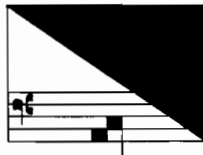


RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

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DAVID CRAWFORD and SCOTT MESSING

GASPAR DE ALBERTIS'
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CHOIRBOOKS
AT BERGAMO



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY
HÄNSSLER-VERLAG

1994

69.906

RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

CHARLES HAMM

General Editor

GASPAR DE ALBERTIS'
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CHOIRBOOKS
AT BERGAMO

PUBLICATIONS OF THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

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Founding Director

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Hänssler-Verlag, D-73762 Neuhausen-Stuttgart,
Order No. 69.906
ISSN 0196-7037
ISBN 3-7751-1820-9

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Preface

Information about the three choirbooks at Bergamo was first announced in 1930 when a local historian, Ciro Caversazzi, published a provisional list of their contents.¹ One manuscript was mentioned by Eduardo Dagnino six years later,² and then two other references to the manuscripts appeared in sources not habitually read by musicologists.³ More widespread musicological attention followed in 1952 when Giovanni d'Alessi used the manuscripts in his article on *coro spezzato*.⁴ Later Knud Jeppesen concentrated upon the works by the leading local musician, Gaspar de Albertis, offering a list of his surviving works as well as some comments on Gaspar's musical style.⁵ He also published a few pieces from the manuscripts.⁶ In 1972 Victor Ravizza turned to the subject, discussing a portrait of Albertis by Giuseppe Belli and adding a rather flawed list of the manuscripts' contents.⁷ In another article of that year he

¹Ciro Caversazzi, "Scoperta di Manoscritti musicali del Secolo XVI," *Bergomum. Bolletino della Civica Biblioteca* IV (1930), 26-33.

²Eduardo Dagnino (ed.), *Costanzo Festa, Sacrae Cantiones in Monumenta Polyphoniae Italicae* II (Rome, 1936), 126.

³G. Pedemonti, "Una gloria musicale italiana e la nostra Bergamo," *Eco di Bergamo* XXI (November, 1942), and Raffaele Casimiri, "Il "coro battente" o "spezzato" fu una novità di Adriano Willaert?" *Bolletino Ceciliano* XXXVIII (1943), 65-69.

⁴Giovanni d'Alessi, "Precursors of Adrian Willaert in the Practice of *Coro Spezzato*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* V (1952), 191-192.

⁵Knud Jeppesen, "A Forgotten Master of the Early 16th Century: Gaspar de Albertis," *The Musical Quarterly* XLIV (1958), 311-328.

⁶Knud Jeppesen (ed.), *Italia Sacra Musica*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen, 1962).

⁷Victor Ravizza, "Gasparo Alberti: Ein wenig bekannter Komponist und dessen Portrait," *Festschrift Arnold Geering zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Victor Ravizza (Bern, 1972), pp. 63-80.

CHAPTER I

THE REPERTOIRE

Our story begins somewhere around the year 1500 when a certain Joannes de Albertis de Padova, a clerk and evidently a pauper, arrived in Bergamo with his young son, Gaspar.¹⁰ The surname "Albertis" was a common one and seems not to yield clues about the history of Gaspar's family. The lad received schooling at Bergamo's church of Santa Maria Maggiore; adulthood found him serving there as a priest, singer, and composer, sometimes also as a music teacher, music copyist, and chapelmaster. From 1544 until 1559 Gaspar de Albertis (born probably 1490, died probably 1560) took on even more duties, the rectorship of the nearby parish church of St. Agatha. Unlike many widely travelled musicians of his day, Gaspar illustrates the career of a churchman "whose childhood education, professional training, major employment, principal creative development, decline, and death all occurred within the same institution."¹¹

The church of Santa Maria Maggiore had been entrusted to a public society, the *Consortio della Misericordia Maggiore, Congregazione di Carità*, since 1449. Commonly called the *Misericordia*, this society was a charity organization whose council included both laymen and clergy. Although this public society directed Santa Maria Maggiore and financed

¹⁰ Documents about Albertis were first published and discussed in Cristoforo Scotti, *Il Pio Istituto Musicale Donizetti in Bergamo*, (Bergamo, 1901). Some of those sources were also transcribed, with better fidelity, in Victor Ravizza, "Gasparo Alberti: Ein wenig bekannter Komponist und dessen Portrait," *Festschrift Arnold Geering zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Victor Ravizza (Bern, 1972), pp. 63-80. Our biographical information, however, relies upon Gary Towne, "Vita quotidiana e carriera di un musicista nella Bergamo del cinquecento: Gaspare de Albertis," *Archivio Storico Bergamasco IV* (1988), 137-161. Mr. Towne generously sent us a copy of his study prior to its publication.

¹¹ Towne, "Vita quotidiana," p. 160.

