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Critica del testo

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viella

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Frammenti di manoscritti medievali a Pavia e dintorni

a cura di Federico Saviotti

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Giovanni Varelli

Canctus Domini Mathei: Virtuoso Liturgical Singing in the Early Trecento*

Abstract

It is not frequent to find a fragment of a medieval manuscript containing, at the same time, an exceptional musical repertory of liturgical chant, a rare musical notation, a palimpsest of a unique devotional song, and the attribution to a named singer-composer whose identity we can trace. Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.3, F14, is a fragment in Padre Martini's famous collection which never attracted the attention of scholars, possibly for its very peculiar nature. Yet, the Bolognese fragment tells the story of a sophisticated enrichment of sung liturgy, achieved through a full command of vocal techniques and of the graphic strategies for notating them. Like an archaeological site, the present contribution aims at offering a complete survey of the "excavation"; a foundation for future studies on an unusually rich fragment which confirms once more the importance of the field of fragmentology for reconstructing lost or lesser-known musical soundscapes.

Keywords: Fragmentology in music, Liturgical chant, Musical notation

It is not at all frequent to find a fragment of a medieval manuscript containing, at the same time, an exceptional musical repertory of liturgical chant, a rare musical notation, a palimpsest of a unique

* The present article is a considerable expansion of a paper presented at the University of Southampton *Ars Antiqua* Conference in September 2013. Because of the remarkably rich content of the fragment, the study remained in preparation as a side project thereafter. The special issue of «Critica del testo», devoted specifically to fragmentology was the most appropriate context for this study. I wish to thank Mark Everist and the *Cantus pulchriorem invenire* team for inviting me to present my then-inceptive study. I also wish to thank in particular the editor of the present volume Federico Saviotti, the anonymous reviewers, and Margaret Bent, Marco Gozzi, and Brian Berni for their useful suggestions and comments.

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devotional song, and the attribution to a named singer-composer whose working environment we can identify. Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.3, F14 (hereafter F14, see fig. 1) is a fragment in Padre Giovanni Battista Martini's famous collection which, although long-known, never attracted the attention of scholars, possibly for its very "queerness". While the chants are easily identified as pertaining to the ordinary of the Mass, practically no other features of the fragment can be readily classified. The idea of virtuosic has not been applied yet to the repertory of liturgical chant and only rarely to the history of music in the Middle Ages (e.g. Ars Nova and Subtilior, or instrumental music of the late Quattrocento). Yet, the Bolognese fragment tells the story of a sophisticated enrichment of sung liturgy, achieved through a full command of vocal techniques and of the graphic strategies for notating them, all showing a great level of musical creativity. Like an archaeological site, the present contribution aims at offering a complete survey of the "excavation"; a foundation for future studies on an unusually rich fragment which, *par excellence*, confirms once more the importance of the field of fragmentology for reconstructing lost or lesser-known musical soundscapes.

1. The fragment

F14 contains the music for two *Benedicamus domino*, three *Deo gratias*, and five *Gloria*, one of which incomplete (fig. 2).[1] Due to the general informality of the *ductus*, it is difficult to date the fragment precisely; set scripts usually display those features more clearly. The text of the chants is written in a type of informal Gothic minuscule influenced by ecclesiastical bookhand, rather than notary, possibly constituting the basic formative script of the scribe. Some morphological elements, such as the uncial *d*, drop-like *a* traced with the loop closing at the top of the second element (e.g. *laud*[*amus*], fig. 4b, c), the descending second stroke of *h* or *x*, and the general proportions between minims' height and width of the letters suggest a dating to the early 14th century. Other features are the final *s*, which is sometimes

1. A reproduction of F14 is available online at http://www.internetculturale.it/ > search (Biblioteca Digitale) : «Frammenti Q.3» (last accessed 05/05/2023).

round and descending below the ruled line, and the horizontal, sometimes oblique, protruding stroke of *e*; the latter seems to be lacking from scripts of that period and it may be a relic of an older script by a mature hand. No aspect of the script in F14 can be unequivocally datable to a range of less than 50-70 years and several features of the hand in F14 are present in minuscule scripts from at least the early 12th century to the beginning of the 16th century. However, the absence of elements, or series thereof, pointing exclusively to either ends of the time-range would support a more careful dating of the F14 hand to the first 50 years of the 14th century, possibly the first quarter.[2]

Finally, the comparison with other dated manuscripts from Veneto and Lombardy would suggest a northern-Italian provenance.[3] The initials, in gothic majuscule script, are written in either red, or black ink (and highlighted in red), sometimes with elaborate penwork decoration (fig. 1a-b). There are three grades: the initials of the chants (e.g. [*Gloria in excelsis Deo*] *Et in terra*), the initial of major sections (e.g. *Qui tollis*) and the initials of minor sections (e.g. *Laudamus te*, *Benedicimus te*, etc.; but also *Benedicamus*…, and *Deo gratias*…). This type of penwork for the initials' filigree is common in northern Italy in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The initial of *Gloria* IV has a more elaborate penwork which also includes a bird's head (fig. 1a). There are no rubrics, except for two marginal additions reading *canctus domini Mathei*, and a series of letters added to the notation: *o*, *v*, and *equaliter*, that will be further discussed below, and *ac* and *me*, which significance will be instead analysed in a forthcoming study.[4]

2. The dating, on the top margin of f. Ar, likely by the hand of Padre Martini, to the «11th or early 12th centuries» [«*videtur saeculi 11. vel 12. initio*»]; is not coeherent with the features of the script.

3. The following catalogues of dated manuscripts in Italian libraries have been consulted: *Catalogo dei manoscritti in scrittura latina datati o databili, per indicazione di anno, di luogo o di copista*, vol. I, *Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma*, a c. di V. Jemolo, Torino, Bottega d'Erasmo, 1971; and vol. III, *Perugia: Biblioteca comunale Augusta, Archivio storico di S. Pietro, Biblioteca Dominicini*, a c. di M. G. Bistoni Grilli Cicilioni, Torino, Bottega d'Erasmo, 1994; *Manoscritti datati d'Italia*, Firenze-Tavarnuzze (Impruneta), SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1996-2022, vols. 1-34.

4. G. Varelli, *The Singing Ordinary Chants in Central and Late Middle Ages*, in preparation.

Fig. 1a. Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.3, F 14, Bv-Ar (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna).
Fig. 1b. Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.3, F 14, Av-Br (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna).

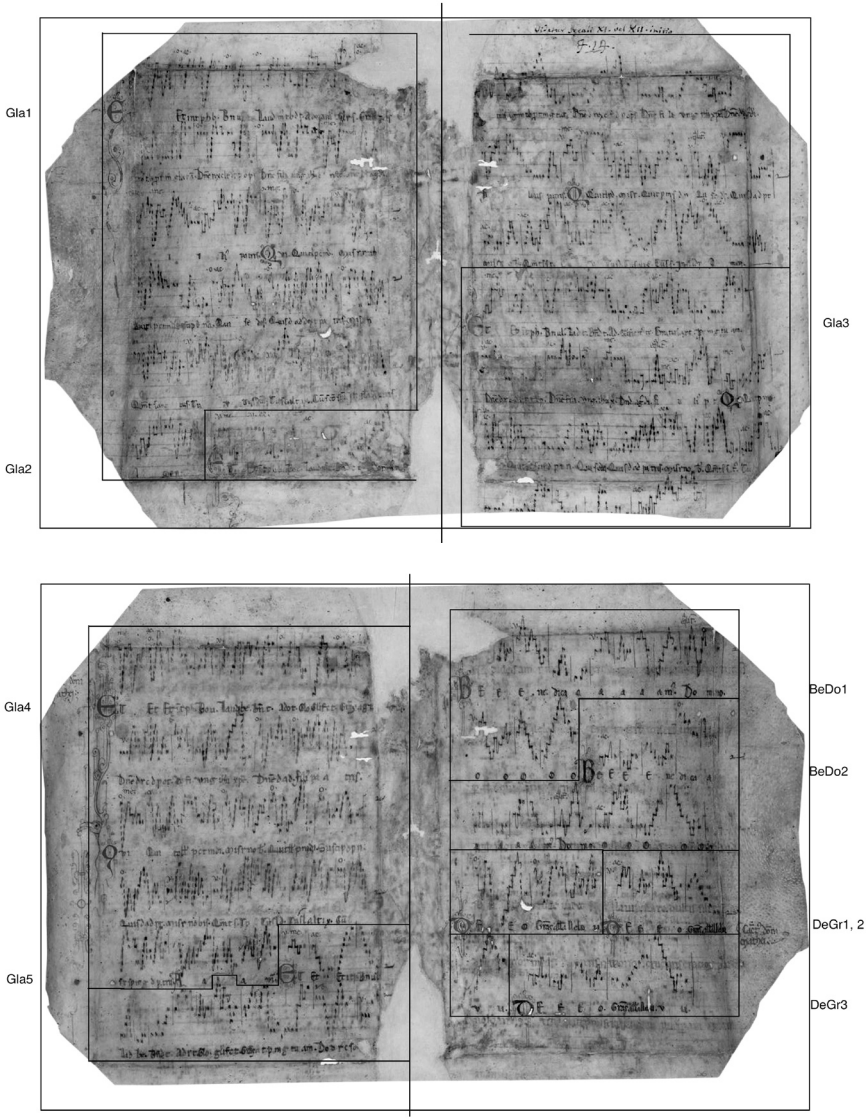


Fig. 2a-b. The content of F14 (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna):
a. Av-Br;
b. Bv-Ar.

Fig. 3a-b. F14, details (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna):
a. «toll[is]»;
b. «gl[or]if[i]c[amus]».

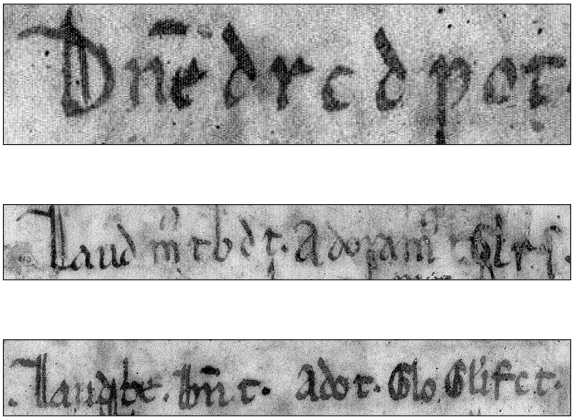


Fig. 4a-c. Examples of the hand and abbreviation practice in F 14 (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna):
a. «Do(mi)ne deus rex celestis pater omnipotens» (*Gloria* IV, f. Bv);
b. «Laudam(us) te benedicimus te. Adoram(us) te. Glorificamus [te]» (*Gloria* V, f. Bv);
c. «Laudamus be [*sic*]. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glo- gl(or)ificamus te» (*Gloria* I, f. Av).

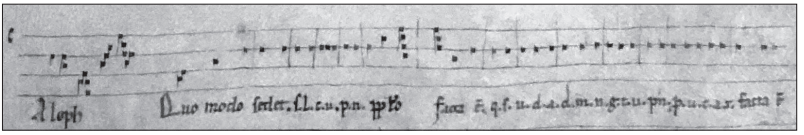


Fig. 5. Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, Cod. 542 p. III, f. 48r, detail (©Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile):
«[...] sola civitas plena p(o)p(u)lo facta e(st) quasi vidua domina gentium p(ri)nceps p(ro)vinciarum facta e(st)».

Abbreviations are the usual *titulus* and the semicircle sign for *-us*, alongside abbreviation signs written with a horizontal stroke intersecting the shafts of *l* or *b*, curving upwards at the end (fig. 3). Beside employing common abbreviation marks, one of the most striking features of the script in F14 is that, rather than writing out the text in full, the scribe often abbreviates the words of the five *Gloria* by writing the initial or only a few letters for each words: e.g. «Dñe d r c d p ot» for «Do(mi)ne deus rex celestis deus pater omnipotens» (fig. 4a).[5] Since the notation was laid out with a rather compressed vertical axis, little space was left for the full writing of the words. The verticality of the notation, in turn, responded to precise musical reason that will be explained below. Furthermore, that the music was written first and the text underlaid accordingly is corroborated by the different ways of abbreviating the same words throughout the fragment (fig. 4b-c). This flexible system was a very pragmatic solution, devised in order to preserve the vertical alignment between the verbal and musical texts. A similar abbreviation system is found in at least three earlier examples from Padua (fig. 5), Verona (fig. 7), and Bologna (fig. 17, below).[6] The

5. It is possible that such way of treating the written verbal texts may have been developed specifically for music, possibly thanks to the clerics' familiarity with the long-lasting practice of abbreviating «*seculorum amen*» with «e u o u a e» in liturgical books.

6. For Padua, see *I manoscritti datati di Padova: Accademia Galileiana di scienze lettere e arti, Archivio Papafava, Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca civica, Biblioteca del Seminario vescovile*, a c. di A. Mazzon *et al.*, Tavarnuzze (Impruneta), SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003, p. 50, Plate LXXXVII. On Bologna and Verona, see below respectively, p. 15, f. 15.

fact that the same way of abbreviating a known text is so widespread may suggest that this was a well-established practice rather than a solution devised by the F14 scribe.

Even though the overall impression is that of a degree of informality more characteristic of later additions to a pre-existing manuscript, rather than that of a high-grade copy, F14 was certainly not an unplanned jotting. Two aspects may shed light on the original manuscript context of F14. The first is the continuation of one of the *Gloria* on the following folio, which suggests that the bifolium was originally placed at the centre of a gathering (see fig. 1b).[7] This necessarily implies that the series of *Benedicamus domino* and *Deo gratias* must have preceded the series of *Gloria* (see fig. 1a) in the original gathering. The *recto-verso* sequence of F14 should then be reconstructed as following (fig. 8):

– f. Ar, *Benedicamus domino* I-II, *Deo gratias* I-III;
– f. Av, *Gloria* I-II;
– f. Br, *Gloria* II-III;
– f. Bv, *Gloria* IV-V.

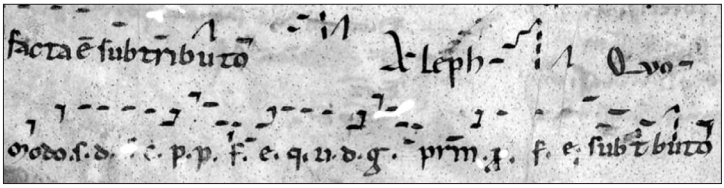


Fig. 6. *Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetae*, detail[8]
«[...] sedet sola civitas plena populo facta est quasi vidua domina gentium pr(i) nceps p(ro)vinciarum facta est [...]».

7. The *Gloria* interrupts on «adoramus te» and continues on the following folio on «[gra]tias agamus tibi». The continuity of the text and the comparable musical style make it extremely unlikely to think that another bifolium – or, even more improbable, more than one – would have been inserted between Av and Br, and that it contained at least two *Gloria* versions, the first and last ones of which breaking off exactly after «adoramus te» and before «gratias agamus tibi». I therefore exclude the possibility of a lacuna.

8. The image was taken a few years ago from an online reproduction. The reference to the manuscript shelfmark is currently not available.

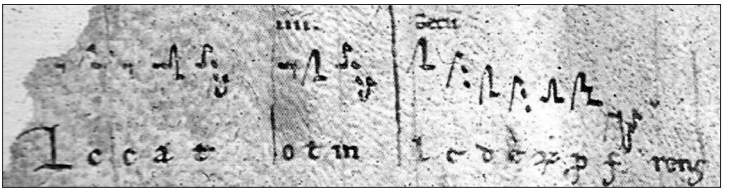


Fig. 7. *Hymni et Capitula cum notis musicis*, Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, CIX (102), f. 190v, detail (©Fondazione Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona) «Lucis creator optime lucem dierum proferens».

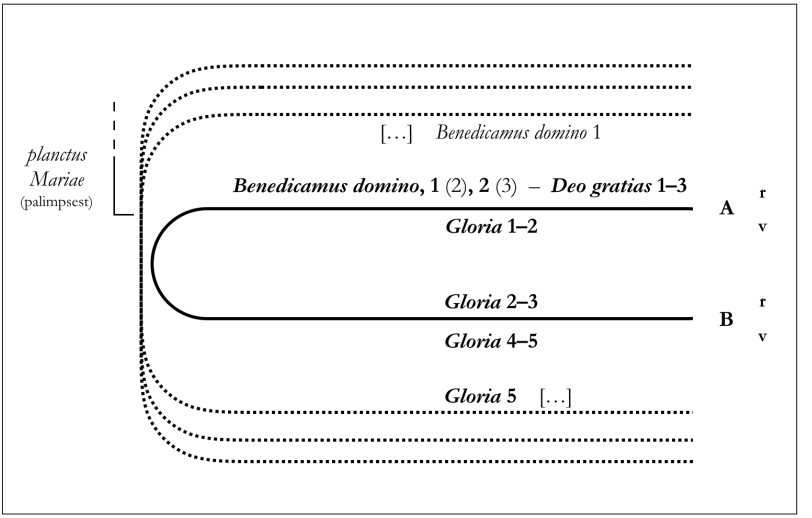


Fig. 8. The codicological context of F14.

The order in which the chants are written in F14 is noteworthy: since the series of *Benedicamus domino* and *Deo gratias* precedes that of the *Gloria*, the musical compilation did not follow the liturgical order of ordinary chants, as the former series would have had to

follow the latter.[9] Moreover, the absence of rubrics connecting the musical entries to a specific use on particular liturgical occasions suggests that neither was this section of the original manuscript conceived to transmit chants for one of more formularies of particular feasts.[10] The hypothesis of an original alphabetical order should also be discarded, as the compilation, to be complete, would have included a series of *Credo* between that of the *Deo gratias* and that of the *Gloria*. We are then left with the simple, yet perfectly plausible, explanation that the order may have been casual and "open", especially given the relative informal nature of the compilation.

A single hand is responsible for the compilation, even though two phases are clearly distinguishable, as shown by the darker ink tone and the shaper nib's cut used for the *Benedicamus Domino* and *Deo gratias* compared to those used for writing the series of *Gloria* (fig. 9), confirming the "open" nature of the compilation, written over a period of time. At some point, after the series of *Benedicamus domino* and *Deo gratias* was added, the series of *Gloria* was entered in the innermost bifolium of the original gathering, possibly copied *en bloc* from another source(s), or – a much more tantalising hypothesis – transcribed extempore from the performance by an experienced singer. Lastly, the presence of two *Benedicamus domino*, compared to three *Deo gratias*, along with the incomplete *Gloria* 5 on Bv suggests that the compilation was originally extending beyond what is now F14, including at least one more bifolium. A third *Benedicamus domino*, thus complementing the series of three *Deo gratias*, may have occupied the lowermost part of the folio originally preceding Ar, while *Gloria* 5 certainly continued on the folio following Bv (fig. 9). The gathering therefore may have either been part of a larger liturgical manuscript, or a miscellany: in the first case it may possibly have occupied a final section; in the second case, it may have been bound at any point in the volume (or booklet) – even though miscellanies often followed particular criteria in the or-

9. In any case, an organization following a liturgical order would have included the presence of *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* between the series of *Gloria* and *Benedicamus Domino-Deo gratias*.

10. However, it is not unusual that compilations of ordinary chants melodies – for example, kyrials, tropers, or later additions to graduals and missals – would bear no particular feast association, but merely the grade of the feast (e.g. *in maioribus festibus*, etc.).

dering of the material. Finally, another hypothesis, the most likely, is that the musical fascicle may have been a booklet assembled and compiled for specifically the practical use in the liturgy by singers.

Providing more information on both the date of compilation and on the original manuscript context of F14 is a palimpsest on Ar.[11] The lower script transmits a *planctus Mariae*, *Virgo plorans filium* (fig. 10).[12] The *planctus* is laid out on eight lines of text and it is incomplete at the beginning. Several elements of the script would point to a much earlier dating than the upper script in F14, as it would be expected in the case of a palimpsest, but because of the quality of the lower script an accurate date cannot be easily determined. Uncial *d*, and the horizontal stroke of *f* touching the top of the mimin *i*, producing an *fi* ligature and the Tironian *et* with a descending left stroke is common in northern-Italian manuscripts from the 13th century onwards, written in gothic minuscule script. After l. 3, the text is then repeated once; this time including the *incipit*. This not only allows the identification of the piece with the *planctus Virgo plorans filium*, but it also provides the extent of the initial lacuna, which would have taken roughly the lower half of the preceding now-lost folio (fig. 8). The lower script thus possibly intersected with the later *Benedicamus domino* I, written as part of the second layer of compilation (fig. 8). Although generous interlinear space was provided for accommodating musical notation, this was entered only on the repeated verses, beginning on l. 4.

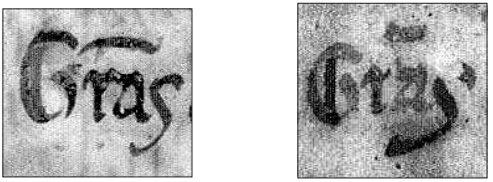


Fig. 9a-b. F14, details (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna): a. from *Deo gratias* III, f. Ar; b. from *Gloria* V, f. Bv.

11. A full study of the palimpsest, *Hidden Traces of Marian Devotion: The* planctus Virgo plorans filium, is in preparation.

12. The planctus in F14 appears to be an abridged, possibly earlier, version of Virgo plorans filium in *AH*, 31, n. 163.

Fig. 10. F14, f. Ar, detail of the lower script and notation (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna): «… moreris et morior, cruciaris crucior …».

2. Virtuosic music writing

At first glance, the notation in F14 appears as an impulsive, unplanned, careless jotting, with a distinctive cursive *ductus* (fig. 11). The repetitiveness of rising and descending melodic phrases of the musical style too may distract from appreciating what is instead a remarkable level of notational detail and graphic solutions for specifying the nuances of vocal delivery, all managed with an exceptional control of musical penmanship. The music script, the design of note-forms and their modifications, graphic techniques for rhythmic articulation, and the particular devices for pitch specification, is nevertheless highly idiosyncratic.[13] The notation type resists immediate classification, but the close observation of the essential note-shapes – particularly those for single, isolated notes – employed by the scribe reveal the script's kinship.

The notation of the Bolognese fragment may be defined as stemming from a square notation substratum, possibly the same one in which the scribe was trained and which formed his musico-graphic base. It is a particularly sophisticated version of the type found in a group of sources from the 12th to 14th centuries (fig. 12-15).[14] The reper-

13. In this study I will refer to the basic, normative graphic of a musical sign as the note-*form*, while its concrete written manifestations as the note-*shape*. I draw this distinction from Latin Palaeography, in particular from Malcolm Parkes' definition of «letter-form» and «letter-shape»: see the *Glossary* in M. Parkes, *Their Hands Before our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008.

14. These include also Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borg. lat. 211, f. 15v; f. 36v in the Cartulary of St. Mary's Abbey in Zadar, Croatia; Roma, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, B 81, f. 140r; Volterra, Biblioteca Guarnacci, L III 39, f. 2r.

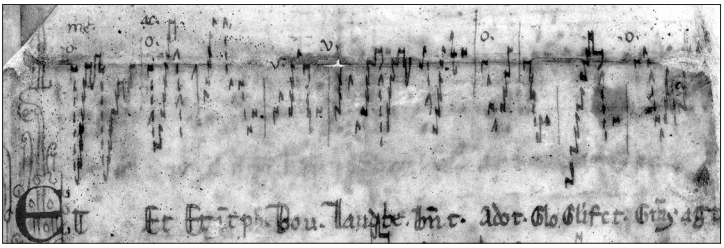
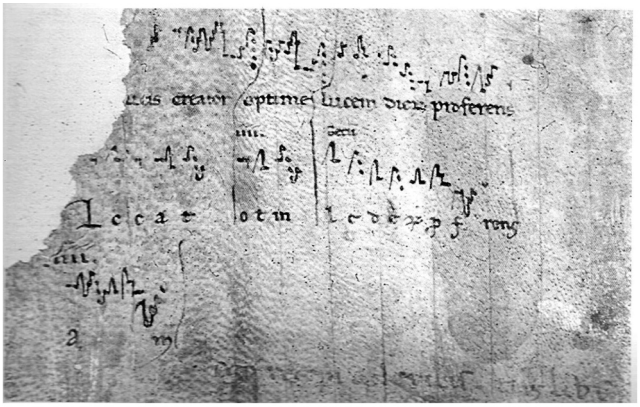


Fig. 11. The beginning of *Gloria* IV in F14, f. Bv (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna).

tory associated with these sources is almost exclusively constituted of chants for the mass: *Gloria*, *Alleluia*, *Credo*, *Agnus Dei*, and *Benedicamus Domino-Deo gratias*. The only example of a chant for the Office is the first line of the hymn *Lucis creator optime*, added in the late 12th century on the rear endleaf of a manuscript from Verona (fig. 12); here, the text is written twice, the second time employing the same style of abbreviation as the one used by the F14 scribe, and a similar style of cursive notation, albeit of an earlier type.[15] The informality that distinguishes most of these examples, especially the lack of precise diastematy due to the absence of stave lines, and the almost casual layout make it difficult to identify unequivocally some of the cases as polyphonic pieces. This is also related to the dual nature of the notated voices that may be read both as very ornate versions of monophonic chants, or as elaborate descants to a chant tenor. The fact that this particular type of musical notation seems to be following a set of formal procedures, often connected to a particular style, repertory and period, means that it is possible to identify it as an independent *notation*, as opposed to merely the outcome of an informal *ductus*. Given the general appearance, the contexts in which it is usually employed, as well as features such as the frequent use of ligatures, if we were to come up with a definition, an appropriate one would be doubtlessly *cursive square notation*.

15. The addition has been interpreted as a two-voice version of the hymn, in a style typical of 13th-century Italian sacred polyphony: A. Vildera, *L'inno* Lucis Creator optime *a Verona tra monodia e polifonia*, in *Polifonie semplici*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Arezzo, 28-30 dicembre 2001), a c. di F. Facchin, Arezzo, Fondazione Guido d'Arezzo, 2004, pp. 31-38.



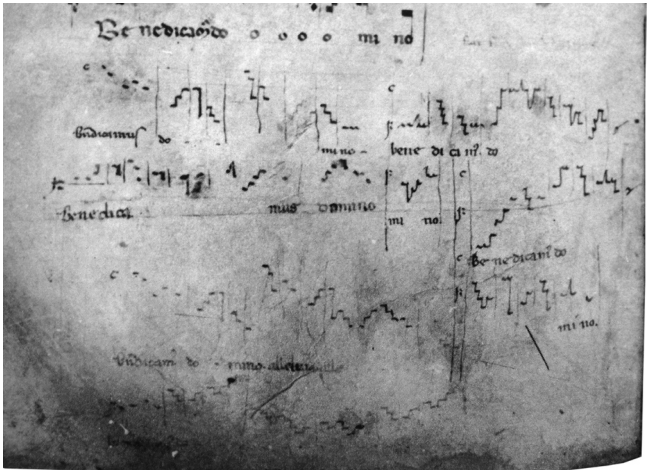


Fig. 12. *Hymni et Capitula cum notis musicis*, Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, CIX (102), f. 190v (© Fondazione Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona).
Fig. 13. Perugia, Biblioteca Capitolare, 15, f. 132v (©Biblioteca Capitolare di Perugia).

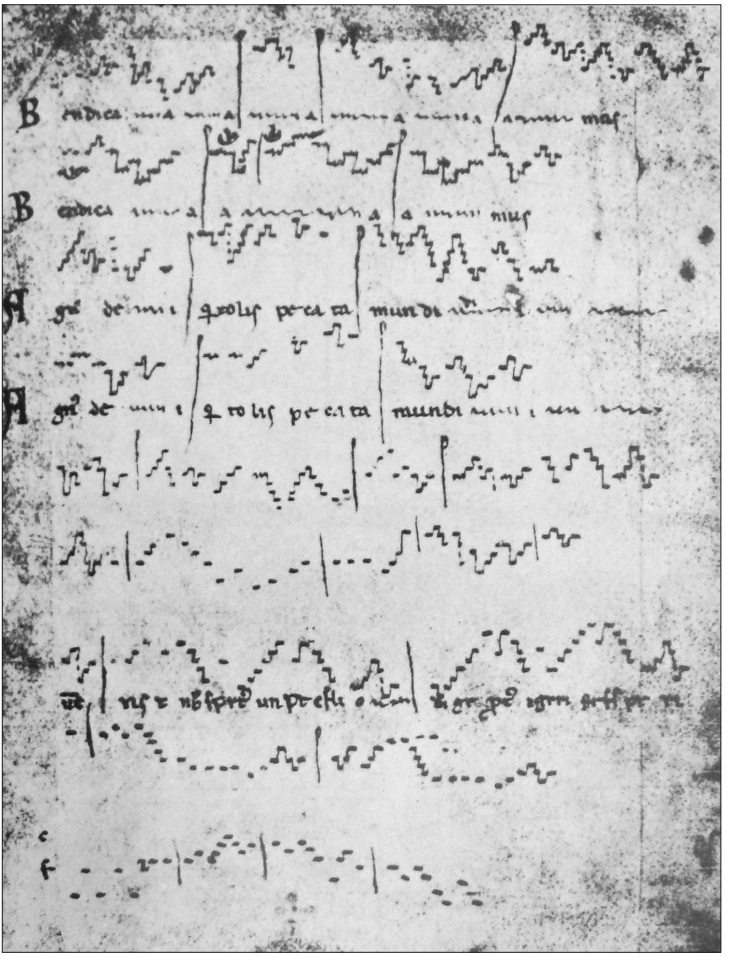


Fig. 14. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 1549, f. 199r (©Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna – Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna).

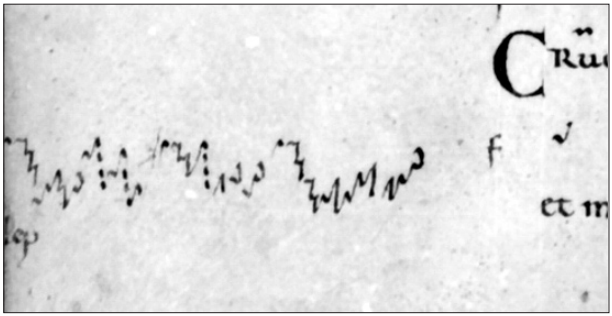
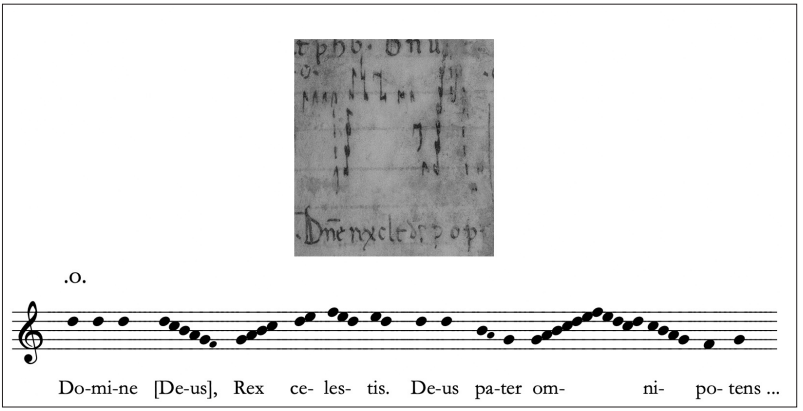


Fig. 15. Firenze, Archivio Storico Arcivescovile, Antifonario [s.n.], f. 267v (©Archivio Storico arcivescovile dell'Arcidiocesi di Firenze).

In F14, like in other examples of cursive square notation, single notes are often written without a stem, with the exception of an initial downward stroke to the left of the sign and sometimes a closing vertical stroke. The latter is lacking instead for certain single-note signs resembling an upside-down *v*, especially when these are part of a larger melodic movement, such as a rising or horizontal tone sequence. In these cases, signs are often alternating between square shape and the upside-down *v*, possibly designating a performance nuance such as a lesser rhythmical emphasis (e.g. shorter note-value), or vocal effect (although differentiation is not always discernible due to graphic inconsistencies). The matching of sequences of one-note signs with the relative text underlaid reveals that the use of graphically isolated signs is normally reserved to syllabic passages. This principle is key to the correct transcription of the chants in F14, as Ex. 1 shows, where it is also evident how the "breaking-up" of sequences of notes was meant to designate the appropriate association of melodic passages to particular syllables, or (monosyllabic) words (e.g. *Rex*).

Most ornate melodic passages, characteristic of the vocal style recorded in F14, involve the use of ligatures in which note-shapes are graphically connected, very often through a single continuous pen-stroke. Changes of direction in the pen's movement do not simply express different tone-heights but also rhythmical details, often



Ex. 1. *Gloria* I, F14, f. Av.

by alternating longer and shorter horizontal strokes (fig. 16). The horizontal lengthening of the stroke is in most cases so clear that it must account for a certain rhythmic value, rather than being simply the result of the particular *ductus*. Two or more consecutive longer strokes within a ligature can also be found, while those passages involving instead a swift turning note, or rapid succession of more turning notes above or below the ornamented pitch are represented by curved strokes. This occurs also for the top note in an arch-like melodic gesture; in these cases, the scribe employs a swift movement of the pen, possibly meaning that the note at the top of the curve should be sung relatively fast, and revealing a rich palette of vocal nuances.

The repertory of signs is used with such coherence which must have been the outcome of a deliberate choice to represent even the tiniest of performance details; certain graphic variations of particular signs may correspond to meaningful rhythmical articulation or vocal techniques. In this sense, cursivity, rather than being due to haste or lack of care, is instead clearly a graphic tool, a technique which has its own conventions and that is mastered by the scribe. Cursivity, therefore, is employed by the music scribe of F14 for expression purposes, as well as to specify the textual-melodic articulation. Another

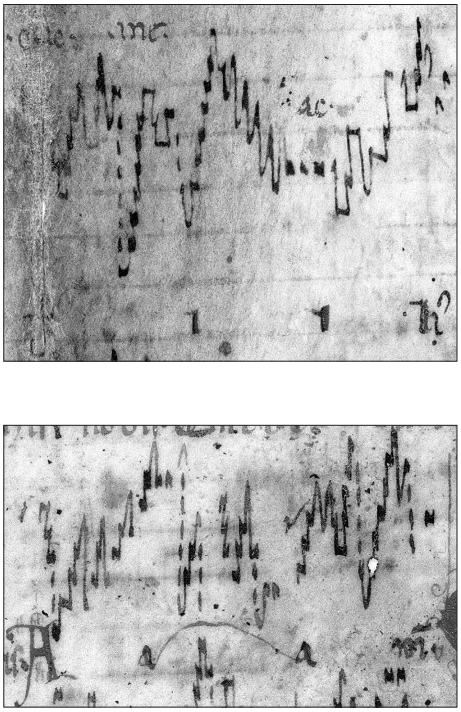
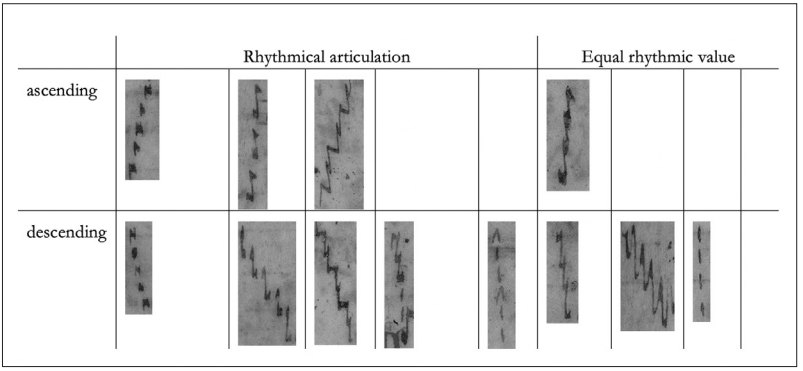


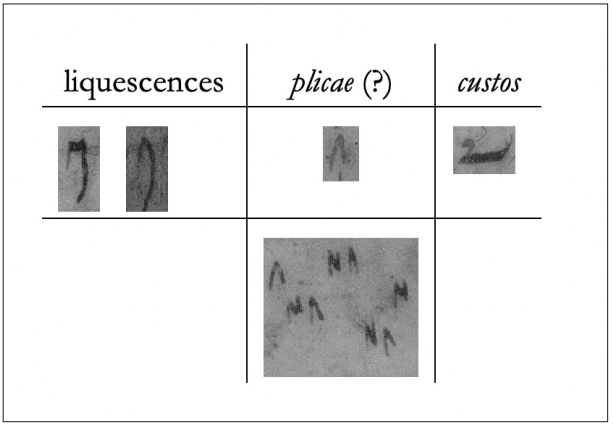
Fig. 16a-b. The range of graphic nuances in the melismas on *filius* in *Gloria* I and *amen* in *Gloria* IV, F14, ff. Av, Bv (©Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna).

means to represent articulation, both between syllables and in larger melodic inflections, is the breaking of the ligature by lifting the pen. Descending passages inside larger ornamentation, when preceding an equivalent ascending movement, consistently feature short vertical strokes, which can be also intercalated by upside-down *v* signs (Ex. 1, «omnipotens»; tab. 1), possibly representing a rhythmical nuance, or even *plicae* (tab. 2). Finally, liquescent signs are not only specifying a melodic detail but they also constitute a useful guide for performance, especially for the text underlaying, functioning also as graphic hints for the singer.

One of the most intriguing features of the fragment is the way in which the scribe was negotiating with the necessity to write such highly ornate melodies in a relatively confined space, and the solutions he devised. The notator uses the ruled lines of the original manuscript which are mostly visible on the palimpsest side of the bifolium Ar. The repertory is characterised by ample melodic gestures, often involving swift descents and ascents of an octave in range. In order to notate the wide melodic range, and the frequent shifting of the tonal space from upper and lower *tessiturae*, a single prefixed staff would have required to make frequent use of clef changes, likely more than one in a single line. The scribe opted instead for a more flexible system, which proved convenient for saving space on the parchment and, at the same time, allow the correct visualisation of the melodic contour. In the lack of clef or stave lines, the initial pitch of a section was designated by complementary indications written in red ink over the notation, usually close to the vertical dividing lines, expressed with the letters *o* and *v*, and in two cases «eq(u)alit(er)» (tab. 3). The analysis of the musical content of the fragment revealed that the letters *o* and *v* meant that a particular section should start on an octave («o*ctava*»), or fifth (*v*, Roman numeral for *quinta*) above the *finalis* of the mode, as the following example shows (Ex. 2). In the case of «qui sedes ad dexteram patris» in *Gloria* IV, the letter *o* designates the starting tone of the whole section as the octave above the *finalis*. By following the



Tab. 1. Note sequences and graphic articulation in F14.

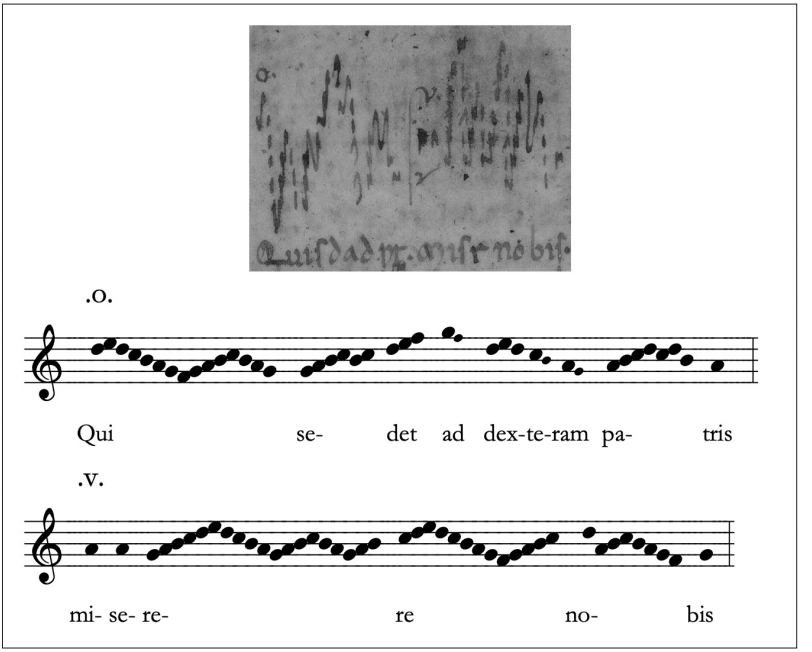


Tab. 2. Other special signs in F14.

melodic profile represented by the notation, the last note of the section is indeed a fourth below, corresponding to the fifth of the mode (*repercussio*). At the start of the following segment the scribe wrote a *custos* at the same height in the interlinear space, signifying that the melody on «*miserere nobis*» should start on the same pitch, even if notated a third above; the addition of *v*, further clarifies the pitch relation.

Rather than aiming merely at a specification of a particular pitch, these additional symbols refer to a whole set of sonorities, a tonal area inside which the section was going to develop. In this sense, it becomes clear why *o* and *v* are almost always placed in the space above the first notes, instead of right next to the first note of a section; a solution the singer-scribe considered suitable for expressing visually the "sonority" of the corresponding musical passage, while at the same time conveniently exploiting the available blank interlinear space. In the singer-scribe's conceptualisation of pitch and tonal space there is a return to a more fluid idea of relative pitch relations, yet still coherent within more or less extensive textual and melodic unities. This view can be traced as far back as early neumatic notations, and it pertains to a modal organisation of melodic material: a linear streaming articulated by reference-tones and conventional formulae.

Tab. 3. Added abbreviations for pitch-specification in F14.



Ex. 2. *Gloria* IV, F14, f. Bv.

One example of this notational and musical style which can provide a useful comparison to F14, and for which it is possible to establish a precise provenance and relatively accurate date, is preserved in the *necrologium* of the Bolognese monastery of San Salvatore, house of the Augustinian canons of the congregation of St Mary

in Reno, now Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10148.[16] On the upper margin of f. 11r is a musical excerpt from the *Credo* («et una sancta catholica et apostolica [*sic*, *recte* «unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam»] ecclesiam […] resurrectionem mortuorum») with a cursive square notation comparable to that in F14 and a relatively florid musical style (fig. 17). Later in the *necrologium* (f. 13v) a remarkably similar hand, if not the same, and showing many of the features of the script in F14, records the donation of a chalice for the use of the monastery dated 1220.[17] The book was in use for at least two centuries, and several hands appear more than once in the writing of obituaries; this, however, is the only entry by this particular hand in the entire *necrologium*, suggesting that the individual had access to the *necrologium* over a relatively short period of time. That the musical addition on f. 11r too might date from the same period is further confirmed by the obituary of a benefactor («Roladinus de Carnilvariis») in 1248 on the following line. The hand responsible for the entry had to slightly descend as he reached the right margin, in order to avoid overlap with the musical annotation, meaning that the latter was already present and that it should predate 1248. That this slant was not due to physical causes such as the curvature of the parchment in a bound volume is confirmed by the fact that other entries on the same folio are written either horizontally or with a slight upwards direction. Therefore, a cautious dating, allowing for a timespan of two decades, would suggest that the *Credo* was entered at some point in the second quarter of the 13th century, possibly between 1220 and 1248.

16. The manuscript, in which were added the names of late brothers and benefactors (often including records of their donations) was prepared in the form of a calendar in the middle of the 12th century and remained in use at least until the second half of the 14th century, as showed by the latest layer of additions. For a complete transcription see G. C. Trombelli, *Memorie istoriche concernenti le due Canoniche di S. Maria di Reno insieme unite*, Bologna, per Girolamo Corciolani ed eredi Colli a S. Tommaso d'Aquino, 1752, *Appendix* I, pp. 317-355. A reproduction of the manuscript is available online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90678019/ (last accessed 05/05/2023).

17. Compare, for example, the shapes for *a*, *c*, etc, and for the abbreviations for *et*, and *-rum*. It is necessary to allow for the possibility that the entry was in fact a copy of an older charter, in which case the hand might be later than the date recorded of 1220.

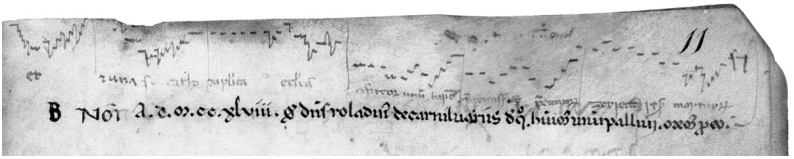


Fig. 17. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10148, f. 11r, detail (©Bibliothèque nationale de France).

This is not the only trace of notation in lat. 10148: a particularly close example to F14 are some short entries on the rear endleaf (f. 22v), possibly pen-trials, as the manuscript context may suggest, although it is not possible to exclude that they may have been instead records of particularly elaborate melodic versions of known chants (fig. 18). However, the lack of text and the difficult legibility of the annotations prevents the identification of the melodies.[18] The status of the material object as a record for the community, was the perfect case of not a formal manuscript, yet not informal either, one that would have been accessed only by those in charge of updating it. The record keeping in a monastery of the 13th century was in charge of the cantor, the second most high figure in a monastery; a figure often responsible for the library, as well as the liturgy. The idea that cursive square notation was practiced by highly trained singers, and that this may be associated also to a level of education and status is therefore a possibility worth considering.

What links these examples in lat. 10148 to F14 is a manuscript copy of the same *Credo* excerpt now in Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.2, F37. The volume is a collection of handwritten reproductions of music manuscripts, some of which were commissioned to artists and scribes, while many are autographs of Padre Martini,

18. Most notably, the notation on the bottom margin appears to be a record of some intonation for the Hebrew letters sung for the *Lamentations* of Jeremias (*Aleph*, *Gimel*, *Zayin*, and *Hei* are readable). The musical entry was written no later than the second decade of the 13th century as it predates an illustration of a Christ *pantocrator*, which in turn was drawn before an entry dated 1218 and commemorating bishop Hugo of Ostia's (then Pope Gregory IX) intervention in Bologna to resolve local political conflicts and impose Frederick II's authority.

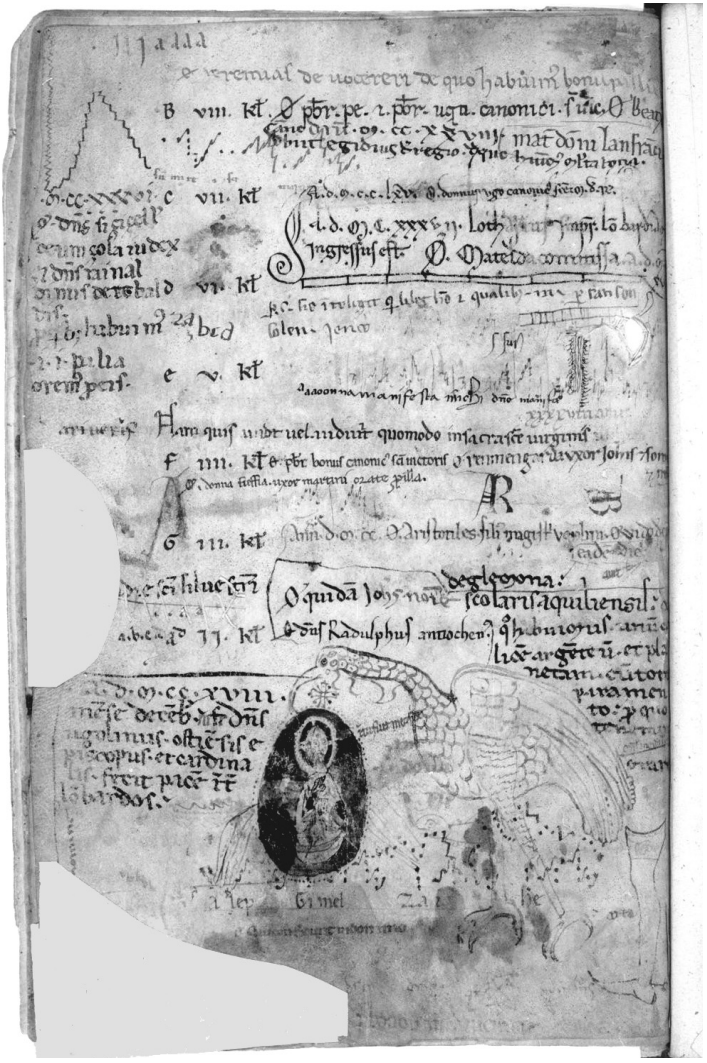


Fig. 18. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10148, f. 22v (©Bibliothèque nationale de France).

possibly sketched when he accessed volumes that could not be removed or acquired. This is also the case of lat. 10148, which Martini consulted while the *necrologium* was still at San Salvatore.[19] While there, on a paper sheet Martini copied the *Credo* on f. 11r, as well as the hymn *Ihesu quadragenarie dictator* from the fragment of a 13th-century hymnal reused as front flyleaf (f. 1r).[20] He also reproduced an excerpt from the gradual *Priusquam te formarem* accompanied by a note saying that he found it a fragment in the same monastery of San Salvatore.[21] While this has not survived, there is at least one other fragment of a 13th-century Gradual (Bologna, Biblioteca della Musica, Q.3, F37) which Martini must have acquired from San Salvatore, featuring a well-formed square notation with a clear tendency to connecting music signs in larger neumatic formations.[22] Because of his scholarly and antiquarian interest in music manuscripts, it is highly plausible that, on his visit to the monastery, Martini may have collected F14 too, especially since the fragment was used as wrapper of a binding and destined to be disposed of. The elements discussed so far, namely the connections between F14 and the musical entries in Lat. 10148, the attested visit of Padre Martini to San Salvatore where he acquired the fragment Q.3 F37, may suggest a possible origin for the fragment in the Augustinian house.[23]

19. Since the monastery of San Salvatore was only ca. 800 hundred meters away from Martini's house in Via Pietralata, it is extremely probable that he visited the library in person. Martini's added note is «frammento di un Credo con caratteri di musica antichi estratti da un codice scritto in pergamena degli anni 1100-1200 de [?] *Canonicorum Sanctae Mariae de Reno et Sancti Salvatoris de Bononia defunctorum familiarium quoque propinquorum ac benefactorum Catalogus instar Calendarii*».

20. Martini's note is «Inno che trovasi nei Cartoni, o sia carte di riguardo di pergamena de antecedente codice [*i.e. necrologium*]».

21. Martini's note is «Parte del Graduale della Messa della Natività di San Giovanni Battista che trovasi in una pergamena nel monastero di San Salvatore di Bologna». While it is not specified if the fragment was originally part of a gradual, a cantatorium, or a missal, the neumatic notation accurately reproduced by Martini would suggest a date to the (early) 11th century.

22. The provenance is attested by the presence of an ex libris by a 15th-century hand: «Iste liber est conventus Sancti Salvatoris de Bononia in Porta Nova: et est signatus in inventario 83».

23. The musical activity at San Salvatore during the late Middle Ages is discussed in R. Pieragostini, *Rediscovering Lost Evidence: Little-Known Fragments*

Lastly, since the Bolognese monastery was part of the congregation of St Mary in Reno, the presence of a rare *planctus Mariae*, *Virgo plorans filium*, would constitute an additional element in favour of a possible relationship between F14 and a centre with a particularly strong Marian devotion like San Salvatore.

3. An Attribution

The role of singers in the composition of plainchant melodies is notably difficult to assess. The very idea of a composition, with reference to much of the repertory of medieval liturgical chant, implicates deep discussions on the role of orality and improvisation, as well as of the dynamics of written and manuscript transmission; the results of such reflections are often only relevant within a precise musical, chronological, and cultural context. Even assuming that, by the central Middle Ages, a certain number of liturgical chant melodies may have been composed by individuals and consequently taken up by a community, lack of evidence such as explicit attributions does not allow us to understand the extent and forms of this phenomenon and, more importantly, the identity of the "composers". Moreover, identities and attributions are more of a modern concern: the virtue of *humilitas*, peculiar of monastic mysticism, as well as the predominantly oral and restricted diffusion in the early phases of transmission of such melodies prevented the singer-composers' contributions to the creation and shaping of a particular chant – or series of chants, *i.e.* saints' *historiae* – to be recorded in writing, with only a few exceptions; one of such rare case may be that of F14.

Written in red ink next to *Deo gratias* II (Ar) and *Gloria* IV (Bv) is the following inscription: «canctus [*sic*] domini Mathej»; '[this is/these are the] chant(s) by (of/for) *dominus Matheus*' (fig. 1a).[24] The

with English Polyphony in Bologna, in «Music & Letters», 92 (2011), 3, pp. 343-376.

24. The spelling «canctus» for «cantus», is so rare that it is even difficult to connect it to a particular *usus scribendi* and there is no occurrence of such spelling in the *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum*. A possible explanation is that «canctus» may be a hypercorrection of someone used to say «santus» for «sanctus», thus thinking that the correct spelling of «cantus» should be «canctus», suggesting that the scribe was a speaker of a Romance language (SANCTUS > it. sp. *santo*, fr.

inscriptions are by the same hand as the chant texts, which would indicate that the music scribe was the one responsible for entering the attribution. Moreover, the attribution appears on the same side of the fragment, but on two different folios, meaning that it was added in two different parts of the original gathering, adding a certain layer of intentionality.[25] The inscription was not an informal and casual addition, but a distinctive feature of the original musical collection, and possibly even one of the reasons behind the compilation, as if this was meant to contain all chants by Matheus, or a selection thereof.

There are, however, three aspects of this attribution that remain unsolved. Firstly, since *cantus* in this context can mean both 'chant' or 'chants', it is unclear whether the attribution referred only to the particular piece next to the inscription, or to the series beginning with *Gloria* IV and the incomplete *Gloria* V. The inscription on Ar, for example, may refer to either all three *Deo gratias* responses, or to just one. However, it would be perplexing to find such an attribution only for the responses to the dismissal formula, so there is a possibility that the whole series of *Benedicamus domino* and *Deo gratias* were both associated to Matheus. Yet, if there was originally a third *Benedicamus domino* to match the three *Deo gratias*, as I have suggested above, and if Matheus was actually to be associated to both series (3+3), then the attribution would have been written in the margin of the first now-lost *Benedicamus domino*. In this case, it is possible that the attribution was meant to identify a series of pieces, and Matheus was written twice, both for the dismissal formula and for the response. Secondly, the genitive («domini Mathei») may be intended to mean either 'by' or 'of', implying respectively that

saint, etc.) – rather than a Germanic one (SANCTUS > ted. *sankt*). I am grateful to Leofranc Holford-Strevens (Oxford) for this interpretation (private communication 04/02/20), which is coherent with an Italian provenance of the fragment, and with what has been discussed above for a possible link with Bologna and the abbey of Santa Maria in Reno. Furthermore, in the *necrologium* from San Salvatore, several charters include the following abbreviation for «domino», «dop[m]no», suggesting that a comparable type of linguistic outcome in case of a sequence of consonants was common in the area.

25. On Bv, even if the inscription is incomplete at the beginning due to trimming, it is possible to determine that the word ended with a *t* with an abbreviation mark, i.e. «cantus» (or more likely «canctus», as on Br).

Matheus may have been either the author, or the source for these chants.[26] Lastly, the title *dominus* was commonly used to refer to lay people rather than clergy. This would raise questions about the possible role of a lay figure in the writing of elaborate chants for the Mass in late Duecento and early Trecento northern Italy. However, one case in which *dominus* may be used in an ecclesiastical context is that of canon regulars, a community of priests living under a rule, exactly like the Augustinian canon regulars of San Salvatore of the Congregation of St Mary in Reno.[27]

Even if San Salvatore appears to be a likely origin for F14, the identity of Matheus is difficult to determine. There are only four «Matheus» mentioned in the *necrologium*: «Matheus diaconus canonicus Sanctae Mariae in Portu» (f. 4r), two «Matheus» lay donors (ff. 15v and 16v), and «Matheus praepositus canonicus Sanctae Mariae de Reno Sancti Salvatoris Bononiae», who died on the 1st December 1328 (f. 21r). Excluding the canon deacon of the Basilica of Santa Maria in Porto in Ravenna – included in the San Salvatore *necrologium* by virtue of being another house of Augustinian canon regulars – and the two lay donors, Matheus canon provost at San Salvatore seems to be a likely figure for the F14 inscription. In particular, the date of his death is consistent with the dating of the script of F14, especially because Matheus of San Salvatore would have likely compiled F14 some time before his death and that his graphic formation took place very probably at the end the 13th century, thus following established graphic canons, going back to the middle of the century, or even as early as the first half. A decorated cross added to the right of the entry – usually reserved for distinguished figures in the *necrologium* – suggests that Matheus of San Salvatore certainly played an influential role in the Bolognese ecclesiastical community. However, especially since there is no mention of his musical activity, the identification of «dominus Matheus» with Matheus of San Salvatore shall remain only a hypothesis. What is significant in this context is the intention by the scribe to associate the repertory

26. There is also the – admittedly less likely – possible interpretation that the genitive would imply that the chants were composed (or written) *for* him.

27. The *necrologium* of San Salvatore contains several entries in which «dominus» («dopmno») is found alongside «canonicus» or «prepositus».

of chants in F14 to a known figure, possibly a remarkable singer, internal to the institution, since no further specification than «dominus Matheus» was needed. This fact, the explicit attribution to an individual, is so rare in the manuscript transmission of liturgical chant that we may safely conclude that F14 preserves the earliest mention of a specific singer, if not composer, of liturgical chant in the history of Italian music.