Danish Diplomacy and the Dedication of *Giardino novo II* (1606) to King James I *

By Susan G. Lewis

The dedication is a common fixture of Renaissance music prints, but one whose artistic currency is often underrated. Already in the years 1538-40 – when they first began to appear in large numbers in Italian music prints – dedicatory texts observed recognised formulas, rhetorical tropes, and strategies of persuasion that only rarely departed from conventional parlance. Contemporary manuals or ‘how-to books’ even circulated these devices in the form of advice, samples, and guidelines for better letter writing. But despite their perceived status as commonplace appendages, contemporaries regarded early-modern book dedications as tools of cultural power, commodities of exchange that served the needs of both authors and their patrons. Composers used dedications to honour a current employer or flatter a future one, to supplement their income, to pay homage to a teacher, or to gain entry into a prestigious circle of musicians. By the same token, merchants, lesser nobility, and monarchs capitalised on the potential role dedications could play in advertising their fame and legitimating their status.

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As a public, written discourse, dedicatory texts offered a verbal framework for the musical discourse they preceded. In this sense these documents can serve as ‘cultural informants’, shedding light on the function and intended audience of the print. The dedication of Giardino novo [. . .] il secondo libro (1606) to James I of England is a notable example of this.4 The dedication is reproduced on pp. 12-13.

Printed in Copenhagen by Heinrich Waldkirch, the volume is the second of a two-part series of anthologies of Italian madrigals compiled by Melchior Borchgrevinck (c. 1570-1632), a Netherlander employed as court organist and later chapel master to Christian IV.5 Borchgrevinck dedicated the first volume (not surprisingly) to his employer, the Danish king, who had financed Borchgrevinck’s recent Venetian studies with Giovanni Gabrieli.6 The address is in Italian and in it we find all the recurring tropes and conventional bows to a patron that formed part of the early-modern prefatory apparatus.7 That Borchgrevinck did not dedicate the second volume to Christian IV – choosing instead the king’s brother-in-law James I – is striking. The vast majority of music issued in Copenhagen was dedicated to Christian IV and the king’s reputation as a patron of the arts extended beyond the Danish borders as well.8 Why is Giardino novo II an exception? The choice of language for the text – French – is also puzzling, considering the language did not relate to the musical content of the print and was not spoken at the Danish court.


Details of these visits may be found in Niels Krabbe, Træk af Musiklivet i Danmark på Christian IV’s Tid, Copenhagen 1988, p. 43.


The following music prints all bear dedications to Christian IV: Alessandro Orologio, Intradae, Helmstadt 1597; Orazio Vecchi, Le voglie di Siena, Venice 1604; Melchior Borchgrevinck (compl.), Giardino novo I, Copenhagen 1605; Giovanni Fonteiio Danese [Hans Nielsen], Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci, Venice 1606; Magneto Petreo Dano [Mogens Pederson], Madrigali a
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So far, the peculiarities of this dedication – the presence of a new dedicatee, a new language, and a new audience (the English court) – have not attracted scholarly attention. But though the text may not reveal all that we would like to know about the gestation, production, and function of these anthologies, the dedication can offer a new ‘interpretive space’ – a new approach to examining the printed reception of the madrigal in Denmark. In what follows, I take a closer look at the dedication of Giardino novo II and suggest that it forms part of a larger political and artistic programme directed at strengthening Denmark’s ties with its northern neighbour. By proposing that madrigal prints could be instruments of political expediency, I give a function or ‘use’ to Italy abroad, one that allows for a more active Danish reception of the Italian madrigal. I draw this concept of the ‘use’ of Italy outside Italy from Peter Burke, whose work emphasises the importance of local circumstances and traditions in the study of the reception of foreign cultural models in the Renaissance.

Perhaps the first question to address is what was the socio-political context for the dedication to James I? What was the relationship between Denmark and England and their respective rulers at the turn of the seventeenth century? The strongest link between the two royal houses was, of course, one of marriage; the countries were joined by the union of Christian IV’s sister, Princess Anne of Denmark (1574-1619), and James VI of Scotland (1566-1625, the future James I of England). The couple’s wedding of 1589 – which occasioned several months of festivities – intensified what was already a close relationship between the two northern powers. For Denmark, promoting contacts with Great Britain formed six parts of the Musae Sioniae (1605-7).


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*The dedication of Melchior Borchgrevinck (compl.), Giardino novo […] il secondo libro, Heinrich Waldkirch, Copenhagen 1606, Canto fols. 1v-2r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library (shelfmark K.4.e.2).*
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part of a multifaceted programme of geo-political and religious integration with its non-Scandinavian neighbours. This programme was motivated by the increased confessionisation of Europe in the decades around 1600; Jesuit influence and the Counter-Reformation posed serious threats to northern Protestantisms. The growing tensions between Denmark and Sweden were also cause for concern. Denmark's response was rooted in the strengthening of dynastic alliances, the exercise of control over the north-German Duchies, and the promotion of visits and exchanges of personnel, which included the formation of a loose network of musicians active at courts in the region. With the ascension of James to the English throne in 1603, relations with England assumed a more prominent position in Denmark's political agenda. Diplomatic missions between the two countries were frequent in the decade after his coronation, culminating in the summer of 1606 with the official visit of Christian IV to England.

The printing of *Giardino novo II* – with its dedication to James I – coincided with the year of this royal visit. The Danish king's stay in England occasioned a formal exchange of gifts between the two courts that included books, small curiosities, and perhaps the Danish madrigal anthologies as well. Much cultural

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15 The precise dynamics of how James I acquired the print are not clear. One can assume he would have owned a copy, considering the anthology was dedicated to him. But the copy currently housed at the British Library was not catalogued there until 8 October 1861 (Jacobsen (1967) pp. xiii-xiv). The collection does not appear in the official lists of presents for the English royal couple, though it is possible that it was a private gift presented to James I. No separate payment survives in the Danish Rentemester-Regnskaber to confirm whether Borchgrevink himself was in attendance in England. The gift exchange is discussed in Glarbo (1943) p. 65. See also the Gift Book of the University Library (Rigsarkivet, Københavns Universitets Arkiv, 16.04.01).
power was attached to the giving and receiving of gifts in Renaissance Europe, and a gift could also be used to express the closeness (desired or real) of an alliance. That both volumes of *Giardino novo* survive with elaborate, copper-engraved title pages further suggests their suitability for formal display.

The dedication of *Giardino novo II* matched the anthology’s visual rhetoric with a verbal one. Many passages are replete with formulic tropes that were a recognised part of the discourse of sixteenth-century letters and epistolary texts. Despite their overuse and almost cliché status, these formulae provided a functional, literary backdrop for promoting relations between the Danish and English kings. The dedicatory address begins, for instance, with a standard salutation and ‘territorial mapping’:

A TRESHAVT ET TRESPVISSANT PRINCE ET SEIGNEVR JAQVES ROY DE LA GRANDE BRETAIGNE, FRANCE, ET IRLANDE, DEFEN- SEVR DE LA FOY, SALVT ET FELICITE PERPETVELLE.

This is followed by a ‘cultural mapping’ praising James I as patron of the arts:

LES Vertueux ont accoustumé (non sans tresapprouuees raisons) de dedier en signe de recoignoiss- sance leurs travaux & oeuvres aux Princes & grands Seigneurs, pour tesmoigner l’honneur & la grati- tude deuë a iceux, comme Vrais Peres & Protecteurs des Vertus & sciences; […] Car il est certain que sans l’entretenement & soing employé par eux à maintenir la vigueur & course de ces excellens Dons de Dieu, on les verroit bien tost exterminexe & precipitez au centre de quelque barbare abyssme.

The dedication proceeds with what might be termed a ‘dynastic mapping’, reaffirming the bonds of kinship and brotherhood that linked the two nations.

17 Both collections survive at D-GhK with less elaborate title pages dating from 1606. The decorative title page of *Giardino novo II* survives only at D-W; cf. footnote 4. It is possible that simpler, cheaper title pages were printed for commercialised distribution.
18 I would like to thank Pamela Lipson for her assistance with the translation of the dedication.
In what follows, however, there is a break from the conventional dedicatory strategy adopted so far, as the political message becomes more forceful. At this point, one expects an expression of the signee’s devotion to the dedicatee, who was often his patron (or would-be future patron). But Borchgreveinck does not offer his own personal servitude to James I: he was neither employed at the English court nor seeking employment there.\(^\text{19}\) Instead, he at once affirms his allegiance to Christian IV and symbolically unites the royal houses of Denmark and England:

\[
[...\] que de cela j’ai pris courage à poursuivre le reste de mon desseing, & y adjoignant ceste Seconde Partie, l’embellir & enrichir du nom Royal de V.\textsuperscript{re} Ma.\textsuperscript{rc} A ceste penseé ma conduit la treshumble deuotion que je porte à ceste Royalle Maison de Danemarc, souche principalle de ces hauts reiettons, ausquels V.\textsuperscript{re} Ma.\textsuperscript{rc} tient le rang tant signalé, comme à tout le monde est notoire.
\]

The notion that Borchgreveinck adjusted his plan, ‘altering this Second Part’, may suggest he initially felt a certain obligation to dedicate the collection to Christian IV, to whom Danish court music is for the most part addressed.\(^\text{20}\) If this were the case, it would then be tempting to propose that Christian IV himself intervened requesting a dedication to his brother-in-law, James I. Yet regardless of the lineage of the choice of dedicatee, the political impetus of the text cannot be denied. Borchgreveinck, in effect, became Christian IV’s envoy, strengthening the bonds between the two courts. His political message is reinforced, moreover, by the trope of Platonic harmony among nations that follows:

\[
\text{A raison de quoy Platon escrit,} \\
\text{Que les Estats se viennent à ruiner, quand leur harmonie defect.}
\]

But what are we to make of the fact that the dedication is written in French? Expressing Denmark’s political alliance with England is to be expected. But the choice of French as the language to convey this sentiment is unusual. There is no extant correspondence between the monarchs in French; Latin was their regular language of written exchange.\(^\text{21}\) All printed accounts of Christian IV’s

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\(^\text{19}\) The dedication may, however, have helped pave the way for the later service of Danish court musicians, cf. John Bergsagel, “Danish Musicians in England 1611-14: Newly-Discovered Instrumental Music”, \textit{Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning} 7 (1973-76) pp. 9-20.

\(^\text{20}\) Cf. footnote 8.

visit to England were published in English, Latin, or German. And there are few traces of French linguistic influence in Denmark before the 1620s: formal study was not available until the opening of Sorø Academy in 1624 and French language manuals were not printed in Denmark until 1625, decades after the Giardini novi. The key to the use of French, then, must lie with the receivers of the dedication: James I and his court. Though not a language of the Danish court, French was already established at the Jacobean court, which inherited the language from Scotland. Scottish court culture was highly receptive to French influence, especially after the marriages of James V to two French princesses (first to Madeleine, the daughter of Francis I, in 1537, and, upon her early death, to Mary of Guise-Lorraine in 1538). The Francophile milieu even seems to have made it necessary for Anne (the future queen) to receive instruction in the language while still in Denmark. In preparation for her new locale, a teacher was hired to instruct Anne and her sisters in French in the spring of 1589. French also functioned as a dynastic, ‘bridal’ language; at their first meeting in Norway in 1589, Anne and James spoke French and their marriage was officiated in French by David Lindsay at St. Halvard’s Church in Oslo. Considering its historical presence in Danish-British relations, French may have been chosen for the dedication of Giardino novo II as a symbol of Christian IV’s desire to forge a more intimate bond between the two courts. The Danish king’s close involvement in the manufacturing and production of the anthologies – he financed their compilation through Borchgrevink’s Italian study (and gathering?) tours and made regular payments to their printer, Waldkirch – increases the likelihood that Christian IV had a hand in choosing French as the dedicatory language.

22 Cf. footnote 14.
26 En route to Scotland, Anne and her entourage were forced to land in Oslo on account of inclement weather; the anxious James VI travelled to meet her there and the two were married on 23 November; Bevan (1996) p. 42.
The dedication of *Giardino novo II* helped Denmark strengthen her presence and acceptance in international political arenas. For us, the dedication offers an explanation of one of the functions of the anthologies and helps account for their chronology, attention to artistic detail, and conditions and contexts of performance. Denmark’s début as a printer of madrigals was symbolic; and, perhaps provocatively, the *Giardini novi* have an extra-musical meaning as a material object – as a commodity of exchange, a gift to be given and received. In this sense, the Italian madrigal and the dedicatory discourse the genre inspired, gave Denmark and her king a cultural status that was recognised and idealised throughout Europe.

**Summary**
This article explores the use of the music book dedication as a cultural tool to advance political goals. Focusing on Melchior Borchgrevinck’s dedication of the madrigal anthology *Giardino novo […] il secondo libro* (Copenhagen: Waldkirch, 1606) to King James I of England, I suggest that the text forms part of a larger political and artistic programme aimed at strengthening Denmark’s ties with England. Acting on Christian IV’s behalf, Borchgrevinck extols the virtues of James I and encourages close relations between the royal houses of Denmark and England. These interests are furthered by the use of French as the dedicatory language to transmit these messages of kinship and harmony.