Anthony Newcomb (UC Berkeley)

“The New Roman Style of the 1570s”

My thesis is that a fundamental and far-reaching shift in the style of the polyphonic madrigal originated in Rome in the 1570s. In a sense it parallels the stylistic change mentioned by Giustiniani. But I want to give this new style more internal stylistic detail drawn from the polyphonic madrigal of the period. The main actors, so to speak, in the 1570s will be Macque and Giovanni Maria Nanino, with a secondary role played by the much older Palestrina. The first clear signs of the style come in the Quarto libro delle muse of 1574; the style comes to full fruition in the First Book for Five Voices of Marenzio of 1580 and the so-called Second Book of Nanino of 1581. It then really takes over the world in the ensuing decades. Gesualdo and Caccini are really flashes in the pan in comparison. The real nuova musica around 1600 is this Roman style of the last quarter of the century.