Sancto Tomascy de Aquino: A Medieval Confraternity in L'Aquila and its *Laudario*

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Summary: The confraternity of San Tommaso d'Aquino, founded in the church of the Dominicans in L'Aquila at the beginning of the fourteenth century thanks to the patronage of the wealthy merchant family Gaglioffi and to a number of important relationships, immediately became one of the most prestigious sodalities in the city. After a long ecclesiastical suspension in the middle of the century, the confraternity resumed its activities and returned to play a leading role in the city, especially in the musical sphere, giving rise up until the third quarter of fifteenth century to a wide production of *laude* and sacred dramas. Most of these have been preserved — without, however, their respective settings — in ms. Vitt. Em. 349 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Rome. This article explores the structure and content of this *laudario* in order to shed light on some of its most important music features.

When, in support of the inquisition against heretic flagellants, Pope Innocent VI (r. 1352–62) promoted in the Kingdom of Sicily a census of confraternities and their statutes,[1] the city of L'Aquila (at the time Aquila, in the Kingdom of Sicity *citra Pharum*, also known as the Kingdeom of Naples) had four active confraternal associations, all of which had been founded by groups of *disciplinati*. The four were identified on that occasion by the title of the churches where they respectively gathered: *Sancti Maximi* (i.e. the Cathedral), *Sancti Augustini*, *Sancti Sixti*, and *Sancti Dominici*.[2] At the end of the census, Paolo Rainaldi, bishop of L'Aquila (r. 1349–53, and again 1356–77) approved only the first three confraternities. According to the ruling issued on 25 November 1358, which survives in a sixteenth-century copy:

> members of the flagellant confraternities [located in the churches of] *Sancti Maximi, Sancti Augustini*, and *Sancti*

[1] The papal bull "De captione, persequtione et exterminatione eorundem fraticellorum, hereticorum et paterenorum," issued in Avignon on 13 August 1358, has been published by Cerasoli, "Innocenzo VI e Giovanna I," 299–302.

[2] On the medieval confraternities in L'Aquila see, in particular, ms. Antinori, Monumenti XLVII; ms. Mariani, *Notizie storiche* M; Bonanni, *Corografia delle opere pie*, and Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono.*

> *Sixti*, seemed like obedient children, exhibiting their statutes, decrees, indulgences, and privileges, which they deposited [at this chancellery] as specified below. Although it seems that the members of the confraternity *Sancti Dominici* deposited some chapters at first, this is not even confirmed by [our] Bishop. After that, very few of them came to swear on the articles of faith, therefore acting as defaulters. Therefore, we have judged them guilty of contumacy.[3]

This study deals with this non-approved confraternity in the church of San Domenico. Named after St. Thomas Aquinas, the sodality was supposedly founded by a certain fra' Simone in 1306, several years before Aquinas's canonization in 1323 and before the building of the current church of San Domenico.[4] Supported by the wealthy merchant Giacomo Gaglioffi in memory of his father Tommaso (fig. 1), the confraternity soon established itself in the eponymous chapel.[5] On 13 December 1338 the kingdom's general inquisitor Oddone da Collalto ratified its statutes and structured in thirty-seven paragraphs.[6] Among other things, the confraternal statutes prescribed that any applicants for membership had to be at least twenty years old and have no enmities, debts, or concubines; that each member had to "do the Discipline" (*farsi la Disciplina*) every Friday and Sunday, on solemnities, and on public holidays, say "Pax vobiscum" every time he entered the chapel, and, before sitting in the pews, recite some "prayers sung aloud in dialogue with the other confreres present [in the oratory]" ("orazioni vocate a voce alta in risposte da Confratelli presenti"), probably an allusion to *lauda* singing. They also state that members were forbidden from indulging in conversations "in shady places" ("in luoghi disonesti"), as well as from frequenting "bad companies, public games, public dancing and singing, and other vanities" ("cattivi compagni, di

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[3] "homines de Confraternitatibus [Disciplinatorum Ecclesiarum] Sancti Maximi, Sancti Augustini, et Sancti Sixti tanquam obedientiae filij comparuerunt producentes eorum capitula, ordinationes, indulgentias, et privilegia, et deposuerunt dicta eorum prout inferius annotantur, et licet homines confraternitatis Sancti Dominici in primo termino comparuissent, et aliqua capitula produxissent non tamen per Diocesanum et confirmata, in alijs vero terminis, et depositionibus super articulis fidei minime comparuerunt, sed per contumaciam assentarunt, et nos reputavimus ipsos fore meritos contumaces." Pescara, Biblioteca "Vittoria Colonna," Pansa ms. IX.1.12, fols. 182^{v}–186^{v}, esp. 182^{v}–183^{r}. This is a miscellany belonged to the Aquilan confraternity of San Leonardo, on which see Pansa, "Un manoscritto."

[4] More precisely, the construction works of the latter began in 1309.

[5] This can explain a timeline so consistently 'beforehand' and suggest that the founding of both space and institution were part of the same project.

[6] For a more extensive transcription see ms. Antinori, *Monumenta* XLIX, 15–17.

giuochi pubblici, di canti o danze, o altra vanità"), as prescribed by many Dominican confraternities of that period.[7]

The sentence of contumacy issued in 1358 (which, behind the sanction of a banal formal defect, could conceal the condemnation of a certain attitude of superiority towards the other institutions) led the brothers to a canonical suspension or, at least, to a phase of cautious quiescence. Despite the temporary setback, the confraternty resumed its regular activities in 1377 thanks to the new bishop, the Dominican Giovanni Zacchei (r. 1377–81).

The first documented event at the re-instated confraternity was, one year later, the construction of a choir stall with an organ ("un Coretto con Organo") in the chapel, paid with funds from a bequest by Giovanni di Giacomo Gaglioffi to his son Iacobuccio that had been pending since the testator's death around 1365.[8] The presence of an organ — clearly a small but stationary instrument recessed into the wooden structure — provides valuable clues for the musical practices of the members, who regularly used such an instrument to accompany their singing ""during the self-flagellation" ("ne le discipline"). This can give us an idea of the confraternity's equipment, considering, for instance, that in Florence the only *compagnia* to permanently pay an organist — that of Orsanmichele, which hired first Niccolò di Lapo Mazzuoli (1370–76), then his better-known son Giovanni (1378–1426) — owned, until 1376, a mere portable organ.[9]

From such a choir stall the *confratelli* of San Tommaso, wearing their robes "of white cotton, with scarlet spools,"[10] used to sing their vernacular *laude*, the core of a repertoire that extended to include a consistent number of sacred plays, among which *La decollation de San Iohanny Bactista* (The Beheading of St John the Baptist), on the same subject as the frescoes — now fragmentary — that decorate the chapel (fig. 2), a work attributed to Antonio d'Atri and datable to just before the stalls were mounted.[11] The name of the donor's eponymous saint allows us, therefore, to establish a precise connection between the inauguration of the cycle, which probably

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[7] Many examples of such regulations and restrictions can be read in Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, II. The latter quoted paragraph is very close to the spirit of some prescriptions of *Pungilingua*, the treatise by Domenico Cavalca (c. 1270–1342) that greatly influenced contemporary Dominican culture.

[8] Ms. Antinori, *Monumenta* XLVII, 620–621.

[9] See Wilson, *Music and Merchants*, 79–83, esp. n. 28, where the organ's typology is deduced from the invitation addressed that year by the confraternity's captains to *magister* Niccolò to move and play in a more appropriate place "when it was not appropriate to play in the chapel" ("cum non sit honestum sonari in tabernaculo").

[10] "di cottone bianco col rocchetto scarlatto"; Ms. Mariani, *Notizie storiche* M, fol. 3^{v}.

[11] See Pasqualetti, "Ascendenze emiliano-adriatiche," esp. 52–61.

took place on 29 August 1377, and the resumption of the confraternity's activities, perhaps celebrated with the very staging of that play.

In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the confraternity began to be known also under the name of San Sebastiano. The first evidence of this revised name is found in a deed of 26 February 1479 in which the confraternity agreed to assign to the Dominican fathers an annual payment of four *carlini* for the space purchased "for the reconstruction of the walls of the confraternity of Saints Thomas Aquinas and Sebastian Martyr."[12] Since the latter was the name of a church located it the convent's external buildings, this decision must be traced back to the violent earthquake that struck L'Aquila on the night of 27 November 1461, severely damaging the church of San Domenico.[13] Over the years the confraternity's new denomination supplanted the old one until it finally became the confraternity's official name, so much so that on 4 July 1522 the brothers aggregated with the Roman archconfraternity of San Sebastiano. To this effect, they undertook to henceforth bring, on the anniversary of his martyrdom, a pound of saffron to the saint's altar at the eponymous catacombs.[14]

The confraternity's devotional life has survived mostly in a manuscript *laudario* currently at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Rome.[15] It comprises ii+150 paper folios, measuring mm. 290x200, numbered in pencil in the late nineteenth century, probably when the codex was about to be provided with a new binding — the current one, in full rigid leather. Despite its structure in irregular gatherings, although without loss of intermediate leaves (I^{36}, II^{22}, III^{16}, $IV–VI^{24}$, VII^{4}), the codex appears to be a fair copy: it was penned in brown ink with a clear and accurate *semitextualis* by a main scribe active around the middle of the fifteenth century and two secondary scribes working in the following decades.

The contents (see Appendix), presented — without musical notation[16] — in an elegant one-column layout (writing space mm. 210x130), have been carefully planned by inserting first the respective headings, as proven *a contrario* by its rare inconsistencies: one of them is found just on fol. 1^{r}, where the book title "Libro della Confraternita de Sancto Tomascy de Aquino de plù cose como de sotto appareranno, cioè […]," it is not followed — as would expected — by the *tabula*, but directly by the *Passio*

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[12] "pro recostructione murorum Confraternitatis S. Thomasj de Aquino et S. Sebastiani Martyris"; Archivio di Stato dell'Aquila, Notarile ms. 17 (Giovanni Cascianelli), fol. 35^{v}.

[13] See Antonini, "San Domenico".

[14] See ms. Lodi, *Storia della Diocesi Aquilana*, 4:44.

[15] Ms. Vitt. Em. 349. A complete edition of the texts in this codex has recently been published, not without some flaws, in De Matteis, *Libro della Confraternita*.

[16] On the other hand, it is known that the rare confraternity collections accompanied by melody belonged to the *laudesi* companies. See Terruggia, "In quale momento," 435–438.

Dominj nostrj Yhesu Cristy (The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ) which should have begun on the next folio. Another inconsistency, even more visible, can be seen in the concluding pages of the *Devotione et festa de sancta Susanna* (Devotion and Celebration of Saint Susanna, fols. 75–87), left blank despite the presence of specific captions.[17]

The material value of the collection, which was already prepared for an illuminated frontispiece depicting an eagle, makes its vicissitudes, which began with the gradual disinterest of the confraternity that owned it, even more striking. At the end of the sixteenth century, in fact, the confraternity was no longer able to provide the musical service by its own means so it had to have recourse to the priests of the nearby parish church of San Pietro.[18] Then on 2 February 1703 L'Aquila was hit by another severe earthquake. In that occasion, even the oratory of San Sebastiano was destroyed,[19] forcing members to make considerable financial efforts to rebuild it. After 1846 the confraternity's spaces were used as a prison. During the confraternity's move to its new headquarters in the church of San Benedetto, the laudario ended up in private hands and underwent various changes of ownership. Around 1870 it belonged to Costantino Corvisieri, first president of the Società Romana di Storia Patria. It was then sold to the historian Carlo Morbio of Milan, at whose death (1881) it moved to an antiquarian bookshop of Munich and from there to a Leipzig auction house where, on 24 June 1889, it was purchased by the Italian government and deposited in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome.[20]

The declared anthological nature of the manuscript as a "book containing many things" ("Libro […] de plù cose") does not necessarily conflict with its character as an official compilation but rather helps us to understand its structure, perfectly divided between the proper laudario and a specific collection of plays reserved for the larger sacred dramas. The lauda section (fols. 1–74) is substantially based on the *circulus anni,* beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with the fourth Sunday of Lent. It begins with a series of nine texts (fols. 1–38), the first of which is the aforesaid *Passio Dominj nostrj Yhesu Cristy*, written in the archaic metre of quatrains of double quinari, and covers all of Holy Week up to Easter Sunday with a single functional interference, that of the lauda for the Annunciation

[17] For instance, fol 86^{r}, reserved for the last dialogue ("Dice Stansino"), in the seventeenth century was filled with a short *Tractatus dubiorum ac difficultatum circa officium misse,* while in in the lower corner ther is a memorandum for the copying of the final choir: "resta ad scrivere la laude: sta in fine dello librettuolo".

[18] See Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 14–15.

[19] See Antonini, "San Domenico".

[20] See De Bartholomaeis, *Il teatro abruzzese*, 342–343. Given the precarious conditions of the volume, extremely deteriorated in its margins, on that occasion it was completely restored by compensating the missing parts and replacing the fragmentary binding.

Con reverentia disse "Ave Maria" (With reverence he said "Ave Maria"), on which we will return later.

Folios 39–54 contain seven works to be sung on the feast days of two important 'additional' patron saints of the city: Pope Celestine V (19 May) and Bernardine of Siena (20 May). Celestine V was crowned pope on 29 August 1294 in the basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila and is also buried in it; on the day of his crowning Celestine linked the basilica with an annual plenary indulgence that paved the way for the Great Jubilee of Pope Boniface VIII (1300).[21] Bernardine died in L'Aquila on 20 May 1444 and is buried there in the basilica of San Bernardino. This group of laude also includes the play *La decollation de San Iohanny Bactista* which, according to the liturgical calendar, should have been performed on 29 August, but which now had a connection with Celestine V, whatever the period in question because in the bull of the *Perdono* of L'Aquila (*Inter sanctorum solemnia*), Celestine had linked the indulgence to the day and to John the Baptist by saying that whoever received the indulgence would return to the purity he or she had when baptized.

The set of ten laude on fols. 55ᵛ–57ᵛ is more problematic. Their rubrics, featuring the use of the preposition 'ad' rather than the more usual 'de', imply a specific reference to some Aquilan churches — intended as physical places — instead of two saints' feast days to which they are dedicated. Some light on this might be shed by the presence of two laude apparently in honour of St. Peter the Apostle, but actually referred to by the title of two different parishes: *Sancto Petro de Popplito*, built *intra moenia* by the inhabitants of Coppito, one of the villages — now a suburb — that took part in the foundation of the city; and *Sancto Petro de Saxa*, concerning the church, not far from the previous one, built by the inhabitants of Sassa. In addition, the entire sequence shows a precise topographic consistency that reveals the presence of a processional itinerary (fig. 3) that the preceding lauda — *Virtù divina di·llassù venisty* (Divine Virtue, You Came from Above), bearing the rubric *Laude del Corpo de Christo* (Lauda of the Corpus Christi, fol. 55) — allows us to assign to the feast of Corpus Christi:

LAUDE DEL CORPO DE CRISTO	LAUDA OF THE BODY OF CHRIST[22]
Virtù divina di·llassù venisty,	Divine Virtue, you came from up there,
c'amasti tanto l'umana natura:	Because you so loved human nature:
per trarela dalla pena aspera e dura	To redeem it from the harsh bitter pain
su nella croce morire volisty.	You chose to die upon the Cross.

[21] On the historical and theological importance of this indulgence see Frugoni, *Celestiniana*; Herde, *Cölestin V*; Pásztor, "Celestino V e Bonifacio VIII"; Cervelli, *Fonti di diritto.*

[22] The English translation the series is kindly provided by Konrad Eisenbichler.

Humanità na Vergene prendisty:
facto Dio et homo per nostra salute,
l'anime che erano perdute
dello tou sangue tu le redemisty.

O Yhesu Cristo, lassare volisty
ally cristianj el sancto Sacraminto
et lu tou corpo ad nostro salvaminto
per conmunione ally apostoly desty.

You took on flesh in the Virgin:
You were God and man for our salvation
The souls that were lost
You redeemed with your blood.

O Jesus Christ, you chose to leave
The holy Sacrament to Christians,
And your body for our salvation
You gave to the apostles as communion.

[I] LAUDE AD SANCTO AUGUSTINO LAUDA BEFORE SANT'AGOSTINO

Poy che credisti nella Trinitate,
o glorioso doctore Augustino,
fusti di fore dello infernal domìno:
ày alluminata la cristianitate.

Once you believed in thee Trinity,
O glorious doctor Augustine,
You were released from Hell's dominion:
You enlightened Christendom.

[II] LAUDE AD SANCTO MARCO LAUDA BEFORE SAN MARCO

San Marcho, pietuso vangelista,
da sancto Petro apostolo imparasty,
evangelista doctrina predicasty:
chi che la serva el paradiso acquista.

Saint Mark, pious Evangelist,
You learned from Saint Peter Apostle,
As an evangelist you preached the doctrine:
Those who adhere to it gain heaven.

[III] AD SAN FRANCISCO BEFORE SAN FRANCESCO [A PALAZZO]

Francischo confessore da Dio electo
tra li beati nella sancta gloria,
nello tou corpo ad eterna memoria
le stìmata mandò ch'erj perfecto.

Francis, confessor chosen by God
Amongst the blessed in holy glory,
On your body as an eternal reminder
Of your perfection, He sent the stigmata.

[IV] AD SANCTO PETRO DE POPPLITO BEFORE SAN PIETRO DI COPPITO

Ad sancto Petro Signore dicistj:
"Petrj te chiami e sopre questa preta,
perché la mente ày scì mansueta,
la Ecclesia in te porrò perché cridisty".

Lord, you said to Saint Peter:
"You are Peter and on this rock,
Since your mind is so peaceful,
I will build my Church, for you believed."

[V] AD SANCTO DOMINICHO BEFORE SAN DOMENICO

Sancto Tomasci de Aquino doctore,
lume de sancta Ecclesia et della fede,
cercha per tuct'i peccator mercede
ad Cristo ch'è lu nostro redemptore.

O Doctor, Saint Thomas Aquinas,
Light of holy Church and of the faith,
Seek pardon for all sinners
From Christ, who is our Redeemer.

[VI] AD SANCTO SEBASTIANO

O martire glorioso Sebastiano,
o cavaleru de Dio, che tucti satia,
per tuct'i fidely demanda la gratia
e non te scorde el populo aquilano.

BEFORE SAN SEBASTIANO

O glorious martyr Sebastian,
Knight of God, who satisfies all,
Ask for grace for all the faithful
And don't forget the people of L'Aquila.

[VII] AD SANCTO QUINÇANO

Sancto Quinzano cavalerj de Deo,
tu fusti per la fede tormentato.
El populo tou te sia ricomendato,
che Dio li scampe d'onne penser rio.

BEFORE SAN QUINZIANO [DI PILE]

Saint Quintian, knight of God,
You were tortured because of your faith.
May you look after your people
And God spare them from all evil thoughts.

[VIII] AD SANCTO PETRO DE SAXA

San Petro primo nella santa Sede,
Cristo del papatu te fe' digno:
donòte le chiavj dello sancto regno.
Per li toy servj cercha a Dio mercede.

BEFORE SAN PIETRO DI SASSA

Saint Peter, first in the holy See
Christ made you worthy to be pope:
He gave you the keys to his holy realm.
Beseech mercy from God for your servants.

[IX] AD SANCTO BLAXIO

O gloriosi martirj biatj,
san Blasio e 'l pretïoso Victorino:
o martiry iacete in Monte Armino,
sciate denantj a Dio nostry advocatj.

BEFORE SAN BIAGIO [D'AMITERNO]

O glorious and blessed martyrs,
Saint Blaise and precious Saint Victorinus:
O martyrs, you rest in the Armenian mount
Be our advocates before God.

[X] AD SANCTO MASSIMO

Rendamo gratie al martir glorïoso:
san Maximo dell'Aquila è patrone.
Denanti a·dDio per nuy faccia oratione
che·nne dea pace et eterno riposo.

BEFORE SAN MASSIMO

Let us give thanks to the glorious martyr:
Saint Maximus, patron of L'Aquila.
Pray for us in front of God
That he grant us peace and eternal rest.

Lu 'mperadore assay desiderosu
tuct'i cristiani scì persequitava.
Quagiù in Forcone ad Maximo mandava
unu offitiale: o quanto era furioso!

The emperor with great zeal
All Christians persecuted.
Here below at Forcona he sent an officer
To Maximus: how furious he was!

San Massimo, diacono gratioso,
dallo offitiale ractu fo chiamatu:
"Chi è quisto Cristo de chi ày predicatu?
Dici che sopre li altry è più famoso".

Saint Maximus, a gracious deacon,
Was swiftly called by the officer:
"Who is this Christ that you preach,
Saying He is far greater than all others?"

El martire beato virtuoso	The Blessed Martyr, of virtue full,
responde con parole honeste e scorte,	Replied with honest, careful words,
non curando recepere morte:	Not worried about risking death:
"Cristo è vero Dio sempre pietuso.	"Christ is true God, always merciful."
Cristo è quil Verbo che stette rechiuso	"Christ is that Word that was sent
nel corpo della Vergene mandatu	To be enclosed in the Virgin's womb
et di po' parto quil corpo beatu	And after giving birth that blessed body
vergene rimase pretioso".	Remained precious and virginal."
Quillo offitiale fo tanto innogiuso:	That officer was so injurious,
voleva che renunzasse il vero Dio.	He wanted him to renounce the true God.
san Maximo, perché non consentìo,	Because Saint Maximus did not consent,
fe'·llu gectare dalla rupe in giuso.	He had him thrown down from off a cliff.

Looking more closely at the structure of this rite, the singular brevity of the intermediate laude, all comprising a single quatrain of hendecasyllabic verses, clarifies their function as 'transitional' pieces, thus to be sung on the same music, probably taken from the setting of an older piece on this subject: the lauda for the feast of "Sancta Calista" (a local *Trecento* malapropism for Santa Eucaristia) *O Christo glorificato et convertuto in sangue* (O Christ, Glorified and Turned into Blood). The text in question is transmitted by another laudario from L'Aquila, ms. XIII D.59 of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples, that belonged to the confraternity of Santa Croce, then of San Leonardo.[23]

The outdoor activities of the confraternity of San Tommaso were not strictly limited to that procession, but also took place when its members went on a pilgrimage to other churches in the city — especially to Santa Maria di Collemaggio, on whose churchyard in the *Perdono* of August they sung the laude *O aquilanj assay obligati sete* and *El tempo fugge e no vi·nne accorgete* (O Aquilani, you are very indebted, and Time flies and you are not aware, fols. 60–61). Similar pieces were sung in preparation for minor indulgences on the first Sunday of certain months.

[23] See Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 62–70 and related bibliography. To this piece, composed in the fourteenth century like all the other pieces in the codex, is connected to an interesting story narrated by the chronicler Antonio di Buccio: in 1376 the General Chapter of the Franciscans was held in L'Aquila and on that occasion the organization of the Corpus Chisti procession — until then a prerogative of the Dominicans — was assigned to that order. Therefore it is possible that the reactivation in 1377 of the confraternity of San Tommaso d'Aquino also aimed to restore the previous *status quo*. See Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 49–50.

It is also likely that the confraternity's public activities were also performed for third parties. For instance, the presence of five laude in honour of the Franciscan St. Bernardine of Siena (1380–1444), most of which were intended for his canonization, leads us to believe that the confraternity, evidently renowned from a musical point of view, was involved in the punchy 'media' campaign promoted by John of Capestrano (1386–1456) to have his fellow friar and friend canonized.[24]

Their composition — datable with certainty between May 1446, when Giovanni returned to his native Abruzzi as vicar of the Observance Franciscan province, and 23 February 1447, the day of death of Pope Eugene IV, proposed in *O summa sapïentia o primo amore* (O highest intellect, o first love) and in *Eterno patre Dio e Verbo incarnato* (God, eternal Father and Word incarnate) (fols. 57^{v} and 58^{v} respectively) — also provides a reliable *terminus post quem* for the compilation of the main part of the codex, to be dated just in these years. Considering the rather regular structure of the collection, an interesting chronological clue is given by the position of the lauda for the Annunciation "Quando fo salutata la nostra Dopnna dallo Angelu" (When our Lady was saluted by the Angel, fol. 24^{v}), placed between the "Laude dell'ore canoniche dello offitio della Croce," for the vespers of Holy Saturday, and the *Devotione della festa de Pasqua* (an Easter play), as if to document the convergence between the two solemnities that took place in 1448, when Easter fell on 24 March. This dating finds a confirmation at the end of the series, where the "Laude ad sancto Benedicto" (Laude before St Benedict, fol. 72^{v}) is placed immediately before that for the "Domeneca terça de Passione" (Third Sunday of the Passion), precisely as happened in the spring of 1449, when these two recurrences were nearly consecutive (21 and 23 March respectively).

The manuscript's second section (fols. 75–150) contains only four extended theatrical texts: the incomplete *Devotione et festa de sancta Susanna* (The play of St Susan); *La disponsatione et festa della nostra Dopnna* (Our Lady's marriage play, fol. 88); *La devotione et festa de sancto Petro martire* (Devotion and celebration of Saint Peter Martyr, fol. 105), also lacking its ending; and the *Legenna de sancto Tomascio* (The legend of Saint Thomas, fol. 123), divided into three *giornate* and animated by as many as sixty characters. This is the tip of the iceberg of a repertoire deemed by Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis as "one of the best things produced in Italian popular theatre."[25] The last two works, in particular, must be attributed to the so far unknown Buccio di Pietruccio di Petracca da

[24] See Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 74–75. John of Capestrano was himself canonized in 1690.

[25] "tra le cose migliori prodotte dall'antico teatro popolare d'Italia." De Bartholomaeis, *Laude drammatiche*, 2:6.

Collebrincioni, abbot of the nearby church of San Silvestro as well as vicar of the Chapter of St. Peter in the Vatican, as evidenced by a passage in his will of 18 May 1470:

> In the same way, he left to the members of the confratrnity of Saint Thomas Aquinas all the plays he had composed, that is, those for St. Peter the Martyr, St. Sebastian, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Dominic, the Passion of Christ, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the Liberation from Limbo.[26]

Unfortunately, we do not know what happened to the remaining six plays. What is certain is that when the will was carried out, ms. Vitt. Em. 349 was already bound, but had enough blank pages at the end to accommodate the copying of two of the plays, probably the ones considered to be the most important ones. This can be clearly seen in the handwriting of the *Legenna de sancto Tomascio*, carried out with a smaller size and a progressive tendency towards the cursive.

Even in terms of musical performances, these plays have very interesting features, highlighted by specific captions. The first type evokes a way of polyphonic singing derived from the fourteenth-century *ars nova* tradition: "ad caccia." It occurs — almost as if it were a modern opera *concertato* — both in choral scenes, where two or more interlocutors were expected, as in a canon, to vocally chase each other on the same passage and in intensified dialogues, therefore capable of producing complex polytextual effects.[27] The second is the "ad coppla" formula, likely analogous to the *copula* described by Iohannes de Garlandia[28] and referring to the general phenomenon of 'simple polyphony' that for centuries has resurfaced in European vocal music.[29] Another musical indication, "ad octo," sometimes appears in the *Legenna de sancto Tomascio*, always in combination with a stanza scheme slightly different in metrical terms from the

[26] "Item reliquit confratribus Sancti Thome de Aquino omnes representaciones per eum factas, scilicet Sancti Petri martyris, Sancti Sebastianj, Sancti Thome de Aquino, Sancti Dominici, Passionis Christi, Nativitatis Virginis, Nativitatis Sancti Iohannis Baptiste et Spoliationis limbj." Archivio di Stato dell'Aquila, Notarile ms. 27 (Giovanni di Marino da Pizzoli), fol. 28.

[27] It is obviously questionable whether, in the same way as the *cacce* properly called, passages of this kind also implied the presence of an 'instrumental' tenor.

[28] *De musica mensurabili positio*, in Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi*, I, 97–117, esp. 116. "Copula duplex est, una que est medium inter organum purum et discantum; altera est que fit in abscisione sonorum, aut sumendo tempus post tempus, et tempora post tempora. Et iste modus sumitur flaiolis; et aliqui vocant hoquetum modum istum".

[29] On this subject there is by now an extensive literature, starting from the pioneering studies by Gallo, "Cantus planus binatim," and Vecchi, "Teoresi e prassi del canto a due voci".

ottava rima (a_{11} b_{11} a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} c_{11} c_{7} b_{11}), but probably intended to receive a modular setting such as the so-called *arie per cantar ottave*.[30] The last type is the "tornellu," often labelling couplets isolated and devoid of any rhymic relation with the surrounding verses: a strong clue of the implicit musical cyclicity that characterized these works, certifying their origin from the old *ballata* forms.

In this regard, the "Libro della Confraternita de Sancto Tomascy de Aquino" — whose laude are generally arranged in homogeneous quatrains with the rhyme ABBA — is also one of the first Italian laudari to experiment the structural transformation of the medieval *ballata* repertoire into the Renaissance *canzonetta*. This was usually done by preserving the original setting's *prima pars* — related to the *ripresa* — and adapting this pattern to the next lines, so as to reshape the old poem in a new one composing of shorter stanzas, all of the same length.[31] Not by chance, among the first to experiment with this formula, very congenial to the oral diffusion of the texts through the melody, were two champions of the Franciscan Observance who had much to do with L'Aquila: Bernardine of Siena and John of Capestrano.[32] The local reception of this practice in a cultural environment of Dominican influence provides an eloquent picture of how advanced and cohesive the city's devotional activity was in its heyday.

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[30] Given their recurrence in some meaningful moments of the representation, it cannot be excluded that these stanzas were all sung on the same music, as a sort of *leitmotiv*.

[31] The phenomenon is described in Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 143–151. Sometimes this procedure is directly mentioned in the rubrics of lauda texts to be sung on pre-existing music models, according to the so-called *cantasi come* practice.

[32] Zimei, *I "cantici" del Perdono*, 145–146, 151–153.

Appendix

Contents of ms. Vitt. Em. 349, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale

Folio	Rubric and incipit	Metre	Stanzas
1r	"Passio Dominj nostrj Yhesu Cristy amen" Eterno Dio che 'l celo firmasty	$a_5+_5\ a_5+_5\ a_5+_5\ a_5+_5$	136
14r	"Domeneca de Palma" Intrasti in Ierusalem o Salvatore	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	5
15r	"Lu lamintu della nostra Dopnna lu venardy sancto" O sconsulata mj con grande doglia	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}\ b_{11}\ c_{11}\ c_{11}\ ;x_{11}\ x_{11}$	41
22r	"Laude del venardj sancto" Piangamo colla vergene Maria	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	6
23r	"Laude del sabato sancto" O Creatore per tua pietate	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	5
23v	"Laude dell'ore canoniche dello offitio della Croce" Adoramote Signor summa bontate	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	10
24v	"Quando fo salutata la nostra Dopnna dallo Angelu" Con reverentia disse "Ave Maria"	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	10
26r	"La devotione della festa de Pasqua" Poj che nuj semo nel tempio congregati	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}\ b_{11}\ c_{11}\ c_{11}$	78
38r	"Laude della devotione de Pasqua" Laudemo sempre el Crïator superno	$a_{11}\ a_{11}\ b_{11}$	8
39r	"La decollation de san Iohanny Bactista" Ad tucti vuj essuto dechiaritu	(composite structure)	–
50r	"Laude de san Iohannj Bactista nella festa soa" O Crïatore sempre si laudatu	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	6
51r	"La canoniçatione del beato Bernardino" Ly confessurj Cristo ànno pregatu	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	5
51v	"Laude dello Eterno Dio" Misericordia eterno Crïatore	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	8
52v	"Laude per li peccaturj allo altissimo Dio" Pençanci o peccatore con contritione	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	6
53v	"Laude del beato Bernardino" Ad dignità mundan no de' audientia	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	6
54r	"Laude di san Petro Celestino" Ad ti recorremo sancto confessore	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	7
55r	"Laude del Corpo de Cristo" Virtù divina di·llassù venisty	$a_{11}\ b_{11}\ b_{11}\ a_{11}$	3

55v	"Laude ad Sancto Augustino" Poy che credisti nella Trinitate	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Laude ad Sancto Marco" San Marcho pietuso vangelista	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Ad San Francisco" Francischo confessore da Dio electo	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
56r	"Ad Sancto Petro de Popplito" Ad sancto Petro Signore dicistj	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Ad Sancto Dominicho" Sancto Thomasci de Aquino doctore	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Ad Sancto Sebastiano" O martire glorioso Sebastiano	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
56v	"Ad Sancto Quinçano" Sancto Quinzano cavalerj de Deo	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Ad Sancto Petro de Saxa" San Petro primo nella sancta Sede	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
–"–	"Ad Sancto Blaxio" O gloriosi martirj biatj	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
57r	"Ad Sancto Massimo" Rendamo gratie al martir glorïoso	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	6
57v	"Laude alla Annuntiata" O Vergene del celo sci regina	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	2
–"–	"Laude del beato Bernardino" O summa sapïentia o primo amore	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	9
58v	"Altre laude del beato Bernardino" Eterno patre Dio e Verbo incarnato	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	5
59r	"Laude dello Spirito Sancto" Oggi scì visitasti o Crïatore	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{1}	5
60r	"Laude ad Collemagio de san Pietro" O aquilanj assay obligati sete	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	5
61r	"Laude in Sancto Dominico" Dominico beato confessore	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	6
62r	"Laude ad Sancto Petro de Popplito" San Petro primo nella sancta Sede	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	8
63r	"Laude ad Sancto Petro de Sassa" Ad Sancto Petro Signore dicisti	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	6
63v	"Laude ad Collemagio la domeneca del mese" Glorioso Crïator che·tte dignasty	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	9
64v	"Laude ad Sancto Macteo" Evangelista apostolo Macteo	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	2

65r	"Laude in Sancto Dominico" Lli apostoly Signore adoctrinasti	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	5
65v	"Laude del beato Bernardino nantj alla nostra Dompnna" Ave Maria fonte de pietate	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	9
66v	"L'altre laude in Sancto Dominico" Con mente pura facciamo oratione	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	7
67r	"Laude in Sancto Dominico per la festa de Sancto Iacobo apostolo" Fratel de Cristo nella humanitate	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	9
68v	"Laude ad Sancta Iusta" Gloriosa Iusta per gran devotione	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	14
70r	"Laude in Collemagio la dome[ne]ca del mese. Alla nostra Dopnna" Piena d'umilità salve Regina	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	7
70v	"Laude ad Sancto Lorenzo" El papa Sisto mi fe' sou cancellerj	a_{11} b_{11} a_{11} b_{11} c_{11} c_{11}	2
71r	"Laude ad Sancto Stefano" Misericordia o divina bontate	a_{11} b_{11} a_{11} b_{11} c_{11} c_{11}	1
–"–	"Laude ad Sancto Blascio et ad Sancto Victorino" O martirj nel cel glorificatj	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	8
72r	"Laude ad Collemagio de sancto Petro Celestino" Ad tucte l'ore sci' regratïatu	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	7
72v	"Laude ad Sancto Benedicto" Glorioso confessor san Benedicto	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	1
73r	"La dome[ne]ca terça de Passione" O summa sapïentia o primo amore	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	6
73v	"Laude ad Sancto Macthia" Per spiration de Dio fusti chiamato	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	4
74r	"Dominica quarta de Passione" Cristo nel monte la turba satiòne	a_{11} b_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	7
75r	"La devotione et festa de sancta Susanna" Savj et prudenti fratelli honorati	(composite structure)	–
88r	"La disponsatione et festa della nostra Dopnna" Iohacchim signore mio e caro patre	(composite structure)	–
104r	"Laude della disponsatione della nostra Dopnna" Laudato si' Signor dell'alto rigno	a_{11} b_{11} a_{11}	4
105r	"La devotione et festa de sancto Petro martire" Petrj figliolo mio sci' benedicto	(composite structure)	–
123r	"Comenza la legenna de sancto Tomas[so]" O matre de Cristo o Vergene beata	(composite structure)	–

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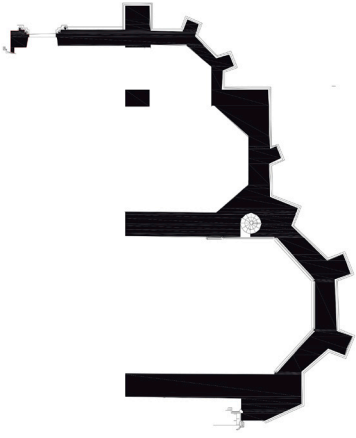
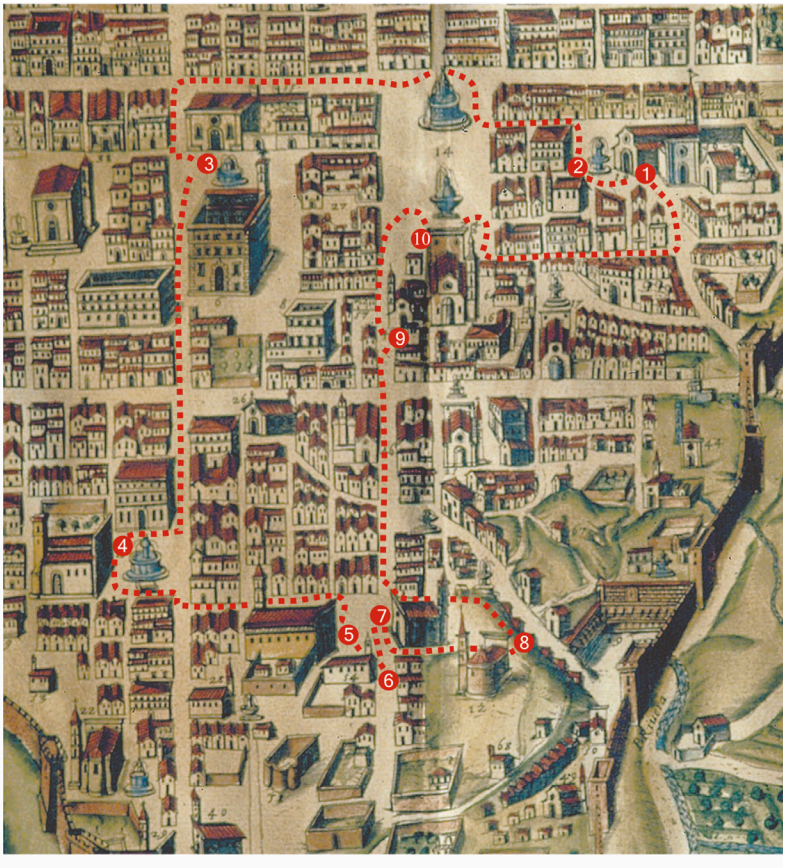


Fig. 1: Plan of the Chapel of San Tommaso d'Aquino in the left apse of the church of San Domenico (reconstruction).

Fig. 2: Antonio d'Atri, *Salomè's Dance* (1377). L'Aquila, church of San Domenico, Chapel of San Tommaso d'Aquino, detail of the fresco cycle with the Stories of St. John the Baptist.



1. Sant'Agostino
2. San Marco
3. San Francesco a Palazzo
4. San Pietro di Coppito
5. San Domenico
6. San Sebastiano
7. San Quinziano di Pile
8. San Pietro di Sassa
9. San Biagio d'Amiterno
10. Cathedral of San Massimo

Fig. 3: Itinerary of the Corpus Christi procession in L'Aquila, from the lauda series on fols. 55ᵛ–57ᵛ of ms. Vitt. Em. 349 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Rome, highlighted on a city map engraved by Giacomo Lauro (Rome, 1600).