

*Of a little-known portrait of Giovanni Maria Nanino*

The fourth centenary of the death of Giovanni Maria Nanino offers me the occasion to talk about one of his portraits, defined in my title as “little-known”, even though I do not really know how to evaluate its level of renown. In the entries on Nanino in major music dictionaries otherwise accurate from an iconographical perspective, such as the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* or *Musik in Geschichte und in Gegenwart*, there is no trace of the portrait in question. However, it was published without any commentary in the complete edition (edited by Hermann-Walther Frey) of the *Diario dell'anno 1596 fatto per me Gio: Maria Nanino cantore e puntatore l'anno sopradetto* or the so-called “libro dei punti” of the papal choir, kept that year by Nanino.<sup>1</sup> The portrait, currently conserved in the administrative offices of the Museo del Tesoro of San Pietro (Fig. 1),<sup>2</sup> is an oil painting on canvas (66 x 62 cm) by an anonymous artist, dated in the late fifteenth century. It depicts a half-length male figure holding a book of music in his hand – surely retouched badly in following years, given that the music is notated wrongly (that is, rotated by 90° from its usual layout).<sup>3</sup> The inscription “GIOV. MARIA / NANINO” can be read in capital letters in the upper right of the picture; we know this to have been deliberately added in 1946-47 by Giambattista Salvatori, then archivist of the Cappella Giulia, when he restored six pictures of the *maestri* of the choir on the orders of the canonical mons. Guido Anichini.<sup>4</sup> Yet, thanks to the solicitous collaboration

<sup>1</sup> HERMANN-WALTHER FREY, *Das Diarium der Sixtinischen Sängerkapelle in Rom für das Jahr 1596 (Nr. 21)*, in *Studien zur italienischen Musikgeschichte XIV* («Analecta musicologica», 23), hrsg. von Friedrich Lippmann, Laaber, Laaber-Verlag, 1985, pp. 129-204: 130.

<sup>2</sup> I welcome the opportunity to thank warmly the senior administration and personnel of the Museo del Tesoro di San Pietro, and in particular Dr. Stefano Nicastro (supervisor), Dr. Mirko Stocchi (archivist), and Dr. Luca Filipponi (restorer), who, together with Antonio Addamiano, librarian of the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra, assisted me efficiently and courteously in the examination of the portrait.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to exclude the hypothesis that the portrait is a sixteenth-century copy of an original from the late fifteenth century. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Michele Maccherini for his expert suggestion.

<sup>4</sup> This information comes from a letter on headed notepaper of the “Venerabile Cappella Musica Giulia”, March 1977, written by Giambattista Salvatori, discovered in an envelope attached to the back of the picture. In this letter, Salvatori declares having added the inscription «Giov. Maria / Nanino» on the suggestion of maestro Armando Antonelli, in 1946-47. This notwithstanding, Salvatori himself believed that the person in question

of the museum's restorer, Dr. Luca Filipponi, once the painting had been dismantled from the frame it was possible to read another inscription, probably contemporary to the portrait itself, "IO. MARIA NANINVS", which appears on the upper left on the fold of the canvas, evidently trimmed with respect to the original dimensions.

Personally, I'm inclined to distrust some identifications of musicians depicted in portraits, even when these include their names. For example, I have expressed doubts on the presumed portrait of the lutenist Francesco da Milano that is part of Cardinal Federico Borromeo's collection of eminent men kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan.<sup>5</sup> Even where portraits are authored, identification has often been advanced on the presupposition that the celebrated painter would only have immortalised a celebrated musical colleague;<sup>6</sup> only to be then belied by archival documents. One example (among several) is the portrait of a musician by Annibale Carracci, in which almost every scholar has wanted to see the likeness of Claudio Merulo for the simple fact that the picture belonged to the collection owned by the Farnese, a family on whom the musician depended. A recently published document has instead demonstrated that the picture reached the Farnese only half a century after Merulo's death in 1650.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, it is not my intention to dwell on the reliability of identification: if the man depicted in the painting is genuinely Nanino, it is (to my mind) a secondary problem. As that *maestro* of historiography Marc Bloch has taught us, whether a document is true or false, or contains genuine data and information, has no relevance: what is important is that it has been created, because the effects it produces in the time of its making are 'real'. Instead, it would be more stimulating to posit some questions about the picture itself: where was it located? Who

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should be identified as Ruggero Giovannelli, both because of an inscription that appears on the frame and for a claimed resemblance with a portrait of Giovannelli that appears in the work of ANDREA ADAMI, *Osservazioni per ben regolare il coro della cappella pontificia*, Roma, A. de Rossi, 1711 (rist. anast. a cura di Giancarlo Rostirolla, Lucca, LIM – Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1988), p. 187.

On close examination, the inscription in question dates however from the nineteenth century, and no resemblance can be verified between the portrait and the image of Giovannelli that appears in Adami's *Osservazioni*. The letter, after our inspection, has now been placed in the archive of the Tesoro di San Pietro. Beyond the portrait of Nanino, portraits of Palestrina, Nicola Spedalieri, Salvatore Meluzzi, Andrea Meluzzi, and Ernesto Boezi are conserved in the same locality.

<sup>5</sup> ARNALDO MORELLI, 'Portraits of musicians in sixteenth-century Italy: a specific typology', *Music in Art*, XXVI, 2001, pp. 47-57.

<sup>6</sup> The archetype of this attitude is probably to be found in Vasari, who in his *Vite* claimed that Giotto had painted the portrait of his friend Dante.

<sup>7</sup> GIUSEPPE BERTINI, 'Giacomo Gaufrido's collection of paintings confiscated in 1650 by the Farnese', *Burlington Magazine*, CXLIII, 2001, n. 1174, pp. 29-33: 31.

commissioned it? Who might have been its owner? And what significance did it have?

The most recent studies on portraiture have underlined the methodological importance of not considering a single portrait in isolation, but of positioning it within a survey of case studies of broader spectrum and the context that unites them.<sup>8</sup> Rarely in the musicological field is a group of portraits studied in order to reveal a possible recurrent typology in a specific cultural, chronological and geographical context.<sup>9</sup> If we exclude some sporadic (and dubious) portraits of the fifteenth century, as, for example, van Eyck's famous *Tymotheus*, which Panofski and other musicologists in his wake identified as Gilles Binchois,<sup>10</sup> it is only from the Cinquecento that the true genre of the musician's portrait emerges and is fully affirmed. As Fenlon notes, it is really from that period that the "increased social status of composers, performers (and in some cases of the spectators), like that of music itself, is reflected in the rising frequency with which the musicians appear in portraits".<sup>11</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the portrait of Nanino is conserved in the Museo del Tesoro of San Pietro, together with the portraits of some composers, primarily *maestri* of the Cappella Giulia, such as Palestrina, Salvatore and Andrea Meluzzi, and Ernesto Boezi.<sup>12</sup> Nanino, however, never worked for the Cappella Giulia; for thirty years, from October 1577 to his death on 11 March 1607, he was in fact a

<sup>8</sup> See Luke Syson's comments in the introduction to *The image of the individual portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. by Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson, London, British Museum Press, 1998, p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> A rare example is the unpublished thesis of MARIAGRAZIA CARLONE, *Immagini di liutisti nel primo Cinquecento*, Università di Bologna, 1996-97.

<sup>10</sup> ERWIN PANOFSKY, *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1953, vol. I, p. 196. The subject has been more convincingly identified with a sculptor (Gilles de Blachère) active at the Burgundian court; cfr. WENDY WOOD, 'A new identification of the sitter in Jan van Eyck's Tymotheus portrait', *Art Bulletin*, LX, 1978, pp. 650-654.

<sup>11</sup> IAIN FENLON, 'Music in Italian Renaissance Paintings', in *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. by Tess Knighton and David Fallows, New York, Schirmer, 1992, pp. 189-209: 197 ("this wider issue of the social status of the composer, the performer (and in some case the audience), and also of music in itself is reflected in the increasing frequency with musicians are shown in portraits"); cfr. also ARNALDO MORELLI, 'Il ritratto di musicista nel Cinquecento: tipologie e significati', in *Il ritratto nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, atti del convegno (Firenze 7-8 novembre 2002), a cura di Aldo Galli, Chiara Piccinini, Massimiliano Rossi, Firenze, Olschki, 2007, pp. 169-191.

<sup>12</sup> An exception in the group is the portrait of the philosopher and theologian Nicola Spedalieri (Bronte, 1740 – Roma, 1795), an amateur musician, who left around thirty of his compositions to the archive of the Cappella Giulia; cfr. the webpage <http://www.bronteinsieme.it/3pe/nicspe.html>.

member of the Papal Choir. The painting's current location might depend on casual factors and to have taken place in a much later epoch. The resemblance with another image of the composer is striking: I refer to that which appears in Adami's *Osservazioni* (Fig. 2).<sup>13</sup> The portrait in question was arguably already known and accessible at the time when Adami commissioned engravings of the images of some papal choristers and noted artists (such as Francesco Trevisani, Giuseppe and Pietro Ghezzi and others) included in his *Osservazioni*. It is probable therefore that the engraver Trevisani used the portrait discussed here as a model, albeit not following it faithfully.

Observing the eleven engravings in the *Osservazioni*,<sup>14</sup> it is plain that the presence of the portrait of a chorister in the respective biographical entry does not always correlate to his celebrity status. Arcadelt, Zoilo, De Grandis, Vittori, Landi, and Marazzoli are all minus portraits, in contrast to singers Soto and Rosini, and composers Savioni and Simonelli, who were certainly no more famous than many of their colleagues whose likenesses were omitted. This fact suggests that when Adami was faced with the problem (common from the Cinquecento in similar works on eminent men) of whether to insert either fantasy portraits when authentic ones were lacking (as Vasari did, for example, in *Vite*) or to include only those for which a reliable original was available<sup>15</sup> (true or presumed to be so), he opted for the latter solution, in line with the historiographical rigour he intended to confer on his work.<sup>16</sup>

Incidentally, I note that for the engraving depicting the chorister Girolamo Rosini,<sup>17</sup> the model used was almost certainly the portrait then owned by the fathers of the Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma.<sup>18</sup>

Concerning the possible iconographic sources used by Adami, we can be certain in at least one case that preexisting portraits were used. The engraving of Palestrina published in the *Osservazioni* (Fig. 3) had as a declared model a

<sup>13</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, p. 180.

<sup>14</sup> We find in sequence: Cristóbal de Morales (p. 164), Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (p. 169), Francisco Soto (p. 176), Giovanni Maria Nanino (p. 180), Felice Anerio (p. 183), Ruggero Giovannelli (p. 187), Girolamo Rosini (p. 189), Gregorio Allegri (p. 198), Mario Savioni (p. 202), Antimo Liberati (p. 206), Matteo Simonelli (p. 208).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, HUBERT GOLTZIUS, *Images presque des tous les empereurs...*, Anversa, Coppenius, 1557.

<sup>16</sup> On the portraits in biographies of illustrious men cfr. ÉDOUARD POMMIER, *Il ritratto. Storia e teorie dal Rinascimento all'Età dei Lumi*, Torino, Einaudi, 2003 (ed. orig.: *Théories du portrait. De la Renaissance aux Lumières*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998), pp. 179-194.

<sup>17</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, p. 189.

<sup>18</sup> Rosini's portrait, conserved today in the archive of the Congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Maria in Vallicella at Rome, is reproduced in CARLO GASBARRI, *L'Oratorio romano dal Cinquecento al Novecento*, Roma, Arti grafiche D'Urso, 1963, appendice iconografica, [tav. XVI].

portrait mentioned by Adami himself in the first part of his treatise, entitled *Prefazione storica*, a kind of brief history of the Papal Chapel:<sup>19</sup>

And because the said Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, as the restorer and benefactor of music, is worthy of eternal memory, I include printed in the catalogue of papal choristers his genuine portrait copied from an original kept in our archive, so that every professor may see the true image of the prince of music.

Giuseppe Ghezzi's engraving therefore used as a model a portrait then existing in the archive of the Papal Chapel – probably the one (later noted by Cametti)<sup>20</sup> still conserved there today (Fig. 4),<sup>21</sup> as can be deduced by comparing the two. We might then ask when and by what path this portrait (not to be confused with the much better-known one still to be found in the Cappella Giulia in San Pietro, the original of a whole series of which extant examples survive in the Chiesa Nuova, the Biblioteca Casanatense and the library of Giuseppe Cascioli)<sup>22</sup> might have come into the possession of the Papal Chapel.

It is probable that this portrait of Palestrina might be identified with the one donated by the chorister Francesco Verdoni to the papal college on 20 April 1692 at the time of his retirement:<sup>23</sup>

The *puntatore* notified the signori choristers that signor Verdoni, having completed twenty-five years of service in the Papal Choir, was beginning to enjoy his retirement, and that he had presented to the college in his name a painting of the portrait of Aloysio Prenestino (which had been bequeathed to him by the good memory of Antimo Liberati); and because his works are sung continuously in the chapel, he believed it to be appropriate to keep the portrait there in memory of a man so distinguished and without equal. The college ordered the *puntatore* to thank him etc., and decreed that the said portrait be placed in the library of the chapel of the Palazzo Quirinale.

<sup>19</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>20</sup> ALBERTO CAMETTI, *Gli antichi ritratti di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, «Roma», I, 1923, pp. 240 passim.

<sup>21</sup> *Iconografia palestriniana. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: immagini e documenti del suo tempo*, a cura di Lino Bianchi e Giancarlo Rostirolla, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1994, pp. 175 (reproduction) and 352 n. 211 (comment). The portrait was at one time housed in the *vestiario* (cloakroom) of the Papal Chapel.

<sup>22</sup> GIUSEPPE CASCIOLI, 'Un ritratto di Palestrina', *Note d'archivio per la storia musicale*, I, 1924, pp. 113-115; portrait purchased by the author, deriving from that in the Cappella Giulia, but without the background, bearing the inscription "IOANNES PETRUS ALOYSIUS PRÆNESTINUS / MUSICÆ PRINCEPS" written on the margin of the sheet in a position visible to any spectator.

<sup>23</sup> PAUL KAST, 'Antimo Liberati: eine biographische Skizze', *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, XLIII, 1959, pp. 49-72: 69 (Italian translation in *Studi e documentazioni*, VIII, 1985, pp. 5-28).

From the account in the Sistine diary, we can assume that the portrait of Palestrina given by Verdoni to his colleagues was the first to be placed in the archive of the Papal Chapel; it therefore follows that there were no others previously. It is especially interesting that Verdoni had received the painting as a gift from another papal singer: Antimo Liberati, who played a notable role as the first historian of the Papal Chapel at the time of Alessandro VII. Liberati might indeed be regarded as the principal ideologue of the construction of the myth of Palestrina and of the Roman school in the second half of the sixteenth century. Thanks not only to his musical but also his legal and literary education, Liberati enjoyed a particular reputation within the Papal Chapel and the Roman curia. His writings, in fact, seem to demonstrate that on more than one occasion his scholarship was sought in order to obtain an authoritative opinion. In 1662-63 he wrote a *Ragguaglio dello stato del coro de' cantori nella cappella pontificia antico et moderno et avvisi per la sua conservazione*.<sup>24</sup> A little later, in 1665, encouraged by Alessandro VII (a pope particularly interested in the reform of sacred music) he wrote his *Epitome della musica*:<sup>25</sup> an unpublished work that survived as a single manuscript donated to the pope. Here, after having outlined an historical profile of music drawing on classical and biblical sources, Liberati celebrated Palestrina as the “saviour” of polyphony (which, according to legend, the council of Trent had wanted to banish from the churches) and the “founder” of the Roman school, whose tradition continued through the papal choristers: those unequalled interpreters of the sacred repertory, “for which they are deservedly privileged by the bulls of the supreme pontiffs”<sup>26</sup>.

But it is primarily in another published work, *Lettera scritta... in risposta ad una del sig. Ovidio Persapegi* (1685), that Liberati dealt yet more extensively with the subject of Palestrina’s authority and the moral superiority of the Roman school, of which he delineated a kind of genealogy. It opened with a surprising affirmation:<sup>27</sup>

[Palestrina] did not have the genius of creating a school or was not able to do so because of his assiduous commitment to harmonic composition, but he united with and conformed to the school of Giovanni Maria Nanino, his disciple and trusted friend.

<sup>24</sup> Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Cappella Sistina* 683.

<sup>25</sup> Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Chigi* F.IV.72.

<sup>26</sup> GALLIANO CILIBERTI – FIORELLA RAMBOTTI, ‘La produzione musicale e gli scritti teorici di Antimo Liberati, cantore della cappella pontificia (Foligno 1617 - Roma 1692)’, *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell’Università degli studi di Perugia*, XXV, n.s. XI, 1987-1988, pp. 87-131: 93.

<sup>27</sup> ANTIMO LIBERATI, *Lettera scritta... in risposta ad una del sig. Ovidio Persapegi...*, Roma, Mascardi, 1685, p. 24.

Unable to connect any important composer to Palestrina's direct teaching, Liberati had to acknowledge Nanino as the effective leader of the movement, given that many of the principal *maestri di cappella* and Roman composers (B. Nanino, F. Anerio, G. Allegri, and A. Cifra) had after all studied with him. This notwithstanding, he recognised that Palestrina had played an indisputable role as the founder of the Roman school, whose works provided an unsurpassed normative model. Considering that Palestrina and Nanino had both trained in the school of the Frenchman Claude Goudimel, *maestro di cappella* of the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, they must in consequence have shared corresponding compositional styles and rules.

A reflection of this curious bicephalous genealogy can be gleaned from a pen-and-ink drawing dating back to the early seventeenth century, more or less in the epoch in which Adami's *Osservazioni* appeared (Fig. 5).<sup>28</sup> As stated in the captions, it depicts Palestrina, Giovanni Maria Nanino and his younger brother Bernardino sat round a table while intently discussing a polyphonic *passaggio* sketched probably on the *cartella* (a work tool of the contrapuntists).<sup>29</sup> Behind the trio, in a portrait towering above them, appears the image of their common *maestro*, "Gaudio Mel".

It is therefore at the very moment in which the idea of the Roman school takes body that the portrait of Nanino might have made its appearance in the papal city.

The inscription of Nanino's name discovered on the picture suggests that it had been part of a collection of portraits, such as in the galleries of eminent men or those belonging to an academic society or an ecclesiastical congregation, or perhaps those small collections of portraits of celebrated *maestri* possessed by some musicians: we know, for example, that as well as Liberati, Stefano Landi owned a portrait of Palestrina.<sup>30</sup> Among the various functions fulfilled by the

<sup>28</sup> *Iconografia palestriniana*, p. 327.

<sup>29</sup> Bernardino was probably depicted because from the Settecento he (together with his brother Giovanni Maria) was considered to be the author of a theoretical-practical treatise on counterpoint, of which a copy is conserved in the Martinian collection in the Museo della Musica at Bologna (B 124); cfr. DANIELE SABAINO, 'Aspetti della teoria contrappuntistica e della didattica della composizione nella Roma del Giannelli: i precetti teorici manoscritti attribuiti a Giovanni Maria e Bernardino Nanino (note storico-filologiche per nuove attribuzioni)', in *Ruggero Giovannelli «musicista eccellentissimo e forse il primo del suo tempo»*, atti del convegno (Velletri, 12-14 giugno 1992), a cura di Carmela Bongiovanni e Giancarlo Rostirolla, Palestrina, Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1998, pp. 363-388.

<sup>30</sup> GERDA PANOFKY-SOERGEL, 'Nachträge zu Stefano Landis Biographie', in *Studien zur italienischen Musikgeschichte. XIII* («Analecta Musicologica», 22), a cura di Friedrich Lippmann, Laaber, Laaber Verlag, 1984, pp. 69-129. As Vasari asserted, "and to what other end did the ancients place the images of great men in public places with honourable inscriptions than to excite the soul of those who might come to virtue and glory?"; cfr. POMMIER, *Il ritratto*, p. 107.

portrait in the modern age, portraits of distinguished men had commemorative and educational aims, as much accentuated as faithful to the model.<sup>31</sup> As Leon Battista Alberti affirmed – perhaps the first art theorist to discuss portraiture – “the portrait is not only the person, but also his glorious life, a life to imitate”.<sup>32</sup> The portrait has illusionistic power; it “does not restore things to the past, but to the present”;<sup>33</sup> “it is not only a sign of recognition, but the presence itself of the model for whom it substitutes”.<sup>34</sup> We note also the emphasis placed by Adami on the “true portrait [of Palestrina] copied from an original conserved in our archive”, to the further demonstration of the lineage from and membership of the same Roman school concretised in the Papal Chapel.<sup>35</sup> As an analogy, I note the ‘presence’ of Goudimel in an image that seems almost to oversee the meeting of his pupils in the drawing mentioned earlier.

I must here specify that for the “Roman school” I do not mean simply the direct *maestro*-pupil filiation, or the sharing of compositional styles and rules; nor a school generically adherent to an abstract model “*alla Palestrina*”. As much as Liberati in *Risposta* sought to distil a series of rules and precepts from Palestrina’s works in order to achieve a delineation of the idea of the “Roman school” (“our school teaches that...”),<sup>36</sup> the generic body of precepts he elaborated was fruitless when he tried to support the dispute about Corelli’s notorious fifths against a solid and strenuous adversary such as Giovanni Paolo Colonna, who had also trained in the Roman school “of signori Carissimi, Abbatini and Benevoli”. Backed by the authority of his Roman *maestri*, the Bolognese *maestro* could thus advance contrasting opinions and examples to those of Liberati.<sup>37</sup> And yet Colonna,

<sup>31</sup> POMMIER, *Il ritratto*, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in POMMIER, *Il ritratto*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> ROMANO ALBERTI, *Trattato della nobiltà della pittura* (Roma, Francesco Zannetti, 1585), quoted in POMMIER, *Il ritratto*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>34</sup> POMMIER, *Il ritratto*, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>36</sup> ARNALDO MORELLI, ‘Antimo Liberati, Matteo Simonelli e la tradizione palestriniana a Roma nella seconda metà del Seicento’, in *Atti del II convegno di studi palestriniani «Palestrina e la sua presenza nella musica e nella cultura europee dal suo tempo ad oggi»* (Palestrina, 3-5 maggio 1986), a cura di Lino Bianchi e Giancarlo Rostirolla, Palestrina, Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1991, pp. 297-307.

<sup>37</sup> The correspondence relative to this controversy is fully reproduced in MARIO RINALDI, *Arcangelo Corelli*, Milano, Curci, 1953, pp. 435-438. Liberati, responding to Colonna, asked (not without wit), “if these *maestri* might not have used the arts of the parish priest Arlotto, who was praising the sausages to his table companions, but was waiting to eat the thrushes” (ibid., p. 437). In order to defend Corelli, Liberati had to recall the undisputable prestige which the celebrated violinist enjoyed and to admit then that “in some things in music, feeling prevails over reason; in others, reason prevails over feeling; and in many others, feeling and reason correspond and unite together” (ibid., p. 438).

although morally the victor in the controversy, conceded the honour of arms to Liberati, affirming that it is the “Roman school, both ancient and modern ... that must give the laws to all the others.”<sup>38</sup> The Roman school was therefore not understood in a normative sense, as a complex of compositional styles and rules, but more probably as a particular model of the performance practices of the Papal Choir as embodied by its most extensive and solemn ceremonies, long considered as the point of reference for the European courts, and which had made Rome “the court of courts”. “The court of Rome never changes” – the Domenican Jean-Baptiste Labat wrote in his *Voyage* in the early Settecento – “one sees the same ceremonies there, and one practices to the letter that which was practiced five or six centuries ago”.<sup>39</sup> The apparent immutability of such ceremonies explains far better than the growing legends the retrograde practices of the Papal Chapel and the consequent staticity of its repertory, mostly dominated by the works of Palestrina flanked by those of Morales, Giovannelli, Anerio, Nanino and a few others.<sup>40</sup>

For these reasons, we might advance the hypothesis – susceptible to refutation or confirmation if new documents emerge from the archive – that the portrait, whether or not authentic, came into the possession of an institution to which Nanino was presumably connected. This might have been the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore or the company of musicians of Rome, but taking account of the portrait’s current location, the Papal Chapel would seem to be the most probable place. Adami, in tracing a brief biographical sketch of Nanino, reprised precisely what Liberati had expressed in his *Risposta*, defining him as the “scholar of Gaudio Mell, Flemish co-disciple, contemporary and trusted friend of Giovan Pierluigi da Palestrina, with whom he maintained a school in Rome, acquiring many pupils”,<sup>41</sup> and acknowledging implicitly in Nanino the role of leader. That is enough to justify the survival of the portrait, the only one (Palestrina excluded, obviously) of a Roman *maestro di cappella* of the period to have survived: a man whose “compositions”, conserved “in cappella” – as Adami wrote – had “made the profundity of his knowledge known to the world”.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> RINALDI, *Arcangelo Corelli*, p. 442.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in MARIA ANTONIETTA VISCEGLIA, *La città rituale. Roma e le sue cerimonie in età moderna*, Roma, Viella, 2002, pp. 130-131.

<sup>40</sup> On the relationship between ceremonies and repertory in the Papal Chapel, see ARNALDO MORELLI, «*Schola romana*», «*stil di cappella*» e *cerimoniale papale*, in *Musici e istituzioni musicali a Roma e nello Stato pontificio nel tardo Rinascimento: attorno a Giovanni Maria Nanino*, atti della giornata di studio (Tivoli, 26 ottobre 2007), a cura di Giorgio Monari e Federico Vizzaccaro, Tivoli, 2008, pp. 129-139 (Atti e memorie della Società Tiburtina di Storia e d’Arte, LXXXI).

<sup>41</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup> ADAMI, *Osservazioni*, p. 181.