




## Writings from a Sienese Renaissance prisoner. Antonio Petrucci's fall and his *zibaldone* (1461-1465)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>EN</sup> **Abstract.** Urbino. November 1464. Antonio Petrucci, a preeminent Senese politician and condottiero, is still imprisoned, following his defeat at the hands of papal troops on 30 October 1461. During his captivity, Petrucci composed a *zibaldone* (a commonplace book), in which he mainly copied lyrics by Latin classics and Italian poets and humanists. Petrucci's autograph also contains a complaint against Fortune dated 10 November 1464, which is one of the last texts of the manuscript. Petrucci was certainly not the first medieval author to reflect on human fate and the role of Fortune. On the contrary, the image of the wheel of Fortune is probably among the most iconic of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, Petrucci's complaint is not simply a general reflection on the role of Fortune. The lamentation is chiefly the way Petrucci decided to portray his own personal fall, accusing the "very cruel Fortune" of depriving him of his "illustrious and gracious homeland", Siena. It would be superficial to reduce the Senese's complaint to a simple description of his misadventures, and the same is true for every document written by someone who suffered a failure. Petrucci's case raises questions about the sources available to historians to study the history of downward mobility.

**Keywords:** Siena; Petrucci; *zibaldone*; prison writing; downward mobility

**Sumario:** 1. Petrucci's *zibaldone*. 2. A panegyric on Pius II and a *lamento*. 3. Bibliography

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Roberto Leporatti, Tommaso Salvatore, Christine Shaw, and the two anonymous reviewers, for their help and suggestions. This is a preliminary article; I am actually working on an edition of Petrucci's texts and on a more detailed analysis of his *zibaldone*. I welcome remarks on Petrucci's manuscript

Since I have an unbelievable will and an unrestrained desire that you should hear from me, your dearest parent, I am therefore sending you this book entirely written by my own hand, as I have no doubt you will recognize. And by this you will understand that I am alive and well, and I am sure that you will have joy, happiness and consolation, although I am in very serious pains, worries, afflictions, woes, miseries and tribulations, and that I am placed in this dark prison<sup>2</sup>.

These lines come from an undated letter, probably written around the second half of 1464, that the Sienese man-at-arms Antonio Petrucci addressed to his son Cesare<sup>3</sup>. Petrucci copied the letter into the “book”, as he called it, he sent to his son, a manuscript he composed during his captivity in Urbino (1461-1465). In fact, born on 29 April 1400 into a wealthy and prominent Sienese family, Antonio Petrucci (also named Antonio di Checco Rosso) became one of the most prominent political figures of his city. In 1456, he was accused of plotting against the city’s independence and condemned to perpetual exile. That was his first fall. He spent the following years trying to return to Siena, fighting as a *condottiero* in both the Kingdom of Naples and central Italy. On 30 October 1461 he was made prisoner by Federico da Montefeltro and held in prison in Urbino until the end of 1465<sup>4</sup>. That was his second fall.

His vicissitudes after 1456 may easily be described as a series of reversals of Fortune, a path of downward mobility. Medievalists, like other historians, are familiar with the problem of social mobility. However, they have analysed it from a particular perspective: they have focused almost exclusively on upward movement; that is, on social mobility as a synonym for social ascension, for the progress of a career. Partly as a consequence of this choice, they have approached it by focusing on social groups, particularly merchants, noblemen, and the ruling elites. A focus on groups rather than on individuals is a better way to explain the general phenomenon of the dynamics of social mobility<sup>5</sup>. Individuals who have fallen have often been described as “more elusive”<sup>6</sup> or as leaving few traces in the archives<sup>7</sup>, and, for that reason, individual reversals of fortune have received limited attention<sup>8</sup>. It is true that many biographies dealing with unfortunate people devote a chapter to their fall(s). However, the narrative about these fall(s) is more of an

<sup>2</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 9v: “Perché ho inaudita volontà et exfrenato desiderio, dilectissimo Cesare mio, che tu senta di me tuo carissimo genitore novella, però ti mando lo presente libro scripto tucto di mia propria mano, come non dubito cognosciarai. Et per esso intendarai come so’ vivo et sano, che certo so n’arai contento, letitia et consolatione, quantunque in gravissime pene, angustie, afflictioni, affanni, miserie et tribulationi sia reposito et collocato in questo mio tenebroso carcere”. Editorial criteria for the texts quoted from Petrucci’s *zibaldone* are those used by Riccardo Fubini, Nicolai Rubinstein and Michael Mallet for their edition of the letters of Lorenzo de’ Medici (1977-1992), which are generally followed by Italian editors of the *dispacci diplomatici* (cf. Lorenzo De’ Medici, *Lettere*, vol. I, pp. xv-xvii).

<sup>3</sup> Petrucci copied the letter into what was a blank space of the manuscript, for the text is very compact and made to fit the available space, and does not follow the pagination of the other texts. Petrucci completed most of the manuscript, as he explicitly wrote in a final note, on 25 June 1464 (cf. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, ff. 231r-v).

<sup>4</sup> Pertici, “Petrucci, Antonio”.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular, Bove, “Réflexions sur les hommes nouveaux”; *La mobilità sociale nel Medioevo italiano* (5 vols.); Oberste and Ehrich (ed.), *Die bewegte Stadt*; Carocci (ed.), *La mobilità sociale*; Carocci, and Lazzarini (ed.), *Social mobility in medieval Italy (1100-1500)*, which despite the title also offers overviews of England, France, the Low Countries, the German Empire and the Iberian peninsula.

<sup>6</sup> Murray, *Reason and Society*, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> Menant, “La mobilité sociale dans la France médiévale”, pp. 54-55.

<sup>8</sup> Some interesting studies are Rucquoi, “Privauté, Fortune et politique”; Bothwell, *Falling From Grace* (but see also the critical reviews by Christine Carpenter, *Journal of British Studies* 49/2 (2010), pp. 419-420 and Ian Mortimer, *History. The Journal of the Historical Association*, 320 (2010), pp. 493-494); Lecuppre-Desjardin, and Lecuppre, “Anno 5”; Albini, “Declassamento sociale”; Brown, “The fear of downward social mobility”.

obligatory biographical passage than a concern to problematise downward mobility as an object of historical study. A history of reversals of fortune has yet to be written.

In the letter to his son Cesare, Petrucci linked the manuscript he composed with his deplorable situation and his captivity in what he defined as a “dark prison”, a description that was, as we shall see, hardly realistic, and was, in the end, dictated by literary tropes. Petrucci’s wish was that the book he composed could bring some joy and happiness to his son by giving him the news that his father was doing well despite his captivity. Thus, the manuscript was meant to be a form of consolation for his son. Interestingly, it also contains two other texts written by Petrucci himself: a copy of a letter written to Federico da Montefeltro (ff. 4r-7r), which mainly took the form of a panegyric on the recently deceased pope Pius II, and a *Lamentatione iusta et honesta*, a “just and honest complaint” about his failures and misfortunes (ff. 232r-236v).

In this article, I wish to focus not so much on Petrucci’s social and political mobility, nor on providing an explanation for his exile and fall<sup>9</sup>. I will rather focus on the manuscript Petrucci composed in Urbino and on the two personal texts he inserted into it. They can be read, as I intend to show, as discourses and interpretations about fall and misfortune, starting from Petrucci’s own. In fact, the texts and the entire manuscript provide an interesting occasion to look at how an individual decided to present his own fall or, using the language of social history, his personal downward mobility.

## 1. Petrucci’s *zibaldone*

Petrucci’s manuscript has been called a *zibaldone* (a commonplace book). It contains mainly vernacular poems by various Italian authors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, along with other vernacular and Latin texts<sup>10</sup>. The manuscript has received little attention, limited to some brief descriptions by researchers in Italian literature addressing Dante’s *Rime* or Petrarch’s *Rime disperse*<sup>11</sup>. We do not know whether Petrucci’s manuscript effectively reached his son Cesare, and what happened to the codex during the fifteenth century remains obscure, for the oldest traces of possession pertain to some otherwise-unknown sixteenth-century owners. It first entered the library of the Venetian senator Giacomo Soranzo during the eighteenth century and was later acquired by the Canonici family. Finally, in 1817, the manuscript was purchased by the Bodleian Library<sup>12</sup>.

Although Petrucci’s manuscript has been labelled a *zibaldone*<sup>13</sup>, Petrucci himself never called it that and, as we have seen, in his letter to his son simply described it as a “book” (*libro*). The term *zibaldone* first appeared in the fourteenth century, and by the fifteenth century it was certainly not an unknown word on the Italian peninsula. It was used most frequently to describe miscellaneous manuscripts, especially those copied by merchants. Nevertheless, there is no common agreement among researchers on what kind of manuscript should be called a *zibaldone*. A precise definition of the term is difficult but it is often used as a synonym for a miscellany or anthology. These miscellaneous manuscripts – due to the various materials copied – have sometimes also been called an “author’s personal archive” or “library-books”<sup>14</sup>. In this contribution, I will use the term “*zibaldone*” as a synonym of a “miscellaneous manuscript” containing various texts.

<sup>9</sup> Petrucci’s life and political activity is quite well known; see in particular the various studies by Petra Pertici and Christine Shaw quoted in this article which deal with various aspects of Petrucci’s career and the Sienese political context.

<sup>10</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50. The content is described in part in Mortara, *Catalogo dei manoscritti italiani*, pp. 56-69, who did not, however, identify all of the texts and did not provide a precise inventory of all of them.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, pp. 545-547, Mann, *Petrarch manuscripts*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>12</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, fol.1r: *Hic liber est Anibal filius de Pulimante de Pulimantii* and on fol. 215r a note from a certain *Annibal Bontadosus*. Cf. also Mann, *Petrarch manuscripts*, p. 378.

<sup>13</sup> For instance Mortara, *Catalogo dei manoscritti italiani*, p. 57 and Pertici, “Novelle senesi”, p. 701.

<sup>14</sup> See the remarks in Murano, “Zibaldoni (commonplace books)”; Decaria, “Different Kinds of Miscellanies”, and Brambilla, “Manoscritti miscellanei e zibaldoni”.

Regardless of the term, there is general agreement about the fact that these manuscripts typically contained very different types of texts that were copied according to the personal interests of the author, who sometimes added personal notes or materials linked with his experiences or even family memories. The structure of the whole manuscript and the reasons why certain texts were copied are most often difficult to grasp. It is precisely this heterogeneity and the difficulties of understanding the “editorial project”—the choices made by the author—that invites us to study the manuscripts as a whole and to try to understand the context behind their production<sup>15</sup>.

In the greatest part of its folios, roughly 80% of them, Petrucci's *zibaldone* is a *canzoniere*, an anthology of Italian poems mostly penned by authors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries<sup>16</sup>. This is not unusual; it has been observed that in the fifteenth century the *zibaldoni* were the most important vehicles for communicating vernacular lyrical texts<sup>17</sup>. The rest of the autograph is a miscellany of both vernacular and Latin texts of different genres.

Table 1 – Poems not identified in Mortara's catalogue

Number in Mortara	Folio	Incipit <sup>18</sup>	Author	References
IV	3v	<i>Mentre benigna si mostrò Fortuna</i>	Malatesta Malatesti (?) <sup>19</sup>	Trolli, <i>rime dubbie</i> no 3 <sup>20</sup>
X	49r <sup>21</sup>	<i>La mente è stata per lo dietro ardita</i>	Antonio Pucci	<i>Centiloquio</i> , canto LV <sup>22</sup>
XXXV.1	168v	<i>Misera, trista, povara e pupilla</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° XV
XXXV.2	169r	<i>Qual caso, qual iuditio, o qual fortuna</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° XIX
XXXV.3	169v	<i>O vaga e dolce luce, anima altera</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° XXII
XXXV.4	169v	<i>S'io falli mai contra 'l tuo bel viso</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° XXIII
XXXV.5	170r	<i>Dove solea stare lo tempio sancto</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° XXIX
XXXV.6	170v	<i>O infelice invidia, o grave soma</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° LV
XXXV.7	171r	<i>Qual Hector fu già mai di te più degno</i>	Malatesta Malatesti	Trolli, n° LVI
XXXVIII	174r	<i>Quel occhio ladro, che mia mente inebria</i>	Angelo Galli <sup>23</sup>	Nonni, n° 162

<sup>15</sup> An interesting example of an in-depth study (and edition) of a *zibaldone* is Brambilla, Hayez (ed.), *Il tesoro*.  
<sup>16</sup> Some of these authors were not identified by Mortara in his catalogue. We have been able to identify twelve additional poems (cf. Table 1). The *zibaldone* still contains nine anonymous texts that it was not possible to attribute to anyone.

<sup>17</sup> Decaria, “Different Kinds of Miscellanies”.

<sup>18</sup> The incipit is always given according to the spelling in Petrucci's *zibaldone*.

<sup>19</sup> The attribution of this sonnet to Malatesta Malatesti is doubtful, cf. Malatesta Malatesti, *Rime*, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> References are to the standard edition by Domizia Trolli: Malatesta Malatesti, *Rime*.

<sup>21</sup> Antonio Petrucci placed a rubric here introducing Pucci's canto: “Canzone facta in laude del famosissimo poeta Dante Aleghieri da Firenze, et dichiarante la morte sua”, but did not explicitly attribute it to Pucci, which was common for many of Pucci's texts; these texts were widely popular during the fifteenth century but copied without the author's name (Cf. McKenzie, “Antonio Pucci”, p. 160).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Corsi (ed.), *Rimatori del Trecento*, p. 884 (Petrucci omits the last four verses).

<sup>23</sup> References are to the standard edition by Giorgio Nonni: Angelo Galli, *Canzoniere*.

XXXVIII	174v	<i>Tolto ho furtivo tempo a li anni mei</i>	Angelo Galli	Nonni, n° 254
XXXVIII	177r	<i>Se' l'iovene vuol essere costumato</i>	Antonio Pucci	Pucci, rime, no III <sup>24</sup>

If we take a closer look at the copied poems, we see that the central part of Petrucci's manuscript (ff. 85v-152v) consists of poems by Giusto de' Conti (ca 1403-1449), making up approximately 28% of the entire *zibaldone*. In fact, the Oxford manuscript is one of the most important witnesses of de' Conti's *canzoniere* entitled *La bella mano*, which was composed during the 1430s-1440s. Petrucci copied the entire original *canzoniere* as it was conceived by Giusto, composed of 144 poems (mostly sonnets)<sup>25</sup>. Dante, with poems that occupy 16% of the *zibaldone* (ff. 10r-49r), is Petrucci's second most copied author. Other Italian poets we found are Guglielmo d'Otranto (thirteenth c.), Sennuccio del Bene (1270/75-1349), Petrarch (1304-1374), Antonio Pucci (ca 1309-ca 1388), Antonio (Beccari) da Ferrara (1315-1371/74), Simone Serdini, detto il Saviozzo (ca. 1360- 1419/20), Malatesta Malatesti (da Pesaro) (ca 1366-1429), Leonardo Bruni (1370/75-1444), Guidantonio da Montefeltro (1378-1443), Leonardo Giustinian (ca 1388-1446), Angelo Galli da Urbino (after 1390-1459), Domenico di Giovanni, detto il Burchiello (1404-1449), Tommaso (Morroni) da Rieti (ca 1408-1476), Alberto Orlandi da Fabriano (fifteenth c.), and Lorenzo da Cagli (fifteenth c.)<sup>26</sup>.

For most of these poems it is difficult to provide a simple and straightforward explanation for Petrucci's decision to insert them into his book. Some of the authors were widely known and their presence is somehow "common" in other similar miscellaneous manuscripts during the fifteenth century; the presence of Dante, Petrarch and Bruni is, for this reason, not surprising. Nor is it surprising that Petrucci copied poets like Simone Serdini<sup>27</sup> and Giusto de' Conti, who were widely popular at the time, or authors who were active at the princely courts of central Italy, such as Urbino, Rimini and Pesaro during the first half of the fifteenth century; this is the case for Angelo Galli and Malatesta Malatesti<sup>28</sup>.

Although it is difficult to penetrate into Petrucci's tastes and interests, a purely literary interest on his part cannot be discounted. Around the mid-fifteenth century, vernacular poetry was very popular in central Italy, including among the Sienese elite<sup>29</sup> and Petra Pertici has attempted to identify him as the author of a *novelliere* that circulated under the name of Gentile Sermini, but this remains dubious and is based on indicial proofs only; the thesis has been contested by Monica Marchi<sup>30</sup>. Regardless of the possibility that Petrucci can be identified as Gentile Sermini, there is no doubt that Petrucci was a cultivated man. Although we lack substantial and precise information, we know that during his youth he had been part of the humanistic circle that formed in Siena during the first half of the 1420s which included his cousin Andreuccio Petrucci<sup>31</sup>, Il Panormita, Giovanni Marrasio, and Enea Silvio Piccolomini. Petrucci also enjoyed a close relationship and shared a literary interest with the Strozzi, an important Florentine family<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> See Corsi (ed.), *Rimatori del Trecento*, p. 810.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Pantani, *L'amoroso messer* and Pantani, "Giusto de' Conti da Valmontone", in Comboni and Zanato, *Atlante dei canzonieri*, pp. 222-223. Petrucci's autograph contains the *rime* n°s 1-144 and the poem to which Pantani gives the number 151, which was not originally included in the *canzoniere* by Giusto himself. On Giusto's importance during the fifteenth century, see also Pantani (ed.), *Giusto de' Conti*.

<sup>26</sup> For some of these authors, Comboni and Zanato, *Atlante dei canzonieri* and the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* provide useful information.

<sup>27</sup> See also *infra* pp. 161.

<sup>28</sup> Santagata, "La lirica feltresco-romagnola". On these two authors, see in particular Comboni and Zanato, *Atlante dei canzonieri*, pp. 329-339, 658-659 and Santagata and Carrai, *La lirica di corte*, pp. 43-95.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Asor Rosa, *Storia europea della letteratura*, pp. 387-389, Carrai, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini" and Santagata, "La lirica feltresco-romagnola".

<sup>30</sup> See Pertici, "Novelle senesi" and the criticism by Marchi, "Sermini, Gentile". The *novelliere* has been edited: Pseudo Gentile Sermini, *Novelle*.

<sup>31</sup> On this person, cf. Pertici, *Tra politica e cultura*.

<sup>32</sup> Pertici, "Lo Pseudo Gentile Sermini".

The reasons behind Petrucci's decision to compose a *zibaldone* are also not easy to understand. In writing to his son Cesare, he expressed his wish that he could bring him happiness and consolation. Despite the fact that these emotions probably played a role in motivating Petrucci to compose a *zibaldone*, we should probably also keep in mind that doing so would also have been an activity to pass the time during a very long captivity<sup>33</sup>. By the fifteenth century, the treatment of prisoners of war followed precise rules, and acts of brutality and violence against captives was not as common as is often mistakenly supposed<sup>34</sup>. Captains and members of important families could be liberated by ransom or detained under house arrest<sup>35</sup>. And in fifteenth century Italy there was a shared agreement that political prisoners and exiles should not receive harsh treatment, so as not to encourage them to take revenge, pushed by their desperate condition<sup>36</sup>. Whatever Petrucci's reasons for composing a *zibaldone*, Federico da Montefeltro treated him in accordance with his status and with contemporary codes of war, giving him access to his library, a library that we know was frequented by humanists.

There is no doubt that his captivity in Urbino gave him access to many manuscripts and sometimes to poems that were certainly not easy to find. The *zibaldone* is, for instance, the only known manuscript containing a sonnet (*Qual cor di pietra non si liqueface*) written by Guidantonio da Montefeltro (1378-1443), Federico's father.<sup>37</sup> However, what exactly was at the disposal of Antonio Petrucci is not an easy question to answer. Petra Pertici asserted that the texts copied by Petrucci corresponded with those available in Federico da Montefeltro's library<sup>38</sup>. This assumption was based on the inventory of the library published by Cesare Guasti in the *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani* in 1861-1863<sup>39</sup>. In fact, Guasti edited the inventory compiled in 1508-1521 by the librarian Federico Veterani<sup>40</sup>, which in turn was based on the first inventory of Montefeltro's library: the famous *Indice Vecchio*, compiled in 1487. At that date, the Urbinate's book collection amounted to some nine hundred volumes, mostly made up of Latin texts (it has been calculated that they comprised 96% of the library at the end of the fifteenth century)<sup>41</sup>.

This was, however, not true at the time of Petrucci's captivity—the library was still relatively small during the first half of the 1460s, probably consisting only of some one hundred manuscripts<sup>42</sup>. It has been suggested that the initial library contained a significant number of manuscripts in the vernacular, and that most of these texts were stored in the so-called *alia bibliotheca*, which contained less precious volumes, now mostly lost<sup>43</sup>. This situation certainly greatly influenced Petrucci's choices, which were limited by the texts he was able to access in Montefeltro's library. In the end, the exact composition of this original nucleus remains hard to determine and one should remain prudent about assumptions concerning what Petrucci may have copied during his captivity, which are based on later inventories such as the *Indice Vecchio* or Veterani's inventory.

Available manuscripts in Federico da Montefeltro's library and Petrucci's literary tastes are not the only possible explanation for Petrucci's decision to compose a *zibaldone*. In a few cases, the poems he copied are clearly related to the topics of misfortune, fall and captivity, and thus are to be linked with Petrucci's personal situation. Petrucci seems, for instance, particularly interested

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also *infra*, pp. ??, with some remarks on prison writings.

<sup>34</sup> Mallet, *Mercenaries*, pp. 85-86, and 200-202.

<sup>35</sup> Ferente, *La sfortuna*, pp. vii-x and 148-155.

<sup>36</sup> On that specific point, Shaw, "Ce que révèle l'exil".

<sup>37</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, ff. 167v-168r. Cf., on that point, Santagata, "La lirica feltresco-romagnola", p. 223.

<sup>38</sup> Pertici, "Novelle senesi", p. 701, n. 62.

<sup>39</sup> Guasti, "Inventario della biblioteca".

<sup>40</sup> On the various inventories of the library, much information is available at the site *The Library of a 'Humanist Prince'. Federico da Montefeltro and His Manuscripts*, by M.G. Critelli: <https://spotlight.vatlib.it/it/humanist-library/feature/inventari-urbinati>.

<sup>41</sup> On this library, see Simonetta (ed.), *Federico da Montefeltro*, Peruzzi, "La biblioteca", and Peruzzi, "The Library".

<sup>42</sup> Michelini Tocci, "La Formazione della biblioteca", p. 9-10.

<sup>43</sup> Peruzzi, "La biblioteca", p. 271-272, and 19.



in four *canzoni* by Simone Serdini, detto il Saviozzo that he copied into his *zibaldone*<sup>44</sup>. Serdini was a poet, and like Petrucci was from Siena and had been exiled (around 1390). According to a fifteenth-century tradition, he had written some of his poems while in prison and committed suicide after writing his famous canzone xxi *Le 'nfastidite labbra in ch'io già pose*<sup>45</sup>. Petrucci followed this tradition in part, although references to a possible suicide are absent in the *zibaldone*, for he also copied *Le 'nfastidite labbra in ch'io già pose* and added this marginal note: “Canzone by Simone da Siena, which is desperate and diabolical, composed in prison”<sup>46</sup>.

*Le 'nfastidite labbra in ch'io già pose* became a model for the fifteenth-century *disperata*—a poem in which the poet complains about bad fate and misfortune. And the same is true for canzone xxii, which Petrucci labelled as a “Canzone by Simone da Siena, written in prison and addressed in the end to our Lord Jesus, asking for mercy and not for justice”<sup>47</sup>. In this case, it seems plausible that Petrucci’s interest—highlighted by his marginal note—was precisely his and Serdini’s similar fates (exiled and imprisoned) and a complaint that was similar to Petrucci’s lamentation<sup>48</sup>. Comparable remarks apply to the *canzone* vii *Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me* that Petrucci copied, adding the following note: “A *canzone* by the incarcerated Simone Serdini begins, which is addressed to the Lord he served, asking with pitiful supplications for mercy and forgiveness”<sup>49</sup>.

Serdini’s case is quite exceptional; for most of the other texts Petrucci copied, his reasons and interest in them remains obscure. We can remark that among the Latin texts (a minority in a manuscript that is primarily a vernacular *zibaldone*), Petrucci was apparently interested in epitaphs, for thirteen of them were copied toward the end of the manuscript<sup>50</sup>. It is possible that this interest was linked with Petrucci’s own texts in the *zibaldone*: a panegyric on Pius II, written upon his death, and a *lamento* in which Petrucci implores Death to rescue him from the vanities of the world and a false life.

## 2. A panegyric on Pius II and a *lamento*

The first text written by Antonio Petrucci is a letter addressed to Count Federico of Montefeltro, dated 26 August 1464,<sup>51</sup> shortly after the death of Pope Pius II on 14 August 1464. The letter is in fact a panegyric for the pope, explicitly underlining some of the main features of the figure and politics of Pius II, including his plans for a crusade against the Turks and his relationship with Siena.

The letter opens with praise for Pius II’s lifelong fight against the Turks. Petrucci reminds the reader of the meagre success of the Council of Mantua (1459) despite the pope’s appeal to European princes for a crusade, and of the pope’s final decision to embark for Ancona (1464)<sup>52</sup>, a decision that Petrucci described as a “laudable and famous example of pitting himself against

<sup>44</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, ff. 55v-62v and 66v-68r. This refers to poems n° vii, xvi, xxi, xxii in the standard edition: Simone Serdini, *Rime*, pp. 20-23, 50-53, 68-75. About Serdini’s life and works, Aghelu, “Serdini, Simone” and Martocco, “Simone Serdini”, in Comboni and Zanato, *Atlante dei canzonieri*, pp. 687-689.

<sup>45</sup> Murray, “Did Simone Serdini”.

<sup>46</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 60r: “Cançone di Simone da Siena, facta in carcere, la quale è desperata et diabolica”. Of the thirty-nine manuscripts preserving this *canzone*, four link it with captivity and suicide, and only two state that the poem was written while Serdini was in prison: Petrucci’s *zibaldone* and Florence, Biblioteca nazionale, II.III 335. Cf. Murray, “Did Simone Serdini”, pp. 263-264.

<sup>47</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 57v: “Cançone di Simone da Siena facta in carcere et diriçata in fine al nostro Signore Ihesu, domandando misericordia et non iustitia”.

<sup>48</sup> Murray, “Did Simone Serdini”, p. 250.

<sup>49</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 55v: “Cominça una cançona di Simone da Siena existente carcerato, la quale diriça ad quel Signore che serviva, domandando con piateose preci misericordia et perdono”.

<sup>50</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, ff. 206r and 218r-227v.

<sup>51</sup> At this time Federico was still a count. He became a duke only in 1474.

<sup>52</sup> On Pius II’s plans for a crusade, see Bisaha, “Pope Pius II”, and the studies quoted hereafter.

the evil Turks" in light of the fact that the pope was old and in poor health<sup>53</sup>. The letter remains at a general level, relying upon well-known facts and containing few details. Siena, like other Italian cities, received embassies seeking support for the crusade; during the first half of the 1460s, it was one of the cities the pope hoped would participate in the war efforts, both militarily and financially<sup>54</sup>. Around October of 1463, the pope became upset with the Sienese government's laziness in collecting tithes from the clergy as well as the taxes imposed on the laity and the Jews, and the fact that the *Concistoro* (the most important institution of the city's government) was reluctant to support the crusade<sup>55</sup>. However, no particular judgement on his city on these matters emerges from Petrucci's panegyric. This is not surprising—Petrucci probably lacked detailed information about Siena's internal affairs. In fact, beginning in 1456, Petrucci had been exiled and was probably little informed about the details of these affairs. Perhaps Petrucci was also trying to avoid criticism, since he was not really in a good position to comment on these matters. After his exile in 1456, he engaged in military campaigns aimed at recovering his position in Siena, meaning that he, like many others, was involved in warfare on the peninsula. When Montefeltro's troops captured him at Castelluccio (30 October 1461) he was fighting against Pius II and his allies; somehow he had also become involved in warfare that was preventing the participation of Italian princes and therefore preventing a successful campaign.

Petrucci was certainly more interested in the pope's origins and his political relationships<sup>56</sup>. The letter deals at length with Siena's internal concord. Petrucci begs the Virgin Mary—the patron of the city—to “preserve Siena in freedom and peace and grant it good concord and union with true love between all citizens, *quia 'omne regnum in se diuisum desolabitur'*<sup>57</sup>, *et Salustius ait : 'Concordia parve res crescunt, discordia maxime dilabuntur'*<sup>58·59</sup>”.

The letter insists particularly on the pope's role in promoting Siena's internal peace:

His pious holiness had, in his mind, deliberated on and decided to realise universal concord and union among all citizens. And he wanted all hatred, rancour, malice, anger, enmity and disdain to cease completely and be eliminated. And that a *unum velle et unum nolle*<sup>60</sup> be created in Siena, so that a remedy could unanimously be found for the preservation of the liberty and government of that republic. And that people lived justly in the city, because the republic without unity and justice can in no way be governed<sup>61</sup>.

According to Petrucci, Pius II's death deprived Siena of a great hope, and in the end, of a possible solution to its internal conflicts. Petrucci's claim was not an abstract one: in fact, shortly after his election (on 19 August 1458), Pius II began discussions with the Sienese popular government in order to find a solution to what he saw as the two main problems of the city—the

<sup>53</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 5r: “laudabile et famoso exemplo di sé contra li maligni Turchi”.

<sup>54</sup> Weber, *Lutter*, pp. 136-138 and Housley, *Crusading*, pp. 88-92.

<sup>55</sup> Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. 2, p. 264 and Polverini Fosi, “La comune”, pp. 515 and 519.

<sup>56</sup> About Pius II's difficult political relationships with Siena, Polverini Fosi, “La commune”; Ascheri and Ciampoli, “Enea Silvio” and Shaw, “Pius II”. See also Shaw, *Popular government*, especially, pp. 3-56 (on Antonio Petrucci's epoch).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Mt 12, 25 ; Lc 11, 17 and Mc 3, 24-26.

<sup>58</sup> Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 10.6.

<sup>59</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 6r: “che la conservi in libertà et pace et le conceda bona concordia et unione, con vero amore infra tutti li cittadini”.

<sup>60</sup> This locution, derived from Sallust's *War with Catiline* (20.4), had at that time become a quite common proverb that was widely used among Italian poets to define friendship and concord (cf. Contini, “Dante come personaggio-poeta”, p. 347).

<sup>61</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 6r: “la sua pia sanctità aveva, nella mente sua, fermato et deliberato di far fare universale concordia et unione infra tucti li cittadini. Et voleva che tucti odii, rancori, malivolentie, ire inimicitie et exdegni, omnino cessassero et si tollessero via. Et che in Siena si fusse creato *unum velle et unum nolle*, accioché unanimiter si fusse atteso alla conservazione della libertà et al governo di quella republica. Et che nella città etiam si vivesse con iustitia, perché la republica sença la unione et la iustitia per nullo modo si po' governare”.



exclusion from political life of part of the Sieneese people and the numerous individuals who had been recently exiled.

During Petrucci's life, Sieneese political life was characterised by the so-called government of the *Monti*, which were similar to political parties of hereditary affiliation and of various sizes<sup>62</sup>. From 1403, only three *Monti* had played a full part in Siena's government: The *Nove*, the *Popolo*, and the *Riformatori*. The *Dodici* were completely excluded and the *Gentiluomini* (or *Nobili*) were only partially admitted and given only minor responsibilities. Pius II's intentions were certainly also motivated by the fact that his family belonged to the *Monte dei Gentiluomini*<sup>63</sup>. After many negotiations, in April 1459, the Sieneese government agreed to accept the *Gentiluomini* as full members of the city government.

The pope also showed sympathy for some of the people exiled in 1456-1458 following a plot meant to change the balance of power within the city with the help of King Alfonso of Aragon and *condottiere* Jacopo Piccinino. The pope seemed not to believe that the conspiracy of 1456 was real and was convinced that the Sieneese authorities were only trying to exclude people from the government in order to avoid sharing power<sup>64</sup>. Sieneese authorities were deeply convinced that the pope was actively supporting the exiles and manoeuvring to change the balance of power within the city. In particular, it was supposed that the pope was actively helping Petrucci.<sup>65</sup> After his exile in 1456, the Sieneese government, fearing his comeback, unsuccessfully tried to murder him and asked Pope Calixtus III to arrest him. After his capture by Montefeltro, the Sieneese government managed to obtain a long detention. Releasing him would have been too dangerous and the possible source of a new plot; that was at least what the Sieneese believed. Murdering him in prison, given the fact that he still had a large following in Siena, may also have been risky and led to civil war, so it is likely that that option was rejected<sup>66</sup>.

The real extent of Pius II's sympathies for the exiles remains difficult to assess. It has been proved that in 1457 he tried to support Petrucci by asking the Sieneese government that his exile be ended<sup>67</sup>. But his support for this position must have declined after 1458, at which time Petrucci, who had sought refuge in Naples under King Alfonso of Aragon, had chosen to side against the king's successor Ferdinand and fell into the anti-Aragonese and anti-papal camp. It was precisely when he was fighting against papal troops that Federico of Montefeltro made him prisoner at the battle of Castelluccio in 1461.

Much of this was well known to the Count of Montefeltro. Petrucci was probably proposing a eulogy that showed his sympathy for the pope despite the events that had put him into what he called an "unjust, impious, inhuman and calamitous imprisonment"<sup>68</sup>. The panegyric was also an occasion for him to pray for Siena, and to show his affection for his city, which had a "just and honest reason to grieve, to distress and anguish, and continually shed tears and weep, having lost such a father as the supreme pontiff the Pope Pius<sup>69</sup>. Petrucci ended his panegyric letter by arguing that "with that magnificent house of Piccolomini, I have always been united by good friendship and affinity, and of it I considered myself a son"<sup>70</sup>. In Siena, Pius II, because of his ambiguous policy

<sup>62</sup> On fifteenth-century Sieneese government see especially Pertici, and Ascheri, "La situazione politica". A short overview of Sieneese political history is Ascheri, "Siena the city": "the *Monti* had no rigid social platform. They were established with the goal of promoting the well-being of the city which they thought was neglected because of the bad government". (p. 24).

<sup>63</sup> Pius II's politics is best summarised in Shaw, "Pius II" and Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 39-56.

<sup>64</sup> Shaw, "Pius II", p. 29-30 and Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 52.

<sup>65</sup> Polverini Fosi, "La commune", p. 517.

<sup>66</sup> Shaw, *The politics of exile*, pp. 134, 161, 173-175 and 235 ; Pertici and Ascheri, "La situazione politica", pp. 1004 and 1009.

<sup>67</sup> Ascheri, Ciampoli, "Enea Silvio", p. 58.

<sup>68</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 6v: "iniusta, impia, inhumana et calamitosa prigionia".

<sup>69</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 6v: "iusta et honesta cagione di dolersi, di turbarsi et angustiarsi, et di continuo spargere lacrime et pianti, avendo perduto uno tale et tanto patre quale et quanto era el summo pontefice papa Pio".

<sup>70</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 7r: "con quella magnifica casa de Piccholomini, so stato sempre coniuuncto de bona amicitia et di affinità, et dessa mi so' reputato figliuolo".

supporting the exiles, had few supporters in 1464. It is thus not surprising that only a few Sieneſe composed epitaphs or texts mourning the dead pope (we have the epitaph written by his nephew, Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini<sup>71</sup>), thus Petrucci's text is valuable ſince it is one of the few eulogies known to have been written by a Sieneſe.

We can only ſpeculate about Petrucci's intentions in writing ſuch a text and addreſſing it as a letter to Federico da Montefeltro. He probably felt obliged, as a Sieneſe, to pray for the pope and his city, or at leaſt to ſhow that he was mourning. In inſiſting on the pope's efforts to end factionaliſm and diſſenſion within the city, he could alſo indirectly demonſtrate that his fall and his condition of exile were not cauſed by his political and military incapacity, but rather by Siena's internal troubles. Finally, by ſtating his ſympathy with the pope and his family, one can wonder how much the letter was alſo a ſort of "petition" to try to gain ſome ſympathy with the Count of Montefeltro. Deſpite a quite mild impriſonment, Petrucci was ſtill an exile with few connections while ſtill hoping to engineer a poſſible comeback in Siena. A new protector was an immediate need.

The letter alſo exhibits many parallels with Petrucci's ſecond personal text copied in the *zibaldone*: a *lamentatione iuſta et honeſta* ("a juſt and honeſt complaint"), as Petrucci himſelf called it. This ſecond text was written as a complaint againſt Fortune, who was reſponsible—in Petrucci's view—for his setbacks<sup>72</sup>. Nevertheless, this text can be read not only as a ſimple lament, but alſo as a reflection on the ſocial and political fall of Petrucci himſelf and ſomehow as a political juſtification of his actions.

The date of this text poſes ſome problems. In fact, in the manuſcript, the *lamento* is dated 10 November 1465<sup>73</sup>. However, Petrucci was preſumably free as of that date. In June 1465 his releaſe was approaching and we know that the *Conciſtore* ſent an ambaaſador to Federico da Montefeltro aſking him to keep Petrucci in priſon<sup>74</sup>. Some months later, on 23 September 1465, the Sieneſe authorities gave inſtructions to an ambaaſador to be ſent to the pope<sup>75</sup>. The *Conciſtore* had learnt that Petrucci and other exiles were gathering in Viterbo, within the papal State, and, fearing military action, they aſked the pope to expel them from papal territory<sup>76</sup>.

In fact, the laſt pages of the manuſcript, beginning at folio 232r and containing the *lamento*, appear to be a ſort of addendum. On the previous folio (231r-v), Petrucci wrote:

Qui liber ſcriptus et finitus fuit a me Antonio de Petrucciis de Sena, milite ac Paterni comite, in arce Urbini et in eadem carcerato, ſub annis domini 1464 die xxv iunii. Supplico igitur Domino noſtro Iheſu Chriſto ut dignetur pro ineffabili pietate et miſericordia<sup>77</sup> ſua me ex eadem captivitate liberari, divinitati cuius me continuo commiſſiſſimum facio cum humilitate, timore et maxima devotione, implorando ſemper miſericordiam Dei, cui ex tota mente ſupplico ut peccatis meis veniam concedere dignetur. Amen.

In June 1464 Petrucci had thus decided to end his *zibaldone*, making an explicit ſtatement to that effect in a ſhort note. The lament was thus written and added after this date. It is difficult to know why he was ſtill a priſoner in November 1465, but it is poſſible that his detention was extended by a few weeks.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Carrai, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini", p. 41.

<sup>72</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 232r-236v.

<sup>73</sup> Mortara (*Catalogo dei manoscritti*, p. 68) correctly dates the text. Other reſearchers ſuch as Mann (*Petrarch manuscripts*, p. 378, n.1) and De Robertis (Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, p. 545) have read 1464, inſtead of 1465. The reaſons are not clear and this might be an error. Petrucci alſo claims to have been in priſon for more than four years, which is correct conſidering that he was taken priſoner at Castelluccio on 30 October 1461. See p. 165 below.

<sup>74</sup> Ascheri, Pertici, "La ſituazione politica", p. 1109.

<sup>75</sup> Mengozzi, "Il Pontefice Pio II", p. 92.

<sup>76</sup> According to Pertici, "Petrucci, Antonio", he was releaſed ſometime around the end of October 1465 with the Sieneſe government being extremely worried about a poſſible comeback.

<sup>77</sup> et miſericordia] bis scr. et del.

In the *lamento*, Petrucci deals at length with his condition and accuses Fortune of being responsible for his fall:

O cruel and malignant Fortune, you have deprived me without any reason of my state, my faculties, my children, my mother, my wife, my grandchildren, relatives and friends and ultimately of the pleasant sight of my fellow countrymen. You sent me through many provinces, where I struggled and begged for my life with many tribulations, worries and pains. And finally, o unjust Fortune, you had me locked up in the dark prison where I have already spent more than four years amidst many calamities, in infinite and unspeakable need and in unutterable miseries<sup>78</sup>.

Petrucci then calls upon Death to rescue him and free him from what he sees as a mundane and false life: “O miserable temporal life, how blessed is he who knows your fallacies, how blessed is he who neither esteems nor cares for your vain blandishments and false flattery<sup>79</sup>”. The *lamento* is, however, not a mere complaint, a sort of *contemptus mundi*; instead, the text is a self-reflection on Petrucci’s social and political fall, a fall caused by Fortune’s blindness and injustice. In fact, Petrucci takes the opportunity to defend and justify his actions. And so he writes about Siena and his political choices:

I loved and honoured its Republic as I was bound to and as required by civil obligation. And I lived vigilantly, careful and diligent for the preservation of its freedom [...]. I was always very obedient to the most excellent Sienese Lords, sparing no effort, neither fearing nor avoiding human dangers, nor looking to avarice or making use of it in any way. And I was a free and faithful advisor to my Republic<sup>80</sup>.

These are more than somewhat generic and rhetorical words. Petrucci here declares his loyalty to Siena and the injustice of his exile. During the fifteenth century, maintaining the Republic’s independence was certainly the main concern of Sienese political life. For Antonio Petrucci and other members of the elite gathered around him, an aggressive political policy against Florentine expansionism was a necessity. This is the main reason that led Petrucci to advocate for a rapprochement with Alfonso of Aragon<sup>81</sup>. Beginning in 1447-1448, Petrucci openly supported the king’s military operations in Italy, which involved Siena in a hugely expensive politics of war<sup>82</sup>. When in 1455 Jacopo Piccinino conquered the subject town of Orbetello, some may have begun to believe that the Aragonese had the desire to conquer Siena, although Alfonso seemed little interested in a military conquest<sup>83</sup>. The discovery of a letter that Petrucci wrote to Piccinino’s secretary, Broccardo Persico, led to his condemnation as a traitor and subsequent exile<sup>84</sup>. But the letter was very ambiguous: “Antonio may well have meant only that he wanted to serve the king, but the letter could be construed as an offer to make Alfonso the lord of Siena<sup>85</sup>”.

<sup>78</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 233v: “O Fortuna crudele et maligna, ài etiam privato sença alcuna ragione dello stato mio, delle mie facultà, delli figlioli, matre et donna, delli nipoti, parenti et amici et tandem di si iocundissimo aspetto delli mei patri concittadini. Et me ài mandato per più provincie stentando et mendicando la vita mia con molte tribulationi, affanni et dolori. Et finalmente me, o Fortuna iniusta, ài facto nel tenebroso carcere recludere dove ho consumati già più che quatro anni in molte calamità, in infinite et indicibili necessitadi et in miserie inenarrabili”.

<sup>79</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 235r: “o misera vita temporale quanto beato è chi cognosce le tue fallacie, quanto è beato chi non extima né cura le tue vane blanditie et le false lusinghe”.

<sup>80</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 232v: “Et la sua Republica amavo et honoravo come ero tenuto et come richiesto da lo vinculo civile. Et alla conservatione della sua libertà stavo et vivevo vigilante, attento et diligente. [...] alli mei excellentissimi Signori senesi fui continuo obedientissimo, non perdonando alla fatica, non temendo né evitando li humani pericoli, né guardando alla avaritia et per nullo modo essa usando. Et alla mia Republica fui libero et fidelissimo consultore”.

<sup>81</sup> Ascheri, Pertici, “La situazione politica”, p. 999-1001.

<sup>82</sup> Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 19-23.

<sup>83</sup> Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 24.

<sup>84</sup> Pertici, “Antonio Petrucci scrive”.

<sup>85</sup> Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 29.

In his *lamento*, Petrucci was also addressing the accusations that the Sienese government made widely public with an intensive campaign after 1456. In Siena, Petrucci and the other exiles of 1456 received *pitture infamanti* (defamatory portraits), along with injurious poems: Petrucci was described as the “king of the traitors” and depicted hanged upside down with a crown<sup>86</sup>. According to the authorities, the traitors had been made blind by the receipt of “provisions, money and gifts” and acted only out of their personal interest with absolute negligence towards the commonwealth<sup>87</sup>. The *lamento* can thus be interpreted as a self-apology for Petrucci’s pro-Aragonese politics. The insistence on Fortune’s role in Petrucci’s misfortune reads as a justification of his personal reversal. By blaming Fortune’s cruelty, Petrucci could pretend that he had fallen not due to his bad conduct, his supposed infidelity to the Republic, or some lack of political ability. The *lamento* reads, in the end, as an attempt to restore his political honour. It is not impossible that Petrucci had also intended to use this text for his own propaganda: Italian Renaissance *Lamenti* were often copied and even recited in public<sup>88</sup>.

\* \* \*

The last years of Petrucci’s life remain largely wrapped in a veil of silence. In 1432, writing to the Sienese *Concistoro*, he had affirmed his willingness to be a man-at-arms and to gain fame in this role<sup>89</sup>. Three decades later, little had changed in his mind. When he was able to finally leave Urbino, certainly by the end of 1465, he probably lacked political support and was certainly in bad financial straits. In 1466, he wrote a letter to a friend begging for some small sums of money and for the loan of a horse. Petrucci was planning to go to Rome<sup>90</sup>, where he could hope to find support within the large Sienese community in the city<sup>91</sup>. The tumultuous events that followed the death of the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza (8 March 1466) and the subsequent campaign in central Italy against Florence and Milan led by the condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni in 1467 fuelled new hopes. During the summer of 1467, the Sienese *Concistoro* was informed that Petrucci had obtained Colleoni’s support for his own return, and the return of the other exiles, to Siena<sup>92</sup>. However, Colleoni’s defeat, ironically by Federico da Montefeltro’s troops on 25 July 1467, put a definitive end to Petrucci’s ambitions. He died in Forlì, where he had found refuge and protection under the lord of the city, Pino III Ordelaffi<sup>93</sup>.

Petrucci has been described as “an extravagant fantasist rather than an astute politician”<sup>94</sup>. He certainly was an ambitious man, but beginning in 1456, his falls and misfortunes made achieving the honours he dreamed of impossible. His *zibaldone* and personal texts give us a hint of how he wanted to describe his political choices and his misfortunes. Both the panegyric letter on Pius II and the *lamento* were centred around his beloved Siena and tried to make clear that he had been faithful to the Republic and that, like the pope, he had worked for the common good of his hometown and concord among its citizens. Petrucci presented his falls as the result of Fortune’s wickedness, not the consequence of his political incapacity or corruption.

Petrucci’s manuscript and the two texts he composed in captivity should not draw our attention because of their later influence, nor because of their literary quality. They were, it should not be forgotten, examples of prison writings. The figure of the man writing during his captivity or exile as a mean of consolation is a well-established one ever since the illustrious examples of Ovide

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Ferente, *La sfortuna*, p. 56: “Anton di Checco io son chiamato / quale ingannai ogni signoria / et poi la patria mia /et re de’ traditor son coronato”.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Gelli, “*Non bastando*”, p. 95.

<sup>88</sup> Alazard, *Le Lamento* and Martines, *Strong Words*, p. 246.

<sup>89</sup> “Avendo io in tucto deliberato fare il mestiere dell’arme et farlo in modo che io ne sia reputato”, quoted in Pertici, “*Novelle senesi*”, p. 700.

<sup>90</sup> Shaw, *Politics of exile*, p. 141.

<sup>91</sup> Shaw, “*Pius II*”, p. 28.

<sup>92</sup> Mengozzi, “*Il Pontefice Pio II*”, p. 246.

<sup>93</sup> Pertici, “*Il capitano*”, pp. 212-213.

<sup>94</sup> Shaw, *Popular government*, p. 21.

and Boethius<sup>95</sup>. If during the period from the eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century, texts related to the experience of captivity remain rare, the two last centuries of the Middle Ages have left numerous examples: from the famous Charles d'Orléans to the lesser-known Italian humanist Benedetto da Piglio<sup>96</sup>. How much this "tradition" was known to Petrucci is difficult to say, although, as we saw, his interest in Simone Serdini's poems probably laid in their common fate as prisoners writing during captivity.

Petrucci's *zibaldone* certainly shared with other prison writings the great variety of topics addressed and the multiple functions they could fulfil. Petrucci opens his letter-panegyric on Pius II by stating that he hopes "to be consoled and comforted as my asperous sorrow requires and deserves" by the letter<sup>97</sup>. The *lamento* appears to be mainly an occasion to discuss the mutability and wickedness of Fortune, a *topos* that can be found in many other prison-writings, such as Ashby Prisoner's Reflections (1463) and *Le débat de cuidier et de Fortune* (1477) by Olivier de la Marche<sup>98</sup>; this was generally also the case for many *lamenti* of the Italian Renaissance<sup>99</sup>. Consolation, Fortune and an autobiographical focus are certainly among the most shared characteristics of prison writings<sup>100</sup>. It is precisely the wide range of conventional topics conveyed that make Petrucci's *zibaldone* remarkable, showing how much an Italian Renaissance condottiero and politician integrated the literary themes of his times.

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<sup>95</sup> On that topic, see especially Summers, *Late-medieval prison writing*; Babbi, Zanon (ed.), *'Le loro prigioni'*; Menegaldo, Fritz (ed.), *Réalités, images, écritures* and Claustre, "Les prisonniers « desconfortés »".

<sup>96</sup> On this Italian humanist and the manuscript he composed while imprisoned in Neuchâtel, see Benedetto da Piglio, *Libellus penarum*, which provides an edition of Da Piglio's manuscript and some related studies.

<sup>97</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Ital. 50, f. 4: "essere consolato et confortato come richiede et merita el mio asperrimo dolore".

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Summers, *Late-medieval prison writing*, p. 142-169 and Claustre, "Les prisonniers « desconfortés »".

<sup>99</sup> About this heterogeneous genre, see Martines, *Strong Words* and Alazard, *Le Lamento*.

<sup>100</sup> Claustre, "Les prisonniers « desconfortés »".



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