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A MUSICAL SONNET BY FRANCO SACCHETTI AND THE SOUNDSCAPE OF FLORENCE

The prolific Florentine poet Franco Sacchetti (ca. 1334-1400), whose refined madrigals, ballatas, and caccias were in great demand among contemporary musicians, is strongly represented in the majority of Trecento musical manuscripts. The recent revolutionary study of the palimpsest codex Firenze, Archivio del Capitolo di San Lorenzo, 2211 (SL) by Andreas Janke and John Nádas gives us a good opportunity to speak about Sacchetti: this manuscript transmits, as an *unicum*, the ballata *Splendor da ciel*, set to music at a later date by the Florentine composer Giovanni Mazzuoli, or Jovannes Horganista de Florentia. As Andreas Janke notes, this ballata does not bear, in Sacchetti's autograph, the usual caption of having been intoned by this or that composer.¹

The interest of musicologists in Sacchetti's poetic legacy is stimulated not only by the setting of his verses to music but, also, by the fact that various contemporary musical practices are reflected in his poems. Some poems disclose the poet's custom of asking composers or singers for musical settings of his poetic texts, as, for example, Sacchetti's sonnets of correspondence with Francesco Landini and Ottolino da Brescia (the music of the latter does not survive) or his madrigal *Ben che io senta*, in which the poet complains about his colleagues who want to furnish their verses with musical dress. Janke proposes that the poems marked with the caption "per altrui" (for someone) could have been written in response to commissions, and points out that some of

^{1.} Andreas Janke, *Die Kompositionen von Giovanni Mazzuoli, Piero Mazzuoli und Ugolino da Orvieto im San-Lorenzo-Palimpsest (ASL 2211)*, Musica Mensurabilis, 7 (Hildesheim: Olms, 2016), 79. Janke indicates two instances of the absence of such an inscription in Sacchetti's *Libro delle rime*: in addition to *Splendor da ciel*, the ballata *Altri n'avrà la pena*, set to music by Landini, also is not referred to as having been intoned.

The End of the Ars Nova in Italy. The San Lorenzo Palimpsest and Related Repertories, ed. A. Calvia, S. Campagnolo, A. Janke, M. S. Lannutti, J. Nádas (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2020), 3-12. (ISBN 978-88-9290-046-2 © SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo e Fondazione Ezio Franceschini ONLUS)

them were set to music as well.² Moreover, Sacchetti's poetic repertoire directs us to an argument that is becoming increasingly prominent in modern historical research: that of the so-called "soundscape", the term used to describe an amalgam of sounds specific to an ambience or an event.³

In painting, the minuscule details of the landscape, framing the main scene of the picture (be it military, biblical, or of another kind), are helpful in expressing the ambience; it is left to our imagination to provide the scene with sonic substance. Given the impossibility of recorded sound until the modern epoch, this lacuna was partially filled with meticulous descriptions of various acoustical aspects in the contemporary literature.

In this regard, the recent study by Niall Atkinson on the soundscape of Florence is very important.⁴ Atkinson explores acoustical aspects of late medieval Florence's urban space, based on architectural blueprints, drawings, plans, and maps both ancient and modern, as well as various other wide-ranging documents (from administrative records to chronicles and other literary sources). These sources are, for example, at the foundation of his fascinating attempt to reconstruct the order in which the four main Florentine bells sounded, creating a diverse acoustic outcome in different sides of the city.⁵ Equally fascinating is the meticulous analysis of the acoustic situation reflected in the poem *I' ho vedute già di molte piazze* by Antonio Pucci, about the characteristics of the Old Market (*Mercato Vecchio*) in Florence.⁶ Selections from Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle* are among the main sources used in Atkinson's research. The same, however, cannot be said about Sacchetti's poetic compositions, which escaped Atkinson's attention, but which provide considerable information about acoustical experiences in the Florence of his time.

Additionally, there is one more category, relevant for discussions of Sacchetti's poetry and of the San Lorenzo Palimpsest: the soundscape of the musico-poetic genre of the caccia. In this regard, Sacchetti is relevant as well, as he is the author of three caccias, two of which were set to music by Niccolò del Preposto (*Passando con pensier per un boschetto* and *State su, donne! Che debian noi fare?*). Niccolò's compositions are completely absent from SL, but this is per-

- 2. Janke, "Die Kompositionen von Giovanni Mazzuoli", 145-9.
- 3. There is a large bibliography on this topic. To cite only the most recent: Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France* 1260-1330, New Cultural History of Music 7 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) and *Hearing the City in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Tess Knighton and Ascensión Mazuela-Anguita (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).
- 4. Niall Atkinson, *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016).
 - 5. Ibid., 114.
 - 6. Ibid., 26-38.
 - 7. For more on these caccias see Nicolò del Preposto, Opera completa. Edizione critica commentata

haps because of the loss of an entire gathering with his works, and because the gathering which contains specifically caccias is difficult to read. The very existence of the separate gathering containing caccias – of which only five are identifiable – emphasizes the importance of this genre to SL's compilers.

The chief characteristic of the caccia's poetic texts is the imitation of various sounds typical of a specific event, first and foremost of hunting (the proper meaning of the term *caccia*): sounds of horns, hunters' shouts, dogs barking, etc. These sounds function as acoustic registrations. For example, the narrative description of the happenings at the Florentine old market in the abovementioned poem by Antonio Pucci can be nicely combined with the direct discourse in the caccia *Cacciando per gustar di quel tesoro* by Antonio Zacara da Teramo. As Giuseppe Corsi notes, "the caccia vividly depicts a market scene [...]: the voices of sellers and buyers rise up in their typical jargon". 8

Pucci		
Quando le frutte	rappariscon	fresche,

vengon le foresette con panieri di fichi, d'uve, di pere e di pesche. (vv. 67-69)

(When the fresh fruits appear,

The girls come with baskets Of figs, grapes, pears and peaches).

Di quaresima poi agli e cipolle E pastinache son vi e non più carne... (vv. 142-143)⁹

(Of the Lent then there are garlic, and onions.

And parsnips, but no more meat...)

rence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017).

Zacara

Et chi le vòl le buone ficora? Et chi le vòl le bone pèrseca? (vv. 41-42)

(Who wishes good figs? Who wishes good peaches?)

A l'agli, a l'agli!
Chi le vò le bon' cepolle?
(vv. 63-64)¹°

(Garlic, garlic! Who wishes good onions?)

dei testi intonati e delle musiche, La Tradizione Musicale, 18; Studi e testi, 10, ed. Antonio Calvia (Flo-

8. Giuseppe Corsi, ed., *Poesie musicali del Trecento* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1970), 314. For a new edition see Davide Checchi and Michele Epifani, "Filologia e interpretazione. Un esercizio interdisciplinare su una *chace* e due cacce trecentesche", *Philomusica on-line* 14 (2015): 7-75. It is important to note that Zacara's caccia more likely refers to a Roman market scene, not one in Florence.

^{9.} See Giuseppe Corsi, ed., Rimatori del Trecento (Turin: UTET, 1969), 876.

^{10.} The text is quoted from Checchi and Epifani, "Filologia e interpretazione", 74-5. See also Corsi, *Poesie musicali del Trecento*, 312-3.

Two of Sacchetti's caccias set to music by Niccolò del Preposto imitate female voices: in *Passando con pensier*, ¹¹ a pleasant day on the grassy meadow full of flowers ends with the unexpected attack of a serpent and, in *State su, donne!*, ¹² a group of women prefer staying at the river to their usual work of spinning. The only caccia by Sacchetti without a musical setting, *A prender la battaglia giuso al piano* (92), ¹³ unlike all other known caccias, is not a dialogue, but presents the direct speech of a military leader who commands his troops: "Ardita gente tosto all'arme all'arme!" (Courageous people, promptly to arms, to arms!, v. 2). The first people sent to the attack are, as always, musicians: "Giù, trombe e trombettini, / sveglioni e naccherini, / vèr li nemici, corni e tamburelli!" (Go down [from the upper fortress] you big and small trumpets, bugles and nakers! Put down the enemy, you horns and drums!, vv. 4-6).

With this preliminary information in mind, let us now turn to a sonnet by Sacchetti from his *Libro delle rime*, which has so far gone unnoticed by historians of music, but which provides us with invaluable information regarding the soundscape of Florence and other specifically musical data. The sonnet *Se, come intendo, la campana grossa* (90) is the first of two addressed to a certain Ser Domenico di Ser Guido Pucci, a personage who also appears in the *Trecentonovelle*.

As is known, Sacchetti's collection of poetry is organized, generally speaking, in chronological order. ¹⁴ This feature permits us to position, with varying degrees of certainty, the poet's stylistic preferences on a timescale. The location in Sacchetti's autograph of the sonnets for Ser Domenico allows us to date them as written by the year 1363.

The sonnet of interest to us was written, in all probability, as a response to a sonnet by Ser Domenico, unfortunately lost:

Se, come intendo, la campana grossa v'intruona l'ore, e' mugghi de' leoni, e de' colati i dolenti sermoni, e 'l batter medicine con gran possa,

- 11. Franco Sacchetti, *Il libro delle Rime*, ed. Franca Brambilla Ageno (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990), 121-2. For the new edition see Nicolò del Preposto, *Opera completa*, 32-8.
 - 12. Sacchetti, Il libro delle Rime, 192-3 and Nicolò del Preposto, Opera completa, 105-12.
 - 13. Sacchetti, Il libro delle Rime, 112-3.
- 14. Regarding Sacchetti's arrangement of his verses in the autograph codex Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 574 (Ash574) there is general consensus that it is "grosso modo [...] cronologico", according to Franca Brambilla Ageno, "Per una nuova edizione delle rime del Sacchetti", *Studi di Filologia italiana* 11 (1953): 257-320, esp. 257. Antonio Calvia provides a good discussion of chronology in Sacchetti's autograph in Nicolò del Preposto, *Opera completa*, XXXIX-XLIV.

ben dovrie esser vostra mente scossa d'ogni diletto per sì fatti soni: fosson liuti o mezzi cannoni, di pene non avreste tal percossa.

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E così quasi io son giunto, lasso,
udendo sempre con urli mortali:

— Sei, — Cinque, — Quattro —, Tre —, e — Due —, ed — Asso —.
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Chi ci cantasse suoni o madriali, d'amor dolci ballate o alto o basso, inteso c'è com'uom tra gli animali!

Cotal conforto abbiamo a' nostri mali. 15

The poem can be translated as follows: ¹⁶ "If, as far as I understand, the big bell stridently sounds the hours to you, and you are disturbed by the roaring of the lions, with the mournful laments of the jailed people and with the noise made by someone who prepares medicines, hitting and rubbing them in the mortar with enormous vigor, [I agree] that your mind is certainly deprived of any pleasure because of such sounds. Had the sounds been those of lutes or of small psalteries, you would not have had so much suffering. I, too, have found myself in a similar situation, alas!, when I constantly hear the deafening shouts of card players: 'Six, five, four, three, two, and ace!' Whoever is able to sing with low or high voice, *soni*, madrigals or sweet love ballatas, is taken here as a human among animals. This is the consolation that we have for our sorrows!"

Analysis of the text enables us to position the sounds that disturbed our Ser Domenico on the map of Florence.

The big bell is that of the Palazzo Vecchio, which sounds the hours very loudly, "intruona". As Atkinson notes, in addition to the big bell, "la campana grossa" or *campana magna*, also called il Leone (the Lion), there were other bells in different periods such as, for example, the *campana del popolo* which, in 1337, was replaced with a bell taken from the Castello di Verino.¹⁷ Another new sonic color was added to the acoustical palette of Florence with the installation of the mechanical clock on the Palazzo Vecchio's tower, which

^{15.} See Sacchetti, Il libro delle Rime, 111.

^{16.} I thank Aldo Menichetti for his paraphrase of this madrigal.

^{17.} Atkinson, The Noisy Renaissance, 107-12.

began marking time on 25 March 1353.¹⁸ Thus, Sacchetti described in his sonnet the tolling produced by the *campana magna* and the mechanical clock.

The lions' roars undoubtedly refer to the enclosure of lions that the Florentine Commune kept next to the Palazzo Vecchio for several centuries. The lion as a symbol of Florence is present in various sites of the city, such as the famous Marzocco by Donatello, originally installed at Santa Maria Novella and later moved to the Piazza della Signoria. It is known that, from 1350, the lions' enclosure was situated on the back side of the Palazzo Vecchio, hence the name of the modern Via dei Leoni.

The "dolenti sermoni dei colati" (mournful moans of the jailed) – *sermoni* here are long, monotonic discourses – are the laments of the prisoners who were bound with a rope, that is, "colati". This detail turns us in the direction of two ancient Florentine prisons, the Carceri delle Stinche and the Carceri delle Burella, both located to the east of the Palazzo Vecchio (near, respectively, the modern Teatro Verdi and in the Via delle Burella).

It was in these surroundings that our Ser Domenico lived, disturbed by unbearable sounds, to which those of a nearby pharmacy must be added (see Figure 1).

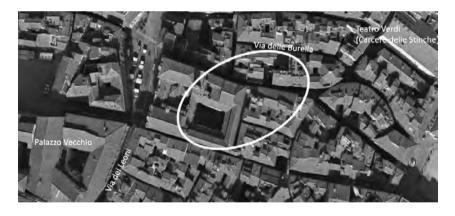


Figure 1. The presumed area of Ser Domenico's Florentine residence (Google maps)

For his part, Sacchetti complains about the likewise insufferable shouts (*urli mortali*) of the card players. Sacchetti's whereabouts are not as clear, but

^{18. &}quot;Niccolao Bernardi popoli Sancti Fridiani cittadino fiorentino per costruzione dell'orologio da adattare sopra la torre del palazzo del popolo fiorentino per pulsare le ore di Dio [...]" (November 20, 1353); Firenze, Archivio di Stato, Provvisioni 40, 175r-175v. See Atkinson, *The Noisy Renaissance*, 242.

it seems that he stayed in a location outside of Florence. It is known from Sacchetti's letter to Astorre Manfredi, ¹⁹ of April 15, 1397, that in 1363 he started his public service on behalf of the Florentine Commune, and his first appointment was as rector at the Commune of Monte Voltraio, near Volterra. ²⁰ Thus, this sonnet could well have been written in Monte Voltraio where, according to Sacchetti, the ferocious screams of the local card players were the predominant acoustical experience.

The dramatic structure of the sonnet *Se, come intendo* is built on comparison and contrast, so the juxtaposition between pleasant and unpleasant sounds is of great interest. The sounds pleasant to Ser Domenico's ear are those of lutes and small psalteries (*mezzi cannoni*), whereas those pleasant to Sacchetti are the sounds of singing "suoni o madrïali, / d'amor dolci ballate" (*soni*, or madrigals, sweet ballatas on love). Yet all these sounds are of a purely musical nature, produced by playing instruments or by singing the most typical Trecento musical genres.

The information extracted from poetic texts is often difficult to interpret. This task is made even more challenging when it comes to poems of correspondence, in which veiled hints and piecemeal phrases must be understood by the addressee.²¹ Thus, what follows is only an attempt to determine Sacchetti's intentions.

Sacchetti appeals to the musical experience of Ser Domenico Pucci, while reminding Pucci of his own experience in music. This feature separates the two friends from the rest of the populace, who are far less sensitive to the ambient sounds. However, from Sacchetti's words it is not clear whether Ser Domenico himself played lute or psaltery, or if he was merely an expert and devoted listener. Though we know nothing about this person, we can infer some information about his métier from novella 145 of the Trecentonovelle, titled Facendosi cavaliere messer Lando da Gobbio in Firenze per essere Podestà, messer Dolcibene schernisce la sua miseria; e poi nella sua corte essendo mossa questione a messer Dolcibene, con nuova astuzia e con le peta vince la questione (When messer Lando da Gobbio becomes a knight in order to gain the position of podestà in Florence, messer Dolcibene mocks his misery; after that when Dolcibene is tried in court

^{19.} Astorre Manfredi (1345-1405) was a military man who, after 1395, served as captain general in the service of Niccolò III d'Este.

^{20.} See Michelangelo Zaccarello, s.v. "Franco Sacchetti", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 89 (2017), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/franco-sacchetti_%28Dizionario-Biografico %29/, accessed May 21, 2018.

^{21.} See more in Claudio Giunta, *Due saggi sulla tenzone* (Rome: Antenore, 2002), and Id., *Versi a un destinatario* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002).

under Lando's judgement, with an extravagant cunning and with flatulence he wins the case).²²

The very title of this story prepares us for a frivolous atmosphere, especially when the protagonist of the novella is none other than the famous Florentine buffoon Dolcibene de' Tori, crowned king of buffoons in 1355 by Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV. The story recounts a judicial case in which Dolcibene appears as defendant. In order to win the case, Dolcibene calls for help on "uno procuratore molto suo domestico e piacevole uomo" (an attorney very close to him and a pleasant man), namely Ser Domenico.²³ Ser Domenico's behavior, however, is far from that of a decent representative of the law, as he is constantly spicing his legal arguments with disgusting noises and smells, recalling the similar buffoonery performed by his friend Dolcibene in novellas 10 and 24.²⁴

Nevertheless, Sacchetti defines Ser Domenico as a "piacevole uomo" (pleasant man), an expression he used at least in two other instances to characterize one "dicitore in rima" (a reciter of poetry) and one buffoon. The first was the blind Pescione de' Cerchi, mentioned in the letter Sacchetti sent to Jacopo di Conte da Perugia in 1396: "E' mi ricorda ne' miei tempi, che essendo a uno mio luogo presso a Firenze era in mia compagnia uno piacevole uomo e dicitore in rima, chiamato Pescione, il quale non vedea lume". (I remember that many years ago when I was in a place near Florence, there was in my circle a pleasant man and reciter of rhymes, called Pescione, who was blind).²⁵ The second personage was a true buffoon and musician: "uno uomo di corte, chiamato maestro Piero Guercio da Imola, piacevole buffone e sonatore di stormenti" (a courtier, called Maestro Piero Guercio da Imola, a pleasant buffoon and an instrument player), the hero of novella 9 of the *Trecentonovelle*.²⁶

It is interesting that the later Florentine writer Giovanni Gherardi da Prato, in his *Paradiso degli Alberti*, describes Dolcibene as "bello di corpo, robusto e gagliardo e convenevole musico e ottimo sonatore d'organetti, di

^{22.} Franco Sacchetti, Il Trecentonovelle, ed. Valerio Marucci (Rome: Salerno, 1996), 449-53.

^{23. &}quot;[...] [M]esser Dolcibene andò a uno procuratore molto suo domestico e piacevole uomo, che avea nome ser Domenico di ser Guido Pucci [...]".

^{24.} Both novellas record Dolcibene's indecent escapades during his pilgrimage in the Holy Land.

^{25.} Published in *Novelle di Sacchetti* (Florence, 1724), Vol. 2, 225-30, at 228. Pescione appears in novella 170 of the *Trecentonovelle* (568-70), and also in the *Libro delle rime* (sonnets 66a, *Qual fôra più a grato a te, Pescione*, and 66b, *Non credess'io veder Salamone*, 83-4). Sacchetti wrote on a sonnet on Pescione's behalf as a response to a sonnet written by another person, *messer* Simone Peruzzi, suggesting that Pescione himself was not gifted enough to compose verses. Sacchetti also mentions Pescione in the frottola *Chi drieto va* (65).

^{26.} Sacchetti, Il Trecentonovelle, 29.

leuto e d'altri stromenti" (blessed with an attractive appearance, robust and gallant, a gifted musician and an outstanding performer on organ, lute, and other instruments). This "piacevole messer Dolcibene in guadagno e sollazzo vivea" (pleasant *messer* Dolcibene lived in prosperity and delight).²⁷

All this enables us to assume that Ser Domenico, being "molto domestico" (very close) to Dolcibene, namely "having a close relationship based on friendship, knowledge, or familiarity", ²⁸ could well have played musical instruments, composed and sung verses, and had other abilities typical of the Italian buffoon. And let not his title of a jurist disturb us: ²⁹ in this period the profession of buffoon was well paid and in no way despised. ³⁰

While expressing solidarity with Ser Domenico for his acoustical suffering, Sacchetti presents himself as a practicing musician, namely, the one who is able to sing madrigals, ballatas and *soni* (apparently the monostrophic ballatas). This ability represents a dramatic distinction from the local unpolished people: "inteso c'è com'uom tra gli animali!" ([he] is seen here as a human among animals). The expression "o alto o basso" (high or low voice) is somewhat ambivalent, as it may signify either rank or high volume. In my opinion, however, the poet meant the two voices of a polyphonic composition, the superius (or cantus) and the tenor, especially if we take into account that Sacchetti himself had set to music two of his own ballatas, *Innamorato pruno* (151) and *Mai non serò contento immaginando* (134), as he noted in his autograph. Unfortunately, their music is lost. Apparently, Sacchetti refers to Ser Domenico's similar musical abilities. To this one may add that the lute and the psaltery (here Sacchetti uses the Greek-Arab term

^{27.} Giovanni Gherardi da Prato, *Il paradiso degli Alberti*, ed. Antonio Lanza (Rome: Salerno, 1975), 201-2.

^{28.} See TLIO, s.v. *Domestico*, in TLIO (*Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini*, http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIO/, last accessed July 2, 2019), 2: "Che ha con qualcuno rapporti di conoscenza, di confidenza, di familiarità. [Di un amico:] intimo".

^{29.} Many jurists, beginning in the Duecento, were at the same time poets and theorists of poetry as, for example, the Paduan judge Antonio da Tempo, author of the famous treatise about Italian poetic forms and techniques, *Summa artis rithimici vulgaris dictaminis* (1332). In her research, Barbara Haggh presents a list of musicians who combined musical activity with their profession as secretaries and notaries, among them some such important Italians such as Antonio Zacara da Teramo, Giovanni Mazzuoli, and Ugolino d'Orvieto (Barbara Haggh, "Composer-Secretaries and Notaries of the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Did They Write?", in *Musik – Raum – Akkord – Bild: Festschrift zum* 65. *Geburtstag von Dorothea Baumann*, ed. Antonio Baldassarre [Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 2011], 27-42). See also Alessandra Fiori, "Ruolo del notariato nella diffusione del repertorio poetico-musicale nel Medioevo", *Studi Musicali* 21 (1992): 211-35. However, Andreas Janke has pointed out that Giovanni was not a notary; Barbara Haggh has confused Giovanni and Piero Mazzuoli ("Die Kompositionen von Giovanni Mazzuoli, Piero Mazzuoli und Ugolino da Orvieto", 94n9).

^{30.} For more on this see Giancarlo Schizzerotto, *Gonnella: il mito del buffone*, Accademia Lucchese di Scienze, Lettere e Arti, Saggi e Ricerche (Pisa: ETS, 2000), 1.

kanon, or qanun) are highly suitable instruments for singing verses with musical accompaniment.

Sacchetti's label for the local people, "animali", is neither as spontaneous nor as innocent as it may seem at first glance. It is highly likely that he is alluding to the famous Aristotelian expression, "man alone of the animals possesses speech", 31 extending it as follows: not solely the ability to speak, but also the gift of singing madrigals and ballatas distinguish a human from an animal. Although this phrase certainly reflects Sacchetti's extremely sarcastic tone, typical of much of his writing, we must agree that, for him, one criterion required to be considered a human of a certain cultural level, lies in the exquisite practice of written music. For this reason we may add the sonnet Se come intendo to the catalogue of laments of Trecento musicians, such as Francesco Landini's Musica son and Jacopo da Bologna's Oseletto selvaggio, both of whom grieve over the sad state of the true musical art among the larger public.

31. Politics, 1253a, 9-10, in Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 21, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944).

ABSTRACT

The importance of Franco Sacchetti to musical life in fourteenth-century Florence cannot be overestimated. A prolific poet, he was highly sought after by musicians and his verses appear in most fourteenth-century musical manuscripts due to the numerous settings of his poetry. Many of his non-musical poems and other literary works provide invaluable insight into contemporary musical customs and tastes. Surprisingly, the sonnet *Se, come intendo, la campana grossa (Libro delle rime, 90)*, which provides unique information about the Florentine soundscape and other specifically musical aspects, has thus far escaped the attention of music historians. The sonnet is addressed to a certain ser Domenico di ser Guido Pucci, a character who also appears in Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*. Some scholars identify ser Domenico as the procuratore of the novella 145 but others see in him an "unidentified character". By comparing particulars and drawing on details from different sources, I will demonstrate that ser Domenico had some of the important qualities and abilities typical of a jester. He was a player of musical instruments and a companion (and perhaps colleague) of the famous Florentine jester, Dolcibene de' Tori.

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