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Pietro Degli Antonii and the Bolognese Sonata for Violin Solo

Before the advent of the instrumental concerto, the sonata was the most ambitious genre of instrumental music of the 17th century. It was the subject of considerable experimentation in form, texture, expression and instrumental technique. The solo sonata, also known as *sonata a uno*, was crucial for the development of the violin idiom.[1] Although 17th-century Bologna was famous for its outstanding violinists, many of their works, such as those of Alfonso Pagani, Ercole Gaibara, Bartolomeo Laurenti, Leonardo Brugnoli and Giovanni Benvenuti, have not survived.

When it comes to Bolognese sonatas for violin solo, the largest number of pieces was left by Pietro Degli Antonii.[2] He is the author of twenty violin

[1] This type, scored for violin and basso continuo, is distinct from the sonata *a due*, featuring violin, melodic bass and basso continuo. Cf. N.M. Jensen, "Solo sonata, duo sonata and trio sonata: some problems of terminology and genre in 17th century Italian instrumental music" in: *Festschrift Jens Peter Larsen*, ed. N. Schiørring, H. Glahn, C.E. Hatting, Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen 1972; P. Wilk, *Sonata na skrzypce solo w siedemnastowiecznych Włoszech* [*Sonata for a violin solo in seventeenth-century Italy*], Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2005, pp. 59–76, 299–300.

[2] These works have been the subject of two publications and two unpublished master's theses. Cf. H. Mishkin, "The Solo Violin Sonata of the Bologna School", *Musical Quarterly* xxix (1943), pp. 103–109; L. Ferretti, *La musica strumentale di Pietro Degl'Antonii e l'opera V^a*, University of Bologna, MA thesis, 1973; W. Apel, *The Italian Violin Music in the 17th Century*, Indiana

sonatas published in two collections between 1676 and 1686. From before that period, we have only eight sonatas by Ottavio Maria Grandi, Bartolomeo Montalbano and Maurizio Cazzati—composers who, although associated with Bologna, were active in other centres at the time of their publication (List 1).[3] In this context, Pietro Degli Antonii's violin sonatas appear as the first purely Bolognese examples of the genre.

List 1. Bolognese sonatas for violin solo with bass in 1628–1706

1. O.M. Grandi (fl. 1610-1630): 2 sonatas vn/bc *in Sonate per ogni sorte di stromenti* (Venice 1628)
2. B. Montalbano (1596–1651): 4 sonatas vn/bc in *Sinfonie ad uno, e doi violini, a doi, e trombone, con il partimento per l'organo, con alcune a quattro viole* (Palermo 1629)
3. M. Cazzati (1616–1678): 2 sonatas vn/bc or vn/[vne]bc in *Il secondo libro delle sonate a una, doi, tre e quattro,* op. 8 (Venice 1648)
4. P. Degli Antonii (1639–1720): 20 sonatas vn/bc in [12] *Sonate a violino solo*, op. 4 (Bologna 1676) and [8] *Sonate a violino solo* op. 5 (Bologna 1686)
5. G. Jacchini (1667–1727): 7 sonatas vn/vc in *Sonate a violino e violoncello,* op. 1 (Bologna ca 1690) and *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695)
6. C.A. Mazzolini (1655–1737): sonata vn/vc in *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695)
7. G. Predieri (1671–1733): sonata vn/vc in *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695)
8. C.B. Rozzi (†1695): sonata vn/vc in *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695)
9. G. Torelli (1658–1709): 2 sonatas vn/bc in I-Bsp D.4.7 (G 60), MS.D.4.6 (G 61)
10. B. Bernardi (c1660-1732): 7 sonatas vn/bc in [6] *Sonate a violino col basso continuo*, op. 3 (Amsterdam 1706) and D-Dl Mus. 2432/R/1

1992, pp. 209–211; M.R. Cusmà Piccione, *Le sonate per violino e organo di Pietro degli Antonii: Studio storico ed edizione critica,* MA thesis, University of Pavia-Cremona, 1992.

[3] Considering the very scarce biographical sources on Ottavio Maria Grandi, his connection with Bologna is limited solely to the fact that he was a pupil of Alfonso Pagani. Bartolomeo Montalbano OFM, who came from the Bolognese nobility, most likely received his musical education in Bologna at San Francesco. However, his four sonatas for violin solo: *La Arezzo*, *La Zambiti*, *La Sghemma* and *La Geloso* come from a collection published during his stay in Palermo and are dedicated to the Sicilian superiors of the order. The affiliation of the sonatas *La Calva* and *La Pezzola* from Cazzati's Op. 8 to the group of Bolognese sonatas may be questionable. The composer published them long before he arrived in Bologna. Furthermore, the sonata *La Pezzola* is intended for performance on the violin with organ or as a sonata *a due* for violin, violone and organ.

The interest in violin sonatas grew in Bologna during the last quarter of the 17th century. Along with Torelli at the time of his activity in Bologna, the violin sonata was embraced by Giuseppe Jacchini, Clemente Giacomo Predieri, Bartolomeo Bernardi, Carlo Mazzolini and Bernardino Rozzi (List 1). Arcangelo Corelli's early violin sonatas published in Carlo Buffagnotti's anthology or preserved in a Turin manuscript (I-Tn, Foà 11) can also be added to this list. Before the publication of his first collection of violin sonatas, Pietro Degli Antonii was also actively involved in the field of the violin solo suite, a genre that was more popular in Bologna than the sonata (List 2). Thus, among Bolognese works for violin solo (sonatas and suites), those by Pietro Degli Antonii are the most numerous.

List 2. Bolognese suites for violin and bass in 1662–1704

1. M. Cazzati (1616–1678): *Correnti e balletti*, op. 30 (Bologna 1662), vn[vn]/vc; *Vari e diversi capricci per camera* a 1–3, op. 50 (Bologna 1669)
2. G.B. Vitali (1632–1692): *Balletti, correnti, ghe, allemande e sarabande,* op. 4 (Bologna 1668), vn, vne/ cemb
3. P. Degli Antonii (1639–1720): *Arie, ghe, baletti, correnti, allemande e sarabande*, op. 1, vn,vne/cemb (Bologna 1670); *Balletti, correnti & arie diverse*, op. 3, vn, vne/cemb (Bologna 1671)
4. G.B. Bassani (c1650-1716): *Balletti, correnti, ghe, sarabande*, op. 1 (Bologna 1677), vn,[vn]/ vc
5. P. Albergati (1663–1735): *Balletti, correnti, sarabande e ghe*, vn,[vn]/vne (Bologna, 1682)
6. D. Gabrielli (1659–1690): *Balletti, ghe, correnti, alemande e sarabande*, op. 1 (Bologna1684), vn,[vn]/ vne
7. G.B. Degli Antonii (1660-1696): *Balletti, correnti, ghe e sarabande da camera*, op. 3 (Bologna 1687), vn, vc/bc; *Balletti*, op.6 (1690), vn, vc/cemb
8. G. Torelli (1658–1709): *Concertino per camera*, op. 4 (Bologna 1688), 5 suites vn/vc in *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695), *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700) and A-Wn EM 50; suite vn/bc in D-Dl Mus. 2035/R/1
9. B.G. Laurenti (1644–1726): *Suonate per camera a violino e violoncello* op.1 (Bologna 1691), vn/vc
10. A. Ariosti (1666–1729): *Divertimenti da camera a violino e violoncello* (Bologna, 1695), vn/vc
11. G. Jacchini (1667–1727): *Concerti per camera*, op. 3 (Modena, 1697), vn/vc and vc/bc; suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)

12. G.A.V. Aldrovandini (1671–1707): 2 suites vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700); suite vn/vc in A-Wn EM.55 MUS MAG
13. C.A. Mazzolini (1655–1737): suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)
14. Filippo Carlo Belisi (?-1696): suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)
15. D. Marcheselli ((?-1703): suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)
16. G.A. Perti (1661–1756); suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)
17. A. Grimandi (fl. 1700-1702); suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)
18. B. Bernardi (c1660-1732): suite vn/vc in *Sonate per camera a violino e violoncello di vari autori* (Bologna ca 1700)

Pietro Degli Antonii, who during his lifetime enjoyed great respect as a composer, instrumentalist of San Petronio and Concerto Palatino, as well as maestro di cappella of many local churches, is today a forgotten figure.[4] According to some accounts, it was on his advice that the young Corelli went to Rome to continue his studies, and during his presidency of the Accademia Filarmonica, Torelli joined it and settled permanently in Bologna.[5] Although Degli Antonii was actively engaged in various vocal and instrumental genres, his works are rarely performed today. He is known essentially only for his violin sonatas, and even that recognition is quite limited.

The collection *Sonate a violino solo con il basso continuo per l'organo*, Op. 4 by Pietro Degli Antonii, containing twelve pieces, was published in Bologna in 1676 and dedicated to Prince Giovanni Carlo Ranuzzi—a representative of a well-known and respected family of Bolognese senators (Illustration 1). Ten years later was published a collection of his eight *Suonate a violino solo col basso continuo per l'organo*, Op. 5 (Illustration 2), dedicated to Francesco II d'Este,

[4] Recently, we have even been deprived of his physical image. During the conference. *Giuseppe Torelli e la musica del suo tempo a Bologna* (Bologna, 28–30.09.2023), Federico Longo proved that the only portrait of Pietro Degli Antonii from the Bolognese Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica actually depicts another composer, Attilio Ariosti. Cf. https://www.museibologna.it/musica/iconoteca/quadrodetails/&id=84

[5] Cf. Olivo Penna, *Cronologia* [...] *o sia istoria generale di questa accademia*, Bologna 1736, p. 62; G.B. Martini, *Serie cronologica de' Principi dell'Accademia de' Filarmonici di Bologna*, Bologna 1776, anno 1684.

Duke of Modena, a well-known violin music lover. Judging by the small number of surviving copies (two for Op. 4 and three for Op. 5), these prints were not issued in large numbers and attracted rather moderate interest outside of Emilia Romagna.[6] In addition, some Op. 4 sonatas were included in the British Library manuscript anthology Add. 31466. A complete copy of the sonatas from Op. 5, on the other hand, can be found in the manuscripts of the Biblioteca Estense in Modena (I-MOe, Mus.F.0021) and the Mariengymnasium Bibliothek in Jever, Germany (D-JE, C2).


SONATE
A VIOLINO SOLO
Con il Baſſo Continuo per l' Organo
DI PIETRO DE GLI ANTONI
Accademico Filaſchiſe
OPERA QVARTA.
All' Illuſtriſſimo Signore
CO. GIO. CARLO
RANVZZI.
IN BOLOGNA MDCLXXVI.
Per Giacomo Monti. Con licenza de' Superiori.

Illustration 1. P. Degli Antonii, *Sonate a violino solo con il basso continuo per l'organo,* Op. 4, Bologna: Monti 1676, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Bologna

[6] Apart from Bologna and Modena, copies of Op. 4 and 5 have only been preserved in Oxford.

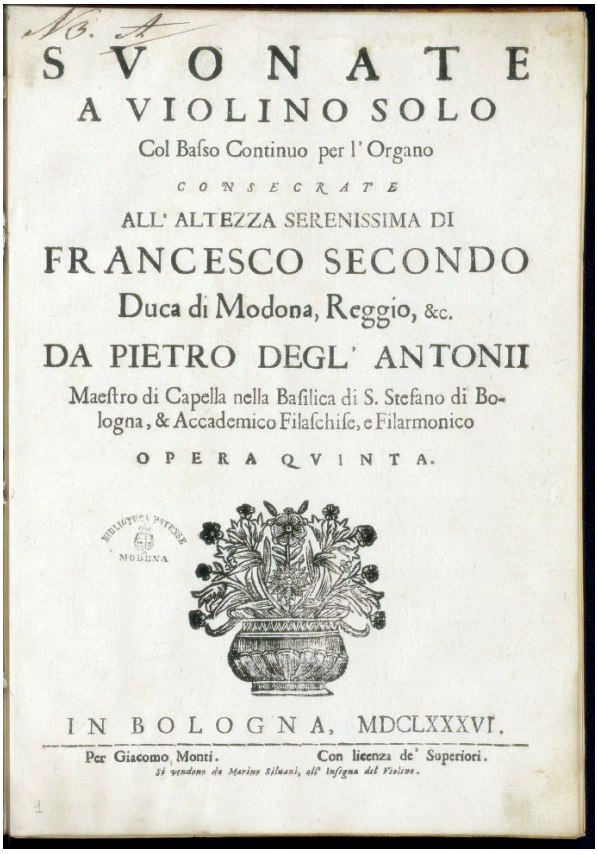

SVONATE
A VIOLINO SOLO
Col Baſso Continuo per l' Organo
CONSECRATE
ALL' ALTEZZA SERENISSIMA DI
FRANCESCO SECONDO
Duca di Modona, Reggio, &c.
DA PIETRO DEGL' ANTONII
Maeſtro di Capella nella Baſilica di S. Stefano di Bologna, & Accademico Filaſchiſe, e Filarmonico
OPERA QVINTA.
BIBLIOTECA ESTENSE MODENA
IN BOLOGNA, MDCLXXXVI.
Per Giacomo Monti. Con licenza de' Superiori.
Si vendono da Marino Silvani, all' Inſegna del Violino.

Illustration 2. P. Degli Antonii, *Suonate a violino solo col basso continuo per l'organo*, Op. 5, Bologna: Monti 1686, Biblioteca Estense, Modena

Today we do not know the purpose behind Degli Antonii's sonatas. Op. 4 appeared in the year he became *principe* of the Accademia Filarmonica, whereas the sonatas of Op. 5 were published in the year of the first performance of his oratorio *L'innocenza depressa* at the court of Francesco II d'Este.[7] It is probable that the composer was in Modena at that time. The title pages of the prints indicate Degli Antonii's membership in two Bologna academies: Accademia dei Filaschisi and Accademia Filarmonica. We can assume, therefore, that these works were written with these academies or the Modena court in mind, where

[7] Cf. *L'Innocenza Depressa. Oratorio à sei con Stromenti del Sig:r Pietro degli Antoni,* I-MOe, Mus.F.22.

there were many violin virtuosos capable of performing them.[8] Considering the style of these pieces and the organ accompaniment, we cannot dismiss the possibility of their performance during the annual celebration of the patronal feast of the Accademia Filarmonica, although sonatas for larger ensembles, such as his sonatas a tre, are more likely to have been performed there. We do know that between 1674 and 1677, unspecified sinfonias by Pietro Degli Antonii were played for the *Graduale* during these festive academic masses, including one with cornetto as the solo instrument.[9]

In the context of all Bologna works, the violin sonatas of Pietro Degli Antonii are not only the most numerous, but also the most original. They all belong to the violin-organ sonata type. Op. 4 is published in the form of a violin part and an organ score, while Op. 5 has been published only as an organ score. The accompanying instrument is clearly specified on the title pages of both collections. Organ accompaniment was also required in violin sonatas by Degli Antonii's predecessors associated with Bologna—Bartolomeo Montalbano, Ottavio Maria Grandi and Maurizio Cazzati. Bolognese composers active in the last quarter of the 17th century referred to the accompanying voice rather generally as *basso continuo*, or *violone* or *violoncello*. The bass accompaniment was most often entrusted to the cello, which was in great demand in Bologna at that time.[10] The organ part of Degli Antonii's sonatas moves within the range of C-e^2, often playing in the high registers (Op. 5 No. 1/v), sometimes *colla parte* with the violin (Example 1), while the bass part of the Bolognese violin and cello sonatas is usually an octave narrower, moving within the range of D-d^1 and not doubling the violin.

[8] In the year of the publication of Degli Antonii's Op. 5, Giuseppe Colombi, Giovanni Maria Bononcini, Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Antonio Vitali worked there.

[9] Cf. Olivo Penna, op. cit., p. 77.

[10] Cf. M. Vanscheeuwijck, *The Baroque Cello and Its Performance*, Performance Practice Review, 9 (1996), p. 83, 89.



Example 1. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 8/ii, bars 1–13[11]

While the violin-organ sonatas of Degli Antonii 's predecessors (Grandi, Montalbano, Cazzati) are monodic in texture, with the melodic line of the violin clearly dominating against the backdrop of the long-note values of the bass and not entering into motivic correspondence with the organ melody, the sonatas of Degli Antonii are shaped quite differently. The bass line here is very active, the organ not only initiates subject entries in imitation (Examples 1–2),[12] but also often participates in concertante dialogues with the violin (Example 3).[13]



Example 2. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 1/iii, bars 1–6

[11] The small Roman numerals after the slash indicate the movement of the sonata, i.e. "i" for the first movement, "ii" for the second movement, etc.

[12] Cf. Sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 1/iii, 6/iv, 7/ii, Op. 5, Nos. 2/ii, 7/iv.

[13] Cf. Sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 2/ii, 3/iv, 6/i, 8/v, Op. 5, No. 8/i.



Example 3. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 2/ii, bars 7–16

This already foreshadows the texture of violin and cello duets by Degli Antonii's younger colleagues—Torelli, Corelli, Jacchini, Predieri, Mazzolini, Rozzi and Bernardi (Example 4).[14] However, when the change of the accompanying instrument from organ to cello called for filling out the harmony by both string instruments, with the violin sometimes playing double- or triple-stops (Example 5),[15] we do not find any examples of such chordal playing in Degli Antonii's sonatas, because, in terms of the melodic language, Degli Antonii's sonatas continue to be influenced by the style prevailing in the first half of the 17th century.[16]

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[14] Cf. G. Predieri, *Sonta IV* from *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori,* (Bologna, ca 1695); B. Bernardi, *Sonate a violino solo col basso continuo,* Op. 3 (Amsterdam 1706); A. Corelli, sonatas Op. 5, Nos. 3/i, 4/i, 5/iv.

[15] Cf. G. Torelli, Sonata G 60, I-Bsp D.4.7; B. Bernardi, *Sonate a violino col basso continuo*, Op. 3 (Amsterdam 1706); C.B. Rozzi, *Sonata VII* from *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori* (Bologna, ca 1695); A. Corelli, *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo*, Op. 5 (Rome 1700).

[16] Unlike Peter Allsop, I do not believe that the lack of chordal playing in many violin sonatas from the first half of the 17th century was caused by the limitations of movable type printing. Manuscripts of sonatas from this time also lack multiply-stops. The reasons for this absence were rather aesthetic in nature. Cf. Peter Allsop, 'Violinistic Virtuosity in the Seventeenth Century: Italian Supremacy or Austro-German Hegemony?', *Il Saggiatore Musicale* III (1996), pp. 233–258 and my polemical articles: 'Chordal Playing in the 17th-Century Violin Repertoire', *Musica Iagellonica* 3 (2004), pp. 155–170; 'The violin technique of Italian solo sonata in the 17th century', *Musica Iagellonica* 5 (2011), pp.186–189.



G. Predieri, *Sonata IV* from *Sonate a violino e violoncelo di vari autori* (Bologna, ca 1695), first movement, bars 1–6



A. Corelli, Sonata Op. 5, No. 5/iv, bars 1–8

Example 4



G. Torelli, *Sonata a violino solo col basso* G 60 (I-Bsp, D.4.7), second movement, bars 1–6



B. Bernardi, Sonata Op. 3, No. 2, finale, bars 11–18

Example 5

The melody of Deglii Antonii's violin voice is not derived from specific harmonies or chords, but is still ruled by the principles of modal counterpoint, with the dominance of melodic motion in seconds, occasionally interrupted by leaps (Example 6).[17] In this respect, Degli Antonii's sonatas from Op. 4 and 5

[17] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 3/i, 5/v, 7/iii.

differ from his violin suites from Op. 1 and 3, where the violin melody features more broken chords and typical violin leaps over empty strings (Example 7).[18] Although violin-specific motifs are used in Op. 4 and 5, some characteristics of the melodic line, the range, and the avoidance of the lowest string register in several of the pieces could just as well point to the cornetto as the solo instrument (e.g. Op. 4, No. 2, Op. 5, Nos. 3, 6). Interestingly, although we can learn very little from the sources about Pietro Degli Antonii's violinist skills, he was known as a cornetto virtuoso.[19]



Example 6. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 5/v, bars 1–5



Example 7. P. Degli Antonii, Suite Op. 3, No. 3, *Giga,* bars 6–10

The melodic features of Degli Antonii's violin sonatas, when compared to those of the works composed by his Bologna colleagues, are distinguished above all by their unique cantilena, undoubtedly based on vocal models. Many of the middle movements of these works are titled *Aria grave*, *Aria posata* or *Aria vivace.*[20] Although his arias from *Cantate da camera a voce sola*, Op. 6 (Bologna 1690) or the arias from his oratorio *L'innocenza depressa* (Modena 1686) bear similar titles, their comparison revealed no borrowings, only some technical similarities (Example 8). Paradoxically, arias from the violin sonatas seem

[18] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, suites Op. 3, Nos. 1, 3, 5.

[19] Cf. Penna, op,. cit., p. 62. It is interesting that while in Op. 4 the composer does not shy away from the G string register, in Op. 5 he does not use it at all in half of the sonatas.

[20] Cf. Op. 4, Nos. 1/ii, 2/ii, 3/ii, Op. 5, Nos. 1/ii, 4/ii, 5/iii, 7/iii, 8/iii.

to be even more lyrical than those in his vocal works (Example 9).[21] The aria movement of the sonata is often based on the principle of the motto aria (Example 10)[22] and the composer also alludes to the arioso style (Example 11)[23] and the recitative (Example 12).[24] Movements not marked as arias are also influenced by the vocal style (Example 13).[25] Although it is difficult to find similar examples inspired by vocal genres in the sonata works of other Bolognese composers, they were not rare in Italian violin sonatas in Degli Antonii's time. Echoes of the melodic conventions of the cantata, with the division into recitative and aria, can be most clearly heard in *Sinfonia cantabile* Op. 4 (Venice 1678) by Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani (Example 14), but similar references to the solo vocal style are quite common in the violin sonatas of Giovanni Antoniio Pandolfi-Mealli, Alessandro Stradella, Carlo Manelli and Agostino Guerrieri.[26]

What also distinguishes Degli Antonii's violin sonatas from other Bolognese works of the last quarter of the 17th century is their original form. Comparing the sonatas from his Op. 4 and Op. 5, it is evident that the composer experimented extensively in this area. Unlike Corelli, Degli Antonii did not intend to create a formal standard that would be replicated in various works, but rather to continuously test a variety of solutions. As is typical of sonatas from the second half of the 17th century, the works from his Op. 4 and 5 are already cyclical and consist of four or five distinct movements, i.e. homogeneous miniatures maintained in the same tempo, metre, key and of a similar expressive character. Several pieces from both collections (e.g. Op. 4, Nos.7/i, 8/i; Op. 5, Nos. 4/iii, 6/iii , 7/ii, 8/iii) also feature multi-sectional heterogeneous structures with a clear expressive contrast and a smooth transition from one section to another, reminiscent of Montalbano sonatas. This older type of formal shaping is however limited to individual movements of the sonata and was used not only by Degli Antonii, but also by Corelli (e.g. Op. 5 No. 1/i) and Bernardi

[21] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 5, Nos. 4/ii, 5/iii, 7/iii.

[22] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, No. 3/ii, Op. 5, Nos. 8/iii, 3/i.

[23] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 1/ii, 7/iv.

[24] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 3/iii, 4/iii, 6/ii.

[25] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, No. 12/ii; Op. 5, No. 7/i.

[26] Cf. G.A. Pandolfi Mealli, *Sonate a violino solo,* Op. 3 (Innsbruck 1660), *Sonate a violino solo,* Op. 4 (Innsbruck 1660); A. Stradella, *Sinfonie a violino solo e basso continuo*, I-MOe, Mus.G.210 (ca 1675–1682); C. Manelli, *Sinfonia a violino solo,* I-Tn Foà 11 (ca. 1666–1677); A. Guerrieri, *Sonate di violino a 1, 2, 3, 4*, Op. 1 (Venice 1673).



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 1/ii, bars 1–6



P. Degli Antonii, Cantata *Costanza in amor platonico,* Op. 6, No. 10, Aria No. 1, bars 1–8

Example 8



Example 9. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 7/iii, bars 1–12



Example 10. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 8/iii, bars 1–20



Example 11. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 7/iv, bars 1–8



Example 12. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 4/iii, bars 1–7



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 12/ii, bars 1–4



P. Degli Antonii, Cantata *Aniobe piangente*, Op. 6, No. 6, aria No. 2, bars 1–5

Example 13



Example 14. G.B. Viviani, *Sinfonia cantabile*, Op. 4 (Venice 1678), bars 1–9, 28–32

(Op. 3 Nos. 1/i, 2/i, 4/i, 6/i), to name only composers of Bolognese origin. Among the sonatas from Op. 4 and 5 by Degli Antonii, the finale of Sonata Op. 5, No. 2 has a unique, multi-sectional, internally contrasting structure arranged in a sequence typical of the sonata da chiesa (slow-fast-slow-fast) and is connected by a very weak cadence to the preceding fugal section (Table 1).

Table 1. Form of the Sonata Op. 5, No. 2 by P. Degli Antonii

Movement	1		2	3	4	5			
Time signature	𝄵		𝄵	$\frac{3}{4}$	𝄵				
Section	a	a^1	b	c	d	e	f	e^1	g
Tonal plan	III	i	→VI	→V	i	→V	→V	→V	i
Bars	13	14	27	52	27	6	4	5	5
Tempo designation	Grave		Allegro	Grave	Con spirito	Grave	Allegro	Grave	Vivace

The five-movement forms slightly outnumber the four-movement cycles (58% in Op. 4 and 62% in Op. 5), which could be seen as pointing to Corelli's Op. 5, where all 6 sonatas from *Parte prima* are five-movement arrangements. In contrast to the classic Baroque sonata form created by Corelli and adopted by other Bolognese composers, with a numerically balanced succession of slow and fast movements, Degli Antonii follows his own experimental path. The most original feature of his sonatas is a marked tendency to overuse slow movements. In extreme cases, three of the four movements are slow, or the first three movements are slow (Table 2). Compared to the sonatas from Op. 4, those in Op. 5 are clearly larger in size, in line with the prevailing trend of the era. The average length of the works in Op. 4 is 109 bars and in Op. 5, 171 bars. When viewed in the context of the sonatas of other Bolognese composers in Torelli's time, Degli Antonii's sonatas are moderately long (Table 3).

Table 2. Unusual forms of violin sonatas by P. Degli Antonii

Op. 4, No. 6	6/4 Adagio	C Grave	C Vivace	C Largo	
Op. 4, No. 8	C Grave	3/8 Largo	C Adagio	12/8 Presto	
Op. 5, No. 5	¾ Largo	C Grave	3/8 Aria vivace	C Grave	¢ Larga

Table 3. The length of Bolognese violin sonatas
(in bars, 1 measure = 1 semibreve, * denotes individual pieces)

Composer, piece dating	Minimum lenght	Maximum lenght	Medium lenght
Ottavio Maria Grandi (1628)	65	114	89
Bartolomeo Montalbano (1629)	58	71	63
Maurizio Cazzati (1648)	102	241	172
Pietro Degl'Antonii (1676, 1686)	93	208	134
Antoniio Montanari (ca 1695)			187*
Giacomo Predieri (ca 1695)			134*
Carlo Mazzolini (ca 1695)			56*
Giuseppe Jacchini (ca 1695)			70*
Clemente Bernardino Rozzi (ca 1695)			129*
Giuseppe Torelli (ca 1680-96)	77	175	126
Arcangelo Corelli (ca 1680, 1700)	119	268	202
Barolomeo Bernardi (1706)	169	241	202

While in sonatas written in the first half of the 17th century one of the inner movements was usually set in triple meter (e.g., in Montalbano, Cazzati), in the sonatas from both Degli Antonii collections, the composer often introduces different triple meters in two movements. Cycles with two such movements constitute half of the Op. 4 collection, and the majority in Op. 5 (e.g. Op. 4 Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, Op. 5 Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7). Forms featuring two triple-meter movements can be also found in violin sonatas by Corelli, Predieri, Rozzi and Bernardi, and, among composers outside of Bologna, in the works of Pandolfi Mealli, Stradella, Lonati and Leonarda. This greater presence of triple-meter movements is related to the process of hybridisation of the sonatas da chiesa and da camera, characteristic of the last quarter of the 17th century and involving the incorporation of stylistic features of the suite into the sonata. Degli Antonii's sonatas include movements in the style of the corrente (e.g. Op. 4, No. 4/v, Op. 5, No. 1/ii), sarabande (Op. 4, Nos. 1/ii, 2/ii, 3/ii, 12/iv, Op. 5, Nos. 1/v, 4/ii, v, 5/iii, 7/ii) and gigue (Op. 4, No. 4/iv, 5/ii, 7/v, 8/iv, 10/v, Op. 5, No. 6/iv). As dance sections start to permeate the sonata, the proportion of periodic structures with repeated phrases and a simple harmonic plan also increases (Example 15).[27]

[27] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 2/iii, 4/iv, v; 7/v, 10/v; Op. 5, No. 1/i, ii.



Example 15. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 1/ii, bars 1–6

A fugal or freely imitative movement is present in almost all Degli Antonii sonatas. The frequent use of imitative counterpoint calls for a greater melodic involvement of the organ which was mentioned above. The sonatas of Op. 4 are among the first in violin literature to incorporate regular fugues with even four or five sections, false entries of the subject, strettos and concertante episodes. Whereas in Op. 4 the composer introduces only one fugal movement in a sonata, in Op. 5 there are pieces with two fugues.[28] This change may have been influenced by the Corellian sonata model, where two fugues were the norm. While fugues usually appear in the second and fourth movements of Corelli's works, Degli Antonii again surprises the listener with his formal solutions, often introducing fugues in the second, third, fourth or fifth movement. A certain melodic evolution of the subjects can be noticed on comparing the Op. 4 fugues with those in Op. 5. The subjects of the fugues from Op. 4 are of an older type and usually operate with canzona motifs (Example 2),[29] while in Op. 5 there are more modern, extended *andamento* subjects (Example 16).[30] The fugues from Op. 5 also feature stylisations in stile antico (Example 17).[31] While in the fugues from Op. 5 the successive entries of the subject alternate between the violin and organ parts (or in reverse order), in the fugues from Op. 4 the subject very often appears in the violin part in self-imitation, with the organ melody joining in only occasionally (Example 18).[32] Degli Antonii continues here the technique used by Marco Uccellini in his sonatas from Op. 5 (1649).

[28] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 5, Nos. 2, 3, 8.
[29] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos.1/iii, 7/ii, 12/iii.
[30] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 5, No. 4/iii, Op. 5, No. 7/iv.
[31] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 5, Nos. 3/iv, 5/v.
[32] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 4/ii, 6/iv, 7/ii.



Example 16. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 7/iv, bars 1–6



Example 17. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 3/iv, bars 1–8



Example 18. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 4/ii, bars 32–6

Degli Antonii's sonatas are highly original also because of their tonal language. Within the collection, each sonata is in a different key. According to the dominant currents of the era, these are various types of transpositions of the Aeolian (IX) and Ionian (XI) modes. There is an almost perfect balance between minor and major modes in both collections (5:7 in Op. 4; 4:4 in Op. 5). Looking at the tonal order of Op. 4, one can see that the first eight sonatas are based on finales corresponding numerically to the system of eight church modes, while the whole set includes various transpositions of Ionian and Aeolian modes (Table 4). An even wider range of such transpositions is presented in the sonatas of Op. 5, where *Sonata Quarta* is in the key of b##, which was still very rare at that time.[33] While most of the sonatas from the second half of the 17th century are based on a similar system of six or seven modes (d, e, F, Gg, a, C)[34] described by Giovanni Maria Bononcini in his *Musico Pratico* (Bologna 1673), Degli Antonii uses as many as thirteen keys only in Op. 4 and 5 (Cc, Dd, E flat, e, F, Gg, Aa, B flat, b).[35] Such a choice is already very similar to the system of 15 keys used by Johann Sebastian Bach and Antonio Vivaldi in the first half of the 18th century (Cc, Dd, E flat, Ee, Ff, Gg, Aa, B flat, b).

With the exception of two pieces (Op. 5 Nos. 1 and 7), in a manner characteristic of the late 17th century, at least one movement in each sonata is in a key contrasting with the main key (parallel or dominant). Only in the case of Sonata Op. 4, No. 5 is the tonal change accompanied by a change in key signature from cantus durus to a system with two flats, as there is a contrast in mode between C XI and c IX. While tonally contrasting movements in Bolognese sonatas of the last quarter of the 17th century are usually placed in the penultimate position of the cycle or in its centre, Degli Antonii also shows experimentation here, with tonally contrasting movements found in the second, third or fourth position (e.g. Op. 4, No. 6/ii, Op. 5 No. 7/ii).

The melodic structure of Degli Antonii's sonatas is also characterized by a rich tonal language. The composer sometimes uses as many as 6 sharps in a single work as part of cantus durus or a system with two sharps at the clef

[33] Several years before Degl'Antonii, Guerrieri and Stradella used the Aeolian mode b## as a parallel mode reserved for the inner movement of the sonata form. Guerrieri used this mode without key signatures as the framework mode in *Sonata malinconica*.

[34] Lowercase letters denote the Aeolian mode, uppercase letters denote the Ionian mode.

[35] By comparison, the full range of main and contrasting keys in the inner movements of Corelli's violin sonatas comprises a slightly different selection of twelve keys: C, c sharp, D, d, E, e, F, f sharp, g, A, a, B flat.

Table 4. Tonalilty in the violin sonatas of Pietro Degli Antonii

Composer, piece dating	Piece	Mode, key signatures	*claves clausularum*
Pietro Degl'Antonii (1676, 1686)	Sonata I Op.4	d IX	d a f
	Sonata II	gb IX	g c d b flat
	Sonata III	a IX, C XI	a e
	Sonata IV	e# IX, G VII	e b g d
	Sonata V	C XI, cbb IX	c g
	Sonata VI	Fb XI, db IX	f c d
	Sonata VII	D## XI	d a
	Sonata VIII	G VII (XI)	g d b
	Sonata IX	B flat b XI, gb IX	b flat f d
	Sonata X	A### VII (XI), D XI	a e d
	Sonata XI	cbb IX	c g e flat
	Sonata XII	E flat bb XI, cbb IX	e flat g c b flat
	Sonata I Op.5	a IX, C XI	a e c g d
	Sonata II	gb IX	g d b flat e flat
	Sonata III	d IX, a IX	d a f
	Sonata IV	b## IX, D## XI	b d f sharp a
	Sonata V	Fb VI (XI)	f c a b flat
	Sonata VI	C XI	c g e d
	Sonata VII	D## XI, b## IX	d a f sharp b
	Sonata VIII	B flat b XI, gb IX	b flat d g f

(in Op. 4, No. 7 and Op. 5, No. 7). For expressive purposes, he particularly frequently introduces leaps with various types of *intervali falsi* (Example 19).[36] The tendency to use this type of leaps can be seen as another example of the influence of vocal music. The imitative subject with a characteristic diminished fourth at the beginning of the sonata Op. 5, No. 2 bears a resemblance to the similarly imitative opening of Maria Magdalena's aria *Care membra* from the Parte Seconda of the oratorio *L'innocenza depressa* (Example 20). Both works were written at the same time (1686).

[36] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 1/iii, 11/i, 12/iv.



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 11/i, bars 20-25



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 1/iii, bars 77–82

Example 19



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 2/i, bars 1–6



P. Degli Antonii. oratorio *L'innocenza depressa,* second part,
Maria Maddalena's aria *Care membra*, bars 1–7

Example 20

The sonatas of Degli Antonii are not as technically virtuosic as those by Torelli, Bernardi or Corelli. Some of them have a relatively narrow range and their melodic nature (e.g., Op. 4, No. 2, Op. 5, No. 59) could easily make them suitable for cornetto performance. However, most require a fairly wide, by 17th-century standards, range of *g-f*^{3} (Table 5), and the lowest registers of the G string are sometimes used in an organ-like manner to transfer a selected motif from register to register (Example 21).[37]

Table 5. Violin range used in Bolognese violin sonatas (* denotes individual pieces)

Composer, piece dating	maximum range	typical range
Bartolomeo Montalbano (1629)	*g*—*d*^{3}	*c*^{1}—*b*^{2}
Maurizio Cazzati (1648)	*b*—*d*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*b*^{2}
Pietro Degl'Antonii (1676, 1686)	*g*—*f*^{3}	*g*—*d*^{3}
Antoniio Montanari (ca 1695)*	*a*—*d*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*d*^{3}
Giacomo Predieri (ca 1695)*	*d*^{1}—*c*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*b*^{2}
Carlo Mazzolini (ca 1695)*	*d*^{1}—*d*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*b*^{2}
Giuseppe Jacchini (ca 1695)*	*d*^{1}—*d*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*d*^{3}
Clemente Bernardino Rozzi (ca 1695)*	*b*—*e*^{3}	*d*^{1}—*b*^{2}
Giuseppe Torelli (ca 1682–1696)*	*g*—*e*^{3}	*c*^{1}—*d*^{3}
Arcangelo Corelli (ca 1680, 1700)	*g*—*e*^{3}	*g*—*d*^{3}
Bartolomeo Bernardi (1706)	*g-f*^{3}	*a-d*^{3}

Because of Degli Antonii's emphasis on cantilena and the linear conduct of the violin melody in imitative or concertante exchanges with the organ, his sonatas lack chordal playing, *arpeggio* or *bariolage* technique. Although the melody is more harmonically conceived in his violin suites from Op. 1 and 3, with more typical violin leaps, this type of technique is also lacking there. The composer apparently adhered to the then dominant practice of modelling the violin part on singing, highlighting beautiful, elaborated melodies and linear figurations at the cost of chordal or polyphonic playing. The works of his Bolognese predecessors, Montalbano and Cazzati, as well as those of some of his

[37] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 7/ii, 12/ii; Op. 5, No. 1/iv. It is difficult to agree with Mario Rinaldi's opinion (*Arcangelo Corelli*, Milan 1953, p. 396) that Corelli "discovered" the G string and treated it almost on a par with the D string. Although the G string is played very often in his works, Degl'Antonii, Colombi, Schmelzer, Biber and others did the same before Corelli.

successors, Giacomo Predieri, Carlo Mazzolini and Giuseppe Jacchini, belong to a similar type of violin sonata. Corelli's early violin sonatas—the Sonata in A Major, preserved in a Turin manuscript, and the first sonata from Buffagnotti's anthology—are also devoid of any violin polyphony.

In Degli Antonii's sonatas we find examples of bow vibrato (*tremolo con arco*), characteristic of 17th-century violin music, written as four repeated eighth notes under a common slur and intended to imitate an organ tremulant (Example 22).[38] The composer also uses real tremolo to split sixteenth-note figurations into two melodic planes (Example 23). As one of the only few Italian violinists of his era, he introduces staccato dots (Example 15). He is no stranger to *trombetta*-type figurations, characteristic of Modena violinists (Example 24)[39] or *perfidia* figurations typical of the Bologna school (Example 25).[40] Degli Antonii's sonatas are among the first to feature idiomatic semiquaver figuration for the violin (Example 26).[41] Acceleration within figuration, which involves a phrase repetition in thirty-second notes, is very interesting (Example 27). The composer's good feel of the instrument is demonstrated by the construction of the phrase, which fits well under the violinist's fingers (Example 15).[42]

Pietro Degli Antonii's sonatas are moderately difficult when it comes to playing in high positions. High notes on the E string are expected to be played in the 5th position, while Uccellini's sonatas required the use of the 7th position as early as the first half of the 17th century (Op. 5, No. 8). The need to play in higher positions on all the strings is sometimes implied by both the shape of the melodic line and economy of means in some of Degli Antonii's sonata figurations (e.g. Op. 5 No. 8, bars 35–36). Shifts into higher positions are facilitated by using open strings (Op. 4 No. 6, bars 15–16, 21; No. 7, bars 14–5), pauses (Op. 4, No. 1, bars 81–2; No. 6, bars 41–2; No. 12, bars 11–6;

[38] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4 No. 12/ii, Op. 5 No. 6/iii. The first examples of *tremolo con arco* can be found in the sonatas of Biagio Marini, Dario Castello and Marco Uccellini, and its last instances in the sonatas of Giuseppe Torelli (G. 60, bars 18–20); Giuseppe Colombi: I-MOe, Mus. E.282 No. 1 (bars 47–58, 80–92); F.280 Nos. 1–2 (bars 41–55); Nos. 6–7 (bars 116–26) and Carlo Ambrogio Lonati: D-Dl, Mus. 2020-R-1 No. 1 (bars 42–56). Starting with Colombi and Torelli, bow vibrato began to be combined with the technique of playing multiple stops.

[39] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 7/i, 10/iv.

[40] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4, Nos. 5/v, 7/iii, 11/iv, Op. 5, No. 5/i.

[41] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 4 Nos. 1/i, 3/i, nr 11/v.

[42] Cf. P. Degli Antonii, sonatas Op. 5, Nos. 1/ii, 7/i, 8/i.

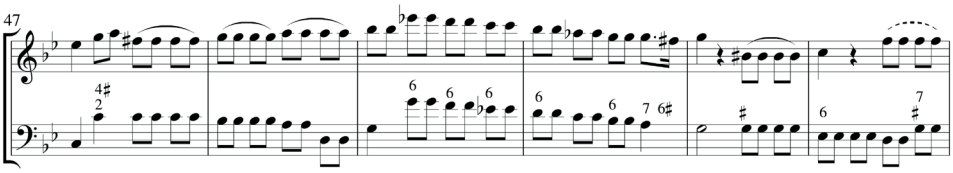


P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 12/ii, bars 36–39



P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 7/ii, bars 35–40

Example 21



Example 22. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 12/ii, bars 47–52



Example 23. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 3/i, bars 17–21



Example 24. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No.7/i, bars 1–6



Example 25. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 5/i, bars 8–12



Example 26. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 4, No. 11/v, bars 94–97



Example 27. P. Degli Antonii, Sonata Op. 5, No. 1/iv, bars 195–208

Op. 5 No. 2, bars 96–100) or changing fingers on a repeated note (Op. 4, No. 1, bars 21–7; 57–8; No. 12, bars 88–9).

The type of violin-organ sonata embraced by Pietro Degli Antonii was slowly receding into the past in Torelli's era. In addition to Degli Antonii, in Italy it was still used by Antonio Veracini (in Florence), Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani (in Innsbruck and Venice), Agostino Guerrieri (in Genua) and Isabella Leonarda (in Novara). The genre that attracted much more interest in Bologna at the turn of the 18th century was rather the violin and cello duo, which encouraged the presence of outstanding violinists and cellists in that city. It was also this tradition that Corelli referred to in his Op. 5, the model for violin sonata writing commonly reproduced in the first decades of the 18th century. Seen in this Bolognese context, Pietro Degli Antonii's sonatas appear as works that, on the one hand, continue the tradition of the monodic sonata typical of the first half of the 17th century (best represented by Giovanni Antonio Leoni's violin and organ sonatas), while at the same time already foreshadowing violin and cello duets (especially Op. 5) characteristic of the late Bologna school. Degli Antonii's violin sonatas thus stand on the borderline of two musical worlds. And that is why they are so interesting and worthy of performance today.

Summary

Just before Giuseppe Torelli's arrival in Bologna, Pietro Degli Antonii was the most prominent composer of local instrumental music. Unlike Torelli, he made no contribution to the development of the new genre of the concerto, but his Op. 1, 3, 4 and 5 appear as outstanding examples of sonatas and suites for violin solo. Although in the twentieth century his work was occasionally the subject of a few publications (H. Mishkin, W. Apel) and unpublished master's theses (L. Ferretti; M.R. Cusmà Piccione), it has not yet received enough attention from musicologists and musicians. In the light of the currently preserved sources, Pietro Degli Antonii was the most prolific among all violin sonata composers active in Bologna in the 17th century. His 20 sonatas from Op. 4 (Bologna 1676) and Op. 5 (Bologna 1686) compared to similar works by his Bolognese colleagues active at the turn of the 18th century (G. Torelli, A. Corelli, G. Jacchini, C.B. Rozzi, G. Predieri, C. Mazzolini, B. Bernardi), are striking for their extraordinary originality and a high level of compositional technique. This comparison leads to interesting conclusions about the changes in the musical language and violin technique that took place between the generation of Degli Antonii and Torelli, as well as the stylistic differences between the sonata for violin with organ and the sonata for violin with cello.

Keywords: Pietro Degli Antonii, Baroque violin sonata, Bologna school