

LUTENISTS ON PARNASSUS: REPUTATION OF RENAISSANCE LUTENISTS

Philippo Oriolo da Bassano's poem *Monte Parnaso* was written in imitation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, between ca. 1519 and 1522, probably in Milan. In a manner similar to Dante's great epic, it offers Oriolo's real or imaginary encounters with poets, poet-musicians (*improvisatori*), musicians, philosophers, painters, and sculptors from mythology and antiquity up to the time of its composition. The cantos concerning musicians mention more than one hundred theorists, composers, singers, and instrumentalists.¹ The last are presented according to their instruments –wind players are followed by performers on keyboards, and then string players. Of special interest here is the inclusion of seventeen lutenists; they are, in his order, "Orbo," "Piero bon," "Gian maria hebreo," "Fra gusino," "Agnol testa grossa," "Spinacino," "Fra Daro," "Gian tedesco," "Il Genovese," "Marco aquillan," "Gian ambrosio," "Il Zoppino," "Francesco melanese," "Bombello," "Bernardin veronese," "Gianetton," and "Gioan antonio vindella Trivigiano."² This list provides a rare insight into the reputation these players had achieved in Italy around 1520. We must, of course, bear in mind the danger of drawing conclusions from only one source, however authoritative it may seem, because we cannot be certain that the author transmitted the contemporary consensus (if it existed) and what kind of criteria he might have used.³ From our knowledge of the well known lutenists listed by Oriolo it seems that he may have placed them in chronological order. Aside from Orbo and Pietrobono, others were seemingly active around the turn of the sixteenth century or during its first two decades. There could be many candidates for the musician named "Orbo" as it is possible that rather than being a surname, it indicates a blind person. The only clue Oriolo provides for us is that Orbo was a contemporary of or slightly older than Pietrobono - that is if we interpret Oriolo's information that "Orbo [was] the first, and the second was that famous Pietro Bono of Ferrara" as indicating the chronological existence of these two lutenists. If so, it fits well with the comparison Johannes Tinctoris made in his *De inventione et usu musicae*, written in Naples, ca. 1480-1483, between "Orbus ille germanus" and "Pietrobono of Ferrara" as the virtuoso lutenists of his time.⁴ Tinctoris described Orbus in the past tense and Pietrobono in the present. Tinctoris regarded Orbus as one of the pre-eminent lutenists who developed the polyphonic manner of lute playing. I have suggested elsewhere that this Orbus is identical with the blind

¹ H. Colin Slim, "Musicians on Parnassus," *Studies in the Renaissance* 12 (1965), pp. 134-63.

² For the section on the lute, see *ibid.*, pp. 145-47 (text), 152-53 (English translation).

³ Sigismondo Fanti, *Triumpho di fortuna* (Venice, 1527), that mentions musicians and includes woodcuts depicting some of them, is unavailable to this study. One of the woodcuts depicts "Pierbobo"; see H. Colin Slim, "Dosso Dossi's Allegory at Florence about Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43 (1990), pp. 43-98, especially Figure 3.

⁴ For the relevant passages, see Karl Weinmann, *Johannes Tinctoris (1445-1511) und sein unbekannter Traktat "De inventione et usu musicae"*, 2nd ed. (Tutzing, 1961), p. 45; and Anthony Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De inventione et usu musicae*," *The Galpin Society Journal* 3 (1950), p. 24.

German organist Conrad Paumann who is proven to have been a virtuoso lutenist.⁵ Paumann was born *ca.* 1410 and died in 1473, while Pietrobono was active between about 1440 and 1497.⁶ If the identification is correct, it may be significant that Oriolo used Paumann's epithet rather than his surname. In fact, he may never have even known Paumann's name. The Italian documents concerning Paumann's visit to the Mantuan court in 1470 always addressed him "Orbo" or "Orbo sonatore da Monacho."⁷ and these epithets may have been the only designations the Italians knew of him.

There are several reasons why the presence or absence of surviving music should not be regarded as a barometer to measure the degree of social acceptance or musical talent of lutenists in the early sixteenth century. First, the surviving lute works are not necessarily representative of the most "famous" lutenists of the time. Second, the preservation of lute books and manuscripts is in part the result of chance survival.⁸ Third, the publisher's decision in choosing his author may not solely have depended on the musician's popularity or musical skill. Fourth, some lutenists may have avoided passing their music to others to guard the secret of their lute styles. And fifth, the monophonic improvisatori style of lute playing was still in use at the time Oriolo was completing his poem. Giovanni Angelo Testagrossa, for instance, acquired his fame during the last decade of fifteenth century and the first two decades of the sixteenth century. His fame lingered on to the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, as for example when the publisher Francesco Marcolini in his 1536 lute book equated Testagrossa with Giovan Maria Hebreo and Josquin des Prez. At the time Oriolo was completing his *Monte parnaso*, Testagrossa was working for the Gonzagas in Mantua.⁹ The question remains whether Testagrossa ever took up the polyphonic manner of lute-playing, or if his solo lute works were never written down, or else his compositions were simply lost.

The lute books published in Italy prior to Oriolo's poem are Ottaviano Petrucci's six lute volumes published between 1507 and 1511 (two books by Francesco Spinacino, one book by Giovan Maria Hebreo, one book by Joan Ambrosio Dalza, and two books by Franciscus Bossinensis),¹⁰ together with Andrea Antico's frottola arrangements for voice and lute of about

⁵ Hiroyuki Minamino, "Conrad Paumann and the Evolution of Solo Lute Practice in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of Musicological Research* 6 (1986), pp. 291-310.

⁶ For Pietrobono's biography, see Lewis Lockwood, "Pietrobono and the Instrumental Tradition at Ferrara in the Fifteenth Century," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 10 (1975), pp. 115-33; and *idem.*, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 95-108.

⁷ It is not known in what reason Paumann is mentioned as a superb lutenist, not as an organist, the profession for which Paumann was largely famous during and after his life time.

⁸ Chris Goodwin, "What Proportion of Lute Music Has Come Down to Us?," *Lute News: The Lute Society Magazine* 53 (2000), pp. 9-10.

⁹ For Testagrossa's biography, see William F. Prizer, "Lutenists at the Court of Mantua in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 13 (1980), pp. 9-12; and Arthur J. Ness, "Testagrossa, Giovanni Angelo," *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

¹⁰ Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto libro primo* (Venice, 1507) [facsimile edition by Minkoff (Geneva, 1978)]; Francesco Spinacino, *Intabulatura de lauto libro secondo* (Venice, 1507) [facsimile edition by Minkoff (Geneva, 1978)]; Giovan Maria, *Intabulatura de lauto libro tertio* (Venice, 1508) [now lost]; Joan Ambrosio Dalza, *Intabulatura de lauto libro quarto* (Venice, 1508) [facsimile edition by Minkoff (Geneva, 1980)]; Franciscus Bossinensis, *Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato per*

1520.¹¹ Three lutenists mentioned in Oriolo's cantos, "Gian maria hebreo," "Spinacino," and "Gioan ambrosio," are most likely identified as Giovan Maria Hebreo, Francesco Spinacino, and Joan Ambrosio Dalza respectively. When Oriolo wrote the poem, Giovan Maria was already famous in some parts of Italy.¹² As early as 1510, a papal secretary and humanist Paolo Cortese praised Giovan Maria's lute-playing in his treatise, citing him as one of the virtuosi who perfected the new manner of polyphonic lute playing.¹³ Moreover, the news of his elevation to the rank of a count by Leo X in 1513, (an extraordinary treatment for a musician and a Jew, even in an age when nepotism was an everyday practice) may well have travelled throughout Italy. On the other hand, the absence of surviving documents for the biography of Spinacino and Dalza may indicate that they were not widely recognized figures in their life time. In fact, nothing is known about Spinacino's life. Even the laudatory poem by Cristoforo Pierio Gigante (Gigas) included in Spinacino's libro primo gives us an impression that Gigante had hardly any personal knowledge of the lutenist.¹⁴ The poet's prime concern appears to have been to make a pun on the word "spina," implicating the thorn's pricking and the lutenist's plucking the strings.¹⁵ From

cantar e sonar col lauto libro primo (Venice, 1509) [facsimile edition by Minkoff (Geneva, 1977)]; and Franciscus Bossinensis, Tenori e contrabassi intabulati col sopran in canto figurato per cantar e sonar col lauto libro secundo (Fossombrone, 1511) [facsimile edition by Minkoff (Geneva, 1982)]. These volumes are listed and described in Howard Mayer Brown, Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600: A Bibliography (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), as items 1507/1, 1507/2, [1508]/1, 1508/2, 1509/1, and 1511/1, respectively.

¹¹ Andrea Antico, Frottole de messer Bortolomeo [sic] Tromboncino & de Misser Marchetto Cara con tenori & bassi tabulati & con soprani in canto figurato per cantar & sonar col lauto (Venice, ca. 1520), f. 2. For the volume, see Francesco Luisi, "Le frottole per canto e liuto di B. Tromboncino e M. Cara nella edizione adespota di Andrea Antico," Nuova rivista musicale italiana 10 (1976), pp. 211-58; for facsimile, see *idem.*, Frottole di B. Tromboncino e M. Cara 'per cantar et sonar col lauto', Istituto di paleografia musicale (Rome: Edizioni Torre d'Orfeo, 1987). Antico's mockery on Bossinensis's lute books is discussed in Hiroyuki Minamino, "A Monkey Business: Petrucci, Antico, and the Frottola Intabulation," Journal of the Lute Society of America 26-27 (1993-1994), pp. 96-106.

¹² For Giovan Maria's biography, see H. Colin Slim, "The Keyboard Ricercar and Fantasia in Italy, c. 1500-1550 with Reference to Parallel Forms in European Lute Music of the Same period" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 383-91; Gian Luigi Dardo, "Contributo alla storia del liuto in Italia: Johannes Maria Alamus e Giovanni Maria da Crema," Quaderni della Rassegna musicale: la nuova musicologia italiana 3 (1965), pp. 143-57; H. Colin Slim, "Gian and Gian Maria, Some Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Namesakes," The Musical Quarterly 57 (1971), pp. 563-68; Anthony M. Cummings, "Gian Maria Giudeo, Sonatore del Liuto, and the Medici," Fontes artis musicae 38 (1991), pp. 312-18; and Hiroyuki Minamino, "Dream of a Dream: Giovan Maria's Extra-Musical Career," The Lute: The Journal of the Lute Society 37 (1997), pp. 9-16.

¹³ Paolo Cortesi, Cardinalatu libri tres (Castel Cortesiano, 1510), Book II, f. 73; for the relevant passages, see Nino Pirrotta, Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 99-100 (text), 103 (translation).

¹⁴ The poem is reproduced and translated in Henry Louis Schmidt III, "The First Printed Lute Books: Francesco Spinacino's Intabulatura de lauto, libro primo and libro secundo (Venice: Petrucci, 1507)" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1969), vol. 1, p. vi. Gigante was chosen because he was also a native of Fossombrone as Petrucci. On Spinacino, see also Lyle Nordstrom, "Spinacino, Francesco," New Grove Online, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

¹⁵ Discussed in Schmidt, "The First Printed Lute Books," vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

the table of contents headed “Tavola de la p[re]sente opera co[m]posta per lo excele[n]te musico e sonatore de lauto” included in Petrucci’s fourth lute book, we can infer that Dalza was from Milan.¹⁶ Dalza is one of the earliest lutenists known to have styled himself “musico,” the term often reserved for the composers of polyphonic vocal music.¹⁷ Judging by the inclusion of easy pieces at the beginning of his lute book, Dalza may have been an instructor of lute.¹⁸ It is therefore conceivable that Oriolo’s mention of Spinacino and Dalza was the result of his acquaintance with Petrucci’s publications rather than his personal encounter with the lutenists or his acceptance of an established opinion.¹⁹

Marco dall’Aquila’s petition of 1505 to the Signory of Venice to print lute tablature indicates that he was a mature player by then, and the use of tablature suggests he was already working in the new polyphonic style. In the petition, Marco points out that the purpose of publishing his lute book is not to waste the compositions he had composed.²⁰ Although the earliest datable lute works by him appear in the lute books published in 1536, side by side with the lute works of Francesco da Milano, Marco appears to have been a contemporary of the Petrucci lutenists and a precursor of Francesco when Oriolo wrote his poem.²¹ Marco’s fame at the time Oriolo wrote the poems is attested by a letter that concerns the instrumentalists’ knowledge in music theory. In a letter of 1524 to Marc Antonio Cavazzoni, a music theorist Giovanni Spataro expressed his disapproval over his fellow music theorist Pietro Aaron’s consulting Marco on the use of equal temperament for fretting the lute. Although Spataro regarded Marco as “a worthy lute player” and “a man of high intelligence,” Spataro doubted the credibility of the lutenist’s knowledge on music theory. He wrote: “it seems strange to me that a theoretical thinker should go in search of the light of understanding to a mere instrumentalist.”²² Ironically, Cavazzoni, the addressee of Spataro’s letter, was an organist.

¹⁶ The table is reprinted in Claudio Sartori, Bibliografia delle opere musicali stampate da Ottaviano Petrucci (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1948), p. 141.

¹⁷ For the term, see Edward E. Lowinsky, Music in the Culture of the Renaissance and Other Essays (Chicago and London, 1989), pp. 40-66, esp. p. 54. Dalza may have intentionally used the term “musico” to make clear that he was well versed in music theory.

¹⁸ On Dalza’s biography, see Joan Wess/Victor Anando Coelho, “Dalza, Joan Ambrosio,” New Grove Online, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

¹⁹ On the other hand, it is conceivable that Oriolo knew or heard about Dalza who lived in Milan where Oriolo wrote Monte parnaso.

²⁰ The privilege is reproduced and translated in Arthur J. Ness, “The Herwarth Lute Manuscripts at the Bavarian State Library, Munich: A Bibliographical Study with Emphasis on the Works of Marco dall’Aquila and Melchior Newsidler” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 350-52.

²¹ Idem., “Dall’Aquila, Marco,” New Grove Online, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

²² The text is reproduced and translated in Edward E. Lowinsky, Music in the Culture of the Renaissance and Other Essays, edited and with an Introduction by Bonnie J. Blackburn (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 687-88; and Bonnie J. Blackburn, Edward E. Lowinsky and Clement A. Miller, eds., A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 318-21.

When the Italian publishers resumed the printing of lute tablature in 1536 after the lacuna of almost fifteen years, their focus was largely on the work of Francesco da Milano, whose work they presumably regarded as the most sought out by the public and as the most profitable to print. This sentiment is expressed in the preface by Francesco Marcolini who devoted his first lute book entirely to the works of Francesco. Marcolini stated that Francesco da Milano, Alberto da Ripa, and Marco dall'Aquila were the champions of the new generation of lute players.²³ An eyewitness of Francesco's performance before Pope Clement VII and Isabella d'Este in Rome in 1526 reports his opinion of the lutenist's playing as "having no equal to others."²⁴ Francesco's reputation as a virtuoso lutenist had already become a stock for cynicism towards the untalented enthusiasts. Pietro Aretino about 1526-1527, several years after Oriolo wrote his *Monte parnaso*, commented the playing of such lutenists by saying that one of them plays like Francesco.²⁵ Oriolo's inclusion of Francesco among the famous lutenists of his time places his early fame when he was in his early twenties. He was in the employ of Pope Leo X at least from 1519 when he was about twenty-four years of age and stayed at the papal court until shortly after the sack of Rome in 1527.²⁶ The lutenists such as Pietrobono, Testagrossa, Spinacino, Dalza, and Giovan Maria precede Francesco in Oriolo's list. It is hard to determine whether Oriolo regarded Francesco as a follower of the Petrucci generation or a founder of the new style of lute playing as expressed by Marcolini.²⁷

The inclusion of Francesco da Milano in Oriolo's list prompts us to question why he did not mention Alberto da Ripa and Pietro Paulo Borrono whose lute compositions were often published side by side with Francesco and whose musical activities appear to have coincided with his.²⁸ Did Alberto and Pietro Paulo reach their musical maturity later than Francesco? Pietro Aretino's comedy *Il Marescalco*, written about 1526-1527, includes Alberto in a list of the distinguished composers and instrumentalists of the time and alludes to his virtuosity in playing alongside that of Francesco.²⁹ At the time, Alberto was likely to have been in the employ of

²³ Francesco Marcolini, *Intabolatura di liuto ... di M. Francesco da Milano* (Venice, 1536), f. 1v; the preface is translated in Ness, "The Herwarth Lute Manuscripts," vol. I, pp. 346-47.

²⁴ For the document, see Prizer, "Lutenists at the Court of Mantua," pp. 26, 34.

²⁵ The relevant passage is translated in H. Colin Slim, "Francesco da Milano (1497-1543/44): A Bio-Bibliographical Study," *Musica disciplina* 18 (1964), p. 75.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68. Herman-Walter Frey, "Regesten zur päpstlichen Kapelle unter Leo X. und zu seiner Privatkapelle," 9 (1956), p. 56, suggests that a "musici milanesi" who is cited in the papal records in 1516 may also refer to the lutenist. Francesco's close connection with Milan, the city where his birth place was quite close in distance, might have played a role in his popularity in Milan where Oriolo wrote *Monte parnaso*. For Francesco's biography, see Slim, "Francesco da Milano," pp. 63-84; and Franco Pavan, "Francesco Canova and his Family in Milan: New Documents," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 24 (1991), pp. 1-13.

²⁷ For a possible influence of Giovan Maria over Francesco, see Hiroyuki Minamino, "A Battle of Old and New: Giovan Maria Hebreo and Francesco da Milano at the Papal Court," *Lute Society of America Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2000), pp. 7-9.

²⁸ See Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed*, for the printed works of those lutenists.

²⁹ The list is reproduced in Jean-Michel Vaccaro, ed., *Oeuvres d'Albert de Rippe* (Paris, 1972), vol. 1, p. XIII.

Ercole Gonzaga, Cardinal of Mantua.³⁰ His performance before Henry VIII on 12 February 1529 and his employment at the court of Francis I three months later imply that he was an outstanding performer at least in the second decade of the sixteenth century, but may indicate that he did not acquire his fame until after Oriolo's poems were written. We can infer from what little we know about Pietro Paulo's biography that his main activity as musician began later than that of Francesco and Alberto.³¹

Oriolo's exceptionally lengthy praises of "Gianetton" and "Gioan Antonio vindella Trivigiano" markedly contrast with his mere listing of other lutenists, which prompts us to assume that Oriolo had first hand, perhaps personal knowledge of these two lutenists. Oriolo expends fifteen lines describing Gianetton's superb playing on the seven-course lute.³² Yet even Gianetton's performance, which astonished the audience, merely serves as a preparation for Giovanni Antonio Vindella of Treviso's arrival at the scene. Oriolo's admiration of Vindella, expressed through Gianetton's mouth, rested on the instrument the lutenist used and his dexterity on this unusual lute. Vindella's seventeen stringed lute must have consisted of nine courses, the lower eight courses doubled with the top course single strung, a disposition which appears not to have been widely used until the beginning of the seventeenth century.³³ Although no biographical information concerning Giovanni Antonio Vindella is available, he may have been a member of a music dynasty. A lutenist named Luigi Vindella was born in 1520.³⁴ Antonio Gardano published Giovanni Francesco Vindella's *Intavolatura di liuto* in Venice in 1546 and styled him as "Francesco Vindella Triviggiano."³⁵ Before 1557 Andrea Calmo referred to one

³⁰ For Alberto's biography, see Robert W. Buggert, "Alberto da Ripa: Lutenist and Composer" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 1-11; Vaccaro, *Oeuvres d'Albert de Rippe*, vol. 1, pp. XI-XIX; and Victor Anando Coelho, "Ripa (da Montova), Alberto da," *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

³¹ No biographical data on Pietro Paulo's birth date and his early years are available, therefore unable us to assert whether he was a contemporary of Francesco and Alberto. Michel Brenet, *Notes sur l'histoire du luth en France* (Turin, 1899), pp. 9-10, identifies a "Pierre Paul dit l'Italian" who is listed in 1531 and 1534 at the court of Francis I as Pietro Paulo Borrone, the identification disputed by Henry Prunières, "La musique de la chambre et de l'ecurie sous le règne de François Ier (1516-1547)," *L'année musicale* 1 (1911), p. 225, who points out that the function of this Pietro Paulo was not that of musical but of courtly. Alessandra Bollini, "L'attività liutistica a Milano dal 1450 al 1550: Nuovi documenti," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 21 (1986), pp. 51-60, offers new documents on Pietro Paulo's activities between 1542 and 1564 and points out that he was a courtier not a professional lutenist.

³² A music theorist Giovanni del Lago was often addressed by his Venetian nickname "Zonetto"; see Lowinsky, *Music in the Culture of Renaissance*, p. 686. For del Lago, see Blackburn, Lowinsky, and Miller, *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians*, pp. 127-42. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina whose nickname was "Giannetto" cannot be Oriolo's Gianetton, for Palestrina was born between 1525 and 1526; see Lewis Lockwood, "Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da," *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 5/2/2008). Palestrina played the lute, proven in a letter by a Mantuan courtier.

³³ See Diana Poulton, "Lute Stringing in the Light of Surviving Tablatures," *The Lute Society Journal* 6 (1964), pp. 20-21.

³⁴ See Slim, "Musicians on Parnassus," p. 162.

³⁵ See Brown, *Instrumental Music*, item 1546-17.

Alvise [Castellin] da Treviso as a celebrated lutenist,³⁶ and he may be identical with Aluige [Alvise?] Vindella whose compositions appear in the so-called Siena Lute Book.³⁷

A physical characteristic, the name of the native town or country, or a combination of both, was often the preferred form for naming musicians.³⁸ Once an epithet was applied to a musician, the new nickname often became the only designation widely accepted by his contemporaries. Therefore, the identification of “il Geovese,” “il Zoppino,” and “Bernardin veronese” needs extreme caution unless there is sufficient supporting information on the lutenists concerned. “Il Geovese” may refer to “Genovese” or “Genoese,” in other words, a person from Genoa. One “Zenovese tenorista” is listed in the Ferrarese documents in 1491-1494, 1496 and 1500 as Pietrobono’s *tenorista* until 1497, the year Pietrobono died.³⁹ Sigismondo Fanti in his *Triumpho di fortuna* of 1527 mentions a musician called “Genovese.”⁴⁰ The first name “Bernardo” was common, and there were numerous musicians from Verona.⁴¹ So the candidates for “Bernardin veronese” are a “M[aestro] Bernardo [who] arrives alone and on foot in Mantua on July 22, 1537” from Florence (“sonatore fiorentino”),⁴² a “Bernardo N.” to whom the intabulations of French chansons by Sermisy and Sandrin are ascribed in the lute manuscripts collected by Hans Heinrich Herwarth (MS 266 and MS 1511d),⁴³ and Bernardino Balletti whose *Intabolutura de lauto* was published by Antonio Gardane in Venice in 1554.⁴⁴ “Zoppino” may refer to a person (and perhaps particularly a youngster) who was slightly lame. Bernardino Aldrati, who worked at the court of Mantua at least from 1510 to 1525, was called “il Zoppino” and is almost certainly identical with a “Zoppino da Luca” who played the lute and viol at the

³⁶ See Nino Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 466-67, n. 10 and n. 11.

³⁷ See Dinko Fabris, *Review of Tablature de luth Italienne dit Siena Manuscrit (ca. 1560-1570)* in *Journal of Lute Society of America* 20-21 (1987-1988), p. 166, n. 3.

³⁸ Conrad Paumann, who was called “Orbus ille germanus,” “Orbo,” or “Cecco,” comes to mind.

³⁹ See Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, pp. 324-27.

⁴⁰ See Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” p. 158.

⁴¹ “Bernardin veronese” is unlikely to be identical with the famous player of wind instruments, Bernardino Pifaro of Verona, for Oriolo mentions him among the players of wind instruments; see Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” pp. 150, 156. For Bernardino, see Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal* (Princeton, 1971), v.1, pp. 42-43; and Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, pp. 55-56. There was Bernardo Pisano (1490-1548), composer, singer and classical scholar. He is not known to have been a lutenist. See Frank A. D’Accone, “Pisano, Bernardo,” *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008).

⁴² See Bertolotti, *Musici alla corte dei Gonzaga*, p. 35; and Ness, “The Herwarth Lute Manuscripts,” v.1, p. 304, n. 36, for the quotation.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, v.1, p. 304, n. 36. Ness postulates that “N” may stand for Newsidler.

⁴⁴ For Balletti’s book, see Brown, *Instrumental Music*, item 1554-1. At the time of the publication, Balletti was at Piacenza perhaps in the employment of Count Onorio Scotto; see Jeanette B. Holland, “Balletti, Bernardino,” *New Grove Dictionary*, v. 2, p. 91; *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 5/2/2008).

same court about 1523.⁴⁵ Cosimo Bartoli in his *Ragionamenti accademici*, published in Venice in 1567, mentions a Zoppino da Luca (il Cavaliere).⁴⁶ Several other musicians with the name “Zoppino” appear to have been active later in the sixteenth century.⁴⁷

The appearance of numerous German musicians or their descendants in Italian documents from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries makes it difficult to separate one from another, for the documents often refer them simply by their place of origin such as “Tedesco,” “Alamanus,” or “Germanus.”⁴⁸ Adding to the confusion created by these unspecific designations, we find some instances of German musicians whose first name was Johannes (with various spellings and Italian adaptation and equivalent such as “Giovan,” “Giovanni,” “Joane,” or “Zuane”), which usually constitutes the only description of the person concerned. Therefore, the identification of “Giovan Tedesco” mentioned by Oriolo is hampered by the lack of any further information to distinguish one Giovan Tedesco from another. There was a “magistro Ianni Bertoldo de Basilea” who is listed in the Milanese court record of 1463.⁴⁹ Galeazzo Maria Sforza in his letter of 1469 mentions a payment to “maestro Janes.”⁵⁰ These documents may refer to “magistre Johanes Todesco, sonatore de laguto” recorded in 1475.⁵¹ The designation “maestro” in the Milanese documents of 1463, 1469 and 1475 indicates that this Johannes Tedesco must have had already been established his fame as a master lutenist when he appeared in the Milanese records in the third quarter of the fifteenth century and might have been

⁴⁵ For the biography of Aldrati, see Antonio Bertolotti, *Musici alla corte dei Gonzaga in Mantova dal secolo XV al XVIII* (Bologna, 1969), p. 26; William F. Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes: The Frottole of Marchetto Cara* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980), Documents 45, 54, 75, 137; and *idem.*, “Lutenists at the Court of Mantua,” pp. 14-15.

⁴⁶ See James Haar, “Cosimo Bartoli on Music,” *Early Music History* 8 (1988), p. 64 (text), p. 72.

⁴⁷ A “Ludovico Milanese Zoppino” was a composer, organist and singer. According to William F. Prizer, “Ludovico Milanese [Ludovico de Mediolano; Zoppino,” *New Grove Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 7/10/2008), he was born about 1480 in Milan and died in Lucca after 1537. A “Gieronimo Zoppino da Ferrara” was an organist about 1540; see Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” p. 163. This organist is not identical with Bernardino Aldrati as claimed in Prizer, “Lutenists at the Court of Mantua,” p. 14, n. 58, for their first names differ. But he may be identical with the organist “Il Zoppino” mentioned by Antonfrancesco Doni in his *La seconda libreria* of 1551; see Slim, “Francesco da Milano,” p. 77. One Zoppino “a celebrated judicious musician” was in charge of selecting the music and tuning the instrument” for the performance of comedy *Gli ingannati* at the court of Naples in 1545; see Donna G. Cardamone, “The Debut of the *canzone villanesca alla napolitana*,” *Studi musicali* 4 (1975), p. 74, n. 24. Anthony M. Cummings, *The Politicized Muse: Music for Medici Festivals 1512-1537* (Princeton, 1992), p. 113, suggests this musician to be identical with Bernardo Pisano.

⁴⁸ A great number of German lutenists appear to have been active in Italy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Paolo Cortese mentions that Giovan Maria Hebreo and Balthasar were both surnamed “Germanus.” Pietrobono’s mother was a daughter of one “Todesco,” implicating Pietrobono’s lineage as a partial German descendant.

⁴⁹ Reproduced in Bollini, “L’attività liutistica a Milano,” p. 40.

⁵⁰ Reproduced in Guglielmo Barblan, “Vita musicale alla corte sforzesca,” *Storia di Milano* 9 (Milan, 1961), p. 806.

⁵¹ Reproduced in Edmund Vander Straeten, *La musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle* (New York, 1969), v. 6, p. 27; and Bollini, “L’attività liutistica a Milano,” p. 41.

too old for Oriolo's Gian todisco. Several other lutenists with the name "Gioan todisco" were active in the early sixteenth century; a "Magnio Todesco sonador da lauto" was fired on 12 June 1496 by one of the Scuole Grandi in Venice,⁵² a "Zuan todisco" was cited as one of the famous lutenists in a manuscript poem by a Sicilian student living in Venice about 1500,⁵³ and a "Todischin" is cited as a lutenist by Sigismondo Fanti in his *Triumpho di fortuna*, published in Venice in 1527.⁵⁴ There is no evidence that these documents refer to the same man or to Oriolo's "Gioan Tedesco." According to Paolo Cortese in his *De cardinalatu* of 1510, Giovan Maria Hebreo's surname was "Germanus."⁵⁵ Yet Giovan Maria should be omitted from the consideration, for Oriolo lists him as "Gian maria hebreo," the epithet often attached to him.⁵⁶

Attempts to identify "Fra Gusino" and "Fra Daro" have so far been unsuccessful, partially due to the uncertainty of interpreting the abbreviation "fra."⁵⁷ In the list of organists, Oriolo mentions one "fra Francesco dal orto." The identity of this musician has not been established.⁵⁸ It is likely that "fra" (with the small letter f) is an abbreviation of "frate." On the other hand, Oriolo uses "Francesco" (with the capital f) for the first name "Francesco."⁵⁹ If this is the way Oriolo distinguished between "frate" and "Francesco," it is conceivable that "Fra Gusino" and "Fra Daro" (both with the capital f) could be Francesco Gusino and Francesco Daro, respectively. Oriolo lists them in the early group of lutenists after Giovan Maria and before Dalza, implying that they were contemporaries of the Petrucci lutenists. One Petrucci lutenist not mentioned in Oriolo's list is Franciscus Bossinensis (i.e., Francesco from Bosnia). Could he be one of them? One may speculate that Oriolo did not regard Bossinensis as much of a lutenist on the basis of the format of his two lute books, collections of frottola arrangements for voice and lute supplemented with a number of short lute recercari. Andrea Antico published a lute book similar in format to Bossinensis's two lute books about the time Oriolo completed his *Monte Parnaso*, and Oriolo listed Antico as composer.

During the first two decades of the sixteenth century, there were number of lutenists working in Venice. The religious confraternities known as Scuole Grandi, for instance, regularly maintained singers and instrumentalists for providing music for the ceremonies and processions.⁶⁰ The standard instrumental ensemble consisted of lute, harp, and viola (or

⁵² See Jonathan Glixon, "Lutenists in Renaissance Venice: Some Notes from the Archives," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 16 (1983), p. 26.

⁵³ Slim, "Gian and Gian Maria," p. 562.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 562-63.

⁵⁵ Paolo Cortese, *De cardinalatu* (Castrum Cortesium, 1510), Book, II, ff. 73-73v; see Nino Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 99-100.

⁵⁶ Oriolo mentions a "Gian Maria" among the players of wind instruments.

⁵⁷ A "Justinus Doro" was a singer at the Vatican about 1500; see Slim, "Musicians on Parnassus," p. 157.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 160. Slim, *ibid.* p. 152, regards "Fra Gusino" and "Fra Daro" as friars, thus translating them as "Friar Gusino" and "Friar Daro," respectively.

⁵⁹ Ottaviano Petrucci used "Fra Spina" to indicate Francesco Spinacino.

⁶⁰ See Denis Arnold, "Music at a Venetian Confraternity in the Renaissance," *Acta musicologica* 37 (1965), pp. 62-72; and Jonathan Glixon, "Music at the Venetian Scuole Grandi, 1440-1540," *Music in*

violette.)⁶¹ The Scuole Grandi employed several lutenists; for instance, Sebastian de Nichollo “da lauto” (1482-1497), Magnio Todesco “sonator da lauto” (1496), Martin Barbier of San Luca (1497, 1505-1517), Bartolomeo de Mafio “sonador de lauto,” Zuan Andrea da Forli Barbier of Santa Marina (1507), Zanmaria da Riva “sonador de lauto” (1518), and Zerolino da Cumicher “sonador da lauto” (1518-1553). Some of them were even members of the establishments; Alexandro Conzavari de Zuan “lauter,” Andrea de Martin “dai lauti,” Marco dall’Aquila, Domengo de Zuane “sonador de lauto” (1516), and Toma Cipriolo “da lauto.”⁶² None of these lutenists, except Marco dall’Aquila, can securely be connected with the lutenists in Oriolo’s list.

Did Oriolo include in the section on lute players musicians who were not primarily lutenists, or did he have his own criteria about the kind of instruments the musicians he cited played? A case in point is “Augustino da ferrara” whom Oriolo included in the list of the singers to the *lira*. In fact, Fanti’s *Triumph di fortuna* includes a woodcut of “Augustino da ferrara” with a *lira*.⁶³ Other sources, however, document him as a virtuoso lutenist. Writing on 30 January 1500 from Insbruck, Erasmo Brasca reported to Francesco Gonzaga that Agostino Alamano was a virtuoso lutenist in the service of Emperor Maximilian I (“Magistro Augustino Allamano sonatore de lauto . . . uno eccellente sonatore et virtuoso.”)⁶⁴ This Agostino arrived at Mantua in that year.⁶⁵ According to Alfonso d’Este’s letter of 15 February 1505 to Isabella d’Este, Agostino had moved to Ferrara by then.⁶⁶ This suggests that Oriolo’s Augustino da ferrara the *lira* player is identical with Agostino Alamano the virtuoso lutenist.

Some of the lutenists Oriolo listed have not yet been identified.⁶⁷ Does this indicate that he invented some of them? The complete lack of biographical data on some of the lutenists prompts us to consider what kind of criteria Oriolo used to determine their fame. There must have been numerous lute players who were only known in the areas where they lived, and Oriolo

Medieval and Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources, and Texts, edited by Iain Fenlon (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 193-208.

⁶¹ This instrumentation is depicted in Gentile Bellini’s painting of procession in the Piazza San Marco completed in 1496; see Howard Mayer Brown, “On Gentile Bellini’s *Processione in San Marco* (1496),” International Musicological Society, Report of the twelfth Congress Berkeley 1977, edited by Daniel Heartz and Bonnie Wade (Kassel, 1981), pp. 649-56. Their possible repertoires include the polyphonic settings of hymns and polyphonic laude.

⁶² See Glixon, “Lutenists in Renaissance Venice,” pp. 15-26.

⁶³ See Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” p. 155. It is not clear what kind of instrument Oriolo denoted with the term “lira.” The term was used either generically or specifically in the Renaissance to denote the classical Greek instrument.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Bertolotti, Musici alla corte dei Gonzaga, p. 25. See also Prizer, Courtly Pastimes, p. 10.

⁶⁵ See idem., “Lutenists at the Court of Mantua,” p. 17.

⁶⁶ See ibid. A “Fra Augustino” was an organist at San Nicolo in Treviso about 1520; see Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” p. 159.

⁶⁷ I have been unable to identify “Bombello.” It is unlikely that he is identical with a humanist Raffaello Bombelli; see Slim, “Musicians on Parnassus,” p. 156.

had no way of knowing them all.⁶⁸ The shortness of Oriolo's list of lute players in his *Monte parnaso*, on the other hand, raises a suspicion regarding the credibility of his knowledge of contemporary musicians and of his concern to include all the representatives of famous lutenists in Italy at the time. A particular case in point is Vincenzo Capirola whose surviving lute works tells us the excellence of his skill in composition and, assuming from his lute pieces, his technical virtuosity on the lute. Yet his name is absent from Oriolo's list. We may, however, defend Oriolo's omission from what we know of Capirola's life which indicates his status as a gifted amateur dilettante. He does not appear to have held an official music position in Venice during the second decade of the sixteenth century and may not have been widely known by his contemporaries.⁶⁹ Another lutenist who should be on Oriolo's list is Balthasar Germanus. A "Maestro Baldassarre Todisco sonatore di liuto" appears in an account book listing musicians working at the court of Naples between 1480 and 1490.⁷⁰ This lutenist may be identical with a "Balthasar Germanus" whom Paolo Cortesi in his *De cardinalatu*, written about 1510, mentions as one of the virtuosi in the polyphonic manner of lute-playing. Cortesi wrote that the new manner of lute-playing was "first established by Balthasar and Johannes Maria [Giovan Maria Hebreo], both surnamed Germanus."⁷¹ The prefix "maestro" in the Neapolitan documents suggests Baldassarre Todisco's musical accomplishment and the high reputation he acquired in the last two decades of the fifteenth century and continued to hold in the first decade of the sixteenth.

Oriolo's list of reputed lutenists in Italy around 1520 is an important source of information from a critical point in the lute's history when polyphonic playing was becoming widespread and written lute music available in both prints and manuscripts. It enables us to assess what kind of criteria he employed to choose his list of players. From what we know today his credibility seems in general to be acceptable as an accurate reflection of the time, for the inclusion of Conrad Paumann, Pietrobono, Giovan Maria Hebreo, Giovanni Angelo Testagrossa, Marco dall'Aquila, and Francesco da Milano corresponds well with our notion of the virtuoso lutenists of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His acquaintance with Ottaviano

⁶⁸ Oriolo or his source appears to have ignored lutenists who were born or working in other countries and concentrated on lutenists who were working in Italy, perhaps the exception of Conrad Paumann who briefly visited Mantua in 1470. Therefore, it is not surprising that both Arnolt Schlick and Hans Judenkünig, who published *Tablaturen* in Mainz in 1512 and *Introduction* in Vienna about 1515-1519 respectively, are not mentioned at all.

⁶⁹ Chicago, Newberry Library, Case MS VM C.25: *Composizione di meser Vincenzo Capirola, gentil homo bresano*. Facsimile edition in Orlando Cristoforetti, ed., *Archivum musicum collana di testi rari*, 39 (Florence: Studio per edizioni scelte, 1981); the entire volume is edited in Otto Gombosi, ed., *Composizione di meser Vincenzo Capirola: Lute-book (circa 1517)* (Neuilly-sur-Seine: Société de Musique d'Autrefois, 1955).

⁷⁰ See Isabel Pope and Masakata Kanazawa, *The Musical Manuscript Montecassino 871: A Neapolitan Repertory of Sacred and Secular Music of the Late Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1978), p. 69, n. 3, the document taken from Erasmo Percopo, *Barzellette napoletane del Quattrocento* (Naples, 1893) [this work is unavailable to this study]; and Allan W. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 10. Atlas, *ibid.*, p. xii, discusses the destruction of "cedole della tesoreria aragonese." That Tinctoris did not mention Baldassarre Todisco in the *De inventione* might point either that Baldassarre Todisco's cultivation of the polyphonic manner lute playing took after the compilation of the *De inventione* or that Baldassarre came to the Neapolitan court after the compilation of the treatise. On this point, see Hiroyuki Minamino, "The Solo Lute Practice in Italy before Petrucci" (in preparation).

⁷¹ Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy*, pp. 96-112.

Petrucchi's lute books, although published more than a decade previously, shows that he was abreast with the situation in lute publication in Italy before 1520s. It may be that those from his list who are unidentified at present were not composers of lute music, but most likely virtuoso performers. Their performance style may have consisted of participating in instrumental ensemble pieces, accompanying the singers, improvising on the monophonic melodies, or playing pieces written by other lutenist-composers. The absence of written music by them may have caused their anonymity today. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Oriolo provided a valuable list for us to assess who were regarded as the famous lutenists, either as lutenist-composers or performers, in early sixteenth-century Italy.

LUTENISTS IN ORIOLO' LIST

Oriolo

Orbo
 Piero bon
 Gian maria hebreo
 Fra gusino
 Agnol testa grossa
 Spinacino
 Fra Daro
 Gian Tedesco
 Il Genovese
 Marco aquillan
 Gian ambrosio
 Il Zoppino
 Francesco melanese
 Bombello
 Bernardin veronese
 Gianetton
 Gioan antonio vindella Trivigiano

Identified Lutenists

Conrad Paumann
 Pietrobono de Burzellis
 Giovan Maria Hebreo

 Giovanni Angelo Testagrossa
 Francesco Spinacino

 Marco dall'Aquila
 Joan Ambrosio Dalza
 [Bernardino Aldrati?]
 Francesco da Milano

 [Giovan Antonio Vindella?]