

THE END OF THE ARS NOVA IN ITALY. THE SAN LORENZO PALIMPSEST AND RELATED REPERTORIES, EDS. ANTONIO CALVIA, STEFANO CAMPAGNOLO, ANDREAS JANKE, MARIA SOFIA LANNUTTI, JOHN NÁDAS
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In 2017, the international conference ‘The Nature of the End of the Ars Nova in Early Quattrocento Italy’ was held in Florence and Certaldo, prompted by the publication a year before of multispectral images of the San Lorenzo Palimpsest (SL) by Andreas Janke and John Nádas.¹ The palimpsest was originally a manuscript compiled in Florence during the first decades of the fifteenth century recording polyphonic music from the long fourteenth century. However, the manuscript was later unbound, and its music and texts were scraped off, to serve a new purpose: in its current state, the host volume of SL is titled ‘Campione de’ Beni del 1504’ and contains records of church properties from the late fifteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century. The musical palimpsest was reported in the early 1980s, but its content remained largely illegible until the publication of the multispec-

tral images by Janke and Nádas in 2016: each folio was photographed several times using different wavelengths of light and various filters to allow the scraped-off music to be seen.² SL transmits over 200 secular works, the earliest dating from before the Great Schism and the latest attributed to authors still active at the Church Council of Constance (1414–17), mostly Italian works, as well as French- and Latin-texted compositions. As such, SL constitutes an exceptional witness to musical practices in Florence during the first half of the fifteenth century.

The publication of SL by Janke and Nádas and the 2017 conference form the start-

1 Florence, Archivio del Capitolo di San Lorenzo, MS 2211. See Andreas Janke and John Nádas, (eds.), *The San Lorenzo Palimpsest: Florence, Archivio del Capitolo di San Lorenzo, Ms. 2211*, v. 1, *Introductory Study*, v. 2, *Multispectral Images*, Lucca 2016.

2 The discovery of the musical palimpsest was first reported in Frank D’Accone, ‘Una nuova fonte dell’ars nova italiana: il codice San Lorenzo, 2211’, *Studi Musicali* 13 (1984), pp. 3–32. The details of the multispectral imaging process are given in Andreas Janke and Claire MacDonald, ‘Multispectral Imaging of the San Lorenzo Palimpsest (Florence, Archivio del Capitolo di San Lorenzo, Ms. 2211)’, *Manuscript Cultures* 7 (2014), pp. 113–25, and A. Janke, J. Nádas, *The San Lorenzo Palimpsest*, v. 1.

ing point for the essays brought together under the title *The End of the Ars Nova in Italy. The San Lorenzo Palimpsest and Related Repertories*, edited by Antonio Calvia, Stefano Campagnolo, Andreas Janke, Maria Sofia Lannutti and John Nádas, and published by Edizioni del Galluzzo. The aim of this volume is to give 'full recognition' (p. vii) of the SL multispectral images, an objective that is also pursued by the ERC project *European Ars Nova*,³ of which this book is one of the scholarly products. By covering the many different facets of SL, the ten essays presented in this volume not only improve 'our understanding of the polyphony composed mainly in Italy – and also in France – during the 14th and early 15th centuries' (p. vii), but also pave the way for many future research questions to be investigated.

The first contribution, 'A Musical Sonnet by Franco Sacchetti and the Soundscape of Florence' (pp. 3–12) by Elena Abramov-Van Rijk, takes as a starting point the methodology of Niall Atkinson,⁴ who analysed the soundscape of Florence by comparing written sources of various kinds with architectural sources. Abramov-van Rijk applies this approach to the sonnet *Se come intendo, la campana grossa* by the Florentine poet Franco Sacchetti, addressed to the previously unidentified Ser Domenico di Ser Guido Pucci. The author compares her textual analysis of the sonnet and the architectural organisation of Renaissance Florence to establish the presumed area of Ser Domenico's residence in the city. With appropriate caution, the second part of the

essay postulates that Ser Domenico had qualities typical of a jester and situates him within the musical environment of Dolcibene de' Tori, a renowned Florentine jester. The presentation of the arguments sometimes lacks clarity, but the essay is an example of the use of existing methodologies to produce new knowledge.

John Nádas's contribution, aptly entitled 'New Biographical Documentation of Paolo da Firenze's Early Career' (pp. 13–42), draws on documents newly available at the Florence Archivio di Stato to show the close ties enjoyed by Paolo da Firenze, a late medieval composer whose early career is obscure, with the important Benedictine abbey of Badia Fiorentina and Cardinal Angelo Acciaiuoli, in particular during the tense years of the Great Schism leading to the Council of Pisa (1409). These two privileged connections confirm previous scholarly assumptions according to which Paolo 'played a major role as initiator and collaborator in compiling the musical treasures of the Trecento' (p. 31). This is supported by an extensive bibliography, quotations from primary sources, well-chosen illustrations and an appendix listing the sources which connect Paolo to the Badia Fiorentina. Yet this article is of interest not only with regard to Paolo da Firenze's early career, but also in relation to the model of Florentine manuscript production: analysing an illuminated missal produced for Cardinal Acciaiuoli (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 30) in light of the new documentation, Nádas suggests that the monastery Santa Maria degli Angeli, the leading Florentine scriptorium of the time, outsourced commissions to a network of artists, possibly including workshops at the Badia.

The following essays deal with the specific contents of SL. In 'The Motet Collection of San Lorenzo 2211 (SL) and the Composer Hubertus de Salinis' (pp. 43–71), Margaret Bent examines the ten motets of SL, a fascinating topic in itself, as it is the only known

3 Maria Sofia Lannutti, 'Combining Romance Philology and Musicology through a New Interdisciplinary Approach: The ERC Advanced Grant Project ArsNova', *Medioevo romanzo* 44 (2020), pp. 145–171.

4 Niall Atkinson, *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life*, University Park, Pennsylvania 2016.

group of motets in a Trecento manuscript. Bent notes that the motets share textual and musical elements which are characteristic of the Italian motet (e.g. echo openings, final cadences), but leaves the question open as to whether these were actual choices made by the compiler or whether he simply selected what was available to him. In the second part, the author explores questions of attribution and authorship in relation to the only non-Italian composer to be named in SL, Hubertus de Salinis. In particular, she posits 'void notation as possible authorial preference' of Salinis (p. 63), and, based on the groupings of the pieces, their simple style and their notation, she suggests that three hitherto unattributed pieces may be by him. While the hypotheses are drawn with caution, the use of the sources makes this a persuasive argumentation.

In 'Musico-metapoetic Relationships in Trecento Song: Two Case Studies from the San Lorenzo Palimpsest (SL 2211)' (pp. 71–98), Mikhail Lopatin presents two case studies to illustrate his new analytical model which aims at 'articulating the unity of form and content' and 'binding formal and semantic relations between music and text' (p. 73). The author brings together the concepts of *metapoesis*, defined as 'poetry about poetry, or how to write poetry' (p. 74), and *equivocus*, 'a link between different discourses and different layers of meaning' (p. 76). Lopatin exemplifies his methodology with Giovanni Mazzuoli's madrigal *A piè del monte*, which plays on the verb 'tornare' to create a link 'between the amorous content, poetic form, and Giovanni Mazzuoli's musical setting' (p. 82). The methodology is further applied to a much more detailed analysis of Piero Mazzuoli's three-voice ballata *A Febo*, with special emphasis on the concept of metamorphosis. The methodology is especially convincing as it deepens the relationship between text and music, here understood as 'singing together' (p. 77), just like the voices of the polyphony. Finally,

the author comes to the interesting definition of (Trecento) songs as 'a sonic space in which words and verbal relations are potentially at their most fluid, polyvalent, ambiguous, and able to transfer between the contexts and shift shapes' (p. 97). The essay does not touch on the implications of this methodology for medieval music analysis, but it certainly opens new directions for research in other contexts or genres.

Antonio Calvia, in his essay entitled 'Some Notes on the Two-Voice Ballatas by Francesco Landini in the San Lorenzo Palimpsest' (pp. 99–129), offers two previously unpublished editions of Francesco Landini's two-voice ballatas as found in SL, namely *De sospirar sovente* and the unica *C(...)* (*tempo fugge*). The essential source research and the musical and poetic analyses conducted by the author to complete his transcriptions are given here with full details and thus provide the reader with a sound understanding of the transcriptions and of the author's hypotheses. From his analysis, the author comes to the convincing conclusion that the novelties in the SL variant of *De sospirar sovente* 'could depend on the needs of a different performance occasion' (p. 129).

The first part of Andreas Janke's contribution, 'On the Transmission of Donato da Firenze's Madrigals' (pp. 131–149), indeed traces the transmission of Donato's madrigals, which is also summarised in an appendix. In the second part of the essay, Janke compares SL with the Codex Squarcialupi,⁵ which is relevant evidence, as it shares structural similarities with SL. Based on this comparative analysis and on an examination of the positioning of genres and composers in the surviving gatherings of SL, Janke suggests that before the section devoted to works by Donato da Firenze, one composer section was probably devoted

⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Mediceo Palatino 87.

to Nicolò del Preposto. Moreover, Janke observes connections in some of the composers' biographies and similarities in their musical compositions (in particular those of Donato and Nicolò). Added to the fact that the composers Nicolò del Preposto, Donato da Firenze, Giovanni Mazzuoli and Francesco Landini, 'whose works appear one after the other [...] seem likely to have produced works on commission' (p. 145), this suggests that these four composers belonged to the same musical circles, which might have been one ordering criteria for the compiler of SL. This throws up an interesting parallel with Bent's possible selection criteria for the motet group.

The next contribution, 'Melodic Searching and the Anonymous Unica of San Lorenzo 2211' (pp. 152–161), by Michael Scott Cuthbert, stands out in the book as an example of 'negative research' (p. 152). Among the 216 compositions in SL identified by Nádas and Janke, Cuthbert focuses on the forty-seven pieces copied on the bottom of the pages which have remained unidentified so far because of their damaged or incomplete state of preservation. The author adapts existing computational tools specifically to palimpsest music by focusing on relative intervals, removing unison, and specifying the position of rests or rhythmic patterns. While this method has proven effective in identifying compositions in other sources, Cuthbert reports that no new concordances were found in SL thanks to his system. Although this does not close the door to future discoveries, at a time when digital resources are becoming a more and more crucial component in the humanities, such critical thinking on current tools is essential.

The last three contributions in the volume switch the focus from Florence and the contents of SL to other Italian regions and sources. In 'Remarks on Some Realistic Virelais of the Reina Codex' (pp. 163–215), Davide Checchi and Michele Epifani pro-

vide in-depth poetic and musical analysis of two virelais from the Italian Codex Reina.⁶ The first part of the essay is devoted to *Hé, tres doulz roussignol joly*: Epifani traces its transmission by comparing the Reina version and its concordances and analysing it against the broader virelai tradition. He concludes with the important nuance that *Hé, tres doulz roussignol joly* relies on a dance-related genre tradition and reflects 'an attempt to raise the genre's status through compositional techniques that mimic the motet' (p. 184). Checchi focuses on the poetic text of the same virelai. Of particular interest is his analysis of the principle of *aequivocatio*, which offers an interesting (and seemingly unintentional) parallel to Lopatin's analytical model exemplified in the same volume (see above). The second part of the essay deals with the anonymous virelai *Rescoes, rescoes / Rescoes le feu*. In particular, Checchi details the relationships between the two musical voices and the two characters of the poems, while Epifani mainly focuses on aspects of counterpoint to improve on previous modern transcriptions. The poetic texts and the musical transcriptions of both virelais are presented in neat critical editions provided at the end of the essay.

In 'Lombard Patronage at the End of the Ars Nova: A Preliminary Panorama' (pp. 218–252), Anne Stone nuances the importance of Florence as a music centre at the beginning of the fifteenth century by demonstrating a Lombardian interest in musical patronage as well as an intense 'cross-fertilization of northern Italian composers with newly arrived French ones' (p. 240). In particular, her heraldic and textual analysis of Matteo da Perugia's *Pres du soleil* and *Se je me plaing De fortune* (both preserved in Modena A7) confirms that these pieces are connected to Filippo Maria

6 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. aq. fr. 6771.

7 Modena, Biblioteca Estense, α.M.5.24.

Visconti. Based on previous scholarship and textual analysis, she also suggests that Feragut's motet *Francorum nobilitati* must have been composed earlier than previously assumed (in the 1420s rather than the 1430s) and for a religious leader, which raises questions about the composer's early career. In the final part of her essay, Stone interestingly presents Branda Castiglione (c. 1360–1433), a theologian and diplomat of Milanese origins, as an 'attractive candidate as music patron' (p. 251). This essay assesses a valuable body of fragmentary evidence, which paves the way for research into Lombardy 'as a center of Ars subtilior theory and practice well into the fifteenth century' (p. 250).

The final essay, 'Music, Texts and Musical Images at the Court of Angevin Naples, Before and During the Schism' (pp. 253–287), by Gianluca D'Agostino, also aims at giving a fuller picture of Italian musical activity outside Florence, while dealing with the scant traces of polyphony. The author relies on an extensive bibliography and different types of sources (chronicles, illuminations, poetry, musician payrolls, etc.) to trace the artistic interests of Joanna I, Queen of Naples between 1343 and 1382. This makes it a useful introduction to the connections between the arts, and more specifically music, and the political situation at the court of Angevin Naples. In addition, the author concludes by suggesting a new context for the ballade *Par les bons Gédéon* by Philipocetus, namely, the interruption of the ceremony of acknowledgment of Pope Clement VII in

1379 by the Neapolitans: D'Agostino considers that this event marked the 'real "end of the Ars nova"' in late-medieval Naples' (p. 285).

This is an interesting point, which actually echoes recurring scholarly debates about applying such terms as 'Ars Nova' to a musical period, style or region. In this regard, the title of the book may be misleading: while terms like 'the end of the Ars Nova' indeed 'evoke a discontinuity in [the San Lorenzo Palimpsest] tradition that coincides with the years of the resolution of the Schism' (p. viii), I believe they also raise a number of questions, mentioned in passing by only a few contributors, particularly because these terms tend to blur the multiplicity and interconnectedness of musical practices and music circulation. That noted, the book can only be praised for its coherent collection of essays, which offers a broad panorama of polyphonic and poetic practices in Italy during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The essays are nicely complemented by two indexes prepared by Lorenzo Giustozzi, one devoted to manuscripts, the other (probably the more useful) to names and anonymous works. The authors illustrate the potential of the current methodologies in the field, but also their limitations, opening up many promising strands of research of relevance for both literary and music scholars.

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