



REOPENING GAFFURIUS'S LIBRONI

EDITED BY AGNESE PAVANELLO

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Studi e Saggi



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ABBREVIATIONS

CMM	Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae
GCO	<i>Gaffurius Codices Online</i> , < https://www.gaffurius-codices.ch/ >
<i>Grove Music Online</i>	< https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/ >
Librone 1	Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Sezione Musicale, Librone 1 (<i>olim</i> MS 2269)
Librone 2	Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Sezione Musicale, Librone 2 (<i>olim</i> MS 2268)
Librone 3	Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Sezione Musicale, Librone 3 (<i>olim</i> MS 2267)
Librone [4]	Milan, Archivio della Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, Casette Ratti, n° VII, 34–43 (<i>olim</i> MS 2266)
MCD	<i>Motet Cycles Database</i> , < http://www.motetcycles.ch/ >
MCE	<i>Motet Cycles Edition</i> , < https://www.gaffurius-codices.ch/s/portal/page/editions >
<i>MGG Online</i>	< https://www.mgg-online.com >
MSD	Musicological Studies and Documents
NJE	New Josquin Edition
Petrucchi, <i>Motetti A</i>	Ottaviano Petrucci, <i>Motetti A</i> (Venice, 1502; RISM B 1502 ¹)
Petrucchi, <i>Motetti C</i>	Ottaviano Petrucci, <i>Motetti C</i> (Venice, 1504; RISM B 1504 ¹)
Petrucchi, <i>Motetti IV</i>	Ottaviano Petrucci, <i>Motetti Libro Quarto</i> (Venice, 1505; RISM B 1505 ²)
RISM	Répertoire International de Sources Musicales
RRMMAER	Recent Researches in the Music of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance

INTRODUCTION

A manuscript from the past is more than a fragment of memory. It embodies an act of communication – in the notation of some contents – and the principles for reading it at the same time, both expressed in a materiality that opens up a specific historical reality, being at the same time the product of a subjective creation process and an object stemming from historically determined conditions.

Working with the four Gaffurius Libroni in the past few years has been a progressive discovery of the rich dimensions under which the earliest extant polyphonic manuscripts of the Duomo of Milan can be investigated. As a corpus related to the presence and activity of the chapel master Franchinus Gaffurius during the years 1484–1522, the four manuscripts represent today a monument of the polyphonic practice of his time grounded on a centuries-old tradition of church singing, unique witnesses for the performance of sacred works in Milan in the last decades of the 15th century and the first of the 16th. Chronologically, they cover the last period of Sforza rule and the new French regime established after the fall of Ludovico il Moro at the end of 1499 – a politically crucial period for the history of the Italian states and of Milan in particular.

The music collected in these manuscripts, including polyphonic pieces for Mass and Office as well as for Marian and other liturgical services, attests to the building of a proper Milanese collection of works composed for the cathedral during Gaffurius's tenure (mostly his own compositions) and, in parallel, to the circulation and performance of contemporary Franco-Flemish polyphony in Renaissance Milan. In fact, the repertory (around 350 items of music)¹ includes works connected both with the Ambrosian rite, characteristic of the Milanese diocese and notably of the cathedral, and the Roman rite, in accordance with the coexistence of liturgical traditions that still characterizes the Milanese environment.

After the pioneering study by Knud Jeppesen and the contributions by Claudio Sartori,² the Libroni have almost exclusively been investigated in relation to the

1. The number of items is given after the catalogue available online on *Gaffurius Codices Online* (hereafter GCO), <<https://www.gaffurius-codices.ch>>.

2. Knud Jeppesen, 'Die 3 Gaffurius-Kodizes der Fabbrica del Duomo, Milano', *Acta Musicologica*, 3/1 (1931), 14–28. Claudio Sartori, *Le musiche della Cappella del Duomo di Milano: Catalogo delle musiche dell'Archivio* (Milan: Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, 1957); id., 'La cappella del Duomo dalle origini a Franchino Gaffurio', in *Storia di Milano*, ix. pt. 3: *La musica nel Duomo e alla corte sino alla seconda metà del Cinquecento* (Milan: Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la Storia di Milano, 1961), 723–48.

Franco-Flemish repertory they include, notably the motet cycles known as *motetti missales*.³ In our case too the study of the Libroni was first prompted by the urge to properly assess the transmission of the motet cycles composed by the singers attached to the Sforza court in the 1470s. A project that was carried out at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in the years 2014–17⁴ aimed to better contextualize the motet cycles, and more specifically the *motetti missales*, and led to the compilation of a critical catalogue of all the cycles transmitted in the Gaffurius manuscripts (among other sources), their component motets, and their texts.⁵ It was during this work, which involved an intense study of the four choirbooks, that the need emerged to scrutinize the Libroni more in depth, in light of recent research and with an interdisciplinary approach.

The question of the precise dating of the Libroni had come to the fore mostly in connection with the problem of establishing a time frame for the composition of specific Franco-Flemish works, such as Josquin des Prez's pieces, constantly the object of a lively scholarly interest.⁶ Since only Librone 1 is provided with an inscription containing the date of completion of the copying project (1490), the chronology of the other three manuscripts has remained a matter of discussion.

The intention to anchor the study of the Libroni to the background of their specific cultural environment led to the realization of our first book project entirely dedicated to the Gaffurius manuscripts, *Codici per cantare* (2019), which included interdisciplinary studies about Milanese book production, the cultural setting experienced by the Sforza court composers, and the particularities of Milanese liturgical usages.⁷ Alongside musicological investigations on specific topics – mostly related to motet cycles, given the focus of the research project – the book provides new information about the manuscripts. It contains, in fact, the first palaeographical and codicological study of Libroni 1–3 after Jeppesen's description, as well as

3. For an overview of the studies and the discussion about the *motetti missales*, see Daniele Filippi and Agnese Pavanello, 'Introduction' in Daniele V. Filippi and Agnese Pavanello (eds.), *Motet Cycles between Devotion and Liturgy*, Scripta, 7 (Basel: Schwabe, 2019), 1–16.

4. The project, entitled 'Motet Cycles in the Late Fifteenth/Early Sixteenth-Century: Function, Performance, and Compositional Design in the Context of Musico-Liturgical and Devotional Practices' was supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation. For an overview of its outcome see <<http://p3.snf.ch/Project-149236>>.

5. See the *Motet Cycles Database* (MCD): <<http://motetcycles.ch>>.

6. An example is the *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae* (in this regard see the discussion in Pavanello's chapter in this book). Many useful observations on the Libroni are embedded, for instance, in an article of Joshua Rifkin dedicated to one of the most famous motets by Josquin. See Joshua Rifkin, 'Munich, Milan, and a Marian Motet: Dating Josquin's "Ave Maria ... Virgo Serena"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 56/2 (2003), 239–350.

7. Daniele V. Filippi and Agnese Pavanello (eds.), *Codici per cantare: I Libroni del Duomo nella Milano sforzesca*, Studi e saggi, 27 (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2019).

a complete catalogue of the Libroni, with concordances and essential bibliography.⁸ That publication therefore represented the starting point for the following research and the work now gathered in the present volume, expressly dedicated to exploring specific aspects of the making of the Libroni and their contents.

The digitization of the Libroni, realized in accordance with the holding institution and thanks to the financial support of the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research during the succeeding project, ‘Polifonia sforzesca / Sforza Polyphony, The Motet Cycles in the Milanese Libroni between Liturgy, Devotion, and Ducal Patronage’,⁹ has recently made accessible the Libroni to everyone interested in these manuscripts, facilitating research on them and also comparison with other manuscripts and documentation. In order to provide an adequate description of and information on the volumes, an open access portal has been created, containing, besides the catalogue, the first detailed inventory of the manuscripts with a systematic classification of the hands involved in the copying work.¹⁰ *Gaffurius Codices Online* (<<https://www.gaffurius-codices.ch>>) is the result of intense teamwork within the project and has served as the basis for the contributions of this new book, forming a complementary output of the same research activity.¹¹

The chapters of this book focus on different aspects concerning the origin and the making of the manuscripts, addressing issues related to their physical characteristics, contents, and specific repertorial choices. They newly assess the issue of the chronology, expand and significantly enrich the codicological and palaeographical analysis initiated in the previous publication, and discuss relevant issues concerning the internal concordances and the ‘import’ of external or non-Milanese works.

All documentary evidence that has emerged so far concerning the genesis of the Libroni is gathered in Daniele Filippi’s study, presenting for the first time the results of a systematic search through the archival records of the Duomo archive covering the period of Gaffurius’s tenure (1484–1522). The discovery of new documents concerning the payments for copying music together with the improved transcriptions and translations of those that were already known contribute not only to framing the copying work for Librone 1 more precisely, but also to identify

8. Martina Pantarotto, ‘Franchino Gaffurio maestro di cantori e di copisti: Analisi codicologico-paleografica dei Libroni della Fabbrica del Duomo’, in Filippi and Pavanello (eds.), *Codici per cantare*, 101–38; Cristina Cassia, ‘Catalogo dei Libroni gaffuriani’, in Filippi and Pavanello (eds.), *Codici per cantare*, 291–389. The printed catalogue prepared by Cassia preceded the online version of GCO, which is substantially based on Cassia’s work.

9. <<https://www.fhnw.ch/plattformen/polifonia-sforzesca/>; <http://p3.snf.ch/project-172933>>.

10. See the Inventory on GCO.

11. Preliminary versions of the chapters gathered in this book were read at the 47th Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference in Basel (July 2019). The contributions will be also made freely accessible on the GCO-site.

beyond doubt Librone 2 in the payment records related to the year 1492. The meticulous reconstruction of the copying tasks associated to the only scribe whose name is recorded in the documents (Giovanni Pietro Pozzobonello) furnishes a thoughtful insight into a copying process that may have taken place in different blocks and phases, and in a way less linear than suggested by Gaffurius's inscription in Librone 1. Filippi's accurate reading of the documents helps to clarify in its fundamental lines the chronology of the first two Libroni. The archive, however, is silent about the later manuscripts. If this surprising outcome unfortunately does not resolve the debated question of the precise dating of Librone 3 and does not provide confirmation of the recovered date of 1507 for Librone [4],¹² it nevertheless opens new scenarios around the making of these later manuscripts. According to Filippi, who recognized in the inscription originally included in Librone [4] the typical formula of Gaffurius's ownership notes, the manuscript might have been privately copied for Gaffurius and used for his musical duties outside the cathedral as well. This suggestion would provide a convincing explanation for the specific contents of Librone [4], which includes a number of works already copied in Librone 3.

Filippi's archival research was a necessary step to collect the evidence about the copying projects undertaken by Gaffurius in collaboration with several scribes. Equally fundamental has been the contribution made by the palaeographical and codicological description undertaken by Martina Pantarotto, who systematically re-examined the codices in their materiality and meticulously inspected the contributions of each scribe. As a scholar specifically acquainted with Gaffurius's activity as writer and bibliophile, Pantarotto has been able to map the several phases of the master's own interventions on the manuscripts, particularly significant in their function of connecting the different units copied by other scribes. Her painstaking examination of the gatherings and of the distribution of the copying work among the scribes has produced substantial new results for the reconstruction of the process of making the manuscripts in its different phases. This work was also important, in the case of Librone 1, for its direct influence on the recent restoration of the manuscript.¹³ Concerning the hands of the scribes, Pantarotto's analysis clarifies matters of graphic education, establishing some temporal relationships with regard to the age and habits of the scribes involved. With just one exception, the copying of the Libroni was entrusted to scribes with an Italian graphic formation,

12. The choirbook was burned at the Esposizione internazionale held in Milan in 1906 (more references are available in the chapters of this book). The current library shelfmark of the manuscript is not Librone 4, since only fragments of it survive, but *Cassette Ratti*, nos. 34–43. For practical reasons in the present book, as well as on *GCO*, the reference to this manuscript is always given as Librone [4].

13. On the restoration of Librone 1, see Pantarotto in this volume (Ch. 2).

although the exact nature of their relationships with Gaffurius remains unascertained. It is unknown whether they were directly involved in the activities of the music chapel (as singers, for instance) or if they belonged to the Duomo environment at large. In this regard, two figures of professional scribes stand out: Scribe A, tentatively identified by Filippi with Giovanni Pietro Pozzobonello, characterized by a handwriting very much rooted in a 15th-century graphic tradition (which Pantarotto inclines to frame in a northern Italian monastic context), responsible in Librone 1 for two distinct copying blocks (as mentioned, possibly originated in different moments); and Scribe I, known for his copying of the music manuscript Codex Basevi 2441 and belonging to a younger generation of copyists with new graphical orientation and features. Recent discoveries related to this scribe made by Pantarotto have indeed provided new insights on Librone 3 in particular, opening new paths of research for explaining the inclusion of specific works copied by this scribe. Pantarotto's chapter, illuminating in its systematic analysis of the codicological and palaeographical data, is enriched by an examination of the decoration elements present in the manuscripts, useful to clarify and to complement the results of her investigation. In sum, Pantarotto's comprehensive study stands as a milestone in research on the Libroni, providing the indispensable basis for any further specific work on the manuscripts and their material features.

Another chapter by Filippi completes the exploration of palaeographical aspects of the Libroni. An accurate scrutiny of the indexes has furnished additional elements to assess the chronology of later interventions. In particular the table of the contents of Librone 1 as studied by Filippi reveals that the entries were made at different times. Ink and the traits of Gaffurius's hand suggest that the list of pieces was enriched in parallel with the additions as more pieces were added to the main corpus of the manuscript. The work of reconstruction of these different phases and of the interventions made on the bound manuscript was carried out by Pantarotto in close collaboration with Filippi, who in turn drew further methodologically relevant consequences from the study of the post-binding additions.

The palaeographical analysis with the reconstruction of at least a relative stratigraphy of the manuscripts sets the stage for exploring and evaluating various characteristics of the Libroni corpus. Cristina Cassia's contribution deals with the striking (and counterintuitive) phenomenon of the internal concordances, namely of pieces copied twice – in one case even three times – within the corpus. The careful scrutiny carried out by Cassia offers an articulate explanation for the cases of re-copying, addressing matters of revision or correction for better versions as well as relating to a specific use of one Librone or the other. Especially taking into account the later dating of Libroni 3 and [4] and the inclusion of works already present in Librone 1 or 2, Cassia suggests that pieces were re-copied because they were still being performed. This in turn raises the question whether the later

Libroni were prepared to replace the older ones or to enlarge the repertory of the chapel. Moreover, the significant – as well as especially puzzling – number of concordances between Libroni 3 and [4] leads to question the idea that the two manuscripts, probably copied in a relatively short time frame, were both destined for the cathedral. The idea that they might have been prepared for different purposes would instead provide a good explanation for the presence of the concordant pieces – in accordance with Filippi's suggestion that particularly Librone [4] was possibly in Gaffurius's private possession. Might the absence of records about these late Libroni mean that their origin or commission differed from that of Librone 1 and Librone 2? Although not dealing with this specific question, Cassia's study offers a clear picture of the intersections between the repertories of the two manuscripts and furnishes elements that may help clarify the temporal relationship between the copying of Librone 3 and Librone [4]. According to Cassia's analysis, the latter, characterized by more correct readings in concordant pieces, was copied later than Librone 3: the *terminus ante quem* for Librone 3 would be, therefore, 1507 (the date originally inscribed on Librone [4]).¹⁴ The clues leading to this conclusion are subtle and, as often happens with scholarly deductions, debatable. In fact they look at the interventions by Scribe G/J in the two manuscripts from a different angle than the one adopted by Pantarotto.

The final chapter of this book is centred on the examination and discussion of the Franco-Flemish repertory gathered in the Libroni, with particular focus on non-Milanese works (namely pieces probably composed elsewhere and later included in the Duomo manuscripts). The question regarding the paths of transmission leading to the inclusion of certain works in the Libroni is not just relevant for tracking musical exchanges and identifying possible channels for the acquisition of international repertory. In fact, it goes hand in hand with the need to map the repertory selected for the Libroni, relevant in turn for a deeper understanding of their making, their functions, and the intentions expressed in their materiality. The examination of the Franco-Flemish works and their concordances in non-Milanese sources reveals a network of the circulation of music around some main centres and enriched by the personal contacts of singers frequently moving from one place to another. The connection with Florence seems to have been particularly important for the acquisition of repertory, as do relations between the Sforza and other courts (the Este court especially). With regard to the issue of the chronology of Librone 3, some of the concordances of the Franco-Flemish works again support its dating to the early years of the 16th century (a dating fully compatible with the results of the palaeographical analysis). The discussion of this choirbook and its

14. This conclusion refers to the main corpus of the choirbook, without considering Gaffurius's later additions.

contents, produced under the French domination, in resonance with Pantarotto's research, led the author to the awareness that the selection of repertory for this Librone may have been related to the changed political conditions, namely a Francophile cultural climate. Gaffurius himself is known to have dedicated copies of his theoretical writings to French authorities, apparently being comfortably aligned with the new political situation.¹⁵ On the basis of the available elements, the question of the enigmatic inclusion in Librone 3 of Compère's motet cycle labelled 'Galeazescha' is also addressed in this contribution. With regard to this particular work a link with the figure of the condottiero Gian Giacomo Trivulzio is explored and discussed.

Overall, the single chapters collect a number of significant details to allow a new assessment of the Libroni in a historical perspective with regard to their Milanese environment and on broader background of the contemporary production of polyphony. Internal analysis, archival research in connection with palaeographical evidence, and comparison of sources doubtless have opened new paths of investigation for these remarkable manuscripts. The title of the book, *Reopening Gaffurius's Libroni*, emblematically points to the ultimate purpose of the work accomplished by the 'Polifonia sforzesca' team condensed in this publication: the aim of reopening the discussion of these valuable and in many respects unique manuscripts, creating a solid basis for further studies and circumstantiated investigations. Much remains to be done for the future, especially with regard to Gaffurius's music, decidedly understudied in its peculiarities and barely explored in the context of his Milanese career, as well as to the activities and contacts of the many persons, alongside the scribes, involved in the life of the cathedral chapel and of its master.¹⁶ The Libroni thus will need to be opened and reopened again in order to disclose new knowledge to modern eyes and furnish fresh insights on their contents and materiality. They still can offer clues on many unknown aspects of the musical and cultural life of Renaissance Milan, and undoubtedly conceal stories that await discovery.

15. In this regard see Martina Pantarotto, 'Per la biblioteca di Franchino Gaffurio: I manoscritti laudensi', *Scripta*, 5 (2012), 111–17, and Adam Ferrari, 'Nuovi dedicatari per Franchino Gaffurio: La ricerca del consenso nella Milano di Luigi XII e Francesco I', *ACME*, 1 (2019), 111–20.

16. New impulse for the research on Gaffurius has been the recent publication of the volume of essays edited by Davide Daolmi, *Ritratto di Gaffurio* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2017), which, however, does not deal with Gaffurius's music. One of the few investigations of Gaffurius's compositional style can be found in Daniele Filippi, 'Text, Form, and Style in Franchino Gaffurio's Motets', in Thomas Schmidt-Beste (ed.), *The Motet around 1500: On the Relationship between Imitation and Text Treatment?* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 383–410. Concerning the Duomo chapel no specific detailed studies have been undertaken after Claudio Sartori's research (see in particular 'La cappella del Duomo dalle origini a Franchino Gaffurio', in *Storia di Milano*, ix. pt. 3, 723–48, cited in n.2).

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