THE BERGAMASCA: SOME JEWISH LINKS?

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A connection between the *bergamasca*, the popular Renaissance dance, and Jewish synagogue music? The idea had first been suggested by Eduard Birnbaum in his biography of Salamone Rossi (Birnbaum 1893: 31–32) and re-echoed by Eric Werner over 80 years later in *A Voice Still Heard* (Werner 1976: 96–98, 266). The following is an attempt to examine the history of the *bergamasca* and its links — hypothetical as well as confirmed — with Jewish music.

What is the essence of the *bergamasca* and what were its origins? Was it a dance, a folk tune, an "Aria" upon which to build variations or to use as a ground bass? Let us present it here in one of its latest and most famous manifestations: Bach's *Quodlibet* from the *Goldberg Variations* (BWV 988/30) (Ex. 1).

Simplified, the melody consists of the following notes: *dd–ee–dd–b/ dd–cb–aa–g*, while the bass corresponds to the most basic harmonic progression, I–IV–V–I, once repeated. Melody and bass, both in the major mode, are stated in 4/4 time, starting on the beat.[1] Although Bach's quotation of the *bergamasca* more or less marks the end of the history of its integration into art music, it not only re-states the main melodic, harmonic and metric components of the pattern, but also captures many of the features and procedures which characterize its treatment in the compositions of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries: contrapuntal elaboration, fragmentation, the notion of "low" folk music elevated into art music, good-natured humor and the association with a virtuoso variation cycle.

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1 We shall refer to them henceforth as the melodic or harmonic pattern.

Example 1. J.S. Bach: Goldberg Variations, Var. 30: mm.3–4, 15–16

BERGAMASCA, VILLOTTA, EBRAICA

The *bergamasca* has its roots not only in the Bergamo district, but also in the ambiance of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, as well as in the comic figure of the *facchin bergamasco* — the Bergamasque porter, who migrated into the city in search of work. His characteristics were put briefly by Garzoni in 1587: "Le proprietà del facchino ... son quattro: parlar grosso, vestire sporco, operatione incivile & attione da ruffiano."[2] The *facchini* were often looked down upon by their contemporaries, but contempt very soon turned into satiric representations of their manners and imitations of their dialect. According to Vito Pandolfi, the dialect was first spoken and ridiculed on the stage in 1518 (Pandolfi 1957: vol. 1, 158–59). The *facchini bergamaschi* and their direct successors, the *zanni*, soon became stock figures of the *commedia dell'arte*. In Antonio Francesco Grazzini's *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate ò canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze* (Florence, 1559) they introduce themselves vividly:

> Commedie nuove habbiam composte in guisa,
> Che quando recitar le sentite,
> Morrete dele risa,
> Tanto son belle, giocose, e facete;
> E dopo ancor vedrete
> Una danza ballar sopra la scena
> Di vari, e nuovi giuocchi tutta piena.[3]

> We have composed new comedies in such a manner
> that, when hearing them,
> you shall die of laughter,
> so nice, joyful and witty they are;
> and afterwards you will see
> a dance on stage
> full of various and new plays.

The dance, as we may observe, was an integral part of the show.

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2 Thomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (Venice, G. B. Somasco, 1587, p. 802. (The pecularities of the *facchino* are four: to speak coarsely, to dress dirtily, uncivilized action and a conduct of a ruffian.)

It is, perhaps, a group of *facchini bergamaschi* which is satirically depicted in Filippo Azzaiolo's two *bergamasche* included in his *Terzo libro delle villotte del fiore alla Padoana a quatro voci* (Venice, A. Gardano, 1569), generally considered to be the earliest printed polyphonic *bergamasche*. This book, of which only the tenor and the bass parts have been preserved (in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, Bologna), contains five *villotte,* three *napolitane,* two *bergamasche,* one *ebraica* and one *mascherata.* As in Azzaiolo's earlier two collections of *Villotte del fiore* (published anonymously in 1557 and 1559), this one also contains compositions by other contemporaries of his, mainly of Bolognese provenance. Noteworthy is the proximity of the *bergamasche* and the *ebraica* (the latter by Ghirardo da Panico Bolognese).[4]

The *villotta* appears in the first decades of the sixteenth century in the northern parts of Italy, especially in the Venetian area, and its roots in the monophonic, unwritten folk tradition are preserved in its four-part settings: the *cantus prius factus* usually appears in the tenor voice and is set homorhythmically, sometimes with short dialogue passages between pairs of voices. As to its poetic form, there are two sorts of *villotte*: type A is composed of a small group of verses, usually four, unequal in length and meter, and type B is strophic in form with a refrain. This refrain is often rhythmically faster than the text of the stanzas and implies a metrical shift from common to triple time. Nonsense syllables are not uncommon in the verse of the *villotte* (Rubsamen 1966).

Azzaiolo's third book of *villotte* contains both types of texts. They exhibit the usual popular verbal witticisms ("Ella rispose: torne due volt'in dì, torne tre volt'in dì, torne sessanta volt'in dì," p. 13), splitting of words ("Primo dì della se ... della settimana/ E da lo, da lo mio'amor," p. 1; "D'in su'l verde fiorire del fre ... del fresco maggio," p. 5), nonsense syllables ("Tandella, tandella, aritondella ..." p.1;[5] "O che dolor son le, son le feri d'amo-no-no-re," p. 5), and humorous imitations of animal calls ("canta cucu, canta cra-cra," p. 2, or the delightful "Mia

3 Antonio Francesco Grazzini, (= Lasca, Accademico fiorentino), *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascheaate* [!] *o canti carnascialeschi ... andati a Firenze* (Florence, L. Torrentino, 1559) p. 462.

4 Nothing is known about this composer, who also contributed a *villotta* to Azzaiolo's first book of *Villotte del fiore*

5 According to Vatielli (1927: 49) this refrain may represent a motive of a folk or a nursery dance.

mar'andò al marco," p. 10, wherein various animal cries are depicted one by one, very much in the manner of the American "Old MacDonald had a farm"[6]). The music of the *villotte*, to judge by the tenor and bass parts, is based on pre-existent tunes in the tenor[7] and set homo-rhythmically, without pairing-off of the voices.

That there was no sharp distinction in the sixteenth century between the *villotta*, the *napolitana* and other dialect songs had already been stated in Zarlino's *Istitutioni harmoniche*.[8] And, indeed, the three *napolitane* of the collection are musically similar to the *villotte*, although one may observe some subtle distinctions between them. They too, place a folk-like melody in the tenor part, but their text and music are rhythmically more poignant and even slightly vulgar ("Od' abracciami, basciami, stringemi, ridemi traditora" — a refrain to "Non t'aricordi," p. 11 — which requires a metrical shift to 3/4, or "tringoli, mingoli, laccioli, spingoli" with its fast motion in *fusae*, p. 6).

The *renommé* of Azzaiolo's third book of *villotte* rests on the two *bergamasche* included in it — the earliest documentation of a musically composed art-*bergamasca* and a rare sample of one based on a text.[9] Their generic affinity to the *villotta* and the *napolitana*, as well as some of their idiosyncrasies, may be detected clearly. The poetic form, the first *bergamasca,* "A sen du fardei vegnu de bergamasca" (p. 3), belongs to type A, and the second, "Chi vuol vegni a bergam" (p. 7) — slightly more sophisticated in its rhyming scheme — to type B (three stanzas with a refrain). They are written in the rough Bergamasque dialect, and refer to concrete places (Bergamo, the market, the tavern of Bartolomeo Cucu), actions (buying *caiada*, [sour milk?], carrying *salada*, drinking wine), names of women of easy virtue ("madonna Sabadina"), songs to be sung ("La Ramacina," "La bella Franceschina"),[10] or vivid situations (being seduced and robbed by bawdy women, in "A sen"). The *villotte*, we are informed by William F. Prizer (1991: 24), "tend to be narrative;

6   Vatielli (1927: 50): "Si tratta di una canzone fanciullesca."
7   Except for "Ascolta che dolc'armonia" (p. 2), where its absence is quite conspicuous.
8   Cf. Einstein (1949: vol. 1, 352); Cardamone (1981: vol. 1, 25).
9   A later *bergamasca* on a text, which quotes both the melodic and the harmonic patterns of the tune, appears in Act II, scene 4 of Vergilio Mazzocchi and Marco Marazzoli's *Che soffre speri* (Rome, 1639 text by Giulio Rospigliosi). It is sung, of course, by the servant, Zanni, in the Bergamasque dialect. Cf. Abert 1954: 226.
10   All these examples are taken from "Chi vuol," p. 7. See Einstein (1949), *passim*, and Rubsamen (1966) for "Che fa la Ramacina." See also Jeppesen (1962: 253) and Kirkendale (1972a: 188–96) for the history of "La bella Franceschina."

names, places, and times are routinely included." And indeed, the texts clearly depict the *couleur locale* of Bergamo and characterize its *facchini* and their adventures, and do so not merely by using the local dialect.

Musically, the two *bergamasche* are cast in the form of the *villotta,* placing a folk-like tune in the tenor part and surrounding it with plain, homophonic texture. Unlike the 'explicit' *villotte* of Azzaiolo's *Terzo libro* they make abundant use of echo answers in pairs (T/B versus S/A; the latter pair, missing in the only extant edition, may easily be reconstructed). These *bergamasche,* then, may be called "*villotte alla bergamasca,*" i.e., *villotte* using the Bergamasque, rather than the Paduan dialect as is professed on the title page of the collection ("*Villotte alla Padoana*").

The music of the *ebraica* is not based on any pre-existent tune. Its text is interwoven with Hebrew words ("Adonai con voi," "Caiadonai"), partly distorted ("Ecco de lo Valam"), which lend it a comic character. Its text consists mainly of verbal mimicry, and the music underscores the notion of parody in its frequent changes from common to triple time.

It is well known that the fragments of pre-existent songs, upon which the *villotte* are based, often migrate from one piece to another, thus creating a network of associations. A closer scrutiny of Azzaiolo's music may, indeed, disclose the existence of musical references between the two *bergamasche,* the *ebraica* and one of the *villotte* of this collection. A melodic fragment of four measures is common to all four of them. Moreover, this fragment is identical to the first part of the melodic pattern of the *bergamasca* (see Ex. 1 above), an affinity which is even more obvious if we draw into the circle of comparisons one of the *villote* from Book I, "O spazzacamin," which Vatielli (1927: 41) classifies both as *bergamasca* (because of the use of the local dialect) and *mascherata.* This piece, which already partly foreshadows the major mode and the duple meter of the future *bergamasca,* characteristically opens with two solo bars by the tenor, proclaiming "O spazzacamin," and its two closing lines display the typical dialogue character of the *villotta* (TB versus the four voices).

Melodically, the five tenor fragments consist of an *ouvert,* leading from *c* to *a,* and a *clos,* leading from *d* to *g* (Ex. 2).[11] If we compare these melodic fragments to the melodic pattern of the *bergamasca,*

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11   This melodic inflection may be found in other *villotte* as well, e.g. in Azzaiolo's no. 2 ("O pur, donna bella") and 6 (the famous "E levaime").

we observe a melodic shift at the *clos*, which leads from *d* to *g* (Ex. 2 a–e), instead of going from *c* to *f* and closing in the major mode, as does the pattern (Ex. 2 f).

"ouvert"   "clos"

		Bergamasca, p. 3 ("A sen") mm. 15-18
Con	cian-z'e ba- le, con frav-d'e con ca- rot- te	
		Bergamasca, p. 7 ("Chi vuol") mm. 1-4
chi	vuol ve- gni e Ber- ga- m'a Ber-go-m'al mer- c'a	
		Villolla, p. 10 mm.3-12
mi	com-pr'i- na gal- li- na per la mia per-so- na	
		Ebraica mm. 40-43
Gri- dan Ba-	ru- ca- ba per svo di-let- to	
		"O spazzacamin" (Book I) mm. 10-13

"ouvert"   "clos"

Bergamasca: melodic pattern

Example 2. Comparison of five tenor fragments and the "melodic pattern"

The affinity with the first part of the *bergamasca* pattern is, of course, only a melodic, and not a harmonic one. However, in "O spazzacamin," we may detect a pronounced double statement of the bass pattern (Ex. 3) and, interestingly enough, it is coupled not with the first, but with the second part of the melodic pattern, closing similarly in the major mode (Ex. 4). In other words, we may find both the melodic and the harmonic patterns of "the" *bergamasca* anticipated in "O spazzacamin," rather than in the two professed *bergamasche* of Azzaiolo's Vol. III. While the latter are linked to one another and to a group of further *villotte* or their sub-species, including the *ebraica,* by a melodic fragment which consists only of the first part (the *ouvert*) of the pattern (see Ex. 2), "O spazzacamin" already contains the raw material out of which the double-scaffolding pattern of the *bergamasca* will eventually be forged.[12]

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12 See Floztinger's "Doppelgerüst," in Flotzinger 1976: 93.

Example 3. "O spazzacamin," *mm. 18–21*
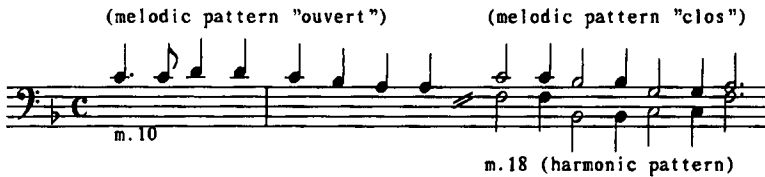
Example 4. "O spazzacamin," *melodic and harmonic patterns*

Francesco Novati pointed out, as early as in 1912, how close the literary links are between the texts of the *spazzacamin* and the *bergamasca* (Novati 1912: 934–35). A *lauda spirituale* ("La tingherlina"), printed in Florence in 1485, is designated by him as a *protagonista* of the *spazzacamin bergamasco*, the chimney sweep from Bergamo, whom we encounter in Azzaiolo's first book of *Villotte del fiore*.[13] The above discussion of the music has demonstrated not only that the literary generic links between the two are corroborated by musical correspondences, but that "O spazzacamin" made an essential contribution to the history of the musical *bergamasca*. As for the *ebraica*, let us conclude that it shares with the "*villotta*-derived" forms most of their family resemblance — a plain, homophonic texture, a folk-like, mocking character, a similar poetic structure, and a common melodic fragment — but lacks the characteristic pre-existent melody in the tenor.

EBRAICHE, MASCHERATE, AND COMMEDIE

A wide gap exists between *ebraiche* such as the one in Azzaiolo's book, in which a few mutilated Hebrew words are used to signify ridiculous figures and situations, and the earlier *ebraiche* from the fifteenth and

13   Biscantor calls "O spazzacamin" a *mascherata* which recalls a famous Florentine *canto carnascialesco*, "Visin, visin, visin,/ Chi vuol spazzar camin," parodied in a spiritual version in a lauda by Feo Belcari, "Gesu, Gesu, Gesu,/ Ognun chiami Gesu." Cf. Acciai (1981: xviii).

early sixteenth centuries, which transmit certain messages and insinuations in a more subtle manner. The latter (chronologically the earlier group) belong to the genre of *mascherate* and *canti carnascialeschi*, while the former (to which Azzaiolo's *ebraica* also belongs) make use of the robust humor of the *commedia dell'arte*. A few examples of both types will illustrate this point.

The first two examples appear in Grazzini's above-mentioned *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate ò canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze* (1559) but were written much earlier. Here the Jews appear among other representatives of sundry professions and social groups — painters, merchants, peasants, scholars, gypsies, widows, etc. The first of the two, the *Canzona de' giudei*, with a text by Giovambattista dell'Ottonaio, one of the main contributors to this genre (D'Accone 1980: vol. 3, 721), contains a sharp satire aimed not at the Jews, but at their Florentine successors in the banking trade. May we interpret it as a covert attack on the new Christian loan-banks of Florence or, more specifically, as a reflection of the controversy around the *Monti di Pietà*? In any case, the obvious critical attitude of the text is well disguised to appear as a reproach enunciated by the Jews.[14]

The *Canzona de' giudei battezzati*, by an anonymous poet, reads like the second part of the previous one. It seems to refer to a concrete event: a group of baptized Jews introduces itself after having been banished from Florence a year before. Now they return to the city as new converts and express their (somewhat ambiguous) confidence in the new faith. The text may recall the official expulsion of Jewish moneylenders from Florence in 1495, a controversial decree which was delayed several times. As for the *neofite*, their motives as well as their loyalty were usually

14 Già mille volte da noi achattasi
    Danar col pegnio in mano;
    Hor poichè l'arte me di noi imparasti
    Pover venuti siano.

A thousand times you have borrowed from us money, with pawn in your hand; now that you have learnt the profession from us we became poor.

    Or:
    Noi sappiam ben che non sol per guadagnio
    Con sicurtà prestate,
    Ma l'aiutare un povero compagnio:
    Il che molto ben fate.
    Et se voi guadagniate
    E' giusto, et cosa honesta:
    Chè non fa mal chi presta;
    Ma chi achatta, fa mal dell'usura.

We know well that not just for the sake of profit you lend with a pledge, but in order to help a poor comrade: and you do it well. And if you do gain it is a good and just cause: For he who lends does not commit any wrong; but he who borrows has to pay back with interest.

suspected both by church authorities and the people.[15] Are we right in observing an ironical note in the words put into their mouths?[16]

The four-part music to the two texts was composed by the Florentine composers Alessandro Coppini (c. 1465–1527) and Giovanni Seragli (fl. 1502–1527), respectively.[17] Both are sung mostly homophonically with subdued voices: Coppini's *Canzona de' giudei* in C3, C3, C3 and F3, and Seragli's *Canzona de' giudei battezzati* in C4, C4, C4 and F4 clefs. The strange sound of the *voci mutati*, which, quite significantly, also characterizes Coppini's *Canzona della morte*,[18] thus appears to be a *topos* of the condemned and the outcast. However, if our reading of the subtext of the two *Canzone* is correct, we should interpret the music as taking part in the *double-entendre*, so typical of many *canti carnascialeschi* (D'Accone 1980: vol. 3, 721).[19]

The next example to be discussed here is found in Lodovico Novello's *Mascherate di piu sorte et varii soggetti appropriati al Carnevale* (Venice,

15   Although the reports relate to a later period, they are nonetheless significant. See, for instance, Segre (1975: 131–42). The most comprehensive history of the Jews in Renaissance Florence is still Umberto Cassuto's (1918) study.

16   Se vi ricorda bene, oggi fa l'anno   As you well remember, it is a year today
     Che tre dì qui da voi fumo accettati,   since you received us for three days
     Dove intendesti el troppo nostro danno   and agreed, to our detriment,
     Per prestar voi et esser noi chacciati.   that you lend money and we be exiled.

     Or, in the next stanza:
     Duolci dell' aver perso troppo tempo   We regret having lost so much time
     A prender questa fè sicura et buona;   Before taking this safe and good faith;

     and in the last stanza:
     Quanto è felice in terra un che sia nato   How happy on earth is the man born
     Di buon cristiano et maxime in Fiorenza;   a good Christian, and especially in Florence;
     Benchè non basta l'esser battezato   but it is not enough to be baptized
     Sanza aver carità et patienza....   without having charity and compassion....

17   Both compositions in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, MS Banco Rari 230. Modern edition in Masson (1913: 16–28) and D'Accone (1967: nos. 7 and 26).

18   In C3, C3, C3, and C4 clefs. Music in D'Accone (1967: no. 9). In the anonymous music to Ottonaio's *Canto dei capi tondi*, the clef combination is identical with that of the *Canzona de' giudei battezzati*. The *capi tondi*, i.e. "round heads," are "impudent, faithless men. The city of Florence is warned to rid itself of such types, because they are indeed 'bad seed' ['*mal semenza*']." Cf. Gallucci (1981: xxiii) (text synopsis) and no. 17 (music). Gallucci's volume contains also Coppini's *Canzona de' giudei* (no. 24).

19   On "the need for symbolism, the songs with double meanings, the aggression sublimated into ritual" in the European carnival see Peter Burke (1978: 199–204). As for the music of the *Canzona de' giudei battezzati*, Federico Ghisi (1937: 58) claims that it evokes, "in armonie sorde ed oscure, il ghetto dei giudei," but the Florentine ghetto was established only in 1571.

1546). The collection opens with a *mascherata* "Da hebbree," where four young *hebbree madonne* present their merchandise, which includes collars, veils and a variety of perfumes. Formally, this is a typical frottola, with its division into *piedi* and *ripresa*. Despite its title and the opening line, the text is devoid of any specific "Jewish" theme, but reads as a typical *mascherata*.[20] One could speculate, of course, as to why Novello would choose to open his book with a somewhat misleading designation. Did he hope to attract the attention of the potential consumer by emphasizing the strange and the exotic? The fact that the piece is followed by a *mascherata* "Da mori," who proclaim that they came from Ethiopia, appears to confirm this interpretation.

The popular delight in poking fun at the foreign and the alien lies at the core of the *commedia dell'arte* with its stock figures of the *Veneziano*, the *Spagnulo*, the *Bergamasco*, etc. Each of them is illustrated both by his distinctive dialect and accent and by a few salient features, commonly believed to characterize him. Thus, the *Ebrei* are portrayed by the use of a few Hebrew words, often contaminated, and an array of private names. They are usually depicted praying and shouting — an indication of how they were perceived by their contemporaries.[21] As for the music, it is written in the light madrigalesque style, enlivened by instances of voice-splitting and by a switch from common to triple time.

Azzaiolo's *Ebraica,* textually and musically, seems to belong to the second tradition discussed here, that of the *commedia dell'arte*, which conveys its messages directly and somewhat robustly, rather than to that of the *canti carnascialeschi* with their more subtle insinuations and atmosphere of reserve.[22]

20 The same holds true for an anonymous *Ebreo trinaio* (the Jewish lace-seller), reported by Ghisi (1937: 161). It is a mascherata sung à 3, which musically seems to belong to the late sixteenth century. It appears in a (lost) manuscript side by side with texts sung by vendors of crockery, greengrocers, etc.

21 Famous musical examples are Orazio Vecchi's *L'Amfiparnasso* (1597) and *Veglie di Siena* (1604), and Banchieri's *Barca di Venezia per Padova* (1605). The same cliches are often used in the comic scenes and farces of Giulio Cesare Croce (1550–1609), the Bolognese comedian, singer, actor and improviser. For example, at the end of his *Questioni di varii linguaggi* (1612) a list of about sixty [!] Hebrew names is rapidly recited, to enhance the comic effect. Or, in *Scaramuccia grandissima...frà due Hebrei* (1609) there is a fight between Manuelle, (who is "ricco da roba ma pover di cervello") and Salamone; upon hearing the noise Messer Mosè, Messer Abram and Messer Iosue rush by, "gridando ad alta voce." Many other examples may be quoted, written (or extemporized) in the vein of the *commedia dell'arte*.

22 Vatielli (1927: 50) claims, however, that the *ebraica*, the *mascherata*, and the two *bergamasche* of Azzaiolo's *Libro terzo* are all "più o meno una derivazione postuma dei canti carnascialeschi."

THE ENGLISH CONNECTION

This part of the study takes us from Italy to England. John M. Ward
(Ward 1967: 32–33) was the first to call attention to the fact that "The
Jewishe dance" for broken consort, existing in two Cambridge
University Library manuscripts, is actually based on the harmonic
pattern of the *bergamasca*. By association with an identical, slightly
varied, keyboard piece in a Paris MS, "The rich Jew," likewise based on
the *bergamasca*-ground, he tried to reconstruct the tune of "Francis' new
jig." The text of this dramatic jig, which was danced by the Elizabethan
actor George Attowell in 1595, is preserved in the *Shirburn Ballads* under
the title "Mr. Attowel's Jigge: between Francis, a Gentleman; Richard, a
farmer; and their wives."[23] It was sung to four consecutive tunes:
"Walsingham," repeated 12 times, "The Jewish dance" (on the
bergamasca ground) 7 times, "Buggle-boe" 14 times, and "Go from
my window" 16 times (Ward 1967: 33).

[ACT II]

Enter *Richard, Bess'es* husband.

To the tune of *The Jewishe dance.*

[7]

Ri[chard]
    Hey downe, a downe /
        Hey downe, a downe, a downe /
    There is never a lustye farmer,
        in all our towne,
    That hath more cause
        to lead a merye lyfe,
    Than I, that am maryed
        to an honest wife.
B[ess]
    I thanke yow, gentle husband!
        yow prayse me to my face.
R[ichard]
    I crye thee mercy, Besse!
        I knewe the not in place.

Illustration 1. Excerpt from the text of "Mr. Attowel's Jigge"

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23   Ed. by Clark 1907. A slightly different version is edited by Rollins (1922). See also
     Baskervill (1929: 238–41).

Are there any connections between the title "The rich Jewe" in the Paris MS and the lost ballad of "the murtherous life and terrible death of the rich Jew of Malta," as suggested by Ward (ibid., 32), or between "The Jewishe dance" and the ballad "The noble prodigal" in the *Roxburghe Ballads*, as suggested by Clark (Rollins 1922:1)? The former was registered on May 16, 1594, one day before Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (Rollins 1924: no.1844), while the latter is dated by the editor of the Roxburgh Ballads as belonging "to the date immediately preceding the Restoration, 29 May, 1660," and consists of "A New Medley of Six Ayres," the first of which is designated "The Jew's coran[to]."[24] Unfortunately, the tunes have not been identified.

Illustration 2. Excerpt from the text of "The Jew's Coranto"

24   Ebsworth 1869: vol. 4, 489–492.

While the pursuit of clear musical "Jewish-English" connections to the *bergamasca* bass pattern yielded no results, the English sources of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries offer ample "Bergamasks," "Bergomasks," or even "dumps" and "hornpipes," sometimes associated with the Morris, the Pantalone, or the Antic dances. In discussing these associations, A.J. Sabol draws parallels between the stock figures of the *commedia dell'arte* and "some familiar popular tunes [which] were very useful to writers and producers of a genre whose meanings were best conveyed if not in dance, then by means of gesture and pantomime." [25] Shakespeare's well-known reference to the *bergamasca* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act V, Scene 1) is a case in point: "Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company," Bottom asks, mixing the visual and the auditory senses. While the music of the "Bergomask" or "the dance of clowns" which follows, has not been preserved, the outlines of its main musical features were certainly fixed and well known, and could have served as a framework for endless variations and extemporization.

THE BERGAMASCA: SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

It was, of course, Italy, the cradle of the *bergamasca,* which provided the impetus for the instrumental development of this form. In the lute tablatures of the sixteenth century we find three *bergamascas.* However, in the earliest of them, the *Saltarello dito il Bergamasco* in G. Gorzanis's *Terzo libro de intabolatura di liuto* (1564),[26] there are no clues as yet of either the melodic or the harmonic pattern of this dance. Its triple Saltarello meter, which contradicts the usual duple meter of the *bergamasca,* and the over simplistic bass, consisting of a I–V scheme, suggest that it was conceived more as a character piece which described the *zanni bergamasco,* than as a *bergamasca* "per definitionem."

25   Cf. Sabol (1978: vol. 1, fn. 45). The following are only samples among a vast number of various English titles for dances based on the *bergamasca* dance: "The Antic," "The Buffons," "Bergamask," and "Pantalone," in Sabol (1978) nos. 214, 215, 217 and 218, respectively; "Dump" in Lumsden (1953) no.16, ("Militis Dump"), and "Dump no. 2" by John Johnson in Ward (1992: vol. 1, no. 35 and fn. 311); "Motley" in the Folger MS fol. 6v, cf. Ward (1992, example 32); "A Horne pype" by Anthony Holborne, *The Cittharn School* (1597) (in modern edition, see M. Kanazawa, ed., 1973, vol. 2, no. 33). An interesting example is Daniel Bachiler's "Medley" composition, "The Lady Frances Sidney's Felicity," ed. and reconstructed by Edwards (1977: 42–46) which contains in mm. 45–48 both the harmonic and the melodic pattern of the *bergamasca.*
26   Facsimile edition Geneva. 1984: 175–78.

The second sixteenth-century example is Giulio Cesare Barbetta's *Moresca deta la Bergamasca* from his *Intavolatura de liuto* (Venice, A. Gardano, 1585). It is the fourth of five "Moresche usitate per diversi paesi," which he composed at the request of his masters and friends "nel modo da moderni usato." This piece, the earliest sample of *bergamasca* variations on the I–IV–V–I bass, may not only be considered representative of the contemporary taste for lute virtuosity, but of the future genre of lute *bergamascas*. Although meticulously notated in tabulature, the overall impression is that of a "description" of a living tradition of improvisation, more than that of "prescription." [27] In Barbetta's composition the bass is coupled with a plain melodic line (*ee–ff–dd–e*), which eventually develops into a more florid figure, one we shall later encounter in the *bergamasca* versions of Scheidt, Buxtehude and Bach,[28] and also in that of John Bull (see Ex. 5c below).

Lute virtuosity is also fully manifested in the *Bergamasca* in Giulio Abondante's *Intabulatura di lauto*, Book 5 (1587),[29] consisting of twelve variations on the bass — again a composition which creates the atmosphere of free virtuoso extemporization.

The Italian tradition of lute variations on the *bergamasca* bass continues in the same vein well into the seventeenth century,[30] spreading to France and Germany.[31] Its English successors are discussed above.

A detailed analysis of all the available *bergamasca* compositions of the seventeenth century in Italy, England, France and Germany is beyond the scope of this study.[32] For the sake of brevity they may be divided into three main groups, according to their instrumentation: (a) plucked instruments, (b) keyboards and (c) instrumental ensembles. Some of them, mainly compositions of group *a*, make use only of the bass pattern, in others the harmonic and the melodic patterns are

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27   These terms are used in the sense of the distinction made by Charles Seeger. Cf. Seeger (1958: 184–95).
28   This fact could be considered as corroborating Carol MacClintock's assumption (1980: vol. 2, 137) that Barbetta, whose lutebooks bear dedications to members of the German nobility, spent much of his life in Germany.
29   Facsimile edition Geneva 1982: 170–171.
30   Noteworthy among the printed examples are those of Rasponi (1635), A. Piccinini (1639), H. Kapsberger (1640) and B. Gianoncello (1650). The prolific guitar literature starts with Montesardo (1606). For additional manuscripts and printed sources for lute and guitar, see Moe (1944: vol 1, 1402–4).
31   Besard (1603 and 1617) and Domenico (1619).
32   This is attempted in an M.Mus. thesis by Yoram Blum (1995).

coupled together, be it explicitly or implicitly, and still others treat the bass and the soprano separately, as if to demonstrate their awareness of the existence of two patterns.[33]

A comparison between the melodic pattern of at least twenty *bergamasca* compositions, mainly from the seventeenth century, has shown that the tradition of the melodic *bergamasca* pattern — as far as one may rely on printed compositions alone — may, in principle, be divided into two lines: Line A (Example 5 a), which we may call "the main line" (to which the sixteenth-century fragment in Bachiler's "Medley," also belongs), examples of which can be found in the compositions of Viadana (1610), Frescobaldi (1635), Mazzocchi/ Marazzoli (1639), Kapsberger (1640), Uccelini (1642), Fasolo (1645), Salvatore (c. 1650), Pasquini ("Bergamasca") and Buxtehude (for instance, in the last *partita* of his variation cycle). A subgroup of this line (line A') — the one of Salamone Rossi, Piccinini and Pasquini ("Partite") — presents the melody from the outset in a slightly embellished version, a melodic variation of a well-known *Vorlage*, as it were (Ex. 5b). Line B (Ex. 5c) may lend some intriguing insights into possible musical connections and associations, mainly as they concern the second part of the melody. It starts with the earliest fully fledged *bergamasca* variations, those of Barbetta (1585), and continues to around 1600, with John Bull and some of his English anonymous contemporaries (Sabol 1978: 15 and nos. 217–18). In Italy it appears in Matteo *Coferati's Corona di sacre canzoni* (1689),[34] and — back in Germany — in the seventeenth-century manuscript known a *"Klavier-buch der Jungfrau Clara Regina Im Hoff"* in Österreichische Nationalbi-bliothek, Vienna (Nettl 1921: 96), in the variation cycles of Scheidt (1624) and Buxtehude (e.g., *Partita* 21), and from the latter, directly or indirectly, to J.S. Bach. It is well known that it was sung in Germany as a folk song with the text "Kraut und Rüben" (Spitta 1970: 654), but we may find its incipit in Erk and Boehme's *Deutscher Liederhort* (No. 310) as "Herzu! Ein neuer Pantalon," dated 1637 — a significant text in view

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33 An interesting example is Viadana's "La bergamasca" (1610), a canzona for two instrumental consorts, in which at first the melodic pattern is polyphonically elaborated by each of the two groups, and then they echo each other in homorhythmic texture, based on the bass pattern. Frescobaldi, too, in his masterful *bergamasca* variations, makes separate use of the harmonic and melodic patterns, which he interweaves in manifold polyphonic combinations.

34 Cf. Ghisi (1964: 77) and Hudson (1980: 541).

Example 5. Comparison of melodic bergamasca patterns (selected samples; transposed to G major)

of the origin of the *bergamasca*. Musically, it fits into our so-called Line A.[35]

It appears, then, that the history of the *bergamasca* melody may be divided into an "Italian" (A) and a "mainly German" line (B), although this dual line of transmission is not completely consistent within itself.

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35   Idelsohn (1932: xliii) claims that this melody is the source for a Passover tune (no. 308 in his collection) sung by southern German Jews.

The comparison also indicates that the *clos* of the melodic pattern is more stable than the *ouvert*. Moreover, it may appear as the only element reminiscent of the melody, as if it were a tag (e.g., Besard).[36]

THE DANCED BERGAMASCA

If the *bergamasca* was raised from an elementary soprano-bass pattern into an elaborate art form in the realm of music, its choreography — as far as it may be traced — continues to retain the character of the erstwhile *facchin bergamasco*, and to depict the vulgar and the grotesque.[37] Thus the dance is ridiculed in Filippo degli Alessandri's *Discorso sopra il ballo* (1620) as performed "as do those who, after putting the heel on the ground, showing the sole to everyone around and keeping the waist behind them as if tumbling down, perform a shake like that of the tail of a fish." And more specifically, "this is done while the left arm is crossed by the right one in the Bergamasca, something really most ridiculous; it is danced holding the arms equally pressed at both sides, moving them a little bit. For it is an ugly sight to keep them always stretched out with closed hands."[38]

While this description is obviously written from the point of view of a writer who is known as always keen to exhibit his *"pompa di erudizione storica e pedagogica"* (Tani 1954: 277), Gregorio Lambranzi's *Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul* provides us with a rich vista of the bourgeois theatrical dance of the late seventeenth century.[39] His *bergamasca* is a short depiction of an artisan's dance — one of many

36   Interestingly enough, in the *bergamasca* attributed to J.P. Sweelinck in the modern edition of *Werken voor orgel of clavecimbel: uit het Celler Klavierbuch 1662* (Schmidt, 1965) the *"ouvert"* corresponds to Line A, and the *"clos"* to Line B, especially to that of Barbetta (Ex. 5c).
37   Similarly, Friedrich Erhard Niedt (1700) pokes fun at the primitive musical skeleton of the *bergamasca*, and its low-class association. Cf. Braun 1981: 18.
38   Filippo degli Alessandri, *Discorso sopra il Ballo et le buone creanze necessarie ad un Gentil Huomo ed ad una Gentildonna* (Terni, 1620) pp. 120–21: "...come fanno alcuni che posato il calcagno in terra mostrando la pianta alli circostanti con la vita tutta all'indietro, che par che vogliano cascare, fanno una rimenata di coda di pescie, atto che si f? con il braccio sinistro, attraversato dalla mano dritta nella Bergamasca, cosa invero ridicolosissima, nel ballare terranno le braccia calcate a paro de'fianchi, movendole un poco, poiche brutta vista farebbe tenendole sempre distese, con le mani alquanto serrate ..."
39   This interesting publication (Nuremburg 1716) has often been discussed in the literature of dance research, but has not yet sufficiently been exploited as a source of musical information. It was translated into English by F. Derra de Moroda (1972). A facsimile edition of the engraver's copy upon which the original 1716 print was based (Cod. Icon

grotesque pantomime dances of this category in Lambranzi's book, which includes dances of tradesmen such as coopers, blacksmiths, tailors, sailors, etc. The copper etching of Johann Georg Puschner depicts (p. 29 of Book II) a solo dancer, a shoemaker and (on p. 30) a couple — the shoemaker and his wife. The soloist is instructed to use pantomime in imitating the figures of his art ("... *stelt* die Verrichtung des Handwercks in Figuren vor") and to follow musical measure, while the scene concludes with the couple dancing "mit gewoehnlichen pas."

Illustration 3. Lambranzi, Neue und curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul, Book II: fol. 29.

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343 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliotheke, Munich) also appeared in Derra de Moroda's translation. The *bergamasca* melody, which is reproduced in the Nuremberg print in a slightly mutilated version (one bar is missing; see illustration 3) is corrected on fol. 36v of the engraver's copy.

While the exact nature of this dance remains somewhat vague, it is noteworthy from our point of view that it is dance of the lower classes. Moreover, in the second line of his "musical caption" Lambranzi quotes the traditional *bergamasca* tune.

The *bergamasca* does not fare better in *Il Malmantile racquistato* by L. Lippi (Florence, 1688), where this dance is performed by frogs ("...Some of them, to the sound of bergamasques/ Cut five or six capriols"). Gaspare Ungarelli (1894: 64) describes the dance as it has still been performed in his days in the Bolognese area. Although it appears to have preserved its popular character, it is no longer associated with lower class manners. Curt Sachs (1937: 367) claims that "the form described by Ungarelli is apparently degenerate." It seems to me, however, that the Italian romantic national movement has lent to this dance the image of idyllic country life. Paul Nettl (1962: 391–92), whose contribution to the history of the *bergamasca* will be discussed below, finds the clear vestiges of the traditional *bergamasca* tune in the music as transcribed by Ungarelli.

A JEWISH CONNECTION?

In discussing Salamone Rossi's *Quarto libro de varie sonate* (1622), Eduard Birnbaum (1893) wonders how the tune of the *bergamasca*, included in this collection, could have entered into the synagogue. "The German Jews," he claims already at the outset of his study, "recite Psalm 144 ('Ledavid Baruch') and the hymn 'Aafid[!] nezer' rhythmically, according to a *bergamasca* tune of the sixteenth century" (Birnbaum 1893: 6). He does not agree with Haberl's assumption that it is reminiscent of the cantilena "O sanctissima," for as he states categorically, "the Bergamasca is characterized by its rhythm" (Birnbaum 1893: 32). In Example 6, we compare six melodies which, according to Birnbaum, illustrate the metamorphoses of the *bergamasca* tune. For the sake of comparison, they were all transposed into the same key:

Example 6. Comparison of bergamasca tunes according to E.Birnbaum

a) Salamone Rossi, Theme of "Sonata duodecima sopra la Bergamasca" from *Quarto libro de varie sonate* (1622)

b) "Ledowid boruch" (Ps. 144), (Idelsohn 1932: no. 299b).

c) "Gibore choach," from "Aapid neser" (Hymn), (Idelsohn 1932: no. 159a).

d) "Teshalesh shoforos," from "Aapid neser," (Idelsohn 1932: no. 159a).

e) "Gibore choach," from "Aapid neser," (Idelsohn 1932: no. 159b).

f) "Gibore choach," (Baer 1877: no. 1099 — "first tune").

"We can often pick out identical notes here and there in two roughly similar themes," claims Jan LaRue while discussing the problem of significant and coincidental resemblance between themes in classical music (LaRue 1961: 226). It is true that "Ledowid boruch" (Ex. 6b) corresponds to the melodic *bergamasca* pattern in its mid- and final cadences; but, as it is based on a pertinent major-mode structure, the rich "statistical background" (LaRue 1961: 226) reduces, or even annihilates, the evidence of direct derivation. As for Ex. 6c–6f, they are rhythmically and melodically interdependent, but then they are different verses of the same hymn. Their resemblance with the *bergamasca* tune, however, is quite doubtful, and it seems that Birnbaum, in claiming similarity, was led by personal musical association, giving priority to the (rather vague) rhythmic element.

Interestingly enough, Paul Nettl — the first musicologist to trace the history of the *bergamasca* — expresses a view similar to that of Birnbaum. For Nettl the *bergamasca* consists only of a melodic, and not of a harmonic pattern (as postulated by Riemann and Robert Lach, with whom he disagrees), and one of its main characteristics is, according to him, "the dotted-eighth rhythm."[40] Yet, after having sifted through a large amount of the extant art-*bergamascas*, we did not detect in them a prominent rhythmical element. Nettl obviously found a confirmation of his "rhythmical hypothesis" in Samuel Scheidt's "Canzon à 5 ad imitationem Bergamasc. Angl." (1621), a composition "where only the rhythm [of the bergamasca, and not its melodic pattern] is recognizable" (Nettl 1922/23: 292). But, in fact this piece, despite its title, is based on the English "Rosasolis," and its title — "Bergamasca anglica" — has not yet been sufficiently explained!

Eduard Birnbaum, the enthusiastic scholar of Jewish music, who was "urged by an incessant collector's passion" throughout his life, started his study of Salamone Rossi's work as early as in 1874, at the age of 19 (Adler 1985: 244). The philosophy of the "Wissenschaft des Judentums," which shaped his historical outlook, is clearly echoed in his *Jewish Musicians at the Mantuan Court*. Like the scholars of this movement, he strives to demonstrate how close the ties were between the Jews and the intellectual world around them, and to what extent they participated in the musical life. The following lines from his *Jewish Musicians* not only reflect nineteenth-century romanticism but also disclose his methodology:

> "Just as in nature everything develops by gradual ascent or descent (while the eye of the scholar attempts to pierce its essence and the gradual development of its forms and phenomena, large or small), so he who investigates Jewish art draws certain conclusions as regards the high or low taste of rulers and peoples in matters of art and science according to the extent in which Jews took part in the achievements in these domains. Particularly instructive in this respect is the history of the Jews in Spain and in Italy" (Birnbaum 1893: 9).

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40   Nettl's earliest discussion of the *bergamasca* is in Nettl 1921: 95–97. He later expanded upon the subject and referred to a few additional *"bergamascas"* (Nettl 1922–23: 291–95). His labeling, though, is not always correct, because of his erroneous melodic-rhythmic premise. See also Kirkendale (1972b: 16, fn. 1). Interestingly, Nettl himself was acquainted with Birnbaum's study, but skeptical as to the infiltration of the *bergamasca* tune into the synagogue (Nettl 1922–23: 295). His skepticism, although justified as we have seen, again rested mainly on his "rhythmical fallacy."

Jewish participation in cultural life, then, is Birnbaum's yardstick for measuring a nation's achievements in science and the arts. Sitting in his laboratory, as it were, the scholar of Jewish music is expected to dissect history into small phenomena (for instance, the affinity of melodic or rhythmic fragments) or large ones (e.g., the scope of Jewish musical activity in Renaissance Mantua). Thus he will penetrate into the nature of the cultural symbiosis between Jews and non-Jews, so significant for the construction of the historical narrative, and sketch the contours of Jewish history.

In conclusion, the hypothesis of the *bergamasca*'s Jewish ties has not been vindicated. One can, of course, arrange the tune in a chain of "common European idioms in western Ashkenazi melodies," as does Avenary (1971: 599). However, it is an elusive chain: its links — like those of so many "wandering melodies" in Jewish music — still await a precise definition, which should proceed beyond the *niveau neutre* to formalized analytical patterns.[41]

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41 These models of analysis are discussed in Nattiez (1990).

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