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**Music in small Italian villages:
a new source of fifteenth-century polyphony from Rocca di Botte***

INTRODUCTION

Rocca di Botte is a tranquil village of about 500 inhabitants in the province of L'Aquila, nestling on the mountains of western Marsica, right on the border of Lazio. It developed during the early Middle Ages on the ruins of a Benedictine settlement, and its whole history is based on the slow rhythms of an agricultural and pastoral economy, so typical of the small villages of central Abruzzo. Its sole 'moment of glory' is connected with the figure of St. Peter the Hermit, who was born there in about 1125 and still commands wide popular devotion. Despite this significant spiritual heritage, the village possesses only one parish church, dedicated to St. Peter (however not the local one, but St. Peter the Apostle), full of interesting architectural details and precious furnishings. Meriting particular attention is a small fifteenth-century parchment manuscript of sacred polyphony, recently discovered when the sacristy was put in order.¹

Although it retains its ancient covers, the manuscript is unfortunately limited to a single gathering, which – when compared to the thickness of the spine – shows that the original volume must have numbered about 200 leaves. We cannot know whether the missing gatherings were deliberately removed or fell out as a result of mechanical problems, such as collapse of the binding. However that may be, a careful inspection of the church premises has not led to any other findings. For proper safeguarding, moreover, the manuscript was sent to the Archivio della Diocesi dei Marsi at Avezzano, where it has been restored and is now kept

* This article proceeds – with numerous additions and changes – from a conference paper read in Los Angeles, CA, at the American Musicological Society Seventy-second Annual Meeting (2-5 November 2006).

¹ I owe the notice of this find to my friend and colleague Gianluca Tarquinio, an assiduous exegetist and scholar of Marsican musical traditions, together with my gratitude for several bibliographical suggestions and for his kind assistance during my research in the field. I also wish to thank the staff of the Archivio della Diocesi dei Marsi at Avezzano for their nice availability, the DIAMM project (Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music), promoted by the University of Oxford and the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College of London for the photo-reproductions, and all those friends who have honoured me with their affectionate nearness: in particular Valerio Annicchiarico and Carla Vivarelli for their fraternal assistance, especially with regard to the transcriptions, Elena Abbado, Annalisa Albuzzi, Marco Gozzi, John Nádas, Alejandro Planchart and Agostino Ziino for their moral

with the pressmark ‘P, Rocca di Botte, 5/25’.²

This discovery increases an already significant number of sources of medieval and early Renaissance polyphonic music which the Abruzzo has, over the past thirty years, brought to the attention of the musicological world: we may for example immediately call to mind the Guardiagrele codices,³ as well as the manuscripts kept at Atri,⁴ L’Aquila,⁵ Sulmona⁶ and Rocca di Mezzo.⁷ The order in which these places are mentioned follows both chronological and geographical criteria, an imaginary arc from east – the Adriatic coast – to west. According to such guiding principles, the Rocca di Botte discovery might symbolically represent the missing link in an itinerary leading straight to Rome.

DESCRIPTION

support and valuable advice, and Davide De Bernardinis for the graphic elaboration of the gathering diagram.

² Henceforth **RdB**. The following manuscripts will also be cited in abbreviated form: **Ao** = Aosta, Biblioteca del Seminario, ms. 15 (formerly A¹D19); **Ca** = Cambrai, Médiathèque Municipale, ms. 6; **Fn112** = Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magl. XIX, 112^{bis}; **Ox** = Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Canonici misc. 213; **Tr92** = Trento, Castello del Buon Consiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali (formerly Museo Provinciale d’Arte), ms. 1379 (formerly 92).

³ Formerly Archivio di S. Maria Maggiore; *Graduale* in three volumes dated 1333, now unfortunately lost. The second volume contained – copied in a more recent hand – two *Sanctus* (respectively for 3 and 2 voices), an *Agnus Dei* for 2 voices, *contrafactum* of the ballata by Francesco Landini *Questa fanciulla, Amor, fallami pia*, and an *Alleluia* for 2 voices. The third, on the other hand, contained a version of the plainchant *Credo IV* – the so-called *Credo ‘Cardinalis’* – enriched by a second voice. See GIULIO CATTIN – OSCAR MISCHIATI – AGOSTINO ZIINO, *Composizioni polifoniche del primo Quattrocento nei libri corali di Guardiagrele*, «Rivista Italiana di Musicologia», VII/2, 1972, pp. 153-181; AGOSTINO ZIINO, *Ancora sulle composizioni polifoniche di Guardiagrele. Aggiunte e precisazioni*, «Rivista Italiana di Musicologia», VIII/1, 1973, pp. 9-13.

⁴ Archivio Capitolare, Sala “Innocenzo IV”, teca A, fragm. 5. On the *recto* the leaf contains the parts of *cantus* II and *contra* of the *Gloria ‘Micinella’* by Antonio Zacara da Teramo, and on the *verso* the anonymous ballata for two voices *Be’ llo sa Dio*. See AGOSTINO ZIINO, *Nuove fonti di polifonia italiana dell’Ars nova*, «Studi Musicali», II/2, 1973, pp. 235-255.

⁵ Biblioteca Provinciale “Salvatore Tommasi”, ms. formerly Museo Nazionale d’Abruzzo, 137 (‘Agnifili Codex’, post 1470): here we have a *Kyrie* in which four *Credo-s* have an *Amen* for 2 voices. See AGOSTINO ZIINO – WALTER TORTORETO, *Polifonia ‘retrospettiva’ e polifonia ‘dotta’ in Abruzzo durante il Quattrocento*, «Prospettiva», LIII-LVI, 1988-1989 (*Scritti in ricordo di Giovanni Previtali*), vol. I, pp. 256-263; FRANCESCO ZIMEI, *Amico Agnifili cardinale e giurista (1398-1476)*, tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi di Teramo, a.a. 1993-’94, pp. 184-187.

⁶ Biblioteca Comunale “Ovidio Nasone”, two sheets without shelfmark (second half of the fifteenth century): the first contains an anonymous 4-voice intonation of the hymn *Iste confessor*, the second is bifoliate with fragments of a mass (*Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*) by an unidentified author. See ZIINO – TORTORETO, *Polifonia ‘retrospettiva’ e polifonia ‘dotta’ cit.*

⁷ In the small museum beside the church of S. Maria della Neve is kept – without any shelfmark – an antiphonary dated 1519, in which the originally blank pages have been filled as follows: a *Magnificat* (4-5 voices), the motet *Adoramus te Christe* (4 voices) and a canon for 7 voices by Laurensius Gasparinus, the motet *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia* (4 voices) by Josquin Desprez, the motet *Hodie Maria virgo celos ascendit* (4 voices) by Johannes de Oleo, another version – this time anonymous – of the motet *Adoramus te Christe* (4 voices) and the anonymous 3-voice villanella *Se me vòl morto*. See AGOSTINO ZIINO, *Documenti di polifonia in Abruzzo*, Roma, Pro Musica Studium, 1974.

With regard to the material aspects of the codex, the covers [Plate 1], of cardboard lined with parchment, include both sides, held together by scanty shreds of the spine, its internal thickness measuring 250 mm. As compared to the thickness of the existing gathering (1 mm), this measurement leads us to assume that, if it had originally been made up in a homogeneous fashion, the codex would have included about twenty-five gatherings. The surface area preserved is wholly untitled, although a seventeenth-century note of ownership («Rocca di Botte»), written in the lower margin of the first page [Plate 3], bears witness to the fact that for at least four centuries the manuscript has been effectively in the place where it was found.

Structurally like a quaternion, the surviving gathering now consists of seven of the eight leaves of which it was originally made up, numbered in pencil from 1 to 7 in the upper corner of each *recto* in what is clearly twentieth-century handwriting. This numbering, written by a hand that had evidently neglected to check the internal match of the four bifolios that form the gathering, does not take the missing leaf into account – which is actually the second – demonstrating thereby that, when the numbering was inserted, the gathering was already reduced to its present-day state. In the enclosed diagram [Plate 2] the existing page arrangement is shown in black, and the original one in grey. As can be noted, in both cases the numbering starts from 1. Indeed, it is highly probable that – relating the note of ownership described above to the liturgical destination of the opening piece – the surviving gathering must, even originally, have been the first.

As far as the dimensions of the manuscript are concerned, each page measures 236 mm in height by 170 mm in width, while the writing space covers about 155 by 115 mm. The text is fairly regularly spaced with six red staves per page, each of which measures 15 mm in height, the space between one stave and the next ranging between 13 and 15 mm. One noteworthy feature is the typology of the stave itself, curiously enough a four-line stave, which leads to the conclusion that the transcriber must have used sheets already prepared, evidently created for another kind of repertory.⁸

NOTATION

The gathering contains seven compositions, four of which are complete and three

⁸ One thinks, naturally, of plainchant, seeing that a certain use of the four-line stave can still be found only in archaic sources of polyphony. A similar phenomenon can be noted however in Abruzzo in some Guardiagrele pieces, in particular in the 3-voice *Sanctus* and in the *contrapunctus* of the *Credo* (see CATTIN – MISCHIATI – ZIINO, *Composizioni polifoniche del primo Quattrocento nei libri corali di*

fragmentary, all moreover anonymous and probably also unique, since thus far I have found no concordances. All the pieces are written in brown ink by a single hand in void notation, seemingly rather archaic, at least judging by the use of the sign ϕ , which, in the graphic form used in the manuscript – with the horizontal stroke – is found particularly in the early decades of the *Quattrocento*.⁹ The related mensural significance, on the other hand, will be discussed below. Although the writing is reasonably clear, the work is probably not that of a professional copyist, as can be deduced from some irregularities in note spacing, which occasionally forced the writer to go beyond the stave.¹⁰ Apart from this, various aspects – including purely visual ones – show a certain care over detail, evidence of considerable attention given to compilation. Two examples of this are noteworthy, the first being two note shapes with dots placed at the end of the *cantus* at the first opening of the *Gloria* for three voices [Plate 8], like a repeat sign. Since, however, the very nature of the piece would exclude any repeat (especially at the end of the verse «Qui tollis peccata mundi miserere nobis», where it would have no sense), it may well have some kind of purely ornamental nature. At the same time, it acts as a *custos*. Indeed, on the next page, the part continues exactly with two *semibreves*, located furthermore in the same spaces. On the other hand, the second example, particularly evident in the *tenor* of the *Gloria* on fol. 7v [Plate 16], consists of sets of *minimae* with a downward-pointing tail. Despite the fact that in void notation this kind of graphic use became established later on,¹¹ in the present source it is perfectly coherent: indeed, the copyist uses it in passages located at the top of the stave, to avoid invading the text of the stave above.¹²

Returning to mensural aspects, the sign ϕ deserves special attention, and is presented in **RdB** at four different points: the first, in the staves of the *Kyrie* on fol. 1v [Plate 4], the

Guardiagrele cit., plates 1-3 and 6): but in this case, as stated above, we are dealing with leaves of a *Graduale*.

⁹ See WILLI APEL, *Die Notation der polyphonen Musik. 900-1600*, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1962, Italian edition edited by Piero Neonato, Firenze, Sansoni, 1984, p. 159, which explicitly refers to **Ox** and **Ca**.

¹⁰ This can, for example, be noted in the *tenor* of the *Kyrie* on fol. 2r [Plate 5], in the *tenor* of the *Gloria* on fol. 7v [Plate 16] and markedly in the *Gloria* on fol. 5r [Plate 11], where the copyist, dealing with an extremely melismatic *contra*, and not having enough space to write all the notes, was obliged to add a whole stave, also of four lines.

¹¹ That is, in the last few years of the *Quattrocento*, and definitively in printed productions. In black notation on the other hand there existed a *semibrevis maior*, but this is clearly not so in the case under examination.

¹² In this connexion, see RICHARD RASTALL, *The Notation of Western Music. An Introduction*, London – Melbourne – Toronto, J. M. Dent, 1983, p. 166: «When the M was first used its upwards tail was probably intended to signify shortness, just as the downward tail of the L signified length, and until well into the sixteenth century all M-tails normally went upwards. This was not always convenient, for it wasted space if the scribe was not to run the risk of allowing a M-tail to collide with the text above it, and such a collision made the text difficult to read. On the other hand, an inverted M could not be mistaken for some other note-value, and there could be no ambiguity at all if the note concerned were in the middle of a group of normal Ms. So from the beginning of the fifteenth century we find an M-tail occasionally going downwards when the note is at the top of the staff».

second of three small circles – $\circ \phi \circ$ – adopted to indicate sectional repeats. It is then employed in the three-voice *Gloria*, on fols. 4v-5r [Plates 10-11], at the verse «Domine Deus, rex celestis». Of particular interest here is its combination with \circ in the key signature of the *tenor*, meaning that the part had to be sung twice. In the same piece, rather unusually, ϕ is also used to mark the *Amen* [Plates 12-13]. Lastly, it appears – with different meanings – in the fragmentary *Gloria* on fol. 7v [Plate 16], as halved shape ϕ , which alternates with \circ .

Recently there has been much debate over ϕ , owing to the many – often contradictory – meanings attributed to it by theoretical sources: from the conventional, sometimes abused *proportio dupla*, concerning, as we know, the halving of note values,¹³ to the *tempus perfectum diminutum*,¹⁴ and even the so-called *acceleratio mensurae*, an out-and-out tempo indication which prescribes performances at a third, or even slightly faster;¹⁵ last but not least, we should mention the brilliant research of Margaret Bent, who in some of her recent studies has questioned many previous readings, attributing several meanings to ϕ , including those of ‘*ut supra*’, of *signe de renvoi*, or as a «a vocal scoring marker».¹⁶

At this point, without wishing to enter into a delicate and so-far-unresolved question,¹⁷ one spontaneously infers that the use of ϕ in several places of **RdB** could probably be assumed – at least as far as this manuscript – to be a uniform interpretation. With regard to the use of the three small circles of the first *Kyrie*, similar applications are known (although not particularly frequent), as for example in a *Kyrie* by Estienne Grossin handed down by **Ao** and in the *Kyrie* ‘*Angelorum*’ by Binchois, witnessed to by various sources, including **Tr92**: in such pieces we can only agree with Margaret Bent, who, starting from the objective difficulty of finding an aesthetic basis for the repetition of identical textures at different speeds, plausibly considers ϕ as a ‘toggle’, «simply giving graphic distinction to adjacent sections, leaving no problem about source inconsistency, and resolving the

¹³ Cf. APEL, *Die Notation der polyphonen Musik* cit., pp. 156-167.

¹⁴ In this case, what is halved is the *mensura* itself. Cf. APEL, *Die Notation der polyphonen Musik* cit., pp. 167-169.

¹⁵ On this point, see ALEJANDRO E. PLANCHART, *The relative speed of tempora in the period of Dufay*, «RMA research chronicle», XVII, 1981, pp. 33-52; EUNICE SCHROEDER, *The stroke comes full circle: ϕ and ϕ in writings of music, ca. 1450-1540*, «Musica Disciplina», XXXVI, 1982, pp. 119-166; ANNA MARIA BUSSE BERGER, *The myth of diminutio per tertiam partem*, «Journal of Musicology», VIII, 1990, pp. 398-426; ROB C. WEGMAN, *What is “acceleratio mensurae”?*, «Music and letters», LXXIII, 1992, pp. 512-524.

¹⁶ MARGARET BENT, *The early use of the sign ϕ* , «Early Music», XXIV/2, 1996, pp. 199-225: 210. See also EAD., *The use of cut signatures in sacred music by Binchois*, in *Binchois studies*, ed. by A. Kirkman and D. Slavin, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 277-312: 286, on the subject of the anonymous *Tractatulus de cantu mensurali seu figurativo musice artis* handed down by ms. 950 of the Stiftsbibliothek of Melk, copied in 1462 but referring to earlier decades (ed. by F. A. Gallo, *Scriptorum de Musica*, XVI, [Rome] American Institute of Musicology, 1971), in which ϕ is defined as a repeat sign.

¹⁷ An effective summary of the more frequent interpretations of ϕ can be found in the recent article by RUTH I. DEFORD, *The mensura of ϕ in the works of Du Fay*, «Early Music», XXXIV/1, 2006, pp. 111-136: 111-113.

awkwardness of a tempo interpretation».¹⁸ For similar reasons, this solution also suits the *Gloria* for three voices, where the presence of ϕ clearly serves to coordinate the repetition of the *tenor* with the entry of the other parts. On the other hand, the possibility that the stroke also indicates a *proportio dupla* or an *acceleratio mensurae* must be rejected, since, particularly in the *contra*, the ϕ section already has notes with shorter values than those in \circ and to reduce their value further – or even merely their performance tempo – would distort the musical idea of the piece.¹⁹ The same goes for the *Amen*: here, ϕ acts as a ‘graphic indicator’, which although *prima facie* might seem anomalous (or – rather - redundant, since its entry is already perfectly recognisable, delimited moreover on the stave by a clear bar line), should once more be linked to the fact that the *tenor*, again in this section, always repeats the same music.

A very case of *proportio dupla* appears, on the contrary, in the *Gloria* on fol. 7v, where – although the piece remains in ternary time – the copyist prefers to use the sign ϕ just to avoid any ambiguity with the meaning of ϕ .

CONTENTS

1 / fol. 1r: *Verbum caro factum est* (C, T)

The **RdB** opening piece is a charming version for two voices of *Verbum caro factum est* [Plate 3], one of the best-known texts of the medieval Christmas repertory. Despite its wide diffusion, documented from the thirteenth century in various parts of Europe, the piece has so far remained immune to genre classifications: indeed, it has at various times been defined as a hymn,²⁰ as a *laus-cantilena*,²¹ or even as a carol, made up from a combination of the responsory *De Virgine Maria* and the *conductus In hoc anni circulo*, attested to for the first time in a Parisian codex from St-Martial de Limoges.²² For our part, we can only recognise the effective presence of heterogeneous elements: indeed, while the poetic typology of the several versions that have reached us is certainly coherent with hymnographic tradition, the

¹⁸ BENT, *The early use of the sign ϕ* cit., p. 216.

¹⁹ Following this trend, in transcribing the pieces, I have left unaltered the value of the notes marked ϕ as compared to those with *integer valor*.

²⁰ Thus FRANZ JOSEPH MONE, who publishes two different versions in his *Hymni latini medii aevi*, Herder, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1853-1855, respectively vol. I, pp. 65-66, and vol. II, pp. 80-83.

²¹ This is the case of GIULIO CATTIN, *Il manoscritto Venet. Marc. Ital. IX, 145*, «Quadrivium», IV, 1960, pp. 1-57: 26.

²² Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. lat. 1139. See ANSELM HUGHES in *The New Oxford History of Music*, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, Italian edition Milano, Feltrinelli – Garzanti, 1991, vol. II, p. 384. See also ID., *In hoc anni circulo*, «The Musical Quarterly», LX/1, 1974, pp. 37-45; in this latter article, Dom Hughes attests to the existence of at least nineteen different settings of this piece.

ballata form, heightened by the dance progression that characterises most of the intonations, is well-suited to the choral gestures of certain processions. At the same time, we should not overlook its strong similarity with the lauda repertory, which, in raising the concept of *contrafactio* to a system, repeatedly adopts this very model, even preserving its Latin *incipit*.²³ All of the above would lead us to consider *Verbum caro* as a ‘transversal’ piece, thus multivalent and for this reason independent of known typologies. At this point, in order to specify its identity, we shall have to verify the context on a case-by-case basis. In this particular case, we are faced with a composition certainly designed for liturgical use, probably destined for the same festivity at which the homonymous responsory was sung, that is the *Feria prima in Nativitate Domini*.²⁴

Realised in a fairly archaic style – note-against-note – with an *incipit* for *moto contrario*, the piece has an improvisatorial harmonic form, using mainly thirds and sixths, rather like a discant. The melody, assigned to the *cantus*, arises from a thematic pattern common to most of the intonations, based on an ascending tetrachord (F-B flat) in trochaic rhythm. We should note here the elegant repetition of A, bringing on the slide of B, like an appoggiatura, probably an exclusive variant of the Abruzzese version, which closely recalls certain formulas of the traditional music. In this connexion, it is worthwhile making a comparison with some contemporary writings, in particular that of **Ox**, the work of the «presbiter P. del Zocholo de Portunaonis», and one of the anonymous versions contained in **Fn112**:

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²³ Cf. In this connexion *Laudario Giustiniano*, a cura di F. Luisi, Venezia, Fondazione Levi, 1983, vol. II, pp. 194-221. Among the *laude* in some way connected to the tradition of the *Verbum caro* we must absolutely include *Dolce vergine Maria*, a text found in numerous sources of the *Tre-Quattrocento*, whose sole intonation, handed down by ms. Banco Rari 18 in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence, confirms – even on the melodic *incipit* – an intertextuality already encountered on the literary level.

²⁴ This strengthens the hypothesis that the piece, even originally, covered the first leaf of the codex.

The *residuum* contains a further ten strophes (structured as seven-syllable quatrains with rhyme *aaax*, while refrain has *bx*), ruled in rather faded ink, but legible using ultraviolet photography. Except for two of them (VIII and X), wholly unknown to the repertoires consulted, the text shows substantial similarities to specimens already known, diverging only at limited points, possibly owing to sedimentation processes connected with the oral tradition. Among the lexical peculiarities, the first term of the dittology in verse 41 should be noted, declined in an improbable Latin («*Senis et Iuvenibus*»), evidently for metric purposes and, in net contrast to this, the hypermetric reading in verse 37 («*peccatis*» instead of the more usual «*culpīs*»).

2 / fol. 1v: *Kyrie* ‘I’ (C, T, [Ct])

The current fols. 1v-2r contain a couple of *Kyrie*-s, unfortunately both incomplete owing to the loss of a middle leaf. These include, graphically laid out in the same way with the *tenor* spanning two pages, respectively the *cantus* and half of the *tenor* (interrupted at the *Christe*) and – almost creating the optical illusion that we are dealing with a single piece²⁵ – half of the *tenor* (again from the *Christe*) and the *contra*. Although the manuscript occasionally shows marks of fresh ink offset on the opposite page,²⁶ ultraviolet reading of the two pages shows no trace of the missing parts of the pieces.

In the first *Kyrie* [Plate 4] the *cantus*, the only complete part to have come down to us, after an initial leap of a fourth, proceeds by conjunct degrees, within the range of a seventh, with peaks up to *d*°. The notation shows notes of mainly short values and cadence formulas with interposition of the sixth degree (the so-called ‘Landini cadence’). As far as the graphic profile is concerned, the distribution of voices assumes that the *recto* of the lost leaf also contained a *contra* part; furthermore, as already observed above, each section of the piece is preceded by three small circles, signifying that it was intoned three times straight, with no alternating with the plainchant.

3 / fol. 2r: *Kyrie* ‘II’ ([C], T, Ct)

The second *Kyrie* setting [Plate 5], in the two surviving voices, contains generally long values and massive use of *ligaturae*. Of particular interest, at the end of the third section, seems to be the inclusion of the *noëma*, or *cantus coronatus*, consisting of fermata-held progressions, probably to be performed with embellishments on each chord: a phenomenon chiefly encountered, with symbolic value, in mass pieces belonging to the first half of the

²⁵ This may have contributed to deceive whoever numbered the leaves, in fairly recent times.

²⁶ For example, in the *Kyrie* on fols. 6v-7r [Plates 14-15], relative to the caption «*tenor*» and to a few scribbles in the lower margin.

Quattrocento.²⁷ Actually it's a succession of *signa congruentiae* added in order to re-establish, in the final passage, the right agreement between the voices, warded off because of a surplus note in the *tenor*. And such a behaviour could belong more to an author than to a mere copyist.

4 / fols. 2v-4r: *Gloria* 'I' (C, T)

Composed for two clear voices [Plates 6-9], with a raised pitch and nearly equal in range (overall *ambitus* *g-e*"), its style is fairly simple, alternating passages of a chordal nature with brief imitation phrases. The notation, wholly in binary metre and exalted by the freshness of the melody, does not appear to derive its materials from pre-existing Gregorian models: the notational stock consists almost entirely of *minimae*, which unravel – especially in the *cantus* – in a rapid declamation with frequent episodes in the upper region, sometimes persisting in the use of repeated notes. From a harmonic point of view, in the introductory and cadenced sections, of a mainly homorhythmic nature, the octave prevails, while the contrapuntal web usually unravels in intervals of fourths and fifths, with some voice-crossings.

An interesting detail is found on fol. 3r, in the first blank stave under the *tenor*, traces of a 'pentimento': the copyist had in fact begun to outline a phrase a C₂ clef, but then erased it immediately. Considering the graphic position of the passage, its tessitura, the fact that it seems to be musically coherent with the entry of the other voices²⁸ and, not least, the internal structure of the manuscript, we are led to exclude any possibility of its being an independent composition. It is quite probable that it was the *incipit* of a *contra* that subsequently miscarried for unknown reasons. However, it cannot be thought that the scribe was copying from another source, since in such a case he would not have planned to distribute the existing voices one per page.

5 / fols. 4v-6r: *Gloria* 'II' (C, T, Ct)

The subsequent three-voice *Gloria*, in ternary time and in D mode [Plates 10-13], is a far-reaching composition and is certainly the most conspicuous work of those handed down to us by **RdB**. Conceived in a rigorous isorhythmic style, it is wholly constructed on a *tenor* with long values, thanks also to a practical notational device (the presence of the sign ϕ , here utilised to coordinate the entry of the other voices),²⁹ and is continually repeated: three times to cover the whole of the text and again 1/3 for the *Amen*. This marked cyclical nature of the musical period is clear proof of its being a *cantus firmus*, derived perhaps from some

²⁷ See REINHARD STROHM, *The rise of European music, 1380-1500*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 167-168.

²⁸ See critical notes.

²⁹ On the interpretation of ϕ in the piece in question, see the comments made above, on pp.

plainsong which, however, has so far been impossible to identify. Besides the descending minor third melodic interval D-B in the second *tempus*, decidedly unusual for ‘classical’ Gregorian chant, a thematic comparison of the repertory has revealed interesting coincidences with the *incipit* of three pieces, the most similar of which – at least in the early measures – is the responsory *Reges Tharsis et insulae*, for the first Nocturn «in tempore Nativitatis»:³⁰ Considering that the text of the *Gloria* takes its idea from the Gospel episode of the birth of Christ (Lk 2,14), such a liturgical destination would thus not only fit the ‘spirit’ of the doxology, but also the symbolic structure of this gathering, which – as we have seen – begins with the *Verbum caro factum est*. Several substantial differences still have to be clarified however, since they are difficult to reconcile with the typical *ductus* of Gregorian melody, based largely on progression by conjunct degrees. An example of this is an octave leap in the concluding part, which could naturally also be evidence of a non-‘structural’ *cantus firmus*, the result of a suitable elaboration. For similar reasons, we cannot even exclude some kind of secular origin, or some connexion with a local liturgical repertory.³¹

The structure of the *Gloria* is defined, besides by the *tenor*, by the contribution of a low-pitched *cantus* – with its C₂ clef in the first section and C₃ in the second – formed by regular *talea*-patterns, with rhythmic pauses for each verse, each of which concludes on ever-changing degrees (but always with the same figuration, which is that of the ‘Landini-cadence’), lending the piece considerable ‘dramatic’ effectiveness. Such periods, mainly consisting of rapid successions of *minimae*, all comprise roughly the same number of notes: where the text of the verse is longer, the syllabic style prevails, and where it is shorter, the author inserts melismas. Vocal distribution is completed by a *contra* equal in range to the *tenor*, but written with short values. This is clearly a freely invented part, more animated starting from the verse «Domine Deus rex celestis» and more especially characterised by the frequent presence of repeated notes, which – although not texted – exclude any possibility of instrumental destination in favour of straightforward declamation. Finally, the overall result, which is one of considerable dexterity, is given its ideal expressive seal by the studied thematic repetition of the *Amen*, all three voices taking up the musical material of the *incipit* before the cadences of a sudden *coloratura*.

6 / fols. 6v-7r: Kyrie ‘III’ (C, T, Ct)

³⁰ See JOHN R. BRYDEN – DAVID G. HUGHES, *An Index of Gregorian Chant*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1969, vol. II (Thematic Index), p. 53. The other two responsories with the same melodic opening are *Cornelius centurio vir religiosus* (*Processionale Monasticum*, 125) and *Deletis cunctis substantiis* (*Worcester Antiphony*, 77).

³¹ But research into three contemporary Marsican sources (two *Graduale*-s kept at the Museo Civico of Cerchio and the antiphonary at the Biblioteca Diocesana “Muzio Febonio” of Avezzano, coming from the church of Ss. Cesidio e Rufino at Trasacco) has not produced any noteworthy results.

Like the lengthy *Gloria* that precedes it, the compositional technique of this remarkable *Kyrie* for three voices [Plates 14-15] is also based on isorhythmic procedures. Indeed, the piece seems to be distinguished by a certain modularity in the construction of its periods: this can be noted particularly in the *cantus*, which, with elegant and ornate notation, freely arranges the melody of the Gregorian *Kyrie* ‘*Cunctipotens genitor Deus*’, belonging to the *Missa IV* ‘*in Festis Apostolorum*’ from the *Liber usualis* (the same used for the *Guardiagrele Credo*). Considering the thoroughly enjoyable treatment, several possible ‘noble’ models come to mind: in the first place the English model, since the habit of borrowing and elaborating plainchant materials in the upper voice was typical of the island’s musical tradition in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.³² But, going back still further in time to seek historical references, a rather surprising ‘skin-deep’ similarity is found – right in the initial measures of the first section – with the *triplum* of the *Kyrie* of the *Messe de nostre Dame* by Machaut.³³

INSERIRE ES. 2

This suggestive kinship is based, obviously, on very different premises, inasmuch as the Machaut compositions is the outcome of a melodic ‘expansion’ with its roots in a *cantus firmus* placed in the *tenor*, whilst in **RdB** it seems to be the direct result of a plainchant paraphrase. In our case, moreover, the *tenor* not only does not reproduce a Gregorian theme, but it does not even possess that rhythmic uniformity needed to highlight its subdivision into more or less regular patterns. However, such palpable affinity gives rise to justified curiosity about the cultural models of the anonymous master of Rocca di Botte, suggesting that the relationship between the two pieces may not be a casual one.

As far as the writing is concerned, although – strangely enough, in view of the copyist’s wont – this time the *mensura* is not stated, the *Kyrie* is in *tempus perfectum* owing to the presence of *puncti divisionis* and *ligaturae in color*: the ternary time, fairly suitable for the solemnity of the setting, also utilises interesting rhythmic contrasts among the voices,

³² This phenomenon is described, with several examples, in STROHM, *The Rise of European Music, 1380-1500* cit., pp. 211-222.

³³ The passage is taken from the edition published in DANIEL LEECH-WILKINSON, *Machaut’s Mass: An Introduction*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990.

enhanced by the animated play of the syncopes.

7 / fol. 7v: *Gloria* 'III' (C, T, [Ct])

The gathering's last page presents another *Gloria* [Plate 16], only part of which has unfortunately come down to us. Graphically modelled on the layout of the pieces for three voices encountered above, the fragment contains the first section of the *cantus* (from «Et in terra pax» to «Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius Patris») and part of the *tenor* layout (interrupted at «Domine Deus, rex celestis»): in both cases the passages set to music and text concern only the even verses of the doxology, meaning that their intonation was supplemented – according to the *alternatim* practice – by plainchant. In the case in question, the *Gloria XI* of the *Liber usualis* was used, in which the *cantus* duly repeats the melody; furthermore, in the same staves, after the part destined for polyphony, there is a short passage in square notation, probably utilised in the same way as a *custos* (that is, in order to facilitate the page turn), which corresponds to the beginning of the next verse, on the words «Qui tollis» of the said Gregorian piece.

Now special attention should be given to the fact that all the compositional features indicated here – i.e. the *cantus firmus* for the upper voice, the use of the melody of the *Gloria XI* and the alternating polyphony and plainchant – are also to be found in one of the earlier pages of Du Fay, the *Gloria* 'in dominicis diebus', handed down to us by **Tr92**,³⁴ which may date back to when the author was in service in Rome at the papal chapel (1428-1433).³⁵ The analogies do not stop there, however: both works, in fact, provide the same vocal distribution (*cantus* and *tenor*, with identical clefs and ranges, and – undoubtedly – *contra*) as well as the same mensural setting, in *tempus perfectum cum prolatione minori*.³⁶ Here, too, we may wonder whether the stylistic relationship between the *Gloria* 'in dominicis diebus' and the anonymous Marsican *Gloria* might lead to the assumption that their respective composers were also acquainted, or at least frequented the same cultural circles.

DATING AND PROVENANCE

³⁴ Published in *Guillelmi Dufay opera omnia*, ed. by H. Besseler, Rome, American Institute of Musicology, 1962 («Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae», I/4), n. 25.

³⁵ According to Besseler, *Guillelmi Dufay opera omnia* cit., p. I, the *Gloria* 'in dominicis diebus' is among the works originated «during the period c. 1429-1440»; CHARLES E. HAMM, *A Chronology of the Works of Guillaume Dufay based on a Study of Mensural Practice*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1964, p. 76, on the other hand narrows the range, from a stylistic point of view, to the period 1433-1435.

³⁶ Starting from «Glorificamus te», the fragmentary Abruzzese *Gloria*, unlike Du Fay's, is written in *proportio dupla*.

What we have remarked so far would presuppose that the Rocca di Botte fragment formed the first gathering of a lost *Kyriale*, and that the remaining leaves therefore contained other polyphonic settings of the *Ordinarium missae*, with the *Credo-s* concentrated in the final part of the manuscript. Notwithstanding the stylistic variety of the surviving material (cognate moreover owing to the very typology and destination of the single pieces, so that we cannot exclude the possibility of their being the outcome of the artistic stock-in-trade of a single, though rather eclectic, composer), the Rocca di Botte repertory is fairly uniform both from the point of view of compilation, and – above all – because it belongs to the same chronological moment, which can be reasonably dated as not later than the 'thirties or 'forties of the *Quattrocento*. Considering that, in view of some of the graphic practices and the particular ruling of the leaves, the manuscript didn't come certainly from the workshop of professional copyists, it also seems plausible that it might have been produced by an expert singer, probably for his own use. These facts, taken together with the notational features, would consequently lead to a dating of the drafting of **RdB** within the first half of the century, that is in the same 'generation' as **Ox**, **Ao₁** and **Tr92**;³⁷ the hand that drafted it must thus have belonged to an up-to-date singer, clearly familiar with the new writing techniques as a result of having probably been in contact with a lively international circle.

At this point, owing to the apparent disproportion between the quality of the music and the singular location of the manuscript, investigation of its context will be needed in the hope of finding some point where creation and fruition coincide. It is with regard to its geographical provenance that my attention was drawn to an archival source, which not only confirms that the codex has been at Rocca di Botte for at least four centuries, but appears to refer to its effective use in the liturgy of the local parish church. It is a report on the pastoral visit to the village carried out on 24 November 1639 by the Bishop of Marsi, Lorenzo Massimi. Indeed, in the inventory drafted for the occasion by the Abbot Emilio Tartaglia, assisted by the Canons Massimo and Domenico Antonio, there also appear,

- Libri tre Antifonarij per messe e vespri di Canto fermo
- Libri tre di Canto figurato per Cantar le messe
- Dui mute di libri per li Vespri.³⁸

³⁷ For the dating of these codices, see respectively *Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Canon. Misc. 213*, ed. by D. Fallows, Chicago – London, University of Chicago Press, 1995 («Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Music in Facsimile», I), pp. 2-4; MARIAN COBIN, *The Compilation of the Aosta Manuscript: a Working Hypothesis*, in *Papers Read at the Dufay Quincentenary Conference, Brooklyn College, December 6-7, 1974*, ed. by A. W. Atlas, Brooklyn, NY, Dept. of Music, School of Performing Arts, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, 1976, pp. 76-101; PETER WRIGHT, *The Compilation of Trent 87₁ and 92₂*, «Early Music History», II, 1982, pp. 237-271.

³⁸ *Inventario delle robbe mobili e stabili della Chiesa Parochiale di S. Pietro Apostolo*. Avezzano, Archivio della Diocesi dei Marsi, ms. B/2/5, fol. 177r.

Taking into account the ownership note of the same period in the lower margin of the first page, it is highly probable that this particular manuscript was just one of the three books, above cited, of 'polyphonic music for mass' («Canto figurato per Cantar le messe»). The dispersion of the various gatherings must thus have taken place later on. In this connexion, the dismemberment must clearly have started long before 26 March 1903, *terminus post quem* for the drafting of the other inventory discovered, which includes only «Tre antifonarii, dei quali due piccoli in pergamena antichi e molto pregevoli, in uno mancano de' fogli».³⁹ Considering that the term 'antiphonary' is clearly used here in a general sense as 'book of liturgical music', it follows indoubtedly that our manuscript is the very one in which 'sheets are missing'.⁴⁰

Among the various reasons for the missing leaves we cannot exclude the possibility that, being of excellent and expensive parchment, the sheets may have been appropriately 'recycled', for example as endpapers or covers for notarial registers, as happened in the case of the Lucca Codex.⁴¹ However that may be, research in the State Archive of L'Aquila, among the collections of notaries active at Rocca di Botte after 1639, has produced no interesting results. The sheets may even have been adopted as packing or reinforcement for the mechanical parts of the beautiful organ built by Cesare Catarinozzi at the end of the seventeenth century:⁴² a possibility that will be verified shortly with the imminent restoration of the instrument.

As regards the description given in the earlier inventory, the stated destination of the codex «per Cantar le messe» will have to be verified to ascertain whether it was effectively used locally or not, and if it was, whether it referred to a moment of particular splendour in the history of such a small village or may even be connected with some 'autochthonous' musical traditions. Leaving the main question aside for the moment, as far as the first question is concerned, from the mid-*Quattrocento* onwards there are no episodes of historical or political importance that could justify some court or chapel passing through Rocca di Botte, so that question remains open. With regard to the second aspect, on the contrary, we have some extremely interesting evidence that comes down to us from the Abbot Muzio Febonio (1597-1663), poet and historian, originally from Avezzano, and nephew of the famous Philippine cardinal, Cesare Baronio. In fact, in his *Historia Marsorum*, completed in January

³⁹ «Three antiphonaries, of which two ancient small ones of parchment and of great value, in one some sheets are missing». *Inventario giusta la circolare del 26 marzo 1903*. Avezzano, Archivio della Diocesi dei Marsi, ms. P, Rocca di Botte, 5/24, fol. 10r («Ordinamento di Archivio e libri parrocchiali»). The numbering of the leaves may have been done on this very occasion.

⁴⁰ On the contrary, at present we have no news about the other cited two 'antiphonaries'.

⁴¹ See *The Lucca Codex*, ed. by J. Nádas and A. Ziino, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1990 («Ars Nova», I), pp. 15-17.

⁴² This attribution is made by FRANCA MAZZALI, *Gli organi antichi nel territorio di Avezzano e zone contermini*, tesi di laurea, Università degli Studi dell'Aquila, a.a. 1972-'73, pp. 142-149.

1661 and published posthumously at Naples in 1678,⁴³ he alludes to specific musical practices that are wholly compatible with the repertory of which we are speaking. This is what he writes on the subject of Rocca di Botte:

[...] montium vicinitas amaena pecoribus pabula praebens, Incolas ad pastorale ministerium invitat, unde suarum Ovium ductores efficiuntur, quae non solum baculo, sed & dulci fistulae sono ad pascua, ovile reducunt; ut in his montibus fabulosum Arcadiae statum ad vivum exprimi videatur; non quidem rudi, & pastorali modo, sed numerali modulatione edocti harmonicas musicis modulis vocum proportionata dispositione explicant cantilenas, & ex puriori Caeli aura dulcivoci effecti incitantur ad cantum. Unde relictis ovibus Regum, Principumque invitantur ad Aulas, chorosque Romanos in ipsa Pontificali Cappella implent.⁴⁴

At first glance, the statement of this suggestive practice and the artistic and professional recognition thereby gained by the inhabitants would seem to point, in particular, to a composer now known to have been born at Rocca di Botte: Bonifacio Graziani (1604/5–1664), a worthy polyphonist and authoritative representative of the Roman School, long deemed a native of Marino like his more famous colleague and friend Giacomo Carissimi.⁴⁵ In actual fact, the true origins of Graziani had already been ascertained, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the erudite Jesuit Domenico Antonio Pierantoni (1646-1727) in his monumental tome – still in manuscript form – of *Memorie del Lazio*.⁴⁶

⁴³ MUZIO FEBONIO, *Historiae Marsorum libri tres, una cum eorundem episcoporum catalogo*, Neapoli, apud Michaellem Monachum, 1678. As to the date of the work's composition, see the Introduction by GIULIO BUTTICCI to the facsimile edition by G. Butticci and U. M. Palanza, with facing Italian translation by Pietro Smarrelli, Roma, De Cristofaro Editore, 1991, vol. I, p. 13.

⁴⁴ «The nearby mountains, with their lush pastures, encourage the inhabitants to raise sheep. They lead their flocks to pasture, not only with the shepherd's staff, but also to the sweet sound of the bagpipes, and then they take them back to the fold. Thus, the fabled life of Arcadia seems to have revived in these hills. However, they do not sing in the usual uncouth manner of shepherds, but, educated to the polyphonic practice, strike up tuneful choruses, with harmonic modulations and voices well tuned according to the rules of music. The purity of the air seems to make them fit for sweet singing, so that, leaving their flocks, they are invited to sing at the courts of kings and princes and, in Rome, in the very choir of the papal chapel» (FEBONIO, *Historiae Marsorum libri tres* cit., Liber tertius, p. 209).

⁴⁵ In a summary bibliography on Bonifacio Graziani, we should mention studies by LINO BIANCHI, *Giacomo Carissimi: nuovi documenti nell'archivio del Collegio Germanico Ungarico di Roma*, «Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana», VIII/1, 1974, pp. 107-124; HOWARD E. SMITHER, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era*, 2 vols., Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1977; SUSANNE SHIGIHARA, *Bonifazio Graziani (1604/05-1664): Biographie, Werkverzeichnis und Untersuchungen zu den Solomotetten*, Bonn, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1984; GIORGIO MORELLI, *Saggio di lettere di musicisti, dalle raccolte di autografi della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, «Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana», XXXI/1-4, 1997, pp. 367-485; GIANLUCA TARQUINIO, *Appunti per una storia della Marsica*, «Quaderni del Museo Civico di Cerchio», I/9, 1998, pp. 3-14 (first treatise of a musicological nature to state that Graziani was born at Rocca di Botte); STEPHEN MILLER, *Gratiani, Bonifatius*, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. by S. Sadie, London, Macmillan, 2001, s.v.; G. TARQUINIO, *Bonifacio Graziani, un musicista marsicano a Roma*, in *La Terra dei Marsi. Cristianesimo, cultura, istituzioni*, Atti del Convegno (Avezzano, 24-26 September 1998), a cura di G. Luongo, Roma, Viella, 2002, pp. 489-498; ID., *Bonifacio Graziani*, «Hortus Musicus», III/9, 2002, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁶ Trevi nel Lazio, Archivio Comunale, vol. XXI (ms. without shelfmark), pp. 43-44. See DANTE ZINANNI, *Da Rocca di Botte a Trevi. Pietro Eremita, l'uomo della speranza*, Roma, Edizioni Terra Nostra, 1988, p. 52. Pierantoni's evidence – true because it was recorded from the living words of

This evidence, however, up to now rather overlooked by scholars, could not have been utilised by Febonio since, at the time when it was drafted, the author of the *Historia Marsorum* had already been dead for several years. For similar reasons, it cannot be maintained that Rocca di Botte had any direct memory of the musician's presence, since Graziani moved to Marino with his family at the age of five.⁴⁷ Moreover, referring to the inhabitants of the village as being employed «in ipsa Pontificali Cappella», the passage in question cannot correspond to the *identikit* of Bonifacio Graziani, who, as we know, rendered his services – as *maestro di cappella* – only at the church of the Gesù and the Seminario Romano. Febonio's allusion must therefore be sought elsewhere, particularly in the past, since Rocca di Botte inhabitants' skill at 'polyphonic practice' («numerali modulatione»), so much appreciated by cultured Roman society, does not appear to reflect 'current' local usage. Explicit confirmation of this is found in the *Historia Marsorum*, in the passage immediately following, relating to the church of St. Peter the Apostle:

Unam Parochialem Apostolorum Principi dicatam habet, cui Abbas cum duobus Canonicis praeest, redditibus opulentam, quam Pastores relicto baculo, & pera, diebus solemnibus dulcisono Organi plausu, unisona vocum numerositate cantibus exornant; et sic rustica simplicitas urbanam vincit industriam.⁴⁸

Here, as we may observe, the author uses the expression «univoca vocum numerositate» (with many voices in unison) in clear contradiction to the 'harmonic modulations' («harmonicis musicis modulis vocum proportionata dispositione explicant cantilenas») previously described. To underscore his meaning, he actually exalts the 'rustic simplicity' («rustica simplicitas») of the local performances over the 'artifice of the city' («urbana industria»), clearly referring to the refined music chapels to which the inhabitants of Rocca di Botte were called to sing. From this, we may deduce that the singular skill of the *roccatani* people in artistic polyphony, resulting in frequent invitations «ad Aulas, chorosque Romanos» and even «in ipsa Pontificali Cappella», at the time when Febonio was writing, already belonged to traditions fossilised by anecdotal collections, and must therefore certainly be backdated. We still have to examine, however, to what extent the inhabitants of this small village may have contributed to the activity – and perhaps even to the fortune – of the choirs to which they belonged.

Graziani himself, whom he met several times during his years of training at the Seminario Romano – was subsequently drawn on by PIETRO ANTONIO CORSIGNANI, *De Viris Illustribus Marsorum, liber singularis*, Romae, De Rubeis, 1712, p. 214, but was not reproduced in the later literature.

⁴⁷ See DOMENICO ANTONIO PIERANTONI, *Memorie del Lazio*, vol. XXI, *ibidem*.

⁴⁸ «The village has a single parish church, dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, and managed by an abbot, assisted by two canons, with rich incomes. On feastdays, the shepherds, abandoning their staff and knapsack, accompanied by the sweet sound of the organ, adorn it by singing with many voices in

THE MUSICAL BACKGROUND

Although certainly singular as a phenomenon – evidence of a custom so widespread among the population as to deserve specific historiographic mention –, the case of Rocca di Botte fits perfectly with the events of late-medieval Abruzzo, supporting a picture, nowadays widely accepted by scholars, of an area no longer on the margins of musical developments, but to be considered as an absolute hotbed of singers. Although, for the time being, we still ignore the ‘cultural’ bases of a practice that, lacking politico-institutional realities like the great *maîtrises* of north-European cathedrals, clearly founded its own guidelines on a widespread monastic presence (especially Benedictine and Celestine),⁴⁹ the fact is based on the variety of names discovered in archival attributions and research, thus helping to explain – at least partially – the presence in the region of the sources of polyphonic music mentioned above.⁵⁰

First, let us take the papal chapel, which – as shown by John Nádas and Giuliano Di Bacco’s recent studies⁵¹ – was, even as early as the end of the fourteenth century, well supplied with Abruzzesi singers. Here we have the example of Antonius *dictus* Zacara from Teramo (c. 1365-1416), *magister capelle* under the antipope John XXIII and now one of the acknowledged protagonists of the international musical scenario in the period of the Great Schism,⁵² who represents merely the tip of an iceberg. It is not mere chance that, in those very

unison. Thus, rustic simplicity overcomes the artifice of the city» (FEBONIO, *Historiae Marsorum libri tres* cit., *ibidem*).

⁴⁹ On Benedictine culture in Abruzzo – connected with autochthonous monastic settlements such as S. Clemente a Casauria, Bominaco, S. Giovanni in Venere, or to the expansion in that area by neighbouring major realities such as Montecassino and Farfa – see, by way of example, LAURENT FELLER, *Les Abruzzes médiévales. Territoire, économie et société en Italie Centrale du IX^e au XII^e siècle*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1998; MAURIZIO D’ANTONIO, *Abbazie benedettine in Abruzzo*, Pescara, Carsa, 2003. Even greater surprises may emerge from research into the musical effects of the Celestine presence in Abruzzo, seeing that the region houses the abbey of S. Spirito del Morrone (near Sulmona), the mother-house of the order, and, at L’Aquila, the basilica of S. Maria di Collemaggio, where, on 29 August 1294, its founder – the hermit Pietro Angeleri – was crowned pope with the name of Celestine V and where his remains also lie. Interesting evidence on Celestine music culture emerge in the paper by CARLA VIVARELLI *Ars cantus mensurabilis mensurata per modos iuris: un trattato napoletano di ars subtilior?*, in «*Dolci e nuove note*», Atti del V Convegno internazionale del Centro Studi sull’Ars nova italiana del Trecento (Certaldo, 17-18 December 2005), a cura di A. Ziino e F. Zimei, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2007 (currently under press).

⁵⁰ For a detail, see above, footnotes from 3 to 7.

⁵¹ See GIULIANO DI BACCO – JOHN NÁDAS, *Zacara e i suoi colleghi italiani nella cappella papale*, in *Antonio Zacara da Teramo e il suo tempo*, a cura di F. Zimei, Lucca, Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2005 («Documenti di Storia Musicale Abruzzese», II), pp. 33-54.

⁵² Sundry important studies have been devoted to the «Chantor Domini nostri Pape» portrayed in the Squarcialupi Codex and to his extensive sacred and secular production, which – including attributions contained in the sources and those proposed by critics – currently number more than thirty

years, we find, beside his own, names such as Nicolaus Ricii from Nocella di Campi (*fl.* 1401-1436)⁵³ and those natives of L'Aquila Antonius (*fl.* 1400-1413) and Jacobus Johannis (*fl.* 1400-1437):⁵⁴ their common origin, exalted by their joint employment in sophisticated pontifical ceremonies, seems to sound almost like a 'quality guarantee', even if their respective artistic contributions still have to be investigated. The same can be said for Antonius Nanni Marsicani, whose patronymic bears witness to his origin in the same particular geographical area that includes Rocca di Botte, although his career with the Roman curia seems to stop in 1401:⁵⁵ too early to suggest any kind of connexion with our manuscript.

Among the Abruzzesi singers working in the principal Italian *cappelle* of the *Quattrocento* also deserves a mention the *presbiter* Paulus de Aquila, whose presence is documented at the Florentine cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in 1407;⁵⁶ as well as Gianni Bacco «da l'Aquila, furone», the mysterious and blinking protagonist of a ballata by Andrea dei Servi that has come down in the Squarcialupi Codex;⁵⁷ the famous Johannes de Quadris (c. 1400-1456), «musicus et cantor diu in ecclesia Santi Marci de Veneciis» – author, among other works, of a successful collection of *Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetiae* for two voices, still used in the Venetian Holy Week rites up to the onset of the *Seicento*⁵⁸ –, whose Abruzzesi origins can now be definitively declared;⁵⁹ the theoretician Jacobus Theatinus, also active as a

compositions. For an ample and updated overview, see Antonio Zacara da Teramo e il suo tempo cit., and related bibliography.

⁵³ Under the the nickname «Nucella», only one piece has come down to us, the ballata for three voices *De bon parole*, found in the ms. Strasbourg, Bibliothèque municipale, M 222 C 22. A varied documentation on his musical and ecclesiastical career is set out in DI BACCO – NÁDAS, *Zacara e i suoi colleghi italiani nella cappella papale* cit., pp. 49-54.

⁵⁴ Cf. DI BACCO – NÁDAS, *Zacara e i suoi colleghi italiani nella cappella papale* cit., in particular the enclosed table *Le cappelle italiane durante il Grande Scisma (1370-1417)*. About Jacobus Johannis de Aquila we also know that he was a canon of St. Peter's Basilica and *auditor* for apostolic proceedings. See ANTON LUDOVICO ANTINORI, *Annali degli Abruzzi* (ms. sec. XVIII). L'Aquila, Biblioteca Provinciale "Salvatore Tommasi, Fondo Antinori, vol. XIV/1, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Cf. DI BACCO – NÁDAS, *Zacara e i suoi colleghi italiani nella cappella papale* cit., *ibidem*.

⁵⁶ See FRANK A. D'ACCONE, *Music and Musicians at Santa Maria del Fiore in the Early Quattrocento*, in *Scritti in onore di Luigi Ronga*, Milano – Napoli, Ricciardi, 1973, pp. 99-126: 117.

⁵⁷ Unless we are dealing with – in view of the surprising homonymy, doubtful only owing to the different provenance – «Johannes Baçus Correçarius de Bononia», author of the ballata *Se questa dea de virtù e d'onestate*, handed down by the Reina Codex and in the fragment 1475 at the Biblioteca Universitaria of Padova. The text of *Fuggite Gianni Bacco* has been published, among others, by GIUSEPPE CORSI, *Poesie musicali del Trecento*, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1970, p. 298 and, together with the two-voice setting, in *Italian Secular Music*, ed. by W. T. Marrocco, Monaco, Editions de L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1977 («Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century», X), p. 23.

⁵⁸ His entire known production is published in *Johannes de Quadris opera*, curante G. Cattin, Bologna, A.M.I.S., 1972.

⁵⁹ Among the documents published by LAURENZ LÜTEKEN, «*Musicus et cantor diu in ecclesia Sancti Marci de Veneciis*». *Note biografiche su Johannes de Quadris*, «Rassegna Veneta di Studi Musicali», V-VI, 1989-1990, pp. 43-62, is a petition to Pope Nicholas IV dated 2 July 1454 in which the musician is named «presbiter valvensis», i.e. coming from the diocese of Valva, which includes Sulmona and the entire Conca Peligna, in the present-day province of L'Aquila; besides this, however, Lütteken justly observes that the singularity of this denomination – coinciding with no specific location – makes it impossible to make any further statement about his place of origin. A somewhat 'tautological' solution, but decidedly plausible, leads us to consider the village of Quadri, located in the province of Chieti, in

singer in the Veneto region in the second half of the century, by whom we have an interesting *Summa in arte musica*;⁶⁰ the two composers from Ortona Aedvardus and «Fr. M.», probably under the influence of the Neapolitan-Aragonese court, as seems proven by their conspicuous production attested in ms. 431 of the Biblioteca Comunale Augusta at Perugia;⁶¹ the priest Pietro d'Onia, also placeable in the Marsican area, whose relations with the chapel of King Ferrante are attested directly by the sources;⁶² the «maiestro di canto» Giovanni dall'Aquila, in service at the Cathedral of Orvieto, whose *Memoriali* show that he was hired on 9 March 1489 with a contract of four florins per year, so that he should «cantasse in coro e insengniasse a certe scolare de la ciesa».⁶³ And the list does not end here.

CONCLUSIONS

Unless we consider the characters mentioned in our brief *excursus* as merely occasional evidence of the artistic flowering of the great institutions they served, the manifest musical vocation of the late-medieval Abruzzo suggests – albeit indirectly – a plausible answer even to our main question: i.e. it is highly probable that the Rocca di Botte manuscript was actually produced for use in the local parish church of St Peter the Apostle. We are clearly unable to establish whether the repertory it contained reflected 'autochthonous' musical customs. We can certainly state however that this church, in the *Quattrocento* – and

the neighbouring Valle del Sangro. Although falling within the period of the jurisdiction of the Abbey of Montecassino, since the twelfth century the area of Quadri included in particular two churches – Santa Trinità and Santa Maria – which were subordinate to the said diocese of Valva. The statement «presbiter valvensis» could thus be meant as a *lectio difficilior*, identifying a priest ordained in one of these churches. Also in virtue of this, it is clear that 'de Quadris' does not designate a family name, but a toponym.

⁶⁰ Handed down by ms. Aldini 361 in the Biblioteca Universitaria di Pavia. On Jacobus Theatinus see BEATRICE PESCIERELLI in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* cit., s.v.

⁶¹ By the former, the codex preserves a complete *Ordinarium missae* and a *barzelletta*, both for 3 voices; to the latter – comparing various attributions, possessing the same initial – as many as sixteen pieces might on the other hand be ascribed, mainly of sacred genre. See ALLAN W. ATLAS, *On the Provenance of the Manuscript Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta, 431 (G20)*, «Musica Disciplina», XXXI, 1977, pp. 45-105: 62-65.

⁶² Cf. ANTINORI, *Annali degli Abruzzi* cit., vol. XVI/2, p. 540, who quotes a measure taken by the Luogotenente del Maestro Giustiziere, issued at Naples on 5 October 1480 and still preserved in the *Settecento* in the archive of the church of S. Maria in Valle Porclaneta at Rosciolo dei Marsi. From this, we learn that the «Proposto Pietro d'Onia Cantore della Regia Cappella» had been molested by the Count of Tagliacozzo, Roberto Orsini, who had deprived him of the estate of the provostship of S. Maria in Valle and more precisely a mill, forcing him to take action to obtain reinstatement. The name, moreover, is not included among the singers indicated by ALLAN W. ATLAS, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 87-97; there is however mention of a royal chaplain, Petrus de Pineda, who, between 1477 and 1479, collected several ecclesiastical benefices in the diocese of Teramo (p. 95).

⁶³ See BIANCAMARIA BRUMANA – GALLIANO CILIBERTI, *Orvieto: una cattedrale e la sua musica (1450-1610)*, Firenze, Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1990, pp. 26-27.

probably later on – was a seat of excellent polyphony, which found fertile ground in the specific vocal tradition of the area.⁶⁴

As far as its unknown compiler is concerned, more pertinent names and answers – along the lines of those already mentioned – may be found by methodical research into the administrative accounts of the major musical chapels active in Italy around mid-century, starting with the papal chapel itself. Indeed, considering that at that time the popes still remunerated their singers with ecclesiastical benefices,⁶⁵ the fact emphasised by Muzio Febonio that the parish church of the village was ‘managed by an abbot, assisted by two canons, with rich incomes’ («Unam Parochialem [...] cui Abbas cum duobus Canonicis praeest, redditibus opulentam»), leads us to think that **RdB** bears witness to the activity of a local experienced singer-composer, who had emigrated elsewhere – perhaps to Rome itself⁶⁶ – for professional reasons and then returned home to enjoy a canonry, introducing his own musical repertory.

⁶⁴ I have vainly sought for traces of the charming practice described by Febonio in the current popular *roccatano* repertory; one hopes that the question may soon arouse parallel attention by ethnomusicologists.

⁶⁵ On this subject see CHRISTOPHER A. REYNOLDS, *Papal Patronage and the Music of St. Peter's 1380-1513*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995; *Papal music and musicians in late Medieval and Renaissance Rome*, ed. by R. Sherr, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998.

⁶⁶ In this connexion, Alejandro Planchart has kindly advised me that his recent research on the pontifical payment lists in the first half of the *Quattrocento* has not unearthed any names of Abruzzese origin in the chapels of Martin V and Eugenius IV. Out of pure curiosity, however, we should lend our attention to the fact that in this latter pope's service were two persons from geographically neighbouring areas of western Marsica: Enrico Silvestri from Fondi and Lodovico Bernardi from Narni.