

6503 pdf
CUMMINGS, A.M.
2010
p. 169-190

Musical References in Brucioli's Dialogi and Their Classical and Medieval Antecedents

Anthony M. Cummings

Among the most distinguished intellectuals of sixteenth-century Italy was Antonio Brucioli (ca. 1498?–December 5, 1566),¹ one of the first Italians to translate the Bible into his native language and thus make it accessible to contemporaries whose linguistic accomplishments were limited to the vernacular. Brucioli's translation influenced the Italian Reformation and was favored by Italian evangelicals until the early seventeenth century, when Diodati's supplanted it.² Brucioli, whose family was represented in the Florentine Priorate during the *de facto* principate of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici,³ is renowned for participating in the gatherings in the garden of the Rucellai (the *Orti Oricellari*) in Florence during the second decade of the sixteenth century⁴; Dialogo V of the first book of his *Dialogi* is actually set

¹ See, above all, Giorgio Spini, *Tra rinascimento e riforma: Antonio Brucioli*. Biblioteca di cultura 17 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1940); also Delio Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937–38): 83–102; Rudolf von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 73–74 n. 2; and R. N. Lear, "Brucioli, Antonio," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 14 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–), 480–85 (hereafter *DBI*).

² It is commonly suggested that Brucioli's translation was the first (Eric Cochrane, *The Late Italian Renaissance* [Evanston, etc.: Harper Torchbooks, 1970], 91). But see John Tedeschi, "I contributi culturali dei riformatori protestanti italiani nel tardo Rinascimento," *Italica* 64 (1987): 19–61, 32, and Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 69. On Brucioli's translation, see, further, Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 45, 69, 207–8.

³ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 13, 14 and n. 2

⁴ Felix Gilbert, "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949): 101–31; Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 7, 15.



Project
MUSE[®]

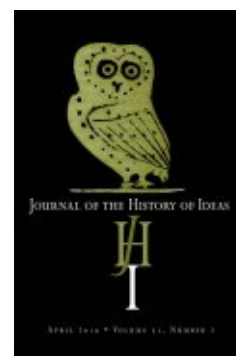
Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.

Musical References in Brucioli's *Dialogi* and Their Classical and Medieval Antecedents

Anthony M. Cummings

Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume 71, Number 2, April 2010, pp. 169-190
(Article)

Published by University of Pennsylvania Press
DOI: 10.1353/jhi.0.0077



For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jhi/summary/v071/71.2.cummings.html>

Musical References in Brucioli's Dialogi and Their Classical and Medieval Antecedents

Anthony M. Cummings

Among the most distinguished intellectuals of sixteenth-century Italy was Antonio Brucioli (ca. 1498?–December 5, 1566),¹ one of the first Italians to translate the Bible into his native language and thus make it accessible to contemporaries whose linguistic accomplishments were limited to the vernacular. Brucioli's translation influenced the Italian Reformation and was favored by Italian evangelicals until the early seventeenth century, when Diodati's supplanted it.² Brucioli, whose family was represented in the Florentine Priorate during the *de facto* principate of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici,³ is renowned for participating in the gatherings in the garden of the Rucellai (the *Orti Oricellari*) in Florence during the second decade of the sixteenth century⁴; Dialogo V of the first book of his *Dialogi* is actually set

¹ See, above all, Giorgio Spini, *Tra rinascimento e riforma: Antonio Brucioli*. Biblioteca di cultura 17 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1940); also Delio Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937–38): 83–102; Rudolf von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 73–74 n. 2; and R. N. Lear, "Brucioli, Antonio," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 14 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–), 480–85 (hereafter *DBI*).

² It is commonly suggested that Brucioli's translation was the first (Eric Cochrane, *The Late Italian Renaissance* [Evanston, etc.: Harper Torchbooks, 1970], 91). But see John Tedeschi, "I contributi culturali dei riformatori protestanti italiani nel tardo Rinascimento," *Italica* 64 (1987): 19–61, 32, and Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 69. On Brucioli's translation, see, further, Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 45, 69, 207–8.

³ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 13, 14 and n. 2

⁴ Felix Gilbert, "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949): 101–31; Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 7, 15.

in the garden.⁵ The Florentine historian, playwright, and translator Jacopo Nardi and Florentine historian Filippo de' Nerli⁶ report that he was involved in the abortive 1522 conspiracy of various members of the Rucellai group against Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (subsequently Clement VII), then his family's principal representative in Florence, although Brucioli's role was secondary.⁷ After the conspiracy was discovered, Brucioli sought refuge in Venice,⁸ where he began a remarkable period of writing and editing that culminated in the publication of the *Dialogi* and numerous other original texts and translations. Giorgio Spini's bibliography⁹ lists 74 titles. Among them (besides the *Dialogi*) are the translations of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, commentaries on the two Testaments,¹⁰ translations of such ancient Greek and Latin texts as Aristotle's *De caelo* and Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*¹¹ (of particular importance for our purposes, as we shall presently see), and editions of medieval Italian texts, notably the sermons of Savonarola; all are testimony to their author's immense learning, intellectual versatility, and scholarly productivity. By January 1523, Brucioli had left Venice for Lyons, a commercial and residential center of expatriate Italians,¹² especially Florentines. By summer 1527, Brucioli had returned to Florence. Accused of having made a profession of Lutheranism, he was newly exiled to Venice.¹³ Throughout the 1530s and 1540s, he experienced serious, frequent encounters with the Inquisition¹⁴ and sought refuge at the Calvinist court of the Duchess of Ferrara¹⁵; he died in 1566.¹⁶

The first edition of Brucioli's *Dialogi* consists of a single book, the *Dialogi (della morale filosofia)*, which is part of a larger work, begun dur-

⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. Aldo Landi (Chicago: The Newberry Library / Naples: Prismi, 1982), 71–94, for example, 72–73.

⁶ Nardi, *Istorie della città di Firenze*, ed. Agenore Gelli (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1858), 2: 74–77, Nerli, *Commentarij dei fatti . . . dall'anno 1215 al 1537* (Trieste: Colombo Coen, 1859), 2: 13–14, and Lear, "Brucioli, Antonio," *DBI*, 481.

⁷ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 30.

⁸ On events subsequent to the discovery of the conspiracy, and their implications for Brucioli, see *ibid.*, 37–39.

⁹ Spini, "Bibliografia delle opere di Antonio Brucioli," *La Bibliofilia* 42 (1940): 129–80. On Brucioli's learning, see also Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 44–45.

¹⁰ On the commentaries, see Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 222 and following.

¹¹ On the translation of Cicero, see *ibid.*, 77, 136.

¹² Tedeschi, "I contributi culturali dei riformatori protestanti italiani nel tardo Rinascimento," 32; Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 43.

¹³ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99, 104, 106.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 131. For a concise recapitulation of the biography, see Lear, "Brucioli, Antonio," *DBI*, 481–84.

ing the time he frequented the Rucellai garden, continued in Lyons, and first published in Venice in 1526.¹⁷ In subsequent editions new books were added,¹⁸ and the *Dialogi* ultimately developed into a philosophical *summa*, a systematic and encyclopedic exposition of the philosophies—moral, natural, and metaphysical:

- *DIALOGI / di Antonio Brucioli. / della morale philosophia.* (In Venetia: . . . M.D. XLIII.)
- *DIALOGI . . . della na / turale philosophia / humana.* (In Venetia: MDXLIII.)
- *DIALOGI . . . delea [sic] natv = / rale philosophia.* (In Venetia: M.D.XXX[X]V.)
- *DIALOGI . . . del = / la metaphisicale / philosophia.* (in Venetia: Impresso . . . per Alessandro Brucioli, & i frategli, nel M.D.XXXXV.)
- *DIALOGI . . . libro quinto.* (In Venetia: MDXXXVIII)

Brucioli's interlocutors in the *Dialogi* were initially given fictive classical names¹⁹; in later editions, his friends and contemporaries were cast in the roles.²⁰ Among those in Dialogo V are several *letterati*: the Florentine Luigi di Piero Alamanni, Brucioli's co-conspirator; Zanobi Buondelmonti, another co-conspirator; the patrician Florentine poet Francesco Guidetti; Hellenist Janus Lascaris; and Vicentine Giangiorgio Trissino, as well as Cosimino Rucellai, who hosted the gatherings during the 1510s.²¹ Other Rucellai group members appear elsewhere: Jacopo Alamanni, Nardi, and co-conspirator Battista della Palla in one dialogue²²; and co-conspirators Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni and Jacopo da Diacceto in another.²³ Niccolò Machiavelli figures prominently as well.

¹⁷ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 56.

¹⁸ On the subsequent editions and further books, see Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 72, 136, 138.

¹⁹ Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 89; Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. Landi, 553, and Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 137.

²⁰ Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 89; Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. Landi, 554. The third edition, on which Landi's edition is based (Landi, 554, 574), differs from the second, especially with respect to the identity of the interlocutors; Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. Landi, 571–75, 577.

²¹ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 23.

²² "On the administration of the family." Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 90–91 n. 6.

²³ "On friendship." Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 91 and n. 1.

Since Delio Cantimori's fundamental article and Giorgio Spini's equally fundamental monograph,²⁴ the *Dialogi* have been valued for the insight they afford into the discussions of the Rucellai group. Whereas Nardi and Nerli emphasized the political content of the discussions—Nerli reported that, as a result of conversation prompted by Machiavelli's composition of the *Discourses* and *Art of War*, members of the Rucellai group "fixed their minds on . . . a plot . . . to murder . . . cardinal [Giulio] and thus restore the city to free government and return liberty to the people . . ."—other authors, notably Brucioli himself, identified members whose interests were literary and philological.²⁵ The group, *grosso modo*, may thus be characterized as possessing both literary and political interests.

Overlaying both was a renewed (or persisting) Savonarolan sensibility. Indeed, Rudolf von Albertini described the "program" of the Rucellai group as a fusion of humanistic elements and Savonarolan religiosity. The Florentine communal humanistic tradition had served to resuscitate in those young Florentines a desire to demonstrate their worthiness of ancient exemplars and undertake some exceptional enterprise. That desire manifested itself against the background of a broader goal of political renewal, such as had actuated the exile of the Medici in 1494, the restoration of the Florentine republic, the ascendancy of Savonarola, and Machiavelli's political theorizing. The contemplated assassination of Cardinal Giulio would have afforded them a means of translating their ideals into reality.²⁶ In verses composed by one of the conspirators—Jacopo da Diacceto²⁷—just before his death, there are traces of both Florentine Platonism (the incorruptible mind will not even be aware of death, and God will receive, not the mind, but the "Spiritus"), and of Savonarola's devotion to the blood of Jesus.²⁸

Savonarolans and Italian Protestants played a critical role in the diffusion of ideas earlier expressed during discussions in the Rucellai gardens. They were responsible for the first Latin translations of Machiavelli's *The Prince* and its dissemination in northern Europe; Italian Protestants residing in the valleys of the Piedmont, close to the French border, contributed

²⁴ Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," passim; Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 16, 21–22, 137, 139, 142.

²⁵ See my *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), 22–29 and 35–36 and the nn.; and Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 25.

²⁶ Von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al principato*, 73–74. Also Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 33.

²⁷ On Diacceto, see Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 38–39.

²⁸ Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 91 n. 1.

to the spread of Machiavelli's ideas in *The Art of War*; and Francesco Giuntini—for a brief time an apostate from the Carmelite Order—edited the first posthumous edition of Nardi's *Historie della città di Fiorenza* (1582). In addition, the city of Lyons, host to the community of expatriate Florentines, was a vital center of publishing.²⁹

Giorgio Spini was careful to qualify, however, that the generalized Savonarolan sensibility of some members of the Rucellai group does not imply that Brucioli himself, or many of his fellows in the Rucellai group, were themselves necessarily *piagnoni*, or followers of Savonarola.³⁰ On the contrary, the Savonarolan influences were expressed more obliquely: in an aspiration toward both a greater spirituality and a more intimate contact with the divine.³¹

Twice in the *Dialogi* Brucioli offers a revealing discussion of music. The first is an exposition of a concern characteristic—as I shall argue—of one strain of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanistic thought, a concern about the potentially corrupting effects of vocal polyphony, especially on young people.³² The second is an evocation of a traditional classical, medieval, and Renaissance cosmology, ultimately dependent upon Boethius's tripartition of music into *musica mundana* (music of the spheres), *musica humana* (the accord of man's body and soul), and *musica organica* (sounding music produced by the human voice or musical instruments). Brucioli's references reflect intellectual traditions of great significance and longevity, documented by a great many texts whose provenances extend from classical Greece to *Settecento* Italy.³³ Though not uncritical in their exposition of conventional sensibilities that are typical of the particular strain of humanistic thought they represent, and dependent upon classical sources, Bruci-

²⁹ Tedeschi, 20, 22 and n. 28, 32–33.

³⁰ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 47 and n. 14, 59, 63.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

³² Scholars differ about the attitudes of Italian humanists towards vocal polyphony. For one view, which assumes a kind of antipathy toward vocal polyphony, see Nino Pirrotta, "Music and Cultural Tendencies in 15th-Century Italy," in *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 80–112 and 382–91. Cf. Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and Margaret Bent, "Pietro Emilian's Chaplain Bartolomeo Rossi da Carpi and the Lamentations of Johannes de Quadris in Vicenza," *Il Saggiatore musicale* 2 (1995): 5–16, and Bent, "Music and the Early Veneto Humanists," *British Academy Italian Lecture, Proceedings of the British Academy* 102, 1998 Lectures and Memoirs (1999): 101–30. For a response to Strohm, see the review of his book by James Haar in *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 647–48. My own position is more aligned with Pirrotta/Haar.

³³ See my *Maecenas*, 47.

oli's statements afford valuable insight into the late-Renaissance reception of such venerable doctrines.

The first such reference appears in Book I (on moral philosophy), in Dialogo V ("On the Education and Rearing of Children"), revealingly characterized by Spini as "more interesting" than the preceding *Dialogi*, given that "it brings us the lively echo of discussions effectively come to pass in the Orti Oricellari, where it is imagined that the interlocutors of the dialogue spoke: Cosim[in]o Rucellai, . . . Trissino and . . . Guidetti."³⁴

The context for the passage on music is all-important to its proper interpretation. Reason is given to man, argued Brucioli, so that he might dominate the passions and fully realize his nature. The task of education is to develop all of the gifts of human nature and indicate the proper means of doing so. Literary education alone leads the individual to act within the community, since only language makes man a sociable being.³⁵

Brucioli further articulates his belief in the political value of education in a subsequent dialogue on "the law of the republic." All education for civil and political life culminated in the learning of classical tongues: "observe what the Romans used to do and in what manner their sons were brought up, who between the fifteenth and twentieth years became skilled in the Latin and Greek languages. . . . [L]anguages . . . are like chalices in which we carry about with us the life-giving drink which we receive from the divine spirit." A mastery of languages and rhetoric (now including Italian as well as Latin) was seen as analogous to military service.³⁶

Brucioli's discussion of music reads as follows:

With respect to music . . . I would not take care that a young person thus expend his energy, because there is nothing upright and honorable about something unsupported by a foundation of words and aphorisms. Moreover, when the delicate voices and voluptuous accents, with the softening effects of harmony, reach the ears (affecting the spirit), or tempt the libidos of young souls, or cause them to be languishing in pain, or to act rashly upon the immediate impulses of the spirit, such things contaminate one's virtue not a little. And in this way, certainly, the Greeks first corrupted their upright, ancient, and laudable practices, indulging in

³⁴ Ibid., 142.

³⁵ Von Albertini, *Firenze dalla repubblica al Principato*, 74.

³⁶ Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 97–100, quoting the 1526 edition of Brucioli, *Dialogi*, fol. LIIII^v–LIIII^r.

theatrical performances, scenes, and choruses, with which they would excite the ears and spirit with various sentiments. Then this pernicious effeminacy was exported to Rome, which broke the stamina of its ancient seriousness. And one will be able to see what good our own era could hope for from similar vocal music if one considers the practices and knowledge with which those who today make a profession of it are endowed, for which I do not judge it worthy of free men, that it could be of benefit to themselves and others.³⁷

(The final section of the passage quoted is so similar to one in Jacopo Sadoletto's treatise on education as to suggest the direct influence of one on the other, or of a third on both.³⁸) The broadest context for Brucioli's remarks is formed by ancient educational practice and philosophy, specifically the tenet that children were susceptible to impression before the age of consent. As Plato suggested in *The Republic*, education, for this reason, was all-important; until adolescence, children should be shielded from corrupting influences, a view echoed by such Renaissance educators as Leon Battista Alberti and Vittorino da Feltre.³⁹ In Book I of the *Della famiglia*, Alberti suggested that "[t]he intellect . . . is like a drinking vessel; if you first fill it with bad stuff it always retains something of the taste."⁴⁰ In Anthony Graft-

³⁷ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. Landi, 89–90. "M. GIANGIORGIO. . . . E circa la musica, della quale mi domandasti, non curerei che si affaticassi il giovane, perché niente ha di retto o di decoro quella cosa che non è sostenuta da alcuna siede di parole e di sentenze. Senza che quando le delicate voci e voluttuosi accenti con moderamento di concerto toccano gl'orecchi, intenerendo l'animo, o inducano alle libidini i giovanili animi, o gli fanno languidi ne' dolori, o precipitosi a' subiti moti dell'animo, le quali cose non poco contaminano la virtù. E certamente in questo modo in prima corrompe la Grecia il suo retto costume antico e laudabile, frequentando i teatri, le scene e i cori, co' quali movevano gli orecchi e gli animi con varii affetti. Di poi fu portata questa effeminata perniciè in Roma, la quale gli spezzò i nervi della sua antiqua gravità. E che cosa possa sperare di bene questa nostra età da simile musica vocale si potrà vedere se si considererà di che costumi e di che sapienza sieno oggi dotati quegli che ne fanno professione, per la qual cosa non giudico che quella sia degna di uomo libero che a sé e a altri possa giovare." For a late sixteenth-century expression of the same sensibility, see Giovanni Bardi, "Discorso mandato a Giulio Caccini detto romano sopra la musica antica, e 'l cantar bene . . .," in Claude V. Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 78–131, esp. 112–13.

³⁸ Sadoletto on Education: *A Translation of the De Pueris Recte Instituendis*, ed. Ernest T. Campagnac and Kenneth B. D. Forbes (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 117. On Sadoletto see n. 45.

³⁹ Alison Brown, *The Renaissance* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 64–65.

⁴⁰ Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 69–70.

on's words, Alberti derived this image, with its "assumption that doctrines shape the reader's mind as easily and rapidly as liquid impregnates porous clay," from one of Horace's *Epistulae*, and he modeled the passage on Plutarch's work on the education of children.⁴¹

Brucioli's text is principally an articulation of the *effects* of music. Absent a comparably detailed articulation of the *properties* of music that provoked his concern, one can, to some extent, only conjecture as to whether Brucioli's interlocutor (and Brucioli himself?) saw no role for musical education of any type in the education of children, or, alternatively, was concerned solely to exclude music of a particular type.⁴² Spini's interpretation appears to assume the former.⁴³

On the other hand, my historical-musicologist's training and experience lead me to propose instead that Brucioli's vivid diction—his allusion to "a foundation of words and aphorisms" (indicating the fundamental significance of a text), the plural "delicate voices" (rather than the singular "voice"), and the "voluptuous accents" and "softening effects of harmony"—suggests a particular kind of music.⁴⁴ He specified vocal music as the object of his concern; he would seem to be referring to polyphonic vocal music: multilinear part music comprising two or more distinct, independent melodies stacked vertically above one another and sung simultaneously by the members of an ensemble, the melodies having been crafted by the composer to produce consonance when performed concurrently. The very close resemblance between the conclusion of Brucioli's text and that of Sadoletto further supports this suggestion, since Sadoletto is known to have condemned such music elsewhere. Sadoletto expressed his opinion on the putative defects of vocal polyphony in the *De Pueris Recte instituendis*; in a fashion and diction characteristic of the particular humanistic tradition they reflect, he wrote that if he were to teach his son about music, he would say nothing of the "common and trivial harmony, which is essentially a pandering caress of the ear with sweetness and . . . consists of hardly anything but variation and running of notes."⁴⁵

This interpretation situates Brucioli's critique within a broad context

⁴¹ Horace *Epistulae* 1.2.67–70. Grafton, *Commerce*. On the ethical and moral dimensions of education in humanist thought (Brucioli's specifically), see Cantimori, "Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism," 97–102.

⁴² See my *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist*, 50.

⁴³ Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 144–45.

⁴⁴ See my *Maecenas*, 50.

⁴⁵ On Sadoletto's views of music, see Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 14 and n. 44.

of numerous other similar criticisms of vocal polyphony. For example, Carlo Valgulio's early sixteenth-century text on music concludes with an apparent reference to polyphonic vocal music: "[today's musicians] sing almost nothing without reading from a book."⁴⁶ Valgulio's remark was a stock criticism of what was deemed an inordinate dependence upon notation, the "technology" by which polyphony was preserved and disseminated. Such critics distinguished it from the spontaneity of the performance of orally transmitted compositions in the tradition of solo-singing to the accompaniment of one's own playing of a bowed- or plucked-string instrument: viola da braccio, lyre, harp, or lute.⁴⁷

What were the concerns of Brucioli and his like-minded fellow humanists about vocal polyphony, and what advantages did solo song offer? "Two explanations," in Nino Pirrotta's words, "were usually given for this state of affairs."⁴⁸ The first was the relative unintelligibility of the text in music with multiple vocal parts; the second was that a particular melody was thought to possess an ethos, and when multiple independent melodic lines were combined simultaneously, the composition's ethical message was confused.⁴⁹ Moreover, the separate melodies had to be composed so as to take account of the pitches occurring simultaneously elsewhere; as a result, the contour of any one melodic line was deemed contrived and artificial. It lacked the naturalness and buoyancy of the contour of the vocal line in solo song, which was considered to possess an "aria," "a somewhat indefinable quality . . . alluding to the sense one had, listening to certain compositions, that they were taking place, phrase after phrase, with a coherent sense of direction, with a determination that was seeming to launch inevitably towards a precise objective with a will that was seeming to be more properly of the sonorous material than the composer."⁵⁰ The most celebrated reflection of these ideals is Castiglione's reference in *Il cortegiano* to the preferability of solo song to polyphonic performance dependent upon notation.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Charoli ualgulij Prooemiu[m] in Musica[m] Plutarchi Ad Titum Pyrrhinum*. (Brescia: Angelo Britannico, 1507), in Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, 21–30.

⁴⁷ See my *Maecenas*, 50–51.

⁴⁸ Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 248.

⁴⁹ See my *Maecenas*, 51.

⁵⁰ Pirrotta, "Maniera e riforme nella musica italiana del '500," *Poesia e musica e altri saggi* (Scandicci: La Nuova Italia, 1994), 107–28, esp. 123.

⁵¹ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 120, and my *Maecenas*, 55–51. See also Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre*, 35–36.

Solo singing was of central importance to the Italian musical Renaissance. Among its renowned practitioners was Raffaele Brandolini, who allied himself with those who argued that music's purpose was to edify rather than entertain: "[t]he lyric song . . . restrains the emotions of the soul."⁵² Brandolini assumed, like Brucioli, that vocal polyphony contaminated virtue. In addition, Brandolini's concerns entailed convictions about the content of the lyrics: he argued that Latin texts should be designed so as to have an edifying effect on the listener's moral posture.⁵³

Solo song was thus more consonant with the educational objectives of such figures as Alberti and Vittorino and deemed less likely than polyphony to produce corrupting effects. Brandolini's own *De musica et poetica* of 1513 identifies other practitioners of solo song, among them Baccio Ugolino, Bernardo Accolti, and Benedetto Gareth ("Chariteo").⁵⁴ Vincenzo Calmeta also lauded Accolti and Gareth in his account of the practices of informal antiquarian salons; Gareth addressed panegyrics to the early sixteenth-century patron Agostino Chigi, whose banquets were legendary.⁵⁵ The most celebrated of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century solo singers, Serafino Aquilano, figures prominently in Calmeta's account.⁵⁶

Brucioli's reference may also reveal the effects of those persistent Savonarolan sensibilities expressed in the program of the Rucellai group; Savonarola himself also fulminated against polyphony.⁵⁷ Indeed, such Savonarolan sensibilities, precisely because they are the expression of local tradition, furnish a more immediate, and therefore perhaps more illuminating, context for understanding Brucioli's reference, in contrast to texts that are reflective of the more generic, "pan-Italian" tradition.⁵⁸

⁵² Brandolini, *On Music and Poetry*, ed. Ann E. Moyer, with Marc Laureys (Tempe: ACMRS, 2001), xxv–xxviii, xxxiv, and 32–33.

⁵³ Moyer's introduction to Brandolini, xxv–xxviii.

⁵⁴ Brandolini, 98–99.

⁵⁵ Ingrid D. Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 87, 92, 95–96, 99–100, 242; on Chariteo's verse addressed to Agostino Chigi, see Rowland, "Some Panegyrics to Agostino Chigi," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 194–99, esp. 96, and Rowland, *Culture*, 242.

⁵⁶ Rowland, *Culture*, 92, 95–96, 99–100.

⁵⁷ On the broadest music-historical context, see Pirrotta, "Italien B., 14.–16. Jahrhundert," *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1949–68), 6: 1476–1500, esp. 1491; also Frank D'Accone, "The Singers of San Giovanni in Florence During the 15th Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14 (1961), 307–58, and, above all, Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), and the review in *Notes* (June 2000).

⁵⁸ On Savonarolan sensibilities about polyphonic music, see Rob C. Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Because much solo song existed only in oral form—because it did not require notation to be preserved, transmitted, and performed—there are relatively fewer vestiges of the tradition in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts and prints. However, Walter Rubsamen, Nino Pirrotta, James Haar, and other scholars have uncovered traces of this widespread practice. Rubsamen identified a setting for solo voice and instrumental accompaniment of the poem “Per la mia cara” by Leonardo Giustiniani,⁵⁹ himself a celebrated fifteenth-century solo singer.⁶⁰ As preserved in musical notation (and as performed and recorded), such works evince the characteristics that made them preferable to vocal polyphony: an easily intelligible text delivered by a solo singer to spare accompaniment, rather than by an ensemble of three or more vocalists singing different words at the same time (a distinguishing feature of vocal polyphony). Given the importance of language in Brucioli's educational program, he would tend to favor a technique that profiled the text and ensured its lucid delivery. In Cantimori's formulation,

With this importance assigned to language, which is conceived of not merely as a means of expression and as a “sign of our operations,” but as the vehicle of the spirit and the essence of wisdom, the interest in the Italian and Florentine language and its power of expression appears in a new light. . . . The aim of language-teaching was similar to that which underlay the training of young citizens in the use of arms, namely, to find a means of educating more and more sections of the people in virtue and thus to give the greatest possible force to the “Republic,” that is, to the State. Machiavelli was to give another interpretation of his faith in the militia and in the Italian arms; but the young men who disputed at the *Orti Oricellari* about politics and literature, language and the state, were seeking rather to infuse a sense of the moral life and of social necessities into literature and into humanism because they conceived of both as educative forces, vital not only for a select group of citizens through the medium of the classical tongues—but

⁵⁹ Walter Rubsamen, “The Justiniane or Viniziane of the 15th Century,” *Acta musicologica* 29 (1957): 172–84, esp. 177, 183; Pirrotta, “Music and Cultural Tendencies”; Haar, *Essays in Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), Chapter II.

⁶⁰ “Perla mya cara,” *Music of the Italian Renaissance for Voice, Lutes, Viola da mano, Cittern and Renaissance Guitar*. Shirley Rumsey. Naxos Early Music/Alte Musik 8.550615 (n.p. [Munich]: HNH International, 1994), track 5.

for the people whom, through the use of their own language, they wished to interest in their ideal of a public life guided by virtue.⁶¹

If Brucioli was indeed alluding to polyphony in his critique, there is an irony in his reference to the pernicious influences of music on the Greeks and Romans, since most writers of the era assumed that the music of the ancients was not polyphonic. Indeed, as Spini appears to have assumed, Brucioli may have been concerned about the effects on young people of music of any type.⁶² As Cantimori suggested, Brucioli “repeats the traditional Platonic ideas on education of a Spartan character, conducive to sobriety, obedience, and bravery in war.”⁶³ Similar ideas on education may be seen in Sassuolo Pratese’s life of Vittorino da Feltre, corroborating Cantimori’s characterization of them as typical.⁶⁴ Other members of the Rucellai group were also concerned about the consequences of particular educational practices, as seen in Machiavelli’s *Arte della guerra*.⁶⁵ Machiavelli’s concern seems to have been shared by the Rucellai group, and an awareness of that concern helps to inform a reading of Brucioli.⁶⁶ In such an educational scheme “of a Spartan character,” musical training could have little or no place. Here, too, there is an irony in that Brucioli was a friend of one of the earliest madrigalists, Francesco de Layolle.⁶⁷

However, Brucioli was heavily indebted to classical authority in designing his argument, as may be seen by juxtaposing his text and that of Cicero, and, indeed, Cicero himself reported that his arguments concur with those of Plato⁶⁸; the least extravagant interpretation is that he was adopting the themes and diction of the text(s) that served as his source material. Perhaps one should not conclude too much from Brucioli’s text about his own view of these issues.

⁶¹ Cantimori, “Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism,” 98. 100.

⁶² See my *Maecenas*, 51.

⁶³ Cantimori, “Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism,” 97.

⁶⁴ Eugenio Garin, ed., *Il pensiero pedagogico dell’umanesimo* (Florence: Giuntine and Sansoni, 1958), 530, and my *Maecenas*, 228–29 n. 181; W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators: Essays and Versions. An Introduction to the History of Classical Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897); *Humanist Educational Treatises*, ed. and trans. Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁶⁵ *Arte della guerra*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milan: Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore, 1961), 329ff.

⁶⁶ See my *Maecenas*, 228–29 n. 181.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁸ Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.38–39; Plato, *Republic* 424B–425A. Other Platonic statements of this theme appear in *Republic* 404E and 410C–D. See also Aristotle, *Politics* 1340B–1341A and my *Maecenas*, 51–52.

On the other hand, Brucioli does enlarge the allusions in the antecedent material to the characteristics of music that occasioned his concern. In the (apparent) reference to the properties of vocal polyphony, he updates the classical argument in terms of the contemporary discourse, familiar to fellow Florentine humanists of the early Cinquecento. Yet there is a sense in Brucioli's text—as in Muratori's in the eighteenth century⁶⁹—that the different elements of the topos, specifically its vivid vocabulary, might be applied uncritically to whichever musical practices were then considered vulnerable to criticism; the vocabulary was sufficiently general and flexible to serve the critique of various musical practices.

At minimum, the terms of Brucioli's argument—the images he deploys—are humanistic. Even if he was concerned about the influences of music in general and not polyphonic vocal music in particular, his understanding of music as a medium of artistic expression suggests values consonant with the humanistic tradition of which they are emblematic, and the effects about which he was concerned were those identified by other like-minded humanist writers: Sassuolo Pratese, Maffeo Vegio,⁷⁰ and Paolo Cortese.⁷¹

The second of Brucioli's important statements about music appears in an entirely different context, one appropriate to the correspondingly different philosophical sensibility it evokes.⁷² In Dialogo IV ("On the Nature of the Stars") of Book IV (on metaphysical philosophy), the renowned Florentine composer and madrigalist "Francesco dell'Aiolle" (Layolle) is cast as interlocutor together with Luigi Alamanni, Hieronimo Benivieni, Gia[m]-batista Borghini, and Zanobi Buondelmonti; Borghini proclaims Layolle a "perfetto musico." He engages in a learned disquisition on the music of the spheres, speaking easily and knowledgeably, and demonstrating a familiarity with music as it figured in the medieval *Quadrivium*. Whether the historical Layolle had such an interest in speculative music is unknown; nonetheless, Brucioli has Layolle argue a thesis concerning the music of the spheres that is consistent with Pythagorean teachings, as transmitted by Aristotle; Benivieni argues the opposing, Aristotelian, position⁷³:

⁶⁹ Lodovico Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, in Pirrotta, "Metastasio and the Demands of his Literary Environment," *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario* 7 (1982): 10–27, esp. 15, 23.

⁷⁰ Maria Walburg Fanning, ed., *Maphei Vegij Laudensis De Educatione Liberorum Et Eorum Claris Moribus . . .* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1933), 105.

⁷¹ Cortese, *De cardinaltu*, in Pirrotta, "Music and Cultural Tendencies," esp. 98 and 102.

⁷² Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 169, 179.

⁷³ Kathi Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). See esp. 11–12 and 15–16 on the Pythagorean conception, as reported in Plato *Republic* 614A–621D. On the Boethian tripartition of music, see esp.

. . . Layolle: The harmony born of these orderly motions of the stars must be wonderful, as Pythagoras affirms. And it seems to me as I look at you that you, Hieronimo, do not agree with this; aren't you also of this opinion?

Giambattista Borghini: What Francesco puts forward, as a perfect musician, is to be seen and considered, since it would be beautiful to know, and perhaps we have passed over it without thinking about it.

Hieronimo Benivieni: Francesco, I have never been of this mistaken opinion, because it is not the truth, even though many very great men have affirmed it.

Layolle: You don't acknowledge that sound is born here through the clashes and striking of the celestial bodies?

Benivieni: It's so; I do confess.

Layolle: The reasons are threefold as to why the celestial bodies near us move, and for their speed of motion and their multitude.

Benivieni: This much I'll grant you.

Layolle: Now, when the celestial bodies near us conjoin, they make a great sound, are very grand, [and] have very rapid motion, like the moon, the sun, and other stars, and the number of these celestial bodies is greater still; those bodies producing sound through their movements, it is a reasonable thing to say that they possess musical harmony created by those things that are told of in music: that rapidity of motion makes a high sound, slowness of motion a low sound, and the specific proportion of certain numbers of high pitches and low sounds are the source of harmony in them. And you have demonstrated that the larger the orbit in which the star moves, the more rapidly; and the larger the orbit in which the star moves, the farther it moves within the sphere of the fixed star, and among the planets the more it is distanced from the center; and for this [reason], according to the proportions among themselves of the elongations of the [orbits of the] stars—either from the center or from the perihelia—it is said to cause the differences in speed of motion of the stars and as a result their high and low sounds.

Meyer-Baer, 76. See also James Haar, "Musica Mundana: Variations on a Pythagorean Theme" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1960).

Benivieni: And what would you respond to whomever might ask you, and to those who affirm it [i.e., the non-existence of the music of the spheres] for whatever reason, because we do not hear it and that seems irrational: Given that we have the sense of hearing, why would such a great sound not be heard by us?

Layolle: What they themselves say about it, that is, that this celestial sound fills our hearing as soon as we are born; for this we cannot hear whatever it is, because the sense of sound exists through the silence that is its opposite. Just as when a particular taste is continually upon the tongue, one does not understand what it is because of long use, thus this sound being second nature to us from the beginning, and natural things through similarity not generating any passion (passion only being created by what is dissimilar), we say that it is impossible for us to perceive the sound of the celestial bodies because we have become habituated to it (our familiarity with it has made it seem natural to us), as happens to those who live where the Nile cascades from the high mountains with a roaring and booming that deafens those around it, who—because they are accustomed to hearing their sound—have their hearing filled with it so that they [do not] hear it, and as happens also to those who, working inside boiling furnaces, throw the metal, who—because they are used to being around a loud voice—do not hear it.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ *DIALOGI . . . del = / la metaphisicale / philosophia*, fols. 13^v–18^v; “DIALOGO QVARTO DELLA NATVRA DELLE stelle, interlocutori, M. Luigi Alamanni, M. Gia[m]-batista Borghini, M. Zanobi Buondelmonti, M. Hieronimo Beniuieni, & Francesco dell’Aiolle. [fol. 16^r] Fr[ancesco] Mirabile debbe esser il co[n]ce[n]to che di questi ordinati moti delle stelle, nasce, come afferma Pittagora. E par così à uederui che uoi Hieronimo no[n] co[n]sientiate à questo, no[n] siete uoi d’un tale parere anche uoi? Gian. Ba[tista] Da uedere, & considerare é questo che Francesco, come perfetto musico, mette aua[n]ti, che bello sia à sapere, & noi forse inconsideratamante l’ha[v]remo passato. H[ieronimo] Io Francesco, mai di questa storta opinione non fui, perche cosi non é la uerita, quantunq[ue] gra[n]dissimi huomini l’habbino affermato. Fr[ancesco] No[n] co[n]feßate uoi che qui per la collisione, & ripercotime[n]to de corpi nasce il suono? Hi[eronimo] Co[n]fesso, et é uero. Fr[ancesco] Tre sono le cause per le quali i corpi che apresso di noi si muouono, & per la uelocita del moto di quegli, & per la moltitudine di essi. Hi[eronimo] Et questo uoi co[n]fesso. Fr[ancesco] Hora i corpi che sono apreßo di noi congiunti fanno gran suono, ne sono tanto grandi, ne ha[n]no ta[n]to moto ueloce, quanto la luna, il sole, & l’altre stelle, & la moltitudine ancora di questi celesti corpi è maggiore, hora facendo suono i corpi per i loro moti è rationabil[e] cosa à dire che essi habbino co[n]fesso musicale, il che é manifesto p[er] quelle cose che si dicono nella musica, che la uelocita del moto fa il suono soaue, e la tardita del moto fa graue, & la determinata proportione, seco[n]do certi numeri di acuto, & di graue è la causa dell’armonia ne suoni.

Layolle's thesis assumes the existence of *musica mundana*, the music of the universe, the sounds produced by the planetary and stellar bodies in their orbits, analogous to the sounds produced on earth by the motions of physical objects. Such celestial sounds were not unreasonably thought to be higher or lower in pitch depending upon the orbit's size (although such an assumption is, of course, contrary to Kepler's findings as expressed in his laws of motion). Conversely, the earth, being stationary, produces no sound, as the fifteenth-century composer and music theorist Franchinus Gaffurius argued in the *De harmonia* of 1518, in his (inaccurate) quotation from the *Somnium Scipionis*.⁷⁵ Brucioli, one recalls, translated the *Somnium* and thus demonstrably was conversant with it.⁷⁶

The simultaneous sounding of the different frequencies produced by the motions of the celestial spheres produced "harmony," that consonance resulting from the concurrent sounding of two or more different pitches. That is, the contrasting orbital dimensions (or contrasting dimensions of the transparent, crystalline globes supporting the orbits) produced contrasting frequencies, further thought to be susceptible to being expressed quantitatively, as a series of numerical ratios—just as the frequency of a pitch played by a musical instrument can be quantified and related numerically to the differing frequency of a contrasting pitch. The belief in the existence

Et uoi dimostrato hauete, che qua[n]to una stella si muoue in maggiore circulo, tanto piu velocemente si muoue, & ta[n]to é maggiore il circulo nel quale si muoua la stella, quanto nella sphaera della stella fiſa maggiormente si discosta dal polo, & ne pianeti qua[n]to piu si discosta dal centro, & per questo seco[n]do la proportione delle elongationi delle stelle fra loro, ò del centro, ò de poli si dice farsi la diuersita della uelocita ne moti delle stelle & per consequente é l'acuto, & il graue ne suoni di quelle. Hie[ronimo] Et chi domandasse uoi, & questi che cosi affermano per quale causa, hauendo noi l'audito, no[n] udiamo il suono, parendo cosa irrationabile, che si gran suono non sia da noi udito, che risponderesti? Fra[ncesco] Quello che eſi medesimi ne dicono, cioé che questo celeste suono subito che noi siamo nati, ci empie l'audito, ne per questo poſiamo udire quale sia, perche il sentimento del suono è pel silenzio contrario à quello. Et come qua[n]do nella lingua si pone un continuo sapore, non si co[m]prende per il lungo uso quale sia, cosi essendoci co[n]naturale da essa generatione esso celeste suono, & no[n] recando le cose naturali p[er] la similitudine, paſione alcuna, no[n] si pate[n]do seno[n] dal diſimile, diciamo che il suono de celesti corpi co[m]pre[n]der[e] no[n] si [fol. 16^v] puote essendo impossibile, perche la consuetudine ci è fatta naturale, come auuiene à quegli che habitano la doue il Nilo da alti monti cadendo col fragore del rimbombo la gente intorno assorda, laquale per la consuetudine di udire tale suono si empie l'audito di quello, in modo che [non] l'odano, & come aduiene anchora à quegli che dentro alle bollenti fornaci traggono il metallo che pel co[n]suetu fragore, no[n] sentono cosa alcuna." Translated with assistance from Professor Linda L. Carroll of Tulane University.

⁷⁵ "Constat quidem apud Marcum Tullium (*Somm. Scip.*, V) terram (quod sit immobilis) silentio comparatam."

⁷⁶ On Brucioli's translation of the *Somm. Scip.*, see Spini, *Tra rinascimento*, 45.

of *musica mundana* explains the contemporary practice of concealing vocalists and instrumentalists from view to create the illusion that their singing and playing were *musica mundana* rather than *musica organica*. In 1589, the instrumentalists who played for the first of the *intermedii* for *La pellegrina*—the “harmony of the spheres,” specifically—were concealed from view.⁷⁷

Layolle's (and Brucioli's?) thesis was that the sounds produced by “the clashes and striking of the celestial bodies” are inaudible because we have become habituated to them from birth; Benivieni questions the validity of this traditional argument and thus reveals his position to be aligned with Aristotle's in the *De caelo*.⁷⁸ Like Brucioli's other references to music, this one, too, reflects a venerable history. The Pythagoreans had subscribed to the theory that the motion of the planets produced harmony, but although Pythagoras himself was credited with the ability to hear such cosmic harmony, its audibility by humans generally was contested by the Pythagoreans. In *Republic* 10.614b, Plato described such celestial music, but in the *De caelo* 290b, Aristotle questioned its existence.⁷⁹ So did two of Aristotle's most celebrated intellectual legatees, Thomas Aquinas and Dante Alighieri,⁸⁰ as well as Roger Bacon.⁸¹ Three late fifteenth-century music theorists—Bartolomeo Ramos de Pareja, Nicolaus Burtius, and Johannes Tinctoris—invoked the theme with contrasting results. In the *Musices opusculum* of 1487, Burtius explicitly addressed the concept of *musica mundana* as entailing relations among the heavenly bodies and agreed with Cicero's

⁷⁷ James M. Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 152, and the liner notes to *Una “stravaganza” dei Medici: Intermedi (1589) per “La pellegrina.”* Taverner Consort. Taverner Choir. Taverner Players. Andrew Parrott. EMI Digital CDC 7 47998 2 (Cologne: EMI Records Ltd., 1988), 16. See also Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre*, 208–36.

⁷⁸ Aristotle *De cael.* II/9, in Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, trans. J. L. Stocks (<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle>). There are other ancient Greek witnesses, among them Nicomachus, *Enchiridion* and Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica*. See Nicomachus, trans. in *Greek Musical Writings*, ed. Andrew Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2 (“Harmonic and Acoustic Theory”), 251–53, and Aristides Quintilianus, trans. *ibid.*, 520.

⁷⁹ See Ann E. Moyer, *Musica Scientia: Musical Scholarship in the Italian Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), esp. 18–19, 44–45, 57, 64–65, 86, and 147.

⁸⁰ Pirrotta, “Dante *Musicus*: Gothicism, Scholasticism, and Music,” in *Music and Culture*, 13–25 and 368–73, esp. 22, and Pirrotta, “‘Ars musica,’” *Musica e arte figurativa nei secoli X–XII, 15–18 ottobre 1972* (Todi: Presso l'Accademia Tudertina, 1973), 225–40, 229.

⁸¹ Bacon, *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1859), 230; and Thomas Adank, “Roger Bacon's Auffassung der Musik,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 35 (1978): 33–56, esp. 44 and n. 63.

Somnium Scipionis that it was inaudible. Ramos's discussion of *musica mundana* and *humana* in the *Musica practica* (1482) is much like Burtius's.⁸² In his *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, on the other hand, Tinctoris adopted the Aristotelian position and identified some of those who had earlier addressed the issue.⁸³ In the sixteenth century, Luigi Dentice denied that the music of the spheres was in fact genuine, audible music.⁸⁴

Brucioli was certainly familiar with Aristotle's *De caelo* since he had translated it.⁸⁵ It is also possible that he knew Macrobius, especially since Macrobius invoked the image of the Nile that also appears in Brucioli, but is absent in other classical texts (Aristotle, Censorinus).⁸⁶ Interestingly, the Nile may also have been invoked by Augustine, whose contribution to this matter is asserted in a gloss on Boethius transmitted in two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale; the gloss amplifies the references to the music of the spheres and cites St. Augustine specifically.⁸⁷ Though it is highly unlikely that Brucioli could have known of this gloss, there may be independent textual witnesses to Augustine's invocation of the image. On the other hand, images in Aristotle invoked by Brucioli may document his converse with Aristotle's text, as well, perhaps, as with an intermediary.⁸⁸ The likeliest source was Boethius, *De institutione musica*; Boethius assumed its existence and, like Brucioli, acknowledged its inaudibility.⁸⁹

To conclude: Brucioli's *Dialogi* are particularly important for their embodiment of the two principal contemporary understandings of music as a

⁸² Moyer, *Musica Scientia*, 44–45, 57.

⁸³ *The Art of Counterpoint*, ed. Albert Seay (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1961), 2–3 and 14; and Moyer, *Musica Scientia*, 64–65.

⁸⁴ Moyer, *Musica Scientia*, 147.

⁸⁵ Aristotile, *De celo et mondo*, tradotto di greco in volgare italiano. Per Antonio Brucioli (In Venetia: per Bartholomeo detto l'Imperadore et Francesco suo genero., M.D.LII.)

⁸⁶ "Ambrosii Theodosii Macrobiani viri clarissimi et illvstris Commentariorvm in somnium Scipionis," Macrobius, Franciscus Eyssenhardt recognovit (Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1868), 587–88. Censorini *De die natali liber ad Q. Caerellium accedit anonymi cuiusdam epitoma disciplinarum (fragmentum Censorini)*, ed. Nicolavs Sallmann (Leipzig: BSB B.G. Teubner, 1983), 22–23.

⁸⁷ I have not been able to identify the relevant text by Augustine. On the gloss on Boethius, see Roger Bragard, "L'Harmonie des Spheres Selon Boece," *Speculum* 4 (1929): 206–13, 207 n. 6 and 208.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, trans. Calvin M. Bower, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9, nn. 35–36, where various sources are identified (in addition to those quoted here: Pliny, *Naturalis historia*; Cicero, *De re publica*; Plutarch, *De musica*; Ptolemy, *Harmonica*).

⁸⁹ *Boetii De institutione musica libri quinque*, ed. Godofredus Friedlein (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1867), 177–225, esp. 187–88; trans. *Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, selected and annotated by Oliver Strunk (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 84.

phenomenon, first as the study of quantitative relationships, second as part of language and poetics.⁹⁰ The two passages on music in Brucioli's writings are therefore related, as the following attempts to elucidate.

In the more developed philosophies that Brucioli invoked briefly, earthly *musica organica* is but a reflection of *musica mundana*. Implicit in the cosmology assumed in the writings of Gaffurius is the conviction that harmony is universal, and earthly harmony only one of its manifestations.⁹¹ In Pirrotta's words, "Music is not merely the perceptible concord of sounds, but the deep inner relationship by which the poetic world reflects some fragment of the transcendent harmonious world of cosmic truths, and is thus an echo of the universal harmony."⁹² In the *Timaueus*, which Gaffurius invoked, terrestrial music was thus understood as a means of maintaining the harmony of the human soul, which is shared with the cosmic soul⁹³; for Plato, the "ethical task of music consists in bringing the music of man into accord with its cosmic prototype"⁹⁴ through an interaction of the three constituents of music that Boethius was to identify. Man was thought to be governed by the same musical harmonies as the heavens; he was healthy when in the same state as the universe, harmonious ratios serving to create a balanced character, dissonant ones to destabilize it.⁹⁵

In later authors such as Cicero and Macrobius, such an understanding produces ecstatic doctrines, where music serves as a means of transporting the soul to heaven⁹⁶: apprehended by the earthly musician in an ecstasy, universal harmony moves him to attempt to replicate it on earth.⁹⁷ Giovanni Pico's construction in the "Oration on the Dignity of Man" reads accordingly: "if through moral philosophy the forces of our passions have by a fitting agreement become so intent on harmony that they can sing together in undisturbed concord, then we shall be stirred by the frenzy of the Muses and drink the heavenly harmony with our inmost hearing."⁹⁸

⁹⁰ See Moyer, introduction to Brandolini, xvii.

⁹¹ Palisca, *Humanism*, 17 and 161, and Gaffurius, *De harmonia*, Chapter 16. See also Gary Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 94; as Tomlinson observes, Gaffurius's sentence is borrowed from Francesco Burana's translation of Aristides Quintilianus *De musica* III, 9. On Gaffurius's treatment of *musica mundana*, see Moyer, *Musica Scientia*, 86.

⁹² *Music and Theatre*, 211.

⁹³ Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, 72.

⁹⁴ Edward A. Lippman, *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 92, as quoted in Tomlinson, 72.

⁹⁵ See Brown, *The Renaissance*, 66.

⁹⁶ Tomlinson, *Music in Renaissance Magic*, 72.

⁹⁷ Palisca, *Humanism*, 17.

⁹⁸ Ficino, et al., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Ernst Cassirer et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 234.

Pico's formulation is consistent with period convention, in that it assumes an interaction of *musica humana* and *mundana* and thus the fulfillment of music's ethical task as articulated in the *Timaeus*. His reference to "our inmost hearing" is a further expression of Neoplatonic thought: under such circumstances, one's hearing is not literal, physical, or material in the terrestrial sense, but metaphysical (or metaphoric).

For Marsilio Ficino, as for Pico, vocal and instrumental music affected the listener's spirit and was therefore a means of ameliorating the disturbances of body and soul and lifting the mind toward the divine and the intelligible⁹⁹; the fact that Ficino subscribed to Pythagorean theories concerning the existence of the music of the spheres suggests the importance to him of the practice of *musica organica* as the means of effecting spiritual communion with universal harmony.¹⁰⁰ Gaffurius's quotations from the *Timaeus* borrow verbatim from Ficino's translation, which documents Ficino's role in the transmission of Platonic theses to participants in the contemporary Italian music-theoretical discussion.¹⁰¹ As for the kind of music Ficino thought appropriate, his own predilections are clear: he performed solo songs to the accompaniment of his own string playing in the palaces of the Medici¹⁰² and was likened to Orpheus by Lorenzo "the Magnificent."¹⁰³ And the continuing alignment of Cinquecento humanists' positions with such late Quattrocento Neoplatonic theorizing is suggested by Brandolini's treatise.¹⁰⁴

Underlying such "ecstatic" doctrines are Greek assumptions about the "unreality of matter."¹⁰⁵ In the *Timaeus* and similar texts, that which is "intelligible" (as contrasted with "sensible") is what the ancient Greeks

⁹⁹ Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Music and Learning in the Early Italian Renaissance," *Renaissance Thought II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 142–62, esp. 158 and n. 61, and Grafton, *Commerce*, 113.

¹⁰⁰ See Kristeller, "Music and Learning," 159, quoting Ficino's treatise *De Rationibus Musicae*.

¹⁰¹ The first edition of Ficino's *Platonis opera omnia* had been published in 1484. On Gaffurius's verbatim citations, see Palisca, *Humanism*, 191 and 193–95, and also Palisca, 18 and 168.

¹⁰² Kristeller, "Music and Learning," 157 and n. 57.

¹⁰³ In Lorenzo's *Altercazione*: "Pensai che Orfeo al mondo ritornasse." Kristeller, "Music and Learning," 157 and n. 57, and "The Scholastic Background of Marsilio Ficino," *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1956), 35–97, esp. 53 and n. 86, quoting from Lorenzo's *Opere*, ed. A. Simioni (Bari: Laterza, 1914), 2: 41.

¹⁰⁴ Brandolini, *De music et poetica*.

¹⁰⁵ M. B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science," *Mind*, New Series 43 (1934): 446–68.

called “form” (as contrasted with “matter”). Of the two elements of which all is composed—the formal and the material—the material contributes no positive element to its being; the form is the essence. The object is nothing more than a realization of form; its materiality is the source of nothing beyond that which it derives from its form. Thus the ancient Greek philosophy of nature was one in which the two elements of form and matter—the former intelligible, the latter sensible—are distinguishable in the actual world. The intelligible is the basis of all being, whereas matter accounts only for the impoverishment of being; intelligent comprehension of form is sufficient for understanding the actual world, whereas sense experience represents no addition to such understanding, only deficiency of it. Natural objects are artifacts (or analogous to artifacts) in this respect: they are nothing but an embodiment of form.

Now, earthly *musica instrumentalis* is the material, and in some sense is merely illusory; celestial *musica mundana* is the formal: “the effects exerted by sounding music on . . . most human beings . . . were but consequences of a superior truth, weakly reflected by the opaqueness of man-made music.”¹⁰⁶ Incarcerated within the human body during its earthly sojourn, the soul is incapable of full communion with the cosmic soul, and therefore incapable of full engagement with celestial harmony, a belief invoked as late as the Elizabethan age, in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, 5.1.60–65.¹⁰⁷

Given such a cosmology, the kind of *musica organica* practiced and experienced on earth was critical to achieving “accord with its cosmic prototype.” Brucioli's concerns expressed in the *Dialogi*, I argue, were partly concerns about the relative ineffectiveness of certain *kinds* of music with respect to its “ethical task”: polyphonic vocal music, lacking an adequate “foundation of words and aphorisms” and distinguished instead by the “softening effects of harmony,” would have been deemed a less effective means of transporting the soul to heaven than solo singing, where the words would have been intelligible and communicated forcefully, and the ethical purposes of the music thus fulfilled. The chancellor of Florence, Carlo Marsuppini, wrote in 1446: “Pythagoras and those who listened to him . . . attributed separate sirens to every sphere. . . . [T]he heavens and all the elements relate to each other according to a certain numerical harmony. . . . [S]ome people have believed that human souls form a har-

¹⁰⁶ Pirrotta, “Dante *Musicus*,” especially 20.

¹⁰⁷ *The Complete Works*, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968).

mony. Thus Plato . . . laid down strict instructions . . . about the type of music that should be played, since he believed that if you change the music, you change the ethos of the city.”¹⁰⁸

Brucioli's engagement with both understandings of music is suggestive of the encyclopedism of his *Dialogi*, of his attempt at a *summa*. Such permits him to incorporate both the consideration of the potential power of language as set to music and its effects on listeners, and the consideration of *musica mundana*, with its traditional resonances of harmonious relationships susceptible to being expressed numerically. The interaction between the two understandings is located in a belief about the special efficacy of a particular kind of music as the human soul's means of achieving communion with its cosmic prototype, the metaphysical, macrocosmic analog to the actual material sounds produced on earth, that microcosmic *musica organica* or *instrumentalis* that was considered so imperfect a reflection of celestial harmony.

Lafayette College.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *The Renaissance*, 111–12.