be found at the same location.

Improvements were made to the chapel in 1476, and in 1480 it was replaced with another on almost the same site, presumably as part of the large-scale redesign of the palace begun in 1479.⁷⁸ In describing the improvements made in 1476 Ariosti supplies a final key detail. After mentioning a new pavement, new ceiling, new organ and new seats for the priests, he concludes:

On vogliasse al choro che viene da ogni banda intagliado e tarsiado magistrevolmente; on vogliasse a questi 20 cantori ducali e rari et eccellenti quali ogni zorni in questa novissimo sacello che si viene instaurando cum so armonie più che humane impronta del divo pio principe nostro.

[And] in what pertains to the choir that is carved and intarsia'd on every level in masterly fashion; [and] in what pertains to these 20 ducal singers who are rare and excellent every day in this very new chapel, which has been invested with such harmony of more than human imprint by our divine pious prince.⁷⁹

Ariosti implies that the quire accommodated a choir of twenty singers, and that this was the number that regularly sang in the chapel. After an early peak, twenty did indeed become the average number of chapel singers employed by Ercole for the majority of his reign.⁸⁰ In the last phrase quoted, Ariosti also describes the choir as an inseparable aspect of Ercole's identity – the very manifestation of his piety and divinity.⁸¹

In the phenomenon of the miraculous Virgin, we find the large chapel choir tied to the management of Ercole's public princely identity more explicitly than we could possibly have hoped. It seems that its size, and perhaps its very existence, was precipitated by the decision to adopt the image as an important aspect the duke's public presentation.⁸² Ercole appropriated the symbolic value of the miraculous image, establishing about it a magnificent observance that his subjects could consider demonstrative of the duke's piety and of his divine favour. Such a strategy could only have worked if it was enacted in a public forum, and that is precisely what his new chapel set out to furnish. The public nature of the choir's size, as of the design of its venue, is thus self-evident from its very inception.

⁷⁸ Tuohy 1996, 93-5.

⁷⁹ Tuohy 1996, 93-4 n.207.

⁸⁰ See Lockwood 1984, Appendix V.

⁸¹ Ariosti's initial description of the chapel offers a new way to understand yet another aspect of the first years of Ercole's choir. Its expansion in 1473 was brought about by the hiring of a body of German choirboys, most of whom remained in Ercole's service for two years (Lockwood 1984, Appendix V). Ariosti notes that the main altar of the new chapel was decorated with 'very many children', and explains their particular significance to the image of the Virgin: they symbolise the childhood of Christ, and hence the role of the Virgin in the Gospels. Actual children were employed in the same symbolic role in processions later in Ercole's reign, and Tuohy has connected their importance to Ferrarese sanctity with that of the many nuns encouraged by Ercole – 'virgins were perceived as most efficacious intermediaries with the Almighty' (Tuohy 1996, 177-8 with further references). Although more direct evidence is lacking, it is certainly plausible that the choirboys were hired partly because they could similarly symbolise the childhood of Christ at the Saturday Mass by the image.

⁸² Lockwood (1972, 108-10 – endorsed in Manca 1989) argues that the particular magnificence of Ercole's rule was due to his status as Duke of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio – the first of the Estensi to begin his reign with those titles. I am not sure that the correlation is valid: Galeazzo Maria Sforza began the first large chapel choir of the Sforzas in Milan even though his father had already been a duke; Francesco II Gonzaga began a large chapel choir in Mantua although he was still a Marchese; and Federico da Montefeltro, despite being a duke, maintained only the smallest of sacred ensembles. It is also far from clear that Ercole's rule was more magnificent than Borso's.

Ercole attended sung Mass in the new chapel every morning and vespers every evening, and insisted on an elaborate and lengthy observance – much to his courtiers' irritation. Caleffini observes that:

Ala quale messa de raro che li fratelli de sua Signoria et zentilhomini stesseno perche durava assai la messa, et lo Signore molto tarde manzava.

It was rare that his Lordship's brothers and court gentlemen were present [throughout] because the Mass lasted so long, and his Lordship [consequently] dined very late.⁸³

However, the veneration of the miraculous Virgin was not the only public use to which the choir was put. They sometimes sang Mass at other churches in Ferrara with Ercole in attendance, offering the duke the opportunity to parade his magnificent piety within the local sacred spaces of his subjects. Lockwood suggests that these visits were timed to coincide with feasts of particular relevance to each individual church. At the major religious festivals they also played their part, closely integrated into the more idiosyncratic and visible aspects of Ercole's observance: the choir accompanied him at the *Mandatum*, for instance, and at Epiphany at the *ventura*, during which he travelled about the city receiving gifts from his subjects.⁸⁴ Sometimes they even featured in the *sacre rappresentazioni* staged by the duke in the central piazza of Ferrara from 1481 on.⁸⁵

In 1482 Ercole precipitated an opportunity to undertake one of the 'great enterprises' advocated by Machiavelli as the most successful demonstration of princely power. Following the Pazzi War, alliances within Italy shifted: Milan and Florence moved to peace with Naples without Venice, forming a league in which Ferrara was also included, leaving Venice to conclude an opposing alliance with the pope. Bad feeling had long festered between Venice and Ferrara, partly on account of the trade concessions demanded of Ferrara by Venice for more than a century, and partly as a result of contested jurisdiction over the Comacchio salt pans.⁸⁶ With the potential force of the league behind him, Ercole felt able to address these discomforts more forcefully than had his predecessors. Following a gradual escalation of tension, and in the absence of a Ferrarese climbdown, Venice set about mobilising its troops along the border in January 1482; Ferrara followed suit. The Venetian attack began by land and water in May, well-planned and supported by massive resources; but what should have been a lightning strike met unexpectedly determined resistance, not least from Federico da Montefeltro commanding a small relief force on behalf of the league. In January 1483, with Venetian troops menacing the city of Ferrara itself, Ercole's allies committed themselves more substantially to his aid. After two years of fighting, despite the continuing possibility of taking the city, Venice decided that a carefully wrought peace would be more advantageous than continued conflict.⁸⁷

Unfortunately the war was a singularly unheroic one from a Ferrarese point of view: expensive, destructive, unpopular, and in its final outcome an unqualified repudiation of Ferrarese arrogance. It coincided with an outbreak of plague in the city which eventually killed Federico, and Ercole spent much of the war

⁸³ Text and translation Lockwood 1984, 136.

⁸⁴ Martines 1979, 232; Lockwood 1984, 137; Rosenberg 1997, 115. The gifts gathered, mostly food, were then turned over to the poor. Lockwood gives details of several other similar ceremonies.

⁸⁵ Lockwood 1984, 137; Tuohy 1996, 170.

⁸⁶ On the history of economic wrangling between Ferrara and Venice see in brief Dean 1993, 83-93; and at more length Dean 1986.

⁸⁷ On the War of Ferrara see Mallett 1993; and Rosenberg 1997, 123-8 (giving more detail from the Ferrarese perspective), on both of which the preceding summary is based.

seriously ill and confined to the Castel Vecchio. Enemy forces reached the city of Ferrara itself, laying waste to the surrounding countryside, with the result that agriculture was disrupted for several years after.⁸⁸ In the final settlement large territorial and financial concessions were made to Venice, and the office of *visdomino* (effectively symbolising Venetian dominance) re-imposed.⁸⁹ The economic fallout coloured the rest of Ercole's reign: in 1499 his debts were estimated by the *visdomino* at 200000 ducats, and throughout the 1490s he took credit and pawned jewels in Venice to raise funds.⁹⁰ A disgruntled populace coined the phrase 'Non son più i tempi del duca Borso'.⁹¹ The whole experience left Ercole shy of military commitments for the remainder of his reign, but (in confirmation of Machiavelli) this approach also invited his subjects' overt criticism.⁹²

Ercole's initial reaction was to retreat into his private pleasures, but he could not ignore his deteriorating public image indefinitely.⁹³ Despite the hardship – or rather, because of it – it is after the war that Ercole's most characteristic efforts to demonstrate his power and magnificence were made.⁹⁴ At Carnival in 1486 public performances of classical comedies (in Italian translation) were held in the palace courtyard (Cortile Grande) at the duke's instigation, and were met with such enthusiasm that they became an annual feature.⁹⁵ In 1492 work began on large fortifications to enclose the suburbs to the north of the city, which had proved vulnerable during the war with Venice, and Ercole took an extremely active part in their construction.⁹⁶ The new walls allowed for a project that served princely presentation at larger scale and in more detail than any other: the redevelopment of the newly enclosed suburbs as a magnificent urban space (known as the *Addizione Ercole*), in effect more than doubling the size of the city.⁹⁷ The layout of the *Addizione*, worked out by Ercole and the architect Biagio Rossetti in close collaboration, constituted, in Bruno Zevi's view, an arena designed to facilitate ceremony, military display and the acting out of appropriate social relations.⁹⁸ The local nobility was selectively prompted to inhabit the wide streets with newly magnificent residences. It was an unprecedented effort to manipulate the space of a city to the end of the better presentation of a prince, both in itself and in its use.

Piety also received new impetus after the war. Ercole devoted considerable time and resources to the arrangement of a grand pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, to take place in 1487 – it never took place, but the magnificence of the preparations was recorded in fresco decoration at the Este villa of Belfiore.⁹⁹ The *Addizione* supplied the opportunity for the building or rebuilding of no fewer than eight churches, as well as the

⁸⁸ On the progress of the war within the immediate vicinity of Ferrara, see Rosenberg 1997, 125-8. Dean 1993, 73-4 references vivid contemporary descriptions of the damage and hardship caused by the war to the territory and people of Ferrara. On the aftermath of the war in Ferrara in general see Dean 1993.

⁸⁹ On the peace settlement see Mallett 1993, 70-2; Dean 1993, 73, 77-8, 83-7.

⁹⁰ Dean 1993, 74.

⁹¹ Lockwood 1984, 87.

⁹² 'he attends to his own pleasure ... and leaves the war to whoever wants to fight' – translation Dean 1993, 76. Ercole's neutrality during the conflicts of the 1490s and 1500s looks rather like a reprise of his predecessor Borso's role of peacemaker among the stronger Italian states. Apparently after an early show of ambition he came to see the wisdom of his half-brother's approach.

⁹³ Dean 1993, 74; Rosenberg 1997, 128.

⁹⁴ This interpretation of events is proposed also in Manca 1989, 525. As Anthony B. Cashman III (2002) reminds us, however, the success of such demonstrations is another question altogether.

⁹⁵ Rosenberg 1997, 129-30; Tuohy 1996, 257-64. The first such performance was attended by as many as 10000 people.

⁹⁶ Rosenberg 1997, 131-2.

⁹⁷ On the *Addizione*, see in particular Zevi 1971; Rosenberg 1997, 130-52.

⁹⁸ Zevi 1971, 144-5.

⁹⁹ Manca 1989, 536-7.

establishment of three monasteries. To populate the latter, Ercole poached not only nuns but a living saint, the subject of a popular cult, from elsewhere in Italy.¹⁰⁰ Under the straightened economic circumstances the choir continued to play its part – indeed its role must have grown in importance. The ducal accounts for 1482-3 are taken up almost entirely with expenses pertaining to the war, but by 1486 the choir had grown back to its pre-war average, staffed largely with the same singers.¹⁰¹

Ercole's reign, thus interpreted, is revealing. His improbably swollen 'court chapel' and its choir had in practice rather little to do with Ercole's private preoccupations in the world of the palace. The choir was tied directly to a cult image appropriated to the ends of the regime and his position at its head, and to the space built to house it – a space designed to manage and embody the interface between the world of the prince and that of his subjects. It was part of Ercole's plan for maintaining his subjects' faith in his power that he should show himself to be pious on a magnificent scale – a scale that was simply not physically possible in the 'home' space of the castle and the palace. The choir was part of the strategic (mis)representation of the ruler to the world at large.

¹⁰⁰ On the religious establishments in the *Addizione* see Rosenberg 1997, 145-8; for a more detailed consideration covering Ercole's religious establishments more generally in the same period see Tuohy 1996, 172-82. On Ercole's living saint see Rosenberg 1997, 145-6; Tuohy 1996, 176. In many ways the situation and role of the Blessed Lucia and her nuns poached from Viterbo was closely analogous to that of the chapel choir, and in fact the process of procuring Lucia and extracting her from Viterbo cost more (3000 ducats) than the choir's yearly wage bill.

¹⁰¹ Lockwood 1984, Appendix V. However, from the end of the war until his death Ercole worked tirelessly to obtain and retain the right to grant ecclesiastical benefices to his singers himself within his own territories, in an effort to displace the cost of the choir from his own pocket – see Lockwood 1984, Appendix IV.

II

Firing the Chapel Choir

In Chapter I we examined the role of the chapel choir in rulership – that is, in the strategic construction of the prince for the benefit of the world at large. The choir emerged as a functional institution – rather than, from the patron’s perspective, a strictly or primarily musical one – tied to public measures of princely quality and efficacy. A fresh look at Ercole’s choir, and his chapel, revealed that it reflected these priorities literally and explicitly – more so than had previously been thought. We have examined Ercole because, in his first few years as duke, Alfonso was tangibly engaged in dealing with (and manipulating) his father’s legacy. In the present chapter we turn to Alfonso himself, examining how he, as prince and as patron, responded on the basis of his own character and expertise to profound and threatening changes in the political landscape of Italy. We will see that his dealings with the chapel choir continued to reflect the functional status assigned to it by his father, and even that, to an extent, the choir remained a symbol of Ercole within his son’s strategies of rulership.

1502-5: Apprenticeship

Alfonso first took a hand in the chapel choir in the last few years of his father’s life.¹ During 1502 he took a singer with him to Paris on a diplomatic trip, perhaps for the purposes of recruiting new members.² In the same year he took an active interest in the fate of another singer, Gian de’ Artiganova, who had been imprisoned in Savoy whilst recruiting singers.³ We learn from the correspondence of another musician, Il Caglia, with Ercole

¹ Documentation in Lockwood 1976, Appendices I and II; initially Lockwood 1972, 120-2. The episode has recently been summarized and revisited in Fallows 2009, 243-4.

² Alfonso to Ercole, 2 May 1502: ‘Hieronymo cantore presente exhibitor ritorna a vostra excellentia, La quale prego non existimi che lo haverlo electo per condurre cum epso me in francia sia stato per fare cosa che dispiaqua a quella, ma solamente per mia delectatione & piacere. Imperò vostra signoria serà contenta che cussi la supplico ad darli licentia che'l possa venire cum epso me, che la me ne fara singulare gratia...’ (The singer Girolamo, the bearer of this letter, is returning to Your Excellency [in Codigoro]. I ask you not to think that I have chosen him to accompany me to France to cause you displeasure, but solely for my entertainment and gratification. I beg Your Lordship to be kind enough to grant my request that he be given permission to accompany me since you will do me a singular favour...) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 5. See also no.6 in the list of correspondence given in Lockwood 1976, Appendix I, in which the musician and agent Girolamo da Sestola (in Lyons) informs Ercole, later in the same month, that Alfonso will send him to Paris.

³ Alfonso to Ercole, 27 July 1502: ‘è venuta qui fama che Giam sia stato retenuto in le terre del signore Duca de Savoia per imputatione de havere desviati cantoni a sua Signoria. Et perchè io non voria, che per questa causa Il patisse alcuno sinistro: prego vostra Excellentia, se voglia dignare ó cum mandare uno cavallaro ó altra persona chiarisse del caso...’ (News has reached here that Gian has been detained in the lands of the Duke of Savoy on the charge of having lured away singers from the service of his Lordship. And since I would not wish him to suffer any harm on this account, I ask Your Excellency whether you would consent to send either one of your riders or some other person to clear up the matter...) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 7; Alfonso to Ercole, 31 July 1502: ‘...mi pare racordargli, che non sentito nova alcuna de Jan Cantore...’ (...I should like to remind you that I have not heard anything of the singer Jan...) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 8; Alfonso to Ercole, 4 August 1502: ‘...La quale ha facta bona provisione per intender quello sia de Jan Cantore, essendosi mandato quello Cavallaro Regio in Savoia...’ (Your excellency has made good provision for finding out what has become of the singer Jan, by sending that royal messenger to Savoy) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 9.

that when Gian returned safely with the new recruits in tow, Alfonso took a particular interest in them.⁴ Not long afterwards, he apparently played an important role in the famous debate over the employment of Josquin or Isaac as head of the Este chapel.⁵ Alfonso was later instructed to seek out new singers whilst travelling north of the Alps in 1504-5.⁶

David Fallows and others have noted that these involvements begin very shortly after an important event in Alfonso's career.⁷ In February 1502 he married Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI and his mistress Vanozza de' Catanei.⁸ In 1503-4 the membership of the choir reached a peak only exceeded during Ercole's reign in the millennium year (a time of particular religious paranoia).⁹

The match, first proposed by Alexander as early as November 1500, was the subject of protracted negotiations.¹⁰ Alexander hoped thereby to support the efforts of his son Cesare Borgia, whose fierce campaigns were carving out a kingdom in central Italy: Ferrara would bring with it the friendship of Mantua and Urbino as a bulwark against the territorial ambitions of Venice. The Este, on the other hand, had expected to secure a French princess as Alfonso's bride, and initially dismissed the idea out of hand. Lucrezia was far below them in social rank, was illegitimate, was already twice married, and was the subject of unsavoury (if unfair) rumours. As the negotiations developed, however, Ercole was backed into a corner. The French king Louis XII, an important ally of the Este, threw his support behind the match in order to win permission to march his armies across the Papal States, on the way to conquer Naples. Alexander, for his part, made it clear that only the confirmation of this marriage could prevent his son Cesare from taking Ferrara by force.

Ercole capitulated, though he had a hard time persuading Alfonso to accept the plan. To salvage the situation, he drove a hard bargain in the negotiation of the dowry.¹¹ The contract was finally drawn up in August 1501, although the pope dragged his feet in upholding his side of the bargain, delaying the departure of the bridal escort. The celebrations in Rome spanned Christmas and were followed by a slow progress through Cesare's states towards Ferrara.¹² When Lucrezia reached Castel Bentivoglio, twenty miles from Ferrara, she

⁴ Girolamo da Sestola to Ercole, 4 August 1502: 'scrivo questa let[te]ra in nome del signore don Alfonso; sua Signoria avisa vostra Signoria como gia[n] è venuto sano e salvo, como li chantori, li quali sono al fine zonti a modena e fano una bona ciera per la gracia di dio, e no dirò altro a la Signoria vostra se non che li chantori sono perfeti, e don Alfonso non vede l'ora che vostra Signoria vegna per ogni cosa e tanto più quanto per farve sentire quisti chantori...' (I am writing this letter on behalf of Don Alfonso. His Lordship informs Your Lordship that Gian has arrived safe and sound, that the singers have at last arrived at Modena, and that by the grace of God they all look well. And I will only say to Your Lordship that the singers are truly perfect, and that Don Alfonso can hardly wait for Your Lordship's coming, for many reasons but all the more to let you hear these singers.) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 10.

⁵ The relevant documents are well-known and I will not repeat them here. See Vander Straeten 1969, 6:87-8; and Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Documents 14 and 17. At the same time (August-September 1502) Alfonso maintained his involvement in mundane matters concerning the chapel – see Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Documents 14-6.

⁶ He may have recruited Obrecht on this trip. Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 25; Lockwood 1984, 207-8.

⁷ Lockwood 1972, 120; Fallows 2009, 243. Lockwood (1985, 196 n.13) notes that Alfonso's account books for 1503-4 contain 'numerous payments for music and musicians'. In fact, Prizer (1985, 4) has published an even earlier notice of Alfonso involved with the ducal choir: he borrowed them to supply entertainment at a banquet he held in anticipation of Lucrezia's arrival.

⁸ In fact they were married by proxy on 1 September 1501, and again on 30 December, but they did not meet until Lucrezia arrived at the outskirts of Ferrara on 31 January 1502. On the marriage and the preparations for it see Gregorovius 1903, 167-265.

⁹ See the chapel lists published in Lockwood 1984, Appendix V.

¹⁰ Described and copiously documented in Gregorovius 1903, 167-95. My summary is based on his account.

¹¹ Described and documented Gregorovius 1903, 182-3.

¹² Described and documented Gregorovius 1903, 208-37.

was greeted unexpectedly in private by Alfonso who, apparently overcoming his distaste, welcomed her warmly. Her formal entry into Ferrara on 1 February instigated a week of festivity.¹³

Fallows is certainly correct to draw a connection between Alfonso's marriage and his involvement in the management of the chapel choir. The event was accompanied by a rise in Alfonso's status, means and involvement in the state. Lucrezia was referred to from 1502 as the 'duchess'; and Alfonso now held the dowry cities of Cento and Pieve as lord in his own right – territories valued at 100000 ducats.¹⁴ The marriage brought a further 100000 ducats cash to the ducal treasury. Fallows draws the conclusions that Alfonso had taken the initiative from his by-then 'stingy' father in equipping the chapel choir; and that he did so to impress a 'glamorous' Lucrezia, who might otherwise have found Ferrara rather dull and provincial.¹⁵ It is difficult to judge how a chapel choir endowed a court with 'glamour' as such, though it was certainly an ostentation: in fact, what are at least arguably the most 'glamorous' courts of the fifteenth century (to the extent that the word means anything at all in the context) – those of the Montefeltri in Urbino and the Medici in Florence – maintained minimal in-house sacred ensembles.¹⁶ A full range of alternative motivations present themselves in the present case, within the historiographical frame outlined in the previous chapter.

Quite apart from her supposed glamour, Lucrezia was a genuinely and thoughtfully pious woman. The reports of the Ferrarese ambassadors to Rome during the negotiation of the marriage are full of approving notices of her faith: in October 1501 they mention that she has visited a saintly recluse in the Vatican; in December they report that 'she is a devout and God-fearing Christian. Tomorrow she is going to confession, and during Christmas week she will receive the communion', and later that 'life in her palace is not only Christian, but also religious'.¹⁷ An inventory of the books Lucrezia brought with her to Ferrara, as well as a later list, is dominated by devotional and theological volumes.¹⁸ Once in Ferrara, she convalesced from her frequent indispositions in the convent of Corpus Domini, and later rebuilt the convent of San Bernardo as a convent of San Bernardino, acting in every respect as its patron.¹⁹ It might therefore have been to impress upon her his

¹³ Described on the basis of Isabella's reports to her husband Marchese Francesco II Gonzaga in Gregorovius 1903, 239-62. Isabella's reports are published in d'Arco 1845. On the wedding see also Bellonci 1953, 179-90; Pirrotta and Povoledo 1982, 51-5; Tuohy 1996, 260, 264-76.

¹⁴ Lucrezia is referred to as 'duchess' in, for instance, the letter of Gian de' Artiganova to Ercole quoted in n.23. On the dowry see Gregorovius 1903, 207.

¹⁵ Fallows 2009, 244. Judging from the correspondence published in Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Alfonso was most actively involved in the choir when Ercole was absent from Ferrara.

¹⁶ On Federico da Montefeltro's chapel choir see Clough 1973, 134; and Clough 1995, n.63. The patronage of the Medici in Florence before their exile extended to exerting an influence over the choir of the Baptistery and Cathedral, but they did not keep an in-house chapel choir – see d'Accone 2006a and 2006b.

¹⁷ Ambassadorial dispatches quoted in Gregorovius 1903, 213n, 213 and 224 respectively. The sources are as follows. Bartolomeo Bresciani to Ercole, 30 October 1501; Gianluca Pozzi to Ercole, 23 December 1501: '...e catholica, mostra temere dio, et domane si confessa con intentione de comunicarse il di de la Nativita del Signore.' (Gregorovius 1874, Appendix, Document 31); Pozzi to Ercole, 28 December 1501, which the Italian translator of Gregorovius renders as 'in casa sua non si vive solo cristianamente, ma anche religiosamente' (Gregorovius 1874, 213 – I do not know if he consulted the original, which is not included in the Appendix of Documents).

¹⁸ The contents of the first inventory is listed in Gregorovius 1903, 304; it includes some ten religious works, ranging from the New Testament in a vernacular translation, through devotional compilations, to bible commentaries. Although it was normal for women to possess devotional books (see, among others, Klapisch-Zuber 1984, 17), Lucrezia's list is unusually long, and the ambassadors' comments clearly mean to indicate that her piety was more than conventional.

¹⁹ As, for example, when recovering from her troubled pregnancy of 1502 – Gregorovius 1903, 283. On her sponsorship of San Bernardino see Ghirardo 2002.

piety, rather than his glamour, that Alfonso took a hand in the mechanisms of the musical side of his father's pious image.

In doing so, his new wife was not Alfonso's sole, likely nor even his primary concern. Prior to the marriage, Alfonso had made no secret of his opposition to the match, and as Lucrezia travelled north Alexander VI harboured real and justified concerns as to her reception in her new city. The pope instructed his daughter to send frequent reports in her own hand, and supplemented her information with that of several spies and informants.²⁰ Despite Alfonso's social objections, the state of Ferrara could ill afford to arouse the ire of Alexander, whose feared nephew was busy carving out a substantial state for himself in central Italy. Good reports were of the greatest importance. Perhaps, for example, it is more than mere chance that Alfonso's particular concern with the fate of Gian de' Artiganova and the new singers he had recruited in Savoy should have coincided with a visit of Cesare Borgia himself, whom Alfonso entertained at Ferrara, Modena and Reggio.²¹ In the event, the singers probably arrived a few days after Cesare's departure.²² Upon his return, Gian wrote apologising to Ercole for his 'lateness in arriving with them [the singers]' – so perhaps they had been intended to enhance the ducal choir specifically for the protocol of Cesare's visit (that would certainly explain Alfonso's urgent concern).²³

In fact, Ferrara hoped that Lucrezia's arrival would not only deflect Cesare's ambitions, but build the pope's favour to its positive advantage. The populace understood very clearly the intimacy of her relationship with her father. The contemporary chronicler Bernardino Zambotto recorded that 'they [the people] take great happiness [from her arrival], hoping that this city will derive great benefits by the influence of the pope, who loves his daughter profoundly'.²⁴

The advantages to be gained by a secular leader at the Vatican through conspicuous piety had already made themselves evident in the course of the negotiations for the marriage. Having reluctantly conceded the

²⁰ See in particular Gregorovius 1903, 231 and 236-7.

²¹ Girolamo da Sestola to Ercole, 4 August 1502: '...Non vi voio dire altro se no[n] che mai sensiti meio chantare a la vita vostra tri compagni soprani. ... Apreso el signore don Alfonso acompagnato el signore Ducha di romagna fino a l'Enza e li avemo fato onore a ferara e modena e rezo compagnatolo fino a l'Enza...' (I only want to tell you that you have never heard better singing in your life than from three sopranos like these. ... As for Don Alfonso, he has accompanied the Duke of Romagna as far as the Enza, and we have shown him honour at Ferrara and a Modena and at Reggio, and accompanied him as far as the Enza) – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 11. See also Lockwood 1976, n.64.

²² With the help of Cesare's biographers, Lockwood puts Cesare's visit at 27-29 July (Lockwood 1976, n.64). However, Bradford (2005, 176) reports that Cesare and Alfonso visited Lucrezia, who was unwell, on 3 August before going on to Reggio. Cesare was passing through on his way to see Louis XII in Milan: according to Pastor (1911, 6:121) he reached his destination on 5 August.

²³ As it turned out, Gian had been delayed by the illness of two of the new singers: 'La indispositione loro è stata cause de la mia tardità del venire cum epsi, per havermi retardato in viaggio dece giorni continui' (Their indisposition was the reason for my lateness in arriving with them, having been held up on my journey for ten consecutive days). Had he arrived when he had intended (i.e. ten days earlier), Gian would have been in Ferrara just ahead of Cesare. He goes on to add that 'Ho facto che la Illustrissima madama Duchessa, mia Signora, li ha auditi cantare' (I have arranged that my lady, the Illustrious Madam Duchess [Lucrezia], should hear them sing). Perhaps Lucrezia's audition was intended as an acceptable alternative to that of her brother, which was no longer possible. Text Vander Straeten 1969, 6:89-90; translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 12. Cesare's visit followed the fall of Camerino to his troops, when he was en route to Milan to meet secretly with Louis XII. News of Camerino's fall was communicated to Alfonso by Cesare via Lucrezia on 20 July 1502 – see the letter published in translation in Gregorovius 1903, 280. Cesare was back in Ferrara in September (Gregorovius 1903, 282-3).

²⁴ '...ne pigliano gran contento, sperando questa Cittade doverne conseguire olti benefizii massime per la autoritate del Papa, quale ama sommamente detta figlia...' – text Zambotto 1867, 20 (closing remarks of the entry for 2 February 1502, the day of Lucrezia's formal entry into Ferrara).

point himself as part of the contract, Alexander had to persuade the cardinals in consistory to reduce Ferrara's annual tribute to the church from 400 ducats to 100 florins. First among his arguments in favour of Ercole were the duke's contributions to the religious life of his city – in particular founding convents and churches.²⁵ The role that a chapel choir in particular could play in wooing the Vatican is exemplified conveniently in the reign of Galeazzo Maria Sforza: Access to Galeazzo's private apartments was via a small chapel – much too small for his large choir to sing the office; but a cardinal arriving to represent the pope at important negotiations was welcomed to the private apartment by the choir, ranged in the chapel in such a way as to accommodate a different kind of ritual.²⁶

The marriage negotiations were entered into by Ercole as a way of ensuring the survival of his state. Prior to their meeting in person, whereafter Alfonso was persuaded by Lucrezia's obvious personal charms, Ercole had the utmost difficulty accommodating his son to the match. Alfonso agreed to it on Ercole's insistence and instruction, and the enthusiasm he mustered for his new wife's arrival can only be understood as an effort to please his father.²⁷ His involvement in the chapel choir equally bears the stamp of a strategy of Ercole's choosing, and should probably be seen in the same terms. In fact, during the last years of Ercole's reign he was demonstrably putting his son through an apprenticeship in rulership: in 1504 he sent Alfonso on a lengthy tour of foreign courts, to make his face known at the power centres of Europe.²⁸ Such an apprenticeship was probably very much needed, if contemporary reports of Alfonso's wilful and hedonistic youth are to be believed.²⁹ Ercole himself had made previous attempts to instruct Alfonso in the ways of ruling, but to his considerable anger had found them frustrated. Setting off for Milan in October 1494 he was reduced to leaving a note: 'Today, before we started from Ferrara, we asked for you and had search made for you, because we wished to give you some directions and to tell you how you were to bear yourself in our absence; and we could not have you, because you had gone out of the town. This thing has greatly displeased us...'.³⁰

It was entirely appropriate to the Renaissance sense of ancestry and dynasty that an heir be modelled in the image of his father (quite literally): Francesco Barbaro spoke for his class when he wrote that 'The light of paternal glory does not permit the well-born to be mediocre; they understand that the image of their parents is more of a burden than an honour unless they prove themselves by their own virtue worthy of the dignity and

²⁵ Gregorovius 1903, 191. For a similar reading of other aspects of princely piety see Tuohy 1996, 171.

²⁶ Welch 1993, 176-7. Galeazzo Maria received the commendation of Pope Sixtus IV for his efforts with his chapel choir: according to the report of Galeazzo Maria's agent, the Bishop of Novara, the pope called them 'questa religiosa et honorevole opera' – letter of 5 February 1473, published in part in Motta 1887, 310. For a similar argument concerning Federico da Montefeltro's patronage of religious buildings and paintings see Kempers 1992, 227-33, esp. 231-3.

²⁷ See in particular Gregorovius 1903, 182 and 236-7.

²⁸ Gregorovius 1903, 303; Gardner 1904, 450. This was the occasion for the instructions to find singers noted earlier (see above n.6).

²⁹ As, for example, the report of the Venetian *visdomino* Girolamo Donà discussed in Dean 1993, 79. Similarly the report of the Venetian Giovanni Mocenigo, again noted by Sanudo (1:706, August 1497): '*Item, che, pochi zorni fa, che don Alfonxo fece in Ferara cossa assa' liziera, che andoe nudo per nudo per Ferara, con alcuni zoveni in compagnia, di mezo zorno, adeo per Ferara era reputà pocho savio.*' (a few days ago, don Alfonso did a licentious thing in Ferrara, that is he went totally nude through Ferrara, accompanied by several youths, at midday; which was thought in Ferrara a stupid thing) – once again, however, we must note that the Venetians were long soured against Ferrara and the Estensi.

³⁰ Ercole to Alfonso, 20 October 1494 – published in translation in Gardner 1904, 251-2. The letter is fascinating: Ercole complains that during a previous absence Alfonso had failed in his 'duty' by not giving up his private life for a public role, and specifically foregrounds the importance of visibility for the prince – something which goes somewhat against traditional modern readings of Ercole's style of rule.

greatness of their ancestors'.³¹ Ercole had been reminded of his own responsibilities in this respect in connection with Ippolito in 1486. Following the young cleric's appointment as Abbot of Pomposa, Pope Innocent VIII advised him to 'take care that he be brought up in good morals and in letters, so that he may be judged worthy of thee, his father, and be promoted to greater things'.³² It is very probably with such an 'apprenticeship' and fashioning in his father's image in view that Alfonso took a hand in managing the choir from 1502.

In sum, then, Alfonso undertook his involvement in Ercole's choir not so much on his own initiative, as rather at the instigation of Ercole himself. In thus prompting his son, Ercole probably thought of the involvement as part of a process of moulding his son as a ruler in his own image, and thus as preparation for the succession, but he also had something else in mind. For Ercole's strategy for the survival of Ferrara to succeed, a reluctant Alfonso had to become, or be made to seem, an appropriate son-in-law to the pope, an appropriate husband for Lucrezia and an appropriate successor as Papal vicar.³³ It is no surprise, given Ercole's own strategies of self-presentation, that the demonstration of Alfonso's magnificent piety should have formed part of his plan.

In such a scenario, the principal audients for Alfonso's activities were Ercole and Lucrezia (and, via Lucrezia, the pope). Here we find explained the striking character of the associated correspondence: it was designed to place Alfonso's activities in the path of those who were supposed to notice it. To his father Alfonso opined of his concern for Gian the singer and his new recruits: 'I would not wish him to suffer any harm on this account';³⁴ 'If your Lordship receives any news of him I hope you will be good enough to send it to me';³⁵ 'If your Lordship receives news of him, I pray you to let me know'.³⁶ Writing to Ercole 'on behalf of Don Alfonso', Girolamo da Sestola reveals that 'Don Alfonso can hardly wait for your lordship's coming, for many reasons but all the more to let you hear these singers'.³⁷ A few days later, Girolamo again writes to Alfonso concerning a singer's holiday plans: 'Don Alfonso, too, thinks it would be better for Your Lordship to grant him leave...'.³⁸ Meanwhile, Gian de' Artiganova reports to Ercole about the new singers in which Alfonso had taken such an interest, letting him know that the heir's dutiful concern had reached its other target: 'I arranged that my lady, the illustrious Madam Duchess [Lucrezia] should hear them sing, and they pleased her excellency so much that it is impossible to describe it'.³⁹ The two musical retainers evidently cooperated with Alfonso in his efforts to demonstrate that he was fulfilling his father's wishes. Caglia even covered for Alfonso when he

³¹ *Pace* that, as a Venetian, Francesco Barbaro was not literally of the same social class as the Estensi. 'Honesto loco natos paternae gloriae lumen obscuros esse non patitur; qui parentum imagines sibi plus oneris quam honoris afferre intelligunt, nisi sua virtute majorum dignitati ac amplitudini responderint' – text and translation King 1976, 33 with n.45. For several similar statements see Simons 1995, 271 with n.33 and n.34.

³² Brief of 3 January 1486, given in translation in Gardner 1906, 47.

³³ For a broadly comparable attempt to use music to fashion a son into an appropriate husband for a diplomatically important daughter-in-law, see Shephard 2010.

³⁴ See above n.3.

³⁵ Alfonso to Ercole, 31 July 1502: 'havendone noticia vostra signoria, le serà contenta advisarmene.' – as in n.3 above.

³⁶ Alfonso to Ercole, 4 August 1502: 'Havendo vostra Signoria notitia di Lui, La se degnarà advirasme...' – as in n.3 above.

³⁷ See above n.4.

³⁸ Girolamo to Ercole, 14 August 1502: '...el pare al signore don Alfonso che'l sia meio che vostra signoria gi la dia adesso...' – text and translation Lockwood 1976, Appendix II, Document 14.

³⁹ See above n.23.

was not as energetic as he might have been: in advising Ercole that Josquin should be appointed he noted that 'Alfonso wishes to write this to Your Lordship...'.⁴⁰

1505-9: Insecurity

For the first five years of his reign, Alfonso maintained the choir established by his father at the original average of twenty singers, replacing one top-rank chapelmaster (Obrecht) with another (Brumel) in 1505.⁴¹ Once again, his motivations can be tied closely to his princely identity and his relationship with his father's rule. The position of the duchy in 1505 was far from secure: With Alexander VI dead, Alfonso's marriage amounted to nothing in diplomatic terms, and the state was exposed to the threat posed by a very active and militant new pope, Julius II, with designs on Bologna.⁴² Venice, for their part, were already in the Romagna. Circumstances within the court were hardly more settled. According to contemporary (though biased) report, Alfonso had not been popular in Ferrara as a young man, in particular in comparison with his brothers.⁴³ In November 1505 a dispute between Alfonso's brother Ippolito, a cardinal, and his half-brother Giulio opened a rift in the family, forcing the banishment of Ippolito, a powerful ally of Alfonso. In the following year, the rift became a coup led by Giulio and a legitimate brother, Ferrante d'Este. Spies uncovered the plot in July 1506, before the plans could come to fruition, and the malefactors were severely punished.⁴⁴ Finally, in 1505 Alfonso may have harboured concerns even closer to home: although he was already on his second marriage, he lacked an heir.⁴⁵

To meet these circumstances, Alfonso put aside the levities of his youth to adopt something of the severity and austerity of his father – while, at the same time, dismantling Ercole's corrupt and hated tax system. Under such circumstances, to emphasize continuity with the previous, stable regime would be a sensible strategy, and it is no doubt in this light that we should see the maintenance of Ercole's chapel choir. Similar strategies had been employed at other Renaissance courts, and had involved the arts. Galeazzo Maria Sforza, one generation removed from a messy coup, whose state was perturbed by a troublesome local aristocracy, began his reign in joint rule with his mother. Although he eventually undertook sweeping changes in the organisation of the court and the state, Evelyn Welch has shown that he decorated his castles with frescoes frequently emphasizing the continuity of his regime with his father's.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ '...don Alfonso el vole scrivere a vostra signoria...' – as in n.5 above.

⁴¹ Lockwood 1981, 14-5; Lockwood 1984, 207-10. Also Wegman 1994, 346-54 on Obrecht; and Vander Straeten 1969, 6:94-102 on Brumel. Lockwood (1972, 107 n18) reports a choir of 21 in 1506 and about 20 in 1508 and 1509.

⁴² Before the marriage took place Louis XII had remarked to the Ferrarese ambassador that, in Gregorovius' paraphrase, 'on Alexander's death, he [Ercole] would no longer know with whom he had concluded the alliance' (Gregorovius 1903, 171-2). On Julius II and Bologna see Gregorovius 1903, 303.

⁴³ According to the opinion of the Venetian *visdomino* Girolamo Donà as reported by Sanuto: '*Item, il signor ducha di Ferrara... li figlioli tra lhorò sono in discordia, el primogenito è mal grato a li populi*' (there is discord among the sons [of the lord duke of Ferrara], the firstborn [i.e. Alfonso] is not popular with the citizens) – 2:1194 (September 1499); '*Item, era stà retenuto uno suo favorito, nome Rizo Tarufo, si dice per mala administratiom fatta di danari*' (there has been detained one of his [Alfonso's] favourites, by the name of Rizo Tarufo, they say for maladministration...) – 3:314 (May 1500); '*Item, don Alfonxo non praticava con feraresi ma con taverneri*' (Alfonso mixes not with citizens but with tavern-keepers) – 3:1449 (February 1501).

⁴⁴ See in brief Gregorovius 1903, 310-6; and at length Bacchelli 1929.

⁴⁵ For an overview of the difficult circumstances of Alfonso's succession and the beginning of his reign, see Gardner 1904, 450-8, 493-506; Chiappini 1970, 211-22.

⁴⁶ See Welch 1990, in particular 176-8.

To further substantiate the point, it is interesting to note that the court of Milan also supplies an example of the reverse scenario. In December 1476 Galeazzo Maria met his death at the hands of his disgruntled aristocracy. Contemporary commentators identified the ostentation of his court – in particular the expensively decorated chapel and its large choir – implicitly as the cause of his demise.⁴⁷ In the year after his death, his widow, Bona of Savoy, dismissed almost all of the choir and halted work on the decoration of a new chapel at Pavia. Welch argues that, far from responding to economic pressures, Bona sought with this move to distance the continuing Sforza rule from her husband's unpopular strategies of rulership.⁴⁸ If a choir could be used to demonstrate continuity, it could also be used to demonstrate difference.

1509-13: War and the Firing of the Choir

On 19 April 1509, Alfonso joined the League of Cambrai, an alliance of French, Papal and Imperial forces designed to reverse the expansion of Venetian territory on the Italian mainland, as commander of the Papal armies.⁴⁹ Among the various noble condottieri of the period Alfonso enjoyed particular renown, and his pioneering expertise in artillery was proverbial.⁵⁰ Initially the war went well, and Alfonso took the opportunity to reclaim on his own account Ferrarese territory lost several years earlier to the Venetians. However, alliances quickly shifted as Italian leaders became uneasy at the free movement of French soldiers through Italy. In early 1510 Pope Julius II sought a new agreement with Venice to eject the French and reclaim the Duchy of Milan, annexed to the French crown in 1499, as an Italian state. Alfonso held fast to his family's historical allegiance to France, and was replaced as commander of the papal armies by his brother-in-law Francesco II Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, whose dynastic allegiances aligned him instead with the Holy Roman Empire.

Alfonso's loyalty placed him in an extremely vulnerable position. The Duchy of Ferrara, technically part of the Papal States, was held in fief to the pope, and the Duchy of Modena and Reggio in fief to the Emperor. In theory, Julius II could reclaim his territory at any time, and the new circumstances made him strongly inclined to do so. Ferrara, whose territory bordered that of Venice, the Papal States and Mantua, was extremely vulnerable to the ambitions of its larger neighbours, and the war began badly. Alfonso was

⁴⁷ Welch 1993, 151-2.

⁴⁸ Welch 1993, 178-9. An economic motive had been implied by Lockwood (1982, 233).

⁴⁹ A very readable overview of this period of Ferrarese history can be found in Bradford 2005, 290-335. The standard contemporary history of the Italian Wars is that written by Francesco Guicciardini – see Guicciardini 1969, esp. 191-279; the standard modern accounts are Pastor 1911, 6:299-436 and, from the Ferrarese perspective, Gardner 1906, 55-105. A more up-to-date account is Shaw 1993, 209-315 – Shaw considers Alfonso's relations with Julius II in particular at 255-69 and 300-10. See also Chiappini 1970, 222-32.

⁵⁰ On Alfonso and artillery see, among many brief references, Taylor 1921, 81-102, 120 and 144. Among contemporary testimonies see, for instance, the poetic account of the Battle of Ravenna by Francesco Sperulo (a partisan for the Papacy): '...Etiam laeta dabat victoria gramen Ibero,/ Cum mox, Hestenses sese dux vertit ad artem,/ Cui genitore olim revocante, et turpe putante,/ A puero incubuit nempe inter inertia semper/ Instrumenta necis, fauces versatus Ahenas,/ Sulphuris et nitri cumulos, vix dignus haberi/ Sceptrum humuli gestare manu, sed fata ferebant/ Artibus his olim rerum discrimina solvi...' (joyful Victory was even giving the field to the Spaniard, when suddenly the Este duke turned to a craft to which he had applied himself from childhood, his father long since dissuading him and thinking it base, for was he not held scarcely worthy to hold the sceptre in his lowly hand, always busy among lifeless instruments of death, bronze mouths, heaps of sulphur and nitre, but for long the Fates had decreed that by these arts contests of state would be decided) – text and translation Shearman 2003, 1:421-2 and 430-1. Sperulo's claim that Ercole disapproved of his son's expertise is implausible, as Ercole was himself known as an expert in the subject; however, as we have seen, the poet's suggestion of a disreputable youth and a nervous succession may not be entirely without basis in fact.

excommunicated on 9 August and Modena fell to the pope on the 17th. However, in a series of engagements through 1509-12, the Ferrarese, led by Alfonso and Cardinal Ippolito, and with the military and financial support of the French, beat back attacks by the Venetians and the pope, sinking a Venetian fleet in the river Po and besieging Papal forces in the city of Ravenna. Victory at Ravenna left the French and Ferrarese on a high, but the death in the battle of the French general Gaston de Foix brought their period of success to a close.

In July 1512 Alfonso was advised that Julius II might be prepared to negotiate, and travelled immediately to Rome. Accompanying him was Fabrizio Colonna, a Roman aristocrat taken prisoner at Ravenna who had, during his captivity, become a firm friend of the duke. After a hopeful beginning in Rome, Alfonso became extremely concerned for his own safety and fled the city in secret, journeying north to Ferrara *incognito* over several months with the help of the Colonna. Nonetheless, he had received secret assurances that neither the Spanish nor the Emperor wished the pope to have Ferrara. By the time he reached home in October 1512, the pope had met in Mantua with his allies to decide the fate of the North Italian territories; Swiss mercenaries were reported to be on the move towards Ferrara. Nothing happened immediately, none of the pope's allies harboring much enthusiasm for the assault, and the city's doom was eventually averted by the death of Julius II in February 1513. Julius' successor Leo X moved quickly to make peace with France, and Ferrara was temporarily safe once more.

It was during this war that there occurred what, in the received judgement of music history, was the defining event of Alfonso's reign. Between December 1510 and about March 1511, twelve members of Alfonso's chapel choir transferred, temporarily or permanently, into the service of his brother-in-law, Francesco II Gonzaga. Meanwhile three further singers, including the chapelmaster Brumel, left for other destinations (some uncertain).⁵¹ Correspondence published by William Prizer documents the arrival of the singers in Mantua: Francesco arranged for their belongings to be brought from Ferrara and encouraged further members of Alfonso's choir to follow their colleagues' lead.⁵² In January 1511, lacking repertoire for his new choir, Francesco wrote to Alfonso requesting the loan of music books from which to copy masses and psalms; he may later have supplemented these with a selection of Petrucci's publications.⁵³ In February Alfonso sent his most

⁵¹ This event is discussed and documented in Lockwood 1976, 110 n.22; Prizer 1977; Lockwood 1979, 209-11; Prizer 1980, 14-23, 46-52 and Appendix II, Documents 51-8; Lockwood 1981, 14-5; Prizer 1985, 8-9; and Prizer 1998, 294-5.

⁵² Francesco to Benedetto Brugia in Ferrara, 16 February 1511: 'Dovendosi condurre qui con le famiglie et robbe loro alcuni nostri cantori, pregamovi che siati contento de fargli la licentia di retrare gli loro letti in quel numero che vi dirà messer Bartholomeo Spagnolo, presente exhibitore, uno s'essi cantori' (Having brought here with their families and clothes several singers of ours, I pray you to be content to give them licence to retrieve their beds in that number that Mr Bartholomeo Spagnolo will tell you, the bearer of this letter, one of the singers) – text Prizer 1980, Appendix II, Document 52 (Document 53, dated 20 March 1511, is in a similar vein). The letters persuading other Ferrarese singers to join the choir, dated 12 December 1510, are summarised briefly in Prizer 1980, 15.

⁵³ Francesco to Alfonso, 15 January 1511: 'Ritrovandomi mal fornito di cose da cantare per la mia capella, prego quanto posso la Signoria Vostra che le piaccia di prestarmi qualche libro di suoi, secundo che le dimandarà Perisone presente exhibitore, ma sopra tutto un libro coperto di rosso che'l dimandarà et lo libro di Fra Piero, che subito che ne habbi fatte copiare alcune Messe gli le rimandarò ... Prego anche la Signoria Vostra che le piaccia de mandarmi appresso gli altri libri, dui da salmeggiare la Septimana Santa chè di tutti le serò bon et presto renditore.' (Finding myself poorly furnished with things to sing for my choir, I beg Your Lordship as much as I am able to agree to lend me some of your books, according to the requests of Perisone, the bearer of this letter. But above all a book covered in red that he will request, and the book of Fra Piero. As soon as I have had some masses copied, I will return them to you ... I also ask Your Lordship to agree to send me the other two books of psalms for Holy Week which like the rest will be well and quickly returned.) – text and translation Prizer 1980, 24 and Appendix II, Document 51. Alfonso wrote to Francesco on 11 October 1511 to request the return of one of these books (Prizer 1980, 24). On Francesco's purchase of Petrucci's prints see Prizer 1980, 24-7.

renowned singer, Bidon, to Mantua with a letter of introduction.⁵⁴ Francesco wrote back the following month to say that Bidon will remain in Mantua for a few months, although if Alfonso wishes he will be returned sooner.⁵⁵

Scholars have thus far attributed the departure of Alfonso's choir to financial strain attendant upon the war; but the scenario was clearly more multifaceted than this alone might suggest.⁵⁶ Whilst working as a mercenary commander for the church, he would have enjoyed a substantial retainer;⁵⁷ however, after July 1510 he was fighting for himself and relied instead on the ducal purse. As one would expect, the ducal accounts for the year 1510 are taken up almost entirely with expenses pertaining to the war – decorative and building projects as well as court entertainments were put on hold.⁵⁸ When Francesco hired them the singers were evidently still resident in Ferrara and still closely associated with Alfonso, even though they had been absent from his accounts for the majority of a year.⁵⁹ It is worth remembering that there was no necessary or direct correlation between a singer's salary and his service: the Burgundian chapel remained in service between 1492 and 1495 without receiving their salaries, and Ercole's choir returned almost intact following a hiatus during the war with Venice.⁶⁰ Rob Wegman notes that the collateral rewards of service – variously including board, lodgings, clothes, benefices, privileges and gifts – were in any case the more dignified part of the deal.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Prizer 1980, 16.

⁵⁵ Francesco to Alfonso, 20 March 1511. Text and translation of this letter in Prizer 1980, 16-7 and Appendix II, Document 54. I will not give it in full as it is rather long, but I will quote sections of it in the ensuing discussion.

⁵⁶ For example, Prizer 1980, 14: 'Francesco Gonzaga's success was founded on the ill fortune of his brother-in-law Alfonso d'Este, for the majority of the singers who comprised the new *cappella* came to Mantua directly from Ferrara, where they had been in the duke's service. Alfonso, at war with Pope Julius II, was constrained to release his singers because of the severe financial strain attendant to this war and the Papal sanctions resulting from it.' See also any of the other references given in n.51 above. Prizer (1985, 8) notes that Lucrezia's musical staff also decreased between 1510 and 1512, connecting this too to financial strain. As her musical staff was small in any case, it is perhaps as likely that its reduction was associated with the more serious demands of her role as regent of Ferrara during her husband's frequent absences – the cultural activity sponsored by Isabella similarly ground to a halt whilst she ruled Mantua during Francesco's imprisonment in 1509-10 (on which see below in the present chapter). It is also possible that a decline in Lucrezia's secular musical interests accompanied her increased religious activities: a certain suggestive paranoia in that direction is expressed in a medal of uncertain date (though certainly after her marriage to Alfonso), which identifies musical instruments as the tools of Eros, whom through her virtue she has conquered – see Lawe 1990 for images and discussion of the medal.

⁵⁷ I have yet to find any reference to his retainer, though it must have existed. For example, Ercole was due 50000 florins a year in peace and 80000 in war as commander of the forces of the league of Milan, Florence and Venice (Chamberlin 1982, 177 – although the information given here is partly garbled). For a demonstration of the impact a mercenary contract could have upon the revenues of a small state see Clough 1973, 129-31.

⁵⁸ Goodgal 1978, 164-5. The accounts for 1509 are missing. See also the archival notices published for 1510 in Franceschini 1993.

⁵⁹ Francesco sent to Ferrara for the singers' possessions, and attempted to persuade further singers still resident in Ferrara to join him. He also communicated with Alfonso concerning his actions. See the various documents cited in the present chapter. Also, Prizer reports that the singer Zoan Francesco da Padua responded to an invitation to come to Mantua by refusing to leave Alfonso (although he could come for a few months) – Prizer 1980, 16. It seems quite likely that many or all of the singers went to Mantua on loan, rather than permanently, although for various reasons few returned (Gian Grivion, Antonio dall'Organo and Bidon all went to Mantua temporarily but returned – Prizer 1980, n.47).

⁶⁰ On the Burgundian chapel's pecuniary distress see Vander Straeten 1969, 3:213-4. The point is not restricted to musicians: Martines (1979, 228) notes the frequent and sometimes long-term suspension of the pay of court functionaries in general – for example, Ariosto did not receive his salary from Cardinal Ippolito for two or three years after the war, relying only on his benefices (awarded by the Cardinal) to keep him in pocket, but he remained for that period technically in the Cardinal's service (Gardner 1906, 118).

⁶¹ Wegman 2005, 429.

Francesco's letter to Alfonso of March 1511 regarding Bidon makes it very clear that musical activities in Ferrara had been suspended,⁶² and with Alfonso in the field for much of 1509 and 1510 it seems reasonable to assume that when the singers were sent to Mantua in December 1510 they had already been redundant, or at least on light duties, for much of two years. We know, for example, from the correspondence of the musician Jean Michel (among other sources) that Alfonso spent the summer of 1510 in camp with French forces in the Veneto.⁶³ If Alfonso's motivations were entirely financial, why did he not cut the choir adrift much earlier?

Alfonso's economic position in fact fluctuated rather rapidly during the war, and its relevance to this scenario may have been overstated in the musicological literature. Prizer notes that Lucrezia pawned some jewels to help raise money for the war, but equally both she and Alfonso pawned jewels frequently and to large values in the first years of Alfonso's reign, and later, in 1517, Lucrezia did so again to buy water-buffalos.⁶⁴ Among the terms of the League of Cambrai were some freeing the Ferrarese from the economic overlordship of Venice (against which Ercole had fought in the 1480s), and Alfonso was duly able to impose duties on trade passing up the Po to Venice.⁶⁵ During 1509 Alfonso was able to pay Louis XII 30000 ducats for a guarantee of protection, and Maximilian 40000 ducats for the investiture of Este and Montagnana (Este towns won back from Venice in the campaigns).⁶⁶ At the same time, though, he was making himself unpopular in Ferrara with attempts to raise money through confiscations, taxes and loans, reportedly aiming at a total of 100000 ducats.⁶⁷ Then in December the utter defeat of the huge Venetian fleet sent up the river Po to take Ferrara left the Este in possession of a substantial haul of booty.⁶⁸ Two months later, in February 1510, Ariosto returned from a begging mission to Rome with a loan; in the same month Cardinal Ippolito took possession of the rich abbey of Nonantola, in the heart of Ferrarese territory (although the pope took it away from him in June).⁶⁹ Oddly,

⁶² Francesco claims that he is keeping Bidon because 'l'habbia più aciò de attendere al spasso de la musica, che adesso là non ha' (he may have more [opportunity] to be involved with music, which he does not have there now [in Ferrara]) – see n.55 above.

⁶³ Lockwood 1979, 201-2. Gardner 1906, 70-4 details Alfonso's activities whilst in camp with the French in May to July 1510. He was with the French forces again in September and October destroying another Venetian fleet (Gardner 1906, 79).

⁶⁴ Lucrezia's jewels were in and out of pawn quite frequently during Alfonso's reign. For instance, both Lucrezia and Alfonso put a large value of jewels in pawn over the course of 1506-8 (Ghirardo 2008, 59-60 with n.26 and 62 n.33). On the water-buffalos see Ghirardo 2008, 77 with n.83. Jewels were pawned for the purposes of the war in 1509 (Bradford 2005, 295) and 1510 (Ghirardo 2008, 54 with n.2) – the fact that they were pawned also in 1509 throws up once again the question of why, if financial problems were the primary motive, the choir was not sent away earlier. In fact, Isabella's jewels were also frequently in pawn, and Francesco's state suffered financial difficulties during and after the war whilst maintaining his new choir. Through the 1490s almost the entirety of Isabella's jewellery was pawned in Venice to support her husband's participation in the earlier wars as well as repeated attempts to purchase a Cardinal's hat for her brother-in-law (Cartwright 1915, 1:75, 116 and 137-8). Francesco's capture by the Venetians in 1509 caused its own disruption to the state, and during his imprisonment the marriage of their daughter Leonora to Francesco Maria della Rovere, in particular the trousseau of clothes and jewels, placed a considerable strain upon the family coffers (Cartwright 1915, 2:32-8). Again, in the later 1510s Isabella liquidated assets (jewellery and plate) to help meet the expense of supporting the exiled courts of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (Cartwright 1915, 2:129-30).

⁶⁵ On the terms of the League *vis-a-vis* Ferrara see Gardner 1906, 56. In June 1510 the pope complained about duties imposed by Alfonso on goods passing through the Ferrarese from Bologna to Venice – Gardner 1906, 71.

⁶⁶ Gardner 1906, 57 and 60.

⁶⁷ According to Ariosto's reports to Ippolito of 7 September and 22 October 1509, quoted at length in translation in Gardner 1906, 60-1.

The fact that a single consignment of Este jewels could be worth 85000 ducats in pawn (Ghirardo 2008, 62 n.33) helps to put this figure into perspective in relation to the economic fundamentals of the dynasty.

⁶⁸ Gardner 1906, 65-8.

⁶⁹ On the loan, Gardner 1906, 68 – he describes it as a 'small sum of ducats', but does not give his source; on the abbey, Gardner 1906, 72-3.

among the key factors in turning Julius II against Alfonso was in fact his economic success: he established a salt industry in the Comacchio, a right extracted from Venice in the terms of the League, and in 1510 secured a salt monopoly in French-controlled Lombardy, thus threatening the salt industry operated in the Papal States by the Vatican.⁷⁰ France remained a reliable source of aid: in August 1510, a month after Julius and Venice began their campaign against Ferrara, Alfonso asked the French to extend him credit and gained their immediate agreement.⁷¹ The example of Alfonso's father demonstrates that economic straits need not curtail spending in any case: during the 1490s Ercole maintained his choir, alongside other ambitious cultural projects, whilst in debt to the tune of 200000 ducats.⁷²

In sum thus far, then: Although finance may have been a factor in the departure of Alfonso's choir, it is neither primary nor necessary to the explanation. It is likely that the choir was not in use, and no doubt that circumstance was a precondition of its departure, though it is unlikely that it prompted it.

August 1510 to January 1511 constituted one of the darkest points of the war for the Ferrarese. In the last months of 1510, papal troops took Modena and some other Este dominions. Julius came to Bologna in person to supervise the expected sack of Ferrara, demanding from Alfonso the keys to the city. Mirandola fell in January. Energies were devoted entirely to the city's defence. Men and women alike set to improving and reinforcing the city's fortifications, aided by the duke in person and fed at his expense; meanwhile the arrival of a large French garrison stretched their patience.⁷³ Lucrezia asked that the livestock and possessions of those resident in territories she owned herself be taken into Mantuan territory for their safety. She tried to arrange safe conduct for herself, her children and possessions to Venice; when that failed, she made new arrangements with Milan.⁷⁴

Perhaps most directly relevant to the choir, on 9 August 1510 Julius issued a bull stripping Alfonso of the territories he held in fief to the Church (including Ferrara itself), excommunicating him, and inviting all who were able to impede and confound his plans.⁷⁵ All his territories were placed under the interdict.⁷⁶ It seems likely that a prince who was barred from taking communion would find diminished use for his chapel choir, not

⁷⁰ On the motivations behind the pope's determination to take Ferrara, including the important question of salt monopolies, see Rowland 1987. Salt production was well under way by December 1509, when it was interrupted by the Venetian counter-attack (Gardner 1906, 63), but it was stopped in July 1510 in an attempt to appease the pope (Gardner 1906, 74).

⁷¹ Reported to Lucrezia by a Jewish agent named Abraham Thus – Bradford 2005, 301. Louis XII had long hoped to bring Alfonso under some sort of financial obligation: in 1507 Alfonso had to firmly refuse a French pension, pushed upon him from all sides, on the basis that whilst at peace he had 'enough to live on according to our condition', asking that the king 'keep this money for more opportune and pressing needs and emergencies' (Alfonso to Ippolito, 8 June 1507, partly published in translation in Gardner 1906, 52-3).

⁷² See Chapter I of the present study.

⁷³ Gardner 1906, 74-82; Bradford 2005, 297-307.

⁷⁴ Bradford 2005, 298 and 302-3.

⁷⁵ Sanuto reports in the entry for 9 August 1510 that 'Hozì in concistorio è stà lecta la bolla de la privatione dil duca di Ferara de tuto quello recognosse da la santa sede apostolicha, che è Ferara, Comachio, e quelle cosse che l'ha in Romagna, e di Rezo, dil quale la casa di Este fu investita da papa Pio secondo; e *similiter* è stà excomunicato dito ducha, e cadauno che li presterà favor et auxilio, *quacunque etiam regali fulgerent dignitate.*' (Today in consistory has been read the Bull of the deprivation of the Duke of Ferrara of all of his recognised by the Holy Apostolic seat, that is Ferrara, Comacchio and those things he has in Romagna, and of Reggio, with which the house of Este was invested by Pope Pius II; and similarly the said duke has been excommunicated, and anyone who will give him favour and help will be equally deprived.) – text Sanuto, 11:114.

⁷⁶ Gardner (1906, 75 and 91-2) notes that the interdict was enforced at least by the Bishops of Modena and Reggio. As Ippolito d'Este was Bishop of Ferrara it is difficult to know how seriously it was taken there; however, when Ippolito welcomed the excommunicated and exiled Bentivoglio in Ferrara in November 1506 he shut the city's churches for the period of their stay (three days) – Gardner 1904, 508.

only in practicality but as a gesture of defiance.⁷⁷ One has also to question more generally the value of demonstrations of piety at a time when Alfonso was at war with the pope: in fact, with Ferrara now held without the permission of its theoretical owners, a show of independence was in order. One might easily see the departure of the choir as an act of iconoclasm, part of an effort to mark a rupture with the previous political dependence on the Church.⁷⁸ In that light it sits directly alongside the famous destruction of Michelangelo's bronze statue of Julius II in Bologna, following his departure from the city (whose preferred Bentivoglio rulers were related to the Este by marriage) in May 1511: Alfonso melted the bronze down and cast it into a canon (to use against the pope) named *La Giulia*.⁷⁹

It is a striking feature of the evidence assembled by Prizer that it appears to show Alfonso colluding in the choir's departure. It is the duke himself who sends Bidon, his most famous singer, to Mantua – this gesture has the character of a gift. The terms of Francesco's letter in response make it clear that he interpreted it that way: gratitude, debt, justification and assurances of a swift return abound. The Marchese, who is 'extremely thankful', reveals that Bidon is kept in Mantua 'for the love of your Lordship' only because Alfonso finds it 'convenient', and he hopes that Alfonso will not be 'displeased' if Bidon is singing every day, because it is only so that he can 'exercise his voice'; and Francesco promises twice to 'return him to your service whenever you wish'.⁸⁰ Francesco even mentions, in his attempt to argue that Bidon's sojourn is in Alfonso's own best interests, that the musician will sing with the new chapel choir – hardly appropriate to the tone of the letter if that choir were a sore point for the duke. More explicitly still, Alfonso is called upon to supply the repertoire for the new choir, in terms that suggest only friendly exchange.⁸¹ It is unthinkable that any of the singers moved to such a close and intimately connected court, in a way that involved Alfonso so openly, without Alfonso's permission.⁸² Either Alfonso offered them and Francesco accepted, or Francesco asked for them and Alfonso agreed. In either case, to get any further with the scenario we need to address two questions that musicology

⁷⁷ The fact that Bidon and the music books lent to Francesco were required back in 1511, before Alfonso's excommunication was lifted (July 1512), suggest that it was more the latter than the former.

⁷⁸ Giraldi (1556, 117) strikes an appropriate note of indignation when describing Alfonso's reaction to the bull: 'Dispiacque veramente questa cosa al Duca Alfonso, quanto dir si possa. Ma nondimeno in così grande ingiuria, e pericolo, come si tuovava, era di grandissima consolazione il pensare, che ciò gli era avvenuto più tosto per altrui leggerezza, che per sua cagione.' (This thing was truly displeasing to Duke Alfonso, as much as one can say. But although it was a very unjust thing, and dangerous, as he would find, there was very great consolation in the thought, that this was happening rather because of someone else's inconstancy, than because of any fault of his own.)

⁷⁹ Gardner 1906, 83 and 90-1. The potency of such an iconoclasm is nicely demonstrated by the fact that Alfonso's insult to 'the image representing Us' was specifically mentioned among the offences ranged against the duke in Julius II's haughty safe-conduct granted in June 1512 (Gardner 1906, 90).

⁸⁰ 'Passando gli di passati de qui Messer Bidone, et per amore dela Signoria Vostra per esserle lui servitore et per respecto de le virtù sue, lo raccogliessimo appresso de noi ... però sempre de renderlo alli servitij di quella tutt'hora che le piacerà ... Pregamola ben quanto possemo ad essere contenta che'l stij con noi quelli cinque o sei mesi che la parirà de concedercilo, che l'haremo grattissimo da lei et promettemole de rimandarlelo tutta volta che la vorrà. Nè le deve spiacere che fra tanto el preditto Messer Bidon stia appresso de noi, chè ogni di lo facemo cantare in la nostra capella et a questo modo l'exercita la voce sua...' – see n.55 above.

⁸¹ See n.53 above.

⁸² Particularly revealing is the fact that the singers were allowed to re-enter Ferrara on Francesco's business without fearing for their lives (as in the letter quoted in n.49 above). Musicians (indeed any court functionaries up to and including men such as Castiglione) who left courtly employment without permission – sometimes even with permission – were usually pursued with vigour and bitterness by their erstwhile employers (see, for instance, the response that met Bidon when he attempted to move back from Papal service to Ferrara – Lockwood 1998).

has so far ignored: in what ways did it serve Alfonso's interests that his choir should have gone to Mantua; and in what ways did it benefit Francesco to acquire a choir at that particular moment?

Francesco's involvement in the wars of 1509-13 was as close and, in many ways, as uncomfortable as Alfonso's.⁸³ In the war of the League of Cambrai in 1509-10, Francesco fought unsuccessfully on the side of the pope. On 9 August 1509 he led a Papal army to a crushing defeat and was captured and imprisoned by the Venetians. He left his state in a condition of distress: although in the competent hands of Isabella as regent, cultural activity came to a standstill.⁸⁴ Upon his release in July 1510, he was appointed to lead the Papal armies against Alfonso and France, but on the condition that he send his son and heir to Rome as a hostage to guarantee his loyalty. At the time the choir moved he was under obligation to attack and capture Ferrara for the pope.

To the pope's frustration, he was not as firmly inclined to do so as he should have been. The reasons are fairly obvious: he was married to Alfonso's sister, perhaps the most famous woman in Italy, and he was engaged in a (demure) romantic entanglement with Alfonso's wife. His position was diplomatically untenable. He was also plagued by syphilis – helpful only as a source of excuses for his inaction.⁸⁵

A mercenary commander from a dynasty of mercenary commanders, Francesco's public image was founded on military heroism, emphasising his prowess as a commander and the prestigious contracts under which he served.⁸⁶ However, he suffered from a paucity of actual military success, leaving a credibility gap that might easily have undermined his rule.⁸⁷ His most conspicuous engagement was the Battle of Fornovo, of 1495 – an indecisive affair which nevertheless succeeded in ejecting Charles VIII from Italy.⁸⁸ Although it would be difficult to argue that the battle was won according to Francesco's plan, and it entailed heavy casualties and rampant desertion on the Italian side, the Marchese made it the lynchpin of his strategy of self-presentation. Immediately after the battle he instigated a campaign of visual and verbal rhetoric to assert for himself the victory and the title 'liberator of Italy'. In Gonzaga propaganda he was compared to Julius Caesar, Hector and Alexander; his broken battle-lance to St Longinus' spear.⁸⁹ Further, he began two new projects that can only have been intended to construct around his victory a cult of the sort manipulated by Ercole, working a story that he had successfully invoked the Virgin's aid in the midst of battle. Firstly, he had a small church built in the centre of Mantua dedicated to Santa Maria della Vittoria, for which Mantegna painted a large altarpiece showing Francesco in full armour presented to the Madonna by soldier saints. The church was built on the site of the house of a Jewish banker which, following his removal from the facade of a fresco of the Virgin, had become a focus of popular religious indignation. Upon the completion of building and altarpiece in summer 1496, the

⁸³ On Francesco's involvement see in particular Shaw 1993. It has not yet been possible for me to consult Bourne 2008b, but no doubt it also offers a detailed discussion of the matter.

⁸⁴ On Mantua in the period of his imprisonment see Luzio 1910.

⁸⁵ Shaw 1993, 184-5, 223, 262-3, 268-9 and many other mentions. Shaw points out that Julius II's other commander, Francesco Maria della Rovere, was also related to both the Este and the Gonzaga, and was not much more inclined to attack Ferrara than was Francesco.

⁸⁶ On Francesco's strategies of self-presentation see Bourne 2001, 102-9 (on the Palazzo di San Sebastiano, Francesco's principal residence from 1508); Bourne 2006 (adding the villas of Marmirolo and Poggio Reale); and Bourne 2008 (on the Battle of Fornovo and the Madonna della Vittoria). These articles offer a digest of points now discussed at more length in Bourne 2008b.

⁸⁷ San Juan (1991, 71) suggests that Isabella's cultural activities acted partly to make up for her husband's limited military success in the business of advertising the court's prowess.

⁸⁸ In the immediate aftermath of the battle most observers concluded that the French had won, but Francesco persuaded Italy otherwise. See Chambers 1995; and Bourne 2008, 168-73.

⁸⁹ Chambers 1995, 224-6; Bourne 2008, 170-3.

painting was displayed outside Mantegna's house before being carried in procession to the church, where it immediately became a centre of devotion. The ceremony was echoed in villages throughout Mantuan territory, and repeated annually.⁹⁰ Secondly, Francesco began a more ambitious and expensive project to decorate with marble the chapel of Santa Maria dei Voti, established in the cathedral of Mantua by his grandfather Ludovico Gonzaga.⁹¹

His defeat and capture in 1509 constituted something of a blow for Francesco's public image. His release in July 1510 was quickly followed by a spate of elaborate carnivals – a distraction tactic already familiar from the difficult days in Ferrara following Ercole's war with Venice.⁹² In the following year Francesco had to issue a command impelling his nobles to attend the major Gonzaga-orchestrated summer festivals, presumably in response to a collapse in attendance at the San Leonardo festival on 16 August 1510.⁹³ It is almost certainly appropriate to see the arrival of the choir as another element in Francesco's redoubled efforts to demonstrate his princehood.

In fact, the choir's new home was precisely the chapel of Santa Maria dei Voti, connected with the cult of Francesco's heroism and located in the very public space of the cathedral in Mantua. Every effort was made to make the singers clearly visible, to emphasize their significance and to associate them closely with the Marchese. The space was specially decorated for their inaugural performance at Mass on 12 January 1511, attended by Francesco and a crowd that spilled out into the main body of the cathedral. Later the same day they sang Vespers in the church of S. Francesco (n.b. 'Francesco') attended by the entire court, after which they were treated to a dinner at the castle alongside members of the court. Amico della Torre, writing to Federico Gonzaga who, probably significantly, was with the pope at Bologna, gives a detailed account:⁹⁴

⁹⁰ On the Madonna della Vittoria and its role in constructing Francesco's image see Bourne 2008, 173-8. The ceremony involved music, and judging from contemporary descriptions (such as that published in Bourne 2008, 177) was not at all dissimilar to that held in Ferrara when Ercole's miracle-working Virgin was moved into her new chapel.

⁹¹ On *Santa Maria dei Voti* see Bourne 2006, 20-1.

⁹² Bourne 2001, 110 describes aspects of the carnival celebrations of 1511.

⁹³ Cashman 2002, 363. Francesco had had trouble with attendance at such events before and continued to do so – see 362-4.

⁹⁴ Although young, Federico won many friends in Rome and became an important advocate for the Gonzaga within the circle of Julius II, effectively presenting the best face of the dynasty to the pope (Cartwright 1915, 2: 44-9, 53-4, 57-61 – his activities in Rome included visiting numerous churches and attending religious festivals with great ostentation). If we accept the pope as an important audience for Francesco's choir, via the reports of the hostage Federico, it is certainly significant that among the singers who moved permanently to Mantua we find five of the six Italians in Alfonso's choir but only four of the thirteen Frenchmen (the nationalities of all members of Alfonso's choir in 1506 and 1508 are given in Lockwood 1979, 210; the membership for 1509 published by Prizer (1980, 15) is identical). The singers Francesco hired for the choir in addition to those from Ferrara were all Italians (Prizer 1980, 17-8). In sum Francesco exactly reversed the national representation of the group. These observations locate the choir even more firmly in the politics of the period, and serve once again to place the choir alongside other chapel ornaments: Bourne (2006, 21) has suggested that the marble decoration of the chapel begun in 1495 was entrusted to Pietro Lombardo, a leading sculptor based in Venice, as a gesture of homage to the city that then employed the Marchese. Later, Federico played an even more explicit role in bringing the choir to the pope's notice. In a letter of 10 December 1511 Francesco asks his son to place a question concerning benefices before Julius II: 'Recevuta questa nostra tu te presentari a Nostra Signoria quanto presto vedi il tempo et, adorata Sua Santità in nome nostro, le dirai che noi havemo instituita una capella di eximi cantori alli quali perché la spesa di la provisione ne grava molto...' (As soon as you receive this letter, present yourself to Our Lord [the pope] as soon as you see the moment and, venerating His Holiness in our name, tell him that we have instituted a chapel of excellent singers for which, because the expense of providing for them burdens us greatly, ...) – text Prizer 1977, 267.

La Excellentia del Signore vostro patre, havendo conducti a li servitij suoi li Cantori che havea il Signore Duca di Ferrara, uscite heri mattina fuora di casa et andò a Messa a la Madonna di S. Pietro, lo altar di laquale cum tutta la Capella era cussi honorevilmente apparato como se'l fusse sta il Zorno di la Madonna da mezzo agosto ... et tanta gente se gli adunò et ne la Chiesa propria di S. Pietro, como se fusse stato il Zorno di S. Anselmo. Procedendo dal desyderio grande che si havea de udire essi cantori ... Cantorono anche li dicti Cantori da Ferrara il Vespro a S. Francisco solennemente, dove gli intervenne la Illustrissima Madama vostra matre cum tutta la corte, et etiam gli erano tante persone che non se gli prossima stare, sì per udire dicti Cantori, como per sentir sonare l'organo ... Lo Illustrissimo Signore vostro patre anchor per refrescar li suoi novi cantori ... gli dette una bella cena in Castello su la Armaria sua cum multi altri...

His Excellency, your father, having taken into his service the singers that the duke of Ferrara had, left his house yesterday morning and went to Mass at the Madonna in S. Pietro, the altar of which, together with the whole Chapel was so honorably decorated that it might have been the Day of Our Lady in the middle of August. ...so many people gathered there and in the Church of S. Pietro itself, that it was as though it were the Day of S. Anselmo, owing to the great desire that was felt to hear these singers. ...

The said Ferrarese singers also sang solemnly Vespers in S. Francesco, to which your illustrious mother came with all of the court. There were so many people that they could not get close enough to hear both the said singers and to hear the organ...

Your illustrious father, then, to refresh his new singers ... gave them and many others a beautiful dinner in the Castle...⁹⁵

The choir's services, usually held in the chapel of the Madonna, continued to prompt the attendance of Francesco, Isabella and their court, and to draw large crowds.⁹⁶ On one occasion they even sang at a service to celebrate Francesco's supposed cure from syphilis.⁹⁷ The obvious publicity of their role and their association with a space charged with Francesco's vision of his princely identity, combined with the opportune timing after the Marchese's imprisonment, make the conclusion inevitable: the choir was hired as one among a range of strategies designed to render Francesco's recently tarnished princely illusion vivid once again.

The Marchese's involvement in the war also throws light on the tasks accomplished by the singers' move for Alfonso. The Estense were well aware that the leverage they had on the pope's commander was among their most potent weapons. Throughout the second half of 1510 Alfonso, Lucrezia and Isabella applied themselves independently and in cooperation to increase the diplomatic discomfort of their supposed enemy, pleading with him not to act against their interests.⁹⁸ In a letter of 26 July 1510 Lucrezia congratulated Francesco on his freedom and begged that 'in every matter which may help this state you will be pleased to do

⁹⁵ Text and translation Prizer 1980, 19 and n.73.

⁹⁶ See various contemporary accounts detailed in Prizer 1980, 20-1. According to a letter of 1514 the choir was 'dedicated' to the chapel of the Madonna dei Voti (Prizer 1980, 20).

⁹⁷ Prizer 1980, 21.

⁹⁸ Copious correspondence to this effect is published in Bradford 2005 – see the following references. See also Bellonci 1953, 289 and 291-5.

as I trust in you'.⁹⁹ On 22 August she reminded Alfonso that he had planned to ask the French representative in Italy to write personally to Francesco, 'even if it should come to pretexts and threats, that he should not molest you in any way'.¹⁰⁰ Later, on 10 September, Lucrezia wrote to Isabella asking her to be 'a good intermediary between Your Illustrious consort and mine'.¹⁰¹ In this context, occurring at Ferrara's most vulnerable moment, the release of the choir looks like a clever move in a tricky diplomatic game, designed to avert the final assault. It is perhaps best to think of it as a gift: it is the nature of a gift to appear magnanimous whilst placing the recipient under a cast-iron obligation.¹⁰²

Such overtures were not unfamiliar as an aspect of Italian diplomacy. For example, following the death of Alexander VI, whilst Francesco was harbouring Cesare Borgia's enemies and actively working against his interests, Cesare, his estates crumbling around him, continued to petition the Marchese assiduously for help on grounds of their previous friendship, even sending him a gift of hunting dogs.¹⁰³ Episodes such as this are entirely appropriate to the constantly re-negotiated identities and sinuously shifting interconnections that characterised the Italian states and their key figures.

In fact, if we characterise the movement of the singers as part of a cultural assault directed at, and encouraged by, Francesco, then the movement and loaning of singers and music between winter 1510 and summer 1511 are not its only components. Having heard at second hand that the marchese was interested in seeing his *Orlando Furioso*, Ariosto, whose involvement in the wars was as a prominent and trusted agent of both Ippolito and Alfonso, wrote in July 1512 volunteering to send transcriptions of the most polished sections.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps further research would reveal further examples of this potent style of diplomacy, to which the Marchese of Mantua was apparently considered particularly vulnerable.¹⁰⁵

Finally, then, we are in a position to draw our conclusions on the firing of the chapel choir – and the situation has changed profoundly. Following months of campaigning and the excommunication, Alfonso's singers had little to do in Ferrara, although even without salaries they were still tied to his service. In light of the excommunication, Alfonso was in a position to configure their disposal as a demonstrative act of princehood. Francesco, recovering the confidence of his rule following his captivity, was no doubt aware of the choir's redundancy, and thought to use the extreme good favour he then enjoyed in Ferrara to enhance his strategies of self-presentation: he asked to borrow, or take, the choir and deployed them to precisely that end. Alfonso saw the diplomatic credit to be amassed by giving his singers to the commander of the forces ranged against him,

⁹⁹ Letter published partially in translation in Bradford 2005, 197.

¹⁰⁰ Letter published partially in translation in Bradford 2005, 302.

¹⁰¹ Letter published partially in translation in Bradford 2005, 305.

¹⁰² The phenomenon of the gift and the gift economy is the subject of a large and growing scholarly discourse, in which the *locus classicus* is the work of Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1990: see also, for the Renaissance and Early Modern period, Klapisch-Zuber 1985, 213-46; Warwick 1994; Bestor 1999; Davis 2000; Butters 2007; Cassidy-Geiger 2007-8; and for musical gifts in particular Wegman 2005 and Shephard 2010). According to the standard formulation, the gift participates in a mode of exchange in which no reciprocation is specified, although all parties involved understand that it is expected (Mauss 1990, 1-3). A successful transaction rests on a system linking obligation with status: to give increases one's status, whereas to be in debt diminishes it (Mauss 1990, 11). It was thus an obvious and characteristic instrument of political life in the Renaissance, as well as an ideal arena for the negotiation of competing but interrelated identities.

¹⁰³ Gregorovius 1903, 293-5, 302, 318-20.

¹⁰⁴ Gardner 1906, 100, with the letter given in translation at 264-5. Gardner gives a wealth of information on Ariosto's involvement in the wars.

¹⁰⁵ Perhaps one could add the fact that in 1511 Isabella negotiated, both directly with Alfonso and through agents, to borrow the 'engineer' Biagio Rossetti together with a builder – documentation published in Franceschini 1993.

and thus facilitated the move with enthusiasm, even taking the initiative in sending his best singer to Mantua. He realised, no doubt, that to do so at that point would not harm his princely identity and could conceivably benefit it, and he sought thus to place his reluctant enemy under an obligation that would make his job tangibly more difficult. The strategy worked: the Marchese never did attack the city, and in fact towards the end of 1510 his cousin Federico Gonzaga of Bozzolo brought soldiers to Ferrara's defense; and later, in 1512, it was through Gonzaga help and facilitation that Alfonso was able hopefully to negotiate with Julius II in Rome.¹⁰⁶ The choir's departure became the first move of a new and fruitful phase in Alfonso's patronage.

¹⁰⁶ On the role of the Gonzaga of Bozzolo, who were in the full confidence of the Estensi, see Gardner 1906, 81 and 100-1; on the safe-conduct see Gardner 1906, 89. The covert support of the Gonzaga for Alfonso extended far, and eventually brought the pope's suspicion upon his commander – Gardner 1906, 98-9.

III

Pastoral and Performance: the Publicness of Private Space

In turning to Alfonso's patronage after 1513, we encounter a situation that demands a different mode of analysis. Our concern is still with identity and its construction through music, but the chapel and its choir give way to the private spaces of the palace and the prince's 'honest leisure' (*otium honestum*). Here the patron's personal taste is, perhaps, more truly apparent; but, as I will discuss, we have not left behind the questions of (re)presentation and demonstration that have dominated the discussion so far, nor the prince's curse of visibility. Aesthetic and 'studious' preoccupations, appropriate to 'honest leisure', partook no less of contemporary ideologies of rulership, albeit in a different register to the 'public' chapel. Similarly, the private spaces they occupied operated a rhetoric of social registration, underlined by traditions of inscription (i.e. decoration) that manifested the prerogatives of the ruler's leisured identity.

After the War: Public to Private

Over the years of the war, Alfonso's circumstances changed swiftly and substantially, the reasons for his initial caution gradually evaporating. Lucrezia gave birth to two healthy sons – Ercole on 4 April 1508 and Ippolito on 25 August 1509 – placing the succession beyond reasonable doubt. After the early discontent under heavy taxation in 1509, Alfonso's rehabilitation in the eyes of his subjects was well begun through his striking military successes and continued through his demonstrations of humility and generosity in the preparation of Ferrara's defense. The war played to his strengths: his energetic and ultimately successful defense of Ferrara won him the fear and respect of his peers, and made him a hero to his subjects. On 16 December 1512, at one of the darkest moments of the war, Bernardino de' Prosperi was able to reassure Isabella, 'Let [the pope] do what he likes, because these people [Alfonso's subjects] are more constant as time goes by and faithful to Your Illustrious House and to the Lord Duke your brother, and of this I am most certain...'.¹ Alfonso succeeded where his father had failed – in placing his public relations on the footing considered by Machiavelli the most secure of all.²

¹ Quoted in translation in Bradford 2005, 321. Giraldi (1556, 120) gives a similar assessment of a point somewhat earlier in the war with the pope, connecting the faith of the people directly with military heroism: (following the destruction of a second Venetian armada, this one allied with Julius II) 'Et havendo presi gli alloggiamenti de' nimici, diede un ricco bottino à' suoi soldati. Et dipoi con l'artiglieria, et insegne de' nimici, havendo seco salva tutta la fanteria, e la cavalleria, vittorioso, et lieto, con grande allegrezza del popolo, ritornò nella città. Hora, havendo egli Ferrara, la quale delle città dianzi possedute, gli era stata lasciata sola dal furor del Papa, poco forte, per render piu sicuro il popolo fedelissimo...' (And having seized the camp of his enemies, he gave a rich booty to his soldiers. And then with the artillery, and the banners of his enemies, having gathered all the infantry, and the cavalry, victorious, and happy, with great joy of the people [of Ferrara], returned to the city. Now, he having [only] Ferrara, of the cities which not long ago he had possessed, he was left only little strength to make the most faithful people [of Ferrara] more secure from the anger of the pope...)

² Gundersheimer (2004, 4) even surmises that Alfonso was spurred on to his own military successes by the experience of his father's failings in 1482-4.

The war was a watershed for Alfonso, clearing a path to the independent configuration of his rule, much as the death of his mother and the birth of an heir had for Galeazzo Maria Sforza in 1469.³ It is during the remainder of the 1510s that we see Alfonso's rule finally drop the compensatory strategies of presentation developed by his father. The projects to rebuild and redecorate his private apartments in the palace, begun before the war, were rebegun with massively increased ambition.⁴ Taking up a venerable Este preoccupation, the duke set about creating for himself a new rural pleasure palace (*delizia*) on a wooded island in the Po on the southern outskirts of Ferrara known as the Boschetto. The major public project after the war, the revision and rebuilding of sections of Ferrara's fortifications, supplied the soil for an artificial hill at the north of the city, on which was built a second villa named Montagnone.⁵ Considerable resources and energy were dedicated to the decoration of Alfonso's new private spaces, whose creation he supervised closely. It is after the war that Alfonso's enthusiastic interest in painting first comes into view, connecting him with names such as Titian, Raphael, Michelangelo and Dosso Dossi.⁶

The effect of the war in winning Alfonso the grace required to turn his mind to his private environment was recognised by early commentators. The poet Scipione Balbo, in an encomium on Belvedere published around 1530, makes a direct connection:

Est locus Eridani mediis natus in undis
 Arboribus quondam rigidis incultus et asper
 Non longe hydriferam spatium porrectus ad urbem.
 Huc oculos flexit, positus Dux inclutus armis,
 Cum licuit laxare animos, et condere pulchrum
 Est meditatus opus. ...

There is a place, born in the midst of Eridanus' waves, formerly arid and harsh with uncultivated trees, that lies not far from the water-washed city. Here this renowned duke turned his gaze, having laid down his arms, when he was able to relax his spirits, and he thought to establish this beautiful work.⁷

Giovanni Battista Giraldi, secretary to Alfonso's successor Duke Ercole II, similarly configured Belvedere as the reward for Alfonso's labours, equating it directly with the hard-won peace of the state:

...per lequali egli si potesse liberare da tanti travagli, et dove egli si levasse daddosso gli odii de' potentissimi nimici, o fargli almeno piu aguvoli, accioche finalmente dopo tante asprissime guerre, et dopo tante fatiche durate, godesse la desiderata pace, et tranquillità. Et per poter lasciare à lo discendenti pacifico, et quieto lo stato, che con indomito, e invito valore egli haveva ristorato, et fermo contra l'insolente furore della contraria fortuna.

³ For this reading of Galeazzo Maria Sforza's patronage see Welch 1990, 176-8; and Welch 1993, 162ff.

⁴ See Chapter V of the present study and the references given there.

⁵ On the *delizie* see Zaniboni 1987; and Fiorenza 2008, 55-63. The villa on the Boschetto, called Belvedere, was begun in 1513. On Alfonso's alterations to the walls see, in brief, Zaniboni 1987, 24-5.

⁶ See Chapter V of the present study and the references given there.

⁷ Text and translation Fiorenza 2008, 59 and n.24.

...by which [recreations in Belvedere] he could free himself of many cares, and where he could shake off the hatreds of powerful enemies, or at least blunt them, so that at last after many very bitter wars, and after many hard labours, he could enjoy the desired peace, and tranquillity. And to be able to leave the state to his descendents at peace and calm, which with indomitable, and undefeated valour he had restored, and firm against the insolent anger of contrary fortune.⁸

His power demonstrated, his legitimacy put beyond question, his subjects no longer needed such assiduous convincing. The *delizie* were a just reward for Alfonso's service to his state.

In this context, it is difficult to see Alfonso's failure to rebuild his choir in the economic terms proposed by previous studies.⁹ Although the finances of the Ferrarese duchy were certainly vulnerable following the war, it is worth remembering that it was under directly equivalent economic circumstances that Ercole began the most expensive and ambitious public projects of his reign. In fact, whilst the account books for 1510 are taken up entirely with expenses pertaining to the war, work on Alfonso's private apartment recommenced in 1511 and the ambition of his various projects escalated throughout the 1510s.¹⁰ In 1512, indeed, with the war still in progress and the officers of the French army to entertain, the splendour of the court redoubled. The biographer of the famous French soldier Bayard later wrote in extravagant terms of the hospitality they received from Lucrezia:

Sur toutes personnes la bonne duchesse, qui estoit une perle en ce monde, leur fist singulier recueil, et tous les jours leur faisoit banquetz et festins à la mode d'Ytalie tant beaulx que merveilles. Bien ose dire que de son temps ne beaucoup devant ne s'est point trouvé de plus triumpante princesse...

Above all people the good duchess, who was a pearl in this world, received them [the French] with singular attention, and every day held for them banquets and festivals in the Italian style very beautiful and marvellous. Well I would dare to say that neither from her times nor long before is there ever to be found a more glorious princess¹¹

⁸ Text Giraldi 1556, 154.

⁹ As, for instance, Lockwood 1979, 210.

¹⁰ Goodgal 1978, 165 and the documents given in her Appendix I, in particular documents 29-31. These records concern the building and decoration of a *studio*, begun and substantially completed before the war; its scaffolding was left up when work stopped in 1509-10 and only taken down in February 1511. Work on the construction and decoration of the room recommenced in June 1511 and continued for the rest of the year. This coincides closely with the return of Bidon from Mantua (probably in June – Prizer 1980, 17) and Alfonso's demand that one of the music books lent to Francesco Gonzaga be returned (in October – Prizer 1980, 24). The implication of these notices is that court life, and thus court spending, re-asserted itself gradually over the course of 1511 – a logical circumstance, given that the ejection of the papal forces from Bologna by the French in May 1511 bought a summer and autumn of relative peace for the duchy (Gardner 1906, 82-6). The point can also be illustrated by looking through the archival notices published in Franceschini 1993 for 1510, 1511 and 1512 – although he gives only those notices pertaining to artists.

¹¹ Le Loyal Serviteur 1878, 239 (chapter 44).

Meanwhile, unlike during the war with Venice in the 1480s, it does not appear that Ferrarese agriculture (the mainstay of the city's economy) suffered particularly from the fighting.¹² Within a few years of the war's end, Alfonso's wealth would benefit considerably from the deaths of Lucrezia in 1519 and Ippolito in 1520.¹³ Alfonso could certainly have rebuilt the chapel choir had he thought it necessary.

The solution to the dilemma is that, following Alfonso's successful prosecution of the war, the strategy of self-presentation that Ercole had carefully built around the miraculous Madonna was obsolete, and so was the choir that had serviced it. As with his other cultural endeavours, Alfonso's piety, and his music, were now required only to service his private interests, rather than to construct the legitimacy of his rule for a potentially sceptical public. Evidence suggests that, during the 1510s at least, Alfonso heard his mass in one of the smaller chapels near to his apartment in the Via Coperta, even when he was entertaining guests of some importance.¹⁴ The choir that he preserved numbered six or seven, after 1516 growing to ten – perfectly sufficient to service the ends of polyphonic music in a private context.¹⁵

It is clear enough that Alfonso pursued a genuine private interest in music, and that he was happy to place his interest before the eyes of the court in performance. We know that he played the lute because in 1489 a payment was made for its repair.¹⁶ Correspondence shows that in 1494 Alfonso was taking singing lessons, for which he borrowed a singing method from Isabella.¹⁷ His agent and retainer Girolamo da Sestola taught keyboard instruments, suggesting that Alfonso may have studied them.¹⁸ Several documents name him as a player of the viol: In 1499 the instrument maker Lorenzo da Pavia, a regular correspondent of Isabella, informed Alfonso's sister that Alfonso was in Venice to order a set of five viols of different sizes, with a view to learning the instrument.¹⁹ Just two months later, in May, Isabella had begun to learn herself, and was planning to play with Alfonso next time she visited Ferrara.²⁰ Mario Sanudo records that Alfonso even

¹² Ghirardo 2008, 61 with n.29.

¹³ Lucrezia died extremely rich. On her will, which does not survive and apparently did not benefit Alfonso quite as much as he would have liked, see Ghirardo 2008, 53 and 58 with n.20. On the disposal of Ippolito's effects and incomes upon his death see Lockwood 1979, 95 with n.28.

¹⁴ As when Federico Gonzaga visited in 1517 – see Goodgal 1978, n.8.

¹⁵ Lockwood 1981, 14-5.

¹⁶ Prizer 1999, 20-1 with n.44.

¹⁷ Isabella to Borso da Correggio (a Ferrarese courtier), 14 February 1494: 'Mandiamo a la Signoria Vostra per questo nostro cavallaro el libro de canto che ne ha richiesto lo Illustrissimo Signor don Alfonso nostro fratello. ... Operato che'l l'haverà, solitamente che'l ce sia remandato, però che nui anchora lo operamo, como sapeti' (By this our rider we are sending you the singing book that don Alfonso our brother has requested. ... Having used it, we ask him to send it back, since we are still using it, as you know.) – text and translation Prizer 1999, 17 with n.25. In May Isabella wrote to Alfonso requesting the book's return (Prizer 1999, 17 with n.26).

¹⁸ Isabella negotiated with Alfonso to borrow Girolamo in the capacity of music teacher more than once in the 1490s – see Prizer 1999, 19-20.

¹⁹ Lorenzo to Isabella, 19 March 1499: 'L'è qua a Venecia el Signore Don Alfonso, al quale vole li faci 5 viole da archo, e con grandissima instanzia. Non me vale a dire che io non le posso fare, e'l vole a tuti i modi del mondo che li faci. La sua Signoria vole imparare.' (Signor Don Alfonso [d'Este] is in Venice and he wants me to make him five viole da archo, and with the greatest insistence. It doesn't help to say that I can't do them. He wants them made in all the possible sizes in the world. His Lordship wants to learn [to play them].) – text and translation Prizer 1982, 104 with n.71.

²⁰ Isabella to Giulio d'Este, 14 May 1499: 'Havemo ben dato principio ad imparare de viola et speramo che impareremo assai bene perchè in dui di solamente che gli havemo dato opera, cominciamo a fare dele minute per modo che, quando veniremo a Ferrara, potremo fare tenore alo Illustrissimo Signor Don Alphonso nostro fratello' (We have begun to learn the viola and we hope that we learn well, because in the two days that we have been working, we have begun to plan that, when we come to Ferrara, we will be able to play tenor to Don Alfonso) – text and translation Prizer 1982, 104 with n.73.

performed as part of a consort of six viols during the celebrations attendant upon his wedding to Lucrezia Borgia in 1502.²¹ Elsewhere we hear that, whilst duke, Alfonso played and sang with members of his personal staff.²² On one occasion he played the bagpipes to welcome guests to a banquet held by a courtier in honour of Lucrezia.²³ Alfonso's early biographers also describe him as a maker of musical instruments – particularly 'flauti'.²⁴

Music and Landscape

The new directions of Alfonso's extra-musical patronage, although rooted in Este tradition, were closely in accord with contemporary courtly fashion. In the early 1500s, following the lead of Jacopo Sannazaro and the Venetian painters associated with Giorgione, the courts took to their hearts the pastoral mode – a vision of landscape, founded largely on readings and visualisations of Virgil and Ovid, which placed shepherds, nymphs and satyrs in a range of amorous relationships, orbiting around a rural pantheon (Apollo, Bacchus, Ceres...).²⁵

Although nothing survives of either Montagnone or Boschetto, it is easy enough to envisage how this pastoral vogue might have inflected their design and the experience of their delights. A good indication can in fact be found within the private apartment prepared simultaneously, in particular the *studiolo* – in conception a space for literary leisure, home of the prince's *vita contemplativa*.²⁶ Drawing on Ovid and Virgil, this room's decoration offered a vision of sylvan relaxation, showing picnics in lush glades by river banks, and identifying its patron deities as gods and goddesses of the countryside (see figs. 1, 2 and 20). In effect, Alfonso created a physical setting for his bucolic leisure outside the walls, whilst having the same setting manifested in paint, complete with its classical overtones, within the palace.²⁷ Such a strategy makes perfect sense in the context of the seasonality of court life: winters at the palace alternated with summers at one of the *delizie* – in Alfonso's reign usually Boschetto.²⁸

²¹ 'Al 3.o acto vene una musica de sei viole, assai bona, fra quale vi era il signor don Alfonso.' – Sanuto 4:230 (part of the 'Ordine di le pompe e spectaculi di le noze de madona Lucrezia Borgia...', which occupies 4:222-30).

²² The evidence in question is that of Angelo Mosti, discussed later in the current chapter. A letter of 1495 mentions that Alfonso's brothers sang together with Ercole in their youth (Lockwood 1972, 113), and there is no reason to doubt that Alfonso did the same.

²³ Prizer 1985, 3. That appears to be Prizer's implication, at any rate, although sadly (and unusually) he does not quote from his source.

²⁴ See the quotations assembled in Camiz 1983, 87.

²⁵ For a more detailed discussion of pastoral with appropriate bibliography, see below, Chapter VI. On the pastoral mode in Ferrarese poetry see Gardner 1906 – for example, Ariosto's poetic account of the attempted coup of 1506 is told as a pastoral eclogue, the voices of which are supplied by characters lifted straight out of Virgil's eclogues (Gardner 1906, 49-50); looking further back we come to Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Pastorali* of the 1480s. On pastoral theatre in Ferrara see Pieri 1982.

²⁶ A more detailed account of this room can be found in Chapter V of the present study. Key overviews of the Renaissance *studiolo* include Boström 1987; Liebenwein 1988; Cieri Via 1988; Thornton 1997.

²⁷ Other scholars have also remarked on a close affinity between the decoration of the *studiolo* and the building of the Boschetto. Several, noting that Boschetto housed a menagerie, have pointed to the large number of animals visible in the *studiolo* paintings (Fehl 1974, 69 n.87; Holberton 1987, 60; Shearman 1987, 215-6; Colantuono 2005, 235-6). Anthony Colantuono (2005, 229ff) has drawn a particularly close connection between Boschetto and Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, made for the *studiolo*, which features a river. A connection between *studioli* and landscape is axiomatic in any case – Petrarch, owner of what one might term the first celebrity study of the Renaissance, made great play of the fact that the literary life of solitude was pursued most successfully in the countryside (see Petrarch 1924). For a recent brief but perceptive overview of the importance of landscape in Ferrarese court culture under Alfonso, see Bayer 1998, 43-6.

²⁸ Charles Rosenberg has proposed a similar reading of the rural vistas prominent in the decoration of the *Salone dei Mesi* in Palazzo

Alfonso's active musical interests, so far as we can judge, were frequently consonant with this pastoral vein. Most striking is his public performance on the bagpipes, an instrument that could only find a place at court within a pastoral or bucolic aesthetic. As the instrument of the contemporary Italian countryside, it was taken up within the pastoral as the direct equivalent of the pipes played by Pan and the shepherds of Virgil's Eclogues. It was used in court entertainment for its rural associations: for example, during an evening of particularly bucolic theatre in celebration of Alfonso's wedding to Lucrezia in 1502, a country dance was performed to its accompaniment.²⁹ Perhaps Alfonso aimed to characterise the dinner as an Arcadian feast.

Further, Alfonso's new pastoral spaces furnished the venues for his music-making. His contemporary biographer, Agostino Mosti, describes musical entertainment during the summer at Boschetto, both in the villa and in its gardens:

...il Prencipe [Alfonso I d'Este] stesso averebbe il verno innanzi cena suonato di Viuola, ma un cotal Cameriere, un Cappellano privato de' suoi, e passato quel tempo non solo avanti, ma anco dopo la cena, cantato dui o tre mottetti, Canzone Francese, ed altri, come spesse volte l'istate alla Villa ed al Boschetto mentre si connive i musici averebbono cantato quattro o sei Canzone molto leggiadre...

the Prince himself would [habitually] play the viol in wintertime before dinner, [with] one or another of his valets or private chaplains, and passed thus the time not only before, but also after dinner, singing two or three motets, French songs, and others, [and] just as [happened] in summertime at the Villa and at the Boschetto, while they ate, the musicians sang four or six very dainty songs³⁰

Mosti draws a link between the musical practices of summer and winter, locating the latter implicitly within the private spaces of the palace.³¹ Given that the summer scene of a country picnic with musical entertainment is rehearsed several times in the decoration of the *studiolo*, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was an appropriate venue for the viol-playing and the singing mentioned – perhaps even that it was designed as such.³² It was not a large room, but for an ensemble of four or five it would have been ideal.³³

Schifanoia – see Rosenberg 1997, 86. It is worth noting in this connection that Dosso was engaged in decorating the villa on Boschetto at the same time (1518-19) as he worked on the Via Coperta apartment (Goodgal 1978, 167).

²⁹ As described in Gregorovius 1903, 259, on the authority of Isabella's report.

³⁰ Text Solerti 1892, 182.

³¹ One might readily connect Mosti's mention of 'one of his valets or private chaplains' as the companion of Alfonso's musical leisure with a remark of Castiglione's on the staff of the prince's private spaces: 'it seems to me that those people are in error who condemn a ruler for keeping in his rooms persons of little worth except in the matter of knowing how to give good personal service [as opposed to courtiers of rank], for I do not see why princes should not be free to relax just as we [the courtiers] like to do' – Castiglione 1967, 127.

³² The summer scene of a country picnic with musical entertainment is one rehearsed twice in the decoration of the *studiolo*, once in the *Feast of the Gods* (fig. 1 – illustrations can be found in a separate section towards the end of the thesis), again in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig. 20). Also, in one of the surviving sections of Dosso's frieze of scenes from the life of Aeneas, *Aeneas in Elysium* (fig. 2), we see a group relaxing in a landscape who seem to be reading from books in landscape format; this was the standard format for musical partbooks in the early sixteenth century.

³³ Specific documentary evidence of music-making in Renaissance *studioli* is sparse, if not entirely absent. The overwhelming number of indirect clues, as well as the existence of documents open to favourable interpretation, put the question beyond doubt, however. Evidence, largely indirect but forceful, concerning the actual performance of music in courtly *studioli* is assembled in Thornton 1997.

The now-lost fresco decoration of the Este villa of Belfiore, described in some detail by Sabadino in his *De Triumphis Religionis*, depicts the diversions of several generations of the Este court in the villa gardens and the countryside nearby. Here we discover that outdoor musical entertainments and picnics were among the activities for which the villas were most characteristically used. One fresco cycle dating from the reign of Alberto I d'Este (r.1388-93) depicts a hunt followed by a feast served in a flowery meadow, after which is held a dance by a spring accompanied by lutes, pipes and harp.³⁴ Another, similar scene concerns Ercole's court:

Poi se li vede come vano ala marina ala tracta del pescie e poi come sotto uno bello e magno paviglione ala tua ducal divisia se riposano, e chi ludendo a scachi et chi danzando al suono de tympano e zuffuli, che ivi li è una bellissima donzella che con la mano nel colle tiene uno struzo. Vedonsi in altra parte li cuochi in cocina cocere ... che per la felicità della pictura pare sentirse l'odore dele vivande, e tanto meglio quanto se vede la gaudiosa gente in altra banda reficiarse deli cotti animali, ad mensa distesa sopra l'herba.

Then we see them as they go to the marina to fish and then as under a beautiful and great pavilion of your [Ercole's] ducal design they rest, and some playing chess and some dancing to the sound of drum and pipes, and over there is a very beautiful lady with her hand in the sleeve holding an ostrich. We see in the other part [of the fresco] the cooks in the kitchen cooking ... such that by the skill of the painter it seems that we smell the odour of the dishes, and so much the better when we see the joyful people on the other side restoring themselves with cooked meats, at dinner tables reclined on the grass.³⁵

Although coloured with the style of the previous century, Sabadino's descriptions help to give life to Mosti's brief remark.³⁶ Placed in this context, the direct connection between the recreation depicted in the *studiolo* and the actual practice of the court at the *delizie* becomes clearer. The reality of the recorder players depicted reclining by a stream in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig. 20) may be more profound still: an inventory of 1520 notes the presence of three recorders belonging to Cardinal Ippolito (whose mistress, Dalida de' Puti, was a professional musician) at Belfiore.³⁷

Despite the distinctly secular aspect of the *studiolo's* decoration, even the motets mentioned by Mosti fit it well. Devotional paintings were featured marginally in the decoration of several Renaissance *studioli*, private devotion constituting an aspect of the *vita contemplativa*.³⁸ The motet could sit comfortably also within the pastoral environment, painted or real: from the early 1500s the pastoral mode inflected both religious texts and

120-3.

³⁴ Text Gundersheimer 1972, 68; see also 22-4. The instruments are given by Sabadino as 'cythare', 'tùbie' and 'arpa'. See also Chapter VI of the present study.

³⁵ Text Gundersheimer 1972, 71.

³⁶ Descriptions of similar feasts dating from the end of Alfonso's reign can be found in Messisbugo 1992.

³⁷ Lockwood 1985, 98. On Dalida de' Puti see Prizer 1985, 8-11; Messisbugo 1992, 46; and Prizer 1998, 295-8, 305-6. Illustrations can be found in a separate section towards the end of the thesis.

³⁸ Arguments have been made for the ascription of specific religious paintings to the *studioli* of Leonello and Federico da Montefeltro – see Clough 1995, 32. Vasari places Titian's *Tribute Money* in Alfonso's *studiolo*, although if he is correct it was later displaced by mythological paintings – see Hope 1971, 649. For the close connection frequently made between *studioli* and devotion in general see Bostrom 1987, 56-8; Liebenwein 1988, 5 and 38; and Thornton 1997, 9-11.

pictures – in particular small devotional pictures destined (like many motets) for a secular setting.³⁹ It is interesting to note that what may be the only surviving music manuscript prepared at Alfonso's court, a manuscript of motets mostly by composers in his employ, was prepared in octavo partbook format.⁴⁰ The tiny size, equivalent to that of Aldus' 'pocket' classics and perhaps prompted by the music publications of Andrea Antico, imports portability – such as one would require when heading out on a summer's day to sing in the gardens of the Boschetto.⁴¹ The partbook format perhaps connotes spontaneity and therefore informality: there would be no need to copy out parts for performance from a sourcebook, as may have been the practice with some choirbooks. It certainly, at octavo size, implies intimacy: more than two to a part would be difficult to manage, and surely one is the intention. The manuscript is thus the natural tool of Alfonso's musical recreation post-1513, as I have been characterising it.⁴²

The Publicness of Privacy

Although I have described the spaces of the *delizie* and the private apartment as 'private', they are only so in a very special sense. Commentators on rulership in Renaissance Italy recognised that the prince was under inspection even in his private moments, and that those moments were as crucial to his image as any other, if in different ways. Pier Paolo Vergerio, whose treatise on humanist education was the most influential of its kind in the fifteenth century, made precisely that connection:

...praecipue tamen qui excelsiore loco sunt, quorumque nihil neque dictum neque factum latere potest, decens est ita principalibus artibus instructos esse, ut et fortuna et gradu dignitatis quam

³⁹ For a recent perceptive analysis of literary and painted Christian pastoral see D'Elia 2005, 9-26. Of course, the motet's presence in a secular setting needs no special justification, and nor does its use as dinner entertainment – see the references given in Shephard 2010, n80.

⁴⁰ The manuscript is London, Royal College of Music, Ms. 2037. Only the superius and bassus parts survive. Joshua Rifkin once suggested that it was copied by the scribe Jean Michel (on whom see Lockwood 1979; Rifkin 2002; Jas 2002), but has recently rejected this conclusion (Rifkin 2002, n.3; the original hypothesis, presented in a conference paper, also appeared in print for the first time in Rifkin 2002, n.3, in order to facilitate its rejection). Either way, it was probably copied in the 1520s. A list of contents is given in Lowinsky 1968, III.116-7, but in the absence of a full inventory I have provided one in the Appendix to the present study. A second manuscript, Bibl. Estense MS Alpha M. 1.2, was completed in Alfonso's reign, but was begun under Ercole (on this manuscript see Lockwood 1972, 122 n60; Lockwood 1984, 208).

⁴¹ Antico published music partbooks in octavo format, whereas Petrucci published them in quarto. The most widely used music partbooks in octavo format during the 1520s were therefore Antico's, and included his four volumes of motets. Lowinsky (1982, 290-7) has argued that Adrian Willaert may have been a collaborator of Antico's whilst the printer was working in Venice around 1520; at that point Willaert was in the employ of first Alfonso's brother Ippolito and then Alfonso himself. I argued in support of his hypothesis in an unpublished paper presented at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Vienna, 2007. Concerning my suggestion that the manuscript is ideal for informal use at the Este villas, c.f. the letter dated 5 July (i.e. high summer) [1516], published and discussed in Lockwood 1979, 224-34, in which Jean Michel reports to Alfonso's invalid brother Sigismondo that he has been delayed in sending music books 'car le Seigneur a esté dehors et les avoir avec luy' (because his Lordship [Alfonso] was away and had them with him).

⁴² It is interesting also to note that after the war no composer who served in Alfonso's chapel specialised in properly liturgical music (the possible exception is Willaert, but there is no reason to suppose that he composed much/any of his liturgical polyphony whilst serving Alfonso). On the other hand, several were prolific composers of motets. The question of the character of Alfonso's chapel repertory in the 1520s is an interesting one, but not one that I will consider in the present study.

obtinere digni habeantur. ... Nec est ulla certior aut stabilior regnandi ratio quam si hi qui regna obtinent, ab omnibus dignissimi omnium regno iudicentur.

...it is particularly fitting that those of lofty rank, who cannot say or do anything in secret, be instructed in the principal arts in such a way as to be held worthy of the fortune and rank they possess. ... Nor is there any more firm or solid rationale for ruling than this: that those who rule be judged by all to be the worthiest to rule⁴³

In doing so, he probably had in mind a famous passage from Pliny the Younger's *Panegyric to Trajan*.

One of the chief features of high estate is that it permits no privacy, no concealment and, in the case of princes, it flings open the door not only to their homes, but to their private apartments and deepest retreats; every secret is exposed and revealed to rumour's listening ear.⁴⁴

Castiglione treats the subject of access to the prince's private apartment under the topic of showing and receiving favour. It is an honour that should never be presumed, and thus an invitation was a political act: 'The courtier will never attempt to make his way into the chamber or private quarters of his master uninvited, even though he possesses considerable authority himself'.⁴⁵ He goes on to explain why the prince might judge the audience for his private identity so carefully: 'when princes are by themselves, they enjoy the liberty of saying and doing just what they please, and so they do not want to be seen or overheard by anyone in a position to criticise'.⁴⁶ To Castiglione, private visibility was a problem, to be solved by the restriction of access to private space.

The *studiolo* was a primary venue for such visible privacy – its decoration frequently designed specifically to articulate and manifest the virtues of the contemplative side of the prince's life.⁴⁷ Cecil Clough has brought together documentary evidence showing that the *studiolo* of Federico da Montefeltro was used to discuss the duke's most secret affairs.⁴⁸ The *studioli* of Leonello, Isabella and Alfonso d'Este were demonstrably on the tour for the most famous or important guests.⁴⁹ One might conveniently characterise the room as a space to entertain a *public* who are of sufficient stature or intimacy to merit *private* reception.

⁴³ Text and translation Kallendorf 2002, 4-5.

⁴⁴ Panegyric no.83 in the Loeb edition of the *Letters and Panegyrics*. See also Welch 2002 on Giovanni Pontano's distinction between public magnificence and private splendour.

⁴⁵ 'Non cercherà d'intromettersi in camera o nei lochi segreti col signor suo non essendo richiesto, se ben sarà di molta autorità' – text Castiglione 1947, 166; translation Castiglione 1967, 127.

⁴⁶ 'spesso i signori, quando stanno privatamente, amano una certa libertà di dire e far ciò che lor piace, e però non vogliono esser né veduti né uditi da persona da cui possano esser giudicati' – text Castiglione 1947, 166; translation Castiglione 1967, 127.

⁴⁷ On the conception of the contemplative and the active life in the Renaissance see in particular Vickers 1985. The subject is discussed at some length in connection with Federico da Montefeltro's *studioli* in Fabiański 1990 and Clough 1995.

⁴⁸ Clough 1995, 40. Thornton (1997, 120-1) disagrees, however, preferring to see Federico's *studioli* as the venues for less formal gatherings.

⁴⁹ See Chapter VI of the present study on the visit to Leonello's *studiolo* of Ciriaco d'Ancona (also Thornton 1997, 120). On visits to Isabella's *studiolo* see Fletcher 1981, 53; Kolsky 1984, 54; Brown 1986; Brown 2004, 283. On visits to Alfonso's *studiolo* see the correspondence published in Hope 1971; Goodgal 1978; and Hope 1987. Randolph Starn (1989) argues that the *Camera degli Spazi* in Mantua was in effect a *studiolo* whose decoration constituted a philosophical reflection on the publicity of the room's privacy. Thornton (1997, 106-25) considers the importance of visitors to the efficacy of a study at length, and discusses the courtly *studiolo*'s 'conviviality' (120-5).

In recognition of this ambiguous function, recent scholarship on Renaissance *studioli* has pointed to a relationship between the *studiolo* and self-fashioning. In a 2003 article Stephen Campbell observed that ‘beginning with the aristocratic *studioli* of the fifteenth century, this ... space was ... the site where the cultivated self had been produced and put on display ... The self could be constructed and revealed through the mute but richly equivocal language of painting and sculpture, defining the owner’s “personal space” even in his or her absence’.⁵⁰ His recent monograph on Isabella d’Este’s *studiolo* has developed the connection at length.⁵¹ Dora Thornton concurs: ‘It was not only the fact of owning a study, but also the nature of its decoration and contents which indicated an individual’s credentials, and many of the characteristic things found in the room subtly suggested ways in which an individual related to the wider social world.’⁵²

In the following chapters, I shall unpack and discuss the musical aspects of the decoration of Alfonso’s private space – in particular his *studiolo* – and that of his close relatives, in search of the work they accomplish in constructing musical identities.⁵³ I take the decoration to be both useful and used: the patron deploys it to address certain preoccupations, to inscribe particular ideologies upon the space;⁵⁴ once it is deployed, they continue to interact with it, to activate, manipulate and even alter its meanings. The decoration thus exists in an interpretative and facilitatory relationship with the activities pursued in the room. It is in this effort of the decoration to intervene in the meanings of the space it inhabits that we can find the trace of the identity of its patron.⁵⁵

Music and Identity in Private Space: An Indicative Example

To clarify and illustrate these points it will be helpful, before turning to the *studioli* of Alfonso and his family, to consider those of Federico da Montefeltro. By virtue of their intactness, their verbal profusion and their legibility, they offer a particularly helpful example in establishing the importance of music to the room and its conception.⁵⁶ They also served as models for future *studioli*, whilst in their turn reacting to that established by Alfonso’s uncle Leonello.

⁵⁰ Campbell 2003, 303.

⁵¹ Campbell 2004. Other *studiolo* studies adopting a similar approach include Starn 1989 (if one accepts Clough’s view that the *Camera degli Spazi* was effectively a *studiolo* – see Clough 1995, 29-30); Clough 1995; Thornton 1997, esp. 1-7; Campbell 2000. See also Findlen 1994, 293-345.

⁵² Thornton 1997, 1.

⁵³ Evidence, largely indirect but forceful, concerning the actual performance of music in courtly *studioli* is assembled in Thornton 1997, 120-3.

⁵⁴ I use the word ‘inscribe’ with reference to Butler – see in particular Butler 1990, 128-41.

⁵⁵ I acknowledge that my approach is founded on the currently debated idea that patrons took a key hand in the design of their paintings, or at least that they made substantive interventions. I do so with confidence because in all three cases considered at length in this study it seems perfectly clear that they did; or at least that they relied on agents and advisers who were closely familiar with their interests and preoccupations. For the debate in question see Hope 1981; Kent and Simons 1987, 17-21; Gilbert 1998; and, on the basis of the most systematic review of the evidence thus far undertaken, O’Malley 2004 and (in expanded form) O’Malley 2005. In any case, the continuing validity of the adviser-patron model (though of course not its universality) is strongly supported by Poliziano’s characterisation of his chores in the service of Lorenzo de’ Medici – see the well-known letter published with translation in Blackburn 1996, 24-5.

⁵⁶ Luciano Cheles (1986, 15 and 26) calls the Urbino *studiolo* ‘the most complete surviving example of an early Renaissance *studiolo*’, and the Gubbio room ‘the second most complete example...’. In what follows I avoid overlapping with the more subtle and detailed musical

Federico's two *studioli* were graced by two similar but distinct decorative programmes: in Urbino, portraits of exemplary men, both ancient and modern, appear above wainscoting decorated with *trompe l'oeil* cupboards and the theological virtues in intarsia; in Gubbio (fig. 3), paintings of the seven Liberal Arts (among them music) appear above similar intarsia cupboards. The contents of the fictive cupboards in both *studioli* constitute an inventory of tools appropriate to the pursuit of the liberal arts, apparently mixed freely with those appropriate to the Muses and to the Virtues.⁵⁷ We find the armillary sphere and astrolabe of Astronomy or Urania; the dividers, set square and plumb bob of Geometry; any number of books that might be associated with either Rhetoric or Grammar; and a large collection of musical instruments and even notated music that relate primarily to Music as a liberal art.

The number and range of musical objects is in fact quite astonishing.⁵⁸ In the Gubbio intarsie there are percussion instruments, including a tabor and a tambourine; stringed instruments, including two lutes, a cittern, a harp, a rebec and a fiddle; wind instruments, including two cornettos, a horn and a pipe; and a portative organ (see figs. 4 - 7).⁵⁹ In Urbino, several songs are also to be found, with legible text and musical notation.⁶⁰ The equipment lies about as if caught up in an ongoing process of regular use. It is very tempting to take their presence as evidence for the performance of music in the room, and I think it likely, but caution is prompted by an interpretative confusion: it is difficult to tease apart the instruments' symbolic function from their 'snapshot' character with any confidence.⁶¹

Federico did not intend to obfuscate. He left a concise statement of the message he intended his *studioli* to convey in a song, notated in intarsia on the wall of his Urbino room (fig. 8). The text reads:

Bella gerit musasque colit Federicus omnium maximus Italicorum Dux foris atque domi

Federico, the greatest leader of all Italians, outdoors and at home, he fights wars and cultivates the Muses⁶²

The *studioli*, we presume, manifest and facilitate the domestic, scholarly side of this equation. The formula was familiar also outside Federico's immediate circle, and thus presumably successful in its advertisement of his character. A contemporary Neapolitan musician-orator, Aurelio Brandolini, described him in identical terms:

analysis proposed by Nicoletta Guidobaldi for Federico's *studioli* (Guidobaldi 1994; Guidobaldi 1995): my purpose is briefly to demonstrate the application of the theme of self-fashioning to the musical decoration. Key non-musicological studies of Federico's *studioli* include Remington 1941; Clough 1967; Cheles 1986; Fabiański 1990; Clough 1995; Raggio 1996; Raggio 1999; Kirkbride 2008. I acknowledge but leave aside the artistic motivations behind the scheme, with its complex manifestation of proportion, and their additional implications for the identity of Federico. For a convenient summary of Federico's patronage see Clough 1973.

⁵⁷ The objects together with their possible significance are identified and catalogued in Cheles 1986, 58-82.

⁵⁸ Musical motifs are common in Italian Renaissance intarsia in general, though few secular decorations survive as complete as those of Federico. For a range of indicative examples see Reese 1965; and Winternitz 1967, plates 47-55.

⁵⁹ As identified in Winternitz 1942, 106-8.

⁶⁰ These include *Bella gerit*, discussed below, *O rosa bella* and *J'ay pris amour* – on these see Guidobaldi 1995, 49-73.

⁶¹ In fact, Vespasiano da Bisticci reports that 'non era istrumento che la sua signoria non avessi in casa' (there wasn't an instrument that His Lordship did not have in the house) – text Guidobaldi 1995, 11.

⁶² Text and translation Fenlon 1997.

Fredericus Urbinas. Nonne imperator est nostra aetate praestantissimus? Nonne idem etiam in liberalibus disciplinis peritissimus? Adeo ut etiam non mediocris philosophus testatur?

Is not Federico, Duke of Urbino, a most excellent commander of our age? Is he not also most learned in the liberal disciplines? To such an extent that he is also reputed to be a not mediocre philosopher?⁶³

The classical reference point for Federico's formula was, in fact, explicitly musical. In an anecdote popular among humanists of the fifteenth century, Homer tells that Achilles relaxed after battle with a song.⁶⁴

For all its assertion of scholarship, however, the intarsia decoration in fact entails a Borso-like vulgarity of ostentation. The problem, even the frustration of the apparently completely explicit decorative programme is that the floor-to-ceiling decoration fictionalising the presence of Liberal Arts paraphernalia pretty much precludes the actual presence of such objects stored in the room. The need to present an image of Pieridian (i.e. muse-like) leisure points to its literal absence, or at least its absence in the idealised proportions proposed by the intarsia.⁶⁵ Here we encounter a key characteristic of the decoration. The musical instruments and other objects constitute a fashioning of Federico's identity. They operate in a performative mode: by asserting the duke's liberal arts credentials, they effectively make them real.

In a treatise on education that enjoyed wide circulation in the fifteenth century, Pier Paolo Vergerio explained the importance of an education in the circle of the Muses – that is, a liberal arts education in the sense that the early humanist teachers meant it – to successful rulership. He casts it as the ultimate weapon of self-fashioning:

Neque enim opes ullas firmiores aut certiora praesidia vitae parare filiis genitores possunt instructos, quibus rebus praediti et obscura suae gentis nomina et humiles patrias attollere atque illustrare consueverunt. ... Verum cum omnes homines deceat ... eos esse qui recte erudire suos liberos studeant ... praecipue tamen qui excelsiore loco sunt, quorumque nihil neque dictum neque factum latere potest, decens est ita principalibus artibus instructos esse, ut et fortuna et gradu dignitatis quam obtinent digni habeantur. ... Nec est ulla certior aut stabilior regnandi ratio quam si hi qui regna obtinent, ab omnibus dignissimi omnium regno iudicentur.

⁶³ Text and translation Gallo 1995, 110. Federico was, of course, a client of King Ferrante of Naples, who featured in the Duke's Gubbio *studiolo* kneeling before Astronomy. On relations between Federico and the Kings of Naples see Clough 1992.

⁶⁴ As, for instance, Vergerio: Kallendorf 2002, 84-7. Fabianski (1990, 204-10), read critically, leads one to the conclusion that the Gubbio *studiolo* similarly asserted Federico's credibility in both active and contemplative life, arranging the two into a hierarchical theology according to which the duke achieves, in the decoration of the *studiolo*, an apotheosis from the active (reason, war, earthly) to the contemplative (wisdom, philosophy, Godly). Clough (1995, esp. 26-30) also finds active and contemplative mingled in the decoration of Federico's two *studioli*, suggesting that the strategy reflects a newly semi-public role for the rooms.

⁶⁵ This disjunction is noted also in Thornton 1997, 120-1. Remington (1941, 4) asserts on the contrary that 'around him [Federico] on all sides, in the intarsia wainscoting, were duplicated in an intricate mosaic of wood the paraphernalia with which he was actually surrounded in real life.' His claim, however, is left unsubstantiated, although it is repeated in Bostrom 1987, 63. The *trompe-l'oeil* effect would only really work if the room was almost empty – certainly not with anything up against the walls, as it simulates the entire wall space from floor to above head height. Clough (1973, 142) helpfully puts Federico's scholarly interests into perspective, whilst explaining why those interests were so widely lauded by humanists.

...parents can provide their children with no more lasting resources, no more dependable protection in life than instruction in honorable arts and liberal disciplines. With such an endowment, children can usually overcome and bring distinction to obscure family origins and humble homelands. ... But although it is fitting that everyone ... desire to educate their children correctly, ... it is particularly fitting that those of lofty rank, who cannot say or do anything in secret, be instructed in the principal arts in such a way as to be held worthy of the fortune and rank they possess. ... Nor is there any more firm or solid rationale for ruling than this: that those who rule be judged by all to be the worthiest to rule.⁶⁶

Federico himself benefitted from just such an education under one of Vergerio's immediate successors, Vittorino da Feltre, in whose curriculum music featured in its practical, philosophical and classicising aspects.⁶⁷

We should therefore take very seriously the duke's choice of music as the vehicle to convey the assertion of his room. Perhaps he understood that the aggressive performativity of the decoration, and the effort of self-construction entailed in the aspiration to liberal arts expertise, was most appropriately matched to the inevitable and explicit performativity of music: to sing the song (either literally or figuratively) is to manifest the performativity of the *studiolo* identity, and to catch the singer up in its creation.

Epilogue

The purpose of Chapter III has been to move between two different registers in the discussion of music and identity: from music's role in the public sphere of rulership to music in the private sphere, in the realm of courtly identities. The two are of course related in the investigation of what we might call the 'princely package', but their relative deployment and importance varied according to the ruler's taste and, more importantly (at least in Alfonso's case), according to the tasks required of music under the circumstances of rule. In Chapters I and II, we observed music's efficacy as an aspect of public expressions of rulership, suggesting reasons for its employment as such under the difficult circumstances of Ercole's reign, and also reasons for its initial continuation under Alfonso. I similarly located the disbanding of Alfonso's choir within the realm of statecraft, and suggested that his military success made its public role unnecessary (or rather more occasional) after 1513.

To carry my analysis forward, therefore, I have proposed to follow my theme into the more private spaces of the palace – although, as I have shown, even in relative privacy music was still caught up in the business of self-fashioning. I have aimed to locate this continuing analysis broadly within the courtly vogue for the pastoral mode. At the centre of the next part of this study will be the *studiolo* – a private space with characteristic ideological baggage concerned with the presentation of the studious prince at leisure. I have given time to Federico's explicitly musical, and explicitly representational, *studioli* both to demonstrate the possibilities for this kind of investigation, and also because Federico was himself exemplary in the eyes of contemporary and later Italian rulers.

⁶⁶ Text and translation Kallendorf 2002, 4-5. For some useful remarks on the aspirational character of humanist expertise both for Federico and for the scholars he patronised, see Clough 1973; and Falvo 1986, 114-24.

⁶⁷ On Federico's education see Woodward 1906, 21-2, as well as Woodward's discussion of Vittorino more generally. Federico's teacher was among the exemplary men whose portraits graced the walls of his Urbino *studiolo*.

Part 2

Music and Identity in the Private Apartments: Alfonso and his Dynastic Models

Introduction

The *studiolo* takes its place at the centre of the second part of this study not least because substantial documentary and physical evidence survives concerning a *studiolo* built and decorated by Alfonso after the war. Such a space was physical and acoustical, but (crucially for our purposes) it was also social, and I have described in Chapter III the politics of access to such a space and its consequent role in self-fashioning.¹ The *studiolo* was also a site of inscription: ideological positions, aesthetic approaches and power relations were sketched out in its decorations. In this second part I take those decorations as the starting point for an analysis of private and courtly musical identities. Such an analysis will naturally seek to marshal and interpret a wide range of evidence, including the traditionally musicological (musical works and genres, performance, music theory), the more properly art-historical (paintings and other visual documents), and the more broadly cultural and contextual (treatises on a variety of subjects, poetry, encomia, manuals of behaviour, correspondence). In view of the contested physical history of the spaces involved, I will also have to devote some of my attention to discussing their creation.

A fact crucial to the understanding of this generation of Estensi is that the ‘princely package’ could pertain to both men and women. Alfonso’s sister, who became Marchesa of Mantua in 1490, was by the time of Alfonso’s succession among the most famous courtly personalities in Italy. As is well known, she was an enthusiastic musician, and her own musical identity is of profound significance to the decoration of her private apartment, in particular her celebrated *studiolo* and *grotta*. It is inevitable that her example, both as a courtly musical personality and as a builder of *studioli*, should have exerted a powerful influence over her brother. I have already noted, in Chapter III, that aspects of Alfonso’s practical musicianship progressed in correspondence with those of Isabella, and vice-versa. Chapters IV and V place the musical decorations of Isabella’s and Alfonso’s *studioli* in comparison, revealing a relationship of primary importance to Alfonso’s private musical identity. In so doing I take as a central theme the construction of a musical voice – gendered voices, powerful voices, performative voices.

¹ C.f. Henri Lefebvre’s distinction between mental, physical and social space (1991, esp. 11-2). Lefebvre argues that space not only hosts social content, but is in itself socially produced, and that the production of space is turned to the ends of the powerful with the help of the purveyors of knowledge – an interesting perspective when considering a room designed for a ruler with the help of scholarly advisors. However, although the discussion in Part II will occasionally come tantalisingly close to a Lefebvian view, it would be a mistake to rely on him in detail: his work is specifically concerned with the improvement of modern society along Marxist lines, and in any case is not without its critics (see, for example, Unwin 2000).

IV

Isabella and the Virtuous Voice

Voice and Decorum

Isabella fashioned her identity most notably around the related pursuits of humanist scholarship, poetry and music. In all three cases she left herself exposed to contemporary concerns of a social and moral nature.

Lisa Jardine has shown in detail the problems attendant upon female scholarship in the Renaissance.¹ Italian male literati were only willing to engage with their female counterparts on a cosmetic level, sidestepping a serious engagement with their philological agency to offer bland assertions of their chastity. Their learning was acceptable only if it could be distanced from the action of philology by, effectively, turning them into personifications of scholarship. Poetry was no less of a minefield. Not satisfied with simply offering a subject to poets, whose indecorous praise itself sometimes got her into trouble, Isabella nursed her own pretensions to authorship.²

Such a presumption was manifested also in her musical patronage, though (as we will later see) through a sophisticated system of veiling. She was well trained as a singer and played a variety of stringed instruments: it has been noted that she patronised only music that she was herself interested in performing.³ Several contemporary accounts praise her ability to render poetry as song to her own accompaniment on the lute or *lira da braccio*, as for instance in a letter written to her in 1502 by Bernardo Accolti (l'Unico Aretino), himself a famed improviser in a similar vein:

...Ove fiorisce el suono, el canto, la liberalità, le comedie, gli spectaculi e le tusche compositioni di quali forse non sai dar iudicio con novo miraculo in donna e di tanta alteza e di tanta inventute, quelle non solo iudicando ma perfectamente componendo e perfectamente in viola o leuto recitandole?

Where flourish music, song, liberality, comedies, spectacles and Tuscan (i.e. vernacular) compositions that you cannot judge with [judgement] new and miraculous in woman and of such height and of such invention[?]; [and] these [you can] not only judge but perfectly compose and perfectly recite to viola or lute? ⁴

¹ See, among others, Jardine 1985. Though Isabella claimed learning and was ascribed it by her contemporaries, her actual knowledge and abilities in the field were certainly not on a level with those of the women discussed by Jardine – see, for example, Kolsky 1984, 59-60.

² On Isabella as a poet, see Alessandro Luzio 1887, 51-68; and Gallico 1962, with an attempt to identify poems attributable to her. On the supposed moral dangers of famous poetic accomplishment for women of the Renaissance see, from among a large literature, Jones 1986; and Jones 1990, 11-35. For examples of male literati misjudging their praise of Isabella, or wilfully subverting it, see Jones 1981; and Regan 2005, 50-69.

³ On Isabella as a musician, see Prizer 1999. Isabella was relatively conventional in the fact, if not the extent and insistence, of her musical accomplishments: on other Italian noblewomen-musicians of the fifteenth century the fundamental text is Brown 1986, esp. 64-74; a recent effort to integrate this musical picture with more up-to-date perspectives on gender and culture can be found in Bryce 2001, esp. 1094-102.

⁴ Text and translation Prizer 1999, 32-3.

As a musician, Isabella is particularly associated with the musical idiom known as the frottola, characterised most frequently by the singing of amatory verse – sometimes bawdy, sometimes courtly-Petrarchan – to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument.⁵ In the late fifteenth century, the idiom was usually semi- or fully improvised; in the early sixteenth it was widely available in notation and tablature. Isabella's practice, begun in the 1490s, was to employ professional musicians (principally Bartolomeo Tromboncino and Marchetto Cara) who could filter the unwritten tradition into a musical language accessible to the amateur, allowing her to aspire to the immense acclaim of men such as Serafino Aquilano without tediously acquired skills of memory and spontaneity.⁶

Isabella saw performance as song as the inevitable fate of all suitable verse, and many of her literary correspondents understood and shared her view. In 1493, for example, she wrote to the aristocratic poet Niccolò da Correggio, with whom she carried on a lengthy literary exchange, asking to borrow his *lira da braccio*; she received in reply both the *lira* and a *capitolo* to sing to its accompaniment.⁷ The poet Galeotto del Carretto, another frequent literary correspondent, found himself in 1499 appropriated by the Marchesa as an agent in the acquisition of musical instruments.⁸ When Pietro Bembo sent her a substantial file of his poems in 1505, he did so in the hope that 'alcun mio verso sia recitato et cantato da Vostra Signoria' (some of my verse [might] be recited and sung by Your Ladyship).⁹ Many similar examples are familiar in the musicological literature.

Such a pastime engendered moral uncertainties at least as potent as those attracted by her scholarly and poetic interests – uncertainties that struck at the courtly woman where it most mattered: her chastity.¹⁰ Prominent social commentators contemporary with Isabella repeatedly connect music with seduction, and particularly with feminine powers of attraction. Paolo Cortese, for instance, in his 1510 *De cardinalatu*, notes that 'multi a communium sensuum natura auersi non modo eam praua quadam nature peruersitate respuunt, sed eam etiam inutilem esse opinantur. Proptereaque ea quedam sit ignauae uoluptatis inuitatrix, maximeque eius iucunditate soleat libidinum excitari malum' (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 the evil of lust).¹¹ A less proper commentator, Pietro Aretino, explained more explicitly that 'I suoni, i canti e le lettere

⁵ Still of fundamental importance on Isabella's frottola, if now somewhat out of date in its scholarly perspective, is Rubsamen 1943.

Subsequent key contributions include all the work by Nino Pirrotta and William Prizer cited in my bibliography.

⁶ On Serafino and his relationship with Isabella's musicians, see Rubsamen 1943, 12-9, based on the contemporary biography written by Serafino's friend Vincenzo Collo: *Vita del facondo poeta vulgare Seraphino Aquilano* (Bologna, 1504); and La Face Bianconi and Rossi 1990.

⁷ Prizer 1999, 22.

⁸ Prizer 1999, 23-4.

⁹ The letter, dated 1 July 1505, is given in transcription as Prizer 1999, Document 5.

¹⁰ The classic account of the decorum of female musicianship and musical performance in Renaissance Italy is that given in Kelso 1956, 52-3 and 228. The subject has been reconsidered in some detail more recently in, among other studies, Lorenzetti 1994. Renaissance attitudes in this respect had also a class dimension, but I do not intend to consider that aspect in any detail. Hopefully, from what I do have to say it will be perfectly clear that, though the noblewoman enjoyed a certain license through the inevitability of her visibility, she could nonetheless be subject to related moral proscriptions – although she could respond to them perhaps with more vigour and confidence than her bourgeois counterparts.

¹¹ Cortese, *De cardinalatu libri tres* (Castel Cortesiano, 1510), fol. 72v. Published in facsimile and translation in Pirrotta 1966, at 148 and 152 respectively. I have spelled out abbreviations and updated punctuation. As I will later discuss, and as Cortese points out at some length elsewhere in the same passage, it was also possible to take an entirely positive moral view of music. However, as Cortese also unintentionally makes clear, such a position needed justification.

che sanno le femmine [sono] le chiavi che aprono le porte della pudicizia loro' (Musical instruments, songs and letters are among the accomplishments of women that are the keys to open the door to their modesty).¹² On the same basis, music was associated with a concern for beautiful appearances – that is, with vanity. In a famous letter, Bembo cautioned his daughter Elena that playing musical instruments 'è cosa da donna vana e leggiera' (is a thing for vain and idle women).¹³

Perennial anxieties over the relationship between musical sensuality, seductive appearances and the beautiful female body found their paradigmatic expression in the myths relating to the Sirens. Henry Cornelius Agrippa makes a not unusual (if perhaps caricatured) reference in this vein in his *De vanitatis* of 1530: 'songs, surpassing the chirping of all Birds, with a certain venomous sweetness, like to Mermaids [i.e. Sirens], with voices, gestures, and lascivious sounds, do destroy and corrupt men's minds.'¹⁴ The danger of the Sirens, as configured through their literary paradigms (and as Agrippa implies), is their ability to bypass reason and seduce the baser instincts directly. The Odysseus story serves in this regard to re-establish the primacy of male reason, as the hero through his cunning neutralises their threat. The Siren's luring voice serves, in effect, as a projection of the seduction of her body (and of physical beauty in general), almost to the point that it replaces it entirely (an encounter with the Siren's body, it is presumed, will be so finally destructive that it must not even be contemplated). Isabella's vulnerability to such disquieting associations is evident in Giangiorgio Trissino's *Ritratti* of 1514, in which he describes various contemporary beauties through the form of a dialogue. He has Pietro Bembo draw Isabella's singing into a close alignment with that of the Sirens, but he is careful to displace the meat of the comparison from the singer to the listener and thus avoid the direct implication that Isabella was a Siren herself:

... la onde, se voi l'haveste una sola volta udita cantare, son certo, che vi sarebbe come a coloro, che udirono le Sirene, e la patria, e la propria casa uscita di mente...

thus, if you were to hear her sing just one time, it is certain, you would be like those who hear the Sirens, and their country and their own house go out of their minds¹⁵

As an obvious result of such moral perspectives, Italians of the sixteenth century drew an increasingly close connection between the female singing voice and the courtesan's arts of seduction. The much-discussed destabilising proximity of the courtesan to the gentlewoman in terms of dress and accomplishments certainly stretched to poetico-musical agency, and touched Isabella directly.¹⁶ She was informed by a correspondent at

¹² Letter published in 1537, given in Einstein 1948, 1:94.

¹³ Letter of 10 December 1541. The letter is widely published and discussed: see, for example, Einstein 1948, 1:94-5; Kolsky 1984, n.17; Brown 1986, 66; Prizer 1999, 26 and n.64; and Feldman 2006, at 105 and n.2.

¹⁴ Agrippa 1974, fol. 29v.

¹⁵ Giangiorgio Trissino, *I ritratti* (Rome, 1524). The dialogue is set in 1507 in Milan; the text was sent to Isabella for approval in 1514. Text in Prizer 1999, Appendix, Document 6; discussed 33-4. C.f. the destructive application of Siren tropes to the reputation of Isabella de' Medici, discussed in Cardamone 2002, at 3-5; and to that of Madalena Casulana, discussed in LaMay 2002, at 45-6 and 48.

¹⁶ On the ambiguous relationship between the dress of courtesans and that of gentlewomen see, for example, Rosenthal 2006, esp. 53-4 and 56-67, noting the far from unique concern of the government of Venice to legislate a visible distinction between them. Campbell (1997, 55) has drawn attention to this problem for women of fifteenth-century Ferrara, noting that Ferrarese sumptuary law allowed exemption from its strictures only to women of the court and to prostitutes. On the sixteenth-century courtesan's musical accomplishments, and for an assessment of musical styles and genres associated with her that places her very close to Isabella's

the Ferrarese court of the musical tools of the courtesan Tullia d'Aragona, then resident, which, encompassing poetry, lute and singing, were exactly similar to her own.¹⁷ Also at the Ferrarese court in the early sixteenth century was Dalida de'Puti, initially a musician in the employ of Lucrezia Borgia but later musician and mistress to Isabella's brother Cardinal Ippolito d'Este. On at least one occasion she performed alongside the frottolist Tromboncino (a former employee of Isabella's, who joined Lucrezia's service in 1505), and was listed directly alongside Tromboncino in Oriolo's *Monte Parnaso*, perhaps implying that she too was able to perform in the idiom that was his (and Isabella's) speciality.¹⁸

Isabella and her female attendants provoked documented censure on more than one occasion, and for reasons that we might link directly with such difficult proximities.¹⁹ For instance, in early 1502, Isabella and several of her attendants and courtiers went to Ferrara for the lengthy celebration of the marriage of Alfonso to Lucrezia Borgia. In May, after the wedding was over, Isabella was surprised and displeased to receive a letter from Rome giving a biting critique of her behaviour. Her detractors protested that:

...non era ben conza, che magnava nella festa et multe altre cose, che voleva parere pucto...

she was not well dressed, that she put on airs during the celebrations, and many other things, that she wanted to appear a boy²⁰

Isabella's position at the forefront of clothing taste suggests that her correspondent did not mean that her clothing was not fashionable, rich and impressive. Perhaps he meant instead that it was *too* fashionable, rich and impressive – that it was vain. How are we to interpret the more cryptic complaint that she 'wanted to appear a boy', unless as a reference to her tendency to presume agency in artistic and political spheres? Women of the Renaissance who undertook to broadcast their agency in realms usually reserved for men (including the musical) were frequently described in language that (either explicitly or implicitly) gendered them male, sometimes as a criticism and sometimes as a compliment.²¹ Such agency was appropriate to a man, but in a woman it raised questions.

A documented musical occurrence at the wedding might offer an example of the behaviour to which some other guests objected. During a banquet held in the course of the celebrations, Isabella allowed herself to be persuaded to perform as a musician before the assembled guests, following a performance given by her professional (male) musician Marchetto Cara. She reported the incident to her husband Francesco:

interests, see Feldman 2006, 108-18 and other essays in the same volume; also Prizer 2004, esp. 408-14. A useful summary of scholarly views on the courtesan and her music-making before Feldman and Gordon's book is offered in Keener 2005.

¹⁷ Tullia herself, in a tacit acknowledgement of the problem of her voice, omitted music altogether from her *Dialogo della infinità d'amore* of 1547, in which she attempted a moral justification of physical love. On Tullia d'Aragona, her *Dialogo* and the Ferrarese report to Isabella see Feldman 2006, 107-8 and 110-4.

¹⁸ Prizer (1985, 10-1) notes these two points, and appears to court the implication that she sang frottole, though he does not state it explicitly.

¹⁹ For further instances not discussed here, see Regan 2005, 60-2 with n.25.

²⁰ Letter of 5 May 1502, in which Mario Equicola reported to Margherita Cantelma on a critical letter sent to Isabella from Rome (no longer extant). Text and translation Prizer 1985, 6 and n.17.

²¹ See, among others, the various examples and relevant discussion scattered throughout LaMay 2002.

Dopo cena, facessimo il ballo dil capello. Finito che'l fu, per tante preghe et croci mi furono facte, fui necessitata fare li mei atti nel cantare in lo lauto.

After dinner we did the hat dance. After that was done, so many prayers and appeals were made to me, that it was necessary to do my performances in singing to the lute.²²

Whilst the circumstances as narrated by Isabella accord well with Castiglione's characteristic view that 'the courtier should turn to music as if it were merely a pastime of his and he is yielding to persuasion', they perhaps contravene his qualification that the courtier should not perform 'in the presence of ... a large crowd'.²³ Castiglione's reserved view, directed here principally at the male courtier, suffered a magnification when applied to women. Ruth Kelso describes an immense reticence among writers of Renaissance conduct books to concede that a woman can perform music at all. If she is allowed to sing and play, it is in private, preferably alone, as a counterpart to spinning and weaving in the battle against idleness, and always tempered by proper and prudent judgement of the occasion. Public performance, entered into unwillingly, should be undertaken 'in a low voice' and 'with reverence and shame', or else in the company only of other noblewomen.²⁴ In light of the moral frameworks outlined above, it is easy to imagine that some of those present would have preferred Isabella to remain steadfast in her modest refusal: Isabella made of herself a siren in both body and voice, and her performance put the civilising reason of her male auditors in jeopardy.

Making Isabella's Studiolo: A Summary

Of all the *studioli* of the Renaissance, that of Isabella d'Este is perhaps the most exhaustively studied.²⁵ Her first *studiolo* was established shortly after she became Marchesa of Mantua, in a small tower of the Castello di San Giorgio. Correspondence with her Mantuan secretary in 1491, beginning before she had even moved to Mantua, concerned the arrangement of the room and its decoration with arms and devices by the painter Luca Liombeni. Immediately beneath her *studiolo* in the Castello she prepared a second room of similar character, known as the *grotta*, which became the principal home of Isabella's large collection of antiquities.²⁶

²² The relevant portion of this letter is published in transcription and translation in Prizer 1999, 25 and n.60.

²³ '...il Cortegiano a far musica come a cosa per passar tempo, e quasi sforzato, e non in presenza di gente ignobile, né di gran moltitudine' – text Castiglione 1947, 156; translation Castiglione 1967, 120. Also later when discussing women specifically: 'quando ella viene a danzar o far musica di che sorte si sia, deve indurvisi con lassarene alquanto pregare, e con una certa timidità, che mostri quella nobile vergogna che è contraria della imprudenzia' (when she is about to dance or make music of any kind, she should first have to be coaxed a little, and should begin with a certain shyness, suggesting the dignified modesty that brazen women cannot understand) – text Castiglione 1947, 306-7; translation Castiglione 1967, 215. The same point of decorum is conveyed in infinitely more poetic terms in Pietro Bembo's *Gli asolani* (Venice, 1505) – see the passage given and discussed in Lorenzetti 1994, 253.

²⁴ Kelso 1956, 53 and 228.

²⁵ Studies that treat Isabella's *studiolo* comprehensively and in detail include Verheyen 1971; Lightbown 1986, 186-209 and 442-4; Liebenwein 1988, 80-102; Campbell 2004. The room has been studied from a musical perspective in Fenlon 1997. My summary of the physical history of the room draws on these sources.

²⁶ On the *grotta* and Isabella's antiquities see in particular Brown 1976; Brown and Lorenzoni 1978.

Whilst on a visit to Ferrara in 1495, Isabella requested a scale drawing of her *studiolo* from her Mantuan secretary, presumably to discuss revisions to the room with her natal family and their artists.²⁷ The new plan, involving marble surrounds for door and window and new painting by a certain 'Bernardino picture da Padua', was enacted in 1496. Egon Verheyen suggests that Bernardino's work was on the ceiling, because part of Isabella's plan appears to have been to prepare the walls of the *studiolo* for a sequence of large canvases. Isabella's room was reorganised once more around 1504-5, when the installation of a new ceiling necessitated certain other alterations.²⁸ At some later point, probably in the 1510s, a new project was begun to prepare a fresh suite of rooms on two sides of a courtyard garden on the ground floor of the Corte Vecchia. These rooms were completed in 1522, and the *studiolo* and *grotta* moved into two of them, now joined by a third room of similar character called the Scalcheria. The paintings were carried over from one *studiolo* to the next, and the antiquities from one *grotta* to the next, but the new rooms were outfitted with new wainscoting to waist height. In the *grotta* the wainscoting was decorated with intarsia featuring architectural scenes, musical instruments and notated music.²⁹

Andrea Mantegna, whose close association with the Gonzaga spanned three generations of Marchese, supplied the first of the *studiolo*'s famous canvases (all now in the Louvre) - the *Parnassus*, installed in 1497.³⁰ At the same time, in 1496 and 1497, Isabella made contact with Giovanni Bellini and Pietro Perugino, both of whom expressed an interest in providing a painting for the room, but negotiations with both continued unsuccessfully for several years. Meanwhile, a purchase of varnish made in June 1502 by an agent of Isabella on Mantegna's behalf has been taken to indicate that his *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* was then about finished. In the same year, Isabella took the opportunity presented by dealings with Leonardo da Vinci to ask if he might contribute a canvas to the *studiolo*, but the idea was never pursued. Towards the end of the year, after abandoning Bellini, discussions with Perugino reached a breakthrough. In November, she sent him written instructions on the subject for his proposed painting and a sketch, and remained in frequent contact until, after several delays, the *Combat of Love and Chastity* was delivered in 1505. By 1505, too, the project had grown to include perhaps Fra Bartolomeo and certainly Lorenzo Costa. Isabella negotiated with Costa in 1504 through his then employers, the Bentivoglio of Bologna, sending instructions and a drawing, as well as other details, in that year. No arrangement was concluded with Fra Bartolomeo, nor with Francesco Francia with whom Isabella also made contact. Shortly before his death in 1506 Mantegna was working on a third painting for Isabella, a *Comus*, but it was never finished. Negotiations to employ Costa as his replacement in the post of court artist began towards the end of the year, and it is conceivable that his *Coronation*, which had suffered delays since its inception in 1504, was completed around the same time. Some time after his employment began - scholarly opinion varies from 1507-1515 - Costa apparently took over the subject left unfinished by Mantegna, producing the *Comus* as it survives today. With this painting, the *studiolo* reached a state of temporary

²⁷ Liebenwein (1988, 81-3) notes that during this visit Isabella would have been able to inspect a new apartment made for her mother.

²⁸ Verheyen 1971, 13 and n.28.

²⁹ On the notated music in Isabella's intarsia, Ockeghem's puzzle-chanson *Prenez sur moi*, see among others Fallows 1992; and Fenlon 1997, 362-3 and 366-7. On the instruments depicted in Isabella's intarsie see Fenlon 1997, 362-3.

³⁰ Good summaries of the assembling of Isabella's large pictures, each to a limited extent displacing the last, can be found in Verheyen 1971; Lightbown 1986, 186-91; Christiansen 1992, 420-4; Brown 2004. The *Parnassus* was reworked in the early 1500s, probably by Lorenzo Leonbruno who decorated rooms adjacent to the *studiolo* and *grotta* in the new Corte Vecchia apartment. The changes largely involved the background landscape and the heads of Apollo and some of the Muses, and appear to have been made in the interests of bringing the painting up-to-date with new priorities in tonal finish - on this see Christiansen 1992, 421.

completion. Plans were made in 1515 for a painting by Raphael that never materialised, but the next and last additions to the scheme were the so-called *Allegories of Vice and Virtue* painted for Isabella by Correggio in about 1529.

From the correspondence it is clear that it was Isabella's regular practice to send written instructions to her artists on the subject and content of the paintings they were to produce. Sometimes she also sent a drawing, to be absolutely sure the artists understood what she wanted. Detailed evidence for the nature of the instructions and the way in which they came about is limited, but helpful. In the case of Costa's *Coronation*, Isabella wrote to a scholar at court, Paride da Ceresara, requesting that he prepare it, only when it was immediately required. Paride was also the author of the instruction sent to Perugino, which is the only one to survive, and a letter of 10 November 1504 implies that he was asked more regularly still, referring to 'vui, che ogni di haveti ad fare nove inventione' (you, who every day have to make new inventions).³¹ Unfortunately, the letters in which Isabella requested the instructions do not survive, and thus it is difficult to assess the extent to which she herself determined the content of her paintings. However, her correspondence with artists subsequent to the sending of an instruction often implies that she had a detailed understanding of their content, and was keen in effect to take ownership of them. In any case, it is obvious that Paride would have worked from an intimate acquaintance with her interests, and with her social position and its parameters. Given that Mantegna was present at court, it seems reasonable to suppose that the inventions he painted were arrived at more organically, or at least more discursively, if still with the input of Paride.³² These notices further indicate clearly that Isabella's subjects were not determined at the outset of the project as a coherent programme, but were created over the course of several years as foils to her changing priorities, even though she may always have envisioned five or six works.

It is well-established that Costa's *Comus* was based on a passage from Book 1 of the *Eikones* (Latin: *Imagines*) of the elder Philostratus.³³ In this text, written in the third century A.D., an aristocratic man of letters walks with a young friend through a gallery of pictures in a villa near Naples. As they look at each picture in turn, he explains to his companion how to read and interpret the content. It is a moot point as to whether or not the pictures ever really existed; for the Renaissance the idea that they might have done was enough to make the text immensely attractive.³⁴

A translation of the *Imagines* into Italian was made for Isabella by a Greek scholar resident in Mantua named Demetrios Moscos.³⁵ A dedicatory letter addressed to Isabella, preserved in both surviving copies of the translation, identifies the *grotta* as the text's natural habitat: 'Ecco ti mo di philostrato le Icone ... digne della sua aurea Grocta' (Here for you the *Icône* of Philostratus ... worthy of your golden Grotto).³⁶ In 1515 and 1516 Isabella wrote to Ferrara attempting to retrieve the translation, which had been lent to her brother Alfonso; at that time, she claimed, Alfonso had had it for 'several years'. From a later letter we know that the translation was commissioned for her by Mario Equicola, her tutor and a prominent humanist, who joined her court in 1508.³⁷ It therefore seems reasonable to date the translation around the time the *Comus* was finished – perhaps

³¹ Brown 2004, Document 66.

³² For a similar view see Campbell 2004, 175.

³³ On the *Comus* and its relationship to Philostratus see, most recently, Campbell 2004, 205-19, esp. 208-15.

³⁴ On Philostratos in the Renaissance see Webb 1992.

³⁵ Isabella's translation is studied in M R Fehl 1974; M R Fehl 1985; Koortbojian and Webb 1993.

³⁶ Transcription given in Koortbojian and Webb 1993, 262-3. The translation is mine.

³⁷ See Koortbojian and Webb 1993, n.1.

ca.1511, as Maria Reina Fehl suggests.³⁸ However, Isabella's encounter with Philostratus must have begun before Moscos or Equicola arrived at court. Someone, probably Paride (who could read Greek), was already employing the text on Isabella's behalf by 1506 when Mantegna was working on his *Comus*. There is no reason to assume, therefore, that the *Comus* was Philostratus' first application in the *studiolo* project.

The point is of interest because aspects of Isabella's project that certainly predate Moscos' work and even the *Comus* seem to respond directly to the challenge and the model established by Philostratus for classicising leisure. Most relevant to the project in general is a passage from the introduction to the *Imagines*, in which Philostratus sets the scene:

The occasion of these discourses of mine was as follows: It was the time of the public games at Naples, a city in Italy settled by men of the Greek race and people of culture, and therefore Greek in their enthusiasm for discussion. And as I did not wish to deliver my addresses in public, the young men kept coming to the house of my host and importuning me. I was lodging outside the walls in a suburb facing the sea, where there was a portico built on four, I think, or possibly five terraces, open to the west wind and looking out on the Tyrrhenian sea. It was resplendent with all the marbles favoured by luxury, but it was particularly splendid by reason of the panel-paintings set in the walls, paintings which I thought had been collected with real judgement, for they exhibited the skill of very many painters.³⁹

Already at the inception of her decorative project, in 1496-7, Isabella was pursuing the most famous painters of her age for mythological allegories: her dealings with Mantegna, Bellini and Perugino commence more-or-less simultaneously at that early stage.⁴⁰ A later letter (of 1502) expresses explicitly what was presumably her intention from the beginning: she desired 'havere nel camerino nostro picture ad historia de li excellenti pictori che sono al presente in Italia' (to have in [her] camerino painted inventions by the excellent painters that are at present in Italy).⁴¹ Though no subject derived from Philostratus has yet been identified in a painting made for Isabella before ca.1506, the moral-allegorical mood of some earlier works is very much in accord with Philostratus' didactic interpretative style.⁴²

Voice and Legitimacy

In a classic essay, Rose Marie San Juan argued persuasively that Isabella adopted moralising strategies in the painted decorations of her *studiolo* to counterbalance social concerns over the morality of literary ability and

³⁸ M R Fehl 1985, 123-4.

³⁹ I have used the translation in the Loeb edition of *Elder Philostratus: Imagines; Younger Philostratus: Imagines; Callistratus: Descriptions*.

⁴⁰ For a similar analysis see Brown 2004, 281-2.

⁴¹ Isabella to Francesco Malatesta, 15 September 1502. Verheyen 1971, n.14; now Campbell 2004, Appendix II, Document 34.

⁴² Philostratus is explicit about his improving aim: 'we propose to describe examples of paintings in the form of addresses which we have composed for the young, that by this means they may learn to interpret paintings and to appreciate what is esteemed in them.' Isabella evinced similar principles: San Juan offers the summary that Isabella 'was primarily concerned with depictions of mythology which explicitly encouraged a didactic interpretation' (San Juan 1991, 69).

classicism interests in women.⁴³ As San Juan describes, the most important exhibit in the *studiolo* from everyone else's point of view was Isabella herself, and it was immensely important that she live up to the demands of courtly feminine decorum even whilst challenging the limits assigned to her agency.⁴⁴ Her private spaces were frequently required to play a public role in the reception of visiting statesmen, and traps lurked in the ambiguity of decorous standards thus provoked.⁴⁵ Iain Fenlon has suggested, without doubt correctly, that Isabella's *studiolo* was a primary venue for her music-making, and it seems, in light of the moral concerns detailed above, that music should be added to San Juan's list.⁴⁶ In fact, a detailed study reveals that music was given a surprising priority: the images that Isabella and her supporters built around her as the manifestation of her identity evidence a clear concern to counteract and short-circuit the uncomfortable associations of her favoured pastime.

I give as the prime example the *Parnassus* painted for her *studiolo* (fig. 9). My reading of the painting is a little different from that offered by other scholars, although plentiful and varied interpretations are already available. Some have stressed its humour, some its edifying message, and some have sought to tie it at a perhaps improbable level of detail to classical prototypes, both literary and visual.⁴⁷ Most recently, Stephen Campbell has argued that the painting aims at a productive and multivalent intertextuality. He views the *Parnassus* as making reference to the origins of poetry, through the Hippocrene spring, through the employment of Greek rather than Roman source-material (both visual and literary), and through Plinian motifs suggestive of the fecundity of nature.⁴⁸

The 'subject' of the painting, it is usually assumed, is the story of Mars and Venus, but it is depicted in a way that seems to confound narrative, split between Vulcan's cave and a fantastical triumphal arch of rock. It is impossible in the context of this 'subject' to simply and adequately account for the much looser association of characters in the foreground – Apollo and the Muses singing and dancing to the lyre, Mercury with a syrinx, Pegasus, and the Hippocrene Spring. Homer's account of the story is frequently invoked to solve this dilemma: according to him, Mercury and Apollo were called to witness the lovers' humiliation once ensnared by Vulcan.⁴⁹ However, in the same breath Homer also specifies Poseidon's presence, and it is Poseidon who goes on the play an active role in the narrative. Other misalignments similarly militate against the Homeric model.⁵⁰

⁴³ San Juan 1991, 72-4. Something similar had been proposed briefly already in Elam 1981, 24.

⁴⁴ San Juan 1991, 71-2: 'Court women, and particularly the ruler's consort, were on public display, and had to please with physical beauty, personal charm, and intellectual skills, while simultaneously conveying all the obvious signs of a modest character and chaste body.' Compare an excerpt from a letter to Isabella, written by Equicola on behalf of Margherita Cantelmo (though it concerns the *grotta* rather than the *studiolo*): 'Non e per questo ad me se leva il desyderio de essere nella sancta grocta, nel conspecto venerando de la diva imagine di quella, la quale in terra meritamente adoro' (Not for this reason is removed my desire to be in the sacred *grotta*, to be in the venerated sight of the divine image of she whom on earth I rightly worship) – text and translation Kolsky 1989, 233.

⁴⁵ Fletcher (1981, 53) notes a visit of the Duke of Bourbon in 1509, and Kolsky (1984, 54) mentions a visit of Venetian ambassadors in 1515. Brown (2004, 283) notes several visitors whose role was to help further Isabella's decorative plans.

⁴⁶ Fenlon 1981, 88; repeated in Fenlon 1997, 363-4. Christiansen (1992, 421), rather misleadingly, takes the location of Isabella's music-making in her *studiolo* to be an established fact.

⁴⁷ See in particular Wind 1948, 9-20; Tietze-Conrat 1949; Wind 1949; Gombrich 1963; Verheyen 1971, esp. 35-41; Lehmann 1973; Jones 1981; Lightbown 1986, 194-201. Iain Fenlon (Fenlon 1997, 355-8) has offered a musical assessment of the *Parnassus* based on Lehmann's study, which otherwise has not won universal support.

⁴⁸ Campbell 2000; Campbell 2004, 117-44.

⁴⁹ For example by Wind 1948, 9-10; Gombrich 1963, 197; and Campbell 2000, 79.

⁵⁰ For example, Homer specifies a garlanded Venus, and at no point does he locate Vulcan at his forge. A more likely source for Mantegna's depiction of Mars and Venus seems to be Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

It has been noted more than once that it is with the scene of the Muses, rather than with the story of Mars and Venus, that the *Parnassus* makes its connection with dynastic and other precedents in the decoration of *studioli*.⁵¹ I suggest, therefore, that the Muses are the starting point of the painting, and that the story of Mars and Venus is in fact the subject of the Muses' song, conjured into being above them by their singing. Such an arrangement is not at all out of character for the Muses, who according to the ancient writers were known specifically to sing about the gods, and thus to inspire mortal poets to recount their mythologies. Hesiod, for example, recounts that:

From there [Helicon] they [the Muses] go forth, veiled in thick mist, and walk by night, uttering beautiful voice, singing of Zeus who bears the aegis, and the lady Hera of Argos... [etc.]

And once they taught Hesiod fine singing, as he tended his lambs below holy Helicon. ... And they told me to sing of the family of blessed ones who are for ever...⁵²

The subject of the painting is therefore, in a sense, song itself.

It might be thought that such a conceit was without visual precedent, but in fact one was close at hand, in the *Imagines* of Philostratus. The author of this work describes and interprets in turn all the paintings on display in his friend's villa, and among them we find one that is similar to the *Parnassus* both in narrative conception and in appearance. Whilst the painting clearly does not copy it exactly, it is easy to imagine that one was prominent among the inspirations for the other:

[Here we see] An Aphrodite, made of ivory: delicate maidens are hymning in delicate myrtle groves. The chorister who leads them is skilled in her art [...] The type of the goddess if that of Aphrodite goddess of Modesty, unclothed and decorous, and the material is ivory [...] However, the goddess is unwilling to seem painted, but she stands out as though one could take hold of her.

Do you wish us to pour a libation of discourse on the altar? For of frankincense and cinnamon and myrrh it has enough already, and it seems to me to give out also a fragrance as of Sappho. [...] the artistry of the painting must be praised [...] because he even makes us hear the hymn. For the maidens are singing, and the chorister frowns at one who is off the key, clapping her hands and trying earnestly to bring her into tune . . . As to their garments, they are simple and such as not to impede their movements if they should play – for instance, the close-fitting girdle, the chiton that leaves the arm free, and the way they enjoy treading with naked feet on the tender grass and drawing refreshment from the dew; and the flowered decoration of their garments, and the colours used on them – the way they harmonize the one with the other – are represented with wonderful truth [...] As to the figures of the maidens, if we were to leave the decision regarding them to Paris or any other judge, I believe he would be at a loss how to vote, so close

⁵¹ The point is noted in Christiansen 1992, 421; Fenlon 1997, 356; Campbell 2004, 129. On Apollo and the Muses as a 'definitive *studiolo* subject' see Campbell 2004, 118-20 and 126-7. Claudia Cieri Via (1988, XVIII) notes that the Ferrarese Lilio Gregorio Giraldi drew a direct connection between the *musaeum* and the place of study in his *De Musis Sintagmata* of 1511.

⁵² Quoted from the Oxford World's Classics edition, translated by M. L. West, at 3. Hesiod's *Theogony* was printed in Ferrara as early as 1472 – Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991, 3:436.

is the rivalry among them in rosy arms and flashing eyes and fair cheeks and in “honeyed voices,” to use the charming expression of Sappho.

Eros, tilting up the centre of his bow, lightly strikes the string for them and the bow-string resounds with a full harmony and asserts that it possesses all the notes of a lyre [...] What, then, is the song they are singing? For indeed something of the subject has been expressed in the painting; they are telling how Aphrodite was born from the sea through an emanation of Uranus. Upon which one of the islands she came ashore they do not yet tell, though doubtless they will name Paphos; but they are singing clearly enough of her birth, for by looking upward they indicate that she is from Heaven (Uranus), and by slightly moving their upturned hands they show that she has come from the sea, and their smile is an intimation of the sea’s calm.⁵³

He describes a group of muse-like female singers, lightly dressed ‘such as not to impede their movements’, ‘treading with naked feet on tender grass’, who occupy ‘myrtle groves’ beneath an altar with an image of Venus, naked and ivory-white, whilst singing her history, to the accompaniment of Eros playing his bow as a lyre. We only know the subject of their song because ‘something of [it] has been expressed in the painting’. Further similarities can easily be found in the descriptive detail.

With this interpretation in mind, it is easy enough to see how the painting was put to work on the behalf of Isabella-the-musician. It manifests and celebrates the power of the ultimate ancient exemplars of female artistic and cultural agency – the Muses. In poetic tributes Isabella was frequently placed among their number, a ‘tenth muse’, and such might well be the implication of the gap left by Mantegna at the back of the circle of muses – large enough to fit an invisible tenth muse, to whom the adjacent muses even hold out their hands.⁵⁴ The painting goes further, identifying the Muses as exemplary *singers*, and identifying the subject of their exemplary song as love – precisely the subject of the vernacular poetry sung so enthusiastically by Isabella. The choice of the story of Mars and Venus might appear a strange one, evidencing as it does the debauchery of the pagan gods,⁵⁵ but according to Ovid it was the best-known (and thus, in a sense, most exemplary) ancient myth: ‘the tale was long most noted in the courts of Heaven’.⁵⁶ It was also the prime gambit in an old rhetorical argument in favour of poetic license: in Boccaccio’s words, ‘if Apelles, or our own Giotto ... should represent Venus in the embrace of Mars instead of the enthroned Jove dispensing laws unto the gods, shall we therefore

⁵³ Again, I have used the Loeb *Philostratus*.

⁵⁴ A demonstration that an early sixteenth-century observer could see the absence implied by the space can be found in a painting by Baldassare Peruzzi, a close copy of Mantegna’s scene of the Muses, in which the gap is filled by Apollo (on this work, and the possibility that it too was made for a *studiola*, see Sarchi 2004). On Isabella’s adoption of the Muse as a ‘personal insignia’, and her lauding in such terms by court poets, see Verheyen 1971, 44-6; Fletcher 1981, 51; Lightbown 1986, 197-200; San Juan 1991, 71; Campbell 2004, 120 and 124-5 with n.24. Lightbown also discusses references to Isabella’s habitat as Parnassus. Of course, the comparison of a praiseworthy woman to the muses was an obvious and popular strategy: see, for instance, the correspondence of Cassandra Fedele and Angelo Politian discussed in Jardine 1985, esp. 805-6.

⁵⁵ Heraclitus, whose commentary on Homer was applied to the interpretation of the *Parnassus* by Gombrich, states the problem clearly when he refers to the love of Mars and Venus as ‘that crime with which the slanderous informers plague us – for they never stop making a song and a dance with their loud accusation that the loves of Mars and Venus are a blasphemous invention’ – translation Gombrich 1963, 197.

⁵⁶ Ovid tells the tale in *Metamorphoses* Bk. 4. He tells it also in the *Ars Amatoria* Bk. 2, when he writes similarly ‘The story’s well known through all the heavens, of Mars and Venus caught by Vulcan’s craft.’ For more on the exemplarity of the Mars and Venus myth see Campbell 2000, 78-9.

condemn these arts?⁵⁷ And if there is any doubt as to the decorum of love as a subject for song, we have only to understand that Mantegna has depicted the mother of love, Venus, as 'Aphrodite goddess of Modesty, unclothed and decorous' (as Philostratus stipulates).

I see the *Parnassus* as an assertion of the legitimacy of female musicianship tailored to precisely the interests and identity of Isabella herself. In effect it is an emblem of the singing Isabella, and it appears to have been understood in these, or at least very similar, terms by Isabella's contemporaries. Trissino, for instance, uses the idea that the *Parnassus* is literally a portrait of Isabella as the frame for the literary 'portrait' he gives of her in his *Ritratti* of 1514, describing the painting obliquely in terms that appear to confirm my interpretation:

un ritratto faremo, il quale sarà di molta varietà, e di molte figure ... Adunque tutti i beni di Castalia, e di Parnaso facciamola havere; e non una cosa sola, come Calliope, Clio, Polymnia, o l'altre sapere; ma quello di tutte le Muse insieme, appreso di Mercurio, e di Apolline esserli manifesto; e di tutte quelle cose, che i Poeti ornano in versi...

we will make a portrait, which will be of great variety, and of many figures ... In it will be all the benefits of the Castalian Spring, and of Parnassus; and not one thing only, such as Calliope, Clio, Polyhymnia, or the other wise ones; but all the Muses together, nearby to Mercury, and to Apollo made manifest; and all those things that the Poets decorate in verses⁵⁸

Offering to the Muses the patronage of her space, in their usual guise as facilitators of poetry and song, made of it, in effect, another Helicon: thus, through a process of implication, Isabella interpolated both her *studiolo* and herself into the picture.

The Muses and their song are the most obvious, but perhaps not the only strategies of legitimation implemented through the *Parnassus*. It is no coincidence that the text which I have suggested inspired the painting makes multiple references to Sappho. The ancient lyric poet, famously female and yet taken by later antique writers as the exemplary, even paradigmatic exponent of her genre, would have made a very attractive ancient exemplar for Isabella, as has recently been argued by Stephen Campbell.⁵⁹ An association is in fact indicated by Trissino in his 'portrait', immediately after the section quoted above:

...et insomma è tale, che se Hipparcha, Anete, Aria, et Hypatia; se Sappho, Corinna, Praxilla, con le altre sei lyrice donne, di che Grecia si vanta, fosseno tutte in una sola ridotte, a quella non anchora bene si potrebbe questa nostra figura assemblare...

⁵⁷ Osgood 1956, 38 – the quote is from Boccaccio's *Genalogia deorum gentilium*. Campbell (2000, 78) also connects this passage of Boccaccio with the *Parnassus*.

⁵⁸ Text Campbell 2004, 200 n.33. Campbell notes the similarity of the passage to the *Parnassus*, though he discusses it to a different end. The connection is also loosely courted in Rogers 1988, 51-2. Rogers offers an extended and illuminating discussion of Trissino's work, placing it in the context of contemporary paintings.

⁵⁹ Campbell unfolds his arguments concerning Isabella and Sappho in Campbell 2004, 199-204. His basis for the association of the two is an argument that Lorenzo Costa's *Coronation*, another painting made for Isabella's *studiolo*, depicts a coronation of Sappho, but as this identification proceeds from a wilful and loosely configured misinterpretation of the many musical aspects of the painting it is not at all convincing. On the other hand, his more general point that the painting is a *Coronation of a Woman Poet* is well taken, and contributes more generically to the argument, which is here recast in relation to Philostratus and to music (or rather song).

and in sum it is thus, that if Hipparcha, Anete, Aria and Hypatia; if Sappho, Corinna, Praxilla, with the other six woman lyric poets, of whom Greece boasts, could be reduced to one alone, with this you still could not assemble our portrait [of Isabella] well

Though little of her poetry was known at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Sappho's legacy was held in the custody of a large body of references, lauds and motifs, among which we find several also applied to Isabella.⁶⁰ An epigram identifying Sappho as the tenth Muse appears to give in words precisely the effect intended by the painting: 'Some say there are nine Muses ... but how careless, look again, ... Sappho of Lesbos is the tenth'.⁶¹ Boccaccio fleshes out Sappho's muse-like persona, claiming that she too 'sings upon the lyre / the loves of the gods'.⁶² The Sapphic phrase 'honeyed voices', adopted by Philostratus to describe the singing of his dancing maidens, was elsewhere applied to Sappho herself, who won the epithet 'sweet-voiced', a laud echoed in several descriptions of Isabella's singing voice.⁶³ Also, classical descriptions of Sappho addressing her songs to her lyre may have inspired the adoption of the same conceit in several poems written especially for Isabella to sing.⁶⁴ Perhaps, through Philostratus, we can understand the exemplary Sappho to be another of the legitimising associations invoked by the *Parnassus*, and (as Sappho was remembered as a lyric poet – that is, as a singer) another with a specifically musical relevance.

The boldness of the painting's statements, however, led to uncomfortable interpretative ambiguities. For example, Filarete had identified the facade of a brothel, not the private room of a princess, as the appropriate spot for a depiction of Venus.⁶⁵ Inevitably (and, one suspects, intentionally) the design of the painting led to an implicit association of Isabella with Venus – an association that was occasionally made explicit with revealing results. A surviving verse by Battista Fieri of 1498-9 attempts to calm a dispute with Isabella sparked by an earlier, lost, verse.⁶⁶ It seems that Fieri fell into the trap, lauding Isabella in direct association with the Venus in the *Parnassus*, and building the connection further through the association of Mars with Isabella's husband Francesco. Isabella, it seems, had rebuked him by explaining that the story was *counter-exemplary*: 'Sed tamen incautus Fabri non viderant Iras / In Marten Ultrices sollicitare manus' (carelessly he [the poet] had not seen the angry smith / Moving with vengeful hands against Mars). Jones argues that Fieri's initial interpretation of the painting was really 'wrong', but I am less certain. It seems unlikely that Fieri means it literally when he claims

⁶⁰ The Renaissance reception of Sappho is conveniently summarized in Reynolds 2000, 81-94, and is separately discussed in Campbell 2004, 199-204. See also Andreadis 1996.

⁶¹ Translated in Reynolds 2000, 70.

⁶² Boccaccio's Eclogue XII on Sappho is discussed and quoted extensively in translation in Campbell 2004, 202-3.

⁶³ For instance, those of Trissino and Bembo – see Prizer 1999, 35 and Appendix, Document 5 respectively.

⁶⁴ I have in mind Horace, *Carmina* 2.13.21-5: 'How narrowly I missed ... seeing ... Sappho complaining to her Aeolian lyre about the girls of her city'; and the sonnets written for Isabella by Niccolò da Correggio, on which see Prizer 1999, 36-8. These lines are quoted several times in Poliziano's *Enarratio* of 1481 (Poliziano 1481, 32, 45-6, 74), alongside much else from Horace.

⁶⁵ In his *Trattato di architettura* of the 1460s – Filarete 1965, 1:131.

⁶⁶ The poem here discussed is given in transcription and translation in Jones 1981, where its relevance to the *Parnassus* is explored at more length. I quote from his text and translation. The association of Isabella with Venus is further mentioned or discussed in Elam 1981, 24; Kolsky 1984, 61; San Juan 1991, 73; Campbell 2004, 124-6. A few of the texts lauding Isabella given in Prizer 1999 also mention a Venusian connection, including one discussed below. Interestingly, Fieri, like Trissino, appears to refer to the *Parnassus* as an image of Isabella: 'Ille dolet dictam Venerem te candida Elisa, / Sed fuerat Vati Iusus, Imago tua' (Fair Isabella, he is sorry to have called you Venus, but [it was] an image of you [that] had been the source of the poet's fancy).

that he did not notice Vulcan in the painting: more probably he is using a poetic mode of presentation to indicate that at first he did not understand the 'true' significance of Vulcan's presence. In fact, Fieri's poetic apology is rather playful throughout, appearing to perpetuate the Venusian connection even as he refutes it. The poet understood, perhaps, that his mistake was not primarily one of interpretation, but one of decorum in the public sphere.

Minervan Equivocations

The next paintings installed in the *studiolo*, finished in 1502 and 1505, seem to effect a retreat from – or at least a qualification of – the position established in the *Parnassus*. They signal a new strategy of poetic association, visible also in other aspects of the *studiolo* and *grotta*: now Isabella appears to place herself alongside Minerva in the struggle against the vices. No doubt they do so with difficulties such as that precipitated by Fieri and censure such as that provoked in 1502 in mind.⁶⁷

In Mantegna's *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* (fig. 10) we find the exemplary goddess and her lieutenants entering a garden at speed, throwing into retreat various dubious and grotesque characters ranging from the Bacchic to the wholly allegorical. Three of the four Virtues approach the scene from above in a cloud. An anthropomorphic tree at the left bears the inscription: AGITE, PELLITE SEDIBUS NOSTRIS / FOEDA HAEC VICIORUM MONSTRA / VIRTUTUM COELITUS AD NOS REDEUNTUM / DIVAE COMITES (Come, divine companions in Virtue who are returning to us from heaven, expel these foul monsters of Vices from our seats). At the far right, a banner attached to a heavily built stone structure demands: ET MIHI MATER VIRTUTUM SUCCURRITE DIVI (Gods, save me too, the Mother of the Virtues). The partisans of Virtue, it seems, are heading across the painting to liberate the Mother of Virtue; and in the process they are shooing away their Vice-ridden opponents, who have taken up residence in her 'seat'. Among the vices is Venus, depicted wearing the same arm-band with which she was adorned in the *Parnassus*.

In Perugino's *Combat of Love and Chastity* (fig. 11), Pallas (in accordance with the instructions sent to the artist) has 'spezzato lo strale d'oro et l'arco d'argento posto sotto li piedi' (broken [Cupid's] golden arrow and cast the silver bow underfoot).⁶⁸ Again the forces of Virtue (in the form of Minerva, Diana and the nymphs) take to the field against those of Vice (Venus, Cupid and assorted Erotes and satyrs). Again, on the face of it, we are presented with a violent disavowal of the themes courted in the *Parnassus* and evidenced in Isabella's pastimes – blind Love, that inescapably Petrarchan character, is about to be run through by Minerva herself.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ In this connection, it is interesting to note that Stephen Kolsky has suggested that Mario Equicola's treatise in defense of women, *De mulieribus*, which features a lengthy appreciation of Isabella, was composed to rescue her reputation from the inappropriate behavior of her *donzelle* at the Ferrarese festivities in 1502 (Kolsky 1991, 69-70 – the suggestion is taken up again in Regan 2005, at 58).

⁶⁸ The instruction is published, most recently, in Campbell 2004, 172-3 with n.6.

⁶⁹ As Campbell points out (2000, 80-1; 2004, 121), the contextual implausibility of this disavowal throws the sincerity of the new direction in Isabella's paintings into doubt. In fact, these two paintings do not reverse the *meaning* of the *Parnassus* so much as its *approach*: they present a 'correct', chaste interpretation on the surface whilst holding a more playful significance in reserve. For instance, Perugino's instructions make it clear that it should not yet be known who will win the battle, and that meanwhile all the background scenes should pertain not to chastity but to lust. Similarly, the other inscription visible in *Pallas*, whilst apparently perfectly straightforward ('*Otia si Tollas Periere Cupidinis Arcus*' - Throw out leisure and Cupid's arrows are vanquished), in fact turns out to come from Ovid's tongue-in-cheek *Remedia Amoris* (line 139), at a point where he is advocating military service as a way of avoiding love's torments.

The new Minervan association is also suggested by a medal made for Isabella by Gian Cristoforo Romano in 1498, and displayed in her *grotta* (fig. 12). On the obverse it shows a portrait of Isabella; on the reverse, a snake and a winged Victory bearing a palm are surmounted by Sagittarius and a sun.⁷⁰ Notwithstanding Luke Syson's objections, the combination can only indicate Minerva: Nike and the snake Erikthionius are her most characteristic companions, and Sagittarius is the sign of her father Jupiter, with whom she was very closely connected.⁷¹ The fact that Minerva is literally absent from the reverse of the medal is surely meant to imply that she should be identified with Isabella herself, whose portrait graces the other face.

Finally, the Minerva connection was given a musical aspect in a roundel on the marble door surround made for Isabella's *studiolo* by Romano some time before 1505 (and later moved into the new *studiolo* in the Corte Vecchia) (figs. 13 - 15).⁷² The Goddess is depicted in her warrior's garb but with a book at her feet. On the surround she is accompanied by three musical muses: Clio with fame's trumpet, Euterpe with flute, panpipes and a keyboard instrument, and Thalia with a lyre. Their intended associations are identified through pendant roundels: Clio is associated with a peacock, symbol of immortality; Thalia with a monkey (*simia*) dressing up like an actor; Euterpe with the sweet-singing nightingale. This last, the nightingale, is the only animal to be equipped with an inscription in Greek: 'Hail Procne'. Its counterpart, Euterpe, located directly opposite Minerva high on the doorframe, is similarly distinguished. The keyboard instrument (organ?) at her right is decorated with a stack of five mensuration signs evidently intended to recall Isabella's *impresa delle pause* (discussed below in detail), and Iain Fenlon reports that the stand to her left bears faintly the inscription 'ISAB[ELLA]'.⁷³ Thus Isabella is identified unambiguously with the Muse of music and lyric poetry (that is, of song in Isabella's vein), who in turn is identified as the privileged companion of Minerva.

Poets writing in praise of Isabella certainly employed Minervan associations in connection with Isabella's pursuit of the arts, and specifically music. Diomede Guidalotti, in a sonnet probably dating from the year of the *Parnassus*' creation, appears to sum up the range of 'poetic associations' courted by that painting whilst adding the Minervan dimension:

...natura

...

...Vener dimandò per sua nutrice

...

⁷⁰ Though the sun makes sense in conjunction with the astrological sign Sagittarius, it was also a Gonzaga device. In that capacity it had previously appeared on a medal of Ludovico Gonzaga, Francesco's grandfather – Chambers and Martineau 1981, cat. 15.

⁷¹ The Minervan connection was originally identified by Andrea Norris (1987, 133-6, esp. 135) but has since been rejected by Luke Syson (1997, 290). Pausanias (*Description of Greece*, 1.24.5) reports both the snake and Nike as important aspects of the statue of Athena in her temple on the Parthenon: 'The statue of Athena is upright, with a tunic reaching to the feet, and on her breast the head of Medousa is worked in ivory. She holds a statue of Nike (Victory) about four cubits high, and in the other hand a spear; at her feet lies a shield and near the spear is a serpent. This serpent would be Erikthionios.' Against the Roman coins adduced by Syson as evidence for his more convoluted interpretation, set a Vespasianic coin published by Mattingly (1923, II, pl.22 n.4, also 122 and lii) which is closer in both appearance and iconography and without doubt shows Minerva. See also the similar, if more conventional, medal of Minerva made for Ercole just a few years earlier (reproduced in Gundersheimer 1972, fig. 6).

⁷² On the door surround see Campbell 2004, 140-4, with good illustrations.

⁷³ Fenlon 1997, 364-5, who implausibly identifies the organ as a 'throne'. Unfortunately, the available images of the doorframe are too poor to permit a confirmation of the inscription.

Chiese a Giove prudentia, a Phebo il canto
 a Mercurio dolcezza de favella.
 Volsse di l'arti de Minerva il vanto;
 Amor gli donò l'arco e la quadrella,
 ...

nature ... asked for Venus as her [Isabella's] nurse ... Called to Jove for prudence, to Phebus for song, to Mercury for sweetness of tongue. She wanted the best of the arts of Minerva; Amor gave her the bow and arrow ...⁷⁴

A later poetic complement offers an even more pregnant synthesis of Minerva with the *Parnassus* (even a rewriting of the painting). Celio Calcagnini, in a Latin poem written shortly after 1523 in praise of an alabaster organ acquired by Isabella's son Federico, mentions her as 'Princeps Palladii magna Isabella chori' (Isabella the great princess of Athena's choir).⁷⁵ The word 'chori' implies not only singers but dancers, and thus the epithet might easily have been intended to conflate the Muses of the *Parnassus*, singing and dancing beneath Venus, with Isabella's more circumspect representations.⁷⁶

Minerva's close association with the Muses came on the good authority of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where she honours the sisters with a visit (the framing device for several stories in Book 5). Here her resonance with them is as goddess of wisdom, approving the scholarly nature of their pursuits: '...felicesque vocat pariter studioque locoque/ Mnemonidas' (she deemed the charm of that locality [Helicon] a fair surrounding for the studious days of those Mnemonian Maids).⁷⁷ Minerva's introduction to the mythic vocabulary of the *studiolo* thus served to establish the type and quality of the recreations enjoyed therein.⁷⁸ The goddess' patronage of the arts in which Isabella had a particular interest is also established by Ovid, this time in the *Fasti* Book 3, where we learn that she is not only the goddess of painting and sculpture, but also the 'dea carminis' (goddess of song).⁷⁹

In Minerva Isabella thus found the ideal character through which to deploy a moral strategy frequently used in the Renaissance to defend music. Musical expertise and ability was only available through the discipline

⁷⁴ The sonnet is ostensibly in praise of Giovanni Battista Pio 'da la Illustrissima Isabella'. As Pio served Isabella during the years 1496-7, it seems reasonable to date the poem to that period. It is given in part in Prizer 1999, 31-2, where the dating is discussed with appropriate references.

⁷⁵ Poem published in Prizer 1999, 43-4.

⁷⁶ Particularly clear, but without a specifically musical association, is Baptista Mantuanus, writing on Isabella's prized statue of Cupid and casting Isabella in the part of Elissa (Dido): 'Heic latet, atque dolos iterum meditatur Elisae: / Sed frustra conatur, habet praecordia curis / Irretita aliis: habitat sub pectore sacro / Illius ingenium faciens Tritonia Pallas, / Vestaque et aeternum custoditura pudorem / Cynthia cum Musis, ad quas intrare Cupido / Nec noctu nec luce potest, vigilatque cubatque' (Here he [Cupid] lies hidden and again plans deceit for Dido [Isabella]. But he tries in vain, for she has her heart set on other preoccupations. Wisdom-bringing Tritonian Pallas lives in her sacred breast, and Vesta and Diana, guarding eternal modesty, along with the Muses, into whom Cupid cannot enter either by day or by night, whether awake or asleep) – text and translation Campbell 2004, 100-1 and n.46.

⁷⁷ V.267-8. I have used Brookes More's edition (Boston, 1922).

⁷⁸ For further discussion of Renaissance strategies for asserting the chastity of the Muses see Campbell 2004, 126-30.

⁷⁹ The relevant passage runs: 'spurn her not ... thou who dost ply the graving tool and paint pictures in encaustic colours, and thou who dost mould the stone with deft hand. She is the goddess of a thousand works: certainly she is the goddess of song; may she be friendly to my pursuits, if I deserve it.' III.829-34. I have used James George Fraser's edition (London, 1929).

of study. Cortese provides a complete exposition of this view in order to refute the accusation that music prompts lust: 'contra autem multi ea[m] cantanq[ue] disciplinam qua[n]dam adhibendam esse volunt, que in symphonie modor[um]q[ue] cognitione versetur' (On the opposite side, however, many agree to resort to it [music] as to a certain discipline that is engaged in the knowledge of concordance and modes).⁸⁰ As the knowledge of musical concordance pertains to the soul and the divine, Cortese continues, to develop (through study) the rational faculties necessary to judge music expertly is tantamount to expertise in morality itself: 'eodemq[ue] modo dicendum est, eam morum causa esse expetendam, siquidem consuescere d[e] eo iudicare, quod simile mor[um] rationi sit, nihil aliud videri potest q[uam] consuescere de mor[um] ratione iudicare, i[n] eoq[ue] exerceri imita[n]do' (it must be said that music must be sought after for the sake of morals, inasmuch as the habit of passing judgement on what is similar to morals in its rational basis cannot be considered to be different from the habit of passing judgement on the rational basis of morals themselves, and of becoming expert in this latter judgement through imitation).⁸¹ Filippo Oriolo da Bassano's epic poem *Monte Parnaso*, written ca.1520 in evident personal cognisance of the musical environment of the North-Italian courts (including Isabella's), offers a more elaborate but exactly equivalent moral reading. His Canto XX proceeds directly from a lengthy description of musicians accompanying a dance on Parnassus to warnings against the seductive appearance of women of questionable virtue; in the following canto the poet encounters the Muses dancing, who give in song an account of the technical aspects of music theory.⁸²

This approach to the morality of music was particularly appropriate to the discussion of musical women – because they were particularly open to the kind of censure it combated – and there are multiple examples of its use. For instance, when her Renaissance biographers wanted to rescue Sappho from the damning erotic associations built around her poetry by late Roman writers, they asserted that it was only 'with diligent study' that 'she ascended the steep slopes of Parnassus'.⁸³ Similarly Johannes Tinctoris, music tutor to Beatrice d'Aragona, praised his student's musicianship on the grounds that 'she has given herself most fervently to the study of this science [i.e. music]', with the result that 'she delights ... not only by her song, but by her judgement'.⁸⁴

It is thus with Isabella's Minervan equivocation, and the moral tradition it invoked, in mind that her literati chose the terms of scholarship to describe her interest in music and the other arts. For example, Niccolò Liburnio, in dedicating to Isabella his *Selvette* of 1513, describes her as 'scientata' (learned) in the 'arti honeste' (honest arts) of 'Poesia', 'Rhitorica' and 'Musica'.⁸⁵ Equicola, too, describes her as 'scientissima' in music in his *Libro de natura de amore*.⁸⁶ Also, Bernardo Accolti, in a letter quoted above, gave Isabella's 'judgement' of poetry

⁸⁰ Facsimile and translation Pirrotta 1966, 148 and 152.

⁸¹ Facsimile and translation Pirrotta 1966, 148 and 152

⁸² See Slim 1965, with excerpts, translation and discussion (though along different lines).

⁸³ This account of Sappho, from Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, is given in transcription and translation in Reynolds 2000, at 86-7. Boccaccio's primary source was the letter of Sappho to Phaon in Ovid's *Heroides*, which certainly does not favour a scholarly reading of the poetess.

⁸⁴ Tinctoris 1967, 6-7 – in his *De Natura et Proprietate Tomorum*. This praise follows a discussion of musical judgement richly qualified by the rhetoric of 'ratio' over 'affectus' (illustrated by the erroneous judgement of King Midas).

⁸⁵ Liburnio's work is quoted at more length in transcription and translation in Prizer 1999, at 33 and n.85.

⁸⁶ The description comes in the course of a panegyric on Isabella's *grotta* contained in the autograph manuscript version of Equicola's work, given in transcription in Kolsky 1989.

and music priority over her practical abilities. To ensure decorum, her music and poetry must be associated with *ratio* (reason) and the intellect rather than *affectus* (sentiment) and the body.⁸⁷

Voice and Agency

Isabella's concern with her singing voice, its authorial force and its potentially troublesome physicality is absolutely central to her strategic self-presentation as a musician. She made it so by turning her voice into a multivalent and portable sign – her so-called *impresa delle pause* (fig. 16).⁸⁸ Luzio and Renier date the invention of this *impresa* to before 1502; Ivy Mumford, aware of further examples of its use, has argued that it may already have been in use when Isabella moved to Mantua.⁸⁹ Judging from the pride of place afforded it in the heraldic decoration of several pieces from the Este-Gonzaga service, it may have been the most important of Isabella's devices.⁹⁰

The *impresa delle pause* featured heavily in the decoration of Isabella's private rooms.⁹¹ A barrel-vaulted roof installed in her *grotta* in 1502 was covered with multiple iterations of the sign. The roof made some years later for the new *grotta* in the Corte Vecchia bore the *impresa* prominently alongside Isabella's other key devices. In the later apartment the *impresa* also appeared in a roundel, part of a brief series of devices decorating the walls of a corridor leading to the courtyard garden.

The *impresa* consists of a short stave on which appears a clef, four mensuration signs, a symmetrical pattern of rests and a repeat sign. The arrangement is visually as much as musically determined, which, given the decorative function of the device, is not altogether surprising. The stack of mensuration signs after the clef

⁸⁷ Boethius establishes this opposition influentially during his encounter with Lady Philosophy at the opening of the *Consolation of Philosophy* – see Panizza 1990, 51.

⁸⁸ For an introduction to and overview of the subject of Renaissance *imprese* see Lippincott 1990. On Isabella's *imprese* generally see Mumford 1979; and Praz 1981, 65-6. Mumford discusses the musical *impresa* at length, giving details of the various decorative uses to which it was put, as do Luzio and Renier (2005, 33-4). Interpretations have been offered in Scherliess 1975; Fallay d'Este 1976; and Genovesi 1993 – all propose either music-technical or neoplatonic views of improbable sophistication (these views are rejected also in Haar 1995, 277-81, which otherwise adds nothing to the debate). For a recent interpretation of the *impresa delle pause* that differs from mine see Campbell 2004, 76-7. Campbell discusses the theme of silence, as I will shortly, but he misses key evidence and almost completely suppresses the self-evidently musical nature of the *impresa*, finding it insufficiently 'philosophically weighty'. Views from a musicological perspective have been offered by Fenlon (1997, 361-2), whose brief explanation foregrounds the theme of balance, and recently at more length by Jaap van Benthem (2009). Benthem argues that Gian Cristoforo Romano's design for the Euterpe tondo in the door frame must have been 'instrumental in the process of the conception of the *impresa*' (573). This seems improbable, as Benthem himself says that the frame was completed by 1505, whereas Isabella's *impresa* was in use by at the latest 1502, and probably much earlier. The scenario, it appears, is in fact reversed: Romano employed the stack of mensuration signs as a reference to the already-established *impresa* (which Romano quotes incorrectly), as a symbol of Isabella designed to identify her explicitly with the muse. Benthem's interpretation of the *impresa* proceeds from an unexpected reading of the arrangement of rests: he argues that, by a rather arcane process that involves respelling the rests in terms of breves, both the Latin and Greek alphabets are to be mapped onto Isabella's sign. This represents, for Benthem, the artful combination of 'tone, time and text' for which 'Euterpe was hailed' (574); however, as the Euterpe connection apparently postdates the use of the *impresa* by a matter of years, such a reading is not altogether likely. Within this system, Benthem continues, the set of rests as represented in the finished *impresa* stands for 'n', which we read as 'Nomen', and refers to Isabella 'shining from heaven in eternity' (576) via the symbolism of the number 13 (there are thirteen rests).

⁸⁹ On the dating of the *impresa delle pause* see Luzio and Renier 2005, 33-4; and Mumford 1979, 65.

⁹⁰ On the use of Isabella's *impresa* in the Este-Gonzaga service see Mumford 1979, esp. 60-2.

⁹¹ On the use of the *impresa* in Isabella's apartments see Mumford 1979, esp. 67-8.

is present, I suspect, as much to give the beginning of the stave a visual symmetry with the repeat mark at the end as to convey any musically defined meaning.⁹² Similarly, the precise arrangement of the rests does not appear to have a music-technical significance, but serendipitously (or rather not) it forms the letter 'M' (i.e. 'Musica'). From the music-technical point of view, the notation signifies a repeated silence. As Iain Fenlon has pointed out, the clef of the *impresa* is one that may have suited Isabella's voice; whether or not such is literally the case, the silence the *impresa* dictates must be hers.⁹³ Mario Equicola (in Stephen Kolsky's words Isabella's 'most persistent pamphleteer'),⁹⁴ in eulogising Isabella and her *grotta*, explains the *impresa* as a symbol of prudence – of knowing when to sing and when to remain silent:

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 [principe deleted] con tucte le pause della musica pratica le quali ci admoniscono et quelli ad viva voce ne dicono "ad tempo taci"

I remember the very wise Biante to have said, that he often regretted not having remained silent. This the most prudent Isabella d'Este, Marchesa of Mantua, has signified in an ingenious image with all the rests of practical music, which admonish us and those of lively voice, telling them 'stay silent at the right time'⁹⁵

This interpretation is certainly in accordance with the gendered anxieties over her musical agency described earlier – Isabella's voice is morally safe because it knows when not to sing. It is equally in accord with a stock contemporary complaint addressed to musicians: Agrippa, for instance, in his *De vanitatis*, gripes that '[music] is the exercise of base men ... which have no consideration of beginning nor ending, as it is read of Archabius the trumpeter, to whom men were glad to give more to make him cease, than to make him sing.'⁹⁶ The *impresa*, then, is conciliatory. It reassures the world that prudent Isabella, though certainly a musician, will not endanger herself and her companions by using her voice inappropriately, and thus inviting opprobrium. As a prominent decorative element in Isabella's private apartment, such a message seems very apt.

⁹² The success of this visual strategy is suggested by the fact that Mumford gives her image of the *impresa* upside down – 1979, Pl. 1. It is also noted in Fallay-d'Este 1976, 84.

⁹³ Fenlon 1981, 88. By way of comparison, the song *Cantai mentre nel cor*, to be discussed later in the present chapter as one sung by Isabella, placed the Cantus line in the neighbouring clef C2 (in Antico's *Canzoni, sonetti, strambotti et frottole. Libro tertio* (Rome, 1513)).

⁹⁴ Kolsky 1984, 55.

⁹⁵ I quote from the autograph manuscript of Mario Equicola's *Libro de natura de amore* preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, Turin, cod. N.III.10, fol. 240r. The transcription is that given in Kolsky 1989, n.23. The *impresa* is ascribed the same significance again elsewhere in the same manuscript (fols. 197r-98r): 'La volta in lamnia con le pause del musico concerto che ad tempo tacere denota et le cartule delle sorte insieme colligate in candidissimo colore impie non satia li occhi.' (The laminated vault with the symmetrical musical rests that signify [that you have to] leave silent time [i.e. sometimes remain silent], and the various sheets of that sort similarly attached, are very brightly coloured though not taxing to the eyes.) – text Kolsky 1989, 235.

⁹⁶ Agrippa 1974, fol. 28v. Similarly, though more gently, Castiglione (1967, 96): 'I should like you to explain how he is to practice [music] ...; for there are many things which in themselves are commendable but which are most unseemly when practiced at the wrong time; and on the other hand, there are many things that seem inconsequential but which are greatly esteemed when performed on the appropriate occasion' (see also 118).

At the wedding of 1502, however, she attempted to make the *impresa* work rather harder. At a critical moment of the wedding celebrations, she appeared before the eyes of all wearing a 'bella camora richamata di quella invencione di tempi e pause' (beautiful camorra adorned with this invention of time signatures and rests).⁹⁷ She must have been aware that her tendency to behave 'like a boy' was likely, in such a public forum as a wedding, to throw her womanly virtue into question. She must also have been aware that contemporary moral perspectives would focus such criticism inevitably upon her body – its dangerous beauty of surface (i.e. its vanity), and ultimately its chastity. In response, I suggest, she sought with her camorra to overwrite her bodily identity in its most morally difficult aspect with the assertive representation of its decorum. In effect, by thus dissembling the bodily origins of her singing voice, by visibly silencing her body, Isabella removed its potential moral and social danger.

Isabella hoped to displace moral responsibility, and moral presentation, from her physical voice to its sign. Such a displacement is itself, in a sense, poetic, reflecting the similar and paradigmatic female identity of Petrarch's Laura, which famously relies on the apotheosis of body to image. The connection is no coincidence: Isabella built her musical identity around the Petrarchan revival, ordering a copy of the Aldus edition of the *Canzoniere* ahead of publication and befriending many contemporary poet-Petrarchans. Petrarch's language constitutes its female referent literally as an image, of marble, of ivory, of gold, achieving a circular apotheosis of being to seeming.⁹⁸ The link foregrounds a further fundamental difficulty in Isabella's strategies of self-presentation: she had ideally to merit the praise for her achievements without actually being seen to act, rather like the female literati mentioned earlier who found their actual scholarly efforts brushed aside in favour of a kind of apotheosis from scholar to scholarly sign. Bodily existence, both in itself and as a cipher for agency, not only placed a Renaissance woman's identity at risk; it was instrumentally detrimental to it.⁹⁹ However, Petrarch also offers the way out – the way to exercise power whilst dissembling it.¹⁰⁰

Isabella's agency – her ability to act – was in practice displaced to the authorship of a coterie of public men, from which distance it could safely be reflected back upon her as an aspect of her (re)presentation. She did not literally make her paintings or her medals, but (as we see in several letters) it was upon her 'ingegno' that the praise of her peers devolved.¹⁰¹ Similarly, though as a musician she performed in an improvisatory tradition, she almost certainly relied on the agency of men in her employ for the authorship of the music, the praise for which then effectively divulged upon her. She was widely acknowledged as a poet, but (unlike some

⁹⁷ Letter of Marchesa Eleanora of Crotona to Marchese Francesco of Mantua, 2 February 1502, transcribed in Luzio and Renier 2005, 34. The event is recorded by Mario Sanudo in his diary: 'vestita da una camora recamata a pause de musica' (dressed in a camorra adorned with musical rests) – Mumford 1979, 63.

⁹⁸ On the construction of the woman in Petrarch see, among others, Vickers 1982. See Cropper 1976 and 1986, for an art-historical examination of the same material. Later I will also draw on John Freccero's analysis of Petrarch, especially his comments concerning the semiotics of veiling offered in Freccero 1975, 39-40. On the relationship between Laura's absence and Renaissance verse sung by women, see Flosi 2006.

⁹⁹ C.f. the analysis of Castiglione offered in Jones 1986, 78, and the extensive discussion of the musical female body to be found in LaMay 2002. Luke Syson (1997) has recently discussed the relationship of Isabella's painted portraits to her physical appearance, analysing precisely this problem from a more tangible perspective. For a similar analysis of her relationship with writers see Regan 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Women writers of the sixteenth century certainly drew attention to the obvious implication that Laura was the author by proxy of Petrarch's poetry. See Cox 2005, esp. 585-92.

¹⁰¹ The subject of *ingegno* in general, and the relationship between the artist's and the patron's *ingegno* in particular, have recently been considered at length in Syson and Thornton 2001, 91 and 135-81. An example of the praise of Isabella's *ingegno* being prompted by an artist's work on her behalf is discussed by Syson and Thornton at 120.

contemporary noblemen of her acquaintance) no surviving verse is transmitted in her name. Her *impresa delle pause* – which again was very likely not authored by her, though Equicola credits to her its ‘ingegno’ – was a tool with which Isabella could negotiate these difficulties. In establishing her voice as the primary component in her musical identity, she achieved a compromise on the question of action. It is the veil of agency, displacing the claim to authorship from the solid authority of written composition, and from the problematic body, to the ephemeral performance and the constructed image.

However, as Stephen Campbell has argued in respect of her painted decorations, the strategies of self-definition that Isabella’s musical *impresa* enacts are double-edged: though it cannot endorse it openly, it evidences a sympathy with the sensual body.¹⁰² Though in the *impresa* Isabella’s voice is silent, the presence of the stave, clef and rests indicates unmistakably that her silence unfolds within song. Thus, whilst it hides behind Equicola’s careful moral, the device actually affirms her voice. Gioivo may intend to invoke precisely this irony when he notes in the introduction to his 1555 *Dialogo dell’imprese militari e amorose* that ‘non merita d’esser passata con silentio la Signora Isabella, Marchesana di Mantova’ (the Lady Isabella, Marchesa of Mantua, does not deserve to be passed over in silence).¹⁰³

The point is made even clearer when the *impresa* is placed within the immediate context of Isabella’s song – that is, of her poetic interests. In amatory lyric poetry from Sappho to the frottola, silence and the destruction of voice are associated paradigmatically with desperate, uncontrollable, hopeless, burning desire. Once again, the point can be illustrated by reference to a Petrarchan precedent:

Nancy Vickers has analysed Petrarch’s pointedly ‘scattered’ verse in terms of the destructive encounter of Diana and Actaeon.¹⁰⁴ Actaeon’s desire, however unintentionally it is aroused, prompts Diana to turn him into a stag, effectively removing his voice, whereupon he is literally scattered (i.e. torn apart) by his hounds. To pre-empt a similar silencing at the hands of his Laura, Petrarch dismembers her and scatters her body throughout his verse. At its most basic principles, then, Petrarch’s verse sets out specifically to safeguard his poetic voice, and his poetic identity, from the silence and destruction rendered by desire.

Vickers’ argument proceeds from an analysis of the famous canzone 23, over the course of which Petrarch’s voice suffers violence through several bodily metamorphoses: from those that suppress it (he is changed into a rock, at which point the poetic voice turns inward: ‘E dicea meco “...”’), to those that distort and constrain it (he is turned into a swan, ‘chiamando con estrania voce’, and is dismayed at his inability to sing properly), to those that embody it (his body is destroyed, ‘e così scossa voce rimasi de l’antiche some’). He is even ordered to silence by his beloved: ‘dicendo a me: “Di ciò non far parola”’.¹⁰⁵

What Petrarch called ‘l tacito focile d’Amor’ (the silent furnace of Love – canzone 185) found more straightforward expression in his canzone 20:

Vergognando talor ch’ancor si taccia,
Donna, per me vostra bellezza in rima,
ricorro al tempo ch’ i’ vi vidi prima

Ashamed sometimes that your beauty,
lady, is still silent in my verses,
I recall that time when I first saw it,

¹⁰² Campbell works with this theme throughout Campbell 2004. It particularly colours his interpretation of Mantegna’s *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*.

¹⁰³ Gioivo 1955, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Vickers 1982.

¹⁰⁵ For an analysis of canzone 23 in terms of love and silence, see Brenkman 1974, esp. 13-8; and Vickers 1982, 97-9.

tal che null'altra fia mai che mi piaccia;

...

Piú volte già per dir le labbra apersi,
poi rimase la voce in mezzo 'l petto;
ma qual sòn poria mai salir tant'alto?

...

such that nothing else could ever please me.

...

Many times my lips have opened to speak,
but my voice is stilled in my chest:
who is he who could climb so high?

...

A list of further examples might include canzone 18, 46, 105, 125, 164, 171, 176 and 205 (and my search was by no means exhaustive).

The idea turns up frequently in the poetry set by the frottolists, where its use suggests the status of a stock motif. For instance, in a poem set by Francesco di Dana and published in 1505, the author complains that 'nel tormento la mia lingua tace' (my tongue is silent in its torment). Another, set by Tromboncino, turns on a list of Petrarchan paradoxes provoked by desire, including 'tacendo parlo et ragionando taccio' (in silence I speak, and talking I am silent). And in a barzelletta set by Cara, 'Mentre io vo per questi boschi', an unhappy lover asks 'Ucelin, bel'ucelino, / come sa' tu ben cantar?' (Little bird, pretty little bird, how do you know good singing?), complaining that he, in contrast, is reduced to 'angoscioso e amaro pianto' (anguished and bitter weeping).¹⁰⁶ It is impossible that Isabella was not aware of this trope, and one can only conclude that she was willing to court the implication that her silence, far from evidencing her prudence, was provoked by the Petrarchan desire described in the verses she sang.

The various aspects of Isabella's equivocal voice are brought together conveniently in one of the very few frottole that can be identified specifically with one of Isabella's documented musical performances.¹⁰⁷ In December 1514, whilst visiting Naples, Isabella spent an evening in Pozuolo, in the nearby countryside, in the company of Francesco Aquaviva, the Marchese of Bitonto. In May of the following year, Francesco wrote to Isabella to thank her for some 'frotuli et canzoni' she had sent him in settings by Marchetto Cara, but requested one further song called 'Cantai', because 'de la quale sono affectionatissimo, maxime recordandome de quella sera de Piczolo' (of that I am very affectionate, largely in memory of that evening in Pozuolo). A further letter refers with absolute clarity to a musical performance given by Isabella on that evening. It is not much of a stretch to conclude, as William Prizer has done, that Isabella sang on that occasion a song called 'Cantai', and to connect 'Cantai' with Castiglione's sonnet 'Cantai mentre nel cor', which survives in a setting by Cara.¹⁰⁸

Cantai mentre nel cor lieto fioria
de' suavi pensier' l'alma mia spene.

Hor che la manca, e ognor crescon la pene,
conversa al lachrimar la voce mia.

I sang while my joyful heart blossomed
with the gentle thoughts of my soul's hope.

Now that it is missing, and the pain grows apace,
my voice changes to tears.

E'l cor, che ai dolci accenti aprir la via

And my heart, which to sweet words only opened the way,

¹⁰⁶ The verses set by Dana and Tromboncino are given in transcription and translation in Prizer 1991, 13-4. The verse set by Cara is discussed in Prizer 1999, 39-40.

¹⁰⁷ On Isabella's documented musical performances, including the one discussed here, see Prizer 1999, 25-30.

¹⁰⁸ Prizer 1999, 26-8. I supply his translation, slightly altered.

solea, senza speranza hormai diviene	now without hope has become
de amor toscho albergo, onde convene	The poisoned home of bitterness,
che ciò che indi deriva, amaro sia	So that all which derives from it must be bitter.
Così in fosco pensier l'alma ha'n governo	Thus my soul remains in dark thought
che col freddo timor dì e notte a canto	That has cold fear with it day and night
de far minaccia il mio dolor eterno.	To menace my endless sorrow.
Però se provo haver l'anticho canto,	If, nonetheless, I try again that old song,
tinta la voce dal dolor interno	my voice is coloured by my internal sorrow
esce in rotti sospir' e duro pianto.	[and] it emerges in broken sighs and hard tears.

Castiglione's sonnet, which in 1514 emerged from Isabella's lips as song, adopts the trope of the voice destroyed by desire as a framing conceit. It serves to locate the sensuous implication of Isabella's voice-symbol in her actual voice. At the same time, it makes clear the further implication of the *impresa* that Isabella's silence is only figurative, and in fact evidences her voice: we know that Isabella's voice is 'broken' not because she is silent – not because it is actually broken – but because she has sung it.

However, in revealing the subversive face of the voice-as-sign, the verse also reveals the conciliatory. Prizer notes that the poem is especially appropriate as the song of a gentlewoman, on account of being 'particularly delicate and courtly'. I would add that it achieves this delicacy largely by being, at least cosmetically, utterly androgynous – it is devoid of the gendered (or sexed) physical or experiential reference points that so often qualify the relationship between the lover and the object of their love in courtly poetry.¹⁰⁹ Crucially, as a result, the speaker is effectively disembodied: their physical existence is signalled only by heart, soul, voice and tears. It offers, through that subtle characteristic, an analogue of the *impresa's* moral paranoia: the physical presence of the subject position is overwritten almost entirely by its voice, which at the same time is concerned to emphasise its silence. It seems that it was only at such a remove that Isabella's musical agency could be accepted into the public domain – or at least a domain less private than that usually advocated for female music-making.

Ironically, whilst Equicola claimed that the prudence of Isabella's body lay in the suppression of its voice, it appears instead that the prudence of Isabella's voice lay in its suppression of her body. In adopting the disembodied and decorous voice as the veil, or the compromise that legitimised her agency, Isabella manipulated for herself a position of remove from which she could act without overt transgression. In effect, an identity of images was the only public arena within which she could exercise her cultural agency, and so she set out to make, as her artistic product, herself. Margaret King finds that Italian women humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are distinguished by the extent to which their engagement with their ancient source material was not merely scholarly, but personal – a means of defining and constructing an identity.¹¹⁰ She ascribes this approach to the invisible influence of Petrarch, who, as has often been commented, never

¹⁰⁹ Paula Higgins (1991, 171-2) briefly discusses the importance of the 'neutral voice' to fifteenth-century creative women. See also LaMay 2002, 57-8.

¹¹⁰ King 2005.

wrote but he wrote about himself. It seems that Isabella, though working in different cultural and social modes to the women humanists discussed by King, operated a similarly Petrarchan subjectivity, and to similar ends.

Alfonso and the Poetics of Agency: The *Studiolo*

Alfonso began work on improving his private apartment almost as soon as he succeeded to the duchy of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio in 1505. A continually evolving, but essentially unbroken, programme of building and decoration lasted almost until his death. The lion's share of the work concerned a series of structures, all of which predated Alfonso's reign in one form or another, that linked the two ducal residences, the castle and the palace. A ravelin, essentially a part of the castle, projected over the moat, and a 'Via Coperta' (covered walkway) proceeded along an arcade over the city's central piazza from the moat to the palace. It was in the Via Coperta and ravelin that Alfonso had made a new apartment, including a room now known as the 'studio' and one termed variously 'studiolo' or 'camerino'. The *studio* was decorated with marble reliefs made by Antonio Lombardo, and the *studiolo* with paintings by Bellini, Titian and Dosso Dossi. It is this second room that mostly concerns me in this chapter.

Some question exists over the use of the term 'studiolo' to refer to Alfonso's room. Liebenwein excludes it from his definition, and Shearman points out that Alfonso himself only ever calls it a 'camerino' in his correspondence concerning the room with Roman agents.¹ The word 'studio' is used in the court accounts for another room – the room decorated with marble reliefs (though this room was also sometimes called a 'camerino'). However, it seems obvious that the 'camerino' was modeled closely on Isabella's *studiolo*, which was referred to as such. We should probably understand the relationship between Alfonso's 'camerino' and 'studio' along similar lines to that between Isabella's 'studiolo' and 'grotta'.² Furthermore, Titian (who had been in the room) named it a 'studio', and Vasari, in describing its decoration, acknowledges both possibilities, calling it a 'stanzino, o vero studio' (little chamber, or rather, study) as well as a 'camerino'.³ Paul Holberton has shown very clearly that in its aesthetic and recreational vision the room fits closely with the less austere aspects of the *studiolo* tradition.⁴ I therefore think it reasonable to refer to it as a *studiolo*, and to discuss it as such in this study.⁵

I have already mentioned the frequent scenes of music-making in the paintings for the *studiolo* (see figs 1, 2, 20 and 21), and will discuss some of them in detail below, but music also features prominently in the surviving decoration of other rooms of Alfonso's new apartment. Among Lombardo's marble reliefs from the studio preserved in the Hermitage Museum and the Louvre, one features musical instruments (fig. 17), and in fact several of the figures in the set seem to be singing.⁶ A female figure in the National Gallery, a fragment of

¹ Liebenwein 1988, 2 with n.3; Shearman 1987, n.4.

² An uncertainty also attended the nomenclature of Isabella's *studiolo*, which she also sometimes referred to as a 'camerino' (Verheyen 1971, 2).

³ Letter of Jacopo Tebaldi (Alfonso's agent in Venice) to Alfonso, 23 April 1518: '[Tiziano] mi ha dicto che' si ricorda che in fazata del studio della Excellentia Vostra erano tri quadri, et che quella scrive che questo chellui farà ha ad andare in fazata' (Titian has told me that he remembers that on the long wall of the study of Your Excellency there were three compartments, and that your instruction says that this that he makes for you has to go on the long wall) – text Hope 1971, 646. Vasari-Milanesi, 6:474 (*Vita di Benvenuto Garofolo e Girolamo da Carpi*) and vol. 7 433 (*Descrizione delle Opere di Tiziano da Cador*) respectively.

⁴ Holberton 1987, 57-9.

⁵ For a summary discussion of the various terms used to indicate a study in Renaissance Italy see Thornton 1997, 18. See also Liebenwein 1988, 1.

⁶ See the excellent reproductions published in Ceriana 2004, 134-85, esp. 164-6 (some of the reliefs reproduced here were probably not for

the ceiling tondo from one of the larger rooms in the apartment, also seems to be singing (fig. 18).⁷ In light of the presence of highly-characterised courtly musicians in other ceiling tondi (such as that by Niccolò dell' Abate for the *studiolo* of Count Giulio Boiardo), one might suggest that the woman is Dalida de' Puti, mentioned in the previous chapter.⁸ Finally, one of the rhomboid paintings by Dosso surviving from the ceiling of Alfonso's bedroom shows two singing men, a woman holding a closed partbook, and another partbook lying open and more-or-less legible on a ledge (fig. 19).⁹

Making Alfonso's Studiolo: A Summary

The Via Coperta as Alfonso inherited it was built in 1471, at the beginning of his father's reign, to replace a wooden bridge allowing access between castle and palace. Judging from the cobbled path with central drainage ditch still to be found running over the tops of the arches at first floor level, initially it was open to the elements. However, several programmes of work raised the height of the walls and divided the interior into rooms at second floor level. At the beginning of Alfonso's reign, the castle, ravelin and Via Coperta did not connect up (for defensive reasons), and access was possible only by means of a drawbridge (or drawbridges). These works, which proceeded in several key campaigns in 1505, 1515 and 1518-19, replaced the drawbridge(s) with permanent bridge(s), and considerably enlarged the Via Coperta in both height and width.¹⁰

His apartment, which probably incorporated rooms in both the Via Coperta and the ravelin, seems to have followed a format not unlike those of his parents.¹¹ Alongside the *studio* and *studiolo*, one of the rooms contained a bed, and may have been his bedroom. Three larger rooms probably served for reception and entertainment. One accessed a balcony, and contemporary correspondence suggests that one was used for dining.¹² There must also have been a private chapel nearby.¹³

the studio, but for door-surrounds elsewhere in the apartment).

⁷ On this painting see Humfrey and Lucco 1998, 187-91.

⁸ On the tondo made for Niccolò dell' Abate see Bernardini 2007, 52-3.

⁹ Images in Humfrey and Lucco 1998, 158-70. To my knowledge the music has not been identified, although Adriano Cavicchi (2004, 84) notes that the text is Italian, suggesting that it is a frottola.

¹⁰ These building programmes have been studied in detail, but without conclusive results. See Hope 1971; Goodgal 1978; Hope 1987; Goodgal 1987; Brown 1987; Bentini 1998; Ballarin 2002; Borella and Ghinato 2006. A coherent assessment of previous opinion is Bayer 1998; a summary reassessment in light of new archaeological evidence is Borella 2004.

¹¹ On the apartments of Ercole I d'Este and Eleonora d'Aragona see Tuohy 1996, esp. 72-104. His deductions are summarized in Folin 2004, 98-9.

¹² The evidence is difficult to interpret confidently. On 7 April 1518 Bernardino de' Prosperi reported to Isabella d'Este that the building on the Via Coperta is progressing, 'et è a le fenestre depesi camerini, in modo che ora se mangia in Camera prima dorata' (and is at the windows of the camerini, in such a way that now we eat in the first Camera dorata) – text Hope 1971, Appendix, document IV. 'Camere dorate' was a term used previously to refer to the apartment of Ercole I in the palace, which was contiguous with the 'camerini' of the Via Coperta. However, the clear implication is that the court was not able to use the 'first Camera dorata' until building had reached an advanced stage, and it is not clear how or why the palace apartment would have been affected. A report of 26 November adds a little extra information: '...gionse in la Camera Dorata verso il Castello a mangiare' ([he] arrived in the Camera Dorata towards the Castle to eat) – text Hope 1971, Appendix, document VII. The room is identified as the one nearest the castle. As Ercole's 'camere dorate' were in the north wing of the Palace, parallel with and facing the castle, all of them were essentially equidistant from it, and such a stipulation would have been meaningless. The rooms in the Via Coperta, on the other hand, ran from palace to castle. I suggest that the newly opulent form achieved by the rooms of the Via Coperta during Alfonso's building campaign of 1518-19 caused the term to creep from one apartment to the other, or perhaps to encompass both. Thus, the meals described took place in the large

A debate has raged for several decades over the exact location in the apartment of the 'camerino' in which the paintings by famous artists were displayed. Key theories have been put forward by Charles Hope, Dana Goodgal and Beverley Louise Brown. Recently, archival and archaeological research carried out by Italian scholars has led to the publication of several 'definitive' statements on the subject, some of which are neither coherent nor even logical.¹⁴ Fortunately, the question is of little relevance here. It suffices to know that the 'camerino' was among the rooms of the Via Coperta and ravelin, that Alfonso invested a great deal of time and money in enlarging the structure without substantially changing its interior layout, and that the 'camerino' almost certainly existed in a physical form similar or identical to that which it eventually took from early on in his reign.

The decoration ordered by Alfonso for his rooms was lavish.¹⁵ Following the rebuilding of 1518, decorative marble pavements were installed, and ceilings, part gilded part painted. Payment records show that Dosso worked on the ceilings with his assistants right through the 1520s, and fragments of his work for two of the rooms survive – two segments of a tondo for the balcony room, and seven rhomboids, probably for the bedroom. A contemporary observer singles out the door decoration for particular mention: 'fra laltre cose la vederà sopra tuti le ussi depi Camerini teste antiche e moderne de scolptori' (among other things one can see above all the exits of the Camerini heads ancient and modern by sculptors).¹⁶ It may well be that these were made by Lombardo, who was probably at work for Alfonso until his death in 1516. Lombardo's principal contribution was the decoration of the *studio* in marble, begun perhaps in 1506 and installed from 1508.¹⁷

Almost all of the surviving evidence concerning paintings made for the walls of the rooms involves those installed in the *studiolo*. In 1598, in the confusion attendant upon the ejection of the Este dynasty from Ferrara by the Church, Cardinal Aldobrandini requisitioned five large canvases and Cardinal Borghese a frieze in ten parts from the room. From inventories made at the time and a little later, we can match four of the five large paintings with works still in existence today, and we have a relatively large amount of evidence about the appearance of the fifth.¹⁸ We also know a certain amount about the frieze, which was by Dosso and depicted

room at the castle end of the Via Coperta.

¹³ In summer 1517 Alfonso's nephew Federico Gonzaga visited Ferrara and was lodged in the Via Coperta apartment and the best apartment in the palace, the 'camere dorate' (golden rooms - which were contiguous with the other apartment). Details of his visit were reported to Federico's mother Isabella d'Este by Stazio Gadio. His letter of 31 May 1517 records that 'Questa matina il S.r Duca e venuto ad retrovar il S.r mio alla camera sua che ludiva missa in una capelletta a canto li camerini...' (This morning the Lord Duke came to meet my Lord in his room and they heard mass in a small chapel near the camerini) – text Goodgal 1978, n.8 (another extract from this letter appears in Hope 1971, Appendix, document I). In the context it is clear that the 'camerini' in question were those of the Via Coperta. Records concerning the construction and decoration of a 'capeleta del corte' (small chapel of the court – i.e. court chapel) in 1508 are discussed in Goodgal 1978, 164. It was apparently graced by a marble doorway made by Antonio Lombardo, and may be identical with one appearing on a much later plan (published by Goodgal as pl. 12) in the north wing of the palace. Such a location is apparently confirmed by a letter of 1518, in which Titian asks where a painting will hang on the wall of Alfonso's *studiolo*: 'verso la capella on in mezzo, overo verso il Castello' (towards the chapel, or in the middle, or towards the castle) – text Goodgal 1978, 167-8.

¹⁴ See note 1 for references.

¹⁵ Information and documentation relating to the decoration of the rooms can be found particularly in Campori 1874; Hope 1971; Goodgal 1978; Hope 1987; Shearman 1987; Ballarin 2002, III, with a comprehensive digest of documents.

¹⁶ Bernardino de' Prosepi to Isabella, 4 October 1518 – Hope 1987, 30.

¹⁷ The documents concerning this project can be found in Goodgal 1978, Appendix I, esp. Documents 17-31, discussed at 164-6. On Lombardo's marbles for Alfonso, see in particular Sheard 1993.

¹⁸ These inventories are transcribed and studied in Hope 1971, Goodgal 1978 and Hope 1987.

scenes from the *Aeneid*, and five surviving paintings have been identified as its remains.¹⁹ From a slightly later inventory we know that the *studiolo*, like some other rooms in the Via Coperta, had a painted ceiling. Payments made to Dosso for the decoration of ceilings in the Via Coperta in the 1520s make it very likely that the *studiolo* ceiling was decorated by him, but no evidence survives as to its appearance.

The four surviving large paintings are the *Feast of the Gods* by Bellini, dated 1514, and three paintings by Titian: the *Worship of Venus, Bacchus and Ariadne* and the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, all painted most probably between 1518 and 1524.²⁰ The Bellini has long been thought to be modeled on a passage from Ovid's *Fasti*; the model for Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* has been argued variously to be Catullus or one of two passages from Ovid; and the remaining two are based on extracts from Philostratus' *Imagines*. The missing painting was by Dosso, and was described by Vasari as 'una Baccanaria d'huomini' (a Bacchanal of men).²¹ Alfonso's dealings with Bellini and Titian are documented variously in the court records and in correspondence.²² From these sources we also learn of a commission to Michelangelo which may or may not relate to the *studiolo*, as well as two commissions to Raphael (the subjects of which are known) and one to Fra Bartolomeo which almost certainly did; however, as far as is known, none of these artists ever delivered a painting for the room.²³

The design of the series of large paintings has been connected by many scholars with a letter of 15 October 1511. Mario Equicola, tutor to Alfonso's sister Isabella, Marchesa of Mantua, writes to his employer from Ferrara to report that his return to Mantua has been delayed:

Al S.r. Duca piace che reste qui octo di: la causa e la pictura di una camera nella quale vanno sei fabule overo istorie. Gia le ho trovate et datele in scritto.

It pleases the Lord Duke that I stay here for eight days: the reason is the painting of a room in which there will be six fables or histories. I have already found them and given them to him in writing.²⁴

It is widely accepted that the room in question is the *studiolo*, and that the *Feast of the Gods* might have been one of the 'fables or histories' 'found' by Equicola. However, the large gap between the completion of that painting and the appearance of the next, the *Worship of Venus*, together with the sudden dominance from 1518 of subjects drawn from Philostratus, have led to a general assumption that the project stalled at the end of 1514

¹⁹ On these see most recently Christiansen 2000.

²⁰ The interpretative literature on these paintings is considerable. Key contributions include Wind 1948; Walker 1956; Panofsky 1969, 4-5 n.3, 7, 96-102, 139-44; Gould 1969; Fehl 1974; Wethey 1975, 29-41; Marek 1983; Holberton 1986; Holberton 1987; Fehl 1987; Bull and Plesters 1990; Rosand 1990; Colantuono 1991; Sheard 1993; Goffen 1997, 107-26; Ballarin 2002; Colantuono 2005; relevant entries in the catalogues Jaffé 2003; Falomir 2003; and Humfrey 2007. A good overview of the process of accumulating the pictures and their significance is Bayer 1998.

²¹ Vasari-Milanesi, 6:474. For the various other descriptions of this picture see Hope 1971, 641 n.4.

²² See in particular Camponi 1874.

²³ On Alfonso's dealings with Michelangelo, see most recently Rosenberg 2000. A summary of Alfonso's relations with Raphael can be found in Shearman 1987, in which John Shearman published documents showing for the first time that Alfonso's relationship with Raphael predated 1517. The relevant documents can now be found conveniently in Shearman 2003, as documents 1512/3; 1514/3, 10, 12, 13; 1516/14; 1517/5, 6, 9, 10, 17, 18, 23, 26, 29, 31-33; 1518/1-3, 14, 15, 19, 24, 40, 58, 66-74, 76; 1519/2, 4, 9-12, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 26, 27, 29, 32, 33, 42, 43, 45, 49, 50, 52-4, 56-9; 1520/1, 2, 7-9, 18, 25, 29, 31, 32, 34-6, 38-40, 43, 50, 55, 56; 1521/5.

²⁴ Text Shearman 1987, n.35.

and was re-begun with a new programme around 1517.²⁵ The discovery by John Shearman of documentation showing that the commission to Raphael for the *studiolo*, known from letters of 1517-20, had already been issued in 1514 suggests that this view needs revision. Also pertinent are the turbulent political circumstances of the 1510s, which interrupted not only the decorative programme of the *studiolo* but also that of the marble *studio*, and Alfonso's building projects.

With the events of 1509-13 (described earlier, in Chapter II) in mind, it is easy to follow a thread through from Equicola's visit to the completion of the *studiolo* project.²⁶ The decoration was planned in a quiet moment in the autumn of 1511 shortly before one of the bloodiest engagements of the war. Alfonso may have had it in mind when he commissioned Michelangelo to paint him a picture when on the scaffolding in the Sistine chapel, during his hopeful visit to Rome in 1512.²⁷ He probably first asked Raphael for a picture whilst he relaxed in Rome following the coronation of Leo X, and his commission to Bellini very likely dates from the same year.²⁸ In 1514 he took delivery of Bellini's picture and continued to pester Raphael, but in 1515 fighting flared again and diverted his attention elsewhere. In 1516, Titian and Fra Bartolomeo visited the court of Ferrara, and both apparently went away with commissions – Fra Bartolomeo's being specifically for the *studiolo*.²⁹ Alfonso continued to remind Raphael of his obligations, without success, in correspondence surviving from 1517 until after the artist's death in April 1520. When Fra Bartolomeo died in 1517 without completing his commission, Titian replaced him. His work evidently pleased Alfonso greatly (perhaps not least because he actually finished it), and he went on to paint two further pictures for the *studiolo*, each new commission probably following on directly from the completion of the last.

The Andrians and Philostratus' Music

It has become a commonplace of the scholarly tradition that the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig. 20) is the most 'musical' of the duke's paintings. Erwin Panofsky claimed that it is 'unified as well as dynamised by a pervasive rhythm', whilst David Rosand identifies music as its 'organising principle'.³⁰ The painting has also received attention from eminent musicologists – most particularly Edward Lowinsky, who corresponded on the subject with Panofsky.³¹ However, musicological statements on the *Andrians* have been characterised by a reluctance to

²⁵ For example, Holberton 1987, 59.

²⁶ A similar hiatus punctuated Isabella's decoration projects, relating to the capture of her husband Francesco by the Venetians in 1509 and the consequent threat to their state – see Brown 2004, 282.

²⁷ Discussed in Rosenberg 2000, 89.

²⁸ Here I agree essentially with the conclusions of Shearman 1987, 213.

²⁹ Titian may at that time have been given to do the 'bagno' (presumably something along the lines of the *Bathers* by Dosso) to which he refers in a letter to Alfonso of 19 February 1518, saying 'non mi son dimenticato' (I haven't forgotten it) – text Hope 1971, 715 n.9. Shortly afterwards he received the commission for the *Worship of Venus*, and the 'bagno' was indeed forgotten. In a letter of 14 June 1517 to Alfonso, Fra Bartolomeo says that he is sending two religious pictures, and that he will soon begin another work for Alfonso (Hope 1971, 712 n.2). As a drawing of the very unusual subject of the *Worship of Venus* survives by his hand, it is generally assumed that the painting in question was that one, and was for the *studiolo*. Archival evidence suggesting the presence of Fra Bartolomeo in Ferrara in 1516 is published in Hope 1971, 712 n.2.

³⁰ Rosand 1987, 85-6; Panofsky 1969, 20-1. The interpretative literature on this painting includes Wind 1948, 60-1, Panofsky 1969, 96-102; Wetey 1975, 37-41; Fehl 1974; Rubinstein 1986; Goffen 1997, 107-26; Pedrocco 2001, 140; Jaffé 2003, 106-7; Colantuono 2005.

³¹ Panofsky 1969, 101 n.26; Lowinsky 1982.

stray too far into the interpretative territory (and literature) of art historians, whilst art historians have limited themselves in discussion of the musical element to poetic vagueness.

The commission for the painting may have been given immediately after the completion of *Bacchus and Ariadne*, in 1523, and it was probably finished in 1524 or early 1525.³² As has long been recognised, it is based, like Isabella's *Parnassus* (as I have argued) and *Comus* (as is well established), on a section from the *Imagines* of Philostratus. The relevant ekphrasis (i.e. literary, interpretative description of an object) describes a picture showing a Bacchanalian festival on the island of Andros:

The stream of wine which flows on the island of Andros and the Andrians made drunk by the river are the subject of this picture, for the land of the Andrians made rich in wine by Bacchus breaks open and sends (the wine) to them as a river. If you think it is water it is not a large river but if you think it is made of wine then it is large and, of a truth, divine. Were you but to taste it I am sure you would think little of the Nile and the Danube and you might perhaps say that they would seem better to you if they were smaller, as long as they flowed like this one.

Such things, as I apprehend it, do the Andrians, crowned with ivy and sage, sing to their women and children. Some of them dance on the one and some on the other shore, and others recline on the ground. Perhaps this too may be part of their song, that the river Achelous brings forth reeds and the Peneus in Thessaly has delightful [groves], and Pactolus used to bear flowers, but that this river has the gift to show forth men to be mighty in council, rich, attentive to their friends, and to let them grow beautiful and six foot tall from a small size. For, once a man has drunk his fill of its stream he is equipped to gather all these qualities into one and let them enter into his soul. And perhaps they also sing that this river alone is not waded into by either cattle or horses, but was graciously given by Bacchus to men only to drink from it, and as it is drunk it flows on without ever exhausting its course.

You will have to pay attention to hear that some of them are singing these things, for their [minds] are confused by the wine. But what you may (readily) see in the picture is the river himself. He is lying on a bed made of grapes, pours out his source neat, and looks ever so committed to his desire. And about the river there grow thyrsi, that is branches wound about with tendrils of vines as they grow by the water. But if you go beyond the land with the drinking feasts taking place, there you encounter Tritons with sea-trumpets who dip up the wine with their trumpets. A part of it they drink and a part they blow into the air. Some of them are drunk and dance. Bacchus is sailing to the feast on Andros. His ship has already entered the port and he brings with him satyrs and, together with them, bacchantes and sileni, and he also brings along Laughter as well as Comus, both very cheerful gods and great experts at feasting, so that the river's harvest may be reaped in the sweetest way.³³

³² Peter Humfrey (Humfrey 2004; Humfrey 2007, 103) has recently suggested on the basis of style that the *Andrians* was painted between the *Worship of Venus* and the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, but the evidence is uncertain, and I retain the conventional view established by Gould (Gould 1969, 12).

³³ This is Maria Reina Fehl's translation, given in Appendix III of Fehl 1974, based on the translation made for Isabella and later lent to Alfonso.

Titian has rendered the text closely but not slavishly. We have, running across the foreground, a 'stream of wine' which is certainly 'not a large river'; Several of the men present possess 'crowns of ivy and sage', and two, at the back right of the main group, 'sing to their women and children', who are also in evidence; We have two people dancing and several reclining on the ground; The child pissing into the stream dramatises the assertion that 'as it is drunk it flows on without ever exhausting its course';³⁴ The river, personified, 'lies on a bed of grapes' on a hill to the right; And 'tendrils of vines' wind up the trunk of a tree that 'grows by the water'; The sleeping nude at the right foreground, who rests on an urn, is surely the nymph of the stream overcome by her charge's unexpected constituent, an identity that she might well combine with that of Comus, as Harry Murutes has argued.³⁵

However, Philostratus leaves certain gaps of logic and detail that have had to be resolved or filled in with a certain amount of ingenuity. Titian avoids placing dancers on both banks of the stream, evidently considering that the recliners (whom Philostratus mentions in the same breath as the dancers, but who are not said to be on both banks) make a more manageable substitute in fulfilling that requirement. Philostratus describes a scene involving Tritons on a different part of the island, presumably on the sea-front, which would be difficult to accommodate with a clear layout of the main activity. In response, Titian displaces some of the activities of the Tritons to a group of mythically naked men at the left of the picture, especially the 'dipping up' and drinking of wine (though the Tritons' 'sea-trumpets', which would obviously leak, have been replaced with more likely amphorae and oenochoe – appropriate ancient Greek vessels). Also, Philostratus is rather unclear on the position of Bacchus and his attendants, who seem in two sentences to progress from a distant ship through to a visible and detailed crowd (an anomaly very characteristic of ekphrasis). Titian shows a ship close by and approaching the shore, and perhaps the group of 'Triton' nudes also replaces the description of Bacchus' host, as it seems reasonable to identify the pot-bellied figure at the extreme left as Bacchus' constant companion, Silenus.

Silenus, though, is not mentioned by Philostratus, either among Bacchus' attendants or among the participants in the festival. The explanation for his presence, as well as for that of several other additions to the scene, can perhaps be found elsewhere. About half-way through the second book of the *Imagines* Philostratus offers what seems very like a reprise of the subject of the Andrians' festival, in the description of a painting showing several islands:

Canopied with ivy and bryony and grape-vines, this next island claims to be dedicated to Dionysus, but adds that Dionysus is now absent, doubtless reveling somewhere on the mainland, having entrusted to Silenus the sacred objects of the place; these objects are yonder cymbals lying upside down, and golden mixing-bowls overturned, and flutes still warm, and drums lying silent; the west wind seems to lift the fawn-skins from the ground; and there are serpents, some of which are twined about the thyrsi and others, in a drunken sleep, are at the disposal of the Bacchantes for use as girdles. Of the clusters of grapes some are ripe to bursting, some are turning dark, some are still green, and some appear to be budding, since Dionysus has cunningly fixed the seasons of the vines so that he may gather a continuous harvest. The clusters are so

³⁴ The pissing child may also be Laughter – see Murutes 1973, esp. 521. If so, it is appropriate that Equicola/Titian should signpost the fact by allowing the child to reveal humorously the reason for the stream of wine's inexhaustibility.

³⁵ Murutes 1973, 521-2.

abundant that they both hang from the rocks and are suspended over the sea, and birds of both the sea and the land fly up to pluck them; for Dionysus provides the vine for all birds alike except the owl, and this bird alone he drives away from the clusters because it gives man a prejudice against wine. For if an infant child that has never tasted wine should eat the eggs of an owl, he hates wine all his life and would refuse to drink it and would be afraid of drunken men. But you are bold enough, my boy, not to fear even the Seilenus [*sic*] that guards the island, though he is both drunken and is trying to seize a Bacchante. She, however, does not deign to look at him, but since she loves Dionysus she fashions his image in her mind and pictures him and sees him, absent though he is; for though the look of the Bacchante's eyes is wavering, yet assuredly it is not free from dreams of love.³⁶

Though clearly the description is not adopted wholesale, it would have been an obvious source to raid for extra detail, and Equicola may well have fleshed out his instruction for the 'Andrians' with some suggestions drawn from it. The presence of drunken Silenus despite the absence of Bacchus, for example, might have been found here. Also the 'golden mixing-bowls overturned' (which is featured in the foreground of the *Andrians*) and the 'flutes still warm' (likewise). The inclusion of a bird might have been prompted (Titian – or Equicola – chose a guineafowl), and the depiction of grapes at various stages of development (the grapes are no longer very distinct, but, of the bunches in the tree at the left, one appears to be 'turning dark' and the other is 'still green').³⁷ Also, perhaps, inspiration was drawn from the drunken Bacchante coveted by Silenus, whose 'eye is wavering' and who 'dreams of love', whom Titian has resolved into the recumbent nymph of the stream.

Trouble on Parnassus: Bacchus' Masculine Eloquence

The ekphrasis on the *Andrians* is framed almost entirely in terms of song. Much of the contents of Philostratus' first two paragraphs, describing the central scene and eulogising the powers of wine, are identified as the song that the *Andrians* 'sing to their women and children'. Philostratus makes out that it is through their song that the picture communicates its content (or rather, mostly, the significance of its content) to the viewer: 'You will have to pay attention to hear that some of them are singing these things, for their [minds] are confused by the wine'. In a sense, following Philostratus' conceit, the main scene and theme of Titian's painting emanate from the mouths of the two singers at back left by the tree line. The ekphrasis implies very clearly that their song has been inspired by Bacchus' wine.

³⁶ Taken from the Loeb edition of *Philostratus*.

³⁷ Colantuono notes (2005, 232-3) that Strabo (*Geography* 5.1.9) mentions the guineafowl as an inhabitant of the islands in the Po, and that Alfonso had the Boschetto stocked with the bird (235). I agree with Colantuono's general argument that elements of the painting are supposed to recall the Boschetto, but I suspect the mechanisms by which that came about were less philologically sophisticated, and less pointedly allegorical, than he makes out. Armed with the second passage of Philostratus, which mentions a bird but does not specify the species, Equicola might easily have filled the blank from his knowledge of Alfonso's zoological interests as they were actually played out on the island retreat whose environment the *studiolo* in general (I have suggested in Chapter III above) was designed to echo. If a more scholarly motive is required, one might mention that the guineafowl, known commonly as the African hen, was an appropriate bird to place in association with Bacchus, who according to some ancient sources was nursed in Libya (effectively synonymous with Africa for classicising purposes), and later journeyed in Libya and Egypt. Colantuono is therefore wrong to assert that Titian's portrayal of the Guinea fowl may be inconsistent with a portrayal of the island of *Andros*' (Colantuono 2005, 234).

The *Andrians* is the most explicit, but not the only 'song of Bacchus' to be found in Alfonso's *studiolo*. Several literary sources have been proposed for the *Bacchus and Ariadne* (fig. 21), delivered to Ferrara on or shortly before 30 January 1523, including poem 64 of Catullus' *Carmina*, the story of the two lovers as it appears in Ovid's *Fasti* book 3, and the account in book 1 of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.³⁸ Among them, the *Ars Amatoria* version, concise but richly visual, offers the most obvious parallel to Titian's picture, with which it shares so many details that one wonders if (and in fact I doubt that) there is any need to involve the other sources directly.³⁹ Here, again, my concern is not particularly with the story itself, but with the way Ovid chooses to frame it.

In the *Ars Amatoria*, a handbook on love and seduction, the story of Bacchus and Ariadne is introduced with the phrase 'Ecce, suum vatem Liber vocat' (But lo, Bacchus is summoning his bard): rather like Philostratus' ekphrasis, it is cast within the narrative as a song inspired by Bacchus (or rather, by implication, by wine).⁴⁰ Ovid uses the story to introduce advice on the deployment of wine in the seduction of another man's wife. His discussion, which immediately follows the story, picks up key motifs in the ancient discourse on wine, already in part familiar from Philostratus:

When, then, you find yourself at a feast where the wine is flowing freely, and where a woman shares the same couch with you, pray to that god whose mysteries are celebrated during the night, that the wine may not overcloud thy brain. 'Tis then thou mayest easily hold converse with thy mistress in hidden words whereof she will easily divine the meaning. A drop of wine will enable you to draw sweet emblems on the table wherein she will read the proof of the love you have for her. Fix well thine eyes on her and so confirm the message of thy love. Ofttimes, without a word being spoken, the eyes can tell a wondrous tale. When she has drunk, be thou the first to seize the cup, and where her lips have touched, there press thine own and drink. Choose thou the dainties that her fingers have lightly touched, and as thou reachest for them, let thy hand softly encounter hers. Be courteous to her husband too. Nothing could better serve your plans than to

³⁸ On *Bacchus and Ariadne* see in particular Thompson 1956; Gould 1969; Panofsky 1969, 139-44; Wethey 1975, 35-7; Lucas and Plesters 1978; Holberton 1986; Goffen 1997, 107-26.

³⁹ Scholarly opinion (with the exception of Goffen 1997, 118-20, which takes a similar line to me) has recently tended to privilege Catullus among the possible sources, following Holberton's discovery that an edition of the *Carmina* was dedicated to Alfonso in 1520 (Holberton 1986). As I am working from the hypothesis that all of the paintings made for the *studiolo* were designed by Mario Equicola in 1511, I do not hesitate to identify the edition as a reaction rather than a prompt to classical interests developed by the duke in connection with his *studiolo*. Once the necessary connection between the edition and Alfonso's painting is thus thrown into question, we are at liberty to notice that Catullus' poem relates to Titian's painting hardly at all. Unlike both the Ovidian accounts, it does not mention the moment of the story depicted, and in its wordy and circuitous progress it is littered with extremely lengthy gloss on Ariadne's lament and on the tangential subject of Theseus' adventures. Its several key visual details – especially those in the long description of Ariadne's distress, which Holberton omits from his study – are entirely absent from Titian's picture. The two are in accord only on absolutely conventional aspects of the activities of Bacchus' host, such as the playing of cymbals and tabors, the wearing of snakes, and the tearing apart of animals (Titian does not show a bullock, as Holberton claims and as Catullus requires, but a more standard fawn); references to all of these can be found, for instance, in the passage given above from Philostratus' 'Islands'. In contrast, the several descriptive cues offered by Ovid in the *Ars Amatoria* account are reproduced by Titian faithfully, logically and in surprising detail.

⁴⁰ I.525. I have used J. Lewis May's edition (London, 1929). On the musical implications of the word *vates*, translated here appropriately as 'bard', see Chapter VI of the present study.

be in his good graces.⁴¹

The passage is striking not only for its musical frame, but for the purposeful, in fact playful poverty of the moral framework with which the Bacchic song is associated. Although in this case the frame clearly does not become a part of Titian's picture, it seems improbable, given the range of alternatives, that the story's literary context did not influence the choice of source.

Given the presence of these explicit and implicit painted 'Bacchic songs' in Alfonso's *studiolo*, it is at least highly suggestive that a contemporary musical setting of an ancient text about Bacchic eloquence survives from his court. Around 1520 the composer Adrian Willaert, an employee of first Ippolito and then Alfonso, made a song out of a section of Horace's fifth epistle, a text which locates the qualities of wine mentioned by Philostratus and Ovid in the context of senatorial leisure (fig. 22).⁴² In high summer, Horace invites a friend to dinner at sunset, entices him with the promise of wine, and reminds him that the following day is a holiday. He continues, 'I shall begin the drinking and the scattering of flowers, and shall suffer you, if you will, to think me reckless'; then follow the lines set by Willaert:

quid non ebrietas dissignat? operta recludit,
 spes iubet esse ratas, ad proelia trudit inertem,
 sollicitis animis onus eximit, addocet artes.
 fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum?

What a miracle cannot the wine-cup work! It unlocks secrets, bids hopes be fulfilled, thrusts the coward into the field, takes the load from anxious hearts, teaches new arts. The flowing bowl – whom has it not made eloquent?⁴³

Willaert's song is known principally from the theoretical discourse that built up around it over the course of the sixteenth century on account of its startling musical technique.⁴⁴ Its musical trick lies in the modulation of a single part within the four-voice texture, such that the song ends with an Ebb and a D in unison. In theory, the interval is a kind of 7th and should make a discord, but in practice it would almost inevitably come out as an octave. Accordingly, music history has interpreted the song in the context of contemporary music theory, largely ignoring the probability that it was a product of Alfonso's patronage.⁴⁵ It

⁴¹ I.565-80.

⁴² On the ideologically charged relationship between Renaissance and Roman conceptions of noble leisure, see Vickers 1990. On Roman precedents for the *studiolo* in particular see Liebenwein 1988, 3-4. On Willaert's employment in Ferrara see Lockwood 1985.

⁴³ I.v.16-9. I give the text and translation found in the Loeb edition of Horace. The extensive and sometimes bad-tempered literature on this song includes Lowinsky 1959; Bent 1984, esp. 16-20; Berger 1987, 39-48; Herlinger 1989; Keyser 1992.

⁴⁴ See in particular Giovanni Spataro's correspondence, published as Blackburn et al. 1991. The exchange concerning *Quid non ebrietas* involves letters 3, 12-4, 28, 29, 53 and 60.

⁴⁵ Spataro claims in a letter of 23 May 1524 to his friend Pietro Aaron that 'Son già passati tri anni, et credo ancora che siano più de quattro, che da uno Messer Laurentio Burgomozo da Mutina, el quale era cantore de la musica secreta de Papa Leone, me fu dicto che da Messer Adriano, musico celebrimo, el quale sta con lo illustrissimo Duca de Ferrara, haveva mandato uno duo a la Beatitudine de Papa Leone, el quale duo finiva in septima' (Already three years have passed, and I believe even more than four, since one Mr Laurentio Burgomozo of Mutina, who was a singer among the private musicians of Pope Leo [X], told me that Mr Adriano [Willaert], celebrated musician, who is with the illustrious Duke of Ferrara, had sent a duo to the Beatitude of Pope Leo, the which duo finishes on a

offers a clear and concise statement of what one might call the ‘theology’ of Bacchic inspiration employed and implied in the paintings. It proceeds from a scenario closely in accord with the scenes depicted therein. It seems almost inevitable that the connection was intended, or at least noted: the song belongs in the *studiolo*.

The song’s technique contributes directly to this connection. Willaert has turned compositional technique to the ends of allegory. The modulating voice of the song, inspired by the ‘eloquence’ of wine, stumbles from hexachord to hexachord, but in the end his blundering reveals a secret of musical notation, a ‘new art’. However, paradoxically, because of the trick, the singer who is actually drunk may well fail to find his way through the song, whose difficulty in performance (according to Giovanni Spataro) defeated even the papal musicians. Thus *Quid non ebrietas* both unlocks and confounds voice, revealing the irony of Bacchic eloquence so obviously implied by the last line of its text: ‘Fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum?’ (Whom has the wine-cup not made eloquent?).

The account of Bacchic eloquence given by Philostratus, Ovid and Horace is not a wholly serious one. Philostratus has his tongue firmly in his cheek when he claims that wine ‘has the gift to show forth men to be mighty in council, rich, attentive to their friends, and to let them grow beautiful and six foot tall from a small size’. Nonetheless, their various transgressions tend towards a single end. Philostratus places his song quite specifically in the mouths of the Andrian men; Ovid’s lesson in seduction is cheerfully misogynistic; and Horace’s epistle is addressed from one male friend to another. Even the word *ἀνδρός* (andros) in Greek is the genitive of *ἄνθρωπος*, meaning ‘man’.⁴⁶ The combination is not casually but pointedly masculine: Bacchus’ eloquence is a gift to men, his song sung by a man’s voice.

Such overt masculinity seems natural in the context of Alfonso’s *studiolo* decoration, but, like Isabella’s decoration, it may also have had a specific music-ideological end in view. Castiglione, through Signor Gaspare, gave voice in his *Courtier* to the not uncommon view that ‘music ... is most certainly very suited to women ... but not to real men’: serious interest in music could be considered effeminate.⁴⁷ In context, the remark is immediately dealt a lengthy classicising riposte (rather different in character to Alfonso’s), but its unsettling implications creep unnoticed into other aspects of Castiglione’s discussion of music. Earlier in the *Courtier* he draws a direct comparison between the singing styles of Isabella’s singer Marchetto Cara and Alfonso’s singer Bidon, both of whom he may have heard under similar circumstances in Mantua. Bidon’s, voice is ‘skilful, quick, vehement and passionate, and of such melodious variety’; on the other hand, Cara’s ‘harmonies are softer’, his voice ‘serene and full of plaintive sweetness’ such that it ‘gently touches and

seventh) – Blackburn et al. 1991, letter 12. Thus the ‘duo’ (known contemporaneously in four parts) was sent to Rome ca.1519-21, and may have been composed around that time. Willaert worked from 1515 for Cardinal Ippolito d’Este, Alfonso’s brother. He went to Hungary with Ippolito in October 1517. By August 1519 he had returned, and was apparently in Ferrara without his employer until March 1520. At the Cardinal’s death in September 1520 he transferred into the service of Alfonso. As Willaert may have been effectively a free agent at court in 1519 and early 1520, his relationship with Alfonso might easily precede his formal employment; in any case, the Estense of that generation frequently shared retainers unofficially. Though the balance is not clear, it therefore seems more likely that ‘Quid’ was written for Alfonso than for Ippolito. (On Willaert’s early employment by the Estense see Lockwood 1985.)

⁴⁶ A very similar pun is used in the dedication to Boccaccio’s popular *De claris mulieribus*, whose dedicatee was Andrea Acciaiuoli: ‘...when I saw that what Nature has taken from the weaker sex God in His liberality has granted to you, instilling marvellous virtues within your breast, and that He willed you to be known by the name you bear (since in Greek *andros* means ‘men’), I felt that you should be set equal to the worthiest of men, even among the ancients’ – Boccaccio 1963, Dedication, xxxiii-xxxv.

⁴⁷ ‘Allor, il signor Gaspar, La musica penso, disse, che insieme con molte altre vanità sia alle donne conveniente sì, e forse ancor ad alcuni che hanno similitudine d’omini, ma non a quelli che veramente sono; i quali non deono con delizie effeminare gli animi, ed indurghi in tal modo a temer la morte.’ – text Castiglione 1947, 117; translation Castiglione 1967, 94.

penetrates our souls'.⁴⁸ Later, when discussing the musical interests appropriate to courtly women, he employs precisely the same comparative analysis to describe the gendering of voice: women should not 'indulge in ... robust and manly exertions' but incline to 'gentle delicacy', thus a woman's dancing should not be 'forceful and energetic' and nor should her singing employ 'those abrupt and frequent ornaments', but instead be characterised by 'sweet gentleness'.⁴⁹ Although Castiglione does not acknowledge the fact, it is perfectly clear that within this music-critical framework Cara's voice genders him female – perhaps appropriate or professionally necessary in the context of his service to Isabella: the ambiguities that Castiglione was at pains to refute were thus close at hand within Alfonso's musical field of reference.

As this analysis suggests, Alfonso's playful assertion of musical masculinity may have had a programmatic as well as a presentational element. When Henry Cornelius Agrippa wanted to satirise and condemn music and the Muses in the 1520s, it was to the musicianship of Bacchus that he turned for ammunition from antiquity:

...Music hath ever been wandering here and there for price and pence, and is the servant of bawdry which no grave, modest, honest, and valiant man ever professed: and therefore the Greeks with a common word called them the Artificers of Father Bacchus, or else (as Aristotle sayeth) *Dionisiaci technitae*, that is the artificers of the Bacchanalia, which for the most part, were always used to have lewd customs: leading for the most part, an unchaste Life: partly also in Misery, and Poverty, the which breedeth and increaseth the Vices. ... And yet for this, these Musicians do much boast ... they affirm that the Heavens themselves to sing, yet with voices never heard of any man, except perhaps they have come to the knowledge of those musicians by means of their *Enouae*, or through Drunkenness, or Dreaming.⁵⁰

I suggest that, similarly, Alfonso's Bacchic songs set out to establish a subversive alternative to the patronage of the Muses, conventionally invoked in a *studiolo* – most recently by Isabella. He set out to inscribe his room in specific response to the musical ideologies constructed by his sister. However, the duke's tone was not that of the moralist: none of his literary reference-points adopt more than the most gently taunting of tones.

A couple of visual clues in the *Andrians* suggest that Alfonso's response was more literal than one might think. This, the most explicitly musical of the duke's pictures, seems at some points to make contact with its Mantuan equivalent, the *Parnassus*. The design of the two images co-locates the Hippocrene spring and the river of wine – two rather different 'sources of eloquence'. Furthermore, the *Andrians* contains what must be a direct quote from the *Parnassus*: the chiton-wearing dancer, whose style of dress is not shared by the other

⁴⁸ '... come si comprende nella maniera del cantare di Bidon; la quale è tanto artificiosa, pronta, veemente, concitata, e di così varie melodie ... Nè men commove nel suo cantar il nostro Marchetto Cara, ma con più molle armonia; ché per una via placida e piena di flebile dolcezza intenerisce e penetra le anime' – text Castiglione 1947, 91-2; translation Castiglione 1967, 82.

⁴⁹ 'non solamente non voglio ch'ella usi questi esercizi virili così robusti ed asperi, ma voglio che quegli ancora che son convenienti a donna faccia con riguardo, e con quella molle delicatura che avemo detto convenirsele; e però nel danzar non vorrei vederla usar movimenti troppo gagliardi e sforzati, né meno nel cantar o sonar, quelle diminuzioni forti e replicate ... medesimamente gli instrumenti di musica che ella usa, secondo me, debbono esser conformi a questa intenzione. Imaginatevi come disgraziata cosa saria veder una donna sonare tamburri, piffari o trombe ... e questo perché la loro asprezza nasconde e leva quella soave mansuetudine, che tanto adorna ogni atto che faccia la donna.' – text Castiglione 1947, 306; translation Castiglione 1967, 215.

⁵⁰ Agrippa 1974, fols. 28v-29v. On Agrippa's *De vanitate* see Keefer 1988, with an assessment of previous opinion.

women in the painting, and whose appearance and movement match exactly those of Mantegna's chiton-wearing dancing Muses (figs 24 and 25).

With the dancer, the *Andrians* achieves (though more gently) the trick of satire proposed by Agrippa, and latent in the tradition of depicting the Muse Erato as a bacchante (fig. 23).⁵¹ It interpolates the supposedly exemplary and inspiring Muses into the Bacchic account of poetic inspiration, revealing and releasing the sensuality of their dance in the *Parnassus* as the evidence of their prior debt to the god of wine. One might even suggest that Alfonso thought of this woman as the tenth Muse missing from the circle in the *Parnassus*, with her help appropriating and perverting the carefully constructed musico-poetic identity of Isabella herself, though a clear and direct identification has been suppressed (the woman looks no more like Isabella than any of the others in the painting).

Such proximities between the siblings' *studioli* are supported, indeed promoted, by the circumstances under which Alfonso's paintings were made. Quite apart from the interest Alfonso may himself have taken in Isabella's rooms, his paintings were (I have argued) designed by Mario Equicola, Isabella's personal tutor and a family acquaintance of long standing. Dosso Dossi had previously found employment at the court of Mantua and may have worked there with Lorenzo Costa, who contributed two paintings to Isabella's *studiolo*.⁵² Most tellingly, according to a letter of 22 November 1519, written by the Ferrarese courtier and musician Girolamo da Sestola, Dosso and Titian travelled to Mantua together in that month and inspected Isabella's *studiolo*.⁵³ One might reasonably suppose that the artists' journey was undertaken precisely to facilitate a close visual response. It seems, too, Isabella recognised that Alfonso's *studiolo* was undertaken at least partly in discussion with her own. She kept herself very well informed on the progress of his new apartment, and visited (together with Equicola) almost as soon as it was physically finished.⁵⁴

The musical ideologies inscribed upon Alfonso's walls established a sophisticated but essentially coherent dialectic with those espoused by his sister. Like those of Isabella and Leonello, his painting offered, at least on the level of metaphor, to facilitate musico-poetic recreation in a classicising vein. The language of that facilitation reveals the parameters and preoccupations of the identity thereby construed. Alfonso's response to his sister was as gendered as his statement: for reasons of basic decorum, Isabella, as a woman, could not have chosen the subjects he chose, and that was partly the point. Perhaps here we detect an element of competition: Alfonso's interests as a performing musician were real and, within a carefully circumscribed circle, public, but their yardstick was inevitably his sister.⁵⁵ In Alfonso's counter-proposal we find critique, distancing and self-

⁵¹ A visual tradition known in Ferrara since the 1460s depicted Erato as a dancing Bacchic musician wearing a chiton, appropriating a figure common on late antique Bacchic sarcophagi. For images, see Campbell 2004, figs. 60 and 64; Syson 2002, 55-61. For brief discussion and further references see Chapter VI of the present study.

⁵² Fiorenza 2008, 13.

⁵³ Wethey 1975, 39 n.203. Clifford Brown (1986, 37) gives a similar reading of this visit.

⁵⁴ A letter of 13 May 1520 from Mario Equicola in Ferrara to Federico Gonzaga (Isabella's son) reports that 'Madama Illustrissima allogia alle Camere nove del Signor Duca' (My Illustrious Lady (i.e. Isabella) lodges in the new rooms of the Lord Duke) – text Hope 1971, Appendix, document X. She had a visit in mind at least as early as September 1518, as we learn from a letter to her from Obizzo Remo, Alfonso's secretary, of 16 of that month (Hope 1987, 30). Isabella demonstrably viewed her *studiolo* as ripe for emulation: in 1506 she wrote congratulating her husband on the similar rooms he was preparing in his new Palazzo di San Sebastiano, noting in particular that he 'ha pur imparato da la mia camera' (has learned from the example of my room) – Bourne 2001, 93.

⁵⁵ Interestingly, Celio Calcagnini, the most prominent scholar at Alfonso's court, noted in a text circulating in the 1510s that 'nulla praecleara ingenia posse ingentes profectus facere, nisi habeant antagonistem (ut Graeci dicunt) qui cum decercent' (no famous talents can enlarge themselves unless they have an antagonist, as the Greeks call it, with whom they can strive) – the text is discussed briefly in Campbell

assertion in equal measure.

Music, Landscape and Presence

Bacchus presides over Alfonso's *studiolo* as a rural deity. In the *Feast of the Gods*, a painting based on a passage from Ovid's frequently georgic-rustic *Fasti*, he appears as the companion of Faunus, Ceres, Apollo, Vertumnus and Pomona.⁵⁶ Titian's *Andrians* places the Bacchic voice in a performative relationship with the pastoral landscape and its inhabitants: paradoxically, the Andrians' festival is brought into being by their song. To uncover the musical ideologies facilitating this invocation, and to understand more fully its relation to Alfonso's own pastoral recreation, we must turn momentarily to a slightly earlier painting.

Attributed variously to Giorgione, Titian, Giorgione completed by Titian, and a follower of Titian, the *Fête Champêtre* (ca.1510) (fig. 26) has occasioned much comment and many entirely divergent interpretations.⁵⁷ At the centre are three seated figures with musical instruments: a rustic man, probably a shepherd; a nude woman with a recorder, usually called a nymph; and a man luxuriously dressed in contemporary style, with a lute.⁵⁸ Stella Newton notes that, on the basis of his dress, this man cannot be properly Venetian, suggesting that he belongs to the upper class of the Venetian mainland: I prefer to label him a courtier, which I suspect catches the intended resonances.⁵⁹ The group sits on the grass in a pleasant landscape leading back to a small wood, a body of water and some distant buildings. In the middle ground of the painting, near the wood, a shepherd stands with his flock, playing a musical instrument. At the front left a nude woman stands pouring water from a jug into a stone cistern. In all probability the cistern is a drinking fountain, fed by a natural spring which the woman, as a nymph, embodies.⁶⁰

Scholars have not exactly been uniformly just in their pronouncements on the musical aspects of the painting, although they have informed several interpretations, and it will be worth our while to clarify them briefly. Although some think of the seated figures as an ensemble, only the courtier is actually making music.⁶¹

2005, 639-40, where the relevant passage is given in text and translation as n. 25.

⁵⁶ The presence of Vertumnus and Pomona is debated, though they seem to me the obvious identifications. For a summary of the various views on their identity, along with a new proposal, see Callahan 1997, esp. 73.

⁵⁷ Jaynie Anderson (1997, 308) lists the painting as an accepted part of Giorgione's oeuvre, though she gives a detailed account of the various opinions on the subject. It matters to me only that the painting emerges from the immediate environment of Titian, which is not in doubt (on the close connection between Titian and Giorgione see, in brief, Joost-Gaugier 1999, 1-2). Key interpretations include Fehl 1957 (see below); Egan 1959 (high and low poetry via Aristotle); Wethey 1975, 3:10-5; Broun 1986 (neoplatonic); Motzkin 1990 (*The Education of Paris*); Emison 1991 (high/low, with comment on artificiality); Holberton 1993 (see below); Joost-Gaugier 1999 (Titian's homage to Giorgione); Kilpatrick 2000 (*Propertius and Horace Compete in Song*). For further bibliography see Anderson 1997, 309. Joost-Gaugier 1999, 2-5 is useful for an overview of the painting, its provenance and the scholarship based upon it.

⁵⁸ Some writers (e.g. Joost-Gaugier 1999, 5) refuse to identify the seated rustic as a shepherd on the basis of his costume, but a comparison with the similarly attired shepherds in Giorgione's slightly earlier *Adoration of the Shepherds* (National Gallery, Washington) overcomes their objection.

⁵⁹ Newton 1988, 43.

⁶⁰ Elhanan Motzkin (1990, 58) calls the cistern a 'drinking fountain' with some confidence, and I suspect he is right. I do not see any reason to suppose, with Patricia Emison (1991, 195), that the standing woman's action is suspiciously superfluous: her role as nymph of the source is natural and logical. Both Motzkin and Kilpatrick (2000, 125-6) identify the nude woman as Muses, but their assertion is basically unsubstantiated and fails to convince.

⁶¹ For example, Paul Holberton (1993, 247) writes of 'the young men ... making music'.

He is caught mid-strum, his left hand fingering a chord on the strings, his technique at least passably realistic; the seated shepherd, meanwhile, is not actually singing, and the seated nymph holds her recorder casually at some distance from her mouth.⁶² The view of some that the shepherd and nymph represent 'lower' poetry and 'lower' class, associated with the bawdy recorder, whereas the courtier represents 'higher' poetry and 'higher' class, associated with the courtly lute, is unsustainable: the second shepherd, in the background, is playing a *lira da braccio* (or some almost identical bowed instrument) – arguably more courtly still than the lute at this period.⁶³ The significance of the musical aspect of the painting, then, has not yet been altogether successfully divined.

Paul Holberton outlines an illuminating context for the *Fête Champêtre* by tracing the literary history of Arcadia.⁶⁴ He finds its origin in Theocritus' first Idyll, whose influence was felt in the Renaissance largely through the agency of a loose imitation – Virgil's Eclogue 10. Here we encounter a real Roman aristocrat, Gallus, in an amorous bind: and whilst, at the outset, it is the poet who is located in Arcadia, we quickly find that the pastoral cast is assembling also around his subject:

For him ... even pine-crowned Maenalus wept, ... The sheep, too, are standing around ... The shepherd came, too ... Menalcas came ... All ask: "Whence this love of thine?" Apollo came. "Gallus", he said, "what madness this?" ... Silvanus came ... Pan came, Arcady's god ... "Will there be no end?" he cried. ...⁶⁵

Holberton observes that Virgil's repeated 'and ... came' (*venit et*) has the quality of an incantation or summons, populating the doleful world of his real friend with the personae of paradise.⁶⁶ In response to their questioning, Gallus acknowledges directly the ambiguous relationship between his reality and that of his new company: 'O that I had been one of you, the shepherd of a flock of yours, or the dresser of your ripened grapes'.⁶⁷ At the very end of the fifteenth century, this idyllic conception of Arcadia – the dream-like aspiration of the professedly love-sick aristocrat – was reborn in Sannazaro's *Arcadia*.⁶⁸

⁶² Patricia Egan (1959, 304) claims that the man has paused in his playing, and Emmanuel Winternitz (1967, 50) that he is not playing, but I cannot understand why. I do not consider significant Joost-Gaugier's observation (1999, 7) that the lute has no strings: the whole face of the lute has either been painted very loosely or has suffered abrasion, as rose, frets and pegs are also invisible – their exclusion would not have been necessary to achieve the allegorical significance Joost-Gaugier proposes. The ghost of a rose is perhaps detectable at the centre of the sounding box, suggesting that details have been lost.

⁶³ See Egan 1959, esp. 306-12; Emison 1991, 196. A detail of the background shepherd can be found in Kilpatrick 2000, 127. Luba Freedman (1989, 160) and Kilpatrick (2000, 127) identify this man's instrument as the bagpipes, but I cannot see it as such. It is easy to see why a pastoral shepherd might have been equipped by the Italian Renaissance with a *lira da braccio*: the tendency to substitute it (or the lute) for the lyre, instrument of the shepherd Apollo, is axiomatic. Although the pipe is the standard shepherd instrument in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (Sannazaro 1966), there one also finds lyre-playing herdsmen, as at 37 and 51. For another example of a *lira da braccio*-playing shepherd emerging from Titian's immediate circle see the Giulio Campagnola drawing dated ca.1514 published in Rearick 1992, 145 (the instrument is a *lira da braccio* rather than a viol, as Rearick calls it); I know of no equivalent visual depiction of a shepherd playing bagpipes. An overview of the subject of the musical shepherd in poetry and visual art can be found in Freedman 1989, 153-68.

⁶⁴ Holberton 1993, 245-7.

⁶⁵ X.13-28. I have used the Loeb edition of *Virgil*, vol. 1, for the quotes in this section.

⁶⁶ Holberton 1993, 247.

⁶⁷ X.35-6.

⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Virgil is perhaps a more suitable reference-point for the *Fête champêtre* than Sannazaro: the shepherds of the *Arcadia* disport more properly with shepherdesses, leaving the nymphs to the satyrs; it is in Virgil that the pairing of nymphs and shepherds is normative.

From these starting points it is quite easy to follow Holberton's view of the painting. The world of the Eclogues is summoned into being by poetry through a mode of utterance that is essentially performative; and bucolic poetry is almost invariably framed as song.⁶⁹ Thus, in his formulation, 'The nymphs have been brought out by the music: their presence indicates that the young men, by making music, have brought Arcadia to life around them.'⁷⁰ Other writers would add that the arrangement is circular: the lutenist, in turn, is inspired in his music-making by the proximity of an other-worldly source of eloquence, symbolised (as conventionally) by the personified water-source.⁷¹

I have only one objection to this attractive view: Like all other writers on the painting, Holberton places the shepherd who apparently communes with the courtier in the category of 'real', distinct from the existence of the nymphs. But in the context of the Eclogues it is the courtier alone who is out of place – dressed shepherds and naked nymphs have equal claim to fully Arcadian status. I suggest that the courtier, like the bucolic poet and even like Gallus, makes his music alone in the tangible world, and summons with it not just the nymphs but the shepherds too.⁷² His sideways glance, by which he appears to engage his companion's attention, is far from unambiguous in its success, and is not dissimilar to a pose used by artists of the period to indicate that a musician is listening to his instrument – perhaps it is supposed to sit suggestively in-between the two implications.⁷³ Holberton notes that the metaphorical presence of nymphs in gardens and landscapes is standard fare in early sixteenth-century writing and, with a sideways glance to the *delizie* of the Estense, it is easy to see the *Fête Champêtre* as making manifest the gently classicising conception lying behind contemporary noble leisure. One might conveniently imagine that the man-made drinking fountain locates us in the groomed nature of a country estate – one whose buildings, perhaps, are those visible in the background.⁷⁴

In fact, the conceit of the *Fête Champêtre* finds its roots not only in a poetic innovation, but in a configuration of musical experience of several decades' standing. The ability of music to bring the human and divine realms into communion was an important aspect of fifteenth century religious experience, supporting an aesthetic vocabulary that appears at times very clearly to prefigure the situation of the *Fête Champêtre*. The idea is developed at length in music-theoretical writings. For example, Gilles Carlier, in a treatise on sacred music of ca.1470, reasoned thus: 'is it surprising if hosts of angels aid God's servants in their devout jubilation when, in the presence of the Church, Christ's beloved bride, they perform songs of praise...?'⁷⁵ His justification, familiar from antiquity, is that music 'instils heavenly love, and brings forgetfulness of earthly things, so that the mind ...

⁶⁹ As Virgil makes explicit when he has Gallus say 'Yet ye, O Arcadians, will sing this tale to your mountains; Arcadians only know how to sing' – X.31-3.

⁷⁰ Although he argues otherwise, his view is almost identical to that proposed by Philip Fehl (1957), differing only in that Fehl claimed the nymphs were literally invisible to the other characters, mere spirits of the landscape attracted by the music. Holberton's version, essentially a revision of Fehl's, has the advantage of being less literal-minded.

⁷¹ Egan (1959) refers the painting to a playing card showing 'Poesia' pouring water from a jug into a pool whilst playing the recorder.

⁷² The enigmatic presence of the water-pouring nymph at front left and the string-playing shepherd at back right is, I suspect, designed to lead us to precisely this conclusion. Both stand as echoes of their seated counterparts, locating them within the landscape: the nymph's natural bucolic role is to guard the spring whilst looking beautiful, and the shepherd's is to make music whilst herding his sheep.

⁷³ A slight or pronounced turning-in of the ear – as, for example, the turbaned musician (Aristoxenus) in Lorenzo Costa's *Coronation*.

⁷⁴ C.f. David Rosand's brief comments on the relationship between pastoral and leisure in Rosand 1992, 162.

⁷⁵ '...quid mirum si servis Dei devote iubilantibus assistant praesidia angelorum, quando in facie ecclesiae, sponsae Christi dilectissimae, laudes musicales exsolvunt, nedum inimicas propulsantes fallacias, sed et corda audientium ad luctum devotionis immutantes?' Text and translation Cullington 2001, 36 and 52. The treatise is entitled *Tractatus de duplici ritu cantus ecclesiastici in divinis officiis*, and is published in full with translation as Cullington 2001, 31-57. For an introduction to the discourse on the powers of music, of which Carlier is a part, see Hutton 1951.

seems to partake of heavenly joys' – music turns the mind towards God.⁷⁶ His expansion and discussion, detailing six 'special claims' (*praerogativas*) of music, draws the conception into even more suggestive territory:

...prima est quod est caelestium imago gaudiorum. Dulcis enim et bene composita musica typum gerit angelorum et sanctorum, qui non cessant laudare nomen Domini. ...

Quinta praerogativa musicae consonantis quod meretur adventum spiritus sancti. ...

Sexta praerogativa quod meretur associationem angelorum. ...

The first is that it is a reflection of heavenly joys. Sweet and well-constructed music conveys an image of angels and saints continuously praising the name of the Lord. ...

The fifth special claim of euphonious music is that it earns the visitation of the Holy Spirit. ...

The sixth special claim is that music earns the companionship of the angels. ...⁷⁷

Music mediates theophany, conjuring the image of heaven and even drawing divine beings into direct communion with those on earth.⁷⁸

The religious flavour is tangible still (if coloured by neoplatonism) in a sonnet by Pietro Bembo, in which we find precisely this musical vision transposed into a gently classicising pastoral very similar in conception to the *Fête Champêtre*.⁷⁹

La mia leggiadra e candida angioletta,
cantando a par de le Sirene antiche,
con altre d'onestade e pregio amiche
sedersi a l'ombra in grembo de l'erbetta
vid'io pien di spavento:
perch'esser mi pareo pur su nel cielo,
tal di dolcezza velo
avolto avea quel agli occhi miei.

My lovely and candid little angel,
singing like the antique Sirens,
with other honest and praiseworthy friends
sitting in the shade, in the womb of the meadow
I saw full of awe:
for I seemed to be up in heaven,
so sweet was the veil
that moment had placed over my eyes

In achieving its musical conjuring trick, the *Fête Champêtre* thus employs an established habit of thought from the realm of music. The effect is to make explicit the subtext of contemporary noble recreation: their world existed in parallel with a realm of metaphor, populated by an Ovidian and Virgilian-bucolic cast of

⁷⁶ '...caelestem immittit amorem, terrena facit oblivisci, ut nisi fuerit animus gravibus peccatorum catheris astrictus, gaudiis videatur interesse caelestibus...'. Text and translation Cullington 2001, 34 and 50.

⁷⁷ Text and translation Cullington 2001, 34-6 and 50-2.

⁷⁸ See also on the subject of music mediating divine presence Brock 1999-2000, 65-78; and Cavicchi 2007, 140-2.

⁷⁹ Text Bembo 1960, 518, no.18. For general comments on the interminglings of Christian and pastoral modes at the time of the *Fête Champêtre*, see D'Elia 2005, 9-26: these included Sannazaro's *De Partu virginis*, in which the shepherds adore the Christ Child with, instead of the usual prayer, a song based on Virgil's fourth eclogue.

classical personalities and types, the gap to which could be bridged most effectively, like that to the realm of the Christian God, by poetry and music (or, best of all, both as song).

The painting works for us both in suggesting the conceit lying behind music-making at Alfonso's *delizie*, and in establishing the circular grammar according to which music might mediate presence in a painting from Titian's immediate environment. It makes reference to the practice of musical recreation in the countryside with which I have already associated Duke Alfonso: we heard earlier from Agostino Mosti how Alfonso enjoyed musical entertainments at Boschetto during the summer. It is of the greatest interest that the *Andrians* and, to a lesser extent, *Bacchus and Ariadne* appear to translate this musical aesthetic into the interior space of the *studiolo*. But, in doing so, do they trap the aesthetic within the hermeneutic space of the image? Can they enfold the patron's lived experience within their theophanic performance?⁸⁰

Viewing, Performance and Identity

The most manifestly and explicitly musical element of the *Andrians* is also the most difficult to integrate into the logic of a musical picture modeled on Philostratus' ekphrasis. In the foreground, in front of the reclining women, there is a small scrap of paper bearing the title 'Canon', a C1 clef, a c-slash mensuration sign, a series of notes (some with *signa congruentiae*), and a repeat sign (figs. 27 and 28). Beneath the notes is a French text:

Qui boyt et ne reboyt, Il ne scet que boyre soit

Who drinks and doesn't drink again, He knows not what drinking is

This canon, in which the single short line of music is to be realised as a multi-voiced and relatively lengthy song, has been the subject of disagreement among scholars.⁸¹ Several possible resolutions have been proposed, some attractive, some plausible, some completely unworkable. Several key pieces of information are provided in the 'score'. The c-slash sign suggests that we are in duple meter, which accords with the distribution of the text; the three *signa congruentiae* indicate the moments at which new voices should enter, spaced at intervals of one minim (which is also consonant with the duple meter), and leading to four voices singing together; the repeat marks suggest that the melody, once sung, should be repeated; and the prominent inclusion of the word 'Canon' (literally 'rule') suggests that the song's lyric gives some crucial clue as to how to make a realisation work. In performance, the first two aspects present no serious problems if the entries arrive at the (perfectly conventional) falling fourth, but as soon as the first voice repeats, the song falls apart in a cacophony of discords.

To overcome the problem, we look to the 'rule' for a clue and understand it thus: 'Who sings once and

⁸⁰ Theophanic: of or pertaining to an encounter with the divine.

⁸¹ Musicological discussions of the canon include Smith 1953; Dart 1954; Panofsky 1969, 101 n.26 (referring to correspondence with Lowinsky); Scherliess 1972; Shinneman 1974; Bonicatti 1980; Lowinsky 1982. I largely follow the realisation proposed by Smith 1953, whose view was valuably revised and extended by Edward Lowinsky in Panofsky 1969 and Lowinsky 1982. Dart, Scherliess and Shinneman offer sharply divergent solutions, all of which are clearly wrong for one reason or another; the literature is subjected to thorough review in Lowinsky 1982, and thus I will not bother with individual refutations here. Bonicatti 1980 largely agrees with Lowinsky, in both mechanics and interpretation.

doesn't repeat, he knows not how to make the song repeat'. The phrase is in this sense partly a taunt: it confirms us in our belief that something must change on the repeat, but is extremely cagey about what that thing should be – something to do with knowing 'what drinking is'. Trial and error reveals that the correct solution is for each singer individually to rise a single scale degree upon their repeat, leading to an infinitely repeatable and (largely) contrapuntally correct four-part song; but even armed with this knowledge, the link is not clear. Lowinsky, who first pointed out that there must be a connection between the 'rule' and the resolution, suggested that drinking was thought of as 'getting high', but his arguments are not compelling. I would like to offer a new theory. Perhaps the lyric of this song, like the Philostratus and the Horace, is a gently ironic eulogy of the inspiration to eloquence found in wine: It is through this 'rule' – that is, this allegory on wine (ie through Bacchus) – that the singers are supposed to find the correct resolution of the canon – to find their voice; but in accepting the eloquence of wine they reveal themselves as foolish, because, rising by step, they will eventually overreach their range and find themselves hoarse – they will lose their voice. The knowledge of 'what drinking is' is thus a knowledge of the (light-hearted) Bacchic theology of inspiration that I identified in both Philostratus' and Titian's *Andrians* earlier in this chapter. It is the knowledge that wine inspires men to foolish eloquence. In effect, then, *Qui boyt* is a loose reworking of *Quid non ebrietas*, collapsed to a single line so as to fit into the space of the painting without sacrificing legibility.

Qui boit et ne re-boit Il ne sait que boi-re soit. Qui boit et
 Qui boit et ne re-boit Il ne sait que boi-re soit. Qui boit et ne re-boit et
 Qui boit et ne re-boit Il ne sait que boi-re soit Qui boit et ne et
 Qui boit et ne re-boit Il ne sait que boi-re soit. Qui et

Smith's realisation of the canon in the *Andrians*.

Certain art historians, principally Philip Fehl, would dearly like to believe that Titian composed *Qui boyt* himself.⁸² I am aware of suggestions that Titian was an accomplished performer, but that is a very different thing to being a composer; he would certainly have lacked the kind of contrapuntal skill necessary to weave

⁸² Fehl 1987, 124.

such complex ends from such simple means.⁸³ Musicologists have argued since the 1950s that the canon, like *Quid non ebrietas*, was written by Willaert. It seems that Willaert built his early fame in Italy through an association with the composition of canons, which (to the considerable advantage of his reputation) he probably learned from musicians of the two previous generations at the royal courts of France.⁸⁴ He has been linked with some sort of editorial role in an unusual print containing only canons, published in Venice in 1520, in which he is the most substantially represented composer.⁸⁵ A canon is among his works appearing in what is almost the earliest surviving source for his music, the manuscript Florence 666 of 1518, known as the Medici Codex. Also, his setting ca.1520 of the Horatian text in praise of wine mentioned earlier in this chapter takes the form of, if not exactly a canon, at least a similar musical puzzle, for which it earned proverbial status in Italian musical circles. As far as it is possible to tell, he was certainly the person on the spot best qualified to produce *Qui boyt*.

A crucial role for the canon can be unearthed by applying a suggestion made by both Smith and Lowinsky: that the canon works just as well in performance if two of the four voices read it upside-down.⁸⁶ In fact (my own observation), the canon can be performed with any combination of upside-down and normally read voices (i.e. 4+0, 3+1, 2+2, 1+3, 0+4). The music is presented in the painting as if it has been involved in the entertainments of the reclining women, and is thus upside-down to the viewer. Lowinsky tried to identify two characters in the painting who might have been sitting opposite the ladies to read the music upside-down – he attempted to keep the music confined within the space of the painting. My proposition is that *we*, the viewers, are the remaining musicians; we read the song upside-down, as it appears to us, whilst the Andrians read it the right way up. The resulting (metaphorical) performance might then involve any combination of viewers and Andrians.⁸⁷ The song thus emerges as an interface between the Andrians' world and ours, drawing the one towards the other and vice versa.

It seems the music is here serving as a device to penetrate the picture plane, somewhat like the characters termed by Michael Baxandall *festaiuoli* who play a similar role in many Renaissance paintings, including the others made for Alfonso's room by Titian.⁸⁸ The music even occupies a similar position within the picture to its counterparts in the *Worship of Venus* and *Bacchus and Ariadne*. In light of this analogy, it is my contention that the canon, quite likely at about eye-level, is specifically intended to initiate and direct the viewer's engagement with the painting. The music is your route in, the beginning of your view. The choice of music to serve this purpose brings with it many connotations of considerable interest for the process of viewing. Polyphonic music is inherently communal, and thus brings into the experience of the painting all the

⁸³ It is interesting to note in this regard that though in the third part of his *Vite* Vasari associates no fewer than thirty-six artists with music, he makes no such claims for Titian – see the Appendix to McIver 1997.

⁸⁴ I presented arguments to this effect in a paper presented at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference 2007 in Vienna. On the tradition of multiple canon at the French royal chapels, see Urquhart 1997.

⁸⁵ See the Appendix to the present study.

⁸⁶ Smith 1953; Lowinsky 1982.

⁸⁷ I have so far aimed to distance the canon from music as such and, though I have no doubt that the song received a few full performances in the *studiolo*, it is important to bear in mind that its explanatory force operates largely as a conceit – as a more explicit version of the song of the Muses in the *Parnassus*. It is no more necessary for the viewer to actually sing their parts to experience the conceit than it is for the Andrians to actually sing theirs.

⁸⁸ Baxandall 1972, 72-5. The trick is advocated by Alberti – 1972, 82-3. The mechanisms and effects I will proceed to assign to this musical *festaiuolo* are similar to those identified by Randolph Starn for equivalent characters in the *Camera degli Sposi* (Starn 1989, 210-7, esp. 216-7).

well-established politics of courtly exchange. It is sensual – a physical act rather than purely a process of thought – and as such it compliments and augments the obviously sensual character of the painted scene. It captures within the frozen image the dimension of time, to be released in the moment of the viewer's engagement. And it turns the moment of viewing into a process, or even quite literally a performance.

Through this mechanism, the painting puts into the viewer's own mouth the ekphrastic power of the song – by which I mean both its cue to interpretation and its relationship with the Philostratean ekphrasis and its account of Bacchanalian inspiration. The viewer is himself inspired to song by and about wine, in imitation of (and in concert with) the Andrians as described by both Philostratus and Titian, and in that song he reveals the picture's significance and the source of its animation, partly in terms of the musico-poetic facilitation of Bacchus, and partly in ironic terms very similar to those of the Renaissance's most prevalent Bacchanalian moral – 'in vino veritas'. In placing the text of the song into the viewer's own voice, it renders the viewer's engagement with the painting a performed ekphrasis, effectively dramatising the poetic performative, 'I sing of...': just as Philostratus encodes the interpretation of his 'picture' in the song of the Andrians, so the canon, as a process of viewing, conjures and animates the painting anew in each instance of viewing.

It is here that the canon makes contact with the role given to music in Philostratus and in the *Fête champêtre* – that of bringing the poet-musician into a sensual and invocative encounter with the ancients. In trapping the viewer in the spider's web of the painting's own space, the canon places him, like Virgil's Gallus, in an ambiguous relationship to the 'real' and the 'fictive'; it locates the viewer within the fiction of the painting through his participation in the Andrians' song, whilst in the process his performance renders their fiction real (in part).

Through this canon and the mechanisms of meaning it interpolates into the painting, which one might (clumsily) term an 'ekphrastic process of musical viewing', Alfonso designs into the *Andrians* a job of mediation that helps him to inscribe his leisured identity upon the room, and upon the experiences available therein. The canon offers a taunt to the uninitiated viewer: it withholds the song and the painting as a tantalisingly signifying 'secret' (to use Horace's term), to be revealed by someone who knows 'what drinking is'. In adopting the canon-conundrum as almost a rite of entry, the image refers the viewer inescapably back to a definitive, unlocking view – that of Alfonso. His mediation is necessary to a 'correct' viewing of the picture, and through his mediation, the song, and the process of viewing that unfolds through it, the viewer is interpolated into Alfonso's strategy of self-construction.⁸⁹ I earlier described the ekphrasis offered by *Qui boyt* as a 'guide to interpretation', but it turns out to be instead a manipulation, or even a population of interpretation by the duke.

It is interesting, in this light, to measure the canon against Isabella's musical *impresa*. For a start, the two look very similar, which may well be intentional (the canon seems to partake of the world of *impresa*, devices and emblems as it does of any musical genre).⁹⁰ In the previous chapter I argued that Isabella's *impresa* is about voice – its withholding, its assertion, its uncertain morality. I have suggested above that the canon in the

⁸⁹ C.f. Huizinga: 'In all games it is very important that the player should be able to boast of his success to others.' (Huizinga 1949, 50). Stephen Kolsky suggests that a similarly exclusive vision of meaning and its revelation informed Isabella's image-making: Kolsky 1984, 54. My arguments here also bring Alfonso's paintings into close alignment with Mimi Hellman's interpretation of other domestic objects (especially furniture) in eighteenth-century France (Hellman 1999): according to Hellman, 'objects were not simply owned, but indeed *performed*' (417), through their design imposing upon the user 'aesthetically and socially desirable conduct' (422), making of leisure a kind of work whose object was 'the fabrication of elite identity' (416).

⁹⁰ On the close relationship between musical puzzles, and *impresa*, devices and emblems, see Durosoir 1981; and Stras 2005. On the intellectual currency of emblems at Alfonso's court see Fiorenza 2004.

Andrians is also concerned with voice, its paradoxical release and silencing through wine. Perhaps this is another point on which Alfonso challenges Isabella's claims to agency and identity: in an appropriate paradox, the canon places in the silent space of her *impresa* a song celebrating the moral uncertainty of song that was the very reason for her prudent silence.

Alfonso's Agency

We are left with a larger question of art and agency. So far I have characterised the *Andrians*, the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, *Quid non ebrietas* and the *Andrians'* musical canon as tools designed by Alfonso to help establish in the space of the *studiolo* his particular vision of classicising leisure, in (friendly) competition with his sister's. But what about Titian and Willaert? What of their agency and prerogative as artists?

The canon is particularly revealing in this respect. I mentioned earlier in the chapter that it is difficult to fully integrate the canon into the musical logic of the picture and its textual model. It would be tempting to suppose that it is the song sung by the Andrian men 'to their women and children', and indeed, as I have argued above, it does serve a function similar to that given to the Andrians' song by Philostratus. But the singing men in the picture are several metres from the music and paying it no attention at all. In fact, as I have noted above, the music seems to be placed for the use of the reclining group, but they too are difficult to resolve into a coherent ensemble for the song. In the foreground there are four recorders, two held by the reclining women and two discarded - by whom? One, lying in the stream, could belong to the reclining nymph, though her participation in any recent activity seems unlikely; the other might have been played by the seated man, or perhaps the man losing his balance in the centre was also sitting with the group. Which of these five performers took the four parts of the song? Why would they play it on recorders when its text is so relevant to the import of the painting? How did their performance relate to that of the singing men? Have two conflicting performances been taking place at once?

These problems lead to the surprising observation that the various characters in fact fit together much more comfortably if they are excused from the requirement to relate in some specific and logical way to the notated music. Without the canon, we can very easily see that, as I suggested much earlier, the two men are the Andrians 'singing to their women and children', whilst the presence of the 'silent' recorders is perhaps inspired by their presence on a very similar Bacchanalian island described elsewhere in the *Imagines*.

In purely visual terms, the canon lies rather unconvincingly in the picture-space, half resting on a fold of a dress and half dangling over the bank towards the stream, in contrast to the more convincing placement of other objects depicted on the ground around it. It has been painted rather thinly over the top of the completed dress and river-bank, which can be seen quite clearly through the paper. Most likely, the canon was added late in the production of the picture, and was not an initial part of Titian's scheme for realising Philostratus' ekphrasis. The documented circumstances of Titian's work for Alfonso in the *studiolo* certainly allow for such an afterthought, and even allow for its possible instigation by Alfonso himself. Specific evidence survives to attest that, on several occasions, Titian left an appreciable amount of work to complete on his paintings for Alfonso in situ.⁹¹ Court records note his presence in Ferrara (for culinary purposes) from 14 April

⁹¹ The evidence is given in summary in Goodgal 1978, at 176-7, and rehearsed at length in Campori 1874. Further documentation is in Venturi 1928, 103ff. The evidence for the exact length of Titian's visits to Ferrara comes from the Ferrarese court records, and is

to 28 June 1524, and yet again from 3 December 1524 to 13 February 1525, the most likely occasions for the delivery of the *Andrians*. The ducal accounts record payments in 1524 and January 1525 for ultramarine 'per dare a Messer Tucian dipintore per li quadri del Signore Nostro' (to give to Mr Titian painter for the paintings of Our Lord).⁹² As Titian otherwise never incorporated notated music into his picture, whereas Dosso not infrequently did, it seems likely that here the more celebrated artist was required to accommodate an aspect of Ferrarese taste.⁹³

Similar circumstances pertained for the delivery of *Bacchus and Ariadne*. Correspondence of 1521-2 shows Alfonso's agent in Venice, Tebaldeo, offering detailed reports on Titian's progress with the picture, and persuading him to bring it to Ferrara to finish it there. The painting arrived on 30 January 1523, and Titian is listed in the court accounts as present from 5 February to 5 March. The information provided by Tebaldeo tells us in relatively clear terms at what stage of completion Titian expected to take his painting to Ferrara. On 31 August the design of the painting was clear at least in outline, and Titian will next begin 'colouring', intending to deliver the painting in October. On 15 October, however, he was still working from the nude, improving the figures. On both occasions, Titian predicts that he will bring the painting to Ferrara with a few heads and some passages of landscape still to complete, but that the work will not take long – perhaps 10 to 15 days – unless Alfonso wants anything adding. As Titian eventually stayed for twice as long as he suggested, one might suppose that Alfonso did ask for changes to be made.⁹⁴

Alfonso's dealings with other artists show a similar eagerness to prompt them to visit in person. Presumably, he preferred to have work done on the spot in Ferrara precisely so that he could supervise it and effect such interventions. This preference probably lies behind the continuing presence at court of Dosso – who was less renowned than Titian, Raphael and Michelangelo but, according to Vasari, was appreciated by Alfonso for being amiable and pleasant.⁹⁵ His musical counterpart, Maistre Jhan, was similarly viewed as a master of the second rank; but judging from his large output of motets, including several mentioning members of the Este family, he must have been a biddable and flattering retainer. Perhaps Jhan was valued similarly for the fact that, unlike 'celebrity' musicians such as Josquin and Mouton who stayed around only briefly, he was content to work under the conditions of Alfonso's engaged and interventionist patronage. Mosti characterises Alfonso's relationship with artists in precisely these terms in his biography of the duke:

...il Duca Alfonso si dilettaua, e si è sempre dilettauo d'uomini virtuosi non meno d'artegiani, che di Cortegiani da spasso amava molto quelli uomini che vedeva solleciti e diligenti alle loro botteghe, e li laudava e favoriva...

discussed in Hope 1987, 26-7. In footnotes he supplies transcriptions of the relevant documents together with their call numbers.

⁹² Goodgal 1978, 177.

⁹³ Notated music appears in at least three paintings by Dosso from the 1520s and early 1530s: the *Allegory of Music* (two canons – see Chapter VI of the present study); the *Allegory with Pan* (an open part-book); and the *Musica* rhomboid mentioned earlier. Cf. the survey of musical elements in Dosso's work offered in Slim 1990, 43-8. As far as I know, no other painting by Titian at this date features notated music, though some feature music-making (most famously the *Fête Champêtre*, discussed above, and the *Three Ages of Man*); however, in this respect, too, he is exceeded by Dosso.

⁹⁴ It seems to me quite likely that the ship in *Bacchus and Ariadne*, which is not literally integral to the story as depicted, is an afterthought: the technique of its execution looks closer to Dosso than to Titian. Also worth mentioning in this connection are the well-known alterations to Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, undertaken by both Dosso and Titian in the 1520s – see Bull 1987; and Bull and Plesters 1990.

⁹⁵ See Fiorenza 2008, 14.

...the Duke Alfonso took real delight, as indeed he always had done, in virtuous men no less than in artisans; and among the courtiers, he greatly loved, for leisure, those men whom he saw to be solicitous and diligent in their business, and he praised and favoured [such men] ...⁹⁶

A scenario not dissimilar to that evidenced for the paintings can be pieced together more circumstantially for *Quid non ebrietas*. The song achieves its association with the *Andrians* and *Bacchus and Ariadne* through the technical tricks of its making: the allegory is not audible in successful performance. Thus the work is meaningless as a product of patronage unless its making – its composition – is as much an object of the patron's interest as its singing: in other words, the performance of the song, like the performance of the paintings, began with its conception. Thus the full range of cultural products here connected with the self-conscious making of Alfonso's musical identity also evidence his related interest in the business of making art – a preoccupation that is perhaps not surprising in light of his reported practical interest in crafts such as founding and pottery. The corollary of this, and of Alfonso's preference for artists like Dosso and Jhan, is that whilst the duke certainly was also interested in artists of large reputation, he did not participate wholeheartedly in the innovation of the fetishisation of the great artist's product (as his dealings with Raphael make clear) – a circumstance that has previously been seen as a stain on his character as a patron.⁹⁷ In my analysis, it should be seen instead as a feature of his particular interest in the arts, and as a reflection of his self-conscious and inventively manifested concern to manipulate through art the programmatic requirements of his princely identity.

⁹⁶ Solerti 1892, 178.

⁹⁷ See in particular Alfonso's rather pragmatic and hard-nosed dealings with Raphael (Shearman 1987); Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* (Goodgal 1987); and Michelangelo (Rosenberg 2000): these last two scholars go to great lengths to argue, against the grain of the evidence, that Alfonso bought into the inviolable 'hand of the master'. The same hard-nosed approach can perhaps be seen in his dealings with Bidon in the 1510s. Probably the most famous singer in Italy during the second decade of the sixteenth century, Bidon left Alfonso's employ around 1513 to work for Leo X. He offered (with some confidence) to return to Alfonso's service in 1517, but Alfonso refused him, accusing him of the 'sin of ingratitude', and threatening legal action if he continued to communicate his petitions to the duchy of Ferrara. See Lockwood 1998.

VI

The Erotics of Song – A Shared Theme

In the last two chapters I have shown Alfonso reacting, purposefully but with wit and humour, to the musical identity and ideologies put forward by his famous sister, Isabella. Isabella marshalled a range of classical associations to establish the decorum of her musical interests, and devised an *impresa* to manage and emblematised her pretensions to musical agency. In response, we have seen Alfonso affirm the masculinity of musical interests, undermining Isabella's moral assertions through the less decorous musical associations of Bacchus; and we have seen him contrast her *impresa* with his own unconcernedly bucolic voice. We have further seen the performative role assigned to music through the poetics of the pastoral mode both within his *studiolo* and – by hypothetical extension – at his country villas, and have linked it to the demonstration of Alfonso's own agency as prince, musician and patron. To achieve these ends, Alfonso clothed his musical identity in a distinctive variety of lightly transgressive classicism, in which both music and dance are associated directly with license and the erotic – a strategy that confronted and subverted conventional and more obviously virtuous musical ideologies, playfully realising their fears.

Isabella was not the first of the Estensi to build a *studiolo*, and hers is not the only direction in which we need to look to understand the context of Alfonso's private musical identity. The principles of a transgressive musical classicism were not new in the 1510s (although their flamboyant articulation was novel): they can be found in the courtly environment bequeathed Alfonso by his dynastic forbears. However, to find it one must look past his father Ercole to the courts of Borso and, most especially, Leonello. Here we will find also the roots of a subjectivity manifested through the performativity of song – something that we have traced in the present study for both Isabella and Alfonso; and they will be not in the polyphonic style of the Northerners, but in the Italian tradition of semi-improvised monophonic song (the *improvvisatori*).

The music-ideological character of the courts of Leonello and Borso, particularly in the private sphere, is difficult to read through standard musicological means, not least because of the importance of improvised musical traditions. Once again, we will have recourse to visual culture to plug the gap. My aim is to show Alfonso engaging with what one might call a dynastic musical aesthetics – and I will conclude by discussing a painting made for Alfonso by Dosso which, in my view, draws directly on these visual and musical precedents.

Music at Belfiore

This chapter begins in the Belfiore *studiolo* of Alfonso's uncle, the Marchese Leonello d'Este, and a little preamble will be necessary to set the scene. The villa of Belfiore, a country retreat to the north of Ferrara, was begun by Marchese Alberto d'Este in the 1390s and continued by his successor, Niccolò III. Niccolò's son Leonello, who became Marchese in 1441 and hoped to spend more time at the villa, added a new south-facing apartment.¹ Within the new extension he had built a *studiolo*, whose decoration would occupy him until his

¹ On Belfiore and the building of Leonello's apartment, see Eörsi 1975, 15. The information in this paragraph is derived from there.

death in 1451 and be brought to completion only by his own successor, his brother Borso.² Between 1449 and 1453 wainscoting with intarsia decoration was prepared and installed in the room: though no trace or evidence survives, it is easy to imagine that musical motifs of some kind featured, as they did in the *studioli* of Federico da Montefeltro.³ Principal among the decorations, however, was a series of painted panels depicting the Muses.

Information on the programme for the paintings, its conception and dating is found primarily in a letter written to Leonello in 1447 by the humanist Guarino da Verona, who had been called to Ferrara in 1429 to serve as Leonello's tutor, and had established there a school of considerable fame.⁴ Leonello, it seems, had written to his old tutor and mentioned that he intended to have panels of the Muses made for his *studiolo*. Guarino responds with praise, a brief scholarly explication of the Muses, and instructions on how each one should be depicted.

After some slight equivocation, Guarino declares that there should be nine Muses, and identifies them by their standard names. Only a few of the resulting paintings survive, and those are sometimes difficult to identify with confidence. Their identifications were first proposed systematically by Anna Eörsi and subsequently revised, very sensibly, by Miklos Boskovits. Boskovits accepts five surviving paintings into the canon of the *studiolo*, all depicting enthroned women: a *Thalia* by Michele Pannonio (Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum); two panels now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, depicting (according to Eörsi) *Erato* and *Urania*, perhaps by Angelo da Siena; and two panels painted largely or entirely by Tura, one of *Terpsichore* (Milan, Museo Poldi-Pezzoli) and an *Allegorical Figure* in the National Gallery, London, whose identity is disputed.⁵

Guarino's terms are of considerable interest for what they reveal about his recreational ideal. The project is 'noble and truly splendid', but precisely because it is 'not stuffed with pointless or licentious figures'.⁶ The Muses are to be understood as personifications of arts which were arrived at by human endeavour; this is reflected in their etymology, for *μῦσθαι* means *seek* in Greek, so that *Μοῦσαι* means *seekers*.⁷ The scheme, then, can only be admitted if it is useful and decorous, and because the Muses can be shown (if here spuriously) to exemplify the thirst for study and knowledge. He is strangely reticent on the subject of poetry, usually the natural preserve of the Muses, and his often bizarre interpretations of individual Muses suggest a rather forced emphasis on the themes he was so careful to establish.

However, our suspicions are raised by the considerable disjunctions, discussed at length by Stephen Campbell, between Guarino's prescriptions and the paintings eventually produced.⁸ The alterations to the scheme, presumably undertaken with Leonello's direct participation and certainly with his agreement, point up certain differences of emphasis and aim. For example, Guarino stipulated that Erato, who 'attends to the bonds of marriage and true love', should 'hold a boy and a girl one to each side of her, setting rings on their fingers

² On the decoration of the Belfiore *studiolo* see Eörsi 1975; Boskovits 1978; Cieri Via 1988, XVIII-XX; Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991; and Campbell 1997, 29-61. The *studiolo* in Belfiore was neither the first nor the only such room used by Leonello – see Liebenwein 1988, 46 (he discusses the Belfiore *studiolo* at 46-9).

³ The same observation is made in Cavicchi 2007, 130-1 n.6. For an overview of the importance of intarsia decoration to Renaissance *studioli* see Thornton 1997, 53-60.

⁴ Text and translation of the letter are published in Baxandall 1965, 186-7 and 201-2. For a detailed discussion of Guarino's views on painting see Baxandall 1963 and Baxandall 1965. For a more general assessment of Guarino's school see Grafton and Jardine 1982.

⁵ Eörsi 1975, esp. 23; Boskovits 1978, 473-5.

⁶ 'praeclaram vereque magnificam'; 'non vanis aut lascivis referta figmentis'. Text and translation Baxandall 1965, 186 and 201.

⁷ 'Μοῦσαι enim graece indagare dicitur, μῦσθαι igitur indagatrices dicantur.' Text and translation Baxandall 1965, 186 and 202.

⁸ Campbell 1997, 40-51.

and joining their hands.⁹ The surviving painting convincingly identified as Leonello's *Erato* is populated by no children, and the Muse's distinctly seductive pose suggests that something other than true love and decorous union is at hand. Evidently Leonello did not entirely share his old tutor's preoccupations. In fact, Campbell shows that the original scheme was conservative in its moral caution even for Guarino, and may reflect the scholar's particular vulnerability to censure around 1447 on the subject of poetry, which, according to some commentators, was both useless and degenerate.¹⁰

By November 1447 the painter Angelo da Siena, identified elsewhere by Guarino as among the best of the age, was at work in the *studiolo*. In 1449 Ciriaco of Ancona visited Ferrara and saw Angelo at work, with two of the Muses complete: Clio and Melpomene (neither of whom survive).¹¹ Leonello died in 1451 leaving the project unfinished, but it was apparently carried forward without interruption by his successor, his brother Borso. Angelo is still listed as painter of the *studiolo* in 1452, and logic has led scholars to suppose that Michele Pannonio became involved in the project upon Angelo's death in 1456.¹² Between 1459 and 1463 Cosmè Tura appears in the court records as 'depintore dello studio', and it is presumed that the Muses still unaccounted for were completed by him or under his supervision.¹³ The villa of Belfiore was razed in 1483 in the reign of the next ducal incumbent, Ercole I, during a war with Venice, and the fate of the paintings is uncertain from that point.

Several of the surviving paintings have been substantially overpainted. Although all agree that the alterations were carried out by Tura, or under his supervision, opinions differ concerning their date. Thomas Tuohy has argued that the changes were effected in the 1480s at the behest of Ercole I.¹⁴ On the basis of style, Stephen Campbell prefers the 1460s and the reign of Borso.¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, I have assumed that the first versions of the paintings, visible only in x-ray photographs, reflect the instructions for the project established by Leonello, and that the alterations and overpainting took place under Borso and after the death of Angelo da Siena. The majority of the panels have also been cut down, removing the inscriptions that once appeared at the foot of each Muse and are preserved in one copy of Guarino's letter.¹⁶ Michele Pannonio's *Tbalia* retains its inscription and presumably indicates the original appearance of its companion pictures.

The programme, as far as we can tell, incorporated two explicitly musical Muses, alongside the collateral motif of Clio's trumpet. Euterpe was to be a music teacher:

⁹ 'Erato coniugalia curat vincula et amoris officia recti; haec adolescentulum et adolescentulam utrinque media teneat, utriusque manus, imposito anulo, copulans.' – text and translation Baxandall 1965, 202.

¹⁰ Campbell 1997, 40-4. The influence of Guarino and his programme of teaching on the Marchese is perhaps generally overstated: Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine strike a wise note of caution when they note that he began his course with the humanist at the age of 22 and pursued it for six years – by preference Guarino liked his pupils to start very much earlier and stay much longer (Grafton and Jardine 1982, 61); later (71-3) they cast very reasonable doubt upon the general efficacy of the advanced stages of humanist instruction. The primary source for Leonello's own literary outlook has traditionally been Angelo Decembrio's dialogue *De politia litteraria*, in which Leonello is given a well-informed, rather austere, Ciceronian, humanist voice (see Gundersheimer 1973, 104-20). However, some scholars have recently questioned the extent to which Decembrio's Leonello accords with other evidence of the Marchese's interests – see, for example, Campbell 1997, 18.

¹¹ All Eörsi 1975, 15.

¹² See, for example, Eörsi 1975, 16; Boskovits 1978, 381.

¹³ Eörsi 1975, 15.

¹⁴ Tuohy 1991.

¹⁵ Campbell 1997, 31-8. Campbell contests Tuohy's view, presuming it to be incompatible with his own; I am not sure this is the case.

¹⁶ The text of the longest version of Guarino's letter is published in Eörsi 1975, 22.

Euterpe tiliarum repertrix chorago musica gestanti instrumenta gestum docentis ostendat; vultus hilaris adsit in primis, ut origo vocabuli probat.

Euterpe, discoverer of the pipes, depict making the gesture of one teaching to a musician carrying musical instruments; her face should be particularly cheerful, as the origin of her name makes clear¹⁷

Melpomene a singer:

Melpomene cantum vocumque melodiam excogitavit; eapropter liber ei sit in manibus musicis annotatus signis.

Melpomene devised song and vocal melody; therefore she must have a book in her hands with musical notation on it.¹⁸

Unfortunately, neither painting survives, but they serve at least to establish the currency of music as a symbol in the room. More concrete evidence is also available: when Ciriaco visited he saw in the *studiolo* an organ, commissioned by Leonello in 1447, whose decoration located it pointedly within the scheme of the Muses.¹⁹

The musical Melpomene is attended by one of those moral disjunctions between plan and reality noted above.²⁰ In the programme, Guarino envisaged her singing from notated music in a book. The medium would be the proportional notation associated at that time primarily with transalpine polyphonic music – a compositional practice that intersected, in its theoretical statements at least, with music taught as a Liberal Art at the universities. Presumably, for Guarino, the symbol of the music book carried appropriate connotations of study and mathematical rigour, or of sacred rather than secular music. Following his visit to the workshop of Angelo da Siena, Ciriaco wrote a description of the resulting painting:²¹

Altera vero aurea unita & ab humeris purpureo amicta paludamento manu levem pulsando citharam heroidea facie in olympum ad parentem versa honesta gravique quadam alacritate ut chordae melodemati concordem peana cantu perbelle quidem modulari & roseis labiis vocem formare visa

Melpomene wears a golden tunic and a red cloak from the shoulders and plucks a cithara with

¹⁷ Text and translation (slightly amended) Baxandall 1965, 187 and 202.

¹⁸ Text and translation Baxandall 1965, 187 and 202.

¹⁹ Discussed at length in the only previous study of music in Leonello's *studiolo*: Cavicchi 2007. Text and Italian translation of Ciriaco's description of the organ appear there at 132-4. An inscription on the base of the organ read 'Organo Pierides nova miro cernite cantu/ quae Constantinus alter Apollo dedit. ...' (Pieridians [i.e. Muses], note with miraculous song the new organ/ that Costantino, following Apollo, has made). On the organ see also Peverada 1994.

²⁰ Eörsi registers this disjunction at 26-7, citing Sabbadini's suggestion that, after writing the letter, Guarino changed his mind on the advice of Teodoro Gaza (teacher of Greek at the University of Ferrara during Leonello's reign). She does not discuss its significance from a musical perspective.

²¹ Text and translation Baxandall 1965, 188 with n.10.

her left hand, her god-like face turned to her father in Olympus, moving with a certain dignified and becoming liveliness so that the strings seem to accompany her harmonious hymn with a tuneful sound, and she seems to shape song with her rosy lips.

Song read from notated music has become unwritten song delivered to the accompaniment of the 'cithara' – a style with appropriate classical associations, but also, as we will later see, one which existed in a crucial ideological and technical relationship to secular musical practice at Leonello's court.

This chapter starts in earnest with another, less explicitly musical (but surviving) painting: the *Calliope*, identified by Jaynie Anderson and Stephen Campbell with the *Allegorical Figure* at the National Gallery attributed to Cosmè Tura (fig. 29).²² Like some of the other surviving Muses, Tura's painting was substantially altered not long after it was finished, and has been cut down so that it no longer bears its inscription. The National Gallery's technical examination found that several key aspects, including the ornate throne, the figure's drapes and details in the landscape, were altered after the painting had lain dormant, half-finished, for months or perhaps years.²³ Whilst the finished painting is agreed to be largely or entirely Tura's, the author of the earlier underdrawing, revealed by x-radiography, is by no means obvious.²⁴ It seems to me most likely that Tura took up a painting left unfinished at Angelo da Siena's death in 1456. We can therefore tentatively distinguish between a version connected with Leonello's original scheme, and alterations or updates prompted by his successor Borso.

Here, too, there are various disjunctions between Guarino's prescription and both the original and finished paintings, though it will take rather more work to unpick their possible significance. Guarino characterised the chief of the Muses thus:²⁵

Calliope doctrinarum indagatrix et poeticae antistes vocemque reliquis praebens artibus coronam ferat lauream, tribus compacta vultibus, cum hominum, semideorum ac deorum naturam edisserat.

Calliope, the seeker out of learning and guardian of the art of poetry, also provides a voice for the other arts; let her carry a laurel crown and have three faces composed together, since she has set forth the nature of men, heroes and gods.

There is little in the surviving painting to align it with the written brief at all (and in fact the identification as Calliope is not the only one to have been proposed). On the other hand, it is easy enough to see why Guarino's suggestion might have been disregarded. The humanist was no painter: 'three faces composed together' would result in a figure of considerable visual distaste, albeit of philosophical beauty. Why is this figure Calliope? In what way is she musical? To what aspects of the musical theory and practice of Leonello's court does she respond?

²² Anderson 1991, 176-80; Campbell 1997, 38-40.

²³ Dunkerton et al. 1987, 20-30.

²⁴ Dunkerton et al. 1987, 30-2; x-radiograph at 10 (reproduced in Campbell 1997, 39).

²⁵ Text and translation Baxandall 1965, 202 and 187.

Calliope's Song

To associate the National Gallery panel with Guarino's prescription, we must attend to an interpretative intervention made within a few years of the painting's inception. Among the alterations made to the composition during Borso's reign is the scene of a blacksmith hammering on an anvil in a cave – the most prominent element of a thoroughly marginal landscape backdrop. For the fifteenth century, the blacksmith's resounding hammer was almost inevitably a reference to the invention of music.²⁶ Beginning with Boethius, the primary authority in musical writing (whose work was copied for Leonello in a French translation), and supported by Guido of Arezzo, most music theorists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance found an opportunity to reference, either in passing or in detail, the story of Pythagoras and the blacksmith.²⁷ It was, for hundreds of years, the standard account of music's origins. In the words of Tinctoris, writing at the court of Naples, in his *Liber de arte contrapuncti* of 1477:²⁸

Three of these [concorde] ... Pythagoras found first of all, because they stand together in proportional ratio. Through a certain divine will, while passing by a mechanic's workshop, he recognised that these three concords were produced by the blows of the hammers. Having examined their weights, he discovered that the diatessaron was produced in a sexquitertia proportion from the hammer weighing twelve pounds as compared to that weighing nine; and, since that hammer of nine pounds compared to that which was six was sexquialtera proportion, it produced the diapente... [etc]

A second, parallel tradition told the same story in a biblical register: in place of Pythagoras, Jubal (identified in Genesis 4:20 as 'the father of all who play the harp and flute') makes the discovery, and the blacksmith is Tubal Cain, his brother.²⁹ This version is transmitted in full by Johannes Gallicus, a resident of the court of Mantua from the 1440s and a student of Vittorino da Feltre, in his pedagogic treatise *Ritus canendi vetustissimus et novus* of ca.1458-64.³⁰

The blacksmith serves to introduce music (which, in a formal context, meant 'song' first and foremost) into the semantic field of the painting. Guarino identifies as Calliope's chief responsibility to 'provide a voice for the other arts', from within her capacity as 'guardian of poetry'. His vision is concisely clarified in the inscription he supplied, which would originally have appeared at the base of the painting:

²⁶ On music's blacksmith-related creation myths in the Middle Ages and Renaissance see Beichner 1954; McKinnon 1978, esp. 1-18; and Slim 1990 (detailing several visual depictions).

²⁷ Boethius gives the story in his *De musica* 1.10 – English trans. Boethius 1989, 18. On Leonello's '*Boecio* in franzese' see Bertoni 1918, 101. For an overview of Boethius' reception history among Renaissance music theorists see Palisca 1990. Guido entitles the last chapter of his *Micrologus* (chapter 20) 'How the nature of music was discovered from the sound of hammers' – English trans. Babb 1978, 82-3.

²⁸ Tinctoris 1961, 18. It is important to note that most writers did not use the Pythagorean story to preface a lengthy consideration of Pythagorean cosmic harmony, as one might expect: in fact, some (such as Tinctoris – see Tinctoris 1961, 14) specifically distance themselves from such theories, which they consider out of date, and most others note the subject only in passing.

²⁹ I quote from the New International Version. On the Jubal story see Beichner 1954; and McKinnon 1978, 3-10.

³⁰ On Gallicus, see Schrade 1953, 317-20; McKinnon 1978, 12-3; Palisca 1990, 259-63. Slim (1990, 167-8) notes several other authors who transmit the Jubal story in full, including Johannes' pupil Niccolò Burzio, whose work appeared in print, and Martin Agricola, as well as several outside the field of music theory.

MATERIAM VATI ET VOCEM CONCEDO SONANTEM

I grant to poets their raw material and resounding voice³¹

The voice Calliope provides, we are left to conclude, is a musical one. The blacksmith – the inventor of music – becomes an allegory for the Muse's inspiration: he literally shapes his 'raw material' with his 'resounding voice' (his hammer).³²

The connection between the Muses and music was a natural and even inescapable one for the classicising Renaissance, as indeed for the medieval authorities on which Renaissance musical thought often relied. Guido of Arezzo, for example, whom we have noted for transmitting the blacksmith story of music's origins, stated as the purpose of his music-didactic *Micrologus* to induce the Muses to return to the school-room.³³ Elsewhere we find the etymology of the word 'music' traced to a common origin with the word 'muse', with the support of no less an authority than Plato.³⁴ Gafori and Bartolomeo Ramis de Pareia (a Spanish theorist active in ?Florence, Bologna and Rome from 1472) were not alone among fifteenth-century theorists in aligning the Muses quite explicitly and in some detail with the system of modes. In his *Musica Practica* of 1482, Ramis proceeds thus on the general authority of Hesiod, as a source on the origins of music, and on the specific recommendation of Martianus Capella and Macrobius:³⁵

...to demonstrate this still more fully ... through that from which music has originated, just as it is approved by Hesiod, we will arrange the nine Muses ... so that the one who recounts wars let us give to Mars and thus to the Phrygian tone [etc.] ... And so we will arrange all of the Muses in their proper places according to Martianus and Macrobius, just as we will assign a verse to each through which her connection to music will be shown.

Cicero even reports that Pythagoras made sacrifice to the Muses whenever he made a new discovery in mathematics, and thus he might be imagined to have encountered his blacksmith under their direct supervision.³⁶

In antiquity the Muses appear almost universally as musicians, both in written and in visual sources.

³¹ Trans. Campbell 1997, 38.

³² Campbell offers a similar (though not identical) interpretation – 1997, 38-40 – but he does not pursue its implications as his concern is with the morality of poetry.

³³ The first words of the treatise, part of a prefatory verse, are 'Gone from school are the Muses; there may I hope to induce them, / Unknown yet to adults, to unveil their light to the young ones!' – Babb 1978, 57.

³⁴ I have in mind John's *De musica*, dating to around 1100 – English translation in Babb 1978; also Jacobus of Liege's *Speculum Musicae* I.11 (ca.1300, but with long legs) – the relevant passage is translated in Godwin 1993, 131-2. Plato links *Mousai* and *mousika* twice (that I know of): in *Alcibiades* 1.108c and *Cratylus* 406a. The etymology is also assumed in the letter written by Guarino excerpted and translated in Grafton and Jardine 1982, 53: 'you are living proof that the Muses rule not only musical instruments but also public affairs'.

³⁵ Ramis 1993, 112; cf. the equivalent passage in Gafori's *De Harmonia Musicorum Instrumentorum Opus* (Gaffurius 1977, 197-200), a much more compendious consideration of the musical muses, drawing on such diverse authorities as Ovid, Diodorus Siculus, Homer, Augustine, Hesiod and several others.

³⁶ *De Natura Deorum* 3.36. Cicero's works were highly recommended by Guarino, according to the account of his son Battista in his 'Program of Teaching and Learning' (see Kallendorf 2002, 290-3).

Their copious traffic with ancient poets is most characteristically configured in musical terms, partly because ancient poetics, either in practice or by tradition, recognised no meaningful distinction between them.³⁷ Thus, it is in the Muses' song that poets find their immortality, and, in one of the most pervasive poetic conceits, through their song that poets find inspiration. The Muses' song acts, in this context, as a repository of cultural memory (and as a hope of future cultural memory), as well as the means by which the body of poetic subject-matter could be communicated to mortal mouthpieces.³⁸ The poet himself, in response, conventionally conceives of his poetic utterance as song. In the time of Hesiod, Homer and the older lyric poets the conception was meaningful, reflecting a performance practice as well as (in an improvisatory tradition) a compositional practice. Ovid and Virgil wrote their poetry down, but found the idea no less appealing: Virgil, for example, begins his self-consciously archaizing *Aeneid* with it – 'Arms and the man I sing...'

The Muses' musical aspect informed by far the greater proportion of their depictions in the fifteenth century.³⁹ Most obvious, and for good reason, are the so-called *Tarocchi di Mantegna* – neither tarocchi nor by Mantegna, but a series of images constituting some sort of didactic card game, or simply an iconographic catalogue.⁴⁰ The full set of nine Muses with Apollo given to Master E was most likely printed in Ferrara in the 1460s, but the designs enjoyed an extremely wide circulation, offering models for a number of subsequent representations.⁴¹ Also pervasively musical, and in some respects indebted to the *Tarocchi*, are the Muses painted by Giovanni Santi for the *Tempietto delle Muse* in the ducal palace at Urbino, a room whose character was distinctly similar to that of Leonello's *studiolo*.⁴² It seems, in fact, that Guarino's proposed Muses are unusual not least in the extent to which they suppress the nine's traditionally musical attributes. The blacksmith interpolation, alongside certain other changes, thus serves cleverly to re-establish a more conventional characterisation.

The terms in which Guarino's motto configures Calliope and her relationship with poets are striking and revealing. A Calliope who offers 'resounding voice' can only have been thought up in cognisance of the ancient emphasis on her own voice, which in turn substantiated her identity as a singer. Diodorus Siculus explains correctly that her name derives from 'kale' (beautiful) 'ops' (voice), and (perhaps with this etymology in mind) Plato asserts that Calliope and Urania 'have the sweetest utterance.'⁴³

Guarino's choice of the word 'vates' to connote 'poet' is equally loaded, and goes hand-in-hand with the poet's encounter with the Muses. The earliest word for poet, tied quite explicitly to the poet's supposed mystic or prophetic role, *vates* fell out of use in Hellenistic times to be revived by Virgil and his Augustan successors.⁴⁴ Leonardo Bruni explains it thus, in the course of advocating the wisdom of the ancient poets and

³⁷ On this aspect of ancient poetics see, in brief, the introduction to Nagy 1996.

³⁸ For a recent study of this aspect of ancient poetry(/song), see Wheeler 2002. The classic account of the musical Muses and their inspiration is that of Hesiod (the opening lines of the *Theogony*), on which see Havelock 1986, 19-23 and 79-82; for a survey of the phenomenon in its other prototypical poet, Homer, see, with further references, Minchin 1995.

³⁹ On the depiction of Muses in north Italy during the fifteenth century see Lippincott 1987, 58-64; Anderson 1991.

⁴⁰ On the *Tarocchi* see Lippincott 1987, 58-67; and Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991, 2:431-7 with the bibliography given there.

⁴¹ See, for instance, the derivative images given in Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991, 2:438-40.

⁴² See Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991, 1:136-7 for images. See Fabiański 1990, 200-1 and 207-8 for the suggestion that the Muses are also substantively present in the Gubbio *studiolo*, but dissolved entirely into their respective instruments.

⁴³ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 4.7.1; Plato, *Phaedrus* 259ff. Gaffuri knew ancient authorities according to whom the Muses each presided over a different mechanical aspect of the voice (lungs, lips, tongue etc.) – Gaffurius 1977, 198.

⁴⁴ The basic reference on this subject is Newman 1967. See also Pasco-Pranger 2000, with intervening bibliography.

conferring upon Virgil its honour.⁴⁵

Nempe mentem divinam inesse poetis sapientissimi veterum tradidere vatesque inde nuncuparunt, quod non tam ex se quam concitatione quadam animi afflatuque divino loquerentur

The wisest of the ancients tell us that the divine mind dwells in the poets, and that they are called *vates* because they speak not so much of their own accord as through a divine inspiration, in a kind of higher mental state.

The Augustans used it, sometimes played with it, as one among a range of loaded and obvious references to Archaic poetry (Homer and Hesiod), designed to serve as the markers of a newly virtuous and ‘useful’ Latin poetics – Virgil’s *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, for example, and Ovid’s *Fasti*.⁴⁶ Guarino appears to have had something almost identical in mind, and no doubt he was aware that in invoking Archaic poetics he was also recalling the Augustan invocation. He explained in his letter that Calliope should stand for the three facets of poetry: in conjunction with his archaising ‘vates’ we presume these to be human (*Works and Days/Georgics*), heroic (*Iliad/Odyssey/Aeneid*) and divine (*Theogony/?Fasti*). Taking once again (as Campbell describes) a defensive and conservative stance, Guarino thus signals that he has in mind the Augustans (who in turn, he is aware, had in mind the Archaics) as models for the moral and civic justification of poetry.

Even ‘vates’ is not devoid of musical connotations. In offering a catalogue of music’s extraordinary effects, a standard feature of the Renaissance music treatise, Ramis is able to adduce biblical evidence that music facilitates vatic theophany: ‘when Eliseus, disciple of the great Elias, the founder of the Carmelites, wished to prophesy, he summoned a musician to play.’⁴⁷ Approaching through the classical tradition one might easily arrive at the same conclusion. Appeals to vatic status went hand in hand with the conceit of song among the purposeful archaisms of the Augustans, and, as they so frequently make clear, the prototypical prophet-poets – Apollo, Orpheus, Musaeus – expressed themselves in song. These, and the ‘divine’ effects of their song, constituted the genealogy of musical invention cited *ad nauseam* by fifteenth-century music theorists.

It is through the role of vatic poetics, the Muses and song in Augustan and Archaic poetry that the role of the Muses in the space of Leonello’s *studiolo* becomes clear. They are designed to constitute a visual proem – a direct counterpart to the hymn or prayer invoking divine aid (most often that of the Muses) that prefaced classical poems in the traditions I have discussed. Such a function, carried through in design with such philological awareness, can only confirm that Leonello’s *studiolo* was conceived in the Petrarchan model elaborated by Liebenwein – designed to restore proper communion with the Muses to facilitate writing.⁴⁸ Most properly, these Muses should preface the writing of poetry, a pastime in which Leonello is known to have

⁴⁵ Bruni’s ‘The Study of Literature’ (ca.1424), addressed to Battista Malatesta, translated in Kallendorf 2002; the reference is from 114-5 in his parallel translation.

⁴⁶ According to Guarino’s son Battista, his successor at the University of Ferrara, Guarino’s programme for the teaching of Greek relied precisely on a detailed realisation of the archaising relationship between Virgil and Homer/Hesiod – see Kallendorf 2002, 282-3. The subject is therefore one with which Leonello would also, very likely, have been closely acquainted.

⁴⁷ Ramis 1993, 43.

⁴⁸ As noted also in Cieri Via 1988, XVIII. On the Petrarchan roots of the *studiolo* phenomenon see Liebenwein 1988, 31-40; and, largely summarizing Liebenwein, Bostrom 1987, 53-5.

indulged.

Eros and the Lion: Leonello's Muse

The patronage of the Muses, and of Calliope in particular, was certainly called upon on Leonello's behalf in literary contexts. For instance, in a performance of Francesco Ariosto's *Iside* at carnival in 1444 – a theatrical event in which music certainly played a significant role – Calliope framed the introduction in a preface directed towards 'Lord Leonello, ... best of audiences'.⁴⁹ However, there is some indication that Leonello's Calliope – that is, his muse – was not the standard figure of classical mythology: Tura's *Calliope* is peculiar in that it appears to court a certain licentious air – something that Guarino set out specifically to avoid, or even to refute. Rather like Angelo da Siena's *Erato*, her dress has already come undone at the abdomen, and she holds a suggestive branch of ripe cherries. The impression is so clear that she has sometimes herself been identified as Erato.

The life of Guarino's three-headed muse did not end with its rejection as a painting. It has long been recognised that the strange three-faced head on the reverse of a portrait medal made for Leonello by Pisanello (fig. 30) must represent Calliope in accordance with the humanist's instructions.⁵⁰ Once again, however, the programme has undergone substantive alteration: the head is not that of a woman, but that of a male child – a Cupid. Such unexpected strategies can be much more clearly understood if we realise that Leonello's personal muse was a hybrid – a multivalent inter-refraction of the personae of Calliope and Eros. In Tura's *Calliope* we see Eros dressed in the guise of Calliope; whereas in Pisanello's medal we see Calliope described emblematically through the visage of Eros.

With the help of another image we can further understand that Leonello saw both aspects of his muse's identity as essentially musical. The medal struck in 1444 to commemorate Leonello's second marriage shows on its reverse Eros holding a scroll bearing musical notation; immediately to the left a lion (leone, Leonello) peers closely at the music, his mouth open – evidently he is singing (fig. 31).⁵¹ There can be little doubt that Eros is here literally fulfilling the function of a poetic muse: the ensemble recalls several ancient configurations of the mechanism of divine inspiration. Propertius, for instance, places his muse squarely in the role of musical pedagogue: 'now my Muse teaches me a different harp';⁵² Pindar similarly claims that 'the Muse stood by me as I found a newly shining way to join to Dorian measure a voice of splendid celebration';⁵³ and at the very origins of written poetry we hear that the Muses 'taught Hesiod fine singing'.⁵⁴ In the fifteenth century, in an anonymous poem, we find Lorenzo de' Medici's poetic and musical skill ascribed to the tutelage of Apollo, who sings with him in duet:⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Pirrotta 1975, 11-2 and n.30 – the translation is his.

⁵⁰ See Lippincott 1990, 67-8. Previously it had been argued that the image stood for Prudence – see the bibliography cited in Lippincott 1990, n.75. On another episode in the afterlife of Guarino's three-headed conception, see King 1988.

⁵¹ On this medal see Mottola-Molfino and Natali 1991, 2:33, with further bibliography.

⁵² 'nunc aliam citharam me mea Musa docet' – *Elegiae* II.x.10. I have used the Loeb edition of *Propertius: Elegies*.

⁵³ 'Μοῖσα δ' οὕτω ποι παρέστα μοι νεοστέγλον εὐρόντι τρέπον/ Δωριῶ φωνάν ἑναρμόξου παβιλῶ/ ἀγλαόδοκωμον' – Olympian Ode 3.4-5. I have used the Loeb edition of *Pindar* vol.1.

⁵⁴ *Theogony*, as previously referenced.

⁵⁵ Text and translation Gallo 1995, 77.

Nunc et uterque simul nocteque dieque moratur
et canit ad doctam doctus uterque lyram.

Now both day and night together they tarry
and each skillful singer sings to skillful accompaniment.

Eros appears in the 1444 medal in the guise of a muse (or rather the muse appears in the guise of Eros), in an arrangement that identifies the mechanism of Leonello's inspiration, and of his poetic performance, as musical.

Leonello's vatic Eros certainly takes his muse in a different direction to that envisaged by Guarino, but it was by no means a departure from the Augustan vision. Guarino's Virgilian *vates* signposted austerity and severity of purpose. In the only work of Ovid to gain unqualified acceptance into Battista Guarino's canon of literary education, the *Fasti*, a similar poetics prevails; however, in the Ovidian works assigned by Battista to private pleasure is found something more playful.⁵⁶ In an anachronistic and pointedly self-contradictory moment of satire, Ovid claims for himself the title 'vates' in the proem to his *Ars Amatoria* whilst at one and the same time relinquishing the validation of the elevated subject, and citing his experience as the source of his inspiration.⁵⁷

Ovid's playfully Erotic *vates* finds particularly suggestive, and musical, expression in the poems that open each book of the *Amores*, a collection in which the poet is constantly poking fun at Virgil's epic and his Homeric models. In I.i, in response to Eros' intrusion into his poetic world, Ovid makes a pretense of putting up a fight to preserve his austere heroic credentials, only to be hopelessly enslaved by a shot from Eros' deadly bow (I.i.21-5):

Questus eram, pharetra cum protinus ille soluta
legit in exitium spicula facta meum,
lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum,
"quod" que "canas, vates, accipe" dixit "opus!"
Me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas.

I had uttered this complaint, when forthwith he opened his quiver and selected arrows which had been made for my destruction. He strongly bent his curving bow on his knee and said 'Take this, bard [*vates*], as a subject for your poems.' Alas! that boy had unerring arrows...⁵⁸

It immediately becomes clear (as Eros himself indicates by calling his poet 'vates') that the arrow has become the means of transmission, and the sign, of a new kind of divine inspiration – one that brings about a Venusian transformation of Ovid's muse (I.i.26-30):

⁵⁶ Battista advises that the student 'will take pleasure in Ovid's other works when they shall read them on their own' (*Reliquis eius operibus cum per se ipsos legent indulgebunt*). Kallendorf 2002, 288-9.

⁵⁷ On vatic poetics in Ovid see Ahern 1990 and Pasco-Pranger 2002. Campbell (1997, 41 and 44-5) offers a less detailed discussion of Ovidian poetics in Leonello's *studiola*.

⁵⁸ Throughout this section I have used John Barsby's translation in *Ovid: Amores I* (Oxford, 1973) for Bk. I of the *Amores*, and the Loeb edition (*Ovid* vol. 1) for Bk. II.

uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor.
 Sex mihi surgat opus numeris, in quinque residat:
 ferrea cum vestris bella valete modis!
 cingere litorea flaventia tempora myrto,
 Musa, per undenos emodulanda pedes!

...I am on fire, and Love reigns in my once empty heart.

Let my work rise in six feet and fall again in five. Iron wars with your metre, farewell. Garland your golden brow, my Muse, with myrtle from the sea-shore, for you are to be measured off in eleven foot lengths.

II.i is similar, and even closer to our case. Poets of the heroic mode are ridiculed, for their reward is tragedy, whereas the poet of love is rewarded by a beautiful girl. Here once again the poet is *vates*, and now we acknowledge openly that his songs are given him by Eros himself (II.i.37-8):

ad mea formosos vultus adhibete, puellae,
 carmina, purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor!

And fair ones, turn hither your beautiful faces as I sing the songs which rosy Love dictates to me!

Leonello's muse has likewise undergone an Erotic transformation, so that the poet sings from Cupid's songbook; Ovid here supplies the poetics that bring the revisions to Guarino's scheme to life.

Leonello's two surviving sonnets do much to enhance our picture of Leonello the poet, and draw us even further into the world of his Erotic muse. One is effectively a Petrarchan rewriting of Amores I.i, in which Leonello envisages encountering Eros in the sanctuary of the Muses, and thereby being diverted from his higher purposes to Erotic 'burning':⁵⁹

Batte il Cavallo su la balza alpina,
 E scaturir fa d'Helicon fonte,
 Dove chi le man bagna, e chi la fronte,
 Secondo che più honore o Amor lo inchina.

The Horse strikes the mountain rock,
 And makes the fountain spring from Helicon,
 Where one bathes his hands, and another his brow
 According as honour or Love inclines him more.

Anch'io m'accosto spesso alla divina
 Acqua prodigiosa de quel monte:
 Amor ne ride, che'l sta li con pronte
 Le sue sagitte in forma pellegrina;

I, too, often approach the divine
 And wondrous water of that mountain;
 Thereat laughs love, who lurks there with, ready,
 His darts, disguised as a pilgrim;

⁵⁹ This sonnet is published in Gardner 1904, 53, in transcription and translation. I have used his translation, somewhat altered. Gardner transcribed the poem from Baruffaldi 1713, 21.

E mentre il labbro a ber se avanza e stende;
 Ello con il venen della puntura
 Macola l'onda e venenosa rende;

And whilst my lips to drink I advance and extend;
 He with the venom of the dart
 Marks the stream and renders it venomous;

Si che quell'acqua, che de sua natura
 Renfrescar me dovrebbe, più m'accende,
 E più che bagno, più cresce l'arsura.

So that that water, which by its nature
 Should refresh me, the more inflames me,
 And the more I bathe, the more the burning grows

The other sonnet recounts a second dispute with Amor, this time involving a conversation. In a reversal of a standard poetic trope, Amor has made Leonello blind, and mocks him as he attempts to find his way by hearing and touch alone. The reference to the 'metre' of Amor's scorn signals a continuing and self-conscious link between love's torment and the act of writing (or delivering) verse.

Lo Amor me ha facto cieco, e non ha tanto
 De charità, che me conduca en via,
 Me lassa per despecto en mea balia,
 E dice: hor va tu, che presciumi tanto.

Amor has made me blind, and does not have
 Enough charity, to lead me on the road,
 But leaves me in contempt and at his mercy,
 And says: now go you, that presume so much.

Et eo perche me scento en forze alquanto,
 E stimo de trovar che man me dia,
 Vado, ma puoi non sciò dovo me sia,
 Tal che me fermo dritto in su d'un canto.

And I, because I hear more acutely,
 And think to find what hands give me,
 Go, but cannot know where I am,
 Such that I stop directly in a corner.

Allora Amore, che me sta quatando,
 Me mostra per desprezzo, et me obstenta,
 Et me va canzonando en altro metro.

Then Amor, who assails me,
 Shows me scorn, and hinders me,
 And sings rudely of me in a different metre.

Ne'l dice tanto pian, ch'eo non lo senta:
 Et eo respondo così borbottando:
 Mostrame almen la via, che torna endietro.⁶⁰

He spoke so softly, that I didn't hear:
 And I respond similarly muttering:
 At least show me the road home.

Amor's 'different metre' should probably be read as a reference to the beginning of the *Amores*, rendering tangible the connective ready implicit between his verse and his images. Eros, and his Ovidian poetics, was evidently a primary aspect of Leonello's personal aesthetic. His Calliope was designed, logically enough, to facilitate specifically this poetic vision.

Noting that Leonello was himself a poet, Lewis Lockwood points out that at his court music functioned, among other things, as a style of poetic delivery.⁶¹ The implication, which I propose to raise to the status of a near-certainty, is that at least some of Leonello's poetry was performed as song, and was probably

⁶⁰ Baruffaldi 1713, 21. This sonnet was not published by Gardner.

⁶¹ Lockwood 1984, 64-5. For example, musical settings of two stanzas from a poem written at Leonello's court survive in a manuscript probably made at court shortly after Leonello's death – see Fallows 1977 and Lockwood 1984, 109-18.

designed as such. The aspects of Leonello's poetic self-imaging discussed thus far appear strongly to confirm this view, and even to propose the Belfiore *studiolo* as the natural venue for such performances. His hybrid vatic singing muse, who in the medal we find literally dictating songs to the poet-Prince, relied at least on an archaising *conceit* configuring poetry as song, and there are almost overwhelming reasons to suppose that at Leonello's court that conceit was in fact a reality.

The performing practice Lockwood has in mind is one in which secular verse is sung or declaimed to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, usually *lira da braccio* or lute. Singer and accompanist are usually one and the same person, and the music they used was semi-improvised, based on melodic and rhythmic formulae (or formulaic melodies) linked to the metrical structures of the verse. The practice is extremely difficult to document musically, for the obvious reason that it was very rarely notated; nonetheless, collateral evidence suggests that throughout the fifteenth century it was the favoured musical style in Italy among those of a classicising bent. Nino Pirrotta, for instance, has repeatedly pointed out that most humanist writers treat the notated polyphonic music of the period with disinterest bordering on contempt.⁶²

Lockwood's account of Leonello's documented musical interests offers much to support his assessment, and equally to further my own argument.⁶³ Archival records reveal that during the 1430s Leonello had both a songbook ('libro de canto') and a singing tutor ('regole de canto') copied for his use, and that at least by 1437 he was a competent lutenist.⁶⁴ In that year is recorded the copying of a collection of Leonello's 'cantione et soneti' (songs and sonnets) – undoubtedly 'cantione' is not meant to refer to musical compositions, but to poetry written to be sung.⁶⁵ He explained his interest in a letter to Guarino, probably dating from his student years: 'interdum me ad lrbos revoco, porro cantui et fidibus laxandi animi gratia temporis quicquam concedo' (occasionally as I turn away from books, I then give myself over to singing and lute-playing for the relaxation of the spirit and as a pastime).⁶⁶

The exact role and status of music in Leonello's education and in the humanist cultural mood of his court is difficult to establish with absolute clarity. Guarino has little directly to say on the subject; and though Vittorino da Feltre gave music a place in his curriculum, he admitted it on the one hand as a mathematical and astronomical subject, and on the other as part of a system of education that was not as rigidly circumscribed as Guarino's by humanist modes of thought.⁶⁷ However, the practices and attitudes of Guarino's contemporaries, as well as those espoused by his antique models, suggest that the omission is one of record rather than one of practice.

Guarino's sometime teacher in Padua, Pier Paolo Vergerio, included several comments on music in his *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus adolescentiae studiis liber* (The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth) of 1404, the most widely distributed treatise on education of the fifteenth century.⁶⁸ Having established early on

⁶² On this style of musico-poetic performance see in particular Rubsamen 1943; Kristeller 1947; Rubsamen 1957; Pirrotta and Povoledo 1982; Pirrotta 1984; Prizer 1986; Pirrotta 1994; Gallo 1995, 69-112; Haar 1999.

⁶³ See Lockwood 1984, 46-7 and 64-73. Lockwood's account of music at Leonello's court should be supplemented by the brief comments in Gallo 1995, 72-4.

⁶⁴ The entries are published as Documents 1 and 2 in Lockwood 1976. See also Lockwood 1984, 46.

⁶⁵ Lockwood 1984, 46-7.

⁶⁶ Lockwood 1984, 46 and n.3; the translation is his.

⁶⁷ On music in Vittorino's curriculum see Woodward 1906, 19-20. For a comprehensive and illuminating attempt to get at Guarino's views on music see Gallo 1995, 69-74: his findings throw considerable weight behind the readings here put forward.

⁶⁸ Published in transcription and translation in Kallendorf 2002. The sections here quoted are at 52-3 and 84-5. On Guarino and Vergerio see Woodward 1906, 26-36; and Gallo 1995, 72-3, who reports that Leonello gave Guarino a copy of the treatise.

that ‘among the Greeks, [no-one] ... was ... considered liberally educated unless he knew how to sing and play the lyre’,⁶⁹ he later locates music in more detail within his system. Under the heading ‘De otio et vacatione’ (On Leisure and Relaxation) he declares that ‘Nor will it be unseemly to relax the mind with singing and playing the lute, as we mentioned above.’⁷⁰ By way of authority he (helpfully, for us) adduces the fact that ‘This was the custom of the Pythagoreans’, but (equally helpfully) he places more weight on a Homeric precedent: ‘and it was once a celebrated fact among the archaic heroes that Homer depicted Achilles withdrawing from battle and resting this way’.⁷¹ Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*, whose account of Roman education placed it at the heart of the educational and expository practice of Guarino, Vittorino and many others of their kind, gives the subject of music even greater prominence; although he concedes that it is not central to the orator’s art, Quintilian argues strongly and at length that it is necessary and important.⁷²

The kind and conception of music to which Quintilian, and his fifteenth-century imitators, intend to refer is frequently clarified: its validity derives from its association with poetry and poetics. Quintilian, courting the vatic implications of the combination, notes that ‘Orpheus and Linus, to mention no others, were regarded as uniting the roles of musician, poet and philosopher’.⁷³ Shortly after, he embarks upon a lengthy proof of the assertion that ‘the art of letters and that of music were once united’. His view is reprised in particularly explicit terms during Leonello’s reign in an oration delivered by Gregorio da Città di Castello in Naples, probably on the occasion of the reopening of the University by Alfonso of Aragon (to whose court Leonello’s brothers Ercole and Sigismondo were attached):⁷⁴

...poetica musica dicitur et Musis est consecrata: ...poetam non solum musicae rationem, sed etiam usum habere oportet; quo modo enim tam multa exercebit, quae pertinent ad poetam?

...poetry is called music, and is consecrated to the Muses. ...the poet should not only have a command of the theory of music but should also be skilled in practice, for how else will he exercise many of the skills that pertain to poetry?

It is no doubt with precisely such a ‘literary’ music, and with such humanist and antique justifications, in mind that Decembrio saw fit to allow a lute into his, and by implication Leonello’s, ideal library.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ ‘Ars vero musicae ... magno quondam apud Graecos honore habebatur, nec putabatur quisquam liberaliter eruditus nisi cantu et fidibus sciret’.

⁷⁰ ‘Sed nec erit quidem cantu fidibusque laxare animum; qua de re superius est habita nobis mentio’.

⁷¹ ‘Nam et Pythagoreorum mos hic erat et fuit quondam priscis heroibus celebre, ut Achillem Homerus inducit a pugna redeuntem in hac re solitum acquiescere’.

⁷² On the influence of Quintilian on the early humanist educators see Woodward 1906, 8-10, and many further comments dotted through his first two chapters; also Grafton and Jardine 1982.

⁷³ Quintilian considers music at I.x.2-33.

⁷⁴ On Gregorio’s oration see Gallo 1995, 102-3. I have used the transcription and translation given there. He offers several similar examples in the same chapter.

⁷⁵ Decembrio places the following in Leonello’s mouth in the course of the discussion of the ideal library: ‘Intra bibliothecam insuper horoscopium, aut sphaeram cosmicam, citharam habere non dedecet, si ea quandoque delecteris: quae nisi cum volumus, nihil instrepuit.’ (As well [as books] it is not unseemly to have in the library an instrument for drawing up horoscopes or a celestial sphere, or even a lute if your pleasure ever lies that way: it makes no noise unless you want it to.) – text and translation Baxandall 1965, 196 with n.35.

In light of such evidence and such modes of thought, it seems very likely that a lute (or a *lira da braccio*) was likewise to be found in the Belfiore *studiolo*, and that improvised musical performance was integral to Leonello's very conception of his poetry. The images with which his *studiolo* is associated responded to and bolstered, indeed are utterly integrated with, the musical poetics of his leisured identity. His hybrid muse brought him song both in conceit and in practice.

Siren Voices: Borso's Muse

At some point after its initial completion, probably during the reign of Borso d'Este, Leonello's brother and successor, Tura's *Calliope* was significantly altered. Most importantly for our purposes, the muse's throne was rendered considerably more ornate, with the addition of several fantastical, jewel-encrusted dolphins and a shell (operating as in a shell niche). Campbell notes, justly, that these marine motifs have the effect of metamorphosing our already erotic Muse into a Siren.⁷⁶

On the basis of this observation, Campbell argues that the painting pointedly adopts a somewhat inflammatory position within contemporary debates surrounding the propriety of poetry – one contrary (once again) to the intentions of Guarino.⁷⁷ The feminine person and beautiful voice of the Siren conveniently encapsulate a range of moral concerns over verse: seductive beauty of surface, concealing content that is at best vacuous, at worst licentious and degrading.⁷⁸ The Sirens' position and utility within the tradition *contra* poetry pivots upon their appearance at the beginning of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. We find a poet, grief-stricken at his misfortune and abandoned by reason, receiving laments by dictation from elegiac Muses. Philosophy arrives to save him and dismisses these 'poeticas Musas' (Muses of poetry), labelling them 'scenicas meretriculas' (theatrical tarts) and 'Sirenes'.⁷⁹ Instead of clothing its subject in the garb of philosophical and useful respectability, a siren-muse seems to clarify the painting's statement in favour of poetry's degenerate potential.

If the Sirens could be invoked to condemn poetry, they might be employed even more obviously and successfully against music.⁸⁰ A convenient example may be drawn from Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque Fortune*, completed in 1366 and widely circulated throughout the fifteenth century.⁸¹ In the course of dialogue 23, 'De

⁷⁶ Campbell 1997, 39-40. Although the canonical classical authors almost unanimously render the Siren as half woman half bird, the tradition giving them instead the tail of a fish was extant in antiquity and was dominant by the late Middle Ages. New philology notwithstanding, the standard Siren of the Renaissance was associated with fish, not birds, and was more-or-less synonymous with 'mermaid'. See Holford-Strevens 2006, 29-37. Of course, the dolphin is not, strictly speaking, a fish, but it was considered as such in the period in question.

⁷⁷ Campbell 1997, 40-51.

⁷⁸ The universal applicability of these moral paranoias, and their inevitable association with the female body, is discussed in Lichtenstein 1987.

⁷⁹ I.26-41. I have used the Loeb edition of *Boethius: Tractates, Consolation*. This section of Boethius' text and its Renaissance reception are discussed in detail in Panizza 1990, and again more briefly in Buhler 2006, 182-3. Boethius' patchy popularity among humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is outlined in Grafton 1981, 410-1.

⁸⁰ A wealth of examples (though, I think, not the one I am about to use) can be found in Austern and Naroditskaya 2006.

⁸¹ Conrad Rawski (1967, 13) describes the *De Remediis* as 'one of the basic books of the early Renaissance'. The complete latin text (not to speak of compilations and translations) survives in well over a hundred manuscript copies, and about thirty printed editions (the first of 1474). On the transmission and reception of the *De Remediis* see Rawski 1967, 8, 13-5, and nn.13 and 88, with the further references given there.

cantu et dulcedine a musica' (On the sweetness of music), the Sirens are marshalled as evidence of music's ability to deceive:⁸²

Gaudium: Cantibus sonisque permulceor.

Ratio: Et fere cantu falluntur et volucres illud mirabilis ... Ad hec sirenes cantu fallere creditum.
... et ad summam nihil ad fallendum voce aptius.

Joy: I am charmed by songs and sounds.

Reason: Also wild animals and birds are tricked by song. ... The Sirens, too, are believed to deceive by song ... there is nothing more suited for deceit than the voice.

In the same response, Reason offers further evidence of musical seduction pertinent to our case. Taking one of the myths deployed most frequently to music's credit, but turning it to the theme of deception, Petrarch recalls that:⁸³

...musica quoque dulcedine pisces tangi. Nota tibi Arionis ac delphinis est fabella ... Astipulantur imagines enec illic ubi e tanto periculo incolumnis primum appulsus est natantis piscis tergo insidens fidicen

...even the fish are touched by the sweetness of music. You know the story of Arion and the dolphins ... after such great danger the harper was first brought to shore unharmed, sitting on the back of the swimming fish.

Not only the Siren-muse herself, but also the dolphins that establish the marine context in Tura's painting are evidence of music's seduction. In keeping with the painting's conception, then, the contemporary and classical associations courted by its revisions remain pervasively musical, as well as undeniably poetic. If the siren-muse made a statement in favour of poetry's seduction, it took an equally clear position in relation to similar concerns over music – an aim that, I will later argue, made perfect sense at Borso's court.

It seems certain that the re-designers of the painting were aware of such negative associations, but I suspect they did not motivate the change. Perhaps the idiosyncratic musico-poetic identity of Leonello's erotic muse was simply too contingent upon the dead Marchese's own poetic identity to enjoy currency under his successor. Under such circumstances, the transformation of the erotic and musical muse into a siren was a logical step – a way of making less contingent sense of the painting's elements. Perhaps the fashions represented by the panel had simply become passé.⁸⁴ The change was not bland, however, and its interpretative

⁸² Text and translation Rawski 1971, 306 and 308-9. It is worth noting that, writing in a different mode, Petrarch was able to use the Sirens to a different (though equally seductive) end: in canzone 167 Laura is 'questa sola fra noi del ciel sirena' (this Siren of heaven who alone is amongst us). For a wide-ranging exploration of the problem of the Siren for music-making women in the early modern period, see Calogero 2006.

⁸³ Text and translation Rawski 1971, 306 and 308-9.

⁸⁴ In the course of justifying nude painting, Decembrio notes that 'non omnis tegumenti usus. neque omnibus temporibus et gentibus placet. Aliaque idcirco aliis calceamentorum genera vel sagulorum cingulorumue. armorum etiam ipsis picturis irridentur.' (it is not every fashion of clothing that pleases every subsequent generation and race: some kinds of shoes and cloaks and belts and even

rationale can easily, if speculatively, be located within Borso's Ferrara, and within musical culture.

The Sirens' associations were not uniformly negative. The system of celestial harmony (as we have seen) was usually demonstrated by assigning to each planet a muse or a musical interval, but according to a Platonic view it was attributable instead to the Sirens. Giorgio Anselmi revived this alternative perspective for the fifteenth century in his *De musica*.⁸⁵

Non est autem unus modus idem, quem celi omnes felicesque hi spiritus [qui] in his insident decantant; sed pro illorum diversitate tam diversus quam consonus. Supersedent autem spiritus hi secundum suos ordines, et per eorum ad sphaeras congruentiam, quatenus omnis harmonie vis redundet. Sunt vero spiritus quos Socrates in Republica Platonis Syrenas nominavit, cum singulas orbibus singulis insidere dixit. Interpretatur vero Syren deus canons per pius incessantes a cantu spiritus, sicut sphaeras a motu significari voluit. Nostri vero theologi melius spiritus hos angelos appellant...

...it is not a single mode that all the heavens sing, with the blessed spirits who inhabit them, but, diverse as they are, one which is as varied as it is harmonious. ... These spirits preside according to their ranks, and the whole force of harmony flows forth from them, owing to their correspondence with the spheres.

These are in truth the spirits which Socrates in the *Republic* of Plato called Sirens, each sitting, as he said, upon one ring. 'Siren' in fact means a singing god, but he actually meant to signify spirits, as ceaseless in their song as the spheres are in their motion. Our theologians more correctly call these spirits angels...

Anselmi, a citizen of Parma (at times within Este territory) of good family, who studied in Pavia and worked in Ferrara, was not a professional musician.⁸⁶ His treatise, composed in 1434, is written accessibly in dialogic form.⁸⁷ He died in the first years of Leonello's reign, but his work enjoyed currency among music theorists (e.g. Gafori) and humanists (e.g. Giorgio Valla) during the second half of the century. Although I know of no evidence that Borso took an interest in music theory, both Leonello and (perhaps) Rinaldo Maria d'Este owned music treatises and, as a local authority, it is probable that Anselmi's work was known at court. Perhaps more significantly, a cosmic-harmonic reading of the siren-muse sits comfortably alongside the principal painting project of Borso's reign – the *Salone dei Mesi* in Palazzo Schifanoia, which offers an astrological scheme charting the zodiacal months. As also (indeed primarily) an established authority on

armour become ridiculous even in paintings) – text and trans. Baxandall 1963, 314-5. Of course, the point counts for the style of the representation as well as for the style of the things represented.

⁸⁵ Text Handschin 1948, 131; translation Godwin 1993, 149-50. On the Platonic Sirens see Holford-Strevens 2006, 22-3; Calogero 2006, 140-6. Plato introduces the idea in *Republic* 10.617 B 4-7; Macrobius, attempting to explain it, claims that 'siren' means 'singing to god' – a rationalisation adopted in garbled form by Anselmi. Campbell mentions the involvement of Sirens in the harmony of the spheres very briefly (1997, 39), but does not offer a fifteenth-century reference, much less locate the idea in Ferrarese territory.

⁸⁶ On Anselmi's life, see Handschin 1948, 124; Massera 1961, 7-19; Palisca 1985, 8. Anselmi practised in Ferrara, and later in Modena, as a doctor of some renown. Massera (1961, 14) hypothesises that he was invited to Ferrara in 1420 by Niccolò III himself, who later conferred upon him honorary citizenship.

⁸⁷ Palisca (1985, 8) suggests that the *De musica* was a university textbook, and that Anselmi taught in the faculty of arts and medicine at the university of Parma.

astrology, Anselmi may have seemed an obvious source for such a scheme.⁸⁸

The identification of Calliope in particular as a Siren may also have enjoyed the support of current antique authority. In his commentary on Virgil, against most other authorities, Servius identifies her as the Sirens' mother.⁸⁹ Servius' work was certainly familiar in Ferrara: Decembrio gave it a place among the learned references assigned to Leonello in his *De politia litteraria*, and he later complained to Borso that his own copy of the commentary (among other possessions) had been stolen.⁹⁰ It also supplied much of the material for Guarino's Latin lexicon, a tool prepared for his classroom.⁹¹ In fact, it is from another author close to Guarino's heart that the Sirens receive a rationalisation which brings them into precise alignment with the humanist's initial interpretation of the Muses. In Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum* we read that:

Neque enim suavitatem videntur aut novitatem quadam et varietate cantandi revocare eos solitare qui praetervehebantur, sed quia multa se scire profitebantur, ut homines ad earum saxa discendi cupiditate adhaerescerent.

Apparently it was not the sweetness of their voices or the novelty and diversity of their songs, but their professions of knowledge that used to attract the passing voyagers; it was the passion for learning that kept men rooted to the Sirens' rocky shores.⁹²

Once again, the revision to the scheme of the painting is playful and subversive, but elegant and defensible even within the parameters of its original conception.

It is in the *Salone dei Mesi* that our Siren-Muse touches base with the culture and conception of musical practice at Borso's court. Music features most prominently in spring – in particular in the month of April (or rather Taurus), presided over by Venus.⁹³ To the right of Venus' triumphal car, a group of young men and women in courtly dress, many of whom hold lutes and recorders, flirt happily with one another. (fig. 32) Around them a lush landscape is teeming with rabbits, and above them the Graces wheel in their dance, holding orchard fruits (apples or quinces), commonly associated with marriage and sex.⁹⁴ The scene is self-evidently one of seduction, appropriate to the season, in which music is apportioned an important role.

Lockwood qualifies the role of music in this fresco on two fronts.⁹⁵ First, he observes that the

⁸⁸ On Anselmi's non-musical treatises and their surviving copies see Handschin 1948, 124. His astrological writings appear still to have been in circulation in the middle of the sixteenth century. For further comments on music and astrology in fifteenth-century Ferrara see Cavicchi 2007, 137-9.

⁸⁹ The passage in question can be found published in translation in Holford-Strevens 2006, 24.

⁹⁰ Celenza 2004, 71-2 and 54-5 respectively. Celenza gives text and translation of the relevant section of *De politia litteraria* in his appendix, with the reference to Servius appearing at 87. See also Baxandall 1963, 310-1; and Ross 1990, 57 and 63. Borso ordered his copy of the completed *De politia litteraria* in 1463 (Baxandall 1963, 306). Once again, Campbell notes the Servian Calliope in passing, but prefers the moral-poetic reading and so does not pursue the reference into the Ferrarese milieu.

⁹¹ Grafton and Jardine 1982, 64-5.

⁹² This view evidently proceeds from an unusually literal reading of Homer. Text and trans. are those of H. Rackham published in the Loeb edition. The same passage is discussed to quite different ends in Buhler 2006, 179-80.

⁹³ On the frescoes of the *Salone dei Mesi* see Lippincott 1987, esp. 77-81 on the Taurus panels. She notes that its musical iconography is related to that of the Garden of Love, which is certainly correct, but does not preclude a parallel relation to contemporary court life.

⁹⁴ On quinces and sex see Callahan 1997.

⁹⁵ Lockwood discusses music in the Schifanoia frescoes at Lockwood 1984, 89-93.

musicians are not actually playing, concluding that 'sober and temperate' music-making is incompatible with the bawdy turn the scene has taken, and is now displaced by lascivious action. Second, he argues that here music is purely symbolic, that lutes and recorders make an improbable ensemble, that the scene could not really have taken place. These objections are perhaps a little cautious (in the interests of musical propriety, both moral and historical), and in fact I view the scene as remarkable for the subtexts it highlights in courtly musical practice at Borso's court.⁹⁶

In establishing a connection between music and seduction Borso was not innovating, but he *was* taking a music-ideological position: rendering axiomatic and valid something that made most serious commentators deeply uncomfortable. The association of music and love is acknowledged without judgement or philosophical obfuscation only at the most courtly and humanist end of the contemporary music-theoretical discourse. In his *Complexus effectuum musices*, written at the court of Naples immediately after Borso's death (d.1471), Johannes Tinctoris lists as the seventeenth in his catalogue of music's 'effects' 'Amorem allicere' (to attract love):⁹⁷

Unde Ovidius puellis amorem virorum allicere cupientibus praecipit ut cantare discant. Enimvero in tertio libro *De arte amandi* sic inquit:

*Res est blanda canor: discant cantare puellae
(Pro facie multis vox sua lena fuit).*

Hinc est quod cum Orpheus liram dulcissime pulsaret, multas mulieres eius amore incensas a poetis traditum est. ...

So Ovid advises girls desirous of attracting men's love to learn singing. Indeed, in *Ars amatoria* he says:

'Song is seductive: girls should learn to sing (her voice,
And not her face, has many a girl's procuress been).

That is why poets record that when Orpheus strummed sweetly on his lyre, many women were fired with love for him.

Tinctoris turns to classical examples, but his taxonomy of musical effect was not a purely intellectual exercise: as Castiglione would later remark, 'the words of songs are nearly always amorous'.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Although it is the lower panels of the *Salone dei Mesi* frescoes that most explicitly depict court life, Charles Rosenberg (1982, 539 with n.35) has pointed out that several of the upper panels also make obvious reference to the circumstances and achievements of Borso's reign.

⁹⁷ An edition and translation of the treatise by J. Donald Cullington, with an introductory essay by Reinhard Strohm, is to be found in Cullington 2001. The passage quoted is to be found at pages 81 (text) and 64 (translation). Pietrobono, who continued in Ferrara under Borso, worked briefly in Naples immediately after Borso's death; Tinctoris in turn visited Ferrara in 1479 – see Lockwood 1975, 127-8. The two courts enjoyed frequent cultural and political relations throughout the fifteenth century. For moralising and paranoid views on the subject of music and love, see Chapter IV of the present study.

⁹⁸ Castiglione 1967, 121.

As implied by the presence of music only in Spring and Summer in Schifanoia (April, May, June), secular music-making, and in particular lavish musical entertainments, were to a significant extent envisioned as outdoor activities. No doubt this view was partly decreed by music's pervasive association with feasting and dancing, which also frequently took place out of doors. It explains the consistent association of musical recreation with landscape, encountered here and throughout the rest of the present study; and thus also the frequent association of musical recreation with the Este country palaces (*delizie*), inhabited during the sunny months and designed to appropriate the landscape to the ends of noble leisure. Thus, though lute and recorder may never have played together, both are appropriate as the tools of rural recreation.⁹⁹

In fact, the April fresco was not the only Este painting to propose such an ensemble: a precedent was on the walls of Belfiore itself, and thus April's choice of instruments helps to locate its musical scene more tangibly within the life (perhaps, still, the imagined life) of the court. Sabadino describes a fresco in the Belfiore villa depicting the rural leisure of Alberto I d'Este and his court:

Finita la venatione se vedono poi, posti in uno fiorito prato, le mense parate et intorno a quelle li scombenti sopra l'herba, con li servitori genuflessi per comodo servire, che saporoso invito duona la pictura a chi vede li discombenti mangiare, existendo da uno canto in desia il principe Alberto vestito di brocato d'oro, havendo in capo una purpurea bireta lunga sino al dorso, ala fogia de quel tempo. Mangiato che hano si vedeno ad uno limpido fonte reducti et al.cuni pelegriini gioveni e dame danzare al suono de cythare e tibie et al. suono de una arpa sonata da una dama, et al.tre donne e donzelle che tesseno girlande de fiori et de herbette per ornarse le bianche trezze.

Having finished the hunt we see then, located in a flowery meadow, the dinner-tables prepared and around them they [the courtiers] scatter themselves on the grass, with the servants kneeling so as to serve conveniently, so tasty an invitation the picture gives to whoever sees these scattered diners, there being on one side on a dais the prince Alberto dressed in gold brocade, having on his head a long purple cap [reaching] down to his back, in the style of that time. They having eaten one sees a limpid, flowing source and several wanderers, and young men and ladies dancing to the sound of lutes and pipes and to the sound of a harp played by a lady, and other women and maidens who weave garlands of flowers and herbs to ornament their blond tresses.¹⁰⁰

A more up-to-date account of musical recreation at Belfiore is also available. Reporting to his mother on a leisurely summer's day at the palace in 1468, Sforza Maria Sforza wrote that:

Heri non andassimo in campagna ma al disnare havessimo diversi piaceri, de clavicembali, de liuti, de buffoni et de Magistro Zohanne Orbo; quale dixit maravigliosamente, piu de l'usato.

Yesterday we did not go into the countryside but at dinner we had various pleasures, of harpsichords, of lutes, of fools and of Mr Zohanne Orbo; who spoke marvellously [i.e. recited

⁹⁹ Charles Rosenberg (1997, 86) reads the rural vistas in Schifanoia as relating closely to the entertainments of the court in the countryside.

¹⁰⁰ Text Gundersheimer 1972, 68.

extempore], out of the ordinary.¹⁰¹

Here we find indication that the varieties of musical recreation to which Tura's muse was originally addressed were still very much alive at Borso's court – an impression confirmed by other evidence. Pietrobono was still the first among his musicians, and may have been a feature of the entertainments enjoyed by Sforza Maria and his party.¹⁰²

A Courty Eros: Alfonso's Muse

Although Belfiore was largely destroyed during the war with Venice in 1482-4, Tura's *Calliope* evidently survived and graced the spaces of Alfonso's childhood – perhaps Ercole's *studiolo*, redecorated in the 1480s.¹⁰³ The 'blacksmith story' of the invention of music was taken up again during Alfonso's reign, in a way that suggests a close relationship with the earlier painting (whose history has already supplied a rich background to the erotically charged musicality of Alfonso's *studiolo*). I have in mind Dosso Dossi's *Allegory of Music*, probably made for Duke Alfonso in the 1520s (fig. 33).¹⁰⁴ At the left of this painting a torch-bearing putto attends a blacksmith, whose hammer blows strike musical notes from the anvil; in the centre a seated, draped woman with a *lira da braccio* at her feet presents a plaque bearing a canon notated in a circle; at the right an entirely nude woman stands gazing at the sky, supporting a plaque bearing a canon notated in a triangle. Several interpretations have been proposed in detail, though all agree that the subject-matter pertains to music. According to one view, the blacksmith is Vulcan, with whom Alfonso (as himself an enthusiastic metallurgist) was sometimes compared; according to another he is Tubal Cain.¹⁰⁵ The women might be sacred and profane Venuses, or they might signify the superiority of notated polyphonic music (the canons) over improvised instrumental music (the *lira da braccio*); on the other hand, they might be members of Tubal Cain's family, and the *lira da braccio* might stand for Jubal.¹⁰⁶ According to another view, the smith is Vulcan conflated with Tubal

¹⁰¹ Letter of 22 August 1468, published in Lockwood 1984, 105, with a slightly different translation.

¹⁰² For a detailed documentary assessment of music at Borso's court, including his patronage of Pietrobono, see Lockwood 1984, 95-108.

¹⁰³ In 1481 four panels depicting female figures were altered by Tura and added to three fresh panels depicting female nudes to decorate Ercole's study. Presumably the resulting scheme was the seven Liberal Arts. Tuohy (1991, 426) has suggested that the four pre-existing panels were muses from Belfiore, specifically the four muses that show signs of overpainting. He does not mention that these four panels are also linked by the fact that they have been cut down, effectively removing their inscriptions (and thus their identity as muses); as the panels were otherwise left further from standard Liberal Arts than they were from muses, it seems possible that this was the most substantial alteration made by Tura in 1481. Interestingly, a quick reconstruction of the new scheme on this basis would suggest that the *Calliope* panel became Music.

¹⁰⁴ Cavalli-Björkman (1987, 74) suggests that this painting was made for Alfonso's *studiolo*, but the connection is implausible and has not been generally accepted, though it is usually assumed that it was hung somewhere in Alfonso's palace or castle. Camiz (1983, 85) shows clearly that two separate paintings by Dosso featuring blacksmiths circulated among the cardinals following the return of Ferrara to the Church in 1598: one almost certainly came from the *studiolo* and involved a ram and a chameleon; the other is the *Allegory*. However, Camiz' evidence does support the idea that the painting was made for Alfonso, and even perhaps that it came from his apartment in the Via Coperta. The generally agreed date for the work is ca.1522.

¹⁰⁵ A comprehensive bibliography and digest of the literature on this painting can be found in Humfrey and Lucco 1998, 154-8. The most thorough study to date is Slim 1990. The Vulcan theory is expounded in most detail in Camiz 1983, 85-7. The Tubal Cain link is advocated in Parigi 1940, 272-4; Mirimonde 1968, 306; and Gibbons 1968, 92-5. It is discussed at length in Slim 1990.

¹⁰⁶ See Gibbons 1968, 97 and Mirimonde 1968, 307 on sacred and profane Venuses; Parigi 1940, 277-8 on notated vs improvised music; and

Cain, and he has created in turn music's elements, musical instruments and musical compositions, which last are protected by classical 'tutelary goddesses'.¹⁰⁷ Finally, it has recently been suggested that the seated woman represents up-to-date instrumental and the standing one old-fashioned vocal music, adding up to a manifesto for Willaert's *musica nova*.¹⁰⁸ None of these interpretative strategies can be accepted without qualification.

To my knowledge, there was (and is) no story connecting Vulcan, as a blacksmith, with the invention of music. The list of 'ancients' to whom a claim could usually be assigned, rehearsed repeatedly in the prefatory matter of contemporary music treatises, included Mercury, Apollo, Orpheus, Amphion, Arion, Linus, Musaeus, but never Vulcan. Moreover, Dosso's smith is manifestly receiving divine inspiration, which would be superfluous if he was himself a god.¹⁰⁹ Nor is there anything in the picture to identify the blacksmith specifically as Tubal Cain, and the attempt to identify the other characters as members of his family is utterly implausible. I suspect also that Slim is on the wrong track in equating the tablets on which the music is depicted with the pillars, one of stone and one of marble, on which Jubal supposedly inscribed his musical discoveries, unless Dosso has morphed them so far as to make a nonsense of their original pertinence.¹¹⁰ The most widely circulated blacksmith story at the time the painting was made was certainly that involving Pythagoras,¹¹¹ but accepting that reference in particular would identify Dosso's blacksmith rather disappointingly as an unknown Greek.

More likely, like Tura, Dosso did not set out to illustrate one story of music's invention in particular, but to invoke the tradition associating the invention of music with a blacksmith in general. In doing so, he combines the figure of the blacksmith (unnamed Greek/Tubal Cain) and the blacksmith's auditor (Pythagoras/Jubal), who in theory played the more important role, into a single figure. The numbers on the hammers and the notes being struck out on the anvil seem to indicate that the man is fully aware of the musical

Gibbons 1968, 94-5 on identifying Tubal Cain's family. It is highly unlikely that Dosso could have meant to show notated music to be superior to improvised: it is conceivable that a contemporary music theorist could have expressed such a view; but among courtiers, improvisers enjoyed credibility (economic, social, intellectual) usually vastly in advance of that sustained by their polyphonist-composer counterparts.

¹⁰⁷ Haar 1995, 267-9. Haar's view, advanced tentatively, is rather vaguely expressed and left entirely unsubstantiated.

¹⁰⁸ Cavicchi 2004. Cavicchi's argument is based on several untenable premises: that instrumental music was 'new' in the Ferrara of the 1510s (most of his own examples of Ferrarese interest in such music date from the fifteenth century); that Josquin was considered *passé* in the Ferrara of the 1510s; that Willaert's *Musica nova* of 1558 relied on experiments in instrumental music undertaken under the influence of neoplatonism in Ferrara in the years 1515-20; that Pythagoras' theories of consonance could be considered 'new' to musical thought in the early sixteenth century; that instrumental music was more popular than vocal at the Ferrarese court of the 1510s; that the standing woman in the painting is old, flabby and decrepit, whilst the seated woman is young and seductive; that the circle canon represents instrumental music because it has no text, whilst the triangle canon, which also has no text, does not.

¹⁰⁹ Although Camiz' general contention that Alfonso courted an association with Vulcan is well taken, her evidence that Vulcan was thought to have anything to do with music is slim in the extreme. It amounts to a *moresca* staged for Ippolito in 1509, in which Vulcan and his helpers danced to musical accompaniment entirely typical of the *moresca*; and a Ferrarese poem published in 1581 in which Vulcan sings whilst undertaking his usual task of making Jove's thunderbolts.

¹¹⁰ Slim 1990, 68-9. Slim suggests that the columns have been conflated with the tablets on which in some cases composers of the Renaissance actually worked, a suggestion whose apparent plausibility is perhaps misleading. The habit of depicting important things inscribed on stone is in any case a central aspect of classicising image-making.

¹¹¹ Mirimonde (1968, 297-300) documents a tradition of depicting Tubal Cain at the forge as an adjunct to *Musica*, the Liberal Art, with many examples from the fifteenth century. However, his evidence suggests that Tubal Cain and *Musica* parted company towards the end of the fifteenth century, and sixteenth-century *Musicians* do not feature him at all (300-5). In the field of music theory, Jubal enjoyed a brief prominence around the middle of the fifteenth century, but is otherwise mentioned only in passing as a biblical alternative to Pythagoras, whose music-proportional discoveries take centre stage (McKinnon 1978, 10-8).

significance of his action, and in fact turn the act of hammering into a literal creation of music – the notes from which music is made (music's 'materia') are being constituted as we watch. The torch-bearing putto who engages the blacksmith's attention presumably represents the 'divine will' by which Pythagoras' discovery was facilitated (as in Tinctoris' account – 'Through a certain divine will, while passing by a mechanic's workshop, he recognised that these three concords were produced by the blows of the hammers'). More literally, the torch may signify knowledge, and thus we are viewing the moment of inspiration in which the larger significance of the hammers' sound is realised.

The women offer two kinds of music: The standing, nude woman gazes at the heavens, and holds a tablet bearing a canon notated in a triangle – the perfect shape of Christian theology.¹¹² The seated, clothed woman gazes at her companion's beautiful body, and holds a tablet bearing a canon notated in a circle – the perfect shape of Greek antiquity.¹¹³ At the feet of the second woman is a *lira da braccio*, an instrument associated (as we have seen) with secular music, and equally placed by painters (including Dosso and Titian) in the hands of ancient proto-musicians such as Apollo and Orpheus. With her right hand she points languidly at the instrument. One woman, then, conflates the music of the ancient pagan world with contemporary secular music according to a standard conceit, whilst the other stands for sacred music in the Christian tradition. It is highly convenient to this allegory that the blacksmith story could be related to a classical and a biblical music-inventor, and Dosso certainly did not set out to tie himself to one or the other.

The music associated with the 'Christian' woman is indeed sacred, identified by Slim as the second *Agnus dei* from Josquin's *Missa L'Homme Armé super voces musicales*. That associated with the 'pagan' woman is unidentified.¹¹⁴ It appears to employ a North-European style and technique, unsurprising given that the technique of canon would have been rather anachronistic within the vernacular secular music popular at the Italian courts in the early sixteenth century. Attempts to align it with Willaert's oeuvre seem doomed to fail, and Cavicchi notes that it is stylistically similar to chansons in the Casanatense chansonnier, a Ferrarese repertoire of the 1480s.¹¹⁵ Despite the French overtones, in view of the presence of the *lira da braccio* it seems likely that the intended reference is to the performance of poetry as song to instrumental accompaniment.¹¹⁶

In this light it seems impossible to ignore the echoes of the neoplatonic conception of love, though at a realistic level of sophistication – as expressed (with both a musical and a theological flavour) by Bembo and Castiglione:

I shall speak of the kind of beauty I now have in mind, which is that seen in the human body ...
and which prompts the ardent desire we call love; ... this beauty is an influx of the divine

¹¹² The canon itself draws attention to the triangle's significance with its instruction: 'trinitas in un[um]'. The number three is also of relevance to the internal construction of the music, on which see Slim 1990, 62. The canon notated as a circle, in turn, is in fact a 'circle canon' – one that can repeat endlessly. The interval of the octave, at which the canon operates, was described by some Renaissance theorists (including Gallicus, mentioned earlier) as perfect and therefore equivalent to the circle. See Slim 1990, 63-4. For an attempt to relate the activities of the blacksmith to the internal proportional workings of the canons, see Slim 1990, 77-8.

¹¹³ According to Aristotle, 'the circle is a perfect thing' (*De Caelo* 1, 2), the which inspired composers to adopt the circle as a mensuration sign for the mensural proportion known as *tempus perfectum*. See Slim 1990, 63. As Slim details at some length, the circle could also connote perfection in a Christian context, and the triangle perfection in a classical, but I suspect that here Dosso aims at their most obvious connotations.

¹¹⁴ On the identification of the two canons and their musical characteristics see Slim 1990, 52-60.

¹¹⁵ Cavicchi 2004, 85.

¹¹⁶ French polyphonic and Italian monodic song styles were clearly mingled at the courts of Ercole, Isabella and Alfonso.

goodness ... well proportioned and composed of a certain joyous harmony ... Thus the mind is seized by desire for the beauty which it recognises as good, and, if it allows itself to be guided by what the senses tell it, it falls into the gravest errors and judges that the body is the chief cause of the beauty which it enshrines ... deceived by the resemblance they see, they soon experience unbridled desire once more ... the only pleasures they experience in love are the same as those enjoyed by unreasoning animals

with the help of reason the courtier should turn his desire completely away from the body to beauty alone ... an abstraction distinct from any material form ... he will determine to make use of this love as a step by which to climb to another that is far more sublime ... And thus he will come to contemplate not the particular beauty of a single woman but the universal beauty ... Thus, when it has become blind to earthly things, the soul opens its eyes wide to those of heaven ... it has discovered the traces of God¹¹⁷

Dosso's personification of pagan, secular music contemplates the beauty of her companion's physical body, whilst the personification of sacred music contemplates the heavens. The Pythagorean blacksmith carries with him the mystical conception of harmony that inflects Bembo's vision of a universalised beauty ('well proportioned and composed of a certain joyous harmony').

With this in mind we turn finally to the putto at the left. He carries not only a torch, which might pertain to divine inspiration in general, but also a quiver slung over his shoulder: he is clearly Eros.¹¹⁸ In a picture offering a musical theology of love, and in light of the interpretation given above of Leonello's muse, it seems entirely appropriate that here it should be Eros who 'dictates the song' – that Eros is the source of the 'divine will' that inspires the blacksmith. By a happy coincidence, it is precisely this device that frames Bembo's discussion of love in the *Courtier*.¹¹⁹

...since I know that I am unworthy to speak of Love's sacred mysteries, I pray him [i.e. Love] so to inspire my thoughts and words that I can teach this excellent courtier of ours how to love in a manner beyond the capacity of the vulgar crowd.

As Castiglione, Bembo and many others make abundantly clear, music was almost invariably and more generally associated with love, and thus to construct a musical theology of love was a logical and characteristic step. In fact, Castiglione associates earthly love specifically with performance on the *lira da braccio*, just as Dosso's

¹¹⁷ I offer here a digest of Castiglione's discussion of love, ventriloquised through Bembo: Castiglione 1967, 322-44. Bembo was an appropriate mouthpiece for such views largely as a result of his *Gli Asolani*, a text which was written in Ferrara and dedicated to Lucrezia Borgia. See also Kristeller's discussion of music in Ficino's philosophy – Kristeller 1947, 156-60; however, it is not necessary (and in fact not helpful) to resort to the less accessible work of the Florentine neoplatonists to arrive at a neoplatonic interpretation of the painting, and nor is it necessary to join Mirimonde in identifying the women specifically as sacred and profane Venuses.

¹¹⁸ Slim (1990, 52) complains that Eros was not often identified by a torch in the Renaissance, but in fact he was so identified in Mantegna's *Pallas expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, with which Dosso was certainly familiar – see Chapter V of the present study – and, contemporaneously, in Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arradia* (Sannazaro 1966, 47).

¹¹⁹ Castiglione 1967, 333.

painting appears to propose.¹²⁰ The step was logical, too, in light of the fact that Ficino developed in his philosophy an association between spiritual love and Pythagorean theories concerning the harmony of the spheres. He and others associate celestial harmony specifically with the number three.¹²¹

I suspect it is no coincidence that this painting picks up key themes addressed by the figure of Tura's Muse, which as I have mentioned hung in the palace of Alfonso's childhood (and, there is no reason to doubt, his adulthood). It has been suggested that Dosso's canvas formed part of a series of seven Liberal Arts, for which Ercole's equivalent series might easily have furnished inspiration.¹²² The association of music with Eros, as well as the blacksmith inventor of music and the close association of classical and contemporary secular song, had already been central aspects of the conception of music at the Ferrarese court for several decades. Here they are subjected to a conceptual update entirely appropriate to the decade that saw the publication of Castiglione's book. It seems not inappropriate, even, to identify our seated classical/secular musician as a Muse, visually designed in dialogue with the seventy-year-old panels, with which her pose and attire share several things in common.

¹²⁰ Castiglione's sequence of thought and logic is not entirely clear on this point. In a discussion of music, given earlier in the book, he advises old men not to sing to the *lira da braccio* in public because 'the words of songs are nearly always amorous, and in old men love is altogether ridiculous' (Castiglione 1967, 121). Later on (322-3) he recalls this condemnation in order to introduce a qualification: base love is not suited to old men, but celestial love suits them better than it does the young. We are therefore left to infer that the love evidenced in singing to the *lira* is earthly.

¹²¹ Slim 1990, 65.

¹²² McTavish 1988, 13. The suggestion is, however, very tentative.

VII

Conclusions: Living Music at Court

Decorated Space and Musical Meaning

In these last few chapters I have been considering music not just as a sonic event but as an interpreted act – the prompt of discussion, thought and measured reaction. It is not least in this respect that music has a place in the private spaces of the Renaissance palace: over the course of the fifteenth century, the contents of private libraries migrated from the pages of books to the walls in pigment; and thus the paintings I have discussed were designed specifically to offer their audience the kind of more-or-less elevated discussion associated with literary culture – albeit in a mode more appropriate to the prince than to the philologist. The established musical discourses into which our paintings have strayed have included the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres, the psychological and to an extent physical effects of music, the decorum of musical performance, music as espoused by the Roman orators, the accord between music and poetry and, most importantly, the multivalent relationship between music and love. However, such views were not simply the subjects of entertaining conversation, but existed in a vital relationship with actual music-making.

I have aimed to show how the paintings made for Alfonso and his dynastic counterparts were designed to locate their private space within these discourses in order to throw a particular light upon their patrons' musical recreation. Such recreation is thereby given meanings in productive accord with the ideological and representational strategies of the prince. The inscription of what is essentially a musical aesthetic onto a space turns that space into a venue: that is, a space which supplies (even imposes) the means to understand the acts performed within it. To that extent, the business of making identities through music operated most potently in the manipulation both of the music-making itself, and of its interpretative frame. To ignore the frame, and its charged musicality, is to fail to understand the music's full range of significance within its context.

Such an understanding of Renaissance space – the 'venue' – is far from ahistorical. It was a commonplace of Renaissance discussions of decoration that it should be directly appropriate to the use of the space decorated. For instance, in Filarete's treatise on architecture, the fictional patron for whom the author is building a city – the duke – surveys his new buildings in detail and declares that their decorations should be 'relevant to the place'. He goes on to assign subjects appropriate to each location: good judges in the hall of the podestà; wise counsellors of Rome in the hall of the Palazzo del Commune; the inventors of the arts in the guildhall; Venus and Priapus above the entrance to the brothel.¹ Decorations, according to Filarete and others, should instruct and manipulate those inhabiting their space, giving meaning to and commenting upon their presence and above all their actions. By this measure the *studioli* of Leonello, Isabella and Alfonso were musical spaces, indeed spaces for music, in every meaningful respect.

However, Dosso's *Allegory of Music* throws up a question of some importance: in its content, its interpretation and its frame of reference it seems to be situated at some distance from the musical vision of Alfonso's *studiolo*. Bacchus' masculine eloquence, and indeed the manipulation of the viewer's relationship to

¹ Filarete 1965, 1:129-31. The treatise is entitled *Trattato di architettura* and dates from the 1460s.

the picture and its patron, is replaced by a courtly-neoplatonic reading of musical mathematics. The light thrown upon musical recreation by each is quite different, and thus also the identity facilitated.

The same historical context supplies a possible explanation. Alberti, in his *De re aedificatoria*, notes that in palaces 'some parts are public, others are restricted to the few, and others for single persons.'² Thus, he advises, the most visible parts of the palace should be adorned according to the precepts for public buildings:³ appropriate subjects include 'scenes of bravery by citizens, portraits and events worthy of recollection ... Or, better still, I would prefer illustration of the tales that poets make for moral instruction'.⁴ Filarete's duke agrees that painted decorations 'should be moral things', and suggests dynastic history and famous battles as appropriate subjects for the palace.⁵ On the other hand, in the most private parts of the palace Alberti concedes that delight may replace pomp as the guiding principle, and thus 'a degree of license may be taken according to taste'.⁶ The rules of decorum in decoration are most relaxed of all in the country villa, which is 'the most lighthearted' of buildings: here, we 'are particularly delighted when we see paintings of pleasant landscapes or harbours, scenes of fishing, hunting, bathing, or country sports, and flowery and leafy views'.⁷

As a private room decorated as an echo of a country villa, it seems that Alfonso's *studiolo* is precisely the kind of space where Alfonso could have justifiably indulged in decoration that was both personal and delightful. On the other hand, Dosso's *Allegory* appears precisely to address not dissimilar subject-matter from a more obviously 'moral' perspective: it is appropriate to a more public part of the palace. The difference in the treatment of music is thus not a dissonance within my reading of Alfonso's musical identity, but a function of the decorum of interior space. The *studiolo* evidences the privately espoused ideologies and preoccupations of the prince's musical interests, whilst the *Allegory* presents those interests publicly in a morally digestible form. This conclusion points up a basic problem in the interpretation of Alfonso's princely identity. As by far the best known of his artistic commissions, Alfonso's *studiolo* paintings have come to colour our view of him absolutely; whereas in fact they represent a side of his self-imaging that was accessible to but few of his contemporaries, and was never meant to constitute his public face.

Objects in Performance

It is striking to reflect that painting was going on in Ferrara for Alfonso's Via Coperta apartment, and for the *studiolo* in particular, almost until the end of Alfonso's reign. Between them, Titian and Dosso may have been at work there on the project for three years or more during the long decade 1519-29.⁸ Similarly, Leonello's *studiolo* was still incomplete at his death; and Isabella's was in development from her arrival in Mantua in 1490 until

² Alberti 1988, 119. Alberti's treatise dates from ca. 1450, but appeared in multiple subsequent printed editions.

³ Alberti 1988, 292-3.

⁴ Alberti 1988, 299.

⁵ Filarete 1965, 129, 184-6 and 117-8 respectively.

⁶ Alberti 1988, 292-3.

⁷ Alberti 1988, 299. For a discussion of the pertinence of Alberti and Filarete's views on the decorum of decoration to the palace decorations of Ercole I, see Rosenberg 1982.

⁸ This calculation is based on the evidence presented for the contribution of Dosso and its interpretation in Hope 1971, 643-4, and the evidence presented concerning Titian's visits to Ferrara and its interpretation in Hope 1987, 26-7 (with footnotes).

about 1530. One can hardly help but conclude that part of the service Alfonso required from his artists, part of the delight of his private space, was the performance of making.

Direct evidence of such spectatorship is not lacking in the annals of the Estense. At the villa of Belriguardo in 1493, Ercole spent days cooped up in his room designing frescoes with his painter Ercole de' Roberti – to the frustration of his court, as his secretary Siverio Siveri reported to Duchess Eleanora.⁹ Later, the process of painting the designs up on the wall in Belriguardo became part of the court's after-dinner entertainment.¹⁰ Similar, if sometimes less explicit, notices date from Alfonso's reign. Particularly interesting is his famous encounter with Michelangelo on the scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel, reported to Isabella d'Este by Grossino on 9 July 1512:

Et il Signor Ducha ando in sula volta con più persone tandem ogni uno apocho apocho sene vene giu dela vollta et il Signor Ducha resto su con Michel Angello che non si poteva satiare di guardare quelle figure et assai careze li [...] et li fece parlare e proferire dinarij et li ha in promesso de fargiello

And the Lord Duke went into the vault with many people then everyone little by little left the vault and the Lord Duke stayed there with Michelangelo because he could not sate his desire to look at the figures and sufficiently praise them [...] and he [Alfonso] made talk [with Michelangelo] and offered money and he has a promise to make him one¹¹

However, more immediately relevant to our subject are the notices relating to the *studiolo*. On 4 October 1518 Bernardino de' Prosperi reported to Isabella on the close attention with which Alfonso was supervising building work, including the private apartment, the fortifications (the 'ditch') and the new villa known as Montagnone:

Il signore preserva ala audentia et examine ogni matina, e lo lavorar' ala fossa et montagna non se abandona: et per il simile a finire la fabrica de li Camerini, ali quali gia sono poste le vedriate...

The Lord keeps it [the apartment] in mind and examines it every morning, and when he works at the ditch and Montagnone he doesn't abandon it: and the work on the Camerini is very nearly finished, of which I have already sent the details...¹²

Meanwhile, as I observed in Chapter V, Alfonso evidently preferred the artists who contributed to his *studiolo* to work on site in Ferrara. As he apparently made interventions in their work, it seems certain that he paid close attention to their task.

Whilst the performance of making is usually read as an aspect of the artist's self-fashioning, its spectating appropriated the performance also to the identity of the patron.¹³ I noted in Chapter III, with the

⁹ See the letter published in transcription and translation and discussed at length in Gundersheimer 1976.

¹⁰ See the letter published in Franceschini 1993, 80 (Document 81); and discussed in Welch 2004, 28.

¹¹ Text Shearman 1987, n.37.

¹² Text Hope 1971, I, Appendix, document VI.

¹³ On the performance of making and the artist's identity see in particular Campbell 1996; and Welch 2004.

help of Vergerio and Pliny, that the prince is never entirely beyond the observation of his followers. We only know of Ercole's and Alfonso's spectatorship because it was reported by their courtiers to absent family members: by Siverio to Eleanora d'Aragona, and by Grossino and Bernardino to Isabella. Siverio is able to comment on the painters' work in Belriguardo, and thus he must have watched alongside Ercole. Grossino notes that 'many people' accompanied Alfonso to the Sistine Chapel, and thought that information would be of interest in Mantua. Alfonso's preference for painters who were present in person to perform their tasks was widely known among his agents and ambassadors, as well as among the painters who served him. In fact, a *studiolo* in progress was a thing of sufficient interest and value to be included on the itinerary of a famous visitor, as when Leonello played host to Ciriaco d'Ancona.

Aligning music with this kind of context is a more complex task. Competent musicianship was a more widespread feature of the nobility than skill in drawing or painting. At the same time, the composition of notated music was, like painting, largely a professional preserve. The existence of multiple modes of musical making – notated composition (often called 'res facta'), improvisation and performance – and the fluidity of their boundaries make for a degree of confusion. What performance constitutes the 'making' and what the finished product? What might one spectate, what might one use, and how does it pertain to identity? The possibilities are various.

Direct evidence of a patron wishing to observe the process of composition is close at hand, to place alongside my discussion of *Quid non ebrietas* in Chapter V. On 13 September 1514 Alfonso's nephew, Federico Gonzaga, who two years earlier had been the duke's guide on his visit to the Sistine chapel, wrote to Marchetto Cara from a country estate:

Essendo stato questa matina qua in Gonzaga sul mercato, ho ritrovato alcune belle cose nuovamente composte ma non anchor finite dal stampatore e per la novità lor non ho potuto partir di lassarle finir de stampare. [...] In questo mezo vi prego vogliati affaticar l'ingegno vostro et ponervi tutta l'arte per far qualche bel canto sopra, me perchè summamente desidero che faciati il canto di bizaria in excellentia et che non siati distratto da altri pensieri et fastidij, mi fareti gran gratia ad venir qui ad star con me in piacer [...] Alli comodi vostri me offero sempre.

Having been this morning here in Gonzaga to the market, I have found several beautiful things newly composed but still not finished at the printer and because of their novelty I was not able to leave and let them finish printing. [...] In this month I pray you and wish you to stretch your talent and apply all your art to make some beautiful song on it, but because above all I desire that you make the song not so much bizarre as excellent and that you won't be distracted by other thoughts and duties, you will make me very grateful if you come here to stay with me in [i.e. at my] pleasure [...] To your comforts I offer myself always.¹⁴

Federico asks that the frottolist come to stay with him whilst he 'makes' music for some new poems. It seems very likely that such a practice was a primary feature of daily life in Isabella's *studiolo*.

The musical environments of the *studioli* of Leonello, Isabella and Alfonso more generally serve similarly to draw attention to musical making. Leonello's *Calliope* constitutes a meditation on the inspiration that

¹⁴ Text Prizer 1980, Appendix I, Document 100.

prompts song, whilst the 'materiam' of the inscription and the blacksmith metaphor foreground the physicality of musical sound and creation. His poetry flutters moth-like around its dangerous source in Eros. Isabella's *impresa delle pause* and her song *Cantai mentre nel cor* address her own problematic music-making – making now deferred to the act of musical performance (meant traditionally). Her *Parnassus* and Alfonso's *Andrians* offer alternative sources of musical inspiration. In the case of all three, it is striking to note that they patronised relatively little music in which they could not themselves participate.¹⁵ Evidently their direct involvement, as far as possible at every stage and mode of the making of music, as with painting, was central to its role at their courts.

The *Parnassus* and the *Andrians* introduce a key aspect of music's efficacy in constructing identities. In Chapter IV I argued that the *Parnassus* shows the Muses conjuring forth the subject of their song. In Chapter V, with the help of the *Fête Champêtre* and Carlerius, I discussed the way Titian and Willaert dealt with Philostratus' conceit that framed the painting he described as a song. The song *Qui boyt* placed the force of this conceit in the voice of the patron himself. Music in these chapters was found to possess invocatory power – the ability to make manifest that of which one sings. In performance (in making) music represents, and in representing it brings into being.

This closely resembles the ontology (or perhaps rather the phenomenology) of musical performance latent in Castiglione, for whom the singer of love songs is perforce himself amorous (as discussed in Chapter I). It resembles, too, the widely articulated status accorded visual making. For example, Alberti famously claimed that through painting 'the absent are made present', and Castiglione envisaged his wife and child interacting with his portrait during his physical absence from the family home. In an analysis of these and many similar instances, Patricia Simons has recently concluded that Renaissance portraiture, at least, 'performatively shapes its world': that life as represented in paint enjoys an instrumental relationship with 'real' life.¹⁶ If the point seems to rely too substantively on metaphor, one might usefully recall Foucault's broad observation that thought in the Renaissance proceeded more by analogy (or 'resemblance') than by scientific connection.¹⁷

Making music is a task with ontological implications – and thus one in which a patron concerned with the manifestation of his princehood might be expected to take a serious interest. Such is the case for composition, but most particularly for performance in which the patron can participate. To sing is to author the world about you. It is to conjure subjects and to activate, or inscribe, meaning, and thus to make the world as a signifying entity – to this extent it is in parallel with the venue as described above. A song like Isabella's *Cantai*, which carries its own hermeneutic framework tortoise-like on its back, is in effect a portable venue-generator, designed to unfold its own virtual interpretative space in performance. To place such a power in the voice of the prince, as both *Cantai* and *Qui boyt* do, is to construct a tool of self-fashioning whose efficacy is beyond words. It is performative in the sense I described in the introduction.

¹⁵ Leonello even sang with his chapel choir – see Lockwood 1984, 44-5.

¹⁶ Simons 1995. For more on the relationship between music and portraits see Shephard 2010.

¹⁷ Foucault 1970, esp. 17-45.

Chapel Choirs in Context

Piety, after war, was, in Machiavelli's view, the most important aspect of a Renaissance prince's rulership – that is, his strategy for persuading the world at large that he was both sufficiently powerful and suitable for the task of ruling. No doubt the existence and character of a chapel choir were partly determined by a patron's taste and musical predilection, but (as Alberti makes clear) personal taste had, ideally, only a small role to play in the public sphere, yielding instead to the more universal standards of nobility, moral virtue and magnificence. It is therefore in the context of piety as a public princely virtue that the existence of the Ferrarese large chapel choirs can most plausibly be explained. They served as an aspect of the 'princely package' fundamentally different to that discovered in the private apartment.

A chapel choir could be a powerful tool in the arena of a city. It could clothe the ruler in magnificent and virtuous sound as he undertook his ceremonial sorties into the communal space of his subjects – both outdoors and in the chapel. It could represent select aspects of the ruler's self-image on tour around the cathedral and churches of the city. It could be tied closely to an observance with specific symbolic associations. It could supply an appropriate formal welcome to ambassadors and other important guests. It could bring a ruler's piety, and alongside his magnificence, to the attention of his peers abroad, and contribute to a healthy relationship (or, if appropriate, a competition) with the ecclesiastical authorities. It could symbolise the political alignment of the state. Also, like a *studiolo*, a chapel choir brought a prince to the world's attention as much in its making as in its keeping; and its removal could be an iconoclastic act of some significance.

In Chapters I, II and III I aimed to show with particular clarity that the existence of the large chapel choirs of northern Italy in the High Renaissance was tied inextricably to a building, and often to a specific commemorative act (one might almost say a cult), that was not primarily musical in nature. In the context of a chapel building, a large choir served as one among a range of expensive and impressive ornaments, which together fused a prince's piety with his magnificence. Unlike music in the *studiolo*, the music of the choir served as an aspect of the chapel itself as an object-in-performance. Thus music in the chapel numbers among the inscriptions upon the space of the building: not so much an act in and for itself as an important part of a discursive space (a 'venue') designed to give meaning to the pomp and ceremony of rulership – a meaning in accord with the ideological and representational strategies of the prince.

Music and Alfonso's Identity

This thesis has, for the first time, given a coherent and contextually embedded shape to Alfonso's music patronage, from his marriage to Lucrezia Borgia to the new approach of the 1510s and 20s. From 1502-5 Alfonso undertook what amounts to a princely training in his father's style of musical statecraft, partly to prepare him for rule, but also to render him more attractive to Ercole's new ecclesiastical allies. Following Ercole's death in 1505, and in the face of dynastic uncertainties, Alfonso demonstrated continuity with his father's regime through the perpetuation of Ercole's musical statecraft. During the Italian Wars of 1509-13 it became to Alfonso's advantage to give or loan the majority of his choir to his brother-in-law as part of a diplomatic offensive. Following the war Alfonso, newly and justly confident in the support of his subjects and finally provided with heirs, was able to abandon the appearance of continuity, and thus his father's strategies of

musical statecraft. He turned to the development of his private spaces, in which we find the traces of music's continuing priority, although marshalled to the construction of a more properly private and courtly identity.

In order to arrive at this picture, I have had to devote sustained attention to questions of identity, broadly construed, drawing on methodologies outside traditional musicology of this period. On the one hand I have described a significantly revised view of large chapel choirs, integrating them into historical and art-historical discussions of rulership and magnificence (a process begun by Evelyn Welch). From this has emerged a substantial re-envisioning of the music patronage of Ercole I and that of Francesco II Gonzaga, in addition to its implications for Alfonso. On the other hand I have given a new discussion of music and identity in the (qualified) privacy of the princely palace.

Part of the point of the thesis has been to explore the possibilities of different kinds of information when discussing music. Although the substantial body of archival information already published by other scholars has played an important part, I have also drawn on a variety of evidence not always considered as aspects of musical culture, particularly in studies of music patronage before the advent of the madrigal. Alongside courtly and other manuals, poetry, and music theory, visual evidence has played an especially prominent role. I have aimed to characterise visual culture partly as an index of musical meaning, but also as the frame (or 'venue') that serves to give music meaning at court – and thus as a factor of immense importance in considering musical performances (meant in the extended sense discussed above). The approaches I have adopted to the integration of visual evidence into the discussion of musical identity are, I hope, prominent among the methodological innovations of this thesis.

It is largely with the help of such visual evidence that I have approached the question of music and identity in what one might, for convenience, call the second phase of Alfonso's music patronage. I have argued that, for Alfonso, both music and musical identity were closely tied to the pastoral mode then in vogue, as expressed most clearly in the decoration of his *studiolo*. Alfonso's pastoral was playful and Ovidian, bringing with it the close association of music and the erotic already visible at the Ferrarese court; and it was through these connections that music made contact with the classicising (if not always exactly humanist) aspect of courtly culture. With the pastoral and with Eros we find foregrounded quite consciously an aspect of music that brings it most firmly into the realm of the patron's identity: participation and performativity. In the *studiolo* we also find revealed the extent to which Alfonso's musical identity was constructed in dialogue with that of his famous sister, with whose more cautious themes he sought to contend.

The change in Alfonso's patronage, for which the fulcrum is the wars of 1509-13 as I have argued throughout, invites broader reflections. In essence it is a change from a stoic and public to a more sensual and private conception of princehood: this point is nicely made by contrasting the Ciceronian inscriptions gracing the marble *studio* he had made before with war with the Ovidian fantasies of the *studiolo* made after it.¹⁸ The courtliness of Alfonso's musical environment and interests after the war is tangibly closer to that of Castiglione's *Courtier* than to that of a fifteenth-century commentator such as Decembrio. It is also, and in concert, markedly secular without being overly scholarly, in contrast to the courtly modes of the previous Este generation. This is true even in the field of religious music: among the musicians employed by Alfonso after the war, almost none is known significantly as a composer of masses or other liturgically functional music, whereas his chapel was a powerhouse of motet production.

¹⁸ The inscriptions are reproduced in Sheard 1993.

In these respects Alfonso's court of the 1520s set the pattern for courtly music in the later sixteenth century, and it is no accident that the sixteenth-century courtly genre *par excellence* – the madrigal – found an early flowering there. One might even claim that the events of the war, by allowing Alfonso to move beyond the precedent set by his father, unlocked in him the first properly sixteenth-century prince. In much of this, however, and in the important prominence afforded the prince's own musical accomplishments, it seems clear from several angles that Alfonso's own model was his older sister Isabella – the first Este of her generation to achieve a noble title. The point has currency beyond the realm of music: as Stephen Campbell has recently argued, Isabella was among the first serious patrons of mythological painting – the genre that would come to define the visual culture of the sixteenth-century courts – and it is certainly to her conception of the *studiolo* and its decoration that Alfonso's is primarily indebted. With this in mind, it is perhaps understandable that Alfonso should have been at pains to establish the masculinity of his new enterprise.

Inevitably, though, much is missing from the picture this thesis has drawn. I was careful in my introduction to be clear about what I did and didn't set out to do, but it will be valuable here to acknowledge more explicitly what I have intentionally avoided. Although its task will be partly to collate information already available, a systematic and comprehensive documentary study of Alfonso's music patronage is still needed. At the same time, the wars of 1509-13 were not the last macro-historic event of his reign, and a more detailed look at the context of the 1520s may reveal further turns and nuances. On a more detailed level, with the exception of my comments about Isabella I have not really considered the fourth dimension of Alfonso's patronage: the contribution of his wife and siblings, as I am certain that they entered into the musical world largely in collaboration. Again with the exception of some brief comments (see the Appendix), I have not given much detailed consideration to the principal repertoires of Alfonso's reign, nor to the music sources associated with him.

It is to these last that I hope to return in particular detail in the future. Fruitful work might be done on locating the texts and styles of Alfonso's motets and madrigals within the patronage environment I have described for the second phase of his reign. Alfonso's madrigal further appears to constitute an argument in favour of Walter Rubsamen's now abandoned view of the genre; and its relationship to the frottola patronised by Alfonso's wife and sister needs close examination. The question of Alfonso's music sources is closely related to that of his repertoires, and also begs to be embedded within his patronage environment. Of particular interest is the question of Alfonso's relationship with early music printing, a subject frequently hinted at but never explored in detail, and the implications of that relationship for his manuscript sources – both those that survive physically and those whose only trace is in the account books. I consider these last questions briefly in the Appendix to the present study, but for detailed investigation they will have to wait for another year.

Illustrations



Figure 1: *Feast of the Gods*. Giovanni Bellini, 1514. Louvre.

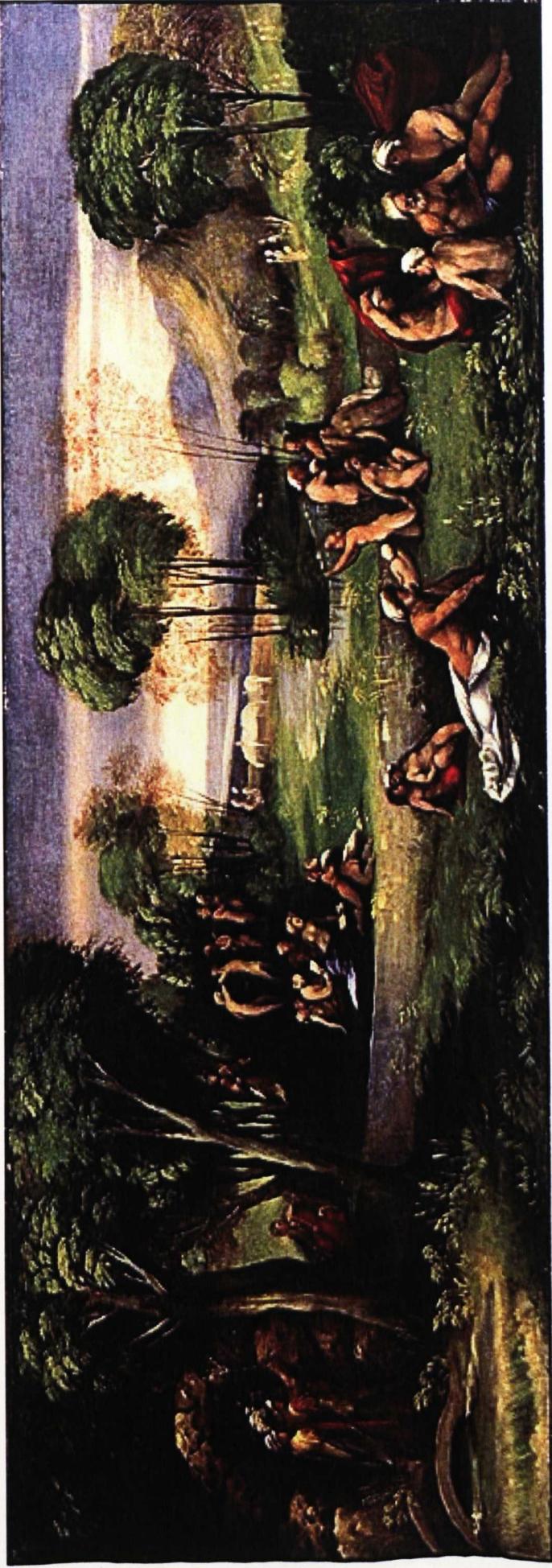
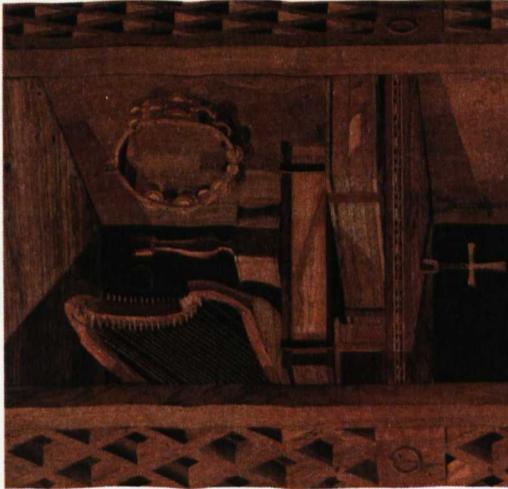
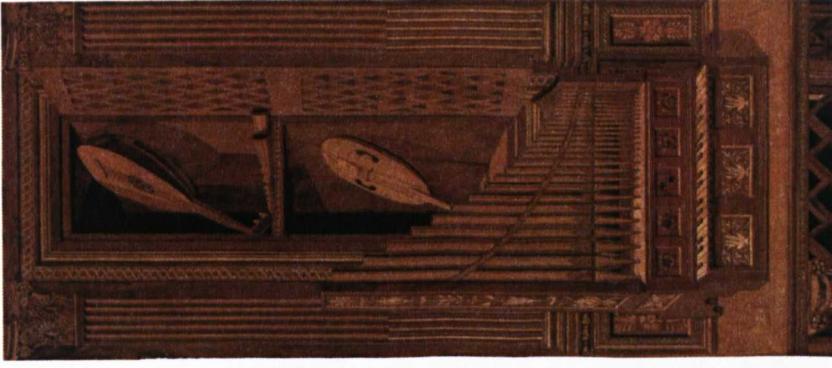


Figure 2: *Aeræas in Elysium*. Dosso Dossi, ?1519-21. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Figure 3: Federico's Gubbio *studio*. Metropolitan Museum, New York.



Figures 4-7: Musical instruments in *intarsia* from the Gubbio *studdo*.

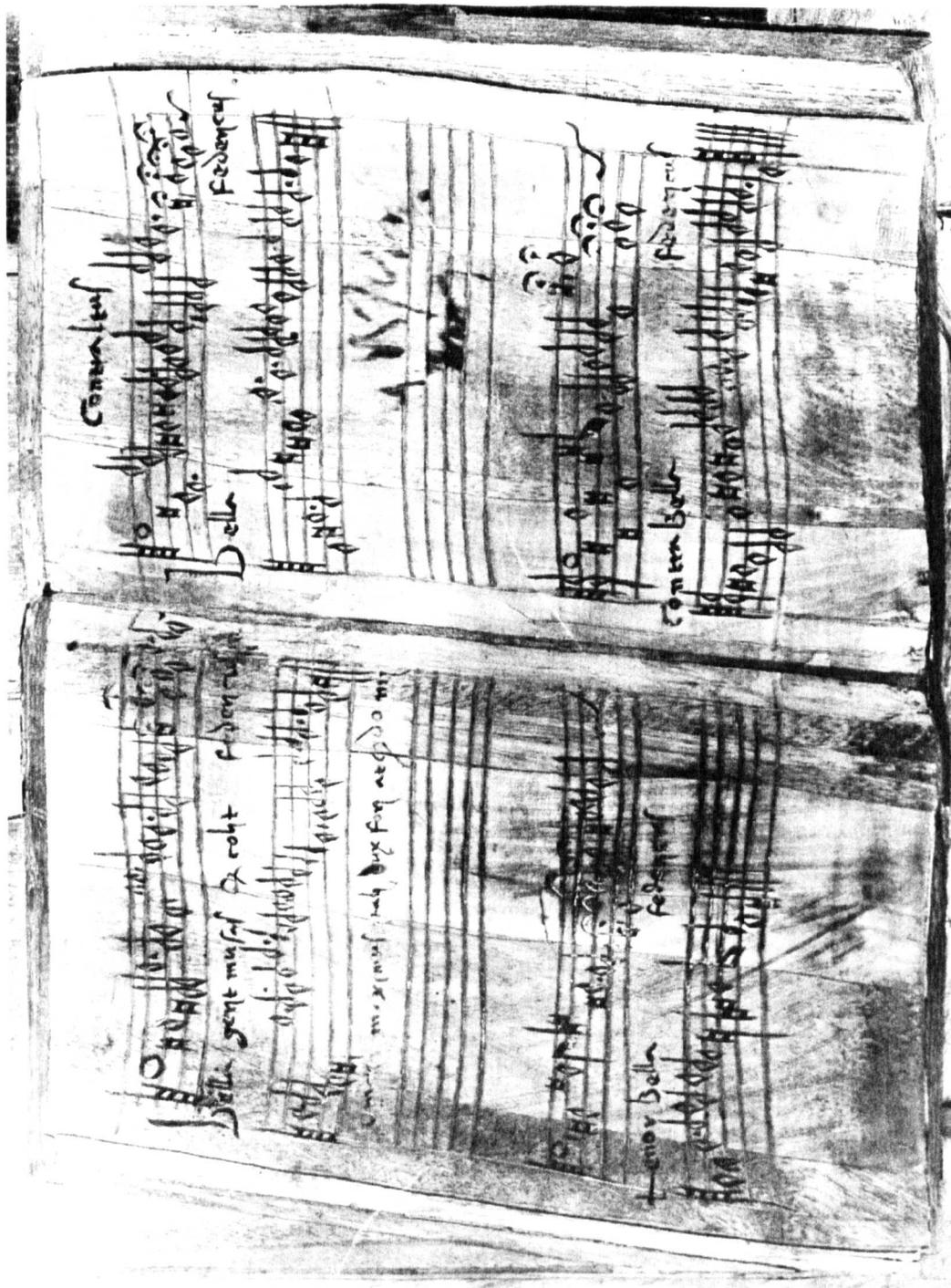


Figure 8: 'Bella gerit' in *intarsia* from the Urbino *stadiolo*.



Figure 9: *Parnassus*. Andrea Mantegna, 1497. Louvre.



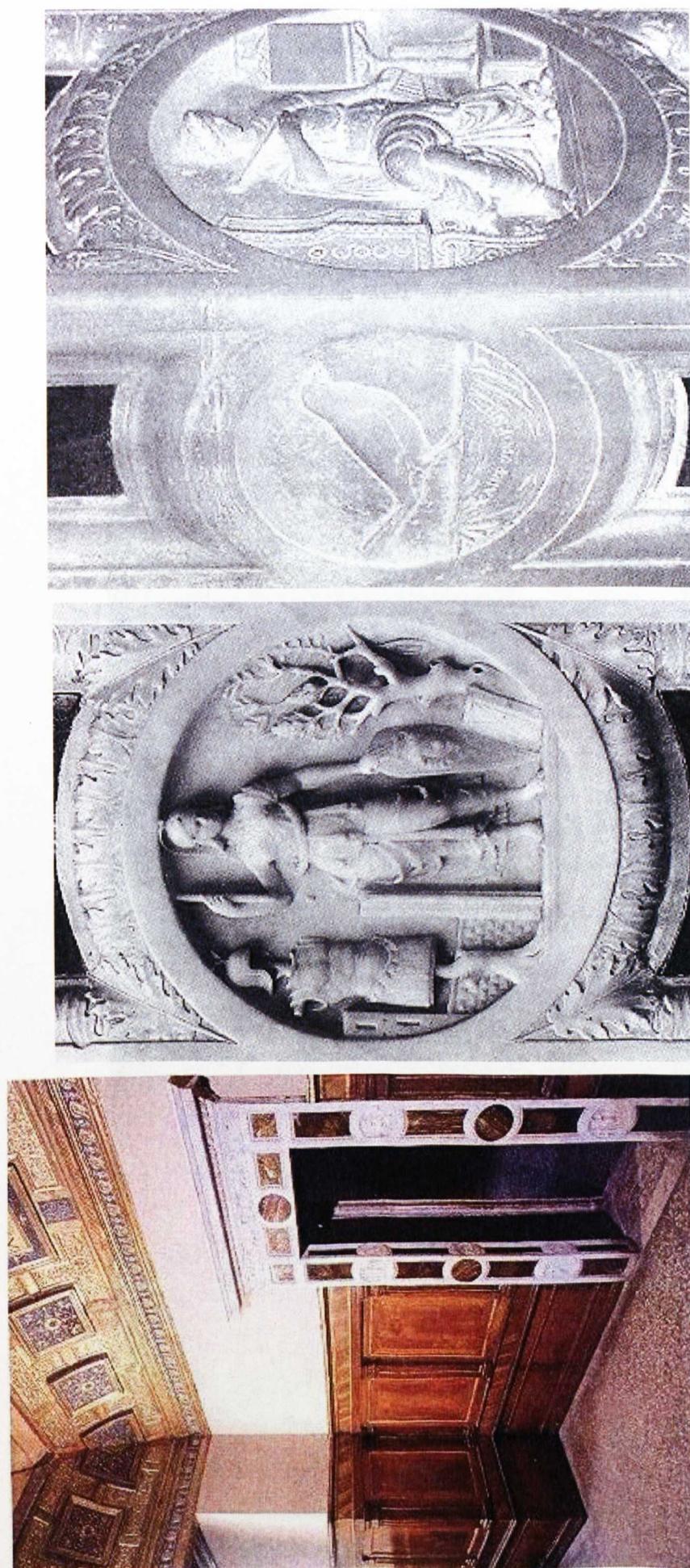
Figure 10: *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*. Andrea Mantegna, 1502. Louvre.



Figure 11: *Combat of Love and Chastity*. Pietro Perugino, 1505. Louvre.



Figure 12: Portrait medal of Isabella d'Este. Gian Cristoforo Romano, 1498.



Figures 13-15: Door surround with roundels of Minerva and Euterpe. Gian Cristoforo Romano, ca.1505.

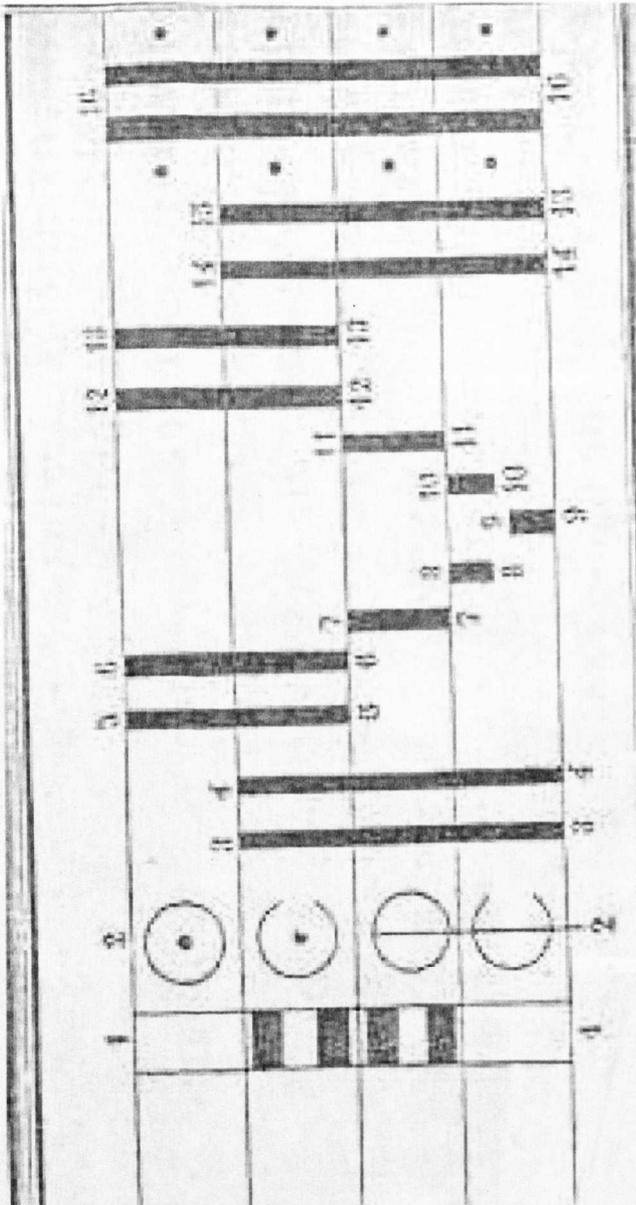


Figure 16: Isabella d'Este's *impresa delle pause*, as reproduced by Luzio and Renier.



Figure 17: Marble relief from Alfonso's studio. Antonio Lombardo with workshop, ca.1508. Hermitage Museum.



Figures 18-19: *Singer and Dancer*. Dosso Dossi, 1521-9. National Gallery, London; *Mistica*. Dosso Dossi, 1521-9. Galleria Estense.



Figure 20: *The Bacchanae of the Andrians*. Titian, ca.1524. Prado.



Figure 21: *Bacchus and Ariadne*. Titian, 1522-3. National Gallery, London.

Arrusi, L' / Arrusi, f. 21r

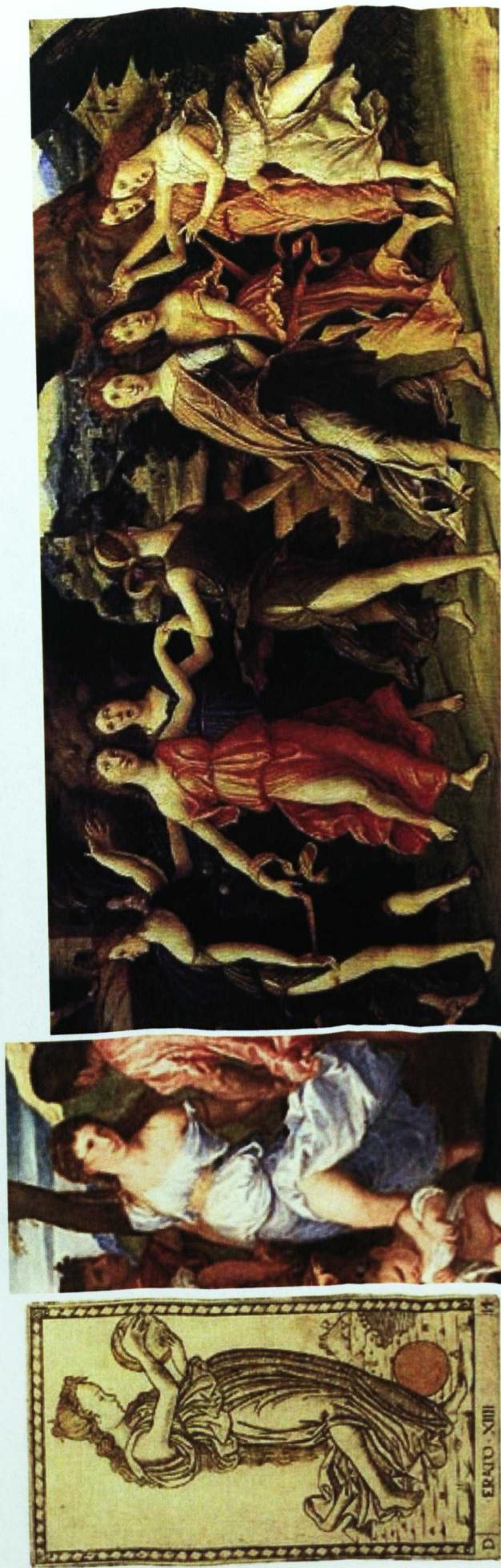
CANTO.

TENOR.

Arrusi, L' / Arrusi, f. 21v. 1

Detailed description: This figure shows a two-voice musical score for the piece 'Quid non ebrietas'. It is divided into two systems. The first system is labeled 'CANTO.' and 'TENOR.' and consists of two staves of music. The second system, labeled 'Arrusi, L' / Arrusi, f. 21v. 1', also consists of two staves of music. The notation includes various note values, rests, and clefs, typical of early printed music.

Figure 22: Willaert's *Quid non ebrietas*, two-voice version, as published by Arrusi later in the century.



Figures 23-5: *Erato* from the *Tarocchi di Mantegna*. Ferrara, 1460s; *Anbians* detail. Chiton-wearing dancer, *Parnassus* detail. Dancing Muses.



Figure 26: *Fête Champêtre*. ?Giorgione or Titian, ca.1510. Louvre.



Figures 27-8: *Ambriars* details. Canon turned to face the viewer; Canon oriented as in painting.



Figure 29: *Allegorical Figure (Calliope?)*. Cosmè Tura, 1450s. National Gallery, London.



Figure 30: Medal of Leonello d'Este, reverse. Pisanello, 1440s.



Figure 31: Medal of Leonello d'Este. Pisanello, 1444.



Figure 32: *Salone dei mesi*, Taurus panel. Francesco del Cossa, 1460s. Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara. Detail.



Figure 33: *Allegory of Music*. Dosso Dossi, 1520s. Museo Horne.

Appendix: An Inventory of the manuscript London, Royal College of Music Ms. 2037

Alfonso's Music Books: Some Preliminary Thoughts

The callnumber 2037 in the library of the Royal College of Music comprises two partbooks, *Superius* and *Bassus*, surviving from a probable set of four.¹ The partbooks are in octavo format, and are composed of regular vellum quarternions. They are filled with fifty-nine motets, all (as far as one can tell) for four voices, written in the main by composers employed at the court of Alfonso I d'Este in Ferrara between about 1513 and 1534 (the year of Alfonso's death). A preliminary examination of the *Superius* partbook suggests that the motets were copied by a single scribe in a single campaign; and that the *tavola*, which is unfoliated and lists works in alphabetical order by textual incipit, was added by the same scribe immediately afterwards. The hand, informal but still somewhat gothic and matched on every opening to finely decorative monochrome initials, was once thought to represent a 'variant form' of the work of Jean Michel.² Michel probably appeared at the court of Ferrara in 1502 and worked there, as singer and music scribe, for about fifty years; however, his several surviving products are usually dated to the reign of Alfonso's son, Ercole II.³ However, 2037 has now been removed from his *oeuvre*.⁴ Several other musicians are known to have copied music in Ferrara during Alfonso's reign, but at present it is not possible to suggest a specific alternative candidate.⁵

The manuscript is attractive and neat, but, at least judging from the surviving partbooks, is almost certainly not a 'presentation copy'. No colour is employed and there is no historiated or figural decoration; nor are there any heraldic insignia or *imprese*. Nonetheless, the manuscript exhibits several interesting features. The composers represented therein are an extremely homogenous group: Willaert, Maistre Jhan, Alfonso della Viola and Jacquet all worked in Ferrara during Alfonso's reign; Simon ferrà was presumably Ferrarese; and Mouton visited Ferrara in 1515.⁶ Gascogne is the only slightly anomalous name in this context, but in view of the copious evidence for the collection of French music in Ferrara in this period, published by Lockwood, his presence is easily explained.⁷ The collection has the appearance of a manifesto of what one might call the Ferrarese motet 'school' in Alfonso's reign – an establishment in which Maistre Jhan was king.

2037's contents do much to enhance this view. The motets include one celebrating Isabella d'Este (no. 56), one perhaps celebrating Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este (no. 23), and four or even five concerned with Alfonso himself (nos. 23, 27, 37, 49 and 57). Meanwhile, two motets laud the long-term allies of the Estense – the French monarchy: one celebrates the birth of princess Renée in 1510 (no. 20); another lauds Francis I (no. 29).

¹ On this manuscript see previously Lowinsky 1968, 3:116-7.

² Rifkin 2002, n.3, summarising the position proposed in his conference paper 'New Light on Music Manuscripts at the Court of Ferrara in the Reigns of Alfonso I and Hercules II', given at the New England Renaissance Conference at Durham, New Hampshire, on 26 October 1974.

³ On Jean Michel see Lockwood 1979; Prizer 1987, 103-4; Rifkin 2002; Jas 2002.

⁴ Rifkin 2002, n.3. Rifkin does not give the reasons for abandoning his earlier identification, which still on the face of it seems very plausible.

⁵ Archival notices concerning the copying of music in Ferrara during Alfonso's reign are published in Lockwood 2001.

⁶ On Jacquet in Ferrara see Lockwood 1979, 224-9 and 232-4. Simon Ferrà is usually identified with Symon Ferrarensis, who is represented by four motets in BolC Q19 (on which see Nosow 1991) as well as a few in later sources, and who worked in Ferrara during Alfonso's reign (on his career see Alfieri 1972). On Mouton's visit to Ferrara see Lockwood 1979, 213-4.

⁷ In particular Lockwood 1979 and 1985.

Appropriately, all of those concerned with the Estense are by Maistre Jhan; meanwhile those addressing French circumstances are by Mouton and Maistre Jhan – one suspects that Jhan’s role in the Ferrarese chapel was modelled on that of Mouton in France. These contemporary reference-points serve to locate the manuscript with certainty within the reign of Alfonso I, and probably at the end of the 1520s. The remaining texts include the usual Marian emphasis, as well as some on the nativity and passion and some addressing important saints (though perhaps fewer in this category than one would expect). However, there are also a number of motets requesting or offering thanks for protection from enemies. Alongside the motets concerned with Alfonso – which mostly celebrate the defeat of enemies or request protection in future adventures – these are closely appropriate to the turbulent political circumstances and frequent wars of Alfonso’s reign. The collection is thus to an extent practical in character; or at least it records the practical and pragmatic use of motets at Alfonso’s court.

The composers of Alfonso’s chapel, in concert with many of the North-European composers employed in Italy in the first few decades of the sixteenth century, were to a man composers of motets before they were composers of masses. In fact, it appears that Willaert and Maistre Jhan were among the most prolific motet composers of the High Renaissance. It is possible that this simply reflects the survival pattern of Ferrarese music sources, but it may also reflect the increasingly secular application of polyphony in the rhetorical and recreational life of the Italian courts. 2037 is in many respects the perfect document of this change in musical practice: its role as a ‘manifesto’ of the Ferrarese motet ‘school’ is proposed above; the presence of the rhetorical life of the court is hopefully clear; and in Chapter III above I suggested how such a manuscript might fit into contemporary courtly recreation.

The survival of Ferrarese sources is itself a question to which 2037 contributes importantly, not least because it is possibly the unique pure representative of Alfonso’s reign. An earlier manuscript, Bibl. Estense MS Alpha M. 1.2, was completed in Alfonso’s reign, but it was begun before he became duke. A collection of masses mostly by Obrecht, it must be tied in conception to Obrecht’s service at the court of Ferrara in 1504-5, and thus to the last year of Ercole’s reign.⁸ Another source, the London-Modena-Paris partbooks copied by Jean Michel, may date from Alfonso’s reign, but the evidence is far from conclusive.⁹ Although numerous archival references to music copying in Ferrara dating from Alfonso’s reign have been published by Lockwood, I am aware of no other surviving Ferrarese source from the years 1505-34 (although research in this area is hampered by the continuing inaccessibility of Joshua Rifkin’s extensive primary research on Ferrarese music sources).¹⁰ One reason for the sparse survival is clear. As described in Chapter II above, several of the music sources of Alfonso’s chapel were lent in 1511 to Francesco II Gonzaga, for the use of his new choir (largely composed of Alfonso’s singers it will be remembered). Items lent between courts were frequently returned reluctantly and tardily, and sometimes not at all. Presumably some of the books found their way back to Ferrara. Some of them certainly did not: in 1513 a singer named Zoan Maria Voltacarta (*sic*) left Mantua for Rome, taking some of the Ferrarese music-books with him.¹¹

⁸ See Lockwood 1972, 122 n60; Lockwood 1984, 208.

⁹ Rifkin 2002 presents refutations of previous arguments dating these partbooks to the reign of Ercole II, but does not supply a definite hypothesis of his own.

¹⁰ Lockwood 2001. Rifkin’s seminal conference paper on Ferrarese music sources has never been published in full, although many of his discoveries are discussed in Rifkin 2002.

¹¹ Prizer 1980, 24.

Nonetheless, 2037 may supply an important clue to the character of music sources at court in Alfonso's reign. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the 'landscape' partbook was still a relatively new format for the transmission and performance of music in Italy. It was not in the realm of manuscript sources that it first found general currency, but in that of music printing.¹² Starting from the mass volumes, the first of which was issued in 1502, the quarto landscape partbook became Petrucci's format of choice. The most widely distributed motet partbooks in octavo landscape format at the time 2037 was made must have been those published by Antico in Rome and Venice between 1518 and 1521. Perhaps another reason why few music sources survive from Alfonso's reign is that extensive use was made of prints; and perhaps this circumstance resulted directly in the format (and even, in some respects, the design) of 2037. In view of this hypothesis, it is interesting to note that several scholars have suggested close relationships between Alfonso's court and Venetian music printing. Both Lewis Lockwood and Stanley Boorman have connected Petrucci's first book of Josquin masses with Alfonso's involvement in the employment of the celebrated composer in Ferrara in 1503, and the second Josquin mass book with the commemoration of Ercole I following his death in 1505.¹³ Edward Lowinsky has suggested, quite plausibly, that Willaert was involved in producing Antico's *Motetti novi e canzoni francese a quatro sopra doi* in Venice in 1520-1.¹⁴ Furthermore, Ippolito d'Este is well known as one of the first documented purchasers of Petrucci's publications, buying mass collections in 1517.¹⁵

Most significant, however, is a circumstance that has apparently been forgotten. In a review of Lockwood's *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, William Prizer published payment records showing that Alfonso preceded his brother as a customer of Petrucci.¹⁶ On 29 January 1504 Alfonso paid Gervase, who sang in his father's chapel, for the purchase of printed music-books in Venice: 'A Gervase franceze, cantore, per tanto luj à speso per Sua Signoria a Vinegia in librij a canto a stanpa – 4 ducati.' On the same day he also paid Jean Michel for having five printed music-books ('Cinque libri de canto stanpe') bound. As Petrucci was the only person publishing (polyphonic) music in Venice in 1504, the volumes bought for Alfonso must have been his.¹⁷ From this point on, however, Prizer experienced difficulties in interpreting the information. By 29 January 1504 Petrucci had published four volumes of songs and motets in choirbook format, and five collections of masses in partbook format: which combination of these made up Alfonso's five?

The most obvious set would seem to be the five mass collections, but each of these comprised four partbooks. Prizer asserts that the partbooks would have been considered individual *libri* – thus the five mass collections would total twenty books, rather than the five specified in Alfonso's account book. In this, however, he is mistaken. Partbook and choirbook editions alike were usually sold unbound, and the former were therefore as likely to be identified as a single *libro* as they were by their separate parts. A set of partbooks was, consequently, as likely to be bound together in a single volume as in four separate bindings. In fact, when

¹² The early history of the partbook format is a subject not yet sufficiently explored in print, and my thoughts here are offered very provisionally.

¹³ See particularly Lockwood 1984, 206-7 and Boorman 2006, 274-8 and 285-6.

¹⁴ Lowinsky 1982, 290-7.

¹⁵ Lockwood 1976, 120-1 – the relevant entry in Ippolito's account book is published at n.56. Lockwood 1985, 99 repeats the point and appears to suggest that Ippolito also bought printed music in 1508.

¹⁶ Prizer 1987, 104-5.

¹⁷ Prizer points out, in my view correctly, that Alfonso is unlikely to have been purchasing printed chant books as he did not then employ his own chapel singers. In light of that deduction, it seems quite possible that Alfonso intended to use the prints for musical recreation in which he himself might have sung a part.

Ippolito had his mass collections bound in 1517, it is precisely each collection – rather than each partbook – that is called a *libro*: ‘Messe diciasette di Josquin in tri libri; Messe cinque de Zoanne gislin in un libro; Messe cinque de Alexandro Agricola in un libro ...’. Prizer’s objection is therefore untenable. A second confusion concerns price: Prizer deduced that a Petrucci choirbook probably cost around one ducat, whilst a set of his partbooks cost about three ducats. Thus, five mass collections would come to fifteen ducats – considerably more than the four paid by Alfonso. However, in light of Stanley Boorman’s more detailed work on the pricing of prints, it seems that here again Prizer is mistaken. In 1512 in Rome the bibliophile Ferdinand Columbus paid, on average, half a soldo per folio for recent Petrucci publications.¹⁸ By that measure, the five mass collections published by January 1504 can together have cost no more than about two ducats – considerably less than the sum advanced to Gervase. We should bear in mind that when court functionaries were sent on missions abroad, they were not paid only for the object of their mission, but also for the expenses incurred in achieving it. Thus, the four ducats paid to Gervase are an appropriate amount to cover both the five mass collections and ‘all that he has spent in Venice’ in order to acquire them.

It is therefore possible to conclude with considerable confidence that Alfonso bought some combination of Petrucci’s publications, and most likely his first five mass collections, in Venice in 1504. In making his own later purchase, Ippolito was in a sense imitating rather than innovating. Taken together, these circumstances strongly suggest that the court of Ferrara, and its chapel, were unusually proactive in embracing the new technology of music printing in a very concrete and practical way. It may well be that there, too, the practical and functional implications of music printing for manuscript culture were first explored, resulting in both an absence of large, formal choirbooks and the particular design of 2037, as well as successfully servicing a new style of courtly music patronage.

Rationale of the Inventory

For composer ascriptions and incipits I have preserved the spelling used in the manuscript, although I have written out abbreviations. Where possible, I have supplied a reference to a modern edition. In the absence of a modern edition, I have supplied a reference to a sixteenth-century printed edition; and, failing that, to a manuscript transmitting the work intact. Unfortunately several of the most interesting works survive only in this and, occasionally, other incomplete sources: they are marked ‘inc’. Print references are in the style of RISM *Recueils Imprimés: XVI – XVII Siècles*; manuscript sigla are in the style of the *Census Catalogue*.

Abbreviations

Jackson: Philip Jackson and George Nugent ed., *Jacquet of Mantua: Opera omnia*, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 54, 6 vols. (1971–86).

Lowinsky: Edward E. Lowinsky, *The Medici Codex of 1518: A Choirbook of Motets Dedicated to Lorenzo de’ Medici, Duke of Urbino*, Monuments of Renaissance Music 3-5 (Chicago and London, 1968).

¹⁸ Boorman 2006, 331-6.

Picker: Martin Picker ed., *The Motet Books of Andrea Antico*, MRM 8 (Chicago and London, 1987).

Smijers: Albert Smijers and A. Tilman Merritt ed., *Treize livres de motets parus chez Pierre Attaignant en 1534 et 1535*, 14 vols. (Monaco, 1934–64).

Zenck: Herman Zenck et al ed., *Adriani Willaert: Opera omnia*, CMM 3, 14 vols. (Rome, 1950-77).

Inventory of Superius Partbook

Key – A: no.; B: folio; C: composer; D: *incipit*; E: *pars*; F: clef; G: mensuration sign; H: key signature; I: edition.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	1v-2r	Maistre Jam	In principio erat verbum	1	G2	c/		inc.
	2v-3r		Fuit homo missus a deo	2	G2	c/		
	3v-4r		Erat lux vera	3	G2	c/		
	4v-5r		Et verbum caro factum est	4	G2	c/		
2	5v-6r	Adrianus willaert	Pater noster qui es in celis		C2	c/	bb	Zenck, 2:11
3	6v-7r	Adrianus willaert	Ave maria gratia plena		C1	c/	b	Zenck 2:14
4	7v-8r	Maistre Jam	Ave maria gratia plena		C1	c/	b	1543/4
5	8v-9r	Adrianus willaert	Magnum hereditatis misterium		C1	c/	b	Zenck 2:32
6	9v-10r	Adrianus willaert	Mirabile misterium declaratur		C1	c/		Zenck 1:86
7	10v-11r	Adrianus willaert	Benedicta es Celorum regina	1	C1	c/		Zenck 1:78
	11v-12r		Per illud ave prolatum	2	C1	c/		
8	12v-13r	Adrianus willaert	Videns dominus		C1	c/		Zenck 1:71
9	13v-14r	A. willaert	Quasi unus de paradisi	1	C1	c/		Zenck 1:73
	14v-15r		Deus qui beatum marcum	2	C1	c/		
10	15v-17r	Adrianus willaert	Tristis est anima mea		C1	c/		BolC Q23
11	17v-18r	Adrianus willaert	Plange quasi virgo		C1	c/	b	inc.
12	18v-19r	Adrianus willaert	Ave regina celorum	1	C2	c/	b	Zenck 1:91
	19v		Gaude gloriosa	2	C2	c/	b	
13	20r	Adrianus willaert	Inviolata Integra et casta	1	C2	c/; 3	b	Zenck 1:95
	20v-21r		Nostra ut pura pectora	2	C2	c/; o.	b	
14	21v-23r	Adrianus w	Dominus regit me		C2	c/	b	Zenck 1:99
15	23v	Adrianus willaert	Patefacte sunt ianue	1	C1	c/	b	Zenck 1:110
	24r		Mortem enim	2	C1	c/	b	
16	24v-25r	Jo Mouton	Nobis sancti spiritus		C1	c/	b	inc.
17	25v-26r	Jo Mouton	Homo quidam fecit		C1	c/	b	Smijers 1:196
18	26v-27r	Mouton	Corde et animo		C1	c/	b	Lowinsky 4:137

19	27v-28r	Jo Mouton	Domine deus exercituum	1	C1	c/	b	inc.
	28v-29r		Igitur dissipa gentes	2	C1	c/	b	
20	29v-30r	Mouton	Non nobis domine	1	C1	c/	b	Smijers 9:38
	30v-31r		Laudate deum	2	C1	c/	b	
21	31v-32r	Willaert	Saluto te sancta virgo maria	1	C1	c/	b	Zenck 1:105
	32v-33r		Rogo te ergo	2	C1	c/	b	
22	33v	Simon ferrà	Sub tuum presidium		C2	c/	bb	inc.
23	34r	Maistre Jam	Vixi puellis nuper idoneus	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	34v		Lenun marine	2	G2	c/	b	
	35r		O que beata diva	3	G2	c/	b	
24	35v-36r	Adrianus willaert	Victime paschalli laudes	1	G2	c/; 3	b	Zenck 2:77 ¹⁹
	36v-37r		Angelicos testes	2	G2	c/; 3	b	
25	37v-38r	Jo Mouton	In illo tempore	1	G2	c/	b	Picker 365
	38v-39r		Sepulchrum Christi	2	G2	c/; 3	b	
26	39v-40r	Mouton	Noe noe noe psallite		G2	c/	b	Smijers 2:86
27	40v-41r	Maistre Jam	Virgo celestum decus	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	41v-42r		Et ducem alphonsus	2	G2	c/; 3	b	
28	42v-43r	Maistre Jam	Vitas hinnulleo me similis	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	43r		Iam sen mobilibus	2	G2	c/	b	
	43v		Et qui non ego	3	G2	c/	b	
	44r		[RULED BUT BLANK]					
29	44v	Maistre Jam	Franciscus vir catholicus	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	45r		Pacem salutem nuntiat	2	G2	c/	b	
30	45v-46r	Maistre Jam	Ecce nos relinquimus	1	G2	c/	b	Smijers 8:175
	46v-47r		Et omnis qui reliquerit	2	G2	c/	b	
31	47v-48r	Maistre Jam	Passer invenit sibi domum		G2	c/	b	TrevBC 8
32	48v-49r	Maistre Jam	Postquam consumati sunt		G2	c/	b	1543/4
33	49v-50r	A willaert	In tua pacientia		G2	c/	b	Zenck 1:59
34	50v	M Gascogne	Ecce venit rex nobis	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	51r		Nuntiate nobis	2	G2	c/	b	
	51v-52r		Quid facit maria	3	G2	c/	b	
35	52v	Jo Mouton	Noe noe noe puer nobis	1	G2	c/	b	Smijers 2:514 inc.
	53r		Tunc herodes tremuit	2	G2	c/	b	
36	53v-54r	Simon ferrà	Surgens ihesus dominus noster	1	G2	c/	b	inc.
	54v-55r		Una ergo sabatorum	2	G2	c/	b	
37	55v	Maistre Jam	Sebastiane decus perenne	1	G2	c/		inc.
	56r		Surgetem reprime	2	G2	c/		
	56v		Mox estense genus	3	G2	c/		

¹⁹ Given with a different 2^a pars.

38	57r	Alphonsus a viola	Vince patrem illecebris		G2	c/		inc.
39	57v-58r	Maistre Jam	Sub altare dei	1	G2	c/		inc.
	58v-59r		Innocentes pro Christo	2	G2	c/		
40	59v-60r	Jacquet	In tua patientia		G2	c/		1543/5
41	60v-61r	Adrianus willaert	Ave virginum		G2	c/	b	Zenck 2:8
42	61v-62r	Adrianus willaert	O gemma clarissima		G2	c/	b	Zenck 1:36
43	62v-63r	Jacquet	Visita quesumus domine		C1	c/		Jackson 4
44	63v-64r	Adrianus willaert	Quem terra pontus	1	C1	c/		Zenck 2:54
	64v-65r		Maria mater gratie	2	C1	c/; 3		
45	65v-66r	Maistre Jam	Quid mihi crudellis	1	G2	c/		inc.
	66v-67r		Improbe non ne vides	2	G2	c/		
	67v-68r		Te cuncti spernant	3	G2	c/		
46	68v-69r	Maistre Jam	In die tribulationis meo		G2	c/		inc.
47	69v-70r	Adrianus Willaert	Intercessio Quesumus		G2	c/		Zenck 2:93
48	70v-71r	Maistre Jam	Preparate corda vestra	1	G2	c/	b	1538/5
	71v-72r		Convertimini ad me	2	G2	c/	b	
	72v-73r		Heu me heu me filli mi	3	F3	c/	bb	
	73v-74r		Sufficiebat mihi paupertas mea	4	F3	c/	bb	
49	74v-75r	Maistre Jam	Sola solus mortallium	1	C1	c/		inc.
	75v-76r		Exora tuum fillium	2	C1	c/		
50	76v-77r	Adrianus willaert	Salve crux sancta arbor digna	1	C1	c/		Zenck 1:83
	77v-78r		Causa etiam vite foret	2	C1	c/		
51	78v-79r	A willaert	O magnum misterium	1	G2	c/	b	Zenck 1:53
	79v-80r		Ave Maria Gratia plena	2	G2	c/	b	
52	80v-81r	A willaert	Valde honorandus est		G2	c/		Zenck 2:6
53	81v-82r	Maistre Jam	In illo tempore		C1	c/		inc.
54	82v-83r	Alphonsus a viola	Ave regina celorum		G2	c/	b	inc.
55	83v-84r	Maistre Jam	Angele dei		G2	c/	b	inc.
56	84v-85r	Maistre Jam	Amo Isabellam		C1	c/		inc.
57	85v-86r	Maistre Jam	In viam pacis		C1	c/	b	1549/12
58	86v	Adrianus willaert	Regina celi letare	1	C4	c/	b	Lowinsky 4:114
	87r		Resurexit Sicut dixit	2	C4	c/	b	
59	87v-88r	Adrianus willaert	Domine ihesu Christe fili		C4	c/	b	Zenck 1:16
	88v-90v		[RULED BUT BLANK]					

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