



CODICI PER CANTARE

I LIBRONI DEL DUOMO
NELLA MILANO SFORZESCA

A CURA DI DANIELE V. FILIPPI E AGNESE PAVANELLO

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Studi e Saggi



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CODICI PER CANTARE

I Libroni del Duomo
nella Milano sforzesca

A CURA DI
DANIELE V. FILIPPI E AGNESE PAVANELLO

CON UN CATALOGO DEI LIBRONI
A CURA DI CRISTINA CASSIA

LIBRERIA MUSICALE ITALIANA

SOMMARIO

Maddalena Peschiera	
<i>Cantare in Archivio: nuova vita per i Libroni di Gaffurio</i>	VII
Daniele V. Filippi e Agnese Pavanello	
<i>Introduzione</i>	IX
Abbreviazioni	XV

IL CONTESTO MILANESE

Massimo Zaggia	
<i>Materiali per una storia del libro e della cultura a Milano negli anni di Franchino Gaffurio (1484-1522)</i>	3
Edoardo Rossetti	
<i>L'«Isola beata» dei musicisti e degli aristocratici: qualche appunto su gerarchie sociali e culturali nella Milano del Rinascimento</i>	53
Norberto Valli	
<i>La liturgia a Milano nel Quattrocento: coesistenza di due riti?</i>	89

I LIBRONI GAFFURIANI: CODICOLOGIA E CONTENUTI MUSICALI

Martina Pantarotto	
<i>Franchino Gaffurio maestro di cantori e di copisti: analisi codicologica-paleografica dei Libroni della Fabbrica del Duomo</i>	101
Daniele V. Filippi	
<i>Breve guida ai motetti missales (e dintorni)</i>	139

Thomas Schmidt	
<i>The Coherence of the Cycle? The Notation of the Motetti missales in Manuscript and Print</i>	171
Bonnie J. Blackburn	
<i>Variations on Agricola's Si dederò: A Motet Cycle Unmasked</i>	187
Francesco Rocco Rossi	
<i>Franchino Gaffurio compositore: tra indagine stilistica e nuove conferme attributive</i>	219
Daniele Torelli	
<i>Gli inni e il repertorio per l'ufficio nei Libroni gaffuriani</i>	233

IL CATALOGO DEI LIBRONI GAFFURIANI

Cristina Cassia	
<i>La compilazione del Catalogo dei Libroni: problemi e osservazioni</i>	275
<i>Catalogo dei Libroni gaffuriani</i> a cura di Cristina Cassia	291
<i>Librone 1</i>	294
<i>Librone 2</i>	322
<i>Librone 3</i>	332
<i>Librone [4]</i>	349
Elenco delle opere citate nel Catalogo	367
Indice per compositore	379
Indice per titolo/incipit	381
Bibliografia generale	391
Indice dei nomi	411

Bonnie J. Blackburn

VARIATIONS ON AGRICOLA'S *SI DEDERO*:
A MOTET CYCLE UNMASKED*

Si dederò somnium oculis meis: «If I shall give sleep to my eyes», I shall not recognize Alexander Agricola's *Si dederò* in an unusual incarnation. This tricinium was his most popular composition, appearing in twenty-one sources for three voices, in two others with a fourth voice added, and in five tablatures. It formed the basis of masses by Jacob Obrecht, Alessandro Coppini, and Antonius Divitis and appears as an opening citation in two strambotti.¹

With open eyes, however, it is possible to discern that an anonymous cycle of five motets in the burnt Librone [4] of the Duomo in Milan is based on Agricola's composition.² Because the manuscript was attractive and of a more manageable size than the other Libroni, it was selected to be displayed at the Esposizione Internazionale dell'Arte held in Milan in 1906. A fire during the night of 3 August destroyed or damaged a large number of exhibits in the room. The Librone itself survived, but in a parlous state, having lost a number of folios at the beginning and suffering fire damage, mostly to the top and side margins, with the loss of music. In 1912 the prefect of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Achille Ratti (later Pope Pius

* I am most grateful to Joshua Rifkin for his critical reading of this article; his sharp eye has caught infelicities and prompted me to strengthen my arguments (though I have not accepted his belief that the cycle originated with a text, if not this one). He has also offered improvements of my reconstruction of the missing parts of the music examples. I also wish to thank the editors, who kindly reminded me of relevant literature that I had overlooked.

1. For a listing of the sources see, most conveniently, DAVID FALLOWS, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415–1480*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999, pp. 597–9. A modern edition appears in ALEXANDER AGRICOLA, *Opera omnia*, ed. by Edward R. Lerner, vol. IV, American Institute of Musicology, n.p. 1966, pp. 50–1, but also in a number of other editions, listed mostly fully by Gioia Filocamo in her edition *Florence, BNC, Panciaticchi 27: Text and Context*, Brepols, Turnhout 2000 (*Monumenta Musica Europea*, II/1), p. 492.

2. I alerted David Fallows to this discovery at the time he was working on his chanson catalogue; it is mentioned briefly on p. 598. I shall refer to the choirbook here as «Librone [4]», as the shelfmark currently applies to another book. It is also known with the *olim* shelfmark 2266, but the correct designation now is Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Cassette Ratti, no. VII, 34–43. For information on the four Milanese Libroni and their contents, see <www.motetcycles.ch/sources>, stemming from the project *Motet Cycles* (c. 1470–1510): *Compositional Design, Performance, and Cultural Context*, directed by Agnese Pavanello at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, 2014–17.

XI), determined that it might be possible to restore the remaining folios.³ They were separated, treated with liquid gelatine, and placed in boxes. Fifty years later another restoration was undertaken by the Istituto di Patologia del Libro, and the 144 surviving leaves were photographed. Today the leaves are too fragile to be digitized, so we depend on the facsimile edition based on the photographs made at the time,⁴ published in 1968 as volume 16 of the series *Archivium Musicae Mediolanense: Liber capelle ecclesie maioris: Quarto codice di Gaffurio*, edited by Angelo Ciceri and Luciano Migliavacca.⁵

In its present state the manuscript preserves motets, masses, Magnificats, and a lauda. If they were present, all names of composers are lost, owing to damage to the top margin. Yet through attributions in pre-1906 sources and concordances, we know that many of the compositions are by Franchino Gaffurio, *maestro di cappella* of the Duomo when the manuscript was copied; the list of the manuscripts sent to a previous exhibition gives the date 1507.⁶ Gaffurio can be identified as the author of four masses, a number of single motets, and a cycle of four motets beginning with *Magnum nomen domini*. This part covers the first ninety-nine folios (out of 144; an unknown number of folios have been lost at the beginning). Following Gaffurio's cycle are an anonymous isolated *Agnus Dei*, a motet by Giovanni Spataro,⁷ four sections of Josquin's *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur* cycle, an anonymous motet added later by Gaffurio, and then six cycles of motets, interrupted by Josquin's *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*. Three of these cycles are anonymous, two can be identified through concordances as by Gaspar van Weerbeke, and one by

3. MADDALENA PESCHIERA, *Un «pratico» in soccorso della Veneranda Fabbrica: Achille Ratti e il restauro dei documenti bruciati nell'Esposizione internazionale del 1906*, in *Pio XI e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno, Desio, 6 febbraio 2016*, ed. by Franco Cajani, «I quaderni della Brianza», XL/183 2017, pp. 275–98.

4. The glass negatives and the high-quality original prints from the 1950s remain, however, and it is planned to digitize them, allowing digital enhancement; see <www.polifoniasforzesca.ch> for the announcement of this project.

5. The description of the history of the manuscript is taken from the preface to this edition. The first scholar to call attention to the survival of the manuscript was CLAUDIO SARTORI, in his *Il quarto codice di Gaffurio non è del tutto scomparso*, in *Collectanea historiae musicae 1*, Olschki, Firenze 1953 (*Historiae musicae cultores*, 2), pp. 25–44. A comparison of the illustration in his article with the facsimile edition makes graphically clear how successful the restoration was. What remains is legible, apart from where the paper has shrunk and tears have caused misalignment of the staves.

6. See DAVIDE STEFANI, *Le vite di Gaffurio*, in *Ritratto di Gaffurio*, ed. by Davide Daolmi, LIM, Lucca 2017, pp. 27–48: 38.

7. The presence of a motet by the Bolognese music theorist may seem surprising, but he and Gaffurio had corresponded, often acrimoniously, since 1493. Spataro mentions the date in his letter of 1 August 1517 to Marcantonio Cavazzoni; referring to Gaffurio he says «già sono 24 anni che circa questa facultà se habbiamo scritto». See *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians*, ed. by Bonnie J. Blackburn, Edward E. Lowinsky, and Clement A. Miller, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, p. 204.

Loyset Compère. Except for Spataro, all these composers, at one time or another, were associated with the Duomo or the Sforza court in Milan. The volume ends with a partial mass, then a Magnificat and a lauda added by Gaffurio (see the Catalogue at the end of this volume). Lynn Halpern Ward, in her article *The «Motetti Missales» Repertory Reconsidered*, provided a useful table of the contents, with identifications of composers where known, and proposals for the grouping of motets in cycles.⁸ One main hand copied the bulk of the manuscript; the second hand is Gaffurio's, filling in gaps on blank folios.⁹

The anonymous cycle based on Agricola's *Si dedero* is on fols. 108v–113r. The texts of four of the motets recall the practice of the Milanese *motetti missales*, with rhymed verse, often based on sequences and hymns, known and unknown, clustered around a particular theme, most often referring to the Virgin. In the present case the occasion is the Annunciation, except for the fourth motet, which is an *Agnus Dei*.¹⁰ The texts and translations are as follows:

1	Missus est ab arce patris In conclavi ¹¹ piaē matris Nuntius amator pacis, Gabriel [arch]angelus. ¹²	He was sent from the fortress of the father to the room of the pious mother, the messenger, lover of peace, The [arch]angel Gabriel.
2	Dum intravit, salutavit, Domum totam illustravit Et perfecte declaravit Virgini mysterium.	When he entered, he greeted and he illuminated the whole house and he perfectly explained the mystery to the Virgin.
3	Flamen divini obumbrabit, ¹³ De virtute decorabit Teque virgo fecundabit Sine viri semine.	The flame of the Lord will overshadow (you) and adorn (you) with virtue and will make you, virgin, fruitful without man's seed.

8. LYNN HALPERN WARD, *The «Motetti Missales» Repertory Reconsidered*, «Journal of the American Musicological Society», xxxix/3 1986, pp. 491–523: 497–502. See there for previous discussion of the question of cycles, part of which revolved around the absence of motets for the elevation. Gaffurio's untitled mass on fols. 41v–47r can be identified as a *Missa Gloriosae virginis Mariae* since it is based on the motet that follows.

9. Of the group of Magnificats, those on fols. 50v–52r and 55v–56r are surely by Gaffurio because they use his favoured mensuration signs, $\text{C}\frac{3}{2}$ and $\text{C}\frac{3}{4}$ (the second Magnificat was copied by him). The latter sign is also used in the two motets *Verbum dei deo natum* and *Volat avis sine meta* on fols. 83v–87r, and these too are in Gaffurio's hand.

10. The texts are taken from <www.motetcycles.ch/texts> (T126–T128 and T130). The translations are by Eva Ferro, with some adjustments, with my thanks to Leofranc Holford-Strevens for additional suggestions.

11. More correctly «conclave»; cf. «Angelus ad virginem subintrans in conclave».

12. This line is hypometric; it should be «Gabriel archangelus».

13. This line is hypermetric; it should be «divum»; the mistake is evidently due to a misreading of the minims. I have retained the original reading when referring to the composition below, however.

4	Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.	O lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. O lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace.
5	O miranda creatura, Virgo eris semper pura Et intacta genitura Summi patris filium. Partum dabis exquisitum, Toti mundo inauditum: Ex te, virgo, [in]finitum Christum deum et hominem.	O wonderful creature, you will always be a pure virgin and, untouched, you will give birth to the Son of the highest Father. You will give a wonderful birth, Unheard-of to the whole world; from you, a virgin, the infinite Christ, god and man.

The only line that can be identified from earlier text sources is the first, «Missus est ab arce patris», which is the middle line of the fourth stanza of the Passion hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis* by Venantius Fortunatus. Curiously, this line turns up in two other motets in the Libroni. The whole fourth stanza, beginning «Quando venit ergo sacri plenitudo temporis», is embedded in Gaffurio's five-voice motet *Magnum nomen domini* (Librone [4], fols. 95v–96r). Moreover, he also used that stanza as the initial text of a four-voice motet in Librone 1, fols. 71v–72r, followed by a *secunda pars*, *Ave corpus Iesu Christi*.¹⁴ And a variant, «missus genitoris ab arce», is a line in the troped Kyrie of Gaffurio's *Missa Omnipotens genitor* (Librone 2, fols. 8v–9r). One might be tempted to think, then, that the *Missus est* cycle is by Gaffurio. That cannot be the case, however.

Up to now, *Missus est ab arce patris* and the following four motets have been assumed to be a Milanese *motetti missales* cycle, or at least a motet cycle, since we cannot know whether they had *loco* designations, which could have been in the lost upper margin. Except for the absence of a motet for the elevation, they fit the usual criteria: a series of texts, mostly rhymed, on a common theme, with the exception of the Agnus Dei,¹⁵ and a common mode and final, in this case G Mixoly-

14. See the analysis of this motet in Daniele V. Filippi, *Text, Form, and Style in Franchino Gaffurio's Motets*, in *The Motet around 1500: On the Relationship between Imitation and Text Treatment?*, ed. by Thomas Schmidt-Beste, Brepols, Turnhout 2012, pp. 383–410: 390–6, with an edition on pp. 408–10.

15. Ward discusses this cycle on pp. 517–18, suggesting that «the anomalous Agnus Dei text was chosen for its ritual connotations rather than its relationship to text used in the other motets in the cycle»; she points out that in three of Compère's cycles the Agnus is also the fourth rather than the last motet, being followed by another motet designated *loco Deo gratias* (p. 517). All the motet cycles in Librone [4] are unusual in not including a motet for the elevation, which is common in Librone 1. Agnese Pavanello has made the interesting suggestion that *Diem novae gratiae* and the six following motets on Corpus Christi (fols. 70v–77r), which all have fermata passages interspersed, are in fact seven Sanctus-elevation motets: see Agnese Pavanello, *The Elevation as Liturgical Climax in Gesture and Sound: Milanese Elevation Motets in Context*, in «Journal of the Alamire Foundation», IX/1 2017, pp. 33–59: 42–3 (the texts are transcribed in Appendix 2). Paul and Lora

dian, though B flats are needed here and there. But that is where the resemblance stops, for this cycle is quite different from any of the other Milanese cycles.

Lynn Ward noticed that the motets of the *Missus est ab arce patris* cycle have «certain musical characteristics in common» and that all share a common head motif.¹⁶ This is in fact the initial motif of Agricola's *Si dedero*; although it may have escaped modern ears, it was surely recognizable by his contemporaries. Agricola presents it on *d* in the contratenor, imitated two breves later in the superius on *g'*, and three breves later in the tenor on *g*.¹⁷ None of the Milanese motets reproduces this opening exactly, though the last motet, *O miranda creatura*, comes closest, if my reconstruction of the top voice is correct (see Ex. 1).

Agricola's *Si dedero* is a very unusual composition. It has a biblical text (Ps. 131: 4) but the source is the verse of the short responsory *In pace in idipsum*, and the chant melody is cited prominently.¹⁸ After the opening, the chant is presented sporadically, in all voices, and never as a cantus firmus. The text is very sparse: twenty-two syllables must be stretched over seventy-six bars. Example 1 shows fifteen bars, which accommodate only four syllables, fitting the first four notes of the melody. The problematic underlay of the text is exacerbated by Agricola's decision to set the chant melody after the opening almost exclusively in breves and longs. Counterpoint against such long notes tends to be very motivic and sequential, and not conducive to declamation. This raises the question of the genre of Agricola's

Merkley had suggested that the elevation motet was part of the ducal ceremonial, and therefore the fourth Librone was made for the Duomo after 1500, after the French conquest of Milan. PAUL A. MERKLEY – LORA L. M. MERKLEY, *Music and Patronage in the Sforza Court*, Brepols, Turnhout 1999 (Studi sulla storia della musica in Lombardia, 3), pp. 355–6. So far nothing is known about music at court at that time.

16. *The «Motetti Missales» Repertory Reconsidered*, p. 517; the head motif is shown in her Ex. 2 on p. 518.

17. In the examples below, the *Si dedero* passages are taken from the edition by Howard Mayer Brown in *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent: Florence*, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Banco Rari 229, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1983 (Monuments of Renaissance Music, 7), music volume, pp. 138–40. My *ficta* differs from Brown's. The mode is rather *labile* in Agricola's *Si dedero*, and this is reflected in the varying key signatures in the concordances and individual flats; see the discussion in ROBERT TOFT, *Aural Images of Lost Traditions: Sharps and Flats in the Sixteenth Century*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto – Buffalo – London 1992, pp. 124–30 (with edition on pp. 148–9 after Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f. fr. 1597).

18. In this it differs from Josquin's use of the responsory and the first half of the verse as the tenor of his song-motet *Que vous ma dame*. Most sources have only the Latin text or an incipit; two have the full French text, and one the French incipit. See FALLOWS, *Catalogue*, 345. Honey Meconi opts for the term «motet-chanson», a composition using French for the top voice and Latin in a lower voice or voices; *Ockeghem and the Motet-chanson in Fifteenth-Century France*, in *Johannes Ockeghem: Actes du XL^e Colloque international d'études humanistes*, Tours, 3–8 février 1997, éd. par Philippe Vendrix, Klincksieck, Paris 1998 (Collection «Építome musical»), pp. 381–402, including a catalogue of such compositions on pp. 393–402.