



MUSIC IN PRINT AND BEYOND

Hildegard von Bingen to The Beatles



Edited by Craig A. Monson and Roberta Montemorra Marvin

Chapter Two

Publishing Music Theory in Early Cinquecento Venice and Bologna

Friends and Foes

Bonnie J. Blackburn

“Regarding the *Diffinitorio* by Tinctoris that you say you have, I don’t care, because the copy I have is sufficient. And what you say about the *retratatione* of this *Diffinitorio* is news to me.” Thus wrote the Bolognese music theorist Giovanni Spataro to the Venetian musician Marc’Antonio Cavazzoni on August 1, 1517, in answer to a lost letter.¹ This is the earliest known reference to the printing of Johannes Tinctoris’s *Terminorum musicae diffinitorium*, which appeared without name of printer or place of publication, but on typographical evidence is believed to come from the press of Gerardus de Lisa in Treviso circa 1495.² Considering the date of Cavazzoni’s letter and Spataro’s reaction, the incunabulum was not well known at the time, although thirteen copies survive today.³ It may seem surprising to us that Spataro was not interested in obtaining the printed edition of Tinctoris’s dictionary, even if it was a revised edition, but I suspect that he did not find the *Diffinitorium* very interesting, since it did not discuss problems of music theory. In fact, it annoyed him, as we see from another of his letters, in which he took umbrage at Tinctoris’s definition of *color*: “Tinctoris was crazy, and thought he knew a lot more than he did, as his works demonstrate.”⁴

Printing music theory meant that books could be widely disseminated, and, as I will show elsewhere, led to the first book reviews, amply attested in the Spataro Correspondence.⁵ This correspondence between the leading Italian theorists of the first half of the *Cinquecento* is unique for the insight it offers into many topics. One of them concerns the problems of publishing music theory: promises made and broken, urgent advice not to publish ignored, the welcome help of friends as intermediaries with publishers, and disappointment at the printed results. The human story of friendships made and broken

is revealed in a number of letters. We may suppose the same events lay behind the publication of music theory in general, but apart from this correspondence, the evidence is scarce.

Spataro's letter to Cavazzoni is the earliest of his letters to have been preserved. The next letter, of July 20, 1520, is to Giovanni del Lago, a fellow music theorist in Venice and one of his main correspondents; it was Del Lago who was responsible for the preservation of the Spataro Correspondence, which he collected with a view to publishing his own letters on music theoretical topics, a project that foundered.⁶ Del Lago had asked for an explanation of Spataro's canons in his *Missa de la tradictora*, and Spataro obliged, explaining all the abstruse proportions, but claiming that he found it difficult to remember, let alone understand his adolescent works.⁷ In the meantime, however, a more promising correspondent was looming on the horizon, the Florentine theorist Pietro Aaron.

The Publication of Aaron's *Libri tres de institutione harmonica* (1516) and Its Aftermath

Of all the people Spataro corresponded with, it was Aaron who raised the most interesting questions and with whom he had the most cordial relations. Their correspondence lasted from at least 1516 (letters before March 1521 are lost) to at least October 30, 1533, although only Spataro's side of the correspondence has been preserved. It would appear that Aaron first came to Spataro's attention in 1516, when his first music theory treatise, the *Libri tres de institutione harmonica*, was published in Bologna. Aaron, at that time *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral in Imola, was some twenty years younger than Spataro, and perhaps for this reason, Spataro was cautious in his remarks about the treatise in the same letter to Cavazzoni, not wishing to criticize a beginner: "A certain Pietro Aaron from Florence has had printed in Bologna a work that I neither praise nor criticize. If possible, I will enclose it with this letter, because he prints certain errors that this work contains. If they are printed in time I will send it to you now. If not, it won't be much later."⁸ It is very uncharacteristic of Spataro to remain neutral about anything. There is a back story to this that he was unwilling to reveal to Cavazzoni; he felt rather embarrassed by it, as we know from an exchange of letters in 1517 between Franchino Gaffurio and Giovanni Antonio Flaminio, the humanist scholar who had translated Aaron's treatise into Latin.⁹ When the book was published, Spataro sent a copy to Gaffurio, asking for his opinion. Gaffurio's response has not survived, but he expressed a very candid and negative judgment of the book in his letter of March 24, 1517, to Flaminio: "I read the book with great pleasure, admiring the elegance and care of the expression in Latin, but as to what pertains to the art of music, it is riddled through and through with errors, so that the author of the work seems

to have been ignorant, not only of the most difficult things, but even the very elements of music. I at once informed Spataro by letter of my opinion of the new work, which I was the readier to do so that Aaron should have the opportunity of revising his work." At that point Gaffurio did not know that Spataro had seen the book in advance of publication; unlike modern books, the *Libri tres* does not include acknowledgments. Flaminio, in his response to Gaffurio, revealed that Spataro had in fact read Aaron's treatise before publication and offered suggestions for improvements:

Aaron too, who was not imprudent in this matter, nor unaware of this custom among writers, thinking that he ought to do the same [i.e., have the book read by an expert before publication, as Flaminio had done], passed on the said books for frank censure to his very good friend, who as you know occupies a distinguished place among the musicians of our age, Giovanni Spataro. He spent much time and trouble, so it seemed to me, on the task, and notified the author of anything that he thought needed changing, but did not cheat of due praise one who was bent on the public benefit.

Flaminio then went on to say that many of the errors were the fault of the printers, who refused to let the book be proofread: Flaminio had enlisted his son, Marcantonio Flaminio, then a student at Bologna and later to become a well-known humanist, to undertake this task. The problems of printing in the early *Cinquecento*, and not just music theory, sound very modern. We authors still struggle with correcting errors, both our own and the printer's, and then may discover to our dismay that not all corrections have been made. Flaminio was greatly annoyed:

Finally the work was handed over for printing to the composers, but to careless and dishonest ones who in very many places corrupted and spoiled both Pietro's teaching and my language. Why that happened would take a long time to record in detail; I shall say this one thing, that I had engaged my son, then studying at Bologna, a young man already well known to Italy for his learning and his published works, to correct the proofs, but he was never let in through the dishonesty of those who were not handling the business in good faith. As a result I discovered for my part both that many things had been polluted and that any Greek I had written in had been utterly suppressed.¹⁰ After the work had been printed Giovanni Spataro himself, an excellent fellow and devoted to you both, thinking he should do himself and Pietro a favor, unbeknownst to the authors sent you one of the copies as a gift; which once read, you write back that you had caught many errors.

A vituperative exchange between Gaffurio and Aaron ensued, for which Flaminio chided Gaffurio:

I know that you did this with some frankness and straightforwardness, nor to be sure am I surprised, but you appeared, not to me, but to some other people and to Aaron himself, to have written rather too freely against a man you did not know well, who if he did deserve censure ought, so they said, to have been admonished with greater moderation and kindness. This hurt Aaron's feelings, and drove him to write certain things of which neither I, when I received them, later approved nor Pietro approves now, who, though he may appear to have inveighed against you more bitterly than was proper, yet is a most charitable and very kindly soul, nor if he were otherwise could I have loved him for so long. I should like you to consider whatever he said too freely and intemperately against you to have been stimulated by [concern for his] reputation, which he values, as is right, above everything else, and do not, I beg you, put it down to a salty tongue, or hatred of you, or a nature as it were prone to speaking ill; for of these vices, if you trust me at all, Aaron is entirely free, and he greatly loves and greatly reveres you.

Flaminio tried to smooth all ruffled feelings as far as he could, but Spataro's failure to spot the complained-of errors (which, to judge from the errata sheet, largely have to do with mensuration in book 2; the list that Gaffurio sent was not published with his letter) must have colored Gaffurio's reaction to the eighteen letters Spataro subsequently wrote criticizing his *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum*, published in 1518. Indeed, this is the case. In the *Errori de Franchino Gafurio da Lodi* (1521), Spataro refers to the controversy: "and because Aaron (in defense) showed you many of your own errors, you wrote to me that you understood very well that it was I and not Pietro who was answering, and so you stopped writing to Pietro and engaged me in your quarrel, and this is the reason (as you know) for all our disputes."¹¹ Years later Aaron acknowledged the partial truth in Gaffurio's suspicion; in the *Lucidario in musica* (Venice, 1545), book 2, oppenione 11 (misprinted II), he refers to Gaffurio's proposition that the Greek tetrachords always begin with the sesquioctave proportion, a whole tone, which was made at the time in 1516 "while the excellent messer Giovanni Spataro and I and Nicolaus Wollick were engaged in a musical dispute."¹² Oppenione 12 begins: "At the same time and date mentioned above, our don Franchino had a contrary opinion, as appears from some letters he wrote me concerning chapter 55 of the third book of our *De institutione harmonica*, where we said that the fifth manner is when the semicircle is reversed under the sign of imperfect tempus, where it signifies duple proportion."¹³ Gaffurio objected, saying he had never seen any learned person who accepted that relation, but Aaron responds that if he hasn't seen it in a treatise, it can be found in the "compositions of our illustrious predecessors." Gaffurio likewise objected to using the circle following the semicircle to indicate sesquialtera proportion; rather, musicians should use the numerals or figures used by arithmeticians. Aaron responds that although musicians may know arithmetic, they are not forced to use it, but only when they wish, and if

the musician can show the proportion using circles and semicircles, it is not necessary to borrow figures from others.¹⁴

We might wonder how Spataro excused himself vis-à-vis Aaron for overlooking errors in the draft of the treatise, but from the subsequent mentions of the quarrel in Spataro's *Errori* and Aaron's *Lucidario*, it appears that Spataro took the attitude that Gaffurio was wrong, at least about certain points, and he helped Aaron to respond to his critic. Despite Spataro's disingenuous remark about "uno Petro Aron," he had indeed known Aaron before the treatise was published; moreover, in the *Libri tres* Aaron refers to Spataro as one of the outstanding contemporary scholars of music, whom he venerates as a father, and whose composition for Leo X (*Cardinei cetus*) he has seen and sung.¹⁵ Whether Aaron had met Spataro before the book was published is not clear, but we do know that he visited Bologna in 1521, where, as Spataro mentions ten years later, they "discussed many exalted and subtle considerations of the art of music."¹⁶ Indeed, it was owing to the dispute with Gaffurio about the signing of sesquialtera that Spataro attributed his decision to write up the matter at length. The treatise was already finished in April 1523, when he wrote to Aaron that he was trying to engage an Austin friar to translate it into Latin, but had to wait till the friar had finished Lenten preaching; nevertheless, he hoped to send the treatise to Aaron soon.¹⁷ Up until this point, all Spataro's treatises had been written in Italian, but now, having seen the prestige conferred on Aaron's *Libri tres* by Flaminio's elegant Latin translation, he wished to follow suit. In the event, after much travail, the *Tractato di musica . . . nel quale si tracta de la perfectione da la sesquialtera producta* was published in Italian in Venice in 1531. (On the printing of this treatise, see below.)

Spataro continued to be Aaron's mentor while Aaron was writing his next treatise, the *Thoscanello de la musica*, which was published in Venice in 1523 by Bernardino and Matheo de Vitali. Spataro advised Aaron on questions of imperfection and the rule of "like before like." When Spataro received a printed copy he eagerly set about reading it, asking Aaron to enlighten him on this or that point, mostly having to do with mensuration. He insisted that he was not criticizing Aaron, but only seeking wisdom—for he did not wish to turn his friend into an enemy, as he had done with Gaffurio. He got as far as book 2, chapter 21, before Aaron decided that he couldn't brook any more of Spataro's "queries," and he broke off the correspondence, leaving Spataro at first chagrined, then angry.¹⁸

The Project to Publish Spataro's Treatises

On October 30, 1527, after a hiatus of seven years, Spataro resumed correspondence with Giovanni del Lago. Again, Del Lago had questions on Spataro's compositions, this time his *Missa Maria Magdalena* and his motet written for

Leo X, *Cardinei cetus*, with its fictitiously chromatic and enharmonic tenor (both compositions are lost). “I sent them to Franchino Gaffurio,” Spataro remarks, “but his response did not please me very much, because he said that in the tenors there were many intolerable errors, and although his remarks gave me some pause, because he did not demonstrate any reason for what he said, I decided it was out of envy or ignorance, because his works very clearly show that he is little skilled in polyphonic music.”¹⁹ A year later, in September 1528, Spataro and Del Lago began corresponding about a possible publication of Spataro’s treatises in Venice, beginning with the treatise on mensural music in its third version, which Spataro said he would happily send to Del Lago “so that it can be thoroughly reviewed and corrected.”²⁰ Del Lago responded that it would be a good idea to add sections on counterpoint and proportions. Spataro agreed, mentioning that he had already written a short treatise on proportions, “but it would be difficult to print, because there are half-blackened notes and other characters I have not yet seen in print, and there are other notes that are very difficult, which would require not a little expense to print, and it would have to be printed in folio format.”²¹ Regarding the counterpoint treatise, it would need to be shortened, a task for which Spataro did not have much time, since he was still occupied with the “troublesome” school of the clerics, even though he was in his seventieth year. But more to the point,

I really care very little whether the rules are printed, because I certainly think that the effort and expense would be thrown away, because most musicians and singers do not observe the rules and precepts ordained by learned antiquity. Your Excellency sees that in our times the signs ordained by the ancients are held in little or no regard, and they only use the sign C, and of proportions only sesquialtera. And even without having studied the rules of counterpoint, everyone is a master of composing harmony. Having given a great deal of thought to this, I understood that it would be a waste of time and learning to enter into this labyrinth, which will be fruitless; thus I urge you not to get into this madness, since I care little about it. Still, do as you like, and to please you I will do what you want.²²

Del Lago wished to pursue the project, and Spataro suggested that the order should be mensural music, counterpoint, and proportions. The treatise on proportions would be sent after Easter, “and in the meantime you will consider it, and perhaps it won’t please you. And then I will send you some chapters from the counterpoint treatise.”²³ Almost by return of post, on March 20, Del Lago sent “el principio de l’opera stampato”; Spataro liked it, and proposed the title *Utile et breue tractato de canto mensurato, composito per Maestro Zoanne Spataro, musico bolognese, ad instantia de lo illustre Signore et patrono suo osservantissimo, Messer Hermes Bentivoglio, con la additione de dui altri tractati, scilicet uno de contrapuncto et l’altro de proportione a le figure del canto mensurato applicate*; the

sample mentions only “canto mensurato.” The sample was evidently in quarto, since Spataro went on to say, “It would please me more if it were printed in folio, because the volume will otherwise turn out to be larger than perhaps you think, and also because it will be easier to understand the necessary examples and diagrams.”²⁴

The treatise on proportions was sent with Spataro’s letter of April 5, 1529, but he was concerned that he had not looked at it in some time, and uncertain whether Del Lago would really want to publish it, in which case it could be “set aside as useless, superfluous, and vain” (posto da parte come cosa inutile, frustratoria, et vana). In this letter Spataro set out a history of his writings. The treatise on proportions was the third part of a very large work:

I called the first part *Appostille*, which was only concerned with the answers to certain annotations Franchino Gaffurio wrote in his own hand on the treatise [*Musica*] *Pratica* of my teacher.²⁵ The other part was called “Letters,” which contained many musical questions discussed between him and me. And the third part was this treatise on proportions, which proceeds with more order, that is, according to genus and species, than do the letters and annotations, because the annotations and letters proceed as I was incited by Gaffurio. However, although even in these parts I treat mensural music, plainchant, counterpoint, and proportions, that way of treating the matter is not arranged in the order used in treatises and introductions, that is, to begin with the elementary principles, and by means of rules proceed to the summit of the discipline.²⁶

Hence the necessity to revise the counterpoint treatise. And it should be short, Spataro continued, in one of his most precious observations, “because the written rules can very well teach the first rudiments of counterpoint, but they won’t make a good composer, for good composers are born just as poets are born. Thus one almost needs the help of heaven more than written rules, and this is evident every day, because the learned composers (through natural instinct and a certain grace and manner, which can hardly be taught) sometimes find procedures in their counterpoints and compositions that have not been demonstrated by any rule or precept of counterpoint.”²⁷

By the end of June 1529 the counterpoint treatise was finished, though Spataro sent it with some reluctance, since “it ought to be held back a year and then again be seen and examined.” He gave Del Lago free rein to edit the treatise: “But from one thing I take comfort, that I know that it will be (out of love for me) seen and read, and purged and cleansed of all its errors, which I very much request of you, that is, that you read it well, and if you find any superfluity or deficiency, or other error, or something that doesn’t please you, emend it as if it were your own, and I will be happy. And also if the end or beginning does not match your expectation, you are entirely free to do what you want,

because just as I have directed and dedicated it to you, I want it to be entirely yours.”²⁸ Fatal words. Del Lago’s next letter alerted Spataro that he had some “doubts.” Spataro conceded, in his letter of August 23, 1529, that there might be some ill-considered passages, and even though he trusted Del Lago implicitly, still he would like to know what the doubts are, having learned from his previous experience with Aaron:

also not to incur the same error that (as you write) our excellent and venerable friend Fra Pietro Aaron fell into, who (trusting too much in himself) published three music treatises for which he has not received much honor from the intelligent. I earlier wrote him demonstrating the many errors that he had committed in his *Toscanello*, and he never (in his defense) made any response. But then in the end he wrote me that he had understood everything I had written him, and regarding my comments he would give me a full written response, which made me wonder whether he didn’t want to do what Franchino Gaffurio did, whom I advised with eighteen of my letters about the many errors he had committed in his treatise *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum*, and from Franchino I never had any response up to the end of the work. Then he wrote an Apologia against me, and sent many copies to Bologna to various canons of our church, thinking that at one blow he could deprive me of honor and usefulness. But the affair turned out otherwise than he thought, because (God be thanked) I am known to be very alien from what he (moved by anger) falsely said about me, but still I had a lot of work and trouble. But from our venerable Fra Pietro I never had any response, and I don’t really care, since nothing can be learned from him, because in this discipline he is not only a pauper but misery itself.²⁹

Two months later an eleven-folio letter from Del Lago arrived, quoting word for word Spataro’s permission to revise the treatise as he saw fit. He criticized Spataro’s definition of *fuga*, claiming that his examples show the opposite, quoting Marchetto of Padua, Tinctoris, Aaron, and Ramos against him,³⁰ and he also objected to his definition of *talea* and *color*. Nevertheless, he was “daily preparing everything necessary for printing your works, although it will take a long time, and especially for engraving the examples.” Then he asked to see the *Appostille*, since they might resolve some of his doubts on places in the treatises on counterpoint, proportion, and mensural music.³¹ Reading this letter, Spataro began to have second thoughts about entrusting his treatises to Del Lago, calling his doubts about the definition of *fuga* “puerile and thoughtless” (puerile et impensate), uncovering another *ignorantia* regarding the understanding of B \flat as essential or accidental, and taking sharp exception to Del Lago’s criticisms of his definition of *fuga*, *talea*, and *color*. He concluded:

It seems to me that I have fallen into a trap, which I always feared, that is I would find in you more prattle than action, because you wait two, three,

and four months and then write me with your puerile doubts and make arguments of the sort that not only reveal your faulty knowledge, but you seek to learn under the shadow of disputation, and you do this to draw the process out. Thus I pray you, if you want to do me a favor, send me back my treatises, because I don't want them to be published with your help, because you think yourself too learned, and my works are humble and lowly. Therefore it would do you little honor to be an intermediary in the process of printing my works. For you are the learned man of Venice, and to inflate your reputation and learning, you go around saying that I sent you my treatises so they could be corrected and cleansed by you. And then you say you would like me to send you my treatise called *Appostille* because you wanted to clarify some of your doubts, to which I respond that I won't send you a single folio in my treatises, because I regret (to death) those I already sent you. I am going to commiserate with Marc'Antonio Cavazzoni, whose opinion and consent (before I sent you my works) I wanted, and I didn't do this without reason, because I had had some whiff of your behavior. Thus don't expect any more letters from me on your puerile doubts and arguments, because I cannot possibly gain anything from you (who are ignorance personified). So again I ask you to send me back my treatises, and after that we will be friends as we were before.³²

This letter occasioned a gap in Spataro's correspondence with Del Lago for nearly three years. It seems that Spataro could be on friendly terms with only one of his correspondents at a time: reviewing the history of his scholarly relations, it is clear that the proverb "Once bitten, twice shy" does not apply in his case. Rather than have his treatises mangled by Del Lago, he preferred not to publish them at all.

The Publication of the Revised Version of the *Toscanello* (1529)

On July 5, 1529, Aaron published a revised version of his *Thoscanello*, with the title *Toscanello in musica*, issued once again by the printers Bernardino and Matheo de Vitali. By the 23rd of August the news had reached Spataro in Bologna, and he told Del Lago that he was very eager to read the new edition, wondering if Aaron had taken his criticisms into account. He asked Del Lago to send him a copy, for which he would reimburse him. He didn't want to write to Aaron directly, he said, because

he is very sore at me, and this happened because I urgently tried to persuade him to hold back from printing his treatise on the modes, recently published [the *Trattato della natura et cognitione di tutti gli tuoni* (Venice, August 4, 1525)], which came out exactly as I wrote to him, that is, without order and

truth, against which I wrote almost 100 folios, which I have kept. That was not done out of anger, nor through hatred and envy towards my venerable Frate Pietro, but only so that beginners (who are easily gullible), reading his uncouth writings and erroneous statements, will not walk in the path of darkness and error, in which (truly) out of his careless attention and excessive self-confidence he remains immersed. But I beg you not to argue with him, because such men are to be shunned and humored to stew in their own ignorance and stubbornness, as I trust you will know how to do.³³

No correspondence exists on Spataro's reaction to the revised version of the *Toscanello*, but by rare good luck a copy of the treatise survives with Spataro's annotations. The exemplar in the Newberry Library, Chicago, case folio V 5 .01, once belonged to J.J. Maier, author of the catalogue of music manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (1879), who added a MS note explaining the untitled pamphlet of 1531, which is bound with this exemplar.³⁴ Spataro's annotations are mostly clarifications, but some are corrections (see appendix 2.1; none of them was incorporated in the 1539 edition of the *Toscanello*). It would not have pleased him to discover that Aaron actually made few changes between the 1523 and 1529 editions.³⁵ At the spot where Spataro criticized Aaron for omitting to show the possibility that the long of imperfect major mode could also have two rests (book 1, ch. 10)³⁶ Aaron has made no change, but Spataro's added words clarify that the example shows perfect minor mode. In book I, chapter 34 (sig. Eii^v), Spataro quite rightly queried Aaron's "tempo imperfetto," suggesting it was "errore de lo impressore,"³⁷ but Aaron made no change. In his comments on chapter 35, Spataro suggested that a black note cannot "serve to augment the perfect number"—"complement" or "supplement" would be more correct.³⁸ This too was ignored. Spataro's comments on chapter 36 raise an interesting point about a blackened semibreve followed by a minim, the so-called minor color. Aaron, following modern practice, interpreted the semibreve as a dotted minim, but Spataro preferred to read it as sesquialtera.³⁹ After a gap of several letters in their correspondence, Spataro resumed commenting at chapter 17 of book 2, where he criticized Aaron for stating that compositions must begin with a perfect consonance; for Spataro this rule applies only to beginners.⁴⁰ Aaron was happy to leave his wording as it was, and likewise his suggestion, which certainly surprised Spataro, that the composer was free to proceed without respect to the mode, and that in diminutions only the first and the last note need to be concordant. Spataro's remarks on the function of the diesis sign (a sharp; ch. 20), on the other hand, were incorporated verbatim, not in the same chapter but in the *Aggiunta* added at the end of the edition, as were some later passages from this letter.⁴¹ After this letter there is a gap until September 1524, when the discussion begins about Willaert's "duo." If Spataro was disappointed with the revised version of the *Toscanello*, he was surely very gratified by

the *Aggiunta*, in which Aaron discusses a number of passages in contemporary compositions problematic from the point of view of accidentals, and which he bills as “a complacenza degli amici fatta” (“done to please some friends,” without any mention of Spataro).⁴²

The Publication of Aaron’s Untitled Pamphlet on *Coniunctae* (1531)

Once Spataro had broken off relations with Del Lago in 1529 over the failed project to publish his counterpoint treatise, he decided to resume contact with Aaron. He was full of joy at Aaron’s response, which included “letters and compositions full of such grace and sweetness that they would move lifeless stones to tears.”⁴³ He was delighted to be reunited with his friend, and eager to continue their musical discussions. After thanking Aaron for pointing out some errors in the motets he had sent him, he mentions that he has nearly finished writing “el tratatello.” This treatise is not further identified, but from what follows it appears that it is a critique of what Aaron wrote on *coniunctae* in the *Trattato della natura et cognitione di tutti gli tuoni*. We know that Spataro severely criticized this treatise, but Aaron did not respond. Now, evidently encouraged by Aaron, he has undertaken to set the matter out in writing:

Regarding the little treatise, every evening I am working on it as best as I can. When it is finished and looked over, I will send it to Your Excellency, because I don’t want to go back on my promise to you. Pray God that I stay healthy. I am almost at the end of the treatise.

I am happy, my honored Fra Pietro, that for your own sake you now think there is more than one *coniuncta*, and not just that of B♭, although in your treatise you say that others are amazed that in all the positions of the hand there should be *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*, and that is the case because they do not understand the *coniuncta*. Here it appears that you understand only one and not more, because you should have said “the *coniuncte*,” and not “the *coniuncta*.”⁴⁴

Spataro then went on to demonstrate that it was crucial to show such hexachords making use of the sharp as well, because there is the interval of a comma between, say, C♯ and D♭; Spataro’s reference to “black keys” indicates that he has divined that Aaron based his discussion on a keyboard instrument tuned in meantone temperament, with split keys, in which the sharp and flat are reversed with respect to Pythagorean intonation. No more was said about the subject in this letter. In the next letter (February 8, 1531), Spataro announced that he had finished his critique of Aaron’s writings, but diplomatically couched it in the third person; he urged Aaron to retract his discussion of the “six syllables,” for his honor’s sake. Then he made an extraordinary offer:

to assist Aaron in every way, and if it pleased him, to write it up himself and send it to him—"and you can publish it under your own name."⁴⁵

By October 1531 the treatise was published, in a small, untitled pamphlet, issued by Aaron's Venetian printers, without a word about Spataro's ghostwriting role.⁴⁶ Spataro was delighted to preserve the fiction, as his letter acknowledging receipt shows: "Many days have passed since I had a letter from you with which there was a very learned, subtle, and worthy little treatise, newly printed, which (elegantly and with the best and truest demonstrations) showed how in each of the positions of the Guidonian hand the six official names can be found."⁴⁷ He shared the treatise with his musical discussion group, the "musici bolognesi," who, we learn from the same letter, were amazed that Spataro defended Aaron even though the latter disagreed with Spataro's revered teacher Bartolomé Ramos, remarking that they thought he had entered his second childhood. We shall see in the next section what motivated Spataro to make this extraordinary offer and keep silent about it.

The treatise, which is only five folios long and has no title (nor any indication of author, though the first sentence makes clear that it is by the author of the *Tratatto*), must have had very poor circulation. Aaron reprinted it in the last two chapters of book 4 of his *Lucidario* of 1545, with a different introduction and slight differences in wording. Of the emendations Aaron made in the copy of the treatise in the Newberry Library bound together with the copy of the *Toscanello* annotated by Spataro (see appendix 2.1), only one was taken over in the *Lucidario* (fol. 38v, 14 up, "discenderebbe").

The Publication of Spataro's *Tractato di musica* (1531)

When Spataro resumed correspondence with Aaron in January 1531 after a long gap, all the difficulties of the past had been resolved, and their friendship was renewed. After telling Aaron that the "tractatello" discussed in the previous section was nearly ready, Spataro retailed the sad history of his negotiations with Del Lago on the proposed publication of his counterpoint treatise, since it now seemed that Aaron was willing to take over as intermediary with the Venetian printers. As he had told Del Lago earlier, Spataro remarked that his trilogy *Appostille*, *Epistole*, and *Proporzione* was probably not worth printing because "many have written on that subject, and few bother about learning anything but practice in singing, and whoever wants to treat it according to practice contradicts theory, and those who want to observe theory find that usage is against them." Therefore, he offered Aaron something "more learned, and other works and treatises that deal with these important questions, which every day are torn to shreds and not understood by the common people and little appreciated."⁴⁸ Foremost is the treatise on a subject very dear to his heart, the perfection of sesquialtera, "grounded in mathematics." Then there are also

his letters to Gaffurio on the *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum*, everything written in Italian. Another possibility is the treatise on proportions, once the figures had been reduced. And perhaps he might revise the treatise on mensural music, and also the one on counterpoint. The prospect of spending a year in Venice with Aaron during the publication process delighted him. All he wanted was that his copies and originals be returned to him after printing, and he was happy that “intelligent” men would consider whether the works need emendation. He left it all up to Aaron, acknowledging that the treatise on counterpoint would be very difficult to print because of the many music examples.⁴⁹ We have already heard most of this before.

In the end only the *Tractato di musica . . . nel quale si tracta de la perfectione da la sesqualtera producta in la musica mensurata exercitate* was published, on October 8, 1531, by Aaron’s Venetian publisher, Bernardino de Vitali. Spataro had sent the manuscript to Aaron with his letter of March 28, 1531, warning him that the diagram at the end of chapter 13 needed to be done carefully.⁵⁰ Responding to Aaron’s report (in a letter of October 7, which has not survived) that he was having trouble with the printers, Spataro wrote:

I can well believe that Your Excellency has had not a little trouble and inconvenience with the printers, because from the little I have had to do with them, I have remained so fed up and full of disgust that I would rather suffer any great punishment than ever fall into their hands again. But I think and know that you will have borne every difficulty with patience out of love for me and to give me pleasure, and I am disposed to do the same for Your Excellency, although my ability is modest. And I am very pleased that the work is finished, which I think will come out well because it has been diligently supervised with regard to the readings and with great care not only by a learned and skilled man but also a friend. Thus at your convenience send at least one of them to me, and if possible also my [original] copy, whatever its condition, that is, marked up by the printers, which doesn’t bother me.⁵¹

By November 27, Spataro had received his copy of the book, and he promised to look for printing errors when he was in better health, so Aaron could correct his copy. In gratitude he had sent Aaron six of the best Bolognese sausages. But, having heard that Del Lago had bought the book, Spataro was worried that his friend was going to find printer’s errors and he asked Aaron to get back his original from the printers and keep it to correct the printed copy.⁵² In his next letter, of January 30, 1532, Spataro was glad to hear that Aaron had his original and could correct “many errors,” and he was relieved to learn that Del Lago praised the treatise; in fact, he requested Aaron to encourage Del Lago to write to him and he would answer like a friend, without regard to what had passed between them.⁵³

From the next letter, of March 13, 1532, it appears that the project to publish Spataro’s other treatises is still on the boards, since Aaron reported on his

discussion with the printers on the format, woodcuts, and paper.⁵⁴ On April 12, Spataro responded to Aaron's request for a corrected copy of his treatise on the *sesquialtera*. He noted that there were many errors, all marked with three dots, but the most important ones were in chapter 3, where in the margin he had written "These are not the author's words." And the diagram at the end of chapter 14, about which he had warned Aaron, had not come out right and did not agree with the statement in the text. Moreover, in the figure in chapter 21 the mensuration signs were misplaced. He assured Aaron that this was not said to blame him, "because I believe firmly that you are not responsible for the errors," as Aaron should know since he had never mentioned them, and Spataro would not even do so now except that Aaron had asked him.⁵⁵ Spataro said nothing further about his other treatises until his letter of March 4, 1533, in which he told Aaron to do as he pleased with the treatise on mensural music, but that he would like to look it over before it was printed.⁵⁶

Something evidently went wrong with the plans to publish Spataro's treatise on mensural music, for on July 30, 1533, he asked Aaron to return it, "because I have become great friends with an excellent woodcutter, who is very talented in carving wood, to whom I showed my treatise on counterpoint, and he has already offered to do everything for free, which I don't want, but I do want it just right, and I believe he will do it as I wish, because he has already given me his son as a cleric in San Petronio, with the hope (with my help) of deriving some use and profit thereby."⁵⁷ When Aaron took offense, as we learn from the next letter, Spataro suspected the evil influence of Del Lago: "I am very saddened by your letter because it seems to me that you have been left in sorrow, almost believing that with art and fiction I sought to liberate my treatise from your hands, and that our old love is over, as that malignant disseminator of discord, Pre Zanetto [del Lago], has falsely imagined." Nothing could be further from the truth, Spataro claimed: he wanted it back only because it was the most complete copy and because of the convenience of having it printed in Bologna.⁵⁸ He reiterated in the next letter his innocence and revealed the reasons he withdrew the treatise: not because it was aimed too low ("non tanto perché l'opera è vulgare"), but because he hadn't seen the treatise for some time and he wanted to review it before having it published, and although he was happy with it in general, he wanted to change some details on points that he and Del Lago had been disputing; otherwise some ignorant persons might accuse him of contradiction and error. The treatise, he said, dealt only with the simple rules of past and contemporary practice, without speculating higher, and this apparently was the source of Del Lago's criticism. Spataro complained that Del Lago "seeks to insinuate that I have tried to extract it from you with deceit, and if I praise you in my letters, I actually attack you."⁵⁹ The rest of the letter concerns a problem posed to Del Lago by Spataro's musical discussion group, "i musici bolognesi," regarding the position of the syllables *ut* and *la* on C \flat and F \flat and B \sharp and E \sharp , and Del Lago's floundering and "puerile"

attempts to provide an answer. Instead of writing directly to Del Lago, Spataro addressed this thirteen-folio letter to Aaron, remarking that Del Lago could make a copy of it in Aaron's room if he liked.⁶⁰

Thus ends the correspondence between Giovanni Spataro and Giovanni del Lago (not surprisingly) and Pietro Aaron, who evidently was truly offended that Spataro had not entrusted to him the printing of the counterpoint treatise, and who had no further wish to be the middleman in disputes between Spataro and Del Lago. This is a pity, because the letter shows Spataro, then in his mid-seventies, still at the height of his powers.

The correspondence between Spataro and Aaron reveals much about the printing of music theory treatises in early *cinquecento* Italy. Before publishing, it was customary at least for some authors (on the ancient model, as Flaminio says) to send the manuscript to a trusted friend for vetting, as Aaron did with his first three treatises, of 1516, 1523, and 1525, which he sent to Giovanni Spataro. Spataro had died by the time the fourth treatise, the *Lucidario in musica di alcune oppenioni antiche, et moderne con le loro Oppositioni, & Resolutioni*, was published by Girolamo Scotto in 1545, but in it Aaron includes many of Spataro's opinions, some of which can be traced back to their correspondence.⁶¹ Their relationship had many ups and downs, but Spataro was eternally grateful to Aaron for steering through the press his only published treatise, on the sesquialtera relation (1531). It appears that Aaron transmitted the manuscript to the printer as he found it, without suggesting changes, no doubt to Spataro's satisfaction; but when the treatise was published, Spataro was chagrined to find that there were errors (some surely his), and especially in a figure that he had warned Aaron about so the printers would get it correct. We may judge from this that Aaron did not undertake to read the proofs of the treatise—if he in fact had been allowed to do so; as we have seen in the case of his 1516 treatise, the printers balked at allowing Marcantonio Flaminio to read proofs. Spataro transmitted a list of corrections to Aaron after his sesquialtera treatise was published, but none of the surviving exemplars I have seen transmits any of these corrections, which would have been marked by three dots in the margin. Possibly Aaron had no access to the stock, and Spataro himself seems to have been content with only one copy, or probably two copies, since he sent a corrected copy back to Aaron. Aaron dedicated all his treatises to potential or actual patrons; Spataro's treatise was dedicated to Aaron, in gratitude. We have no idea what the financial arrangements were; since they are not discussed in the correspondence between the two theorists, evidently all the expense and any profit were delegated to the printer, Bernardino de Vitali, the well-known publisher of Aaron's three Venetian treatises. Aaron's 1523 *Toscanello* was reprinted three times, in 1529 (Bernardino and Matheo de Vitali), 1539 (Marchio Sessa), and 1562 (Domenico Nicolini), so the printers must have made a profit. 103 copies are still extant.⁶² Spataro's sesquialtera treatise had

only one edition, and twenty-five copies are extant. On a specialized topic, and chaotically organized (Aaron was no copyeditor), it cannot have appealed to many readers. Had it not been for Aaron's friendship, it is doubtful that the treatise would ever have been printed. The correspondence between Gaffurio, Flaminio, Spataro, Del Lago, and Aaron allows us a rare glimpse into the process of preparing books for publication, problems with the typesetters, and the often fraught personal relations involved in bringing books to print.

Appendix 2.1

Spataro's Corrections in the Newberry Library Copy of Aaron's *Toscanello de la musica* and Aaron's Corrections in the Untitled Pamphlet on *Coniunctae*

The copy of Aaron's *Toscanello de la musica* (1529) in the Newberry Library, Chicago, shelf mark case folio V 5.01, is bound in vellum with a leather label with the date 1531 (the date of the untitled pamphlet, bound in at the end); the edges of the pages are gilt. Pasted on the inside front cover is a clipping from a book catalogue: "no. 207. ARON (Pietro). Toscanello in mvica di Messer Pietro Aron" with a description in French and the price 70.000.⁶³ On the title page at the top right corner in an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century hand: 'Bibl.ca Haym pag. 50 . . . 12'.⁶⁴ The annotations in Spataro's hand in the *Toscanello* are in a light brown ink. Aaron has made one correction and an addition, in very faint ink, in the untitled pamphlet. The presence of his hand indicates that Spataro sent this annotated copy to Aaron.

In the following list, the words deleted by Spataro are shown with strike-through; those inserted are italicized. Not a single one of these corrections is found in later editions of the *Toscanello*, except for the handwritten correction of the note in the example in book 2, chapter 7, which is also found in the exemplar of the 1539 edition in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana.

Spataro's corrections in the *Toscanello*:

Book 1

Ch. 10, sig. C1^v, l. 13 up: "Nel modo maggiore imperfetto *et modo minore* *perfecto* la massima valera due longhe, sei brevi, xii semibreui, & minime xxiiii." This is a clarification rather than a correction.

Ch. 11, sig. C2, l. 6 up: "La massima *imperfecta* del modo minor perfetto vale due longhe, brevi sei, semibreui xviii, minime liiii." Spataro's insertion is again a clarification, but what he does not note is that this paragraph is nearly a duplication of the previous paragraph. In chapters 11–26

Aaron sets out the sixteen species of mensuration, probably based on Tinctoris's *Tractatus de regulari valore notarum*. This and the previous paragraph delineate the third species.

sig. C2^v, l. 1: "La massima *imperfecta* del modo minore imperfetto, over secondo il volgo detto per mezo, val ~~tre~~ *due* longhe, brevi quatro, semibrevi xii, minime xxxvi." This is Tinctoris's fourth species, where both modes are imperfect, but tempus and prolation perfect. Spataro's "imperfecta" is again a clarification, but "due" a correction ("due longhe" is correctly given in line 3).

- Ch. 15, sig. C3, l. 1 under heading: "La massima *imperfecta* del modo minor perfetto val due longhe, brevi vi, semibrevi xii, minime xxxvi." This is the same clarification as in the previous examples.
- Ch. 16, l. 1 under heading: "La massima *imperfecta* nel modo minore imperfetto val due longhe, brevi iiiii, semibrevi viiii, minime xxiiii." Same clarification as before.
- Ch. 17, sig. C3^v, chapter heading: "Valore del modo maggior perfetto, nel segno del tempo perfetto, et prolatione imperfetta, ~~come qui O.~~ *come qui O.*" This is Tinctoris's ninth species, where the maxima is perfect. It would have made more sense to change O. to Θ .
- Ch. 28, sig. D2, l. 2 under heading: "Ne la parte superiore habbiamo dimostrato & narrato la intelligenza del modo maggiore, minore, & tempo *per el circulo: et per el semicirculo: et per le cifre ternarie & binarie.*" Spataro is right to add this clarification because in the previous chapter Aaron had discussed the so-called *modus-cum-tempore* signatures, e.g., O33, with circles and semicircles as well as figures.
- l. 7 under heading: "Hanno adunque a sapere che gli circoli & semicircoli congiunti, & inanzi posti con una cifra sola: essendo de la cifra diminuti, *s. mancando una de le doe cifre numerale posite disopra dapo el circulo overo el semicirculo*, muteranno il modo di maggiore in minore . . ."; the insertion is in the margin; a three-dot sign is written over "diminuti." Here Aaron is explaining the signs with a single figure, e.g., O3 and O2. Spataro's addition is a clarification. (See fig. 2.1.)
- Ch. 29 [wrongly 28], sig. D2^v, opp. l. 8 under heading: "p^o modo." This is a type of annotation commonly found in treatises, to call attention to something in the text. Here Aaron is describing three ways to recognize when a maxima is perfect.
- l. 12 up: "O $\equiv\circ\cdot\circ\equiv\equiv\equiv\cdot$ " in margin, with three-dot sign after "prima nota." The notes clarify what Aaron says in the text, illustrating an incorrect notation breaking the rule "like before like is always perfect."
- opp. l. 7 up: "2^o modo." (See fig. 2.2.)
- sig. D 3, opp. l. 4: "3^o modo."

PRIMO

pfetta: & limperfetto p il semicircolo: & così p la cifra ternaria la pfessione: & p la binaria la imperfettione. Per tanto il sopradetto si dirà segno di modo maggior pfetto per rispetto del circolo, & per la prima cifra di modo minor pfetto: & p la secôda di tēpo anchor perfetto. Così ritrouando il semicircolo, hara natura del modo maggiore impfetto p esser forma imperfetta: & se di poi seguirà la binaria cifra, modo minore impfetto: & se nel lultimo il simile trouerai, fara inditio di tēpo imperfetto: come gli presenti dimostrarano. C22. Anchora se fara prima la ternaria cifra: diremo modo minore perfetto. C23. & se fara ultima, tempo perfetto come qui C23. Ma se fara la prima, & la seconda cifra ternaria: harem modo minor pfetto & tempo perfetto: come qui C33. Se anchora fara la prima, & secôda cifra binaria: fara modo minore impfetto & tempo imperfetto: come qui C22. Et perche tal ordine da gli nostri cōpositori nō è usitato, piu di questo nō mi estendero.

DE LA COGNITIONE DEL MODO MINOR
PERFETTO, ET IMPERFETTO, TEMPO,
ET PROLATIONE PER VARI
SEGNI. CAP. XXVIII.

NE la parte superiore habbiamo dimostrarato & narrato la intelligenza del modo maggiore, minore: & tēpo per le cifre ternarie & binarie: & pche alcuni hāno anchora dimostrarato il modo minore con il circolo & semicircolo: & il tēpo per le medesime cifre: uoglio in qualche parte soddisfare a coloro gli quali forse harāno piacere di cotale intelligenza. Hāno adūque a sape che gli circoli & semicircoli cōgiunti, & inanzi posti con una cifra sola: essendo de la cifra diminuti, muterāno il modo di maggiore in minore: cioè che il circolo o semicircolo resta in luogo de la prima cifra ternaria, ouer binaria: lequal di sopra prima dimostrarauano modo minore pfetto, & impfetto. Per tanto nota che il circolo ināzi posto ad una cifra sola ternaria, fara modo minor pfetto: & la cifra tēpo pfetto: come qui, O3. Et quādo tal circolo fara con la binaria, diremo modo minor pfetto & tēpo impfetto: come qui O2. Se anchora fara trouato il semicircolo con la cifra ternaria: dimostrarà lo impfetto minore modo nel tēpo pfetto come qui C3. Et cō la binaria, modo minore impfetto & tēpo impfetto cōe qui C2. Oltra di q̄sto

D ii

p el circolo: et 2 / 157
circolo: et 2

f. mōdo uno de
le due cifre nume
rale poste d'opra
d'opra el circolo, o mō
re el semicircolo.

Figure 2.1. Giovanni Spataro's annotations in Pietro Aaron, *Toscanello in musica* (Venice, 1529), sig. D ii. Reproduced with permission from the Newberry Library, Chicago, case folio V 5 .01.

Ch. 30 [wrongly 25], sig. D3^v: opp. l. 8: "p^o modo." This chapter discusses three ways of recognizing imperfection.

opp. l. 11: "2^o modo."

opp. l. 12: "3^o modo."

opposite example: Spataro has added in the margin a two-voice example under Θ showing imperfection *a parte ante*. (See fig. 2.3.)

LIBRO

come da parte sua propinqua: & da una breue, da una semibreue, & da una minima ne la prolatione perfetta: come parti dependenti luna da l'altra: ouer di tanto suo ualore, come dimoſtrano alcuni canti antichi. La longa anchora puo eſſere imperfetta da una breue, semibreue, & minima in eſſa platione perfetta. Il ſimile la breue da una semibreue, & minima ne la prolatione perfetta. La semibreue ſolo da la ſua terza parte quale è la minima puo eſſere imperfetta: da altra figura mai nõ è cõceſſo. La imperfettione è conſiderata in tre modi principali. Primamente quãdo ſi truoua una figura perfectibile ſeparata da la ſua ſimile, & congiunta con alcuna minore: & queſta ſeparatione ſi fa in dui modi: cioè da la parte dinanzi, ouero da la parte di poi: o uoi dire da la minore antecedente, o ſuſſeguenta. Il ſecondo è per gli punti poſti appreſſo le figure perfectibili. Il terzo modo per cauſa del colore, cioè ne grezza. Trouaſi anchora detta imperfettione non ſolo quando dopo dette figure ſeguano le minori: ma anchora quando ſono poſte auanti le pauſe, ouer note maggiori di ſe: che da lo antecedente minore uengono a eſſere di minute, ouero imperfette: come dichiara la ſeguenta figura.

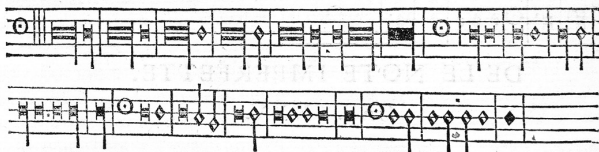
1.^o modo

2.^o modo

3.^o modo



IMPERFETTIONE DE LE NOTE.



COME LA LONGA NEL TEMPO PERFETTO NON SI PVO DIRE IMPERFETTA. CAP. XXXI.

FOrſe che alcuni credono che la longa del tempo perfetto diminuta da qualche parte ſia domandata imperfetta: impero che eſſendo formata di due breui: reſta in quantita di ſci semibreui: laqual quantita ſenaria, quegli dicono eſſere perfetta: & che anchora genera il ualore di tre breui del tempo imperfetto: a laqual cõſideratione io ueramente ſon cõtrario: p che ſe

Figure 2.3. Giovanni Spataro's annotations in Pietro Aaron, *Toscanello in musica* (Venice, 1529), sig. D iii^v. Reproduced with permission from the Newberry Library, Chicago, case folio V 5 .01.

Book 2

Ch. 5, sig. G2, l. 15 under heading: “sarà mutata ne la voce fa *per* quello che di sopra è stato detto.” Spataro inserts a missing word.

Ch. 6, sig. G2^v, at end of l. 4: “per tanto ogni consonanza: *in la quale cadera semitono* sempre harà meno una spetie che non sono le sue voci . . .” Aaron is describing the first species of fourth, remarking that “Every consonance has one less species than the number of notes it contains”; Spataro specifies that it needs to contain a semitone.

last line before example: “Cade il diatessaron ne la proportione sesquiterza presente xlviij 4. a. 3.” A necessary correction.

Ch. 7, sig. G3, example: penultimate note changed from *f* to *g*. Spataro corrects an error (as anyone could have independently).

l. 15 up: “Dicono adunque primieramente che tante sono le spetie del diapente quanto sono le spetie de la sesquialtera”: “Dico” is the 1523 reading, and there is no reason why it should have been changed, from “I say” to “They say.”

Ch. 35, sig. L4, l. 9 up: “Tre quantità/ *generi* semplici, & primi generi di sopra da noi son stati dichiarati”: “generi” is written over “quantità.” Either word is possible, though the chapter titles have “genere.”

l. 4 up: “Quando un numero maggiore è comparato a uno minore: & che in esso maggiore sia il suo minore più di una volta, & anchora di più alcune altre parti, o siano mezze, terze, quarte, o quinte: in questo consiste il multiplice superparticolare genere: come gli presenti numeri dichiarano 5 a 2, 7 a 3, 9 a 4, 11 a 5.” Spataro has altered the phrase “alcune . . . quinte” from the plural to the singular: “alcuna altra parte, o siano mezza, terza, quarta, o quinta.” Spataro’s definition of the multiplex superparticular genus is clearer; Aaron’s definition is not wrong, but applies only to the examples given.

Ch. 40, sig. M2, l. 8 up: “Da mese & ~~trite synemenon~~ *paramese* quali sono a la mi re, & \sharp mi acuto, cade il tuono naturale diviso dal tasto negro.”

This correction is necessary, since *trite synemenon* is *b \flat* ; Spataro, however, should also have corrected “&” to “a.”

Aggiunta, sig. N1, l. 12 up: “[il tritono] naturalmente nasce da *parhypate meson*, & ~~trite synemenon~~ *paramese*, chiamati F fa ut grave, & \sharp mi acuto . . .” Again Spataro corrects Aaron’s erroneous indication of “trite synemenon,” although he should have omitted “trite.”

Aaron’s Corrections in the Untitled Pamphlet on *Coniunctae*:

sig. aai^v, l. 11 up in margin: “Similmente se questo segno .b. fussi date in .c. ovvero in .f. naturali, il suo suono ~~discorderà~~ *discenderà* sotto .b. & .e. naturali per spatio di uno coma.” “Descend” is correct: *C \flat* and *F \flat* would fall a comma lower than *B* and *E*.

sig. aaii, marginal addition before “Ma” of l. 2: “Diremo adunque che la prima syllaba .ut. harà origine da questo segno # segnato in D sol re de l’ordine semplice & la seconda, cioè re, harà il suo nascimento dal preditto segno segnato in .C. fa ut, *et per contrario accaderà volendo trovare el nascimento delle seconde tre sillabe cioè fa. sol. la bisognerà discendere perché hanno il suo semituono costituito infra fa et mi*, ma la terza syllaba, cioè mi, sta in tal luogo naturalmente” (the discussion concerns a hexachord starting on B).

Notes

It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this essay to Jane Bernstein, who has done so much to illuminate our knowledge of sixteenth-century music printing. Of the treatises discussed in this article, one, Aaron’s *Lucidario in musica* (1545), was published by one of “her” printers, Girolamo Scotto. I draw most of my evidence from the Spataro Correspondence, which, although published, is so extensive that the many references to printing in it have largely been overlooked—and not least by myself, since I did not include “printing” in the index. The views of readers presented in this article add a small personal complement to Cristle Collins Judd’s pioneering *Reading Renaissance Music Theory: Hearing with the Eyes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). I am grateful to Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans and Katelijne Schiltz for reading the article in draft and offering valuable observations.

1. Letter 2 in the Spataro Correspondence: *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians*, ed. Bonnie J. Blackburn, Edward E. Lowinsky, and Clement A. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 203–11, at 203. All translations are taken from this edition. “Retratatione” can mean either “retraction” or “revision”; the latter seems likely here; Cavazzoni may have assumed it was revised since it was now printed.

2. See the essay by James B. Coover, based on the research of Victor Scholderer, in *Dictionary of Musical Terms by Johannes Tinctoris*, trans. and annotated by Carl Parrish (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 101–8. Gerardus, himself a musician, evidently printed a manuscript copy without updating it in any way, since Tinctoris’s dedication “ad illustrissimam virginem et dominam D. Beatricem de Aragonia” must have been written before her marriage to Mathias Corvinus in 1476 or before the time she was formally betrothed.

3. See the new critical edition *Johannes Tinctoris: Diffinitorium musicae. Un dizionario di musica per Beatrice d’Aragona*, ed. and trans. Cecilia Panti (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2004), xlv. She prefers the date 1494, following Dennis E. Rhodes, *La stampa a Treviso nel secolo XV* (Treviso: Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso, 1983), 25, as the last known date of Gerardus’s publications in Treviso.

4. Letter 29 (November 24, 1529) to Giovanni del Lago; *A Correspondence*, 406. Spataro complained that Tinctoris’s definition of *color* was word for word the same as his definition of *talea* (which is not in fact true).

5. See my “Theorists as Prima Donnas: Reviewing Music Theory in the Early Cinquecento,” to be published in *Music Theories: Strategies, Intentions, and Methods in 16th-Century Writings on Music*, ed. Inga Mai Groote (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, in press).

6. On this project, see *A Correspondence*, 131–42, where I suggest that Del Lago was motivated by the example of Pietro Aretino, whose first volume of letters, published in Venice in 1537, was the first vernacular correspondence to be published in modern times. Because Del Lago kept copies of letters written to him, I was able to determine that some of the letters he intended to publish as his own (they appear in a fair copy at the beginning of the manuscript, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 5318) were cannibalized from letters of others, and some letters were fictitious.

7. Letter 3 in *A Correspondence*, 217. Cavazzoni, too, had asked Spataro for an explanation of his canons, this time in the lost work *Ubi opus est facto*.

8. *A Correspondence*, 203. Spataro refers to the list of errors that is printed at the back of some copies of the *Libri tres*, including that used for the facsimile edition by Broude Brothers (New York, 1976); the date of his letter shows that the errata sheet was published a year after the treatise appeared in print.

9. The letters of Flaminio and Gaffurio are in Bologna, Biblioteca universitaria, MS 1998, pp. 538–43, a sixteenth-century fair copy. They were later published as *Epistolae familiares*, ed. Domenico Capponi, OP (Bologna: Ex typographia Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, 1744), 461 (letter from Gaffurio) and 462–63 (letter from Flaminio). The letters were transcribed from the 1744 edition but not translated in appendix B of Ed Peter Bergquist, Jr., “The Theoretical Writings of Pietro Aaron” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1964), 504–10, and were also reprinted in Giuseppe Vecchi’s introduction to the facsimile of *Libri tres* (Bologna: Forni, 1970) after a faulty transcription from the 1744 edition by Fabio Fano in “Note su Franchino Gaffurio,” *Rivista musicale italiana* 55 (1953): 225–50, at 239–42.

10. That is, the Greek was transliterated. The publisher, Benedetto di Ettore, was certainly capable of printing Greek, which appears in other books printed by his press.

11. *Errori de Franchino Gafurio da Lodi: da maestro Joanne Spataro musico bolognese, in sua deffensione, et del suo preceptore maestro Bartolomeo Ramis hispano. Subtilmente demonstrati* (Bologna, January 12, 1521). Error 32, fol. 39r–v: “m’è venuto a memoria che de l’anno 1516 (per la tua invidia et petulantia) tra te et Petro Aron Florentino Musico doctissimo naque litigio Musico: et perché Petro Aron (per sua diffessa) te demonstrò multi toi errori: Tu scrivesti a me che da te era compreheso che io era quello che te rispondeua, et non Petro: pertanto tu lassasti de scrivere al prelibato Petro, et con mecoolesti la lite; per la quale cosa (come tu sciai) tra nui acadete multe desputatione.”

12. “La qual questione nel 1516 fu da don Franchino proposta mentre l’ecellente messer Gioan Spadaro, & io con lui, & con Nicolo Vulso eravamo a musico litigio, nella quale il detto don Franchino teneua, che i tre generi havessono principio per Tuono, & non per Semituono, ne per Diesi.” Aaron then provides the “resoluta risposta” given to Gaffurio (*Lucidario in musica*, fol. 10). The *Lucidario* is described in Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press (1539–1572)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), no. 399, pp. 897–98. It is the only music theory treatise published by Girolamo Scotto.

13. “Nel medesimo tempo & millesimo soprascritto il nostro don Franchino hebbe contraria opinione, come appare da alcune sue a me scritte intorno il capitolo .55. del Terzo della nostra Musica della Institutione harmonica, ove dannoi è detto, che il Quinto modo è quando il Semicercolo si ritrova volto al contrario sotto il segno del tempo imperfetto, la qual figura significa doppia proportione, sopra qual luogo disse In questo pigliate errore, perciocché il Semicircolo comunque sia volto, sempre è segno di tempo imperfetto” (*Lucidario*, fol. 11).

14. “Al gran discorso, & obiettion della Eccellenza del nostro don Franchino, la quale egli ci fa in poche parole dicendo, che egli non ha mai trovato dotto alcuno, che tra questo segno .C. et quest’altro .O. faccia proportione doppia, Dannoì è risposto, che se egli non ha veduto di ciò special regola, o trattato, che noi l’habbiamo trovato nelle compositioni di dotti musici nostri predecessori. . . . Ma [lui] ha oppenione che il Musico, quando vorrà dimostrare qualche proportione ne suoi canti debba adoperare le zifre, o figure numerali da gli Arithmetici usate, Intorno al qual parere, dico, che l’usare i numeri è in potestà, et arbitrio del musico, né perciò si fa pregiuditio alla Arithmetica, che benché sia lecito al Musico sapere Arithmetica, egli non è però sforzato di usarla, se non quanto allui piace, et bisogna, Perché se il Musico ne suoi canti può dimostrare per lo suo circolo, et per lo semicircolo la proportione cadente tra le sue figure cantabili, non gli è dibisogno andar togliendo le zifre d’altrui” (ibid., fol. 11r–v). On the argument about indicating sesquialtera proportion with mensuration signs or figures, see Bonnie J. Blackburn, “The Sign of Petrucci’s Editor,” in *Venezia 1501: Petrucci e la stampa musicale / Venice 1501: Petrucci, Music, Print and Publishing. Atti del Convegno internazionale Venezia—Palazzo Giustinian Lolin, 10–13 ottobre 2001*, ed. Giulio Cattin and Patrizia Dalla Vecchia (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 2005), 417–20.

15. “qui sunt in arte peritissimi, quales sunt hoc nostro seculo non pauci, quorum de numero est Ioannes Spartarius [*sic*] Bononiensis, quem ego ob meritum eximiae virtutis qua pollet, etsi [*sic*] ratione etatis uti patrem veneror. Is enim modulationem proxime in laudem Leonis decimi pontificis Maximi edidit, quam ego et vidi, et libenter cecini.” *Libri tres*, fol. 22v. The context is a discussion of the chromatic and enharmonic readings of the *soggetto cavato* on the words ‘Leo pontifex maximus’; see letters 15–17 and 19 in *A Correspondence* and the introduction, 68–70.

16. As recalled at the end of Spataro’s *Tractato di musica*, sig. 15v: “quella fu causa che io mi disponessi a pertractare di tale materia, et questo fu perché del anno de la nostra salute M.D.XXI trovandosi tua Eccellentia in Bologna, fui (per tua benignità) da te visitato nel musico habitaculo del nostro divo Petronio, et allora tra noi di molte alte et sottile consideratione de l’arte musica fu facto discorso.”

17. Letter 6, April 8, 1523; *A Correspondence*, 256–57.

18. For the review letters see ibid., 262–310 (Letters 7–12). They are discussed at greater length in Blackburn, “Theorists as Prima Donnas.”

19. Letter 15, October 30, 1527; *A Correspondence*, 323.

20. Letter 16, September 1, 1528; ibid., 333.

21. Letter 17, January 4, 1529; ibid., 336.

22. Ibid.

23. Letter 20, March 1529 (probably shortly after the 13th); ibid., 358.

24. Letter 21, March 31, 1529; ibid., 361.

25. This exemplar is in the Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna (A. 80); Gaffurio’s notes are transcribed in Johannes Wolf’s edition of Ramos’s treatise, *Musica practica Bartolomei Rami de Pareia*, Publikationen der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft, Beihefte, 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901).

26. Letter 22, April 5, 1529; *A Correspondence*, 363.

27. Ibid., 364.

28. Letter 26, July 5, 1529; ibid., 372.

29. Letter 27, August 23, 1529; ibid., 373–74.

30. The argument is whether *fuga* implies likeness of intervals or of solmization syllables.

31. Letter 28, October 8, 1529; *A Correspondence*, 377–91.

32. Letter 29, November 24, 1529; *ibid.*, 408–9.
33. Letter 27, August 23, 1529; *ibid.*, 374–75. Spataro’s criticism of the treatise on modes has not survived.
34. For a transcription of the note, see the online union catalogue of Illinois academic and research libraries, CARLI, <https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&v1=1&BBRecID=108066>, accessed February 20, 2011.
35. Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans’s electronic edition of the *Toscanello* in which all readings may be compared was published as a CD in the series *Thesaurus musicarum italicarum*, vol. 2 (2003).
36. Letter 7, September 19, 1523; *A Correspondence*, 262–63.
37. *Ibid.*, 263.
38. Letter 8, November 1, 1523; *ibid.*, 276. Letter 9, of November 6, 1523, contains further criticisms of this chapter, also ignored (*ibid.*, 280–83).
39. Letter 10, November 8, 1523; *ibid.*, 286–87. On the discrepancy between Spataro’s and Aaron’s annotations, see *ibid.*, 287, n4.
40. Letter 11, May 6, 1524; *ibid.*, 291.
41. Letter 12, May 23, 1523; *ibid.*, 301–5, where the passages incorporated by Aaron are marked in half brackets.
42. See Margaret Bent, “Accidentals, Counterpoint, and Notation in Aaron’s *Aggiunta to the Toscanello*,” *Journal of Musicology* 12 (1994): 306–44. Aaron as a reader of Petrucci is considered in Judd, *Reading Renaissance Music Theory*, ch. 3.
43. Letter 30, January 30, 1531; *A Correspondence*, 415.
44. *Ibid.*, 416. Spataro refers to ch. 26 of Aaron’s *Trattato della natura et cognitione di tutti gli tuoni di canto figurato* (Venice, 1525). He had discussed these points in a letter to Del Lago of October 30, 1527, but as shown in the *Correspondence*, 325, n6, he misunderstood Aaron’s system.
45. Letter 31, February 8, 1531; *A Correspondence*, 428.
46. The treatise is bound with some exemplars of the *Trattato . . . di tutti gli tuoni* and the 1529 *Toscanello*.
47. Letter 34, October 24, 1531; *A Correspondence*, 435.
48. Letter 30, January 30, 1531; *ibid.*, 421.
49. *Ibid.*, 421–22.
50. Letter 32, March 28, 1531; *ibid.*, 430–31.
51. Letter 35, October 24, 1531; *ibid.*, 440–41.
52. Letter 36, November 27, 1531; *ibid.*, 450–51.
53. Letter 37, January 30, 1532; *ibid.*, 457.
54. Letter 38, March 13, 1532; *ibid.*, 463.
55. Letter 40, April 12, 1532; *ibid.*, 473–74. See there for an explanation of the errors. In all the copies of Spataro’s treatise that I have seen, not a single correction has been made. However, he did make corrections, adding words, in the British Library copy of the *Dilucide et probatissime demonstratione*, sigs. a5 and a7; see the facsimile edition by Johannes Wolf (Veröffentlichungen der Musik-Bibliothek Paul Hirsch, 7 [Berlin: Martin Breslauer, 1925]).
56. Letter 50, March 4, 1533; *A Correspondence*, 619.
57. Letter 55, July 30, 1533; *ibid.*, 644.
58. Letter 58, August 20, 1533; *ibid.*, 668. Evidently Spataro hoped to overcome the problem of Bolognese printers not having music type by using woodcuts for the examples.
59. Letter 59, August 29, 1533; *ibid.*, 674.

60. This question is discussed in Aaron's *Lucidario*, book 4, fols. 37–38, without reference to Spataro.

61. For example, the discussion of using a natural sign rather than a sharp before B; cf. letter 36, Spataro to Aaron, November 27, 1531, *A Correspondence*, 449, with *Lucidario*, book 2, fols. 3v–4. The wording is very close, but Spataro is not mentioned. He is cited by name elsewhere in the treatise: book 1, sig. C3 (referring to the *Errori*, part 1, ch. 10); book 2, fol. 2 (with reference to the same treatise, part 1, ch. 14); fol. 10 (on the dispute in 1516 between Spataro, Gaffurio, Aaron, and Nicolaus Wollick and whether the beginning of the three Greek tetrachords was a whole tone, a semitone, or a quarter tone); fols. 11v–12 (on mensuration signs vs. numerals, responding to Gaffurio); fol. 12v (on *tempus* and *modus*, referring to the *sesquialtera* treatise); fol. 14 (that music theory is not easy, according to “nostro messer Gioan Spadaro”); book 2, fol. 14v (knowledge of theory is necessary in order to compose good harmony, according to the “eccellente, et consumato musico messer Gioan Spadaro”); book 3, fol. 16 (binary is the natural meter, a proposition Spataro learned from Ramos); fol. 17v (any interval with a specific proportion can be found geometrically or arithmetically in a sounding interval, according to “l'autorità del eccellente, et dottissimo musico messer Gioanni Spadaro Bolognese,” whose opinion is not published “ma dallui ci furno scritte”); fol. 18 (contesting Gaffurio's definition of counterpoint); fol. 18v (on Ramos's claim that the whole body of music consists in the diapason); fol. 21 (on clarification of some remarks on imperfection in ch. 20 of the first book of the *Toscanello*, “Le quali sentenze sono dallo eccellente Musico messer Gioanni spadaro addotte, et da noi confermate”); book 4, fol. 33 (on an exception, in the case of two longs before two long rests, to the rule that a note may not be altered before its equal, “Et di quanto disopra habbiamo scritto, et con ragioni evidenti chiarito, più et più volte con l'eccellente Messer Gioan Spadaro habbiamo fatto discorso, et fra noi il tutto confermato”). On the citations in the *Lucidario*, see Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, “Le *Lucidario* in musica de Pietro Aaron,” in *Uno gentile et subtile ingenio: Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Bonnie J. Blackburn*, ed. M. Jennifer Bloxam, Gioia Filocamo, and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Collection “Épitome musical” (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 729–39, esp. 734–39.

62. According to RISM, *Écrits imprimés concernant la musique*, ed. François Lesure (Munich-Duisberg: G. Henle Verlag, 1971): 35 of the 1529 edition, 27 of the 1539 edition (after Aaron had left Venice), and 21 of the 1562 edition. The 1557 edition, listed in RISM as in Cambridge, University Library, appears to be a ghost.

63. This price is before the currency reform of 1958. A copy of Aaron's 1529 *Toscanello* was offered for sale in *Catalogue des livres rares en partie des XV^e et XVI^e siècles composant la bibliothèque musicale de M. Gaetano Gaspari* (Paris: L. Potier, 1862), no. 107, p. 12; a marginal note indicates that it was sold for nineteen francs.

64. This is evidently a reference to one of the many editions of Nicola Francesco Haym, *Notizia de' libri rari nella lingua italiana divisa in quattro parti principali; Cioè, istoria, Poesia, Prose, Arti e Scienze*. The first edition (London, 1726) lists the 1539 edition of Aaron's *Toscanello* on p. 268 (along with Spataro's *Tractato di musica* of 1531).