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The *Cinquecento* Italian Madrigal in Theory and Practice: the Case of Filippo Massini.

1. The second half of the sixteenth century was the period of greatest popularity of the Italian Renaissance madrigal. Poet and jurist Filippo Massini greatly contributed to this development, providing, in addition to an extensive production of madrigals, a theorization of this verse form. His academic lecture *Del madrigale* (*On the madrigal*), composed in the early 1580s, carefully analyzes all the key characteristics of the madrigal and also provides practical suggestions on its composition. Massini's comprehensive reflection on the madrigal takes into account the interplay between theory, practice, and mainstream aesthetic preferences. Although it is proposed as a summary of Pietro Bembo's theories, the lecture actually expands them, thus bringing them into line with the transformed literary scene and widespread composition practice. This keen interest in the practical side of the verse form is easily explained in the light of the vast output of madrigals he produced during his life. He left three collections in this verse form and included more than 100 madrigals in his main collection of *Rime*, published in 1609.

Unlike other contemporaries, Massini did not develop any particular interest in madrigal as musical composition. His few notes on madrigal's musicality and harmony in the academic lecture (that will be analyzed in a later passage of this essay) are indebted to Bembo's theories and still contemplate madrigal exclusively as a literary composition. Analogously, contemporary composers overlooked Massini's madrigal production, which has never been set to music. For this reason, this paper will be devoted to consider Massini's academic lecture in the light of contemporary debate on literary madrigal and will not reflect on the madrigal as a musical composition. Analyzing this theoretical piece of writing, I will address the following research questions: How should Massini's position be considered within the aforementioned debate on this verse form? What are the main, distinctive characteristics of Massini's concept of the madrigal? More specifically, how loyal is Massini to Pietro Bembo's theories of which he declares himself a follower? The second part of this paper will assess whether Massini was consistent in translating his theory into practice. In other words, I will consider if his actual literary production corresponds to the idea of madrigal that emerges from the lecture. To assess this, I will provide an outline of Massini's madrigal production and compare his compositions to the suggestions given in the lecture.

2. The rediscovery of Filippo Massini's literary production is due to Quinto Marini and Mirko Volpi.[1] The two Italian scholars recognized the Perugia-born poet as one of the most important men of letters active in the Milan area at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Marini and Volpi have observed the capacity of Massini's poetry to merge and balance the more established Petrarchan tradition with the innovative, and to some extent controversial, rhetorical features characteristic of the emerging *Seicentesco* poetry. More recently, Uberto Motta has recognized in Massini's literary production a clear intent to defend the freedom of poetic expression and Roberta Ferro has traced his presence in the literary milieu of Milan at the beginning of the *Seicento*.[2]

Born in Perugia on May 1, 1559, Massini devoted his life to pursuing his career as a jurist and to his vocation as a man of letters. After graduating in 1580 *in utroque iure*, he taught law at the local University of Perugia. He left his hometown in 1590, moving to Fermo on the Adriatic coast. He was later appointed as a law professor at the universities of Pisa, Pavia and Bologna. He died in the last of these in May 1618 at the age of 59.[3] In the 16 years he spent in Pavia, Massini had the chance to play an active part in the cultural life of the city, participating in the prestigious academies of the Affidati and of the Intenti, and republishing in 1611 his volume of academic lectures, entitled *Lettioni* (*Lectures*). The first edition of this collection of lectures dates to 1588 and is the highest achievement of his juvenile involvement in the Accademia degli Insensati of Perugia.[4]

Founded in 1561, this literary society reached its greatest height under the leadership of art historian and collector Cesare Crispolti.[5] Thanks to its

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[1] Quinto Marini and Mirko Volpi, "Poesia lirica, encomiastica e giocosa," in *Sul Tesin piantàro i tuoi laureti. Poesia e vita letteraria nella Lombardia spagnola (1535-1706). Catalogo della mostra. Pavia, Castello Visconteo, 19 aprile-2 giugno 2002* (Pavia: Cardano, 2002), 185-93.

[2] Uberto Motta, "Petrarca a Milano al principio del Seicento," in *Petrarca in Barocco. Cantieri petrarcheschi. Due seminari romani*, ed. Amedeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni, 2004), 255-65; Roberta Ferro, *Federico Borromeo ed Ericio Puteano. Cultura e letteratura a Milano agli inizi del Seicento* (Milan-Rome: Biblioteca Ambrosiana-Bulzoni, 2007), 37-38, 46, 53, 81, 344-45, 349, 352.

[3] On Massini's life, see Filippo Ciri, "Massini, Filippo," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana), 72 (2009): 21-23; Alfredo Massini, *Filippo Massini giureconsulto e poeta: 1559-1618* (Perugia: Guerra, 1939); Giovan Battista Vermiglioli, *Biografia degli scrittori perugini e notizie delle opere loro*, 2 vols. (Perugia: Bartelli e Costantini, 1828-1829), 2: 92-98.

[4] Filippo Massini, *Lettioni dell'Estatico Insensato . . .* (Perugia, Petrucci, 1588; and, with the same title, Pavia, Viani, 1611). On the Intenti and Massini's involvement within the academy, see Janie Cole, *Music, spectacle and cultural brokerage in early modern Italy. Michelangelo Buonarroti il giovane*, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 2011), 1: 91-95.

[5] On Crispolti see Carlotta Belloni, "Cesare Crispolti perugino: documenti per una biografia," in *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. La vita e le Opere attraverso i Documenti, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, ed. Stefania Macioce (Rome: Logart Press, 1996), 136-47; Vermiglioli, *Biografia*, 1: 360-61; Roberto Volpi, "Crispolti, Cesare," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 30

privileged connections with the Roman cultural scene, this institution was able to attain a dominant position in the peripheral city of Perugia. A survey of the academy's literary production, still largely in manuscript form, has shown the treatment of a wide variety of topics. In addition to the discussion of new ethical and aesthetic matters (*On Simulation, On moles*, *In praise of ugliness*) and the investigation of ideals for living (*In praise of the villa*, *In praise of the city*), the surviving academic lectures show an abiding interest in literary culture. This is best represented by dissertations on Petrarch's poetry, analyses of sixteenth-century lyrical poets' sonnets, and lectures on the nature of verse forms.[6] In the 1590s, Crispolti penned an important lecture *Del sonetto* (*On the sonnet*), published by Bernard Weinberg in 1974, which shares some clear similarities with Massini's lecture on the madrigal.[7]

Between 1581 and 1587, Massini gave three other talks at the Perugian academy in addition to *Del madrigale*.[8] These four lectures were later collected in the aforementioned 1588 volume of *Lettioni*. The central second and third lectures, *Della contemplatione dell'huomo estatico* (*On ecstatic man's contemplation*) and *Della conversione dell'huomo a Dio* (*On man's conversion to God*), are two expositions of Giovanni Giudiccioni's sonnets. The opening lecture *Della difesa del Petrarca* (*In defense of Petrarch*) is a spirited defense of Petrarch's poetry against the severe rigorism of Ludovico Castelvetro. These lectures form the theoretical framework that underpins Massini's literary production. His vast literary output also includes the printing of the individual *canzoni In lode della santissima Casa Lauretana* (*In praise of the Holy House in Loreto*) and *La villa* (*The villa*), three collections of madrigals, and a major

(1984): 811-12. Recently, his works *Idea dello scolare* (*The idea of the scholar*) and *Raccolta delle cose segnalate* (*Collection of items of distinction*) have been published respectively by Elisabetta Patrizi in *La trattatistica educativa tra Rinascimento e Controriforma. L"Idea dello scolare' di Cesare Crispolti* (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2005) and Laura Teza, *'Raccolta delle cose segnalate' di Cesare Crispolti. La più antica guida di Perugia (1597)*, notes by Simonetta Stopponi (Florence: Olschki, 2001).

[6] Lorenzo Sacchini, *Identità, lettere e virtù. Le lezioni accademiche degli Insensati di Perugia* (Bologna, Emil, 2016), 89-112; 140-55.

[7] Cesare Crispolti, "Del sonetto," in *Trattati di poetica e di retorica del Cinquecento*, 4 vols. (Bari: Laterza, 1974), 4: 193-205. On the Accademia degli Insensati, see Erminia Irace, "Le accademie letterarie nella società perugina tra Cinquecento e Seicento," *Bollettino della Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria* 87 (1990), 155-78; Erminia Irace, "Le accademie e la vita culturale," in *Storia illustrata delle città dell'Umbria. Perugia*, ed. Raffaele Rossi, 3 vols. (Milano: Elio Sellino, 1993), 2: 481-96; Lorenzo Sacchini, "Scritti inediti dell'Accademia degli Insensati nella Perugia del secondo Cinquecento," *Lettere italiane* 63, no.3 (2013), 376-413; Sacchini, *Identità, lettere*; Laura Teza, *Caravaggio e il frutto della virtù: il Mondafrutto e l'Accademia degli Insensati*. (Milano: Electa, 2013), 41-47; Aurelio Valeriani, "L'insegnamento di Giovanni Tinnoli «Magister» dello Studio Perugino del sec. XVI," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia della Università degli Studi di Perugia* 2 (1964-1965), 64-72.

[8] A modern edition of the lecture *Del madrigale* with a concise introduction was published by Giuseppe Fanelli in 1986 (Urbino: Argalìa). All the quotations are from this edition.

collection of *Rime*. This last volume represents the core of Massini's literary production, gathering over 500 lyrics written over more than 20 years.

3. The first decade of the seventeenth century, when Massini published the *Rime*, marks the high point in the fortunes of the literary madrigal. Since the publication of Luigio Cassola's collection of *Madrigali* (*Madrigals*) in 1544, this verse form had been gradually gaining prominence within the literary canon. In his seminal analysis of the sixteenth and seventeenth century madrigal, Alessandro Martini notices a significant and relentless growth in its popularity until 1611, the year of the publication in Venice of the *Gareggiamento poetico del Confuso Ardito Accademico* (*Poetic competition of the Confuso Ardito Academician*).[9] Looking at the same chronological period, Ritrovato observes a decisive switch in views of the madrigal, starting from the 1580s. The progressive detachment of new literary production from Petrarch's metrical system, based on a marked predominance of sonnets and *canzoni*, eventually made it possible for the madrigal to reach a prominent position in the literary panorama of the time.[10]

Unlike other traditional forms, such as the sonnet, the madrigal possessed neither distinctive metric pattern(s) nor a deep-rooted tradition. The sixteenth century madrigal was, in fact, detached from its *Trecento* equivalent, showing a more flexible form and different metric options.[11] When on April 28, 1581 Massini delivers the above-mentioned lecture *Del madrigale*, he explicitly points out the coeval paradoxical situation of the madrigal. Unveiling the reasons that made him opt for the madrigal, Massini acknowledges, on the one hand, the current widespread popularity of this poetic form (in particular, when compared to its fortune in the literary tradition of prior centuries) while noting, on the other hand, the remarkable persistence of doubts as to how to properly write it:

> Ho eletto . . . di ragionar del madrigale che d'altro componimento per più cagioni. Primieramente perché essendo io il più picciol membro e 'l più debil soggetto di quest'Academia, è di ragione che io ragioni del più picciolo e debol poema (avengache vaghissimo e leggiadrissimo) della poesia toscana; e poi perché, comechè 'l madrigale sia più in uso a questi

[9] Alessandro Martini, "Ritratto del madrigale poetico tra Cinque e Seicento," *Lettere italiane* 33, no. 4 (1981), 529-30.
[10] Salvatore Ritrovato, "Antologie e canoni del madrigale (1545-1611)," in *Studi sul madrigale Cinquecentesco* (Rome: Salerno, 2015), 65-67.
[11] On the metric patterns of *Trecento* and *Cinquecento* madrigals, see Pietro G. Beltrami, *La metrica italiana* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011[5]), 98-100, 281-83, 322-23.

> tempi che per l'a dietro sia stato già mai, più che mai si dubita in che guisa debba formarsi.[12] (38)
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> I have elected . . . to examine the madrigal instead of any other verse form for various reasons. Firstly, since I am the youngest and the weakest member of this academy, it stands to reason that I consider the smallest and weakest (although very agreeable and pulchritudinous) verse form of Tuscan poetry; and, then, since – although the madrigal is more in use in these times than it has ever been in the past – [now] more than ever one wonders in what manner it should be composed.[13]

This theoretical uncertainty, along with the contemporary development of the madrigal, led Italian literati to begin a debate on the nature of the verse form and on how to compose it.[14] Massini's lecture constitutes one of the most substantial contributions to this debate.

The origins of this reflection on the madrigal lay in the fourteenth-century Antonio Da Tempo's treatise *Summa artis ritmici vulgaris dictamini*. The Paduan author had in fact established an etymological link between the madrigal, whose name would derive from "mandra [herds]," and pastoral themes.[15] This rustic origin of the term in question seems to have been taken

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[12] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

[13] Except where otherwise noted, translations are mine.

[14] In addition to the aforementioned essays by Martini and Ritrovato, on the Italian literary madrigal in the second half of the sixteenth century, see Marco Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi, il Manierismo e il Madrigale del '500: strutture ideologiche e strutture formali," in *Strozzi il Vecchio, Giovan Battista. Madrigali inediti*, ed. Marco Ariani (Urbino: Argalìa, 1975), VII-CXLVIII; Antonio Daniele, "Teoria e prassi del madrigale libero nel Cinquecento (con alcune note sui madrigali musicati da Andrea Gabrieli)," in *Andrea Gabrieli e il suo tempo. Atti del convegno internazionale (Venezia, 16-18 settembre 1985)*, ed. Francesco Degrada (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 75-169; Stefano La Via, "'Madrigale' e rapporto fra poesia e musica nella critica letteraria del Cinquecento," *Studi musicali* 19 (1990), 33-70; Alessandro Martini, "Marino e il madrigale intorno al 1602," in *The sense of Marino. Literature, Fine Arts and Music of the Italian Baroque*, ed. Francesco Guardiani (New York-Ottawa-Toronto: Legas, 1994), 361-93; Ciro Perna, "Un madrigalista inedito del secondo Cinquecento," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 188, no. 622 (2011), 224-48; Franco Piperno, "'Sì alte, dolce e musical parole.' Petrarca, il petrarchismo musicale e la committenza madrigalistica nel Cinquecento," in *Petrarca in musica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Arezzo, 18-20 marzo 2004*, eds. Andrea Chegai, Cecilia Luzzi (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2004), 321-46.

[15] "Dicitur autem mandrialis a mandra pecudum et pastorum, quia primo modum illum rithimandi et cantandi habuimus ab ovium pastoribus [Indeed they were called madrigals from herds of sheep and shepherds, because we first received this kind of rhyming and singing from them]:" Antonio Da Tempo, *Summa artis rithimici vulgaris dictaminis*, ed. Richard Andrews (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1977), 70. On Da Tempo's definition, see Abramov van-Rijk, *Parlar cantando. The practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2009), 97-99, 112-14 (whose translation I use); Guglielmo Gorni, *Metrica e analisi letteraria* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1993), 91-92; James Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance 1350-1600* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986),

for granted in the sixteenth century, when the discussion focused mainly on two intertwined matters. Literary theorists tried, in fact, to establish: (a) the metrical system of the madrigal and (b) the most suitable subjects for its form. The former argument addresses not merely the rhyme pattern(s) but also the length and number of lines, which could be limited to a fixed size or amount. Similarly, the latter encompasses also a discussion on the style of the madrigal, on how it might express the chosen themes. These two lines of inquiry often implied – as a corollary – a preference (according to one's position in the debate) for the more regulated *Trecento* madrigal over the more unconstrained *Cinquecento* form.

In the last 30 years, Marco Ariani, Alessandro Martini and, more recently, Salvatore Ritrovato have carefully analyzed the debate on the literary madrigal. I will therefore limit my analysis to locating Massini's position within it and to considering the opinions of the main sixteenth century critics, whose theories evidence both similarities and differences vis-à-vis Massini's lecture. It is appropriate to begin this overview by considering Pietro Bembo's opinion. He was not only the most influential literary theorist in the *Cinquecento*, but also, and more specifically, Massini's declared source. In his *Prose della volgar lingua* (*Prose on vernacular language*), published in 1525, Bembo only briefly touches on the madrigal. Following Da Tempo's definition, he acknowledges a direct connection between pastoral love songs and the madrigals, which closely resemble Latin and Greek eclogues.[16] More importantly, Bembo comments on the madrigal's nature in his distinction between "libere," "regolate," and "mescolate" verse forms. Among the regulated forms of verse, Bembo includes the *terza rima*, the *ottava rima* and the *sestina*. In the "mescolate" forms, Bembo lists the sonnet, the *canzone* and the *ballata*. Some restrictions aside, these verse forms maintain their freedom in many respects. In the case of sonnets, for instance, the number of verses is set, but there is a relative freedom in the order of the rhymes. Lastly, the madrigal is included in (or, better, embodies) the so-called "libere" forms as it has neither a fixed rhyme scheme nor an established number of lines:

> Libere poi sono quell'altre; che non hanno alcuna legge o nel numero de versi, o nella maniera del rimargli: ma ciascuno, si come a esso piace,

7-8. On the etymology of madrigal, see Giuseppe Corsi, "Madrigali inediti del Trecento," *Belfagor* 14 (1959), 72-82.

[16] On Bembo's familiarity with Antonio Da Tempo's definition of the madrigal, see Giuseppe Fanelli, "Introduzione," in Massini, *Del madrigale*, 15; Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 51; van-Rijk, *Parlar cantando*, 115-16. Bembo also offers an alternative etymological possibility, connecting the word madrigal to the original way of singing "cose materiali et grosse [material and rough things]:" *Prose della volgar lingua: l'*editio princeps *del 1525 riscontrata con l'autografo Vaticano latino 3210*, ed. Claudio Vela (Bologna: CLUEB, 2001), 77.

> cosi le forma: et queste universalmente sono tutte Madriali chiamate. (77)[17]
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> Free, then, are those other [verse forms] which do not follow any rule with regard either to their number of lines or to their rhyme patterns; on the contrary, everyone forms them as one likes; all these [verse forms] are universally named madrigals.

In his 1529 *Poetica* (*Poetics*), Gian Giorgio Trissino reaffirms the link between madrigals and love themes "convenevoli a mandre [appropriate to herds]" (78).[18] Unlike Bembo, though, he concentrates his attention on fourteenth-century madrigals by Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and Petrarch, searching for regularities and recurrences in their metric patterns (78-81).

As Ritrovato has argued, Ludovico Dolce and Girolamo Ruscelli marked a significant watershed in the perception of the madrigal in the second half of the sixteenth century and anticipate, to some degree, Massini's view.[19] Commenting on the madrigal composition in *Del modo di comporre in versi* (*On composing in verse*), Ruscelli clearly assesses the superiority of contemporary poets over *Trecento* authors.[20] In Petrarch's times – he argues – madrigal was scarcely established in literary practice and confined only to lightweight subjects. As a consequence, Ruscelli discourages sixteenth century poets from imitating Petrarch, who was not particularly successful ("men felice") in this sort of poem. In particular, Ruscelli disapproves of the exclusive use of hendecasyllables in Petrarch's madrigals.[21] He then urges literati to include septenaries in their compositions, since the madrigal "ricerca i versi corti [searches for short lines]" (CXXII). This degree of brevity applied to the madrigal is likely to explain the only limitation Ruscelli places on it. Whilst reasserting the "libertà della lor testura [freedom of their metric scheme]," he nonetheless limits the number of lines of the madrigals to 12 (CXXII). This restriction would be explicitly challenged in Massini's *Del madrigale*.

Around 20 years before his lecture was published, the Venetian prolific writer Lodovico Dolce in his *Quattro libri delle osservazioni (Four books of observations)* addressed the issue of the madrigal with great prudence. He seems more interested in illustrating the diachronic evolution of the verse form

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[17] Bembo, *Prose*.
[18] Gian Giorgio Trissino, "La poetica," in *Tutte le opere di Giovan Giorgio Trissino gentiluomo vicentino* . . . (Verona: Vallarsi, 1729).
[19] Salvatore Ritrovato, "'Senza alcun dubbio il madrigale è poema . . .'", in *Studi sul madrigale*, 12.
[20] Girolamo Ruscelli. *Del modo di comporre in versi* . . . (Venice: Gio. Battista and Melchiorre Sessa), 1558.
[21] On Petrarch's four madrigals in the *Canzoniere*, see Giorgio Forni, "Piccoli gesti estremi: i quattro madrigali del *Canzoniere* di Petrarca," Griseldaonline, 12 (2012), 1-8.

rather than suggesting precise guidelines for its practice. He carefully describes Petrarch's metric patterns and subsequently, just incidentally, notes that "gli altri, e molto più i moderni [poeti], v'interposero versi rotti [others, in particular modern [poets], inserted shorter lines in the madrigals]" (228-29).[22] Moreover, with respect to their content, Dolce openly discusses the possibility that they express grave and philosophical themes, noting that some poets "uscirono di materia pastorali, alle volte a sensi gravi e filosofici alzandogli [abandoned pastoral topics, raising them [= the madrigals] sometimes to grave and philosophical themes meanings]" (228-29).

In his lecture *Sopra i madrigali* (*On madrigals*), recited in front of the members of the Accademia Fiorentina in 1574, Giovan Battista Strozzi the Younger made the first attempt to systematically apply the categories of Aristotelian *Poetics* to the madrigal, a genre of lyric poetry neglected by Aristotle.[23] In this perspective, the madrigal is described as an imitation of an "attione gratiosa e breve [graceful and brief action]" (172). This character of gentleness and sophistication recurs often in the lecture. The madrigal has in fact undergone, in Strozzi's view, a process of urbanization and civilization. Although he recognizes the pastoral origin attributed to the madrigal by Da Tempo, Strozzi also notices a remarkable development towards elegance and a gradual abandonment of rustic primitiveness. Commenting, then, on its metric form, Strozzi firstly adheres to Bembo's opinion and states the madrigal's freedom in the length and type of its lines. Subsequently, though, he advises others to follow the best authors' practice and therefore suggests a limitation to 7-10 lines and discourages composers from adopting unrhymed lines in their lyrics. His main concern is, however, focused on the subjects that madrigals should address. Despite acknowledging a certain freedom in the choice of topic, Strozzi evidently identifies a clear link between the small size of the madrigal and its subject. Although it enjoys freedom with respect to subject, – Strozzi argues – "più volentier si restringe a cose gentili e picciole [it more willingly confines itself to small and gentle things]" (164). A clear example of this freedom is offered by the variegated madrigal production of his uncle Giovan Battista Strozzi the Elder, who expressed, in artful and shimmering style, traditional love themes, reflections on disease and pain and an obsession with death and darkness. Nonetheless – the Younger continues – out of his wide and

[22] Lodovico Dolce, *I quattro libri delle osservazioni . . .* (Venice: Giolito de' Ferrari, 1558).

[23] Giovan Battista Strozzi, "Lezione sopra i madrigali" ("Lecture on madrigals"), in *Orazioni ed altre prose* (Roma: Grignani, 1635), 159-88. A summary of Giovan Battista Strozzi the Younger's literary profile is offered by Adrasto S. Barbi, *Un accademico mecenate e poeta: Giovan Battista Strozzi il Giovane* (Florence: Sansoni, 1900) and James Chater, "Poetry in the Service of Music: The Case of Giovanbattista Strozzi the Younger (1551-1634)," *Journal of musicology*, 29, no. 4 (2012), 328-84. On the comparison between Massini's lecture and Giovan Battista Strozzi's "Lezione sopra i madrigali," see Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi," LIV-LXVIII and, more recently, Ritrovato, "'Senza alcun dubbio,'" 15-20, 26-29.

motley production, "molto si dilungano dagl'altri que' suoi madrigaletti che . . . trattano le materie che proportionate sono alla sua picciolezza [those little madrigals that . . . deal with subjects, which are proportional to its [of the madrigal] smallness, clearly stand out]" (164-165).[24] This continual emphasis on the madrigal's "picciolezza [littleness]" and gentleness has direct consequences for every aspect of the verse form. Therefore, the principle determining the length of the lines is again the quantitative correspondence between the littleness of the imitated action and the form of the madrigal. Strozzi, then, bans the exclusive use of the hendecasyllable and encourages the adoption of the septenary, more suited to the subjects of the madrigal: "Hora dovendosi accommodare i versi al concetto, se noi l'abbiamo piccolo, più gli assomiglieranno i versi piccoli che non faranno quegli altri [now, since we have to accommodate the lines to the idea, if we have [to express] a small idea, shorter lines will better conform to it than others [the hendecasyllables] will do]" (184). Lastly, this knot of gentleness and littleness translates into a certain preciousness in style, which should be characterized – according to Strozzi – by figurative meanings, elusive words and vivid wit. The madrigal implies an active reader, who is involved in the process of the intellectual decipherment of the composition.

4. Massini's lecture comes at the end of this rather repetitive debate on the madrigal, re-addressing questions and positions that had already emerged. It can be divided into a negative (*destruens*) and a positive (*construens*) part. In the first section, Massini aims to free the madrigal from the "ristrettezze [tight constraints]" imposed by contemporary theorists. As we will see, his intended polemical target is Antonio Sebastiano, known as Minturno, whose strict regulation of the madrigal constitutes, in Massini's view, a major threat to its freedom.[25] Minturno's tight guidelines appear in the third book of the *Arte*

[24] Precisely this main criterion of promoting agreeable output has been applied to the collection of Strozzi's *Madrigali* edited by his sons Lorenzo and Filippo (Florence: Sermantelli, 1593), who excluded grave topics (Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi").

[25] Born in 1500 in the south of Lazio, he is known to literature scholars mainly for his application of Aristotelian principles to literary theory. As a literary critic, he proved to have a great influence on the establishment of Torquato Tasso's theories. Tasso dedicated to him his work *Minturno, ovvero della bellezza* (*Minturno, that is the beauty*), which is a dialogue between Minturno himself and Ruscelli, set against the backdrop of the Naples' "lido." On Minturno's thought, see Davide Colombo, "La cultura letteraria di Antonio Minturno," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 181, no. 596 (2004): 544-57; Davide Colombo, "'Aristarchi nuovi ripresi' Giraldi, Minturno e il riuso dell'antico nella trattatistica del Cinquecento," in *Uso, riuso e abuso dei testi classici*, ed. Massimo Gioseffi (Milan: LED, 2010) 153-82; Francesca D'Alessandro, *Petrarca e i moderni da Machiavelli a Carducci* (Pisa: ETS, 2007), 95-130; Baxter Hathaway, *The Age of Criticism. The Late Renaissance in Italy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1962), 225-28; Pasquale Sabbatino. *L'"Arte poetica" del Minturno* (Naples: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento Meridionale, 1985). On his idea of madrigal, see Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi," LII-LIII;

poetica (*The art of poetry*), published in 1563, and serve as an explicit point of comparison for Massini.[26] In the second and more constructive part of the lecture, Massini expresses and develops the aforementioned Pietro Bembo's opinions on the madrigal. By adapting Bembo's principles, Massini provides some key practical suggestions on the composition of madrigals so as to favor their positive reception in the contemporary literary scene.

Massini's efforts towards the liberation of the madrigal involve three main aspects, namely "quantità [quantity]," "forma" or "testura [metric pattern]" and "materia [subject]." With regard to the "quantità" – that is to say, the number of lines – Massini rejects the limits of 11 and 12 lines imposed on by Minturno and Ruscelli respectively.[27] Massini argues that ancient and modern poets repeatedly exceeded these limits.[28] In particular, Massini observes that Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, and Buonaccorso da Montemagno, as well as numerous modern poets, wrote madrigals of 13, 14, and even 15 lines.[29] This list includes such renowned sixteenth-century poets as Ludovico Ariosto and Domenico Venier, and local authors such as Leandro Signorelli and members of the Accademia degli Insensati. Massini devotes additional space to addressing Minturno's opinion, which also includes a lower limit of eight lines for the madrigal's length. Massini's rebuttal is once more based on poets' practice. By observing the production of Giovanni Guidiccioni and Torquato Tasso who, unlike ancient poets, wrote madrigals of fewer than eight lines, Massini proves this restriction to be unnecessary and pointless. Therefore, Massini concludes this passage claiming, similarly to Ruscelli, that "brevità [brevity]" is greatly appreciated and highly valued in this sort of poem (44).

Massini then extends his discussion to include the "testura." He concentrates on the passage in Minturno's definition of the madrigal devoted to defining its metric pattern. Minturno states that the madrigal has to be composed "sotto certo ordine [according to a definite metric order]" (261).[30] Commenting on this passage, Massini observes that even the ancient madrigals

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Ritrovato, "'Senza alcun dubbio,'" 12; Salvatore Ritrovato, "Fra traduzioni e imitazioni. Il madrigale nello specchio dell'epigramma," in *Studi sul madrigale*, 80-81, 83.

[26] Antonio Minturno, *L'arte poetica . . .* (Venice: Valvassori, 1563).

[27] Minturno, *Arte poetica*, 262; Ruscelli, *Del modo*, CXXII.

[28] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

[29] The list of madrigals and authors provided by Massini is characterized by a certain degree of imprecision. A few of the so-called "madrigals" are actually *ballate* or other verse forms. The most interesting mistake is the quotation of Cino da Pistoia's *Deh piacciavi donare a 'l mio cor vita* and *Io prego, donna mia*: these two composition are defined by nowadays critics as examples of "sonetto misto [mixed sonnet]" (*Poeti dello Stilnovo*, ed. Marco Berisso (Milan: RCS libri, 2006) 46-7). This remark is intended to show once more how slippery was the definition of madrigal in the *Cinquecento*.

[30] Minturno develops this point quite broadly in the *Arte poetica*, where he lists a series of different rhyme patterns depending on whether the madrigal consists of 8, 9, 10 or 11 lines (*Arte poetica*, 262-63).

of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Sacchetti, cited by Minturno, do not seem to corroborate his assertion. Massini points out, moreover, that this unsubstantiated regulation also conflicts with the habit of modern poets, who demand to be "liberissimi [entirely free]" in this respect. In the conclusion of this passage, Massini wonders why Minturno is eager to deprive modern poets of the same liberty that the ancients took for themselves:

> Non so adunque perché Minturno voglia torre questa libertà ai moderni, che gli antichi liberamente si sono pigliata, parendo massime che i moderni in questa sorte di componimento sieno stati, e quanto ai pensieri e quanto alle testure, più felici. (45)[31]
>
> I wonder why Minturno intends to deprive modern poets of this freedom that the ancients freely seized upon, as it seems that with regard to this sort of poem, the moderns have been more prosperous with respect to ideas and rhyme schemes.

Finally Massini gets to the core of his refutation of Minturno's theory, addressing the subject of "materia." He focuses on Minturno's claim that the madrigal should express "materie rustichette e boscareccie e pastorali [rural, rustic, and pastoral subjects]" (45). Massini argues, on the basis of a strained interpretation of a passage from Aristotle's *Poetics*, that it is not the "qualità del verso [quality of the verse]" that determines "sostantialmente [substantially]" the poem. On the contrary, Massini claims, quoting Bembo, that the actual elements of its content affect the nature and quality of the composition:

> Il poema . . . prende la forma e qualità sua dalla qualità della favola e del concetto che s'imprende a scrivere; quindi diceva il Bembo nel più volte allegato secondo libro delle sue *Prose*, il soggetto esser quello che fa il poema alto o umile o mezzano di stile. (48)
>
> The poem . . . acquires its form and quality from the quality of the plot and of the idea that one undertakes to write; therefore Bembo said in the more often cited second book of his *Prose* that the subject is what makes the style of the poem sublime, middle, or low.[32]

In Massini's opinion, since the quality of the verse does not determine, or limit, the range of the subjects of the poem, madrigals should not be confined solely

[31] Massini, *Del madrigale*.
[32] This crucial passage of Massini's lecture has been analyzed by Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi," LVXI; Ritrovato, "Senza alcun dubbio," 27-28.

to agreeable topics but should be able to express serious themes too. He considers this practice to be already in vogue in the *ballate*, in which modern poets, in fact, express delightful and pleasant topics as well as "concetti altissimi e gravissimi [very high and serious ideas]." Massini phrases his argument in the form of a rhetorical question:

> Se dunque le ballate, che di natura più piacevoli sono, e in materia di morte e di concetti più gravi informate si truovano, perché non sarà leccito, e in occasioni di morti e di qualsivoglia altra materia grave, comporre madrigali parimente? (48)
>
> If *ballate*, which are by nature more agreeable [than madrigals], are then found to be shaped by the subjects of death and more serious concepts, why should it not be also legitimate to compose madrigals on the occasion of deaths or other tragic events?

Even more explicitly, in the second part of the lecture, Massini states that madrigals can potentially develop any concept, ranging from rural and pastoral love to death; in other words, ranging from *levitas* to *gravitas*: "Quanto a i soggetti . . . i madrigali potranno qualsivoglia pensiero e concetto, che nella qualità sua accomodato ci nasca, spiegare [Concerning the subjects . . . madrigals will be able to express whatsoever thought or idea that can be compliant with its quality]" (50-51).

Massini is perfectly aware of the potentially controversial nature of this statement, cautiously expressed in the future tense, that could have led to an expansion towards gravity of the themes of the madrigal. Therefore, this declaration is almost immediately delimited by an important qualification. The author, in fact, identifies in the *piacevolezza* a distinctive feature of this poetic form:

> I madrigali che leggiadramente spiegano concetti men severi e più piacevoli par che siano communemente più graditi e commendati, essendo la piacevolezza, senz'alcun dubbio, più propria e più proporzionata alla natura piacevolissima di questo componimento, non incapace però affatto . . . di gravità. (51)
>
> The madrigals that elegantly express less grave and more pleasant ideas commonly seem more well-accepted and praised, since pleasantness is without any doubt more appropriate and more proportionate to the very delightful nature of this composition, [which is] not incapable, however, . . . of gravity.

On the one hand, Massini acknowledges once more the freedom of the madrigal with respect to its subject; on the other hand, he establishes a profitable correspondence between the nature of the madrigal and agreeable topics. The criterion that explains this strong connection is the favorable reception of more pleasant madrigals. Consequently, although in theory madrigals can potentially express any topic, agreeable compositions are more praised, as they appeal to the widest audience.

5. The necessary premise for the second and more practically oriented section of the academic lecture is that the madrigal's freedom is not boundless. Massini rejects the formation of madrigals with a "stravagante testura [extravagant metric pattern]," or of excessive length (consisting, for instance, of "venticinque o trenta versi [twenty-five or thirty lines]"). Moreover, like Strozzi, he eschews "lunghe materie [long subjects]" for madrigals, as these – he claims – are more suitable for longer compositions like *canzoni*, *ottava* and *terza rima* (49). Massini finds the solution to avoiding this utter lack of regulation in the equivalence, which he expressly states, between the madrigal and a nobler verse form, such as the *canzone*. Whilst illustrating this process of identification between different verse forms in the literary tradition, Massini adopts unchanged Bembo's definitions of "spogliata e semplice" and "doppia o vestita" compositions for, respectively, single-stanza and multi-stanza poems. Massini notes that, just as the "spogliata" *ballata* is equivalent to the first stanza of a "vestita" *ballata*, the madrigal – as a *spogliata canzone* – corresponds with the "prima stanza della canzone [the first stanza of the *canzone*]" (50). This equivalence allows then Massini to adopt for the madrigal those same principles of Bembo that were valid for another verse form, the *canzone*.[33]

A series of consequences, defined by Weinberg as "preferable practices", [34] ensue from this equivalence. They deal once more with versification, matters of style, and subject. Regarding the number of lines, Massini observes that neither ancient (e.g. Petrarch) nor modern poets have ever exceeded the limit of 20 lines for the *canzone*'s stanza. Such sixteenth-

[33] On the proximity between madrigal and *canzone* in *Cinquecento* Italian literary production and theorization see Maiko Favaro, "Su alcune scelte metriche di Campanella", *Italianistica* 35, no. 1 (2006), 63-64. In a lecture given in 1575 in the Accademia de' Confusi of Fossombrone, Ippolito Peruzzini validates madrigals longer than twelve lines by virtue of the freedom enjoyed in this respect by the *canzone*. Prior to Massini, then, Peruzzini notes and acknowledge the likeness between these two verse forms starting from their number of lines (Ippolito Peruzzini, *Lettura sopra un madrigale del signor Cesare Simonetti da Fano* (Bologna: Bonardo, 1575), 62; the passage is quoted in Salvatore Ritrovato, "'Ecco mormorar l'onde'. Un esercizio di lettura" [2012], in Ritrovato *Studi sul madrigale*, 126).

[34] Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1961), 1: 208.

century poets as Bernardo Tasso and Giacomo Marmitta, who wrote *canzoni*, or better "canzonette," of five lines, help Massini define the lower limit of a madrigal's length. Therefore, while denying the existence of formal rules, Massini nevertheless recommends that madrigals should not be longer than 20 lines, nor shorter than five. Furthermore, he argues that it is a good practice to seldom adopt such a short form and to reserve these very short five-line madrigals for "materie argute e ingegnose [witty and ingenious topics]." With reference to the *testura*, Massini concentrates on very specific details. First, he advises that one should not exceed the limit set by Bembo of five-line gaps between two rhyming words (79).[35] Second, he allows the insertion of one, or even more, unrhymed lines followed by an internal rhyme. He nevertheless again warns the readers (and potential composers of madrigals) to avail themselves only "moderatamente [moderately]" of this freedom.

With regard to the *qualità* of the lines, Massini conducts an extensive survey of ancient and modern poets to finally conclude that it is not advisable to compose madrigals made exclusively of septenaries. On the contrary, in order to advance toward the "perfezione del bene scrivere [perfection in good writing]" (56), the authors of madrigals should utilize hendecasyllable and septenary as follows: in the case of cheerful compositions they should incline toward the latter, whilst in the case of serious subjects, composers of madrigals should give prominence to the former. This statement can be clarified in the light of Bembo's theories, which state that every delay in the correspondence of the rhymes is an index of greater *gravità*: therefore, a series of hendecasyllables, which entails a longer suspension in the repetition of the rhymes, is more suitable to express grave themes than a sequence of septenaries.[36] Finally, Massini reaffirms the complete freedom of the madrigal to deal with both agreeable and solemn topics. However, as reported in the quotation in section 4, Massini praises *piacevolezza* as an appropriate component of the madrigal's nature.

In the concluding part of the academic lecture, Massini briefly introduces an important new element that contributes to fully shaping his concept of the madrigal. Massini states the ideas and the *elocutio* on which the madrigal should be based: "Desidererei poi, sopra 'l tutto che, 'l madrigale avesse 'l concetto raro e ingegnoso e l'elocuzion purissima e artifiziosa [I would wish above all that the madrigal had a rare and ingenious idea and a very pure and artful elocution]." (56)[37] Sharp wit ("concetto raro e ingegnoso") and sophisticated eloquence ("elocuzion purissima e artifiziosa") are recognized as the main factors in poetic discourse. Massini suggests that the authors of

[35] Bembo, *Prose*.
[36] ibid., 80-83.
[37] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

madrigals should adorn their compositions with startling metaphors and elaborate conceits, and set them in refined and sophisticated language. This combination will provide in the *gravi* madrigals "l'onestà, la dignità, la maestà [honesty, dignity, solemnity]," and in the *piacevoli* madrigals "grazia, soavità, vaghezza, dolcezza [grace, suavity, amusement, sweetness]." (56-57) Once more, the categories adopted by Massini echo Bembo's theories, who described respectively *gravità* and *piacevolezza* with exactly the same words.[38] Finally, the suggested combination of *acutezze* and artful eloquence will produce in the *mezani* madrigals a "concento e un'armonia soavissima [very gentle harmony and melody]." (56-57)[39]

Massini's lecture does not address any musical matter and this brief remark to the harmony of the madrigals is to be intended in the terms proposed by Bembo. In spite of the strong connection between literary and musical madrigals in the second half of the sixteenth century, Massini does not discuss the musical aspect of the composition. The reason lies in Massini's intentions. It seems, in fact, that his first aim is to assert the 'dignity' of the madrigal as a self-sufficient literary genre. In order to achieve this goal, Massini establishes the aforementioned equivalence with the more distinguished *canzone*. This correspondence between the two verse forms leads to a dramatic elevation in the status of the madrigal, whose advancement must be seen, once more, exclusively in literary terms.

6. Massini's commitment to add dignity to the verse form (characterizing his own literary production) evolves in parallel with the purpose to avoid lack of guidelines in the composition of madrigals and to illustrate the aforementioned series of practices. This partly normative section of Massini's discourse leads to an apparent inconsistency with the freedom he generally calls for in the previous section. Although the Perugian author strenuously defends the theoretical lack of restrictions on the madrigal, he nonetheless orients his practical advice to meeting prevailing literary practice and the aesthetic tendencies of the readership. Therefore, the resulting idea of Massini's madrigal stems from the delicate balance between theoretical liberty and practical advice on the composition of the madrigal. The emergence of these two intertwined elements in the lecture explains why Minturno, untiring advocate of the ancient practice of madrigal writing and of its strict regulation, is the main target of Massini's arguments. Basing his convictions on the *Trecento* form of madrigals, Minturno dramatically diverges from Massini, who elaborates his

[38] Bembo, *Prose*, 71. On Bembo's passage, see also Dean T. Mace, "Pietro Bembo and the Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal," *The Musical Quarterly* 55, no.1 (1969), 74.
[39] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

idea of the madrigal on the basis of its contemporary form.[40] Not by chance, a key source of disagreement – in addition to the many already mentioned – concerns the insertion of the septenaries in the *testura* of the madrigal. Minturno observes that in the collections "degli antichi" one cannot find septenaries and rules them out (262); [41] Massini, instead, praises the contemporary practice of forming madrigals with a balanced mixture of "rotti [septenary]" and "interi [hendecasyllabic]" lines (43).[42]

As has emerged from analysis of the lecture, Dolce, Ruscelli, and Strozzi, unlike Minturno, shared the same opinion as Massini on some distinctive aspects. I will now further expand on their relation with the Perugian author in order to determine what was distinctive in Massini's view. Both Dolce and Massini, for instance, acknowledge the possibility of allocating serious themes to madrigals. However, between the two literati there lies a crucial difference: whereas the former was illustrating a coeval tendency, without encouraging or discouraging it, the latter was addressing the same point from a militant perspective. Analogously, Ruscelli and Massini articulated a very similar view on the madrigal, agreeing, for instance, on the superiority of *Cinquecento* writers of madrigals and on the freedom of their metric schemes. One might therefore wonder why Ruscelli, in spite of these similarities, is clearly addressed by Massini, on a par with Minturno, as one of the adversaries of madrigal freedom. I am inclined to argue that Massini tends to ignore Ruscelli for reasons that go beyond the aforementioned limit imposed by the latter on the number of lines. Presumably, Massini does not want to reveal that Ruscelli was, for him, such an important source in shaping his concept of the madrigal - a role that he would rather ascribe to Bembo. I will try to prove this by reading a rather convoluted passage of the *Del modo di comporre in versi*, where Ruscelli acknowledges an ambiguity in the definition of different verse forms. He claims that "non vestite" or single-stanza *ballate* are called by some literati either *ballate*, madrigals, or even *canzoni*. In particular, he notes that Bembo in his *Asolani* (*The wedding feast at Asolo*) defines *canzoni* to include both madrigals and other, longer, compositions. As a consequence, Ruscelli expresses his preference for using the term *canzoni* to indicate madrigals or "non vestite" *ballate*:

[40] With regard to his critical thought, Colombo has observed that Minturno "rimane ancorato all'idea che i migliori risultati antichi in un genere debbano servire da base, eterni modelli per gli autori moderni [remained steadfast to the idea that the best products of the ancient authors should serve as the foundations, the immortal models, for modern authors]" ("'Aristarchi nuovi ripresi,'" 181).
[41] Minturno, *Arte poetica*.
[42] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

> L'altra sorte di ballate – cioè le ignude o non vestite . . . o madrigali . . . o canzoni, come più mi piace, e come s'è veduto che l'ha dette il Bembo – non ammettono niuna languidezza di verso, né alcuna bassezza di dire. (CXXX-CXXXI)[43]
>
> The other kind of *ballate* – i.e. the naked or *non vestite* ones . . . or madrigals . . . or *canzoni*, as I prefer [to call them], and as Bembo has defined them – do not tolerate any feebleness or lowness of style.

It is therefore likely – or at least possible – that Massini had been inspired by the quoted passage, which also cites Bembo, to build and develop his own equivalence between the madrigal and the *canzone*.

Similarly controversial is the relation between the lectures of Strozzi and Massini. The last part of Massini's *Del madrigale* might appear similar (at least in the practical outcome) to the Florentine's position. Both Massini and Strozzi, in fact, considered wit an essential requirement of the modern madrigal. Additionally, they both rely on Aristotle's *Poetics* to justify their opinions (although Massini does not adopt the Greek philosopher's theories systematically). In spite of their somewhat similar views, Massini would probably not have liked the insistence Strozzi consistently put on the idea of the agreeableness of the madrigal. Massini avoids, in fact, fostering this link too energetically, stressing, on the contrary, the capability of the madrigal to cover serious topics as well. Unfortunately, it is not possible to state whether Massini knew of Strozzi's lecture, printed only in 1635. On this very subject, though, one might conjecture that the Perugian author in fact shaped his lecture essentially as a response to Strozzi's *lezione*.[44]

7. Massini's knowledge of Strozzi's lecture can only be postulated, as Massini himself never mentions the Florentine's name. On the other hand, Massini refers at various points in the lecture to Bembo's opinion on the madrigal, which indeed constitutes his principal source. It has already been observed that Massini needs to expand Bembo's brief annotations in order to illustrate his

[43] Ruscelli, *Del modo*.

[44] Massini's aforementioned lecture *Della difesa del Petrarca*, composed in 1582, circulated among the affiliates of the Accademia della Crusca: it is in fact celebrated by one of its members in the flattering sonnet *Come in brieve canzon vago pensiero* included in Massini's collection of *Rime* (Pavia: Andrea Viani, 1609, 141) dedicated to Cosimo II de' Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany. Its author, the *Insaccato* Lorenzo Franceschi, was a member of both the Crusca and Fiorentina academies. Unfortunately, it is not possible to date this sonnet and to state whether Massini was acquainted with Strozzi's lecture before the publication of his own lecture in 1588. On the echoes of Massini's lecture on Petrarch within the Florentine cultural environment, see Lorenzo Sacchini, "Corrispondenti nelle 'Rime' di Filippo Massini (1609): Girolamo Preti, Tommaso Stigliani, Isabella Andreini e Torquato Tasso," *Filologia e Critica* 38, no.2 (2013), 165.

theory on the madrigal. Massini is in fact perfectly aware that Bembo treated this matter just "per accidente [incidentally]" in the *Prose* and his few notes do not constitute a set of principles.[45] In order to fulfill his intention to base his idea of the madrigal on Bembo's theories, he faced two different challenges. On the one hand, he had to formulate a consistent theory just relying on fragmentary annotations; on the other hand, he had to cope with the distance of more than 50 years since the publication of the *Prose*. As a result, the relationship between Massini and Bembo is more complicated than it may appear at first. Hence, I will now assess Massini's degree of loyalty toward Bembo and his strategies in applying Bembo's recommendations to the madrigal.

We have just seen that Massini has applied to the madrigal the same principles that Bembo assigned in the *Prose* to the *canzone*'s stanza. This strategic change in the object of the regulation represents a first deviation from Bembo's theory. To comprehend the second and more important deviation from Bembo's intentions, we have to focus again on the passage of the lecture partially quoted in the fourth section above. It is, in fact, the crucial theoretical part of the lecture, and it may be useful to re-quote here, adding more context:

> Né i greci, né i latini poeti negarono già mai a sorte alcuna de' versi, ch'io sappia, qualsivoglia materia. E la ragione è di ciò, come s'appara d'Aristotele nel settimo capo della sua *Poetica*, perché la qualità del verso non qualifica . . . sostanzialmente il poema; il quale prende la forma e qualità sua dalla qualità della favola e del concetto che s'imprende a scrivere; quindi, diceva Bembo nel suo più volte allegato secondo libro delle sue *Prose*, il soggetto essere quello che fa il poema alto, o umile, o mezzano di stile. (47-48)[46]
>
> As far as I know, neither Greek nor Latin poets ever prohibited allocating any subject whatsoever to any kind of verse form. And the reason for that, as one can learn from the seventh paragraph of Aristotle's *Poetics*, is that the quality of the verse does not distinguish . . .

[45] Bembo does not seem, in fact, to attribute much importance to the madrigal in his theorization (Ariani, "Giovan Battista Strozzi," XLVIII-IL).

[46] Massini, *Del madrigale*. The nomenclature "settimo capo" that Massini uses to pinpoint the passage does not help to identify the exact portion of Aristotle's text. In accordance with Bernard Weinberg (*A History of Literary Criticism*, 1: 207), it can be stated that Massini makes a reference to *Poet*. 1447b 13. Here Aristotle criticizes people for calling writers "poets" or "makers," as if their usage of the meter entitled them to those names, ignoring that it is the imitation that makes them "poets" or "makers." In Castelvetro's commentary on the *Poetics*, likely the source used by Massini (Ritrovato, "'Senza alcun dubbio,'" 28), it is said that it is the quality of the imitation of the poetic subject that distinguishes poets, and not the quality of the verses (Lodovico Castelvetro*, Poetica d'Aristotele (Aristotle's Poetics)* (Vienna: Stainhofer, 1570), 15^{r}).

> substantially the poem, which acquires its form and quality from the quality of the plot and of the idea one undertakes to write; therefore Bembo said in the more frequently cited second book of his *Prose* that the subject is what makes the style of the poem sublime, middle, or low.

It is interesting to notice in this passage the partial and likely intentional misinterpretation of Bembo's thought. After stating that ideas determine the style of the poem and the quality of its verses, Massini concludes, quoting Bembo's *Prose*, that subjects determine the style of the composition.[47] Whilst citing Bembo's work, Massini omits the last part of the cited text, provoking therefore a profound change in its meaning. The original passage of the *Prose* focuses on the importance of subjects in the composition of poems. At first, the interlocutor Giuliano de' Medici, son of Lorenzo, praises Dante's ability to cover great and wide-ranging subjects. The same Giuliano, though, adds: "Il suggetto è ben quello; che fa il poema, o puollo almen fare, o alto o humile o mezzano di stile: ma buono in se o non buono non giamai [The subject is truly what makes, or what can make, at least, the style of the poem sublime, middle or low; but [it can] not [make it] good or not good by itself]." (101-02)[48] In the final part of the text ("but . . . itself"), a clear diminution of the role of the subject materializes, which does not affect the quality of the composition. Although Bembo's sentence does confirm Massini's thought, it has been cut off and taken out of context. Massini seems to have picked the wrong advocate for the cause of the subject, as Bembo was evidently more attracted by the formal elements of poetic compositions.[49]

The analysis of this passage shows that this lecture is not just a plain exposition of Bembo's theory. Massini needs, in fact, to appeal to other sources (such as Aristotle) to formulate his concept of the madrigal. After the rediscovery of Aristotle, following the emergence in the 1560s of a "scienza della letteratura [science of literature]," [50] Bembo cannot be the sole source. Furthermore, the labored inclusion of Bembo as primary source in the

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[47] In the *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, elaborated in the early 1560s, Tasso proved, like Massini, that the style of a poem stems from ideas. Tasso argued that different ideas can be applied to treat even the same subject (as they are two distinct entities) and can thus determine different styles ("Discourses on the Art of Poetry," in Lawrence Rhu, *The Genesis of Tasso's Narrative Theory. English Translation of the Early Poetics and a Comparative Study of Their Significance* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP, 1993) 144-53). In contrast to Tasso's theories, though, Massini weights ideas and subjects equally, as they can both affect, in his view, the style of the poem.

[48] Massini, *Del madrigale*.

[49] In Bembo's theory, in fact, prominence is evidently given to sounds, rhythm, and in general to the formal features of poetry, over its content and significance (Mace, "Pietro Bembo," 69-73). On the crucial theoretical debate in the *Cinquecento* on *gravità* and *piacevolezza*, see Andrea Afribo, *Teoria e prassi della* gravitas *nel Cinquecento* (Florence: Cesati, 2001).

[50] Carlo Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del concilio di Trento, [1965]" in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 1967), 248.

quotation accurately reflects the general struggle that Massini faces throughout the lecture. In order to display the authority of Bembo, Massini has therefore to edit, adapt, and even deconstruct his theories.

8. In the penultimate section of this article, following the brief introduction of Massini's collections of madrigals, I will consider the influence of his conception of the madrigal on his own literary production. More specifically, I will apply the three designated categories of *quantità*, *forma*, and *materia* to Massini's three collections of madrigals and to the 115 madrigals of the *Rime* and assess the degree of conformity to his own proposed recommendations.

Each of the three collections of madrigals is structured around a main subject that is further developed in a variety of minor themes, usually organized in micro-sections of similar compositions "Nello stesso soggetto [On the same topic]." The *Lucherino* (*Siskin*) is a collection of 69 madrigals divided into two parts. The first portion is dedicated to Ludovico Sforza di Caravaggio, abbot of San Giovanni monastery in Naples, and the second part to his sister-in-law Orsina Damasceni Peretti, grandniece of Pope Sixtus V. The very simple plot of the collection is based on the troubled relation between the author and an opportunistic and unfaithful siskin (a small songbird related to the goldfinch). The more serene domestic scenes of the first part, in which the author trifles with the bird, are gradually replaced in the second part by the author's bitter complaints about the betrayal of the escaped bird. This relationship between the two main characters of the collection resembles a passionate love affair, characterized by playful struggles and smoldering resentments, culminating in an encomiastic theme, the celebration of the grandniece of the pope.

The *Candore amoroso* (*Amorous candor*) and *Chiaroscuro amoroso* (*Amorous chiaroscuro*) are complementary works. The former is a celebration of Anna Busca's paleness and purity, and the latter is a virtuoso declaration of love for two women, Ottavia del Maino and, once more, Anna Busca. Other than the presence of Busca, the final *canzone* of both collections offers further confirmation of their correspondence. In *Candore amoroso*, the *canzone* "Re d'ogni altro colore" is dedicated to praise the color white (45-47), and in *Chiaroscuro amoroso*, "Color gradito e caro" is a tribute to black (43-45). *Candore amoroso* presents a corpus of 86 madrigals,[51] which celebrate the pale and honest beauty of the poet's beloved. Busca is praised for outdoing the brightness of the dawn, of the snow, of the frost, of the ice, and of other natural

[51] The inner part of the collection is preceded by a *canzone-ode* by Ippolito Cerboni (*Massin, lungo il Tesino in fresca riva*, A3r-v), a couple of madrigals by Girolamo Bossi (*Questi, ch'ha 'l crin simile*; *Donna, tu, che di viso e d'alma sei*, A4r-v) and followed by the final above-mentioned *canzone*. Mirko Volpi has provided a concise analysis of this work: *Sul Tesin piantàro*, 219-20.

elements. All these madrigals develop in a rich variety of forms some of the images of the Petrarchan sestina *Giovene donna sotto un verde lauro* (*Rvf.* XXX): like Laura, who shows "dentro pur foco et for candida neve [fire inside and white snow outside]," the inaccessible and glacial woman of the *Candore amoroso* conceals an inner fire which fuels the poet's love. The antithetical expressions, which characterize this collection, reach their climax in the more sophisticated *Chiaroscuro amoroso*. In the 84 madrigals of the collection, Massini portrays his twofold love for platinum-blonde Anna Busca and dark-haired Ottavia del Maino.[52] Like the *Candore amoroso*, this collection does not develop a plot; the key and recurring element among the lyrics is the presence of counterpoised love images that originate from the opposite colors of the hair of the two women. In this collection, Massini exploits the practice of the *variatio*, creating an endless sequence of metaphors for the two women. The *Chiaroscuro* is clearly intended as an exhibition of the author's ingenuity and cannot avoid arousing a sense of repetitiveness in the modern reader.

The total of Massini's madrigals amounts to 354. Within this vast production, Massini displays a great variety of topics, rhyme schemes, and number of lines. Considering this last element, I divided up and ordered the madrigals of each collection according to their number of lines:

	5 lines	6 lines	7 lines	8 lines	9 lines	10 lines	11 lines
Lucherino		2	5	22	11	21	8
Candore Amoroso		14	16	31	11	13	1
Chiaroscuso Amoroso	1	20	14	32	11	6	
Rime	2	17	15	30	20	26	5
Total	3	53	50	115	53	66	14

From the observation of the table, one can immediately note that no madrigal is shorter than five lines in accordance with the academic lecture. Furthermore, Massini very seldom composed five-line madrigals. Indeed, within his entire production, only three madrigals consist of five lines: *Orsella mia, d'ogni più bel*

[52] The core of the collection includes 83 madrigals. They are preceded by a "canzonetta" by Ippolito Cerboni (*Io non volea, Massin, più muse intorno*, [A3r]), a sonnet by Cesare Borri (*Mentre, Massin, di crine oscuro e chiaro*, [A3v]) and Massini's reply (*Misto il mio fosco a l'altrui scuro, al chiaro*, [A4r]), and a Massini's madrigal (the 84th of the *Chiaroscuro amoroso*) dedicated to the countess Chiara Marliani Crivelli (*Deh, tu questi miei bassi oscuri e chiari*, [A4v]); they are followed by the quoted canzone *Color gradito e caro* and the sestet *Meraviglia ch'huom mai non vide in terra* (46-47).

candore, *Amoroso gemello* (*Rime,* 102, 270), and *Ne le carte di Cesare e di Piero*, which is the second-to-last composition of the *Chiaroscuro amoroso* (42). The vast majority of Massini's madrigals have fewer than ten lines, so although he recommends in the lecture a loose upper limit of twenty lines, he himself never approaches that length. It may be more interesting to observe that none of his madrigals, in fact, exceeds eleven lines. One can find five eleven-line madrigals in the *Rime* (236, 251, 257, 258, 260), just one in the *Candore amoroso* (44) and eight in the *Lucherino* (4, 6, 17, 19, 24, 28, 35, 37). Quite surprisingly, this limit corresponds exactly to the one imposed by Minturno to the length of madrigals, and it is the same limit that Massini advocated against so vehemently in the lecture.

With regard to the *testura*, Massini shows in his output a great variety of rhyme schemes. This was a common practice for poets of the second half of the sixteenth century.[53] Massini also respects the gap of five lines between rhymes, as well as adopting unrhymed verse. Massini's usual method is to follow an unrhymed line with an internal rhyme in the next line. More unusual is the case of more sophisticated structures with two unrhymed lines. In *Privilegi d'amante* (*Chiaroscuro amoroso*, 36), for instance, lines 5 and 7 are both unrhymed ("Chi vide in un soggetto"; "Pascersi d'aria sol d'un dolce viso"), yet the ending –*etto* of *soggetto* of line 5 rhymes with *obietto* of line 6 ("In doppio obietto fisso"), and *viso*, the last word of line 7, rhymes with *diviso* of the following line ("Tutto da sé diviso, in due non scisso").

Massini does not prove to be entirely consistent with regard to his advice to adjust the use of hendecasyllables or septenaries according to the gravity of the covered topic. Normally, septenaries are more commonly chosen to express lightweight and humble topics. In *Famelico e digiuno* and in the following *Foll'augellin ingrato*, which illustrate a couple of domestic scenes, where the bird is first denied and then rewarded with food by the compassionate owner, the author demonstrates a clear preference for the shorter line, adopting the septenaries in seventeen out of twenty-one lines (*Lucherino*, 23-24). The aforementioned practice is, however, sometimes disregarded. In a few cases, the criterion for the choice of the line to use is not strict adherence to the nature of the topic. Again in the *Lucherino*, the madrigal *A la gran donna e bella andar non vuoi* (36), composed almost entirely of hendecasyllables, is preceded by *Torna, torn'augellin, che 'n forza andrai* (35),

[53] In the last part of the lecture, Massini postulates another, partly regulated, form of madrigal in addition to the utterly free one. A contradiction with what he previously stated is avoided by declaring that madrigals are free "per natura" [by nature], but can be partly regulated "per accidente" [by accident]. In this latter case, the *testura* will be modeled on some distinctive *testure* adopted by the same composer or, alternatively, by the most illustrious authors of madrigals (57-59). Bembo is the source used by Massini, who once more has to develop the very short note found in the *Prose* (77).

which has a majority of septenaries. Since both these poems are on the same subject, the clumsy attempts of the poet to persuade the siskin to return, one would expect them to adopt a similar set of line types, but such is not the case. Likewise, Massini directly contradicts the one specific restriction from his lecture: he instructs his listeners not to write madrigals consisting only of septenaries, but he himself composes *Picciola sì ma fiera*, in which every line is a septenary (*Rime*, 192).

In order to discuss the more complex issue of *materia*, I will confine my analysis to the 115 madrigals included in the *Rime*. This is advantageous because the madrigals included in this vast collection cover a great variety of topics, rather than just developing a series of *variationes* around a main topic, as the three other collections do. Love is a frequent topic in the *Rime*. Although it is not merely a pastoral love, the love described in the numerous madrigals of the collection is certainly a feeling that lacks depth, avoids commitment, and denies any kind of engagement. Such traditional themes as the author's departure and the consequent separation from the beloved (*Quando vi dissi "A Dio"*, 274), are presented alongside more innovative and ingenious approaches to the topic. *Dolcemente m'alletta*, *Nera stella crinita*, for instance, examine the appearance of a mole on his beloved's face (5, 6); *Quel lusinghiero infido*, *Quel cristallo gelato*, and *Fra la tua vista e mia* describe the mutual reflection of two lovers in a mirror (18, 19). In addition to the dominant love theme, some madrigals were intended to celebrate and strengthen links with friends and/or other academy members. Massini mocks Marco Antonio Bonciari's blindness (*D'esser orbo si duol chi d'intelletto*, 61); praises poet Scipone Della Cella's reading of a lecture in the Accademia degli Intenti (*Tu rapisci, rapito*, 180); and congratulates Giovan Battista Fossati for achieving his doctorate (*Segni pur bianco de le muse il choro*, 282).[54] Moreover, madrigals could also deal with more unconventional matters: describing an historic football match (*Re de gli altri colori*, 144); the death of a noctule bat (*Non so s'augello o fera*; *Già l'odioso giorno*; *Mentre, vivendo, amai*; *Sì tosto oimè cedeva,* 106-08); celebrating the

[54] The same topic recurs in the sonnet *Per avanzar se stessa in te Natura* (*Rime*, 285). Bonciari, a member of the Insensati, was an eminent Italian Latinist of the second half of the sixteenth century, who was able to build up an extensive network, attested by his numerous collections of letters, still largely in manuscript form. See on him Gianmaria Mazzucchelli, *Scrittori d'Italia. Cioè notizie storiche e critiche intorno alle vite e agli scritti dei letterati italiana . . .* 2 vols (Brescia: Bossini, 1762) 2: III, 1571-77; Vermiglioli, *Biografia*, 1: 221-39; Renzo Negri, "Bonciari (Bonciario, Bonciarius), Marco Antonio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 11 (1969), 676-78; Gabrijelcic, "Alle origini del Seminario," 128-41. On Della Cella and his *Rime*, see Cerutti, "Il petrarchismo tassiano di Scipione della Cella," in *Petrarca in Barocco Cantieri petrarcheschi. Due seminari romani*, ed. Amedeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni, 2004) 79-96 and "Logica e retorica nella poesia barocca. Alcune considerazioni in margine all'edizione delle 'Rime' di Scipione Della Cella," *Critica letteraria* 114 (2002), 11-34; Guglielminetti Marziano, "Fra Marino e Chiabrera: Scipione della Cella," *Tecnica e invenzione nell'opera di Giovambattista Marino* (Messina-Firenze: D'Anna, 1964), 221-238. It has not been possible to identify Fossati.

beauty and unexpected brutality of the small female dog Armida (*Questa latrante e piccioletta Armida*; *Chi crederà che tu le lepri ancida*; *Al tuo lucido pelo*, 117).

Three compact sections of the *Rime* well represent the general tone of Massini's madrigals oriented toward *levitas* or *piacevolezza*. The first section consists of 16 madrigals that describe the outlandish and zoomorphic jewels of the noblewoman Ippolita Benigna Manfredi. The following composition, for instance, portrays the "small sword" adorning her hair. In Massini's imagination, the decorative ornament transforms into a powerful weapon in the hands of love:

Alla signora Hippolita Benigna Manfredi che portava una picciola spada in testa. (*Rime*, 198)	To Madam Hippolita Benigna Manfredi who was wearing a small sword in her hair.
Nove armi adopra Amor, fuggite amanti se versar non volete sangue vie più che pianti. Ah ciechi, non vedete là sovra i crin superbi e torreggianti la bruna spada ultrice che morte altrui promette e guerra indice	Love employs new arms; flee lovers unless you want to shed blood instead of tears. Ah, you blind ones do not see there, on her superb and towering hair, the dark vengeful sword which foreshadows death to others and declares war.

In the balanced alternation of septenaries and hendecasyllables, the theme of the "fuggite amanti," quite popular in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century production of madrigals, is developed here in epic and dramatic tones. The threat brought by Love is described as a frightening military action that scares lovers; still, the actual significance of the madrigal lies in the sharp contrast between the dramatic intonation and the harmless menace brought by the "small sword," which is in fact a jewel.

The second and third sections of madrigals of the collection are both dedicated to Pompilia Beccaria Gattinara, called Fillide by the poet. The former presents a mixture of traditional and more eccentric (even fetishistic) images of frustrated love, followed by a series of comparisons between Fillide and various celestial bodies. The beloved woman is, for instance, represented as a frigid lover like the moon (*Cintia, quand'io ti miro*, 238), as brighter than the stars (*Quando vi miro, o stelle*, 237), and as more beautiful but less courteous than Venus (*Bella madre d'Amore*, 239). In the more innovative third section, Massini composes a sequence of madrigals in which he gazes at the constellations as they were on the day of his own birth, to comprehend the astrological reasons for his love for Fillide.

Tellingly, Massini does not reject entirely the idea promoted in the lecture of expressing grave and solemn topics in madrigals. At the very end of the collection, in fact, there is an heterogeneous section of six madrigals, nine sonnets, one *canzone* and one *cento* focused almost entirely on religious subjects.[55] This section, which culminates in a Petrarchan *cento*, is opened by a couple of penitential madrigals addressed to the inquisitor (and later cardinal) Desiderio Scaglia, who urged Massini to abandon his earthly love.[56] In this portion of the collection, Massini clearly demonstrates, in conformity with the lecture, that different verse forms, such as *canzoni*, madrigals, and sonnets, can express analogous topics: the sonnets *Colma d'ardir dolente e di dolore* and *La nobil peccatrice incolta e vaga* deal with the conversion of Mary Magdalene while the madrigal *Un brevissimo "seguimi" dicesti* (300-302) treats the religious rebirth of Philip the Apostle. The fourth and fifth madrigals of this section are focused on the Eucharist. The madrigal *Quel che pan sembra a l'egra vista mia*, structured in three sections of three lines each, describes the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist as a deception of the senses that can be rectified only by intellect and faith:

Eucharestia (*Rime* 297)	Eucharist
Quel che pan sembra a l'egra vista mia, che carne e sangue sia, pur l'intelletto crede. S'a l'orecchio ti scopri e ti riveli, deh, perché a gli altri sensi, perch'a le luci mie, Signor, ti celi? Ah, ché così conviensi, che sol verace fede è dove occhio non vede.	What seems bread to my defective sight, the intellect believes is flesh and blood. If you unveil and reveal to the ear, Lord, so why do you hide from the other senses, from my lights?[57] Ah, because it is thus fitting that only truthful faith lies where eye cannot see.

Although the topic is spiritual and devotional, the style of the madrigal is neither sublime nor particularly elevated. The madrigal is clearly oriented toward the last tercet of the poem, in which the poet resolves brilliantly the

[55] The two exceptions are represented by the *canzone Chi turba, ahi, le mie gioie? e 'n un mi priva* and the sonnet *Il bel sentier ch'al primo bello adduce*, which deal with the death of Massini's wife Virginia Narducci, who died in childbirth (*Rime*, 303-8).

[56] Surprisingly, this final spiritual section is preceded by a series of compositions in praise of wine, such as *Scarno, pallido, essangue e quasi privo*, which is an invocation to Bacchus (*Rime*, 293). On Scaglia, see Albano Biondi, "'L'inordinata devozione' nella 'Prattica' del cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635)," in *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1991), 306-25; Thomas F. Mayer, *A Papal Burocracy in the Age of Galileo* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2013), 68-71; Thomas F. Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition on the stage of Italy* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2014), 15-17, 40, 61, 80, 131, 139, 141-43, 145-47, 229n, 300n; Fiorenza Rangoni, *Fra' Desiderio Scaglia cardinale di Cremona. Un collezionista inquisitore nella Roma del Seicento* (Cernobbio: Stillgrafix, 2008).

[57] "Lights" is a metaphor for eyes.

question of the believer who is puzzled by God's nonappearance. This final image links intellect and faith, which overcomes the deceitful senses. The last madrigal of this section, *Chiara stella Maria, ch'l vasto mare* (303), is a devout celebration of the Virgin Mary as Star of the Sea. Massini praises Mary for weakening the bitter waves of the tempestuous earthly world ("immondo mondo") and stopping the storms. These six devotional and more somber madrigals are in stark contrast to the more frivolous forms of madrigals within Massini's collection. However, when compared to the total of 115 madrigals of the *Rime* and to the 354 of his entire production, they still constitute only a minor proportion.

9. In the preceding comparison between the content of Massini's lecture and his poetic corpus, a few discrepancies have clearly emerged. This is likely a tangible hint of the partial autonomy of his practice from his theory, and also a further confirmation of the preeminence of the former over the latter in the sixteenth century literary madrigal.[58]

One is then led to ask what criteria steered Massini's preferences in practice. The adoption of the eleven-line limit and his clear predilection for agreeable topics provide clues. The first choice seems oriented to maintain the brevity of the composition, the second, to enhance its pleasantness. These two elements, in addition to wit, which was cultivated by Massini in the great majority of his madrigals, are essential factors in matching the predominant taste and achieving acceptance within the literary scene. The focus therefore shifts toward the expedient of ingenuity, stylistic experimentation, and laconic diction, all to be expressed in the brevity of the madrigal. The desire to meet the mainstream orientation of contemporary madrigalistic production, more powerful than any other precept or suggestion, is the actual principle that directs Massini's literary production.

[58] Salvatore Ritrovato, "Forme e stili del madrigale cinquecentesco," in *Studi sul madrigale*, 34.