

Senza Vestimenta: *The Literary Tradition of Trecento Song*.

Lauren McGuire Jennings.

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In the musicological world, especially in English scholarship, Trecento song texts are often overshadowed by French *ars nova* compositions and poetry of the same time period. Perhaps this is because of the relative scarcity of extant sources, perhaps it is because musicologists have been hesitant to move beyond the notated score, or perhaps it is due to the traditional thought that musical and literary texts of fourteenth-century Italy are inherently different. Whatever the reason, Lauren McGuire Jennings's new monograph will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of those interested in musicality in Italian texts and the roles these texts played in manuscript culture from the fourteenth century through the end of the Renaissance era.

Senza Vestimenta: The Literary Tradition of Trecento Song focuses not on individual lyrics, but on the mostly nonmusic-centric sources in which they are found. These collections include texts set by composers such as Jacopo da Bologna and Francesco degli Organi (better known to many as Landini) that soon transcended their musical settings. Jennings demonstrates that more often than not, the texts were transmitted independently of their notation and that readers and poets of the era did not segregate *poesia aulica* (serious poetry) and *poesia per musica* (musical poetry) in the same way modern scholars so often do. Jennings accomplishes this through a series of case studies. In some of the manuscripts (such as Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence Palatino 315 and Magliabechiano VII 1078), fourteenth-century madrigal, ballate, and caccia texts are found alongside sonnets by iconic poets such as Dante and Petrarch. Close examinations of the manuscripts featured are commendable, with clearly laid out charts listing song-text inclusions, as well as backgrounds on and reception histories of each collection.

Early chapters primarily defend Jennings's theories of textual transmission, some of which are more successful than others. Later chapters, however, focus more on the manuscripts themselves, with descriptions of quality, provenance, histories of scribes,

and overarching content. This is where the book's true value lies. The reader is connected not only to a better understanding of material culture of the time, but also to those who specifically participated in it. A wide variety of manuscripts are considered, with a special focus on those from the Tuscany region. Some feature the work of professional scribes, but many were copied by amateurs from the merchant and artisan classes for their own edification. This diversity at times presents difficulty in applying the same theories to all manuscripts studied, but Jennings uses the disparity to deconstruct past oversimplification of bipolarities: formal vs. popular, elite vs. working class, musical vs. literary, low vs. high. The author makes it clear that Trecento musical lyrics were appreciated by many, in different formats and with different meanings attached to each. She also convincingly presents later manuscripts to show that Trecento texts had lasting literary value into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, even after their original monophonic and polyphonic settings had lost relevance.

Of special bibliographic interest are the two appendixes found at the end of the book. Together, they may be of great help to future scholars. The first is an alphabetical table of known Trecento song texts with composer, author, and genre indications, as well as textual and musical concordances. The second provides physical descriptions and content listings for relevant literary sources. Hopefully, Jennings's work will inspire others to take a closer look at the contexts in which these early Italian texts were first presented and valued, thereby fostering further discussion of a time and place rich in music, poetry, culture, and historical significance.

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