

Miscellany of Poetry, including Sonnets by GIOVANNI ANDREA GILIO; FRANCESCO COPPETTA DEI BECCUTI; JACOPO SANNAZARO; LAURA BATTIFERRA DEGLI AMMANNATI

In Italian, manuscript on paper

Italy, Tuscany?, Latium ?, c. 1560-1570 (probably after 1564, closer to 1567-1570)

44 ff., of which ff. 34v-43v are blank, complete (collation: i16, i18, iii18), on paper, with four different watermarks of the type [1] Briquet, "Cerf," no. 3338: "filigrane emprunté à Likhatscheff (no. 4226) MS de 1567"; [2] Briquet, "Couronne sommée d'une étoile," no. 4834, Vérone, 1556-1575 (although not a perfect match); [3] Briquet, "Arbalète," no. 749, Lucques, 1548; [4] Briquet, "Étoile," no. 6097, Lucques, 1566-1567, Fabriano, 1572, Rome 1567; written in an Italian cursive, in brown to dark brown ink, by two hands (Hand A, ff. 1-2; 23-24v; Hand B, ff. 3-21v; Hand C, ff. 22; 25-34: Hand B and C could be the same hand with varying degrees of application and speed), varying number of lines per page (from 21 to 37), paper unruled, catchword at the foot of every leaf announcing the first word of the next verse on the verso or following leaf. Bound in a limp vellum cover, reused parchment from a liturgical manuscript from a 15th century [leaf from an Italian mid-15th c. missal, text in two columns, liturgical script in brown ink, rubrics in bright red, painted initials in red or blue, covers worn with some ink faded or erased] (General condition satisfactory, although acidity of ink has caused smudging to fol. 17, with a few holes; some tears to paper probably due to thumbing).
Dimensions 210 x 150 mm.

Miscellany of spiritual sonnets by several poets composed and copied during the Counter Reformation after the Council of Trent. There are 21 sonnets (which include one isolated sonnet by Laura Battiferra, an admirer of Petrarch) followed by the Italian translation of the Seven Penitential Psalms by Laura Battiferra, an important woman poet of the sixteenth century. The identity of the copyist of the present compilation is unknown, but should surely be sought in the immediate circle of literati who crossed paths with Battiferra.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Italy based on language and watermarks in paper. The latter suggest paper stocks originating in Tuscany, with at least two watermarks pointing towards the region around Lucca (Tuscany), but also Rome. The watermarks generally refer to paper dated in the 1550s-1560s. The Psalms, translated by Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati, in this manuscript occupy the last written quire: these were indeed published in 1564, but it cannot be said for certain that this manuscript was copied from a printed edition. We know that the works of Laura circulated in manuscript form, before and after the printed editions. Hence this copy could have made from either another manuscript or from the printed edition, hence necessarily after 1564.
2. European continental collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-2, [Anonymous], heading, *Yhesus*; incipit, "Sovviemi tu per i cui lumi santi...";

f. 2v, blank;

f. 3, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo*; incipit, "Surge ad inluminar Gierusalem..." [derived from Isaiah, 60:1, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.."];

f. 3v, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo*; incipit, "Quando si volgera santa famiglia...";

f. 3v, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo*; incipit, "Percuotero il pastor, dice il Signore..." [derived from Zaccariah, 13: 7, "[...] declares the Lord Almighty. 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered...'"];

ff. 4-5v, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo di speranza*; incipit, "O veramente sordi, ignudi et frali...";

f. 5v, Silvestro Console (perhaps Silvestro Brancondio?), heading, *Capitolo di Mastro Silvestro Console*, incipit, "Una nova progenie e nova prole...";

It has been suggested to us that this author could be Silvestro Brancondio (c. 1550-c. 1603) who published *Sonetti in morte de l'illustrissimo cardinal Farnese*, Orvieto, 1589 (see *Le edizioni italiane del XVI secolo* (1985), B-3577). This seems unlikely, because of his dates which would place him amongst the following generation of poets.

f. 6, Giovanni Andrea Gilio, heading, *Capitolo di Monsignor Giovanni Andrea Gilio*, incipit, "Mentre dal Sita all'etiope adusto...";

Giovanni Andrea Gilio was born in Fabriano and died in 1584. Poet and theoretician, Gilio was also one of the chief ideologues of the Counter-Reformation, and his writings fit well in the present miscellany of poetry largely favorable to the Counter-Reformation. Interestingly, the Ammannati owned a copy of Gilio's *Due dialogi* (Venice, 1565). The present sonnet does not appear to have been published.

f. 7v, Silvestro Console (perhaps Silvestro Brancondio?), heading, *Capitolo di Maestro Silvestro Console*, incipit, "In principio era il verbo e il verbo era...";

f. 8v, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo*, incipit, "Chi mi porge col pianto le parole...";

f. 10v, [Anonymous], heading, *Sonetto*, incipit, "O Alma Croce, o glorioso et santo...";

f. 11, [Anonymous] heading, *Ottave*, incipit, "Popul ingrato, popul empio et rio...";

f. 18, [Anonymous], heading, *Trionfo di san Nicolò*, incipit, "Cinto di stelle nel sublime trono"

f. 19v, [Anonymous], heading, *Capitolo della Croce*, incipit, "Croce beata, santa, avventurosa...";

f. 22, [Laura Battiferri Ammannati], Spiritual Sonnet, heading *Sonnetto*, incipit, "Verace Apollo, a cui ben vero amore..." (published in Guidi, ed. 2005, p.110, *Sonetti spirituali*, no. III; also published by Kirkham, 2006, p. 226).

In this sonnet, Laura Battiferra translates Ovid into a Christian register. The poet's Apollo, in love with Daphne when Cupid's arrow pierced his heart, becomes "true" as Christ wounded by the lance of Longinus. Apollo is here a symbol of Christ and Daphne is the poetess. This sonnet is one of the "Sonetti spirituali" printed after the *Sette salmi penitentiali* in 1564.

f. 22, [Anonymous], heading, *Sonetto*, incipit, "Qual suol per forte braccio, e destra mano...";

f. 23, [Anonymous], heading, *Sonetto della assumptione*, incipit, "Toglea dall'Oriente il negro cielo...";

f. 23v, [Jacopo Sannazaro], heading, *Capitolo*, incipit, "Se mai per meraviglia alzando il viso..." (published in A. Mauro ed., 1961, p. 210: "Lamentazione sopra al corpo del Redentor del mondo a mortali")

f. 24, [Jacopo Sannazaro], heading, *Sonetto*, incipit, "È questo il legno che del sacro sangue..." (published in A. Mauro ed., 1961, p. 209);

f. 24v, [Jacopo Sannazaro]; heading, *Sonetto*, incipit, "Almo monte felice e sacra valle..." (published in A. Mauro ed., 1961, p. 209);

Born and died in Naples, Jacopo Sannazaro (1458-1530) adapted the pastoral eclogue to the medium of vernacular poetry. His most famous work, *Arcadia* consists of 12 chapters of prose discourse ending with a poetic eclogue. Sannazaro composed Neo-Latin poetry but also vernacular *rime*, Italian sonnets and *canzoni*, which are accepted as some of the best examples of pure Petrarchan verse produced in the Renaissance.

His works are published in *Le Opere volgari di M. J. Sannazaro*, Padua, G. Comino, 1723; and more recently by A. Mauro, 1961 (to which we refer here); see also A. Altamura, *La tradizione manoscritta dei carmina del Sannazaro*, Naples, 1957. Recently, see *Iacopo Sannazaro: la cultura napoletana nell'Europa del Rinascimento*, ed. P. Sabbatino [Convegno Napoli 27-28 marzo 2006], Florence, 2009.

f. 25, [Francesco Coppetta dei Beccuti], heading, *Sonetto*, "Locar sopra gli abissi i fondamenti..." (published in M. Danzi and S. Longhi, *Poeti del Cinquecento*, tomo I, Milan, 2001, p. 516)

Francesco Coppetta dei Beccuti (1509-1553) was from a noble family from Perugia (see Danzi and Longhi, op. Cit., 2001, pp. 507-509; see also A. Salza, "Francesco Coppetta dei Beccuti. Poeta perugino del secolo XVI," in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 1900, pp. 1-157). This sonnet and the one immediately following on f. 25, were published posthumously in 1580. This sonnet was famously adapted as a musical madrigal in the second half of the sixteenth century.

f. 25, [Francesco Coppetta dei Beccuti], heading, *Sonetto*, incipit, "Padre eterno in cui sol Roma si fida...";

f. 25v, blank;

ff. 26-34, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo sesto, et primo de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "Non voler con furore..." (Kirkham, 2006, p. 224)

f. 26v, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Il secondo salmo de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "O felici e beati...";

f. 27v, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo terzo de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "Almo rettore del cielo...";

f. 29, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo quarto de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "Habbi di me mercede...";

f. 30v, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo quinto de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "La mia preghiera humile, e 'l flebil suono...";

f. 32, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo sesto de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "Da questo alto, e profondo...";

f. 33-34, [Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati], Psalms, Italian translation by Laura Battiferri degli Ammannati, heading, *Salmo settimo de' Penitentiali*, incipit, "Esaudisce signor dolce, e benigno..."; explicit, "[...] de miei sospir, perch'io tuo servo sono. Il fine de' sette salmi penitentiali del santissimo profeta Davit, tradotti in lingua toscana da Madonna Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati";

ff. 34v-43v, blank.

Native of Urbino, Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati (1523-1589) was celebrated by her contemporaries as the "new Sappho of our time ... at the crossroads of Renaissance and Catholic Reformation culture" (as coined by V. Kirkham, 2006, p.1; see Kirkham's excellent literary biography of Laura Battiferra, 2006). There is a beautiful portrait by Agnolo Bronzino, circa 1561 of Laura Battiferra holding a book of sonnets by Petrarch (Florence, Palazzo Vecchio). She married her second husband Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511-1592), sculptor and architect. Her first lyric anthology was published by Giunta in Florence in 1560 under the title *Il primo libro delle opere toscane di Madonna Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati* [The First Book of Tuscan Works by Madonna Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati] with 187 poems, 146 by the author and 41 by male poets such as Benedetto Varchi, il Lasca, Benvenuto Cellini (critical edition, Guidi ed., 2000; see J. Balsamo, 2007, tome I, no. 38; *Le edizioni italiane del XVI secolo* (1985), B-813). We know that Laura's husband Bartolomeo Ammannati helped publicize her works: he shared with Michelangelo Buonarrotti copies (perhaps copied by Laura herself) of her verses (see Kirkham: "Although the poems Ammannati sent do not survive in manuscript form in Buonarrotti's papers, others by Laura can still be read among the many lyrics in his notebooks ... Those lost copies destined for the aging giant in Rome, surely transcribed by Laura herself, suggest that Bartolomeo Ammannati may have taken pleasure in delivering her work to others..." (Kirkham, 2002, p. 526).

The present verses grouped on ff. 26-34 were first printed in Laura Battiferra's "second book" printed again by Giunta in Florence in 1564: *I sette salmi penitentiali del santissimo profeta David. Tradotti in lingua Toscana da Madonna Laura Battiferra Degli Ammannati...* [Seven Penitential Psalms of the Prophet David, translated into the Tuscan language by Laura Battiferra Degli Ammannati...]. The present copy does not include however the preceding prose arguments and dedicatory elements, nor the following "Sonnetti spirituali della medesima autrice" published in 1564 (see Guidi, ed. 2005, pp. 109-115). Battiferra chose the Duchess of Urbino, Vittoria Farnese Della Rovere (1519-1602) as the recipient of her *Sette salmi penitentiali* published in 1564. Laura Battiferra boldly places herself in the same family of poets as King David. A successor in translating to Saint Jerome, she appropriates the language of Saint Paul to make a declaration of her militant Christian mission. Her translation was reprinted numerous times in the years following the Council of Trent, in 1566, 1568, 1570 and in 1572 as part of a pocket anthology edited by Francesco Turchi, *Salmi penitenziali, di diversi eccellenti autori*. The Seven Penitential Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129 and 142 in the Vulgate numbering) express the penitent's awareness of sin and hope for pardon. Laura's interest in the Psalms should be replaced in the post-Tridentine religious fervor and rise of the Jesuits with whom she would become close. To quote Kirkham: "The translations are remarkable for the simplicity of their lexical register and their experimental metrical range" (Kirkham, 2006, p. 427, note 270).

In all, Kirkham numbers some 550 Italian poems attributed or addressed to Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati. Kirkham has identified a holograph (entirely written in the author's hand) manuscript of Laura Battiferra's First Book of poetry (Florence, BNCF, MS VII, 778; see Kirkham, 1996, pp. 351-391: this manuscript was compiled as a fair copy destined for her editor Giunti and served as the exemplar for typesetting the text). The same scholar discovered a manuscript which contains *Rime*, likely destined to be her third anthology, never printed but composed in the 1570s-1580s, copied by a Jesuit scribe [Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 3229] (see Kirkham, 2006, pp. 3-4). Another work, *Oratione sopra il Natale di Nostro Signore* (a meditation on the Christmas creche inspired by Ignatius de Loyola) is found in a Jesuit miscellany (Macerata, Bibl. Comunale Mozzi-Borgetti, MS 137, ff. 137-141).

The question of the present manuscript containing works by Laura Battiferra, but also other poets, some anonymous or in need of identification, remains. The manuscript is actually contemporary with only two of the authors it contains (Giovanni Andrea Gilio and Laura Battiferra, who both die in 1589). Was the manuscript copied in circles close to Battiferra and consorts? It is clearly not in the hand of Laura Battiferra nor her husband Bartolomeo Ammannati (both hands are well-documented, see Kirkham, 2002, figures in Appendix 3 and 4 with examples of both hands, pp. 544-545; pp. 548-549). We know that Battiferra was close to certain important poets such as Benedetto Varchi, Annibale Caro, both to whom she turned to for advice. This manuscript presents itself as an interesting and still to be explored miscellany of spiritual poetry close to the ideals of the Counter-Reformation.

LITERATURE

Battiferra degli Ammannati, Laura. *Il primo libro dell'opere toscane di M. Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati*, Florence, Giunti, 1560.

Battiferra degli Ammannati, Laura. *I sette salmi penitentiali del santissimo profeta David...*, Florence, Giunti, 1564.

Battiferra degli Ammannati, Laura. *Sette salmi penitentiali del santissimo profeta David, tradotti in lingua toscana da M. Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati...insieme con alcuni suoi sonetti spirituali*, In Napoli, presso Antonio Bulifon, 1697 [see Delaveau and Hillard, *Bibles imprimées du XVe au XVIIIe siècle conservées à Paris* (2002), no. 3227].

Battiferra degli Ammannati, Laura. *Il primo libro delle operre toscane* ed. Enrico Maria Guidi, Urbino, 2000.

Battiferra degli Ammannati, Laura. *I sette salmi penitenziali di David con alcuni sonetti spirituali*, a cura di Enrico Maria Guidi, Urbino, 2005.

Balsamo, J. and F. Tomasi. *De Dante à Chiabrera. Poètes italiens de la Renaissance dans la bibliothèque de la Fondation Barbier-Mueller*, Genève, 2007.

Kirkham, V. (ed.). *Laura Battiferra and Her Literary Circle: An Anthology*, Chicago and London, 2006.

Kirkham, V. "Sappho on the Arno: The Brief Fame of Laura Battiferra," in *Strong Voices, Weak History: Early Women Writers and Canons in England, France and Italy*, ed. P. Benson and V. Kirkham, Ann Arbor, 2005, pp. 174-196.

Kirkham, V. "Creative Partners: The Marriage of Laura Battiferra and Bartolomeo Ammannati," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2002), pp. 498-558.

Kirkham, V. "Laura Battiferra's 'First Book' of Poetry: A Renaissance Holograph Comes Out of Hiding," *Rinascimento* 35 (1996), pp. 351-391.

Mauro, A. *Iacobo Sannazaro. Opere volgari*, Bari, 1961.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Battiferri

V. Kirkham, 2002: "Creative Partners: The Marriage of Laura Battiferra and Bartolomeo Ammannati"

<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1262317>

Portrait of Laura Battiferra by Agnolo Bronzino

<http://www.aidart.fr/galerie-maitres/manierisme-italien/portrait-de-laura-battiferri-bronzino-vers-1558-1094.html>

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