Schütz's Venice: 1609–1613 and 1628–1629

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Schütz's acknowledgement of his enormous personal and artistic debt to Giovanni Gabrieli, as expressed in the dedication to his *Symphoniae sacrae* of 1629, is only one of the many tributes addressed to the Venetian composer or written in his memory by his numerous pupils from north of the Alps[1]. Alongside this direct, personal relationship, a not insignificant part of the »Venetian experience« for any young foreign musician cannot but have regarded music-making in the city – in the churches, in the private palaces, in theatrical contexts. This contribution sets out to characterize what must surely have been the young (and not so young) Schütz's experience in Venice as observer and as practical musician.

To begin with, a brief note on methodology. Though specific documentation on music-making in Venice during the years of Schütz's studies is plentiful enough, its incomplete and often trivial character, and the substantially random nature of its survival, render it incapable of painting an adequate picture of musical life in these years. In particular, individual details are often difficult to paste together in a way that permits conclusions of any significance. For example, in 1609, 1610 and again in 1611 the Augustinian monastery of Santo Stefano paid external singers and instrumentalists for their services during Lent and for the feast of its patron St Stephen (26 December)[2]. In itself, this data is little more than an ›interesting story‹. Yet when, as in this case, the documents note that payments were effected »as usual« or »according to custom«, and similar or identical data can be traced, for example, to 1593[3] (and also to later years), we can conclude that the presence of musicians was quite normal on these occasions over a substantial period of time (and not just for the years effectively documented). If, moreover, comparison with surviving documentation from the other 200 monastic and parish churches present in the city and surrounding islands reveals similar practices, it will be legitimate to speak of shared standards in the context of an overall ›system‹[4].

How, in musical terms, might music and music-making in early seventeenth-century Venice have seemed in the eyes of a young northern composer?

1 For a compendium: Rodolfo Baroncini, *Giovanni Gabrieli*, Palermo 2012, pp. 178–181 and 195–199, and, with particular reference to the many citations of Gabrieli's music in the work of younger composers: id., *»Et per tale confirmato dall'auttorità del signor Giovanni Gabrieli«: the Reception of Gabrieli as a Model by Venetian and Non-Venetian Composers of the New Generation (1600–1620)*, in: id., David Bryant, Luigi Collarile (eds.), *Giovanni Gabrieli. Transmission and Reception of a Venetian Musical Tradition* (forthcoming).

2 Elena Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco. Organizzazione e prassi della musica nelle chiese di Venezia nel Rinascimento*, Florence 1998 (= Studi di musica veneta 26), pp. 385–386.

3 Ibid., p. 383.

4 Ibid., passim, and, for a general survey of Venice and cities in the Venetian territories: David Bryant, Elena Quaranta, gruppo di lavoro »Treviso« dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, *Come si consuma (e perché si produce) la musica sacra da chiesa? Sondaggi sulle città della Repubblica Veneta (e qualche appunto storiografico)*, in: David Bryant, Elena Quaranta (eds.), *Produzione, circolazione e consumo. Consuetudine e quotidianità della polifonia sacra nelle chiese monastiche e parrocchiali dal tardo Medioevo alla fine degli Antichi Regimi*, Bologna 2006, pp. 7–66, especially pp. 21–25 and 41–47.

1. The exceptional quality of music and music-making in the official state institutions
The ducal basilica of St Mark's has all the characteristics of a great and unique institution:

– a liturgical and ceremonial tradition that maintains its uniqueness in the face of the Counter-Reformation insistence on liturgical uniformity and the centralization of ecclesiastical authority in Rome[5];
– a unique tradition of liturgical chant[6];
– a *cappella musicale* of exceptional dimensions, further augmented by external singers and instrumentalists for the greatest events[7];
– particular musical repertoires, in many cases published only retrospectively (examples are the *Concerti* of Andrea Gabrieli, printed posthumously in 1587; the two volumes of *Sacrae symphoniae* by Giovanni Gabrieli, published in 1597 and 1615; and, probably, Monteverdi's *Selva morale e spirituale* of 1640–1641 and posthumous *Messa et salmi* of 1650);
– polychoral practices which, though by no means unique to St Mark's, are frequently used in such a way as to be fully appreciable only in the presbytery, ›exclusive‹ location of the clerics and highest state dignitaries, as a kind of *musica reservata*[8].

As a privileged pupil of Gabrieli and – maybe – Monteverdi, Schütz undoubtedly enjoyed a musician's access to the repertories and practices of St Mark's. Yet this is only one aspect of the »Venetian experience«, which must surely have been perceived by the young composer as quite exceptional in the context of musical practice in Venice at large. We ourselves, as musicians and historians of music, might also usefully ask to what extent the music of a ›unique‹ institution can reflect the ›normal‹ practices and ideals of a given historical period, and to what extent institutional uniqueness will be reflected in uniqueness of composition and sound.

2. Venice is an institutional and commercial point of reference for significant numbers of important musicians.
At St Mark's, Giovanni Croce is *maestro di cappella* from 1603 until his death in 1609 and Giovanni Gabrieli is organist until his death in 1612. Alessandro Grandi is *giovane di coro* between 1604 and 1608, singer from 1617 and *vice maestro di cappella* from 1620 to 1627. Claudio Monteverdi is *maestro di cappella* between 1613 and 1643. At the nearby nunnery of San Lorenzo, Giovanni Matteo Asola is curate until his demise in 1609; Asola, though today little considered, was in reality the most popular and most frequently printed composer of sacred polyphony in Italy during the final three decades of his life – more, still, compared to Palestrina or Lasso. The composer Giacomo Finetti is director of music at the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Assunta dei Frari from 1612 to his death in 1631. Two possible pupils of Giovanni Gabrieli are the composer and organist Giovanni Battista Riccio (active in Venice until his death, probably after 1621) and Giovanni Picchi[9] (composer and organist in Venetian churches, including the

5 See Giulio Cattin, *Musica e liturgia a San Marco*, Venice 1990.

6 Ibid.

7 Documentation and discussion in: Baroncini, *Giovanni Gabrieli* (footnote 1), pp. 233–272 and 563–568.

8 David Bryant, Elena Quaranta, Francesco Trentini, *Architecture, Musical Composition and Performance. Some Thoughts on the Multiple Forms of a Difficult Relationship*, in: Deborah Howard, Laura Moretti (eds.), *Architettura e musica nella Venezia del Rinascimento*, Milan 2006, pp. 261–275, especially p. 272.

9 Both composers were assiduous ›borrowers‹ from Gabrieli, but no proof exists that they were pupils. On Riccio's and Picchi's borrowings from Gabrieli: Baroncini, »*Et per tale confirmato*« (footnote 1). Specifically on Riccio: Marco Di

Frari, beginning in or before 1615). The composer, singer and player of chitarrone Bartolomeo Barbarino was probably active for some three decades beginning in 1608.

The commercial importance of music printing in Venice provides a constant attraction for composers great and small from elsewhere on the Italian peninsula and, occasionally, beyond, who frequently sign the dedications of their publications while in the city (presumably to supervise the final stages of the printing process). The following examples, all dated 1609, regard only collections of sacred polyphony[10]; the list would grow considerably if extended to the secular repertories.

– The Franciscan friar Giovanni Battista Biondi (Cesena) is apparently in Venice when signing the dedication of his *Salmi a quattro voci pari* (»Venetijs die prima februarij 1609«)[11]; other dedications signed in Venice by Biondi are dated 1605, 1606, 1608, 1615 and 1621[12].
– On 25 February, Camillo Cortellini, a musician in the service of San Petronio, Bologna, is in Venice when dedicating his *Messe a quattro, cinque, sei, et otto voci* to cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani, »legato de latere di Bologna«[13].
– Other ›Venetian‹ dedications are provided by Lodovico Grossi da Viadana, *maestro di cappella* at Concordia cathedral (*Completorium romanum quaternis vocibus decantandum*, dated April 1609; *Lamentationes Hieremiae prophetae in Maiori Hebdomada concinendae* […] *opus XXII*, *Responsoria ad lamentationes Hieremiae prophetae* […] *cum quatuor vocibus*, and *Il terzo libro de' concerti ecclesiastici a due, a tre, & quattro voci*, all dated June 1609[14]); Ercole Porta, organist at the collegiate church of San Giovanni in Persiceto (*Giardino di spirituali concenti a due, a tre, e a quattro voci*, dated 10 April[15]); Pietro Antonio Bianchi, then in the employ of the archduke Ferdinand of Graz (*Sacri concentus octonis vocibus*, dated »Venetijs die primo septembris anno MDCIX«[16]); the nobleman Bernardino Borlasca from Gavio Genovese (*Scherzi musicali ecclesiastici sopra la Cantica a tre voci*, dated »li 10. di giugno 1609«[17]); Giovanni Battista Strata, organist at Genova cathedral (*Messa, motteti, Magnificat, falsi bordoni a cinque voci*, dated 7 October[18]); Girolamo Giacobbi, *maestro di cappella* at San Petronio, Bologna (*Prima parte de i salmi a due, e più chori*, dated 15 October[19]); and Antonio Coma, *maestro di cappella* at the collegiate church of San Biagio, Cento (*Psalmi omnes, qui in vesperis decantantur quinque vocibus* […] *op. III*[20]).
– The Benedictine monk Gregorio Zucchini, resident in the Venetian monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, publishes a collection of *Motectorum et missarum quattuor, & quinque vocibus*[21].

Pasquale, *Giovanni Battista Riccio's Canzonas in the Light of his Borrowings from Giovanni Gabrieli*, in: Baroncini, Bryant, Collarile (footnote 1).

10 Data from http://www.printed-sacred-music.org/ (RISM: *Printed Sacred Music Database – Printed Sacred Music in Europe 1500–1800*).

11 RISM B2713.

12 RISM B2702, 2707, 2708, 2711, 2712, BB2718a, B2719.

13 RISM C4168.

14 RISM V1388, 1389, 1391, 1392. Viadana is again in Venice in May 1612, when he signs the dedication of his *Salmi campagnoli a quattro voci* (RISM V1399).

15 RISM P5191.

16 RISM B2595.

17 RISM B3754.

18 RISM S6928.

19 RISM G1821.

20 RISM C3480.

By 1628, the year of Schütz's second journey to the city, the number of Venetian publications is significantly lower, and the percentage of reprints without dedication has grown. Yet, leaving aside a limited number of collections by composers active in Venice and other cities of the Serenissima, the dedications of the following prints are signed by their (mostly lesser known) composers in the course of presumably brief Venetian sojourns:

– *Messe Magnificat et motetti concertati* by Francesco Bellazzo, *maestro di cappella* at the church of San Francesco, Milan (1 January);
– *Mazzo d'armonici fiori* […] *a due, et tre voci* by Francesco Milleville (15 January);
– *Cinque messe a due voci,* […] *et vinti due motetti a voce sola per tutte le parti,* […] *con otto sonate per gl'istrumenti* by Tommaso Cecchino (30 March);
– *Messe motetti et dialogi a 5. concertati* by Natale Bazzini, organist at Ardesio near Bergamo (1 April);
– *Libro secondo de concerti spirituali con alcune sonate, a due, tre, quattro, et cinque voci* by Tarquinio Merula (26 April);
– *Hymni per tutto l'anno a quatro voci* by Pietro Lappi, *maestro di cappella* at the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Brescia (1 May);
– *Harmonicum coelum* […] *quatuor vocibus musicis* by Giovanni Battista Aloysi, *maestro di cappella* at Sacile (October 1628)[22].

Merula's arrival predates that of Schütz. The other musicians can have been of little interest to the mature composer, who Monteverdi now »guided […] with joy and happily showed […] the long-sought path«[23]; Schütz himself recalled not many years later that

> I engaged myself in a singular manner of composition, namely how a comedy of diverse voices can be translated into declamatory style and be brought to the stage and enacted in song – things that to the best of my knowledge […] are still completely unknown in Germany.[24]

Schütz's specific aims aside, however, Venice was still undoubtedly of central importance for the musical profession, a city which brought together composers, practical musicians and artistic experiences from home and abroad, furthered commercial and artistic contacts and fostered knowledge of the most recent trends in compositional and performing technique.

3. Venice, as a major centre both demographically and economically, guarantees constant engagements – and constant daily earnings – for musicians.

3.1 In the ecclesiastical sector, the majority use of church polyphony in the roughly 200 parish and monastic churches located in the city and on neighbouring islands may be classified in accordance with two types of activity:

21 RISM Z361.

22 Respectively RISM B1724, M2809, C1677, B1444, M2339, L698, A875.

23 The words are those of the Dresden court poet David Schirmer, cited in: Joshua Rifkin and Eva Linfield, art. *Schütz*, in: New GroveD2 (22), p. 829.

24 Letter of 6 February 1633 to Friedrich Lebzelter. See Schütz Dok, p. 179: »[…] Ich mich noch auf eine absonderliche art der *Composition* begeben hette, nemblich wie eine *Comedi* von allerhandt stimmen in redenden *Stÿlo*, übersetzet vndt auf den schawplatz gebracht vndt singende agiret werden könne, welche dinge meines wissens […] in teutschland noch gantz ohnbekandt, […]«.

a) the routine work of small *cappelle musicali* (above all on Sundays and the major festivities of the universal church calendar): the permanent or intermittent activities of church choirs can be documented in the contexts of the principal monasteries, the richest parishes and the largest lay confraternities of even small Italian cities; in Venice, around 1600, quantification is difficult, because archival documentation from many of the city's parish and monastic churches and other places of worship does not survive or is unavailable for study; yet a much smaller city like Treviso – with some 55 places of worship – supports at least eight *cappelle musicali*, and the much smaller Conegliano has at least four.

b) the constant and thus, for musicians, routine succession of special feast-days in individual churches: in the richer institutions, the greatest celebrations in the universal church calendar (Christmas, Easter, the most important Marian feasts and sometimes, in addition, the periods of Advent and Lent); in all institutions, the commemoration of a church's patron saint and, for monastic churches, the feast of the founder or dedicatee of the governing order; occasionally, the commemoration of the dedication of a church; in general, feasts honoring the patron saints of guilds and confraternities, normally celebrated at side altars maintained by these lay institutions; ›privately‹ funded ceremonies (in particular, baptisms, marriage ceremonies and funerals of wealthy citizens, the consecration of nuns and the first masses of newly-ordained priests: once again, quantification is difficult, because little non-institutional documentation has survived). Together, these festivities provided musicians with an unending supply of daily and recurring engagements – well over 500 per year, most of which would normally have required music at first vespers, mass and second vespers. The practice is well established by the first half of the fifteenth century (probably much earlier, but documentation is limited) and continues unabated until the Napoleonic abolition of the monasteries, guilds and confraternities[25].

The richest institutions could spend lavishly on music. For example, the English traveller Thomas Coryate describes the music provided by the wealthy Scuola Grande di San Rocco to celebrate its patron saint in 1608:

> Sometimes there sung sixteene or twenty men together, having their master or moderator to keepe them in order; and when they sung, the instrumentall musitians played also. Sometimes sixteene played together upon their instruments, ten sagbuts, foure cornets, and two violdegambaes of an extraordinary greatnesse; sometimes ten, six sagbuts and foure cornets; sometimes two, a cornet and a treble violl. […] Those that played upon the treble viols sung and played together, and sometimes two singular fellowes played together upon theorboes, to which they sang also […]. They beganne about five of the clocke, and ended not before eight. Also it continued as long in the morning: at every time that every severall musicke played, the organs, whereof there are seven faire paire in that room, standing al in a rowe together, plaid with them […][26].

Evidently, however, less wealthy institutions were also capable of providing quite extravagant music if, in 1639, a decree of the *Provveditori di Comun*, the government body responsible for supervising the lay confraternities, could deplore »not only the clothes of the musicians but also the musical instruments,

25 Quaranta (footnote 2); Bryant etc., *Come si consuma* (footnote 4); and, specifically on the confraternities, Jonathan Glixon, *Honoring God and the City. Music at the Venetian Confraternities, 1260–1807*, New York 2003.

26 Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities – Hastily gobled up in five Moneths travells* […], Glasgow 1905, vol. 1, pp. 390–391.

and the words that are sung seem designed more for the pleasure of the listeners than for the devotion for which such solemnities were piously instituted«. As regards the quality of the instruments, the decree required confraternities to abstain »in particular from the use of warlike instruments such as trumpets, drums and the like, better suited for use in armies than in the house of God«. At the same time, the text makes it clear that motets could regularly be performed »at the offertory, the elevation and after the Agnus Dei, and similarly at vespers between the psalms […]«[27].

3.2 In the private sector, surviving documentation points to the existence of a flourishing demand for music in the *ridotti* of numerous Venetian nobles and wealthy citizen-class merchants[28]. Giovanni Gabrieli can be associated with at least twelve of these *ridotti*, and it is difficult to imagine that a long-term pupil of the calibre of Schütz should not have been introduced by his master to these elite circles. Particularly prominent among patrons of Gabrieli were the Flemish merchant Carlo Helman and the merchant and art dealer Girolamo Oth (descendent of a distinguished German family from Augsburg, probably in Venice from around the mid sixteenth century, and himself a Fugger agent in Venice and Piacenza); other notable foreign patrons are the merchant Andreas Funch from Lindau (dedicatee of Orindio Bartolini's *Primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* of 1606 and Jean de Macque's *Sesto libro de madrigali a cinque voci* of 1613) and Simon de Decher from Cologne, dedicatee of Bartolini's *Canzonette et arie alla romana a tre voci* of 1606, whose Venetian residence was a venue for daily musical academies.

Documented local patrons of Gabrieli include the Venetian nobles Silvano Capello and Pietro Antonio Diedo, and the wealthy citizens Alvise Balbi, Nicolò Belloni, Bartolomeo Bontempelli, Simone Castellano, Orazio Guarguante, Antonio Milani (creator of a »theatre made for music« in his residence in the parish of S. Marziale!), Bernardo Pesenti and Camillo Rubini, all members of the merchant and professional classes. This, of course, does not preclude the composer's regular or sporadic appearance in other *ridotti* or association with other patrons. Alvise Grani, in dedicating Gabrieli's *Symphoniae sacrae* of 1615 to the abbot Johannes Merck von Mindelheim of Augsburg, notes that, while »the substance and presence of the composer's body may disappear after his death, his memory in the musical academies will not be forgotten, so much so that recognition of his supreme art and virtue will reach even those who have never known him«[29]. To date, the names of over 100 Venetian patricians or wealthy citizens can in some way be connected to the activities of local musicians – through participation in private entertainments, dedications of prints or individual compositions, or personal services (for example, as witnesses to administrative documents).

Thus the idea of disseminated opulence so evident in the visual impact of Venice (in architecture, sculpture, painting, craftsmanship of every kind) has an evident counterpart in music. Far from prerogative of the ducal basilica and ducal palace, music-making in Venice is ubiquitous (albeit at variously lower socio-economic levels). The following productive dynamics are particularly evident in the well-documented ecclesiastical sector but are also apparent in what is known of the private ›system‹:

27 Venice, Archivio di Stato, monastero di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, b. 100, no. 1, fol. 93, transcribed and translated in Glixon (footnote 25), pp. 213 and 331.

28 For a detailed discussion of private patronage of music in Venice in the late sixteenth century and first decades of the Seicento, see Baroncini, *Giovanni Gabrieli* (footnote 1), pp. 50–67 and passim, from which the following data is taken.

29 Giovanni Gabrieli, *Symphoniae sacrae* […] *liber secundus. Senis, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 19*, Venice 1615: »desit corporis ipsius copia & convictus, non deerit eius in musicis academijs memoria, quin ad eos etiam, quos nunquam vidit aut novit, summa eius & artis & virtutis notitia perveniet.«

1. the daily recurrence of similar events (festive church ceremonies; social gatherings in *ridotti*) with relatively standardized musical requirements;
2. above all in the ecclesiastical sector, the cyclic recurrence – year after year – of the same events, with potentially identical requirements in terms of musical services;
3. the economic stability of the productive chain, based on the combination of daily and cyclic recurrence of similar events requiring music, which naturally benefits not only performers and composers but also the flourishing ›auxiliary‹ trades of instrument making[30] and music publishing[31] (whose profits on the domestic market usefully complement those obtained through exploitation of the well-developed trade routes used by Venice for commerce of every kind); economic stability provides a *sine qua non* for artistic continuity (as the ›tools‹ of secure daily retribution are passed from one generation to the next);
4. the central role of performance (still more than composition or the copying / publication of musical artefacts) in the productive system: performance is the principal moment of direct contact between composers / performers and patrons / public, buyers and sellers, i. e. the hub of the economic system.

In Venice, these elements characterize every productive sector of musical culture (including the later operatic repertories) in non-official contexts. In the field of church music, no significant variations in the system can be discerned until the Napoleonic suppressions of the monasteries, guilds and confraternities in the first decade of the nineteenth century, with consequent reduction of a ›circuit‹ which, for centuries, had provided almost daily employment for large numbers of musicians.

How does Schütz interact with musical life in Venice? As is so frequently the case with foreigners (Grabbe, Pedersøn, Cornet, Kegel, Clemsee, Gallus Guggumus provide further examples), Schütz's Venetian sojourns are largely documented in non-Venetian sources (in particular, his own writings). His *Primo libro de madrigali*, published in Venice in 1611, bears an uninformative dedication to Landgrave Moritz of Hessen-Kassel; much later, in a petition of 1651 to the Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony, he remarks that this collection obtained »the particular praise of the best musicians in Venice«. The preface to his *Symphoniae sacrae* of 1629 specifies that this volume contains »the fruits of his encounter with the ›fresh devices‹ used by the newer Italian composers ›to tickle the ears of today‹«[32]. Nowhere does he offer information regarding his participation in musical events in the city. Nor do the Venetian archives cast light on his musical activities: the only known document, dated 2 August 1610, certifies the presence of »Enrico Schütz todesco« as witness to the baptism of a son of »Giacomo Moar, tailor, and Fioretta, his friend« in the church of San Samuele[33]. This archival void is perhaps the outcome of several forces:

1. the corporate organization of Venetian musicians, in attempting to guarantee a fair distribution of available earnings among members and defend what was little short of a market monopoly, effectively excludes the participation of ›outsiders‹[34].

30 See, in particular, Stefano Pio, *Viol and Lute Makers of Venice, 1490–1630*, Venice 2011.

31 In particular Richard Agee, *The Gardano Music Printing Firms, 1569–1611*, Rochester 1998; and contributions on the various Venetian music printers in: Bianca Maria Antolini (ed.), *Dizionario degli editori musicali italiani (dalle origini alla metà del Settecento)* (forthcoming).

32 Rifkin and Linfield (footnote 23), p. 829, who cite the preface.

33 Baroncini, *Giovanni Gabrieli* (footnote 1), p. 197.

2. the possible conditions of Schütz's ›apprenticeship‹: when, for example, Gabrieli accepts »Zorzi fio de ms Francesco varoter« as his pupil in 1583, the contract specifies that he was to enjoy all Zorzi's earnings as organist for the duration of his studies[35]; thus a young musician's name might not regularly appear in account books (and Schütz, in any case, was the recipient of a stipend provided by the Landgrave Moritz).
3. documentation regarding private patronage is little indeed; almost all surviving private papers regard property, legacies, legal wrangles, the administration of terrains and the like, while account books are few and far between. At the same time, institutional account books tend frequently to omit specific details: expenses for music are regularly recorded in the most generic terms, most frequently with the total payment and (rarely) the name of the musician who collected it for distribution among his companions.

A partial exception to the general lack of data regarding foreign musicians in Venice regards Wilhelm Lichtlein from Augsburg, engaged in 1605 as cornettist in St Mark's through the good offices of Giovanni Gabrieli[36]; Lichtlein, in the ducal chapel, appears on the regular pay-roll with the other salaried musicians, but his activities elsewhere in the city can only be imagined. A century later, little or nothing has changed: no data has yet emerged from the Venetian archives regarding the early eighteenth-century sojourns of Händel and Scarlatti, themselves recorded only casually in non-Venetian sources.

34 On the corporations formed by the singers and instrumentalists of St Mark's to protect their interests and regulate their activities in the other Venetian churches, see Jonathan Glixon, *A Musicians' Union in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, in: JAMS 36 (1983), pp. 392–421; and Francesco Luisi, *Laudario Giustinianeo*, Venice 1983, vol. 1, pp. 501–511 and 514–519.

35 The case is discussed in Baroncini, *Giovanni Gabrieli* (footnote 1), pp. 175–176 and 540.

36 Ibid., p. 180.