

**Francesco Rognoni**

# **Selva de Varii Passaggi**

**(1620)**

**Avvertimenti alli Benigni Lettori**

**Translated by Sion M. Honea**

## Translator's Preface

We must be grateful for Rognoni's book, but it must also stand as something of an enigmatic anachronism. Rognoni's exact dates are uncertain, but he was no doubt middle-aged by 1620, the date of publication. His father Riccardo had published his own book in 1592, at what seems to have been the height, or more likely the last flowering of the diminution technique in the 1590's, along with those of Conforto, Bovicelli and Zacconi. Maffei had produced the essential document on the subject in 1562 and Caccini delivered the first blow to, or perhaps the eulogy on it in 1601, dismissing it as an irrelevant anachronism from a bygone age. This in fact it was.

In a sense, the practice has more in common with the several techniques of improvised counterpoint on chant melodies that medieval choristers trained in, and even seems rather a holdover as applied to the renaissance motet or madrigal. It was a technique of thrillingly virtuosic potential but essentially barren of internal emotional significance. Rognoni himself realized this, it seems, and presents a startling indictment of singers who saw themselves, their voices and their technique of greater value than the words and the affect. More important evidence of his understanding is that his book begins with his superb presentation of the types of ornaments that Caccini's new emotional performance used. Then it moves on to the diminution technique as incorporating these elements of the new style.<sup>1</sup>

The book is in two parts, the first for voice and the second for instruments. Together they compress a very large amount of valuable information on performance practice into a very small amount of prefatory text. Rognoni presents what, to my mind, is the best and clearest description and illustration of ornaments of the entire period—even so not perfect. Of course no two authors agree with each other, but it is invaluable to have a reasonably clear statement by any author, much less an accomplished musician, that can serve as a “base line” for comparison. The obscurities of Bovicelli's treatment stand as evidence of this. The statement to the singer that concludes part 1 is a text of historical value sufficient to deserve inclusion in the standard anthologies, and it is a little surprising that it is not.

The second part's documentation of instruments is of equal value, particularly its remarks on bowing, among the very earliest, and despite their own obscurities. Wind players should be particularly grateful for the two sections on their family of instruments. The instrumental sections are, in fact, indebted to Dalla Casa (1584), but they are not wholesale “lifts,” such as those in Cerone from Zacconi. The remarks on tonguing, deriving from Dalla Casa, are slightly different and a valuable antecedent to the kind of sophisticated technique presented much later by Quantz.

It is efficient to make more general mention here in this preface of Bruce Dickey's excellent remarks on Rognoni's *Selva* in the preface to his edition of the *Passaggi per potersi esercitare nel diminuire* (1592, Forni reprint, 2007) by Riccardo Rognoni, Francesco's father. References here to Dickey's work can, perhaps, better alert the reader than by “burying” important information in notes within the translation. Dickey offers far more information on Francesco's text than on Riccardo's, which

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<sup>1</sup> Dickey says that this is “the first ‘table of ornaments’ in the history of music.” He must intend “table of ornaments’ to be a critical distinction, for others prior to Rognoni, notably Bovicelli (1594) and Praetorius (1619) had given explanations and illustrations of ornaments. I personally feel that Rognoni's is the clearest.

latter is very much shorter. A complete recital of Dickey's conclusions cannot be summarized here, where only a few allusions to specific issues can be raised.

For as good an understanding of the bowing material on the gamba and braccio families as presented by both Rognonis the reader must simply read Dickey. I see my task as presenting the reader with as clear a translation as possible—difficult enough considering that the originals are fraught with obscurities and considering my own lack of specific knowledge of string instruments. Even so, Dickey describes the bowing directions of both the Rognonis as “tantalizingly rich in information and maddeningly difficult to interpret.” To the limit of my ability to evaluate, Dickey has drawn about as much information from the sources as can well be extracted at this time. If further understanding is to be reached it will be through the process of many minds directed to the text in translation. In regard to this, I was pleased to see that the few passages from the *Selva* that I compared to Dickey's translation in the same edition of Riccardo's work nearly always conformed well in sense, though sometimes not in expression, to my own. The disparity is owing to my principle of maintaining a less smooth translation in order to facilitate the reader's own comparison. The one particular case in which I am most indebted was a misreading of the instrument cornamusa, which I document in its place.

The reader may also be somewhat reassured that my frequently expressed frustration over descriptions of ornaments in the texts of this series is justified, especially concerning the tremolo, which Dickey refers to as “frustratingly unelucidated in the theoretical sources.” I share his pain. He has independently reached my own conclusions—or rather I his—that the tremolo was a term applied to a wide diversity of idiosyncratic ornaments, which variety cannot be reduced to one understanding. On the esclamazione Dickey refers to Caccini's earlier—quite muddled—description as well as to Francesco's clearer one. Dickey's reading of the texts is not my own, for which reason I retain my own version that the decrescendo happens on the first note and the crescendo on the following one. Dickey's understanding is that the crescendo occurs on the very end of the first note after the decrescendo. As I have said the texts are unclear, sufficiently unclear to render his interpretation at least as plausible as my own. What I find more persuasive about his interpretation is that he supports it with musical examples that appear later in Francesco's text. I think that this is as nearly definitive as possible. I feel, though, that the reader should have reference to both understandings.

In regard to the examples of tonguing that appear within Francesco's text, Dickey addresses why the syllables appear in one form in the text and another in the musical illustration. His refusal to dismiss disparities in the musical illustration as printing errors is a pristine example of proper scholarly method—sad experience has rendered me less fastidious. Years of training and decades of study in printing technology, paleography and text editing leave me cynical as to the reliability of copyists and composers. Further, the two characters involved in the issue are “t” and “r,” which in modern typography seem utterly incapable of confusion. In the reality of sixteenth-century typography, printing practice, poorly inked forms, worn and broken type and faulty type setting, “t” and “r” can in original state look very similar, and become even more similar through the outrages of fortune described above. Dickey is, however, absolutely correct in stating that, considering the

possibility of error inherent, no theory should be based on the disparities as deliberate. I have left the syllables as I have read them, which reading also differs slightly from Dickey's own.

Rognoni's prose style ranges from crystal clear to almost incomprehensible.. He seems to include a peculiarly large number of problematic words—whether obsolete, obscure, neologisms, or misprints is uncertain, though probably a mixture of all. A most annoying feature attributable to the compositor is the use of *è* for both the verb *è* and the conjunction *e*. The pagination of the opening of part one is confused, and I have done my best to clarify it for the reader. As always, when a choice must be made, I prefer fidelity to the original over elegance in translation.

## Advice to the Gentle Reader

[folio unnumbered]<sup>2</sup>

1. The portar della voce<sup>3</sup> must be with grace, which one makes by reinforcing the voice gradually on the first note and then making a tremolo on the black note.<sup>4</sup>

**[For the convenience of the reader relevant ornament examples have been extracted from Rognoni's ornament table and placed with the description.  
The entire ornament table is given intact at the end of this section.]**



2. The accento must be rather slow than otherwise. The true accento is the one that one makes in descending, although nowadays one also makes use of another one ascending, and sometimes to please the ear, but good singers do it rarely because it would then be tedious.



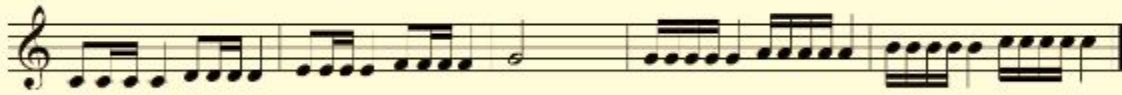
<sup>2</sup> The page numbering of Part 1 is quite confused. The first two folios are unfoliated and unpagged, including this advice to the reader. Beginning with the table of ornaments it bears foliation numbers 1 and 2. Folio 3 is misnumbered 2 again. Folio 4 begins pagination with number 6 and continues to the end of Part 1, the last page of which is the advice to singers. Part 2 recommences pagination beginning with the title page, though page numbers do not begin to appear until page 5.

<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to "Anglicize" all the terms in Rognoni's treatise. Most are still current in the vocabulary, though perhaps with different meanings, but Rognoni's descriptions and illustrations make virtually all differences clear.

<sup>4</sup> Note that Rognoni's example does not illustrate the tremolo on the portar della voce but only the two notes, white and black. Dickey provides a discussion of this. The reader must infer that this is an improvised ornament made by subdividing one original longer note into the two ornamental ones of the portar della voce.

3. The tremolo one makes often, but with grace, and one ought to take care not to make it as some do without a termination, so that they seem like goats. For the most part the tremolo is made on the value of the dot of each note.<sup>5</sup>

**The Tremolo in two ways**



**Tremolo on a whole-note**



4. The groppo,<sup>6</sup> as it seems to me, ought to be written in this way, such as the greater part of knowledgeable men have written it, as so also the trillo, everyone who wants to learn this trillo or groppo needs to be careful to attack and strike each note in the throat on the vowel “a” up to the last breve or semibreve,<sup>7</sup> which trillo or groppo is made mostly on the penultimate note of any cadence or final [cadence].<sup>8</sup>

**Groppo, single**



**Groppo, double**



<sup>5</sup> The limitation of the tremolo to the value of the dot of a dotted note seems a potentially very short time in some cases, as Dickey also finds bewildering. Rognoni’s examples do not represent it in that rhythmic context, but this description helps make sense of Bovicelli’s enigmatic description of the tremolo and adds a degree of confirmation that he is describing one of the Rognoni type, as I argue in the Bovicelli translation in this series.

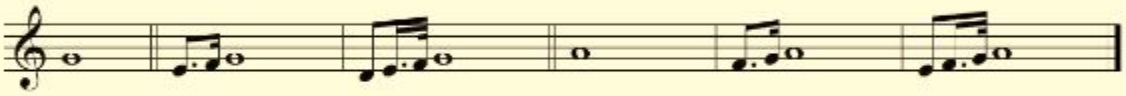
<sup>6</sup> Consistent with casual orthographical practice of the time, Rognoni spells this in two ways indiscriminately, both “groppo” and “gruppo.” I have used only “groppo.”

<sup>7</sup> The use of the vowel “a” is as Rognoni says, a practice vowel for learning the technique, not for use in all occasions of performance. Note that he does not specify the articulation method of the tremolo.

<sup>8</sup> The text is “*cadenza ò finali*.” The word ò can, as with the English “or,” indicate that the two are the same or that the two are different. Rognoni may be distinguishing an internal cadence from a final one, which is common in the literature.

5. The *principiar sotto la nota* needs to be either on the third or the fourth (though there must be judicious evaluation) because it will not always be good to begin on the third, but sometimes on the fourth, and this is a matter for the ear of the discerning singer because of the dissonance that can be produced. This initiating is nothing other than a giving of grace to the voice in initiating the notes.<sup>9</sup>

**Principiar sotto la nota**




Rognoni does not use precise rhythmic indications.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. It contains six measures of music. The first measure has a whole note. The second measure has a dotted half note. The third measure has a dotted half note. The fourth measure has a whole note. The fifth measure has a dotted half note. The sixth measure has a dotted half note. The notes are written on a five-line staff, with some notes having accidentals (sharps and flats).

6. The *esclamazione* is made by a gradual decrescendo and a descent from the first pitch, and then giving a little spirit and liveliness to the note that follows, along with a tremolino.<sup>10</sup>

**Esclamazione**



Note that these examples are as performed not as written. The first would originally have been only 2 whole-notes D and B.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. It contains six measures of music. The first measure has a whole note. The second measure has a dotted half note. The third measure has a dotted half note. The fourth measure has a whole note. The fifth measure has a dotted half note. The sixth measure has a dotted half note. The notes are written on a five-line staff, with some notes having accidentals (sharps and flats).

7. The necessity of passing from one note to the next makes it necessary to carry the voice well with grace, holding the dotted notes well by giving them the tremolo with spirit and liveliness, taking care not to produce two fifths or two octaves, which could happen, holding back a little more on the penultimate note, and one ought to avoid the opposite. I say again that it is necessary always to hold back on the penultimate note in any *passaggio* whatever and in particular on the *trillo* or *grosso* so as not suddenly to produce a harsh effect on the last note, which would be disgusting to the listener.

<sup>9</sup> As the name—beginning below the note—implies, Rognoni means that the singer enters at the interval of a third or fourth below the written pitch. The usual term for this is *intonatio* or *intonare*.

<sup>10</sup> Caccini gives a famously confused description of the *esclamazione*. Despite its brevity, Rognoni's is far more clear. The singer makes a decrescendo on and falls in pitch from the first note, then makes a crescendo on the following note. Rognoni leaves only the tremolino unexplained. The fact that he does not explain it suggests that he expects the reader to understand or find it self-evident, which implies that it is only a brief tremolo, as the diminutive suffix *-ino* implies. Dickey has an importantly different understanding of the dynamic variation in the *esclamazione*. See my preface.

8. The good singer takes care to make his *passaggio* on the vowels and not as some do, who make *passaggi* choosing some such syllable as these—gnu, gu, bi, vi, si, tur, bar, bor—and other similar ones, he will need to avoid them because one cannot hear worse.
9. There are certain singers who at times make a kind of throat articulation (*gorgheggiare*) (in the Moorish fashion), beating the *passaggio* in a certain way disliked by all, singing a-a-a, which seems like they are laughing. They can resemble those Ethiopians or Moors that *The Voyage from Venice to Jerusalem*<sup>11</sup> tells about; it says that such people in their sacrifices sing in this way, which seems like they laugh showing all the teeth in their mouths. Hence they learn that the gorga [technique] must come from the chest (*petto*), not the throat (*gola*).<sup>12</sup>
10. Although you will sometimes find *passaggi* on an ascending and descending step, which do not arrive at their destined place, this is done in order to shorten the work, because it would have been too prominent. It is understood, however, that in studying *passaggi* one goes as far as his disposition [allows] and farther in regard to instruments.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This appears to be a reference to Giovanni Francesco Alcarotti, *Del viaggio di terra santa da Venetia à Tripoli di Soria per mare & di là per terra à Gierusalemme*. (1596)

<sup>12</sup> This sounds like a less clear description of an error in the technique of throat articulation as discussed by Maffei, in which he says that the notes are incorrectly “articulated” as in laughing, rather than by the vocal cords. See Maffei, *Delle lettere* (1562) in this translations series (original p.30). The singers that Rognoni describes have mistaken this chest technique for the proper throat technique.

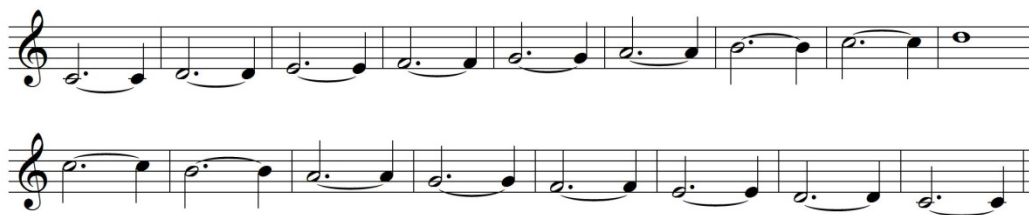
<sup>13</sup> A singer’s disposition (ability in throat articulation) limits the nature of the *passaggi*, whereas instruments are not so limited, their technique not being the special type of throat articulation to some degree dependent on natural ability.



# The True Principles of Singing Elegantly and Well

Where are contained the manner of portar la voce, of giving grace in the principiar of the note, tremolo, groppo, trillo, with some esclamationes no little useful for one who desires to sing with grace and style.

## Portar la voce



## Accento



## The Tremolo in two ways



## Groppo, single



## Groppo, double



## Tremolo on a whole-note



## The True Principles of Singing Elegantly and Well

### Trillo on the half-note



### Trillo on the whole-note, first way



### Trillo on the whole-note, second way



## Esclamazione



Note that these examples are as performed not as written. The first would originally have been only 2 whole-notes D and B.

### Principiar sotto la nota



Rognoni does not use precise rhythmic indications.

**[51] Advice to Singers**  
**[From the close of Part One]**

It being the case that the ornament (*vaghezza*) of song consists principally in expressing well and distinctly the word that one sings, I thus wanted in this place to remind the singers desirous of following in the footsteps of the distinguished and experienced. Since<sup>14</sup> the articulate voice is nothing other than the instrument for expressing the concept of the mind, [i.e.] the word, they [singers] should understand [the word] in greater consideration [as] the instrument by which a thing is produced or even [than] the very thing that is produced; to our mind as if they must more make the voice heard with which one sings the word than the very word that is sung. They must also beware of passaggi on words that signify distress, anxiety, torment, and similar things, because [on these occasions] in place of the passaggi it is customary to make graces, accentos and exclamations, now singing softer now louder with sweet and gentle movement, and sometimes with a voice sad and dolorous conforming to the sense of the text.<sup>15</sup>

Nor is it praiseworthy that many singers nowadays overindulge, who have a little of the natural *disposizione*.<sup>16</sup> Although they produce endless passaggi, nevertheless they abide by no rule other than to make passaggi on all syllables,<sup>17</sup> producing them in such a way to the ruin of all the harmony, by means of which one well discerns that they have not learned good rules from a good master. One finds<sup>18</sup> the said error even among the instrumentalists, the error and failing of which singers and players reaches such an extent that some think they have surpassed their teachers, while others deny it saying that they have learned from foreigners, or that being of such an elevated talent they have instructed themselves—a sign of ingratitude. They do not notice how empty is their idea because through a little practice that becomes long usage they produce neither a foundation nor principles and the inability to arrive at the knowledge of their master makes them deny it. In my opinion it would be better for such a person to choose some other art for himself than this noble and sublime one.

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<sup>14</sup> From this point to the sentence beginning “they must also beware” is quite difficult to translate. The passage also suffers from ellipsis and the frequent lack of clear referents. I believe that the burden of Rognoni’s thought is that singers must remember what is proper and not see themselves and their voices as of greater consideration than the text and its effective expression, on which latter they would do well to concentrate, with which Caccini would certainly agree. The exemplary clarity of Rognoni’s previous descriptions of ornaments as well as the clarity of the opening and closing of this paragraph would seem to indicate that the difficulty lies in the fact that Rognoni is trying to express a difficult idea, that of conceptually separating the singing voice from the thing sung. Unfortunately, it is not the only occasion of Rognoni’s obscurity; Boyden and Dickey indicate that they find the very important section on bowing to be confused or obscure, as do I (see note 39). It seems that Rognoni’s prose is at its worst when trying to convey the most complex ideas, which is only natural but nonetheless frustrating. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>15</sup> This is an influence of the new emotional style.

<sup>16</sup> The term “disposition” in the technical sense of throat articulation is so standard that it is preferable to circumlocutions. Nonetheless the simple English “disposition” is too easily confused with the other more familiar senses of that word today, for which reason I use the Italian form.

<sup>17</sup> In other words, the lack of any rule!

<sup>18</sup> Once again, the prose degenerates here.

He who in the first forest (*selva*) will not find fruits conforming to all his desire may progress to the second, which because more ample and liberal will also be abundant of more tasty and delicious fruit. Farewell.

## *Selva de varii Pasaggi: Part 2*

### Where is Discussed Some Difficult Pasaggi For instruments

[Unnumbered page 2]

#### On the Nature of the Viola da Gamba<sup>19</sup>

The viola da gamba is a sensitive instrument, in particular if it is played with a beautiful bowed articulation, with its tremolos, with controlled passaggi that are well distributed, with the bow in good contact with the viola; distinguishing the notes (*corde*) well.<sup>20</sup> The bass part, to be sure, does not make many passaggi,<sup>21</sup> but those few it does make must be well placed and natural because the bass part is the foundation of the other parts. I advise everyone not to do as do many who play the bass of some instrument, who do nothing except diminutions and for the most part make passaggi that are not [characteristic of] the bass, and throw the entire ensemble into ruin, it is the part of the violino da gamba<sup>22</sup> to make diminutions gracefully, and always well bowed. The manner of bowing is that the bow is always drawn (*tirar*) down at the beginning of a song and at any rest because thrusting (*pontar*) the other way<sup>23</sup> seems ugly and is not its nature.

#### On the Lira da Gamba and Lira da Brazzo<sup>24</sup>

The lira da gamba is the most harmonious found among bowed instruments and is so artful (*artificioso*) that moving a single finger makes all the combinations (*legature*) that could be imagined. In my opinion, I think the one who was the inventor of it was a man of great judgment because there are all the dissonances (*false*) resolved with consonances (*buone*),<sup>25</sup> and harmony is such it moves the soul through hearing more than anything, principally in sad matters and sorrowful, and although it is an imperfect instrument, the bass singing with it accompanied by soprano, one cannot hear better. The lira da brazzo, then, although known by few, has all the harmonies and musical

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<sup>19</sup> For an understanding of the bowing issues, or of the problems relating to them, the reader really must consult Dickey's preface, as referred to in my preface.

<sup>20</sup> Rognoni could not have chosen a word more ambiguous in this context than *corde* (notes, chords, strings) if he had tried. In the context of bowing I have supposed his intention to be well articulated notes.

<sup>21</sup> This is consistent with many authors' instructions in regard to the bass voice.

<sup>22</sup> I can find no citation for this instrument in either Marcuse or *Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* (1984). *Oxford Music Online* (s.v. violoncello) mentions numerous terms in connection with the history of the cello as the bass member of the violin family, but nothing sufficiently close to reference here. Rognoni is often quite casual in terms, orthography and semantics. He lifts entire passages in this section largely verbatim from Dalla Casa. I see no indication in this passage that he is referring to more than one instrument of the gamba type.

<sup>23</sup> The phrase he uses is "*oltre che*," about which I can only speculate from the context that Rognoni means an upbow, which he may have avoided as "*in su*" because of the horizontal movement on the gamba.

<sup>24</sup> Both the lira da gamba and the lira da brazzo are string instruments with both actively played strings and drone strings. The lira da gamba is the lower (in pitch) form of the lira da brazzo (or braccio).

<sup>25</sup> The "faults" and "strengths" are expressed by bare adjectives without clear referent(s).

combinations that are necessary. The bowing (*archetare*) or lireggiare<sup>26</sup> of these instruments is the same as the viol. The lira for itself likes the long bow, since one can lireggiare better with it.

### On the Viola Bastarda

The viola bastarda, which is queen of the other instruments for making passaggi, is an instrument that is neither tenor nor bass viol but is between the one and the other in size, it is called bastarda because at one time it goes high at another low, then again the highest (*sopra acuto*).<sup>27</sup> At one time it produces one part, at another time another, at one time with new counterpoint at another time with imitative passaggi, but it is necessary to notice that the imitations have no more than six or seven answers at most, because it would be tedious and distasteful. The same is understood also of all kinds of instruments because the schools of the foremost players do not permit it. They also prohibit making two octaves or two fifths with any other parts in passaggi, except if one is compelled in order to follow some imitation. Many are seen nowadays who play either the cornetto or violin or other instrument who do nothing more than make passaggi, either good or bad, so long as they make passaggi, deafening the one who knows his business, ruining all the song, thinking they are doing well. For those it would be better that they should go play, as is said, out in the bushes,<sup>28</sup> than in ensembles, since they don't know that it is worth knowing how to play a note with grace or bowed sweetly and gently than to make so many passaggi beyond what is proper. This method of making passaggi on the bastarda serves for organs, lutes, harps and similar instruments.

### On the Nature of Wind Instruments

The wind instruments for the most part have some imperfections either of sound or of some pitch, mainly in the *schilli*,<sup>29</sup> that is in the high [range], which is false,<sup>30</sup> or which does not respond (*torna*) well, and the judgment of knowledgeable players consists in understanding such imperfections by knowing how to avoid an error, one time by putting down a finger, another time by raising a different one, since he tries to make that pitch that is not perfect. Many flutes have a range up to thirteen or fourteen pitches, others fifteen and more, according to what the player knows how to produce. The cornetto will go naturally to fifteen pitches and more up to nineteen in the very high (*sopra acuto*)<sup>31</sup> range. The cornamusa has only nine, except the bass according to its

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<sup>26</sup> This is a special term for bowing that Rognoni explains below. Derivatives from the root *arc-* usually indicate ordinary bowing in Rognoni.

<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Music Online* (s.v. *chiavette*) explains that Ganassi (*Lettonne Seconda*, 1543) was the first to use this term for the range we know as the modern g2 treble clef, the highest one.

<sup>28</sup> This is not quite a literal translation but a very communicative one nonetheless!

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately this word is now apparently obsolete and obscure (or one of the fairly frequent misprints in this text), the next phrase provides a kind of definition.

<sup>30</sup> This sounds as if Rognoni is referring to the overblown high range of many instruments.

<sup>31</sup> See note 20.

keys (*mole*).<sup>32</sup> The bassoon will be able to go as far as fifteen pitches, according to sizes. The whistle flute (*piffano*),<sup>33</sup> and the Diana<sup>34</sup> will have more of them. The fistula (*fisola*)<sup>35</sup> goes up to 18 pitches. The trombone, now, will be able to produce as many pitches as a man wants to execute with the embouchure. God granting me life, I will treat the practice of every kind of instrument in my *Theorica & Pratica di Musica*.<sup>36</sup>

### [Unnumbered page 3, Untitled section on Performance Practice]

The arm supported viols (*viola da braccio*), particularly the violin, is [*sic*] an instrument in itself crude and harsh, except it is moderated by gentle bowing, [then] it is thin and sweet (*radolcito*).<sup>37</sup> Hence let those who have a certain crude playing learn without laying the bow over the viola and raise it with such force that they produce more noise with the bow than [musical] sound. Further also, they do not know<sup>38</sup> how to draw (*tirar*) four eighth-notes or sixteenth-notes that are equal to each other but go leaping with the bow on the viola so that it appears to swallow the notes, thus not making them heard all equally with the bow well addressed to the viola as good players do. They even make certain tremolos with the finger that makes the same pitch, always fingering wrong, not knowing what the tremolo is by nature, that it is an increasing/raising (*accrescimento*) of pitch (*voce*) and does not fall, and by this means the tremolo is produced with the finger above that of the sound.<sup>39</sup> The *passaggio* must be of equal notes and be heard note by note so that it is neither too

<sup>32</sup> I am indebted to Dickey's translation here for correcting my misread. First, I understood *cornamusa* as the bagpipe, which it can mean, not *cornamusa* the wind-cap instrument. Next I understood *mole* as the Italian word for size, proportion, etc., which was not precluded by its subsequent application to the bassoon. Dickey's understanding of it as a variant of the plural of *molla* seems a far better fit, *molla* being a spring or some kind of mechanical contrivance and so "key."

<sup>33</sup> The modern word is *piffero* and is generic, referring to a variety of whistle or duct flutes.

<sup>34</sup> The Diana is unknown to both Marcuse and *Oxford Dictionary of Musical Instruments* (1984): as the merest conjecture possibly it is a Pan pipe type, in keeping with the mythological theme?

<sup>35</sup> Again the term is generic. Marcuse knows the fistula as a panpipes of Campania. This seems as likely as any.

<sup>36</sup> Apparently God begrudged it him.

<sup>37</sup> The term is obscure and either obsolete, a neologism or a misprint. The root *rad-* has the sense of "rare, thin, fine" and the root *dolc-* as in *dolce* is "sweet, gentle, soft." This would yield something like "a thin soft sound," which does not seem consistent with Rognoni's description of the violin as crude and harsh. If the first clause of "*se della soave archata non vien temprato, è rodolcito*" is taken as an exception and the second as the result, as I have taken it here, something more sensible results. This reading does not stretch the bounds of credulity where Rognoni is concerned, whose prose is often very disjointed, paratactical and leaves much to the reader's inference.

<sup>38</sup> A caveat to readers! I puzzled many times over this phrase "*di più ancora non fanno*" until I realized that what I was reading as "*fanno*" was the almost indistinguishable long "s" in "*sanno*"! For all the times I have corrected this error in students, I can still make it myself!

<sup>39</sup> I must leave the explanation of this description to experts in string instruments. The term "*accrescere*" and its derivatives usually mean to become louder, not to raise to a higher pitch. The word "*voce*" is also problematic meaning either voice, pitch in general, or a specific pitch. For an author at this time, writing on a subject related to string instrument, the natural tendency would be for the author to mean a crescendo on a pitch. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be the case as the allusion to fingering indicates. Rognoni's illustration of the basic tremolo is a pulse on a single pitch, except for the tremolo on a whole-note, which involves one raised note. This may be why he referred to "certain tremolos," "*certi tremolo*." Spatial metaphors in writing of this time are most often guesswork, but if Rognoni means "*il ditto superiore*," "the finger above," to mean the finger toward the player of the

fast nor too slow but holds to the middle course, extending the bow well over the viol so that the eighth-notes, sixteenth-notes and thirtysecond-notes are well apportioned, as many in the downbeat as in the upbeat of the beat<sup>40</sup> because the greater importance of the player, whatever the instrument, is to keep the tempo in the *passaggio* he makes. It is necessary to keep an ear to the *passaggi* that have leaps because at times the leap of a third or fourth, sometimes a fifth or sixth will be good. This, however, is at the discretion of the player because no one unexpectedly can be a fortune teller as to the notes that move by step. Each one being in a position to notice that, when one doesn't play in a song, as to the management of the bow—in regard to entire rests, it is necessary to draw the bow down (*tirar in giù*), as regards half-rests or breaths (literally sighs, *sospiri*) to point the bow up (*pontar in su*), the same as one finds the *passaggio* that goes immediately in sixteenth-notes or thirtysecond-notes to draw it down (*tirar in giù*), if [there is] an eighth-note before the *passaggio* one can use an upbos (*pontar in su*), this is natural for it. If it is a madrigal or motet or a canzona with diminutions or rather something with *passaggi* by someone who doesn't know his business, they will always make *passaggi* too much *stropiati*<sup>41</sup> for the bow because they don't have an understanding of the instrument. The same happens with other instruments, as with the winds, lute,<sup>42</sup> harp and other similar ones. For those who play winds, because they don't know the articulation of the tongue, for the lute and harp the movements of the hand, and other information for similar instruments, although perfect players accommodate themselves to everything, accommodating the *passaggio* to their proper office, even if with great difficulty, but for the poor beginners, it is a dismissal to disaster, such that they will never make players able to produce four reasonable eighth-notes, nor will the *passaggio* ever be songlike, nor with spirit because he will lack what he needs. In this regard let students beware of taking works with *passaggi* by others, except by those who have understanding of the instrument that he wants to make his profession because to each one his own craft. This is sufficient.

#### [Unnumbered page 4, Instructions for *Archeggiare* or *Lireggiare* On Bowed Instruments]

By *lireggiare*<sup>43</sup> is understood making two, three or more notes on a single bow [stroke], as is seen in the examples opposite. If there are two, two down and<sup>44</sup> two up. If there are three, the

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viola da braccio, then it would be a higher pitch and consistent with his illustration of the tremolo on a whole-note. Dickey addresses this specific issue in his preface, but I am still left with questions on the performance of the tremolo.

<sup>40</sup> This translation is somewhat anachronistic, but it is clearly what Rognoni means.

<sup>41</sup> Once again Rognoni uses an obscure term. Given his causal alternative use of singular and double consonants, I conjecture that the heart of the word is *troppo* and the *s-* is the intensive suffix deriving from Latin *ex*, thus rendering a meaning something like “made too much.”

<sup>42</sup> I take *licuto* as a misprint for *leuto*.

<sup>43</sup> *Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* (1984) has a brief but very helpful entry on *lireggiare*. Boyden's *History of Violin Playing* (pp. 164-165) provides a discussion of *lireggiare* that cannot do much to enlighten Rognoni's obscurity beyond providing the valuable confirmation that it is obscure. Dickey's discussion is the most extensive.

<sup>44</sup> I must admit to some annoyance that Rognoni's text uses *è* for both “and” and “is” and sometimes the reverse. It can become very confusing.



same. If there are four, four down and four up. If there are eight or twelve, the same, provided that the movement of the bow (*arcata*)<sup>45</sup> lasts up to where the line below [bowing mark?] arrives. Should it number even five of them or six notes.<sup>46</sup> If you want it to succeed<sup>47</sup> well, it is necessary to do it slowly, giving force to the pulse of the bow hand, advising each that the “T” means to draw [the bow] down (*tirar in giù*) and “P” to thrust the bow up (*pontar in su*). This is the way of *lireggiare* that serves for all bowed instruments.

*Lireggiare affetuoso*, that is to *lireggiare* with affect, is the same as above in regard to the bow, but it is necessary that the pulse of the bow hand, almost leaping, should strike all the notes one by one.<sup>48</sup> This is difficult to do well, it needs long study, however, in order to be able to maintain the tempo conforming to the value of the notes, taking care not to make more noise with the bow than with the [musical] sound.

**Method of lireggiare for all bowed instruments**

Excerpts only

### Advice for Wind Instruments<sup>49</sup>

The tongue is that which more than anything in the performance of wind instruments, and principally the cornetto, produces the good and beautiful, although the embouchure cooperates with

<sup>45</sup> *Cambridge Italian Dictionary* records this as meaning one movement of the bow, or bowing.

<sup>46</sup> I take *notte* as a misprint for *note*. This sentence is quite obscure grammatically, but Rognoni's illustration makes clear that there is no difference in the bowing of five or six notes.

<sup>47</sup> The text reads "*riesehino*." The sense indicates this can only be the form *riescano* from *riuscire*. The "eh" is probably a misprint for "ch" and the first conjugation subjunctive ending *-ino* probably results from the not infrequent confusion of conjugations and the proclivity of errors toward the first conjugation.

<sup>48</sup> I make no pretense to knowledge of bowing technique. The reader must consult Dickey's discussion.

<sup>49</sup> This section clearly relies heavily on Dalla Casa, *Il Vero Modo di Diminuir* (1584)

it, which is very important for producing the sound. There are three kinds of tongue in use. The first is called “reverse” (*lingua riversa*)<sup>50</sup> and is the main one for being similar to the “*gorgha*” [sic] of the human voice;<sup>51</sup> This is the fastest and is difficult to control. Its place of articulation is on the palate and it is produced in three modes.<sup>52</sup> The first [mode] is le-re le-re le-re-le, tonguing soft and gentle. The second [mode] is de-re de-re de-re-de and is moderate. The third [mode] is de-re te-re de-re-te and is more harsh. The second kind goes by the name “direct” and its place of articulation is on the teeth. It is of two modes, the first is this: te-re te-re te-re-te, and the other is te te te te te te te. These two kinds of tongue are highly praised for the production of the notes up to diminutions in eighth-notes. The third kind of tongue is struck on the palate behind the teeth, which is te-che te-che te-che-te and is harsh and coarse by nature and is distasteful to the listeners. The reverse tonguing, however, is the most praised and used by good players, in particular the first mode le-re le-re-le, but adding at the beginning some other figure te in exchange for le, that is te-re le-re-le and is seen in the examples opposite.<sup>53</sup>

**Method of Tonguing on the Cornetto  
or on other Wind Instruments  
Excerpts only**

te te re le te le te te te te re le

te re le re te re le re le re le re te te re le re le te (?)

<sup>50</sup> Dickey proposes an interesting suggestion as to the origin of the term, that the soft liquid initial “*le*” is the “reverse” of the normal harder consonant sound of “*de*” or “*te*.”

<sup>51</sup> This is a very interesting analogy to the *disposizione* method of throat articulation.

<sup>52</sup> Rognoni does not strictly maintain his terminology of genre = *sorte* (kind) and species = *modo* (mode), which I do maintain here.

<sup>53</sup> I add a comparison of the tonguing of Rognoni and Dalla Casa for the convenience of the reader.

The cornetto is an instrument that simulates the human voice more than any other. It must be played a long time in order to make a good instrument sound, lest it be like a horn and feeble (*muto*).<sup>54</sup> Holding the embouchure tenser than necessary makes it crack.<sup>55</sup> Holding the [aperture of the] embouchure too open makes it like a horn and feeble. Therefore, to make a good instrument [sound] it is necessary for the player to produce an aperture in the embouchure that is the medium. It needs also to be played with discrimination and delicacy, endeavoring to imitate the human voice, and the tongue needs to be neither too dead nor too hard but similar to the *gorra* and this makes for a good instrument [sound].

Although you find in ascending and descending by step passaggi that do not come to their destined end, this has been done to shorten the work. It is understood, however, that in studying similar passaggi one goes as far as his disposition, and further, according to the instrument, since each can make use of some in cadences, even final ones, with its imitation and where it seems pleasing. Live well!

Tonguing Comparison Rognoni & Dalla Casa		
<i>Sorte</i> (Kind)		
<i>Lingua Rivversa</i> (on the palate)		
<u>Rognoni</u>		<u>Dalla Casa</u>
1. lere lere lerede		lere lere lere lerele
2. dere dere derede		dere lere dere lerele
3. dere tere derete		tere lere tere lerele
<i>Dritta</i> , Direct (on the teeth)		
1. tere tere terete		tere tere tere terete
2. te te te te te te		
Unnamed (on the palate behind the teeth)		
teche teche techete		teche teche teche techete
Also		
		te te te te
		de de de de
		dere dere dere dere

<sup>54</sup> *Cambridge Italian Dictionary* recognizes a special musical sense of *muto* as feeble.

<sup>55</sup> The text is "*lo fa havere del sfesso*." On brass-type instruments, among which the cornetto ranks owing to its mouthpiece, an embouchure that is too tense can result in several negative results, which one Rognoni means is unclear. It can make notes "crack" by missing the specific harmonic. It also results in an unpleasant "pinched," very nasal sound. When the harmonics lie close together it is possible to miss the one intended, in which the instrument produces simultaneously the two adjacent ones, causing an unpleasant rapid beating or popping sound.