

## MUSICAL ICONOGRAPHY IN THE VISCONTI CODICES

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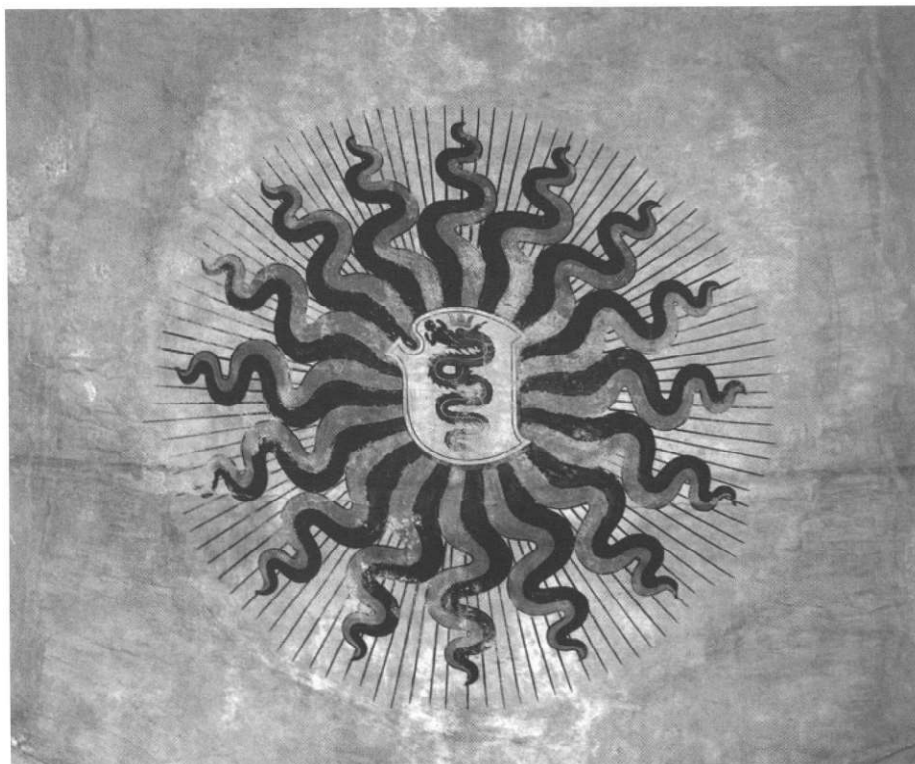
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The involvement of the Visconti family with music has been much studied, but too often almost exclusively from the theoretical-compositional point of view and focused on the so-called *ars subtilior*, the extraordinary and still somewhat enigmatic compositional style which at the end of the fourteenth century reached the realm governed by the lords of Milan. *Ars subtilior*, undoubtedly very important from the technical point of view, counts for about thirty works found in about ten manuscripts written many years after these works were composed.<sup>1</sup>

Because of their humble origins the Viscontis were considered as *parvenus*, what made it important for them to exalt their own cultural background. Therefore they transformed their court into a renowned center of experimentation in all the fields of culture and art. Between 1362 and 1386 the Viscontis founded the University of Pavia, gave rise to the constructions of the Duomo in Milan and the Certosa of Pavia, and attracted to their territories a great number of important cultural and artistic persons. Although the Viscontis had such a great interest in culture, there are only a few witnesses of their efforts that survived to the present day because: (1) they were a tyrannical family and when they disappeared from the political life they suffered a sort of *damnatio memoriae*; (2) their successors, the Sforzas, suffered a similar fate, and, for example, their splendid library at the Pavia castle was taken to France and partly dispersed; and (3) the devastations and fires destroyed large portions of the archives at the castles in Milan and of Pavia, causing the loss of almost all sources documenting their life. The rare images with musical subjects created in the Visconti circle provide precious evidence about the role that music played in the representation of their power.

*LA FIERA BISSA CHE D'UMAN SI CIBA*:<sup>2</sup> THE VISCONTIS. The Visconti family originated from Massino, a village near the Lago Maggiore. In 1209, they obtained the title of *vicecomes* which gave the origin to their family name, and at that time they also created their well-known coat of arms showing a snake holding a child in its mouth [fig. 1]. Although the meaning of this image is unknown, the Viscontis utilized it to celebrate their power, and to emphasize their expansionistic aim (the voracity of the snake) on the background of their heroic past (going back to Aeneas) and thus obliterating the memory of their peasant origins.

The Viscontis appeared on the Milanese political scene in 1262 when Ottone (1207-1295), a simple chaplain of the Cardinal Ottaviano Ubaldini, was appointed archbishop of Milan. The municipality was in those years a battlefield for the two opposing factions: on one side the aristocratic party and on the other the *populares* led by the Della Torre family (also called the Torriani). These struggles ended in 1277 when Ottone Visconti, leader of the aristocratic fraction, defeated the Torriani in the famous Battle of Desio and entered Milan taking possession of the city. This was the moment when the Visconti family assumed its political power, which was after Ottone carried by eleven of his descendants, who were frequently engaged in struggles within the family. With skillful diplomatic strategies and military campaigns they were able not only to enlarge their domains, but made Milan a leading political, cultural and artistic center. For some



1. Visconti's coat of arms (19th century). Fresco at Castello Sforzesco, Milano.

ninety years (1302–1395) the Viscontis succeeded to be crowned as Dukes of Milan (Gian Galeazzo was the first). Their lordship ended in 1447 with the death of Filippo Maria (1412–1447), after about 145 years of family's political power. Their cultural policy was then inherited by the Sforzas: Bianca Maria Visconti, the daughter of Filippo Maria, was the wife of Francesco I Sforza who became in 1450 the Duke of Milan.

**ARS MUSICA IN THE MANUSCRIPT *CANZONE DELLE VIRTÙ E DELLE SCIENZE*.** The creation of the manuscript *Canzone delle Virtù e delle Scienze* (Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 599) was influenced by the cultural and musical interests of Luchino Visconti (1292–1349; lord of Milan 1339–1349).<sup>3</sup> The manuscript was compiled in 1349 by Bartolomeo di Bartoli and was illuminated by his brother Andrea de' Bartoli (active ca. 1355–ca. 1367). The content of its ten folios was meant to enhance the seven virtues and the seven liberal arts. It was commissioned by Bruzio Visconti (died ca. 1360), illegitimate son of Luchino to whom his father had given a prestigious role within the city administration. Although often described as a cruel tyrant, Bruzio was a man of refined culture. Like his father, he was in touch with Francesco Petrarca and had a deep appreciation for books, which he himself also collected. He was also involved in poetical composition and wrote four canzonas, a ballata and two sonnets.

The pages of the manuscript are decorated by magnificent illustrations, including a full-page representation of *Ars Musica* [fig. 2]. The theme of the virtues and the depiction of the liberal arts as the embodiment of human knowledge were popular in the second half of the thirteenth and in the fourteenth centuries, reflecting the religious and secular perspectives.<sup>4</sup> The image of the Lady Musica was first formalized in the fifth century by the rhetorician and grammarian Martianus Capella in his treatise *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, where the wedding gifts for Philology and Mercury are brought, under the guidance of Apollo, by seven girls representing grammar, dialectic, rhetoric (the humanistic subjects of *trivium*) and geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music (the sciences of *quadrivium*).<sup>5</sup> They generally seat on a throne and at their feet are portrayed the greatest representatives of each discipline.

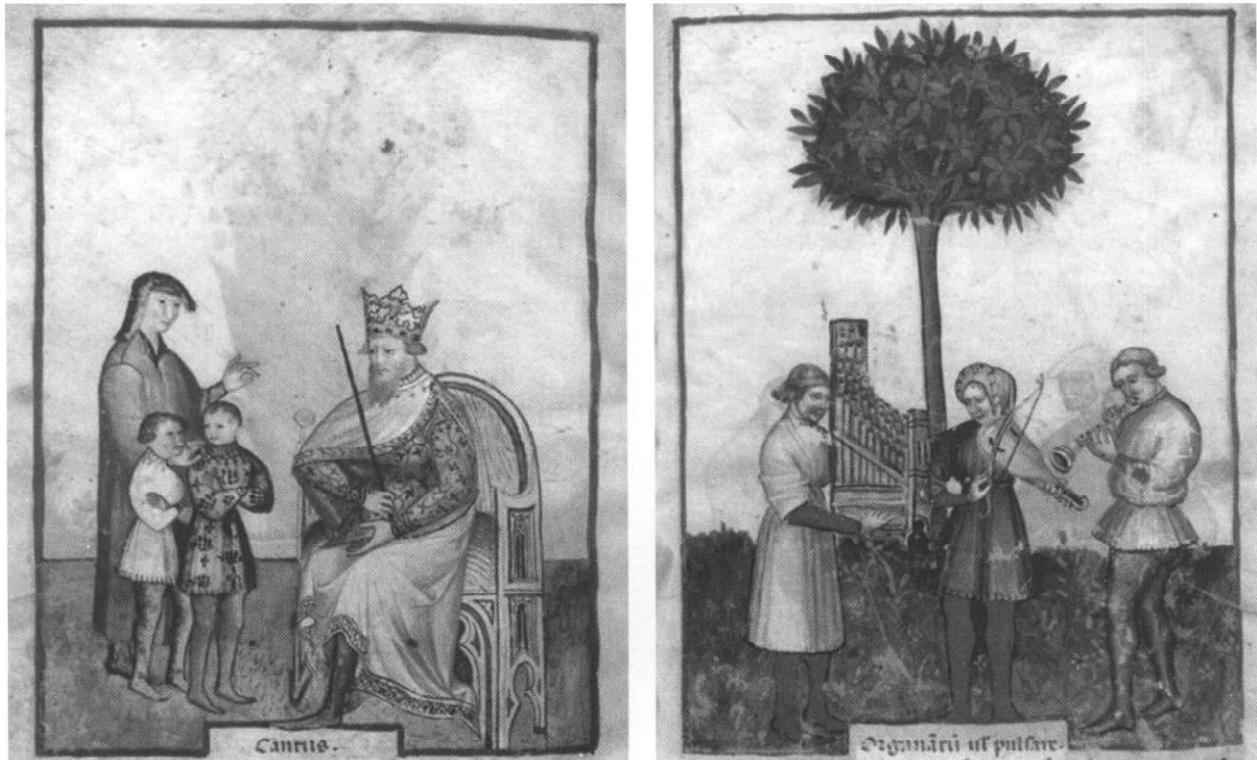
Demusica dicitur an  
quidam dicitur an  
quidam dicitur an  
quidam dicitur an

Ars malulandi delijs accomodata mortalium nūorum ratio est in  
nemens penl dubio mēi. qualem in moribz fuerit tempore malum ne  
discrepando dissonet ab ordine rationis ;



**S**onene uaqha muenti per confundere. So questa e pſicā  
melanchonia, chome per ſimploma. In ſon di boccha p or  
ghano e corda a ppar quandeila acorda. Ciaschuna in  
femme ala noſtra memoria. P triumph eintonia. In trombe et tam  
taloz ſe ribalta. Plei ſe balla e ſalta. E ſa dogne aleggrea i chori in  
fundere. Vace a nota reſpondere. Sa di canora e de bella armonia ſi  
colce melodia. Che talma e i ſpuri el amere con corda ſi quel che la  
recorda. ſi ben conſona a lodito agni iſtoria. Tubal chavm la gloria.  
In ſepre uoci trouo baſſa et alta. De muſieba che exalta. In pietra pme  
ſura e ſenza rugene. Laue per pezo de mali e danchugene ;

2. Andrea de' Bartoli, *Ars Musica*. Drawing on parchment, 33.3 × 22.6 cm. *Canzone delle Virtù e delle Scienze* (ca. 1349). Chantilly, Bibliothèque du Musée Condé, MS 599, fol. 9v.



3–4. Giovanni di Benedetto da Como, *Cantare* (left) and *Organare vel pulsare* (right). Tempera on parchment. *Tacuinum sanitatis* of Verde Visconti (ca. 1365). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. latin 1673, fol. 85v and 86r.

In the *Canzone delle Virtù e delle Scienze*, the Lady Musica is associated with Jubal and Tubal (both sons of Cain) rather than with the more traditional Pythagoras.<sup>6</sup> According to the Bible, Jubal *fuit pater omnium et canentium cithara organ* (Gen. 4,21) and Tubal *fuit malleator cuncta by aeris et ferri* (Gen. 4,22). The two brothers are often represented as a single male figure producing sounds by hitting an anvil with a hammer. The presence of the Arts in the image constitutes the representation of a real initiation journey in the world of knowledge. In these cases, after passing through an arc or between two columns (symbol of the knowledge and of the gap between the “everyday world” and the “world of wisdom”), a student, led by his master, goes to the top of a mountain (the knowledge) along a narrow street (the difficulty of learning), along which he meets the seven maidens. The illustration on fol. 9v is linked to this archetypal standard. It shows Tubal beating the anvil sitting at the feet of the personification of music tuning a lute. On the left there are the two columns symbolizing the knowledge: the left one is decorated by a series of technical musical terms and the right one by the six syllables of the hexachord.<sup>7</sup> All around are shown musical instruments: a psaltery, a portative organ, a triangle, a fiddle, a pair of nakers, a bagpipe, and some wind instruments.

**THE MUSICAL IMAGES IN THE *TACUINUM SANITATIS* OF VERDE VISCONTI.** Verde Visconti (1352–1414) was another important protagonist of the cultural life in the Visconti circle. Second daughter of Bernabò Visconti (1323–1385), lord of Milan from 1354, and Beatrice Regina della Scala (1331–1384), Verde married Leopold III, Duke of Austria (1351–1386) in 1365. The wedding had great resonance and celebration across Milan, and the *Tacuinum sanitatis* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. latin 1673) was, probably, a wedding gift that Bernabò commissioned from the illuminator Giovanni di Benedetto da Como (active 1352–1361 or 1378).

The expression “*tacuinum sanitatis*” was a name for a kind of handbooks with medical remedies extracted mainly from the works by the Arabic writer Ibn Butlan (ابن بطال; died 1038 or 1066). The aim of these





The *Tacuinum sanitatis* of Verde Visconti gave rise to a new standard for the arrangement of this type of book. In fact, this volume was followed by a series of at least five manuscripts, all produced within the Visconti circle attesting a new trend of presenting the subject through a series of illustrations with captions.<sup>8</sup> This simplification of the presentation was counterbalanced by a tangible increase in the insertion of courtly scenes. That was the reason why this kind of book became an object specially appreciated by the young ladies, in a similar way as were appreciated Books of Hours. Some activities usually practiced at the court became models for a healthy way of life and a subject of representations in the *Tacuinum sanitatis*. One such activity was music making which included the practice of singing (*cantare*), playing (*organare cantum vel pulsare*), and dance (*cantare et balare*). In Verde's *Tacuinum sanitatis* the image on fol. 85v shows two singing boys [fig. 3]. Their arms are composedly crossed over their chests and they stand before a king (maybe King David) who is sitting on a throne with crown and scepter.<sup>9</sup> Behind the singers is standing an adult figure, possibly their teacher. He is keeping his right hand on the shoulder of one child and with the left hand is conducting the performance.

On fol. 86r is the second musical image showing the instrumental music practice, another healthy activity [fig. 4]. In the scene are depicted three musicians standing under a tree and playing a portable organ, a fiddle, and a shawm.

The representation of *cantare et balare* component lacks in the book of Verde Visconti, but it has been preserved in another Milanese *tacuinum* volume from ca. 1380, kept at Liège, Bibliothèque Universitaire, MS 1041 on fol. 64v [fig. 5]. In the composition are represented three female figures and a small girl performing a semi-circle dance holding their hands. The music accompaniment is provided by a shawm and bagpipes.

Alberto Gallo has hypothesized that the image could have been a realistic depiction of a dance performance at the Visconti court.<sup>10</sup>

**GIOVANNINO DE GRASSI'S IMAGE OF TWO LADIES.** The Civica Biblioteca Angelo Mai in Bergamo holds another interesting document from the late fourteenth century (MS Δ.VII.14, c.5r). It is a single watercolor and pen picture attributed to Giovannino de Grassi (d.1398), the artist who produced the first part of the *Offiziolo Visconti* [fig. 6]. This image too represent a courtly scene: a lady, sitting on the floor on a pillow, is playing a small harp. On her left is standing another lady. With her right hand she is touching the harpist's shoulder and with the left hand holds her own robe (noteworthy the elegant drapery) ready to start a dance step.

**LE ORE VISCONTI: A LUXURY CODEX FOR GIAN GALEAZZO.** The Visconti Hours, produced under the patronage of Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1351–1402), the first duke of Milan, is an eloquent testimony about the artistic and cultural orientations of the family. The production of valuable books was an important element of Viscontis' policy, and every manuscript produced for them was a precious object created with great care which had a role in both their religious and secular life.<sup>11</sup> The possession of such richly and preciously illuminated manuscript which can compete with similar French, English, Flemish, and Bohemian exemplars, meant for Gian Galeazzo a possibility to externalize his ambition.

The Book of Hours, known also as *Offiziolo Visconti* or *Libro d'Ore Visconti*, held at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, consists of two distinct parts which were reunified in 1969. The first part (Banco Rari 397) was commissioned by Gian Galeazzo,<sup>12</sup> and the second (Landau-Finaly 22) by his son Filippo Maria, the last Visconti Duke of Milan. The *Offiziolo Visconti* stands out for the quality of its production. It includes thirty-eight full page and half-page miniatures, in addition to eighty-six decorated initials and a great number of decorated letters and borders.<sup>13</sup> What distinguishes the *Offiziolo Visconti* is the lack, both in the texts and in its decorations, of the devotional elements that generally characterize the other Lombard books of hours.

The particularly sumptuous decoration of the manuscript's part commissioned by Gian Galeazzo was implemented by Giovannino de Grassi and his workshop,<sup>14</sup> and the iconographical program makes here some biographical references about the lord of Milan. The codex is not dated, but the iconographic analysis established the year 1395 as a *terminus ante quem*. In that year Gian Galeazzo acquired the ducal title and since then the imperial eagle, which is absent from the *Offiziolo Visconti*, became a regular part of his identification in the manuscripts. Of particular interest in the investigation of the repertoire of arms included in this volume is the fact that his wife Isabella of Valois, daughter of the king of France, brought him at the wedding in 1360 as a dowry the county of Vertus in Champagne. With this possession Gian Galeazzo became *comes virtutum* (Earl of Vertus) and took advantage of the "double sense" (Vertus/virtue) that this new title offered him. Besides the famous personal emblem of the rayed sun (*razza viscontea*), the *Signore di Virtù* used as further personal emblems the theological and cardinal virtues. Cardinal virtues, in fact, are recurrent in the *chartae* decorated by Giovannino de Grassi.

This volume reveals several significant peculiarities. Although it is a book of prayers (and thus, intended for a private devotional use), its iconography is focused on the frequent portraits of the patron. He is almost never seen in a prayer, but rather inserted into medallions belonging to the numismatic sphere. This element points to the significant and unequivocal intent of celebration of his power. Another peculiarity is that among the illustrations accompanying the morning prayers, several full-page illustrations depict the biblical story of Joachim and Anna, the old parents of Mary. Such iconographic program is unique among the decorations of books of hours, and it may reflect here a virtual connection between Gian Galeazzo and Joachim, who both became fathers in an old age following many years of marriage. The male offspring was eagerly awaited and, when in September 1388 Giovanni Maria (son of Caterina, second wife of Gian Galeazzo) was born, not only sumptuous celebrations took place, but the Duke transformed the day of his birth to an official holiday,<sup>15</sup> and ordered that all future Viscontis had to bear the name of the Virgin.<sup>16</sup> The book of hours might have been commissioned as further tangible celebration and commemoration of this event.

The *Offiziolo Visconti* includes several interesting miniatures depicting musicians and ensembles. As Giovannino was a renowned architect recruited by the Reverenda Fabbrica del Duomo, in his illustrations are included not only various figures, but also the architectonic vistas. The images in *Offiziolo Visconti* do not



7. Giovannino de Grassi, Psalm LXXXI (Friday Matins): "Exultate Deo adiutori nostro". Tempera on parchment. *Libro d'ore Visconti* (1388-1395). Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS BR397, fol. 76v.

represent abstract ideals, but are strictly adherent to the sound landscape of Gian Galeazzo and his court. The miniatures on fol. 76v (Psalm LXXXI), fol. 90v (Psalm CL) and fol. 120v (Psalm CXXII) are paradigmatic in this sense. Further musicians are depicted on four other pages.<sup>17</sup>

PSALM LXXXI (FRIDAY MATINS): "EXULTATE DEO ADIUTORI NOSTRO". The protagonist of this image is King David sitting on a throne and playing the psaltery (its pegs are visible) with long plumes used as plectrums [fig. 7]. In his performance he is communicating with a group of musicians standing to his left and playing a pair of small nakers, a portable organ, a fiddle, and two trumpets from which are hanging banners decorated with the heraldic Visconti serpent. The entire scene is enclosed within an "E" which has at the corners included four doves, each inside a rayed sun. Their presence may allude to the turtledove, another Viscontis' emblem

PSALM CL (SATURDAY MATINS): "CANTATE DOMINO CANTICUM NOVUM". The miniature depicts a group of courtiers singing from a roll held by a man in the middle of the group [fig. 8]. On the scroll is shown square notation and in its middle is indicated the syllable *do*, probably the *incipit* of the word *Domino*. A long musical sequence with no other syllables suggests this to be a melisma. Noteworthy is the typical hand



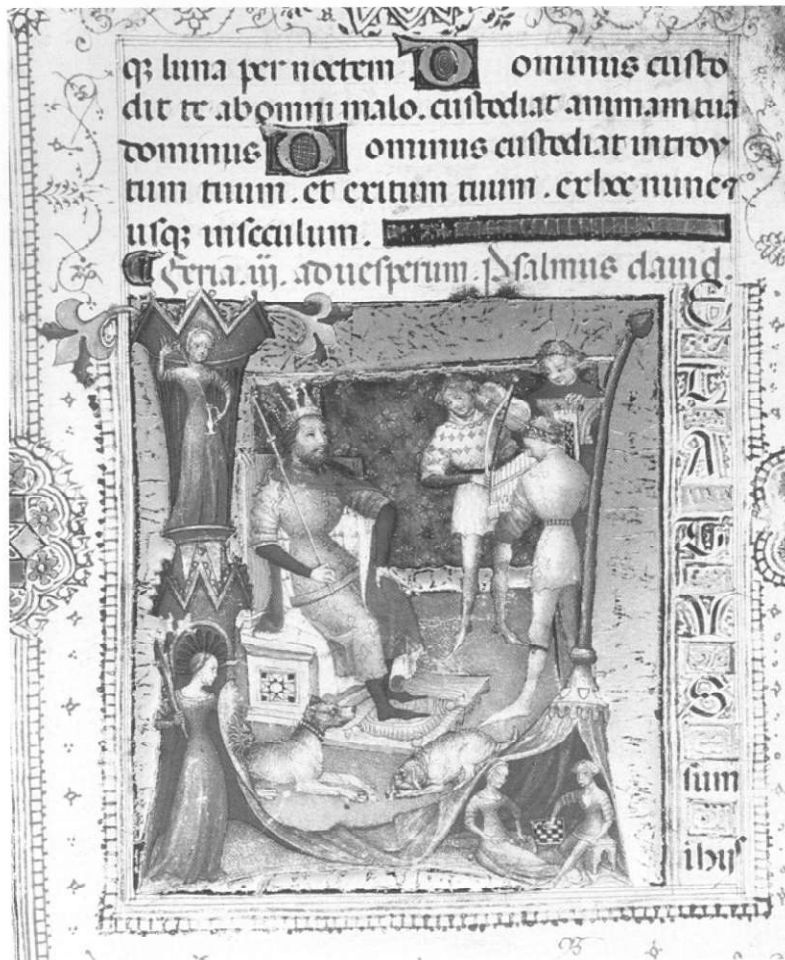
8. Giovannino de Grassi, Psalm CL (Saturday Matins): "Cantate Domino canticum novum". Tempera on parchment. *Libro d'ore Visconti* (1388–1395). Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS BR397, fol. 90v.

gesture of some singers; they have raised their index or middle finger or entire hands, beating the *tactus*, and indicating the rhythmical proportions and the melodic *ductus*.

PSALM CXXII (TUESDAY VESPERS): "LAETATUS SUM IN EO, QUOD DIXERUNT MIHI". This miniature is a tangible example of the influence exerted by the courtly life on the illustration of medieval religious texts [fig. 9]. Although the psalm begins with the words "Laetatus sum in eo, quod dixerunt mihi: In domum Domini ibimus", God does not appear in the miniature because of the preference for a more profane atmosphere. The picture includes King David, dressed in a pink garb decorated with embroidered lilies and free of the wrinkles and without gray hair that characterized the previously described images. He is listening to his musicians playing a fiddle (which has well depicted bow), a psaltery, and a portable organ. At David's feet are laying two hunting dogs, what is a clear reference to the favorite pastime of the Viscontis. The aim of this image may have been to show David as a lord fond of hunting and consequently to establish a connection between him and the lord of Milan: Gian Galeazzo as a new David.

In the elevated left section of the letter "L" (*Laetatus*) that encloses the scene are shown two virtues (*Fortitudo* and *Temperantia*) fashionably dressed. On the opposite side of the letter is depicted a couple playing chess under a tent "padiglione tenduto". The scene evidently depicts a moment of relaxation at Gian Galeazzo's court, perhaps in the "doulz Chastel de Pavie", and it may be related to the text of the composition





9. Giovannino de Grassi, Psalm CXXII (Tuesday Vespers): "Laetatus sum in eo, quod dixerunt mihi". Tempera on parchment. *Libro d'ore Visconti* (1388-1395). Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS BR397, fol. 120v.

by Jacopo da Bologna, *In verde prato a padiglion tenduti* (On a green grass with pavilions), composed during the composer's stay at the court of Gian Galeazzo.

**LA HARPE DE MELODIE.** Another extraordinary testimony from the circle of the Visconti family is the visual representation of the virelais *La harpe de melodie* by the Franco-Flemish composer and harpist Jaquemin de Senleches (fl. 1382/83-1395) in the manuscript 54.1 of the Newberry Library in Chicago. The manuscript is a theoretical compendium which has at the end of the first treatise the *explicit* "Papiae 2. scriptum octobris 1391 per Fratrem G. de Anglia" (written in Pavia on 2 October 1391 by the friar G. de Anglia), what confirms a close links between the manuscript and the Visconti court at Pavia.<sup>18</sup> On its folio 10r is included the virelais notated on harp's strings which become a hypothetical musical staff lines [fig. 10].

La harpe de melodie  
fayte sans merancolie  
par plaisir,  
doit bien chascun resjoir  
pour l'armonie ouir  
sonner et veir,  
et pour ce je suy d'acort  
pour le gracioux deport

de son douz son,  
de faire sans nul discort,  
dedans li, de bon acort  
bonne chanson,  
pour plaire bonne compagnie,  
pour avoir plaisanche lie de merir,  
pour desplaysance fuir,  
qui trop anuie

a ceulz qui plaist a oir.  
La harpe de melodie  
fayte sans merancolie  
par plaisir,

doit bien chescun resjoir  
pour l'armonie ouir  
sonner et veir.

The virelais is to be performed as a canon and inside a ribbon entwined around the harp's column on the right-hand side are given the instructions for the canonic performance:

Se tu me veulz proprement pronuncier,  
Sus la tenur pour miex ester d'acort  
Diapenthe te convient comencier,  
Ou autrement tu seras en discort.  
Pars blanc et noir per mi sans oublier,  
Lay le tonant, out tu li feras tort.  
Se tu me veulz.

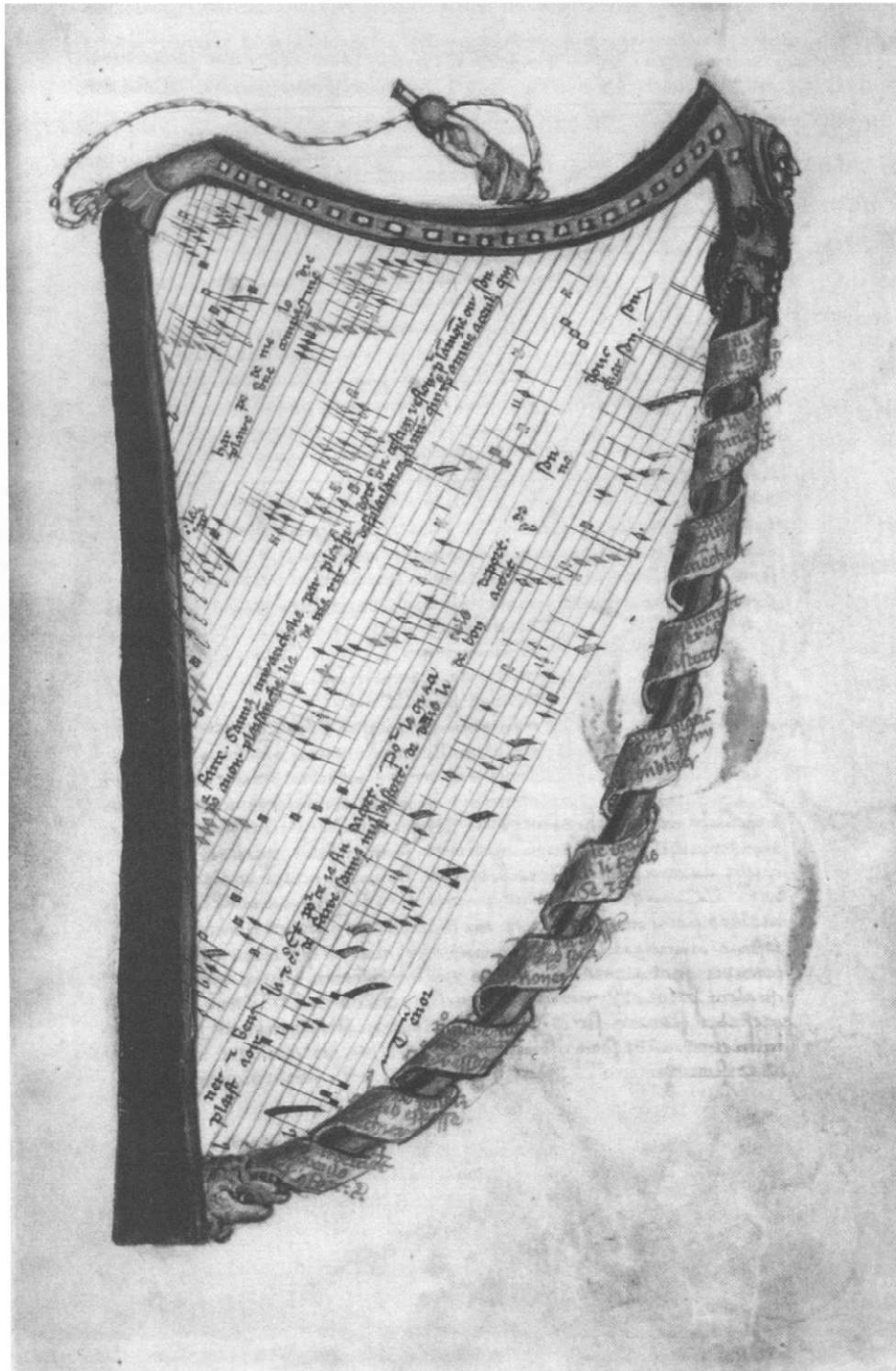
Puis va cassant duz temps sanz forvoier,  
Premiere note en .d. prent son resort;  
Harpe toudis sanz espasse blechier,  
Par sentiment me puis doner confort.  
Se tu me veulz.

The visual composition, which makes an exceptional impact, parallels here the refined and sophisticated compositional style of *ars subtilior*, reflecting verse 6 of the poem which links hearing, playing and seeing (*oir, sonner et veir*). Tilman Seebass wrote that "the composition represents the rhythmic intricacies of the *ars subtilior* at its peak, and it features, with its hidden canon and its peculiar notation, the delight taken in that period in riddles and clever little conceits".<sup>19</sup> The coexistence of the image of the instrument with the notation of the composition may underline the interest of Jaquemin who not only was a "harpomaniac" (a maniac of harp, as Seebass defined him<sup>20</sup>) but also conceived the compositional and performative practices on the same level: "this document gives us an illustrious example of the personal union of harpist and composer, and it fits neatly into the time-spam between Machaut and Binchois".<sup>21</sup>

It is not sure whether Jaquemin de Sanleches took part in the manuscript's production, but we know that he was mentioned as an instrumentalist in a document from the royal household in Navarra, dated 21 August 1383, where he was mentioned together with *menestreri* and *joungleurs* of the Conte de Vertù.<sup>22</sup> Therefore this document testify the contacts between Sanleches and the Visconti court.<sup>23</sup> That is the reason why *La harpe de melodie* is attested also in the Codex Chantilly,<sup>24</sup> preserved at the Musée Conde, MS 564 (*olim* 1047), fol. 43v,<sup>25</sup> another Viscontis musical source.<sup>26</sup> The complexity of the image of the harp, besides, fit with the general content of the manuscript that attests a series of musical treatises: *Tractatus de musica* by Petrus de Sancto Dionysio, *Regule de contrapuncto* and *Tractatus figurarum* by Filippoto, *Lucidarium* and *Pomerium* by Marchetto da Padova, *Libellus cantus mensurabilis* by Johannes de Muris and the anonymous treatises *Sciendum est quod*, *Sex sunt species speciales discantus*, *Tractatus de contrapuncto*, and *Sicut se habent brevis et longa in modo perfecto*.

The Newberry manuscript is decorated only with six other ornamental letters and few other architectural ornaments. *La harpe de melodie*, therefore, acquires a great relevance both doctrinal (only through this kind of representation it was possible to insert the composition in a theoretical compendium) and artistic.

There are only a few images showing musical scenes in the Visconti entourage, what appears unusual when we think of the role that music played in the construction of power (political and cultural) of the Viscontis.<sup>27</sup> But, as anticipated in the beginning of this contribution, in the end of their tyranny they were affected by a sort of *damnatio memoriae* whose effect was destructions of many Viscontean symbols, including also their residence, the Castle of Porta Giovia.<sup>28</sup> It is therefore possible that many codices with pictures of music making became victims of the Milanese anti-Visconti iconoclasm and that the few images now in existence are only the tip of an iceberg of an important artistic production parallel to the equally important Viscontean musical production.



10. Jaquemin de Sanleches, *La harpe de melodie* (ca. 1390). Color drawing on parchment, 25.3 × 18 cm. Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 54.1, fol. 10r.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In my doctoral research I focused the attention on the role that music played in the Visconti circle. I traced an outline of the Milanese musical experience during the Visconti period keeping in consideration not only the technical-compositional aspects, but also the activities of the composers, the poetical and iconographical elements, the cultural environment and everything what could be useful to rebuilt, so many centuries later, the musical landscape in the Visconti circle. Donatella Melini, *I Visconti e la musica a Milano tra XIV e XV secolo: Cultura, committenza, prassi e iconografia musicale* (Ph.D diss., Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck, 2008), xvii, 321.

<sup>2</sup> "La fiera bisca che d'uman si ciba" is the *incipit* of the two-voice madrigal of Bartolino da Padova (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ital. 568, fol. 40v-41r; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Pal. 87, fol. 104v-105r; and Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Archivio di San Lorenzo, MS 2211, fol. 8v-9r). This verse best represents the aggressive features of the Visconti family that always tried to impose itself politically and culturally by any means. It also describes well the coat of arm of the Viscontis that portrays a snake ("La fiera bisca") with a child in his mouth ("che d'uman si ciba"). A famous textual variant of the "fiera bisca": "la fiera testa" is the *incipit* of the canon by Nicolò da Perugia.

<sup>3</sup> Luchino loved not only hunting, which was at that time a form of art and a symbol of power, but also literature and music. At his court flourished the earliest Milanese musicians about whom we have some documentation. The most famous among them was Jacopo da Bologna.

<sup>4</sup> Their image can be found in many depictions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; for example, among the sculptures on the portals or in the frescoes of the Gothic cathedrals. Frequently they are linked to the cycle of months to emphasize the dialogue between the earthly and divine knowledge (as in the case of the Cathedral of Chartres) under the auspices of course, not of Apollo, but of the Virgin Mary *sedes sapientes*.

<sup>5</sup> The oldest source of this treatise that came down to us was written in the tenth century and is held at the Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, MS HL.IV, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Tilman Seebass, "Lady Music and Her Proteges from Musical Allegory to Musicians' Portraits", *Musica disciplina* XLII (1988), 23-61.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Federica Toniolo, "L'immagine di Tubalcain-Iubal e le iniziali a nastro del codice musicale estense", *The Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a M.5.24*, ed. by Anne Stone (Lucca: Libreria Editrice Musicale, 2005), commentary, 155-171.

<sup>8</sup> Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, MS 887; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Ser. 2644; Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 4182; Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS Leber 1088; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 9333.

<sup>9</sup> F. Alberto Gallo, *Musica nel Castello: Trovatori, libri, oratori nelle corti italiane tra XIII al XV secolo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 79.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Evelyn Welch, "Nel segno della vipera: Il contesto culturale e politico del Libro d'Ore Visconti", *Il libro d'ore Visconti: Commentario al codice*, ed. by Milvia Bollati (Modena: Panini, 2003), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Gian Galeazzo commissioned also an elegant prayer book sold in 1991 by the London antiquarian Sam Fogg, and perhaps a Book of Hours kept at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag, MS α 76 F 6.

<sup>13</sup> Francesca Manzari, "Tipologie di strumenti devozionali nella Lombardia del Trecento: I libri d'ore e l'offiziolo Visconti", *Il libro d'ore Visconti: Commentario al codice*, ed. by Milvia Bollati (Modena: Panini, 2003), 154.

<sup>14</sup> About the origin and the structure of the volume see *Les heures de Visconti: Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale*, ed. by Millard Meiss and W. Edith Kirsch (Vilo-Paris: Draeger Frères, 1972).

<sup>15</sup> *Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano dall'origine fino al presente pubblicati a cura della sua amministrazione* (Milano: G. Brigola, 1877-1885), vol. 1, 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> For instance Giovanni Maria, Galeazzo Maria, Ludovico Maria. This tradition was accepted also by the Sforzas.

<sup>17</sup> (1) Psalm I: *Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum* (fol. 3r). The miniature represents David playing a psalter. (2) Psalm XXII: *Deus, Deus meus, quare me dereliquisti?* (fol. 18r). A musician angel in the left margin is playing a portable organ. (3) Psalm CIX: *Dixit Dominus Domino meo* (fol. 105v). Under the Father and the Son two angels are playing respectively a lute and a portable organ. (4) Psalm CXVI: *Dilexi, quoniam exauditi Dominus* (fol. 108v). Two angels on the top margin are playing a portable organ and a fiddle.

<sup>18</sup> See Lucia Marchi, "Music and University Culture in Late Fourteenth-Century Pavia: The Manuscript Chicago, Newberry Library, Case MS 54.1", *Acta musicologica* LXXX (2008), 143-164.

<sup>19</sup> Tilman Seebass, "The Visualisation of Music Through Pictorial Imagery and Notation in Late Medieval France", *Studies in the Performance of Late Mediaeval Music*, ed. by Stanley Boorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Carmen Gomez Muntané, "La musique a la maison royale de Navarre a la fin du Moyen-âge et le chantre Johan Robert", *Musica disciplina* XLI (1987), 114.

<sup>23</sup> Melini, *I Visconti e la musica a Milano tra XIV e XV secolo*, 165.

<sup>24</sup> In this source the composition is written on regular six-line staves and no illustration is present.

<sup>25</sup> About the relation between Sanleches's biography and the two musical sources (Newberry and Chantilly) see also Reinhard Strohm, "La harpe de mélodie oder das Kunstwerk als Akt der Zueignung", *Das musikalische Kunstwerk: Geschichte, Ästhetik, Theorie. Festschrift Carl Dahlhaus zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Hermann Danuser, Helga de la Motte-Haber, and Silke Leopold (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1988), 305-316.

<sup>26</sup> Anne Stone, *The Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca Estense, a M.5.24* (Lucca: Libreria Editrice Musicale, 2005), commentary, 90, n.169.

<sup>27</sup> Melini, *I Visconti e la musica a Milano tra XIV e XV secolo*.

<sup>28</sup> It was rebuilt in the Sforza age and it is now known as Sforzesco Castle.