

# STUDI TASSIANI

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# STUDI TASSIANI

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A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED ADDITION TO THE POEMS  
IN PRAISE OF VIOLANTE VISCONTI:  
AN UNPUBLISHED, AND HITHERTO UNKNOWN,  
AUTOGRAPH CANZONE IN BERNARDO TASSO'S HAND

This paper intends to bring to light a hitherto unpublished and unknown autograph canzone of substantial length – 78 lines over five stanzas – in Bernardo Tasso's hand, thus representing the twenty-seventh extant poem written in praise of Violante Visconti, and hopes to offer a significant contribution for any future evaluation of Bernardo Tasso's juvenilia.<sup>1</sup>

The extant corpus of the poems written for Violante Visconti, as it is currently known, was first partially edited and published by Fortunato Pintor at the turn of the century, and, after decades of critical neglect, reprised and studied by Vercingetorige Martignone, Francesca Martina Falchi and, most recently, by Giulia Casella.<sup>2</sup> It consisted, up to the inclusion of the canzone currently under discussion, of twenty-six poems, the vast majority of which (eighteen between sonnets and madrigals) were later bound, in the second half of the nineteenth-century, in a codex held at the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma. Further individual leaves are scattered in other Italian and European libraries, including Bergamo (one madrigal), Ferrara (one madrigal), Florence (one madrigal and one sonnet), Milan (one canzone, one sestina and one sonnet), Modena (one madrigal) and Vienna (one sonnet); the leaves all show evident folding lines and share identical, or virtually identical, headers, proof of their autonomous quality – and of their epistolary circulation.

As the vast majority of the poems in praise of Violante are sonnets (fourteen) or madrigals (twelve), with two sestinas and, up until the present

1 I am especially indebted to Prof. Massimo Castellozzi whose initial advice and support has been invaluable, and whose encouragement and shared enthusiasm tremendously motivating. I would also like to thank Dott.ssa Mirna Bonazza at the Biblioteca Ariostea in Ferrara and Dott. Trifone Cellamaro at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan for their valuable comments; Dr James Freeman's help with codicological matters was extremely useful. Finally, this paper would not have been possible without the instrumental support of Kingston University's Research Fund, particularly in the person of Prof. Patricia Phillippy. The funding enabled me to consult first-hand the extant Violante poems and other Bernardo Tasso autographs over the course of three different archival and research trips.

2 See in particular FORTUNATO PINTOR, *Delle Liriche di Bernardo Tasso*, Pisa, Tipografia Fratelli Nistri, 1899; VERCINGETORIGE MARTIGNONE, *Tra Ferrara e il Veneto: l'apprendistato poetico di Bernardo Tasso*, «Schifanoia», 2005, 28-29, pp. 303-313; FRANCESCA MARTINA FALCHI, *In Lode di Violante Visconti. Liriche inedite di Bernardo Tasso*, «Studi tassiani», 59-61, 2011-2013, pp. 281-291; GUIDO ARBIZZONI, *Bernardo Tasso*, in *Autografi di letterati italiani. Il Cinquecento*, a cura di Matteo Motolese, Paolo Procaccioli ed Emilio Russo, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2013, pp. 345-358; GIULIA CASELLA, *Prima del 1530: le liriche giovanili di Giovan Battista Giralaldi Cinthio e di Bernardo Tasso*, «Studi Giraldiani», 4, 2018, pp. 95-171.

discovery, only one known canzone, the addition to the corpus of a second canzone is crucial in further establishing the formal variety of Bernardo Tasso's juvenile canzoniere: as Casella notes, the poet's heterogeneous formal choices reveal his desire to 'move away from courtly models [...] in search of a more varied harmony, closer to the Petrarchan model'.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in addition to the canzone at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan and to the one under discussion here, there is evidence of the existence of a third canzone in seven stanza mentioned in an early-20<sup>th</sup> century sales catalogue of a London antiquarian bookseller<sup>4</sup> but now likely lost or in private hands.

The manuscript under discussion consists of a single leaf of paper measuring 315 mm x 185 mm, and shares with the other *Violante* autographs evidence of very clear folding lines; one such line has caused the paper to tear, leading to the loss of the opening syllables of the first three lines of the second stanza. The tear also affects the watermark, of which only a minute trace is visible. On the verso, there is an authentication in the hand of Giovanni Galvani, vice-librarian at the Biblioteca Estense in the 1840s, who certified the authenticity of all extant *Violante* poems (as well as of the now-lost sestina «Per una verde») bar the Ferrara madrigal, which carries a slightly later (1852) authentication signed by Modenese bookseller Giuseppe Luppi and countersigned by Luigi Cittadella in Ferrara. Galvani's statement, aimed at certifying the manuscript's full conformity with the extant Bernardo Tasso autographs held in the Biblioteca Estense, is signed 7<sup>th</sup> January 1842, the same day as Galvani's assessment of the sonnet now in Vienna and of the madrigal now in Bergamo. It faithfully mirrors, in style and terminological choices («li ho trovati pienamente conformi»), Galvani's other authentications.

The dedication of the manuscript records Bernardo Tasso's Arcadian pseudonym, *Il Passonico*, shared by all other extant poems in praise of *Violante*, and the dedicatee is named as *Violante Visconta* (elsewhere *Visconte*), identified

3 CASELLA, *Prima del 1530: le liriche giovanili di Giovan Battista Giralaldi Cinthio e di Bernardo Tasso*, cit., p. 116.

4 There is a reference to a seven-stanza «original holograph manuscript of a poem» by Bernardo Tasso «Sovra la Signora *Violante Visconta il Tassonico* (sic) suo servatori (sic)» in a *Catalogue of Rare and Valuable Autograph Letters, Historical Documents, and Authors' Original Manuscripts*, which was offered on sale by J. Pearson in London in 1907 together with an autograph letter signed by Bernardo and other documents relating to Torquato, bound in the nineteenth century by Torquato's editor and translator Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen. Unfortunately, the catalogue carries no mention of first line, stanza length or content. Although it is not impossible to conjecture that the poem under discussion here might be part of the longer canzone sold by Pearson, it seems more likely that it is two distinct canzoni: the two dedications are similar but not identical, as the honorific 'Ill.' before 'Signora' is present here but not in Pearson; moreover, the Arcadian nom-de-plume *Passonico* is so clearly legible in 'Donna che di beltate' that it seems extremely unlikely that whoever described the autograph for inclusion in the catalogue could have misread it as 'Tassonico'. It has unfortunately been impossible to trace the whereabouts of Pearson's manuscript after 1907.

by Francesca Martina Falchi as the Violante Lampugnani who married Alfonso Visconti in 1512 or 1513, leading the critic to posit a date for the composition of the collection as between 1512 and 1515-16,<sup>5</sup> while Casella, partially basing her dating on an interpretation of the madrigal *Sopra el diluvio*, suggests instead a slightly later date range for the canzoniere (1520-1525).<sup>6</sup> Finally, it is worth mentioning briefly the authorial corrections which can be found throughout the autograph. While on one occasion these aim at correcting a mistake ('si serrebbe cangiato' in the third-last line), and while in most other instances they simply reveal a preference for a different syntactical or terminological expression, or turn of phrase (e.g. 'stava' > 'era' in l. 24, or 'sdegno' > 'schivo' in l. 66), on one occasion at least they betray a more semantically significant change of heart: 'rendo' in l. 46 is erased for 'dono', thus emphasizing the spontaneity and willingness intrinsic to the cupid's submission to love over a pre-existent sense of belonging. Semantically or syntactically there is nothing to suggest the canzone is incomplete, bar the lack of an envoy at the close of the poem bidding farewell to the work – per se not an indispensable requirement of every canzone. On the one hand, the rhyme scheme,<sup>7</sup> which remains identical throughout the five stanzas and is somewhat interrupted at line 10 of the fifth stanza, might indicate, especially through the lack of a concluding, effective rhyming couplet, that there should have been one or more stanzas to the canzone;<sup>8</sup> on the other hand, the paratextual material suggests that, at least in 1842, the canzone already only consisted of this single leaf, as Galvani's authentication is placed on the bottom half of the second page (as opposed to near the conclusion of the poem, on a hypothetical third page). The other possibility is, of course, that it was left unfinished, at this stage, by Tasso himself.

### *Provenance and ownership*

The autograph was for a long time in the ownership of artist Nino Natale Proto (Ovada, 1908-1997), painter and collector who was very active in the literary and cultural scene of this small Piedmontese town, and who co-

5 FALCHI, *In Lode di Violante Visconti. Liriche inedite di Bernardo Tasso*, cit., p. 286.

6 CASELLA, *Prima del 1530: le liriche giovanili di Giovan Battista Giralaldi Cinthio e di Bernardo Tasso*, cit., pp. 105-6

7 The first two stanzas are seventeen lines long, with the fifth shorter at ten lines. The first two stanzas rhyme ABbaAcCDdEFGfEGhH; the third follows the same rhyme scheme but has an heptameter, rather than an hendecasyllable, as the eight line (ABbaAcDdEFGfEGhH); the fourth inverts the length of the fourth and fifth lines but goes back to an hendecasyllable for the eighth (ABbAacCDdEFGfEGhH); the final, possibly incomplete, stanza rhymes ABbAacCDdE.

8 The only other surviving canzone dedicated to Violante, 'Lingua, s'al mio desir alto, immortale' at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, comprises five eighteen-line stanzas (rhyming ABCCbAaddEefGgFgHH), plus a final ten-line envoy concluding with a rhyming couplet.

founded, in 1957, the cultural association Accademia Urbense, instrumental in helping inject some vitality in a town that, at the time, was without a library or a secondary school. In turn, Proto had acquired the manuscript from his master and mentor Alberto Helios Gagliardo (Genoa 1893–1987), a symbolist painter active from 1912 onwards and whose well-regarded paintings and etchings were exhibited internationally. Towards the end of his life, Proto donated the letter to close friend Prof. Enrico Scarsi, in whose ownership it still sits today; the circulation of the autograph between 1842 and the unspecified time it joined Helios Gagliardo's collection is unknown.

### *Transcription criteria*

A criterion of maximum conservativity was adopted for both morphological and syntactic aspects of the manuscript. Only the graphic alternation of u/v and i/j has been modernized; capitalization and all punctuation marks have been left unchanged. For the three lines where a tear in the leaf has meant one or more words, or a partial word, have been lost, tentative suggestions have been provided in order to facilitate reading, and are highlighted in angle brackets (<>). Authorial corrections have been faithfully reproduced, both in those cases where the final version is a clear departure from the original choice, and in the one case where the correction is merely aimed at fixing a mistake (as in line 75). Corrections are indicated via strikethroughs. The verso commences with the line 'Poscia da l'altro lato'.

SELENE SCARSI

## DONNA CHE DI BELTATE OGN'ALTRA EXCEDE

Sovra la Ill. Signora Violante | Visconta il Passonico suo | servitore;

Donna che di beltate ogn'altra excede,  
viddi in un colle diletto ameno,  
Tal che di stupor pieno,  
Come chi cosa vede  
Non solita a veder, e a pena il crede  
Io me ne stava in forsi:  
Pur tanto inanzi la mia vista porsi,  
Ch'io viddi il vero, e pien di meraviglia,  
Drizai ambe le ciglia  
Intento a remirar verso quel loco,  
Ma tal splendor uscì de' gli occhi soi:  
Ch'io restai come quel che affisa il sole  
Che volgendosi poi,  
Riman cecato dal splendente foco:  
Mancommi in un momento le parole,  
E mirandola fiso  
Vedeo tutto il ben dil paradiso;

Q<uattro> colombe, candidette, e belle  
<Trageva>no il carro, ove la bella Donna,  
<Con> una bianca gonna,  
Di raggi, e di fiammelle  
Intorno cinta, e di minute stelle  
Sedeasi honesta altiera,  
Stava Era d'ambi doi lati una gran schiera  
Di spiritelli, con le faci ardenti,  
E con strali pungenti,—  
Indi d'amanti una gran turba vidi,  
Venir seguendo il triomphante seggio,  
Di lacci havendo assai gravose some  
E 'l lor titol egreggio,  
Portavan scritto in fronte, e con gran gridi  
Rempievan l'aria di quel santo nome:  
Et ella gli occhi piano  
Volgendo rallegrava il monte 'l piano;

Eran sospesi al bel carro d'intorno,  
Mille trophei, de l'amorose imprese,  
Tra gli altri vi comprese  
Sovra un bel tronco adorno  
Le mie misere spoglie ond'hebbi scorno:  
Pocchia da l'altro lato  
Vidi venir un pargoletto armato,  
Timido alquanto, e paventoso in vista:

E con sembianza trista,  
 Inginochioni posto nanzi a lei  
 Prima adorolla, e poscia alzando il sguardo  
 Disse, Signora a te prigion mi ~~rendo~~, dono,  
 Come vile, e codardo,  
 Che senza dubbio tu piu degna sei  
 D'esser Donna dil mondo, ch'io non sono:  
 E ~~perche non son degno~~, Essendo dunque indegno  
 Io ti rinuntio il mio soperbo regno;

Quelli son quei prigion che col mio telo  
 Feci soggetti al mio stato reale:  
 Hora Donna immortale  
 Son tutti toi, e da qui inanzi il cielo  
 Rendera caldo, e gielo  
 A tuo voler, gli strali  
 Ti dono, l'arco, e mie le dorat' ali:  
 Indi volgendo le veloci piante  
 Con lagrimette alquante,  
 Come chi perde cosa cara, e bella,  
 Pianse il suo danno, tal ch'io piansi sieco,  
 Vedendo il poverel dil regno privo,  
 Girsene ignudo, e cieco,  
 Maledicendo la sua cruda stella:  
 E credo viver piu prendesse a ~~degno~~ a schivo:  
 E per satiar sua sorte  
 Con le sue proprie man si desse morte;

Stava Giove, e gli Dei altri in un canto  
 Attenti a contemplar quella beltate  
 Con tanta maiestate,  
 E gli vidi turbar il volto santo,  
 D'un amoroso incanto:  
 E volentieri in tauro,  
~~Si sereb cano~~ Si serrebbe cangiato, o in poggia d'auro  
 Giove, ma quando gli occhi in quella parte,  
 Volse quella egli e Marte  
 Bassorno il sguardo, e diventorno morti.

*Confrontato il presente manoscritto cogli autografi di Bernardo Tasso |  
 posseduti dalla Estense li ho trovati pienamente conformi. | Dalla R. Biblio-  
 teca Estense | a di 7 gennaio 1842. | In fede | Gio. Galvani Vice Bibliotecario*

## A B S T R A C T E K E Y W O R D S

MASSIMO COLELLA, *Torquato Tasso e il «De fuga saeculi» di Sant’Ambrogio. Una nuova fonte (e altro) per il «Monte Oliveto»* [Premio Tasso 2020]

*Abstract:* The present paper aims at tracing a correct semantic decoding of the *Monte Oliveto* (a poem on a sacred subject belonging to the last phase of Torquato Tasso’s literary production), almost always obtained through the acknowledgment of intertextual referents, and providing a large series of clarifications useful for the interpretation of the text.

The essay identifies with absolute certainty an important source underlying the texture of the poem (and, in particular, of a long section of it), the *De fuga saeculi* by Saint Ambrose: a truly decisive source which, despite its conspicuous importance in the economics of the *Monte Oliveto*, has so far remained hidden in the history of studies.

Once unveiled, the patristic model allows us to enter the poet’s intertextual workshop, evaluating the strategies and methods of re-elaboration, and to better understand the *lictera* itself of the taxian text.

The essay demonstrates, in a broader perspective, the absolute need to relate the poem to its sources, be they biblical, patristic or hagiographic (with reference, for this latter point, to the biographies of Bernardo Tolomei, founder of the Olivetan Congregation).

*Keywords:* *Monte Oliveto*, Saint Ambrose, *De fuga saeculi*, patristics, intertextuality

YUJI MURASE, *Some effects of separated direct speech in Tasso’s «Gerusalemme liberata»* [Premio Tasso 2020]

*Abstract:* Torquato Tasso uses direct narrations actively and effectively in his *Gerusalemme liberata*. A direct speech is generally accompanied by an expression of reporting (e. g. “he said”) which precedes the speech or is inserted in it. Tasso makes a skillful use of the insertion of reporting expression, creating various effects in his epic. This essay examines instances of the direct speech separated by the insertion of reporting expression in *Gerusalemme liberata*, making a statistical comparison with those of Boiardo’s *L’Innamoramento de Orlando* and Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*. The data reveals that Tasso has a tendency to insert the reporting expression immediately after the first word of the speech. This characteristic separation has a function of emphasizing a word or a phrase following the insertion of reporting, as well as the first isolated word. Furthermore, it contributes to making a vivid depiction of the speaker in dramatic situation by interrupting

his speech at its beginning. It also gives a tone of graveness to some supernatural beings who say an important message. The study concludes that Tasso uses his particular type of direct speech to create a realistic epic like the works of Vergil or Homer.

*Keywords:* *Gerusalemme liberata*, direct speech, reporting expression, graveness

MASSIMO COLELLA, «*Voi avete albergato le muse fra' negozi*». *La tensione desiderativa delle fughe perenni ne «Il Malpiglio secondo»*

*Abstract:* Torquato Tasso wrote the dialogue *Il Malpiglio secondo ovvero del fuggire la moltitudine* between 1583 and 1585, during the period of internment in the hospital of Sant'Anna.

Although the apparently anodyne nature of the title makes one think at first glance of a text in which an ancient cultural and literary *topos* is wearily repeated, the dialogue actually turns out to present numerous original aspects.

A polycentric intellectual (and existential) voyage, always open to changes of perspective and characterized by various points of view and philosophical achievements that are continually overcome, is the centrepiece of the rich analysis provided in this essay.

*Keywords:* *Dialoghi, Il Malpiglio secondo*, library space, *Wunderkammer*, act of reading, mnemonic system, philosophy, loneliness, multitude, voyage, escape

SERENA NARDELLA, «*Rimuovere il velo da la scena*». *Sul mutamento linguistico della «Conquistata»*

*Abstract:* The research has been developed with the objective of analyzing the linguistic rework of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, initially focusing on ideological and content differences compared to the *Liberata*, then on the linguistic modalities of the second poem in order to identify potential alterations with respect to the first. After a careful observation of the sixteenth-century polemical writings written by the Academicians of the Crusca and the defenses of Tasso and other literary men, the linguistic features discussed were isolated and their frequency was verified in parallel in the two works and in the contemporary and previous production, in order to investigate the origin of the critical interventions and of the new stylistic choices of the poet.

*Keywords:* Torquato Tasso; *Gerusalemme Liberata*; *Gerusalemme Conquistata*; History of the language; Accademia della Crusca

ELENA DE BORTOLI, *I libri storici dell'Antico Testamento nella «Gerusalemme conquistata»: quattro figure esemplari*

*Abstract:* In the rewriting of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the Historical Books of the Bible (especially the Pentateuch and the Books of Kings) have an important role. Tasso, in fact, uses some exemplary figures of the Old Testament to achieve his goal, that is the realization of his ideal of the epic Christian poem, where the First Crusade becomes part of the sacred history. The figures examined in this paper are David, Solomon, Moses and Joshua; all these characters are mentioned through their works (for Solomon, the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem and its furniture), their glorious actions (David who kills Goliath), their miracles (the miracle of the manna in the desert; God that stops the curse of the sun to allow Joshua to defeat the Amorite). However, Tasso also writes about their sins and vices, all punished by God (for example the lust of David for Bathsheba, punished with the death of their first son). Many of these quotes are used to provide accurate geographical indications (Tasso usually mentions specific places around Jerusalem, referring to events happened there) that not only respond to the need for a greater truthfulness of the poem but also have the essential task of giving an example and a moral teaching to the reader.

*Keywords:* *Gerusalemme conquistata*, David, Salomone, Mosè, Giosuè

ELENA BILANCIA, *Encomio, idolatria e purgazione nel «Cataneo ovvero de gli idoli» e nel progetto editoriale delle «Rime» di Torquato Tasso*

*Abstract:* The article aims to offer an interpretation of the thematic tripartition of Torquato Tasso's *Rime*, according to the order envisioned by the author at the beginning of the 1590s. Following the arguments on lyrical praise expounded in the dialogue *Il Cataneo ovvero de gli idoli* (1585) and in other theoretical considerations of those years, the paper attempts to trace in epideictic rhetoric the criterion for ordering the three books of Tasso's lyrical corpus. The macro-structural division into amorous rhymes, praises of illustrious women and men, and finally praise of "sacred things" seems to follow an ascending path towards the sacred, aimed at glorifying the poet's genius in a *crescendo* parallel to the value of the lyrical subject and at purging the language of all simulacra generated by poetic mimesis.

*Keywords:* Epideictic rhetoric; Lyrical theory; Idols; Poetic purgation

MARIKA INCANDELA, *Osservazioni su strutture e forme della canzone «Osanna»*

*Abstract:* The essay proposes a study of the songs printed in the 1591 *Osanna* edition, in order to define their metrical and stylistic physiognomy. The analysis begins with the examination of the metrical schemes used, the model from which they are taken and the number of stanzas each song consists of. In particular, the

revival of Petrarch's model is highlighted by the use of metrical schemes inspired to the *Canzoniere*. The morphology of the stanzas is then examined on the basis of the absence or presence of links between the *piedi* and the *sirma*, through processes of syntactic coordination/subordination or *enjambement*. In the end, Tasso's song *O ne l'amor che mesci* – Osanna CXLVII – is analysed with particular attention to the different strophic types alternating throughout its structure.

*Keywords:* Osanna songs metric, syntax, Petrarch's model

SELENE SCARSI, *A recently-discovered Addition to the Poems in Praise of Violante Visconti: an unpublished, and hitherto unknown, autograph Canzone in Bernardo Tasso's hand*

*Abstract:* This article brings to light, for the first time, a hitherto unknown and unpublished autograph canzone in Bernardo Tasso's hand, currently in private ownership. The 78-line poem, in five stanzas, is part of a series of twenty-seven poems written in praise of Milanese noblewoman Violante Visconti, and can be dated to the early 1520s. Signed 'Il Passonico' (Tasso's Arcadian nickname), it carries the same authentication as the majority of the other poems for Violante Visconti (Giovanni Galvani, Ferrara 1842). The paper includes the full text of the canzone as well as some critical annotations, and it hopes to offer a significant contribution to the extant scholarship on Bernardo Tasso's juvenilia.

*Keywords:* Bernardo Tasso; manuscript; autograph; canzone

MATTIA PERICO, *La risata Liberata. La «Gerusalemme» di Marcello tra pedagogia e umorismo*

*Abstract:* In the field of reinterpretations of the classics, Marcello Toninelli and his *Rinaldo: la Gerusalemme Liberata a fumetti* stand out for their irreverence and refinement.

The article explores and also explains Marcello's working method, starting from his *Dante* up to the reinterpretation of the Tasso's masterpiece. By frequently comparing tassian octaves and humorous strips, we will focus on adherence to the text, on the quotes and on the types of humor put into play by the cartoonist, as well as on his pedagogical intent.

*Keywords:* Marcello Toninelli, comic strip, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, reinterpretations, humor

UBERTO MOTTA, *«Che le carte non fosser come l'arene del mare». Sul corpus dei «Dialoghi»*

*Abstract:* From the mid-1950s to present scholars explained and interpreted Tasso's *Dialogues* from different points of view and with different

results. In 2017 at the University of Fribourg a team of researchers was established, led by the author of this paper, with the aim to produce a new edition of this work, fully annotated. In this article, data collected by the team researchers are provisionally summarized in order to propose a critical review of Tasso's work. Contrary to what has often been assumed, the coherence and originality of the corpus are largely confirmed. Our findings indicate that Tasso uses a very large set of ancient and modern sources to fix by writing the fundamental issues of his own culture and of the late-Renaissance civilization.

*Keywords:* Torquato Tasso; *Dialogues*; annotated edition; intertextuality; Renaissance Aristotelianism; Renaissance Platonism