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“Divini concerti musicali [...] di diverse monache”

New Light on the Origin and Context of the *Carlo G Manuscript*

Arnaldo Morelli

At times, music historians have to work on a source that has only survived as a photographic reproduction. For most documents they deal with, in manuscript or print, they know at least the last owner, and not infrequently have the information necessary to date it and place it in a historical and geographical context. This is not the case for the intriguing *Carlo G manuscript* (hereafter, *Carlo G MS*). Purchased for a modest sum from a flea market in Baden bei Wien around 2000–2001,¹ it was resold for a thousand times that price at a Sotheby's auction in London in December 2007.² Since then, it has returned to the shadows, ending up in the private library of an unknown owner. Like a meteor, the manuscript thus passed through the sky before disappearing again into obscurity, leaving only a photographic trace: this reproduction is now available to musicians and musicologists in the IMSLP/Petrucchi Music Library.³

Despite being physically inaccessible, the *Carlo G MS* has been the subject of two studies. The first is Roman Chlada's bachelor's thesis, defended at the Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität in 2007.⁴ The second is an article by Elam Rotem,⁵ who also transcribed, performed, and recorded a selection of

My warmest thanks to Antonio Addamiano, Bruce Dickey, Robert Kendrick, Stefano Lorenzetti, Franco Pavan, Cesarino Ruini and Daniele Torelli for reading my text and providing helpful comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to Marco Di Pasquale and Craig Monson for providing me with bibliographical material. Finally, special thanks to Mara Galassi for drawing my attention to the *Carlo G MS* and to Candace Smith for translating my essay.

¹ Roman Chlada, “Die Begleitung am Tasteninstrument bei Carlo G. Versuch einer ersten Bestimmung und praktischen Auswertung der neu aufgefundenen Handschrift”, Bachelorarbeit, Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität, 2007, 4.

² The entry for the manuscript describes the contents as “Early seventeenth-century Italian motets”: Sotheby's auction site 4 December 2007, www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/music-l07408/lot.34.html (10 November 2020).

³ International Music Score Library Project Petrucchi Music Library [https://imslp.org/wiki/Di_Carlo_G._\(Anonymous\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Di_Carlo_G._(Anonymous)). Inexplicably, this reproduction is missing ten pages (50r, 51v, 52v, 53r, 82v, 83r, 100v, 101r, 116v, 117r).

⁴ Chlada, “Die Begleitung am Tasteninstrument” (see n. 1).

⁵ Elam Rotem, “The ‘Carlo G Manuscript’. New Light on Early Seventeenth-Century Accompaniment and Diminution Practices”, in: *Groß Geigen um 1500 · Orazio Michi und die*

pieces with the vocal ensemble *Profeti della Quinta*.⁶ The titles of the works by Chlada and Rotem show their interest in particular issues of performance practice presented by the manuscript, regarding accompaniment or ornamentation. The volume contains sacred pieces for one or two voices, with the organ part fully written out in Italian tablature (7 + 7 staves), while some pieces intended for chitarrone are notated in Italian lute tablature.⁷ Five instrumental *toccatas* function as introductions to the motets which follow. Nothing has emerged concerning the identity of the single compiler of the collection, “Carlo Gra[...]”,⁸ whose name appears, written in the same hand, at the beginning of the table of contents, and who also signed most of the works with the initials “C. G.”. As to his identity, the Sotheby’s catalogue entry, which reads the author as “Carlo Grat[...]”, suggests a connection to a certain Carlo Graziani, documented in Rome in 1633 in the entourage of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, but who, as far as we know, was not a musician.⁹

In their studies, Chlada and Rotem highlighted the connections between the *Carlo G MS* and Italian musical sources, both printed and in manuscript, in terms of certain specific graphic aspects of the tablature and the vocal ornamentation. Based on this comparison, they have advanced some hypotheses about the dating and provenance of the manuscript. Regarding the date, the two scholars refer primarily to print works by the very few authors mentioned in the col-

Harfe um 1600, ed. Martina Papiro, Basel: Schwabe, 2020, 401–429 (Basler Beiträge für Historische Musikpraxis 39).

⁶ Profeti della Quinta, Elam Rotem, *The Carlo G Manuscript. Virtuoso Liturgical Music from the Early 17th Century*, Glossa, GCD 922516, 2017.

⁷ Only in the *Miserere* for 2 sopranos, signed “C. G.”, copied in a fascicle added at the end of the codex but bound together with it, is the basso continuo written on a single staff in bass clef.

⁸ Because of a spot that has dissolved the ink, the letters which probably completed his last name are illegible.

⁹ See the Sotheby’s entry on the manuscript (n. 2). Cardinal Francesco Barberini paid this Carlo Graziani a sum to be given “to diverse musicians” on the occasion of a ceremony of the Forty Hours’ Devotion in the Roman church of San Lorenzo in Damaso. This information is deduced by Tibor Tallián, “Archivdokumente über die Tätigkeit Stefano Landis in Rom in den Jahren von 1624 bis 1639”, in: *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19 (1977), 267–295: 284 (“Adì 2 marzo 1633 [...] scudi 68.80 moneta in oro come sopra pagati con mandato 3023 al sudetto signor Carlo [Gratiani] per pagarli a diversi musici che hanno servito nella musica del detto apparato [delle quarant’ore] fatta da Stefano Landi” [“On the day of 2 March 1633 [...] 68.80 *scudi* in gold coin as above, paid with mandate 3023 to the aforementioned Signor Carlo [Gratiani] for the purpose of paying them to various musicians who served in the music of the said display [of the Forty Hours] made by Stefano Landi”]). The fact that the music was “made”, that is to say, organized and directed by Landi, suggests that this Carlo Graziani was only charged with paying the musicians for the Barberini.

lection and, secondarily, to the style of some instrumental pieces, the type of musical notation employed, and the handwriting of the sung texts.¹⁰ While Chlada proposed dating the compilation to the first half of the seventeenth century,¹¹ Rotem limited the time frame to 1600–1620, and suggested that the manuscript originated in Rome or was at least connected with Roman circles.¹²

In my study, I examine the content, in particular the texts, of the *Carlo G MS*, to offer a more solid hypothesis about its provenance, placing its origin in Bologna, in the particular context of some important nunneries.

1. Origin

First of all, it should be noted that the *Carlo G MS* is a collection of works intended to satisfy particular liturgical needs. As with any other liturgical codex, references to saints whose names appear in the text are key to identifying where it was compiled and to understanding the context and functions for which it was created.¹³ The decisive clue emerges from the *Confiteor* (fol. 109), the text of which contains a triple invocation of saints Romuald, Benedict, and Cristina. The simultaneous presence of these three names can only refer to a Camaldolese convent dedicated to Saint Cristina. Benedict was the father of Western monasticism and Romuald was the founder of the Camaldolese order.¹⁴ Only two contemporary Camaldolese monasteries could be candidates.¹⁵ The first is Santi Cristina e Parisio in Treviso. But there is no evidence for musical activities in this nunnery; furthermore, if the *Confiteor* had been destined for it, the invoca-

¹⁰ Only the motet *Sic parasti cor meum* (fol. 53v), a *contrafactum* of the madrigal *Se bramate ch'io mora* by Luca Marenzio, which appeared in 1587, and the final Alleluia (fols. 70v–71r) of the motet *Mater Hierusalem civitas*, an elaboration of a passage from the madrigal *Quella ch'in mille selve* by Orazio Vecchi, published in 1589, furnish an approximate terminus post quem which is, however, of little use in dating the manuscript.

¹¹ Chlada, "Die Begleitung am Tasteninstrument bei Carlo G." (see n. 1), 8.

¹² Rotem, "The 'Carlo G Manuscript'" (see n. 5), 407.

¹³ Chlada (see n. 1), and Rotem (see n. 5), do not consider the genre and liturgical function of the pieces.

¹⁴ Based on the invocation of saints Benedict and Margaret in a *Confiteor*, it has been possible to connect a fourteenth-century liturgical-musical codex to a Bolognese Benedictine convent named after the former saint. Cf. Alessandra Fiori, "Il ms. Q.11 del Museo della Musica di Bologna: una fonte trecentesca di musica monodica e polifonica per le monache", in: *Celesti sirene. Musica e monachesimo dal Medioevo all'Ottocento*, eds. Annamaria Bonsante and Roberto Matteo Pasquandrea, Barletta: Cafagna 2015, 105–121.

¹⁵ Fabio Di Pietro and Raoul Romano (eds.), *Nuovo atlante storico geografico camaldolese*, Rome: INEA, 2012, 72, 132.

tion in the text would certainly have included its co-patron saint Parisius, a Camaldolese monk and long-time spiritual guide of these nuns.¹⁶ The second monastery in consideration is Santa Cristina della Fondazza in Bologna and it is indeed very likely that the piece is in some way related to this nunnery, as it was highly renowned since the sixteenth century for the musical activities of its nuns.¹⁷ In addition to a wealth of documentation, no fewer than four collections of sacred music published between 1599 and 1606 praise these women, with dedications to individual nuns or to the entire convent:

Adriano Banchieri, *Messa solenne a 8 voci dentrovi variati concerti all'introito, graduale, offertorio, levatione et communione, et nel fine l'hinno degli gloriosiss. S.S. Ambrogio et Agostino [...]: libro 3° degli suoi concerti [...]*, Venice: Ricciardo Amadino 1599, dedicated "to the most illustrious and virtuous mother, donna Emilia Grassi, nun at Santa Cristina in Bologna".

Gabriele Fattorini, *Il secondo libro de motetti a otto voci con il basso generale per l'organo et nel fine una canzon francese a quattro voci [...] raccolti da D. Donato Beroaldi*, Venice: Ricciardo Amadino 1601, dedicated "to the illustrious and most reverend mother, most observant to our Lord, donna Deodata Leoni, a Camaldolese nun in the monastery of Santa Cristina in Bologna".

Gio. Battista [Biondi] Cesena, *Compieta con letanie che si cantano nella S. Casa di Loreto, et motetti a otto voci, di Gio. Battista Cesena*. Venice: Giacomo Vincenti 1606, dedicated "to the most illustrious and reverend mothers of the monastery of Santa Cristina in Bologna".

Lucrezia Orsina Vizzani, *Componimenti musicali de motteti concertati a una e più voci di donna Lucretia Orsina Vizana monaca nel sacro collegio di Santa Christina di Bologna della Congregatione Camaldolense. Dedicati alle medesme monache Anno MDCXXIII*. Venice: Stamperia del Gardano, appresso Bartolomeo Magni 1623.

Warm accolades for the sacred music performed by the nuns of Santa Cristina are found in two of these four collections. Banchieri, in the dedication of his *Messa solenne a 8 voci* (1599), recalls "the harmonious *concerti* of voices, organs, and various musical instruments, directed with most exquisite sentiments of devotion" by Grassi, and heard during Vespers on the feast of Saint Cristina. In his dedication of the *Compieta con letanie* by Cesena "to the most illustrious and reverend mothers of the convent of Santa Cristina in Bologna", the printer Gia-

16 See Cécile Caby, "Parisio, santo", in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 81, Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2014, [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-parisio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-parisio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (24 November 2020).

17 Concerning music and the nun musicians at Santa Cristina della Fondazza, see the seminal work by Craig A. Monson, *Disembodied Voices. Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1995.

como Vincenti praised the musical virtues of "various nuns" and their "divine musical concerts", which he had occasion to hear personally.

Other references to both male and female saints in the texts of the *Carlo G MS* allow us to strengthen the hypothesis that the manuscript originated in Bologna. Particular feasts of these saints were solemnly celebrated only in the churches of certain nunneries in the city, as is documented in the detailed guide by Antonio Masini, *Bologna perlustrata*.¹⁸

Two pieces make reference to Mary Magdalene: the motet à 6, *Alma mater pietatis forma penitentiae* (fol. 9v), attributed to Paolo Quagliati, contains the invocation "o Maria Magdalena te rogamus"; the motet *Iam hiems transiit*, signed C. G., bears the indication "Per la Madalena" (fol. 141v).¹⁹ In Bologna, the feast of this saint was solemnly celebrated by the Dominican nuns of Santa Maria Maddalena in Galliera.²⁰

The motet *Congratulamini omnes in Domino diem festum commemorantes beatae Elisabet* (fols. 26–27v), also signed C. G., contains an invocation of St. Elisabeth of Hungary, celebrated by the Franciscan tertiaries in the Chiesa dell'Annunziata ("also called Santo Spirito outside Porta San Mamolo").²¹

The antiphon *Quasi stella matutina* (fol. 43v), a text commonly adapted for various saints, contains the verse "sic beata Clara refulsit", referable to Saint Clare, whose feast was solemnized by the Clarissans in the convent of Santi Naborre e Felice, also noted for its musical activities.²²

The motet *Iste est qui ante Deum*, signed C. G., bears the indication "per S. Bernardo" (fol. 131v), referring quite probably to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux,

18 Antonio Masini, *Bologna perlustrata, in cui si fa mentione ogni giorno in perpetuo delle fontioni sacre e profane di tutto l'anno. Delle chiese, e loro feste, indulgenze, reliquie, corpi santi [...]*, Bologna: Carlo Zenero 1650. The nunneries known for their musical activities are discussed in the works by Craig A. Monson, "La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi", in: *La cappella musicale nell'Italia della Controriforma*, eds. Oscar Mischiati and Paolo Russo, Florence: Olschki 1993, 143–160; Id., "Molti concerti, poca concordia: monache, parrochiani e musica nella chiesa e convento dei SS. Vitale e Agricola, 1550–1730", in: *Vitale e Agricola: il culto dei protomartiri di Bologna attraverso i secoli nel XVI centenario della traslazione*, ed. Gina Fasoli, Bologna: EDB 1993, 195–200; Id., "Organi e organiste nei monasteri di Bologna", in: *L'organo* 30 (1996), 37–118.

19 *Canticle* 2:11. Antiphon *ad sextam* from the Office of St. Mary Magdalene.

20 Masini, *Bologna perlustrata* (see n. 18), 415–416.

21 Ibid., 573.

22 Ibid., 445. The feast of Saint Clare (12 August) was also celebrated in the church of the Capuchins of Via delle Lame. Keeping in mind the musical traditions of Santi Naborre e Felice and the austerity of the Capuchins, it is more likely that the piece was intended for the former convent. See Monson, "La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi" (see n. 18), 149; Id., "Organi e organiste nei monasteri femminili di Bologna" (see n. 18), 99–100.

whose feast was commemorated by the Cistercian nuns of San Leonardo in Via San Vitale.²³

The motet *Sidus de nube trahitur*, which bears the rubric “in festo S. Thomae de Aquino” (fol. 4v), was probably intended for a Dominican setting. Although no specific church can be indicated, at this time there were at least six communities of Dominican nuns within the city walls of Bologna: Sant’Agnese, San Giovanni Battista a Porta Pia, San Guglielmo a Porta Mascarella, Santa Maria Maddalena in Galliera, Santa Maria Nuova, and San Pietro Martire.²⁴

Even the presence of works such as *Luce gratiae tuae illustra Domine* by Girolamo Giacobbi (fol. 16v) and *Alma mater pietatis* (fol. 9v) by Paolo Quagliati, not otherwise known in printed sources, may imply a Bolognese context. Giacobbi was born and active in Bologna, where he was *maestro di cappella* at San Petronio. Quagliati lived in Rome, but was closely tied to the Ludovisi family, of Bolognese origin, and in particular to the cardinal archbishop of the city, Alessandro Ludovisi (later Pope Gregory XV), to whom he dedicated a collection of *Motecta et dialogi* (Rome: Giovan Battista Robletti 1620).²⁵

2. Context

The connection between the *Carlo G MS* and convents is strengthened by two significant details. The first is the piece attributed to “Giulio Romano”, that is Giulio Caccini, *Benché sopra le stelle*, which is expressly destined “Per monache” (fol. 8v). One passage reads: “Noi povere verginelle sacrat’habbiām l’anima e ’l core. | Per te del mondo fuore | viviam in solitarie celle. | Tuo sia, Giesù, benché sia vil, | il dono di queste voci”. (“We poor little virgins have consecrated our soul and our heart. | For you we live in solitary cells outside the world. | For you, Jesus, is this gift, | albeit humble, of these voices”.) This is a clear allusion to music sung by a community of nuns. The second detail is the annotation found below the motet *En dilectus meus loquitur mihi* (fol. 129v) and written in the same hand as the compiler of the manuscript: “a S[uor] M[aria] Vitt[ori]a ho

²³ Masini, *Bologna perlustrata* (see n. 18), 459. The Cistercians owned a relic of St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

²⁴ Ibid., passim. Concerning liturgy and music in the Dominican convents of Sant’Agnese and Santa Maria Maddalena, see Stefania Roncroffi, *Psallite sapienter. Codici musicali delle Domenicane bolognesi*, Florence: Olschki 2009.

²⁵ Saverio Franchi, *Annali della stampa musicale romana dei secoli XVI–XVIII*, vol. 1/1, Rome: Ibis 2012, 384–387. Quagliati had conceived his *Motecta et dialogi* for use by nuns, too, as we can deduce from the rubric “Alla quarta bassa e per monache alla quarta alta” (“At the lower fourth and for nuns at the upper fourth”) on the motet *O bone Jesu* (ibid., 386).

dato q[ues]to" ("I have given this to S[ister] M[aria] Vitt[oria]").²⁶ The note refers to an alternative measure for the cadence on the word "Alleluia", undoubtedly written for a singer, probably a nun called "Suor Maria Vittoria".²⁷

In addition to these details, though I believe in no way less important, is the fact that about ten motets are settings of texts drawn from the Song of Songs. These amorous dialogues between the Bride and Bridegroom, interpreted allegorically, seem to have been extremely relevant to the nuns consecrated as *sponsae Christi*, brides of Christ.²⁸ This connection is supported by a medieval tradition²⁹ revived in the sixteenth century in the mystical writings of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross.³⁰ The theme of Christ as mystical Bridegroom is found in a piece based on a text from the *Officium Sponsi Jesu* contained in the *Officium monasticum Beatae Mariae Virginis* of the Benedictine order.³¹ This motet is

26 Rotem interpreted the "S." which precedes the name as a possible abbreviation for "Signora", rather than "Suor" (which was very common in documents of the time). He points out that in this period secular women, such as Vittoria Archilei, were documented as singing in church. See Rotem, "The 'Carlo G manuscript'" (see n. 5), 409.

27 Although this name was fairly common among nuns at this time, Suor Maria Vittoria, daughter of Count Galeazzo della Bordella, and Dominican nun in the convent of Santa Maria Nuova in Bologna in the early seventeenth century, is mentioned as "esteemed, revered [...] for exercising music, in which she was excellent" ("stimata, riverita [...] per essercitio della musica nella quale era eccellente"). See Craig Monson, "The Artistic Heyday (Brief, but Turbulent) of Santa Maria Nuova in Bologna", in: *Florilegium musicae. Studi in onore di Carolyn Gianturco*, eds. Patrizia Radicchi and Michael Burden, Pisa: ETS 2004, 697–711: 698.

28 For example, Banchieri dedicated his *Vezzo di perle musicali modernamente conteste alla regia Sposa effigiata nella sacra Cantica. Opera ventesima terza* [...] (Venice: Ricciardo Amadino 1610) to Mother Flavia Clemenza Gazzi ("diligent director of music in the most honourable monastery of S. Maria dalla Neve di Piacenza" ("concertatrice industrie nell'onoratissimo monastero di S. Maria dalla Neve di Piacenza").

29 For instance, Abelard addresses Heloise as *sponsa Christi*, comparing her to the bride in the Song of Songs. See Glenda McLeod, "'Wholly Guilty, Wholly Innocent': Self-Definition in Heloise's Letters to Abelard", in: *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, eds. Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethaus, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1993, 74.

30 Concerning the popularity of the Song of Songs in sacred music of the Seicento, particularly within the monastic environment, see Robert L. Kendrick, "'Sonet vox tua in auribus meis': Song of Songs Exegesis and the Seventeenth-Century Motet", in: *Schütz-Jahrbuch* 16 (1994), 99–118. On the theme of the *sponsa Christi* and relative bibliography, see Dyan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200–1500*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2012; Gabrielle Kristen Bibeau, *The Spouse of Christ in the Hereafter: A Historical Exploration of Nuptial Imagery and the Eschatology of Celibate Chastity in Religious Life*, MA thesis, University of Dayton, 2019.

31 The first printed edition that I have been able to find of the *Officium monasticum B. Mariae Virginis* [...] *pro omnibus sub regula sanctissimi patris Benedicti militantibus*, in the version approved by Pope Paul V, is the one published in Venice by Giunta in 1618.

divided into three sections: an introductory verse, *Iucundum sit eloquium*,³² followed by the versicle *Bonus est Jesus sperantibus*, and concluding with the antiphon *Filiae Hierusalem annuntiate Jesu*. It is composed for soprano and alto, and in the margin is written: “chi non può andar basso canti alto all’ottava” (“whoever cannot sing low can sing it an octave higher”). This, too, is clear evidence that the piece was intended for women’s voices.³³ Consequently, in the Bolognese context, the piece could easily be framed within the liturgical-musical practice of the Benedictine nuns of Santa Margherita, or more probably, the Camaldolese nuns of Santa Cristina.³⁴

3. The Relationship between Context, Performance Practice, and Repertoire in the *Carlo G MS*

The fact that the pieces require limited forces – mostly only one or two voices – supports the hypothesis that the repertoire conforms with the directives governing sacred music imposed upon the nunneries of Bologna from the late sixteenth century.³⁵ In the climate of the Counter Reformation following the Council of Trent, the diocesan authorities sought to moderate musical practices within female convents and monasteries in order to strengthen the separation between the worlds inside and outside the cloister.³⁶ Practical provisions, restrictions, and

³² Introductory verse of the Office of the *Devotissimum Sponsi Jesu*. The verse is taken from Psalm 104 (103), *Benedic anima mea domine*. Note that the official Vulgate text reads “Iucundum sit ei eloquium meum”, while in both this Office and the *Carlo G MS* the pronoun *ei* is missing. This is yet another small clue implying the monastic origin of the manuscript.

³³ Numerous examples of bass parts transposed up an octave for nuns are discussed by Candace Smith, “Eseguire la musica delle monache: un approccio pratico alle problematiche della clausura”, in: *Soror mea, sponsa mea. Arte e musica nei conventi femminili in Italia tra Cinque e Seicento*, eds. Chiara Sirk and Candace Smith, Padua: Il Poligrafo 2009, 69–85: 82–83.

³⁴ Concerning the music at Santa Margherita, see Monson, “La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi” (see n. 18), 152–153. The *Officium Sponsi Jesu* was used by the Benedictine nuns of San Maurizio Maggiore in Milan in the early sixteenth century. Cf. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996, 137.

³⁵ Monson, “La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi” (see n. 18), 143–160.

³⁶ On this question see Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens* (see n. 34), 58–89; Kimberlyn Montford, “Holy Restraint: Religious Reform and Nuns’ Music in Early Modern Rome”, in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 37/4 (2006), 1007–1026. Concerning provisions adopted in Naples at the end of the sixteenth century see Domenico Antonio D’Alessandro, “Mecenati e mecenatismo nella vita musicale napoletana del Seicento e condizione sociale del musicista [...]”, in: *Storia della*

prohibitions regarding convent music were intended to prevent external musicians from entering and coming into direct contact with the nuns, as well as to avert conflicts and rivalries between the sisters over music. For these reasons, polyphonic or concerted music (*canto figurato*) was forbidden or limited to a few feasts during the year; on the remaining days, only Gregorian chant (*canto fermo*) was permitted. Nunneries were therefore encouraged to gradually abandon polyphonic music scored for multiple voices, at times concerted (*concertato*) with instruments, in favour of pieces composed for a few voices (usually one or two) and organ, or with the centuries-old practices of *canto fratto* or simple polyphony (*falsobordone*).³⁷ These rules were not applied everywhere with the same severity.³⁸ The diocese of Bologna, however, was one of the most zealous in controlling, regimenting, and limiting music in nunnery churches. By the mid-sixteenth century, in his *Discorso sopra il governo delle monache* dedicated to Giovanni Campeggi, bishop of Bologna from 1553 to 1563, Giovanni Boccadiferro exhorted the nuns:

It is again necessary that you resolve to put aside all these pernicious customs that until now have caused your ruin. Leave off, therefore, your *canto figurato*, which, although becoming to other male religious orders, for you – or a goodly part of you – has been the cause of great harm.³⁹

In 1580, archbishop Gabriele Paleotti reserved a chapter of his *Episcopale bononiensis civitatis et diocesis* for the "Ordini da servarsi dalle suore nel loro cantare e musica" ("Orders to be observed by the nuns in their singing and music"). The

musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli. Il Seicento, eds. Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maiorone, Naples: Turchini 2019, vol. 1, 71–603: 74–75.

³⁷ For some early examples in female convents, see Daniele Torelli, "Liturgia e musica nei manoscritti domenicani dal tardo Duecento. Testimonianze dall'archivio di Santa Maria Novella", in: *Nicolò da Prato e i frati predicatori tra Roma e Avignone*, eds. Marina Benedetti and Luciano Cinelli, Florence: Nerbini 2013 (*Memorie domenicane*, n. s. 44), 301–432: 334–338; Angelo Rusconi, "Testimonianze di polifonia semplice nelle biblioteche di Bergamo", in: *Un millennio di polifonia liturgica tra oralità e scrittura*, eds. Giulio Cattin and Franco Alberto Gallo, Bologna: Il Mulino 2002 (*Quaderni di Musica e Storia* 3), 133–160: 135–144.

³⁸ See, for instance, Colleen Reardon, *Holy Concord within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575–1700*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; Jonathan E. Glixon, *Mirrors of Heaven or Worldly Theaters?: Venetian Nunneries and their Music*, New York: Oxford University Press 2017; Graziella Martinelli Braglia, "Musica claustrale e Controriforma. Suor Sulpizia Cesis del monastero di San Geminiano [a Modena]", in: *Il Ducato* 46 (ottobre 2018), 3–17.

³⁹ "Fà anchor bisogno che vi disponiate [...] a por da banda tutti quei perniciosi costumi che sin hora hanno causato la ruina vostra. Lasciate dunque il canto figurato, quale anchora che alli altri religiosi sia dicevole, a voi o gran parte di voi è stato causa di gran danno". Cited in Craig Monson, "Elena Malvezzi's Keyboard Manuscript: A New Sixteenth-Century Source", in: *Early Music History* 9 (1990), 73–128: 112.

episcopal decree listed seven points about musical practices, uses, and behaviours permitted and prohibited to the nuns:⁴⁰

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>P.° La musica delle suore si facci nel coro basso dove stanno l'altre suore; si permette però che nell'organo possa cantare una voce sola nelli tempi concessi, che non canti cose volgari, ma latine ecclesiastiche et di religione.</p> | <p>1. The nuns' music should be performed in the lower choir where the other nuns stay. It is permitted, however, for a solo voice to sing with the organ at the times permitted, not vernacular pieces, but rather Latin, ecclesiastical and religious.</p> |
| <p>2. Li divini offitij della settimana santa se abbiano a dire a parole, cioè con canto basso, et in ultimo sia lecito cantare il Benedictus et Miserere con canto che si adimanda falsobordone overo giorgiana.</p> | <p>2. The Divine Offices for Holy Week are to be recited as if spoken, that is in simple chant; and finally it is permitted to sing the Benedictus and Miserere in song, which should be <i>falsobordone</i>, or else, <i>giorgiana</i>.⁴¹</p> |
| <p>3. Che alla Pasqua di Resurrectione non si debba cantare in canto figurato salmi, né a vespro, né a compieta, ma un canto fermo, et sia lecito sonare l'organo fra detti salmi con una voce sola che canta in detto organo senz'altro concerto.</p> | <p>3. On the Feast of the Resurrection it is not permitted to sing the psalms in <i>canto figurato</i> [polyphony], neither at vespers nor at compline, but only in plainchant; but it is permitted to play the organ between the psalms, with a solo voice that sings with the organ without any other <i>concerto</i> [i.e. instruments].</p> |
| <p>4. Il giorno della sua festa, cioè una volta l'anno, si possa cantare il canto figurato li salmi senza alcuna sorte di concerto et similmente la messa.</p> | <p>4. On the day of their feast, that is once a year, it is permitted to sing the psalms in polyphony without any sort of <i>concerto</i>, and similarly the Mass.</p> |
| <p>5. Che nel resto dell'anno a tutte le feste solenni si possa cantare quando si celebra la messa una o due volte un mottetto, et similmente alla fine del vespro.</p> | <p>5. During the rest of the year, on all solemn feasts, it is permitted to sing a motet once or twice when Mass is celebrated, and similarly at the end of vespers.</p> |
| <p>6. Che non si adopri sorte alcuna de instrumenti musicali, eccetto la viola per basso dove si necessita, con licentia de' superiori, et nelle celle l'arpicordo.</p> | <p>6. No type of musical instruments should be used except the viol for the bass where it is necessary, with the permission of their superiors, and in their cells the harpsichord.</p> |

⁴⁰ Monson, "La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi" (see n. 18), 145–146. English translation in Monson, *Disembodied voices* (see n. 17), 37–38.

⁴¹ "Giorgiana" (or "cantare *more georgiano*") probably refers to a style of simple polyphony very close to a *cantus planus binatim*, originally used by the canons regular of San Giorgio in Alga and also in use at St. Mark's in Venice. Cf. Lucia Boscolo and Giulio Cattin, "Il codice 359 del Seminario di Padova (anno 1505). Canti liturgici a due voci dei canonici di San Giorgio in Alga", in: *Contributi per la storia della musica sacra a Padova*, eds. Giulio Cattin and Antonio Lovato, Padua: Istituto per la storia ecclesiastica padovana 1993, 141–189: 184; David Bryant, "Cori Spezzati in Composition and Sound", in: *A Companion to Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, ed. Katelijne Schiltz, Leiden: Brill 2018, 371–394: 377.

7. Che sia proibito [a] ogni sorte di maestro andare ad insegnare a dette suore ancora per provare qualche loro musica, così nell'organo come in canto.

7. It is forbidden for any sort of music teacher to go to teach the said nuns, also to rehearse any of their music, whether on the organ or in song.

As is clear from the document, the nuns were not allowed to sing Mass and Vespers in polyphony except on the titular feast day of their convent.⁴² They were permitted to perform one or two motets after the Mass and Vespers of important feasts, but without musical instruments. Moreover, "one voice" could "sing with the organ" alternate verses of the psalms,⁴³ and that during the Offices for Holy Week, the Benedictus and Miserere could be sung in simple polyphony (*falsobordone*, or *giorgiana*).⁴⁴ On closer inspection, the *Carlo G MS* contains a good number of pieces that meet these restrictions, further supporting the hypothesis that it was intended for Bolognese nunneries. In the manuscript, diverse pieces for solo voice are comprised of versicles from psalms (fols. 46v–50v), the *Magnificat* (fols. 93v, 122v) and *Salve Regina* (fol. 23v), intended to be sung alternately with the organ or with the choir singing in plain chant. Moreover, the *Miserere* (fols. [159r–161r]) with three verses for two voices and basso continuo, is the only piece composed in highly ornamented polyphony (*falsobordone passeggiato*). The only text in the vernacular, *Benché sovra le stelle cantin gloria al tuo nome angeli santi*, with music attributed to Caccini, also presents a free Latin translation (*Deus Dominus meus tibi gloria canunt angeli sancti*); this was probably necessary for liturgical use, in keeping with the prohibition against singing in the vernacular in the first point of the *Ordini* cited above.

Nonetheless, the table of contents and parts of the text suggest that not all pieces were performed with one or two voices and organ. Some were probably arranged polyphonically and performed at Vespers or Mass on the most impor-

⁴² In the dedication to Mother Emilia Grassi of his *Messa solenne a otto voci* (1599), Adriano Banchieri recalled listening to music "on the day when the feast of the glorious Saint Cristina was solemnized" in the church of the Bolognese monastery of the same name, "while the first Vespers was being sung [with] harmonious *concerti* of voices, organs and various musical instruments", conducted by this nun "with most exquisite sentiments of devotion".

⁴³ Concerning this practice, which was widely diffused throughout the Cinquecento, see Arnaldo Morelli, "Cantare sull'organo": an Unrecognised Practice", in: *Recercare* 10 (1998), 183–208. I think it is unlikely that in an ecclesiastical document of 1580, the expression "cantare nell'organo" could have alluded to the monodic practice of the "stile recitativo" which was emerging in the first years of the Seicento, following a period of experimentation in particularly exclusive and sophisticated court circles.

⁴⁴ While such *Ordini* might not have been scrupulously observed, a document of 1593 seems to confirm that normally the nuns "sonavano li loro organi con una sola voce a laude di Dio" ("played their organs with a single voice in praise of God"). See the letter by Don Ercole Tinelli, confessor to the nuns of Corpus Domini, to cardinal Alessandro de' Medici (1593), cited in Monson, "La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi" (see n. 18), 150–151.

tant feast days.⁴⁵ Examples include *In te Domine speravi* (fol. 31v) and *Ecce nunc benedicite* (fol. 33v), which bear the indications, “il coro è a 8 voci” and “il coro è a 7 voci”, respectively; the motets for double choir *Sancti tui Domine florebunt* (fol. 63v),⁴⁶ and *Benedicite Deum coeli et coram omnibus* (fol. 153v),⁴⁷ both notated in score with two sopranos and two organs; *Non turbetur cor vestrum* “a 6” (fol. 147v), with four soprano parts subdivided into two choirs and two organs (fol. 71v);⁴⁸ and *Sicut sponsus matris fuit custos* “a 6 per sonar quattro viole et cantar due soprani” (fol. 147v). The annotation “le parti sono sul libro delle partiture” (“the parts are in the book of scores”, fol. 147v) is placed at the motet *Sicut sponsus matris*. The piece for two choirs and two organs, as well as the sole “Toccata per Florete flores con due organi” (fol. 78v), reflect performance practice in some Bolognese nunneries. In early seventeenth-century Bologna, the churches of certain convents had two organs “per cantar et servire a due cori”, as attested by the organ builder Paolo Cipri in 1607.⁴⁹

The numerous indications concerning performance practice found throughout the *Carlo G MS* lead me to think that the unusual notation for the upper voices and the tabulated organ parts served as a sort of score whether for multiple, one, or two voices.⁵⁰ Other instruments were expected to participate in

⁴⁵ According to the *Ordini* of 1580, each convent was allowed to sing “the psalms [at vespers] in polyphony without any sort of [instrumental] *concerto*, and likewise at Mass” on the occasion of their annual feast, as well as a motet at the Mass and Vespers for the solemn feasts. See Monson, “La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi” (see n. 18), 145–146.

⁴⁶ The two vocal parts are annotated “P^o choro / 2.^{do} choro”.

⁴⁷ The two vocal parts are annotated “Canto del p.^o choro / Canto del 2.^{do} choro”.

⁴⁸ The vocal parts (SS choir I + SS choir II) are indicated as “*Primus corus / Secundus corus / Violino*”.

⁴⁹ For example, those of Santa Maria Maddalena, Santa Cristina della Fondazza, and probably Santi Naborre e Felice (1607); see Monson, “La pratica della musica nei monasteri femminili bolognesi” (see n. 18), 151; Id., “Organi e organiste nei monasteri femminili di Bologna” (see n. 18), 99–100.

⁵⁰ The only other example of this type of notation is in the *Madrigali per cantare e sonare a uno e doi e tre soprani* by Luzzasco Luzzaschi (Rome: Simone Verovio 1601). The *Carlo G MS*, as far as we know, constitutes a unique case in the field of sacred music. It does not contain the types of notation used for accompaniments in the first part of the seventeenth century described by Imogene Horsley, “Full and Short Scores in the Accompaniment of Italian Church Music in the Early Baroque”, in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30/3 (1977), 466–499. Both the notation and compositional style of the *Carlo G MS* are very different from the works for solo voice and organ in the *Communiones totius anni* by Polish composer Mikołaj Zieleński (Venice: Giacomo Vincenti 1611). These pieces are classifiable as “pseudo-monodies”, since they are actually polyphonic compositions in which one part is entrusted to the solo voice (canto, alto, tenor or bass) while the others are written out in tablature for organ. Cf. Gerald Abraham, *The Age of Humanism, 1540–1630*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1968 (The New Oxford History of Music 4/1), 305–307.

the performance, as implied by the word "violino" in the soprano part of the motets *Mater Hierusalem civitas, Non turbetur cor vestrum* (both fol. 71v), and *Panis angelicus* (fol. 145r).⁵¹ In reconstructions of performance practices, it is easy to forget that Agostino Agazzari, in his brief contemporary treatise *Del sonare il basso* (1607), prescribed not only fundamental instruments (organ, harpsichord, theorbo, etc.), but also the use "in concerto" of 'ornamental' instruments, such as the violin "which, in playfulness and contrapuntal juxtaposition, make the harmony more pleasing and sonorous". Significantly, the single precedent of a similar notation is the *Madrigali per cantare e sonare a uno e doi e tre soprani* (1601) by Luzzasco Luzzaschi, not coincidentally conceived "for singing and playing", that is to say, including 'ornamental' instruments besides the harpsichord.

In short, I believe it is reasonable to assume that Carlo G. composed many of the pieces and adapted others, copying them into his manuscript to provide a repertoire generally suitable for nuns and scored for one or two voices and organ. On the one hand, this compilation would have respected the *Ordini* emanated by the episcopal authority in 1580 and subsequently reaffirmed; on the other, it would have been relatively easy to use. Evidence of this is found in the traces of use and the presence of indications, rewritings, corrections, and variations of certain passages, as well as in its continuous writing on two contiguous pages.

4. Identifying "Carlo G." and Dating the Manuscript: Some Theories

From what I have argued so far, the manuscript has one unusual feature: it would not have been intended for a single institution, but rather for a group of institutions, which I have assumed to be certain female convents in Bologna. One wonders, therefore, who this "Carlo Gra" (or "Grat") was and what relationship he might have had with these Bolognese nunneries. Attempts to identify him with a professional musician through musical repertoires or archival documents from the first decades of the seventeenth century were unsuccessful.⁵² In-

⁵¹ The rubric on the last measure of this motet implies that a violin could be added: "non si facci cadenza con l'organo quando sona il violino" ("the organ should not ornament the cadence when the violin is playing", fol. 146v).

⁵² An obscure musician in mid-seventeenth-century Bologna named Carlo Grandi – who was a *musico* at San Petronio and of Concerto Palatino – is chronologically too far from the period in which the manuscript was compiled. Documents attest to his being a "musico" at San Petronio from 1641 to 1656 and a "musico soprannumerario" of Concerto Palatino from 1648 to 1656. See Osvaldo Gambassi, *La cappella musicale di San Petronio*, Florence: Olschki, 1987,

stead, Carlo may have been a person of elevated social rank, with excellent musical skills, tied by kinship or friendship to an important Bolognese family or kin network to which many nuns belonged; as was the custom of the time, these women who would have been scattered across the various convents and monasteries of the city.⁵³ Such a position would have made it easy for him to frequent the convents in which many of his relatives resided. Scrolling through the lists of Bolognese senators and magistrates, we note the presence, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, of numerous exponents of the Grati family, including the name Carlo in nearly every generation.⁵⁴ In the period in question, we find a Carlo di Fulvio Grati who held the offices of “gonfaloniere di giustizia” (high official of the city government) in 1640 and “anziano” (elder, i.e. senior magistrate) in 1647.⁵⁵ He is remembered for his particular devotion to Saint Charles Borromeo, which led him to finance the construction and decoration of a church dedicated to this saint in Ozzano nell’Emilia, a small town not far from Bologna, in 1640.⁵⁶ The scant biographical information thus suggests that in the 1640s, Carlo Grati was of mature age, and was therefore born at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so he could have compiled the manuscript in the 1610s or 1620s.

123–132; Id., *Il Concerto Palatino della Signoria di Bologna*, Florence: Olschki, 1989, 231, 238–239, 243–244.

⁵³ Concerning the placement of sisters or other relatives in diverse convents or monasteries, see Craig Monson, “Families, Convents, Music: the Power of Sisterhood”, in: *Sibling Relations and Gender in the Early Modern World: Sisters, Brothers and Others*, eds. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, London: Routledge 2006, 40–52: 40–42.

⁵⁴ On the Grati family, documented from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, see Pompeo Scipione Dolfi, *Cronologia delle famiglie nobili di Bologna*, Bologna: Giovan Battista Ferroni 1670, 399–403. Some of its members who distinguished themselves in literature are mentioned in Giovanni Fantuzzi, *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi*, Bologna: Stamperia San Tomaso 1784, vol. 4, 256–266.

⁵⁵ See Petronio Ruinetti, *Registro degl’illustrissimi signori gonfalonieri del popolo della città di Bologna*, etc. Bologna: G. Recaldini 1680, 109; Giovanni Nicolò Pasquali Alidosi, *I signori anziani consoli, e gonfalonieri di giustizia della città di Bologna*, Bologna: Manolessi 1670, 195. This last work mentions another Carlo di Fulvio Grati, listed among the Elders in 1584 and 1587 (ibid., 135). Given his chronological distance from the previous Carlo, he was likely a different ancestor with the same name.

⁵⁶ The Church of Saints Christopher and Charles: building started in 1640, it was inaugurated in 1642, and decorative work continued for a number of years, as witnessed by the epigraphs that were placed there. The marriage of Carlo Grati and Francesca Pepoli, the widow of Giovanni Girolamo Grati, was celebrated in the church on 8 November 1659. See *Le chiese parrocchiali della diocesi di Bologna, ritratte e descritte*, Bologna: Litografia Marchi e Corty 1844, vol. 1, 38.

As for dating the manuscript, whoever Carlo G. was, as a composer he does not exhibit particularly original traits, but rather a familiarity with the repertoire for one and two voices composed in the style of *nuova musica*. In sacred music – excluding the *Arie devote* (1608) by Ottavio Durante and some motets in Severo Bonini's *Il secondo libro de madrigali e mottetti a una voce sola per cantare sopra gravicembali, chitarroni, et organi. Con passaggi, e senza* (1609) – compositions for a single voice in "stile affettuoso" or "passeggiato" (quite different from the pieces in the *Concerti ecclesiastici* by Viadana) did not appear in print in good numbers until the 1610s. Carlo G. included compositions by Bartolomeo Barbarino, who was not well known for his sacred music before 1610, when he published his *Primo libro de' mottetti [...] da cantarsi da una voce sola*. These facts suggest that the manuscript was compiled in the 1610s or 1620s.

The hypothesis that it was compiled for Bolognese nuns confirms the *Carlo G MS* as a source of extraordinary interest, not only for the repertoire that it passes down and for certain aspects of notation, but because it teaches us how questions of performance practice must be seen as solutions to particular needs in a given context. More than any printed musical source, the manuscript shines a light on the lived reality of musical practice inside the female convents and monasteries of an important Italian city in the early modern age.

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English translation by Candace Smith

