

# Contrafactio as a tool for making poetry : Iacopone da Todi and music

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## ***Contrafactio* as a Tool for Making Poetry: Iacopone da Todi and Music**

Francesco Zimei

When, through a witty sonnet, the poet Franco Sacchetti asked Francesco Landini to set “col dolce suon che da te piove” (“with the sweet sound that flows from you”), his ballata *Gentil d’aspetto in cui la mente mia*, Landini, in returning the poem with music to him, replied with the same rhymes:

[...]

Vestita la canzon, che ’l cor commuove,  
rimando a te, sì ch’omai per la terra  
cantando potrà gire, qui ed altrove.<sup>1</sup>

The metaphor of “dressing”, already frequent in Italian medieval poetry and later entering common language,<sup>2</sup> summarises a concept of musical endowment that in modern mentality has often been interpreted as a mere aesthetic feature: an optional, therefore superfluous, garnishment – possibly even a hitch to the autarchic ideal of “pure” poetry – which in Italian literary studies has become the point of distinction between what was conceived with a proven destination for singing and what was not, segregating the first case as a special and less valuable category, the so-called *poesia per musica*.<sup>3</sup>

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1 “Having dressed this canzone, which moves the heart, / I am sending it back to you, so that from now on earth / it may go by singing here and anywhere”. English translation in Elena Abramov-van Rijk, *Parlar Cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600*, Bern etc.: Peter Lang 2009, 40 (with some changes). Both texts are edited by Franca Ageno in Franco Sacchetti, *Il libro delle rime*, Florence etc.: Olschki – University of Western Australia Press 1990 (Italian Medieval and Renaissance Studies 1), 372–373.

2 Just consider, for analog extension, the practice of *travestimento spirituale*, one of the basic implementations of the concept of *contrafactio*.

3 This definition, established after a seminal article by Giosuè Carducci, “Musica e poesia nel mondo elegante italiano del secolo XIV,” in: *Nuova Antologia di Scienze, Lette-*

The concern for classifying poetry into such abstract categories, substantially based on heuristic criteria requiring at all times written manuscript evidence, has diverted attention – even among musicologists – from some functional aspects of fundamental importance in the relationship between words and music. Eye-opening in this regard is the resolution of Dante Alighieri’s double sonnet *Se Lippo amico sè tu che mi leggi*, where he asks his friend and minstrel Lippo to set his new canzone, *Lo mio servente core*, and sends him the first stanza introducing it as a “naked maiden”:

[...]

Lo qual ti guido esta pulcella nuda  
 che vien dirieto a me sì vergognosa  
 ch’atorno gir non osa  
 perch’ella non ha vesta in cui si chiuda;  
 e prego il cor gentil che ’n te riposa  
 che la rivesta e tengala per druda,  
 sì che sia conosciuda  
 e possa andar la ’vunqu’è disiosa.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of the verb “conosciuda” – to be translated as “known” rather than “recognised”, as some scholars have done<sup>5</sup> – implies an absolutely focused use for a setting: more properly, according to Dante, musical dress-

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*re ed Arti* 14 (1870), 463–482, and 15 (1870), 5–30, has recently been questioned by Lauren Jennings, *Senza Vestimenta: The Literary Tradition of Trecento Song*, Farnham etc.: Ashgate 2014 (Music and Material Culture).

4 “I take to you this naked maiden, / shyly coming behind me, / reluctant to go around / because she has no dress for cover. / And ask your kind heart / to dress her and hold her dearly, / so as to allow her to be known / and go wherever she wishes”. The passage is taken from the edition by Claudio Giunta, *Dante, Rime*, Milan: Mondadori 2014 (I Meridiani), 49. More recently Pasquale Stoppelli, “Se Lippo amico, Lo meo servente core e il Codice Bardera”, in: Andrea Mazzucchi (ed.), “*Per beneficio e concordia di studio*”. *Studi danteschi offerti a Enrico Malato per i suoi ottant’anni*, Cittadella: Bertinello Artigrafiche 2015, 861–875, has attributed the poem to Dante da Maiano, but for our purposes the issue does not change.

5 For instance, Abramov-van Rijk in *Parlar cantando* (see n. 1), 33: “For her to be recognised”, since it is out of the question that a poem cannot be recognised by others before leaving its author and entering circulation.

ing is a suitable way for poetry to make itself known, that is, to be disseminated everywhere. In a society composed for the most part of illiterates and therefore mainly based on orality, this was possible through singing. One of the primary goals of singing is, in fact, to give support to memory, so as to encourage the learning and circulation of poetry.<sup>6</sup>

Music as a mnemotechnic tool can, in turn, stimulate poetic activity by providing metrical and formal models which can aid in adapting verses and concepts taken from one's mental archive. Just consider the etymology of the Provençal *trobar* and its connections with liturgical *tropes*, specifically concerning the interpolation of words in melismatic passages,<sup>7</sup> or the tradition of improvised poetry, still currently composed (at least with regard to the Italian tradition) on short melodic formulas and *arie per cantare* peculiar to the individual poets;<sup>8</sup> but the same also goes for the modern *rap* style, where

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6 Apart from the famous Guidonian hymn *Ut queant laxis*, or the wide phenomenology collected as regards to the traditional cultures by Paul Zumthor, *Introduction à la poésie orale*, Paris: Éditions de Seuil 1983, systematic studies on music and memorisation are carried out in the fields of cognitive psychology and neurosciences, such in the case of Daniele Schön et al., "Song as an aid for language acquisition", in: *Cognition* 106 (2008), 976–983, or Katie Overy et al. (eds.), *The Neurosciences and Music IV: Learning and Memory*, Proceedings of the International Symposium (Edinburgh, 9–11 June 2011), in: *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1252 (2012).

7 Moreover the use of preexisting melodies for new poems was a widespread practice by the *troubadours* themselves: see for instance Frank M. Chambers, "Imitation of Form in the Old Provençal Lyric", in: *Romance Philology* 6 (1953), 104–120: 106, according to which "at least 68 of the extant melodies have texts which served as models for other poems"; not to mention that the renowned *Kalenda maya* by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, as shown in its *razo*, "fu facta a las notas de la stampida qe-l joglars fasion en las violas". Cf. Jean Boutière and Alexander H. Schutz, *Biographies des troubadours. Textes provençaux des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Édition refondue, Paris: Nizet 1964, 466.

8 On this glorious and secular practice, see the features and the wide bibliography of the website *Aporie. Per un archivio della poesia estemporanea in ottava rima*. <http://www.aporie.it> (5.9.2018). On the cultural history of the form from a musical point of view, see the recent Maurizio Agamennone (ed.), *Cantar Ottave. Per una storia culturale dell'intonazione cantata in ottava rima*, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 2017.



lyrics are created on a predetermined rhythm.<sup>9</sup> Going back to Dante's canzone, given that the single stanza sent to Lippo is also the only one to have reached the present day, in conclusion, we cannot even rule out that he aimed to complete the poem with the help of a melody which, for some reason, the minstrel never provided.<sup>10</sup>

These considerations should apply even better to religious poetry, if the subject were not a controversial contemporary of Dante: such is the case with Iacopone da Todi (c.1230–1306?). The blessed friar belonging to the most extremist wing of the Franciscan order – the so-called Spirituals – was the author of a hundred vernacular *laude*, as well as some Latin works, on themes such as the ideal of poverty, the praise of the Virgin, the admonition against worldly temptations, the exhortation to a moral life, the hyperrealistic description of disease and death, the call to penance, and the ecstasy of closeness to God.<sup>11</sup> This eccentric personality and the vibrant impulse of his production, often interwoven with autobiographical details, have, up to the last decades of the 19th century, simply been considered by literary criticism as the experience of “a crude versifier unworthy of the title of poet”.<sup>12</sup>

But the perception of Iacopone began to change, shifting the critical focus from the mystic to the poet and then revealing a learned man, whose features embraced not only grotesque and rough imagery and language, but

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9 For example, among the suggestions of a website devoted to rap composing, we read, with regards to the lyrics: “Use the brainstorming you did along with your chorus as a guide for what you are writing about and to build onto your ideas. Keep in mind that you have to maintain a rhythm since rap is music as well as poetry, and both follow a beat. Some lyricists listen to a beat as they write to help keep their rhythm”. <https://www.powerpoetry.org/actions/7-tips-writing-rap> (5.9.2018).

10 After all, when Dante himself in *De vulgari eloquentia* II, VIII, 6 defines the poetic composition as “actio completa dicentis modulationi armonizata”, one cannot help but think that the act of composing “words harmonised in function to music” can happen having in mind a melody, or at least its structure. On this passage see also Thomas Persico, “Contrefact’, ‘contrafact’, ‘contrafactum’ (secoli XIV-XV): falsificazione, imitazione, parodia”, in: *Elephant & Castle* 17 (2017), 5–29: 12.

11 An updated biographical and critical profile in English is given by V. Louise Katainen, “Jacopone da Todi, Poet and Mystic: A Review of the History of the Criticism”, in: *Mystic Quarterly* 22 (1996), 16–57.

12 Katainen, “Jacopone da Todi” (see n. 11), 49.

also aulic elements, as evidenced by sophisticated rhyme schemes, cultured poetic forms, and richness of expression.<sup>13</sup> This growing success has been confirmed by a number of editions of Iacopone's *laude* published between 1910 and 2010,<sup>14</sup> mainly due – in the obvious absence of an autograph source – to the ongoing concern for separating the authentic corpus from the many apocryphal texts attributed to him over the centuries.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, during this rehabilitation process, the normal disposition of Iacopone's lyrics intended for musical dress – much more convincing than in other poets, given his preference for ballata forms – has been considered in an inversely proportional way compared to the fortune of his oeuvre, as if usual means of the past for the circulation of poetry could have been applied or not, depending on the current evaluation of its contents. Thus, at the same time as he was defined “a crude versifier”, there was nothing to prevent him from being considered “a God's minstrel”, though adapting in a

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13 For instance Natalino Sapegno, *Disegno storico della letteratura italiana*, Florence: La Nuova Italia 1954, 28, dubbed Iacopone “forse la più potente personalità della nostra storia letteraria prima dell'Alighieri”.

14 Starting with the edition by Giovanni Ferri, carried out on the *editio princeps* printed in Florence by Francesco Bonaccorsi in 1490 (*Laude di frate Jacopone da Todi secondo la stampa fiorentina del 1490, con prospetto grammaticale e lessico*, Rome: Società filologica romana 1910), the modern positive recognition of Iacopone has been celebrated in the complete editions by Franca Ageno (ed.), *Iacopone da Todi, Laudi, Trattato e Detti*, Florence: Le Monnier 1953; Franco Mancini (ed.), *Iacopone da Todi, Laude*, Bari: Laterza 1974 (*Scrittori d'Italia* 257); and Matteo Leonardi (ed.), *Iacopone da Todi, Laude*, Florence: Olschki 2010 (*Biblioteca della “Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa” – Testi e Documenti* 23). Among the editions of Iacoponic sources should be mentioned, because of the importance of the method and content, even the partial collections by Francesco A. Ugolini, *Laude di Jacopone da Todi tratte da due manoscritti umbri*, Turin: Istituto Editoriale Gheroni 1947; and Rosanna Bettarini, *Jacopone e il laudario urbinato*, Florence: Sansoni 1969. For an updated overview of Iacopone's critical fortune, see Matteo Leonardi (ed.), *Bibliografia iacoponica*, Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo 2010 (*Archivio romanzo* 17).

15 A recent attempt to extend the paternity of Iacopone to some extra-canonical works attributed to him by “excellent” sources, is due to Gaia Gubbini, “Ai margini del canone: sull'attribuibilità a Iacopone nella tradizione antica”, in: Enrico Menestò (ed.), *La vita e l'opera di Iacopone da Todi, Atti del Convegno di studio (Todi, 3–7 dicembre 2006)*, Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 2007, 489–513.

derogatory sense the mystical image created for St. Francis' hagiography to the low category of street entertainers.<sup>16</sup>

When, some decades later, Iacopone's literary fortune began to grow, the musicologist Fernando Liuzzi – the first editor of the only two collections of monophonic *laude* to have entirely survived, i.e. the *Laudario di Cortona* and the Florentine *Laudario di Santo Spirito*<sup>17</sup> – naïvely attempted to mythologise his figure on the model of *troubadours* by inferring the melodic peculiarity of seven *laude*, at the time attributed to the friar, although now mostly considered spurious:

Già all'unione di poesia e melodia richiama, nella lirica in generale, e in particolare, come copiosamente s'è constatato, nelle laude, il costume del tempo. Ma il costume, appunto perché è costume, cioè abito generico e in certo modo uniforme, non spiega e tanto meno definisce l'originalità, la singolare e potente omogeneità della musica che ci balza incontro, là dove è congiunta a laude di Jacopone.<sup>18</sup>

Regardless of the authenticity of those poems, it is clear that in these terms the question was misplaced, especially in light of the functional “divorce between music and poetry” theorised by Italian philologists starting precisely from the 13th century.<sup>19</sup>

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16 See, for instance, Alessandro D'Ancona, “Iacopone da Todi, il giullare di Dio del secolo XIII”, in: Idem, *Studj sulla letteratura italiana de' primi secoli*, Ancona: A. G. Morelli 1884, 1–101.

17 Respectively Cortona, Biblioteca Comunale e dell'Accademia Etrusca, Ms. 91, and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Banco Rari 18, both published in Fernando Liuzzi, *La lauda e i primordi della melodia italiana*, Rome: La Libreria dello Stato 1935.

18 “Yet the custom of the time, in lyric repertoire in general and in the lauda in particular, as it has been abundantly observed, presupposes the combination of poetry and melody. But the custom, precisely for being a custom – that is, a generic and somewhat uniform habit – does not explain and much less defines the originality, the unique and strong homogeneity of settings connected to Jacopone's laude”. See Liuzzi, *La lauda* (see n. 17), I, 140.

19 See, in particular, Aurelio Roncaglia, “Sul ‘divorzio tra musica e poesia’ nel Duecento italiano”, in: Agostino Ziino (ed.), *La musica al tempo di Giovanni Boccaccio e i suoi rapporti con la letteratura, Atti del 3° Congresso internazionale (Siena-Certaldo, 19–22 luglio 1975)*, Certaldo: Centro di studi sull'Ars nova italiana del Trecento 1978 (*L'Ars nova italiana del Trecento* 4), 365–397.

Today, the revaluation of Iacopone's poetry has probably reached its apogee. However – almost as a reaction to the previous positions, as if the interest in rejecting the former ones was greater than offering an objective approach to the matter – the current opinion, after having dismantled the myth of the “God's minstrel”, is, even among musicologists, that Iacopone had neither a direct relationship with music, nor with the dissemination of his poems. Hence emerges the conclusion that his *laude* were not intended for collective devotion, but rather as a philosophical reflection, an ascetic practice, and the claim of his political and religious ideas:

Ne emerge oggi la figura di un pensatore dalle solide basi teologiche, di un autore che padroneggia tecniche poetiche e retoriche tra le più raffinate. E per il suo laudario, ormai comunemente definito ‘personale’, la cui tradizione manoscritta non prevede mai la trascrizione delle melodie, si sono prese le distanze dal repertorio laudistico propriamente devozionale fino a dubitare di un'effettiva esecuzione musicale.<sup>20</sup>

On the contrary, despite his strictly individualistic nature, it should be observed that the popular reception of Iacopone's *laude* had abundantly taken place in confraternal sources mainly compiled by the first half of the 14th century, witnessing a wide dissemination of his poems not long after the time

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<sup>20</sup> “The current view is of a thinker with a solid theological background, of an author who masters the most refined poetic and rhetorical techniques. And regarding his lauda production, now commonly referred to as ‘personal’, whose manuscript tradition never provides a transmission of the melodies, scholars have distanced themselves from considering it as a properly devotional laudistic repertoire to the point of doubting its actual musical performance”. See Maria Sofia Lannutti, “Iacopone musico e Garzo doctore. Nuove ipotesi di interpretazione”, in: *Iacopone da Todi. Atti del XXXVII Convegno storico internazionale* (Todi, 8–11 ottobre 2000), Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 2001, 337–362: 337. On the musicological side, it suffices to consider Agostino Ziino, “Aspetti della musica a Todi durante il Medioevo”, in: *Todi nel Medioevo, (secoli VI–XIV). Atti del XLVI Convegno storico internazionale* (Todi, 10–15 ottobre), Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 2010, 837–894: 853: “Allo stato attuale delle nostre conoscenze è impossibile sapere se Iacopone abbia concepito il ‘suo’ laudario, il suo canzoniere mistico solo per se stesso oppure se abbia immaginato degli ipotetici destinatari. In quest'ultimo caso non sappiamo se avesse previsto una sua circolazione solo attraverso la lettura privata e la meditazione personale oppure anche in forma cantata e per via orale”.

when he lived. Among them there are twelve *laudari* belonging to companies of *Laudesi*,<sup>21</sup> specifically active in *lauda* singing regardless of the availability of notated books, since all repertory was usually sung by heart. For instance the Florentine *Laudario di San Gilio*,<sup>22</sup> transmitting *Piange la Chiesa*, on the moral corruption of the Church, and *Quando t'alegri, uomo d'altura*, against vanity but sung *pro defunctis* as well, preserved also in the second part – without notation – of the *Laudario di Cortona* and in the Pisan *laudario* (possibly belonging to the Dominican Compagnia del Crocione) provided with unfilled music staves and now in Paris,<sup>23</sup> also containing other famous Iacoponic texts such as *Un albor è da Dio piantato* and a dialogue between Christ and the Soul, *O Cristo onipotente*.

The latter is also the unique *lauda* by Iacopone recognised as authentic, which has been handed down with music from a coeval source. We are dealing with the aforesaid *Laudario di Santo Spirito*, compiled within the second decade of the fourteenth century,<sup>24</sup> that is, a little earlier than Ms. 4 of the Biblioteca Oliveriana of Pesaro, the oldest Iacoponic collection to have survived (copied around 1330 in the convent of San Pancrazio at Collepepe: a place familiar to the poet), and at least fifteen years earlier than the only

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21 Furthermore, sixteen other sources come from confraternities of *Disciplinati*. See Angelo Eugenio Mecca, “La tradizione manoscritta delle *Laude* di Iacopone da Todi”, in: *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura Italiana* 19/2 (2016), 9–103. Another survey on this matter has been previously published by Fabrizio Mastroianni, “Le *Laude* di Iacopone da Todi furono cantate? Alcune tabelle per rispondere alla domanda”, in: *Rivista Internazionale di Musica Sacra* 27 (2006), 95–103.

22 Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Banco Rari 19, edited by Concetto Del Popolo, *Laude Fiorentine I: Il Laudario della Compagnia di San Gilio*, Florence: Olschki 1990 (Biblioteca della “Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa” – Testi e Documenti 10).

23 Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Ms. 8521, edited by Erik Staaff, *Le laudario de Pisa du ms. 8521 de la Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal de Paris. Étude linguistique*, Uppsala etc.: Almqvist och Wiksell – Harrassowitz 1931 (Skriifter utgivna av K. Humanistika Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala 27).

24 This dating is effectively based on the style of illuminations, made between 1310 and 1320. Cf. Ada Labriola, “Visibile cantare. Il *Laudario di Santo Spirito* a Firenze”, in: *Alumina. Pagine miniate* 44 (2014), 6–13.

dated source – an unidentified 1336 codex from Perugia – that Francesco Bonaccorsi declared having used for the *editio princeps*.<sup>25</sup>

The melody (see Appendix, no. 1), in Lydian mode, is quite peculiar and strongly enhances the dramatic features of the text (Appendix, no. 2a).<sup>26</sup> One might argue that such an impressive musical dress had been added by the compiler – although one should first ask how a “naked” text could have reached a confraternity and received such favored treatment as to be included in its performing repertory. More simply, *O Cristo onipotente* has instead a twin piece with identical incipit and structure (Appendix, no. 2b). It is likewise a dialogue, this time between Christ and the author himself; and since it is evident that one is the contrafactum of the other, we must conclude that one, or perhaps both poems, must have been composed on a preexisting melody.

Just by scrolling through Iacopone’s works, we come to realise the suggestive existence of similar calques. Such is the case with a couple of *laude* connected to crucial moments of the author’s life: *Que farai, Pier da Morrone?* (Appendix, no. 3a) was addressed in summer 1294 to the new pontiff Celestine V, protector of the Spiritual friars, with a view that his election could bring the Church to salvation. Additionally, in *Que farai, fra Iacovone?*, most likely composed in the first months of 1300, he narrates his conditions after one and a half years as a prisoner of pope Boniface VIII, stating that the pains he is suffering will not make him change his mind, but rather give support to his ascetic life. In this case the contrafactum is even clearer, since both pieces share not only form and meter, but also the rhyme of the *volta* (Appendix, no. 3b).

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Ferri (ed.), *Laude di frate Iacopone* (see n. 14), 260. So there is no reason to believe that, at such a short distance after Iacopone’s life, it could be sung differently. Actually, the first part of the *Laudario di Cortona*, far older than the *Laudario di Santo Spirito* since it was compiled by the last decade of the 13th century, transmits another text set to music, *Troppo perde ’l tempo ki ben non t’ama*, that a good part of the most authoritative sources of Iacopone’s poetry accredit to the blessed friar, although current literary criticism has not yet accepted it as such.

<sup>26</sup> All of Iacopone’s *laude* quoted in the Appendix are taken from the Mancini edition (see n. 14) and bear their respective numbering.



Another example of this creative behaviour can be found in two *laude*, both beginning with *Audite una entenzone*, similarly sharing form, meter, and rhyme scheme and even using the same syllable in the *volta* (Appendix, no. 4, a-b). We could continue along this path, but, as forewarned, Iacopone's catalogue of works is still ongoing, so there are still several texts to be investigated – although the question, for what interests us, would not change, since even in the presence of imitations, any author should have in mind the chosen model's melody.

From this point of view, we cannot rule out, for instance, that the blessed friar himself could sometimes have been the imitator of other poets. This seems to be the case with the lauda text *Amor dolçe sença pare*, handed down in two different versions (Appendix, no. 5, a-b). One is recognised now as an authentic work by Iacopone; the other one, surviving with music in the first part of the *Laudario di Cortona* (Appendix, no. 6), has often been attributed to one “Garzo” mentioned in some texts of the collection.<sup>27</sup> Here the cross-reference is conclusive, since unlike the previous examples even the *ripresa* is identical.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, we are dealing with another melody certainly known and used by Iacopone. What is more, since he shares with this laudario a striking preference for the *zejel* form (zz aaaz),<sup>29</sup> at this stage he could have even borrowed other “Cortonese” settings for his poems.

Likewise, the wide dissemination of Iacoponic *laude* soon resulted in a precise literary model, for they could have in turn implied as a model also

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27 The critical story of this author, whose identity is not yet clear, has been summarised in the following bibliography: Liuzzi, *La lauda* (see n. 17), I, 127–138; Giorgio Varanini (ed.), *Laude cortonesi dal secolo XIII al XV*, I, Florence: Olschki 1981 (Biblioteca della “Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa” – Testi e Documenti 5), 42–53; Lannutti, “Iacopone musico” (see n. 20).

28 Not to say some strophes, probable a sign of a contamination due to the interference of orality in writing.

29 Analogous structures have been abundantly used also in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* by Alfonso X El Sabio. See Ramón Menéndez Pidal, “Poesía árabe y poesía europea”, in: *Bulletin Hispanique* 10 (1938), 337–423; Aurelio Roncaglia, “Nella preistoria della lauda: ballata e strofa zagialesca”, in: *Il movimento dei Disciplinati nel Settimo Centenario dal suo inizio (Perugia, 1260), Convegno internazionale (Perugia, 25–28 settembre 1960)*, Perugia: Deputazione di Storia patria per l'Umbria 1962, 460–475.

the necessary musical support, given their oral tradition. Such an extensive use of melody sharing is deduced, for instance, by a connection recently found with an early fourteenth-century anonymous lauda in honor of the Virgin. *Salve, Virgo pretiosa* (Appendix, no. 8a) was copied into a Florentine laudario of the mid Quattrocento, now at the Vatican Library,<sup>30</sup> with the caption: “in su” – to be sung on – Iacopone’s *Senno me par e cortisia* (Appendix, no. 8b).<sup>31</sup> This is a very significant detail: in fact, in this source “cantasi come” indications generally refer to current texts, whereas all eleven *laude* belonging to the old monophonic tradition have been left caption-free, evidently for having preserved their original melodies.

But there is more: *Salve, Virgo pretiosa* in the *Laudario di Santo Spirito* has preserved its music (Appendix, no. 7),<sup>32</sup> leading one to believe that this melody could have been the original “dressing” of *Senno me pare e cortisia*. This choice was probably made not accidentally, since, according to the cross-references of the said Vatican source, the latter supplies the music even for another famous Iacoponic lauda, *O amor de povertate* (Appendix, no. 9) – as if a single setting were able to “generate” a constellation of texts.

In this way, Iacopone could have systematically used a small number of tunes to compose most – or perhaps all – of his poems. We may, at least in theory, speculate on this possibility once Italian philologists define the authentic corpus of his works, thus allowing us to classify his preferences concerning ballata forms.

On the other hand, the use of a single melody for more *laude* was rather normal in the early devotional repertoire as a whole. Such connections occur, for instance, in the *Laudario di Cortona* between the said *Amor dolçe sença pare* and *Laude novella sia cantata* – the latter notated a fourth lower – and

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<sup>30</sup> Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Vat. Chig. L.VII.266, compiled by Filippo Benci from 1448 to 1464. It is the most important source of “cantasi come”. See on this point Blake Wilson, *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The Cantasi come Tradition (1375–1550)*, Florence: Olschki 2009 (Italian Medieval and Renaissance Studies 9).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Francesco Zimei, *I “cantici” del Perdono. Laude e soni nella devozione aquilana a san Pietro Celestino*, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 2015 (“Civitatis aures”. Musica e contesto urbano 1), 138–139.

<sup>32</sup> Concordance lacking in Wilson, *Singing Poetry* (see n. 30).



between *Altissima luce col grande splendore* and *Regina sovrana de gram pietade*; not to mention that similar materials have been “recycled” on different texts in other *laudari*.<sup>33</sup> Realistically, this happened much more frequently than manuscript tradition can document for us, due to the lack of a visual aspect – the notation – that in musical practice generally based on orality was absolutely unessential; we are obviously dealing with the tip of an iceberg.

Therefore, it is not daring to assume that *contrafactio* was one of the features of Iacopone’s creative process. In this regard, even the sequence *Stabat Mater dolorosa* (Appendix, no. 11a), probably the most famous work traditionally connected to the blessed friar, deserves some careful consideration. The debate about the authenticity of this text, whose original melody has not yet been identified, has recently resumed after the discovery of an early version of the piece, placed in an additional gathering – to be dated around 1325 – of a Dominican Gradual from Bologna, now Ms. 518 of Museo Civico Medievale (Appendix, no. 10).<sup>34</sup> In raising doubts about Iacopone’s authorship, it has also brought out the fact that this setting was taken from the sequence for St Dominic *In celesti hierarchia*, also used by Friars Preachers for another one in praise of the Virgin, *Ave, Virgo gloriosa*,<sup>35</sup> so that all these worshipful songs seem to belong to a Dominican context.

However, as demonstrated with the Pisan laudario,<sup>36</sup> the presence of works by Iacopone in Dominican sources of the period was not unusual. Since it seems likely that he had no ambitions as a melodist, his use of music – as far as we have seen – had to be substantially functional in composing verses, so it might not have been a problem for him to resort to preexisting tunes as well. All of this is quite interesting in light of a lesser known hymn

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<sup>33</sup> In the *Laudario di Santo Spirito*, for example, melodic identities between different lauda texts are even more frequent. See Liuzzi, *La lauda* (see n. 17), I, 85–87.

<sup>34</sup> See Cesarino Ruini, “Un’antica versione dello *Stabat Mater* in un Graduale delle domenicane bolognesi”, in: *Philomusica on-line* 9/3 (2010), 212–234.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Margot Fassler, “Music and the Miraculous: Mary in the Mid-Thirteenth-Century Dominican Sequence Repertory”, in: Leonard E. Boyle et al. (eds.), *Aux Origines de la liturgie Dominicaine: Le manuscrit Santa Sabina XIV L 1*, Paris: École Française de Rome – CNRS Éditions 2004, 229–278.

<sup>36</sup> See above, n. 23.

attributed to him, *Stabat Mater speciosa* (Appendix, no. 11b),<sup>37</sup> which repeats the situation already observed in some of his *laude*. In this case, it is not simply a contrafactum, but also a perfect counterpart to the previous one: that on the Passion of Christ, this on the Nativity, even using the same words.

In conclusion, leaving aside the myth of Iacopone as a musician (an aspect that cannot be further clarified here and that, all in all, would not add anything to his prominence), the fact remains that, as a poet, he certainly made use of music, at least in a functional sense. Even better, while his texts show a predominantly individual nature, the melodic repertoire he exploited as a tool for making poetry – especially if drawn from the popular arena – may have been one of the means that led to an effective dissemination of his works in the wide community of devotees.

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<sup>37</sup> Printed for the first time, along with the more famous version, in *Laudi del beato frate Iacopone del sacro ordine di frati minori de osservantia*, Bressa: per Bernardo de Misintis 1495.

## Appendix



1: Musical Setting of *O Crist'onipotente*. *Laudario di Santo Spirito*, fols. 35v–36r (courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence).

36

la donna per auer me bono  
 re lasciommi ad infirmitate  
 mi gire penato. t io fila  
 donna di gioie et di amore. mee  
 anima forma la sembrar et al  
 la mia simiglianza ammi fac  
 to fallanca a facto gra peccato.  
 ite anima sposa che degia  
 nuente che pena dolorosa p  
 lei uolli soffrire nolla uolli

XXXIII

a. Iacopone, Lauda 50		b. Iacopone, Lauda 27
4 “O Cristo onipotente, dove site enviato? Perché povera mente gite peligrinato?”.		4 “O Cristo onipotente, dove site enviato? Perché peligrinato vo site messo a andare?”
10 “Una sposa pigliai, che dato li ho el mio core; de ioie l’adornai, per avermene onore; lassòme a ddesonore, fame gir en penato.	I	10 Multo me maraviglio de questa vostra andata, persona tanto altissima mettarse a ddesperata! Non ne si stata usata de volerne apenare”.
16 Eo si ne l’adornai de ioie e d’onoranza, mea forma l’assignai en la me’ simiglianza; àme fatta fallanza vònne peligrinato.	II	16 “Lo devino consiglio si à diliverato ch’e’ ne venga nel mondo a l’om ch’è desformato e facciace parentato, con’ l’ho priso ad amare”.
22 Eo li donai memoria ne lo meo placemento; de la cestial gloria dèli lo entennemento e voluntate en centro nel core li ho emminiato.	III	22 “Que n’è opporto tal omo, per cu’ va’ afatiganno? Se nn’è da te fugito, a te non torna n’ danno; à a pagare gran banno, no lo po’ satisfare!”.
28 Po’ li donai la fede che adimpie entellegenza, a mmemoria li dède la verac’esperanza e, n’ caritate, amanza èl volere ordenato.	IV	28 “Tutto ’l déveto c’ane eo si lo pagaraio et enfra Deo e l’omo pace ce mettarai e si la ’n ce fermaraio, non se deia guastare”.
34 A cciò che lo essercizio avesse complemento, lo corpo per servizio dèli e per ornamento; e fo bello stromento, no l’avess’escordato.	V	34 “Como porrai far pace enfra Deo e l’om mundano, ca l’om vòlse essar Deo e Deo vòl l’om sottano? E questo è tale trano, null’om ’l se po’ placare”.
40 A cciò ched ella avesse en que s’essercetare, tutte le creature per lei vòlse creare; dónne me devi’ amare àme guerra amenato.	VI	40 “Si, co’ me faccio omo, omo à so entennemento; et, en quanto omo, a Deo farò suiacemento; faròcce iognemento; ciascheun suo consolare”.
[...]		[...]

2, a-b: *O Cristo onipotente*: Laude 50 and 27 compared (*ripresa* and strophes I–V).

a. Iacopone, Lauda 74		b. Iacopone, Lauda 53
2 Que farai, Pier da Morrone? Èi venuto al paragone.		2 Que farai, fra' Iacovone? Èi venuto al paragone.
6 Vederimo èl lavorato che en cell'hai contemplato. S'el mondo de te è 'ngannato, séquita maleddezzone.	I	6 Fusti al Monte Pellestrina, anno e mezzo en desciplina; loco pigliasti malina dónne ài mo la presone.
10 La tua fama alta è salita, en molte parte n'è gita; se te sozz'a la finita a bon' sirai confusione.	II	10 Probandato in cort'i Roma, tale n'ho redutta soma; onne fama se 'n ci afuma, tal n'aio 'maleddezzone.
14 Como segno a ssaietta, tutto lo monno a te affitta; se non ten' belancia ritta, a dDeo ne va appellazione.	III	14 So' arvenuto probendato, ch'el capuccio m'è mozzato; en perpetua encarcerato, encatenato co' llione.
18 Se si auro, ferro o rame, provàrite enn esto esame; quigno ài filo, lana o stame, mustràrite enn est'azzone.	IV	18 La presone che m'è data, una casa sotterrata; arèscece una privata, non fa fragar de moscune.
22 Questa corte è una focina, ch'el bon auro se cci afina; s'ello tene altra ramina, torna en cennere e 'n carbone.	V	22 Null'omo me pò parlare; chi me serve lo po' fare, ma èli opporto a confessare de la mea parlazione.
26 Se ll'ofizio te deletta, nulla malsania è plu enfetta; e ben è vita emmaledetta perdir Deo per tal boccone.	VI	26 Porto iette de sparveri, soneglianno nel meo gire; nova danza ce po' odire chi sta apresso mea stazzone.
30 Grann'eo n'abi en te cordoglio co' t'escio de bocca: "Voglio", che t'ài posto iogo en collo che tt'è tua dannazione.	VII	30 Da po' ch'eo me so' colcato, revòltome nell'altro lato; nei ferri so' enciampagliato, engavinato èl catenone.
34 Quanno l'omo vertüoso è posto en loco tempestoso, sempre l trovi vigoroso a portar ritto el gonfalone.	VIII	34 Aio un canestrello appiso, che da surci non sia offiso; cinqui pane, al meo parviso, pò tener lo meo cestone.
38 Grann'è la tua degnetate, non n'è menor la tempestate; grann'è la varietate che trovarai in tua masone.	IX	38 Lo ciston sì sta fornito: fette de lo di transito, la cepolla pro appetito (nobel tasca de paltone!).
[...]		[...]

3, a-b: *Que farai, Pier da Morrone?* and *Que farai, fra' Iacovone?* (*ripresa* and strophes I–IX).

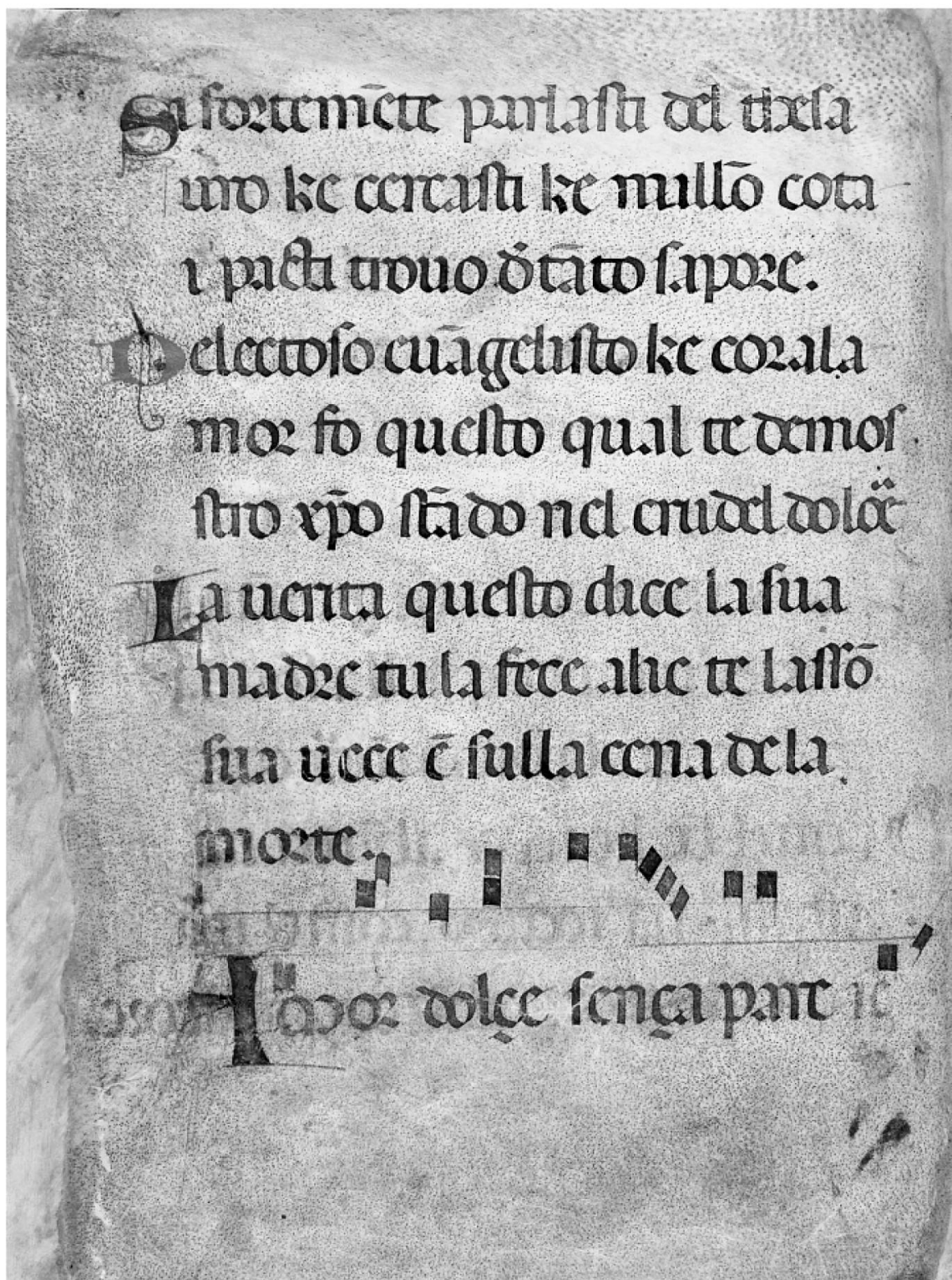
a. Iacopone, Lauda 7		b. Iacopone, Lauda App. 1
Audite una 'ntenzone, ch'è 'nfra l'anema e 'l corpo; batalia dura troppo 4 fine a lo consumare!		Audite una entenzone, ch'è enfra Onore e Vergogna, quale è plu dura pugna 4 ad om vertuoso a passare.
L'anema dice al corpo: "Facciamo penetenza, ché pozzamo fugire quella grave sentenza e guadagnim la gloria, ch'è de tanta placenza; portimo onne gravenza 12 con delettoso amare".	I	La Fortetuden vertute armata tolle sua schiera e lla Vergogna li è 'scuntra co la sua dura mainera; ennella prima frontera Vergogna fa dura bataglia (l'altra è poi senza vaglia, 12 ché nulla cosa po' fare).
Lo corpo dice: "Turbone d'esto che t'odo dire; nutrito so' en delicii, non lo porria patere; lo celebr' aio debele, porria tosto 'mpazzire; fugi cotal pensieri, 20 mai non me ne parlare".	II	La Fortetuden po' ch'entra a la Vergogna patere, ella va vigoriano èlla Vergogna avilire; non li po' ennante fugire, là unque si trova l'abatte, a 'scemplo de Cristo combatte, 20 che vòlse vergogna portare.
Sozzo, malvascio corpo, lussurioso e 'ngordo, ad onne mea salute sempre te trovo sordo; sostene lo fragello d'esto nodoso cordo, emprend'esto descordo, 28 cà 'n t'è ci òpo a danzare!".	III	Tanto è lo gaudio che porta chi va per la via del Signore che onne vergogna ci abatte e nullo li à ennante vigore, 'nanti 'l se reputa onore poter vergogna suffrire, ché sequita el dolce suo Scire, 28 che vòl'sen vergogna finire.
"Succurrite, vicine, cà ll'anema m' à morto; allis' è 'nsanguenato, disciplinato a torto! O impia crudele, et a que me ài ridotto? Starò sempr'en corrotto, 36 non me porrò alegrare".	IV	La Temperanza s'acuncia, armata d'umilitate, l'Onore armato sta escuntra, affolto en soa degnetate. Bataglie ce sso' esmesurate; vencendol, s'envigoresce, sempre piu forte ci areisce, 36 quando 'l te cridi finire.
"Questa morte sì breve non me siria 'n talento; sòmmè deliverata de farte far spermento: de cinque sensi tollote onne delettamento e nullo placemento 44 te aio voglia de dare".	V	De l'onor c'ài conculcato nàscente, piu forte, onore! Se om terreno no 'l vede, bataglie te 'n porti nel core; po' che per signi de fore odi che ssanto èi clamato, e tu, Satanàs encarnato, 44 odi de te tal parlare!
[...]		[...]

4, a-b: *Audite una 'ntenzone* and *Audite una entenzone* (ripresa and strophes I–V).

a. <i>Laudario di Cortona</i> , 45		b. Iacopone (attrib.)
2 Amor dolçe sença pare se' tu, Cristo, per amare!		2 Amor dolçe sença pare si' tu, Christo, per amare.
6 Amor sença cominciança, se' tu: padre in substança, in Trinità per amança, fillio et spiritu regnare.	I	6 Tu sè amor ke coniunge, cui più ami spesso pongne. Onne piaga, poi che l'ongne, sença onguento fai sanare.
10 Tu, amore ke coniungi, cui più ami spesso pungi; omni piaga poi ke l'ungi senza unguento fai saldare.	II	10 Amor, tu non abanduni che te offende, sì perdoni, et de gloria encoroni ki se sa humiliare.
14 Dolce amore, tu se' speme; ki bene ama sempre teme, nasce et cresce del tuo seme ke bon fructo fa granare.	III	14 Signor fanne perdonança de la nostra offensança, et de la tua dolce amança fanne un poco assaiare.
18 Amor, tu non abandoni ki l'ofende: sì perdoni, e di gloria el coroni ki si sa humiliare.	IV	18 Dolce Ihesu amoroso, più ke manna savoroso, sopre noi sie pietoso: singnor, non abandonare.
22 Amor grande, dolc'e fino, increato se' divino: tu fai lu saraphyno di tua gloria inflammare.	V	22 Amor, grande, dolçe, fino increato si' divino, tu ke fai lo seraphino de tua gloria enfanmare.
26 Cherubin' et li alti chori, apostoli, gran predicatori, martiri et confessori, virgene fai iocundare.	VI	26 Cherubin' et l'altri cori, apostoli et doctori, martiri et confessori, virgini fai iocundare.
30 Patriarche et prophete, tu li traiesti de la rete; di te, amor, avien gran sete: mai non si credian satiare!	VII	30 Patriarchi et prophete tu traisti de la rete: de te, amor, avén tal sete mai non se credéno satiare.
34 Or son consolati en tutto di te, gaudio cum disducto: tu se' canto sençà lucto, cielo e terra fai cantare.	VIII	34 Dolçe amore, tanto n'ame, ke al tuo rengno senpre kiamé, satiando d'onne fame, si sè dolce a gustare.
38 Dolce amore, di te nasce la sperança c'omo pasce, unde al peccator tu lasce pietancà adimandare.	IX	38 Amor, ki te ben pensa ianmai non de' fare offensa: tu sè fructuosa mensa en cui devam gloriare.
[...]		[...]

5, a-b: *Amor dolçe sença pare* in *Laudario di Cortona* and Iacopone's versions (*ripresa* and strophes I–IX), respectively from Varanini (ed.), *Laude cortonesi* (see n. 27), and Gubbini, *Ai margini* (see n. 15).





6. Musical setting of *Amor dolce sença pare*. *Laudario di Cortona*, fols. 117v–118r. From Marco Gozzi and Francesco Zimei (eds.), *Il Laudario di Cortona, I (Facsimile)*, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana 2015 (“Venite a laudare”. Studi e facsimili sulla lauda italiana 1).



tentia si an fuor dipaura.  
**P**adore pietoso fontana di misicor  
 dia re poveroso manna in tra pi  
 ce et concordia fa chella discor  
 dia cressi che si scura.  
**A**firma al core anui che sien  
 que adunati plo tuol honore.  
 ptonaci inu peccati che siemo  
 formati tuca a tua figura.  

 Ave uirgo  
 ptio sa madre di piet mea.  


7: Musical setting of *Salve, Virgo pretiosa*. *Laudario di Santo Spirito*, fols. 114v–115r (courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence).



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**A**udite genti un dolce can- to
   
 che fece san bernardo sanc to
   
 dela uergine conpia to come
   
 piangea la nostra amanca.
   
**S**alue uirgo splendente so
   
 uirginalto se piacente em
   
 ierusalem presente quanto il

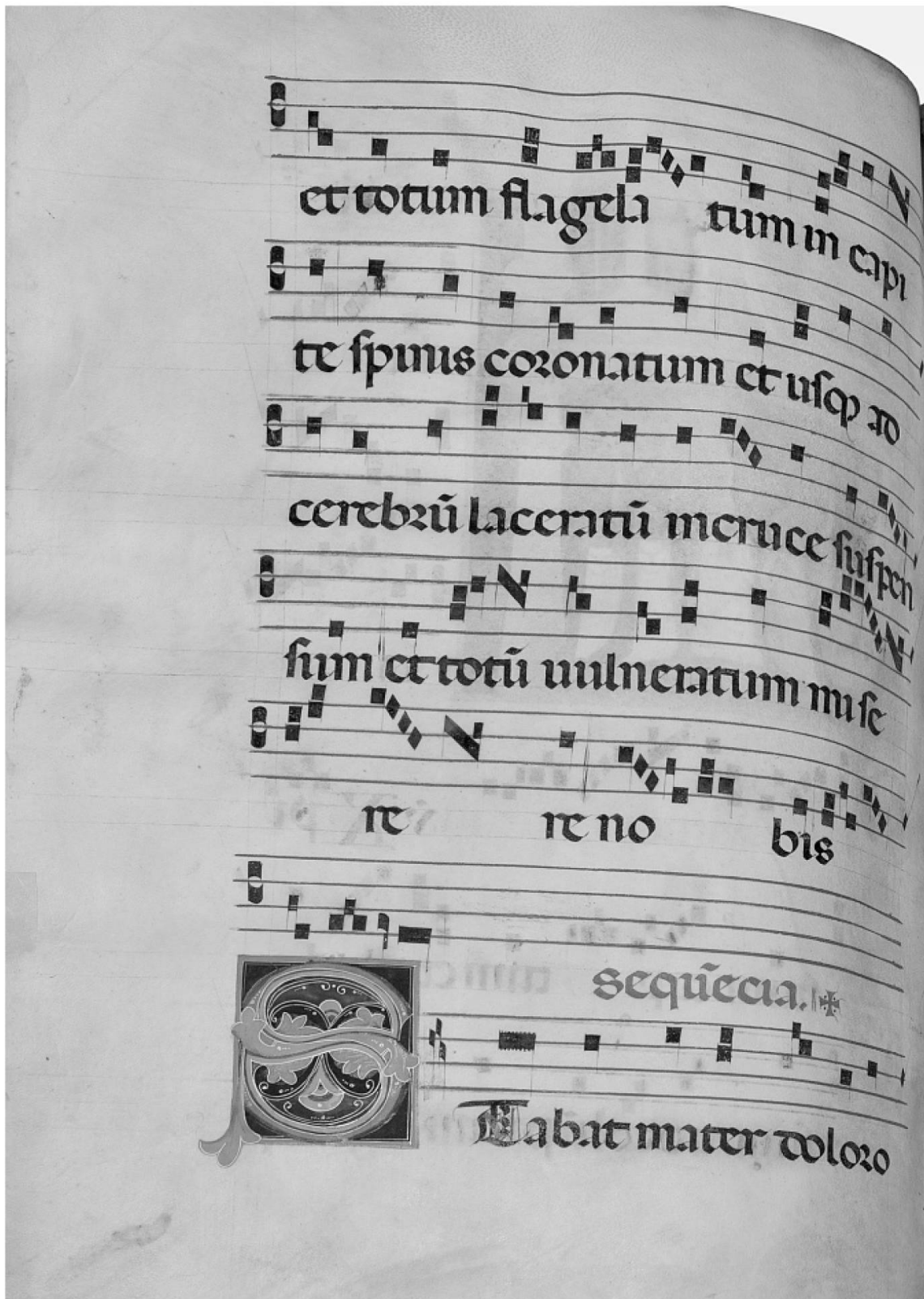
10

a. <i>Laudario di Santo Spirito</i> , 75		b. <i>Iacopone, Lauda</i> 87
2 Salve, Virgo pretiosa, madre di pietança.		2 Senno me par e cortisia empazzir per lo bel Messia.
6 Audite, genti, un dolçe canto che fece san Bernardo sancto de la vergine con pianto, come piangea la nostra amança.	I	6 Ello me sa sì gran sapere a cchi per Deo vòle empazzire, en Parisi non se vide cusì granne filosofa.
10 “Salve, virgo splendente, sovr’ogn’altra se’ piacente; eri ’n Ierusalem presente quando il tuo figliuolo ebbe pesança?”.	II	10 Chi pro Cristo va empazzato, pare afflito e tribulato, ma el è magistro conventato en natura e ’n teologia.
14 “Vidi il mio figlio preso et legato et duramente tormentato et nel viso isputato dalli giuderì per ’niquitança”.	III	14 Chi pro Cristo ne va pazzo, a la gente sì par matto; chi non à provato el fatto, par che sia for de la via.
18 Vidi il mio figlio in gran tremore in tra la gente piena d’errore, e io guardando avea dolore della mia desiderança.	IV	18 Chi vòle entrare en questa scola, trovarà dottrina nova; tal pazzia, chi non la prova, ià non sa que ben se scia.
22 Et io parlando a quella gente quasi era uscita dalla mente, et pregando umilmente: del figliuol mio abiate pietança.	V	22 Chi vòle entrare en questa danza trova amor d’esmesurança; cento di de perdunanza a chi li dice vellania.
26 Io pregare neente valea: de l’alto figliul, vita mia, le pene sue tuttòr vedea unde il mio core à dolorança”.	VI	26 Chi girà cercando onore, no n’è degno del Suo amore, cà Iesù ’nfra dui latruni en mezzo la croce staia.
30 “E chi era teco, virgo pietosa, sovr’ogn’altra se’ amorosa? Vedei il tuo figlio, dolorosa, in tra la gente di sleança”.	VII	30 Chi va cercando la vergogna, bene me par che cetto iogna; ià non vada plu a Bologna per ’mparare altra mastria.
34 “Eram meco mie sorori, altre donne per amore, la Magdalena in gran tristore più dell’altre à dolorança.	VIII	
38 Data à la sentença Pylato ke Cristo in croce sia chiavato: quelli che no avea peccato né facta nulla offesança”.	IX	

**8, a-b:** *Salve, Virgo pretiosa*, from Liuzzi, *La lauda* (see n. 17), II, 342–343, and its melodic model *Senno me par e cortisia*.

<b>Iacopone, Lauda 36</b>	
2	O amor de povertate, renno de tranquillitate!
6	Povertat'è via sicura, I non n' à lite né rancura, de latrun' non n' à pagura né de nulla tempestate.
10	Povertate more en pace, II nullo testamento face; larga el monno como iace e le gente concordate.
14	Non n' à iudece né notaro, III a ccorte non porta salaro, rìdesse de l'omo avaro, che sta 'n tanta ansietate.
18	Povertate, alto sapere, IV a nnulla cosa suiacere e 'n disprezzo possedere tutte le cose create.
22	Chi disprezza, sé possede, V possedenno, non se lede; nulla cosa i piglia el pede che non faccia so iornate.
26	Chi descidra è posseduto, VI a cquel c'ama s'è venduto; se ll'om pensa que n' à auto, àne aute rei derrate.
30	Troppo so' de vil coraio VII ad entrar en vassallaio, simiglianza de Deo c' aio detorpiria en vanetate!
34	Deo no n' aberga 'n core stretto; VIII tant'è granne, quant'ài affetto. Povertate à sì gran petto che cci aberga Deitate.
38	Povertat'è cel celato IX a chi è 'n terra ottenebrato. Chi è nel terzo cel su entrato ode arcana profunditate.
	[...]

9: *O amor de povertate* (ripresa and strophes I-IX), to be sung on the melody of *Senno me par e cortisia* as well.



10: *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, first opening. Bologna, Museo Civico Medievale (courtesy), Ms. 518, fols. 200v–201r.

sa iusta crucem lacrimosa cū p̄  
 tebat filius. **Q**uis animam  
 gemētē osternatam et dolētē  
 pertransibat gladius. **Q**uā  
 tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedic  
 ta mater unigeniti. **Q**uemere  
 bat et gemitabat et dolebat cum

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<i>a. Stabat Mater dolorosa</i>		<i>b. Stabat Mater speciosa</i>
3 Stabat Mater dolorosa, iuxta crucem lacrimosa, dum pendeat Filius.	I	3 Stabat Mater speciosa iuxta foenum gaudiosa dum iacebat Parvulus.
6 Cuius animam gementem, contristatam et dolentem, pertransivit gladius.	II	6 Cuius animam gaudentem, laetabundam et ferventem, pertransivit iubilus.
9 O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedicta Mater Unigeniti!	III	9 O quam laeta et beata fuit illa immaculata Mater Unigeniti!
12 Quae moerebat et dolebat pia Mater, dum videbat Nati poenas incliti.	IV	12 Quae gaudebat et ridebat, exultabat cum videbat Nati partum incliti.
15 Quis est homo qui non fleret, Matrem Christi si videret in tanto supplicio?	V	15 Quis est qui non gauderet, Christi Matrem si videret in tanto solacio?
18 Quis non posset contristari, Christi Matrem contemplari dolentem cum Filio?	VI	18 Quis non posset collaetari, piam Matrem contemplari ludentem cum Filio?
21 Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Iesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum.	VII	21 Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Iesum cum iumentis, et algori subditum.
24 Vidit suum dulcem Natum moriendo desolatum dum emisit spiritum.	VIII	24 Vidit suum dulcem Natum vagientum adoratum vili diversorio.
27 Eia, Mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris fac, ut tecum lugeam.	IX	27 Eia Mater, fons amoris me sentire vim ardoris fac, ut tecum sentiam.
30 Fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum, ut sibi complaceam.	X	30 Fac, ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum ut sibi complaceam.
33 Sancta Mater, istud agas, Crucifixi fige plagas cordi meo valide.	XI	33 Sancta Mater, istud agas, pone nostro ducas plagas cordi fixas valide.
36 Tui Nati vulnerati, tam dignati pro me pati, poenas mecum divide.	XII	36 Tui Nati coelo lapsi, iam dignati foeno nasci, poenas mecum divide.
[...]		[...]

11, a-b: *Stabat Mater dolorosa* and *Stabat Mater speciosa* (strophes I–XII), respectively from Clemens Blume (ed.), *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, LIV, Leipzig: O. R. Reisland 1915, and Frédéric Ozanam, *Les poètes franciscains en Italie au treizième siècle*, Paris: Jacques Lecoffre 1852.