THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CELLO IN NAPLES: GIOVANNI BONONCINI, ROCCO GRECO AND GAETANO FRANCONE IN A FORGOTTEN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of a forgotten source sheds light on the early history of the cello in seventeenth-century Naples. The manuscript MS 2-D-13, held in the library of the Montecassino Abbey, dates from around 1699 and contains two unknown cello sonatas by Giovanni Bononcini, together with passacaglias, sonatas for two 'violas' and elaborations over antiphons by Gaetano Francone and Rocco Greco, two prominent string performers and teachers in Naples. A study of this remarkable source helps to clarify the nomenclature of the bass violins in use in the city and offers new evidence on the practice of continuo realization at the cello, as well as on the connections with partimento practice. This collection is thus of critical importance for a discussion of the technical achievements and developments of the cello repertory in Naples before the emergence of the celebrated generation of Neapolitan cello virtuosi in the early years of the eighteenth century.

The traditional narrative of the history of the cello has placed the origins and early developments of this instrument in the vibrant centres of the Emilia region.[1] Scholars have focused their attention on the activity of the earliest cello virtuosi and composers – such as Domenico Gabrielli (1659–1690), Giovanni Battista Degli Antonii (1660–1696) and Giuseppe Maria Jacchini (1667–1727) – and on the existence of a substantial printed repertory for the cello in Bologna and Modena.[2] This approach has often overlooked the early

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1 Throughout this article I use the term 'cello' for the modern, standardized instrument or as a generic term (for instance, when talking about 'cello repertory', 'cello technique'); with the term 'bass violin' I indicate, instead, the group of non-standardized 8′ instruments of the violin family in use in the seventeenth century, while the terms 'violoncello' and 'viola' designate specific instruments described in the course of this essay. With this nomenclature, I follow in part the seminal articles by Stephen Bonta, 'Terminology for the Bass Violin in Seventeenth-Century Italy', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 4 (1978), 5–42, and 'From Violone to Violoncello: A Question of Strings?', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 3 (1977), 64–99.

2 This line of enquiry is found in practically all the histories of the cello from Edmund van der Straeten, *History of the Violoncello, the Viol da Gamba, Their Precursors and Collateral Instruments* (London: William Reeves, 1915), to Robin Stowell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). The most important studies on the violoncello in Bologna are listed in Marc Vanscheeuwijck, 'Violoncello and Violone', in *A*

developments of the cello in other Italian centres and the significant contribution of other traditions to the evolution and dissemination of this instrument.[3]

Sparked by a renewed interest in the importance of instrumental music in Naples,[4] recent studies have established the central role of Neapolitan virtuosi in the dissemination of a solo repertory for the cello and the advancement of its technical resources in the eighteenth century.[5] There is no doubt that the exceptional success of a group of virtuosi – such as Francesco Alborea (1691–1739), Francesco Paolo Supriani (1678–1753) and Salvatore Lanzetti (c1710–1780), who were trained in the Neapolitan conservatoires and then served in the major Italian and European courts – crucially contributed to the dissemination of the modern cello, to the standardization of tuning and holding, and to the advancement of performance practice.[6] Yet the history of the early development of the cello in Naples remains largely unwritten. If we know that Neapolitan conservatoires started to hire specialized cello teachers only around the mid-eighteenth century, it is evident that the virtuosic Neapolitan tradition did not emerge abruptly. The remarkable progress of the Neapolitan performers originated in a tradition of training and performance that was already well established in the city by the end of the seventeenth century.

A hitherto neglected source provides new insights into the cultivation and progress of the cello repertory in seventeenth-century Naples. As it includes the earliest and largest local repertory dedicated to bass-violin

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Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music, ed. Stewart Carter, revision by Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 231–247. On Modena see Alessandro Sanguineti, 'Giovanni Battista Vitali's *Violone* in the Accademia', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 12 (2016–2017), 3–29.

3 A few studies have been devoted to the Roman developments by Stefano La Via, '*Violone* and *Violoncello* in Rome at the Time of Corelli: Terminology, Organological Models, Performance Practice', in *Studi corelliani IV: atti del quarto congresso internazionale*, ed. Pierluigi Petrobelli and Gloria Staffieri (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 165–191; and, more recently, Marc Vanscheeuwijck, 'Bowed Basses in Corelli's Rome', in *Arcomelo 2013: studi nel terzo centenario della morte di Arcangelo Corelli*, ed. Guido Olivieri and Marc Vanscheeuwijck (Lucca: LIM, 2015), 173–188, and Marco Ceccato, 'Aspetti formali e sviluppo della sonata per violoncello a Roma tra XVII e XVIII secolo', in *Gli esordi del violoncello a Napoli e in Europa tra Sei e Settecento*, ed. Dinko Fabris (Barletta: Cafagna, 2020), 101–115.

4 I have devoted several studies to the instrumental string repertory in Naples. Among others, see Guido Olivieri, '"Si suona a Napoli!": i rapporti fra Napoli e Parigi e i primordi della sonata in Francia', *Studi musicali* 35 (1996), 409–427; Guido Olivieri, 'The "Fiery Genius": The Contribution of Neapolitan Virtuosi to the Spread of the String Sonata (1684–1736)' (PhD dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 2005); and Guido Olivieri, 'Stylistic Influences of Arcangelo Corelli's Music on the Neapolitan Violin Sonata Repertory', *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* 37 (2016), 211–236. See also Cesare Fertonani, 'Musica strumentale a Napoli nel Settecento', in *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli: il Settecento*, ed. Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, two volumes (Naples: Turchini, 2009), volume 2, 925–963. The most recent study of the instrumental repertory in seventeenth-century Naples is Guido Olivieri, 'La musica strumentale a Napoli nel Seicento', in *Storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli: il Seicento*, ed. Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione, two volumes (Naples: Turchini, 2020), volume 2, 1493–1535.

5 I presented the first comprehensive study of the development of the cello in eighteenth-century Naples at the Twelfth International Conference on Baroque Music in Warsaw (2006), later published in Guido Olivieri, 'Cello Teaching and Playing in Naples in the Early Eighteenth Century: Francesco Paolo Supriani's *Principij da imparare a suonare il violoncello*', in *Performance Practice: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Timothy D. Watkins (Ann Arbor: Steglein, 2009), 109–136. For a more recent study see Guido Olivieri, 'Prassi e didattica del violoncello nella Napoli del Settecento: un bilancio degli studi', in *Gli esordi del violoncello a Napoli*, ed. Fabris, 117–128.

6 Drawing evidence from the repertory and from iconographic sources, Vanscheeuwijck has demonstrated that it was only around the middle of the eighteenth century, probably after the appearance of Corrette's treatise (1741), that the cello started to settle into what could be considered the modern standard; see Marc Vanscheeuwijck, 'In Search of the Eighteenth-Century "Violoncello": Antonio Vandini and the Concertos for Viola by Tartini', *Performance Practice Review* 13 (2008), 1–20. In his most recent re-examination of the history of bass violins in Italy, Vanscheeuwijck has come to the conclusion that 'it was not really the Emilian tradition but the Neapolitan cello school that was the true foundation of the "classical" cello school' ('Violoncello and Other Bass Violins in Baroque Italy', in *Gli esordi del violoncello a Napoli*, ed. Fabris, 81).

instruments, this manuscript collection occupies a significant place in the history of the cello. It sheds light on the solid pedagogical tradition developed in Naples, revealing its emphasis on improvisation and extemporaneous composition, and offers a rare view of the characteristics and uses of the early cello in the Neapolitan area. The remarkable historical significance of this manuscript is amplified by the inclusion of two unknown cello sonatas by Giovanni Bononcini (1670–1747), which constitute the only surviving works for 'violoncello' solo by this celebrated composer.

In order to give a proper appreciation of the significance of this source, I first describe its structure and codicological features, then provide information on the careers of the composers included in the volume; finally I examine the characteristics of the instruments used, features of performance and teaching practices, the function of this repertory and the place of such music in the history of the cello in seventeenth-century Naples.

THE MANUSCRIPT

The manuscript MS 2-D-13 is a large homogeneous volume in oblong quarto (measuring 21 by 27.5 cm) preserved in the Biblioteca dell'Abbazia di Montecassino (I-MC).[7] The volume consists of one hundred and thirty-six folios bound together in thirty-four numbered gatherings; it includes fifty-one works (plus a single anonymous movement), most of them *unica*. Table 1 shows the full content of the collection. The ex-libris on the inside of the cover indicates that the volume belonged to Vincenzo Bovio, a nineteenth-century organist and master of ceremonies at the Abbey of Montecassino and *priore* at the church of San Severino in Naples.[8] Although the history and exact provenance of the manuscript are unknown, codicological evidence points to Neapolitan origins. Two watermarks appear in the source. The most frequent is a *fleur-de-lis* inscribed in a circle, a watermark commonly found both in Roman and Neapolitan sources of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The second one depicts a quadruped inscribed within a circle, surmounted by the letter P; in some volumes of cantatas this watermark is associated with the printer Giovanni Palmiero, active at least from the first decades of the eighteenth century at Porta Medina in Naples.[9]

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7 The term 'homogeneous' in this context indicates that the manuscript shows a uniform repertory written by a single copyist. Although included in the RISM catalogue (No. 852024107) and mentioned in Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples: Francesco Provenzale (1624–1704)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 209, and in Guido Olivieri, 'Cello Teaching and Playing in Naples', 111, this source has never been the object of a specific study. Some of the works discussed here were also included in the unpublished thesis by Inés Salinas Blasco, 'The Cello in Naples in the Early 18th Century: Teaching Methods and Performance Practice' (master's thesis, Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, 2015). I would like to thank the librarian at the Archive of the Montecassino Abbey, Don Mariano Dell'Omo, for facilitating my research.

8 In 1829 Bovio was Prior of Subiaco and of Sanseverina as well as organist and master of ceremonies of the novices. In 1868, after becoming seriously ill, he returned to Montecassino, where was appointed abbot of the monastery of San Matteo de Castello, or Servorum Dei. He died in Montecassino in 1889. See Emilio Pistilli, 'Vincenzo Bove: monaco e pittore a Montecassino', *Studi Cassinati* 12/1 (2012), 85–87. Although Bovio often placed his ex-libris on volumes that were already in possession of the library of the Abbey, we know that he also brought to Montecassino several manuscripts from Naples. It is worth mentioning, however, that the manuscript could also have reached Montecassino through Gaetano Greco, who moved there in 1728 and spent the last two years of his life as organist at the Abbey.

9 See descriptions in the database *Clori: archivio della cantata italiana* http://cantataitaliana.it/query_bid.php?id=284 (4 May 2018). Giovanni and Giuseppe Palmiero were certainly active in Naples in the 1720s to 1730s; see Giulia Giovani, 'Giovanni e Giuseppe Palmiero', in *Dizionario degli editori musicali italiani: dalle origini alla metà del Settecento*, ed. Bianca Maria Antolini (Pisa: ETS, 2019). A Francesco Palmiero, however, was already active as a printer in 1661; see Giovanni Lombardi, 'Tipografia e commercio cartolibrario a Napoli nel Seicento', *Studi storici* 39/1 (1998), 156, and Giampiero Di Marco, 'Librai, editori e tipografi a Napoli nel XVII secolo (parte II)', *La Bibliofilia* 112/2 (2010), 156. For additional details see Giulia Giovani, *Col suggello delle pubbliche stampe: storia editoriale della cantata da camera* (Roma: Società Editrice di Musicologia, 2017), 206.

Table 1 Contents of manuscript MS 2-D-13, Biblioteca dell'Abbazia di Montecassino

Folios	Title
1–59	28 'Sonate à due Viole del Sig.r Rocco Greco / 1699'
59v–64	2 'Sinfonie per violoncello del Sig.r Giovanni Bononcini'
64v	'Balletto' (anonymous)
65–88v	10 'Passagagli p. violoncello del Sig.r Gaetano Francone'
89–136v	11 [antiphons] 'del Sig.r Rocco Greco'

The manuscript is still preserved in what was probably its original binding. Some page edges appear to have been slightly cut to fit it. The elegant leather cover (Figure 1), complete with two clasps, bears the title 'Sonate' on the spine, while front and back are richly decorated by a golden emblem representing two crenellated towers on water. This coat of arms belonged to the Di Somma family, one of the oldest and most influential among the Neapolitan aristocracy.[10] No documentary evidence connects this family to the repertory included in the volume or to music patronage in general in the seventeenth century, but it is certainly plausible that some members of the family sponsored musical activities or commissioned copies of instrumental music for their private use.

The collection appears to be the work of a single scribe, written in careful handwriting and showing very few erasures or mistakes. The year 1699, specified on both the title-page and the last folio of the manuscript, provides the *terminus ante quem* for the composition of these works. We can assume that the entire manuscript was copied to order, possibly having been compiled from various works that had been written in different years, but all belonging to roughly the same time.[11]

As is apparent from Table 1, two collections by Rocco Greco (1657–*c*1717) form the bulk of the manuscript, placed as bookends at the beginning and end of the volume; they enclose another collection of a Neapolitan composer, the ten passacaglias by Gaetano Francone (*fl.* 1688–1717). The inclusion of the two *sinfonie per violoncello* by the Modenese Giovanni Bononcini therefore represents a striking exception in this otherwise entirely Neapolitan source.

The only anonymous work in the whole manuscript is a short 3/8 binary movement entitled *Balletto*. Despite sharing the same key with the preceding sonata by Bononcini, its style and part-writing are certainly unrelated to that work. Some of its characteristics seem rather to relate to Rocco Greco's sonatas. The function of this isolated movement remains unclear, especially considering the overall arrangement of this source.[12]

THE COMPOSERS

The largest part of the Montecassino manuscript consists, as noted, of works by two Neapolitan composers, Rocco Greco and Gaetano Francone. Although almost forgotten today, Greco and Francone were among the leading figures on the Neapolitan musical scene of the late *Seicento*.

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10 A description of the emblem is in Carlo Torelli, *Lo splendore della nobiltà napoletana ascritta ne' cinque seggi: giuoco d'arme* (Napoli: Bulifon, 1678), 41. Another description with an image is in Scipione Mazzella, *Descrittione del regno di Napoli* (Naples: G. B. Cappello, 1601), 566. The most detailed account of the history of this family can be found in Biagio Aldimari, *Memorie historiche di diverse famiglie nobili* (Naples: G. Raillard, 1691), 150–151, and in Nicola Della Monica, *Le grandi famiglie di Napoli* (Rome: Newton & Compton, 1998), 352–355. The Di Somma family was a member of the 'Seggio di Capuana', one of the six *Seggi* that formed the administrative body of the city of Naples and included representatives of the major aristocratic families.

11 Even without relying on the date indicated on the manuscript, it is important to note that two of the authors included in this source died between 1717 and 1718.

12 One hypothesis would be to consider this *Balletto* as an alternative ending, perhaps added by the copyist, to Bononcini's previous *sinfonia*.

Figure 1   Manuscript from the Biblioteca dell'Abbazia di Montecassino (I-MC), MS 2-D-13. Cover with the emblem of the Di Somma family. All figures are taken from this manuscript, unless otherwise indicated, and are used by permission

Born in 1657, Rocco Greco came from a family of musicians: his father, Francesco, had been a wind-instrument teacher ('maestro di cornetta') at both the Conservatorio della Pietà dei Turchini and at the Poveri di Gesù Cristo in the second half of the seventeenth century.[13] The most prominent member of the family was certainly Rocco's younger brother, Gaetano. Both brothers studied at the Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo,[14] but while Gaetano, as maestro di cappella at the Poveri di Gesù Cristo from 1696, became a respected and influential teacher of counterpoint – among his students there were Giuseppe Porsile, Nicola Porpora and Giovanni Battista Pergolesi – Rocco pursued a career as a string performer and teacher. In 1677 Rocco was hired at the Conservatorio dei Poveri as a teacher of string instruments, and in 1698 he joined the ranks of the Royal Chapel. He was one of the governors of the Congregazione e Monte dei Musici in the church of San Giorgio Maggiore, the largest and most powerful guild of musicians in Naples.[15] On 28 August 1687 the governors of the Cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro appointed Greco to replace Paolo Antonio d'Oria (also known as Sessa) as 'prima viola', specifying in their motivation that Greco was 'the best [player] nowadays in Naples, acclaimed as such by all the music virtuosi' ('il migliore ché sia

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13 Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Il Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio a Capuana e quello di S. M. della Pietà dei Turchini* (Naples: Sandron, 1924), 307.

14 Raffaele Pozzi, 'Osservazioni su un libro contabile del Conservatorio dei Poveri di Gesù Cristo in Napoli (1673–78)', in *La musica a Napoli durante il Seicento*, ed. Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro and Agostino Ziino (Rome: Torre d'Orfeo, 1987), 625–641.

15 See Marta Columbro and Eloisa Intini, 'Congregazioni e corporazioni di musici a Napoli tra Sei e Settecento', *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 33/1 (1998), 46. Founded in 1649, this *congregazione* in 1655 included about 150 musicians; their names are reproduced in Dinko Fabris, 'Strumenti di corde musici e congregazioni a Napoli alla metà del Seicento', *Note d'archivio per la storia musicale*, new series, 1 (1983), 93.

hoggi in Napoli, acclamato per tale da tutti li virtuosi di musica').[16] The records of the Tesoro di San Gennaro confirm Rocco's participation in all the major celebrations and festivities of that institution up to 1717. Already three years earlier, however, the governors' minutes had mentioned that Greco had been forced to miss several events owing to illness. On 20 April 1717, since he had already been ill for some time, the governors of the Tesoro finally decided to replace Greco with Francesco Alborea, who would also be officially hired as a 'violoncello' player in the event of Greco's death.[17] As this is the last document mentioning Rocco Greco at the Capella del Tesoro, his death must have occurred shortly thereafter.

The career of the violinist Gaetano Francone overlaps in part with that of Greco. Although we have relatively little biographical information on this musician, archival records show that Francone was employed from 1688 as string teacher at the Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio, where he had Francesco Durante among his students.[18] His name also appears in the list of violinists employed in the five main festivities of the Casa Santa dell'Annunziata.[19] Like Greco, Francone was elected as governor of the Congregazione e Monte dei Musici. In 1689, however, a diarist mentions that he had been expelled because he had participated in a performance at the Teatro dei Fiorentini, thus contravening the strict rule that prohibited musicians enrolled in the Congregazione from playing in public theatres.[20] On 12 June 1697 Francone joined the chapel of the Tesoro di San Gennaro as first violin in the 'second choir of the instruments' ('Secondo Coro degli strumenti').[21] This 'virtuoso, renowned for his thorough talents' ('virtuoso conosciuto d'ogni habilità') served that chapel until 1717: a despatch of the Governors on 25 May 1717 announced Francone's replacement following his death.[22] The ten passacaglias included in the Montecassino manuscript are Francone's only known compositions.

The two *sinfonie per violoncello* by Giovanni Bononcini are a major addition to the catalogue of this celebrated musician and contribute significantly to our understanding of an overlooked aspect of his career. Although scholarly attention has mostly focused on his successful vocal production, contemporary accounts attest that Bononcini was one of the greatest cello virtuosi of his time. The *Diario Bolognese* of 1776 clearly called attention to both these aspects of his training:

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16 Cited in Marta Columbro and Paologiovanni Maione, *La cappella musicale del Tesoro di San Gennaro* (Naples: Turchini, 2014), 236. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine; I have retained the original orthography in quoted material.

17 Despatch on 20 April 1717: 'We [the Governors] conclude that during the infirmity of the said Rocco Greco, the said Francesco Alborea would replace him, and in case this position were to be vacated on account of the death or anything else that could occur to the said Rocco Greco, *nunc pro tunc* the same Francesco must be elected as a regular musician in our chapel' ('Noi [Governatori] concludiamo che durante l'infermità di detto Rocco Greco, subentri il sudetto Francesco Alborea, ed in caso di vacanza di detta Piazza per morte, ò altro potrà avvenire al sudetto Rocco Greco da ora per all'ora resti eletto per musico ordinario della nostra cappella il medesimo Francesco'). Cited in Columbro and Maione, *La cappella musicale del Tesoro di San Gennaro*, 281.

18 According to Di Giacomo, Francone was paid two *carlini* per month; see Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Il Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio*, 132, 138.

19 Marta Columbro, 'Le fonti musicali nella Conservatoria del patrimonio storico, artistico ed archivistico dell'ex Reale Casa Santa dell'Annunziata di Napoli', in *Fonti d'archivio per la storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli fra XVI e XVIII secolo*, ed. Paologiovanni Maione (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 2001), 73. A summary of the history of this institution is given in Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 20.

20 The episode is mentioned in Ulisse Prota-Giurleo, 'Matteo Sassano detto "Matteuccio" (documenti napoletani)', *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 1/1 (1966), 104. Unfortunately, Prota-Giurleo does not give a precise reference to the source.

21 The first choir of the Tesoro included the violinists Pietro Marchitelli and Giovanni Carlo Cailò, Rocco Greco on the 'viola', and the archlute virtuoso Pietro 'Golino [*recte* Ugolini]'; the second choir was formed by Gaetano Francone, Giovanni Sabatino and Aniello Nevola, violinists, Giuseppe Brando, 'violone', and two trumpet players. Columbro and Maione, *La cappella musicale del Tesoro di San Gennaro*, 268–269.

22 This comment is found in the hiring resolution of the Tesoro di San Gennaro governors reproduced in Columbro and Maione, *La cappella musicale del Tesoro di San Gennaro*, 249; the announcement of Francone's death is transcribed in this same volume (281). See also Di Giacomo, *Il Conservatorio di Sant'Onofrio*, 138.

sotto la disciplina di Gio. Paolo Colonna apprese Gioanni [*sic*] l'arte del contrappunto e dalla scuola di D. Giorgio Buoni apprese l'arte di sonare il violoncello, nelle quali due arti si rese così eccellente, che fu ammirato e commendato per tutta l'Europa.

under the discipline of Giovanni Paolo Colonna, Gioanni [*sic*] learned the art of counterpoint, and from the school of D. Giorgio Buoni he learned the art of playing the violoncello. In both those crafts he became so excellent that he was admired and praised throughout Europe.[23]

Bononcini's precocious talent as a performer and composer of instrumental music was admired throughout his long career. By 1687 he had already published six instrumental collections – from the *Trattenimenti da camera*, Op. 1, to the twelve *Sinfonie a due*, Op. 6 – which certainly contributed towards securing him an early admission to the prestigious Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna. In December of 1686, 'being skilled on any string instrument' ('avendo abilità per qualsivoglia istromento da arco'),[24] Giovanni entered the service of the Cappella di S. Petronio as a violinist, and later as a cello player in Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili's orchestra. Nicola Haym, who had played with him in Rome, considered Bononcini 'indisputably the first' among cello virtuosi.[25] Writing in 1716 about the most famous Italian composers of cantatas, John E. Galliard associated Bononcini's talent as a composer with his competence as a cello player: 'Of late years, *Aless. Scarlatti* and *Bononcini* have brought *cantata's* to what they are at present; *Bononcini* by his agreable and easie style, and those fine inventions in his basses (to which he was led by an instrument upon which he excels)'.[26]

Despite such extensive and prestigious activity, only one work for cello has thus far been attributed, tentatively, to Giovanni Bononcini.[27] Moreover, the correct attribution of Bononcini's music has often been difficult owing to the overlapping of the parallel careers of Giovanni's younger brother, Antonio Maria – who was also a renowned cello virtuoso – and of his father, Giovanni Maria. The two works included in the

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23 *Serie Cronologica de' Principi dell'Accademia de' Filarmonici di Bologna*, added as an appendix to *Diario Bolognese* (Bologna: Lelio della Volpe, 1776), 13; quoted and translated in Paolo Da Col, Introduction to *Giovanni Bononcini, Cantate e Duetti* (Bologna: Forni, 2008). Similar information appears in the documents of the Accademia Filarmonica, to which Bononcini was admitted in May of 1686, the youngest member of that institution; see Annarosa Vannoni and Romano Vettori, '1666–1747: l'Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna nella prassi editoriale e nella diffusione europea della musica strumentale', in *I Bononcini: da Modena all'Europa (1666–1747)*, ed. Marc Vanscheeuwijck (Lucca: LIM, 2020), 46–47.

24 The full petition submitted by Bononcini to the *cappella* of S. Petronio in 1686 reads as follows: 'As a pupil of the Church of San Petronio, he has already been serving in the Cappella for six years, either as a singer or as a player, being skilled on any string instrument, as well as in singing various parts needed in the service of the aforementioned Church'. ('Alunno della Chiesa di S. Petronio che già da sei anni sono serve in capella, o per cantare o per suonare, avendo abilità per qualsivoglia instromento da arco, come pure di cantare in molte parti necessarie al servisio di detta chiesa'). Cited in Osvaldo Gambassi, *La cappella di S. Petronio: maestri, organisti, cantori e strumentisti dal 1436 al 1920* (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 151, 466. See also Marc Vanscheeuwijck, *The Cappella Musicale of San Petronio in Bologna under Giovanni Paolo Colonna (1674–95)* (Brussels: Brepols, 2003), 240.

25 This comment is added to the English translation – attributed to Nicola Haym – of François Raguenet's *Parallèle des Italiens et des Français en ce qui regarde la musique e les operas* (1709), 50; cited in Lowell Lindgren, 'Bononcini's "agreable and easie style, and those fine inventions in his basses (to which he was led by an instrument upon which he excells)"', in *Aspects of the Secular Cantata in Late Baroque Italy*, ed. Michael Talbot (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 159.

26 John E. Galliard, *To the lovers of musick*, in *Six English Cantatas after the Italian manner* (London: J. Walsh and J. Hare, *c*1716); cited in Lindgren, 'Bononcini's "agreable and easie style"', 146.

27 It is the sonata in A minor 'by Sig.r Bononcini' that opens the collection of *Six Solos for Two Violoncellos, Composed by Sig.r Bononcini and other eminent Authors* published in London by Simpson in 1748. A facsimile edition appears in the appendix to *Antonio Maria Bononcini, Complete Sonatas for Violoncello and Basso Continuo*, ed. Lowell Lindgren, (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 1996). Lindgren also lists all the modern editions of this sonata (xxi). See also Elizabeth Cowling, *The Cello* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1975), 85–86. The attribution of this work, however, is made more problematic by its similarity with Jean-Marie Leclair's Sonata Op. 1 No. 8 (1723).

Montecassino manuscript are therefore extremely significant as they provide insights into Bononcini's style and technical capabilities as well as into the type of instrument he played.[28]

GIOVANNI BONONCINI'S *SINFONIE PER VIOLONCELLO*

In the Preface to his *Méthode pour apprendre le violoncelle*, published in Paris in 1741, Michel Corrette stated:

> Depuis environ vingt-cinq ou trente ans, on a quitté la grosse basse de Violon montée en Sol pour le Violoncelle des Italiens, inventé par *Bonocini* [*sic*] présentement Maitre de Chapelle du Roi de Portugal, son accord est d'un ton plus haut que l'ancienne Basse, ce qui lui donne beaucoup plus de jeu.[29]

> About twenty-five or thirty years ago we [French] gave up the larger *basse de violon* tuned in G [Bb^1-F-c-g] in favour of the *violoncello* of the Italians, invented by *Bonocini* [*sic*], presently Chapel Master of the King of Portugal; its tuning is a whole tone higher than the old *basse de violon*, which gives it much more versatility.

Corrette's account confirms the fame achieved by Bononcini as a virtuoso player – going so far as to make him the inventor of the 'violoncello' – and gives a succinct description of the new instrument. The technical features of the two Montecassino sonatas present compelling evidence concerning the characteristics of this instrument. Both works are divided into four movements, with a regular alternation of slow and fast tempos: the opening, multi-sectional movement of the first *sinfonia* (Example 1) starts with a short Corellian Largo that establishes the key; it is followed by a section in 'arpeggio' and then by an Allegro in triple metre, filled with *batteries*[30] and fast semiquaver runs over a tonic pedal, after which the movement ends with a Grave. The juxtaposition of contrasting sections and prevalence of solo passages lends the entire movement a brilliant, quasi-improvisatory quality and links it to the late seventeenth-century *stylus phantasticus*.

Similar technical demands and improvisatory writing also mark sections of the second movement, Allegro (Figure 2). A compact dialogue between the two parts is achieved through frequent recourse to imitative exchanges, cadential unisons or sections in parallel thirds, the latter featuring prominently in the second *sinfonia* (Example 2). Passages like these provide indications of the full compass of the instrument and idiomatic techniques, and confirm that these sonatas were conceived for an instrument similar to the one described by Corrette. In fact, in the third paragraph of his Preface, Corrette adds:

> Le Violoncelle est beaucoup plus aisé a joüer que la basse de Violon des anciens, son patron étant plus petit, et par consequent le manche moins gros, ce qui donne toute liberté pour joüer les basses difficiles, et même pour executer des pièces qui font aussi bien sur cet instrument que sur la Viole.[31]

> The *violoncello* is much easier to play than the old *basse de violon*, since its size is smaller and consequently the neck is thinner, which gives complete freedom to play difficult basses, and also to execute pieces that work as well on this instrument as on the viol.

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28 The two *sinfonie* are now available in a modern edition: *Giovanni Bononcini: Due sinfonie per violoncello e basso continuo*, ed. Guido Olivieri (Roma: Società Editrice di Musicologia, 2019), with an introduction in Italian and English. It can be accessed at www.sedm.it/sedm/en/instrumental-music/157-bononcini-olivieri.html.

29 Michel Corrette, *Méthode théorique et pratique pour apprendre en peu de tems* [*sic*] *le violoncelle dans sa perfection*, Op. 24 (Paris, 1741), Preface. The word 'jeu' has been variously translated, but in this sentence, Corrette clearly indicates a flexibility of movement and action.

30 The term *batteries* indicates a rapid alternation of notes between neighbouring strings. According to Valerie Walden, *One Hundred Years of Violoncello: A History of Technique and Performance Practice, 1740–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 158, the expression was first used by Corrette.

31 Corrette, *Méthode thèorique et pratique*, Preface.

Example 1 Giovanni Bononcini, *Sinfonia per violoncello* (No. 1), first movement, bars 1–23. Biblioteca dell'Abbazia di Montecassino (I-MC) MS 2-D-13, fols 59v–60. All examples are taken from this manuscript, unless otherwise indicated, and are used by permission

The solo part of the Montecassino sonatas, written mostly in the tenor clef, spans from D to a^1, the highest note in the entire manuscript. Its idiomatic writing strengthens the hypothesis that Bononcini's 'violoncello' was a four-string instrument, in all likelihood smaller than the modern cello and tuned C-G-d-a, or possibly with a lower string tuned a step higher (D).[32]

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32 Although this range would obviously make an instrument tuned a fifth higher (G-d-a-e^1) unsuitable for these works, the use of a five-string *violoncello* cannot be completely ruled out. Some passages – including the thematic incipit of the Allegro of the first sonata – would certainly sound more transparent on an added string tuned to e^1 or d^1. In these sonatas, however, the additional fifth string would be rarely used in passages beyond the first position – a^1 is reached only three times in the first sonata and only once (as an a♭^{1}) in the second – and practically never in batteries and arpeggios (see Examples 1 and 2).
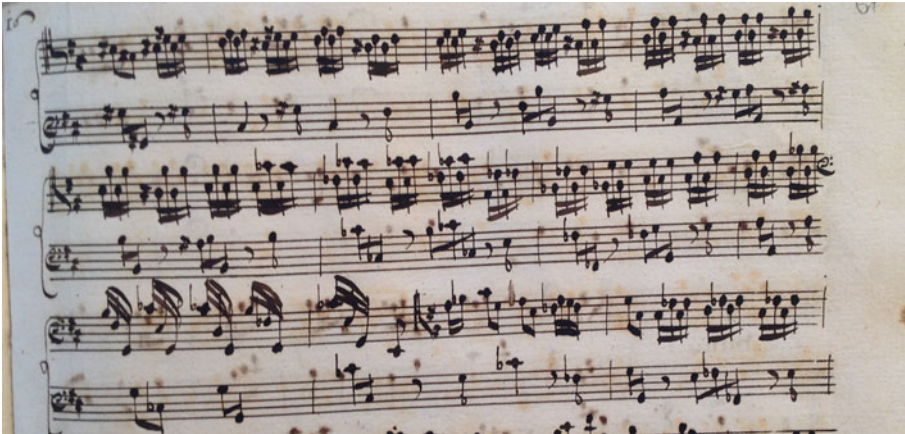
Example 1   *continued*

Figure 2   Giovanni Bononcini, *Sinfonia per violoncello* (No. 1), second movement, bars 18–27 (fol. 61)

The style of these two *sinfonie* stems from the virtuosic tradition in which, as we have seen, Bononcini had been raised. They show the influence of the solo repertory developed by cello players of the northern Italian school, virtuosi such as Domenico Gabrielli or Giuseppe Jacchini, active in Bologna and at the Este court in Modena in the second half of the seventeenth century.[33] The two sonatas also feature the more markedly galant language that Bononcini adopted and developed over the course of his career. The cantabile manner found in the slow movements of the second *sinfonia* and in the minuets that end both sonatas illustrates

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33 On the characteristics of instrumental music in Bologna and at the Este court of Modena see Gregory Barnett, *Bolognese Instrumental Music, 1660–1710: Spiritual Comfort, Courtly Delight, and Commercial Triumph* (Aldeshot: Ashgate, 2007).

Example 2   Bononcini, *Sinfonia per violoncello* (No. 2), first movement (fol. 62)

perfectly Bononcini's 'agreable and easie style',[34] a quality that emerges even when, as in the minuet of the first sonata (Example 3), phrase overlaps and cadential echoes generate irregular seven-bar strains.

Similar traits can be observed in Bononcini's *violoncello obbligato* arias included in the oratorios and serenatas he wrote in Rome for Lorenza Colonna.[35] The two Montecassino sonatas are indeed connected to

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34 Lindgren, 'Bononcini's "agreable and easie style"', 146.

35 For an analysis of the cello style and techniques of Giovanni Bononcini in comparison with those of his brother, Antonio Maria, see Marc Vanscheeuwijck, 'The Violoncello of the Bononcini Brothers', in *I Bononcini*, ed. Vanscheeuwijck, 85–101. A splendid example of an aria with 'violoncello obbligato' is 'Pur ti riveggio ancor' from the serenata *La nemica d'amore fatta amante*, written in Rome in 1693. A detailed description of the circumstances of composition of these serenatas can be found in Chiara Pelliccia, 'Le serenate romane di Giovanni Bononcini e Silvio Stampiglia per Lorenza de la Cerda Colonna', in *I Bononcini*, ed. Vanscheeuwijck, 229–240.

Example 3   Bononcini, *Sinfonia per violoncello* (No. 1), fourth movement (fol. 61v)

Bononcini's Roman years and to his early activity as a vocal composer. Around 1691 Bononcini entered the service of Filippo and Lorenza Colonna and started his productive collaboration with the poet and librettist Silvio Stampiglia. This partnership resulted in the creation of some of the composer's most celebrated operas and serenatas; it was the fame reached through these Roman productions that opened the doors to Bononcini's future international career.[36]

The most successful among these early works was certainly *Il trionfo di Camilla regina dei Volsci*, premiered in Naples at the San Bartolomeo Theatre on 27 December 1696. The opera was a homage to Lorenza Colonna's brother, Luis Francisco de la Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli, to celebrate his appointment as the new Spanish Viceroy of Naples. *Camilla* soon became an international triumph: 'twenty-three productions in Italian cities from 1698–1719; three in London (in English translation) from 1706–1728; as well as countless books of favorite arias'.[37] The account in the *Gazzetta di Napoli* attests to the extraordinary success of this work and confirms that Bononcini's fame as a cello player preceded that as an opera composer:

> Con grandissimo plauso continuasi nel Teatro di S. Bartolomeo la recita dello scritto dramma nomato *Il trionfo di Camilla*, composto dal sig. Silvio Stampiglia e posto egregiamente in musica dall'eccellente sonator di violone sig. Giovanni Bononcini bolognese, essendosi finora rappresentato tredici volte con infinito concorso, onorato quasi ogni sera dall'intervento di questi eccellentissimi viceregnanti.[38]

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36 For an account of Bononcini's operatic career see Lowell Lindgren, Introduction to *Giovanni Bononcini, Camilla: Royal College of Music, ms. 779* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1990).

37 Rosalind Halton, 'From Serenata to Opera Stage: Giovanni Bononcini's Serenata *Amor per Amore* (Rome, August 1696) as Inspiration and Source Material for *Il Trionfo di Camilla* (Naples, December 1696)', in *I Bononcini*, ed. Vanscheeuwijck, 169. On the success of *Camilla* see Lowell Lindgren, 'I trionfi di Camilla', *Studi musicali* 6 (1977), 89–159. In this article Lindgren takes for granted Bononcini's presence in Naples (see 150).

38 Ausilia Magaudda and Danilo Costantini, *Musica e spettacolo nel Regno di Napoli attraverso lo spoglio della "Gazzetta" (1675–1768)* (Rome: ISMEZ, 2009), Appendix, 78; the report concerned a performance on 23 December 1697. According to another source, the production 'delighted so much that it was carried on until the end of Carnival' ('tanto piacque, che fu seguitata fino alla fine del Carnovale'), that is, until about 26 February 1697. See Pier Caterino Zeno, *Elogio di S. Stampiglia romano* (1733); cited in Magaudda and Costantini, *Musica e spettacolo*, 74; the authors, however, give the date of the end of Carnival as 4 March 1697.

> The performances of the drama entitled *Il trionfo di Camilla*, written by Sig. Silvio Stampiglia and admirably set to music by the excellent *violone* player Sig. Giovanni Bononcini of Bologna, continue to be performed to great applause at the San Bartolomeo Theatre, having been so far presented thirteen times before a large audience, and honoured almost every night by the presence of the Most Excellent Sovereigns of this realm.

Although there is no documentary evidence of the presence of Bononcini in Naples, it is certainly possible that the composer attended the celebrations arranged for the Duke of Medinaceli and, as it was customary, supervised the first rehearsals and performances of *Il trionfo di Camilla*. Bononcini's close connections with the Neapolitan milieu are in fact confirmed by an announcement that circulated a year earlier, according to which the composer would have replaced Scarlatti at the helm of the Neapolitan Royal Chapel, an appointment that never materialized:

> Si ritrova in Roma il celebre Alessandro Scarlatti per passare in Spagna maestro di cappella di sua maestà cattolica e Giovanni Bononcino [*sic*] altro celebre par suo passerà in Napoli maestro di Cappella di quel signor viceré.[39]

> The famous Alessandro Scarlatti is in Rome on his way to Spain to become maestro di cappella of His Catholic Majesty, and the equally famous Giovanni Bononcino [*sic*] will move to Naples to become maestro di cappella of that Viceroy.

If the two sonatas included in the Montecassino manuscript were brought to Naples by Bononcini (or if they were expressly composed for and sent there), we can date them to between 1691 and 1697 – more precisely, to around the year that saw the production of *Il trionfo di Camilla*. Certainly, they had already been written by August 1697, when, following the sudden death of Lorenza Colonna, Bononcini moved to Vienna. In fact, the bass part in arias such as 'Dall'idol mio' in *Il trionfo di Camilla*, although not expressly indicated for the 'violoncello', features passages as elaborate as those found in the Montecassino sonatas.[40]

The adoption and rapid dissemination of the 'violoncello' in Naples finds concrete evidence in the repertory written by Alessandro Scarlatti and other Neapolitan composers in the 1690s. Scarlatti's 'Se la gioia non m'uccide' in the oratorio *Giuditta* (1693) is among the earliest examples of arias with obbligato 'violoncello' (range D–g^1) by this composer, while in the third act of *Il prigioniero fortunato*, an opera performed in Naples in 1698, and so chronologically very close to the Montecassino source, Scarlatti included an aria 'col violoncello', 'Luce degl'occhi miei'.[41]

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39 The document (Doc. 105, fol. 270r–v), dated 5 April 1695, is transcribed in Luca Della Libera and José María Domínguez, 'Nuove fonti per la vita musicale romana di fine Seicento: il Giornale e il Diario di Roma del Fondo Bolognetti all'Archivio Segreto Vaticano', in *La musique à Rome au XVIIe Siècle,* ed. Caroline Giron-Panel and Anne-Madeleine Goulet (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2012), 155.

40 The bass part in this aria is written in bass and tenor clefs and goes up to g^1. Some of the octave leaps (e–e^1) present challenging left-hand stretches if not played on a smaller four-string instrument (or involve more elaborate string-crossing on a five-string instrument). I am very grateful to Giovanna Barbati for bringing this aria to my attention and to Elinor Frey for discussing some technical issues.

41 Alessandro Scarlatti, *Il prigioniero fortunato*, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella (I-Nc), 32.2.35 (aria at fol. 25v), available at www.internetculturale.it. First presented in Rome in 1693, the oratorio *Giuditta* was possibly performed in Naples too (a copy of the score is in I-Nc, 15.7.23). See Rosalind Halton, 'Nicola Porpora and the Cantabile Cello', in *Nicola Porpora musicista europeo: atti del convegno internazionale di studi* (Reggio Calabria: Laruffa, 2011), 305. Bettina Hoffmann, however, suggests that the Neapolitan copy could in fact date from the eighteenth century: *I bassi d'arco di Antonio Vivaldi* (Florence: Olschki, 2020), 11. She also gives a list of operas and oratorios performed in Naples with cello-obbligato arias (*I bassi d'arco*, 125). Hoffmann's book was published while this article was under review, and so I could make only a few references to this excellent publication; I am glad that in the pages dedicated to Naples the author's views agree in large part with those presented here.

The presence in this collection of the two *sinfonie* by Giovanni Bononcini becomes, therefore, particularly significant as a testimony to the gradual replacement of the old bass violin by the new, smaller 'violoncello', and the latter's rapid rise to favour among the Neapolitan virtuosi. They also indicate the impact, via the Roman milieu, of the northern Italian cello tradition on the developments of the Neapolitan school. These innovations were probably driven by the frequent musical exchanges between Naples and Rome and the activity of Roman musicians, such as Alessandro Scarlatti and the influential Roman string teacher Giovanni Carlo Cailò, who moved with Scarlatti to Naples in the 1680s.[42]

'VIOLA' AND 'VIOLONCELLO' IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NAPLES

Bononcini's works for the 'violoncello' constitute an exception in the Montecassino manuscript. Large parts of the repertory in this source in fact document a transitional stage in the development of bass-violin instruments in Naples. The collection that opens the manuscript bears the title *Sonate à due viole* 'del Sig.r Rocco Greco / 1699'. These twenty-eight sonatas – individually entitled *Sinfonia* – are short pieces for the most part divided into two movements, an opening in fast or slow tempo followed by a binary-form movement in triple metre. The first movements – often without a precise tempo indication – present a variety of formal solutions and styles. Those in slow tempo are characterized by a prevalence of a melodic upper part, which highlights the instrument's lyrical qualities; in some cases, Greco adopts a style that closely recalls that of Corelli's opening *Grave* movements, as in the fourteenth sonata (Example 4). In other instances, as in the twentieth *sinfonia*, the movement takes the form of a multi-sectional prelude that alternates between fast arpeggios on tonic or dominant pedals and slower cantabile sections (Example 5). Most of the final movements are binary dances, with a preference for a corrente in 3/4 or movements in 3/8 with gigue or minuet characteristics. In two instances they are written in 3/2 with recourse to white notation (see Figure 3).

While the idiomatic writing appears similar to that found in Bononcini's sonatas, some features of these works suggest the use of a different instrument. In Greco's sonatas – as in Francone's *Passagagli* – the two parts are written almost exclusively in bass clef; their tessitura extends down to Bb^1, while the upper range rarely exceeds f^1 (Greco's works reach g^1 only occasionally). Arpeggios (often on a chord of F major) and the range of scale runs prove that these works were probably intended for a four-string bass violin tuned Bb^1-F-c-g, probably slightly larger and therefore less agile than the 'violoncello'. This tuning, encountered in the repertory of the Modenese school up to the end of the seventeenth century, is indeed the one indicated by Corrette for the 'grosse basse de Violon'.[43] Thus in seventeenth-century Naples the term 'viola' was clearly used to designate a group of larger bass violins that 'sacrificed ease of playing in favor of bass sonority'.[44] These instruments should not be mistaken for the modern alto viola – normally called 'violetta' in Neapolitan sources – nor with the viola da gamba, since they possessed neither the tuning nor the idiomatic writing associated with that instrument.[45]

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42 On Cailò see Guido Olivieri, 'Per una storia della tradizione violinistica napoletana del '700: Giovanni Carlo Cailò', in *Fonti d'archivio per la storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli tra XVI e XVIII sec.*, ed. Paologiovanni Maione (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 2001), 227–249.

43 Marc Vanscheeuwijck has traced the use and dissemination of these instruments: see 'The Baroque Cello and Its Performance', *Performance Practice Review* 9/1 (1996), 78–96, and 'In Search of the Eighteenth-Century "Violoncello"', 1–20.

44 Bonta, 'Terminology for the Bass Violin', 5. The use of cellos of two different sizes was in fact still recommended by Quantz in his treatise of 1752, although, in the context of ensemble performance, 'Those who not only accompany on the violoncello, but also play solos on it, would do well to have two special instruments, one for solos, the other for ripieno parts in large ensembles. The latter must be larger, and must be equipped with thicker strings than the former. If a small instrument with thin strings were employed for both types of parts, the accompaniment in a large ensemble would have no effect whatsoever'. Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. and ed. Edward R. Reilly, second edition (London: Faber, 1985), 241.

45 For a detailed analysis of the repertory for the viola da gamba and its rapid decline in Italy after the 1640s see Bettina Hoffmann, 'Il repertorio della viola da gamba dopo il 1640: delimitazione e censimento', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*

Example 4   Rocco Greco, *Sinfonia Decima Quarta* (No. 14), first movement, bars 1–9 (fol. 29v)

Example 5   Greco, *Sinfonia Viggesima* (No. 20), first movement, bars 1–10 (fol. 41v)

Figure 3   Rocco Greco, *Sinfonia Viggesima Quinta* (No. 25), second movement (fols 52v–53r)

The Montecassino repertory effectively illustrates the permanence in late seventeenth-century Naples of a distinct nomenclature describing two groups of bass-violin instruments, divided according to size and function: larger instruments – with four or sometimes five strings, usually tuned Bb^1-F-c-g – were designated as 'viola' and often entrusted with the continuo realization, while the term 'violoncello' was reserved for instruments most likely smaller than the modern cello, usually tuned C-G-d-a, held vertically, played with an overhand bow grip and mostly used in solo repertory.[46]

The concomitant and often overlapping use of these two terms also appears in the official documents of Neapolitan institutions around the turn of the eighteenth century. In the registers of the Royal Chapel, Rocco Greco and Giulio Marchetti are still listed as players of 'viola' in 1708, the same year in which the term 'violoncello' makes its appearance in that institution in reference to the appointment of Francesco Paolo Supriani.[47] Around 1713, a list of musicians of the Royal Chapel compiled by Alessandro Scarlatti refers to Rocco Greco as a 'player of viola in the old manner' ('sonador di viola all'antica'), while just two years earlier, Greco appears instead listed among the 'violoncelli'.[48] As we have seen, he had been hired as 'prima viola' at the Tesoro di San Gennaro in 1687 and was replaced in 1718 by the 'violoncello' virtuoso Francesco Alborea. In 1711, however, Nicola Fago, maestro di cappella at the Tesoro, had already recommended that 'fully to carry out the music of the Tesoro, a Violoncello is needed' ('Essendono stati richiesti dal Magnifico Nicola Fago maestro di cappella del nostro Tesoro, che per complire di tutto punto la musica di detto Tesoro vi è di bisogno il Violoncello'), and endorsed the employment of Supriani in that position.[49] A sign of this fluctuating nomenclature is in fact also present in the Montecassino source: the title of Francone's *Passagagli* includes the term 'violoncello' associated with an instrument tuned in Bb^1.

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46 In his recent discussion of Bononcini's works, Marc Vanscheeuwijck underlines that the 'violoncello' used by the Modenese musician was 'most probably of a smaller size than our modern standardized "Baroque" cellos. Such a smaller instrument would indeed substantially facilitate the many batteries, tremolos, large leaps, arpeggios, and double stops'. Vanscheeuwijck, 'The Violoncello of the Bononcini Brothers', 91.

47 Olivieri, 'Cello Teaching and Playing in Naples', 110.

48 Alessio Ruffatti, 'Musica e rito nella Napoli austriaca: i rapporti fra Alessandro Scarlatti e Carlo Borromeo Arese', in *Devozione e passione: Alessandro Scarlatti nel 350° anniversario della nascita*, ed. Niccolò Maccavino (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2013), 88 and 90. The expression 'all'antica' could refer to the 'old' bass-violin instrument (the 'viola') as well as to an old-fashioned performance approach (for instance, using an underhand bow grip).

49 Columbro and Maione, *La cappella musicale del Tesoro di San Gennaro*, 275.
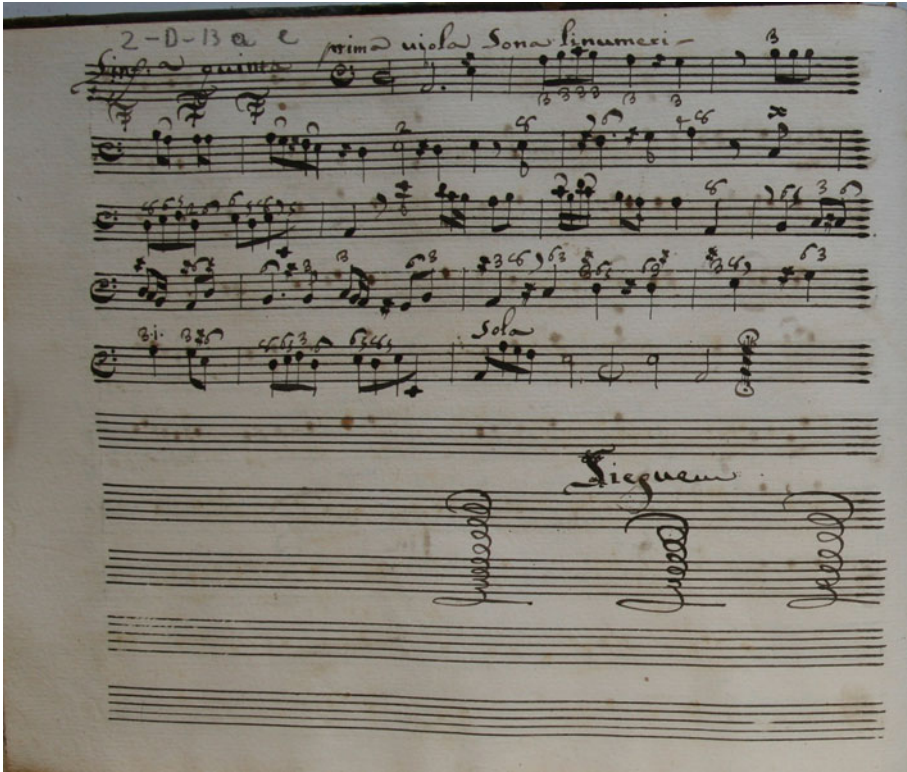
Figure 4a   Greco, *Sinfonia Quinta* (No. 5), first movement (fol. 13v)

A paradigmatic case of this transitional stage in the definition of bass-violin instruments is the *Confitebor a voce sola con istrumenti* by Gaetano Veneziano (1665–1716). Besides including two 'violonzelli soli' without violins in the 'Memor erit' section, Veneziano's *Confitebor* presents partbooks with the full combination of nomenclatures: parts for first and second violins, first and second 'violonzello', 'viola e leuto' playing the continuo, 'violetta' (that is, modern alto viola), and finally a 16′ 'controbasso'.[50]

PARTIMENTI AT THE CELLO?

The first movements of *Sinfonia Quinta* and *Sesta* in Greco's collection present a remarkable feature: in these movements Greco wrote out only the part of the second viola and added figures above it with the instruction, 'the first viola plays the numbers' (Figures 4a and 4b). The figures included in these movements are not indications for continuo realization; they rather imply that the melodic part of the first viola must be obtained from extemporaneously playing the intervals provided.[51] This process of composing the upper part by improvising

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50 Giovanni Veneziano, *Confitebor a voce sola con istrumenti*, Biblioteca statale Oratoriana dei Girolamini di Napoli (I-Nf), 944/11. Available at www.internetculturale.it (1 December 2019). See also Bettina Hoffmann, *I bassi d'arco di Antonio Vivaldi*, 126.

51 A short section of a harpsichord toccata by Alessandro Scarlatti shows a similar procedure, half-way between continuo and partimento practices; Scarlatti has left the upper staff empty, adding the indication 'Arpeggio' and the instruction 'The right hand [accompanies/improvises] with the harmonies indicated in the bass part' ('Mano destra con le consonanze segnate nel Basso'). Reproduced in Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory, and Practice in Naples* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.
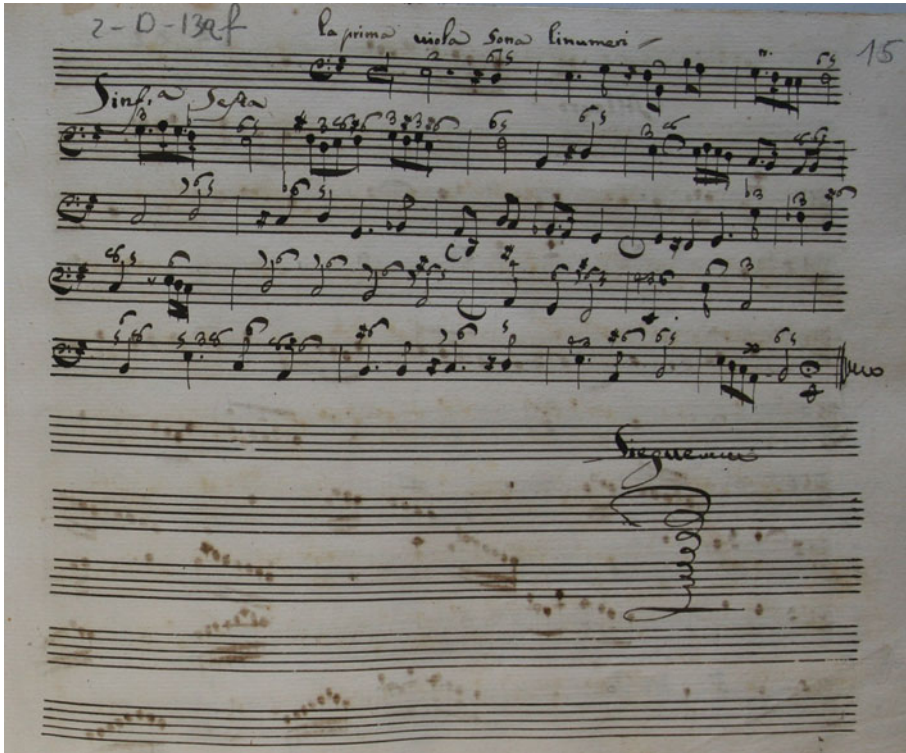
Figure 4b Greco, *Sinfonia Sesta* (No. 6), first movement (fol. 15)

over figures indicated in the bass likens these two sonatas to partimento practice. Indeed, the 'use of figures for representation of melodic lines instead of chords is one of the features that distinguish partimento from continuo practice'.[52] If in some cases the succession of numbers calls for simple parallel movements between the two parts – as does, for instance, the sequence of thirds in the second bar of *Sinfonia Quinta* (see Figure 4a) – other figures imply the use of more elaborate contrapuntal patterns, characterized by imitative exchanges, as shown in a sample realization derived from the figures in bars 7–9 of the same sonata (Example 6).

These examples from the Montecassino manuscript suggest that a method similar to keyboard partimento practice was known to cello players and could evidently be used in a repertory for two instruments.[53] The hypothesis of a connection between Greco's sonatas and the partimento tradition is strengthened by existing concordances between the Montecassino manuscript and one of the earliest sources of Neapolitan partimenti, the manuscript 33.2.3 held at the Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella (I-Nc). The latter is a large composite volume that on the opening page bears the title 'Partimenti di Rocco Greco'. Although the copyist's hand differs from the one found in the Montecassino source, two notes confirm Rocco Greco's authorship, at fol. 21 ('Sig. Rocco Grieco') and fol. 25v ('Sono del Sig. Rocco

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52 Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 194. On the analogies between cello improvisation and partimento practice see Giovanna Barbati, '"Il n'exécute jamais la Basse telle qu'elle est écrite": The Use of Improvisation in Teaching Low Strings', in *Musical Improvisation in the Baroque Era*, ed. Fulvia Morabito (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 123–129.

53 One of the most peculiar examples of the early partimento tradition is Bernardo Pasquini's collection of fourteen sonatas for two cembalos, which are written as two separate partimenti. Pasquini's partimenti too are multi-movement works, clearly connected with Greco's sonatas. Sanguinetti states, 'Most of the two-movement partimenti belong to the early stages of this repertory': *The Art of Partimento*, 278.

Example 6   Greco, *Sinfonia Quinta* (No. 5), first movement, bars 6–9 (fol. 13v), sample realization

Gieco [*sic*]'). The manuscript opens with an incomplete copy of Greco's antiphons (discussed below), and contains about thirty figured partimenti attributed to Greco followed by 'a series of 114 monophonic pieces, totally unfigured, in a florid instrumental style and often with dance rhythms. These pieces are among the most problematic in the whole partimento repertoire'.[54] These works, possibly exercises gathered as a student's notebook or as teaching materials, use a variety of clefs – mostly bass and tenor, but also alto and soprano – and feature the same idiomatic passages with arpeggios, scales and elaborate passagework found in Greco's *sinfonie*.[55]

A detailed comparison and analysis of this source, which is beyond the scope of this study, could reveal the presence of several concordances, but even a few examples can demonstrate the close link between the two repertories. The opening of the last movement of *sinfonia* No. 28, moving from an initial cadential progression to a sequential module over a descending scale, appears as a simplified variant of the third movement of the first *sinfonia*, but it is also a transposed version of the incipit of Partimento 9 in I-Nc 33.2.3 (see Examples 7a–c).[56] Similarities also appear between the first bars of Partimento 89 and the second movement of Greco's *Sinfonia ottava*, both, in turn, related to Partimento 5 (see Examples 8a–c) as well as to some of the patterns in Example 7.

Even if these works are not bona-fide partimenti, their inclusion in a miscellaneous volume together with keyboard *intavolature* and partimenti by the Greco brothers, and their concordances with Rocco Greco's *Sonate à due viole*, show a close proximity between the cello repertory of the Montecassino volume and the partimento tradition. It is certainly not coincidental that the Grecos belonged to the first generation of Neapolitan composers who introduced and developed partimento practice in Naples.[57]

The analogy between the works in I-Nc 33.2.3 and Greco's sonatas indicates the existence of a repertory of formulas, a 'vocabulary' of patterns used to develop a solid competence in improvisation and contrapuntal elaboration. The instructions for the extemporaneous realization of an entire movement at the cello provided in Greco's fifth and sixth sonatas are rare, but clear, testimonies that the practice of improvised composition based on a figured bass was well known and cultivated by the Neapolitan cello players towards the end of the seventeenth century.[58]

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54 Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 275. Sanguinetti examines in detail Greco's Partimento No. 62 from this source.

55 The second half of the manuscript I-Nc 33.2.3 is copied by a different hand. It includes two sets of *Intavolature per Cembalo* by Gaetano Greco, the first dated 1762 (therefore more than thirty years after the composer's death). The term 'partimento' does not appear in the manuscript; the progressive numeration was probably added later by a librarian.

56 The similarity between the first and last *sinfonie* gives a sense of unity to Greco's entire collection. Interestingly, Partimento No. 9 reappears copied by a different hand as Partimento No. 97.

57 See Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 59.

58 Later repertories and instructions, such as those found in Francesco Paolo Supriani's works, attest to the significance and permanence of this tradition in Naples. Why did Greco use this partimento-like writing only in the fifth and sixth sinfonias? Any attempt to answer this open question runs the risk, of course, of creating false interpretations or attaching unrelated meanings to the composer's choice. Yet an intriguing hypothesis could connect these works to the date of the manuscript and to the Greco family. In fact, 1699 was a crucial year in the career of Rocco's younger brother,

Example 7a   Greco [?], Partimento 9, bars 1–15. Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, Naples (I-Nc), 33.2.3, fol. 29

Example 7b   Greco, *Sinfonia Viggesima ottava* (No. 28), second movement, bars 1–10 (fol. 58v)

Example 7c   Greco, *Sinfonia prima* (No. 1), third movement, bars 1–17 (fol. 3v)

CONTINUO REALIZATION AT THE CELLO: ROCCO GRECO'S SUBSTITUTE ANTIPHONS

The close interplay between the two parts in Greco's sonatas – often characterized by tight imitative exchanges and passages in parallel thirds, as seen in the *Sinfonia quarta* (see Example 9) – suggests a

Gaetano, since he was elected head of the musicians connected with the city's *Seggi* (or *Sedili*) ('Maestro della Fidelissima Città'). As mentioned, the Di Somma family was a member of the *Seggi*. The five aristocratic *seggi* elected six representatives each, except for the *Seggio di Nilo*, which elected only five. It might be a mere, though fascinating, coincidence that these representatives were usually called the 'Court of the Five and Six' ('Magistratura dei Cinque e Sei'). For additional information on the role of the *Seggi* in the governance of the city of Naples see Giulio Sodano, 'Governing the City', in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 109–130. See also here note 8 on Gaetano Greco's possible role in the transmission of this source.

Example 8a   Greco, *Sinfonia ottava* (No. 8), second movement, bars 1–12 (fol. 18v)

Example 8b   Greco [?], Partimento 89, bars 1–7. I-Nc 33.2.3, fol. 69

Example 8c   Greco [?], Partimento 5, bars 1–7. I-Nc 33.2.3, fol. 27

performance by two equal instruments, obviously also implied in the title of Greco's collection ('Sonate à due viole'). Yet the works included in the Montecassino manuscript cannot be considered just as cello duets. Although the occurrence of continuo figures is relatively sporadic – and in some instances they appear to be later additions[59] – their presence throughout the manuscript is evidence of the practice of continuo realization at the cello.[60]

The last collection in the Montecassino manuscript shows a remarkable use of the cello as continuo instrument in a sacred context. This set of eleven liturgical compositions, bearing on the first page the indication 'del Sig.r Rocco Greco', is one of the earliest examples of the presence of the cello in liturgical settings, a

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59 For instance, in Greco's *Sonata ottava* at fol. 17v. The only works in this source where figures are completely absent are Francone's passacaglias, on account of the obvious harmonic pattern on which they are based.

60 Several studies examine the use of the cello as continuo instrument: John Lutterman, '"Cet art est la perfection du Talent": Chordal Thoroughbass Realization and Improvised Solo Performance on the Viol and the Cello in the Eighteenth Century', in *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Rudolf Rasch (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 111–128; Nathan H. Whittaker, 'Chordal Cello Accompaniment: The Proof and Practice of Figured Bass Realization on the Violoncello from 1660–1850' (DMA thesis, University of Washington, 2012); and Barbati, '"Il n'exécute jamais la Basse telle qu'elle est écrite"', 117–149. On this practice in Naples see Claudio Bacciagaluppi, 'Double Ensembles and Cello Continuo in Eighteenth-Century Naples', in *Barockmusik: Diskurs zu einem Interpretationsprofil*, ed. Thomas Hochradner (Freiburg: Rombach, 2013), 185–216, and Olivieri, 'Cello Teaching and Playing in Naples', 128–130. For evidence of its permanence in the nineteenth century see Claudio Bacciagaluppi, '"Primo Violoncello al cembalo": l'accompagnamento del recitativo semplice nell'Ottocento', *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 41/1 (2006), 101–134. The accompaniment of recitatives on the cello had already been attested in Bologna in the seventeenth century: 'Giuseppe Jacchini was particularly famous for the way he accompanied singers in their recitatives' (Vanscheeuwijck, 'The Baroque Cello and Its Performance', 89).

Example 9   Greco, *Sinfonia Quarta* (No. 4), first movement, bars 1–10 (fol. 10v)

practice that may well have been widespread in the Neapolitan environment. The textual incipits that Greco has included at the beginning of each piece reveal that these are in fact elaborations of eleven antiphons; Table 2 lists all the incipits and the corresponding feast.

Each antiphon includes between two and four sections, alternating between duple and triple metres, with the exceptions of 'Veni electa mea' – written as a through-composed movement in 3/2 – and 'Sacerdos Dei', divided into five sections. A partial copy of six antiphons is also found at the opening of the manuscript I-Nc 33.2.3. Although following a slightly altered order and copied by two different hands, the I-Nc 33.2.3 and the Montecassino manuscripts share identical versions of the antiphons (see Table 3), which confirms the close relation between these two sources.[61] In fact, the source of Greco's antiphons appears to be the volume of

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61   Although I could only access a digital reproduction of manuscript I-Nc 33.2.3, the less rigorous order in the series of the antiphons and the incomplete status of this source make me think that it might have been compiled after the Montecassino manuscript or from a common antigraph.

Table 2   Rocco Greco's Antiphons

Textual incipit	Feasts	Placement
Viri galilei	Ascension	first antiphon at Lauds
Loquebantur	Pentecost	fifth antiphon at Lauds
Misereator Dominus [*sic*]	Corpus Christi	second antiphon at first Vespers
Dum esset Rex	Blessed Mary	first antiphon at Lauds and Vespers
Veni Sponsa Christi	Virgins	Antiphon at Magnificat, first and second Vespers
Ecce sacerdos magnus	Confessors	first antiphon at Lauds and Vespers
Non est inventus	Confessors	second antiphon at Lauds and Vespers
Sacerdos Dei [*sic*]	Confessors	fourth antiphon at Lauds and Vespers
Domus mea	Dedication of the Church	
Fidelis servus	Confessors	third antiphon at Lauds and Vespers
Veni electa mea	Virgins	fourth antiphon at Lauds and Vespers

Table 3   List of Greco's antiphons included in I-Nc 33.2.3

Misereator Dominus (fols 1–2v)	incomplete; starts from the second page of the first section
Dum esset Rex (fols 3–4)	incomplete; missing the first page
Veni Sponsa Christi (fols 4v–6)	complete
Ecce sacerdos magnus (fols 6v–7)	incomplete; only first section
Viri galilei (fols 7v–8)	incomplete; starts from the end of the second section
Loquebantur (fol. 8v)	incomplete; only first page

Antifone per diverse festività di tutto l'anno by Bonifacio Graziani (1604–1664), a collection that had a wide dissemination after its posthumous publication in 1666.[62] Greco's two-part antiphons follow precisely the order of all eight antiphons 'a due voci' in Graziani's set, but also include antiphons 'a tre voci' ('Fidelis servus' and 'Veni electa mea') and 'a quattro voci' ('Domus mea'). Indeed, the correspondence goes beyond the mere succession of titles: with a single exception, Greco's bass part reproduces Graziani's organ part literally. Greco follows the original antiphons so carefully that each section of his works corresponds exactly to the partitions and time changes present in Graziani's set (see Figure 5a and compare Figures 5b and 5c).[63]

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62 Bonifacio Graziani, *Antifone per diverse festività di tutto l'anno, a due, tre, e quattro voci del Signor Don Bonifacio Gratiani Già Maestro di Cappella nella Chiesa del Giesù, e Seminario Romano. Parte prima. Opera decima quarta* (Rome: Ignazio de' Lazzari, 1666) (RISM G3680). The volume, currently at the Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica in Bologna, is available at www.bibliotecamusica.it/cmbm/viewschedatwbca.asp?path=/cmbm/images/ripro/gaspari/AA/AA076/. The correspondence with Greco's works appears evident thanks to the index of Graziani's volume compiled by Jeffrey Kurtzman and Anne Schnoebelen in *A Catalogue of Mass, Office, and Holy Week Music Printed in Italy, 1516–1770, JSCM Instrumenta* 2 (created November 2014; last revised October 2018); see the entry GrazianiB 1666 G3680 at sscm-jscm.org/instrumenta/instrumenta-volumes/instrumenta-volume-2/ (1 March 2019). Graziani (or Gratiani) was maestro di cappella of the Chiesa del Gesù and the Seminario Romano in Rome. His biography is summarized in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 58 (2002) www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ (1 March 2019) and in Ugo Onorati, 'Un contributo alla biografia del musicista Bonifacio Graziani', *Strenna dei romanisti* 71 (2010), 497–512. On the popularity of his music see also Saverio Franchi, 'Fortuna editoriale di un compositore del Seicento romano: Bonifacio Graziani', in *Musica fra storia e filologia: studi in onore di Lino Bianchi*, ed. Federica Nardacci (Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 2010), 181–216.

63 The only exception to this perfect correspondence is the antiphon 'Domus mea', whose organ line presents a large number of wide leaps, probably less idiomatic for the cello. This exception, together with the omission of a large number of continuo figures, might indicate, however, that Graziani's publication was not the direct source of Greco's compositions,

Figure 5a Bonifacio Graziani, *Antifone per diverse festività di tutto l'anno* (1666), organ part, page 6. Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Bologna (I-Bc)

While the second 'viola' plays the antiphons' bass in long notes, the first part elaborates on this bass foundation with idiomatic arpeggios, string-crossings and scales. These works are in fact examples of antiphon substitutes, or more precisely antiphon overlays, performed mainly during the Office of Vespers while the priest intoned the full text of the antiphon. The practice of interpolating or replacing the antiphons, before

but rather the source of another, perhaps more recent copy of antiphonal intonations that circulated in Naples at the end of the seventeenth century.
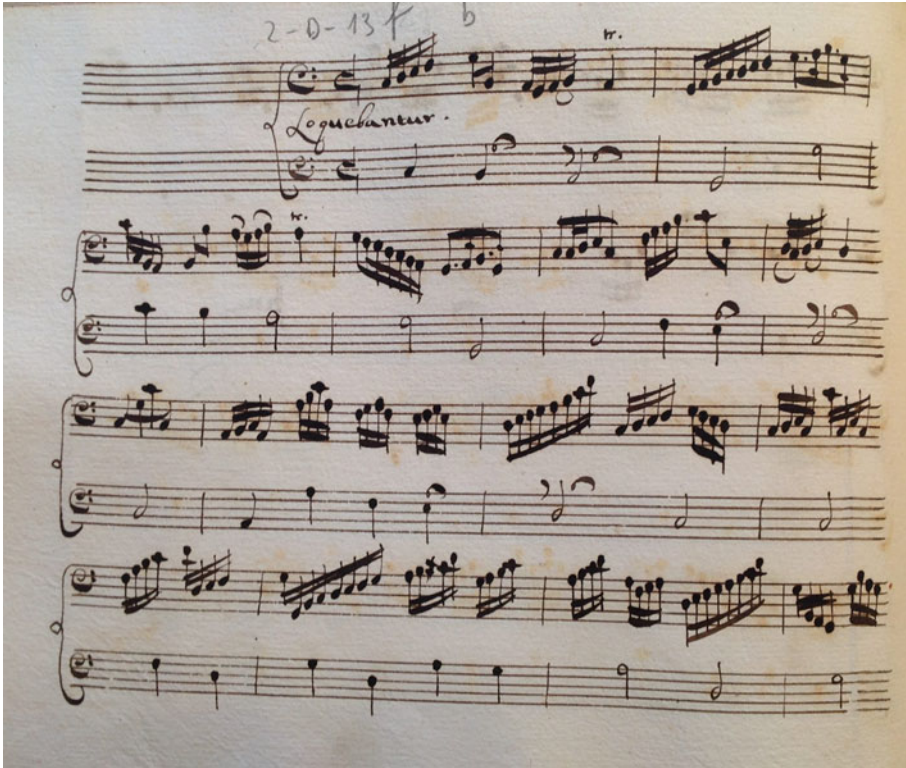
Figure 5b   Greco, *Loquebantur*, first section (fols 93v–94r)

or after the psalms, with other vocal or instrumental music, particularly during Vesper services, became widespread in Italian churches in the second half of the seventeenth century. The *Cæremoniale Episcoporum* promulgated in 1600 by Pope Clement VIII recommended the organist to play between the Vesper psalms as long as someone intoned the full antiphon texts simultaneously. Collections of antiphons, such as the one by Graziani, were then published to respond to this new demand and helped establish the practice of improvisation and elaboration, usually at the organ, over the Vesper antiphons.[64] Greco's works are evidence of a practice that required cello players to replace the organist in this function or at least to elaborate together with the organ on the original antiphon bass.[65]

A closer look at these elaborations reveals a crucial aspect of continuo realization at the 'viola'. A comparison with the continuo figures of the original demonstrates that the principle governing Greco's realizations is not chordal, but it is rather based on a contrapuntal approach that privileges melodic and idiomatic elaborations and diminutions of the original bass. The approach to continuo realization at the 'viola' was therefore conceived horizontally and developed through the study of patterns and schemata, to be memorized in a process that blended together performance, improvisation and composition, an approach that was very close

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64 *Cæremoniale Episcoporum iussu Clementis VIII, Pont. Max., Romae, 1600*, facsimile edition, ed. A. M. Triacca and M. Sodi (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 135–136, § 547–548. I am very grateful to Jeffrey Kurtzman for bringing this practice to my attention and for his helpful comments. See also Stephen Bonta, 'The Uses of the "Sonata da Chiesa"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 22/1 (1969), 54–84; Stephen Bonta, 'The Use of Instruments in Sacred Music in Italy 1560–1700', *Early Music* 18/4 (1990), 519–535; and David Crook, 'The Exegetical Motet', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68/2 (2015), 255–316.

65 There is, of course, also the possibility that these antiphons might have been well-known melodies and therefore useful tools for improvisation.

Figure 5b   *continued*

indeed to that followed by organ players in the performance of *alternatim* organ versets.[66] This repertory of melodic and bass patterns points to a practice and a pedagogical approach that aimed at perfecting the performers' abilities in extemporaneous contrapuntal improvisation.

A REPERTORY FOR IMPROVISATION: FRANCONE'S *PASSAGAGLI*

The ten 'Passagagli per violoncello del Sig.r Gaetano Francone' (see Table 4) are the only known works by this musician, and represent the largest corpus of passacaglias for cello in the whole seventeenth century.[67] Although it was with the publication of Girolamo Frescobaldi's *Partite sopra passacaglia* in 1627 – followed ten years later by his *Cento partite sopra passacaglia* – that the passacaglia became widely popular in the keyboard repertory, this basso ostinato had reached Italy at the beginning of the seventeenth century through collections devoted to the *rasgueado* technique on the Spanish guitar.[68] Early in the century, passacaglias

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66 See Edoardo Bellotti, 'Composing at the Keyboard: Banchieri and Spiridion, Two Complementary Methods', in *Studies in Historical Improvisation: From Cantare super Librum to Partimenti*, ed. Massimiliano Guido (London: Routledge, 2017), 115–130. Once more, this procedure and the liturgical destination of Greco's works put them in close contact with the partimento tradition: 'Organists used partimenti for their liturgical services, as a shorthand notation for the versetti in *alternatim* organ mass' (Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento*, 14). Significantly, this repertory constitutes the bulk of Gaetano Greco's partimento output.

67 I am preparing, in collaboration with Giovanna Barbati, a modern edition of Francone's *Passagagli* for Edition HH.

68 In the passacaglias included in his *Nuova inventione d'intavolatura per sonare li balletti* (1606), the virtuoso of *chitarra spagnola* Girolamo Montesardo used a plain pattern, always in triple metre. An extensive discussion of passacaglia can be found in Alexander Silbiger, 'On Frescobaldi's Recreation of the Chaconne and the Passacaglia', in *The Keyboard in Baroque Europe*, ed. Christopher Hogwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3–18. See also Richard
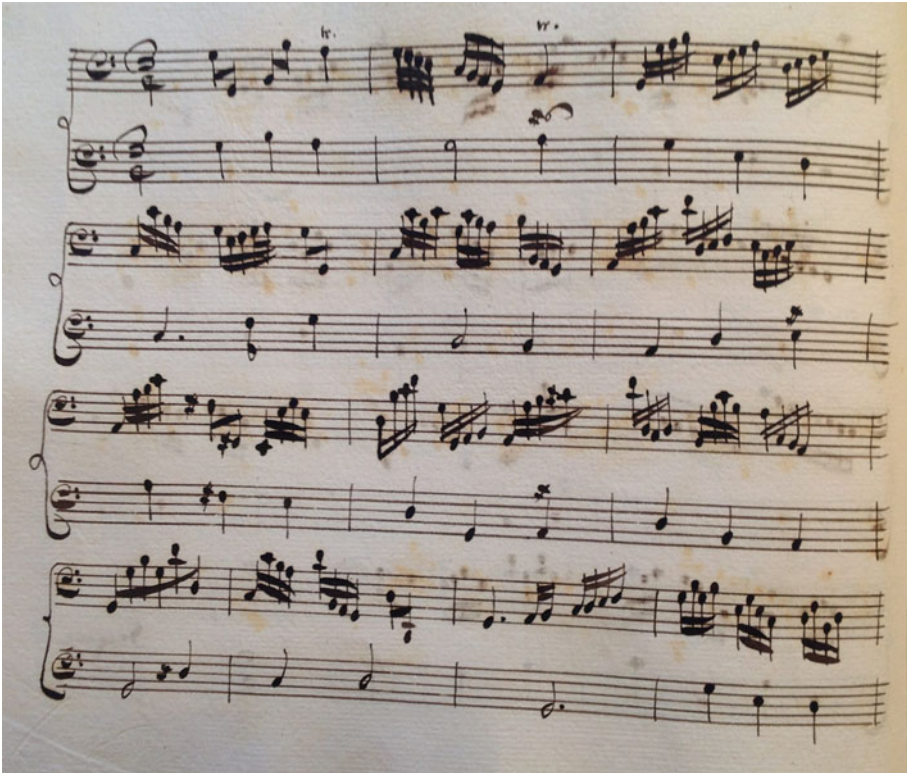
Figure 5c   Greco, *Loquebantur*, second section, bars 1–13 (fol. 94v)

Table 4   List of Gaetano Francone's *Passagagli*

Title	Key	Time signature
Passagaglio 1.o	G minor	3/4
Passagaglio 2.o	A major	3/2
Passagaglio 3.o	B minor	3/4
Passagaglio quarto	C major	3/2
Passagaglio quinto	D minor	3/4
Passagaglio sesto	E minor	3/2
Passagaglio settimo	F major	3/4
Passagaglio ottavo	G major	3/4
Passagaglio nono	B flat major	3/4
Passagaglio decimo	F major	3/4

were 'short formulaic progressions that presumably served as models for . . . ritornello improvisations and perhaps also as exercises for strumming common chords sequences'.[69] Francone's *Passagagli* indeed follow

Hudson, 'Further Remarks on the Passacaglia and Ciaccona', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 23/2 (1970), 302–314.

69 Silbiger, 'On Frescobaldi's Recreation of the Chaconne and the Passacaglia', 5. See also Alexander Silbiger, 'Passacaglia and Ciaccona: Genre Pairing and Ambiguity from Frescobaldi to Couperin', *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 2/1 (1996), paragraph 4.1 http://sscm-jscm.org/v2/no1/silbiger.html (1 October 2018).

Figure 6   Gaetano Francone, *Passagaglio 2.0*, bars 41–55 (fol. 69)

Example 10a   Gaetano Francone, *Passagaglio Terzo* (No. 3), bars 1–16 (fol. 70)

the plain original harmonic pattern (I–IV–V–I) introduced in the early guitar *alfabeto* tablatures. They appear more related to Giovanni Battista Vitali's set of *Partite sopra diverse sonate per il violone* (before 1692) based on *alfabeto* chords – Vitali's *Bergamasca per la lettera B* has the same bass pattern and features

Example 10b   Francone, *Passagaglio Terzo* (No. 3), bars 49–65 (fols 71v–72)

sets of elaborations similar to Francone's style – than to the geographically closer model of Andrea Falconieri's *Passacalle à 3 per violini e viole* (1650).[70]

All ten passacaglias by Francone are in triple metre, seven in 3/4 and three in 3/2, the latter all written in white notation (Figure 6). The set presents a quite regular organization: the first eight are arranged on ascending steps of the diatonic scale, starting from G minor and using the most common keys up to two flats and three sharps, while the first four alternate between minor and major modes, though altogether we find a prevalence of the major mode, a relatively unusual choice for passacaglias.

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70 Giovanni Battista Vitali, *Partite sopra diverse sonate per il violone,* Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena (I-MOe). A similar pattern can also be seen in some passacaglias in Bernardo Storace, *Selva di varie compositioni d'intavolatura per cimbalo ed organo* (Venice, 1664). See also Andrea Falconieri, *Il primo libro di canzone, sinfonie, fantasie. Napoli 1650* (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1980).

Example 10c   Francone, *Passagaglio Sesto* (No. 6), bars 33–44 (fols 78v–79)

Each passacaglia presents between twelve and sixteen iterations of the bass, elaborated by the upper part over the bare harmonic pattern. Although not exceptionally virtuosic, the upper part includes a combination of idiomatic writing for the 'violoncello' – in this case, however, most likely a 'viola' given the compass from B♭^{1} to f♯^{1} – that includes string-crossing, batteries, arpeggios, octave leaps and scales, together with constantly varying articulations and rhythmic combinations (Example 10). As in Greco's antiphons, Francone's set is based on the linear elaboration of the bass pattern: each example proceeds from simple rhythmic variants to elaborate melodic divisions that, starting from the notes of the ground, embellish them through a variety of ornamental figures (scales, arpeggios, turns and sequences).

Francone's variations on the passacaglia, along with numerous other works based on a ground bass, were a crucial tool in the teaching and development of improvisation skills. In fact, the simple reiteration of this bass formula in the lower voice was particularly suited to improvisation and variations: 'A complete set of Passacagli also presented most excellent exercises for the beginner guitarist to learn the basic chords of his instrument. Such a forthright tonal sequence seems especially fitting when the Passacaglio acts as an *intonazione* for a vocal piece'.[71] These improvisations over the passacaglia were in fact often used in the performance of introductions or ritornellos in strophic arias. Some examples of these improvised passacaglia ritornellos are, for instance, found in the Neapolitan copy of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (1651).[72] The pedagogical value of this short harmonic formula consisted in the unlimited possibilities of rhythmical and idiomatic variations that were available to the improviser, a trait that also characterizes Francone's set. Through these sets of variations, performers (often amateurs) could assimilate a stock of formulas directly through

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71 Richard Hudson, 'The Development of Italian Keyboard Variations in the Passacaglio and Ciaccona from Guitar Music in the Seventeenth Century' (PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1967), 36. Hudson adds: 'This is indeed the fundamental and original harmonic sequence that defines the Passacaglio. From this simple pattern all the later patterns evolve. . . . the guitar player had to know how to play a Passacaglio to match a piece in any key. . . . Consequently, it becomes common in later instruction books to begin with an alphabet of Passacagli for all the letters'. (36).

72 See Nicola Cumer, 'Si suona Passacaglio: A Didactic Introduction to Improvisation in the Italian Practice of *Basso Ostinato*', *Philomusica On-line* 12 (2012) http://riviste.paviauniversitypress.it/index.php/phi/article/view/1455 (1 March 2019).

Example 10d   Francone, *Passagaglio Nono* (No. 9), bars 33–49 (fols 85v–86)

performance and apply them to a variety of repertoires. The development of such competence was not only a key element in the formation of the cello virtuoso, but also the foundation of the techniques of accompaniment, an essential function of bass-violin instruments in the late seventeenth century.

FUNCTION AND DESTINATION OF THE MONTECASSINO REPERTORY

The variety of repertoires included in the Montecassino manuscript raises questions about its function and destination. What conclusions can we draw about the reasons for gathering this repertory and what is its importance in the early history of the cello in Naples?

The prevalence of works intended for performance on two paired instruments suggests a pedagogical aim for this repertory. Vocal and instrumental *bicinia* were indeed considered very effective teaching tools in the training of two students or in master–student performances. This teaching method was frequently used in Naples: collections of duets and two-part solfeggi such as Cristoforo Caresana's *Duo*, Op. 1 (1681), or Gregorio Strozzi's *Elementorum musicae praxis*, Op. 3 (1683), are well-known Neapolitan examples of this

Example 10e   Francone, *Passagaglio Decimo* (No. 10), bars 45–53 (fols 88r–v)

practice.[73] Francone's elaborations on the passacaglia bass respond to a similar pedagogical goal. They provide a repertory of melodic and harmonic formulas aimed at developing a solid competence in improvisation and advancing the technical proficiency required for cello players to perform both solo and continuo repertories.

Yet the fine binding of the volume, its ordered gatherings and the clarity of the copy make this manuscript unlike any notebook of exercises jotted down for the practice of professional students or for the training of inexperienced amateur players. Rather, the care and elegance of this source indicate that it was copied to order and probably became part of a private collection, perhaps as a gift presented to an amateur performer of the Di Somma family, or instead as a *florilegium* of some of the most advanced works for the cello written by eminent composers at the end of the seventeenth century.

Regardless of the rationale behind the compilation of the Montecassino manuscript, this repertory offers a unique perspective on crucial aspects of cello performance practice in seventeenth-century Naples. Greco's collection of antiphons presents new evidence of the widespread and still insufficiently documented use of bass violins in liturgical settings, together with or even in lieu of the organ. This repertory also provides rare insights into the distinctive approach to continuo performance at the cello, based not on chordal realization, but rather on contrapuntal elaborations and diminutions of the bass part, often built upon idiomatic figures. This approach, which combined performance, improvisation and composition in an integrated whole, placed cello practice in close contact with the concomitant partimento tradition. The inventory of

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73 Both works are available online: Cristoforo Caresana, *Duo*, Op. 1 (Naples, 1681), https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4500408p and Gregorio Strozzi, *Elementorum Musicae Praxis*, Op. 3 (Naples, 1683), www.bibliotecamusica.it/cmbm/viewschedatwbca.asp?path=/cmbm/images/ripro/gaspari/BB/BB369/. The use of duos for pedagogical purposes goes back at least to Eustachio Romano's *Musica duorum* (Rome, 1521), and also characterizes the *bicinia* by Orlando di Lasso (Munich, 1577) and Lupacchino (Venice, 1559), among others. In the second half of the seventeenth century the list includes the solfeggi by Giovanni Gentile (Rome, 1642), Pompeo Natale (Rome, 1674) and Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani (Florence, 1693). The latter considered the duets 'very useful to any music student, since one can learn from them, at the same time, dexterity and the good way to sing' ('utilissimi a ogni studente di musica, potendosi apprendere da essi, in un tempo medesimo, e la franchezza ed il buon modo di cantare') (Viviani, *Solfeggiamenti a due voci* (Florence: Vincenzo Vangelisti, 1693), dedication). These duets were performed both vocally and instrumentally.

figures and formulas that this collection offers to the players gives a clear sense of the advancement of cello technique in seventeenth-century Naples and offers models that could effectively be used in the modern pedagogy of improvisation.

The exceptional significance of the Montecassino repertory for the history of the cello is undeniable. Through this source it is possible to reconstruct the transformation of bass-violin instruments in Naples between the end of the seventeenth century and the first decade of the following century, a time of transition from the 'old-fashioned viola' to the spread of the new 'violoncello'. The analysis of repertories and idiomatic writing helps us to clarify not only the nomenclature and the organological characteristics of the bass-violin instruments, but also the new solo role being given to the emerging 'violoncello'.

Finally, the Montecassino manuscript confirms the significant contribution of Neapolitan musicians to the evolution of the cello. The presence of Giovanni Bononcini's 'violoncello' sonatas in this source represents a finding of the utmost importance, not only because they are the only two surviving contributions to the cello repertory by this renowned composer, but also because they hint at the influence of the northern Italian cello tradition on the developments of the Neapolitan school, via the Roman milieu. The collections included in this volume reveal the roots of the extraordinary success of the eighteenth-century Neapolitan cello virtuosi and bear testimony to the central role that Naples occupied in the history of the early cello.