



Franchino Gafori and Marsilio Ficino

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moving from one house to another.

Besides the photostats in question, the writer has also deposited in the Harvard College Library a typed transcript of MS B², received from Professor Hilka in 1936. A preliminary survey of the I⁸ manuscripts strongly suggested that B², together with P³, may well prove to form the best basis for a critical edition. Hence,

Professor Hilka's transcript is likely to be of special convenience for some future editor of I⁸. There has further been deposited the writer's typed transcript of C³, a manuscript of no particular excellence, together with a handwritten trial apparatus for the characteristic Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2.

FRANCIS P. MAGOUN, JR

Franchino Gafori and Marsilio Ficino

THE brilliant court of Lorenzo, the Magnificent, in Florence was rivalled in the last two decades of the fifteenth century in several other cities in the North of Italy. Not the least significant of these centers of Renaissance activity and humanistic culture was the court of Milan under the rule of Ludovico Sforza, commonly known as Il Moro. From 1481, when by an act of gross usurpation he supplanted his nephew, Gian Galeazzo Sforza (d.1494), he ruled Milan with an iron hand, cruel, vindictive, warlike, but also a patron of arts and letters, who invested his court with a splendor and with an atmosphere of culture entirely in keeping with the strange spirit of his age. His rule ended when he was captured by the invading French forces of Louis XII in 1500.

It was during The Moor's reign that Leonardo da Vinci, coming from Florence, lived for sixteen years (1483-1499) in Milan. It was during this period that the University of Pavia, some twenty-two miles from Milan, became the greatest Italian rival of the University of Padua. The art

of music was cultivated by the Sforza dukes long before the reign of Ludovico. Ludovico's immediate predecessors had encouraged a lively musical activity at the court which was closely connected with the development of the art in the Cathedral of Milan.

In 1484 we find the first indication of the connection of Franchino Gafori (Gaffori, Gafurius, 1451-1522) with Milan. Engaged nominally as a singer, he assumed, either at once or very shortly, the office of Choirmaster of the Cathedral.¹ Gafori is recognized today, by the side of Johannes Tinctoris (ca. 1446-1511), as one of the greatest musical theorists of the Renaissance. With his duties as Choirmaster of the Cathedral he combined, for some years at any rate, the office of Professor of Music at the University of Pavia. He often signs his name as 'phonascus' and 'musicis professor.' He likewise composed music. A few manuscripts (masses, motets, etc.) are

¹The best account of the life of Gafori is to be found in the historical introduction of the facsimile of his *Theorica Musica* (Milan, 1492) edited by Gaetano Cesare (Rome, 1934).

preserved in the archives of the Cathedral, but he seems not to have risen to great eminence in this direction.

But that he was a great student and a scholar of no mean attainments is evident from his theoretical works. He seems to have had only a slight knowledge of Greek, for we know that he had a number of Greek treatises translated into Latin for his use. Of the breadth of his studies we have an example in a book deposited at present in the Harvard College Library. It is a copy of a part of the translation into Latin by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) of the complete works of Plato.

Ficino, with his younger contemporary and protégé, Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), made the Platonic Academy, founded at Florence by Cosimo de' Medici and magnificently supported by Lorenzo, his grandson, the acknowledged center of philosophic studies in the second half of the fifteenth century. Ficino had been specifically commissioned by Cosimo to translate the whole of Plato into Latin. The work was finally put through the press in Florence by Laurentius de Alopa, Venetus, in the years 1484 and 1485. It was dedicated to Lorenzo. A complete copy consists of 562 leaves. The copy in question, which bears the place and the printer's name but no date, includes 160 unnumbered leaves. It contains the *Timaeus*, the *Critias*, the *Laws*, the *Epinomis*, and the *Letters*. An apparently identical copy is owned by the British Museum.

The copy deposited at Harvard was once the property of Franchino Gaffori. Below the colophon we find the note, presumably in the possessor's

autograph: 'Franchini Gaffori musicis professoris est hic liber/ die vi maii 1489 emptus.' Great interest is added to the volume by the fact that Gaffori made copious marginal notes. In addition to numerous passages of the text singled out for emphasis by the word 'Nota' in the margin, or by a pointing hand, there are more than one hundred and forty actual marginal notes or comments. They are written in the same hand as the possessor note at the end, and as a rule do no more than paraphrase a passage of the text.

Unfortunately these remarks on Plato or on Ficino (who wrote more or less lengthy commentaries or introductions to the separate works which he translated) do not reveal as much as we should like to know of what was going on in the mind of Gaffori as he read. Gaffori, who could, as is known, strike out vigorously at a rival in the field of music theory, seems never, while reading this book, to have fallen into a critical or disputatious mood. On the contrary, he seems to have been in a humble or even pious frame of mind. A very large number of the marginal annotations refer to moral sentiments or to religious utterances in Plato or in Ficino. 'Here Plato invokes God at the beginning of his discourse,' or, 'Nothing is better than philosophy.' In the *Timaeus* he selects such statements as the following 'Anima irrationalis est quasi vestigium animae rationalis.' From a passage in Ficino's commentary on the first letter of Plato he quotes: 'Tutius est verbis divinis committendum quam litteris.' There are, of course, a number of annotations of purely musical passages,

but they are not nearly as numerous as one might expect, and they are not very characteristic or very enlightening. For example, the second book of the *Laws*, in which Plato expounds his aesthetic theory of art as imitation, and dwells upon the significance of the choral ode for young and old, receives but scant attention in Gafori's marginal notes.

It would be interesting to discover whether Gafori was influenced by his reading of the *Ficino Plato* and changed any of his fundamental theoretical ideas. Gafori on the whole taught a straightforward Boethian theory of music, as did most of his predecessors and contemporaries. The Paduan professor of music, Ramis de Pareja, a Spaniard, was an exception. Gafori's nearest authorities, whom he quotes repeatedly, are Ugolino of Orvieto and one Anselmus Georgius of Parma. The latter is a little-known writer, apparently of the first half of the fifteenth century. The only known copy of his treatise '*De Harmonia*,' which, like the *Ficino Plato*, has Gafori's possessor note on it, is now among the manuscripts in the Ambrosiana in Milan. It is not included in the great collections of *Scriptores de Musica* of Gerbert and Coussemaker.

Gafori published his first known theoretical work, the *Theoricum Opus*, in Naples in 1480. A second edition, entitled *Theorica Musica*, was printed in Milan in 1492. By 1492 Gafori had surely read and annotated his *Ficino Plato*. Gaetano Cesare, the editor of the 1934 facsimile edition of Gafori's *Theorica Musica*, gives some indication of the passages which differ in the two editions of this book.

From this it does not appear that Gafori departed in the later edition in any significant detail from his earlier position.

Twice, in the edition of 1492, he actually names and quotes Ficino. The first time, in Book 2, Chapter 3, he quotes the Latin translation of Plato's statement in the *Laws*, Book 2, that 'harmoniam esse ordinem in ipsa vocum per acutum et grave contemperantia,' with Ficino's explanation 'quam nos concentum dicere solemus.' The other almost literal quotation (Book 2, Chapter 6) is from Ficino's commentary on the *Epinomis* to the effect that Plato often not only praises and admires arithmetic but maintains that arithmetic, more than any other discipline, sharpens the intellect, strengthens memory, and renders the mind most apt and prompt for all speculation and action.

More interesting than these results of Gafori's study is the observation, not hitherto emphasized, that Marsilio Ficino himself indulges in a little musical theorizing. The famous Platonist is reported to have had a certain amount of musical talent. We are told that he was able to sing his own verses to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, designated as the 'plectrum.' This was probably some form of lute. It is further reported that he rarely attended a meeting of the Academy without bringing his plectrum with him. Like all other commentators on the *Timaeus*, from the earliest times to our own day, he becomes involved in a certain amount of musical theory and speculation. This accounts for his chapters in the *Timaeus* preface: (28) *Cur anima rei compositae comparetur: cur consonantiae*

musicae; (29) Propositiones et proportiones ad musicam Pythagoricam et Platoniam pertinentes; (30) Quod in musicis unum ex multis efficitur, per quod consonantia definitur; (31) Quae consonantiae ex quibus proportionibus orientur; (32) De harmonica animae compositione; (33) Summa

numerorum harmonicorum ad compositionem animae conducentium.

Surely, a small niche should be reserved for Marsilio Ficino in the hall of fame of musical theorists of the Renaissance.

OTTO KINKELDEY

The Earliest Known English Playbill

IN 1931 Miss Eleanore Boswell discovered among the uncalendared State Papers Domestic in the Public Record Office an English playbill of 1687.¹ This broadside antedated by five years the William and Mary playbill found by the late W. J. Lawrence among the Verney Papers in 1911 and termed by him 'the oldest known English playbill.'² There has been, however, in the Theatre Collection of the Harvard College Library since 1915 a small playbill (7¼ by 5⅞ inches) — reproduced here approximately full size (Plate I) — which I believe to be more than twenty-seven years earlier than the James II bill in the Public Record Office.

This interesting broadside, slightly imperfect, was acquired about 1830 for two guineas by William Upcott, the antiquary and collector, from Thomas Thorpe, the bookseller. Upcott had twelve copies of it litho-

graphed for himself and his friends³ and then sold it to George Daniel, the miscellaneous writer and a collector of theatrical curiosities. Daniel mounted it on one of the leaves of a quarto volume bound for him in calf in 1835 and containing twenty tracts, broadsides, and clippings concerning Bartholomew Fair that he has assembled from various sources. When his library came up for auction at his death in 1864, this volume passed through the hands of Ellis, a dealer, into the possession of Henry Huth; and as lot 489 in the great Huth sale it was purchased in 1911 by the firm of Tregaskis, who sold it to Robert Gould Shaw, founder of the Harvard Theatre Collection.

Without giving the date or the time, the playbill announces that at 'John Harris's Booth, in Bartholomew-Fair . . . , next the Rope-dancers, is to be seen, The Court of King Henry the Second; And the Death of Fair Rosamond; With the merry Humours of Punchinello, and the Lancashire-Witches. As also the famous History of Bungy and Frier Bacon: With the

³Two of these copies are in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

¹Eleanore Boswell, 'A Playbill of 1687,' *The Library*, 4th ser., XI (1931), 499-502 (facsimile).

²W. J. Lawrence, *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies, Second Series* (Philadelphia, 1913), pp. 240, 241 (facsimiles of four William and Mary playbills, the oldest dated 9 November 1692).

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