The Emergence of Opera in Florence from a History of Knowledge Perspective, 1550-1600

Master thesis

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Abstract

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The aim of this research was to investigate the emergence of opera in the second half of the sixteenth century from the perspective of the history of knowledge. This perspective allowed to contextualise the musical development as part of the pursuit of knowledge in sixteenth-century Florence. Vincenzo Galilei and the Camerata Fiorentina exemplified the need for the relatively new perspective of the history of knowledge. In this case study, the four central processes in the pursuit of knowledge (gathering, analysing, employing and disseminating), and the hypothetical site of knowledge of the Accademia degli Alterati and the Camerata Fiorentina as a locus for innovation, proved to be powerful tools to analyse the emergence of opera.

The fresh perspective allowed to highlight new ways that connect the early modern musical practice to the pursuit of knowledge. Two aspects proved to be important in this case, namely the social context and the interdisciplinary engagement of rhetorical *actio*. First, the locus of the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati as the social context for both musical innovation and rhetorical *actio*, allowed for intellectual and artistic exchange. Second, the connection between rhetorical *actio* and musical practice appeared to have a strong multidisciplinary nature. Philological research, literary discussions, musical aesthetic, musical practice, experimentation with affect theory, a three-century long oral performance practice, and individual ideals proved to be important factors in the emergence of opera.

Historiographically, this master thesis contributed to an ongoing debate on the nature of the Scientific Revolution by highlighting the significance of rhetorical *actio* and accordingly, the trivium in the early modern pursuit of knowledge. In addition, the consideration of practical knowledge allowed for a re-evaluation of the Scientific Revolution. Furthermore, the inclusion of the study and practice of music in the history of knowledge inevitably called for the reappraisal of music as part of Renaissance Humanism and of the Republic of Letters. The emergence of opera as a case study allowed to start thinking about these narratives in a different way. Music appeared as an important aspect of the sixteenth-century humanistic endeavour. The formal *accademia* and the informal *camerata* were both valuable sites of knowledge in studying the Italian culture of the academy as part of the Republic of Letters.

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Contents

Introduction

*"**Music**: The art or science of combining vocal or instrumental sounds to produce beauty of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, expressive content, etc.; musical composition, performance, analysis, etc., as a subject of study; the occupation or profession of musicians."*[1]

Oxford English Dictionary

Music, art, and science

The definition of *music* by the Oxford English Dictionary leaves us with a fundamental tension: music is art or science. Art and science are notions that, in daily use at least, do not refer to similar activities. In fact, as art is believed to be subjective, carried out by creative individuals and sometimes deemed merely ornamental, science is believed to be objective, carried out by hard-working geniuses and changing the world's course, both positively and negatively. In short, there seems to be a fundamental difference between science and art.

That music is strongly connected to art need no explanation. Music can be scientific too, however. The history of music shows intricate connections with the history of science. There are various present-day examples of the relation between music and science. Music and the influence on the brain and the body is a fashionable research topic, exemplified by a field of research called music therapy. Reversely, scientific ideas are used by composers for inspiration. The contemporary composer Iannis Xenakis uses stochastic processes and game theory to create his music. There are even more historical examples of individuals who engage in music and science. The Dutchman Adriaan Daniël Fokker (1887-1972) built the 'Euler organ' in the tradition of Huygens and Euler. In doing so, he engaged in a mathematical debate on how to divide the octave.[2] Euler, one of the most important mathematicians in history, wrote his *Tentamen Novae theoriae musicae* in 1739, a number theory based music theory. In the nineteenth century, Hermann von Helmholtz is probably the most famous example with his *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik* (1863). However, the connection between music and the pursuit of knowledge in the early modern period is even more apparent.

Early modern science and music

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, philosophers and other intellectuals included music in their writings about mathematics and natural philosophy. From a medieval perspective the connection of music and science is nothing but obvious. Based on philosophers such as Boethius, early modern philosophers thought that music was just a possible manifestation the harmony of the world, just like heavenly harmony was (planetary motions, for instance). This sort of music was called *musica mundana* and is described by Boethius in his *De institutione musica*.[3] Although this concept was not

[1] "music, n. and adj." *OED Online*.
[2] The usual division of the octave is in twelve parts. The division Fokker suggested is in 31 parts. https://www.teylersmuseum.nl/en/collection/instruments/fk-1943-01-euler-orgel-naar-fokker
[3] Ilnitchi, *Musica Mundana.*

even new to Boethius (he based himself on ancient philosophical ideas), many medieval thinkers knew the classical ideas through Boethius' work and much literature can be traced back to him. Furthermore, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance knew an educational system in which the seven liberal arts were dominant. These seven liberal arts were divided in the trivium (logic, grammar, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music). The quadrivium, thus, included the mathematical subjects, one of which was music. Floris Cohen distinguishes three early modern traditions connecting music and science: a mathematical-philosophical, a mechanistic, and an experimental tradition. Johannes Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi* (1619) is an excellent example of mathematical-philosophical approach. In *Harmonices Mundi*, Kepler unifies the numerological properties of harmony in music, geometry and astronomy, based on the philosophical idea that all these harmonies were connected. The third law of planetary motion was derived in *Harmonices Mundi.*[4] Whereas Kepler's approach was mostly mathematical-philosophical, René Descartes took a more mechanistic approach.[5] I will not discuss his theory of music in great detail, but for our purposes the most important point is that Descartes's intellectual output is not only philosophical in nature but also concerned with music and natural philosophy. For him, this all-encompassing approach was necessary, not the least because of his ambition to become the new Aristotle.[6] The third approach was more experimental in nature, an approach in which Vincenzo Galilei takes centre stage. Vincenzo, besides being the father of the famous Galileo, was a lutenist and became famous for his work on various tuning systems, among other things. [7] Vincenzo was a practical musician but also dedicated to music theory. Hence, he studied with Gioseffo Zarlino, who is known for his description of the *senario*, a theory of musical consonance described in Zarlino's *Istitutioni Harmoniche* (1558). The *senario* is partly based on Pythagoras's problem of consonance in which various ratios of string lengths produce various consonant or dissonant intervals.[8] The experimental aspect of Vincenzo's work is found in his experiments with the monochord and the solution he came up with for the tuning problem.

Vincenzo's 'famous' son Galileo inevitably calls to mind the Scientific Revolution. This well-established narrative in the history of science covers roughly the second half of the sixteenth century until the first half of the eighteenth century. Floris Cohen has shown that music and science play a significant role in the Scientific Revolution.[9] There is one difficulty, however. Humans, and therefore also historians, have a tendency to rewrite history into a narrative that explains the present situation. On one hand, it is the job of historians to create narratives that guide us through history, otherwise, history would be an impermeable collection of events without any connections. On the other hand, there is a distinct risk that we understand our history only from our own contemporary perspective. This problem of presentism is particularly pressing in the case of science. Science plays a central role in our present-day society. One of the tasks of historians of science is to investigate the origins of modern science. One of the key narratives in that quest is the Scientific Revolution. Some historians say that in this revolution, the seeds for our modern science are formed.[10] They start distinguishing science from other activities from the sixteenth century onwards. This seems overly simplistic, since historical figures in the sixteenth century did not refer to their own intellectual activities as science. In historical jargon this would mean that *science* is an analytical category in the investigation of the seventeenth-century pursuit of knowledge. From the nineteenth century onwards, the word *science* is

[4] Cohen, *Quanfiying Music,* pp. 13-33.
[5] Ibid., pp. 161 – 180.
[6] Cohen, *How Modern Science Came into the World,* pp. 233.
[7] Cohen, *Quantifying Music,* pp. 78 – 85.
[8] Ibid., pp. 1-6.
[9] Cohen, *Quantifying Music.*
[10] For example: Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution*, Bowler & Morus, *Making Modern Science*, Dijksterhuis & Dikshoorn, *The Mechanization of the World Picture*.

used increasingly in reference to the natural sciences. Furthermore, a process of discipline formation takes shape, and hence it is possible to become a *scientist* as a professional occupation. This argument is known as the Cunningham thesis, summarised as such: we ought to talk about the modern origins of science, instead of the origins of modern science. This leaves the early modern period with a definition void for 'scientific activities'. This void, however, creates space for the actors' category of natural philosophy. Many early modern intellectuals, such as Isaac Newton and Johannes Kepler would refer to themselves as natural philosophers. However, the early modern pursuit of knowledge cannot be reduced to natural philosophy only.

Towards a History of Knowledge

The history and philosophy of science have initially focused on the natural sciences with a particular emphasis on physics as the emblematic science. There are many practical and theoretical reasons for this, but it seems that the history of the human sciences is underrepresented. This was noticed by, among others, Rens Bod who wrote *A new History of the Humanities*. Of course, he included music (or musicology) in his history. Bod, like Cohen, stresses the connection of the study of music and the so-called *New Sciences*, a category that is largely overlapping with natural philosophy. In contrast to this, Bod states in his most recent work *Een wereld vol patronen* that the study of music was done by humanists in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Interestingly, Vincenzo Galilei again serves as the example. As a humanist, Vincenzo had the goal of reviving ancient music in mind. The association of Vincenzo with the Scientific Revolution on the one hand, and with the tradition of humanism on the other, indicates that the division of humanities and science is perhaps not a satisfactory division for the early modern period. The divide between the humanities and the sciences is much more evident in twenty-first-century academic institutionalisation than it was during the Scientific Revolution.

Therefore, a more comprehensive research approach to early modern intellectual activities would perhaps represent the ideals associated with the history of knowledge. I argue that early modern knowledge practices are obscured by looking at history from the perspective of the present-day distinction of humanities and sciences. The history of knowledge is a category that has acquired increasing attention of historians over the last decades. Peter Burke summarises the importance of the history of knowledge in relation with the history of science:

> *"One challenge is a consequence of the awareness that 'science' in the modern sense of the term is a nineteenth-century concept, so that to use the term about knowledge-seeking activities in earlier periods encourages what historians hate most, anachronism. The second challenge has come from the rise of academic interest in popular culture, including the practical knowledges of artisans and healers. (…)"*[11]

The first challenge that Burke describes, addresses the issue we already touched upon in previous paragraphs. The second challenge, however, is equally important, opening up possibilities in terms of methodology together with a turn away from the canon of historical 'scientists'. In other words, 'less important' or lesser-known historical actors, such as artisans and practitioners of crafts, may then find their importance in the history of knowledge. Furthermore, in a history of knowledge, sources outside the traditional text-based paradigm can be viewed as relevant, such as the material culture of knowledge. Lastly, the history of knowledge emancipates *know-how* in relation to *know-that*,

[11] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge?* pp. 9-10.

highlighting the importance of practical knowledge. Thus, the history of knowledge is a promising framework to study sixteenth-century intellectual practices.

Taking 'knowledge-seeking activities' as a point of departure widens our view and leads us to connect the so-called Scientific Revolution to other changes that were taking place at the same time in philology and music and regard these fields of knowledge as a continuum. This thesis is an attempt to contextualise central figures in the Scientific Revolution to start rethinking the nature of it. The Scientific Revolution will appear to be a broader movement, not only a revolution in the 'natural sciences'. Moreover, the changes in the second half of the sixteenth century are strongly connected to the humanistic tradition in Northern Italy. Lastly, the case study suggests that some aspects of the Scientific Revolution were not even revolutionary in nature, but merely generic ways of engaging with knowledge in the sixteenth century.

The turn away from master narratives of great scientists and textual sources is already taking place. Scholars such as Thijs Weststeijn and Sven Dupré are investigating the possibilities of a history of knowledge in art history. Both do so in different ways. Weststeijn analyses how humanistic ideas and ideals are interpreted in a vernacular context of art making.[12] Dupré's focus is more on the material culture of art making and how this relates to knowledge practices. He does so, among other things, by re-enactments of skill-based actions such as making dyes and producing oils.[13] The objective is to re-obtain the tacit knowledge that early modern artisans possessed, but never wrote down. This approach is inspired by scholars like Pamela Smith and Michael Baxandall.[14] Pamela Smith argues in her book *The Body of the Artisan* how important the embodied knowledge is in the early modern period and in the context of the Scientific Revolution. She analyses the role that the 'body of the artisan' has in the early modern pursuit of knowledge.[15] The earlier distinction between *know-that* and *know-how* inevitably plays a significant role in this type of research.

This thesis will add a significant perspective to the work of Dupré and Weststeijn with the inclusion of the study and practice of music in the history of knowledge. Furthermore, the idea of the 'body of the artisan' will be explored in relation to music making and affect theory. I think that the second half of the sixteenth century provides an excellent and thought-provoking category to be analysed from a history of knowledge. First of all, music has both obvious theoretical and practical components. This requires an integral approach that the history of knowledge provides. Such an approach is necessarily interdisciplinary. Secondly, and related to the former point, the study and practice of music have connections to both the history of science and the history of the humanities, as we have seen. The history of music thus provides an interesting category that serves as a pivot between the human and the natural sciences. The approach from the history of knowledge will therefore provide a unique and new way of investigating this period. Third and last, the history of music has a splendid case study available in the second half of the sixteenth century: the emergence of opera in Florence.

The birth of opera

Opera is an art form in which many different disciplines and skills come together. Singers, librettists, poets, actors, composers, instrumentalists, directors, technicians, stage designers, and conductors

[12] Weststeijn, *Art and Antiquity in the Netherlands and Britain*.
[13] ARTECHNE project: https://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/.
[14] Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, Baxandall *The Limewood Sculptors*, Smith, Body of the Artisan.
[15] Smith, *Body of the artisan.*

work together to create one work of art. In this sense, opera is the nexus that brings disciplines, skills, and individuals together. It is perhaps Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* that comes to mind at first, but also the first operas were multidisciplinary undertakings. Furthermore, as I will argue, the emergence of opera around 1600 is also a nexus in time. There are many different traditions that come together in this subject and many different ideas emanate from it. This makes the appearance of opera on the historical stage such an interesting moment to study. Opera, in short, marked a revolution in the history of knowledge: as a form of art, it still epitomizes for most people the very notion of classical music, more even than the song, the sonata, the concerto or the symphony.

The emergence of opera took place in Florence. The first operas were written by Florentine poets and composers and performed in Florence. Although the use of the term *opera* is justified by of its extensive use in secondary literature, the term was not in use around 1600, and hence an anachronism. However, the term *opera* is convenient to distinguish the first monodic musical dramas based on the Florentine engagement with Aristotelian ideas, from other dramas with music and other art forms that preceded opera. One such art form was the *intermedio*, a performance with theatre, music and sometimes dance that became popular in the sixteenth century, throughout the Italian peninsula. Their popularity is evident from the abundance of *intermedi* in historical sources and their place in the Medici wedding festivities in 1589. But others also included (accompanied) singing in their performances, primarily the women who acted in the Commedia dell'Arte. These actresses even became quite famous for their ability to act and sing.[16] The connection of opera and Commedia dell'Arte often goes unrecognised in the history of opera, but certainly deserves more attention.

In the context of the emergence of opera, the Camerata Fiorentina is often taken as a starting point, and there are various good reasons for that.[17] There is source material available that convincingly suggests that this group was focusing on the development of a new art form, inspired by ancient writers. One of the members of the Camerata, the singer-composer Giulio Caccini, wrote one of the first operas and he specifically refers to the group in the preface of the opera. On the other hand, the actual first opera was written by Jacopo Peri, who was not a member of the Camerata. Peri was patronised by Jacopo Corsi. It is suggested that the Corsi and Bardi were rivals.[18] That would still suggest that Corsi and Bardi at least knew each other. Both noblemen moved in similar social circles and had many mutual colleagues, acquaintances and friends. Although the Camerata is perhaps not the only social circle responsible for the emergence of opera, it provides an interesting starting point in this research. There is already a significant amount of source material available of this group. The word *camerata* is used for informal gatherings and is not specifically reserved for the Camerata Fiorentina. Despite this fact, I will mostly use Camerata to refer to this group. Also, because of its informal nature, there was no official membership. Nevertheless, I will speak about members, for practical purposes.

The Camerata existed of individuals with various occupations: composer, lutenist, poet, patron, singer, nobleman. This diverse group of people cooperated to engage in innovation regarding entertainment. In the context of the history of knowledge, this is not surprising. There are two aspects in the history of knowledge that are of interest in this case study: the focus on groups, and so-called sites of knowledge. A site of knowledge can be a blacksmith's workplace, a chemistry lab, or a

[16] Chaffee & Crick, *Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte,* pp. 246-276.
[17] To be complete and avoid misunderstandings, it must be mentioned that the Camerata Fiorentina is often referred to as the Camerata de Bardi. Although this is a useful name, it is not an accurate name. Camerata de Bardi means 'Camerata of the family Bardi', whereas the Camerata was an initiative of Giovanni de Bardi only, not of his family as a whole.
[18] Donington, *Rise of Opera,* pp. 80.

university building. In this case, it is difficult to say what the site of knowledge is. I would like to believe that the house of Giovanni de Bardi in Florence was a site of knowledge, but this does not seem to do justice to the situation. Some members of the Camerata were also member of another group, the Accademia degli Alterati. This academy was a typical sixteenth-century Italian academy in the sense that its members were educated, and their activities were centred around rhetorical deliveries on various topics. The site of knowledge would thus be the metaphorical locus of the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati, confined by the city walls of Florence. In line with the ideas of Bert De Munck, Antonella Romano, Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis and others of the early modern city as an urban knowledge location,[19] the city gives us the opportunity to analyse a local pursuit of knowledge, such as the network of learned men in Florence who were connected through the Accademia degli Alterati and the Camerata Fiorentina. Although the Camerata was an informal group and the Accademia degli Alterati a formal academy, both produced theoretical and practical knowledge. The second important aspect within the framework of the history of knowledge is the focus on groups, rather than a focus on individuals. Both the Camerata and the Accademia were, of course, groups of people. The construction of knowledge was often not only carried out by individuals but was the result of a complicated interaction of several or many intellectuals. According to Burke, these groups were encouraged by the growth of cities.[20] Florence was such a wealthy and growing city in this period. It was one of the major cities in Italy and spread its fame throughout Europe. Here we can also regard these groups as what Karin Knorr-Cetina has labeled 'epistemic cultures',[21] or what Dieter Henrich has termed 'Konstellationen'.[22] As such, this thesis engages with existing historiographical categories, using them to analyse the emergence of opera.

Opera and the History of Knowledge

In unpacking the Camerata Fiorentina as a site of knowledge, I analyse the various stages in the pursuit of knowledge: gathering, analysing, employing and disseminating.[23] The 'research' conducted by the Camerata Fiorentina focused on ancient texts to find inspiration and support for a new musical style and form. The ancient sources were gathered, analysed and finally put to practice (employed) in the first operas. The knowledge thus obtained was employed practically. Like art history, music history has a practical, oft-neglected component. The technique of playing an instrument or the use of the voice is a telling example: it involves a great deal of tacit knowledge. The connection between practical knowledge and skilfulness is very strong in this case. Lastly, the dissemination of knowledge is at least partly involved in this case, since opera swiftly found its way out of Florence. The Mantuan and Ferrarese courts were present at the Medici weddings and soon after the first operas appeared in Florence, Claudio Monteverdi wrote his first operas for the Mantuan court. These operas are still performed today and managed to establish a place in the standard repertoire. It might not be surprising that Monteverdi took *Orfeo* as the subject and title of his first opera, imitating the Florentines Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri.

Hence, music is an excellent case study to investigate the broad nature of the history of knowledge. Music theory and practice are very much part of the pursuit of knowledge. I consider the practice of music as a broad category, including composing, musical virtuosity and skill, improvised

[19] De Munck & Romano, eds, *A History of Entanglements.* See also part 1 in "Cities" in: Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis, Weber & Zuidervaart, eds, *Locations of Knowledge in Dutch Contexts*.
[20] Donington, *Rise of Opera*, pp. 23-24.
[21] Knorr Cetina, *Epistemic cultures: how the sciences make knowledge.*
[22] Mulsow & Stamm, eds, *Konstellationsforschung*.
[23] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge,* pp. 46,47.

theatre (like Commedia dell'Arte), patronage structures, the triangle of poetry, literature and music, and the network involved with music making. The practical turn that Weststeijn and Dupré took for the history of art, has been applied in the history of music in research that is referred to as performance practice or Historically Informed Performance (HIP).[24] The problem with this field of study is that it is often carried out in the context of the conservatory and its results do not always find their way to the university.

Also, the research into performance practice should be assessed carefully. Firstly, recent study and practice of music tends to be internal in nature. Although there are at times superficial references to developments in cultural context influencing the course of music history, a strong embedding of the study and practice of music in the history of knowledge is lacking. Secondly, the seventies of the twentieth century saw the emergence of performers in early music, and more specifically, baroque music. These performers started a change in performance practice that is known as the early music revolution. This 'revolution' is associated with names such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Gustav Leonhardt, Frans Brüggen, John Eliot Gardiner and Ton Koopman. Changes associated with this revolution are for example new playing techniques on period instruments, interest in early music notation, and the flourishing of the counter tenor voice type. Most of these Historically Informed Performance revolutionaries formed their own ensembles and became world famous. As a result of that, some even got positions at universities and received professorships. However, these innovative performers from the previous century found their way of doing things and are no longer considered innovative. There is not so much room for experimenting when you are already world famous and facing audiences that expect smooth performances. Taruskin goes even further in stating that the movement of Historically Informed Performance has more to do with Romantic-modernist values than with 'authentic performance' and contends that the movement is largely anachronistic in nature.[25] On a more positive note, the lack of innovation also leaves room for a new generation of performers and researchers to become creative. My wish is to position myself to the available musicological research and to provide new insights into the context of music making in the second half of the sixteenth century from the perspective of the history of knowledge.

Opera has become such an eminent art form that its history is almost inevitably influenced by its current state, leaving the historian of music with a similar challenge that the historian of science is facing in early modern science. This is particularly evident with the quest for the roots of opera. Often, this quest is obscured by persistent internalism. In this thesis, we will find that the birth opera is only partly a revolutionary event. The rest of the story appears to be a continuation of existing art forms and in one respect even the end of a long and oral tradition. Again, the history of knowledge is a promising perspective to investigate the emergence of what is an ever-developing major art form: opera.

Historiographical considerations

Sixteenth-century Italy and its history are related to two other important historiographical narratives: Renaissance humanism and the Republic of Letters. The Republic of Letters denotes the world of scholars who were connected through extensive correspondences. This might suggest that the network of scholars in Florence is connected to other learned people spread through Italy and the rest of Europe. The correspondence of Girolamo Mei to Vincenzo Galilei, is only one example of such a

[24] An example of this is: Koopman: *Barokmuziek.*
[25] Taruskin, *Text and Act,* pp. 13.

connection.[26] The Italian intellectual academies also play a significant role in the Republic of Letters.[27] We will find that in this specific case study, the culture of the Italian academy will prove to be more fruitful than the investigation of private correspondences. Other than the Mei-Galilei correspondence, very few letters regarding the Camerata Fiorentina are available to us.

Secondly, the study of knowledge gathering in the period 1550-1600 is indissolubly linked to Renaissance humanism. This field of study focuses roughly on the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, highlighting a major movement in the culture of Early Modern Europe. Interestingly, music history seems to be less important in this respect. The table of contents of the *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* simply fails to include music history.[28] This suggests to the more casual reader, that humanism in the Renaissance and Renaissance music are not connected. On the contrary, the introduction of the same *Cambridge Companion* just mentioned states:

> *"A further aim in producing this book is to counter the view that Renaissance humanism was a narrowly philological enterprise, concerned only with the technicalities of classical scholarship and with a definable curriculum consisting of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. These subjects are discussed at length in this volume; but equal stress is laid on the role of humanism as a broad intellectual and cultural movement, which contributed to, or at any rate engaged with, disciplines such as biblical studies, political thought, art, science and all branches of philosophy."*[29]

If the role of Renaissance humanism is indeed a broad intellectual and cultural movement, the study of music must be part of that. There is some literature available suggesting the relation between Renaissance humanism and the study and practice of music.[30] Here, this connection will be investigated even further. I argue that philology and the study of ancient texts were in fact driving forces that stimulated the innovation in musical style and form. This is exemplified by the correspondence of Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni de Bardi with the philologist Girolamo Mei, the humanistic Accademia degli Alterati, and the specific references to Aristotelian ideas of *katharsis* in relation to music making.

Research question

It is my wish that this work will provide a thought-provoking example of engagement with well-established historiographical narratives in a very specific case study. This thesis is structured around two themes. First, the need for the history of knowledge and the reinterpretation of the Scientific Revolution will be sketched. The argument will be exemplified by the work and life of Vincenzo Galilei firstly, and secondly by the group of the Camerata Fiorentina. The second part of this thesis will explore an important connection that came up during the process of researching the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati from the perspective of the history of knowledge. A new perspective allows to transgress current disciplinary boundaries and find new connections in history. The connection that will be explored is between rhetorical *actio* and musical practice. The Accademia degli Alterati and the Commedia dell'Arte actresses prove to be social contexts in which rhetorical *actio* and musical practice and theory were strongly related. In practice, this meant that the operatic monodies

[26] Mei & Palisca, *Letters on Ancient and Modern Music.*
[27] Fumaroli, T*he Republic of Letters*, pp. 82-101.
[28] Kraye, *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism.*
[29] Ibid., pp. xv.
[30] Walker, "Musical Humanism in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries." in *The Music Review.*

from around 1600 were strongly rooted in a tradition of oratorical delivery called *parlar cantando*. In fact, the first operas are the end of an oral tradition. Lastly, I extend Pamela Smith's idea of the Body of the Artisan to the 'Soul of the Artisan'. The study of the passions and affects (or emotions) as perceived by the early modern soul is as important for sixteenth-century intellectuals and artisans as the study of the body and the outside nature.

The pursuit of knowledge and the emergence of opera are related, but the central question in this thesis is: In what ways? This question has been asked before by other authors. The unique aspect of this thesis is that we revisit this episode in history with a new perspective, that of the history of knowledge. Guided by the central question, the social network of Florentine intellectuals connected to the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati will be investigated. Furthermore, oratorical delivery practiced by the members of the Accademia degli Alterati and the Camerata will be explored. This delivery turns out to be an interplay of practical and theoretical knowledge combining various domains of knowledge, such as musical theory and practice, philology, and (vernacular) literature. This thesis is an attempt to show that the perspective of the history of knowledge provides an adequate framework to approach early modern knowledge practices.

Chapter 1

Vincenzo Galilei

1.1. Why the history of knowledge?

The research question of this thesis is concerned with the ways in which the emergence of opera relates to the pursuit of knowledge in the second half of the sixteenth century. Before we can address this question, it is crucial to carefully contemplate the need for confronting the history of music with the history of knowledge. The case study of this master thesis will provide examples that illustrate this need. In the chapters that follow, I will more carefully address two ways in which a history of knowledge connects to the emergence of opera.

The history of knowledge is a relatively recent initiative. The most recent Gewina conference was entirely devoted to the theme of the history of knowledge[31], and a Journal for the History of Knowledge is about to be launched.[32] A concise introduction to the history of knowledge is provided by Peter Burke.[33] I want to highlight three possibilities of this 'new' history here. First, the seemingly persistent distinction of the Two Cultures can be avoided. Second, the history of knowledge provides new methodologies. Knowledge production is not only regarded as a cerebral activity of individual geniuses, but is analysed in various stages of analysis, gathering, dissemination and employment of knowledge. These new methodologies highlight the multi-faceted nature of the knowledge pursuit. Practical knowledge and artisanal skill are important factors in these various stages of knowledge production. A third possibility, and in the context of this research perhaps less interesting possibility, is the focus on non-Western ways of knowing.

In short, a historical investigation of early modern knowledge practices could benefit greatly from the fresh perspective of the history of knowledge. The Cunningham thesis seeks to provide a new 'big picture' in the history of science.[34] It is certainly out of the scope of this thesis to provide such a new big picture. I will try to show how the history of knowledge could navigate through the existent scholarly literature of the history of science, the history of the humanities, the history of music, and sixteenth-century primary sources. I hope that this endeavour serves as a practical example of the history of knowledge in action and how this could benefit the building of a new big picture.

One of the central aspects of a possible new big picture should include a careful reassessment of the Scientific Revolution. The narrative of the Scientific Revolution is strongly embedded in the history of science. The term was coined in the 1920s and was elaborated upon by scholars such as Floris Cohen and Thomas Kuhn.[35] More recently, the master narrative received considerable criticism by scholars such as Steven Shapin: "There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution, and this is a book about it."[36] Interestingly, this criticism has not led to an abandoning of the concept. Rather, it is being reinterpreted and contextualised. Hence, we have a different understanding of the Scientific

[31] https://www.dwc.knaw.nl/call-for-papers-8th-gewina-woudschoten-meeting-for-historians-of-science-in-the-netherlands-towards-a-history-of-knowledge-zeist-21-22-june-2019-deadline-15-january-2019/ (Accessed on October 18, 2019).
[32] https://journalhistoryknowledge.org/ (Accessed on October 18, 2019).
[33] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge.*
[34] Cunningham & Williams, "De-centring the "Big Picture"".
[35] Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Cohen, *Quantifying Music,* and Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution*.
[36] Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, pp. 1.

Revolution today compared to several decades ago. This thesis is a contribution to the reinterpretation and contextualisation of the Scientific Revolution. I assert that the Scientific Revolution was not only a revolution in the natural sciences. Rather, I propose that in various fields of knowledge profound changes took place. The Scientific Revolution is a narrative that privileges developments in natural sciences, while obscuring other 'revolutions'. On the other hand, the second half of the sixteenth century is not only full of revolution and big changes. Instead, a much more continuous story appears in the emergence of opera and changes in musical aesthetic. Despite the general sense of change and revolution, I will highlight some continuities that were as important. These continuities are often obscured by the persistent need to explain the course of history as a sequence of causal events.

Chapter 1 and 2 will provide instances that exemplify the double hypothesis I put forward. First, the need for the history of knowledge in the early modern pursuit of knowledge. Second, how this new perspective changes the nature of the Scientific Revolution. In this chapter, the lutenist Vincenzo Galilei will be examined. His background and knowledge output will be compared to another towering figure in the history of science, Johannes Kepler. This comparison will allow us to draw some preliminary conclusions.

1.2. Vincenzo Galilei

Vincenzo Galilei, father of the famous Galileo, was a lutenist and a composer. Often, Vincenzo is associated with the study of music during the Scientific Revolution. This association has multiple reasons. Firstly, his work on ancient and modern music (*Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna, 1581)*. In this work he addresses the issue of tuning an instrument, either a keyboard or a lute. Although the 'tuning problem' was under scrutiny since Pythagoras, the subject is well documented as part of the Scientific Revolution and the movement of mathematization. Secondly, Vincenzo received his education from another important figure in the field of music and mathematics: Gioseffo Zarlino. Vincenzo's *Dialogo* is considered as a reaction to the work of Zarlino. Lastly, Vincenzo has an obvious connection to a key figure of the Scientific Revolution: his son Galileo Galilei. There is much speculation on how Vincenzo perhaps has influenced Galileo in his ideas on experimentation and the primacy of mathematics. This seems obvious but it is difficult to provide evidence to prove such a dissemination of knowledge.

Vincenzo Galilei might not be as famous as his son Galileo, but he certainly received, and continues to receive, considerable scholarly attention. Also, his musical output is not forgotten, especially his lute music is regularly played nowadays. In terms of scholarly attention, he received significant attention from Floris Cohen in his work on music and the Scientific Revolution: *Quantifying Music*. Vincenzo is associated primarily with an experimental tradition regarding music and science. This experimental approach allowed Vincenzo to come up with a practical way to tune lutes and keyboard instruments. Cohen focuses solely on the 'scientific' elements of Vincenzo's work, although he makes use of secondary literature that sometimes suggests more intricate connections between music and science.[37] This is obviously justified by his methodology of the history of science and Cohen's work should receive praise for that. However, it is precisely the basis of the methodology that we would like to address here. Because of the methodological focus on what is considered to be *science*, Vincenzo's knowledge production appears to be 'scientific'.

On the other hand, Vincenzo Galilei is also included by Rens Bod in his *A New History of the Humanities*. Vincenzo's work is then discussed in the context of musicology in the Early Modern Era. It

[37] Cohen, *Quantifying Music*, pp. 78-85.

is disappointing to read very little about Vincenzo's work in relation to his correspondence with the humanist scholar Girolamo Mei, Vincenzo's activities as part of the Camerata Fiorentina and the connection of this Camerata to other knowledge practices present in sixteenth-century Italy. Bod's discussion of Vincenzo is largely based on Cohen and appears to be a reiteration of Cohen's ideas put forward in *Quantifying Music*. Thus, Bod's history of the humanities is not providing the balanced account on Vincenzo's output either.

The history of knowledge, therefore, provides a significant new perspective towards Vincenzo's output. One of the central reasons why this perspective is so different is because it emancipates various expressions of knowledge. Not only Vincenzo's written output can be considered, also his humanistic correspondence with Mei, his musical writings, and his connection to the Florentine Camerata should be analysed to get a solid grasp on Vincenzo's work.

Fortunately, Vincenzo Galilei is a scholar who is studied in various contexts. This allows us to indeed combine a study of primary and secondary sources on Vincenzo and come to terms with the multi-faceted output of Vincenzo. The difficulty that arises with combining these various sources on Vincenzo, is that it is still unavoidable to start thinking from twenty-first-century disciplinary boundaries. Historians of science tend to highlight 'scientific' output, musicologists focus more on the cultural context and the musical material. The task for the historian of knowledge is crucial, in order to come to terms with the early modern way of thinking. Adopting a conception of knowledge that is less connected to twenty-first-century disciplinary boundaries is a good start. Inevitably, we will impose other strains on the historical actors at hand with the new conception of knowledge, but hopefully it will at least emancipate forgotten narratives that turn out to be important in our understanding of early modern knowledge production.

Of course, historians of science have continuously searched for new methodologies to emancipate the 'forgotten narratives' just mentioned. The history of knowledge is very much a product of this endeavour. After all, it is mostly historians of science that associate themselves today with the history of knowledge. Cohen's *Quantifying Music* was published in 1984, and obviously the history of science changed since then. It is therefore important to re-examine the relation between music and knowledge in the second half of the sixteenth century with a fresh perspective. In the following section, this fresh perspective will be used to compare Johannes Kepler and Vincenzo Galilei and their respective backgrounds.

1.3. Johannes Kepler and Vincenzo Galilei

The laws of planetary motion as formulated by Johannes Kepler form a solid basis on which Isaac Newton was able to build his *Principia*. These laws are still a central part of the physics curriculum as taught in secondary schools and universities. Interestingly, the third law of planetary motion is found in *Harmonices Mundi*, a work in which Kepler discusses the harmony of geometrical figures, astrology, planetary motion and interestingly: music. Inevitably, Kepler is a central actor in the history of the Scientific Revolution and music.[38]

Thus, *Harmonices Mundi* is a work that exemplifies how natural philosophers structured their thought in the seventeenth century. From a historical perspective, the combination of music, geometry and astronomy is not surprising. These fields of study were part of the *quadrivium*, consisting of music, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic. The quadrivium was part of the seven *artes liberales*. The other

[38] Cohen, *Quantifying music*, pp. 13-34.

three fields of study were grammar, rhetoric and dialectic: the trivium. Kepler's unification of music, geometry and astronomy is therefore not necessarily surprising.

Kepler's work is the perfect illustration of Cohen's narrative of how the Scientific Revolution and the study of music related. The inclusion of Vincenzo Galilei in the same narrative is problematic, to say the least. By squeezing Vincenzo into the narrative of music in the Scientific Revolution, his work is reduced to the extent that it almost alters the way we perceive Vincenzo. By comparing Kepler and Vincenzo, I will show how they differ in background, in scholarly orientation and in their revolutionary nature.

A look at the 'job descriptions' of Johannes Kepler and Vincenzo Galilei is already insightful. Johannes Kepler was a (natural) philosopher, a mathematician, who received a scholarly education. In terms of the history of knowledge, he is very much an example of someone concerned with theoretical knowledge, with *know-that*. Vincenzo Galilei, on the other hand, did not receive a scholarly education, was first and foremost a lutenist, and did not find himself in the formal academies of Florence. His connection to formal scholarly circles such as the Accademia degli Alterati was mainly through his patron Giovanni de Bardi. Bardi was a nobleman who (of course) received formal education. It is illustrative that Vincenzo wrote his work in the vernacular (a Northern Italian dialect, close to the current Italian)[39], and Kepler wrote and read in the lingua franca of early modern Europe: Latin.

Kepler knew the work of Vincenzo and read it. Most likely Kepler read the *Dialogo della musica antica et della moderna*, since he refers to the work of Vincenzo 'de re Musica', in a letter from 1618. Kepler then remarks that the reading of Vincenzo's works was impeded by the fact that Vinenco did not write in the ordinary language.[40] This is very plausible, since Vincenzo did write in the Italian language. He, after all, had not received the scholarly education and his Greek and Latin were weak.[41] Kepler did not necessarily agree with Vincenzo's work. The disagreement was not so much in the mathematical work because Kepler deemed the tuning system of Vincenzo to be superior to the common mean tone temperament tuning system.[42] However, the aesthetic goal that Kepler and Galilei had in mind was entirely different.

The title *Harmonices Mundi* already points in the direction that Kepler was aiming for. He sought to unify the studies in the quadrivium in a common harmony. Such a research program strongly resonates with scholastic ideas on the harmony of the world, as imposed by God. Regarding music, he aimed for 'heavenly music', music that was guided by harmony of the spheres. This type of music is inspired by the Platonic (or Boethian) ideals of 'beauty, harmony and proportion, of divinity and love'[43]. On the other hand, Vincenzo had a more affective idea in mind. Music had to move the listener, like an orator did in delivering a speech or a poetic text. According to him, the ancient monody was essentially the key to moving the affective state or emotional state of the audience. This ideal was grounded strongly in the Aristotelian and Ciceronian tradition connected to Aristotle's *Poetics* and Cicero's *De Oratore*.[44] The connection of music to rhetoric and oratory will be explored further in Chapter 3 and 4, but for now it will suffice to point out that the study and practice of music can be

[39] From now on, I will refer to the language of Vincenzo and his co-workers as Italian. In fact, the Florentine dialect and some other Northern Italian dialects happen to be almost similar to the current-day Italian. It is, however, not entirely accurate and I am aware of that but 'Italian' is more practical than 'Northern Italian dialect'.
[40] Kepler, *Gesammelte Werke*, 17 pp. 254: '*cujus lectionem quam vis impeditam ob idioma in suetum*'.
[41] Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*, pp. 153.
[42] Cohen, *Quantifying Music*, pp. 184.
[43] Palisca, *Letters on Ancient and Modern Music*, pp. 43.
[44] Ibid., pp. 43-45.

related to various domains of knowledge in the early modern period, and is therefore not restricted to the quadrivium. Vincenzo Galilei, inspired and guided by the correspondence with Girolamo Mei, connects music to oratory and poetry: "Mei devalued the role of mathematics, cosmology and ethics and restored music to its natural sisters, poetry and oratory."[45] Kepler on the other hand, strongly connects music to the quadrivium, in essence the point of view that Vincenzo's teacher Gioseffo Zarlino also held.

1.4. Preliminary conclusions and directions

Comparing the ideals of Vincenzo and Mei to the ideals of Zarlino and Kepler is instructive for the case at hand. It shows how the history of knowledge is a flexible framework to analyse such a complicated history. Firstly, there is the connection of early modern knowledge production to a strong humanistic tradition. Girolamo Mei, a humanist scholar living in Rome, based his contentions on 'new' ancient sources that came available to him. The grounding of newly produced knowledge on a solid humanistic basis was paramount for early modern scholars. Vincenzo, although he was not a scholar in the strict sense of the word, took pains to connect his ideas on music to ancient sources. Secondly, the musical ideal of Kepler and Vincenzo not only was rooted in a divergent connection to ancient sources, it was also led by a different aesthetic view on music. Kepler essentially wanted to go back to the polyphonic structures of the Renaissance. Vincenzo, on the other hand, despised the intricate polyphonic structures, because the multiplicity of individual musical lines could not clearly invoke strong affects. According to Mei and Vincenzo, the vocal range and modal identity of a certain musical phrase corresponds to a certain affect. In polyphonic music, vocal ranges and modality are mixed in a larger structure, effectively diminishing the affective powers of individual lines because they are blended together.[46] The theory of affect came to play an important role in early baroque music and rhetoric, at the same time being strongly rooted in Aristotelian ideas of *katharsis*.

Thus, the history of knowledge highlights also the importance of aesthetic principles governing the pursuit of knowledge. Regarding these aesthetical principles, Johannes Kepler was rather conservative, basing himself on (neo-)Platonic ideas. Vincenzo Galilei, on the other hand, was much more up to date with recent *Cinquecento* trends in scholarly circles, privileging an Aristotelian aesthetic tradition. He perhaps did not receive the scholarly education that Kepler did, but was far more revolutionary than other historical actors of the Scientific Revolution. Galilei, however, was not necessarily revolutionary in the sense of a *Scientific* Revolution. Rather, he distanced himself from his teacher Zarlino, and the (neo-)Platonic ideals that he adhered to, on an *aesthetic* basis. Therefore, I propose to start thinking about the second half of the sixteenth century as a period of change, perhaps even revolution. The extent to which it was a period of change or revolution are not of my primary interest. Instead, I suggest that the Scientific Revolution was not only scientific in nature. This case study supports the hypothesis that the radical changes in the period associated with the beginning Scientific Revolution were as much connected to other domains of knowledge as to natural philosophy. In fact, rhetoric, philology, and musical aesthetic prove to be driving forces in the example of Vincenzo Galilei's work. The narrative of the Scientific Revolution is too narrow to adequately account for such delicate interplay of knowledge domains.

A critical reader might comment that the Scientific Revolution was essentially a change in the way of thinking that led natural philosophers to a different understanding of the natural world. This is

[45] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 45.
[46] Ibid., pp. 46,47.

a valid criticism, but it overlooks important aspects. The study of nature as we know it today is associated with the study of the exact sciences: the disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics. Moving in the direction of psychology and sociology is already a turn away from the sciences that describe how the natural world works. Interestingly, in the early modern period the study of nature was as much a study of the nature outside the individual as the study of the self. This will be addressed shortly in the fourth chapter, but essentially the argument is that the study of the individual emotional states is as much a study of nature as the study of natural phenomena. Vincenzo thus explored the possibilities of studying the affects in a similarly 'scientific' way as he experimented with tuning his lute. Contemporaries of Vincenzo have set up whole systems of passions that actors had to learn to 'get the affects right' in order to be good actors.[47] Furthermore, the search for a satisfying tuning system is as much an experiment with musical instruments as 'scientific' instruments as an experiment to express human passions with the musical instrument. The human voice is obviously most closely related to the human passions. But, especially from the seventeenth century onwards, instrumental music is employed as well to explore the possibilities of influencing emotional states.[48] Again, this shows that the history of knowledge provides a superfluous way of thinking about the nature of knowledge, to satisfactorily deal with the early modern way of thinking. Moreover, it leads us away from the persistent narrative of the Scientific Revolution as a period in which a radical new way of thinking is pursued to study the outside nature only. Instead, this case study shows that what is considered the upbeat to the Scientific Revolution, is essentially a movement in the pursuit of knowledge that is associated as much with the investigation of the passionate self as with the mathematical world around the early modern individual.

Another merit of the history of knowledge is the attention for the construction of knowledge as an interplay between theory and practice in so-called sites of knowledge. This is a useful way of thinking about the production of knowledge, also in the context of this case study. First of all, Vincenzo was a lutenist. He was no scholar, although he had a strong inclination towards the theory of music. This is why he went to study with Zarlino in the first place.[49] But he can still be viewed as a musical artisan, somebody who possesses a certain degree of skill or *dispositione di mano*.[50] The emancipation of artisanal knowledge has found a recent impetus with the work of Pamela Smith: *The Body of the Artisan*. The argument she develops is mostly connected with the visual arts, but I would propose to extend the idea to the world of musical practice. The construction of knowledge is thus carried out by practical musicians as well as theorists. Secondly, Vincenzo did not work on his own. We already mentioned the correspondence with Girolamo Mei. Moreover, Vincenzo was part of a group known as the Camerata Fiorentina, patronised by Giovanni de Bardi. It was in this group that musical experiments were conducted and the monodic style that became popular around 1600 was investigated. In the following chapter we will see how important this site of knowledge was for the construction of new ideas on musical style and how they connect to the scholarly world of sixteenth-century Florence.

[47] The theory of affects and passions will surface at times during this thesis. I assume it is known to the reader. For those who do not, an affective state is comparable to a 21st-century emotional state. However, I stick with the early modern actors' category because of some technical details and precision of wording.
[48] Cypess, *Curious & Modern Inventions*.
[49] Palisca, *Letters,* pp. 7,8.
[50] Cypess, *Curious & Modern Inventions*, pp. 23.

Chapter 2

Camerata Fiorentina and Girolamo Mei

2.1. The history of knowledge in practice

In this chapter, the second example to illustrate the need for the history of knowledge to investigate early modern knowledge practices, and to allow for a reinterpretation of the Scientific Revolution, will be discussed. Vincenzo Galilei was not working on his own. On the contrary, he corresponded with Girolamo Mei, and he regularly met with likeminded people in the house of Giovanni de Bardi. This group is known today as the Camerata Fiorentina.

Subsequently, a discussion of the history of knowledge in theory and practice will follow. The framework of Peter Burke will be used to look back to the discussion of Vincenzo Galilei and the Camerata Fiorentina. The combination between Burke's theoretical work and this case study allows us to gain insight in how the history of knowledge framework can be used effectively. Lastly, the correspondence of Vincenzo and Girolamo Mei will be discussed. We will see how a practical musician corresponded with a philologist about musical history and their view on 'what music ought to be'.

2.2. Camerata Fiorentina

The Camerata Fiorentina was a group of likeminded Florentine individuals who came together on a regular basis in the house of Giovanni de Bardi. These meetings took place between 1570 and 1592, reaching "its height between 1577 and 1582".[51] The core activity of the group was making music together, as can be derived from an entry in the *Diario* of the Accademia degli Alterati in which "*regente* Cosimo Rucellai "sent word through a domestic servant that he could not come [to the Alterati], because he was at the house of Monsigr. de' Bardi to make music"".[52] We will see later that it was not exclusively music making: 'praiseworthy discussions' and 'honorable recreation' were part of the sessions as well.[53]

2.3. Primary source material and its problems

The Camerata Fiorentina, sometimes incorrectly referred to as Camerata de Bardi, was an informal group with no official membership and no official documentation. It is often suggested that the first experiments in the monodic style of the early baroque were conducted in the context of this group. Hence, this group is often associated with the emergence of the art form that came to be known as opera. Scholars disagree on the uniqueness of the achievements of the Camerata and on the primacy that is given to them.

Warren Kirkendale starts his immense work on Florentine court music as follows:

"Studies on musicians at the court of the grand dukes of Tuscany have long focussed on single figures or on that small group generally referred to as the "Florentine Camerata". The

[51] Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*, pp. 7.
[52] Ibid., pp. 5. Quote: Florence, Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Ashburnham 558, vol. 2, fol. 3v.
[53] Ibid., pp. 3. Quote: *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei nobile fiorentino Della musica antica, et della moderna* (Florence: G. Marescotti, 1581) pp. 1.

documents extant in the Archivio di Stato Firenze, however, present a quite different picture. They remain blissfully silent on the so-called "Camerata", that cliché so beloved by aestheticians and compilers of music history textbooks who seem to have imagined that all significant musical activity in Florence at the end of the sixteenth century took place in a small group of experimenting intellectuals, formally organized like an academy. Actually, the word "camerata occurs only in a minute number of contemporary sources, notably in the prefaces of Giulio Caccini (…). It was, of course, not an exclusive designation for the friends of Giovanni Bardi, but could be used for any informal gathering of persons in a "camera"."[54]

This passage summarises various criticisms on the central role of the Camerata Fiorentina in the emergence of opera in a concise way. First, the Camerata Fiorentina is mentioned only a few times in primary sources. Second, Kirkendale implies that the Camerata Fiorentina is not representative of all musical activity in Florence. Third and most importantly, a *camerata* is an informal gathering. He also remarks later that more such informal circles were present in Florence around the same time, something also recognised by Claude Palisca.[55] Not only Bardi had such a circle around him, also Emilio de Cavalieri and Jacopo Corsi surrounded themselves with their companions in music and literature.

It is true that the Camerata Fiorentina is only mentioned sparingly in primary sources. It was only in the preface to Caccini's *Le nuove musiche*, that the first reference to the Camerata Fiorentina was made (given the fact that Cosimo Rucellai did not refer to the Camerata Fiorentina literally).[56] After that, the son of Giovanni de Bardi, Pietro, spoke about the camerata of his father in a (now famous) letter to Giovanni Battista Doni in 1634. There are documents that are related to the actors that where probably active in the Camerata Fiorentina, but in these documents no specific reference is made to the Camerata.[57] The absence of direct primary sources is only logical, recalling that a camerata is an informal group with no official membership. Although it would be convenient from a practical, twenty-first-century, methodological point of view, the informal nature of the assemblies would be questioned if there was much more documentation available. It is, however, because of its informal nature, an interesting case to investigate in the context of the history of knowledge.

It becomes only more interesting in the context of this knowledge-directed research that there were more groups like the Camerata Fiorentina in terms of their informal nature. This explains in part why the name 'Camerata Fiorentina' was not in use during the existence of the group itself. It would be slightly pompous to refer to one's own informal circle as *the* camerata of Florence, whereas there were many others. Precisely the presence of many other camerata's allows us to take one group as a case study, enabling us to draw larger conclusions about the Florentine, Tuscan and perhaps even Northern Italian pursuit of knowledge. This is an approach that is seldomly applied to the Camerata Fiorentina because of its presumed strong connection to the emergence of opera. Often, the Camerata is researched as an idiosyncratic phenomenon. In contrast, I propose to study the Camerata as a relatively normal phenomenon. In short, the Camerata Fiorentina is an excellent case study for the interplay of informal groups that experimented with theoretical and practical knowledge. First, because there is much secondary literature available on this group, based on the few, but insightful, primary sources; second, because there is evidence available suggesting to indeed draw broader conclusions from this.

[54] Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, pp. 33.
[55] Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, pp. 2,3.
[56] Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, pp. 33.
[57] For editions of these documents: Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata* & Palisca, *Letters.*

It may be no surprise that the Camerata Fiorentina became so popular in studies of the history of music as a central aspect in the emergence of opera. The lack of primary sources and the availability of famous sixteenth-century composer-singers (Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri) that are associated with the first operas, might have seduced historians of opera to construct narratives that are based more on wishful thinking than on actual historical evidence. Indeed, we should be careful with glorifying the Camerata and its members for being the one and only determining factor that brought about opera. However, the criticism of Kirkendale and others is not the end of all meaningful research on the Camerata. Firstly, the research of Palisca shows to what extent the Camerata dealt with some important aesthetical, musical and scholarly aspects connected to the emergence of opera. The most important examples are: the correspondence of Bardi and Vincenzo with Girolamo Mei, the discourse on ancient music and good singing by Bardi, the discourse on the performance of Tragedy (probably by Bardi), and the essays on tuning and sounds by Vincenzo Galilei.[58] Additionally, Caccini mentions the Camerata both in the preface to *L'Euridice* and in the preface to *Le nuove musiche*. Secondly, the emergence of opera is as much a historical event (or series of events) as any 'scientific' discovery. Several decades history of science has shown the large portion of contingent events that lead to sometimes unforeseen developments. It was Nino Pirotta who pointed to the contingency in the story:

> *"It was not theories and ideas that brought about opera, but the practical attempts of certain men, each following the dictates of his own temperament and sensibility, to realize their own ideals: Caccini that of noble, refined singing, Cavalieri that of elegant and pleasing music appropriate to the stage, Peri and Rinuccini that of dramatic expression."*[59]

In Pirotta's article, this quotation is conclusion to the critique on the unconscious tendency "to assume that the men of the time foresaw everything that was later to stem from the birth of opera".[60] However, in the context of this thesis, the criticism can be used to point out the importance of practicing musicians in this case study. To sum up, the Camerata Fiorentina was perhaps not the one and only group that invented the art form of opera, but the group certainly took interest in a study of the classic authors to gain knowledge and inspiration for an aesthetic change in music. Moreover, the emergence of opera was not an event that was prepared and foreseen by a homogeneous group effort. Instead, it was the outcome of practical attempts of men with contrasting aesthetical ideals.

2.4. Membership of the Camerata

Since the Camerata Fiorentina was an informal group, it is until today only vaguely known who might have assembled at the house of Giovanni de Bardi. Giulio Caccini, Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni de Bardi were likely the nucleus of the group. Other individuals possibly associated to the Camerata were: Piero Strozzi, Alessandro Striggio (the father of the Alessandro Striggio that wrote the libretto for Monteverdi's Orfeo), Cristoforo Malvezzi, Emilio de' Cavalieri, Francesco Cini, Ottavio Rinuccini, Giovanni B. Guarini, Gabriello Chiabrera, Giovanni B. Strozzi the Younger, Baccio Valori, and Leonardo Salviati.[61] These individuals had differing walks of life, but they shared an interest in literature. As we know from the *Diario* of the Accademia degli Alterati, also Cosimo Rucellai went to the house of Giovanni de Bardi, but he is not even mentioned by Palisca. This might mean that the composition of the group varied at times.

[58] Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata.*
[59] Pirotta, "Temperaments and Tendencies", pp. 188,189.
[60] Ibid., pp. 170.
[61] Palisca, *The Florentine Camerata*, pp. 7-8. NB Several more individuals are mentioned by Palisca but I decided to reduce the list for practical purposes.

What we at least can say is that Vincenzo Galilei had regular contact with Giulio Caccini, Giovanni de Bardi, Girolamo Mei, and almost certainly with influential Florentine literary figures. It is this connection of various domains of knowledge that is of interest here. We can safely assume that there was a regular exchange of ideas on literature and music as well as musical performances. It is likely that Vincenzo performed his rendition of Dante's *Ugolino's Lament* in the context of one of the Camerata's meetings. Moreover, Vincenzo states that many noblemen "were in the habit of going to his [Giovanni de Bardi] house and there to pass the time in honorable recreation, with delightful singing and praiseworthy discussions."[62] Caccini also mentions the luxury of intellectual and artistic exchange in the house of Giovanni de Bardi. The preface to *Le nuove musiche* provides a picture similar to that described by Vincenzo:

> *"At the time when the admirable Camerata of the most illustrious Signor Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio, was flourishing in Florence, with not not only many of the nobility but also the foremost musicians, intellectuals, poets, and philosophers of the city in attendance, I too was present; and I can truly say that I learned more from their learned discussions than my more than thirty years of counterpoint."*[63]

Thus, both Vincenzo Galilei and Giulio Caccini recognise the value of the exchange of ideas in the house of Giovanni de Bardi. It is safe to assume that the gatherings at Bardi's house were indeed attended by people from various knowledge domains. Caccini even states that he learned much more from them than from 30 years in counterpoint, an interesting statement for various reasons. Firstly, Caccini was a musician with a musical education. Like Vincenzo Galilei, he had not received any formal education. The confrontation and association with poets and philosophers were both inspirational and good for his public image. In a way, he distances himself from his musical education, which had a more modest connotation. Secondly, he refers explicitly to various domains of knowledge, namely music, philosophy, and poetry. He learned more from that than from 30 years in counterpoint. It is difficult to find out what Caccini learned, however. My educated guess would be, that he learned more how to move the passions of the audience with his music. Although counterpoint is still implied in Caccini's songs in *Le nuove musiche,* I think his main aim was to move the *affetti* with his music. The inspiration he got from the discussions in the Camerata might have enabled him to pursue the new monodic style of writing and singing.

Apparently, the Camerata was not such a unique phenomenon as it comes to the informal nature of the group and the way in which various domains of knowledge were connected through discussions and 'practical attempts'. We will see later that practice-oriented knowledge domains and group-structured entities are important driving forces for innovation, putting the importance of theoretical knowledge into perspective. Innovation as a result of group work is also not surprising. Because of the multi-faceted nature of a group such as the Camerata, unique and innovative ideas could be developed.

2.5. Struggle for primacy: Peri and Caccini

The quotation of Caccini's preface points to the importance of the Camerata for another important reason: when Caccini had this preface written for him, he was competing with Jacopo Peri for the primacy of inventing the modern style of writing. Peri had just written his opera *Euridice* for the

[62] Palisca, The Florentine Camerata, pp. 3. Quote: *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei nobile fiorentino Della musica antica, et della moderna* (Florence: G. Marescotti, 1581) pp. 1.
[63] Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* pp. 3.

festivities of the wedding between Marie de Medici (the niece of the grand duke of Florence, Ferdinando) and Henry IV of France. Jacopo Peri enjoyed the patronage of Jacopo Corsi, who also had an informal circle of likeminded people around him: a camerata. One of the reasons that Caccini mentions the camerata of Giovanni de Bardi specifically, is because this group was active in the years before the camerata of Jacopo Corsi became active. Jacopo Peri was also 30 years younger than Caccini and could not have been active in Bardi's camerata because he was too young at the time. Moreover, it is known that Bardi and Corsi were also rivals. In short, Caccini needed to mention his connection to the camerata of Giovanni de Bardi to claim priority in the invention of the modern style of writing. This must have been important to Caccini, because by openly associating himself to Giovanni de Bardi, he took a serious gamble. Giovanni de Bardi had moved out of Florence in 1592 because he had lost favour at the Medici court of Ferdinando I: 'he had been closely associated with the deceased Grand Duke Francesco and Bianca Cappello, not loved by Ferdinando'.[64] Bardi had publicly endorsed the marriage of Francesco and Bianca Capello, Francesco's Venetian mistress.[65] Caccini was only recently reappointed at the Medici court in 1600, being in financial debt.[66] His position at the court was not at all stable and a public reinstatement of his connection to Giovanni de Bardi probably did not help. Despite this, Caccini refers to Bardi in his preface.

This episode is important for various reasons. Evidently, Caccini took pains to establish his primacy in something that both he and Jacopo Peri apparently viewed as something 'new', the art from they created and referred to as opera. Although later in this thesis, I will suggest that many aspects of this new style were continuations of some sort of older traditions, it is important that the historical actors themselves thought of their work as something new and original. Interestingly, the idea of struggle and rivalry is manifested clearly, as pointed out by Pirotta.[67] Finally, we again see that the culture of knowledge exchange between artists or artisans and scholars in the camerata's was not restricted to the Camerata Fiorentina only. This supports the idea of studying the Camerata as a relatively 'normal phenomenon' in the sense of an opportunity to exchange knowledge.

2.6. The history of knowledge in theory and practice

Vincenzo Galilei and the Camerata Fiorentina are two practical historical examples that illustrate the need for a history of knowledge and a reinterpretation of the Scientific Revolution. Now, the connection between the practical examples and a theoretical framework of the history of knowledge will be made. We will see how practical knowledge, the growth of cities, innovation, and the Scientific Revolution are connected by this case study.

> *"Intellectual innovation develops not only from interaction between disciplines but also from outside the academic system, from practical knowledge or 'knowhow'. Orders of knowledge include practical, tacit or implicit knowledges, 'knowing how' to do something, as opposed to 'knowing that' something is the case, the form of knowledge dominant in the academic world."*[68]

Tacit knowledge is one of the key elements within the history of knowledge. The emancipation of various forms of knowledge is important to start appreciating how knowledge is created. Our case

[64] Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, pp. 128.
[65] Palisca, Florentine Camerata, pp. 6.
[66] Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, pp. 136.
[67] Pirotta, "Temperaments and Tendencies".
[68] Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 34.

study is full of tacit knowledge. It is unclear what the discussions and 'practical attempts' of the Camerata entailed. We only know the central figures within the group and there are some descriptions of the central activities of the Camerata. One thing that is apparent, both in the case of Vincenzo Galilei and of the Camerata, is that practical knowledge plays an important role. Vincenzo needed other scholars and intellectuals to provide him with humanistic and historical knowledge. He was, however, able to work with that knowledge from a practical point of view and he experimented with this knowledge. The great difficulty is, that this practical knowledge is seldomly put on paper and therefore:

> *"Studying embodied practices of tacit knowledge poses serious problems for historians. Take the case of the crafts, the many products of what is sometimes called the 'mindful hand' or 'vernacular epistemology'. Artisanal knowledge is literally handed down (the original meaning of 'tradition') from master to apprentice by example, almost without words. Hence the study of the crafts depends on fieldwork and participant observation, methods that are impossible to follow in the study of the past."*[69]

The case study of musical practice and theory might in this case prove to be crucial. The problem posed for historians is that most practical knowledge is never put on paper. In musical practice, this is of course also the case. It is hard to reconstruct how singers were singing, how actors were acting, and how instrumentalists were playing their instruments. However, because there are musical pieces of this period available in print and in editions, we can study so-called *idiomatic* pieces, pieces that are composed specifically for an instrument. [70] In practice, this means that we are, through re-enactament, to a certain extent able to understand the techniques of playing an instrument that were available. Similarly, for singers, we can analyse singing treatises to get a better understanding of tacit knowledge that was available. Although not a singing treatise per se, Caccini's preface to *Le nuove musiche* holds a wealth of information on the performance of his pieces. Moreover, we could think of the musical pieces that were written in the new monodic style, as written sources on how text was recited. The assumption is that the practice of reciting poetry and delivering speeches in the sixteenth century is strongly related to the monodic style that Caccini and Peri used to write their operatic recitatives around 1600. Lastly, Caccini mentions in his preface that he taught his wives and his daughters how to sing. Caccini's daughters became famous singers in Italy, Francesca being the most noteworthy example. It is plausible that Vincenzo Galilei also taught Galileo to play the lute. These are two examples how the tacit knowledge of musical practice is handed down from master to apprentice, in this case an example of knowledge dissemination within the context of the family. Luckily, Caccini described in what way he would sing himself and how he taught his singing students, allowing us a precious insight in a possible early modern singing practice. Although it is extremely challenging to reconstruct what he was doing, it is a tremendous opportunity to bring to life a tradition of tacit knowledge that can be used to in turn shed light on the methodologies of the history of knowledge. The argument of this chapter is turned around here: not only is the history of knowledge a way of studying the Florentine *Cinquecento*, this case study also provides a way of reflecting on the history of knowledge. Because of the possibilities that the study of music provides, this should be taken much more seriously by historians of knowledge.

The inclusion of artisanal or artistic practices reflects not only on the history of knowledge. We can also extend the argument to the Scientific Revolution:

> *"(…) it has been argued that the so-called 'scientific revolution' of the seventeenth century was the fruit of an encounter between the explicit and tacit knowledges of scholars and artisans.*

[69] Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 35.
[70] Cypess, *Curious and Modern Inventions,* pp. 3.

Scientific experiments, for example, were an elaboration of the 'trial and error' techniques that were common practice on the part of goldsmiths, for instance. We might speak of the new knowledge produced in this way as 'hybrid' or 'translated'."[71]

The encounter between artisans and scholars as a leading principle in the emergence of modern science is known as the 'Zilsel thesis'.[72] Although my research is not aiming to understand the emergence of modern science as a whole, it is significant to see that practical knowledge also played an important role in the emergence of opera. Furthermore, as Vincenzo Galilei is an important figure in the Scientific Revolution, the role of practical knowledge is directly related to the Scientific Revolution. My hypothesis is that the Scientific Revolution is strongly connected to knowledge practices such as the Camerata, at least as far as Italy is concerned. In this case, I associate the knowledge culture of the Camerata with an informal and often practical engagement with theoretical knowledge. In such a reading of the Scientific Revolution, the development of 'science' leans heavily on knowledge practices that are not only theoretically oriented towards the study of nature. Instead, both in theory and practice, the knowledge practice of the Camerata Fiorentina suggests that various knowledge domains were present in the changing landscape of the pursuit of knowledge. These knowledge domains concern as much the theory and mathematics of music as the literary developments in the vernacular, musical skill and virtuosity, and experiments regarding the revival of Greek ancient drama.

It is impossible and misleading to distinguish the developments in music that are associated with 'science' from developments in music that are associated with 'humanities'. The case study presented shows that historical figures and intellectual groups in the sixteenth century combined theoretical knowledge from both the quadrivium and the trivium with practical knowledge. This endeavour was not geared towards an understanding of the outside nature necessarily. Instead, the inside nature of the soul and the *affective* nature of human beings was as important. Furthermore, the goal of the Camerata Fiorentina was as much aesthetic as intellectual. Although the evidence of this case study is not at all conclusive for the whole pursuit of knowledge in Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century, it does point to a rigorously different interpretation of the Scientific Revolution. I propose to start thinking about this Revolution as a period of change in various fields of knowledge, that were inextricably linked to each other and were influenced by each other. Of course, the development of ideas that are important in the history of science should not be denied. In turn, neither should the developments in the pursuit of knowledge be denied that do not fit in the picture of modern science and are very specific for the sixteenth century.

The second half of the sixteenth century was an innovative period. However, the process of innovation is often blurry and the need for primacy seems to be persistent in history writing. The Camerata is an interesting case to reflect on innovation and primacy. Peter Burke states that

"(…) the mythology of innovation is dominated by individual geniuses, recent studies suggest that the propensity to innovate is a collective as well as an individual phenomenon, depending on interaction and exchange. The most important milieu for creative interaction is a small group, usually a face-to-face group, especially a group that meets regularly. Ideally, this group should be composed of people with common interests but different approaches, often linked to differences in their education, in different countries or in different disciplines."[73]

[71] Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 36.
[72] Cohen, *How Modern Science Came into the World,* pp. xix, xx.
[73] Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 23.

The Camerata Fiorentina fits the description above almost perfectly. The people that gathered in Giovanni de Bardi's house met each other face-to-face, and it is plausible that they met on a regular basis. This regularity will be explored later in relation to the Accademia degli Alterati. The informal nature of the group and the connection to the close circle of Giovanni de Bardi suggests that the group was relatively small. Furthermore, these people shared an interest in music and ancient drama but had different educations and different sets of skills. Lastly, not all Bardi's associates were from Florence. Most notably, Giulio Caccini came to the Florence at a young age (14 years old), recruited by the Medici court to sing as a boy soprano during the wedding festivities of Francesco Medici and Giovanna d'Austria.[74] The fact that Florence was a wealthy and important city in northern Italy is significant. It is plausible that the city had attractive powers that caused people like Caccini to gravitate there. Burke states that innovative groups

> *"were often encouraged by the growth of cities. Cities are magnets for immigrants from different places and with different skills and they offer niches or spaces of sociability such as taverns and coffeehouses where discussion can flourish, producing the 'buzz' that leads to new ideas."*[75]

On the basis of our case study, we can safely add to the 'niches or spaces of sociability' the culture of the camerata in Florence. It was in these places of informal knowledge exchange that people from various backgrounds could experiment with new ideas and new aesthetics. In the case of the Camerata this exchange was in part based on newly found ancient sources. The philologist Girolamo Mei found these sources in the Vatican Library and communicated about them with Vincenzo Galilei and Giovanni de Bardi. To this correspondence we will turn now.

2.7. A thought-provoking correspondence

Vincenzo turned to Girolamo Mei for guidance on the history of Greek music and drama. Palisca suggests that Vincenzo perhaps had to live up to the expectations of the 'dilettanti associated with Bardi'.[76] Hence, he was more interested in the *principles* of music theory than in practical composition, although the latter was much closer to his professional experience and education. The correspondence of Mei and Vincenzo is already a clear example of the translation and exchange of knowledge. Vincenzo was aware that his historical and philological experience was not suited to conduct satisfying research in this domain of knowledge. He therefore turned to Girolamo Mei.

Mei was originally from Florence, but he spent a significant portion of his life in Rome; Vincenzo and Mei did not know each other in person.[77] However, 'through a common friend (…), Galilei heard that an erudite Florentine gentleman in Rome [Mei] united these three faculties [i.e. history, philology, and mathematics]'.[78] Again, we find a historical actor that is 'multidisciplinary', or better, an early modern intellectual with a well-rounded education and a broad interest. It is very likely that, because Mei was not a practical musician, he was able to do original research. As a professional philologist without musical training, he was not preoccupied by a persistent Renaissance polyphonic aesthetic. By

[74] Kirkendale, *Court Musicians*, pp. 121.
[75] Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge,* pp. 23-24.
See also: De Munck & Romano, eds, *A History of Entanglements*, and: part 1 "Cities", in Dijksterhuis, Weber & Zuidervaart, eds, *Locations of Knowledge in Dutch Contexts*, and: Knorr Cetina, *Epistemic cultures*, and: Mulsow & Stamm, eds, *Konstellationsforschung*.
[76] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 8.
[77] Ibid., pp. 8.
[78] Ibid., pp. 8.

contrast, most of the intellectuals that were interested in Greek music were at least active in music making, either as a professional or an amateur.[79] Often, these individuals were barely scratching the surface of Greek art, rather than finding the core of it.[80] Although it is questionable whether Mei indeed found the core of Greek art, he can be credited for his innovative view and the discovery and interpretation of important ancient sources.

Vincenzo and Mei exchanged several lengthy letters and it is possible that Vincenzo went to Rome to visit Mei.[81] No doubt, they exchanged their ideas at length, if they ever met. Two aspects of the correspondence are of interest here. Firstly, the correspondence is an example of an exchange of an artisan/artist and a scholar, of practical and theoretical knowledge. Secondly, Mei's thoughts strongly opposed the aesthetic view of Vincenzo's teacher, Gioseffo Zarlino. Hence, supported by Mei's ideas, Galilei was able to radically change his opinion on musical aesthetic.

The correspondence between Mei and Galilei is a clear example of the translation of knowledge from theory to practice, from the scholar to the artisan or artist. It might be that Mei chose to write in the vernacular to accommodate for Vincenzo's lack of mastery of the Latin language. Vincenzo was, after all, a musician, not a scholar in the early modern sense of the word. Obviously, he was dedicated to the theory of music, despite being a practical musician in the first place. Although Vincenzo's work demonstrates that he was an original thinker and a brilliant mathematician, he did not have the philological training to conduct historical research at the level of someone like Girolamo Mei. 'A musician like Galilei, revolving in the smaller orbit of musicians and dilettantes, despite his proximity to the nerve centres of mid-sixteenth-century intellectual life, needed Mei's guidance to give his musical thinking a fresh start.'[82] This fresh start is illustrated by a radical change of thought that Vincenzo experienced from the way Zarlino amended the classical sources to the Franco-Flemish school of composing, to the thought-provoking philology that Mei conducted.

Mei's philological and historical work plays a key role in many aspects of Vincenzo's work. First, and already mentioned, is the radical change of thought that Mei promoted. Second, Mei encouraged Galilei to conduct (comparative) experiments:

> *"Mei suggested that Galilei make a simple experiment: '*Stretch out *over a lute (…) two … strings of equal length and width and* measure *out the frets under them accurately according to the distribution of the intervals in each of the two species of tuning (…) and then, (…),* observe *which of the two strings gives the notes that correspond to what is sung today.'"*[83]

Interestingly, the words printed in roman (i.e. stretch out, measure out, and observe), resemble the language of a prescription. Palisca states that Galilei conducted the experiment, because he 'was soon convinced that the syntonic [tuning] was not the tuning in use'.[84] The syntonic tuning was the tuning system as advocated by Gioseffo Zarlino. It is difficult to determine whether Galilei indeed conducted the experiment because the comparison with the tuning in singing is subject to many uncertainties. Even in the case he conducted the experiment, it is unlikely that he could conclude, purely on practical grounds, which tuning system was superior. The nature of the experiment is therefore questionable,

[79] The distinction between musical amateurs and professionals is more intricate than this sentence might suggest. Later in this thesis, I hope to address the early modern conception of musical amateurism further. For now, it suffices to remark that the process of professionalisation is associated strongly with the 19th century.
[80] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 2.
[81] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[82] Ibid., pp. 79-80.
[83] Ibid., pp. 67, Quotation from Letter no. 3, pp.140, fol 48v, my roman emphasis.
[84] Ibid., pp. 67.

at best. Perhaps, the allusion to experiment was largely a rhetorical device that Mei used in his text. After all, the experiment was more connected to practical mathematics than to philology. Moreover, the experiment was mainly purposed as an educational device to show that Zarlino's tuning system was faulty. The disagreement with Zarlino was mainly based on a theoretical argument of Mei, who stated that the syntonic tuning system was already rejected for centuries. Thus, Girolamo Mei was not interested in experiments as tools for research: he entertained a general distrust towards the human senses after all.

"He [Mei] doubted if practice could ever correspond with theory because of the fundamental cleavage between their ends."[85] Thus, Mei clearly is the intellectual in this story, with a certain disinterestedness to musical practice altogether. In that, he was relatively unique, however. Most music theorists before him were musicians at the same time. For Mei, this was not a problem at all, since 'the true end of science is altogether different from that of art (…)'.[86] Mei argues that

> *"The practitioner, having simply to satisfy the sense, does not need as much refinement and punctiliousness, so to speak, as the theorist requires. He does not esteem reason as much as the theorist and is content whenever his art succeeds in satisfying the sense without going any further, his end being none other than this."*[87]

Hence, the distinction between theory and practice was made painfully clear for Vincenzo. Although Vincenzo had an explicit interest in the theoretical aspects of music, Mei did not hesitate to distinguish himself from Galilei's practical endeavour. This indicates that also in the sixteenth century, there was a clear distinction between theory and practice and therefore, a certain separation between artisans and intellectuals. The correspondence between Vincenzo Galilei and Girolamo Mei is a clear-cut example of knowledge transfer and translation. Vincenzo needed Mei for his philological knowledge and Mei needed Vincenzo for the practical application of his novel theories. Although Mei acts as the master towards his apprentice Vincenzo, the philological knowledge that he gathered was eventually disseminated through the theoretical and musical works of Vincenzo and his collaborators (Caccini) and contemporaries (Peri, Cavalieri) in Florence.

The work of Girolamo Mei probably had to be conducted without a direct connection to practical music to be innovative. This is also suggested by Palisca:

> *"That he was not a musician and did not share the prejudices of the musical theorists of his time was probably one of his greatest advantages, for it saved him from falling into the errors of his contemporaries. But Mei had the far more important advantage of being the only trained philologist and historian among the many who hunted the secrets of Greek music."*[88]

Thus, Mei had a refreshing disinterestedness towards the practical side of music. The disinterestedness or objectivity is strongly connected to his historical and philological training. The history of objectivity is too complicated and long to address fully here, but I would suggest that the notion of objectivity is apparent in the philological work of Girolamo Mei. Although objectivity is often associated with modern (natural) science, in the sixteenth century objectivity is as much associated to other domains of knowledge.[89] Again, this puts the Scientific Revolution in perspective. Although this case study does

[85] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 66.
[86] Ibid., pp. 65, Quotation from Letter no. 1, pp. 103, fols. 19v-20r.
[87] Ibid., pp. 66, Quotation from Letter no 2, pp. 123 fol. 43v.
[88] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 2.
[89] Daston & Galison. *Objectivity*.

not present conclusive evidence, I suspect a strong link between the notion of objectivity in philology and the development of the Scientific Revolution.

An important contingency in the Mei-Galilei debate is pointed out by Palisca, namely the fact that Mei became famous for his musical criticism instead of his scholarly work: *"(…) as so often happens, Mei made his mark on history not by his honest scholarship but by his excursion into musical criticism."*[90] His scholarly work involved more than 20 years of archival research in the Vatican library. His interest in musical theory urged him to read the ancient treatises available and allowed him to discover the *Tables of Alypius* and the *Hymns of Mesomedes*.[91] His reading of the ancient sources was important, because most of his predecessors and contemporaries had only a superficial notion of the material and based themselves mostly on Boethius' work on music.[92] The discovery of the two works allowed him to reconstruct the ancient musical modes. The reconstruction of the ancient modes or *tonoi* was inspired by Mei's conviction that Greek music was always monodic, both in solo and in choral contexts. This was contrary to contemporary musical practice, since almost all written music was polyphonic. Both aspects are important conclusions that he passed on to Vincenzo and his collaborators. The most important reason why Mei was convinced that Greek (choral) music was monodic, lies in the belief that 'only a single melody could have aroused the affections in the manner described in the ancient accounts'.[93] This belief was based on ancient accounts and had to do with the fact that different areas of the voice had characteristic effects which invoked various affective qualities:

> *"As nature had given man a voice to express his inner feelings, is was natural that certain qualities of the voice were appropriate for expressing certain affections and states while other qualities were suitable for expressing opposing affections and states. (…) Mei observed a sequence of cause and effect between the affections and degree of pitch, which he reasoned was due to the relative agitation or sluggishness of the living organism in various passions. By reversing the natural process, presenting objects or inducing recollections that have previously aroused certain affections, one may move a person to these affections."*[94]

According to Mei, there was a strong connection between the tessitura of a melodic line and the affect associated with it. It is likely that this ancient theory was generally known and accepted, since other authors (Zarlino included) speak about it. In the fourth chapter of this thesis, we will explore this aspect further. Mei deemed the invoking of affects and passions as central to music making. Therefore, he worked out his view on the Greek *tonoi* in great technical detail. These details are not of importance here and we will just mention that both Bardi and Vincenzo used Mei's work on the *tonoi* in their own works, be it with an occasional misreading or misunderstanding. The central problem with polyphonic music is related to the relation between affect and voice tessitura and *tonoi*. Because polyphonic music makes use of various pitched individual melodic lines, the result includes a mixture of different affects invoked by the different melodies. The problem is that the affects of the low melodies are diminished by the affects of the higher melodies, leading to a net result of unperceivable affective content. The ancients could not have sung polyphonic music, because their music was able to 'stir so vividly in the listener whatever affections'.[95]

[90] Palisca, *Letters*., pp. 70.
[91] Ibid., pp. 59.
[92] Ibid., pp. 40.
[93] Ibid., pp. 46.
[94] Ibid., pp. 46.
[95] Ibid., pp. 47.

The importance for music being able to stir the listener is because of the relation to rhetoric. It is known that Mei had an agenda of moving music away from the quadrivium into the trivium and hence in the direction of rhetoric. Music has affective powers, just like rhetoric has. For Zarlino and his like-minded contemporaries, the weakening of the affective power of music was not a problem. They had another ideal in mind, namely that music 'aimed not to move listeners to tears and laughter but to dispose them to virtue'.[96] This (neo-)Platonic ideal was opposed by Mei's more Aristotelian view, based on Aristoteles' *Poetics* and writings by Quintilian on rhetoric. Again, we see how idealistic views on musical aesthetic are determining factors for the direction in which the pursuit of knowledge moved.

Much of Mei's work as communicated in his letters appears in Vincenzo's *Discorso*. However, 'it took a musician to point out the significance for practical music of Mei's discoveries about antiquity'.[97] The translation of Mei's knowledge in Vincenzo's treatise and the dissemination through his musical writings were essential for the pursuit of knowledge as a whole. As was suggested before, Galilei perhaps tried to live up to the expectations of Bardi and the affiliates of the Camerata, including a historical component in his work. This interest of Vincenzo in theory, apart from a perhaps genuine interest in it, might also have to do with a sense of upward mobility that Vincenzo experienced. Vincenzo was not born of noble blood and did not receive a formal education. He did, however, marry into a noble family. It is possible that an important part of his upward mobility consisted of his interest in the theory of music, next to his musical practice. Despite the motivation that Vincenzo may have had to engage with the theory of music, his contribution was of significant value.[98] Lastly, the interest that Vincenzo developed in experimentation was always attributed to his musical practice. Although Mei has a divergent view on experimentation, it was the scholar who suggested to Vincenzo to conduct an experiment to compare the tuning systems of Zarlino with the tuning of singers. It shows that the history of experimentation is perhaps much more complicated than we want to assume.

Although Girolamo Mei was a Florentine philologist, the fact that he lived in Rome is important in this case study. Without the correspondence of Vincenzo Galilei and Girolamo Mei, very little source material would be available to study the pursuit of knowledge of the Florentine Camerata. The *camerata*-culture would perhaps be a promising category to study from the perspective of the history of knowledge and the Republic of Letters, we are still faced with the problem of source material. Because of the informal nature of the Camerata, no proceedings are available and almost nothing is known about the central activities during the meetings. This fact leaves us with an enormous challenge regarding methodology. In this specific case study, we have to be aware of the many gaps that are still there. There is very little known about the composition of the group during the most active years of the Camerata. Even less is known how these people were connected to each other and how their individual viewpoints influenced and shaped the discussions and experiments. We are lucky that this correspondence is available, although the evidence is fragmentary at best.

Despite the fragmentary nature of the evidence, important conclusions regarding the history of knowledge can be drawn. The correspondence is a clear example of knowledge gathering and transfer. Also, it provides a practical example of the exchange between theory and practice, between a scholar and an artisan. The role of experimentation plays an almost cryptic role in this. It is difficult to assert that experimentation was indeed valued by Girolamo Mei as worthy of research. His strong intellectual profile suggests that the role of experimentation was merely educational and rhetorical. It might be that Vincenzo was inspired to conduct experiments, however. Of course, this case study is by

[96] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 43.
[97] Ibid., pp. 77.
[98] Ibid., pp. 77.

no means conclusive, but it attempts to question the standard account of experimentation and objectivity as an element of natural philosophy. Lastly, we have seen that music played an important role in the pursuit of knowledge, involving philology as an important factor. The role of music was fundamental for the study of the passions and affects. As such, the pursuit of knowledge is found to be an endeavour that connects domains of knowledge in a surprising way.

2.8. Conclusions

The context of the Camerata Fiorentina as a case study for knowledge exchange, translation, production, employment, and dissemination proves to be a rich one. Many processes central to the history of knowledge are identified in this context. Furthermore, it is evident how the group structure of the camerata, with intellectuals from various knowledge domains engaging in one topic, was crucial for the development of original ideas. One of the key processes identified is the exchange of practice and theory, both between individuals and within individuals. In practice this means that Vincenzo needed the counselling advice and knowledge of Girolamo Mei, the musical exchanges with Giulio Caccini and Giovanni de Bardi, and the connection with literary figures for inspiration regarding textual approaches. This case study confirms the suggestion by Peter Burke that innovation often is a process involving a group of individuals that are to some extent detached from the bigger (intellectual) world.[99] Recall that nor Vincenzo nor Caccini were dependent on a job in a church context, allowing them to freely gravitate towards a new musical aesthetic in which direct emotions (or passions) were important.

Moreover, the engagement of various knowledge domains in an episode of fundamental musical change overlaps with the initial developments within the Scientific Revolution. Also, some historians of science consider the Camerata as part of this Scientific Revolution.[100] However, this period of change was not only restricted to the domain of natural philosophy. Instead, I suggest that this 'revolution' was as much going on in other categories of the pursuit of knowledge, such as philology, history writing, and music. Music is in the context of the Scientific Revolution often connected to the quadrivium, highlighting its mathematical properties. This case study, however, shows the strong agenda of Girolamo Mei in 'wishing to lead music out of the sphere of mathematics and physics into that of poetics.'[101] This agenda was not without success and, as I will argue later, one of the reasons why the Florentines were the forerunners of the new monodic singing style. Music is an instructive case study for the history of knowledge because it connects theory and practice, the trivium and the quadrivium, and the Scientific Revolution to the humanistic enterprise.

[99] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 23,24.
[100] Cohen, *Quantifying music,* pp. 78,79.
[101] Palisca, *Letters*, pp. 81.

Chapter 3

Rhetoric and music: the social context

"The pressing task for modern historians is to reconstruct in greater depth the attitudes and mentalities of a culture in which eloquence, conceived as a moral force, was the most important accomplishment of man."[102]

Brian Vickers in 'Philosophy and humanistic disciplines: Rhetoric and poetics'

3.1. Rhetoric and the history of knowledge

Rhetoric is becoming more and more important in our current society: *how* something is said is found to be more important than *what* is said. The political arena is particularly full of rhetorical action: the election of president Obama, North Korean propaganda, British eloquence, and Hitler's rise and fall are just a few noteworthy examples. Despite the apparent central position of rhetoric in our society, rhetoric is seldomly taught in a systematic way. Yet, in the early modern period, rhetoric was central to the pursuit of knowledge:

> *"During the Middle Ages rhetoric barely rose above the status of preaching and writing letters, but during humanism it towered above all the other artes [liberales]."*[103]

Although rhetoric obtained a high position in Renaissance knowledge and has received plenty of attention in the history of literature and art, its study merits a better integration into the history of knowledge. The humanistic interest in classical sources is one of the main factors that enabled the interest in rhetoric. Rhetorical treatises became available and were studied extensively by humanist scholars in the Renaissance.

> *"In every sense (…) it is right to link Renaissance humanism with 'the rhetorical tradition in western culture', and to observe that we are as yet far from appreciating the extent of rhetoric's domain."*[104]

The city of Florence appears as one of the main centres that 'had a formative influence on the rediscovery of rhetoric' in the fifteenth century.[105] At the turn of the fourteenth century, the statutes of the University of Florence illustrate the importance of rhetoric: *"(…) the art of rhetoric is not only the instrument of persuasion for all the sciences, but also the greatest ornament of public life (…)."*[106] The Florentines, thus, did not only recognise the value of rhetoric from a scholarly perspective, they also deemed it central to their public lives. Fifteenth-century Florentine politicians made extensive use of rhetoric in the glorification of Florence. One of the aspects that was part of this rhetoric was history writing on the city of Florence. This history writing was something specifically Florentine called 'civic humanism', according to the Baron thesis. This civic humanism was

[102] Vickers, "Philosophy and humanistic disciplines: Rhetoric and poetics", pp. 745.
[103] Bod, *A New History of the Humanities*, pp. 229.
[104] Vickers, "Philosophy and humanistic disciplines: Rhetoric and poetics", pp. 724.
[105] Ibid., pp. 728.
[106] Ibid., pp. 727. It is quite surprising that 'University of Florence' is used by Vickers because no such institution was known to be existent in the 14th century. Most likely, the author meant the Studium Generale in Florence. Although this is likely, the term 'University of Florence is inaccurate and confusing.

> *"The fusion of two distinct currents of Florentine thought: apolitical so-called "Petrarchan" humanism, on the one hand, and the Guelf tradition of patriotic resistance by the Florentine city-state to imperial domination, on the other."*[107]

One of the most famous writers in this context is Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444).[108] Among others, Girolamo Mei engaged in history writing on the city of Florence with his 'De origine urbis Florentiae'.[109] The combination of scholarly interest and widespread employment of rhetoric in the Renaissance is significant from the perspective of the history of knowledge, because it provides another example of theory and practice.

Rhetoric, essentially, is a practical art that therefore needs to be practiced. We will see in this chapter that the practice of rhetoric (and poetic delivery) was central to the activities of the Accademia degli Alterati in Florence. The practice of rhetoric had to be "absorbed into their [the students'] intellectual metabolism".[110] This aspect is of interest to the history of knowledge: the practical component stresses the need for complete mastery of rhetorical skill. Not only were students expected to know about rhetorical devices and how to write a persuasive text. They were expected to *employ* these skills in delivery as well. The employment of knowledge is one of the central aspects in the history of knowledge. Usually, however, the process of employment of knowledge is associated with technology and industry. The early modern knowledge pursuit shows that humanistic knowledge also had to be employed. Rhetoric was not solely theoretical knowledge, but also a performative and embodied one. Much of the *actio* consisted of 'tacit' knowledge: a performative style, and perhaps one that was subject to changes in fashion. A humanistic education prepared the elite for a role in public life. The mastery of oratory was essential for early modern politicians. They had to be able to move (*movere*) people, instead of teaching (*docere*) them. Lastly, and strongly connected to the practical aspect, is the art (*τέχνη*) of speaking.[111] In the history of knowledge, the aspect of τέχνη is strongly associated with artisanal knowledge. It is important to note that this association is not only connected to the artisans and artists in the early modern period and that many intellectuals also recognized the value of skill. Of course, the scholars valued skill mostly in the context of intellectual activities, not necessarily in the case of artisans. It is, however, an important observation that reflects on the practice of the history of knowledge.[112]

Rhetoric, in the mind of the humanists, was not limited to speeches in prose: poetry was also deeply invested in rhetoric. Rens Bod's introduction to early modern rhetoric in *A new History of the Humanities* is concise and very informative but it lacks one central component: precisely this link to poetry. Bod separates poetry from rhetoric from the early modern age onwards, but it is important to stress that poetry and rhetoric are still strongly connected in the early modern era:

> *"The modern reader approaching Renaissance texts in the expectation of finding a clear-cut distinction between rhetoric and poetics will soon be disappointed. Their isolation as critical terms is a product of post-Romantic literary theory, deriving from a period in which traditional rhetoric had been banished from education. To approach a rhetorical culture like the*

[107] Nederman, "Civic Humanism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*
[108] "Leonardo Bruni", *Encyclopædia Britannica*
[109] Hier. Meius, *De origine Urbis Florentiae*, Magl. XXV, no. 390, BNCF.
[110] Vickers, "Philosophy and humanistic disciplines: Rhetoric and poetics", pp. 741.
[111] Ibid., pp. 732.
[112] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge*, pp. 80.

Renaissance with post- or even anti-rhetorical expectations is obviously anachronistic, and can only produce complaints about the 'confusion' of rhetoric with poetics."[113]

In particular, the component of poetic performance and rhetorical delivery are strongly connected. This is a topic that we will turn to in the next chapter. In this chapter, we will show how the social context of music making and rhetorical delivery are connected.

3.2. Rhetoric and the history of opera

The focus on rhetorical practice (or *actio*) is different from 'common' musicological practice, in the sense that there is often much attention for the employment of rhetorical devices in composition. I want to highlight one example that is illustrative for the abstract way that rhetoric can play a role in composition. Anne Smith writes in her *The Performance of 16th-Century Music: Learning from the Theorists* a whole chapter on rhetoric and counterpoint. The central part of the chapter includes the analysis of a motet from Orlando di Lasso: *In me transierunt irae tuae*. In her analysis, Smith identifies the nature of certain melodic intervals that are associated with a certain affect. An example is the first melodic leap of a minor sixth followed by a descending line, associated with grief, the main affect of the motet. Another example is the choice for the Phrygian mode, the mode that is strongly associated with passions such as sadness. I want to make two remarks about this practice. First, it focuses mostly on the compositional side of the musical work. This approach is incredibly important, since it is often only the music on paper that is still available from this time. However, the performative element is ignored to a certain extent. Second, the employment of affect theory and rhetorical devices in composition is rather abstract, in terms of the 'emotional' effect. I think that Vincenzo Galilei and Giulio Caccini were searching for a more direct approach, in which an audience is be moved by acting and musical delivery, not solely by compositional art. The ideal was that the affect is displayed as clear as possible, integrating the acting, the colour of the voice or the instrument with the affective quality of the musical piece. In contrast to Anne Smith's work, my approach focuses not primarily on the compositional side of rhetoric, i.e. the *inventio* and the *dispositio*. Instead, it centralises the rhetorical *actio.*

The social context of rhetorical delivery will be examined by extending the scope of our site of knowledge from the Camerata Fiorentina to the Accademia degli Alterati. Music theory and practice played an important role for the knowledge pursuit of the Accademia degli Alterati. This is exemplified by the connection between music and rhetoric in the academic practice. It was Girolamo Mei's wish to connect music to the trivium, instead of the quadrivium. We will see how this worked at the Accademia degli Alterati.

The second part of this chapter will be devoted to a reading of a lecture by Giovanni de Bardi at the Accademia degli Alterati. The manuscript of this lecture has received little scholarly attention and has not appeared in edition. I provide a transcription of the lecture in Appendix A to this thesis. Bardi's speech is important for understanding the famous debate about on who the best poet was: Ludovico Ariosto or Torquato Tasso. Bardi's lecture argues in favour of Ariosto, drawing on musical practice in his argumentation. Thus, musical practice is directly linked to oratorical delivery and the evaluation of poetic texts.

Lastly, I will address the Commedia dell'Arte: comical, improvised theatre that was widely known in Italy. Troups of the Commedia dell'Arte performed throughout the country - even performed

[113] Vickers, "Philosophy and humanistic disciplines: Rhetoric and poetics", pp. 715.

at the wedding festivities of the Medici. More importantly, most of the actresses of the Commedia dell'Arte regularly sang in performances. Some actresses became famous for their singing and had successful careers in this regard.[114] I think that this way of singing was much closer to the monodic style that is associated with the Camerata Fiorentina than to the polyphonic style of Renaissance music. The Commedia dell'Arte deals with the same domains of knowledge, combining affects, music and poetic delivery, just like the members of the Camerata had in mind. The Commedia dell'Arte shows a different social context, balancing the overly intellectual account on the Accademia, in which similar knowledge domains play a role.

3.3. Accademia degli Alterati and rhetorical delivery

In the previous chapter, we came across the Camerata Fiorentina as an informal group that was interested in multiple domains of knowledge. The members of the Accademia degli Alterati were, likewise, interested in various domains of knowledge. The greatest difference is that the Accademia was a much more formal assembly than the Camerata. There was an official list of members and the academy kept a *Diario*. We already came across the *Diario* in chapter 2, where Cosimo Rucellai gave note of absence because he was going to the house of Monseigneur Bardi to make music. This leave of absence also illustrates the connection between the Accademia and the Camerata. The Accademia degli Alterati is, like the Camerata, closely associated with the musical changes that took place in the second half of the sixteenth century. The change of our scope from the Camerata to the Accademia is associated with a move from an informal approach to knowledge to a more formal approach. In the Italian academies, only formally educated people could become members. As a consequence, musicians like Vincenzo Galilei and Giulio Caccini could not take part in the activities of the Accademia degli Alterati.[115] On the other hand, Giovanni de Bardi and Girolamo Mei could, and they were in fact members of this academy. Girolamo Mei was already in Rome when he received his honorary membership. He did not take part in the regular meetings, but he frequently sent letters and his work was discussed during the Accademia's sessions.[116] The advantage of studying the Accademia degli Alterati is that there is much archival material available. Although scattered over libraries in Florence, it is relatively easy to investigate the membership, the literary output, and the literary debates that took part within the academy.

The social context of the Accademia degli Alterati is a complex one, from the perspective of Florentine politics. The Accademia Fiorentina was sponsored by the Medici court and was the most important Florentine academy. It has been suggested that the Alterati had a political agenda in establishing their own academy, one that was not officially linked to the Medici family. Although scholars disagree on this issue (caused by the unclarity of primary sources), it is known that various prominent Alterati received central positions within the Medici household. Most music historians (Palisca, Weinberg) do not go into the details of the political nature of the *accademia*, because it has nothing to do with the subject of music.[117] This, however, might be a missed opportunity. Deborah Blocker discusses the connection of the theoretical work of the Alterati and the invention of the new

[114] MacNeil, *Music and* Women, and: Chaffee & Crick, *Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte,* pp. 246-276.
[115] Blocker, "Accademia degli Alterati", pp. 89. At least Peri was never a member of the Accademia, and very likely Caccini and Galilei were not as well. I did not find them on the list with academy members.
[116] Palisca, "The Alterati of Florence", in *Studies in the history of Italian music and music theory,* pp. 415/6.
[117] Blocker, "Pro- *and* anti-Medici?", in: *Italian academies*, pp. 38.

art form of opera, focusing mainly on Peri's *Euridice*. She develops an argument that is interesting from the perspective of the history of knowledge.

There are a few aspects of the argument that I want to highlight. The independent nature of the Alterati (independent of the ruling Medici family), ensured the possibility for experimenting *"with the idea that art, though needing to respect the existing political framework, should not be subjected to short-term political goals."*[118] *Euridice* was part of the Medici wedding festivities in 1600, and it was common practice that the spectacles explicitly or implicitly stated the grandeur of the Medici family. Because of the somewhat detached nature of the Alterati, and the fact that *Euridice* was not performed as the most important performance of the festivities, it might be the case that there was indeed more freedom to experiment with the art form. This experiment resulted in an artistic form that contained new elements, in several regards. Blocker remarks that the dialogues were sung, instead of declaimed.[119] We will see in the next chapter that there was perhaps not such a big difference between declaiming and singing. The use of a dramatic narrative or plot was certainly new. Although opera and the *intermedi* are often related, the difference between these art forms is the static nature of the *intermedi* and the dynamic narrative of the operatic form. The inclusion of a dramatic narrative was inspired by the revival of Greek drama, discussed in the Accademia degli Alterati and in the Camerata Fiorentina. The second important aspect is that *Euridice* is interpreted as a stylised form of theory. The idea is that

> *"the work itself was in fact theory set as fiction. As such it attempted to offer its viewers (and readers) a supple and elegant allegorical spectacle that was meant not only to be enjoyed as a fable but also to be deciphered as a statement on art and on the social function of artists."*[120]

This is an interesting observation, because it emancipates poetic and dramatic output as expressions of knowledge. Blocker remarks that the choice for the story of Orpheus is important in the political context as a statement of the importance of the arts of music, dance and drama for the court.[121] *Euridice* is thus seen as an art form that contains theory. Because of this stylised form, the implicit knowledge was easily disseminated. The operas of Claudio Monteverdi, still famous today, are an example of this dissemination. This case study suggests that knowledge is not always disseminated through textual practice but even through musical drama containing theory implicitly.

The independent position of the Alterati was carefully maintained by its members. Whereas the Accademia Fiorentina held public lectures that later appeared in print for an even wider audience, the Accademia degli Alterati kept manuscripts of the lectures exclusively for themselves. New members could only be admitted by a unanimous positive vote of all the members. Absent members had to cast a written vote.[122] Recall the quotation from the previous chapter by Burke about the importance of face-to-face groups ('epistemic communities/cultures' or *Konstellationen*) in the creation of new knowledge.[123]

The Accademia degli Alterati was such a small group that met regularly, once or twice a week. The relative secrecy that was kept within the academy created a sense of trust amongst each other, that allowed members to speak our more freely amongst themselves. This reflected on the central activity of the academy:

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[118] Blocker, "Accademia degli Alterati", pp. 112.
[119] Ibid., pp. 94.
[120] Ibid., pp. 116/8.
[121] Ibid., pp. 106/7.
[122] Blocker, "Pro- *and* anti-Medici?" pp. 38/39, Blocker, "Accademia degli Alterati", pp. 89, n. 32.
[123] Burke, *What is History of Knowledge*, pp. 23.

> *"In the secluded space of the academy, the expounding of judgments and the voicing of evaluations on issues of art and learning prolonged, in the private sphere, the practices of public speech which characterized Florence's republican regime, transferring them to a newly established sphere of activity (aesthetics and, to a lesser extent, erudition) which — though certainly not without far-reaching political stakes — could, when needed, be passed off as politically innocuous."*[124]

In short, the Accademia degli Alterati provided a pressure cooker for innovative ideas, that allowed for a new musical and dramatic aesthetic, nurtured by polemical debates on literary discussion.

3.4. The Alterati and musical change

These literary discussions were the central part of the *accademia's* activities. Although many members of the Alterati were amateur musicians, there is no evidence that music making was a central activity of the Alterati. Instead, only the theoretical aspects of music were discussed. It is safe to assume that primarily musical theory connected to poetry and rhetoric was discussed. The departure point for their discussions was the *Poetics* of Aristotle. In this regard, the Alterati reflect an increased interest for Aristotle in the sixteenth century. Whereas the intellectual life in fifteenth-century Florence is characterised by Ficino's Platonic Academy, the sixteenth century shows an upsurge of Aristotelian ideas. Likewise, in literary taste, the Alterati differed not much from other Italian academies.[125] However, there was perhaps no music making involved, the Alterati made sure not only to have formal lectures and discussions. Although they constituted a formal academy, it did not prevent them from having dinner and enjoying their time together. Palisca even suspects that the dinners were much better attended than the lectures.[126] It is only logical that these events were embroidered by musical performances, but no conclusive evidence is available. In turn, this might point to the important nature of the Camerata Fiorentina as a place in which experimentation with musical material was possible. This, however, is mostly speculative.

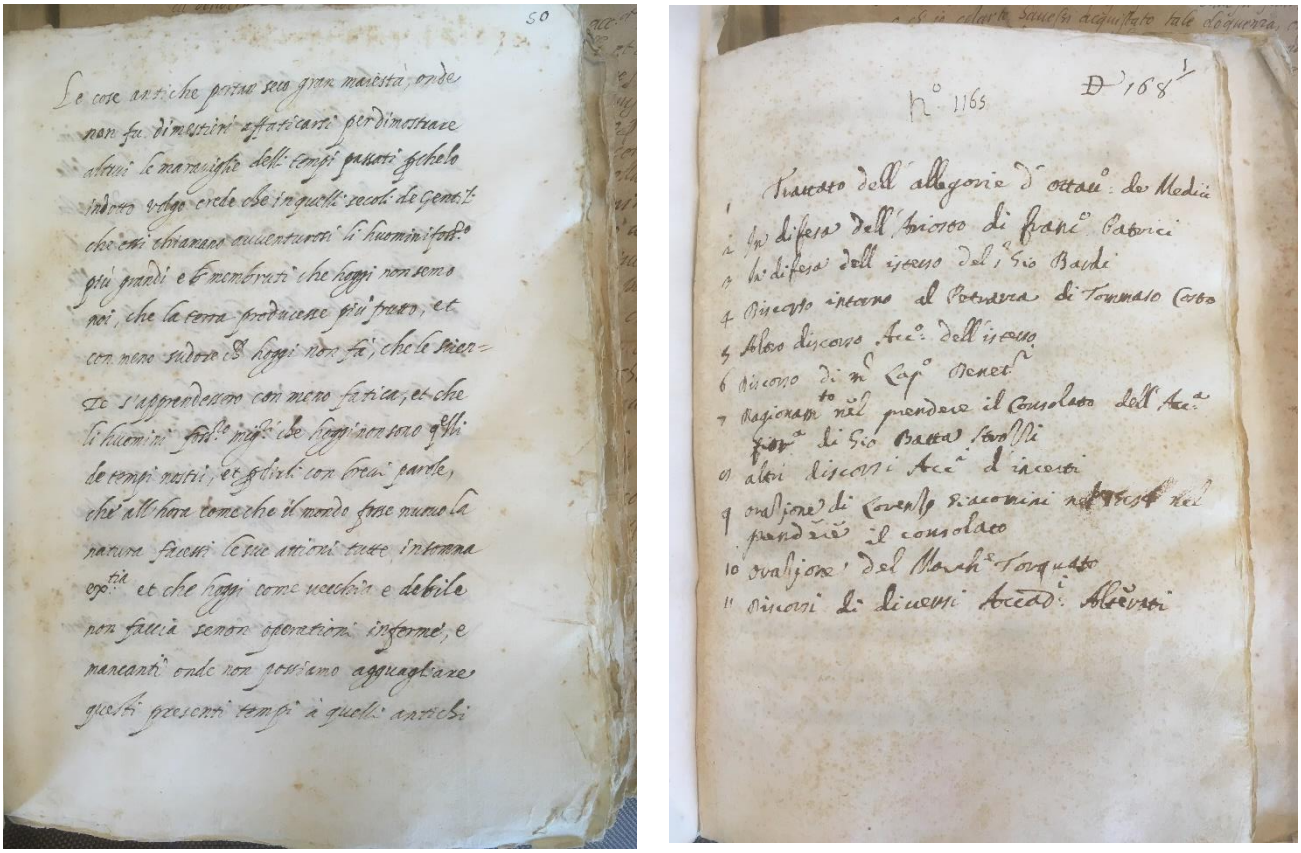
Almost everybody that is associated with the change of musical language in the second half of the sixteenth century, was a member of the Accademia degli Alterati. I will name the most important figures: Ottavio Rinuccini (librettist of Peri's Euridice), Jacopo Corsi (patron of Jacopo Peri), Giovanni de Bardi, Girolamo Mei, Giovanni Battista Strozzi and Gabriello Chiabrera. The last two provided texts for *Le nuove musiche* by Caccini. Although Corsi never became an official member, he is in the proceedings listed as a visitor on several occasions. Many more Alterati were somehow connected to music and they are often considered musical amateurs. The notion of amateurism and professionalism in the sixteenth century differs from our current understanding of it. Giovanni de Bardi is illustrative in this regard. So far, Bardi is only mentioned as the patron of the Camerata, but he was a composer as well. He wrote *intermedi* for the 1589 Medici wedding and was in charge of the musical festivities of this event, together with Emilio de Cavalieri. Ironically, this event eventually caused Bardi to move out of Florence, because he fell in disrespect with the new Medici ruler, Ferdinando I. Giovanni de Bardi, being a composer, did not consider himself a professional musician. Early modern musical amateurs could still be virtuosic performers and/or composers. The same argument goes for Peri's patron Jacopo Corsi, who even played in the performances of Peri's operas.

[124] Blocker, "Accademia degli Alterati", pp. 88,89.
[125] Weinberg, "Alterati and Literary Taste", pp. 213, Palisca, "Alterati of Florence", pp. 412.
[126] Palisca, "Alterati of Florence", pp. 417.

3.5 Bardi at the Accademia degli Alterati

As noted above, it is difficult to establish the importance of the subject of music in the knowledge pursuit of the Accedemia degli Alterati. This section will be devoted to a lecture by Giovanni de Bardi on the eminence of the poet Ludovio Ariosto: *'In difesa dell'Ariosto del Gio Bardi'*. It shows in practice how music was part of the literary discussions. This supports the main argument of this chapter, namely that the social context of rhetorical discussions was connected to the changes in musical style.

The lecture by Bardi is mentioned only in passing in secondary literature and so far, the lecture remains unpublished.[127] In the appendix to this thesis, I provide a full transcription. The manuscript is in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, in the collection of Magliabechi (shelf mark Magl. VI, 168). This shelf mark number holds a collection with several other manuscripts, mainly lectures and speeches by other Alterati (see Figure 1, right). For further research, it would be interesting to study these manuscripts in conjunction with Bardi's lecture. The other lecture that is concerned with praise of Ariosto's work, given by Francesco Patrici would be a good starting point. Another option would be a speech by Giovanni Battista Strozzi, a poet who wrote some of the texts in Caccini's *Le nuove musiche*.



1. Left: First page of the manuscript of Bardi's lecture. Magliabechiano VI 168. In the source, other manuscript collections are included with miscellanea. Right: The collection with Bardi's lecture is smaller than the other manuscripts and they are bundled together with other lectures. The table of contents shows that there are 11 units in this little booklet. The third piece is the lecture by Bardi. The second is the other lecture on Ariosto, by Francesco Patrici, the ninth is the inaugural lecture of Giovanni Battista Strozzi when he became consul of the Accademia.

[127] Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, pp. 11. As far as I know of no edition was published.

Bardi was a Florentine nobleman, the Count of Vernio. He has a broad interest in knowledge: 'he did not concentrate on any single goal, such as the reform of music, but was dedicated to the advancement of knowledge on many fronts. Any academy revolving around him had thus to keep pace with his many interests, theatrical, literary, musical, scientific, sportive, military, and civil.'[128] Bardi was active in the military, fighting against Siena and the Turks.[129] Regarding his sportive interest, there is an interesting treatise by Bardi on the game of *calcio fiorentino,* an early version of football: *Discorso sopra il giuoco del calcio, del Puro Accademico Alterato*, which appeared in print in 1580.[130] (Bardi is called *Puro*, in another source from the Magliabechiano: Magl. IX, 134. The practice of nicknames was common within the *accademia*, almost every Alterato had a pseudonym). Bardi also wrote compositions, most notably some *intermedi* for the Medici weddings. The *intermedi* were spectacles with music and dance that were played between acts of a play. It is suggested that the combination of acting and the *intermedi* as art forms led to the combination of them in opera, which seems a logical conclusion.[131] The count of Vernio also wrote literary works and poetry. From the quotation above, we learn that that Bardi had also a scientific interest. Here, we should not confuse 'science' this with modern science or perhaps even natural science, nor project modern science unto early modern *scienze*. Instead, 'knowledge' or even 'art' would be a translation that is more satisfying. The fact that his talents, also in the domain of natural philosophy and mathematics, are mentioned in the *Diario* of the Alterati shows that these capacities were highly esteemed by his associates in the academy. Hence, not only poetry and literary theory was important, the combination of domains of knowledge was regarded positively as well.

3.6. The lecture

The lecture in defense of Ariosto compares Ariosto's poetry to the works of ancient authors. The main argument is that the Italian poet surpasses their works.[132] The lecture, delivered on 24 February 1583, is part of a bigger debate on the question who was the most outstanding poet, Ariosto or Tasso, and recalls the ancient question about the superiority of either Homer or Vergil.[133] I use implicit and explicit references to singing and music in the lecture to identify four different ways in which singing and poetry are related. The first is based on the general tendency to mention singing in relation to the performance of poetry. In other words, it is generally accepted for poetry to be sung, not merely to be read or delivered. The second foregrounds music and singing in the criticism of poetry. Bardi says that Ariosto's poetry outshines other poetic art because it invokes the need to be sung. The third argument focuses on a reference by Bardi to music performances in the academies. The last argument is on the question of monodic composition, relating to ancient musical practice.

There is much unclarity and debate about what is meant with singing in this context. For example, the chapters of Dante's Commedia are called Canto's. The unclarity about the way of performing poetry is in part also caused by the various ways in which it was performed in the sixteenth century. A singer like Caccini would have performed differently than an actor that delivered poetry, for example. In the next chapter we will explore this subject in more detail.

[128] Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, pp. 11.
[129] Ibid., pp. 8.
[130] To consult here: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_a-YPwMlZW-IC and in BNCF Palat. C. 1.2.15.
[131] Goodwin, 'Theatre music', *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
[132] Palisca, *Florentine Camerata*, pp. 11.
[133] Ibid., pp. 11.

The first aspect of importance in Bardi's lecture is that he refers on multiple occasions to poetry as being sung. Some examples: *canta con versi*, [134] *poiche le sue poesie si cantavano*,[135] *son fatte adunq[ue] le Poesie in versi per cantarsi*,[136] *dell'Ariosto che è cantato in Italia, in Francia, in Spagna, trapassato in India e trasportato in lingua latina!*.[137] In all these quotations, it is assumed that poetry is sung and that this is the general way of doing. The third quote is the most specific, in the sense that some poetry made to sing. From this we can conclude that not all poetry was sung. The last quotation is interesting because it shows that the poetry of Ariosto was apparently translated into Latin. The translation of vernacular Italian literature to neo-Latin was not uncommon. In fact, these translations are believed to have influenced the popular reception of Ariosto's work.[138] Furthermore, it shows that the poetry was disseminated into other countries, even to India. The relation between poetry delivery and singing will be explored further in the following chapter, but we already see here that poetry was at least not spoken. There was a certain degree of singing perceivable in delivery of poetic texts.

Second, the relation between verse in poetry and singing. Bardi develops an argument concerning the use of prose and verse, arguing that the use of verse is more praiseworthy.[139] The consistent use of verse is better because it allows the text to be sung. The speaker explicitly supports this idea of verse poetry with naming Plato, Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Vitruvius, Ptolemy and Boethius. To even better understand this argument, we should connect this to the revival of Greek tragedy. The debate that Giovanni de Bardi is referring to is concerned with the question whether the tragedies on the ancient Greek stage were entirely sung, or whether parts of it were recited. The general idea was that the Greek choir sang the *tutti* parts in unison. Recall that this was something that Bardi and Vincenzo learned from Girolamo Mei's letters. The solo parts were either recited or sung. Bardi argues that the best poetry is the poetry which allows everyone to sing: both the *cetera da gente* and the *huomini nobili e di molto sapere*.[140] Thus, he connects the praise for the poet Ariosto to the fact that his poetry allows both the lead actors and the people to sing. Regarding the people, he means that the people could sing in the vernacular. The poetry of Ariosto allows to be sung because it is full of rhythm and sound, like music is. Lastly, Bardi refers to the musician Orpheus. The myth of Orpheus is extremely important for the Florentines. First, Orpheus is a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The stories from this collection were extremely popular in sixteenth-century Italy. Next, the story of Orpheus is used frequently in the early operas, and some connection to North Italy is suggested by various authors.[141] As an example, we already came across the story of *Euridice* earlier in this chapter, in relation to the political situation of the Accademia degli Alterati and the Medici family. Lastly, the story of Orpheus centralises the affective powers of music, something that was on the agenda of Giovanni de Bardi. By mentioning Orpheus, he offers the most powerful argument that he has for the point he wants to make: Ariosto is the greatest poet, because he makes poetry in verse that invites singing (*la sua Poesia che invita ciascuno à cantarla*).[142] Implicitly, he says that sung poetry succeeds to fulfil the highest goal, namely, to move an audience with strong affective powers. In fact, these powers are so strong, Orpheus even managed to move the gods of the underworld, Pluto and Proserpina with his sung

[134] The translations are by the author. Bardi, *Lecture in defense of Ariosto*. Appendix A, pp. 54v: sing with verses. In this context, a 'verse' is a stanza from a poem that is 'sung' by the poet.
[135] Ibid., pp. 60v: for his poems were sung.
[136] Ibid, pp. 61v: therefore the Poems in verse are made to sing.
[137] Ibid., pp. 64r: [the poetry] of Ariosto that is sung in Italy, France, in Spain, disseminated to India and translated to Latin.
[138] Lucioli, "Ariosto Latine Redditus", pp. 114.
[139] Bardi, *Lecture,* Appendix A, pp. 61v.
[140] Ibid., pp. 61r.
[141] Carter, *Orpheus in the Marketplace*, and Blocker, 'Accademia degli Alterati'.
[142] Bardi, *Lecture*, Appendix A, pp. 62r.

poetry. The goal of moving the audience through various affective states was based on the interpretation of the *katharsis* in Aristotle's Poetics. In short, this argument shows how music is used in the relation to the performance of poetry. For this thesis, it is important to note the strong connection of the two in relation to the use of affect. Next, it points us in the direction of poetry performance and declamation, which we will explore in the next chapter. For now, it suffices to mention that the oral performance is central for the Alterati, because of the rhythm and the sounds that it produces. This, however, imposes serious consequences for historians in the research of poetry. I would suggest that attempt to re-enact such poetic performances becomes extremely important.

The relation to performance becomes even more apparent in the next section where Bardi says that many poets have composed music over their own poetry. These poets also performed in the musical academies for the Italian *gentilhuoi*, the gentlemen.[143] One of these poets is Alessandro Strigio (Striggio in modern spelling), the father of the Alessandro Striggio who wrote the libretto of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. It is important to see here the immediate connection made by Bardi, of the composition of poetry and music. On the other hand, it is apparent that poetry composition and musical composition is not the same thing. There are strong connections, but the composition of music on a poetic text will always be one interpretation, where many interpretations are possible. Another individual mentioned is Vincenzo Galilei, who apparently has little time left to put music to words. This might indeed have been the case, since little vocal music by Vincenzo has survived. His famous piece, the Lament of Ugolino from Dante's Comedy, has not survived. The main reason why the piece became famous, was because it was mentioned in Doni's writings. In the research to the Camerata Fiorentina, Vincenzo's settings of Ugolino's Lament and the Lamentations of Jeremiah were among the few pieces that were mentioned as musical output, alongside the first operas by Peri, Cavalieri and Caccini.[144] Having mentioned Vincenzo, Bardi goes on to state that the airs composed in this way (connected to the poetry) are natural and more according to the ancient authors, especially the airs sung without harmony (*dico ancora che le nostre arie sono piu secondo la natura che quelle chiamate musicali, e che più si appressano alle antiche tanto celebrate dalli scrittori, e in particolare quell'arie ch esi cantono senza accordo*).[145] This basically is the argument developed by Girolamo Mei, Vincenzo Galillei, and Giovanni de Bardi. Polyphonic music is not natural, and it is not according to the ancient authors, because there is too much harmony.

The lack of harmony and the singing with a single voice is the last aspect to highlight here. Bardi states that the *ceteri* (the people) sang with *una voce sola*. This is, again, something that is supported by the ideas of Girolamo Mei, who was corresponding with Bardi and Vincenzo at the time. The idea was that even the Greek chorus sang in unison, not in a polyphonic structure. Hence, to revive Greek singing, polyphonic composition should be abandoned in favour of poetry set to music. Bardi distances himself also from the madrigalist composers, who wrote also poetic texts but mostly for multiple voices. However, the madrigal tradition was in fact much closer to the monody that was developed in Florence than the sacred polyphonic music. The two reasons why madrigals resemble monody is the use of the (secular) vernacular texts, and the extensive use of word painting in composition. Furthermore, madrigals were often sung by one voice and accompanied by lute. This combination is not different from the monodic recitatives that are known as the first operas. However, Bardi still finds madrigals too unnatural because there is too much harmony.

This last argument is difficult to grasp and needs some extra thought. The music that Caccini composed, for instance, still had explicit and implicit harmony in it, by use of an accompanying

[143] Bardi, *Lecture,* Appendix A, pp. 62v.
[144] Abramov, *Singing Dante*, pp.14, and Solerti, *Le origini del melodramma*, pp. 209–11.
[145] Bardi, *Lecture*, Appendix A, pp. 63v.

instrument. It might be the case that Bardi disapproved of this, because he wanted pure, unaccompanied singing, based on the poetic text. This seems unlikely, because Vincenzo was also a lutenist and consistently wrote accompaniments for monodic texts.[146] It might be that the difference lies in the definition of polyphony and monophony. In the sixteenth century, polyphonic music was still thought of as individual horizontal lines that come together in one piece. This one piece should then have consonances on the important moments, and dissonances only when necessary. Most certainly, the orientation of the composers was not to write 'vertical' harmony, but their excellence was displayed by the ability to compose horizontal, individual singing lines that sounded well together.[147] By contrast, the monodic setting only had a supporting set of chords struck on an accompanying instrument. These chords did not have an individual polyphonic structure but were simply there to support. The individuality of the internal harmony is subject to the singing line, and therefore the composition is more monophonic than polyphonic. Yet, Bardi's clear demarcation of his ideas to existent musical practice might have been a red herring, enabling him to connect his avant-garde humanistic ideas to musical practice. Even the practice of figured bass, sometimes credited to Caccini, was already known and in use in order to 'shorthand' complex polyphony. This practice relied on a knowledge of extemporised counterpoint, with which Caccini would have been familiar.[148]

Music, thus, plays a very significant role in the intellectual debates of the Florentine academies. These debates were part of rhetorical exercises within the Accademia degli Alterati. Also, we have seen how Bardi uses the ideas that he developed with Vincenzo Galilei and Girolamo Mei on ancient music in the relation to poetic delivery. This chapter exemplifies how music and the pursuit of knowledge are closely related. There are two aspects that came together in this example. First, the academic discussions within the Accademia in which Giovanni de Bardi actively took part. These academic discussions were strongly rooted in a sixteenth-century humanistic tradition that engaged with the revival of Greek tragedy and singing. This humanistic tradition was expressed in literary and philosophical discussions of vernacular poetry, philological research, and a strong connection to a study of the classical authors. Second, the central role that rhetorical *actio* and musical practice play within this lecture. It shows that music was strongly connected to rhetoric, not only from a compositional point of view, but also from the perspective of performance. We are confronted with a lack of knowledge of this performance practice, which might be accessible through re-enactment experiments to revive this embodied and tacit knowledge.

The difficulty with such re-enactment experiments lies in the fact that there is no musical notation for these poetic performances, and secondly, that it is largely unclear what is meant by singing. The question of musical notation will be explored in the next chapter. Regarding singing: sometimes it seems as if *cantare* is a simple term referring to a performance of a poetic text, without any aesthetic consequences. Other times there are specific references to such aesthetic ideals, especially concerning the accompaniment and when monody is compared to polyphony. Bardi's lecture is only one early modern opinion on performance and in the next section, we will try to get more grip on the performance practice by analysing the singers that sang during the first operas.

[146] Galilei's *Fronimo* bears examples of lute intabulations. Also: Palisca, 'Vincenzo Galilei's Arrangements for Voice and Lute'.
[147] Although even that is debatable, see: Owens, *Composers at Work*, pp. 32,33.
[148] An early example of basso continuo is found in Placido Falconio's *Introitus et Alleluia.* See: Fenlon, Falconio, Placido. *Grove Music Online.*

3.7. Commedia dell'Arte actresses

An analysis of the artists that performed the first operas might give us insight in the way poetry and operas were performed in the second half of the sixteenth century. It is known that a number of the opera performers were Commedia dell'Arte actresses. It seems to be the case that the first operas were indeed sung (instead of spoken) to a certain extent. Investigating the tradition of singing in Commedia dell'Arte troups provides a unique insight in the performances of the first operas. It gives us an idea about who sang in these performances and how these operas were sang. We will find that the Commedia dell'Arte actresses were known for their singing. Moreover, despite the relatively low status of improvised theatre, the actresses managed to engage in intellectual life. [149] Thus, this brief investigation again shows that the pursuit of knowledge is an enterprise dispersed over many different social categories that interacted with each other. Also, the link between singing, acting and intellectual life in Northern Italy is reinforced.

The Commedia dell'Arte actresses underscore the important role that women had in a knowledge culture dominated by male intellectuals. It puts the standard narrative of a male dominated intellectual and musical culture in perspective. On a side note, Caccini's daughters also managed to make good careers for themselves in singing, being taught by their father. Second, the fact that the actresses performed the first operas, shows that there was an intricate connection between acting, singing and poetic delivery. Women like Viriginia Andreini, Isabella Andreini, Vincena Armani, Vittoria Archilei, and Vittoria Pissimi were primarily actresses. On top of that, they were the most well-known singers of their day.[150] Some managed to build such a reputation that they were invited to perform at Medici festivities in the second half of the sixteenth century. With their growing reputation, some individuals and troupes were patronised by wealthy noble houses. One such as example is the Mantuan court of Vincenzo Gonzaga, the patron of Claudio Monteverdi.[151] The fact that the Commedia dell'Arte singer-performers were part of the first operas, indicated that their way of singing and performing was perhaps closest to the aesthetic the Camerata and the Accademia degli Alterati were looking for. They had the right skill set to navigate through the demands of the first operas in terms of vocal technique and acting proficiency.

Thus, the possibility of singing and acting at the same time existed already. Therefore, this combination is not new in the sixteenth century. The innovation of the Camerata and the Accademia degli Alterati lies in the inclusion of the Aristotelian aspect of *katharsis*, as derived from the *Poetics*, in it. By contrast, the 1589 wedding festivities, although in part supervised by Giovanni de Bardi, scheduled performances of plays and *intermedi* that had specific neo-Platonic traits.[152] The idea behind this is that the Medici should receive praise during these festivities. The state-of-the-art Aristotelianism of sixteenth-century humanist scholars within the Accademia degli Alterati and other academies had not reached the Medici court. Likewise, the Accademia Fiorentina was much more conservative than the Accademia degli Alterati. Plausibly, this has to do with the obvious links between the Medici family and the Accademia Fiorentina.

Although the Accademia degli Alterati was progressive in scholarly interest and in musical aesthetic, the innovations were not generally accepted straightaway. As we have seen, Johannes Kepler, in the seventeenth century, still draws heavily from neo-Platonic ideas, in the way he connects music to the quadrivium and the *harmony of the spheres* in *Harmonices Mundi*. In a review of Vincenza

[149] MacNeil, *Music and Women*, pp. 77-126.
[150] Ibid., pp. 4.
[151] Ibid., pp. 77.
[152] Ibid., pp. 52.

Armani, one of the Commedia dell'Arte actresses, she receives the highest neo-Platonic praise regarding her singing: *"(…) the Souls, who felt an unheard semblance of that true harmony that the stars create in their movement, melted with ineffable sweetness, remembering their celestial home"*.[153] In sum, the aesthetical innovation of the Camerata and the Accademia degli Alterati was based on Aristotelian ideas, as derived from the early modern humanistic tradition of the interpretation of the *Poetics*, in the revival of Greek tragedy. The Commedia dell'Arte actresses possessed the right skill set of vocal technique and acting abilities to perform such new ideas. I suspect that the performances of the Commedia dell'Arte plays and the first operas sounded quite similar, especially the lyrical pieces. The through-composed recitative may have sounded similar as well, as we will see in the next chapter.

[153] Chaffee & Crick, *Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte,* pp. 247/8.

Chapter 4

Rhetoric and Music: The Practice

4.1. Introduction

Having discussed some examples of rhetorical delivery in social practices, it is time to turn to the qualitative relationship between rhetorical delivery and musical performance, focusing on the second half of the sixteenth century. We restrict our inquiry to a possible performance of the first operas, and the monodic experiments that plausibly have been conducted within the Camerata Fiorentina. As in the previous chapter, I will not focus on the element of musical composition necessarily. Most musicological analyses focus on the relation between composition and the rhetorical elements of *inventio* and *dispositio*. Instead, I want to focus on the aspect of performance, the delivery of rhetorical texts in relation to singing traditions, i.e. the rhetorical *actio*.

Some valuable research has already been done. The work by Elena Abramov-van Rijk excellently succeeded in displaying an oral tradition of rhetorical delivery, dating back to the fourteenth century. This will be the starting point, focusing on the tradition of *parlar cantando* and on the work of Vincenzo Galilei in connection to this practice. Second, I will address the practical work that has been done by Jed Wentz and his collaborators. Wentz experiments with the practice of delivering (poetic) texts, which sheds a refreshing light on the theory-based research. I will connect some important conclusions from these re-enactment practices to the *parlar cantando* and the monodic tradition. Lastly, I will make a connection from affect theory to the study of nature. The argument is based on the idea that the study of nature on the one hand and the study of the self and one's emotions on the other, were both important in the early modern pursuit of knowledge. This brings in many new fields of knowledge and shows the enormous potential for future research. This chapter will show how theoretical aspects can be applied practically, giving insight in how future historical research might be conducted.

4.2. Parlar cantando

The delivery of poetry received much attention in academic circles in Cinquecento Northern Italy. Although the focus in this thesis is on Northern Italy, the interest in oratorical delivery is certainly not restricted to this area. There is a plethora of examples, stretching from the Italian academies to the Dutch *collegia oratoria*. These classes were set up to practise oratorical delivery. In the previous chapter, we saw how Bardi uses the word *cantare* (singing) in the context of the delivery of vernacular poetry. It shows that the delivery of poetry was important for the intellectual knowledge pursuit in the second half of the sixteenth century. In this chapter, the practical component of this delivery will be investigated. The basic assumption is that the delivery of poetry is strongly associated with the emergence of opera. The way in which the poetry was delivered is called *parlar cantando*.

Parlar cantando or *recitar cantando* is a term used to denote a way of delivering that holds the middle between speaking and singing. As the word suggests, *parlar cantando* is a way of delivery with a sustained voice (singing) but with a lot of attention for the articulation of text (speaking). Literally, *parlar cantando* means 'to speak in singing'. The term is found in sources from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century and is therefore an actors' category. The scholar Elena Abramov - van Rijk investigates this tradition of singing-speaking in her book *Parlar cantando*. She traces the history of

vernacular Italian poetry delivery back to the fourteenth century. Interestingly, *parlar cantando* is an oral tradition. As can be derived from the lecture by Bardi, rhythm and sound are important in poetry. These two aspects are only important when performed, however. Modern scholars disagree on how people in the sixteenth century sang. These debates are complicated by the fact that there were different schools of singing in various countries and even within cities. An important distinction to make here is the distinction between *voce da camera* and *voce di chiesa*:

> *"he who says that one makes a voice by crying out loud is deceived ... because many learn to sing softly and in camere (where loud singing is abhorred) and are not constrained by necessity to sing in churches and in cappelle where paid singers sing."*[154]

In church, one had to sing quite loudly to be audible. Hence, singers of sacred music were known to be shouting or singing loudly. On the other hand, the singers of theatrical secular pieces often performed in smaller rooms that allowed them to sing very softly at times. Perhaps contrary to modern ideas about classical singing, early modern singers of musical drama received praise for their soft singing: *con soave voce*. It is an enormous challenge to imagine how these things have sounded, since our aural impression of sixteenth-century music is heavily influenced by twentieth-century recordings.[155] Apart from *voce di chiesa* and *voce da camera*, there were hybrid ways of performing somewhere between speaking and singing. Such a hybrid manner of performing is only logical from a practical point of view. If speaking is regarded as speaking to a person next to you, standing in front of a classroom already heightens the use of resonance naturally. The heightening of the use of resonance combined with the sustaining of sound, leads to singing. It would thus appear logical that for public speech and delivery, *parlar cantando* indeed seems a practical solution to the absence of microphones and the presence of a large audience.

Although the orality of performance is fascinating from a historical perspective, it poses significant challenges in terms of historiographical methodology. This probably is the most important reason for having ignored it in knowledge history. The evidence from primary sources is scarce and often not directly related to the question of delivery. Abramov-De Rijk studied sources that relate to the delivery of poetry only indirectly. Yet, *parlar cantando* is important for three reasons: its long history, stretching into the fourteenth century, suggests that it was a robust tradition of which the influence should not be underestimated in the emergence of opera. Second, the tradition accounts for the lack of written music in fifteenth-century Italy, the so-called *segreto del Quattrocento*, again suggesting the robustness and the importance of this tradition. Third, the relation between musical delivery and *parlar cantando*. This relation has multiple aspects, such as the use of the hendecasyllable, the use of instruments, and the specific use of the term *recitar cantando* or *parlar cantando* by sixteenth-century composers, such as Emilio de Cavalieri.

Parlar cantando is often strongly associated with the first operas around 1600. The problem with that is that the whole tradition from the fourteenth century onwards is easily neglected. It is significant, however, that this tradition already emerged in the 14th century as an oral tradition. It shows that the emergence of opera is only partially innovative, indicating the continuity of this development. *Parlar cantando* was a way of performing that was done by so-called *prolatores*. Among others, Dante mentions the existence of these performers who recited poetry. It was also Dante who requested a friend (Lippi) to 'dress' his 'bare' poetry.[156] The dressing of poetry is associated with the process of coming to an interpretation of a poem and then performing it based on that interpretation.

[154] Zacconi, L. *Prattica di Musica*, Parta Prima.
[155] Taruskin, *Text and Act*, pp. 14.
[156] Abramov, *Parlar cantando*, pp. 27-36.

Furthermore, Abramov shows that personal letters and even political battles were sung.[157] Especially the political debate is interesting in the context of our investigation, since the members of the Accademia degli Alterati were known to be debating about various topics in their meetings. It is not certain whether it was common practice in the Accademia degli Alterati to 'sing' during their debates, but it would be something worth considering.

During the fifteenth century, there is a lack of written music by Italian composers between approximately 1430-1480. This is referred to as the *segreto del quattrocento*. The existence of an oral tradition such as *parlar cantando* is a partial answer to this question. Because neither poets nor *prolatores* wrote musical scores, it is indeed possible that this tradition was still vivid in the fifteenth century. It seems indeed likely, because in the sixteenth century, there is still a widespread interest in performances of vernacular poetry. (Latin poetry was also part of the tradition of *parlar cantando*, but we will leave this aspect aside).[158]

The third element of interest is the direct relation of the overlapping characteristics of *parlar cantando* and the first operas. First, the texts that are used are written in hendecasyllabic sentences. Abramov provides examples from the fourteenth century by Landini, as well as an example of an aria from Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. She shows that the rhythmic structure is analysed through scansion by Monteverdi and Landini and accordingly put to music. Hence, the musical setting of *Possente spirto* by Monteverdi follows the rhythmical structure meticulously. This technique was also used by madrigal composers in the sixteenth century, and is therefore not an innovative element of the first operas. Second, the use of instruments was common in the practice of *parlar cantando*. Although many historical authors only focus on the textual element of the delivery, others also include musical support during reciting.[159] One can only imagine how much a 'dressed' poem with musical accompaniment sounds like an actual sixteenth-century monody. The profession of *prolatores* likely evolved into the professions of musicians and actors, each with their own focus on text and music. It seems likely that actors incline to focus more on the text whereas musicians focus more on the music. Hence, different ideas are present in sixteenth-century primary sources on what sort of performance is more aesthetically pleasing, determined by an aesthetic view on the performance of poetry. Third and last, the term *parlar cantando* or *recitar cantando* was used by the composers of the first operas. A clear example is provided by Abramov. It was Emilio de Cavalieri who speaks of *recitar cantando* in the preface of his *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* from 1600.[160] Emilio de Cavalieri was a very well-connected person in the context of the emergence of opera in Florence. He was the superintendent of the arts of the Medici court. It is significant that somebody in his position used the term *parlar cantando*. This also meant that this way of performing was accepted, even in the conservative circles of the Medici court.

In Abramov's second book, *Singing Dante*, the literary origins of Cinquecento monody are explored in more detail. In this book, Vincenzo's setting of Ugolino's Lament (*La Commedia, Canto* XXXII, Dante) is analysed. Although the setting has not survived, Abramov succeeds in contextualising the performance in the sixteenth-century musical tradition. As we have explained, the nature of the experiments by Vincenzo Galilei remained a little bit vague. I think that the experiments with delivery of Dante's poetry were central for Vincenzo in the development of the monodic style of singing and perhaps also for the idea of experimenting as a way of interacting with available knowledge. The performance of Vincenzo's Ugolino's Lament took place during one of the meetings of the Camerata

[157] Abramov, *Parlar cantando*, pp. 15-27.
[158] Ibid., pp. 2.
[159] Ibid., pp. 188-193.
[160] Ibid., pp. 191.

Fiorentina in Bardi's house.[161] Canto XXXII provides Vincenzo with an intensely dramatic piece that is indeed suited for monodic composition. Although the setting has not survived, some aspects of the performance can be reconstructed, such as the rhythmic structure of the poem. Here, we focus on the aspect of experimentation with this source material and what components of the performance were experimental in nature.

4.3. Parlar cantando and experimental practice

The experimentation of Vincenzo was probably meant to evaluate various ways of putting the text on musical notation, and the role of the instrument in that. However, I suspect that there was another, more important aspect of experimentation. This aspect is related to the affective content of the pieces. I suggest that Vincenzo tried various modes (or *tonoi*) to test which mode would be best in order to communicate the right passionate content. This is supported by a passage by Vincenzo, also quoted by Abramov:

> *"Because great artists sometimes want to experiment, they undertake to test the boundaries of their principles, and Philoxenus was one of those who wanted to experiment with something new. But what he tried was not equal to his idea. Thus, conquered by the nature of his subject, he succumbed to it. Although he started the dithyramb in the Dorian tonos, whose harmonia is calm and without any violent affection, abhorring the unbecoming delicacy of such a subject and the charms of that verse, he realized that he could not proceed – skilful artist that he was – without the support of the harmonia for his imitation. So he abandoned the Dorian, disregarding convention, and passed almost impetuously into the Phrygian, pitched higher than the Dorian and therefore by nature excited and suited to the expression of the ideas that he had to hand. It is also not a wonder that such a technique should have occurred to Philoxenus, whose nature and temperament was to love the low and quiet harmoniai, indeed the lowest. This is evidence that after all the others he discovered the Hypodorian harmonia, slower and more relaxed than any other."*[162]

This passage shows that Vincenzo was even conscious of some sort of experimentation. It is important that he makes the use of experiment explicit, because it shows how Vincenzo thought of the status of experimentation in terms of his pursuit of knowledge. Experiment is something that is natural to great artists. Interestingly, he even connects experimentation to ancient authors, almost to legitimise his own actions. The next issue is then the nature of the experiment.

> *"It happened that the very high and very low tonoi were rejected by the Platonists from their well-ordered republic for being too lamenting in the case of the high and too lugubrious in the low. They accepted those in the middle, as happened also with durations and rhythms. This opinion was later refuted by Aristotle, who said that the relaxed [low] harmoniai [pitches] were not to be disdained for elderly men, who because of their age cannot sing the tense [high] harmoniai [pitches]. The high ones, like the Lydian, he permitted to children to instil in them, he said, at once decorous and disciplined behaviour."*

As Vincenzo is pointing out here, the use of experiment is vital in the context of the choice for the right mode for a character, such as an old man or a child. But he also touches on the subject of the connection of a certain *tonos* as connected to an affect, such as lamenting or lugubrious. This

[161] Abramov, *Singing Dante*, pp. 17.
[162] Ibid., pp. 113.

connection of tonality and affect was generally accepted in the later stages of the Baroque period. It turns out, however, that the connection of tonality to affect was already present in Vincenzo's work, as can be derived from the quotation above. The choice for a certain *tonos* was determined by experimenting and the study of the character and affect at hand. The innovative aspect lies in the choice for monody instead of polyphony, not necessarily the relation between affect and tonality. The relation between affect and tonality was already established before the emergence of opera. The use of monody, however, was based on the ideas developed by Mei and the Camerata Fiorentina in relation to their interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* and other ancient sources.

Although the relation between affect and *tonoi* was already established and generally accepted, it is important that experimentation played a role in it. It may seem obvious that composers experimented in their music writing, but the experimentation of musical material as an affective entity is certainly a different action. I think that Vincenzo deliberately experimented with various *tonoi*, to check what kind of effect this had on the passionate state of himself and of his listeners. Therefore, I would suggest that the group sessions of the Camerata were also meant to give the feedback that Vincenzo needed in terms of the trajectory of passionate states that he wanted to address. The experiment, then, is set up to use various *tonoi* to investigate which one is suited best to the character and affective state.

For us in the twenty-first century, this seems far-fetched to say the least. Every individual perceives a piece of art in their personal way, influenced by an idiosyncratic past, one's associative ability, and a temporally defined state of being. However, according sixteenth-century theory of affect, humans generally respond in a similar fashion to similar input. For instance, one expects to feel a sad affect when confronted with an actor reciting a sad monologue, with the expression of sadness in the voice, face, and body. The example becomes more difficult with multiple actors and a narrative structure, but the argument stays essentially the same. The reason for such a similar response to a theatrical performance is rooted the fact that the soul of the listener is moved by a performance. The movement of the soul is not necessarily regarded an individual expression in the sixteenth century.

Recently, the body of the artisan has been identified as an epistemological tool by Pamela Smith. She points to the importance of artisanal labour in the pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, she shows that artisans constructed knowledge with bodily techniques and manual labour.[163] In our current investigation, we can add another component to this idea of embodying knowledge. I would argue that for Vincenzo Galilei, and by extrapolation his collaborators in the Camerata Fiorentina, the soul was as important as their body. In this case, the soul of the artisan is used to identify the right *tonoi* for various effects. In other words, the soul is as much a tool for sixteenth-century actors for experiment as the body of the artisan. This idea of the soul in relation to the body will be explored further in the last part of this chapter. We can for now conclude that the soul became also an epistemological tool in investigating nature. Historical figures were not only investigating the nature around them, also the nature of their own body and soul were objects of inquiry. The following quote by Diderot makes this thought-provoking connection also apparent:

> *"Creative men bear this distinctive trait. Since it is not merely by leafing through the writings of their contemporaries that they find the ideas they need to use in their own writings, but sometimes rather by delving deep into themselves, at other times by bursting outside themselves, and studying more attentively and more profoundly the natures about them, they*

[163] Smith, *Body of the artisan*, pp. 28.

are obliged, especially at the origin of languages, to invent signs to represent exactly and forcefully what they are the first to discover."[164]

Although this quotation is from an eighteenth-century French author, it shows that the relation between the investigation of the inside nature and the outside nature is strong. Although much more research is needed to investigate the connection of these two modes of investigation,[165] I suspect that it is an essential part of the culture of experimentation that became important from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards.

The use of monody and *parlar cantando* is merely a tool for the investigation of affect and the response of the soul. The investigation of the self, using poetry and music was an essential part of the pursuit of knowledge for sixteenth-century historical figures. Therefore, the oral practice of poetic performance should be embedded in the history of knowledge. The first operas can serve as a starting point for a reconstruction of the oral practice in the Cinquecento. The assumption then, is that the recitatives in the first operas are a possible written version of a thoroughly analysed oral practice. This assumption can be supported by the following arguments. First, the oral tradition of *parlar cantando* seems to have vanished during the seventeenth century. It seems likely that the emergence of musical drama, i.e. opera, replaced the oral tradition of poetry delivery. Second, there are other examples of opera composers in the seventeenth century of whom we believe they wrote recitatives based on the performance practice of poetry delivery. One example is the French-Italian composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, who will be discussed in the following section. Third and last, in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artisans started to write down elements of traditional oral practice as well. By analogy, the emergence of opera is also an oral tradition that becomes written down.

Written sources open up possibilities to investigate and reconstruct oral practices by re-enactment experiments. The first operatic recitatives are then the starting point from where, by backward extrapolation and educated guessing, the oral practice of poetic delivery can be studied. This work is not only important for musicologists and musicians in the early music movement, scholars of early modern knowledge history should include musical and poetic practice in their investigations. The relation between theory and practice, oral and written practice, and knowledge and music are informative and inspirational for historians of knowledge in general.

4.4. Oratorical delivery in practice

Through re-enactment, insightful tacit knowledge can be revealed. Although it is hard to draw definitive conclusions on the value of such revelations, by connecting new ideas about historical delivery practices to primary source material, the argument will become more convincing. It is precisely the tacit knowledge within the tradition of poetic delivery that is difficult to explore. Where a recipe for a pigment can be used to create a certain pigment, there is a natural checking mechanism to evaluate the outcome of such an experiment, although often even these experiments are unlikely to succeed. In the case of a musical or rhetorical practice, such a checking mechanism is generally not available.

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[164] Diderot, 'Encyclopedia', Encyclopedia, pp. 638.

[165] Some research is already being done in this direction. For instance, the work of Inger Leemans (VU Amsterdam) focuses on historical emotions. Also, she connects this work on passions and affects to the marketplace. Forthcoming is a book on *Knowledge and the Market: Affective Economies* as part of the project 'Creating a Knowledge Society in a Globalizing World (1450-1800)' (https://globalknowledgesociety.wordpress.com/)

In his article on Lully's *Roland*, Jed Wentz investigates a booklet (*livret*) that includes the text of *Roland*, annotated in three different hands.[166] These annotations can be used as an interpretative guide to perform the text in a theatrical declamatory style. Such a source is valuable, because it offers the possibility of comparing the operatic recitatives by Lully to the annotated text. One of the main conclusions of the essay is that Lully's recitatives are meticulously set to the oral practice of theatrical delivery in France. Although Lully's operas are written well into the seventeenth century in France, some aspects of this investigation allow us to think about aspects that are derived from the practice of delivery to the operatic repertoire. Lully is known as the 'Father of French opera', but this meant mostly that he was able to create musical drama in the French vernacular. Initially, Lully opposed the idea of French opera, because he thought Italian was the only possible language for musical drama. After all, Lully was born in Florence and received his initial education there. Furthermore, his inspiration came from Italian composers such as Francesco Cavalli, who came to Paris in 1660.[167] There are three things of interest here in the relation between musical recitative and theatrical delivery. First, the use of inflections as described in Roland's *livret* and more generally in other primary sources is strongly connected to musical practice. Second, performers of poetry made use of *ton*, an indication of musical pitch. This is found in the *livret*, but also in other sources, where the notes of a scale (ut, re, mi, fa, sol) are used to indicate various expressive states. Third, the use of embellishment in poetic delivery is used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century operatic repertoire. With these technical elements of delivery, a comparison can be made between Lully's setting of the recitatives in the opera and the annotations in the *livret* of the text. Based on this comparison, Wentz draws the conclusion that Lully's setting is probably very close to the practice of the seventeenth-century delivery of poetry in France.[168]

Inflections can be used to express words and sentences in various ways to shift emphasis or even change the meaning of a phrase. There are various sorts of inflections: monotone, rising and falling inflection, and rising and falling circumflex are the main examples, of which some are present in the *livret*. The inflections can be translated to relative intervals between words in music. Even a monotone can be very expressive, if applied with taste. Conscious use of inflections can also serve to structure a longer monologue into large units that belong together, instead of the persisting tendency to end every sentence with a downward inflection. Spoken inflections are commonly used as inspiring or even leading in composing operatic recitatives, as can be seen in the example of Lully's *Roland*.[169] In analogy to that, the structuring of sentences towards an emotional climax can also be seen in the first operas in Northern Italy.

Relative intervals are used for expression. However, in Roland's *livret* there are even some indications of absolute intonation. These indications are often very specific, such as 'Ut' at the beginning of a sentence. This probably meant that this new sentence had to start on the tonic or the first note of a scale. In the case of 'Ut', this often meant the beginning of the scale ut, re, mi, fa, sol, etc. In practice, a reciting orator, made use of various parts of his voice to find different colours. 'Ut' was often used for descriptive passages or for sombre sections. Higher pitches, such as 'fa' or 'sol' are then for heightened emotional states. Authors have various opinions on the issue, to what extent orators could vary in their tonal range. Some find a fifth the maximum, but Marin Mersenne thought that an octave is necessary to express all kinds of emotions.[170] An orator must find the octave that is strongest. This then determines where one's 'ut' is located, more or less in an absolute way. In other

[166] Wentz, 'An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland*', pp. 3.
[167] Gorce, Lully, Jean-Baptiste (i). *Grove Music Online.*
[168] Wentz, 'An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland*', pp. 2.
[169] Ibid., pp. 2.
[170] Ibid., pp. 13.

words, not only relative intervals or inflections are important, absolute intonation and the use of vocal range is necessary. Again, this strongly coincides with musical practice.[171]

Where inflections could be notated, embellishments are often left out in (musical) notation. Embellishments could almost be any vocal effect that is applied on top of normal speech. Some examples are trembling of the voice, growling, (audible) use of breath, *port de voix*, and appuyés. These embellishments are used in speech and in singing, although the extent to which growling can be used in singing is dependent on the performer.[172] Although Wentz is decisive on the question whether the same embellishments were used in singing and in speech, the subject is still under debate and not widely accepted, hence, further research is needed.

The extent to which the performance of poetry has sounded like singing is difficult to determine. It is certain, however, that there were varying opinions on the aesthetics of such performances. Some writers argue that poetry should not sound like singing, and they complain about performers who sing too much.[173] Implicitly, we can derive from such comments, that there was a certain scale between speaking and singing in the performing of poetry and in oratory. The amount of singing in speaking is highly dependent on personal style and taste of the performer. It can be concluded from this section that there are strong connections between musical notation of sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century operatic recitative and the performative aspect of poetry.

4.5. Study of the passions

In Pamela Smith's *The Body of the Artisan*, the relation between the passions and the study of nature is explored. The argument focuses mostly on how, among others, René Descartes and Robert Boyle tried to reach a mode of observation that was *dispassionate*. Hence, the new philosopher constructed 'an "objective" method of investigation and a distinctive identity in order to remove himself from the dangers presented by the immersion in the senses.'[174] In this view, the passions are impeding the senses in the observation of nature. Only in passing, Smith mentions the work of Charles Le Brun, a French painter of the seventeenth century. His investigation of the passions shows another aspect of the relation between experiment, senses, and expression. We will explore that here, as an illustration of the idea of the 'Soul of the Artisan'.

The idea of the passion is strongly connected to the human soul*: "First, a passion is a movement of the sensitive part of the soul, (…). Ordinarily, anything which causes a passion in the soul produces some action in the body."*[175] In the case of the observation of nature, the senses are used to investigate nature around the individual. However, in this case, the movement of the soul creates bodily actions, which can therefore be perceived by the bodily senses. It is the relation between the bodily actions and the movement of the soul that is of interest to Charles Le Brun. He analyses various facial expressions for the most important passions. There is a strong relation between the passions, or the movements of the soul and the actions of the body:

> *"An action is nothing else but the movement of some part, and this movement can be effected only by an alteration in the muscles, while the muscles are moved only by the intervention of the nerves, which bind the parts of the body and pass through them. The nerves work only by*

[171] Wentz, 'An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland*', pp. 11-28.
[172] Wentz, 'An Annotated *livret* of Lully's *Roland*', pp. 8.
[173] Abramov, *Singing Dante*, pp. 27,28.
[174] Smith, *Body of the Artisan,* pp. 227/8.
[175] Le Brun, *Lecture on Expression*, transl. Montagu, pp. 126.

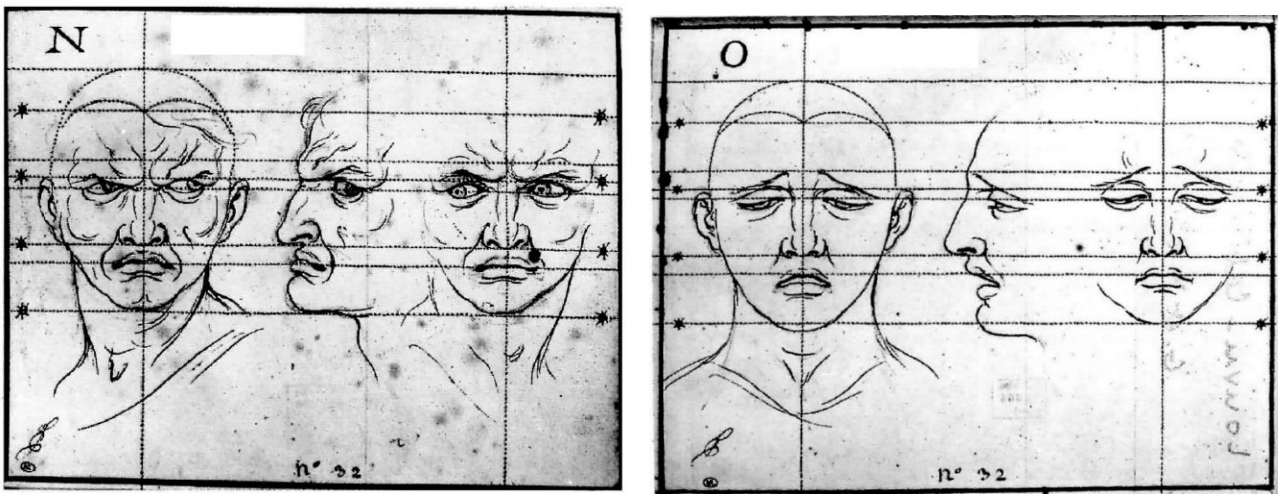
the spirits which are contained in the cavities of the brain, and the brain receives the spirits only from the blood which passes continuously through the heart, which heats and rarifies it in such a way that it produces a thin air or spirit, which rises to the brain and fills its cavities."[176]

It is difficult to read this in a seventeenth-century context, because some aspects resonate strongly with twenty-first-century ideas on neurosciences. Le Brun is, in the context of his lecture on expression in painting, clearly making use of philosophical ideas on the nature of the soul and the body in the seventeenth century. Another painter, Samuel van Hoogstraten *"recommended that the painter observe the passions in himself, noting both their internal and external effects"*.[177] Again, we see how the relation of body and soul was scrutinised through experimentation, for instance by 'striking poses in front of a mirror'.[178] Furthermore, Le Brun states that

"it is my opinion that the soul receives the impressions of the passions in the brain and that it feels the effects of them in the heart. The external movements which I have observed strongly confirm me in this opinion."[179]

The most interesting part for now is the last sentence, the use of observation of external movements to conclude something about the relation between the soul, the passions, the brain, and the heart.

The idea of the study of the passions is not restricted to painting, however. On the contrary, many seventeenth-century intellectuals were writing about the passions. The most important example here is René Descartes' *Les passions de l'âme*. Without going into details, it is noteworthy that a philosopher as Descartes wrote a book on passions. Jennifer Montagu mentions that Charles Le Brun made use of the Descartes' work, the theory of music, and the tradition of the ancient musical Modes.[180] Unfortunately, I could not find a direct connection in Le Brun's lecture on the passions but perhaps this connection is found somewhere else in his written output. Le Brun, thus, perhaps



2.Images of Le Brun's Lecture on expressions (Montagu, pp. 125-140.). The pictures display two of the important passions. Every passion has a certain facial expression and tension governing eyebrows, mouth shape, eyes, and nostrils. Left: La Jalousie, right: La Tristesse.

[176] Le Brun, *Lecture on Expression*, transl. Montagu, pp. 126.
[177] Smith, Body of the Artisan, pp. 226.
[178] Ibid., pp. 226.
[179] Le Brun, *Lecture on Expression*, transl. Montagu, pp. 126.
[180] Montagu, *Expression of the Passions*, pp. 50.

connected his work to music theory. Following the advice of Samuel van Hoogstraten, painters tried to 'transform into actors', to find the best way of expression a passion. There are numerous examples of various intellectuals and artisans in the business of seventeenth-century music that were preoccupied with the movements of the soul.

Some examples are Marin Mersenne, Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Vincenzo Galilei. The engagement with the passions was something strongly rooted in humanism. Major classical authors such as Aristotle and Quintilian wrote on the passions. Aristotle even *"devoted a high proportion of his text [in his central work on rhetoric] to a consideration of the passions, the situation in which they are felt, towards whom, and for what reasons."*[181] Despite this intellectual tradition, the engagement with the passions was often very practical:

> *"Such a practical, rather than theoretical approach to the expressive potentialities of music was to be found in many of the French seventeenth-century writers on music. Marin Mersenne studied the passions, and the movements they caused in the blood and other humours, 'for it seems that there is no more powerful means to excite the passions of the audience than to use the same tempi and movements as are used by the very passions themselves in those who are affected by them.' He advocated a set of symbols to show the executant not only what passions the composer intended, but also in what degree, and he evolved a system of musical expression quite as dogmatic as that of Le Brun."*[182]

Mersenne thus developed a system for performers to work with the passions in a systematic way. This supports the idea that the passions were indeed subject to investigation through experimentation. The idea that Marc-Antoine Charpentier developed and systematised is loosely related to the ancient modes and their characteristics. He made a list of baroque keys and assigned to each a number of adjectives that expressed the passionate characteristic of the key: D major is joyful and very martial, whereas E minor is effeminate, amorous and plaintive. Although Charpentier makes uses of the modern keys in the baroque period, the idea is similar to Vincenzo Galilei's idea of the Greek modes and their characteristic affects. It was Vincenzo Galilei who was perhaps the most rigid in the relation between music and affect. He regarded the 'pleasure the listener might derive from music as not merely irrelevant, but positively harmful by occupying his attention and thus preventing him from being influenced morally and emotionally.'[183]

Hitherto, I have presented material from the seventeenth century on visual arts (Le Brun), philosophy (Descartes), and musical practice (Mersenne, Charpentier) in their relation to the study of the passions. It is out of the scope of this thesis to provide sufficient evidence for the following hypothesis, but I suspect that the work of Vincenzo Galilei and his collaborators of the Camerata Fiorentina and the intellectuals of the Accademia degli Alterati has influenced the way expression was dealt with in the context of music, rhetorical *actio*, and the passions. The examples from the seventeenth century are simply more numerous. I think that the change in musical aesthetic in the second half of the sixteenth century led to an increase in engagement with the passions in music, guided by poetic texts, instead of the beauty of polyphonic music. Vincenzo Galilei writes about the work of a musical composer, summarising some of the aspects that we have touched upon in this chapter:

> *"Before singing a poem, an ancient musician first examined diligently the quality of the person speaking, the age, sex, with whom, and the object of the speech. After the poet clothed these*

[181] Montagu, *Expression of the Passions*, p. 50
[182] Ibid., p. 55
[183] Ibid., p. 54

ideas in words suited to their needs, the musician expressed them in that tonos, with those embellishments, gestures, quantities and qualities of sound, and with rhythm that suited the action of the personage."[184]

Firstly, the performance of the poem is *sung*. This supports the idea of *parlar cantando* in the performance of poetic material. Again, we come across the analogy of 'dressing' or 'clothing' ideas with words and sounds, just like Dante had used three centuries earlier. Secondly, the poem is performed by one person, because the musical line should be monodic and not polyphonic. Thirdly, the composer of the monody analyses the character at hand and chooses an appropriate mode for him or her and the situation. The mode is connected both to the character (old or young, male or female, etc.) as to the situation (sad, happy, dark, light, etc.). Implicitly, and that is the fourth aspect, Vincenzo will write down a musical score to grasp the embellishments and gestures of the poetic performance of the character. The oral practice of *parlar cantando* becomes written down. In a way, this means the end of the oral practice. On the other hand, one could argue that the oral practice evolved into another art form. The practice of *parlar cantando* was strongly related to rhetorical delivery and therefore to the expression of direct passions. To put this into music, the members of the Camerata Fiorentina, inspired by the discussions of the Accademia degli Alterati, experimented with monody. The experimentation was necessary to find the right mode for each passion.

[184] Abramov, *Singing Dante*, pp. 111.

Conclusion

The emergence of opera from the history of knowledge perspective

5.1. Social context and interdisciplinarity

Vincenzo Galilei appeared both at the beginning and the ending of this thesis. In the course of four chapters, we followed his footsteps within the Camerata Fiorentina, studied his correspondence with the philologist Girolamo Mei, digressed with Vincenzo's patron Giovanni de Bardi to the Accademia degli Alterati, and finally returned to Vincenzo's performance of Ugolino's Lament in the Camerata. This whole endeavour allows us to answer the central question of this thesis: in what ways were the emergence of opera and the pursuit of knowledge related? The answer to this question, based on the research I have done, is that there is a social way and an interdisciplinary way in which the emergence of opera is related to the pursuit of knowledge in the second half of the sixteenth century. This answer is far from comprehensive, but it highlights two important characteristics of the emergence of opera.

The first aspect is the social context in which opera emerged. It appears that many historical figures that were active in the emergence of opera were active in the pursuit of knowledge in Florence. Vincenzo Galilei, Girolamo Mei, Giulio Caccini, Giovanni de Bardi, both Jacopo's (Peri and Corsi), and many others are examples of such historical figures. However, these individuals needed each other in their knowledge pursuit and as a result of individual 'temperaments'[185] and ideals, opera emerged in Florence. Their innovative ideas can (at least partly) be dedicated to groups such as the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati. These groups functioned as sites of knowledge, within the city of Florence. The city of Florence attracted some important individuals in this research by the increase of its wealth, fame, and population. The Accademia degli Alterati appeared as a pressure cooker for the avant-garde ideas of musical aesthetic, partly because of their peculiar political status in relation to the Medici court. The Camerata Fiorentina was important in the experimentation and application of intellectual ideas on music discussed in the Accademia degli Alterati, partly thanks to their informal nature and the regularity of their meetings. As such, the Camerata Fiorentina stands for a widespread *camerata*-culture in Northern Italy. The informal engagement with intellectual knowledge was paramount for the pursuit of knowledge in sixteenth-century Italy. Hence, the *camerata*-culture should be considered in relation to the culture of the *accademia* in the Republic of Letters. Thanks to the correspondence of Girolamo Mei and Vincenzo Galilei, we at least have some insight in the transfer of innovative ideas from philological knowledge to a musical result. Lastly, the Commedia dell'Arte actresses immersed themselves in the intellectual climate, combining their acting skills with the intellectual ideas on Aristotelian *katharsis*. Summarising, the emergence of opera was embedded in the social context of the epistemic culture of Florence. The intellectual climate allowed for innovation but was not necessarily the driving force of it. Rather, the narrative as presented is full of contingent factors that complicate a simple narrative of cause and effect.

The combination of various domains of knowledge appears to be a second important factor in the emergence of opera. For practical purposes, this is called interdisciplinary knowledge. However, this thesis has shown that early modern disciplines differ strongly from twenty-first-century academic disciplines. Therefore, the term 'domains of knowledge' is perhaps more precise in this context. The emblematic figure of the engagement with various domains of knowledge is Vincenzo Galilei. We have seen how he engaged with music in relation to his tuning experiments, as was pointed out by historians

[185] Pirotta, 'Temperaments and Tendencies'.

of science. However, his experimentation was not limited to natural science. Instead, his experimentation was guided by a different view on musical and dramatic aesthetic, was inspired by philological research, and is connected to scrutinising the relation between his soul and his music. Furthermore, this thesis has shown that the collaboration of individuals from various domains of knowledge allowed for the creation of innovative ideas, although each and every one was preoccupied and guided by his or her own aesthetic and intellectual ideas. These individuals were not necessarily intellectuals. Vincenzo is again representative for a larger group of people who engaged in a practical way with theoretical knowledge. This larger group consisted of the Commedia dell'Arte actresses, the composer-singers Jacopo Peri and Giulio Caccini, the composer-patrons Jacopo Corsi and Giovanni de Bardi, who all engaged with theoretical knowledge in a practical way. Even the intellectuals in the Accademia degli Alterati honed their practical skills in oratory. It is likely that these intellectuals were acquainted with *parlar cantando*, a way of delivering poetry. As an oral tradition, *parlar cantando* evolved over the course of three centuries (1300-1600) to become written down by the end of the sixteenth century in the first operas. The informal Camerata Fiorentina appeared as an excellent community for the practical engagement with theoretical knowledge, bringing together singers, composers, librettists and men of letters. Apart from this practical engagement with knowledge, the study of the soul appeared as a promising category to analyse early modern knowledge practices. Not only the outside nature was of importance to the early modern pursuit of knowledge, the 'inside nature' was as relevant. The investigation of the human soul was closely connected to the sixteenth-century interpretation of the Aristotelian *katharsis*. In contrast to (neo-)Platonic ideals, Aristotelian thought was focused more on a direct transfer of affective and passionate content (or emotions) from performer to the audience. Where the neo-Platonists thought that music should evoke virtue in people, the Aristotelians had another idea in mind. The interpretation of *katharsis* in the sixteenth century centralised the purification of the human soul by living through the passions that were displayed in the drama and the music. This ideal had serious consequences for musical practice, preferring monody over polyphony. Monody was a much better means to the end of moving people's affective state compared to polyphony. This had to do with the early modern conception of *tonoi* (Greek modes). Each *tonos* had its own affective state and character. In polyphony, all these different affective states were blended in a homogeneous whole, cancelling out the emotional effect. In monody, the affective state was much clearer, and could therefore transfer the right passion to the audience. Vincenzo and his collaborators of the Camerata Fiorentina experimented with monodic compositional techniques to revive the affective powers of Greek drama and music. To sum up, in this research we have found and articulated intricate connections between various domains of knowledge that hitherto went unrecognised or undervalued. The emergence of opera appears to be an interplay between an (intellectual) oral tradition of poetic delivery, philological research to musical history, musical-dramatic experiments concerning affect theory and the study of the passions, and a humanistic tradition centralising ideas from Aristoteles' *Poetics*.

5.2. Historiographical summary and outlook

Renaissance Humanism turned out to be an important aspect in the emergence of opera. The interest in classical sources on Greek music and drama was one of the driving forces that led to the emergence of opera. Furthermore, the strong connection of vernacular poetry and classical literature is as evident as important, as pointed out in Chapter 3 and 4. Hence, it is vital to include music in the bigger picture of Renaissance Humanism. Although practice and theory of visual art seems to be a major part of the investigation of humanistic thought, developments such as the emergence of opera still deserve better integration into the overall study of Renaissance Humanism. In addition to that, scholars such as D.P.

Walker already established the connection between the history of music and sixteenth-century humanism several decades ago. Note that the larger field of Renaissance studies does include the history of music theory and practice in the larger equation of Renaissance history. Hence, the incorporation of music is fundamental for the historiographical narrative of Renaissance Humanism.

The culture of the *accademia* was found to be important in the Republic of Letters. Chapter 3 on the Accademia degli Alterati provides a case study that confirms this idea and shows how this worked in practice. However, it turned out that not only the accademie in Florence were part of this Republic of Letters, the culture of the *camerata* should be incorporated as well. This case study suggests that the informal camerata was vital for the emergence of opera. If the case study is indeed found to be representative for the pursuit of knowledge in Northern Italy, the category of the camerata should be taken into account in the Republic of Letters. This thesis suggests that the informal and practical engagement with theoretical knowledge by acquainted or befriended people from various domains of knowledge accounts in part for the emergence of opera in Florence. This emergence was therefore not only a cultural development but also a development for the pursuit of knowledge more specifically.

The framework of the history of knowledge is a promising perspective to analyse the early modern pursuit of knowledge. Not only historians of science could benefit from such a perspective, musicologists could find inspiration in this as well. Although the case study of the emergence of opera is well documented, being an important point in music history, this framework allowed to revisit the existent secondary literature from a fresh perspective. This perspective allowed to regard music as an expression of knowledge, being part of the larger pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, historical tools familiar to historians of knowledge appear to be interesting devices to study the history of music. The focus on sites of knowledge in this research allowed to interpret the emergence of opera as process of innovation that involved a group with individuals striving for different ideals. The need to address innovation to individual geniuses is questioned on the basis of this case study. Similarly, the four stages in the pursuit of knowledge (gathering, analysing, employing and disseminating) appear to be powerful tools in the analysis of musical development. The use of these historical devices is promising for music historians. I suspect that there are many more parallels to find between the history of music and the history of knowledge, especially in the early modern period. Patronage structures, aesthetical views informed or inspired by philosophical ideas, artistic research, the question of professionalisation, tacit knowledge and oral tradition, and attempting objectivity are all aspects that play a significant role in the history of science and might be very useful tools to analyse music history. In return, an analysis of music history with tools from the history of knowledge, allows to reassess the history of knowledge.

Although the Scientific Revolution is a robust concept within the history of science, this thesis has shown that it might need some serious re-evaluation. The standard narrative of music as part of the Scientific Revolution is questioned, based on this case study. Contrasting Cohen's *Quantifying Music*, the case study has shown that the emergence of opera, being part of the study and practice of music in the sixteenth century, was closely related to the *trivium* instead of the *quadrivium*. Hence, the emergence of opera was closely linked to knowledge practices in Florence that appreciated oratorical delivery and the study of poetry as eminent domains of knowledge. Also, we have seen that important historical figures in the Scientific Revolution (Johannes Kepler, Vincenzo Galilei) were led by strong philosophical ideas on aesthetic. I conjecture that the Scientific Revolution is in fact a much broader movement across all domains of knowledge, strongly rooted in humanistic knowledge practices.

By applying the framework of the history of knowledge, no preoccupation with contemporary (i.e. twenty-first-century) disciplinary boundaries manipulated our historical investigation. It gave us

the opportunity to emancipate various ways of knowing, both practical and theoretical. The various processes within the pursuit of knowledge (i.e. gathering, analysing, employing, and disseminating) were found to be applicable to the emergence of opera. Also, the focus on innovative groups as sites of knowledge, triggered by the growth of cities appeared to be a useful device to study this development in the pursuit of knowledge. Finally, the perspective of the history of knowledge allowed us to scrutinise the practical aspects of an intellectual oral tradition or oratorical delivery and relate it to the emergence of opera. Almost certainly, the history of knowledge brings in other preoccupations that we might not be aware of now. However, in line with Peter Burke,[186] I contend that the history of knowledge is an important attempt to prevent that what historians hate most: anachronism.

The case study of the Camerata Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Alterati provided us with a multi-faceted episode that was served with the perspective of the history of knowledge. However, this research is far from exhaustive and we are left with more questions than answers. Without attempting to be encyclopaedic, I will highlight some possibilities for further research. By far the most general topic would be the history of knowledge in relation to the history of music. More specifically, the *camerata*-culture can be explored by studying informal knowledge practices in Northern Italy and perhaps even in Europe. In addition, non-Western informal research traditions could perhaps be very informative in such an endeavour. Another continuation could be the reassessment of historical figures of the Scientific Revolution in light of the new perspective, emancipating various ways of knowing and calling to attention other analytical categories. A third possibility is the connection of music and Renaissance Humanism. Although this connection was identified decades ago in secondary literature, the field of Renaissance Humanism would benefit from the addition of the study and practice of music in the early modern period. Furthermore, the Republic of Letters in connection to the study and practice of music could shed light on the processes of knowledge (gathering, analysing, employing and disseminating) involving intellectuals and practitioners throughout domains of knowledge.

The second general subject for further research is be the performative aspect in the pursuit of knowledge and the role that rhetoric plays in the history of knowledge. Firstly, the group of Commedia dell'Arte actors and actresses proved to be a surprising and fruitful category actively engaging with the pursuit of knowledge. Secondly, the reconstruction of oratorical practice through re-enactment could prove to be fertile and important research in the context of the history of knowledge. The rhetorical *actio* contains valuable tacit knowledge on early modern knowledge practices and the study of this *actio* will shed a new light on the relation between knowledge and society in the sixteenth century. Lastly, and of personal interest to myself, is the possibility of the 'soul of the artisan' as connected to the early modern pursuit of knowledge. I suspect that this category could be a major attempt to start thinking about the early modern knowledge seeking activities in a profoundly different way. Perhaps, the early modern cohesion of body and soul could be a way to connect to premodern European knowledge seeking to non-Western ways of knowing. Combining the idea of the Soul of the Artisan and the early modern pursuit of knowledge to musical practice might lead us to reappraise the head-in-the-clouds ideal of 'music as language of the soul' in a down-to-earth fashion.

[186] Burke, *What is the History of Knowledge,* pp. 9-10.

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Appendix A

Transcription of Bardi's lecture in defense of Ariosto at the Accademia degli Alterati

Transcriber: Gerben van der Werf
Manuscript: Magliabechiano VI, 168, Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze
October 2019

Note from transcriber

Although the handwriting of the source is steady and legible, some words and shorthand notations were not familiar to me. The words or expressions whose transcription I am not sure of, are put in [brackets]. Furthermore, I have indicated the page numbers of the manuscript and I used indents for poetic passages.

50r

Le cose antiche portan seco gran maiestà, onde non fu di mestieri affaticarsi per dimostrare altrui le maraviglie delli tempi passati perchelo indotto volgo crede che in quelli secoli de Gentili che essi chiamano avventurosi li huomini [fossero] più grandi e [?] membrati che hoggi non semo noi, che la terra producesse più fratto, et con meno sudore che hoggi non fà, che le scienze s'apprendessero con meno fatica, et che li huomini fossero [migliori] che hoggi non sono quelli de tempi nostri, et perdirli con brevi parole, che all'hora come che il mondo fosse nuovo la natura facessi le sue attioni tutte, insomma ex^{tia} et che hoggi come vecchia e debile non faccia semon operationi [inferme], e mancanti onde non possiamo agguagliare questi presenti tempi à quelli antichi

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tanto celebrati dalli scrittori et huomini scientati dell'eta nostra, da queste ragioni forse mossi due gentilissimi Accademici L'uno della publica, L'altro similmente di essa, et di questa nostra privata Accademia impresero à Lodare il settembre passato due antichi Poeti, L'uno della greca, et l'altro della latina favella et [no' senza] biasimo di quelli dell'età nostra pensado forse per mio adviso che la riputatione dell'antichita' dovesse di leggieri far credere altrui tutto quello di che essi impresero à ragionare, ma io veggendo il sole e l'altre stelle muoversi in perpetuo giro e con eterna norma crearsi le pioggie le nevi, ei venti come già facevano distinguarsi l'anno in quattro stagioni nascere e morire li huomini, spengersi ò diminuirsi le monarchie antiche et le

51r

(et le) nuove et picciole erescere in altro et divenire illustri ho pensato questa machina temestre esser mai sempre stata, et la medesima cose se bene invarie parti esotto diverse forme etanto più veggendo si puo dir quasi alli di nostri tanti gran Regi e Imperatori tanti famosi e illustri Capitani, tanti eccellenti artefici e tanti virtuosi in qualunque scientia, qual età fù giamai che havesse cosi chi [chiari] Eroi come il gran Carlo v^{o} Imperatore Francesco Re di Francia, soli mano gran signore de Turchi, Pagolo [?] Adoardo Re d'inghilterra, e il gran Duca di Toscana Cosimo Principe nostro, qual secolo hebbe mai quasi in un med^{o} tempo cosi valorosi Capitani, come il Connestabole

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di Francia, il Marchese di Pescara, il Duca d'Alva, Don Ferrante Gonzaga, il Marchese del Vasco, il Duca di Guisa, il Marchese di Rignano, [Brisac] e il Maresciale Strozzi, e molti altri simili i quali tralascio pernon vi recar tedio, quando fur mai si eccellenti artefici come un Michelagnolo Buonarroti, un Raffaello da Urbino, un Andrea del Santo, un Puntorno, un San Gallo, un Daniel da Volterra, e tant' altri i quali tralascio che sarei troppo lungo; in qual tempo fiorirono cosi scientiati e dotti huomini, come un Ficino, un Pontano, un Marcello, un Moggio, un Genova, un Robertello, un Vettorio, in qual'età nacquero cosi dolci Poeti come in questa che si [alzarono] fino al Cielo, due Martelli, il Molza, Il Sadoleto, il Bibbiena, il Bembo

52r

(Il Bembo), Annibal Caro, il Casa, et il divino Ariosto, del quale è mio intendimento in questa sera prender la difesa delle calunnie datoli dal virtuosissimo e gentilissimo Aspro nostro, pensando che ciascuno debba prenderlo ingrado senon per amor di lui, per conoscere almeno che la natura non ne sia stata scarsa e [mancante] in questi presenti tempi havendo fatto nascere al mondo [quanto] huomo divino, ne credo dover esser riputato troppo ardito se in difendendo lui mi converrà dimostrare gli altrui errori poiche è necessario con il paragone nella med^{a} guisa che hanno fatto gli altri far chiaro altrui l'eccellenza di cosi chiaro Poeta e veramente che quanto fù difficile all'Aspro dire in suo biasimo tanto doverrà

52v

esser facile àme il contare le lodi sue, hor chi non sà che è difficile in aspro monte notare all'erta alto e gravoso sasso' e per lo contrario facile à dimostrar la [chiavezza] del sole! Imprese il sott^{mo} Aspro nostro imprese dico à rotare all'[erra] il gravoso sasso e grande parlando in biasimo di quel raro e peregrino ingegno, in questa sera vengo io à dimostrare la luce del sole esser chiara. Ma quanto avanza egli col suo divino ingegno il mio basso e' frale, tanto da me saranno dette scarse le lodi sue le quali egli con lo artifitioso suo e dotto parlare fece apparir degne di biasimo, Cominciero dunqe dal Luogo di Rodomonte biasimato per mio avviso a torto che egli [lo] facesse alterar dal vino, et in prima dico che

53r

(dico che) volendo il Poeta far morir Isabella in quella guisa faceva di mestieri che a quegli che la haveva da [ammazzar] si levasse in qualche guisa il senno perche non era verisimile che essendo Isabella Donna bellisima che si trovasse alcuno che essendo in cervello L'havesse occisa, e per far questo non c'era niuno più aproposito che Rodomonte [In] prima per non esser egli principale nel Poema et per esser Rodomonte dal boiardo di pinto per huomo crudele e pieno di follia, lo cui costume segue L'Ariosto come ci sonviene secondo li [ammaestramenti] [d'Aristotele] li pingendolo

sempre per furibondo e crudele e fuori d'ogni ragione si come si puo conoscere nelli seg^{ti} versi del i4^{mo} Canto, ove nel fine d'una stanza il Poeta dice,

53v

Che qualunque s'adagia il Re d'Algiere
Rodomonte crudele occide, ò fere et nel fine della seguente stanza
Ove nel caso dispietato e rio
Altri [far] voto, egli bestemmia Dio. et nel principio d'un altra poco di sotto,
Rodomonte non già men di [Nembrotto]
Indomito superbo e furibondo

Chi vedrà questi luoghi egli altui tutti nò si maraviglierà se egli lo fa riscaldare dal vino e tanto più essendo egli moro, ne usa adesso, come nel Canto [...] à stanze venticinque.

Non era Rodomonte usato al vino
Perche la legge sua lo vieta e danna.

Conveniva adunque all'Ariosto levarli il senno perqualche via [perrecare] a fine il suo disegno come' fece Omero facendo imbriacar

54r

imbriacar Polifemo da Ulisse, perche egli potesse uscir della grotta, [...] egli stava chiuso, la qual cosa non starò à replicare essendo à ciascheduno di voi assai nota, ma fù altra imbriacatura quella di Polifemo, poiche Omero il quale fà sudare super le Cattedre L humanisti per dire le lodi sue lo fa dormendo eruttare pezzi di carne non digeriti e par questi e pur questi è quell' Omero preso per scopo da Aristotele per ammaestrarei come si debba comporre L'epopeio Poema, cosi non fa il nostro Ariosto, poiche non li fa [fare schifiltà] alcuna che dea schifezza à Lettori, ma solo lo fa alterar tanto quanto serve à condurre a fine il suo disegno, non merita adunque in questo biasimo L'autore, poiche egli non hà solamente imitato Omero, ma

54v

(ma) migliorato ma lode da chiunque vorrà senza animosità riguardare quanto si è detto: fù ancora biasimato questo divino Poeta nella fortuna ch'egli descrive nel Canto ... . la qual cosa quanto sia à torto lo potra giudicare qualunque si sia trovato in simil periglio, avvengache non fù mai Poeta che meglio rappresentasse davanti agli occhi cosa come fa egli questa, perche egli la descrive con due maniere di versi quando canta L'orgoglio del snare con versi alti [egontiati] quando racconta poi i servigi fatti da marinati huomini vili, racconta dico con altra maniera, secondo che si richiede, hor chi non sa che con altro modo, è richiesto raccontar' L'orgoglio del mare che li servigi de Piloti! ma il nostro Aspro non [racconto] i versi della fortuna di mare detti con tanta grandezza

55r

(grandezza), ma recito quelli de servigi fatti da Piloti, ove il Poeta secondo ch'era dispediente cantò più humile i servigi fatti da Marinari in quel procelloso tempo et con un modo di dire che qualunque verso ancorche alto si farebbe basso e languido, ma io pregandovi che non vi sia gracce' L'ascoltarvi volgio rendervene alcuni ove il Poeta mette d'avanti quell' horribile eprocelloso tempo.

Al vento di maestro [alio] [la Nave]
Le vele all'orza et allargossi in alto
Un Ponente libeccio che soave

Parve à principio e fin che'l sol stette alto
E poi si fe verso La sera grave
Le leva incontro il mar con fero assalto
Contanti tuoni e tanti ardor [di] lampi
Che par che'l Ciel si spezzi e tutto avvampi

55v

Stendon le nubi un tenebroso velo
che ne sole apparir lascia ne stella
Di sotto il Mar, di sopra rugge' il Cielo
Il venso d'ogni intorno ela procella
Che di poggia oscurissima e di gielo
I navicanti miseri flagella
e la notte più sempre si diffonde
sopra l'irate e formidabili onde.

E le altre stanze che seguano le [quali se] saranno considerate rettamente si scorgerà quanto questo ecccellente Poeta habbia meglio imitata la fortuna di mare che non fa Omero quando conduce Ulisse dalla Deca Calipso al Regno de de Feaci, e quando Virgilio conduce Enea à Regni di Libia, meglio imitata dico [...] si vedrà la fortuna e meglio servato il costume poiche L'Ariosto non fa i suoi Eroi anchorche

56r

(anchorche) non principali nel suo Poema cosi timorosi, Come fa Omero Ulisse, et Virgilio Enea Eroi principale nelle favole, loro i quali con poia grandezza d'animo si come è richiesto à simili huomini fanno lamenti à femminelle disdicevoli, ne so con che ragione si possino biasimare i servigi fatti da marinari tanto accortamente inquel tempo che ne era maggior bisogno, et se pare strano che intanto pericolo espavento li huomini non perdino il sentimento, avviene à quelli che hanno poco travagliato in mare che molto ben sanno quelli che vi sono usi, che non poteva meglio questo Poeta scrivere ne porre davanti agli occhi altrui i servigi fatti da marinari in cosi procelloso tempo, si dice ancora che secondo la

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mente d'Aristotile le cose si debbano scrivere non come sono state fatte ma come doverebbono essere avvenute ma passiamo ad altro. Fù biasimato ancora L'Ariosto in comparat^{e} di Virgilio nella cena dove Ruggiero è con Alcina donna impudica e maliarda alla cena dove Enea si trova in casa Didone grandissima Regina, farebbe qui di mestieri far lungo discorso sopra le Comparationi mostrando come le debbano essere simili nel genere, nella [spetie] e nello individuo ma perche sopra di questo sarebbe necess^{o} [farei] una Lettione, L'andrò passando, che siamo qui perhora peraltro, e ciasched^{o} chi voi il sa molto meglio di me, onde peradesso dirò solo che la Comparat^{e} delle come nò è simile

57r

(è simile) ..... ben sarebbe stata simile quella fatta nell' Odiss^{a} da Alcinoo ad Ulisse, Enea arriva sbattuto dalla fortuna in Libia terreno forestiero in casa di Didone regina, Ulisse arriva sbattuto della fortuna tra feaci medesimamente terreno forestiero nella Regia d'Alcinoo Re Enea è raccolto con grata cera accarezzato e reverito, ad Ulisse avviene il med^{mo}, Enea è banchettato da^{lla} Regina ove sono tutti i principali di Libia, Ulisse è banchettato da Alcinoo ove sono tutti li principali de Feaci,

dopo la cena fatta ad Enea viene il Citeredo e [canta] il corso delle Erranti, avanti la cena fatta a Ulisse viene dedemaco musico e poeta e canta L'adulterio di [Marteco] Venere

57v

come Vulcano dubitando della moglie finse di gire alemno sua Citta amata e che questo sapendo Marte ne andò da Citerea sua moglie edi tratto li mise le mani in seno, dicendo vitamia andianne a letto, nel qual luogo andarono ne furono si tosto alli abbracciamenti che li [Lacci] tesi da Vulcano [scocchrono], e li presero legando strettamente amenduni Lo che fù visto dalli Dei tutti et non senza gran risa, questa era comarat^{e} simile à quella cena fatta da Didone à Enea Eroe principale nel Poema di Virgilio , non la cena fatta à Ruggiero heroe non principale nel Poema [all] Ariosto da Alcina donna lusinghiera e infame credo pure che poiche si comporta à Omero

58r

(à Omero) e in quel Poema che fu agguagliato alla vita contemplativa che in casa si grande Eroe fra principale del Regno il Citeredo canti l'Aldulterio di Marte con venere, et che in casa Telemaco i Proci cantassero lascivi canti, credo che' si possa compartare che in Casa meritrice Sfacciata dopo la cena scritta dal Poeta con tanta suntuosità che si faccia il cuoco ove l'uno all'altro parla nell'orecchio per poter condurre al desiderato fine li loro amori, lo che si fece dopo le levate mense, e poi che [semo] a questo proposito diro che giamai non fù Poeta ne Omero ne' Virgilio che scrivesse con tanta brevita di parole con tanta grandezza con tanta chiavezza con tanta spressione come fa egli

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questa cena ascoltate.

Qual mensa trionfante ò sontuosa
Di qual si volgia successor divino
O qual mai tanto celebre e famosa
Di cleopatra al vincitor latino
Patria à g^{a} esser par che l'amorosa
Fatta havea porre al paladino
Tal non cred'io che s'apparecchi dove
Ministra Ganimede' al sommo Giove

non son quesete mica le' lunghe cene d'Omero ove arrivano le serventi con lo ceste piene' di pane' e li bovali pieni divino et li pastori con li porci e li agnelli in casa Ulisse, altra è questa cena che fa fare [q^{o}] divino huomo, et altra quella che sarebbe statameg^{o} in comparat^{e} di quella fatta da Didone à Enea quando Bradamante e Ulania cenarono con (Tris)

59r

(con) Tristano, ove dopo la cena invece del Citeredo fa l'Ariosto, poiche habbiamo perso il modo della musica di que' tempi, fa dico con maggior grandezza dar trattenim^{to} à q^{e}lla magnamima guerrièra in facendoli vedere di pinte tutte le' guerre che si doveano fare per spatio di centinaia d'anni, ben sapeva egli al par d'ogn'altro servare il decoro secondo i tempi, i luoghi, e le persone: fù impotato ancora il Poeta per haver egli fatto dire à Bradamante innamorata,

Dunque baciar si belle'e dolci labbia
Deci altri se bacciar non le poss'io

bisogna ricordarsi che è un discorso tacito che ella fa seco stessa messo in parole dal Poeta per notificarlo alli uditori, poiche noi non possiamo intendere in spirito come gli angioli

59v

bisogna ancora ricordarsi che [g^{a}] è finta donna e guerriera, e in quelli tempi che simili sorte di donne dal [sesso] in poi erano simili alli huomini dico guerrieri e valorosi perche li huomini ordinarii rimanevano loro [adeto] di gran lunga ne credo io che sia stata [donzella] innamorata alli passati tempi o alli presenti che in pensando alla cosa amata per honesta ch'ella sia non faccia de discorsi più lascivi che non ha fatto fare l'Ariosto à Bradamante, non si [dee] dunque prender maravig^{a} se il Poeta fingendo d'una innamorata che parli seco stessa li fa dir quello che di ragione ella devrebbe dire, ne fa a proposito quello che fù detto in comparando la risposta che diede ....

.... a Dante perche ben si sà che altrimenti [dec'] far parlare il Poeta à donna che risponda à cui la domande che a donna che parle secostessa; non fu

60r

(non fu) adunque buona la similitud^{e} fatta tra .... rispondente à Dante à Bradamante che seco stessa si lamentava, sarebbe ben stato simile lo haver comparato à .... Isabella rispondente à Orlando da cui fù trovata nella grotta de malandrini, ben sapeva [q^{o}] eccellente huo' far rispondere alle donzelle come si conveniva, ascoltate Isabella che risponde a Orlando da cui era stata domandata cui ella fosse.

Isabella son' io che figlia fui
Del Re mal fortunato di Galitia
Dico fui ben ch'io non son piu di lui
Ma di dolor d'affanno e di mestitia
Colpa d'Amor ch'io non saprei di cui
Dolermi più che della sua nequitia
Che dolcemente ne Principi aplaude
E tesse di nascosto inganni e fraude

60v

Par egli che il Poeta faccia rispondere à Donz^{lla} innamorata con quella honestà che si conviene questa era comparatione simile à quella ..... rispondente à Dante e non la recitata: fù ancora biasimato il Poeta nella stanza del xxxii Canto, che incomincia

"Tu m'hai Ruggier lasciato io te non voglio, tassando il Poeta di bassezza soggiugnendo che egli portava le pene del suo dir basso, poiche le sue poesie si cantavano in sulla cetera per le taverne enei barbieri, si risponde, che ancora molte cose di Omero, il quale habbiamo altra volta detto che Aristotele per suo scopo nella sua Poetica si cantavano da per tutto, dice Eliano che Licurgo fu il primo, che transporto la poesia d'Omero della ionia in grecia, perche avanti à Licurgo

61r

(à Licurgo) i versi suoi per tutto si cantavano separati, cioè la battaglia fatta alle navi la morte di Patroclo, il riscatto d'Hettore, et l'esseguie di esso Patroclo dice che si cantavano per tutti questi versi non tralle persone scientiate e dotte merita per questo biasimo Omero perche parte delle' sue poesie ~~perche parte delle sue~~ fossino per la bocca d'ognuno? No di vero, si come ne ancora merita biasimo l'Ariosto perche se bene alcune sue stanze son cantate sulla Cetera da gente basse sono ancor cantate da huomini nobili e di molto sapere, lo che è chiaro segno della lor perfettione, hor chi non sa che tutte le Poesie son fatte per cantarsi, et che più merita loda la Poesia fatta in versi che in prosa per esser

61v

In essa verso il ritmo e il suono conforme alla musica, che secondo Platone, Aristotele Aristosseno, Vetruvio, Tolomeo, Boetio essa musica non è altro che verso ritmo e suono non dice Omero nell Hiade' sua canta L'ira del figliuolo d'Achille, e Virgilio L'arme e l'huom canto: son fatte adunq[ue] le Poesie in versi per cantarsi, habbiamo pure atheneo che dice nel suo i4 libro che Omero misse tutte le sue Poesie in musica, habbiamo adunque che la Poesia è vestita di verso nel cui è il suono et il ritmo, et che la musica consta di verso, di suono, et di ritmo, adunque que versi saranno [migliori] che havanno miglior ritmo e miglior suono e per conseguenza più musicali, onde più cantabili. Se L'Ariosto adunque ha fatta

62r

(ha fatta) la sua Poesia che invita ciascuno à cantarla è segno che li suoi versi sono si come conviene pieni di ritmo e di suono, hor chi non sa che volendosi [dar] loda al musico Orfeo si dice che cantando in sù la cetera faceva venire à se le fiere, le fiere si pigliano per li huomini volgari essendo adunque cantati li versi dell' Ariosto da huomini volgari ci da segno che sono tanto pieni di ritmo, e di suono che tirano per forza ciascuno che li legge à imparare a mente per cantarli, chiaro segno della loro perfettione, e si come li huomini di picciolo [intendim^{to}] e idioti sono tirati per forza dall'eccellenza del verso a cantarli ci sono venuti per amore li huomini di alto ingegno e scientiati in questa professione, [Giovanni Domenico da Nola] musico eccellente volendo

62v

far musiche' ariose fece pure si [pur] dire quasi un libro intero di stanze dell'Ariosto e in particolare vi haveva pur quella

Tu m'hai Ruggier lasciato [...]

i quali si cantarono e ancora cantano per tutte le Accademie musicali de gentilhuoi d'Italia, il divino Cipriano [Giache], Orlando il [virtuosiss^{o}] [nostro] [...] [Alessandro] Strigio, il Rossello, il Rossetto hanno pur tutti composto musiche sopra le parole sue, il nostro [Cav] Giacomini pur [ultimamente] essendo in Pisa, dovendo far musica che havesse in se affetto e dolcezza, prese pur per consiglio di huoi giuditiosi dieci stanze delle sue, le quali sono tenute in grand^{mo} pregio, il nostro [Ms] Vincenzo Galilei dovendo ha poco tempo [metter] in musica, stanze che havessero dell'attivo

63r

(dell'attivo) pur prese anch'egli dieci stanze delle sue tratto dalla dolcezza del ritmo, e del suono che in esse sono, hor di qual Poeta si cantano piu parole messe in musica e composta da eccellenti huomini, figurata et come si dice, à aria che di questi, e del Petrarca le stanze del Bembo che sono cotanto miracolose, furono pur messe tutte à cinq^{ta} in musica da huomo [peritissimo] , e sono continuamente, com'altresi le poesie del Petrarca per la bocca d'ognuno, meritano donque biasimo questi eccellenti huoi per esser cantati datt^{o} il mondo, e [figuratamente] e ad aria, no divero [anzi] loda poiche sono [adoperati] per quello sono stati fatti dall'arte e dalla natura: farò qui un poco digressione dicendo che l'arie che si cantano non son'altro che musica

63v

e composte da huoi periti in quella scientia e se sono cantate da huoi idioti adiviene per la loro facilità nella cui consiste l'eccellenza della cosa, e di quelle che sono insomma eccellentia ciascuno si serve e le adopera come dirò tosto, dico ancora che le nostre arie sono più secondo la natura che quelle chiamate musicali, e che più si appressano alle antiche tanto celebrate dalli scrittori, e in particolare quell'arie che si cantono senza accordo, ma ritornando donde mi parti, dico, che non è maraviglia se ciascuno tirato da ritmo e suono si dolce che è la perfettione del verso imprende à cantare i versi dell'Ariosto, ben sa ciascuno che ogn' huomo si serve di quelle cose che sono insomma eccellentia e che di quelle che non sono cosi perfette [sene]

64r

[sene] servano li huomini secondo L'oppinione per esempio in Affrica le genti non beano vino, in Italia li huoi non si servono [dalla] cervogia, et pure è assai pregiata in Clemagna, ecco un'altro esempio, lo habito vinetiano in Venetia [reca] maesta altrove riso ebaia, advien questo che no' hanno in loro [perfettione] universale, cosi non advien del sole e delli elementi che sono da ciascheduno adoperati, segno evidente della grande eccellentia che è in loro, che [diremo] adunque dell'Ariosto che è cantato in Italia, in Francia, in Spagna, trapassato in India e trasportato in lingua Latina! Tenuto caro da vecchi, da giovani, dalle donne dai dotti giuditiosi stante per le Città, e andante in villa tanta concordia che hà

64v

forza di natura non cred'io che menta fù ancora accompangata la Cetera al canto pensando forse per mio adviso dar li pia biasimo, fù pur ancor cantato in su la cetera con una voce sola nella cena di Didone il corso delle erranti, e medesimamente da Dedomaco in casa Alcinoo, et da femio in casa Ulisse e pur sovr'essa cantava Achille, mentre stava lungi dallo esercito greco sopra Troia, mi potrebbe [alcuno] rispondere, questa non è fatta in quella guisa che era quella, si risponde che se non è quanto alla forma è molto simile quanto al suono, et quanto al cantarvisi [sopra] con la voce sola; ma trapassiamo più oltre al biasimo dato al Poeta, nell episodi d'Anselmo di Giocondo, e dell'Oste i quali per difendere

65r

(difendere) fa mestieri farsi da alto dicendo per [fondamento] di questo [nostro] ragionamento. La Poesia essere imitatione secondo che vuol Platone la cui sentenza segue Aristotele e tutti li altri [migliori], diciamo ancora con l'autorita de medesimi la imitatione essere in noi naturale e che li instrumenti con che imitiamo son tre l'oratione, la musica, e il ballo de quali tre uno ne è

perpetuo e necessario alla Poesia, li altri due non sono necessarii se ben s'usano ò s'usovano quando fioriva la Poetica nelle celebrationi recitate al Popolo, diciano ancora che le orationi composte affermanti alcuna cosa alcune sono vere, alcune sono false indue modi si imita adunque con l'oratione vera et con la falsa, la vera è quella che imita perapunto le cose come

65v

sono state fatte, ò come le sono, e come le si fanno che è proprio della storia ò di questa o di quella scienza, ne appartiene alla Poesia l'altra parte cioè la falsa appartiene alla Poetica imitatione, cioè imitare con favola e con falsa oratione, imita ancora il Poeta oltre alle cose humane le divine e li dii onde il Poeta è imitatore di cose humane, et divine, diciamo ancora che se la Poesia è favola et oratione favolosa che due sono l'orationi favolose, una delle quali non ha attione alcuna, come sono i Poeti Lirici et molte odi le quali Platone chiama odi favoleggianti, et [...] un'altra cene'ha che contiene attioni humane della quale fa al proposito nostro perhora ragionare dicendo che l'oratione favolosa che contiene attioni

66r

(attione) humane secondo Aristotele si divide in due in attioni magnifiche e grandi et in basse e friole dicendo egli che quelli di animo bello e grande [presero] à imitare attioni belle e magnifiche simili alla loro natura e che li abbietti e bassi d'animo presero à imitare attioni basse e friole alla lor [natura] dicevoli componendo invettive in biasimo altrui, come li altri d'animo grande li altrui fatti con lode celebravano, il qual modo di dir basso svillaneggiando Omero con il suo divino ingegno à miglior forma lasciando stare il biasimare altrui pigliando soggetti da muover riso come egli fece nel suo Margite, il quale Aristotele afferma havere la [medesima] proportione con la Comedia che ha l'epopeia con la Tragedia, hora stanti feme

66v

Le recitate cose fa di mestieri vedere se il nostro Poeta ha fatto errore havend'egli mescolato nel suo Poema alcuni episodi che non hanno cosi dell'Eroico ma che si abbassino al qunato, diciamo adunque tenendo per fermo quello che habbiamo detto di sopra che ancor che la Poesia sia imitatione, e che la imitatione sia in noi naturale e che sia quella che informa la favola con oratione favolosa e falsa che non è già di necessità ne secondo la natura imitar sempre le medesime cose ma che fà di mestieri imitar secondo i tempi rassomigliando le cose che piacciano e dilettano, ecco uno esempio. I Poeti che imitavano con li versi lirici chiamati da Platone ode et citerodia, e da Aristotele Ditirambi

67r

(Ditirambi), imitavano divero cose grandi anzi non potevano imitar cose magg^{ri} cantando essi le lode delli Dii, e delli Eroi hoggi li nostri Poeti Lirici hanno variato da loro abbassandosi cantando le lodi, ò lamentandosi delle amate loro, e perche hanno fatto questo se non perche han'o veduto che le Poesie del divino Petrarca di cui si puo dire che con il miglioramento che egli diede à questa sorte di Poesia oltre à quelli che avanti lui havevano scritto che l'habbia ridotta in grado di eccellentia che sono piaciute oltre a misura, che diremo hor qui, pur si sono abbassati e piacciono e dilettano tanto; conviene adunque confess^{re} come dissi di sopra che se bene ci è naturale li imitare sempre le [medesime] cose, et che fa

67v

(di mestieri) secondare i tempi, onde se l'Ariosto ha imitato variando secondo i tempi non merita biasimo tanto più vedendo egli da cento anni in qua le Poesie piacevoli e trattanti simili attioni haver dilettato oltre a modo ancorche fatte di maniera che non si potevano far peggio, come i Danesi, i Mambriani, i Morganti, li Orlandi innamorati et in prosa il [Cav^{r}] dell'ardente spada, e li Amadis di Gaula e simili, nó have ancora il nostro Ms. Giovanni Boccaccio variato anch'egli da tutti gli atri [essendosi] egli vestito delle due persone dette da Aristotele nella Poetica havendo ogli imitate attioni magnifice e grandi et altre attioni ~~grandi~~ basse e dimesse ma ciascuna

68r

(ma ciascuna) nel suo genere rassomigliate per eccellenza onde tanto [ha'] dilettato conforme all'autorità d'Aristotele che dice nella sua Poetica che ci prendiamo gran diletto di vedere le cose ben rassimigliate anchorche nella propria forma siano brutte [esporche] e ci dispiaccino, non si è ancora abbassato assai Ovidio nelle sue metamorfosi, il [quale] invece di cantar le lodi delli Dij ha cantato loro adulterij e rapimenti di fanciulli, e pure è piaciuto e piace oltre à misura, e à Greci piacque tanto che [lorevarono] nella lor favella; merita adunque biasimo L'Ariosto per haver mescolato fra attioni tanto magnifice e grandi alcuna cosa varia e piacevole, no di vero se si vorrà andare bene à

68v

drento considerando le ragioni che hora che hora da me saranno addotte; Dice Aristotele nella sua Poetica ov'egli comincia à trattare dell epopeia che conviene constituir la favola secondo la Tragedia però veggiamo com'egli vuole che si constituisca la favola, nella Tragedia poi parleremo al proposito nostro, dice egli cosi, raccogliendo la diffinitione della sustanza sua, è la Tragedia sustanza d'attione Magnifica, è adunque ancora l'epopeia sustanza d'attione magnfica, onde fa di mestieri confessare che L'epopeia non sià ne debba essere altro che attione grande et illustre, ne segue adunque di necessità che havendo mescolato L'Ariosto nel suo Poema li episodi di sopra nominati che habbia errato [grandemente] perche non si potrà dir mai che queste siano attioni

69r

(attioni) magnifiche e grandi, e di vero che à chi non [voria] andare molto a drento cercando la cosa [parrà] esser di cosi, ma chi vorrà bene adrento considerando il tutto troverà la bisogna stare altramenti ch'egli non s'era imaginato Dico adunque che fa di mestieri intendere che l'epopeia, e la Tragedia quanto alla favola principale debbano essere imitationi di persone magnifiche e grandi, ma che quanto alle parti in esse possano [ess^{ze}] attioni di cose friole e basse, purche siano bene imitate secondo i luoghi e i tempi, altramenti Aristotele si sarebbe contradetto, egli nella sua poetica quanto all'epopeia si serve sempre per [prova] d'Omero, il quale Omero s'è pure alcuna volta

69v

abbassato nella sua Odissea, facendo dolersi Telemaco [figuro] d'Ulisse, che i Proci mangiando e beando del suo non pagassino la parte loro, e facendo andar' Ulisse in in casa sua in Itaca come mendicante et azzuffarlo con [Iro] povero e vile per conto della Broda e de Tozzi, e ricevere da Melantio pastore, oltre a molte parole vili percosse col piede nella persona sua facendo ancora esso Omero apparire li [Stupri] de Proci con le serventi di Penelope, e dire il Pastore e umeneo à Ulisse che suo Padre dopo la partenzo di Telemaco suo Nipote non si havea preso cura delle opere sue che lavorasse e finalmente fare a Telemaco con le proprie mani impiccare le serventi sue, non dirà alcuno divero queste

70r

(queste) essere attioni magnifiche e illustri e pure le ha fatte apparire Omero nell'Odissea et in quelle [persone] che sono principali in questo Poema, mi dira alcuno Omero volse fare la furfanteria d'Ulisse per dimostrare la sua astutia e patientia volendo egli condurre à fine il suo disegno d'ammazzare i Proci, e nell'altre cose si veggano bene imitati i costumi di que tempi e vi sono sotto allegorie, ancora noi rispondiamo à questi con le medesime ragioni dicendo che L'Ariosto ha imitato i costumi di suoi tempi, et che nelle favole d'Anselmo, di Giocondo, e dell Oste vi sono sotto allegorie ammaestrandoci che non ci dobbiamo [fidare] di femine vendibili, et insiememente con la novella

70v

d'Anselmo ci dimostra quanto li huoi [avari] siano sottoposti à quanlunque vitio, non si vede ancora nelle Tragedie de buoni antichi allegati da Aristotele che anchorch rappresentino attioni magnifiche et eroiche che pur in esse si trovano [tal] volta [lichori] di persone basse e peggiori, et nuntii e servi persone di basso affare i quali facilmente si spaventano nelle cose grandi effetti contrarii alla eroica maestà di cui è soggetto la Tragedia, direno dunque per questo che in esse sia errore, no di vero perche ci allontaneremo troppo dalla verita se volessimo dar biasimo à quei Poemi, li quali Aristotele ha presi per principal fondamento a provare li [ntention] sua nella materia tragica et nella eroica direno adunque che l'epopeia (lasciando stare la Tragedia

71r

(la Tragedia), di cui habbiamo favellato per fortificar le nostre ragioni) in quanto altt^{o} e attion magnifica e illustre, ma che [quanto] alle parti sue si puo abbassare secondo i luoghi e i tempi, secondo la destrezza del Poeta purche si rassomigli servando il costume secondo i luoghi, i tempi e le persone, le quali cose [strinti] cosi non può ricever biasimo l'Ariosto se alcuna volta si è abbassato in cantando alcuna cosa piacevole, anzi loda, havendo egli non solamente imitato Omero ma migliorato, non facendo egli mai [adere] dalla loro maiestà li suoi Eroi principali, li quali sono Agramante e Carlo ese fa commettere errori alcuna [fiata] ò trattar di materie basse lo fa nelli episodi, et quelli che li commettano sono tutti ò biasimati

71v

ò gastigati, come nell'episodio d'Anselmo

Dalla brutta dimanda e disonesta
persona lo stimo matta e bestiale e poco disotto
O terra accio vi si gettasse dentro
Perch'all'hor non t'apriste insino al centro

E se talhora dipigne uno disleale, uno spergiuro, alla fine non lo lassa impunito, e sempre fa cader questi casi in persone che dal Poeta sono dichiarate permalvagie e del continovo biasimate da lui, cosi nó fa Virgilio che pecca nel costume, in due modi prima dipignendo coraggioso Enea contra quello ch'egli era prima stato dipinto dagli altri di poi facendolo diseguale à se stesso col fare à colui ch'egli haveva preso per esempio di pietà e di virtù morale fare una impietà

72r

(una impietà) e scerelatezza detestabile qual fu il violare la castità d'una don'a reale à cui egli dovea la vita stessa, e poi esserli traditore [espergiuro] e [cargionarle] morte di sempiterna infamia, chi scusa Enea con la imbasciata di Mercurio cade dalla Padella nel fuoco volendo che Giove tenga

mano à tanta sceleratezza, ese egli sene impacciava perche lasciò egli seguire infino a quivi, fa etiamdio mal servare il costume ad Enea e Turno eroi principali nel suo Poema | lo che non fa L'Ariosto | quando li conduce à singolar certame facendo egli vilmente fuggir Turno eposcia arrendersi, à cui Enea non vuol salvar la vita cosa empia, e contraria al costume ch'egli doveva

72v

Far servare ad Enea assomigliato nel suo Poema per esempio di pietà, ne è valevole quello che alcuni adducono persalvar Virgilio dicendo che cio fece fare ad Enea la cintura del morto Pallante amico suo, la cui scusa per mio avviso è molto debile perche Turno uccise Pallante a corpo a corpo con l'armi in mano nell' ardor della battaglia combattendo secondo che si richiedeva à valoroso eroe, e anchora che Turno havesse occiso Pallante con modo disdicevole non doveva il Poeta farlo imitare ad enea imperoche li huoi di alto coraggio non deano imitare [senon] attione valorose e illustri, tutto lo contrario si ritroverrà, da cui andrà ben riguardando li abbattimenti rassomigliati dall'Ariosto nelli quali si riconosce tutto il costume

73r

(costume) che in grandi e generosi quori si possa imaginare, ma troppo mi vo io allontanando dal principio, che m'ero preposto difendere questo divino Poeta dalle calunnie [dateli] dal virtuosissimo Aspro nostro, pure tuttavolta oltre alle cose promesse voglio io raccontare brevemente alcuna delle lodi sue che [entrerei] in troppo alto Mare se osassi dimostrar' parte per parte i colori, le metafore li episodi le comparationi il costume, la sentezza la locutione di quest' huomo divino, dico adunque che quello che informa principalmente la Poesia che è la imitatione è stata rassomigliata da questo Poeta eccellente in quel maggior grado di perfettione che si possa imaginare nella cui ha egli trapassato tutti li Poeti antichi e moderni soggiugnendo [anc^{ra}]

73v

ch'egli la sua attion primaria che è la guerra trà Agramante e Carlo ha dipinto con tanto costume e maestà ch'alcuno giamai è arrivato à questo segno la cui attione è condita da tante belle parti e belezze particolari che fanno ingran parte nascer l'applauso di questo divino Poeta [pu^{o}ss'egli] sentire parlar più alto più nobile e più figurato di quello

E se rotando il sol co'chiari rai ò di quest'altro
che dal mar indo alla tirintia foce
Dal bianco scita all'Ethiope adusto
Reverir fà la tua candida Croce ò di quell'altro
Di sotto il mar, di sopra rugge il Cielo

Ò parlar più grave espaventoso di questo (Di middole)

74r

Di midolle già d'Orsi e di leoni
Ti [pors'io] dunque li primi elementi
Tu per caverne et horridi burroni
fanciullo avvezzo à strangolar serpenti
Pantere e tigri à disarmar [d'ugnoni]
et à vivi Cignai trar spesso i denti

ò piu belle descrittioni di quelle delle bellezze d'Alcina

Sotto duo negri e sottilissimi archi
son duo begli occhi anzi duo chiari soli
pietosi al rimirare al muover parchi
drento à cui par ch'Amore scherzi e voli

O piu mirabili di quelle del Paradiso terrestre, le quali tralascio per la troppo lunghezza ò parlar più magnanimo et eroico di quello d'Agramante con Brandimarte

Ch'io vinca o [perda] ò debba nel mio Regno

74v

Tornare antico ò sempre starne inbando
in mente sua neba Dio fatto disegno
Il qual ne io, ne tu, ne vede Orlando
ma sia che vuol non potrà ad atto indegno
Di [Re] inchinarmi mai timor nefando
s'io fussi certo di morir vo morto
prima restar ch'al sangue mio far torto

ò piu superbo di quel di Rodomonte,

Ovunque io vo si gran vestigio resta
che non lo lascia il Fulmine maggiore

ò [Comparat^{ne}] più evidente e stupenda di questa

Come soglion talhor due can mordenti
Per qualch' invidia o [per altro dio] mossi
Avvicinarsi e digrignare i denti
con occhi biechi e più che bracia rossi

ò luoghi più variabili per muovere à compassione che quelli d'Olimpia, ò Episodio piu stupendo

75r

(più stupendo) di quelle di Ginevra il quale perse solo è un Poema con tutte quelle parti e virtù e perfettioni ch'in perfettisimo poeta si possino desiderare, e per conchiudere ogni cosa in una sola parole, qual Poema si è mai trovato che diletti quanto il Fur^{so} et con il diletto che si richiede, recandoli animi all'honesto et quando Aristotele ha detto nel suo libretto tutto quello ch'egli ha potuto conclude ultimamente che il Poema che diletta sia il piu bello e'L [migliore] contraponendo la Tragedia all'epopeia, e non solo in quel luogo ma ancora ove parla della Tragedia nuova determina il diletto unico fine di quel Poema. Ho detto Signor [Reggente] si come mi è stato comandato pensando esser molto meglio L'

75v

haver obedito e letto questa mia [Lettere] piu tosto cominciata che abbozzata , che fuori de comandamenti suoi havere indugiato altra fiata à farla udire ripulita e limitata, scusinmi.