

**Performative Constructions of Authorship in Italian Vernacular Verse 1470-1550**

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**Abstract**

This thesis aims to work with the soundscapes of poetry published in the late fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century in a manner sensitive to their entanglement with contemporary poetic performances and practices. This time period saw poetry as a genre that was innately musical, and combined humanist beliefs surrounding poetry with older traditions of musical performance, with verse innately tied to its existence as song accompanied by a solo string instrument. This tradition rose to prominence in the latter half of the fifteenth century and continued to evolve and change into the sixteenth century, giving opportunity to a wide range of poets across the Italian peninsula to participate within this culture. Within this poetry is an internal soundscape that the poet-musician could utilise in creating an authorial identity, and as such is an essential element in linking the written form of the verse to its existence as song. Though the poetic performance traditions found in Italy during this time period have been an area of growing academic interest across disciplines, the realm of soundscape study, which has proven its fruitfulness in regard to early French lyric, has yet to be utilised. This thesis aims to shed new light on this tradition by taking a multidisciplinary approach, combining soundscape study with contemporary musicological thought and textual close reading.

This will be done in a series of six case studies, loosely split into three pairs that navigate issues such as geography, gender, and time. The first two of these case studies are concerned with the work of two members of the patriciate at the height of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition, Matteo Maria Boiardo and Lucrezia Tornabuoni. The subsequent set of case studies will focus on *strambotto* culture at the turn of the sixteenth century, featuring the renowned Serafino Aquilano and the lesser known Panfilo Sasso. Finally this thesis will turn to the salon environments and the growing participation of female poets in this tradition by turning to the work of the courtesan Tullia d’Aragona and *virtuosa* singer Gaspara Stampa.

The case studies selected provide different examples of how sounds internal to the verse could be utilised for the author’s self-fashioning, and although all were participating within the same performative culture, vary greatly in setting and purpose. By applying the as yet neglected realm of soundscape studies to this verse, a greater understanding of the purpose and meaning of the text and its relationship to the careers and performances of these poets can be understood, presenting great scope for further musicological study.

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**Introduction**

In this thesis I will explore the internal soundscapes of poetry published in the late fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century in a manner sensitive to their entanglement with contemporary poetic performance practices and traditions. These soundscapes represent a performative construction of the poet as author, related to and realised in the real-life soundscape of these works in their performance. This thesis will examine the relationship between these imagined and performed soundscapes, considering both why the soundscape has been shaped in such a way, as well as its relation to the poets’ own experiences and interaction with musical practices. The study of the performative poetic traditions found in Italy has struggled at times to find its focus between the performative and literary traditions, often choosing to focus on one element to the detriment of the other. Indeed, existing studies largely engage with the written output of poets as a purely literary endeavour, and do not acknowledge its existence also as song. By utilising the underexplored avenue of soundscapes study, which has found great success in work on early French literature, and combining this with current musicological perspectives, this thesis aims to shed new light on the relationship between poetry and its performance in Italy in the decades spanning from the late fifteenth to the mid sixteenth centuries.

The performative poetic traditions seen in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been an area of growing academic interest across disciplines. In the realms of Italian literature scholarship, the work of scholars such as Brian Richardson and Luca Degl’Innocenti has acknowledged the influence of poetic performance traditions on contemporary vernacular literature.[[1]](#footnote-1) Richardson in particular should be noted for his prolific work in the field, and his numerous studies deal thoroughly with the issues of orality surrounding traditions of poetry performance, as well as manuscript culture, improvisation, and excursions into realms of a more musicological nature including the setting of Petrarchan verse, and the social connotations of singing poetry.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Most recently, the work of James Coleman has shed new light on the traditions of improvisation and orality and their connection to power in late fifteenth-century Florence.[[3]](#footnote-3) His study pays particular attention to the philosophical perspectives of leading Florentine scholars such as Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano, as well as the uses and role of oral poetry in the regime of Lorenzo de Medici. The later chapters of Coleman’s book attempt to examine the wider world of the improviser and the courts, but this remains a cursory glance beyond the otherwise Florence-centric nature of the study.

The tradition has also been the focus of the work of a range of musicologists; beginning with a small number of studies dating from the 50s and 80s, in more recent decades the area has seen growing interest. Nino Pirrotta’s early studies established a type of music performance native to Italy that did not survive in written notation but was prolific on account of its contemporary importance.[[4]](#footnote-4) Also of note is the early work of Walter Rubsamen, whose exploration of literary sources of secular music at the turn of the sixteenth century began to examine the relationship between verse and its performance.[[5]](#footnote-5) The later contributions of James Haar built upon the foundations of Pirrotta to examine the relationship between poetry and performance from the fourteenth century through to the Baroque, providing insightful commentary on the relationship of poet performers to the wider musical canon.[[6]](#footnote-6) Also worthy of note, Alberto Gallo’s *Music in the Castle* examines the role of performance in the Italian courts of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, with a focus on specific performers and great attention to primary source materials.[[7]](#footnote-7) The last of his three case studies in particular shows the connections with the growth of humanism as a basis for educational practices and verse performance.[[8]](#footnote-8)

More recently, the work of both Timothy McGee and Phillippe Canguilhem has continued to build on this body of literature, connecting the traditions of unwritten musical performance with contemporary developments in written composition. McGee’s examination of ceremonial musicians has Florence as its geographical base, and examines the earlier traditions of the civic herald and their relation to the practices of poetic improvisation.[[9]](#footnote-9) Canguilhem’s briefer study of the improvised tradition centres on the nature of ‘improvisation’ but moves quickly back to its relationship with improvised counterpoint.[[10]](#footnote-10)Of more relevance to the present thesis is the work of Elena Abramov-van Rijk and Blake Wilson, which presents some of the most current and thorough research on the poetic performance tradition, though from varying perspectives. Abramov-van Rijk’s book *Parlar Cantando* focuses on the practice of poetry recitation, based on fourteenth-century poetic theory, and connecting this to the later development of Italian opera.[[11]](#footnote-11) Wilson’s study takes a notably different approach whilst covering a very similar time frame, instead focusing on the symbiosis of the *canterino* and *cantare ad lyram* traditions, starting with historic *canterino* traditions evident in Italy, and devoting most of the study to the height of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century.[[12]](#footnote-12) This work also makes efforts to investigate other centres of the tradition such as Rome, Ferrara and Naples, but Florence largely remains the focal point for the study.

Current research shows how a multidisciplinary approach is not only appropriate but required to examine a topic that exists between the realms of both music and literature. The project *Italian Voices: Oral Culture, Manuscript and Print in Early Modern Italy 1450*-*1700*, led by Brian Richardson, has demonstrated just how productive a multidisciplinary approach can be to this topic area.[[13]](#footnote-13) Both Wilson and Coleman, approaching the topic respectively from musicological and literary perspectives, acknowledge in what are the most current studies of the tradition that their investigations were only possible as a result of the combined interest of scholars from both literary and musicological backgrounds, and their resultant works show a considerable degree of overlap despite originating from different disciplines.[[14]](#footnote-14) As such, the methods of this thesis, which will combine close textual readings and soundscape analysis with musicological methods and perspectives, work to continue and add to this in a meaningful manner. As a result, this thesis will take a new perspective on the performative poetic tradition by dealing with it from the point of view of individual creators and performers with a large-scale analysis of their verse, sensitive and adaptable to the verse contents and its relationship with performance, as well as the individuality and context of each poet.

This approach is not without precedent, and soundscape analysis in the context of poetic performative traditions has already been established as a fruitful avenue for investigation. An early example can be seen in the work of Sylvia Huot, who, as part of her study of Old French lyric and narrative poetry, examines the audiovisual poetics of lyrical verse, recognising that the dual aspect of both audio and visual cues in the text can be a function of both illuminated manuscripts as an audiovisual construct, and also of performance.[[15]](#footnote-15) Through this methodology, Huot demonstrates the relationship between real life performance and its interaction with the written version of the text, both reflecting and interacting with the innately performative nature of the work.[[16]](#footnote-16) Though Huot does not directly identify her method as soundscape analysis and is using both visual and auditory cues as the basis for her argument, it functions in much the same manner, and provides a precedent for soundscape analysis in its connection both to the written and performed elements of verse.

More recent, and more crucial for the basis of this thesis, is the work of Brigitte Cazelles and her study of soundscapes in Early French literature.[[17]](#footnote-17) Cazelles’ study focuses on the examination and function of ‘noise’ in a range of early French texts, including religious works, epic narratives, and lyrical verse. Through her analysis, Cazelles demonstrates the author’s awareness and conscious manipulation of the sounding elements of their verse, and how the resultant combination of ‘noises’ is used to bring greater levity to their narrative by either enforcing or undercutting the intended message of a story.[[18]](#footnote-18) Notably, in her conclusion, Cazelles briefly considers the work of the late medieval poet François Villon and his conscious combining of orality and literacy to call attention to the aural power of his work.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Central to her study is Cazelles idea of soundscape, which she uses to analyse the ‘noise’ textually transcribed in written works as if they were real sounds. This conception of a literary soundscape combines the two-standard definition of soundscape: the idea of soundscape as an acoustic environment present in a particular place or setting; and the conscious manipulation and combination of sounds in art or performance to create an effect. Cazelles’ soundscapes are the resultant combination of all the noises transcribed in her chosen texts, creating an imagined acoustic environment that is entirely controlled by the text’s author. It is this understanding of soundscape that will form the basis for analysing the sounding worlds of the poets in this thesis but adapted to deal with a musical tradition, allowing for greater sensitivity for how textually transcribed sounds interact with verse intended for performace. Indeed, Cazelles’ focus remains internal to the verse and does not look to engage with the performative aspect of the soundscape, though her brief engagement with the work of Villon shows that this could be a fruitful avenue for investigation. Present studies that have used this method, then, have remained within the realms of early French literature, and have been carried out by literary scholars, who, though acknowledging the performance element of the analysed verse, do not have the same level of focus on the relationship between the written word and its innate musicality.

*The Choice of Case Studies*

It has long been acknowledged by scholars exploring the poetic performative traditions that the area spans a wide range of social and professional boundaries. As James Haar has suggested, the wide variety of names by which performers of poetry were known even from a professional perspective indicates that there was not a single type of professional, but rather a ‘range of careers’.[[20]](#footnote-20) The choice of case studies featured in this thesis aims to acknowledge this by dealing more intimately with individuals and paying close attention to their own involvement with the tradition, including a range from poets who produced work as a serious recreational activity, to the work of career performers.

The case study basis also looks to contrast with previous studies by having a ‘person’-centred approach as opposed to a geographical one.[[21]](#footnote-21) The aim here is to have a more balanced overview of the poetic performance tradition that does not have the same Florentine bias that has been seen in a large number of studies to date.[[22]](#footnote-22) The case studies selected aim to cover a mixed geographical range, though remaining among the Italian city states, as well as a mix of individuals who led itinerant careers, and those who were more rooted in a particular setting. Time frame has also been considered alongside this to represent different elements of the poetic performance tradition as it evolved during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. As a result there is a greater range of locations featured, from the more ancient centres of poetry performance such as Florence and Ferrara at the height of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition, to newer centres such as Naples and Rome around the turn of the century, and the later Venetian environment of the early to mid-sixteenth century.

Gender has been another key element in case study selection, as the role of female poets within the poetic performance tradition has as yet been largely ignored. There have been a number of studies that have addressed the growing traditions of women’s writing more generally, among them the work of Ann Rosalind Jones and her classic study *The Currency of Eros* dedicated to the love lyric of female poets; Virginia Cox’s *Women’s Writing in Italy 1400-1650,* which examines the canon of female writers generally across the time period; and the contributions of Letizia Panizza, Judith Bryce, Giovanna Rabitti, Virginia Cox, and Gabriella Zarri to the edition *A History of Women’s writing in Italy*,to name just a few.[[23]](#footnote-23) The literary output of the courtesans has also seen a small amount of interest from scholars, such as Fiora Bassanese’s article looking at works by courtesans across the sixteenth century, though this study presents a notably outdated argument in its generally negative assessment.[[24]](#footnote-24) Known courtesans also feature heavily in the previously mentioned works of both Cox and Jones.

Despite the growing attention women’s writing has received, there has been little scholarship dedicated to its relationship with musical performance. Isabella d’Este has been the protagonist of a number of studies, including with a focus on her own musical skills. Her role in the circulation and production of texts has long been recognised, featuring in Rubsamen’s early study and more recently in the work of Brian Richardson.[[25]](#footnote-25) She has also received some attention for her talents as a performer, seen in the work of William Prizer and Tim Shephard.[[26]](#footnote-26) The work of Lucrezia Tornabuoni and its connections to her contemporary Florentine environment is mentioned in passing frequently by Coleman, suggesting an avenue for further investigation.[[27]](#footnote-27) Gaspara Stampa has been considered briefly in a performance context by Smarr, in one of the few works by a literary scholar to consider the performative element of Stampa’s verse in any detail.[[28]](#footnote-28) Returning to the field of musicology, Martha Feldman has been one of the largest contributors, with her discussions of performances by Gaspara Stampa in *City Culture and the Madrigal in Venice*.[[29]](#footnote-29) The musicianship of courtesans has also received some level of attention, and *The Courtesan’s Arts* represents a cornerstone publication in this field,featuring a section dedicated to discussing ‘The Courtesan’s Voice in Early Modern Italy’, to which Feldman is again a contributor.[[30]](#footnote-30) Many of the rather brief chapters in this anthology provide a useful basis for ideas, however none go into any great depth. Additionally, Shawn Marie Keener has examined the connections between vocal bravura and the early courtesan, focusing heavily on the ‘illusion’ that the courtesan had to create and its subsequent impact on other women in the public sphere.[[31]](#footnote-31) What we see, then, is a small collection of literature in which the connections between female poets and the poetic performative tradition are treated in a cursory manner, but which nonetheless demonstrate that this could be a fruitful avenue of investigation. A key aim in the selection of case studies, therefore, has been to balance the presence of female poets who contributed to the canon alongside their male contemporaries, giving them equal weight and importance whilst also navigating the impacts of gender in their involvement with the canon.

Finally, my work on the project ‘Sounding the Bookshelf 1501: A Year in Italian Printed Books’ must also be acknowledged for its influence, particularly on the inclusion of Serafino Aquilano, Panfilo Sasso, and Matteo Maria Boiardo, whose poetic output I first engaged with in great detail due to their presence among the publications in the project’s corpus. Both Serafino and Panfilo were at points considered alongside Antonio Tebaldeo and Benedetto Gareth (‘Il Cariteo’) as possible case study chapters. The balanced choice was between the more studious Tebaldeo and Panfilo, and the strambottists and legendary performers that are Gareth and Serafino. The resulting case study selections may come in part due to the role of personal preference, but also for the meaningful contribution to the understanding of Serafino’s work that the methods of the current study could provide, and the general disregard of his verses’ content in favour of his performance manner; and then also for the relative obscurity suffered by Panfilo despite his large verse production and wide circulation as well as his contemporary popularity.

What has resulted is six case studies loosely collected in pairs, which manage to negotiate these factors to the best of my abilities. Other interesting elements also appear, as half of the case studies selected are examples of poets who had knowledge of both Latin and the vernacular – seen with Boiardo, Sasso, and to an extent Tornabuoni - and there is also an equal split between poets who published their work during their lifetimes and those who received posthumous publication.[[32]](#footnote-32) Most of the case studies have yet to be considered through the lens of song and performance, and have as a result received little musicological consideration, with the exception of Serafino Aquilano and Gaspara Stampa.[[33]](#footnote-33) However, even in the case of these two case studies, the more focused scope of ‘soundscape’ has yet to be explored.

Notably, with the exception of Serafino and Panfilo, there have been English translations produced of many of the poets featured. The presence of translations of the work of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Tullia d’Aragona and Gaspara Stampa owe their existence to the *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* series, which has aimed in the past few decades to improve accessibility and shed new light on the literary production of female authors in the early modern period.[[34]](#footnote-34) The translation of Boiardo’s *Amorum Libri Tres* is owed to the efforts of Andrea di Tommaso.[[35]](#footnote-35) Though this thesis aims to work primarily with the contemporary editions of poetry, these translations have been acknowledged and used but adapted where necessary to preserve the meaning of the original verse where it is obscured by the translators’ preference for pleasant poetical phrasing.

*Thesis Structure*

This thesis will start with a general overview of the status of poetic performance traditions found in Italy roughly covering the period from 1470 to 1550, before presenting a series of case study chapters that look to examine individuals in greater detail. These case studies are loosely paired by time frame, presenting two case studies at a time that are roughly contemporary with each other. Though the verse analysis for each case study will be adaptable to the individuality of the verse content, each chapter will follow the same general structure for consistency, presenting a brief biography of the subject, an examination of their known musical talents, or in lieu of this the connections between their verse and contemporary performance, before embarking on an in-depth analysis of their verse soundscape. This analysis will remain within the confines of the internal soundscape of the verse, discussing only what can be found in the textually transcribed sounds of the verse. As such, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the performed soundscape of the verse; that is the realised sound of the verse in performance, including elements such as the interactions and effects of the acoustics of performance space, and instrumentation.

The first chapter begins by surveying the current literature on the performance of vernacular poetry, highlighting the poetic performance cultures that the later case studies are a part of and situating them more generally within this culture of poetry performance. As a result of the gendered aspect of many of the case studies, greater care has been taken to include the involvement of women within the canon. This chapter is notably constrained and focussed in scope, as the thorough exploration of this literature on a greater scale could easily fill an entire thesis of its own.

The first two case studies are concerned with poetry produced by members of the patriciate in the 1470s and 80s. Chapter 2, the opening case study, will focus on the love lyric of Matteo Maria Boiardo, giving an insight into the performance of verse for courtly entertainment and the rising popularity of verse performance at the Este court in the 1470s and 80s. Through the analysis of his work, I will examine how Boiardo combined the popularity of Petrarchan verse and courtly love with his own unique style, and how he utilises his soundscape to connect his lush visual descriptions with his emotional state as author. Chapter 3 will focus on Lucrezia Tornabuoni, examining both her longer narrative poetry and the shorter *laude*. Here I will look at the Florentine environment of the late fifteenth century, which is the centre of much current literature, from the alternative perspective of a female poet, and examining how Lucrezia’s own soundscape construction aided in her navigation of gendered expectations.

Following this, the next two case studies focus on the height of *strambotto* culture closer to the turn of the sixteenth century, and the poetry production of the great Serafino Aquilano, as well as his assumed ‘follower’ Panfilo Sasso, both of whom had their work published first in the first decade of the sixteenth century. In Chapter 4, we will see how Serafino’s manipulation of his soundscape is innately tied to the sound of his verse in performance and is important in considering the legacy of the performer and the contemporary admiration for his performance abilities. In Chapter 5, which will shed some much-deserved light on the career and work of Panfilo Sasso, we will see how his modern dismissal as a follower of Serafino has led to the overlooking of verse that presents a rich and varied soundscape that is notably focused on female classical comparators and reflects the real-life social networks of the poet.

Finally, we turn to the 1530s and 40s with the work of female poets Tullia d’Aragona and Gaspara Stampa. Chapter 6 is concerned with Tullia d’Aragona, who was a known *cortigiana onesta* and turned to the publication of her poetry and her dialogue on the nature of love later in life. In her chapter I will examine how Tullia’s career affected her manipulation of sound in her publications, working to negate the negative implications of women’s singing by notably silencing her voice in lieu of allowing others to sing her praises instead. In a full circle moment, in Chapter 7 the work of Gaspara Stampa returns to the realms of the pastoral first encountered in the work of Boiardo, and in her case study I will use the idea of pastoral drama to frame her world construction and the presentation of her sound in her verse.

Soundscape analysis has already shown itself to be a useful methodology in negotiating the written and performed elements of early French lyric. By applying this approach to a new canon of work, this methodology can help bridge the gap between literature and musicological analysis by offering a new perspective on the work of these poets that remains sensitive to its relationship with performance. By adding this dimension to the analysis of their oeuvre, a greater understanding of the purpose and meaning of the texts can be gained, with great scope for further musicological study.

**Chapter 1: The Performance of Vernacular Verse in Italy c.1470-1550**

During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Italy, poetry was inseparable from music as a performative genre. The performance of poetry accompanied by solo string instrument was a widespread practice throughout the Italian peninsula; from the Aragonese Court of Naples to the salons of Venice, this practice presented poet-musicians with the opportunity to display their talents and gain renown for their skill. This chapter will begin by analysing the evolving tradition of *cantare ad lyram* which grew alongside and in hybridity with the older *canterino* performance traditions found in Italy, with a focus on late fifteenth-century Florence, which has been the focus of some of the most recent studies concerning poetry performance. This will culminate in a brief examination of the popularity of the *strambotto* form at the peak of its vogue and of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition. The puzzle of the sixteenth century, which saw the increased diversification of poetry performance practices, will be dealt with first by examining the growing ‘frottola’ traditions at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, before moving onto the growing interaction between the print trade and poetry performance as seen in the itinerant street singer. Finally, this chapter will finish by looking at the performance of poetry in the post-Bembo era, examining the impact of Bembo’s Petrarchism on the tradition, before moving on to the continued practices of poetry performance in the growing culture of salons and academies, as well as the performance of poetry by the *cortigiana onesta*.

1.1Cantare ad Lyram

The *cantare ad lyram* tradition saw a rapid shift in the role played by vernacular poetry performance during the fifteenth century and stems from multiple lineages of poetry performance that had existed for centuries prior to the growth of *cantare ad lyram*. One element of this was the native tradition of the *canterini*, which saw transformation from the start of the century as an art largely relegated to being a form of popular entertainment for the masses, to one in which Italy’s elite were engaged with the performance culture both as spectators and practitioners.[[36]](#footnote-36) As suggested by Charles Dempsey, this shift saw the appropriation of the long standing *canterino* tradition found across Italy through the lens of ancient precedents and classical models*.*[[37]](#footnote-37)However, *cantare ad lyram* also owed its precedence from the longstanding popularity of the troubadour tradition, through which the performance of vernacular self-accompanied verse had remained a mainstay in Italian courtly life.[[38]](#footnote-38)

The theoretical foundations for this practice, which started largely with the performance of Latin before the appropriation of the vernacular, can be seen in the early fifteenth century. As Gallo details in the case of Ferrara, one source for this can be found in the teaching of Guarino Veronese. Guarino was in possession of an education treatise, entitled *De ingenius moribus et liberalibus studiis adolescentie*, written by Pierpaolo Vergerio in 1402 for Ubertino, son of Francesco da Carrara, lord of Padua.[[39]](#footnote-39) Upon acquiring this treatise in 1429, Guarino notes that it was much sought after by his companions.[[40]](#footnote-40) In the treatise, drawing on the teaching of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, it recommends singing with stringed instrument as a relaxing activity, as was seen in classical sources after battles.[[41]](#footnote-41) Indeed, the centrality of poetry, grammar, and rhetoric to the *studia humanitatis*, meant that the tradition of *cantare ad lyram* and poetry recitation more generally aligned with the pedagogical goals of the discipline, assuring their dissemination and adoption as the *studia humanitatis* grew in influence.[[42]](#footnote-42) By the late fifteenth century, the singing of improvised poetry to a stringed instrument was commonplace among elite educated circles, its ratification as a suitable means of personal musical and poetic display confirmed in early sixteenth century texts such as Castiglione’s *Il Cortigiano*.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The presence of a native vernacular verse culture, seen in the historic presence of the *canterini* of all levels, no doubt aided in the widespread adoption of the practice as a contemporary practice rather than a theoretical ideal.[[44]](#footnote-44) This appropriation reached its peak in the classical model of Orpheus, frequently converging at the end of the fifteenth century with the contemporary image of the elite *canterini*.[[45]](#footnote-45) This is seen in contemporary imagery, such as the depiction of Orpheus charming the animals in the 1500 Florentine edition of Poliziano’s *Orfeo* and *Stanze*, where the instrument being played is clearly a *lira da braccio*.[[46]](#footnote-46)The same instrument is depicted in the arms of Orpheus in the woodcuts found in the 1497 edition of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.[[47]](#footnote-47)

1.1.1 *Florence*

Florence has long been a focal point for scholars investigating the emerging *cantare ad lyram* tradition, especially in some of the most recent scholarship of Blake Wilson and James Coleman.[[48]](#footnote-48) This is because Florence supported both an older *canterino* tradition whilst also being an emerging centre for humanist thought, as Wilson states:

In no other Italian city can we more clearly see the emergence of the humanist practice [of *cantare ad lyram*] as a reimagining of local canterino traditions in light of ancient precedents.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Indeed, whilst the importance of Florence is perhaps overstated by the level of attention it has received in comparison to other humanist centres where there were also strong *canterino* traditions, it is undoubtedly an important case study in how the *cantare ad lyram* evolved alongside and with the older traditions of vernacular verse performance.[[50]](#footnote-50) This includes the beginnings of the interactions between poetry performance and the fledgling print trade, the influence of the *canterino* tradition on the academic practices of poetry and its performance, seen in the work of Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano, and its use as a political tool within these elite circles.

Antonio di Guido (1418-86) was a professional *canterino* who moved between public and private spheres, known for his performances in the Piazza San Martino as well as his interactions with the circle of Lorenzo de Medici. Despite being a *canterino* and not a scholar or humanist thinker, his career is often used as an example of the overlap of the *canterini* and *cantare ad lyram* traditions in Florence. His career spanned over half a century after his debut in 1437, and in the performance of verse he was likened to Orpheus by Poliziano, able to attract crowds to watch him in the same way the ancient lyre player could sway beasts with his song.[[51]](#footnote-51) He performed a wide range of poetic forms, including the traditional longer epics in *ottava rima* as well as shorter lyric verse forms; of his surviving poetry we have 22 works, including a selection of sonnets, *canzone*, *laude*, and a *capitolo*.[[52]](#footnote-52) Antonio is also linked to the introduction of the art of printing in Florence, and was the publisher of numerous editions in the early 1470s, including the *editio princeps* of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*.[[53]](#footnote-53) Antonio presents to us then a *canterino* who rose to the top of his profession at a particularly advantageous time, and who shows us the early willingness of performers to engage with the printing trade from its very inception. Notably, Antonio’s career can also illustrate the control over verse dissemination that poet performers had to grapple with; as Wilson notes, Antonio likely wished to keep much of his output in a strictly oral form.[[54]](#footnote-54) The reasons for this can perhaps be explained by remarks made on Antonio’s performance by Michele Verino in the 1480s:

Once in Piazza San Martino I heard a certain Antonio singing the wars of Orlando with such eloquence that I felt as if I were hearing Petrarch himself, and you would have thought you were participating in the battle, not merely hearing about it. Later I read his poems, and they were so rough that they seemed like different works.

Audivi ego quondam Antonium, in vico Martini, bella Orlandi canentem tanta eloquentia ut Petrarcha, audire viderer, ut agi, non referri, bella putares. Legi post carmina eius, inculta ut alia crederes.[[55]](#footnote-55)

As both Coleman and Wilson discuss, Antonio’s performance was clearly an example of the role that rhetorical delivery and eloquence played in the experience of the listener, and when removed and placed on the printed page, the words alone lost their power, becoming subject to a different set of stylistic criteria, and failed to impress Michele.[[56]](#footnote-56) Coleman goes so far as to suggest that the text read by Michele was different, representing either an inaccurate transcription or a different version of the same performance.[[57]](#footnote-57) Michele’s critique highlights that beautiful performance was not enough, and that performed poetry was already being taken from its performed context to be disseminated with or without the permission of the performer. Antonio’s choice to control the dissemination of his work, though, shows that the issues of authorship and ownership of written work were not yet a worry, and that it was his manner of performing that was more important than the poetic content. Both of these elements would grow to be crucial to the poet performer as the tradition continued and evolved. Importantly, despite Antonio’s performance, and Michele’s comments showing the hybridity between *canterino* and *cantare ad lyram* traditions, we see the growing cultural distance between them, even though practices continued to be appropriated from the *canterino* tradition.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The adoption and appropriation of the *canterino* tradition has been observed especially in the philosophical writings of both Marsilio Ficino and Angelo Poliziano. Both Coleman and Wilson explore how Ficino’s exposure to the *canterino* tradition and the integrated nature of performance in Florence likely impacted his interpretation of Platonic texts.[[59]](#footnote-59) In one of his earliest works, the *De Divino furore* (1457), following the concepts put forward in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, we can see how Ficino saw poetry as a type of divine madness.[[60]](#footnote-60) The performance of poetry accompanied by a string instrument is suggested as the most superior type of music, which sees the truest imitation of celestial music, where the words and music are inextricably bound together.[[61]](#footnote-61) However, more than simply theoretical, we can see how Ficino was actively engaged in contemporary performance, for example through his correspondence with the aforementioned Antonio di Guido, which suggests that Antonio viewed Ficino as an authority on verse performance.[[62]](#footnote-62) As Wilson notes, the legacy of Ficino’s writings was impressive, helping to raise the idea of sung poetry as a divine experience, connecting the classical image of lyre players to contemporary performance practices. As a result the many contemporary iconographical references to musicians caught in a state of divine madness, as well as the literary comparisons of poet-performers to Orpheus, are in Wilson’s view indebted to Ficino in some way.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Poliziano, like Ficino before him, also drew the conclusion that the nature of poetry is musical, and that it has maintained its musical character from its origins when poetry and songs were the same.[[64]](#footnote-64) However, one notable drawback to Ficino’s theories was that the celebration of divinely inspired poetry produced as part of this poetic frenzy also meant the diminishing of the importance of training to the art. This was one element that Poliziano sought to refine and build upon, still noting the necessity of such divine madness, but also appreciating to a greater degree the rhetorical and literary craftmanship that went into poetic composition.[[65]](#footnote-65) This is seen in his encouragement of the use of Statius’ *Silvae* as a model for poetic imitation. The *sylvae* were supposed to represent a precedent for improvisational freedom, a draft composed quickly in a moment of great inspiration that the poet could refine later.[[66]](#footnote-66) There was, then, the introduction of an element of revision and refinement to the process of divinely inspired poetic composition. Poliziano recognised that poetic frenzy, as suggested by Ficino, could not apply in the same way to a culture already based in the written word, and so a combination of both divine inspiration and learnt skill was required.[[67]](#footnote-67)

The philosophies of Ficino and Poliziano can be seen at work in Lorenzo de’ Medici’s cultivation of improvised poetry. In his early years, Lorenzo was known for his bawdy verse, and his interactions with the poetic cultures of Florence contributed to his image as a libertine.[[68]](#footnote-68) However, Lorenzo also recognised that his poetic output could be used to fashion for himself a new public image, one that aligned with the Platonic ideal of the enlightened and philosophic ruler, whilst also being used as a legitimising model to justify his one-man rule over Florence.[[69]](#footnote-69)

1.1.2 *The* Strambotto

Worthy of separate consideration for its considerable cultural impact, the *strambotto* in its various forms represented one of the most popular verse forms at the end of the fifteenth century. It was the preferred medium for improvised song by poet-performers, influenced by humanists such as Poliziano and Pulci, as a form that balanced wit and grace with spontaneity and directness of expression.[[70]](#footnote-70) In its most basic form the *strambotto* is a short poem consisting of eight hendecasyllabic lines, with some variations in rhyming patterns among which the two most popular were the Sicilian form (*abababab*) and the Tuscan (*abababcc*). The Tuscan form of the *strambotto* was also known as *ottava rima* and was used in the recitation of epic verse; it is often credited to Boccaccio, who used the form in his *Decameron* and who elevated the form through his use of it.[[71]](#footnote-71) As suggested by Pirrotta, the importance of the *strambotto* at this time was comparable to the madrigal during the following century, and the form was key to many types of popular poetry.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The elevation of the *strambotto* to one of the highest forms for improvised verse in the *cantare ad lyram* tradition can be seen in its elevation and use by Poliziano. In his secular drama, *Fabula di Orfeo*, which is believed to date from around 1480, the *strambotto* is the dominant poetic form featured. The stanzas sung by the character of Orfeo, performed in the first production by the known *improvvisatore* Baccio Ugolini, are almost all *strambotti*, with the brief exception of his short victory song.[[73]](#footnote-73) As Pirrotta notes, Poliziano’s choice to have his Orpheus, a well-known *improvvisatore*, sing *strambotti*, put ‘the strambotto on a par with the Latin verses as the representatives of the noblest form of sung poetry’.[[74]](#footnote-74)

The popularity of the form is seen in famed *improvvisatori* such as Serafino Aquilano and Benedetto Gareth. Here we gain an impression of the *strambotto* as the true union between poetry and its performance, for it also saw a manner of performing cultivated and passed between performers. Whilst accompanying Cardinal Ascanio Sforza on a trip to the Sforza court in Milan, Serafino heard the *strambotti* of Benedetto Gareth, better known as *‘*Il Cariteo’, being performed by the Neapolitan nobleman and singer Andrea Coscia.[[75]](#footnote-75) Notably, the literary content of Gareth’s *strambotti* do not suggest any apparent manner that would separate them from the *strambotti* of others. That Serafino was able to recognise Cariteo’s style through the performance of Coscia suggests there was a specific manner of performance tied to the words that was particularly associated with Cariteo. This is supported by Calmeta’s comments on the style of performing demonstrated by both Serafino and Cariteo:

There will be others who, training in another mode of singing, simple and not melismatic, will wish to enjoy some sort of cleverness or affect (sensation, emotion) in order to separate themselves from the popular breed, those accompanied by musical instruments, [and] in order to better impress the hearts, not only of those they love but also of the learned. Those [poets] must emulate, in their style of singing, either Cariteo or Serafino, who, in our time, are first in such practice, and they were forced to accompany the poems with restrained and quiet music, for a better understanding of their emotional and wise words.

Altri saranno che, essercitandosi in un altro modo di cantare, semplice e non diminuito, vorranno di qualche arguzietta, o vero affetto, dilettarsi, per uscir fuora della vulgar schiera, quelle con lo istrumento di musica accompagnando, per poter meglio non solo negli amorosi ma ancora negli eruditi cuori imprimere. Questi tali nel modo del cantare deveno Cariteo o Serafino imitare, i quali a’ nostri tempi hanno di simile essercizio portata la palma, e sonosi sforzati d’accompagnar le rime con musica stesa e piana, acciocché meglio la eccellenza delle sentenziose e argute parole si potesse intendere.[[76]](#footnote-76)

Calmeta’s comments suggest a simple style of singing, that is, without melisma and heavy ornament, and with a quiet musical accompaniment that allowed the beauty of the words to shine through.[[77]](#footnote-77)

After the heights of the *strambotto*’s popularity in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it quickly became a form in decline. This can be seen in the fall of *strambotto* settings featured in Petrucci’sbooks of frottole. In 1505, Petrucci’s fourth book of frottole, aptly titled *Strambotti, ode, frottole, sonetti et modo de cantar versi latini e capituli*, contained a total of 47 strambotti settings out of 91 total compositions, meaning they comprised more than half of the edition.[[78]](#footnote-78) However, in Petrucci’s subsequent printings this proportion quickly fell to only 10%.[[79]](#footnote-79) Though there are no decisive reasons for this, it appears that the *strambotto* gave way to the rise of the sonnet, and to the broader decline in more purely oral poetic forms in the first few decades of the sixteenth century. This can be seen even in the publications of Cariteo: his 1506 *Opera* contains a high number of *strambotti* among other verse forms such as sonnets, *capitoli*, *canzone*, and *sestine*, organised by poetic type.[[80]](#footnote-80) However, in his 1509 *Endimione*, the *strambotti*, despite being the verse form for which Cariteo was best known, were omitted.[[81]](#footnote-81) The main difference between these two editions, which otherwise feature mostly the same poetic content, is that the 1509 edition was an edited *canzoniere* which, in imitation of Petrarch, worked to create a greater organic narrative throughout the publication.[[82]](#footnote-82) In his imitation of Petrarch, it seems that Cariteo felt it necessary to remove the verse form, as it did not feature as part of the Petrarchan canon, reducing the traces of his oral performance of his work in preference for its written form.

Despite this, the *strambotto* did not completely disappear. The *ottava rima* continued to be the chosen form for street performers and vernacular epic verse in general, and the more highbrow *strambotto* can still be seen in use by 1539 in Florence, at the time of the wedding of Cosimo de Medici to Elenora of Toledo. As Pirrotta explains, the printed score associated with the wedding performances contains a number of polyphonic madrigal settings sung by groups representing the various cities of Tuscany, but presenting these groups was a singer, personifying Apollo, who sang as many as forty stanzas in *ottava rima* for which the text, but not the music, survives.[[83]](#footnote-83)

1.2 *The* Frottola

The frottola has been received by musicologists as a genre of secular song that rose to prominence in the 1490s largely in the north of Italy, in the general area of the Veneto and Po Valley.[[84]](#footnote-84) It undoubtedly had some roots in the tradition of improvised song. In its earliest stages, this connection is suggested as being one of some form of transcription: Pirrotta constructs the frottola as the surfacing in written tradition of forms and modes which until then had been employed in oral tradition, and Prizer suggests that the frottola was a ‘direct outgrowth’ of the unwritten tradition in its early stages, and was at times an attempt to capture the music of that older tradition in a written form.[[85]](#footnote-85) In his article concerning the frottola and the unwritten tradition, Prizer demonstrates the connections between the two, including their poetic forms, musical forms and styles, and manner of performance.[[86]](#footnote-86) Prizer’s investigation also demonstrates how the form evolved from an unwritten one to one of fixed notation. Indeed, the frottola remains a mostly separate entity from the examination of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition, as it is suggested by modern musicologists that it may have failed to appease the humanist agenda for poetic performance; as Zanovello states, ‘the music *performs* the text, rather than *engaging* in it’.[[87]](#footnote-87) The purpose of the frottola then was for performance by professional court musicians, for the playing of their music patrons, such as in the case of Isabella d’Este or Lucrezia Borgia, or by way of printing and dissemination, for aiding the elite amateur.[[88]](#footnote-88) Whilst the early frottola was transmitted through both written and oral means, it later became much more codified in its written practice and is viewed as eventually severing from the unwritten tradition as a result.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Many of the investigations into the frottola repertory are concerned with the frottola at Mantua, under the patronage of Isabella d’Este. Notably, the frottola is also a genre in which the words and music were not typically written by the same person, characterised by a demarcation between poet, composer, and even performer.[[90]](#footnote-90) As suggested by James Haar, Isabella collected poems, and where possible aimed to bring their authors into her employ, seen with men such as Niccolo da Correggio, Antonio Tebaldeo, and Vincenzo Calmenta.[[91]](#footnote-91) In this environment, poems were requested and circulated by letter, and set to music upon request by musicians who were employed specially for this purpose. The musicians employed to set these texts, chief among them being Marchetto Cara and Bartolomeo Tromboncino, were regarded as frottolists; that is, they were regarded as composers, and not improvisers.[[92]](#footnote-92) However, in the continued overlap between the two traditions, many frottola composers were known as both singers and lutenists. Castiglione praised Cara’s gentle manner of singing and he is known for his cultivation of the lute, which would allow him to accompany himself.[[93]](#footnote-93) Pietro Aaron, in his musical treatise *Lucidario in musica*, included both Cara and Tromboncino among the ‘cantori al liuto’ suggesting the ability of both to sing to their own accompaniment on the lute.[[94]](#footnote-94) Additionally, many of the poets of frottola texts were also known for singing their own verse; Tebaldeo is noted by both Vincenzo Calmeta and in the work of Panfilo Sasso for the performance of his own verse as well as its written circulation.[[95]](#footnote-95) We can also see the setting of some of the work of Serafino Aquilano that would have been performed and the verse transcribed.[[96]](#footnote-96)

The frottola itself was printed primarily as if scored for four voices; however in reality, the repertory remained in effect one of solo song, with accompaniment played either by the singer or another performer.[[97]](#footnote-97) Very few of the frottole printed by Petrucci look as if they were intended for performance by four singers, as evidenced by the nature of the inner voices and in their manner of printing. The only part that appears written for voice, the cantus of the frottola, was frequently simple in nature with a syllabic text setting, conjunct movement, and only brief melisma.[[98]](#footnote-98) The inner voices either move with the cantus to form a homorhythmic texture, or contrast with the top line. They are more disjunct in nature, have a greater range, and have a different rhythmic character, or as Haar suggests, they ‘jump about nervously’, and remain fillers.[[99]](#footnote-99) The bass lines in particular appear to be frequently instrumental in nature, resembling the bass lines of dance tune formulas common among instrumentalists.[[100]](#footnote-100) Additionally, the frottola as printed by Petrucci rarely has text provided for the lower voices, and as Haar notes, those that do have texted parts appear to be fully vocal in nature and intended for special purposes.[[101]](#footnote-101) It seems then that the combination of these lower parts is meant to be instrumental in nature, possibly connected to their composition stemming from the lute.[[102]](#footnote-102) As suggested by Hiroyuki Minamino, there is a possible ‘chicken or egg’ debate surrounding the printed form of the frottola, as both lute and vocal arrangements of the works exist, and the vocal arrangements are often possibly incorrectly given pre-eminence as the ‘original’ form of the work.[[103]](#footnote-103)

Performed as solo song, it has long been recognised that the frequently simple melody line of the frottola lent itself to displays of vocal skill on the part of the performer.[[104]](#footnote-104) As suggested by his later inclusion of *aere* or *modi* which, printed without words, could be set to any corresponding poetic form, Petrucci’s frottola settings provided basic stock melodies that could be used by a poet to declaim their verse, furnishing the amateur poet performer with music for the first few lines or verses, that could then be repeated and applied to the whole poem.[[105]](#footnote-105) These were simply skeletal frameworks for the performer, and the emphasis was still placed on the performer’s ability to present both the music and text together. It was this style of performance that Haar concludes Castiglione was referring to in the *Cortegiano*; Castiglione is known to have had contact with manuscript frottola anthologies and would have been well aware of the large additions to the repertory represented by Petrucci’s prints.[[106]](#footnote-106) As we have already seen, Castiglione focuses on the requirements of *sprezzatura* and the *maniera* in which the courtier should sing, which suggests the expectations placed on the performer in cultivating a distinctive style and manner of delivery.[[107]](#footnote-107)

These basic settings then continued to occupy a kind of ambiguous middle ground in their performance practice between oral and written tradition, as they remain a framework, and applicable for any poet looking to perform their work with said poet being required to add their own embellishment and personal style to create any kind of effectual performance. As Wilson notes, these formulae are often seen from the viewpoint of the notated music traditions as the evidence of oral musical practices, but he suggests they are actually the erosion of the tradition, causing separation between the poet’s words and the music used to accompany their verse, which according to the ideology of *cantare ad lyram* are supposed to be inseparable.[[108]](#footnote-108) Indeed, Haar stresses that the performance style of the great improvisers was extremely personal, and thus resistant to transcription, to which Wilson adds the performances of the most capable street performers.[[109]](#footnote-109) The consensus of scholars then is that even though the performance of the frottola lent itself to manipulation and adaptation in the hands of the performer, it was still not comparable to the performances of the great improvisers, both courtly and otherwise.

However, whilst separated from the theoretical spirit of *cantare ad lyram*, in practice this seems like an evolution and continuation of poetry performance adapting to the advent of technologies that allowed the dissemination of the practice to a much wider group of people, the inevitable outcome of which was to produce a much wider range of performance standards. Notably, there are still practitioners that we see referred to with the same level of reverence reserved for the most capable of the poet improvisers. For example, though central to the development of the frottola, Isabella d’Este’s playing was still likened to that of Orpheus and Amphion – and so was still subject to the same classicising model that was used to explain the *cantare ad lyram* tradition.[[110]](#footnote-110)

1.3 *Street Singers in the Early Sixteenth Century*

In addition to the frottola, and the previously seen printing exploits of Antonio de Guido, there were other avenues of interaction between the oral tradition of poetry performance and its representations in printed form that continued to grow as the print trade strengthened.

One of the key areas in which this interaction has been examined is the growing literature surrounding street singers and their peddling of various printed ephemera. These works were frequently small and inexpensive in nature, and contained an array of poetry types, in addition to dialogues and other prose that would appeal to the public.[[111]](#footnote-111) Indeed, as Salzberg explains, street singers were unconcerned with the contents of pamphlets as long as they held broad appeal, mixing work from both famous and obscure writers, as well as contemporary and older traditional texts.[[112]](#footnote-112) These texts were often then performed to draw a crowd to which the performer could sell their printed product.[[113]](#footnote-113) Additionally, although best recognised for their secular performances, the repertoire of street singers and peddlers could also be religious in nature, linked to the popular genres of the *lauda* and *sacre rappresentazione*.[[114]](#footnote-114)

The more professional *canterini* were also not excused from such trade. As professional entertainers, the selling of literature was an added means of income for the performer, providing a relatively cheap way in which the poet could sell copies of their ‘performance’ for listeners to take home with them.[[115]](#footnote-115) One of the oldest forms of poetry that continued to be performed by street singers was Chivalric tales in *ottava rima*. Central to the *cantastorie’s* repertoire since the Middle Ages, they were immensely popular with an extremely broad range of listeners, and so very rapidly gained a place in printed form.[[116]](#footnote-116) However, the move to print did not denote the changing of this genre from an entertainment for the masses into an elevated literary form, but rather, as Salzberg notes, it existed ‘at the crossroads between oral and written communication, between educated and uneducated audiences’.[[117]](#footnote-117)

Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* provides an interesting case study of the interactions between a text conceived in a written form for a small social elite with its performance and reappropriation by street singers, showing the hybridity and interactions between text and performance that existed at the time. First published in 1516, and later revised for a 1532 edition, the *Furioso* was printed over 60 times in the first half of the sixteenth century. However, these account only for the book printings; the *Furioso* was printed in a wide variety of other formats, reaching a large public because of how enjoyable it was to hear as well as read, disseminated in smaller pamphlet forms by street singers who also performed parts of the work.[[118]](#footnote-118) As Richardson discusses, this is an example of how a text composed for a social elite could be taken and appropriated by those below this class.[[119]](#footnote-119) This popularity is also noted in contemporary references; Giovan Battista Pigna, a poet and historian from Ferrara, noted in the 1560s that one could hear people ‘singing the verses of the *Furioso* in the streets’.[[120]](#footnote-120) Additionally, the appropriation of the work by street singers led the poet to reconsider aspects of the work, as Pigna remarks that Ariosto edited the text after hearing it sung.[[121]](#footnote-121) The broad musical appeal of the work is also captured by musical settings; as Haar discusses, the *Furioso* provided plenty of material in the form of laments, which in addition to their appeal to street singers, also saw the work formally set by composers, including a 1517 setting by the frottolist Bartolomeo Tromboncino, and later madrigal settings, such as that of Philippe Verdelot.[[122]](#footnote-122)

But in addition to the appropriation of written texts by street singers, we can also see how the interactions between orality and printing played out in the careers of performers who took their own work to print. One notable figure whose performance and printing has seen a reasonable level of investigation in particular is Cristoforo Fiorentino, better known as l’Altissimo. L’Altissimo is recognised by Wilson as being the ‘last known traditional *canterino* of repute in Florence’, and notes how his career saw greater interaction with the print trade then those of his predecessors; the relationship between his performance and print has also been the subject of multiple investigations by Luca Degl’Innocenti.[[123]](#footnote-123) L’Altissimo was possibly the only *canterino* to perform at San Martino after the death of Antonio di Guido in 1486, and was the last to do so, as no other *canterino* of note is mentioned after l’Altissimo’s departure for Venice in the mid-1510s.[[124]](#footnote-124) His career has presented somewhat of a puzzle, for it appears he only turned to performance later in life after his first career as a sculptor, and as a performer he is recognised for both the performance of epic verse as well as shorter lyric forms.[[125]](#footnote-125)

As a *canterino* then, as Degl’Innocenti describes, l’Altissimo was advised to publish his poetry by the Florentine publisher Bernardo Giunta, who dedicated his 1515 print of Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* to the poet, with the printer offering his own press for the project.[[126]](#footnote-126) Whether acting on this advice or otherwise, l'Atissimo’s poetry publications in the early 1520s were very much in tune with the vogue of printing culture at the height of *poesia cortigiana*. The printing of the collected works of Serafino Aquilano in 1502 after the poet’s early death began a busy few decades in which a large number of poet performers from all over Italy moved to publish their work in *Opera* editions.[[127]](#footnote-127) Degl’Innocenti describes this as a ‘nationwide movement’ of poets who looked to gain greater acclaim by reaching a wider audience with their work, and includes works from Cariteo, Antonio Tebaldeo, Panfilo Sasso, Bernardo Accolti and Francesco Cei among others.[[128]](#footnote-128) The relationship between these texts and their performance was evident in their printed format, displayed by the woodcuts on the editions’ title pages which frequently showed a singer accompanying themselves on a stringed instrument.[[129]](#footnote-129) In the case of l’Altissimo, Wilson suggests that his move to print was intended to claim authorship over his work as he aged, and possibly to provide a source of income once he had retired from public performance, as suggested by the poet’s move from Florence to Venice, where there was a more favourable economic environment for commercial printing.[[130]](#footnote-130) This social polarization appears to be reﬂected in the activities of sixteenth-century singer-poets, who increasingly operated at more extreme ends of the social scale, either as skilled amateurs within elite academic environments, or as marginalized street singers.

1.4 *The Post-Bembo Era*

1.4.1 Petrarch, Bembo, and the growing use of the Vernacular

Verse from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century is often identified as *poesia cortigiana* in an aim to differentiate it from the more purist neo-Petrarchan verse styles that slowly began to dominate from around the second decade of the sixteenth century under the influence of Bembo. While obviously influenced by Petrarch and his imitators, the *poesia cortigiana* was notably eclectic and featured a much wider range of metrical structures, and despite being united in its use of the vernacular generally, it was written in the regional dialect of the poet, albeit in an elevated form thereof.[[131]](#footnote-131) This separated vernacular from Latin lyric, which did carry with it higher linguistic standards, making its dominance understandable. At the height of the popularity of the *poesia cortigiana* in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, there were the beginnings of desires for stricter regulation of linguistic norms.[[132]](#footnote-132) However, it is particularly in the early sixteenth century we can see this begin to change, largely through the work of Pietro Bembo. Bembo’s *Prose della volgar lingua*, first published in 1525 with subsequent reprints in 1535 and 1548, suggested the unifying of vernacular lyric through the use of Old Tuscan, as found in Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, presenting this linguistic style, and Petrarch’s lyric verse more generally, as the ideal model for vernacular poetry.[[133]](#footnote-133) Importantly in the consideration of verse performance and improvisation in particular, this move took the written vernacular further from its spoken counterpart.

This shift made Italian teachable and learnable, making ‘high’ literature more accessible to the non-Latin literate, such as women.[[134]](#footnote-134) Imitating Petrarchan verse continued to grow in popularity, and the Petrarchan model’s popularity made it accessible, providing a vernacular text of which the reproduction and appropriation was not only encouraged, but facilitated in a form that could be utilised by the female poet in particular. The traditional separation of the writer and his beloved was often the cause of his writing, but when regendered, this distance provided an acceptable female position from which to write.[[135]](#footnote-135) Indeed, this issue was one appreciated by Bembo, who addressed two of the earliest female Petrarchan poets, Vittoria Colonna and Veronica Gambara, in his poetry on more than one occasion – the only contemporary poets he addressed more than once.[[136]](#footnote-136) In addition to the growing production of poetry by noblewomen, there are many examples and anecdotal references to courtesans writing original verse; the Roman courtesan Imperia, who was active in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, was recorded by Matteo Bandello as ‘not unskilfully composing the occasional sonnet or madrigal’.[[137]](#footnote-137) There is also evidence of a *capitolo* written by the Florentine courtesan Barbara Raffacani Salutati, who notably had a relationship with Machiavelli.[[138]](#footnote-138) In addition to this, we see the very serious poetic outputs of the courtesans Tullia d’Aragona and Veronica Franco. Cox suggests that Tullia’s activity as a poet was influenced by the precedent set by her mother’s generation of courtesans that included Imperia.[[139]](#footnote-139) It is then only in the wake of Bembo’s Petrarchism that the poetry of courtesans, in particular that of Tullia and Veronica, was given more serious consideration by their contemporaries.

Whilst the greater adoption of the vernacular allowed for a wider range of participants, notably women, to access the world of poetry and performance, it also had a resounding effect on orality and improvisation, which can be seen in the impact these changing tastes had on the choice of poetic forms. There was a decline in the very varied and mixed poetic forms often seen in works during the era of courtly poetry; in addition to the decreasing popularity of the *strambotto*, other once popular forms such as *capitoli, barzellette*, and *eclogues* were also abandoned in favour of sonnets, *canzone* and *sestine*.[[140]](#footnote-140) Bembists also showed a disinterest in the musical setting of their verse, the poetry now further removed from an innate musical nature, but this eventually gave way to polyphonic settings of the text, that is, as madrigals.[[141]](#footnote-141) This certainly suggests a growing divide between the writing of texts and their performance. However, as we will see, the performance of poetry continued well into the sixteenth century; as Richardson remarks, there were still examples of the same person acting as both poet and composer, citing the cases of Anton Francesco Doni and Girolamo Parabosco.[[142]](#footnote-142)

1.4.2 *Music in the Academies and Salons*

Academies and salons were not new in the sixteenth century, but with the growing print trade and the expanded access to knowledge that this provided, the fashion for these types of gatherings continued to grow. Notably, the growing use of the vernacular and the influence of Bembo also saw the adoption of the *volgare* as the preferred language of publication and discourse in these circles.[[143]](#footnote-143) Musical performance was a key part of such meetings, including vernacular polyphony, and the performance of poetry.[[144]](#footnote-144)

The diverse range of music that may have made up an academy gathering is captured in Antofrancesco Doni’s *Dialogo della musica* from 1544, which suggests the performance of madrigals, motets, and chansons, as well as poetry accompanied by the *viuola*.[[145]](#footnote-145) The music for singing poetry most likely consisted of standard *arie di cantare* such as those printed by Petrucci; as discussed by Robert Nosow, the music theorist and composer Gioseffo Zarlino testifies to the continued use of *arie* in Venice in the middle of the sixteenth century, referring to ‘a certain *modo* or, as we say, *arie di cantare*; since those are the *modi di cantare* on which we now sing the sonnets and *canzoni* of Petrarch, or the *rime* of Ariosto’.[[146]](#footnote-146) Performances are also captured in dedicatory poetry – for example, as discussed by Martha Feldman, Gaspara Stampa writes of her good friend Molino singing: ‘Here only your lyre is fitting, and your song, famed lord’.[[147]](#footnote-147) Feldman notes how Stampa’s separation of the acts of singing and writing by Stampa in this sonnet suggests she refers to performance specifically, and not the writing of poetry as is often the case.[[148]](#footnote-148)

In her discussion of improvised song in relation to the salon culture of Venice, Martha Feldman notes that direct references to the performance of solo singing in reference to the salon of Domenico Venier are always in conjunction with women.[[149]](#footnote-149) Indeed, as detailed by Ann Rosalind Jones in her discussion of female writers in the sixteenth century, these humanist academies and urban salons provided a space in which social advancement was possible for both men and women who already belonged to the classes of people welcome at such events.[[150]](#footnote-150) For women in particular, this is most often seen in their musical and poetic talents. Continuing her discussion on solo singing in Venier’s salons, Feldman lists a number of singers who accompanied themselves on a stringed instrument who feature in discourse connected to Venier during the 1540s and 50s; these include the likes of Franceschina Bellamano, Polissena Frigera, and Polissena Pecorina, all of whom feature in Ortensio Landi’s *Sette libri di cathaloghi* in 1552, with Franceschina in particular also featuring as a ‘donne a liuto et a libro’ in Pietro Aaron’s *Lucidario in musica* in 1545.[[151]](#footnote-151) This title suggests Franceschina’s ability to both sing from part books and also accompany herself in a similar manner to Landi’s classification of ‘cantori a liuto’, which was directly connected to the continuing tradition of poetry performances stemming from the late fifteenth century.[[152]](#footnote-152) However, there are no suggestions that Franceschina composed any of the verse she performed.[[153]](#footnote-153) Also mentioned in connection to the salon of Venier was the lutenist and singer Irene di Spilimbergo, to whom Venier and many of his circle wrote sonnets in dedication after her untimely death in 1559.[[154]](#footnote-154) In the opening of the work in dedication to her, her musical talents are described:

In summary, in a very short space of time, she reached such a point that she sang everything perfectly by sight; accompanying her readiness to sing with such sweet accents, and with such an honourable, gracious and pleasant manner as any other maiden ever sang.

In somma in brevissimo spatio pervenne a tanto, che ella cantava sicuramente a libro ogni cosa, accompagnando la prontezza del cantare con accenti sì dolci, & con sì honesta, gratiosa, e soave maniera, con quanta altra donzella cantasse giamai.[[155]](#footnote-155)

Irene was recognised in particular for her ability to emulate the unique singing style of Ippolito Tromboncino in her performance of his works.[[156]](#footnote-156) Some of the descriptions of Irene’s singing style certainly seem to suggest that her performances contained elements of the *sprezzatura* and *maneria* described by Castiglione, but do not go so far as to suggest that she composed or wrote any of her own verse.

Though lauded for their solo performance of verse accompanied by string instrument, then, the status of these women as poets is not established. However, there are some important examples of women participating within this tradition who were recognised for both their musical and poetic talents; these include the protagonists of two later chapters, namely the courtesan Tullia d’Aragona and the *virtuosa* singer and poet Gaspara Stampa, but they are not the only examples. Chiara Matraini too was known as both a poet and musician - and so it is fitting to place her within this tradition of poetry performance. She belongs to the tradition of female writers who wrote amorous verse in the wake of the adoption of the vernacular; coming from a middle-class family she is a clear example of how the greater adoption of the vernacular allowed women to enter the literary canon.[[157]](#footnote-157) Her Petrarchan verse was printed in the 1550s, and she continued to write and print her work, which became increasingly spiritual in nature, up until her death in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Though her musical talents are mostly overlooked now, we can see how contemporary reference to her in the 1550s highlights both elements of her work; in a defence against a slanderous attack on Chiara by Pietro Pera, we can see how both her musical and poetic talents are highlighted:

Besides poetry, Matraini delighted in music and played the spinet and sang very pleasantly, so that the youths of Lucca, attracted by her gracefulness, went to converse in her house, where at times they spent a good part of the night singing, playing music, and merrymaking, which caused a lot of murmuring and slander, since the contemporary habit of free conversation was unknown in those days, and in the *Vita* of M[esser] Gherardo Sergiutsti an unfavorable description was given of this excellent woman.

Oltre la poesia, dilettossi la Matraini della musica e suonava la spinetta e cantava d’ottimo gusto, di modo che la gioventù lucchese, allettata dalla sua grazia, andava a far conversazione a casa sua, ove alle volte passava buona parte della notte in canti e suoni e allegria; lo che, non essendo in quei tempi l’usanza presente del libero conversare, diede motivo a varie mormorazioni e maldicenze, e nella vita di M. Gherardo Sergiusti di questa eccellente donna ne viene fatto uno svantaggioso ritratto.[[158]](#footnote-158)

Pera was defending against the image of Chiara cast in the *Vita de Gherando Sergiusti P.I. celebre col nome di Gherado Diceo*, written by Gherando Sergiusti, a professor at the University of Bologna.[[159]](#footnote-159) The gatherings in question were established by Bartolomeo Graziani, who was at the time engaged in a relationship with the widowed Chiara, and were in some part for the benefit of her musical and poetical interests. What is clear in both the attack against, and the defence of, this academy is that Chiara cultivated her passions for music and poetry in Lucca and Pisa, performing as part of a gathering of educated young men.[[160]](#footnote-160)

* 1. 3 *Courtesans and Verse Performance*

In addition to the likes of Chiara and Gaspara, there was another notable category of female performers that likely made up a key part of any informal salon, which often played host to courtesans; cases are known from Florence, in addition to the well-known examples of Rome and Venice.[[161]](#footnote-161) These high-class courtesans were known for their eloquence and rhetorical skill, and a key feature of this was their musical performance. However, similar to the publications of poetry by known poet performers, the courtesan’s verse was most frequently transmitted in the form of solo song.

Courtesans were present at varying levels across the Italian peninsula throughout the sixteenth century, but both Rome, and later Venice, are singled out as centres of courtesanary during this period. First rising to prominence in the gatherings of Rome in the late fifteenth century, the elite courtesan, or *cortigiana onesta*, was a hybrid of the contemporary sex worker and the courtesans of antiquity, as featured in the works of popular classical authors such as Cato, Terence, and Plautus, providing an intellectual justification for her existence.[[162]](#footnote-162) Elevating herself above the common prostitute, the role of the courtesan in these elite circles went beyond sex work, providing the opportunity for her clients and men in her immediate circle to engage in the ritualised processes of love and desire, and allowing the elite class of men with which she engaged to showcase their social status, manhood and virility through their interactions with her.[[163]](#footnote-163) Indeed, it was these interactions, that is, her association with men of high financial and social status, and not a state of moral honesty that garnered her the title of ‘honest’ courtesan.[[164]](#footnote-164) Those that could claim the accolade of *cortigiana onesta* were few, and courtesans of this class made up only a small proportion of the prostitution trade, as exhibited in Venice in the early sixteenth century.In 1509, the Venetian historian and diarist Marino Sanudo made note of 11,654 women working within the sex trade in the city, but of these only a few hundred women could claim the rank of *cortigiana onesta*.[[165]](#footnote-165) These numbers appear to have remained fairly consistent throughout the century: the famed ‘Catalogue of All the Principle and Most Honoured Courtesans,’ which is believed to have been printed around 1570, lists some 212 women, and the French philosopher Michel de Montaigne suggests the number could have been as low as 150 at the time of his visit.[[166]](#footnote-166)

In Matteo Bandello’s *Novelle*,which were later published between 1554 and 1573, we can see the presence of musical instruments and books in a description of the famous Roman courtesan Imperia’s dwelling:

In the middle of the salon there was a small table, the most beautiful in the world, covered with green velvet. And here there was always a lute or cetra with books of music and other musical instruments. There were also several richly decorated books in the vernacular and in Latin. She truly delighted in vernacular poetry, having been taught by the most delightful Messer Domenico Campana, known as Strascino, she had already made such progress as to have composed some not unpleasing sonnets and madrigals.

Si vedeva poi nel mezzo un tavolino, il più bello del mondo, coperto di velluto verde. Quivi sempre era o liuto o cetra con libri di musica e altri instrumenti musici. V’erano poi parecchi libretti volgari e latini riccamente adornati. Ella non mezzanamente si dilettava de le rime volgari, essendolo stato in ciò essortatore e come maestro il nostro piacevolissimo messer Domenico Campana detto Strascino, e tanto già di profitto fatto ci aveva che ella non insoavemente componeva qualche sonetto o madrigale. [[167]](#footnote-167)

Imperia was at the height of her career during the first decade of the sixteenth century, before her death by suicide in 1512. She belonged to an era of courtesans during which their popularity was at its height in Rome - the same generation of courtesans to which Tullia’s mother Giulia belonged. As Bandello indicates, her musical abilities were a key element of this career: he remarks upon the presence of music instruments, which we assume she could play, as well as on her poetic abilities, mentioning both her love of vernacular poetry, and that she herself was able to compose verse.

Like the many other verse improvisers we have already discussed, the courtesan could make use of precomposed stock melodies;as the primary focus of the courtesan’s performance was the delivery of her verse, original musical composition was not a requirement. As was the process for the poet-musician more generally, this was likely done by setting the text to melodic formulas committed to the performer’s memory and performing it through the medium of solo song, using standard patterns of chords.[[168]](#footnote-168) As already seen, the source of the basic melodic formulas may have been frottola books, such as those published by Petrucci between 1504 and 1515, where poetry could be applied to repetitive melodic lines written to fit the syllables and stanza length of different poetic forms. Indeed, Martha Feldman has shown the ease with which poetry by courtesan characters can be set to these formulas.[[169]](#footnote-169) This is supported by the accessibility of these printed books to the courtesan, and their likely awareness of the music’s connection to the world of the courtly poet reciter.[[170]](#footnote-170) Additionally, work could also be adapted to be used; Perrisone’s dedication of his book of madrigals in 1547 to Gaspara Stampa has been previously explored as a possible source documenting Stampa’s own musical performance.[[171]](#footnote-171) The treble-dominated nature of the work, as well the phraseology, suggest the work’s ability to be adapted for solo song and lute accompaniment, and Feldman suggests the dedication, with its plea to be put amongst Stampa’s adored things, is a veiled request for her to perform his music.[[172]](#footnote-172)

However, just as with the varying levels of musicianship seen across the general population of improvisers, it seems only fitting that similar disparities would be seen amongst this group of performers, and some could have composed both the verse and music for their performance, a notion which is supported by anecdotal evidence of courtesan performances. In his miscellany of poetry, Domenico di Benedetto Arrighi makes note of two performances by a courtesan introduced to us as Maria: ‘La fava bem menata’ is described as ‘the *canzona* composed by Maria the courtesan’, and the following work, ‘O passi sparssi’, is introduced as a ‘most piteous *strambotto* of the aforesaid Maria, who sang it with great grace’.[[173]](#footnote-173) As discussed by Prizer, there is an ambiguity as to which element of the performance was of Maria’s own composition. The *strambotto* ‘O passi sparssi’ is identifiable as the work of Serafino Aquilano, suggesting that it was the music of this performance that was composed by Maria, but it is possible that both elements were composed by her in the first of the two songs. Arrighi later writes of another of Maria’s performances but notes only that the song was a favourite of hers and she sang it with great beauty, supporting her compositional role in the other two works.[[174]](#footnote-174)

Whether borrowed or of their own composition, these basic melodies were embellished and further developed for performance, using creative variations and ornamentation to suit the poetry they were displaying, improvising around the basic formula to add interest. As we have already seen, such practices were standard, but in the context of the courtesan’s performance, the contemporary anxieties expressed around female vocal performance appear to support the idea that the courtesan’s singing style was virtuosic and excessive in nature. In his article regarding courtesans and secular music in Rome in the early sixteenth century, Prizer highlights how the widespread use of music by the courtesan, especially singing and performing poetry, may have encouraged growing fears over female music-making. In a description of Rome before the sack of 1527, from the *Ragionamento del Soppino fatto frate, e Lodovico, putaniere*, the character Zoppino cautions another character, Lodovico, against letting a courtesan into his home, in case she ‘take[s] from you your lutes or other instruments’.[[175]](#footnote-175) Moreover, the warning expressed by Pietro Bembo to his 13-year-old niece in 1541, cautioning her against musical performance even when requested, was in direct opposition to the compliments he paid the likes of Isabella d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia in the first decade of the century.[[176]](#footnote-176) Prizer argues that it may have been Bembo’s exposure to the performance of courtesans in Rome that caused his viewpoint to change.[[177]](#footnote-177) Indeed, Martha Feldman has discussed how the agency of voice given to the courtesan, at a time when women were held to the ideal of silence (at least in principle), meant that the female singing voice, especially in passages of solo virtuosity, came to signify the disrepute of the courtesan.[[178]](#footnote-178) It was through her performance that the courtesan could incite desire in her listener, and give them greater access to her body, both visually and audibly. Music, then, was essential in the repertoire of the courtesan in wooing and maintaining her relationships with the patrician gentlemen who visited her.

But despite the overwhelming evidence for the *cortigiana onesta* possessing at least some level of musical skill, there has been debate as to what level of musicianship they would have reached. In his classic article concerning female musicianship in the sixteenth century, Anthony Newcomb makes a point of labelling courtesans as failing to reach a professional level of musicianship.[[179]](#footnote-179) However, the struggle to distinguish between courtesans and unmarried female musicians across the Italian city states suggests the courtesan was known for a very high level of musical ability. In the late 1490s at the court of Mantua, the singer Giovanna Moreschi only confirmed her status as a professional singer and quelled whispers of courtesanary after her marriage to the composer and musician Marchetto Cara.[[180]](#footnote-180) The status of singer and poet Gaspara Stampa is still debated due to her position as an unmarried woman performing in the Venetian salons in the 1540s.[[181]](#footnote-181) There was, then, a hazy line of demarcation, whereby great musical skill functioned as a badge of courtesanship, and in consequence all female musicians were tarnished by association, and the anxieties expressed around female vocal performance appear to suggest the courtesan’s singing style was virtuosic, potentially to an extravagant degree. This is seen in warnings such as that in Castiglione’s *Cortigiano*, where he advises court ladies to avoid excessive ornamentation, displaying enough talent to show that they have it, but not to be boastful or immoderate.[[182]](#footnote-182)

1.4 *Conclusions*

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the current state of literature surrounding the culture of vernacular verse performance across the time period covered by the individuals featured in the following case studies, setting the stage so that their place and interaction with this canon can be more greatly understood. For the first set of case studies concerning the work of Boiardo and Tornabuoni, we can understand their place in the flourishing world of the *cantare ad lyram* tradition in the historic centres of the Italian city states, their status as members of the patriciate exposing them to the genre at the peak of its popularity. In the following studies of Aquilano and Sasso, we are at the peak of the *strambotto*’spopularity and the world of courtly performers*.* Finally, the last of the case studies, focused on the work of Stampa and d’Aragona, bring us to the post-Bembo era and the evolution of the tradition into the salons and academies made possible by the growth of print but still rooted in performance. The poetry produced by these individuals can all be connected to this greater tradition of verse performance, and they represent different elements of this tradition’s growth and evolution. As a result, by examining the wider traditions to which the case studies belong, we see how their verse, though preserved in its printed form, can be understood first and foremost as reflecting and created for a performative context, not necessarily created with their collation and printing in mind. Therefore, these poems hold an innate musicality, created during the poets’ lifetimes for the purpose of performance by themselves or others.

**Chapter 2: Matteo Maria Boiardo**

Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano, was a poet and courtier at the Este court of Ferrara during the mid to late fifteenth century. As a poet, he was better known both during his life and posthumously for his chivalric epic, the *Orlando Innamorato*, which, left unfinished at the time of his death, was later added to by Ludovico Ariosto with his *Orlando Furioso* in the early sixteenth century. Boiardo produced a number of other vernacular works in various verse forms; in addition to the *Innamorato*, written in traditional *ottava rima*, he also produced a comedy, *Timone*, in *terza rima,* and a collection of love lyrics, entitled the *Amorum Libri Tres*, which will be the focus of the present study. Matteo’s works were produced as entertainment for the court, transmitted through their performance and manuscript forms with only the *Innamorato* receiving publication during his lifetime.

Boiardo was born sometime between 1440 and 1441, at the family seat at Scandiano. His grandfather Feltrino Boiardo was the first Count of Scandiano, gaining the title in 1432, though the family had been in the service of the Estes since the early fourteenth century.[[183]](#footnote-183) Boiardo spent much of his early years at the court of Ferrara accompanying his father Giovanni where he would have begun his education at the school of Guarino Guarini. The school, set up in 1429 for the education of Leonello d’Este, was well renowned for its exemplary humanist teaching, and was flourishing under the patronage of Leonello, now Marquess of Ferrara from 1441.[[184]](#footnote-184) However, Boiardo’s time at the court, and as a result his education there, was cut short by the death of his father in 1451, at which point he returned to the family home in Scandiano. This is not to suggest that Boiardo’s brief time at court saw the end of his formal learning; as suggested by Antonia Benvenuti, Boiardo remained notably dedicated to his studies and received a serious humanistic education under the watchful eye of his grandfather.[[185]](#footnote-185) In testament to this, he would later produce a number of Latin works and translations dedicated to Ercole d’Este, beginning with the *Carmina*, ten Eclogues, and a translation of Apulius’ *Golden Ass*.[[186]](#footnote-186)

Following the death of both his grandfather and uncle, Boiardo became head of the family and Count of Scandiano in 1460. The early years of the 1460s were spent at the court of Sigismondo d’Este at Reggio, where in 1469 Boiardo would meet Antonia di Bartolomeo Caprara, the lady to whom his *Amorum Libri* is dedicated. Her name is revealed to us at the beginning of the first book; slowly spelt out in the first thirteen poems through the starting letter of each first word it is then presented in complete acrostics in the fourteenth poem. Little is known of Antonia other than her existence, and she is traceable through the church records of San Giovanni di Reggio, where a girl by her name was baptised in 1451.[[187]](#footnote-187) The romance between Boiardo and Antonia portrayed in the *Amorum Libri* is imagined as having taken place between 1469 and 1472, with the suggested ending coming with the inclusion of Boiardo’s summons to Rome for the coronation of Borso d’Este in 1471 and either the marriage or death of Antonia.[[188]](#footnote-188) In reality, the general consensus is that the work was written over the course of the early 1470s before being finalised into a completed manuscript form in 1477.[[189]](#footnote-189)

Boiardo’s life was not one entirely dedicated to his writings, and he was very much engaged in the public service of the Este family. Boiardo formally entered into the service of Ercole d’Este sometime in 1476; appearing at the top of Ercole d’Este list of ‘compagni’ it is apparent he had a high standing at the court.[[190]](#footnote-190) Boiardo’s closeness to Ercole is one that has been much commentated on and is evident in many of Boiardo’s early dedication to Ercole, such as the use of the informal ‘tu’ form of address in the dedication of his translation of Cornelius Nepos’ *De Viris Illustrribusi*.[[191]](#footnote-191) This is also seen in the civic appointments given to Boiardo, as he held two of the highest positions of the provinces as the Governor of Modena from 1480 to 1483, and later as Governor of Reggio from 1487 until his death in 1494, both of which were positions that had previously been filled by Ercole himself and by his brother Sigismondo while Ercole’s predecessor, Borso, was Duke.[[192]](#footnote-192)

A year after Boiardo’s death in 1495 saw the first and only complete publication of all Boiardo had finished of the *Orlando Innamorato*, including snippets of the third book provided by his widow*.*[[193]](#footnote-193)Indeed, the work would go on to be eclipsed by its far more popular successor, Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, and receive little to no attention after the first publication of the *Furioso* in 1516. Equalling the popularity of the *Innamorato* was Boiardo’s comedy, *Timone,* which was a loose translation of the classical comedy by Lucien*.* First published in 1500, it is believed to have been written nearer the end of Boiardo’s life in the 1490s, but could easily predate this.[[194]](#footnote-194) Though the work has received far less attention that the *Innamorato* by modern scholarship, it appears to have had a similar level of contemporary print publication and was published almost as many times as the *Innamorato* during the first few decades of the sixteenth century. The first printing of the *Amorum Libri*,under the alternative title of *Sonetti e canzoni*, was in 1499 in nearby Reggio, with one final subsequent publication in Venice in 1501. In comparison to Boiardo’s other printed works, the *Amorum Libri* were far less popular, which is not unsurprising given its relative age and evolving poetic tastes of the time, with Boiardo’s verse being experimental in form and style at times, and the lack of popular forms like the *strambotto* in the work. The changing genres of his work and Boiardo’s lack of publication during his lifetime highlights the purpose of the works as courtly entertainment, appealing to the evolving desires and tastes of the Ferrarese court, and existing not in print, but through manuscript editions and oral transmission among a select elite.

2.1 *Boiardo and Performance*

When examining the *Amorum Libri* there is no doubt that the work has been conceived primarily as a text first, that is, it was not created through a process of spontaneous oral delivery but written down and meticulously edited to form a coherent and cohesive whole. Boiardo preferred to write in solitude at his home in Scandiano than whilst at the court, something made evident by his requests to Ercole to retire to Scandiano briefly in the late 1470s to continue his work on the *Innamorato.[[195]](#footnote-195)* There is ample evidence in the *Amorum Libri* themselves that the work was written and drafted; from acrostics, which are understood far more easily when read than if heard, to experimental poetic forms and elaborate inter-rhyming schemes, it is clear that the work as a whole was created through a process of written drafts by the author.

However, while Boiardo’s poems were not improvised, nor is there any record of him being a noted performer, the *Amorum Libri* were nevertheless written for the entertainment of the court and as such would have been transmitted at least partly through oral delivery. This is highlighted by the appearance of the first full manuscript of the *Amorum Libri* from around 1477, just a year after Boiardo entered into the service of Ercole d’Este. It seems likely then that the work was compiled formally due to its success as a means of entertainment during Boiardo’s early months at the court, where he may have shared the work in snippets and gained enough support and popularity to share a completed edition. To understand Boiardo’s verse more greatly in a performance context then, it is necessary to consider the musical atmosphere it would have been a part of. As there is an absence of any accounts and sources detailing Boiardo’s performance of his verse, we can instead turn to the environment fostered at the Ferrarese court during Boiardo’s time there, and in turn examine how his verse would have existed and interacted with this environment.

2.1.1 *Music at the Este Courts*

The Este court at Ferrara has long been recognised for the richness of its musical traditions and prestige in relation to its relatively small size and status.[[196]](#footnote-196) Under the tutelage of Guarino, it seems likely that Leonello d’Este, who held power from 1441 to 1450, would have been exposed to the growing ideals of singing verse accompanied by a string instrument as a recreational activity. A Ferrarese courtier and teacher of rhetoric at the University of Ferrara, Ludovico Carboni refers directly to Guarino teaching his students to compose Latin verses with musical accompaniment in an epitaph from his funeral oration for the teacher: ‘I taught [them] well how to weave verses with sounding plectrum’.[[197]](#footnote-197) Indeed, Gallo suggests Carboni’s own ability to sing in Latin and accompany himself on stringed instrument was because of his education with Guarino.[[198]](#footnote-198) Though this refers to Latin verse, there was then precedent in the court for the performance of verse by non-musicians as a recreational activity, in line with the humanist teachings found in Ferrara.

There was also a strong tradition of itinerant performers, that is *canterini*, being kept at the court as paid musicians. Court records show a number of *canterini* employed at the courts dating from the mid to late fifteenth century;though they are named in a number of ways it is clear that these performers were reciting verse and accompanying themselves on some sort of stringed instrument.[[199]](#footnote-199) Few are more noteworthy than the legendary lutenist Pietrobono, who appears in the court records during the 1450s but was still present in the early days of Ercole’s reign, as seen by his presence as part of the *comitiva* sent to collect Ercole’s bride to be, Eleonora d’Aragona, from Naples.[[200]](#footnote-200) Pietrobono was one of the most famous singers and lutenists in Italy in the mid fifteenth century; celebrated by both poets and musicians for his performative skills during his lifetime, he was capable of both improvising narrative verse, but also playing as part of ensembles.[[201]](#footnote-201) In addition to Pietrobono, records show that the court was not without a *canterino* in its employ at any point between 1436 and 1478.[[202]](#footnote-202) Niccolò Tedesco is listed both as a *canterino* in 1456 but also as a *cantor et pulsator* in other records of court musicians.[[203]](#footnote-203) Tedesco was employed at the court for almost 30 years, from 1436 to 1466 as a secular musician, and his recording as a *canterino* as well as a *cantor et pulsator* suggests he both sang and could accompany himself while doing so, perhaps, like Pietrobono, being required to lend either his singing voice, instrumental playing or both depending on the circumstances.[[204]](#footnote-204)

Also worthy of note is the blind *canterino* Giovanni Orbo da Parma who served the court from 1468 to 1478 at both Ferrara and Mantua.[[205]](#footnote-205) His surviving poetry includes eighteen sonnets in a Petrarchan style, and a *capitolo* in *terza rima,* providing evidence for the performance of shorter verse forms at the court. The presence of these shorter verse forms in the repertoire of Giovanni is important in the consideration of Boiardo’s lyric output given the known preference of the Ferrarese courts to the older style of performers who sang vernacular narrative poetry that was based on the Carolingian epics.[[206]](#footnote-206) That is, the type of verse that was preferred at the court was longer epic verse in *ottava rima* rather than shorter verse forms. However, the overlap between the end of Giovanni’s time at the court, and the production of a formal manuscript of Boiardo’s work is notable, suggesting a period where these shorter verse forms were being cultivated and performed at the court. It is likely that Boiardo, who though not a permanent fixture at court just yet, would have noticed their popularity and was responding to this.

2.1.2 Timone

Though there is no evidence that Boiardo’s singular play, *Timone*, was ever performed during his lifetime, it was clearly written with its performance in mind. Indeed, as the Prologue makes clear, it was written for the entertainment of the Ferrarese court.[[207]](#footnote-207) Although its date of composition is unclear, the play is undoubtedly one of the earliest vernacular comedies to survive and, like others of its time, combined some known features of classical plays, such as the prologue, presentation of the plot, and the division of the play into five acts, with elements of contemporary religious theatre. [[208]](#footnote-208)

This later work of Boiardo’s is helpful in understanding his constantly changing literary genre choices. By this point in his life, Boiardo had already demonstrated his abilities in a wide range of genres, from Latin translations to his early production of love lyric in various short and longer verse forms, and the almost completed *Innamorato.* As has already been discussed, these changing genres were no doubt connected to the changing demands of the court, with *Timone* no doubt being written to appeal to Ercole’s growing patronage of the theatre, and the subject of the play, concerning the correct use of wealth, aligned both with the fashionable ideals, but also the chivalrous ideals seen already by Boiardo in the *Innamorato.[[209]](#footnote-209)*

2.1.3 *The* Innamorato

In comparison to the *Amorum Libri,* far clearer connections between Boiardo’s work and performative traditions can be seen in the *Innamorato* which took inspiration in both form and content from the chivalric epics performed by *canterini* in the streets of Italian cities.[[210]](#footnote-210) The content of the epics as performed on the streets, that is, the singing in *ottava rima* of the exploits of ancient knights such as Orlando or Rinaldo, was a well-established tradition by Boiardo’s time, and neither the themes and content of the *Innamorato*, nor the performative culture from which they came were new.[[211]](#footnote-211) In the climate of the Ferrarese Court, where the *Innamorato* is often regarded as one of the first great epic poems in the course of many that would be produced in the chivalric mode, the form and topic appealed greatly to the Este family who claimed descent from French nobility and were known for their preference of this verse form.[[212]](#footnote-212) Like the *Amorum Libri* then, the *Innamorato* was clearly composed for courtly entertainment, meant to be circulated around a small elite and be performed for the entertainment of the court, but we can see the reflections of the wider epic tradition in abundance in its contents.

Like other works of the same genre, such as that of close contemporary Luigi Pulci’s *Morgante*, Boiardo’*s Innamorato* keeps much of the same tone and themes of the verse sung by *cantastorie* – performers dedicated to singing longer epic verse. This can be seen in the opening address of the work:

You gentleman and knights assembled here,

To hear of things both delightful and new,

Be still, and pay attention, and listen,

To the fine tale that I’ll now sing for you.

Signori e cavalieri che v’e adunati

Per odir cose diletose e nove

Stati atenti e quieti & ascoltati

La bella historia che il mio canto move.[[213]](#footnote-213)

Here, as he does throughout the *Innamorato*, Boiardo refers to an audience that hears and does not read his verse.[[214]](#footnote-214) In a similar vein, his use of ‘canto’, describing the process of delivery as sung rather than written is also pervasive in the verse. This is despite our knowledge that the work was conceived as a literary exploit first and foremost. Haar suggests that this is simply an example of convention, but it seems more likely that this is also evident of Boiardo’s intent for the work to be performed and not simply read by the court, and in doing so present a precedent for the performance of Boiardo’s verse from a written source, but still delivered through performance. The *Innamorato* is listed by Calmeta as a sung verse type, though one not suitable for performance in a melismatic style.[[215]](#footnote-215) As has previously been examined, the later work of Ariosto which continued the story of the *Innamorato* and was similarly written in *ottava rima,* gained popularity for its performance on the streets by the common *canterino* after its publication, with Ariosto supposedly editing the work after hearing it performed. However, despite its relationship to performance and the acclaim of its successor, the *Furioso*, there is no suggestion that Boiardo’s *Innamorato* reached the same heights of public popularity, failing to become part of the *canterini* repertoire in the same way.*[[216]](#footnote-216)*

2.2 *Verse analysis*

As has been frequently noted by scholars examining Boiardo’s lyric, one of the most striking aspects of his style is his consistent reference to landscape and natural elements, and surprising lack of classical references.[[217]](#footnote-217) As a result of this, his soundscape too reflects his greater invocation of the natural world, featuring a much larger number of sounding natural elements and presenting us with far fewer distinct sonic actors.

One way in which the impact of this has on Boiardo’s greater soundscape can be seen in the Orphic references found in both books one and two of the *Amorum Libri*. Though references to the poet’s sound as having Orphic qualities is a common trope in verse, Boiardo’s use reflects his personal poetic style, addressing multiple aspects of his imagined landscape:

I would oblige not only man to listen,

But every beast apart from man as well,

And if I could describe her gracious smile,

I’d move the rocks and make the winds be still.

Farebbe ad ascoltarmi a forza intento

Ogni animal da humanità diviso.

E se mostrar potesse il dolcie riso,

Faria movere e sassi e star il vento.[[218]](#footnote-218)

Here the reference to ‘beasts’ serves as a comparison to the author’s ability to affect both humans and animals alike and provides a gentle lead into the further orphic references later in the passage. Whilst the author’s control of these characters is implied, their inclusion focuses less on Boiardo’s ability to sway them, and more on their presence as an audience to his verse; they are invoked as listeners and Boiardo does not go on to suggest how his verse has power over them as we might typically expect from such a reference. The author’s orphic powers are instead more closely related to the landscape elements, the rocks and wind; it is these elements that he chooses to highlight his greater control over. We see this again in a later passage from Book Two:

Not only the birds, but even rocks and waves

Have pity on me in my maddening pain

And the nearby river and the distant hill

Respond to me as I call out to them.

Ne sol gli ocei ma anchor le petre e londe

Hanno pietà del mio dolor insano

E il fiume apresso e il monte di lontano

Come io soglio chiama cosi risponde.[[219]](#footnote-219)

As we will see, birds feature as one of the rare contributors to the soundscape outside of the author, the beloved, and other non-sentient landscape elements. Their inclusion and the author’s ability to move them to pity is not surprising, as they are frequently established as listeners, but also as an accompanying chorus to the author. As seen in the first of Boiardo’s orphic references, he quickly shifts the focus of the passage from animals, in this case the birds, to landscape elements, creating evocative imagery and detailed scenes that give a sense of the size and scope of the landscape. In doing this, Boiardo specifically references distance - the nearby river, the distant hill. As a result, his landscape scene, over which his verse resounds, is given greater dimension. These elements serve not only to show how great an effect the author has, for the sound of his verse echoes greatly through his imagined landscape to its very edges and still has the power to inspire a response, but also inspires an image for the reader alongside sound in evoking a descriptive scene that is laid out for them in their mind’s eye.

Through these Orphic references, Boiardo establishes that it is his landscape that is most affected by his emotions as portrayed in his verse. This again has already been recognised by scholars examining Boiardo’s work; the purpose of Boiardo’s landscape is not just to provide a setting in which his romance can be played out, instead it is a living and breathing entity that acts both as an extension of the author himself, and as a changing paragon for the actions of the beloved.[[220]](#footnote-220) In order to gain a greater understanding of Boiardo’s constructed sound then, we must also understand how the landscape and its sounding elements are intrinsically tied to the sound of the author as he moves from book to book and through the stages of his imagined romance.

2.2.1 *Book 1*

After Boiardo’s first sonnet with its Petrarchan like opening, the poet quickly presents us with the issue suffered by the entirety of his first book of work:

None other will believe or comprehend

The heavenly beauty of which I would here speak

Since even I, who have surrendered all

My thought to it, have grasped but just a part.

Yet does my mind, inflamed by desire,

Evoke such dulcet sounds within my breast,

That I will not give up this poet’s art

Although my skill’s unequal to the task.

Non fia da altrui creduta e non fia Intesa

La celeste beltà de che io ragiono

Poiché io, che tutto in lei posto mi sono,

Sì poca parte ancor n’hagio compresa.

Ma la mia mente che è di voglia accesa

Mi fa sentir nel cor sì dolce suono

Che il cominciato stil non abandano,

Benché sia disequale a tanta empresa.[[221]](#footnote-221)

Struggling to find the words to adequately describe his love and desire, and the heavenly beauty of his lady whose name is slowly revealed in acrostic across the first thirteen poems on the book, Boiardo can only continue to try. Not yet suffering heartbreak nor driven to despair by his love, he is instead consumed by attempts to capture the essence of his love in his words. In doing so, the soundscape of this first book too is almost wholly dedicated to this task, as both the landscape and inhabitants that Boiardo so richly details both in sound and sight are used almost exclusively in reference to the beloved. Indeed, in using his landscape in connection to his beloved, Boiardo’s first book in particular has been recognised for its lush visual descriptions of nature and focus on sensorial elements.[[222]](#footnote-222) Present as one of the few other distinct sonic actors within Boiardo’s verse, the beloved’s speech is compared to pearls, roses and violets, her words captured and turned to beautiful objects.[[223]](#footnote-223) As a result of the author’s dedication to capturing her in his words, the sounding elements of this section revolve less around the sound of the author and more on the positive description of the beloved that the poet provides, with his sound characterised by its dedication to her, seemingly unworthy of description in comparison to hers.

This is not to suggest silence on the part of the author. We of course still ‘hear’ him, and he is frequently described as singing his verse throughout the book. On the one hand, this expression of the verse as sung supports its purpose for performance, relating to the audible nature of the verse in this form, with the singing done by the poet being understood as addressing both a real and imagined audience.[[224]](#footnote-224) But Boiardo also describes himself as singing to express the emotions felt early in his imagined relationship; when the poet as a character is still hopeful that his feelings may be returned he sings, and it is typified as sweet and joyful:

And so with a light heart singing I am off

Not fearing what the strokes of Fortune bring

Così cantando me ne vo legiero

E non temo de’ colpi de fortuna.[[225]](#footnote-225)

Here, Boiardo expresses a kind of carefree singing, yet to be weighed down by the pain and rejection that will follow. The threat of what fortune may bring looms ominously, suggesting both that he is at the height of happiness within the imagined romance, as well as providing a sense of foreboding for the inevitable heartbreak that is sure to follow. Until the end of the first book, when this sense of foreboding intensifies as we transition to the second book of the work that is dedicated to heartbreak, the sound of Boiardo’s voice in his verse seemingly requires no greater explanation or description; he sings for he is in love, and his words are better used for the task at hand than describing the quality of his sound in any greater detail.

In another instance in which Boiardo presents himself as singing, he provides for us both a chorus and audience to the sound of his performance. In one of the first instances in which Boiardo refers to the birds, they are present in a longer list of landscape elements:

Come sing with me you little love-struck birds

Since love invites me now to sing with you

And you, fair rapid streams

Accompany my verse

With your sweet voice along your flowered banks.

The beauty of which I sing is so intense

My heart’s not bold enough

To face the task alone.

Cantati meco inamorati augelli

Poiché vosco a cantare amor me invita

E voi, bei rivi e snelli

Per la piagia fiorita

Teneti a le mie rime el tuon suave

La beltà de che io canto è sì infinita

Che il cor ardir non have

Pigliar lo incarco solo.[[226]](#footnote-226)

Boiardo’s birds are called to accompany him in his verse, he requires the sweetness of their voices, but also their support, for he is unable to complete the task without their help. The happy disposition of the birds is central to their character and is used in this instance to mirror the poet’s own joy, and the birds, like the poet, are cast as being stricken by love.[[227]](#footnote-227) In these happy times, the collection of birds acts as a chorus to the voice of the poet, singing with him in expressing his happiness. If the poet himself is unequal to the task of singing of his love alone, a sentiment frequently expressed across the first book, then by adding the birds to his song it seems the poet hopes their additional voices will help him in his plight. The presence of the birds can also be seen to go beyond their function as a chorus to the voice of the author, as they also provide an internal audience to the imagined performance of his verse, playing with the boundaries between the internal and performed soundscapes of the verse by conflating the imagined sound of the verse as ‘heard’ in Boiardo’s poetic landscape, and the real sound of the verse performed aloud.

As we reach the end of the book, the voice of the author slowly becomes more present and is described in greater detail as we hear more about how it cannot be contained. The poet is losing control, his voice becoming more audible and demands greater descriptions of its sound as he pleads with his lady to hear him. His desire causes him to continue even though his rational mind recognises his failure to capture in verse the qualities of his love and, most importantly, the heart of his lady.

Thus do I so often quit the task

Seeing too well my struggle as in vain

But then, pursued by a mad desire I spur myself

Once more to follow that abandoned course.

And so I turn to speak again of love

With a burning mind and with a tired voice

Weakened by reason and pricked on by hope.

Unde io la impresa più volte abandon

Vegendo ben che io me affatico invano

Ma pui, cacciato da desir insano

Nel corso già lassato ancor me sprono.

Così ritorno a ragionar d’amore

Con mente ardita e con la voce stanca,

Da ragion fiaco e punto da speranza.[[228]](#footnote-228)

Boiardo expresses how the toll of the task has weighed on him. No longer inspired by love in the same way, he grows tired, and admits to giving up, continuing now only in madness though he recognises the fruitlessness of his actions.

Throughout the first book of the *Amorum Libri,* the lack of presence, that is the lack of detailed descriptions of the author’s voice, is used by Boiardo to show the unworthiness of the author and his complete inferiority, including sonically, to the beloved. This is why he rarely goes beyond singing until the end of the book, where we see him slowly turn to more painful expressions of sound that require greater descriptions to fully capture, shifting the focus slowly from the beloved to the hurt she has caused him. In trying to find the words to describe his love, he dedicates everything, from his sound to his imagined landscape, to her, creating a world that initially revolves only around her almost to the exclusion of himself.

2.2.2 *Book 2*

If the first book is full of the poet’s hopeful singing, it is in the opening to the second book, at which point Boiardo is newly grieving the hopelessness of his emotions, we can see the full turn from sweet songs to the bitter tears and laments threatened at the end of the first book that will populate the verse from this point on.

Who is there that will hear my grave lament

My wretched verses, and my doleful style

Converted from a sweet and gentle song

To messages of torment and pain

My usual tone has been completely changed

As have my love rhymes, once sublime and light

And I’ve become so bitter and so base

I find contentment only in laments.

Chi fia che ascolti el mio grave lamento

Miseri versi e doloroso stile

Con versi dal cantar dolce e gentile

A ragionar di poena e di tormento

Cangiato è in tuto il consueto accento

E le rime d’amor alte sutile

E son sì fatto disdegnoso e vile

Che sol nel lamentar mi fo contento.[[229]](#footnote-229)

Boiardo now refers to his hopeful singing as a past action. We are presented with a host of contrasts, and the controlled singing heard previously is established as the poet’s ‘usual tone’, meaning that the weeping and expressions of pain that are to follow are not; they are only possible as a result of the new contrasting height of emotion the poet has been sent to, moving from an extreme of joy, to an extreme of despair. This, as the opening to the second book, establishes the change of tone immediately to the reader as now being characterised by the author’s expressions of pain; the focus has now shifted from the beloved to the poet himself, as his cries and moans take over the soundscape of his work.

The birds utilised as both audience and chorus to the poet’s singing in the first book also return, this time present only as listeners and independent contributors to the soundscape. As listeners, Boiardo presents them as lacking in human emotion, free from earthly cares and unsympathetic to the plight of the author. In this role, they cannot lend their voices to echo and aid the intent of the poet’s voice in song anymore, instead becoming at odds to the author’s sound in their sweet, delicate, and somewhat emotionless singing against the tormented cries of the author.

With what sweet harmony those lovely birds

Fly off together to their place of rest

Seeing how the shade has veiled the earth

And the great sun’s rays absorbed into the sea

You happy birds, set free from every care

You cheerfully and swiftly find repose

Just now, it seems my painful song returns

When it is night and no one’s here to listen.

Con que dolce conceto insieme accolti

Se vano ad albergar quei vagi occelli

Vegiendo come l’ombra il mondo velli

E iragi del gran lume in mar involti

Felici ocei, che de ogni cura sciolti

A riposar ne giti lieti e snelli

Hor par che’l mio dolor se rinovelli

Quando è la notte e non è chi l’ascolti.[[230]](#footnote-230)

Here, the happy birds both contrast with the poet’s unhappy state whilst also referring back to a happier time. The birds, in comparison to the poet, are free, as animals they cannot express the same level of feeling and understanding and are not weighed down by their emotions, remaining cheerful and happy and their singing harmonious. Their presence is also used to highlight the importance of time and space in the poet’s landscape; if the poet now finds himself alone as the sun sets and he heads into the lonely and dark night, the birds are connected to the bright light of day that has passed, referencing a time in which the poet was happy in love, in comparison to the present moment. The birds are also able to leave, flying off and leaving the poet alone in his torment, whilst they can go to find peace and rest at the end of the day that escapes the poet in his despair. Boiardo, in setting up these comparisons, highlights how his grief means he will forever be restless, trapped in the landscape which reflects only his inner torment.

The all-encompassing takeover of the poet’s grief over both the temporal and spatial aspects of his imagined world are seen directly in his landscape, with Boiardo making a listener of his landscape in a way that is highly evocative of contemporary pastoral:

You high mountains (since my tongue gets twisted

When I try to speak while in her presence

When my great passion forces me to speak)

You high mountains hear my martyr’s tale

If love insists that I expire sighing

Love that nurtures me with endless plaints

Many you make known to her, my enemy

Before my end, that I would die for her.

Voi monti alpestri (poiché del mio dire

La lingua avanti a lei tanto se intrica

E il gran voler mi sforza pur ch’io dica)

Voi monti alpestri oditi il mio martire

Se amor vol pur che sisirando expire

Amor che in pianto aeterno me nutrica

Fatti voi moto a quella mia menica

Nanti al mio fin, che io vuò per lei morire.[[231]](#footnote-231)

His imagined world, which was once full of only positive points of comparison to the sound and sight of his beloved, becomes a sympathetic listener to his plight, and he addresses the high mountains, suggesting the way that his voice in its despair must carry to the edges of his fictional world. At these edges, the landscape is marked by these towering peaks, providing both a visual boundary suggesting the edges of his world, but also a sonic one as they both resound the poet’s words and stop them from travelling any further. In establishing the scope and size of his landscape, Boiardo shows us the equal importance of both the sonic and visual elements of his verse, as both share the same boundary and demonstrating the intimate connections between the setting and poet as his landscape is tied to the scope of his senses. Boiardo also highlights it is only as he cannot talk to his beloved that he is forced to turn to the mountains to hear his plight, showing us how he has moved from addressing his lady to the very environment from which he once found so many positive comparisons for her, but also conflating his sound in performance with his imagined soundscape as he moves quickly from one to the other, addressing his lady and imagined landscape in quick succession. In doing this, Boiardo is telling us directly that this place is fictitious, and both acts as an imagined listener, but also reflects his emotional state.

Just as there is no escape from the sound of the poet’s grief across the scope of his imagined landscape, his imagined sound is also endless, with no end and no beginning, taking up the temporal space of his imagined world as well:

From daylight’s brightness to the black of night

I ease my deep-felt grief with woeful weeping

Because laments are always more pronounced

When one no longer hopes for Pity's aid.

My eyes, therefore, are always full of tears

And all the sky contains my sighing voice

And all my pages bear my doleful rhymes.

Cosi da il bianco giorno a notte nera

Sfogo piangendo lalto mio dolore

Che sempre lamentando vien magiore

Poiché loccorso da pietà non spera

Indi di pianti gli ochi mei son pieni

Sempre e di voce sospirosa il cielo

E de rime dogliose le mie carte?[[232]](#footnote-232)

The passing of time, morning to night, is frequently expressed in verse by Boiardo, for example in the first book of the *Amorum Libri* the use of dawn and night is used to establish the all-encompassing nature of the poet’s love for his lady.[[233]](#footnote-233) In this instance though, it is used to explain how the nature of his grief, expressed though constant lamentation, has taken over his world. By making use of this temporal aspect, Boiardo is able to frame his laments as never ending and as filling up his imagined world, as his sighs are framed as filling the air. In this way, Boiardo shows how his voice in its despair is able to completely take over the landscape; while the imagery of the beloved, that is the flowers and birds to which she was compared to in his first book, may die, wither, or otherwise dissipate, the poet’s takeover of the sonic elements of this land, his voice filling its air, will be everlasting. The sound of the author’s voice, once garnering little mention in the attempts to capture the beauty of the beloved, has now become the central component of the verse, shown by its ability to permeate everything in its tracks.

2.2.3 *Book 3*

This idea of exhaustion, an inevitable approach of the end as the body and soul can take no more, is the characteristic of Boiardo’s final book of the *Amorum Libri*. This third and final stage is a far quieter one, the poet coming to terms with his grief but also having reached such a level of exhaustion and exertion that he is no longer capable of sound, only the quiet acceptance of his fate:

If in a dying voice these final prayers

Can stir compassion in another’s heart

Do hear the voice of one who dies for you

Cruel lady, who deny me mercy at the end

Se in moriente voce ultimi pregi

Han forza di pietade in alcun core

Odi la voce de un che per te more

Crudel che al fin ancor mercie mi negi.[[234]](#footnote-234)

Now the authorial voice is characterised as dying, referencing both the death of the relationship and the end of the poet’s weeping as he aspires to spiritual elevation. The suggestion of mercy on the part of the poet’s cruel lady reminds the audience that it is she who has caused the poet harm, as the author’s own actions were beyond his control. This quietness, much like the early singing, and dominant weeping, tells us that the authorial voice is talking to us from the end point of the narrative. This third book of the *Amorum Libri* has also been noted for its penitential content, a homage to Petrarch’s model of the *Fragmenta*, but an unusual choice, narrating Boiardo’s attempts to move on and forget his love.[[235]](#footnote-235)

Indeed, Boiardo seems to have left the landscape he once inhabited early on in the third book:

Go there if it pleases where you will hear

The birds all singing in that stiller air

Mid shady myrtles, beeches, pines and firs

Go to the place from which I’ve just now fled,

No, not free, for as you well can see,

I carry with me still my chains from there.

Ite s’el vè in piacer là dove odeti

Cantar li augei ne laria più serena

Tra ombrosi myrti e pini e fagi e abeti

Ite là voi, che io so fugito apena,

Libero non, ché pur, come vedeti,

Porto con meco ancora la catena.[[236]](#footnote-236)

In referencing singing birds again, a theme we saw frequently in the first and second books, Boiardo tells us he is no longer in the place that they sing, the place that has previously been established as his imagined world where the birds have both accompanied him in joyful song and contrasted his mournful weeping. Though he has moved on, we also understand that he has not been able to entirely free himself from that imagined world; in this sonnet, appearing early in the third book, Boiardo shows us how he is beginning to separate himself from that landscape that he previously inhabited, the one that he established as an extension of himself and his great love story through both its sound and sight, but he is not entirely free of it yet.

And this is true of much of the third book where we can see how the landscape is referenced less, with occasional references to a landscape that is frozen, but also with references that seem more greatly tied to a real life landscape than Boiardo’s imagined one, such as the references to the real life events of Boiardo being summoned to Rome that appear in a few of the later works.[[237]](#footnote-237) When the landscape is referenced then, we again see its changing nature, no longer a sounding board for the quiet sound of the author in his sighs and groans but becoming frozen in homage to the story that has been told through its image and sound. This lack of a rich landscape which was once painted so clearly both visually and sonically, as well as the quietness of this final stage lends a feeling of impersonality and coldness as Boiardo, and by extension his voice, retreat from the work, and as such the intimate and tormented tone found in the second book is completely abandoned.

This impersonal tone extends to the poet’s examination of himself, with the imagined separation between Boiardo and his soul, allowing for him to reflect on his actions from a more objective perspective:

And yet the senseless soul that is undone

By burning sweetly in a generous flame

Does wrong to seethe with anger and lament

It waits when singing and it sighs with laughter

It dwells in happy woes and tearful joy

In such sweet sorrow that it like to suffer

Anzi a gran torto se lamenta e adira

L’anima fol che al generoso foco

Ardendo sì suave se disface

Piagne cantando e ridendo sospira

In lieto affanno, in lacrimoso gioco

Pena sì dolce che penar li piace.[[238]](#footnote-238)

Boiardo’s own reflections are harsh, his soul has searched for this pain and enjoyed its suffering. Now separated from his soul, he remarks that it is his soul itself that dwells, introducing again a temporal aspect in that it is his soul that is holding back and choosing to trap itself in these moments of pain. By having his soul sing and sigh instead of himself, Boiardo can show how his expressions of pain were outside his control and have gone beyond vocal expression, as it is his very soul that makes such noise.

Turning to sighs and quiet expressions of hopelessness, Boiardo’s voice no longer expands and inhabits his landscape in the same way, becoming at once smaller in its volume but greater in its size as it goes beyond the previously established boundaries of the poet’s landscape:

And I have found no respite yet

From thoughts which rest not with the setting sun,

And so return to sighing with the stars.

Ed io soletto, senza alcun sogiorno

De’ mei pensier’ co’ il sol sosta non have

E con le stelle a sospirar ritorno.[[239]](#footnote-239)

Now firmly establishing a nighttime setting, moving on from the encroaching shade and twilight and abandoning any mention of the brightness of day, Boiardo’s world is one in which he suffers a cold and lonely existence. Certainly, with his newly quiet voice, Boiardo lacks the force to echo to the reaches of the imagined world anymore and as such establish its boundaries. The lack of a landscape, covered by the inky blackness of the nighttime setting, allows Boiardo to abandon references to his voice echoing in his imagined world and now his quiet sighs instead are directed towards to endless sea of stars as the poet lets go of his earthly ties in pursuit of the heavens.

2.3 *Conclusions*

Boiardo’s love lyric provides us with a fascinating case study of a distinct poetic voice seen to evolve and cater to the changing tastes of the Ferrarese Court in the late fifteenth century. As such, Boiardo provides us with an example of a poet whose skills were part of his greater role as a courtier, utilising his obvious poetic talents to gain favour at court and provide entertainment alongside a career of civic duty. Even in his love lyric production we see the union of Petrarchan ideals with the troubadour and characteristic of Ferrarese humanism in his appreciation of what had come before and its union with the present.[[240]](#footnote-240)

The suggestion that Boiardo’s verse was written with the intent of being performed is supported by the presence of Giovanni Orbo da Parma in the employ of the court in Boiardo’s early time there, the alignment with this of the production of the first manuscript of the *Amorum Libri,* and the general trend seen in Boiardo’s verse that suggest it was intended for performance and entertainment. Indeed, the connection between Boiardo’s written verse and its performance is in line with the more general belief that the Este court may have been a frontrunner in a broader shift from a mostly oral tradition to more hybrid performance traditions that focused on written sources, like the frottola, in the early sixteenth century. Such is suggested by Blake Wilson, who suggests the shift in the court away from hiring *canterini* at the end of the fifteenth century supports the courts cultivation of the frottola.[[241]](#footnote-241)

But despite being written to appeal to the taste of others, in the *Amorum Libri* we can see Boiardo’s individuality as a poet, creating a lush and vivid world which, whilst providing a stage for his story, is at the same time recognised as intrinsically connected to the author as poet and his emotional state. We have seen how the connections between Boiardo and his landscape are often established sonically; his sound, imagined echoing through his landscape, gives way to his lush visual description of his imagined world. It is also established as the driving force between the evolution of the space, causing the landscape to shift and change as it reflects his emotional state. It exists symbiotically with him, that is, whilst the landscape changes, giving new examples for comparison, it is at the same time that Boiardo, and the reverberations of his sound around the space also cause it to evolve. His first book is often recognised for containing the most visual descriptions of the landscape, and these visual descriptions are then linked to the beloved. At this point, the landscape feels almost like a staged space, being more closely tied to a character beyond the poet. However, as the work continues, the landscape turns inward, becoming connected to Boiardo in his despair.

**Chapter 3: Lucrezia Tornabuoni**

Lucrezia Tornabuoni de’ Medici, wife of Piero de’ Medici and mother to Lorenzo ‘il Magnifico’, was an influential woman in her own right, exercising an unusual amount of power first in her role as wife and later as a mother and widow in the conservative Florentine climate of the mid to late fifteenth century. Known during her lifetime for her piety and support of religious institutions, the majority of her vernacular poetry has a deeply religious character, and she wrote a number of *laude*, religious poems often set to popular tunes, as well as a number of longer narrative poems in *terza* and *ottava rime* based on the tales of biblical heroines and other characters. There also remains one extant sonnet written by Lucrezia, though from her correspondence it appears she wrote many more.[[242]](#footnote-242) As suggested by Virginia Cox, Lucrezia may have been one of the earliest secular women to have appeared in print, with six of her *laude* featuring in a 1486 Florentine anthology.[[243]](#footnote-243)

Lucrezia was born in 1427 a member of an old and powerful lineage, the Tornabuoni - a branch of the Tornaquinci family who could trace their nobility back to the 11th century. Though her grandfather had changed their name from Tornaquinci to Tornabuoni to distance them from their aristocratic roots and gain himself a seat in the Florentine magistracy, they were a powerful family in Florentine commerce and politics.[[244]](#footnote-244) Lucrezia’s early life is poorly documented beyond the record of her birth, but despite the lack of evidence to attest to the level of education Lucrezia and her siblings received, the status of the family, and her father Francesco’s friendship with the scholar and politician Leonardo Bruni, suggest her education would have been thorough and well-rounded. Bruni produced a treatise dedicated to Battista da Montefeltro in which he details the learning he believes women should attain, which may be used as a suggestion for the nature of Lucrezia’s education. In his treatise he includes the study of history and Latin, as well as knowledge of the writings of ancient orators and poets and the Church Fathers.[[245]](#footnote-245) This is supported by evidence from Lucrezia’s adult life: Lucrezia knew some level of Latin, and she was well regarded for her love of reading, as recognised in a letter to her from her son’s tutor Gentile Becchi, as well as being noted as ‘unusually eloquent’ for a woman by her son’s biographer, Niccolò Valori.[[246]](#footnote-246)

Lucrezia was married to Piero de’ Medici in 1444 at age 17, a shrewd move to link the new and prosperous Medici family to the aristocratic roots of the Tornabuoni. This was a general pattern in the marriages of the family, such as Piero’s father Cosimo’s marriage to Contessina de’ Bardi, that worked to align the Medici with the wealth and prestige of noble bloodlines.[[247]](#footnote-247) The marriage between Lucrezia and Piero appears to have been one of genuine warmth and affection, as evidenced in their correspondence.[[248]](#footnote-248) Their closeness was highlighted by a joint trip to visit Rome as pilgrims for the Jubilee in 1450; as noted by Tomas, it was rare for a woman to visit the papal court, but this journey was undertaken together in a spirit of partnership.[[249]](#footnote-249) There is also a growing consensus that Lucrezia acted as a partner in commissioning a number of artworks with Piero, such as the altarpiece of the Medici chapel in the family palace on the Via Larga.[[250]](#footnote-250) Lucrezia would go on to have five children with Piero, and would take a very active role in their education and marriages. This was seen most clearly in the selection of a bride for Lorenzo de’ Medici, as Lucrezia travelled to Rome herself to meet his intended bride to confirm it was a good match. However, the nature of this trip, which was both semi-diplomatic in purpose as well as personal, saw Lucrezia face criticism for her actions. The Florentine exile Jacopo Acciaiuoli reported to his brother that Lucrezia was bringing Florence into disrepute, ‘acting the great lady, and [going] about dolled-up like a fifteen-year-old’.[[251]](#footnote-251) It seems, then, that in this case Lucrezia was thought to have been allowed to interfere in the political sphere outside the domain of women.[[252]](#footnote-252)

Piero’s death in 1469 forced Lucrezia further into the limelight as Lorenzo, aged just 20, became the head of the family. Lucrezia’s influence on her son is well recognised, and though at first could be attributed to Lorenzo’s young age, her continued influence and presence for the following 13 years until her death in 1482 suggests that Lorenzo truly valued her as a confidante and aide. This is supported by his remarks following her death made in letters to the Duke and Duchess of Ferrara in which he says he had lost ‘not only [his] mother, but the only refuge from many of [his] troubles’.[[253]](#footnote-253) This partnership can also be seen in Lucrezia’s business endeavours as a widow. Lucrezia had a number of interests both financial and of patronage in the Pisa area, including the support of a large number of convents, and her actions, and intercessions on behalf of clients, suggest she became something of a rural ‘specialist’ for her son, and helped maintain Medicean attempts to keep power in the territories of Florence.[[254]](#footnote-254) But more than simply being required to step up to help her son, Lucrezia’s status as a widow gave her a much greater level of autonomy than as a wife. Remarriage, which was fairly common for widowed women as their families looked to form new alliances, appeared to be off the table, as the Tornabuoni would not have wanted to lose their connection to the Medici family.[[255]](#footnote-255) As a wealthy widow, Lucrezia was able to exercise a great deal of financial independence, and conduct a certain level of private business, with one of the most frequent examples cited being her purchase and restoration of the thermal baths of Bagno a Morbo in 1477.[[256]](#footnote-256) The purchase of the baths combined Lucrezia’s need for visits for her own medical reasons with a shrewd business endeavour that also furthered Medici patronage.[[257]](#footnote-257)

Trying to provide a date for when in her life Lucrezia began to write poetry is an impossible task. As we will later see, Lucrezia’s constant exposure to the many contemporary musical poetic traditions in Florence, as well as the close ties between the Medici as patrons of many poets themselves, likely mean that an argument could be made to suggest any time after her marriage in 1444, at which point she become more exposed to these poetic cultures, is plausible. In addition to this, there is no doubt that a decent proportion of her poetry, especially her earlier work, has been lost to us. However, although the exact date of composition for any of Lucrezia’s extant works is unknown, there is a general consensus that most of her surviving poetic output dates from after the death of Piero in 1469. In his critical editions of the life of Saint John the Baptist and the Story of Judith, Fulvio Pezzarossa suggests that the relationship between Lucrezia and the poet Luigi Pulci throughout the 1460s was instrumental in inspiring her verse.[[258]](#footnote-258) Indeed, Lucrezia’s patronage of Pulci could not have started before 1460, as he was employed by Francesco Castellani at this point, and so it is generally accepted that 1461 was the date of inception for their relationship, with Lucrezia’s commissioning of Pulci’s great chivalric epic *Morgante* likely coming at this moment.[[259]](#footnote-259) Moreover, the topics and believed purpose of her longer narrative works, which, as we will later explore in greater detail, were for the spiritual and moral education of her granddaughters, suggest the works must have been written sometime after the birth of her eldest granddaughter, also named Lucrezia, in 1470.[[260]](#footnote-260)

3.1 *Lucrezia’s work in performance*

There are no surviving contemporary accounts that refer directly to Lucrezia performing any of her works, even in a private setting where such a performance would be more acceptable. But that is not to suggest in any way that her poetic output is not deeply rooted within the musical poetic culture of Florence, something that has been widely recognised by scholars examining her work.[[261]](#footnote-261) The most evident musicality is no doubt seen in Lucrezia’s cultivation of the *lauda*. However, as we progress through the performative connections in Lucrezia’s narrative works in addition to her *laude*, as well as considering her own possible musical abilities, the deep intertextual relationships between Lucrezia’s works and wider musical poetic genres in Florence are abundant and provide compelling justification for the analysis of Lucrezia’s work from a performative angle.

3.1.1 *The* Laude

In comparison to the longer narrative works, Lucrezia’s *laude* stand out as most likely being occasional pieces, and therefore written with an obvious intended performance in mind.[[262]](#footnote-262) However, the works are largely derivative, showing Lucrezia’s strict adherence to their formal conventions. The tradition of *lauda* singing most likely emerged from a combination of the older Italian practices of both the *improvvisatori* and the *laudesi* confraternities.[[263]](#footnote-263) The *laudesi* confraternities, in which institutional *lauda* singing took place, were founded in Florence between 1270 and 1290, and consisted of members from the artisan and bourgeoisie classes.[[264]](#footnote-264) Attached to the major churches in the city, these groups would meet multiple times a week to worship and sing.[[265]](#footnote-265) But the *laudesi* companies were not the only groups to use the *lauda*, and throughout most of the fifteenth century they were sung by improvisers in the Piazza di San Martino, such as by the famed Antonio di Guido, and were a feature of performances of *sacre representazioni*.[[266]](#footnote-266)

In composition, the *lauda* was not confined to any single form or style, instead evolving alongside popular musical poetic tastes. Florentine *laude* in particular showed the influence of the carnival song tradition, and some carnival songs were simply appropriated through the substitution of the text. [[267]](#footnote-267) Indeed, the *lauda* was a flourishing form in Florence in Lucrezia’s time, as seen by the three early prints of lauda texts from 1480, 1486, and ca. 1489, with the 1486 edition being that which features six of Lucrezia’s own *laude*. [[268]](#footnote-268) Works by Lorenzo de’ Medici also appear in these editions, suggesting the wider support of the tradition by the Medici, which can also be seen in Lucrezia’s support as a patron for some of the most notable poets of the *lauda* tradition, such as Feo Belcari and Bernardo Bellincioni.[[269]](#footnote-269) Notably, the *lauda* tradition was a mainly oral tradition, with pieces marked to indicate a popular tune to which they should be sung, bearing the rubric ‘cantasi come’. In Lucrezia’s case, four of her *laude* instruct that they are to be sung to the popular tune ‘Ben venga Maggio’, a ballata with text written by Angelo Poliziano, who was the tutor of Lucrezia’s grandchildren. Lucrezia surely sang these works herself, and moreover the popularity of her *laude*, seen in the later publication of her works, suggests their performance on a wider scale as well as their long-lasting influence. Almost a century later, two of Lucrezia’s *laude*, ‘Ecco’l Messia’ and ‘Deh venitene pastori’, featured in Serafino Razzi’s *Libro primo delle laudi spirituali* (Venice: Guinti, 1563).[[270]](#footnote-270) The print features over 180 *lauda* texts and was intended to provide music for devotional use in nunneries, as is stated on the title page.

3.1.2 *The* Storie Sacre

Lucrezia’s deep ties with both secular and sacred vernacular poetry demonstrate a wide range of interpersonal and intertextual factors that we can see at play in her longer narrative works. At the very least Lucrezia would have likely heard a variety of performances in the Piazza San Martino, but there were also strong ties between the Medici and the performers. The longstanding relationships between her son Lorenzo and the *canterini* of Florence is something that we have already seen in detail in Chapter 1. However, Lucrezia’s connections to this genre began much earlier. In 1454, Michele di Nofri del Giogante, an accountant and poet who acted as a sort of teacher for the performers in the Piazza San Martino, wrote to Lucrezia’s husband Piero to request his help with a young singer, who he had ‘already put to singing improvisations on the bench at San Martino’.[[271]](#footnote-271) In the same letter, he reminds Piero that the boy had sung at a private dinner party where Piero was present.[[272]](#footnote-272) The same Giogante also dedicated two sonnets to Lucrezia during the early years of her married life.[[273]](#footnote-273) The praise he gives her in these works suggests he saw her as a valued patron.

Indeed, Lucrezia’s patronage of poet performers writing both religious and secular verse was extensive. So much so that Coleman suggests that Lucrezia’s marriage to Piero and entry into the Medici family caused a key shift in the family’s relationship with the Florentine network of poet performers.[[274]](#footnote-274) The previously mentioned Bernardo Bellincioni was a notable poet performer, garnering comparisons to Orpheus himself for his talents as an *improvvisatore*. He was better known for his secular works than his *laude*, namely burlesque poetry some of which he is believed to have taught to Lucrezia, and he later exchanged poetry with her frequently.[[275]](#footnote-275) Most notable of course is Lucrezia’s patronage of Luigi Pulci and commissioning of his *Morgante*. The importance of the work should not be understated, as the *Morgante* is a vital link between the oral *cantari* performed at the Piazza San Martino; as suggested by Marco Villoresi and Paolo Orvieto, the character of Margutte was intended to represent none other than the famed *canterino* Antonio di Guido.[[276]](#footnote-276) Villoresi goes on to suggest a friendship between the two, on the grounds that Lucrezia lent Pulci books constituting parts of the oral repertory performed in the Piazza San Martino as source material for the *Morgante*.[[277]](#footnote-277)

But more than simply commissioning works, Lucrezia’s position as both poet and patron can be seen in the complex intertextuality seen between her narrative works and those of some of the most notable men in her life - Pulci, Angelo Poliziano, and her son Lorenzo. We have already seen her support of Pulci, but this relationship, and the relationship between their verse, goes much further than the simple dynamic of patron and protégé. Luca Mazzoni has examined the intertextuality of Lucrezia’s *storie sacre* and Pulci’s *Morgante* and goes so far as to suggest that elements of Lucrezia’s story of Tobias may date from as early as 1462, proposing that Pulci drew inspiration from Lucrezia’s work as much as she may have done from his.[[278]](#footnote-278) It is notable though that this is the weakest of the textual links identified by Mazzoni, and a much stronger case is made for the influence of Lucrezia on the works of Poliziano and Lorenzo, for which there is more definitive evidence.

With these strong ties to musical traditions seen in Lucrezia’s life and her own work, it is not surprising that these influences, and suggestions of performance, are present in her work. The most obvious allusion to performance culture lies in Lucrezia’s choice of verse forms, with the use of *terza rima*, reflecting Dante’s *Commedia*, and *ottava rima*, the chosen form for the chivalric epics of the *cantarini* performed in the Piazza San Marco, and seen in the likes of the *Morgante*, as well as Boiardo’s *Orlando Innamorato*. The epictradition can also be seen reflected in the introductory and closing gestures of Lucrezia’s works, which present her voice as narrator and invoke the help and guidance of God in inspiring and guiding her verse. This is imitative of the more religious epics, such as those of Neri Pagliaresi, and Niccolò Cicerchia, with whose work Lucrezia’s shares a number of similarities in their appeals to God seen throughout their verse.[[279]](#footnote-279) Beyond their religious connections, these introductions and endings also suggest the performative nature of the verse, inherited from the epic traditionbut perhaps initially less obvious for Lucrezia who was not known as a performer. We can see the direct suggestion that her works were heard as well as read at the end of the story of Susanna, where Lucrezia addresses ‘whoever hears or reads this little work’.[[280]](#footnote-280)

In seeing how deeply integrated Lucrezia was into the poet performer traditions around her in Florence, it seems wrong to assume that her work was without the same innate musicality or was not written with the possibility of performance in mind. There is, of course, no expectation that Lucrezia would have wished to perform her works publicly herself, and even within private circles, musical and poetic improvised performance was almost exclusively male.[[281]](#footnote-281) However, Lucrezia’s *laude* were no doubt sung and would have been an acceptable form of performance open to her; as suggested by Judith Bryce, the monophonic *lauda* was likely central to the vocal repertoire of most in fifteenth-century Florence, regardless of musical training.[[282]](#footnote-282) Her *storie sacre* could also have been performed, just with careful considerations for their dissemination and intended audience.

It seems likely that Lucrezia would have had the skills to facilitate the performance of her work; she had an interest in music and poetry that can be seen from the early days of her marriage and was seemingly an adequate musician. In 1445, a ballad was sent from Rosello Roselli to both Lucrezia’s brother-in-law Giovanni, and a musician named Ser Francesco so that it could be taught to Lucrezia. A month later, Ugo della Stufa wrote to Giovanni and attested:

the ballad pleases me, [it] turned out well and so I advise you that Lucrezia finished learning it 3 days ago and is singing it.

Piacemi la ballata riesca buona e sì t’aviso la Lucrezia l’ha compiuto d’aparare 3 dì sono e sì la canta.[[283]](#footnote-283)

Though this fragmentary evidence provides little to go on, it at least suggests enthusiasm on the part of Lucrezia for musical learning, and that she was receiving musical instruction. It would also suggest that Lucrezia had received some musical training before her marriage to Piero, given that the letter dates from soon after the wedding. Because singing is the only performative element mentioned, it is difficult to discern if Lucrezia would have been able to play any instruments, but we do know that her daughter Bianca was a capable organ player, based on accounts of her playing on the occasion of the visit of Galeazzo Maria Sforza to the Medici palace in 1459.[[284]](#footnote-284) Indeed, it is possible that Lucrezia’s daughters played a wide range of instruments, supported by a remark from a 1465 letter from Nicodemo Tranchedini to Francesco Sforza, which reports that ‘as soon as they have eaten, Piero’s daughters will play various instruments in the Duchess’s chamber’.[[285]](#footnote-285) Thus, musical skills were common among the closest female family to Lucrezia, and possibly undertaken at her suggestion, perhaps echoing her own abilities.

Even if we are able to establish that Lucrezia most likely had the musical ability to perform her work, and likely did, there are no surviving accounts directly describing a performance of either the *laude* or the narrative works. There is, however, at least the suggestion the works could have been performed recorded in a letter from Poliziano to Lucrezia from 1479:

My magnificent lady, I am sending back to you, via Tommaso, those *laude* and sonnets and *ternari* that you lent me when I was there. Those ladies took the greatest pleasure in them. And Lady Lucrezia – or should I say, Lucrezia – has learned by heart nearly all [the poetry of] Lucrezia.

Magnifica Madonna mia, Io vi Rimando per Tommaso quelle vostre laude e sonetti e ternarii che mi prestasti quando fui costà. Presonne quelle donne un piacere estremo; e Madonna Lucrezia, o vero Lucrezia, aveva apparato a mente tutta la Lucrezia.[[286]](#footnote-286)

Poliziano speaks of an audience for her work when he mentions *quelle donne*, those ladies, likely referencing Lucrezia’s female family. This supports the private circulation of Lucrezia’s work among her literary friends and family, and at least hints at possible performance, supported by the occasional mentions in her verse of the works being both read and heard. We also see that Lucrezia’s granddaughter, her namesake Lucrezia, has gone so far as to memorise some of her grandmother’s work, mentioning not just the *laude* and the works in *terza rima*, but also sonnets. This evidence is often used to support the contention that the works could be and were performed in a private setting.[[287]](#footnote-287) Indeed, there is a lack of separation between the *laude*, which with their popular tunes would surely have been learnt as songs and not only as written poetry, and the other verse forms mentioned, which may imply the musical performance of all Lucrezia’s verse.

3.2 *Verse Analysis*

3.2.1 *Analysing the* Laude *- Formal Conventions and the Silence of the Author*

As a result of their formal conventions, to which Lucrezia strictly adheres, the nine extant *laude* do not present the reader, or indeed listener, with any sounding elements that are linked to the authorial voice directly. There is no room for the author to invoke their voice in the first person, nor to present us with the lofty list of comparators and metaphors that we see in other verse types. Instead, the sounding elements with which we are presented are those linked to the religious topics of the poetry, and the author’s voice is frequently ‘heard’ as a member of the choruses invoked by the verse as the authors calls on multiple characters, from angels and prophets to shepherds and crowds, to join in singing. This can be seen frequently in the *lauda* ‘Ecco el Messia’:

Come, you holy angels,

Come while playing music;

Come everyone in heaven,

Praising Jesus Christ

And singing out his glory

With sweet melody.

This is the Messiah, and his mother Mary!

Venite Angioli santi,

E venite sonando;

Venite tutti quanti,

Jesu Cristo laudando,

Alla gloria cantando

Con dolce melodia.

Ecco’l Messia e la Madre Maria.[[288]](#footnote-288)

Here we can see how Lucrezia invokes the sound of the angels and heaven to amplify the celebratory tone, literally calling on them to join the chorus in singing. ‘Ecco el Messia’ shares a similar structure to many of Lucrezia’s *laude*, written in hexasyllabic lines, featuring six-line strophes in an ABABBC rhyme scheme. It is also one of Lucrezia’s four *laude* which are to be sung to Poliziano’s ‘Ben venga Maggio’. As suggested by Tylus, the reprising line in particular in its joyful celebration invokes a wider audience that is asked to take part in the praise.[[289]](#footnote-289) It is then only in the chorus of celebration, and in the calls for additional characters to join in, that the authorial voice is heard, remaining, as is appropriate and typical for the genre, entirely dedicated to its cause of worship and celebration.

However, this is not the only way in which we see Lucrezia use and manipulate sound in the *laude*. The *lauda* ‘Ben vengha Osanna’has been discussed by Tylus for its departure from the triumphant mode of some of Lucrezia’s other *laude*, ending on the rather sobering image of Christ upon the cross after its more joyful beginnings.[[290]](#footnote-290) Interestingly, Lucrezia’s manipulation of the sonic aspects of the song - namely, the songs, cries, and shouts seen at the end of each six line strophe, that are invoked before the refrain and generate the imagined chorus of singers - plays an integral role in creating and supporting the mood and emotions that are conveyed through the piece. In the first strophe, which covers the birth of Jesus, the ending is joyous and hopeful:

Who wishes to see Jesus,

Let him come and sing Hosanna.

Chi vuol veder Giesue

Venga a cantare Osanna.[[291]](#footnote-291)

The endings of the following two strophes build on this, adding to the chorus of joyful cries the Magi and the shepherds, before increasing to crowds of people who begin by ‘crying in loud voices, Hosanna!’, until they reach the jubilant peak of the work in the fourth strophe, where everyone cries together, invoking the largest chorus:

Jerusalem may rejoice now

And raise up its soul in gladness.

He who will soon be weeping

Disperses olive branch and palm,

They all adore their Jesus,

And everyone cries, ‘Hosanna!’

Rallegrasi e fassi alma

Gierusalem allora;

E sparge ulivo e palma

Chi’l piangera ancora;

Giesù, ciascun l’adora

Tutti gridando Osanna.[[292]](#footnote-292)

After this, the invocations literally become quieter, in the second to last strophe we hear how ‘no one says Hosanna’, to the last strophe in which the joyful cries have been turned to ‘humble voices’ and weeping.[[293]](#footnote-293) Sound then throughout the song, and specifically in the invocation of the imagined audience, is used to reflect the mood of the piece, and the quiet and silence is as consciously used and manipulated as the joyful cries of crowds. From this *lauda* we can see the devices that will also become apparent through Lucrezia’s narrative work, notably her keen awareness of an audience and the sounds of crowds and onlookers which no doubt reflect the reader or listener of her work.

3.2.2 *The* Storie Sacre *– the Author as Narrator*

It is then, in the *storie sacre*,with their longer narrative forms, that we truly get the chance to hear the voice of the author. As previously discussed, the use of the first person in Lucrezia’s narrative poetry is a reflection of the influence of the epic traditionon her work. However, whilst this is evidently true, Lucrezia writes with the focus of her audience in mind. The voice of the author as narrator is most apparent in the works written in *terza rima*, the stories of Susanna, Esther, and also to a lesser extent in the story of Tobias. Tylus suggests that the choice of these three stories which are grouped together in the Vulgate Bible, indicated that Lucrezia was turning to a selection of materials she saw as interrelated.[[294]](#footnote-294) It is likely then, in addition to being grouped by their verse form and material, these works are also aimed at the same small audience, composed and copied for the purpose of instructing her granddaughters, with the birth of her namesake eldest granddaughter Lucrezia in 1470 often being cited as inspiring the inception of the project.[[295]](#footnote-295) With the purpose of instruction in mind, her voice becomes the central guide to these works as a narrator, appearing at the opening and closing of each story, and also throughout the works, offering guidance, and presenting opinions and additions to the story in the first person.

The subject matter of these stories supports their use as educational tools, featuring a range of what could be considered practical advice in addition to the more obvious moral and religious instruction. The story of Susanna, in addition to emphasising Susanna’s innocence and closeness to God, also comments on the dangers of gossiping:

Thus she began to shriek loudly,

And the elders began crying out too,

Uttering against Susanna the accusation.

One of them unlocked the gate

To the beautiful garden and immediately ran outside

And recounted to all the people the falsehood.

The servants from the house heard the noise…

They were drawn instantly to the sound,

And heard the old men tell of Susanna’s adultery.

All were speechless and stunned

To think that Susanna could have sinned in such fashion

Filled them with marvel, since never before

Had they heard anything spoken against her.

They murmured of this at great length.

Et cominciò fortemente a gridare

et gli antichi, il medesimo gridando,

contr’a Susanna l’accusa a narrare.

Et un di lor, la porta disserrando

del bel giardino, et preso usciva fuori,

a tutta gente il falso raccontando.

Que’ della casa udiron que’ romori

et l’adultèr da’ vecchi udiron dire.

Stupivan tutti dentro alle lor mente

pensavan di Susanna il gran fallire

facëasi ciascun gran maraviglia,

ché mai più fallo alcun sentiron dire.

Di questo molto la gente bisbiglia.[[296]](#footnote-296)

The biblical account of Susanna’s story limits the spread of news about Susanna’s infidelity to the servants of the household. Lucrezia extends this, showing that the news makes its way about the town quickly through the murmurings of people, despite them knowing that the action is out of character for Susanna. Though they believe the accusation ‘because the old men were the elders’, Lucrezia first demonstrates how quickly and easily the news spread, with the addition of their ‘marvel’ at the news suggesting the sensationalised manner of its propagation. Similarly, practical advice is also offered through the life of Tobias, for which the possibilities for domestic advice have already been thoroughly commented on in Tylus’ introduction to her translation, including how the biblical book could serve as an instructional tool for the sexual relations between a newly married couple.[[297]](#footnote-297)

With the educational elements of the text in mind, Lucrezia’s interjections as narrator establish her as the source of this wisdom, but in the stories of Susanna and Esther, her voice is also used to establish feminine authority. The interjections act as framing tools for the narrative, providing brief breaks and adding structure to the stories. This is most apparent in the story of Esther, where we hear the author at the opening of each of the first few chapters, but also within the chapters acting as a driving force for the story to move on by introducing the start of the next passage. Whilst in the stories of Susanna and Tobias Lucrezia’s interjections are quick, in Esther we find much longer passages which are reminiscent of the longer opening sections in which we usually hear her call to God for inspiration in some manner:

Now it happens that I am so unused to singing

That it’s hard for me to put these words in order,

And easily I would remain confused,

O my sweet Lord: without your help

I could not follow this [divine] speech,

And thus I wish to call on you again, O Lord,

That I might raise myself up with my verses,

And through your grace arrive at the desired end

Where I would like to go.

Or i’, che di cantar son pur poco usa,

simile cose mal so ordinare,

agevolmente rimarrei confuse.

O dolce Signor mio, questo parlare

seguir senza‘l tuo aiuto non potrei,

et però te Signor, vo’ richiamare,

che mi dirizzi sì coi versi miei,

per la tuo grazia, ch’i’ possa venire

al termin disïat, ov’io vorrei.[[298]](#footnote-298)

It is notable that this is in contrast to the interjections seen in the story of Tobias, which is more similar to Esther in length and style. In the case of Esther, we also see how these longer sections from the narrator decrease in length once the voice of the protagonist (i.e. Esther) becomes more present in the verse, particularly from chapter five onwards, as Lucrezia appears to consciously remove herself from the story more to allow Esther to take centre stage as the female voice being heard. As such, Lucrezia’s more prominent voice in the earlier chapters helps to maintain the female gendering of the narrative account until her protagonist can take over. This is similar to how her voice works in the story of Susanna, as Tylus remarks on how Lucrezia’s interjections prevent a male gendering of the narrative account.[[299]](#footnote-299)

3.2.3 *The lack of sound in the story of Judith*

Compared to the stories written in *terza rima*, the two works written in *ottava rima* feature the voice of the author as narrator far less prominently. Indeed, in neither piece do we hear any interjections from Lucrezia as narrator beyond the introductions and endings of the stories. These two works, the stories of Judith and of John the Baptist, also appear to have enjoyed a much wider circulation than Lucrezia’s other narrative works.[[300]](#footnote-300) This can no doubt in part be attributed to the Florentine connections of both John the Baptist, who was the patron saint of Florence, and Judith, a character who, like the shepherd David to whom she is often compared, was called by God to kill the man who threatened her people, and represented freedom and republican ideals to the people of Florence.[[301]](#footnote-301) The choice of these two stories, whose connotations and wider appeal would not have been lost on Lucrezia, suggests that at their very inception they were written with a wider audience in mind than the other three narrative works, and her ‘quieter’ presence may in some way be connected to this more public character.

The story of Judith in particular has been remarked upon for its reflections of Lucrezia’s own life, and for its exploration of the relationship between women (particularly widows), politics, and devotion in fifteenth-century Florence. Supporting this is the continued theme of Lucrezia demonstrating her ability to balance her own personal interests with those of her family; whilst representing Lucrezia as a widow, Judith is also a heroine in whom we can see the balancing of both public and private life. As a result, Roger Crum suggests that the narrative may have been written in the early years of Lorenzo’s rule, when the Medici’s ability to balance the public and private dimensions of their involvement with Florentine politics was tested, making her choice a significant one for her family as well as for her own personal interests.[[302]](#footnote-302) A recent and wealthy widow, Judith is also a character who has to intercede on behalf of others, namely the elders of her city whose inability to protect them forces her to action – here again we can no doubt see similarities with Lucrezia’s own circumstances. If Judith, then, can be understood as a reflection of or even a substitute for Lucrezia within the context of her story, her own use of speech and sound is worthy of note for its reflection back onto our author.

This connection between Judith and Lucrezia is strongly implied in Lucrezia’s introduction to the work. Lucrezia works to draw comparisons between herself and Judith, suggesting that the composition of her verse could be considered equivalent in some way to the achievements and heroism of Judith:[[303]](#footnote-303)

Lord, I appeal to your charity

And pray that you help me tell a little story…

I found her story written in prose

And I was greatly impressed by her courage:

A fearful little widow

She had your help, and she knew what to do and say;

Lord, you made her bold and helped her plan succeed.

Would that you could grant such favour to me,

So that I may turn her tale into rhyme,

In a manner that would please.

Per la tuo carità Signor ti priego

Che tu m’aiuti dire una storietta…

I’ l’ò trovata così scripta in prosa

Et tanto m’è piaciuto il suo ardire:

Essendo vedovetta et temorosa

Hebbe il tuo aiuto et seppe fare et dire,

Tu la facesti, Signor, baldanzosa

E’l suo pensier l’à tutto a riuscire.

Questa grazia vorrei mi convedessi:

Di farla in rima in modo che piacessi.[[304]](#footnote-304)

After the opening stanza that gives praise to God more generally, in the following two stanzas, Lucrezia shows her admiration for Judith by first praising her virtues. Her status as a widow is not mentioned until after, in the third stanza, where Lucrezia refers to her as a *vedovetta*, a ‘little widow’, a term also used by both Petrarch and her contemporary Pulci.[[305]](#footnote-305) Her status as a widow, then, is somewhat separated from her achievements for just a moment, and this tendency for Judith’s widowhood to be a background element, mentioned perhaps less than would be expected, is a continued theme throughout the work.

The story of Judith is notable, in both Lucrezia’s version and the biblical version, for how long it takes for the titular character to appear - almost halfway through in both versions of the tale. But even once Judith appears, in Lucrezia’s version of the story she is a much quieter character than her biblical counterpart. Tylus notes how, in comparison to the biblical version, the character of Judith in Lucrezia’s retelling of the story is far less verbose.[[306]](#footnote-306) This includes in her prayers, which in the biblical tale go on for pages, but in Lucrezia’s tale are much more succinct. For example, when Judith turns to prayer before she leaves to confront Holofernes, in the bible her prayers last for 19 verses, whereas Lucrezia’s Judith’s prayers last just half a stanza:

Help me, God, in my going out,

So that I may be the liberation of your people;

Help me Lord, in this enterprise,

Because you alone, my Lord, are my defence.

Aiutami, Signore, in questa andata

Ch’i’ sia del popol tuo liberazione;

Aiutami, Signore, in questa impresa

Ché tu sol, Signor mio, se’ mie difesa.[[307]](#footnote-307)

Lucrezia chooses to omit any references to the violence of the act Judith will be inspired to commit, which are present in the biblical version, and instead focuses on the divine inspiration of what is to follow.

However, the most striking deviation by Lucrezia from the original biblical tale comes at the end of the story. After the heroic deed is done, and upon her return to Bethulia, after briefly commenting on the celebrations of her victory, Lucrezia has Judith disappear from her own story.[[308]](#footnote-308)This contrasts with the long canticle addressed to God by the biblical Judith, and the details of her final days that are found in the biblical tale. Indeed, Lucrezia’s choice here stands out perhaps more than any other of her changes to the original version of the story, especially as most contemporary Florentine representations of Judith usually directly reference, or at least imply, Judith’s return to domestic life.[[309]](#footnote-309) But without any clarification from Lucrezia on the matter, this ending is open to interpretation. Anna Wainwright provides a very neat proposal for what this ending could mean for Lucrezia’s representations of widowhood:

Tornabuoni’s Judith offers an open-ended model of the tale that allows for widows to model themselves on Judith – intercessionary figures working on behalf of their city – without also necessarily denying themselves future husbands or a life actively engaged with their community.[[310]](#footnote-310)

The absence of any kind of discussion about how this rich widow proceeds with her life after this great act feels like a conscious choice by Lucrezia, who did not wish to relegate the heroine to the same isolated existence she has in her original biblical tale - particularly not when her Judith was apparently intended to be read as a reflection of her own life and actions.[[311]](#footnote-311) In imagining this work being performed and disseminated among the Medici women, this suggestion gains strength, as in its imagined performance the connections between Judith and Lucrezia would be much clearer.

At the end of the work, the voice of the narrator appears in the same way it does is many of the *storie sacre*. But in comparison to its other appearances, Lucrezia’s own voice is notably quiet at the end of this tale, a mere four lines that again state the unworthiness of her work, whilst ruminating on its divine inspiration:

May you, omnipotent Lord, be thanked,

Who drew me out of the sea to the shore,

And I am now in harbour, where my heart

Offers up to you my weak and unpolished rhymes.

Ringraziato sie tu Omnipotente

Che m’hai cavato del pelago al lito,

Et sono in porto et delle rime fore

Deboli et rozze come porge il core.[[312]](#footnote-312)

Here there is a quietness to the ending, with no suggestion of a wider audience beyond God himself, choosing instead to focus on the unworthiness of her work. Although this is a common conceit in poetry, and especially in dedications, it is the only ending to one of Lucrezia’s narrative works to undertake such textual gestures of debasement. This ending seems most similar to that from Lucrezia’s story of Esther, which also uses boat and harbour imagery, and suggests a quietness or weariness on the part of the author upon finishing her task. However, this ending greatly contrasts with that of her other work in *ottava rima*, the story of John the Baptist, to which the best comparison can be made if we are assuming both works were intended for a wider audience. In this work, the ending takes up the seemingly more logical full stanza to finish, and alludes to a greater readership that the story might serve to inspire:

May you, Eternal Father, be thanked,

And your son, and the Holy Spirit:

I want to thank as well the worthy Mother,

And the prophet John in this song.

By virtue of his delightful works

And through his grace, I will be able to boast

Of having told of his death and of his people

[so that] my and others’ devotion may grow!

Ringraziato sie tu Eterno Padre

E’l tuo Figliuolo et lo Spirito Santo,

Ringraziar voglio ancor la degna Madre

E’l propheta Giovanni in questo canto,

Et per virtù di su’ opre leggiadre

Et per suo grazia, mi potrò dar vanto

D’aver raconto morte et suo nazione,

Che a me et ad altri cresca divozione.[[313]](#footnote-313)

The narrator’s ending to the story of John the Baptist makes it much clearer what Lucrezia’s intentions for the work were, namely a celebration of a Florentine symbol meant to be read and to inspire a much wider readership. In comparison, the ending to the story of Judith feels much more personal and sombre, suggesting a humbleness in having completed her work, and that it is offered to God alone for judgement.

It is notable that the story of Judith and that of John the Baptist are often taken to have been the last of Lucrezia’s works to be composed.[[314]](#footnote-314) When combined with their connections to the civic identity of Florence, we can perhaps see a move by Lucrezia away from instructional verse aimed at a very small audience, namely her female relatives, and towards a more expansive readership. Though this is not to suggest that Lucrezia herself ever planned on performing the works in public, it could be that she thought them suitable for public performance by others. In this case, her move away from a motherly guiding voice, whose presence was to educate, and towards a more silent author can be understood as her adaptations to suit this wider readership; in the story of Judith, she does this whilst, and in some manner despite, crafting a piece that is working to reflect her own personal circumstances. Even the character of Judith herself is constructed to represent an ideal of widowhood for Lucrezia. Tylus notes frequently in her comments on her translation how Lucrezia seems often to neglect the opportunity to make Judith a more symbolically charged character, missing opportunities to draw parallels to other characters such as Mary, or Susanna.[[315]](#footnote-315) Perhaps an answer to this is that Lucrezia was not aiming to create a religiously charged image of Judith, but rather a representation and ideal of her own situation as a perfected reflection of herself. As such, her poetic voice looks to uphold contemporary beliefs concerning women, and more specifically in her case, widowhood, balancing them with a tale in which a “little widow” had to act outside of gender norms and ideals to achieve her goals.

3.3 *Conclusions*

As suggested by Virginia Cox, Lucrezia’s poetic output presents us with the opportunity to see a woman producing work that is fully within the ‘traditional circumscriptions of women’s proper sphere’ at the time.[[316]](#footnote-316) Another comparable case is Lucrezia’s female contemporary Antonia Tanini Pulci, whose husband was the brother of the famous poet-performers Luca and Luigi Pulci. Antonia also limited herself to only devotional works, producing a number of popular *sacre rappresentazioni* written for performance, which saw a great degree of success based on the records of their printing in the sixteenth century.[[317]](#footnote-317) But that is not to suggest that the only reason Lucrezia chose to write within the religious sphere was in order to find a suitable idiom within which it was acceptable for a women to write; throughout her life we can see she constantly portrayed herself as a woman of great piety, and very frequently contributed to religious causes as well as commissioning of a number of minor works of religious art.[[318]](#footnote-318) Her work also conforms to the proper women’s sphere beyond the fact of their religious subject matter; the purpose of the work as a tool for the moral and religious education of her granddaughters and other female relatives, and their proposed limited dissemination and performance, also reflect Lucrezia’s sensitivity to the expectations of a woman of her standing. Indeed, the focus on chastity and virtue seen in the tales of her biblical heroines are in line with the contemporary ideals of womanhood and wifely conduct.[[319]](#footnote-319) The role Lucrezia takes as narrator and therefore teacher in these works also matches up to contemporary ideals: as a maternal figure, Lucrezia was expected to provide the foundational religious education of all younger family members early in their lives, as well as the more specific education for young women to prepare them for married life and to educate them to be the ideal wife.[[320]](#footnote-320)

But to leave it at this would fail to acknowledge the incredible achievements and pushing of boundaries exhibited by Lucrezia in her work, as also in her life. Lucrezia was able to use her position, first as wife, and later as widow and mother to create for herself a significant space allowing her to frequently work outside the traditional expectations of a woman of her station. She was able to use her power in the domestic sphere, such as in the education of her children, and later her grandchildren, as well as her management of personal business affairs and relationships with male family members to gain authority. Even the conventionally accepted proposal that Lucrezia only turned to writing poetry after the death of Piero, and the fact that her work sits entirely within the confines of the religious sphere, feels a rather neatened version of her history. As the scholarly discussion of her work continues, we see earlier and earlier dating of her surviving works, and beyond this we have no real clue how much of her work has been lost to us, when it was written, and what it may have contained. That it is the religious works that have survived surely suggests that these works were better disseminated and recorded precisely because in them Lucrezia met the expectations of the surrounding society.

In the works we do have, we see how Lucrezia’s voice is loudest in those stories which feature women who, in some manner, had to take risks in defiance of gender norms and ideals to achieve their goals.[[321]](#footnote-321) This is also reflected in the soundscape of Lucrezia’s oeuvre, which is not one that is particularly wide or varied. Instead, it is carefully crafted and somewhat restricted in its aims, working to continuously reflect the ideals of a woman in Lucrezia’s position and to manifest as a form of vernacular teaching aid extolling the feminine virtues, as well as demonstrating the careful ways in which such a mould can be gently reshaped in pursuit of the greater good.

Lucrezia’s poetry was not published in print until 1486, four years after her death, and her *storie sacre* are not recorded as having been performed for an audience at all, beyond the suggestions for their small-scale performance for immediate family. But this is a poor measure by which to evaluate the influence of her work, and instead the importance of Lucrezia’s verse lies in recognising that she is not the only one listening and interacting with the diverse musical poetic traditions seen in Florence at the time; rather, her work is in dialogue with that of those around her, both being inspired by and inspiring other writers. The evident intertextuality between Lucrezia’s work and that of her contemporaries shows that, more than being a mere imitator and copying elements and pieces from the vernacular poetry traditions around her, Lucrezia was an active participant, contributing as both a patron but also as a creator.

**Chapter 4: Serafino Aquilano**

Serafino Aquilano was one of the most famed performers of vernacular courtly verse in the late fifteenth century. Renowned for his musical and poetical talents, his short career saw him travel across the Italian peninsula, focusing largely on Naples and Rome, but also venturing to the northern courts of Milan, Urbino, and Mantua in his search for patronage. Performing exclusively in the vernacular, Serafino was a well-known strambottist, but also produced sonnets, *barzellette*, eclogues, and *capitoli*. Unusually, we have a great deal of information about Serafino’s life, thanks to the biography written shortly after Serafino’s death by the poet and literary critic Vincenzo Calmeta.

Serafino was born in the Neapolitan village of l’Aquila in 1466, but beyond this, little is known of his earliest years. Our knowledge of Serafino’s life begins properly in 1478, when the then twelve-year-old Serafino was taken to the court at Potenza by his uncle to serve as a page.[[322]](#footnote-322) Elena Abramov-van Rijk suggests his family sent him to the court as he was already exhibiting musical talent, and his position at court would allow him to receive an education.[[323]](#footnote-323) Serafino stayed at the court for the following three years, before returning to his family home in l’Aquila, where he spent a further three years dedicated to the memorisation of Petrarch’s vernacular works for the purpose of performance.

In 1484, Serafino left l’Aquila for Rome, where he entered the service of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza and formed a connection with the literary circle of Paolo Cortese. This was also the setting in which Serafino came into contact with his eventual biographer Calmeta. As Calmeta recalls, in this centre of eloquence, and despite his lack of Latin, Serafino was able to compete with the ‘men of letters’ in the recitation of verse, and gained renown amongst academic circles.[[324]](#footnote-324) However, Serafino’s time in Rome was marred by his poor relationship with Cardinal Sforza, and Calmeta’s biography paints an unflattering portrait of the Cardinal as a patron, paying little attention to music, and instead devoted to hunting.[[325]](#footnote-325) Whilst accompanying the Cardinal on a trip to the Sforza court in Milan, Serafino heard the strambotti of Benedetto Gareth being performed by the Neapolitan nobleman and singer, Andrea Coscia.[[326]](#footnote-326) It is supposedly this exposure to the strambottiof Gareth that encouraged Serafino’s own cultivation of the form, though it would already have been a part of the poet’s repertoire. Indeed, upon their return to Rome, Serafino’s reputation and fame was only growing, to the extent that, according to Calmeta, the time came at which all new strambotti, including those composed by others, were attributed to Serafino.[[327]](#footnote-327)

In 1490 Serafino performed his eclogue, *Tyrinto e Menandro*, with the support of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, in which he made an attack on Roman society and the corruption of the Roman curia, as well as harsh attacks against his patron Cardinal Ascanio Sforza.[[328]](#footnote-328) After this, Serafino left Rome, either at his own behest, or after being dismissed. Despite his apparent desire to leave the patronage of the Cardinal, and his notable fame by this point, Serafino did not find himself inundated with offers of patronage or employment elsewhere. He eventually ended up returning to Naples in 1491, entering the court of Ferdinando d’Aragona.[[329]](#footnote-329) His return brought him into contact with the members of the *Accademia Pontaniana*, of which he became an active member.[[330]](#footnote-330) Serafino’s return to Naples was likely in search of greater security in a place where he knew he would be valued.[[331]](#footnote-331) Serafino would likely have achieved this and found himself steady employment with the court, if it were not for the onset of war in 1494, which forced him to move elsewhere.

The following years demonstrate Serafino’s struggles to find a secure appointment. His immediate patron after leaving Naples was Elisabetta Gonzaga, the Duchess of Urbino, but Serafino very quickly used his contacts in Urbino to gain a place at the court in Mantua, where he came into contact with other creators of courtly poetry, such as Antonio Tebaldeo – of whose poetry Calmeta had a very low opinion.[[332]](#footnote-332) Failing again to gain permanent employment, Serafino then left for Milan, where he was forced to make peace with the Sforza family after his time with Cardinal Ascanio Sforza in Rome, and gained a place at the edges of the court of Beatrice d’Este, Duchess of Milan. [[333]](#footnote-333) However, this too did not last long, with the court dispersed after the death of the duchess in 1497. In his final search for patronage, Serafino looked to Cesare Borgia and returned to Rome, which would be his last court appointment.[[334]](#footnote-334)

Serafino’s courtly career certainly exposed him to a wide range of patrons and venues, traversing the Italian peninsula in the search for a permanent berth to no avail. From bad patrons to the struggle for continued employment, Serafino appears to have held a low opinion of the courts generally, as can be seen in the following sonnet:

The court is like the game of *quadrelo*,

Each one chases the other from his seat and post,

Not for a reason, but only because of greed,

since there is much more money than brains.

One night you’ll see without a cape

A big kid standing like a lost owl

The next morning you’ll see him dressed in silk and gold

So that you’ll say: he’s not the same person.

When he has risen as far as he can go

Some random countryman shows up, and ruins his luck

And makes him fall down on the wheel of fortune

And become a page boy once again.

How accurate that old saying is:

The shadow of a lord is a fool’s hat.

La corte è come el gioco del quadrelo

l’un caccia l’altro da seggio e partito,

non per ragion, ma sol per apitito

chi à dinari assai più che cervelo.

La sera vedrai sensa mantelo

un ragazon come un gufo smarito

e la matin di seta e d’or vestito

tanto che tu dirai: non è più quelo.

Quando è ben ’n alto fin dove pò andare

e’ vien un for de villa e rompe el gazo

e fal giù de la rota trabucare,

e ritornar come prima ragazzi.

Com’è proverbio santo quell parlare:

ombra de gran signor, capel de pazo.[[335]](#footnote-335)

Serafino describes the competitive nature of the court, where courtiers battle to improve their positions, often at the expense of others. As Paola Ugolini explains, Serafino’s depiction of the courts is of an unreliable and quickly changing world, where one must defend oneself constantly and can expect no honest communication between courtiers.[[336]](#footnote-336) This satirical, witty observation on the courtly arena on which Serafino’s livelihood depended is perhaps one of our most accurate representations of the man himself, and is certainly one that aligns with the image of Serafino’s character painted by Calmeta, one of a restless and somewhat scruffy man, whose manners remained somewhat rough and uncouth, despite his constant courtly appointments.[[337]](#footnote-337)

Serafino died in 1500, aged just 35, after a short fever. There are no known autograph copies of his work, but his poetry had been copied and distributed by others throughout his life.[[338]](#footnote-338) The poet’s sudden death resulted in a huge swath of publications capturing his verse and capitalising on his fame through the first decade of the sixteenth century. In 1501 a collection of strambotti was published attributed to Serafino, entitled *Soneti del Seraphin*, and printed in Brescia by Bernardino Misinta. The authorship of this 1501 edition is dubious, with the opening strambotto later attributed to Tebaldeo, and the concluding capitolo to Panfilo Sasso.[[339]](#footnote-339) Instead, the *Editio princeps* of Serafino’s work is accepted as being the 1502 *Opera* edited by Francesco Flavio.[[340]](#footnote-340) The present study will make use of both editions. The difficulties and widespread nature of Serafino’s work at the time of his death was highlighted by Francesco Flavio, who collected his work for the 1502 Roman edition, and commented on the difficulty in discerning what was truly the work of Serafino and what was mere imitation.[[341]](#footnote-341) This difficulty can be seen in the rapid growth of works attributed to Serafino during the first two decades of the sixteenth century; the 1502 editioncontained 323 works ascribed to Serafino, but by 1516, published editions of Serafino’s poetry contained as many as 753 works.[[342]](#footnote-342)

4.1 *Serafino as Performer*

4.1.1 *Serafino’s Music Education*

As a result of Serafino’s fame and contemporary biography, we have more knowledge than is typical concerning the type of musical education the poet received. As previously discussed, Serafino spent three years at the court of Potenza; Calmeta makes reference to Serafino’s time here and specifically the music education he received:

In this laudable place of study… Serafino devoted himself to music under the tutelage of a Flemish man, Guglielmo, a very famous musician in this time. He made such progress in a few years that he surpassed all other Italian musicians in the field of song composition.

Tra questa laudabile palestra… se dede Serafino alla musica sotto la erudizione d’uno Guglielmo Fiammengo, il quello tempo musico famosissimo. Fece in pochi anni tal profitto che a ciascuno altro musico Italiano nel componere canti tolse la palma.[[343]](#footnote-343)

The type of tuition Serafino may have received has been a subject of some debate. We know he studied with the Franco-Flemish music theorist and composer Guillaume Garnier. Garnier was himself a notable musician and was in contact with many of the other music theorists and notable composers present in the Kingdom of Naples at this time, such as Johannes Tinctoris, Franchino Gaffurio, and Bernard Ycart.[[344]](#footnote-344) However, the extent of Serafino’s music-theoretical education, and exactly what that education consisted of, is not made clear by Calmeta beyond the fame of Serafino’s teacher, and as a result has been the subject of some debate. For example, Atlas includes Serafino in his list of ‘composers’ at the Aragonese Court, suggesting that his studies may have given him the skills to compose polyphonic music, and this sentiment is echoed in the classic studies of Rubsamen and Luisi.[[345]](#footnote-345) There is a belief current in these classic studies that it was Serafino’s superior music education and compositional skills that aided his performance and can explain the great accolades bestowed upon him. This idea is no doubt supported by the anonymous attribution found in many of the contemporary musical settings of Serafino’s *strambotti*, leading to the connection of these sources to Serafino himself, suggesting his compositional skills.[[346]](#footnote-346)

However, more recent studies that address Serafino’s music education suggest that this heavy emphasis on Serafino’s theoretical or technical skill is a somewhat outdated view in trying to explain his great contemporary popularity and the praise heaped upon his performance. Abramov-van Rijk suggests that whilst he may have been taught music theory and the rudiments of Flemish polyphony, his studies would likely have been more practical in nature rather than theoretical, focused on singing technique, the development of the voice, and the playing of instruments.[[347]](#footnote-347) This belief is also shared by Wilson, who concludes that Serafino had no greater formal knowledge of music than any of his poet-performer contemporaries.[[348]](#footnote-348) Indeed, Serafino’s later pursuits would support this, and after his initial music education, Calmeta goes on to explain that Serafino dedicated much of his time to the learning of Petrarch for the purposes of performance:

After returning to his native city, where he stayed for three years, he devoted himself wholly to learning Petrarch’s sonnets, canzoni and trionfi, which he not only learned by heart, but also combined them with music so well that hearing him sing with the lute, [one felt his songs] surpassed all other harmony.

Redutto poi in la patria nella quale per tre anni fece Dimora, ad imparare sonetti, canzoni e Trionfi dil Petrarca tutto se dispose, li quali non solo ebbe famigliarissimi, ma tanto bene con la musica li accordava che a sentirli da hui cantare nel liuto, ogni altra armonia superavano.[[349]](#footnote-349)

This commitment to the learning of Petrarch by Serafino suggests his dedication to vernacular poetry in particular, and, as Abramov-van Rijk suggests, he took to developing his own way of reciting them, using the best example of amorous verse possible.[[350]](#footnote-350) Combined with Calmeta’s earlier comments on his skills specifically in song composition (*componere canti*), we gain the image of a performer who concentrated on and honed a very specific set of skills for the purpose of being the best performer of vernacular verse he could possibly be.

4.1.2 *Serafino in Performance*

Key in the appraisal of Serafino as performer is the image that was created and existed in the wake of his early death. Despite his struggles during his life to find stable employment, in the aftermath of Serafino’s death, the myth of him as an Apollonian poet, cast in the image of Orpheus or Apollo for his skills in performance and the effect of his verse, grew exponentially. Central to this image was Angelo Colocci’s *Apologia*, alongside Calmeta’s *Vita di Serafino* which has already formed the basis for much of the biographical information on Serafino so far in this chapter.[[351]](#footnote-351) Neither work appeared alongside the 1502 *Editio princeps*; the *Apologia* first appeared alongside the 1503 *Opera*, and the *Vita di Serafino* by Vincenzo Calmeta was first published with the 1504 *Collettanee*, a book containing only poems in praise of Serafino, and later published again with the 1505 edition of the *Opera*.[[352]](#footnote-352)

Both works use an ancient legitimising model, linking Serafino’s contemporary performance with the ancient tradition of lyre players and poets whilst stressing his contemporary popularity and the widespread sadness at his early death. Indeed, Calmeta goes to great lengths in describing Serafino’s general popularity, detailing how the poet was keen to win favour and appeal to listeners from all social classes – something he appears to have been very successful in doing:[[353]](#footnote-353)

in the recitation of his poems he was so ardent and he joined the words with the music with such judgment that the souls of the listeners—whether scholars, mediocre, plebian, or women—were equally moved.

Nel recitare de’ suoi poemi era tanto ardente e con tanto giuditio le parole con la musica consertava che l’animo de li ascoltanti o dotti, o mediocri, o plebei, o donne equalmente commoveva.[[354]](#footnote-354)

As Calmeta suggests, Serafino’s performance saw the perfect union of words and music, and his appeal held no bounds, stretching from the courts to the common people. As Bortoletti describes, when paired with his accounts of Serafino competing in verse recitation against the learned members of the academies, Calmeta creates an image of a mythical poet from ancient times, blending the fact and fiction of Serafino’s life to create something extraordinary.[[355]](#footnote-355)

However, though illuminating as to the effect of Serafino’s verse, these accounts say very little about how his verse was able to hold such great power and sway. There are, though, some brief glimmers of information that ground the poet in the real world of technique and craft. For example, Colocci suggests an element of pre-composition to Serafino’s verse:

He did not compose in an improvised manner even though he was of quick wit, saying that a sudden extemporality was rarely followed by either prosperity or praise.

Non componeva improvviso, anchor che fusse di celere ingegno, dicendo che una subita extemporalità raro era sequita o da prosperitate o da laude.[[356]](#footnote-356)

It is very easy to lose sight of the act of performance when hearing how great its effect was, but Colocci suggests here just how planned and controlled Serafino’s performances were. Though we are given the image of a great improviser, Colocci suggests that Serafino would adapt material he already had to suit the situation and his specific audience. This adaption to the tastes and desires of his surroundings is also evident during Serafino’s time in Mantua, where Serafino demonstrated how alert to the latest innovations in court poetry he was and quickly made them his own, as Kolsky has shown.[[357]](#footnote-357)

The legend and success of Serafino is one that is difficult to understand, but the image we can gain of him during his lifetime is that of a young itinerant performer, who embodied much of what the traditional *canterino* did, but found his place in the world of the courts as a malleable poet who could charm and entrance whilst keeping up to date with poetic fashions. Though we are unable to pin down the specifics of Serafino’s performance style, beyond its individuality, popularity, and some general outlines, what is apparent is that it was his adaptable and evolving style, teamed with his expressive and unique delivery, that maintained his fame and the great number of compliments given to him.

4.2 *Verse Analysis*

4.2.1 *Sound of the Author – the creation of Orpheus*

As we have already seen, Serafino’s contemporary fame and the praise for his performance cannot be understated. Not merely a gifted performer and improviser, Serafino’s great talents were legitimised through ancient models; captured in the image of an Apollonian or orphic poet, his abilities to entertain and sway his listeners from the courts to the piazzas became something of a legend. In addition to the biographies of Calmeta and Colocci which have already been mentioned, poetry in praise of Serafino, much of which also propagated this image of the poet in their descriptions of him, was collected into an edition for the Duchess of Urbino, Elisabetta Gonzaga, and published in 1504 in Bologna.[[358]](#footnote-358) As discussed by Francesca Bortoletti, the poetry contained in this edition frequently casts Serafino in the image of Apollo specifically, capturing his success as a poet during his lifetime and immortalising him in his death. In the sonnet ‘Ecco la nocte, el ciel tucto se adorna’, written by the subject of the next case study Panfilo Sasso, Serafino is portrayed in the act of singing in the image of Apollo, and Sasso speaks of how the poet’s fame can continue to live in his words, captured from his song and put on the page.[[359]](#footnote-359) These dedications and praise of Serafino’s abilities in performance created an almost mythological identity for the poet in death, cast by his contemporaries as a talent above all others and immortalising Serafino and his song.

But the beginnings of this image of Serafino began long before his death, created by the poet during his lifetime. The creation of this myth by Serafino himself has already been examined by Bortoletti in her study of Serafino’s eclogue *Tyrinto e Menandro*.[[360]](#footnote-360) Here, we see how Serafino, acting the role of Menandro, is able to combine these identities, that of performer and of character, to amplify both the skills of the character Menandro within the scope of the performance, but also his own wider identity. By doing this within the pastoral fiction of the eclogue, Serafino is able to connect his real-world performance to the fiction of the drama, combining his performative talents with the mythology and imagery of Arcadia, which, as summarised neatly by Bortoletti, defined ‘his identity as an artist on the stage and in society through myth’.[[361]](#footnote-361) When we turn to Serafino’s collected lyric, the many references to the orphic powers of the verse are hardly surprising given the great popularity of the trope in contemporary verse; we have already seen its use in the work of Boiardo, and there are plentiful examples in the work of Serafino’s contemporaries including Antonio Tebaldeo and Benedetto Gareth. However, unlike these other poets, Serafino uses this trope to an extreme, entirely inhabiting the role of Orpheus in his amorous verse to the exclusion of almost any other comparators to the sound of his verse in performance, or the presence of any other distinct sonic actors within his work.

In this strambotto segment, we can see a typical reference to the power of the verse over the landscape and its inhabitants:

The air which hears this great and sad outcry

Scatters, to all places, my grief

So much so, that out of compassion for my pain

It seems that every leaf trembles in the trees.

Every fierce animal lays down its fury

For each one seems to want to help me.

L'aer che sente el mesto & gran clamore

Divulga in ogne parte la mia doglia

Tal che per compassion del mio dolore

Par che ne treme in arbore ogne foglia.

Ogne fiero animal posa el furore

Che d’aiutarmi ognun par ch’abbia voglia.[[362]](#footnote-362)

For the most part, there is not much surprising about Serafino’s orphic reference here, presenting us with the traditional image of the poet’s verse being carried and spread without his knowledge and moving both the landscape and its inhabitants to sympathy at the sound of his plight. However, the elements featured by Serafino, the trees, and the particular reference to ‘fierce animals’- that is, untamed and wild animals that would otherwise wish him harm - work to connect him more directly with the Orpheus myth as transmitted by classical authors. In comparison to the use of this trope by others, Serafino can be regarded as a traditionalist, keeping close to the original mythology of Orpheus rather than adapting and personalising his use of the tale to fit his own soundscape, as we saw in Boiardo who adapted his orphic references to align with his greater invocation of nature and landscape generally. The effect of this in Serafino’s verse is emphasised through frequent repetition, with Serafino creating a focused sonic picture of his verses’ effect rather than invoking a more diverse set of listeners (such as, for example, Boiardo’s birds) that would fail to connect him to this orphic imagery in the same way.

In addition to these elements, Serafino includes a number of more unusual characters in his verse who are affected by its sound, which continue within the orphic ideal. One such set of characters that we see frequently are snakes:

Version 1:

With their song they humble the serpents,

Placate the stars, and the infernal fury.

And I, with my bitter and grave laments

Have no strength to make her humble.

Soglion li canti humiliar serpenti:

Placar le stelle, e linfernal furore.

Et io con gli aspri & gravi miei lamenti

A fare humil costei non ho vigore.[[363]](#footnote-363)

Version 2:

If only songs to humble serpents

Would turn the stars and the infernal fury

And I, with tears in songs and great laments,

Have no strength to make her humble

Se sol per canti humiliar serpenti

Voltar le stelle e l‘infernal furore

Et io con i pianti in canti e gran lamenti

A far humil costei non ho vigore[[364]](#footnote-364)

In these two versions of the same *strambotto*, the first coming from the 1502 *Opera* and the second from the 1501 *Sonetti*,we see slight variations on the same core material. Given the dubious authorship of the 1501 edition, the presence of this strambotto in the later and much better regarded 1502 *Opera* is useful to confirm the strambotto as Serafino’s. The appearance of this strambotto with slight variations in both editions demonstrates that some of the 1501 edition is correct in its attribution to Serafino, and that the differences between the two versions of the verse could suggest changes made to the written record of the strambotto as it has been transmitted between copies, or that the strambotto was performed with variations by Serafino himself on different occasions and recorded separately.

In this strambotto, rather than provide a lengthy list of landscape elements and characters swayed by the poet’s performance, Serafino presents the extremely specific case of snakes, making direct reference to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and the snake that killed Orpheus’ beloved. Whilst still playing into the common trope of contrasting the power of the verse to affect others and not the beloved, this reference to the original story of Orpheus adds further dimensions, linking Serafino’s imagined narrative more closely with that of Orpheus. Serafino and his verse do not just possess orphic powers; Serafino himself is created as Orpheus. That this strambotto found its way into the 1501 *Sonetti* suggests that serpentine references may have been particularly characteristic of Serafino, to identify the piece as his for inclusion in the edition that had much broader constraints of authorship that the more rigorous selection found later in the 1502 *Opera*. And this is most certainly borne out by the *Opera* edition, which features over a dozen direct references to snakes.

Indeed, this dozen or so references do not include those which speak of snakes or serpents less directly, as can be seen in the following example:

The sound of my sad laments resounds,

so that every harsh animal with its cruel venom

has compassion for my many torments.

Ribomba il son de miei gravi lamenti

Si che ogni aspro animal con crudel tosto

Ha compassion de miei tanti tormenti[[365]](#footnote-365)

The poet’s verse, portrayed as a great lamenting at the pain caused by the torment of his beloved, is imagined as resounding around his landscape outside of his control and once again is seen affecting the inhabitants of this place. Here, the animal over which Serafino’s verse has control is not directly named as a snake, but the reference to the animal’s cruel venom again inspires the imagery of Eurydice’s death, creating another direct connection to the mythology of Orpheus. In this case, Serafino goes so far as to say that he is able to draw compassion from the very animal that doomed Eurydice, so powerful is the sound of his torment. The beloved (equated with Eurydice), meanwhile, is even more cruel than the snake that brought about her untimely demise.

There are a few brief moments in Serafino’s verse where we see him invoke other characters in the soundscape to create positive comparisons to the sound of his verse, but even in these examples the poet remains dedicated to the image of himself as orphic poet. One of the few direct comparators featured is the swan, which still carries an implied connection to the god Apollo:[[366]](#footnote-366)

That singing, I run to death

Like the swan does at the end.

Che cantando corro a morte

Come el Cygno nel finir.[[367]](#footnote-367)

The use of swan song was a popular trope and comes from an ancient Greek belief that the swan sings most beautifully at the point of its death. By characterising himself as near death, Serafino suggests he is only able to produce the music that he does because of his great anguish and torment, whilst also characterising the beauty of the author’s singing. This allows Serafino to suggest the positive attributes of his song, whilst remaining consistent in his narrative and creation of himself as an orphic and Apollonian poet. Indeed, this use of swan song, and with it its greater ties to the god Apollo rather than the traditional mythology of Orpheus, is as far as Serafino dares to stray from his focused orphic imagery in his construction of his sound in his verse.

4.2.2 *‘Words to the wind’ – Serafino’s construction of space*

At first glance, Serafino appears to provide us with an imagined landscape in which we can imagine his verse resounding. There are multiple occasions in Serafino’s verse where he presents us with lists of landscape elements and animals:

I often go, offering my torments

Through valleys, rivers, seas, mountains, and woods,

In the heat, the cold, the sun, storms, and winds.

And in dark and gloomy places

I seek my death, so that I may please you all the more

Among cliffs, rocks, logs, trees, and thickets,

Bears, wolves, lions, eagles, and snakes.

Spesso andar offocando i miei tormenti

Per valli, fiumi, mar, montagne e boschi,

Al caldo, al freddo, al sol, tempesta & venti

E voglio in lochi tenebrosi & foschi

Cercar morire, acciò più te contenti

Fra ripe, sassi, tronchi, arbori, & sterperi

Orsi, lupi, leni, aquile, & serpi[[368]](#footnote-368)

Our example here is fairly formulaic. Suggesting the continued crying and torment of the author as he travels, we are presented with a list of landscape elements, given weather conditions through which the poet must suffer, and finally presented with various predatorial animals the author finds himself among that we can assume he has the power to sway with his verse, or else will meet his demise. However, rather than presenting us with a consistent imagined setting in which the author’s verse resounds, these long lists seem almost journey-like, describing the poet’s relationship and the hardships he endures as a result of his lady’s torment and his wish to please her, and becoming a tool in describing the scope of his own emotions by demonstrating variety and contrast in his landscape. This is not, then, the formation of a single staged space for the poet to inhabit entirely, in which we are given a feel for the boundaries and limits of the landscape and a greater understanding of the poet’s own control over them, as we find in the work of several of the other poets studied in this thesis. Indeed, in these lists the sonic aspect of the verse in the changing landscape is left completely unexplored. This is despite the fact that there is undoubtedly a resonant aspect to this changing landscape as the poet journeys; the featuring of caves and rocks, as well as valleys and cliffs, all provide surfaces off which the poet’s sound can echo. The caves and rocks in particular are understood as the typical realm of the nymph Echo, invoking her and her sonic properties through their inclusion. But these elements are not utilised any further than their presence in this verse style in which they are quickly listed and not greatly explored, nor are they used in a stable manner that gives us a real feel for space and setting in Serafino’s verse.

Though Serafino avoids the trappings of an imagined landscape through which his voice may echo, he still requires an imagined device to carry his voice to his audience, to allow them to overhear his complaints in song and avoid framing them as a direct performance. In lieu of a consistent landscape, Serafino turns to the wind to carry his verse - indeed, the idea of the wind transporting his words as an action beyond his control to the ears of his listener has already been seen in our examination of his verse, carrying the sound of the poet to the fierce beasts and orphic landscapes previously discussed. This conceit is seen throughout Serafino’s verse, with the author frequently turning to the wind to transport his words rather than releasing them to a resounding landscape to echo their sound:

You see my labours, lost in the wind

And yet you do not believe my sorrow at all.

Tu vedi mie fatiche al vento perse

Et per niente el mio dolor non credi.[[369]](#footnote-369)

His words are lost, he did not mean for them to be captured and carried by the wind, emphasising the poet’s lack of control in the situation. In this example, it is also understood that the wind has carried the poet’s words, his labours, to his beloved’s ears, but to no avail. Whilst the poet may not be able to sway her, this establishes that she too is a part of the constructed soundscape of the poet, able to hear his verse – although, without a solid landscape to inhabit, we do not know the distance that may separate them as, unlike the confines of landscape features, the wind does not suggest any limitations or end to how far the poet’s words can travel, their scope made endless just as his pain is endless.

More than just a vessel, the wind is also a sympathetic listener to the poet, given agency in his verse to further take away control from Serafino:

I pray thee, o you pitiful winds,

Do not misunderstand my words

So much so that I can satisfy my laments

And silence my ardent voice.

Pregovi alquanto o voi piatosi venti

Che non menate altroe e le mie parole.

Tanto chio possa satisfar lamente

Et dar silentio alla mia voce ardente.[[370]](#footnote-370)

Serafino speaks to the wind, he asks it to carry his words honestly and gives the wind agency; it must understand him and carry his verse without corruption, helping him in his plight. As a sentient force, not only does the wind choose to carry the poet’s words, but it appears to do so out of sympathy for his pain, as it is only by releasing his laments to the wind that the poet feels he may end his suffering, trusting the wind to carry his words unchanged to the beloved in the hopes of swaying her feelings towards him.

Combined with the ideas of movement and journeying seen in Serafino’s changing landscape, the use of the wind to carry the poet’s words gives the feeling of freedom and great scope to the verse as it lacks confinement; we are given no idea as to how far his words will be able to travel, only that it is the wind that carries them. Unlike a resonant landscape, the overhearing of the poet’s verse through this device becomes that much more pointed, his listeners selected by the wind that carries his words instead of simply overhearing them as they echo. This works to destabilise the distinction between the imagined and the real soundscape, blurring the boundaries between the two as this imagined wind travels between the real and imagined soundscapes to transport the words of the poet.

4.2.3 *Echo*

In her traditional form as a force that echoes the poet’s words around the landscape, living in the resonant spaces created by the poet, we rarely see Echo in Serafino’s verse. Though we see the inclusion of some of her usual haunts, the featuring of caves, rocks, and cliffs that comprise her domain, Serafino appears to rely entirely on the wind to transport his words, excluding Echo and her sonic devices almost entirely from his soundscape. We find Echo named once - a reference to the story of Echo and Narcissus is used as an opening to a strambotto: ‘As Narcissus was cruel to Echo.’[[371]](#footnote-371) But there is no sonic aspect to her inclusion here, rather Serafino is drawing on Echo solely as a sympathetic comparator, using her mistreatment at the hands of Narcissus and her story of rejected love to draw comparisons with his own situation, to reflect positively on himself and frame his beloved in a less flattering light. This is not without precedent, as Petrarch too frames the beloved as Narcissus (canzone 45, 9-11), casting himself in the role of Echo to gain sympathy for his plight.[[372]](#footnote-372) By referring to the earlier part of her story, at which point Echo is mistreated and heartbroken, Serafino avoids the later stage in her tale when she has been reduced to mere voice, so we see only the utilisation of her status as an unrequited lover.

But despite this, Serafino has been noted for his use of Echo and was a prominent poet in vernacular echo lyric.[[373]](#footnote-373) Rather than using Echo as an imagined force, echoing his words in a fictitious landscape, Serafino employs her properties in the real performance of his verse, repeating the final words and phrases of his lines in answer to his own questions. The most famous example of this usage can be found in the work of Poliziano, whose *l’Eco* is believed to be the first vernacular poem to employ this device. Appearing in print in 1494, Poliziano’s work was one of the most influential poems to be written in this genre in terms of its reach and popularity:[[374]](#footnote-374)

What are you doing Echo, while I call you? I love.

Do you love two, or one alone? One alone.

And you alone, no other do I love. I love others.

Then you don’t love one alone? One alone.

This is to say I do not love you. I do not love you.

He who you love, do you love him alone? Alone.

Who has taken you from my love? Love.

What does he to whom you bring love do? Ah, he dies.

Che fai tu Echo mentre ch’io ti chiamo? Amo.

Ami tu duo pur un solo? Un solo.

Et io te sol & non altri amo? Altri amo.

Dunque non ami tu un solo? Un solo.

Questo e un dirmi i non t’amo? I non t’amo.

Quel che tu ami, ami’l tu solo? Solo.

Chi t’ha levato dal mio amore? Amore.

Che fa quello a chi porti amore? A! more.[[375]](#footnote-375)

Only a few words are used to create the echo, with each word being simply repeated to follow the rhyme scheme – only the last repetition of ‘amore’ introduces a change of meaning in the repetition, pivoting to the verb ‘morire’. Echo is named directly in the first line, leaving no mystery as to whether the echoing device is related to the nymph, and establishing that the work is a dialogue between the poet and the nymph, who is only able to reply through the repetition of the poet’s own words. This type of echoing no doubt calls back to the Ovidian tale of Echo (*Metamorphoses*, III, 375-390), but Poliziano himself identifies an older and much lesser-known Greek poet, Gauradas, as the inspiration for his verse.[[376]](#footnote-376) And indeed, the simplicity of the technique employed by Poliziano here does imply Gauradas as his original source.[[377]](#footnote-377)

Serafino, like Poliziano, employs this echoing technique in his work, and in the *Opera* - which very helpfully collects Serafino’s verse into categories - we find three *strambotti* in a section under the heading ‘Ecco’. This heading is interesting, as such demarcations are few and far between in the *Opera*, which generally lists verse of similar content close together without stating when one section ends and the next begins, beyond demarcations between different verse forms. That the editor felt the need to put such a heading in suggests the title would be helpful in their identification for the reader, and that these echo poems were notable for their use of the device. It should be noted as well that Serafino employs a much wider range of end-rhymes in comparison to Poliziano, who uses only three, and this is true of all of Serafino’s echo poems, which do not duplicate words in the rhyme scheme generally. This echo poetry presents an interesting question as to the improvised nature of such verse. Despite its notably sonic properties, these kinds of end-rhyme devices require planning, and the diversity in Serafino’s end rhymes, not relying on a very small selection but utilising a much wider range, suggests the precomposed nature of such verse. Echo herself is not named in any of the strambotti as she is by Poliziano, but the added title and the echoing device itself leave no ambiguity as to her presence.

The following is one of the three echo poems; all three are similar in style:

Oh, who was it that stole my slumber? I.

Ah, who responds to my cries? Love.

Can my prayers, Love, bind you? They can.

Tell me, does she prize my love? She dies.

Then the heavens do not will my happiness? They do.

Who will put an end to my pain? Time.

And what can I do to please her? Try.

You hope then, to give me the wind? The wind.

Deh fusse qui chi me to el somno? Somno.

Ah chi responde al mio clamore? Amore.

Miei prieghi amor stringer te ponno? Ponno.

Dimi costei prezza el mio amore? More.

Dunque li ciel mio ben non vonno? Vonno.

Chi darà fine al mio dolore? L’hore.

E che ho da far lei sia contenta? Tenta.

Speri poi tu darme la venta? Venta.[[378]](#footnote-378)

Unlike Poliziano’s echo poem, the identity of the replying voice is less clear. The repeating nature of the voice suggests that the respondent is Echo, replying to the poet in the only way she is able, but the voice is also identified as love in the second line, when Serafino asks who is responding to his cries. By using this device, the poet’s words are forced to repeat, making it unclear if the work is a true dialogue - that is, a separate entity identified as either love or Echo is answering the poet through the repetition of his words - or if the poet himself becomes Echo, and the work then is reduced to an echo chamber, providing no real answers but echoing the responses that the poet wishes to hear back to him. This leaves ambiguity as to whether the echo is indeed a distinct sonic actor, or if the poet as echo is replying to his own complaints. As such the level of hopefulness portrayed in the poem, the belief that things may get better and the poet’s attempts will not prove fruitless, become, like the Ovidian tale of Echo, that much more desperate and sad.

Excluded from the imaginary, then, Echo finds her place in the real-world soundscape of Serafino’s poetry; rather than being employed in a more abstract capacity as she usually is by contemporary poets, Echo is called to literally echo the poet’s words in the performance of these works. Despite the ambiguity in the identity of the replying voice, in performance this uncertainty is gone - Serafino is both parts of the dialogue, replying to his own questions. This allows him to utilise Echo/echo as a sympathetic comparator to his own pain and plight, and highlight its fruitlessness, whilst also using her sonic properties to create a dialogue within the *strambotto.*

4.2.4 *Sound of the verse itself*

Something that becomes very apparent to anyone who decides to read a large volume of Serafino’s poetry is how innately musical the verse is; that is, how the repetition and structures used by the poet lend themselves to the inflection of lines and words in a pleasing manner when read aloud. There is a natural movement and feel to the verse, which very much aligns with the praise given to Serafino for his unity of words and music in performance. Indeed, Serafino’s verse stands out from its peers in this regard, and such characteristics are felt much more strongly in his verse in comparison to his contemporaries, including Tebaldeo, Cariteo, and Sasso to name only a few.

One of the devices employed frequently by Serafino is the repetition of the end of the poetic line. The repeated ending rhyme-word was a common feature of *strambotti* from the late fifteenth century and can be seen in both Serafino and his contemporary Sasso’s work, as well as others.[[379]](#footnote-379) For Serafino, the structure this creates is very similar to what was seen with his use of echo, that is, it entails the direct repetion of the final word of each line. However, unlike Serafino’s use of echo, the use of this repetition appears to be far more related to how the line will sound in performance than his experimentation with poetic styles, and does not change the word meaning in the same way:

Wandering I go from stone to stone,

Scattered nightly, and from mountain to mountain,

Alone, alone, afflicted, afflicted, weak, weak.

Lost & facing death, facing death.

Praying to heaven every step, every step.

That he would help me with hands outstretched, outstretched.

That I doubt to return to all, to all,

Slowly, slowly, wearily, wearily, wasting, wasting.

Peregrinando vo di sasso in sasso

Disperso nocte, & di monte in monte

Solo solo, afllicto afflicto, lasso lasso

Smarrito & con la morte a fronte a fronte

Pregando elcielo ogn’hor de passo in passo

Che aiuti me, con le man gionte gionte

Che dubito tornarmi al tutto al tutto

Piano piano, stanco stanco, asciutto ascuitto.[[380]](#footnote-380)

The repetition at the ends of the lines provides emphasis, but it is perhaps not the most elegant literary device; rather, it is memorable and easy to repeat. Serafino’s use of full lines of repeated words, seen in the above example in lines three and eight, is rather unique to the poet, and not often seen as pervasively in the work of his contemporaries, such as Sasso.

In addition to Serafino’s use of repetition, something we see frequently in Serafino’s strambotti is the use of questioning and answering phrases. These again align with much of what we saw in his echo poetry, creating a dialogue in which the poet is both speakers:

Death. What do you want? I yearn for you: here I am next to you.

Take me: what for? I miss my pain.

I can't: Oh, can’t you? Not for now.

Why? Because in you I cannot find a heart.

What have you done? Don't you know, fool, where you have put it?

Ah ah: what is it? I know: it's because of love.

But what will I do? Make her return it.

He who has no life cannot die.

Morte. che voi? te bramo: ecco mi appresso.

Prende mi: a che? che manche el mio dolore.

Non posso: ohime non puoi? non per adesso.

Perche? perho che in te non trovo el core.

Che a facto? hor non sai stolto ove lhai messo?

Ah ah: che ce? si so: ne e causa amore.

Ma che farò? Fatte’l restituire.

Che chi vita non ha non può morire.[[381]](#footnote-381)

Here we are presented with a conversation between the poet and death. The structure of the *strambotto* is such that we see the dialogue between the two speakers more than once per line, creating a quick back and forth that does not align with the strambotto structure in any obvious way; sometimes we see each speaker multiple times in a line. Instead, the structure creates consistency in creating rising and falling phrases, with all but the final line containing this back and forth, question and answer structure. The presence of questioning in Serafino’s verse so pervasively may suggest to some degree the melodic inflection of the line, suggesting the rising and falling of the performance, with the last line of the *strambotto* breaking this mould in order to give the sense of an ending to the work.

The compliments given to Serafino’s verse appear to come from the ultimate marrying of the words and the music - a true Orpheus. In his verse, this is portrayed in the easy musicality of the words; it is easy to read and provides the suggestion of melodic inflection with no musical setting required. Although there was much praise from more academic circles, Calmeta stresses Serafino’s popularity with the masses, for which his verse must have held wide ranging appeal, with a combination of memorable lyrics and a tune that could get stuck in the head of a listener like a modern-day earworm.

4.3 *Conclusion*

Serafino’s constructed sound is a fascinating reflection of his ambition and poetic skill. He presents us with a focused sonic image and narrative of himself in his verse that allows little room for experimentation or deviance from an established ideal and plays with the boundaries of real and imagined sound to an extreme. In creating this orphic ideal of himself in performance, there was no demand to create an imagined landscape for him to inhabit, as this would go against his aims; the listeners to his verse did not need to imagine an Arcadian landscape through which Serafino as character might be found wondering, as his world was their world, and the poet as Orpheus was the singer in front of them.

This consistency and blurring of boundaries is also seen in his manipulation of other elements in his verse. In using the wind as the force which transports his words, listeners to his verse can understand themselves as catching his complaints as he throws them into his imagined soundscape, but also into the real one. Combined with his lack of an imagined landscape generally, this adds once again to the blurring of boundaries between the real and imagined, as the constructed space in which Serafino’s verse exists becomes his real performance setting. This is only compounded by his use of Echo in his verse; by providing actual echoing of his words rather than invoking their imagined resonance, Serafino avoids the trappings of an imaged landscape once more as he takes on the role of the echo himself.

Serafino then so greatly inhabits the role of orphic poet that his imagined soundscape becomes his real setting - they overlap entirely. It is in his work that we see the truest union of performed and imagined soundscapes, maintaining a consistent image of himself that was concordant with the sound and sight of his verse in performance. Indeed, this consistency in his created image and sound could explain to some degree the vast number of imitations of his work which were so often accepted as his own, as Serafino’s focused soundscape was more easily copied than that of poets whose poetic soundscapes were more greatly varied and elaborately imaged.

**Chapter 5: Panfilo Sasso**

Panfilo Sasso, a pseudonym for Sasso de’ Sassi, was a Modenese poet whose career spanned the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Sasso has broadly been defined as a producer of ‘courtly poetry’, with his secluded lifestyle seeing him labelled as a ‘courtier without a court’ by the few scholars to have examined his work.[[382]](#footnote-382) He was born in Modena, likely in 1455, but beyond this all of his early life, training, and career is a mystery. The first record of Sasso appears in the 1490s, where his suggested year of birth, as well as his whereabouts, are confirmed in a 1493 letter written by Sasso where he states his age as 38, and his location as Verona.[[383]](#footnote-383) His correspondent was Cassandra Fedele, a ‘child prodigy’, who had given a public oration at the University of Padua in 1487 and had cultivated a wide circle of intellectual contacts, which included Sasso among its ranks. As suggested by Sarah Gwyneth Ross, Sasso created a ‘father-daughter’-like relationship with the poet to allow the two to correspond without suspicion, and their friendship may have been particularly useful for Sasso in order to further his own standing and help with the later publication of his work.[[384]](#footnote-384)

By 1498, Sasso had moved to Brescia; he appears to have had strong patriotic links to the region, reflected in his Latin works in particular which often work to build upon the myth and prestige of the city.[[385]](#footnote-385) His patriotism to the region is also highlighted in his contributions to a multiauthor volume of vernacular poetry written in praise of the female poet Laura Brenzoni that was likely collected in the 1490s.[[386]](#footnote-386) As highlighted by Virginia Cox, whilst Sasso centres his praise in this volume on the virtues and beauty of Laura herself, he also makes persistent reference to the city she ‘honours’, and Cox goes as far as to identify Sasso as an active propagandist for the city.[[387]](#footnote-387) This patriotism helps to illuminate Sasso’s earlier life further; with such strong ties to the area, it would seem that Sasso likely spent a reasonable amount of his earlier years in the region, to have built such a relationship with the city.

It was whilst in Brescia that Sasso produced a flurry of publications in both Latin and the vernacular with the printer Bernardino Misinta. In 1499, his collection of Latin works, entitled *Pamphili Saxi Poetae lepidissimi epigrammatum libri quattuor, distichorum libri duo, de bello gallico, de laudibus Veronae, et elegiarum liber unus*, was published with a dedication to Sigismondo Gonzaga, the brother of the Marquess of Mantua, Francesco II Gonzaga. It is likely that his political invective against Ludovico il Moro, *Carmen ad Onophrium et alia carmina*, was published in the same year. 1500 saw the publication of the *Versi in lode de la lyra*, as well as the first complete edition of his *Opera*, featuring 407 sonnets, 38 *capitoli*, and 5 eclogues. The *Opera* was dedicated to the sister of the Marquess, Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino, to whom the first three sonnets of the *Opera* were also individually dedicated. These early publications by Sasso were recognised with a gift of money in 1500 from the Brescia city council, likely for their patriotic sentiment.[[388]](#footnote-388) In 1501, separate to the publication of the *Opera*, Sasso published his *Strambotti*, capitalising on the popularity of the genre at the time. The edition was printed a total of three times in 1501: in Brescia by Misinta, but also in Rome by Johann Besicken and Martin van Amsterdam, and Milan by Leonardo Pachel. Interestingly, the *Strambotti* in particular have a complicated editorial history, with the biggest revisions being the censorship of some of the work in the first decade after its original publication for its heretical content, as well as different opening engravings.[[389]](#footnote-389) There can be no doubt of the success and popularity of Sasso’s vernacular texts, given their frequent re-issues, indicating that he gained a strong readership despite his lack of a courtly appointment. The first decade of the sixteenth century saw no less than seven editions of the *Opera*, reprinted in Milan in 1502 by Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, and more significantly in Venice by Bernardino de’ Viani in 1501, who would go on to print the edition a further four times before 1510 and a total of nine times in the period 1501-1519. The *Strambotti* also saw a good level of success in their print publications, with at least five reprints within the decade in addition to the three prints of 1501.

In 1504, Sasso returned to Modena, where he may have taken on a teaching role, suggested by the phrase ‘professore delle bone arte’ that was added to the titles of his works from that point.[[390]](#footnote-390) After this Sasso likely moved to Cesena in 1508, where he appears to have settled for the remainder of his life. He continues to appear in records briefly for the next decade or so, including a mention in the 1516 and 1521 editions of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. At some point between the late 1510s and his death in 1527, Sasso was appointed Governor and *Podestà* of Longiano, a small village near Cesena, a post given to him by Count Guido Rangoni. This post may have come after the incident in 1523, when Sasso was tried for heresy and for instruction in the practice of magic of a peasant witch, Anastasia la Frappona.[[391]](#footnote-391) Sasso escaped the charges due to the intervention of Count Rangoni and the Tassoni family.[[392]](#footnote-392) After this we hear nothing more of Sasso until his death in 1527 in Longiano:

The magnificent poet Sasso Modenese died at Longiano in Romagna, in which land he was Governor and Podestà and was a most learned old man; which office had been given to him by Count Guido Rangoni to be his place, and for the love he bore him, and for his virtues, who was loved by all the world.

Il magnifico Poeta Messer Saxo Modenese è morto a Lonzani in Romagna, in la quale terra era Governatore et Podestà, et era vecchio dottissimo; il quale officio che lo aveva dato il Sig. Conte Guido Rangoni per esser suo desso luogo, et per l’amore che gli portava, et per le sue virtù, che era amato da tutto il mondo.[[393]](#footnote-393)

What is most striking about Sasso’s life is his avoidance of any kind of courtly setting, where Sasso’s poetic contemporaries, such as Serafino and Antonio Tebaldeo, thrived. It seems that this was a conscious decision on Sasso’s part, rather than an indication of the poor quality of his verse or his lack of performance abilities. Indeed, in a letter from the early 1490s, written by Matteo Bosso to Aldeodalo Broilo, Bosso recounts a conversation with Sasso regarding his disdain of the courts:

Finally, as he told me himself, when he was invited to certain kings’ and princes’ courts and offered not insignificant honours and rewards, he refused, regarding it as ignoble and sordid for one who is desirous of philosophy (so he himself said) to serve at the nod and whim of those who are purple-robed slaves of evil desires and vices, whose entire glory seems to be based on flattery, fraud, plunder, and license.

Denique ut contulit mecum amice: ad regum & principum quasdam aulas provocatus etiam premiis honoribusque non infimis recusavit accedere illiberale & sordidum ducens cum qui philosophiae sit auidus (sic ipse dicebat) iis ad nutum libidinemque servire: quae purpurata cupiditatum malarum & vitiorum mancipia sint: & tota quorum gloria videat in adulatione fraude rapina omnique licentia posita.[[394]](#footnote-394)

Here, Bosso suggests that Sasso had been given the opportunity for employment in a courtly setting—though at which court or courts is not specified—but chose to remain isolated due to his dislike of the frivolity of the courts and their values, seemingly so distant from his own. We may regard Sasso’s comments to Bosso with a degree of scepticism; we have no record of Sasso ever being offered a position at court beyond his own reported statement, and his later dedications to members of the Gonzaga family at nearby Mantua would seem to suggest some degree for a search of patronage which rather undermines such ardent distaste for the courts. However, this discontentment with the courtly setting in general is also emphasised in Sasso’s own writings. In one of his *capitoli*, for example,Sasso draws on the themes of exile and the contrast of city and country that are common in pastoral verse to declare that he can only find peace in a remote landscape, going so far as to construe the court as a place of evil:[[395]](#footnote-395)

Freedom, that governs and moderates every spirit

And every human will, is completely lost

Because where justice itself is evil, freedom cannot win.

La libertà che ogni animo ogni voglia

Humana tempra e regge in tutto e persa

Che dove’l iusto è mal lei non ha spoglia.[[396]](#footnote-396)

His avoidance of a courtly setting then seems a conscious choice, and moreover Sasso was decidedly dedicated to his scholarly pursuits, leading a somewhat unusual and itinerant life, of which his rejection of a courtly setting was but one facet.

5.1 *Sasso as Performer*

Beyond the attention paid to his impressive print production around the turn of the century, Sasso as performer and poet has received very little scholarly attention. Indeed, there has been a general disregard of Sasso as merely one of the whole host of poets producing vernacular poetry in the late fifteenth century, with Sasso most often being cited as a follower of Serafino and little more. In his classic study on literary sources of secular music in Italy, Walter H. Rubsamen regards Sasso as ‘well-known poet and improviser with a remarkable memory for the recitation of verses’.[[397]](#footnote-397) Rubsamen is far from complementary about Sasso’s verse, labelling it highly derivative, but acknowledges that the man himself is worthy of some recognition for his improvisatory skills. It seems then, in the little attention Sasso has so far received from scholarship, he is at least recognised for the musical nature of his oeuvre and his performance skills. The association between Sasso and Serafino likely stems from Sasso’s very active role in writing poetry dedicated to Serafino in the wake of his death, as well as the Petrarchan style of both poets’ verse.

Sasso’s choice of vernacular forms, such as his cultivation of the *strambotto*, supports his position as a performer, but we do not have any record of any performances by Sasso at any point in his youth. Nonetheless, the fact that Sasso does not publish any of his work until around the turn of the century, at which time we can estimate him to be around 45, suggests that his work was being transmitted partly or primarily through performance in his earlier life. Indeed, we know that Sasso was active as a poet before this point: a sonnet of Sasso’s entitled ‘Quando nascesti, Amor? – Quando la terra’is believed to have been written some time before 1477, and saw a great level of diffusion in both print and manuscript form, suggesting that Sasso was already seeing some level of success by the time he was reaching his early 20s.[[398]](#footnote-398) This would also suggest Sasso’s career was very much alive and seeing success nearly a decade before Serafino began to gain recognition for his own performance skills. However, the lack of records about his activity have made him a more elusive individual to track down.

One indication of Sasso’s whereabouts and activities in his earlier years, prior to his re-emergence into the historical record in the 1490s, is suggested in his letter to Fedele, where he writes:

And since I, Panfilo Sasso of Modena, who have lived in the village of Raffa in the province of Verona for thirty-eight years, cause men to stop and marvel,(an effect you also have with your good letters on the subjects of philosophy and theology), beguiled by my extemporaneous poems, which are sung in meters and accompanied on the lyre or kithara, I also have sent you praises of yourself in addition to my prior eulogy of you.

Iccirco cum in praesentia huius Veronensis agri vicum nomine Rapha incolat Pamphilus Saxus Mutinensis octavum & trigesimum circiter agens annum, qui, ut tu, bonis leteris Philosophia & Theologia, & utroque extemporanco poemate lyra citharave, & canta modulis interpolatos stupere mortales facit, ad quem elogium de te meum transmisi aliquid laudem tuarum superaddens.[[399]](#footnote-399)

As we have seen, nearly all the information we have on Sasso’s early life is derived from this one letter. Though we know Sasso had a disliking of the courts and so did not look for employment among their ranks, there is every possibility that he could have been a participant in the *canterini* tradition. In this letter, Sasso suggests he has been a street singer, enchanting the public with his poetry and accompanying himself on a stringed instrument. He suggests he lived in Raffa, a small village about twenty miles south of Verona for at least a significant portion of his life, and we have already seen the evidence for his long-standing ties to the surrounding regions especially in his Latin publications.[[400]](#footnote-400)

In addition to his remarks on Sasso’s refusal to work within a court, the letter of Matteo Bosso references a performance of Sasso’s at a dinner in Erbé, presumably in the early 1490s:

I don’t know of anyone else at that age with such learning, sharp wit, and exceptional talent in extemporaneous speech and memory, if not for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Ermalao Barbaro (Venetian patrician), and the pious and blind Aurelio Brandolini… And who, with insuperable ease, could extemporaneously compose as easily in Latin as in his native language any event or matter in any meter at the lyre?

Tantae doctrinae tam acris igenii & quae praeter caetera in eo regnat tantae extemporalis audaciae atque memoriae alium: qui mihi occurrat: ea aetate novi neminem: si tales non fuerint Ioannes Picus Mirandula: & Hermolaus barbarus Patricius Venetus: virque religiosus & caecus Lippus Florentinus… Qui & inaudita facilitate ad omnes eventus resque propositas tam latine: quam materne quovis carmine extemporaliter poetat ad lyram?[[401]](#footnote-401)

Bosso holds Sasso’s performance abilities in the highest esteem, placing him among some of the best performers of poetry in the northern Italian city states in the second half of the fifteenth century. Upon closer examination, we can see that all these poet-performers belong to a slightly older generation than Sasso is most commonly associated with. All these men were noted for their scholarly pursuits, more so than their ability to perform in the case of Pico and Barbaro. The comparison to Aurelio Brandolini is most flattering of Sasso’s performance talents, as Bosso goes to great lengths in some of his other letters to extol Brandolini’s abilities, suggesting his talent was greater than the famous lyre-players of antiquity; ‘Orpheus and Arion yield to him’.[[402]](#footnote-402) It is noteworthy that these are the figures Bosso draws comparison to, as he makes no comparison of Serafino and Sasso, despite Serafino being at the peak of his career at this point, supporting the contention that the connections between Sasso and Serafino were formed at a later date, or are a largely modern construction.

Beyond these accounts, we can see reflections of Sasso’s talents as a performer within his verse, and the image we find is certainly that of a varied and experienced poet. In the *Versi in laude della lyra* we are presented with a continuous narrative of 40 stanzas in *ottava rima*, which in performance was no doubt reminiscent of the *cantarini* chivalric epics, in form if not in content. The work, as suggested by the title, covers just about all the famous lyre players, ancient and modern, mythical and real. We also see Sasso unite a wide range of contemporary poets in their laments upon their pains in love:

Finally my Paride and Tebaldeo,

Looking for a lonely hermitage

where they can lament the bitter harshness of love,

Which has made both of them sick and sad

Then Vincenzo, Serafino and Timoteo,

who find with Amor no shelter or shield,

wandering on a twisted and torturous path.

Infin che’l mio Parisse e Tebaldeo

Cercando loco solitario et ermo

Per lamentarse d’Amor crudo e reo

Che l’uno e l’altro fa tristo et inferno

Vincenzio, Serafino et Timoteo

Che non trovan con lui riparo e schermo

Verran qua per sentiero obliquo e torto.[[403]](#footnote-403)

In his own account of the many poets who performed vernacular verse, he makes no distinctions between them based on their other interests, be they poetic or scholarly. In this list we can see a range of performers, from Antonio Tebaldeo and Paride da Ceresara, both of whom are less recognised as performers but produced a wide range of vernacular verse among other scholarly pursuits, as well as Timoteo Viti, and the famed Serafino Aquilano. Sasso’s reference to ‘Vincenzo’ likely refers to Vincenzo Calmeta, who though now recognised more for his biography on Serafino, was also a producer of courtly vernacular lyric, and was present in Mantua during 1498 putting him in close proximity to Sasso at the time, and knew Sasso, as the two later had a falling out.[[404]](#footnote-404)

Sasso’s reference to both the lyre and the cithara seen in his letter to Fedele raises the question of exactly what instrument, or indeed instruments, he played to accompany himself in verse. This tendency to switch between lyre or cithara is also one that can be seen in his verse, where we see him refer to both as being the instrument he plays. This is also seen in his *Versi in lode della lyra*, which confusingly opens with the line ‘o dolce cethra,’which would appear to reference Sasso’s instrument of choice as a small lute, a term also used by his contemporary Tebaldeo.[[405]](#footnote-405)Indeed, variations of cithara - such as cetra, citera or guitarra – can refer generically to both bowed stringed instruments, such as the *lira di braccio*, but also to those that were plucked, such as the lute. Blake Wilson suggests in his survey of fifteenth-century *canterini* that the lute was rarely their instrument of choice, with them instead preferring the viola, and later in the century the *lira di braccio*.[[406]](#footnote-406) However, both the lute and *lira di braccio* were instruments of choice for the courtly poet, and so either or both could have been played by Sasso. If we are to believe Sasso was a *canterino* then we would assume he played the *lira di braccio*, supported in part by Bosso’s use of *lyra* in his description of Sasso’s performance, which most frequently refers to an instrument that is bowed rather than plucked. But this does not solve the issue of Sasso’s reference to both the lyre and the cithara in his letter to Fedele.

Turning to the use of both names in the work of Sasso’s contemporaries provides at least an opportunity for comparison, to see if Sasso’s general use of the terms conforms to some sort of norm.[[407]](#footnote-407) In the published *Opera* of Antonio Tebaldeo, who is perhaps one of the better poetic comparators here given that, like Sasso, he wrote in both Latin and the vernacular, he almost exclusively uses cetra, with one exception in reference to Apollo.[[408]](#footnote-408) The use of cetra, as previously mentioned, could refer to a specific instrument in itself, a small lute, which could provide evidence for this being the instrument of choice of Tebaldeo, and one of the instruments played by Sasso.[[409]](#footnote-409) In the work of Serafino, we see that he refers to himself as playing the cithara, but to Apollo as playing the lyre—but there is no established pattern here given that Serafino refers to both instruments just one time each.[[410]](#footnote-410) The *Opera* of Benedetto Gareth, better known as ‘Il Cariteo,’ on the other hand, sees the exclusive use of lyre as his instrument of choice.[[411]](#footnote-411) On one hand, the choice between the two instruments often seems a poetic one; *lyra* is seen most frequently at the end of a line of poetry as it acts as a fairly easy rhyming word for the poet, a seemingly essential choice if the poet if composing his verse in a more spontaneous manner. In comparison, the word *cetra* and its variations have far fewer rhyming choices, and it is most frequently seen within the body of verse instead of at the line-end. Indeed, Tortelli’s Orthographia, which was a standard Latin lexicon at the time, refers to the cithara as ‘a musical instrument which is called ‘lyre’’, suggesting the two could be used interchangeably.[[412]](#footnote-412)Apart from this, there does seem to be a tendency for poets to favour either *lyra* or *cetra* in reference to their own playing, as seen in the examples of Tebaldeo and Cariteo, and so Sasso is an outlier in referring to himself as playing both in his verse, and most certainly in his letter. How far this could be used as an argument to suggest he was accompanying himself on both the lute and *lira di braccio* is limited, but it certainly seems to suggest he is referring to multiple instruments.

5.2 *Verse Analysis*

At first glance, Sasso appears to indulge in almost every trope imaginable in his verse, from a whole host of classical characters to a wide range of nature and pastoral references. Whilst Sasso’s use of these elements is very much in line with our understanding of the common tropes seen in ‘courtly verse’ at this time, it is noteworthy that Sasso utilises a much wider range of female characters, specifically classical characters, as direct comparators to his authorial voice. The tropes most frequently seen in male authored verse are those of Orpheus and Arion, which would give Sasso the chance to construct himself as a poet of old in the same manner as Serafino. But Sasso does not do this; whilst Orpheus, Apollo and Arion appear, they feature most often as distinct actors in the soundscape, in scenes and descriptions, rather than in comparison to the authorial voice. Instead, we see the greater invocation of female classical characters, characterising the voice of the author frequently as feminine as he utilises the tales of their woe and mistreatment in crafting his authorial persona. In his *Versi in lode della lyra* we are provided with a list of his most popular comparators in the space of one stanza:

I sing as Procne and Philomena do

Led to miserable and wretched fate

Crying of her ancient and cruel sorrow

…

I sing in fortune like the siren

And as does the wretched turtle dove

See it left abandoned and alone

Canto como fa progne e philomena

condotte in sorte miseranda e fella

sfogando la sua antiqua e crudel pena

…

Canto in fortuna como la syrena

E come fa l’aflitta tortorella

vidua lassa abandonata e sola.[[413]](#footnote-413)

Here we see the use of the sisters Procne and Philomena, as well as the siren and the turtledove. These characters, as well as the nymph Echo, feature heavily throughout Sasso’s vernacular verse. Also worthy of note is the character of Medusa, who, although she lends no sonic properties to make her relevant here, appears frequently throughout Sasso’s *Opera*,suggesting his focus on female classical characters within the world of his work extends beyond sonic aspects.

5.2.1 *Birdsong*

One of the most frequent nature references we see in Sasso’s work is birdsong, both in comparison to the authorial voice and as a distinct contribution to the soundscape in a more generally pastoral manner. Multiple species of bird with romantic connotations from the classical and natural worlds are used to highlight different aspects of Sasso’s heartbreak at the hands of his beloved in his verse, whilst adding to the pastoral element of his imagined soundscape. By using the sounds of these birds as comparators to his own voice, Sasso deliberately and directly destabilises the distinction between the sound of his verse in performance and the sounds of the landscape setting constructed within his verse, creating a kind of performative soundscape that is highly characteristic of contemporary pastoral.

One popular bird to which Sasso draws comparisons is the swan:

As the sad swan does when he dies,

the tongue sings and says the words,

the heart is torn, complains and grieves.

Como fa el tristo Cygno quando el more

La lingua canta e dice le parole

El cuor si strugge se lamenta e duole [[414]](#footnote-414)

The use of swan song was a popular trope and comes from an ancient Greek belief that the swan sings most beautifully at the point of their death; they were inherently musical animals, being connected to the god Apollo and the goddess Aphrodite or Venus, both associated with music. In the work of Sasso this swan comparison extends to characterise the state of the author as being near death, only able to produce the music that he does because of his great anguish, and also works to characterise the beauty of the author’s voice.

We also see Sasso’s extensive use of the turtledove, both as a comparator and as a distinct contributor:

The sorrowful and sad turtle dove,

since she has lost her sweet companion,

wanders through woods and countryside

fleeing as far as the human eye can see.

La tortorella dolorosa e trista

dapoi che ha perso la dolce compagna

seletta va per bochi e per campagna

fuggendo quanto po l’humana vista.[[415]](#footnote-415)

According to the medieval bestiary tradition, the turtledove was a bird believed to mate for life, who at the loss of their mate, never ceased to mourn them.[[416]](#footnote-416) As such they make ideal characters either as sympathetic listeners or as comparators to the poet’s own state. Sasso also uses the turtledove as a comparator to himself, opening one strambotto, ‘crying, I go like the turtledove without a companion’.[[417]](#footnote-417) By doing this, Sasso is utilising the common knowledge of the turtledove as a devoted bird who takes only one mate to create a devotional image that reflects positively back on himself. This is an opportune comparator for the poet in characterising both his love and his suffering as eternal, whilst maintaining the sonic properties of the bird’s song. It would seem perhaps that Sasso is not intending to reference any other aspect of the turtledove beyond this evocation, and as a solitary case, his identifying of the authorial voice with a character of possible feminine origins would seem unusual. But, as we will go on to see, this is highly characteristic of Sasso’s use of sonic comparators more generally.

5.2.2 *Sirens*

The presence of the sirens in Sasso’s verse is not in itself surprising. The Homeric sirens with their terrifying abilities to pull men and ships to their death make for an obvious comparator to the sound of the beloved, who in her imagined mistreatment of the poet dooms him to the same fate as those who hear the sirens, pulled in by her sweet voice only to lose their lives.[[418]](#footnote-418) Sasso does indeed utilise the sirens in this way:

What do you hear? Her sweet words

Don’t you realise? That she is a siren

She will make of you, as of other suns

Do not look at her serene face

That he who holds his eye still in the sun

Loses his sight, and feels distress and pain

Che ascoltate? Le sue dolce parole

non ve acorgete? ​Che glie una Sirena

farà di voi, come de gli altri sole

Non guardate la sua faccia serena

che qual che l’occhio tien fermo nel sole

perda la vista, e sente affanno e pena [[419]](#footnote-419)

The siren is present in her traditional form to serve as a warning, alluding to the sweet words and sounds of the beloved that only serve to hurt and destroy the author. Here she is given both a visible and an audible dimension; we see this in Sasso’s reference to both sweet words and her serene face—which also serve to fragment the siren across the work, as we have seen done with the beloved more generally. In giving her both sound and image, the siren is established as a separate actor in the soundscape, suggesting that she is an entity outside of the author’s control, and thus allowing him to be at her mercy. This duality of senses serves as an additional point to highlight the sound of the siren/beloved over the image of her; whilst the author can choose not to look upon the beloved as siren, he cannot help but hear her, she is acoustically inescapable. By utilising the siren in this way, then, Sasso is able to show his lack of power when faced with the sonic perfection of the beloved, for whom his feelings are beyond his own control, whilst highlighting his awareness that the love he feels causes him great pain and distress.

But for Sasso, the sonic perfection suggested by the siren can also become the source of a positive comparison, and Sasso describes his own lamenting as siren-like: ‘I come to sing as the siren does when her cruel pain grows more and more’.[[420]](#footnote-420) As a comparator to the author and not the beloved, the sirens are forced to become a sympathetic character; she sings as she does for a reason, having been driven to it as a result of her own mistreatment as an unrequited lover. She is no longer singing for the purpose of deceitful allure, but due to her unfortunate circumstance. The visual element of the siren is also stripped away; she becomes nothing but sound, creating a comparator that is sonic perfection lamenting as a result of her agony, but still has the power to enchant and allure. With the visual element gone and her lamenting justified, the siren becomes an ideal positive comparator to Sasso’s own voice for both the quality of his singing, and his power to ‘enchant’ his audience. Such a use of the sirens is not completely without precedent: we can see at least in ancient usage the sirens as a positive comparator for male oration, such as the presence of a siren on the tomb of the ancient Greek orator Isocrates, or in descriptions of Greek writers such as Homer, Bacchylides, and Menander.[[421]](#footnote-421) However, in Italian verse around 1500, the use of the sirens as a comparator to the male authorial voice is extremely rare, if not unique to Sasso.

5.2.3 *Echo*

Another female classical character used by Sasso as a comparator to his authorial voice is the nymph Echo. Sasso draws on the Ovidian myth of Echo, who, after being rejected by her love Narcissus, wastes away to nothing but a repeating voice, and it is this final form of Echo that we encounter most frequently. In harnessing this version of Echo, Sasso utilises her as the force which reverberates the sound of his works around his imagined landscape, and as such shows his awareness of the space and its boundaries in both a real and an imagined manner, whilst also drawing on her as a sympathetic listener and comparator for his plight.[[422]](#footnote-422) As a result, we can see the presence of Echo without direct invocation:

You fly with desire, I have broken my wings,

You sing on a flowery and pleasant hillside,

I weep among caverns and caves.

Tu voli col desio, io l’ale ho rotte

tu canti in piaggia florida & amena

io piango fra spelonche e cave grotte.[[423]](#footnote-423)

Here we are presented with a dialogue of extremes, with the addition of the imagined location compounding the meaning of the sound being produced. Within his cave, the author’s weeping will echo back only on himself, an imagined environment recognisable for its sonic properties and as the traditional domain of Echo.[[424]](#footnote-424) This is heightened by the contrast with the beloved’s song, which can fly through the imagined landscape and be heard by the poet still. This dichotomy in itself suggests parallels to the tale of Echo and Narcissus, with the beloved unaware of the plight of the author, despite her profound effect on him.

We also see Sasso’s direct acknowledgment of Echo for both her character and sonic properties when he says:

A tree without a branch, a dry trunk

That hears my laments, my sorrows.

Desire, listen to the painful sound of Echo.

Uno arbor senza ramo, un tronco secco,

Che‘l mio lamento odir, el mio dolore

Desidera, ascolta el son dolente d’Ecco.[[425]](#footnote-425)

Again, we see the reference to a hollow natural element that provides a resonant space for the sonic echo. But here, more than simply being the domain of Echo as we saw in reference to the cave imagery, the dead and empty nature of the tree also refers to the withering away of Echo, as she turns to nothing but voice. The ‘painful sound’ makes reference to both Echo’s suffering at the hands of Narcissus, and her echoing of the poet’s own suffering, as Echo is lacking in voice until she is given speech to repeat. The call to desire provides a listener to the whole scene, as Sasso asks his desire to recognise that the object of its affection is leading to his pain, adding the dimension of the poet’s separation from his own feelings to suggest they are outside of his control.

Whilst Echo most commonly features as a comparator and sonic device, invoked directly through name or indirectly through landscape elements, Sasso takes this one step further, showing us that he himself turns into Echo in a series of quick metamorphoses:

Now am I a salamander, who is thrown in the fire

And soon I wait to be transformed into Echo

So as never to rest from answering.

Hor salamandra son che in foco iace

e presto aspetto tramutarme in Ecco

per non haver mai rispondendo pace.[[426]](#footnote-426)

This metamorphosis by Sasso is not without precedent, as Petrarch too transforms into Echo in *canzone* 23:

…I felt my bones

And sinew turn to flint: nothing remains

Now but a voice shaken from my poor frame

Calling on death and calling out her name.

…I nervi et l’ossa

Mi volse in dira selce: et cosi scossa

Voce rimasi de l’antiche some,

Chiamando Morte, et lei sola per nome.[[427]](#footnote-427)

In Petrarch, this is but one of many transformations, and unlike Sasso he does not name Echo directly, rather inferring his metamorphosis through the reduction of his body to nothing but voice. In comparison, Sasso does name Echo, lending an effeminacy to the transformation through the direct reference. This is likely in part because the transformation has not yet happened; he ‘waits to be transformed,’ and so by naming Echo, Sasso is able to draw more quickly on her story’s greater narrative. But Echo is not the only female character Sasso moves to fully embody through transformation, suggesting that this effeminacy is a conscious move on the part of the poet. Of all the female classical characters we see Sasso utilise, Echo provides one of the most interesting comparisons to the poet himself, as a symbol of loneliness and isolation, echoing Sasso’s self-imposed isolation from the traditional realms of the courtly poets.

5.2.4 *Procne and Philomena*

The final set of sounding female classical characters seen frequently in Sasso’s verse are the sisters Procne and Philomena. Whilst these are the sisters from the Ovidian tale, they are utilised in their final forms of a swallow and a nightingale respectively, following their metamorphoses at the end of the classical myth. Their use by male poets in general refers to a rather sanitised version of the story, as Ann Rosalind Jones comments:

Male poets displaced the male violence and guilt and the female linguistic loss in both tales [Echo and Philomena] into purified pastoral settings and reworked them into occasions for rhetorical virtuosity.[[428]](#footnote-428)

In Sasso’s verse, we see Procne and Philomena most frequently as ‘sad sisters’, contributing their sweet laments in their bird forms to Sasso’s soundscape to create a setting and a sorrowful atmosphere in which to stage the voice of the author.[[429]](#footnote-429) There is some hint to the greater story of the sisters in the mention of their ‘punishment’—that is, their metamorphosis into birds—but beyond this it is not explored:

With sweet verses, Procne and Philomena

weep, singing of their ancient punishment.

Con dolci versi Progne e Philomena

piange cantando la sua antiqua poena.[[430]](#footnote-430)

In this case, they are distinct actors within the soundscape, adding to general mood as well as being present as sympathetic listeners for the author’s voice in its own lamenting. Sasso does not mention Tereus, and so does not suggest the sisters have been wronged in some way. Instead, by suggesting that the sisters sing as a result of their ‘ancient punishment,’ Sasso positions them in an almost repentant position, regretful of their prior actions even though their actions themselves are not directly referenced. Sasso’s mention of their punishment as being ancient could be taken to refer to the myth as ancient, or indeed to suggest that the transformation of the sisters itself is what is old, and the sisters have existed as birds ever since.

There is a stark contrast between the featuring of the sisters together, in which they become distinct actors within the soundscape who, suffering a punishment for their actions, can listen and sympathise with Sasso, but are not the most advantageous of comparators, and Philomena alone, who is presented as a far more sympathetic character to whom positive comparisons can be made. Philomena features frequently alone, and indeed is one of the most prevalent characters in Sasso’s verse, appearing well over a dozen times across both the *Opera* and *Strambotti*. Her presence individually is almost always for comparison to her sweet sound or laments, and not to her status as a repentant character as she appears with her sister. At the beginning of a work she may feature to set a scene: ‘When I rise and hear Philomena sing so sweet.’[[431]](#footnote-431) Here the brief use of Philomena is as an inspirational force for one who laments, much like the beloved, and her sounds are characterised by their sweetness, prompting the author to sing beautifully of his own agony. At the close of a work, Philomena may feature as a comparator for the author: ‘and Philomena returns to her lament.’[[432]](#footnote-432) With this, hope is gone, and Philomena’s lament works as a comparator to Sasso’s eternal suffering and continuous cries and tears, as his imagined world is again encased in the darkness of night. In all these instances Philomena’s appearances are brief, her connotations of sweet song and lamentation clearly established through her description and use as a comparator to the author’s voice, but her story is never much explored.

This is in stark contrast to Echo, who, whilst directly named far less frequently, has her story explored to a much greater degree; she is mentioned as many times directly alongside Narcissus, with some reference to her mistreatment, as she features alone. However, in a similar manner to the nymph Echo, we can also see the use of Philomena as a direct comparator and metamorphic destination for the voice of the author:

If I could change into Philomena

This body of mine, so afflicted and weary,

I would begin such sorrowful weeping.

S’io potesse mutar in Philomena

questo mio corpo afflitto, e lasso tanto

cominciarei sì doloroso pianto.[[433]](#footnote-433)

The connotations of Philomena after her metamorphosis into a nightingale, and her beautiful and sorrowful lament, provide an obvious positive reflection for the voice of the author. Just as Sasso transformed into Echo, he is again using the sonic qualities of the character to mirror his own creative skill. This choice by Sasso, even though in line with his use of female classical characters more generally, is interesting, given that we have already seen how Sasso places the blame for the metamorphoses of Procne and Philomena with them—they ‘sing of their ancient punishment.’[[434]](#footnote-434) If Sasso suggests the sisters are repentant figures, then his transformation into Philomena suggests his own awareness that the cause of his pain is at least in part due to his own actions. From a narrative standpoint, this feels like a metamorphosis in which Sasso reflects on his relationship with the beloved from a position of acceptance, suggesting that in some ways he may be regretful of pursuing something that has caused him so much pain. However, this metamorphosis recognises that, like Philomena, it is as a result of this somewhat self-inflicted circumstance that Sasso has been able to produce such beautiful ‘weeping’—that is, his verse. In this particular case there is a sort of irony not connected to the original myth, as female nightingales are actually mute, whilst it is the male birds who sing. In many ways this most probably accidental irony serves to highlight the issues with the wider narrative uses of female classical characters throughout Sasso’s work; in short, whilst Sasso’s use of female classical characters is interesting and novel, they remain under the control of the male author.

5.3 *Conclusions*

There is no denying that the work of Sasso frequently typifies many of the vernacular poetic conventions of his day, demonstrating the many common tropes internal to verse utilised by authors for self-fashioning, and as a result his work is often overlooked by scholars. This situation is perhaps exacerbated by our lack of knowledge concerning Sasso’s early career, and more specifically of his performative career in what would presumably have been its golden period. His seclusion in the vicinity of Verona is certainly unhelpful, given that the small snippets we often gather about poet-performers most frequently come from the courts, the one place Sasso seems to have avoided. But his contacts, and his publishing success, suggest some level of popularity and fame, which we can perhaps infer as stemming from at least a somewhat successful earlier career that was more performance focused.

In considering Sasso alongside Serafino, whilst the poetic production of both men has often been compared, it is clear that their characters could not have been more different. Whilst Serafino moves and searches for a platform for recognition very successfully, Sasso’s choices are more those of the recluse, opting for a solitary and scholarly lifestyle and avoiding the frivolity of court which could have provided him with opportunities to reach for fame. This is reflected in the character and register of their work: both belong to the same genre or idiom, but the authorial identities presented greatly contrast. Whilst Serafino focuses on the sonic superiority of his verse in performance, creating a rich but self-indulgent soundscape to reflect back upon his skills, Sasso’s is more exploratory and has less of a singular vision. Whilst not void of the same tropes and characterisations of greatness as seen in the verse of Serafino, the wide range of characters and exploration of voice should be noted.

When we take a closer look at the nuance of his verse, Sasso’s manipulation of female characters and the female voice, specifically for comparison to his voice as author, is unique, and perhaps amounts to a kind of queering of his male poetic voice, to the extent that he takes on a distinctly feminine tone with reasonable frequency. The sound of women in his poetic soundscape is of course configured and regulated by himself, the male poet, and as such serves in the creation of Sasso’s authorial identity, whilst controlling the level of power and prominence given to feminine voices in his verse. The characters and sounds featured are useful to the poet as a tool to fashion himself in the role of the great unrequited lover, who has been driven to lament by his suffering, and this wholly one-sided result is hardly unexpected. Nonetheless, the use of female characters for comparators increases their importance within the soundscape, as they are directly related to the sound of the authorial voice, rather than distinct actors that remain decidedly feminine and under the author’s narrative control.

This prominence of female characters in Sasso’s work leads us to question why Sasso would choose to create such a focused and distinctive soundscape. Though unique in the extent of his use of such characters in his soundscape, Sasso was not the only poet to take on the voice of these female classical characters. Taking a slightly different approach to Sasso, another contemporary poet, Bernardo Accolti, has been noted for his frequent use of female protagonists from classical sources in his verse.[[435]](#footnote-435) The notable difference between these two poets is that Sasso utilises a small number of female classical characters that can be exploited for their acoustic properties, whilst Accolti inhabits them as characters, giving voice to female emotion at critical points of their classical tales. In James Coleman’s discussion of Accolti he provides some suggestions as to why this expression of female emotion was, as he describes, fundamental to his repertoire. Though originally Florentine, Accolti moved around the world of the Italian courts during his career, where there were growing numbers of women participating in literary and cultural life. Accolti’s choice of female characters may have been influenced by a search for patronage and growing association with this demographic, though no close relationships to any specific women have been noted.[[436]](#footnote-436) By comparison, Sasso had a number of notable close friendships with women, to the extent that it is through these relationships that information about his life has survived, such as his correspondence with Cassandra Fedele. It seems likely that this female network had an influence on his poetic output, especially given his avoidance of the courts and so greater need of individual patronage and support. Additionally, Coleman also theorises that Accolti’s representation of female voices in performance could be understood in association with Ficino’s theories about poetic frenzy as a female gendered state of emotional possession—that is, that in taking on these feminine voices he was ‘in some ways, merely closing the circle Ficino had begun to sketch.’[[437]](#footnote-437) Sasso, then, as philosopher as well as poet, could perhaps be understood to be exploring this aspect of poetic production by gendering his poetic soundscape as feminine, combining a performance of his own divine inspiration with a mark of respect for his friends among the female literatae.

**Chapter 6: Tullia d’Aragona**

Tullia D’Aragona was one of the most famous *cortigiane oneste* of the first half of the sixteenth century, gaining a reputation for both her musical talents and intellectual skill, and was the first courtesan to take her works to print. Tullia D’Aragona was born between 1501 and 1505 to the Roman courtesan Giulia Campana. The identity of her father has been a topic of much debate; in Girolamo Muzio’s eclogue, on which much of Tullia’s early biography is based, it is suggested that her father was Cardinal Luigi d’Aragona, who was the illegitimate grandson of King Ferdinand of Naples, but Tullia’s own marriage record identified her father as Costanzo Palmieri d’Aragona.[[438]](#footnote-438) Indeed, Tullia’s biography in general is poorly documented, and largely based on a scattering of literary sources in which she features, perhaps made more difficult due to the frequent moves she made across much of central and northern Italy throughout her lifetime. It is likely that she met her long-term patron and supporter Fillipo Strozzi in the mid-1520s when she was based in Rome; in 1526 Fillipo wrote ‘I will not deny that I gladly spend time with Tullia’, suggesting that their association was strong by this point.[[439]](#footnote-439) Tullia then moved to Venice with Strozzi in the early 1530s; she features in the *Pricelist of the Whores of Venice* which was published in 1535 suggesting her presence in Venice before this point.[[440]](#footnote-440) By 1537, Tullia was at the court of Ferrara, and in the same year Strozzi died, ending over a decade of patronage. Julia Hairston suggests that it was whilst at the court that Tullia met and began her relationship with Girolamo Muzio, who served as a courtier for Ercole II d’Este, the Duke of Ferrara at the time.[[441]](#footnote-441) Muzio would go on to provide the largest number of poems about Tullia in her *Rime* and write the introduction to the printed edition of her *Dialogo* a decade later.

Three poems sent to the Florentine *Accademia degli umidi* from Rome suggest that Tullia had left the Ferrarese court and returned to Rome in late 1540 or early 1541, given that the academy was not founded until November of 1540.[[442]](#footnote-442) After this, Tullia moved to Siena, where she married a Ferrarese gentleman, Silvestro Guicciardi.[[443]](#footnote-443) Whilst in Siena, Tullia was denounced for wearing a *sbernia*, a luxurious cloak, which was in violation of Sienese sumptuary legislation that controlled the dress allowed to courtesans. However, the accusation was dismissed when Tullia provided evidence of her marriage.[[444]](#footnote-444) Tullia then fled to Florence, likely in early 1546 after riots and political upheaval began in Siena. When she moves, she is without her husband, and so it is assumed he had died by this point. Georgina Masson theorises that her marriage had been one convenience, and her husband already old and possibly infirm when they wed, making his death by natural causes one that is without suspicion.[[445]](#footnote-445) It was in Florence in 1547 that Tullia found herself once again in violation of sumptuary laws, in this case a Florentine law that required all sex workers to wear a yellow veil in public.[[446]](#footnote-446) In this case, unlike in Siena, Tullia declined to use her widowed status to prove her exemption, and instead formed an appeal for her classification as a poet. Her situation is recorded in a letter to Benedetto Varchi, a Florentine poet with whom Tullia cultivated a close relationship. In the letter, Tullia begs Varchi to ‘aid [her]… in expounding this plea’, asking him to write the appeal for her to send with her sonnets to Duchess Eleonora.[[447]](#footnote-447) Her appeal was granted, and it was in the same year, 1547, that Tullia published her works, the *Rime della Signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei* and her *Dialogo della infinita di amore.* Her dedications in the *Rime* to the Duke and Duchesssuggest her publications were intended to solidify her standing as a woman of letters and poet, cementing Tullia’s intellectual identity in Florence after winning her appeal. But her time in Florence, although apparently successful, was brief.

From 1548 onwards she returned to Rome. Here she continued to produce poetry, though it appears in far lesser quantities than previously, including two sonnets, unpublished during her lifetime, and a handful of spiritual poems that were published in a 1553 anthology.[[448]](#footnote-448) It is possible that at this point Tullia was spending much of her time working on her epic poem, *Il Meschino, altramente detto il Guerrino*.[[449]](#footnote-449) But, after a short bout of illness in 1556, Tullia died before publishing this last work. Instead, it was published posthumously by Giovanni Battista and Melchiorre Sessa, four years later in 1560. This epic poem of Tullia’s has been subject to some degree of controversy, and there has been much debate as to whether Tullia truly authored the text, given its difference in tone and style to her other publications; but the epic poem is now generally accepted as being of her own composition.[[450]](#footnote-450)

Tullia’s life bridged a time of uncertainty for the highbrow courtesan. In the early 1500s, Rome was still the centre of the Italian courtesan world, and her mother Guilia was a part of this heyday of Roman courtesanary. That Tullia stayed in Rome for much of her late teens and her twenties, when she would have been in her prime as a courtesan, suggests some level of steadiness to her life and circumstances. After the sack of Rome, in which Tullia and her mother likely suffered a significant loss of wealth, Venice became the courtesan capital of Italy, and this is where Tullia found herself in the early 1530s, at the probable height of her career. The 1540s saw the enacting of multiple laws aimed against the *cortigiana onesta*, such as those implemented in Siena and in Florence where Tullia faced difficulties, and also in Venice.[[451]](#footnote-451) Whilst aiming to attack the *cortigiana onesta*, these legislations struggled to define her clearly, and resorted to making the courtesan indistinguishable from the common prostitute. This continued uncertainty undoubtedly influenced many of Tullia’s decisions concerning her career and the crafting of her public image.

6.1 *Tullia as Musician*

Given her upbringing and position as a *cortigiana onesta*, there is no doubt that Tullia was a capable musician. As we have already examined in Chapter 1, musical talent and singing in particular were skills ubiquitous to the *cortigiane oneste* and there is no shortage of contemporary references to their musical skills. It is this tradition in which we can place Tullia, and the brief evidence of her musicality during her lifetime supports this. At the height of her popularity in the late 1520s, Tullia’s use of music to ensnare her clients is remarked upon in a *novella* by Giovanni Battista Giraldi: he speaks of how she convinced older men and intellectual figures to dance barefoot the pavane, *rossina*, and any other dance she so wished whilst accompanying them on the lute.[[452]](#footnote-452) Battista Stambellino, who acted as a secret informant of Isabella d’Este, reported Tullia’s arrival in Ferrara in June 1537, with a description of her and her musical ability: ‘a noble courtesan from Rome has arrived in this land… she knows how to sing every motet or song from a partbook’.[[453]](#footnote-453) This explicit reference to Tullia’s musical skills shows unambiguously that at this point in her life, when Tullia would have been in her mid to late 30s, her musical abilities were still being recognised and existed alongside if not in partnership with her poetic output. In 1546, while Tullia was in Ferrara, a letter from her then lover Niccolò Martelli mentions Tullia singing and playing a musical instrument: ‘People are amazed when they hear you sing so sweetly, or with your beautiful white hands play any instrument so delicately’.[[454]](#footnote-454) This suggests Tullia was still performing for others well into her 40s, with Martelli referring to others hearing her voice and not just himself. The continued presence of music in Tullia’s life is confirmed in an itinerary of items left after her death: she had in her possession a harpsichord, a selection of books in Latin and the vernacular, books of music, and a broken lute.[[455]](#footnote-455)

But Tullia was also known as a poet for most of her career, and this identity was not one that was independent from her music making. A sonnet by Cardinal Ippolito de’ Medici, which later featured in Tullia’s published *Rime*, makes reference to her ‘sweet song’, a phrase that could indicate both her singing and her poetic abilities.[[456]](#footnote-456) Ippolito died in 1535, providing a *terminus ante quem* for his recognition of Tullia’s skills. Ercole Bentivoglio suggests the duality of her skills when he writes of ‘the learned pronouncements with which Euterpe inspires you’.[[457]](#footnote-457) In referencing Euterpe, closely associated with lyric poetry and often represented making music, Bentivoglio is calling attention to Tullia’s poetic skills, in a way that can easily be seen as intersecting with her musical abilities. Bentivoglio likely met Tullia soon after her arrival in Ferrara in 1537, suggesting she was known as a poet whilst in Ferrara, in addition to the recognition she received for her singing voice. This celebration of Tullia’s musical and poetic talents continues into the 1540s, with comments on Tullia’s musical skill dating from around the time of her publications in 1547 whilst in Florence, suggesting the continued performance of her work alongside its existence in published form. In one of the multiple sonnets featured by him in the *Rime*, Doctor Lattanzio Benucci mentions ‘her, who sings in such a sweet vein to add honour to the nine sisters (muses)’.[[458]](#footnote-458) Benucci likely first met Tullia when they were both in Siena, but it is more probable the sonnet dates from 1546/7 as Benucci was a visitor to Tullia’s Florentine salon, and a client of hers as this point, as such his remarks in this sonnet suggest Tullia was still singing her verse during her time in Florence. But this reference plays with the dual meaning of singing as both the musical act and the process of poetic composition, making it difficult to distinguish if the authors are complimenting either skill or indeed both, as it is likely Tullia was still performing her verse at this time.

That Tullia’s music should exist both in published form and as song is not surprising. Tullia’s own poetry makes occasional reference to the identity of music and poetry, suggesting that the two were not completely separate entities for her. In an early poem to Cosimo de’ Medici, Tullia asks whether ‘prose or verse might ever be able to sing of your talents’.[[459]](#footnote-459) A similar formula is seen later in a poem dedicated to Varchi, where Tullia says she ‘would turn [her] every sorrow into a sweet song’.[[460]](#footnote-460) But these instances could also be construed as Tullia mobilising a metaphorical rather than literal identity of verse and song, a commonplace in contemporary Italian verse. Her understanding of the duality of her verse is clarified in the ninth sonnet of the *Rime*,which speaks of honour that ‘neither pen, nor human voice can reach’.[[461]](#footnote-461) Here, by separating the acts of writing and performing, we can see Tullia’s understanding of the duality of her work: her poetry is both for publication, and for performance. As an early *cortigiana onesta*, Tullia would have likely seen both skills as entwined and as part of her courtesan nature, exploiting both or each alone as the situation required.

6.2. *The* Rime della Signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei

The publishing of Tullia’s *Rime della Signora Tullia di Aragona; et di diversi a lei* in 1547 has been viewed by some scholars, such as Julia Hairston and Ann Rosalind Jones, as Tullia’s way of cementing her standing as a poet in light of the dispensation given to her after her encounter with Florentine sumptuary law.[[462]](#footnote-462) Indeed, Hairston argues that after the death of her long-time patron Fillipo Strozzi in 1537, Tullia began to make a conscious shift in her identity away from her status as a *cortigiana onesta* and towards being a woman of letters. But Tullia’s move to cement her standing as poet and woman of letters does not mean she had completely abandoned her past as a *cortigiana onesta*. We have already seen that Tullia was still performing, at least for her close acquaintances, if the letter of Martelli praising her performing abilities is to be believed. Martha Feldman theorises on how a performance by Tullia of one of her poems in praise of her lover and patron Muzio may have sounded. Here, she suggests a growing use of ornamentation throughout the performance, singing for her audience of intellectuals.[[463]](#footnote-463) Based on the evidence for courtesan performance practices, Tullia likely sang in a highly ornamented style, accompanying herself on the lute. If much of the poetry in the *Rime* was also performed, then the naming of her subject, and singing in a highly ornamented, solo style may have carried erotic undertones otherwise missed when merely reading her poetry.

It is likely then that despite the continued performance of her work and recognition of her musical talents, this alone could no longer be relied upon to demonstrate her skill and gain her new patronage. This would mean the move to publish and be recognised for her poetic skills suggests Tullia was choosing to shift the emphasis of her public identity towards her poetry and intellect, to remain relevant and to continue to gain patronage as she aged, as she was no longer able to rely on her youth and beauty to influence. This was not a new facet to her identity, as Tullia had always been known for her relationships with intellectuals, supported by the slander aimed against her in her youth that claimed she made older men and intellectuals dance to her lute.[[464]](#footnote-464) But now, as she aged, she felt the need to strengthen this aspect of her identity and exercise greater control over her public persona, to provide protection and to maintain an income. The dangers of aging for the courtesan would not have been lost on Tullia, who would have seen in her lifetime the loss of income and influence suffered by the aging *cortigiana onesta* when she fell from grace, with many courtesans ending their lives in poverty after great success and fame in their youth. That Tullia was pursuing a conscious strategy is particularly suggested by the fact that she chose to claim the status of poet in Florence, even though as a married woman there was another—very likely easier—way for her to escape the wearing of the prostitute’s veil. Through the publication of her *Dialogo* as well as her *Rime*, she laid claim to a status greater than that of either courtesan or wife. This, then, is a crucial factor in understanding how Tullia aimed to shape her perception in the *Rime*, and how her self-fashioning strategies likely differed between the printed version of her work that was created to serve a greater public, and the private performance of her verse as song, which continued nonetheless.

In analysing Tullia’s *Rime*,one of the most striking elements of the work is the inclusion of poetry with direct replies from multiple authors, including those instigated by Tullia but also by her many interlocutors. This dialogic form she uses in her *Rime*, putting poetic responses next to each other in print, renders her a subject as well as the speaker, allowing the men with whom she is in dialogue to sing her praises in a way she cannot. Indeed, by asking for and gaining a response, Tullia is exhibiting her ability to call these powerful men to her aid. This allows her to sing of the men whilst retaining a degree of feminine modesty and humility. In her own poetry, Tullia rarely, if ever, uses erotic turns of phrase, in contrast to some other courtesan-poets.[[465]](#footnote-465) Instead, any sexualised imagery or phrasing comes from the poetry dedicated to her, and largely appears in the section of the *Rime* containing only the poetry of others, without her own responses. In turn, because of their sex and their position as lovers or admirers expressed in Petrarchan style, the men featured remain performatively inferior in their writing, and also emerge enhanced, both by the skill of their own writing, and by the compliments received in return in Tullia’s verse.[[466]](#footnote-466) This process is highlighted when Tullia’s interlocutors seemingly refuse to play her game. In one set of sonnets featuring the satirist Luigi Grazzini, we can see how, although he writes respectfully of Tullia in his only known Petrarchan verse, he does not allow himself to be used in the same manner as the other interlocutors featured in the *Rime*. As discussed by Jones, Grazzini draws attention to the process by which Tullia’s dialogues of poems work to reflect positively upon Tullia, by suggesting that only Tullia can sing her praises in the manner they deserve, as when he says ‘thus you alone to your own self similar…by singing… make Tullia resound from the Ganges to Thule’.[[467]](#footnote-467) Whilst complimentary, this passage suggests he will not join the chorus of poets writing in praise of her.[[468]](#footnote-468) That Tullia formed such a dialogue with one who could evade or at least somewhat subvert her dialogic rhetorical strategies suggests that there was also the opportunity to try to control possible critics, one of the possible routes suggested by Ann Rosalind Jones.[[469]](#footnote-469) Importantly, these processes were a printed reflection of the dialogic structures seen in salon culture, and thus are not so far removed from performance as they first appear. In this we see the union between Tullia’s private life as *cortigiana onesta*, one able to make these connections and later call upon them, and how Tullia is choosing to present this in a new light for the purposes of publication.

The dialogue form of the *Rime* is highly unusual; in other anthologies in which poetry in praise of the author is featured, it is usually found at the end of the edition, and in a much smaller quantity. Laura Terracina was a noblewoman and poet who was a contemporary of Tullia, and whose *Rime* was published by the same printer a year after Tullia’s. Like Tullia, she too included dedicatory poetry in praise of her in her printed work,but she included only fourteen such poems positioned at the end of her printed *Rime* in a separate section of the work, and without the dramatic dialogic arrangement seen in Tullia’s publication.[[470]](#footnote-470) As Hairston has suggested, the format of Tullia’s *Rime* shows her transition away from the role of active participant: the first section is entirely dedicated to her own poetry, next are dialogues of poetry initiated by her, then dialogues initiated by her interlocutor, and finally her voice falls silent, in a section featuring only poems addressed to her without response. In so doing, Tullia moves from an active participant in her *Rime* to being without vocal presence by the end of the edition.[[471]](#footnote-471) Tullia’s increasing dematerialisation throughout her own *Rime* achieves two aims: it counters other unflattering representations of her in circulation that portrayed her as a mere *meretrice*, a common whore who was all body and no intellect, and it paradoxically enlarges her presence through her absence, emphasising her fame.

This dematerialisation is interesting to consider in conjunction with the imagined sung performance of the *Rime*. Tullia’s time in Florence after publication is short; she publishes in 1547, and leaves in 1548. In this, it seems we see the eclipse of her body in real life, in that she is no longer physically present, she can no longer be seen and heard, and the work would no longer exist as musical performance; all that is left in Florence is what she published. That is not to say that Tullia completely cut herself off from her Florentine acquaintances, indeed there is evidence of some continued friendships, such as an ongoing acquaintance with Benedetto Varchi, but there is no obvious motivation for her return to her native Rome, and she does not appear to form any new contacts or maintain an active social life after her move. This retreat from public life seems to align with Tullia’s choice of ‘final’ work, in that it appears she spent much of her final years working on her epic poem *Il Meschino, altramente detto il Guerrino*. Although belonging to a tradition of musical performance in itself, there is no evidence to support Tullia’s performance of *Il Meschino* in Rome. In this final work, Tullia loses her voice completely, retelling another story rather than her own and gendering the voice of the poet in the work as masculine, creating such a different poetic voice as to raise concerns over the authorship of the work. Tullia must have been aware of the impact of choosing to work on this project alone, without attempting to maintain the social connections she had relied upon for the success of the publication of her *Rime* and the *Dialogo*. It seems, then, that as she advanced in age, Tullia realised her continued musical performance would not be beneficial, and indeed the praise for her musical talents and her continued career had already outlasted that enjoyed by many other famed *cortigiane oneste* which may largely be due to Tullia’s status as an intellectual.

Beyond Tullia’s use of publication and the ordering of the *Rime* as a whole, we must delve deeper into the poetic content of the *Rime* to see how Tullia was working to portray herself on a smaller scale. Though the format of the work is unusual, the content of the individual poems is not, drawing frequently upon Petrarchan and Pastoral tropes that we would expect to see in verse of this period. Many of these elements can be seen demonstrated in this sonnet to Ugolino Martelli, featured in the first section of the *Rime* containing only poetry by Tullia:

While with the sound of your learned ornate verses

You make the wide banks of the Arno resound,

Singing together through more than one age

With the virtues, which to you are so friendly,

To me, dear MARTEL, so adverse

Are the fates that all goodness from my heart falls;

And through secluded solitary streets

I go, bewailing the day that I opened my eyes.

So much that of my crying, of my languishing,

Every twig and every rock languishes and weeps

And the beasts and the birds everywhere.

You while ungodly suffering afflicts me,

Ah, console my feeble spirit

With your eternal, and honoured pages.

Mentre ch’al suon de i dotti ornati versi

Fate d’arno suonar l’ampie contrade

Cantando insieme a più ch’ad una etade

Con le virtù, ch’a voi si amiche fersi

A me caro MARTEL son tanto adversi

I fati, ch’ogni ben dal cor mi cade

Et per occulte, solitarie strade

Vo lagrimando il dì, che gli occhi apersi

Tal che del pianto mio, del mio languire

Languiscem e piagne ogni sterpo e ogni sasso

E le fiere, e gli augelli in ogni parte.

Voi, mentre afflige me l’empio martire,

Deh consolate lo mio spirto lasso

Con vostre eterne, e honorate carte.[[472]](#footnote-472)

Tullia begins the sonnet by complimenting Martelli’s poetic abilities, identifying him as one of the many poet ‘shepherds’ of Florence through the pastoral conceit of linking the sonic landscape to the real-life urban landscape, using the river Arno as an identifier. The location of Florence here indicates that this poem dates from late 1546 to early 1547. Whilst Martelli is identified through his singing that resounds throughout her imagined landscape, Tullia’s own sonic contribution in this work is not her song, but her cries, as she returns the reader to the urban landscape of the city through her mention of ‘solitary streets’, perhaps suggesting her feeling of isolation from her fellow poets. However, we are very quickly returned to the pastoral realm through the mention of landscape and nature elements, which Tullia moves with her verse: the twigs, and the rocks, as well as animals, beasts, and birds, are moved to despair alongside the author as a result of the sound of her pain. By imbuing her verse with Orphic power, Tullia suggests its musical nature by highlighting the parallels between Orpheus’ song and its power over the landscape, and her own verse. But despite this Orphic power ascribed to the sound of Tullia, she does not move to song—her own sonic contributions are cries and weeping.

This tendency to restrain herself from song is common, and it is Tullia’s cries and tears that are most frequently heard throughout her work, as opposed to the traditional conceit of singing that we have seen so frequently in the verse of other poet-performers. This is not to say that Tullia never refers to her verse as song—as we have seen above, there are clear instances where Tullia makes reference to her verse in a manner reflective of its performance. However, crying is often the precursor to the mention of song by many Petrarchan poets, whose tears and great emotion prompted by their beloved cause them to turn to song as the only avenue for expressing their pain. Tullia’s crying, then, cannot be understood as totally removed from song; there is a strong link between crying and singing, making Tullia’s choice to characterise her verse in this manner not as far removed from performance as it may first appear.

6.2.2 *Tullia as Philomena*

Beyond the reference to the Orphic powers of her verse, there is almost no use of classical characters as comparators by Tullia, and she instead leaves it to her interlocutors to suggest such comparisons.[[473]](#footnote-473) There is only one case of Tullia making a direct reference by name to a classical character for comparison to herself in her own writing: in a sonnet without a dedicatee she makes a continuous parallel to the character of Philomena. In characterising her sound as largely one of sadness, her choice of comparison to this tragic character is interesting, and unlike the use of Philomena seen previously by male poets, Tullia takes full advantage of Philomena as a sympathetic comparator through reference to the darker elements of Philomena’s story.[[474]](#footnote-474) The sonnet is as follows:

Just as the beautiful Philomena who having escaped

From her hated cage, and in supreme

View goes out among the saplings and grass

Returned to freedom, and to a happy life,

So was I from the amorous snares freed,

Mocking all pain and bitter suffering

Of the incredible agony it reserves

For whoever by loving too much has lost her soul.

Indeed I have taken back (alas cruel star)

My spoils from the temple of the Cyprian goddess,

And of their worth I went proudly

When love said to me, I shall change

Your secret desires and he made me prisoner

Of your virtue to renew my torment.

Qual vaga Philomena, che fuggita

E da la odiata gabbia, e in superba

Vista sen’va tra gli arboscelli, e l’herba

Tornata in libertate, e io’n lieta vita

Ed’io da gli amorosi lacci uscita

Schernendo ogni martire, e pena acerba

De l’incredibil duol, ch’in se riserba

Qual ha per troppo amar l’alma smarrita

Ben havev’io ritolte (ahi Stella fera)

Dal tempio di Ciprigna le mie spoglie

Et di lor pregio me n’andava altera

Quand’a me Amor, le tue ritrose voglie

Mutero, disse e femmi prigioniera

Di tua virtù, per rinovar mie doglie.[[475]](#footnote-475)

Sound is notably absent from the sonnet— though Tullia goes on to discuss her great pains in love, she is without the characteristic cries and sighs we most frequently hear from her, even though the comparison with Philomena would seem to call for them. Philomena breaks from her cage in silence, just as Tullia describes pain and agony with no sonic component. This sonnet is discussed in great detail by Ann Rosalind Jones, who highlights Tullia’s choice to capture Philomena at her point of escape, suggesting the ‘fantasy of freedom’ for both Philomena from Tereus, and also Tullia from the psychic constraints of love.[[476]](#footnote-476) But in the absence of sound, the focus of the beginning of the sonnet is on the sight of the bird in her escape, which Jones suggests to imply the focus of the gaze of the listener is on both the bird and Tullia, and the visual desirability of the scene.[[477]](#footnote-477) This, in combination with the lack of dedicatee - one of only a handful of poems we see in the *Rime* lacking a dedication - could suggest the sonnet is talking more generally about Tullia’s own thoughts on her courtesanary, strengthened by the later mention of the ‘spoils from the temple of the Cyprian goddess’, which is a reference to the ancient practice of prostitutes dedicating offerings in the temple of Venus.[[478]](#footnote-478) If this sonnet is to be read as a wish by Tullia to escape the demands of her courtesanary, the absence of sound then could reflect Tullia’s wish to break free, avoiding the musicianship that may characterise her baser appeal to highlight instead her words on the page, and her elevated philosophical understanding of love as reflected in her *Dialogo*,where we also see the absence of musical references. However, although there is no express reference to the sonic element of Philomena here, the common notion of Philomena as crying or singing would not be lost on a reader, and so Tullia’s usual focus on her own cries can also be related to the transformed heroine. If we consider the sonnet within its printed setting, the work’s position in the *Rime* in the first section containing only work by Tullia would mean that the reader would arrive at this poem already equipped with a strong sense of the characteristic sound of Tullia within her poetic soundscape. If Philomena’s weeping is often construed as song, it is not a great stretch to suggest that Tullia’s cries and weeping too may be understood as such.

6.2.3 *Tullia as Pastoral Poet*

Another key element of Tullia’s poetic soundscape is her pastoral imagery, and in particular her sonic contribution to her imagined pastoral landscape. In Muzio’s eclogues, we see him refer to her as ‘Tirrhenia’, but this is not a pastoral avatar that she herself identifies with in her own works.[[479]](#footnote-479) Indeed, Tullia never describes herself as singing in the manner of shepherds or creates for herself a pastoral character which she can inhabit. Rather, the sound of Tullia in this landscape is an instrumental one: she only ever describes herself as playing the *zampogna*, a form of Italian bagpipes. Notably, this is not an uncommon conceit, and the issue of finding a feminine voice in a pastoral landscape is a difficult one, as will be seen again in the case of Gaspara Stampa. We see the use of the *zampogna* first in her *Rime* during her selection of sonnets dedicated to Cosimo de Medici:

Thus I might one day make myself heard—

Not elegant, no, but grateful—with my

Bagpipe, which to you alone, I, although unworthy, raise.

Così potessi un dì farmi sentire

Cortese no, ma grata con la mia

Zampogna, ch’a te sol, bench’indegna, ergo.[[480]](#footnote-480)

The *zampogna* is an instrument often connected to bucolic poetry, and it is used by Tullia as a sign of the pastoral landscape she intends to inhabit, characterising Tullia in this setting as the female equivalent of the shepherd, performing her poetry as song. Although pastoral shepherds often play *zampogna*, Tullia’s choice feels like a conscious move, continuing the strategy that holds her at the point falling just before expressing her verse as song. As we will later see, although she suggests herself as being the equivalent of the male shepherd, Tullia maintains her distance and purposefully separates herself from the other ‘shepherds’, which when combined with her lack of singing, means though she suggests herself as being their equivalent, she does not fully inhabit the role of shepherd. Additionally, by using an instrument rather than a pastoral avatar, Tullia’s character in her more pastoral works is still Tullia; she does not create for herself a pastoral persona in which she can wander Arcadia as the female equivalent of the shepherd, rather, it is Tullia herself that we see there. She chooses not to make herself a shepherdess, which would come with the implications of the character which were perhaps too close to home for a courtesan, and nor does it seem she feels she can choose the role of chaste nymph, possibly for a similar reason. By using the instrument rather than an identifying character to define her pastoral self, there is no separation between Tullia as pastoral poet and Tullia the women.

We see this again in a sonnet written to Ugolino Martelli printed later in the *Rime:*

Many times, my dear UGOLINO, have I thought

To resound with my bagpipe

Your rare virtue and courtesy

Ascending to the skies with such a lofty subject.

But (alas) in vain I struggle (o cruel destiny)

For rasping is the sound, and my fortune grim,

So fully does it send me in pursuit of my sorrows

That to rise from the ground I hope no longer.

May they sing of you the many other shepherds

Who graze their flocks near the Arno

To whom the Muses and fortune are friendly

I, if ever to my happy state shall return

Not only will I not silence my holy passions

But you will be my greatest undertaking.

Più volte, UGLOIN mio, mossi il pensiero

Per risonar con la zampogna mia

Vostra rare virtute, e cortesia

Poggiando al ciel col bel suggestto altero

Ma (lassa) in van m’affanno (o destin fero)

Che roco e’l suono, e la mia sorte ria

Sì dietro a i miei dolor tutta m’invia

Che levarmi da terra unqua non spero

Cantino altri di voi tanti pastori

Che pascon le lor gregge a l’Arno intorno

A cui le Muse, a cui fortuna e amica

Io, s’unqua al mio felice stato torno

Non pur non tacerò miei santi ardori

Ma voi sarete mia maggior fatica.[[481]](#footnote-481)

Here Tullia describes the sound of her *zampogna*, which is rasping or hoarse (*roco*), but the other shepherds are said to be singing. Whilst this works to situate Tullia alongside the shepherds of the Arno she consciously contrasts their sound to hers, playing into the trope of her verse being unworthy as is expected of such Petrarchan manoeuvres, but also drawing attention to herself as an individual whose sound is notably different, not simply worse. This drawing of attention to herself in isolation from the other shepherds of Florence is something that was also seen in the first sonnet dedicated to Martelli previously discussed. In both these cases, Tullia’s separation helps her show herself as being unworthy of a place among the other poets of Florence but could also suggest her feeling of isolation from them and newness to their ranks, having to fight for her position among them after being labelled as a common prostitute by Florentine sumptuary law.

Notably, in the poetry dedicated to Tullia by her closest companions, Muzio and Varchi, she takes on a variety of pastoral identities. As previously mentioned, in Muzio’s eclogue Tullia is named as ‘Tirrhenia’. This name refers to Etruria, referencing southern Tuscany the area North of Rome in which Tullia spent some time as a child. However, it seems Tullia herself expressed a wish for Muzio to refer to her as Thalia, instead of Tirrhenia, ‘in such a way that it’s apparent that Tirrhenia and Thalia are the same thing’.[[482]](#footnote-482) It seems, then, that Tullia wished for Muzio’s pastoral identity for her to refer to the muse associated with bucolic poetry and comedy, perhaps a more flattering comparator than a toponym. Muzio would go on to use the identifier of ‘Thalia’ for Tullia is some of his later eclogues.

We see Tullia seemingly ask Varchi to identify her within a pastoral setting in a sonnet exchange between the two. In Tullia’s sonnet to Varchi,she sets up the pastoral nature of their correspondence by addressing Varchi as a ‘sweet shepherd’ who is ‘the honour of Arcadia, and of Tuscany’.[[483]](#footnote-483) She also references Varchi’s known pastoral appellative ‘Damon’, and in doing so she is prompting him to identify her in return in his reply. In answer to this sonnet, Varchi opens by identifying Tullia as a nymph:

nymph, that whom in the forests, fountains, or fields

no shepherd has ever seen any more beautiful

other than Diana, and the honoured Muses,

to whom bow ever more often the most worthy.

nimpha, di cui per boschi o fonti o prati

non vide mai più bella alcun pastore

ver di Diana, e de le Muse honore

cui più inchinano sempre i più pregiati.[[484]](#footnote-484)

Varchi’s choice of nymph is an interesting one, as within pastoral poetry the nymph was a notably chaste figure, and she served as the counterpart to the Laura of Petrarchan poetry in this setting.[[485]](#footnote-485) As a chaste character, then, it seems unlikely that Tullia would have felt able to identify herself in this manner. Instead, she deliberately leaves room for her close acquaintance to do so, allowing her to benefit from the association without courting controversy by claiming the identity for herself.

6.3 *The absence of Music – Tullia’s* Dialogo dell’infinita d’amore

One of the most striking things about Tullia’s *Dialogo,* published in the same year as her *Rime*,is the complete absence of any mention of music, even in opposition to its role in seduction. Though there is no explicit reference to Tullia being a courtesan, it is mentioned that she is experienced in love; but any reference to musical skills is avoided throughout. Through her performance, the *cortigiana onesta* was not only inciting desire in her listener, but giving them greater access to her body, both visually and audibly. Though, in general, love theories saw music as a positive asset, and even as a metaphor for beauty and divine love, it was also a liability for the women who used it. Whilst love was seen as a chance for the intellectual man to prove his philosophical mettle and reach for the highest spiritual forms of love, it was also a potential pitfall, robbing him of his senses and his mind of reason, and rendering him effeminate.[[486]](#footnote-486) This would mean the discussion of music and love by a courtesan would have likely been very difficult to execute without opening Tullia to critique. Paired with the *Rime*, her *Dialogo* instead works to add to the picture of public self-representation for which Tullia worked so hard.

Similar to the format of the *Rime*, the *Dialogo* is another reflection of the salon culture in which Tullia was a participant. As Smarr remarks, Tullia writes with the ‘sophisticated wit of women experienced in salon conversation… [her] writing reflects the tone necessary to keep a woman’s arguments with men on the edge between the serious and the socially entertaining’.[[487]](#footnote-487) Her *Dialogo* added to the spate of love treatises that had appeared from the 1500s through the 30s in Italy, but significantly, Tullia’s stands as the only love treatise written by a woman. As has been discussed in previous chapters, love as an ethical topic was fashionable, and central to the debates surrounding Neo-Platonism. Dialogues in this vein include Bembo’s *Gli Asolani* (1505), Bembo’s discourse on love in Castiglione’s *Cortigiano* (1528), Equicola’s *Libro de natura de amore* (1525), Leone Ebreo’s *Dialoghi d’amore* (1535) and Giuseppe Betussi’s *Raverta* (1544)*.*

Perhaps the most significant of these when considering Tullia’s own love treatise is Sperone Speroni’s *Dialogo di Amore* (1542), whichfeatured the courtesan character of Tullia as an interlocutor. The publishing of Tullia’s *Dialogo* in response has led to the pair being described as a ‘dialogue of dialogues’.[[488]](#footnote-488) Speroni, a lecturer on Philosophy at the University of Padua and a member of the Paduan [*Accademia degli Infiammati*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accademia_degli_Infiammati), is thought likely to have met Tullia whilst they were both in Venice in the early 1530s. Speroni’s dialogue was apparently written before this in 1528, and when he later decided on the names for his interlocutors, Tullia featured as the courtesan character. The presence of courtesan characters in dialogues concerning love, including Speroni’s but also Betussi’s *Raverta*, suggests that these discussions of love, specifically sexuality and natural love, were the concerns of only a specific category of woman.[[489]](#footnote-489) In Speroni’s dialogue, the courtesan character Tullia is identified with carnal and sexual love, deeming such types of love and those who practice it as irrational.[[490]](#footnote-490) Her presence in the conversation keeps the tone light, and the character does not contribute much intellectually. Although this might seem to belittle and insult Tullia, Speroni himself saw her inclusion as a great compliment, and likely expected her to see it as such as well. However, it seems Tullia’s dialogue worked to reform the character of her that Speroni had created, and the notable absence of music in the discourse may also have worked to help differentiate her from Speroni’s Tullia by avoiding any discussion of its use in seduction.

In the first few pages of Tullia’s *Dialogo*, the Varchi character says he ‘does not want to set [himself] up in any way as the equal of our very learned, refined and gracious Signor Sperone... unless it be in the matter of appreciating your own worth’, singling him out for his underestimation of Tullia’s abilities.[[491]](#footnote-491) The presence of this at the very beginning of the *Dialogo* is a declaration of intent by Tullia: she used the opportunity not only to reply to her characterisation by Speroni, but to define herself and her viewpoint on her own terms. Tullia presents herself as a *virtuosa* of love, joining both Aristotelian and Platonic views, without reference to her profession or to music. Her argument seems to unfold in direct counterpoint with that of the courtesan character of Speroni’s dialogue, who was clearly both intelligent and articulate, but celebrated the irrational and passionate nature of love.[[492]](#footnote-492) In her own dialogue, Tullia proposes a love that is grounded in reason and morality, with a desire to know if women too can be the intellectual lovers of men.[[493]](#footnote-493) By advocating an intellectual kind of love requiring the rational facilities of both lovers, she is also implicitly arguing for the intellectual ability of women, and freeing them from their ties to the physical side of human nature.[[494]](#footnote-494) But the text is not attempting to change the outlook on all women, just Tullia. Through her dialogue, Tullia is highlighting her intellect, and emphasising love that is neither physical nor erotic, showing that this is the type of love of which she is a master.

6.4 *Conclusions*

Tullia’s poetic output demonstrates her ability to highlight and elide aspects of her public self to suit her changing situations, and her ability to respond to the social climate around her. Thanks to these efforts, Tullia maintained some form of career right up to her death in 1556, although it cannot be denied that in her later years, she saw a lower income in what appears to be almost self-isolation in her native Rome. As the protection afforded by her ‘honest’ status and labelling as ‘courtesan to the intellectuals’ diminished, demonstrated by the legal threats she faced in Siena and Florence, Tullia chose to highlight certain aspects of her skills in print to articulate the difference between the *cortigiana onesta* and the common prostitute. Though the analysis of her verse supports the idea that her public persona was one that attempted to distance her from her musicianship, the continued performance of her verse and work as a courtesan suggests that this facet of her public identity was so entwined with her courtesan nature she did not feel the need to separate them in private.

Tullia’s manipulation of her soundscape reflects these struggles. She presents us with a narrative that is deeply connected to the salon culture in which she participated and rooted in her own poetic performance, but careful controls her own poetry to avoid expressions of her own musicianship. We have seen how the structure of the *Rime* results in Tullia slowly removing her own voice, from the work as a whole but even in her own verse; her soundscape is one in which we rarely hear her describe herself as singing, even if the context of her verse suggests its presence as song. This process by which Tullia avoids creating a sonic aspect to her poetry is highlighted in her use of Philomena, where she takes a character that is so frequently used for her song and presents her as silent, yet we still understand the innate musicality of the poetic content despite the lack of a constructed soundscape.

She instead uses her interlocutors to create an image of herself through the words of others rather than through her own construction, and it is here we hear of the beauty of her voice; but Tullia’s self-construction is built carefully around this, and she cries and weeps in the face of her woes instead of ‘singing’. This is seen also in Tullia’s manipulation of the pastoral elements of her verse; just as she allows her interlocutors to describe her song, she allows them once again to create for her a pastoral identity that is far more flattering than the one she could create for herself.

**Chapter 7: Gaspara Stampa**

Gaspara Stampa is now known as one the great female poets of the Renaissance, but during her lifetime in the mid-sixteenth century she was better recognised as a *virtuosa* singer than for her poetic output. She was active in the Venetian salons of the mid-1540s, particularly at the residence of her mother, Cecilia Stampa, and—most notably—in the illustrious salon of Domenico Venier, which would later host the famous courtesan poet Veronica Franco, and included the likes of Girolamo Parabosco, Sperone Speroni, Ludovico Dolce, and Girolamo Molino. In the performance of her verse, Stampa would fashion herself as the river nymph, Anassilla, at a time when the adoption of poetic pseudonyms was a widespread practice among the salons and academies. As Anassilla, Stampa would invoke the sights and sounds of the water around her to transport her listeners to the site of her imagined suffering, in the pastoral mode so popular at the time. As could later be seen in her *Rime*, the only record we have of her work and the basis for the present study, Stampa created a rich and developed pastoral world in which to stage for her eager audience both her imagined triumphs and her suffering in love.

Stampa was born around 1523 in Padua, to a relatively wealthy merchant family. Her father was a jewel merchant, and saw that all his children—Gaspara, her sister Cassandra and brother Baldassare—received a well-rounded humanist education.[[495]](#footnote-495) Upon her father’s death in the early 1530s, the family moved to their mother’s native Venice, where the children’s education continued.[[496]](#footnote-496) By mid-1545, both Gaspara and Cassandra were acclaimed for their musical abilities. It was during her participation in the salons of Venice that Gaspara would meet one of the pivotal figures of her life, Count Collaltino di Collalto, perhaps during a Christmas season, as suggested in her poetry: ‘it was near the day that the creator came… forth from the virginal womb’.[[497]](#footnote-497) Their affair would be the driving inspiration for most of Stampa’s poetic output. After this, Gaspara is believed to have had a second affair with the wealthy Venetian Bartolomeo Zen, identified in acrostics in poem 216 of the original Rime.[[498]](#footnote-498) Then, aged only 31, ‘on the 23rd day of April 1554, Gasparina Stampa, taken ill from fever, colic and matrix sickness for fifteen days, died … in the house of Geronimo Morosini’.[[499]](#footnote-499) After her death, all of her known poetic output, including that dedicated to her romance with Collaltino, was collated into her *Rime* and published by her sister the same year.

Gaspara Stampa’s supposed status as a *cortigiana onesta* is one that has been frequently questioned. She was first categorised as a courtesan in the 1910s by Abdelkader Salza; but more modern interpretations, such as that of Fiora Bassanese, view her as an unmarried singer and poet, suggesting that with the education she received, her parents hoped for her to be a *virtuosa*, a talented singer, and not a courtesan.[[500]](#footnote-500) Indeed, in a letter written by Lucrezia Gonzaga to Ortensio Lando in 1552, she describes Gaspara as a *virtuosa*.[[501]](#footnote-501) However, Gaspara’s lifestyle and use of musical performance mirrors that of the *cortigiana onesta*: Gaspara was unmarried, well educated, and very publicly had more than one lover, all whilst participating in the salon culture of Venice. Her very public relationship meant she fell under the category of ‘whore’ as defined by the Venetian government, ‘being unmarried, [and having] dealings and intercourse with one man or more’.[[502]](#footnote-502) Not only this, but she used solo singing as a vehicle for social advancement, with the contents of her songs being highly erotic in nature. As a result, there is strong evidence either way in the question of Gaspara’s courtesan status, the ambiguities of the public sphere at the time making the distinction between professional unmarried women and *cortigiane oneste* near impossible.[[503]](#footnote-503) For the purposes of this study, Gaspara’s status is not of any great significance in the analysis of her work as her musical talents are well established, and Gaspara herself does not appear to have needed to negate these issues in her verse.

7.1. *Gaspara as Musician*

That Stampa was renowned as a singer and that she used her own verse in performance is made clear in the original printing of her work*.* In its first published form, Gaspara’s *Rime* was ordered to reflect the way that Gaspara had been recognised in her life, that is, as a *virtuosa*. The poems in the *Rime* are grouped by genre, separating the 285 sonnets, six *capitoli*, and 19 madrigals. This choice may be an indication of its intended use as a songbook, alluding to Gaspara’s musical skills: as John Walter Hill has suggested in relation to a slightly later period in Italy, singing pupils may have first learnt to improvise sonnets, before moving onto madrigals.[[504]](#footnote-504) This ordering is in stark contrast to the ordering of the work of Gaspara’s contemporaries, which frequently imitated Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* in their structure.[[505]](#footnote-505)This choice seems unlikely to have been Stampa’s own, and instead the decision of the editor or her sister who oversaw the publishing, suggesting the arrangement of the *Rime* in this manner was an attempt to capitalise on Gaspara’s musical status at the time of her death, rather than her immortalisation into the poetic canon.[[506]](#footnote-506)

This musical fame is widely documented, in the form of praise penned by members of the salons she attended. Girolamo Parabosco commends Gaspara for her poetic and musical abilities in one of his *Lettere amorose* written in 1545, speaking of Stampa’s ‘delightful and sweet words… [and] angelic voice, which, whenever it strikes the air with its divine accents, makes such sweet harmony’.[[507]](#footnote-507) The mention of both sweet words, and Gaspara’s singing voice suggests that Stampa was already performing her own verse at this time, notably before her affair with Count Collaltino which is believed to have begun three years later in 1548. In addition to Parabosco’s compliments, the likes of Girolamo Molino, Giorgio Benzone, and the composer Perissone Cambio commended her musical skills. In 1547, when Gaspara was around 24, Cambio chose to dedicate his *Primo di madrigali a quatro voci* to her. The dedicatory letter is extremely complimentary of Stampa’s musical talents in particular: ‘no woman in the world loves music as much as you do, nor possesses it to such a rare degree’.[[508]](#footnote-508) She is a ‘divine siren’, and Perissone hopes to be placed among her adoring throng.[[509]](#footnote-509) As we have already briefly examined, both Dawn De Ryke and Martha Feldman have interpreted this as Perissone’s hope that Stampa will perform his music. Both suggest that the treble-dominated character of the work, as well as the phraseology, point to the work’s suitability to be adapted for solo song with lute accompaniment, suggesting the work was written to serve for solo, as well as polyphonic, performances.[[510]](#footnote-510) Molino, in a poem published after Gaspara’s death, describes how ‘a new siren, singing, climbed the high hill and on its summit made the green eternal and the air always serene’.[[511]](#footnote-511) Interestingly Molino’s reference to a ‘hill’ serves to connect Gaspara to both the ancient home of the Muses, Parnassus, a place that also reflects her poetic output as well as her musical talents, and also employs a pun upon Count Collaltino’s name that features throughout Gaspara’s poetry. Similar to Parabosco’s comments nearly a decade earlier, Molino chooses to reference both Stampa’s musical and poetic talents, highlighting her renown as a poetess and *virtuosa*, and the performance of her own verse,that lasted right up to her untimely death.

There have also been arguments made in contemporary scholarship that Gaspara Stampa composed original music to accompany her verse. As has previously been examined, Lynn Hooker suggests that the similarities between Stampa’s two *cansoni,* which share an identical versification scheme to Petrarch’s ‘Chiare fresche et dolce acque’,indicates they were to be sung to the same basic melodic material.[[512]](#footnote-512) The *cansoni* form of all three works feature one of the least fixed poetic forms, and as such they would be the least applicable to stock repetitive melodic formula, as a result, the similarities between the three - containing the same number of syllables and rhyme scheme - was so they could be performed to the same basic music by Gaspara. This could be done by combining stock melodic phrases of varying lengths to fit which, as a result of the special requirements of the form, may have been of Gaspara’s own composition. This theory is supported by comments on Gaspara’s performance of Petrarch’s work made by the eventual editor of her work Giorgio Benzone, who upon unsuccessfully seeking admission to the salon held in Gaspara’s home, claimed he could not read ‘Chiare, fresche et dolci acque’ without hearing Stampa’s rendition of it. This would suggest that the performance was is some way especially memorable, and unique to Gaspara, supporting Hooker’s theory that the music may have been Gaspara’s own composition.[[513]](#footnote-513)

Gaspara herself makes clear the connections between her work and its performance. In her poetry she frequently makes reference to the duality of her work as both written and performed, in the same way that the *strambotto* culture of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century did not distinguish between music and poetry; poetry was innately musical and meant to be heard, not read. Though ‘singing’ was frequently used as a metaphor for poetic writing in the work of Gaspara’s contemporaries, Gaspara does not follow suit; in the sonnets in which Stampa makes herself the clear speaker, she frequently configures her poetic abilities as a dialogue of writing and singing, clearly differentiating rather than conflating the acts of writing and performance. The published *Rime* furnishes numerous examples, such as in sonnet 16, where she wishes to record her lover’s beauty, trying to find the right words ‘so [she] might write them down and sing them’, which is followed in the next poem with ‘as long as those calm lights are before me, of which it suits me always to write and sing’.[[514]](#footnote-514) Later she speaks of her rage and sorrow, ‘that [she] sometimes vents in song and writing’.[[515]](#footnote-515) These lines make clear the existence of Gaspara’s verse as both written word and song.

7.2 *Verse Analysis*

7.2.1 *Character: Stampa as Anassilla*

At the centre of Stampa’s *Rime* is the character of Anassilla, the poet’s imagined pastoral avatar, who features heavily throughout Gaspara’s work. The choice of this name intrinsically connects Stampa to the Count on a physical level, deriving from Anaxus, the Latin name for the River Piave that ran through the Collaltino estate in the Veneto region of Collalto. This linked Gaspara’s persona directly to the landscape as the place of her suffering, but also publicly with the wealth and prestige of the Collaltino family.[[516]](#footnote-516) Her watery identity as a river nymph native to this particular landscape is used extensively in the language of her poetry, a point explored in more depth below*.* Giorgio Benzone, the editor of her posthumous *Rime*, addressed her as ‘Anassilla’ in his verse opening the anthology, suggesting that‘Anassilla’ became an identifier for Gaspara within the academic circles of Venice in which she would have performed.[[517]](#footnote-517)

Anassilla most frequently appears in the third person; though Gaspara and Anassilla are one and the same, she creates a degree of separation between the two, presenting Anassilla as a distinct character within herself. We can see this in the different points of view presented in the *Rime*; for example, we know that the speaker is Stampa in sonnet 82, as Anassilla is described in the third person here:

Count, your wretched Anassilla,

When the moon ices over and the sun sparkles,

Weeping and tormented, on you alone she calls.

Conte la vostra misera Anassilla,

Quando la Luna agghiaccia, e’l Sol favilla,

Pur voi chiamando, si lamenta & agne.[[518]](#footnote-518)

In these instances, Gaspara the performer is able to tell the story of Anassilla as an onlooker by consciously separating the sound of Anassilla in her torment from her own voice as author. In contrast, Anassilla is sometimes identified as the speaker using the first person, as we can see in this extract from sonnet 146:

Thus here among the divine haunts of Adria,

I, Anassilla, prey to love, call out,

Night and day for my two lovely lights.

Tal qui fra questi d’Adria almi soggiorni,

Io misera Anassilla d’Amor preda

Notte e dì chiamo i miei due lumi adorni.[[519]](#footnote-519)

In this case, the line between Gaspara and Anassilla becomes more blurred, as we see Gaspara the performer and Anassilla the character as one and the same. In this manner, the boundaries between Anassilla as character and Gaspara as performer are also blurred, showing the intentional merging of the internal and performed soundscapes of the work through the conflation of Anassilla’s sonic contribution to the narrative of the story being tied to Gaspara’s sound in performance. But Gaspara’s decision to create a character that is both understood as an extension of the poet herself but also as a character can be seen in the narrative she is able to develop as a result.

As the central character of the *Rime*, Anassilla appears from the very beginning in a sympathetic light as one who suffers from the unjust neglect of her beloved Count. In Gaspara’s opening dedication, she identifies Anassilla as the voice we are hearing, and as ‘forgotten and abandoned’ by her lover the Count, opening a narrative that will continue throughout her poetry:[[520]](#footnote-520)

Thus, your lordship, when you chance to have a moment of relief from more pressing occupations closer to your heart, read these notes of the burdensome and passionate cares of your most faithful, most unhappy Anassilla.

Legga V.S. dunque quando haverà triegua dale sue maggiori, e più care cure, le note delle cure amorose, et gravi della sua fidissima, et infelicissima Anassilla.[[521]](#footnote-521)

Anassilla is first named in verse in the opening of sonnet 65, where, echoing her opening dedication, Gaspara uses the third person in her description of Anassilla’s faithfulness to the Count and names him directly: ‘your most faithful Anassilla has ever been kind and sweet to you while you held the key to her heart so that no one else, Count, could ever open it’.[[522]](#footnote-522) Indeed, Anassilla’s character narrative is one that is continually defined by an unbreakable faith and dedication to her beloved.[[523]](#footnote-523) By maintaining separation between herself and the character, Gaspara can also praise Anassilla for her devotion. For example, in sonnet 86, the speaker switches to third person in praise of Anassilla whilst announcing her death: ‘Under this harsh stone lies hidden the unhappy, and most faithful Anassilla, rare example of great amorous faith’.[[524]](#footnote-524) However, this narrative is connected to real world events in the relationship between Gaspara and Collaltino, so that Anassilla’s world remains tethered to Stampa’s real life. In sonnet 79 there is a direct reference to Collaltino’s time in France— ‘hardly had you seen the realm of Gaul’—in addition to the presence of Anassilla—‘Anassilla and the true and faithful love she bears for you’.[[525]](#footnote-525) In this we can see that the character of Anassilla and Gaspara are inextricably combined, but this constant shifting of perspective and the existence of Gaspara as narrator in control of Anassilla the character highlights that she and her experiences belong to a character that, whilst connected to Gaspara and the real-world narrative of her life, have been exaggerated and elaborated upon for the purpose of performance.

As a water-dwelling creature drawing her name from a river, the character of Anassilla would have been understood by contemporary audiences to be a river nymph. This identification has rarely been discussed by those investigating Gaspara’s pastoral identity, despite its fundamental importance.[[526]](#footnote-526) Stampa herself certainly seems to think of Anassilla as a water nymph, beyond the clear implication of her name. In sonnet 138, Anassilla claims to gain her name from the river, stating, ‘you give me my name’.[[527]](#footnote-527) In contrast, the following sonnet claims the opposite, with the phrase, ‘river who takes your name from mine’.[[528]](#footnote-528) A very simple reading of this is that Anassilla and the river are one, and so it is impossible to distinguish which came first and who named whom, an understandable situation if Anassilla is a river spirit who is inseparable from the landscape.[[529]](#footnote-529) The pastoral world of the sixteenth century was inhabited by two principal types of female character: nymphs and shepherdesses. The nymph was a notably chaste figure, and she served as the mythological counterpart for the Laura of Petrarchan poetry.[[530]](#footnote-530) In choosing this identity, Gaspara not only connects herself to the land of the Count but suggests core aspects of her character even before she is heard. This aids Stampa in the creation of the voice of an unmarried woman who is sexually fulfilled but cruelly abandoned and allows Gaspara at times to be sexually explicit whilst remaining highbrow in her poetic style.

Notably, Anassilla does exist as a shepherdess as well as a nymph within the world of the *Rime*. But in her shepherdess guise, Gaspara does not take on the character of the typical *pastorella*, which was one in opposition to the chaste nymph, and given siren-like attributes.[[531]](#footnote-531) Instead, Gaspara/Anassilla uses her shepherdess role as a literal female counterpart to that of the male poet as shepherd. For example, sonnet 247 appears to be addressed to her fellow Venetian poets, as suggested by the phrase, ‘these renowned shepherds, who have filled me with joy and all of Adria with honour’.[[532]](#footnote-532) In this context, ‘Anassilla pastorella’acts as a connection between her and the male poets of her circle, identifying herself as one of their kind, rather than as a rustic love object to be pursued in a masculine authorial voice.[[533]](#footnote-533) In sonnets 261 and 262, the presence of an unknown shepherd, who is not the Count, suggests that Anassilla is once again a shepherdess – perhaps this twist in the narrative arises as a result of the sonnets being dedicated to another unknown, yet important, man in Stampa’s life, who may well have been a poet himself, causing her to adapt her pastoral world to reflect a different relationship. Anassilla as a nymph remains entirely dedicated to the Count, with the single exception of sonnet 202, where Gaspara identifies herself as a shepherdess in relation to Collaltino.

7.2.2 *Setting - Watery Landscapes*

Anassilla’s watery connections are emphasised before we even hear her name. In the same dedication in which Gaspara first mentions her, and before the name Anassilla appears, she first establishes the importance of water in her world and its connections to her poetry and emotions:

Rather than finding here the oceans of my passions, tears, and torments – for such a sea can’t be sounded – Your Lordship will only discover a little brook.

Qui dunque V.S. vedrà non il pelago delle passioni, delle lagrime, et de’ tormenti miei, perche è mar senza fondo; ma un picciolo ruscello dolo di esse.[[534]](#footnote-534)

The visual elements of Gaspara’s imagined landscape and their innate ties to the role of sound in her world are introduced right here at the opening of the anthology as a foil for her, or rather Anassilla’s, emotional state - a theme that will continue throughout her poetry. By emphasising the aquatic character of the Collaltino estate as landscape setting, Gaspara allows Anassilla a degree of control over her surroundings, which becomes a key tool in dramatising the emotional narrative of her suffering. Quantity and quality of water are also established as being linked to Anassilla’s cries and general sonic expression, with large bodies of water connecting to ‘loud’ cries and outpourings of emotion, and smaller bodies of water to her inability to make noise.

One important way in which water is established as an extension of Anassilla, beyond her nature as a river nymph and its connection to her sounds of despair, is to give control of the land to Collaltino. Just as Petrarch plays on his beloved Laura’s name, Gaspara uses the Count’s name to create a running pun through her poetry, frequently referring to him as *colle* (hill), or *colle alto* (high hill), as in sonnets 46, 138 and 158. As mentioned by Troy Towers, the relationship between these two landscape features, Gaspara as the river and river nymph and Collaltino as a hill, can be examined throughout Gaspara’s work for countless connotations that reflect back on both the two characters as well as their relationship.[[535]](#footnote-535) This includes the physical manifestation of their class difference, though Gaspara’s wish to climb said high hill is also a reflection of her ambitions to use Collaltino’s social standing as a vehicle for her own rise to fame and status.[[536]](#footnote-536) This is made clear in a number of ways, such as in sonnet 139, which makes reference to Gaspara as Anassilla abasing herself in the shadow of her lord: ‘river who take your name from mine and bathe the feet of that high, pleasant hill’.[[537]](#footnote-537) This is also seen in sonnets 10, 35, and 46 where Gaspara unites Collaltino as her high hill with the obvious connection of Parnassus, making her literary ambitions clear by identifying the Count as a metaphorical Parnassus, inspiring her verse and lifting her to greater glory.[[538]](#footnote-538)

The land as a masculine entity connected to Collaltino and unaffected by the sound of her verse is also seen in the imagery of similes describing the Count’s treatment of Anassilla. In sonnets 92 and 93, for example, the opening lines use nature references to compare with Stampa’s emotional treatment from the Count: ‘like a mountain oak, throttled and beaten’ and ‘like a pitiful doe in flight’.[[539]](#footnote-539) In these instances, Stampa chooses living elements of the landscape that are unable to defend themselves, and are therefore at the mercy of the landscape we know to be connected to the Count, creating a metaphor to communicate her mistreatment. It is worth noting that these elements, the mountain oak and the pitiful doe, also invoke Vergil’s *Aeneid* and cast Gaspara as both Aeneas and Dido, giving her an opportunity to compare herself and her great love to that of some of classical literature’s most famous lovers.[[540]](#footnote-540) Stampa furthers this idea of the land as a masculine entity that brings danger in the following sonnet by describing the Count as a land predator: ‘why contend with someone who can’t resist, whom you’ve always had between your claws?’[[541]](#footnote-541) Gaspara’s presence in these places is controlled by the Count where she is at his mercy; this reflects the power dynamics of the relationship between the two, in addition to referring conventionally to the Count’s cruel treatment of his beloved.

As a result of Collaltino’s identification with the land, it is only by escaping to water that we are able to further understand Anassilla’s emotional state; the sea and water become feminine entities and extensions of the narrator and are directly controlled by her sound. This aquatic imagery, which the reader can quickly link to Anassilla and her sonic contribution to this imagined landscape even when she is not explicitly invoked, becomes a visual and sonic representation of Anassilla’s psychological state. Anassilla’s tears, and crying, become central elements of her character.[[542]](#footnote-542) Gaspara works with a direct analogy between tears and poems or songs: the two are identical, both prompted by unrequited love, and both expressing her suffering. We see this connection explicitly stated in sonnet 139, ‘for which I cried and sang in many verses’, but also less explicitly elsewhere, such as in sonnet 124, ‘these tears that seem from me to flow’.[[543]](#footnote-543) It is these tears that create the sea that is so frequently invoked, as seen in sonnet 44, ‘if you could see the deep sea of my tears’, and sonnet 149, ‘tears so copious one seems to see a wave rise up, a sea increasing’ - thus the sea of her tears is also her poetic oeuvre, growing with the continued sound of her cries and song.[[544]](#footnote-544) The sea is also a metaphor for Anassilla’s great and unending love, so deep and vast it cannot fully be described or explained, such as in sonnet 15, where she speaks of ‘this sea, which has no bottom nor end’, or sonnet 64, ‘love’s deep and boundless sea’.[[545]](#footnote-545)

As such, Anassilla’s sea exists in an almost symbiotic relationship with her tears. She does not want her tears to stop, just as she does not want her outpouring of song to run dry, and so in sonnet 40 she asks the waves to give her their waters, ‘just enough so I can unleash my sobs in a way befitting a sorrow as deep as mine’.[[546]](#footnote-546) As her tears create the sea, the sea and Anassilla’s great love can also provide the source for her tears as a kind of melancholic counterpoint to the inspiring spring; Anassilla does not mind crying, and it is an inability to cry and resultant silence that worries her more. The water is also established as a sympathetic listener and is responsive to her plights, as in sonnet 47 where Gaspara’s control over the water has an Orphic quality: ‘With these tears that make my eyes moist, I make the sea and its waves pitiful’.[[547]](#footnote-547) The Count’s influence on her emotional state is seen through the sea: ‘calm seas, dear Count, I’ve scarcely known since the day you took yourself far from me’.[[548]](#footnote-548)

At sea, Anassilla feels the loss of her Count, and the watery world around her reflects only her misery, and never her happiness or triumphs. Only the Count can bring her happiness, and so only by her return to land do we see an end to Anassilla’s tears. Harbour imagery is used countless times throughout the *Rime*: for example, poem 108 highlights the harbour’s, and therefore the Count’s, ability to quiet Anassilla’s tears: ‘Sweet, sure, and gracious port, that of my weeping the infinite sea, hast soothed me with the ray of the stars’.[[549]](#footnote-549) As land, he is her safe port and being with him reduces her torment. Similar to the imagery of the river and land as a reflection of their relationship, the use of a boat at sea coming to safe harbour also resonates with their relationship. In sonnet 64, Gaspara speaks of how she ‘was pitched onto the reefs by evil fortune just when [she] had high hopes of reaching port’.[[550]](#footnote-550) Here, Gaspara uses this imagery to reflect on Collaltino’s rejection of her love, and as a result she is unable to reach the harbour and instead is stuck on the reefs; that she is not floating aimlessly at sea suggests certainty in her knowledge of her rejection in this case.

7.2.3 *Gaspara’s Self-Staging*

Key to understanding the link between Gaspara’s internal and performed soundscapes is the manner in which she ‘stages’ her work, creating the idea that her performances belong to a consistent narrative in which she inhabits the character of Anassilla, with Gaspara centred as performer and creator. Her deliberate separation of writing and singing then, which is in contrast to many of her contemporaries, can be seen as referring very directly to the performative aspect of her work - she writes for her work to be sung, to be performed - whilst at the same time highlighting her status as a creator of written texts. This is also seen in sonnets that appear ‘self-staged’, in other words those which provide a clear setting and narrative, not hidden in subtext, nor relying on the author’s prior knowledge of Gaspara’s other verse. The phenomenon of ‘self-staging’ was first brought to light by Janet Smarr in her discussion of Gaspara’s *Rime* for performance purposes and is seen in many of Stampa’s works.[[551]](#footnote-551) This is made most clear in sonnet 202, where Anassilla is wandering along the shore of the Adriatic, calling to her shepherd. The octave of this sonnet is her voice; the character Anassilla speaks of her woes in love, of broken promises and her distant lover. The sestet then gives the reader a setting – a where, a who – describing a scene that clarifies that the intended auditor is not Anassilla’s landscape, but the listener or reader, for whom the setting can add context.[[552]](#footnote-552)

Is this, this the firm and lively faith

You promised your lithe shepherdess

When, the season turning to spring, you left

To travel to the throne of Gaul’s great king?

Oh, wherever the sun scorches, its eyes

See you, ungrateful in your words and deeds;

Wretched me, who chose to be your handmaiden

And carried home such a pitiful prize!

So the desolate and wretched Anassilla

Along the Adriatic’s lovely shores, was calling

Her shepherd, whom the heavens detained,

And the water and wind sweetly echoing,

There where the sun most burns and dazzles,

Carrying her sighs up to the sky.

E’ questa quella viva, e salda fede,

Che promettevi à la tua Pastorella,

Quando partendo à la stagion novella

N’andasti, ove’l gran Re Gallico siede?

O’ di quanto il Sol scalda, e quanto vede

Perfido ingrato in atto, et in favella;

Misera me, che ti divenni ancella,

Per riportarne sì scarsa mercede.

Così l’afflitta, e misera Anassilla

Lungo i bei lidi d’Adria iva chiamando

Il suo Pastor, da cui’l ciel dipartilla.

E l’acque e l’aure dolce risonando

Allor che’l Sol più arde, e più sfavilla

I suoi sospir’ al ciel givan portando.[[553]](#footnote-553)

In addition to sonnet 202, another example of this can be seen in sonnet 247 in which Gaspara is praising another unknown poet. Here she finishes the sonnet, ‘so prayed Anassilla, shepherdess, with ardent zeal and a heart warm and enflamed; the Graces heard her, as did Venus’.[[554]](#footnote-554) Though this does not have the same neat octave/sestet dialogue/setting form of sonnet 202, we can see how there is a suggestion of character in the presence of Anassilla as the speaker who has dialogue, creating a small piece of theatre in which the character and pastoral setting are given directly. This is also witnessed in sonnet 261 which finishes: ‘so said Anassilla, praising her wise shepherd to the air, clear and pure, and the sky was full of lovely sights’.[[555]](#footnote-555) Here, in addition to the presence of a character as a distinct sonic actor in the poem, an inferred audience is given in the direction of her praise. Interestingly, the clearest examples of this self-staging frequently see Anassilla in the guise of a shepherdess rather than a nymph. This position reflects Anassilla as the female equivalent of the male shepherd – that is, the poets of the Venetian salons – highlighting her poetic abilities in these theatrical sonnets. Within this context, the identifier Anassilla provides a literary identity within her social circle, as well as a speaking part within her pastoral fiction.

Another performative aspect that we can see in greater abundance is the presence of ‘audible openings’ within Gaspara’s work, that is, openings to her poetry which suggest its audible nature, and make reference to it being heard or performed by Gaspara.[[556]](#footnote-556) The opening sonnet to Stampa’s *Rime* with its emulation of Petrarch’s own opening sonnet is one such example. Here Gaspara addresses ‘you who hear in these troubled rhymes… the sound of my amorous lament’.[[557]](#footnote-557) Whilst also playing into Gaspara’s literary ambitions, this opening gives her verse a sonic element that is described as heard and not read. In sonnet 173 Gaspara asks ‘Procne and Philomena, sing with me’, here the classical characters invoked help provide a favourable comparison to the sound of Gaspara’s song as well as flattering models for her pains in love.[[558]](#footnote-558) Although not at the very beginning of the poem, Gaspara ends the octave of sonnet 13 wishing her words to sound ‘like a clear and resonant trumpet’.[[559]](#footnote-559) Here she indicates her wish for her words to have volume, to be heard loudly and clearly like the instrument she uses for comparison.

The final aspect of Gaspara’s self-conscious staging is the suggestions of audience, which again are abundant throughout her work. Although in the *Rime* this metaphorically listening public might be thought quite a large group, during her own lifetime it comprised those who encountered her verse as both song and writing in the salon circle. This specific audience presence is explicitly seen in some of her poetry; for example, she mentions the attentive presence of a ‘bright, illustrious company’ and ‘a thousand learned intellects’.[[560]](#footnote-560) Far from addressing the common reader, Gaspara directs her work to the people around her, those who can access her voice as well as her text. However, Gaspara’s manipulation of audience goes even further, and we can see how the audience plays a dynamic role for Stampa: she manipulates it, turning the group gaze on her beloved to win support for her plight, whilst also addressing specific publics in particular ways.[[561]](#footnote-561) Women, as a collective, are invoked multiple times to judge her beloved for his cruel actions, such as in sonnet 90, which is addressed to ‘dear ladies’, asking them to tell her the truth of her suffering.[[562]](#footnote-562) In sonnet 64 she warns women of the dangers of love’s ‘deep and boundless sea’ saying, ‘may your little boat learn from mine’.[[563]](#footnote-563) She calls on women as sympathetic and understanding listeners, as if they are the only ones who can truly empathise with her pain. However, Stampa thinks of the overarching audience for her theatrical verse-performances as comprising the literary and musical circles in which she moved in Venice.[[564]](#footnote-564) The posthumous print publication of her verse is in tension with this feature. As Virginia Cox suggests, had Gaspara not died so young, her romantic poetry would have likely remained unpublished and circulating only in the small circles where such insider knowledge was current.[[565]](#footnote-565)

7.3. *Conclusions*

The creation of a pastoral world allowed Gaspara to communicate with her audience through a fantastical double of her real life. Stampa’s theatrical poetic world reflects the growing trend for pastoral theatre in the sixteenth century with its centrality of musical performance and imitation of real-life affairs.[[566]](#footnote-566) Although Gaspara was likely not aiming to emulate pastoral theatre in particular, her performative background and use of pastoral manifest themselves in a similar way as a result of the focus on setting, character, and performance in her verse. This world was best understood by the audience for which it was written and performed, namely the musical and literary circles to which Gaspara belonged.

It is certainly not surprising that an Italian poet of the 1540s used the pastoral and Petrarchan modes and drew on her own romances as inspiration for her poetry. Nor was it unusual to create for oneself a fictional character – other well-known examples can be found in Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* and Tasso’s *Aminta*. To achieve success as a female poet, Gaspara had to create work that matched the expectations of her cultured community. As an unmarried woman, to present lowbrow work could not further her career, as she already existed in a dangerous area of ambiguity for social acceptance. Indeed, whilst her male contemporaries, the many ‘shepherds’ of Venice, were able to present their pastoral writings as performatively unpolished, rough and low, Gaspara had to develop a more refined pastoral with which to be associated. Her choice of pastoral reflects Venice’s love-affair with the countryside of the Veneto and the life of the villa in the sixteenth century, and her emphasis on her personal life proved attractively sensational in a society that valued discretion.[[567]](#footnote-567) However, Gaspara’s clear literary ambitions, abundantly visible in her verse, do not take away from the understanding of Gaspara’s work as inherently musical and its existence as song; Gaspara’s search for fame, and the intimate relationship between herself as writer and herself as performer, are clearly inflected her verse and soundscape. In her adaptation of Petrarchan mannerisms, and in common with the character of contemporary pastoral, she does not make her poetry solitary, rather she involves all those that hear her lament and invites them to listen to her story.

The landscape that Gaspara created was more than a mere reflection of her own life – it was a carefully constructed world designed to showcase her poetic talents, demonstrating her ability to imagine and represent the emotional highs and lows of a Renaissance love affair in the most popular fictional modes of the time. By creating a pastoral avatar that was identifiable with Stampa herself, and also a character within Stampa’s pastoral world, Stampa gives Anassilla a descriptive setting, intrinsically tied to her character, which is used for countless metaphors reflecting on her story of unrequited love. The performative nature of Gaspara’s work allows us to take such a multimedia approach to analysis, and we are able to look at the *Rime* on a grand scale, analysing in depth the consistent characters and settings that appear, like frequent listeners to her work may have done, but also to look on a smaller scale from verse to verse without losing these performative qualities.

This case study has begun to stray from the very focused realm of soundscape due to the intrinsic ties between the sounding elements of Gaspara’s verse and its visual and narrative aspects, which could be seen to connect more greatly with the role of soundscape in theatre and pastoral drama in creating mood and atmosphere then soundscape as seen in the other case studies presented. But Gaspara’s soundscape is not without comparison to her fellow case study subjects. The relationship between Gaspara as Anassilla’s sound and its effects on her watery landscape see a similarity with that of Boiardo and the connections between his own soundscape and pastoral landscape. Additionally, the conflation by Stampa between her voice as author and as character can be seen to blur the boundaries between real and imagined soundscape in much the same way as that of Serafino. We can see then to some degree in her soundscape construction both the evolution of its use by the poet-performer, but also continuity from the role of soundscape in the poetry of the previous subjects.

However, the relationship between the internal and performative soundscapes of Gaspara’s verse are tethered in a unique way. Elements such as her self-staging, audible openings, and identifiable audience, in addition to the clear creation of character and setting within the *Rime,* highlight the pervasively performative and pastoral elements of Gaspara’s work and resultant soundscape, utilising the sonnet form as a piece of multimedia theatre to stage the author, appearing in the guise of a shepherdess or the river nymph Anassilla. Although it may not have been the way in which Stampa explicitly envisioned her poetry, this performative nature lends Gaspara’s work to examination as a piece of pastoral theatre, given character, setting, and an identifiable audience. Her reflection of real-life affairs through the manipulation of elements such as character and setting have many similarities with the pastoral theatre that was popular at the Italian courts throughout the sixteenth century. As a result, theatre’s performative combination of word, sound, image, and its development of character and setting, form useful comparators in examining the multimedia construction of Gaspara’s poetic world.

**Conclusions**

This thesis has shown how soundscape analysis can provide a new and fruitful avenue of investigation in negotiating the complex relationship between writing and performance found in Italian vernacular poetry from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In all of the case studies presented, we can see how the analysis of the internal soundscape of the poets’ verse shows their conscious control of sound both in the creation of themselves as a character and a voice in their work, and also in mediating between the internal and realised soundscape of the poetry when performed. This manipulation of the sounding elements of their verse is notably in line with the current studies concerning soundscape analysis, which support the authors’ awareness of the sounding elements present in their poetry, and the conscious decisions made to either reinforce or weaken the message and constructs of their verse.[[568]](#footnote-568) By treating each poet’s oeuvre with a necessary individuality, the unique and personal nature of each poet’s soundscape construction is revealed, and the complex relationships between poet, performance traditions, and even print, are more easily understood.

In the early case studies of Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Matteo Maria Boiardo, their soundscape construction appears largely linked to specific place and purpose, establishing a type of poetic performance and dissemination that was intended principally for a small and specific audience. For Boiardo, this is the Este court, where his verse was written for the entertainment of a small elite. In this environment, we can see how Boiardo melds the beliefs and desires of his chosen audience with his own personal style and flair, utilising the sonic realm of his verse to establish his connection with his chosen setting, and forcing the evolution of his imagined landscape from pastoral stage to an emotional reflection of his own imagined heartbreak. For Lucrezia, we can see her manipulation of soundscape to conform with gendered expectations whilst also giving herself voice and agency as an educator, and how this is managed in line with her chosen audience. In the verse for her female family members we hear her voice clearly as a source of authority, but in verse meant for wider dissemination, such as her *laude* and the stories of Judith and John the Baptist, her voice is more greatly controlled but the works and their soundscapes are still reflective of a distinctively Florentine audience.

In the later case studies of Serafino Aquilano and Panfilo Sasso, we can see the changing world between poetry and print, in which the publication of works became an almost expected element of their careers. Their soundscapes, in relation to this, are tied to their careers and are far more centred on the poets themselves. Whilst Serafino did not produce any manuscript or printed forms of his work during his lifetime, the rush to do so after his untimely death indicates the massive demand for these works in print form. His soundscape reflects his performative career, constructed to appeal to the masses by innately connecting the real and imagined sonic realms of his work, and focusing on elevating his status more generally than targeting his appeal to any one group. Sasso’s soundscape is similar in its self-centred indulgence, reflecting a career of female connections and philosophical experimentation, rather than adapting to appeal to a particular group. In both soundscapes, poetry is innately understood as musical, and there is no separation between song and word.

In the final pair of case studies of Tullia d’Aragona and Gaspara Stampa, we see greater mediation between writing and performance, and as a result internal soundscapes that reflect the poets’ own understanding of the duality of their song and written word, with verse created to intentionally exist in both realms concurrently. Whilst it has been suggested that poetic performance by this point saw a greater separation between the worlds of poetry and its innate ties to performance, both of these poets manipulate their soundscapes in a manner that suggests the continued symbiosis between these elements of their verse. For Tullia, this requires the careful management of soundscape in her printed works to navigate contemporary fears over female music-making and her own use of musical performance as a *cortigiana onesta* that could threaten to reduce the impact of her publication. As a result, she notably quietens her own voice, reducing her sonic presence in favour of allowing others instead to describe her sound. For Gaspara, her soundscape is intrinsically linked to the pastoral world in which she stages her romance, connecting her role as character in this world with her real-life performance. Though writing and singing are consciously separated in her verse, her soundscape is utilised to navigate these elements, combining them in the sensationalised performance of her imagined narrative. Unlike Tullia, we do not see the same silencing of her voice, and instead the fantasy of her romance provides a space in which she is free to display her singing talents.

In addition to the pairing of these case studies by time period, there are additional links that span the course of the study. One example of this can be found in the case studies of Lucrezia and Tullia who, despite their vastly different circumstances, show how the gendered aspect of authorial construction required additional soundscape management on the part of the poet. As a result, we can see how both make moves to silence their voices in the internal soundscape of their verse for the purposes of wider dissemination of their work. Though both women were navigating vastly different circumstances, and this comparison does not look to draw similarities in this respect, the manipulation of their verse in this manner for both poets transcends the realms of real and imagined soundscape, with these women consciously quietening their voice in both realms, carefully managing their contributions to their own soundscape to appease contemporary ideals. The lack of this silencing element present in Gaspara’s verse is perhaps owed to the fact her work was not intended for dissemination beyond an audience that already saw her as a *virtuosa*, and her poetry and thus soundscape acted as extensions of this.

However, perhaps one of the most overarching links between these case studies is the relationship between performed and printed verse, and how verse and its internal soundscape required adaptation for the purposes of print. This is seen in the contrasting pairs of Tullia and Panfilo, who printed their verse under their own direction later in life, and Serafino and Gaspara, who died whilst at the height of their performance careers and had their verse collated and published posthumously by others. The entanglement between writing and transcription has been one of the hardest elements of the poetic performative traditions to navigate, but in this regard, soundscape analysis can possibly aid in shedding light on the level of adaptation faced by verse in its transition from performance to printed work.

The printed works of both Gaspara and Serafino present us with the most intrinsic connections between imagined and performed soundscapes. That is, the internal soundscape of the verse is inseparable from the soundscape of the verse in its performance, presenting on both levels a sonic ideal of the poet both in their imagined and realised sound. This construction of both poets is undoubtedly linked to their untimely deaths, capturing their verse production at the height of their performance careers and looking to reflect this in their published verse. Indeed, for Gaspara, whose own understanding of her work is shown to be a combination of both the written and performed elements, we can see the highlighting of her role as a *virtuosa* above poet and author in the structure of the first compilation of her work. Here, the ordering of her poetry contrasted with that of other contemporary female poets in its connection to performance practice as opposed to narrative.

By comparison, in the case of both Tullia and Panfilo, there is a move to publish their verse at the perceived end of their performance careers, collating work which for the majority of their career had existed primarily as song. Sasso’s own motivation for the need to print is seen in poetry written in dedication to Serafino: in a sonnet written in dedication to Serafino, entitled ‘Ecco la nocte, el ciel tucto se adorna’, Panfilo references not only Serafino’s great performative abilities, but also that the fame of the poet can only continue due to the recording of his sung works in text.[[569]](#footnote-569) Sasso then suggests an understanding that the consolidation of performed work into a printed format is required for the longevity of the poet, especially beyond their own lifetime. For Tullia, the move to print has been seen to be situationally motivated, consolidating a career of performance into the image of a women of letters to appease sumptuary laws and gain a status as poetess above all other accolades.

This process of moving from performative career to compilated poetry edition led to the revision of their work, including considerations of how their internal soundscape worked to reinforce or lessen the performative nature of their poetry and their own constructions as author. This is clearly seen in Tullia’s work, as although certain poems contained in her printed anthology can be dated from throughout her career, her manipulation of her own role in the internal soundscape of her poetry is reactive to contemporary connections between courtesanary and anxieties surrounding female vocal performance. This process is less evident in Sasso’s publications, but the focus of the internal soundscape of his verse can still be seen to be edited to more greatly reflect his connections to notable contemporary woman, and also his philosophical thinking, which he may have wished to highlight over his performative career in the print publication of his work.

In conclusion, the analysis of soundscapes internal to verse, when done in a manner sensitive to its existence also as song, undoubtedly provides new insight into the relationships between poet, verse, and performance. In addition to generating new information about individual creators and their work, this type of analysis has shown how it can aid in gaining a greater understanding of the poetic performative traditions more generally, including examining the role of performance, ideas of audience and intention, as well as shedding new light on the poets’ own reasons for printing and how work may be necessarily adapted for this purpose, helping to more precisely understand the balance between writing and performance and the process by which song is captured in printed text editions.

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1. For Luca Degl’Innocenti see for example: “Il poeta, la viola e l’incanto: Per l’iconografia del canterino nel primo Cinquecento,” *Paragone* 62, no. 93-5 (2011): 141-156; and “Chivalric Poetry between Singing and Printing in Early Modern Italy,” *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 7 (2018): 43-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This includes but is not limited to publications such as: Brian Richardson, “*Recitato e Cantato:* The Oral Diffusion of Lyric Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” in *Theatre, Opera, and Performance in Italy from the Fifteenth Century to the Present: Essays in Honour of Richard Andrews*, ed. Brian Richardson, Simon Gilson, and Catherine Keen (Leeds: Society for Italian Studies, 2004), 67-82; *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); “The Social Connotations of Singing Verse in Cinquecento Italy,” *The Italianist* 34 (2014): 362-378; “Sixteenth Century Italian Petrarchists and Musical Settings of Their Verse,” in *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society,* ed. Stefano Dall’Aglio, Brian Richardson, and Massimo Rospocher (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 124-138; and “Improvising Lyric Verse in the Renaissance,” in *Cultural Reception, Translation and Transformation from Medieval to Modern Italy: Essays in Honour of Martin McLaughlin*, ed. Guido Bonsaver, Brian Richardson, and Giuseppe Stellardi (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), 97-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. James K. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy: Improvisation, Orality and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Nino Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Cambridge and London:Harvard University Press, 1984), see especially 51-112; and Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 3-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Walter Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy* *(ca. 1500)* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. James Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance 1350-1600* (London: University of California Press, 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. F. Alberto Gallo, *Music in the Castle: Troubadours, Books & Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, trans. Anna Herklotz (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid., see chapter 3, “Orpheus Christianus,” 69-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Timothy McGee, *The Ceremonial Musicians of Late Medieval Florence* (Bloomington: Indianna University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Philippe Canguilhem, *“*Improvisation as Concept and Musical Practice in the Fifteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music,* ed. Busse Berger and Rodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 149-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Elena Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600* (Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Blake Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy: Memory, Performance, and Oral Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This project has resulted in a number of publications, including: *Interactions Between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture,* ed. Luca Degl’Innocenti, Brian Richardson and Chiara Sbordoni (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society,* ed. Stefano Dall’Aglio, Brian Richardson, and Massimo Rospocher (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017); a special edition of *Italian Studies* 71, no.2 (2016),entitled “The Cantastorie in Renaissance Italy: Street Singers Between Oral and Literate Cultures,” ed. Luca Degl’Innocenti, Massimo Rospocher, and Rosa Salzberg; and a special edition of *Renaissance Studies* 33, no.1 (2019), “Street Singers in Renaissance Europe,” ed. Luca Degl’Innocenti and Massimo Rosphocher; the importance of this project has also been acknowledged by Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 159-160 n.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. As much is acknowledged by Coleman, who revised his investigation in light of the publication of Wilson’s own study. See Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 160 n.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 135-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Brigitte Cazelles, *Soundscape in Early French Literature* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in collaboration with Brepols, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid., 161-165. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Though his focus remains on courtly environments, Gallo can also be noted for this style of approach in his following of Aurelio Brandolini’s and Pietrobono dal Chitarino’s careers. See Gallo, *Music in the Castle*, 75-86, and 86-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. As already noted, Florence is the predominant focus for Wilson’s *Singing to the Lyre,* and is also the focus of the studies by Coleman, McGee, and Degl’Innocenti. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Virginia Cox, *Women’s Writing in Italy, 1400-1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women’s love lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); *A History of Women’s Writing in Italy,* ed. Letizia Panizza and Sharon Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), see especially 25-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Fiora Bassanese, ““Private Lives and Public Lies: Texts by Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 30, no. 3 (1988): 295-319. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy*, 9-11; Brian Richardson, *Women and the Circulation of Texts in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2020), 193-224. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. William F. Prizer, “Isabella d'Este and Lorenzo da Pavia, ‘Master Instrument – Maker,’” *Early music history,* vol.2, (1982), 87 – 127; “Isabella d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38 (1985): 1-33; “Una “Virtù Molto Conveniente a Madonne": Isabella d’Este as a Musician.” *Journal of Musicology*, A Birthday Tableau for H. Colin Slim, 17, no. 1, (1999), 10 - 49; and Tim Shephard, “Constructing Isabella d’Este’s Musical Decorum in the Visual Sphere,” *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 5 (2011): 684–706.   [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, for her mentions see 16, 21, 41, and 126; for the *Sacred Narratives* see 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Janet L. Smarr, “Gaspara Stampa’s Poetry for Performance,” *Quidditas: Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association*, no.12 (1991): 61-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (London: University of California Press, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon, ed., *The Courtesans Arts: Cross Cultural Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Shawn Marie Keener, “Virtue, Illusion, *Venezianità*: Vocal Bravura and the Early *Cortigiana Onesta,*” in *Musical Voices of Early Modern Women: Many Headed Melodies*, ed. Thomasin K. LaMay (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 119-133. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Issues of authorship arising from this are dealt with when necessary on a case-by-case basis in the relevant case study chapters. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For Serafino, see especially Giuseppina la Face Bianconi and Antonio Rossi, *Le Rime di Serafino Aquilano in Musica* (Florence: Leo S. Olshki Editore, 1999), and for Gaspara see Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *Sacred Narratives*, ed. and trans. Jane Tylus (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); Gaspara Stampa, *The Complete Poems: The 1554 Edition of the “Rime”, a Bilingual Edition*, ed. Troy Tower and Jane Tylus, trans. Jane Tylus (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 2010); and Tullia d’Aragona, *The Poems and Letter of Tullia d’Aragona and Others: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. Julia L. Hairston (Toronto: Iter Inc., 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Amorum Libri: The Lyric Poems of Matteo Maria Boiardo*. ed. and trans. Andrea di Tommaso (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Charles Dempsey, *Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy*, 165; Gallo, *Music in the Castle,* see in particular 11-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Gallo, *Music in the Castle,* 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ibid.; Guarino Veronese, *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese,* vol. 2 ed. Remigio Sabbadini (Venice: A Spese della Società, 1916), 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 245; For an overview of music’s role in a humanist education, see James Hankins, “Humanism and Music in Italy,” in *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music,* ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 233 – 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 207; Haar, “The Courtier as a Musician: Castiglioneʼs View of the Science and Art of Music,” in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. Paul Corneilson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 20-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 250; Gallo, *Music in the Castle,* 98-112; Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy,* 167-168; Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Chriscinda Henry, “Alter Orpheus: Masks of Virtuosity in Renaissance Portraits of Musical Improvisers,” *Italian Studies* 71, no. 2 (2016): 258; Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Luca degl’Innocenti, “Il poeta, la viola e l’incanto,” 148; Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Tim Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2020), 173-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*; Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Notably, many of these centres, including Ferrara and the Aragonese Court of Naples, are also discussed by Wilson, however they do not receive the same level of attention as Florence. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. “Tuscus ab Othrysio, Fabiane, Antonius Orpheo/ How differ: homines hic trahit, ille feras,” Angelo Poliziano, *Prose volgari inedite e posie latine e greche edite e inedite*, ed. Isidoro Del Lungo (Florence: Barbera, 1867), 21; Luca degl’Innocenti trans., “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press. Itineraries of the Altissimo’s Performed Texts in Renaissance Italy,” *The Italianist* 34 (2014): 322. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Degl’Innocenti, “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press,” 322; Lorenz Boninger, “Ricerche sugli inizi della stampa Fiorentina (1471-1472),” *La Bibliofilia,* 105 (2003): 225-248. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Armando F. Verde and Raffaella Maria Zaccaria, *Lo studio fiorentino, 1473-1502: Richerche e documenti,* (Florence: Olschki, 1973), 3:689; Coleman trans., *A Sudden Frenzy*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 139, Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Christina Storey, “The Philosopher, the Poet, and the Fragment: Ficino, Poliziano, and Le Stanze per La Giostra,” *The Modern Language Review* 98, no. 3 (2003): 605; C.C. Greenfield, *Humanism and Scholastic Poetics, 1250-1500* (London; Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1981), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 183; Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 54; Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. This is explored in more detail by Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Greenfield, *Humanism and Scholastic Poetics,* 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 97; Coleman suggests that Poliziano recognised the differences between what Walter Ong calls primary and secondary orality, as poetic frenzy in the manner described by Ficino was only possible in the orality of the likes of Homer and Hesiod, which Ong would describe as the condition of primary orality. See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid., 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre,* 19; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 316. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre,* 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 215, Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 80, [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre,* 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Vincenzo Calmeta, *Qual stile tra’ volgari poeti sia da imitare,* in *Prose e lettere edite e inedite,* ed. Cecil Grayson (Bologna: Commissione per I testi di lingua, 1959),21-22; Abromov-van Rijk trans., *Parlar Cantando,* 165-166. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Abromov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando,* 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Giovanni Zanovello, “‘You Will Take This Sacred Book’: The Musical Strambotto as a Learned Gift,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 141, no. 1 (2016): 16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Benedetto Gareth, *Opera noua del Chariteo* (Venice: Giorgio Rusconi, 1507). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. For more on this see William J. Kennedy, “Citing Petrarch in Naples: The Politics of Commentary in Cariteo’s Endimione,” *Renaissance* Quarterly, Vol. 55, No.4 (Winter 2002), 1197; and *The Site of Petrarchism: Early Modern National Sentiment in Italy, France, and England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. This is a distinction commented upon in the *Atlante dei canzonieri del Quattrocento*, ed. Andrea Comboni and Tiziano Zanato, (Florence; Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Pirotta, *Music and Theatre,* 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. As raised by Zanavello and Giullo Catin, many notable frottola composers from the 1490s especially were born, trained or active in the Veneto area. See Giulio Cattin, “Formazione e attività delle cappelle polifoniche nelle cattedrali. La musica nelle città,” in *Storia della culturea veneta*, vol. 3: *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Vincenza: Neri Pozza, 1981): 294; and Giovanni Zanavello, “The Frottola in the Veneto,” in *A Companion to Sixteenth-Century Venice,* ed. Katelijne Schiltz (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), 398. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Pirotta, *Music and Theatre,* 75; William Prizer, “The Frottola and the Unwritten Tradition,” *Studi musicali* 15 (1986): 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Prizer, “The Frottola and the Unwritten Tradition,” 5-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Giovanni Zanovello, “’With tempered notes, in the green hills and among rivers’: Music, Learning, and the Symbolic Space of Recreation in the Manuscript Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, α.F.9.9,” in *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space and Object*, ed. Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 171 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. William F. Prizer, “Games of Venus: Secular Vocal Music in the Late Quattrocento and Early Cinquecento,” *Journal of Musicology* 9 (1991): 7; “Isabella d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music,” 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Prizer, “The Frottola and the Unwritten Tradition,” 4, 27-30; *Courtly Pastimes: The Frottole of Marchetto Cara* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 129-136; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 417. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 417. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music,* 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid., 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. William Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes,* 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Hiroyuki Minamino, “Chicken or Egg? Frottola ‘arrangements’ for Voice and Lute,” *Lute Society*. *The Lute: The Journal of the Lute Society*, 38 (1998): 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Calmeta makes harsh remarks in regard to Tebaldeo’s poetry in comparison to that of Serafino Aquilano, for more on this see Calmeta, *Prose e lettere*, pp.LXII-LXIII & 15-19; Stephen D. Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic: Vincenzo Calmeta’s *Vita del facondo poeta vulgare Serafino Aquilano*,” *Italica* 67.2 (1990) 172 n.5.; Tebaldeo also features in Panfilo Sasso’s *Versi in lode de la lyra,* among a list of contemporaries Sasso credits for verse performance, see Panfilo Sasso, *Versi in lode de la lyra composti per il clarissimo poeta miser Panphilo Sasso Modenese,* (Brescia: Bernardino Misinta, 1500), F.A.vi.r. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. For more on this, see Bianconi and Rossi, *Le Rime di Serafino Aquilano in Musica*. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Notably, there are instance in which it appears all vocal performances of frottole took place, in these cases it appears that the text is printed for all parts, see Prizer, “Performance Practices in the Frottola,” 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes*, 137; “Performance Practices in the Frottola,” 227; Haar, *Essays on* *Italian Poetry and Music*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Prizer, *Courtly Pastimes,* 138; Minamino, “Chicken or Egg? Frottola ‘arrangements’ for Voice and Lute,” 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Minamino, “Chicken or Egg? Frottola ‘arrangements’ for Voice and Lute,” 52 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. See Nino Pirrotta, “Novelty and Renewal in Italy,” in *Music and Culture in Italy*, 170; Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 87-88*;* “The Courtier as a Musician: Castiglioneʼs View of the Science and Art of Music,” in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. Paul Corneilson (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998),

     25; Martha Feldman,“The Courtesan’s Voice: Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy and Oral Traditions,” in *The* *Courtesan's Arts: cross-cultural perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman & Bonnie Gordon (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy*, 170; Martha Feldman, “Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy, and Oral Tradition,” 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Haar, “The Courtier as Musician,” 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Ibid., 25; See also Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 292-295. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 414. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music,* 83; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 414n.30. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Prizer, “Isabella d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music,” 32, Tim Shephard, *Echoing Helicon: Music, Art and Identity in the Este Studioli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Rosa Salzberg, “In the Mouth of Charlatans: Street Performers and the Dissemination of

     Pamphlets in Renaissance Italy,” *Renaissance Studies* 24, 5(2010): 640; Paul F. Grendler, “Form and Function in Italian Renaissance Popular Books,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 46 (1993): 453. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Salzberg, “In the Mouth of Charlatans,” 648. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Rosa Salzberg, “The Word of the Street: Street Performers and Devotional Texts in Italian Renaissance Cities,” *Italianist* 34.3 (2014): 338 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Ibid., 337 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Ibid., 323. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Ibid., 101; Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 94; Richardson, “The Social Connotations of Singing Verse in Cinquecento Italy,” 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Richardson, “The Social Connotations of Singing Verse in Cinquecento Italy,” 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. “cantandosi I versi del *Furioso* per la strade, I Fanciulli apparano molti comminciamenti di Canti, come che egli siano a ciò più comodi,” Giovan Battista Pigna, “Scontri dei luoghi mutati dall’autore doppo la prima impressione,” no. 52, in Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1562), fol. l8r; see also Richardson, “The Social Connotations of Singing Verse in Cinquecento Italy,” 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music,* 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Haar, “From Cantimbanco to Court: The Musical Fortunes of Ariosto in Florentine Society,” in *L’arme e gli amori: Ariosto, Tasso and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence*, ed. Massimiliano Rossi and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi, (Florence: Olschki, 2004), 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 153-167; Degl’Innocenti. “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press,” 318-335; *I ‘Reali’ dell’Altissimo: un ciclo di cantari fra oralità e scrittura (*Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 154; Degl’Innocenti. “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press,” 325-329. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Degl’Innocenti. “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press,” 319. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4, of which Serafino is the subject. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Degl’Innocenti. “The Singing Voice and the Printing Press,” 324. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Virginia Cox, “Introduction,” to *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. William J. Kennedy, *Authorising Petrarch* (Ithica; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Cox, *Women’s Writing in Italy,* 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Kennedy, *Authorising Petrarch*, 115; Jones, *The Currency of Eros,* 28-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Kennedy, *Authorising Petrarch*, 116; Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithica; London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. “non insoavemente componeva qualche sonetto o madrigal,” Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, *Parte terza,* vol. 8 (Milan: Giovanni Silvestri, 1814), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Poem features in Cox, *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance,* 83-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Cox, *Women Writing in Italy,* 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 412; Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 68-9; Richardson, “The Social Connotations of Singing,” 364-365. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Wilson, *Singing to the lyre,* 412, Richardson, “Sixteenth Century Italian Petrarchists and Musical Settings of Their Verse,” 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Richardson, “Sixteenth Century Italian Petrarchists and Musical Settings of Their Verse,” 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Ian Fenlon, “Music and the Academies of Venice and the Veneto,” in *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society,* ed. Stefano Dall’Aglio et al. (London: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), 99; Eric Cochrane, *The Late Italian Renaissance 1525-1630* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Martha Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 102; Pirrota, *Music and Culture,* 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Anton Francesco Doni, *Dialogo della musica* (Venice, Girolamo Scotto, 1544), 209; this dialogue has been the centre of some academic discussion, see for example Cathy Ann Elias, “Musical Performance in 16th-Century Italian Literature: Straparola’s Le Piacevoli Notti,” *Early Music* 17, no. 2 (1989): 162; and James Haar, “Notes on the *Dialogo della Musica* of Antonfrancesco Doni,” in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. Paul Corneilson (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998), 271-299. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. “un certo Modo, overo Aria, che lo vogliamo dire, di cantare; si come sono quelli modi di cantare, sopra I quali cantiamo al presente li Sonetti, o Canzoni del petrarca, overmente le Rime dell’Ariosto,” Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice: Pietro da Fino, 1558), pt. 3, 289; Trans. Robert Nosow, “The Debate on Song in the Accademia Fiorentina,” *Early Music History* 21 (2002):180. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. “Qui convien sol la tua cetra, e’l tuo canto, Chiaro Signor,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 274-5; Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 115; This will be examined in greater detail in regard to Stampa’s own use of this device in relation to her own poetry and performance in Chapter 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Jones, *The* *Currency of Eros*, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Pietro Aaron, *Lucidario in Musica* (Venice: Girolamo Scoto),f.32. See also Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal,* 104, and Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal,* trans. Alexander H. Knappe, Roger H. Sessions, and Oliver Strunk, 3 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949; Repr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990),1:447 and 2:843. At noted by Feldman, Einstein considered Franceschina a courtesan by nature of her musicianship, for which a similar issue will later be seen in relation to Gaspara Stampa. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. David Nutter, “Ippolito Tromboncino, *Cantore al liuto*,” *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance Studies* 3 (1989): 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Franceschina features in Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 104; and Nutter, “Ippolito Tromboncino, *Cantore al liuto*,” 133-135. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal*, 104; and Nutter, “Ippolito Tromboncino, *Cantore al liuto*,” 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. *Rime di diversi nobilissimi et eccellentissimi autori in morte della Signora Irene delle Signore di Spilimbergo. Alle quali si son aggiunti versi Latini di diversi egregii Poeti, in morte della medesima Signora* (Venice: Domenico and Giovanni Battista Guerra, 1561), F.a.6.r.; Nutter, “Ippolito Tromboncino, *Cantore al liuto*,” 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Nutter, “Ippolito Tromboncino, *Cantore al liuto*,” 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Giovanna Rabitti, “Introduction,” to Chiara Matraini, *Selected Poetry and Prose: A Bilingual Edition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Pietro Pera, *Miscellanea lucchese*, MS 1547, c. 397, as quoted in Giovanna Rabitti, “Linee per il ritratto di Chiara Matraini,” *Studi e problemi di critica letteraria* 22 (1981): 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Rabitti, “Introduction,” 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Anthony M. Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist: Patrons, Patronage, and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2004), 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Tessa Storey, “Courtesan Culture: manhood, honour and sociability,” in *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy,* ed. Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 250; Courtney Quaintance, *Textual Masculinity and the Exchange of Women in Renaissance Venice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Quaintance, *Textual Masculinity,* 17; Chriscinda Henry, “Courtesans as Collectors and Tastemakers in Renaissance Italy,” in *When Michelangelo Was Modern; Collecting, Patronage and the Art Market in Italy, 1450-1650*, ed. Inge Reist (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2022), 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Marino Sanudo, *I Diarii* ed. Rinaldo Fulin et al., 58 vols (Venice: Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria, 1879-1903) Vol. 8, 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. The catalogue has seen numerous reprints, for example see Antonio Barzaghi, Donne o cortigiane? La prostituzione a Venezia, documenti di costume dal XVI al XVIII secolo (Verona, Italy: Bertani editore, 1980); Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, Le cortigiane Veneziane nel Cinquecento (Milan, Italy: Longanesi & C., 1968); Catalogo di tutte le principal et più honorate cortigiane di Venezia (Venice, Italy: I antichi editori Venezia, 2013); and Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage en Italie*, in *Oeuvres completes*, ed. Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat, (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 1235. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Matteo Bandello, *Novelle*, *Parte terza,* vol. 8 (Milan: Giovanni Silvestri, 1814), 64-5. Trans. adapted from Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975),37. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music,* 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice,* 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Shawn Marie Keener, “Virtue, Illusion, *Venezianità,”* 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Dawn De Rycke, “On Hearing the Courtesan in a Gift of Song: The Venetian Case of Gaspara Stampa,” in *The Courtesan’s Arts: cross-cultural perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice,* 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. F.24v: “La canzona ponposta per la Maria cortigiana.” F.25r: “Strambotto pietosissimo della prefata Maria, el quale lo cantava con gratia assai.” Antorini 158, the manuscript is the focus of William F. Prizer’s, “Wives and Courtesans: The Frottola in Florence,” in *Music Observed: Studies in Memory of William C. Holmes*, ed. Colleen Reardon and Susan Parisi (Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), 410. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. “La sopra scriptta canzona era la sua favorita, e molto la cantava bene di modo ogniuno sis aria Innamorato d’essa audirglene cantare si bene,” Antorini 158, f. 23r. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. “ti portan via le spere e ti cavan di mano i Liuti, o altri stormenti,” attributed to Pietro Aretino. The entire dialogue with translation can be found in Duncan Salkeld, “History, Genre and Sexuality in the Sixteenth Century: The Zoppino Dialogue Attributed to Pietro Aretino,” *Mediterranean Studies* 10 (2001), 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Pietro Bembo, *Delle lettere di M. Pietro Bembo* (Venice, 1552), IV, 124–5; William F. Prizer, “Cardinals and Courtesans: Secular Music in Rome, 1500–1520,” in Italy and the European Powers ed. Christine Shaw (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006): 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Prizer, "Cardinals and Courtesans,” 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Feldman, “The Courtesans’ Voice,” 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Anthony Newcomb, “Courtesans, Muses, or Musicians? Professional Women Musicians in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition 1150-1950,* ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 104-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Keener, “Virtue, Illusion, *Venezianità,*”124. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. The possible courtesan status of Gaspara Stampa will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier,* trans. George Bull (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Andrea di Tommaso, “Introduction,” to Boiardo, *Amorum Libri*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. For more on Guarino’s school at Ferrara, and his greater pedagogical career and influence see Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 125-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti, “Matteo Maria Boiardo,” *La Letteratura Italiana: Storia e Testi*, 10 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1972), Vol. 3 tome 2, *Il Quattrocento: L’Eta dell’Umanesimo,* 293-294; Tommaso, “Introduction”, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. E. W. Edwards, *The* Orlando Furioso *& its Predecessor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Ibid., 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. See especially sonnets 141-143, Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone del Poeta Clarissimo Matheo Maria Boiardo Contedi Scandiano* (Venice, Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1501), F.49v-50r. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Indeed, as suggested by Tomaso, the date ‘*die quatro Ianuarii MCCCCLXXVII’* found at the end of the manuscript suggests the final edits to the work were done whilst Boiardo was at the Ferrarese Court. Tommaso, “Introduction”, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Angelandrea Zottoli, “Introduction,” to *Tutte le Opere di Matteo M. Boiardo*, ed. Zottoli (Milan: Mondadori, 1936), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Giovanni Ponte, *La Personalità e L’opera del Boiardo* (Genoa: Tilgher, 1972), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Jo Ann Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. 1495 also saw the first publication of Boiardo’s third book separately in addition to the complete edition; published in Venice by Simon Bevilaqua, this edition has now been lost. Edwards, *The* Orlando Furioso *& its Predecessors*, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Peter Brand suggests the work could have been written before 1486 when the first performance of Plautus’ *I Menechmi* was staged. For more on this see Peter Brand, “Boiardo’s *Timone*,” in *Italy in Crisis, 1494,* ed. Jane Everson and Diego Zancani (London: Routledge, 2000), 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso*, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 274. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. “Texere perdocui resonanti carmina plectro,” Ludovico Carbone, *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Milan and Naples, 1952), 410; trans. Gallo, *Music in the Castle*, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Gallo, *Music in the Castle,* 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 276; Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara; The Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009),105. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara,* 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Ibid.,106; It is worth noting that Pietrobono’s status as a singer has been challenged recently, see Bonnie Blackburn, “’The Foremost Lutenist in the World’: Pietrobono dal Chitarino and his Repertory,” *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 51 (2018): 1-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara,* 50; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara,* 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Ibid., 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Brand, “Boiardo’s Timone,” 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Ibid., 81; Pirrotta, *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Ibid., 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Ibid., 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato (I-II)* (Venice: Petrus de Plasiis, 1486). [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. See also Jane E. Everson, *The Italian Romance Epic in the Age of Humanism: the Matter of Italy and the World of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press; 2001), 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Calmeta*, “*Qual stile tra’ volgare poeti sia da imitare,”*,*in *Prose e lettere edite e inedite,* 21; Abromov-van Rijk, *Parlar cantando,* 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Haar, *Essays on* *Italian Poetry and Music*, 93-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. See for example A. Benvenuti, “Tradizioni letterarie e gusto tardogotico nel canzoniere di M. M. Boiardo,” GSLI, 137 (1960), 557; and Mauda Bregoli-Russo, *Boiardo Lirico*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 140-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.10r.; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. Ibid., F.33v; trans. ibid., 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. A. Benvenuti, “Tradizioni letterarie e gusto tardogotco nel canzioniere di M. M. Boiardo,” GSLI, 137 (1960), 557. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.2r.; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. Alessandra Rozzoni, “Sequenze penitenziali negli “Amorum libri” di Boiardo,” *Acme*, 65(2012), 200; Tiziano Zanato, “Provare “l’ultimo valor” di amore. Sensualita ed erotismo negli “Amorum libri” di Boiardo,” *Italique,* 17 (2014), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. For descriptions of the beloved’s sound in Boiardo’s work, see in particular: Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.13r. and F.40v-41r. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Olivia Holmes, *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian*

     *Poetry Book* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 174. As we will later see, Boiardo provides us with an audience internal to his verse, frequently birds. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.6v; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. Ibid., F.3r-3v; trans. ibid., 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. Tiziano Zanato, “Varianti d’autore negli “Amorum libri tres,”” in *Gli* Amorum Libri *e la lirica del quattrocento: con altri studi Boiardeschi* ed. Antonia Tassoni Benvenuti, (Novara: Interlinea, 2003), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.15v; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 104-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Ibid., F.18v-19r; trans. ibid., 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. Ibid., F.30v; trans. ibid., 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. Ibid., F.30r; trans. ibid.*,* 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. Ibid., F.20r; trans. ibid., 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. See for example sonnet 20, Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.7.r. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.37r; Tomasso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. See especially the concluding poems of both books 2 and 3: Rozzoni, “Sequenze penitenziali negli “Amorum libri” di Boiardo,” 179-183; for more on Boiardo’s Petrarchism see G. Baldassari, “Corrispondenze petrarchesche nel I libro degli “Amores” di Boiardo,” in *Studi dedicati a Gennaro Barbarisi,* ed. Claudia Berra and Michele Mari (Milan: CUEM, 2007), 171-206. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.38.v; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 216-217. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. For frozen landscape references see in particular F.39.v and sonnet F.37.v; whilst the conceit of the beloved as ice while the author burns is a common one in Petrarchan verse, Boiardo sees these extend to his landscape. For references to Rome see sonnets 141-143, F.49r.-F.49v. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. Boiardo, *Sonetti e Canzone*, F.37.r; Tommaso trans., *Amorum Libri,* 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Ibid., F.45r; trans. ibid., 251. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. Mauda Bregoli-Russo, *Boiardo Lirico*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre, 282*.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. For more on this see Jane Tylus, “Introduction” to Lucrezia Tornabuoni de’Medici, *Sacred Narratives,* 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. Lucrezia is unlikely to have been the first woman in print, of which honour may fall to her fellow Florentine contemporary Antonia Pulci, whose 13 *sacre rappresentazioni* may have been printed in 1483. For more on this discussion see Nerida Newbigin, “Antonia Pulci and the First Anthology of *Sacre Rappresentazioni* (1483?),” *La Bibliofilía* 118, no. 3 (2016): 337–62; and Cox, *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance*, 190. The importance of these early *laude* publications is also discussed in Patrick Macey, “The Lauda and the Cult of Savonarola,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1992): 441. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. Guido Pampaloni, “I Tornaquinci, Poi Tornabuoni, Fino Ai Primi Del Cinquecento,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 126, no. 3/4 (459/460) (1968): 345-346. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. Leonardo Bruni d’Arezzo, “The Study of Literature,” in *Humanist Educational Treatises,* trans. Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 47-64.For more on the discussion of this treatise and the education of women in fifteenth century Italy see Virginia Cox, "Leonardo Bruni on Women and Rhetoric: De Studiis Et Litteris Revisited," *Rhetorica* 27, no. 1 (Winter, 2009): 47-75; and Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling In Renaissance Italy,* 87-102.  [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. “Voi havete sempre tanto lecto, si pieno lo scriptoio di libri, udito pistol di sam Paolo, praticho tutto il tempo di vostra vita con valenti huomini,” found in Salvadori ed., *Lettere* (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 122.; “e quello che in quel sesso e raro, fu di grandissima eloquenzia” found in Niccolò Valori, *Vita di Lorenzo de’Medici,* ed. E. Niccolini, (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1991), 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. Natalie Tomas, *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), 16.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Francis W. Kent, “Sainted Mother, Magnificent Son: Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Lorenzo de ‘Medici,” *Italian History and Culture,* Vol. 3 Edizioni Cadmo (1997), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Tomas, *The Medici Women,* 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. For more on this see the suggestions by Tomas, who lists many commissions that may have come from Lucrezia and Piero as a team; ibid, 84-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. “falla alla signorile e va lisciata come se fussi di 15 anni,” Jacapo Acciaiuoli to his brother, Neri, Rome, 3 April 1467, Firenze, Arch. Di Stato, Archivio MaP, LXXII, 239. Found and translated in Kent, “Sainted Mother, Magnificent Son,” 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Tomas, *The Medici Women,* 31.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. “io resto tanto sconsolato… havendo perduto non solamente la madre, ma un unico refugio di molti miei fastidii.” found in Gaetano Pieraccini, “Lucrezia Tornabuoni,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 107, no. 2 (395) (1949): 213-214. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Tomas, *The Medici Women,* 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. Ibid, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Kent, “Sainted Mother, Magnificent Son,” 10; Tylus, “Introduction,” 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. Ibid, 10; ibid, 35.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *I Poemetti Sacri di Lucrezia Tornabuoni,* ed. Fulvio Pezzarossa (Florence: Olschki, 1978), 41.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. The work was not printed in its entirety until after Lucrezia’s death in 1482; see the classic study by Ernest H. Wilkins, “On the Dates of Composition of the Morgante of Luigi Pulci,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 66, no. 2 (1951): 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. Kent, “Sainted Mother, Magnificent Son,” 86.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. See in particular Tylus, “Introduction,” 35-45; and Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Tylus, “Introduction,” 40.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. Blake Wilson, *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The Cantasi Come Tradition (1375-1550)* (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. Blake Wilson, *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 37.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. 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 de Medici*, ed. Piero Gargiulo (Florence: Olschki, 1993), 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. Ibid., 171-172.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. Patrick Macey, “*Infiamma il mio cor*: Savonarolan *Laude* by and for Dominican Nuns in Tuscany,” in *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe* ed. Craig A. Monson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Macey, “The Lauda and the Cult of Savonarola,” 442. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. Tomas, *The Medici Women*,93.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. Serafino Razzi, *Libro primo delle laudi spirituali* (Venice, Guinti, 1563), F.15v-16v. and F.36r. respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediveo avanti il principato, xvii, 108; trans. Kent, *Cosimo de’Medici and the Florentine Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 47-48; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Tomas, *The Medici Women*,94. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Ibid., 30.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Orvieto, *Pulci medievale: Studio sulla poesia volgare Fiorentina del Quattrocento* (Rome: Salerno, 1978)176-86; MarcoVilloresi, “Panoramica sui poeti performativi d’età laurenziana,” *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana* 34 (2009): 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. Villoresi, “Panoramica sui poeti performativi d’età laurenziana,” 15.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Luca Mazzoni, “Lucrezia Tornabuoni fra Lorenzo, Poliziano e Pulci,” in *Memoria poetica: Questioni filogiche e problem di metodo*, ed. Giuseppe Alvino, Marco Berisso, and Irene Falini (Genoa: Genova University Press, 2019), 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. For more on this see Tylus, “Introduction,” 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. “et chi questa operetta legge o ode,” Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *La istoria della casta Susanna*, ed. and intro. Paolo Orvieto, (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 1992), 45-46 [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy,* 126.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Judith Bryce, “Performing for Strangers: Women, Dance, and Music in Quattrocento Florence,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (2001): 1095.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. F.A. D’Accone, “Lorenzo il Magnifico and Music,” in *Lorenzo il Magnifico ed il suo mondo* ed. Garfagnini (Florence; Olschki, 1994), 268; trans. Tomas, *The Medici Women*, 93. Bryce, ibid. 1095 n.7 for a note on translations. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Bryce, “Performing for Strangers,” 1096.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. “Disnato che haverano se sonerà parechij instrumenti per le figliole de Piero in Camera de Madona,” Andre Rochon, *La jeunesse de Laurent de Medicis (1449-1478)* (Paris, 1963), 104 n.58; found and trans. in Bryce, “Performing for Strangers,” 1096

     [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Poliziano, *Prose volgari inedite*, 72; Translation from Coleman, A *Sudden Frenzy*, 28.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. Judith Bryce, “Adjusting the Canon for Later Fifteenth Century Florence,” in *The Renaissance Theatre Texts, Performance, Design Volume 1* ed. Christopher Cairns (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 139.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *Rime sacre del Magnifico Lorenzo de’medici il Vecchio, di Madonna Lucrezia sua madre e d’altri stessa Famiglia* (Florence: Torre de Donati, 1680), 68-69; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives,* 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives,* 265. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. Tornabuoni, *Rime sacre,* 78; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives,* 278. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Ibid.,78-9; trans. ibid.*,* 278-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. “A dio con umil voce/ Volgasi ognun Fedele/ A pianger Giesu in Croce/ Che per noi giusta il fede/ Laudil ciascun Fedele/ Con la Figljuola d’Anna,” Tornabuoni, *Rime sacre,* 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives,* 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Tylus, “Introduction,” 38; Tomas, *The Medici Women*,29. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *La istoria della casta Susanna*, ed. and intro. Paolo Orvieto (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 1992), 45-46; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives*, 64.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives*, 73; Kenelm Foster, “The Vernacular Scriptures in Italy,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 463-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, *Storia di Hester* e *Vita di Tubia,* ed. and intro Luca Mazzoni (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020), 151; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives*, 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. Tylus, “Introduction,” 40.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Roger J. Crum, “Judith between the Private and Public Realms in Renaissance Florence,” in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Discipline,* ed. Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lahnemann (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Crum, “Judith between the Private and Public Realms in Renaissance Florence,” 304 n.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives,* 58 n.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. Tornabuoni, *I poemetti sacri,* 201; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives,* 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives*, 123 n.9. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Ibid., 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Tornabuoni, *Poemetti sacri*, 230; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives*, 147.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives*, 160 n.57; Anna Wainwright, “Teaching Widowed Women, Community, and Devotion in Quattrocento Florence with Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Antonia Tanini Pulci,” *Religions* 9, no.3: 76 (2018), 8.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. Crum, “Judith between the Private and Public Realms in Renaissance Florence,” 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. Wainwright, "Teaching Widowed Women,” 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. Tornabuoni, *Poemetti sacri*, 248; Tylus trans., *Sacred Narratives*, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Ibid., 200; trans. ibid.,263.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. For example see Mario Martelli, “Lucrezia Tornabuoni,” in *Les Femmes Ecrivains en Italie au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1994), 65-6. Martelli suggests that the lack of mention of the works in *ottava rima* in the letter from Poliziano to Lucrezia concerning her granddaughter memorising her works suggests that the works had not been composed yet. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. Tylus, *Sacred Narratives*, 149 n.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. Cox, *Women writing in Italy*, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. Ibid., 13

     [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. Tomas, *The Medici Women*,89; Catherine E. King, *Renaissance Women Patrons: Wives and Widows in Italy c.1300-1550* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 249.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Francesco, Barbaro, “On Wifely Duties,” in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 200; Anna Wainwright, "Teaching Widowed Women,” 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. King, *Renaissance Women Patrons*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. Tomas, *The Medici Women*,28. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. Calmeta, *Vita del facondo poeta vulgare Serafino Aquilano,* in *Prose e lettere edite e inedite*, 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar cantando*, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. Calmeta, *Vita*, 63; Francesca Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta: A denunciation in the eclogue of *Tyrinto e Menandro* (1490),” in *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society* ed. Stefano Dall’Aglio, Brian Richardson and Massimo Rospocher (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. Calmeta, *Vita, 60*-61; Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic,” 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. Calmeta, *Vita*, 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta,” 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. Calmeta, *Vita,* 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. Allan W. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic,” 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. For Calmeta’s comments on Tebaldeo’s poetry, see Calmeta, *Prose e lettere*, pp. LXII-LXIII & 15-19; Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic,” 172 n.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. Calmeta, *Vita,* 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. Ibid., 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Serafino Aquilano, *Le rime di Serafino de’Ciminelli dall’Aquila: Volume primo,* ed. Mario Menghini(Bologna: Romagnoli-Dall’Acqua, 1894), 128; Trans. Paola Ugolini, *The Court and its Critics: Anti-Court Sentiments in Early Modern Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 104-5.

     This sonnet does not feature in either the 1502 or 1503 editions of Serafino’s work, however, is a rare example of a work printed and attributed to Serafino during his lifetime; see Menghini’s introduction to the *Rime*, IX-X. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. Ugolini, *The Court and its Critics,* 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. Calmeta, *Vita,* 76; Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar cantando*, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Antonio Rossi, *Serafino Aquilano e la poesia cortigiana* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1980), 13–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. Bianconi and Rossi, *Le Rime di Serafino Aquilano in Musica*, 30-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Serafino Aquilano, *Opere del facundissimo Seraphino Aquilano collette per Francescio Flavio. Sonetti LXXXIX. Egloghe III. Epistole VI. Capitoli IX Strammotti CCVI Barzellette X* (Venice: Manfredo Bonelli, 1502). This edition, in addition to the 1503 publication are considered by La Face and Rossi to be the most accurate in their attributions to Serafino. See Bianconi and Rossi, *Le Rime di Serafino Aquilano,* 14 & 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. Francesco Flavio editor’s note to Aquilano, *Opere;* trans. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre,* 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. Elizabeth Elmi, “Singing Lyric among Local Aristocratic Networks in the Aragonese Kingdom

     of Naples: Aesthetic and Political Meaning in the Written Records of an Oral Practice,” (PhD diss. Indiana University, 2019), 49; Giuseppina La Face Bianconi and Antonio Rossi, ““Sofferir non son disposto ogni tormento”: Serafino Aquilano: Figura letteraria, fantasma musicologico,” in *Atti del XIV Congresso della Società* *Internazionale di Musicologia,* Bologna, 27 agosto- 1 settembre 1987, ed. Angelo Pompilio, Donatella Restani and Lorenzo Bianconi (Turin: EDT, 1990), 241-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. Calmeta, *Vita,* 60; trans. Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar cantando*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. Elmi, “Singing Lyric among Local Aristocratic Networks in the Aragonese Kingdom of Naples,” 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples*, 83; Rubsamen, *Sources of Secular Music in Italy*, 14-17; Francesco Luisi, *La musica vocale nel rinascimento: Studi sulla musica vocale profana in Italia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Turin: ERI, 1977), 112-118. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. See for example the attributions in Bianconi and Rossi, *Le Rime di Serafino Aquilano in Musica,* 177-285; Calmeta, *Vita,* 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre*, 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. Calmeta, *Vita,* 60; trans. Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of *Poeta*,” 140-142. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Serafino Aquilano, *Collettanee grece, latine,e vulgari per diversi auctori moderni, nella morte de l’ardente Seraphino Aquilano per Gioanne Philoteo Achillino bolognese in uno corpo ridutte e alla diva Helisabetta Feltria da Gonzaga duchessa di Urbino dicate* (Bologna: Caligola Bazalieri, 1504); Serafino Aquilano, *Opere delfacundissimo Serafino Aquilano collette per Francesco Flauio Sonetti lxxxix Egloghe. iii Epistole yi Capitoli ix. Stramboti ccyi barzelette. X.* (Bologna: Girolamo Ruggeri, 1503). [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. Richardson, “The Social Connotations of Singing,” 364; Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta,” 141; Calmeta, *Vita,* 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. Calmeta, *Vita*, 75; Anne Smith, *The Performance of 16th-Century Music: Learning from the Theorists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011),103. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta,” 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Colocci, “Apologia” in *Le rime di Serafino de’Ciminelli dall’Aquila: Volume primo,* ed. and intro.Mario Menghini(Bologna: Romagnoli-Dall’Acqua, 1894), 26; for more on the *Apologia* see Aulo Greco, *L’‘Apologia’ delle rime di Serafino Aquilano di Angelo Colocci* (Città di Castello: Arte Grafiche, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Kolsky, “The Courtier as Critic,” 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta,” 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. Ibid., 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Aquilano, *Opera,* F.b.4v. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. Ibid.*,* F.b.4r. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. Aquilano, *Sonetti del Seraphin* (Brescia: Bernardino Misinta, 1501), F. b.ii.r. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. Ibid., F.b.iv. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. Tim Shephard et al., *Music in the Art of Renaissance* Italy, 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. Aquilano, *Opera,* F.g.8v. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Ibid., F.b.7r. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. Ibid., F.b.7v. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. Ibid., F.c.5v. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. “E come ad Eccho fu crudel Narciso,” Aquilano, *Soneti del Serafin,* F.ar. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. For more on this see Sara Sturm-Maddox, *Petrarch’s Laurels* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992),41. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. Frederick W. Sternfeld, “Repetition and Echo in Renaissance Poetry and Music,” in *English Renaissance Studies* ed. John Carey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. Ibid., 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. Angelo Poliziano, *Le cose volgare del celeberrimo miser Angelo Polliciano, cioèStanza & Canzone Pastorale & alter cose elegantissime novamente stampate & ben corrette* (Milan: Giovanni Castiglione and Giovanni Giacomo Da Legnano, 1519), F. E.iiiiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. Sternfeld, “Reception and Echo,” 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Gauradas, *Greek Anthology*, IV, Book 16, trans. W.R. Paton (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 249-251: *"Dear Echo, grant me somewhat. - What?*

     *I love a girl, but do not think she loves. - She loves.*

     *But to do it Time gives me not good chance. - Good chance.*

     *Do thou then tell her I love her, if so be they will. - I will.*

     *And here is a pledge in the shape of cash I beg thee to hand over. - Hand over.*

     *Echo, what remains but to succeed - Succeed.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. Aquilano, *Opera,* F.d.1v. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Elmi, “Singing Lyric among Local Aristocratic Networks in the Aragonese Kingdom of Naples,” 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. Aquilano, *Opera,* F.a.7r. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. Ibid.*,* F.c.2r. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. See in particular Massimo Malinverni, “Un caso di incrocia fra tradizione autorizzata e letteratura populare: I “sonetti e capitula” di Panfilo Sasso e un opuscolo sulle guerre di fine ‘400,’” *Diacritica* V, 6(30), Dec 2019; and Folke Gernerted. *Panfilo Sasso* Strambotti (Trier: Romanica Treverensis, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. ‘Pamphilus Saxus Mutinensis octavum et trigesimum circiter agens annum,’(Panfilo Sasso of Moderna, about the eighth and thirtieth year of his life) Panfilo Sasso, found in Cassandra Fedele, *Clarissimae Feminae Cassandrae Fidelis venetae Epistolae et orations,* ed. Jacopo Filippo Tomasini (Padua: Franciscus Bolzetta, 1636), 184; translation from Cassandra Fedele, *Letters and Orations,* ed. and trans. Diana Robin (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Women as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 332n.104. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice’s Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 35-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Much of the poetry in dedication to Brenzoni refers to her by her married name Schioppo, suggesting it was written after her marriage in 1492. See Massimo Castoldi (ed.), *Rime per Laura Brenzoni Schioppo dal codice Marciana It. El, ix, 163* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1994); Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. Virginia Cox, *Women writing in Italy,* 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. Bowd, *Venice’s Most Loyal City*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. For a detailed look at the editorial history of the strambotti see Folke Gernert, “Introduction,” to *Panfilo Sasso* Strambotti, 9-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Folke Gernert, “Introduction,” 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. Carlo Ginzburg, “Un letterato e una strega al principio del Cinquecento: Panfilo Sasso e Anastasia la Frappona,” in *Studi in memoria di Carlo Ascheri* (Urbino: Argalia, 1970), 129-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Folke Gernert, “Introduction,” 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. Giuseppe Cavazzuti, *Lodovico Castelvetro* (Modena: Societa Tipografica Modenese, 1903), 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Matteo Bosso, *Familiares et secundae epistolae* (Mantova, 1498), letter 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. Ugolini, *The Court and its Critics,* 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. Sasso, *Opere*; Ugolini trans., *The Court and its Critics*, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. Rubsamen, *Literary Sources of Secular Music in Italy,* 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. This sonnet was latter set by multiple madrigalists such as Willaert and Perrisonne in the mid-16th century and was featured in the 1519 edition of Sasso’s *Opera*,confirming the piece as his. For more on its later musical settings see Richard Freedman, “Claude Le Jeune, Adrian Willaert and the Art of Musical Translation,” *Early Music History* 13 (1994): 123-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. Panfilo Sasso, found in Fedele, *Clarissimae Feminae Cassandrae Fidelis*, 184; Robin trans., *Letters and Orations*, 81. Italics are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Thank you to Tim Shephard, Vincenzo Borghetti, and Paolo Pellegrini for the help in accurately identifying this location. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. Matteo Bosso, *Familiares et secundae epistolae* (Mantova, 1498), letter 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. ‘Ei caedit Apollo et Amphion,’ ibid.; Gallo trans., *Music in the Castle*, 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. Sasso, *Versi in lode della lyra*, f.4.r; Stephen John Campbell trans., *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological painting and the studiolo of Isabella d’Este* (Newhaven CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. # The other possibility for this character is Vincenzo Querini. Querini was in Padua studying philosophy from 1492 onwards and is known to have written Tuscan lyric. However, Querini later turned to a religious lifestyle in the early 1500s and was also only 14 at the time of his studies. Stephen David Bowd, *Reform before the Reformation: Vincenzo Querini and the Religious Renaissance in Italy* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 33-34.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. Panfilo Sasso, *Versi in lode della lyra*, f.3r. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. Wilson, *Singing to the lyre*, 104 n.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. My work with these sources comes from my close reading of a number of Sasso’s contemporaries whose work was published in 1501, which I have had the opportunity to read and work with as part of my time on the ‘Sounding the Bookshelf 1501: A Year in Italian Printed Books’ project. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Antonio Tebaldeo, *Soneti, capituli et egloghe*, (Milan: Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1501). [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. For a more on the *cetra* specifically see Crawford Young, ‘Le cetra ciruta: The Horned Lyre of the Christian World,’ PhD diss., (Leiden University, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. These references come from the same editions that formed the basis for the previous chapter; Aquilano, *Opera*; and Aquilano, *Soneti del Serafin.* [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. Benedetto Gareth, *Opera noua del Chariteo* (Venice: Giorgio Rusconi, 1507); *Opera di Chariteo stampate novamente* (Venice: Manfredo Bonelli, 1507). [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. ‘instrumentum est musicum: quidem est ilyra dicitur’, Giovanni Tortelli, *Ioannis Tortelii. Orthographia. Tortelli Lima quaedam per Giorgium Vallam tractatum de orthographia* (Venice: Bartolomeo Zani, 1501), f. 59r. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. Sasso, *Versi in lode della lyra,* f.2r. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Panfilo Sasso, *Strambotti del clarissimo professore dele bone arte miser Sasso Modenese* (Rome:

     Johann Besicken, 1501), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. Panfilo Sasso, *Opera del praeclarissimo poeta miser Pamphilo Sasso modenese. Sonetti CCCCVII. Capituli XXXVIII. Egloge V.* (Venice: Viani, Bernardino (I), 1501)*,* F.c.iii.b. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. Ann Payne, *Medieval Beasts* (London: The British Library, 1990), 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. “Piangendo vo como la Tortorella/ senza compagno,” Sasso, *Strambotti,* 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Elena Laura Calogero, ““ Sweet alluring harmony”: Heavenly and Earthly Sirens in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Literary and Visual Culture,” in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. Sasso, *Opera*, F.b.ir. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. “vengho a cantar como fa la Serena/ quando piu cresce el so crudel dolore,” Sasso, *Strambotti,* 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. Leofranc Holford-Strevens, “Sirens in antiquity and the Middle Ages,” in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. Ljubica Ilic, “In Pursuit of Echo: Sound, Space and the History of Self,” in *Music, Myth and Story in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Katherine Butler and Samantha Bassler (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), 162.  [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. Sasso, *Opera*, F.p.iiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A model of Allusion in Milton and After* (London: University of California Press, 1981), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. Sasso, *Strambotti*, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Sasso, *Opera,* F.i.ir. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. Mark Musa trans. *Petrarch: The Canzoniere, or Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999),32-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. Ann Rosalind Jones, “‘New Songs for the Swallow’: Ovid's Philomela in Tullia d'Aragona and Gaspara Stampa," in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance,* ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Ibid., 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. Sasso, *Opera*, F.c.iiir. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. ‘Quando me levo e sento Philomena cantar si dolce’, ibid., F.q.iiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. “& torna Philomena al suo lamento.” Ibid., F.m.ivr. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. Ibid., F.h.ivv. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. ‘piange cantando la sua antiqua *poena.’* Ibid., F.c.iiir. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. James K. Coleman provides a list of examples, which features a far more extensive array of characters than is found in Sasso work, including characters from a wide range of classical antiquity and mythology. See Coleman, *A Sudden Frenzy*, 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. Ibid., 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. The eclogue features as part of the 1547 *Rime.* Girolamo Muzio, *Tirrhenia,* found and translated in *The Poems and Letters of Tullia d’Aragona and Others: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. and trans. Hairston, 178-179; and Julia L. Hairston, “Introduction,” to *The Poems and Letters of Tullia d’Aragona and Others,* 156-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. “Non negherò di non passare tempo volentieri con Tullia,” Alessandro Bardi, “Filippo Strozzi (da nuovi documenti),” *Archivio storico italiano* 14 (1894), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. Pietro Aretino, *Tariffa della puttane di Venegia, accompagné d’un catalogue des principales courtisanes de Venise tire des archives vénitiennes (XVIe siècle)* (Paris: Bibliothèque de curieux, 1911), 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. Hairston, “Introduction,” to *The* *Poems and Letters*, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. Sonnet 117, Tullia D’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. ASS, Notarile antecosimiano 2357, f.207 found in Hairston, “Introduction,” 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. ASS, Capitano di giustizia 75, f.53, found in ibid, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. Lorenzo Cantini, *Legislazione Toscana,* 16 vols. (Florence: Stamp. Albizziana, 1800-1808) 1:322; ibid, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. ‘mi auti… in esporre questa supplica*’,* Tullia D’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 297. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. These sonnets are briefly discussed by Hairston in her introduction to the modern edition of Tullia’s work and are included in the Miscellaneous poems featured in the modern edition; see *Poems and Letters,* 26 & 275-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. Hairston, “Introduction,” 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. The exact date of composition has been suggested to start from as early as 1543 when Tullia was still in Siena and before her relationship with Varchi. For more on this and the debate of authorship see John C. McLucas, “Renaissance Carolingian: Tullia d’Aragona’s *Il Meschino, Altramente Detto Il Guerrino*,” *Olifant* 25, no. 1/2 (2006): 314; and Gloria Allaire, “Tullia d’Aragona’s *Il Meschino altramente detto il Guerrino* as Key to a Reappraisal of Her Work,” *Quaderni d’italianistica* 16.1 (1995): 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. Senate Decree of 21 February 1542, and Decree of 1539, found and trans. in David Chambers and Brian Pullan *Venice: A Documentary History,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. “ma cosi togliea ella il senno ad alcuni uomini maturi e scienziati, che col prometter loro di lasciarli goder di lei, qualunque volta danzassero, mentre ella toccava il leuto, faccano scalzi la rosina, o la pavana,” Giovanni Battista Giraldi, *Gli ecatommiti, ovvero cento novelle* (Florence: Borghi, 1834), 43; Rita Casagrande di Villaviera, *Le cortigiane veneziane nel Cinquecento* (Milan: Longanesi, 1968), 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. “È sorto in questa terra una gentil cortigiana di Roma... sa cantare al libro ogni motetto et canzone,” Battista Stambellino, ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1251, ff.191r-192v. found and trans. in Hairston, “Introduction,” 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. “La quale empie di stupor le genti a udirve si dolcemnte cantare, et con la man bianca et bella qual si voglia stromento leggiadramente sonare,” Niccolò Martelli, 6 March 1546, from vol. 2 of his letters, found and translated in Storey, “Courtesan Culture,” 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance,* 130; Rodocanachi, *Cortigiane* ASR, Notai AC, 6298, ff.79r-80v, found in Feldman, “Petrarchan lovers, pop philosophy and oral tradition,” 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. ‘dolce canto’, Ippolito de’Medici, *Poems and Letters,* 225-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. ‘I dotti accenti che vi ispira Euterpe’, Ercole Bentivoglio, ibid, 231-232. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. ‘di colei, che cantando in dolce vena a le nove sorelle aggiunge honore’, Lattanzio Benucci, ibid., 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. ‘E sì rade doti vostre cantar prose, né versi’, sonnet 2, ibid.*,* 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. ‘e ogni mia doglia cangerei in dolce canto’, sonnet 22, ibid., 93-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. ‘non giunge penna, o voce humana arriva’, sonnet 9, ibid., 74-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. Hairston “Introduction,” 23; and Jones, *The Currency of Eros*, 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. Feldman, “Petrarchan lovers, pop philosophy and oral tradition,” 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. See footnote 24 previously. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. Jones, *The Currency of Eros*, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Bassanese, “Private Lives and Public Lies,” 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. “Dunque voi sola a voi stessa simile, a cui s’inchina la natura, e l’arte, fate di voi cantando in ogni parte, Tullia, Tullia suonar da Gange a Thule,” the reference to Thule in particular comes originally from Petrarch, canzone 146, used to show the great distance at which the poet’s verse will resound. Luigi Grazzini, *Poems and Letters,* 146-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. Jones, *The Currency of Eros*, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Jones, “Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women’s Lyric,” in *The Poetics of Gender* ed. Nancy K. Miller and Carolyn G. Heilbrun (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. Laura Terracina, *Rime de la signora Laura Terracina* (Venice: Gabriele Giolitto, 1548). [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. Julia L. Hairston, ““Di sangue illustre & pellegrino”: The eclipse of the Body in the Lyric of Tullia d’Aragona,” in *The Body in Early Modern Italy* ed. Julia L. Hairston and Walter Stephens (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. d’Aragona, *Rime,* 90-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. For example, Muzio refers to her as a siren and Varchi refers to her as a nymph, see *Poems and Letters*, 206-7 and 129 respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. Procne and Philomena are often reduced to ‘sad sisters’ that act as sympathetic listeners to the poet, this is the case in their use by Sasso seen in the last case study. Ann Rosalind Jones, “New Song for the Swallows,” 265, and 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 105-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. Jones, “New Songs for the Swallow,” 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. Cathy Santore, “The Tools of Venus,” *Renaissance Studies*, 11, no.3, (1997): 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. See Muzio’s eclogues in d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 156-181*.* As Hairston discusses, Tullia wished Muzio change her name to Thalia, linking her to the muse of the comedy and bucolic poetry*, Poems and Letter,* 156 n.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters*, 68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. “Io vorrei che tu mi mutassi nome et appellassimi Thalia, ma che lo facessi in guise che si conoscesse che Tirrehenia et Thalia sono un cosa istessa,” d’Aragona, from Muzio, *Lettere,* 321. Translated in d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 158 n.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. ‘dolce pastore, vero d’Arcadia e di Toscana honore’, d’Aragona, *Poems and Letters,* 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. Ibid., 128-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy,* 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. Bonnie Gordon, “The Courtesan’s Singing Body as Cultural Capital in Seventeenth Century Italy,” in *The Courtesan’s Arts: cross-cultural perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. Janet Levarie Smarr, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women* (Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. See the title of the article by Janet Levarie Smarr, “A Dialogue of Dialogues: Tullia D'Aragona and Sperone Speroni,” *Modern Language Notes,* 113, no. 1 (1998): 204-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. Tullia d’Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*,trans. and intro. Rinaldina Russel and Bruce Merry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. Smarr, “A Dialogue of Dialogues,” 206; “Love as Centaur: Rational Man, Animal Woman in Sperone Speroni’s *Dialogue on Love*,” in *In Dialogue with the Other Voice in Sixteenth-Century Italy* ed. Julie D. Campbell and Maria Galli Stampino (New York: Iter Press, 2011), 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. “Io non mi voglio aguagliare in cosa niuna al vostro e mio dottissimo, leggiadrissimo e cortesissimo messer Sperone… in tutto, salvo che in conoscer il pregio vostro,” d’Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love,* trans. Russel and Merry, 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. Ibid, 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. d’Aragona, *Dialogue of the Infinity of Love,* 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. Rinaldina Russell, “Introduction,” to the *Dialogue of the Infinity of Love,* 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. Bassanese, *Gaspara Stampa* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 3; and Jane Tylus, “Introduction,” to Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. Jane Tylus, “Introduction,” 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. “Era vicino il dì, che’l Creatore… dal ventre Virginal’ uscendo fore,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 248-249. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. “Adì 23 April 1554 M. Gasparina Stampa in le case de messer Hieronymo Morosini la qual é stà malà de fibre et mal colico, et mal de mare zorni 15, è morta in questo zorno” Maria Bellonci, “Cronologia”, from Gaspara Stampa, *Rime di Madonna Gaspara Stampa* (Venice: Plinio Pietrasanta, 1554), 40; Tylus trans., “Introduction,” 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. Akdelkader Salza, “Madonna Gasparina Stampa e la società Veneziana del suo tempo,” *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 70 (1917), 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. Maria Bellonci “Introduzione,” to Gaspara Stampa’s *Rime*, 2nd ed. (Milano, 1976), found and trans. in Bassanese, *Gaspara Stampa,* 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. Senate Decree of 21 February 1542, and Decree of 1539 found and trans. in Chambers and Pullan *Venice A Documentary History,* 126-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. For more on the issues on identifying between singers and *cortigiana* see Keener, “Virtue, Illusion, *Venezianità,*”123-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. John Walter Hill, “Training a Singer for ‘musica recitativa’ in Early Seventeenth Century Italy: The Case of Baldassare,” in *Musicologia humana: Studies in Honor of Warren and Ursula Kirkendale* (Florence: Olschki, 1994): 345-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. For example, the *Rime* of Chiara Matraini published in 1555 was split into poetry from before and after the death of the beloved in imitation of Petrarch. This is despite Matraini also being recognised for her musical talents during her lifetime. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. Indeed, we have no manuscript copies of Stampa’s work making it impossible to know the editorial process. See Veronica Andreani, “Sul Petrarchismo di Gaspara Stampa: il modello di Pietro Bembo,” in *L’Italianistica oggi: ricerca e didattica*, proceedings of the 19th Congress of the Association of Italianists (Rome, 9-12 September 2015), ed. by B. Alfonzetti et al. (Rome: Adi Editore, 2017), 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. “chi mai sì soave e dolci parole ascoltò? Chi mai sentì più alti concetti? Che dirò io di quell’angelica voce, che qualora percuote l’aria de’suoi divini accenti, fa tale e sì dolce armonia…” Girolamo Parabosco, “Lettera alla virtuosissima Madonna Gaspara Stampa” in *Lettere amorse,* found and trans. in Smarr, “Gaspara Stampa’s Poetry for Performance,” 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. “Niuna donna al mondo amar piu la Musica di quello che fate voi, ne altra piu raramente possederla,” Perrisone Cambio dedication from *Primo libro di madrigali a quatro voci,* found and translated in Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice*, 373 [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. “divina sirena” ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. Dawn De Rycke, “On Hearing the Courtesan in a Gift of Song: The Venetian Case of Gaspara Stampa,” in *The Courtesan’s Arts: cross-cultural perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 130; Feldman, *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice,* 374. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. “Nuova sirena, poggiò cantando un colle alto, ed in cima, fe’l verde eterno, e l’aria ognior serena,” Girolamo Molino, trans. and found in Janet L. Smarr, “Gaspara Stampa’s Poetry for Performance,” 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. Feldman, “The Courtesan’s Voice: Petrachan Lovers, Pop Philosophy and Oral Traditions,” 109; Howard Mayer Brown and Louise K. Stein, *Music in the Renaissance* 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999), 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Abdelkader Salza, “Madonna Gasparina Stampa e La Società Veneziana Del Suo Tempo (Nuove

     Discussioni). Parte I (15. XI. 1916),” *Giornale Storico Della Letteratura Italiana* 69, no. 206 (1917): 298-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. “sì che fosser da me scritte e cantate,” and “Mentr’ho davanti i lumi almi, e sereni, di ui conven, che sempre scriva, e canti,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. “che per sfogar talhor descrivo e canto,” ibid, 96-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Jones, *The Currency of Eros*, 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. Stampa, *The Complete Poem,* 130-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. Ibid., 188-189. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. “dimenticata et abbandonata Anassilla,” ibid., 58-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. Ibid., 58-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. “se vi fu giamai dolce e soave la vostra fidelissima Anassilla mentre serrata sì, che nullo aprilla, teneste dal suo cor Conte la chiave,” Ibid., 114-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. Troy Towers, “Anassilla: Stampa’s Poetic Ecology,” in *Rethinking Gaspara Stampa in the*

     *Canon of Renaissance Poetry*, ed. Unn Falkeid and Aileen Feng (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. “sotto quest’aspra pietra giace ascosa l’infelice e fidissima Anassilla, raro essempio di fede alta amorosa,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 134-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. “A’ pena vide’ voi’l Gallico Regno” and “Anassilla, e’l suo Fedele & vero amor sparir da voi…” ibid.,128-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. One exception is Jones, *The Currency of Eros,* 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. “Tu mi dai nome,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 182-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. “Fiume, che dal mio nome, nome prendi,” ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. Jennifer Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy,* 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Questi chiarissimi Pastori, che me di giola, et Adria han d’honour pieno…” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 280-281. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. Janet Levarie Smarr, “Substituting for Laura: Objects of Desire for Renaissance Women Poets,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 38, no. 1 (2001): 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 56-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. Towers, “Anassilla: Stampa’s Poetic Ecology,” 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. Jones, *The Currency of Eros,* 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. “Fiume, che dal mio nome, nome predi, e bagni i piedi à l’alto Colle e vago,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 182-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. Veronica Andreani, “Tra pseudonimo e *senhal.* L’onomastica dell’amore nelle *Rime* di Gaspara Stampa,” *Il Nome nel Testo,* 12 (2010): 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. “quasi quercia di monte urtata e scossa” and sonnet 93, “qual fuggitiva cerva e miserella,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 140-141. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. In book 4 of Virgil *Aeneid,* Dido is cast as a deer, and Aeneas as an oak. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. “A’che contender con chi non contende? Con chi havete mai sempre fra ‘ugna?’” Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 140-141. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia, *Woman on Fire: Mapping the Four Elements in Gaspara Stampa’s* Rime, PhD diss. (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2008), 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. “Ond’io piansi, e cantai con più d’un verso,” 182-3 and “E questo pianto, che da me deriva…” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 182-3 and 140-141. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. “pianger di pianto tal, che sen’aveggia homai quest’onda, e cresca questo mare,” ibid., 190-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. “largo e profondo pelago d’Amore,” ibid., 112-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. “in questo mar, che non ha fondo o fine”, ibid., 70-1; “quanto mi basti à disfogar’ il pianto, che si conviene à l’alto mio dolore,” ibid., 92-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. “Così col pianto, ond’ho gli occhi miei molli, fò pietose quest’onde e questo mare,” ibid., 98-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. “Bonaccie non vi son, perchè dal die che voi Conte da me lontan vi feste partir con voi l'hore serene mie,” ibid., 122-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. “dolce, sicuro, e gratioso porto, che del mio pianto l’infinito mare, m'hai acquetato al raggio de le stelle*,”* ibid., 156-157. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. “Cui ria fortuna allor diede di piglio che più sperai esser vicina al porto.’ ibid., 112-113 [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. Smarr. “Gaspara Stampa’s Poetry for Performance,” 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 237. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. “Tal pregando Anassilla pastorella, d’ardente zelo, e’l cor caldo e’nfiammato le gratie udirla, e la più chiara stella.” ibid., 280-281. [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. “Così, lodando il suo saggio Pastore; Anassilla dicea, di dolci aspetti ripieno il cielo, à l’aer chiaro, e puro.” ibid., 292-293. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. The presence of these ‘audible openings’ is not an aspect unique to Stampa’s poetry, but rather an element that can be found widely in poetry engaging in performative practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. “Voi ch’ascoltate in queste meste rime…. Il suon de gli amorosi miei lamenti,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems,* 58-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. Cantate meco Progne e Filomena,’ ibid., 212-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. E, quasi chiara, e risonante tromba,’ ibid., 68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. “Fra quell’illustre e nobil compagnia,” ibid., 84-5; and “à mille alti intelletti,” ibid., 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. Jones, *The Currency of Eros,* 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. “Voi, che per l’amoroso aspro sentiero, donne care, com'io, forse passate,” Stampa, *The Complete Poems*, 138-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. “Largo e profondo pelago d'Amore… sia dal mio essempio il vostro legno scorto,” ibid., 112-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. Justin Vitiello. “Gaspara Stampa: The Ambiguities of Martyrdom,” *Modern Language Notes*, 90, no. 1 (1975): 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. Cox, *Women’s Writing in Italy,* 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy*, 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. William J. Kennedy, *Petrarchism at Work* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2016), 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. Hout, *From Song to Book*, 140; Cazelles, *Soundscape in Early French Literature*, 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. Bortoletti, “Serafino Aquilano and the mask of Poeta,” 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)