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Introduction

The Composer and His Works

In Girolamo Parabosco we are confronted with an enigmatic figure: a musician remembered more for his literary works than his musical ones, a church organist best known for bawdy stories and low comedies. The few surviving details of his biography are preserved primarily in two life-and-works studies, both published centuries after his death.¹ Born around 1524 in Piacenza to organist Vincenzo Parabosco, he settled in Venice around 1541, where he became a pupil of Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490–1562), the renowned composer, teacher, and maestro di cappella at the Basilica di San Marco. In 1551 Parabosco became first organist at San Marco under Willaert's directorship, one of the premier musical posts in Italy at that time. He held that position until his death in 1557 at approximately thirty-three years of age.

During his years in Venice, Parabosco became deeply enmeshed in the city's vibrant cultural life, associating himself with noted literary figures, artists, patrons of the arts, and other musicians. Some scholars suggest that it is Parabosco who is depicted in the painter Titian's *Venus and the Organist* series, though others disagree.² Whether or not Parabosco is

Titian's organist, he and Titian certainly moved in the same orbit among the luminaries of Venetian culture. Parabosco's literary acquaintances included Andrea Calmo, Lodovico Dolce, Anton Francesco Doni, Pietro Aretino, and Gaspara Stampa. He was well known to influential patrons of cultural and intellectual circles such as Domenico Venier and Antonio Zantani. In 1546, when he was roughly twenty-two years of age, Parabosco's sole known published book of music, the *Madrigali a cinque voci*, was issued by Venetian music publisher Antonio Gardano. Parabosco dedicated the volume to Ruberto Strozzi, a Florentine exile who frequented Venice during the 1530s and 1540s and was an active patron of the madrigal, particularly those of Parabosco's fellow Willaert associate Cipriano de Rore.³ Parabosco rubbed shoulders with other significant disciples of Willaert, including Gioseffo Zarlino, Nicola Vicentino, Baldassare Donato, and Perissone Cambio.

Parabosco's real-life participation in intellectual circles in Piacenza and Venice likely prompted his appearance as a fictive interlocutor in Anton Francesco Doni's *Dialogo della musica* of 1544, a volume of alternating music and prose dialogue purportedly portraying the mix of conversation and musical performance that might take place within an academy. Doni notes

1. Giuseppe Bianchini, *Girolamo Parabosco: Scrittore e organista del secolo XVI* (Venice: A Spese della Società, 1899); Francesco Bussi, *Umanità e arte di Gerolamo [sic] Parabosco: Madrigalista, organista, e poligrafo* (Piacenza: Edizioni del Liceo Musicale "G. Nicolini," 1961). See also Giorgio Fiori, "Novità biografiche su tre letterati piacentini del Cinquecento: Lodovico Domenichi, Luigi Cassoli, Girolamo Paraboschi," *Bollettino storico piacentino* 97 (2002): 73–111; "Nota biografica," in *Diporti: Girolamo Parabosco–Gherardo Borgogni*, ed. Donato Pirovano (Rome: Salerno, 2005), 34–40; and Courtney Quaintance, *Textual Masculinity and the Exchange of Women in Renaissance Venice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

2. Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal*, trans. Alexander Krappe, Roger Sessions, and Oliver Strunk, 3 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949; repr. 1971), 1:182; Nino Pirrotta, "Commedia dell'Arte and Opera," *Musical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1955): 308, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mq/XLI.3.305>; Pirovano, ed., *Diporti*, 36; and Manuel Bertolini, "L'affetto e la sua misura: Le autorità

ecclesiastiche e la regolamentazione della musica nel Cinque e Seicento" (doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi di Milano, 2013), 103–4. H. Colin Slim asserts a more likely image appears in a seventeenth-century copy of a lost sixteenth-century portrait; cf. *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online (<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>), s.v. "Parabosco, Girolamo," by H. Colin Slim, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.20862>. See also Katherine A. McIver, "Pastoral Pleasures, Sensual Sounds: Paintings of Love, Music, and Morality in Sixteenth-Century Italy," in *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern (New York: Routledge, 2002), 285–98.

3. Richard Agee, "Ruberto Strozzi and the Early Madrigal," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36, no. 1 (1983): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/830952>; and Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 24–46. Feldman translates Parabosco's dedication on page 44.

Texts and Translations

The texts of this edition retain the poetry as it appears in the original part-books except where minor adjustments in spelling, including the use of diacritics, capitalization, and punctuation, are needed to conform to modern usage. Ampersands have been replaced with “e” or “et” as appropriate. Where possible, sixteenth-century printed collections of poetry have been consulted for guidance in matters of punctuation, particularly Pietro Bembo’s *Le cose volgari di Messer Francesco Petrarca* (Venice: Aldo Romano, 1501). The three poems by Baldassare Castiglione, Fortunio Spira, and Giovanni Mozzarello have been compared against *Rime diverse di molti eccellentiss. auttori nuovamente raccolte* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito di Ferrarii, 1545), which also contains a dozen of Parabosco’s poems. Lodovico Martelli’s *Le rime volgari* (Rome: Antonio Blado d’Asola, 1533) has been consulted for “Ultimi miei sospiri” and “Non dispregiat’i miserelli amanti.” Modern editions consulted include Girolamo Parabosco, *Il primo libro dei madrigali, 1551*, ed. Nicola Longo (Rome: Bulzoni, 1987), which contains his “Chi vuol veder” (no. 1), “Si ch’io l’ho detto” (no. 2), and “Niuna sconsolata” (no. 18); and Robert M. Durling, ed. and trans., *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems: The “Rime sparse” and Other Lyrics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976). Examination of these coeval and modern sources reveals minor variants between the conventional versions of the poems and Parabosco’s settings thereof. These discrepancies, while intriguing, are not addressed here.

1. *Chi vuol veder in un soggetto solo*

Chi vuol veder in un soggetto solo
Quant’ha di bell’il Ciel tutto raccolto
Miri, bella Medea, il vostro volto.

Potrà veder in voi mirando fiso
Quella gratia gentil, quella beltate
Che si porta qua giù dal paradiso,
Udirà le dolcissime parole che fan firmar
Il sole con tal soavitate
Percuoton l’aria e con sì dolci accenti;
Vedrà quegli occhi più ch’il sol lucenti.
Degni ben veramente c’huom per loro
Gradisca ogni martoro.
O donna di beltate sola fra noi,
Contento son languir sempre per voi.

Whoever wishes to see in a single subject
how Heaven has gathered all beauty
must gaze, beautiful Medea, upon your face.

Gazing intently, he will be able to see in you
that amiable grace, that fairness
that is carried down here from paradise,
will hear the sweetest words, which cause
the sun to stand fast with such soft delight,
strike the air, and with such sweet accents;
will see those eyes that are brighter than the sun.
So truly worthy that for them any man
would appreciate every torture.
O lady of beauty, singular among us,
I am content to languish evermore for you.

Girolamo Parabosco

1. Chi vuol veder in un soggetto solo

Girolamo Parabosco

Cantus

Chi vuol ve- der in un sog- get- to so- -

Altus

Chi vuol ve- der

Tenor

Chi vuol ve- der in un sog- get- - to so-

Quintus

Chi vuol ve- der in un sog- get- to so- - lo quan-

Bassus

Chi vuol ve- der in un sog- get- to so-

5

C

-lo quan- t'ha di bel- l'il Ciel tut- to rac- col-

A

in un sog- get- to so- lo quan- t'ha di bel- l'il Ciel tut- to rac- col-

T

-lo quan- t'ha di bel- l'il Ciel tut- to rac- col-

Q

-t'ha di bel- l'il Ciel (quan- t'ha di bel- - l'il Ciel) tut- to rac-

B

-lo quan- t'ha di bel- l'il Ciel tut- to rac- col- -

4. Solo e pensoso

Francesco Petrarca

Cantus *[Prima pars]*

So- lo_e pen- so- - so, so- lo_e pen- so- so_in

Altus

So- lo_e pen-

Tenor

So- lo_e pen- so- so, (so- lo_e pen- so- so,)

Quintus

So- lo_e pen- so- so in più_____ di- ser- ti

Bassus

So- lo_e pen- so- so, (so-

6

C

più di- ser- ti cam- pi, (so- lo_e pen- so- so_in più di- ser- ti

A

-so- so, so- lo_e pen- so- so_in più di- ser- ti cam- - pi

T

so- lo_e pen- so- so_in più di- ser- ti cam- pi vo

Q

cam- pi vo mi- su-

B

-lo_e pen- so- so,) so- lo_e pen- so- so_in più di- ser- ti cam- pi

19. Non dispregiat' i miserelli amanti

a 6 voci

Lodovico Martelli

Cantus

Altus

Tenor

Sextus

Quintus

Bassus

6

C

A

T

Sx

Q

B

Non di- spre- gia- - t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man-
 Non di- spre- gia- - t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti,
 Non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- - ti, i
 Non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti, i mi- se-
 Non di- spre- gia- - t'i mi- - se- rel- - li_a- man-
 Non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti, <non di- spre- gia-
 - ti, non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man-
 non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- - ti ch'es-
 mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti, <i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- - ti>
 -rel- li_a- man- ti, non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti ch'es-
 -ti, non di- spre- gia- - t'i mi- - se- rel- li_a- man- ti ch'es-
 -t'i mi- se- rel- li_a- man- ti,) non di- spre- gia- t'i mi- se- rel-

Critical Report

Sources

Principal Source

Verona. Accademia Filarmonica di Verona (I-VEaf, Fondo musicale antico, n. 191/II).

Parabosco | Madrigali a cinque voci di | Girolamo Parabosco discipulo di M. Adriano novamente da | Lui composti & posti in luce. | A cinque voci | In Venetia apresso di | Antonio Gardane. | M. D. XXXXVI. | Cantus

This is the sole surviving complete set of partbooks of Parabosco's *Madrigali a cinque voci*.

Additional Sources

Further concordant sources for several madrigals are listed within the critical notes below.

London. The British Library (GB-Lbl, K.3.f.1). Bassus partbook only.

Modena. Biblioteca Estense (I-Moe, G345.7). Bassus partbook only.

Bologna. Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna (I-Bc, U.33). Altus and Tenor partbooks only. Altus incomplete (missing nos. 1–3 and 6 entirely, as well as the prima pars of no. 7).

Editorial Methods

The order of the madrigals follows that of the original printed collection. Numbers and text incipits have been added tacitly. Latin designations for voice parts and formal divisions are preserved, while Italian terms, which appear only occasionally in the source, have been translated into Latin for consistency.

The madrigals are transcribed using modern clefs, substituting treble clef for G2, C1, and C2 clefs, G-tenor clef for C4 clefs, and bass clef for F3 and F4 clefs. An exception to the latter rule occurs in nos. 12 and 13, where the quintus, originally in F3 clef, is transcribed in G-tenor clef to match the tenor, the range of which is nearly identical. In the altus, C3 clef has been transcribed in treble clef unless its lower range requires

more than two ledger lines, in which case G-tenor clef has been used. G-tenor clef has also been used for the altus in nos. 4, 11, 13, and 15 to keep the entire vocal range on the staff. In the tenor, sextus, and quintus, C3 clef is always rendered in G-tenor clef. The original clef, key signature, mensuration sign, initial note value, and initial rests are given as incipits at the beginning of each madrigal. The range of each voice is shown following the modern clef, key signature, and meter.

The original mensuration ¢ has been rendered as $\frac{4}{2}$. Barlines have been introduced for the convenience of the modern user. Original note values have been retained except where the introduction of barlines requires that notes be split and joined with a tie. The final longa of a pars is transcribed either as a single breve with a fermata or a series of tied breves to accommodate continued motion in other voices. Pitches originally joined together in a ligature are indicated with a solid horizontal bracket. Coloration within a ligature is indicated with an open bracket.

Accidentals placed on the staff are present in the original partbooks unless enclosed in brackets. The symbol \times has been tacitly replaced with sharps or naturals as warranted by modern practice. Bracketed accidentals on the staff have been supplied to repeat accidentals as needed due to the addition of modern barlines, to correct typographical omissions, or to dispel ambiguity. All implicit performer-added accidentals needed to provide cadential leading tones, to avoid false relations within or between voices, or to adhere to the *una nota supra la* convention are indicated above the pitch to which they apply.

The original partbooks generally exhibit careful and clear text underlay. In cases in which more than one possibility for underlay might be chosen, this edition follows the conventions of the Willaertian school as codified by Zarlino, to which Parabosco adheres in most unambiguous cases.¹ These conventions include

1. Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes: Part Four of "Le Istitutioni Harmoniche," 1558*, trans. Vered Cohen, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 97–99.