

Bellerofonte Castaldi (1580-1649) of Modena: Musician, Poet, and Adventurer

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By all accounts, the enigmatic Modenese musician, poet, artist, and adventurer Bellerofonte Castaldi, was one of seicento Italy's most captivating public figures. In his day, he was as widely known for his sensational adventures, controversial poetry, and stinging public satires denouncing the hypocrisy of politicians and churchmen, as he was for his activities as a theorbo virtuoso, singer, and composer.¹ Restless, outspoken, and eccentric, Bellerofonte Castaldi associated with many of seicento Italy's most influential writers, poets, and musicians, sharing with them a passionate need to express himself through his art. Like the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini (1500-71), Castaldi's fiercely independent nature often led him to be involved in duels, and he was imprisoned or banished several times for his sharp wit and sword.² Yet, despite the operatic events of his life, Castaldi embodied Baldassare Castiglione's image of a highly educated and cultivated gentleman, versed in the arts and sciences, literature and rhetoric, as well as in the manly physical skills of horsemanship and swordplay.³

I would like to express my gratitude to Mary Dolata for her insightful comments and advice on previous drafts of this essay. My thanks also go to Michela Addorisio and her staff at Modena's Biblioteca Estense for facilitating my research in every possible way and the librarians at Modena's Archivio di Stato and Archivio Storico, who also gave freely of their time and expertise. Illustrations Nos. 2 and 3 are reproduced with the kind permission of Count Giulio Forni. It is my pleasure to dedicate this essay to John Suess on the occasion of his retirement from Case Western Reserve University.

1. Nigel Fortune and David Dolata, "Bellerofonte Castaldi," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, pp. 247-8. Other encyclopedic entries on Castaldi include Joachim Steinheuer's article in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Personenteil, vol. 4, cols. 381-6; Robert Eitner, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1900-04), vol. 2, p. 359; François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Brussels, 1835-44), vol. 2, p. 205; *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti, Le Biografie*, ed. Alberto Basso (Turin, 1985-8), vol. 2, p. 141; *Dizionario Ricordi della Musica e dei Musicisti*, ed. Claudio Sartori (Milan, 1959), p. 266; *Enciclopedia della musica Ricordi*, ed. Sartori (Milan, 1963-4), vol. 1, p. 428; and Claudio Mutini and Cesare Orselli's entry in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-), vol. 21, p. 552-3.
2. See *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, trans. John Addington Symonds (New York: Collier, 1910). While both Cellini and Castaldi frequently claimed that they simply wanted to be left alone to practice their respective arts, Caravaggio (1571-1610) aggressively pursued confrontation, attenuating comparisons between Castaldi and the combative artist.

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Although he composed for the theorbo, an instrument associated with professional musicians such as his famous colleagues Alessandro Piccinini (1566-1638) and Girolamo Giovanni Kapsberger (1580-1651),⁴ Castaldi never aspired to be a court musician, an employment that as an aristocrat, he may have considered beneath his station. He did, however, publish two innovative printed editions on which his current musical fame chiefly rests. The first, *Capricci a due stromenti cioe tiorba e tiorbino e per sonar solo varie sorti di balli e fantasticarie* (Modena, 1622), Castaldi engraved himself.⁵ It contains music for solo theorbo, tiorbino and theorbo duo,⁶ and songs with tablature accompaniments. This volume he distributed mostly among his friends and acquaintances. His second print, *Primo mazzetto di fiori musicalmente colti dal giardino Bellerofonteo* (Venice, 1623),⁷ a monody collection of solos, duos, and a trio, all accompanied by an unfigured bass line, was published by his close friend, the printer Alessandro Vincenti.

Until recently, scholarly interest in Bellerofonte Castaldi has generally been limited to the philological research of his poetry,⁸ chapters in Modenese musicologists'

3. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528), translated and introduced by George Bull. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967).
4. The less challenging lute was the standard vehicle for dilettante composers. Victor Coelho, "Authority, autonomy, and interpretation in seventeenth-century Italian lute music," in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela: Historical Practice and Modern Interpretation*, ed. Victor Coelho (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 124.
5. Facsimile reproduction by Minkoff Reprints (Geneva, 1981) and Studio per Edizioni Scelte: Archivum Musicum, Collana di testi rari, vol. 88, ed. Francesca Torelli (Florence, 2002). *Répertoire Internationale des Sources Musicales (RISM)*, Series A: "Einzeldrucke vor 1800," Band 2, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1975), p. 79, RISM No. C 1452. *Capricci* does not appear in Boetticher's RISM catalog: Wolfgang Boetticher, ed., *Handschriftlich überlieferte Lauten- und Gitarrentabulaturen des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, Ser. B, vol. 7 of *Répertoire Internationale des Sources Musicales* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1978). Critical edition by David Dolata, Vols. 142 & 143 in *Recent Researches of Music in the Baroque Era* (Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, 2006). See also David Dolata, "The Sonatas and Dance Music in the 'Capricci a due stromenti' (1622) of Bellerofonte Castaldi (1580-1649)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1998).
6. The tiorbino is a small theorbo that is tuned an octave higher than the larger instrument. It retains the theorbo's single strings and re-entrant tuning. Regarding the use of the term "tiorbino" to describe a keyboard instrument, see Grant O'Brien and Francesco Nocerino "The tiorbino: an unrecognized instrument type built by harpsichord makers with possible evidence for a surviving instrument," *Galpin Society Journal* 58 (2005), pp. 184-208.
7. Facsimile reproduction in Archivum Musicum: La cantata barocca, 18, introductory notes by Piero Mioli (Florence: Studio Per Edizioni Scelte, 1984). Hereafter it will be referred to as *Primo mazzetto*. *Répertoire Internationale des Sources Musicales (RISM)*, Series A: "Einzeldrucke vor 1800," Band 2, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1975), p. 79, RISM No. C 1453; Emil Vogel, Alfred Einstein, François Lesure, and Claudio Sartori, *Bibliografia della musica italiana vocale profana pubblicata dal 1500 al 1700*, 3 vols. (Staderini spa, Pomezia: Minkoff, 1977), pp. 330-1, No. 502; Nigel Fortune, "Italian Secular Song from 1600 to 1635: the Origins and Development of Accompanied Monody" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1954), Appendix I(a) under "1623."
8. Paolo Pergreffi, *Bellerofonte Castaldi: Le Rime* (Laurea thesis, University of Bologna, 1982). This magisterial work includes a transcription of Castaldi's entire poetic output. Giuseppe Cavazzuti's *Frammenti di una corrispondenza poetica del sec. XVII* (Modena: Ferraguti, 1910) and *Poesia diattale*

larger essays that chronicle Castaldi's role in the musical history of their beloved city,⁹ and characterizations of Castaldi as a member of Claudio Monteverdi's circle of friends and colleagues.¹⁰ This current essay presents the fascinating biographical details of Castaldi's life based on archival research carried out in Modena, Castaldi's native Collegara, Bologna, Forlì, Venice, Rome, Paris, and London. A deeper understanding of the climate in which Castaldi practiced his art can enhance our appreciation of his music and provide a broader view of the factors that impacted the daily lives of musicians and artists in seventeenth-century Italy.

Sources

Most of the available biographical information on Bellerofonte Castaldi is derived from his personal collection of poetry and private correspondence entitled *Le Rime Burlesche, Parte Seconda* (1636) & *Parte Terza* (1638), and *Rimansuglio di Rime Berniesche* (1645).¹¹ These several hundred pages are what remain of a larger collection of Castaldi's assembled writings. A page from *Rimansuglio* is reproduced here as Illustration No. 1. *Rimansuglio* begins with a lengthy autobiographical narrative in *terza rima* entitled "A l'illustrissimo Signor Francesco Bolani." The versed letters that follow "Bolani" and

modenese (Modena: Ferraguti, 1910) contain detailed analyses and assessments of Castaldi's poetry. *Frammenti* explores the relationship between Castaldi and his close friend Fulvio Testi as revealed in the letters and poems the two friends exchanged. For an explanation of the allegorical undercurrent that flows beneath the surface of the Testi's sonnet and Castaldi's response, both of which appear in *Capricci's* introductory material, see Dolata, "Visual and Poetic Allegory in Bellerofonte Castaldi's Extraordinary *Capricci a due stromenti*" *Early Music* XXXIII/3 (August 2005), pp. 383-5.

9. Luigi F. Valdrighi "Di Bellerofonte Castaldi e per incidenza di altri musicisti modenesei dei secoli XVI e XVII: annotazioni biobibliografiche" in *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazione di storia patria per le provincie dell'Emilia*, new ser., v/1 (1880), pp. 89-115; reprinted as *Musurgiana*, 1st ser., iii (1880/R1970). Valdrighi (1827-1899) was a Modenese musicologist. This work recounts the story of Castaldi's life through information provided in *Rimansuglio*. Giovanni Battista Spaccini, *Cronaca di Modena* (1588-1631) in Archivio Storico Comunale di Modena, Camera segreta, vol. 3, passim and Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca modenese* (Modena: Soc. tip., 1781), vol. 1, pp. 424-25 also contain preliminary biographical information on Castaldi. Spaccini (1570-1636) and Tiraboschi (1731-1784) were both Modenese historians. Gino Roncaglia, "Di Bellerofonte Castaldi (con un documento inedito)" in *Atti e memorie della Deputazione di storia patria per le antic provincie modenesei*, vii/10 (1958), pp. 117-23. Roncaglia (1883-1968) was also a Modenese musicologist. Although he provides some biographical information, Roncaglia's stated purpose in this essay is to provide commentary on Castaldi's life and musical contributions.
10. Paolo Fabbri, translated by Tim Carter, *Monteverdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 129, 193, (fn. 81, p. 302), 245-46, 61 (fn. 90, p. 286) and "Inediti Monteverdiani," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 15 (1980), 71-86; Denis Stevens, translation and introduction, *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 251, 272-73, 424, 427; John Whenham, "The Later Madrigals and Madrigal Books" in *The New Monteverdi Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 216-50.
11. *Le Rime Burlesche Seconda Parte* (1636) e *Parte Terza* (1638), Biblioteca Estense, Modena, Deposito del Collegio San Carlo, cd. n. 6 and *Rimansuglio di Rime Berniesche* (1645), Biblioteca Estense, Modena, cd. a. S.1 (1) lt. 1407.

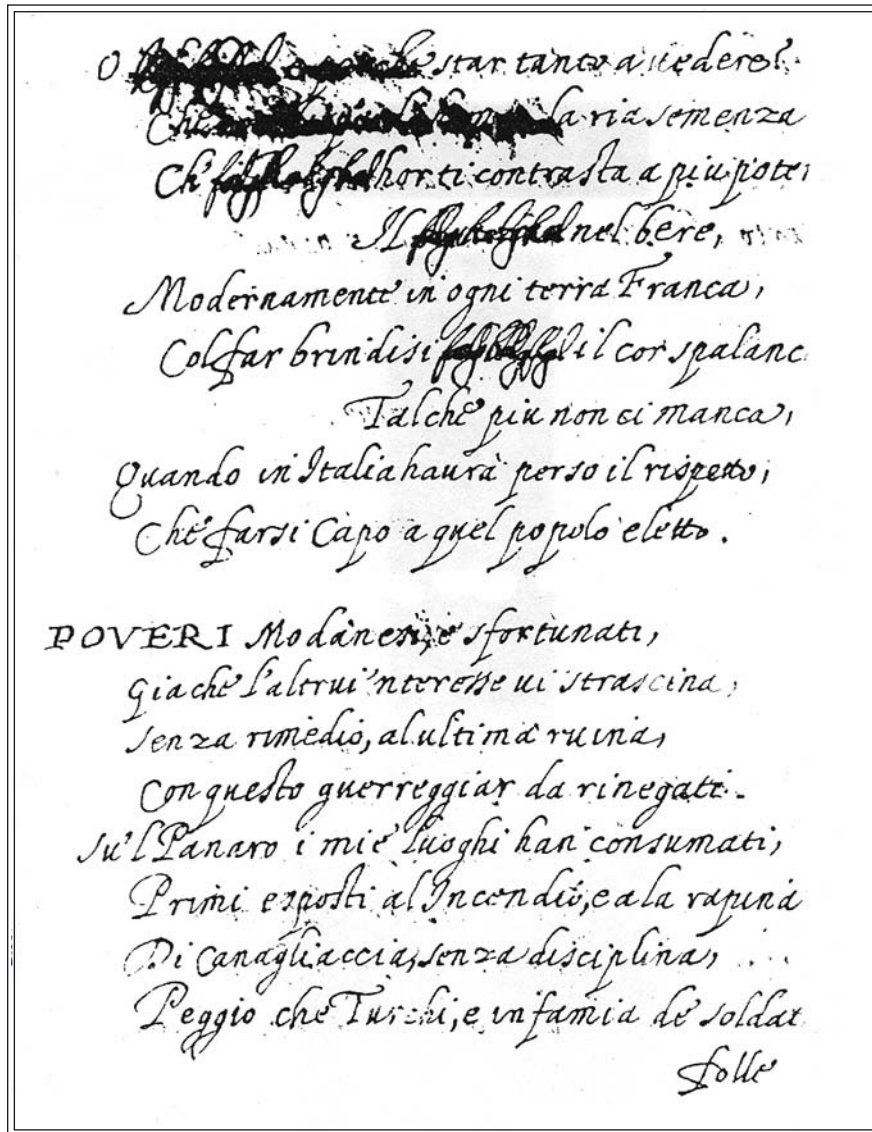


Illustration 1. Rimansuglio, p. 39r.

those found in *Le Rime Burlesche* are Castaldi's handwritten transcriptions of the correspondence exchanged with many of his friends over the years. These compelling memoirs allow us to construct a chronological outline of the events of Castaldi's life; they also provide detailed and candid information that sheds light on Castaldi's complicated and multi-faceted personality.

The Castaldis

The roots of Castaldi's magic lie deep in the soil of Modena, a city well known for its maverick spirit.¹² Bellerofonte Castaldi was born in 1580 sometime between January and July, the exact month and day unknown, in the remote and peaceful village of Collegara, southeast of Modena in the province of Emilia-Romagna.¹³ He was the fifth of seven children issued from the marriage of the Modenese Francesco Castaldi and Maria Rossi, originally from Terni, a community about 40 miles northeast of Rome. Francesco Castaldi was one of three men living in the Modena area at that time with the same name. As a result Francesco's mail was often mistakenly sent to one of the other Francesco Castaldis and vice versa.¹⁴ Bellerofonte reports that Francesco gave his children unique and extravagant names so that they would not be similarly inconvenienced. The daughters were named Araplice, Areta, Artemia, and Axiotea; the sons were, in birth order, first Bellerofonte,¹⁵ then Sesostro, and the youngest, Oromedonte.

12. After all, how many cities display "stolen buckets" in their city halls? The stolen bucket refers to the story portrayed in *La Secchia Rapita*, Castaldi's friend Alessandro Tassoni's (1565-1635) popular 1614 mock-heroic account of the war between Modena and Bologna in 1325. In that year a young man from the noble Modenese family, the Forni, stole the well bucket from Bologna as a trophy. Legend has it that he wore it on his head as he made his frantic escape with the furious Bolognesi hot on his heels. Today the bucket is enshrined in a glass display case on the second floor of Modena's city hall, the Palazzo Comunale. Before the current renovations began on the city's "duomo" or cathedral, the wooden bucket was displayed in the "Ghirlandina," the duomo's bell tower, Modena's most treasured shrine and city symbol. Its nickname probably comes from the two rows of garland-like balustrading that crown the slightly leaning tower.
13. For a detailed explanation of the confusion surrounding Castaldi's year of birth, see Dolata, "The Sonatas and Dance Music in the 'Capricci a due stromenti' (1622)," pp. 14-15.
14. The large number of documents relating to the various Castaldi families that comprise Particolare busta 326 at the Archivio di Stato di Modena testifies to the plenitude of Modenese citizens with Castaldi as a surname. A "busta" [envelope] is actually a large lidded box used for storing documents.
15. A prince of Corinth, the mythological Bellerophon had captured the winged horse Pegasus, the symbol of beauty and inspiration, and with his aid, Bellerophon slew the Chimera, "A fearful creature, great and swift of feet and strong, whose breath was flame unquenchable." The Chimera was also the symbol of deceit. When, forgetting his place, Bellerophon tried to ride up to Olympus, Pegasus threw him, making him lame for the remainder of his days, which were spent wandering the world in solitude. Francesco certainly could not have foretold that his Bellerofonte would also be made lame, but in his case, by a bullet. Nor could he have predicted the deep loneliness his eldest son would endure during his final years. The other children's names have similar derivations. See Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (New York: Mentor Books, 1942), pp. 134-7.

Somewhat financially well to do, the Castaldis held an estate known as the “Casino Bianco” fronting the Panaro River.¹⁶ Bellerofonte and Sesostro’s evident backgrounds in the classics, philosophy, and the arts and sciences suggest that their father Francesco gave his children a fine education. It also appears that they inherited his eccentric nature. After Francesco’s death, the children maintained control of the family estate and continued to benefit from the income it produced. As first-born son, Bellerofonte was responsible for the administration of the family’s business affairs,¹⁷ but left much of the day-to-day management of the estate in the capable hands of his sister Areta, with whom he corresponded regarding personal and estate matters whenever he was away.¹⁸ Archival records document that the property was still in the family 150 years later when in 1733 a “Sesostro” Castaldi petitioned the Modenese authorities for permission to make improvements to the land surrounding the property.¹⁹

Early Travels

Bellerofonte’s modest but sufficient income from the family estate gave him the financial freedom to travel much more extensively than his two main contemporaries, Piccinini and Kapsberger. As professional musicians, they were ultimately required to remain in the cities of the patrons to whom they were beholden.²⁰ Castaldi’s exposure to foreign musical styles through his travels had a direct bearing on his music; he was the only one of these three main Italian theorbo composers to incorporate contemporary trends from countries outside of Italy in his music in any meaningful way.²¹

16. The titleholder of the property was a Florentine, Ainolfo Bardi, Knight of the Order of Malta, whose family had possessed the land since 1312. Prior to that, the Knights Templar owned the property. The Castaldis’ relationship with their landlord Bardi was often strained. Casino Bianco was located in the northeast corner of Collegara, near the bridge that crossed the Panaro River. Because modern flood control has considerably altered the Panaro’s course from its original state, the site of the Casino Bianco is no longer on the river’s shore. I thank Collegara historian Alberto Grossoli for this information.
17. In a letter dated July 23, 1638, addressed to the *Comunità di Modena*, for example, Bellerofonte asked the city fathers to intercede on the Castaldis’ behalf in a dispute with their landlord. “Memoriale al Ill.ma *Comunità di Modena*, per me Bellerofonte Castaldi suo Cittadino,” transcribed in Pergreffi, pp. 684-5. He subsequently sent the *Comunità* a letter thanking them for resolving the matter in the Castaldis’ favor.
18. For instance, a letter Bellerofonte wrote from Venice to Areta in Modena, dated May 17, 1643, discusses family business affairs, specifically the disbursement of income and the payment of bills. *Autografoteca Campori* (Bellerofonte Castaldi), Modena, transcribed in Pergreffi, pp. 686-7.
19. *Archivio di Stato di Modena*, Particolare 326. The plot map and a drawing for the proposed improvements that Sesostro attached to his application include a sketch of the estate house and show its precise location in relation to the Panaro and existing roads.
20. Piccinini was largely restricted to Bologna and Kapsberger to Rome. Victor Coelho, “G.G. Kapsberger in Rome, 1604-1645: New Biographical Data,” *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 16 (1983): 103-33.
21. For further insight into this issue, see Dolata, “The Sonatas and Dance Music in the ‘Capricci a due stromenti’ (1622),” chapters 5 and 6: “Castaldi’s Compositional Style and Technique in *Capricci’s*

As a young man in his 20s and 30s, Castaldi lived recklessly, spending his time in rough society and participating in anti-Spanish political activities. In 1603 when Bellerofonte was twenty-three, he left Modena and travelled to Germany, throughout Italy, and to Palermo, Sicily, where he stayed for some time.²² *Capricci's* dedication indicates that Castaldi also lived in Genoa prior to 1621.²³ Later he may have been one of the instigators of a civic public disturbance in the autumn of 1628 in Milan. Castaldi wrote that this “bread riot,” which began on November 11th, was directed against unscrupulous bakers who colluded to enrich themselves by selling old rotten bread for three times a reasonable price.²⁴ There is some evidence in Castaldi’s writings that he may have also visited France. Over the years he resided in Rome for extended periods of time on at least three separate occasions and Naples at least twice, but for the great majority of his life, he lived either in his apartment in Venice or at his family home in Collegara.

Murder, Vendetta, and Banishment

To Bellerofonte, his youngest brother Oromedonte was “pure and innocent,” but various incidents suggest that Bellerofonte may have overlooked his younger brother’s combative and troublesome nature.²⁵ In 1607, when Oromedonte was no older than twenty, he was fined, whipped, cut on the hand, and then banished from Modena for having beaten a Sig. Ottavio Maselli. In 1609 and again in 1611 Oromedonte petitioned Cesare I d’Este, Duke of Modena, for clemency for his attack, begging forgiveness for his foolish youthful indiscretions. Oromedonte added that he had already been punished enough by his years of banishment.²⁶ Yet in 1610, the intervening year between his two petitions, Oromedonte fought a duel.

Two years later in 1612, Oromedonte was again embroiled in a dispute, this time over the Castaldi family property. The antagonist was a Bolognese gentleman from the court of Cardinal Alessandro d’Este (1568-1624), Duke Cesare’s half brother and Bellerofonte’s mentor.²⁷ Count Alfonso Pepoli, a powerful and wealthy Bolognese noble-

Dance Music,” pp. 114-38 and “Style and Form in the Sonatas,” pp. 139-86. Castaldi’s intermittent association with the Modenese court, which was unusually receptive to foreign cultural influences, particularly those from France, may have also contributed to the internationally sophisticated nature of Castaldi’s music.

22. *Rimansuglio*, p. 65r.

23. For detailed information on the dedication, including translation and commentary, see Dolata, “Visual and Poetic Allegory,” pp. 383, 386-7.

24. Pergreffi, p. 12. This is but one of many instances in Castaldi’s writings where he rails against profiteering.

25. Pergreffi, p. 14.

26. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Particolare 326. This busta also contains other documents relating to this incident and its fallout.

27. Pergreffi, p. 16.

man, who undoubtedly had his own axe to grind with the Castaldis,²⁸ incited the offended Bolognese “gentleman” to take revenge. As the conspiratorial mastermind, Pepoli procured a gun for his Bolognese proxy, who late one evening in April of 1612, ambushed Oromedonte as he was leaving a tavern, shooting him to death.

Back from his travels, Bellerofonte joined forces with Sesostro to seek vengeance for their cherished brother’s murder. They were unable to take revenge on the coward who actually shot Oromedonte because the assassin, perhaps overcome by guilt and shame, but more likely for fear of retribution from his victim’s volatile brothers, sought refuge behind the walls of a monastery and became a monk. Bellerofonte and Sesostro, however, were able to exact their retribution by arranging to have the equally culpable Count Pepoli killed. It is unclear whether they participated in the deed itself, but it is certain that Bellerofonte was present when it took place since he described Pepoli’s death in graphic detail and expressed his satisfaction with the results. Roncaglia advises that we should not judge Castaldi too harshly because even though the Church and the letter of the law prohibited “vendetta,” in Castaldi’s day it was commonly considered something of a duty.²⁹

Bellerofonte’s role in this incident compelled Duke Cesare to banish him from Modena, possibly for the sole purpose of appeasing the influential Pepoli family. We learn from the *Capricci* dedication that Bellerofonte sought refuge in Rome, but was able to return home to Modena within a year or two. It is likely that his quick pardon was facilitated through the intercession of Cardinal Alessandro d’Este and his nephew Prince Alfonso, who together had tried in vain to reconcile differences between the Pepoli family and the Castaldi brothers.

Within a year of his return to Modena, Bellerofonte was wounded by what he wryly referred to as “una leggiadra e gentil Pistoletta galante.”³⁰ This injury most likely resulted from the continuing dispute between the Castaldi brothers and the Pepoli family. The bullet became lodged in the middle of Castaldi’s left foot, wedged between a nerve and the bone and could not be removed. This injury made him permanently lame and caused him constant pain for the rest of his life, so much so that his suffering from this wound became a regularly recurring theme in his subsequent writings. And this perhaps explains why, in the absence of modern painkillers, he frequently indulged in excessive alcohol consumption, a vice he alludes to several times in his letters and poems. These events all took place when Bellerofonte was in his early thirties.

28. We can only wonder to what degree the traditional animosity between the people of Bologna and Modena played in this episode.

29. Roncaglia, p. 118.

30. Castaldi, “Dedication to the Youth of Genoa,” transcribed in Dolata, “Visual and Poetic Allegory,” pp. 386-7.

Castaldi often referred to his disfigurement and lameness as his “disgrace,” “stigma,” or “tragedy.” In a moving letter to his trusted friend and confidant Conte Giovanni Battista Ronchi, the Modenese ambassador to Spain from 1630-1633, Bellerofonte poignantly wrote that women rejected him for being lame and thus he was miserable in love, consigned to a “prison of loneliness.”³¹ Pained by the rejection and occasional pity he received from women, he went on to write that he sought refuge in his music. Lacking the comforts of a wife and marriage, he was a frequent visitor to the area’s brothels. He later wrote that he was glad he never took a wife.³²

The Court vs. Freedom

Bellerofonte Castaldi maintained a lifelong but intermittent relationship with the Estense court, serving as an unofficial advisor of sorts on musical matters. He wrote that he admired the court, but preferred to praise it from afar.³³ Two letters written in 1623 from Cesare I d’Este, Duke of Modena to Castaldi dated May 11 and November 24, conserved in the Modena Archivio di Stato, provide some insight into the nature of Castaldi’s relationship with the court.³⁴ In the first letter, the duke expressed his pleasure with some compositions by Castaldi’s friend Claudio Monteverdi that Bellerofonte had procured for him. The previous year, the duke had begun to amass a collection of music that included all of Monteverdi’s madrigals and other vocal works, as well as the score to *Orfeo*. In the second letter, the duke asked Castaldi’s advice on how best to entice a Venetian castrato by the name of Turchetto to come to work for the Estense court in Modena. It appears that the Este family valued Castaldi’s counsel and overlooked and perhaps even appreciated his eccentricities.

While on intimate terms with several members of the Este family, Castaldi was closest to Duke Cesare’s half-brother, Cardinal Alessandro d’Este with whom he enjoyed an enduring friendship. Versed in literature and foreign languages, Alessandro was cultured, eloquent, and open minded. His liberal tastes resonated well with his young friend Bellerofonte’s independent spirit, yet Alessandro’s paternalistic concern also caused him to attempt to moderate Bellerofonte’s frequent excesses.³⁵

31. *Le Rime Burlesche, Seconda Parte*, pp. 363-8.

32. *Rimansuglio*, p. 79v.

33. *Rimansuglio*, p. 81r.

34. Fabbri, “Indediti Monteverdiani,” p. 74-8.

35. As a patron of the arts, many musicians sought Alessandro d’Este’s protection, among them Alessandro Piccinini and Girolamo Frescobaldi. Two letters from Piccinini to d’Este are conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Modena, Archivio Materie, Musicisti b.1/A. One is dated January 1623 and requests d’Este’s opinion on Piccinini’s reworking of a corrente from his *Intavolatura di Liuto, et di Chitarone, Libro Primo*, which was published later that year on August 2nd in Bologna. Another letter dated June 21, 1622 discussed the music for a future event to be held in Modena. This indicates that even after being transferred to Rome, d’Este was still involved in Modena’s cultural life.

Although somewhat limited, Castaldi's financial independence did give him the freedom to pursue his artistic activities with only minor constraints.³⁶ He addressed the following to the Camerata Musifili:³⁷

Amici, io son di certa conditione	[Friends, my state of life is such that
Che su miei cinque soldi me la passo	I am able to live on my meagre income
E in smusicar ogn'hor mi piglio spasso	And always take my pleasure in music
Tempestando liuto o chitarone.	Playing the lute or chitarone.] ³⁸

For Castaldi and his many compatriots of similar thought, personal liberty was of paramount importance. To his friend Fulvio Testi, the acclaimed poet and sometimes diplomat,³⁹ Bellerofonte wrote that as long as he breathes he must remain free.⁴⁰ Fulvio and Bellerofonte were no doubt drawn together as much by their mutual love of poetry as for their resentment of the Spaniards who controlled much of Italy during this period.⁴¹ In their letters to each other Bellerofonte and Testi commiserated that in the present political climate no one was allowed to speak the truth.

Castaldi's outspokenness often got him into serious trouble; he was incarcerated several times for his writings, both political and licentious.⁴² On one occasion he was jailed for at least six months and complained that he was imprisoned with ruff-raff and had to lurk like a spider on a web, always on guard to protect himself. Bellerofonte was apparently accused of having a hot temper. Refuting his reputation for irascibility, he wrote:

... non son tale	[... I am not such
ch'io non sappia frenare un detto arguto.	that I do not know how to refrain from a sharp word.
Non vo' fastidio e vivo alla carlona;	I do not want trouble and live capriciously;
ma parlo con rispetto de' maggiori,	but I speak of most people with respect,
come può farne fede ogni persona.	as everyone can bear witness.] ⁴³

36. Despite his decision to subsist solely on his inheritance, Bellerofonte often complained about his lack of funds. It appears that the amount of income he received every month from his portion of the family's estate often fluctuated dramatically.
37. An academy devoted to the study of both music and philosophy.
38. *Le Rime Burlesche Seconda Parte*, p. 394.
39. Fulvio Testi (1593-1646) was a writer, poet, and envoy. He was the Modenese resident in Rome and in 1635 was appointed emissary to Madrid. See Frederick Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi: a guide to research* (New York: Garland, 1988), p. 167.
40. "Vo' star in liberta mentr'havro fiato." *Le Rime Burlesche, Seconda Parte*, p. 301.
41. Their view of the Spanish hegemony did not necessarily coincide with that of most Italians at the time, who considered the stability of Spanish rule preferable to the constant turmoil of the previous century's Franco-Spanish conflict over control of the Italian peninsula. Domenica Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 2-3.
42. Roncaglia, p. 118; Antonio Barbieri, *Modenese da ricordare* (Modena: Mucchi, 1966), Musicisti, p. 23.
43. Roncaglia, p. 117.

Castaldi's Poetry

The titles of Castaldi's collections of poetry, *Rime Burlesche* and *Rime Berniesche*, which span several hundred pages, reflect the satiric poetry that was fashionable then, and indeed, much of the material is comic, absurd, or farcical, and at times even obscene.⁴⁴ Well-known for his biting sarcasm, Bellerofonte's offerings include an ode "in praise of Modenese sausage"⁴⁵ and a parody on Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.⁴⁶ Castaldi's astute power of observation and nuanced insight into the transcendent gave him the ability to see the irony in everyday events and the perspective to take life's misfortunes in stride. On at least one occasion in Rome Castaldi engaged in the Roman practice of "pasquinate," the hanging of posters on one of several well-known statues late at night so that they could be read by all in the morning before the authorities were able to take them down.⁴⁷ The posters were often politically charged, mocking specific individuals, the authorities, and quite often the pope himself. Castaldi's "pasquinate" lampooned another lute player, proclaiming that "he played the horn instead of the lute,"⁴⁸ implying that the lute player wore the horns of the cuckold, simultaneously ridiculing both his musicianship and masculinity.

Testi dedicated a sonnet to Castaldi in his collection of poetry, *Rime di Fulvio Testi* (1617), and included Castaldi's poetic response, in which Bellerofonte matched Fulvio's rhyme line-by-line, responded to the content of each of the stanzas, and returned his friend's praise in full measure.⁴⁹ Since Bellerofonte's response makes it obvious that it was written while he was in Rome, we can deduce that he had resumed living there by 1617, or perhaps even earlier considering *Rime's* year of publication.⁵⁰

Banishment from Rome, Shipwreck, and Further Travels

Castaldi was in Rome in December of 1618 as a guest in the home of Cardinal Alessandro d'Este. When Girolamo Frescobaldi performed at the cardinal's residence in 1619,⁵¹ Castaldi was most likely in attendance.⁵² At this or many other similar occa-

44. Pergreffi, pp. 5-7.

45. *Le Rime Burlesche, Seconda Parte*, p. 37r.

46. Pergreffi, p. 10.

47. Most famous among the statues is one called "Pasquino," from which the practice receives its name. Pasquino has stood in a small piazza, now called Piazza Pasquino, just behind Piazza Navona since 1501. Still to this day, posters regularly appear hung around Pasquino's neck.

48. Valdrighi, p. 112.

49. Fulvio Testi, *Rime di Fulvio Testi* (Modena: Soliani, 1617), pp. 168-9. With minor changes, these poems appear side by side in Castaldi's *Capricci*. Castaldi also included both poems in *Le Rime Burlesche Seconda Parte*, pp. 82r. and 82v. Testi dedicated another poem to Castaldi, which Castaldi presents in *Primo mazzetto's* introductory material. During 1617 Testi was arrested for publishing some poetry that aroused the ire of the Spanish ambassador, even though the collection had received the imprimatur. Pergreffi, p. 17.

50. For a detailed discussion of this poetic exchange, see Dolata, "Visual and Poetic Allegory," pp. 383-5.

51. Hammond, p. 121.

sions, Castaldi and Frescobaldi must have become acquainted. One of the compositions in Frescobaldi's *Canzoni alla francese*, published after his death by Bellerofonte's close friend, the printer Alessandro Vincenti in 1645, is entitled "Canzon Quinta detta Bellerofonte."⁵³ Vincenti is known to have furnished his own titles to some of Frescobaldi's posthumously published works. If Vincenti did this with regard to the "Canzon Quinta detta Bellerofonte," his action would no doubt have been based on the knowledge of a friendship between the two.

As Bellerofonte's mentor, Cardinal d'Este interceded on Castaldi's behalf on several occasions during his turbulent life. The Cardinal was unable, however, to dissuade Pope Paul V from banishing Castaldi from Rome after the police confiscated some of his political writings.⁵⁴ Before leaving Rome, Bellerofonte thrashed the informant who turned him in.

Castaldi's autobiography recounts his treacherous escape by sea, including a vivid description of a violent storm and shipwreck on his way to Naples. The passengers all would have perished, he reported, were it not for the bravery and skill of the captain, who was able to guide the crippled ship to within sight of the shore before it broke apart. Bellerofonte recorded how he made it safely to land and found lodging in the upstairs bedroom of a nearby tavern where, after falling asleep, he had a terrifying nightmare that he was still on stormy seas causing him to fall out of bed and break his nose. Thus, his fellow boarders mistook him for a "drunken German." To avoid further embarrassment, the next day he quietly slipped out of town and headed for Naples by carriage. Although Castaldi would later come to detest Naples, in his usual enthusiasm for new discoveries, he described the city as a place:

Dove temperato Ciel, chiaro, e sereno
Ride con gioia eterna, e gli Arboscelli,
D'Aranzi, e Cedri hanno ogni ramo pieno
Tutto l'anno, e di frutti, e fior novelli.

[Where the temperate sky, clear and serene
Laughs with eternal joy,
And the orange and citron trees have branches
Full of fruit and new flowers all year long.]⁵⁵

52. In a letter dated June 1, 1619 found in the Archivio di Stato di Modena, Archivio Materie, Letterati b. 14, Castaldi grumbled about Rome's pestilent air, the constant noise, and mentions that he had an "ear contamination." He added that he was becoming like his brother Sesostro, i.e., upset about Papal misdeeds and hypocrisy.
53. Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Orgel-und Klavierwerke*, Band I: *Fantasie (1608) und Canzoni alla Francese (1645)* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1959), p. 60. Castaldi and Frescobaldi both based compositions on the same theme, "Fra Jacopino," Castaldi in his *Jacopina corrente* and Frescobaldi in his "Capriccio del Soggetto scritto l'Aria di Roggiero" from his first book of toccatas of 1637. Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Orgel- und Klavierwerke*. Band III: "The first book of Toccatas, Partitas etc. 1637" (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1967), pp. 86-88.
54. For more on Pope Paul V, see John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 510.
55. Castaldi, "A L'Illustrissimo Signor Francesco Bolani," transcribed in Pergreff, p. 499.

From Naples he travelled to Palermo and then on to the Republic of Venice, which he praised as:

... sì bella, e sì gentile,	[... so beautiful, and so courteous,
Savia, discreta, nobile, e cortese,	wise, discreet, noble, and gracious,
Tanto miracolosa, e Signorile,	so miraculous, and illustrious,
Ch'or mi diletta più d'altro paese.	that now it delights me more than any other country.] ⁵⁶

Musical Activities

We know that in the summer of 1621 at the age of forty-one, Castaldi had resumed his life in Modena⁵⁷ where he personally hand engraved the copper plates for his *Capricci*, which was printed the following year.⁵⁸ In the dedication, Castaldi tells us that he worked on *Capricci* to distract him from the constant pain from the bullet permanently lodged in his left foot. *Capricci a due stromenti* is an exceptional accomplishment on many fronts. Its tremendous variety of unique and often virtuosic compositions of mostly dances, fantasias, and single-movement sonatas, displays an international refinement that fuses the polyphonic style of the previous century with the exciting new musical vocabulary championed by Monteverdi, D'India, and others.⁵⁹ *Capricci* also includes nine lengthy duos for "tiorba e tiorbino," the only known examples of music for the tiorbino, an instrument that Castaldi himself seems to have invented.⁶⁰ Castaldi furnished the six strophic dance-songs with intabulated theorbo accompaniments, providing us with the finest example of how seventeenth-century Italian theorbo virtuosos realized unfigured bass lines in the monodic style. Casting aside established norms in favour of efficiency, concision, and practicality,

56. Castaldi, "A L'Illustrissimo Signor Francesco Bolani," transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 499, 501.

57. Pergreffi, p. 19.

58. On May 20, 1622 Bellerofonte Castaldi sent a letter to the Duke of Mantua with a copy of his "galanterie Tiorbesche," which we can safely identify as his *Capricci a due stromenti*. See Susan Parisi, "Ducal patronage of music in Mantua, 1587-1627: An archival study," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1989), p. 317. Castaldi's *Capricci* is also listed in Parisi's reconstruction of the "Musical Holdings of the Mantuan Court, 1587-1623" on p. 714. In addition to its reproduction in Pergreffi (p. 680), Castaldi's letter is published in Antonio Bertolotti, "Artisti in relazione coi Gonzaga duchi di Mantova nei. sec. XVI e XVII" in *Atti e meorie della R. Deputazione di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmesani*. s.3, v. 3 (1885), p.138. Parisi reports the existence of a draft of Ferdinando Gonzaga's letter of thanks to Castaldi dated 6 July 1622[2] conserved in the Archivio di Stato Archivio Gonzaga in Mantua (A.G. 2303), p. 731. Ferdinando's well-known appreciation of sharp wit, language, poetry, and music and his reputation for lavish spending on the arts (often beyond his means) were undoubtedly among the reasons Castaldi chose to send him his *Capricci*. See Parisi, pp. 282-6. Apparently, nothing came of it, for there is no record of Castaldi's reaping any rewards from Ferdinando's largesse. Five months later, on October 22, 1622, Castaldi sent a copy of *Capricci* to the Cardinal Alessandro d'Este in Rome.

59. For further detail on this matter, see Dolata, *Capricci*, Vol. 142, pp. xi-xii and Vol. 143, pp. x-xii.

60. In "Frontispiccio d'un libro tiorbesco," transcribed in Pergreffi, pp. 366-7, Castaldi refers to the tiorbino as "questa mia invenzion novella." See also Dolata, "The Sonatas and Dance Music in the 'Capricci a due stromenti' (1622)," p. 87. Dolata, "Visual and Poetic Allegory" p. 383, 386-7 discusses Castaldi's fanciful description of the genesis of the tiorbino in his dedication to *Capricci*.

Capricci's layout and physical appearance were clearly dictated by Castaldi's concern for the reader's enjoyment and facility. For example, he placed the table of contents in the front of the book rather than at the back, as was the usual Italian fashion and put his scordatura indications more conveniently at the beginning of each composition instead of Piccinini's awkward method of placing them at the end.⁶¹ Unlike other contemporary publications of Italian theorbo music, *Capricci* has no awkward mid-phrase page turns, and its engraving is clear and legible.⁶² Castaldi decorated its pages with his own hand-drawn artwork

of a quality rarely found in musical collections of that time.⁶³ He also drew and engraved the portraits of himself reproduced on the following as Illustration No. 3 and the one of him playing with his friends, No. 2.



Illustration 2. "Virus Unitas," *Capricci a due stromenti* (Biblioteca Forni, Modena).

Castaldi returned to Venice in 1623, where he oversaw the publication of his monody collection *Primo mazzetto* by Vincenti. In the dedication to Cardinal Alessandro d'Este, dated November 22, 1623⁶⁴ Bellerofonte proclaims, "Sono vivo, sono in Venetia."⁶⁵ *Primo mazzetto* consists of nineteen strophic arias, three madrigals, and four strophic variations. Several of the arias are examples of the strophic dance-song, with "corrente" or "gagliarda," appended to the titles. Fifteen of *Primo mazzetto's* twenty-six songs are settings of Castaldi's own poems, an uncommon feature among early monody collections.⁶⁶ Notable is the similarity between the first act scene in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* of 1642 where Nero and Poppea exchange "adios" and the conclusion of *Primo mazzetto's* "Echo notturno."

61. Alessandro Piccinini, Facsimile Reprint: *Intavolatura di Liuto et di Chitarrone, Libro Primo* (Bologna 1623), No. 50 in Archivum Musicum, Collana di testi rari, Preface by Orlando Cristoforetti (Florence: Studio per Edizione Scelte, 1983).
62. It is unfortunate that the Minkoff reprint was reproduced from the *Capricci* copy held by the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the poorest and least carefully preserved of the three known copies in existence. For further detail on this matter, see Dolata, "The Sonatas and Dance Music in the 'Capricci a due stromenti' (1622)," pp. 56-66. Unfortunately, the Studio per Edizioni Scelte *Capricci* facsimile fares even worse: tablature ciphers, slurs, dots, and rhythmic values that are clearly visible in the original source are inexplicably eliminated or changed without editorial notice or comment.
63. See Dolata, "Visual and Poetic Allegory," pp. 373-82.



Illustration 3. Bellerofonte Castaldi, Self-portrait, *Capricci a due stromenti*.
(Biblioteca Forni, Modena)

Primo mazzetto was one of the first music publications to introduce the logical and efficient practice of placing successive verses underneath the first verse, directly below the vocal line instead of at the foot of the page or on another page altogether.⁶⁷ In his introduction to the reader, Castaldi criticized the conventional use of falsetto and specified that the vocal parts should be in the tenor clef.⁶⁸ He also directed Vincenti to exclude the popular guitar *alfabeto*, which littered the printer's other monody publications from the 1620s. Castaldi considered these chord symbols to be pedantic clutter and perhaps even an insult to musicians of his caliber who could easily extemporize accompaniments from unfigured bass lines. *Primo mazzetto* was still included in Vincenti's 1662 catalog, thirty-nine years after its initial publication, selling for four lire, while other books of a similar nature sold for two to three lire.⁶⁹

Modena 239, a manuscript compiled sometime between 1632 and 1671, but most likely after Castaldi's death in 1649, contains thirteen of Castaldi's songs, six of which also previously appeared in *Primo mazzetto*.⁷⁰ This manuscript is one of several

64. By coincidence or not, November 22 is the feast day for Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians.
65. Castaldi included four copies of *Primo mazzetto* with his letter to d'Este dated December 3, 1623 from Venice. Cardinal d'Este died a short time later on March 3, 1624. Three of Castaldi's letters to d'Este are conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Modena.
66. Nigel Fortune, "Italian Secular Song," p. 31. Another well-travelled and classically educated musician who also wrote the texts to own his songs was Castaldi's contemporary, the virtuoso singer and chitarrone player Francesco Rasi. See Susan Parisi, "Francesco Rasi's *La favola di Cibebe ed Ati* and the Cybele Legend from Ovid to the Early *Seicento*" in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, ed. by Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), 361-92, for a fascinating account of the creation and reception of Rasi's *Cibebe ed Ati* within the intensely political environment of the Gonzaga and Medici courts, a situation Castaldi assiduously avoided in his own community by keeping the Modenese court at arm's length.
67. See Dolata, "Visual and Poetic Allegory," fn. 55, p. 391.
68. Three of the songs in *Primo mazzetto*, however, are in alto clef.
69. Alessandro Vincenti, *Indice delle opere di musica degli editori veneziani* (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1978), p. 31 of facsimile reprint of "Indice di Tutte le opere di Musica, che si trovano Nella Stampa della Pagina: di Alessandro Vincenti," 1662. It also appears in "Indice di Tutte le opere di Musica, che si trovano Nella Stampa della Pagina: di Alessandro Vincenti," *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte*, Jahrg. 14, 1882 Supplement, ed. Robert Eitner (Scarsdale: Annemarie Schnase – Reprint Dept., 1960), p. 39. *Primo mazzetto* is listed as No. 49 in the 45th section entitled "Musica per cantar, e sonar nel Chitaron, Theorbo, Arpicordo et Chitarra alla Spagnola, et altro simile Stromento."
70. Modena Biblioteca Estense Ms. Mus.G.239. Mirco Caffagni, "Il chitarrone come strumento per il basso continuo ed esempi del MS. M. 127 della Biblioteca Estense di Modena," in *Atti del Secondo incontro con la musica italiana e polacca; Musica strumentale e vocale strumentale e dal Rinascimento al Barocco* - Bologna, 29-30 settembre, 1970, (Bologna: Antiquae Musicae Italicae Studiosi, 1974), pp. 117-150 and "The Modena Tiorba Continuo manuscript," *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, 12 (1979), pp. 25-42. Nigel Fortune, Italian Secular Song, "Appendix," p. 51. See also, Victor Coelho, *The Manuscript Sources of Seventeenth-Century Italian Lute Music* (New York and London: Garland, 1995), pp. 96, 101-4. Both Caffagni and Coelho offer convincing evidence that the manuscript was most likely compiled by Pietro Bertacchini (b. 1641) sometime around 1670. On p. 14 of the Studio per Edizioni Scelte *Capricci* reprint Torelli suggests the possibility that the rest of the songs in Modena 239, save the Monteverdi of course, could have been composed by Castaldi as well, a notion that invites further research in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary.

sources preserving Monteverdi's "Lamento d'Arianna" and also contains a series of ornamented theorbo cadences.⁷¹ The seven Castaldi songs that appear in *Modena 239* but not in *Primo mazzetto* might have been destined for a future *Secondo mazzetto* that never came to fruition;⁷² Castaldi's writings occasionally allude to other musical publications in the works. From *Modena 239* we learn that Castaldi's songs continued to be appreciated in Modena long after his death.⁷³

Monteverdi, et. al.

Claudio Monteverdi and Bellerofonte Castaldi most likely became acquainted through their mutual friend, the printer Alessandro Vincenti.⁷⁴ Castaldi tells us that he and Monteverdi were among the regulars who would congregate at Vincenti's shop to discuss musical issues.⁷⁵ We learn other things about Monteverdi through Castaldi. For instance, Castaldi tells us that Monteverdi always composed with the theorbo in hand.⁷⁶ Castaldi also implies that he successfully dissuaded Monteverdi from accepting a post at the court of Prince Ladislas Sigismund in Poland, convincing Monteverdi that he would not be as well appreciated in Poland as in Italy.⁷⁷ And it appears that Monteverdi wrote Castaldi to ask him for drawings of some obscure musical instrument that interested him.⁷⁸

Castaldi was one of the earliest public figures to recognize Monteverdi's genius and was among his most vocal supporters, referring to him as the "New Apollo and Musical Orfeo."⁷⁹ Monteverdi must have particularly valued Castaldi's support since his innovations were initially regarded with disdain in Modena. For example, contemporary Modenese chronicler Giovanni Battista Spaccini reported the performance of some of Monteverdi's psalms for Christmas Day Vespers at Modena's Duomo in 1611, to have been "nauseating

71. *Cadenze e Passagi Diversi Intavolati per Tiorba dal Manoscritto Estense G 239 (Sec. XIII)*, Società Italiana del Liuto, No. 1, transcription and Preface by Tiziano Banati (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 1995).
72. Mioli, Introduction to *Primo mazzetto*, n.p. Mioli introduces the idea of the pregnancy inherent in Castaldi's use of *Primo* in the title of his monody collection.
73. In fact, Castaldi's dances are still used to accompany early dance performance in Modena today. I thank Dott. Fabio Mollica, director of the Società di Danza, for this information.
74. Vincenti published Monteverdi's eighth (1638) and ninth (1651) books of madrigals and his *Messa et salmi* (1650).
75. Whenham, p. 238; Fabbri, "Inediti Monteverdiani," pp. 71-86 and *Monteverdi*, pp. 286, 308; and Caffagni, "The Modena Tiorba Continuo Manuscript," p. 32.
76. Castaldi, "In Dialogo," transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 375. On p. 308 of his *Monteverdi* Fabbri points out that Castaldi's assertion that Monteverdi composed with the theorbo in hand is "not without prejudice, given Castaldi's predilection for the instrument," despite having previously provided independent confirmation of Monteverdi's skill on the theorbo on p. 286.
77. Castaldi, "Capitolessa al Signor Alessandro [Vincenti]," transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 554. Castaldi wrote that the post was in Germany, but he must have meant Poland. Fabbri, "Inediti Monteverdiani," p. 82; Whenham, p. 238.
78. Stevens, ed., *The Letters of Monteverdi*, pp. 424, 427.
79. Castaldi, "Capitolessa al Signor Alessandro [Vincenti]," transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 554.

to all.”⁸⁰ This may in part explain why eleven years later in 1622 Monteverdi seemed to have underestimated the sophistication of the Estense court in his dealings with Cesare I d’Este. The court’s singers were, after all, praised by none other than Sigismondo d’India, who raved that they were “the best that today may be heard in Europe.”⁸¹

While he was exiled in Naples in 1636, Castaldi began a letter in *terza rima* addressed to Monteverdi in Venice:

Felice chi ricovra a la dolce ombra,
Claudio gentil, del vostro Monteverde,
Ch’ogni malinconia dal cor disombra;
La Primavera con l’Autun ci perde,
Perch’egli è verdeggiante, e d’altra sorte
Fa frutti, e fior, che il vento non disperde.

[Happy is he who is sheltered by the sweet shadow
Gentle Claudio, of your Green Mountain,⁸²
That sweeps away every melancholy from the heart;
Springtime cannot compare with Autumn,
Because it [he] is ever green, and makes fruit and flowers
Of other kinds, which the wind does not disperse.]⁸³

Bellerofonte elaborates further:

Perché musica nuova in voi discerno
Con tal varietà, che n’innamora
Non sol la terra, e ’l ciel, ma ancor l’inferno;

[Because in you I discern new music
With such variety, that not only the earth and heavens
Are enamored with it, but also the inferno;]⁸⁴

Later in the letter he continued:

Spero, nulla di meno, che concesso
Mi sia dal Ciel di ritornarci presto,
E venire a godervi più da presso,
Sol per quei concertoni in die festo,
Tanto ordinati, e con tant’armonia,
Che fan che l’uom talora esca di sesto,
Sì che non sa in qual mondo egli si sia,
Tanto il vostro compor muove l’affetto
Col gir per nuova, inusitata via.

[I hope, nonetheless, that it is conceded
To me by Heaven to return there [Venice] soon,
And to come to enjoy you from closer by,
If only for those grand concerts on festival days,
So well presented, and with such harmony,
That they make a person lose his senses
So that he does not know which world he is in,⁸⁵
So much do your compositions stir the emotion
By turning to new and unusual paths.]⁸⁶

Several years later Bellerofonte was able to fulfill his wish to return to his apartment in Venice, which was only a short walk from San Marco in Calle de le Tole o Barberia between S. Giustina and SS. Giovanni and Paolo, directly across from Prince Alvise d’Este’s apartment.⁸⁷ Castaldi sums up Monteverdi’s compositional skill with the following:

80. Roncaglia, p. 122.
81. Whenham, p. 239. D’India served the Este court on and off from 1623 until his death some time prior to April 1629.
82. A pun of course on Monteverdi’s surname.
83. *Rime Burlesche, Seconda Parte*, p. 1r ff. In Castaldi’s poem, Monteverdi is evergreen because the appeal of his music is everlasting. I would like to thank musicologist, composer, classicist, and professor of Italian at the College of Mt. St. Joseph and Xavier University in Cincinnati, Father Angelo Della Picca, for patiently guiding me through the allegorical subtexts in Castaldi’s poetry.
84. Castaldi, “Capitolo Primo, Al Signor Claudio Monteverde, a Venezia, di Napoli,” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 90.
85. That is, to go into ecstasy.
86. Later in the letter, Castaldi added that, “Predico il vostro nome glorioso.” Castaldi, “Capitolo Primo, Al Signor Claudio Monteverde, a Venezia, di Napoli,” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 93.

Io dico il gentil Claudio Monteverde,
Nel cui compor perfetto in stil Drammatico
La musica ubbidisce a le parole.

Però nel'invenzioni arditò e pratico
Nobile, vario e bello e sempre verde
Si mostra, e senza pari sotto il sole.

[I refer to the noble Claudio Monteverdi,
In whose perfect compositions in the dramatic style
The music obeys the words.

Yet in bold and practical inventions
Noble, varied and beautiful, and always green
He shows himself to be without equals under the sun.]⁸⁸

As we have already seen, Castaldi moved among Italy's most influential cultural and intellectual circles, but his connections with the upper echelons of Italian musical society were not limited to Monteverdi and Frescobaldi. Through his friendship with Cardinal d'Este and Vincenti, Castaldi came to be acquainted with many other well-known musicians.

Castaldi esteemed his elder theorbist colleague Alessandro Piccinini, the best-known member of the famous Piccinini family of lutenists and the most influential theorbo player and teacher in the Ferrara – Bologna – Modena region.⁸⁹ While he does not indicate that Piccinini was his *maestro*, Bellerofonte no doubt learned a great deal from his contact with Piccinini.⁹⁰ Castaldi also praised Girolamo Giovanni Kapsberger's virtuosity by stating that "few can compete with him."⁹¹ He adds that while he admires Kapsberger and other virtuosi, he has no interest in having dinner with them; i.e., he is content to admire from a distance. Furthermore, he claims that he does not care to compete with them nor does he worry about being musically fashionable.

Lutenist and theorbist Pietro Paolo Melii lived in Reggio-Emilia, a short distance from Castaldi's Modena. Melii, whose books of tablature were also printed by Vincenti, was probably another of Castaldi's acquaintances.⁹² One of Castaldi's companions was the lutenist known as Bernardello, whose mercurial temperament resonated well with

87. *Rimansuglio*, p. 49v. ff. Calle de le Tole o Barberia is now called Barbaria de le Tole. The church of SS. Giovanni and Paolo is the traditional burial site of Venice's doges. Unfortunately, Bellerofonte had returned to his apartment in Venice for only a few months before Monteverdi died in November of 1643.

88. Castaldi, "In Dialogo," transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 375.

89. Castaldi would certainly have known Piccinini through both their associations with the Estes. Piccinini was in the service of Duke Alfonso II d'Este at Ferrara, and as we have seen, Piccinini kept in contact with Castaldi's mentor Cardinal Alessandro d'Este as late as 1623.

90. Castaldi mentions Piccinini a number of times in his writings. For further insight on how Piccinini may have influenced Castaldi, see Dolata, "The Sonatas and Dance Music in the 'Capricci a due stromenti' (1622)," pp. 82-7, 98-9, 102-3.

91. "Pochi con esso ponno entrar in Giostra." Castaldi, *Rime Burlesche* parte terza, p. 157. Bellerofonte's various residencies in Rome allowed him many opportunities to hear Kapsberger perform. Castaldi's generous praise of Kapsberger, who was well reputed to have had an arrogant disposition, illustrates how Castaldi was able to be fair-minded and rise above the petty competition among professional lutenists.

92. Francesca Torelli, "Pietro Paolo Melii, Musician of Reggio Emilia," *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 17/18 (1984/85), pp. 42-49. Melii also dedicated the only two theorbo compositions to appear in his *Intavolatura di Liuto* (1614), a prelude and corrente, to Alessandro d'Este.

Bellerofonte's, and the famed lutemaker Vendelio Venere from Padua may have also been one of Bellerofonte's regular drinking companions in his younger days.⁹³

There is evidence in Castaldi's writings that he knew and admired Orazio Vecchi (1550-1605), Modena's best-known sixteenth-century composer. Vecchi, a Catholic priest, held several musical posts in the nearby Reggio-Emilia area, and like Castaldi, was one of the few composers also known as a poet. Castaldi certainly had the opportunity to meet him through Alessandro d'Este, Vecchi's protector. According to contemporary accounts, Vecchi, like Castaldi, was involved in a number of violent confrontations, and similarly, these episodes were usually in defence of a member of his immediate family. On October 7, 1604 Vecchi was removed from his post as *maestro di cappella* of Modena's Duomo and replaced by his student Geminiano Capilupi (d.1616).⁹⁴ It later became known that Capilupi deliberately betrayed Vecchi's trust and defamed him in order to succeed him at the Duomo. In retaliation, Castaldi issued a virulent public satire on Capilupi.⁹⁵ It is hard to imagine that Castaldi was not acquainted with Sigismondo d'India and Marco Uccellini since they all moved in the same social and cultural circles. From October 1623 to April 1624, d'India was employed by the Estense court at Modena and after a two-year residence in Rome, then again from 1626 until his death within three years, and Uccellini was *maestro di cappella* at the "Ghirlandina" from 1647 to 1665.

If for no other reason than sheer proximity, Castaldi must have had occasion to become acquainted with the composer Massimiliano Neri (c.1615-66).⁹⁶ From 1644 to 1646, Neri was the organist at SS. Giovanni e Paolo, located steps from Castaldi's apartment in Venice. Bellerofonte probably also had some contact with the trumpet virtuoso Girolamo Fantini, since one of the pieces in Fantini's *Modo per Imparare a sonare di Tromba tanto di Guerra* (1638) is titled "Sonata a due Trombe detta del Castaldi."⁹⁷

93. Valdrighi, p. 112-13. It is evident from Castaldi's writings that Bernardello was seriously manic-depressive.
94. Capilupi was the assistant *maestro di cappella* who presented Monteverdi's music at Christmas Vespers in 1611.
95. Roncaglia, p. 118. Although at this time we cannot determine with absolute certainty that the Orazio that Castaldi affectionately mentions in a number of places is Vecchi, their interlocking social circles and Castaldi's vitriol toward Capilupi leads us to believe that he is. Additionally, according to Paolo Pergreffi, the fact that Orazio was an uncommon name in Modena also supports the likelihood that Castaldi is indeed referring to Vecchi.
96. Neri's father, Giovanni Giacomo Negri (fl.1609-38) was a theorbist and singer, and Neri specified theorbo in the instrumentation of his Op. 2 for its performance at San Marco, where he also served as organist.
97. Girolamo Fantini, *Modo per Imparare a Sonare di Tromba*, Facsimile edition with a complete English translation and critical commentary by Edward H. Tarr (Nashville: Brass Press, 1978), p. 67. The facsimile's table of contents and the title above the composition clearly read "Castaldi," yet the sonata is much closer to the style of the balletti of Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi (1550's - c.1622) than Castaldi's. Nevertheless, Fantini's dates (fl. 1630-8), his service as chief court trumpeter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Fernando II, and his frequent trips to Rome make it more likely that he would have

In one of his letters to the Camerata Musifili, Bellerofonte sent personal salutations to several of its members individually. One greeting was to “Pavarotto, Gentil,” with whom he played theorbo and tiorbino, sang Monteverdi’s songs, smoked, and drank wine in the evenings.⁹⁸ This Pavarotto may be an ancestor of one of today’s most celebrated tenors, Luciano Pavarotti, whose family is from Modena, and where he still maintains a residence today. In another letter to the camerata Bellerofonte invited his friends to his music room to sing, playing, and chitchat.⁹⁹ He added that he looked forward to playing theorbo and tiorbino duets with another friend, Gasparo.¹⁰⁰ One or both of these friends are probably depicted with Castaldi in his ensemble portrait from *Capricci* that is reproduced here as Illustration No. 2.¹⁰¹

Other than playing for his own amusement, this type of informal music making with a group of friends is the only kind of performance Castaldi ever mentions. In fact, Castaldi avoided the public musical spotlight, although he was clearly well equipped to take it if it pleased him to do so. To him, music was a highly personal sanctuary rather than a means to fame and glory,¹⁰² and his writings are full of references to music’s therapeutic effect.¹⁰³

The Plague, his Brother Sesostro, and his Literary Friends

By 1630, we again find Castaldi in Rome. While the plague of that year ravaged much of Italy, taking at least 25% of the population, Castaldi, now fifty years old, remained safe in Rome, which was somehow “immune” from the epidemic.¹⁰⁴ He had implored his brother Sesostro to join him there, but Sesostro did not want to “abandon” the “Ghirlandina” (Modena), and because of this, on August 4th of 1630 he succumbed to

met Castaldi than Gastoldi, who spent most of his time in Mantua and Milan. This, of course, is not meant to imply that a composer must be acquainted with his dedicatee. The confusion between Bellerofonte and his elder colleague with the similar surname is still pervasive today as it was then. To complicate matters further, there is some indication in Castaldi’s writings that he and Gastoldi also knew each other.

98. Castaldi, “A’ Signori Musifili,” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 305.
99. “... sonando e cantando e chiacchiarando,” Castaldi, “A lo stesso col resto de la camerata,” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 218.
100. “Ma con ragionamento più piacevole,/Gasparo mio, vo’ che ce la passiamo,/E la dolce Tiorba e Dilettevole/Col Tiorbino insieme concertiamo.” Castaldi, “A lo stesso col resto de la camerata,” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 219. We know nothing of Gasparo other than that he was member of the Musifili and must have been a theorbo player of some ability.
101. For a detailed analysis of this portrait, see Dolata, “Visual and Poetic Allegory,” pp. 378-80.
102. We must also keep in mind that Castaldi’s inheritance freed him from the need to have a paid profession and the servitude that comes with it.
103. Roncaglia wrote “Music, therefore, always exercised on Castaldi the effect of lifting his spirit above human misery, in a world where sadness ceases and the reign of serenity and joy is opened.” (La Musica, dunque, essecita sempre sul Castaldi l’effetto di sollevarne lo spirito al di sopra delle miserie umane, in un mondo dove la malinconia cessa e si apre il regno della serenità e della gioia.) Roncaglia, p. 121.
104. Harry Hearder, *Italy: A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 140.

the pestilence in his 47th year.¹⁰⁵ Sesostro was a well-esteemed mathematician, architect, and philosopher. Bellerofonte reported that Sesostro left a manuscript critical of Aristotle and the popular perception that the famous philosopher was infallible. Spaccini wrote that Sesostro was one of Modena's "beautiful spirits."¹⁰⁶

Bellerofonte maintained a close relationship with his siblings throughout his life. He also exchanged letters regularly with his sister Artemia's husband, Francesco Marescotti. Even in his final year, Castaldi continued to mourn the loss of his brothers: "Canzonetta 1649" contains lengthy descriptions of the circumstances surrounding their unfortunate deaths and expresses how profoundly he still missed them, thirty-seven years after Oromedonte's death and nineteen years after Sesostro's.¹⁰⁷

Although Castaldi was deprived of the two friends dearest to him, his two brothers,¹⁰⁸ his life was enriched by a multitude of other friends, many of whom were also involved in the literary arts. They exchanged versed letters discussing everything from personal issues to poetry and politics.¹⁰⁹ In addition to Testi, Ronchi, and Alessandro d'Este, Castaldi was friends with Bishop Obizzio d'Este (1611-42), Princess Giulia d'Este (1558-1645), and the Modenese bookseller and printer Bartolomeo Solani, at whose shop Castaldi often whiled away the hours.¹¹⁰ Many of Bellerofonte's companions were members of the same interlocking social circles. For instance, Castaldi and Testi were friends and associates with Alessandro Tassoni, the celebrated author of *La Secchia Rapita*, and their circle included Girolamo Graziani, a poet who was also the secretary of state for three Modenese dukes.

Castaldi exchanged letters with noted philosophers, and other learned men such as Don Marin Bolizza (1603-43), Giovanni Rossi, and the blind philosopher Ludovico Scapinelli (c. 1590-1634), who taught at the Universities of Bologna, Modena, and Pisa. The correspondence between Castaldi and his Modenese friends was often in the Modenese dialect, which is still spoken in that area today. Despite Castaldi's sometimes temperamental nature, his friends' letters to him are filled with expressions of affection and admiration.¹¹¹

105. *Le Rime Burlesche, Seconda Parte*, p. 35r.

106. Valdrighi, p. 100.

107. *Rimansuglio*, pp. 76v-81v.

108. Referring to the three Castaldi brothers, on p. 23 of his *Poetic dialettale modenese* Cavazzuti wrote, "Eccentric names, eccentric minds; their adventures both eccentric and tragic" (Bizzarri nomi, bizzarri cervelli; bizzarri e insieme tragiche le loro avventure).

109. Their political discussions often centered on their hatred of the Spanish usurpers.

110. At one point after Castaldi's death, Solani possessed Castaldi's *Rimansuglio*. Valdrighi, pp. 98, 114.

111. In the *Studio per Edizione Scelte Capricci* reprint, p. 15, Torelli states that Castaldi's irascibility may have prevented his having intimate personal relationships. (... la sua irascibilità gli precludeva forse rapporti vincolanti con gli altri.) The contents of the letters he received from his friends and admirers certainly refute this assertion.

Castaldi's Home in Collegara and Apartment in Venice

Bellerofonte lived in Naples in 1633-36 under the protection of the Prince of Stigliano, and from 1636 to 1638 he was in Collegara, where he compiled the greater part of his writings into *Le Rime Burlesche*. In a letter to his friend Don Paolo Ferranone of Modena dated the end of May 1638, he related how happy he was to be at home at the Casino Bianco “where he enjoys his solitude, where the country people allow him to live in peace, where stars by the millions appear at night, and where the days are delightful, long, bright, and serene.”¹¹² Bellerofonte gave a descriptive tour of the house's layout and view from the windows, the vegetable garden, pasture, and fields, and the sound of the Panaro River murmuring in the background. He went on to depict his practice room as “an attractive, and nice little room where my theorbos always echo” and other rooms where he kept his books and paintings.¹¹³

In time, however, Castaldi became increasingly unhappy with the hypocrisy, backbiting, and rancorousness of his fellow citizens, which no doubt arose at least in part from the general decline of Modena's fortunes in the 1630s. Once again Castaldi was torn between his nostalgic love for Modena and the lure of Venice's splendor, with the anonymity it offered, and the peace he found floating through its labyrinth of canals in comfortable cabined gondolas. He returned to Venice in April of 1643.¹¹⁴

Dal prossimo passato Aprile in qua,
Ch'è del sei cento, col quarantatrè,
Stò qui a Venezia volentier, perchè
Godo la Pace, e vivo in Libertà.

[From this past April,
That is, in 1643,
I am pleased to have been in Venice, because
Here I enjoy Peace, and live in Liberty]¹¹⁵

In a letter to the witty doctor Andrea Baranzone, with whom Bellerofonte exchanged vulgar verses, and Camillo Valentini, dated the same year, Bellerofonte described his apartment in Venice and the view of the city from its rooftop. Valdrighi writes that Bellerofonte portrayed his rooms and their furnishings with the detail of a painter's eye:¹¹⁶

112. “Godendo in questi luoghi solitarii” where “gente rusitica Che non può fara altrui ne ben, ne male,” “Le stelle a milioni apparir fuora” and “I giorni qui sono piu dilettevoli, /E piu lunghi, e piu chiari, e piu sereni.” *Le Rime Burlesche, Parte Terza*, p. 178 ff.
113. “un vago, e gentil camerino/Dove le mie tiorbe ogn'hor risuonano.” *Le Rime Burlesche, Parte Terza*, p. 178 ff.
114. Castaldi's exact whereabouts between June of 1638 and April of 1643 are unknown, but his return to Venice appears to have been through Naples. It is possible that he had to leave suddenly to escape the dangers of yet another eruption from Mt. Vesuvius, which he mentions in his “Capitolessa al Signor Alessandro [Vincenti],” transcribed in Pergreffi, p. 552. During the period of 1637-52 Naples was still threatened by eruptions from Mt. Vesuvius, which had previously exploded on December 15th, 1631 taking the lives of between 3500 and 4000 people, with the lava flow reaching to the sea.
115. *Rimansuglio*, p. 36v. Although by 1643 Venice had lost much of her prestige and power, Venetians still enjoyed unparalleled personal, if not political, freedom.
116. Since the letter is in the Modenese dialect, the information here is taken from Valdrighi's account, p. 107ff.

his little terrace full of flowers, which seemed like a paradise to him and his balcony where he enjoyed singing his songs, drinking his favorite wine, and smoking in the coolness of the evening air during the hot summers.¹¹⁷ Bellerofonte mentioned a painting that depicts a “hustler taking a fool for his money.” He added that the painting’s purpose was to remind him to not waste any more money gambling. On one wall hung his two theorbos and two tiorbini next to his two rifles, a visual joke symbolizing, as Castaldi wrote, “peace, the enemy of war!” Along with the sword he kept by his bed, the rifles were for his own protection. He wrote, “as long as there are scoundrels, I will be on the lookout.”¹¹⁸

Castaldi’s Final Years

In the summer of 1643, just a few months after his arrival in Venice, Bellerofonte received devastating news: during a skirmish in the “guerra di Castro,” a border war between the pope and the Duke of Modena, who eventually prevailed, a company of the pope’s soldiers from the nearby Forte Urbano had sacked and burned his family’s estate in Collegara.¹¹⁹ At sixty-three years old, Bellerofonte found himself financially ruined.¹²⁰ Although he condemned the soldiers as “worse than Turks,”¹²¹ he blamed himself for not being there to protect the property.¹²² Nevertheless, Castaldi tried to view these events stoically, echoing his previous words to Fulvio Testi regarding his desire for freedom above all:

Ma stò contento a quel che Dio destina, Ne fuor che Libertà vo’ cosa alcuna, E lieto aspetto l’ultima ruina.	[But I remain content with God’s will, I want nothing more than my freedom, And happily I await my final ruin.] ¹²³
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Two years later in 1645, directly under the clock in the piazza of San Marco, Bellerofonte, age sixty-five, met another kindred spirit, the patrician Francesco Bolani with whom he shared his life story by addressing to him the autobiographical poem from which we must draw so heavily. During that same year, Castaldi began to compile the poems and correspondence that would become his *Rimansuglio di Rime Berniesche*.

117. On several occasions Bellerofonte wrote how uncomfortable he felt in the heat of the summer.
 118. “finchè ci sono, mi guardo da mariuoli.” Valdrighi, p. 108.
 119. *Rimansuglio*, p.38r-39r. The fort, built by Pope Urban VIII in 1626, was located across the Panaro from the Casino Bianco, about three kilometers beyond the opposite shore, near the town of Castelfranco Emilia. Pope Urban situated the fort close to the Panaro River because it was Modena’s eastern border and raids across the river would be relatively easy. The Castaldi estate was particularly vulnerable because it was located near the bridge, which the pope’s soldiers used for easy access and escape. From personal conversations with Collegara historian Alberto Grosoli.
 120. “And because of others, I am ruined” (Et io per causa altrui sono in malhora), *Rimansuglio*, p. 78r.
 121. “Peggio che Turchi” *Rimansuglio*, p. 38r-39r. Castaldi reserved this invective for his worst enemies. The Ottoman Empire was a constant threat to northern Italy’s security. Its institutionalized anti-Christian prejudice and its soldiers’ reputation for sadistic violence made the Turks particularly feared and detested. See Norwich, pp. 293 ff.
 122. *Rimansuglio*, p. 65r.
 123. *Rimansuglio*, p. 40r.

The year 1646 marked Castaldi's return home to Modena for the last time. His dear friend Fulvio Testi was accused of treason and had been imprisoned in Modena by Duke Francesco I d'Este, Cesare I d'Este's successor. Testi subsequently died in prison on August 28, 1646 at the age of 53. It is unclear if this or some other events precipitated Castaldi's return home.¹²⁴ Whether he was able to live at the ruined Casino Bianco or in the city itself during this period is unknown. Since the 1733 architectural drawings referred to earlier clearly show the actual structure of the Casino Bianco, it must have been rebuilt at some time. Given Bellerofonte's poor financial state, it is doubtful that the reconstruction occurred during his lifetime.

Bellerofonte's final years were also marred by his disappointment with the small-minded bickering that permeated Modenese society. Late in his life he had a falling out with one of his oldest friends, Don Marin Bolizza, although the two were eventually reconciled through the intervention of their mutual friend, Don Paolo Ferrarone. About his physical condition he wrote that "At 68 years of age I still do not wear glasses; I read, write, and sing as my strength allows"¹²⁵ and that he did not yet spur himself while wearing boots, but the old wound in his foot still troubled him.¹²⁶ He lamented that his repeated visits with various doctors did not provide any relief from the relentless pain of his injury, and therefore, they were all avoiding him. Bellerofonte also joked that "a bellyful of lasagna had made him so enormously fat," that he had to forgo his usual holiday in the mountains because he was unable to endure the required twelve-day horse ride.¹²⁷

It was during this period that Castaldi wrote to Bishop Obizzio d'Este bemoaning the "bellowing" of the singers at the Duomo, grumbling that "their shrieks invoke war, plague, and famine." He petitioned the bishop for permission to open a singing school for children to provide the church with competent sopranos. "Otherwise it seems," he carped, "that they make the Devil's music!"¹²⁸

Bellerofonte's approach to religion was a pragmatic compromise. On the one hand he had a strong faith and trust in God's will;¹²⁹ on the other he had an equally

124. Pergreffi, p. 22.

125. "N'ho sessantotto, e ancor non porto occhiali/e leggo, e scrivo, e canto de mia possa." *Rimansuglio*, p. 81r.

126. *Rimansuglio*, p. 81r.

127. "Ingrassato enormemente, anzi fatto trippa da lasagne, bisogna che si dimentichi le lunghe traversate ch'era solito a fare nelle montagne, per le quali è stato a cavallo fino dodici giornate, e senza riposare le gambe." Valdrighi, p. 105.

128. Roncaglia, p. 120-1; Valdrighi, p. 97. "muggianti," "que' versacci – che chiaman guerra, peste, e carestia," "Chè altrimenti pare ... che musica del diavolo si facci." Castaldi implies that the singers make the Devil's music "rather" than the Lord's. He equates the singers with cows and the choir loft with the stable. Sprinkled throughout the stanza are words that contain the "mu" sound that cows make, such as the reference to his native city by its Latin name, Mutina, rather than Modena. Here again I thank Rev. Angelo Della Picca for his insights.

vigorous distrust of the Church and churchmen, despite his friendship with a number of priests, a bishop, and a cardinal, albeit a very liberal-minded cardinal. Opinionated about Church matters, he often groused about papal hypocrisy. Italy's constant wars troubled him, and he found it particularly unseemly that Christians warred against other Christians "like Turks and dogs."¹³⁰ Acknowledging that he was an inactive churchgoer, he prayed that he be spared the fires of Hell for not being speciously pious.¹³¹

Castaldi's faith and ability to accept the paradoxical whims of destiny helped him triumph over bitterness in the face of potentially crippling personal catastrophes. During his final days, in his sixty-ninth year, he continued to work on *Rimansuglio*. Resigned to the fact that there was little hope of economic salvation, Bellerofonte wrote that he looked forward to bidding his troubles farewell and welcomed the sweet release of death. He added that his conscience was clear.¹³²

The end came on September 27, 1649.¹³³ On that very day, Francesco I d'Este, was notified of Castaldi's death.¹³⁴ Bellerofonte was buried at the Church of San Domenico just across the street from the ducal palace, a final irony that while not reflecting Castaldi's feelings toward the court may have expressed theirs toward him. The original Chiesa di San Domenico building and cemetery were destroyed during Napoleon's rampage through northern Italy. Although the church was rebuilt, there is no trace of Castaldi's or any other grave from that era from the original cemetery.¹³⁵

Adventurer, poet, artist, and musician Bellerofonte Castaldi must have been a captivating person.¹³⁶ His circle of friends and acquaintances, among them musicians and poets, printers, politicians, and many of the leading intellectuals of his day, gives us some small sense of how stimulating his life must have been. Castaldi's scorching

129. He often repeated such phrases as "quel che Dio vuol sia fatto," particularly in his later writings. *Rimansuglio*, p. 78r.
130. "...come Turchi, e cani." *Rimansuglio*, p. 78r.
131. Roncaglia, p. 118.
132. "Canzonetta 1649," *Rimansuglio*, p. 77r.
133. Register of Deaths in the Community of Modena, A. 1644-1652, N. 10, Archivio Storico Comunale di Modena. Castaldi's death notice erroneously reports that he was 76 years old at his death. On p. 122 of his article Roncaglia correctly dismisses this as a scribal error.
134. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Archivio per materie, Letterati, b. 14.
135. Before Napoleon, all the churches in Modena were required to face in the same direction as the Duomo, approximately on a northwest by southeast axis. Napoleon ordered that new church buildings were to be positioned at a 90-degree angle to the Duomo, on a southwest by northeast axis. The interior of the current church on that site contains the sepulchers of thirty priests, bishops, and other prominent citizens.
136. In his *Modenese da ricordare*, Antonio Barbieri neatly characterized Castaldi as "bold, irascible, and intolerant of restraints," and "a strange mixture of vice and virtue, with a good dose of eccentricity and an irresistible love for the literary and musical arts." (Bellerofonte Castaldi, spavaldo, collerico, insofferente di freni, è uno strano miscuglio di vizi e di virtù, con una buona dose di bizzaria e di irresistibile amore per l'arte letteraria e musicale.). Barbieri, p. 23.

criticisms of the established order, outrage against injustice, and thrilling escapades occasionally elicited fierce and at times violent repercussions. Like many public figures, he often retreated to the refuge of his privacy to escape the conformity that conventional society demanded. Castaldi chose to restrict his musical activities to small gatherings with intimate friends, yet, encouraged by them and most likely inspired by his contact with Monteverdi, Kapsberger, Frescobaldi, and others, he published two substantial books of music over a brief span of only sixteen months during his middle years.

Francesco Castaldi and his controversial sons were not troubled by convention or the opinions of others, and Bellerofonte was certainly nobody's victim. A resourceful, highly educated, and cultivated aristocrat, he was able to subsist on his modest inheritance. When his brother was murdered, he and his remaining brother took matters into their own hands. When he had an opinion, he delivered it loudly and clearly. When his sharp words were insufficient, he used his sword. Our portrait of Castaldi's odyssey through life reveals that he was loyal, devoted to his family and friends, and passionate about the world around him. And although he experienced several personal tragedies, his resilience and sense of humour always carried the day.

