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PETRUCCI AND THE CARNIVAL SONG:  
ON THE ORIGINS AND DISSEMINATION OF A GENRE

Between 1505 and 1509, Ottaviano Petrucci published some thirteen carnival songs in his third, sixth, eighth, and ninth books of frottole. There were virtually no precedents for these works in northern Italy: neither MoBE 9, 9 nor ParBN 676, both copied before Petrucci began to issue his books, include them among their contents.<sup>1</sup> Neither are included in earlier north-Italian collections of *poesia per musica*. The works are therefore anomalous in his prints, apparently without a background in the area. On the other hand, the carnival song existed as an indigenous genre much earlier in Florence, and it is possible that the north-Italian examples represent in some sense imitations of the earlier works.

If there is agreement among scholars that the carnival song, or *canto carnascialesco*, existed earlier in Florence, there is no agreement at all as to when it began or who was responsible for its origin. These two issues – origins and chronology – are intimately linked, since until we can establish a reasonably firm *terminus ante quem* for the genre we cannot consider its subsequent development in any intelligent way. Traditional scholarship has identified the beginnings of the genre with Lorenzo de' Medici, il Magnifico (1445-1492), although recently attempts have been made to minimize his role. A further problem is the dissemination of the genre to other areas in Italy. Are Petrucci's carnival songs related to the Florentine genre, and, if so, how did this dissemination take place? This study addresses these issues by establishing a basic chronology for the origins of the *canto carnascialesco* in Florence and then tracing its dissemination throughout the peninsula. In so doing, it offers a previously unavailable background to the *canti* published by Petrucci.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A list of sigla for the manuscripts and prints discussed here is included at the end of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> This study forms a part of a larger one on secular music in Italy around 1500. I am preparing a monograph that will examine secular music in three centers of the peninsula – Florence, Rome, and Mantua – through manuscripts representing repertory from each of the cities.

## ORIGINS OF THE CANTO CARNASCIALESCO

In 1559 Anton Francesco Grazzini, known as “Il Lasca,” published his encyclopedic collection of carnival songs, *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascheaate [sic] o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo vecchio de’ Medici; quando egli ebbero prima cominciamiento, per infino a questo anno presente 1559*. His dedication of the work, to Prince Francesco I de’ Medici (1541-1587), remains one of the clearest descriptions of the function of the Florentine *canto carnascialesco* and of its requisite apparatus, the costumes and implements carried by the singers. It is also the principal basis for the belief that Lorenzo himself was intimately involved in the creation of the genre. Although this dedication is well known, a close reading of it is nonetheless revealing:

Among the various entertainments, the different spectacles and the many feasts that, according to the time and the season, are done publicly in Florence, the *mascherate*, or carnival songs as they are called, are in every respect (Magnanimous and most Gentle Prince), a marvelous and very beautiful celebration, because, when they happen to be lovely, well prepared, and well done with all the necessary appurtenances: that is, that the concept, first of all, be excellent and understandable; the words, revealing and full of witty jests; the music, joyful and free; the voices sonorous and united; the costumes, rich and humorous and appropriate to the concept and made without thought of the cost; the accoutrements, or the utensils, that are suitable to it are made with mastery and painted gaily; the horses, if they are needed, very beautiful and well liveried; and at night, then, with the accompaniment and large number of torches, one can neither see nor hear anything more pleasing or more delightful. And thus they [the singers] spread out and try, between the day and night, [to go through] almost all of the city. They are seen and heard by everyone, they can be sent wherever one wants, and they can be made a spectacle for everyone, including even the young maidens in their houses, who, making for themselves a screen or a curtain, can see and hear it all without being seen by anyone. And when the celebration, which all the populace has enjoyed, is over, the words are read by everyone and at night they are sung everywhere and both [the words and the music] are sent not only all about Florence and in all the cities of Italy, but also to Germany, Spain, and France to relatives and friends.

And this way of celebrating was invented by the Magnificent Lorenzo the Elder de’ Medici – one of the first and brightest splendors that not only your most illustrious and most noble family and Florence, but also Italy and all the world has had, truly worthy of never being remembered without tears and reverence – because formerly the men of that time, masked, used the carnival to disguise themselves as women, performed for the May Day celebrations (*calendimaggio*). And thus dressed as women and as young girls they sang *canzoni a ballo*. This manner of singing *il Magnifico* considered always the same, [and so] he thought to vary it, and not only the music (*canto*) but also the invention and the way of composing the words, making songs with verses of different length and the music composed with new and diverse melodies. And the first song, or

*mascherata*, that one sang in this manner was of men who were selling sweet cakes (*berriquocoli e confortini*), written for three voices by a certain Arrigo Tedesco, then *maestro di cappella* at [the Baptistry of] S. Giovanni, and a musician most famous in those times. But before long they were writing them in four parts and thus little by little well-known composers and poets began to write them, so that we arrive at the present situation.<sup>3</sup>

Grazzini's first paragraph tells us that masked men and youths sang *mascherate* in the streets of Florence during carnival time. The participants were costumed in accordance with the group they were supposedly representing – a trade, foreigners, country folk, and so forth. They carried an identifying object of their group with them – sweet pastries, brooms, or bird cages, for example. They could be on horseback or walking through the streets and, if they were performing at night, they were accompanied by others holding torches so that they could be seen clearly. When Grazzini requires that the texts be “revealing and full of witty jests,” he is referring to the sexual *doubles entendres* typical of the genre that, with the items they carried and their costumes, demonstrated to all the putative group the singers represented – Moors, street vendors, German soldiers, and so forth. Once their pergrination was completed, the song's text was read by the populace, its music was sung throughout Florence, and both could be sent to friends and relatives all over Italy and beyond.

Grazzini's second paragraph is more problematic. It attributes to Lorenzo de' Medici a central role in the development of the carnival song and the manner of performing it, and it even points to the first carnival song he wrote, the *Canzona de' confortini*, “Berriquocoli, donne, e confortini.” It also gives the name of its composer, “Arrigo Tedesco,” that is, Heinrich Isaac. This view of the development of the carnival song, accepted by Ghisi and others,<sup>4</sup> is given a certain support in writings of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Machiavelli, in his *Istorie fiorentine*, writes that Lorenzo “in those peaceful times, kept his homeland always in celebration, with jousts and [...] antique triumphs often seen.”<sup>5</sup> Guicciardini, in his *Storie fiorentine*, states that “the populace was delighted every day with spectacles, celebrations, and new things,”<sup>6</sup> and Savonarola, speaking directly of Lorenzo as tyrant of Florence, writes that he “often, especially in times of abundance and peace,

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<sup>3</sup> ANTON FRANCESCO GRAZZINI, *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascheate [sic] o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici; quando egli ebbero prima cominciamento, per infino a questo anno presente 1559* (Florence: [Tolentino], 1559), fols. aiir-aiiir. For the original Italian, see Appendix, Document 1. The six documents quoted *in extenso* here are included in an appendix to this article.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, FEDERICO GHISI, *I canti carnascialeschi nelle fonti musicali del XV e XVI secolo* (Florence: Olschki, 1937; reprint Bologna, AMIS, 1970), 2-3 and 46-48.

<sup>5</sup> “Tranne ancora, in questi tempi pacifici, sempre la patria sua in festa; dove spesso giostre [...] e trionfi antichi si vedevano.” NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI, *Tutte le opere*, ed. by Mario Martelli (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), 843.

<sup>6</sup> “Dilettavasi el popolo ogni dì di spettacoli, di feste e cose nuove.” Francesco Guicciardini, *Opere*, ed. by Emanuella Lugnani Scarano, (Turin: UTET, 1970), 1:98.

keeps [the populace] busy with spectacles and festivals so that they will think of themselves and not about him.”<sup>7</sup> Vasari, in his life of Francesco Granacci, is even more specific: “Lorenzo de’ Medici was the first inventor, as has been said other times, of those *mascherate* that represent various things – and are called in Florence *canti* – not finding that they were done before in other times.”<sup>8</sup>

Historians have generally dated the beginning of the *canto carnascialesco* in the 1480s, although Paolo Orvieto, one of the major authorities on the poetry of Lorenzo and the carnival song, has put its beginnings in the 1470s, in Lorenzo’s relative youth, for two reasons. First, the *Canzona de’ confortini*, the very song that Grazzini believes to be the origin of the genre, contains a verse reading “che maladetto sie Sforzo Bettini,” in a stanza that accuses Sforza Bettini of sodomy. Orvieto shows that Bettini was in Florence from 1473 to 1479 and believes, therefore, that this is the most logical time for the composition of the text. Second, Orvieto states that “after the cruel and traumatic Pazzi conspiracy [an assassination attempt of April 1478, in which Lorenzo was wounded and his brother Giuliano, killed], every type of public demonstration was prohibited in Florence, in a sort of decade-long period of mourning, particularly the celebration of carnival (until its return in 1488).”<sup>9</sup> If this were the case, then the song would have been written between 1473 and 1478.

There are, however, problems with this view of the genre’s origins. First, if the *Canzona de’ confortini* was written during the 1470s, then it was not Isaac who composed the music for it, since Frank D’Accone has shown that the composer did not arrive in Florence until 1485.<sup>10</sup> It remains possible, of course, that Grazzini is mistaken about the composer, or that he was merely casting about for the name of the most famous composer of the period who was still remembered in Florence in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Giovanni Ciappelli has shown that

<sup>7</sup> “Studia di fare ch’el poplo sia occupato circa le cose necessarie alla vita; e però, quanto puo, lo tiene magro con gravezze e gabelle. E molto volte, massime in tempo di abbondanza e quiete, lo occupa in spettacoli e feste, acciò che pensi a sè e non a lui.” GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, *Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*. Quoted from Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo con il Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*, ed. Luigi Firpo (Rome: Angelo Belardetti, 1965), 459.

<sup>8</sup> “Né tacerò qui che il detto Lorenzo de’ Medici fu primo inventore, come altra volta è stato detto, di quelle mascherate che rappresentano alcuna cosa – e sono detti a Firenze Canti –, non si trovando che prima ne fossero state fatte in altri tempi.” Quoted from GIORGIO VASARI, “Vita di Francesco Granacci,” in his *Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, vol. 4, (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1976). pt. 1: 602.

<sup>9</sup> PAOLO ORVIETO, ed., *Lorenzo de’ Medici. Canti carnascialeschi* (Rome: Salerno, 1991), 23-25. The original Italian reads as follows: “dopo la cruenta e traumatica congiura dei Pazzi, fu in Firenze proibita ogni tipo di manifestazione pubblica e soprattutto, per una sorta di lutto decennale, la celebrazione del carnevale (fino alla riattivazione del 1488).”

<sup>10</sup> FRANK A. D’ACCONNE, “Heinrich Isaac in Florence: New and Unpublished Documents,” *The Musical Quarterly* 14 (1961): 467.

<sup>11</sup> STEFANO CARRAI, “Momenti e problemi del canto carnascialesco fiorentino,” in Piero Gargiulo, ed., *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 120, suggests that Grazzini may have exaggerated in having the origin of the genre coincide with Isaac’s arrival in Florence. He affirms, however, the reliability of Grazzini’s description in other matters.

Sforza Bettini remained in touch with Lorenzo and Florence in the years after his departure, and that Bettini's dubious reputation could have remained alive there.<sup>12</sup> In this case, the song could have been written later, a point to which we shall return.

The second problem with Orvieto's chronology is even more critical. In his belief that carnival was not held from 1479 until 1488, he is apparently following a study by Paola Ventrone.<sup>13</sup> She cites a letter of 26 June 1488 from Piero da Bibbiena to Giovanni Lanfredini, Florentine ambassador to Rome, stating that the sacred and secular floats ("edifici e trionfi") have not been included in the feast of Florence's patronal saint, S. Giovanni Battista, for ten years. From this, Ventrone reasons that, if celebrations for S. Giovanni (centering around 24 June) were not held, then carnival would not have been allowed either.<sup>14</sup>

There are two interrelated difficulties here. First, there is Ventrone's acceptance of a single letter as a defining source for the cancellation of a whole decade of honoring Florence's patron saint.<sup>15</sup> Second, there is the even graver problem of her extrapolation from this official, "communal" festival to the more spontaneous, "informal" festival of the pre-Lenten carnival. There is no evidence that carnival was canceled: no chronicler remarks that its celebrations were curtailed and no letter suggests it. Admittedly, this is negative evidence, but there is much stronger, positive evidence as well. This is found in the records of the *Otto di Guardia*.

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<sup>12</sup> GIOVANNI CIAPPELLI, *Carnevale e quaresima: comportamenti sociali e cultura a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1997), 202n. See also BERNARD TOSCANI, "I canti carnascaleschi e le laude di Lorenzo: elementi di cronologia," in Piero Gargiulo, ed., *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 136.

<sup>13</sup> PAOLA VENTRONE, "Note sul carnevale fiorentino di età laurenziana," in *Il carnevale: dalla tradizione arcaica alla tradizione colta del Rinascimento. Convegno di studi* (Rome: Centro Studi sul Teatro Medioevale e Rinascimentale, 1990), 321-66. Orvieto, *Lorenzo de' Medici: canti carnascaleschi*, 25, does not cite Ventrone for his statement, but does cite her study just before it (n. 26).

<sup>14</sup> VENTRONE, "Note sul carnevale," 341. The letter itself, found in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze (hereafter ASF), Mediceo avanti il Principato, Filza 59, doc. 179, fol. 89, reads as follows: "Non voglio dimenticare di dirvi, che più di dieci anni sono non si feciono edifici et trionfi et in questi tali di." The letter has been published in ANGELO FABRONI, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita Auctore Angelo Fabronio Academiae Pisanae Curatore* (Pisa: Jacobus Gratiolius, 1784), 2: *Adnotationes et Monumenta ad Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vitam Pertinentia*, 386-88.

<sup>15</sup> The feast of S. Giovanni was one in which the communes subject to Florentine rule made their annual tributes to the city. There were set activities on consecutive days that served to demonstrate the power and wealth of Florence to foreigners, to the residents of the subject communes, and to its own citizens. An integral part of this festival were the *edifici*, floats with sacred subjects that were shown in the Piazza della Signoria and then joined in an official procession to the Baptistry of S. Giovanni. Although there is some reason to believe that Ventrone and Orvieto are in error here, I pass over this festival for that of Carnival. On the festivities for St. John, see RICHARD C. TREXLER, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence: Studies in Social Discontinuity* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 240-78; NICOLE CAREW-REID, *Les fêtes florentines au temps de Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Olschki, 1996), 40-93; and HEIDI L. CHRÉTIEN, *The Festival of San Giovanni: Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994). Still valuable are two older studies: CESARI GUASTI, *Le feste di S. Giovanni Batista in Firenze: descritte in prosa e in rima da contemporanei* (Florence: R. Società di S. Giovanni Batista, 1908), and PIETRO GORI, *Le feste fiorentine attraverso i secoli: le feste per San Giovanni* (Florence, 1926; reprint Florence: Giunti Reprint, 1989).

The *Otto di Guardia* was a group of eight men – six from the major guilds and two from the minor ones – who held office for a period ranging from three to six months. They were, in effect, the political police, in charge of the internal security of the Florentine state. As such they held broad powers, including the right to call citizens summarily before them for interrogation and to banish those guilty of treason against the ruling party. They also had the power to issue curfews and to forbid assemblies of citizens in times of crisis, since either of these might lead to political unrest and even to the overthrow of the established regime.<sup>16</sup> In the period after the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, with its strong repressions, they can be expected to have been especially diligent in their duties. Nonetheless, the records of their proclamations show little concern with carnival, other than the almost annual one of banning the “gioco dei sassi,” the traditional stone-throwing battle of youths at the Ponte S. Trinita. Table I presents a list of their proclamations concerning carnival from 1479 to 1489.

TABLE I  
Otto di Guardia, Proclamations Concerning Carnival, 1479-1489  
(Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e di Balìa della Repubblica  
Minuti di Bandi avanti dell’Otto, Libro 221)

(All dates new style)

Date	Proclamation
1479, 29 January	Prohibits <i>maschere</i> , veils, or painted faces
1479, 13 March	Prohibits throwing stones with slings (“saxi colle fronbole”)
1480, 21 January	Prohibits throwing stones or similar materials
1481, 5 February	Prohibits throwing stones
1481, 2 March	Prohibits throwing stones
1482? 1483?	Undated prohibition of stone throwing
1484, 7 February	Prohibits throwing stones
1485, 26 January	Prohibits throwing stones
1486, 2 February	Prohibits bearing arms while in <i>maschera</i> or otherwise costumed or while attending jousts
1487, 16 January	Prohibits bearing arms while in <i>maschera</i> (“col viso coperto di maschera”)
1487, 29 January	Prohibits throwing stones
1488, 29 January	Prohibits bearing arms while in <i>maschera</i> whether mounted or on foot
1489, 4 February	Prohibits bearing arms while in <i>maschera</i> or otherwise costumed and throwing stones

<sup>16</sup> The rise of the *Otto di Guardia* and the eventual decline of its power after the Medici restoration in 1512 is discussed in detail in GIOVANNI ANTONELLI, “La magistratura degli Otto di Guardia a Firenze,” *Archivio storico italiano* 92 (1954): 3-40.

The data in this table are particularly revealing concerning the Signoria's (and therefore Lorenzo's) attitude toward carnival. In virtually every year, the "gioco dei sassi" is prohibited, but in only one year is carnival itself prohibited, 1479:

The Magnificent and Most Worthy Men, the *Otto di Guardia* of the city of Florence, now proclaim and notify and expressly command that no person of whatever state, grade, quality, or condition, be they male or female, dare or presume from today in any way to go by day or night through the city of Florence with a face covered with a mask, veil, or anything else or colored or changed by any makeup or tinted in any manner from the natural in a way that they could not be clearly identified. Notifying everyone that whomever is found going against the above will be punished at the judgment [of the *Otto*], and [that] no excuse whatsoever will be accepted.<sup>17</sup>

This is the single instance during the years after the Pazzi conspiracy that the *Otto di Guardia* prohibits *maschere* in Florence. This ban was undoubtedly due, in part, to the conspiracy itself, but it must also have been the result of the tense political situation and concerns about public health. Florence was at war with the Papacy and Naples, in fear for its very existence, and 1479 also saw one of the periodic outbreaks of the plague in the city. Benedetto Dei reports that "1479 in Florence was the greatest plague ever seen and all the banks and shops were closed."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the previous December, the *Otto* had already issued a proclamation banning those who had the plague or who came from infected areas to enter the city.<sup>19</sup> By the following November, they required those who had had any association with the affliction to wear signs warning of the infection when they left their homes.<sup>20</sup> In these circumstances – the worries about invasion, the fear that members of the banished Pazzi faction might try to return to the city, and the definite presence of the plague – it was natural not to permit masks or to allow those with the plague to cover the signs of their disease with makeup.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix, Document 2.

<sup>18</sup> "1479 fu in Firenze la maggiore moria che mai fusse e serrati tutti i banchi e boteghe." BENEDETTO DEI, *La cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500* (Florence: Papafava, 1985), 103. The chronicler Giusto d'Anghiari reports that the celebrations for the feast of S. Giovanni were also much reduced because of fear of the plague: "giovedì a dì 24 detto [giugno] fu la festa di San Giovanni in Firenze. Per amor della moria non si fece quasi festa e non si mettono le tende, né si feciono le altre cerimonie che si sogliono fare. Pure si corse il palio, bello di broccato d'oro; ebbelo un barberesco di Lorenzo de' Medici." "Memorie di Giusto di Giovanni Giusti d'Anghiari." FlorBN, MS II. II. 127, fol. 131v.

<sup>19</sup> ASF, *Otto di Guardia*, Libro 221, fol. 16r (15 December 1478).

<sup>20</sup> 2 November 1479. "E più fanno bandire, notificare et expressamente comandare che nessuna persona di qualunque grado, stato o conditione si sia che havessi o havessi havuto in casa alcuno morbato o commersassi in alcun modo con alcuno di detti morbati, se prima non saranno passati 49 dì dal dì di tal morbo, non ardischa o vero presumma di dì o di notte andare o stare fuora della casa della sua habitatione se non nella forma infrascripta, cioè che e' maschi sieno tenuti et debbino portare in sulla spalla evidentemente uno fazzoletto overo banda bianca cucita et le femine sieno tenute et debbino portare al braccio similmente uno fazzoletto overo banda bianca cucita [...]." ASF, *Otto di Guardia*, Libro 221, fol. 45v-46.

It is important to emphasize that the *Otto* did not prohibit *maschere* in any other year, and in several instances it is clear that they explicitly permitted them. In two years during the supposed hiatus – 1486 and 1487 – they forbade bearing arms while wearing a mask, and thus clearly allowed those unarmed to wear them. Particularly telling is the decree of 2 February 1486, since it includes a mention of the traditional carnival joust:

The Respected and Most Worthy *Otto di Guardia e Balia* of the city of Florence, wishing to avoid any misfortune or scandal that could occur in these days [of carnival], do now proclaim, notify and expressly command whatever person of whatever state, grade, quality, dignity, or condition that they shall not dare or in any way presume in the future, and particularly in these days, to carry any kind or type or quality of arms to attack or defend [themselves] in any way, and principally that those who go in *maschera* or otherwise disguised or go to or attend a joust do not carry or have with them any arms, especially offensive ones like swords, bows, knives, daggers or other similar arms, under the penalty that their office shall order.<sup>21</sup>

This and the 1487 decree, moreover, are essentially the same proclamations as that of 1488 and 1489, years in which Orvieto and Ventrone believe that carnival was restored. Of particular interest is the decree of 1488, since it underlines the possibility of going in *maschera* both on foot and on horseback:

The Respected and Most Worthy *Otto di Guardia e Balia* of the city of Florence, in order to avoid any misfortune or scandal, do now proclaim, notify, and expressly command whatever person of whatever state, grade, quality, or condition that from now [on] they shall not dare or presume to carry any kind or type or quality of arms through the city of Florence, principally those who go in *maschera* or with covered face or [painted] with any color at all, on horseback or on foot, by day or night in any way. Under the penalty of four lashes, at the judgment [of the *Otto*] [...].<sup>22</sup>

It is apparent, therefore, that carnival did continue during the period 1479 to 1488. For this reason, Orvieto's assertion that Lorenzo's *Canzona de' confortini* had to have been written before 1478 is unnecessary.

On the other hand, there are problems with placing the beginnings of the genre as late as Grazzini suggests. Presumably, Isaac could not have composed the music for Lorenzo's *Canzona de' confortini* before 1485 or even 1486, since he is first

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix, Document 3.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix, Document 4.

documented in Florence in July 1485.<sup>23</sup> This is clearly too late for the origins of the genre, however. The first printed book of laude, the *Laude fatte e composte da più persone*, was published on 1 March 1486 [n. s.] and it contains several laude that bear the rubric “cantasi come” or “sung to the music of” pre-existent carnival songs (See Table II).<sup>24</sup>

TABLE II  
Laude with Carnival-Song Models in *Laude fatte e composte da più persone*  
(Florence: Francesco Buonaccorsi, 1486 [n.s.])

Carnival song	Rhyme Scheme <sup>a</sup> (syllable count)	Lauda Incipit	Poet	Comments
1. Alle schiave, alle schiavone	xyyx ababbccx <sup>b</sup> (8)	<i>Po' che'l cor mi stringe</i>	Belcari	Carnival text non extant
2. Deh, porgete un po'	xx ababbx (8)	<i>I' non vo' più teco stare</i>	Albizzi	<i>Canzona delle ninfe e de' vecchi</i>
3. Donne, chi vuoi far filare	xyyx ababbccx <sup>b</sup> (8)	<i>Chi salute vuoi trovare</i>	Albizzi	Carnival text non extant
4. Ferri vecchi, rami vecchi [Same]	xx ababba (8) xx ababbx <sup>b</sup> (8)	<i>L'orazione è sempre buona Chi vuoi pace</i>	Belcari Belcari	<i>Canzona de' ferravecchi</i>
5. Faccia ben a' pellegrini	xyyx ababbccx <sup>b</sup> (8)	<i>Giovanetti, con fervore</i>	Albizzi	Carnival text non extant
6. Giovanetti con fervore	xyxy ababbccx (8)	<i>Giovanetti, con fervore</i>	Albizzi	Not listed as model in lauda print <sup>c</sup>
7. Noi siam tre pellegrini [Same] [Same]	XX ABABCC <sup>b</sup> (11) XX ABABCC <sup>b</sup> (11) XX ABABCC <sup>b</sup> (11)	<i>O gloriosi in cielo Ognun con divozione O San Bartolomeo</i>	Albizzi Albizzi Albizzi	Carnival text non extant
8. Omé. omé, omé	xx ababbccx	<i>O anima accecata</i>	Belcari	<i>Canzona dell'orso</i>
9. Vicin, vicin, vicin	xx ababbx (7)	<i>Gesù, Gesù, Gesù</i>	Belcari	<i>Canzona degli spazzacamini</i>

<sup>a</sup> Upper-case letters denote eleven-syllable lines; lower case letters denote lines with fewer than eleven syllables.

<sup>b</sup> Rhyme scheme taken from «cantasi come» lauda.

<sup>c</sup> This is clearly modeled on the carnival song with the same incipit and in the same form found in FlorBN 42, fol. 45. See below for this text.

<sup>23</sup> D'ACCONE, “Heinrich Isaac in Florence,” 467.

<sup>24</sup> This print was already studied as a source for carnival songs by JOSEPH J. GALLUCCI, “Festival Music in Florence, ca. 1480-ca. 1520: *Canti Carnascialeschi, Trionfi, and Related Forms*,” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1966) 1: 42-44. Unlike GALLUCCI, I have not listed in this table the seven laude included in the 1486 print sung to the music of “Ben venga maggio,” since this is not properly speaking a carnival song, but rather a song for the *Calendimaggio* celebrations. The use of music at this festival may well predate the introduction of songs at carnival itself. I have, however, included incipits that suggest they begin carnival songs, even if the texts are not longer extant. No. 2 on the table, “I' non vo' più teco stare,” bears the rubric “Cantasi come ‘Deh guardate in quanti affanni.’” The lauda is in an unusual form: it exactly matches the form and rhyme-scheme of a six-verse stanza of a *barzelletta*. Furthermore, although there is no refrain, the last verse of each strophe returns to the same rhyme. It would seem to be based on the stanzas of “Deh, porgete un po' gli orecchi,” the first stanza of which begins “Risguardati in quanti affanni.” This identification is also suggested in CIAPPELLI, *Carnevale e Quaresima*, 199n.

Even 1486 is too late for several of the *canti* in this table, however, since Feo Belcari died in 1484, and his five laude (and therefore their carnival-song models) must have written before that year. Furthermore, there is a manuscript that contains at least two even earlier carnival songs: Gianozzo Salviati's *zibaldone* (miscellany), copied over a period of time, but mostly in the 1480s. This manuscript contains a calendar for finding *martedì grasso*, Easter, Ascension, and other *feste*; lyric poems; and a good number of carnival-song texts. Salviati concludes his book with the following statement: "This book belongs to Giannozzo di Bernardo di Marcho di messer Forese Salviati, Florentine citizen. It is called a *zibaldone* [and it was] written at various times, as one can see."<sup>25</sup> By this, Salviati is referring to the dates he enters into the book, as for example, the above statement, which is preceded by "A dì 15 di gianaio 1484 [s. f.]." Dates, in fact, are peppered throughout the book. Of particular importance here are two folios. At the top of folio 44v, Salviati entered "1482"; above folio 45r, in the manner of double-entry bookkeeping, he entered the same year in Roman numerals: "MccccLxxxii." The texts on these folios represent two carnival songs that are of particular interest, even though their musical settings are not extant. First, if Salviati is correct, they become the earliest securely datable examples of the genre. Second, both are otherwise unknown: they appear in none of the later collections of carnival songs and neither Singleton nor Brusciagli includes them in his anthologies.<sup>26</sup> The first song, "Chi à toppa di stram maniera," is a typical *mascherata*, in this instance sung by a group masquerading as locksmiths. It contains the standard *doubles entendres* associated with the genre: the "locks" and "keyholes" represent the feminine sexual organs, and the "keys" and the "sack," the masculine.

Chi à toppa di stram maniera  
chiave abbiàno per aprire:  
che ne vuol cie'l sappi dire  
che pieno è nostra bastiera.

Whoever has a lock of an unusual type  
We have keys to open it:  
Whoever wants us knows to ask  
Since our sack is full.

Se forzieri o chasse avete,  
cholla toppa e senza chiave,  
a dircielo non vi temete,  
che'l servire non ci è grave.  
Padronesse, o fante, o schiave,  
chi ne vuole ongnium cie'l dica:  
vo' ci torete faticha  
a votarci la bastiera.

If you have chests or strongboxes,  
With a keyhole and without a key,  
Don't hesitate to tell us,  
Since serving you is our pleasure.  
Ladies, maid-servants, or slaves,  
Everyone should ask us:  
You will receive from us the effort  
Of emptying our sack.

<sup>25</sup> "Questo libro è di Giannozzo di Bernardo di Marcho di messer Forese Salviati, cittadino fiorentino. Chiamasi zibaldone, iscritto im più volte et a vari tempi chome si vede." FlorBN 42, 90v.

<sup>26</sup> CHARLES S. SINGLETON, ed., *Canti carnascialeschi del rinascimento* (Bari: G. Laterza & figli, 1936); Id., *Nuovi canti carnascialeschi del rinascimento* (Modena: Società tipografica modenese, 1940); Riccardo Brusciagli, ed. *Trionfi e canti carnascialeschi del Rinascimento*, 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno, [1986]).

Toppe far no' non sappiàno,  
 e non abbiàm mai imparato,  
 ma di chiavi lavorìano  
 e faciann'a buon merchato.<sup>27</sup>  
 Chi danari non à a lato  
 a credenzia<sup>28</sup> glie'l daréno,  
 e'n piacere lo'mputeréno<sup>29</sup>  
 se vi votò la bastiera.

We don't know how to make locks  
 And we have never learned,  
 We work only with keys  
 And we do it very cheaply.  
 Whoever does not have ready money  
 We will give it to them on trust,  
 And charge it with pleasure  
 If you empty our sack.

Chiavi abiàno d'ongni misura:  
 grande, pichole, e mezane.  
 Se è gentil seratura,  
 che non sieno toppe istrane,  
 non forzate cholle mane,  
 che'l serame non si guasti,  
 ungniete un pocho, se non basta  
 enne più nella bastiera.

We have keys in every size:  
 Large, small, and middle-sized.  
 If the lock is delicate,  
 and the keyholes are hard to work,  
 Do not force them with your hands  
 Because the lock may break,  
 Moisten it a bit, and if that's not enough  
 We have more in our sack.

The second carnival song is quite different. It contains none of the sexual metaphors of the first and is more classically oriented, in that it concerns the god of love, Cupid.

*De l'Amore*

Giovanetti chon fervore,  
 non vogliate più indugiare  
 questo Amor non può schampare:  
 a cavallo, a cavallo,<sup>30</sup> Singnior, Singniore.

*Of Cupid*

Young men, valiently,  
 Do not linger  
 This Cupid cannot escape:  
 To horse, to horse, Signore.

A chavallo, or sù smanzieri:  
 presto hognum meniallo via,  
 andiam presto e volentieri,  
 dimostriam suo gran pazzia.  
 Po' che la suo singnioria  
 ci à tenuti in tanta aspreza,  
 or mostriàn suo legierezza:  
 a chavallo, a chavallo, Singnior, Singniore.

To horse, up you lovers:  
 Quickly, everyone lead it away,  
 Let's go quickly and willingly,  
 We will demonstrate his great folly.  
 Since his reign  
 Has kept us in such suffering,  
 Now we will show his fickleness:  
 To horse, to horse, Signore.

<sup>27</sup> JOHN FLORIO, *A Worlde of Words* (London: Blount, 1598; reprint Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1972), 123: "buon mercato [...] also branded with a hot iron." An obvious play on words.

<sup>28</sup> "Credenza" also means cupboard, so there is a pun here as well.

<sup>29</sup> Again a play on words, between "imputare," to ascribe or impute, and "imputanire" to become a whore ("putana") and even, perhaps, "impudicizia," wanton living.

<sup>30</sup> The second "a chavallo" causes a hypermeter; without it, the verse is octosyllabic.

No' l'abbiam preso e leghato  
per far qui nostra vendetta,  
po' che ci à sù bem trattato  
cho' l'ardente suo saetta.  
E' viem tempo, a chi l'aspetta,  
che ristorerà tutti e' danni;  
noi siam fuora di questi affanni,  
a chavallo, a chavallo, Singnior, Singniore.

We have captured and bound him  
To have here our revenge,  
Since he stung us so ably  
With his burning arrow.  
The time comes, for he who waits,  
that all the damage will be undone;  
We are released from these woes,  
To horse, to horse, Signore.

E' porta l'archo e'l turchasso  
e va drieto a chi lo fugie;  
pargli poi pigliare spasso  
quando e' ci chonsuma e struggie.  
Or vedrem se'n te resurgie  
più lacciuoli, inganni ho arte  
non v'arà Venere ho Marte:  
a chavallo, a chavallo, Singnior, Singniore.

He bears his bow and quiver  
And pursues he who flees;  
He even seems to take pleasure  
In consuming and destroying us.  
Now we'll see if remain any longer  
His snares, tricks, or craft  
He will not have Venus or Mars:  
To horse, to horse, Signore.

Giovanete, vo' vedete  
questo Amore preso e leghato  
perché nollo sochorrete  
or ch'egli è sù tormentato?  
Chosì fa chi sta indurato  
e chi perde el fiore e'l frutto.  
Hor ch'egli è morto e distrutto  
a chavallo, a chavallo, Singnior, Singniore.<sup>31</sup>

Young ladies, you see  
This Cupid captured and bound  
Why don't you help him  
Now that he is so afflicted?  
Thus ends he who remains hard hearted  
And who loses the flower with the fruit.  
Now that he is dead and destroyed  
To horse, to horse, Signore.

The is remarkable text on several counts. It reveals itself as a *trionfo*, that variety of carnival song that included an allegorical float and that often concerned mythological characters. Here, it is clear that youths (“giovannetti”), who have a statue of Cupid (“Amore”) on the float, are singing to young women (“giovenete”) of love.

There is, however, a further possible interpretation of this *trionfo*. The call to the “Signore” to mount his horse, repeated at the end of each stanza, brings to mind the older

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<sup>31</sup> The secular text is found in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS II, IX, 42, fol. 45r-v. The manuscript is described in MICHELE MESSINA, “Rime inedite di Lorenzo il Magnifico e del Poliziano?,” *La Bibliofilia* 53 (1951): 23-51. “Giovannetti, con fervore” is edited there on pp. 44-45. CIAPPELLI, *Carnevale e Quaresima*, 199n, proposes the *Canzona delle vedove e de' medici*, “Deh, maestri, con favore,” as the model for the lauda. This is possible, although this song has a *ripresa* of two verses rather than four, and a six-verse rather than an eight-verse stanza. I have thus preferred the identification with “Giovannetti, con fervore / non vogliate più indugiare.” The transcription of the lauda is taken from GUSTAVO GALLETI, *Laude spirituali di Feo Belcari, di Lorenzo de' Medici, di Francesco d'Albizzo, di Castellano Castellani e di altri comprese nelle quattro più antiche raccolte* (Florence: Molini e Cecchi, 1863), 59-60. I have changed some of the capitalization and punctuation from Galletti's edition. The lauda includes a final stanza, not transcribed here.

Florentine tradition of the *armeggeria*, a stylized, equestrian display of knightly expertise in which a group, or *brigata*, of young men would select a “Signore” who would be in charge of the demonstration. There had been just such an *armeggeria dell’ Amore* on *martedì grasso* almost twenty years earlier, on 14 February 1464. The *brigata*, with Bartolomeo Benci as *Signore*, constructed a “Trionfo d’ Amore,” which featured at the top a burning heart and Cupids with bows and arrows. Benci gave the *brigata* supper at his *palazzo* near S. Croce, and then they set off about three hours after sunset. He himself was richly clad and wore multi-colored wings attached to his shoulders, and thus was clearly playing *Amor* personified. Accompanied by shawms and trombones (“pifferi”), the *brigata* paraded on horseback to the *palazzo* of Marietta di Lorenzo degli Strozzi, near S. Trinita. Marietta, illuminated by torches, watched from a window while the *armeggeria* was performed. After this was accomplished, the *brigata* placed the *trionfo* in front of the house. The *Signore’s* wings were removed and thrown on the *trionfo*, which was then set to flame, so that it appeared that the arrows of the Cupids were being shot off. At this, Benci remounted his horse and, in order not to turn away from Marietta, had it back out of sight. The *brigata* then went on to houses of other young women and repeated the festivities. At the end of the very long evening, which lasted until almost dawn, they returned to Marietta’s house and performed a “*mattinata* cho molti suoni e grà magnificenze. E questo si dice *mattinata*, perché era presso a dì.” This must be the equivalent of a *serenata*: a work sung (and played) to a woman from the street below her window.<sup>32</sup>

This description is extraordinarily close to the text of the *trionfo*. The *ripresa* and first stanza of the poem can be read to describe the *brigata’s* departure from Benci’s *palazzo*; the remainder of the text is a description of “Amor,” which concludes with the lines “Now that he is dead and destroyed, / To horse, to horse, Signore.” It could thus have been performed during the evening’s celebrations or as a *mattinata* at their conclusion, or both. We know that music (the “pifferi” and the “*mattinata*”) was a part of the celebration. Moreover, this is the only time known to me in which an *armeggeria* was combined with a *trionfo d’ Amore*. It was likely, too, that such an event would have been remembered later, since it seems to have been constructed on a far grander scale than had been seen previously. The document concludes, in fact, with the statement that “Everyone thought that never had such a magnificent and elaborate celebration been done in this city.”<sup>33</sup> If this text were a part of the 1464 *armeggeria*, then the beginnings of the genre could stretch back to the 1460s.

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<sup>32</sup> The document describing the *armeggeria* and the *trionfo d’ Amore* is published in Gori, *Le feste fiorentine*, 41-44. For further general information on the *armeggeria* and its political significance, see TRELXER, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, 225-33. The most recent examination of this event is NICOLE CAREW-REID, *Les Fêtes florentines*, 101-105, with, however, misinterpretations of the instruments included (e. g., the “pifferi” who marched beside the *trionfo* were shawms, not “joueurs de flûte”) and of the hour of the day the *armeggeria* took place (e. g., “24 ore,” according to Italian time during the Renaissance, was sundown, not “minuit”). According to the document published by Gori, “Durò la festa la notte da ore ii a ore xj.” In Florence in February, this would mean that it began roughly at 7:00 P. M. and lasted until about 6:00 A. M.

<sup>33</sup> “Tiensi per ciascheduno che mai in questa città si facessi la più magnifica né la più ordinata festa.” Cited from GORI, *Le feste fiorentine*, 44.

Returning to Table II, we can draw a final element suggested by the data there, particularly when viewed in conjunction with a sentence from Grazzini's description. "This manner of singing *il Magnifico* considered always the same, [and so] he thought to vary it, and not only the music, but also the invention and the way of composing the words, making songs with verses of different length. [...]" Stefano Carrai has suggested, quite logically, that Lorenzo's original contribution to the poetry of the *canto carnascialesco* consisted in grafting to the popularizing form of the *barzilletta*, with its seven- or eight-syllable verses, the meter of more serious poetry with its endecasyllabic verses.<sup>34</sup> In fact, five of Lorenzo's carnival songs are written with octosyllabic verses, and six are composed entirely of eleven-syllable verses. If we accept Carrai's insightful assertion, then the works from Table II reveal that this change has already taken place before 1486. Three laude by Francesco degli Albizzi are modeled on the carnival song "Noi siam tre pellegrini," (No. 7 on Table II) and all feature exclusively endecasyllabic lines. It would appear, therefore, that not only does the carnival song reach back before Isaac's arrival in the city, but that the addition of "verses of diverse length," to use Grazzini's phrase, predates his arrival as well. In fact, Lorenzo's *Canzona de' confortini*, which Grazzini believed to be *il Magnifico's* first carnival song, itself adopts these endecasyllabic lines.

This is as early as we can document the polyphonic carnival-song tradition: it was surely in existence by 1482 when Salviati copied "Chi à toppa," and "Giovanetti chon fervore" into his manuscript, though it is possible that it stretches back as far as the 1460s. There are also a number of other songs – those on which Belcari based his laude – dating from the early 1480s at the latest. It is well to bear in mind, however, that the *Laude fatte e composte da più persone* is the first known printed book of such pieces, and so there is no need to assume that everything in it was a recent production; it could well be a retrospective collection. For this reason, we should not assume that all of the laude based on carnival songs were necessarily written immediately before their date of publication. It would seem likely, then, that the tradition of including *mascherate* during carnival does go back at least to some point in the 1470s. Here we can return to the question of Sforza Bettini. Although Ciapelli is undoubtedly correct that he remained in contact with Florence – even while working in Mantua and elsewhere – it is far more likely that a topical reference in a carnival song would resonate with the populace more strongly while he was actually in Florence and a part of the Laurentian entourage than years later when he had been away for some time. It seems logical, as well, to give at least some credence to Grazzini's statement that Lorenzo took an active part in their introduction into the celebrations of the season. I would tend, on these grounds, to place the *Canzona de' Confortini* in the later 1470s.

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<sup>34</sup> CARRAI, "Momenti e problemi," 120-21.

THE DISSEMINATION OF THE CANTO CARNASCIALESCO

There are also carnival songs outside Florence, and their relation to the Florentine genre is of the highest interest. In terms of late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century sources, there are three groups of these songs: Neapolitan, Roman, and North Italian, the latter two mostly found in Petrucci. These are very different repertoires, both chronologically and stylistically.

The earliest carnival songs to appear outside Florence are in two Neapolitan manuscripts, MontBA 871 and PerBC 431. The former was copied, perhaps in a Franciscan convent, in the late 1470s and 1480s. The latter, also perhaps from a Franciscan convent, is slightly later, from the mid-1480s.<sup>35</sup> Both contain works by composers known to have flourished in the Kingdom of Naples, and both are rife with *strambotti*, particularly *strambotti siciliani*, the peculiarly southern version of the *strambotto* that rhymes ABABABAB. Also contained in these manuscripts are six works that seem, on first glance, to be typical *mascherate* (See Table III). The question is, of course, whether these are native Neapolitan works, or were imported from elsewhere. There are suggestions, in fact, that they are Florentine rather than Neapolitan.

TABLE III  
Quattrocento Carnival Songs from Neapolitan Manuscripts

A.MontBA 871

Incipit	Folios	Subject	Voices
<i>Chiave, chiave</i>	420-21	Locksmiths	4
<i>Alle stamengea</i> <sup>a</sup>	422-23	A Miller	4

B.PerBC 431

<i>Orsù, su cari</i>	57v-58	Scribes	4
<i>Nui siamo qui</i>	104v-105	Sifters of Flour	3
<i>De sartor</i>	106v-107	Tailors	4
<i>Viva, viva</i>	113v-114	[Incomplete Text]	4

<sup>a</sup> Strictly speaking, a *canzone a ballo* and not a carnival song.

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<sup>35</sup> ISABEL POPE – MASAKATA KANAZAWA, *The Musical Manuscript Montecassino 871: A Neapolitan Repertory of Sacred and Secular Music of the Late Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); ALLAN W. ATLAS, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 120-21. GIULIO CATTIN, “Il repertorio polifonico sacro nelle fonti napoletane del Quattrocento,” in *Musica e cultura a Napoli dal XV al XIX secolo*, ed. by Lorenzo Bianconi and Renato Bossa (Florence, Olschki, 1983), 35-39, suggests convincingly that MontBA 871 was copied in a Franciscan convent in the area, most probably Ortona. Atlas, “On the Provenance of the Manuscript Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta 431 (G20),” *Musica Disciplina* 31 (1977): 45-105. See also DAVID FALLOWS, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27-28, 37.

First, the content of these texts is exactly that of the earlier Florentine carnival songs. All are *mascherate* and all but one speak in the plural. Insofar as one can tell, all are songs of trades, here scribes, tailors, locksmiths, and so forth.<sup>36</sup> Within these “trade songs,” the same sexual double meanings are employed, and many of the same puns are offered. “Nui siamo qui per buractar,” from PerBC 431, for example, is a song of flour sifters, in which the “sieve” represents the male sexual organ, and the “flour,” the female. The same word-plays on “lavorare,” “menare,” “longo,” and “stretto,” found so frequently in the known Florentine repertory, are here, as well:

Nui siamo qui per buractar[e]  
 donne mie, vostre farine:  
 abiam tucti bone schine  
 e siam destri ad lavorare.

We are here to sift,  
 Your flour, ladies:  
 We all have good, strong backs  
 And we are expert at our work.

Questo nostro è'l bel mistero;  
 ma ben fare ognun no sa.<sup>37</sup>

Ours is a wonderful specialty;  
 But everyone does not know how to  
 do it well:

.....  
 .....

tutto il nostro facto sta  
 in saperve contentare.

All our art consists in  
 Knowing how to content you.

Nui siamo [...].

Per la prim' a nui convene  
 avere longo e gran buracto  
 e menar multo bene,  
 né siam stanchi al primo tracto:  
 che forzo è che le s'en facto  
 s'il buracto pò durare.

First of all, it's important for us  
 To have a long and large sieve  
 And to deliver it very well,  
 Nor do we tire at the first stroke:  
 It's necessary that they be made thus  
 If the sieve is to last.

Nui [...].

Quando la farina è nova,  
 buractar con avvertenza;  
 quivi usamo ad tucta prova  
 omne nostra diligenza:  
 che chi non à patientia,  
 ne la sòl spesso guastare.

When the flour is new,  
 One must sift with care;  
 Here we use at every try  
 All our diligence:  
 He who lacks patience,  
 Will often founder on the bottom.

Nui [...].

<sup>36</sup> Two of the works have incomplete texts. See below.

<sup>37</sup> This stanza would appear to be lacking two verses at this point: all other stanzas are of six verses.

Ma se l'è piccolo et stretto  
 quel'archa vale un tesoro:  
 la farina bucta necto,  
 se la fosse ben tanto oro;  
 allora fanno bona prova  
 et potemo nui satisfare.  
 Nui [...].<sup>38</sup>

But if it is small and tight  
 That coffer is worth a treasure:  
 Put the flour in cleanly,  
 As though it were so much gold;  
 Then they make a good test  
 And we can be satisfied.

One text is of particular interest, “Alle stamengne, donne,” from MontBA 871. This work does not adopt the plural of the carnival song; rather, it is a song of a single vendor of sieves:

Alle stamengne, donne,  
 alle bone stamengne!  
 Chi vole stamengnare?

I've got sieves, ladies,  
 See the good sieves!  
 Who wants to sift?

Io so' stamengnatore,  
 et si fo bona farina,  
 e stamengno a tucte l'ore  
 de sera e de matina.  
 S'è nulla vicina  
 che voglia stamengnare?<sup>39</sup>

I am a miller  
 And I make good flour,  
 And I sift any time,  
 Night or day.  
 Is there no housewife  
 Who wants to sift?

Although this piece seems an anomaly, there is a whole repertory of such texts that has received little attention from musicologists, perhaps because so few text exist with musical settings. These are poems that concord in every respect, save one, with the *canto carnascialesco*: they speak in first person singular. They were called by Florentines *ballatette* or, more frequently, *canzoni a ballo*, and they seem to be, at least in this guise, a purely Florentine phenomenon. They are what Orvieto calls *canzoni a ballo* “carnascialeschi.”<sup>40</sup> Both the earliest printed editions and modern literary scholars segregate them from carnival songs: neither the *Canzone per andare in maschera* of ca. 1515 nor Grazzini's *Tutti i trionfi*, for example, includes them. They are, instead, given their own series of prints, including the *Ballatette del magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici & di messere Agnolo Politiani & di Bernardo Giamburlari & di molti altri* (Florence: n. p., n. d. [Tipografia della Caccia di Belfiore, not before 1495]) and the *Canzone a ballo nuovamente composte da diversi autori [...]*. In *Firenze alle Scale di Badia* (end of 15<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>41</sup> Almost all are in *ballata* form, or its variant, the *barzelletta*, and they would

<sup>38</sup> PerBC 431, fols. 104v-105. Three stanzas follow.

<sup>39</sup> MontBA 871, 422-23 (fols. 145v-146).

<sup>40</sup> Orvieto, ed. *Lorenzo de' Medici. Tutte le opere* (Rome: Salerno, 1992) 2: 710.

<sup>41</sup> There are, on the other hand, a very few plural *canti carnascialeschi* included in the *canzone a ballo* prints: (1) LORENZO'S “Quant'è bella giovinezza,” fol. [1v] (with, however, an inverted *ripresa*, which begins with the normal second couplet rather than the first: “Chi vuol esser lieto, sia, /di doman non c'è certezza. / Quanto è bella

seem to go back as far as Boccaccio. Vittore Branca has shown that one *canzone a ballo*, “Una donna d’amore fino,” often attributed to Lorenzo de’ Medici, is a reference to a *novella* in the *Decameron*, and was already circulating in the late *Trecento*.<sup>42</sup> The prints include a number of works that are the exact parallels to carnival songs.

Furthermore, there is the important matter of textual form of the *canti* in the two Neapolitan sources. All the poems would seem to be in variants of the *barzelletta*, itself not particularly associated with Naples, but rather with northern Italy and Florence. There were of course, native southern *barzelle*, but the *strambotto* is by far the more typical verse form in the South. The only *barzelle* other than the carnival songs in MontBA 871, for example, are “O vos homnes” and “Amor, tu non me gabasti”; the latter would appear to be Florentine as well: it is included in the Florentine ParBN 15123 and was the model for a lauda in FlorBR 2896.<sup>43</sup>

Two of the works in the Neapolitan sources, “Chiave, chiave” and “Viva, viva li gallanti,” have incomplete texts. The former, however, is musically a refrain form, and would easily fit a *barzelletta*. The latter contains only two verses of text and a fragment of a third, but the opening couplet is octosyllabic in the manner of a *barzelletta*.<sup>44</sup> “Viva, viva” and “De sartor nui siamo maestri” have refrains of only two lines. This, however, is frequent in Florentine carnival song. Two of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s *canti*, in fact, have the same rhyme scheme, his *Canzona delle cicale*, “Donne, siam, come vedete,” and his *Canzona de’ visi addrieto*, “Le cose al contrario vanno.”<sup>45</sup> “Nui siamo qui per buractar,” as we have seen, has the typical *xyyx*-rhyming, four-verse *ripresa* of the *barzelletta*. Significantly, too, the later Neapolitan carnival song, the *mascherata alla napoletana*, has a completely different structure. It is a derivative of the *canzone villanesca alla napoletana*, and shares its *strambotto*-based form.<sup>46</sup>

There is also the musical nature of the works, although there are so few extant

giovineza / che si fugge tutta via”) in *Canzone a ballo nuovamente composte da diversi autori*; (2) BERNARDO GIAMBULLARI’S “Chi vuol udir cantare,” in *Ballatette del magnifico Lorenzo de’ Medici*, fols. 15v-16; (3) “Donne, chi vuol de’ lupini” in the same book, fol. 26v; and (4) “Donne gentile e di piatoso core” in *Canzone a ballo composte dal Magnifico Lorenzo de’ Medici & da Messer Agnolo Politiano* (Florence: [Francesco di Jacopo Cartolaro], 1533), fol. 30v. Of these, only the first and last are included in the printed anthologies dedicated to carnivals songs, and only they have extant musical settings.

<sup>42</sup> VITTORE BRANCA, “Per le canzoni a ballo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: problemi di tradizione e di autenticità,” in *Miscellanea in onore di Roberto Cessi* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1958), 1: 403-408. Branca lists the contents of all extant books of *canzoni a ballo*. There are other early examples of these works, as well, among the poetry of Franco Sacchetti (ca. 1333-1400). See, for example, his “Benedetta sia la state,” in Alberto Chiari, ed., *Franco Sacchetti. Il libro delle rime* (Bari: Laterza, 1936), 105-107.

<sup>43</sup> FALLOWS, *Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 503. On the Italian text forms of MontBA 871, see POPE and KANZAWA, *Montecassino 871*, 71-9.

<sup>44</sup> The couplet that is present rhymes aa: “Viva, viva, li gallanti, / li amorosi tucti quanti. / Chi non” (Hooray, hooray for the gallants, / all lovers that they are. / [She? He?] who [does?] not). This is the typical rhyme scheme for a two-verse *ripresa*. Both the sentiment and the use of plural seen in this fragment of text are typical of the *mascherata*, and I therefore include it among the carnival songs here.

<sup>45</sup> Modern edition in Orvieto, *Lorenzo de’ Medici. Tutte le opere*, 2: 798-99 and 806-809.

<sup>46</sup> On this point, see DONNA CARDAMONE, *The canzone villanesca alla napoletana and Related Forms, 1537-1570* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 1: 148. On the poetic form of these works see idem, “Forme metriche e musicali della canzone villanesca e della villanella alla napoletana,” *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 12 (1977): 25-72.

Florentine carnival songs from before the period of Savonarola that one must proceed with great caution in any discussion of musical characteristics.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, some points can be suggested. The works are largely homorhythmic and, though only the superius is texted in the southern sources, they can easily accommodate text for all voices and were probably performed vocally, again like the Florentine carnival song. Several other musical characteristics are also suggestive of a Florentine provenance. Three of the works, “Nui siamo qui per buractar,” “De sartor nui siam maestri,” and “Chiave, chiave,” share the typical mensurations of the Florentine carnival song: *tempus imperfectum diminutum* moving to a triple mensuration in the *volta* of the stanza.<sup>48</sup> “Alle stamengne, donne” shares its major prolation with the Florentine carnival song “Visin, visin, visin,” also an early example of the genre.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, there are other indications that two of the works may be Florentine. “De sartor nui siamo maestri,” has a textual concordance with a central Florentine source, the famous *Canzone per andare in maschera*, formerly believed to stem from the late fifteenth century but now shown to have been printed no earlier than 1515.<sup>50</sup> Don Giulio Cattin has also suggested that “Chiave chiave” may be the model for the lauda “Po’ che’l core mi stringe e serra.” In the *Laude fatte da più persone spirituali*, this bears the rubric “cantasi come ‘Alle schiave, alle schiavone’” (See No. 1 on Table II, above); in a slightly later printed edition, this reads “Alle chiave, alle chiave.”<sup>51</sup> The case for the former song seems strong, that for the latter, considerably weaker, for two reasons. First, the lauda has a stanza of eight verses, and “Chiave chiave” has only six musical clauses in that section of the piece. Second, the opening clause in the carnival song is strongly tied to the phrase “chiave, chiave” or “alle chiave, alle chiave”: the superius has two four-note sub-clauses with a rest between them that would make it difficult to fit the

<sup>47</sup> For a preliminary attempt to identify fifteenth-century settings of carnival-song texts, see WILLIAM F. PRIZER, “The Music Savonarola Burned: The Florentine Carnival Song in the Late Fifteenth Century,” *Musica e Storia* 9 (2001): 5-33.

<sup>48</sup> As it exists in PerBC 431, “Nui siamo qui per buractar” presents a formal problem: either the *pedi* are sung to the same music as the *ripresa* or it is lacking the music for the *pedi*: there are four clauses present for the *ripresa* and then only two further clauses in *proportio sesquialtera*, which fit the lines of the *volta*. Although the former would be highly unusual in the Florentine repertory, it may be that some of its earliest examples, as would be this one, did use the same music for the *ripresa* and the *pedi*.

<sup>49</sup> On “Visin, visin, visin,” see, among other discussions, PATRICK MACEY, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola’s Musical Legacy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 44-47, and WILLIAM F. PRIZER, “Laude di popolo, laude di corte: Some Thoughts on the Style and Function of the Renaissance Lauda,” in *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Congresso internazionali di studi. Firenze 15-17 giugno 1992*, ed. by Piero Gargiulo (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 176-77.

<sup>50</sup> *Canzone per andare in maschera per carnesciale facte da più persone* (Florence, ca. 1515), fol. 2v-3. Facsimile edition ed. by Stefano Carrai (Sulmona: FOS, 1992). MARIA LUISA MINIO-PALUELLO, “Un’occasione in cui la storia detta il canto alla festa,” *Quaderni del teatro* 2 (1980): 114-34, demonstrates that the print cannot have been issued before 1515. See also DENNIS E. RHODES, “Notes on Early Florentine Printing,” *La Bibliofilia* 84 (1982): 157-59 and 161.

<sup>51</sup> GIULIO CATTIN, “I ‘cantasi come’ in una stampa di laude della Biblioteca Riccardiana,” *Quadrivium* 12<sup>2</sup> (1978): 37. See also FALLOWS, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs*, 501.

first verse of the lauda to them.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, when taken together, these elements all suggest that the six works found in Neapolitan manuscripts are in fact Florentine, even though their scribes have adopted non-Tuscan orthography. In the *Canzone per andare in maschera* the opening line of “De sartor nui siam maestri,” for example, reads “De sartori noi siàn maestri,” using the Tuscan “noi” for “nui” and the typically Florentine “siàn” for “siam” found in the PerBC 431.

This seeming discrepancy between the provenance of the manuscript and that of the carnival songs can be explained through the work of Atlas. He has shown that the artistic renewal undertaken in the Kingdom of Naples by Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, in the 1480s was to a major degree dependant on Florence, and Florentine artists and musicians were often in the south, while Neapolitan musicians were frequently in Florence.<sup>53</sup> Lorenzo de’ Medici himself, for example, gave Federigo d’Aragona a copy of the *Raccolta aragonese*, an anthology of Tuscan verse, in 1476; this even included five of Lorenzo’s *canzoni a ballo*.<sup>54</sup> Given the many musical contacts listed by Atlas, it would not have been difficult for the five carnival songs and the one *canzone a ballo* to have passed from Florence to Naples, and Atlas notes at least two other Florentine works in the repertory of PerBC 431: “Je suys mal content” and “Morte che fai,” both by Heinrich Isaac.<sup>55</sup>

If these six works are not members of our extra-Florentine repertory, they do add to the small repertory of pre-1500 carnival songs in Florence and represent, in fact, some of the earliest extant examples of polyphonic settings of *mascherate* from the city of the Medici. They also demonstrate that Florentine carnival songs did upon occasion travel outside the limited circles of Florence, just as Grazzini had suggested in his dedication.

#### PETRUCCI’S CARNIVAL SONGS

The carnival songs in Petrucci and other north-Italian sources present a clearer

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<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, it is possible that another song of the locksmiths, “Chi à toppa di stram maniera,” discussed above, may have been the model for the lauda. At least this has an eight-verse stanza that would match that of “Poi che’l cor.”

<sup>53</sup> ALLAN W. ATLAS, “Aragonese Naples and Medicean Florence: Musical Interrelationships and Influence in the Late Fifteenth Century,” in *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 15-45.

<sup>54</sup> On the *Raccolta aragonese*, the basic source remains MICHELE BARBI, *Studi sul canzoniere di Dante, con nuove indagini sulle raccolte manoscritte e a stampa di antiche rime italiane* (Florence: Sansoni, 1915; reprint Florence: Giuntina, 1965), 215-338. On LORENZO’S *canzoni a ballo* contained in the *Raccolta*, see also PAOLO ORVIETO, *Lorenzo de’ Medici* (Florence: Nuova Italia Editrice, 1976), 70.

<sup>55</sup> ATLAS, “Aragonese Naples,” Appendix I (34-39) is a chronological listing of known musical contacts between the two areas from 1450 to ca. 1513. For the two pieces of Isaac, see *ibid.*, 42

case of non-Florentine provenance.<sup>56</sup> The principal sources of these works are Petrucci's books of frottole, although a few appear in north-Italian manuscripts, as well (See Table IV).

Table IV  
Carnival Songs in North-Italian Sources

A. Carnival Songs from Petrucci's Books of Frottole

Incipit	Source	Composer	Subject	Provenance
<i>Ai maroni</i>	PeF VIII (1507)	Tromboncino	Vendors of chestnuts	Ferrara/Mantua
<i>Chi la castra</i>	PeF IX (1509)	Cara	Farmers who castrate pigs	Mantua
<i>De paesi oltremontani</i>	PeF IX (1509)	Lurano	Foreign warrioresses	Rome
<i>Donne, habiati</i>	PeF VIII (1507)	Cara	Galley slaves	Mantua
<i>Fate ben, gente cortese<sup>a</sup></i>	PeF VIII (1507)	Tromboncino	Pilgrims in Rome	Ferrara/Mantua
<i>Forestieri a la ventura</i>	PeF VI (1506)	?	Foreign singers in Rome	Rome
<i>Gionti siam</i>	PeF IX (1509)	?	Candle vendors	Northern Italy
<i>Noi l'Amazone siamo</i>	PeF IX (1509)	Lurano	Amazon warrioresses	Rome
<i>Nui siam tutti amartelati</i>	PeF IX (1509)	Tromboncino	Men beaten down by Cupid	Ferrara/Mantua
<i>Nui siamo segatori<sup>b</sup></i>	PeF VIII (1507)	Stringari	Mowers	Northern Italy
<i>O mischini</i>	PeF VI (1506)	?	Chained slaves	Northern Italy
<i>Pan de miglio<sup>c</sup></i>	PeF VI (1506)	?	A Vendor of hot bread	Northern Italy
<i>Son Fortuna omnipotente</i>	PeF III (1506)	Lurano	<i>Trionfo</i> of Fortune	Rome

B. Carnival Songs in North-Italian Manuscripts

<i>Noi siamo tre romeri</i>	FlorBN 27	?	Pilgrims	Ferrara? Florence?
<i>L'arte nostra è macinare</i>	FlorC2441	?	Millers	Milan
<i>De le done qual'è l'arte</i>	FlorC2441	?	Women as hunters	Milan

<sup>a</sup> Also in PeB II (1511), 27v (to B. T.); text in ManBC 4, cc. 218v-219v.

<sup>b</sup> Text in ManBC 4, cc. 126v-27.

<sup>c</sup> Strictly speaking, a *canzone a ballo* and not a carnival song.

There are, however, not one, but two distinct geographical repertoires present in these sources. One is north Italian, represented by the works of Tromboncino, Cara, and others. The second, however, is Roman, since it can be shown that Filippo de Lurano worked in Rome during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the period in which his compositions were published in Petrucci's books. In a Florentine miscellany

<sup>56</sup> I have discussed the nature and function of these works in my "Facciamo pure noi carnevale: Non-Florentine Carnival Songs of the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries," in *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*. Edited by Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore, and Colleen Reardon (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 173-211. I offer a summary of that information here. In that earlier study, I also discussed the four Siense carnival songs by Ansano Senese found in SamF I (1515), which are omitted here. On these works, see also FRANK A. D'ACCONTE, "Instrumental Resonances in a Siense Vocal Print of 1515," in *Le Concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance: Actes du XXXIV<sup>e</sup> Colloque International d'Études Humanistes. Tours, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, 1-11 juillet 1991*, ed. by Jean-Michel Vaccaro (Paris: CNRS, 1995), 333-59.

of poetry copied between 1505 and 1508, at least six of Lurano's frottole are included among pieces sent from Rome, and his *barzelletta* "Donna contra alla mia voglia" bears the rubric "This song was the favorite of Duke Valentino," that is, Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, whose principal residence was the Eternal City.<sup>57</sup> Lurano also wrote a Latin frottola, "Quercus juncta columna est," for the Roman wedding of Lucrezia Gara della Rovere to Marcantonio I Colonna, which took place on 2 January 1508.<sup>58</sup> For this reason, his three carnival songs, "Son Fortuna omnipotente," the only example of a *trionfo* among Petrucci's repertory, "Noi l'Amazone siamo," and "De paesi oltremontani," must stem from Rome rather than northern Italy.

Whatever their provenance, these works, like many of the Florentine carnival songs, are uniformly *barzellette* or some slight variant of it. Like the Florentine songs, they speak in the first person plural and feature the typical sexual *doubles entendres*.<sup>59</sup> Although putatively about galley slaves, for example, Cara's "Donne, habiati voi pietate" contains just such a text: the sea the slaves plow is obviously sexual, and there is little doubt what their "anguish" and "struggling" are or exactly how they become "destitute" immediately afterward:

Donne, habiati voi pietate  
de sti poveri galeotti;  
gran bisogno ne ha condotti  
a chiedervi caritate.

Ladies, have pity  
On us, poor galley slaves;  
A great need has led us  
To ask for your charity.

Sotto forza d'un tiranno,  
nui solchamo un tempo el mare,  
e qual fusse el nostro affanno  
seria longo il raccontare  
perché anchor di po' il stentare  
deventiamo in povertate.  
Donne, habiati [...].<sup>60</sup>

Under the force of a tyrant [i.e., Cupid]  
We briefly plow the sea  
And our anguish  
Would take long to describe  
Because after a short spell of struggling  
We again become destitute.  
Ladies, have pity [...].

Although it speaks in the singular rather than the plural, the sentiments voiced in "Pan di miglio, caldo, caldo," are also closely analogous to the Florentine carnival song and its *canzone a ballo* "carnascialesco." It begins with an imitation of a street cry, the vendor asking ladies to buy his "bread" while it is hot.

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<sup>57</sup> Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Antinori 158, fols. 22v-24 and 29v-32. The rubric, "Questa canzona era la favorita del Duca Valentino," is included there on fol. 24. A study of this manuscript will be included in the monograph referred to in note 1 above.

<sup>58</sup> PeF IX (1509), fol. 2. For further on Lurano see WILLIAM F. PRIZER, "Wives and Courtesans: The Frottola in Florence," forthcoming in *Studies in Honor of William C. Holmes*, ed. by Alyson McLamore and Susan Parisi (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press).

<sup>59</sup> "Pan de miglio" is an exception. It is in the first person singular and thus resembles the Florentine *canzone a ballo*.

<sup>60</sup> PeF VIII (1509), fols. 27v-38.

Pan de miglio, caldo, caldo,  
 donne mie, a chi ne vole;  
 le man presto a le guarnole,  
 su, su, su, che questo è caldo.

Orsù, donne, comperati  
 del mio pan caldo de miglio:  
 fa star tutti innamorati;  
 fresche e belle come un ziglio,  
 vi farà color virmiglio<sup>61</sup>  
 se'l gustati cusì caldo.  
 Pan de miglio [...].

Io so ben e vi prometto,  
 se'l mio pan voi gustareti,  
 tal dolceza in vostro pecto  
 con piacer e festa hareti:  
 con effecto voi direti  
 "benedecto che l'è caldo"!  
 Pan de miglio [...].

Tal virtù e tal dolceza  
 el mio pan in se retiene  
 che chi'l gusta con tristeza  
 e chi sempre vive in pene<sup>62</sup>  
 crudel pene non retiene  
 mentre il gusta cusì caldo.  
 Pan de miglio [...].

Orsù, presto, donne care,  
 le man presto nel mio cesto,<sup>63</sup>  
 comenzate hormai gustare,  
 non l'abiati già a molesto;  
 se son troppo a voi modesto,<sup>64</sup>  
 qui amor mi fa star saldo.  
 Pan de miglio [...].<sup>65</sup>

Hot millet bread,  
 My ladies, for she who wants some;  
 Put your hand quickly under your petticoats,  
 Quickly, quickly, for this is hot.

Hurry, ladies, buy  
 my hot millet loaf:  
 It makes everyone fall in love;  
 Fresh and beautiful like a lily,  
 It will make you turn bright red  
 If you enjoy it while it's hot.  
 Hot millet bread [...].

I am sure and I promise you,  
 If you try my loaf,  
 Such sweetness in your breast  
 You'll feel, with pleasure and joy:  
 That you'll say  
 "Thank God, it's hot!"  
 Hot millet bread [...].

Such power and such sweetness  
 Does my loaf have  
 That she who tries it when she's sad  
 And she who lives always in anguish  
 Will not keep that cruel pain  
 If she tries while it's hot.  
 Hot millet bread [...].

Come on, quickly, my dear ladies,  
 Put you hands into my basket,  
 Begin from now on to enjoy it,  
 It won't do you any harm;  
 If I seem too shy to you,  
 Here love will make me stand firm.  
 Hot millet bread [...].

<sup>61</sup> This is a play on words: "ziglio" is used as the white lily of virginity; trying the bread will make it bright red.

<sup>62</sup> An obvious pun: "pena" means "pain" or "anguish"; "pene" means "penis."

<sup>63</sup> Again a pun: "cesto" means both "basket" and "a tuft of growth."

<sup>64</sup> Text reads "molesto." I have emended it for sense and because it repeats the same rhyming word from the previous verse.

<sup>65</sup> PeF VI (1506), fol. 26v. It is possible that the singular found here is an imitation of the Florentine *canzone a ballo*; it is also possible, however, that it represents an independent attempt to match the content of the carnival song with the typical manner of performance of the frottola – a single voice with instrumental accompaniment.

If these texts are similar to those in Florence, the musical settings in north-Italian carnival songs are not. All include more repetition than their Florentine cousins: most have music only for the *ripresa* and refrain, with the stanza being sung to the same music. In Florence, on the other hand, new music for the stanza is the rule. Furthermore, the musical style of Petrucci's works is that of the typical north-Italian *barzelletta* of courtly love: the songs feature basically syllabic text treatment in the superius, active inner voices with lute-like figurations, bass-lines that support the harmony and that move frequently by fourths and fifths, and hemiola rhythms. Unlike the Florentine pieces, their lower voices are often impossible to provide with a rational text placement, seeming, therefore, to call for instrumental performance. Furthermore, none of them demonstrates the use of a contrasting section in triple mensuration so typical of Florentine carnival songs, where a portion of the *volta* often changes from duple mensuration to triple. The same is true of three of the anonymous *canti* published by Petrucci: "Gionti siam a la vechieza," "Pan de miglio, caldo, caldo," and "O mischini, o siagurati" remain entirely in duple mensuration and feature lower voices typical of the frottola. On the basis of these stylistic elements, these can be assigned, at least tentatively, to the north-Italian repertory.

The Roman repertory, however, differs in several ways from that of northern Italy. Lurano's "Noi l' Amazone siamo" features a section in triple mensuration, like the Florentine *canto*, although here the entire two-verse *volta* rather than its last verse moves to triple. Both this and Lurano's other *mascherata*, "De paesi oltremontani," are also considerably more homorhythmic than their North-Italian counterparts. Unlike the latter pieces, they more nearly lend themselves to text underlay in the lower voices. The same characteristic is found in the anonymous "Forestieri a la ventura," which opens with a brief, paired imitative section in which all voices have a strictly syllabic delivery of the text. The remainder of the setting is highly homorhythmic, although the first two lines of the *volta*, in triplet coloration, return briefly to a paired imitative texture; the entire setting easily accommodates the text for the lower voices.<sup>66</sup> Pirrotta has already suggested that the work was intended to be sung in all parts and has emphasized its syllabic delivery and sense of vertical harmony.<sup>67</sup> Both because of its musical style and its topic, foreign singers looking for work in Rome, I have suggested that this, too, is a Roman carnival song.<sup>68</sup>

There are thus two separate repertories of carnival songs in Petrucci's prints: one from the north-Italian courts, and the other from Rome. A basic question concerning these works is then their relation to Florentine *canti*. Are they in some way linked to the Florentine works, or did they arise independently? It is the use of these *doubles-*

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<sup>66</sup> Petrucci texts only the superius, as is his habit in Italian secular pieces.

<sup>67</sup> NINO PIRROTTA, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, trans. by Karen Eales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 57-58. WALTER RUBSAMEN, "From Frottola to Madrigal: The Changing Pattern of Secular Italian Vocal Music," in *Chanson and Madrigal, 1480-1530*, ed. by James Haar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 62, also believes that the work should be texted in all voices.

<sup>68</sup> PRIZER, "Facciamo pure noi carnevale," 185-87.

*entendres* pieces for carnival festivities endemic to all of Italy and not just Florence? Second, if they are related, how did the idea of such pieces move from Florence to northern Italy? There can be no definitive answer to these questions, although it is clear that the genre appears in Florentine sources decades before it is seen in north-Italian ones. Furthermore, as we have seen, at least the Florentines were convinced that this was a native idea. With this in mind, we can find traces of a transmission of works and the concept underlying them from Florence to elsewhere.

Rome is an obvious candidate for such transmission: the Medici themselves were there from at least 1500 during their exile from their native city. Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici lived in the Medici palace there, often joined by his brother Giuliano. Even though they were officially *personae non gratae* in Florence, they held open house to Florentines visiting in Rome, offering them lodging and entertainment. Guiccardini writes that, in spite of Florentine laws forbidding it,

[Giovanni and Giuliano] did not fail to do everything they could to please those Florentines who were staying in Rome or who happened to be there, giving them much help and favor in all their needs, providing money or credit if they required it; and in effect the Cardinal's palace, his riches, his efforts, and his reputation were all at the complete disposition of the Florentines [...]. These things, when talked about in Florence, meant that almost all the Florentines, when they had business at the [papal] court in Rome, either for the expedition of benefices or for other reasons, turned either in person or with letters to the Cardinal de' Medici, even including those who had been their [i.e., the house of Medici's] enemies; and he helped them all most readily [...].<sup>69</sup>

In such an atmosphere, with the Medici attempting to do everything possible to ingratiate themselves with the citizens of Florence, it would not be surprising to find that they had imported the custom of Florentine carnival.

There is evidence, however, that the Florentine carnival song, or at least its basic conceits, were imported to Rome even earlier. The Roman chronicler Stefano Infessura reports disapprovingly on what seems to be a change in carnival for the Eternal City in 1491:

A dishonest custom that had arisen in the past grew more this year [1491] than in the others, whereby each cardinal during the carnival with great pomp sent through the city,

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<sup>69</sup> "E però, non premettevano di fare spezie alcuna di piacere a quegli fiorentini che stavano o capitavano a Roma, dando loro grande aiuto e favore in tutte le occorrenze e spedizione loro, servendo ancora di danari o di credito chi n'avessi bisogno; e in effetto la casa, le facultà, le forze e la riputazione tutta del cardinale erano a saccomanno de' fiorentini. . . . Queste cose, divulgate a Firenze, avevano fatto che tutti quasi e' fiorentini, a chi accadeva in Roma avere bisogno della corte o per spedizione di benefici o per altoro, facevano o personalmente o con lettere capo al cardinale de' Medici, insino ancora a quegli che erano stati loro inimici e lui gli serviva tutti prontissimamente [...]" GUICCIARDINI, *Storie fiorentine*, quoted from Scarano, ed. *Opere di Francesco Guiccardini* 1: 232.

and in particular to the houses of the other cardinals, *carri trionfali*, together with riders with trumpets and enticing sounds and *maschere*, with boys singing and uttering lascivious texts and other things that delighted them, with mimes and clowns and others dressed not in linens or wool, but in silks and gold and silver brocade, costing many, many ducats. From this we should say and judge that the mercy of God was changed into lust and the work of the Devil; and yet no one was offended by this at all.<sup>70</sup>

Documents show that cardinals had ridden through the streets in *maschera* earlier, but this is the first known reference to *canti carnascialeschi* themselves.<sup>71</sup>

Of equal interest is the mode of transmission of Florentine carnival songs to northern Italy. Here we must differentiate between the transmission of the works themselves and the transmission of their basic conceit and language. There are at least two instances of these transmissions, one in Ferrara and the other in Milan, both occurring in the last decade of the fifteenth century, or before any known source of north-Italian carnival songs. On 11 March 1490, the singer Cornelio da Fiandra writes to Duke Ercole d'Este from Florence apologizing for not having returned to the duke's *cappella*, but saying that his wife has just given birth and cannot travel. He also writes that "I am sending your Excellency a Mass by Gaspar [van Weerbeke] composed on 'Princesse et amorette.' I believe you will like it. I am also sending you a song that was sung in this place on *martedì grasso* [23 February], which [I believe] will also please your Excellency."<sup>72</sup>

It is not clear exactly what this carnival song was, although one such work appears in FlorBN 27, copied in the middle of the first decade of the *Cinquecento*, probably in Ferrara.<sup>73</sup> "Siamo, donne, tre romeri," the song of three Roman pilgrims, is a strange work.<sup>74</sup> It is similar to many Florentine carnival songs of the late fifteenth

<sup>70</sup> Appendix, Document 5.

<sup>71</sup> There is a large literature on carnival in Rome. Among other sources, see FILIPPO CLEMENTI, *Il carnevale romano nelle cronache contemporanee* (Rome: Tipografia Tiberina di F. Setth, 1899) and BEATRICE PREMOLI, *Ludus Carnelevarii: il carnevale a Roma dal secolo XII al secolo XVI* (Rome: Guido Guidotti, 1981).

<sup>72</sup> "Mando a la Excellentia Vostra una missa de Gasparo, facta sopra 'Princesse et amorette'. Credo piacerà a la Excellentia Vostra." Archivio di Stato di Modena, Musica e musicisti, Busta 2. Published in EDMOND VANDER STRAETEN, *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* 6 (Brussels: Van Trigt, 1882; reprint New York: Dover, 1969): 81; partially published in LEWIS LOCKWOOD, *Music in Ferrara, 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 164-5 with English translation

<sup>73</sup> I do not include here the Florentine carnival song "Visin, visin, visin," which appears in FlorBN 27, fols. 45v-46, only as a *travestimento spirituale* with the text "Gesù, Gesù, Gesù." ATLAS, *The Cappella Giulia Chansonnier (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, C. G. XIII.27)* (Brooklyn: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1975) 1: 252 views FlorBN 27 as North-Italian and probably Mantuan. I believe it is more likely, however, that the manuscript stems from Ferrara.

<sup>74</sup> FlorBN 27, fols. 110v-111. To the best of my knowledge, it is edited only in JOSEPH J. GALLUCCI, JR., "Festival Music in Florence, ca. 1480 - ca. 1520: *Canti carnascialeschi, Trionfi, and Related Forms*" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1966) 1: 324-25 (text) and 2:234-35 (music). A partial facsimile is included in GHISI, *Canti carnascialeschi*, Figure D, before p. 57.

century in that it is written for three voices and concludes with a section in triple mensuration. The opening is almost completely homorhythmic and the triple section begins, as do many Florentine *canti*, with several measures in imitation. This much, then, would make this seem a native Florentine work, although it appears in no Florentine textual or musical source. On the other hand, the form of the text is highly unusual: it is a variant of a *barzioletta*, with octosyllabic verses, but with a *ripresa* of five verses and a stanza of eight verses that does not return to the rhyme of the *ripresa* in the *volta*. Furthermore, only the *ripresa* is set to music, the stanza being sung to the same music with the addition of a repetition sign. This is not typical of the Florentine *canto*, which, as we have seen, provides new music for the stanza. The work remains anomalous, resembling in some ways both Florentine and north-Italian *canti*, but also differing enough from either tradition that it is at present impossible to assign it to either.<sup>75</sup>

Even more intriguing is the case of Milan, since one can see the introduction of the genre there clearly, and even trace the introduction of Florentine themes into the north. MilT 1093 is an autograph miscellany by the Milanese poet Gaspare Visconti (1461-1499), who worked at the court of the Sforza. At some time before his death, probably in the 1490s, he entered the texts of three carnival songs into his manuscript.<sup>76</sup> Two of these are of particular interest, since Visconti includes an explanation of how he came to write them: they are actually two attempts to write the same song, at the request of a “great magnate.”<sup>77</sup> The first was not entirely successful, so he wrote another, with more detailed instructions from the magnate. Although the poems do not specify that their inspiration was Florentine, the context makes this seem extremely likely.

Visconti first produced the following text:

Bel paese è Lombardia,  
degnio assai, ricco e galante,  
ma de gioie la Soria  
e di fructi è più abbondante.

Lombardy is a beautiful land,  
Very worthy, rich and galant,  
But with jewels and fruit  
Is Syria more abundant

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<sup>75</sup> If I am correct that “Nui siamo qui per buractar,” from PerBC 431, is Florentine, then there would be a precedent among early carnival songs for works that adopt the same music for the *ripresa* and stanza. In this case, it is possible that “Noi siamo tre romeri” was the carnival song sent to Ercole d’Este in 1490. See the discussion of “Nui siamo qui per buractar” above.

<sup>76</sup> On Visconti, see RODOLFO RENIER, “Gaspare Visconti,” *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, anno 13 (1908): 509-62 and 777-824.

<sup>77</sup> I do not include here Visconti’s third carnival-like work, “Ho bomaso, ho lana, ho stoppa,” (MilT 1093, fol. 50). This is of less interest for the question of transmission, although it would seem to be a cross between the *canzone a ballo* “carnascialesco,” with its singular *ripresa*, and the *canto carnascialesco* itself, with its plural in the last stanza (“Se sapesti che dolcezza / sempre vien da l’arte nostra”). All three texts are published in RENIER, “Gaspare Visconti,” 552-58. There are also two further Milanese carnival songs, which are included in FlorC 2441. I have discussed these in my “Secular Music at Milan during the Early Cinquecento: Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio, MS Basevi 2441,” *Musica Disciplina* 52 (1998): 23-25.

Tanta fama è per il mondo  
del gran vostro alto Milano  
che, solcando il mar profundo [sic]  
siam venuti dal lontano  
gran paese soriano  
per veder sì così sia.  
Bel paese è Lombardia [...].

Gionti che siam stati qui,  
cercho avemo e giù e su  
e l'habbiam visto così  
che mei visto mai non fu,  
infin poi ne troviam più  
che la fama non dicia.  
Bel paese etc.

Vero è che'l paese nostro  
questo avanza e gli altri tutti,  
né produce il terren vostro  
così dolci e sì gran frutti  
quanto il nostro ha già prodotti  
e produce tuttavia.  
Bel paese etc.

Deh, guardate queste fave  
ome egli han la sgorba grossa:  
mai fu cibo più suave;  
e i fasoì ch'an scorza rossa  
masticati han tanta possa  
ch'altro allor non se desia.  
Bel paese etc.

D'acque, polvere e profumi,  
robin, perle e gran ballassi;  
non sia terra che presumi  
con la nostra por suoi passi,  
ch'el convien vincer si lassi  
ciascun'altra signoria.  
Bel paese etc.

Quanto noi vincemo voi  
del le sopra dette cose,  
tanto voi vincete noi  
de le dame gloriose  
che se fosseno pietose  
ciaschedun qui restaria,

Such is the fame  
of your great Milan  
that, plowing the deep sea,  
we have come from the far off  
great country of Syria  
To see if it is true.  
Lombardy [...].

We have arrived here,  
And have looked high and low  
And we have seen things  
We have never seen before,  
So that we find that it is more  
Than its fame would predict.  
Lombardy [...].

It is true that our country  
Remains this, and all the others,  
Yours included do not produce like ours  
such sweet and large fruits  
As has ours already produced  
And continues to.  
Lombardy [...].

Oh, look at these broad beans  
How they have a large blot:  
There is no food more agreeable;  
And the kidney beans that have a rough skin  
when you chew them they have such power  
That you will want no others.  
Lombardy [...].

Potions, powders, and profumes,  
rubies, pearls, and large precious stones;  
There is no country that presumes  
That can compare to ours,  
So that we are left to conquer  
All the others.  
Lombardy [...].

Just as we defeat you  
In the things above  
So you defeat us  
In your beautiful ladies  
So that, if they had pity on us,  
Each of us would remain here,

smenticando la Soria  
d'altre cose più abbondante.

Forgetting Syria  
For other things more abundant.

Some of the bases for a carnival song are present here. Foreign merchants, speaking in the first person plural, hawk their wares and compare their merchandise to that of Italy. Objects that could be the subject of sexually equivocal meanings – beans, potions, powders, and so forth – are even present, but Visconti makes little or no attempt to exploit these meanings. Rather it is a straight-forward listing of the items the merchants bring and concludes with a praise of the beautiful women of Milan without many obvious sexual connotations.

Visconti writes, in fact, that the “magnate” was not happy with this result: “After I had written the above song at the request of a great magnate, after several days he decided that he wanted more references in it than he had wanted previously [or had explained previously?] he sent me instructions written below.”<sup>78</sup> These gave him explicit directions as to how the work was to be constructed, including the sexual innuendos to be contained. Visconti quotes, seemingly verbatim, these instructions:

So that you can understand what the song should be and so that you can express the content of the *barzelle*, this will be the way. And first, begin as follows:

In the great kingdom of Syria, we are powerful merchants, and we have come here to increase our fame and fortunes, and we have brought our wares and riches with us, and since we have arrived in this powerful state, which is full of nobility and magnificence, we are very content and plan to sell our merchandise.

You should begin the frottola with this material and write it in as many stanzas as you think fitting. And we want a stanza separated from the frottola that greets his Excellency the Duke, chiefly because we are arriving without being announced to meet such a great lord as is his Excellency. When you finish this stanza, you should begin the frottola. When the [stanza] is done, we will seat ourselves on the floor on carpets with our legs under us, in Moorish fashion, with several ampules (*capsette*) and boxes, in which there will be various things, which we will exhibit in order, singing stanzas [for each], by which one will learn of the characteristics of the objects.

There will be five Moors who will sing and one or two who will show the merchandise at the same time we mention them in our singing. There will also be two or three servants dressed in Moorish fashion who will carry the carpets on their shoulders with the boxes and ampules under their arms.

This will be the first thing to be exhibited: a box with ampules of rose water and fragrant oils that are so perfect and good that whoever bathes themselves with them will become younger and will have beautiful skin and will grow hair and [turn it] blond.

In the second box will be musk, civet, rouge, and other things, which are completely perfect, and which we bring to give away and to sell to those who wish them.

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<sup>78</sup> Appendix, Document 6.

The third, will have several broad, red beans (*fave*), which will be made of sugar, that grow in Syria and that are sweet as honey and that must be eaten raw, and whoever puts them in her mouth will become pregnant with lovely girls.

The fourth box will have Syrian beans (*fasoli*) large like our broad beans (*fave*) and of the largest and reddest type, also of sugar, and they have the quality that they thin the face and if we ourselves with our own hands put them into ladies' mouths, they cause them to have male children.

The fifth box will have a large, fat ruby of such a lovely color that, showing it, it changes in various ways, and you can give the ruby whatever qualities and properties that you think fitting.

And we send this send back to you, adding and deleting where you think fit for composing the frottola.

Visconti followed these directions virtually to the letter. He began with a *strambotto* praising Lombardy, and continued with a *barzelletta* of six stanzas, the first of which sets the scene and the following five depicting the contents of each of the boxes in turn. In its content, it looks very much like the text of a Florentine carnival song. In fact, the majority of the subjects for Visconti's commissioned work can be traced to extant Florentine carnival-song texts. These include the following:

1. Jacopo da Bientina's *Canzona della manna soriana*. Syrian merchants bring "manna" in ampules that preserves youth, just as it does in Visconti's poem.
2. Lorenzo de' Medici's *Canzona de' profumi*, in which Valentian merchants find Florentine women more beautiful than those in their native land and offer perfumes and oils that have amorous powers.
3. Lorenzo's *Canzona del zibetto*, in which an "unguent" from the civet helps women to become pregnant.
4. Lorenzo's *Canzona de' fornai*, in which the third stanza begins "Se ci è alcuna a chi la fava piaccia," or Bernardo Giambullari's *Canzona de' cavadenti*, which also speaks of "olio ch'è di fave rosse." There are also two Florentine *canzoni a ballo* that concern "fave."<sup>79</sup>

All of these display virtually the same double meanings and properties as those shown in the instructions to Visconti. It would almost appear that Visconti's

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<sup>79</sup> The text of the first work is edited in SINGLETON, *Canti carnascialeschi*, 320. The last three are edited, among other places in ORVIETO, *Lorenzo de' Medici. Tutte le opere* 2: 779-82, 789-91 and 794-97. The *Canzona de' cavadenti* is published anonymously in SINGLETON, *Canti carnascialeschi*, 41-42, and, attributed to Giambullari, in BRUSCAGLI, *Trionfi e canti carnascialeschi* 1: 256-57. For other Florentine works that use "fava" as a sexual metaphor, see PRIZER, "Wives and Courtesans."

“magnate” was familiar with the subjects of these Florentine songs and that he constructed a kind of “medley” of them for his presentation at court. Significantly, there was no Florentine *Canzona del rubino*, and for this the magnate did not specify its properties. Taken together, the instructions and the analogous Florentine *canti* strongly suggest that Visconti’s work represents an importation of Florentine ideas into the north-Italian courts. This would later bear fruit, at least indirectly, in the carnival songs written for court by Tromboncino, Cara and others.

It would thus seem that the carnival song arose in Florence by the early 1480s, at the latest, although the genre may actually stretch back to the 1460s. Lorenzo de’ Medici himself must have played a major role in its development. From the 1480s, Florentine *canti carnascialeschi* and *canzoni a ballo* “carnascialeschi” were exported to southern Italy. In the 1490s, they appeared in Rome, where they were seemingly imitated by Filippo de’ Lurano. During the same decade, they begin to appear in northern Italy, as well, both in Ferrara and at the court of Milan. The thirteen carnival songs published by Petrucci by Tromboncino, Cara, and others are the results of this process.

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APPENDIX

Doc. 1. Anton Francesco Grazzini, *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascheate [sic] o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici; quando egli hebbero prima cominciamento, per infino a questo anno presente 1559* (Florence: [Tolentino], 1559), fols. aiir-aiiir

Tra i vari giuochi, i diversi spettacoli, e le molte feste che, secondo i tempi e le stagioni, si fanno pubblicamente in Firenze, le mascherate o i canti carnascialeschi che dir vogliamo, sono per ogni rispetto (Magnanimo, e Gentilissimo Principe) festa meravigliosa, e bellissima. . . percioché, quando s'abbattono a esser begli, ben fatti e bene ordinati, e con tutte quante l'appartenenze debite; cioè che l'invenzione primieramente sia nobile e conoscibile; le parole aperte e trattose; la musica allegra e larga; le voci sonore e unite; i vestiri ricchi e lieti e secondo l'invenzione approp[r]iati, e lavorati senza risparmio; le masserizie, o gli strumenti che vi accagion fatti con maestria e dipinti leggiadramente; i cavalli, bisognandovene, bellissimi e ben forniti; e la notte poi con accompagniatura e concorso grandissimo di torce; non si può né vedere, né udire cosa né più gioconda, né più dilettevole. E così spargendosi, e cercando fra dì e notte quasi tutta quanta la città. Sono veduti e uditi da ogni uno; possonsi mandare dove altri vuole e farne spettacolo a chi altrui vien bene, per infino alle fanciulle in casa che, facendosi a una gelosia, o a una impannata, senza esser vedute da persona, veggono e odono il tutto: e fornito la festa, della quale tutto quanto il popolo ha preso piacere e contento, si leggono le parole da ogni gente, e la notte si cantano per ogni luogo; e l'une e l'altre si mandano non solo in tutto Firenze e in tutte le città d'Italia; ma nella Magna, in Spagna e in Francia, ai parenti e agli amici.

Et questo modo di festeggiare fu trovato dal Magnifico Lorenzo vecchio de' Medici; uno dei primi, e più chiari splendori c'habbia havuto, non pure la Illustrissima, e nobilissima casa vostra, e Firenze; ma Italia ancora, e il mondo tutto quanto; degno veramente di non esser ricordato mai né senza lagrime, né senza riverenza: percioché prima gli huomini di quei tempi, usavano il Carnovale, immascherandosi, contraffare le Madonne, solite andar per lo calendimaggio e così travestiti a uso di Donne, e di fanciulle cantavano Canzoni a ballo la qual maniera di cantare, considerato il Magnifico esser sempre la medesima, pensò di variare, e non solamente il canto, ma le invenzioni, e il modo di comporre le parole; facendo canzoni con altri piedi vari; e la musica suoi [sic] poi comporre con nuove, e diverse arie: e il primo canto, o Mascherata che si cantasse in questa guisa, fu d'huomini, che vendevano Berriquocoli, e confortini; composta a tre voci da un certo Arrigo Tedesco; maestro all'ora della Capella di San Giovanni; e musico in quei tempi, riputatissimo. Ma doppo non molto ne fecero poi a Quattro: e così di mano immano vennero crescendo i componitori così di note, come di parole; tanto che si condussero dove di presente si trovano.

Doc. 2. ASF, Otto di Guardia, Libro 221, fol. 27. 28 January 1479 [n. s.]

E' Magnifici et degnissimi huomini Otto di Guardia della città di Firenze fanno bandire notificare et expressamente comandare a qualunque persona di qualunque stato, grado,

qualità o conditione si sia, maschio o femina, che non ardischa o vero presumma da oggi in alguno modo andare di di o di notte per la città di Firenze col viso coperto con maschera, velo, o alcuna altra chosa o tinto o variato d'alcuno colore fuor del naturale in modo che non fussi chiaramente conosciuto. Notificando a ciaschuno che chi sarà trovato contrafare a quanto di sopra si contiene sarà punito al loro arbitrio, et non si accetterà schusa veruna. Banditto per me Marioto di Simone a dì 29 di genaio 1478 [s. f.]

Doc. 3. ASF, Otto di Guardia, Libro 221, fol. 58r. 2 February 1486 [n. s.]

Gli Spectabili et Degnissimi Otto di Guardia et Balia della città di Firenze, desiderando obviare ad ogni inconveniente et scandolo che in questi dì potessi occorrere, fanno bandire, notificare et expressamente comandare a qualunque persona di qualunque stato, grado, qualità, dignità o conditione si sia che non ardischa o in alcun modo presumma per lo advenire maximamente in questo presenti dì portare alcuna generatione o qualità d'arme da offendere o da difendere in modo alcuno, et maxime chi andassi in maschera o altrimenti travestito o andassi o fussi in giostra non portino o habbino seco arme alcuna maxime da offendere come sono spade, arcette, coltelle, pugnali o altre armi simili sotto la pena per loro ufficio ordinata. . . . Condotto per me Filippo de' Ranieri a dì 2 di febraio 1485 [s. f.].

Doc. 4. ASF, Otto di Guardia, Libro 221, fol. 185. 29 January 1488 [n. s.]

Gli Spectabili et Degnissimi Octo di Guardia et Balia della città di Firenze, per occorrere a ogni inconveniente et scandolo che accadere potessi, fanno bandire, notificare et expressamente comandare di qualunque persona di qualunque stato, grado, qualità o conditione si sia che da hora non ardischa o presumma portare per la città di Firenze in alcun modo alcuna generatione o qualità d'arme tanto da offendere quanto da difendere, maximamente chi andassi in maschera o coperto il viso di cosa o colore alcuna, a cavallo o a pié di di o di notte in alcun modo. Sotto pena di quattro tratti di chorda et del loro arbitrio. . . . a dì 29 di genaio 1487 [s. f.].

Doc. 5. Stefano Infessura, *Diario della città di Roma*, ed. by Oreste Tommasini (Rome: Forzani e Tipografia del Senato, 1890), 265

Et quamvis aliis temporibus haec improbata consuetudo inolevit, isto tamen anno magis quam caeteris excrevit ut unusquisque cardinalis in carnisprivio sumptuosissime in carris triumphalibus et etiam equitibus cum tubis et sonis larvatos et mascarar per Urbem miserunt; potissime ad domum aliorum cardinalium cum pueris cantatibus ac dicentibus verba lasciva et eis delectabilia cum buffonibus et histrionibus et cum aliis, indutis non panno lineo vel laneo, sed serico et imbrocato auri et argenti; in quibus maxima ducatorum copia consumpta fuit. Ex quo intrepide dicere et iudicare possumus misericordiam Dei nostri in luxuriam et opus diabolicum conversam esse; et nullus est qui ex hoc non miretur.

Doc. 6. Gaspare Visconti, autograph manuscript of poetry. Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 1053, fols 133v-34r

Havendo facto la soprascripta canzone a richiesta d'un gran maestro, et da poi alquanti di venendo voglia al predefecto volergli dentro più cose che pria non avea voluto, mandò la infrascripta instructione sopra la qual se ferà la seguente:

A ciò possiati intender come have ad esser la cosa et per poterla bene exprimere ne la bargeleta et intendere la materia questo serà el modo. In primis començar così:

Nel gran regno de Soria siam potenti merchatanti; siam venuti in questa parte expandere nostra fama et virtute et de nostre robbe et richeze habbiamo portato, et per essere nui capitati in questo potente stato, quale è pieno de nobiltate et magificentia, se ne troviamo molto alegri et qui è intention nostra fare experienza de le nostre merchantie. Di questa tal materia haverete a dare principio a la ffrottola et redurle in quante stantie vi parerà.

Et volessamo separata da la frottola una stantia che salutasse la excellentia del duca, maxime arivando lì nui a l'improvviso per conoscer sì gran signore come è sua excellentia. Finita la stantia incomminzare poi la frottola. Fornita quella, se ponremo ad sedere in terra sopra tapetti cun le gambe sotto, a la moresca, con alcune capsette et scatole, ne le quale serà alcune robbe dentro, le quale haveremo a mostrare per ordine cantando stantie, per le quale se intenderà la proprietà de dicte robe.

Li mori saranno cinque che cantaranno et uno o dui che mostrerà le robbe a tempo secundo nui faremo mentione de esse cantando.

Etiam dui o tre famigli vestiti a la moresca che portaranno li tapetti in spalla cum le scatole et capsette sotto la brazza.

Questa serà la prima cosa che se haverà ad mostrare et primo una scatola con ampolle de aqua rosa et de olij odoriferi che sono tanto perfecti et boni che chi se bagna de epsi farà ingiovenire et bella carnasone et farà crescere capilli et d'oro.

In la seconda scatola gli serà muschio, zibetto, beletto et altre cose, quale sono in tutta perfectione et se portano per donare, ch'è per vendere, ad chi gli saranno grate.

La terza gli serà alcune fave grosse et rosse, che saranno de zuchero, che nasceno in Soria et hanno tal virtù che sono dolce como melle et se debbono mangiar crude, et chi le mena ben per bocca faranno ingravidare de le belle pute.

La quarta scatola, o vero capseta, gli seranno fasoli suriani grandi come fave nostre de le più grosse et rosse, pur de zucharo, et sono de tal virtù che sottigliano la vista e se nui cum nostre mane gli mettemo in boccha a le donne inducono a far figlioli maschi.

La quinta scatola gli serà uno robino grande et grosso et de tanto vago color che, mostrandolo, subito si transformarà in varij modi et ad questo rubino gli daretì quelle virtù et proprietate che a voi parirà.

Et questo remettiamo a voi, giungendo et dimenuendo quanto a voi serà comodo nel componere la frottola.

*Introito al nostro illustrissimo Signore*

Per fama e per vedere il milanese  
di bontà pieno de la tua excellentia,  
venuti siamo dal sorian paese,  
dove è la patria et nostra residentia,  
e visto quel magior voglia ne prese  
de contemplarte e farti reverentia  
et offerirti i cor de' nostri petti,  
stimando in noi gran don se tu li acetti.

*Canzon*

Gran merchanti de Soria  
il levante hoggi ne chiama  
or per spander nostra fama  
siam venuti in Lombardia.  
De la nostra assai ricchezza  
qualche cosa habbiam portato  
e ciascun sente allegrezza  
esser gionto in sì bel stato  
dove a prova fia mostrato  
quel che può 'sta mercantia.  
Gran mercanti de Soria etc.

Aqua rosa è in queste ampolle  
e in questa olio sì perfetto  
ch'ogni falda al viso tolle  
e ritornal giovanetto  
fa il capillo d'oro e schietto  
e che crese tutta via,  
Gran mercanti etc.

Muschio è qui de bono odore  
qui zibetto, qui una pasta  
che fa al volto un bel colore  
e risana la pel guasta  
e poterla donar basta  
dove habbian la fantasia.  
Gran mercanti etc.

Queste nostre sì gran fave  
voglion crude esser mangiate  
son più dolce e più suave  
quando son ben masticate  
fanno anchor panze ingrossate  
più di quel ch'erano pria.

Gran mercanti etc.

'Sto fasol fa bona vista  
a chi lo poniamo in bocca  
e se la persona è avista  
de far che l'ugola tocca  
de figlioli maschi inbrocca  
più che cibo altro che sia.

Gran mercanti etc.

Qui un robin che par tutto arda  
et forza ha maravigliosa  
che qualuncha<sup>80</sup> vista il guarda  
li par proprio quella cosa  
che lui ten per più gratiosa  
e che più il suo cor desia.

Gran mercanti etc.

Finita la canzon saran quatro persone che parlaranno insieme, uno vestito a la mercantile, pallido in viso et magro, per denotare le qualitate che denno haver li avari, un altro ch'abbia una maschera in viso de un omo de bona vita che se dilecti de bere, un altro vestito come si voglia che dica li ultimi do versi sopra uno vestito da donna a la todescha, che non ha a parlare:

Non è dinaro al mondo che pagasse  
questo gioiello in punta che è rubino.  
A gli ochi mei par che se apresentasse  
un gran thesor non fin ma sopra fino.  
Et a me parve proprio ch'io guardasse  
una caraffa piena de bon vino.  
Vorrei quanto haggio al mondo ora aver perso  
se 'sta todesca nol credeva un cerso.

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<sup>80</sup> Renier reads "qualunche"

