Frescobaldi and the Lute and Chitarrone
Toccatas of “Il Tedesco della Tiorba”

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The scope of current research into the origins and impact of Frescobaldi’s keyboard music can be substantially augmented through a consideration of Italian music for the seventeenth-century lute and chitarrone. This corpus of music—much of it preserved in printed tablatures, but a good deal of it transmitted in hastily scribbled commonplace books as well—has never been examined in this light, despite the fact that lute and keyboard music enjoyed a close partnership in seventeenth-century English and French repertoires. Much of this neglect can be attributed to the present lack of bibliographic control over the lute and chitarrone sources. Moreover, it is difficult to assess the impact of a body of music when the extant sources represent only a small fraction of the original repertory. Nevertheless, the conclusions offered by the music contained in the sources I have examined strongly suggest that a fertile field of research lies ahead.

Specifically, between 1600 and 1650 there existed in Italy a cross-pollination of musical styles, repertories, forms, and compositional techniques between the keyboard and the lute (both long- and short-necked). For Frescobaldi’s keyboard music, the relationships between these instruments and their repertories assume a special significance. The composer had long personal contacts with the two most influential lute and chitarrone virtuosos in Italy: Alessandro Piccinini (1566–ca. 1638) and Johann Hieronymus (Giovanni Girolamo) Kapsberger (1580–1651).

Piccinini was born into a family of lutenists, all of whom worked for Duke Alfonso II d’Este of Ferrara until the dissolution of the Ferrarese court in 1597. We can assume that there was contact between Piccinini and Frescobaldi during this time; they could scarcely have missed each
other in Rome. Documents show that shortly after 1600, Piccinini entered the service of Guido Bentivoglio and possibly that of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, both of whom patronized Frescobaldi during his early years in Rome. It is contended that the rather conservative nature of Piccinini's works suggests that there was little or no actual transference of style between Frescobaldi and Piccinini, the lutenist may have introduced Frescobaldi to the music of other fine lute and chitarrone players working in Italy.

Among these musicians was Johann Hieronymus Kapsberger, the most prolific composer of lute and chitarrone music in the seventeenth century. The Venetian-born Kapsberger, who was popularly known as "Il Tedesco della tioba," settled in Rome shortly after 1604, and in late 1624 entered the service of Frescobaldi's last patron, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew to the reigning Pope Urban VIII. Moreover, Kapsberger is mentioned in two letters by Vincenzo Landinelli in Rome to Enzo Bentivoglio in Ferrara (1610, 1611), which, at any rate, suggests at least a peripheral relationship with Frescobaldi's first Roman patron. This similarity in backgrounds is coupled with a congruity in the two composers' musical styles. In this paper, then, I would like to open up new lines of investigation into an unexplored area of Frescobaldi research by concentrating on the similar approaches toward chromaticism, formal construction, and textural makeup in the toccatas of Frescobaldi and the lute and chitarrone toccatas of Kapsberger. My aims are to increase our limited knowledge of the sources, transmission, and impact of the seventeenth-century lute and chitarrone repertory in general, and specifically, to contribute new thoughts concerning the performance of Frescobaldi's toccatas.

In 1604, Kapsberger published his first and perhaps most important work, the Libro primo d'intavolatura di chitarrone. It is the only work of Kapsberger that was published in Venice. For its novelty as the first printed book of chitarrone music, and because it contained a short but very valuable list of avertimenti for the player, the Libro primo was probably the most important of the seventeenth-century chitarrone and lute tablatures. It seems to have remained in use for at least twenty years, since some of its contents appear in manuscripts copied as late as 1627.

Of special interest are the six brilliant toccatas that open the Libro primo. Similar to Frescobaldi's toccatas in style, but anticipating them by eleven years, these works display an attunement to the expressive and dramatic style of the seconda pratica through the daring use of chromaticism and by the introduction of various improvisatory techniques within a declamatory musical texture.

The toccatas from the Libro primo are also of great historical significance because they combine elements of Renaissance lute music and the emerging baroque keyboard style. The playing technique of the chitarrone and its tuning are both refinements of the sixteenth-century lute style, but the formal designs, textures, and ornamentation of Kapsberger show a closer affinity to keyboard music. It thus seems likely that Kapsberger's and Frescobaldi's toccatas have common antecedents in the toccatas composed by the Venetians Andrea Gabrieli, Annibale Pavolino, and Claudio Merulo. The Venetian toccatas represent a significant departure from previous instrumental music in their introduction of virtuoso passagework and contrasting chordal episodes, and in their well-defined harmonic motion and formal clarity.

That Frescobaldi should have been drawn to the Venetian repertory is to be expected in view of his early sensitivity to current styles of playing and also because of the proximity of Ferrara to Venice, which was then the center of toccata activity. Kapsberger's absorption of the Venetian style, on the other hand, was the culmination of a certain progressive trend in sixteenth-century lute music, which from midcentury showed the influence of keyboard music. Significantly, this influence coincided with a period of heightened activity in the publication of keyboard music. In the lute manuscript B-Br II.275 (dated 1590), one of fifteen anonymous ricercars is based on a fuga by Merulo. Copied in roughly the same period as Venetian publications of keyboard works by Bertoldo (1591), Merulo (1592), Radino (1592), Diruta (1593), and Giovanni and Andrea Gabrieli (1593), this manuscript is the first to acknowledge the lutenists' growing awareness of keyboard music and may even point to the possibility that some musicians played both instruments. This is certainly the case with Radino, whose 1592 keyboard print was republished by Vincenti in an arrangement "per sonar di liuto" later in the same year. Both versions were published in Venice, which was the center of keyboard and lute music as well as the city where Kapsberger published his Libro primo.

It thus appears that Venice was also the focus of this progressive trend of lute music. Radino's arrangements, which clearly show how keyboard
style can be transferred to the lute, were a watershed in this trend, which culminated with the publication of Kapsberger's *Libro primo* in 1604. The simultaneous presence of keyboard and lute music in the manuscripts D-Ngm Ms. 33.748/M.271 and I-Bc AA/360, both of which date from after 1604, show that this trend continued well into the seventeenth century. Finally, the lute manuscript A-KR L.64, copied after 1609, contains excerpts from part 2 of Diruta's *Il Transilvano* of 1609. Diruta's treatise apparently held great interest for lute players, and Kapsberger's discussion of *acenti* in his *Libro quarto* (1640) has its origins in part 2 of Diruta's book.

Kapsberger's toccatas of 1604 become even more significant when compared with what might be the only contemporaneous source of solo chitarrone music. In the back of a rather ordinary seventeenth-century lute manuscript now owned by the University of California at Berkeley, an addition, probably dating from around 1605-10, contains among other pieces six toccatas, and these toccatas provide an ideal index for comparison with Kapsberger's work. The Berkeley toccatas show none of the predilection for textural contrast and virtuosity characteristic of the Venetian keyboardists' and Kapsberger's work (see example 1).

Example 1  Toccata from US-BE Ms. 757, fol. 33v

In short, Kapsberger's 1604 toccatas are unique examples in the plucked-string repertoire of the adoption of the progressive tendencies of the Venetian keyboard school. But beyond this, with his many innovative departures from the keyboard mold, Kapsberger demonstrates his ingenuity, and ultimately his link with the toccatas of Frescobaldi.

When comparing Kapsberger's list of *avertimenti* that appears in the *Libro primo* and in an expanded version in the *Libro quarto* (see plate 1), with Frescobaldi's own instructions to the player from his *Toccate* of 1615, one becomes immediately aware of the composers' common conceptual approach toward performance. Both attempt to set forth a guide which, in essence, warns against a strict interpretation of notated music in favor of a more improvisatory approach. As for specific connections between

Plate 1. Expanded avertimenti from the *Libro quarto* (1640)

(London, British Library)
Kapsberger and Frescobaldi, their discussion of something so seemingly unimportant as the arpeggio underlines the congruities in their styles.

In his preface Kapsberger describes an arpeggiation pattern which is to be used on all chords of four or more notes, and occasionally for chords of three notes. On the one hand, Kapsberger was simply providing a solution to the problem of voicing chords on an instrument with re-entrant tuning. According to Kapsberger (1640) (see plate 1) and Kircher, among others, the chitarrone was tuned as shown in example 2.17

Example 2

Since the top two courses are tuned an octave lower than on the lute, the third course has the highest pitch. Thus, a simple arpeggio from lowest strings to highest causes the highest note to sound somewhere in the middle of the arpeggio (see example 3).

Example 3

However, by employing Kapsberger’s method—his “propria et sola inventione”—arpeggiated chords sound in a normal fashion, as shown in example 4.

Example 4

But there must have been other reasons as well for Kapsberger’s method, since on certain chords it is the pattern itself that causes the tones to sound “out of order” (see example 5).

Example 5

It appears that proper chord voicing in an arpeggio was a secondary consideration to the use of the arpeggio as an effect, or, more precisely, an Affekt, which formed part of the general musical aesthetic of the time. In his Della pratica musica vocale, et strumentale, Scipione Cerreto alluded to the expressive quality of the arpeggio when, in his chapter on the guitar, he wrote, “And when one plays this instrument arpeggiando with the fingers of the right hand, it also has a beautiful effect, but one can learn this style of playing only through long practice.”18 Cerreto’s comment on the difficulty of mastering this technique suggests that arpeggios were played not as simple rolled chords, but in a more complex manner, as indicated by Kapsberger. Kapsberger’s rules, which offered practical solutions to the problem of arpeggiation, standardized this technique, and his method was quickly adopted by other instrumentalists. Piccinini employed Kapsberger’s method in his book of 1623—albeit with some modifications—but he failed to cite its inventor. Such was not the case with the guitarist Francesco Valdambrini, who used the technique in his guitar books of 1646 and 1648 and acknowledged his debt to Kapsberger.19

It was Kapsberger, then, who was the founder of this particular arpeggiated style, and his methods gained widespread use first through his own chitarrone publications, and then through the guitar repertory. Moreover, in exploiting the arpeggio as an affective device, Kapsberger could employ it as a means of heightening the dramatic tensions of the toccata. Indeed, one of the most important aspects of the Libro primo toccatas is Kapsberger’s creation of this drama, not only through the alternation of chordal and figural elements, but also through the contrast between arpeggiated and unarpeggiated sections (see example 6).

Frescobaldi’s rules bear strong resemblances to Kapsberger’s. In his third rule, which states that the opening of the toccatas “should be played slowly and with arpeggiation,” Frescobaldi seems to be striving
for a lightly strummed lute-like sonority. This rule would have been applied, for example, to the passage in example 7. The actual execution of the arpeggios is left to the player; Frescobaldi gives no examples. Frescobaldi's ideal, however, may have been the sound of Kapsberger's chitarrone arpeggios. Furthermore, almost all of Kapsberger's toccatas begin "slowly and with arpeggiation" (see example 8).

These chordal beginnings have their origins in the sixteenth-century preludioal forms used by lutenists to set the mode, warm up, check the tuning of the instrument, or alert the audience that music was about to begin. These pieces, many of which have titles such as "tastar de corde," "praeludium," "tochata," but others of which are simply nonimitative ricercars, functioned as preludes to more "learned" pieces such as imitative ricercars, fantasias, canzonas, or intabulations of vocal works. In his toccatas, Kapsberger retains this improvisatory and ultimately practical element by writing out a prelude and integrating it into the toccata as an opening section that precedes an imitative one. The beginning of Toccata 5 from the Libro primo, to give but one example, is essentially a prelude consisting of primary chords sounding over long tonic pedal in the bass. This static opening has no musical function other than to set the mode of the toccata and to check the tuning of the instrument. The opening G chord, for example, is fingered in three different positions—all of them retaining the original spacing—so that the player can check the relative tuning of the strings, and make sure that the frets are properly aligned (see example 9). In performance, these chordal exordia create a sonorous, rhythmless texture, which contrasts nicely with the
introverted and severely disciplined imitative sections that follow. In addition, these preludes exploit the resonance and sympathetic vibrations that naturally occur from the lingering sound of unmuted bass notes. The beginning chordal sections in Frescobaldi's toccatas, when played "arpeggiando," achieve the same quality of sound—a kind of resonant harmonic blur that gradually focuses into rhythmic clarity (see example 10).

The influence of Kapsberger's use of the arpeggio is also evident in the last two points of Frescobaldi's third rule. He continues, "Where suspensions occur, even if this is in the middle of the piece, these too should be arpeggiated so that the instrument is not left empty; these arpeggios may be repeated at the discretion of the player." The arpeggiation of strict chordal passages, or botte ferme, that contain dissonances, constitutes the most expressive use of the arpeggio, for it allows the player to retrace the suspensions, prolong the dissonances, and thus heighten the harmonic tension. In Frescobaldi's work, such chordal episodes are sprinkled throughout the toccatas (see example 11).

A likely predecessor of these passages is Kapsberger's Toccata Arpeggiata from the Libro primo. Written in long note values, one chord to a bar, the work requires the arpeggiation of every chord—a technique that further dramatizes the effect of the ambiguous, suspended harmonies (see example 12). The use of a slow rhythm is also indicative of the tempo at which the toccata should be played. Frescobaldi employed a similar procedure to show tempo relationships, in which the slow introductions to his toccatas suggest a change in tempo between the introductions and the sections that follow. The slow-moving, murky harmonies of the Arpeggiata toccata might also have a parallel in Frescobaldi's Toccata VIII, "of dissonances and suspensions," from the 1627 Toccate. Here Frescobaldi writes a toccata similar to Kapsberger's in which the resultant chordal texture is chiefly effective by being dramatically conditioned through a sophisticated and adventurous harmonic vocabulary (see example 13).

Finally, in setting the Toccata "Arpeggiata" to a slow rhythm, Kapsberger, like Frescobaldi, promotes the element of improvisation by leaving space within each bar for the player to embellish or retrace the chord. This intention is confirmed in Kapsberger's avvertimenti, where he states that the arpeggio can be repeated "for as long as the time indicated above"
This appears to be a clear foreshadowing of Frescobaldi's suggestion that chords can be repeated "at the discretion of the player," and the earliest anticipation of Frescobaldi's warning against "leaving the instrument empty."27

Chordal textures, however, were often more effectively used in the middle of a toccata in conjunction with other contrasting elements, rather than at the beginning or throughout the piece. In emphasizing the "nuova maniera" and the "novita d'artificio" of his 1627 Toccate, Frescobaldi employed new modes of textural contrast, of which the use of dance-like triple-meter sections in tandem with chordal episodes was a major component. This feature was indeed part of the "novelty" of the 1627 book, since triple-time sections did not appear in the 1615 collection nor were they all that common in the toccatas composed by the Neapolitans Macque, Mayone, and Trabaci. They were, however, important features in both Kapsberger's and Piccinini's toccatas. In Toccata V from the Libro primo, the triple section—framed on both sides by two measures of arpeggiated chords—assumes the characteristic rhythm of the Italian corrente (see example 14).

Example 14 Kapsberger, Toccata V (1604)

A triple-meter section in galliard rhythm appears in a toccata in the chitarrone manuscript I-MO Bisma 4 (attributed to Kapsberger)28 (see example 15).

Example 15 [Toccata] from I-MO Bisma 4, chitarrone Ms., fol. 2v

A final point of contact between Frescobaldi and Kapsberger concerns their similar approach toward chromaticism. While this is not the place for an extensive discussion, a brief review may point the way to further study in this area.

The use of chromatic subjects had become fashionable in early seventeenth-century keyboard music. The often-cited Neapolitan influence on Frescobaldi seems most persuasive here, since chromatic subjects appeared early in the keyboard music of Trabaci and Macque.29 It is far more difficult to explain the appearance of chromatic subjects in Kapsberger's work. There was no tradition of Roman or Venetian lute music that could have stimulated this style. Nor was vocal music a factor, since such an influence should have been noticeable in Kapsberger's Madrigali of 1609. Is it possible that the Neapolitan influence extended to the lute and chitarrone repertory as well? This question is difficult to answer, but in view of the seventeenth-century lutenists' awareness of contemporary keyboard styles, this relationship may prove to be a promising area of inquiry.

Roland Jackson has shown that one of the most indisputable claims to a Neapolitan influence in Frescobaldi's music is the sudden chromatic lowering of tones at the end of phrases (see example 16).30

Example 16 Frescobaldi, Toccata XI (1627)

In the above example, the lowering of the E on the third beat effectively obscures the V3–I cadence that has been set up, by deflecting the resolution to the tonic minor. In Kapsberger's work we see similar chromatic maneuvers in the toccatas of the 1611 lute book (see example 17).

Example 17 Kapsberger, Toccata V (1611), mm. 10–13
Here Kapsberger sets up a cadence on the dominant of C minor, which should resolve to a major chord. Even though the resolution to the major is anticipated by the B-natural in the previous measure, Kapsberger surprisingly cadences on the dominant minor, which fails to relieve any of the harmonic or rhythmic tension generated prior to that point. This ambiguity provides the structure of the entire first section of the toccata, for Kapsberger repeats the whole sequence only a few measures later. This time, a cadence on the secondary dominant of D is similarly resolved with a lowered third, despite the presence of the F-sharps in the previous three measures (see example 18).

**Example 18** Kapsberger, Toccata V (1611), mm. 20–23.

![Example 18](image)

A similar approach also dictates the method by which Frescobaldi and Kapsberger employ chromatic motives to promote musical and dramatic development. This is normally achieved by the use of a single chromatic subject, which is gradually lengthened during the course of the work, often moving through different voices. In the absence of contrasting figural material, however, it is precisely this technique that is responsible for the forward motion and dramatic tensions of the chromatic toccatas. A good example is offered by Frescobaldi’s Toccata VIII from the 1627 *Toccate*. As the following example shows, chromatic or semichromatic lines spanning a fourth appear early (see example 19a) and are gradually lengthened to a fifth (example 19b), sixth, seventh, and finally a tenth (example 19c) to climax the work.

This underlying element of growth becomes the structural fabric of the work and is felt as a dramatic succession of events. Once again, this method of construction can be found in Kapsberger’s work, particularly in the toccatas from the *Libro primo di lamento*. In Toccata III, Kapsberger begins the imitative second section of the work with a chromatic subject descending a minor third from C to A (mm. 21–22). This subject is immediately echoed with an answer spanning a fifth from F down to B-flat (mm. 22–25). In the stretto climax of the work, both motives are augmented: the subject, from a third to an octave and a half, while the answer, now real, spirals two octaves down to a low C, played on the tenth and lowest course of the lute (see example 20).

**Example 29** Frescobaldi, Toccata VIII (1627)

![Example 29](image)

Does the lute and chitarrone repertory, and Kapsberger’s contribution in particular, represent no more than a peripheral area of Italian instrumental music of the *seicento*? I have suggested that it does represent more. Many of the modes of dramatic expression implicit in Frescobaldi’s toccatas may well be the result of Frescobaldi’s adaptation or even imitation of the idiomatic characteristics common to the central lute and chitarrone repertory of the early seventeenth century. With regard to the use of the arpeggio as a means of contrast, and in the appearance of triple-meter sections as contrasting episodes, Kapsberger’s influence on Frescobaldi seems strong. The appearance of chromatic subjects in Kapsberger’s work is also interesting, for it may indicate that Kapsberger was a point on the line that connects the important Neapolitan keyboardists with Frescobaldi.

In assessing the significance of the relationship between Kapsberger and Frescobaldi, however, we must keep in mind that the sources available for study were all written before the period during which they had
the most direct contact with each other's music. It is both puzzling and unfortunate that their period of employment under Cardinal Francesco Barberini has yielded no significant information of any contact in their musical activities. Thus, this paper stops short of being an exhaustive study of either Kapsberger's influence or of the intertwining strands of baroque music. It does draw attention, however, to some little-known but important sources, and will perhaps form a basis for further research into some of the larger connections that undoubtedly exist between Italian lute and keyboard music of the seventeenth century.

Notes

1. See, for example, the lute versions made from some of William Byrd's keyboard works, in Nigel North, ed., William Byrd: Music for the Lute (London: Oxford University Press, 1976). Some French sources of the seventeenth century contain lute music transcribed into staff notation; Perrin's Pieces de luth en musique . . . (Paris, 1680), for example, contains six pieces by Gaultier (le vieux) transcribed expressly for keyboard performance. This trend seems to have continued into the eighteenth century, for in the keyboard manuscript 8-M4 19 of Emmanuel L'Affre, Ms. 4a, there appear nine pieces by the Bohemian lutenist Johann Anton Losy, "reinserted" into keyboard tablature; see Emil Vogl, "The Lute Music of Johann Anton Losy," Journal of the Lute Society of America 14 (1984):5-58.


3. I am currently preparing a complete study of the manuscript sources of seventeenth-century music for the Italian lute and chitarrone.

4. I use the word "lute" here as a generic term, to cover the many lute-related instruments that were popular in seventeenth-century Italy, such as the chitarrone (or tiara), the lusco luscanio, lusco luscanio, and the colascione. For an explanation of the confusing terminology surrounding some of these instruments, see Douglas A. Smith, "On the Origins of the Chitarrone," Journal of the American Musicalological Society 31 (1979):440-62. Kevin Mearns has reached slightly different conclusions regarding the chitarrone's origins; see his "The Chitarrone and its Repertoire in Early Seventeenth-Century Italy" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1985), 13-26.


6. See Anthony Newcomb, "Giovanni Frescobaldi, 1583-1643: A Documentary Study."


9. In a letter dated 3 November 1610 (Ferrara, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Bentivoglio, M 9-55, fol. 524v), Landinelli mentions that Kapsberger performed for some of Enzo Bentivoglio’s guests; in another letter, dated 2 January 1611 (Archivio Bentivoglio, M. 9-58, fols. 30-30v), Landinelli writes that Kapsberger will give them the liuto that Enzo requested be sent to him. The letters are quoted and translated in Victor Coelho, “G. G. Kapsberger in Rome,” 114–15. I record here my thanks to Dinko Fabris of Bari, Italy, for drawing my attention to these documents.


14. I should also mention here the vocal works published in Rome by Simone Verovio, since they contain accompaniments that can be played on either harpsichord or lute (tablature is provided); see Howard Mayer Brown, Instrumental Music Printed before 1600, vol. 2d. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 1586, 1589a–b, 1591, 1594, 1595. It is interesting to note that the Verovio family lived in the parish of San Lorenzo in Damaso through at least 1600 (Rome, Archivio del Vicariato, San Lorenzo in Damaso, Battesimi, IV (1591-99), fol. 35v, fol. 338; Battesimi, VI (1599–1606), fol. 65v). This is the same parish in which two of Kapsberger’s three children were born (see Coelho, “G. G. Kapsberger in Rome,” 114 n. 40). I am indebted to James Chater for this information.


18. Cerretto, Della prattica musica vocale, et strumentale (Naples: Carlini, 1601), 321: “Il quando tale Strumento si sonora arpeggiando con tutte le dita della mano destra, fassa un bello effetto, ma questo modo di sonare si può imparre con lunga prattica.”


22. “É così nelle lirature, o vero durezze, che anche nel mezzo del'opera, si batterano insieme, per non lasciar voto' l'istromento: il qual battimeto ripigliarsi a bene placito di chi suona.”

23. Piccinini also advocated this style, in which during a dissonant passage, the dissonances can be struck repeatedly, either piano or forte, the number of times depending on how strong the dissonance is, “playing as they do in Naples.” See chapter 5 of the preface to his Intavolatura di liuto et di chitarrone (Bologna: Moscatelli, 1623; reprint, Florence: Studio per Edizioni Selci, 1983).


25. It may be worth mentioning that works bearing the name “Arpeggiato,” of which Kapsberger’s was the first, became a small genre during the seventeenth century in both lute and keyboard music. A chitarrone piece entitled “Arpeggiato a mio modo” appears in Castaldi’s Capricci a due strumenti ... (1622; reprint, Geneva: Minkoff, 1981), and a keyboard piece entitled “Tastata arpeggiata longa” (possibly by Bernard Pasquini) appears in the manuscript I-Rooi Vat. mus. 569, 45–46 (see Silbiger, Italian Manuscript Sources, 174 77).”

26. “Segno dell’ Arpeggiato + (qual’è di diretto contrario al pizzicando) si fa in diverso maniere tocando le corde di quel’ colpo separate ... reiterando il colpo quanto duerta il tempo soprascritt’.”


28. Almost all the pieces in this section of the Modena manuscript are headed by the initials “HK” (Hieronymus Kapsberger) or “AP” (Alessandro Piccinini). However, the initials appear in a different, later ink, and have been found to not be entirely accurate.

29. See Ruland Jackson, “On Frescobaldi’s Chromaticism and Its Background,” Musical
Frescobaldi’s *Arie* and the Musical Circle around Cardinal Montalto

John Walter Hill

I would like to begin with a problem formulated by Frederick Hammond in his recent book on Frescobaldi. His words are, “The general stylistic orientation of [Frescobaldi’s] *Arie musicali* is difficult to explain,” although, as he says in another place, their style “suggests some strong external influence.” Monteverdi is offered as a possible model for one aria, and Roman monodists of ca. 1615–20 are mentioned in relation to a few others. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relevance of a monody repertoire and of some letters that have come to light in the course of my research on the musicians in the circle around Cardinal Montalto. I hope they will contribute something to our continuing search for Frescobaldi’s sources and models as monody composer.

The feature that suggested strong external influence to Hammond was the prominence in Frescobaldi’s *Arie* of eleven solo songs written entirely in pure recitative style. By 1630 this was an oddity. Florentine monody collections of the 1620s, by Filippo Vitali and Giovanni Battista da Gagliano, were dominated by strictly metrical, strophic arias. Nor had recitatives been found in Roman or Venetian monody collections of recent years. Stranger still, seven of Frescobaldi’s recitatives are settings of sonnets.

I think it likely that these sonnet settings were in view when the Florentine music theorist G. B. Doni wrote in his *Compendio*, published in 1635,

Sonnets, which correspond so well to the hymns, paeans, noml, and similar Greek poems, normally should be set for one solo voice, but in madrigallan style (as to the variety of pitches and intervals)