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Autor(en): **Di Pasquale, Marco**

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Inventing Palestrina: ideological and historiographical approaches in nineteenth-century Italy

MARCO DI PASQUALE (Venezia)

As is well known, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina was uninterruptedly celebrated by a number of writers on music since the later years of his life, and for that reason his name never completely fell into oblivion.¹ Nonetheless, before the second quarter of the nineteenth century, discussion concerning the Roman composer was mainly sustained by encomiastic motives or technical and theoretical topics.² Not even those who studied Palestrina from a more historical point of view – such as Giovanni Battista Martini, John Hawkins or Charles Burney – had been able to gather new evidence to enrich accounts then circulating about his life, for the most part anecdotally oriented.³

* This essay develops several points contained in the paper *La storiografia della musica sacra nell'Italia dell'Ottocento* that I delivered at the International Conference “European sacred music, 1500–1800: new approaches” (University of Fribourg, 9–12 June 2010). A less detailed account of my research was presented, under the title *Palestrina as a patriot: a survey of biographical portraits from nineteenth-century Italy*, at “(Auto)-biography as a musicological discourse: the ninth International conference of the departments of musicology and ethnomusicology” (University of Arts in Belgrade, 19–22 April 2008). I wish to thank my colleague Jeremy Norris for shading light on various subtleties in the English language.

1 For a list of the most famous writings concerning the composer, see *Bibliografia degli scritti su Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1568–1996)*, a cura di Giancarlo Rostirolla (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina – Centro Studi Palestriniani, 1997). A considerable number of the texts dating from the nineteenth century that I cite in this essay is not recorded in that work.

2 See, for example, the essays collected in *La recezione di Palestrina in Europa fino all'Ottocento*, a cura di Rodobaldo Tibaldi (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1999).

3 The exiguous biographical traces then available consisted of a few parochial references in the *historiae* of his native town (see particularly Leonardo Cecconi, *Storia di Palestrina città del Prisco Lazio [...] illustrata con antiche iscrizioni e notizie finora inedite* [Ascoli: per Niccola Ricci Stampator pubblico, e del Palazzo Apostolico, 1756], pp. 344–345) and the relevant passages in the treatises of two papal singers: Antimo Liberati, *Lettera scritta [...] in risposta ad una del Sig. Ovidio Persapegi [...]* (Roma: per il Mascardi, 1685), pp. 22–25, and Andrea Adami, *Osservazioni per ben regolare il coro dei cantori della cappella pontificia [...]* (Roma: per Antonio de' Rossi, 1711), pp. 169–174. A typical example of an opuscle based on those sources is Luigi Cecconi, *Di Pier Luigi da*



Fig. 1: Palestrina in a portrait drawn and engraved by Giuseppe Ghezzi. The illustration, probably inspired by a portrait in the Vatican, was published in: Andrea Adami, *Osservazioni per ben regolare il coro dei cantori della cappella pontificia [...]* (Roma: per Antonio de' Rossi, 1711).

Giuseppe Baini was the first writer to use a significant documentary basis in his biography of Palestrina.⁴ When it was published in 1828, Baini's work was the largest monograph so far devoted to a musician; it was also one of the first life-and-works contributions centred on a composer belonging to the distant past.⁵ As we shall see, the novelties that Baini displayed in

Palestrina (Roma: presso Giunchi e Mordacchini, 1826). Luigi Cecconi, a lawyer born in Palestrina, was a descendant of the Leonardo Cecconi mentioned above.

4 *Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina cappellano cantore, e quindi compositore della cappella pontificia, maestro di cappella delle basiliche vaticana, lateranense, e liberiana detto il principe della musica compilate da Giuseppe Baini sacerdote romano, cappellano cantore, e direttore della stessa cappella pontificia* (2 vols., Roma: dalla Società Tipografica, 1828).

5 The primacy is acknowledged in: Hans Lenneberg, *Witnesses and scholars: studies in musical biography* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988), *passim*. In fact, Baini's book was preceded by Luigi Angeloni, *Sopra la vita, le opere, ed il sapere di Guido d'Arezzo, restauratore della scienza e dell'arte musica: dissertazione* (Parigi: appresso l'autore, 1811), but strictly speaking this is not a true biography as it merely consists of inferences from Guido's writings.

his manner of relating an artist's life were to exert some considerable influence for many decades.⁶ Furthermore, if one considers that, at the author's death in 1844, 367 copies of his book out of the 500 printed in Italy were still unsold, it seems highly probable that the wide dissemination attained by Baini's monumental achievement was mainly due to the fact that it was promptly translated into French and German.⁷

Baini's accomplishment will perhaps be best understood in the light of the principal events that occurred during his somewhat unremarkable life.⁸ Born in Rome in 1775, he received a first-rate education at the Seminario Romano, the school entrusted with the training of future priests under the guidance of very prestigious teachers.⁹ After rather unsystematic musical studies under Stefano Silveyra, Giovanni Battista Bati and his uncle Lorenzo Baini, Giuseppe became a member of the papal chapel in 1795 as a baritone, and in 1798 was ordained as a priest. From 1802 to 1815 he studied counterpoint with the composer Giuseppe Jannacconi, then highly reputed as the last representative of the Roman school led by Palestrina and there-

6 For a comparison with what by then was the conventional view of Palestrina, see Giuseppe Bertini, *Dizionario storico-critico degli scrittori di musica e de' più celebri artisti di tutte le nazioni sì antiche che moderne* (4 vols., Palermo: Tipografia Reale di Guerra, 1814–1815), vol. 3, pp. 153–155, which heavily relies on Alexandre Choron – François Fayolle, *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens, artistes et amateurs, morts ou vivants, qui se sont illustrés en une partie quelconque de la musique et des arts qui y sont relatifs [...]* (2 vols., Paris: Valade et Lenormant, 1810–1811), vol. 2, pp. 117–119.

7 It should be noted, however, that for the most part, the following translations were drastically abridged: Adrien de La Fage, "Notice sur Palestrina, d'après les Mémoires de Baini", in: *Revue Musicale*, 6 (1830), pp. 193–203, 241–251; Carl von Winterfeld, *Johannes Pierluigi von Palestrina, seine Werke und deren Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Tonkunst: mit Bezug auf Bainis neueste Forschungen* (Breslau: Georg Philipp Aderholz, 1832); Franz Sales Kandler, *Über das Leben und die Werke des G. Pierluigi da Palestrina [...] nach den "Memorie storico-critiche" des Abbate Giuseppe Baini [...] verfasst*, hrsg. mit einem Vorwort und mit gelegentlichen Anmerkungen von Raphael Georg Kiesewetter (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1834). As regards the unsold copies among the estate left by Baini, see Pietro Alfieri, "Biografia di monsignor Giuseppe Baini", in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 14 (1856), pp. 153–155, 177–178, 201–203, 209–211, 236–237, 251–252, 260–261, 265–267: 211.

8 Revealing biographical and intellectual profiles of Baini are offered by Adrien de La Fage, "Notice sur Joseph Baini", in: id., *Miscellanées musicales* (Paris: Comptoir des Imprimeurs Unis, 1844), pp. 505–523; Giacinto De Ferrari, "Biografia di monsignor d[on] Giuseppe Baini", in: *Giornale Arcadico di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, 121 (1849–1850), pp. 328–392; Alfieri, "Biografia"; Adrien de La Fage, "Notice sur la vie et les ouvrages de Joseph Baini", in: id., *Essais de diphthéographie musicale [...]* (Paris: O. Legouix, 1864), pp. 17–60.

9 The most recent general contribution concerning the Roman institute is Luigi Mezzadri, *Il Seminario Romano: storia di un'istituzione di cultura e di pietà* (Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni San Paolo, 2001).

fore an unrivalled contemporary expert of the *stile osservato*.¹⁰ In 1814 he was entrusted with the reorganization of the archives of the Cappella Sistina and in 1819 became *camerlengo* (i.e., general administrator) of the college of papal singers, an elective office that he held until his death. He also became its musical director, even though the title of *direttore perpetuo* was not officially used before 1841.¹¹ Endowed with sufficient financial resources, Baini was also able to furnish himself with a library which included, among other volumes, a collection of first editions and reprints by the Prenestine master and his contemporaries, scores drawn from unpublished compositions of Palestrina unearthed in the archives of the Roman basilicas and elsewhere, a selection from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sacred and secular musical repertoires, and theoretical, didactic, critical and historical treatises on music from the Greek era up to his own days.¹²

10 On the fanciful idea of a local trend in composition that originated with Palestrina (who, in Baini's opinion, became director of the school of music established in Rome by Giovanni Maria Nanino), see Helmut Hucke, "Palestrina als Autorität und Vorbild im 17. Jahrhundert", in: *Congresso internazionale sul tema Claudio Monteverdi e il suo tempo: relazioni e comunicazioni* (Venezia/Mantova/Cremona, 3–7 maggio 1968), a cura di Raffaello Monterosso (Verona: Stamperia Valdonega, 1969), pp. 253–261; Pierre Gaillard, "Histoire de la légende palestrinienne", in: *Revue de Musicologie*, 57 (1971), pp. 11–22; and Arnaldo Morelli, "Antimo Liberati, Matteo Simonelli e la tradizione palestriniana a Roma nella seconda metà del Seicento", in: *Atti del II Convegno internazionale di studi palestriniani: Palestrina e la sua presenza nella musica e nella cultura europea dal suo tempo ad oggi* (Anno Europeo della Musica, 3–5 maggio 1986), a cura di Lino Bianchi e Giancarlo Rostirolla (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina – Centro Studi Palestriniani, 1991), pp. 297–307.

11 Baini's career in the pontifical music establishment is reconstructed, on the basis of documents of the Fondo Cappella Sistina (the ancient chapel's archives) now housed in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, by Angela Pachovsky, "Organizzazione e storia", in: Leopold M. Kantner – Angela Pachovsky, *La cappella musicale pontificia nell'Ottocento* (Roma: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina – Hortus Musicus, 1998), chapter 1, pp. 19–64: 25–31, and "Appendice I: Documenti del Fondo Cappella Sistina della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana", pp. 193–212, for the transcriptions of the documents.

12 The annotated catalogue of the section of his library now preserved in the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome is the core of Stefania Soldati, *Giuseppe Baini e il mito di Palestrina* (Palestrina: Biblioteca Comunale Fantoniana, 1999), pp. 141–494. In fact, Baini bequeathed his entire archive to the library founded, according to the will of Cardinal Girolamo Casanate, by the Dominicans of the Monastery of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and opened to the public in 1701. Nevertheless, a part of Baini's estate – mainly consisting in editions and manuscripts of Palestrina's opuses – was entrusted to the archives of the Cappella Sistina: see Vincenzo De Gregorio, *La Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993), pp. 181–184.

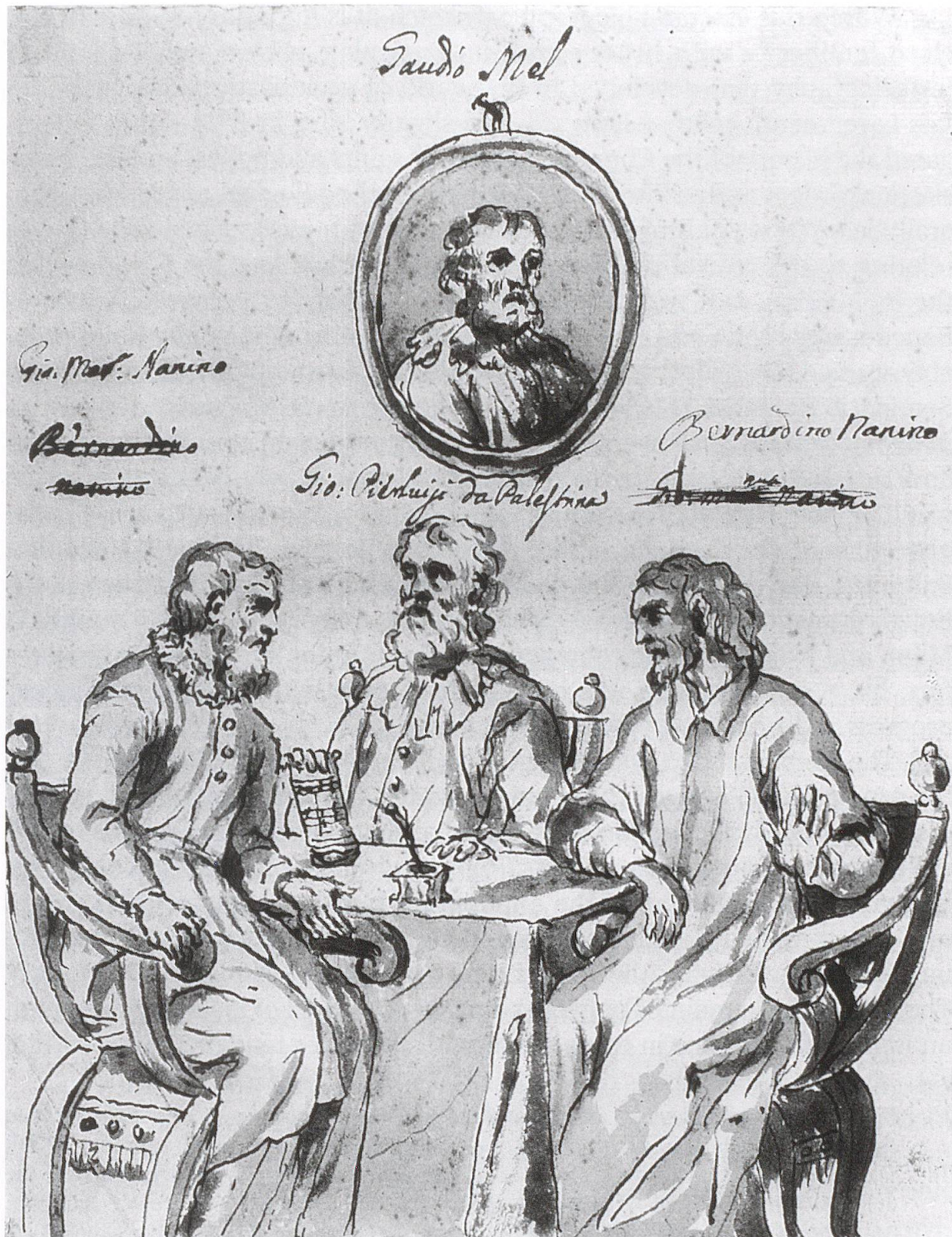


Fig. 2: A seventeenth-century anonymous watercolour painting depicting Gaudio Mel (i.e., Claude Goudimel) as the inspirer of the Roman polyphonic school established by Palestrina, Giovanni Maria Nanino and his brother Bernardino (private collection).

Within this essential biographical sketch, it is important to note Baini's close familiarity with history and, in particular, with a specific kind of historiography that developed in the world of ecclesiastical scholarship in late seventeenth-century France – and slightly later in Italy – that investigated the history of the Church, the lives of saints and popes, and the ecclesiastical orders and institutions. This new methodological approach – generally referred to as *historia critica* (critical history) – was sustained by studies relating to the critical philology of Dom Jean Mabillon, the Maurists and the Bollandists, and was quickly embraced in Italy by polygraphs such as Benedetto Bacchini and Ludovico Antonio Muratori. The young Baini probably studied these illustrious models during his formation years spent at the Seminario Romano. The Seminario was hostile to recent foreign tendencies in historiography such as those prompted by various historicist conceptions and Hegelian idealism, hermeneutic forms that slowly penetrated to the south of the Alps and remained extraneous to scholars who were more observant of the Catholic faith.¹³ Moreover, it must be pointed out that Baini was also adverse to the philosophical and historical doctrines of the Enlightenment, which reached their greatest diffusion in Italy – mainly in Milan and Naples – during the period of his training for the priesthood. In fact, his vision of history was harshly discordant with the notion of linear progress as formulated by the French *philosophes*.¹⁴

The *historia critica* was also eventually applied to secular subjects and the arts, and encouraged the inquiry into the “unaware witnesses” as concrete sources of information were called at that time. In earlier ages, archival documents, monuments, coins, tools and other objects surviving from the past were examined by the antiquaries, but these scholars and collectors generally had a somewhat limited conception of history and were not interested in clarifying the causes and connections of historical events.¹⁵ The acknowledgement of tangible sources in the field of history represented an important advance in comparison with the older tendency of admitting

13 See the relevant essays in: *Incidenza di Hegel: studi raccolti in occasione del secondo centenario della nascita del filosofo*, a cura di Fulvio Tessitore (Napoli: Morano, 1970).

14 For an introduction to the different conceptions of progress in modern Europe, see John B. Bury, *The idea of progress: an inquiry into its origin and growth* (London: Macmillan, 1920), and Gennaro Sasso, *Il tramonto di un mito: l'idea di “progresso” tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), particularly chapter 3: “Fra Settecento e Ottocento: l'idea di ‘progresso’ da Voltaire a Darwin”, pp. 109–144.

15 On the antiquarian approach to the study of the past, as opposed to the concept of history elaborated during the eighteenth century, see Krzysztof Pomian, “Maffei e Caylus”, in: *Nuovi studi maffeiiani*, Atti del convegno “Scipione Maffei e il Museo Maffeiiano” (Verona: Comune di Verona, 1985), pp. 187–205, also appearing in French as a chapter in: Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectionneurs, amateurs et curieux: Paris, Venise, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), pp. 195–211.

the sole facts reported by eyewitnesses. This traditional approach implied the evaluation of testimonies on the basis of the moral reliability and authority of the witnesses. The new method, *historia critica*, on the other hand, required a strong critical approach to distinguish truth from falsity, and this fostered the so-called auxiliary sciences of history, such as archaeology, palaeography, numismatology, bibliography and so forth. Critical history aimed at bringing about the separation from a history inspired by classical and humanistic ideals and expounded in accordance with rhetorical criteria. It therefore exhorted a return to the sources and strongly disregarded what had been previously stated without the support of authentic documents. In other words, critical history aimed at paving the way from a history made of opinions towards a history made of facts.¹⁶

Baini's greatest merit is the transposition of critical methodology to the field of musical biography (even if, as we shall see, his enterprise was only partially successful). He not only scrutinized nearly all Palestrina's editions printed during the composer's lifetime and various later reprints, he also copied in score manuscript works by Palestrina dispersed in many Roman churches. Furthermore, Baini made references to almost every Italian musical treatise of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (results, one might add, also obtainable by applying the principles of antiquarian erudition), and he even inspected many archives and libraries, both ecclesiastical and private, in search of undiscovered evidence that could shed light on less visible aspects of his subject. In doing so, he turned his attention to official ecclesiastical acts, synchronous memorials, chronicles and letters, registers of births, marriages and deaths, rules and financial accounts of local chapels. From the documentary point of view Baini anticipated the guidelines of positivistic research, an expression used here in connection with the inquiring process and not with the respective philosophy that was severely censured by the Roman Church and never approved by most Italian literati until very late in the century.¹⁷

It must be said that Baini was in an ideal position for pursuing his studies. He had free access to the archives of the Cappella Sistina and, as an officer of the pope, had little difficulty in being admitted to archives and libraries in Rome and the Pontifical State, and in obtaining source materials from such institutions. Scholars with fewer credentials in the Roman envi-

16 For a discussion of the issues and methods of the *historia critica*, see Luciano Malusa, "Le origini moderne della storia della filosofia (Osservazioni sulla 'storia critica della filosofia' tra Seicento e Settecento)", in: *Storiografia e filosofia del linguaggio*, a cura di Carlo Giacon (Padova: Antenore, 1975), pp. 3–41.

17 See *Il positivismo e la cultura italiana*, a cura di Emilio R. Papa (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1985).

ronment would certainly have had greater difficulties in carrying out similar tasks, and this is probably the reason why, in the fifty years or so that followed, the foundation of all writings on Palestrina substantially remained that established by Baini. It is worth noting that, even as late as 1894, Francesco Flores D'Arcais, a popular Italian music journalist and critic living in Rome, complained that “the biography of Palestrina is a book yet to be written and perhaps will never really be completed unless the archives that the papal court jealously keeps closed – thus inflicting great harm to historical research – will be truly opened to the scholars”.¹⁸ It is also of some interest to learn that Baini was the only person in possession of the keys to the archives of the papal chapel until he returned them in 1832 and that he did not allow anyone to copy his transcriptions of the works of Palestrina until they had been printed.¹⁹

Provided with a comprehensive factual support and sustained by a strong polemical bent coupled with wide erudition and sufficient working tools, Baini established many aspects of Palestrina's life, such as his family status, his career as a singer and later as a *magister cappellae*, and his relationships with colleagues, patrons and publishers. Baini did not hesitate in contradicting, on the basis of newly acquired data or penetrating criticism of those already known, the statements of earlier scholars, even if they were musical authorities or members of the ecclesiastical or social hierarchy. Exemplary, in this regard, is his revision – against the unquestionable opinion of musicographers dating back to the very early seventeenth century – of the deep-rooted myth about the salvation of sacred music accomplished by the *Missa papae Marcelli*.²⁰ Baini did not hesitate in criticizing a number of ecclesiastical *auctoritates* and writers on music (from Giovan Battisti Doni to Antonio Eximeno) who had claimed that Pope Marcellus II, having decided

18 Francesco Flores D'Arcais, “Le onoranze a Palestrina”, in: *Nuova Antologia di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti*, seconda serie, vol. 21 (1880), pp. 762–769: 764: “la biografia del Palestrina è un libro ancora da scrivere e forse non lo si potrà aver completo se non quando saranno veramente aperti agli studiosi gli archivi che la Corte Pontificia tiene ora gelosamente serrati con grave pregiudizio delle ricerche storiche”.

19 See, respectively, Pachovsky, “Organizzazione e storia”, p. 23, and Alfieri, “Biografia”, p. 178. Baini's attempts to realize the project of printing the whole corpus of Palestrinian compositions (later notoriously undertaken by the publishing house Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig) are remembered, along other coeval publishing initiatives based in Rome and centred on sixteenth-century sacred polyphony, in: Bianca Maria Antolini – Annalisa Bini, *Editori e librai musicali a Roma nella prima metà dell'Ottocento* (Roma: Edizioni Torre d'Orfeo, 1988), chapter “Musica antica e musica sacra”, pp. 111–126.

20 It is well known that the legend first appeared, at least in the literature on music, in: Agostino Agazzari, *Del sonare sopra il basso con tutti li stromenti e dell'uso loro nel concerto* (Siena: appresso Domenico Falcini, 1607), p. 11.

to banish polyphony from the liturgy, retracted his decision after listening to the Mass expressly composed by Palestrina.²¹

However, Baini did not only work as a documentalist. His reconstruction of Palestrina's biography is set against a wide historical background extending from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Particular attention is paid to advancements in the theory and technique of composition, but the scope of his research was by no means restricted to these matters: his interests included general history and, within it, ecclesiastical history which constituted the context in which man and his music operated. Baini's treatment becomes particularly detailed when he introduces the Flemish school, both because of its relevance to the Roman (and Italian) fourteenth- and sixteenth-century culture and in recognition of its influence in the formation of the young Palestrina.²² References to later centuries are made with the aim of delineating further changes in musical style. To sum up, Baini contextualized Palestrina's life and works in the course of history and by doing so exalted to the highest degree the epochal function carried out by his hero, who succeeded in imposing an extraordinary turning point in the development of music.

However, it would be a mistake to eulogize Baini: he is not worthy of it. Baini was a very poor biographer indeed. This is strikingly obvious when he deals with polysemous aspects implicit in historical documents, by conferring continuity on his narrative using dubious evidence, by inferring biographical and even psychological traits from the examination of the works of Palestrina or, by reversing the process, deducing explanations concerning compositions from biographical details. Needless to say, interventions of this sort were not considered inherently improper: the earliest, quasi-contemporary, handbook for biographers – James Field Stanfield's *An essay on the study and composition of biography* (Sunderland: George Garbutt, 1813) – even recommended them. Stanfield, however, advised the utmost prudence and the strictest adherence to what was undoubtedly proven. This is not exactly the case with Baini.

Baini was interested in transmitting a powerfully connoted portrait of the Roman master in which were interweaved both religious and artistic aspects of the composer's life and work. According to the biographer, Palestrina

21 Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 1, pp. 171–242. On this subject, see also Leonida Busi, *Il padre G. B. Martini musicista-letterato del secolo XVIII: notizie* (Bologna: Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1891), pp. 247–271; Gaillard, “Histoire de la légende palestrinienne”; *Pope Marcellus Mass: an authoritative score, background and sources, history and analysis, views and comments*, ed. Lewis Lockwood (New York: Norton, 1975); and Oscar Mischiati, “‘Ut verba intelligenrentur’: circostanze e connessioni a proposito della *Missa papae Marcelli*”, in: *Atti del Convegno di studi palestriniani* (28 settembre – 2 ottobre 1975), a cura di Francesco Luisi (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1977), pp. 415–426.

22 It is also worth noting that many Flemish musical and documental sources were available to Baini from the Cappella Sistina archives.

was very poor and had to rely on financial support for the printing of his works. Yet despite those adverse conditions he sacrificed his whole life to music and always conducted himself piously, being strenuously intent on fulfilling his earthly mission: the accomplishment of God's will. Intellectual tension, material deprivation and moral sufferance, combined with faith, meditation and genius, with the assistance of divine providence, earned him a miraculous creative production that, in Baini's evaluation, stands at the highest peak ever attained in music. Palestrina was a *musicus philosophicus*,²³ a qualification that, in acknowledging his skill in the investigation of nature and its imitation by means of music, is to be kept in even greater esteem if one considers that music – the highest of the arts, in the opinion of the abbot – unlike poetry, painting and sculpture, did not have the advantage of the rediscovery of classical masterpieces that had led to the *risorgimento* (a term at that time preferred to the synonymous Renaissance). Palestrina, by redeeming sacred music from the “perversion” of the Flemish school and by responding to the dictates of the counter-reformed Church, realized a model of perfect art in which truth and beauty are admirably conjugated and which, therefore, will be never surpassed. Palestrina, in conclusion, was little less than a saint and his output was a kind of revelation.

So as not to tarnish the venerable image that he had created, Baini was to some extent prepared to sacrifice the veracity of historical facts and their interpretation, and even to infringe on the criteria chosen to guide his work. Pietro Alfieri, a Roman priest, composer and a passionate admirer of Palestrina's music, testified that Baini always refused to visit the archives in the small town of Palestrina, a few miles from Rome and birthplace of the great composer; a fact later confirmed by Alberto Cametti: “to the repeated requests of his pupil Pietro Cicerchia – who came from the town of Palestrina – to go rummaging in that archive [...] [Baini] always responded negatively”.²⁴ A further issue is discussed by Alfieri when he recalls the following episode:

23 The issue had already been raised by Vincenzo Galilei, *Fronimo: dialogo [...] nel quale si contengono le vere, et necessarie regole del intavolare la musica nel liuto* (Vinegia: erede di Girolamo Scotto, 1568); this helps to specify Baini's obsolete aesthetic attitude.

24 Alberto Cametti, *Cenni biografici di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina compilati nell'occasione del 3.º centenario della sua morte* (Milano: R. Stabilimento Tito di Gio. Ricordi e Francesco Lucca di G. Ricordi & C., 1894; already appeared in a number of instalments in the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* of the same year), p. XVI: “invitato più volte dal suo scolaro Pietro Cicerchia, prenestino, a recarsi a rovistare in quell'archivio [...] [Baini] rispose sempre negativamente”; and Pietro Alfieri, *Prodromo sulla restaurazione de' libri di canto ecclesiastico detto gregoriano* (Roma: Tipografia Monaldi, 1857), p. 77. The Palestrinian documents later found by Cicerchia, that repudiated the assumptions made by Baini on the composer's youth, were published for the first time, though in a compendious way, in: Karl Eduard Schelle, *Die päpstliche Sängerschule in Rom, genannt die Sixtinische Kapelle: ein musikhistorisches Bild* (Wien: J. P. Gotthard, 1872).

[Baini] delivered the aforementioned work [the *Memorie storico-critiche*] to the philologist [Giuseppe Antonio] Guattani for revision; who subsequently gave him the friendly advice of rewriting it, given that in many passages Baini had indulged more in his imagination than in reality, and that he had endeavoured to be, so to say, more pleasing than veracious: which, as anyone knows, is not consentient to the purpose of the critical art of history. But Baini did not take Guattani's advice, using the excuse that he did not feel strong enough to bear again the fatigue already endured for too many years. Instead, he assigned to another friend, Professor [Luigi] Portelli, [...] the task of amending some passages of incorrect diction, but without changing the substance of the dictate. A careful examination of this work is sufficient to realize that it manifests the defects noted by Guattani and to deduce that it is indeed written in a romantic rather than historical style.²⁵

Rather than dwelling on further details, it is important to highlight Baini's ultra-conservative aesthetic and moral convictions, because they not only affected his musical appreciation but also shaped his biographical and historical judgement. He was genuinely persuaded that Palestrina, after a long preparatory phase that ended in the name of the Flemish school, reached the apex of the music of any age, past and future. Consequently, he claimed that, when the composer died, music moved again towards corruption and degeneration, particularly because of the advancement of *stile organico*, i.e. the mixing of voices and instruments. As he put it:

As painting, elevated to the highest degree of perfection by Raffaello Sanzio, at his death was found to be more imperfect than it was at the time of his birth and was maltreated and vilified by his pupils, who dispersed themselves in different styles, so music, raised to the most sublime degree of perfection by Giovanni Pierluigi, at his death was found to be more imperfect than it was at the time of his birth, and his very pupils transformed it, as if effected by a sudden metamorphosis, into a stammering child.²⁶

* * *

25 Alfieri, "Biografia", pp. 251–252: "consegnata la menzionata opera [le *Memorie storico-critiche*] al filologo [Giuseppe Antonio] Guattani per la revisione, questi gli diè l'amichevole consiglio di rifonderla, avendo in diversi punti il Baini più secondata la sua immaginazione che la realtà, ed essendosi studiato, come a dire, più di dilettere che d'esser verace: il che, siccome ognun vede, non è consentaneo allo scopo dell'arte critica della storia. Ma il Baini non credette di arrendersi alle riflessioni del Guattani, adducendo la scusa di non sentirsi da tanto di soggiacere di nuovo ad una fatica già per troppo [*sic*] lunghi anni sopportata, e solamente rimise all'arbitrio dell'altro suo amico il professore [Luigi] Portelli [...] di emendarla in qualche punto di men propria dizione, senza però cambiarne la sostanza del dettato. Che poi quest'opera presenti i difetti notati dal Guattani, basterà il leggerla attentamente onde convincersene, e rilevare essere difatti scritta in forma più tosto romantica che storica".

26 Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 2, p. 432: "Come la pittura, elevata da Raffaello Sanzio al più alto grado di perfezione, trovossi alla morte di lui, più imperfetta di quello che era al di lui nascere, e fu dai medesimi suoi scolari, che si divisero in varii stili, non poco malmenata e invilita: così la musica, innalzata al più sublime grado di perfezione da Giovanni Pierluigi, trovossi alla sua morte più imperfetta di quello che

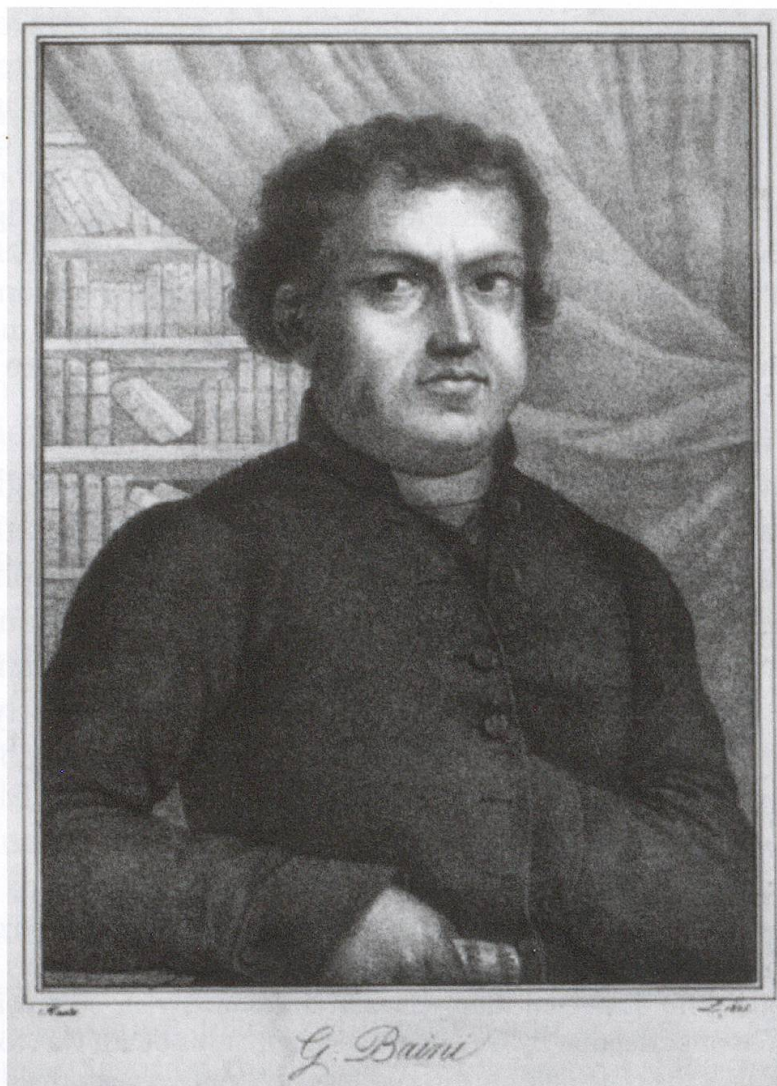


Fig. 3: Giuseppe Baini in a lithography by L. Haster published in: *Iconografia d'Euterpe, ossia Collezione di ritratti, con notizie biografiche dei più celebri armonisti antichi e moderni* (Londra: presso Jousnel, Walker & Co., 1824).

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, several Italian *letterati* celebrated Palestrina, mostly in essays aimed at educating the middle classes. Other writers involved the composer in debates concerning sacred music or placed him at the centre of substantial chapters in their general outlines of the history of music. Compared to their European counterparts, Italian musicographers, however, were somewhat slow in showing any interest in past ages.²⁷

era al di lui nascere, e fu dai medesimi suoi scolari cangiata con metamorfosi improvvisa in una balbuziente bambina”.

27 For a survey of nineteenth-century Italian writings dealing mostly with earlier music, see Fausto Torrefranca, “Problemi della nostra cultura musicale”, in: *Nuova Antologia di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti*, serie V, 153 (1911), pp. 130–142; being a rather biased account, it should at least be complemented with Giovanni Tebaldini, “Contributo critico-bibliografico alla cronaca della ‘musicologia’ in Italia nella seconda metà del sec. XIX”, in: *Harmonia*, 2/1–2 (January 1914), pp. 6–13, and 2/6 (June 1914), pp. 6–13.



GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI

DA PALESTRINA

PRINCIPE DELLA MUSICA

1.° 1324. M. 1394.

Fig. 4: Palestrina in an etching by Samuel F. Amsler from a drawing by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld published for the first time as the frontispiece of Giuseppe Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina [...]* (Roma: dalla Società Tipografica, 1828).

And it must also be pointed out that for a long time these contributions were completely divorced from practical, aural experience. In Rome the papal choir revived its Palestrinian repertoire only as late as the 1890s, and in other cities public performances of Palestrina's music were first promoted only around the same time: in Milan, for example, the *Missa papae Marcelli* was heard for the first time in 1890, despite the fact that its printed score had been available since 1847 from the local publisher Ricordi.²⁸

28 About the Cappella Sistina, see Angela Pachovsky, "Il repertorio", in: Kantner – Pachovsky, *La cappella musicale pontificia nell'Ottocento*, chapter 3, pp. 79–115. For the performances of Palestrina's music in Milan, see Michelangelo Gabbrielli, "La musica sacra", in: *Milano musicale, 1861–1897*, a cura di Bianca Maria Antolini (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1999), pp. 311–331: 322–323. As regards the edition of Palestrina's Mass (Milano: I. R. Stabilimento Nazionale Privilegiato di Giovanni Ricordi, 1847), see the eloquent comment of Raimondo Boucheron, "Messa di Pier Luigi detto il Palestrina

Given that no new documentary discoveries appeared before the last decades of the century, all factual accounts of the composer's life invariably summarized Baini's biography.²⁹ However, a conspicuous part of his critical propositions was rejected. The incompatibility of the Roman priest's vision and the exegetical attitudes that later prevailed is immediately evident in the display of opposing theoretical directions concerning the tension between past and present. To Baini, a relatively brief period of the sixteenth century represented the moment of the highest elevation ever attained by music. His beliefs and his way of thinking about music indicate the degree of his attraction to an era of which, not surprisingly, he advocated a return. Few if any, among those who were concerned with music in nineteenth-century Italy, would have shared such an extreme point of view as his. Many of them, indeed, objected that Palestrina was not to be regarded as a "final destination" rather, in their view, the "starting point" of a lengthy development still in progress and whose end was confidently expected to be still a long way off.

For instance, Isidoro Cambiasi, in a collection of biographical portraits of distinguished men published in 1855, abridged Baini's tale and highly praised Palestrina, but concluded by affirming that, in the nearly three centuries that followed his death,

harmony had been enriched with countless new combinations; the art of singing had developed and perfected; and moreover, to give it support, orchestral accompaniments had been created. In short, the dramatic expression of the word acquired a power which, in the sixteenth century, one could not have even the slightest idea.³⁰

intitolata a papa Marcello", in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 6 (1847), pp. 209–211 (partially quoted below in the present paper). For a wider recognition of the revival of early music in nineteenth-century Italy, see Marco Di Pasquale, "Dei concerti storici in Italia e di Oscar Chilesotti", in: *Oscar Chilesotti, la musica antica e la musicologia storica*, a cura di Ivano Cavallini (Venezia: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 2000), pp. 25–113.

29 See, for example, Giovanni Simone Mayr, "Osservazioni di un vecchio suonatore di viola abitante in Bergamo intorno ad un articolo del Signor de Sevelinges inserito nella Biografia Universale sulla vita e le opere di Pier-Luigi Palestrina", in: *Gazzetta Privilegiata di Milano*, no. 104 (14.04.1835), pp. 413–416, no. 105 (15.04.1835), pp. 417–419, no. 106 (16.04.1835), pp. 421–424; reprinted in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 1 (1842), pp. 182–184, 186–188, 193–194, 198–199, again in: *Per la solenne inaugurazione del monumento eretto alla memoria del celebre maestro Giovanni Simone Mayr nella basilica di S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo: orazione detta da monsignor canonico teologo Giovanni Finazzi* (Bergamo: Tipografia Mazzoleni, 1853), pp. 77 ff., and in modern edition in: Giovanni Simone Mayr, *Passi scelti dallo Zibaldone e altri scritti*, a cura di Arrigo Gazzaniga, revisione di Angela Romagnoli e Pietro Zappalà (Bergamo: Bolis, 1993), pp. 143–159.

30 Isidoro Cambiasi, "Pier Luigi da Palestrina", in: *Storia delle lettere e delle arti in Italia, giusta le reciproche loro corrispondenze, ordinata nelle vite e nei ritratti degli uomini illustri dal secolo XIII fino ai nostri giorni per cura di Giuseppe Rovani* (4 vols., Milano: per Borroni e Scotti [vols. 1–2], per Francesco Sanvito [vols. 3–4], 1855–1858), vol. 1,

Obviously, Cambiasi – founder with Giovanni Ricordi of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, patron of the arts and theatre critic – believed history to be going in a diametrically different direction to that envisaged by Baini and placed more emphasis on opera than sacred music.

Many persons connected with the Church also agreed that, after Palestrina, music had in fact undergone important developments rather than falling into degeneration, as in Baini's vision. Even if dissatisfied with the style adopted by the modern *maestri di cappella* (owing to its contamination with operatic fashion), they did not preach a return to earlier performance practices. On the contrary, they felt that the *a cappella* manner was not an obligatory route for rescuing Catholic music and, in their opinion, what needed to be restored was not a set of strictly-determined compositional procedures, but the function that music had traditionally fulfilled in the liturgy.

Let us consider, for instance, the position of Pietro Alfieri.³¹ He was certainly not in sympathy with the more worldly musical expressions of his time. Far from it, Alfieri was closely committed to the dissemination of *stile osservato* of the early Roman school, though usually with unsatisfactory results:

I have tracked down in the libraries and archives of Rome the most beautiful pieces which exist in such a [polyphonic] style, and have transcribed them into score with the earnest hope that they will again be widely performed, [...] I have published several collections of them with no small expense of my own and I have heard with pleasure that quite a number of such compositions have been performed in Catholic churches in England and France. In Italy, however, only in a few places have works by Palestrina been performed. Therefore,

pp. 337–342: 341: “L’armonia di poi arricchissi d’infinite nuove combinazioni, l’arte del canto si venne formando e perfezionando; più ancora, per suo sostegno crearonsi gli accompagnamenti dell’orchestra; insomma l’espressione drammatica della parola acquistò un potere di cui nel secolo XVI non potevasi aver alcun’idea”. The phrase is reproduced almost word by word in: Fermo Bellini, *Fasti della civiltà, coltura e indipendenza degl’italiani compendiate in sei periodi [...] offerti agli altari e alla patria* (3 vols., Venezia: dalla Tip. Editr. di Pietro Naratovich, 1859–1861), vol. 2, p. 274. Fermo Bellini was a composer and historian whose musical treatises, especially those with didactic aims, enjoyed a certain reputation; see Luigi Lugaresi, *Giuseppe e Fermo Bellini: intellettuali traspadani dell’Ottocento* (Rovigo: Minelliana, 2000). Giuseppe Rovani, the editor of *Storia delle lettere e delle arti in Italia*, the volume featuring Cambiasi’s article, was a Milanese novelist and journalist who sympathized with the *Scapigliatura*, the artistic and literary movement engaged in the renovation of Italian culture and initially led by the poet, composer and librettist Arrigo Boito.

31 The most extensive biographical reference to Alfieri is Francesco Fabi Montani, “Mon-signor Pietro Alfieri maestro compositore di musica”, in: *Il Buonarroti*, serie II, 4/3 (March 1869), pp. 53–62.

I warmly urge choir conductors, especially in Italy, to perform such compositions in their cathedrals.³²

Nevertheless, Alfieri rejected Baini's restrictive mode of thinking and, quite significantly, did so while in the act of writing his biography, retorting that:

in the study of music, and particularly in the study of sacred composition, it is profitable to observe and imitate the authors of the sixteenth century for the unattainable sublimity of their concepts, but – given that in the subsequent centuries harmonic art has greatly advanced and composition has taken a broader conduct – it is certainly not reprehensible that even music should draw benefit from these achievements of art, provided that one does not fall into the profane and sensual. Nobody could deny that the majority, if not all of compositions by the illustrious masters of the sixteenth century, are more valuable than others for the house of prayer; and therefore it would be greatly advantageous for them to be heard again by means of great masses [i.e., large choirs], in the main churches of the Catholic world on the occasion of annual functions, especially on Lent Sundays, as is the custom in Rome in the basilicas of St Peter and St John. But this does not exclude the possibility of creating other compositions, no less worthy of those aforementioned, without repudiating some of the most appropriate new elements introduced in this science and art during more than two and a half centuries.³³

32 Pietro Alfieri, *Ristabilimento del canto e della musica ecclesiastica: considerazioni scritte in occasione de' molteplici reclami contro gli abusi insorti in varie chiese d'Italia e di Francia, e che servono in risposta alla quistione sul canto detto dai francesi faux-bourdon, adoperato nell'esequie di S.A.R. il duca d'Orleans in Parigi, ed ai dilleggiamenti pubblicati dal signor Didron contro i riti di Roma* (Roma: Tipografia delle Belle Arti, 1843; off-print from *Annali delle Scienze Religiose*, vol. 16/46–48 [1843]), p. 99: “ho rintracciato nelle biblioteche ed archivi di Roma i più bei pezzi, che esistono in siffatto stile [polifonico], mettendoli in partitura, e quindi bramando ardentemente, che si propagassero di nuovo, [...] ne ho pubblicato delle raccolte con ispesa mia non piccola: ed ho inteso con piacere essere state eseguite parecchie composizioni nelle chiese cattoliche d'Inghilterra ed in alcune di Francia. In Italia però appena in qualche luogo si è eseguita alcuna composizione del Palestrina. Pel che esorto caldamente i direttori dei cori, particolarmente italiani, a fare eseguire siffatte composizioni nelle cattedrali”. The editions alluded to in the quotation are the following: *Raccolta di musica sacra in cui contengonsi i capi lavori de' più celebri compositori italiani, consistente in messe, sequenze, offertorij, mottetti, salmi, inni, responsorij* (7 vols., Roma: Pietro Pittarelli [vols. 1–3], then Filippo Martelli [vols. 4–7], 1838–1846); *Excerpta ex celebrioribus de musica viris, Io. Petro Aloisio praenestino, Thoma Ludovico a Victoria abulensi, et Gregorio Allegrio romano in usum cathedralium, et collegialium ecclesiarum concinenda in dominica palmorum, et majori hebdomada* (Roma: Pietro Pittarelli, 1840); *Raccolta di mottetti a quattro voci di Gio. Pier Luigi da Palestrina, di Ludovico da Vittoria d'Avila, e di Felice Anerio romano, compositori del seculo XVI* (Roma: Luigi Polisiero, 1841); and *Felicitas Anerii, Io. Petri Aloisii praenestini, et Io. M. Nanini a Valerano fragmenta hymnorum in festo ss.mi nominis Iesu* (Roma: Pietro Pittarelli, 1842).

33 Alfieri, “Biografia”, p. 203: “nello studio della musica, egli è proficuo, e per le sacre composizioni in ispecie, l'osservare ed imitare nella sublimità inarrivabile de' concetti gli autori del secolo XVI, ma l'arte armonica essendo ne' secoli posteriori di molto progredita, ed avendo la composizione preso un andamento più ampio, non è certo

The author was fully consistent with the dictate of the Church and with what he had proposed in a previous essay, by saying:

And then, which kind of chant or music used so far would be suitable to the church? [...] the chant most fitting for the Mass and divine offices of the church may be the Gregorian chant performed by ecclesiastics, also accompanied by the organ [...] Secondly, one can also use a unison chant, likewise accompanied by the organ playing the *cantus firmus* [...] Third, it may be the music used in the sixteenth century after the Council of Trent or other new music of a similar kind. Fourth, where there is a chapel [i.e., an ensemble consisting of singers and instrumentalists], one could use a broader genre in the *stile organico* [i.e., voices and instruments together], but with few repetitions and without solos, duets and trios, almost always for full choir and proceeding with moderation [...] in accordance with the edict of the Holy Apostolic Visitation of 1665 cited above.³⁴

No doubt, Palestrina continued to represent a model for ecclesiastical musicians, but the ideal character of the *princeps musicae* was determined in moral terms rather than through the analysis of his compositions. Indeed, at least in Italy, the actual descriptions of his production and the so-called *stile alla Palestrina* remained quite superficial, conditioned as they were by current thoughts in music theory, the creative process and performing practice. Highly instructive, in this regard, is the already mentioned article that Boucheron wrote to announce the publication of the *Missa papae Marcelli* as the first issue of the “Antologia Classica Musicale”, the series of sheet music

mal fatto che anche le musiche da queste conquiste dell'arte traggano vantaggio, purché non si cada nel profano e nel sensuale. Nessuno potrebbe negare che le composizioni degl'illustri maestri del secolo XVI, se non tutte, la maggior parte almeno, non sieno degne più ch'altre mai della casa di orazione; e perciò anzi sarebbe cosa ottima di farle nuovamente sentire con grandi masse nelle principali chiese dell'orbe cattolico in qualche funzione annuale, particolarmente nelle domeniche di Quaresima, siccome si costuma in Roma nelle basiliche di S. Pietro e di S. Giovanni; però ciò non toglie che possano crearsi delle altre non meno degne di quelle, e senza ripudiare alcuni de' più appropriati nuovi elementi introdotti in questa scienza ed arte nello spazio di oltre due secoli e mezzo”.

34 Alfieri, *Ristabilimento del canto*, pp. 35–36: “E qual genere dunque di canto o di musica finora usati potrà addirsi alla chiesa? [...] il canto convenevole alla chiesa nella messa e negli ufficii divini potrà essere il gregoriano eseguito dagli ecclesiastici, accompagnato eziandio dall'organo [...] Potrà usarsi inoltre un canto unisono figurato ed accompagnato parimenti dall'organo, ove si eseguisce il canto fermo [...] Potrà essere in terzo luogo la musica usata nel secolo decimo sesto dopo il Concilio di Trento od altra nuova di simil genere. In quarto luogo, ove sia la cappella musicale, potrà usarsi un genere più spazioso di stile organico, ma con poche ripetizioni e senza assoli, né con duetti, né con terzetti, ma quasi sempre piena [*sic*] e condotta [*sic*] con moderazione [...] conforme all'editto della S[acra] [Congregazione della] V[isita] Apostolica del 1665 di sopra riferito”. Concerning the 1665 edict, see Fiorenzo Romita, *Ius musicae liturgicae: dissertatio historico-iuridica* (Torino: ex Officina libraria Marietti, 1936).

expressly produced for the subscribers of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*.³⁵ After having stated, in perfect accordance with Baini, that God himself had inspired Palestrina, he goes on to depict that masterpiece in these terms:

the Pope Marcellus Mass [is] simple without being vulgar, learned without complexities that obscure the clarity of the concept or that leads to a confusion of words and undermine the almost virginal, so to speak, purity of the harmony [...]

[...] one who barely knows how to read a score, and understands what contrapuntal artifice is, cannot but admire the purity of the style, the naturalness of the melodies, their harmonious interlacement and the majestic bearing of the whole. But what deserves still more admiration is the eminently religious character that Palestrina, perhaps more than any other composer, was able to infuse in his music: a characteristic that represents its major feature and did not fade, despite the revolutions of taste and the expansion of artistic means that occurred in the course of nearly three centuries.

The fact that Palestrina's music is exclusively constructed on the intertwining of voices in a polyphonic texture may probably be one of the main reasons of it being supremely suitable for religious worship [...]

But I think that the religious character of Palestrina's music results from him having fully grasped the real office by which art is called to join the cult [...]

And the very office of music in the temple is [...] to quell the tumult of the passions in the listeners [...] In this way it was certainly understood by Palestrina; and consequently, having chosen genuine melodies flowing through intervals that are easy to sing and sweet to listen to, and having interlaced them just enough to attract the attention without distracting, he abstained from whatever might have affected the sweetness and peace that he wanted to infuse into the soul of the listeners, even neglecting to a certain degree the expression of the word where it seemed inappropriate to the intended purpose. Sweetness and peace emanate from the rhythms that quietly flow like waves of a well-levelled channel, sweetness and peace emanate from the harmony that springs pure and clear from the peaceful intertwining of simple and genuine melodies, sweetness and peace emanate from modulations mainly limited to the diatonic genus. In conclusion, one could say that it proceeds with the demeanour of a chaste and noble matron who does not take a step or a look, or does not undertake any act that is not decent and modest.

The freely fugal style that predominates, together with the simplicity and straightforwardness of the melodies unspoiled by unnecessary indentations, contributes to the nobility and effectiveness of this music, since it is proper to this style to win the attention of the person who listens and to transport him in a kind of ecstasy. From such things, as a streamlet from the source, derive useful lessons for church music in general, which, to be excellent, must only be great and simple and proceed in a calm and pure manner, seeking to master the tumult of the affections without provoking rebellious passions.³⁶

35 On Boucheron, see Mariateresa Dellaborra, *Raimondo Boucheron (1800–1876) compositore, didatta, critico, filosofo della musica* (Milano: Rugginenti, 1999).

36 Boucheron, "Messa di Pier Luigi detto il Palestrina", p. 210: "la Messa di Papa Marcello [è] semplice senza cadere nel triviale, dotta senza che la complicazione offuschi la chiarezza del concetto o induca confusion di parole e nuocia alla purezza, direi quasi verginale, dell'armonia [...] chi appena sa leggere una partizione, e intende che sia artificio contrappuntistico, non può non ammirare in questa la purezza dello stile, la naturalezza delle melodie, l'armonioso loro intreccio e l'andamento maestoso di tutto l'insieme. Ma ciò che merita maggiore ammirazione si è il carattere eminentemente

Boucheron does not go into greater details pertaining to compositional practice and stylistic matters. As a consequence, his treatment does not allow the unequivocal identification either of the *Missa papae Marcelli* or of any other piece by Palestrina or even any piece belonging to the more vaguely defined *stile osservato*. Many other appraisals of Palestrina's works expressed by Italian musicographers of this period are guided by the same or similarly inconclusive criteria.

Various (often insufficiently defined) concepts of progress also pervade the handbooks giving instruction in the history of music that timidly began to be published in Italy and in a number of biographical medleys of personalities (including Palestrina) reputed to have created the history of Italian culture. These texts presented the chronological unfolding of the arts as a continuous, ascending sequence that, as far as music was concerned, openly contradicted Baini's conviction that Palestrina left no room for further improvement.³⁷ Of course, Palestrina was still prized as a pivotal figure of a

religioso che il Palestrina forse più d'ogni altro compositore seppe infondere nella sua musica: carattere che ne forma il precipuo pregio, e non si è punto smentito, non ostanti le rivoluzioni del gusto e l'ampliarsi dei mezzi dell'arte operatosi nel corso di quasi tre secoli. [...] L'esser la musica di Palestrina tessuta per sole voci può sembrare uno dei principali motivi per cui riesce sommamente adatta al tempio [...] Ma io penso che il carattere religioso della musica di Palestrina derivi dall'aver colpito il vero ufficio per cui l'arte è chiamata a far parte del culto [...] E l'ufficio della musica nel tempio egli è appunto [...] di acquetare negli ascoltanti il tumulto delle passioni [...] Così l'intese certamente il Palestrina; epperò, scelto avendo melodie schiette e scorrenti per intervalli facili a cantarsi come a udirsi soavi, e quelle intrecciando quel tanto che basta ad attirarsi senz'urto l'attenzione, da ogni cosa si astenne che alterar potesse la soavità e pace che egli voleva trasfondere nell'animo degli uditori, trascurando anche sino ad un certo punto l'espressione della parola ove questa gli sembrava inopportuna al fine prefisso. Soavità e pace spira il ritmo che scorre tranquillo come le onde di ben livellato canale, soavità e pace dall'armonia scaturiente pura e limpida dal quieto intreccio delle melodie semplici e schiette, soavità e pace dalla modulazione ristretta per lo più al genere diatonico. Diresti insomma che essa procede col contegno di casta e nobile matrona, la quale non muove passo o sguardo, non fa atto che decoroso e pudico non sia. Lo stile liberamente fugato che vi domina, congiunto alla semplicità e schiettezza delle melodie non guaste da inutili frastagli, contribuisce a dare a questa musica nobiltà ed efficacia, giacché egli è proprio di questo stile il cattivarsi l'attenzione di chi ascolta e rapirla in una specie di estasi. Dalle quali cose come rivo da fonte derivano utili insegnamenti per la musica ecclesiastica in genere, la quale, per essere eccellente, deve appunto essere grande e semplice, e procedere pacata e pura, mirando a dominare il tumulto degli affetti, non a suscitare le ribelli passioni”.

37 I shall mention here only the most important handbooks in the history of music: Giuseppe Trambusti, *Storia della musica e specialmente dell'italiana* (Velletri: Tipografia Colonnese, 1857); Abramo Basevi, *Compendio della storia della musica* (2 vols., Firenze: Gio. Gualberto Guidi, 1865–1866; previously published in instalments in: *Boccherini: Giornale Musicale per le Società del Quartetto* of the same years); Giovanni Masutto, *La musica: della sua origine e della sua storia* (Venezia: Tipografia della Società di Mutuo

former age, but the reasons proposed to legitimate this assumption sounded new. One recurring issue was that he was Italian. This simple observation was charged with emphatic patriotic and nationalistic implications, especially after the civil disorders of 1848 that strengthened the Italian aspirations to political independence. On the one hand, Palestrina was elevated to the status of civil hero for asserting the supremacy of melody over counterpoint; on the other, melody was believed to be the natural expression of the innate musical disposition of the Italians.

Giuseppe Zirardini, a man of letters and a patriot of Catholic moderate temper, for example, linked the moral theme to the proud claim of Italy's leadership in Western musical history and argued that the withdrawal of tradition, to which is committed the transmission of the native character of Italian music, was the cause of the present decadent state of church music (*italics mine*):

Whoever heard the masterpieces of the creator of the new language of music [i.e., Palestrina] sung in the Sistine Chapel would maintain that no modern sacred music, though aided by the artifice of multiple combinations and varied orchestral accompaniments, is as apt as the ancient one to drive one to sublime meditations and to sudden enthusiasms. The conservatories and academies that have neglected *the harmonies of the Genius from Preneste, from which first originated the empire of Italian music*, are therefore to be much blamed.³⁸

However, due to the ubiquity of many topics and the semantic mobility of certain words that played an essential role in the Italian (and European) debate throughout that century, in the subsequent literature that we are about to investigate it is often difficult to distinguish the repetition of con-

Soccorso fra compositori-tipografi, 1877); Alfredo Untersteiner, *Storia della musica* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli Editore-Libraio della Real Casa, 1893; revised by the author until the fourth edition in 1916); Arnaldo Bonaventura, *Manuale di storia della musica* (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti Editore, 1898; with various reprints); Guido Gasperini, *Storia della musica: letture fatte in Firenze alla Sala Maglioni, inverno 1899* (Firenze: Tipografia Baroni e Lastrucci, 1899). A quasi-exhaustive bibliographical survey and useful considerations for the critical appraisal of that literature are given in: Ivano Cavallini, "Per uno studio della storiografia musicale in Italia nel XIX secolo", in: *Musica e Storia*, 13/2 (August 2005), pp. 197–229.

38 Giuseppe Zirardini, "Pier Luigi da Palestrina", in: id., *L'Italia letteraria ed artistica: galleria di cento ritratti de' poeti, prosatori, scultori, architetti e musicisti più illustri con cenni storici [...] e con un discorso sul genio italiano per opera di E. J. Delecluze* (Parigi: Raudry, Libreria Europea, 1850), pp. 489–491: 491: "Chi udì cantati nella cappella Sistina i capolavori del creatore di nuova lingua musicale [= Palestrina], afferma che nessuna musica sacra moderna, benché aiutata dall'artificio delle molteplici combinazioni, e da' variati accompagnamenti d'orchestra, rapisce al pari dell'antica a sublimi meditazioni ed a improvvisi entusiasmi. In molto biasimo dunque cadono que' Conservatorj ed Accademie che han poste in non cale *le armonie del Genio di Preneste, da cui primo originò l'impero della musica italiana*" (*italics mine*). *Pr(a)eneste* is the latin name of the town at present called Palestrina.

cepts already notified by Baini from the statements arising from independent reflections. Baini had insisted on the intrinsic Italian qualities displayed in Palestrina's art, in opposition to the foreign features that the Flemish masters had introduced into the peninsula. On several pages of his book Baini declares his affection for his homeland and boasts the Italian primacy in the matter of music since its *risorgimento/rinascimento*, instigated by the Italians of the *trecento* and that led to the climax of Palestrina. Yet one somehow doubts that the priest's pride in his fatherland and the nationalistic ideologies that developed during the second half of the century had much in common.³⁹ Nothing suggests contiguity between the abbot's thought and the intendments of the many musicographers who reiterated with increasing insistence the inherently Italian character of the *princeps musicae* and flaunted him as a true national relic. The aversion to Flemish music was an issue already firmly rooted in the common consciousness well before the appearance of the *Memorie storico-critiche*.⁴⁰ Moreover, when he declares "Rome and Italy at last liberated" just because the French (but not other foreign rulers) had been forced to leave Italy, Baini does not seem to be pervaded by a longing for the unity and independence of the country which, by contrast, animated the writers to whom I shall refer.⁴¹ To sum up, one has reasons to believe that Baini's love for his country has little (if anything) to do with the patriotism of others and that even the respective concepts of homeland could imply geographical and political notions that do not coincide.

39 For a different (and, I find, cursory) evaluation of Baini's "nationalism", see Lenneberg, *Witnesses and scholars*, p. 108. A general introduction to nationalistic ideologies is provided by Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; revised and extended edition, London: Verso, 1991); and Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Particularly relevant for the different orientations of Italian nationalism both before and after the achievement of national unity are Alberto Mario Banti, *La nazione del risorgimento: parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita* (Torino: Einaudi, 2000); and Enrica Di Ciommo, *I confini dell'identità: teorie e modelli di nazione in Italia* (Roma/Bari: Laterza, 2005). Gilles Pécout, *Naissance de l'Italie contemporaine, 1770–1922* (Paris: Editions Nathan, 1997) and Alberto Mario Banti, *Il risorgimento italiano* (Roma/Bari: Laterza, 2004) are useful and up-to-date compendiums of Italian history in the period here under consideration.

40 Limiting oneself to Italian musicographers of the early nineteenth century, orientations against Flemish polyphony had at least be voiced by Giuseppe Carpani, *Le Haydine, ovvero Lettere sulla vita e le opere del celebre maestro Giuseppe Haydn* (Milano: da Candido Buccinelli Stampatore-Cartaro, 1812; edizione seconda riveduta ed accresciuta dall'autore, Padova: dalla Tipografia della Minerva, 1823); and Andrea Majer, *Discorso sulle origini, progressi e stato attuale della musica italiana* (Padova: dalla Tipografia e Fonderia della Minerva, 1821).

41 Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 1, p. 279: "Liberata finalmente l'Italia e Roma".

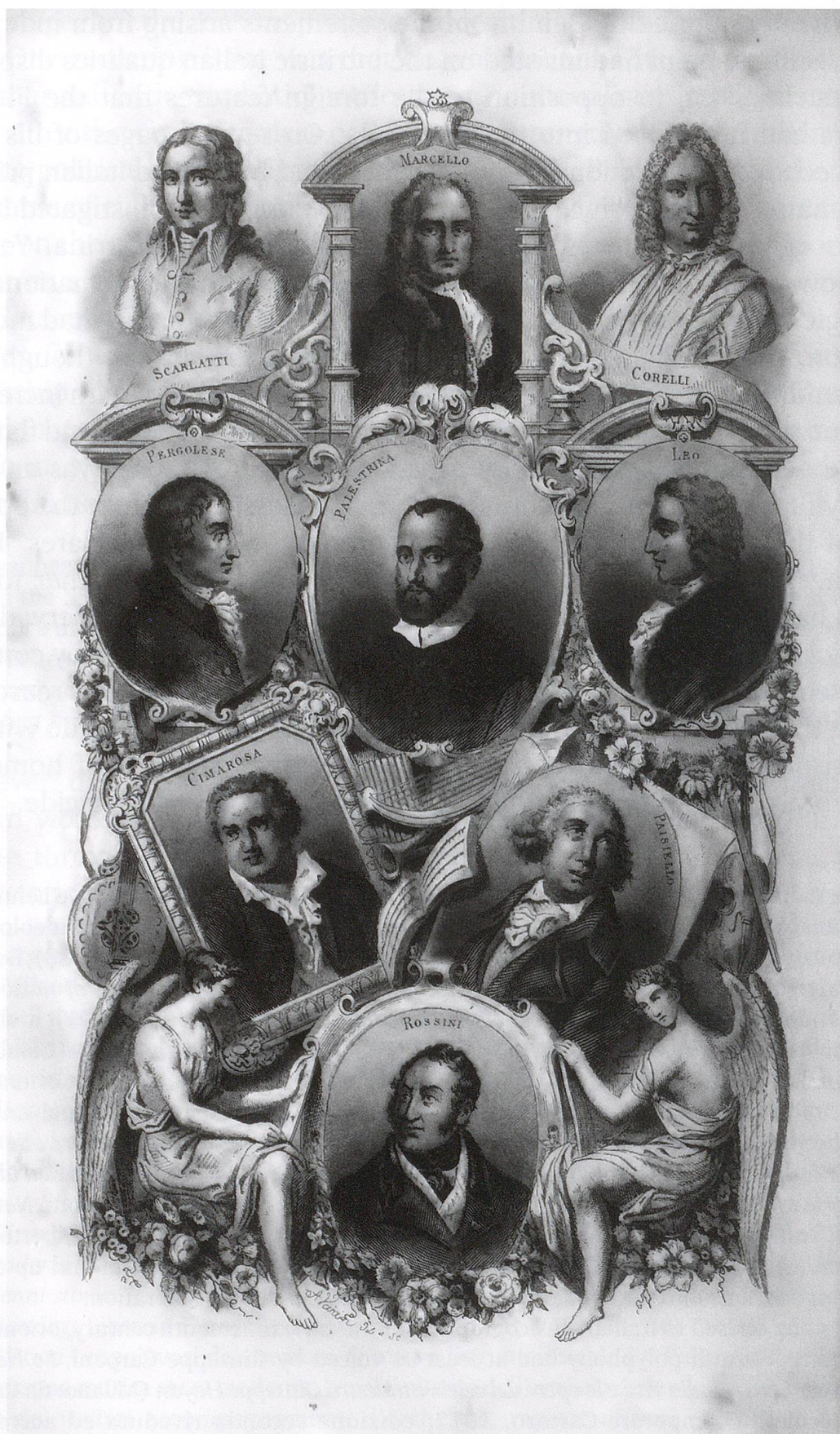


Fig. 5: Palestrina surrounded by the greatest Italian composers (clockwise: A. Scarlatti, B. Marcello, Corelli, Leo, Paisiello, Rossini, Cimarosa and Pergolesi) in a lithography from Giuseppe Zirardini, *L'Italia letteraria ed artistica* (Parigi: Raudry, Libreria Europea, 1850).

By tracing the source of genuine national aesthetic principles in the remote past, others have aimed at imparting historical credit and a stronger identity on Italian contemporary music (i.e., opera), which unfortunately was then beginning to lose commercial ground and intellectual prestige in the face of the increasingly more aggressive international production, including the new genres of operatic music contrived in France, Wagnerian drama and the exceptional blossoming of instrumental music in Germany. Furthermore, by magnifying the influence that Italian music had exerted in all Europe since Palestrina's days, they stressed the hegemonic role played by their country in Western *Bildung* and more particularly, in the approach to the Modern Age (which was reputed to be still alive). It must be said that, in those days, there were no commonly shared criteria of periodization. Leaving aside the radical-Catholic oriented writers who still divided the whole historical timeline before and after Christ, many scholars did not subdivide the Modern Age in smaller units (e.g., early modern period) and did not rigidly distinguish between late modern and contemporary ages.⁴²

Sometimes the assertion that Italy had played a leading role in European musical civilization takes on a very peremptory tone, as is the case with Abramo Basevi, who opines: "in the second half of the sixteenth century, Palestrina snatched the sceptre of music from the Flemish and returned it to Italy".⁴³ Even more explicit was Alessandro Biaggi who claimed that

the *Missa papae Marcelli*, the music of which is such a lively aspiration to melody and singing, shook to the foundations the grotesque building of Flemish art, and is undisputedly the corner-stone of Italian art, that art that subsequently, up until our own day, become the art of the entire world.⁴⁴

42 For an introduction concerning this key issue in historical methodology, see Krzysztof Pomian, *L'Ordre du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), and Scipione Guarracino, *Le età della storia: i concetti di antico, medievale, moderno e contemporaneo* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2001).

43 Basevi, *Compendio della storia della musica*, vol. 2, p. 32: "il Palestrina, nella seconda metà del secolo XVI, tolse ai Fiamminghi e ridonò all'Italia lo scettro della musica". Basevi entirely devoted to Palestrina chapter 10 of his handbook (vol. 2, pp. 48 ff.). About him, see: Antonio Addamiano, "La figura e il ruolo di Abramo Basevi nella vita musicale del secondo Ottocento a Firenze", in: Antonio Addamiano – Jania Sarno, *Catalogo del fondo Basevi nella biblioteca del Conservatorio "Luigi Cherubini" di Firenze: musica vocale, opere teatrali manoscritte e a stampa* (Roma: Torre d'Orfeo, 1994), pp. IX–LVI; and Ugo Piovano, "Abramo Basevi e il suo tempo", in: Abramo Basevi, *Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi (1859)*, a cura di Ugo Piovano (Milano: Rugginenti, 2001), pp. 7–48.

44 Alessandro Biaggi, "La musica nel secolo XVI: conferenza", in: *La vita italiana nel Cinquecento*, Vol. 3: *Arte* (Milano: Fratelli Treves Editori, 1894), pp. 581–616: 600: "La Messa di papa Marcello, nella cui musica è una così viva aspirazione alla melodia e al canto, scosse dalle basi il grottesco edificio dell'arte fiamminga, ed è, incontrastabil-

Forty years earlier, Biaggi had ruled that “from a historical and aesthetic point of view, Palestrina and Monteverdi cannot be separated, for they represent one epoch and one reform, and not two schools, two principles and two musical trends, as alleged by the French” (it will be noted that by reform he meant the introduction of the modern tonal system that supplanted the modal counterpoint of the Middle Ages).⁴⁵ However, what enabled him to remove the temporal barrier between Palestrina’s epoch and the centuries that followed was the persuasion that “the natural and eternal principle that is the melody” (whose first corollary is singing) was still flourishing in his days, as demonstrated by Italian “national” opera, now at a most advanced stage of a continuous development which had begun with the Florentine Camerata.⁴⁶ This, in fact, encouraged his ultimate dismissal of the Flemish authority:

I am convinced that the Flemish school would have easily recovered from the shock, however strong, inflicted by the Pope Marcellus Mass, and would have prolonged, who knows for how long, its infested domain if, providentially, the Camerata of Count Bardi del Vernio with the *reform of opera* had not arrived from Florence.⁴⁷

This event is also regarded more as a reform rather than an “invention”, since “opera, as is very well known, had existed for centuries” and “the

mente, la pietra angolare dell’arte italiana; di quell’arte italiana che fu poi, e sino a’ nostri giorni, l’arte di tutto il mondo”. The very same concept had already been enunciated by the author in his volume *Della musica religiosa e delle questioni inerenti: discorso* (Milano: Tipografia F. Lucca, 1856). A complete biographical portrait of Biaggi is still lacking; some information is given in: Leonardo Pinzauti, “Un critico dell’Ottocento: G. Alessandro Biaggi”, in: *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 7 (1973), pp. 388–401; as regards his intellectual position, see Marco Di Pasquale, “Immagini del rinascimento nella storiografia musicale italiana del secondo Ottocento: due paradigmi”, in: *Musica e Storia*, 13/2 (August 2005), pp. 279–322: § 2: “Biaggi e l’immagine ‘confessionale’ del rinascimento”, 295–306.

45 Biaggi, *Della musica religiosa*, p. 109 (“nel rispetto storico e nell’estetico, Palestrina e Monteverde, non possono andar disgiunti in quanto che rappresentano, non già due scuole, due principii, e due musiche, come asseriscono i francesi; ma bensì, un’epoca, ed una riforma”) and 38–39. On Palestrina’s reception in France, see the very important book by Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the musical past: early music in nineteenth-century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 6: “Defining Palestrina”, pp. 179–207.

46 Biaggi, *Della musica religiosa*, p. 108: “il naturale ed eterno principio, che è la melodia”.

47 Biaggi, “La musica nel secolo XVI”, p. 603: “vo’ pur convinto che dalla scossa, per quanto forte, avuta dalla Messa di Papa Marcello, la scuola fiamminga si sarebbe facilmente ripresa e avrebbe prolungato chi sa per quanto tempo ancora l’infesto suo dominio, se, provvidenziale, non veniva da Firenze la Camerata del conte Bardi del Vernio, colla *riforma del melodramma*” (emphasis in the original text).

Flemish wanted and had opera in *madrigalesque* style".⁴⁸ To conclude his historical reconstruction, Biaggi tried to demonstrate that Palestrina's attitude towards melody was deeply influenced by Gregorian chant, which in fact appears to be harmoniously incorporated in his compositions (a theme that was stressed also by the members of the Caecilian movement).⁴⁹ In conclusion, Biaggi's musical *risorgimento* is more than a question of style. It is the beginning of a long period in musical history that he reputed to be still present in his time and distinguished by the excellence of Italian composition over every other country. It is self-evident that, by means of music and with the support of history, Biaggi was trying to confer a strong identity on his country and its culture.⁵⁰

The relationship between Palestrina and the Renaissance is another salient topic that fuelled debate on the composer. Its examination, however, would require a digression too substantial for the aims of this article; it is perhaps sufficient to condense the question in the following considerations.⁵¹ In the nineteenth century, the chronological borders and individual traits of the Renaissance were variably defined.⁵² The moral question and

48 Biaggi, "La musica nel secolo XVI", pp. 603 and 606: "il melodramma, notissimo a tutto il mondo, esisteva da secoli [...] i Fiamminghi vollero ed ebbero il melodramma in stile *madrigalesco*" (emphasis in the original text).

49 See, for example, Giovanni Tebaldini, "Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina", in: *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1 (1894), pp. 213–239: 223–225. An account of Italian Caecilianism provided by a partisan is Paolo Guerrini, "La restaurazione della musica sacra in Italia", in: Johannes B. Katschthaler, *Storia della musica sacra: seconda edizione italiana nuovamente rivista e migliorata con un'Appendice sulla storia della riforma ceciliana in Italia per cura del Sacerdote Prof. Paolo Guerrini* (Torino: STEN Società Tipografico-Editrice Nazionale, 1910), pp. 257–314.

50 Biaggi's *Della musica religiosa e delle questioni inerenti* was enthusiastically reviewed by Boucheron in the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 15 (1857), pp. 145–148. Lengthy passages from the book are endorsed and quoted in: Luigi Nerici, "Dell'origine della musica moderna: discorso letto [...] nella seduta de' 30 giugno 1869", in: *Atti della R. Accademia Lucchese di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, vol. 19 (Lucca: Dalla Tipografia Giusti, 1873), pp. 103–147.

51 This subject is dealt with at greater length in Di Pasquale, "Immagini del rinascimento", and Marco Di Pasquale, "The music of the Italian Renaissance as a national myth", in: *Music's intellectual history: founders, followers & fads*, ed. Zdravko Blažekovic and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2009), pp. 503–513.

52 Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in historical thought* (Cambridge [Mass.]: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), provides a synoptic view of the shaping of the idea of Renaissance in an international perspective. More informative about nineteenth-century Italian historiography are: Benedetto Croce, *Storia della storiografia italiana nel secolo decimonono* (Bari: Laterza, 1921; with various reprints); Michele Biscione, *Neo-umanesimo e rinascimento: l'immagine del rinascimento nella storia della cultura dell'Ottocento* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1962); Cesare Vasoli, *Umanesimo*

the different ways of dealing with it, together with the need to establish an image of national identity which, of course, could not rule out music, raised a very complex issue concerning the appropriate role to assign to Palestrina in connection with the Renaissance.⁵³ Depending on how one viewed these different conceptions, Palestrina's historical function shifted from that of "inaugurating" to that of "concluding" Renaissance of music.

The first conception was more typical of the supporters of the strictest Catholic observance, the so-called neo-Guelphs who craved the unification of Italy under papal rule. They claimed that the Renaissance opposed Roman faith and they reproached the religious and civil corruption that tainted a part of the fifteenth and the whole of the sixteenth century. As a consequence, the neo-Guelphs postulated that Palestrina (who they considered merely a composer of sacred music) was alien to that trend. According to their way of thinking, during the period dominated by the classicist dictates, music did not experience any improvement; on the contrary, owing to the Franco-Flemish composers, it deepened tendencies that had surfaced since the late Middle Ages. For example, they believed that, in a context pervaded by paganism, the impure contrapuntal artifices, the pernicious abstraction of the polyphonic texture from the liturgical texts and the aberration of abandoning the church chant in favour of trivial secular melodies found their most suitable milieu. Given the assumption that the Renaissance had been an Italian phenomenon and the distinctive display of a well-defined national culture, and on the other hand, given the predominance of the Flemish musicians in the country's princely and ecclesiastical *cappelle*, it remained difficult to detect a manifestation in music that could correspond to the extraordinary growth in letters and the arts in the period running

e rinascimento (Palermo: Palumbo, 1969; 2nd ed., 1976); *Il rinascimento: storia di un dibattito*, a cura di Michele Ciliberto (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1975; 2nd ed., 1988); Fulvio Tessitore, "L'idea di rinascimento nella cultura idealistica italiana tra '800 e '900", in: id., *Storiografia e storia della cultura* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), pp. 89–123; Cesare Vasoli, "La tradizione italiana negli studi sul rinascimento", in: *I filosofi e la genesi della coscienza culturale della "nuova Italia" (1799–1900): stato delle ricerche e prospettive di interpretazione*, Atti del Convegno di Santa Margherita Ligure (23–25 ottobre 1995), a cura di Luciano Malusa (Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1997), pp. 151–164.

53 With regard to the theme of morality, which was at the centre of the Italian historiography during the *risorgimento*, see Michele Ciliberto, "Interpretazioni del rinascimento: Balbo e Romagnosi", in: *Il rinascimento nell'Ottocento in Italia e in Germania / Die Renaissance im 19. Jahrhundert in Italien und Deutschland*, a cura di August Buck e Cesare Vasoli (Bologna/Berlin, Il Mulino – Duncker und Humblot, 1989), pp. 65–91; Carlo Dionisotti, "Rinascimento e risorgimento: la questione morale", in: *Il rinascimento nell'Ottocento*, pp. 157–165; and Vasoli, "La tradizione italiana".

from the *trecento* to the sixteenth century.⁵⁴ On account of the lack of *cantabile* melodic lines and the overwhelming contrapuntal devices that rendered it artificial and exceedingly intellectual, Flemish sacred composition was defined as a product of the last stage of the Middle Ages, while the *rinascimento* (new birth) or *risorgimento* (resurrection) of music – which occurred much later than the Renaissance in letters and the visual arts – was attributed to Palestrina's achievement. However, the image of a musical Renaissance not synchronized with the Renaissance of other art forms had already been envisaged by Baini, although with different reasons.⁵⁵ The description of the Northern school as the conclusion of the mediaeval period in music, however, did not coincide with his beliefs, which had actually belittled the artistic value of those musicians to the advantage of Palestrina, but did not completely deny their contribution to the Renaissance.⁵⁶ Biaggi bluntly put it as follows:

it [music] remained completely extraneous to the great and admirable intellectual movement that, initiated by Dante, arrived at Raphael, Michelangelo, Ariosto and Machiavelli (the *Risorgimento*, in a word).

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, while poetry, sculpture and architecture triumphantly ran along avenues full of light and splendour, music vainly bustled about in the darkness, having completely lost the sentiment of *beauty*, adverse to any sound aesthetic intention and obstinately adverse to anything that could redeem it.⁵⁷

54 One should bear in mind that the Italian *Ars nova* repertoire was discovered only in the 1890s, in particular through the investigations of Johannes Wolf and Friedrich Ludwig. Compositions such as the *frottola*, *villanella*, *lauda* and *canto carnascialesco* were superficially studied and not classed high enough to rival contemporary art (i. e., sacred) music, or alternatively they were believed to belong to the Flemish manner. Even the sixteenth-century madrigal, or at least that of its earliest period, was also attributed to the Flemish composers who were living in Italy. I would also like to point out that the Renaissance was assumed to be a national affair even if coeval Italy was a mere geographical notion. The unity of the country was only partially achieved in 1861; the Veneto region was annexed in 1866 and the Pontifical State only in 1870.

55 A more explicit enunciation is found in: Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 1, pp. 299–300.

56 On this aspect, see Andrew Kirkman, “‘Under such heavy chains’: the discovery and evaluation of late medieval music before Ambros”, *19th-Century Music*, 24 (2000), pp. 89–112: 96–102.

57 Biaggi, “La musica nel secolo XVI”, pp. 591–592: “a quel grande e mirabile movimento intellettuale che iniziato da Dante giunse a Raffaello, al Buonarroti, all’Ariosto e al Machiavelli (al *Risorgimento*, in una parola), ella [la musica] rimase in tutto e per tutto estranea. Sul principio del secolo XVI mentre la poesia, la pittura, la scultura, l’architettura correvano trionfanti per le vie tutte luce e splendori, la musica anfanava nelle tenebre, smarrito affatto il sentimento del *bello*, avversa ad ogni sano intendimento estetico, avversa, e pertinacemente, a tutto ciò che poteva redimerla” (italics in the original text).

An opposite position, however, was assumed by other scholars also closely connected to the Church but by then conditioned by the beliefs that enlivened the Caecilian movement. Giovanni Tebaldini, for instance, wrote:

A recent French criticism, more concerned in describing the glorious master [i. e., Palestrina] as he who revised the Gregorian chant rather than acknowledging him as the most eminent polyphonist, has attempted to demean Palestrina's art from a liturgical point of view by trying to prove that, since he belonged to the Italian Renaissance, he cannot but be counted among the artists of the neo-pagan school.⁵⁸ From a strictly historical point of view, this statement might also appear to be well founded and reasonable, precisely because of the return to purely Christian sources of the Middle Ages which is now spreading throughout historical criticism of religious art.

On the contrary, it is not difficult to prove that Palestrina's art, instead of being counted among the neo-pagan art of the sixteenth century, may and must be considered as the summit of eminently Christian art of the Middle Ages, and as the continuation of the highly liturgical act on the part of St Gregory the Great which even passed through the disastrous ages when sacred representations of the *Misteri*, fallen in the most deplorable vulgarity, profaned every purely liturgical practice in the church.⁵⁹

From a very different perspective, also Luigi Torchi (who had studied musicology at Leipzig University with Oscar Paul) alleged that Palestrina should belong to the Middle Ages and that

the Renaissance had dealt a terrible blow to vocal church music and determined its loss. The distant goal of polyphonic singing had been reached; to musicians it seemed that, within its limits, everything had been done with Palestrina. At the end of the sixteenth century, the excitement of chromaticism and the instrumental embellishments deprived church music of its sacred character. As the Renaissance, nurtured in poetry at the time of Petrarch, devel-

58 Tebaldini here makes a reference to Antoine Super, *Palestrina (G. Pierluigi): étude historique et critique sur la musique religieuse* (Paris: Victor Retaux et fils, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1892). Antoine Super is the pseudonym of Antoine Dessus.

59 Tebaldini, "Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina", p. 214: "Una recente critica francese, più preoccupata di colpire nel glorioso maestro il rimaneggiatore del canto gregoriano, che di riconoscere il sommo polifonista, si è provata ad abbattere l'arte sua dal punto di vista liturgico, tentando dimostrare che egli appartenendo all'epoca della rinascenza italica, non può che essere annoverato fra gli artisti della scuola neo-pagana. Ed è una affermazione questa che dal semplice criterio storico potrebbe anche apparire fondata e ragionevole, appunto per quel ritorno alle fonti puramente cristiane del medio-evo, che nella critica storica dell'arte religiosa va ovunque insinuandosi. Al contrario non è difficil cosa dimostrare che l'arte del Palestrina, lungi dall'essere annoverata fra l'arte neo-pagana del secolo XVI, può e deve essere considerata come il culmine dell'arte eminentemente cristiana del medio-evo; come la continuazione dell'opera altamente liturgica di San Gregorio Magno, anche attraverso le epoche fatali in cui le rappresentazioni sacre dei *Misteri*, cadute nella più deplorabile volgarità, avevano profanato ogni manifestazione puramente liturgica nella chiesa". Tebaldini's ideas must have seemed reasonable: they are approved and repeated, for example, in Bonaventura, *Manuale di storia della musica*, pp. 62–66.

oped in the arts by means of the imitation of classical models, so in music the investigation turned now to the remains of Greek music.⁶⁰

Returning for a moment to the dominant view of moderate Catholic inspiration, it is important to note how, by forcing the interpretation of certain traits of the past, one could suggest a (not merely chronological) connection between the inception of a glorious epoch in the history of the Roman Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Counter-Reformation, and the reform of sacred music accomplished by Palestrina. He both recovered the primitive expression of the Church, the Gregorian chant – which he respectfully incorporated in the polyphonic texture – and revealed the genuine national spirit in music that gave rise to the irrefutable Italian supremacy. Palestrina, therefore, was the first musician who could really be considered an Italian composer. Those men of faith were fascinated by the idea that his memorable output had been supported by a religious impulse in the attempt to counter secular Renaissance, an abhorred age because of its unorthodox, and even pagan attitudes and its disinterest in the unification of the country. The fact that Palestrina was educated at the school of the Northern master Claude Goudimel, however, made it necessary to divide his output into two opposing periods. The first period was connoted by the assimilation of current canons; the second inaugurated the new epoch: “In Palestrina therefore, one must imagine two composers, each clearly distinguishable from the other: the Flemish composer until the Pope Marcellus Mass and, from that Mass onwards, the Italian”.⁶¹

60 Luigi Torchi, “Musica sacra”, in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 39 (1884), pp. 255–256, 263–265, 271–272, 279–280: 271: “Il rinascimento assestò un colpo terribile al canto da chiesa e decise la sua perdita. La lontana meta del canto polifonico era raggiunta; ai musicisti parve entro a’ suoi limiti essersi fatto tutto con Palestrina. In fine del secolo XVI gli eccitamenti della cromatica, gli abbellimenti istrumentali tolsero alla musica della chiesa il carattere sacro. Come il rinascimento, preparato nella poesia al tempo di Petrarca, si sviluppò nelle arti coll’imitazione dei modelli dell’antichità classica, così nella musica l’indagine si rivolse ora ai resti della musica greca”. On this protagonist of the incipient Italian musicology, see Caterina Criscione, *Luigi Torchi: un musicologo italiano tra Otto e Novecento* (Imola: Editrice La Mandragora, 1997).

61 Biaggi, “La musica nel secolo XVI”, p. 601: “Nel Palestrina adunque sono a vedersi due compositori ben distinti fra loro: il fiammingo sino alla Messa di Papa Marcello, e da quella messa in poi, l’italiano”. The statement appears to be a very simplified version of Bainsi’s classification of Palestrinian opuses in ten styles (“dieci stili”): Bainsi, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 2, pp. 423 ff. A further reason to underline that separation was that Goudimel had become a Huguenot; Ippolito Valetta, “Il centenario di Palestrina”, in: *Nuova Antologia: Rivista di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti*, serie III, 49 (1894), pp. 467–485: 483, remarked that this issue suggested to the “Catholic purist” (“cattolico purista”) Bainsi to deal hastily with the French composer instead of praising him.

A rather varied literature, ranging from militant critique to historiography and achieving its most significant results towards the end of the century, rose up against such a manner of dealing with the question. As these contributions were not primarily interested in sacred music, they tended to focus on aspects of the past that had been neglected by the aforementioned scholars. If writers affiliated to the Church had made Palestrina the paradigm of Italianness by virtue of his tonal settings, the *cantabile* style and the thoughtful relationship between words and music, those less inclined to the Catholic *Weltanschauung* could not help noticing how these very same traits – which in their opinion well represented the value and hallmark of Italian music – were more significantly featured in music belonging to other periods and other genres. At first, attention was centred on the inception of opera but somewhat later, when an older corpus of music hitherto largely ignored and entirely pertinent to the secular sphere was discovered, a new idea took shape: that a first, but already securely formed manifestation of the Italian genius could be traced back to the very beginning of the sixteenth century or even earlier. This made it possible to determine, if not the exact moment of coincidence, at least one more direct link between Renaissance civic life, literature, arts, and music. Although the criteria of periodization adopted at that time did not establish a precise boundary between this period and subsequent musical revolutions, Palestrina, though retaining a sacred inviolability, could no longer be considered a pioneer of modern trends in music.

Many writers identified Claudio Monteverdi, to whom was also ascribed the conquest of the harmonic system still practiced, as the initiator of the modern era. For instance, in his very concise historical outline, Giuseppe Orlandi made use of the notion of “second Latin civilization” in order to contemplate as a continuous process the unfolding of Italian culture and customs in an era that, in his view, had been inaugurated by the consolidation of the Roman Church sometime before the fall of the Roman Empire. With regard to music, he proposed a sequence of four periods – namely the “epic”, “lyrical”, “dramatic” and “decadent” – determined on the basis of aesthetic criteria. Within such a pattern, Palestrina is said to have concluded the first phase that was characterized by the predominance of religious spirit and the focus on objective feelings, and Monteverdi was regarded as the initiator of a subsequent stage distinguished by the transition to the expression of composers’ individual emotions. These same emotions, by being involved in a dialectical relationship with the demand of the civil society, opened the doors to the dramatic period that was still evolving.⁶²

62 Giuseppe Orlandi, “Domenico Cimarosa e la musica nella seconda civiltà latina”, in: *Rivista Bolognese: Periodico Mensuale di Scienze e Letteratura*, 1 (1868), pp. 933–947, 1005–1024; 1006–1007 and 1014–1016.

Oscar Chilesotti, a man of liberal principles and a “musical archaeologist”, as he described himself, was one of the first to contribute considerations that became decisive for the redefinition of the musical Renaissance. Many of his studies are devoted to the so-called *melodia popolare* (folk melody) which in his view was the spontaneous manifestation of the Italian people – representing the true musical expression of the nation – as well as the force behind the transition to the tonal system.⁶³ The folk music tradition – in the beginning timidly cultivated by improvising minstrels in the forms of the *ballata* and *canzone* – grew stronger in the incipient Renaissance, being supported by the fashion for solo singing accompanied by the lute. The *melodia popolare* was seen as a singing line consequent to the laws of harmony or, in other words, based on the harmonic scale instead of the melodic scale previously in use. On the other hand, lute accompaniment was an unobtrusive, quasi-tonal practice which allowed the melodic line to develop in a way freed from all contrapuntal constraint. The same was also true of solo lute arrangements of such songs. Moreover, the *melodia popolare* was singled out for its “lively and marked rhythms, diversified and regular forms, shaped, or rather, inspired by a new sentiment of beauty, in perfect accordance with the accents of folk poems”.⁶⁴ The *melodia popolare* enabled Chilesotti to attribute the origin of the musical Renaissance to the beginning of the sixteenth century and to describe it as an occurrence belonging to the secular realm. In the late fifteenth century, in fact, the *melodia popolare* had merged with the Flemish “scientific” compositional technique and gave rise to typical Italian genres such as the *frottola*, *villotta* and *villanella*, which were later developed in the madrigal and opera. As Chilesotti put it:

The Italians soon made themselves masters of the musical movement that until then had taken its impulse from Flanders and, guided by creative genius, established the original forms of the modern art. Only later, France and Germany joined the new musical trend and

63 Oscar Chilesotti, *Sulla melodia popolare del Cinquecento: saggio* (Milano: Stab. Tito di Gio. Ricordi e Francesco Lucca di G. Ricordi e C. Edit., [1889]). See also my “Dei concerti storici in Italia”, pp. 73–76, for a deeper insight in his essay. Chilesotti already displayed his critical condemnation of Flemish music in “Sulla decadenza della musica fiamminga e sull’origine e sviluppo della scuola veneziana (secoli XVI–XVIII)”, in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 39 (1884), pp. 109–110, 119–120, 131–132. On Chilesotti, see Giuseppe Vecchi, “La melodia popolare nel pensiero e nella ricerca filologica di Oscar Chilesotti”, in: *Chigiana*, 23 (1966), pp. 211–223; *Oscar Chilesotti: diletto e scienza agli albori della musicologia italiana. Studi e ricerche* (Firenze: Olschki, 1987); and *Oscar Chilesotti, la musica antica*.

64 Chilesotti, *Sulla melodia popolare*, p. 5: “coi suoi ritmi vivaci, marcati, dalle forme varie e regolari, modellate, anzi ispirate, da un nuovo sentimento del bello, in accordo perfetto cogli accenti delle poesie popolari”.

founded schools in conformity with the national traditions and the particular melodic and rhythmic tendencies of the tongue.⁶⁵

In addition, Chilesotti polemically underlined that the *melodia popolare* – and not the Roman chant – was the true “eternal principle of the [musical] art” and that secular music composed in its wake also prepared the change Palestrina was later to introduce into sacred music.⁶⁶ In providing his outline, Chilesotti certainly benefited from recent discoveries and critical studies, some of which were based on his own research into early lute tablatures and their vocal models. He also availed himself of the theory of evolution formulated by Herbert Spencer and applied it to music, explaining its development through the integration of heterogeneous elements and the subsequent transition to further differentiation.⁶⁷ His outlook, however, also responded to the ideas of the Italian liberal ideology, which was fiercely anticlerical and hence engaged in the promotion of secular trends in state policy. However, it is worth noting that, just a few years earlier, Chilesotti substantially agreed with the more conventional idea that envisaged Palestrina as the initiator of Italian music, as reliably testified by the fact that, in introducing the composer’s biography, he wrote: “Now, we shall see how in Italy one put a stop to the aberration of Flemish music”.⁶⁸

Alfredo Untersteiner, a musicologist who was well informed on recent German literature on music, proposed a slightly different line of thought

65 Chilesotti, *Sulla melodia popolare*, p. 6: “Gl’italiani ben presto si resero padroni del movimento musicale che fino allora aveva avuto l’impulso dalle Fiandre e, guidati da un genio creatore, stabilirono le forme originarie dell’arte moderna. Solo più tardi la Francia e la Germania entrarono nella nuova via fondando scuole secondo le tradizioni nazionali e le speciali tendenze melodiche e ritmiche della lingua”.

66 Chilesotti, *Sulla melodia popolare*, p. 6: “principio eterno dell’arte [musicale]”.

67 Chilesotti’s most detailed account of this process is “L’evoluzione della musica: appunti sulla teoria di Herbert Spencer”, in: *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 5 (1898), pp. 559–573, reprinted as a volume in the same year (Torino: Bocca, 1898; edizione riveduta e ampliata, Torino: Bocca, 1911), but he already explicitly declared his liking for evolutionism in *I nostri maestri del passato: note biografiche sui più grandi musicisti italiani da Palestrina a Bellini* (Milano: R. Stabilimento Musicale Tito di Gio. Ricordi, 1882). Also referring to this theory are many of his articles on both the sixteenth-century lute repertoire and the comparative study of the scales in use in different musical cultures (see Marcello Sorce Keller, “Musica popolare, scale ‘esotiche’ ed evoluzione delle culture musicali negli studi di Oscar Chilesotti”, and “Bibliografia degli scritti di Oscar Chilesotti”, a cura di Francesco Passadore, in: *Oscar Chilesotti, la musica antica*, respectively pp. 183–192 and 233–263). I remember that evolutionism was condemned by the Church as an anti-creationist heresy.

68 Chilesotti, *I nostri maestri del passato*, “Prefazione”, p. XVI: “Ora vedremo come in Italia si abbia posto riparo alle aberrazioni della musica fiamminga”; pp. 1–4 for Palestrina’s biography.

which incorporated Chilesotti's convictions, though within a broader background and with the support of a more profound knowledge of the history of early modern music.⁶⁹ He claimed that the Northern composers' gradual distancing themselves from mediaeval scholasticism and mysticism, and the eventual abandonment of their native system of composition (a process already clearly perceptible in Adrian Willaert) were conquests that could be attributed to their stay in Italy. The schools they established in cities such as Rome and Venice encouraged the initial developments in national music, for, despite the foreign origins of their founders, the schools embodied the beneficial effects of Italian culture. And actual nationalization of Renaissance music was a process that later reached its climax – both chronologically and from the point of view of classical perfection – with Palestrina.⁷⁰ Untersteiner was conditioned by the principles of positivistic historiography (probably of German origin), but his judgement was in some measure determined by the then current Italian penchant for an idealistic, aesthetic criticism committed to the strenuous defence of Italian honour.⁷¹

The conflicting ideas summarily referred to here have only one basic aspect in common which perhaps can be best appreciated if one bears in mind Baini's considerations. In contrast to his restrictive formulations, for the most part, nineteenth-century Italian musicographers not only endorsed the developments of music that occurred after Palestrina, but also felt a strong continuity between that distant age and their own days. In fact, their historical outlines – once having identified the threshold of modernity and the imprint of the national spirit alternatively in the Roman composer, or in Monteverdi, or in the *frottola*, or in the *melodia popolare* – did not impose any drastic subdivision in the long period of time that stretched from those manifestations to the present day. In other words, the prevailing idea was that of an organic growth of Italian musical language in which counterpoint, harmony, singing and instrumental practices progressed in parallel guise. The different stylistic inclinations that appeared in Italy as early as the sixteenth century were addressed by means of the concepts of genre and school.

69 Untersteiner's more profound insight into Mediaeval and Renaissance music, and more thoughtful historical approach also emerge from his review of Chilesotti's *Sulla melodia popolare*: "La melodia popolare nel Cinquecento (a proposito del nuovo saggio di Oscar Chilesotti)", in: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 49 (1889), pp. 239–240.

70 Untersteiner, *Storia della musica* (1893), pp. 87–103; during the revisions of his book until the fourth edition in 1916, the author continuously refined his musicological ideas. Chilesotti positively reviewed the first edition of Untersteiner's book and negatively the volume containing Biaggi's "La musica nel secolo XVI": see *Rivista Musicale Italiana*, 1 (1894), respectively pp. 161–162 and 758–763.

71 For more details, see Di Pasquale, "Immagine del rinascimento", § 3: "Untersteiner e l'immagine 'scientifica' del rinascimento", pp. 306–337.

364

ITA

zioni, e che da essi e da altri valorosi Compositori italiani s'arricchirono le italiane scene di una prodigiosa quantità di bellissime Opere serie e buffe.

Gli scrittori letterari musicali del secolo XVIII, sono: il monaco Zaccaria Tevo, Francesco Gasparini, Giuseppe Tartini, il dottissimo Abate Gio. Battista Martini, il P. D. Giovenale Sacchi, il conte Francesco Algarotti, Fra Giuseppe Paolucci, il cav. Antonio Planelli, Giovan Battista Mancini, Vincenzo Manfredini, il celebre P. Franc. Antonio Valotti, il canonico Lazaro Venanzio Belli, Fra Luigi Antonio Sabattini ec.

Nel secolo presente vennero fondati tre nuovi stabilimenti musicali, cioè: il Liceo musicale di Bologna, l'Istituto musicale di Bergamo nel 1805, ed il Conservatorio di Milano nel 1807. Una particolar fama s'acquistarono i Compositori Gio. Simone Mayr (della Baviera) (*), Ferdinando Paer, Bonifazio Asioli, Gioacchino Rossini, ed i violinisti G. B. Polledro, Nicolò Paganini, e Pietro Rovelli. Convien però confessare che in oggi l'Italia non è più quella de' secoli passati rispetto ai Compositori, ai cantanti ed agli autori didattici, e la buona musica di chiesa è ormai quasi del tutto scomparsa. Per dimostrar ciò, si porrà fine all'articolo coll'elenco delle varie scuole musicali italiane de' tre secoli passati. Tale elenco, per imperfetto che sia, darà nondimeno un'idea della prodigiosa quantità di Compositori e di cantanti, la maggior parte de' quali risveglia alla memoria la celebrità de' loro nomi.

SCUOLA ROMANA

CAPI

Palestrina, Nanini, Benevoli.

Compositori. Emilio Rossi, Alfonso della Viola, Annibale Melone, Pier Luigi detto il *Palestrina*, Emilio del Cavaliere, Gio. Maria e Bernardo Nanini, Luca Marenzio, Felice e Gio. Francesco Anerio, Ruggiero Giovanelli, Gio. Battista Lucatello, Giulio Caccino, Gerolamo Frescobaldi, Cav. Tarquinio Merula, Luigi Rossi, Gregorio Allegri, Antonio Cifra, Pietro Francesco Valentini, Gio. Angelo Capponi, Domenico e Virgilio Mazzocchi, Giacomo Carissimi, D. Bonifazio Gra-

(*) Il Mayr mutò faccia all'Opera italiana con nuovi risultati d'armonia, di modulazioni, di accompagnamenti ec., e trovò un degno emulo nel rinomato maestro Paer.

ITA

365

ziani, Oratio Benevoli, Domenico del Pane, Antonio Draghi, Ercole Bernabei, Giacomo Antonio Perti, Ottavio Pittoni, Luca Antonio Predieri, Gio. Carlo Maria Clari, Giuseppe Amadori, Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei, Gregorio Ballabene, Andrea Basilj, Giuseppe Sarti, Giovan Battista Borghi, Stanislao Matteo ec.

Cantanti. Francesco Antonio Pistocchi, Antonio Bernacchi, Antonio Pasi, Giambattista Minelli, Gio. Fabri detto il *Ballino*, Bartolino di Faenza (tutti e cinque allievi del Pistocchi), Giovanni Tedeschi detto *Amadori*, Carlo Cariani, Tomaso Guarducci (tutti e tre allievi del Bernacchi), Francesca Boschi detta la *Salamona*, Anna Peruzzi, Francesca Gabrielli detta la *Ferrarese*, Venanzio Rauzzini (anche Compositore), Lucrezia Aguiari detta la *Bastardella*, Giovanni Ansani, Giuseppe Cicognani, Caterina Gabrielli, Gaspare Pacchiarotti, Gerolamo Crescentini, Matteo Babini, Angelica Catalani ec.

SCUOLA VENEZIANA

CAPI

Willert, Zarlino, Lotti, Gasparini, B. Marcello.

Compositori. Costanzo Festa, Gio. Ferretti, Matteo Asola, Claudio Merula, Ludovico Balbo, Gio. Croce, Francesco Cavalli, Andrea Gabrieli, Antonio Sartorio, D. Antonio Biffi, D. Pietro Andrea e Marcantonio Ziani, Agostino Steffani, Gio. Maria Ruggieri, Gio. Battista Bassani, Carlo Francesco Polarolo, Tomaso Albinoni, Francesco Gasparini, Gerolamo Polani, Alessandro e Benedetto Marcello, Antonio Vivaldi, Antonio Caldara, Gio. Battista Pescetti, Baldassare Galuppi, Gioacchino Cocchi, Andrea Bernabei, Ferdinando Bertoni, Giuseppe Scolari, Giuseppe Gazzaniga, Bonaventura Furlanetto, Sebastiano Nasolini ec.

Cantanti. Il cav. Nic. Grimaldi, Faustina Bordoni Hasse detta la *decima musa*, Antonio Hubert, detto il *Porporino*, Angelo Amorevoli ec.

SCUOLA FIORENTINA (*)

Compositori. Gio. Animucci, Vincenzo Galilei, Alessandro Strig-

(*) Questa non forma, propriamente detta, una scuola, mentre la maggior parte de' suoi abili Compositori erano allievi di quelle di Roma e di Bologna, e quelli che si sono illustrati riguardo all'Opera erano per lo più semplici amatori.

Fig. 6: The "Roman school" as presented in: Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica* (Milano: per Antonio Fontana, 1826).

However, it was firmly believed that the qualifications of the Roman, Venetian, Neapolitan or Bolognese schools, to name but the most important ones, should always be hierarchically subordinated to the Italian school and that, as far as sacred music was concerned, it was the Roman school that gave, so to speak, the best example.⁷²

In 1894, the third centenary of Palestrina's death was celebrated with an abundance of monuments, concerts and publications. Among a series of otherwise negligible writings, two monographs stood out: one by Giuseppe Cascioli, a Roman priest and historian who had studied music with the papal singer Francesco Gordiani; the other by Alberto Cametti, also from Rome, then a young writer on music, composer and keyboard player trained

72 For a precocious and systematic application of these concepts, see the entry "Italia" in: Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica* (4 vols., Milano: per Antonio Fontana, 1826; 2nd ed., Milano: presso Antonio Fontana, 1836), vol. 1, pp. 364–367.

at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia.⁷³ These writers, who were the last important nineteenth-century Italian contributors to Palestrina's biography, aimed at presenting to a wider public an up-to-date account, expurgated from the mistakes and prejudices of Baini, even though this did not prevent the authors from extolling him as the initiator of Palestrinian studies. Both volumes benefited from a significant amount of archival documents that had been circulating sporadically during the preceding twenty-five years in books and articles on Renaissance aristocrats and ruling courts, the Cappella Sistina and Palestrina's household.⁷⁴ Cametti, the more competent and precise of the two scholars, even succeeded in discovering a few unpublished papers in the State Archives in Rome.

Both Cametti and Cascioli observed that Baini inclined towards fictional narrative, as for example, when he claimed that St Filippo Neri was a good friend of Palestrina and assisted the composer on his deathbed⁷⁵ and, at least on one occasion, deliberately altered a piece of historical evidence.⁷⁶ They also pointed out that Palestrina was not born into an indigent family and was never needy; and that, on the contrary, he was the owner of land and property. Furthermore, Cametti was the first to exhibit the deed attesting the composer's second marriage to a fur dressmaker only six months after the death of his first wife.⁷⁷ The relations between Palestrina and his non-institutional patrons, such as Guglielmo Gonzaga Duke of Mantua and

73 Giuseppe Cascioli, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina principe della musica pubblicate nella ricorrenza del terzo centenario della sua morte avvenuta il 2 febbraio 1584 [sic] con note illustrative e ritratto del grande maestro* (Roma: Tipografia Cooperativa Operaia, 1894); Cametti, *Cenni biografici*.

74 See, for their substantial contributions, Giuseppe Campori, *Notizie delle relazioni di Orlando di Lasso e di Gio. Pier Luigi da Palestrina co' principi estensi* (Modena: C. Vincenzi, 1869); Schelle, *Die päpstliche Sängerschule in Rom, gennant die Sixtinische Kapelle*; [Ascanio Cappelli], *Breve memoria della progenie del celebre maestro di musica sacra Giovanni Pierluigi detto il Palestrina* (Roma: Gius. C. Cortis e R. Wingley, 1880); Antonino Bertolotti, *Musici alla corte dei Gonzaga in Mantova dal secolo XV al XVIII: notizie e documenti raccolti negli archivi mantovani* (Milano: appresso G. Ricordi & C., Editori-Stampatori, 1890); and the articles and prefaces that Franz Xaver Haberl had began publishing in 1879 in the journals (*Cäcilien Kalender* and *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*) and volumes of Palestrina's opera omnia (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel) of which he was the editor.

75 Cametti, *Cenni biografici*, p. 120. Cascioli, *La vita e le opere*, p. 52, on the other hand, confirms the anecdote.

76 The case in point is the omission of some significant phrases in quoting the *motu proprio* by which in 1553 Pope Julius III regulated the hiring of singers for the Cappella Sistina. See Baini, *Memorie storico-critiche*, vol. 1, p. 42, and Cametti, *Cenni biografici di*, p. 12. Cascioli did not notice the fraud.

77 In 1921 Cametti even documented Palestrina's direct involvement in the fur trade: "Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina e il suo commercio di pellicerie", in: *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 44 (1921), pp. 207–234.

Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, also attracted the authors' attention, and Cametti emphasized that these connections brought the composer not only honour, but also substantial earnings. Unquestionably the image of Palestrina resulting from Cametti's biography diverged significantly from that proposed by the late Baini. The man was now shown in a more credible light, busy with wordly activities and enlivened by human sentiments. Cascioli, on the other hand, adhered more closely to Baini's findings, particularly on matters relating to religious and moral attributes; for example, he did not dispute his account of the legend surrounding the *Missa papae Marcelli*, which Franz Xaver Haberl had recently rejected in the light of objective evidence.⁷⁸

The biographical additions introduced by the two writers, however, had little impact on the evaluation of the composer's work, which remained solidly founded on Baini's example. Neither Cametti nor Cascioli mentioned the most recent historical accounts of sixteenth-century music, such those by Chilesotti or Untersteiner, so little reference was made to the musical context in which Palestrina had been active (with the exception of the Flemish school), and still less to its secular characteristics. Both preferred to reassert the firmly established Catholic tradition when it came to appraising Palestrina's role within the history of the Church and its music. Indeed even the presumed national character of his production and the subsequent primacy of the Italians were only moderately emphasized. It is worth mentioning that Cascioli was a priest, while Cametti was a *maestro di cappella* in various Roman churches and a fervent supporter of the Caecilian movement for the renovation of sacred music. They surely were not in a privileged position to introduce new interpretative keys.⁷⁹

* * *

It is quite obvious that the aim of this brief review of writings focusing on, or otherwise referring to, Palestrina is not to assess the central position that he retained in the Italian debate about music during the nineteenth century. Needless to say, the Roman composer was held in very high regard and perhaps even to a higher degree than that granted to other musical personalities in the history of the country, such as Pope Gregory I (the Great), Guido d'Arezzo, Monteverdi, Pergolesi, Benedetto Marcello and, in later times, Rossini and Verdi. The main concern of this paper is rather to high-

78 Cametti agreed with the German musicologist. Compare Cametti, *Cenni biografici*, pp. 17–36, and Cascioli, *La vita e le opere*, pp. 67–73.

79 Many years later Cametti published an entirely new book (not a revised edition) on Palestrina: *Palestrina* (Milano: Bottega di Poesia, 1925; reprint, with a foreword by Giancarlo Rostirolla, Roma: Edizioni Torre d'Orfeo, 1994). Despite his discovery of a considerable mass of archival documents, his critical attitude showed little change.

light how many different mutual connections could be established between the documental foundation of historical discourse and the hermeneutical attitudes that developed in nineteenth-century Italy. The observation of this phenomenon is facilitated by the fact that the primary historical sources regarding the Roman composer did not significantly increase during the fifty or so years since Baini. On the contrary, as we have seen, their interpretations varied dramatically. The diverging solutions to historical problems contrived by the Italian scholars were not simply due to the antinomy implicit in any evidence of the past. In fact, for the most part of the century, the polysemic nature of the testimonies was emphasized by still uncertain conceptions of history and the consequent lack of solidly devised historical methods, a situation that hindered an accurate control of the results obtained by applying different interpretative devices. On the other hand, it is self-evident that the conflicting positions assumed by those musicographers were not entirely determined by their insights into the past; without doubt, no less influential were the ways in which they considered the present.⁸⁰

Abstract

Giuseppe Baini's *Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina* (1828) is an early example of an outstanding life-and-works monograph centred on a composer of the past. The result of original research and a profound knowledge of the cultural and institutional contexts in which Palestrina operated, it provided the documentary basis for all Palestrinian studies to come for at least the following fifty years or so. Even though the factual foundations remained unchanged for the most part of the nineteenth century, the biographical and critical works that a number of Italian musicographers devoted to Palestrina display irreconcilable traits due to the different historical conceptions and methods adopted by the respective authors, and to the different ways in which they perceived the historiographical, ideological and aesthetical issues of their own time. Although the connotations varied, Palestrina was generally acknowledged as the hero who revealed the true features of Italian music, which were viewed as a prominent element of national identity and a crucial issue in the *Risorgimento*, i.e., the period which led to the administrative and cultural unification of the country. In the last decades of the century, further insights into the history of early modern music suggested that the emergence of the Italian musical spirit was to be first detected in the *frottola* or in the *melodia popolare* (folk song), therefore in a previous age, dating from the very beginning of the sixteenth century or even earlier, and in the realm of secular instead of sacred music.

80 The comparison of Palestrina's receptions in Italy and in other countries goes beyond the limits imposed on this paper. Useful materials and critical approaches for this purpose are provided by James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German romantic imagination: interpreting historicism in nineteenth-century music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Ellis, *Interpreting the musical past*.

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