

People and Places in a (Music) Source. A Case Study of Giuseppe Michele Stratico and His Theoretical Treatises (Croatian Writers on Music and Transfer of Ideas in Their New Environments)

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Taking into consideration a particular (music) source means to have in mind the various interpretative aspects that it offers. It is a sort of (hi)story that can be told about a source itself, its author, context, connections, etc., based on research.

In this paper, I would like to propose a story/case study of Giuseppe Michele Stratico, a composer, violinist and writer on music from the 18th century.¹ Considering that the analytical work on Giuseppe Michele Stratico's theoretical treatises is still a work in progress, the conclusions in my article shall not be final.

There is not much literature on Stratico. Valuable sources are an article on his biography by Zdravko Blažeković (1990),² doctoral theses on his compositions by Michael Thomas Roeder³ and Francia Fitch Mann,⁴ an article on his theories by Mark Lindley,⁵ and the catalog by Vincent

1 The subject is part of my doctoral project at the Kunstuniversität in Graz under the supervision of Prof Klaus Aringer.

2 BLAŽEKOVIĆ, 1990.

3 ROEDER, 1971.

4 MANN, 1992.

5 LINDLEY, 1981.

Duckles and Minnie Elmer⁶ of the collection in Berkeley, where most of his compositions are preserved today.⁷

Giuseppe Michele was a member of the noble Stratico family from Zadar (Zara, the family had Greek origins) that has produced a number of outstanding personalities. His brothers were Gian Domenico (1732-1799), bishop of Novigrad (Cittanova), later bishop of Hvar (Lesina) and professor in Siena; Simone (1733-1824), expert in the regulation of rivers and shipbuilding, and university professor at Padua and Pavia; Gregorio (1736-1806), lawyer, diplomat and poet. They all contributed significantly to the environment in which they worked. Giuseppe Michele was born in Zadar on July 31st, 1728. Already in 1737 (at the age of only nine), he moved to Padua where his uncle, Antonio Stratico, was rector at the Collegio Cottunio. Musical life in Padua during the mid-18th century was rich. Two dominant figures in the Paduan Basilica were Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770), who also operated the famous music school (*Scuola delle nazioni*), and Francesco Antonio Vallotti (1697-1780), both not only composers but also music theorists. It is supposed that, besides his law studies, Stratico studied violin and composition with Tartini. Although he is not listed anywhere as one of Tartini's students, there are several indications supporting that assumption: the letter by Father Antonio Bonaventura Sberti mentions him as "Sig. Michele Stratico, insigne alunno del gran Tartini",⁸ and Giordano Riccati in his (as yet disputable) *Memorie sul violinista G. Tartini* mentioned that "the young man was presented as Stratico Michele, Tartini's pupil in violin and composition".⁹ The fact that Riccati did know Stratico is suggested by a letter from Giovannale Sacchi asking for an opinion on Stratico as a composer: "recently I have been told infinite praises about Mr Michele Stratico, vicar of Sanguinetto. Your Lordship, I presume, must know him."¹⁰

6 DUCKLES/ELMER, 1963.

7 Stratico produced more than 300 compositions that are preserved mostly in Berkeley (the *Manuscript Collection of 18th-Century Italian Instrumental Music*), and also in Padua (Cappella Antoniana), Venice (Biblioteca di San Marco, Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi), Verona, Berlin (Deutsche Staatsbibliothek), Washington (The Library of Congress), Modena (Biblioteca Estense), Ancona (Biblioteca Comunale Luciano Benincasa).

8 SBERTI, 1814, p. 10., cited by BLAŽEKović, 1990, p. 124.

9 "il giovane fu presentato come Stratico Michele allievo a Tartini in violino e composizione". RICCATI, 1969, p. 408.

10 "Ultimamente mi sono state narrate infinite lodi del signor Michele Stratico

Around 1760, Stratico moved from Padua to the small town of Sanguinetto (near Verona), where he worked as *vicario e giudice al maleficio* (vicar and criminal judge). Research during 2011 established 31st January 1783 in Sanguinetto as the date and place of his death.¹¹

In the field of music theory, Stratico left behind three works. They are preserved only in the form of manuscripts in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (I-Vnm), under the signatures Ms. It. Cl. IV, 341 [= 5294], 342 [= 5347], 343 [= 5348].

These treatises are:

- a. *Trattato di musica* – in nine versions and related sketches;¹²
- b. *Trattato di musica – Nuovo sistema musicale* – in one version, clear copy, dialog;¹³
- c. *Lo spirito Tartiniano* – in one version, clear copy.¹⁴

It is presumed that all of Stratico's treatises were written after 1770 (the year of Tartini's death). Leonardo Frasson supposed that *Lo spirito Tartiniano* had been written between 1771 and 1775, and the other two, far more complex, before his premature death from tuberculosis in 1783. All literature on Stratico mentions two of the treatises (a and c), probably considering the second (b) as a version of the first, but I venture that these are, in fact, three different works.

Taking into account persons connected to these sources, the first problem arises in connection with authorship, which is not precisely specified anywhere. No version with Stratico's name on it exists, but it was Giuseppe Valentinelli in 1868, *praefectus* of the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, who attributed the work to the theorist/writer.¹⁵ All the treatises were donated to the Marciana with the belongings of his more famous

vicario di Sanguinetto. Vostra Signoria illustrissima parmi che lo dovvia conoscere". The letter dated June 22nd 1776 is held in Udine, Biblioteca Comunale (I-UDc), Correspondence of Giordano Riccati, vol. 6, sign. Mss. 1025, f. 107, cited by BLAŽEKOVIĆ, 1990, pp. 128-129.

11 First published in: KONFIC, 2012.

12 Although the first version (341a) is titled *Nuovo sistema musicale*, as well as the dialog (341b), the title in other versions is *Trattato di musica*. 342 contains another version of the *Trattato di musica*.

13 STRATICO, 341b.

14 STRATICO, 343e.

15 VALENTINELLI, 1868, p. 162.

brother Simone, whose wish it was to deposit his works in some public library. Thus, his nephews and heirs, Giovanni Battista Stratico and Giuseppe Bellori, gave them to the Marciana between 1831 and 1841. One of them could well be “amatissimo mio signor Cugino” (“my beloved Mr Cousin”), mentioned by Stratico in his *Fogli con dichiarazioni*:¹⁶

“Principles and reasoning, with which presented Melody is deducted, are declared and explained on the leaves (folios) left in the hands of my dearest Mr Cousin, and the Writer reports to them.”¹⁷

Another issue regarding authorship concerns the different handwritings in these treatises (even within the same version). More precise and detailed comparison with the existing Stratico’s legal documents (and its copies)¹⁸ could help to identify whether these handwritings belong to Stratico or to different persons/copyists. However, at the present state of research, we shall assume that all the treatises and their versions were written by Stratico, as suggested by Valentinelli.

Examining Stratico’s theoretical work from the aspect of names of persons and places found within, our goal is to detect a set of sources that Stratico used in his work, as well as the tradition (resulting from school experience or knowledge acquired in a spiritual circle) in which he formed his thinking on music and music theory. Also, we aim to connect those names with already known facts about Stratico’s life that may lead to our deeper understanding of yet unknown parts of his biography. Therefore, the references on people and places will be divided into several categories that shall help us to realize their greater or lesser im-

16 *Fogli con dichiarazioni* (Folios with clarifications) are explanations of the most important parts of Stratico’s musical system, part of the 341c, fol. 157-168.

17 “I principj poi, ed i ragionanti, in forza dei quali deducesi la pr[ese]nte Cantilena, sono dichiarati, e spiegati ne’ fogli lasciati nelle mani dell’amat[issi]mo mio Signor Cugino, e ad esseloro riportasi lo Scrittore.” STRATICO, 341c, fol. 158r.

18 Some of the legal documents in affairs under the jurisdiction of vicar of Sanguinetto are preserved as originals written by Stratico, and some as copies transcribed with another hand. See for example Affari del feudo di Sanguinetto ove Michele Stratico era Vicario, I-Vnm, Ms. It. Cl. VI, 282 [= 5773], fols. 90-96.

portance. In this sense, it is important to determine which sources Stratico quoted and who he had seen as an authority figure, to which tradition he adhered, in which way ideas were transferred to him and in which way he used them.

In Stratico's treatises we can distinguish several types of references:

1. Quotations – 3 types:
 - a. of sources in the text;
 - b. of sources in the studies;
 - c. of classical literature;
2. General references – referring to a group of people;
3. Other references – names (in the main text or at the margin).

1. Quotations

a. Quotation of sources in the text

These quotations are one of the main keys in understanding Stratico's starting points and they introduce changes in his theory. The most important source upon which Stratico bases his system is certainly Giuseppe Tartini (mentioned in all three treatises). Stratico quotes his *Trattato di musica seconda la vera scienza dell'armonia*, published in Padua in 1754 (in *Lo spirito Tartiniano, Nuovo sistema musicale, Trattato di musica*), as well as *De' principj dell'Armonia contenuta nel Diatonico Genere* published in Padua in 1767 (only in *Lo spirito Tartiniano*). They are not only his sources, but the starting points for the development of his new musical system. As *Lo spirito Tartiniano* suggests, Stratico starts his reasoning within Tartini's system, but then proposes some changes and more consistent thoughts.¹⁹

19 It would also be very interesting to find out more about Stratico's connections with some others among Tartini's students. Beside the Berkeley collection, Stratico's compositions can be found in the Fondo della Biblioteca Comunale "Luciano Benincasa" in Ancona (I-AN) and the Fondo Malaspina dell'Archivio di Stato in Verona (I-VEas), among Tartini's own and (other) of Tartini's students' works. These are, for example, Pietro Nardini (1722-1793), Giuseppe Antonio Capuzzi (1755-1818), Domenico Ferrari (1722-1780), Lodovico Syrmen (1738-1812), Carlo Antonio Campioni (1720-1788), Carlo Ignazio Nappi (1723-1796) etc. However, fur-

Another name quoted in the treatises (in *Nuovo sistema musicale* and *Tratatto di musica*) is that of the Spanish theorist Antonio Eximeno (y Pujades, 1729-1808) and his work *Dell'origine e delle regole della musica colla storia del suo progresso, decadenza, e rinovazione* published in Rome in 1774. As David Damschroder and David Russell Williams state, Eximeno “attained notoriety not by creating new theories but by broadcasting his opposition to those of others. He criticized the use of rules and mathematical formulations as aids to the mastery of music”²⁰ (especially criticising Martini and Tartini). Thus, Stratico takes a stand against Eximeno and in favor of music as science.

b. Quotations of sources in the studies

The example of these quotations is a copy of parts of a treatise by another author, which is also an important source concerning the contents of Stratico's treatises. The name mentioned here is of another important composer, player and music writer of 18th century Padua – Francescantonio Vallotti (1697-1780). At the end of version 343a, we can find transcriptions of Vallotti's treatise *Della scienza teorica, e pratica della moderna musica* (Padua 1779). Vallotti's name is marked in the upper corner of the page. Together with the letter written to Vallotti,²¹ this is the proof for Stratico's connections with the Paduan environment, even after his transfer to Sanguinetto (in the 1760s and 1770s).

c. Quotations of classical literature

These quotations show Stratico's (wide) knowledge, but are not important for understanding his theory. Stratico quotes or paraphrases only masters of classical literature in order to emphasize more vividly his position or statement, and always specifies the source of his quotations. They all appear in the treatise *Lo spirito Tartiniano*. On most occasions, he uses *Saturae* by Juvenal, then *De rerum natura* by Lucretius, and once also Virgil (*Aeneid*), Ovid (*Metamorphoses*), Persia (*Satura*) and Horace (*Sermones*).

ther research on this aspect would exceed the framework of this paper. Cf. CANALE, 2010.

20 DAMSCHRODER/WILLIAMS, 1990, p. 83.

21 Now in I-Pca, D.VI.1894/6-3.

For example:

“Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, quos ultra, citraque nequit consistere verum” (“Measure in everything: in short, there are certain boundaries, on neither side of which lies Right”).²²

2. General references

The syntagm “general references” in this paper refers to a group of people mentioned in Stratico’s treatises. They do not offer specific data and require a contextual knowledge (partly) to identify them. They are interesting as a target audience (for whom the particular version is written, considering different styles in different versions of the treatises).

I am referring here particularly to Stratico’s clear opposition of music theory and music practice: “What then the scholars say, and what is discussed among musicians?”²³ From this standpoint, throughout the entire treatise (*Lo spirito Tartiniano*), two ways of understanding general and specific issues in music theory arise, more or less applicable in practice. Because, as Stratico explains, scholars (“i Dotti”) discuss the theoretical assumptions not knowing their application, and practical musicians (“i Musici”) do not understand the theoretical studies and think that only that which can be put to practical use is important.²⁴ That is why only those

22 Stratico’s quotation (variant) of Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Sermones*, I, 106-107, STRATICO, 343e, fol. 190r. English translation by A. S. KLINE, <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/HoraceSatiresBkISatI.htm>, 7.4.2014.

23 “Che dunque ne dicono i Dotti, e cosa si discorre frà Musici?” STRATICO, 341e, fol. 172v.

24 “I Dotti la negligono, e non vi badano perche manca loro quel grado tale pratico delle cose musiche, il quale rendesi necessario a ben intenderla, e perciò fare non possono la vera, e legitima applicazione della teoria, alla pratica [...]; I Musici per converso, mancando della cognizione de’ principi teorici, non la curano, perche non la intendono. Al solo rimbombo di questa vostra espressione Diatonico Sestuplo Consonante Sistema, resta abbattuto il di loro spirito, e se poi s’ incontrano nelle proporzioni della Dupla geometrica discreta, della Sesquialtera geometrica discreta etc. etc. chiudono in fretta il libro, per mai più affacciarvisi.” (“The learned persons neglect it and don’t care for it because they lack that practical level of musical things,

practical musicians who have theoretical knowledge, and only those theorists who are also practical musicians, can discuss music in a complete and proper way. Two such examples are, of course, both Tartini and Stratico.

In *Nuovo sistema musicale* and *Tratatto di musica* we can find similar statements – “Musicopratici” (“practical musicians”) and “Musicoteorici” (“music theorists”), or “Persone illuminate e dotte” (“enlightened and learned persons”), as scientists. This is particularly present in the discussion on common terms of the different subjects of the music system. Another name for music theorists is also “parecchi autori più rinomati di questo secolo” (“several most reputable authors of this century”).²⁵

As a separate group, we can find the “Filarmonici”, used in the introduction of the version 341a, with whom Stratico himself identifies:

“The Philharmonics taught in it [music as science] will thus have greater incentive to discuss in this new study, which is exposed by me to them in the present short work, free from the difficulties which want to retain our minds [...].”²⁶

That group also includes those “amanti e studiosi di tale scienza” (“lovers and scholars/researchers of this science”), mentioned in the version of the *Trattato* 343d.²⁷

As ideas, these groups are very clear, but several questions arise: did Stratico have conversational partners also in Sanguinetto; did he only refer to past Paduan days or did he participate (at least through the cor-

which is necessary to understand it well, and therefore they cannot make the true and legitimate application of the theory into practice [...] Musicians conversely, lacking the knowledge of the theoretical principles, pay no attention to it, because they do not understand it. At a single rumble of your expression Diatonic Sextuple Consonant System, their spirit remains knocked down, and if they find themselves in the geometrical discrete proportion of dupla, geometrical discrete proportion of sesquialtera etc. etc. they close quickly the book, not to look at it ever again.”) STRATICO, 343e, fols. 172v-173r.

25 STRATICO, 341a, fol. 2r.

26 “Avranno quindi più forte stimolo i Filarmonici addottrinati in essa di versare in questo nuovo studio, che da me lor si esibisce nella presente breve opera, sgombro dalle difficoltà, che arrestar soglion le menti nostre [...]” STRATICO, 341a, fols. 2r-v.

27 STRATICO, 343d, fol. 121r.

respondence, as the letter to Vallotti indicates) in music events or discussions in Padua or elsewhere ...

3. Other references

This group refers to the names/persons (in the main text or at the margin) that are mentioned by Stratico, but not in terms of the content. They are, however, important for understanding the context.

In *Lo spirito Tartiniano*, Stratico mentions (always in connection with Tartini's treatises) "Mr. le Serre, vostro [Tartini's] critico" ("Mr le Serre, your critique"),²⁸ i.e. Jean-Adam Serre (1704-1788), Swiss physicist, chemist, painter and music theorist who, in his work *Observations sur les principes de l'harmonie* published in 1763, questioned the theories of D'Alembert, Tartini and Geminiani.²⁹ One can also find the name of "Mr Rameau insigne Musico Francese" ("Mr Rameau, famous French musician").³⁰ Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) and his work in the field of music theory marked the entire century and he was widely known. His connections with the Italian (Paduan) circle, as well as similarities with and differences from Paduan theories were researched by Patrizio Barbieri.³¹ One of the future tasks is to put Stratico in this context. Another name in this category is Andrea Zotti, who will be mentioned in more detail later in the text.

The mention of places/towns in Stratico's treatises is rare. We can distinguish either direct or indirect types of reference.

The crucial place for Stratico is Padua. From *Lo spirito Tartiniano*, we can understand the change of the environment and the influence on Stratico's life and work:

"I, who live in an almost complete solitude, and what is worse, distant and distracted, because of my duties and occupations, from musical thoughts, that formed for a while my delights, I do not know surely and certainly what to answer you about your research."³²

28 STRATICO, 343e, fol. 172r.

29 COHEN, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25488>, 7.4.2014.

30 STRATICO, 343e, fol. 174v.

31 See BARBIERI, 1987, 1991.

32 "Io, che vivo in una quasi solitudine, e quel ch'è peggio lontano, e distratto, a causa delle mie cure, ed occupazioni de' musici pensieri, che pur anno

Although he does not mention Padua or Sanguinetto here, connecting the information with the other data (of his employment as a “vicario” from 1760), we can assume that he talks about these two places. Another, even more important conclusion is that Stratico kept his (vital) connections with Padua even after his transfer to Sanguinetto, which is specifically important in Stratico’s case for the acquisition of the literature (the books of Tartini and Vallotti).

“I’ll tell you the truth, and that is how I acquired your [Tartini’s] Music treatise according to true harmonic science from a certain practical musician [on the margin: That was Mr. Andrea Zotti, violinist at the cappella of the Saint in Padua] who in desperation to come to his senses, begged me to take it as a gift, almost as if he wanted to unburden himself of a harassing and useless weight; and I’ve later found gladly this purchase, and I wanted resolutely to pay the right price.”³³

In this quotation, we can find the name of Andrea Zotti (or De Zotti), violinist of the Basilica in Padua from 1735 to 1788, member of the family of professional violinists with whom Stratico seems to have been in contact even after his transfer to Sanguinetto.³⁴

The present study takes into consideration the names of people and places mentioned in the theoretical work of Giuseppe Michele Stratico. They are divided into several categories that indicate the importance of particular ways of referencing within Stratico’s treatises and related writings. As it is shown, these references are important for understanding Stratico’s position and his ideas behind his musical system. This especially applies to the quoted sources in the text and in the sketches. The

formate un tempo le mie delizie, non sò che rispondervi di sicuro, e certo sopra le ricerche vostre.” STRATICO, 343e, fol. 172r.

33 “Vi dirò cosa verissima, e si è, l’ aver io, fatto acquisto del vr~o Trattato di musica secondo la vera scienza, dell’Armonia, da certo Musicopratico* [on the margins:] /*Questi fù il S’ Andrea Zotti, violinista nella capella del Santo di Padova / che disperando di giugnere[!] [giungere] alla sua intelligenza, pregòmi a riceverlo in dono, quasichè sgravarsi volesse di peso molesto, ed inutile; ed a me poi riuscì grato l’acquisto, ed hò voluto risolutamente pagarne il giusto suo prezzo.” 343, fol. 173r.

34 BOSCOLO/PIETRIBIASI, 1997, p. 37.

two primary sources for Stratico's treatises are Giuseppe Tartini's and Francescantonio Vallotti's theoretical writings. But, Stratico also made a detachment from both authorities, seeking a different (even braver) approach to what was then common practice. The ideas of the musical system from which he started to develop his own musical thinking are, thus, changed and shaped into a new system, which was disseminated further (cf. the example of the *Fogli con dichiarazioni*). Given the relative scarcity of clearly stated sources, additional sources (and associated names) could be found in a more detailed analysis of the contents of the treatises (reading "between the lines"), which shall be dealt with in a further study. Particular general references, although they do not contain specific names, reveal the tradition in which Stratico formed his theoretical thinking and the audience with which he wanted to communicate. He considered himself a practical musician, not a scientist. However, in clear opposition to Eximeno's counter-scientific discourse and with his commitment to music as a science, Stratico wanted to balance the two (not necessarily opposite) sides. In some cases, although not often, some details of Stratico's biography or the context of his activities can be revealed. Thus, the idea in the MusMig project of creating an interactive map also offers a great possibility for the wider understanding of paths and overlaps in the (hi)stories with which we are dealing.

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