
From Religious Lauda to Medieval Canzone and Sonnet:
Poetry of the Senses in 13th and 14th Century Italy
Od verskih hvalnic do srednjeveške kancone in soneta:
● *poezija čutov v italiji 13. in 14. stoletja*

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the sensory expression impregnated in the medieval religious poetry from the 13th and 14th centuries written by Italian poets originally from the regions of Umbria, Sicily, and Emilia-Romagna: Jacopone da Todì, San Francesco d'Assisi, Giacomo da Lentini and Guido Guinizelli. Although religious representation is often related to the rationally expressed scholastic message, we can talk about the almost therapeutic dimension of the poem when spirituality is expressed through sensory poetics. Poetry affects not only through the open religious message it conveys but also through the activation of all sensory impressions at the moment of reading or liturgical singing, as empathy between the reader and the poet. Even religious poetry is not immune to these peculiarities, which we will prove in this article. Four poems will be taken as examples: Canticum of the Creatures ('Laudes Creaturarum') by San Francesco d'Assisi, The Lament of the Madonna ('Il pianto della Madonna') by Jacopone da Todì, Love Is a Desire that Comes from the Heart ('Amor è uno desio che ven da core') by Giacomo da Lentini, and Truly I Wish to Praise My Lady... ('Io voglio del ver la mia donna laudare') by Guido Guinizelli.

Keywords: lauda, sonnet, canzone, senses, Middle Ages

Izvlček

Namen tega prispevka je predstaviti čutni izraz, impregniran v srednjeveški verski poeziji iz 13. in 14. stoletja, ki so jo napisali italijanski pesniki iz regij Umbrija, Sicilija in Emilija - Romanja: Jacopone da Todì, San Francesco d'Assisi, Giacomo da Lentini in Guido Guinizelli. Čeprav je religiozna predstava največkrat postavljena v razmerje z racionalno izraženim sholastičnim sporočilom, pa lahko govorimo o skoraj terapevtski razsežnosti pesmi, ko je duhovnost izražena s čutno poetiko. Poezija ne vpliva le z odprtim verskim sporočilom, ki ga posreduje, temveč tudi z aktivacijo vseh čutnih vtisov v trenutku branja ali liturgičnega petja kot empatije med bralcem in pesnikom. Tudi verska poezija ni imuna na te posebnosti in to bomo dokazali v tem članku. Za primer bomo vzeli štiri pesmi: Pesem stvarstev (»Laudes Creaturarum«) Frančiška Asiškega, Žalostinke Madone (»Il pianto della Madonna«) Jacopona da Todija, Ljubezen je želja, ki prihaja iz srca (»Amor è uno desio che ven da core«) Giacoma da Lentinija in Resnično želim hvaliti svojo gospo (»Io voglio del ver la mia donna laudare«) Guida Guinizellija.

Ključne besede: hvalnice, sonet, kancone, čutila, srednji vek

Introduction: Italian Poetry in the Context of the Late Middle Ages

This paper traces the development stages of poetry in Italy starting from the 13th century through the prism of its gradu-

al distancing from the classical religious form of lyrical expression. The selection focuses on those poets who were directly influenced by the medieval Italian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas (1920) because, in his philosophy, reason and emotion become complementary things. Thus,

in poetry, a space can be given for sensory poetics. The Middle Ages, which includes the epoch of feudalism, is usually recognized as a dark or gloomy period in which all creations and actions are influenced by religion. The Middle Ages conflicted with ancient, classical values. The figure of the religious man replaces the place of the ideal of heroism from Antiquity. Mystical preoccupations replace the antique glorification of the light of reason. Philosophy, as well as the overall understanding of life, is under the patronage of the Church. Literature is the only domain of expression and creation in which the reconciliation of these opposites in the 13th century could occur.

But when we talk about medieval Italian literature, we mean the literature that developed in the Italian vernacular rather than the whole Italian creation in the Middle Ages, historically including the period from the 6th to the 14th century.¹ In medieval Italy's linguistic and social disunity, vernacular literature had a decisive function in forming a unique, standardized, and aestheticized expression that affirmed state and cultural continuity. Through poetry, it is possible to follow how the vernacular gradually matures into written creation, thus opening the question of a unifying linguistic phenomenon that will condition the consciousness of national unity, given the fact that Italian society until the 19th century existed through independent cities, dominions, communes, and lordships. From the religious poetry of San Francesco d'Assisi to the early love poetry of Dante Alighieri, poetry is refined stylistically. With it, the vernacular becomes amenable to literary expression. The sensory and emotional message that these authors

bring to poetry keeps the link with religious creation and, at the same time, brings it closer to the common man. On the other hand, it contributes to the development of formally developed poetry. The transition from Latin to the vernacular opens a new worldview through which faith gets closer to everyday life and the experiences shared among ordinary people.

The Literary Forms of *Lauda*, *Sonnet*, *Canzone* and *Canzonette*

Starting from the 11th century, the Church gradually began to lose its dominance, and at the same time, the feudal regime weakened. Namely, until then, the Church preaches in accordance with the state dogmas, and through art, the Christian religion leaves the institutions to connect with the common man and express a more sincere faith. The vernacular (*volgare*) is also becoming more prevalent in liturgies at the expense of Latin. On the social level, the commune was created as an independent social government in medieval cities. Religiosity existed even before the establishment of communes as self-governing cities, but with the rise of civic life, it takes on a completely different dimension.

Religious consciousness is most potent in Italy's central region, the Umbria, which was therefore called *mystical Umbria*. There, the most famous literature with religious content was developed, whose representative, San Francesco d'Assisi, expressed the harmonization of opposing things in poetry following medieval philosophy. In his poetry, the most visible trace is the attempt of St. Thomas Aquinas to reconcile the rationalist teaching of Aristotle with the religious teaching of the Church (Fortini 1981, 154).

Between the 13th and 15th centuries, also a new poetic form called *Lauda* (lat. *Laus* - praise) appeared in Italy, primarily as a religious folk song derived from liturgical songs, to later be interpolated in religious dramas from where it would develop its form in dialogue, transforming itself into a *dramatic Lauda*. The *Lauda* was dedicated to the themes from the Gospel, intended to express praises to the Mother

¹ Namely, until the 13th century, there was literature created on Italian soil, but which was written exclusively in Latin. In the Middle Ages, the vernacular and Latin languages were used in parallel, but they had a clearly demarcated domain of use. Latin is the language used by the educated, who know how to read documents and literature written in this language, while the vernacular is used in everyday communication and is understandable by all strata of the people. For its part, the Latin language in the Middle Ages is divided into literary and spoken. Today's Italian language developed from the spoken Latin language, *Volgare*.

of God, Jesus, and other saints while thematizing their sufferings and exploits. The laudas were preserved in collections called *laudari*, in which the remains of a musical text were also found, suggesting that they were accompanied by music. Laudas were initially recited as a collective prayer to acquire a folk tone later and come closer to ballads. Like the ballad, the dramatic *Lauda* contains elements of epic, lyric, and drama (Živković 2001, 415).

At the same time, the sonnet, the canzone, and the canzonette were created in Italy. The sonnet, with its strict structure of four stanzas (two tercets and two quatrains), was mainly used for love poetry as an extension of the religious feeling towards the amourosity. On the other hand, the canzonette occurs in a narrative and dialogic form, with short verses in hexameter or octave. If the canzone existed to express loftier themes and was primarily addressed to aristocracy, the canzonette was used for less noble, mundane themes (Živković 2001, 331).

In this article, we will present the religious and love poetry from this period, emphasizing the expression of all the senses in religious poetry and the predominance of visuality in love poetry, mainly as a result of the platonic love of the poet. *Canticle of the Creatures* by San Francesco d'Assisi is considered the oldest *Lauda* from religious poetry. Still, a unique artistic and dramatic work is the *Lament of the Madonna* or the *Lady from Paradise* by Jacopone da Todi. These two laudas will be the subject of analysis in the following article.

From the love poetry will be analysed one sonnet and one canzone: *Love Is a Desire...* by Giacomo da Lentini and *Truly I Wish to Praise My Lady...* by Guido Guinizelli.

Religious poetry in 13th-century Italy

The presence of religion in all domains of life in the Middle Ages conditions the existence of religious art. It expresses people's moral and religious dilemmas and preoccupations in that period. In the first religious poetry in the Italian language, during the early Middle Ages, the ar-

tistic goal was subordinated to the religious one, but this did not exclude the literary value of those works. Even more so that this poetry does not aim to confirm church dogmas but to reflect on some general human values, such as humanism, solidarity, and moral correctness; this is an integral part of Christian teaching.

However, there is a significant difference between the sensibility and understanding of religion reflected in the works of the two poets that will be considered here. Suppose Francesco d'Assisi wrote his poems in *Volgare* to reach more people. In that case, Jacopone's poems are expressed in a more elevated style and intended for a more educated audience. Jacopone sings about sin, death, and vice, not to present them as a necessary stage before bowing to God but to emphasize salvation as distancing from life. The only sign of religiosity for him is not joy but suffering. He denies theological theories; for him, even learned theology should be replaced by cruel renunciation in the name of faith. He agrees to misery, suffering, humiliation, and even ridicule as a sign of renunciation of human vanity.

Jacopone does not praise human bliss but only suffering, remorse, pain, and death. He aspires to negate the body, at the expense of which the soul should be elevated. However, the negation of the body does not mean the rejection of sensory experiences. In the poem 'O Signor, per cortesia', which is a kind of negative prayer he says: 'Tanto sia 'l fetor fetente che non sia null' om vivente che non fuga da me dolente' (Underhill 1919, 73). Although negative, the sense of smell is interpolated in the poem. A dark, mournful atmosphere and pessimism prevail in it. None of the pleasures of the soul should be sought on earth. Long but broken sentences are found in the songs, and shouts and exclamations are frequent. The last songs of his creation will contain exclusively a mystical dimension that will imply a direct fusion with God. Contrary to the harmony that Francesco seeks, Jacopone's songs are dominated by ignorance of measure, and excess

2 'Let the stench be so stinking that there is no living man who does not flee from me in pain'.

in suffering is the only right path. For him, life on earth is inseparable from the inauthenticity of existence, human sinfulness, hypocrisy, and greed.

Unlike Francesco, who celebrates all the phenomena of the earth as creations of God and speaks of man's unification with everything that surrounds him, Jacopone's work is marked by strict opposition between the divine and the mundane, life and death, pleasure and suffering.

Canticle of the Creatures – San Francesco d'Assisi

San Francesco of Assisi wrote in *Volgare Canticle of the Creatures*, which is thought to be based on the Song of Songs from the *Bible* and some similar works of Latin prose. The Canticle is *Lauda*, or a kind of prayer to God without strict metrics, which symbolically contains 33 verses, symbolizing the age of Jesus at the time of his death or a doubled sign of the Holy Trinity. The author addresses God's creations found in this world: the Sun, the Moon, and the stars, and the four elements: air, water, fire, and earth; since all things come from God, goodness, holiness, and justice are incarnated in them.

The author begins the poem using hyperbolic expressions: 'Most High, all-powerful... 'To You alone, Most High, do they belong' ('the praises, the glory, the honour, and all blessing') and by juxtaposing the greatness of God with the smallness of man: 'and no man is worthy to mention Your name' (Rebay 1971, 7–12).

In the manner of a *Lauda*, each verse begins anaphorically with the phrase *Praised be You*, which creates a mantric and rhythmic repetition throughout the poem. The poet celebrates the essential elements of the world's creation according to old philosophies: the sun, the water, the wind, the fire, and the earth. Each of those elements is described through a numbering of epithets:

The Sun is 'beautiful and radiant in all his splendour.'

The Moon, stars, and sky are 'clear and precious and beautiful.'

The Water is 'very useful and humble and precious and chaste.'

The wind is 'beautiful and playful and robust and strong.'

[Rebay 1971, 7–12]

The poet uses suggestive descriptions that invite the reader or the believer to feel what is stated in the verse. Through the positive images that the poet hints at, an optimistic and pantheistic representation of the relationship between the self and the world is created.

It is a pantheism in which the invisible is part of the visible world, which is its spirituality. Since the spirit is one, its recognition will lead to the fraternization of men. He appeals for the harmonious unification of man with the rest of the world's creatures because God's spirit flows through everyone. Hence, both pain and death should be understood as part of human existence. Different moods permeate the poem: in the first verses, a joyful mood of love and respect for the harmony in nature prevails, and the accidents and diseases that are an integral part of human life are listed further; in the end, the poet talks about suffering and death and the necessity of accepting them, i.e. about the transience of life. The poem ends with the word 'humility'; if the pain is humbly endured, it becomes a means of liberation from sin and a condition for union with God.

The poem differs from other medieval works because it celebrates the divine and the human, the mystical and the rational. The language is deliberately vernacular to appeal more easily to the poor and humble. The calm face of death is sung in parallel with the brightness of daylight so that even when the song opens these themes, it preserves the optimistic belief in a more authentic, higher world.

The Lament of the Madonna – Jacopone da Todi

This most significant and deeply humane dramatic *Lauda* of Jacopone da Todi, *The Lament of the Madonna* (Underhill 1919, 220), thematiz-

es the lamentation of Christ by his mother at the moment of the crucifixion, with the mother's feeling in the foreground, rather than the suffering experienced by the son. The Mother of God, just like Christ, is not depicted with holiness and unattainability but represents every mother who mourns for her child, thus calling for the universality of human existence. The specificity of the form of the *Lauda* allows it to contain both a narrative and dialogic part, apart from its primary poetic structure. The narrative part of the praise follows the Gospel, with the Messenger appearing as the first omniscient narrator, most likely the Apostle John, who communicates to the Virgin the facts about the crucifixion of Jesus in chronological order: his capture, torture, evocation of betrayal, humiliation and transfer to Pilate to be crucified. Jacopone da Todi brings the suffering of the Virgin to the scene in place of the suffering of Jesus. It is considered that the poet wrote in the form of a *Lauda*, which could already be found in the form of frescoes in the chapels of northern and central Italy as early as the 12th century, but also that he leaned towards the specifics of the *Lauda* originating from Perugia which is advocated less for asceticism and mysticism, as for a general and humane representation of suffering (Sapegno 1926).

Lexical peculiarities

In this *lauda*, we can find two different lexical registers: one refers to the lexicon from the colloquial speech or *sermo cotidianus*, and the other to the lexical elements that are Latinisms from the Gospel. The first should emphasize the universality of the mother-son relationship and give a humanistic vision to the poem, while the second register should emphasize its religious content. The frequent repetition of the lexeme 'son,' as well as the address of Jesus to the Mother of God with the vocative 'mother' ('Donna de Paradiso', verses 84, 92 and 104, cited in Sapegno 1926, 78) or, for nuance, the more formal use of 'mia mate' at the moment when Jesus hands his mother over to his friend John for him to be her new son (verse 108), they highlight the intimate and ten-

der relationship between mother and son. In the entire *Lauda*, the word 'son' appears 40 times to humanize the sacred or bring the content closer to the pathos and feelings of ordinary people. The same thing happens through the mention of breastfeeding, which emphasizes the physical aspect of the relationship: *Figlio, perche t'ascundi al petto o'si lattato?* ('Son, why do you spurn the breasts that suckled you?', verse 47). In verse 77, Mary's expression speaks of a motherly feeling which is described in words from the realm of profane love ('figlio, lo meo deporto' - My Son! My Comfort!), just as in verse 116, 'Red Son and White Son' is a way of describing beauty which is often it is found in love poetry, and the same metaphor is used in the *Song of Songs*, V, 10 ('my beloved is white and red').

However, Mary never leaves her human dimension, and her grief still seems to maintain the unbridgeable chasm between the human and divine worlds. In the initial address to Mary, St. John uses the lexeme 'donna,' whose translation is not 'Madam' but originates from the Latin 'domina,' which acquires a more sophisticated meaning as 'the lady from Heaven.' It is as if the address 'Signora,' which would contain the distanced meaning of 'Madam,' is deliberately left out. On the contrary, through the lexeme 'donna,' the emphasis is placed on the human nature of the mother's reactions. The title 'Signora' will be reserved for the Virgin's stay in Heaven; until then, she is a wife and mother.

In the verse 'figlio, pat'e mmarito'/'son, father and husband' (verse 89), the reference to son, father and husband is both a metaphor and an allusion to the holy trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. A connection is made between the ordinary human and the sacred, expanding the semantic field of the son with that of the Father (God) and the Spirit, who himself is the embodiment of love, hence using the lexeme 'husband.' The son's identification with holiness is also metaphorical when Mary addresses him in verse 41: 'figlio, amoroso giglio!/'son, beloved dove' (verse 89), knowing that the dove in Christianity symbolizes spiritual purity.

Thematic-structural peculiarities

After the prologue of three stanzas, twenty stanzas follow in the *Lauda* (verses 4–83), which describe Mary's attempt to talk to various interlocutors (Magdalene, Pilat, the people, the cross...) to find help for her son, but which are marked by the absence or impossibility of communication. In the absence of an answer, Mary desperately turns to the cross (verse 55), personifying it and assigning to it some of the blame for the crucifixion. The absence of an answer to Mary's requests gives the text an increased drama because her words turn into a desperate monologue or rhetorical questions that speak more about her pain than about the expectation of understanding, not neglecting the foreknowledge of the reader who knows the outcome of the events, does not expect mercy from her interlocutors.

The messenger with whom the narrative begins reappears to describe the realistic crucifixion of Jesus (verses 64–75). The crucifixion is delivered in three stanzas that occupy the central part of the *Lauda* so that the poem can be said to have a strict structure, where the first 15 stanzas refer to the attempt at dialogue and the last 15 indicate the funeral lament (verses 112–135), which are the only real dialogue in the song, the one between mother and son. The wounds of Jesus and the anatomy of his hands and feet are described with expressionistic precision. This description stops the dialogue and emphasizes a cinematic presentation, slowing the narration and bringing the pain closer.

«Soccurri, plena de doglia,
cà 'l tuo figliol se spoglia;
la gente par che voglia
che sia martirizzato».
«Se i tollit'el vestire,
lassatelme vedere,
com'en crudel firire
tutto l'ò ensanguenato».
«Donna, la man li è presa,
ennella croc'è stesa;
con un bollon l'ò fesa,
tanto lo 'n cci ò ficcato.

L'altra mano se prende,
ennella croce se stende
e lo dolor s'accende,
ch'è plu multiplicato.³
[Underhill 1919, 220]

The description of Jesus's body (verses 64–75) emphasizes visuality, and the anatomy is followed in detail. The vocabulary is taken from the folk creation: 'abbraccate' means embraced (verse 134), 'afferato' means desperately (verse 87), and 'attossecato' means killed (verse 115).

Seven stanzas in the central part of the *lauda* are devoted to the dialogue between mother and son (verses 84–111). While Mary's speech is filled with pathos and suffering, Jesus retains the otherworldly dimension and comforts Mary to leave him to his fate with reconciliation and acceptance. Apart from the physical descriptions the Messenger gave, Jesus himself does not utter words that allude to suffering or an emotional state. His pain stems more from his mother's cries than from the wounds on his body.

In their article on Color Poetry, Jun Dong Cho and Yong Lee (Cho and Lee 2021) point out that apart from 'the classic five senses of vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell,' there are 'less obviously, proprioception, kinesthesia, pain, and the vestibular senses.' Exactly these less obvious senses, the pain, the proprioception, and the kin-

3 'Quick, Sorrowful Lady!
Your son is stripped naked.
The crowd want him
nailed to the wood'.
'Now they have torn off his clothes,
Let me see
how the cruel lash
has bloodied him'.
'Lady, they have taken his hand
and stretched it on the cross.
With a nail they have pierced it:
In this manner they have fixed it.
Now the second hand is taken:
They spread it on the wood.
The pain increases,
burning him up.
They take his feet now, Lady:
They fix them to the tree,
Every limb outstretched,
wrenching him all over'

esthesis, are present in this poem and are interconnected with the classic senses.

Mary's repeated address as 'son' is less a vocative than a posthumous lament for a lost son. The three stanzas with which Jesus addresses the mother are not accidental but reflect the holy trinity. Just as the mother, for whom the son is everything, identifies him with the trinity of father, son, and holy spirit. But Jesus also addresses Mary with the noun 'mother,' which etymologically also denotes the relationship of a newborn with its mother. The use of the vocative mother by Jesus is also specific, which refers to the Latin etymology for the breast, and from there, Mary alludes to breastfeeding: 'Son, why do you spurn the breasts that suckled you?' (verse 47). Using the synecdoche, according to the principle of *pars pro toto*, the mother's physical proximity and primordial connection with the child is emphasized.

Love Poetry in 13th-Century Italy

But, starting with the religious and moralistic literature of the 13th century, Italian creativity goes through a visible evolution in which changes occur both on thematic and compositional levels. Italian literature, mainly inspired by Provençal lyricism, would eventually reach more ethical qualities and independence through which it could influence future European literature and civilization. Three schools of poetry were formed in this period: the Sicilian school of poetry, the Tuscan school of poetry, and the *Sweet New Style* (Casadei and Santagata 2023). The first elements of literary novelty will be felt in the court lyrics of the Sicilian school of poetry from the first half of the 13th century. This school of poetry is among the first in Europe. It will bring a new poetic experience, a new style, and the power to plunge into the human psyche, thus representing a transitional moment towards Humanism and the Renaissance. The lyrical poetry of the first school of poetry is tied to the motif of love as a dominant feeling and was inspired to a great extent by the Provençal lyrics in which visible results were achieved and which signifi-

cantly influenced the poets of the 14th century, especially Dante and Petrarch.

By taking over the themes from the Provençal lyrics (that is, through the French influences), it goes towards processing the feeling of love, but there are changes in how it is treated. The poetry here is not performed to the accompaniment of music. Created in a different social context, court poetry differs from feudal poetry. Provençal lyrics are distinguished by coldness, intellectuality, expressed concern for form and rhetoric, complications in expression, unreality in depicting phenomena, and elevation to abstract and unattainable values. The beloved of the poets is described in the same way, with a perfection that makes her inhuman and almost always portrayed in a spring landscape that represents a kind of cliché, a stereotype, or kitsch from today's point of view. Artificiality is a characteristic of the sung object and the procedure applied by the one who creates it. It is about chivalrous respect and bowing in front of the lady (Giudice and Bruni 1981).

The Sicilian school plays a role in changing these poetic conventions and in introducing a certain spontaneity in the expression of feeling because the goal is to progress in the psychologization of both the creative subject and the sung lady. Therefore, the marble surface of the statement must be abolished, and the naturalization of the representations must be inclined. It describes a range of emotions associated with the feeling of love, which varies from joy and satisfaction to the other extreme of suffering and torture. The exaltation of the lady is not understood as an annulment of the poet but, on the contrary, as his predisposition to notice and experience the sublime.

Ultimate individualism has not yet been reached in this poetry characteristic of the modern era because what the poet sings is socially accepted and recommended. It is about leaning towards a collective, literary, and social ideal of love. Much attention is paid to the technical construction of the song. In that period, several poetic forms were characterized by precisely de-

finer features the sonnet, the canzone, and the canzonetta. All these poems are written in vulgar language, borrowing from Latin, Provençal and other Italian languages. The vernacular in these poems acquires greater sophistication.

Giacomo da Lentini - Love Is a Desire that Comes from the Heart

Giacomo da Lentini occupies an essential place among Sicilian lyricists. It is believed that he is the creator of the sonnet. He has written 16 canzoni and 22 sonnets. He uses metaphors to describe the variations of the feeling of love and its psychological effects on the subject. For him, the image has a very significant role both from a philosophical point of view and from the point of view of the formal shaping of the poem. Visualization precedes imagination. Love obsession is transferred from the actual image to a mental, imaginary image. The emphasis is not on the real lady, but she is the inspiration for the turmoil born in the poet's soul.

Amor è un[o] desio che ven da core
per abondanza di gran piacimento;
e li occhi in prima genera[n] l'amore
e lo core li dà nutrimento.⁴
[Lansing 2018, 109–148]

In this first stanza of the sonnet, as the poet moves from visual concern to contemplation, the sight of the beloved strongly affects him. The interior of the lady emanates from her gaze, and the poet's perception leads to an inner transformation that gives birth to a poem. Love for a girl is also an analogy for love for God (*Love is a desire that comes from the heart / Amor è uno desio che ven da core*). Lentini's understandings correspond to the science of the time, in which Aquinas's division of the soul into three functions – rational, sensory, and nutritional – can be rec-

4 'Love is a desire that comes from the heart through abundance of great pleasure; and the eyes generate love at first, and the heart nurtures it there . . . That love that grasps with fury is born of the eyes. For the eyes present to the heart everything that is good, bad, and how it is naturally formed; and the heart, that which imagines and pleases that desire, is the conceiver.'

ognized (1920). In his reading of the biblical passage dedicated to the Corinthians, he states: 'Or my spirit that is my reasoning prays, which means [my reason] organizes in me so that I may frequently say those things that are for good, whether by one's own words or of the other holy ones. Or my spirit, which is the viewpoint stored in the mind. Prays, inasmuch if voices are the likeness of physical things only as a record [in the mind] separate from this which is being understood by the intellect'. Therefore, he adds, 'But my mind, that is my intellect, is without fruit, because he does not understand and therefore prophecy or interpretation is better than the gift of tongues' (Aquinas Lectures on I Corinthians, chapter 14, 1C3) (Aquinas n.d.). The first sensory perception shakes the soul, so it can later be transformed into a rational image (*imaginatio* ie *interpretatio*), which is psychologically carried despite the absolute absence of the object of love.

After the collapse of the Sicilian court, around 1266, the dominant cultural and poetic environment became Tuscany, where the Tuscan school of poetry developed. For a long time, Sicilian poetry circulated throughout Central Italy, where it inspired the creation of new works of love typical of that climate. The themes and the literary level of the poetry remain unchanged, with the difference that political or patriotic content is also present in the Tuscan School. Its leading representative is Guitone d'Arezzo, who sets program poems that re-actualize the psychological stages of falling in love and imaginary visualization, similar to previous poets. However, the actual value of medieval poetry will come to the fore with the emergence of the third poetic school of the *Sweet New Style*.

Sweet New Style (Dolce Stil Novo)

The *Dolce Stil Novo* appears in the 80s of the 13th century. It retains the feeling of love as the essential element but acquires a more significant emotional and thought depth while being more refined in style and formality. Poetry has moral sublimity as a prerequisite, and it is the purity of the soul that the poet will notice in the woman

he sings about. In the new social reality in Italy, the Sicilian court soon reached its maximum. It begins to repeat itself through constant motifs and clichés, so there is a need for more nuanced poetic forms in place of this poetry. In the new lyric, the spirit of civil society begins to appear, of new democratic communities, municipalities, or communes in which human individuality begins to dominate more and more, and religious life becomes more secular. At the same time, there is a tendency to establish worldly authority; thus, conditions are created for new ethical principles. Love is understood realistically; it is found in an everyday existential context, and the woman is not only seen as a lofty ideal, but she occupies a real place in life (Magliozzi, Atalenti, and Cotroneo 1998).

The first reactions to the old Sicilian school appear in the learned environment of Bologna, a city with the oldest university in Europe. The school takes its name from Dante, who mentions it in the 24 cantos of Purgatory. This direction is 'new' in content and 'sweet' in style. For Dante, poetry has two stages: one is the one when the feeling of love causes a particular psychological state, and the second is the moment when reason dictates to the poet to record what he felt in the form of verse (Chiappelli 1978). Poetry begins to be distinguished by the rudiments of philosophical thought. Still, some conceptions from the field of ethics dominate, contradicting the Provençal lyric. The lady here is distant not because she is of an unattainable social position but because she embodies virtue and is identical to God. In this period, we are not talking about the ladies who lived in the castles but about the women who could be met in everyday life in the squares due to the development of civil life.

Guido Guinizelli - Within the gentle heart, Love shelters him

The founder of this school was the Bologna jurist Guido Guinizelli, and his most famous program canzone is *In the tender heart always hides Amor* ('Al cor gentil reppaira sempre Amore').

This song is significant because it is representative of the Sweet New Style.

Interestingly, Guinizelli searches for a synthesis in the love of the noble heart of the woman and the angel. The identification of love for God and love for woman has its inspirations in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas (1920). Through the intellectual structure of the canzone, Guinizelli asserts himself as a prover of a new doctrine in that period, according to which the phenomenon of love is much more complexly analyzed.

Al cor gentil reppaira sempre amore
come l'ausello in selva a la verdura;
né fe' amor anti che gentil core,
né gentil core anti ch'amor, natura:
ch'adesso con' fu 'l sole,
sì tosto lo splendore fu lucente,
né fu davanti 'l sole;
e prende amore in gentilezza loco
così propiamente
come calore in clarità di foco.⁵
[Borsa 2007, 162]

According to the canzone, love can only be born in a virtuous heart. The new democratic reality and the new understandings of the social life of that time will also be seen in the attitude according to which the nobility of the soul is a human characteristic that he acquires naturally; it is a natural phenomenon, not a privilege of the noble class and is not inherited according to blue blood, as propagated in feudalism. The ineffable ethereal love for the beloved compared to an angel shines in the gaze of the tender-hearted man and causes in him feelings directed towards goodness and God (Borsa 2007). The uniqueness of Guinizelli's poetry is also seen in the style; it is revealed in the poet's admiration for

5 Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love.
For with the sun, at once,
So sprang the light immediately; nor was
Its birth before the sun's.
And Love hath his effect in gentleness
Of very self; even as
Within the middle fire the heat's excess.

the realization of the power and influence of love on the human being, but in this lyric can sometimes be felt the indulgence of the intellectual at the expense of the immediate feeling itself. The frequent mention of the sun, fire, heat, and nature, in general, creates the effect of melting the subject into the environment through the power of loving feeling. Just as San Francesco of Assisi used the four elements to explain phenomena, Guinizelli distinguishes between good and evil through water and fire and expresses the effect of goodness and love through the sun's rays and warmth.

Donna, Deo mi dirà: « Che presomisti? »,
siando l'alma mia a Lui davanti.
« Lo ciel passasti e'nfin a Me venisti
e desti in vano amor Me per sembranti:
ch'a Me conven le laude
e a la reina del regname degno,
per cui cessa onne fraude ».
Dir Li porò: « Tenne d'angel sembianza
che fosse del Tuo regno;
non me fu fallo, s'eo li posi amanza ».⁶
[Borsa 2007, 189]

The essence of love becomes the true path to higher values. Love for a noble being elevates the human mind so much that it can get closer to God and understand heavenly things. In turn, through spirituality and mysticism, God can introduce him to the understanding of things unknowable exclusively by the rational mind (Kris-teva 1983). Dante Alighieri, whose early poetry was also included in the Sweet New Style school, called *Sapienza Amoroza*, the relation of love to knowledge, an idea also present in St. Thomas Aquinas (1920).

6 My lady, God shall ask, 'What dared'st thou?
(When my soul stands with all her acts review'd);
'Thou passed'st Heaven, into My sight, as now,
To make Me of vain love similitude.
To Me doth praise belong,
And to the Queen of all the realm of grace
Who endeth fraud and wrong.'
Then may I plead: 'As though from Thee he came,
Love wore an angel's face:
Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame.'

Conclusion

The experience or the effect of the wind or the sun in San Francesco's poetry creates a new, atypical medieval poetry with an accent on the personal, sincere fate and connection to nature. Jacopone da Todi expresses the pain through visual precision and makes a hyperplastic ekphrasis (painting through poetic words). The other poets express the visual elements of the apparitions of an image by the medieval concept of platonic love.

This poetry corresponds more precisely to what Maurice Merleau-Ponty introduced in phenomenology as the 'embodied self,' claiming that man's initial awareness of the world occurs through the senses (Andén 2019). The body is not only a physical entity but a subject that is actively, sensibly, and even spiritually perceived and is an integral part of the overall thinking of man. That authentic connection of man with the world represents a turning to something that precedes strict thought, and that is the relation between sensation and sensibility, which is mutual for all people. Poetry becomes the most authentic domain where this connection can be restored, and the medieval poets succeeded in reconciling the sacred and sublime with humanity and everyday life.

Summary

This paper traces the development stages of poetry in Italy starting from the 13th century through the prism of its gradual distancing from the classical religious form of lyrical expression. The selection focuses on those poets who were directly influenced by the medieval Italian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas (1920) because, in his philosophy, reason and emotion become complementary things. The Middle Ages, which includes the epoch of feudalism, is usually recognized as a dark or gloomy period in which all creations and actions are influenced by religion. The Middle Ages conflicted with ancient, classical values. The figure of the religious man replaces the place of the ideal of heroism from Antiquity. Philosophy, as well as the overall understanding of life, will be under the patronage of the Church. Liter-

ature is the only domain of expression and creation in which the reconciliation of these opposites in the 13th century could occur.

From the religious poetry of San Francesco d'Assisi to the early love poetry of Dante Alighieri, poetry is refined stylistically. With it, the vernacular becomes amenable to literary expression. The sensory and emotional message that these authors bring to poetry keeps the link with religious creation and, at the same time, brings it closer to the common man. On the other hand, it contributes to the development of formally developed poetry. The transition from Latin to the vernacular opens up a new worldview through which faith gets closer to everyday life and the experiences shared among ordinary people.

Although religious representation is most often associated with a rationally expressed scholastic message, we can discuss the almost therapeutic dimension of the poem when spirituality is expressed through sensory poetics. Poetry affects not only through the open religious message it conveys but also through the activation of all sensory impressions at the moment of reading or liturgical singing, as empathy between the reader and the poet.

Povzetek

Članek sledi razvojnim fazam poezije v Italiji od 13. stoletja naprej skozi prizmo njenega postopnega oddaljevanja od klasične verske oblike lirskega izražanja. Izbor se osredotoča na tiste pesnike, na katere je neposredno vplival srednjeveški italijanski filozof sveti Tomaž Akvinski (1225–1274), saj v njegovi filozofiji razum in čustvo postaneta komplementarna. Srednji vek, ki vključuje obdobje fevdalizma, je običajno prepoznan kot temačno ali mračno obdobje, v katerem na vse stvaritve in dejanja vpliva religija. Srednji vek je v nasprotju z antičnimi, klasičnimi vrednotami. Na mesto ideala junaštva iz antike stopi lik religioznega človeka. Filozofija in tudi splošno razumevanje življenja sta pod pokroviteljstvom Cerkve. Literatura je pravzaprav edino področje izražanja in ustvarjanja, na katerem bi se v 13. stoletju lahko zgodila sprava teh nasprotij.

Od verske poezije svetega Frančiška Asiškega do zgodnje ljubezenske poezije Danteja Alighierija se poezija slogovno izpopolnjuje, z njo pa ljudski jezik postaja primeren za literarno izražanje. Čutna in čustvena

sporočilnost, ki jo ti avtorji prinašajo v poezijo, ohranja povezavo z verskim ustvarjanjem in ga hkrati približuje preprostemu človeku, po drugi strani pa prispeva k razvoju formalno razvite poezije. Prehod iz latinščine v ljudski jezik odpira nov pogled na svet, preko katerega se vera približa vsakdanjemu življenju in izkušnjam, ki si jih delijo preprosti ljudje.

Čeprav se religiozna predstava največkrat postavlja v razmerje z racionalno izraženim sholastičnim sporočilom, pa lahko govorimo o skorajda terapevtski razsežnosti pesmi, ko se duhovnost izraža skozi čutno poetiko. Poezija ne vpliva le z odprtim verskim sporočilom, ki ga posreduje, temveč tudi z aktivacijo vseh čutnih vtisov v trenutku branja ali liturgičnega petja kot empatije med bralcem in pesnikom.

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