

Donato da Cascia [Magister Dominus Donatus de Florentia]

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(*fl* Florence, 2nd half of the 14th century). Italian composer. The position of Donato's works in the Squarcialupi Codex (**I-Fl** 87) suggests that he was somewhat younger than Lorenzo and older than Landini. The poet Franco Sacchetti designated Donato as 'presbiter de Cascia' (Cascia near Florence, not the Umbrian Cascia). Donato has nothing to do with the Dominus Donati who is mentioned by Clercx as applying for a canonry in Liège in 1344. The titles *Ser*, *Dominus* and *Don* as well as his dress as depicted in **I-Fl** 87 (f.71v) indicate that he was a Benedictine or a Camaldolensian.

Very little information can be gleaned from the texts of Donato's works, which are almost all madrigals. The two lost settings of texts by Sacchetti presumably date from the 1350s. *Sovran' uccello se'* was possibly composed on the occasion of one of the two journeys to Rome made by the Emperor Charles IV (in 1355 and in 1368). *Dal cielo scese* possibly refers to Samaritana di Polenta who married Antonio della Scala (Verona) in 1378. Some doubt is cast on this relatively late dating of a work by Donato by the fact that the two-voice madrigal is still dominant in his work, as it was in the output of the older Trecento composers. On the other hand, the style of the only surviving ballata (if indeed it is a work by Donato) contradicts this, for it can hardly belong to the early examples of its genre. As well as Sacchetti, Donato also set texts by Niccolò Soldanieri, Arrigo Belondi and Antonio degli Alberti.

14 madrigals, one caccia, one ballata and one virelai have survived; with one exception (the virelai in the south German MS **CZ-Pu** XI E 9) they are all to be found in Tuscan sources. The largest repertory is contained in **I-Fl** 87, with 15 works.

On the one hand Donato is indebted stylistically to Jacopo da Bologna, notably in the transitional phrases between lines of madrigal verse, these being usually untexted and monophonic (though some are two-voiced and more modern in style), and in sporadic points of imitation. On the other hand Donato's style is similar to that of Lorenzo in its rich, virtuoso melismas. With the exception of the caccia-madrigal - which is texted in all three voices and does not belong among the older cacce - all pieces are for two voices, in the early Trecento fashion, with text supplied for both voices. (The missing text in the tenor of *Come'l potestu far* is presumably to be supplied.) Pieces with completely simultaneous syllabic articulation are found alongside others in which the text is offset by rhythmic or melodic imitation. The one virelai is composed

in a simple French style. The ballata with text in dialogue form, contained in **I-FI** 87, is syllabic in style and has a tripartite structure which became more common in the late 14th century and the 15th. Thus, older and more modern stylistic elements occur side by side in Donato's work.

Works

Editions

Der Squarcialupi-Codex Pal.87 der Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana zu Florenz, ed. J. Wolf (Lippstadt, 1955) [W]

The Music of Fourteenth-Century Italy, ed. N. Pirrotta, CMM, viii/3 (1962) [P]

Italian Secular Music, ed. W.T. Marrocco, PMFC, vii (1971) [M]

Poetry edition

Poesie musicali del Trecento, ed. G. Corsi (Bologna, 1970), pp.xlviii, 117-25

Virelais

Je port amiablement, 2vv, P 42, M 51 (text inc., full text in **I-Fn** W. A. 1031, ed. in Contini)

Ballatas

Senti tu d'amor, 2vv, W 101, P 41, M 62 (volta with its own music; text: dialogue)

Madrigals

Come da lupo (N. Soldanieri), 2vv, W 113, P 23, M 30 (cited by Sercambi; see Rossi, LVII)

Come 'l potestu far, 2vv, P 24, M 33
Dal cielo scese, 2vv, W 115, P 25, M 35
D'or pomo incominciò, 2vv, W 105, P 26, M 37 (Senhal: 'Alisa' or 'Lisa')
Fortuna avversa (F. Sacchetti), music lost
I' fu' già bianc'uccel (A. degli Alberti), 2vv, W 116, P 28, M 44
I' fu' già usignolo (Soldanieri), 2vv, W 103, P 29, M 46 (cited by Sercambi; see Rossi, LXXVIII)
I' ho perduto (A. Belondi), 2vv, W 110, P 30, M 49
L'aspido sordo (Belondi), 2vv, W 112, P 31, M 54
Lucida pecorella (?Soldanieri), 2vv, W 102, P 32, M 57
Seguendo'l canto, 2vv, W 100, P 34, M 60
S'i', monacordo, 2vv, W 111, P 35, M 64 (text inc.)
Sovran uccello se', 2vv, W 107, P 36, M 66
Un bel girfalco (Soldanieri), 2vv, W 99, P 37, M 69 (cited by Sercambi; see Rossi, LXXV)
Un cane, un'oca, 2vv, W 106, P 38, M 72
Volgendo i suo' begli occhi (Sacchetti), music lost

Caccias

Faccia chi de', 3vv, W 108, P 39, M 40 (form of the text: madrigal; all voices with text)

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