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EROS AND *THANATOS*: A FICINIAN AND LAURENTIAN READING OF VERDELOT'S *SÌ LIETA E GRATA MORTE*

The literary origins of the Italian sixteenth-century madrigal, as well as the presumed inexpressive nature of the so-called *prima pratica* as compared with the *seconda pratica*, perhaps represent two of the most abused commonplaces of modern musical historiography. Most scholars still believe that the linguistic, rhetorical and stylistic principles codified by Petrarchist humanists such as Pietro Bembo directly stimulated the birth of the new literary-musical genre.[1] Even more problematic is the attitude of those who extract the dichotomy *prima/seconda pratica* from its specific cultural context – the Artusi–Monteverdi controversy – and apply it to an extended historical period, largely covering the whole history of the madrigal itself.[2]

This essay partly summarises and partly develops a lecture I delivered in Italian at the University of Bologna (14 April 1999) as part of the cycle *Sei conferenze-lezioni su Medioevo e Rinascimento* organised by Giuseppina La Face Bianconi. More recently I presented a more concise version at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference (St Peter's College, Oxford, 20–2 August 2000), at the suggestion of Bonnie Blackburn. I should like to thank Professor La Face Bianconi and Dr Blackburn for giving me the opportunity to develop and present this work.

[1] See, above all, D. T. Mace, 'Pietro Bembo and the Literary Origins of the Italian Madrigal', *Musical Quarterly*, 55 (1969), pp. 65–86, whose theory has been accepted and variously developed by innumerable scholars. Among the exceptions, see J. Haar, 'The Early Madrigal: A Re-appraisal of its Sources and its Character', in I. Fenlon (ed.), *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 163–92, at pp. 175–9, and I. Fenlon and J. Haar, *The Italian Madrigal in the Early Sixteenth Century: Sources and Interpretations* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 13, 15–46, at pp. 28–30; Haar and Fenlon pointed out, in particular, the wide cultural hiatus that separates the birth of the madrigal – a typically Florentine phenomenon – from Bembo's Petrarchism and its rather Venetian literary-musical developments; similar conclusions emerge also in S. La Via, '*Madrigale* e rapporto fra poesia e musica nella critica letteraria del Cinquecento', *Studi musicali*, 19 (1990), pp. 33–70. See also below, nn. 40–1.

[2] A first attempt to show the basic inconsistency of this musicological commonplace appears in S. La Via, 'Cipriano de Rore as Reader and as Read: A Literary-Musical Study of Madrigals from Rore's Later Collections (1557–1566)' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton

Neither of these views finds any solid foundation in the works of the first great madrigalist, Philippe Verdelot. A close look at his production shows not only a wide spectrum of literary interests but also a remarkable ability to give musical form to the structure as well as the content of a great variety of poems.[3] To realise this, and fully to appreciate Verdelot's mastery as a literary-musical exegete, it is essential not to undervalue the poems themselves, nor to base our musical analysis on superficial or even arbitrary textual readings.

A case in point is Verdelot's setting of the anonymous ballata-madrigal *Sì lieta e grata morte* (see Appendix 2 for an edition). Despite its sixteenth-century fame,[4] first revived in modern times by Alfred Einstein,[5] scholars have so far not essayed an interpretation of its textual and musical contents.[6] The only exception is

University, 1991), esp. Part I, and ch. 6, 'Cipriano between two *prattiche*? A Musicological Topos Revisited', pp. 14–125, at pp. 93–125.

[3] H. Colin Slim has already demonstrated this in a number of fundamental studies devoted to Verdelot, particularly in *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets* (Chicago and London, 1972), pp. 41–65, 81–104, 161–90. Cf. also D. L. Hersh [= D. Harrán], 'Verdelot and the Early Madrigal' (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1963); and, more recently, H. C. Slim and S. La Via, 'Verdelot, Philippe', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn (London, 2001), xxvi, pp. 427–34.

[4] The earliest surviving sources of *Sì lieta e grata morte* are, respectively: the so-called 'Strozzi partbooks' (Florence, Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini, MS Basevi 2495, dated *c*.1530: madrigal no. 19); the 1533 and 1537 Venetian editions, by Scotto and Antico and by Scotto, of Verdelot's *Primo libro* for four voices (RISM 1533^{2}, isolated partbook in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and RISM 1537^{9}, complete set in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, U308: madrigal no. 15); Adrian Willaert's *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto da cantare et sonare nel lauto* (Venice: Ottaviano Scotto, 1536; RISM 1536^{8}, madrigal no. 15). Clear evidence of its growing success is the fact that in the first edition of *Di Verdelotto tutti li madrigali del primo, et del secondo libro a quatro voci* (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1540; RISM 1540^{20}) *Sì lieta* is given pride of place as the opening piece of the whole collection; since then it has been reprinted – and variously rearranged – with almost no interruption up to Claudio Merulo's edition of *I madrigali del primo et del secondo libro a quattro voci nuovamente ristampati et da molti e importanti errori con ogni diligentia corretti* (Venice: Claudio da Correggio, 1566; RISM 1566^{22}).

[5] A. Einstein, 'Claudio Merulo's Ausgabe der Madrigale des Verdelot', *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft*, 8 (1906–7), pp. 220–54, 516, includes a still valuable edition of *Sì lieta e grata morte* (*Anhang*, pp. 249–54), based on RISM 1566^{22}, 1540^{20} and 1556^{27}. More recent editions of the madrigal have been made by Bernard Thomas and Jessie Ann Owens on the basis of different sources: see *Philippe Verdelot, 22 Madrigals for Four Voices or Instruments*, ed. B. Thomas (London, 1980), pp. 39–41 (*Sì liet'e grata morte*, based on 1537^{9}, 1536^{8} and 1549^{33} – the latter being a reprint of 1540^{20}), and *Philippe Verdelot*, *Madrigals for Four and Five Voices*, ed. J. A. Owens (Sixteenth-Century Madrigal, 28–30; New York and London, 1989), vol. 30, pp. 81–5 (*Se lieta e grata morte*, based on 1537^{9}).

[6] Even Hersh [Harrán], 'Verdelot and the Early Madrigal', pp. 90, 163, 175, 220, refers only sporadically to *Se lieta e grata morte* and only with regard to simple matters such as rhyme scheme, recurrence of initial rhythmic patterns and 'imitative motives', adoption of 'melodic word painting'.

a short statement by Bernard Thomas, as part of his introduction to the valuable CD anthology of *Italian Renaissance Madrigals* performed by the Hilliard Ensemble (EMI, 1992): after introducing Verdelot as 'probably the most expressive madrigal composer of his generation', Thomas describes his *Sì lieta* as 'one of the earlier pieces to exploit the death/orgasm metaphor that became so important later'.[7] An attentive reader of the anonymous text, however, will find no trace of such a sexual metaphor:

Sì lieta e grata morte	Such happy and welcome death
dagli occhi di madonna al cor mi viene	from my lady's eyes comes to my heart
che dolce m'è 'l morir, dolce le pene.	that sweet to me is dying, sweet the pain.
Perché qualhor la miro	For whenever I see her
volgers'in sì benigno e lieto giro,	turning in such kind and delightful motion,
subito per dolcezza il cor si more,	at once my heart dies of sweetness,
la lingua muta tace,	my tongue, mute, is silent,
ogni spirito giace	every spirit lies
attento per sentire	alert to perceive
un sì dolce morire.	such a sweet dying.
Ma tanto del morir gioisce 'l core	But so much does my heart rejoice in dying
che poi non sento noia,	that then I feel no discomfort;
anzi la morte si convert'in gioia.	rather, death turns into joy.
Dunque se la mia donna è di tal sorte	Thus, if my lady is of such a sort
che sentir fammi morte sì gradita,	as to make death so welcome to me,
che saria poi s'ella mi desse vita?	what would it be if she gave me life?

The opening tercet, the typical *ripresa* of a *ballata mezzana*, introduces the poem's main theme: it is the lady's gaze, her *occhi* – and no more than that – which conveys an oxymoronic feeling of sweet death to the poet's heart. The motif is then further developed in the two central *mutazioni*, where the poet describes the symptoms

[7] B. Thomas, introduction to the Hilliard Ensemble, *Italian Renaissance Madrigals* (recorded April 1991), London, EMI, 1992, pp. 2–4, at p. 2; here he seems to go far beyond what he had stated in the commentary to his Verdelot edition, p. 3: 'compared with the madrigals of Arcadelt, for instance, Verdelot's pieces have much greater emotional range. *Sì liet'e grata morte* is one of the more ambitious numbers, with great deal of internal contrast, and some word-painting on *morte* and *volgersi*; particularly effective is the way six bars of low, rather static writing prepare for the dramatic leap at bar 40.' In both comments (1980 edn, p. 7, and 1992 CD programme booklet, pp. 16–17), moreover, Thomas gives a quite free translation of lines 5 ('moving in her beatific course'), 6 ('my heart dies of happiness'), 8–9 ('every spirit sleeps / rapt to experience / [such a sweet death]') and 16 ('what would she be if she gave me life').

of his fulguration: just as *madonna* turns to look at him, his heart dies of sweetness (second tercet), he is struck dumb and all his inner spirits suddenly lie motionless so to perceive that sweet dying most intensely (central quatrain); a similar feeling of *voluptas dolendi* is eventually described in the second *mutazioni* (penultimate tercet) as a sort of emotional metamorphosis: so much does his heart enjoy 'death', that it literally turns it into joy. Finally the *volta*, the closing tercet, restores not only the A-rhyme (*morte/sorte)* but also the main key words of the opening tercet (*madonna/mia donna, sì grata morte/morte sì gradita)*, this time to reach the crucial turning point of the poem: thus, if my lady's gaze has such effects on me as to make me enjoy death, then what would I feel if she 'gave me life'?

One wonders what kind of 'death' and 'life' the poet has in mind here. Is he just playing with words? or is he trying to tell us something deeper about love? Indeed, it would be impossible to answer such questions, that is, to understand *Sì lieta*, without considering the specific literary and philosophical tradition that lies behind the poem. This is a typically Florentine tradition, which directly connects the thirteenth-century *stilnovisti* – Guido Cavalcanti even more than Dante – to Lorenzo de' Medici's fifteenth-century *Canzoniere* and to its Platonic foundation, Marsilio Ficino's treatise on Love. (For the following discussion, see the quotations in Appendix 1, §§1–3.)

Cavalcanti's *Rime*, circulating widely in manuscript throughout the previous three centuries, were first published in Florence during the 1520s, and a good selection of them also appeared in Giunta's successful 1527 anthology of *Sonetti e canzoni di diversi antichi autori toscani*.[8] Two years later Giovan Giorgio Trissino, in his *Poetica*, would highly praise the 'sweetness and sharpness' of Guido's verses and variously quote them, side by side with those by Dante and Cino da Pistoia, as an alternative model to Petrarch's *Canzoniere*.[9] It is worth noting that Trissino, Bembo's main opponent, had also

[8] Cf. G. Cavalcanti, *Rime*, ed. M. Ciccuto, intro. M. Corti (Milan, 1996; 1st edn 1978), where a list of the primary manuscript and printed sources is given on pp. 48–9, including the reference to the *Sonetti e canzoni* (Florence: Eredi di Filippo Giunta, 1527).

[9] G. G. Trissino, *La poetica*, Divisions I–IV (Vicenza: T. Ianiculo, 1529). Trissino did not contest the authority of Petrarch but rather Bembo's and Sannazaro's exclusive use of Petrarch as a model: this is why he quotes Petrarch as often as Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia and other great authors ('lj altri buoni autori') such as Boccaccio,

frequented the *Orti Oricellari* – the main centre of intellectual life in Florence between 1513 and 1522 – together with other key figures such as Machiavelli, Filippo and Lorenzo Strozzi, Francesco da Diacceto, Michelangelo and probably even Verdelot.[10] Already in this light, then, Verdelot's poetic choice may well be closely linked not only to a specific Florentine tradition, but also to an even more precise cultural context and literary trend, completely independent of Bembo's Petrarchism. Not so much in Petrarch's as in Guido's poetry, in fact, do we find almost entirely the imagery later to be revived by the author of *Sì lieta* (see Appendix 1, §1): the turn of madonna's eyes (Sonnet 4); the death which 'such a sweet gaze' conveys to the lover's heart, making him confuse pleasure with pain and rhyme *gioia* with *noia* (Sonnets 13, 15, 24, Ballata 32); and the almost theatrical animation of the inner spirits, to be taken as vital functions but also as allegorical projections of the poet's feelings (Sonnet 6, Ballatas 10, 34).[11]

Two centuries later, Guido became the privileged model for both

Guittone d'Arezzo, Francesco Sacchetti and even Lorenzo de' Medici (with particular reference to his ballata 'Donne belle io ho cercato': cf. Divisions II, IV, fols. 17^{v}, 67^{v}). As for Guido, after praising the peculiar 'dolceza et acume' of his style (Division I, fol. 5^{v}), Trissino quotes four of his most celebrated poems: the sonnet 'L'anima mia vilmente sbigottita' (ll. 1–4), the canzone 'Donna me prega' (ll. 21–4), the ballata 'Perch'io no spero di tornar giammai' (ll. 1–6, 1–16), and the isolated canzone stanza 'Se m'ha del tutto oblïato Merzede' (cf. Divisions III and IV, fols. 23^{v}, 24, 27^{r-v}, 32, 41, 45^{v}–46, 59, 59^{v}).

[10] On Bernardo Rucellai's gardens, the so-called *Orti Oricellari*, and on the complex events that led up to the conspiracy against Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, see esp. R. Von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewustsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), translated into Italian as *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato: storia e coscienza politica* (Turin, 1970), pp. 67–85. Rucellai (d. 1514) had been a close friend of Lorenzo il Magnifico; Diacceto, one of the leading members of the Rucellai circle, had been Ficino's favourite disciple; moreover, Cardinal Giulio had always been on good terms with the Republican wing of the *Orti*, particularly with its leader Machiavelli, and in part even with rather 'liberal' aristocrats such as Alessandro de' Pazzi or Battista della Palla, the real promoters of the conspiracy. On Verdelot's association with the Rucellai circle, and in particular with Machiavelli, see Slim, *A Gift*, pp. 53–61; Fenlon and Haar, *The Italian Madrigal*, pp. 37–45; Slim and La Via, 'Verdelot', pp. 427–8. On the key role played by the two Strozzi brothers in the early history of the madrigal, see F. A. D'Accone, 'Transitional Forms and Settings in an Early 16th-Century Florentine Manuscript', in L. Berman (ed.), *Words and Music: The Scholar's View. A Medley of Problems and Solutions Compiled in Honor of Tillman Merritt by Sundry Hands* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 29–58, and R. J. Agee, 'Filippo Strozzi and the Early Madrigal', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38 (1985), pp. 227–37. On Michelangelo's close relationships with both Lorenzo de' Medici and Cardinal Giulio, see below, n. 39.

[11] See the complete version of each of these poems (but see also Sonnets 5, 7, 16, 20, 22, 23, Canzone 9, 27, Canzone stanza 14, Ballatas 19, 26, 30, 31) in *Rime*, ed. Ciccuto; according to Maria Corti (*ibid.*, 'Introduzione', pp. 5–27), Guido's basically negative view,

Ficino's conception of contemplative love and Lorenzo de' Medici's poetry. Lorenzo's *Canzoniere*, in particular the sonnets included in his *Comento de' miei sonetti*, might be considered as a faithful reading of the Platonic doctrine already codified by his tutor in his treatise *Sopra lo amore* (see Appendix 1, §2: excerpts from Orations II, VI, VII).[12]

According to Ficino (Oration II, ch. 8),[13] he who falls in love 'dies' as his own thought abandons him and turns to the beloved, as his soul moves to the other's body. But if love is not requited, then the lover is said to be entirely dead, since he lives neither in himself nor in his beloved, and he has no hope to be resurrected; if love is requited, on the other hand, both lovers 'die' in order to be resurrected and 'live' one in the other. The 'double death' of the unrequited lover is then opposed to the requited lover's 'happy death' and double life: the latter is first resurrected in the beloved as he has the feeling of being requited, then comes back once again to life when he recognises himself in the beloved, and therefore he no longer doubts being loved.

Ficino's 'vital death' concerns the purely contemplative phase of the falling in love, and is the only experience capable of redeeming human beings, and of leading them to God (cf. also Oration VI, chs. 6, 8, 10).[14] Here too, as in Guido and Dante, the beloved's

his symptomatic paradox of falling in love as the loss of any rational faculty, reflects in particular Averroes's conception of love as the death of reason. The terms and images used in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* are quite different; see Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere (Rerum vulgarium fragmenta)*, ed. M. Santagata (Milan, 1996), for instance, in the Sonnets 2–3, 39, 61, 86–87, 94, 112, 131, 133, 141, 167, 171, 175, 183, or in the Ballatas 14, 59 and in the Canzone 73. Much closer to Guido, of course, is Dante, particularly in the first part of his *Vita nuova* (1283–90), ed. L. Magugliani (Milan, 1952), sections II–III, XIV, XVI, XIX, XXIV, XXVI.

[12] First written in Latin with the title *Commentarium Marsilii Ficini florentini in Convivium Platonis de amore* (autograph MS in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 7705, dated 1469; and Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Strozzi 98), the treatise was immediately translated into Italian by Ficino himself (*El libro dell'Amore*, Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana, LXXVI, 73; and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.V.98), and printed posthumously as *Sopra lo Amore o ver' Convito di Platone* (Florence: Neri Dortelata, 1544). Its main sources are described in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone: mostra di manoscritti, stampe e documenti (Firenze, 17 maggio – 16 giugno 1984)*, ed. S. Gentile, S. Niccoli, P. Viti (Florence, 1984), pp. 60–1, 64–8, cat. nos. 46, 48–9, 50–2. I use the modern edition of M. Ficino, *Sopra lo amore, ovvero Convito di Platone*, ed. G. Rensi (Milan, 1998).

[13] *Esortazione allo amore, e disputa de lo amore semplice, e dello scambievole* (Exhortation to love, and dispute on simple and mutual love): *ibid.*, pp. 40–4.

[14] *Del modo dello innamorarsi* (On how to fall in love); *Come in tutte le anime sono due amori* (How two kinds of love live in every soul); *Quali doti abbino gli amanti dal padre dello amore* (Which gifts belong to the lovers of the father of love): *ibid.*, pp. 96–8, 102–3, 109–15.

eyes are seen as the concrete reflection of the divine rays, as a magical means of human salvation. Melancholic people, more than any others, need to experience contemplative love in order to survive (cf. Oration VI, ch. 9):[15] because of their extraordinary sensitivity, visual but also musical, and also by virtue of the restless activity of their inner vital spirits, they need constantly to experience beauty, by 'seeing' and 'listening to' it.

In this context (Oration VI, ch. 9,[16] but cf. also Oration VII, chs. 1 and 14)[17] the Greek poet Sappho, even more than the philosophers Socrates and Guido, stands out as Ficino's classical model of *amore malinconico*; this is hardly surprising, considering that Ficino's symptoms of falling in love are quite similar to those found in Sappho's famous fragment no. 31 (the only one that was certainly known at the time).[18] Here, in fact, one finds the earliest description of both the symptoms of amorous fulguration and the consequent Love/Death association later revived by the author of *Sì lieta e grata morte*, especially in the central quatrain:

[15] *Quali passioni sieno negli amanti per cagione della madre d'amore* (Which passions are in the lovers that are caused by the mother of love): *ibid.*, pp. 103–9.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 105–8.

[17] *Conclusione di tutte le cose dette, con la oppenione di Guido Cavalcanti filosofo* (Conclusions about everything that has been said, with the opinion of the philosopher Guido Cavalcanti); *Per quali gradi i furori divini innalzino l'anima* (By which degrees the divine furors raise the soul): *ibid.*, pp. 135–7, 155–7.

[18] The numbering of the fragment (31, not 2 as in other editions) is the one proposed in *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, ed. E. Lobel and D. L. Page (Oxford, 1955), and followed also in *Sappho et Alceus, Fragmenta*, ed. E. M. Voigt (Amsterdam, 1963). Fragment 31 was quoted as an instance of the sublime in Pseudo-Longinus' *De sublime* (1st c. BC), 10; its modern fame is also due to Catullus' quite free and incomplete Latin reworking, where even the final image of death is left out. Cf. P. Radiciotti, 'Introduzione', and F. Acerbo, 'Premessa', to the volume *Canti di Saffo* (Rome, 1992), pp. ix–xvi, xix–xxxvi; both Sappho's fragment and Catullus' version are edited and translated there on pp. 4–7. Even though Longinus' treatise would become widely known only from the second half of the sixteenth century (as I learn from Leofranc Holford-Strevens, pers. comm), it is still possible that a fine humanist such as Ficino had already had direct access to it and, therefore, to Sappho's Greek text as well. This would hardly be the case for Petrarch, whose double mention of Sappho (*Triumphus Cupidinis*, iv. 25–7, and *Triumphus Fame*, iia. 86–8) seems to rely instead on Horace (*Odes*, ii. 13, 24–5), not yet on Ovid (*Heroides*, xv. 99, discovered only during the fifteenth century); both Latin poets, together with Catullus, might even have inspired Raphael's famous melancholic portrait of Sappho (included in his *Parnassus*, Vatican, Stanza della Segnatura, 1509–11).

> . . . Oh, this is what makes my heart tremble,
> deep inside my breast:
> just as I look at you, for an instant,
> and suddenly I have no more voice,
> my tongue is broken,
> a sharp shudder of fire runs along my flesh,
> . . . I almost think I am dead.[19]

All these elements, in the end, come together in the later phase of Lorenzo's *Canzoniere* (see Appendix 1, §3a)[20] and in his final *Comento* (see Appendix 1, §3b);[21] in comparison, Bembo's later *Asolani* would indeed appear as a much more superficial and rigidly doctrinal vulgarization of Ficino's Platonic conception of love.[22] In Lorenzo's sonnets, just as in Ficino's inspired prose, madonna's 'murderous' gaze, its divine ray, pierces the poet's heart and causes him a 'sweet death', which is also the first step towards his erotic and mystical 'resurrection' (Sonnets 68, 92, 100, 108–9, quoted in Appendix 1, §3a).[23] And yet Lorenzo, himself dazzled by the divine ray of love, seems never to take this step: even in his last poems we find him suspended in 'a sweet existence, between death and life', his heart conforted by the same vital spirits that Guido and

[19] 'Τό μ' ἦ μὰν / καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν, / ὠς γάρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὤς με φώναι- / σ' οὐδ' ἔν ἔτ' ἔικει, // ἀλλὰ κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον / δ' αὔτικα χρῷ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν, // . . . τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης / φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὔτα.' My own translation of these two excerpts from fragment 31 (ll. 5–10, 15–16) is based partly on Acerbo's and Radiciotti's edition (quoted in n. 18), partly on that published in *Saffo, Alceo, Anacreonte, Liriche e frammenti*, ed. F. M. Pontani (Turin, 1965), pp. 18–19. I wish to thank Leofranc Holford-Strevens once again for kindly helping me improve both my understanding of the Greek text and my rendering of it in idiomatic English.

[20] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Canzoniere* (Florence, *c*.1464–83), ed. P. Orvieto (Milan, 1984, repr. 1996); on its various phases, and in particular its later anti-Petrarchist and Ficinian turning point, see P. Orvieto's splendid 'Introduzione', *ibid.*, pp. vii–xl.

[21] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento de' miei sonetti* (Florence, 1480–91), ed. T. Zanato (Florence, 1991).

[22] Cf. P. Bembo, *Gli Asolani* (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1505), modern edition in P. Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua. Gli Asolani. Rime*, ed. C. Dionisotti (Turin, 1966), pp. 311–504: in particular Book I, entirely devoted to Perottino's unhappy love, chs. 12–16, pp. 337–44, and Gismondo's rather joyful replies in Book II, chs. 8–13, 22, pp. 393–408, 425–7; cf. also Bembo's *Rime* 3, 9–10, 57, 68, 79, 86, *Stanza* 45, and above all *Rime rifiutate*, Madrigal 9, 'È cosa natural fuggir da morte', originally included in Book I of the *Asolani* and later replaced with the Canzonetta 'Quand'io penso al martire'.

[23] Cf. Lorenzo de' Medici, *Canzoniere*, respectively 'Se in qualche loco aprico, dolce e bello', 'Quando morrà questa dolce inimica', 'Sì bella è la mia donna, e in sé raccoglie', 'Se talor gli occhi miei madonna mira' and 'Quando a me il lume de' begli occhi arriva'; but see also Sonnets 72–3, 75, 91, 95–6, 99, 105, 107.

Ficino had already described in detail (Sonnet 96, Canzone 117, quoted in Appendix 1, §3a).[24]

Lorenzo's phenomenological explanation, especially in his comment to Sonnet 11 (*Comento*, 11: 9–19, quoted in Appendix 1, §3b),[25] fits even more neatly the situation and vocabulary of *Sì lieta e grata morte*:

> Se il mio *cuore* fortunato sospira quando è più presso alla *donna mia*, ne è cagione la *dolcezza* che lui *sente*, la quale è sì grande che tiene occupate tutte le forze e *spiriti vitali* e gli svia dal loro officio naturale alla *fruizione di quella dolcezza*. Se prima il *cuore* aveva bisogno di respirare e refriggerarsi, molto più ne ha bisogno sopravenendo tanti *spiriti*, e' quali di natura sono caldi. E di qui nasce il sospiro, e quinci si rinfresca il *cuore;* el quale, avendo già dimenticato se stesso, per sé *non si curava di morire*, *anzi* bramava *sì dolce e sì felice morte*.
>
> (If my fortunate *heart* sighs when it is closer to *my lady*, this is due to the *sweetness* it *feels*, which is so great that it keeps all the strength and *vital spirits* busy, and diverts them from their natural office to the *fruition of that sweetness*. If earlier my *heart* needed to breathe and be refreshed, it needs that even more now with the sudden arrival of so many *spirits*, which are warm by nature. This gives birth to the sigh, and therefore refreshes the *heart*; which in turn, having forgotten about itself, *did not care about dying, and rather* longed for *such sweet and happy death*.)

Indeed, the similarities between Lorenzo's comment and Verdelot's anonymous poem are so striking that one might even think of a direct relationship between them: Lorenzo's specific terms may well have inspired, in particular, the very incipit of *Sì lieta*, its central quatrain and its penultimate tercet. Both poets, moreover, limit their experience to a one-way, ecstatic contemplation of the lady's eyes and of their divine beauty; their self-complacent 'sweet death' is not yet 'life' in the complete sense that Ficino had meant in his definition of reciprocal love. Their love, in fact, is still unrequited, suspended between death and life, confined in such a voluptuous and yet unresolved oxymoron. Hence the anonymous poet's final question: what would happen 'if my lady gave me life?': that is, if she returned not only my gaze but also my love? if she gave me the final proof that my love is entirely

[24] Cf. *ibid.*, 'Gli alti sospir' dell'amoroso petto' and 'Quando raggio di sole'; see also Sonnets 95, 109, 110.

[25] Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento*, comment to Sonnet 11, 'Se il fortunato cor, quando è più presso', pp. 198–202. Cf. also *ibid.*: 'Proemio' 24–37, 60–2, 89–100 (with reference to Dante, Petrarch, as well as to Cavalcanti and his 'Donna mi prega'), pp. 136–8, 142–3; 'Nuovo Argumento' 19–26, pp. 173–4; comments to Sonnets 5, 9, 12, 22–3, 25–6, 30–5, 39–40, pp. 178–80, 191–5, 202–8, 251–62, 266–74 , 285–311, 324–31.

requited? if she allowed me to accomplish my resurrection and final salvation?

We might wonder, at this point, whether Verdelot was able to catch the poem's subtle *concetti*, its literary and philosophic allusions, and even to give them musical expression. My impression is that he fulfilled both tasks: Ficino and Lorenzo – perhaps even Sappho and Guido behind them – have just given us the key to understanding not only the anonymous text but also Verdelot's profoundly expressive musical response to it.

Each compositional choice, indeed, contributes to the most effective musical representation of that Ficinian and Laurentian kind of *amore malinconico* which is at the heart of *Sì lieta e grata morte* (see my annotated edition of the madrigal, in Appendix 2, and Tables 1–2). The most obvious of such choices concern cleffing, ambitus and rhythm. The gloomy nature of Verdelot's reading, in fact, depends primarily on the dark colour of its compact texture and on its static declamation: that is, on its fairly low clef combination and ambitus, and on the homogeneous slowness of its pace, obtained through an almost exclusive adoption of white notation in the context of the so-called *misura comune* (the ¢ sign, denoting *alla breve* tactus).

What makes such *tardità* stand out most effectively, moreover, is the adoption of an almost pervasive homophonic writing; this is interrupted only in a few instances by brief imitative hints, usually at beginnings of lines and in connection with positive concepts of sweetness, pleasure and delight (see bars 10–15, 22–5, 40–1, 48–52, 61–6: 'che dolce . . .', 'volgersi in sì benigno e lieto giro', 'un sì dolce . . .', 'che poi non sente noia', 'che sentir fammi morte sì gradita, / che saria poi . . .'). Otherwise, particularly in the incipit and in the central symptomatic quatrain (bars 27–44), Verdelot seems to anticipate the 'choral recitative style' of Rore's and even Monteverdi's *seconda pratica* madrigals:[26] here too in fact – and this is not a unique case in Verdelot – we find the most clear and intel-

[26] Concerning the use of the so-called 'choral recitative style' in the madrigals of Monteverdi and some of his predecessors (Rore and Wert above all), see respectively A. Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal* (Princeton, 1949), i, pp. 417–18, ii, pp. 516, 724; D. Arnold, '*Seconda Pratica:* A Background to Monteverdi's Madrigals', *Music & Letters*, 38 (1957), pp. 341–52, at pp. 345–6, 351; S. La Via, 'Origini del "recitativo corale" monteverdiano: gli ultimi madrigali di Cipriano de Rore', in *Monteverdi: recitativo in monodia e polifonia* (Rome, 1996), pp. 23–58.

ligible declamation of the poetic text, as well as the segmentation of the musical discourse in single phrases clearly marked by cadences (see Table 1 and the edition in Appendix 2).[27]

Even if each musical phrase usually corresponds to a single poetic line, the strongest cadential resolutions – followed by a simultaneous rest in all voices – are carefully adopted to mark the very incipit of the poem as well as the ending of its four main divisions and synctactic periods: that is, respectively, the ending of lines 3B (*ripresa* = period I), 10f (first *mutazioni* = period II), 13G (second *mutazioni* = period III) and 16H (*volta* = period IV). More or less weak and passing resolutions, on the other hand, never followed by a simultaneous rest, tend to be used within each block, particularly in the two central *mutazioni*, revealing Verdelot's attention to both metre and syntax. By virtue of their strategic position and of their clear perceptibility, however, cadences are also given a specific semantic function, which in turn appears to orient the tonal trend of the whole setting: their expressive function, in other words, is at work at both levels of micro- and macrostructure.

Table 1 sums up the madrigal's tonal-cadential plan, of which a synopsis is given in Figure 1: it shows, in the first place, the sharp preponderance of Phrygian and half-cadence types over the authentic model. My use of these terms is clarified in Appendix 3, which also offers a detailed definition and exemplification of each cadential type with reference to Verdelot's practice.[28] It will suffice here to recall that the negative, suspended, pathetic nature of both the Phrygian and half-cadence types is due mainly to the

[27] Many other madrigals by Verdelot exhibit a similarly homophonic writing, even with episodic adoption of choral recitative. Among them, particularly close to the typology and even to the expressive contents of *Sì lieta*, are *O dolce nocte* (Machiavelli, in the 'Newberry-Oscott Partbooks', *c*.1526–9, ed. Slim in *A Gift*), *Se mai provasti, donna, qual sia amore* (Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale Q21, *c*.1526, and RISM 1533^2, ed. Thomas, Owens), *Se voi porgesti una sol fiata* (1533^2, ed. Owens), *La bella man mi porse* (1533^2, ed. Owens), *Qual maraviglia, o donna* (1534^{16}, ed. Owens), *Quando madonna Amor, lasso, m'invita* (1534^{16}, ed. Owens), *Non è ver che pietade* (1537^{11}, ed. Owens). Cf. also Slim and La Via, 'Verdelot', p. 430.

[28] I have first defined and applied my analytical system in La Via, 'Cipriano de Rore as Reader and as Read', pp. 134–48 (theoretical principles), 152–398 (analyses and conclusions), completed under the supervision of Harold Powers; more recently I have further developed the same method in various essays, particularly in *Il lamento di Venere abbandonata: da Tiziano a Cipriano de Rore* (Lucca, 1994), and '"Natura delle cadenze" e "natura contraria delli modi": punti di convergenza fra teoria e prassi nel madrigale cinquecentesco', *Saggiatore musicale*, 4 (1997), pp. 5–51.

Table 1 *Formal outline and tonal plan of Verdelot's* Sì lieta e grata morte

				Cadences		
				Phrygian	Half-cadence (or Plagal imp.)	Authentic
Ripresa		1a	Sì lieta e grata morte	g > *A*		
	I	2B	dagli occhi di madonna al cor mi viene		d > *A*	
		3B	che dolce m'è 'l morir, dolce le pene.			(x) A $^{>(d)}/_{g}$ →
					→ (ext.) g > **D**	
Mutazioni		4c	Perché qualhor la miro	c > **D**		
		5C	volgers'in sì benigno e lieto giro,	(x) c^{6} > **D**		
		6D	subito per dolcezza il cor si more,			A > $\mathbf{d}^{unf}$
	II					A > **d** →
		7e	la lingua muta tace,		→(g > **d**) →	
		8e	ogni spirito giace		→ d > *A*	
		9f	attento per sentire	(g > *A* →		→ A > $\mathbf{d}^{unf}/_{B\flat}$)
		10f	un sì dolce morire.		d > *A*	
		11D	Ma tanto del morir gioisce 'l core	((x) g $^{>(a)}$/**d**)		
		12g	che poi non sento noia,	((x) g^{6} > [d^{4}] *a* g $^{>(a)}/_{F}$)		
	III					
		13G	anzi la morte si convert'in gioia.	(x) c^{6} > **D**		
Volta		14A	Dunque se la mia donna è di tal sorte	(x) g^{6} > *A*		
	IV	15H	che sentir fammi morte sì gradita,			(D > g)
		16H	che saria poi s'ella mi desse vita?			(x) A > **d** →
					→ (ext.) g > **D**	

Key to Table 1

Poetic text
Numbers and letters in the left column designate respectively lines and rhymes; small and capital letters distinguish 7-syllable lines (such as 1a) from 11-syllable lines (such as 14A).

Vertical sonorities
Conventional letter-notation symbols designate single vertical sonorities or 'triads'; small and capital letters distinguish minor from major triads; for example: d = D minor triad; D = D major triad.

Small or capital letters, with no added symbols, designate 5/3 or 8/3 root-position triads; small letters with added superscript ^{unf} designate 8/8 unfilled triads (without a third); for example: d^{unf} = 8/8 unfilled triad rooted on D.

Added superscripts ^{6} and ^{4} designate respectively 6/3 and 6/4 triads (equivalent to 'first inversion' and 'second inversion'); for example: c^{6} = 6/3 C minor triad; d^{4} = 6/4 D minor triad.

d / **D** = primary tonal focus, or the pitch class of the lowest note in the sonority that ends the piece (*finalis* or *corda finale* in sixteenth-century modal terms).

a / *A* = secondary tonal focus (*confinalis* or *corda mezana* in sixteenth-century modal terms).

Cadences
The linkage of one letter to the next through the symbol > denotes that one triad 'resolves' to the next, as in any type of cadence (see definitions and descriptions in Appendix 3):

g > *A* or c^{6} > **D** = Phrygian (abbr. Phry)
d > *A* or g > **D** = half-cadence (hc)
g > **d** = plagal imperfect (pla i.)
A > **D** or D > g = authentic (au)

The symbol (x) refers to the *sincopa* or suspension preceding the cadential resolution, as in: (x) c^{6} > **D** = 7–6 suspension (*sincopa di settima*) and Phrygian perfect 6–8 resolution.

Brackets and arrows denote the feeble, passing quality of a cadence, as in:

(D > g) = passing authentic cadence
A > d → (g > d) → = authentic resolution immediately followed by passing plagal imperfect cadence
((x) g^{6} > [d^{4}] a) = passing Phrygian cadence.

Evaded cadences (*fuggir la cadenza*) and cadential elisions are designated respectively as follows:

(x) A $^{>\ (d)}/_{g}$ = the expected authentic resolution onto d/D is evaded and diverted into g.
A > $d^{unf}/_{B\flat}$ = the authentic resolution onto d, at the end of the poetic line, is 'elided' by the anticipated setting of the next line, with the effect of turning d into B♭.
→ (ext) = cadential extension with *protractio longae*.

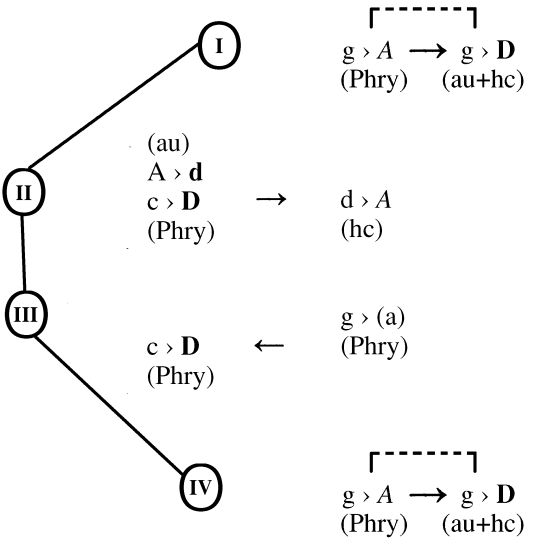


Figure 1

downward motion of their semitone resolution, which even leads to 'imperfection' in the case of the half-cadence; the more positive character of the authentic cadence, on the contrary, depends on its ascending and 'perfect' kind of resolution, which in this case is weakened, elided or even reversed.

The pathetic *gravità* of the Phrygian and half-cadence resolutions, onto A or D, which mark the first two sections of the madrigal (lines 1a, 3B, 10f, at *morte*, *pene*, *morire*, bars 4–5, 18–19, 42–4), is even increased, in sections III and IV, in association with more positive rhyme words such as *gioia* (line 13G, bars 54–5) and *vita* (line 16H, final two bars). At this level too, as in that of rhythm, Verdelot chooses to underscore the negative, painful member of the oxymoron to the detriment of its pleasant and joyful counterpart.

The same logic appears to inform, at the macro-structure level, the overall tonal-cadential plan of the piece, its coherence and symmetry as well as its inexorably negative trend. The expected positive resolution onto the main 'tonal focus' of the madrigal[29] –

[29] The useful term 'tonal focus' was first used by Karol Berger in a paper presented at the Symposium *Tonal Coherence in Pre-Tonal Polyphony* (Princeton, April 1987). Harold Powers later adopted the same term to designate 'either or both of two things: a cluster of dia-

its initial and final **D** sonority – not only is rare and feeble, but is repeatedly denied or reversed in various ways: (1) externally, by means of a specular overturn or 'cadential chasm' – from A > **D** to d > *A* (half-cadence) or g > *A* (Phrygian) – with pathetic emphasis on the alternative tonal focus *A*; (2) internally, by means of negative cadence models that either resolve directly onto **D** or transform the original authentic close A > **D** into the half-cadence g > **D**, as in the cadential extensions of the *ripresa* and *volta*.

The resulting symmetry of the whole tonal-cadential architecture (see the synopsis in Figure 1) faithfully mirrors not only the structure of the ballata-madrigal (the varied return of the opening tercet in the final *volta)* but also the parallel circularity of its concepts: the return of the 'welcome death' inspired by the gaze of 'my lady'. The final rhetorical turn towards 'life', being also a turn from reality to idealization, does not allow Verdelot to close the piece with a positive authentic cadence to **D** (see bars 65–73). The solemn extension with *protractio longae* and suspended half-cadence g > **D**, albeit conventional, gives definitive stress to the negative member of the oxymoron (i.e. of the *voluptas dolendi)*, in a way that renders almost mimetically the lover's unresolved suspension between death and life.

The overall coherence and homogeneity of Verdelot's setting, however, does not prevent him from giving some kind of relief also to the oxymoron itself, by means of a cleverly designed upward/downward oscillation of the melodic profile. At first, the ascending motion and its reversal correspond exactly to the 'sweet death' positive/negative sequence: see, for instance, in the incipit (opening five bars), the quasi-fauxbordon oscillation of the three compact upper parts against the bassus; particularly elegant, in the cantus, is the reversal of the stepwise diminished fourth ascent,

tonically adjacent pitch classes of the order of three to six, within which one or two predominate; a tonal center around which pitches and pitch relationships cluster or seem to be dominated. In medieval/Renaissance theoretical terms, tonal focus would be either a diatonic species of the fourth or fifth, or a degree in a Guidonian hexachord. Tonal focus is meant for concrete analysis of pieces or parts of pieces, and is hence likely to be a matter of judgement in any particular instance': H. S. Powers, 'Monteverdi's Model for a Multimodal Madrigal', in F. Della Seta and F. Piperno (eds), *In Cantu et in Sermone: For Nino Pirrotta on his 80th Birthday* (Florence, 1989), pp. 185–219, at pp. 185–6, n. 5. Cf. also S. La Via, 'Monteverdi esegeta: rilettura di *Cruda Amarilli* / *O Mirtillo*', in M. Caraci Vela and R. Tibaldi (eds), *Intorno a Monteverdi* (Lucca, 1999), pp. 77–99, at p. 86, n. 16.

from $C_{\sharp 3}$ up to F_3 (at *Sì lieta e grata*),[30] into descent of a diminished fifth, from G_3 down to $C_{\sharp 3}$ (melisma at *morte*). A similar up-and-down fluctuation comes back even at the 'metamorphic' line 13G, when the order of the two opposing units is inverted (bars 52–5, *anzi la morte* vs. *si convert'in gioia*): once again, not only in the cantus but in all three upper voices, evoking the quasi-fauxbourdon oscillation of the incipit. In the simplest possible way, then, Verdelot is showing here the interchangeability of the two oxymoronic units, or, in other words, that process of mutual penetration that distinguishes an oxymoron from a real antithesis.

Also at this level, however, it is the element of *gravità* and melancholic pathos that in the end prevails over that of sweet *piacevolezza*:[31] the final segment of each melodic phrase (especially in the cantus) is always descending, and its stepwise motion tends to outline harsh intervals such as the diminished fourth and fifth, or pathetic figures such as the Phrygian tetrachord. A direct consequence of such a prevalently descending tendency is the gradual lowering and restriction of the overall ambitus, what any sixteenth-century theorist would consider as a generic symptom of a plagally oriented kind of 'modality'.

Sì lieta e grata morte, however, poses some serious problems of modal attribution, especially with reference to the eight-mode system, the only one Verdelot could possibly have been familiar with (see Table 2). We find neither this madrigal, nor its unusual tonal type – *cantus mollis*, low clefs (C2–C4–C4–F4), final D – in any modally ordered collection of the time.[32] Perhaps a traditional the-

[30] Here, as well as in Appendix 3, subscript numbers are attached to capital letters to designate pitch level: with reference to the Guidonian hexachordal system, G_1 corresponds to Gamma *ut*, C_2 to C *fa ut*, C_3 to c *sol fa ut*, and C_4 to cc *sol fa*.

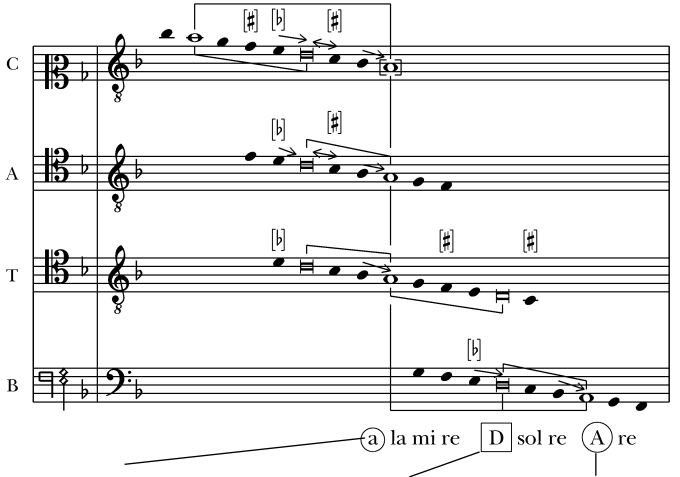
[31] The stylistic dichotomy *gravità*/*piacevolezza* (or *dolcezza*), traditionally one of the landmarks of Bembo's Petrarchism (cf. P. Bembo, *Prose della volgar lingua* (Venice: Tacuino, 1525), in Bembo, *Prose*, ed. Dionisotti, pp. 146 ff.), was already quite familiar to Lorenzo de' Medici, who applied it not only to Petrarch but also, and above all, to Guido Cavalcanti: 'Chi negherà nel Petrarca trovarsi uno stile grave, lepido e dolce, e queste cose amorose con tanta gravità e venustà trattate . . .?'; 'E Guido Cavalcanti, di chi di sopra facemmo menzione ['Proemio' 61, p. 142], non si può dire quanto commodamente abbi insieme coniunto la gravità e la dolcezza, come mostra la canzone sopra detta ['Donna me prega'] e alcuni sonetti e ballate sue dolcissime': Lorenzo de' Medici, *Comento*, ed. Zanato, 'Proemio' 95, 99, pp. 147, 148; later on, *ibid.*, 'Nuovo Argomento' 31, p. 175, Lorenzo uses similar terms to describe the beauty of his beloved lady : 'Era la sua bellezza, come abbiamo detto, mirabile: . . . l'aspetto suo grave e non superbo, dolce e piacevole'.

[32] Cf. H. S. Powers, 'Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34 (1981), pp. 428–70.

Table 2 *Tonal type and possible modal representation in Verdelot's* Sì lieta e grata morte

(1) tonal type: ♭ = *cantus mollis*, or B♭ system
C2 = 'low' clef combination (cantus: C2, altus: C4, tenor: C4, bassus: F4)
D = pitch class of the lowest note in the last sonority

(2) ambitus of each voice, species of 8ve/5th/4th, cadences:



	[*corda mezana*]	**corda finale** (opening sonority)	*corda mezana*
cadential emphasis:		+ 2 main cadences: end of *ripresa* and end of *volta* = au + (ext) hc	first cadence = Phry
	+	+	+
	1 internal cadence: 11D = (Phry) (tenor)(bassus tacet)	7 internal cad.s: 4c = (Phry) 5C = Phry 6D = au *rep.* 7e = (pla i.) 9f = (au) 13G = Phry	6 internal cad.s: 2B = hc 8e = (hc) 10f = hc 12g = (Phry) *rep.* 14A = Phry

Key to Table 2

Downward and upward arrows between notes indicate semitone tendency only in relation to the two main pitch classes of the piece (**D** and *A*), corresponding to the modal *finalis* (Zarlino's *corda finale)* and *confinalis* (Zarlino's *corda mezana)*.

Accidentals within square brackets indicate occasional alteration of diatonic pitches (usually at cadence points).

au = authentic cadence
hc = half-cadence
pla i. = plagal imperfect cadence
Phry = Phrygian cadence
(ext) = cadential extension
rep. = repeat

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orist such as the Florentine Pietro Aaron would have ascribed it to the first mode,[33] whose positive and joyful ethos,[34] however, hardly fits the unquestionably grave and melancholic character of Verdelot's madrigal. From the rather retrospective viewpoint of dodecachordal theorists such as Gioseffo Zarlino, on the other hand, the tonal type of *Sì lieta* might be seen as an *ante litteram* representation of the Hypoaeolian mode 10, transposed a fifth lower by B flat, perhaps with an inner Hypophrygian (even more than Hypodorian) commixture.[35] The particularly close connection between the two plagal modes 10 and 4, according to Zarlino himself, is due basically to their common species of fourth (D–C–B♭–A), besides, naturally, their descending *modo di procedere* and low ambitus; for these reasons, he also attributes to them exactly the same melancholic and plaintive 'nature', particularly suitable to *materie amorose*.[36]

Here our exegetic circle might find its final closure. Zarlino's modal terms, even though hypothetical and retrospective,[37] would fit perfectly the essence of Verdelot's reading, and would give

[33] Cf. P. Aaron, *Trattato della natura et cognitione di tutti gli tuoni di canto figurato non da altrui più scritti* (Venice, 1525), chs. 1–3, and in particular ch. 4, 'Dichiaratione del primo et secondo tuono', unnumbered folio. According to Aaron, 'any song whose Tenor ends on D sol re' – including those 'with the *B molle*', since this does not affect the species of fifth – 'will undoubtedly be ascribed to either the first or the second mode'. In the case of *Sì lieta*, Aaron's first mode (rather than the second) seems to fit quite well the octave species in the tenor (with the regular fifth below the 'transformed' fourth, and not vice versa) as well as its whole *processus*. For a discussion of Aaron's terms, cf. H. S. Powers, 'Is Mode Real? Pietro Aron, the Octenary System, and Polyphony', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 16 (1992), pp. 9–52, at p. 28 *et passim*.

[34] Cf. Aaron, *Trattato*, ch. 25, 'Della natura et operatione di tutti gli tuoni', unnumbered folios, where the first mode is associated with affections of 'happiness, joy and hilarity' (*letitia, gaudio et hillarità d'animo*).

[35] G. Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice: F. dei Franceschi, 1558), part IV, chs. 5–29, pp. 301–5, and esp. ch. 19, 'Del secondo modo', ch. 21, 'Del quarto modo', and ch. 27, 'Del decimo modo', pp. 322–3, 324, 332. On Zarlino's humanistic interpretation of Glareanus' dodecachordal system, and on his rather modern conception of 'transposition' (as opposed to Aaron's 'transformation'), *modo di procedere*, modal species, relationship between tenor and the other voices, and *natura contraria* of authentic and plagal modes, see La Via, 'Natura delle cadenze', pp. 14–22, 42–50.

[36] On mode 10 and its structural as well as affective connection with modes 2 and 4 – also with reference to Verdelot's four-voice motet *Gabriel archangelus locutus est Zachariae* (1532^{10}) – cf. Zarlino, *Istitutioni*, p. 332; on the similarly grave, melancholic and plaintive nature of these three plagal modes, see also pp. 322–4.

[37] It must be stressed here that Zarlino's reference to Verdelot, just quoted above in n. 36, is not at all exceptional: indeed, in the whole *Istitutioni harmoniche* Verdelot's madrigals and motets stand out among Zarlino's main practical models, second only to Willaert's *Musica nova*.

further confirmation to everything that has emerged from my analysis. At every level, indeed – from rhythm, melody and texture to cadential and tonal strategy – Verdelot's music appears to be aimed at the most melancholic, at times even funereal, representation of the anonymous poet's fatal experience of amorous fulguration, and, behind that, of a specifically Florentine, Platonically oriented conception of *amore contemplativo*. Without going beyond the limits of a working hypothesis, one might even see in early madrigals such as *Sì lieta e grata morte* the particular reflection of a wider cultural phenomenon: the Florentine political and artistic revival, during the 1520s, of the cult of Lorenzo il Magnifico, whose main promoter was Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (since 1523 Pope Clement VII), Verdelot's own patron,[38] who commissioned his early madrigals as well as Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana and Medici chapel in San Lorenzo.[39]

[38] R. Sherr, 'Verdelot in Florence, Coppini in Rome, and the Singer "La Fiore"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 37 (1984), pp. 402–11, at pp. 402–4, 409, has uncovered and published a letter from Niccolò de Pictis which documents Verdelot's entrance into the service of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in May 1521; see also N. Pirrotta, 'Rom', in *MGG*, xi, p. 706; Slim, *A Gift*, pp. 53–62, and Slim and La Via, 'Verdelot', pp. 427–8. See also above, n. 10, and below, nn. 39 and 40. Authoritative scholars such as Haar and Fenlon, however, tend to exclude the possibility that the Medici family, and in particular Cardinal Giulio, might have played a primary role in the Florentine patronage of the early madrigal, also on the ground of Verdelot's association with Machiavelli and the *Orti Oricellari*, and of his supposed opposition to the Medici family: see Haar, 'The Early Madrigal', p. 164, and I. Fenlon, 'Context and Chronology of the Early Florentine Madrigal', in M. Muraro (ed.), *La letteratura, la rappresentazione, la musica al tempo e nei luoghi di Giorgione* (Rome, 1987), pp. 281–93, at pp. 283–5.

[39] The Florentine renewal of the Golden Age of Lorenzo il Magnifico started during the papacy of Giovanni de' Medici, Leo X (1513–21); it is in this period (1519) that Michelangelo began to work on his decorative sculptures of the Medici chapel, encouraged in particular by Cardinal Giulio, who, as Pope Clement VII (1523–34), would later commission Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana (1524–7, 1533–4); both works represent a tribute to the Medici dynasty as a whole, but also a retrospective celebration of Lorenzo as politician, patron of the arts and man of letters. In the same years, various retrospective homages were addressed to Lorenzo by different persons, such as the biographer Niccolò Valori (*Vita Laurentii Medicis*, dedicated to Leo X in 1518), the Republican Machiavelli (*Istorie fiorentine*, commissioned by the Medici in 1518), the aristocrat Alessandro de' Pazzi (*Discorso*, 1522, written at the explicit request of Cardinal Giulio), the literary critic Trissino (*La poetica*, 1529; see above, n. 9), the painter Pontormo and the artists who decorated Lorenzo's villa at Poggio a Caiano after the Medici restoration in 1512. See, in particular, Von Albertini, *Firenze dalla Repubblica al Principato*, pp. 69–70, 78–83; C. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, iii: *The Medici Chapel* (Princeton, 1970, 1st edn 1948), pp. 7–13, 26, 33–5, 63–75; J. S. Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo* (Harmondsworth, 1970, 1st edn 1961), pp. 97–122, at pp. 98–104; H. Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (New York, 1974), pp. 177–219; J. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medicean Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton, 1984), Parts I–III, pp. 15–227.

Even outside such a hypothesis,[40] both Verdelot's poetic choice and his sensitive musical response suggest once again that the traditional Petrarchan- and Bembist-oriented view of the literary origins of the sixteenth-century madrigal should be further re-examined, widened and also reconciled with its primarily Florentine roots.[41] The profound expressivity of Verdelot's music also seriously challenges the even more schematic *prima/seconda pratica* opposition: here, as elsewhere, the composer is clearly interested in mirroring and highlighting not only the formal surface of his chosen poetry but also its inner meanings, up to the point of offering us a key to their clarification and deep understanding. Even though he is not as yet interested in the musical dramatization of poetic contrasts and antitheses, some of his solutions – including his tonal, cadential and melodic strategies – clearly anticipate those that Cipriano de Rore, the supposed 'founder' of the *seconda pratica*, will restore and bring to perfection in his later masterpieces.[42]

Università degli Studi di Pavia

[40] A hypothesis in line with the recent conclusions reached by F. A. D'Accone, 'Lorenzo il Magnifico e la musica', in *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico, Congresso internazionale di studi (Firenze, 15–17 giugno 1992)*, ed. P. Gargiulo (Florence, 1993), pp. 219–48, at pp. 246–8. Here D'Accone stresses the key role played by Lorenzo in promoting transalpine polyphony in late fifteenth-century Florence, and even in laying the groundwork for the imminent birth of the madrigal; he identifies in particular the Fleming Heinrich Isaac, Lorenzo's favourite composer (a stable member of the Medici court from 1484 to 1496 and still in Florence between 1512 and 1517) as the true predecessor of early madrigalists such as Bernardo Pisano, Francesco Layolle and Philippe Verdelot.

[41] In this broader sense my Ficinian and Laurentian reading of Verdelot further substantiates the historical view of the Florentine origins of the Italian sixteenth-century madrigal already proposed by several American and British scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. Besides the essays by Haar (1981), Fenlon and Haar (1988), D'Accone (1972), Agee (1985) and Fenlon (1987) cited in nn. 1, 10 and 38, see also F. A. D'Accone, 'Bernardo Pisano and the Early Madrigal', in *Internationale Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft: Report of the Tenth Congress* (Ljubljana, 1967), ed. D. Cvetko (Kassel, 1970), pp. 96–106, and J. Haar, 'Madrigals from the Last Florentine Republic', in S. Bertelli and G. Ramakus (eds), *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore* (Florence, 1978), ii, pp. 383–403.

[42] From this angle, Verdelot's *Sì lieta e grata morte* is a forerunner in particular of Rore's sombre setting of Della Casa's sonnet 'O sonno, o della queta, humida, ombrosa', analysed in La Via, 'Natura delle cadenze'.

APPENDIX 1

Some Antecedents and Possible Literary Sources of *Sì lieta e grata morte*

1. Guido Cavalcanti, *Rime*

4. 5: quando li *occhi gira*

9. 4: mostrando per lo viso agli *occhi morte*

13. 1: Voi che per li *occhi* mi passaste 'l *core*

15. 11–12: . . . ritornerebbe in allegrezza e 'n *gioia*.
Ma sì è al *cor dolente* tanta *noia* . . .

24. 9–14: Ma quando sento che *sì dolce* sguardo
dentro degli *occhi* mi passò al *core*
e posevi uno spirito di *gioia*,
di farne a lei mercé, di ciò non tardo:
così pregata foss'ella d'Amore
ch'un poco di pietà no i fosse *noia*!

32. 1–4: Quando di *morte* mi conven trar *vita*
e di pesanza *gioia*,
come di tanta *noia*
lo spirito d'amor d'amar m'invita?

6. 1–4: Deh, *spiriti miei*, quando mi vedete
con tanta pena, come non mandate
fuor della mente parole adornate
di pianto, dolorose e sbigottite?

10. 13–16: Questa pesanza ch'è *nel cor* discesa
ha certi *spirite'* già consumati,
i quali eran venuti per difesa
del *cor dolente* che gli avea chiamati.

34. 18–21: Pieno d'angoscia, in loco di paura,
lo spirito del cor dolente giace
per la Fortuna che di me non cura,
c'ha volta *Morte* dove assai mi spiace.

2. Marsilio Ficino, *Sopra lo Amore*

II. 8: Platone . . . disse: quello amatore è un animo nel proprio corpo morto, e nel corpo d'altri vivo . . .

Platone chiama l'amore amaro, e non senza cagione, perché qualunque ama, muore amando . . .

Muore amando qualunque ama: perché il suo pensiero dimenticando sé, nella persona amata si rivolge. . . .

Due sono le spezie d'amore, l'uno è semplice, l'altro è reciproco.

L'amore semplice è dove l'amatore non ama l'amato. Quivi in tutto

l'amatore è morto, perché non vive in sé . . . e non vive nell'amato, essendo da lui sprezzato. . . .

Adunque in nessun luogo vive chi ama altrui e non è da altrui amato; e però interamente è morto il non amato amante; e mai non resuscita . . .

Ma dove lo amato nell'amor risponde, l'amatore almen che sia nell'amato vive. Qui cosa maravigliosa avviene, quando duoi insieme si amano: costui in colui e colui in costui vive. . . .

Una solamente è la morte nell'amore reciproco; le resurrezioni sono due: perché chi ama muore una volta in sé, quando si lascia; risuscita subito nell'amato quando l'amato lo riceve con ardente pensiero; risuscita ancora quando egli nell'amato finalmente si riconosce, e non dubita sé esser amato. O felice morte alla quale seguono due vite!

VI. 6: coloro che sono nati sotto una medesima stella sono in tal modo disposti che la immagine del più bello di loro, entrando per gli occhi nell'animo di quell'altro, interamente si confà con una certa immagine, formata dal principio di essa generazione, così nel velame celestiale dell'Anima, come nel seno dell'anima. . . .

Tre cose senza dubbio sono in noi: Anima, Spirito e Corpo. L'Anima e il Corpo sono di natura molto diversa, e congiungonsi insieme per mezzo dello Spirito, il quale è un certo vapore sottilissimo e lucidissimo, generato per il caldo del cuore dalla più sottil parte del sangue.

VI. 8: ogni amore comincia dal vedere . . .

lo amore del contemplativo si chiama 'divino', dello attivo 'umano', del voluttuoso 'bestiale'.

VI. 9: per lungo amore gli uomini pallidi e magri divengono . . .

La intenzione dello amante tutta si rivolta nella assidua cogitazione della persona amata . . . dove l'assidua intenzione dell'animo ci trasporta, quivi volano ancora gli spiriti . . .

Questi spiriti si generano nel caldo del cuore, dalla sottilissima parte del sangue. . . .

Inverso questa [persona amata] sono tirati ancora gli spiriti, e volando quivi continuamente si consumano . . . Di qui il corpo si secca e impallidisce: di qui gli amanti divengono malinconici. . . .

I collerici e i melanconici seguitano molto i diletti del canto e della forma, come unico rimedio e conforto di loro complessione molestissima, e però sono a le lusinghe di Amore inclinati: come Socrate il quale fu giudicato da Aristotele di complessione malinconica. E costui fu dato allo Amore più che uomo alcuno, secondo che egli medesimo confessava. Il

medesimo possiamo giudicare di Saffo poetessa, la quale dipinge se stessa melanconica e innamorata. . . .

Chi negherà lo Amore essere ignudo? perché nessuno lo può celare: con ciò sia che molti segni scuoprino gli innamorati: cioè il guardare simile al toro e fiso, il parlare interrotto, il colore del viso or giallo, or rosso, gli spessi sospiri, il gittare in qua e in là le membra, i continui rammarichi . . .

VI.10: il raggio della Bellezza che è copia e padre dell'Amore ha questa forza, che e' si riflette quivi onde ei venne, e riflettendosi tira seco lo amante. Certamente questo raggio disceso prima da Dio e poi passando nello Angelo, e nell'Anima, . . . e dall'Anima nel corpo preparato a ricevere tal raggio facilmente passando, da esso corpo formoso traluce fuora, massime per gli occhi, come per transparenti finestre: e subito vola per aria, e penetrando gli occhi dell'uomo che bada, ferisce l'Anima, accende lo appetito. . . .

Questo medesimo avviene alle volte agli Amanti e agli Amati . . .

VII.1: Guido filosofo . . . seguitò lo Amore socratico in parole e in costumi.

Costui con gli suoi versi brevemente conchiuse ciò che da voi di Amore è detto. . . .

Guido Cavalcanti filosofo tutte queste cose artificiosamente chiuse nelli suoi versi. . . .

Imperocché quando ne' suoi versi dice: *sole e raggio*, per il Sole intende la luce di Dio, per il raggio la forma de' corpi.

VII.14: Quattro adunque sono le spezie del divino furore: il primo è il furore poetico, il secondo il misteriale cioè sacerdotale, il terzo la divinazione, il quarto è lo affetto dello amore. . . .

Orfeo da tutti questi furori fu occupato, . . . Ma dal furore amatorio spezialmente sopra gli altri furono rapiti Saffo, Anacreonte e Socrate.

3. Lorenzo de Medici

(a) *Canzoniere*:

68. 9–14: Né sa più il tristo core omai che farsi:
o fuggir ne' begli occhi alla sua morte
o ver lontan da quei morir ognora.
Dice fra sé : 'Se un tempo in quelli occhi arsi,
dolce era il mio morir, *lieta mia sorte*:
onde meglio è che ne' belli occhi mora.'

92. 12–14: Risponde sorridendo Amore allora:

	'dolce è mia morte, . . .
	e sempre vive Amore'.
96. 1, 4, 5–8, 12–14:	Gli alti sospir dell'amoroso petto . . .
	caldi ancor nel mio cor hanno ricetto.
	Gli narran le parole che ha lor detto
	Amore, in dolci e tacite favelle;
	tutti gli spirti allor per udir quelle
	correndo, resta *il core* oppresso e stretto. . . .
	Là *vita e morte*, onde partì, par faccia:
	così uno spirito in due alterna e move
	un dolce viver ch'è fra morte e vita.
100. 9–11:	Oh bella morte e, oh, dolor süavi!
	Oh pensier' che portate ne' sospiri,
	ad altri ignota, al cor tanta dolcezza!
108. 1, 4–5, 12–14:	Se talor gli occhi miei madonna mira . . .
	però sovente *i suoi begli occhi gira*
	verso li miei . . .
	Giunto al mio cor, che in lei vie più s'accende,
	la pigra speme e lunga pietà caccia:
	così vede i miei spirti allor contenti.
109. 1, 9–14:	Quando a me il lume de' begli occhi arriva . . .
	Li spirti incontro a quel dolce splendore
	da me fuggendo lieti vanno, in cui
	(e loro il sanno) Amor gli uccide e strugge.
	Se la mia vista resta o se pur fugge,
	che morta in me allor vive in altrui,
	dubbio amoroso solva il gentil core.
117. 18–26:	Venne per gli occhi pria
	nel petto tenebroso
	degli occhi vaghi il bel raggio amoroso,
	e destò ciascun spirto che dormiva,
	sparti pel petto, sanza cure ozioso.
	Ma tosto che sen giva
	in mezzo al cor la bella luce viva,
	gli spirti, accesi del bel lume adorno,
	corsono al core intorno.

(b) *Comento de' miei sonetti*:
Nuovo Argumento 25: Veramente quando la natura gli creò, non fece solamente due *occhi*, ma *il vero luogo dove stessi Amore e insieme la Morte*, o vero vita e 'nfelicità degli uomini che fiso gli riguardassino.

5. 4–7 ff.: E però se mi trovavo alla presenza di lei, el viso suo, veramente angelico, pareva al cuore dolce e altero: dolce perché così veramente era, altero gliele faceva parere el dubbio . . . della poca pietà. . . . Di questo suo timore nasceva in lui l'affanno, e però li *spiriti vitali*, correndo per soccorrere al *cuore*, lasciavano la faccia mia senza colore, pallida e smorta.

11. 9–19: Se 'l mio *cuore* fortunato . . . sospira in quel tempo quando è più presso alla donna mia, . . . ne è cagione la *dolcezza* che lui sente, la quale è sì grande che tiene occupate tutte le forze e *spiriti vitali* e gli svia dal loro officio naturale alla *fruizione di quella dolcezza*. . . . se prima il cuore aveva bisogno di respirare e refriggerarsi, molto più ne ha bisogno sopravenendo tanti spiriti, e quali di natura sono caldi. . . . E di qui nasce il sospiro, e quinci si rinfresca il *cuore*; el quale, avendo già dimenticato se stesso, *per sé non si curava di morire*, *anzi* bramava *sì dolce e sì felice morte*.

40. 19: Godevomi adunque non solamente quella presente bellezza, ma ancora la speranza di molto più *dolce morte*, la quale . . . con grandissimo desiderio aspettavo, perché quanto maggiore erano le offese, cioè el desiderio di tanta bellezza, più dolce si faceva la morte. E però la speranza di questa morte mi empieva il cuore di tanta dolcezza, che il cuore già se ne nutriva e viveva: intendendo questa morte nella forma che abbiamo detto morire li amanti, quando tutti nella cosa amata si trasformano . . . E però questa morte non solamente è dolce, ma è quella dolcezza che puote avere l'umana concupiscienzia, e per questo da me come unico remedio alla salute mia era con grandissima dolcezza e desiderio aspettata come vero fine di tutti i miei desiderii.

APPENDIX 2

Annotated Edition of Verdelot's *Sì lieta e grata morte*

Preliminary notes

The present edition of *Sì lieta e grata morte*, far from being a critical edition in the strict sense, is based primarily but not exclusively on the earliest complete surviving printed source of Verdelot's madrigal: *Il primo libro de' madrigali di Verdelotto, novamente stampato, et con somma diligentia corretto* (Venice: Ottaviano Scotto, 1537) (RISM 1537[9]; Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, U308). Of both the first edition – issued in 1533 by the Scotto family and Andrea Antico (RISM 1533[2]) – and an otherwise lost second edition [1535–6], only a single bass partbook survives (respectively in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Thibault collection, and in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale): see Fenlon and Haar, *The Italian Madrigal*, pp. 296–9.

Not surprisingly, this source presents a few mistakes in the poetic text, and almost no accidentals. Both the correction of such mistakes and the addition of editorial accidentals reflect musical, exegetic and analytical considerations which have often found confirmation in other relevant sources: in particular, the earlier but incomplete Florentine manuscript known as the 'Strozzi partbooks' (Florence, Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini, MS Basevi 2495: Cantus, Tenor, Bassus, *c.*1530; see Fenlon and Haar, pp. 159–61); and Adrian Willaert's *Intavolatura de li madrigali di Verdelotto* (Scotto 1536 = RISM 1536[8]). Later sources have also been consulted such as Scotto's and Gardano's respective editions of *Di Verdelotto tutti li madrigali del primo et del secondo libro a quatro voci* (Scotto 1540, 1549 = RISM 1540[20], 1549[33]; Gardano 1556 = RISM 1556[27]), and Claudio Merulo's final edition of *I madrigali del primo et secondo libro di Verdelot a quattro voci* (RISM 1566[22]).

Significant variants in the poetic text:

1a: *Sì lieta e grata morte*
Sì lieta (Strozzi *c.*1530; 1536[8]; 1537[9] Tenor; later sources) vs.
Se lieta (1536[8] Index title; 1537[9] Cantus, Altus, Bassus)

3B: *che dolce m'è 'l morir, dolce le pene*
dolc'et le pene (Strozzi *c.*1530) vs.
dolce le pene (1536[8], 1537[9], later sources)

6D: *subito per dolcezza il cor si more*
dolceza . . . muore (Strozzi *c.*1530) vs.
dolcezza . . . more (1536[8], 1537[9], later sources)

14A: *Dunque se la mia donna è di tal sorte*
Dunque (Strozzi *c.*1530; later sources) vs.
Donque (1536[8]; 1537[9])

16H: *che saria poi s'ella mi desse vita*
che saria poi se la mi dessi vita (Strozzi *c.*1530)
che saria poi se la mi desse vita (1536[8])
che seria poi s'ella mi desse vita (1537[9] Tenor)
che saria poi si la me desse vita (1537[9] Cantus, Altus, Bassus)
che saria poi s'ella mi desse vita (later sources)

The musical text given in the two earliest vocal sources of *Sì lieta* (Strozzi *c.*1530 and 1537[9]) is almost identical: I have found only one mistake in the Strozzi tenor partbook (bar 27, at 'subito', A, B♭, B♭); but I have also accepted the rhythmic solution given in the manuscript bass partbook, at bar 63: 'morte' = 𝅗𝅥. 𝅘𝅥 instead of 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 in all the other sources (including 1537[9]).

Original accidentals in 1537[9] are indicated above the stave with the symbol *; the symbol † at bar 62 in the bassus (E♭ at 'sentir') refers to the only accidental found in the Strozzi partbooks.

Given their high quantity, accidentals found in other sources have also been inserted within the musical text without brackets. Almost all of them correspond to the accidentals already included by Willaert (1536[8]) and Merulo (1566[22]), listed below:

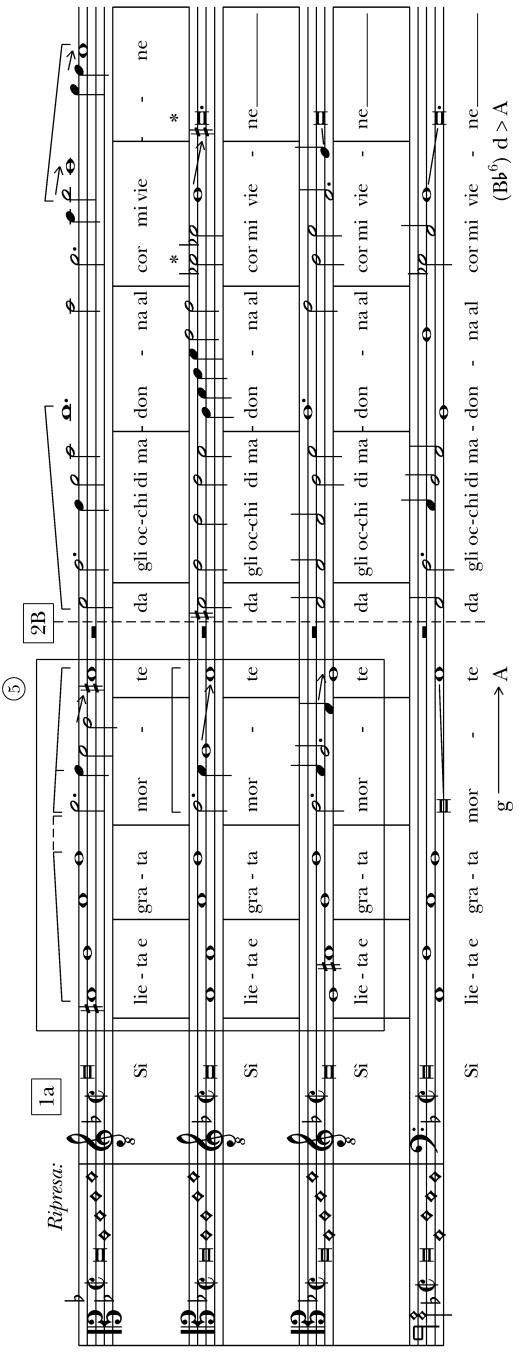
Cantus:	2	5	11	14	15	20–1	24	26–7	37	39	54	61	68	
1536[8]	C♯	C♯				F♯			C♯	C♯	E♭	C♯		
1566[22]	C♯	C♯	C♯	C♯	C♯-B-C♯	F♯	F♯	F♯	C♯	C♯		C♯	C♯	
Altus:	5	8	9–10	12	16	24	25	29	32	44	55	61	69	
1536[8]	C♯	E♭	C♯	F♯	F♯	E♭	B	C♯	C♯	C♯	F♯	C♯		
1566[22]	C♯	E♭	C♯	F♯	F♯	E♭	B	C♯-B-C♯	C♯-B-C♯	C♯	F♯	C♯	F♯	
Tenor:	2	12	14	19	23	25–6	38	59	64–5	73				
1536[8]	F♯	C♯	C♯	F♯	F♯	E♭	F♯	C♯	F♯	F♯				
1566[22]			C♯	F♯	F♯	E♭	F♯		F♯	F♯				
Bassus:	8	24	26	36	54	62	67	71						
1536[8]	E♭	E♭ B	E♭	C♯	E♭*	E♭		F♯						
1566[22]	E♭	E♭ B	E♭	C♯	E♭	E♭	C♯	F♯						

* 1536[8], bar 54: in the fourth line of the tablature (representing the C-string in the lute) number 5 (= F) should be read as number 3 (= E♭).

Entirely new accidentals (not found in any of the sixteenth-century sources here consulted) have been inserted only in three cases, at bars 13 (cantus, 'mo-[rir]', F♯) and 22 (cantus, 'mi-[ro]', E♭; altus, '[mi-]ro', F♯); they are indicated above the stave with the symbol +.

I have kept the original notation (including the ¢ sign, denoting *alla breve* tactus), with *Mensurstrich* and no bars between staves, in order to render more faithfully its basically 'white', slow-paced character, and to make visible more clearly single note values (without ligatures) as well as rhythmic-melodic figures.

Literary and musical annotations are intended to help the reader follow my analysis. Numbers and letters above the stave (such as 1a, 2B, etc.) signal the beginning of each line in the poetic text (see also the Key to Table 1); vertical lines mark the corresponding caesuras between musical phrases. Letter-notation symbols beneath the stave designate the corresponding sonorities, harmonic progressions and cadences (see also Table 1 and related Key). Cadence resolutions are also highlighted within the musical text by means of arrows (half-tone resolution) and hyphens (step motion or skip in the accompanying voice/s).



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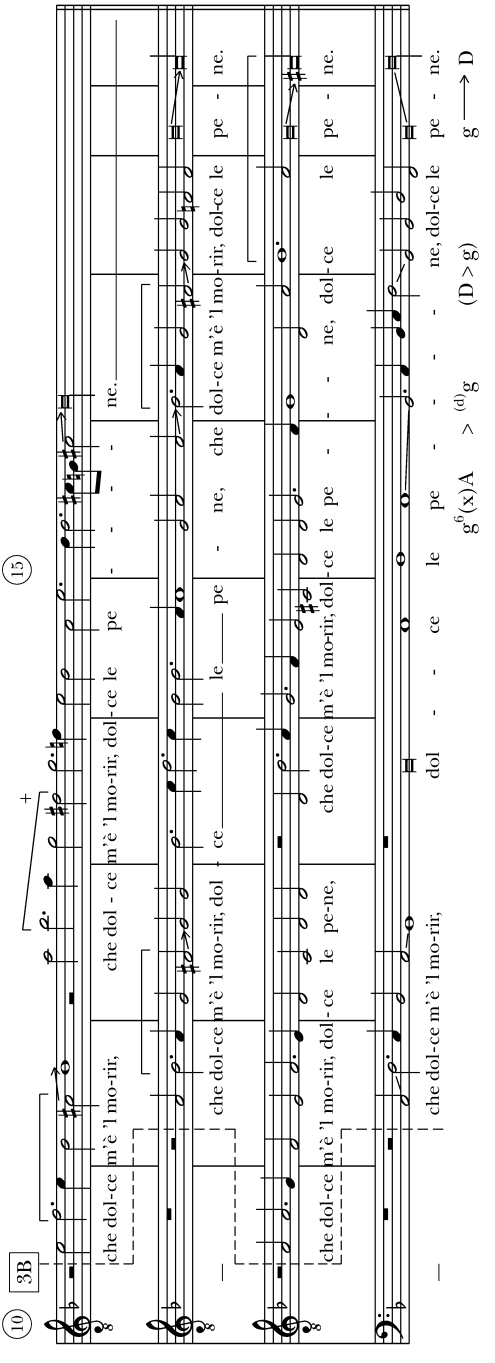

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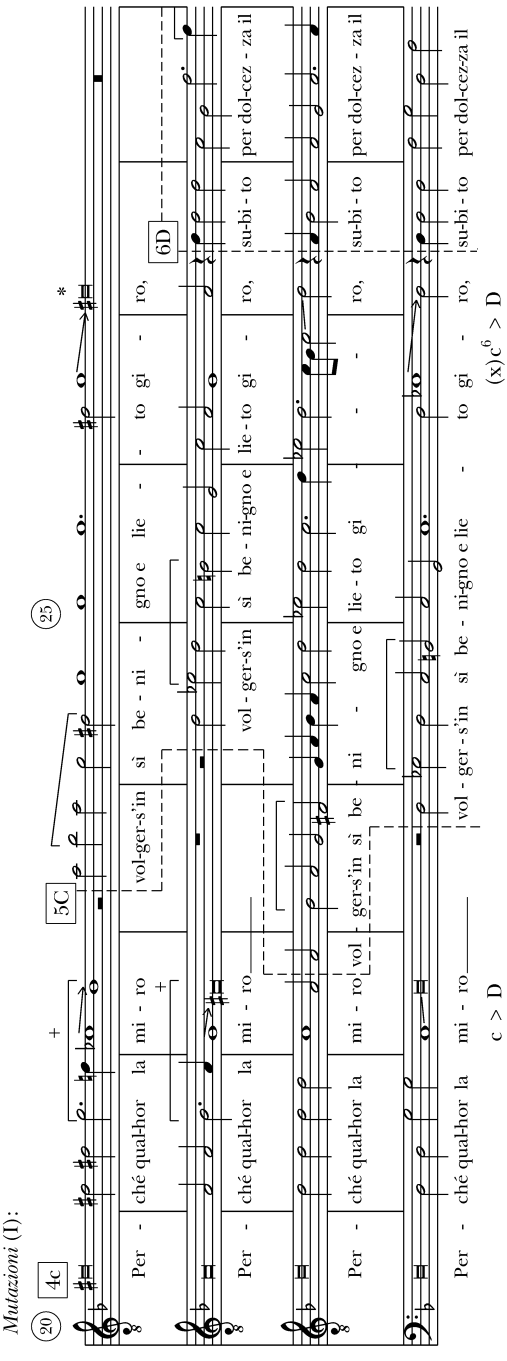

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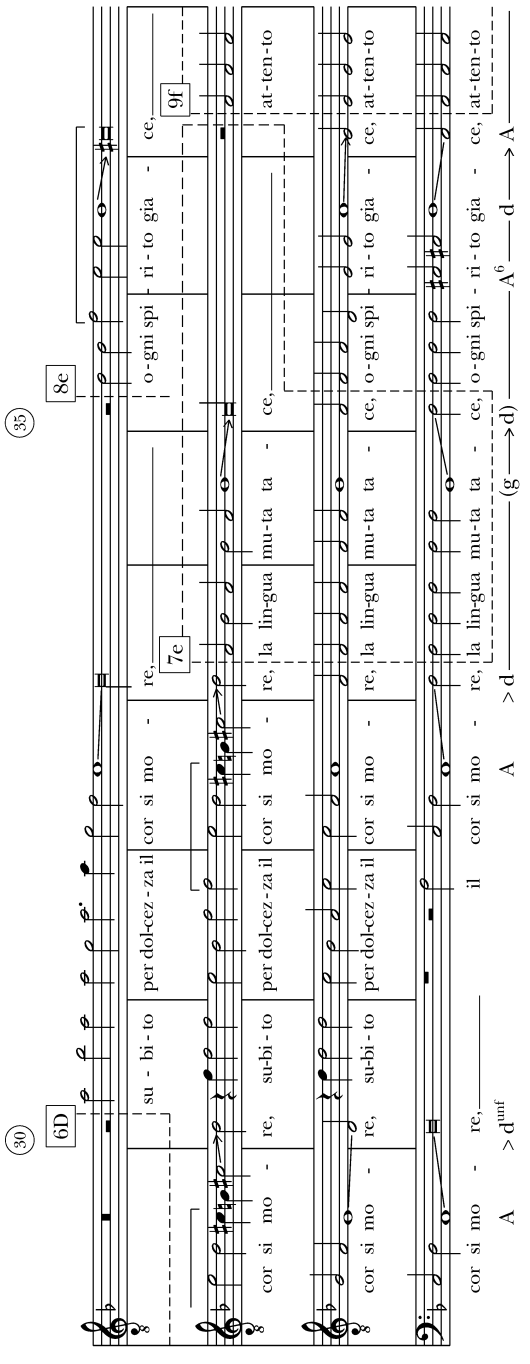

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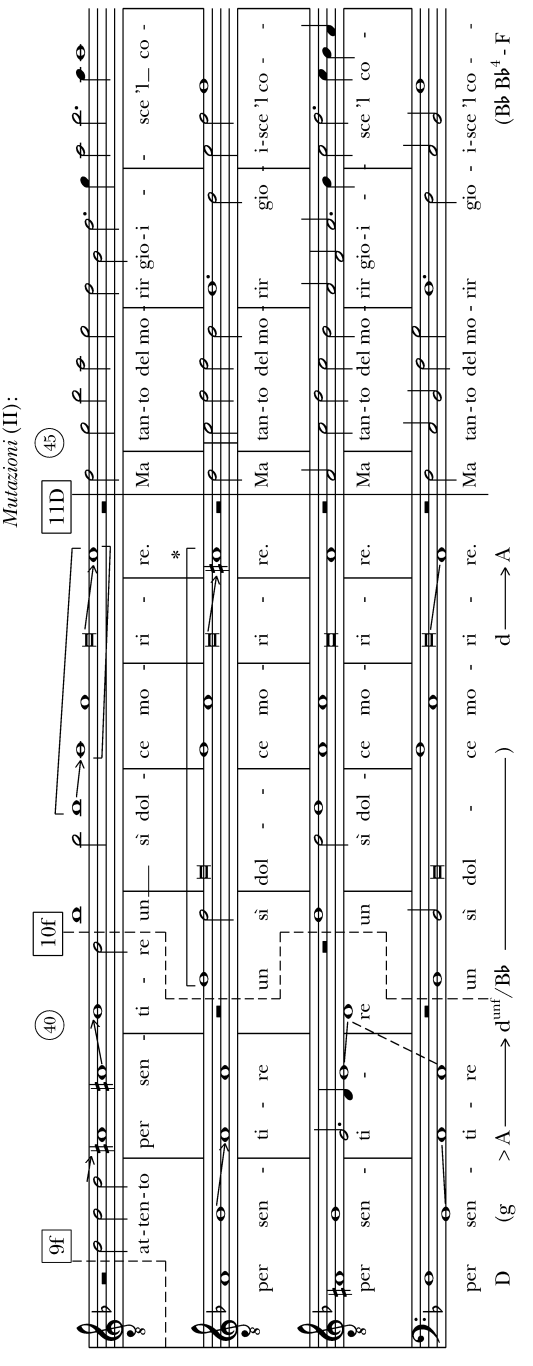

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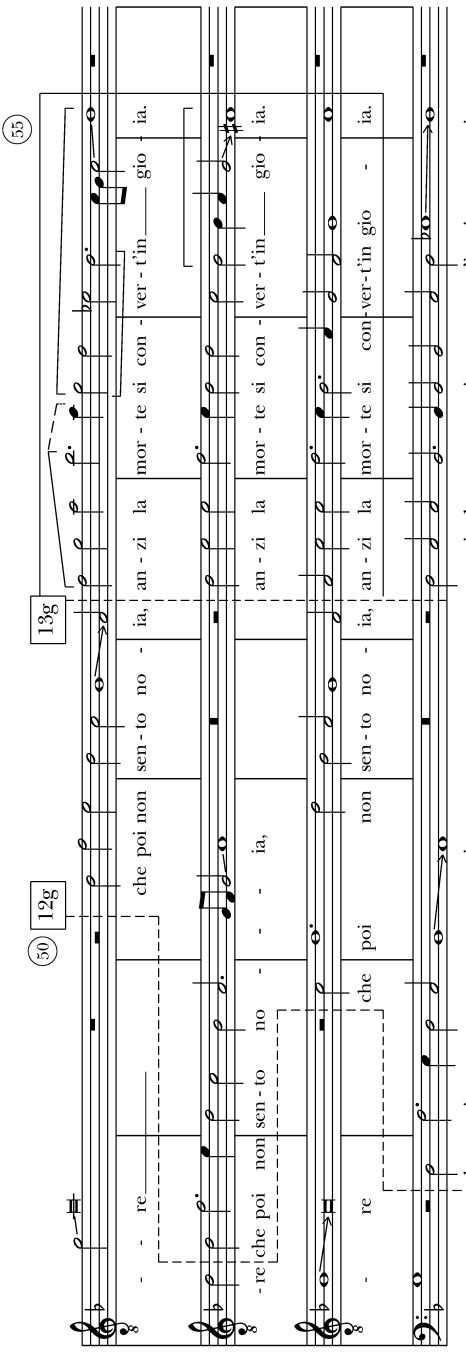

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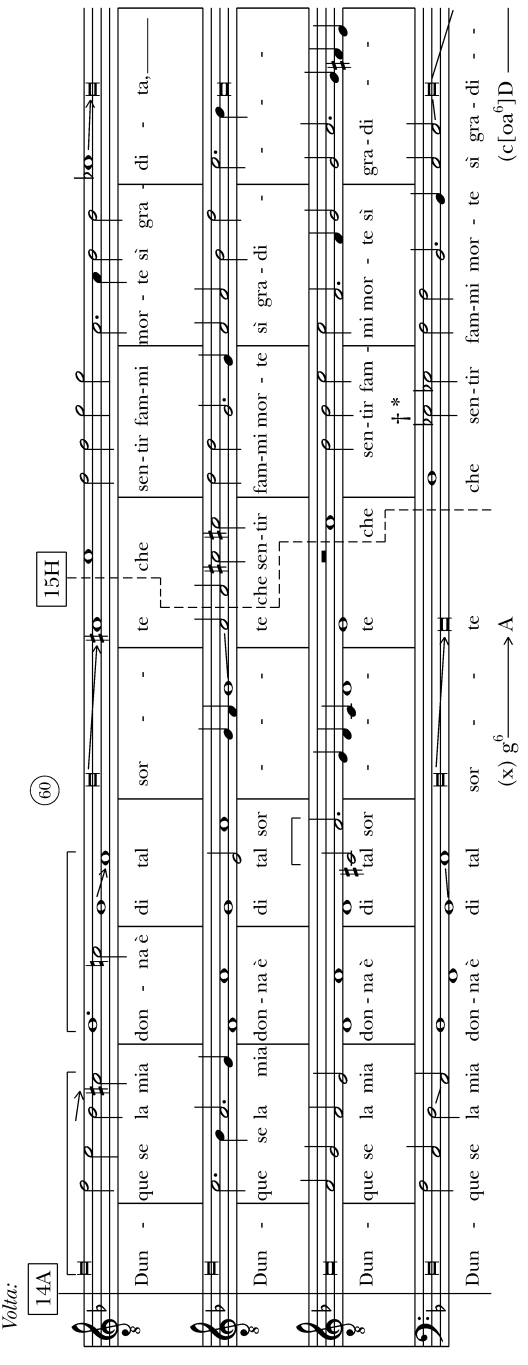

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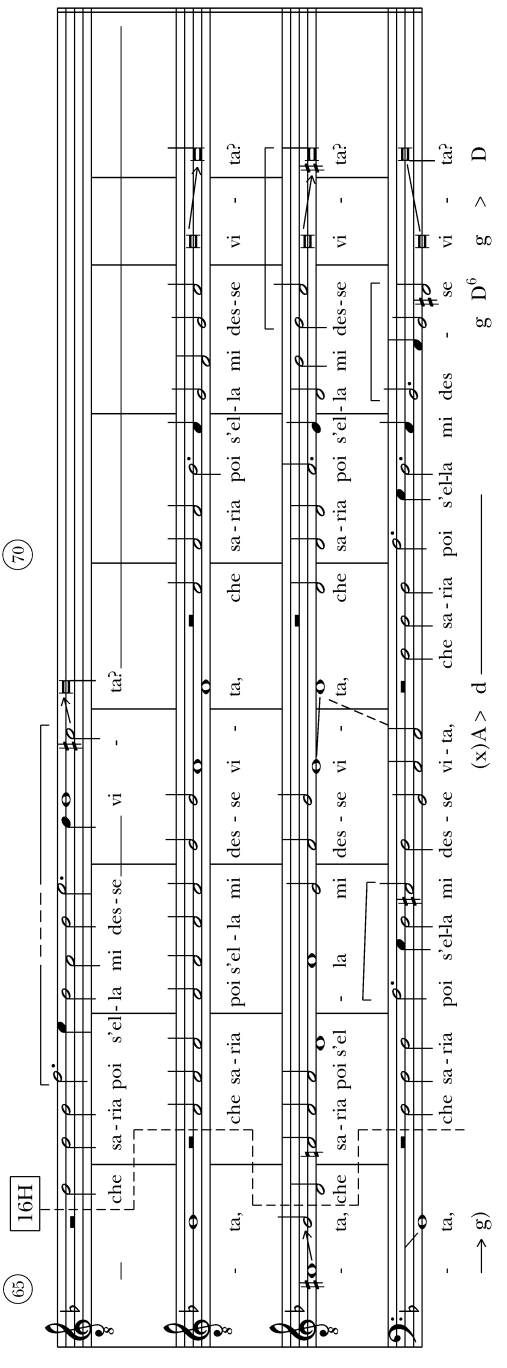

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APPENDIX 3

Verdelot's Use of Cadences in *Sì lieta e grata morte:* Definitions and Examples

I. Authentic Cadence

Equivalent to the modern 'authentic' cadence – but still alien to its tonal and harmonic function V > I – it does not even correspond necessarily to a 'perfect' cadence in the strictly sixteenth-century, Zarlinian sense. What makes a cadence authentic, in fact, is not so much the perfect resolution of the structural voices – into an octave or unison – as two additional factors, which contribute to its positive, syntactic, strongly assertive character:

- The upward motion of the half-step resolution, which can be represented with the symbols 7 > 1 (denoting not yet 'leading-note > tonic' in the modern sense but rather an ascending semitone resolution into the pitch class corresponding to the root of the final triad).
- The fact that the ascending semitone, usually placed in one of the upper voices (as the final part of the so-called *clausula cantizans*) is accompanied in the lowest sounding voice either by the upward skip of a fourth or by the downward skip of a fifth (5–1, *clausula basizans*); a third structural voice – usually in one of the middle voices (but sometimes also in the cantus), never in the lowest voice as in the 'perfect' Zarlinian model – may also accompany the same resolution by downward step (2–1, *clausula tenorizans*).

In the case of *Sì lieta* (cf. Appendix 2 and Table 1), quite significantly, Verdelot adopts only six cadences of this kind (out of 20), and even tends to deprive them of their usual dynamic character and syntactic function. Not only is their occurrence always internal (first setting of both the repeated lines 3B and 16H; lines 6D, 9f, 15H), but their passing resolution is also variously weakened, elided, evaded or even reversed, and never followed by a simultaneous rest in all voices. Moreover, the cadential suspension typical of Zarlino's *cadenza diminuita* (7th–6th, 2nd–3rd or 4th–3rd, usually produced by syncopation in the *clausula cantizans*), is here used only twice (lines 3B and 16H) and in association with two of the weakest cadential caesuras of the whole madrigal (bars 15–16, 68–9): in both cases, in fact, the authentic cadence is first 'announced' by the syncopation in the upper voice and then turned more or less dramatically into a half-cadence; in the former, extreme case (3B, 'pene'), the cadence is first prepared in the most emphatic way (by extended melismatic syncopation in the cantus) and then immediately evaded before the cadential extension (see my detailed description below). All the remaining cadences belong to the 'simple' type (Zarlino's unsuspended *cadenza*

semplice), either perfectly homorhythmic (line 9f) or lightly decorated (lines 6D, 15H).

The presence of all three structural *clausulae* characterises only the first, three-voice authentic cadence (line 6D, 'il cor si more', bar 29: A > d^{unf}) as well as its amplified repetition (bars 32–3: A > d, with use of all four voices): notice the stable permanence, from one phrase to the next, of the *cantizans* and *basizans* in the altus and bassus pair, while the *tenorizans*, first sung by the tenor, is eventually taken up by the cantus and repeated an octave above. This is actually the only instance, albeit repeated, of a full authentic close in the whole madrigal. Only in one other case (line 15H, 'gradita', bars 64–5: D > g) do we find both the *cantizans* and the *basizans* resolutions typical of the authentic type (with no *tenorizans)*, but they are compressed in the two lower voices, and there is no real break between the ending of line 15H ('gradita') and the beginning of line 16H ('che saria'), due to the anticipated entry of cantus and tenor.

In two similar but still weak instances (line 9f, 'sentire', bars 39–40; line 16H, 'vita', bars 68–9), the whole harmonic effect is that of an authentic cadence A > d, even though, at a strictly melodic level, the *clausula basizans* is missing (as in a more commonly Zarlinian kind of 'perfect cadence'): the bassus anticipates its pause, without completing (at least immediately) its expected upward skip of a fourth (A_1–[D_2]), and yet this is implicitly accomplished – and made clearly audible – by the tenor, with its typical downward step motion, E_2–D_2. The feeble character of both these cadences also depends on various other factors:

- bars 39–40: not only does the simultaneous 'evaporation' of altus and bassus cause the resolution of the remaining cantus/tenor pair into a quite empty d-sonority (8/8, with no third and fifth), but the anticipated beginning of the next phrase (line 10f, 'Un sì [dolce]', altus/bassus), has the effect of turning immediately that unfilled d-sonority into a major triad rooted on B flat, causing also the 'elision' of the cadence itself: in other words, the very ending of line 9f (empty d, '[senti-]re') coincides with the beginning of line 10f (B flat, 'un sì [dolce]');
- bars 68–9/ 70–3: the authentic resolution of all voices (confirmed even by the delayed skip of a fourth in the bassus, at the reprise of 'saria') is here comparatively much stronger; and yet the conventional *protractio longae* in the cantus, with cadential extension carried out by the three lower voices, leads inevitably to the inner dissolution of the authentic cadence itself and to its definitive transformation into 'half-cadence' (see my definition below): from A > d to g > D.

An even more dramatic kind of extension, to be sure, is already used to seal the opening *ripresa* section (line 3B, 'che dolce m'è 'l morir, dolce

le pene', bars 15–16/16–19): the *clausula cantizans*, in the cantus, is here resolutely 'evaded' by all the other voices, as in a typical *fuggir la cadenza* (represented with the symbols A > (d)/g); not only is the expected d-sonority immediately avoided and replaced by a G minor triad, but this seems to be asserted by means of a clear authentic cadence (D > g, at 'morir' in the altus, and at '[pe-]ne' in the bassus, bars 16–17) which is in turn reversed into a half-cadence, g > D, identical to the one in the final close.

II. Half-cadence, Plagal Imperfect, Phrygian

These three cadential types, albeit different from one another, are equally characterised by the downward motion of the half-step resolution, which also contributes to their variously negative, suspended, pathetic nature.

Over two-thirds of the cadences used in Verdelot's *Sì lieta* belong to this category (14 out of 20): eight to the Phrygian type, five to the half-cadence type and one to its plagal imperfect variant. Their specific placement in the whole architectural plan of the madrigal, moreover, is always strategic and structurally relevant: three of the four sections of the madrigal (I, II, IV: the framing *ripresa* and *volta* as well as the first *mutazioni*) invariably start with a Phrygian cadence and end with a half-cadence, while the remaining section III (second *mutazioni*) includes Phrygian cadences only. The fact that only the latter type (in five out of eight cases) is further emphasised by cadential suspension – the half and plagal cadences being either 'simple' or lightly decorated – further confirms the special importance given by Verdelot to the pathetic cadence par excellence.

1. Half-cadence

In a half-cadence (equivalent to the homonymous modern type but alien to its I > V harmonic function) the descending semitone – 4 > 3 if referred to the final root-position triad – is in one of the upper voices and is accompanied in the lowest sounding voice either by the downward skip of of a fourth or the upward skip of a fifth. Due to the 'imperfect' resolution of its structural voices, the half-cadence turns out to be the reversed form of the authentic type; if seen from this angle – and thus if referred not to the final but to the starting triad of the cadence – the function of its downward half-step resolution may also be read as 1 > 7 and considered a reversed *clausula cantizans;* the same kind of structural reversal applies to the *basizans* (1–5) and to the optional *tenorizans* (1–2).

Such a structural reversal, or 'cadential chasm', characterises all the half-cadences of *Sì lieta*, in particular both the extremely grave and suspended half-cadence extensions adopted by Verdelot to close respectively

the opening *ripresa* (bars 15–19) and the final *volta* (bars 69–73). In both instances, in fact, an identical half-cadence g > D (with reversed *cantizans* and *basizans* resolutions compressed in the two lower voices) not only weakens and transforms the main suspended authentic cadence A > d (which in the first case is even evaded) but reverses a rather passing but similarly authentic resolution D > g, occurring respectively within the extension itself (bars 16–17, altus/bassus, 'pene'/'morir') and before the extension, at the end of the previous line (bars 64–5, tenor/bassus, 'gradita').

If the three remaining half-cadences (lines 2B, 8e, 10f; 'mi viene', 'giace', 'morire'; bars 8–9, 36–7, 42–4) sound even more pathetic and gloomy, this depends also on the downward motion of the *clausula basizans*, and on the consequent parallel descent of all (or almost all) voices. The same, quite slow-paced half-cadence d > A is here repeated with just a few variants: both the structural *clausulae* are always given at the same pitch-level (D_2–A_1 in the bassus, D_3 > $C\sharp_3$ either in altus or cantus), as well as the rather neutral *altizans* (variously ending into A_2 either in tenor or altus, evaporated in the case of line 8f); what changes is merely the placement of the additional semitone common to the plagal and half-cadence types (F_3 > E_3, cantus: lines 2B and 10f vs. F_2 > E_2, tenor: line 8e). Notice, in the first and third instances (lines 2B and 10f), how the same closing formula of a descending diminished fifth ($B\flat_3$ > A_3–G_3–F_3 > E_3 in the Cantus) is carefully applied to quite different words, concepts and – therefore – note values: a fluent melismatic gesture at 'viene' (bars 8–9), whose initial Phrygian flavour ($B\flat_3$ > A_3) is underscored by the ascending step resolution in the tenor (G_2–A_2); a syllabic, rather slow and heavy series of four semibreves and a breve at 'dolce morire' (bars 41–4), with static repeat of A_2 in the tenor ('[mo] rire').

2. Plagal imperfect cadence

What I call a plagal imperfect cadence (to be distinguished from a 'plagal perfect' cadence) differs from a half-cadence in the more feeble quality of its resolution and the minor quality of both its starting and ending root-position triads: the downward half-step motion (6 > 5), in fact, does not lead from octave or unison to an imperfect consonance (as in a half-cadence), but rather connects an imperfect consonance (usually a third or tenth) to a fifth.

In *Sì lieta* the plagal imperfect cadence occurs only once, and just in passing, to underscore the lover's symptomatic loss of speech (line 7e, 'la lingua muta tace', bars 33–5). Quite significantly, this is the only line in the whole madrigal that is not declaimed by the cantus; compressed below its prolonged D_3 (at '[mo-]re', the final syllable of the previous line), the

static choral recitative of the three lower voices (with repeated d minor triad at 'la lingua muta') is only temporarily marked by the most feeble and 'silent' cadence in the whole setting (at 'tace'): the downward half-step resolution in the altus does nothing but repeat for the last time, with augmented values, the same $B\flat_2 > A_2$ gesture that has already been obsessively reiterated at the words 'lingua muta'; the descending semitone in the altus is accompanied by the upward skip of a fifth in the bassus, G_1–D_2, while the tenor steps down from G_2 to $F\sharp_2$ (not to $F\sharp_2$ as in a half-cadence), and the cantus literally *tacet* (i.e. interrupts its upper D_3 pedal point, at the strong beat of bar 35).

Notice the close similarity between the whole setting of line 7e and both the cadential extensions that close the opening and the final sections of the madrigal (lines 3B, 16H, bars 15–19, 68–73): what makes the difference is the very adoption of plagal instead of half-cadence resolution, in the context of a fairly static 'choral recitative' writing; all this is clearly dictated not only by syntactic and rhetorical needs but also, and above all, by precise expressive purposes on Verdelot's part.

3. Phrygian cadence

In a Phrygian cadence, the descending semitone (*clausula tenorizans*, 2 > 1 if referred to the final triad) is usually in the lowest voice, sometimes also in one of the upper voices, and is always accompanied by upward-step motion in the other structural voice (*clausula cantizans*), with consequent 'perfect' resolution. If considered as a sort of variant of the half-cadence (and similarly related to its authentic model), the function of its downward half-step resolution may also be read as 6 > 5 (without losing its identity as *clausula tenorizans*).

Its primary role in *Sì lieta* goes beyond the simple numerical data (8 cadences out of 20 are Phrygian) and is evident at every single level. Each section of the madrigal invariably starts with a Phrygian cadence, and section III (the second *mutazioni)* includes only cadences of this type. Its constant recurrence contributes decisively to the melancholic, self-complacent, *voluptas dolendi* tone of the whole setting.

Last but not least, this is the only cadential model that even plays a consistent metric and prosodic function: its almost identical repetition further underscores the consonance between both the 4c/5C rhyming couplets ('miro' / 'giro' = c > D / c^6 > D, bars 22, 26–7) and the quite distant but still rhyming 1a/14A lines ('morte' / 'sorte' = g > A / g^6 > A, bars 4–5, 60–1). In both cases the progression from seven-syllable to eleven-syllable line – i.e., in Bembo's terms, from 'piacevolezza' to 'gravità' – corresponds to the progression from a relatively pleasant and light to a rather grave and solemn form of Phrygian cadence: the *tenorizans*

downward half-step resolution is placed at first in one of the upper parts (respectively altus at 'morte', and cantus at 'miro': bars 4–5, 22), later in the bassus (at 'sorte' and 'giro', bars 60–1, 26–7); moreover, the *cantizans* upward-step motion, at first plainly stated in the bassus as in a 'simple' kind of cadence (at 'morte' and 'miro', bars 4–5, 22), is later reinforced by means of cadential suspension and placed in one of the inner voices (respectively altus at 'sorte', and tenor at 'giro', bars 60–1, 26–7). In the case of lines 1a/14A, the metric/prosodic and rhetoric/semantic functions are indissolubly related, as the return of the same Phrygian cadence onto A signals quite clearly the return not only of the opening rhyme but also of the main terms of the poetic discourse, first introduced in the incipit.

Three of the four remaining Phrygian cadences, all included in the second *mutazioni* section (lines 11D, 12g, 13G, 'core', 'noia', 'gioia': bars 47–8, 49–50/51–2, 54–5), are characterised by the suspension and perfect resolution of the two structural voices, even though this is accomplished in a progressively stronger fashion. In each case, as in the most classical and fully resolving kind of Phrygian cadence, the syncopated *clausula cantizans* (either in cantus or altus) is placed above the *clausula tenorizans* (either in tenor or bassus). But in the first two instances the 'staggering' of the two vocal pairs (cantus/tenor vs. altus/bassus) has the effect of variously obscuring, weakening and eliding the two-voiced resolution (bars 47–8, 49–50); the resulting gradual 'evaporation' culminates at the end of line 12g ('non sento noia', bars 50–2), where the cantus and tenor voices are left alone, and their expected Phrygian resolution is even evaded (the tenor descends from G_2 to F_2 instead of rising to A_2). In the last case, on the contrary (bars 54–5, 'in gioia'), both the full texture and the homophonic writing are resumed, and all voices participate in the strongest Phrygian cadence in the whole madrigal: $c^6 > D$, almost identical with the previous one at 'lieto giro' (bars 26–7), and similarly meant to underscore by contrast the melancholic nature of that 'joy'; its new strength – justified by obvious syntactic reasons – depends also on the placement of the two structural *clausulae* in the outer voices as well as on the fact that its full resolution is clearly marked by a simultaneous rest of a semibreve in all voices.