

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE CACCIA FOUND IN BOLOGNA,
CIVICO MUSEO, CODEX Q 16

EDWARD PEASE

In my recent article on Codex Q 16¹ I offered a transcription of a short caccia from the late-fifteenth century bearing the incipit, *Alla cazza, alla cazza*, which is found on ff. 144v-145r of that source. To the best of my knowledge, no early concordances exist for this piece.

As I pointed out in the text of the article, *Q 16* offers many editorial problems, due for the most part to the large number of scribal inaccuracies. In fact, the great majority of pieces must be treated with some editorial adjustment of the musical notation if convincing transcriptions are to be achieved.

As for *Alla cazza*, both the altus and the bassus² must be repaired in some fashion. My approach in both cases was to stay as close to the source as possible and thus make only those corrections which would allow the four voices to fit together. Thus, I confined my editorial emendations to the lengthening by the value of a semibrevis of the final "g" minima in measure 1 of the bassus and the removal of the dot from the semibrevis "a" in measure 16 of the altus. (Both changes are duly footnoted in the transcription.)

Just after my article had gone to press I received long-awaited Xerox copies of an article by F. Ghisi³ which I had not been able to examine

¹ "A Report on Codex Q 16 of the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale (Formerly of the Conservatorio Statale di Musica 'G. B. Martini'), Bologna", *Musica Disciplina* XX (1966), pp. 57-94. The transcription of *Alla cazza* is to be found on pp. 93-4, a facsimile opposite p. 60.

² The names employed here for the voices are supplied on the basis of pitch range, inasmuch as no designations for the voices of this particular piece are to be found in *Q 16*.


³ German version entitled "Bruchstücke einer neuen Musikhandschrift der italienischen Ars nova und zwei unveröffentlichte Caccien der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts", *Archiv für Musikforschung* VII (1942), p. 17 f. Published also in Italian as "Frammenti di un nuovo Codice musicale dell' Ars-Nova italiana e due saggi inediti di Cacce del secondo Quattrocento", *La Rinascita* V (1942), p. 72 f. The two articles are virtually identical except that the Italian version omits transcriptions. Both versions of the article are rare items in American libraries due to the limited distribution of the two periodicals during the war years. Ghisi mentions in a footnote

previously. I was surprised to discover that in his report there is also contained a transcription of the *Q 16 Alla caccia*⁴ and that a comparison of his version with mine brings to light some significant details.

As far as editorial adjustments are concerned, both Ghisi and I have treated the first measure of the bassus in the same fashion, but his approach to the problems in the altus is quite different: he makes more extensive adjustments, adding two minima "b-flats" at the outset of measure 10 and shortening the semibrevis "d" in measure 18 to a minima.

I wish to acknowledge at this point that although Ghisi's corrections of the scribal inaccuracies in the altus are less objectively founded than mine, they do indeed seem superior from the stylistic standpoint, for they make for better harmony in several places and also the resultant phraseology is more logical. Therefore, I withdraw my solution of the problems in the altus in favor of his.

On the other hand, Ghisi is guilty of a number of obvious misreadings of both text and music. The following is a list of his musical corruptions:

1. Superius, m. 5; initial "b" should be a "d".
2. Superius, m. 11; three colored (blackened) notes are present, not four. Thus, the correct rhythm is  (my reduction).
3. Altus, m. 10; Ghisi makes no attempt to indicate his editorial insertion of two minima "b-flats".
4. Altus, m. 11; no minima rest is present. Instead, the semibrevis should be dotted.
5. Altus, m. 18; Ghisi fails to indicate his editorial shortening of the "d" semibrevis to the value of a minima.
6. Tenor, m. 8; the first "b" minima should be a "g".
7. Bassus, m. 1; Ghisi does not indicate his editorial lengthening of the final minima "g" to the value of a semibrevis.
8. Bassus, m. 13; the minima "e" should be a "d".
9. Bassus, m. 17; the final minima in the measure should be a "g", not an "e".

The text of this piece is underlaid in an unusually haphazard manner for an Italian composition contained in what is almost certainly a codex

a reference to *Q 16* previously unknown to me: F. Novati's "Contributi alla storia della lirica musicale neolatina", *Studi medievali* II (1906-7), p. 303 f. Although most of his material is of questionable value to the modern scholar, Novati does present a reading of the text of *Alla caccia* (p. 317), albeit an inaccurate one, and also suggests (footnote, p. 317) that the scribe who identifies himself as "Dominicus Marsilius" on f. 8v of the manuscript was a member of a noble Florentine family of the same surname (Italian = *de' Marsili*), a theory supported by the presence of the family coat of arms on f. 2v. However, it seems doubtful that the scribe was a "member" of the family in the genealogical sense. Perhaps he was merely an employee of the household.

⁴ pp. 38-9 of the German version. Ghisi's scale of reduction is $\diamond = \text{minima}$, mine $\diamond = \text{semibrevis}$ (undotted).

compiled in Italy. It follows that any reconstruction of the relationship between text and music will be somewhat subjective. However, I am somewhat dubious about the manner in which Ghisi so frequently violates relations between musical and poetic stress, and I also question his attempt to fit texts to all of the parts.⁵ In addition, one finds at least two significant misreadings of the text:⁶ the initial incipit is certainly not *Alla caccia*, and the phrase, *se perdano* found in mm. 13-14 is clearly an editorial corruption of *te jordano*.

Should the reader feel at this point that I am indulging in excessive detail with respect to a very brief and relatively insignificant composition, I hasten to add that cacce from the late-15th and early-16th centuries are valuable if for no other reason than their rarity, and in addition, the *Q 16 Alla caccia* is a very attractive piece. At any rate, it deserves better treatment than either Ghisi or I have given it in earlier publications. Therefore, the transcription included in this article represents an attempt to combine the best features of those previously available.

⁵ In the source, one finds a complete text in only the superius, mere incipits in the tenor and bassus, and no text at all in the altus.

⁶ My thanks to Frl. Mechthild Caanitz of the University of Freiburg, Germany, for helping me edit this and several other difficult texts in *Q 16*. Ghisi's misreadings of the text can be traced back to Novati's article.

