Mottos and Metaphors: Towards an Interpretation of the Emblems in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro d’arie musicali*

**Journal Item**

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Version: Accepted Manuscript

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Dispersing the mist: Towards an interpretation of the emblems in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro d’arie musicali*¹

1. The nature of the problem

Frescobaldi’s two volumes of *Arie musicali*, destined to be his only Florentine publications, were printed by Giovanni Battista Landini in September 1630, just short of two years after the composer’s arrival in Florence. The composer had left Rome at the end of November or early December 1628 having been given permission to depart by the Chapter of St. Peter’s on 22 November. He would have arrived in Florence six to eight months after the official accession to the throne of the young Grand Duke Ferdinando II de Medici on his eighteenth birthday on 14 July. Celebration of the marriage of the grand duke’s sister Princess Margherita to Duke Odoardo Farnese of Parma followed shortly thereafter on 14 October: an occasion marked by magnificent musical entertainments including Marco da Gagliano’s *La Flora*. Frederick Hammond has suggested that Frescobaldi’s *Arie* were ‘occasioned by the predominance of vocal music at the Tuscan court and a lingering local tradition of *stile recitativo*’ and that they were an anomaly.² He also notes that it is the only collection including monodies to be published in Florence between 1619 and 1635.³

While the musical content of the *Primo libro d’arie musicali* raises some important questions, so too does the nature of the book as a material object as it contains a wealth of paratextual components. This publication is unusual in the use of figurative rather than purely decorative visual elements. These elements include an elaborate title page, decorated initial letters of at least two different sorts in the song texts, decorative panels and blocks, and most importantly, emblems that fill substantial portions of six of the pages [Fig.1]. The four emblems appear towards the beginning of the volume and are not accompanied by any other decorative material. From page 15 to 42 there are no emblems, but other decorative materials including initial letters decorated with cityscapes are used. Only one item, the duet ‘Eri già tutta mia’ includes all three decorative elements. Table 1 shows the placement of the decorative elements in the volume.

Figure 1: Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) title page
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25. Reproduced with permission/su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

Table 1: Placement of decorative elements in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro d’arie musicali*⁴

The only other similar publication of which I am aware, and to which I will make reference, is the *Libro primo d’arie musicali* by Domenico Anglesi also published by Landini five year later in 1635.⁵ Not a great deal is known about Anglesi. He was associated with Florence and had some reputation as an organist, as two failed attempts to win the post of organist at the cathedral are documented. He was also the composer of three dramatic works for which no music survives, including *Il mondo festeggiant* – an equestrian ballet performed for the wedding of Grand Duke Cosimo III de’ Medici in 1661. A manuscript held in the library of Northwestern University containing a cantata by him alongside works of Roman provenance by Luigi Rossi, Marazzoli, Carissimi and others, suggests that he may also have worked in Rome.⁶

In this article I will present a hypothetical reading of the emblems printed in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro d’arie musicali*. An explanation of the symbolism of the emblems will be offered, setting them in the context of the texts which they accompany, before taking a collective overview of how they relate to each other and to the other visual material in the book. The resulting interpretation will be the basis for a case for the intellectual agency of the volume and some suggestions will be made as to how the book might have been used and understood at the time of its production.
The historical-critical framework for Frescobaldi’s aria publications demands closer scrutiny. Although printed in Florence and dedicated to Ferdinando II de Medici, in some respects the Arie are more Roman than Florentine and it seems likely that the publication was conceived at least in part before he left Rome. Elena Ferrari Barassi has noted the stylistic relationship between Frescobaldi’s ground bass arias, especially the Passacaglia and Romanesca, and arias in Roman dramatic works by Domenico Mazzocchi, Virgilio Mazzocchi, Marco Marazzoli and Stefano Landi which post-date both the publication of the Arie musicali and the 1637 reprint of the Secondo libro di toccate containing the Aggiunta with the ‘Cento partite sopra passacaglia’.

John W. Hill on the other hand has suggested that composers in the Montalto circle provided the models for the musical style of the compositions, noting that Frescobaldi was working with composers from Cardinal Montalto’s household in the mid-1610s.

Frescobaldi’s treatment of text too is idiosyncratic, especially in terms of the relationship between musical and poetic phrase structures. Hill has noted that Frescobaldi’s choice of texts for the arias is unusual, and that he sets sonnets in the recitative style - something that Giovanni Battista Doni warned against doing. The arie are ordered in such a way that the first part of the volume presents settings of poetic types that were deemed to be serious (sonnets, ottava rime) all of which are set for solo voice; followed by lighter texts (mostly canzonette) some of which are for solo voice and the remainder for two or three voices. The disposition of the emblems with only one exception in the first, serious section of the volume, is of note.

The authors of many of the poetic texts remain anonymous, but those sources that have been identified do not point to the more usual Florentine poesia per musica. Instead they reflect the type of poetic texts in circulation in Rome and evident in Roman monody collections. Janie Cole has comparatively recently attributed one of the texts in the Secondo libro to Michelangelo Buonarrotti il giovane, adding to the list of known authors. Buonarotti was well known as a mediator between artists and patrons and was certainly known in the Florentine court as well as in Rome, adding weight to an argument that this music incorporates both Roman and Florentine influences. Further indications that the volume was at least in part conceived in Rome will be discussed in section 8 below.

By the time Frescobaldi’s two books of arie appeared in print, the music publishing industry had been in a sharp decline for a decade, reflecting a more general economic crisis. Music printing in Florence in particular was struggling. There are only two surviving exemplars of Frescobaldi’s first book – the presentation copy in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence and a second copy in Bologna. Only a single copy of the second books survives in Bologna. It may be significant that the only copy of Anglesi’s Libro primo is also in Bologna (see Section 7 below). A small print run is one possible reason for the low survival rate. The luxurious quality of the book and the rich symbolism implicit in the visual material located in a musico-textual content suggests an explicit socio-cultural purpose that was not necessarily linked to the re-creation of the music in performance by its purchasers.

2. Space fillers or meaningful images?

It may be argued that the mixture of visual and musical elements in Frescobaldi’s book was the result of mundane necessity and that the images are used only to fill empty spaces left by the process of typesetting songs with an inconsistent number of voices and different length texts. The presence of three of the emblems and some of the decorative initial letters in Anglesi’s Libro primo might suggest that Landini, who was not a specialist music publisher, simply filled blank parts of pages with whatever blocks he had to hand. There is certainly nothing unusual about the decorative
panels and blocks that separate verses of texts, fill spaces at the ends of pages and frame the title page and the header of the dedication page. The filigree panels and smaller floral details along with caryatid figures, swags and wreaths with masks, cherubs and so on are standard printer’s fare. These imprints, unlike the emblems, lack clarity, suggesting that the blocks were worn by use when this book went through the press.

There are a number of arguments that support an opposing view, however. First, Landini, like other Florentine printers was successful at producing high quality, luxury publications where the costs were met by a third party. He was, for example, able to produce and incorporate high quality images and scientific diagrams into his publications with some precision. Galileo’s *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo* probably his most famous product, is just one example. Other publications from the Landini press further support an argument for deliberate choice over practical expediency. Two books relating closely to activity at the Medici court provide exemplars. The publication of Cavalcanti’s account of the funeral of Francesco de Medici, brother of Ferdinando, who died at the age of 20 in 1634, and which post-dates Frescobaldi’s *Arie musicali*, includes eight emblems, all specifically relating to time and the brevity of life and placed in specific locations in the book. The account of the funeral oration for the archduchess Maria Maddalena who enjoyed a long and productive life, in contrast, is bare of any imagery. Second, given the extent of the culture of emblems during this period, a printer would be unlikely to use visual images that could be interpreted (or misinterpreted) by users of the book, especially a learned patron, just to fill up space. Space fillers were generically decorative and abstracted images that did not contain text. Third, if Landini was drawing on existing wood cuts of emblems to use in any of these prints, they would be apparent in other earlier publications, just as there are many others that use the fillers comprising abstract patterns. None have come to light. The subsequent recycling of the emblems in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro* in Anglesi’s *Libro primo* does however fit the pattern of reuse of existing materials.

Frescobaldi too, was generally careful about what he committed to print. The choices he made regarding the printing of his keyboard music – the printing technology, whether engraved or from type; the choice of intavolatura or partitura format; and especially the revisions of his books of toccatas and the re-workings of his canzonas all point to attention to detail in material that was intended for preservation and dissemination. Indeed, Alexander Silbiger has argued that the final edition of the two books of *Toccate* published in 1637 represents a deliberate attempt at a definitive ‘collected works’ on the part of the composer. The composer was also adept at embedding intellectual challenges into his compositions. His *ricercari*, fantasie and capricci on subjects that observe strict formulae (for example only moving by step or following a strict solmisation pattern); verbal instructions that indicate that the performer should sing a fifth part (the *Capriccio di obligo di cantare la quinta parte senza toccarla* (1626)); and cryptic observations such as the subtitle of the Bergamasca in the appendix to *Fiori musicali*, ‘he who plays this Bergamasca will learn not a little’ support a view of the composer as a man comfortable with the kind of intellectual conceits that would appeal to a learned audience. The emblems in the *Arie musicali*, whether or not their use was directly instigated by Frescobaldi, would have appealed to the same type of audience.

In Frescobaldi’s *Secondo libro d’arie musicali*, printed at the same time and by the same publisher as the *Primo libro*, but with a different dedicatee, the Marchese Roberto Obizzi, there are no emblems. On several pages, extra space is filled with empty stave lines, and on page 37, the space is left blank. On page 11 and again on page 13, only the final cadence of an aria occupies the last four staves. These notes could have been squeezed into the preceding line as is done on page 29 if the space of almost half the page was needed for something else.
The function of spare staves in the *Primo libro* seems to be different. In one case, page 32, they separate the end of one aria from the start of the next one on the same page. In the other, page 35, there is sufficient space to put in a decorative filler as the song that ends leaves two spare staves at the bottom of the page, but it is followed by a duet that requires three staves per line and so starts at the top of the next page. Landini has chosen not to put a decorative element in either place, but to leave the empty staves. There are also no pictorial ‘fillers’ in Frescobaldi’s *Primo libro* like those found in Anglesi’s *Libro primo*. [Fig. 2] The differences in the layouts and visual elements between these three books point to deliberate choices.


An assumption that the visual elements of the *Arie musicali* are not accidental must therefore mean that somebody – the composer, the printer, or possibly even the patron – had a reason for their presence and was conceptually responsible for devising a publication that brings together image, text and, if performed, sound. The question of agency is fundamental to a full understanding of this book, but it is also an issue for which several plausible narratives may be constructed. Understanding the meanings and uses of emblems in the context of the *arie* is challenging and we have to invoke a ‘period eye’ in order to try and read them in a way that may have been familiar to Frescobaldi’s contemporaries. In combination with sound we also need an oral/aural imagination or, perhaps better, what Shai Burstyn calls a ‘musical-historical imagination’ to try and draw out how image, text and sound might have been perceived at the time of publication.

3. Emblems and imprese: layering meaning

In the world view that was prevalent in the early modern period, almost anything from everyday objects to exotic animals might be used to represent or signal something beyond the obvious, and emblems and symbols could be found everywhere. Following the first publication of Alciati’s *Emblematum liber* in 1531 and its subsequent circulation in successive new editions, the popularity of the emblem book increased rapidly, finding favour in both Protestant northern Europe as well as in the south, where it was adopted and adapted as an educational and moralising tool in Counter-Reformation politics. The fusion of an epigrammatic text and a pithy motto with an arresting image could be turned to many uses, thus emblems and books about emblems proliferated as did the terminology associated with them. *Imprese*, emblem, symbol, hieroglyph, *icones* and their variants in French, Spanish and German are indicative of a Europe-wide interest in symbolic forms. Given the quantity of emblem books produced in the second half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it should probably not be surprising to find emblems in a printed book of music.

John Manning has outlined the difficulty of defining generically what the term emblem means over a wide geographical area and long historical time span. He points out that the emblem has ‘proved to be particularly vigorous in adapting itself to different uses’ and that there is no such thing as a normative form for an emblem. According to Dorigen Caldwell, in the context of late-sixteenth and early seventeenth century Italian *impressa* theory, there was a distinct difference between an *impressa*, an emblem and heraldic symbolism. Although writers are not entirely consistent in their definitions, what is clear is that *imprese* are personal devices that identify individuals and do not convey a specific message other than one that relates to that person. For Giovio in the mid-sixteenth
In Counter-Reformation Italy, emblems became useful propaganda tools, and were adopted by the Jesuits in particular. The contemplation of an image with a moral meaning was a way of concentrating all the senses of the contemplation of the Divine. Given that two of the emblems appear at the end of the Sonetto spirituale ‘Dove, dove, Signor’ and the Canto spirituale ‘Dopo si lungo error’, the notion of the reader reading (or hearing) the aria and contemplating an image that reinforces its moral message makes perfect sense.

In the context of Frescobaldi’s Arie musicali, multiple readings of the symbolic or allegorical elements of emblems on one hand supports the reasoning these images are not imprese. On the other, it does make them more complex to understand. Emblems were also commonly reused in different contexts to alter their connotations and it is worth considering the possibility that ambiguity is deliberate in order to create layers of meaning.

Of the four emblems that are used in Frescobaldi’s Primo libro, one is clearly different from the others. The emblem with the motto ‘discordia concors’ is not only the only one that is repeated, but it is also the only one that comprises an image, a motto and a name thus following a different set of
rules in terms of the theories of emblems and imprese. Furthermore, it is the first to appear, following immediately after the opening Sonetto in stile recitativo. The quality of the image too, is better than the other three. It is also the only emblem that has been discussed in the literature on Frescobaldi. As it presents particular challenges, it will be discussed separately in section 7 below.

The assumption in the interpretation that follows is that the image follows the song with which it is associated as the reader turns the pages, reading the words and music and seeing the emblem at the end. The emblems are attached to four different types of text: a dedicatory sonnet, a secular text in Petrarchan style, two devotional texts and a secular canzonetta. These different types of poetry too, may hint at how their associated emblems should be read.

4. The bee topos: Pulveris iactu q[ui]escent

Figure 3: Pulveris iactu qescent. Frescobaldi, Primo libro d'arie musicali (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 10-11 Reproduced with permission /su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

The second emblem that appears Frescobaldi’s Primo libro follows the aria ‘Ardo, e taccio il mio mal’ (see Table 1). As with the first, it is also present in Anglesi’s Libro primo following the song ‘Chi si fa prigionier’, the eleventh item in the volume. It represents two groups of bees, each with a clear leader, facing each other and framed by intertwining stems and leaves, possibly of a vine, with the motto ‘Pulveris iactu q[ui]escent’. [Fig. 3]. The image can be specifically related to Virgil’s Georgics Book 4 that describes honey farming and the cultivation of bees. Here, Virgil describes the emergence of two rival swarms in a ‘civil war’ of bees led by a ‘king’ or ‘captain’ (properly the birth of a young queen), and indicates that a handful of dust will calm them: ‘These ardent passions and these prodigious contests a little handful of dust will lay to rest’. 31 This passage provides the context for the motto and a source for the image. Although the text of the motto is a slightly contracted version of the original Latin, it is one that would have been immediately obvious to a seventeenth century reader. The lines that follow on from it in the Georgics refer to putting to death one of the bee ‘captains’ to leave the palace free for the better one to rule. 32 The image invites the reader to ponder the consequences of warfare as portrayed by the metaphor of the bee swarms but also, as Wilkinson suggests, reminds the reader that while man is in control of the bees, ultimately he is himself subordinate to the gods. 33

The bee was a common topos in emblems and offered a range of themes and meanings. Hall’s Dictionary of signs and symbols tells us that the beehive is an attribute of Bernard of Clairvaux, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom, ‘all noted for their eloquence or mellifluous words’ and in secular imagery is an attribute of the Golden age personified. 34 The sting of the bee, the selfless work of the bee in making honey, the structure of the hive and its social organisation as a political model of benevolent governance are all common themes. 35 It does seem likely, given the motto, that the metaphor of government is what is intended here. The bee is of course also the most important part of the Barberini family coat of arms and bees appear conspicuously on the frontispieces of several editions of Maffeo Barberini’s Poemata and in publications with Barberini dedications such as Stefano Landi’s Il Sant’Alessio. A bee even appears in three dimensional form on the collar of a portrait bust of Michelangelo Buonarroti il giovane, a Barberini client. 36

The text of ‘Ardo e taccio il mio mal’ is an extract from a poem by Girolamo Preti. 37 By the middle of the seventeenth century this text was already associated with emblems as it is included in Filippo Picinelli’s Mondo simbolico o sia università d’imprese... first printed in Milan in 1653 and reprinted several times elsewhere in Italian and Latin. 38 The poetic imagery is dominated by Petrarchan
conjunctions of opposites - war and peace, faith and fear, fire and ice, death and life – all of which describe the emotional turmoil of love. The bee provides a visual parallel. It can sting but also provides sweet honey; if it stings, it also dies, but living, works in harmony with others and produces sweetness. The intention is perhaps to remind the reader that man should have control over his emotions just as he can control a swarm of bees. Even though emotions may be both painful and pleasant, ultimately one will be subservient to another, as the bees are to the dust. Layered over this, is the warning in Virgil about the consequences of too much passion. Following the section about swarming bees, Virgil tells the story of Aristaeus who lost all his bees as a punishment for pursuing Euridice who subsequently died of a snake bite while fleeing from him. Both the Petrarchan source of the poetic concetti and the Virgilian narrative would have been familiar and readily understood by a seventeenth century audience.

The musical setting does little to explain the emblem in itself, but it does reflect the Petrarchan oppositions present in both the text and image to some extent. There is neither extreme chromaticism nor especially harsh dissonance, but rapid shifts between major and minor triads serve to illustrate key concepts such as hope and death. The mobility of the third in chords also creates localised tonal ambiguity. For example, the A-natural tonal type implicit in the opening is undermined in the second bar by a C sharp which tonicises D which in turn tonicises a G minor triad, all in the space of four bars. Thus one hears opposites in the juxtaposition of major and minor sonorities.

5. Moral and spiritual subjects

Figure 4: Depressa elevor. Frescobaldi, _Primo libro d’arie musicali_ (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 12-13. Reproduced with permission /su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

The third emblem depicts a wood fire in a hearth with a bellows surrounded by a stylised branch and leaves (possibly of oak) with the motto ‘Depressa elevor’ [Fig. 4]. Bellows were common objects in households, artisan’s workshops and pre-industrial manufacturing and their multiple uses and contexts thus allows for a range of interpretations when used as an image in the body of an emblem. The bellows features in a number of alchemical emblems and in iconographic contexts in which there is either an object for the flame to heat or Cupid operating the bellows, neither of which is apparent here. There are also Ovidian sources for epigrams and mottoes relating to love that use the metaphor of flame being kindled or put out by breath, for which the bellows can be seen as a substitute. The notion of the bellows as a substitute for breath is also brought out by Piccinelli who cites Virgil’s _Aeneid_ as an example of the divine inspiration or breath of the gods on the Cumaen sibyl and also the Christian parallel of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The flames that accompany the bellows in this and many other depictions are a symbol of ardour, either spiritual, or as an attribute of Venus, sexual. The bellows is simply the means of increasing flames.

A popular source of imagery close to the period in question is Ripa’s _Iconologia_. In the 1603 edition of this book, the bellows is identified as an attribute of ‘Capriccio’. In his description, Ripa notes that ‘The spur and the bellows show the capricious ready to praise any virtues or to punish the vices’. Taking the lead from Ripa, it is possible to draw out an implied extended metaphor of the biblical ‘refiner’s fire’ heated by the bellows, and indicative of the salvation of humanity through suffering, raising up the virtuous and punishing the wicked.
The seventeenth century reader would have been familiar with all of these sources, from Ovid to Ripa and especially any religious metaphor they invoked, and would, more easily than we can, arrive at a meaning for this emblem, pointed in the right direction by the motto. A fascinating sketch depicting a bellows and a smoking fire remarkably similar to this emblem but carrying the motto ‘Io del mio mal ministro fui’ (I was the maker of my own misfortune) was scribbled by the artist Agostino Tassi during the trial for his rape of Artemisia Gentileschi in Rome in 1612. Given the context, Tassi’s image perhaps invokes Ripa’s connection of the bellows to the punishment of vice and praise of virtue, or even hints at fear of damnation.44 Perhaps more importantly though, it suggests that there might be a common visual source on which both he and the creator of the Frescobaldian emblems were able to draw, and that such a source was of Roman provenance. Further, the bellows in the version in Frescobaldi’s print faces the opposite direction to the bellows in the sketch. Reversal of images is frequently happens in the engraving or wood-cutting process for making print blocks and is additional evidence for the existence of a common source.

Figure 5: Agostino Tassi, sketch from trial records, ‘Pro Curia et fisco Con. Agostinum Tassum Pictorum’. Archivio di Stato di Roma: Archivio del Tribunale Criminale del Governatore di Roma, processo 7, busta 104, anno 1612, p. 53 [permissions pending]

The Latin motto too, is open to ambiguity, conveying the idea ‘having been weighed down, I am raised up’, with feminine verb forms which may indicate the rise and fall of the flames, or, ‘having been weighed down I am lessened’.45 The bellows once pressed down has exhausted its wind and therefore its power to activate anything (flame, organ pipes etc.). It is in the process of depression that the force of air is created which feeds the flames, causing them to rise. As a personification of man, in a depressed state, weighed down he is exhausted and has no further strength or inspiration. In being raised up he regains the strength and inspiration he has lost. The meaning may be secular or sacred – the capricious moodiness of the lover or the raising up from the weight of sin offered by divine love. Given the context is a devotional song, it is likely that a sacred meaning is implied. However, if we accept the second reading of the motto, the loss of power or strength (the depression of the bellows) in the process of empowering something else (love, flames) could be read in political terms – losing one’s own power in the service of something or someone else. This could be a more personal statement of submission to a patron.

The text of the song which precedes this emblem ‘Dove, dove, Signor’ by Francesco della Valle, voices emotional upheaval in the first person.46 The poet identifies God as the only place of refuge, but the process of finding that refuge may not necessarily be a comfortable one. The concetto expressed in the motto ‘Depressa elevor’ is a common one with many parallel, though not identical examples signifying the wish to rise up from the baser things of life to the contemplation of more spiritual matters, or the desire to see through the highs and lows of life.47 A motto with a similar sentiment though different words is used by Piccinelli to represent the idea of raising up from sin, and the example he cites is a specific biblical reference to the parable of the prodigal son, who, brought down by sin, says ‘I will arise and go to my Father’.48 The bellows is an image that conflates ideas relating to the capriciousness of life with its highs and lows, with the religious metaphor of suffering and salvation. Open, it is a force that may inflame either positively or negatively; closed, it is powerless, but it does require an external agency to control it. The agency that is inferred (oneself, God, the devil, life, love) drives the reading of the emblem. Situated in this poetic context, the message of suffering and salvation seems to be the most appropriate, illustrating the lines: ‘therefore my soul, deluded by its own desires, wishes to break away from the gloomy prison that is my chest’ (Onde dai suoi piacer l’alma delusa / Romper desia l’atra prigion del petto). The reader is encouraged to rise up or be inspired to return in penitence to the Lord, however difficult it may be
to recognise fault or admit guilt. The musical setting of the text mirrors the ‘path’ from guilt to salvation from minor sonorities at the beginning to a major ending by way of tonally unstable chromatic movement, for example in the line that juxtaposes ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ in connection with ‘delight’ (fatto hor nemico i miei delitti) and in the final cadence on the words ‘to you my God’ (a te, mio Dio).

Figure 6: Elevat et dissipat. Frescobaldi, _Primo libro d’arie musicali_ (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 14-15. Reproduced with permission / su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

The emblem at the end of the canto spirituale ‘Dopo si lungo error’ comprises two columns of mist on either side of a bush with the sun in the centre with the motto ‘Elevat et dissipat’ [Fig. 6]⁴⁹. Unlike the two previous mottoes, the frame is not related to the natural world. There are other similar images with a Florentine provenance that, like the depiction of bellows, can be found with reference to alchemy and other esoteric studies. Though fascinating, they are unlikely sources for this emblem. Benardino de Sahagun’s _Universal history of the things of new Spain_, a sixteenth-century manuscript known more commonly as the Florentine codex, contains a description of Aztec methods of hunting for precious stones and suggests that at dawn when the sun came up, the earth gave off vapour or smoke where the precious stones were located, thus indicating to the primitive geologist where to dig.⁵⁰ The notion of some kind of secret sign indicating the location of hidden treasure is appealing, and if it could be proven that it was widely known, might suggest that it was used as a signal to look beyond the superficial presentation of the book or song. However, it is doubtful that such a reading could aid in reaching a sustainable interpretation of the emblems in this context. The emblem is used in a later Florentine publication, the _Historia contagioso morbi qui Florentiam populates fuit_ 1630 published in 1633, a book which documents the plague epidemic of 1630. In this context, the vapours might be interpreted in the Galenic sense of the bad airs thought to spread disease being evaporated.⁵¹

Piccinelli, a widely known and more reliable source, associates the verb dissipabit with the sun because of the power of the sun’s rays to burn away cloud.⁵² However, Piccinelli also associates this combination of image and word with the presence of God and, perhaps pertinent here, to the presence of the head of the family. He further notes that, before he became pope when he left Pisa to return to Florence following his studies, Urban VIII adopted the _impresa_ of the sun rising in the East with the motto _Aliusque, et idem_.⁵³ In addition, he quotes Seneca to indicate the sun as a symbol of virtue against which calumnies and imposture cannot survive.⁵⁴

The text of ‘Dopo si lungo error’ is by Giovanni della Casa and is a plea to God to forgive sins committed.⁵⁵ Here there is an unambiguous metaphor connecting the image and the poetic text. God (the sun) has the power to forgive (disperse) sin and restore (elevat) the sinner who has for so long committed sins. The text makes explicit reference to ‘the pity of your holy gaze’ (la pietà delle tue luci sante) which seems to be a direct invitation to the reader or listener to contemplate the message of reconciliation and forgiveness of sins reinforced by the image. The positive message of forgiveness is underlined by major sonorities at crucial moments in the text. The opening melodic gesture ascends to a major third above the bass on the word ‘error’ which seems to contradict its meaning, and in the line quoted above, the word ‘luci’ is placed on a D sharp above a B in the bass. The implied B major triad is comparatively rare in Frescobaldi’s output. The setting, though apparently in an A-natural tonal type, ranges widely into the sharp side of the hexachordal gamut
which might be seen as a way of musically representing the dispersing of mist or turning from the ‘many sins’ outlined in the text.

The relationship of each poetic text to the emblem which follows it hints at an interpretation of the image which has some universal moral element. If we view that interpretation through the lens of historical context, other layers of meaning emerge.

6. Visual imagery and the historical context

Christopher Hibbert’s standard history of the Medici rather unfairly paints Ferdinando II de’ Medici, the dedicatee of this volume, as less than dynamic as a leader, noting that ‘he was drawn into a brief war with the Pope’s tiresome Barberini relatives, but otherwise contrived to face every threat to Florence’s peace and security with mollifying complaisance.’ The reputation of Medici rule after the death of Ferdinando I as weak, corrupt and indecisive has been questioned by Niccolò Capponi who has demonstrated that Ferdinando II was a clever diplomat, working to keep a sustained peace in Tuscany while mindful of the financial resources available. For all of his long rule, Ferdinando was able to maintain neutrality with both France and Spain, reducing the Tuscan naval fleet and increasing his land defences, developing a strong militia that reduced his reliance on expensive mercenary forces. In 1630 the grand duchy of Florence was paralysed by a plague epidemic. At this time Ferdinando had had been forced to send financial and military aid to Milan under the terms of an old but still operational agreement with the Spanish. Under these conditions, Pope Urban VIII Barberini annexed the Duchy of Urbino in 1631. Ferdinando subsequently reasserted his claim to Urbino, by marrying Vittoria della Rovere, the duchy’s heir, in 1637. Relations with the Papal state broke down completely with the attempted annexation of Castro in 1640, and war broke out. Ferdinando was on the winning side as part of an anti-papal coalition formed by Parma, Modena, Tuscany and Venice.

Bearing in mind the historical context outlined briefly above, to a Florentine reader in 1630, this collection of images would have been loaded with meaning. As noted above, the bee is the most important part of the Barberini family coat of arms and appears conspicuously on Barberini commissioned art, architecture and publications. The young Ferdinando II de’ Medici had won the admiration of his subjects by staying in the city during the plague of 1630, while the annexation of Urbino had created the perception of a land-grabbing Papacy. The Virgilian concetto of pacifying bees would have been a highly resonant image especially with a knowledge of the passage that immediately follows on from these lines about putting to death the inferior ‘captain’ to leave the palace free.

The motto attached to the bellows has strong echoes of one used by Ferdinando I de Medici in the church of Santa Maria in Domnica, also known as Santa Maria alla Navicella, in Rome. Ferdinando had the ceiling restored and the great coffers are decorated with numerous symbolic images including many in which that church’s symbol of a ship, the ‘navicella’, is prominent. The ‘navicella’ is an image with a long history dating back to mosaics in the old St. Peter’s, and also appears in the frescoes in the Spanish chapel of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. The image of a ship riding out the waves of a storm, rising and falling, but remaining afloat, referred explicitly to the ship of the Church. In the corner of Santa Maria alla Navicella, above the entrance there is a representation of a ship with the motto ‘depressa extollitur’. As used by Ferdinando I, the concept of something pushed down that will rise up expressed his determination to remain afloat despite the maelstrom of life. This reading would not have been out of place in the context of events around 1630 and in the life of the second Duke Ferdinando as he navigated a treacherous political environment. Coupling a very
similar motto to the picture of the bellows found in the Frescobaldian emblem perhaps invokes the extended biblical metaphor of the refiner’s fire and suggests that we all ultimately get the reward we deserve raising or condemning us regardless of outward appearances.

Figure 7: Rome, Santa Maria alla navicella, ceiling coffers. Photo (c) the author

The concetto of the emblem of the rising sun in an historical context is equally ambiguous. Images of the sun were important in dynastic representations and were used not only by Urban VIII Barberini, as already noted above, but also the Bourbons. Florence in 1630 was in a delicately balanced politically neutral stance between the French and the Spanish. In spite of periodic diplomatic or even military skirmishes the Medici also needed to maintain a relationship with Rome as their status as Grand Dukes was bestowed by the Papacy. Given the possibility of the sun as representing a familial ‘padre’ or ‘padrone’ it could also be read as a plea from a client to a patron (unnamed) for restoration and forgiveness.

However, a very similar image is used in the ceiling commissioned by Ferdinando I for Santa Maria Domnica, appearing alongside the images of the navicella. The bellows representing the praise of virtue and punishment of vice with its associated motto suggesting rising up above vice is directly connected to the forgiveness of sin represented by the sun and clouds. The two images are complementary, fitting with the texts of the two spiritual songs set by Frescobaldi. The physical proximity and presence of the images devised by a Florentine patron but situated in a Roman location further enhances the duality of allegiance that is reflected in this publication.

The duality of the imagery is further complicated by the decorative initial letters. As noted above, the emblems are not the only visual components in Frescobaldi’s Libro primo. To survey the context of the emblems it is worth focussing briefly on other visual elements present. Landini used at least two sets of initial letters for the song texts. One set is unremarkable, the letters being embellished by abstract floral patterns or cherubs. The outlines lack sharpness and in one case the letter appears damaged, though it seems possible that this letter C (p. 46) is from a different font set as what can be seen of the decoration suggests neither vegetation nor cherub. The other set of initial letters is decorated with cityscapes. [Fig. 8]

There are only five Letters with this sort of decoration – A, C, D, E and S, and they are not used for every occurrence of these initial letters. The inconsistency may be down to the practicalities of printing if, for example, more than one decorated initial letter D was needed at the same time. But it does raise the question as to whether there is some significance in where they are placed or even if the letters are significant in themselves. Landini also used these letters at least in one other book, namely Buoninsegni’s Storia della cita di Firenze dall’anno 1410 al 1460 (1637).

Figure 8: Frescobaldi, Primo libro d’arie musicali (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) details of initial letters with cityscapes, pp. 22, 32, 36, 42 Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 22, 32, 36, 42. Reproduced with permission / su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

The views may well be generic, but comparisons with contemporary views of the city and with Tuscan architectural styles suggest an attempt at a more specific rendition of Tuscany, if not the city of Florence itself, bearing in mind of course the small size of the images and capacity of the technology. The outline of surrounding hills behind a dome and tower embellishing the letter E,
while somewhat abstracted and reversed in the process of creating a block for printing is suggestive of the Florentine landscape and dome and tower of the Duomo and Signoria. The loggia depicted behind the letter S is typical of Florentine architecture such as that of the mercato nuovo, the Signoria or the Ospedale of Santa Maria Nuova. The letter C includes what might be a row of houses along the city wall, a piazza and buildings with domes that could conceivably be those of the Duomo and baptistery. A comparison of these images with a sixteenth-century perspective view of the city supports the argument that they were intended to be specific views of Florence. They seem consistent with contemporary chorographies which use oblique elevated views to depict important landmarks, but at such an angle that street plans are obscured. Early chorographies of the 15th century were probably made with the intention of showing the strength of a city’s fortifications rather than as a tool for tourists. The first chorography of Florence of a manageable size that might have been used by tourists was published by Claudio Duchetto around 1580. The first chorography to use some sort of plan was made by Stefano Bonsignori, court cosmographer to Francesco I and Ferdinando I. It was published in 1584 and functions in part as an encomium to Florence itself. Collectively the little images contained in the initial letters in Frescobaldi’s book may likewise suggest some sort of homage to the city, if not directly, perhaps by triggering memory or association with a known chorography such as that of Bonsignori.

In summarising the visual material presented thus far, there are three points to consider: 1) a generic ‘look’ that pays homage to the city of Florence or to Tuscany more generally; 2) a theme of reconciliation expressed by metaphors of pacification, repentance and forgiveness that connects the moral meanings of the emblems; and 3) a relationship between the emblems and the poetic texts to which they are affiliated. These are not without ambiguity as the references to Florence and Rome suggest a least two different sources if not allegiances. This does however seem to parallel the Roman and Florentine elements of the musical style noted above. The final emblem to be considered introduces the potential for further layers of meaning.

7. The Banchieri question

The first emblem in Frescobaldi’s Primo libro printed at the end of the first item in the collection, ‘Signor, c’hora fra gli ostri’ is the only one in the collection that has been discussed in scholarly literature. [Fig. 9] The image of seven pipes surmounted by a musical stave with the motto ‘Discordia concors’ is the only one to include what appears to be an academic pseudonym, Il dissonante, and is also the only one to appear twice – the second time towards the end of the volume following the canzona a due canti e tenore, ‘Eri già tutta mia’. Hammond and Remo Giazzotto suggested that this impresa might indicate Frescobaldi’s membership of a Florentine or Roman academy. In pursuing this line of reasoning, Elda Salerni Buracchio has argued that it signifies Frescobaldi’s membership of the obscure Roman Accademia degli inequali, the only academy from the period that used a matching impresa. In so doing, she has shown that the device of the Congregazione dei musici di S. Cecilia, a more obvious organisation for Frescobaldi’s membership, is of small organ pipes, not the zampogna pastorale (pan pipe or syrinx) used in this emblem, and has the motto ‘Concordia discors’ – an inversion of the motto ‘Discordia concors’ seen here. The motto ‘Discordia concors’ without the image was used by three other academies – the Accademia degli accordati of Siena and of Genoa, and in the 1660s by the Accademia dei discordanti of Naples, none of which is a likely candidate.

Buracchio notes that as this emblem is used by Domenico Anglesi in his 1635 Primo libro d’arie musicali also printed by Landini, it suggests that he too knew both Frescobaldi and Banchieri. What
Buracchio does not mention is that two of the other emblems in Frescobaldi’s book also appear in Anglesi’s volume which further erodes the argument for these images as a collection of academic imprese. A search in the British Library’s Italian academies data-base for the mottos and the primary images (or body) of each of the other emblems did not reveal any correlation between them and any of the devices used by academies or individuals listed in the data-base. This does not of course mean that there is none. While ‘Discordia concors’ may have an academic connection, if the emblems are to be viewed as a collection, the resolution of their meanings does not lie in academic circles.

Figure 9: Discordia concors. Frescobaldi, Primo libro d’arie musicali (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp.4-5. Reproduced with permission / su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

There is no question that this image is personal to Banchieri as it is identical one which appears in three of his works: on the frontispiece of his Dialoghi concerti sinfonia e canzoni, in Il virtuoso ritrovo academico del dissonante and in the Lettere armoniche. Banchieri founded the Academia dei Floridi in Bologna in 1614. Its activities were suspended around 1623-24 and the academia subsequently reformed in 1625 as the Accademia dei filomusi. All three of these publications date from the period of the filomusi. In the Lettere armoniche Banchieri published a discourse which he had presented to the Academia dei filomusi on the topic of the sampogna. The impresa appears under the heading ‘Compendio sulla sampogna armonica’ and is sandwiched between a madrigal ‘to Syrinx’ (à Siringa) by Cesare Rinaldi and the text of the discourse itself. The music that accompanied Banchieri’s discourse was published separately in Il virtuoso ritrovo academico. Banchieri had a wide network of correspondents including clerics, printer-publishers, patrons and musicians and he clearly knew Frescobaldi as he is one of the addressees included in the Lettere armoniche. The image does not, however, appear in the 1630 revision of the letters published as Lettere scritte à diversi patroni, & amici.

Figure 10: Banchieri, Lettere armoniche, Bologna: Girolamo Mascheroni, 1628, p. 131


In the discourse published in the Lettere armoniche, Banchieri situates the sampogna in classical myth and Biblical narrative - the pipes of Jubal placed on a keyboard become the organ of the Roman church – and follows this with a mini discourse on the concord of perfect intervals. According to the Lettere, the impresa was invented on the madrigal text. Adrien Alix has suggested that contrary to Banchieri’s claim, the impresa was at least in part devised by the poet Giovanni Battista Marino. He identifies the source as Marino’s series of idyllic and pastoral poems, La sampogna, published in Paris in 1620, five years before Banchieri’s presentation of his discourse at the Accademia dei filomusi. Furthermore, Marino published a mystical-religious interpretation of the Pan myth in his Dicerie sacre (1614).

In Marino’s poems, the syrinx or sampogna is set not just in its mythological context, but in the context of cosmic harmony. In the first instance, Pan falls in love with Syrinx, but her metamorphosis into reeds allowed her to escape his advances. His love can only be consummated by blowing into
the pipes to create music. Pan’s disordered passion is thus transformed into harmony. In the Dicierie sacre, Pan is viewed as a Christ figure. The reeds represent the frailties and weaknesses of humankind over which Christ breathes to lament man’s ingratitude and his breath represents his love for humanity. The seven notes of the pipe represent the seven last words of Christ on the cross. The overarching theme of both is that love has the power to transcend all discord.

There is a direct connection with Bologna in Marino’s La sampogna as two letters addressed to Bolognese literati Claudio Achillini and Girolamo Preti follow immediately after the dedication and one may fairly safely assume that it was read in Bologna very soon after publication. However, Banchieri’s relationship with Marino goes back even further as he published a laudatory poem ostensibly by Marino in 1613 of which a version also appears in the Conclusioni nel’organo suonarino (1609). Frescobaldi was acquainted with Marino’s poetry having already set a handful of his texts in his madrigal book of 1608 as well as setting further texts in his Arie where they appear alongside poetry by Preti.

The musical canon represented in the emblem (the upper part on the musical stave in the frame and the lower part on the stave decorating the band across the pipes) also pre-dates the image. It is included in the canons attached to the edition of Banchieri’s Cartella musicale published in 1613, and subsequently resolved in Romano Micheli’s Musica vaga et artificiosa (1615). Micheli identifies Banchieri as the composer of the canon and provides both Banchieri’s cryptic instruction for its realisation and a solution to it. There is one small rhythmic difference in the upper part in Micheli’s version in that the first semibreve, C, is divided into two minims, C-B. In all other respects, this miniature double canon is identical to the canon embedded in the emblem. [Example 1].


Banchieri’s instructions for the resolution of the canon rendered in poetic form chime with the meanings that can be drawn out from Marino’s texts: in particular the notion of friends and enemies being united and the appearance of things apparently in opposition to each other coming together in harmony. These ideas are germnane in the context of Frescobaldi’s Arie as will be seen below. Micheli certainly knew Frescobaldi as he addressed a dedication to him which would suggest some sort of relationship, even if only one of professional respect.

O che gratioso tir da raccontare
Amici & inimici sono uniti,
Acuto, & sopracuto ogn’uno appare
Tutti contrari, & fanno in suono uniti
Gli orerecchie altrui; ondio per dichiare
A gli cantori acciò sieno avertiti
Ut re mi sol la, cantan costoro
Fa mi re ut, Sol fa me re con loro.

The question of the ownership of this impresa is further complicated by its inclusion in a portrait of Frescobaldi. This anonymous painting is typical of the period and shows the sitter’s head and upper body. The emblem is drawn on a piece of paper in the composer’s left hand. An image of Frescobaldi holding this impresa suggests that it was in some way personal to him. The whole point of an impresa was that it was individual and unique and for two people to use the same image undermines the basis of identification by means of an emblematic image. Although now in a private
The provenance of the portrait indicates a direct line back to Antonio Goretti. Goretti was a dilettante musician and patron, and it was in his home in Ferrara in 1598 that an audience which included Artusi heard performances of modern madrigals by Monteverdi and others, thus sparking the Artusi-Monteverdi controversy. The second appearance of this emblem in Frescobaldi’s Arie follows the setting of ‘Eri già tutta mia’: a text also set by Monteverdi. Monteverdi had attended a meeting of the Accademia dei floridi in 1620 and was known to Banchieri. Though only printed in 1632, it is possible that Monteverdi’s setting of ‘Eri già tutta mia’ was in circulation prior to its publication.

The pitch pattern in the tenor part at the start of ‘Eri già tutta mia’ closely resembles Micheli’s resolution of Banchieri’s canon with a stepwise descent over a third followed by a stepwise descent over a fourth. The skip that separates the two descents however is a perfect fourth rather than the perfect fifth found in Micheli’s version. Although there are repeated stepwise descending patterns throughout the aria, the ascending stepwise scale that forms the lower part of the canon and that one might expect to form an accompaniment is missing entirely.

Given the multivalency of this emblem, understanding its use in the context of Frescobaldi’s Arie is challenging. With respect to ‘Eri gia tutta mia’, the imagery of the poetic text lamenting the departed lover is unexpectedly given a rhythmically strong refrain in which words are extracted and repeated (Eri già tutta mia, or non sei più; non più, non più) and a lilting triple time setting that creates a light-hearted mood. The tension between the text and the setting suggests a mock lament rather than a genuine one: perhaps the discord between the separated lovers is temporary and their unity is implied in the motto ‘Discordia concors’. However, given the characters who would have been familiar with either the image or the text or both — Banchieri, Goretti, Preti, Marino, Monteverdi — might the combination of text and emblem refer to a musical disagreement such as that between Artusi and Monteverdi which after all included a criticism of incorrect handling of dissonance? Sadly I can find no evidence in the music to support such an hypothesis, attractive though it is.

An alternative interpretation of the ‘Discordia concors’ motto alongside this text may indicate a torn allegiance. If the common topoi of beauty and virtue of the departed lover present in the text were read as personifications of place, the songs and laughter of the one remaining turning to sighs would be indicative of homesickness or at least sorrow for being elsewhere. If the emblem were being used as a personal impresa, and imprese were supposed to be time specific, the message is politically quite powerful - Frescobaldi lamenting his departure from Rome perhaps? Again though, this reading further demonstrates the multivalence of emblems and the difficulty in reaching an unambiguous interpretation.

The fact that the ‘Discordia concors’ emblem is also positioned early in the volume following the opening aria suggests that it has significance to the whole volume. While the dedicatory letter which precedes the first aria ‘Signor c’hora fra gli ostri’ is addressed to Ferdinando II de Medici and he is also named in the second aria in the book ‘Degnati o gran Fernando’, the assumption has always been that this too is a dedicatory text, although the ‘Signor’ is not identified. He is described in relation to Pallas and Mars, gloriously disarming death, and the object of songs of praise and glory. The prefatory dedication and ‘Degnati o gran Fernando’ both refer in some way to celestial harmony – a topos familiar in Medici symbolism, and indeed resonates with the concetto of the image.

Banchieri’s letter to Frescobaldi published in 1628 in the Lettere armoniche, makes reference to perfect harmony and consonance and has echoes of his academic discourse. Might this song contain a response to Banchieri hidden in the encomiastic text? Frescobaldi was after all a master of the hexachordal inganno in which the polyphonic behaviour of notes could be transformed by
changing their associated hexachordal syllables. Whatever the ‘Discordia concors’ impresa may have meant to Frescobaldi, Banchieri or others, Landini presumably printed the Arie volumes as a commercial enterprise, and though undoubtedly a high-end product, the book must have had some appeal to purchasers without having any attachment to an academy or knowledge of personal imprese. Following this line of reasoning, I would suggest that the ‘Discordia concors’ emblem carried layers of meaning, at least one of which was understandable to a wider readership.

If we therefore set aside previous readings of the ‘Discordia concors’ emblem as a personal impresa, the meaning of which is fixed in relation to an individual, and interpret it instead as an emblem that is repeatable in a variety of contexts, another more plausible meaning emerges. Just as erotic love emblems are recast as moral emblems of the divine by framing them with a different verbal content, so the song texts recast the Discordia concors emblem.

The notion of the world as a knot in which all the diverse parts are joined in a discordant concord is a concept deeply rooted in Classical literature and philosophy and is found in the work of Ovid, Horace, Plato and others. It recurs closer to the period in question in Tasso’s discourse on heroic poetry. In Banchieri’s explanation of the motto in his impresa, the disparate elements of pipe and keyboard are united in the perfect instrument; the Dionysian and Apollonian are reconciled; the canon is resolved. The neo-platonic invocation of cosmic harmony seems apt in this context. The motto ‘Discordia concors’ as a metaphor for resolving discord between warring factions and making peace, or at least encouraging those who are fundamentally in disagreement to live together peaceably, has some political traction in the Florentine context and at the same time echoes the theme of cosmic harmony used to glorify Ferdinando I de Medici in the 1589 Intermedi. In the context of the volume as a whole, the ‘Discordia concors’ emblem in its first appearance functions as an announcement of a theme of resolution of discord, pacification, and reconciliation that is metaphorically present in various forms in the other emblems: the bees are pacified by dust, the bellows invokes salvation or spiritual reconciliation, the mist evaporated by the sun is a metaphor for forgiveness, and finally, love remains in spite of physical separation.

8. Frescobaldi’s Arie and their Intellectual agency

The Medici were no strangers to the power of emblems and cosmic harmony was a theme embedded in the Medici decorative programmes from the time of Cosimo I. The decorative programmes in the Palazzo della Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio) commissioned by Cosimo I used emblematic symbols to reinforce the legitimacy of Medici rule. By 1630 the theme would have invoked past glories of the grand duchy. Following the family move to the Palazzo Pitti, Ferdinando II commissioned a remarkably similar decorative programme from Pietro da Cortona, executed between 1637 and 1661. The Cortona frescoes in the Stanze dei pianeti include images of peace-making, for example, Vulcan refusing to forge weapons and Mercury promising an age of peace.

In the mid to late sixteenth centuries, the publication of emblem books increased significantly following the appearance of Alciati’s Emblemata liber. Alongside Alciati, books by Giovio, Ruscelli, Domenichi and Ripa provided additional material for aspiring courtiers and academies to use in fashioning their identities. Galileo provides a good example of how a man who aspired to a courtly role tapped into the self-conscious use of emblems in positioning himself as court philosopher and mathematician. He even designed an emblem for a medal to be struck to commemorate the marriage of Cosimo II to Maria Maddalena of Austria in 1608, describing it in detail in a letter to the Grand Duchess Cristina. Comprising a globe-shaped lodestone with little pieces of iron around it and a motto ‘Vim facit amor’ (love produces strength), he drew on the existing emblematic tradition of the ball-shaped globe representing the Medici palle and the idea of the lodestone drawing all
subjects to it with love. This medal was never struck, but another celebrating Cosimo II as the new Jupiter surrounded by the ‘Medicean stars’ was made. Ferdinando II’s mother and grandmother, the archduchess Maria Maddalena and Cristina of Lorraine, also drew on emblems to construct their identity and to reinforce their authority to rule when they became regents after the death of Cosimo II when Ferdinando, as the legitimate heir, was only 11 years old. Maria Maddalena in particular, drew on the symbolism and mythology of female rulers for court entertainments and art that she commissioned prior to July 1628, when Ferdinando began to rule in his own right. Heroines such as Judith, St. Ursula and St. Agatha appear in operas while historical female sovereigns were the subjects of frescoes in the newly acquired Villa Poggio Imperiale. Kelly Harness sees the narrative of Gagliano’s La Flora presented in 1628 and especially the role of Venus, as significant in depicting the surrender of power of mother to son, ensuring continuity of peace and prosperity.

Frescobaldi’s book is a comfortable match to a patron with a family history of exploiting emblematic imagery. In the context of seventeenth century material culture, books were items of value and libraries a marker of status. Further, the fashion for collecting made books that illustrated and made available other people’s collections of curiosities, statues, art, coins and so on, increasingly popular. A book that combines elements of the emblem book (a popular genre for libraries) and the songbook is likely to have had a particular courtly appeal and high value in a gift economy. The courtly message it portrays of resolving discord and maintaining peace, inferring diplomacy and reconciliation rather than war, would be appropriate to the course of leadership that Ferdinando would subsequently take. It was only several years after this publication that Ferdinando and his allies defeated the papal forces in the War of Castro and his diplomatic skills in maintaining neutrality between France and Spain emerged. The theme of reconciliation could be read as a signal of his intent. However, this is not the only possible narrative, and of course, the Medici were not the only family to exploit emblems to their advantage. This collection of emblems might be understood differently by another patron or audience and in a geographical location other than Florence, such as for example, in Rome, where the references to the Barberini bees and rising sun motifs could be seen as constructing an image which reinforced the legitimacy and power of Urban VIII and his family.

For the printer Giovanni Battista Landini, a successful homage to the Medici and to the city of Florence might have improved his status as a printer and therefore his business during tough economic times. It does seem unlikely though, that he would have come up with a complex literary and artistic programme himself, though he certainly had the specialist skills to see the work through the printing process. It also seems unlikely that he would have undertaken a costly publication unless he could see a significant return on the expense of producing it.

Could Frescobaldi, who was primarily an instrumentalist and whose literary abilities were scorned by Giovanni Battista Doni, have come up with such an idea? Although the dedicatee is not named on the title page [Fig 1], Frescobaldi is identified as ‘organista del serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana’ with the font for the words ‘Gran Duca’ being equal in size to those of the words ‘Arie Musicali’. Together with the Medici coat of arms, even without reading the dedication, there is no doubt as to the allegiance of the composer and printer whose name also appears on the title page. It seems unlikely that the composer himself could have devised the programme. Hammond has suggested that Frescobaldi’s son Domenico may have been the author of at least two of the texts in the book, including the dedicatory sonnet. Domenico potentially had the literary education to have been capable of devising the programme and one known volume of his Latin poetry survives. The simultaneous references to Florence and the Medici and to the Barberini do fit with the composer’s
circles of patronage at the time. The Barberini were of course Frescobaldi’s major patrons following his return to Rome.

I would suggest though, that within Frescobaldi’s Roman circle there was a more compelling candidate for the role of intellectual agent who could have devised the emblematic and literary programme – a candidate who had the skills, the patronal contacts and is known to have been an associate of Frescobaldi - the poet, art connoisseur and courtly virtuoso, Lelio Guidiccioni. Arnaldo Morelli has proved convincingly that Frescobaldi was on collegial if not friendly terms with Guidiccioni. Guidiccioni was in the right places at the right time. He wrote the Latin dedication of Frescobaldi’s Liber secundum sacrarum modulationum published in 1627. He had been the papal envoy to Florence at the time of Ferdinando’s birth, and it was he who conducted Ferdinando on a tour of the Borghese art collection during his visit to Rome in 1628, a visit during which he also probably heard Frescobaldi play and during which Frescobaldi’s move to Florence was probably instigated as the composer left Rome after 22 November 1628.

In his little known discourse Della musica preserved in manuscript, Guidiccioni presents a series of metaphors about musica humana shot through with the oppositions of concord and discord: ‘...the upper world and the heavens are governed by and turn with harmony; the lower world is a concordant discord, a mixture of elements; the lives of animate bodies are a concord of humors; man as a small world is a dissonant consonance composed perfectly of soul and body, of intellect, sense, reason and appetite.’ The echo of the motto ‘Discordia concors’ is obvious as are the Classical sources. Adding weight to the case for Guidiccioni as the inventor of the emblematic program are his manuscript lectures and documents, and in particular his discourse on eloquence. While apparently written in an archaic, even arcane style, the underlying message regarding the power of music to subdue warring factions and exert harmony and peace is clear. The image of the noise of war obscuring eloquence and of music restoring it, finds parallels in the emblematic program of the arie.

‘But for the other part, if in the bombast of martial noise eloquence is no longer or not always heard, there where Bellona exults with Discord and with bloody flogging rages, the wisdom of Pallas can no longer be recognised and has no place, nor does her oil flow, where lakes of human blood stagnate. Music must be preferred, which holds dominion over warriors, over infuriated Saul, over Alexander dominator of the world; an ostia which transplants woods, tames tigers; draws the herds of the sea, obtains life from the bosom of death; that raises up and does not subjugate; and although the song of the muses can enchant, there where sounds the whistle of the tempests of Mars, vanishes altogether Apollo’s melody which requires calm... [Indecipherable insertion ending with a Latin phrase] I can, without leaving out harmony, speak of the order that makes the world like a musician, measuring and weighing everything; giving to everything proportion, rule, consonance and order by its numbers;’

Guidiccioni’s other writings are full of references to Virgil whose works he translated, and to other classical sources. He was certainly familiar with the Georgics. The devotional aspect of music in the service of God emerges in some of Guidiccioni’s other writings in particular a discourse on the moon which evolves into an extended metaphor of Marian worship in which man becomes a new David singing praises with the seraphim.

Guidiccioni was probably influenced by his friend Giulio Mancini, the physician who was employed as a doctor at the Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia before becoming papal physician to Urban VIII. Mancini wrote a number of manuscript treatises including two on the uses of painting as a means of maintaining health. For Mancini, beholding paintings not only exercised the eye, but also
impressed on the mind correct images, whether for the pregnant woman who should impress on the maternal imagination images of healthy sons, or for the man who should view heroic deeds of the past as models for his civic and civil behaviour, or landscapes to refresh and restore his cheerfulness. Frescobaldi too, is likely to have known Mancini as his period of employment at the Ospedale di Santo Spirito coincided with Mancini’s. Mancini also wrote briefly about music. A volume like the *Arie musicali* that combines beholding moral images alongside texts which could be read or listened to in song would make it physically and morally beneficial to the health of the ‘reader’.

If Guidiccioni was the intellectual agency behind the volume, it would support an argument that the contents of this book were devised and created prior to, and probably in preparation for Frescobaldi’s departure for Florence at the end of 1628. Guidiccioni moved in the intersecting circles of Florentine Medici patronage and Roman Barberini patronage. His involvement would explain the mixture of Roman and Florentine influences in the music and the apparently divided loyalties implied in the visual material that may be read as asserting Frescobaldi’s allegiance to his new employer, while simultaneously referencing the old.

What it does not explain is the reappearance of the emblems in a different context in Anglesi’s *Primo libro d’arie musicali*. While the music itself is of high quality and is indicative that Anglesi was a skilled composer, there are physical characteristics in Anglesi’s volume that betray carelessness and lack of attention to detail on the part of the printer. While Frescobaldi’s book is not without mistakes, in Anglesi’s several of the initial letters are clearly damaged with the centre of the block missing, there is an upside down initial letter and the empty spaces on pages are filled with an apparently random selection of decorative blocks, some of them quite large. The emblems seem to be used only for this purpose and seem to have no connection to the texts. I would propose therefore, that it is an imitation of the Frescobaldi volume, possibly paid for by subscription, judging from the number of songs that have titles containing what purport to be family names such as ‘Aria detta la Montalva’ and ‘Aria detta la Saracinella’. It was also to be the final publication of Landini’s tiny musical output.

9. Conclusions: function, use and reception

The interpretation of the emblems presented here is hypothetical. It is plausible but not provable and there remain unanswered questions about the visual material in Frescobaldi’s publication. The casting of type and the creation of blocks for printing images was not a cheap process. The re-use of blocks was common and both type and blocks were passed from one print shop to another. Landini had acquired his music font from Pietro Cecconcelli who had issued a handful of music prints in the 1620s but he himself only issued four music books which would suggest that these were in some way special cases. Landini’s source for the blocks for printing images remains problematic as it seems unlikely that he would have gone to the expense of having blocks made for these images and then used them only twice in music books, probably with small print runs. However, I have been unable to trace reuse of the emblems he used in the publication of Cavalacanti’s *Esequie del serenissimo Principe Francesco* either. Landini also created bespoke diagrams for Galileo, all of which may suggest that these images were paid for by a wealthy third party and that economy was not an issue. It is possible he acquired the ‘Discordia concors’ image from a different source to the others as it is of better quality. Given the association with Banchieri, perhaps it was provided by one of the print shops that Banchieri had used for his publications, presumably a Bolognese one as the earlier uses of it were Venetian in origin. If more than one version of the image existed, one would expect to find other examples of the emblem. Images used as printers’ marks may provide further clues as to the sources of the print materials, for example, Ricciardo Amadino used an organ with the motto ‘Magis corde quam organo’ as his printer’s mark. However, as with the emblems data-bases,
neither of the major catalogues of Italian printers’ marks has yielded any likely sources for images of bellows, bees, or images relating to concord or discord such as the sampogna used here. From this lack of evidence to the contrary, I conclude that they were bespoke productions.

Up to this point, I have used the term reader when discussing Frescobaldi’s book though of course it is primarily a book of songs. The poetic texts and images can be enjoyed by the reader paging through the volume, and pondering the moral messages delivered by the word-image partnership. The visual imagery supports that of the text and provides the reader with a richer experience particularly in the case of the devotional texts; reading and looking simultaneously may be used as a means of reaching greater spiritual awareness. This reading chimes with Mancini’s ideas of beholding images to impress healthy images in the mind. Such an interpretation though, implies a silent reader as the image cannot be conveyed by reading aloud. Neither would a performer have had any way of communicating an image to an audience, even if they had a reason to look at and study the emblems.

The concept of a silent reader is problematic. Since at least the work of Marshal McLuhan, the impact of the invention of the printing press and the apparent shift from an oral/aural culture to one in which the written and visual are primary has been debated. Scholars are largely in agreement that reading in the early modern period was primarily audible, whether in the context of reading aloud to family or a social gathering, or in the context of education, and many early modern texts provide evidence that the author’s expectation was that the written words would be heard, not seen. The presence of a picture suggests the primacy of the eye over the ear, which in the context of a music book sets up a paradox.

By incorporating visual elements, the experience of the music as performed is separated from the music as written object. To invoke Carolyn Abbate, the affective drastic element of the experience of performance is eliminated as the reader contemplates the gnostic meaning of text and image. The visual nature of the book suggests that it was not intended for the recreation of sound in future performance as the performer cannot convey the image, though it could be argued that if the book were to be used to recreate a performance, the images might give clues as to the performed interpretation of the songs.

Andrew Dell’Antonio’s argument that proper listening by cultivated virtuosi was valued as a spiritual practice is germane here. He contends that discourse about music rather than participation in music performance marked the courtly appreciation of music in the early seventeenth century. The learned discussion of emblems and their meanings was likewise a pastime of the man of virtù as emblems required interpretation. As Tesauro puts it ‘wit loses its insight when a saying is too clear… this causes the double pleasure of one who forms a witty concept and another who hears it. For the first enjoys giving life in another’s intellect to a noble product of his own, and the second enjoys grasping by his own ingenuity what the ingenuity of another furtively hides, since interpreting as witty an ingenious emblem requires no less wisdom than composing it.’ With Frescobaldi’s publication, sound adds a new dimension, but I would suggest that it is remembered sound rather than live performance. The act of reading the text and pondering the associated images would have prompted memory of the sound of song in performance, perhaps of a specific occasion or even performer. The book is the means by which the mental recreation of sound in private or socially is enabled. Furthermore, the array of emblems would have facilitated the courtly polymath’s engagement in discussion of a range of topics from natural philosophy to alchemy within a discourse community of likeminded virtuosi. The pansemiotic world view that gave rise to the fashion for emblems is the same world view that created the cabinet of curiosities or Wunderkammer.
Frescobaldi’s book is a substitute *wunderkammer* comprising visual and textual elements to be admired and commented on.

Frescobaldi’s *Arie musicali* then, perhaps reflect a courtly listening practice. Frescobaldi and his collaborators, whoever they might have been, created a volume for Ferdinando II de’ Medici that encouraged a listening practice already favoured in Roman circles. The images helped the young prince to focus his listening in the right way, away from sensuous enjoyment to contemplation of higher things. It was also therefore a means of keeping melancholy at bay, channelling courtly diversion in discourse alongside healthful viewing of moral images. Ultimately, whoever the prime mover in creating it was, the result is a multimedia package for a courtly environment to read, to listen to and to ponder.

Appendix: Texts and translations

**Sonetto in stile recitativo**

Signor, ch’ora fra gli ostri, hora fra l’armi
movi gara per te fra Palla e Marte,
e giunto a quanto può natura e arte
conto al gran nome tuo morte disarmi,
se moli eccelse di superbi marmi
a questa destra humil non lice alzarte,
humil tributo di devote carte
ti porgo in voto, e ti consacro i carmi.

Nel picciol dono il grand’ affetto mio
rimira umano, e le primizie accogli
del pigro ingegno imitator di Dio.

Che tempo fia, ch’al Trace empio gli orgogli
tu domerai vittorioso, e io
spiegherò le tue glorie in mille fogli.

My Liege, who now in purple, now in arms
Cause Mars and Pallas to wage war for thee,
And achieving the utmost that art and nature may,
Disarm death before thy great name.

If exalted structures of proud marble
this humble hand may not erect to thee,
a humble tribute of devoted pages
I offer and to thee consecrate these songs.

In this small gift my great affection
humanely regard, and accept the first fruits
of this poor talent imitating God.

May time come that the godless Thracian’s pride
thou shalt victorious bend, and I
will tell thy glories on a thousand sheets.
Canto in stile recitativo (Girolamo Preti\textsuperscript{113})

Two verses are left out in this setting.

I burn, but keep my pain quiet, because I fear
That if I reveal the passion which wrecks me
I will stir a flame of fury and not of love.
I fear, Love, that my torment will be an insult
Even more for her than myself,
As perhaps she dislikes my liking her.
And for this I tolerate my warring thoughts in peace,
And if I try to formulate prayers or words,
Faith and Fear do not require
That I procure mercy for myself, or even hope for it.
I am dying, without revealing who I am or have been,
And I am not avoiding my death, but the fury of others.
Even in silence I hide my thoughts:
I live in pain, and unravel myself through tears,
And I die to hope, and am reborn to grief.
I nurture myself only of thoughts and sighs,
And keeping my sorrow deep and closed,
I am all fire inside, all frozen outside.
I would like to speak, but keep quiet,
Because I cannot express what I would wish for;
From afar I dare, but close by I tremble,
Now I flee, now come back, now fear,
And I am dead to myself, and alive in her.
And my soul, divided from myself,
Forgets itself to follow her.
Sonetto spirituale in stile recitativo
(Francesco della Valle15, Rime Naples 1617, rep Rome 1622)

Dove, dove, Signor, quieto ricetto
fia mai che trovi, ah! ch’ogni via m’è chiusa
per fuggir l’ira tua, né giova iscusa,
ch’ogni cosa è palese al tuo cospetto.

Ciò ch’amico mi diè vano dilettto,
fatto hor nemico i miei delitti accusa;
onde da i suoi piacer l’alma delusa
romper desia l’atra prigion del petto.

Fan gli elementi, ove diletti presi,
testimonio appo te del fallir mio,
e contr’i’ mi veggio i dì mal spesi.

Sol tu sei porto di salute, ond’io
tanto ti pregherò, quanto t’offesi,
e dov’andrò, se non a te, mio Dio?

Where, o where my Lord will I ever find a
quiet refuge?
Alas, all ways are closed for me
to flee from your anger, nor do excuses help
as everything is known to you.

What once was my friend bringing vain
delights to me,
Is now my foe, and accuses me of my own
wrongs:
And therefore my soul, deluded by its own
desires,
Wishes to break away from the gloomy prison
that is my chest.

The natural elements, which gave me delight,
Testify to you now of my failures,
And reveal all my wasted days.

You only are the harbour of salvation,
And I will pray to you as much as I have
offended you,
And where will I go if not to you, my God?
Canto spirituale in stile recitativo (Giovanni della Casa\textsuperscript{116})

Dopo si lungo error, dopo le tante
sì gravi offese, ond’hai ogn’or sofferto
l’antico fallo, e l’empio mio demerto,
con la pietà delle tue luci sante,

mira, Padre celeste, omai con quante
lagrime a te devoto i’ mi converto,

e spira al viver mio breve, ed incerto,

grazie, ch’al buon cammin volga le piante:

mostra gli affanni, il sangue e i sudor sparsi
(hor volgon gli anni), e l’aspro tuo dolore,
ai miei pensieri ad altro oggetti avvezzi;

rafredda Signor mio quel foco ond’arsi
col mondo, e consumai la vita, e l’hore,
tu, che contrito cor giammai non sprezi.

After such prolonged sinning, after so many
offences,
And so severe, that You have suffered for ever
From the original fall and my own evil
unworthiness,
With the pity of your holy gaze

See, heavenly father, how devotedly and
tearfully
I convert to you, and, pray, inspire grace
Into my brief and uncertain life,
So that I can turn my feet on to the good path.

Show to my thoughts, used to other subjects,
your suffering,
the blood and sweat you poured,
and your bitter sorrow, now for so many
years;

Lord, cool down the fire which used to burn
me
Along with the world, and for which I
consumed my hours and my life,
You who never despise an atoning soul.
Canzona a due canti et tenore\textsuperscript{117}

Eri già tutta mia, 
mia quell’ alma, e quel core, 
or da me ti disvia 
nuovo affetto d’Amore. 
O bellezza, o valore, 
O mirabil bellezza, ove sei tu? 
Eri già tutta mia, or non sei piú; 
non piú, non piú, ah, che mia non sei piú.

Sol per me gli occhi belli 
rivolgevi ridenti, 
Per me d’oro i capelli 
si scioglievano a’ venti; 
o fugaci contenti, 
o dolcezza, o beltà dove sei tu? 
Eri già tutta mia, or non sei piú; 
non piú, non piú, ah, che mia non sei piú.

Ah, che piú tu non miri 
il gioir del mio viso, 
il mio canto, il mio riso 
è converso in martiri; 
o dispersi sospiri, 
o sparita pietà dove sei tu? 
Eri già tutta mia, or non sei piú; 
non piú, non piú, ah, che mia non sei piú.

You were once all mine, 
mine were that soul and heart; 
who has turned you from me? 
A new bond of love. 
O beauty, o virtue, 
O wondrous constancy, 
where are you? 
You were once all mine, 
now you are no longer. 
Ah, you are no longer mine.

On me alone you turned 
those beautiful laughing eyes, 
for me your golden locks 
were unfurled in the winds. 
O fleeting pleasures, 
O constancy of heart, 
where are you? 
You were once all mine, 
now you are no longer. 
Ah, you are no longer mine.

The joy in my face 
ah, you will see again no more; 
my song, my laughter 
are turned to suffering. 
O scattered sighs, 
O vanished compassion, 
where are you now? 
You were once all mine, 
now you are no longer. 
Ah, you are no longer mine.\textsuperscript{118}
A number of people have contributed to this article by commenting on drafts, helping with translations and engaging in fruitful discussion on the topic. I would especially like to thank David Appleton, Tim Carter, Francesca Chiarelli-Morgan, Peg Katritzky, Jason Stoessel and the two anonymous JSCM reviewers who gave generous advice for improving my initial submission. Any remaining errors are my own.

1 Frederick Hammond, Girolamo Frescobaldi (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP 1983), 78
2 Hammond, op cit. 77
3 Girolamo Frescobaldi, Primo libro d’arie musicali per cantarsi nel gravicembalo e tiorba a una, a due e a tre voci, (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) facsimile edition, Archivium musicum: La cantata barocca 10, (Florence: Studio per edizioni scelte, 1982)
4 Michael Maier’s Atalanta fugiens (Oppenheim: 1617) is a somewhat different type of publication as it is essentially an alchemical emblem book with musical embellishment in the form of fugues.
7 http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00938
10 For a detailed discussion of text types in the context of other similar volumes, see Paolo Fabbri, Angelo Pompilio and Antonio Vassalli, ‘Frescobaldi e le raccolte con composizioni a voce sola del primo seicento’ in Sergio Durante and Dinko Fabris (eds) Girolamo Frescobaldi nel IV centenario della sua nascita (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986) 233-260
12 Copies of Frescobaldi’s Arie musicali are held in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale and Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale; a single exemplar of Anglesi’s Primo libro d’arie musicali is in Bologna, Museo internazionale e Biblioteca della musica di Bologna.
13 Tim Carter, ‘Music Printing in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, Cristofano Marescotti and Zanobi Pignoni’, Early Music History, Vol. 9 (1990), 27-72 http://www.jstor.org/stable/942440 The Florentine printers could not compete with the Venetians for various complex economic reasons and produced books where the costs were met by either the patron or the author (or composer).
14 Galileo Galilei, Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo (Florence: Landini, 1633)
15 Andrea Cavalcanti, Esequie del serenissimo Principe Francesco celebrate in Firenze dal Serenissimo Ferdinando II Granduca di Toscana suo fratello (Florence: Landini, 1634). At least one of the plates in this volume bears the signature of the famous Stefano della Bella, suggesting he may also have designed the emblems.
16 Niccolò Arrighetti, Orazione recitata al Serenissima Granduca di Toscana Ferdinando II, nelle esequie della Granduchessa sua madre la Serenissima Maria Maddalena Arciduchessa d’Austria (Florence: Landini, 1631)
Cavalarizzo maggiore. (Leiden:)

The Marchese Roberto Obizzi served the Grand Duke of Tuscany as Master of horse (Cavalarizzo maggiore) and perhaps his lesser status and presumably lesser wealth meant that he could not afford such luxuries.


Shai Burstyn, 'In quest of the period ear', *Early Music, 25th Anniversary Issue; Listening Practice*, 25 (1997), 692-697+699-701; 695


Francesco Caburacci, *Trattato...dove si mostra il vero et novo modo di fare le imprese* (Bologna: Vandini, 1580) cited in Drysdall, 'The emblem according to the Italian Impresa theorists', 25, 29


Definiz: Simile in tutto alla IMPRESA è quello, che noi diciamo EMBLEMA, fuorchè, in questo s'ammettono i corpi umani: in quella dicon che nò.,


'Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta / pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescent' http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vergil/geo4.shtml, Virgil, *The Georgics*, IV, 86-87; 'These ardent passions and these prodigious contests / a little handful of dust will lay to rest’, trans L.P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics*, lines 88-90, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vergil/geo4.shtml; ‘When you have recalled from the field of battle / Both captains, single out the inferior / and put him to death. For fear his wasteful presence /Obstruct the work, and leave the palace free /For the better one to rule’ trans. Wilkinson, 127

Verum ubi ducatores acie revocaveris ambo, / deterior qui visus, eum, ne prodigus obsit, / dede neci; melior vacua sine regnent in aula. *Georgics* IV, lines 88-90, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vergil/geo4.shtml; ‘When you have recalled from the field of battle / Both captains, single out the inferior / and put him to death. For fear his wasteful presence /Obstruct the work, and leave the palace free /For the better one to rule’ trans. Wilkinson, 127


This text appears in chapter 21 under the heading 'Pietra Focaia'. Preti was a member of the Accademia dei gelati of Bologna and although born in Bologna, he served at the Ferrarese court of Alfonso Il d'Este, and later became one of Cardinal Francesco Barberini's secretaries. Francesco too, was a member of the Gelati and was
of course one of Frescobaldi’s Roman patrons. Valerio Zani, *Memorie, imprese e ritratti dei Signori accademici gelati di Bologna* (Bologna: Per li Manolessi, 1672) [http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/noh440m25w.pdf](http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/noh440m25w.pdf) This item does not appear in either Hammond’s list of Frescobaldi arie for which texts have been identified (Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi*, p. 264) nor that given in Paolo Fabbri, Angelo Pomilio and Antonio Vassalli, ‘Frescobaldi e le raccolte con composizioni a voce sola del primo seicento’ in Sergio Durante and Dinko Fabris (eds) *Girolamo Frescobaldi nel IV centenario della sua nascità* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1986) 238-9

39 The conceits in these emblems are adapted from the poetry of Petrarch and Boccaccio – Love creating the flame that distils tears through the eyes from the heart, Love that is sweet but that burns. Heinsius *Emblematum amatoria* and Vaeinius *Amorum Emblemata* are just two of the most popular early emblem books in which the bellows is an attribute of Cupid. For other examples see Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, *Emblematum* : *Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI und XVII Jahrhunderts*, im Auftrage der Göttinger Akademie der Wissenschaften (Stuttgart: Metzler 1967) 120, 121, 1405,1406, 1032; Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-century imagery*, 90-91 and *Emblematica Online* [http://emblematica.grainger.illinois.edu/](http://emblematica.grainger.illinois.edu/)

40 Praz, op.cit. 84, 89-91,110 discusses the Petrarchian and Ovidian sources of love emblems in detail

41 Piccinelli, *Il mondo simbolico*, lib 17, cap 18, 438. Piccinelli’s specific example is from the *Aenied* book 6,v.77. [https://ia600202.us.archive.org/9/items/mondosimbolicos00pic/mondosimbolicos00pic.pdf](https://ia600202.us.archive.org/9/items/mondosimbolicos00pic/mondosimbolicos00pic.pdf)

42 Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Rome: Lepido Facii, 1603), 48. ‘Lo sperone & il mantice mostrono il capriccioso pronto all’adulare l’altrui virtù, o, à pungere i vicili’ [https://ia800301.us.archive.org/35/items/iconologiauerod00ripa/iconologiauerod00ripa.pdf](https://ia800301.us.archive.org/35/items/iconologiauerod00ripa/iconologiauerod00ripa.pdf)

43 Malachy 3:2-3


45 The verb elevo can be made to raise, to lift up, to alleviate or to lessen. Thanks to Jo Paul for the Latin translation. This motto appeared attached to a different image (an upside-down torch) in the decorations in the town of Namur for victory celebrations following the Battle of Höchstädt in 1703. *Mercure galant*, December 1703, tome 12, 14-43. [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40216887k/date](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40216887k/date). My thanks to Peg Katritsky for alerting me to this reference.


47 Caldwell, *The sixteenth-century Italian impresa*, 239

48 Luke 15: 18; Piccinelli, *Il mondo simbolico* 438 [https://ia600202.us.archive.org/9/items/mondosimbolicos00pic/mondosimbolicos00pic.pdf](https://ia600202.us.archive.org/9/items/mondosimbolicos00pic/mondosimbolicos00pic.pdf)

49 This emblem appears in later sources, notably together with ‘Depressa elevor’ in the celebrations in Namur in 1703. *Mercure galant*, December 1703, tome 12, 14-43. See note 44 above. [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40216887k/date](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40216887k/date)


51 Alessandro Righi, *Historia contagioso morbi qui Florentiam populates fuit 1630*, Florence: Francesco Honufrio, 1633. [https://archive.org/details/hinwelall00002849-001](https://archive.org/details/hinwelall00002849-001). This publication post-dates the Landini print of Frescobaldi’s arie, which suggests that Righi’s printer may have used Landini’s printing block.

52 Si come il Sole con la virtù del suo raggio si dil...

53 This poem does not appear in earlier editions, but is present from at least 1598 (Florence: Fillippo Giunti, 1598) 54. [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dUlbZ1Y-v5UC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&source=bl&ots=XrTPzfuLF&sig=u0VijGnv7IwxsXIBZy9eNYZW9o8H&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjKo_H1svfeAhVHnRoKHzqAaCTkQ6AEwB3oECAUQAQ#v=onepage&q=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dUlbZ1Y-v5UC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&source=bl&ots=XrTPzfuLF&sig=u0VijGnv7IwxsXIBZy9eNYZW9o8H&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjKo_H1svfeAhVHnRoKHzqAaCTkQ6AEwB3oECAUQAQ#v=onepage&q=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&f=false)

54 Piccinelli, *Il mondo simbolico*, Lib 1, p. 10

55 Giovanni della Casa, *Rime e prose*, Venice: 1558 and many reprints. This poem does not appear in earlier editions, but is present from at least 1598 (Florence: Fillippo Giunti, 1598) 54. [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dUlbZ1Y-v5UC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&source=bl&ots=XrTPzfuLF&sig=u0VijGnv7IwxsXIBZy9eNYZW9o8H&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjKo_H1svfeAhVHnRoKHzqAaCTkQ6AEwB3oECAUQAQ#v=onepage&q=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dUlbZ1Y-v5UC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&source=bl&ots=XrTPzfuLF&sig=u0VijGnv7IwxsXIBZy9eNYZW9o8H&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjKo_H1svfeAhVHnRoKHzqAaCTkQ6AEwB3oECAUQAQ#v=onepage&q=dopo%20si%2Chugo%20error&f=false)

The use of the term ‘ostia’ is strange, but I would like to accept it. It might include a quote from Virgil’s second Eclogue: “... c’est un homme fort grossier... pour accommoder les paroles, il est fort ignorant et despourveu de jugement.”

G. B. Doni, letter to Mersenne, 22 July 1640.


Monteverdi’s setting of this text in his Scherzi musicali (SV 248) is unambiguously light-hearted, though he chooses different patterns of repetition and demarcates the ‘lamenting’ lines more clearly.

It may be significant that the two surviving copies of the Primo libro d’Arie musicali are located in Florence and Bologna and also that this song is the only one in the volume decorated with all three types of visual material as noted above in Table 1.


The reference to the herds of the sea may refer to shoals of fish, or possibly the mythical herds of white horses of the waves. A web search of a few legible words from the insertion indicated that this sentence might include a quote from Virgil’s second Eclogue though it is not possible to decipher the context. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Francesca Chiarelli-Morgan in translating this passage.
‘Ma d’altra parte, se al rimbombar degli strepiti martiali, l’eloquenza non più, ò non sempre è udita, e dove Bellona con la Discordia esultante, e col sanguigno flagello imperversa, non si ravvisa, e non ha più luogo la Sapienza di Pallade, nè corre il suo ovestagnan laghi d’humano sangue;

Dovrà preferirsi la musica; che tien dominio sopra i guerrieri, sopra i Sauli infuriasi, sopra gli Alessandri domatori de’ mondi; Osta che trapianta i boschi, mansueta le Tigri; attreha gli armenti del mare, ottien vita dal sen di morte. Ma che accende et non soggioga; et per molto ch’il canto delle Muse n’incanti; ove suona il fischio delle tempeste di Marte, suanisce affatto la melodia d’Apollo che vuol bonaccia. [Indecipherable insertion]

Posso, l’armonia non lasciando, dir l’ordine; che fà il mondo musico, il tutto misura, e pesa; a tutto dà proporzione, regola, consonanza e successione per li suoi numeri;’

98 His translation of the Aeneid was published in 1642 by Mascardi and dedicated to Antonio Barberini

99 Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 2960 f7v


101 Giulio Mancini, Della ginnastica, della musica e delle pitture, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 4315, f190. Music is also mentioned in his Discorso del origin et nobilità di’l ballo, Barb. Lat. 4315, f157-189.

102 If one is to accept the ‘Discordia concors’ as a reference to Banchieri, a date of 1628 or earlier would indicate that the illustrative programme was planned before the publication of the Lettore armoniche which only appeared in 1628.

103 Carter, ‘Music-Printing in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Florence’, 60


105 Margherita Aste and Ornella Denza (eds) Inter Omnes: Contributo alo studio delle marche dei tipografi degli editori italiani del xvi secolo (Rome: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche, 2006) Giuseppina Zappella, Le marche dei tipografi e degli editori italiani del Cinquecento: repertorio di figure, simboli et soggetti e dei relativi motti (Milano: Editrice Bibliografica,1986)


https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=q2doAAAAAAAAIAJ&pg=PA460&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false accessed 28/03/2017


112 Claudio Gallico and Stefano Patuzzi (eds.) Frescobaldi, Arie musicali per cantarsi nel gravicembalo, e tiorba a una, a due, e a tre voci Libri primo e secondo (1630) e brani sparsi. Monumenti Musicali Italiani, vol xxi (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1998) xxxv. Patuzzi provides an English translation of this text in his Preface, p. xvi

113 Text as edited by Gallico and Patuzzi. The original text is from Girolamo Preti – Rime, Venice 1618, 45-48

https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_pdoTv6iEqIch_Translation: Francesca Chiarelli-Morgan

114 “offendere” and “offesa” in Italian can mean both insult and injury: the play of words here is to indicate that his passion is at the same time an insult to her and a metaphoric injury to himself.

115 Italian text Claudio Gallico and Stefano Patuzzi (eds.) Frescobaldi, Arie musicali, xxxvi The original text is from Francesco della Valle, Rime (Naples: S. Bonino, 1617) 80. Translation: Francesca Chiarelli-Morgan
Italian text Claudio Gallico and Stefano Patuzzi (eds.) Frescobaldi, Arie musicali, xxxvi. The original text may be found in Rime e prose di M. Giovanni della Casa (Florence: Fillipo Giunti, 1598) 54. Translation: Francesca Chiarelli-Morgan. [Link to translation](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dUbZ1YvgSUC&pg=PA54&lpg=PA54&dq=dopo%20si%20lungo%20error&source=bl&ots=XRtTPzfuL&sig=u0vJiGrviwXsIXBzV9eNkYZS80&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjKo_H1svfeAhVHnRoKHUqaCTkQ6AEwB3oECAUQAQ#v=onepage&q=dopo%20si%20lungo%20error&f=false).

Claudio Gallico and Stefano Patuzzi (eds.) Frescobaldi, Arie musicali, xxxix


Illustrations:

![Figure 1: Frescobaldi, Primo libro d’arie musicali (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) title page](Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25. Reproduced with permission/ su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First line of text</th>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Emblem</th>
<th>Cityscape</th>
<th>other decoration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signor, c'ora frà gli ostri</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discordia concors</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrati, ò gran Fernando</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardo, e tacce il mio mal</td>
<td>Preti</td>
<td>Pulveris iactu qescent</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove, dove, Signor quieto ricetto</td>
<td>Delle Valle</td>
<td>Depressa elevor</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dopo si lungo errore</td>
<td>Della Casa</td>
<td>Elevat et dissipat</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A piè della gran Croce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A at end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunque dovrò del puro servir mio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se l'onde, ohimé</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna, siam rei di morte</td>
<td>Marino</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entro nave dorata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troppo sotto due stelle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no at end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non mi negate, ohime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di Licori un guardo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voi partite mio Sole</td>
<td>Balducci</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se l'aura spira tutta vezzosa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Così mi disprezzate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se m'amate io v'adoro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S at end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begli occhi io non provo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occhi che sete di voi pomposi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove, dove ne vai pensiero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D at end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Era già tutta mia</td>
<td>Discordia concors</td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>separating text of verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corilla danzando</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con dolcezza e pietate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Positioning of decorative elements within the contents of Frescobaldi’s *Arie Musicali Libro primo*
Figure 2: Decorative filler. Domenico Anglesi, *Libro primo d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1635) p. 55 Bologna, Museo internazionale e Biblioteca della musica
Figure 3: Pulveris iactu qescent. Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 10-11 Reproduced with permission /su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze
Figure 4: Depressa elevor. Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 12-13. Reproduced with permission /su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze
Figure 5: [placeholder image]: Agostino Tassi, sketch from trial records, ‘Pro Curia et fisco Con. Agostinum Tassum Pictorum’. Archivio di Stato di Roma: Archivio del Tribunale Criminale del Governatore di Roma, processo 7, busta 104, anno 1612, p. 53 [permissions pending]

Figure 6: Elevat et dissipat. Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 14-15. Reproduced with permission / su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze
Figure 7: Santa Maria alla navicella, ceiling coffers. Photos (c) the author
SONETTO.

Non so ancora di morte, cera
flora, era la.

Aria di Passaglia.

O si midisprez zate! Cosi voi voi mi buona

Madrigale a Due Voci.

E m'amato, io vado ro. Se pur, se pur mi

E m'amato, io vado ro, Se pur mi disprez za-
Figure 8: Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630) details of initial letters with cityscapes, pp. 22, 32, 36, 42 Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 22, 32, 36, 42. Reproduced with permission / su concessione del Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali / Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

Figure 9: Discordia concors. Frescobaldi, *Primo libro d’arie musicali* (Florence: Giovanni Battista Landini, 1630). Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Musica Antica 25, pp. 4-5. Reproduced with
Figure 10: Banchieri, *Lettere armoniche*, Bologna: Girolamo Mascheroni, 1628, p. 131

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