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Title: Fragment. To the noble Reader

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[<f.1r>-] To the noble Reader.

Envy has inhabited the world for such a long time that it appears to have been born with it. Certainly, the very ancient poet Hesiodus, who lived almost as far back as the Heroic age, provides the evidence in these short verses that even then this plague was rife not only among the less well regarded performers, but also among the most famous musicians.

The potter envies the potter, the carpenter envies the carpenter,

The beggar envies the beggar and the bard the bard.

The potter envies the potter, the artisan the artisan

The bard envies the bard and the pauper the indigent.

It is much less surprising that such a base and abject vice should be associated with men of lowly fortune and humble workers, but who will not be resentful that the pupils and lovers of the Muses, to whom nothing but what is elevated and splendid is suited, should be possessed by such contemptible and depraved vice, or indeed who should consider this to be credible? However, this is how it is: nothing is more certain and true than this Hesiodic oracle. [<f.1v>-] So horrid is this plague that has infected the family of musicians that most of them not only seethe full of hatred and envy against each other, but also refuse to consider those who devote themselves to philosophical and literary studies and refuse to pursue their irrelevant trifles. I myself have experienced these attacks from a very learned man who is also very versed in music when I set myself to compose certain poems according to the rather exact norm prescribed by the rules of the ancients on meter and rhythm, so that I might present them not only to the most refined ears of His Highness the Prince, but also to His most discerning and incomparable stylistic judgment.

In fact, immediately there arose certain fairly well known Composers, who should have applauded and embraced our decision supportively, who, instead, were not ashamed to deride and mock our efforts considering them vacuous and useless. Nevertheless, I am drawn to despise their ill-feeling just as I am inclined to pity their ignorance. Trusting only my conscience and secure of the judgement of posterity, I shall not be deterred by such tales from hastening towards my goal [<f.2r>-] and from pursuing such a beautiful aim, according my personal capacity and as far as my strengths allow. Let them indulge their own credulity and bother the ignorant populace with their empty chatter. Let them also try to persuade the learned openly that ancient music making and its stylistic notions were totally coarse and unsophisticated, while convincing them that the power of music has reached its acme in our age and that there is nothing that could be added to it to improve it further. However, they will never convince me of this, at least, or those 'who Juppiter loved in his benevolence'. In fact, it is sufficiently clear both in many other fields and in this

particular discipline that, as the world of our immediate ancestors disappears, so to speak and, in a way, the liberal disciplines are borne again, every day many elements of their knowledge, which were unknown to our immediate ancestors, but were of common domain in a more florid age, emerge into the light once again. However, aside from these matters, I thought it appropriate to warn you, kind reader, that I predict that there will be no shortage of people who will tear to pieces with malice the invention of this new instrument, and who will vilify it, and who will tear apart and destroy in whichever way they can the songs that, in my role as the Author, I have placed after this Commentary. To them I declare now then that I dedicate the efforts of my sleepless nights to learned and honorable men who are neither ignorant or malicious, and that I have done nothing without experimental confirmation, while I have followed the authority of those [-<f.2v>-] who (whether they want it or not they must admit it) have been the founders and teachers of the discipline of music. Therefore, should they have any grievance, let them go by the letter and the opinion of a competent judge. In fact, let them not think that this should be resolved by the judgment of the populace, since they know very well indeed that nothing corrupted music more than the popular taste and the theater. However, since nowadays not only the theatres and the private chambers resound with that broken and enervated musical stylistic elements which (this is the extent to which disapproval is turned into praise by habit) captivate the ears of almost everyone, but also the churches all too often rumble with the noise of worthless and unattractive melodies, what is it that will be so hateful in presenting some example of that ancient and genuine noble music, whose gravitas and worthiness is predicated by so many very esteemed authors, as far as it is possible in a matter already long forgotten, and in inspiring the minds to produce better results? Works sung in the Enharmonic mode stopped being composed at least fifteen hundred years ago (for as many years as separate our times from Plutarch's age). What then? Is it the case, therefore, that if someone composes a piece of this sort, one should be laughed at as a primitive man born in the age of Saturn? Or should one be met with universal admiration as in the case of Socrates or of the famous Alexander of Macedonia, in whose time the whole of Greece flourished admirably in every art? I make this premise not because I want to dress up - in my love of music - this little song as [-<f.3r>-] an outstanding vocal composition finely wrought in every part and detail, but so that the readers may acquire a small taste of that famous ancient melodic style which flourished when this discipline of music had not yet achieved its greatest splendor, and which not simply by itself, but in addition and conjunction with other disciplines, can have some utility. However, I am perfectly aware that there will be no shortage of those who believe that this essay in Enharmonic music, which is totally the fruit of my imagination, will appear completely inauthentic, since it does not conform to certain little rules codified and handed down by more recent writers, but I have the profound desire to ask them, before they produce too harsh a judgment against us, to consult the Greek authors who are mostly still missing in the Libraries and who were not read thoroughly at all by these more recent writers from whose opinion they consider unacceptable to part even an inch, while I maintain that they should expect us to be judicious and dutiful with regards to the information we possess on the differences among the three genera and on their properties. In fact, unless our spirit and determination fail, we shall support and prove our opinion both by resorting to the drive of our reason and to the witness statements of the ancient writers on this matter in such a way that there shall be, in our opinion, no further room for doubt. However, since there is no shortage nowadays of music scholars who exercise themselves in this same field and who have

the capacity to offer much more than we can, since they are greatly endowed superior intelligence, doctrine, time for their studies and access to books (and first among them Father Marin Mersenne, a honest and learned man member of the order of the Minims, whose most lavish [-<f.3v>-] work entitled De Vniuersali Harmonia we are awaiting eagerly) perhaps there will be no lack of those who shall slit the throat of their lack of education with their learned pen. [[There will be also those who cannot stand the fact that I, since I am not a performer or a composer]] There are those nowadays who think it disgraceful and insufferable that a person who does not profess a particular discipline should disagree at times with those who cultivate nothing but that discipline, and they think, therefore, that it is almost prodigy