

***Artistes in Rome:* Froberger, Poussin, and the Modes of Music and Painting¹**

The painter Nicolas Poussin spent much of his career in Rome, from 1624 to 1640 and again from 1642 until his death in 1665. This overlapped with the two periods spent there by the composer Johann Jacob Froberger during 1637–41 and again from about 1645 to 1649. My purpose is to consider possible intersections between the two, particularly with regard to a theory of mode that Poussin set forth to explain what he called the “harmony” of his paintings. Poussin’s famous theory raises the question of what mode meant not only for seventeenth-century painters but for contemporary musicians.² Although there is little evidence for any personal associations between Froberger, Poussin, and their acquaintances, I shall argue that the confusing and sometimes contradictory concepts of mode found in seventeenth-century documents are best understood in relation to general ideas of the time, rather than within the specific music-theoretical tradition deriving from Zarlino and other humanist writers of the previous century.

Musical subjects, although hardly unusual in Poussin’s paintings, tend to be incidental to larger concerns. Rarely if ever did he depict living musicians or contemporaneous musical practices, rather incorporating mythological musicians and antique instruments into idealized or allegorical scenes of figures and events from classical literature. Typical of his subjects are *Apollo and the Muses on Mount Parnassus* (fig. 1), in which Apollo plays a violin or lira da braccio and a muse plays a lyre, and a *Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice* (fig. 2).³ Dancers appear not infrequently, as in the famous *Dance to the Music of Time* (fig. 3), although how close they come in appearance either to seventeenth-century theatrical dancers or those of antiquity is open to question. In these works, however, music is primarily allegorical. One is therefore somewhat surprised to find Poussin delineating a theory of mode in painting that is clearly derived from that of the musical modes. He does so in a famous letter written in 1647 from Rome to his long-time patron Paul Fréart, sieur de Chantelou. In the letter Poussin defends his second series of paintings on the Sacraments, which he was then creating for Chantelou (see fig. 4).

¹ My title paraphrases that of an article by Claudio Annibaldi: “Froberger in Rome: From Frescobaldi’s Craftsmanship to Kircher’s Compositional Secrets,” *Current Musicology* 58 (1995): 5–27; for the longer original version (not published until later), see his “Froberger à Rome: De l’artisanat frescobaldien aux secrets de composition de Kircher,” in *J. J. Froberger musicien européen: Colloque organisé par la ville et l’École Nationale de Musique de Montbéliard, Montbéliard, 2–4 novembre 1990* ([Paris:] Klincksieck, 1998), 39–57. The two publications established important biographical facts about Froberger’s Roman years.

² The present paper is a response to the beautiful exhibition *Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions* shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from Feb. 12 through May 11, 2008; exhibition catalog of the same title edited by Pierre Rosenberg and Keith Christiansen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2008). Most of the examples of Poussin’s work cited here are illustrated in the latter catalog.

³ *Poussin and Nature*, cat. nos. 17 (a drawing from the Getty Museum, not the painting in the Prado) and 47 (from the Louvre).



Fig. 1. *Apollo and the Muses* (drawing, ca. 1626, Getty Museum, Los Angeles)



Fig. 2. *Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice* (1650–1, Louvre, Paris)



Fig. 3. *Dance to the Music of Time* (ca. 1640, Wallace Collection, London)



4. *Ordination* (no. 5 from *Seven Sacraments*, second series, 1647, National Gallery of Scotland)

He explains why these lack the liveliness that Chantelou evidently found in *The Finding of Moses* (fig. 5), which Poussin had recently completed for another patron.⁴

In his letter, Poussin never refers to music as such. But it is clear from his references to modulation and dance, and to the doctrine of modal ethos, that Poussin is indeed writing about specifically musical modes, especially as discussed in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. What is less clear is how well he has understood or absorbed the sixteenth-century humanistic theory of musical modality, despite the incorporation in his letter of a number of near-quotations from Zarlino's *Institutioni armonichi*.⁵ Certainly Poussin betrays no engagement with the detailed mechanics of mode as discussed by Zarlino and other music theorists. Indeed, Poussin conflates the doctrines of mode and proportion, perhaps through a confusion of musical mode with the temporal or rhythmic principles signified in music theory by the word *modus*. Thus he asserts: “This word 'mode' means, properly, the *ratio* or the measure and the form that we use to do something. . . . each mode retained in itself a certain distinctiveness, particularly when all the things that entered into the composition were put together in such proportions that there arose the capacity and power to arouse the soul of the beholders to diverse emotions.”⁶

Although perhaps effective for Poussin's immediate rhetorical purposes, this formulation is so vague as to reduce the concept of mode to little more than a series of platitudes. Poussin's visual orientation—hardly surprising in a painter—is evident in his reference to “spectator[s]” (*regardans*) rather than “listeners,” one of several deviations from Zarlino's text that have been noted by Frederick Hammond.⁷ Poussin then proceeds to offer traditional characterizations of the modes, starting with the Dorian, which “was firm, grave, and severe, and [the Ancients] applied

⁴ The letter, dated March 24, 1647, is no. 156 in *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin*, edited by Ch. Jouanny (Paris: Jean Schemit, 1911), 370–5; it is reprinted and translated in Anthony Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin* (London: Pallas Athene, 1995), 367–70. Jouanny's transcription of this letter can also be consulted in the appendix to Hector Reyes, “The Rhetorical Frame of Poussin's Theory of the Modes,” *Intellectual History Review* 19 (2009): 287–302 (cited: 301–2).

⁵ The identification of these extracts is generally attributed to Anthony Blunt; for an even-handed discussion, summarizing views pro and con the seriousness of Poussin's references to music theory, see Jennifer Montagu, “The Theory of the Musical Modes in the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992): 233–48 (cited: 234–6).

⁶ Translated by David Freedberg, “Composition and Emotion,” in *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74–89 (cited: 77–8). Freedberg acknowledges his reliance on the earlier translation in Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, 369; the original reads “Cette parole Mode signifie proprement la raison ou la mesure et forme de laquelle nous nous servons à faire quelque chose. . . . chacun d'eux retenoit en soy je ne scais quoy de varié principalement quand toutes les choses qui entrent au composé étoient mises ensemble proportionnement d'où procédoit une puissance de induire l'âme des regardans à diverses passions.”

⁷ Zarlino has *ascolanti*; see “Poussin et les modes: Le point de vue d'un musicien,” in *Poussin et Rome: Actes du colloque à l'Académie de France à Rome et à la Bibliotheca Herziana 16–18 novembre 1994*, ed. Olivier Bonfait et al. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, and Rome: Accademia di Francia, Bibliotheca Hertziana, 1996), 75–89 (cited: p. 77).



Fig. 5. *The Finding of Moses* (1651, National Gallery, London)

it to matters that were grave, severe, and full of wisdom.”⁸ He also makes an analogy to poetry, citing Vergil for the use of words whose sounds accord with what he is describing, so that “when he is speaking of love, he has cleverly chosen certain words that are sweet, pleasing, and very grateful to the ear.”⁹

These thoroughly conventional ideas are remarkable only because a famous painter conveyed them to a wealthy and influential patron. The superficial character of Poussin's references to mode suggests that his use of musical terminology was no more—or less—significant than when an influential twentieth-century thinker entitled her best-known work “*Philosophy in a New Key*.” Susanne Langer's book presented a theory of aesthetics that was unusual for being inspired by music theory. Poussin indicates similar inspiration as well in a previous letter to Chantelou, in which the painter described himself as “not at all one of those who always sings in the same tone—and I know how to change it when I wish.”¹⁰ It is not inconceivable that he might have used this language because of Chantelou's, not his own, interest

⁸ “stable graue et sévère et luy appliquoint matières graues sévères et plaine de sapiense.”

⁹ “où il parle d'amour l'on voit qu'il a artificieusement choisi aucunes parolles douces plaisantes et grandement gratieuses à ouir.”

¹⁰ “je ne suis point de ceux qui en chantans prennent tousiours le mesme ton. et que je scais varier quan je veus,” no. 146 (letter of March 24, 1647, to Chantelou), in *Correspondance*, 352.

in music; in any case he evidently considered this an effective way to persuade his patron of his own high intentions.

Under these circumstances, how, precisely, should we understand Poussin's word *ton*? To translate it as *key* is certainly anachronistic, although not necessarily wrong; by Poussin's day, most European art music was becoming more or less tonal.¹¹ Poussin may well have assumed that *ton* and *mode* meant the same thing, as they probably did for many contemporary musicians. But it is also possible that he did not fully understand the technical significance of mode as either a scale or a set of focal pitches. Certainly it is an exaggeration to describe his subsequent letter as “an extended exposition on his theory of the modes.”¹² Rather, his second-hand references to the musical modes are at best an extended metaphor—a rhetorical device or a learned reference to a hazily understood concept that was nevertheless recognized as deriving from ancient music theory. The painting in question, *The Finding of Moses*, contains a similar reference in the form of a sistrum, an ancient Egyptian musical instrument that vaguely resembles a lyre in Poussin's version, although it is in fact a percussion instrument, still used in Coptic and Ethiopian church ceremonial.¹³ David Jaffé suggests that the inclusion of the sistrum was an “intentional reference” to an actual object recently acquired by a collector.¹⁴ In any case, the sistrum joins the pyramids in the distant landscape as a reference to ancient Egyptian (and pagan) culture.

Here as elsewhere, music for Poussin, as both painter and theorist, is incidental to his larger purposes. His “mode” is little other than *mood*, although later writers would make somewhat more substantive analogies between painterly and musical modes. One who did so was Charles Le Brun, whose authoritative role in the French visual arts of the period, as head of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture and as Premier Peintre du Roy, was somewhat parallel to that of Lully in music and dance. Le Brun came to Rome with Poussin in 1642, after Froberger's first visit, and he was probably back in France by the time Froberger returned in 1645. Only after Poussin's death in 1665 did Le Brun and his colleague André Félibien elevate Poussin's theory of mode to canonic status, in several discussions and essays whose influence over French academic painters extended into the nineteenth century. Jennifer Montagu cites Le Brun's claim that Poussin “wished that everything in his painting should be in reciprocal harmony and combine in creating one end.”¹⁵ In other words, Le Brun, like Poussin, evidently considered “harmony” to be assured by painting in a given “mode.” This is a conventionally metaphorical

¹¹ Rosenberg uses *key* to translate Poussin's *ton* in his catalog entry for *The Finding of Moses (Poussin and Nature*, no. 41, p. 222).

¹² Rosenberg, *ibid.*

¹³ Rosenberg, *ibid.*, calls the sistrum an “Egyptian harp,” citing David Jaffé, “Two Bronzes in Poussin's Studies of Antiquities,” *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 17 (1989): 39–46. But the latter makes no such gaffe, being concerned rather with tracing the source of Poussin's image of this instrument.

¹⁴ Jaffé, “Two Bronzes,” 46; the same sistrum, from the collection of Francesco Gualdo, appears in other sources cited by Jaffé, indicating that Poussin did not necessarily depict it from life.

¹⁵ “il voulait que, dans ses tableaux, toutes choses gardassent des accords réciproques et conspirassent à une même fin” (“The Theory of the Musical Modes,” 238).

use of the term *harmony*; should we understand *mode* any more concretely?

Montagu provides citations and other evidence which suggest that Poussin often used similar language in conversation or teaching. But nowhere is there any suggestion that he or his followers understood the actual use of mode either in Gregorian chant, where the concept in its traditional form applies most directly, or in more recent music. Indeed, Montagu cites at least one uncomprehending figure who confused musical modes, such as the Dorian and Phrygian mentioned by Poussin, with architectural orders, referring to a “Corinthian” mode.¹⁶ In addition, Félibien seems to refer to a “Lesbian” mode,¹⁷ perhaps having in mind the alcaic or the sapphic poetic meter. As Montagu observes, Le Brun had no known connections with musicians,¹⁸ and of later authors commonly quoted on this topic, only the Earl of Shaftesbury reveals any significant knowledge of music. Yet he too does little more than draw a vague analogy between painting and music: of “different *Airs* (such as *Sonatas*, *Entrys*, or *Sarabands*),” each possesses “its own proper Character or Genius . . . Thus the *Harmony* of Painting requires, 'that whatsoever *Key* the Painter begins his Piece, he shou'd be sure to finish it in the same.’”¹⁹

For Shaftesbury, writing in the early eighteenth century, key has replaced mode. Presumably he was aware of the now-familiar doctrine of key characteristics. This is already explicit by the latter seventeenth century in such sources as a list drawn up by the composer Charpentier of eighteen tonalities together with their affects or expressive qualities.²⁰ Other eighteenth-century writers on “mode” in painting continued to use it only in the most general or metaphorical way. Thus Antoine Coypel equates mode with *dessin*, which might literally mean design but more likely signifies something like an intended emotional expression.²¹ Nineteenth-century writers would resurrect the idea and assign paintings to specific modes.

Returning to Poussin, we might ask what led him to his musical analogy or metaphor in the first place. Not surprisingly, the music theorist Giovanni Battista Doni has been cited in connection with Poussin, with whom he shared some mutual acquaintances if not patrons at Rome. Even closer to Poussin was the collector Vincenzo Giustiniani, who wrote a small *Discourse on Music* in addition to assembling a famous gallery of ancient art that furnished

¹⁶ Henri Testelin, secretary of the Académie; see Montagu, “The Theory of the Musical Modes,” 242.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *A Notion of the Historical Draught; Or, Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules: With a Letter Concerning Design* (London [?], 1713 [?]), chap. 5, paras. 3–4 = pp. 29–30.

²⁰ In his manuscript “Règles de Composition” for Philippe d’Orléans; see James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music From Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, revised and expanded edition (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus, 1997), 231, for Charpentier’s table listing expressive characteristics of eighteen “modes” (actually major and minor keys).

²¹ “ce que les musiciens appellent modes ou dessins sont gracieux, forts ou terribles”; *Sur l’esthétique du peintre* (Paris, 1721), cited by Montagu, “The Theory of the Musical Modes,” 245, from H. Jouin, *Conférences de l’Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* (Paris, 1883), 240; Montagu notes that the meaning of *dessin* here is “not clear” (p. 245n. 51).

models for Poussin.²² Giustiniani, however, essentially ignores the modes in his *Discorso*, which is primarily an account of what we now understand as the transition from Renaissance to Baroque style, and from polyphony to monody in vocal music.²³ The work may nevertheless be symptomatic of how music was understood by a competent dilettante in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, when, as Giustiani puts it, Roman gentlemen no longer “sing together with several voices as in past years.”²⁴ The modes receive glancing attention in a single paragraph; there Giustiniani refers somewhat skeptically to the doctrine of modal affect as passed down from Plato (Zarlino is not mentioned), adding that “the diversity of tones . . . is not my business to explain to you.”²⁵

Doni, on the other hand, took a keen if essentially historicist interest in the theory of modes and genres, at one point even comparing musical genera, in the ancient Greek sense, to “tones of chiaroscuro in painting.”²⁶ Hammond supposes that as a Florentine “francophile” aristocrat, Doni might have been politically close to the French painters. Certainly Doni's Barberini patrons were great supporters of musicians, including Frescobaldi, thought to have been one of Froberger's teachers. This, however, is as close as we can come to discerning any contacts between Poussin and specific musicians. Hammond suggests that Poussin might have read Zarlino in the Barberini library while studying with the Barberini painters Dominichino and Sacchi. He mentions as well the effort by Pietro Della Valle to resurrect the Greek modes in a *dialogo* performed in 1640, using newly invented instruments in the Barberini collection. Individual passages in the work's manuscript score are labeled with respect to mode, showing that at least in this one (possibly unique) case a composer was quite purposefully singing in more than one tone (fig. 6).²⁷

But although conceivably providing inspiration for Poussin and others, such examples actually strengthen the impression that there is no concrete musical element in Poussin's theory of the modes. For Della Valle's modal modulations involve what we would call changes of key, involving elements of structure such as scales and cadence points, not mere changes of affect—and within a single composition. Poussin, however, seems to have understood mode as a purely expressive quantity that characterizes a single complete, integrated work. When he writes to Chantelou that “I hope within a year to paint a subject [*sujet*] in this Phrygian mode,” he

²² See Marc Fumaroli, *L'école du silence: Le sentiment des images au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 123.

²³ Part 6 of the collective manuscript Lucca, Archivio dello Stato, O 49, the *Discorso* is translated by Carol McClintock (together with Hercole Bottrigari, *Il desiderio*) in *Musicological Studies and Documents*, vol. 9 (N.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1962).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁶ Hammond, “Poussin et les modes,” 81–2.

²⁷ See Pietro della Valle, *Per la festa della Santissima Purificazione: Dialogo in musica*, facsimile with introduction by Howard E. Smither, in *The Italian Oratorio, 1650–1800*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1986).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Pietro Della Valle's *Dialogo per la Festa della Purificazione*. The score is written on three systems of staves. The top system features Bass (Basso), Violin (Viol. ma.), and Bass Continuo (Basso cont.) parts. The middle system is empty. The bottom system also features Bass (Basso cont.), Violin (Viol. ma.), and Bass Continuo (Basso cont.) parts. The score is divided into sections labeled with musical modes: Hipolidio, Dorio, Frigio, and Dorio. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Fig. 6. Pietro Della Valle, *Dialogo per la Festa della Purificazione con varietà di cinque tuoni diversi cioè Dorio, Frigio, Eolio, Lidio, et Hipolidio*, end of section 1, from Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele III, Fondi Minori, Mus. 123

means that he intends to paint in a mode that Plato and Aristotle “considered vehement, violent, very severe, and useful for rendering astonishment,” adding that “Terrible warlike subjects are appropriate for this manner.”²⁸

To what degree would Froberger have shared any of the various views of the modes discussed above? Would he have known about Doni's or Della Valle's work, or would he at least have shared their humanistic interest in modal theory, perhaps even being inspired by it as Poussin might have been? In the absence of relevant documents, we can only speculate about Froberger's personal inclinations. Clues about the intellectual or cultural environment in which he worked might be sought in the writings of Athanasius Kircher, the Jesuit polymath who was responsible for the first publication of any of Froberger's compositions. Kircher's writings reveal

²⁸ Poussin's letter of Nov. 24, 1647; the original reads: “Ils estimèrent se Mode véhément furieux très-sévère et qui rend les personnes estonnés. . . . Les subjects de guerres épouvantables s'acommode à cette manière.” *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin*, 374.

some of the same interests that Poussin expressed when he incorporated not only ancient Egyptian architecture but an ancient musical instrument in *The Finding of Moses*. But Poussin's sistrum is not one of the ones illustrated by Kircher, as Nancy Barker has shown. Poussin's sistrum is of the four-bar type depicted in Windsor Royal Library drawing 8393 (fig. 7).²⁹ This is quite unlike the “one-bar” sistrum illustrated in Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* (fig. 8).³⁰ And although they might have shared common acquaintances with Poussin, Frescobaldi as well as Froberger, Kircher, and other German-speaking musicians from the Empire are likely to have moved in rather different circles from the French painters and their francophile patrons. Doni famously sneered at Frescobaldi,³¹ and as an organist employed by the imperial court in Vienna, Froberger might not have been particularly welcome in the palaces of the Barberini and other patrons of Poussin. To be sure, Froberger was also a native of Stuttgart, unhappily guarding the border between France and the Empire, and he might have willingly served masters of both nations. But even those whom he knew in France seem to have inclined toward the *frondeurs*, in opposition to the King.³²

However remote he might have been from the Roman humanists—and despite having studied with the supposedly unlearned Frescobaldi—Froberger followed the latter in continuing to compose modal polyphony, especially in certain genres of contrapuntal keyboard music. Froberger's works of this type include fantasias, canzoni, ricercars, and capricci, all of them in four voices originally notated in open score, like those of Frescobaldi (ex. 1).³³ Apart from a few liturgical pieces, neither Frescobaldi nor Froberger explicitly designated anything as belonging to a mode. Yet Frescobaldi's published collections of contrapuntal keyboard compositions reveal a type of modal organization whose vestiges continue in Froberger's manuscript sets (see table 1). Frescobaldi's first publication, the twelve fantasias of 1608, includes one piece in each of the twelve modes, some of them transposed. The ten ricercars first published in 1615 continue in this manner, but the canzoni published with them, as well as several later sets, are less distinctly modal in their organization. Nevertheless these series tend to start with one or more pieces in the

²⁹ Jaffé, “Two Bronzes,” 46n. 20. Nancy Barker, “Un-discarded Images: Illustrations of Antique Musical Instruments in 17th- and 18th-Century Books, Their Sources and Transmission,” *Early Music* 35 (2007): 191–211, reproduces the drawing (p. 209).

³⁰ (Rome: Corbellettus, 1650), 1: 51.

³¹ More than once, in letters to Mersenne (1638 and 1640) and in his *Lyra barberina* (Florence, 1763), 1: 97–8; see Frederick Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 85–6.

³² As I argue in “Recent Editions and Recordings of Froberger and Other Seventeenth-Century Composers,” review article, *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* 13 (2007), online at <http://www.sscm-jscm.org/v13/no1/schulenberg.html>.

³³ Froberger's works are identified here by their numbering in the collected edition of Guido Adler (in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, vols. 8, 13, and 21 [Vienna, 1897–1903]). Despite some confusing features (notably in the numbering of the *capricci*) and the inclusion of a few fragmentary and misattributed pieces, Adler's numbering remains the most familiar and has not been improved by more recent systems as a means of identifying Froberger's works unambiguously.

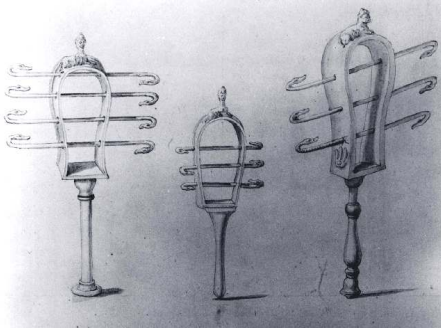


Fig. 7. Anonymous, *Three Sistra* (brown ink and wash on paper, Royal Collection, London, RL 8393)

Lib. II. Philologicus de Musica Hebr. et Grec. 51

alicinum, sed pulatit fuisse manifestissimis argumentis demonstratit se putet, ait enim illud idem fuisse, quod Systrum Aegyptium aut *sytra* Giacomum: fuisse autem circulum multis tintinabulis circumdatum ex ferro, aere, argento, auro fieri solitum: Sed verba eius audiantur:

הנה זמורל כקרא בלשון יין טוסטרום או נרוסטאר בלשון לאטינו טונטרטובולום כלי של נחש או של כסף או זהב שהוא עגול ודומה לכבועה גדול פתוח סבב לדודו שבאר שלו סביב סבב שהוא דומה כמו שלשה אבנעות חזיר קבועים מעמרים כסנים ובחקשה חקנבלין בנזונן דודו משמיעים קדורו שלטמח

Verum nos comparatione facta melius forsan dicimus huiusmodi Systrum inter instrumenta quae dicitur *Zalsalab* & *Minsanghain*, id est inter ea quae multis tintinabulis constant, adnumerari posse.

Necque enim huiusmodi instrumentum vlla ratione respondet Systro Aegyptiorum. Nam uti nos fuisse in Musica notata Hieroglyphica ostendimus, erat Systrum instrumentum ferreum non campanalis instructum, sed ferreis circumla cum manubrio, quo agitato triste quoddam murmur oboriebatur ex collisione a nularum ferreorum tum inter se, tum cum ferreis, aut aeneis, quibus inferebantur, sigillis quorum formam & rationem mysticam subtilissime descripsit reperies in Oedipo nostro, in libro de Musica Hieroglyphica Aegyptiorum. Ad huius tamen similitudinem fabricatum fuisse Systrum Hebraeorum siue *Tshb* hinc inducor, quod huiusmodi Systro Virgines in connubijs Systrorum tripodis passim venerant ut in Exodo & libro Iudicum de Maria Sorore Moysis, & Iephthe Filia legitur. & adhuc in Palestina vsum huius Systrici permanere, à cecilibus fide dignis accepi.

Fig. 8. Anonymous, *Machul (systrum Aegyptiorum)*, vignette from *Athanasii Kircheri fuldensis e Soc. Iesu presbyteri Musurgia universalis . . . Tomus I* (Rome, 1650), p. 51

Ex. 1. Froberger, *Canzon 1*, mm. 1–5, notated in score as in the autograph (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ms. 18706)

Table 1. Modal/tonal organization in collections by Frescobaldi and FrobergerFrescobaldi*Fantasie* (1608)

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>sopra un soggetto</i> | g ^b | g ^b | e |
| <i>sopra due soggetti</i> | a ^b | F | F |
| <i>sopra tre soggetti</i> | G | G | a |
| <i>sopra quattro soggetti</i> | a | F ^b | F ^b |

Recercari (1615)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>canzoni</i> | g ^b | g ^b | e | a ^b | F | F | G | G | a | a |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|
| | g ^b | g ^b | g ^b | F | a |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|

Toccate e partite I (1615)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| <i>toccate</i> | g ^b | g ^b | g ^b | g ^b | e | e | d ^b | F | a | F ^b | C | a |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|

Capricci (1624)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| | C | a | G | a | g ^b | g ^b | a | d ^b | a | d | G | F |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|

Toccate e partite II (1627)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|-----|
| <i>toccate</i> | g ^b | g ^b | d | a | G | F ^b | d ^b | F ^b | F ^b | d | G | (a) |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|---|-----|

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| <i>canzoni</i> | g ^b | C | G | F ^b | C | C |
|----------------|----------------|---|---|----------------|---|---|

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Magnificat</i> | d | g ^b | F ^b |
|-------------------|---|----------------|----------------|

Froberger*Libro 2* (1649)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| <i>toccatas</i> | a | d | G | C | d | g ^b |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>fantasie</i> | C | e | F | G | a | a |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| <i>canzoni</i> | d | g ^b | F | G | C | a |
|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| <i>suites</i> | a | d | G | F ^b | C | G |
|---------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|

Libro 4 (1656)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>toccatas</i> | G | e | C | F | e | a |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|------|
| <i>ricercari</i> | d | g ^b | e | G | d | f(♯) |
|------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|------|

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|
| <i>capricci</i> | G | g ^b | e | F ^b | F | a |
|-----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----|----------------|---|----|---|
| <i>suites</i> | e | A* | g ^b | a | D* | C |
|---------------|---|----|----------------|---|----|---|

“*Libro 5*” (1658)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|---|
| <i>capricci</i> | G | a | d | F | g ^b | C |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|---|

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|------|
| <i>ricercari</i> | C ^b | G | F ^b | C | g ^b | c(♯) |
|------------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|----------------|------|

Lost autograph (1662 or later)

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>fantasies</i> | a | e | F? | g ^b | B ^b | F? |
| <i>caprices</i> | a | G | B ^b | e | G | F? |
| <i>suites</i> | a | g ^b | c ^b | F? | D* | g ^b f ^b d |

Notes to Table 1

This list shows tonalities of works in certain genres from published or autograph manuscript collections. Each entry lists the final of pieces of a given type, uppercase letters indicating a major third, lowercase letters a minor third. Dates are those of first publication or of manuscript dedications.

A flat (b) or sharp (#) following a pitch name indicates that the accidental is present in a “key” signature. An asterisk * indicates a signature of two sharps. There appears to be no record of the “key” signatures employed in the lost autograph of 1662 or later which was sold by Sotheby’s in 2006, apart from what is visible in illustrations from Sotheby’s auction catalog that show details from several movements. A one-flat signature can be assumed for the two pieces with B^b final and in Suites 18 and 19 (following concordances); question marks indicate uncertain signatures for some of the remaining pieces.

The titles of the three Magnificat settings in Frescobaldi’s *Toccate et partite* II assign them to tones 1, 2, and 6, respectively.

In the apograph manuscript Berlin, Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, Musikarchiv, SA 4450, the toccatas and suites by Froberger form the following sequences of tones:

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|----------------|---|---|--|
| toccatas | d | G | F ^b | e | a | g ^b |
| suites | d | G | F ^b | e | a | g ^b c ^b D* C A* g ^b D* f ^b e a |

first mode or tone, usually transposed to G and with a signature of one flat, followed by one or more pieces on E; thereafter come pieces in other tones, those on G and A falling toward the end.

Froberger’s series are less consistent in this regard. But many of the *ricercars* and other contrapuntal pieces are clearly meant to represent something like the traditional modes of sixteenth-century polyphony even when they do not fall in a traditional sequence. Yet it is just as clear that many of these pieces are hardly modal in the same sense as sixteenth-century vocal polyphony, most obviously from the use of the non-traditional finals C-sharp and F-sharp. The modal aspects of these pieces must be related to their conservative polyphonic texture, but was the purpose merely archaism or respect for tradition, or was their more to it?

A possible clue arises with the use by Frescobaldi and Froberger of the title *capriccio* or its French equivalent *caprice*, which also arises in the visual arts. For instance, in a fictional dialogue between Poussin and Leonardo da Vinci, François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon described Poussin’s *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake* (fig. 9) as a *caprice*.³⁴ From the context, it is clear that the term means primarily that the scene is an invention, as opposed to an *histoire*, a depiction of an actual event. But Poussin’s purpose in inventing this scene, to judge

³⁴ Number 51 in *Dialogues des morts composés pour l’éducation d’un prince* (Paris, F. Didot et J. Didot, 1819), 300–309; the relevant portion is translated in Louis Marin, *Sublime Poussin*, translated by Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 62–4 (appendix 1 to chapter 2).



Fig. 9. *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake* (probably 1648, National Gallery, London)

from the conclusion of the dialogue, was the representation of a specific “passion”; this at least is how Pierre Rosenberg interprets Fénelon's dialogue.³⁵

Froberger's *capricci* and other contrapuntal pieces are less obviously representative of any passions than his suites and toccatas, which are famous among music historians for their expression of the composer's personal sentiments.³⁶ Yet many of these contrapuntal compositions possess a distinct coloration due to their peculiar approaches to modality or tonality. For instance, several pieces on G are evidently intended to represent something like the Mixolydian mode, making early moves to C major and even D minor that we would not expect in a piece in G major (ex. 2). Others with final on F make frequent use of an ostentatiously raised fourth degree of the scale (ex. 3). One of these pieces on F, *Fantasia 3*, tends to use B-flats as we would expect in a piece in F major. Yet although its final cadence seems entirely tonal when viewed in isolation, this cadence is preceded by six measures of what seems a solid C major. This makes the close on F a surprise—and probably not merely as a result of an anachronistic modern way of hearing the piece's tonality. For the surprise seems to be inherent in the piece's pitch structure, which is mildly chromatic in a way that is foreign to both sixteenth-century modality and eighteenth-century tonality (ex. 4).

³⁵ *Poussin and Nature*, 231 (entry for *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake*, cat. no. 44).

³⁶ The composer himself claimed that “various works . . . derive from emotions that the vicissitudes of time have occasioned in me,” in the dedication of a 1656 autograph manuscript to the Emperor; see my “Crossing the Rhine With Froberger: Suites, Symbols, and Seventeenth-Century Musical Autobiography,” in *Fiori musicali: Liber amicorum Alexander Silbiger* (Harmonie Park Press, 2010), ed. Claire Fontijn, 271–302 (cited: 286).

Musical score for Ex. 2, Froberger, Canzon 5, mm. 1-9. The score is in common time (C) and consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system starts at measure 4, and the third system starts at measure 7. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a final cadence.

Ex. 2. Froberger, Canzon 5, mm. 1-9

Musical score for Ex. 3, Froberger, Capriccio 4, mm. 1-5. The score is in common time (C) and consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system starts at measure 3. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a final cadence.

Ex. 3. Froberger, Capriccio 4, mm. 1-5

Musical score for Ex. 4, Froberger, Fantasia 3, mm. 195-206. The score is in common time (C) and consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system starts at measure 195, and the second system starts at measure 201. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a final cadence.

Ex. 4. Froberger, Fantasia 3, mm. 195-206

Capricci 15 and 16, both from Libro 4 of 1656 and with F final, demonstrate distinct approaches to what we might call the tone on F, the first possessing a signature of one flat, the second none. In theory this might mean that the first of these pieces represents not the traditional F mode (Lydian) but the transposed C mode (Ionian). But the real distinction is that Capriccio 15 moves remarkably far to the “flat” side of its prevailing tonality, even comprising brief passages in F minor. Similar minor inflections of an essentially major tonality are common in Froberger's pieces with G final. Notable here, however, is the close juxtaposition of a fairly remote “flat” excursion with one to the “sharp” domain of A minor (ex. 5).³⁷ On the other hand, the second of the volume's two capricci on F lacks the flat signature, whose absence could have been an intentional signal that the piece possesses a distinct tonality, even though it does not entirely avoid inflections to F minor. After its first two sections, however, Capriccio 16 moves in a more “sharpward” direction, even introducing a chromatic rising countersubject. Although this chromatic line was ostensibly an icon of radical expressiveness, by the mid-seventeenth century when Froberger wrote these pieces chromaticism of this sort had become more conventional, even more predictable, than anything in Capriccio 15 (ex. 6).

The distinct tonality of each of these two pieces, as signaled by their contrasting “key” signatures, nevertheless remains an extension of the modality of sixteenth-century vocal polyphony. Other compositions, however, incorporate a type of chromaticism that could have been inspired by speculation about ancient Greek modes and genera, as in certain works of Gesualdo and his contemporaries from around 1600. In Froberger's *Ricercar* 10, an early B-flat does not contradict anything that we might expect in a composition of the late sixteenth century. But as the third and fourth voices enter, accidentals introduce a chromatic element uncharacteristic of genuine Renaissance polyphony (ex. 7). An ascending minor sixth within the subject gives the latter an angularity also atypical of sixteenth-century music, although this as well as the subsequent sharps are readily explained in tonal terms as outlining or implying dominant-seventh chords. Alongside such evidence of tonal thinking, however, one finds suggestions of a much earlier paradigm, as when Froberger embeds an ancient Greek chromatic tetrachord within the main subject in *Canzon* 2 (ex. 8). As a learned reference to ancient thought, this recalls the sistrum which Poussin incorporated into *The Finding of Moses*. Far from an incidental reference, however, as part of the subject the chromatic motive is a fundamental element of the composition (even if it is absent from the so-called tonal answer when the second voice enters in ex. 8). The music nevertheless resolves regularly into fully tonal cadences, hence avoiding the almost atonal quality that arises in earlier chromatic works, especially some of Gesualdo's (ex. 9).

If the chromaticism of *Canzon* 2 was a deliberate archaism, in other pieces it is more likely an expressive *topos* borrowed from the *stile moderno* of vocal monody, as in the ostentatious tritone within the subject of *Canzon* 1 (see ex. 1). The distinction between the two types of chromaticism is hardly clear, however. We could imagine the chromatic octachord that furnishes

³⁷ The melodic subject in this passage is very similar to that used for the line “e primavera candida e vermiglia” in Monteverdi's madrigal “Zefiro torna e'l bel tempo rimena” from his Book 6. The resemblance is surely fortuitous, however, as Froberger's subject at this point is a triple-meter variation of a rather different subject in common time introduced at the beginning of the piece.

41

Ex. 5. Froberger, Capriccio 15, mm. 41–4

51

54

Ex. 6. Froberger, Capriccio 16, mm. 51–7

12

Ex. 7. Froberger, Ricercar 10, mm. 1–20

Ex. 8. Froberger, *Canzon 2*, mm. 1–5

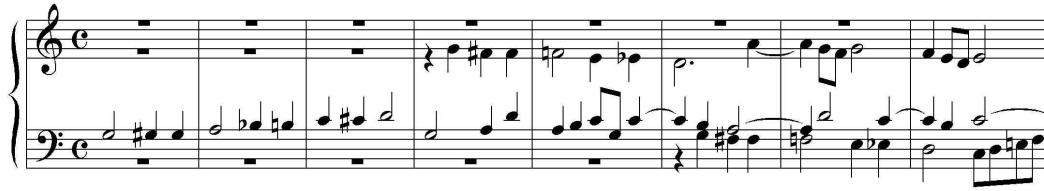
Bel - tà, poi che t'as - sen - ti, Co - me ne por - ti il cor,

Ex. 9. Gesualdo, "Beltà poi, che t'assenti," mm. 1–4

the subject of *Capriccio 6* as representing both an ancient Greek genus and a modern type of expressivity, the latter of course having been inspired by the former (ex. 10). Either way, the chromaticism obliterates any sense of a traditional mode—presumably Hypoionian in the case of *Capriccio 6*. Mode in sixteenth-century polyphony had depended on the use of particular patterns of diatonic melodic intervals within individual voice parts spanning a single octave. In fact the individual parts in Froberger's contrapuntal pieces do not range much farther than those in the polyphony of the previous century—thanks in part to their notation on conventional five-line staves, each headed by a traditional clef. But any genuinely modal qualities in Froberger's music are weakened not only by the pervasive chromaticism of certain pieces but by the presence of genuine modulations, as in later tonal music.³⁸ Hence his contrapuntal keyboard pieces are hardly modal in the traditional sense. Yet the distinctive coloration that stems in some cases from his use of chromaticism might have led such pieces to be regarded by his contemporaries as *more* modal than others which followed a more traditional understanding of the modes.

That would have been the case especially if these pieces of Froberger's were understood as representing particular expressive characters, or *passions*, as the French called them, and if these passions were believed (rightly or wrongly) to correspond with either the ancient Greek modes or those of humanistic theory. Froberger and his contemporaries seem to have had no terminology for describing the tonal systems of such pieces. Modern writers have used various terms,

³⁸ As in the presence in *Capriccio 6* of cadences on what we would call the subdominant and the dominant; these are as frequent as cadences on the final C. Arrivals on G are as often minor as major, however, a reminder that this piece is not quite tonal in the same way as eighteenth- or nineteenth-century music.



Ex. 10. Froberger, Capriccio 6, mm. 1–8

including the expressions “pitch-key mode” and “church key.”³⁹ Whatever terminology we adopt, it is clear that during the seventeenth century traditional modal theory was losing force. But we misunderstand seventeenth-century tonality if we attempt to see it as a closed, theoretically consistent system. Rather, these pieces at times refer to the traditional modality of vocal polyphony, at others the new common-practice tonality that comes to the fore especially at cadences, and at still others the chromaticism that tends to contradict both modal and tonal systems of organization.

The presence especially of chromaticism would probably have caused Froberger's contemporaries as much trouble as it does us in assigning a given piece to a particular mode (or key, or genre). Although most of Froberger's fantasias and ricercars are relatively straightforward, tending toward diatonic, conventionally modal subjects, the canzoni and capricci seem deliberately to confound any conventional understanding of modality or tonality through their references to contradictory types of tonal organization. In effect they represent new, invented modes (to use that term broadly). So too do at least two of his ricercars, those that we would describe today as being in F-sharp minor and C-sharp minor, respectively. These pieces fall at the ends, respectively, of Froberger's autograph collections of 1656 and 1658.⁴⁰ But these pieces too are neither entirely tonal nor genuinely modal, each rather employing a unique sort of tone organization. That they are by no means transposed examples of the traditional Dorian or Aeolian mode becomes clear early in the ricercar in C-sharp, which avoids the note D-sharp, favoring instead the flat second degree. The final cadence confirms the piece's peculiar blend of elements that we would identify as belonging to both the Phrygian and the minor modes (ex. 11).

If, however, Froberger's *capricci* and other contrapuntal pieces could be taken as representing particular affects or expressive characters, rather than modes in the traditional sense, they remain distinct in obvious ways from Poussin's paintings, even if the latter were likewise meant to

³⁹ See, e.g., Walter Atcherson, “Key and Mode in Seventeenth-Century Music Theory Books,” *Journal of Music Theory* 17 (1973): 204–32, especially 216ff. on “pitch-key modes”; and, more recently, the contributions of Candace Bailey (“Concepts of Key in Seventeenth-Century English Keyboard Music”) and of Michael R. Dodds (“Tonal Types and Modal Equivalence in Two Keyboard Cycles by Murschhauser”) on what Joel Lester has called “church keys,” in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, ed. Cristle Collins Judd (New York: Garland, 2000), 247–74 and 341–72. (On Lester, see below at note 49.)

⁴⁰ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, mss. 18707 and 16560, respectively; facsimiles edited by Robert Hill in vols. 3/2–3 of *17th Century Keyboard Music: Sources Central to the Keyboard Art of the Baroque*, Alexander Silbiger, general editor ((New York: Garland, 1988).

Ex. 11. Froberger, Ricercar 6, mm. 84–92

Ex. 12. Froberger, Capriccio 16, mm. 1–2, 22–5, 51–2, 71–2

represent specific passions. For most of Froberger's capricci, ricercars, and the like are multi-sectional pieces in which a single subject recurs in each section in a new melodic or metrical variation, sometimes in conjunction with a new countersubject or a particular contrapuntal device such as stretto (ex. 12).⁴¹ The use of one subject in diverse variations within a single composition is at odds with the unified character with which Poussin, to judge from his letter to Chantelou, endeavored to imbue each of his works. If, however, the point of one of Froberger's compositions was to constitute a set of varied realizations of a specific musical mode (however broadly understood), it would have constituted a parallel of sorts to a *series* of visual caprices.

⁴¹ For an example of stretto, see example 4.



Fig. 10. Jacques Callot, *Gentleman With a Sword*, etching, from *Capricci di varie figure* (1622)

The most familiar caprices of this sort today are probably the Romantic-era ones of Goya. But previously the term had been associated with architectural fantasies.⁴² Froberger himself might have known such things as the *Capricci di varie figure* (1617, rev. 1622) by the French print-maker Jacques Callot (fig. 10) or the 1635 *Capricci di varii battagli* by the Strassburg artist Johann Wilhelm Baur, who worked in Stuttgart, Vienna, Rome, and elsewhere. The actual word *capriccio* did not necessarily imply any such series, or any particular type of visual artwork, for either Froberger or Poussin. But the idea of assembling sets of exemplars for both artistic and pedagogic or philosophical purposes was certainly in the air—all the better if these systematically demonstrated a variety of passions or expressive characters. In music, the idea of a series might be realized on several distinct structural levels, for a musical capriccio or canzona not only comprises a series of variations on its subject but is itself part of a larger series. Poussin does not seem to have been aware of this possibility, even though, at the time of his letter to Chantelouon the modes, he was at work on his series depicting the seven *Sacraments* (he was defending one of these in his letter). Within the series, Alain Mérot has noted the “sober Doric pilasters” in *The Eucharist* (fig. 11), Ionic columns that stand “between luxury and austerity” in *Penitence* (fig. 12), and “the opulence and liveliness of the Corinthian” in *Marriage* (fig. 13)⁴³—conflating musical modes and architectural orders much as Henri Testelin had done in the late seventeenth century.

⁴² See, e.g., Joanna Augustyn, “Subjectivity in the Fictional Ruin: The Caprice Genre,” *The Romanic Review* 91 (2000): 433–57 (cited: 435f.).

⁴³ “Les modes, ou le paradoxe du peintre,” in *Nicolas Poussin 1594–1665*, ed. Pierre Rosenberg and Louis-Antoine Prat (Paris: Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994), 80–6 (cited: 82).

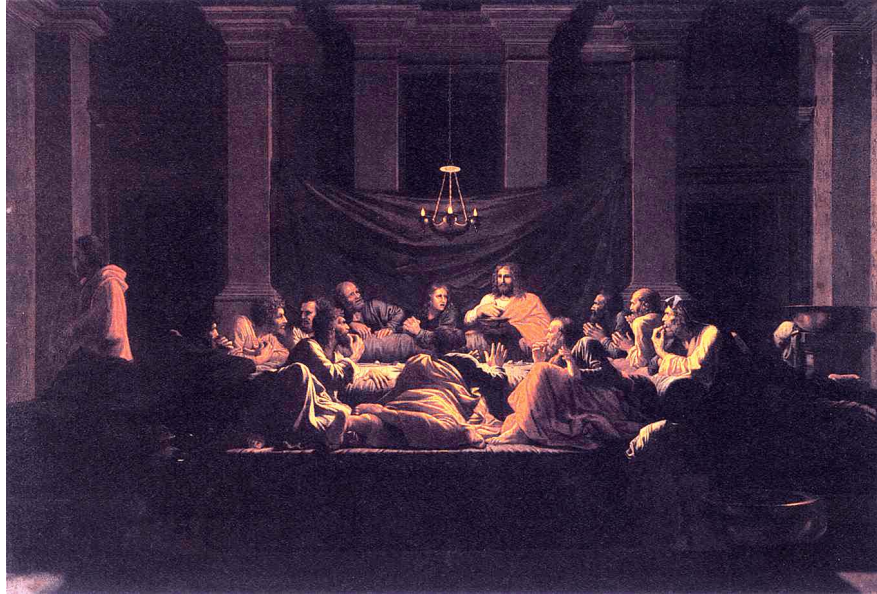


Fig. 11. *The Eucharist* (no. 5 from *Seven Sacraments*, second series, 1647, National Gallery of Scotland)



Fig. 12. *Penitence* (no. 4 from *Seven Sacraments*, second series, 1647, National Gallery of Scotland)

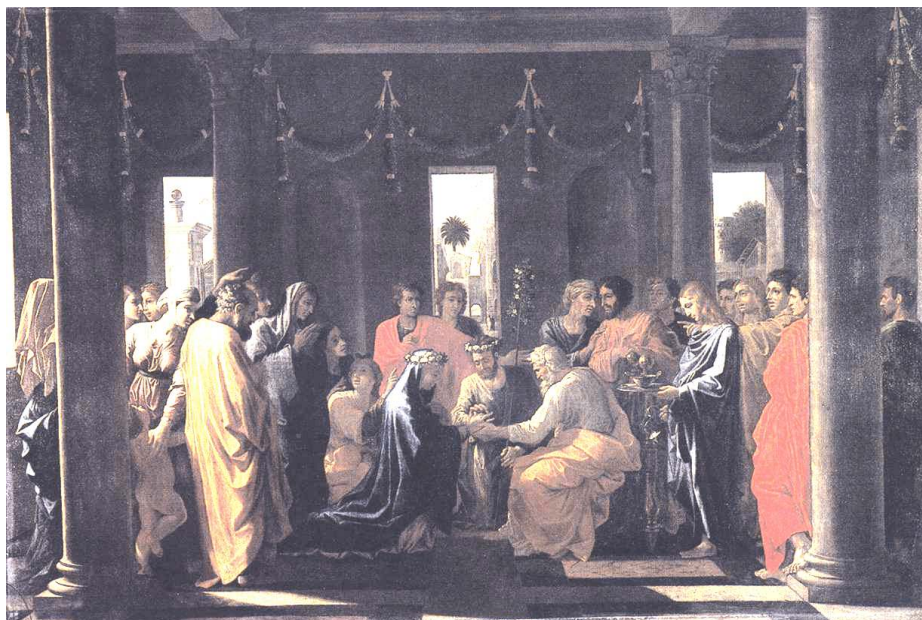


Fig. 13. *Marriage* (no. 6 from *Seven Sacraments*, second series, 1647–8, National Gallery of Scotland)



Ex. 13. Bull, “Voluntary, 4 Parts: Dorick Musique,” from Oxford, Christ Church, MS 1113 (“Ellis”)

Modes and orders, however, shared a conceptual origin in the ancient Greek habit of tracing cultural principles to legendary individuals or, in this case, ethnic groups or tribes. The precise number and nomenclature of the modes, or of the orders, differs depending on which theorist one reads—just as the number of sacraments differs between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. But a painter embarking on a series of paintings might have thought about individual items in a series somewhat as a composer did in creating a series of *ricercars* or *fantasias*. Composers had been writing compositions as parts of modal series since the later sixteenth century, but primarily in vocal, liturgical works. With Frescobaldi and Froberger, the practice was shifting to instrumental pieces, and although not yet explicit would become so by the eighteenth century, when Bach and his contemporaries would assemble works such as the *Well-Tempered Clavier*; by then, of course, the concept of mode had been superseded by what we call keys. There is little evidence that any of these composers shared the academic fascination with equating keys, or modes, with precise expressive characteristics. But the same logic that led Poussin to organize a series of works in terms of prevailing color or expressive character—which he understood metaphorically as a matter of mode—could apply only slightly less metaphorically to actual musical compositions.

For whereas Poussin's use of musical mode is essentially metaphorical, the same is *also* true with Froberger and later musicians who organized their collections modally or tonally. This is because to a practicing musician the modes, and later the keys, do not really possess the expressive qualities that theorists have associated with them. Mode and key are themselves somewhat arbitrary categories; within modally organized sets of compositions from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there is often no real distinction between certain modes, such as the authentic and plagal versions of the Phrygian mode. Moreover, as D. P. Walker pointed out long ago, during the period before Poussin and Froberger arrived in Rome there had been two mutually exclusive systems of mode: the traditional one used since the Middle Ages for chant and the humanist one of Zarlino and later Mersenne. The latter made Dorian the mode on C (not D), and Mersenne prescribed the use of particular modes for particular affects based on that system.⁴⁴ As appealing as this might have been to academics and dilettantes, it would have made serious musicians and artists skeptical of any system, even as they accepted the common understanding that there *were* modes and that these descended from classical antiquity.

Besides mode and its types, another term that Froberger and other musicians evidently shared with Poussin is *subject*, which was used routinely for the content or perhaps the topic of a painting. In Baroque music we usually understand the word as referring to the theme of a fugal composition, but it also occurs as part of the programmatic title of Froberger's *Allemande 16*, which is designated in one reliable source as being “on the subject of a mountain path.”⁴⁵ That a

⁴⁴ D. P. Walker, “Musical Humanism in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries,” *Music Review* 2 (1941): 1–13, 111–21, 220–7, and 288–308, and 3 (1942): 55–71 (cited: 220–1); as he notes on p. 222, Galilei, Mei, and Doni had a third system. The essay is reprinted in D. P. Walker, *Music, Spirit, and Language in the Renaissance*, ed. Penelope Gouk (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985).

⁴⁵ “faite sur le Subject d'un Chemin Montaigneux . . .” in Berlin, Sing-Akademie zu Berlin, Musikarchiv (on deposit in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz), SA 4450.

mountain path might be the subject of an instrumental composition is unremarkable to us, accustomed as we are to programmatic compositions from the later seventeenth century onward. This is, however, a unique instance of the word used as part of the title of one of Froberger's keyboard pieces. No other work of Froberger's bears a title pointing to an outdoor scene, but this one, although not present in any autograph manuscript, is confirmed in an independent copy.⁴⁶

Froberger, like other seventeenth-century travelers, was probably less enthusiastic than later artists about the charms of actual mountain paths, viewing them as places of considerable danger, or at least discomfort. Hence the sudden bursts of arpeggiation in Froberger's musical depiction of this particular mountain path, if not representing an avalanche,⁴⁷ might at least have been intended to evoke sensations of dread or unease rather than bucolic visions of the countryside. But in any case the idea of depicting outdoor scenes or landscapes for their own sake was another one that was in the air; Poussin was among the first major painters to take a serious interest in it. In *Allemande 16*, the phraseology of the title, like the programmatic titles for other pieces by Froberger, betrays the novelty of attaching descriptive headings to musical compositions: Froberger and those who copied his music usually preface the actual title with the word *sur*, “on,” and, in this one case, with the additional word “subject.”

In such a context, the word *subject*, like the term *mode*, would not have been understood solely as a technical musical term, equivalent to our *theme* or *motif*. In vocal polyphony, a subject was as much the verbal phrase to which a theme was sung as it was the theme itself. In one of Froberger's programmatic pieces, the subject could be the underlying image—a visual topic—in the same way that Poussin's *Finding of Moses* was a representation of a traditional image or topic. In discussions of contrapuntal music by Zarlino and other writers, references to *soggetti* might carry at least a hint of extra-musical significance, particularly if the subjects were conceived modally, that is, as representing a particular set of conventionalized melodic as well as expressive features.

We might suppose that Froberger, as a professional musician and court organist, would have had a clearer understanding of mode (in the traditional sense) than someone like Poussin. An organist of his day needed to know something of the doctrine of modes or tones in order to accompany liturgical singing. Yet it is unclear whether Froberger, although officially an imperial organist, actually participated in church services; at least one contemporary understood him as a harpsichordist.⁴⁸ Nor, in any case, did routine liturgical practice necessarily require a profound understanding of mode; surely, liturgical musicians did not always follow the precepts of Zarlino

⁴⁶ *Allemande 16* is described as “repraesentans monticidium Frobergeri” in Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Mus. ms. 1-T-595, another late-seventeenth-century copy; further discussion in Schulenberg, “Crossing the Rhine With Froberger,” 272–3.

⁴⁷ As suggested by Rudolf Rasch and Pieter Dirksen, “Eine neue Quelle zu Johann Jacob Frobergers Claviersuiten,” in *Musik in Baden-Württemberg: Jahrbuch 2001/Band 8*, edited by Georg Günther and Reiner Nägele (Stuttgart: Metzler, [2001]), 133–53 (cited: 143).

⁴⁸ Kurt Seidler, *Untersuchungen über Biographie und Klavierstil Johann Jacob Froberger's* (Inaugural-Dissertation, Albertus-Universität, Königsberg, 1928, published at Königsberg: Emil Rautenberg, 1930), 24, observes that Froberger was apparently not a regular member of the court music and quotes (pp. 26–7) a letter of William Swann to Constantijn Huygens describing Froberger as “un homme tres-rare sur les Espinettes.”

or Banchieri as they matched antiphons to psalm and hymn verses and improvised accompaniments and interludes.⁴⁹ It may be that, lacking our music-analytical apparatus, or even that of sixteenth-century modal theory, organists in the school of Frescobaldi conceived of modes as general patterns of musical behavior, in a way concordant with the vague understanding of mode implicit in the writings of somewhat later French painters. Certainly musicians today do not require, and may even be hindered by, theoretically rigorous conceptions of tonality when playing classical compositions or improvising jazz. If we were to ask such musicians to explain how keys function in their performances, we might get accounts more like Poussin's than Zarlino's.

Is it possible, then, that music historians have relied too heavily on theoretical writings for an understanding of what mode meant to seventeenth-century musicians and listeners? Although the Zarlirian doctrine of modal ethos had become common currency by the end of the sixteenth century, this might have been as much by analogy with the architectural orders as through a rigorous understanding of Greek and humanistic modal theory. One hint that the vaguer, more metaphorical understanding of mode expressed by Poussin was not confined to artists at Rome—or in Paris—comes from several pieces by the English composer John Bull (1562 or 1563–1628). Entitled Doric preludes, these pieces are hardly in the liturgical Dorian mode—nor are they all in Zarlino's Dorian on C (ex. 13).⁵⁰

These “Dorick” pieces seem rather to reflect the type of popular account that the modes receive in John Playford's *Breefe Introduction to the Skill of Music*, which went through numerous editions over the course of the seventeenth century. There, in what Joel Lester describes as a “peculiar discussion of five Greek *Moods*,” we read that “The Dorick Mood consists of sober slow timed Notes which in composition of parts goes Note for Note, be they of two, three, or four parts, as is usuall in Church Tunes to the usuall Psalms.”⁵¹ Whatever this

⁴⁹ Adriano Banchieri, *L'organo suonarino* (Venice, 1605; facsimile, with additions from the editions of 1611 and 1638, with introduction by Giulio Cattin, Bologna: Forni, 1969), is a sort of textbook in the skills that an organist of Froberger's day might have been expected to master.

⁵⁰ The presentation of Bull's “Dorick” music in *John Bull: Keyboard Music I*, ed. John Steele and Francis Cameron (Musica britannica, vol. 1), third edition, revised by Alan Brown (London: Stainer and Bell, 2001), remains misleading. Of six distinct pieces there designated as “Dorick” by their titles, one (no. 58a) is an unrelated consort piece, another cannot be connected to Bull (no. 59, copied and surely composed by Benjamin Cosyn), and for two others the word *Dorick* in the title is a doubtful completion of the abbreviations “Dor.” and “D.” in titles in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. Hence only the “Dorick musique” in three and four parts, respectively (nos. 57 and 58) can be attributed to Bull as keyboard pieces under this title with reasonable certainty.

⁵¹ John Playford, *A Breefe Introduction to the Skill of Music* (London, 1654), quoted by Joel Lester, *Between Modes and Keys: German Theory, 1592–1802* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1989), 101, who, however, appears to give an erroneous citation, conflating Playford's discussion with one of Playford's sources, Thomas Campion's *A New Way of Making Fowre Parts in Counterpoint* ([London]: John Browne, ca. 1613). The latter is edited by Christopher R. Wilson together with Giovanni Coprario's *Rules How to Compose* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). A similar passage is quoted from the seventh edition of Playford's work, entitled *An Introduction to the Skill of Music* (London, 1674; reprint, Ridgewood, 1966), 57, by Douglas Murray, “The Musical Structure of Dryden's 'Song for St. Cecilia's Day,’” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 10 (1977): 326–34 (cited: 329). Jessie Anne Owens, “Concepts of Pitch in English Music Theory, c. 1560–1650,” in *Tonal Structures in Early Music*, 183–246 (cited: 236n. 15), points to a similar definition in Charles Butler, *The Principles of Music in Singing and Setting*

means precisely, it is hardly the Dorian mode as we understand it, or as ancient Greek or Renaissance music theorists defined it. But it is an adequate characterization of Bull's Doric pieces, and it accords roughly with what Poussin might have understood as the austere Doric order in painting and design. In short, Poussin's letter should encourage music historians to look beyond the realm of music and music theory for their understanding of how seventeenth-century musicians and listeners regarded the modes, and artistic expression generally. Froberger never wrote anything resembling Bull's Dorick pieces. But this merely indicates that, although like Poussin he did not always sing in the same key, he never happened to do so in this one.