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**« At every gesture from the lord » :  
Music at banquets, a cornucopia  
of the senses**

*La fusione sinestetica, che disegna la figura dell'abbondanza, proiettata in un continuum di iperbole rappresentativa, sintagma dell'indicibilità, può essere rivelata analizzando il contributo che la musica porge alla realizzazione di quella seduzione sensoriale globale che costituisce la peculiarità comunicativo-rappresentativa del banchetto. Nel presente saggio, si tratterà di cercare di cogliere almeno qualche aspetto dell'interazione tra la performance musicale e i cinque sensi: i nostri attori protagonisti di questa 'commedia' cortese. Cinque, si è detto, e non quattro poiché la musica non comprende l'intero universo uditivo, essendone, al contrario, una declinazione molto parziale ed elitaria, molto specializzata ed artificiosa.*

1. « It is truly something fit for a prince »

I admit that this labor of mine is not one of the seven liberal arts ; but it is, however, so important that, without the element that is its subject, one cannot live, or live well : and it is nonetheless such that the more illustrious the man, the greater the benefit he receives from it ; and to put it in just a few words, it is truly something fit for a prince<sup>1</sup>.

Even though they fall outside the compass of the seven *artes liberales* – which, it must be said, are increasingly inadequate to embrace the entire universe of knowledge and activity in the late sixteenth century – the disciplines presided over by the « most noble office of the Steward » achieve their legitimacy in relation to the function they are called upon to perform, the ornaments they are capable of giving. The higher one's position on the social scale, the more essential the rite of the table is seen to be, without which « one cannot live, or live well » ; the higher one is on the social scale, the more the distance between those who have power over food and those who depend on the food has to take the form of a contrived scene, of the aristocratic identity show *par excellence*.

Giovan Battista Rossetti wrote the dedication of his monumental tribute to the supreme « director » of court tables, the steward, on the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, as though to suggest elliptically an analogous conversion, albeit infinitely more modest, a conversion that informs the gentle reader of the manifold virtues that his noble office embraces and exercises.

Dressed in black, with a plumed hat on his head, the steward is the conductor of a composite multisensorial orchestra, an endless circle of servants, waiters, carvers, decorators, musicians, and so on who inhabit every space of the court.

Before embarking, on one hand, on a technical analysis of the duties of his office, and on the other on the extended *elencatio* of courses and dishes of exemplary meals which he devised, Rossetti constructs a taxonomy of courtly conviviality that identifies the banquet as the height of this experience, differentiating it from « big dinners, and luncheons », just as these latter are differentiated from « domestic » dinners and lunches<sup>2</sup>.

While the number and variety of courses must be adequate for the occasion, what connotes the banquet is the accomplished perfection of all its parts, and above all, the multiplicity of sensorial seductions that distinguish the process of perception, since this process is staged for no reason « *other than to satisfy all the senses*, the eye with cleanliness, loveliness, and inventions, the ear with music and rare entertainments ; smell is in the well-prepared dishes, and taste and touch with perfect condiments, and as varied as the tastes are varied »<sup>3</sup>.

The triumph of total sensorial apperception is the heart and soul of the banquet, its very reason for being. From this arises the power of the identity image it propagates and broadcasts, since, as opposed to other occasions of courtly sociability, all five senses appear involved here : those connected with the consumption of food, obviously (taste, touch, smell), but also sight and hearing. Rather, with a meaningful use of metanoia, these last two are listed first, even though they are less specifically connected with the event.

Perhaps, out of deference to a well-established hierarchy, even a specialist like Rossetti – who writes a treatise devoted completely to the representation of convivial « technicalities » – accepts giving special centrality to the noble senses as driving forces of seduction, as though the « inner rhythm » of the discourses that transform a banquet into a literary event has to be marked off by the marvels that the eye observes and the ear hears, marvels that hide other marvels, metabolizing the more pertinent narratives of the delights of smell, touch, and taste which, in the chronicles of the time, appear usually to remain in the background, barely hinted.

Decontextualizing Erasmus's concept of *copia* from the model to be adopted for literary compositions<sup>4</sup> to the sensorial abundance for which the banquet is a metaphor, we could seek to follow the ways in which meanings are multiplied, investigating the cornucopia of the senses which produce sense.

The synesthetic fusion which designs the figure of abundance, projected in a continuum of representative hyperbole, syntagma of inexpressibility, can be revealed

by analyzing the contribution music offers to the realization of the all-encompassing sensorial seduction that, Rossetti *docet*, constitutes the special communicative and representative quality of the banquet. Thus we shall attempt here to capture at least some aspects of the interaction between the musical performance and the five senses : our leading actors in this courtly « play ». Five, we have said, and not four, since music does not embrace the entire auditory universe, as it is, on the contrary, a very partial and elite form of sound, highly specialized and contrived.

## 2. « Musica iocunditatem convivii augmentat »

« Like a ruby set in a gold jewel is the appearance of musicians at a wine feast »<sup>5</sup>. Quoting this passage from Ecclesiasticus, Johannes Tinctoris, in his *Complexus effectuum musices*, discusses the eighteenth effect produced by our discipline, which consists precisely in amplifying the merry atmosphere at table : « for just as the ruby double the gold's splendor, so does melody the gaiety of the banquet »<sup>6</sup>. Other classical and biblical sources are cited by the Franco-Flemish theoretician to bear witness to this archetypal function : a poem by Horace<sup>7</sup>, a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid*<sup>8</sup>, from *Institutio Oratoria* by Quintilian<sup>9</sup>, and finally, the book of Isaiah<sup>10</sup>.

But the ancient sources serve, equally, to legitimate a modern custom, in full vogue in the second half of the fifteenth century, when in all probability the treatise was written. As we know, from the past to the present, the habit continued into the future, constituting an enduring *topos* that survived well beyond the fifteenth century :

And we see that this custom is alive and well in our own time : for we know that to the splendid banquets of the most important people are invited musicians of every type, singers and players of flutes and percussion instruments, organists and players of the lyre and bagpipes and trumpets which harmonize together so melodiously as to evoke the true image of heavenly beatitude<sup>11</sup>.

The reference is astonishing to the « *supernorum gaudiorum* » which music seems to materialize in the fully secular context of a banquet, but perhaps, more than a direct allusion to the theological gladness of the paradisiacal singing of the righteous admitted to contemplation of the divine, is the reference to a more all-embracing harmonizing quality of music, its intrinsic capacity to mediate between heaven and earth, and in a microcosmic perspective, between body and spirit :

When we think it is time, returning home, sitting at the table, now with sounds now with songs bringing in the dishes, we shall refresh body and soul, each tired out by its characteristic exercise<sup>12</sup>.

In the early sixteenth century, Angelo Firenzuola specified in an ethical sense the function of music in the banqueting sphere, evoking its ontological capacity to re-establish a psycho-physical balance compromised by the toil of living. Analogously, almost a century later, in an encomiastic sonnet « sung with great grace » at the « magnificent banquets and feasts with very delicate music » to celebrate the wedding of Eleonora Gonzaga to Emperor Ferdinand II, music is shown to be, at one and the same time, a sensory metaphor for the supersensory harmony that governs the world and a « brake » on the excesses of the spirit :

I, who already full of horror and fears,  
 And exposed to the ire of Mars and of Death,  
 Accustomed between blood and flames to hear  
 Fierce roars and querulous laments ;  
 Now my glad and pleasant banks  
 I see blooming between the snows and the sky :  
 I hear the waters, the earth, and the heavens rejoice  
 To the harmony of musicians in accord  
 Every soul reluctant before the just curb  
 Of the great Jove on earth the Eagle adores,  
 Ah what mortal strength dares not presume.  
 What deity is on these shores, and honors them in this way ?  
 Thus speaks the Danube, and Echo hidden  
 In a nearby cave says, LEONORA<sup>13</sup>.

The *topos* of music at banquets is thus nourished with other *tòpoi*, which stratify the convention as if it were an unending parade of Chinese boxes, each one inside the other, but each not necessarily consistent with the other. Anomaly is always lurking in wait, and the tradition is built also by absorbing, and at the same time metabolizing, this anomaly.

If, indeed, music can add to and augment the moderate merriness of a decent banquet, it can just as well accompany the unbridled drunkenness of a licentious banquet, as shown by this engraving (fig. 1) taken from *Homo microcosmus hoc est parvus mundus macrocosmo*<sup>14</sup> to which another verse from Ecclesiasticus can be referred : « The custom of a lying man is dishonor, and infamy is always with him »<sup>15</sup>.

### 3. Music as a herald

But, above and beyond any ethical connotations, from which music is *ab origine* exempt, the fragile ridge separating the Orphic from the Dionysian-Bacchic dimension, the prime « organizational » function performed by music in the banquet is the

structuring of time, the organization of diachronic experience : music is the herald that signals the *initium et finis* of the meal and, at the same time, cadences and counterpoints the courses.

The processional function, probably the most ancient, is testified by a plethora of sources that extend over a long period, starting at least in the Middle Ages.

At a banquet for the investiture of Gian Galeazzo Visconti as duke of Milan, held on 5 September 1395, after the noble guests had entered the banquet hall, « hands were bathed in water distilled with precious aromas, and then followed the courses, all accompanied by trumpets and other various sounds »<sup>16</sup>. This is the unvarying rite of « initiation » to the banquet, known by the term *corner l'eau*, in which the guests, washing their hands in perfumed water, wait for the sound marking the beginning of the feast : it is a ritual beginning, strictly codified, in which three senses immediately interact in close connection with each other : touch, smell, and hearing.

The fact that fifes and trumpets play an important role in the organization of the « show » at these events can be deduced both from the considerable number of them – there were twenty, for example, at a banquet held in Pistoia on 26 April 1388<sup>17</sup> and a good « fifty, of various princes » at the wedding feast of Roberto Malatesta and Isabella di Montefeltro held on 24 June 1475, for the considerable sum of four-hundred ducats<sup>18</sup> – and from the custom of having them sometimes eat at the « first tables » :

At said wedding were fifty women well decked out and richly dressed and similarly thirty youths to make merry, very well-dressed ; and usually dining at each meal were fifty citizens among the relatives and friends and neighbors of the city leaders, so that at the first tables, counting the women and the homebound girls, and fifes and trumpets, one-hundred-seventy people were eating, and at the second and third and fourth tables many people were eating, so that five-hundred people ate at that meal<sup>19</sup>.

The « first tables » were immediately adjacent to the « head table », usually set under a canopy, where the bride and groom ate along with a restricted circle of illustrious guests ; this closeness to the hosts was not only a sign of consideration but also and above all a functional necessity, connected with the performance of the musicians' institutional duties, a familiarity that certifies spatially the ideal availability to leap into action « at every gesture of the lord with their sound to exhilarate the soul, and bring refreshment to it, and consequently to all the court »<sup>20</sup>.

But what, in detail, is the structure of this composite, multisensorial « garland » that cyclically runs through the banquet hall ?

First came two pages dressed in black velvet, with two burning white torches in their hands, then six trumpeters playing, after whom came two more pages dressed like the first, with their torches, followed by the head steward, wearing a robe of black velvet, with beautiful decorations on it, and with a gold stick in his hand, and he had on his left side an under-steward honorably dressed. Behind these came the bearers of the dishes, with a band of green sarsenet at the neck and a gold and silk tassel hanging down the back, and with similar ties at the legs. First came a page dressed in green velvet, with a large platter in his hands, made in the shape of a seashell, inside which was an imitation lawn in the middle of which was a fine laurel tree, which had in its shade countless plants of white lilies, which seemed really to have grown there, with a motto that said *NON COELI VIOLENTIA FRANGET*, which in our language means that the violence of the sky cannot ruin or break these lilies, since the laurel tree is safe from lightning, whose meaning was that the soul that has drawn near to the virtues and armed itself with them could rest in safety from the trials and fortunes of this world. After this came the waiters with their dishes<sup>21</sup>.

The seduction of the event transformed into a discourse, into a narrative act that makes it unforgettable, proceeds from the dialogue of the noble senses, to which it is fair to add at least the fragrances emanating from the food, aromas that are not expressly evoked here but were certainly present in the room : two pages with white torches in their hands who add light to a place already full of light from the « many lit torches all around that made that room as light as the day »<sup>22</sup>, followed by the six trumpets, a composite ornament that has the nature of an emblem, and finally the many dishes of this first course.

Analyzing these « trips » that periodically traverse the banquet hall, can we try to reconstruct at least some aspects of their *inner rhythm*<sup>23</sup> ? Within a repetitive order, differences are made evident by the diversity of emblems, foods, and musical ensembles. These latter, in particular, succeed each other according to the following cadence :

1. First trip :

- a. Six trumpets<sup>24</sup>.
- b. Fifes and Trombones<sup>25</sup>.

2. Second trip :

- a. *Viola d'arco* players playing the sweetest music<sup>26</sup>.

3. Third trip :

- a. Music of cornets, flutes, and voices, which made the whole room resound with the sweetest tones<sup>27</sup>.
- b. Beautiful concert [of] bagpipes, lutes, harpsichords, tambourines, flutes, and voices<sup>28</sup>.

4. After the first tablecloth is removed :

- a. music of countless instruments, organs, harps, cymbals, trombones, cornets, flutes, fifes, violas, lutes, harpsichords, and sweet voices with other sorts of sounds<sup>29</sup>.

It is against the background of processional rituality that the differentiation is produced : not only, linguistically speaking, is music the abstract archetype of repetition and, at the same time, its differential content, but here, concretely, *variatio* is effected by means of *amplificatio* that provides for the studied progressive accumulation of instruments and voices that reaches its apex « after the first tablecloth is removed ».

The music is structured as the instrument of oriented measurement of the time of the banquet, as this witness seems implicitly to admit :

When the time came for dinner, the Duchess, attended by His Excellency, passed (as was her custom) by the Empress's chamber, and from there by a secret passage went with their Majesties into the Empress's antechamber, where they dined in the same form that they had lunched that morning, *with an unending concert of various pieces of music, which with extraordinary delight held the attention of all present*<sup>30</sup>.

Even though this was not a banquet, but a reserved and so to speak « domestic » dinner, to adopt Rossetti's terms of classification, it is continuously punctuated by music, in keeping with a custom deeply rooted at the court of Ferdinando II. By producing delight, the musical performance holds the attention of those at table, an attention that could be constantly compromised by the abundant libations and above all, on the more institutional occasions, by the probable endless length of the meal, about which the Venetian ambassador Ambrogio Contarini, for one, complained :

On the first of May 1474 we were in a town called Chio or Magraman, which is outside the above-mentioned Russia, which was governed by a person called Pammartin, a Polish Catholic. We went in to luncheon, to tell the truth honorably set and with everything in abundance, paying me great honor. There was a brother of his who was a bishop and many other gentlemen, and they had some singers who sang. while we dined. I had to stay a very long time at the table, to my great weariness, so that more than anything I needed to rest<sup>31</sup>.

To what does music make the diners pay attention ? As we have already hypothesized, it could help « decode » the progress of the banquet, pointing their attention towards the oriented cadence of the « lived time » which the execution of the music *measures* : we are still in a period when the perception of the passage of time, more than confirmed by sight, was prevalently ruled by hearing, as was true in the Middle Ages when people « knew the time for the most part not visually, but by the sound »<sup>32</sup>.

But knowing the time by its sound means listening to time ; it means not getting distracted while counting the number of times the bell of the church or town

clock strikes, a clock that is not yet a personal object, solidly anchored to a specific visual horizon, but a community object to be used *in absentia*, perceived at a distance. Listening to time means letting the artificial time of time's measurement pass in order to know the real time of daily life, as opposed to the immediate, mediated measurement of sight, which reads the hands on the clock, informing us instantly of the time of day.

Even though universally intelligible, the progressive increase in the strikes of the bell that mark the passage of the various phases of the day gives us a fundamentally evocative dimension of temporality, not yet sufficiently separated from the human dimension, not sufficiently objective in the presumed sterility of mathematized diachrony. Of the same nature is the time of the banquet made articulate by sound, indeed it is even more subjective, since the ways in which it is marked off are not equally codified, but this does not make them cognitively ineffective or unperceivable by the senses : for what can produce in the guests at table this contemporary *variatio-amplificatio* of the ensembles toward a climax – joined with other signals like the change in the types of dishes brought to the table – if not orientation and directionality ? Sound accompanies the passage of time, giving it sense, by means of a process of temporal spatialization and of contemporary spatial diachronization, activated by the processional form adopted prevalently, in this case, by the musical performance.

#### 4. « If not to satisfy all the senses »

Onto the diachrony that marks off the processional cadence of courses can be superimposed the synchrony of a composite perception that associates the directional sense *par excellence*, sight, with the a-directional and a-perspectival senses of hearing and smell, which can even anticipate and predispose visual perception. In a context so rich in the simultaneous presence of multiple senses, sound, besides giving the auditory measure of the time of the banquet, becomes the preferred instrument for helping organize and structure the colloquy of the senses, their reciprocal interaction, incorporating them into one all-encompassing perceptive synthesis that brings to fruition the specific capacities for synesthetic stimulation that play a fundamental role in the generation of the symbolism of sound.

Indeed, the process of musical perception does not engage just the sense « ear-marked » for it, hearing, but also sight (seeing the musicians and their instruments), touch (the vibrations of the body), and the kinesthetic and muscular dimension (the body's positions and the dynamics of tension and relaxation).

Although the term synesthesia is often used in the sense of a generic inter-relation

among different arts, in psychology it identifies the specific condition of the person who, receiving a stimulus in one sensory mode, simultaneously experiences it also in another. Even not abandoning its specific sense, if we want to use this concept here, it is necessary to substitute for the individual experience of the subject, which the sources do not furnish us, the culturally codified and linguistically expressed association of sensorially diverse qualities.

Within a situation of high social value deliberately designed to satisfy all the senses, which intersections are explicitly emphasized? The relation between sight and hearing is so well-established that there is no need even to mention it again, since almost always, in a period when the technological reproduction of music was still in the future, seeing the musical performance is as much a perceptive precondition for being able to listen to it as it is the locus of a metaphorical action that can transform both sound into vision and, inversely, vision into sound<sup>33</sup>. At a banquet, the pleasures of sight meld and merge continuously with the pleasures of hearing, so much so that these two senses, as we have already pointed out, are the main ones that arouse marvel, in the narrative that transforms a meal into a literary event.

But there are associations that are less usual and even more bound to the specific nature of the occasion, like the one between sounds and smells. Smells and sounds emanate into space in a similar way, and in a similar way they occupy it completely: « mellifluous harmonies and sweetness » are diffused « through the air in an unusual manner »<sup>34</sup>, just as fragrant odors waft through the air :

The Hours wafted over those involved as they came in, and distributed garlands made up of various flowers : At the same time various very fragrant odors were smelled, and Love singing ; and as he crossed the stage he shot various arrows into the listening audience<sup>35</sup>.

At the same time, the « listening audience » *perceives* the smells and *perceives* the music of Alessandro Striggio, a sumptuous concerted piece « with four double-manual harpichords, four violas, two trombones, two tenor recorders, a muted cornet, a flute and two lutes »<sup>36</sup>.

At the same time, the « listening audience » can enjoy the mellifluousness of the music and the pleasant fragrance of the odors, with the adjective *soave* being used hundreds of times in contemporary literary sources to connote both sounds and smells, bearing witness to similar emotional responses even when induced by properties of a different sort<sup>37</sup>.

Even deeper is the connection between touch and music : the Latin word *tactus*, literally « touch », designates the beat that underlies any musical performance. Through music, « bodily tangibility » is extended beyond the body : the sound, at one and

the same time, de-localizes and spiritualizes the tactile dimension, and projects it far into space, preserving its intrinsic narrative quality, since touch, like music, is a movement that becomes real in time. This is why the tempo of music is *tactus* : a « contact » with the body projecting itself outside the body :

After the wedding ceremony was celebrated and the signal given, a new round of bombards was fired and other shots with great pealing of bells, drums, trumpets, cornets, and fifes in great abundance so that the air all around resounded, during which time the seven tables were prepared on the platform of the great throne, and close by the other seven, outside it down lower<sup>38</sup>.

This composite « concert » that encompasses different levels of the formation of sound, from the firing of the bombards to the pealing of the bells, the music of the fifes and trumpets, all enclosed in one *unicum* of perception, sets off a high level of sound vibrations that is reflected in an almost physical, corporeal perception of the sound : not only does « the air all around resound », but also the bodies resound because of the effect of a pressure that « touches » them, localizing their sensations<sup>39</sup>. The play of the dynamics, from *piano* to *forte* and vice versa, defines differing levels of proximity, differing levels of spatialization : « a *forte* sound stretches out to touch, threatens us, collides with us, overwhelms us, a *piano* sound moves away and our pulsations quiet down »<sup>40</sup>.

Music, like a bridge between the senses, is the driving force of perceptive iso-schematisms which produce synesthetic associations that activate semantic units of an all-encompassing sensorial synchretism, « because of which we can accommodate the senses in various pleasures, which is denied to brutes : in music, in smells, in shaped things, in diversity of foods, and new delights of Venus»<sup>41</sup>, a sensorial synchretism that has its triumph in the banquet and seems even to constitute for Equicola the very hallmark of civilization, since « only in a greater aptitude for sensual pleasures are we superior to the animals »<sup>42</sup>.

##### 5. « How the musicians lend their service during the meal »

Music, a herald in motion and, at the same time, an inexhaustible reservoir of synesthetic perception – within a composite garland that allures sight, hearing, and smell, as a prelude to the delight of touch and taste it foretells – does not have its only mode of being in the banquet. The dialectic among the various types of performance can be read, in a nutshell, in this late reconstruction by the Jesuit Paolo Morigia of a wedding feast for the marriage of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio and Beatrice d'Avalos d'Aquino :

Besides Trumpets, & and others, that playing sang on, & many others ran above the ropes ; and a marvellous thing it was, that all the dishes that were brought to the table one by one were accompanied by lit torches, and trumpets, which went in front of the dishes. In those same torches were bird cages, and four-legged animals, and finally there were in them all those sorts of living creatures which were sent to the table cooked<sup>43</sup>.

But, perhaps, the most exemplary source for showing us the many-sided complexity of the « musical situations » which can take place during a meal is the well-known chronicle by Messisbugo which testifies amply to the functional use of a sort of musical « signal system », which helps render the structure of the feast immediately intelligible, at the same time accentuating its playfulness ; this dimension of play is ensured by the enactment of a studied *varietas* that now joins together, now counterposes instruments and voices, artfully contrived music and dance music, madrigals and songs, groups and soloists, bowed instruments and string instruments, winds and keyboards<sup>44</sup>, performances that unfold both in processional form and, prevalently, occupying designated places, like the « beautiful bower, decorated with various arms and festoons, under which the musicians stayed, continuously playing and singing for the duration of the dinner » held at Belfiore on 20 May 1529<sup>45</sup>.

Starting at least in the fifteenth century, we have abundant information about the place usually occupied by the musicians. This is a sort of platform set up high, from which the sound wafts out all over the room<sup>46</sup>, which this fifteenth-century miniature shows us with the immediacy of an icon (fig. 2)<sup>47</sup>.

At the banquet for the marriage of Cosimo de' Medici to Maria Maddalena of Austria, the galleries, where a good two-hundred musicians were stationed, were two, placed up high, one above the other, on the opposite side of the room from the bridal couple's table (fig. 3)<sup>48</sup>.

In a different case, two galleries were set up on opposite sides of the room, facing each other, in a position potentially suited to producing « polychoral » effects, spreading the sound in space :

Up high were then two Lofts, that is to say one on this side of the hall and the other on the other, where there were various couples of sounds of Music, which all in accord together made pleasing harmony<sup>49</sup>.

Attempting a schematic presentation for clarity's sake to organize the various types and functions of music at banquets, we can identify three different levels of involvement of the dimension of sound : a first level on which the simple intervention of trumpets and fifes, with the possible addition of percussions, renders in sound the distribution of the courses at the table, as is shown in a painting

attributed to Davide Ghirlandaio and Sebastiano Mainardi<sup>50</sup> (fig. 4) ; a second level, where the « trips » to bring in the food are progressively enriched with increasingly complex and articulated performances<sup>51</sup> that end up merging, sometimes seamlessly, into the organization of a third level of involvement, when the music becomes fully a show within the show.

A reading of this threefold dialectic in light of the well-known theory on musical patronage worked out by Claudio Annibaldi enables us to note the contemporary presence, in the event, of a « conventional patronage » traditionally tied to the metonymical representation of a noble status through explicitly codified repertoires and genres – in which trumpets and fifes are always an essential element – and a « humanistic patronage », more complex and refined, that metaphorically represents this status through the excellence and artifice of the cultural products promoted and enjoyed by the aristocracy, deliberately « exploited » in a process of « aesthetization of politics »<sup>52</sup>, an aesthetization of politics that ends up turning into an all-encompassing « aesthetization of existence », or, again, of the soul, which is synonymous with politics, according to Plato's sense of the term discussed in the *Gorgias*<sup>53</sup>.

The identification of these three possible categories does not, to be sure, mean that they cannot interact with each other, an interaction that is always present in the representation of identity which takes place at table : they live and coexist together ; they arise from one and develop into the other, as seems to be revealed in the vivid dramatic dialogue by the Neapolitan composer and singer Massimo Troiano, « Musico dell' Illustrissimo & Eccellentissimo duca di Baviera » :

MARINIO : Tell me how they do their music during a meal.

FORTUNIO : After the first delectable dishes have been brought in and hands have been washed, and his Excellency, the Most Serene [Duchess] of Austria, the Most Illustrious Renata seated, with the other Illustrious brothers and sisters and other personages, who never fail to be there : the first commotion having died down, which usually accompanies being seated : the wind instruments, now with the bagpipe, now with flutes, now with fifes, and now with trombones, and cornets playing until the second course : with 'canzone Franzese' and other merry works, do what they have been appointed to do, after Messer Antonio Morari and his companions with their 'viola da braccio' (although sometimes with 'viola da gamba', and with various instruments) now with 'canzone Franzese', now with precious motets, and now with lovely madrigals, with celestial harmony, play until the last service. When the fruit has been brought in, Messer Orlando di Lasso, with his singers, releases their restraints so that with soft and gentle voice they can make the well-devised compositions heard, which each day he presents before them. And often (not without the Duke's great satisfaction) he has them sing some beautiful quartets and well-wrought trios by expert, selected singers : that I can swear I have seen his Excellency leave his meal so as to hear the harmony he loves so well<sup>54</sup>.

Once silence has been imposed, a sign of otherness that requires the cessation of all sound so that another sound can rise up, and at the same time the reserved and protected backdrop that marks off the ritual space of expectation, the wind instruments announce the beginning of the feast, to which a counterpoint is then set up by the most fully-elaborated genres of the polyphony of the period : French songs, motets, and madrigals.

From being a background interacting with myriad other sounds – of voices, the noise of plates, silverware and glasses, even of mouths intent on the lavish meal – music seems to take over, bit by bit, the social space of the banquet, tending and attempting to condition its overall action : ‘canzoni francesi’, motets and madrigals require, as it were demand, attention. Orlando di Lasso, what is more, at the end of the meal, while the fruit is being eaten, « releases the restraints » of his singers, producing an effect that leaves Troiano himself at a loss ; to ward off any possible incredulosity on the part of his readers, he is ready to swear that the duke has been seen to « leave his meal ».

What can this term mean ? It could indicate that the duke got up from the table to go into the adjoining rooms where the musicians were playing their concert, a habit sometimes attested to by the sources<sup>55</sup>, or it could mean simply that he stopped eating ; what appears certain is that he wanted *only* to listen, wanted *only* « to hear the harmony he loved so well » :

MARINIO : As far as I can understand if not say, that his Excellency (among the happiest) at the sound of those tones, with all gladness can sing these two lines by Messer Francesco Petrarck : I nourish the mind with such noble food / that I do not envy Jove his ambrosia and nectar<sup>56</sup>.

Interaction with the other senses seems to be suspended and the « noble food » of the quotation from Petrarck<sup>57</sup> becomes the musical performance, which takes the place of all other food.

On a later occasion, the effect is extended to everyone present at the meal :

FORTUNIO : After the beautiful and artistic Mass was said, just as the other times they went to the table, and I cannot avoid telling you that among so many pieces of music performed there, was a work by Messer Orlando di Lasso, who wrote it for the blissful wedding, with the songs done by the erudite Signor Nicolò Stopio, a Belgian : the first part for five voices was sung by the whole crowd of singers, the second, for four, by only four chosen voices, and so sweetly they sang, and in such a way the imitations one after the other, and artistic, beautiful passages they offered to the ears of the listeners : that all the Most Serene Princes and Most Serene Ladies with the bite of food in their mouths stopped to hear the unheard-of harmony, and until the well-contrived quartet was finished, no one moved from the place where they were sitting<sup>58</sup>.

The « marvel » mentioned various times by Messisbugo as an effect of musical activity brings on, in this case, the paralysis of any activity that is not the attentive listening to Orlando di Lasso's music, which immerses the diners in its own all-encompassing meaning of understanding, imagination, memory. This is a completely anomalous listening condition for a meal, which nonetheless takes place even though in a, so to speak, hostile context in which the experience of music is for the most part merely heard, merged and mixed in with a host of other sensory stimuli with which, as we have seen, it is efficaciously metabolized as a sign of its existence in that place.

Even while making allowances for the narrative hyperbole that can distort the actual truth, the emphatic reference to the illustrious guests who, with their mouthfuls of food, stopped to listen testifies to the anomalous subversion of all balance, the anomalous dissolution of all hierarchy : at least for that moment, from being a component of the festivities the music becomes its symbolic center and beating emotional « heart ».

There is no other banquet marvel that, according to the sources, can provoke an effect like this : neither gustatory nor olfactory nor tactile nor visual... Even while being invaded by a plethora of dishes pouring onto the table, « nonetheless being heard the sweetest music, of which those lords and ladies were more enamored than of the food, often intent solely on that with their ears, and with their eyes on the beautiful sight, left the tasty food not only intact, but not even touched at all »<sup>59</sup>.

In this last, extreme case the tasting of the food is not even begun : all activity is unexpectedly precluded except for the ear listening and the eye seeing what the ear is hearing. Thus, the synthesis of perception based on sensorial syncretism, the organ of a synesthetic activity that is an invaluable key to comprehension of the nature and functions of musical performance at banquets, can for once be interrupted, but as the colloquy can be interrupted among the senses that, at least for a fleeting moment, are as it were suspended, as though engulfed by one sole sense, that of hearing, to which even sight, the most noble of the noble senses, becomes, for once, a humble handmaid.

Thanks to music's power to enthrall, the cornucopia of the senses is transformed into the triumph of one sole sense, a symbolically meaningful triumph which turns it, in this instant, from an instrument into an end to be enjoyed in and of itself. But equally, a triumph as circumscribed as it is ephemeral, tied to the evanescent nature of its brief existence and immediate death : of all pleasures the vainest, as the irreverent Sguazza reminds us, « because if you grab music, everything is air and breath, so that nothing comes into your body »<sup>60</sup>.

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- 1 « Confesso, che questa mia fatica, non è una delle sette arti liberali ; ma ella è ben però di tanta importanza, che senza quello, ch'è il suo soggetto, non si può né vivere, né ben vivere ; & è tuttavia tale, che quanto gli huomini son più grandi, tanto maggiore è il beneficio, che ne ricevono : & per dirla in poche parole, ella è veramente cosa da Principi », G. B. ROSSETTI, *Dello Scalco. Nel quale si contengono le qualità di uno Scalco perfetto, & tutti i carichi suoi [...]*, Ferrara 1584, Lettera dedicatoria.
- 2 ROSSETTI, *Dello Scalco*, p. 45.
- 3 *Ibid.* (italics mine).
- 4 Cf. T. CAVE, *The Cornucopian Text. Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*, Oxford 1979.
- 5 « Gemmula carbuncoli in ornamento auri et comparatio musicorum in convivio vini », *Ecclesiasticus*, 32:7.
- 6 « Sicut enim carbunculus duplicat splendorem auri, ita melodia iocunditatem convivii », J. TINCTORIS, *Complexus effectuum musices*, in *Opera theoretica*, ed. by A. Seay, 3 vols., 2 tomes, [Rome] 1975-1978, « Corpus scriptorum de musica, vol. 22 », II, p. 176 [Translation mine].
- 7 « O decus Phoebi et dapibus supremis/ Grata testudo Jovis. O laborum/ Dulce lenimen mihi cumque salve rite vocanti » ; HORACE, *Carmina*, 1, 32, 13-16.
- 8 « Cithara crinitus lopas personat aurata, docuit quem maximus Atlas », VIRGIL, *Aeneid*, 1, 740-741.
- 9 « Sed veterum quoque Romanorum epulis fides ac tibias adhibere moris fuit », QUINTILIAN, *Institutio oratoria*, 1, 10, 20.
- 10 « Cythara et lyra et tympanum et tibia et vinum in convivii vestris », ISAIAH 5:12.
- 11 « Hanc quoque consuetudinem hac tempestate plurimum vigere videmus, magnatibus splendide ac solenniter epulantibus, quod genus musicorum adesse sentimus, illic cantores, illic tibicines, illic tympanistae, illic organistae, illic cytharedi, illic fistulae, illic tubae, adeo melodiose concinentes, ut vera quaedam imago supernorum gaudiorum esse videatur », TINCTORIS, *Complexus viginti effectuum nobilis artis musices*, in *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi nova series a Gerbertina altera*, 4 vols., ed. by E. de Coussemaker, Paris 1864-7186 ; facs., Hildesheim, 1963, IV, p. 199 [Translation mine].
- 12 « Quando ci parerà tempo, ritornandocene a casa, posti a tavola, or con suoni or con canti intromettendo le vivande, ricrieremo il corpo e lo animo, stanchi ognuno di loro dallo esercizio suo particolare », A. FIRENZUOLA, *Ragionamenti d'amore*, in *Delle opere di M[esser] Agnolo Firenzuola fiorentino*, Firenze 1723, I, p. 121.
- 13 « Io, che già pien d'orrori, e di spaventi,/ E di Marte, e di Morte esposto à l'ire,/ Solea tra'l sangue, e tra fiamme udire/ Fieri rimbombi, e queruli Lamenti ;/ Hora le sponde mie liete, e ridenti / Tra le nevi, e tra'l ciel veggio fiorire :/ Odo l'acque, la terra, e'l Ciel gioire/ A' l'armonia di Musici concerti/ Ogn'alma al giusto fren dianzi ritrosa/ Del gran Giove terren l'Aquila adora,/ Ah che forza mortal tanto non osa./ Qual Nume è in queste rive, e si le onora ?/ Così parla il Danubio, & Eco ascosa/ In un antro vicin, dice, LEONORA », G. BERTAZZOLO, *Breve relatione dello sposalitio fatto dalla Serenissima Principessa Eleonora Gonzaga con la Sacra Cesarea Maestà di Ferdinando II Imperatore*, Mantova 1622, p. [102].
- 14 M. MEYERUM, *Homo microcosmos hoc est parvus mundus macrocosmo*, Frankfurt 1670, p. 28.
- 15 « Mores hominum mendacium sine honore et confusio illius cum ipso sine intermissione », *Ecclesiasticus* 20:28 [translation mine].
- 16 « Fu data l'acqua alle mani stillata, con preciosi odori, & poi seguitarono le bandigioni tutte accompagnate con Trombe, & altri diversi suoni », B. CORIO, *L'istoria di Milano*, Venezia

- 1554, c. 266v. [recte 275v.], quoted in C. BENPORAT, *Feste e banchetti. Convivialità italiana fra Tre e Quattrocento*, Firenze 2001, *Appendice documentaria*, p. 142.
- 17 *Relazione per le feste fatte in Pistoia per la cavalleria di messer Giovanni Panciatichi, seguita in Firenze nel tempio di San Giovanni il dì 26 di aprile 1388*, anonymous manuscript, Firenze, formerly in the Panciatichi family archive, quoted in BENPORAT, *Feste e banchetti*, p. 136.
- 18 G. BROGLIO DI TARTAGLIA, *ms. 1161*, Rimini, Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga, cc. 264r.-272r., quoted in BENPORAT, *Feste e banchetti*, p. 236.
- 19 « Furono alle decte nozze donne 50 bene parate et richamente vestite e similmente 30 giovani da ffare [sic] festa, benissimo vestiti ; e chomunemente si convitava a ciaschuno pasto 50 cictadini tra parenti e amici e vicini de' principali della città, per modo che alle prime tavole, contando le donne e fanciulle chasalinge, e' pifferi e trombetti, mangiava 170 persone, e alle seconde e terze e quarte tavole mangiava gente assai, per modo che fu tal pasto che ci mangiò persone 500 », *Memoria che a dì 8 di giugno 1466 facemo la festa delle nozze di Bernardo Rucellai e Nannina de' Medici*, ms. Firenze, Archivio Rucellai, quoted in BENPORAT, *Feste e banchetti*, p. 149.
- 20 M. TIMOTEI, *Il Cortegiano*, Roma 1614, p. 114.
- 21 « In prima venivano due paggi vestiti di velluto nero, con due torchi bianchi et accesi in mano, dopo sei trombetti suonando, appresso de i quali veniano due altri paggi simili à i primi, con suoi torchi, e dietro veniva il scalco maggiore, vestito con robba di velluto nero, con bei lavori sopra, e con un bastone dorato in mano, & haveva al sinistro lato un sottoscalco onoratamente vestito. Dietro à questi seguivano i portatori delle vivande, con una banda di ormisino verde al collo, che con un fiocco d'oro e di seta gli pendea dietro le spalle, e con legami simili alle gambe. Prima veniva un paggio vestito di velluto verde, con un piatto grande nelle sue mani, fatto in foggia d'una conca marina, dentro al quale era finto un prato, nel cui mezzo era un bel lauro, che havea sotto la sua ombra infinite piante di gigli bianchi, che pareano ivi proprio nate, con un motto che dicea, NON COELI VIOLENTIA FRANGET ; ch'in nostra lingua vuole dire, che la violenza del cielo non potrà rovinare ò rompere quei gigli, essendo il Lauro sicuro da fulmini ; il cui significato era, che l'animo accostato alle virtù, e di quelle armato, potea riposarsi sicuro dalle fortune e travagli di questo mondo. Appresso à questo seguiano i portatori con suoi piatti », A. CENTORIO, *I grandi apparati e feste fatte in Melano dalli Illust[rissimij] & Eccell[entissimij] S[gnori] il S[ignor] Duca di Sessa Governatore dello Stato di Melano & Capitan Generale del Re di Spagna in Italia e S[ignor] Marchese di Pescara Generale della Cavalleria leggiera di sua Mae[stà] in Lombardia : in casa dell' Illust[rissimo] S[ignor] Gio[van] Battista Castaldo Marchese di Cassano*, Milano 1559, pp. 20r.-20v.
- 22 « Molti torchi accesi in giro che rendeano quella stanza come il giorno chiara », *Ibid.*, p. 20r.
- 23 As Lefebvre uses it, the term designates the complex of space-time interrelations on a given existential horizon. Cf. H. LEFEBVRE, *Rhythmanalysis. Space, Time and Everyday Life*, London/ New York 2004.
- 24 CENTORIO, *I grandi apparati*, p. 20r.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 21r.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 22r.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 22v.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 23v.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 24v.
- 30 « Venuta l'ora della cena, la Sig[nora] Duchessa servita da S[ua] E[ccellenza] passò (come era sua

usanza) alla camera dell'Imperatrice, & di là per via secreta andarono con le loro Maestà nell'anticamera dell'Imperatore, dove si cenò nella stessa forma, che si era desinato la mattina, con un perpetuo concerto di varie musiche, che con straordinario diletto tenevano attenti gli astanti». BERTAZZOLO, *Breve relatione*, p. 69, italics mine.

- 31 « A di primo maggio 1474 fummo in una terra chiamata Chio over Magraman, che è fuori della detta Rossia, la quale era governata per uno chiamato Pammartin, Pollacco catolico. Ce n'andammo a disinare, in vero onorevolmente apparecchiato e abbondantemente di tutto, facendomi onore assai. Eravi un suo fratello vescovo e molti altri gentiluomini, e avevano alcuni cantori i quali mentre desinammo cantarono. Fecemi star molto longamente a tavola, con mio grande affanno, perciòché più tosto mi bisognava riposo che altro », G. B. RAMUSIO, *Viaggio di A. Contarini*, in *Navigazioni et viaggi*, Venezia 1583<sup>3</sup>, II, p. 113v.
- 32 A. J. GUREVIĆ, *Le categorie della cultura medievale*, Torino 2007, p. 108.
- 33 S. LORENZETTI, *I loci communes della musica rinascimentale: sintagmi di un sapere metaforologico, in Saperi a confronto nell'Europa dei secoli XIII-XIX*, papers of the international study conference (Pisa 2006), ed. by M. P. Paoli, Pisa 2009, pp. 481-501 : 491-499.
- 34 P. BEMBO, *Prose della volgar lingua*, libro II, 3.
- 35 « Spargevano l'Hore, sopra i riguardanti, nel venire, e nel partirsi ghirlande di diversi fiori conteste : Sentivansi nel medesimo tempo diversi soavissimi odori, & Amore cantando ; & attraversando la scena, tirava nel ascoltante popolo diverse saette », *Descrizione dell'apparato della comedia et intermedii d'essa recitata in Firenze il giorno di S. Stefano 1565 nella gran Sala del palazzo di sua Ecc[ellenza] Illust[rissima] nelle reali nozze dell'Illust[rissimo] & Eccell[entissimo] S[ignore] il S[ignor] Don Francesco Medici Principe di Fiorenza, & di Siena, & della Regina Giovanna d'Austria sua consorte*, Firenze 1616, p. 12.
- 36 « Da quattro Gravicembali doppi, da quattro Viole d'arco, da dua Tromboni, da dua Tenori di Flauti, da un Cornetto muto, da una Traversa et da dua Liuti », *ibid.*, p. 13.
- 37 On the specific use of terms like *suavitas* and *dulcedo* applied to the experience of music, see esp. S. LORENZETTI, 'Cum tanta armonia, cum tanta incredibile sonoritate, cum tanta insueta proportione.' *La dialettica tra sensibile e sovransensibile nella percezione della musica rinascimentale*, in *Proportions. Science – Musique – Peinture & Architecture*, papers of the LI Colloque international d'études humanistes (Tours 2008), ed. by S. Rommevaux, Ph. Vendrix, V. Zara, Turnhout 2011, pp. 199-215.
- 38 « Dopo fu celebrato lo spozalizio solennissimo, e dato il segno fu rifatta nova salva generale dalle bombarde, et altri tiri con strepito di campane, di tamburi, di trombe, di cornetti e di Piferi in gran copia, onde l'aria tutta risonava, nel qual tempo furono apprestate le sette tavole sopra il soglio del gran trono e d'indi a poco le altre sette, fuori d'essa più a basso », BROGLIO DI TARTAGLIA, *ms. 1161*, p. 230.
- 39 For example : « It is shown that the lower a note is, the lower the sensations of vibration are localized in the body. The notes of bass viols, cellos, bassoons, horns, etc., are localized in the chest cavity, those coming from violins, flutes, etc., in the head », G. Révész, *Einführung in die musik-psychologie*, Bern 1954, trad. it. : *Psicologia della musica*, Firenze 1983, p. 216 (the quotation was translated into English from the Italian edition).
- 40 S. SCIARRINO, *Le figure della musica*, Milano 1998, p. 67.
- 41 « per la quale li sensi in varii piaceri possemo accomodare, che alli bruti è negato : in musica, in odori, in cose formose, in diversità di cibi, et nova delectatione de Venere », M. EQUICOLA, *Libro de natura de amore*, Venezia, 1525, book VI, 3.

42 *Ibid.*

- 43 « Oltre a' Trombetti, & altri, che sonando cantavano ancora, & alquanti altri correvano sopra le funi ; & cosa mirabile fu, che tutte le vivande ch'erano portate alla tavola à una per una erano accompagnate da fiaccole accese, & trombe, che andavano innanzi à le vivande. In quelle istesse fiaccole vi erano gabbie d'uccelli, e quadrupedi, et finalmente vi erano dentro di tutte quelle sorti de' viventi, ch'erano mandati in tavola cotti », P. MORIGIA, *Descrittione fatta del convito del magno Giovan Giacomo Trivultio, quando egli prese moglie*, in *Historia dell'antichità di Milano divisa in quattro libri*, Venezia 1592, p. 688.
- 44 For a study of the treatise from the standpoint of execution, cf. H. M. BROWN, *A Cook's Tour of Ferrara in 1529*, « Rivista italiana di musicologia », X, 1975, pp. 216-241.
- 45 « Bellissima gran frascata, ornata di diverse arme e festoni, sotto la quale stettero i musici continuamente a sonare e a cantare, fino a tanto che durò la cena », C. DA MESSISBUGO, *Banchetti, composizioni di vivande et apparecchio generale* (Ferrara 1549), ed. by F. Bandini, Vicenza 1992<sup>2</sup>. The treatise, written by the *maggiordomo* of the House of Este and dedicated to Ippolito d'Este, contains, according to its author, the chronicle of « some real banquets, abounding in various and diverse dishes discovered and composed and in effect made by the diligence, industry, and experience of my meager and rough intellect (« alcuni conviti veri, abbondanti di varie e diverse vivande dalla diligenza, dalla industria e dalla esperienza del mio basso e rozzo ingegno ritrovate e composte e in effetto fatte ») ». The description of the various banquets contains the place and full date when and where they were held, the list of the most illustrious gentlemen who took part in them, and the meticulous enumeration of the content of each course that made up the meal.
- 46 « Ordinarily a raised gallery or scaffold was erected permanently in the banquet hall, facing the lord's dais. Numerous illuminated manuscripts depict just such a gallery on one side of the hall, often populated with musicians whose legs dangle precariously over the balcony », E. A. BOWLES, *Musical Instruments at the Medieval Banquet*, « Revue belge de Musicologie », XII (1958), pp. 41-51 : 41.
- 47 *Royal wedding banquet*, miniature in the fifteenth-century manuscript fr. 12574, fol. 181v. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. The manuscript tells the story of Olivier de Castille and of Artus d'Algarbe translated into French by David Aubert ; the scene in question illustrates the wedding feast of Olivier's daughter to Artus.
- 48 *Descrizione delle feste fatte nelle reali nozze de' Serenissimi Principi di Toscana Duca Cosimo de' Medici e Maria Maddalena arciduchessa d'Austria*, Firenze 1608 ; the engraving is inserted between pp. 23 and 24.
- 49 « Ad alto erano poi doi Palchi, cioè uno da questa parte del Salono, & l'altro da quella altra, dove stavano più coppie di suoni di Musica, che tutti ben concertati insieme facevano armonia soave ». T. PANDOLA, *Il famoso convito così delle giostre come del banchetto, che lo illustrissimo & Eccell[entissimo] S[ignor] Duca di Piacenza, & di Parma, ha fatto nella Mag[gior] città di Piacenza nell'anno 1561*, Milano 1561, p. [15].
- 50 DAVIDE GHIRLANDAIO and SEBASTIANO MAINARDI (attr.), *The Magnanimity of Alexander the Great*, 1493-1494, London, Victoria & Albert Museum (previously Longleat House, Warminster, Wiltshire, England).
- 51 See for example the chronicle by Ascanio Centorio discussed above.
- 52 « In other words, the difference between 'conventional' and 'humanistic' patronage is both cultural and semiotic. A piece issuing from 'conventional patronage' symbolised the rank of

its patron through reference to repertoires traditionally associated with the élite class. Hence it achieves its ends by 'contiguity'; by proving to be a sort of musical accessory of the élite itself. In contrast, a piece generated by 'humanistic patronage' symbolises the rank of its patron through a display of his artistic sensibility. It thus achieves its ends by 'similarity': by displaying compositional qualities that parallel the sophisticated tastes of the class in question », C. ANNIBALDI, *Towards a Theory of Musical Patronage in the Renaissance and Baroque: the Perspective from Anthropology and Semiotics*, « Recercare », X, 1998, pp. 173-180 : 176.

- 53 « The soul and body being two, have two arts corresponding to them : there is the art of politics attending on the soul ; and another art attending on the body, of which I know no single name, but which may be described as having two divisions, one of them gymnastic, and the other medicine », PLATO, *Gorgias*, XIX (translation by Benjamin Jowett, 1871).
- 54 « MARINIO : Ditemi in che modo fanno le loro Musiche nella Mensa. FORTUNIO : Dopo portato le prime delicate vivande, lavate le Mani, sentato a Tavola sua Eccell[en]za, la Sereniss[im]a d'Austria, l'Illustriss[im]a Renata, con li altri Illustriss[im]i fratelli, e sorelle, & altri personaggi, che mai vene manchano : quietato il primo tumulto, che col sentire far se suole : Li strumenti di fiato, hor con corna Muse hora con flauti, hora con Fifferi, & hora con Tromboni, e cornetti in sino alle seconde : con canzone Franzese, & con altre allegre opere, fanno il loro uffitio, dopo Messere Antonio Morari, e suoi compagni con le viole di Braccio (ben che alcuna volta, con viole di Gamba, e con vari strumenti) hor con canzoni Franzese, hor con artificiosi Mottetti, & hor con vaghi Madricali, con celeste Harmonia, suonano in sino a l'ultimo servitio. Venuti che sono li frutti, Messere Orlando di Lasso, con li suoi canteri, a tutti lassa il freno, che con suave e piana voce, udir facciano le ben conteste, & artefitiose, Compositioni, che ciascuno giorno di nuovo avanti li presenta. Ed al spesso, (non senza gran sadisfatione del Duca) fa Cantare alcuni belli quarti & artificiosi terzi da pratici e scelti Cantori : che posso giurare havere visto suo Eccellenza, lasciare il Prandio, per udir la tanto amata harmonia », M. TROIANO, *Discorsi della triomfi, giostre, apparati e delle cose più notabili fatte nelle sontuose nozze dell'illustrissimo & eccellentissimo Signor Duca Guglielmo*, München 1568, pp. 72-73.
- 55 Cf. for example : « At the end of the hall are two rooms, one leading into the other, each one decked with drapes of greenery, beautiful, with tapestry curtain ; the other decked with a tapestry containing figures, with a cloth curtain; into which rooms all the diners with their entourage reired before and after the meal, to be entertained with various instruments and some musicians, and it was no small pleasure to hear them... After getting up from table, without taking the tables away, they withdrew into the said two room, and some played, some sang, and some talked about what most pleased them », Banquet organized by Benedetto Salutati and other Florentine merchants for the sons of the king of Naples, Florence, 16 February 1476, ms. strozziano 574, cl. XV, fols. 125 ff., quoted in BENPORAT, *Feste e banchetti*, pp. 238-240.
- 56 « MARINIO : A quanto comprender posso se non dire, che sua Eccellenza (tra li più felici) al suon di quelli accenti, con ogni letitia può, cantar questi dui Versi di Messer Francesco Petrarca : Pasco la mente d'un sí nobil cibo / ch'ambrosia e nectar non invidia a Giove » ; *ibid.*, p. 73.
- 57 « Pasco la mente d'un sí nobil cibo/ ch'ambrosia e nectar non invidia a Giove », PETRARCH, *Rerum vulgariarum fragmenta*, CXCIII, ll. 1-2.
- 58 « FORTUNIO : Ditta la bella & artista Messa come l'altre volte andarono a Tavola, e non posso far dimeno, che tra tanti Musiche, che fatti ivi furono, non vi narra una opera di Messere Orlando di Lasso, quale per le felicissime Nozze ha fatto, con li Carmi fatti dall'erudito Signor Nicolò, Stopio bello : la prima parte a cinque fu cantata da tutta la turba delli Cantori, la seconda

a quattro, da solo quattro scelte voci, e tanto soavemente lo cantarono, e di tal sorte uno presso l'altro le fughe, & artisti e belli passi, porgevano, alle orecchie delli ascoltanti : che tutti li Serenissimi Principi, e Serenissime Dame con il boccone in bocca si fermarono ad udire, l'inodita concordanza & insino che non fu finito il ben contestato quarto, nissuno si mosse dallo loco, che si trovava », TROIANO, *Discorsi delli triomfi, giostre, apparati*, p. 165.

- 59 « Tuttavia udendosi una dolcissima Musica, della quale quei signori più vaghi che del mangiare, spesse volte à quella sola intenti con le orecchie, & con i guardi ad bello adornamento, lasciavano i saporiti cibi non pure illesi, ma ne anco in parte alcuna tocchi », PANDOLA, *Il famoso convito così delle giostre come del banchetto*, p. [17].
- 60 « Perché se tu pigli la musica, tutto è aria e fiato, che niente t'entra in corpo », A. PICCOLOMINI, *L'amor costante*, in *Commedie del Cinquecento*, ed. by I. Sanesi, Bari 1912, II, p. 54.

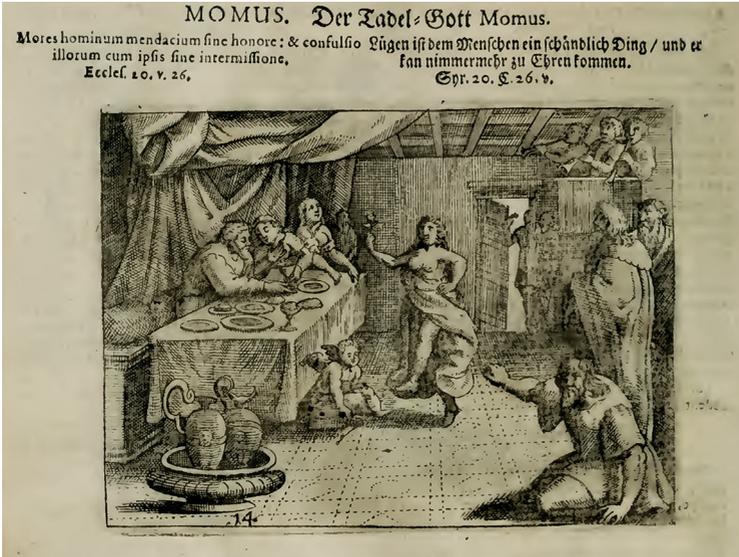


fig. 1: *Mores hominum mendacium sine honore*, engraving, in M. MEYERUM, *Homo microcosmos hoc est parvus mundus macrocosmo*, Frankfurt 1670, p. 28



fig. 2: *Wedding banquet of Olivier de Castille's daughter to Artus d'Algarbe*, ca 1467, miniature on parchment, 34,6 x 23,7 cm, in *Histoire d'Olivier de Castille et Arthus d'Algarbe*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. fr. 12574, fol. 181v (detail)

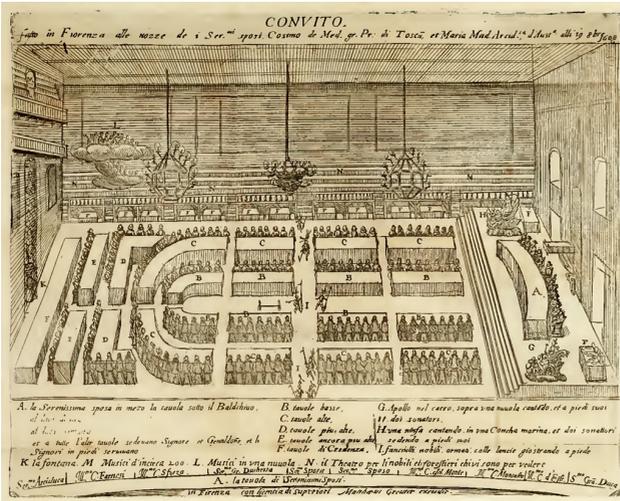


fig. 3: MATTHAEUS GREUTER, *Wedding banquet of Cosimo II de' Medici to Maria Maddalena d'Austria*, engraving, in *Descrizione delle feste fatte nelle reali nozze de' Serenissimi Principi di Toscana Duca Cosimo de' Medici e Maria Maddalena arciduchessa d'Austria*, Firenze 1608



fig. 4 DAVIDE GHIRLANDAIO and SEBASTIANO MAINARDI (attr.), *The Magnanimity of Alexander the Great*, 1493-1494, tempera on panel, 76 x 229,5 cm, London, Victoria & Albert Museum (detail)