

# Italian Music at the Danish Court during the Reign of Christian IV

## *Presenting a picture of cultural transformation*

BJARKE MOE

During the era of the art-loving Christian IV (crowned 1596, died 1648) the Danish court experienced a huge desire for Italian culture. This dominated the life at court to a degree that even the art of fencing had to be done the ‘Italian way’.<sup>1</sup> Also Italian music was popular, and like North German princes the King sent musicians to Italy to study with the famous organist Giovanni Gabrieli at San Marco in Venice; their achievements in the art of composing Italian madrigals have for more than a century been one of the favourite ways of depicting Christian’s fascination of Italian culture. Since the Danish musicologist Angul Hammerich in 1892 wrote his dissertation on the music at Christian’s court, the Italian madrigal has been a keyword for researchers dealing with music in Denmark of this period.<sup>2</sup>

The attention these journeys to Italy have received in the existing literature has to a certain degree distorted the picture of the interest of Italian music at the Christian IV’s court in general. In 2001, Susan G. Lewis observed that ‘Danish interest in Italian culture peaked in the decades around 1600’.<sup>3</sup> When taking a closer look at the musical activities at the court, it is clear that the interest in Italian music lasted throughout the reign of Christian IV. The sources reveal the King’s efforts in seeking out Italian musicians for employment, and during the first half of the seventeenth century, the court employed several virtuoso instrumentalists as well as singers from Italy. This tendency also continued under his son, Frederik III (reigned 1648–70). The present article argues that even though the King’s Italian musicians received high salaries and were looked at as lionized artists, they were expected to participate in the courtly routines just as ordinary members of the chapel. Their presence, however, was important for the court in order to be introduced to music by Italian composers.

The existing literature describes the fascination of Italian music at the Danish court as a result of a search for an ‘original music from Italy’. Heinrich Schwab demonstrates that the desire for this music resulted in the presence of ‘Italianità’ – an Italian being – at the court. He argues that “‘Ad fontes’ zu gehen, war ein Wahlspruch seiner [Christian IV’s] Epoche, den er sich augenscheinlich zu eigen

1 Giuseppe Migliorato, ‘Salvator Fabris. Den italienske fægtemester og hans forbindelser med Christian IVs hof’, *Fund og Forskning*, 31 (1992), 45–56.

2 Angul Hammerich, *Musiken ved Christian den Fjerdes Hof* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1892).

3 Susan Gail Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad: Anthologies of Italian Madrigals in the Print World of Northern Europe*, Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 2001), 151.

gemacht hatte'.<sup>4</sup> By importing madrigals 'als *Originale* aus Italien', the Danish King showed off his princely power and abilities as sovereign.<sup>5</sup> Also Lewis' study of the import of madrigals to Copenhagen describes the significance of Italian music at the Danish court. She repeats the account of the Danish musicians, who were sent to Italy in order to learn music first-hand from Italian composers: this was due to 'a returning to the origin of the genre'.<sup>6</sup> Lewis states that 'learning the art of the madrigal through secondary sources – score study or by employing Italian musicians – was inadequate'.<sup>7</sup> Hence they had to travel to Italy, and by publishing madrigals the Danish court musicians proved that they had learned the skills of composing in the Italian way.<sup>8</sup> The assumption has been prevailing, and thus the fascination of Italian music at the Danish court has been understood as a search for what was genuine Italian. The present article questions this view and suggests that the presence of Italian music was more than just a result of an 'ad fontes' movement. Even if it was one of the fundamental ideas of the renaissance to return 'to the sources', the diffusion of Italian music throughout Europe varied from locality to locality depending on the receivers. By re-examining Danish sources that tell us how madrigals were performed at the court, this article argues that the King's musicians in Copenhagen integrated Italian music into the daily activities by adapting it to local traditions of performance. In this way, the fascination of Italian music was a catalyst of cultural transformation.

#### ITALIAN AND ITALIANATE MUSICIANS IN DENMARK

The usual assumption is that very few Italian musicians were active at the court during Christian IV.<sup>9</sup> Not all musicians at the Danish court have been identified in earlier studies, and hence it has not been clear that some of them actually were Italian. Taking a closer look at the music employees at the court, one realizes that at least nine Italians were engaged by the Danish King, and even more might have visited the chapel without leaving traces in the sources. For many years, the King was surrounded by Italian musicians at his court (see Table 1).

The fascination of Italian music was part of a general tendency among North European rulers at this time. Often the Italians were recruited while staying outside of Italy, and hence many of them travelled from court to court. It seems as if it was

4 Heinrich W. Schwab, 'Italianità in Danimarca. Zur Rezeption des Madrigals am Hofe Christians IV', in Robert Bohn (ed.), *Europa in Scandinavia. Kulturelle und soziale Dialoge in der frühen Neuzeit* (Studia Septemtrionalia, 2; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994), 127–53, at 137.

5 Schwab, 'Italianità in Danimarca', 136 (italics original).

6 Lewis, *Collecting 'Italia' abroad*, 156; Susan Lewis Hammond, 'Italian Music and Christian IV's Urban Agenda for Copenhagen', *Scandinavian Studies*, 77/3 (2005), 365–82, at 369.

7 Lewis, *Collecting 'Italia' abroad*, 156.

8 On Gabrieli's German and Danish students, see Konrad Küster, *Opus Primum in Venedig. Traditionen des Vokalsatzes 1590–1650* (Freiburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, 4; Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1995).

9 Lewis, *Collecting 'Italia' abroad*, 153, states that 'Italian musicians are not known to have been active at the Danish court in the decades around 1600'. Schwab, 'Italianità in Danimarca', 125, similarly assumes that there were 'ganz wenige Italiener' at the Danish court.

<i>Paulus Paganinus</i> , singer	8 May 1605 – c. April 1610
<i>Vincensius Bertholusius</i> , organist	5 April 1607 – 18 September 1608
<i>Jacobus Merlis</i> , viol player	5 April 1607 – 6 June 1609
<i>Marcus Materanus</i> , singer	20 May 1608 – 6 June 1609
<i>Giovanni Baptista Veraldi</i> , lute player	10 August 1618 – c. October 1620
<i>Georgius Chelli da Verona</i> , singer (alto)	1 August 1634 – c. November 1639
<i>Agostino Fontana</i> , singer (alto)	7 October 1638 – c. October 1650
<i>Benedetto Bonaglia</i> , singer (bass)	7 October 1638 – 16 September 1651
<i>Agostino Pisone</i> , singer (soprano)	1 January 1643 – c. September 1646

Table 1. Italian musicians employed at the Danish court during the reign of Christian IV. Their dates of employment are taken from Angul Hammerich, *Musiken ved Christian den fjerdes Hof* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1892), 201–23.

not always important to the princes whether or not the Italians arrived directly from Italy. This was the case with the Danish king, who used his connections with the royal court in Poland and the courts in Wolfenbüttel, Bückeburg, and Munich in order to get in contact with Italians. It is possible to gain a new understanding of the fascination of Italian music by shedding light on how musicians were recruited at the Danish court. In 1604, Christian IV corresponded with an Italian musician at the Polish court, Antonio Tarroni, who had met a Copenhagen delegation of diplomats in Cracow which had persuaded him into working for the Danish King. Moreover, he was asked to persuade more Italians to travel with him to Denmark. In a letter to Christian IV, Tarroni wrote that he himself and four other Italians were willing to enter the King's service, provided that they would get a proper salary.<sup>10</sup> Over the next years, four Italians arrived from Poland, however not Tarroni, who apparently went back to Italy working under Claudio Monteverdi at the Mantuan court.<sup>11</sup> In 1608, for a period of four months, four Italian musicians were present at the Danish court.

In the 1630s and '40s, the chapel again housed Italian musicians. For brief periods, 1638–39 and 1643–45, three singers stayed there at the same time, and as the number of musicians was smaller than in earlier periods, the Italians dominated among the singers. The alto Agostino Fontana rose in the King's esteem, and shortly before the King's death, Fontana was appointed *Kapellmeister* – becoming the first native Italian leader of the chapel.

<sup>10</sup> The letter from Tarroni to Christian (dated 22 April 1604) is kept at the Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Tyske Kancelli, Udenrigske Afdeling, Topografisk henlagte sager, Polen – Akter og dokumenter vedrørende det politiske forhold til Polen, 1598–1621 (9). For a further description of the contact, see Bjarke Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock. Musikerrekruttering og repertoireformyelse i første halvdel af 1600-tallet*, Ph.D. diss. (University of Copenhagen, 2010), vol. 1, 88–91.

<sup>11</sup> On Tarroni, see Iain Fenlon, 'Taroni, Antonio', *Grove Music Online* ([www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)), accessed 17 Nov. 2010; Barbara Przybyszewska-Jarmińska, *Muzyczne dwory polskich Wazów* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2007), 217.

The number of Italian musicians would have been even higher, had the King succeeded in his plans on recruiting even more of them. The sources reveal that the King himself was eager to recruit such musicians. Since 1599 he had been in touch with Alessandro Orologio, an Italian musician employed at the court of his brother-in-law, Heinrich Julius, in Wolfenbüttel. Orologio was supposed to recruit four Italians, but they had regrettably left their positions in Germany and returned 'in patriam'.<sup>12</sup> Instead, Orologio found four singers from the Imperial court (none of them apparently Italian), who arrived in Copenhagen during the first half year of 1600.<sup>13</sup> In another case, the King was even more determined to get hold of an Italian cornetto player named Giovanni Martino Caesare. During Easter 1614, he sent one of his courtiers, the painter Søren Kiær, to Venice. The king had given him instructions to hand over a letter to Caesare on his way. Presumably, Caesare was employed by the Markgraf zu Burgau, but Kiær realized that he had left this position and had gone to Salzburg. Kiær hired a messenger to deliver the letter, and continued his own journey to Venice.<sup>14</sup> Christian IV was not satisfied with the situation and tried to solve the problem through other contacts; thus count Ernst of Bückeberg promised the Danish king to arrange for Caesare to go to Copenhagen.<sup>15</sup> Even with the help of Count Ernst, Christian did not succeed in employing this Italian virtuoso. Also the efforts of recruiting musicians from Rome were unsuccessful. The singer Gregorio Chelli was employed at the Danish court from 1634, and five years later he was sent to Rome to recruit two new singers.<sup>16</sup> He never returned; however, his contacts with Rome might have been the reason why a soprano, Agostino Pisone who had earlier been active in St Laterano, arrived in Copenhagen in 1643.<sup>17</sup>

12 This letter from Orologio to Christian IV (undated, but likely from the beginning of 1600) is kept together with two other letters from Orologio at the Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Tyske Kancelli, Udenrigske Afdeling, Breve fra udenlandske universiteter og lærde mænd 1530–1690, M–R. See a transcription in Robert Eitner, 'Drei Briefe von Alessandro Orologio', *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte*, 31 (1899), 42–45. Orologio's letters to the King are described further in S.A.E. Hagen, 'Bemærkninger og Tilføjelser til Dr. Angul Hammerichs Skrift: Musikken ved Christian den Fjerdes Hof', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 6/IV (1893), 420–44, at 440–41; Rudolf Flotzinger, 'Alessandro Orologio und seine Intraden (1597)', *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning*, 17 (1986), 53–64; Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 87–88.

13 Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 87–88.

14 Kiær wrote a report on his doings in Venice and sent it to the King's chancellor, Christian Friis, who received the letter in Copenhagen 15 August 1614. See transcription of the letter in Holger Frederik Rørdam, 'Til Musikens Historie i ældre Tid', *Historiske Samlinger og Studier* (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1896), vol. 2, 160–77.

15 Astrid Laakmann, '...nur allein aus Liebe der Musica' – Die Bückeberger Hofmusik zur Zeit des Grafen Ernst III. zu Holstein-Schaumburg als Beispiel höfischer Musikpflege im Gebiet der 'Weserrenaissance' (Musik in Westfalen, 4; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), 85–86, 347–48 (transcription of a letter from Christian IV to count Ernst).

16 Hammerich, *Musiken ved Christian den Fjerdes Hof*, 126–27; Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 86.

17 On Pisone in Rome, see Wolfgang Witzemann, *Die Lateran-Kapelle von 1599 bis 1650* (Analecta Musicologica, 40/I-II; Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 2008), vol. 1, 102; vol. 2, 671, 678, 684, 769.

Among art historians, it is often stressed that sculptors and other artists connected to the Danish court at this time represented Dutch art traditions.<sup>18</sup> However, the art historian Kristoffer Neville has recently demonstrated that several of Christian IV's artists (although being Dutch) were trained in Italy.<sup>19</sup> The fact that they were familiar with Italian traditions obviously was of greater importance to the King than having native Italians at court. This, too, was the case with musicians. The *Kapellmeister* Gregorio Trehou (employed 1590–1611) and the singer Jan Tollius (employed 1601–3) were both born in the Netherlands but stayed several years in Italy before arriving in Denmark.<sup>20</sup> Also the later *Kapellmeister* Heinrich Schütz (employed 1633–35, 1642–44) was known by the royal family to have studied in Italy, as might also have been the case with a musician like Michael Ulich (employed 1634–43, 1649–69).<sup>21</sup> The soprano Georg Sidow (employed 1641–53) was probably also trained in Italy and hence received a high salary comparable to the Italians. In the last decades of his reign, the King made it possible for the musicians that surrounded him to be in contact with Italians. In 1631, he gave the organist of the main church in Copenhagen, Johann Lorentz the Younger, permission to travel to Italy to study;<sup>22</sup> and even as late as 1643, the King sent Friedrich Hoyoul, a son of the chapel musician Georg Friedrich Hoyoul, to study with Giovanni Giacomo Porro at the court in Munich. At the Bavarian court, the above-mentioned Giovanni Martino Cesare also taught Hoyoul.<sup>23</sup>

Many of the Italian musicians arriving in Copenhagen were accustomed to working at North European courts. One might suggest that musicians arriving from neighbouring courts had a better chance of integrating into the daily musical activities at the Danish court compared to musicians who came directly from Italy and thus had never experienced courtly routines in Northern Europe. Mara Wade investigated how wedding celebrations took place at the Danish court in the seventeenth century arguing that ‘Denmark was a flourishing center of Protestant

18 Cf. Harald Olsen, *Italian Paintings and Sculpture in Denmark* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1961), 12.

19 Kristoffer Neville, ‘Christian IV's Italianates. Sculpture at the Danish Court’, in Hugo Johannsen (ed.), *Reframing the Danish Renaissance. Problems and Prospects in a European Perspective* (Copenhagen, forthcoming). I'm grateful to Kristoffer Neville for letting me read his manuscript.

20 On Trehou and Tollius, see Ole Kongsted, ‘Nyopdukkede værker af Gregorius Trehou i Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana’, in Mette Müller and Lisbet Torp (eds.), *Musikkens Tjenere. Instrument – Forsker – Musiker* (Meddelelser fra Musikhistorisk Museum og Carl Claudius' Samlinger, VI; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 1998), 189–209; Ole Kongsted, ‘Jan Tollius: “Musicus excellens, sed homo famae sinisterioris”’, in Ole Kongsted et al. (eds.), *A due. Musical Essays in Honour of John D. Bergsagel & Heinrich W. Schwab* (Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, 37; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2008), 346–68.

21 On Ulich's training in Italy, see Laakmann, ‘...nur allein aus Liebe der Musica’, 87.

22 Bo Lundgren, ‘Nikolajorganisten Johan Lorentz i Köpenhamn. Ett försök till en biografi’, *Svenskt tidskrift för Musikforskning*, 43 (1961), 249–63, at 250–51.

23 Hoyoul travelled to Munich together with the diplomat Malte Juul; see Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 79. On Cesare and Hoyoul, see Horst Leuchtmann, ‘Die Maximilianische Hofkapelle’, in Hubert Glaser (ed.), *Um Glauben und Reich. Kurfürst Maximilian I. Beiträge zur Bayerischen Geschichte und Kunst* (Wittelsbach und Bayern, II/1; Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1980), 364–75, at 371.

court culture.<sup>24</sup> Musicians from Gottorf, Wolfenbüttel, and Dresden, for instance, would therefore experience festivities as well as daily routines at the court in Copenhagen similar to what they were used to. The Danish King and his administration most likely expected musicians to be able to enter the staff and learn such routines. Indeed, once employed at the Danish court, the Italian musicians became part of the daily work in the chapel. Most of them were met with appreciation and received high salaries, but they did not rest on their laurels keeping their status as lionized artists. The Italian lute player Giovanni Baptista Veraldi did not stay at the Copenhagen Castle all the time, but followed the King on his journeys in the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein.<sup>25</sup> It must have been expected, even of a virtuoso like Veraldi, that he would play whatever and wherever according to the King's pleasure. Indeed, he was supposed to offer his 'service in the church, in our own chambers or else in other ways that he is ordered and commanded'.<sup>26</sup> Veraldi may not have been satisfied with these conditions, and after two years in the Danish King's service, he left his position and joined the court of the sworn enemy of Denmark, the Swedish King.<sup>27</sup>

The skills of Italian virtuoso musicians were also employed in the royal household at the Copenhagen Castle. When the singer Gregorio Chelli da Verona was hired in 1634, his primary task was to teach the boy singers in the chapel. Chelli was the first singer to be hired specifically to teach them 'to sing in the Italian manner' and to implement music from Italy into the daily repertoire of the chapel.<sup>28</sup> Several singers (also non-Italians) followed in his footsteps.<sup>29</sup> The situation reveals that the court administration was willing to change the conditions of the employment of musicians in order to integrate Italian music into the court life. The repertoire that they taught was Italian, and during the 1630s and '40s, the court bought music from local book shops with the help of Chelli. He proves to be the author of a

24 Mara Wade, *Triumphus Nuptialis Danicus. German Court Culture and Denmark. The "Great Wedding" of 1634* (Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung, 27; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 295.

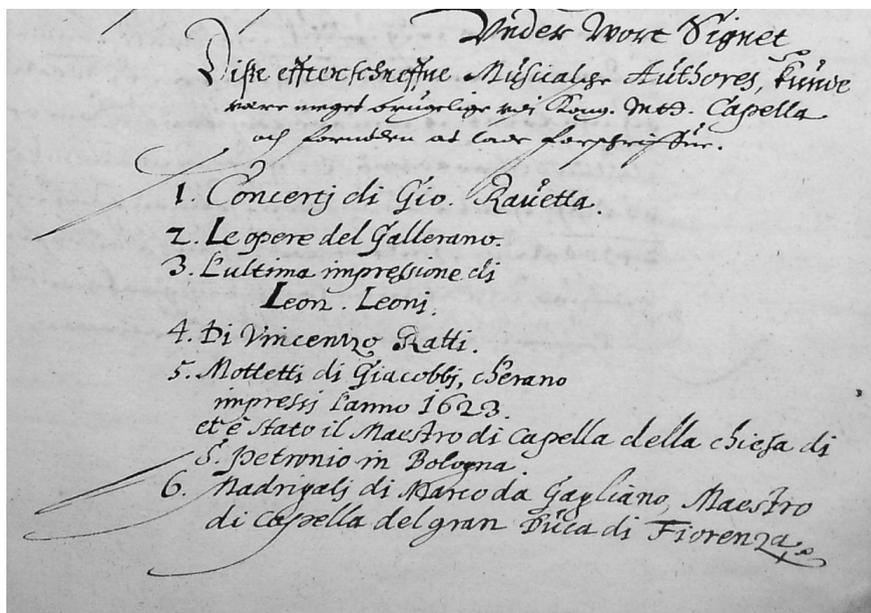
25 According to the royal account books (Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Rentemesterregnskaberne, 1620–1621, fol. 360), in June and August 1620 Veraldi received his salary in Krempen and Bredsted (Schleswig-Holstein), where the King resided during the summer of that year according to his personal letters; cf. C.F. Bricka and J.A. Fridericia (eds.), *Kong Christian den Fjerdes Egenhændige Breve* (Copenhagen: Rudolph Klein, 1887–89), vol. 1, 164–77.

26 According to his contract dated 18 August 1618: 'opwartningh wdi kirckenh, wdi woris egne gemacher, eller och wdi andre maader [han] befallendiß och tilsigendiß wordet', Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Danske Kancelli, Sjællandske registre, 1613–19, fol. 360r.

27 Erik Kjellberg, *Kungliga musiker i Sverige under stormaktstiden. Studier kring deras organisation, verksamheter och status ca 1620–ca 1720*, diss. (Uppsala Universitet, 1979), vol. 1, 507.

28 'paa Italiensk manering att siunge', Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Danske Kancelli, Sjællandske register, 1632–37, fol. 301r–v. An account of the fashionable way of singing in the Italian manner is given by Christoph Bernhard in his 'Von der Singe-Kunst oder Manier', Joseph Müller-Blattau (ed.), *Die Kompositionslehre Heinrich Schützens in der Fassung seines Schülers Christoph Bernhard*, 4th edn. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2003), 31–39.

29 This was the case with Agostino Fontana (employed 1638) and Benedetto Bonaglia (1638), but also the singer Johannes Lange (1634), who apparently was not native Italian; cf. Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 37–38.



Ill. 1. List of Italian music to be ordered for the royal chapel in 1636. Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Danske Kancelli, Rentekammerafdelingen, Kopi-bøger over kgl. Missive 1622–46, 28 October 1636.

list of music by Italian composers that ‘would be very useful in his royal majesty’s *Capella*’.<sup>30</sup> Chelli recommended music by composers such as Leandro Gallerano, Leone Leoni, and the *maestro di capella* Marco da Gagliano at the Tuscan court – Chelli’s former workplace.<sup>31</sup> During the 1630s and ‘40s, the new repertoire was introduced at the Danish court, and vocal music by Claudio Monteverdi, Alessandro Grandi, and other North Italian composers became part of the daily repertoire.<sup>32</sup>

Performing music with the court’s boy singers, however, was not necessarily close to being the kind of ‘Italian manner’ to which the singers from Italy were accustomed. Between four and eight boy singers lived at the castle where they received daily tuition. A school master took care of the general training in languages, while Chelli and the other singers were supposed to teach them Italian music. Even though these boys might have been gifted, we cannot expect that Chelli had an easy time learning them the musical traditions that he represented. It would have taken

30 The list is only preserved as a copy (done by a scribe in the King’s account office), Danish National Archives, Copenhagen, Danske Kancelli, Rentekammerafdelingen, Kopi-bøger over kgl. Missive 1622–46, 28. Oktober 1636. See further description in Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 133–34; and transcription in vol. 2, 30–31.

31 On Chelli’s employment in Florence 1616–20, see Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principate of the Medici. With a Reconstruction of the Artistic Establishment* (*Historiae musicae cultores* Biblioteca, LXI; Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1993), 353–54.

32 Cf. Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 141–52.

them years to learn the advanced techniques of singing in ‘the Italian manner’, and since many of the boys only stayed in the chapel for a couple of years, Chelli’s challenges were endless. Being a celebrated Italian musician at the Danish court was not as fashionable, as one might think.

### ITALIAN OUTSIDE ITALY

Italian music was popular and musicians from Italy were highly regarded; yet, in order to understand how the musical traditions that they represented were diffused northwards, it is necessary to address the problem regarding the reception of Italian culture outside Italy. First of all, we might think that it makes little sense to speak of a homogeneous ‘Italy’ or of a unified ‘Italian’ culture in the first half of the seventeenth century. Not only did the Italian peninsula at that time consist of several politically independent states with significant social differences; there were also different musical practices in Rome, Florence, and Venice for instance. Being an indistinct geographical expression, ‘Italian’ was an unclear designation of cultures and identities in Italy. The term was, nevertheless, frequently used during the seventeenth century. Silke Leopold argues that the category ‘Italianità’ first of all has been used by non-Italians in order to characterize Italians.<sup>33</sup> What this term covered, then, was a mixture of how foreigners understood and made use of cultural trends from the Italian peninsula. This was also the case in the seventeenth century, when non-Italian musicians and composers often referred to ‘Italian music’ in general. After learning compositional techniques that Italians employed (though not necessarily by travelling to Italy), German composers often called attention to the fact that they too composed music in ‘the Italian manner’. This was the case with Heinrich Schütz and Johann Hermann Schein but as Walter Werbeck has demonstrated, these two composers made use of ‘the Italian manners’ in different ways.<sup>34</sup> It has been suggested that German composers referred to their compositions as Italianate with marketing purposes in mind: everything Italian was *en vogue* and adding ‘Italy’ on the front page of a music print would increase its saleability.<sup>35</sup> Also ways of performing music was broadly referred to as ‘the Italian way’. In his *Syntagma Musicum III* (1619), Michael Praetorius provides the reader with a description of ‘die jetzige Italianische Art und Manier im singen’ in general.<sup>36</sup> Christoph Bernhard

33 Silke Leopold, ‘Vom Mythos der “Italianità”. Vor-, Früh- und Problemgeschichte einer musikalischen Kategorie’, in *Vanitatis fuga, aeternitatis amor. Wolfgang Witzemann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Analecta Musicologica, 36; Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2005), 1–21. Moreover, Leopold has made the observation that the majority of musicological studies, using the term ‘Italianità’ as a way of articulating Italian identity, has been made by non-Italian scholars. In addition, she points to the fact that the term is often used in order to describe an Italian influence on non-Italian composers.

34 Walter Werbeck, ‘Gabrieli-Schule und “italian-madrigalische Manier”: Schütz und Schein’, *Schütz-Jahrbuch*, 28 (2006), 23–34.

35 Cf. Katharina Bruns, *Das deutsche Lied von Orlando di Lasso bis Johann Hermann Schein*, diss. (Universität Zürich, 2006), 116.

36 Arno Forchert (ed.), *Michael Praetorius. Syntagma musicum. Band III. Faksimile-Reprint der Ausgabe Wolfenbüttel 1619* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), title page.

was aware of local differences in the techniques of singing and termed *Cantar alla Romana*, *alla Napolitana*, and *alla Lombarda*.<sup>37</sup> What ‘Italian manner’ covered in the seventeenth century is not always clear, since the ways Italian music traditions were used varied from locality to locality and from composer to composer. The term did not necessarily refer to one specific way of performing or composing, and in many situations the designation ‘Italian’ intentionally was used ambiguously as a broad reference to the fashionable cultural movements of the time.

‘Italian’ seemed on the surface to be a fashionable term; however, the ways in which Italian culture was received outside Italy were far from universal throughout Europe. The historian Peter Burke addresses the problem of ‘the uses of Italy’ in the early modern period by focusing on the presence of Italian culture outside Italy. He argues that the dissemination of Italian culture contributed to the rise of independent ‘local renaissances’ – a concept which follows the idea that local European uses of the fashionable Italian culture ‘were far from carbon copies of one another’.<sup>38</sup> What might have been thought of as original Italian was on the contrary shaped by local traditions. ‘The messages which Italian artists and writers sent were not always or exactly the messages which the foreign audiences received. The changes, whether conscious or unconscious, may be regarded as a kind of creative misunderstanding, or better, as a process of appropriation, adaptation or cultural translation’.<sup>39</sup> Burke focuses on the situation of the receiver and argues that reception was an active process of appropriating what was received.<sup>40</sup>

The concept of ‘local renaissances’ allows us to focus on how the receivers of Italian culture acted as a reaction to their encounter with Italy and how Italian culture was used in specific localities. This challenges the way we tend to think of the dissemination of Italian music outside Italy: what at first sight looks ‘genuine Italian’ might not entirely represent Italian practices. Rather, we should consider it a product of local adaptations. Thus, the extreme consequence of Burke’s theories, ‘the original’ (whatever that is) never exists in the eyes of the receiver. This proves to be a useful way of thinking of Italian music in a locality as distant from Italy as Copenhagen. We should consider the appropriation of Italian music on this locality and the creation of ‘new cultural products as a part of the rise of ‘local renaissances’. Lewis took her point of departure in Burke’s theories when she investigated three localities (Antwerp, Nuremberg, and Copenhagen) in order to show how ‘the uses of Italy’ varied here: each of these represents a different use of Italy.<sup>41</sup> However, she

37 Müller-Blattau (ed.), *Die Kompositionslehre Heinrich Schützens*, 31.

38 Peter Burke, ‘The uses of Italy’, in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Renaissance in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 6–20.

39 Burke, ‘The uses of Italy’, 8.

40 Burke has developed these ideas in Peter Burke, *Kultureller Austausch* (Erbschaft unsere Zeit. Vorträge über den Wissenstand der Epoche, 8; Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000); Peter Burke, ‘Cultures of translation in early modern Europe’, in Peter Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7–38; Peter Burke, ‘Translating Knowledge, Translating Cultures’, in Michael North (ed.), *Kultureller Austausch. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2009), 69–77.

41 Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 1–14.

focused on one dimension of the Copenhagen reception of Italian music. In fact, the concept of ‘local renaissances’ (in plural) suggests that even on one locality, we can expect to find different uses of Italian culture. Hence, the application of Italian music at the Danish court differed from that of elsewhere in Europe, and, furthermore, ‘Italy’ was even employed in several different ways here.

#### ADAPTING THE MADRIGAL

In the rise of local musical renaissances at the Danish court, the madrigal was an important representation of Italy; yet, the integration of this genre into the daily activities at court happened on several levels, making it subject to cultural transformations. Even if madrigals were consciously sought out in Italy where the genre originated, one cannot preclude the possibility that the search for ‘the original’ was put aside in advantage of other ‘uses of Italy’. Indeed, Italian music was in some cases introduced to musicians at the Danish court through non-Italian sources. According to a catalogue (1663) held by the Royal Library, the son of Christian IV had inherited volumes of music from his father. Among them was a collection of Italian madrigals printed in Antwerp, *Symphonia angelica* (1585).<sup>42</sup> This specific volume – together with several other madrigal prints from this city – is still kept at the Royal Library; another collection with pieces by Rinaldo del Mel even has the same binding as the 1585-collection. All in all, fifteen prints issued between 1585 and 1607 containing hundreds of madrigals mostly by Italian composers, belonged to the royal court around 1600.<sup>43</sup> Italian music at the court did not always originate from Italian sources, but from prints by the successful music publishers in Antwerp. Lewis argues that the Antwerp publishers shaped their madrigal anthologies for both local and international buyers. The anthologies ‘relocate[d] and recontextualize[d] the madrigal, thereby enhancing the genre’s appeal to northern audiences’.<sup>44</sup> Musicians at the Danish court were among the users of the Antwerp collections. The dissemination of Italian music was significantly dependent on such anthologies, and to the Danish court musicians they were a means of saving time and money: they were not compelled to travel to Italy in order to get Italian music at hand.<sup>45</sup>

Taking a closer look at how Italian music was used on an everyday basis at the royal chapel, we get the impression that the search for ‘original Italian music’ from time to time was pushed aside. This was the case when the music needed to be fitted into the daily repertoire. One can easily imagine how musicians, who were unaccustomed to playing ‘the Italian way’, were forced to acquire the necessary skills

42 RISM B/I 1585<sup>19</sup>. On the catalogue, see Harald Ilsøe, *Det kongelige bibliotek i støbeskeen. Studier og samlinger til bestandens historie indtil ca. 1780* (Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, 21; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Forlag, 1999), 43–48.

43 For further details on the single prints and on the provenance, see Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 134–40.

44 Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 11.

45 On the dissemination of music through anthologies, see Susan Lewis Hammond, *Editing Music in Early Modern Germany* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

in order to participate in the daily musical activities. The same musicians might instead have preferred to make changes to the music in order to be able to play it. Such transformations are documented in two Antwerp prints from the royal music collection.<sup>46</sup> In two madrigals by Luca Marenzio, a local scribe has added sacred German texts as alternatives to the secular Italian ones. In both cases, the German texts reflect the nature poetry of the Italian texts. Thus, instead of describing only the relation between humans and nature, the sacred texts conclude that God's words last eternally, contrary to humans and nature (see Example 1 and Ill. 2).<sup>47</sup> The German text to the madrigal 'Spuntavan già per far' is based on stanzas from Isaiah, 40 (6–8), but the scribe changed the original wording in order to fit it to the musical structure, thus avoiding changes in the music. By carefully adding an alternative text to the print, the composition now existed in two different versions: a secular Italian madrigal, and a sacred German motet. The compositional structures were unchanged, and so were the lyrical themes of the Italian text, suggesting that there was an interest in keeping the original character of the piece. However, the changes also reveal that musicians at court did not necessarily perform Italian madrigals with the original texts.

Adding new texts to Italian madrigals was a well-known procedure that increased the dissemination of the genre throughout Europe. The anthologies *Musica transalpina* (1588 and 1597) and *Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590) are famous examples of how editors translated the original texts in order to meet the demands of English singers.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the German organist Ambrosius Profius published contrafacts of Monteverdi's madrigals, hence offering his protestant colleagues the possibility of performing these popular Italian secular pieces.<sup>49</sup> Recently discovered sources reveal uncharted aspects of madrigal performances at the Danish court, and they challenge the assumption that '[f]ür Christian IV. hieß Madrigal italienisches Madrigal und nicht Madrigal schlechthin'.<sup>50</sup> On the contrary, the court musicians wanted the opportunity of performing madrigals in several languages for different occasions. The two versions reflect the daily musical activities at court: if a certain madrigal was popular but the occasion did not call for secular music a sacred text might be added.<sup>51</sup>

46 Only the tenor part books are extant: Luca Marenzio, 'Spuntavan già per far', *Madrigali a cinque voci* (Antwerp: Pierre Phalese, 1593), fols. 39v–40r (copy at Dk-Kk, sign. mu 6405.1133); and Luca Marenzio, 'Rivi, fontane e fiumi', in Pierre Phalese (ed.), *Paradiso musicale di madrigal et canzone a cinque voci di diversi eccellentissimi avtori* (Antwerp, 1596), no. 6 (copy at Dk-Kk, sign. mu 6405.1134).

47 See a further analysis of the texts in Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 188–94.

48 Cf. Laura Mary, 'The Due Decorum Kept: Elizabethan Translation and the Madrigals Englished of Nicholas Yonge and Thomas Watson', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 17/1 (1997), 1–21.

49 Cf. Kristin Marie Sponheim, *The Anthologies of Ambrosius Profie (1589–1661) and the Transmission of Italian Music in Germany*, diss. (Yale University, 1995).

50 Schwab, 'Italianità in Danimarca', 136.

51 'Spuntavan già per far' was one of Marenzio's most popular madrigals. It was published in Marenzio's first book of madrigals (Venice, 1580) and reprinted in Antwerp 1593. In addition, it was issued in four different anthologies (RISM B/I 1588<sup>21</sup>, 1590<sup>29</sup> (both with English translations), RISM B/I 1609<sup>14-15</sup> (with a sacred Latin text), RISM B/I 1627<sup>8</sup> (with a sacred German text), cf. Sponheim, *The Anthologies of Ambrosius Profie*, 132–34; Hammond, *Editing Music in Early Modern Germany*, app. B.

Example 1. The beginning of Marenzio's madrigal 'Spuntavan già' with the alternative German text. The score is based on John Steele (ed.), *Luca Marenzio. The Complete Five Voiced Madrigals for Mixed Voices*, vol. 1 (New York: Gaudia Music and Arts, 1996), 13–14, with the German text added from the Antwerp print kept at the Royal Library, Copenhagen (see footnote 46).



The musical score is for five voices: Canto, Quinto, Alto, Tenore, and Basso. It is in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-5, and the second system covers measures 6-10. The lyrics are provided in both Italian and German.

**System 1 (Measures 1-5):**

- Canto:** Spun - ta - van già / Als fleisch ist hev, per far il mon-do a-dor / al sei - ne güth vnd wüir -
- Quinto:** Spun - ta - van già / Als fleisch ist hev, per far il mon-do a-dor - no, per far il / al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - me, al sei - ne
- Alto:** Spun - ta - van già / Als fleisch ist hev, per far il mon-do a-dor - no, per far il / al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - me, al sei - ne
- Tenore:** Spun - ta - van già / Als fleisch ist hev, per far il mon-do a-dor -
- Basso:** (No lyrics shown for this part in the first system)

**System 2 (Measures 6-10):**

- Canto:** no, / me, spun - ta - van già, / als fleisch ist hev, per far il / al sei - ne
- Quinto:** mon - do a - dor - no, / güth vnd wüir - me, per far il mon - da a - / al sei - ne güth vnd
- Alto:** mon - do a - dor - no, / güth vnd wüir - me, spun - ta - van / als fleisch ist
- Tenore:** no, per far il mon - do a - dor - no, / me, al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - me,
- Basso:** Spun - ta - van già, / Als fleisch ist hev, per / al

9

Canto  
mon - do a - dor - no, il mon - do a - dor - no  
güth vnd wüir - me, sein' güth vnd wüir - me

Quinto  
dor - no, per far il mon - do a - dor - - - no  
wüir - me, al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - - - me

Alto  
già per far il mon - do a - dor - - - no  
hew, al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - - - me

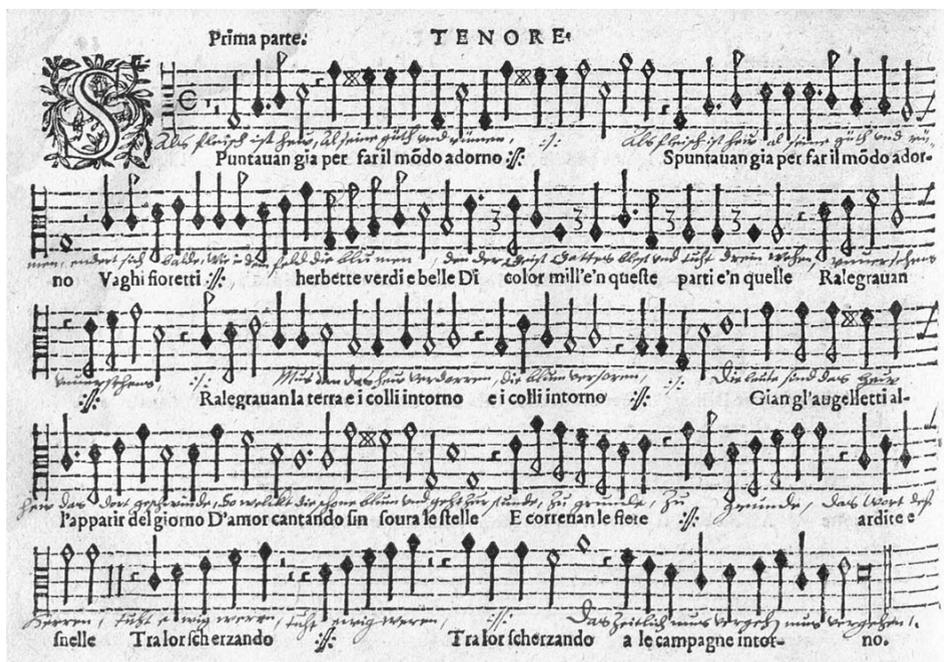
Tenore  
spun - ta - van già per far il mon - do a - dor - no  
als fleisch ist hew, al sei - ne güth vnd wüir - - - me

Basso  
far il mon - do a - dor - - - - - no  
sei - ne güth vnd wüir - - - - - me

Al[le]s fleisch ist Hew,  
al[le] seine güth vnd wüirme endert sich balde  
wie in den feld die blumen,  
den der Geist Gottes bles[e]t vnd tuht drein wehr.  
Vnversehens muß den das hew verdorren, die blum verso[h]ren.  
Die leute sind das hew, das dort geschwinde,  
so welckt die sch[ö]ne blum vnd geht zu stunde zu grunde.  
Das Wort des Herren tuht ewig we[h]ren das zeitlich mus[s] vergehn.

Moreover, if the Italian text was inappropriate or unintelligible for the singers or the listeners, an alternative German text was regarded as a way of making it more suitable for that particular event.

When making Italian music part of the courtly agenda and integrating specific musical pieces into the daily repertoire, it was not always possible to keep the music in its original form. A further reason for making changes to the music was so as to adapt it to the skills of the musicians present at court. If none of them were trained in singing Italian music (or even in the language), the musicians most likely decided jointly to make changes to the music. The Italian musicians at the court of Christian IV surely knew how to perform madrigals with original Italian texts. However, when collaborating with Danish and German musicians on performances of the madrigals, the Italians might even have been ordered to perform the madrigals with German texts. Even though the available sources do not reflect such everyday disputes in details, the mentioned music prints certainly suggest that the integration of Italian music resulted in a conflict of interests – a conflict that affected the local reception of Italian music. These sources further suggest that the integration of Italian music was carried out as a result of negotiations between Italian (or Italianate) musicians and local musicians.



Ill. 2. The madrigal ‘Spuntavan gia per far’ from *Madrigali a cinque voci* (Antwerp, 1593, fol. 39v); German text begins ‘Al[le]s fleisch ist hew’. Reproduced by permission of The Royal Library, Copenhagen.

The madrigal anthologies by the court organist Melchior Borchgrevinck give us further impressions of how Italian madrigals were adapted to local performance practices at the Danish court. After having visited Italy a couple of times in the beginning of the seventeenth century, Borchgrevinck published two anthologies, *Giardino novo I–II* (Copenhagen, 1605 and 1606), mostly with Italian madrigals collected during his recent journeys. Lewis argues that the ‘Danes not only “brought the madrigal home”, but retransmitted it back to Europe by becoming producers rather than consumers of Venetian goods’.<sup>52</sup> Contrary to Lewis, I would like to focus on their role as consumers of Italian music in order to get an impression of their use of the music: Borchgrevinck did not simply re-publish the madrigals back home in Denmark, but rather transformed them according to local traditions of music performance.

The second anthology contains the famous ‘Cruda Amarilli’ from Monteverdi’s fifth book of madrigals (first edn., Venice, 1605). The presence of this specific piece has been used as an account of the interest in the newest developments in composing at that time.<sup>53</sup> The madrigal was, indeed, reprinted in Copenhagen the very year

52 Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 165.

53 Schwab, ‘Italianità in Danimarca’, 134–35; Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 172–76; Hammond, ‘Italian Music and Christian IV’s Urban Agenda for Copenhagen’, 375.

after Monteverdi himself issued it in Venice, which has been described as ‘the full impact of the *ad fontes* approach’.<sup>54</sup> However, in preparing the madrigal for performances at the Danish court, Borchgrevinck transformed ‘the original’ and adapted it to local practices. It is interesting to note that he omitted the *basso continuo* part. Monteverdi mentioned that this part was only necessary when playing the last six madrigals in the publication. Regarding the other thirteen madrigals (including ‘Cruda Amarilli’), the part was optional.<sup>55</sup> Borchgrevinck ignored the part when issuing the madrigal and his publication only consisted of the five vocal parts.<sup>56</sup> The fact that Monteverdi included a *basso continuo* part for all his pieces in the publication suggests that in his mind this part was dispensable.

The *basso continuo* part in the Monteverdi publication is at first sight a *basso seguente*, a part drawn from whichever vocal part was the lowest at any moment. If the *basso continuo* was omitted, as Monteverdi himself suggested, a similar part could always be reproduced from the vocal parts. However, Monteverdi did not consequently work out the part as a mere concentrate of the vocal composition. In ‘Cruda Amarilla’, Monteverdi often avoided following strictly the lowest note, but sometimes stuck to a part, also if another had taken over the lowest note. He apparently did this with the melodic qualities of the *basso seguente* in mind (see Example 2, bb. 58–59). In other cases, however, he would cut off a phrase and jump to the lowest note in another part in order to support the harmony – even though he in doing so ignored the melodic structure of the voice parts (see bar 61). These and other considerations were common when extracting a *basso seguente*, but the methods varied considerably from musician to musician, according to contemporary theorists.<sup>57</sup> In Monteverdi’s case this also resulted in simplified rhythms and other alterations.

Borchgrevinck could easily omit the *basso continuo* part, since a *basso seguente* based on the voice parts alone would not be significantly different from the one Monteverdi issued. The crucial point, however, was that Borchgrevinck did not take Monteverdi’s suggestions into consideration; instead he adapted the music to his own performance traditions. In that way, he took a step away from ‘the original’ and, by omitting the *basso continuo* part, Borchgrevinck rejected the Italian way of notating an instrumental accompaniment.<sup>58</sup> We might suggest that he did not con-

54 Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 173 (italics original).

55 The title page of the *basso continuo* part reads ‘Quale necessariamente anderà sonato per bisogno / de li vltimi sei Madrigali, & per il altri / à beneplacito’; see facs. of the 1605-edition part books at [http://imslp.org/wiki/Madrigals,\\_Book\\_5\\_\(Monteverdi,\\_Claudio\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Madrigals,_Book_5_(Monteverdi,_Claudio)).

56 On Borchgrevinck’s madrigal anthologies, see Henrik Glahn (ed.), *20 italienske madrigaler fra Melchior Borchgrevinck ‘Giardino Novo’ I–II København 1605/06* (Copenhagen: Edition Egtved, 1983); and Lewis, *Collecting ‘Italia’ abroad*, 149–214. Note that also G. Francesco Malipiero (ed.), *Il Quinto Libro de Madrigali a 5 voci* (Tutte le opera di Claudio Monteverdi, 5; Vienna: Universal Edition, [s.a.]) has omitted the *basso continuo* part.

57 Peter Williams and David Ledbetter, ‘Basso seguente’, *Grove Music Online* ([www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)), accessed 17 Nov. 2010.

58 Except for the omitted *basso continuo* part, Borchgrevinck’s reprint ‘is in all details an exact reproduction’ of the 1605-edition of Monteverdi’s publication; cf. Karin and Jens Peter Jacobsen (eds.), *Claudio Monteverdi. Il quinto libro de madrigali. A Critical Edition* (Egtved: Edition Egtved, 1985), xii.

Example 2. Excerpt from Monteverdi's 'Cruda Amarilli', *Il quinto libro de madrigali* (Venice, 1605); the marked parts indicate which vocal parts the *basso continuo* follows. The score is based on Karin and Jens Peter Jacobsen (eds.), *Claudio Monteverdi. Il quinto libro de madrigali. A Critical Edition* (Egtved: Edition Egtved, 1985), 4.



The image displays two systems of a musical score for 'Cruda Amarilli' by Claudio Monteverdi. Each system includes six staves: Canto, Alto, Quinto, Tenore, Basso, and Basso continuo. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are in Italian. Grey shaded areas in the Quinto, Tenore, and Basso staves indicate the parts followed by the basso continuo. The first system starts at measure 55, and the second system starts at measure 59.

**System 1 (Measures 55-58):**

- Canto:** -do, poi che col dir t'of - fen - do,
- Alto:** -do, poi che col dir t'of - fen - - do i
- Quinto:** -do, i mi mor - rò ta - cen - - do, poi
- Tenore:** -do i mi mor -
- Basso:** -do,
- Basso continuo:** (continues the bass line)

**System 2 (Measures 59-62):**

- Canto:** poi che col dir t'of - fen - do
- Alto:** mi mor - rò, poi che col dir t'of - fen - - do
- Quinto:** che col dir t'of - fen - do i
- Tenore:** rò, i mi mor - rò, i
- Basso:** i mi mor - rò, i mi mor -
- Basso continuo:** (continues the bass line)



Ill. 3. Detail from the title page of *Giardino novo I* (Copenhagen, 1605) showing five musicians playing (two lute players, a viol player, and presumably two singers).

sider the effort of preparing a part book for a continuo-player relevant, indicating that performances of madrigals at the Danish court took place in other ways: the musicians probably did not play from *basso continuo* parts but rather from scores or tablatures. The North German traditions of playing from tablatures were common among Copenhagen musicians.<sup>59</sup> The front page of Borchgrevinck's first volume of madrigals shows a consort of musicians – probably playing music similar to the contents of the volumes (see Ill. 3). It depicts two musicians playing chordal instruments (lutes) suggesting that the Danish musicians surely knew the practice of playing madrigals (and other similar vocal pieces) with instrumental accompaniment. However, musicians at the Danish court were probably unaccustomed to the practice of using a specific part book containing a bass part with chord figurations – this being a practice developing in musical circles in Italy.<sup>60</sup>

These examples show that there was a kind of pragmatism in the 'ad fontes' movement at the Danish court. Musicians at the Danish court were only to a certain degree interested in learning how to play Italian music in the Italian way. As a result, Italian music was performed in various ways at the Danish court according to the practical circumstances and local traditions. Whether playing from North

<sup>59</sup> A collection of German organ tablatures, the so-called Clausholm fragments from the middle of the seventeenth century, substantiate this; cf. Moe, *Musikkulturel trafik i København og Rostock*, vol. 1, 161–69, 237–41.

<sup>60</sup> A recent study on the development of the figured bass is Giulia Nuti, *The Performance of Italian Basso Continuo. Style in Keyboard Accompaniment in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 19–60.

European anthologies or from collections brought back home from journeys to Italy, the Danish court musicians adjusted Italian music in order to make it suitable for performances at the Copenhagen court.

## CONCLUSION

Italian music was fashionable throughout Europe during the seventeenth century. Contrary to what is suggested in the existing literature on the court of Christian IV, Italian music was on the musical agenda during the entire reign of the King. The Danish sources reveal that Christian was in contact with several Italian musicians, and they further suggest that he continuously was looking for new musicians to recruit. The King employed his connections with other North European courts in order to hire Italians; however, he was not successful every time. After arriving in Copenhagen, the Italian musicians did not rest on their laurels. They were expected to be involved in the daily activities such as travelling with the King or teaching the boy singers Italian music.

Local musical renaissances at the Copenhagen court during the reign of Christian IV were far from copies of Italian renaissances. Musicians at court were surely fascinated by music from Italy, but when the music was used at the Copenhagen court, it became a catalyst of cultural transformation. Part books belonging to the court show that Italy was not always the place to turn to in order to get hold of Italian music. Dissemination of Italian music also happened through non-Italian sources, and the King's chapel owned more popular anthologies from Antwerp. When purchasing fashionable Italian music, such anthologies were a matter of saving time and money. Italian madrigals were integrated into the daily repertoire by local musicians based on negotiations between Italian and local music traditions. The musicians at court had a pragmatic attitude towards performing Italian music in order to fulfil their duties on a daily basis. Sometimes they played modern Italian madrigals without a *basso continuo* part and sang them with German texts. In that way, the musicians reveal their interest in performing the music according to local musical traditions.

## SUMMARY

During the era of the art-loving King Christian IV, the Danish court was influenced by Italian culture. So far, this fascination has been described as being based on an 'ad fontes' movement and a search for what was 'original'. The use of Italian culture in the early modern days, however, was not universal throughout Europe, but was adapted to local traditions. The article argues that the uses of Italian music at the Danish court were determined by local traditions. By showing examples of how madrigals were performed at court, it is revealed that Italian music was transformed in order to fit local circumstances. Furthermore, based on what we know about Italian musicians employed at court, it is argued that the musical activities were shaped on the balance between local and Italian music traditions.