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Comunale Classense,  
MS Classense 545**

*Edited by*  
**Alexander Silbiger**



Seventeenth Century Keyboard Music Series

17<sup>th</sup> Century  
Keyboard  
Music

*Sources Central to the Keyboard Art of the Baroque*

*General Editor*  
ALEXANDER SILBIGER  
*Duke University*

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- 3 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hss. 16560, 18706, and 18707 (Froberger autographs)
- 4 Johann Jacob Froberger, *Diverse . . . Partite*, 2 parts (Mainz, Bourgeat, 1693, 1696); *10 Suittes de Clavessin* (Amsterdam, Mortier, n.d.)
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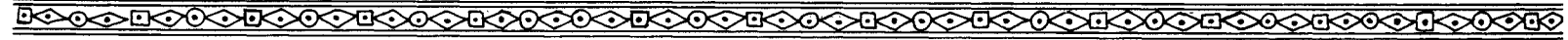
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*Introduction by*

ALEXANDER SILBIGER

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by Giovanni Frescobaldi, Ercole Pasquini, Cesare  
Argentini, Andrea Gabrieli, Antonio Cifra, Tarquinio  
Merula, and other, unidentified, composers.

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# Introduction

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The “Libro di fra Gioseffo da Ravenna” is one of the largest early anthologies of Italian keyboard music: it covers a wide range of styles and genres from the final decades of the sixteenth century to the middle decades of the seventeenth. The great Frescobaldi (1583–1643) is well represented, as is his predecessor at St. Peter’s, Ercole Pasquini (c. 1540–c. 1620)—both with several pieces not found elsewhere. It also includes compositions by Andrea Gabrieli (1510–1586), Antonio Cifra (1584–1629), and Tarquinio Merula (1590–1665), and by a composer otherwise entirely unknown, Cesare Argentino. Most of these works have made their way into various modern editions. However, for over half the pieces in the collection, the composers have not yet been identified, and this anonymous repertory remains unstudied and unpublished.<sup>1</sup>

The volume is bound in parchment; on its spine appears the inscription “Lavori musicali.” There are three front and two back flyleaves and 116 ruled music pages; the pages measure approximately 22.5 × 29.5 cm. The recto of the first flyleaf serves as title page with a handsomely inscribed text and ornately decorated borders: there are no further inscriptions or decorations on the flyleaves. Fra Gioseffo da Ravenna, named on the title page, has been tentatively identified as Giuseppe Rasino, ordained in the order of S. Vitale. He evidently was a native of Ravenna and became abbot

there of the monastery of Classe; his presence in Ravenna can be documented for the years 1634 and 1669 to 1674.<sup>2</sup>

The watermarks of the music pages are of the star-and-crown type, fairly common in Roman papers of the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> An early foliation appears in the upper right hand corners of the recto sides up to f. 103; the remaining folio numbers are modern. The collation is regular and consists of 19 binions. The pages are ruled with five lines in the treble staves and seven lines in the bass staves; although bass staves with seven lines are very common in seventeenth-century Italian keyboard manuscripts, the particular combination of five and seven lines is, to my knowledge, unique to this manuscript.<sup>4</sup>

All the music appears to have been entered by the same copyist. However, on a number of pages scattered throughout the manuscript the hand shows some anomalous features, most notably in the formation of the C clefs. The first example can be seen on f. 4; the variant clefs seem to be drawn with only four rather than six independent strokes. To distinguish these variant clefs from the more common type, we shall call them “type-B clefs”; as will be shown shortly, they appear to represent a later chronological layer in the compilation of the manuscript. A further peculiarity is that many gatherings are not completely filled; often one or more final page (or sometimes just the lower system of a

final page) were left blank. Such is the case with more than a third of the gatherings. This suggests that the music was entered in the individual fascicles before they were bound together. Furthermore, almost all entries using type-B clefs appear on the final pages of gatherings.

The hypothesis that these entries represent later additions appears to be confirmed by the manner in which the different genres are distributed over the manuscript. As can be seen from the table of contents, pieces in the same genre are generally grouped together, but some pieces are placed out of order. For example, a Kyrie setting (no. 4) shows up in the middle of the group of toccatas, and a canzona (no. 46) appears among the dances rather than with the other canzonas. All such “out of order” pieces are among those entered on the final pages of gatherings with type-B clefs. From these observations one can deduce the probable history of the compilation of the manuscript. It must have been the intention at the outset to create a collection in which the pieces were ordered by genre, whether for educational purposes (since it would facilitate the study of a genre) or for practical reasons (since it would allow the quick location of a piece of a certain type, as might be needed, say, when playing a service). However, at any one time the copyist may have had access (through loans or visits to collections) to only a limited number of sources, and these sources may have included pieces in a variety of genres. Since at this point he did not know yet how many pages would be needed eventually for a particular genre, he copied the pieces of each genre on separate unbound fascicles and left the remaining pages of those fascicles blank (to be used, if needed, for future additions). When his task was regarded as substantially completed, the fascicles were bound together according to the following, more or less traditional, genre ordering:<sup>5</sup>

TOCCATAS: Gatherings 1–3 (ff. 1–12v)

RECERCARES: Gatherings 4–5 (ff. 13–20v)

CAPRICCIOS: Gatherings 7–11 (ff. 22–44v)<sup>6</sup>

CANZONAS: Gatherings 12–19 (ff. 45–76v)

DANCES AND ARIAS: Gatherings 20–29 (ff. 77–116v)

The last category includes variation settings of popular songs and basses,<sup>7</sup> and incorporates a subgroup of correnti (nos. 41–45). At some later point (at which time he had changed his C clef to the more efficient type B) he decided to copy some additional pieces. Some of these were added to the genre groups to which they belong (e.g., nos. 54–55), but most were simply entered on remaining blank pages, regardless of location. These added pieces appear on f. 4 (Kirie), f. 19v (Ricercare),<sup>8</sup> f. 58v (Cappellina), f. 80 (Toccatà), f. 82 (Romena), f. 89v (Canzon), f. 96v (Barriera), f. 110 (Romanesca), and f. 110v ([Gagliarda]).

The title page with its list of composers was probably not added until after the manuscript was completed, since the copyist was unlikely to know in advance which composers were going to be represented in the collection. In fact, it looks as though someone leafed through the manuscript and picked up some names from the attributions (but missed others, i.e., Cifra and Merula). The addition of “Incert’Autore” is curious; evidently the person preparing the title page did not know the identities of the composers responsible for the anonymous pieces.<sup>9</sup> It seems likely that the manuscript was not copied by Giuseppe Rasino (since otherwise he might have known more about the sources of the pieces), but was acquired by him after it was completed, at which point the title page was added. Evidently, Rasino was a collector; another manuscript—this one containing early sixteenth-century repertory—bears his name.<sup>10</sup> Incidentally, formal title pages are rarely found in seventeenth-century Italian keyboard manuscripts, probably because most manuscripts were compiled for practical use rather than for collectors; I know of no other example executed with such care.

The care expended on the title page, in fact, forms a marked contrast with that exercised by the music copyist. The latter seems to have worked rather hastily and his text contains more than the usual number of errors and omissions. Particularly common are transposition errors of a third, suggesting that his exemplars were notated in different clefs or used different staff systems (e.g., six rather than five lines in the treble staves). Often such transposition errors were subsequently corrected by the placement of the number "3" above or below the passage; in other passages a correct version was added without removal of the incorrect pitches, resulting in some rather strange-looking progressions.<sup>11</sup> Also common are vertical misalignments of voices (perhaps the consequence of copying from open scores or partbooks of ensemble compositions), errors in the number of beams or flags of short note values, and omissions of accidentals. The reader of these pieces needs to be alert to all such errors and often will have to guess at the intended readings.

Of the fifty-nine pieces in the manuscript, twenty-two are provided with attributions: eleven to Hercole Pasquini (or to H.P.), eight to Girolamo Frescobaldi (or to G. F), and one each to Cesare Argentino, Cifra, and Tarquinio Merula; seven of these attributed pieces are known from other sources. Of the thirty-seven pieces left without attributions, three appear in other sources: two are by Frescobaldi and the third is by Andrea Gabrieli. Hence a total of ten pieces have concordances in other sources; for two of these sources the concordances appear in manuscripts, for eight in prints. While the concordant versions in manuscripts provide markedly different readings (furthermore, one has a conflicting attribution and the other extends only over a segment of the piece—see the comments on nos. 45 and 49), the concordant versions in the prints correspond rather closely. The attributions, when given, are identical and the printed texts appear in their entirety in the manuscript (ex-

cept in the case of no. 54—see the comments on that piece). To be sure, there are in almost every instance small differences, usually omissions in the manuscript of segments of inner voices or trivial notational changes, such as the beaming together of eighth notes or the replacement of tied notes by an equivalent single note value. Only in Gabrieli's toccata (no. 5) are there a few variants in which the manuscript version appears more correct or complete than the printed version.

One would, of course, like to know whether the manuscript versions were in fact derived—directly or through intermediate sources—from the printed versions. For, if such were the case, the publication dates of the prints would provide earliest possible dates for the manuscript copies. If, on the other hand, the manuscript version were not transmitted via the print, there is the interesting possibility that some of its variant readings represent earlier (or, less likely, later) versions stemming from the composer. However, the possible dependence of the manuscript copy on the printed version would need to be examined for each piece individually through detailed comparative analyses of texts and notational features, and such an undertaking falls outside the scope of this introduction. Nevertheless, a cursory examination suggests, at least for the Frescobaldi pieces, that a direct dependence on the prints is highly probable.<sup>12</sup>

The identifiable composers in the manuscript cover an appreciable time span, from Gabrieli, who died in 1586, to Merula, active well past the middle of the next century. The stylistic diversity of the anonymous pieces suggests that they also were written over a prolonged period of time. Some, such as the *ricercare*s nos. 10 and 12, appear to date back to the sixteenth century. Others show the impact of Frescobaldi's innovations of the 1620s and 1630s, for example, the *ciaccona*, no. 59, a genre apparently introduced to the keyboard repertory by his *Second Book of Toccatas* of 1627, and the curious "*Cappellina*," no. 26, in E minor with

D-sharp leading tones; the first datable examples of this key appear in the 1637 supplement—the “Aggiunta”—to his First Book of Toccatas.<sup>13</sup> Several passages in this piece suggest, in fact, that its composer was familiar with the E-minor dances in the 1637 “Aggiunta.”

As was observed in my earlier study on the manuscript, a number of pieces show closer kinship to the North-Italian tradition represented by Merula than to the Roman tradition represented by Frescobaldi; characteristics of this Northern tradition include extended chains of sequences, strings of repeated notes, and octave leaps.<sup>14</sup> Some of these pieces, in particular the toccata, no. 2, with its many long suspension chains, hardly seem to belong to the first half of the seventeenth century; they bring to mind the keyboard music of Kerll. However, little North-Italian keyboard music survives from the 1630s and 1640s, and some of these “modern” features may well have been introduced earlier than can now be determined. Hence, with regard to the date of the manuscript, one can only conclude that it was compiled *at the earliest* during the years 1630–1640.

A further examination of this interesting anonymous re-

pertory will have to await future detailed studies of the manuscript (which this facsimile edition will facilitate and, one hopes, encourage). Since some pieces that lack attributions are in fact by composers named elsewhere in the manuscript, it is quite possible that other anonymous pieces are the work of some of these composers. This intriguing possibility will also not be pursued here, except for drawing attention to one potential prospect: the anonymous corrente, no. 44, which shows a remarkable resemblance to the two preceding correnti—both known to be by Frescobaldi. Still, without corroboration from other sources, one cannot discount the possibility that someone else wrote it in imitation of Frescobaldi’s correnti. Finally, stylistic comparisons may also lead to questions regarding the reliability of some of the attributions provided in the manuscript. In my earlier study, I expressed skepticism regarding the authenticity of the three pieces assigned to Frescobaldi, none of which appears in any other source (nos. 19, 20, and 27). The conception of those works appears altogether foreign to Frescobaldi: in fact, they show every sign of belonging to the Northern tradition described earlier.<sup>15</sup>

## NOTES

1. The manuscript has received brief note in various studies and editions of the keyboard music of Frescobaldi, Pasquini, and Merula; the only discussion of any length appears in Alexander Silbiger, *Italian Manuscript Sources of Seventeenth-Century Keyboard Music* (Ann Arbor, 1980), 111–12.

2. Silbiger, *Sources*, 111–12.

3. See, for example, Heywood No. 1120 (Rome, 1618); this mark also appears in several of the keyboard manuscripts in the Chigi collection—see Volume 15 of this set.

4. On staff rulings in Italian keyboard manuscripts, see Silbiger, *Sources*, 20–21, 23.

5. On the traditional genre ordering in Italian keyboard sources, see Silbiger, *Sources*, 45.

6. The first piece in the sixth gathering (no. 13), although here grouped with capriccios, is of a special type, designated by Frescobaldi as “toccata per la levatione.” The ninth and tenth gatherings both end with a canzona; perhaps the copyist felt that the distinction between the two genres was not a significant one, and, in fact, the two types are in practice often virtually identical.

7. See "Settings of Traditional Arie, Balli, and Tenori," Silbiger, *Sources*, 39–41.

8. Although no. 6 is called "Ricericare" in this manuscript, it is of a type usually called *Durezza e ligature*, and sometimes also designated as a toccata or capriccio.

9. The phrase may have been prompted by the heading of no. 25, "D'Incerto"; however, this heading itself is curious, since the collection contains so many other anonymous pieces, which are not noted thus.

10. Silbiger, *Sources*, 111.

11. An extreme example can be seen on f. 21, third half-note beat of the second measure; of the four pitches in the "chord" of the left hand, all but the lowest are incorrect and should have been removed.

12. It has been suggested that contemporary copies from Frescobaldi's publications must have been extremely rare, since the original editions were easily available; see Etienne Darbellay, "I manoscritti Chigi Q.IV.24 e Q.VIII.205/206 come fonti frescobaldiani: criteri filologici di autenticità." *Girolamo Frescobaldi nel IV centenario della nascita*, Sergio Durante and Dinko Fabris, eds. (Florence, 1986), 121. However, even if musicians could have afforded to buy these editions, they may still have found it convenient to have copies of certain pieces available in their own music books; in certain circles the practice of making manuscript copies from printed editions survived until the recent advent of photocopying.

13. See Darbellay, "Manoscritti," 113.

14. Silbiger, *Sources*, 35, 112.

15. Silbiger, *Sources*, 159–60.

## MODERN EDITIONS

Antonio Cifra. *Ricercari e Canzoni francesi (1619)*. Edited by Francesco Luisi and Giancarlo Rostiròlla. *Concentus Musicus, Veröffentlichungen der musikgeschichtlichen Abteilung des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom*, vol. 6. Cologne, 1981. [Includes mod. ed. of no. 23.]

Girolamo Diruta. *Il Transilvano*. Edited by Tamàs Zàszkaliczky, Andras Pernye, and Ö. Szabolcs Barlay. *Musica per la tastiera*, vol. 3. Budapest, 1981. [Includes mod. ed. of no. 5.]

Girolamo Frescobaldi. *Keyboard Compositions Preserved in Manuscript*. Edited by W. Richard Shindle. *Corpus of Early Keyboard Works*, vol. 30. Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1968. [Includes mod. eds. of nos. 19, 20, 27, 28.]

Girolamo Frescobaldi. *Opere complete II: Il primo libro di toccate d'intavolatura di cembalo e organo. 1615–1637*. Edited by Etienne Darbellay. *Monumenti musicali italiani*, vol. 4. Milan, 1977. [Includes mod. eds. of nos. 42, 43, 54.]

Girolamo Frescobaldi. *Opere complete III: Il secondo libro di toccate d'intavolatura di cembalo e organo, 1627–1637*. Edited by Etienne Darbellay. *Monumenti musicali italiani*, vol. 5. Milan, 1979. [Includes mod. eds. of nos. 46, 55.]

Girolamo Frescobaldi. *Opere complete IV: Il primo libro di capricci fatti sopra diversi soggetti e arie, 1624*. Edited by Etienne Darbellay. *Monumenti musicali italiani*, vol. 7. Milan, 1984. [Includes mod. eds. of nos. 14, 15.]

Tarquino Merula. *Composizioni per organo e cembalo*. Edited by Alan Curtis. *Monumenta di musica italiana*, vol. 1. Brescia/Kassel, 1961. [Includes mod. ed. of no. 33.]

Ercole Pasquini. *Collected Keyboard Works*. Edited by W. Richard Shindle. *Corpus of Early Keyboard Works*, vol. 12. Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1966. [Includes mod. eds. of nos. 2, 32, 35–37, 40, 45, 49, 50, 53, 56.]

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### COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL PIECES

No. 5. Published in Girolamo Diruta, *Il Transilvano* (Venice, 1593), 19, where it is attributed to Andrea Gabrieli.

Nos. 14–15. Published in Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Il primo libro di capricci* (Venice, 1624), 23 and 63.

No. 23. Published in Antonio Cifra Romano, *Ricercari et canzoni francese* (Rome, 1619), 47.

No. 26. This curious piece appears, in fact, to consist of a sequence of dances in contrasting meters; it has no evident connection with

a canzona “La Cappellina” in Merula’s *Quarto Libro delle canzoni* (Venice, 1651).

No. 29. The annotation under the first system of f. 66 instructs the performer to insert between the last two measures of this system the first part of the canzona up to the last measure of the first system of f. 65 (marked by the two pointing hands).

No. 32. The opening subject is identical to that of a canzona by Pasquini known from several other sources (No. 16 in Shindle’s edition); there are, however, no further correspondences between the two pieces.

No. 33. The opening subject is almost identical with that of Merula’s Canzona “La Lugarina” for two violins and bass in his *Quarto libro delle canzoni* (Venice, 1651), 46.

Nos. 36–37. Variations over an unidentified bass progression (G–C–F–D–B-flat–F–cadence to G, etc.).

Nos. 42–43. Published in Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Toccate e partite d’intavolatura* (Rome, 1616), 66–67.

No. 45. Concordances in *I-Rvat* Chigi Q.VIII.205, f. 79 (anon.)

and in *I-Rdp* MS 250B, f. 33v (Sig. Girolamo [Frescobaldi?]): see Volume 15/6 of this set.

No. 46. Published in Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Il secondo libro di toccate* (Rome, 1627), 46.

No. 49. Variant versions of the first two variations—but not the third—appear anonymously in the Feininger MS (see Volume 16 of this set), where they are followed by two additional variations, not present here (see also Silbiger, *Sources*, 54–55).

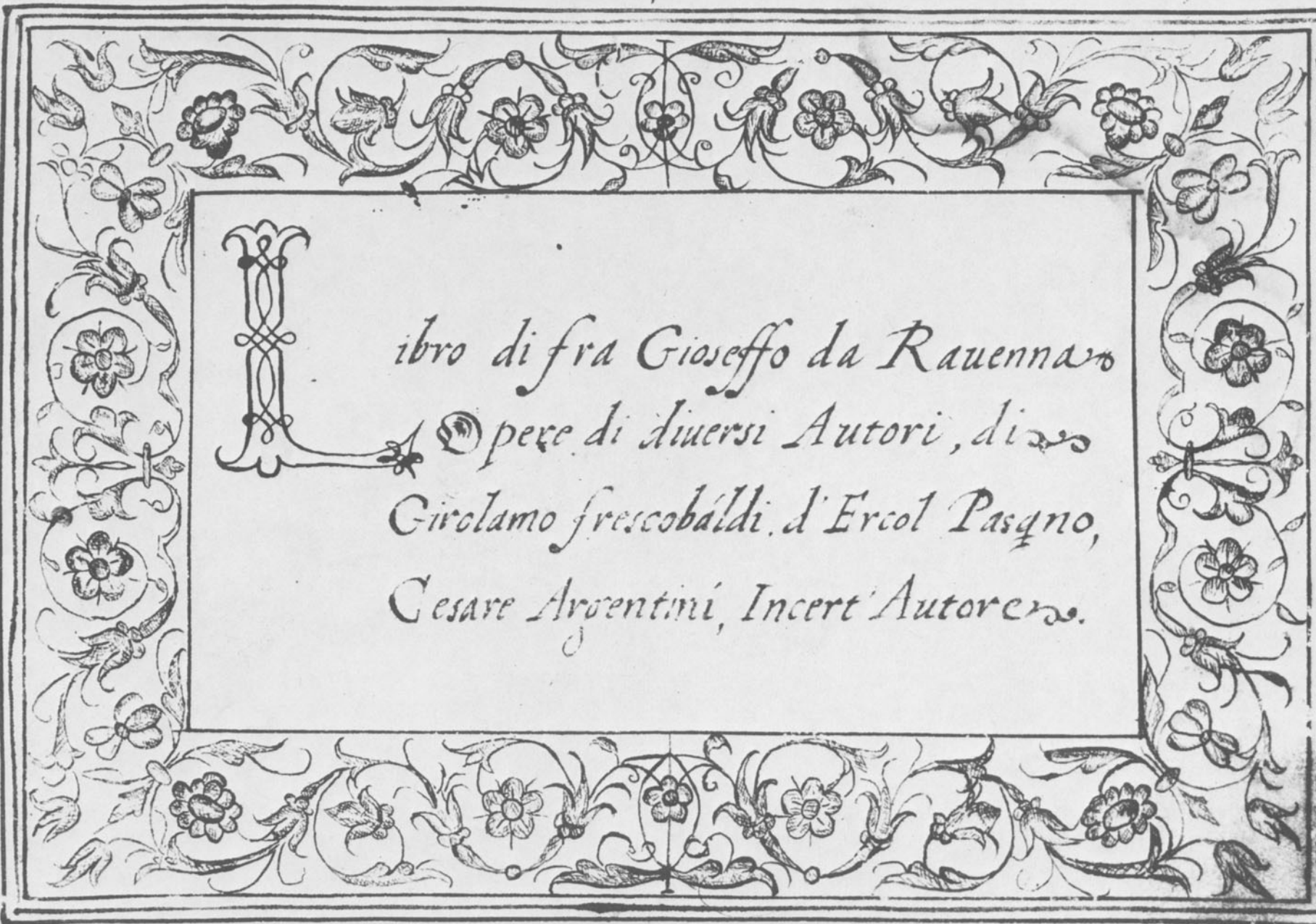
No. 53. The original heading, “Gagliarda,” was crossed out; the piece is, in fact, a setting of a variant in triple meter of the Romanesca, which in *I-Bc* MS Q 34, f. 91 is called “Romanesca in Gagliarda” (on this manuscript, which includes skeletal basses of popular *arie* and *balli*, see Silbiger, *Sources*, 99).

No. 54. Published in Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Toccate e partite d’intavolatura* (Rome, 1615), 41. Only the first of the twelve *partite* is copied here.

No. 55. Published in Girolamo Frescobaldi, *Il secondo libro di toccate* (Rome, 1627), 77.

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*Suppl. alla stanza 102. C. 12. l. 11. a*

A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine motif, featuring stylized flowers and leaves, framing the central text.

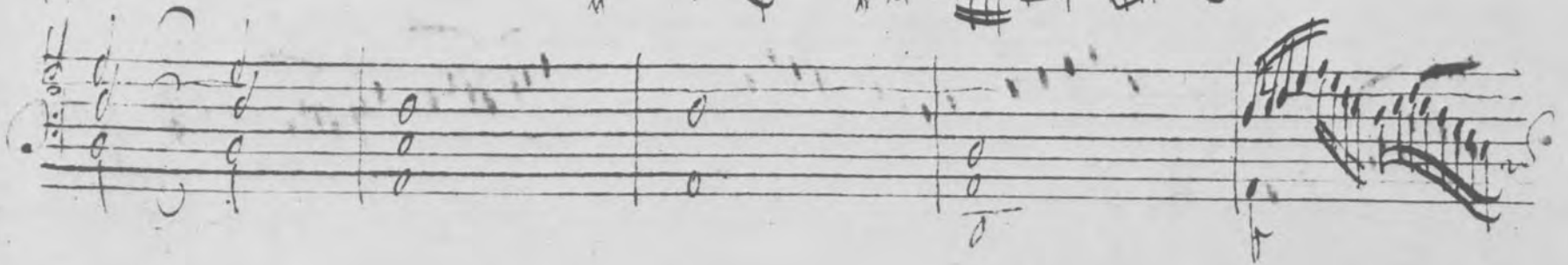
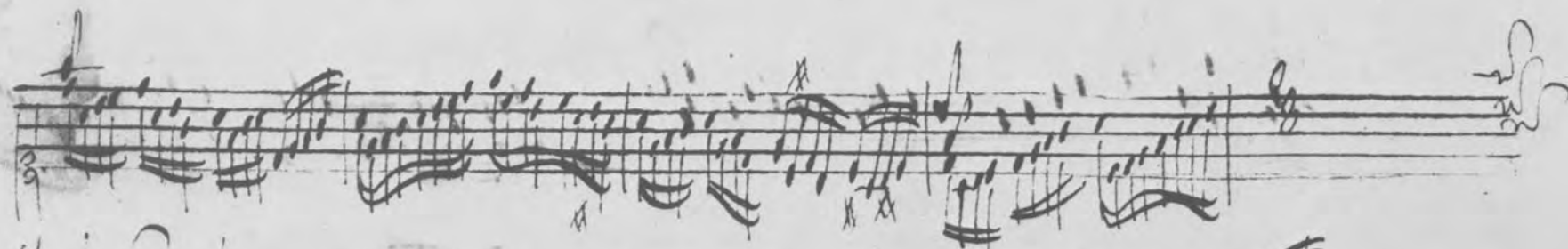
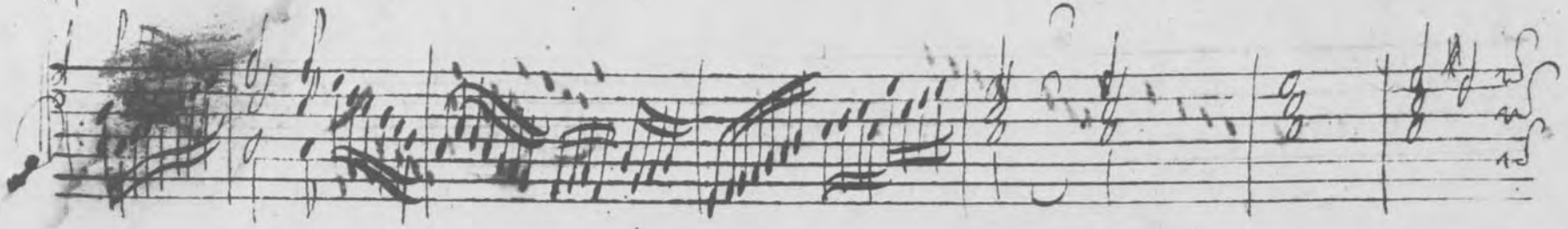
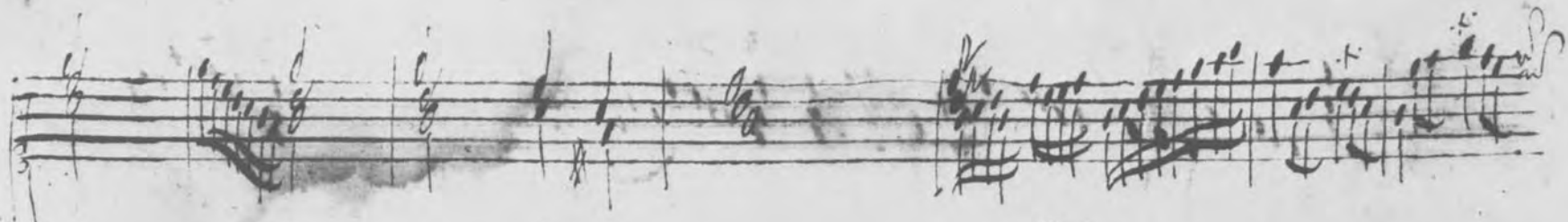
**L**ibro di fra Gioseffo da Rauenna  
Opere di diuersi Autori, di  
Girolamo frescobaldi, d'Ercol Pasqno,  
Cesare Argentini, Incert' Autore.

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Coro alla

A handwritten musical score consisting of four staves. The notation is dense and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and clefs. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The second staff starts with a bass clef and contains some markings that appear to be 'm' and 'a'. The third and fourth staves continue the musical notation. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and a dark, irregular mark on the right side.





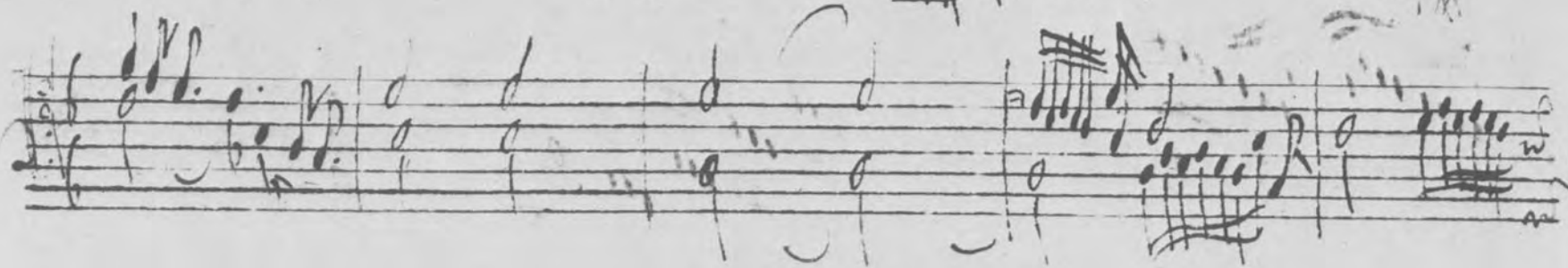
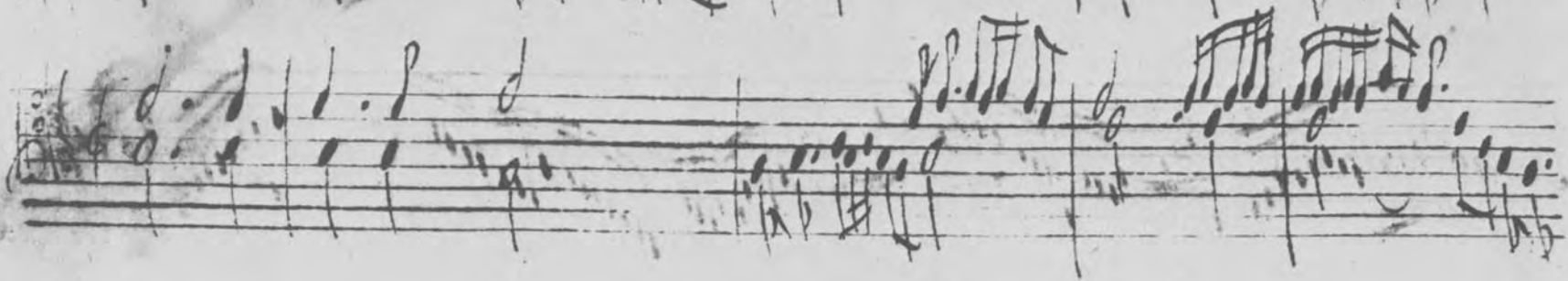
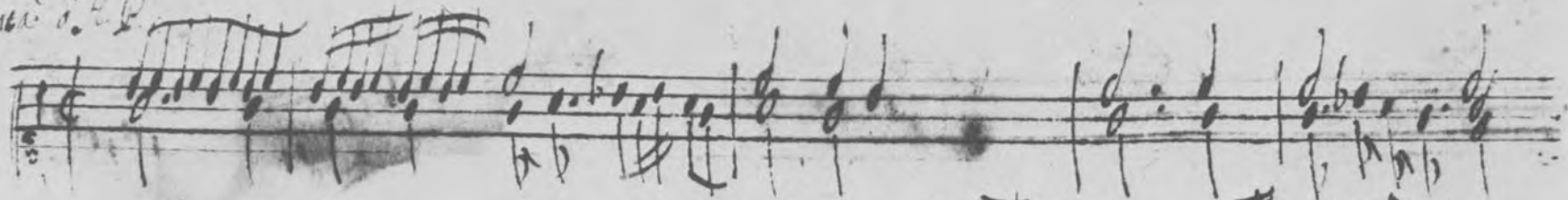
Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

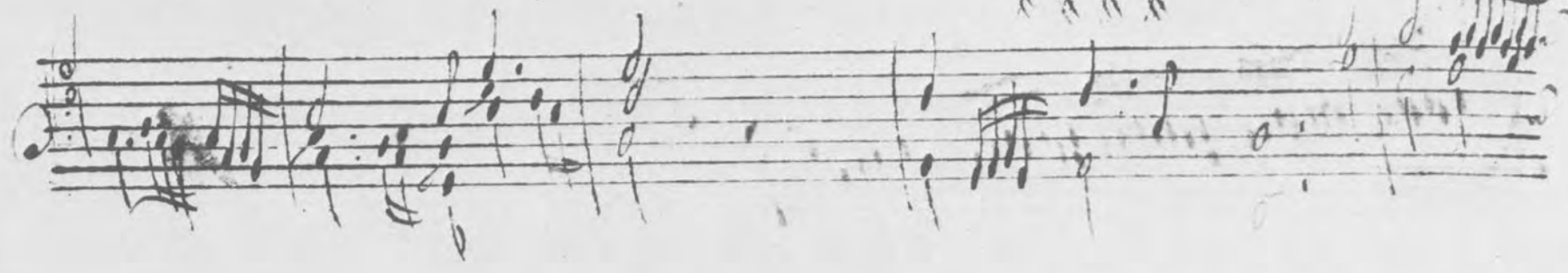
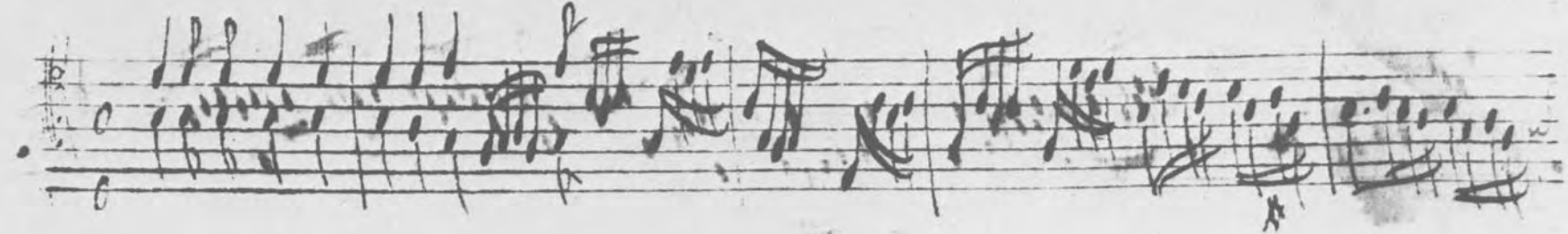
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Handwritten musical notation on a five-line staff. It begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a fermata.

Allegretto & C. P.







Kirie do

This image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a piece titled "Kirie do". The page is numbered "4" in the upper right corner. The music is written on four staves, each with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation is dense and somewhat obscured by dark ink smudges, particularly in the upper right and lower right areas. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The third and fourth staves continue the melodic line with various rhythmic values and ornaments. The handwriting is characteristic of an 18th or 19th-century manuscript.

