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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE RICERCARI A TRE OF PIETRO VINCI AND ANTONIO IL VERSO: A DISCUSSION AND MODERN EDITION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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BY

HUGO A. MAGLIOCCO

Norman, Oklahoma

1972

THE RICERCARI A TRE OF PIETRO VINCI AND ANTONIO IL VERSO: A DISCUSSION AND MODERN EDITION

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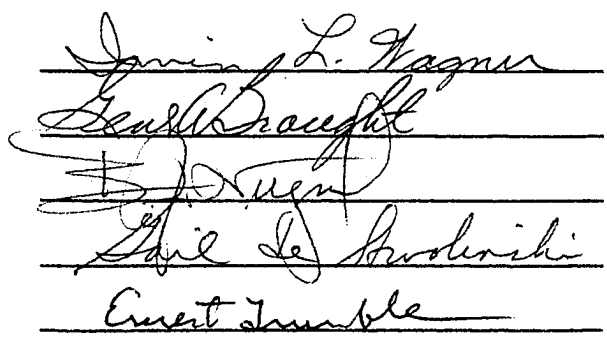

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THE *RICERCARI A TRE* OF PIETRO VINCI AND ANTONIO IL VERSO: A DISCUSSION AND MODERN EDITION

CHAPTER I

PIETRO VINCI AND ANTONIO IL VERSO, A SKETCH OF THEIR LIVES AND MUSIC

Pietro Vinci and Antonio il Verso, teacher and pupil, were both Sicilians by birth whose musical activities after 1581 were significant as a beginning of a Sicilian School of Polyphony. Though Vinci flourished chiefly in Bergamo in northern Italy from 1568 to 1580, upon his return to Sicily he became mentor and master to a group of young composers, one of whom, il Verso, was to become a collector and perpetuator of his master's works as well as a composer and historian in his own right. Both were active during the Renaissance; and during the High Renaissance, Italy was foremost in its wealth of composers and musicians as well as music of all styles and forms then in existence. Such composers as Palestrina, da Rore, Marenzio, and the Gabrielis are just a few of the Renaissance masters active in Italy during the late sixteenth century. Such forms as the Mass, motet, and madrigal in the vocal tradition and the fantasia, toccata, canzona, and ricercar in the instrumental tradition were some of the many forms and styles practiced in the musical centers of Italy proper.

But what of Sicily? That football-shaped island just off the toe of the Italian boot had, in Christian times, seen the conquests of the Moors, Normans, Aragonese, and Spanish, and would not become a part of a unified Italy until the late nineteenth century. At the time pertinent to this study, Sicily was under Spanish domination. Its wheat and silk were important to the economy of the Spanish realm, and the post of Viceroy at Sicily became a privileged and lucrative position for those favored by the King. The Spanish Viceroy maintained a court and probably employed some musicians for entertainment. The cathedrals at Palermo and Nicosia certainly would have had their Maestri di Cappeli as well as singers and players. But were these musicians from northern Italy or Spain? Were there any Sicilian composers active in Sicily or elsewhere?

It has been suggested that there was a "Sicilian School of Polyphony,"[1] dating from circa 1580 to 1640. That such a "school" existed is doubtful, in that no individual "style of Sicilian polyphony" existed; but there was a group of composers active in Sicily who, because of their locality, could be grouped into a "school." A school would have a leader, a "capo," who would serve as a focal point, or center, for the activities of his pupils. Such a person did exist in Sicily. His name was Pietro Vinci, and his foremost pupil was Antonio il Verso.

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[1]Ottavio Tiby, "The Polyphonic School in Sicily of the XVI-XVII Century," Musica Disciplina, V (1951), p. 203.

Pietro Vinci

Pietro Vinci, "Siciliano de la Città di Nicosia," was born probably in the third or fourth decade of the sixteenth century, sometime between 1535 and 1540. Little is known of Vinci's youth; nothing is known of where or with whom he studied. His formative years certainly occurred during a period of history that was significant to Italy. Sicily and Naples were under the rule of the Spanish Habsburgs, and the Catholic Counter-Reformation was begun at this time. Pope Paul III instituted the order of the Society of Jesus in 1540 and assembled the nineteenth ecumenical council in 1545 in the little town of Trent.

From Sicily, Vinci travelled through central Italy, finally settling in Bergamo in the north. Mompellio writes, " . . . it is not possible to note all of his travels, since he wrote that he 'conducted' himself first to Livorno, then Lombardy, meanwhile passing through many other cities, welcomed everywhere and practicing his art in various churches, spending some time in Rome. Finally, after much traveling with friends and 'signori,' he arrived and settled in Bergamo, where he occupied the post of Maestro di Capella at the Basilica of S. Maria Maggiore (1568-1580)."[2] Bergamo was one of several thriving cities along the Po River enjoying a

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[2]Federico Mompellio, Pietro Vinci, Madrigalista Siciliano (Milano: U. Hoepli, 1937), p. 27.

tenure of independence under the jurisdiction of the Venetian Republic, and with a strong musical tradition built up in the sixteenth century.[3] The Church of S. Maria Maggiore was located in the center of the town and was owned by an organization known as the Miserecordia Maggiore whose history had begun in 1265. The church itself had been founded in 1137 but music was not introduced until 1449.[4] The church council (the Conzorzio) included in its duties an obligation to maintain a good choir. Shortly after 1449, two organs were built and "by 1527 wind instruments were in use and 50 years later . . . not only organ and harpsichord but also other instruments took part in the music."[5] In the midst of his tenure at Bergamo, then, Vinci had resources at hand comparable in kind but probably not in quantity and quality to Venice. Mompellio tells us that the basilica "attracted illustrious musicians and theoreticians of the age (l'epoca)."[6]

In May of 1568, the Conzorzio appointed Pietro Vinci as successor to Bartolomeo Ospite to the post of Maestro di Capella, with an "honorable stipend."[7] He retained the

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[3]Jerome Roche, "Music at S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, 1614-1643," Music and Letters, XLVII (1966), p. 296.

[4]Ibid., p. 297.

[5]Loc. cit.

[6]Mompellio, Pietro Vinci, . . . Siciliano, p. 29.

[7]Ibid., p. 30.

position for twelve years. During those years, Vinci traveled to Milan, Venice, and other cities, meeting some important and influential people among whom was Vincenzo Galilei, a member of the Camerata and father of the famous astronomer and philosopher. He resigned on July 28, 1580.

Following his resignation, Vinci remained in Bergamo for more than a year. In the dedication page of his sixth book of Madrigali a 5 (1581), he wrote that he would "depart Lombardy to return to live in Sicily, my home."[8] Apparently he had already secured a post there, since he identified himself as "Siciliano de la Città di Nicosia et Maestro di Capella in essa città."[9] His return seemed to have been prompted by nostalgia for his homeland; but it is also possible that he was in poor health, and the fear of dying in this distant city, never to see his birthplace again, probably made him decide against remaining any longer in Bergamo.[10]

Little is known of the last years of Vinci's life. Although his activity was centered chiefly in Nicosia, he also taught in the cities of Piazza Armerina and Caltagirone. He had many pupils in these cities, among whom were Caraciolo, il Verso, and Marien. These, with other madrigalists in

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[8] Ibid., p. 36.

[9] Loc. cit.

[10] Ibid., p. 37.

Sicily, were the nucleus of a real school at whose head was Vinci. His last work was his seventh book of Madrigali a 5, published posthumously by il Verso.[11] He died sometime in the last half of 1584 and was buried at the Cathedral in Nicosia.[12]

Vinci's Music

The music of Pietro Vinci consists almost entirely of madrigals. Of the twenty-one known publications, fully half are madrigals for from three to six voices, with one madrigal for a triple choir of twelve voices in all. Surprisingly, since he spent over fourteen years as a church musician, only two books of Masses are known. The only music written by Vinci which could be called instrumental are the Primo Libro della Musica a 2 (1560) and the Secondo Libro de Motetti e Ricercari a 3; the latter is the subject of this dissertation.

There is some question as to whether Vinci's first publication appeared in 1558 or in 1563. Tiby maintains that Vinci's earliest known work was a book of motets for five voices, dated 1558,[13] but Federico Mompellio, author of Vinci's biography, disputes this and dates his earliest work as a book of madrigals, rather than motets, for five voices printed in

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[11]Robert Eitner, "Vinci, Pietro," Quellen-Lexicon (Leipzig, 1904), p. 98.

[12]Mompellio, Pietro Vinci, . . . Siciliano, p. 38.

[13]Tiby, "The Polyphonic School . . .," p. 206.

1563.[14] However, the 1563 date for the first book of madrigals is actually misleading because it is a corrected edition of an earlier printing dated 1561.[15] The confusion is further complicated by the knowledge of a book of Ricercari a 2, first printed in 1560.[16] In any event, it appears that Vinci embarked on his career by the beginning of the 1560's. The last work written by Vinci, Il Settimo Libro di Madrigali a 5, written in 1584, was published by il Verso the same year. Following is a chronological list of Vinci's publications as collated by this writer from several sources.[17]

1558 Primo Libro de Motetti a 5

1560 Primo Libro della Musica a 2 (reprint: 1586)

1561 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 5 (reprints: 1563, 1564, 1566)

1567 Secondo Libro de Madrigali a 5 (reprints: 1579, 1589)

1571 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 6 (reprints: 1573, 1583)

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[14]Mompellio, Pietro Vinci, . . . Siciliano, p. 27.

[15]Federico Mompellio, "Vinci, Pietro," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Kassel, 1966), p. 1668.

[16]Loc. cit.; Howard Mayer Brown, Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 191; Gaetano Gaspari, Catalogo della Biblioteca Musicale G. B. Martini (Bologna, 1961), vol. IV, p. 232; Ernest H. Meyer, "Concerted Instrumental Music," in The New Oxford History of Music, Vol. IV: The Age of Humanism, 1540-1630 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 552.

[17]Mompellio, "Vinci, Pietro"; Eitner, op. cit.; Brown, op. cit.; Gaspari, op. cit.; Mompellio, Pietro Vinci, . . . Siciliano.

1572 Secondo Libro de Motetti a 5

1573 Quarto Libro de Madrigali a 5 (reprint: 1583)

1573 Quinto Libro de Madrigali a 5 (reprint: 1581)

1575 Primo Libro di Missarum cum 5, 6, et 8 voci

1578 Primo Libro de Motetti a 4

1579 Secondo Libro di Madrigali a 6 con un Dialogo a Dodeci (reprint: 1583)

1580 Quattordeci Sonetti Spirituali a 5

1581 Primo Libro di Messe a 4

1582 Primo Libro de Motetti a 8

1582 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 3

1583 Primo Libro de Lamentationes a 4

1583 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 4

1584 Sesto Libro de Madrigali a 5 (Quivi sospiri)

1584 Settimo Libro di Madrigali a 5 (posthumous)

1588 Terzo Libro de Motetti a 5 et a 6 (posthumous)

1591 Secondo Libro de Motetti e Ricercari a 3 con alcuni Ricercari di Antonio il Verso

The many reprints of some of the publications indicate that at least Vinci's madrigals had been popularly accepted. In addition to the published books, isolated works were printed in collections by various authors published from 1575 to 1613, including arrangements for lute tablature by Vincenzo Galilei, G. Fallamero, and G. A. Terzi. Some of these were published in Heidelberg and Antwerp as well as in various Italian and Sicilian cities. A manuscript of organ tablature bearing Vinci's name (but probably an arrangement) exists in

Thorn, a volume of Canzone for solo voice and lute is located in Modena, and an arrangement of the madrigal "Sappi, signor, che Lidio son io," in organ tablature can be found in the Minoritenkonvent Codex in Vienna.

Vinci, as a composer, may well have been held in high esteem by his contemporaries for a few of them included examples of his works in their published collections, and often placed him in the company of composers of great repute. G. Cavalieri's edition of madrigals by diverse composers published in 1616 includes Vinci with Luca Marenzio, Gio. Maria Nanino, Alessandro Striggio, and Andrea Gabrieli.[18] Vinci's Ben fu l'ape ingegnosa is included in Casare Corrodi's 1583 publication of "Li Amarosi Ardori di diversi excellentissimi musici" along with works by Claudio Merulo, O. Vecchi, Marenzio, G. Nanino, A. Gabrieli, and Palestrina.[19] Vincenzo Galilei, in the Fronimo Dialogo, Part II, dedicated to Jacopo Corsi in 1584, contains an arrangement in lute tablature of the madrigal a 5, Amor m'ha posto, by Vinci. Among the other composers represented through the arrangements are Palestrina, Annibale Padovano, Striggio, and G. Nanino.[20]

Vinci is also mentioned in several treatises on music. A fellow Bergamese, Pietro Cerone, included him in El Melopeo

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[18]Gaspari, op. cit., III, p. 34.

[19]Loc. cit.

[20]Gaspari, op. cit., I, p. 335.

y maestro (Naples, 1613), an uneven treatise on composition with some redeeming merits.[21] In Book XII, Chapter 13, "The Manner To Be Observed in Composing a Mass," Cerone advises his readers to contrive " . . . as was done by Pietro Vinci . . . masses dependent upon the notes of the hexachord."[22] This same Mass is mentioned by Gustave Reese as "revealing (Vinci) in a favorable light. His six-part Mass La sol fa mi re ut contains a fine Kyrie.[23] Reese also comments on Vinci's style in reference to the motet, O crux benedicta, as "His moving motet . . . makes sparing but eloquent use of degree inflection."[24] Commenting on various settings of the Quivi sospiri passage from Dante's Inferno, Reese places Vinci's setting (Sesto Libro de Madrigali a 5, 1584) as "much more conservative (than Luzzaschi), using degree inflection quite sparingly."[25] These statements indicate that to both a contemporary of Vinci and a contemporary of ours, Vinci's creative efforts are somewhat better than those of a run-of-the-mill composer.

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[21]Oliver Strunk, Source Readings in Music History, The Renaissance (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1965), p. 72.

[22]Ibid., p. 78.

[23]Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 492. A modern edition of the Kyrie is found in Torchi, L'Arte Musicale in Italia, vol. I.

[24]Loc. cit. Reese explains "degree inflection" as the use of accidentals which give rise to semitonal progressions on a single degree, i.e., chromaticism.

[25]Ibid., p. 413.

Ottavio Tiby, too, has been kind to the Sicilian polyphonist. Writing for Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians and the Musica Disciplina, Tiby refers to Vinci as a prolific composer without much enterprise or passion, and conservative. He goes on to say that his counterpoint was orthodox, only venturing away from modality and Gregorian melodies. "In his works the tonal feeling is clear and in his melodies there is a certain 'ariosita' which announces new times. If the new style asserting itself at the end of the century overshadowed the fame of Vinci, he must nevertheless be included among the great composers of the second period in the history of the madrigal--that of full technical development and expressiveness."[26] Judging from these various comments, it would appear that some have found Vinci's music, though typically conservative, not without merit.

Because Vinci's total output was primarily vocal music, all of the commentators on his music have concentrated on this literature, the madrigals in particular. But what of the few examples of his instrumental music? Ernest Meyer, in The New Oxford History of Music, makes this statement: "From 1529 onwards purely instrumental publications for groups of players appeared with increasing frequency; some of the more important, composed up to 1580, include . . . Pietro Vinci,

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[26]Tiby, "The Polyphonic School . . .," p. 206.

Ricercari (1560)."[27] This comment indicates a degree of value in Vinci's instrumental music as well.

The instrumental ricercari quoted in Meyer are found in the Primo Libro della Musica a 2, first printed in Venice in 1560. With no indication of the performance medium, it is impossible to state whether these pieces were originally intended for instruments or for voices. The indications are that Vinci wrote the Ricercari a 2 for either or both. Howard Brown lists these as compositions for instrumental ensemble a 2,[28] but Gaspari describes them as "Solfeggi, O Ricercari senza parole . . ." which implies use for voices. Gaspari goes on to quote from the dedication page that they were composed for the use of those desiring to learn music, "per utilita di coloro che desiderando imparar musica."[29] Therefore, they could be construed as instructive instrumental pieces such as Ganassi's Regola Rubertina (1542). However, Willi Apel, describing the Ricercar in the Harvard Dictionary of Music states: "A pedagogic purpose is clearly indicated in an extensive repertory of 16th- and 17th-century 'ricercari a due voci,' i.e., two-voice untexted compositions designed primarily for singers, since . . . they are referred to as

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[27]Meyer, op. cit., p. 552.

[28]Brown, op. cit., p. 191.

[29]Gaspari, op. cit., IV, p. 232.

vocal exercises, . . ."[30] However, Mompellio states that they have a more instrumental character than vocal, more scholastic than artistic.[31]

The Ricercari a 2 have rather enigmatic titles, all in Sicilian dialect. Probably most of the titles refer to Sicilian folk songs of a humorous nature; some are names of persons. There are twenty-nine in all, and they must have had some success because they were printed again in 1586. Following are the titles of the Ricercari a 2.[32]

1. La marencha
2. La canallotto
3. Vinci
4. Castro Joanni & muxa
5. Fontana di chiazza
6. Xumo sanzo Con Mastro Joanno & Mastro Antoni
7. Piro con lo furno
8. Barressi
9. Coccocino
10. Chiucia
11. Lo cayordo
12. Spinello cunda Antonino d'allena

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[30]Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 733.

[31]Mompellio, Pietro Vinci . . . Siciliano, p. 218.

[32]Brown, op. cit.

13. Panuso
14. Le gorre con lo paschiero
15. Mal portuso
16. Paravola
17. Pe Martino
18. Gallina ratto rattonis
19. La vaccarra con le buscaglie
20. Spatta folco con lo gobbetto
21. La murada
22. Sper lingua E presti apulo Bono
23. San Basilli
24. Senza octava
25. Planzuni
26. Il gambaro con denaretto
27. Xiri che senza Xiri stamo male
28. La danzulina E luchia peri
29. Le poletine

Antonio il Verso

The foremost pupil of Pietro Vinci was Antonio il Verso, "Siciliano della città di Piazza, discepolo di Pietro Vinci," who was active for most of his productive career in Palermo. He was probably one of the first native-born Sicilian composers of importance who remained in his homeland throughout his career. Il Verso's actual birth year is also somewhat clouded. Oscar Mischiati, in Die Musik in Geschichte

und Gegenwart, writes that il Verso was born between 1560 and 1565 in Piazza Armerina, a small provincial town near Nicosia, and died probably in August of 1621 in Palermo.[33] Ruth Watanabe, in her study of five Italian Madrigalists, reports a larger discrepancy in dates. She quotes Mompellio as reporting 1530 as the birthdate of il Verso.[34] Actually, Mompellio does mention that year, but only to quote Leopold Mastrigli in La Siciliae Musicale (Bologna, 1891), whom he questions because with such an early year of birth, il Verso would have been sixty years old when his first book of madrigals appeared in 1590. Moreover, he would have been older than Vinci, his teacher.[35]

There is even less biographical data about il Verso than about Vinci. Watanabe, for the most part, uses the biographical notes from Fetis, but this writer finds Mischiati's notes a bit more complete and Mompellio's sketch a bit more interesting. From the latter, the simple statement "fu detto 'musico celebre' . . . rinomato per la sua fecondita . . .

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[33]Oscar Mischiati, "Verso, Antonio il," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Kassel: Barenrieter-Verlag, 1949), XIII, p. 1518.

[34]Ruth Watanabe, "Five Italian Madrigal Books of the Late 16-th Century: A Transcription and Study of the First Books A Cinque by Antonio il Verso, Bartolomeo Roy, Bernardino Scaramella, Pietro Paolo Quartieri and Emilio Virgelli" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, 1951), p. 14.

[35]Mompellio, Pietro Vinci . . . Siciliano, p. 178f.

profondo anche nelle disciplino storiche" indicates that il Verso was rather more well-rounded than his master.[36] Tiby, too, credits il Verso as the most prolific of the Sicilian polyphonists, publishing some forty books of sacred and secular music.[37]

Apparently il Verso was not associated with any church as Maestro di Capella. His dedicatory pages and long letters to patrons could indicate some benefices from various members of the nobility, and perhaps his reputation, which Tiby claims was great in his own time,[38] was sufficient to bring him a comfortable income as a teacher.

Il Verso was also known as a historian. He wrote a history of his birthplace, the city of Piazza, Sicily.[39] This fact, too, could have been pertinent as an opportunity for gainful employment since the Spanish Viceroy during the first decade of the seventeenth century, a certain de Vega, was appalled by the lack of feeling for a Sicilian national history and, to remedy that lack, patronized some Sicilian historians, notably Fazello and Maurolico.[40] It is possible,

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[36]Ibid., p. 179.

[37]Tiby, "The Polyphonic School . . .," p. 206.

[38]Tiby, "Antonio il Verso," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954-61), p. 756.

[39]Mompellio, ibid., p. 179f.

[40]Denis Mack Smith, A History of Sicily, Medieval Sicily, 800-1713 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), p. 123.

too, that il Verso himself may have benefited from de Vega's patronage.

Il Verso's reputation as a composer is further evidenced by the details of a contest occurring in 1600 in Palermo in extemporaneous composition between the Calabrian Achille Falcone and the Spaniard Sebastiano Raval.[41] Il Verso was invited to serve as one of the adjudicators. Falcone was adjudged the winner of the match by a majority of the judges including il Verso. Raval, however, was dissatisfied. He appealed to the Spanish Viceroy Medinaceli and was granted a second match, which reversed the decision. Il Verso's report of the account claims that "all manners of fraud were used to make Raval victorious in the second experiment." Falcone, however, stung by this reversal, challenged Raval to a new trial to be held before the musicians of Rome, but the trial never took place owing to Falcone's premature death on November 9, 1600. J. B. Trend concluded from a study of Achille Falcone's compositions published by Falcone's father in 1603 that the younger Falcone was a far superior composer than Raval but was deprived of the winner's honors simply because of the obvious bias of the Spanish Viceroy.[42]

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[41]The complete episode is reported in Mompellio's book on Pietro Vinci . . . Siciliano, pp. 186-188.

[42]J. B. Trend, "Raval, Sebastiano," Grove's . . ., VII, p. 55.

It is not surprising that il Verso was esteemed in Palermo because this is the city in which he was primarily active even though he was born in Piazza and spent a considerable amount of time in Venice.[43] In any event, it was in Palermo that he died, probably in August of 1621, after a life which displayed a great deal of musical productivity.

Il Verso's Music

The most prolific of the Sicilian polyphonists, il Verso published some forty books of sacred and secular music, less than half of which have been found either in part or complete. Although a pupil of Vinci, he differed from his master in artistic temperament, leaning toward the new Baroque styles. Tiby writes "although change is noticeable between the first and last books of his madrigals," il Verso had just arrived at the threshold of the "seconda prattica."[44]

Ruth Watanabe's commentary on il Verso in her dissertation states that the five Italian Madrigalists of her study "with the possible exception of il Verso, are writers of a humbler sort."[45] She explores il Verso's style of composition further, commenting that he "had at least an idea of harmonic

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[43]Watanabe, op. cit., p. 14.

[44]Tiby, "The Polyphonic School . . .," p. 208.

[45]Watanabe, op. cit., p. iii.

concept"[46] as evidenced in the final cadences of the first book of madrigals which "often generate a true feeling for chord progressions by fifths, . . . bona fide II-V-I."[47] Later, Watanabe states that "il Verso's style cannot be said to be startling or progressive"[48] and reasons that "of the five, perhaps the most conservative and in some ways the most artistic is Antonio il Verso . . . his residence in Palermo, away from the sophisticated larger cities of the main-land, . . . might account for some of his conservatism."[49] So as a composer, il Verso was not too different from Vinci.

In her discussion of the Madrigals a 5, Watanabe comments that il Verso's style is predominantly contrapuntal, in spite of the obvious harmonic background in his writing.[50] His favorite devices included "suspensions in white note values and passing notes (both ascending and descending) in quarter notes," and eighth notes in passages encompassing scale lines, melodic motives, or combination of the two.[51] Il Verso's music further evidences a wavering between triadic

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[46] Ibid., p. 52.

[47] Loc. cit.

[48] Ibid., p. 54.

[49] Ibid., p. 197.

[50] Loc. cit.

[51] Ibid., p. 51.

harmony and modality which is characteristic of the time. The modes he favored were the Mixolydian and the transposed Dorian, while the Aeolian was employed in a few of the madrigals.[52]

Watanabe's comments on his use of double subjects in the Madrigals a 5 can also be made about the Ricercari a 3. "Il Verso may have intended them to be a double subject or a subject and countersubject, for sometimes the two motives are imitated together and are of equal importance, while at other times one assumes the ascendency over the other by being imitated more often. Sometimes, too, the two subjects seem to grow from the same germ idea."[53] It is obvious from this description that il Verso's polyphonic style differed little from the Palestrinian style described by Jeppesen in his book on counterpoint.[54]

A few of il Verso's madrigals were written in the Spanish language, no doubt to please a Spanish patron or other nobleman. In addition to the eleventh book of Madrigals which contains a romanza in Spanish, the third book of Madrigals for six voices closes with both an Aria and a Canzone in Spanish.[55]

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[52] Ibid., p. 52.

[53] Ibid., p. 53.

[54] Knud Jeppesen, Counterpoint, trans. by Glen Haydon (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939).

[55] Gaspari, op. cit., III, p. 183.

This same book of madrigals contains a madrigal that was originally written by Luzzascho Luzzaschi for five voices, Non guardar, to which il Verso added a sixth part.[56] Il Verso's works were also associated with Arcadelt in a new edition of Arcadelt's first book of madrigals a 4, published in Palermo in 1592. The edition added five madrigals by il Verso to Arcadelt's original group of publications.

Almost all of il Verso's known works are books of madrigals, with a few books of sacred music (but no masses), and besides the ricercari of this study, a few possible instrumental ensemble pieces. Although he included a few of his own motets in a book of motets a 5 by Vinci which he published in 1588, il Verso's first published work was Il Primo Libro de Madrigali a 5 published in 1590; the last was his Decimoquinto Libro de Madrigali a 5, Opus 36, published in 1619. The latter and the earlier Opus 35, Il Quarto Libro de Madrigali a 3, published in 1617, are his only collections given opus numbers. Following is a chronological list of il Verso's publications collated by this writer from several sources.[57]

1588 Terzo Libro de Motetti a 5 e 6 de Pietro Vinci con alcuni di Antonio il Verso

1590 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 5

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[56]Mischiati, op. cit.

[57]Loc. cit.; Eitner, "Il Verso, Antonio," op. cit., p. 68; Brown, op. cit.; Gaspari, op. cit.; Mompellio, Pietro, Vinci . . . Siciliano; Watanabe, op. cit.

1591 Secondo Libro de Motetti e Ricercari a 3 con alcuni ricercari de Antonio il Verso

1594 Primo Libro de Madrigali a 6

1595 Terzo Libro de Madrigali a 5

1596 Primo Libro della Musica a 2

1600 Quarto Libro de Madrigali a 5

1601 Secondo Libro de Madrigali a 6

1603 Ottavo Libro de Madrigali a 5 'I soavissimi adori'

1605 Secondo Libro de Madrigali a 3

1605 Nono Libro de Madrigali a 5

1606 Primo Libro de Motetti a 3 e a 6 cum organum

1607 Terzo Libro de Madrigali a 6

1608 Undecimo Libro de Madrigali a 5 con alcuni romanze alla spagnola

1611 Sacrarum Cantionum quae a 3, 4 v. cum Dialogo 6 v. et Basso ad Organum

1612 Primo Libro delle Vallanelle a 3

1612 Decimoterzo Libro di Madrigali a 5

1612 Decimoquarto Libro di Madrigali a 5

1617 Quarto Libro de Madrigali a 3, Opus 35

1619 Decimoquinto Libro di Madrigali a 5, Opus 36

Il Verso's works were known in foreign countries as well as in Sicily and Italy. The Primo Libro de Motetti and the Sacrarum Cantionum are also listed in a catalog of manuscripts in Germany.[58] In Antwerp, the publisher Phalese (in Italian,

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[58]Gaspari, op. cit., III, p. 183.

Phalesio) included five of il Verso's madrigals for six voices in Il Parnasso, madrigali de diversi eccellentissimi musici (1613), and two madrigals for five voices in Il Helicone, madrigali de . . . musici (1616).[59]

Primarily a madrigalist, il Verso's known instrumental music is limited to the seven ricercari of this study and two ricercari found in G. B. Cali's Primo Libro de Ricercari a 2 published in 1605. It is probable that il Verso's Primo Libro delle Musica a 2 (1596) was for instruments. Less likely, but also possible, his Primo Libro delle Villanelle a 3 may have been for instrumental ensemble. Ernest Meyer states that the form of the instrumantal canzon was easily adapted to the tradition of the villanelle,[60] which had originally been a three-part, homophonic vocal piece of Neapolitan origin characterized by the plentiful use of consecutive triads.[61] But this is insufficient evidence to conclude that il Verso's villanelle are of instrumental character.

Except for the Primo Libro de Madrigali a 5 transcribed by Ruth Watanabe, none of il Verso's works can be found in modern editions. Some of Vinci's vocal music but none of the

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[59]Mischiati, op. cit., p. 1518.

[60]Meyer, op. cit., p. 565.

[61]E. J. Dent, "The Sixteenth-Century Madrigal," in The New Oxford History of Music, Vol. IV: The Age of Humanism, 1540-1630 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 53.

ricercari have been transcribed.[62] In order that the efforts of both of these composers may be better understood and appreciated, and in order to add to the repertoire for instrumental ensemble, the present edition of the *Ricercari a 3* has been made.

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[62]Mompellio, "Vinci, Pietro . . .," p. 1669.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENSEMBLE *RICERCAR* IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The term "*ricercar*" does not carry with it a simple definition. It is a term which describes a type or technique of composition. Etymologically, the term means to research, or to search again. The implications of the term evolved from an investigative technique derived from improvization to the research of a theme or themes through imitation.

Ricercari were written for performance by lute, organ, voices, and instrumental ensemble. The type of performance intended can usually be determined from the notation. Those for lute were written in lute tablature. Compositions for organ were generally in tablature also, although they, too, appear in score notation. The accomplished organist was even expected to realize *ricercari* from part-books. However, the use of part-books almost invariably indicates that ensemble performance, whether instrumental or vocal, was intended.

The history of the *ricercar*, emphasizing those for keyboard, from Willaert to J. S. Bach, has been thoroughly documented in studies by Richard Murphy, Robert Douglass, and

Gordon Sutherland.[1] A detailed analysis and discussion of imitative devices used in keyboard ricercari has been admirably presented by Richard Tappa.[2] However, the subject of ensemble ricercar has been touched upon by only a few writers. Murphy included only one chapter on Carmen, Ensemble Ricercar, and the Instructive Duo in his dissertation. Sutherland, on the other hand, makes little distinction between keyboard and ensemble ricercari. Various histories and discourses on the fugue make references, sometimes casual, to the place of the imitative ricercar in the development or evolution of the fugue. But a definitive study on ensemble ricercar for instruments, although needed, has not been attempted. Indeed, a comprehensive study is impossible at the present time owing to difficulties in obtaining source material. The purpose of this dissertation is to make a beginning, looking toward a more comprehensive study in the future. The ricercari of Vinci and il Verso are admirably suited to this purpose

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[1]Three studies which discuss keyboard ricercari are Richard Murphy, "Fantasia and Ricercare in the Sixteenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1954); Robert S. Douglass, "The Keyboard Ricercare in the Baroque Era" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1963); and Gordon Sutherland, "Studies in the Development of the Keyboard and Ensemble Ricercare from Willaert to Frescobaldi" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942).

[2]Richard J. Tappa, "An Analytical Study of the Use of Imitative Devices in Keyboard Ricercar from 1520-1720" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1965).

because they illuminate the workings of a little known school of composers in Sicily. They also illustrate a type of composition which culminated in the late Renaissance and early Baroque, to be revived by Bach in the high Baroque and in the twentieth century by Casella and Webern.

The Ricercar Before 1550

The Venetian printer Petrucci was responsible for the oldest printed collection of solo instrumental music: the Intabulature de Lauto: Libro Primo printed in 1507. This collection contains seventeen pieces called ricercari. These ricercari are simply short preludes to specific songs and transcriptions by the lutenist Francesco Spinacino and are in the style of non-thematic improvizations consisting of chords and passage-work.[3]

Another important characteristic of the early lute ricercar is their improvizational nature. Murphy espouses the belief that "their style is derivative of the improvizational techniques associated with the dances" for which they functioned as preludes;[4] perhaps they were improvizational elaborations of the compositions surrounding them.

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[3]Yvonne Rokseth, "The Instrumental Music of the Middle Ages and Early Sixteenth-Century," in The New Oxford History of Music, Vol. III: Ars Nova and the Renaissance, 1300-1540, ed. by Dom Anselm Hughes and Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 706.

[4]Murphy, "Fantasia and Ricercare," p. 206.

Similar quasi-improvizational pieces for organ bearing the name "ricercari" were the Recherchari, motetti, canzoni, Libro I by Marc'antonio Cavazzoni, published in 1523. The two ricercari included in the set are like the earlier ricercari in Petrucci's lute intabulations.[5] Each of the ricercari serves as a prelude to the motet-transcriptions which follow. Although no vocal models have been found for these organ works, they are not only in motet style, but they also exhibit some motivic resemblance to the ricercari to which they are connected. These ricercari by Marc'antonio belong to a general class of compositions which employs a free, quite unsystematic imitation in a texture which is predominantly chordal and scalic. Actually, they bear more resemblance to the improvisatory procedure of the toccata than to the learned contrapuntal style of the motet-transcriptions. Their prelude-fugue type of association with the motet provides evidence that the early organ ricercari were functional, liturgical compositions, growing out of traditional instrumental practices.[6] Yvonne Rokseth praises the "grandeur" of the chordal sections and "remarkable" breadth of their composition.[7]

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[5]Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 535.

[6]Murphy, "Fantasia and Ricercare," p. 206.

[7]Rokseth, "Instrumental Music," pp. 445-447.

Another type of ricercar which served yet a different function is that of the instructive ricercar for a melodic solo instrument described and illustrated by the writers Ganassi and Diego Ortiz. Written specifically for the viol, Ganassi's Regola Rubertina (1542) uses the term ricercar for what we would now call an etude. They exhibit the improvizational character of the early ricercar, and are more relevant to the study of soloistically oriented instrumental music than of the ensemble ricercar. Similarly, Ortiz's Tratado de glosas, published in 1553, contains compositions which are designed to show the player how to improvise ricercari for solo viol.[8]

The Musica Nova, published in 1540, represents a new departure in the conception of the ricercar both in style and medium. This collection contains twenty-one ricercari by "diversi eccellentissimi musici" including Willaert, Segni, Benoist, Golin, Parabosco, and G. Cavazzoni. The title page states that the compositions are "per cantar et sonar sopri organi et altri stromenti." They were printed in part-books, the first time ricercari appeared in this form. Thus we

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[8]Willi Apel, "Solo Instrumental Music," in The New Oxford History of Music, Vol. IV: The Age of Humanism, 1540-1630, ed. by Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 706.

The Ricercar From ca. 1550 to 1600

The mid-century *ricercar* for ensemble, rather than keyboard or melodic solo instruments, found first in the *Musica Nova*, forms a part of a repertoire which is independent in character and which places a greater emphasis on composition than on improvization. The guiding principle of this new instrumental style is based on consistent use of points of imitation, a technique fashioned after the motet. However, to state that the motet was the only model for the *ricercar* is rather misleading. Sutherland, for example, writes, that "since the same techniques and styles of writing found in the motet . . . were also employed in the Mass, with similar techniques used . . . in the madrigal,"[11] the motet alone should not be singled out as the principal model. Therefore, though the instrumental *ricercar* in many ways corresponds to imitative vocal music, it developed its own musical meaning through the cogency of its own thematic material in the second half of the sixteenth century.

In the two decades following the publication of the *Musica Nova*, the composition of keyboard and ensemble *ricercari* flourished throughout Italy. Adriano Willaert and his Venetian contemporaries are recognized for their great contributions to instrumental music. This particular circle of composers

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

included such persons as Jacques Buus, G. Cavazzoni, Giulio Segni, Tiburtino, and Annibale Padovano. All of these composers produced an even flow of publications containing keyboard and ensemble ricercari[12] well into the seventeenth century.

Less recognition has been given to the composers active in southern Italy, in the area within the boundaries of the kingdom of Naples. Some of the important Neapolitan composers were Rocco Rodio, Antonio Valente, Ascanio Mayone, and G. Trabaci, all flourishing in the last half of the sixteenth century.

Although comparatively little is known of the musical activity in southern Italy, according to Sutherland there are more ricercari still extant from Naples than from the Northern schools of Rome and Venice.[13] The Neapolitan ricercari reveal a style reminiscent of Antonio Cabezon, including the free employment of syncopations, cross accents, and other devices of variation.[14] Through these Neapolitans, the Spanish style of keyboard composition, especially Cabezon's, influenced the style of the northern Italians, notably Frescobaldi.[15] The

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[12]Slim, Musica Nova, p. xxxvi.

[13]Sutherland, "Studies," p. 277.

[14]Tappa, "An Analytical Study," p. 220.

[15]Apel, "Neapolitan Links," pp. 419-437.

involvement of the southerners in the evolution of the keyboard style, especially ricercari, is a subject deserving further research. The Neapolitan composers who rigorously cultivated the strict imitative ricercar may have provided the beginnings of fugal composition. Their contributions in the history of the fugue need clarification and elaboration.

How much Cabezon's keyboard style influenced the more familiar imitative ricercar in the last half of the century is evidenced in the parallel form produced by the Spaniards, the tiento. Cabezon treated the tiento somewhat differently than the Italians, especially Andrea Gabrieli, treated the ricercar. Imitative treatment and scholastic devices were not applied consistently by Cabezon.[16] Instead of obvious imitation, the tientos evidence motivic transformation and development. On the other hand, the ricercari of Andrea Gabrieli display frequent employment of scholastic devices and a structure which is clear and logical. Gabrieli's influence on the imitative ricercar, in addition to the simplification and clarification of the form, is evidenced through the extensive use of the contrapuntal devices of stretto, inversion, diminution, and augmentation. These devices help to strengthen the ricercar as an independent musical type.

The most prevalent imitative device utilized by Andrea Gabrieli is that of stretto. Stretto occurring at the

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[16]Apel, "Solo Instrumental Music," p. 612.

beginning of the composition introduces the subject in the second voice before the subject is completed in the first voice. The style of the subject is that of a slow (andamento) type which is well suited to the ornate rhythmic changes characteristic of Gabrieli's technique. Of equal importance is Gabrieli's use of diminution and augmentation. These devices are significant to the development of the ricercar since the economy of material used in the subject's longer note values gains a flavor of animation through diminution. Augmentation, on the other hand, often causes the subject to lose its motivic characteristic and therefore serves a function similar to a cantus firmus.

In any event, it is the imitative ricercar in the style similar to that of Andrea Gabrieli which culminates in the last half of the sixteenth century. It is a style of composition which cultivates the scholastic devices and assimilates the old, quasi-vocal style of diatonicism and limited range. The instrumental character of these later ricercari comes from the cogency of their rhythmic patterns and thematic transformation, or more correctly, thematic derivation.

Summary and Conclusion

A valuable perspective for the purpose of this study would be the realization that the term "ricercar" has no single connotation of form or, for that matter, of style. Even the spelling varies, not only between but within countries,

and appeared in various publications throughout the century as: ricercar, ricercare, ricercata, recercada, recercar, and recerchada. The earliest examples of the lute and organ ricercari show a type of composition which is homophonic in texture and functions as a prelude-type piece for dances (the lute ricercar). As such, they are basically improvizational. By 1550, the imitative ricercar had gained prominence in keyboard and ensemble compositions while the lute was more closely associated with the fantasia. Beginning with the Musica Nova, the imitative ricercar displays a variety of structures, evidencing only two binding characteristics: the dignity of its opening statement and the development of that statement through successive points of imitation.

CHAPTER III

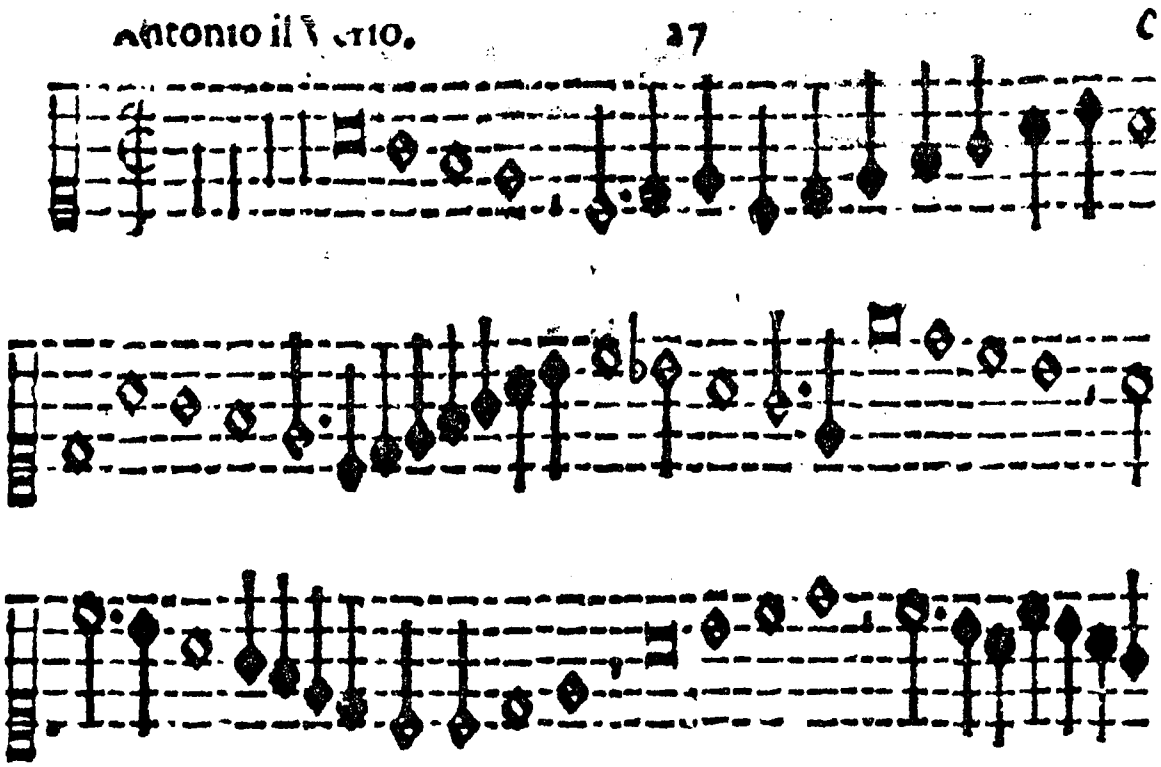
DISCUSSION OF THE RICERCARI A TRE

The Ricercari a Tre by Pietro Vinci and Antonio il Verso comprise fourteen compositions written for ensemble performance and survive in Di Pietro Vinci/ Siciliano, della città di Nicosia/ il secondo libro de motetti,/ e ricercari a tre voci,/ con alcuni ricercari di Antonio il Verso suo discepolo, published by Girolamo Scotto in Venice in 1591. The entire publication is dedicated to Don Francesco Moncado, Prince of Paterno and Duke of Mont'alto. The dedicatory letter to Moncado, explaining the desire to print the music under the name of the Prince/Duke, is signed by il Verso and dated April 20, 1591. (A copy of the printed letter and a translation are included in the appendix.) A copy of each part-book of the original publication has been preserved in the Biblioteca nazionale Marciana in Venice.

The Scotto family was one of several printers active in Venice during the sixteenth century. According to H. Colin Slim, there was very little difference between the various publishers in the actual printing since type-founding was a

difficult task, accomplished by a limited number of craftsmen.[1] Therefore, the actual note forms of the music of the period are practically identical while the main differences lay in format and spacing. As an illustration, Example 1 is a reproduction of the first three lines of the Canto part from the last ricercar of the collection.

Example 1



[1]H. Colin Slim, ed., Musica Nova, Vol. I of Monuments of Renaissance Music, ed. by E. Lowinsky (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964-), p. xxix.

All of the compositions are contained in separate part-books for each of the three voices, marked Canto (for the highest part), Tenore (for the middle part), and Basso (for the lowest part). The parts are not designated for specific instruments, nor is there any indication on the title page for any particular medium of performance. Although the composers did not specify what medium to use, we may assume that an ensemble was intended and therefore the works were published in the most economical and practical form suitable for ensembles with varied instrumentation.

The actual printing of the music was done by the single impression system of printing in which each individual piece of type consisted of a note combined with a small section of the staff. In the sixteenth century, this method was commonly utilized for the printing of part-books.[2] The printing is not difficult to read, once the reader becomes accustomed to the slight dis-alignment and minute spaces within the lines of the staff. Willi Apel calls the system of mensural notation in which white as well as black notes were used the "classical" system.[3] Except for the shape of the note-heads, the classical system of notation is virtually the same as our modern notation. No ligatures or major coloration appear in Scotto's edition.

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[2]Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 694.

[3]Ibid., p. 580.

With the exception of the maxima, the notation employed in the Ricercari a Tre encompasses the complete range of note values known at the time. The largest is the longa, always found at the final cadence and in the last two ricercari in which the contrapuntal device of double augmentation occurs. The smallest note value is the semi-fusa which commonly occurs at brief points of ornamentation. With remarkable consistency, all of the compositions begin with a brevis, with the exception of the seventh which begins with a semi-brevis, and the Fa mi la mi sol la Ricercar which begins with a dotted semi-brevis. All three voices in each ricercar begin imitatively with the same note values and all end together on a longa.

The values of the rests, like those of the notes, encompass the typical range, i.e., from maxima to semi-minima, with the maxima rests used primarily by the voice entering last in the imitation at the beginning of each composition, where an extended period of silence exists.

The metrical signs employed in the collection include only those which indicate tempus imperfectum (C) and tempus imperfectum diminutum (¢). The most common metrical sign is "C" which is used in all but three of the ricercari. In Ricercar Ottavo the bass part is marked with a "¢" but this is an error by the printer since it is necessary to transcribe this voice in tempus imperfectum to render it compatible with

the upper voices, both of which are marked with a "C". There are no occurrences of perfection, coloration, or sesquialtera.

Since bar lines were not a part of mensural notation, the individual parts of the Ricercari a Tre are un-barred except for the use of double-bar lines to close each part. Since there are no special notational problems in Scotto's edition, the absence of bar lines presents the only major difficulty in preparing a modern edition in score form. Each part must still be aligned vertically with the remaining parts through observation of note values and the intervallic distances between the parts to insure the "correct" modal counterpoint.

The problems of printing music in the sixteenth century dictated the preference of confining all the notes of a given part within the staff, thus avoiding the excessive use of ledger lines. With the exception of an occasional single ledger line above or below the staff, the Ricercari a Tre are printed in this manner. To accomplish this, the printing of the Ricercari a Tre employed three different clefs to indicate the placement of g', c', and f on the staff. These clefs are placed so as to allow the range of the individual parts to be set within the staff without unnecessary ledger lines. The Canto parts are usually in the soprano clef with the exception of the fifth and twelfth ricercari which utilize the G-clef. The Tenore parts are most often printed in the alto clef, again with the exception of the fifth and twelfth

ricercari which employ the mezzo-soprano clef. The Basso parts most often employ the tenor clef, less often the alto clef, and in two of the ricercari, the baritone clef.

The fourteen ricercari of this collection are numbered in consecutive order with the exceptions of numbers twelve and fourteen. The seven "alcuni" ricercari by il Verso are interspersed among those of Vinci, but there appears to be no pattern for the arrangement of the composers, no groupings for reasons of mode or motivic ideas. Following is a listing of the Ricercari a Tre with the appropriate composer for each as they appear in Scotto's edition.

Ricercar Primo	Vinci
Ricercar Secondo	Vinci
Ricercar Terzo	il Verso
Ricercar Quarto	il Verso
Ricercar Quinto	Vinci
Ricercar Sesto	Vinci
Ricercar Settimo	il Verso
Ricercar Ottavo	Vinci
Ricercar Nono	il Verso
Ricercar Decimo	Vinci
Ricercar Undecimo	il Verso
Fa mi la mi sol la	Vinci
Ricercar Terzodecimo	il Verso
(Ricercar Quartodecimo)	il Verso

To discuss the Ricercari a Tre individually would result in a monument of redundancy, for any significant differences could be easily assigned to a series of footnotes. Even the subjects are so similar, with but a few exceptions, as to be considered not several subjects but the same subject slightly rearranged for each ricercar. However, the sameness of the subjects is in itself significant to the compositional process, for in their archaic style, their unmemorable qualities, lies the challenge of creating a piece which is not totally devoid of character. Albeit there is a remarkable singularity of character evidenced in these ricercari, the contrapuntal devices employed in them do indicate that the composers were thoroughly competent in their craft. It is possible that they were creating nothing more than a set of instructive trios to be used by instrumentalists or vocalists wishing to learn the art of reading music or the techniques of composition as practiced by those composers well versed in the polyphonic style. Unfortunately, these composers, as a rule, did not give any indication as to the specific intent of their compositions. Another possible function of the ricercari is that they could have been used as preludes to the motets by Vinci to which they are appended. However, there are fourteen ricercari and only ten motets. And if they were to serve as functional preludes, would they not better serve that purpose if scored for organ rather than

for an ensemble? The alternatives are numerous; all are plausible but none is definite.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, let us assume that the Ricercari a Tre are merely entertainment pieces, designed for three performers to use for their own purposes. If this may be assumed, then we may arbitrarily initiate a system of analysis which will best describe their salient features, remembering that this study does not purport to be a comprehensive study of the styles of both composers, but rather, a limited perspective of a type of composition, already subjected to a modicum of studies by other writers, as constructed by the two Sicilians Pietro Vinci and Antonio il Verso. To be sure, this perspective will not necessarily prove or disprove that the composers of this study were either masters of the art of composition or merely mediocre craftsmen, but will show that their efforts in the composition of ricercari look to the past and indicate an approach to the culmination of the sixteenth-century ricercar.

The remainder of this chapter shall deal with the specific features of the Ricercari a Tre. Within the bounds of this study it is necessary to treat very briefly much that is of interest in them and to concentrate attention upon those elements of composition which, although artificially isolated here, are inseparable. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity and succinctness, the two composers will be treated separately, primarily to ascertain the similarities and differences which

may be evidenced in their compositional techniques. Toward this end, the features which will be discussed will include the elements of melodic line, contrapuntal treatment, harmonic style, and structure.

Vinci's Ricercari

Single melodic lines

One of the most obvious characteristics of the melodic lines in the ricercari by Vinci is their quasi-vocal style. In vocal literature of the period, voice parts ordinarily show a range of an octave to a twelfth. The ranges within the parts of the ricercari of Vinci evidence a similar range, averaging approximately something less than a tenth. In the Canto parts, the range encompasses a tenth, from c' to e", in the first two ricercari; in the fifth the range extends from d' to a"; d' to g" in the sixth ricercar; d' to f" in the eighth; a to e" in the tenth; and e' to g" in the twelfth ricercar. The Tenore parts more consistently encompass the range of an eleventh. In the first ricercar, the range extends from e to a'; from f to a' in the second; g to c" in the fifth, sixth, and twelfth ricercari; f to b-flat' in the eighth; and from d to a' in the tenth ricercar. The range of the Basso part extends from c to e' in the first, second, and tenth ricercari; from d to a' in the fifth; d to g' in the sixth; b-flat to d' in the eighth; and from e to b-flat' in the twelfth ricercar.

Vinci uses these rather limited ranges in a conservative, yet architecturally solid, manner. With scalar smoothness, the curves of the melodic lines are almost pure Palestrinian, thereby representing the tradition of the Renaissance. Because of their basic diatonicism, the melodic lines all flow evenly and freely. Intervallic leaps never encompass more than an octave and these most often in the Basso parts. In mm. 43 and 44 of the Basso line in the sixth ricercar, for example, an octave leap of g to g' is immediately followed by a descent stepwise to f', then another octave leap down to f. In fact, in all instances the octave leap is immediately followed by stepwise motion in the opposite direction, in the tradition followed by Palestrina and other contemporaries. Similarly, the lowest part often evidences other leaps such as fourths, fifths, and an occasional sixth, which are followed by opposite stepwise motion in all but a few rare instances.

In Vinci's ricercari, all three parts are melodic lines which present the subject material and are equal in importance to the unfolding of the polyphonic texture. But because of their affinity to the vocal style, their ranges are small and there is little angularity in the linear design. Evidence of unmistakable instrumental style is limited to the rhythmic evolution. From a subject which has no animated or characteristic rhythmic pattern (usually a brevis followed by two or more semibrevi), Vinci then unfolds a composition of

rich rhythmic variety derived from the same melodic contour of the principal subject. Before the mid-point of the ricercar is reached, the number of semiminimae and fusae has increased proportionately, and semi-fusae, when employed, ornament all three melodic lines. Surprisingly the two lower parts are often embellished more than the Canto.

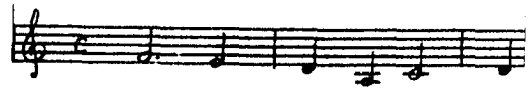
Contrapuntal Treatment

Vinci, in his ricercari, cautiously explores a variety of contrapuntal devices usually practiced by vocal polyphonists. Yet within the conservatism of his technique lies a mastery of compositional skill which gives each of the ricercari a character at once typical and unique. The subjects, as previously described, are not distinctive for their memorable qualities. Rather, they present themselves as subjects suitable for scholastic contrapuntal treatment. In his ricercari, Vinci explores and transforms a given subject until its usefulness is practically exhausted. Whereas a motet usually shows a series of several motives, the ricercari by Vinci generally employ only one melodic idea which serves the entire composition, thereby contributing yet another clue to the instrumental character of the pieces. In these instances, Vinci is presenting a purely instrumental structure on a musical basis without reference to text.

One unique feature, for ricercari, is the subject employed in the twelfth ricercar by Vinci with the solmization

title Fa mi la mi sol la.[4] On first viewing the opening subject in the Tenore (Example 2), the meaning of the title is not clear for the syllables do not appear to fit the subject.

Example 2



To unravel the meaning of this rather enigmatic solmization, it is first necessary to review the three hexachords of solmization in the Renaissance. The hexachords were the natural (hexachordum naturale), the soft (hexachordum molle), and the hard (hexachordum durum). When the melody went beyond the six tones of the hexachord, it was necessary to make a pivotal modulation, a "mutation," in which a certain tone common to both hexachords could serve as a pivotal point for changing from one hexachord to another. The pivotal tone in the mutation was given a compound name which included both the pitch-letter as well as the solmization syllables to indicate its placement in the hexachords.[5] In Example 2, the pitch letter "d'" is called Delasolre, indicating its function as la in the soft hexachord, sol in the hard hexachord, and re in the natural hexachord. Using this system of mutation, then, the subject

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[4]This technique is not unlike the solmization found at the beginning of Okeghem's Mi Mi Mass.

[5]Apel, Harvard Dictionary, pp. 383-385.

begins on Fa in the natural hexachord then changes at the third tone to be completed in the soft hexachord. When the second voice enters after two and one-half measures in the modern edition, answering at the fifth, the subject begins on Fa in the hard hexachord. The mutation again occurs on the third tone, "a'", called Alamire, and the subject then finishes in the natural hexachord (Example 3).

Example 3



This single subject appears in various rhythmic transformations, in augmented and diminished forms, and transposed, (usually up a fifth), nine times in the Canto, seven times in the Tenore, and six times in the Basso. The multiple repetitions of a single subject in a given voice is another indication of the ricercar's instrumental character. In a motet of this period, a subject would likely appear no more than two or three times in the same voice, since each line of the text would usually employ a new subject. The ricercari of Vinci, on the other hand, use material much more sparingly. The argument supporting the instrumental style becomes even stronger as further analysis of the contrapuntal techniques unfold.

It has already been observed that Vinci's contrapuntal style is somewhat scholastic but still reflects his skill as a

composer. This in itself could prove to be artistically devastating if the ricercari were not accepted for what they might be, as instructional trios. Virtually every important composer of the sixteenth century wrote duos or trios of an instructive nature, from the earliest by Licino printed in 1545 or 1546 through those by more notable figures like Palestrina, Lassus, de Rore, and Vincenzo Galilei. Alfred Einstein states that the purposes of the instructive pieces were threefold: (1) as primers of musical notation; (2) as instruction in tempi; and (3) as an introduction in composition.[6] To be sure, the last point is the most important, for the ricercar was an extension of pedagogical instruction in counterpoint. With this in mind, it is now opportune to investigate Vinci's treatment of such contrapuntal devices as stretto, inversion, diminution, and augmentation.

Although the technique of stretto is not used to any obvious extent by Vinci, an example actually showing two subjects in stretto is found in Ricercar Secondo in which the second subject appears before the first subject has run its course. The double subjects (see Example 4), although so similar as to cast a doubt on their distinctness, are each treated independently, thereby justifying their labels. Subject I, m. 1 in the Basso, is imitated at the octave in m. 12

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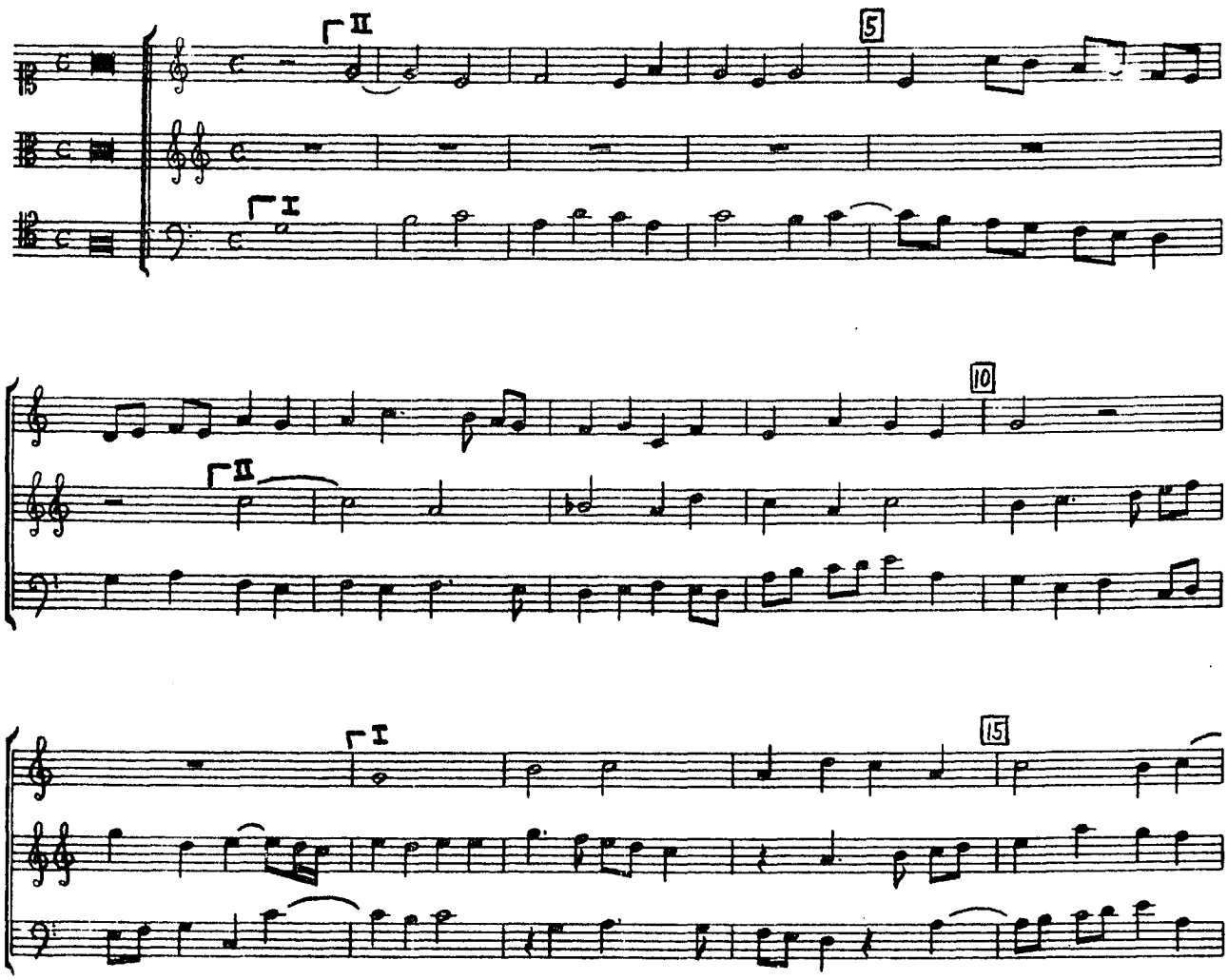
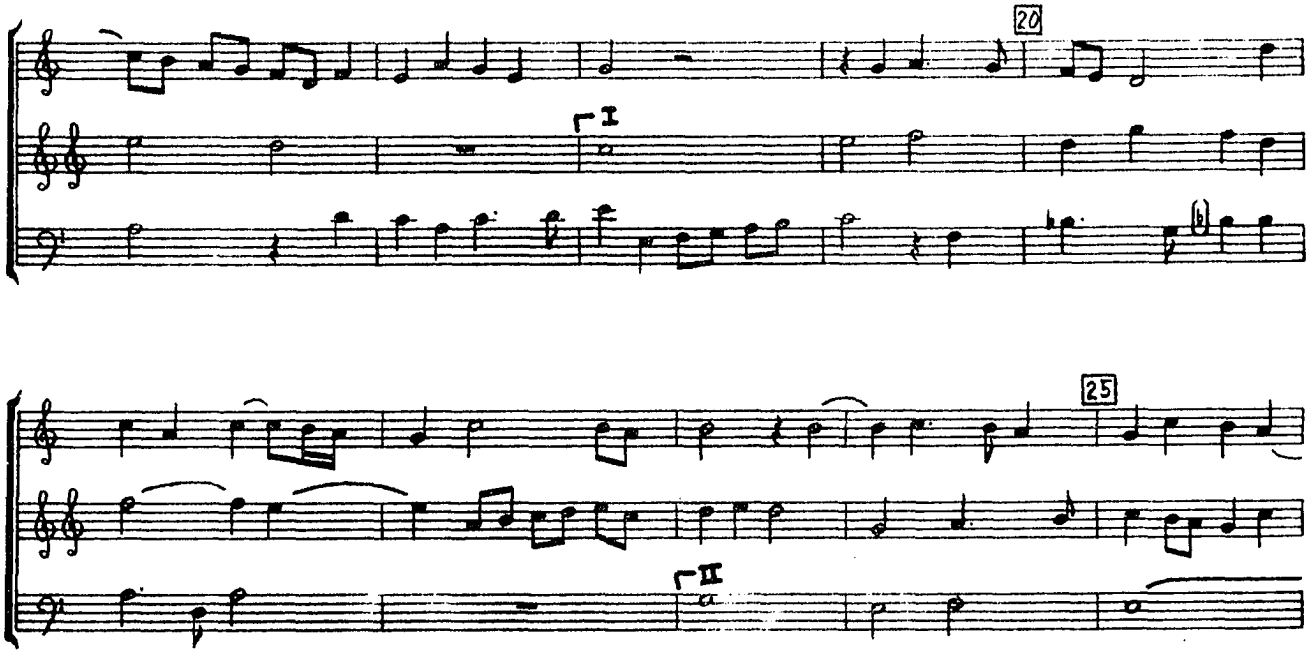
[6]Alfred Einstein, "Vincenzo Galilei and the Instructive Duo," Music and Letters, XVIII (1937), p. 364.

of the Canto, and later at a fourth in m. 18 of the Tenore. Subject II, m. 1 of the Canto, is imitated a fifth lower in m. 6 by the Tenore. The Basso completes the imitative entrances of Subject II in m. 23 at the octave.

Example 4



Example 4 (continued)



The technique of inversion seems to be moderately favored by Vinci. In Ricercar Primo, for example, inversion occurs quickly in the opening measures where m. 13 in the Canto is an inversion of m. 8 in the Basso (Example 5).

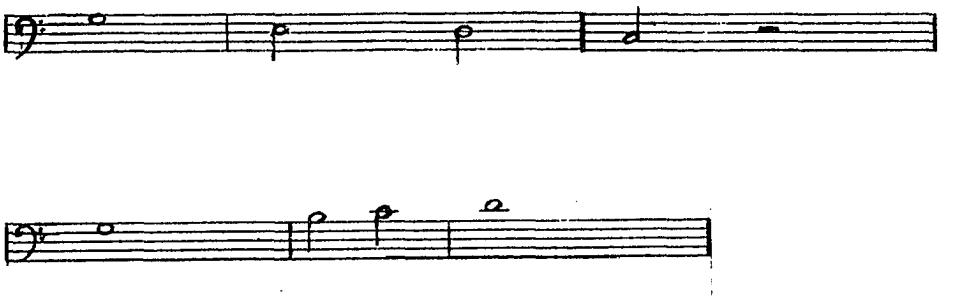
Example 5



But, as if this were too subtle for the amateur musician, Vinci boldly proclaims both the original subject and its inversion consecutively in the same voice, mm. 26-31 (Example 6). The inversion immediately comes under contrapuntal

treatment, is imitated five measures later at the octave by the Canto and then appears in diminished form again in the Basso before m. 37 where the Tenore repeats the inverted form.

Example 6

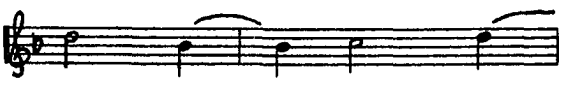


In Ricercar Sesto and Ricercar Decimo, inversion is not used at all. In Ricercar Quinto, however, Vinci combines inversion with diminution. The subject (Example 7) is first presented in the Tenore at the beginning of the composition. Its inversion occurs for the first time in the Canto in m. 28 (Example 8) and remains in its inverted form through a point of imitation before reappearing in its original form, but diminished, in the Canto in m. 40, and doubly diminished in m. 41 in the Tenore immediately afterwards (Example 9). The

Example 7

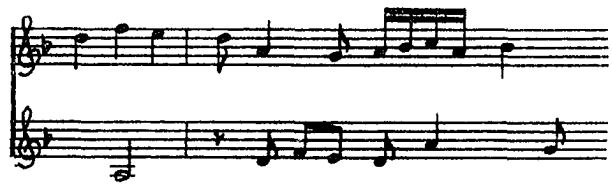


Example 8

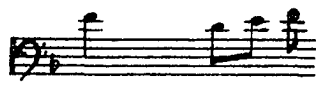


Basso also presents the inverted and diminished version of the subject beginning in m. 41:3 (Example 10).

Example 9



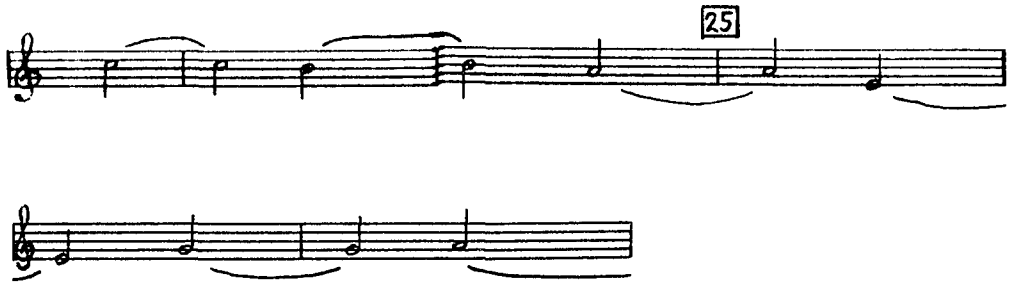
Example 10



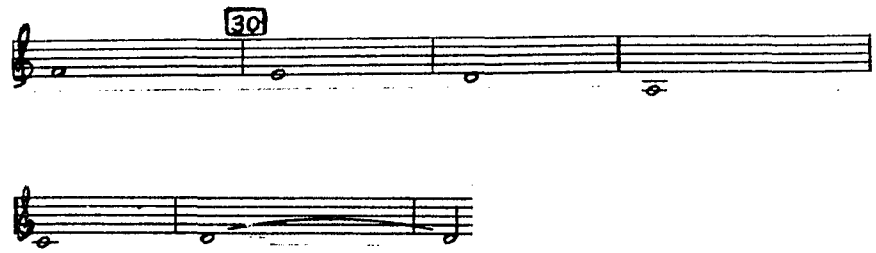
The subject reappears, both diminished and doubly-diminished, inverted and in the original form, in all three voices ten more times before the final cadence.

The device of diminution provides a simple and obvious means for variation of the subject. Often, Vinci employs rhythmic changes in the use of smaller note values to thus provide greater animation without losing the prevailing feature of the original subject. It is when augmentation is used that the subject begins to lose its identity and acquires the characteristics of a cantus firmus with expanded note values. Perhaps it is for this reason that Vinci employs augmentation only in the Fa mi la mi sol la ricercar, and here sparingly. In this piece, the subject, which has already been discussed above (Example 2), appears in augmented form in mm. 22:3-27 in the Canto (Example 11a) and in mm. 29-34 in the Tenore (Example 11b).

Example 11a



Example 11b



Since these are the only occurrences of augmentation, we may conclude that augmentation was not a favored device employed by Vinci. In constrast, Vinci's pupil, il Verso, made greater use of augmentation as we shall see later.

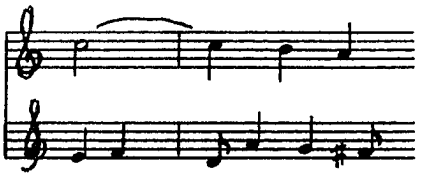
Harmonic Style

As pointed out earlier in the discussion of melodic style, Vinci's ricercari evidence a distinctive economy of material. Unfortunately, this often results in rather static harmonies. In fact, the harmony borders on monotony. The relative brevity of the pieces, however, fortunately prevents them from becoming unduly monotonous. Although there is variety through augmentation, diminution, and sometimes

transposition, even the transpositions appear infrequently and usually at only the fourth or fifth. The one or two principal motives used for each piece do appear in a succession of points of imitation. In the imitation, Vinci offers some variety where a voice first leads and then follows, a practice common in Renaissance music. In other words, where a given voice serves as the comes in one point of imitation, it may become the dux in the next point of imitation. Thus, the subject may appear a number of times in each voice. For example, in Ricercar Decimo the subject appears twelve times in the Canto part. Of these twelve entries, five are at the pitch level originally employed at the opening; the remaining are exchanges in the roles of the comes and the dux. In no instance is there an actual transposition to any other degree of the mode.

Vinci's dissonances are in keeping with the usual harmonic idioms of the period. The most significant examples of dissonances are those resulting from suspensions. The four-three suspension occurs with modest frequency but is not consistently prevalent in all of Vinci's ricercari. Although appearing less frequently, the seven-six and two-three suspensions are present and are sometimes used sequentially. The Fa mi la mi sol la ricercar shows one such example in m. 4 where a non-harmonic tone occurs on the strong beat and is immediately followed by a pair of two-three suspensions (Example 12).

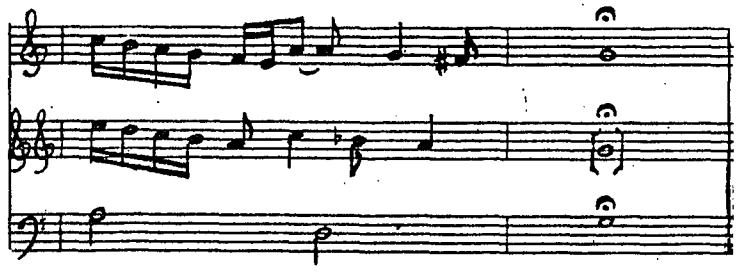
Example 12



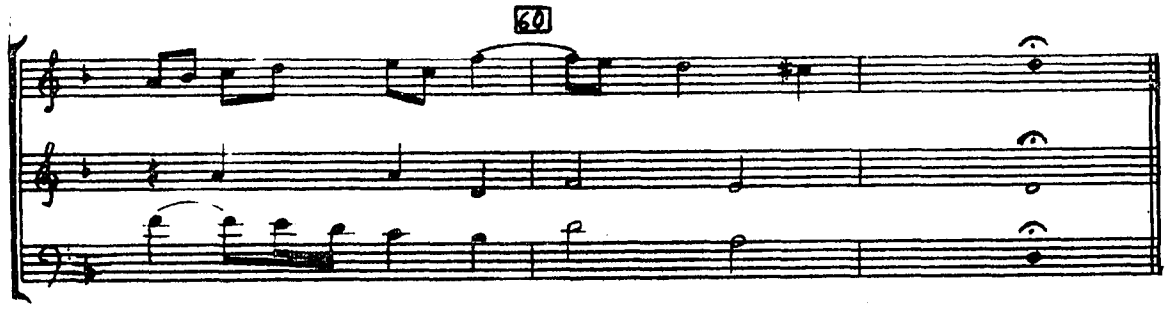
However, situations such as this are rare, and even with a high incidence of syncopation, many measures may pass with no suspensions at all.

The question as to the modality or tonality of these ricercari is best answered by stating, quite simply, that modality is still present but the triadic system is only a step in the future. In this aspect, these ricercari are not unique since the trend toward the system of triads had been approaching for decades. Vinci utilizes modal counterpoint as a liturgical composer, changing to a feeling of chordal progressions most clearly at the final cadences. All of Vinci's ricercari close with a dominant-tonic progression. More typical for Vinci is the final cadence of Ricercar Primo (Example 13). The final cadence of Ricercar Sesto (Example 14) is less clouded than the preceding example, with a typical suspension for the closing.

Example 13



Example 14



To show that the preference for the triad was gaining strength over the fading modal feelings, a summary of the final chords is perhaps appropriate. In only three of Vinci's ricercari, numbers one, six, and eight, is the third absent (the root is tripled) in the final chord. In the tenth and twelfth, the full triad is present; and in the remaining two, numbers two and five, the third is present with doubled root.

Structure

The prevalent structure of Vinci's ricercari depends primarily upon one main motive which is subsequently presented in a series of alterations. Sometimes Vinci follows the practice of deriving a secondary subject from the counterpoint to

the principal subject and this secondary subject is then sometimes repeated. However, he usually presents a rather "cyclic" plan to achieve a basic unity by returning to the principal subject in diminished form at the end. Only the Fa mi la mi sol la ricercar is a true example of a monothematic type. The fact of this occurrence is probably dictated by the solmization device. The monothematic ricercar, generally defined as an ancestor of the fugue, naturally suffers from monotony and redundancy. Only through the rhythmic variety in the imitative recurrencies of the subject and the brevity of the composition does Vinci manage to avoid complete boredom.

Ricercari written earlier than the Ricercari a Tre were often of far greater length. Several examples of ricercari by Willaert or A. Gabrieli are over a hundred measures. These, however, are sectionalized, purely polyphonic ricercari. With a stronger penchant for refining the ricercar, composers near the close of the Renaissance shortened the form, thereby achieving a structure which was simple and compact. Vinci's ricercari follow this tendency.

The seven Ricercari a Tre composed by Vinci average fifty-three measures in the modern edition. The shortest, the Fa mi la mi sol la ricercar, is only forty-six measures while Ricercar Sesto is the longest with sixty-one measures. With this characteristic of brevity and without the dictates of the prose texts, there is neither need nor time for sectionalization. Because of the lack of sections in Vinci's ricercari,

they never evidence formal symmetry; however, they do not necessarily lack proportion because the subjects become shorter and more fragmentary as they proceed through the course of the composition. As a group, Vinci's ricercari exhibit a fine sense of balance because in each there is a gradual increase in animation as the rhythmic variations evolve from the opening, stately subjects.

Pietro Vinci never achieved, either in his own lifetime or now, the eminence equal to his contemporaries such as Willaert and A. Gabrieli or his followers such as Frescobaldi and G. Gabrieli, at least not in northern Italy. But very possibly his importance as a representative composer from the south has been neglected for too long. What may be his most outstanding contribution is not that he was doing anything differently from the composers in the north, but that he brought a highly refined technique of musical composition in the high Renaissance outside the boundaries of Italy in a direction heretofore unexplored, Sicily.

Il Verso's Ricercari

Antonio il Verso, whose concern for his teacher's works resulted in the publication of the Ricercari a Tre, provided half of the pieces in the set. This was not the only occasion for which il Verso brought about a posthumous publication of Vinci's music. Vinci's seventh book of Madrigali a 5 and third book of Motetti a 5 e a 6 were also

published after the composer's death through the efforts of his most devoted pupil. Il Verso included some of his own motets in the third book of motets as well as his own ricercari in the Ricercari a Tre. In his dedicatory letter, il Verso humbly expressed the hope that his own contributions to the set would not "insult" those of his master. Il Verso seemed to be avoiding any implication that his own works should rival or surpass in quality the works of his teacher. Nevertheless, they are certainly more interesting, if only in respect to the employment of contrapuntal devices, and from this standpoint, his ricercari reveal a well disciplined, scholarly composer. Let us simply assume that il Verso's intentions were honorable and that he wished only to venerate the memory of his teacher by bringing all of Vinci's creative endeavors to light. We may now examine the remaining ricercari in the Ricercari a Tre.

Single melodic lines

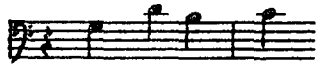
Il Verso's ricercari, like those of Pietro Vinci, evidence a vocal influence in their melodic style. However, in more instances than occur in Vinci's ricercari, fragments of truly instrumental character are evidenced. In the first place, the average range encompassed in il Verso's works is somewhat larger than Vinci's, approximating an eleventh. The ranges of the Canto and Tenore parts extend through a twelfth. The range of the upper voice extends from c' to e" in the

third, fourth, and fourteenth ricercari; from b-flat to d' in the ninth; from d to g" in ricercar seven; and from a to e" in the eleventh and thirteenth ricercari. In the Tenore parts, the last two ricercari show a range of a tenth, both extending from f to a'. Of the remaining pieces, the third, fourth, and eleventh ricercari all show identical ranges of an eleventh from e to a'; the ninth, a range of an eleventh from e-flat to a'; with only the seventh ricercar encompassing a twelfth from g' to d". It is in the Basso parts that the ranges are more extensive. Only Ricercar Terzodecimo is limited to a tenth, from c to e'. Ricercari three, four, and eleven all encompass a range of a twelfth, from c to g'. The ninth and fourteenth ricercari extend to the lowest pitch, from d' down to A, an eleventh. Ricercar Settimo embraces a thirteenth, from d to b-flat'. The low A in Ricercar Nono and Quartodecimo is the lowest notated pitch in all fourteen of the complete set.

Il Verso's limited ranges, although averaging larger than Vinci's, are still small when compared to contemporary vocal literature. But architecturally, il Verso is more inclined to venture away from vocal rules, such as extending a scale passage beyond an octave and increasing the number of leaps within the lines. As with Vinci, intervallic leaps never encompass more than an octave. But unlike Vinci, il Verso allows almost as much disjunctness or angularity in the Tenore as in the Basso, while minimizing the number of octave

leaps in the Canto. Although il Verso for the most part follows a leap with stepwise motion in the opposite direction, he occasionally allows that motion to include another leap (Example 15) or to ignore any enclosure or return and continue on in the same direction (Example 16).

Example 15



Example 16



The most disjunct of all the ricercari is Ricercar Settimo. For a variety of reasons, some of which will be discussed later, this is the most instrumental of all. The opening subject evidences much more vitality than any subject used thus far. Disregarding the rhythmic aspect for the moment, the melodic contour, though limited in range, achieves an interesting rise and fall in the span of seven tones (Example 17). The angularity of this particular subject is far from

Example 17



startling if compared with, for example, ricercari by Buus. Yet for the Ricercari a Tre, the subject has specific characteristics which are adventuresome. The first downward leap of a fourth after two repeated tones is followed as expected by a scalar passage returning to the starting tone. But this

is then followed by a downward leap of a fifth and, after an eighth rest to set the subject off from what follows, another leap back to the initial tone. This same pattern is imitated in the Tenore at a fifth lower. Thus, il Verso, like other contemporaries, made use of rests in passages where the harmony called for awkward skips.

Typical of polyphonic composition is the importance of all the melodic lines. Il Verso's ricercari evidence the same equality of lines as Vinci's but, again in Ricercar Settimo, the Basso generates a particular animation which is atypical of the remaining compositions. The subject appears in the Basso the same as in the upper parts, but after a pause of almost a whole measure, a diminution of the subject introduces four measures (in the modern edition) of almost nothing but sixteenth notes. The tessitura of this particular line is also higher than any of the other bass lines, causing a greater degree of intensity and, in conjunction with the shorter note values, agitation. As mentioned earlier, this voice is also the only one whose range exceeds a twelfth, encompassing a thirteenth. Semi-fusae are used in all three parts, primarily as ornamental passing tones, also contributing to the particular melodic vitality.

In many ways, il Verso's ricercari are still not entirely liberated from the vocal tradition. But the affinity to the vocal style is lessened by the bold sweeps of the

melodic lines, particularly in the seventh ricercar. Similarly, the subject of this particular ricercar incorporates a rhythmic animation which is memorable in its own right.

Contrapuntal treatment

Il Verso's contrapuntal technique is basically the same as his teacher's. With the exception of Ricercar Settimo, the subjects, like Vinci's, are not really unique in any way except for their usefulness for contrapuntal treatment. Again the subjects display an economy of material which is peculiar to an instrumental style as opposed to vocal composition.

Like Vinci, an important technique of il Verso's style involves the number of repetitions of a single subject, except il Verso surpasses Vinci in the number of repetitions. In the third ricercar, for example, the opening subject (Example 18) is repeated a total of eighteen times.

Example 18



Apparently the number of repetitions is not dependent on the length of the composition. Ricercar Settimo, the shortest of the ricercari, has fifteen repetitions of the opening subject while the longest of the set, the last ricercar, has fourteen repetitions of the principal subject and five of the secondary subject. As is evident in Vinci's ricercari, il

Verso's employment of multiple repetitions of a single subject is a strong indication of their instrumental character.

Through the treatment of diminution and augmentation, il Verso incorporates rhythmic variations more interestingly than Vinci. Pertaining particularly to diminution, Ricercar Nono, for example, shows to some extent the variety of il Verso's transformations of an opening subject (Example 19). Each of the voices presents the subject, either dux or comes, a total of five times before the first instance of diminution occurs at m. 25 in the Tenore (Example 20). The Basso again sounds the original subject in diminished form a fourth lower than the initial tone (Example 21), and, shortly afterwards, is moderately varied rhythmically (Example 22). Further diminution occurs again at m. 52 in the Basso (Example 23). At m. 60, the Canto and Tenore present the subject, diminished and in stretto, but with a varied rhythmic pattern in the Tenore (Example 24).

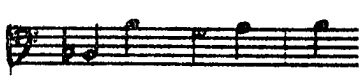
Example 19



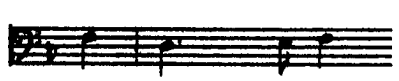
Example 20



Example 21



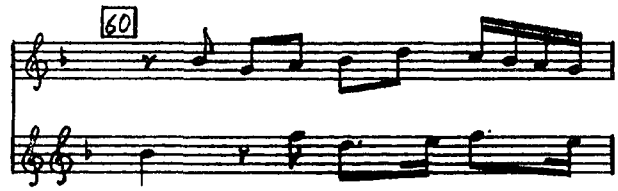
Example 22



Example 23



Example 24



With regard to augmentation, it has already been shown that this technique was not an important feature in Vinci's ricercari. Il Verso, however, seemed to favor the use of augmentation and double augmentation and examples of both are easily discernable, although the technique was not used at all in the third, seventh, and ninth ricercari. It has already been noted that when double augmentation is employed, the subject tends to lose its identity and becomes quasi-cantus firmus in appearance. Of special interest in Ricercar Terzodecimo, where there are two subjects which are alternated, and both of them are doubly augmented. Both subjects appear a total of eight times before the Basso, in mm. 38ff, presents the doubly augmented version of the first subject. Immediately at the close of the Basso exposition, the Tenore, in mm. 44ff, doubly augments the same subject. Finally, in mm. 52ff, the second subject is presented in double augmentation in the Canto. Il Verso rounds out the entire ricercar with yet one last recurrence of the augmented first subject in the Basso.

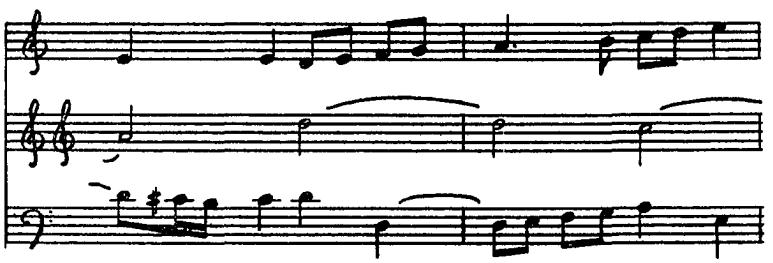
The final ricercar (number fourteen) also displays examples of double augmentation, but only in the lower voices.

During the occurrences of augmentation, both single and double, the remaining voices are engaged with episodic material, some of which are derived from previous subsidiary material. An example of this contrapuntal technique is observed in Ricercar Terzodecimo in which a fragmentary thematic idea (Example 25) is heard in stretto between the Basso and the Canto while the Tenore carries the double augmentation of the initial subject (Example 26). Therefore, the concluding evidence results from the observation that il Verso's ricercari tend toward greater scholasticism than the comparable works by Vinci.

Example 25



Example 26



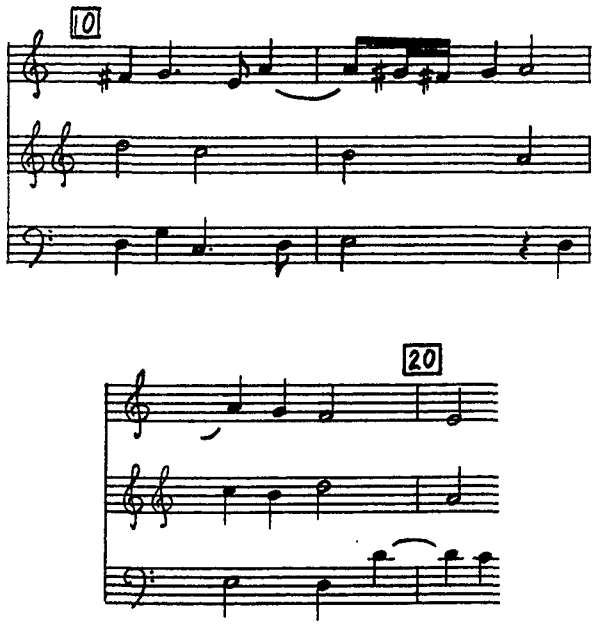
Harmonic style

An analysis of il Verso's transpositions is somewhat unnecessary here, since the voices share in the presentation

of the material, exchanging the roles of comes and dux resulting in transpositions not unlike those of Vinci. Likewise, il Verso's transpositions venture only so far as to the intervals of the fourth or fifth. One small point of passing interest involves the entrances of the subject in Ricercar Quarto, where two successive repetitions of the subject enter at a fifth (in the Tenore), then a fourth (in the Basso), below the original tone. There are sufficient transpositions to allow the Basso and Tenore to present the subject at all three principal pitches, i.e., G, C, and D, and the Canto to present the subject on G and D. No other transpositions appear. With an obvious lack of venturesome spirit as regards his transpositions and modulations, il Verso, like his teacher, remains a conservative.

In the utilizations of dissonances, il Verso is even more conservative than Vinci, if this is possible. With moderate equality, he favors the frequencies of both the four-three and seven-six suspensions, with fewer examples of the two-three suspension. The only unique feature, which may be construed as mildly surprising, occurs when dissonances result because of two simultaneous suspensions. This technique, usually found at cadencial points, appears most often in Ricercar Terzodecimo. Two examples of this technique (Example 27) are illustrated in m. 11 which shows both the seven-six and four-three suspensions simultaneously, and m. 20 which shows both two-three and four-three suspensions concurrently.

Example 27



Whenever il Verso tends toward the dominent-tonic progression at the final cadence, as he does in four of the seven ricercari, he employs a four-three suspension in three of these four. Compared to Vinci, il Verso more often prefers a modal final, as with the Phrygian cadence in Ricercar Undecimo, than a strong dominant-tonic progression, thus looking back to the ricercar of the past and re-examining the older harmonic styles of liturgical composition. Perhaps because of their association with Vinci's motets, these ricercari are paradigms of modal counterpoint. And if they also serve as instructional pieces, what better way is there to demonstrate polyphonic composition than these examples? Il Verso certainly reflects those aspects of scholasticism pertinent to instruction with the inclusion of his ricercari in the set.

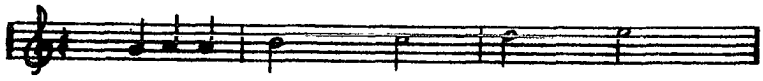
One further observation in respect to il Verso's harmonic style is worthy of mention. Neither Vinci nor il Verso made frequent use of the triad to close the ricercari. Whereas Vinci closed only two of his ricercari with a triad, il Verso closed only one, Ricercar Terzodecimo, with a triad. In Ricercar Quarto and Undecimo, he omits the fifth in the final chord and closes the remaining four ricercari with unisons (no third or fifth present). In this category, too, then, il Verso displays an even more conservative approach to harmony than his teacher.

Structure

Il Verso's ricercari, for the most part, are similar in structure and symmetry to those of his teacher. Almost all of his pieces are based on one principal subject. Not unlike Vinci's Ricercar Secondo, il Verso's Ricercar Nono and Terzodecimo utilize what appear to be double subjects, with each subject treated imitatively through various contrapuntal devices. In most of the remaining ricercari, subsidiary material is also presented and treated imitatively. Of the seven ricercari by il Verso, Ricercar Settimo is the only true monothematic ricercar. Again, the uniqueness of the subject (compared to the subjects in Vinci's and il Verso's other ricercari) and the extreme brevity (the shortest of all fourteen) are the probable reasons for its monothematic structure.

The symmetry of il Verso's Ricercar Quarto and Quartodecimo is perhaps more interesting. In both of these, il Verso seems to give more attention to symmetry than heretofore evidenced in the other pieces. The result is a structure resembling the tri-partite form. In Ricercar Quarto, for example, after the opening subject is imitated in all voices, a completely new subject, albeit brief, begins in m. 42 in the Canto (Example 28).

Example 28



This subject is imitated just once by each of the two lower voices, the Basso in stretto after the Tenore, after which the opening subject, doubly augmented, returns at m. 50 in the Basso. The principal subject in its original form is imitated once more at m. 59 in the Canto, immediately followed by the Basso in augmented form to close the entire piece (the Tenore does not imitate in this closing section).

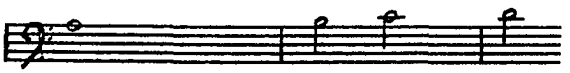
Ricercar Quartodecimo achieves the same kind of symmetry, though not with a new subject but with the inversion of the principal subject. The initial subject is nothing more than a partial scale descending a fourth (Example 29).

Example 29



The inversion occurs for the first time at m. 22 in the Basso (Example 30) and is imitated once in the Tenore and twice in the Canto.

Example 30



At m. 36, the Basso again presents the subject in its original form which version continues to be treated contrapuntally for the remainder of the piece. Although the sections offer little contrast and there is no formal sectionalizing in either of the ricercari, the allusion to a ternary structure is not accidental, but rather an obvious attempt at symmetry in an otherwise unsymmetrical form.

Again, because of their relative brevity and the lack of a prose text, these ricercari of il Verso are not sectionalized. Yet they do not lack sensitivity to length, nor are the elements of form and proportion missing entirely. In each of the ricercari, il Verso restates the initial subject near or at the final cadence in either the original or in some form of variation. Through this use of a reprise, il Verso achieves a basic unity and coherence. Without the benefit of text, a musical coherence is therefore evidenced in keeping with the instrumental character of the compositions.

The only remaining observation to be made on structure is that of length. Whereas Vinci's ricercari averaged only

fifty-three measures, il Verso's are not much longer, averaging only sixty measures in the modern edition. However, Vinci's works ranged between forty-six and sixty-one measures, whereas il Verso's extend from an extremely brief thirty-three measures (Ricercar Settimo) to seventy-three measures in the final ricercar.

Il Verso's relative importance as a composer is probably no less or no more than Vinci's. Of the two, only Vinci has been honored by a modern study of his life and works. Il Verso, on the other hand, may have been better known during his own lifetime. Evidence of his reputation as a composer has been related in the Falcone-Raval dispute, and his own writings speak as to his reputation as a historian. In any case his importance cannot be minimized since he is probably the only Sicilian who learned and practiced his craft in his native land and at the same time gained significant recognition on the mainland. Vinci and il Verso, master and pupil, both left their marks in what may be described as virgin territory at the end of the sixteenth century, Sicily.

Conclusion

In the light of the preceding discussion of the Ricercari a Tre, a number of descriptive statements have been generated. These ricercari are short, simple, and clear in outline, evidencing a high degree of economy in material. They differ from the structure of the vocal prototype, the motet,

yet still retain strong influences of vocal style. Vinci and il Verso both treat the ricercar conservatively in style and structure, employing the same essentials but not always to the same degree. But beyond that, they refine the ricercar. To them, the polyphonic instrumental form, archaic and abstract as it was, seemed to require a scholarly and conservative treatment. A half-century after the publication of the Musica Nova, Vinci and il Verso left a sampling of a form which perfected the earlier models, and epitomized the closing years of the Prima Prattica.

The import of these ricercari to the compendium of instrumental literature of the Renaissance is significant. They helped to establish the independence of instrumental music and gave rise to the independence of the Sicilian polyphonic school, a productive counterpart to the better known masters in the north, the Venetians.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

TITLE PAGE AND DEDICATORY LETTER OF RICERCARI A TRE, with translation of Antonio il Verso's letter

The identity of Ricercari a Tre's printer is boldly emblazoned on the title page of each of the three part books. The printer's device in the publication shows a winged muse blowing a horn and holding a shield on which are inscribed the letters O, S, and M (Octavianus Scotus Modoetiensis). Above the main figure, a cherub appears to be crowning the muse with a garland. Surrounding the device is the printer's motto, "Famam Extendere Factis [F. S. T.] Virtutis Opus," which appears to be a cryptic, if boastful, statement of the printer's stature or an admonition to those who would display ambition. To the right of the main device is the official seal of the Biblioteca Nazionale de Marco in Venice, featuring the famous winged lion of the Republic of Venice, and added, probably, when the Ricercari a Tre was cataloged by the library.

Il Verso's letter is actually rather lengthy for a dedicatory letter but perhaps necessarily so since the writer wished to include a complete explanation for his actions. The

following translation attempts to put il Verso's words in a less archaic setting but without losing the intent of the writer.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND HIGHEST SIR, DON FRANCESCO MONCADO, PRINCE OF PATERNO AND DUKE OF MONT'ALTO, etc.

My most revered Sir,

Among the many compositions, most Illustrious and Excellent Sir, that my teacher, the divine and fondly remembered Pietro Vinci, sent to the printer in Venice, are certain motets and ricercars which comprise the major content of the works which he wrote, with a surprisingly sound mind, toward the end of his life. But in all this time, I have not yet seen them [the motets and ricercars] in print, and I do not understand why. The Magnificent and Honorable Melchoir Scotto, to whom they were addressed, advised me in his last letter from Venice that he had never received them. Consequently, I am led to believe that the works were purposely destroyed by some spiteful persons or lost through the haphazard attitude of the deliverer.

Since I myself have gathered the major portion of the above mentioned motets and ricercars, I have resolved to bring them to light under the name and protection of Your Excellency, believing that I am acting as a pious and grateful disciple in accomplishing the desires of my dead teacher. And since I do not have all the ricercars that he sent, I have replaced those that are missing with some of mine, certain that their inclusion will not insult those of my teacher.

Further, since the whole world knows I am Your Eminence's servant, I consider myself unfortunate that I have not been able to show my gratitude to you and to return the innumerable favors and graces afforded me, which I shall always remember and which are more than I deserve.

Accept these motets, Your Grace, with the greatness of your soul. I would be grateful to see them in print in the immediate future inscribed with your name and the name of your Royal House. May our Lord increase the state of your happiness as all the virtuous desire. Meanwhile, I kiss Your Excellency's hand and beseech you to keep his [Vinci's] memory alive. I desire nothing more.

From Palermo, the 20th of April, 1591.

Your Excellency's most humble servant,

Antonio il Verso

TENORE

DI PIETRO VINCI

SICILIANO

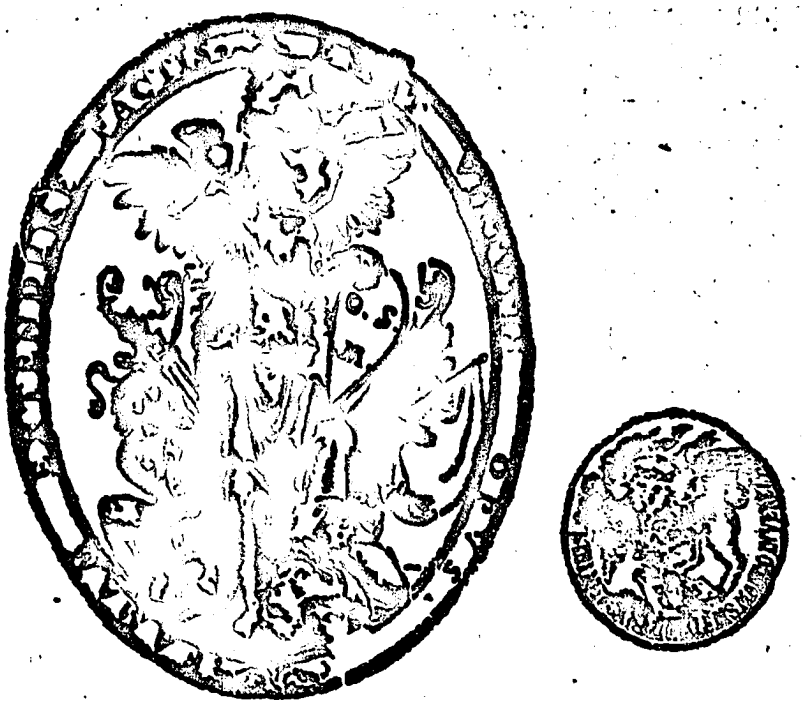
Della Citta di Nicosia

IL SECONDO LIBRO DE MOTETTI,

E RICERCARI A TRE VOCI.

Con alcuni Ricercari Di Antonio Il Verso suo Discepolo.

Nouamente dati in luce.



IN VENETIA, M. D XCI.

Appresso l'Herede di Gierolamo Scotto.

D

ALL'ILLVSTRISSIMO
ET ECCELLENTISSIMO
SIGNOR
DON FRANCESCO MONCADA
Principe di Paterno e Duca di Mont'alto &c.

Mio Signor Collendissimo.

FRA le molte compositioni che il Diuino Pietro Vinci di buona memoria mio maestro mando fuori, Illustrissimo & Eccellentissimo Signor, egli stesso hebbe in maggior conto certi motetti, e Ricercari a tre voci, che in sù l'estremo de' suoi di con giudicio veramente merauiglioso compos se, & inuiò in Vinegia alla Stampa. E non essendo in tanto tempo comparsi giamai, ne volsi intender la cagione dal Magnifico & Honorato Melchior Scotto, à cui furono drizzati, il quale m'ha hor vltimamente da Venetia rescritto non hauergli anchor riceputi. Tanto che se ne può far giudicio che opera de maligni, ò trascuragine de' portatori habbia lor dato mal ricapito, la onde io che mi trouo hauer fatto raccolta della maggior parte de' sudetti motetti e Ricercari, m'hò risoluto mandarli in luce sotto l'ombra e protettione di V.E. e come che di quelli istessi ch'egli mando all'hora, à me ne mancano alcuni Ricercari, l'ho rassopplito de' miei certo che andando presso à quei del maestro non riceuerāno insulto; anzi più perche il mondo tutto sà ch'io son seruitore di V.E. nel che credo far'opera di pietoso e buon Discepolo in adempire il desiderio del morto maestro & in sieme atto d'animo grato con V.E. alla quale, m'ho tenuto per sventurato nō hauer potuto anchor mostrare quanto impressi nell'animo mi stanno l'innumerabili fauori e gratie ch oltre ogni mio merito m'ha sempre fatto. Accetti li V.E. con la grandezza dell'animo, che suole, che se conoscerò questi esserli grati Vedrà di qui à non molto tempo e motetti e messe dell'istesso andar in luce freggiati del suo Eccellentissimo nome, e di quelli della sua Real Casa, quale N. S. accresca di stato e felicità come tutti i virtuosi desiderano mentre io le bacio l'Eccellentissima mano, e la supplico à serbar memoria, ch'io le son tanto gran seruitore, che nulla più. Da Palermo li di 20. April 1591.

Di V.E. Humilissimo Seruitore

Antonio il Verso.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RICERCARI A TRE

A discussion of the performance practices for instrumental ensembles in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has been expostulated by Irvin Wagner in his study on the Sinfonie Musicale of Viadana.[1] Therefore, the purpose of this appendix is to present certain suggestions which would aid present-day musicians who might utilize the modern edition of the Ricercari a Tre. Since Scotto's edition, like other printings of ensemble music before Giovanni Gabrieli's Sonata pian e forte (1597), did not specify any performance instructions, it cannot be certain as to the medium of performance and exact instrumentation necessary to recapture and render a satisfactorally authentic interpretation of the music. The modern performers of these pieces must first have an idea as to how they were performed by musicians of the time. The specific suggestions included here are limited to the modern

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[1]Irvin L. Wagner, "The Sinfonie Musicale of Ludovico Viadana, A Discussion and Modern Edition" (unpublished DMA dissertation, Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, 1968).

edition of the Ricercari a Tre and to the characteristics dealing with instrumentation, dynamics, and tempo.

Instrumentation

Since Scotto made no mention as to the appropriate instruments, no attempt is made in the modern edition to emulate the exact sounds produced by Renaissance performers. Moreover, no modern instrument is capable of producing the same quality of sound available to the late Renaissance performer. An indication of what media may have been used in the early performances of these pieces can be surmised from Renaissance and early Baroque sources which have been translated and reported by twentieth-century writers.

It has been observed in Chapter III that these pieces may have been performed by voices as solmization exercises, as well as by instruments. Several arguments against this theory include the fact that no texts were supplied with the ricercari and that instrumental characteristics preclude vocal rendition. In vocal literature of the period, periodic rests in the parts are included, whereas these ricercari have extended melodic passages with fewer rests than their vocal counterparts. Consequently, a rendition by either a keyboard instrument or a trio of instruments was more probable.

Keyboard performance from part-books was reportedly an expected practice of competent musicians. However, such a technique was certainly not within the realm of all keyboard

players; therefore, it is less likely that these pieces were intended for a single instrument. More likely is the probability that they were intended for a consort of viols or another compatible combination of instruments.

Although any composition of this period could ostensibly be considered common property of all media, in the performances of chamber music viols were often preferred.[2] With the increased tendencies in the sixteenth century to construct instruments in families, usually of three ranges, it would have been appropriate for a trio of viols to be the performance media of the Ricercari a Tre. Although the ricercari are polyphonic, the viols when heard in consort were sufficiently distinct from one another in sound so that the individual lines would be discernible.[3]

Although the wind instruments were not used for chamber music to the same extent as viols, a combination of wind instruments alone or wind instruments mixed with stringed instruments was also possible. Cornetts and trombones were used by Giovanni Gabrieli and had been available at St. Marks since 1565. Reese contends that Giovanni's instrumentation consisted solely of cornetts, trombones, and violini.[4]

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[2]Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 547.

[3]Robert Donington, The Interpretation of Early Music (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 642.

[4]Reese, ibid., p. 551.

Considering the strong Venetian influences on instrumental practices of the time and both Vinci's and il Verso's associations with Venice, it is also possible that this same instrumentation (cornett, violino, and trombone) was intended for the Ricercari a Tre.

In modern performance, a string ensemble consisting of the violin for the Canto, the viola for the Tenore, and the cello for the Basso is probably the most satisfactory. A gamba instead of a cello is better on the bass line since the sonority would be kept lighter in this way. Donington recommends such an ensemble in the performance of pavans by John Dowland written in 1604.[5]

A trio of brass instruments, consisting of trumpet, horn in F, and tenor trombone, is also suitable for a modern performance of the Ricercari a Tre. The ranges of the three parts make these three instruments readily adaptable for these pieces. The tessitura for all three parts lies in the middle or upper-middle ranges of these three instruments. An ensemble comparable to that favored by Giovanni Gabrieli would substitute a viola for the horn. Such a combination is both feasible and sonorously acceptable providing both brass instruments have narrow bores.

Modern woodwind instruments, although less comparable to Renaissance instruments, may also be utilized in modern

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[5]Donington, ibid., p. 462.

performances of these pieces. The most likely combination might consist of two clarinets and a bassoon. An ensemble of clarinets with a bass clarinet playing the bass part, though also satisfactory, would not adequately differentiate the lines of the polyphonic textures. Neither flute nor oboe could be used in the Canto since the lower range is beyond the capabilities of these instruments.

In summary, the suggested choices of instruments for modern performances of the Ricercari a Tre may well include the following ensembles:

	Brass	String	Woodwind	Mixed
Canto:	trumpet	violin	clarinet	trumpet
Tenor:	horn in F	viola	clarinet	viola
Basso:	tenor trombone	cello (gamba)	bassoon (bass clarinet)	trombone

Dynamics

The earliest known work for an ensemble to indicate dynamic contrasts is Giovanni Gabrieli's Sonata pian e forte (1597). Before the Venetian music of the 1590's, however, dynamic markings of any kind are practically unknown, with the exception of the undated Capirola lute-book which provides the earliest examples of the indication of dynamics.[6] Shadings in the dynamics were expected of the performer and such an

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[6]Reese, ibid., p. 521.

indication is reported by Praetorious in the Syntagma Musicum III (1615-1619). In commenting on the element of expression, Praetorious states "it adds to the loveliness of an ensemble, if the dynamic level . . . is varied now and then."[7]

Particularly relevant to the performance of the Ricercari a Tre is the manner of performing imitative (fugal) entrances. As early as 1556, Hermann Finck in his Practica Musica proposed that performers must allow successive entrances of a subject to be produced more decisively.[8] Observations such as these clearly indicate that dynamics were used in the Ricercari a Tre but not where or how they were to be used. In keeping with the reference by Finck, the author's suggestion is only that particular attention be given to entrances of the subjects, and that they be proportionately emphasized in order to allow for clarity and coherence in the individual lines. Other than that, it is only recommended that the normal rise and fall of the melodic lines influence dynamics and shadings.

Tempo

As with dynamics, no indications of tempi are present in the Ricercari a Tre. Therefore, to suggest a definite

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[7]Hans Lampl, "Translation of Syntagma Musicum III of Michael Praetorious" (unpublished DMA thesis, University of Southern California, 1957), p. 135.

[8]Donington, ibid., p. 426.

metronomic marking for each of these pieces is inappropriate. However, observations from Chapter II on ricercari in general indicate that these pieces were performed in a slow and stately manner.

Other references to tempi are found in numerous writings. The earliest known indication of tempi is found in the fantasias by Milán and Narváez dated 1538.[9] These indications, however, are relative and do not aid the modern performer in interpreting precisely what tempo to take. Praetorious' remarks on tempo indicating that "C is slow and ¢ is fast, but look at the music to discover exactly how slow or how fast"[10] are just further indications that tempo, then and now, is a relative quantity.

Relative to the Ricercari a Tre, it is advised that a constant tempo equal to a metronomic marking of 80 for the quarter note be taken for all the pieces except the tenth, thirteenth, and fourteenth ricercari. In these three, the only ones marked "¢", it is advisable to increase the tempo to perhaps MM = 100 for the quarter note. The slow and stately character would still be maintained in these three ricercari since note values smaller than the eighth-note rarely occur in them.

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[9]Reese, ibid., p. 622.

[10]Thurston Dart, The Interpretation of Music (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1963), p. 107.

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PART II

THE MODERN EDITION OF THE RICERCARI A TRE

EXPLANATION OF EDITORIAL MARKINGS

All editorial markings in the modern edition are indicated by the use of brackets. All accidentals appearing in Scotto's early printing have been retained faithfully in the modern edition. Since the addition of a sharp, flat, or natural by the composer referred only to the succeeding note, indications of the next accidental in the same measure are bracketed.

In the modern edition the G-clef (second line) and the F-clef (fourth line) have been employed because they are most familiar to the performer. In order to avoid the overuse of ledger lines in the Tenore parts, most of them have been put into the double G-clef, indicating that the sound is an octave lower than written.

The original publication of the Ricercari a Tre is remarkably, almost totally free of errors with the following exceptions:

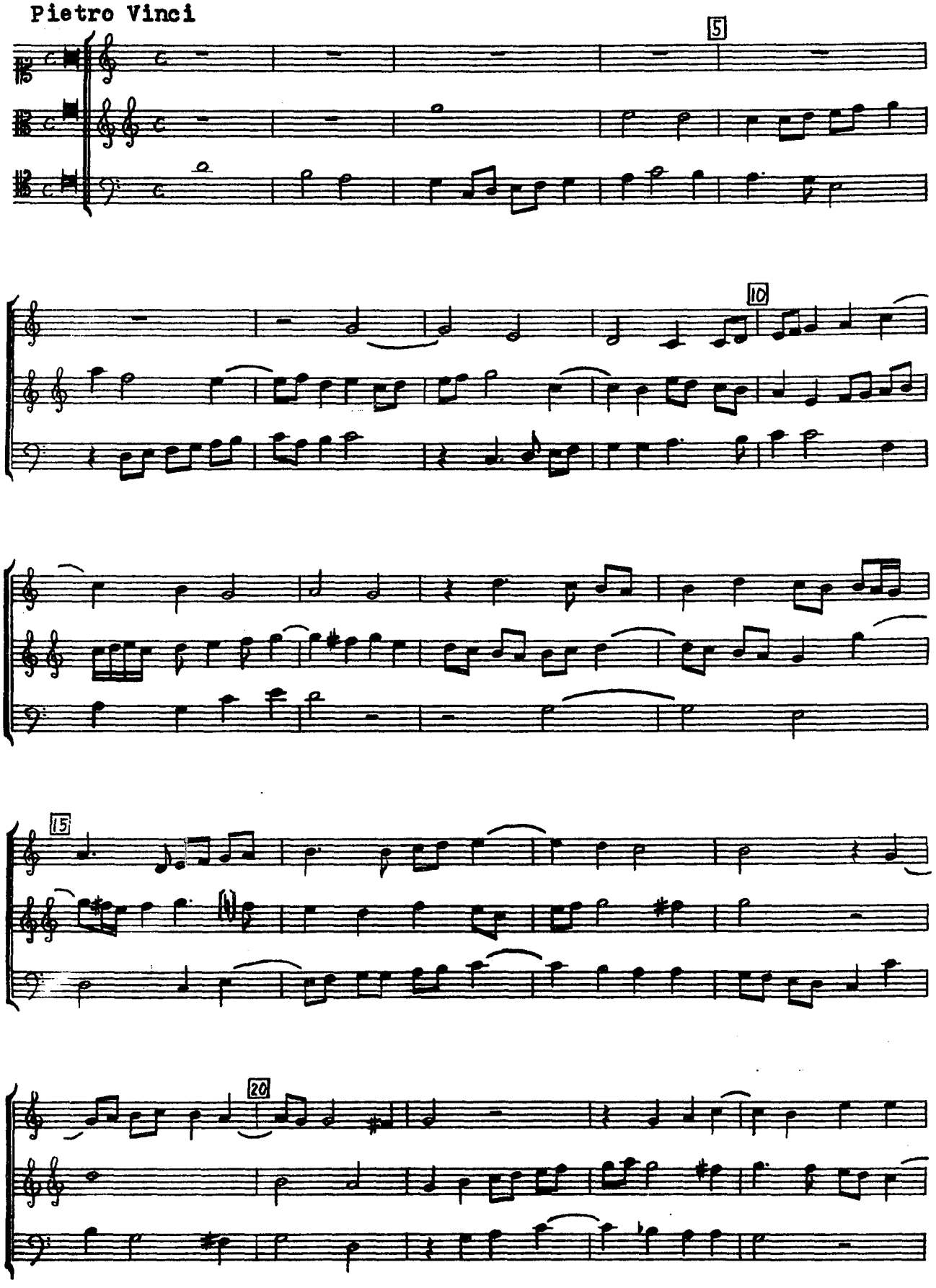
Ricercar Primo: final tone in Tenore originally indicated as an "a" has been changed to "g";

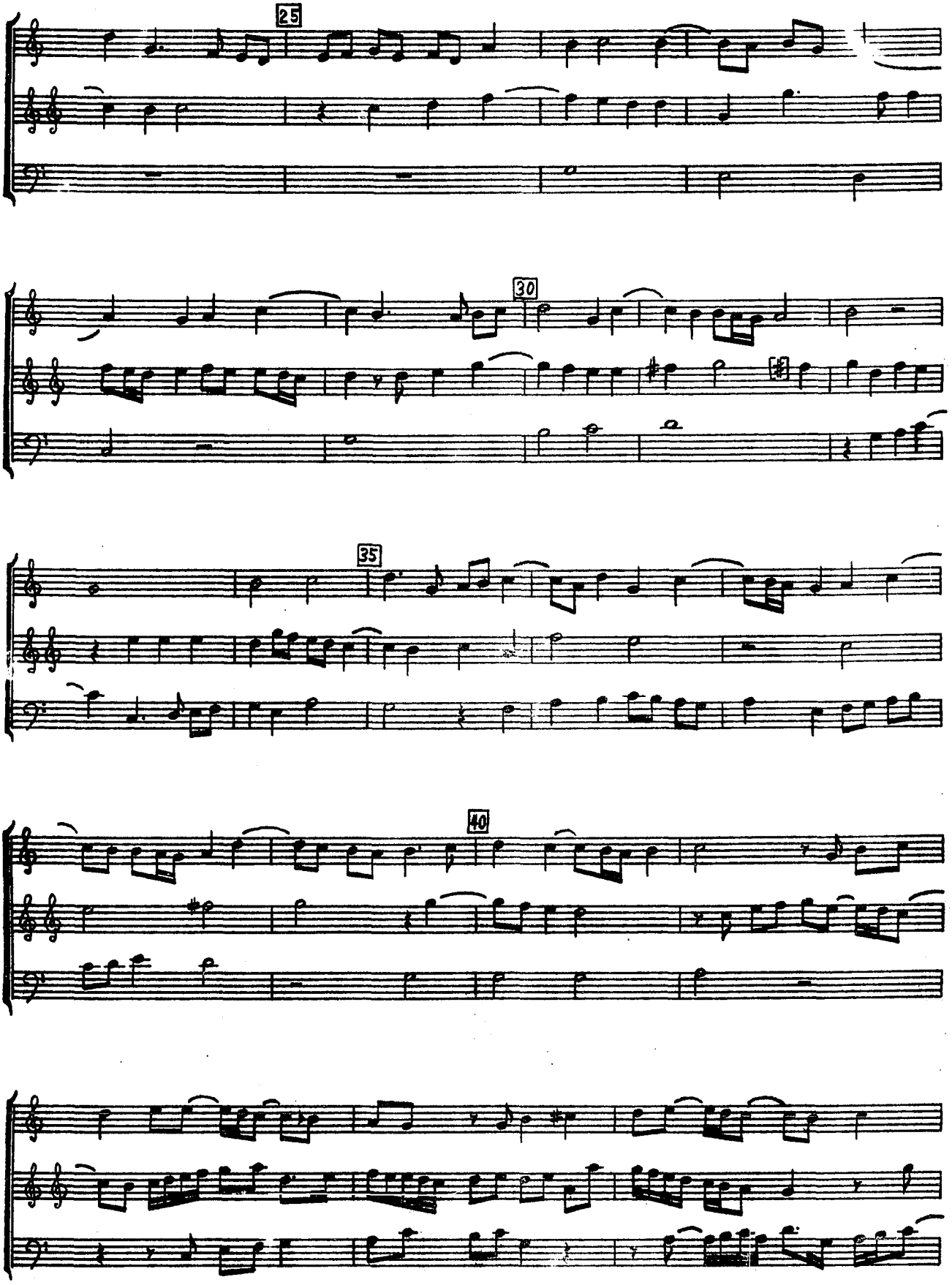
Ricercar Ottavo: tempus imperfectum diminutum in Basso has been changed to tempus imperfectum to coincide with upper parts; and

Ricercar Quartodecimo: the "e" on the second beat of measure 56 has been changed to "d".

RICERCAR PRIMO

Pietro Vinci

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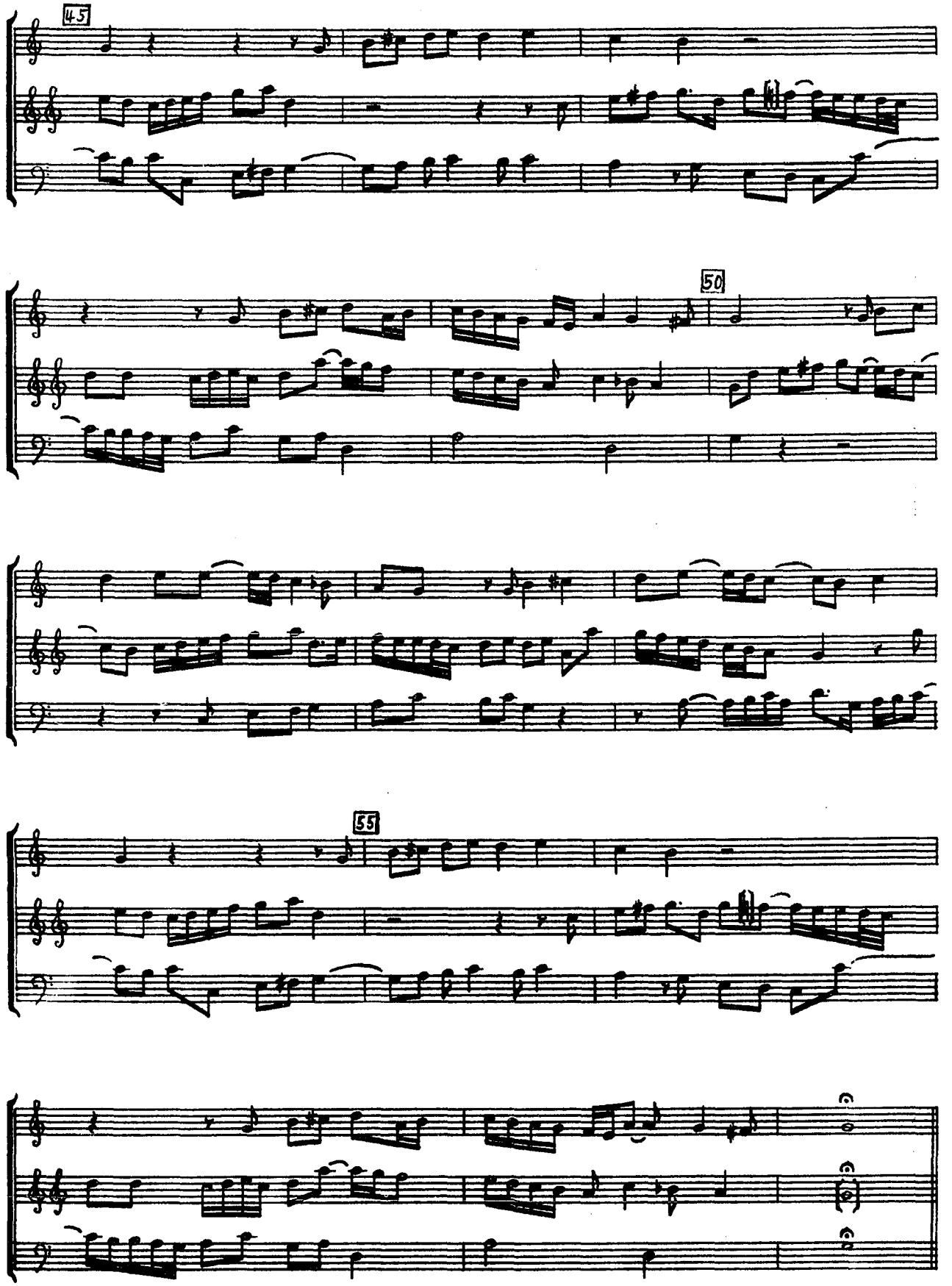
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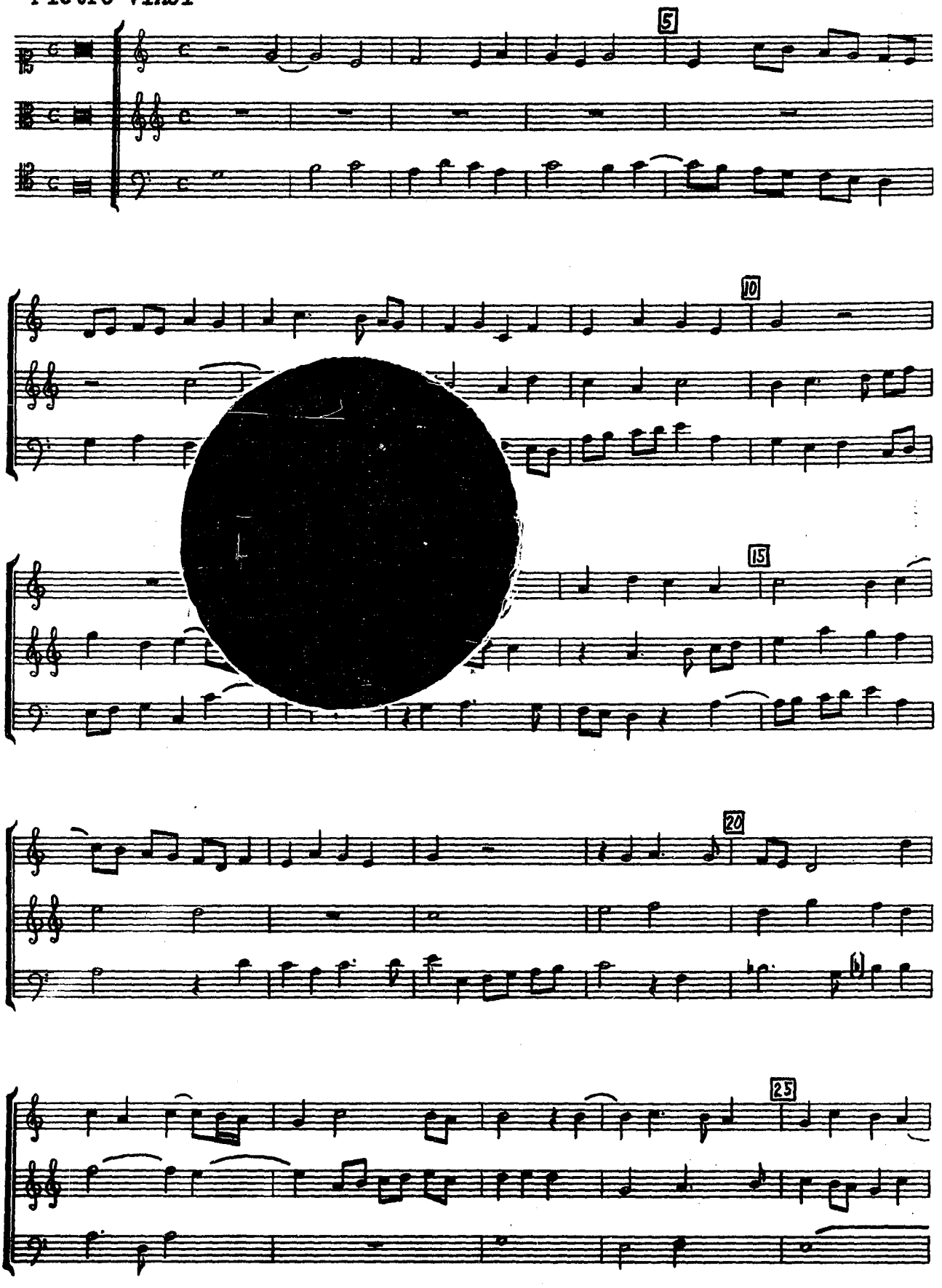
RICERCAR SECONDO

Pietro Vinci



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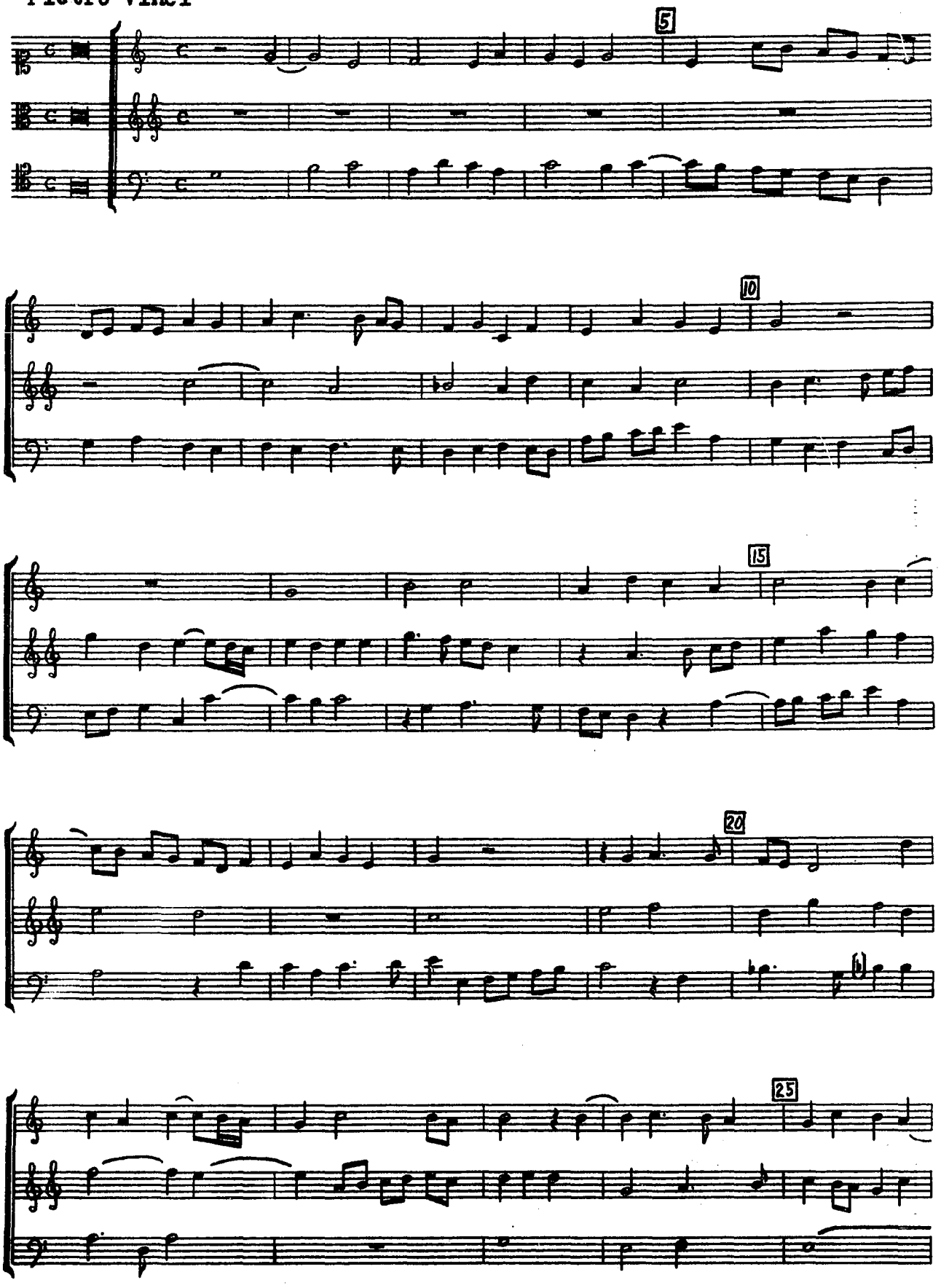

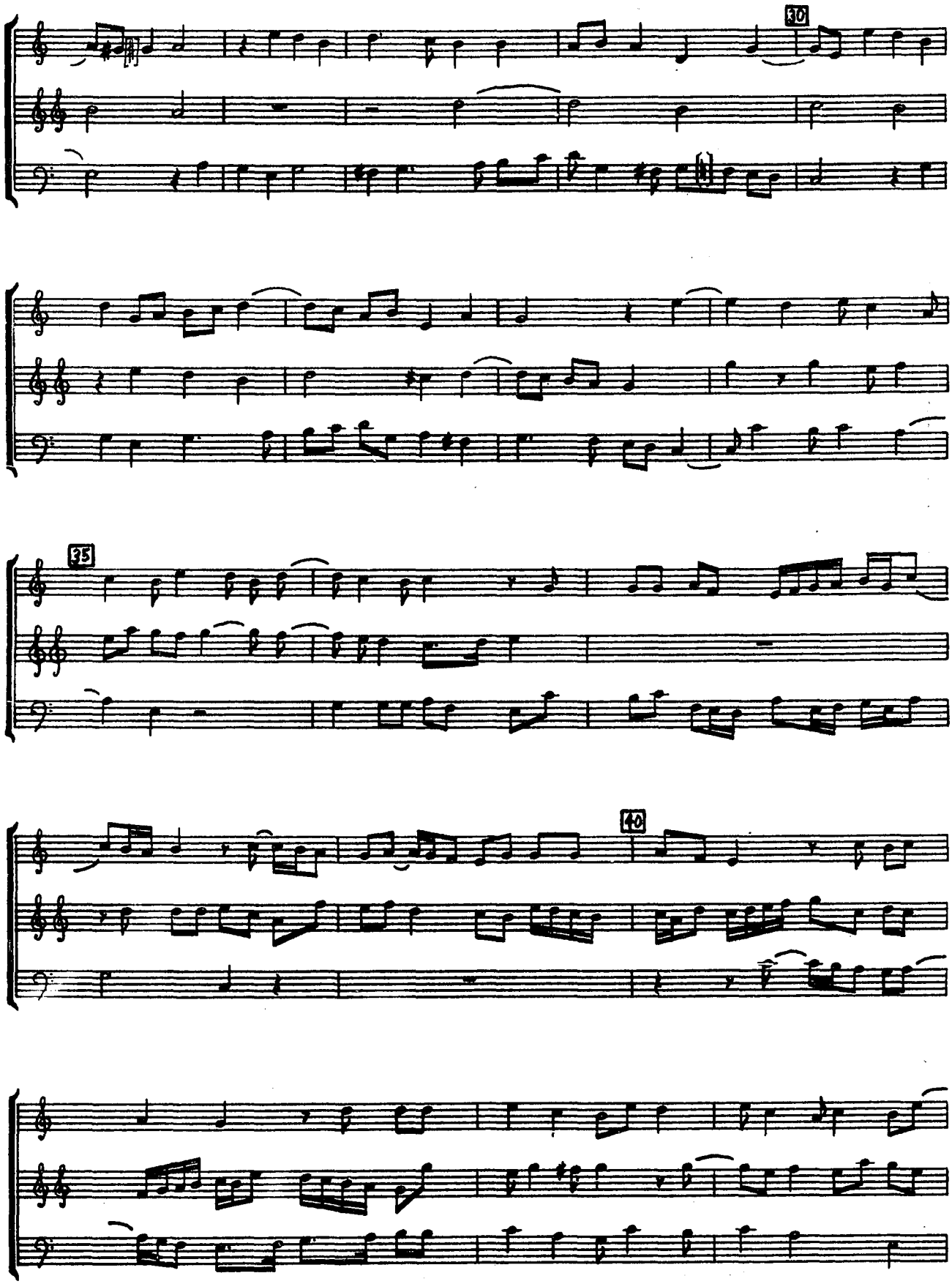
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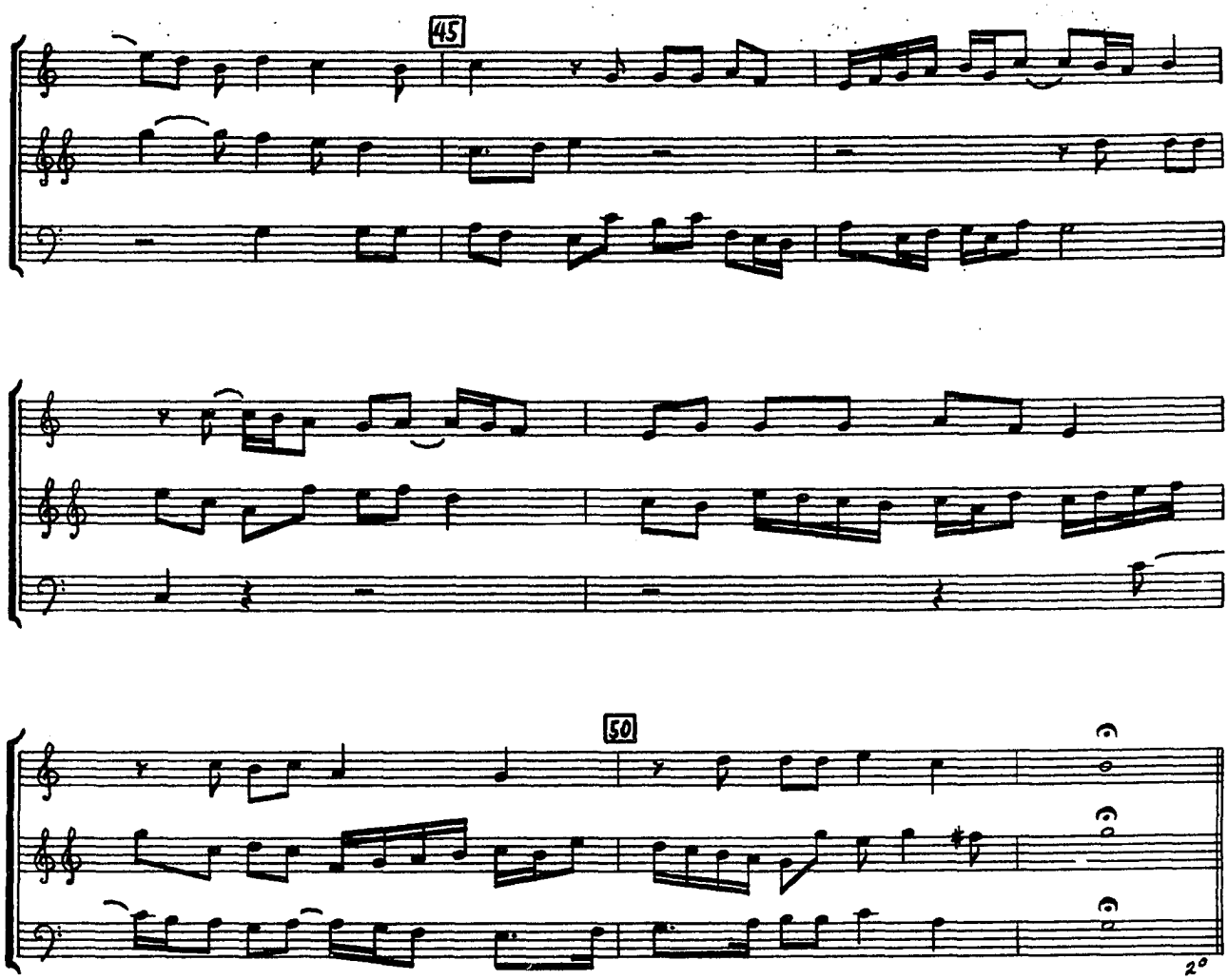
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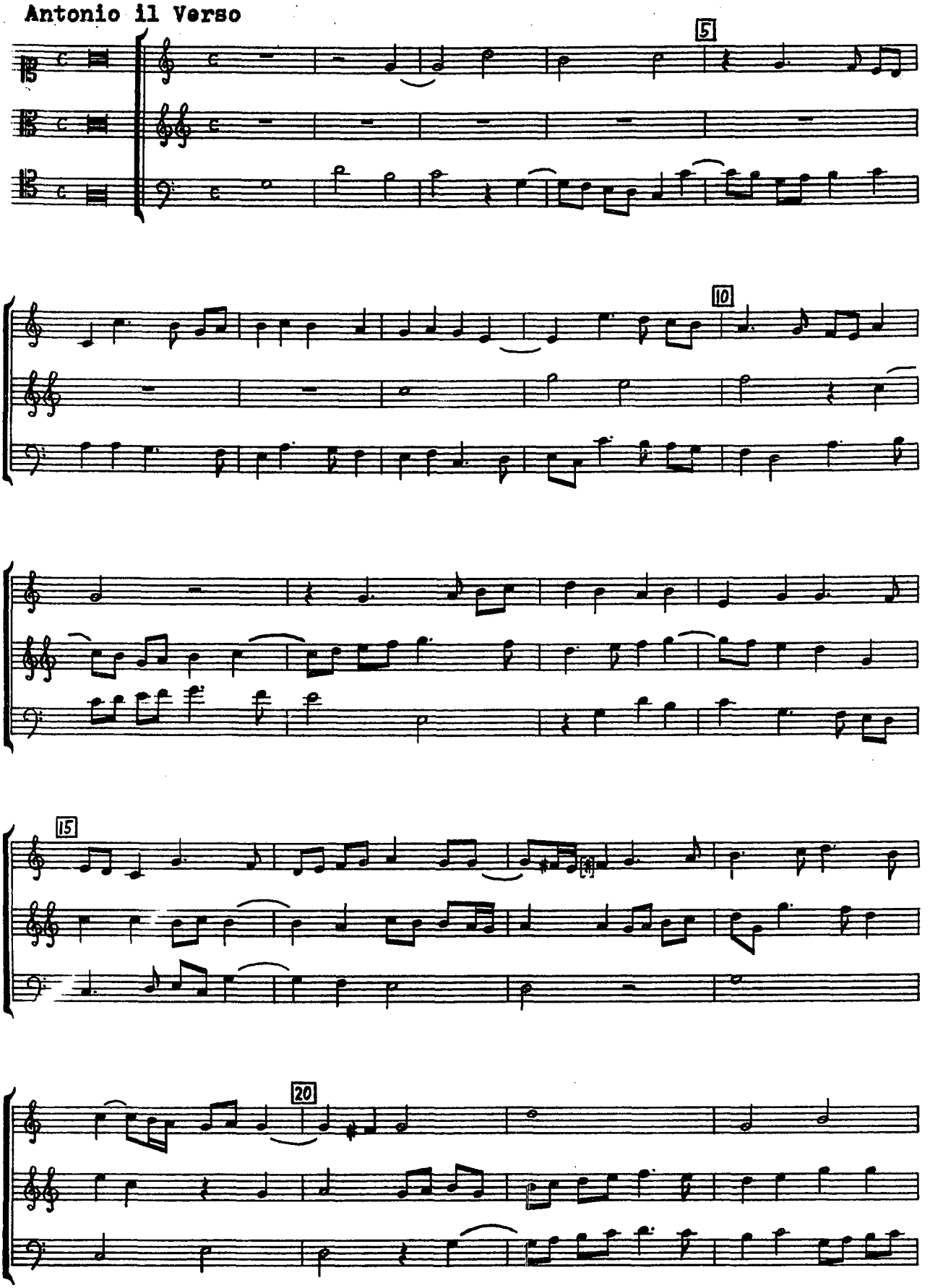
2°

RICERCAR TERZO

Antonio il Verso



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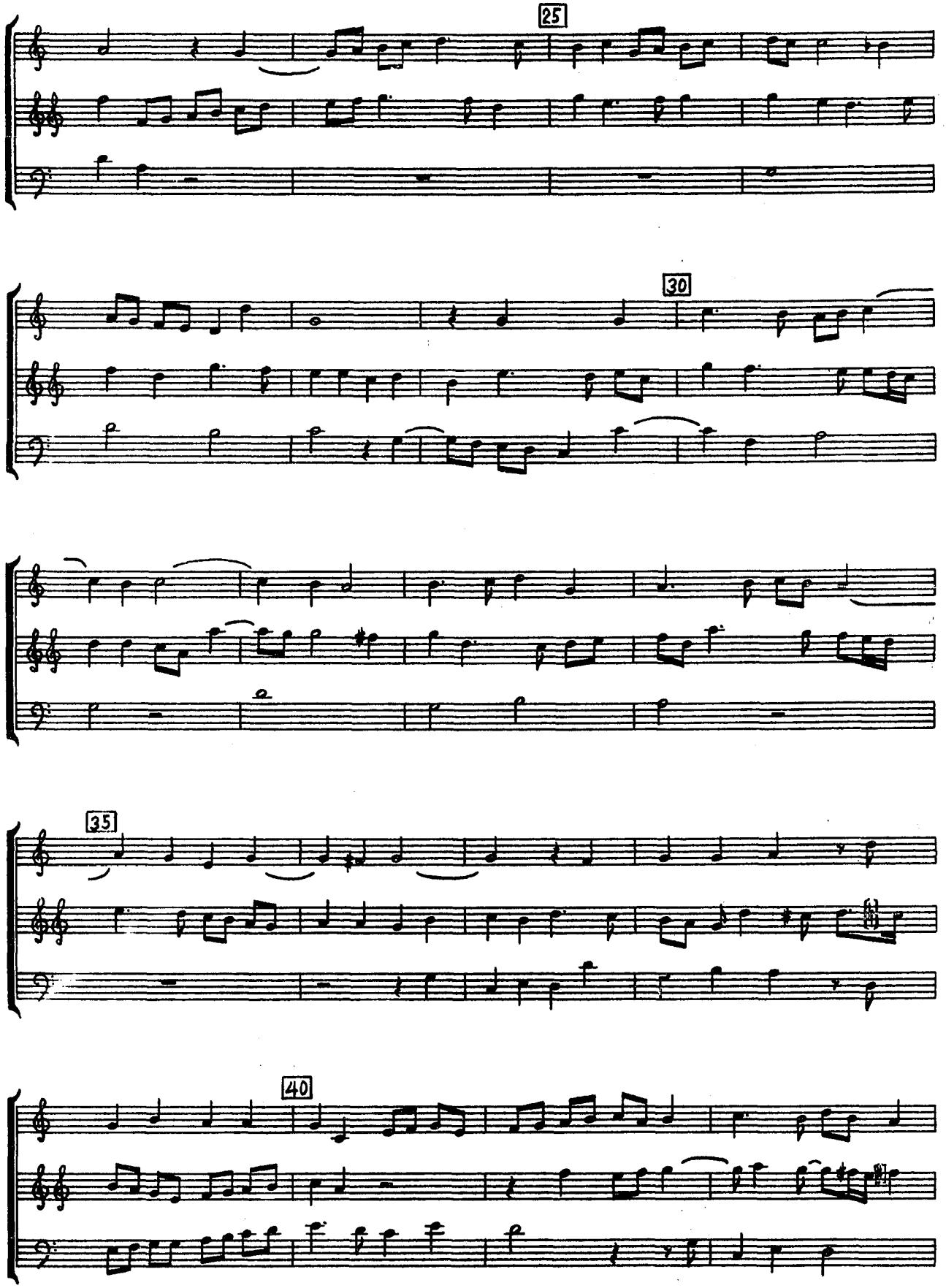
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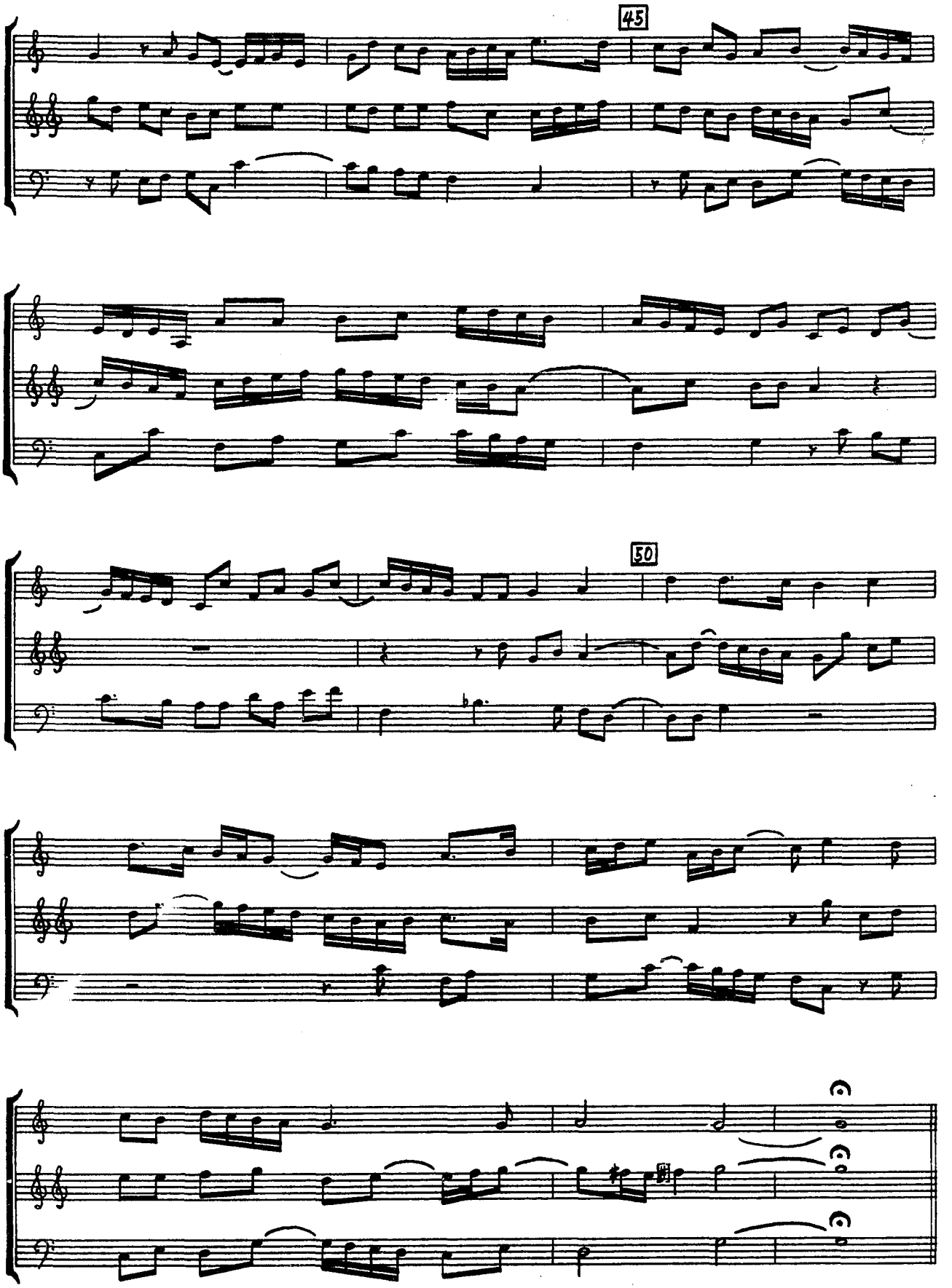
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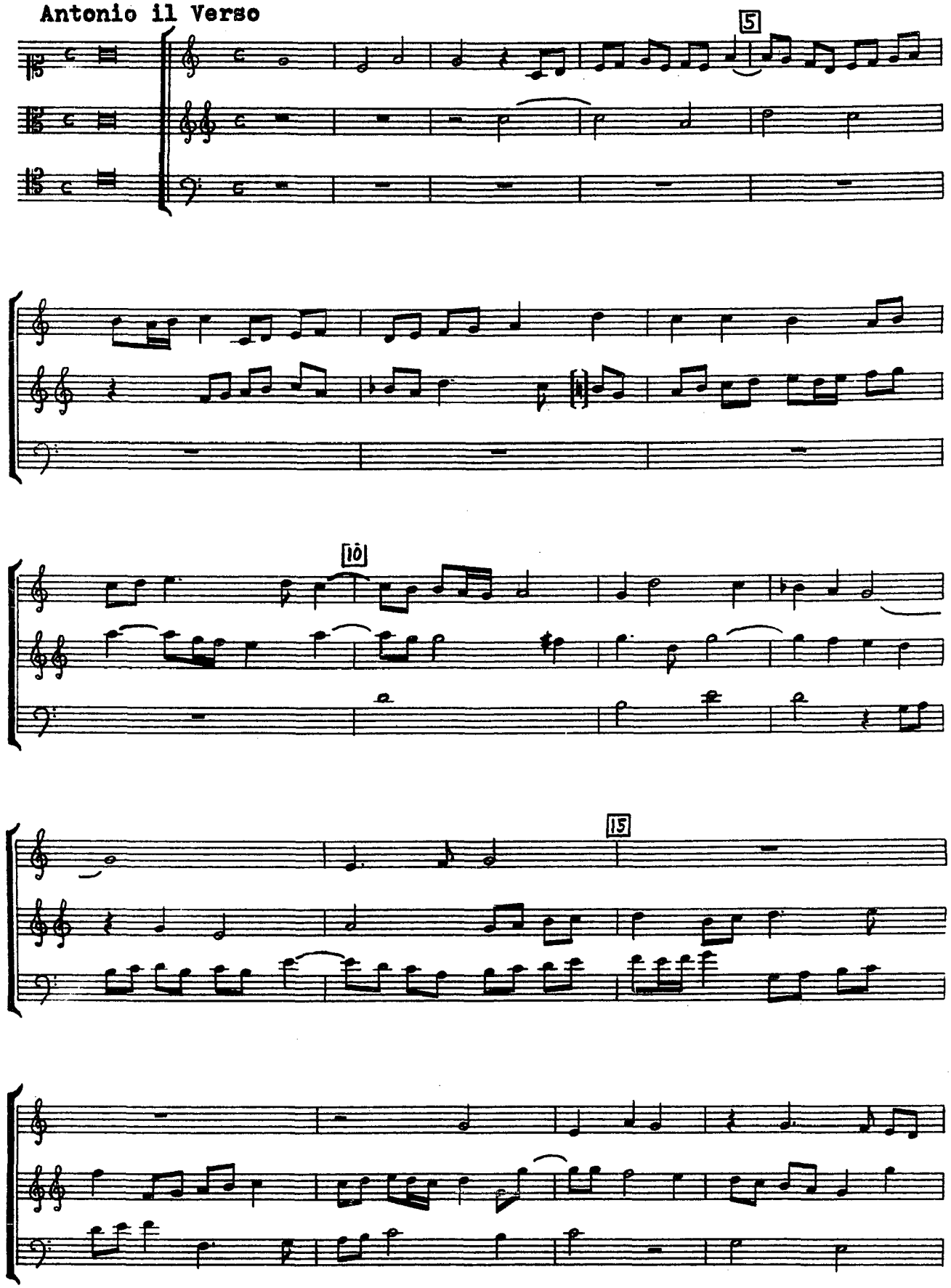
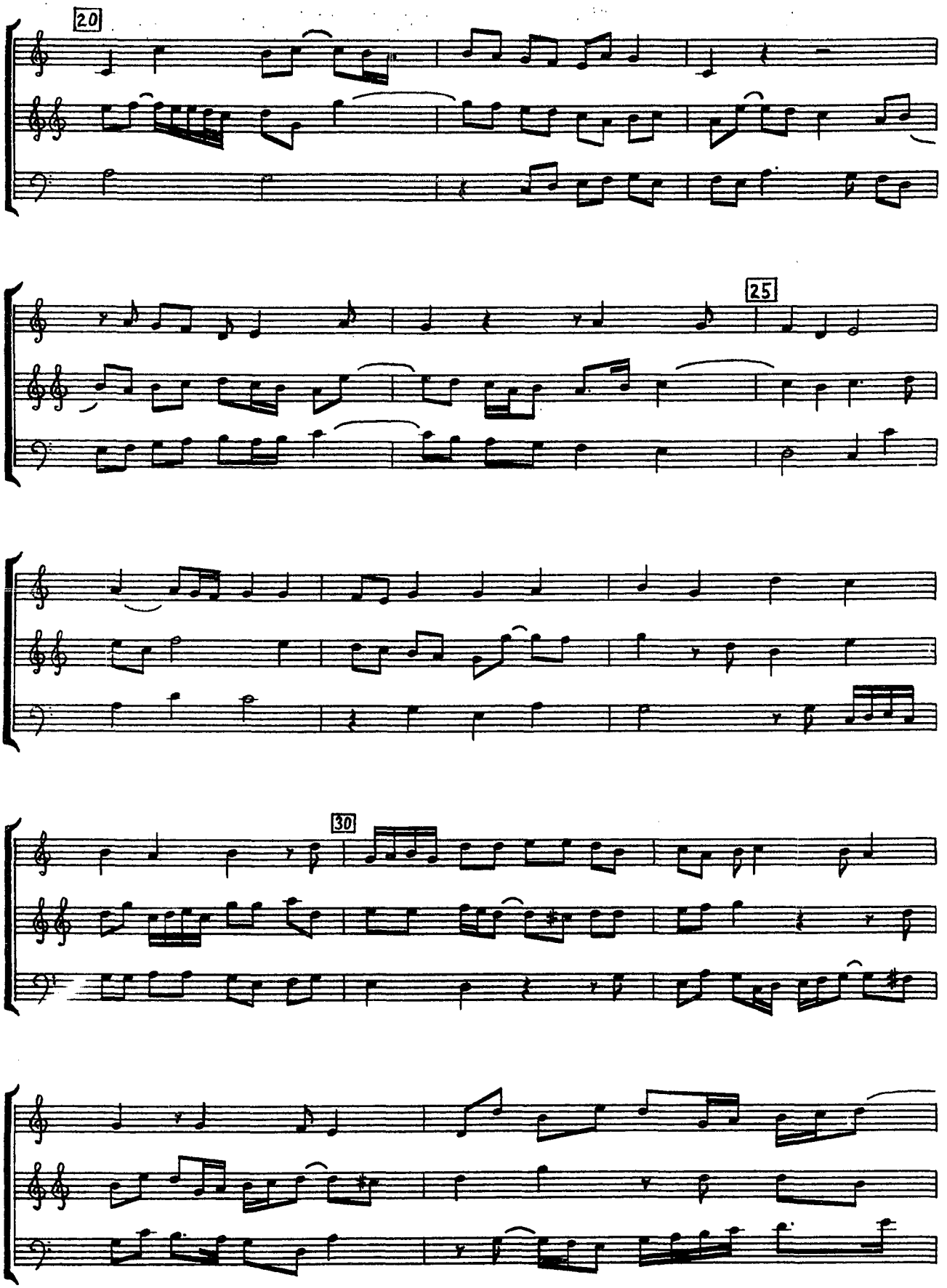
RICERCAR QUARTO

Antonio il Verso

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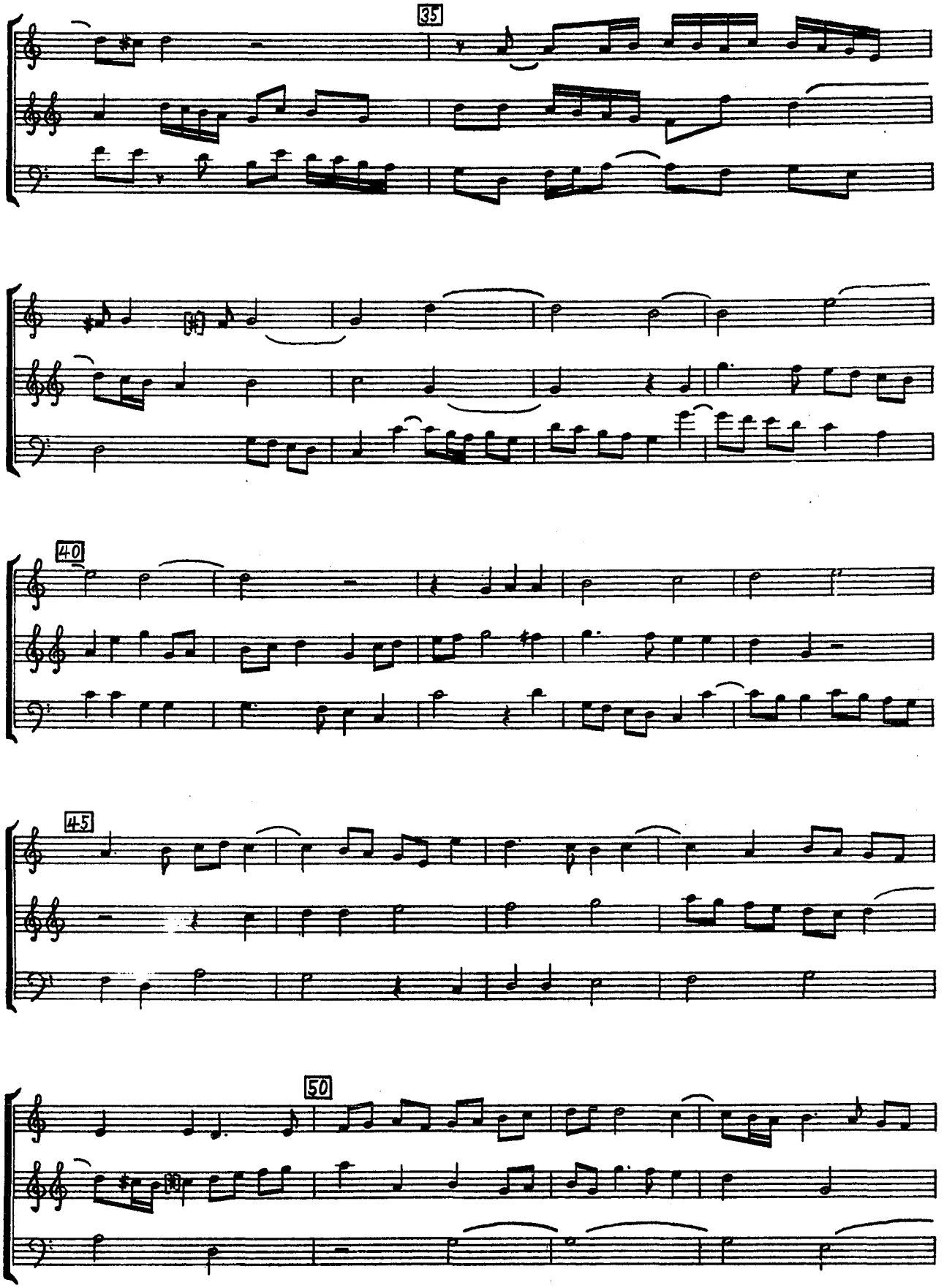
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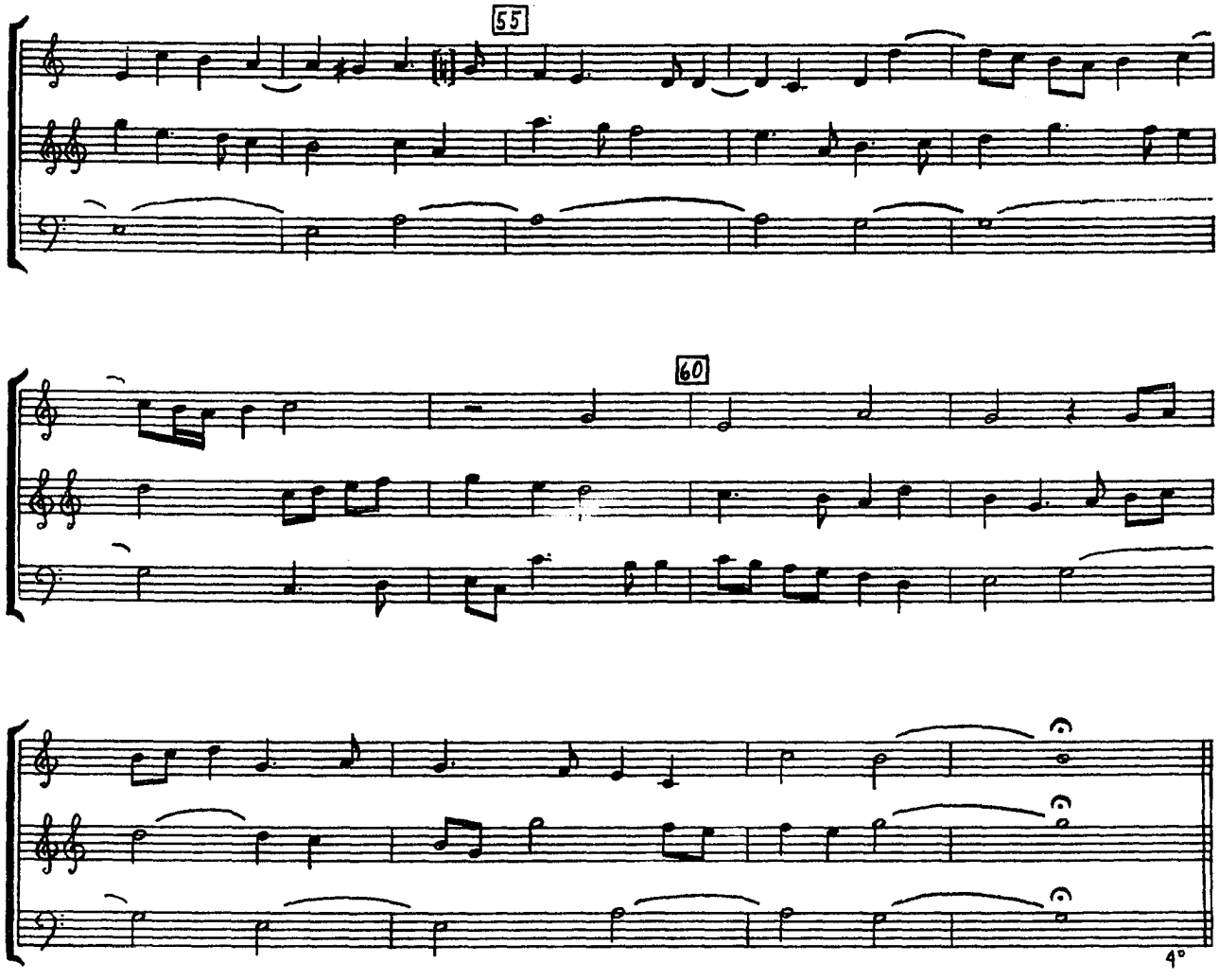
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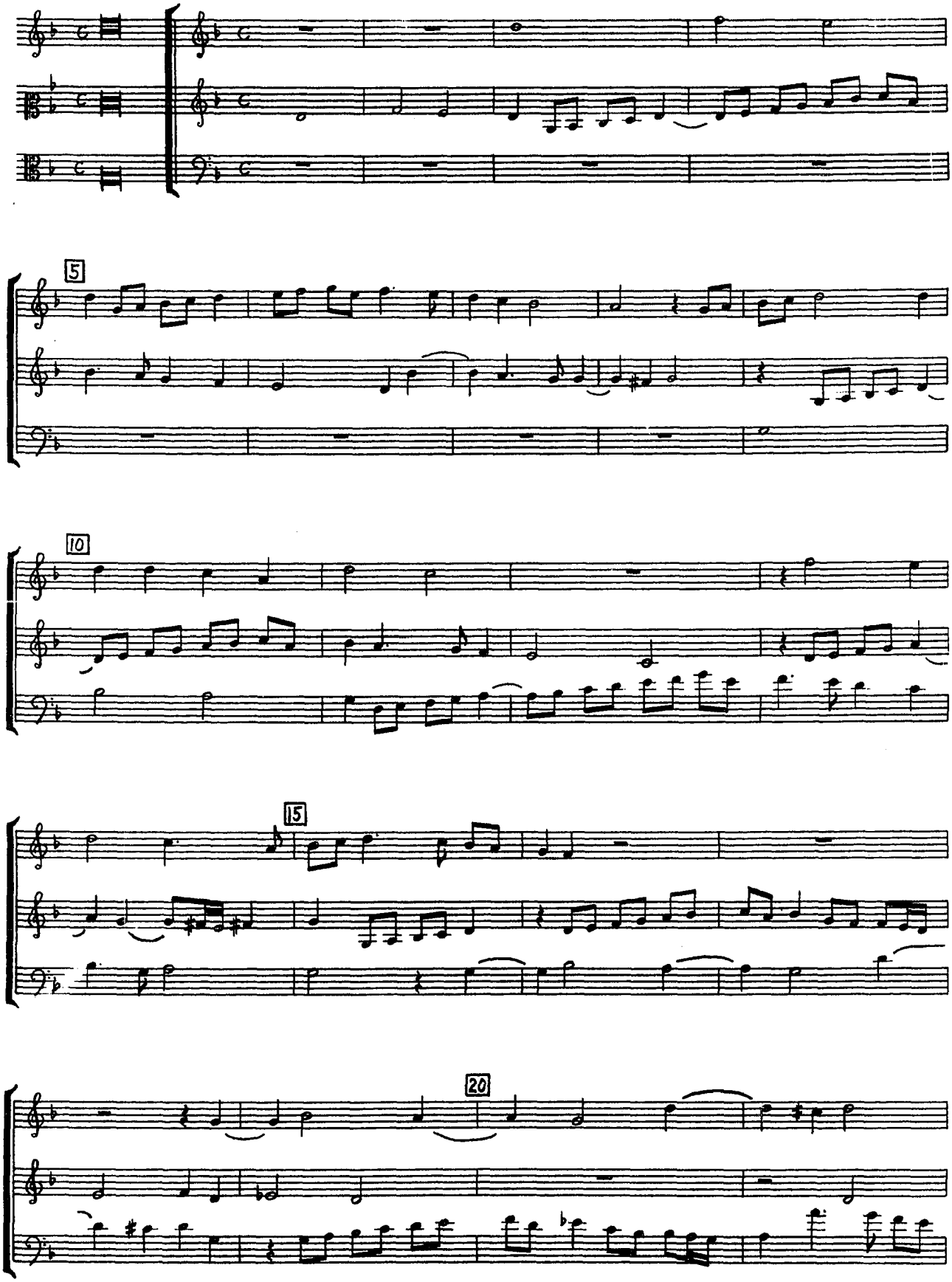
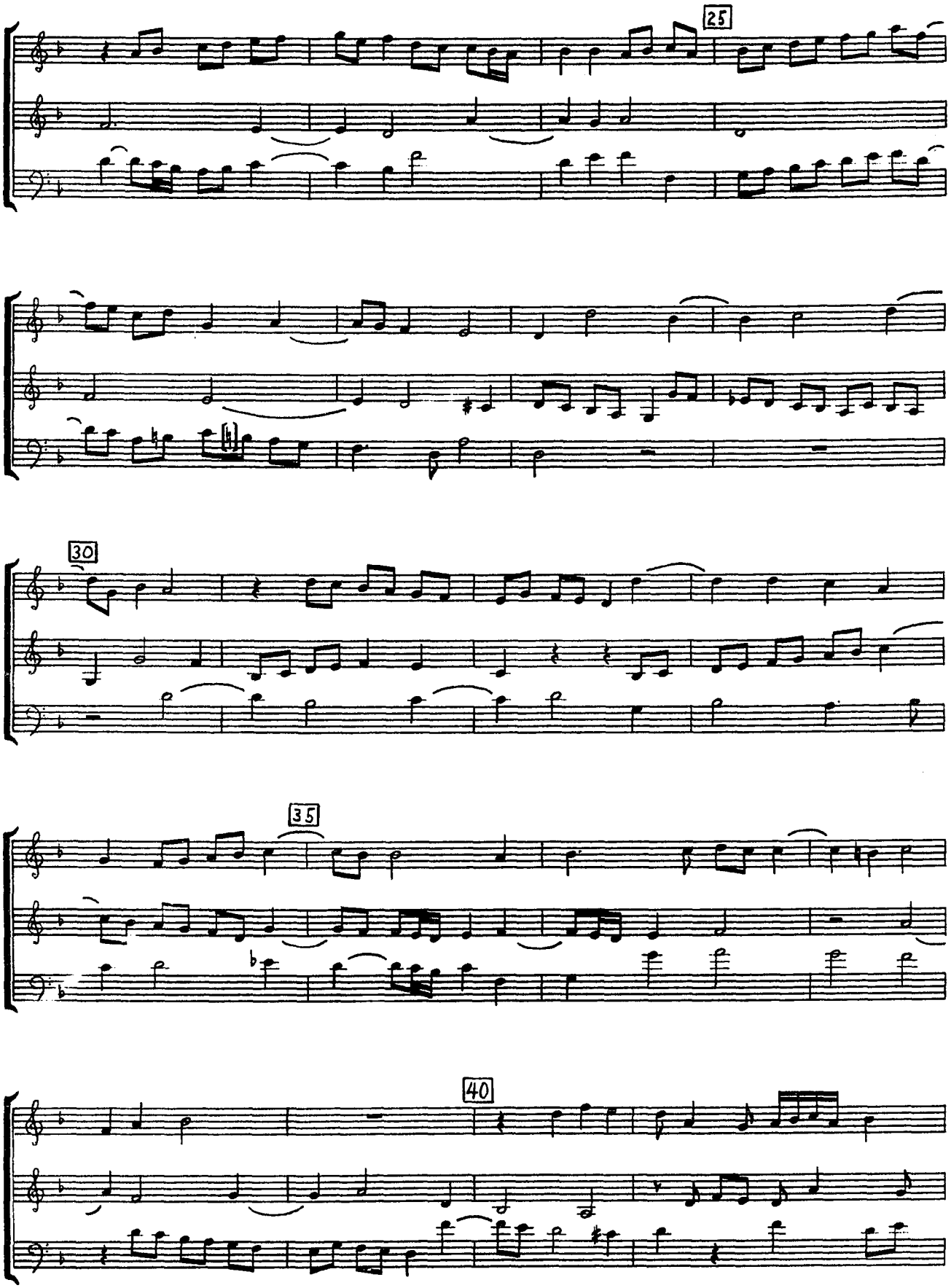
4°

RICERCAR QUINTO

Pietro Vinci

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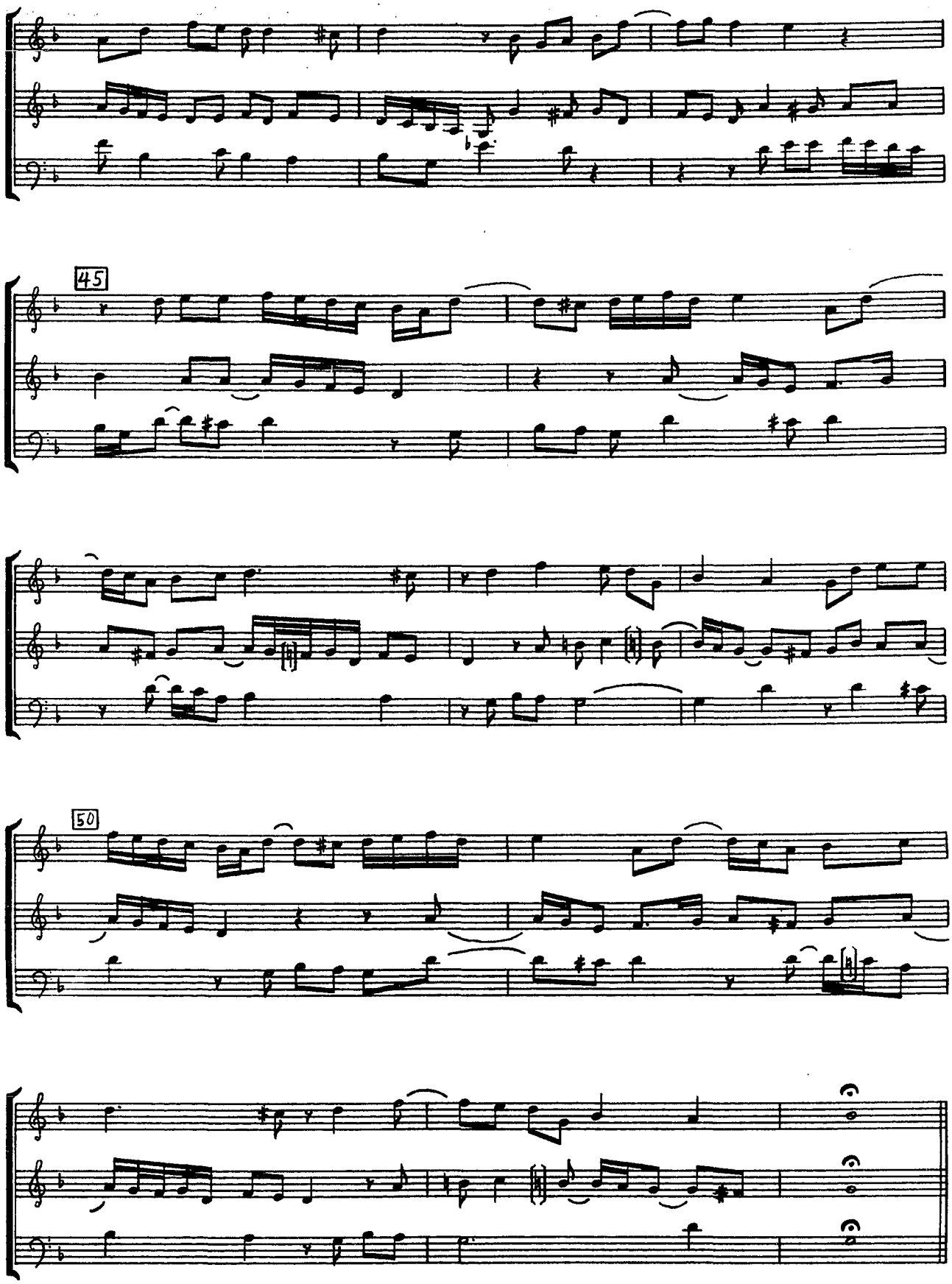
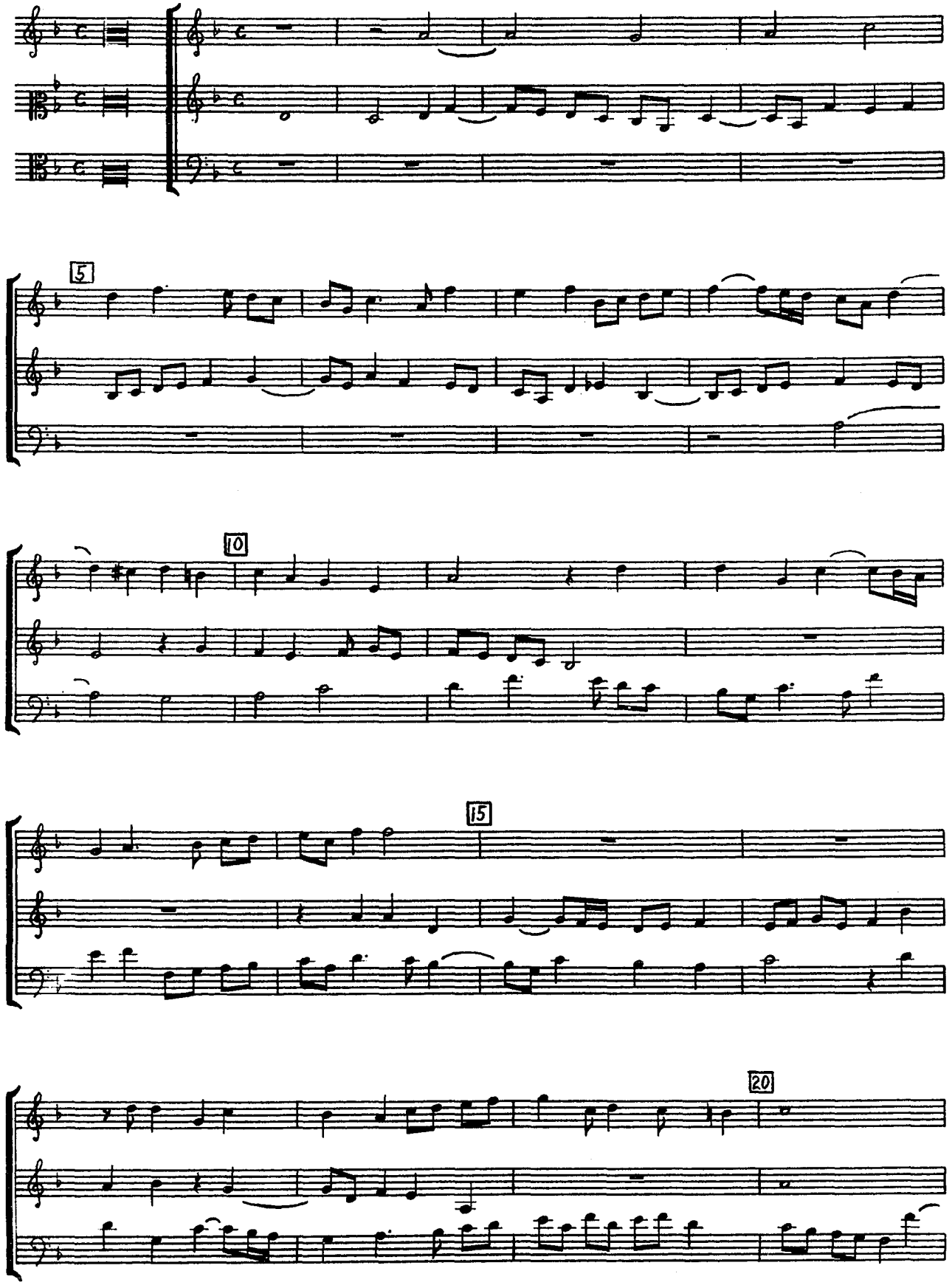
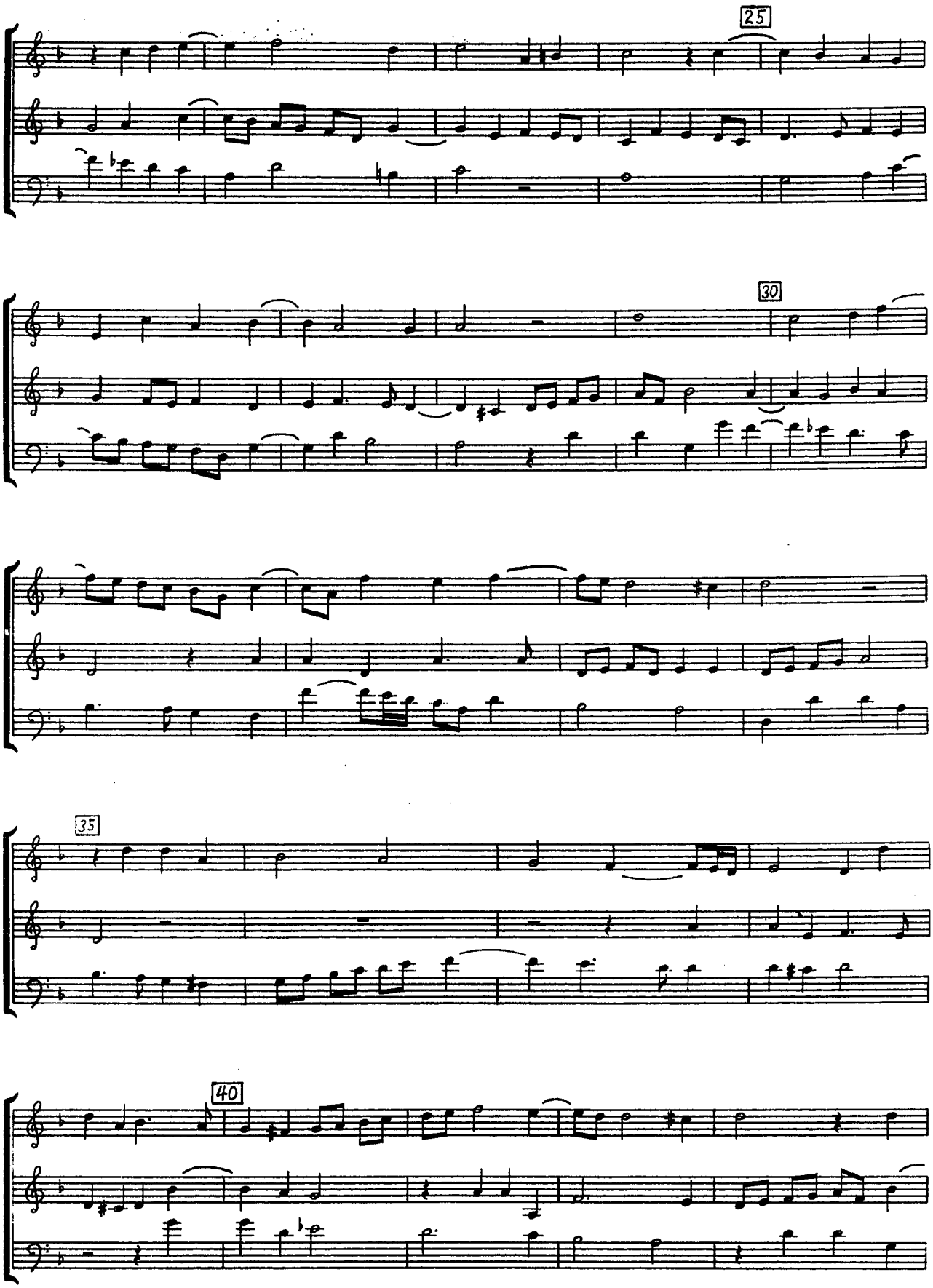


5°

RICERCAR SESTO

Pietro Vinci

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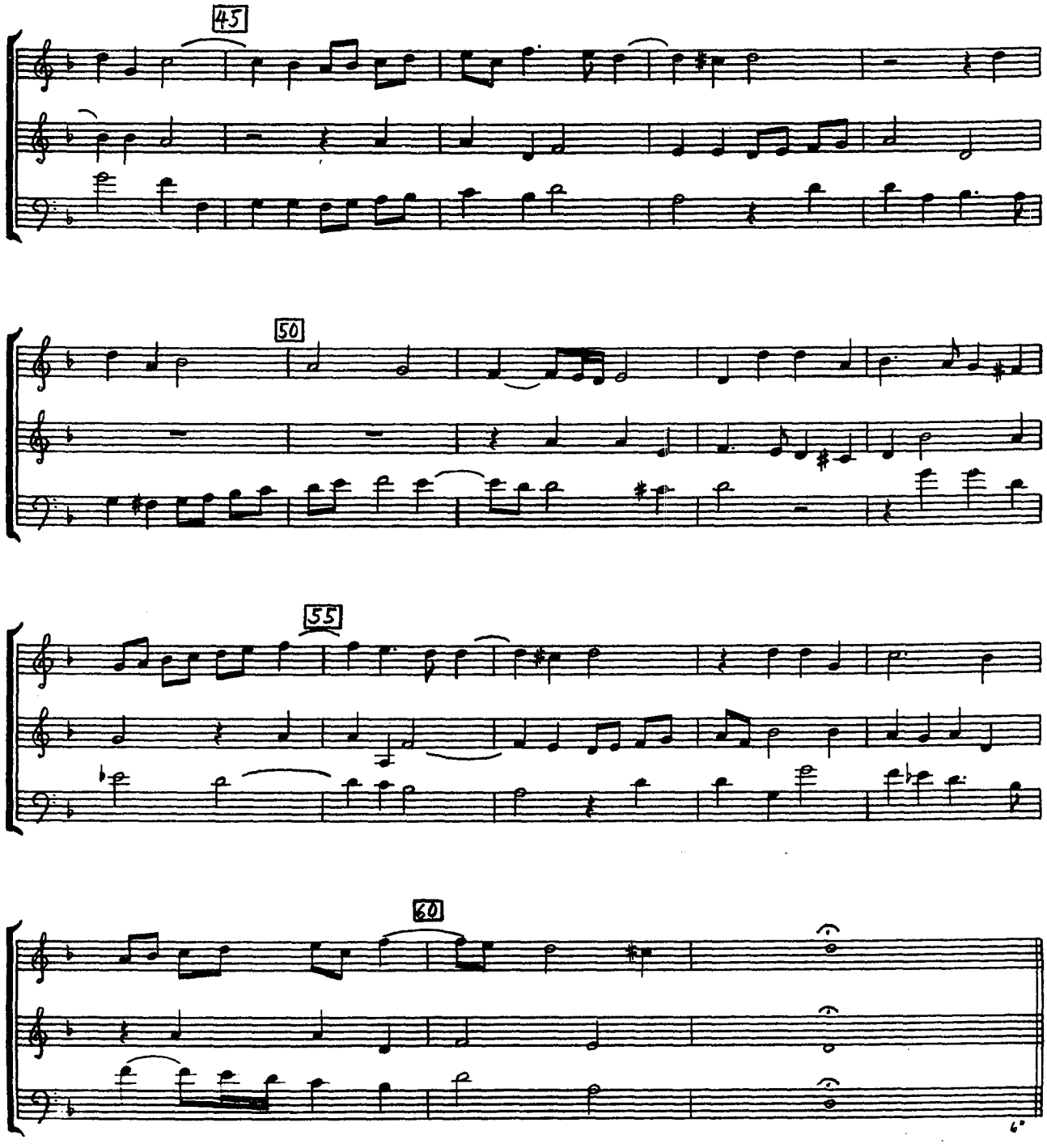
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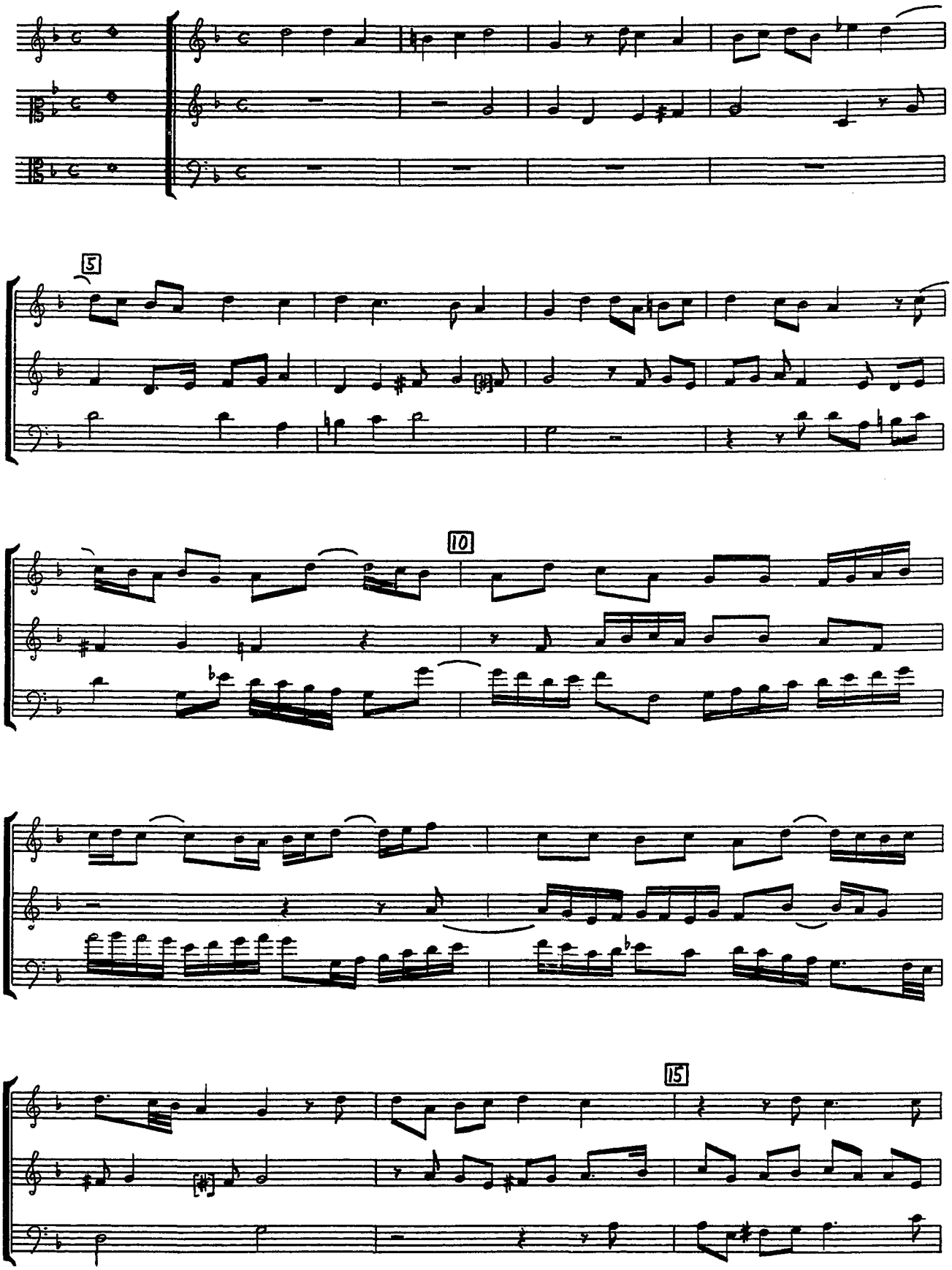
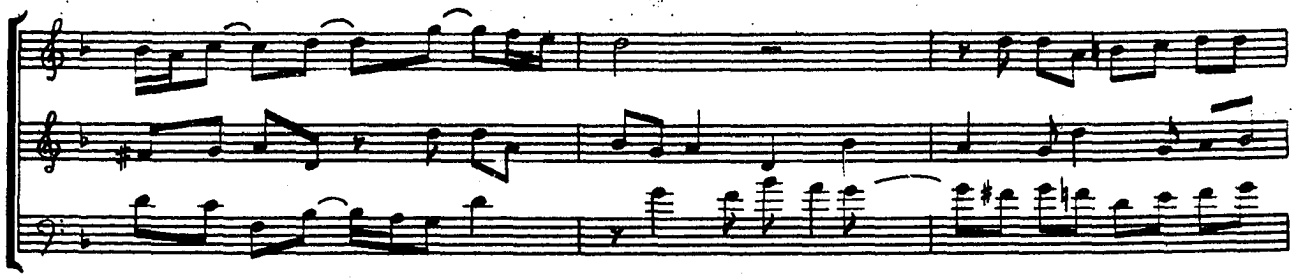
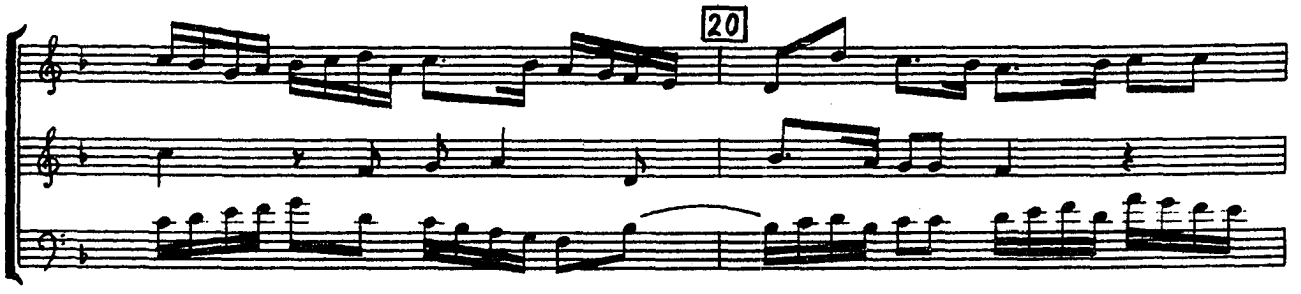
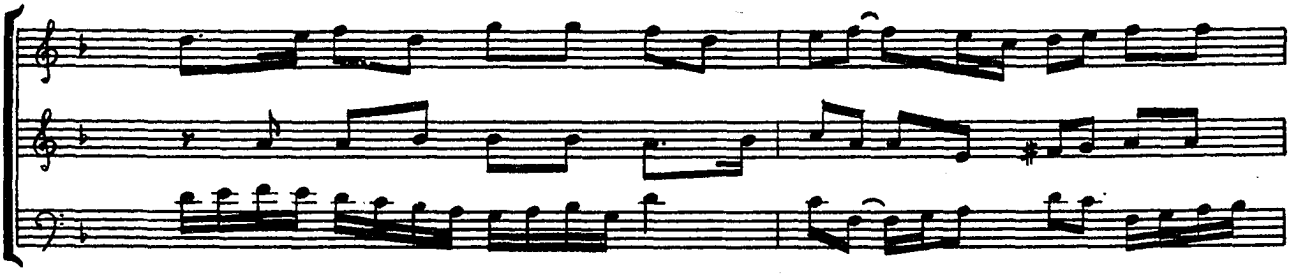
RICERCAR SETTIMO

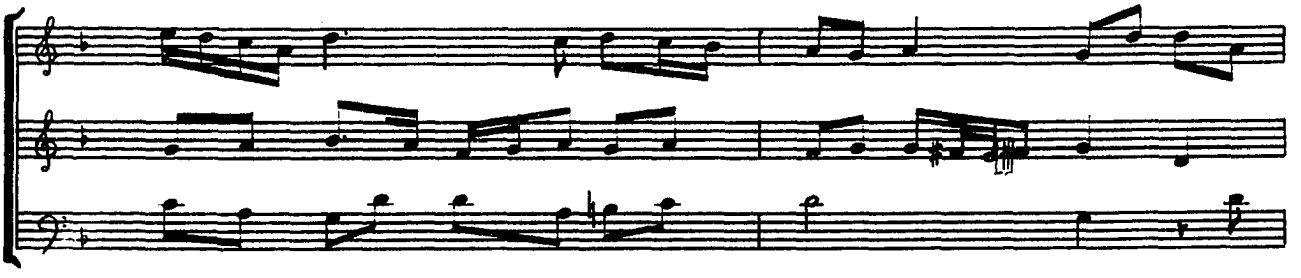
Antonio il Verso

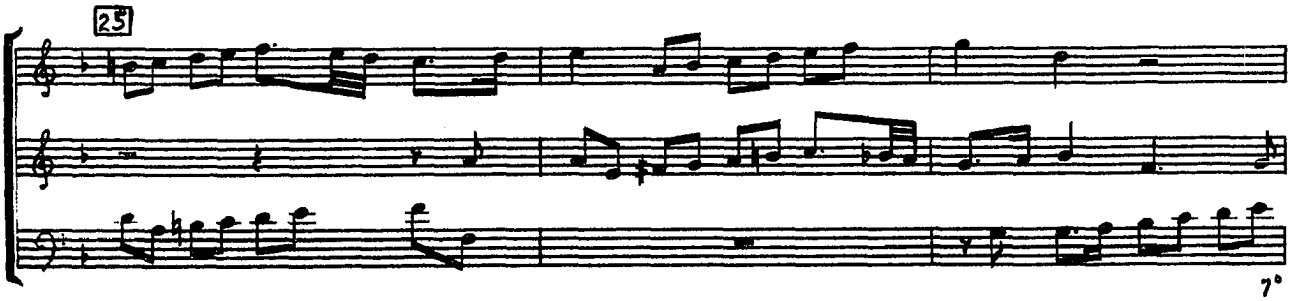












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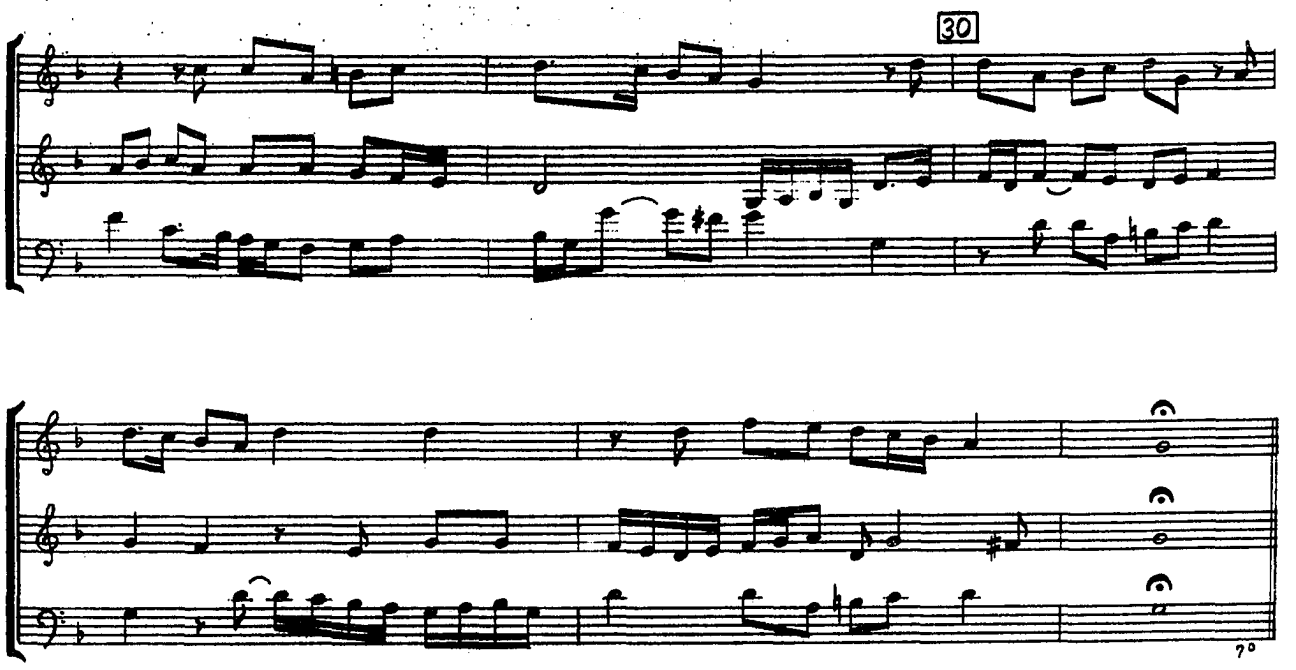
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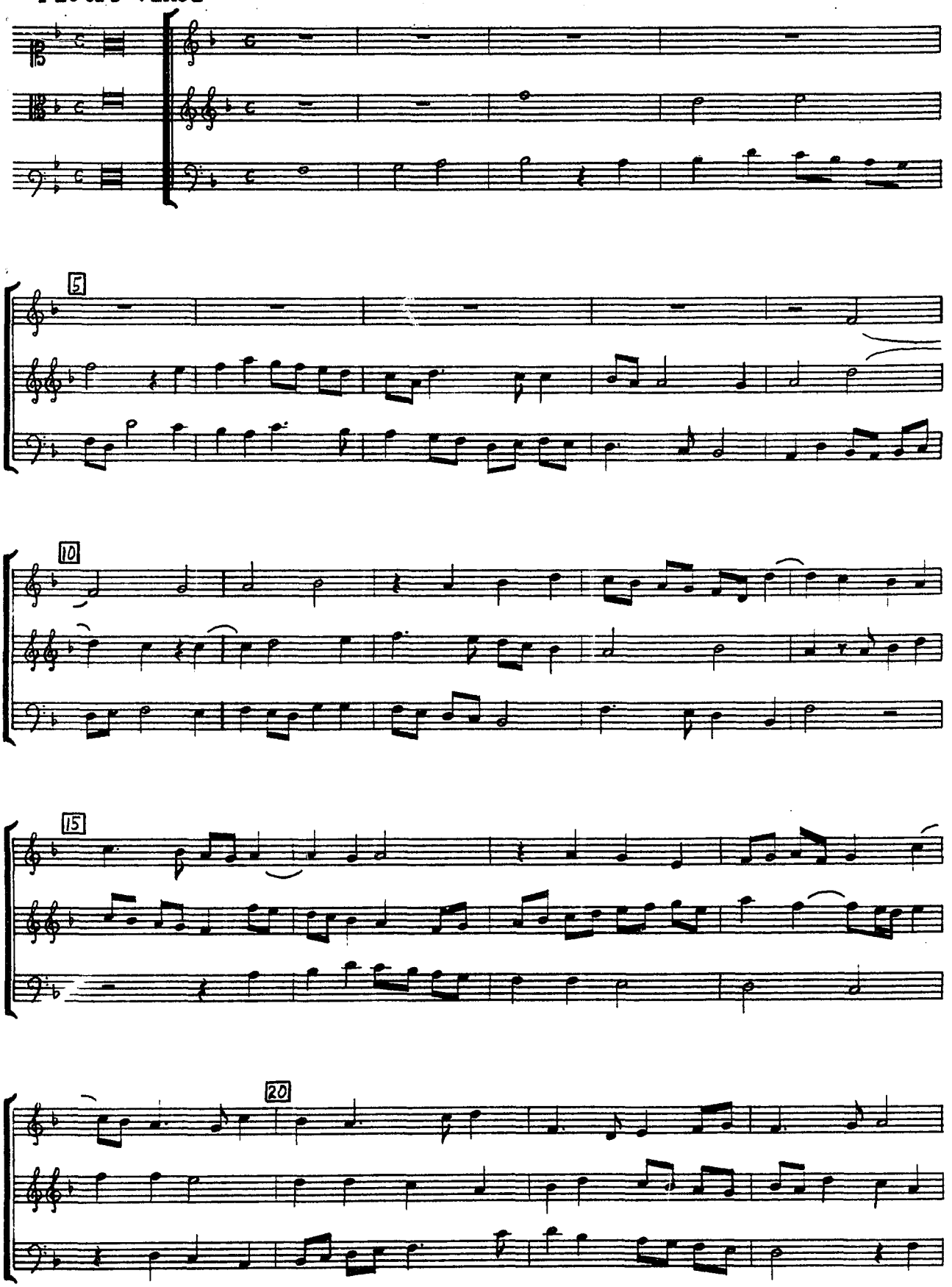
RICERCAR OTTAVO

Pietro Vinci



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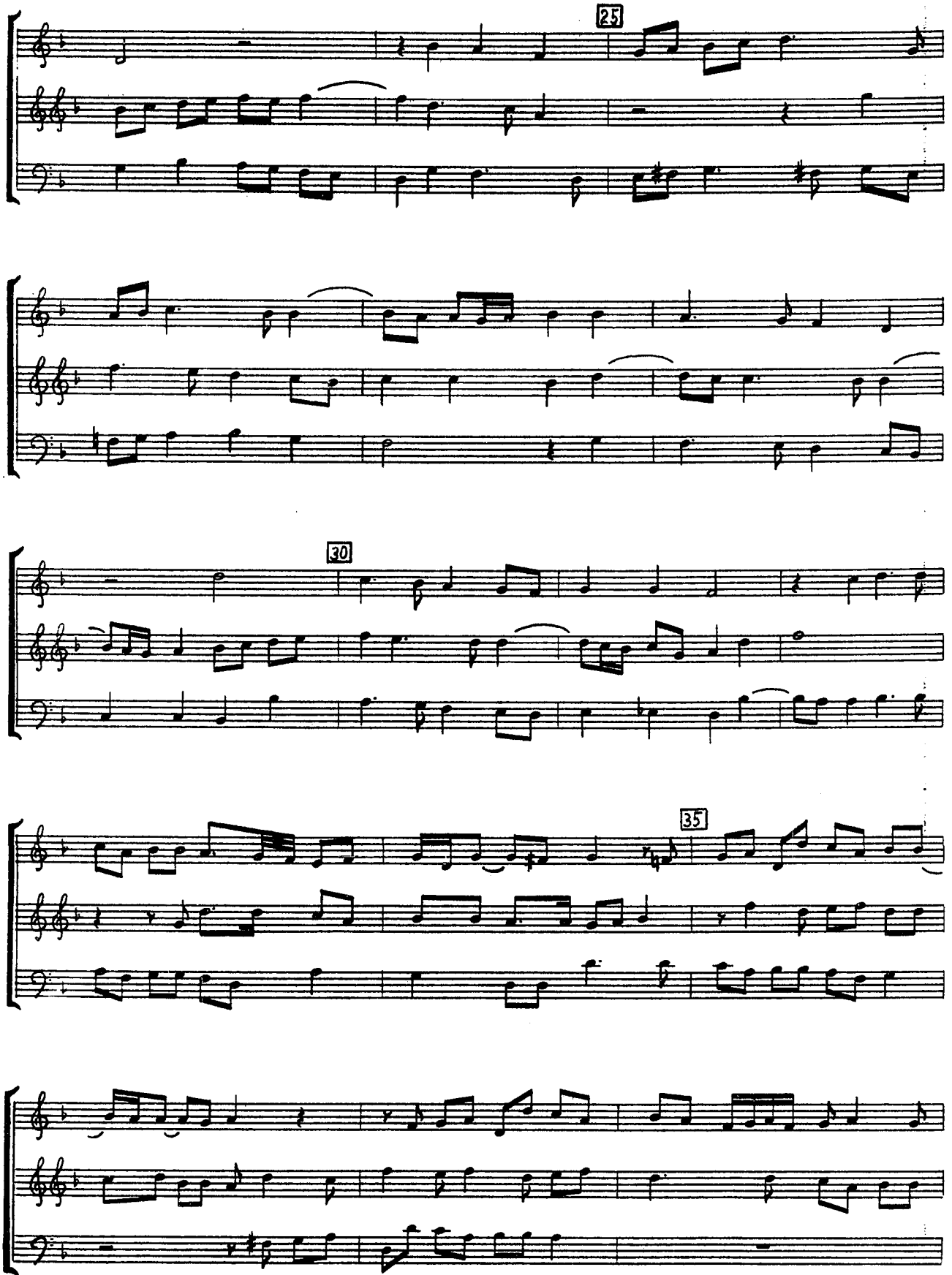
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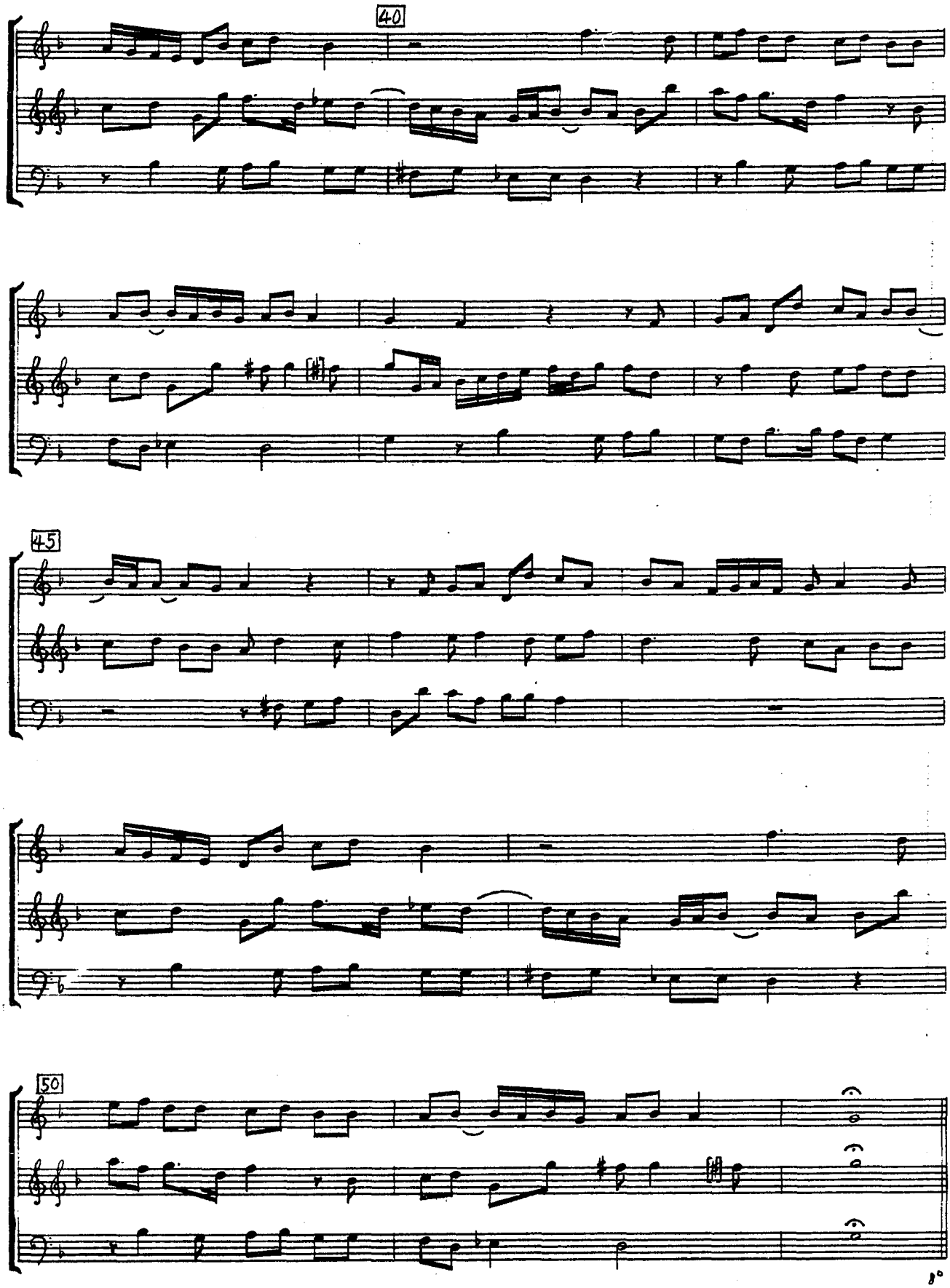
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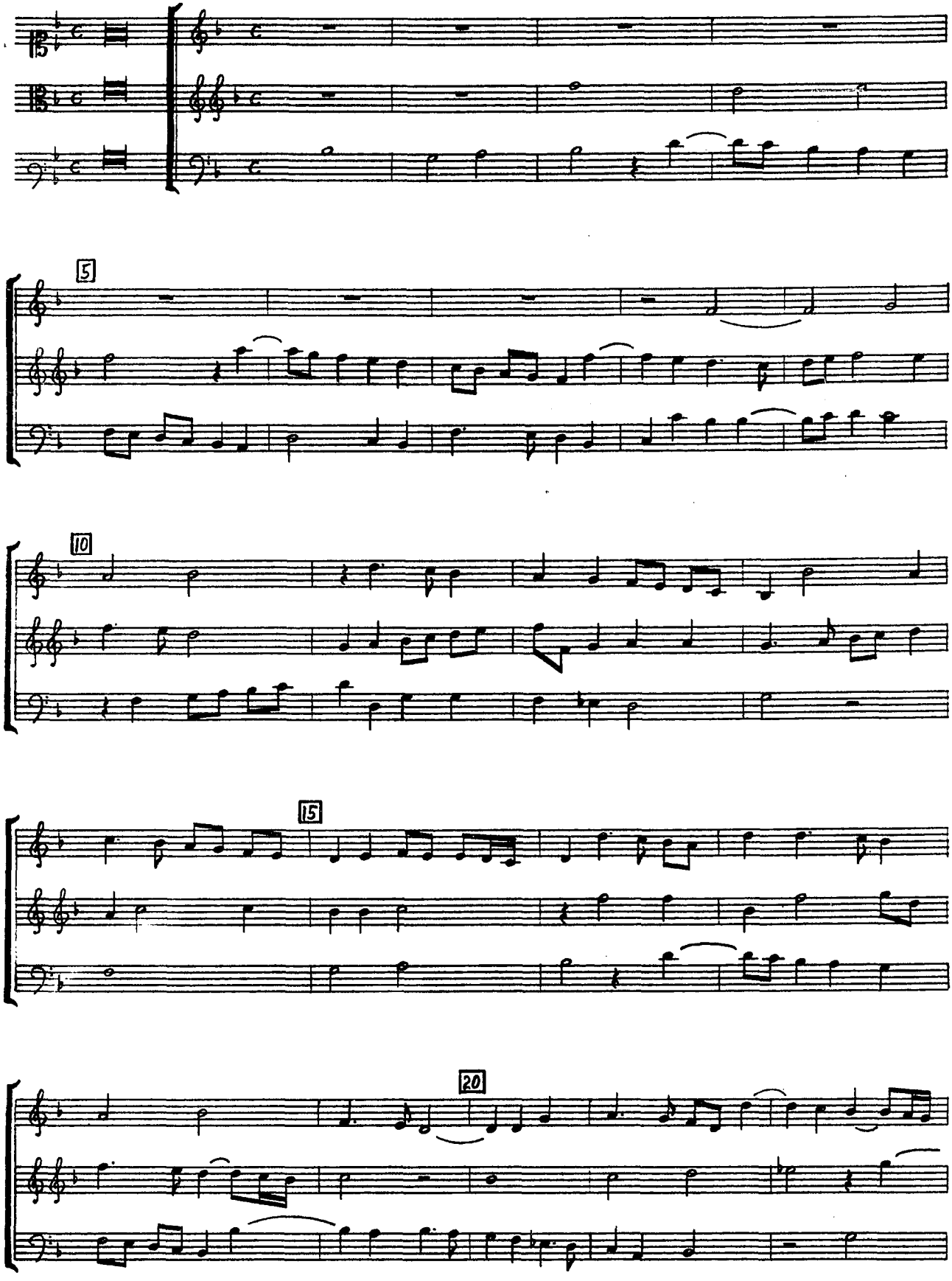
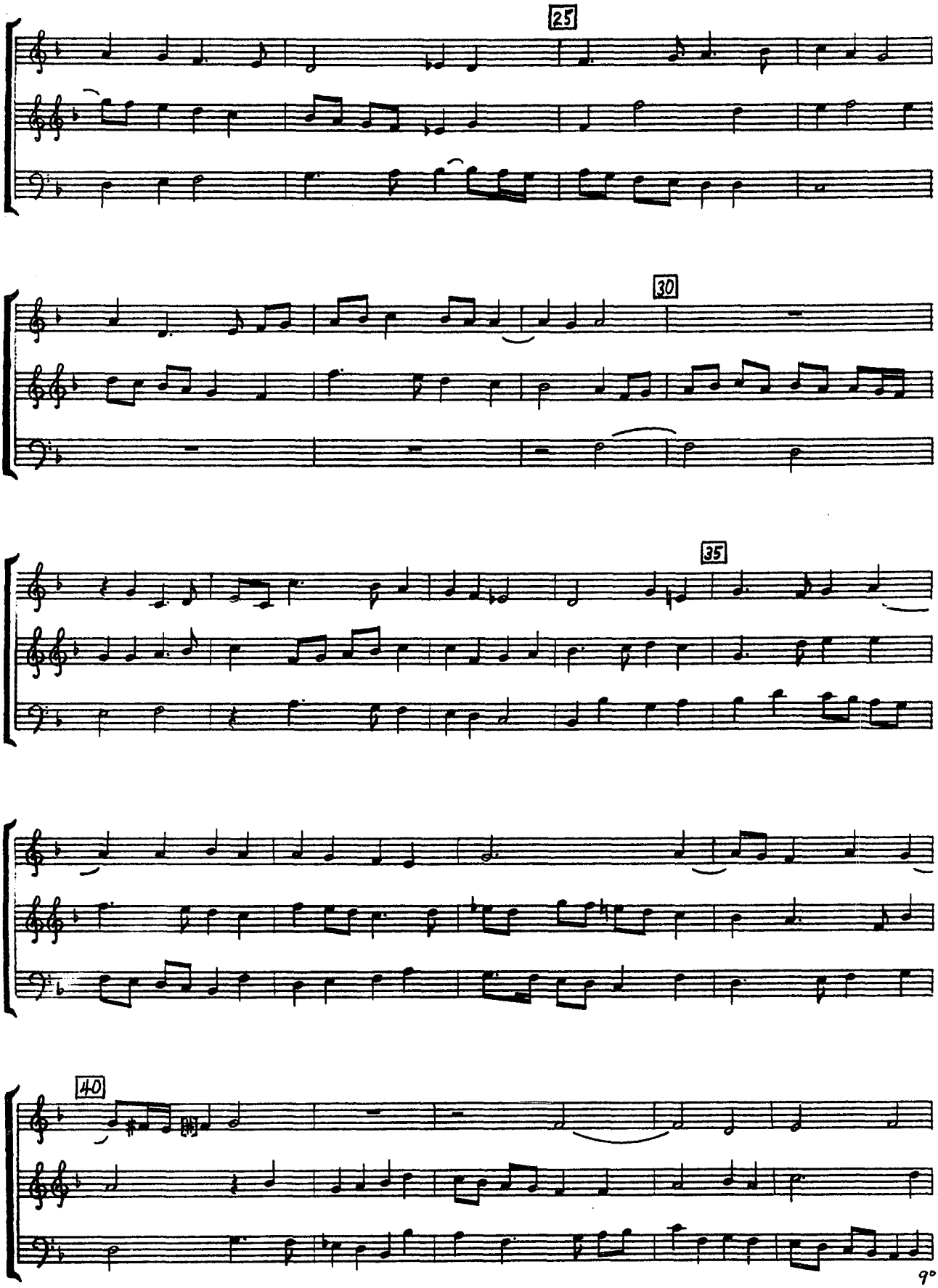
RICERCAR NONO

Antonio il Verso





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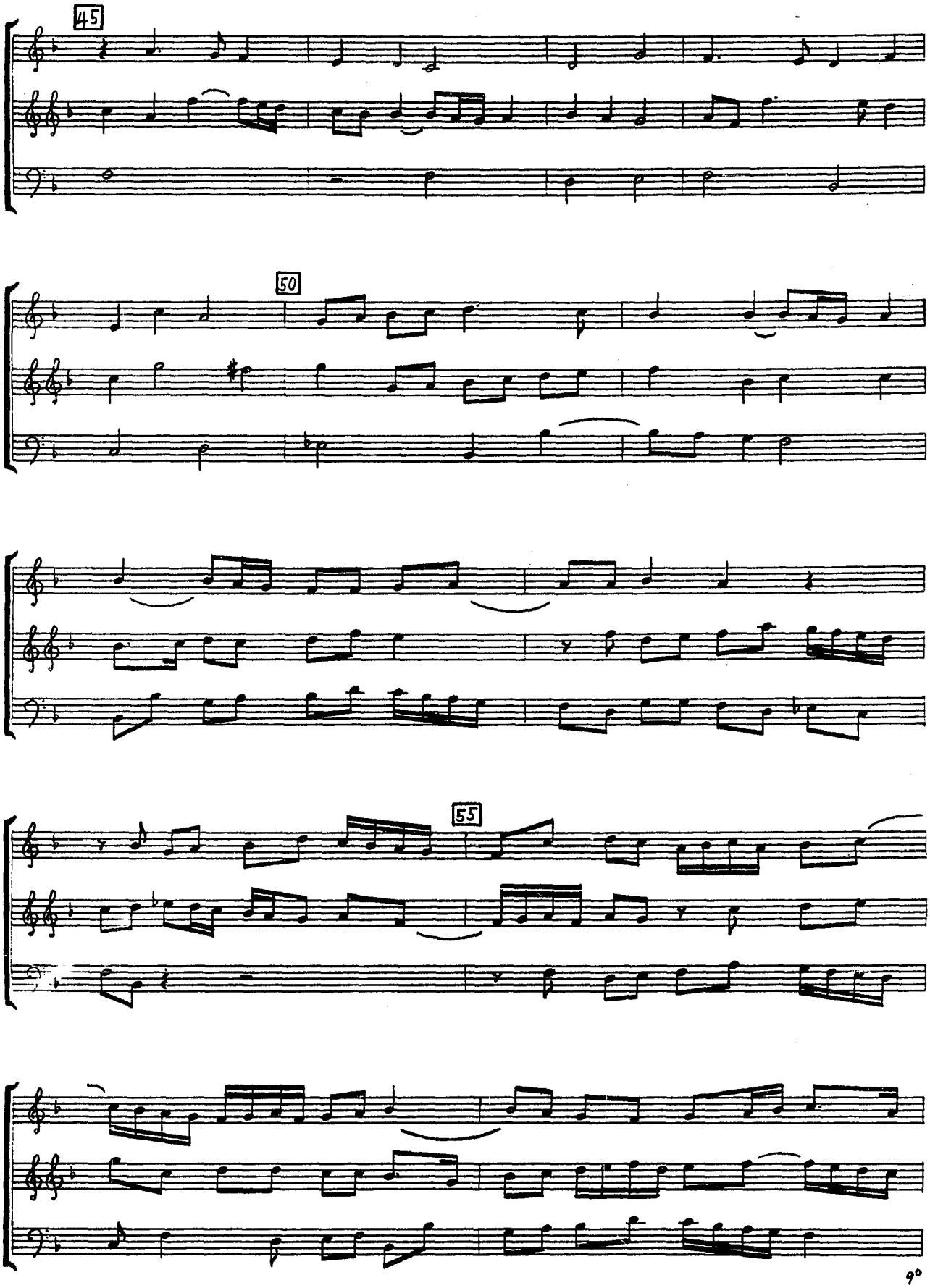
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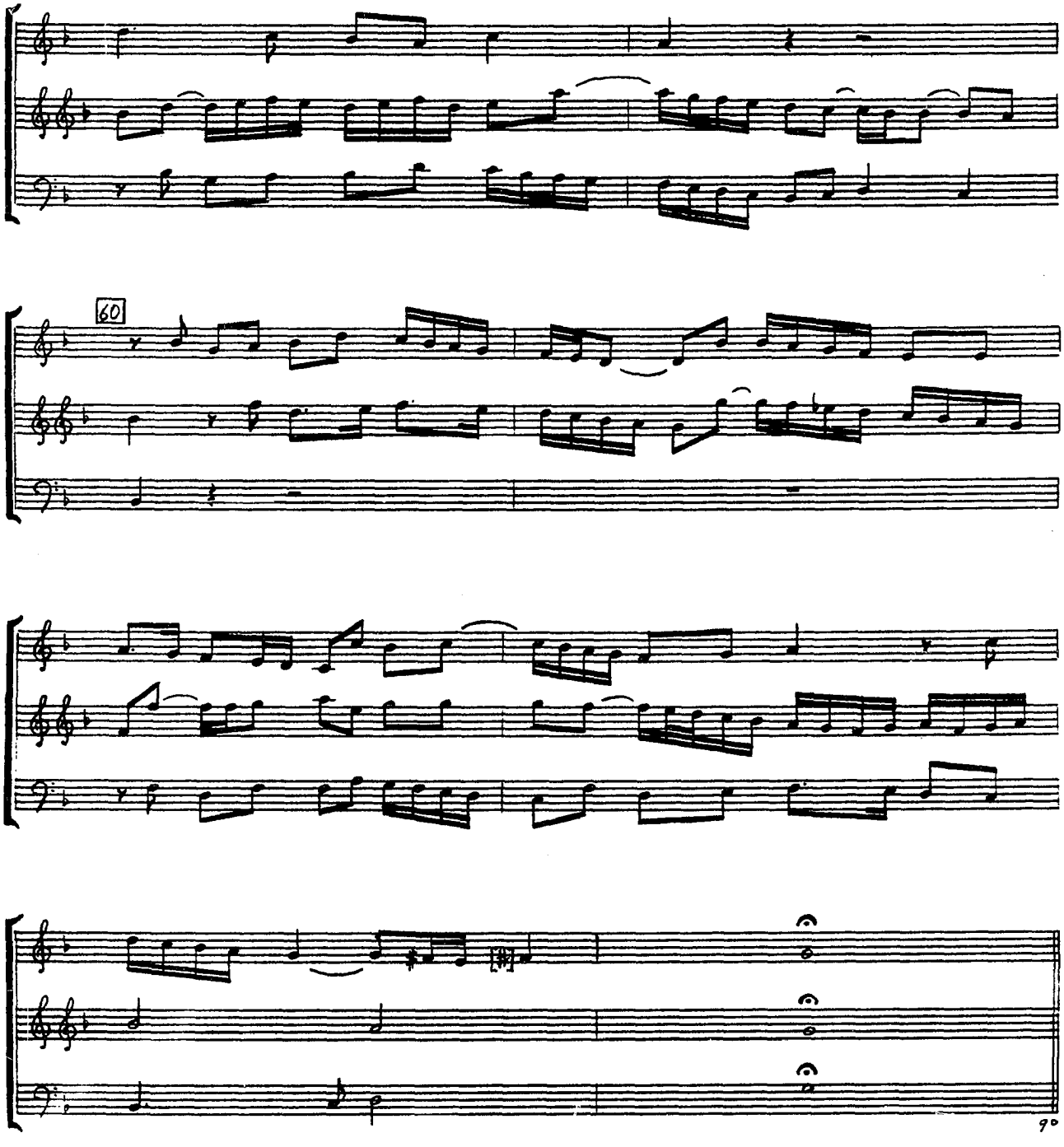
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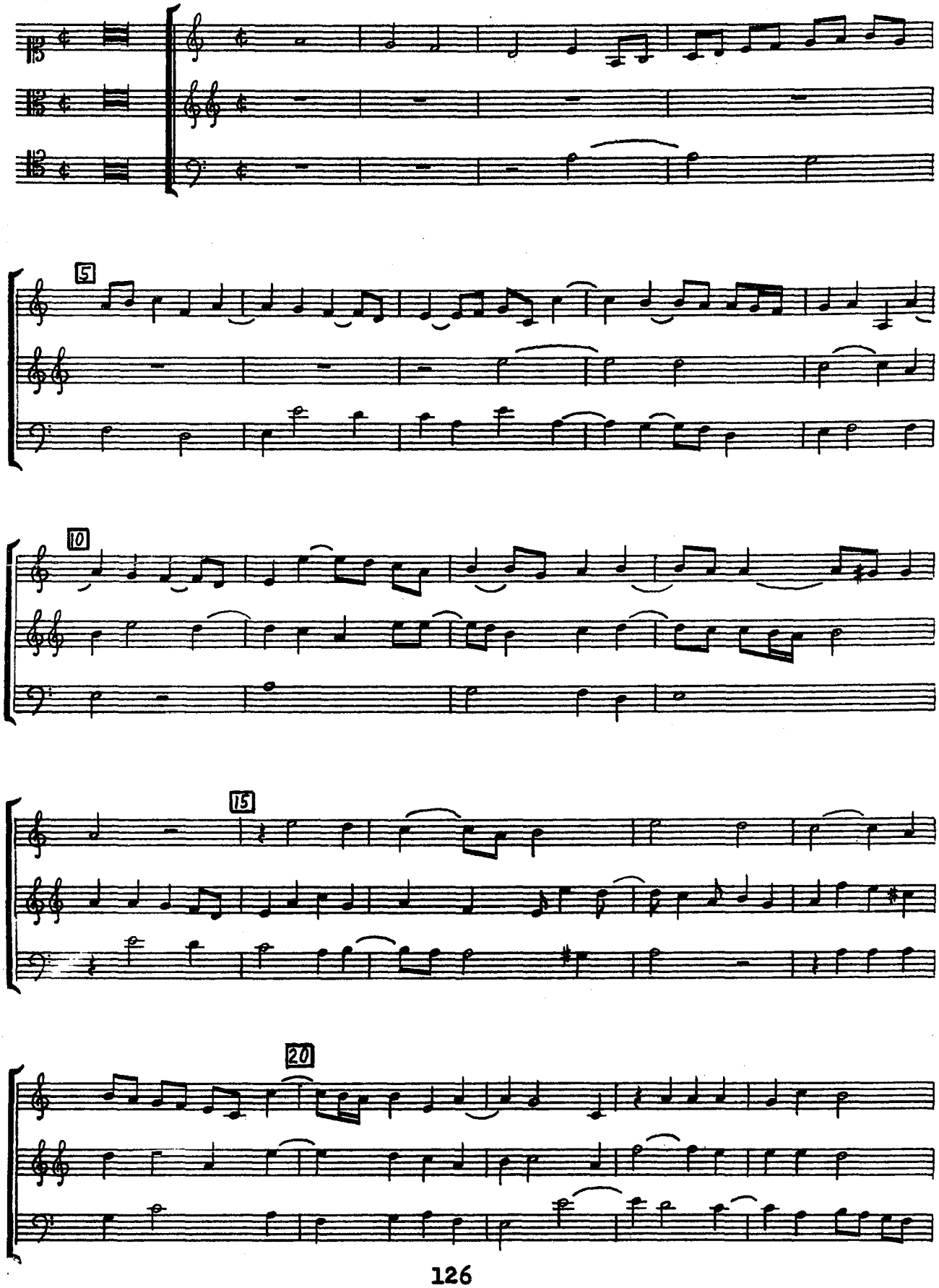
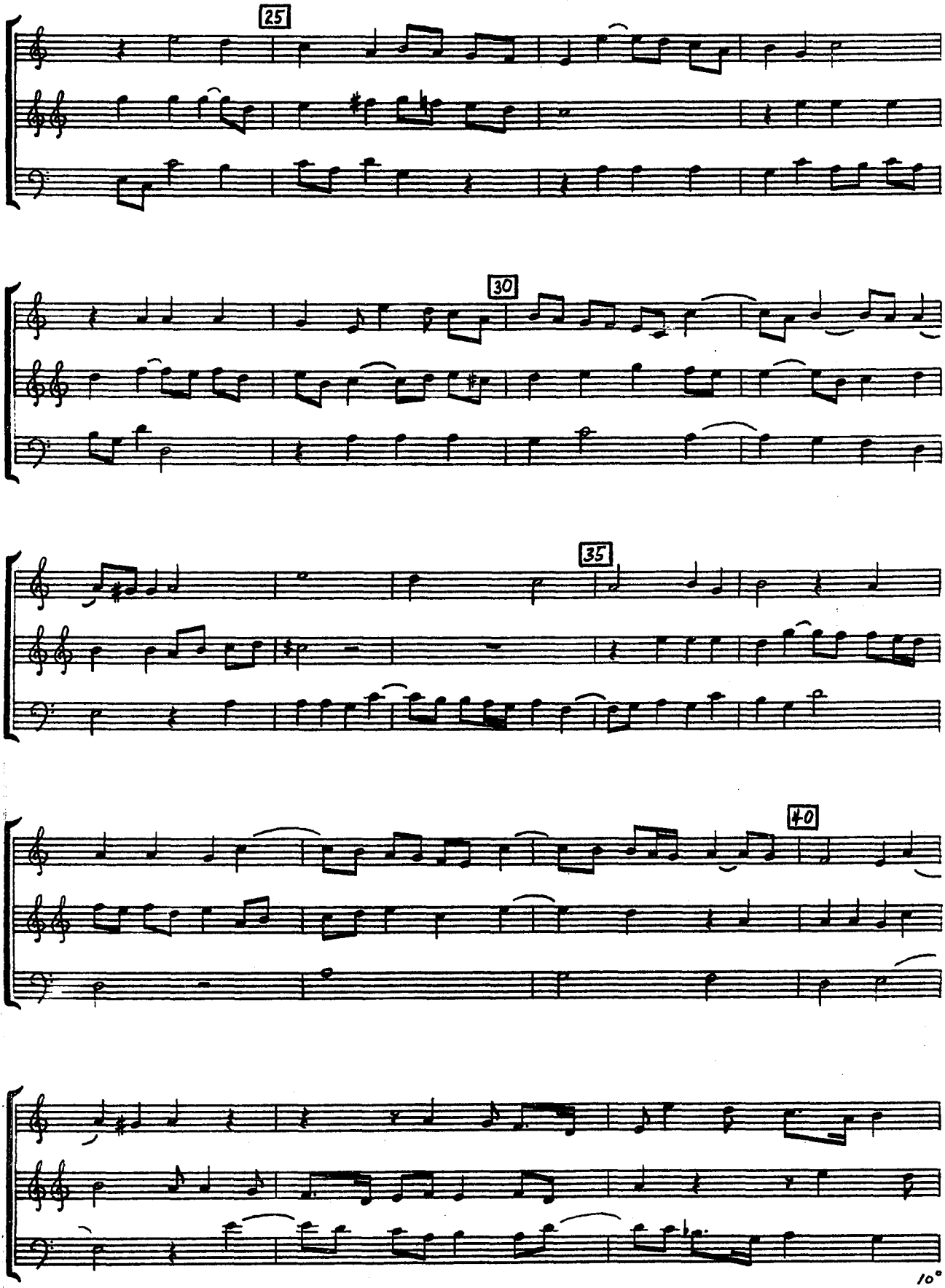
RICERCAR DECIMO

Pietro Vinci

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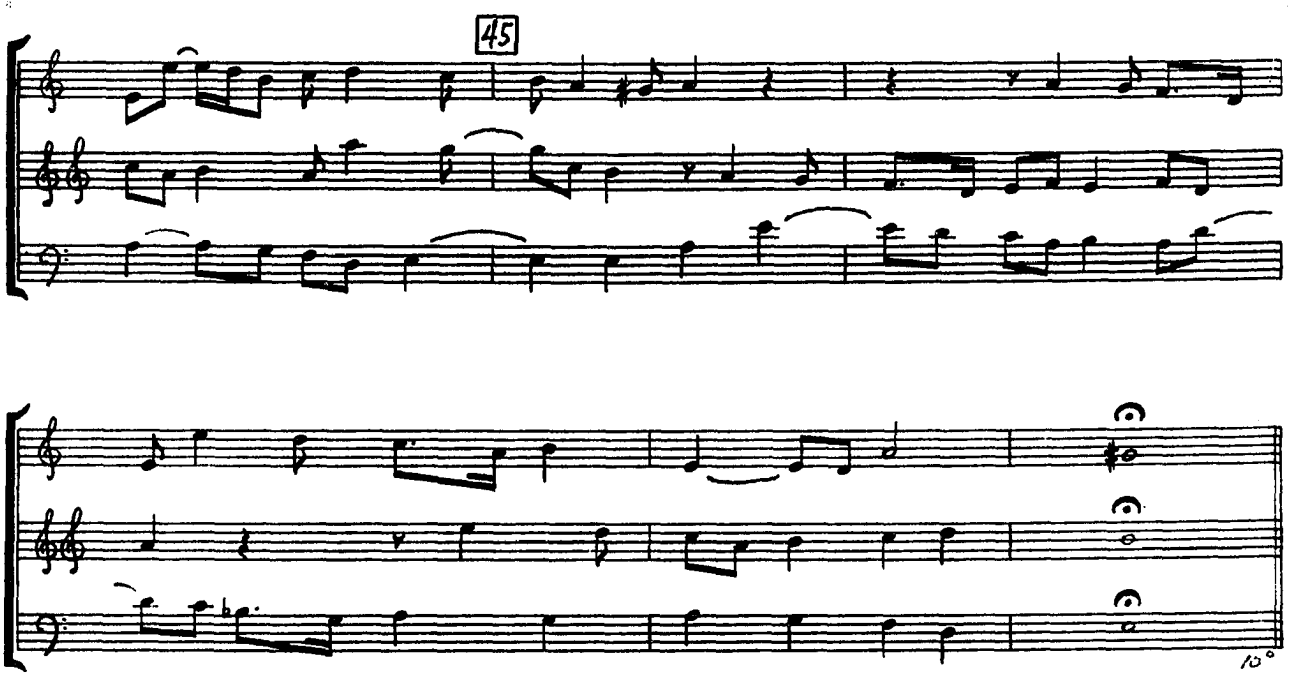
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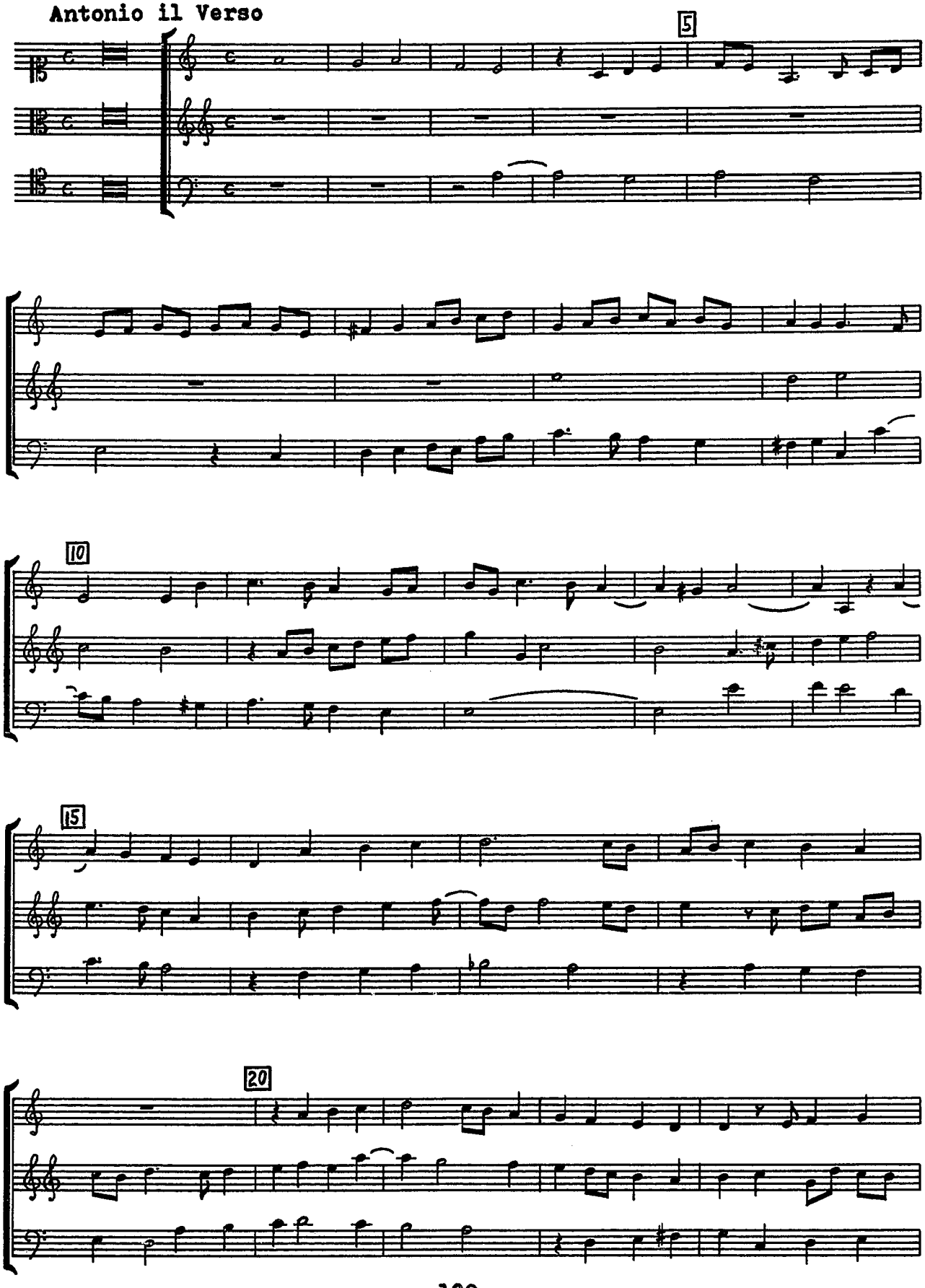
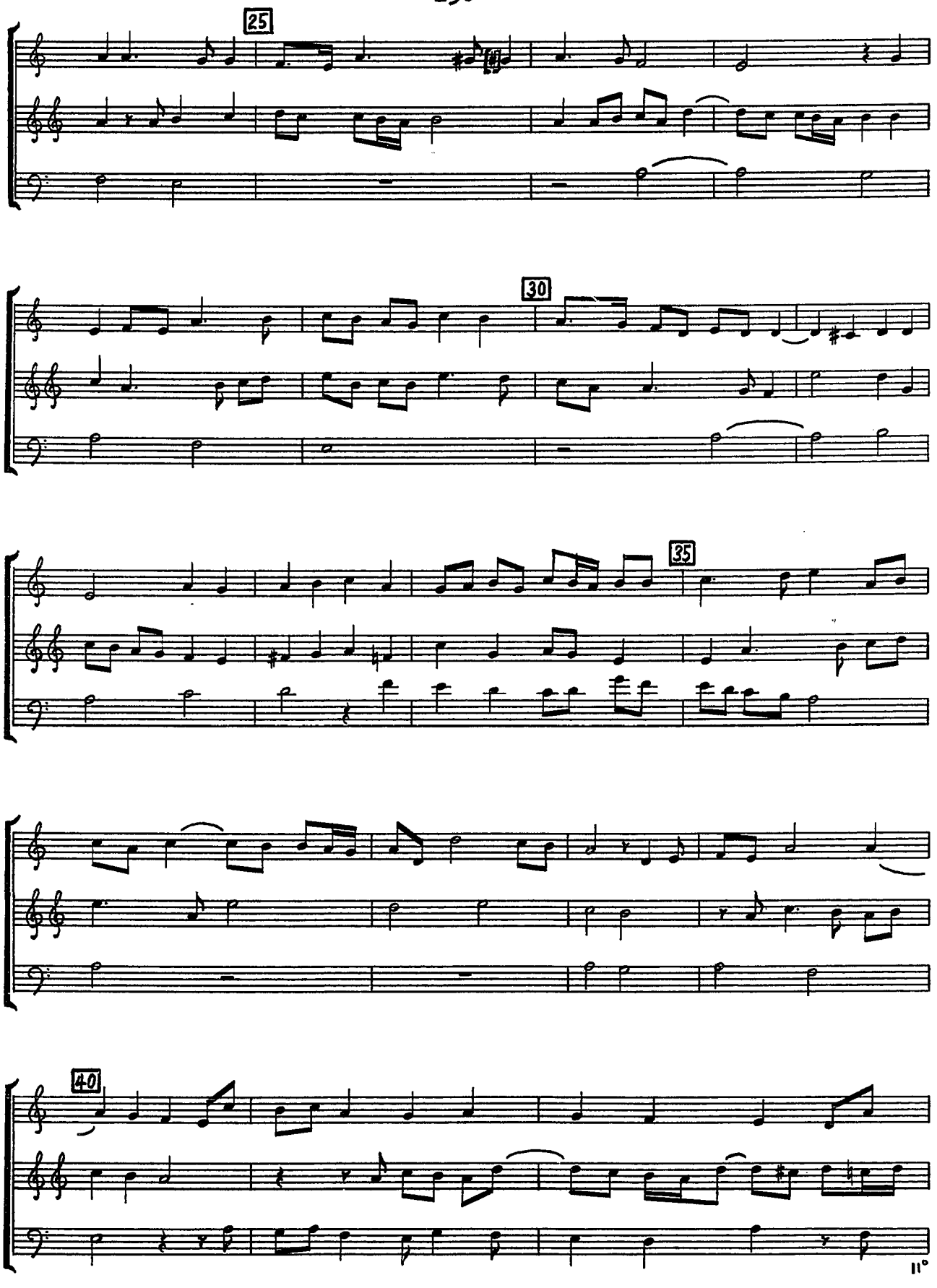
RICERCAR UNDECIMO

Antonio il Verso

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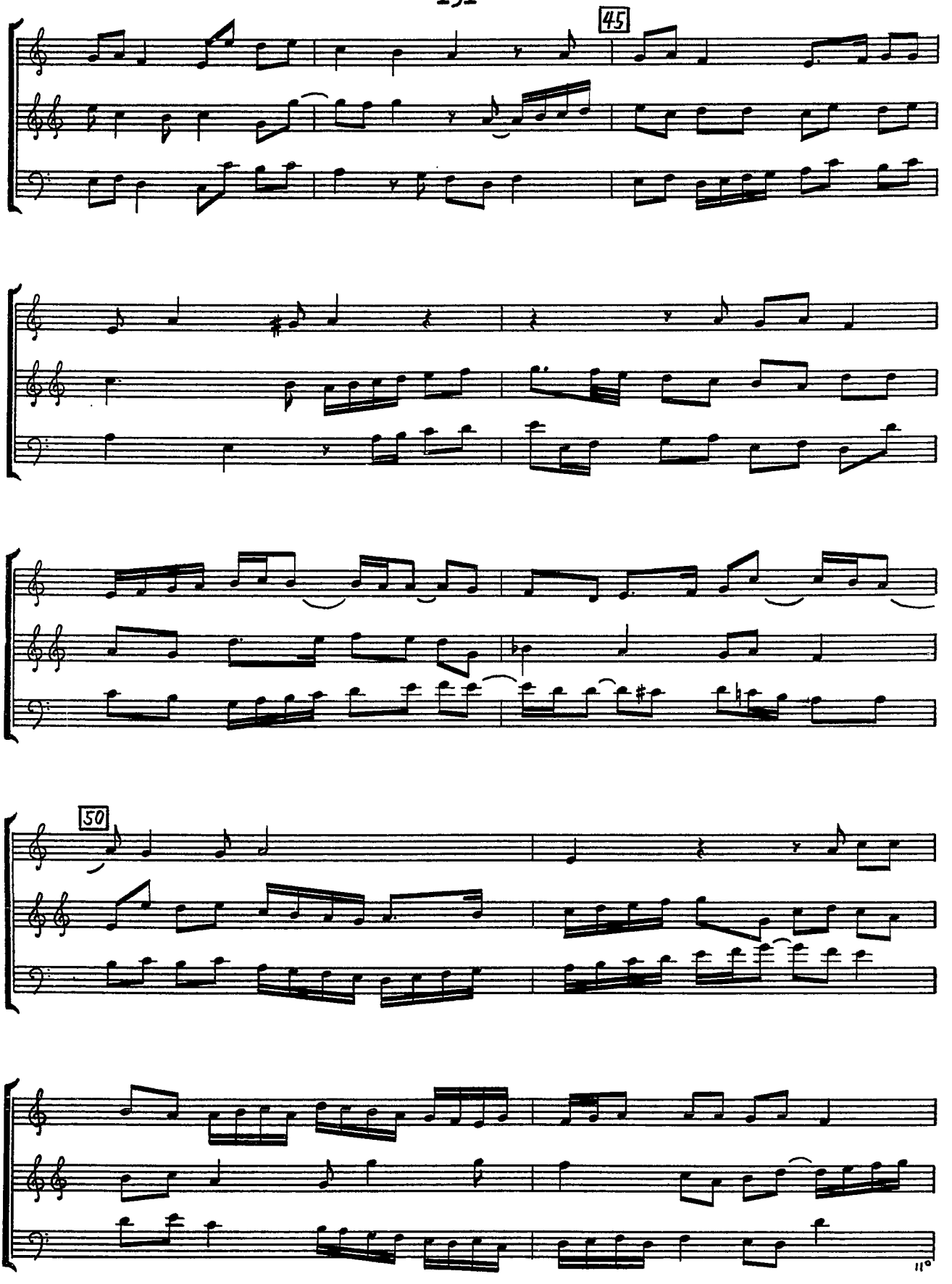
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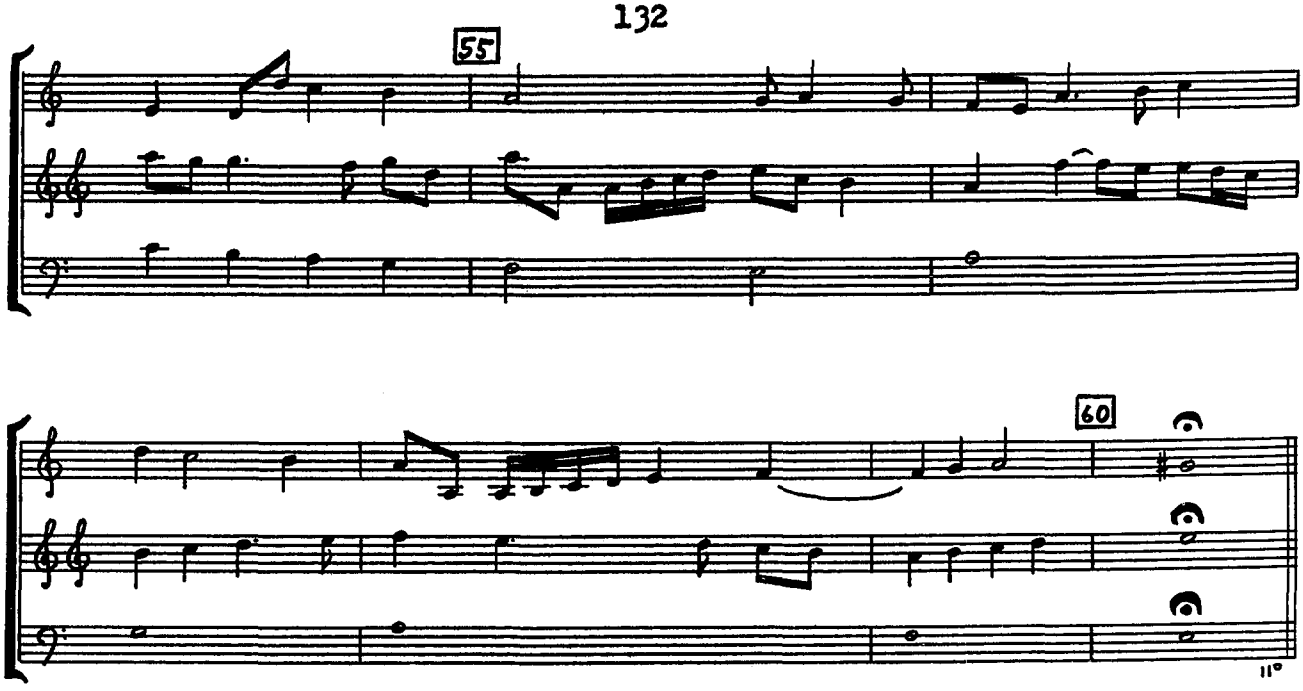
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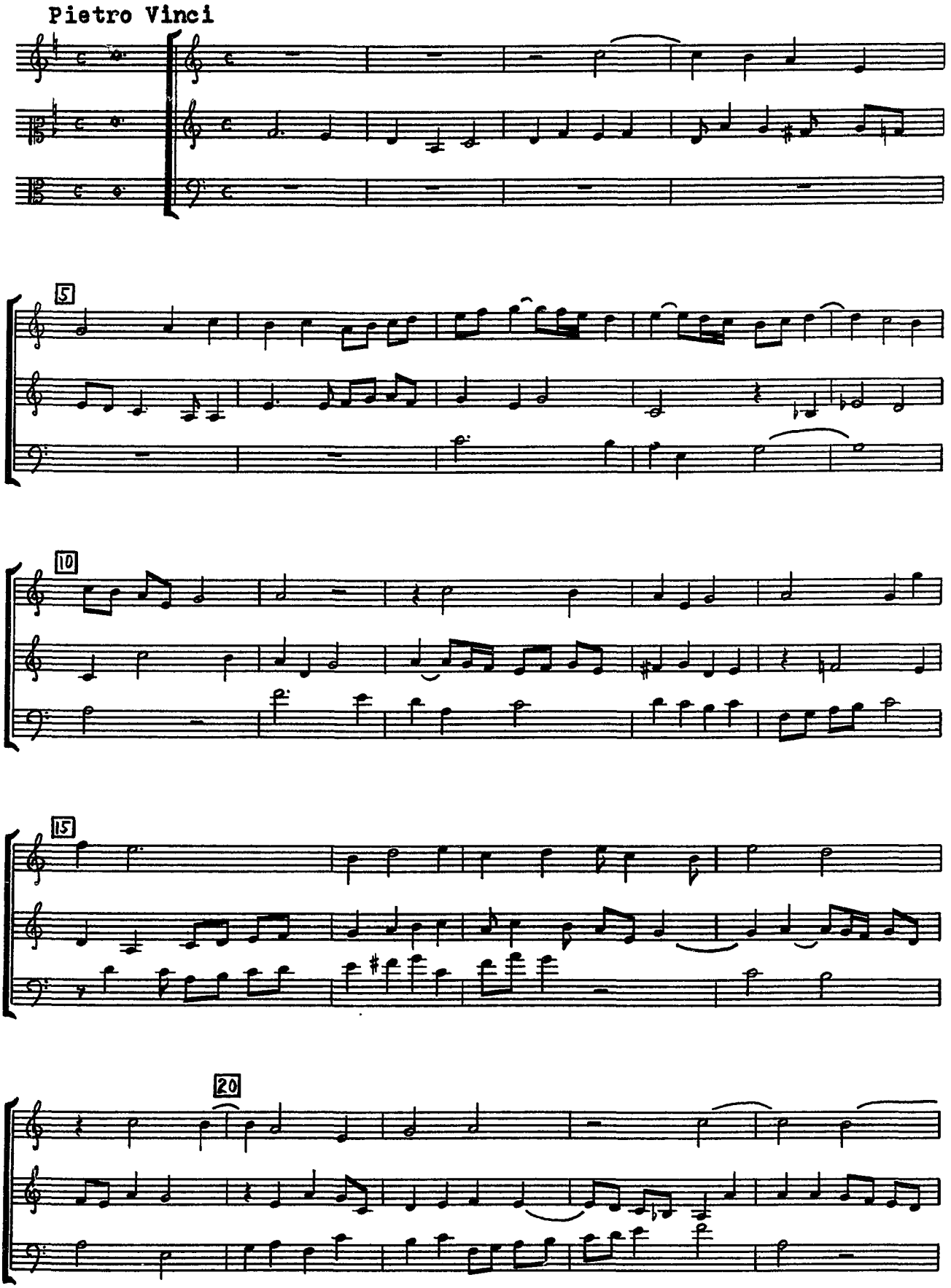
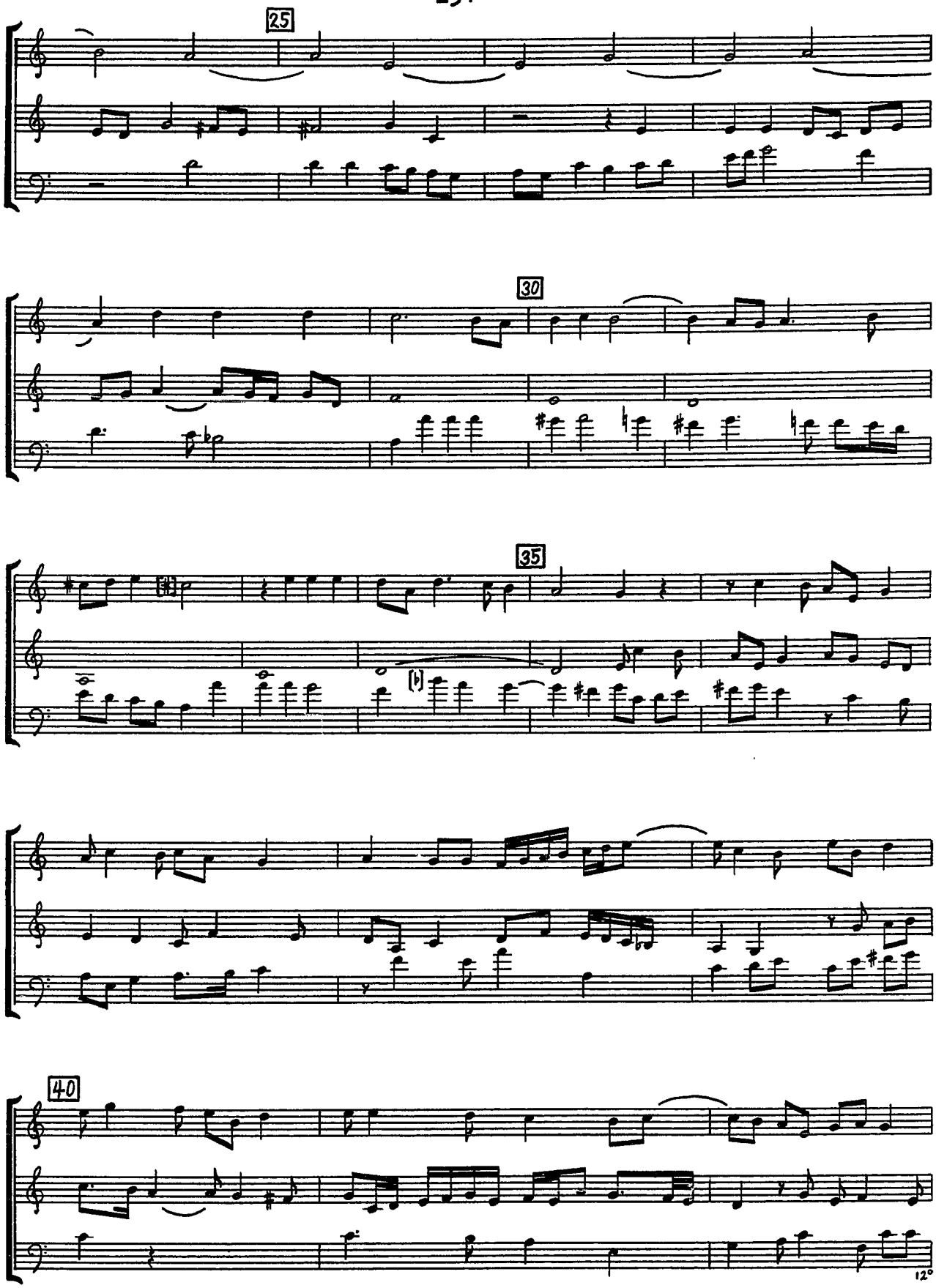
FA MI LA MI SOL LA

Pietro Vinci

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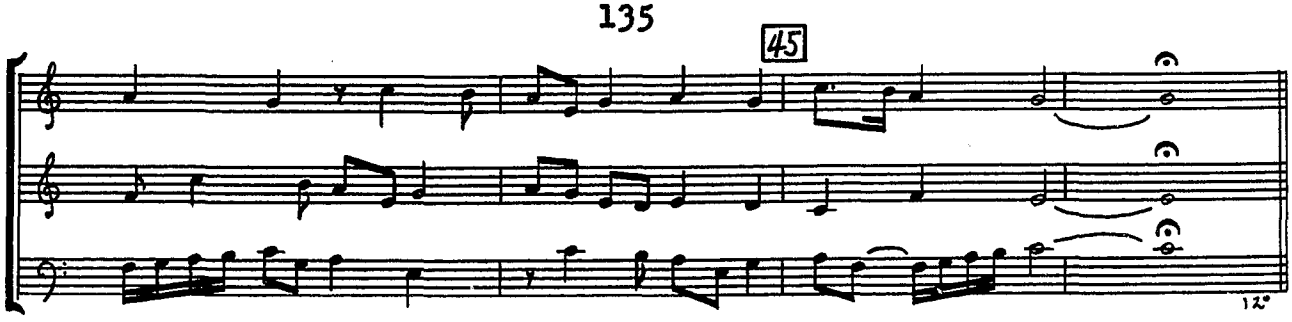
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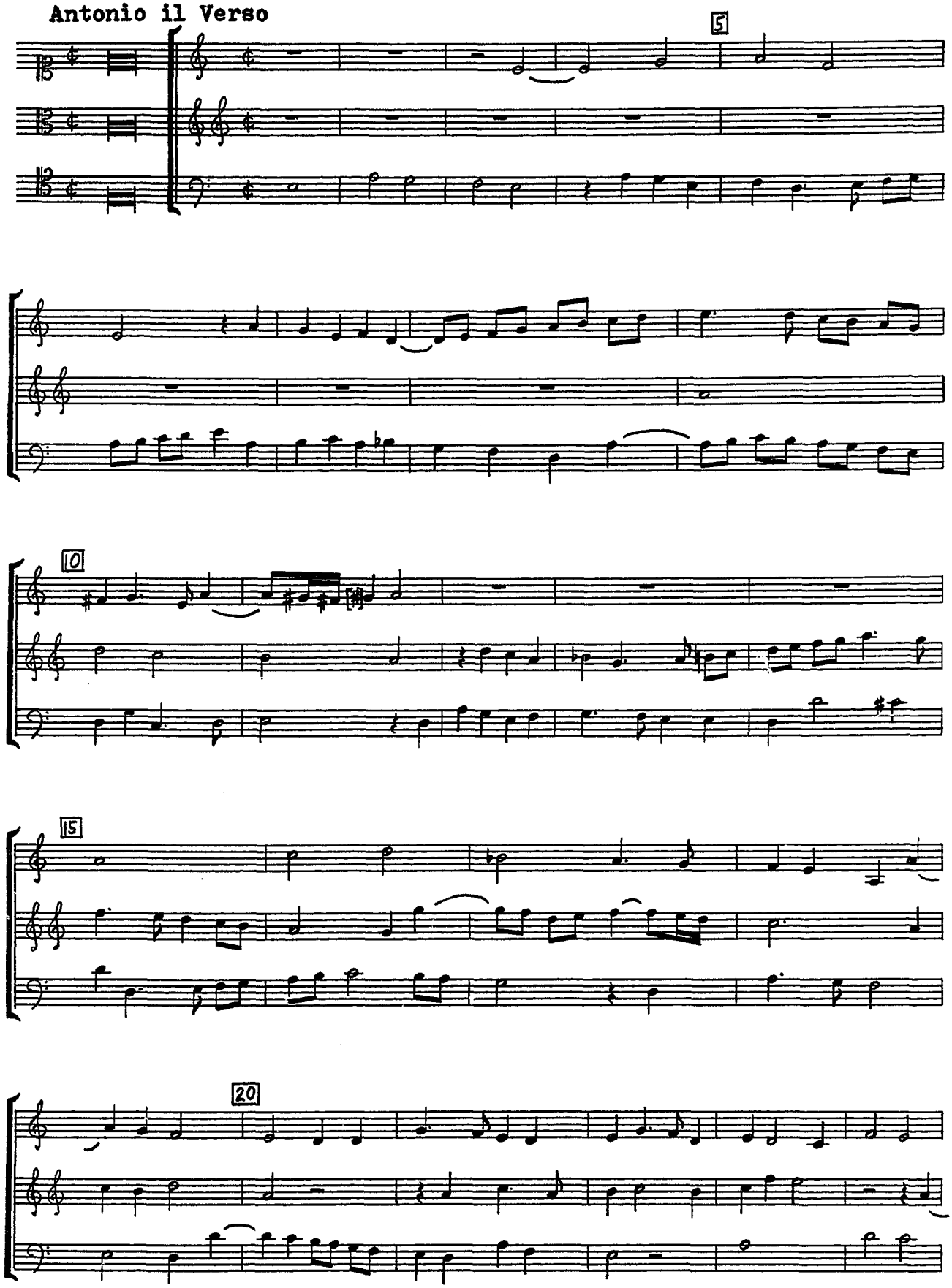
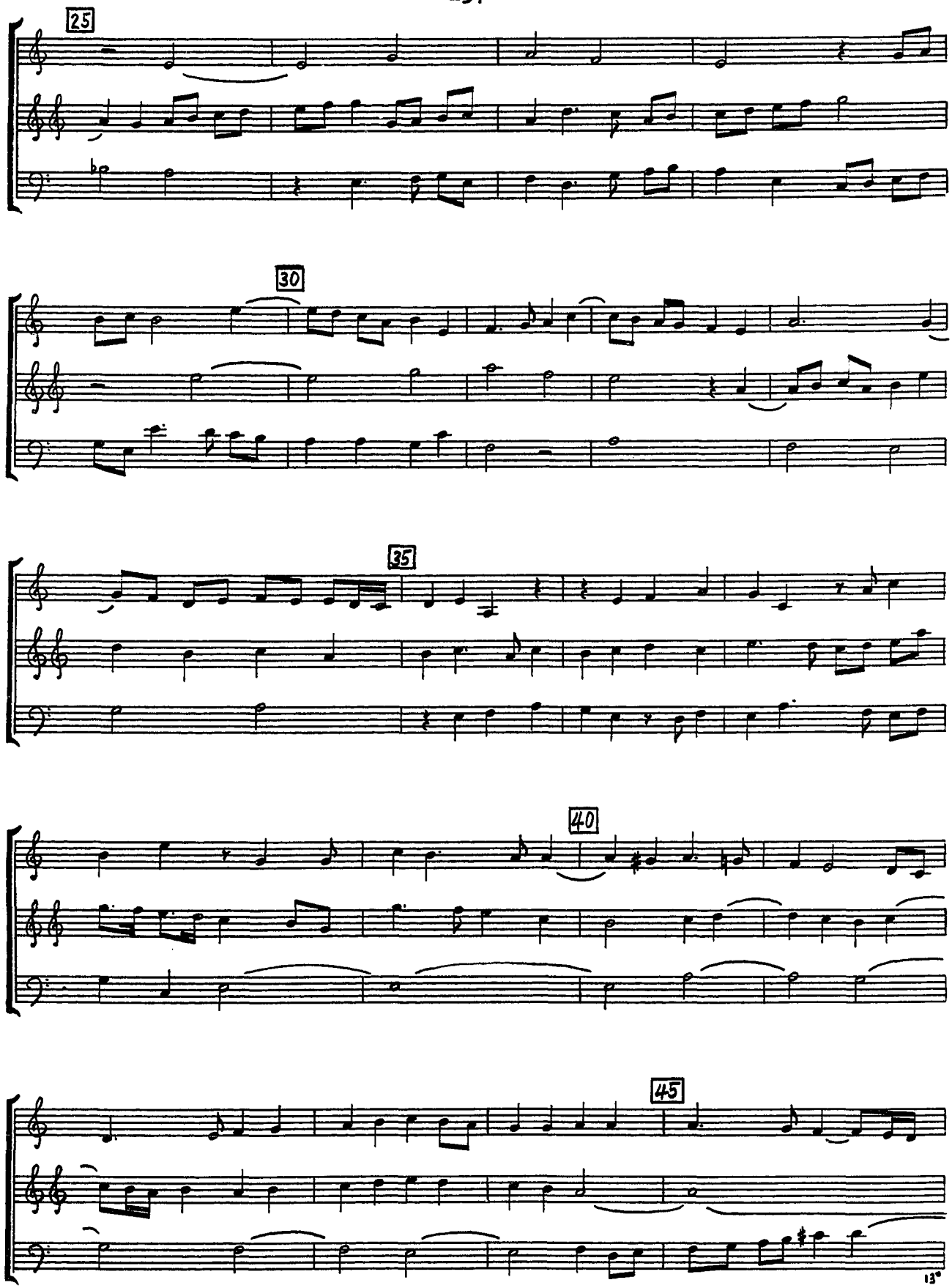
RICERCAR TERZODECIMO

Antonio il Verso

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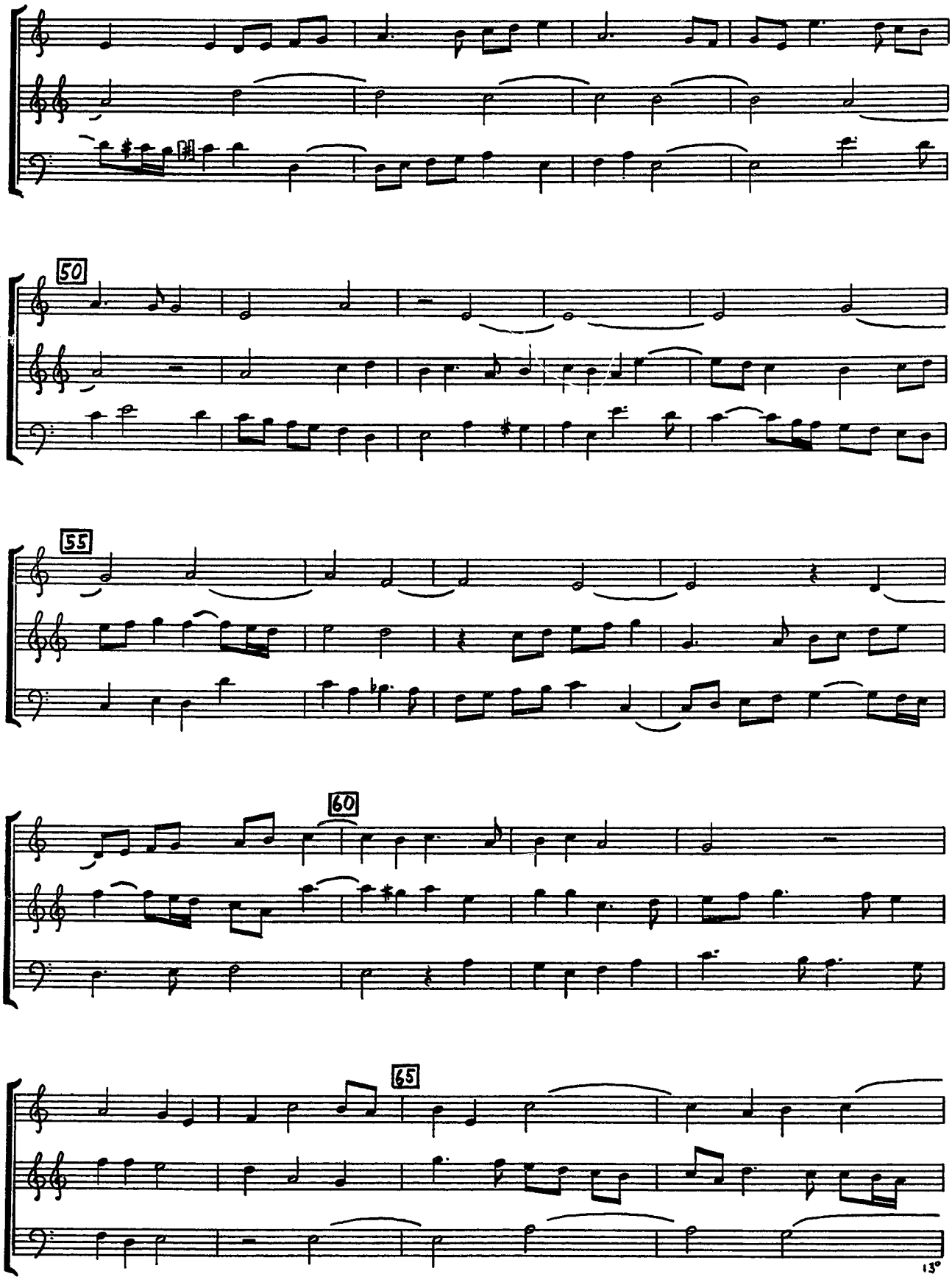
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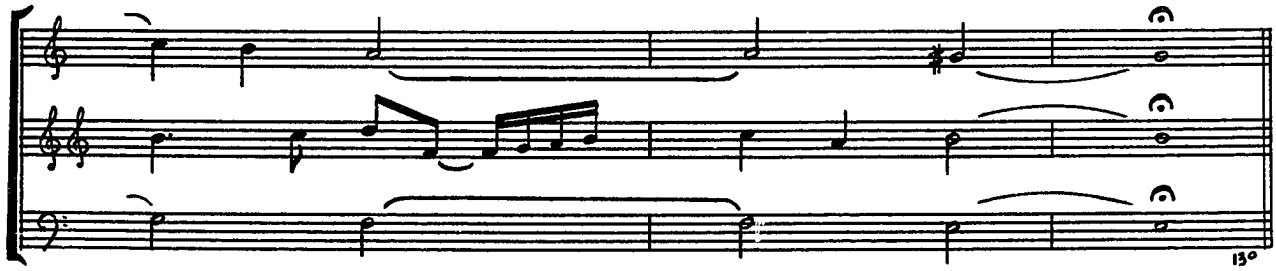
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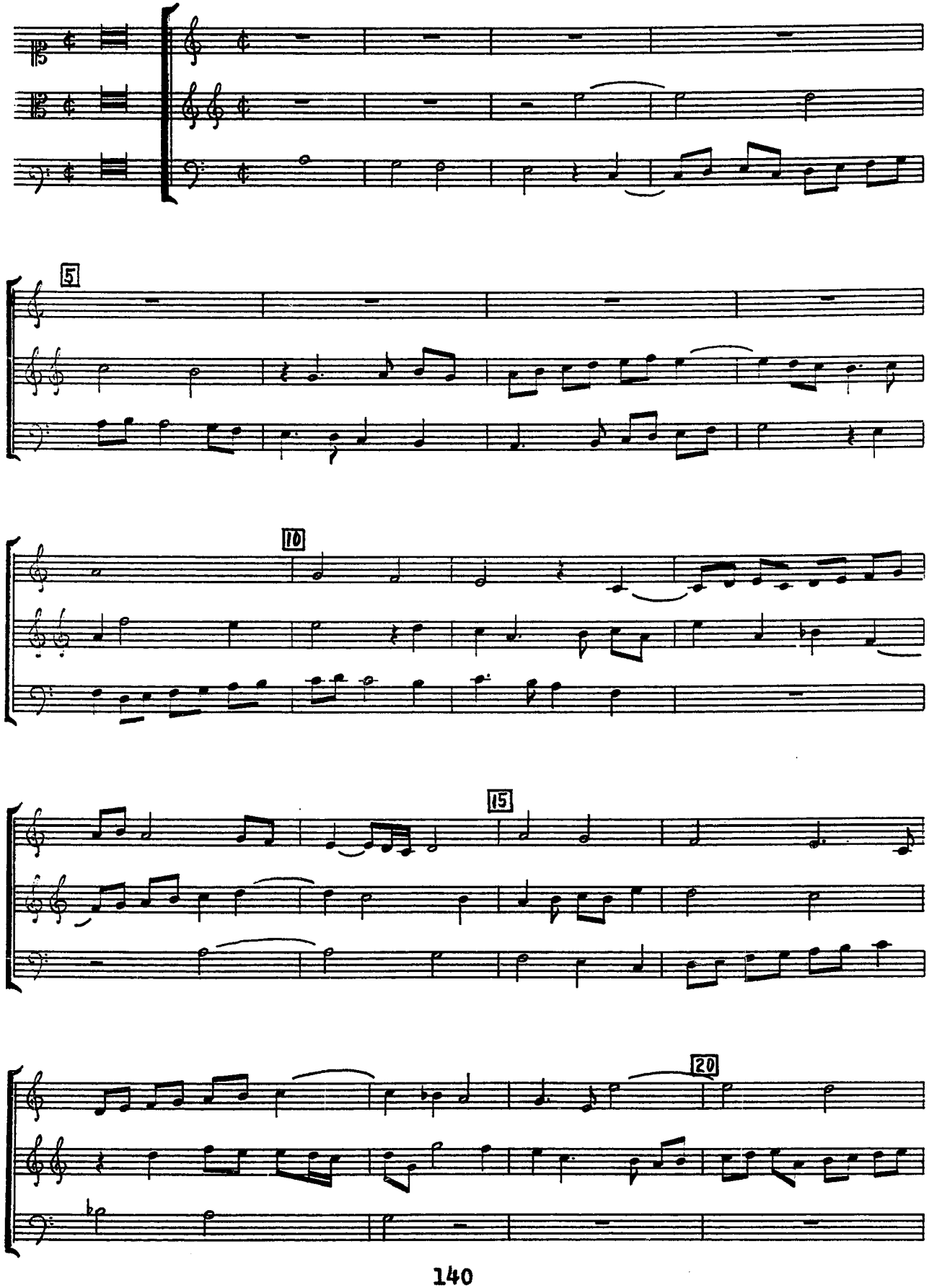
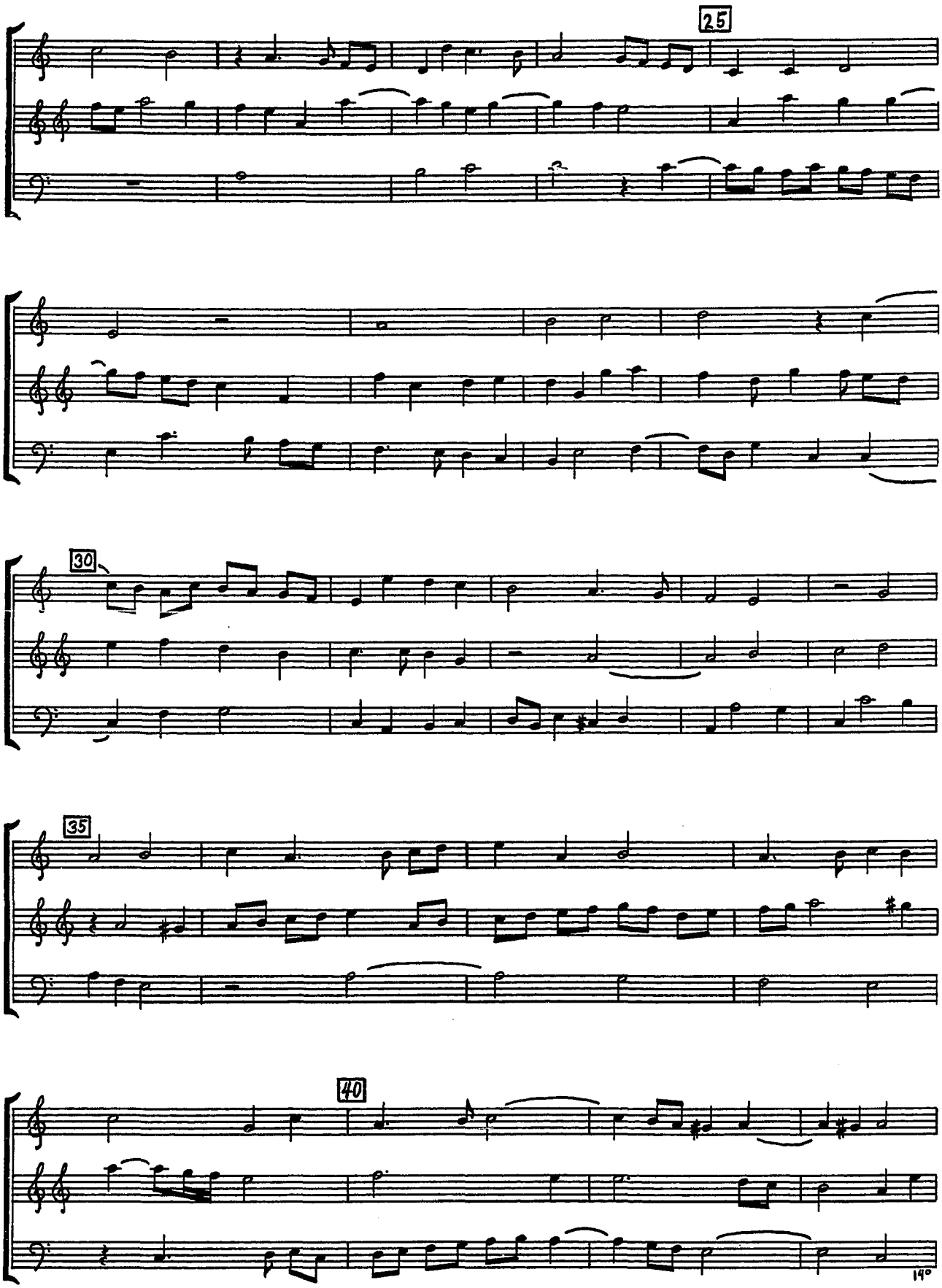
RICERCAR QUARTODECIMO

Antonio il Verso

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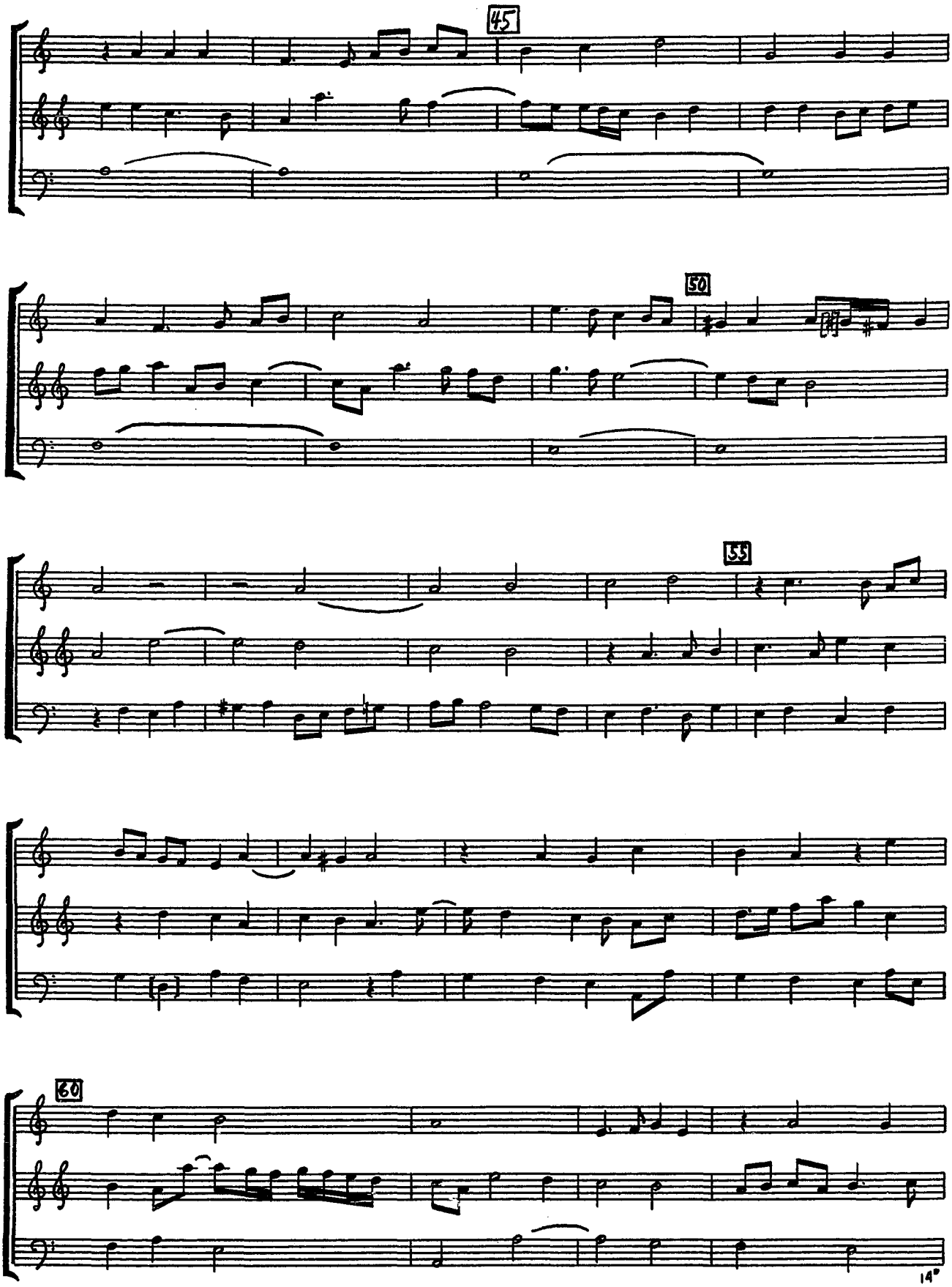
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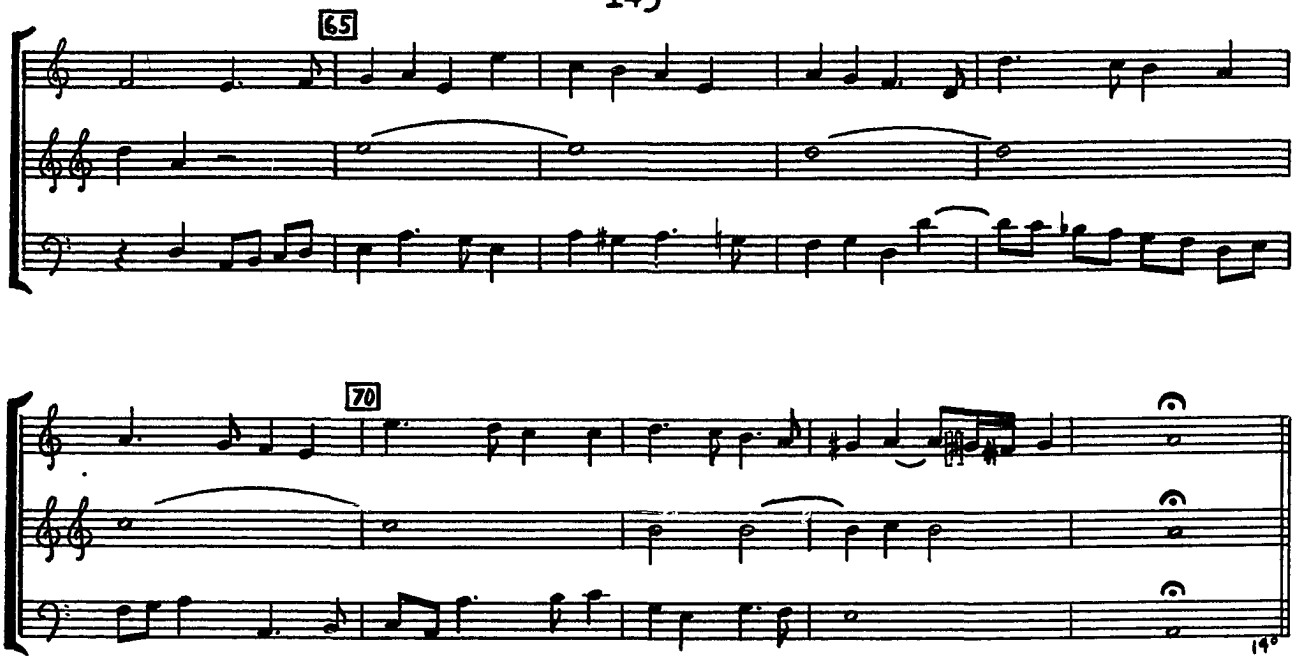
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