Bells and Trumpets, Jesters and *Musici*: Sounds and Musical life in Milan under the Visconti

Or questa diciaria,	Now [I conclude] my speech,
perché l'Ave Maria	since the Ave Maria
sona,	is ringing,
serro la staciona	I shut up shop
nén più dico[1]	and I won't talk anymore

These verses, written by the Milanese poet and wealthy member of the ducal chancellery Bartolomeo Sachella, refer to a common daily sound in late Medieval Milan. The poet is quickly concluding his poem, since the Ave Maria is already sounding. When church-bells rang the Ave Maria, every citizen knew, indeed, that the working-day was over; thus, probably after the recitation of a brief prayer in honour of the Virgin, shops closed and workers went home.

Church-bells were only one of the very large variety of sounds characterising Medieval cities. Going back over six-hundred years, we could have been surrounded by city-criers accompanied by trumpet blasts, people playing music or singing through the streets, beggars ringing their bells asking for charity, mothers' and children's voices, horses' hoofs and many other sounds. All these sounds created what musicology has defined as 'urban soundscape', which, since the pioneering study by Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (1985), has deeply intrigued music historians.

The present essay aims to inquire into the different manifestations of musical phenomena in late Medieval Milan, relating them to the diverse social, cultural and historical contexts in which they used to take place. My research will focus on a time frame over a century, ca. 1330s-1450, when the city was ruled by the powerful Visconti family. Focusing on these decades, I aim to highlight the role of music as a means to further understand the urban-society of late Medieval Milan, its habits and customs. As I will try to show, urban sounds had a precise significance, both social and political: certain kinds of sounds and instruments acted as signals, whose meaning was holistically recognised by the entire community; other music making was more exclusive and took part in closed environments, enjoyed only by a small fraction of the citizens. I will, thus, divide my work into two parts: the first one dedicated to the huge amount of repertoire - lost in its largest part - which formed the most significant component of Milan's soundscape and was usually performed in a vast variety of places (such as squares, streets, private houses, taverns) and events. The second part will focus instead on the ducal court, the most elitist place of that period. Here music was regularly played and sung as entertainment, perhaps during balls, banquets and other celebrations. Moreover, some genres clearly showed self-promotional purposes: this is the case of numerous polyphonic songs – cacce, madrigals, motets, French *formes fixes*

[1] *Frottola* XX, verses 119-123; see *Bartolomeo Sachella*, *Frottole*, edited by GIOVANNA POLEZZO SUSTO, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua - Casa Carducci,1990, pp. 89-93.

– whose artistic refinement, transmitted in precious manuscripts and anthologies, perfectly matched the lords' aims: the legitimisation of their power over the city and of their newly-acquired status of ducal dynasty.

Part one

1. Music for the Collectiveness

The following part has the task of recreating the musical landscape of the city through a set of music and performances involving the whole citizen body. Because of the universal enjoyment of this music, I decided to name the present section 'Music for the Collectiveness'.

As a matter of fact, the strong sense of community of the dwellers was highlighted by the different role that sounds and music played in Milan. I can mention two categories: sounds that represented real signals, marking and regulating Milan's daily life (church bells and trumpet blasts) and the sounds heard by the entire community gathered in the main streets and squares to celebrate the most relevant events of the city. The latter consisted in a repertory of sounds and music addressing precise liturgical and devotional needs (such as processions or sacred and para-liturgical chants); moreover, most of the music accounted in late fourteenth-century Milanese documents was performed in order to collect oblations for the construction of the Duomo, the new city's cathedral, seen both as an expression of devotion and of civic pride.

1.1.Church bells

The pivotal role played by Medieval church-bells has been pointed out by Johan Huizinga as follows:

> The bells were in daily life like good spirits, which by their familiar voices, now called upon the citizens to mourn and now to rejoice, now warned them of danger, now exhorted them to piety. […] Every one knew the difference in meaning of the various ways of ringing. However continuous the ringing of the bells, people would seem not to have become blunted to the effect of their sound.[2]

Bell sounds were the most common daily sound of Medieval cities. They were of extreme importance: not only did bells function as instruction for the faithful (indicating the beginning of a service, or inviting them to say their prayers), but they also had the task to regulate the different moments of daily life and strengthen the most relevant political events. Thus, they obviously had a predominant part in any Medieval urban soundscape.

City-bells were undoubtedly the real advocates of the common living of the past ages. As we have learnt from Sachella, in Milan the Ave Maria sounded to indicate that the day had ended. In the case of Milan, chronicles and historians reported many examples of the use of bell-ringing in the city, which can be summarized as follows:

- To inform all the citizens about danger;
- To celebrate both political and military victories;
- To welcome illustrious or noble figures.

In the first case, the sixteenth-century historian Bernardino Corio reports that, when the Guelph party headed by the da Casate family occupied Porta Nuova, all the church bells

[2] JOHAN HUIZINGA, *The waning of the Middle Ages*, London: Penguin,1922, p. 10.

rang simultaneously (*suonare a stormo*)[3] to alarm all the citizens of the imminent danger.[4] By contrast, we have several examples of bells ringing joyfully to stress fortunate news or events, such as Filippo Maria's entry in Milan as its new Duke, when the bells rang joyfully, hailed by the crowd's "*Viva il duca*" (long live the Duke).[5]

1.2.City clocks

Milan was one of the first European cities to build mechanical clocks. Between 1306 and 1309, an iron clock was installed in the church of Sant'Eustorgio; twenty-six years later, the church of San Gottardo had another one built. While we do not have any information about the functioning of the clock of Sant'Eustorgio, the Dominican friar and chronicler Galvano Fiamma - describing the one of San Gottardo - wrote that « it was a marvellous clock, with a big hammer striking a bell twenty-four times, as twenty-four are the hours of the day and of the night. Thus, it rings once for the first hour of the day, twice for the second […]. For this reason, it is possible to distinguish one particular hour from another, that is extremely useful for people of any condition. »[6] The admiration that Fiamma showed in his tale clearly states how these tools were considered as extraordinary novelties, providers of prestige for the city and its entire community.

1.3. City trumpeters

Along with bells, trumpet blasts were the other most frequent sound signals in Medieval cities. Their tasks ranged from giving out warning signals in case of fire or danger, to accompanying important announcements or leading figures as heralds, or even to joining public events as entertainers.

According to Bonvesin de la Riva, during the Communal era, the municipality of Milan used to hire six[7] trumpeters (*tubicines*), described as honourable and egregious men. They used to live as nobles, riding horses as a symbol of the city's splendour. As Bonvesin claims, Milanese trumpets were played in such a different way from in all the other cities that their sound alone was capable to strike fear and to command respect. In his *De magnalibus urbis Mediolani*, Bonvesin specified that all six Milanese trumpeters belonged to the highest social classes, paid no less than two horses per person over a regular wage. Their functions ranged from following the *podestà* (the head of the city) through the streets in his public appearances, to playing as heralds in order to attract the people's attention before public announces, even to joining the city's army in battle. Bonvesin, indeed, emphasises Milanese trumpeters' military worth, specifying that their tents at the battlefront were entirely paid by the municipality.[8]

Furthermore, Corio informs about several occasions in which trumpets and trumpeters had been implied, either as criers, heralds or entertainers. During the first years of the fifteenth century the Guelphs occupied Porta Nuova, threatening the Ghibelline Visconti: along with the Duke, the *capitani di ventura* « Jacopo dal Verme, Zamboni and Antonio Visconti wore

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[3] The Italian *Suonare a stormo* means ringing the bells with rapid strokes of hammer in order to inform people about a threatening situation.

[4] BERNARDINO CORIO, *La storia di Milano, riveduta e annotata dal Prof. Angelo Butti e da Luigi Ferrario. Vol II,* Milano: Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1975, p. 486.

[5] CORIO 1975, p. 515.

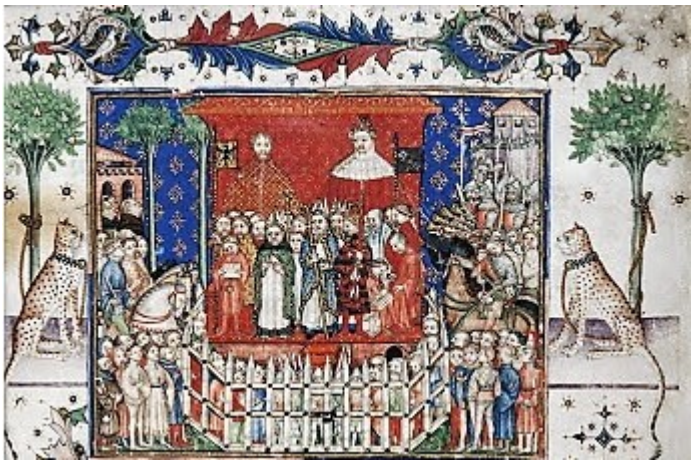
[6] My translation from GALVANO FIAMMA, *Gualvanei de La Flamma ordinis praedicatorum Opusculum de rebus gestis ab Azone, Luchino et Johanne vicecomitibus: ab anno MCCCXXVIII usque ad annum MCCCXLII*, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores* XII/IV, edited by Carlo Castiglioni, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1938, p. 16.

[7] Their number seemed to remain unchanged even during the XVI and XVII-century. See ROBERT L. KENDRICK, *The Sounds of Milan*, 1585-1650, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 64.

[8] BONVESIN DE LA RIVA, *Le meraviglie di Milano*, edited by Paolo Chiesa, Milan: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla-Mondadori, 2009, p. 51 and 131.

their weapons and sent trumpeters (*trombetti*) through the city to shout that all those who loved their ruler should have gathered in arms in the Corte dell'Arengo. »[9]

By the end of the fourteenth century onward, when Milan turned into the Viscontian *signoria*, trumpeters became functional images of the new lordly power. Describing the parade which accompanied Giangaleazzo from the Castle of Porta Giovia to the basilica of Sant'Ambrogio during the ceremony of his ducal investiture (1395), Corio wrote that the Duke was followed by a « large number of jesters, and music instruments ».[10] Although he does not specify what kind of instruments he is talking about, we can imagine that such a pompous procession was followed by trumpets and other different types of winds. Nevertheless, further information is provided by an illuminated miniature painted in a Missal donated by the Duke to the church of Sant'Ambrogio.



Scene from *The crowning ceremony of Giangaleazzo Visconti* by Anovelo da Imbonate, in Giangaleazzo's Missal, now in Milan, Museo della Basilica di S. Ambrogio.

Here, Anovelo da Imbonate's illumination plainly shows the trumpeters' new status. The representation of Giangaleazzo's coronation shows on the right a group of trumpeters playing some long, straight-shaped instruments, perhaps buisines. Their sounds - being immediately associated with warrior bravery and with the nobility of the trumpeters themselves – now identified the new Duke's image of greatness and royalty, strengthening the legitimation of his power. From that moment onward, indeed, chronicles started referring to Milanese trumpeters as 'ducal *pifferi*', mostly employed to celebrate the arrival of important guests. Trumpets, thus, officially became the homage that the Dukes themselves paid as welcome. This happened in 1418, during Martin V's journey from the concluded Council of Constance to Rome; the newly elected Pope arrived in Milan where he consecrated the Duomo, still under construction. Corio accounts that when he entered the city, the Papal procession was preceded by the *pifferi ducali.*[11] We are now quite far from Bonvesin's statements: Milanese trumpeters started with being the voice of the city itself and, eventually, they became the voice of its ruler.

1.4.The spaces of music: streets, squares and parishes

Throughout the year, the sense of community was underlined by a consistent number of festivals and celebrations which all the citizens identified themselves with. The main events

[9] My translation from CORIO 1975, p. 486.
[10] My translation from CORIO 1975, p. 396.
[11] CORIO 1975, pp. 542-3.

usually matched the most important festivities of the liturgical calendar. All these feasts were celebrated with processions, the most common Medieval expression of devotion; there is little doubt that they were joined by the entire urban community. The largest part of the music (mostly chants) performed during these occasions must have been taken from the huge repertory of Saints and Marian litanies, belonging to the ancient traditional Milanese Ambrosian chant.

In his chronicle, titled *Opusculum*, Galvano Fiamma describes the most important traditional Milanese processions attended by both the Archbishop and the majority of the clergy (*diacones cardinales*). These processions took place on Christmas day, St. Stephen's, St. John the Evangelist's (i.e. 25th, 26th, 27th December), as well as on Corpus Domini and on Palm and Easter Sunday.[12] Thanks to Fiamma, we are well informed about the main routes that Milanese processions used to follow (see the map below). The Archbishop, followed by a crowd of devoted, proceeded on horseback from the main church (in fourteenth-century Milan either the winter or summer cathedrals of Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Tecla) to the churches of San Lorenzo, Sant'Ambrogio and the Dominican convent of Sant'Eustorgio.

Sometimes processions made use of musical instruments. This is the case of one of the most popular Milanese parade, recreating the journey of the Three Kings (*Festum Trium Regum*). Fiamma accounts the presence of trumpets joining this spectacular rite, established by Azzone Visconti's will. Staged for the first time during the Epiphany of 1336, the parade resembled a sacred play: three royally dressed men rode with an entourage of squires, monkeys, baboons and many other animals to San Lorenzo's colonnade, where they asked King Herod where the baby called Christ was supposed to be born. Then accompanied with the sounds of *tubae* and *bucinae* the parade moved to Sant'Eustorgio, where the three characters offered their gifts in front of the main altar, next to which a scene of the Nativity was set up.[13]

[12] FIAMMA 1938, p. 50.
[13] FIAMMA 1938, p. 22.

Fourteenth-century Milan (reconstructed in MAURO NATALE-SERENA ROMANO, *Arte lombarda dai Visconti agli Sforza*, Milan: Skira, 2015, p. 29). Three coloured harrows show the main routes followed during the most important Milanese religious processions.

- The blue one refers to the Corpus Domini (or Corpus Christi) procession. The Bishop and the faithful walked from the Major church to Sant'Ambrogio, then back to the cathedral, accompanied by chants (*cum cantibus*) and other *solemnitatibus mirabilibus*. (FIAMMA 1938, p. 19)
- The red one highlight the route follow on Palm Sunday. According to Galvano, the Bishop rode from the major church to San Lorenzo, where, after his sermon, he blessed some olive branches and the palms in front of the Roman colonnade; a decorated *crux cristalina* was offered the Archbishop, who proceeded on horseback to the church of Sant'Ambrogio blessing the crowd with the cross, followed by the clerics holding the palms. (FIAMMA 1938, pp. 49-50)
- The dashed black one marks the aforementioned parade of the Three kings.

1.5. The construction of Duomo. Music as the expression of civic devotion and pride

In 1386 the building project of a new cathedral was officially commenced by the will of Giangaleazzo Visconti. Aiming to express his own devotion to the Virgin after the defeat of his uncle Bernabò in the 1385 *coup d'état* – which allowed him to became the new lord of Milan – Giangaleazzo wanted the new Duomo to be dedicated to the birth of Mary (*Mariae nascenti*).

The Duomo's foundation stone, showing the starting date of its building
(literally, "The beginning of Milan's Duomo was in the year 1386")

Although the ducal will held a crucial role, his contribution to the construction of the Duomo was confined only to some occasional donation, which had not been regularly paid before 1396.[14] The most prominent contributions had been granted by the citizens, who seemed to have considered the project a matter of civic pride as well as of devotion. The large amounts of donations were entirely controlled by a specific institution: the Fabbrica del Duomo, a sort of financial and economic agency, addressed to the supervision and maintenance of the building site.

The oblations had been provided mostly in form of alms, testaments and even indulgences.[15] Anyway, it is interesting to note that the Milanese people demonstrated their devotion and support to their Duomo also through a large use of music and chants. The documents inserted in the *Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo* accounts a consistent number of musical events spontaneously set up by different parishes and *porte*. All these events are extremely meaningful, since they state the community's contribution to a common scope. The first one was organised on the initiative of the Fabbrica itself. During the feast of the Assumption (15th August 1387) the Fabbrica and its deputies (*Dodici di provvisione*) arranged a spectacular procession, attended by the entire monastic and clerical community; the commune marched to Santa Maria Maggiore with its trumpeters and pipers, and the parade raised over 600 *lire*.[16] Giangaleazzo himself took part in the procession. The Duke,

[14] He promoted indeed a favourable financial policy, granting an easier circulation of merchandise and materials reserved to the construction.

[15] In occasion of the 1390 Jubilee, the deputies obtained from Boniface IX that half of the oblations paid for the indulgences had to be paid for the Milanese Duomo. See SOLDI RONDININI, *La fabbrica del Duomo come espressione dello spirito religioso e civile della società milanese. (Fine sec. XIV-sec XV)*, in *Saggi di storia e storiografia visconteo-sforzesche*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1984, pp. 56-7.

[16] EVELYN S. WELCH, *Art and authority in Renaissance Milan*, New Haven-London: Yale University Press 1995, p. 61.

moreover, provided his ducal *pifferi* to the Fabbrica, which largely employed them until 1430, when Filippo Maria requested them back.[17]

Along with public processions, even theatrical displays had been widely organised to collect alms on the Fabrica's behalf. The six city *porte*, indeed, competed in staging dramatic displays and allegorical representations, in order to raise as much money as possible for the cathedral's benefit. These events were paid both by the Fabbrica deputies and the parish *anziani*. A wooden stage used to be set in front of the façade of Santa Maria Maggiore, in front of which we can imagine the entire community of citizens gathered. The plays we are aware of ranged from 1389, when Porta Vercellina performed the story of Jason and Medea, to 1423 when Porta Ticinese staged an astrological display of the seven planets gods; in that same year, Porta Comasina set a historical play concerning the defeat of the Count d'Armagnac in Alessandria by the Visconti's army, while Porta Nuova performed Aeneas and Dido's story.[18] Although the documents do not mention any musical performance, it can be easily imagined its involvement on these occasions, either in form of chant or instrumental insertions.

A special mention should also be given to the huge involvement of female devotion, first of all the members of the ducal family – first and foremost Caterina Visconti (Giangaleazzo's second wife). The *Annali* recorded a large variety of donations made by women of any social condition: noblewomen, as well as wealthy widows, and even prostitutes. We are aware of diverse female initiatives to collect money and oblation to be addressed to the Fabbrica; many of them concerned forms of public singing. The most popular ones were the so-called *cantegore*, processions during which ladies and young women danced and sang accompanied by trumpets and *pifferi*. In 1387 a group of women, dressed in white, held a special event of public singing during the feast of St. John the Baptist and Peter. This event took place on the same day every year during the following years (the *Annali* use the expression "*secumdum consuetudinem servatam annuatim*"), as testified by a document dated 30th June 1423.[19]

Since the documents do not provide any information about the music that could be heard on these occasions, some reportorial considerations are only assumable. Simple and monophonic songs could have been the largest part of this music. Even the *lauda* could have been one of the most involved. Developed in central Italy during the thirteenth century, the *laudi* were dedicated mainly to Christ's Passion as well as to Christmas and Easter time. Due to the simplicity of their forms and the clarity of their content (written both in Latin and in Vernacular), the *laudi* spread quite soon through all the peninsula. Mendicant orders (in particular the Dominicans) had a key role in the circulation of this genre, exploited as a functional preaching tool. The characters from the Bible acquired more human and humble traits, being thus ideal for the dissemination of the Scripture's teachings.[20]

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[17] GIAN NICOLA VESSIA-GRAZIELLA DE FLORENTIIS, *Sei secoli di musica nel Duomo di Milano*, Milan: N.E.D.,1986, p. 47.

[18] See ETTORE VERGA, *Storia della vita milanese*, Milano: Industrie grafiche Moneta 1931, pp. 114-5 and WELCH 1995, p. 61.

[19] ANNALI *Appendix*, in GAETANO CESARI-FABIO FANO, *La Cappella Musicale del Duomo di Milano,* Milano: Ricordi, 1956, p. 97.

[20] On the history and the development of the *lauda* see IGNAZIO BALDELLI, *La lauda e i disciplinati, in Il movimento dei disciplinati nel settimo centenario del suo inizio (Perugia-1260), Covegno Internazionale, Perugia, 25-28 settembre 1960,* Centro di Ricerca e Studio sul Movimento dei Disciplinati, 1986, pp. 338-68.

It is not surprising that the *lauda* became popular also in Milan, where the Dominicans were well represented in Sant'Eustorgio. Here, friars could have undoubtedly contributed to its spread among the citizens, and the numerous events that the Fabbrica sponsored by the end of the fourteenth century could have largely implied this genre. In Milan, the history of the *lauda* was marked by a particular event: between 1399 and 1400, a peace movement of white-dressed penitents, called Bianchi, travelled all along the peninsula. The impact of their arrival in Milan was reported by Corio as follows:

> At the same time, a great novelty happened, since a crowd of men, women, girls, shop-boys, young and old, citizens, peasants, nobles, humbles, laymen, and priests, all barefoot, completely covered with white clothes […] came from Piedmont to Italy; then they started to be followed by the dwellers of the nearby towns and villages, from where they (the *Bianchi*) come; and for eight consecutive days they visited three country-churches, where they usually sang a Mass. They knelt in front of every cross they saw, shouting *Misericordia* for three times; then they chanted the Sunday oration and the salute to the Virgin. During their first arrival, they sang *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, *Ante crucem lacrymosa etc*. rhymes composed by St. Bernard, the Litanies or other prayers.

Further details on the spectacular processions organised by the Bianchi has been accounted by the main chroniclers of the period: Giorgio Stella, Giovanni Sercambi, Luca Dominici da Pistoia and Coluccio Salutati.[21] According to them, the Bianchi had a large repertoire of *laudi*, both Latin and Vernacular; otherwise, the main one was just the *Stabat Mater*. Stella reported how this prayer used to be sung during processions: their text was divided into *terzine* and while two soloists (maybe in unison) chanted a stanza, all the other attendees sang the first stanza as a refrain. In addition to this information, Sercambi's account added that, after having sung the *lauda*, they recited a *Pater*, followed by the prayer *Oremus Domine Jesu Christe*. Sercambi also informs about another Latin *lauda*, *Signum crucis factum* and about other seven *laudi* on Italian texts.[22] These *laudi* were accompanied by musical instruments; according to Dominici da Pistoia, indeed, during their processions, the Bianchi, carrying the cross, chanted the *Stabat Mater* accompanied by a viola player. As he wrote, the organ was involved too, especially when the parade entered the Duomo of Lucca. Moreover, it seems that a polyphonic setting was implied: during the feast of *Corona della Spina di Cristo*, the *Bianchi* sang in front of the church using *canti* and *biscanti*. Their *laudi* - *Stabat Mater* in particular - spread throughout all Italy, reaching such a high popularity, that, since 1399, we are aware of *laudi* associated with the recitation of Vespers and with sermons.

As I said above, Mendicant orders as well as lay confraternities undoubtedly contributed to the diffusion of *laudi* and other para-liturgical chants. Giovanni Visconti strongly supported hospitals and pious places, granting them lands and amounts of money. The main Milanese *confraternitas* was the *Luogo Pio delle Quattro Marie*: devoted to the assistance of poor and beggars, it played an active role in the construction of the Duomo. These *hospitalia*[23] and *pia loca* were in touch with lay confraternities, such as that of the Disciplinati, housed in Santa Marta, Santa Maria in Porta Ticinese and San Giovanni

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[21] See BERNARD TOSCANI, *Contributi alla storia musicale delle laude dei Bianchi*, in *Studi Musicali*, 9 (1980), pp. 161-70.

[22] TOSCANI 1980, p. 162-4. On *laudi* on Italian text see p. 163, note.

[23] Although we are not informed about music performances in Milanese hospitals, this practice has not to be excluded. On music in Medieval hospitals see *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, edited by Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler, «York Studies in Medieval Theology», III, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001, pp. 135-53.

decollato delle Case Rotte.[24] All these confraternities could undoubtedly have involved music and forms of sacred chants and *laudi* during their meetings or the events that they promoted.

Moreover, the hypothesis of a possible connection between Giovanni Visconti and forms of para-liturgical chant seems to be corroborated by the Perugia fragment *I-PEu*; the fragment contains works by Giovanni da Firenze, Jacopo da Bologna and by a certain Franciscus de Cumis. De Cumis was a friar (likely from Como) in the convent of San Domenico in Genoa, which remained under the Milanese control until 1356. He is represented in *I-PEu* by three sacred compositions: a *Sancus*, a *Patrem* and an *Agnus Dei*. Interestingly, the three-voice *Patrem* is a section of the *Credo* translated into Vernacular; a translation of a section of the *Ordinarium Missae* which clearly reflects educational scopes, making the theological content of the *Credo* easier for all the faithful to understand. There is a sentence, in particular, which seems to stress precisely the tie between Giovanni Visconti and Franciscus' *Patrem*: « no re temando ni imperatore » (fearing neither kings nor emperors), which highlights the Ghibelline Viscontean policy.[25]

1.6.Music and musicians inside the Duomo

The most reliable sources concerning the first stages of the *Cappella musicale del Duomo* are the *Ordinazioni capitolari*. Thanks to the *Dati et recepti*, to the *Libri Mandatorum* and the *Libri expensorum*, we are informed about the names of singers, organists and *magistri* in Milan's cathedral. Due to a fire in 1906, the documents from 1390s to 1444 are now irretrievably lost; consequently, the only available sources regarding those years are contained in the *Annali della Fabbrica*.

The first document that clearly states a musical activity inside the cathedral is the *Ordinazione* dated 10th August 1396 (ten years had passed after the foundation stone had been laid), in which a set of musical books of Ambrosian Chant was requested to Giangaleazzo; other previous documents involve only the organ and the organist, Antonio Monti da Prato. Martino de' Stremiti da Concorezzo was commissioned to build a large organ, substituted in the 1440s by a new instrument.[26]

1.6.1. The first *Maestro di cappella*

It is not until 1402 that the names of composers, musicians and singers working at the Duomo chapel were known. The first *maestro di cappella* was Matteo da Perugia, appointed by the Fabbrica as *magister a cantu* and as *dischantor*. The musician's contract of employment reports all his tasks and salary: Perusio was paid 48 florins monthly to sing during solemn masses and Vespsers and to provide the choir with "sweet melodies" (*corumnque eiusdem ecclesie dulcibus mellodiis honoret*). He also had to teach three boys - chosen by the deputies - in a house provided by the Fabbrica next to the Duomo façade; here he could also have his own school open to anyone who wanted to learn, but he was not allowed to teach elsewhere.

Although precise information on Matteo's early years are not available, considering his French compositions in the Codex Estense (*Mod*), he could have spent a certain period of time in France, maybe at the Papal court in Avignon or in Paris where he could have met his future patron, Pietro Filargo. We can assume that Matteo could have made his first musical experiences in his native Perugia. The city had, indeed, a long tradition of secular

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[24] GALLIANO CILIBERTI, *Il mecenatismo musicale di Luchino e Giovanni Visconti*, in *Frammenti musicali del Trecento*, edited by Biancamaria Brumana and Galliano Ciliberti, Firenze: Olschki, 2004, p. 84.

[25] CILIBERTI 2004, pp. 65-92.

[26] CESARI-FANO 1956, pp.98-9.

music, cultivated by the so-called *canterini*, singers and musicians hired by the magistrates as entertainers in public festivals and ceremonies. When the Fabbrica engaged Mateo, Perugia was part of the Viscontis' dominions. It is noteworthy that the composer's arrival in Milan took place at the same time in which Pietro Filargo was appointed as Archbishop. Thus, it is likely that the influent clergyman, close to Giangaleazzo, promoted the hiring of his *protégé*.

Matteo worked at the Duomo from 1402 to 1406, when he was seemingly in Pavia with Cardinal Filargo - being still salaried by the cathedral. In the meantime, because of a tragic pestilence, Matteo's and the organist Monti da Prato's wages were suspended for a short time; in the same year, no services had been officiated in the Duomo. Anyway, some months later the salaries of the two musicians were re-established with a little increase to help them in the difficulties caused by the plague and by the famine. Subsequently, in 1407 some citizens asked for the dismissal of Perusio from his office, because of his negligence and carelessness of his duties. The same year, in July, the relations between the *maestro* and the Fabbrica ended; the lack of documents on him suggests that in that time he was definitely in the service of Filargo in Pavia. When the latter was elected antipope in Pisa, Matteo probably followed him. Nevertheless, after his patron's death in 1409, the composer seemed not to have remained for long at the antipapal chapel of his successor, John XXIII.

In 1414 Matteo's name reappeared in the Fabbrica documents. Between 1407 and 1414, the maestro had been substituted by two unknown singer-ministers. Matteo worked again in the Milanese cathedral no later than 1418, as can be read in a record in which Ambrogio da Pessano complained that his wage was consistently smaller than that of his predecessor, Perusio. Da Pessano had been *magister* since 1411, with the same tasks of Metteo's. From 1414 - when the former maestro returned - to 1416, the chapel had two *dischantores* and an organist (still Monti da Prato, who retired officially in 1416), assisted by a certain Zilio da Pioltello.

Since in the *Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo* Matteo was recorded as *musichus*, we can assume that he was surely a layman and professional musician.[27] Despite the fact that no compositions by Perusio can be found in the Fabbrica's archive, *Mod* transmits a set of secular and sacred songs attributed to the first *maestro di cappella*. This group of songs could have likely been composed during his stay in Pavia, as part of Filargo's household. Anyway, it is very plausible that the largest part of his musical production at the Duomo – mostly dealing with enriching chants with discant – could have been improvised.[28]

1.6.2. The second *Maestro*

The last years of the chapel's earliest life stage are characterised by constant changes. After the departure of Matteo and Monti da Prato, Ambrogio da Pessano remained *biscantor* of

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[27] See CLAUDIO SARTORI, *Matteo da Perugia e Bertrand Ferragut, i due primi Maestri de Cappella del Duomo di Milano*, in *Acta Musicologica*, 28 (1956), pp. 12-27.

[28] On the improvised practice of discant see ROB C. WEGMAN, *From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450-1500*, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 49, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 409-479. Anyway, among Matteo's sacred works collected in *Mod*, the motet honouring St. Laurence *Laurea martirii / Conlaudana* (whose tenor is actually an Ambrosian Vespers antiphon dedicated to St. Laurence) and a three-voice *Gloria* clearly fit the Ambrosia rite. This Gloria, in contrast with those related to the Roman rite, presents a structural division not at the qui tollis, but at the suscipe deprecationen nostram, where the talea's second statement begins; moreover, its rhythmic complexities resemble the typical Ambrosian solo florid singing tradition. Thus, as Maiani pointed out, these compositions had been almost certainly composed during Matteo's appointment at the cathedral. BRAD MAIANI, *Notes on Matteo da Perugia: adapting the Ambrosian Liturgy in polyphony for the Pisan Council*, in *Studi Musicali*, 23 (1994), pp. 10-2.

the chapel, while Pedrazzino Bigli da Pioltello (Monti's pupil) was appointed as new organist, helped first by Zilio da Pioltello, later substituted by Protasio Luono (1423). The payment books of the Fabbrica mentioned the names of two *cantores*, Donato Ambrogio da Piacenza (called *Georgius de Pontulo*) and the friar Pietro da San Severo.

Since da Pessano had never been quoted as *magister*, this title was never mentioned again until 1425. The second official *maestro di cappella* of the Duomo was a French minister, recorded as *Don Beltrandus de Avignone*, *musichus* or as *Maestro Dom. Bertand di Avignone,* perhaps the French composer Bertrand Ferragut. According to Sartori, he was named *Dominus* from 1425 to 1428, while from 1429 to 1430 *Presbiter* and his wage was similar to that of the fist *maestro*'s. He left the Duomo in 1430 by his own free will. A document from the *Annali*, recording a request (*supplica*) made by three *cantores* after the maestro's departure, gives further information about *Don Beltrandus*. The three men expressed their will to divide the former *magister* Beltramo de Ferraguti's duties as the new choir masters.

When these three *cantores*, i.e. the *soprano* Ambrosius de Machis, the *tenorista* Jacobus de Lavetiis and Beltraminus de Villa, rector of the Church of S. Vittore ai 40 Martiri, officially took over de Ferragutis' duties, the chapel accounted a total of four singers and an organist. Its activity went on unaltered until 1442, when the records show the names of Nicolaus de Comitibus, *bischantator*, Moysino da Besana and Donato da Lugano. The last change the chapel saw during the Viscontis' reign was the substitution of Donato da Lugano with Santino da Taverna, who worked in the Duomo from 1444 to 1447. [29]

The history of the musical life inside the Duomo close the first part of this work. I find this place particularly noteworthy. Not only was it the symbol of Milanese church and devotion; it represents also the involvement of the most skilled composers of the time in making music for the entire commune. The case of Perusio is revealing: not only was he hired by the Municipality to conduct the Duomo's choir, but – according to his duties - he was also allowed to have his own school and to teach anyone who wished to learn music. He can thus truly be seen as a musician at the service of the community.

Part two

2. Music for the few

The courts and its members created on their own a closed, small society, totally overwhelmed by its own rules and etiquette. Courtly life was, indeed, a succession of celebrations, banquets, and balls all surrounded by a considerable quantity of music.

When Bernabò and Galeazzo II Visconti shared their power over Milan, they established two different courts. While Bernabò remained in Milan, his brother Galeazzo moved to Pavia, where he promoted the construction of his own residence. The castle of Pavia was conceived both as an administrative centre and a place of delights; not only did it host the ducal chancellery and administration, but it was also designed as the image of refinement and sophistication that both Galeazzo and his son Giangaleazzo aspired to.

The Visconti's need of legitimation and international recognition as rightful *domini* of Milan started from the very beginning of their *signoria*. Due to the lack of legitimacy of a hereditary title and kingdom, the Visconti sought to justify their authority providing images

[29] See SARTORI 1956, pp. 12-27.

of magnificence.[30] For this purpose, the Visconti favoured artistic and musical patronage, making their court a meeting point for artists and musicians from all over Europe; through their patronage, indeed, the Visconti aimed to create an image of enlightened sovereign and dispenser of magnanimity, on par with the other European royal houses.

The promotion of culture and arts was not merely restricted to the creation of a princely court. Galeazzo II wanted Pavia to be both the administrative and cultural capital of his reign. In this regard, he established the creation of two important institutions: the library, housed in one of the four towers of his castle, and the Univesity of Pavia, named *Studium generale*. The presence of Petrarch, who arrived in Milan likely on Giovanni Visconti's invitation, influenced Galeazzo to embark on his policy of cultural renewal. The poet, certainly the most renowned of his time, gave a consistent impetus to the gathering of manuscripts in the Visconti's collection, whose number was subsequently enhanced by Giangaleazzo. Both the library and the University soon became a lure for Italian as well as for international scholars; the Visconti's library, in particular, was opened both to students and lecturers working at the *Studium*. The large collection of books accounted several volumes on musical matters, most of them concerning French music and music theory.[31] The dynasty was indeed both politically and culturally linked to France. As a result of the political relation between the Visconti and the royal house of France, the interest in transalpine literature and Provençal poetry increased consistently: copies of de Mereuil's, de Bornelh's and Cardinal's poems as well as the *Roman de la rose* or the *Dit du Lion* by Machaut had place in Pavia. A prose version of the *Ordre de Chévalerie* and a volume called *Ordinarium* testified that French tastes even influenced the Pavese court ceremonial. Easily, cultural and artistic exchange between the two countries involved also music.

2.1. Musical life at court

Our knowledge of courtly instrumental music is limited only to a couple of *estampie* called *Isabella* and *Virtù*, conceivably dedicated to Isabella di Valois and Giangaleazzo, who – after his marriage with the daughter of Charles V- acquired the title of 'Count of Vertus', in Champagne.[32] The largest part of the instrumental repertoire was likely performed for purposes of entertainment. Entertaining courtiers and lords was, indeed, the first task of courtly music. The Milanese *signori*, first of all Bernabò Visconti, seemed to have strongly appreciated the presence of buffoons at court. In one of Matteo da Milano's three *Lamenti*[33] on the death of Bernabò, the poet mentioned the lord's love for buffoons, in particular for a certain Messer Dolcibene[34], probably the most famous jester in Milan, even called 'King

[30] On the first stages of the Viconti's policy of self-promotion through artistic patronage see LUIS GREEN, *Galvano Fiamma, Azzone Visconti and the revival of the classic theory of magnificence*, in Journal of the Walburg and Courtauld Institute, 13 (1990), pp. 98-115.

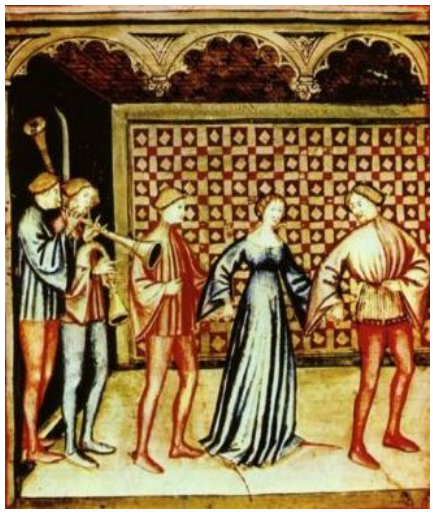
[31] See F. ALBERTO GALLO, *Musica nel castello*, Bologna: il Mulino, 1992, pp. 59-82.

[32] See F. ALBERTO GALLO, *La polifonia nel Medioevo*, «Storia della musica a cura della Società Italiana di Musicologia», 3, Turin: EDT, 1991, pp. 68.

[33] The *Lamento* is a typical popular genre – widely cultivated in Tuscan jesters' literature – which deals with historical, fictional and educational topics. See *La storia di Milano. La signoria dei Visconti (1310-1392)*, vol. IV, (Fondazione Treccani per la storia di Milano), 1955, pp. 605-6.

[34] On Dolcibene see EZIO LEVI, *Francesco di Vannozzo e la lirica nelle corti lombarde durante la seconda metà del secolo XIV*, Firenze: Galletti e Cocci, 1908; CLAUDIO GALLICO, *La musica a Milano nel Trecento*, in *Petrarca e la Lombardia, atti del Convegno di Studi. Milano, 22-23 maggio 2003*, edited by Giuseppe Frasso, Giuseppe Velli e Maurizio Vitale, Rome-Padua: Antenore, 2005, pp. 65-76 and MAURIZIO VITALE, *Culura e lingua a Milano nel Trecento*, in *Petrarca e la Lombardia, atti del Convegno di Studi. Milano, 22-23 maggio 2003*, Rome-Padua: Antenore, 2005, pp. 31-49.

of buffoons' (*rex istrionum*). He is mentioned in *Il Paradiso degli Alberti* by Gherardi da Prato, who praised the capabilities of Dolcibene, described as a Florentine (close friend with Francesco Sacchetti and protagonist of some of his novels) skilled in playing more than one instrument (the organ and the lute among others) and in composing *canzonette in rittimi* (probably in counterpoint). Thus, his condition of particular gifted musician made Dolcibene an exception: not a mere entertainer (like most of his colleagues), but a composer appreciated and generously rewarded by his patrons for his own creativity.



The image on the left belongs to the illuminated copy of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* donated by Bernabò visconti to his daughter Verde. The painting refers to the section Sonare vel pulsare (instrumental music). Three musicians are playing respectively a portative organ, a viaella and a ciaramella, presumably common instruments at court. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. nouv. acq. latin 1613).
The image on the right represent a probable courtly dance, inserted in another copy of the *Tacuinum* illuminated by Giovannino De Grassi, part of the Visconti's book collection too. The drawing concerns the section named *Sonare et balare* (playing and dancing), in which Dance is depicted as a group of three elegant people dancing accompanied by ciaramellas. (Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, ms 4182).

The other example of recreational musical activity deals with polyphony, mostly with the caccia. Two cacce allude to Visconti's territories: *Con brachi assai, Segugi a corda* and *Per sparverare*. The first one had been set to music by Giovanni da Firenze and by Piero, while the second only by Jacopo. Both pieces quoted the name of Varin (or Varino), one of Visconti's hounds[35], but *Con brachi assai* has a stronger connection with the Milanese state: since the setting of this piece is the Lombard region on the banks of the river Adda, and the poem depicts a hunt which could have actually taken place during Luchino Visconti's reign.[36] As Dieckmann wrote, « Presumably, actual scenes served as a source for these pieces. For this reason the caccia accounts particularly for the need of entertainment in a court society. The hunt was an occupation and art of the high aristocracy; in the genre of the caccia it was transposed into music and poetry. The audience present at a musical event would have been identical with the hunting party represented in the caccia.

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[35] SANDRA DIECKMANN, *Con brachi assai*, *Segugi a corda*, *Per sparverare*. *The caccia at the court of the Visconti*, in *Kontinuität und Transformation in der italienischen Vokalmusik zwischen Due- und Quattrocento,* edited by Sandra Dieckmann, Oliver Huck et. al., New York, Georg Olms Verlag, 2007, p. 261.
[36] DIECKMANN 2007, p. 261.

Therefore, mirroring of a society that enjoys recognizing itself was certainly an important motive for the performance of *poesia per musica.* »[37]

2.2.The role of lute and harp at court

The most consistent part of courtly repertoire which has survived ranges from the compositions of the most renowned polyphonists of the late fourteenth century, to a set of poems lacking music notation. To the second category belongs the production of one of the most interesting poets at the service of Giangaleazzo, Francesco di Vannozzo. Born in Padua perhaps during the 1340s he was active at the courts of the Della Scala in Verona and in the Carrarese's in his hometown Padua. Vannozzo dedicated a set of eight sonnets (*Cantilena pro comite Virtutum*) to Giangaleazzo. The poet's musical skills are pointed out by Gherardi da Prato in his *Il Paradiso degli Alberti,* who informed that Vannozzo was not only a singer, but also a music teacher, particularly skilled in composing *canzonette ciciliane*.[38]

Vannozzo dedicated a set of seven poems to his two favourite instruments: the lute and the harp.[39] In these poems, the lute, the harp and the poet himself are three different characters, talking to each other. The poet apologizes to the lute, his old friend and companion, for having abandoned it in favour of his new passion, the harp. In one of these poems, the harp answers the lute's charges as follows:

Il tuo fratel Francesco a te mi manda,	Your brother Francesco sent me to you;
dove ponendo tutta sua speranza	placing all his hopes [in me],
m'ha tratto fuor del bel pays de Franza	he has brought me out of the beautiful country of France
per parte saporar nova vivanda,	in order to make you savour a new delight,
pregando te che mai tu non m'abanda,	begging you that you never neglected me
ch'a farse de comun poco s'avanza;	so that I become a common thing for those with little talent;
arpa mi chiamo per antico usanza	I am called harp by ancient usage,
che sopra ogni altro suon porto girlanda.	that takes the prize above all other sounds.
E giùrote per la dolce armonia,	And I swear to you by the sweet harmony
ch'esce di me, quando voglio, sì fatta,	that comes from me, when I wish,
che tutta zente s'adormenta in via.	that everyone will fall asleep because of me.
Se tu quel ami, che m'ha qui ritratta,	If you love him who brought me here,
io ti farò sentir tal melodia,	I shall make you hear such melody
che l'alma tua sarà, sempre rifatta.	That your soul will constantly be renewed.
Se 'l non ti piace, di' ch'io mi diparta:	
rendime al messo e rendigli la carta.	

[37] DIECKMANN 2007, p. 262.

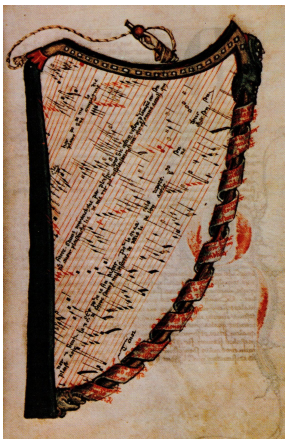
[38] Levi identified the *Ciciliane* or *Siciliane* with the *Strambotti*, simple structures of popular poetry. See LEVI 1908, pp. 320. Levi accounted some examples of *Siciliane*, showing that they were sung accompanied on the lute. LEVI 1908, pp. 320-7.

[39] *Sonnets XXIX-XXX* and *XXXIII-VII*, see Levi 1908; *Le rime di Francesco di Vannozzo*, edited by di ANTONIO MEDIN, Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua - Casa Carducci, 1928 and HOWARD MAYER BROWN, *The trecento harp*, in *Studies in the performance of late mediaeval music*, edited by Stanley Brooman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 35-73.

And if that doesn't please you, say that I should go away

Give me back to the courier, and give [your friend] the receipt.[40]

This sonnet is particularly meaningful: here, the harp replies to the lute introducing itself. The first information that the harp provides concerns its French origins. Vannozzo probably got acquainted with it after a journey to France, maybe during a stay in Avignon. The instrument continues its speech claiming to be a true novelty and affirming to be capable of new kinds of delight. Its melodies, indeed, are not only sweeter than any other sound, but they are also able to provide relief; like medicine, the harp can calm the soul through its own harmony, making the hearer fall asleep: the same effect of Orpheus's music on wildlife or of David's harp, whose thaumaturgical power was able to cure King Saul's disease. Two significant conclusions can be drawn from this group of poems: the first one is the obvious practice of accompanying poems with plucked string instruments, either the lute or the harp. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that Vannozzo's passion for the harp is not a coincidence; it perfectly matched the Francophile tastes of the Viscontian court, in which the harp seems to have been highly appreciated. The harp was, indeed, the instrument played by Giangaleazzo's daughter, Valentina, and loved by Verde. For the same reason, it seems not surprising that Jacob de Senleches' famous harp-shaped *virelai, La harpe de melodie*, was included in the Newberry Codex, which was copied in 1391 in Pavia by a certain frater G. de Anglia. The manuscript, containing a set of theoretical treatises on music, likely reflects both the court's and the *Studium*'s interest both in music theory and practice.[41]



Jacob de Senleches, *La harpe de melodie*, Chicago, Newberry Library, Ms. 54.1, f. 10r.

Here are the qualities of Senleches' harp:

La harpe de melodie	The harp of melody
Faite sanz merancholie	Made without melancholy
Par plaisir	for pleasure,
Doit bien chascun resjoir	has to delight every-one
Pour l'armonie	through the harmony [that they]

[40] BROWN 1983, p. 36-7.

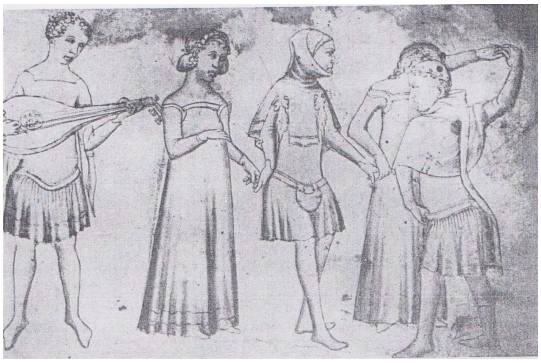
[41] On music and musical speculation in Pavia, see LUCIA MARCHI, *Music and University culture in late fourteenth-century Pavia*, in *Acta Musicologica*, 80/2 (2008), pp. 162-4.

Oir, sonner et veir. hear, play and see.

The same attitudes stated by Vannozzo make also Senleches' harp the 'king' of all instruments. The harp shows off its skills through pleasure (*plaisir*) and providing delight (*resjoir*), and every soul can benefit from its harmonies.

The case of Vannozzo, who decided to abandon the lute for the harp, seems to suggest that these two instruments were regarded and used differently at court. The first one, notoriously employed by buffoons, seems to have accompanied popular genres, such as jesters' performances or the frottola; indeed, in Sachella's frottola *Guai a quel pularo* (verses 22-8)[42], the poet mentioned the sounds of the *laguto* (lute) and of the *ghitarra*, as the two instruments that usually accompany his poems. Considering that these compositions were addressed to a celebrating audience, it looks like that the lute had been destined to entertaining genres. Harp seems to have been preferred to accompany the most elegant musical and poetic genres as well as worthy to be played by the members of the social elite.

Giovannino de Grassi. *Two ladies playing harp* (*Taccuino dei Disegni*, Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica). The elegant dresses and haircut of the two female figures plainly suggest their high social status. This painting seems to suggest the popularity acquired by the harp in fourteenth-century courts.



This drawing (part of a collection of Lombard drawings) plainly the recreational purposes the lute was employed for. Here indeed a group of people is dancing accompanied by the sound of a lute.

[42] *Frottola* LI, SUSTO 1990, pp. 233-39.

(New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. II, 2).

2.3.Music as political promotion

Music at court was not only limited to mere entertainment and recreational scopes. Certain kind of genres, the most complex and refined ones, had been involved as a means to affirm the Visconti's new political status of undisputed and legitimate rulers of the state. In this respect, the Viscontian court was particularly devoted to polyphony; fourteenth-century composers matched the lords' will inserting in their compositions homages to their patrons. The most renowned *Ars nova* and late-*Ars nova* composers seem to have spent time at the service of the *signoria*, since quotations and allusions to the dynasty have been found in the texts of their compositions.[43] Thus, it is easily assumable that these polyphonic pieces could have been composed or at least performed in Pavia and Milan to celebrate the family's power and patronage.

The first kind of allusion results from the coded insertion of the name of the patron (or of one of his relatives) in the lyrics of a piece. This is the case of a group of madrigals and motets that Jacopo da Bologna dedicated to Luchino Visconti. The first letters of the eight verses of Jacopo's madrigal *Lo lume vostro, dolce mio signore*, form the acrostic LVCHINUS, while verse 7 contains the coded name (*senhal*) of Luchinos's wife Isabella Fieschi, 'e sì bella'. Following the same technique, Jacopo inserted the name of Luchino in his two motets *Lux purpurata* and *Laudibus dignis* (this latter attributed to Jacopo): both of them show respectively the acrostics LVCHINVS VICECOMES and LVCHINV DUX, casting no doubts about their dedicatee. Another composition by Jacopo that can be considered as part of this set of "Viscontian pieces" is the madrigal *O in Italia felice Liguria*, which celebrates the birth of the twins Giovanni and Luchino Novello, Luchino's and Isabella's long-expected male heirs. The lyric, here, informs about the precise year, day and hour in which the twins were born.[44]

The other way in which composers paid homage to the Visconti patronage is through the citations and description of their mottos and coat of arms. The clearest example is Filippotto da Caserta's ballade *En attendant soufrir m'estuet*. The title plainly recalls Bernabò Visconti's motto *Sofrir m'estuet*, witnessing a plausible relationship between the composer and the Milanese lord. Filippotto's ballade, through a series of allusions and citations, is strongly linked to other two compositions, which open with the same words. The titles of these pieces are the following: *En attendant, esperance conforte*, by Jacob de Senleches and *En attendant d'amer la douce vie*, by Jo. Galiot. All three musically or textually quoted the anonymous *rondeau Esperance qui en mon cuer s'enbat*, which, in turn, derives from Machaut's *ballade En amer a douce vie* (from *Remende de fortune*), whose music was surely well known at court. *Eseperance* was, indeed, a very popular composition, found in many sources: its diffusion throughout Europe is well known, thus, its presence in Northern

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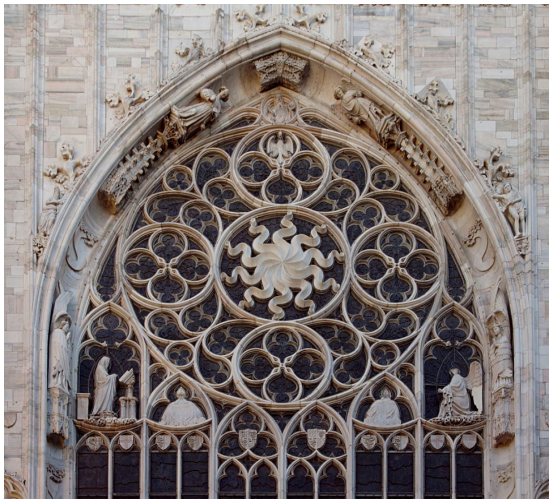
[43] See URSULA GUÜNTHER, *Unusual Phenomena in the Transmission of Late Fourteenth-Century Polyphonic Music*, in *Musica Disciplina*, 38 (1984), pp. 87-109; REINHARD STROHM, *Filippotto da Caserta, ovvero i Francesi in Lombardia*, in *In Cantu et in sermone. For Nino Pirrotta on his 80th Birthday*, edited by Fabrizio della Seta and Franco Piperno, Firenze: Olschki, 1989, pp. 65-74. and JOHN NÁDAS-AGOSTINO ZIINO, *The Lucca Code. (Codice Mancini). Lucca, Archivio di Stato, MS 184-Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale 'Augusta'*, MS 3065, Lucca: LIM, 1990.

[44] See ELENA ABRAMOV-VAN RIJK, *Luchino Visconti, Jacopo da Bologna: Courting and Patron, in Studi Musicali*, 3, 2012, pp. 7-62 and MARIA CARACI VELA, *La polifonia profana a Pavia negli anni di Bernabò e Gian Galeazzo Visconti: linee di sviluppo di un progetto culturale europeo*, in *Courts and Courtly Cultures in Early Modern Italy and Europe. Models and Languages*, edited by Simone Albonico and Serena Romano, *Studi Lombardi* 8, Rome: Viella, 2016, pp. 241-60.

Italy can easily be assumed, perhaps contained in a now-lost anthology.[45] It is not to be excluded that the three *En attendant* songs could have been composed contemporaneously, in the same contexts: perhaps some kind of musical competition based on the same *rondeau*. Filippotto's *En attendant* is also quoted the three-voice *virelai Sus une fontayne* by Johannes Ciconia;[46] for this reason, it seems likely that the two composers have met in person - maybe precisely in Pavia. In fact, this hypothesis results corroborated by Ciconia's three-voice prolation canon *La ray au soleil*, which described Giangaleazzo's coat of arms through its two symbols: the radiant sun (or *razza*) and the quotation of the impresa *A bon droit*.



The *razza* (i.e. the sunfish, resembling the Christological image of the reigning sun) sculpted in the centre of the Duomo's apse window as a clear statement of Giangaleazzo's patronage over the cathedral.

This aim to prestige clearly reflects the profound admiration of both Bernabò and Giangaleazzo toward the courts of France and Burgundy. Gaston III, Count of Foix's elegant and highly cultured court was a melting pot for artists and musicians. It inspired the Visconti to follow its same ways to legitimize their new lordly and ducal power. Taking over his uncle's *devise*, *Sofrir m'estuet*, creating his own symbols (the *razza*) and motto *A bon droit*, Giangaleazzo showed himself as the rightful successor of Bernabò and the head of a new dynasty. Pursuing this aim, the promotion of culture and patronage introduced the court of the Visconti into the same cultural circuit of the other European royal and aristocrat courts. As in the case of the motets and ballades dedicated to Gaston Fébus, even the music composed for the Visconti played an important role in supporting their power and international recognition.[47] As we have seen, their mottos and emblems became the subjects of numerous polyphonic songs through which composers, flaunting the *subtilitas* of their techniques, courted their patronage.

Ars subtilior, late fourteenth-century polyphonic vanguard found a breeding-ground in Visconti's Milan. In Pavia, in particular, the synergy between the Francophile court, the library and the University seems to have favored hybridization between French and Italian polyphony and notation. This trend is exemplified by the music of Matteo da Perugia,

[45] YOLANDA PLUMLEY, *Citation and allusion in the late Ars nova: the case of Esperance and the En attendant songs*, in *Early Music History*, 18 (1999), pp. 287-363.

[46] On the plausible relationship between Ciconia and Filippotto see ANNE STONE, *A singer at the fountain: homage and irony in Ciconia's 'Sus une fontaine'*, in *Music and Letters*, 82 (2001), pp. 361-90.

[47] See CARACI VELA 2016.

Filippotto and Antonello da Caserta (who seems to have dedicated his madrigal *Del glorioso titolo d'esto duce* to Giangaleazzo's coronation). The largest part of Antonello's and Matteo's compositions - along with several of Filippotto's - are all inserted in *Mod*. The manuscript, likely originally compiled either in Pavia or at the Antipapal court of Bologna, is one of the main sources of Northern-Italian interest in *Ars subtilior*.[48] The *Studium generale*, in particular, employed many scholars interested in musical matters and mensuralism, such as Giovanni Dondi, Johannes de Janua and the aforementioned Pietro Filargo. Moreover, we should not forget that music, due to his status of *Scientia*, has always been approached speculatively in Medieval universities. Considering its presence inside the *quadrivium*, it is conceivable that in Pavia music had been taught by professors or lecturers in Natural Philosophy, Astronomy or Mathematics, even though we are not informed about any musical degree available for students.[49]

Conclusions

Apart from the wide group of polyphonic songs written to please the Visconti and collected in the most important manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth century (*Mod*, *Squarcialupi*, *Reina*, *Pit*, *Mancini* etc.), there is a large part of this Medieval musical universe that has not reached us, even in chronicles. This music was carried out by jesters, buffoons and travelling musicians, who performed their vernacular or instrumental repertoire during different occasions and in various contexts; market sellers, who weekly tried to draw buyers' attention;[50] jesters performing at the main fairs;[51] instrumentalists playing in taverns in exchange for a cup of wine;[52] and even important events such as the Carnival have been neglected by Fiamma or Bonvesin in their careful portraits of daily urban life.[53] All this lost repertoire, which now can only be imagined or supposed, had been undoubtedly integral part of the sonic universe of Medieval Milan; any citizen, regardless of their social status, could have heard it, walking through the streets.

As a final consideration, I found noteworthy how intricate and rich this musical universe could have been. Popular genres or genres involving popular topics (such as the frottola) were largely appreciated at court, which is commonly considered as the place devoted to polyphony *par excellence*; but, at the same time, the music of the most skilled composers (such as Matteo da Perugia's – as we have seen) could be heard at court as well as outside it. Moreover, even the ducal trumpeters, who were hired as courtly musicians, spread their sounds through Milan, contributing in collecting oblations in favour of the Duomo.

This wide set of music and sounds crossed the boundaries of social contexts, moving from the most sophisticated courtly and academic environments to the main streets and squares of the city, becoming, therefore, part of the diverse complex of musical experiences of the Milanese late Medieval soundscape.

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48 CARLA VIVARELLI, *Le composizioni francesi di Filippotto e Antonello da Caserta tradite nel Codice estense Alpha.M.5.24*, Pisa: ETS, 2005. pp. 3-6.

49 MARCHI 2008, pp. 143-64.

50 According to Bonvesin, markets used to take place on Friday and Saturday in different parts of Milan. BONVESIN 2009, p. 83.

51 Fairs in Milan were held four times a year, on the feasts of St. Laurence, St. Ambrose, the Assumption and St. Bartholomew. BONVESIN 2009, p. 85.

52 This image (maybe merely poetic) is used by Francesco di Vannozzo to complain about his poverty. See MEDIN, p. 240.

53 The only reference to Carnival is made by Sachella in one of his *Frottole*, but not any reference to music can be found. *Frottola* XL, SUSTO 1990, pp. 175-185.