

THE FROTTOLA AND THE UNWRITTEN TRADITION *

The problem of the « unwritten tradition » in Quattrocento Italy has drawn the attention of many scholars, but principally that of Nino Pirrotta, who with his customary insight has both defined the problem and pointed toward its solution, finding in manuscripts throughout the fifteenth century written examples of the basically oral practice.¹ He shows that it is only through the acceptance of the existence of the unwritten tradition that the seeming dearth of native composition in Quattrocento Italy can be explained satisfactorily.

Pirrotta has by no means been alone in his examination of the unwritten tradition. Also active have been the late Walter Rubsamen, who studied the *giustiniane* or *viniziane* of Leonardo Giustinian and his imitators; Lewis Lockwood, who has examined Pietrobono and the improvising tradition at Ferrara; and Fabio Carboni and Agostino Ziino, who have been concerned with the phenomenon both in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.² These scholars and others have charted the

* Abbreviated versions of this article were read at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, November 1980, and at a colloquium on *Secular Music of the European Renaissance* at Rutgers University in April 1985. I am indebted to the University of California for a Regents' Humanities Fellowship during the summer of 1980 and to the American Philosophical Society for a grant for the spring and summer of 1983. The basic research for this study was undertaken on these occasions.

¹ Among Pirrotta's articles concerning the unwritten tradition are *Music and Cultural Tendencies in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XIX, 1966, pp. 127-161; *Ars nova e stil novo*, « Rivista italiana di musicologia », I, 1966, pp. 3-19; *Musica polifonica per un testo attribuito a Federico II* in *L'Arts Nova italiana del Trecento*, II, Certaldo, 1968, pp. 97-112; *Two Anglo-Italian Pieces in the Manuscript Porto 714 in Festgabe für Heinrich Husmann zum 60. Geburtstag am 16. Dezember 1968: Speculum Musicae Artis*, ed. H. Becker and R. Gerlach, Munich, 1970, pp. 253-261; *Tradizione orale e tradizione scritta nella musica* in *L'Arts Nova italiana del Trecento*, III, Certaldo, 1970, pp. 431-432; *New Glimpses of an Unwritten Tradition in Words and Music, the Scholar's View: A Medley of Problems and Solutions Compiled in Honor of A. Tillman Merritt*, ed. L. Berman, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, pp. 271-291; *Ricerchare e variazioni su 'O Rosa Bella'*, « Studi musicali », I, 1972, pp. 59-77; *Novelty and Renewal in Italy, 1300-1600* in *Studien zur Tradition in der Musik: Kurt von Fischer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. H. H. Eggebrecht and M. Lütolf, Munich, 1973, pp. 49-63; *Su alcuni testi italiani di composizioni polifoniche quattrocentesche*, « Quadrievium », XIV², 1973, pp. 133-157; and *La siciliana trecentesca*, « Schede Medievali », III, 1982, pp. 297-308. Many of these studies have now been collected in *IDEM, Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984, and *Musica tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Turin, 1984. Throughout the present article, however, citations of Pirrotta's studies are to their original publications.

² W. RUBSAMEN, *The Justiniane or Viniziane of the 15th Century*, « Acta musico-

seas of the tradition of the improvisers and have found in manuscripts from the late Trecento and Quattrocento anomalous pieces that they view as written samples of the oral practice, pieces such as those Antonio da Tempo and Francesco Landini call « base frottole ».³ Specimens of such pieces have been pointed out in the Reina Codex, Escorial IV.a.24, Montecassino 871, and the Cordiforme Chansonnier, among other sources. These pieces tend to be less ornate, to be written for fewer voices, and to have a more rudimentary counterpoint than either the Trecento art music that preceded them or the Quattrocento chansons written by Northerners in Italy.

It is clear that improvisers – singers and instrumentalists who performed from memory renditions of narrative and lyric verse – were present at virtually every court and town in Quattrocento Italy. Paramount among them were Leonardo Giustinian (*ca.* 1383-1446) of Venice, Antonio di Guido (d. 1486) of Florence, Pietrobono of Ferrara (1417-1497), and Serafino dall'Aquila (1466-1500), active at many courts, among them Naples, Rome, Urbino, and Mantua.

The purpose of this study is to examine in detail the relationship between the unwritten tradition and the early frottola, concentrating on the period of about 1450 to 1505. Its thesis is that the frottola was the direct outgrowth of the unwritten tradition, representing in its early stages a precious written record of it. By examining the basic similarities in text form, musical form and style, manner of performance, and repertory between the pieces of the unwritten tradition and the frottola, it is apparent that the two genres are closely enough analogous to be viewed as the same genre. The first three areas, poetic form and musical form and style, are treated more briefly here, since these are the principal focus of Pirrotta's arguments. A final portion of this study attempts to show that the early frottola was itself transmitted by oral as well as written means and to link the increasing subtlety of the textual and musical form of the frottola to the decision to begin writing down the pieces. This development represented both a severing of the

logica », XXIX, 1957, pp. 172-184; L. LOCKWOOD, *Pietrobono and the Instrumental Tradition at Ferrara in the Fifteenth Century*, « Rivista italiana di musicologia », X, 1975, pp. 191-246; IDEM, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century*, London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984, esp. pp. 95-108; F. CARBONI - A. ZIINO, *Una fonte trecentesca della ballata 'Deh, non me fare languire'*, « Studi Medievali », serie 3, vol. XXIII, 1982, pp. 303-309; IDEM, *Una nuova testimonianza musicale per la 'Nencia da Barberino'*, « Schede medievali », III, 1982, pp. 253-280.

³ See W. F. PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes: The Frottole of Marchetto Cara*, Ann Arbor, 1980, pp. 69-70, for the descriptions of da Tempo and Landini.

frottola from the unwritten tradition and a turn toward a new art tradition that would result indirectly in the madrigal.

Through literary references, collections of *poesie per musica*, and musical manuscripts, it is evident that there were four text forms found frequently in the unwritten tradition: *sirventesi*, also called *canzonette* (long strophic poems in stanzas of three or four lines); *strambotti* (lyric poems of a single strophe of eight lines); *barzellette* (octosyllabic variants of the *ballata*); and the *ballata* itself, which, although often found in the art tradition, is also associated with oral practice.⁴ Ms. Bologna Universitaria 2216, for example, contains eleven Italian-texted pieces, of which nine are anonymous *ballate*. Several of these works reveal their ties to the unwritten tradition through their two-voice frameworks, note-against-note counterpoint, and in their series of simultaneous *corone*, intended perhaps to allow time for vocal embellishment.⁵

The *strambotto* illustrates the bond between the unwritten tradition and the frottola particularly clearly. During the second or third decade of the Quattrocento, Simone Prudenzi of Orvieto wrote two long narrative poems, describing the delights offered by Sollazzo, an idealized entertainer at court. Prudenzi had his singer perform, in addition to sacred music and works by Landini, Ciconia, and others, a number of works from local repertoires, including « strambotti de Cicilia a la reale ». ⁶ Further, the real-life improviser Serafino dall'Aquila wrote and sang *strambotti*, and Gian Francesco and Rodolfo Gonzaga heard them performed in Verona in 1463.⁷ Within the frottola repertory, the *strambotto* was the most wide-spread form in the early period of the genre. Milan, Trivulziana Ms. 55, for example, probably copied around 1500,

⁴ On the structure of these forms, see *ibid.*, pp. 63-88.

⁵ Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. 2216 is described in H. BESSELER, *The Manuscript Bologna Biblioteca Universitaria 2216*, « Musica Disciplina », VI, 1952, pp. 39-65, and in A. GALLO, *Il codice musicale 2216 della Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna* (« Monumenta Lyrica Medii Aevi Italica », serie III, vol. III, part 2), Bologna, 1970.

⁶ Prudenzi's works are edited by S. DEBENEDETTI, *Il 'Sollazzo' e il 'Saporetto' con altre rime di Simone Prudenzi d'Orvieto*, « Giornale storico della letteratura italiana », Supplemento No. 15 (1913). The reference to « strambotti de Cicilia a la reale » is on p. 116 of Debenedetti's edition. On these poems and music, see also D. FALLOWS, *Specific Information on the Ensembles for Composed Polyphony, 1400-1474, Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, ed S. Boorman, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 140-141.

⁷ For Serafino's *strambotti*, see B. Bauer-Formiconi, *Die Strambotti des Serafino dall'Aquila* (« Freiburger Schriften zur romanischen Philologie », X), Munich, 1967. The reference to *strambotti* in Verona is from a letter of 13 May 1463 from Antonio de Gonzaga to Barbara of Brandenburg. It is in the Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga (ASMN) busta 1795 and is published in PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., p. 169, n. 26.

contains forty-one *strambotti* among its sixty-four pieces, and Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. α .F.9,9, copied in October 1495, is dedicated almost entirely to the genre.⁸

Further text-forms of the oral tradition can also be linked to the frottola. The *sirventese* or *canzonetta* sung by Giustinian became the *oda* and the *capitolo* of the frottola. Although the latter names are relatively new, they simply add a humanistic veneer to a pre-existent form.⁹ Finally, the *barzelletta*, the most frequently set form in the entire frottola repertory, also had antecedents in the oral tradition: Sollazzo sang narrative verse in *barzelletta* form; the Mancini Codex of the early Quattrocento includes, among more artful works by Ciconia and others, a complaint in *barzelletta* form of a vegetarian stomach; and Pietrobono sang *barzellette* as well.¹⁰

Another bond between the oral tradition and the frottola is musical form and style. In any music that is transmitted primarily through oral means, there are two requisite factors: simplicity and redundancy. These elements are necessary because the performer, with a large repertory, must have memorized not only the music, but also the text, which was often quite long. A striking example is that of Cristoforo, called « l'Altissimo » (d. 1500), who composed and sang from memory his *Primo libro de' Reali* of ninety-eight cantos.¹¹ In such a work, the melodic and harmonic material must have been simple, including a large measure of redundancy, or better yet patterned redundancy, in which the performer would know in advance exactly which segment of music accompanied a given poetic line. Pirrotta has shown, for example, exactly this patterned redundancy in a *siciliana* from the early Quattrocento, *E vantènde, signor mio* from the Reina codex. He notes that the singer has reduced the

⁸ Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Ms. 55 is edited by K. JEPPESEN in *La Frottola*, vol. III, Aarhus, 1970, pp. 141-324, and by R. GIAZZOTTO, *Onde musicali nella corrente poetica di Serafino Dall'Aquila* in his *Musurgia nova*, Milan, 1959, pp. 3-119. On Ms. α .F. 9,9, see C. GALLICO, *Poesie musicali di Isabella d'Este*, « Collectanea historiae musicae », III, 1963, pp. 109-119.

⁹ On this point, see PIRROTTA, *Tradizione orale*, cit., p. 437.

¹⁰ Virtually all of Prudenanzi's Sollazzo, a long narrative sung by his idealized musician, is in the octosyllabic rhyme-scheme of the *barzelletta*, with each stanza returning to the rhyme of the original *ripresa*. It is not clear, however that the author intended a return to this *ripresa* at the end of each stanza. In the last poem of this cycle, *Rapina*, Prudenanzi has Sollazzo call the poem a *ballata* (« In questa ultima ballata »). See DEBENEDETTI, *Il 'Sollazzo'*, cit., pp. 5ff and p. 83. « Deh, tristo mi topinello » is included in Lucca, Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca Manoscritti, Ms. 184. It is edited in G. CESARI, *Le frottole nell'edizione principe di Ottaviano Petrucci*, Cremona, 1954, pp. XI-XII. On the poem as a *barzelletta*, see PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., p. 75. On Pietrobono and the *barzelletta*, see below, pp. 23-27.

¹¹ B. BECHERINI, *Un canta in panca fiorentino, Antonio di Guido*, « Rivista musicale italiana », L, 1948, p. 242.

musical material of his *siciliana* to only two elements, the second of which is actually a slightly varied version of the first.¹²

This kind of structure, which I call « mnemonic form », is precisely that found in the frottola, where there is a strong tendency toward the re-use of melodic elements within the setting. Since these repetitions are linked to the rhyme scheme of the poem, they serve both to reduce the number of phrases the performer must learn and to provide a kind of mnemonic key through which a given melody is associated with a given rhyme. *Barzellette*, for example, show a clear use of this patterned repetition, for they tend to adopt the same melodic segment for the rhyming middle lines of the *ripresa* and to re-use the same music for the rhyming lines in the stanza. Marchetto Cara's *Defecerunt, donna, bormai*, from Petrucci's first book of frottole, although simple, is typical:¹³

| <i>Ripresa</i> | <i>Piedi</i> | <i>Volta</i> |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| a b b a | c d c d | d a |
| 1 2 2 3 | 1 2 1 2 | 2 3 |

Also illuminating are the musical forms given the *strambotto*: composers most often set all eight lines of the poem (rhyming ABABABCC) with only two melodic segments. Even when they add new music for the concluding couplet, there remains the strong link with rhyme, for the form that results is 1 2 1 2 1 2 3 3.¹⁴ There are even musical settings within frottola manuscripts and prints that must stem directly from the unwritten tradition: the pieces entitled « Modo de cantar sonetti », « Aere de capitoli », and the like. These are formulae, often untexted in the sources, for singing any text in a given poetic form.¹⁵

¹² PIRROTTA, *Tradizione orale*, cit., pp. 434-435. On this text and on the *siciliana* in general, see also G. CATTIN, *Ricerche sulla musica a S. Giustina di Padova all'inizio del Quattrocento I: il copista Rolando da Casale. Nuovi frammenti musicali nell'Archivio di Stato*, « Annales musicologiques », VII, 1977, pp. 17-91, and F. A. GALLO, *Ricerche sulla musica a S. Giustina di Padova all'inizio del Quattrocento II: due « siciliane » del Trecento*, *ibid.*, pp. 43-50. See also G. DONATO, *Contributo alla storia delle Siciliane*, in *L'Ars nova italiana del Trecento*, vol. IV, a cura di A. Ziino, Certaldo 1978, pp. 183-209.

¹³ RISM 1504⁴, fols. 4v-5. A similar example, using Cara's *Oimé el cor*, is included in PIRROTTA, *Tradizione orale*, cit., pp. 438-441. In the following examples, letters indicate the rhyme scheme, and numerals indicate the melodic segments that set them. For more on the musical form of the *barzelletta*, see PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 116-124.

¹⁴ On the form of the *strambotto*, see *ibid.*, pp. 107-110.

¹⁵ Petrucci's fourth book of frottole (RISM 1505⁵), for example, includes a textless « Modo de cantar sonetti » (fol. 14), an untexted « Aer de versi latini » (fol. 36) and *Un sollicito amor*, labelled « Aer de capituli » (fol. 55v). Florence, Biblioteca del

The musical style of the frottola also tends to mirror an improvised practice, for poetic forms of a single strophe often have much more elaborate and melismatic musical settings than those with many strophes. This functions not only as an element of economy, but also as an aid to memory, for long poems in an oral practice would hardly have featured highly elaborate settings. Thus, *ode* and *capitoli*, with many strophes, tend to be set simply: their melodies are almost entirely syllabic except for occasional, mild *fioriture* at the ends of lines, and their accompanying voices are sparse and almost homorhythmic with the upper voice. *Strambotti*, of a single strophe, and isolated stanzas of longer poems, however, often have much more elaborate melodic lines that include long melismata and more complicated accompaniments.¹⁶ The same is true of *ballate* that mirror the unwritten tradition. Although strophic in theory, they tend to set only a single stanza and can, like *Mercé o morte*, *O bella rosa*, and *En bianca vesta* from BU 2216, have highly melismatic lines. *Barzelle*, on the other hand, occupy a kind of middle ground between the two extremes. They are in fact strophic, but are usually furnished in musical sources with only two or three stanzas. Their musical settings are therefore somewhat more elaborate than the settings of *ode* and *capitoli*, but they are considerably simpler than the settings of *strambotti*. The musical style of the frottola, then, like the areas of musical and textual form, seems to be firmly rooted in the older unwritten practice.

A further tie between the frottola and the oral tradition is the manner of performance. Although there were clearly various methods of performing works in both repertories, the most prevalent one was the accompanying of a vocal line by one or two bowed or plucked string instruments. The problems to be explored, then, are which instruments were used, how they were played, and what parts of the composition they executed.

The lira da braccio, the Quattrocento « imitation » of the antique

Conservatorio, Ms. 2441 contains one work, *Pensieri in fuoco*, that bears the heading « Soneti » (fols. 39v-40). See also the letter of 14 January 1497 from Galeotto del Caretto to Isabella d'Este, in which he asks for an « aiere novo de capitulo » (ASMN busta 745). The letter is published and discussed in A. EINSTEIN, *The Italian Madrigal*, 2nd ed., Princeton, 1971, vol. I, pp. 45-46, and in PRIZER, *Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XXXVIII, 1985, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ The style of the *strambotto* is discussed in PIRROTTA, *Ricerchare e variazioni*, cit., p. 61, and in N. BRIDGMAN, *La Frottola et la transition de frottola au madrigal in Musique et poésie au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, 1954, pp. 63-77.

lyre, has often been linked to frottola performance and to the unwritten practice.¹⁷ Now, however, Professor Howard M. Brown has transcribed the sole remaining tablature for the instrument and has shown the kind of music playable on the instrument, at least in general outlines. The works in this source are characterized by triple and quadruple stops forming full chords, the top of which are elaborated with simple *passaggi*.¹⁸ This kind of simple, homophonic texture within the frottola repertory is found most often in the « aeri » for *ode*, *capitoli*, and, to some extent, sonnets. The typical texture of *barzellette* and *strambotti*, however, is a pseudo-contrapuntal one in which the inner voices are considerably more active and would therefore not have been easily playable on the *lira da braccio*, at least in a four-voice version. It would be logical, then, for this instrument to have been used to accompany long, strophic poems (*ode* and *capitoli*) within the frottola repertory, as well as long narrative verse, such as *terze* or *ottave rime*, which would of necessity be simpler in musical style. Tinctoris, in his *De inventione et usu musicae*, supports this view, writing that « the true viola with bow is used not only for this [‘any type of song’], but also, in many parts of the world, for the recitation of epics ».¹⁹

How were other, more complicated pieces performed? The earliest samples of the oral tradition seem to have been accompanied by a single instrumental line played by the singer himself, thus making a two-part framework. Sollazzo sang *Matre mia, questo giloso* while « con la chitarra fe’ suoni a tenore », and performed other pieces playing the tenor on the « cetera ».²⁰ Further, Pirrotta has noted that those oddities that

¹⁷ See, for example, B. DISERTORI, *Pratica e tecnica della lira da braccio*, « Rivista musicale italiana », XLV, 1941, pp. 150-175.

¹⁸ Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, Ms. 1144 (*olim* 1193). See H. M. BROWN, *Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation: The Music of the Florentine Intermedii*, American Institute of Musicology, 1973, pp. 41-45 and 223-225. On this manuscript see also W. RUBSAMEN, *The Earliest French Lute Tablature*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XXXI, 1968, pp. 286-299, and the important contribution of D. FALLOWS, *15th-Century Tablatures for Plucked Instruments: A Summary, A Revision, and a Suggestion*, « Lute Society Journal », XIX, 1977, pp. 10-18.

¹⁹ « Viola vero cum arculo: non solum ad hanc usum: sed etiam ad historiarum recitationem in plerique partibus orbis assumitur »; see K. WEINMANN, *Johannes Tinctoris (1445-1511) und sein unbekannter Traktat ‘De inventione et usu musicae’*, Regensburg, 1917, reprint Tutzing, 1961, p. 45. The translation is that of A. BAINES, *Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris’s ‘De Inventione et Usu Musicae’*, « Galpin Society Journal », III, 1950, p. 24. A further function of the *lira* must have been to accompany a lutenist in polyphonic performance; see p. 17 below for a « Galeazo » who accompanied the lutenist Giovan Maria Giudeo on the *lira*.

²⁰ DEBENEDETTI, *Il ‘Sollazzo’*, cit., p. 109. As FALLOWS, *Specific Information*, cit., p. 140, points out, this passage does not state explicitly that Sollazzo sang the upper part. I would maintain that his singing the Cantus is the most probable explanation,

occasionally appear in early fifteenth-century manuscripts and that therefore cross from the oral to the written tradition are virtually all in two parts.²¹ Thus, *E vantènde* from the Reina Codex, *Deh, tristo mi topinello* from the Mancini Codex, and *Mercé te chiamo* from BU 2216 are all two-part compositions. To judge from iconographical evidence, this mode of performance continued far into the fifteenth century: a North-Italian miniature of around 1470, the Fountain of Youth from the *Libro « De Sphera »* shows a solo lutenist playing with a plectrum and therefore playing only a single line,²² and Apollonio di Giovanni, in the so-called « Virgil manuscript » of the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, of around 1464, shows a player of the *viola da mano* performing alone.²³

Shortly before 1450 a new method of performance arose, perhaps adopted from the written tradition. Now, a new player was added to the improviser: a *tenorista* who played lute, *viola da mano*, or fiddle. Presumably, the *tenorista* played the tenor part and the improviser himself played a new contratenor line.²⁴ Pietrobono of Ferrara was listed alone during the earlier part of his career, but from 1449 was always provided with a *tenorista*. In 1456 « Pietrobono del Chitarinj » is paid for the whole year, as is « Francesco de Biasio de Malacise, tenorista de chitarinj ». Both names are included in essentially the same way in 1475 and 1478.²⁵ In Milan, the same practice is evident after mid-century: on 12

since no other musician is mentioned in the sonnet, and since the verb in the passage is singular: «Puoi fece *Matre mia, questo giloso.* / Con la chitarra fe' suoni a tenore / Con tanta melodia, che a ciaschuno / Per la dolceça gli alegrava'l core. / Con la cetera ancor ne fece alcuno ».

²¹ PIRROTTA, *Two Anglo-Italian Pieces*, cit., pp. 258-259, and IDEM, *Novelty and Renewal*, cit., p. 55.

²² Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. lat. 209 (*olim* α.X.2.14), fol. 9. Reproduced in H. M. BROWN, *Instruments and Voices in the Fifteenth-Century Chanson in Current Thought in Musicology*, ed. J. GRUBBS, Austin, Texas, 1976, p. 94, and, among other places, in R. WANGERMÉE, *La Musique flamande dans la société des XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, Brussels, 1965, plate 84.

²³ The miniature is reproduced in E. A. BOWLES, *Musikleben im 15. Jahrhundert*, in *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, vol. III, part 8, Leipzig, 1977, p. 49 (plate 31). The Virgil manuscript, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana Ms. 492, is discussed in E. H. GOMBRICH, *Apollonio di Giovanni: A Florentine Cassone Workshop Seen through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet in Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, London, 1966, pp. 11-28, where the period immediately before Apollonio's death in 1465 is suggested for the illumination of the manuscript.

²⁴ On the phenomenon of the *tenorista*, see PIRROTTA, *Music and Cultural Tendencies*, cit., p. 141n. P. DANNER, *Before Petrucci: The Lute in the Fifteenth Century*, « Journal of the Lute Society of America », V, 1972, pp. 4-17, E. HARASZTI, *La Technique des improvisateurs de langue vulgaire et de latin au Quattrocento*, « Revue belge de musicologie », IX, 1955, pp. 12-31, and FALLOWS, *15th-Century Tablatures*, cit., pp. 7-33. Fallows' suggestion (p. 28) that the *tenorista* played more than one line refers to a slightly later period, at least in Italy. See below, pp. 12-16.

²⁵ On Pietrobono and his *tenorista*, see LOCKWOOD, *Pietrobono*, cit., p. 121, and his

November 1461 two florins were paid to « a player of the lute and another who plays the tenor »; in 1469, a payment is recorded to a German lutenist and to « his companion, player of the viola »;²⁶ and the same is recorded again in 1475, when Galeazzo Maria Sforza writes to Giovanni di Castelnovo, requesting « Johannes the German, player of the lute, and his companion who plays the viola ».²⁷

Such records continue much later as well. In 1493, during a banquet in Innsbruck, Italian musicians played « liutto cum viola », ²⁸ and there is even some evidence that the famed poet and improviser Serafino dall'Aquila had a *tenorista*: in an unpublished letter of 1498, written from Urbino, Silvestro Calandra informs Isabella d'Este that « Serafino and Fidele are here to entertain ». Although this statement is not amenable to a definite interpretation, it is probable that Serafino and Fidele were performing in the traditional manner of lutenist and *tenorista*.²⁹

The addition of the *tenorista* by around 1450 would also account for the later written samples of the improvised practice having three parts instead of two. Thus, Escorial Ms. IV.a.24, from the 1460's or

Music in Renaissance Ferrara, cit., pp. 69 and 97-100. The pay records cited above are the following: ASMO (Archivio di Stato di Modena), Camera ducale, Computisteria, Bolletta No. 1 (1456), fols. 101-102v; *ibid.*, Bolletta No. 7 (1475), fols. 141-142; and *ibid.*, Bolletta No. 8 (1478). The last is only an *estratto*, and the musicians are therefore listed alphabetically by Christian name. In 1473, « Pietrobono cum lo suo tenorista » was sent in the party that escorted Eleonora d'Aragona, the future wife of Ercole I d'Este, to Ferrara. G. BARBLAN, *Vita musicale alla corte sforzesca in Storia di Milano*, vol. IX, Milan, 1961, p. 805, and LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, cit., p. 103.

²⁶ These notices are published in E. MOTTA, *Musici alla corte degli Sforza*, « Archivio storico lombardo », XIV, 1887, pp. 50n and 57n.

²⁷ Published in E. VANDER STRAETEN, *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIX^e siècle*, vol. VI, Brussels, 1882; reprint New York, 1969, p. 27.

²⁸ BARBLAN, *Vita musicale*, cit., p. 809.

²⁹ « Serafino e Fidele sono qui pur suso li suoi apiacere »; letter of 27 August 1498 (ASMN busta 852). Serafino, although he may have played other instruments such as the *lira da braccio*, seems to have been basically a lutenist. Isabella d'Este writes Elisabetta Gonzaga at Urbino on 12 June 1497: « Intendendo che la Signoria Vostra, doppo la morte de Tondo, hebe uno suo liutto grande; quando lei non lo operi, como intendo non fa per essere troppo grande, la prego voglia compiacerne a me, perché, havendo qua adesso Seraphino, io lo fareti exercitare, essendo proprio instrumento da suo paro » (ASMN busta 2992, libro 8, fol. 80v). Serafino had already played lute at Mantua during an allegorical 'representation' in 1495. On 25 January of this year Giovanni Gonzaga wrote to Isabella in Milan: « Et prima Seraphino, assai lascivamente como a la Voluptà si conviene cum il lauto in brazo, comincio a cantare » (ASMN busta 2110, fols. 202-205); published in M. MENGHINI, *Le rime di Serafino del Ciminelli dall'Aquila*, Bologna, 1894, vol. I, pp. 267-275. On the « liutto grande » as a tenor or bass lute, see PRIZER, *Lutenists at the Court of Mantua in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, « Journal of the Lute Society of America », XIII, 1980, pp. 18-20. Throughout this study, all punctuation, capitalization, and diacritical marks in the documents are those of the author.

1470's contains *O gratiosa viola mia* and *Aymé sospiri*, both *viniziane* in three parts, and the *Cordiforme Chansonnier*, from around 1470, contains *Perla mia cara*, also a three-voice *viniziana*. This process is seen particularly clearly in *Mercé te chiamo*, a 2 in the early BU 2216, but expanded to three parts in the later Montecassino manuscript.³⁰

At least through the 1460's, the lute would have been responsible for only a single line and would have been played with a plectrum.³¹ This method extended into the sixteenth century. As late as 1523, a well-known entry in the diary of Marin Sanudo states that Giovan Maria Giudeo played with a plectrum for Pope Adrian VI, and Tinctoris states that Pietrobono played with a plectrum as well.³²

But Tinctoris, writing in Naples in around 1487, describes in his *De inventione et usu musicae* another method of lute playing, that is, playing polyphonically with the fingers:

Others do what is much more difficult [than play a single line], namely to play a composition alone, and most skillfully, in not only two parts, but even three or four. For example, Orbus the German or Henry [Bouclers] who was recently in the service of Charles Duke of Burgundy: the German was supereminent in playing this way.³³

Although this passage has long been known to music historians, no one has yet traced the way in which this style of playing was introduced to Italy. It can be demonstrated that this introduction was accomplished by 1470, more than a decade before Tinctoris's treatise, and that the court of Mantua served as one of the conduits for the style. There is in Mantua a musician who answers perfectly to the description of one of Tinctoris's players, an « Orbo Tedesco » (blind or one-eyed German) from Munich, « marvelous on any instrument », who appears there in

³⁰ On Escorial IV.a.24, see PIRROTTA, *Su alcuni testi*, cit., pp. 133-156, and M. K. HANEN, *The Chansonier El Escorial IV.a.24*, 3 vols. (« Musicological Studies » XXXVI), Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1983. On the *Cordiforme Chansonnier* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Rothschild 2973), see E. KOTTICK, *The Chansonier Cordiforme*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XX, 1968, pp. 10-27. Montecassino Ms. 871 is published in I. POPE and M. KANAZAWA, *The Musical Manuscript Montecassino 871: A Neapolitan Repertory of Sacred and Secular Music of the Late Fifteenth Century*, Oxford, 1978.

³¹ For the lute being played with a plectrum, see, among other discussions, that of P. DANNER, *Before Petrucci*, cit., pp. 5-7.

³² M. SANUDO, *I Diari*, vol. XXXIV, Venice, 1892, col. 216, and WEINMANN, *Johannes Tinctoris*, cit., p. 45. For more on Giovan Maria Giudeo see below pp. 17-18.

³³ WEINMANN, *Johannes Tinctoris*, cit., p. 45, and BAINES, *Fifteenth-Century Instruments*, cit., p. 24. The surname of the Henri who was in the service of Charles the Bold is included in J. MARIX, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon*, Strasbourg, 1939; reprint Baden-Baden, 1974, p. 108.

1470 and is immediately requested by both Galeazzo Maria Sforza of Milan and Ferrante I of Naples. In a letter of 11 March 1470 to Galeazzo Maria, Marchese Ludovico Gonzaga calls the musician « lo Orbo, sonatore da Monicho » and says that he will only eat food prepared by the ladies of Margherita of Bavaria, his daughter-in-law, « in whom he has faith because they are of his nationality ».³⁴ An unpublished entry in the Mantuan chronicle of Andrea Schivenoglia echoes these statements as to his nationality and lack of sight and also reports that he played plucked string instruments:

[In] the month of June 1470³⁵ there came to Mantua a blind man from Germany, who had never seen [in his life], and he played every instrument. And if he heard a verse or a song he knew how to play it [by ear] either on the organ, or the bagpipe, or on plucked string instruments (« chitarrij »), or on the harp, or on shawm. And this blind man was taken from one place to another in a cart with two horses. And at Mantua he was dressed in gold cloth and given many ducats, and then he [left and] went toward Ferrara.³⁶

The musician also went to Naples, for in 1475 Ferrante I enlists Ludovico's aid in having in his services « that blind German musician who was here before ».³⁷

³⁴ « L'è un homo el più suspectoso che sentisse mai, et dal sonar in fori l'è como un putino et se ha posta questa fantasia, che li sonatori de Italia per invidia lo debano tosicare, né vole manzare cosa alcuna se non quello che gli fa fare la Illustrissima mia fiola, consorte de Federico, per la via de le donne suoe, de la qual se confida pur per esser de la natione sua » (ASMN busta 2981, libro 65, fol. 38r). The letter is published in PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 168-169.

³⁵ Schivenoglia must be mistaken in saying that the musician came to Mantua in June: the eight letters concerning his visit all come from the period of March through May 1470. Schivenoglia may have meant that the musician left in June. Given the extant documentation, this may well have been the case.

³⁶ A. SCHIVENOGLIA, *Famiglie mantovane e cronaca di Mantova*. Mantua, Biblioteca Comunale, Ms. 1019 [olim I.I.2], fol. 65v.: « El mexe de zugno 1470 vene a Mantoa uno horbo el qualo venia de verse li parte da la Magna e maij non ge vitte, e si sonava de ogne instromentij, e con l'ondia [=audia] sonare uno verso overo uno chanto luy lo savia sonare ho in organo o piva overo in chitarrij o in arpa o in pittaro [=piffaro]. E questo horbo se faxia menare da una tera all'altra suxo una chareta com 2 chavallij. E a Mantoa foe vestito de drapo d'oro e si ave molte ducati, e poy andete verso Ferara ». Part of Schivenoglia's Chronicle has been published by C. D'ARCO, *Cronaca di Mantova dal 1445 al 1484*, Milan, 1857, reprint Mantua, 1976. This entry, however, is not included there. BROWN, *Instruments and Voices*, cit., pp. 129-130, believes that « cythara » refers to the harp. This is not possible in Schivenoglia's entry, since harp is given explicitly as « arpa ». I have tried to show that the word « cythara » in its various spellings is simply a generic term describing plucked strings: see my *Isabella d'Este and Lorenzo da Pavia, « Master Instrument Maker »*, « Early Music History », II, 1982, p. 107, as well as L. WRIGHT, *The Medieval Gittern and Cithole: A Case of Mistaken Identity*, « Galpin Society Journal », XXX, 1977, p. 23, where the same point is made concerning the equivalent Latin term.

³⁷ « Havemo singulare desyderio de havere in nostri servicij quello musico ceco,

This figure can only have been the great German organist and lutenist Conrad Paumann (ca. 1410-1473). First, Paumann, like the « Orbo Tedesco », was from Munich, where he was in the service of Duke Albrecht IV of Bavaria. Significantly, Albrecht was the brother of Margherita von Wittelsbach Gonzaga, who was married to Federico I Gonzaga of Mantua. Second, Paumann was also blind from birth. Third, Paumann played the instruments listed by Schivenoglia: his tomb monument in the Frauenkirche of Munich includes a representation of a lute along with a portative organ, a recorder, a fiddle, bagpipes, and a harp,³⁸ and an entry in a German chronicle lists him as a musician able to play « in organis, lutina, cythera, fidella, ac fistula Tibiis ac Buccina et in omnibus Instrumentis Musicalibus ».³⁹

Paumann therefore played lute, and there is evidence that he played it in a polyphonic manner. Sebastian Virdung, writing in 1511, believed him to be the inventor of the German lute tablature,⁴⁰ for which there would have been little use in monophonic performance.⁴¹ More conclusively, there is one work by Paumann, an arrangement of Binchois's *Je loe amours* from the Buxheimer Orgelbuch, which bears the rubric « in cytaris vel etiam in organis », that is, for plucked string instrument or organ. Although both « cytaris » and « organis » are given in the

tudisco, quale già altra volta fo qua»; letter of Ferrante I of Naples to Ludovico Gonzaga, 21 July 1475. (ASMN busta 802).

³⁸ A photograph of Paumann's tomb monument is included in R. HENNING, *German Lute Tablature and Conrad Paumann*, «Lute Society Journal», XV, 1973, p. 6, and in F. KRAUTWURST, *Paumann, Konrad* in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. X, Kassel, 1962, col. 970.

³⁹ JOHANN STAINDL, *Chronicon Generale*, ed. A. F. Oefele («Rerum Boicarum Scriptores», I), Augsburg, 1763, p. 539. In this instance, the « cythera » may in fact be a harp, since « lutina » is referred to separately. On the other hand, it may only mean « other plucked strings ». The passage is quoted from F. KRAUTWURST, *Neues zur Biographie Konrad Paumanns*, «Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung», XXII, 1962, p. 145n. Krautwurst here, and in his *Konrad Paumann in Nordlingen in Festschrift Heinrich Besseler zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, Leipzig, 1961, pp. 203-210, also views the blind musician who came to Mantua as Paumann, as does B. A. WALLNER, *Konrad Paumann in Münchener Charakterköpfe der Götik*, ed. A.-H. Bolongaro Crevenna, Munich, 1938, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁰ « There was a blind man born in Nuremberg and buried in Munich, called Master Conrat of Nuremberg, who in his time must have been praised and glorified beyond other instrumentalists. He arranged that the entire alphabet should be written on the neck [of the lute] with five courses on the seven frets »; VIRDTUNG, *Musica getuschet*, Basel, 1511, fol. K iiijv. Quoted from HENNING, *German Lute Tablature*, cit., p. 8. The belief that Paumann invented German tablature is also supported by Fallows' finding that the system of tablature actually existed during the blind musician's time in the Königstein Liederbuch (*15th-Century Tablatures*, cit., p. 10), and by the fact that both Paumann and Virdung lived in Nuremberg, although of course at different times. See KRAUTWURST, *Neues zur Biographie*, cit., p. 144n.

⁴¹ This point is made in O. KÖRTE, *Laute und Lautenmusik* («Publikationen der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft» Beihefte, III), Leipzig, 1901, p. 77.

plural, these seem to be generic designations and to imply the singular for each instrument. If this is the case, then the work is intended either for organ or for lute played polyphonically.⁴² Even if the work were for two lutes, as Fallows believes, the second lute would have to be playing polyphonically.⁴³

The blind musician whom Tinctoris believed to have been an originator of polyphonic lute playing was therefore Conrad Paumann, who came to Italy in 1470, where he performed on the instrument to the marvel of all in Mantua and in Naples: his reputation would certainly have still been alive in the latter city when Tinctoris wrote his treatise on instruments there in about 1487.⁴⁴ Furthermore, there is at least one fifteenth-century Italian source that calls for polyphonic lute performance: Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria Ms. 596. This source contains a *Fortuna Vincinecta* which, as Brown and Fallows have shown, was intended for polyphonic lute. Significantly, Fallows believes that the manuscript is Neapolitan, and it emanates, therefore, from the same milieu in which Tinctoris was writing his *De inventione et usu musicae*.⁴⁵

There were other Northerners who followed Paumann in bringing the technique of polyphonic lute playing to Italy: Paolo Cortese, in his *De cardinalatu*, lists Balthasar and Johannes Maria, both Germans, as among those who were the first to play lute in polyphonic fashion.⁴⁶ Cortese, however, was writing after 1503, much later than Tinctoris, and at least one of the musicians he names was later as well. Giovan Maria Alemanno is a figure of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and

⁴² *Jeloyvors* is edited by B. A. WALLNER, *Das Buxheimer Orgelbuch* («Das Erbe deutscher Music», XXXVII), Kassel, 1958, pp. 14-15.

⁴³ FALLOWS, *15th-Century Tablatures*, cit., p. 31, transcribes the opening of the work for two lutes, one decorating the Cantus line and the other playing the bottom parts polyphonically. Although not simple, *Jeloyvors* is playable by a single lute. I am grateful to Professor John Nadas for this information as well as for numerous helpful suggestions made during the course of this study.

⁴⁴ That Tinctoris states that he himself had heard the lutenist perform raises the possibility that he had heard him in Naples. This would mean that he would have arrived in that city by 1470 instead of around 1472, as previously suggested. See H. HÜSCHEN, *Tinctoris, Johannes* in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London, 1980, vol. XVIII, pp. 837-838. It is also possible that Tinctoris could have heard him in 1454, when Paumann played for Philip the Good in Landshut. See MARIX, *Histoire de la musique*, cit., p. 71-72, and KRAUTWURST, *Neues zur Biographie*, cit., p. 145n.

⁴⁵ BROWN, *Instruments and Voices*, cit., pp. 102-103, and FALLOWS, *15th-Century Tablatures*, cit., pp. 18-28.

⁴⁶ CORTESE, *De cardinalatu libri tres*, Castel Cortesiano, 1510; PIRROTTA, *Music and Cultural Tendencies*, cit., pp. 152-154.

the beginning of his career therefore postdates Paumann by approximately twenty years.⁴⁷

These findings concerning performance practices can also be applied to the frottola. That the genre was performed by lute playing polyphonically is clear: Petrucci published two books of frottole for voice and lute, Antico published one, and there exists a manuscript of frottole for voice and lute, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris under the collocation Rés. Vmd. Ms. 27.⁴⁸ In all these books, the lute omits the Altus and plays only two of the three lower voices written in other, mensural sources. Indeed, to play all three lower parts on lute is possible but somewhat awkward because of the similarity of range in Altus and Tenor and the frequent voice crossings and notes on the same course that result.

There is, however, evidence that the lutenist-*tenorista* duo was still functioning in this repertory. An early sixteenth-century manuscript in the Biblioteca Marciana of Venice, Ms. It. XI, 66, includes in its oldest gatherings a *ballata* with the incipit, *E' un buon cantar suave*. This is a simple, didactic poem containing a few brief musical passages intended to teach the methods of singing; it includes the phrase « This tenor that I jot down can be played on any viola », suggesting that the practice of the viola-playing *tenorista* was still alive in the early Cinquecento.⁴⁹

Mantua and Ferrara, the two greatest centers of the frottola, also offer proof of the continuing tradition of the lutenist-*tenorista* duo. Marchetto Cara, one of the leading frottolists, was provided with a *tenorista*, the lutenist and violist Roberto d'Avanzini. In fact, Mantuan documents rarely mention d'Avanzini in a musical context without also mentioning Cara, and they seem to have formed a consistent performing

⁴⁷ On the date of Cortese's treatise, see PIRROTTA, *Music and Cultural Tendencies*, cit., p. 142n. H. C. SLIM, *Gian and Gian Maria, some Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Namesakes*, « The Musical Quarterly », LVII, 1971, pp. 563-568, finds that the earliest document concerning Giovan Maria comes from 1492. He is active as late as 1526. See also G. DARDO, *Contributo alla storia del liuto in Italia*, « Quaderni della Rassegna musicale », III, 1965, pp. 143-157. I am unable to identify the « Balthasar Germanus » named by Cortese, although it seems significant that Paumann, Giovan Maria Alemanno, and Balthasar were all Germans.

⁴⁸ RISM 1509³, 1511, and [c. 1520]⁷. See below, pp. 28-30, for more on Rés. Vmd. Ms. 27.

⁴⁹ Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. XI, 66, fol. 50: « Questo tenor ch'io squadro/se a fa ad ogni viola ». The entire poem is published in R. RENIER's review of R. SCHWARTZ, *Die Frottole im 15. Jabrbundert*, in « Giornale storico della letteratura italiana », IX, 1887, p. 303. On the manuscript itself, which is basically a collection of Italian and Latin poetry, see M. CRISTOFARI, *Il codice marciano It. XI, 66* (« Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia della R. Università di Padova » XIV), Padua, 1937, pp. 21 and *passim*.

duo. Thus, Cara and d'Avanzini traveled together to sing and play for Massimiliano Sforza in 1512 and 1513,⁵⁰ and in 1515 « Marchetto and another [presumably Roberto] with two lutes sang certain songs better than they had ever been heard before » for visiting Venetian ambassadors.⁵¹ This view of a performing duo is further supported by a letter of 1512, in which Roberto is expressly called Cara's *coadiutore* or accompanist.⁵²

The same practice seems to have been followed in Ferrara, although the documents are not quite so clear. Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este's pay register for 1507 includes payments to a « Zoan Maria nostro Halmano, musico » on 14 March and to a « Zoan Maria Judio, sonadore » on 15 March.⁵³ Professor Slim has shown that these must be the same musician, and the Ferrarese documents support his conclusion: after the single payment of 15 March, « Zoan Maria Judio » disappears, but « Zoan Maria Alemano » continues.⁵⁴ This musician was therefore the same one mentioned previously whom Cortese listed as one of the initiators of polyphonic lute playing and who played before Adrian VI in 1523. The important point here, however, is that the same pay register includes a certain « Galeazo de Joane Maria », probably the lutenist's *coadiutore*.⁵⁵ The pay register for the previous year makes this point explicit: listed there are « Galeazo de Zoanne Maria che sona de lira » and « Zoanne Maria che sona de liuto ». ⁵⁶ Since Giovan Maria is German, it is possible that he was not singing frottole, although other Germans are recorded in Italy as singers of secular music.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the same kind of

⁵⁰ This trip is discussed in detail in PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 43-45.

⁵¹ « Marchetto e un altro con do laùti, che disse certe canzone che mai si sentì meglio »; SANUDO, *I Diari*, vol. XXI, Venice, 1887, cols. 281-283. Also published in PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., Document 108.

⁵² « Mando esso Marchetto a Vostra Excellentia et Roberto, suo alevo et coadiutore »; letter of Francesco Gonzaga to Massimiliano Sforza, 22 November 1512 (ASMN, busta 2919, libro 224, fols. 19v-20; published in PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., Document 64). For more on d'Avanzini, see IDEM, *Lutenists at the Court of Mantua*, cit., pp. 15-16.

⁵³ ASMO, Libri d'Amministrazione dei Singoli Principi (LASP), No. 768, fol. 10 (14 March 1507): « A Zoan Maria nostro Almano, musico »; fol. 11v (15 March 1507): « A Zoan Maria Judio, sonadore, per una casa per mete dentro le viole ».

⁵⁴ SLIM, *Gian and Gian Maria*, cit., pp. 563-568. « Zoane Maria Alemano, musico » and « Zoane Maria, musico » continue through July 1507 (ASMO, LASP, No. 768, fols. 21v and 23v).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 22.

⁵⁶ ASMO, LASP, No. 766, fols. 4v and 40.

⁵⁷ Niccolò Tedesco, « cantor et pulsator eccellentissimo », for example, is recorded at the court of Ferrara as a singer of secular music from 1436 to 1466. See Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, pp. 25 and 95-97. In 1462 he is specifically called « Niccolò Todesco, cantadore » (ASMO Bolletta No. 4 [Estratto], unfoliated, under the letter

entry is found later for the famous frottolist and lutenist Michele Pesenti. Among Ippolito's musicians for 1513, « Pre Michiele musico » is accompanied in the pay register by a « Janis de Pre Michiele ». ⁵⁸

The discrepancy between polyphonic lute playing in the frottola and the presence of a *coadiutore* can be reconciled through an examination of the musical nature of the genre. Professor Lowinsky has shown that the frottola was one of the first genres to be conceived partially in a simultaneous fashion as opposed to the earlier successive method of composition. In his opinion, the Cantus and the Bassus were composed at the same time and the Tenor and Altus were added afterwards. ⁵⁹ This view, deriving partly from a series of unpublished lectures of Alfred Einstein, was later discussed in detail in the latter's monumental *Italian Madrigal*. ⁶⁰ Lowinsky's and Einstein's observations are certainly valid, for, in a certain sense, the frottola substitutes a Cantus-Bassus framework for the Cantus-Tenor framework of the contemporaneous chanson: the Bassus consistently provides the harmonic underpinning and forms a rhythmic pair with the Cantus. Nevertheless, there is a hierarchy within the two inner voices, for the Tenor continues to make good harmony with the Cantus according to the rules of counterpoint, generally not sounding fourths simultaneously with it and being the structural voice at cadence points. ⁶¹ The Altus, on the other hand, simply adds harmonic filler and is in no way structural. It was for this reason that it could be omitted in lute entabulations and was sometimes omitted in mensural versions as well. Thus, Cara's *Oimé el cor, oimé la testa* is included in Petrucci's first book of frottole a4 with Altus, but a3 without Altus in the Milanese manuscript Florence, Basevi 2441. ⁶² Similarly, some pieces

« N »). That Niccolò was responsible for singing Italian texts is suggested by his letter of 21 June 1460, in which he recommends to Marchese Ludovico Gonzaga a certain Giovanni Brith: « Credo secondo el cantare moderno piaserà alla Vostra Illustrissima Signoria, et maxime de l'aere venetiano »; ASMN busta 1228, fol. 335.

⁵⁸ ASMO, LASP No. 785, fol. 64r (30 June 1513): « A Pre Michele per carne e pesse », and « Janis de Pre Michiele che principiò adì II de giugno ». For more on Pesenti in Ferrara, see PRIZER, *Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia*, cit., pp. 19-20 and 24-30.

⁵⁹ E. E. LOWINSKY, *On the Use of Scores by Sixteenth-Century Musicians*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », I, 1948, p. 21n. I am deeply indebted to Professor Lowinsky for his comments on an early version of this study.

⁶⁰ EINSTEIN, *The Italian Madrigal*, cit., vol. I, pp. 76-79.

⁶¹ For a discussion of the nature of the Bassus and Tenor voices in the frottola, see PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 136-42 and 154-157.

⁶² *RISM* 1504³, fols. 2v-3, and Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, Ms. 2441, fols. 7v-8. Ms. 2441 has been shown to be a Milanese manuscript in J. RIFKIN, *Scribal Concordances in Some Renaissance Manuscripts in Florentine Libraries*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XXVI, 1973, p. 306.

occur in two different mensural sources with different Altus parts. *Come el pionbin*, for example, is present in Trivulziana 55 with one Altus and in Bologna Q 18 with another.⁶³

In broad outline, then, the basic performance of a frottola must have been as follows: the singer-lutenist would sing the Cantus while playing either the structural voices (Bassus and Tenor) or the decorative Altus line and his *coadiutore* or accompanist would play the part or parts not taken by the singer. If the accompanist were not present, then the singer-lutenist would simply play the structural parts, losing thereby only a certain fullness of harmony and rhythmic liveliness. These modes of performance would concord well with the musical nature of the frottola and would account for Cara's and Pesenti's being accompanied by *coadiutori*. Moreover, this was the most usual way of writing for two lutes during the early sixteenth century, for the duets in both the Spinaccino and Dalza lute books feature one lute playing polyphonically and the other, monophonically.⁶⁴

Repertory is another way in which the unwritten tradition can be tied to the frottola. Since the improvisers performed many different kinds of music, however, it is necessary first to define which of their repertoires were of importance to the frottola. First, the improvisers sang long, narrative verse. Antonio di Guido in Florence sang paraphrases of biblical stories, l'Altissimo sang of the Royal Houses of France and of the Overthrow of Ravenna, and Pietrobono sang stories of contemporaneous lovers.⁶⁵ Second, the improvisers even sang prose. Giovanni da Verona, for example, in 1465 « sang in prose of the months of May, June, and the others ». Third, they must have played instrumental music, especially for the dance.⁶⁶ Except for the last category, none of these repertoires is important for the frottola. The tradition of singing narrative verse, for example, seems to have continued on its own, unwritten way, to emerge later in what Professor James Haar has recently defined

⁶³ Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Ms. 55, fol. 26v-27; Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Ms. Q 18, fols. 15v-16.

⁶⁴ BROWN, *Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation*, cit., pp. 32-33.

⁶⁵ On Antonio and l'Altissimo see B. BECHERINI, *Un canta in panca*, cit., pp. 241-247. Pietrobono's singing of « the loves of modern people » is documented in PIRROTTA, *Music and Cultural Tendencies*, cit., p. 139.

⁶⁶ « Cantava in broxa li mexi mazo, zugno e li altri »; G. BERTONI, *Il cieco di Ferrara e altri improvvisatori alla corte d'Este*, « Giornale storico della letteratura italiana », XCIV, 1929, p. 272. The improvisers' repertory is discussed in HARASZTI, *La Technique des improvisateurs*, cit., pp. 15-25. On string players associated with the dance, see PRIZER, *Lutenists at the Court of Mantua*, cit., p. 27.

as « arie per cantar stanze » formulae for singing the narrative verse of Ariosto and others.⁶⁷ Most important for the frottola was the improvisers' singing of lyric verse, discussed above in connection with the *strambotto* and other forms.

Within this last category, one can demonstrate that specific pieces occurred in both the written and unwritten repertoires. Pirrotta has shown that Solazzo included among his pieces versions of *Strençi li labri* and *Finir mia vita*, both of which are recorded in the Reina Codex,⁶⁸ and Carboni and Ziino have also shown that a version of the tune *Nencioza mia*, which they believe to have originated in the unwritten tradition, was taken over as a Tenor in two settings with the same *incipit* by Jean Japart and Johannes Martini.⁶⁹ Finally, Ippolita Sforza heard in Siena in 1465 « a song that says 'Non vol' essere più monica », probably a version of *Hora may che fora son*, a *barzelletta* from Escorial IV.a.24, the second line of which is « Non voio esser più monica ». That it was a version of this song is strongly suggested by the fact that the poem is included in a Tuscan manuscript of *poesie per musica* of the 1470s, where it is called a « canzona napoletana ».⁷⁰ Furthermore, the song seems to have enjoyed a fairly wide currency in Northern Italy. Girolamo Savonarola included the tune of the work in his autograph manuscript of 1483 and 1484, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana S.P.II,5, as the music for the lauda *Hora mai che sono in età*, and the same lauda, ascribed to Feo Belcari, is included in the printed collection of laude published at Florence in 1486 with the rubric « Cantasi come *Ora mai che fora sono* ».⁷¹

⁶⁷ J. HAAR, *Arie per cantar stanze ariostesche* in *L'Ariosto, la musica, i musicisti*, ed. M. A. Balsano, Florence, 1981, pp. 31-46.

⁶⁸ On Sollazzo singing *Strençi li labri* and *Finir mia vita*, see DEBENEDETTI, *Il 'Sollazzo'*, cit., pp. 174 and 177, and PIRROTTA, *New Glimpses*, cit., p. 279.

⁶⁹ CARBONI and ZIINO, *Una nuova testimonianza*, cit., pp. 253-280, esp. p. 268.

⁷⁰ The reference to this tune as heard in Siena is included in *Diario di Allegretto Allegretti, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, XXIII, Milan, 1773, col. 772. On the version in Escorial IV.a.24, see HANEN, *The Chansonnier Escorial IV.a.24*, cit., vol. I, pp. 41 and 118-19. The poem from the Tuscan manuscript, there with the incipit « Oramai che fora sono non voglio essere chiù monica », is published in G. VOLPI, *Poesie popolari italiane del secolo XV*, « Biblioteche delle scuole italiane », IV, 1891, p. 39. It is referred to in PIRROTTA, *Su alcuni testi*, cit., p. 143. On the whole complex of songs using this incipit, see J. WENDLAND, 'Madre non mi far Monaca': *The Biography of a Renaissance Folksong*, « Acta Musicologica », XLVIII, 1976, pp. 185-204.

⁷¹ On Ms. S.P.II,5, see G. CATTIN, *Le poesie del Savonarola nelle fonti musicali*, « Quadrivium », XII¹ (1971), pp. 259-281, and IDEM, *Il primo Savonarola: poesie e prediche autografe dal codice Borromeo* (« Biblioteca di lettere italiane » XII), Florence, 1973. The music from the manuscript is also published in O. CHILESOTTI, *Savonarola musicista*, « Rivista musicale italiana », VI, 1899, pp. 792-794. The lauda from *Laude fatte e composte da più persone spirituali*, Florence, 1486 (n. s.), is published in modern edition in G. GALLETTI, *Laude spirituali di Feo Belcari, di Lorenzo de' Medici, di Fran-*

Another of the basically unwritten repertoires that appears in the frottola is the dance tune. Jeppesen has pointed out that Giovanni Ambrosio's *ballo* entitled *Voltate in ça*, *Rosina* is found in a quodlibet by Ludovico Fogliano in Petrucci's ninth book of frottole, and Beatrice Pescerelli has noted that *Se non dormi, donna, ascolta*, from Petrucci's third frottola book, is included as a *ballo* in a copy of Guglielmo Ebreo's dance treatise.⁷⁵ To these two tunes can now be added a third: the refrain of Cara's *Poiché in van* includes a tune, the text of which is « Vegnando da Bologna »; this same tune appears again as a *cascarda* in Caroso's *Il Ballarino* of 1581, now entitled *Fedeltà*.⁷⁶

EX. 2a. Marchetto Cara, *Poiché in van*. Cantus, mm. 13–18 (ripresa).

Libro primo de la croce, fol. 14v. Rome, 1526.

Ve - gnan-do da Bo - lo - gna, La - scar - pa mi fa ma - le;

Tan - da - ron - da - rin - dun - da.

EX. 2b. Fabritio Caroso, *Cascarda*, "La Fedeltà". Melody of lute entabulation.
Il ballarino, fol. 147. Venice, 1581; reprint New York, 1967.

⁷⁵ JEPPESEN, *La Frottola*, vol. III, cit., pp. 32 and 35; B. PESCIERELLI, *Una sconosciuta redazione del trattato di danza di Guglielmo Ebreo*, « Rivista italiana di musicologia », IX, 1974, p. 51.

⁷⁶ Cara's *barzelle* is included in *RISM* 1526⁶, fols. 14v-15; that of Caroso is in his *Il Ballarino*, Venice, 1581, reprint New York, 1967, fol. 147. A modern edition of Cara's setting is included in W. F. PRIZER, ed., *Libro primo de la Croce* (Rome: Pasotti and Dorico, 1526). *Canzoni, Frottole, and Capitoli* (« Yale University Collegium Musicum », 2nd series, VIII), Madison, Wisconsin, 1978, pp. 26-27. I am grateful to Professor Kristine Forney for having called Caroso's *Fedeltà* to my attention.

An even more striking example concerns the Ferrarese improviser Pietrobono, for one can name at least some of the pieces he performed. These pieces, moreover, are not dance tunes, which might be viewed as peripheral to the frottola, but are rather works typical of the repertory. In 1494 Francesco II Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, sent a certain Don Acteon Mauri to study in Ferrara with the aging lutenist. That he should do so should not surprise us, for Pietrobono had previously taught musicians from Milan and Venice and, moreover, had been in Mantua from approximately 1482 to early 1486.⁷⁷ Don Acteon wrote two letters to his Marchese from Ferrara describing his studies there and listing the pieces Pietrobono had taught him. In the first, of 12 July, Don Acteon wrote as follows:

Hearing that Messer Pietrobono was not in Ferrara and that he had gone to Stienta to one of his possessions, I decided to go to find him, and thus I gave him the letter of Your Lordship, which he appreciated very much. And thus that evening he taught me the new *Scaramella*, not the one he had already taught me, but another new one. And thus I shall stay with him in his villa until he has finished his harvest.⁷⁸

Settings of *Scaramella* are well known to music historians: a version by Compère is included in Petrucci's fourth book of frottole and elsewhere, and one by Josquin is included in, among other sources, the manuscript Banco Rari 229 of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. These two settings seem a bit complicated for a lutenist and his *tenorista*, however, and it is likely that Pietrobono was performing other, simpler versions of the same tune. Indeed, Claudio Gallico has shown that this

⁷⁷ Pietrobono's teaching of students from the Sforza court is documented in BARBLAN, *Vita musicale*, cit., p. 803. For his teaching a certain Hieronimo Bondi from Venice, see E. PEVERADA, *Vita musicale nella cattedrale di Ferrara nel '400*, « Rivista italiana di musicologia », XV, 1980, p. 6n, and LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, cit., pp. 106-107. Lockwood, *Pietrobono*, cit., p. 128, shows that the lutenist went to Mantua to escape Ercole I's war with Venice in 1482. That he did not return to Ferrara until early 1486 is demonstrated in a letter from Pietrobono himself to Francesco II Gonzaga asking forgiveness for having left Mantua: « Ho maridata mia neza, per la quale è stata pottissima et principale cagione de farmi venire a Ferrara, l'altra perché quella aiere de Mantova non me comporta, como dissi a la Signoria Vostra quando adimandai licentia a quella »; letter without provenance, but from Ferrara, and without date, but registered in the Mantuan chancery on 17 February 1486 (ASMN busta 2437).

⁷⁸ « Illustrissimo Signor mio [...] Intisi che Misser Petrobono non era in la terra et che era andato a Stienta a uno suo possessione, el che mi parse d'andarlo a trovare, et cusì gie apresentaj la litera de Vostra Signoria, la quale molto l'ave grato e ve tene voluntiera. Et cusì in quella sira me insignò la *Scaramella* nova, non quella che prima me havea insegnato, ma un'altra nova. E cusì starò cum luj in vila insino a tanto che luj à fato li soj raccolti [...] Ferrara, die XIJ Julij 1494 »; letter of Don Acteon Mauri in Ferrara to Francesco Gonzaga, 12 July 1494. (ASMN busta 1233).

melody is used as a *ripresa* of a *barzelle* by Antonio Stringari of Padua and in quodlibets by Musicola and Ludovico Fogliano.⁷⁹

Don Acteon's second letter is even more revealing. On 2 August he writes,

I wish to inform your Lordship that Messer Pietrobono has taught me *Vivi lieto e non temere, L'ocelo da le rame d'oro, Sol' a me la tua partita* and both his *Scaramelle*. And these things I learned from the beginning of July to the twentieth, and his tenors are very good. Until now, I have learned nothing else because Messer Pietrobono has been very ill and could not get out of bed. Now, though, he is much better and says, because of his love for your Lordship, that he will never tire of teaching me and that he will teach me things he has never taught anyone else; he wants me to come soon to play what I have learned for your most Illustrious Lordship [...] Your most Illustrious Lordship should not be upset that I have not written you more often. This is because I have been in Messer Pietrobono's villa, and [because] he became ill in Ferrara.⁸⁰

There are three important conclusions to be drawn from this letter. First, the settings that Mauri learned were polyphonic ones, for he mentions not only the works themselves, but also their tenors, which he says are « very good ». Second, since Mauri singles out these tenors, this same passage seems to furnish additional evidence that the practice of the *tenorista* was still alive. Third, since, with one exception, all the pieces mentioned can be found in the frottola repertory, it seems likely that Pietrobono was teaching Don Acteon vocal works with instrumental accompaniments rather than purely instrumental works.

Among these pieces, I have not yet found *Sol' a me la tua partita* in any musical or poetic collection of the fifteenth century, although, insofar as one can judge from incipits alone, it expresses the typical amo-

⁷⁹ For the sources of all the *Scaramella* settings, see C. GALLICO, *Josquin's Compositions on Italian Texts and the Frottola*, in *Josquin des Prez: Acts of the Josquin Festival Congress*, ed. E. E. Lowinsky, London, 1977, pp. 447-50.

⁸⁰ « Illustrissimo Signore mio. Aviso a la Vostra signoria come Messer Petrobono me à insegnato *Vivi lieto e non temere, L'ocelo de le rame d'oro e Sol'a me la tua partita* et tute due le sue *Scaramelle*. E queste cose le imparai dal principio de luio per fino a vinte del dito, et li soi tenori che son molto boni, el quello di per finqui, non ò imparato altro, e questo è stato ché Misser Petrobono è stato gravemente infermo et non s'è mai levato del letto. Pur al presente sta asa[i] meio et dise che per amore de la Vostra Signoria mai se vederà straco a insegnarme et che'l me insegnarà cose per amore vostro che mai l'ha voluto insegnare a niuno e vole che da qui a qualche di venga a sonare quello che ò imparato a la Vostra Illustrissima Signoria [...] No[n] se maravelgi la Vostra Illustrissima Signoria se non ve ò scripto spesso. Questo è stato perché sono [sic] stato in vila con Misser Petrobon, et poi lui vene amalato a Ferara ... », letter of Don Acteon Mauri in Ferrara to Francesco Gonzaga, 2 August 1494. (ASMN busta 1233; also published in LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, cit., p. 107).

rous, courtly sentiments of a line from a *barzelletta*. The two *Scaramelle* have already been discussed in relation to Acteon's first letter. *L'ocelo da le rame d'oro* is a part of a complex of « bird-song *strambotti* » within the frottola repertory that includes *Io son l'ocelo che non pò volare* of Bartolomeo Tromboncino and *Io son l'ocel che con le debil ali* of Michele Pesenti. Pietrobono's piece, though, can only be the text *Io son l'ocel che sopra i rami d'oro*, a popularizing *strambotto*, the text and tune of which were set by Marchetto Cara and the tenor of which was also included in Pesenti's *strambotto*. Significantly, Cara's piece is found in the manuscripts Paris 676, from Ferrara or Mantua, and Florence, Panciatichi 27, probably also from the same orbit.⁸¹

Acteon's final piece, *Vivi lieto e non temere*, is included as a *barzelletta* in the manuscript A.I.4 of the Biblioteca Comunale of Mantua. This manuscript, a collection of *poesie per musica*, is probably Mantuan and dates from around the middle part of the decade 1500-1510.⁸² At the very least, then, we can state that Pietrobono's text is included among the repertory current in Mauri's city several years later.

It is possible, furthermore, that the music of *Vivi lieto* can also be identified, for there is a piece in the manuscript Panciatichi 27, referred to above, that may be a version of the work. Here on folios 14v-15 is the musical setting of a lauda, *A Maria, fonte d'amore*, above which is written « Vive lieto ». The lauda text itself is by Francesco degli Albizzi and is contained in the *Laude fatte e composti da più persone spirituali* published in Florence in 1486 (n. s.).⁸³ There it includes the rubric « Catansi come *Accoullié ma la belle* », thus indicating that it was to be sung to the music of the *rondeau cinquain* with that incipit.⁸⁴ That the lauda text was originally intended to be sung to this music explains its rather odd form: it is a variety of the *barzelletta* consisting of the typical octosyllabic verses but with a *ripresa* of five lines, rhyming

⁸¹ On this complex, see PRIZER, *Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia*, cit., pp. 28-29. I differ from LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, cit., pp. 107-108, in his belief that *l'ocelo da le rame d'oro* may be a part of the text *Sol' a me la tua partita*. That we have a group of pieces the *incipits* of which so closely match this phrase make it seem highly likely that Mauri was referring to one of them, in this case, *Io son l'ocel che sopra i rami d'oro*.

⁸² The basic study of Ms. A.I.4 is C. GALLICO, *Un libro di poesie per musica dell'epoca di Isabella d'Este*, Mantua, 1961. See also PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 30-32.

⁸³ The poem is published in GALLETTI, *Laude spirituali di Feo Belcari*, cit., pp. 83-84.

⁸⁴ *Accoullié* is included in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl. XIX, 176, fols. 59v-60, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fonds fr. 15123 (Chansonnier Pixérécourt), fols. 6v-7, ascribed to Caron. For other sources see L. L. PERKINS, and H. GAREY, *The Mellon Chansonnier*, New Haven and London, 1979, vol. II, pp. 193-194.

ababa, a series of five-line strophes, rhyming cdca, efefa, and so forth, and a refrain of only the first line of the *ripresa*.

The music of *Accoullié* is not the same as that in Panciaticchi 27, however, and the phrase « Vive lieto » must have been intended to indicate, according to the common practice of the day, that the lauda text was not the original one and that it was a *contrafactum* of this secular setting. The poetic and musical form of the lauda as contained in Panciaticchi 27 are the following (the letters in italics represent the lines of text repeated for the refrain):⁸⁵

$$\begin{array}{cccccc} a & b & a & b & a & a \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 5 \end{array}$$

There are several puzzling aspects to this setting, for the repetition pattern of the music does not seem to be typical of the mnemonic form generally associated with Italian music of the time. Two unusual elements stand out: first, the original melodic segment (mm. 1-9) is repeated for a new line of text in the lauda (« Perché madre del Signore », mm. 22-30); second and even more unusual is the totally new melody given to the closing repetition of the first line of text (mm. 31-33). In a normal Italian setting, this should be the same melody that accompanied the original statement of the line, that is, the melodic segment designated as « 1 » in the scheme above.

The problems inherent to this setting disappear, however, if one inserts the secular text *Vivi lieto*. Panciaticchi 27 contains exactly the number of melodic segments necessary for the *barzelletta*, and, moreover, the musical repetition pattern is a logical one for this form: the repeated melodic segment (1) now falls at the beginning of the refrain, and the new melody (5) now sets the final line of the refrain. The pattern with the secular text is the following:

$$\begin{array}{cccc|cc|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c} a & b & b & a & a & b & : & c & d & : & d & : & e & : & a & : & b \\ & & & & & & : & c & d & : & & : & e & : & a & : & \\ 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 5 & : & 1 & 2 & : & 3 & : & 4 & : & 1 & : & 5 \end{array}$$

I have added to this scheme the typical repetition signs of the *barzelletta*. These repetition signs, lacking in Panciaticchi 27 because of the

⁸⁵ *A Maria* is also found in Cape Town, South African Library, Ms. Grey 3.b.12, fols. 77v-78, without the title « Vive lieto ». An edition of this work after Panciaticchi 27 with both texts is included in the Appendix to this article. An edition of *A Maria fonte* after the MS Capetown, Grey 3.b.12 is included in G. CATTIN (Ed.), *Italian Laude & Latin Unica in MS Capetown, Grey 3.b.12*, American Institute of Musicology, Häussler 1977 (« Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae », 76), pp. 36-37, n. 34.

change of text form in the lauda, are necessary only for the *piedi* and *volta*, not for the *ripresa* and refrain. Thus, the *piedi* of *Vivi lieto*, rhyming cd/cd, would be sung to the first repeated section; the two central lines of the *volta*, rhyming ee, to the second repeated section; and the last line of the *volta* and the first line of the refrain, both rhyming a, to the third repeated section. In fact, when these are included, both the Cantus and the Tenor of the secular text fit the musical setting at least as well as the lauda version. Given the neat correspondence of the form of the musical setting to the secular text and the Ferrarese or Mantuan provenance of the manuscript that contains the work, it is at least possible that the *barzelletta* mentioned by Don Acteon in his letter to Francesco Gonzaga is related to the version in the Panciatichi manuscript.

Don Acteon's letters are important, then, for several reasons. First, they increase our knowledge of Pietrobono's repertory, as well as that of other improvisers, and indicate that the Ferrarese lutenist performed not only narrative verse, but also lyric verse, including *strambotti* and *barzellette*. Further, by showing that versions of the same pieces occur in both the frottola repertory and in the oral tradition, the letters serve to link inextricably the two practices, a link already strongly suggested by the similarity of text forms, musical form and style, and manner of performance.

There is also a different kind of evidence that the frottola is tied to the unwritten tradition, for it seems to have been transmitted not only through written means, but also orally. This simultaneous dissemination of a repertory through oral and written transmission is not a new occurrence. Hendrik Van der Werf, for example, has already noted the same situation in the chansons of the *trouvères*. As he so aptly puts it, if one is dealing in that repertory with a purely written transmission of pieces, then scribes copied more wrong notes than right ones. On the other hand, if one assumes a tradition in which written and oral transmission exist side by side, then variants between two versions of the same work are not only logical, but are also testimonies in themselves to the existence of the two modes of transmission.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ H. VAN DER WERF, *The Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères: A Study of the Melodies and Their Relations to the Poems*, Utrecht, 1972, pp. 26-29. For more on the unwritten tradition in the Middle Ages, see A. ZUINO, *Aspetti della tradizione orale nella musica medioevale*, in *Letnomusicologia in Italia* (Primo Convegno degli Studi Etnomusicologici in Italia, [«Uomo e Cultura Testi»]), Palermo, 1975, pp. 169-187; IDEM, *Adattamenti musicali e tradizione manoscritta nel repertorio laudistico del*

There is a striking parallel within the frottola to the pattern that Van der Werf describes. The manuscript Rés. Vmd. 27 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, formerly belonging to Geneviève Thibault, seems to have functioned as an *aide-memoire* of a professional lutenist, probably in the Veneto during the first decade of the Cinquecento.⁸⁷ The recent availability of this source makes possible for the first time an examination of its repertory and readings.⁸⁸ Particularly important is the second section of the manuscript, which includes frottole arranged for voice and lute. It has already been noted that this source omits the Altus, like all lute entabulations of the repertory, and it also omits the mensural Cantus parts, which the lutenist was expected to know from memory. This in itself is an important testimony to the survival of an oral tradition, for he would hardly have been expected to perform from two manuscripts of music at once. The crucial factor here, however, is that the versions of the frottole included in the Thibault manuscript are often very different from those in other sources. The accompanying lines have frequently been ornamented, and, in some cases, lines that seem almost entirely new have been added that still fit with the vocal Cantus. A particularly telling example of this process is seen in the anonymous *A la fé, si à la fé bona*, which includes a virtually new Tenor and Bassus to accompany the mensural Cantus found in Petrucci's third book of frottole and elsewhere.⁸⁹

Equally as important, the lutenist has changed the form of many of the *barzellette* so that the pieces are considerably simpler, perhaps to make them easier to memorize. The brief codettas intended to elaborate

Duecento, in *Scritti in onore di Luigi Ronga*, Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, Milano 1973, pp. 653-669; IDEM, *Laudi e miniature fiorentine del primo Trecento*, «Studi Musicali», VII, 1978, pp. 39-83.

⁸⁷ G. THIBAUT, *Un manuscrit italien pour luth des premières années du XVI^e siècle*, in *Le luth et sa musique*, Paris, 1958, pp. 43-76, esp. pp. 44-46.

⁸⁸ The manuscript was in the private library of Madame Thibault. It has recently become available in the Département de la Musique at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, where I was able to examine it during the spring of 1983. There is now also a published facsimile of the manuscript, *Tablature de luth italienne. Cent dix pièces d'oeuvres vocales pour luth seul et accompagnement pour luth*, Geneva, 1981. This publication is not as useful as it might be, however, since pencil bar-lines are reproduced in it as though they were the originals. Because one of the problems of the manuscript is the dearth of rhythmic signs in the tablature, the original *stanghette*, indicating major structural divisions, are quite important for transcription, and the transcriber may well be led astray by the modern ones.

⁸⁹ *A la fé*, a *barzelletta*, is included in Vmd, 27 on fol. 47; mensural versions of the same *barzelletta* with different lower parts are included in Petrucci's *Frottole, libro terzo* (RISM 1505^o, fols. 50v-51, and in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Ms. Q 18, fols. 6v-7.

the final statement of the refrain included in Petrucci's publications and in other sources are often excluded,⁹⁰ but the chief change lies in the omission of structural parts of the *barzelletta*. Whereas other sources frequently include new music for the stanza of these works, the Paris manuscript consistently omits them, repeating instead the music of the *ripresa*. Thus, Tromboncino's *Naque al mondo per amarte* lacks both the concluding version of the refrain and the new music for the stanza in the Ms.⁹¹ Here, as in all cases, the lutenist included enough of the music to perform the piece in a formally correct manner, but he changed the shape of the *barzelletta* considerably, re-using the music of the *ripresa* in the stanza and thereby reducing to an indispensable minimum the amount of material he had to memorize.⁹²

It is possible, of course, that the scribe of the Thibault manuscript made these changes from copies closer to the other known versions of the works, but, given the nature of the changes, it seems more likely that he was working from different versions that he had learned aurally and perhaps piecemeal.⁹³ This would then indicate that the dissemination of the frottola was often an oral one, and that the source represents a variant reading that was not necessarily unique to the Thibault manuscript. If this were true, then the frottola could be seen as continuing the basically oral tradition of the previous period while also beginning to codify a given version of the work through writing. Even if the lutenist had been consciously adapting the more complicated versions of the pieces, the Thibault manuscript would remain a testimony to the need to simplify for the purposes of memorization.

⁹⁰ The codetta included in Petrucci's first book of frottole (*RISM* 1504⁴), fols. 17v-18 and other sources for Tromboncino's *Non val aqua al mio gran foco*, for example, is omitted in Vmd, 27, fol. 46.

⁹¹ *Naque al mondo per amarte* is included in the Thibault Ms. on fol. 43 and in Petrucci's third book of frottole (*RISM* 1505⁶), fols. 5v-6. In this work, as in many pieces, Tromboncino has used slightly varied versions of the music of the *ripresa* for the stanza. Nevertheless, here and in Cara's *Perso ho in tutto hormai* the copyist of the lute book has simplified the form of the work. Cara's *barzelletta* is included in the Thibault Ms. on fol. 49 and in *RISM* 1505⁶, fols. 31v-33, there with new music for the stanza and for the concluding version of the refrain.

⁹² PIRROTTA, *Tradizione orale*, cit., p. 434, makes precisely this point concerning the Quattrocento unwritten repertory.

⁹³ On the piecemeal learning of pieces during the Renaissance see A. HANHAM, *The Musical Studies of a Fifteenth-Century Wool Merchant*, «Review of English Studies», new series, VIII, 1957, pp. 270-74, as well as the documents concerning Pietrobono and already taught works in this fashion in 1465, when he agreed to teach Hieromimo Bondi of Venice seven «cantilenas»; see PEVERADA, *Vita musicale nella cattedrale di Ferrara*, cit., p. 6n, and LOCKWOOD, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, cit., pp. 106-107.

The decision to fix the repertory through writing it down changed the basic nature of the genre. Even among the simpler text forms, later settings are frequently more elaborate than earlier ones. Cara, for example, in works published in Petrucci's first book of frottole, tends to set *barzellette* using the same music for the *ripresa* and the stanza, like the lutenist of the Thibault manuscript. In later works, however, he most often composes new music for the stanza.⁹⁴ In retrospect, it seems that Isabella d'Este may have sounded the symbolic death knell for this particular branch of the unwritten tradition in 1504, when she wrote to the poet Niccolò da Correggio asking him to choose a *canzone* of Petrarch that she could have set to music. Niccolò responded with *Sì è debile il filo*, and a setting of this poem by Tromboncino is in Petrucci's seventh book of frottole of 1507.⁹⁵ From this date there is first a trickle and then a stream of settings of this higher quality verse. At the beginning, these pieces are schematic, attempting to use the mnemonic form associated with the early frottola and with the unwritten tradition. Composers found quickly, however, that the *canzone*, *ballata*, and poetic madrigal with their frequent shifts in line-length were not suitable to the kind of schematic music that they had been writing. The results of this discovery were frottole that set the « new », more subtle forms and that themselves were more subtle, often being composed nearly or completely in a through-composed manner. The attraction of setting rhyming lines with identical music meant that traces of the mnemonic form remain in the frottola and indeed in the early madrigal, but these occur much less frequently and eventually almost die out.⁹⁶ The shift from frottola verse to madrigalesque verse, then, was the first step in the process that led eventually to the madrigal and was closely linked with a turn away from the previous unwritten tradition and toward a written one.

The frottola is therefore bonded to the unwritten tradition through several strong ties, including the adoption of the same text forms, the use of a mnemonic musical form, the differentiation of short poems from longer, strophic ones through musical style, the presence of the same

⁹⁴ PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., p. 116.

⁹⁵ See PRIZER, *Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia*, cit., p. 20, for a discussion of the correspondence between Isabella and Niccolò da Correggio.

⁹⁶ On the increase in through-composed settings in the frottola and the structural repetitions in the early madrigal, see PRIZER, *Courtly Pastimes*, cit., pp. 129-136. On the repetitions in the madrigal, see also H. C. SLIM, *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets*, Chicago and London, 1972, vol. I, pp. 162-164.

manner of performance, and even through specific works occurring in both repertoires. The process of moving from an oral tradition to a written one was a gradual one, involving the simultaneous transmission of the works both through writing and through oral means during the last years of the Quattrocento and the first years of Cinquecento. After this point, the text forms become increasingly more subtle, and the music becomes increasingly more complex and dependent on written transmission.

APPENDIX:

VIVI LIETO E NON TEMERE

TEXTS

- I. *Vivi lieto e non temere* (Mantua, Biblioteca Comunale, Ms. A.I.4, fols. 227v-228).

Vivi lieto e non temere
ch'i' te habia abbandonato;
se ben altro ho pigl[i]ato,
fu per forza e non (per) volere,

Vivi lieto ...

Io ho fermo nel mio cor[e]
de volerti sempre amarte,
E tu se' il mio signore
per potermi comandare.
Mai te voglio abbandonare
per belezza o forza d'oro,
né già mai altrui amor[e]
contra il tuo harà podere.

Vivi lieto ...

Sempre fusti e tu sarai
lo mio ben e lo mio tesoro;
io te amo più che mai
e te ho dato l'alma il cor[e].
Non te pigliar doncha dolore,
né per questo darte morte;
quel che volse nostra sorte
sia costante al suo podere.

Vivi lieto e non temere.

- II. *A Maria, fonte d'amore* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Panciatichi 27, fols. 13v-14).

A Maria, fonte d'amore
Vada ogni alma peccatrice,
mondaràla d'ogni errore,
e faràla venire al fin felice,
perch'è madre del Signore.

A Maria, fonte d'amore.
Chi vol gratia vada a quella,

che è del ciel porta serena
 e dil mondo chiara stella,
 che per recta via ci mena,
 ciascun che i dona el core.

A Maria, fonte d'amore.
 L'alma che è cum lei unita,
 serà dal dracon diffessa,
 et in ciel cum lei unita,
 e di gloria sempre acesa
 dell'immenso eterno ardore.

A Maria ...
 Ogn'hom lauda il nome sancto
 di Maria, virgine bella,
 piena de Spirito Sancto,
 de' mortal(i) sicura stella,
 e di gratie dispensatore.

A Maria ...

III. *A Maria, fonte d'amore/Vivi lieto e non temere.*

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Panciatichi 27,
 fols. 13v-14. (N. B. All repetition signs are editorial.)

APPENDIX

A Maria, Viva lieto

A Ma - ri - a, fon - - te d'a -
Vi - va lie - - to _____ [e non _____]

Vi - va lie - - to _____ [e

5

- mo - - re, d'a - mo - -
te - me - re, te - me - -

non _____ te - - me - -

10

- re, Va - dao - gni al - ma pec - ca - tri - ce,
- re Chi te ha - bia ab - ban - do - - na - - to;

- re Chi te ha bia ab - ban - do - - na - - to;

15

Mon - da - ra - la d'o - gni er - - - ro - - -
Se ben al - - - tro ho - pi - - - gia - - -

Se ben al - tro ho pi - - - gia - - -

20

- re,
- to,

E fa - ra - la ve - ni - real-fin
Fu per for - za e non per vo -

- to,
Fu per for - za e non per vo -

25

fe - li - ce,
- le - - re.

Per - ch'è ma - - dre
Vi - va lie - - to

- le - - re. Vi - va lie - - to

del si - - - - - gno - -
 e non _____ te - - - - - me - - -

e non _____ te - - - - - me - - -

30

- re. A Ma-ri- a fon- te _____ d'a- mo - - re.
 - re Chi te ha-bi- aab- ban - do - na - - to.]

- re Chi te ha-bi- aab- ban - do - - na - to.]