

AN UNKNOWN EPISODE OF
BURCHIELLO'S RECEPTION IN THE EARLY
CINQUECENTO: FLORENCE, BIBLIOTECA
RICCARDIANA, MS 2725, FOLS 80^r–131^v

This article aims at introducing and exploring an unknown and unpublished collection of poems written in the style of Burchiello at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Such instances of close imitation of the poet who was considered at the time to possess the uncontested 'crown' of comic poetry (a role parallel to that of Dante in narrative poetry and Petrarch in lyric poetry) are not uncommon in the Cinquecento; however, my aim will be to illustrate the sophistication of this orthodox approach to Burchiello as a model in (1) understanding and employing various aspects of Burchiello's poetic syntax; (2) accepting his verbal hedonism (and indeed his trademark obscurity); (3) expanding the possibilities of the *maniera burchiellesca*, and using recent developments in comic genres to update and complete some of its aspects. Such a textual approach is particularly striking in the context of the vast and multifaceted reception of Burchiello's sonnets in the early Cinquecento, a revival which included such prominent poetic figures as Francesco Berni, and which may be generally read as a return to the more intelligible forms of an uninterrupted Tuscan tradition of comic and realistic poetry—a tradition also practised by Burchiello. Drawing mainly on an unpublished source, I have made extensive use of quotations; longer extracts have my translation attached, as literal as possible in order to facilitate the reader's access to a linguistically problematic text.

The Florentine barber and poet Domenico di Giovanni, called Burchiello (Florence, 1404–Rome, 1449), was the main promoter of a bizarre and distinctive poetic style usually referred to as *alla burchia*, a definition based on the analogy of its accumulative techniques with the random loading of barges (*burchi* or *burchielli*) used to transport various goods via the Arno or other rivers. Such compositional techniques were episodically introduced by poets of earlier generations, their inventor being in all likelihood Franco Sacchetti (Ragusa, 1332/34–San Miniato, 1400), whose verbal inventiveness is well known through a *frottola* usually referred to as *La Lingua nova*.¹ Further precursors were direct acquaintances of the young Burchiello, belonging to the same social group of Florentine artists and craftsmen: Filippo Brunelleschi's sonnet 'Panni alla burchia e visi barbizechi', for example, adopts the new accumulative pattern only in its first four lines, before revealing the real aim of the poem to be an invective against ignorance.² The *alla burchia* technique, often associated

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¹ Franco Sacchetti, *Il libro delle rime*, ed. by Franca Brambilla Ageno (Perth: University of Western Australia; Florence: Olschki, 1990), no. CLIX.

² The poem is edited in Filippo Brunelleschi, *Sonetti*, ed. by Domenico De Robertis (Florence: Accademia della Crusca, 1977), p. 24.

with anti-academic parody, was far more systematically used by Mariotto di Nardo di Cione Orcagna (d. Florence, 1424), who belonged to the family of the better-known artist Andrea and who was also a painter. Giorgio Vasari, in his *Vita* of Andrea, seems to confuse the two, saying that Orcagna exchanged sonnets with Burchiello himself, a circumstance which, if applied to Mariotto, may well provide biographical evidence of their common stylistic grounds.³

The main features of the *alla burchia* style may be summarized as follows:

- (1) metrical fluidity and regularity (mostly adhering to the *sonetto caudato* scheme ABBA ABBA CDC DCD dEE); remarkable rarity of enjambement;
- (2) correspondence between metrical and syntactic units, with quatrains and tercets functioning as potentially separate units, often semantically independent of each other;
- (3) dominance of paratactic structure, mainly through accumulation of N + A elements: e.g. Burchiello, xxxvi. 1–3: 'Fрати tedeschi colle cappe corte | panico sodo e noce maliose, | ricotte crude e succiole piate';⁴
- (4) late appearance of the main-clause verb, usually located towards the end of the unit (often in ll. 3–4, 7–8, etc., as examples below will show), to create an effect of suspense;
- (5) conjunctions and other syntactic links (expressing cause, result, purpose or other logical connection) often applied to blatantly unrelated elements to create an amusing effect of bewilderment in the reader;
- (6) use of hyperbolic quantifiers and exaggerated numerals to increase the reader's bewilderment; rather than an original feature, this may be considered as an adaptation of a pre-existing one: see e.g. Muscia da Siena, 'Dugento scodelline di diamanti',⁵ and *SdB*, xviii, 'Novantanove maniche infreddate';
- (7) use of *aequivocatio* as a main factor in the juxtaposition of unrelated elements: to appreciate the continuity of this device, one could compare an early example from Sacchetti, 'con pale, con *marroni* e con castagne' (*Libro delle rime*, ccxxi. 13), with a later distich by Bernardo Bellincioni, 'dimandarono se Arno era malato, | sentendo che in sul *letto* era a diacere';⁶
- (8) parodic, often paradoxical and/or contradictory, quotation of protagonists from high culture (biblical and mythological heroes and episodes, elements of lyric poetry, university textbooks, invented sources, etc.): see e.g. *SdB*, cvi. 9, 'Avicenna, Ipocrasso e Galieno', where the three

³ See G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri nell'edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentino, Firenze 1550*, ed. by Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), p. 166: 'nella poesia alcuni sonetti che di suo [Andrea di Cione Orcagna] si leggono ancora, scritti a lui già vecchio al Burchiello allora giovanetto'.

⁴ Quotations from Burchiello's corpus are taken from *I sonetti del Burchiello*, ed. by M. Zaccarello (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 2000) (henceforth *SdB*). Translations are my own.

⁵ Cited from *Rimatori comico-realistici del Duecento e Trecento*, ed. by Maurizio Vitale (Turin: UTET, 1968), p. 515.

⁶ See *Le rime di Bernardo Bellincioni riscontrate sui manoscritti*, ed. by Pietro Fanfani, 2 vols (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1876–78), clii. 3–4.

main sources of medieval medicine are mockingly cited together, possibly following the incipit of a sonnet by Boccaccio;⁷

- (9) remarkable inclination towards linguistic pastiche, featuring parodic use of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and dialects from various Italian cities (Parma, Rome, Siena, Venice);
- (10) frequent use of cryptic jargon, mainly by paraphrastic means, e.g. *SdB*, CLXXXI. 9, 'Quel tra Lerice e 'l porto dell'amore', meaning 'spice' (the sonnet is based on a recipe for *gelatina*) punning on the name of La Spezia, which lies precisely between Lerici and Portovenere.

An example of Burchiello's style may be seen in the following sonnet (*SdB*, vi):

<p>Cacio stillato et olio pagonazzo et un mugnaio che vende brace nera andorno ier mattina presso a sera a fare uno grand'oco a un mogliazzo; le chiocciolate ne fecion gran rombazzo però che v'era gente di scARRIERA, che non volevan render fava nera perché il risciacquatoio facie gran guazzo. Allor si mosse una bertuccia in zoccoli per far colpo di lancia con Acchille, gridando forte:—Spegnete que' moccoli! Et io ne vidi accender più di mille e fare grande apparecchio agli anitroccoli</p> <p>perché e ranocchi volean dir le squille,</p> <p>E poi vidi l'anguille far <i>cosa</i> ch'io non so se dir mel debbia; pur lo dirò: elle 'mbottavan nebbia.</p>	<p>Melted cheese and purple oil and a miller who sells black embers went yesterday morning at dusk to make a big cheer at a wedding. 5 Snails made a great fuss of it because there were stragglers around who didn't want to cast a negative vote as the sink had leaked a large puddle. 9 Then a monkey in clogs stood up to break a spear with Achilles, shouting aloud:—Put out those candles! 12 But I saw a thousand were lit up and a great welcome was prepared for the ducks as the frogs wanted to say the evening prayer. 15 And then I saw eels doing something I'm not sure I should tell but I shall say it: they were putting fog in barrels.</p>
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A remarkable example of formal orthodoxy in assimilating and reproducing Burchiello's model may be observed in an anonymous poem from the early Cinquecento:⁸

<p>Bucce sghusciate in una çucha vòta olio di fumo (et) grasso di comino et una ghora ch'andava al mulino con le punte de' piè su per la mota hebbon sì gran paura d'una trota che per bocca sputava un mestolino, che se non fusse stato el re Pipino</p>	<p>Peeled skins in an empty pumpkin, smoky oil and chimney grease and a stream that ran to the mill with its toes upwards to avoid the mud 5 were all so frightened by a trout with a ladle sticking out of its mouth, that—had not king Pepin intervened—</p>
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⁷ 'Ippocrate, Avicenna o Galieno' (*Rime*, LXXXVI), in Giovanni Boccaccio, *Opere*, ed. by Cesare Segre (Milan: Mursia, 1963), pp. 741–42, where such *auctoritates* are cited within a completely different cultural framework, that of lofty lyric poetry (all medical skills fail when it comes to eradicating the lover's sickness).

⁸ Quotations are from MS 2725 in the Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence (=R); the sonnets are numbered progressively but, as numbers are not present in the original, they are given here in square brackets. The linguistic peculiarities of the original will be preserved where possible, although capitals and punctuation will be adapted to modern use; expansions of abbreviations are given in parentheses. Translations are mine.

era tagliato a peçi una charota. Ella che se n'achorse, per isdegno tutta si tinse dal capo alla vetta chome suol far chi d'ira è tutto pregno.		a carrot would have been cut into pieces. 9 When it realized, it was so indignant that it blushed all over from head to toe like someone who's all filled up with wrath.
Vedendo sì stran chaso, una paletta	12	Seeing such a bizarre thing, a small shovel
hebbe sì malitioso (et) presto ingegno che con le molle s'achostò soletta.		had such a cunning and prompt idea that it approached the fire tongs on its own.
Et chi non ha berretta da poter far sonaglio alla 'mpaçata, non entri in giuoco, ch'ella fia picchiata.	15	And those who've got no cap with bells to ring out like mad shouldn't join the game, or they'll get battered.

[R, XIII]

This poem is found amongst an unrecorded collection of 140 sonnets in Riccardiano 2725, a paper manuscript containing a large miscellany of poems and prose from various epochs from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century;⁹ fols 80–131 (= 158–209 of the modern, printed numbering) appear to be an independent manuscript (although wanting the initial leaf), copied in a humanistic cursive hand in a clear, elegant, yet unambitious fashion, possibly for personal or private use (see Figure 1). Both watermarks and palaeographical evidence suggest that this section of the manuscript was assembled in the first decades of the sixteenth century; as will be explained later, a note on fol. 85^r seems to indicate 1514 as a *terminus ante quem* for its transcription and Tuscany (possibly Pescia or Florence) as its place of origin.

A large number of corrections carried out *currente calamo* on the text, and especially some rejected drafts, seem to suggest that the manuscript is indeed an autograph, initially intended as a fair copy, but then deemed unsatisfactory as the transcription progressed and consequently amended in various parts (the phenomenon of 'perpetual motion' is often observed in authorial intention). In spite of a last-minute addition on the last leaf, an element that may confirm that this poetic collection had reached a relatively consolidated state is that poems appear to be copied in alphabetical order (of the initial letter of each text), although several exceptions to this criterion, as well as the above-mentioned drafts, indicate that room was left for adjustments of both canon and text.

The *alla burchia* sonnet is indeed a standardized form that was possibly designed, as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁰ to support improvisation and/or mnemonic transmission (a factor that complicates philological issues enormously). However, the long and extensive history of Burchiello's reception is a remarkable example of how further innovators—or perhaps those who rejected the source's most radical innovations and attempted to bridge the gap separating it from a pre-existing, well-established tradition—succeeded far more in ensuring the continuity and success of this literary form than orthodox imitators.

⁹ For a brief description of the manuscript, see M. Zaccarello, 'Rettifiche, aggiunte e supplemento bibliografico al *Censimento* dei testimoni contenenti rime del Burchiello', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 62 (2001), 85–117.

¹⁰ See M. Zaccarello, 'Morfologia e patologia della trasmissione nei "Sonetti di Burchiello"', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 57 (1999), 257–76 (p. 257), and my introduction to *SdB*, pp. xxi–xxiv.

As I hope will emerge in more detail in the course of this paper, within such a diverse social context as were the Italian courts in the Cinquecento the very essence of Burchiello's style—the *alla burchia* technique—was felt to be unsuitable and inadequate to the main functions that comic poetry was meant to fulfil: intellectual controversy, literary debates, personal invectives, courtly eulogies. Reference to places, persons, and other realistic details—an essential feature of such poetic exercises—were intimately at odds with the very nature of Burchiello's poetry, the paradoxical and often oxymoronic juxtaposition of fantastic elements with humble, anonymous objects and characters from everyday life.

As the examples adduced will have suggested, this peculiar poetic style uses realistic elements but does not really tackle reality as such; indeed, the articulation and development of the sonnet appear to be using superficial, merely verbal connections, built on the ambiguities that the Florentine vernacular inherited from its use of a vast range of metaphorical, anecdotal, and proverbial contexts. This style of writing—possibly connected with improvisational practice—sought systematically to shift and displace the reader's expectations, building bizarre verbal associations on apparently trivial words and mixing various stylistic registers and unrelated vocabulary. As a result, the reader was (and still is) bewildered and often at a complete loss to know what meaning such connections may conceal. However, Burchiello's readers were prepared for and tolerant of a style that systematically denied, and often turned upside down, the usual logical and/or narrative structures and development of a poem. Authors such as Franco Sacchetti had introduced their audience to and gained some favour for a style that was often referred to as 'per motti', i.e. combining words for the sake of displaying verbal virtuosity and an ability to exploit the semantic and metaphorical potential of each word. Sacchetti, who appears to be fascinated by the rich Florentine vocabulary even in his prose, had done this in both the sonnet ('Nasi cornuti e visi digrignati') and the *frottola* form, in his famous poem 'La lingua nova'.¹¹

Between the late Quattrocento and the early Cinquecento, however, linguistic standards were rapidly shifting in Florence, and the socially cohesive environment that had eased the circulation of *motti* was critically undermined by the many traumatic events that had deeply affected the moral and political conscience of its citizens, from the descent of Charles VIII in 1494 to the sack of Rome in 1527. This is not to say that literary demand had decreased; the distraction provided by comic genres was needed more than ever. But the *alla burchia* style was heavily reliant on a very specific audience who shared a common knowledge of people, anecdotes, and vocabulary that was an indispensable prerequisite for understanding and enjoying such readings.¹²

Although the appearance of the sonnets is still more often than not characterized by features such as accumulation, verbal virtuosity, and idiomatic complexity, the vast majority of later instances of *alla burchia* style are in fact

¹¹ Sacchetti, *Il libro delle rime*, nos CCXXII and CLIX respectively.

¹² A cultural overview of this problematic period of Italian history has been provided by Giancarlo Mazzacurati, *Piani per una revisione della dialettica culturale nel primo Cinquecento* (Naples: Liguori, 1972).

motivated by a reaction to the supposed lack of meaning in Burchiello's original pattern, and attempt to refunctionalize his technique by a number of means:

(a) linking some of the elements accumulated in the texts to recognizable coordinates (persons, places, and other circumstances known to the poet's audience) that may spark the reader's curiosity, please a patron, and/or underline the specific occasion that—in a courtly social and cultural context—had pivotal importance in the creation and appreciation of poetry, and especially in poetic correspondence (*tenzoni*). An example of this is provided by Bernardo Bellincioni, a Florentine poet born in 1452 who still participates to a large extent in the 'original' style:¹³

A Lorenzo de' Medici per Marchione che disse al Bellincioni che Lorenzo voleva fosse confinato per certi sonetti, e non era vero.

[. . .]

Portandone due rose a Salamone
disse la pecchia:—E' non piove da cielo,
Bernardo, e non bisogno el capperone.

9 As she brought two roses to Solomon,
said the bee:—It's not raining today,
Bernardo, and you won't need a heavy
coat.

Calandrino si fè 'l segno del Vangelo
pel ber d'un gran cocomero al secchione;
ma come il partorì qui non vi celo.

12 Calandrino made the sign of the Gospel
because he ate an ice-cold watermelon,
but I shan't hide how he gave birth to it.

Il Burchiel contra pelo
vuol che gli rada; un codicil s'aggiunghi,
sta' ben con *Sisto*, e non temer di funghi.

15 Burchiello wants to give 'em
an irritating shave; let's add one rule:
get on with Sixtus and fear not the
mushrooms.

(b) encapsulating the *alla burchia* elements in the established framework of Tuscan comic and realistic poetry, using recognizable patterns such as hyperbolic or grotesque (especially misogynistic) descriptions, self-pity and complaint, personal invective, and literary parody. These were tools used also by Burchiello as a tribute to the continuity of comic genres in Tuscany, but were given no leading functions, nor, indeed, did they seem indispensable for his innovations. Such a retrieval of a pre-existing and very successful tradition may be seen in the most authoritative of the 'new wave' of comic poets in the early Cinquecento, Francesco Berni:¹⁴

Sonetto contra la moglie

Cancheri e beccafichi magri arrosto,
e magnar carne salsa senza bere;
essere stracco e non poter sedere;
aver il fuoco appresso e 'l vin discosto;
riscuoter a bell'agio e pagar tosto,
e dar ad altri per dover avere;

Roast of crabs and skinny warblers
and eating salty meat without a drink,
being exhausted when you can't sit down,
being near the fire and far from wine,
5 getting a late salary and paying early,
giving to others without getting anything
back,

esser ad una festa e non vedere,

attending a ball when you can't see a thing

¹³ *Le rime di Bernardo Bellincioni*, CLVIII. 9–17. Italics are mine: 'Bernardo' (l. 11) is clearly the author, worried by his 'cloudy' future away from Lorenzo's protection; 'Sixtus' (l. 17) is Pope Sixtus IV.

¹⁴ F. Berni, *Rime*, ed. by D. Romei (Milan: Mursia, 1985), no. 1v.

e de gennar sudar come di agosto;	and sweating in January as you would in August,
aver un sassolin nella scarpetta	9 having a stone in your little shoe
et una pulce drento ad una calza,	and a flea inside your sock
che vadi in su in giù per istaffetta;	that goes up and down like a courier,
una mano imbrattata ed una netta;	12 having one hand dirty and the other clean,
una gamba calzata ed una scalza;	a shoe on one foot and the other bare,
esser fatto aspettar ed aver fretta:	being in a hurry and being made to wait.
chi più n'ha più ne metta	15 Add anything on top of that
e conti tutti i dispetti e le doglie,	and recount all possible pain and annoyance:
ché la peggior di tutte è l'aver moglie.	the worst of all is still being married.

Although very few narrative elements—with the exception of parodic ones—are to be found in the *per motti* or *alla burchia* style, it is not surprising that the tradition of the *novella* is one that bears many linguistic resemblances to these poems; indeed, in the Florentine literary tradition, short stories were often concerned with verbal effects, in the form of *motti*, clever comments or answers, hilarious definitions or wordplays, which were attributed with greater or lesser accuracy to individuals known in the city, often professional entertainers such as *buffoni* or jongleurs, but also eccentric or clumsy personalities of its social and political life. The importance of *motti* in the early Florentine *novella* tradition may be seen in Day 6 of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, but it is especially with Sacchetti that this kind of story—which had doubtless circulated orally at an early stage—gains definitive literary recognition, to the extent that collections were almost entirely dedicated to this concise narrative form (e.g. the *Motti e facezie del piovano Arlotto*, c. 1480). In terms of genre and chronology, the link between short stories and comic poetry may be exemplified by Burchiello's sonnet on the ambassadors from Norcia (or Siena, according to some manuscripts):

—Prestate nobis de oleo vestrosso [. . .]—, Disse il compagno suo:—Lasciatel dire,	—Lend us some of your oil [. . .]— His fellow ambassador said:—Do not mind him,
non ci manca olio, e per farlo mentire vedete ch'e' n'ha ben se' macchie adosso. [SdB, LXXIX. 1–4]	we need no oil, and to prove him a liar you can see he's got at least six stains on his coat.

The rhetorical artifice of the first ambassador, who alludes to a passage of the Gospels (the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Matthew 25. 1–12), is ridiculed by his companion's earthy and materialistic remark; the scene appears to be based on the account given by Poggio Bracciolini (*Facietiarum liber*, cxxiv), also of two ambassadors, one of whom fails to grasp the biblical allusion and interrupts the other's speech to address their concrete needs: 'Quid hoc est oleum—inquit—Oleum tu postulas, cum milite egeamus?'¹⁵

Curiously, the incipit of Burchiello's sonnet is closely imitated in the early Cinquecento by our anonymous poet, who nevertheless seems to be no longer aware of the anecdotal significance of the line, and offers a completely different interpretation based on the metaphorical equivalence, often used in comic genres, between 'oil' and 'semen', and reinvents the line within a completely

¹⁵ The *facezia* may be read, with an Italian translation facing the Latin original, in P. Bracciolini, *Facezie*, ed. by M. Ciccuto (Milan: Garzanti, 1983), no. cxxiv.

different scene, that of a sexual proposal made by Nencia (a popularizing equivalent of either Lorenza or Continenza) to a hermit, who declines, adducing his poor physical condition and long chastity:

—Date mihi de oleo vestrosso—
dixit la Nencia a fra' Liseo romito,

el qual rispose:—Io rifiuto l'invito,
che gran peço è ch(e) l'orcio ho vòto et schosso.
[R, xxxiii. 1–4]

—Give me some of your oil,
said Nencia to brother Eliseo, a
hermit,
and he replied:—I must decline,
as my jar [=scrotum] has long been
empty and dry.

Among the most significant issues of continuity in both Burchiellesque poetry and the *novella* tradition is the widespread and articulate use of 'speaking names' and other forms of allusive onomastics, often supported by the repertory deployed in carnival songs. Our anonymous collection offers several instances of this artifice:

Dè, i' non churo più Foiano un peto,
non fu' mill'anni fa in val di Frignano!

El fra Churrado mio sta in pace et cheto.
[R, xxxvii. 12–14]

Alas, I no longer care about Foiano,
I haven't been in Frignano for a thousand
years:

brother Currado here is quiet and silent.

Frignano derives from 'frigna', a term found in the *Pataffio* (early fifteenth century), with the meaning of 'vagina',¹⁶ but is also modelled on toponyms such as *Rignano* (a village in the Valdarno, south-east of Florence); *Foiano*, a town in the Chiana valley near Arezzo, is used with the same allusive purpose (a popular etymology connects it to *foia* 'lust').¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, Burchiello also has a passage where 'Foiano' appears together with 'la malaria da Foiano' (*SdB*, cxxxvii. 14–15), and the toponym is attested by several *canti carnascialeschi*: 'Abbiam tolto lor Foiano | che ci fece già gran guerra'; 'Po' voleme in dar Foiam | ragunare stipe e strame'; 'in Culabria fol andar | prestamente non passam | per Foiam con gran furor'.¹⁸

Other 'speaking names' draw on the same tradition of anti-academic satire, a genre that, in this collection, is found specifically addressed to lawyers: for example, 'et verde in Balordia fu doctorato' (xxxix. 8) and 'tu imparasti grammatichia a Grosseto' (xxxvi. 2), to be compared, respectively, with examples such as Burchiello, 'vorrebboni mandare in Balordia' (*SdB*, lxxxi. 12; 'Balordia' is also found in the *Studio d'Atene* by Stefano Finiguerra called *Za*, II. 42), and 'dottor/frate da Grosseto' (= 'stupido') in San Bernardino, *Prediche 1427*, xxvii. 147 and xx. 105.¹⁹ In the same sonnet xxxix of our collection, there is

¹⁶ 'La frigna spacciommi', in [pseudo-]Brunetto Latini, *Il Pataffio* (Naples: Chiappari, 1788), p. 4; the poem is commonly thought to have been composed in the early Quattrocento, but has recently been attributed to Franco Sacchetti (d. 1400) by Federico Della Corte, 'Proposta di attribuzione del *Pataffio* a Franco Sacchetti', *Filologia e critica*, 28 (2003), 41–69.

¹⁷ See 'il bosco del Frignano', in *Rime edite ed inedite di Antonio Cammelli detto il Pistoia*, ed. by Antonio Cappelli and Severino Ferrari (Livorno: Vigo, 1884), no. viii.

¹⁸ Quotations are from *Trionfi e canti carnascialeschi toscani del Rinascimento*, ed. by Riccardo Brusagli, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno, 1986): respectively, 'Canzona degli uomini salvaticchi', II. 15–16 (p. 411); Bernardo Giambullari, 'Canzona degli scoppiettieri', I. 23 (p. 268); 'Canzona de' Todeschi', II. 32–34 (p. 419).

¹⁹ See San Bernardino, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena: 1427*, ed. by Carlo Delcorno, 2 vols (Milan: Rusconi, 1989).

an explicit allusion to Burchiello's anti-academic texts, especially the diptych often found in manuscripts of the *Studio d'Atene*:²⁰

Di Buemia le schuole
ha tolto in guardia, e 'l m(astro) Pecorone,
et facto ha compagnia chon s(er) Castrone.

He took charge of the schools of Bohemia, and Pecorone the teacher, and was accompanied by Castrone the notary.

The passage draws, once again, on *SdB*, II. 9, 'Molti aretini andavano in Buemia', LXXXI. 8, 'ser Pecora', and XCII. 1, 'Questi che hanno studiato il Pecorone'.

As has already emerged, our anonymous text features a very large number of quotations from the *Sonetti del Burchiello*, such as XLI. 11, 'voi mi parete con gli occhi a rovescio', reminiscent of *SdB*, LXIV. 2, 'chi già a rovescio non si mette gli occhi'; given the number of such examples, I shall concentrate on instances where intertextuality is emphasized by positioning of quoted elements in a similar metrical context.

(a) Opening lines: the first line 'Dieci fecte d'agresto in un mortito' (XXXI) looks like a combination of *SdB*, XXXVIII, 'Tre fecte di popone et due di seta', and XIV, 'Un giuoco d'aliossi in un mortito'; the initial distich 'Giunse l'altr'ieri al porto della ghaza | una ghalera charicha di sogni' (XLVI) derives from *SdB*, I. 6–7, 'che 'gli è venuto al porto de' Pilastri | una galea carica d'impiastri'; another opening line, 'Se lla scharsella tua fosse digiuna' (CXXII), is closely modelled on *SdB*, L. 5–6, 'Se la chiudenda tua del mellonaio | avesse sgangherato l'uscioolino'; the aforementioned sonnet XXXIII, 'Date mihi de oleo vestrosso' (fol. 169^v), cites *SdB*, LXXIX. 1, 'Prestate nobis de oleo vestrosso'.

(b) Other parts of the sonnet: XXXIII. 3, 'el qual rispose:—Io rifiuto lo 'nvito', recalls *SdB*, XIV. 4, 'Et un babbion che rifiutò lo 'nvito'; XLIII. 10, 'con loro insieme andare alla pagnotta', alludes to *SdB*, XIV. 11, 'che voi andrete ancora alla pagnotta'; CXIII. 3, 'parmi ch'ella abbia assai del nuovo pesce', is again modelled on *SdB*, XXLVIII. 2, 'd'uccegli che hanno più del nuovo pesce'; XXXVI. 13–14, 'lascia la penna se giuchar non vuoi | per la pocha faccenda al duro e 'l molle', is an elaboration of *SdB*, XV. 3–4, 'giuococono e topi vecchi a mazasquido | e per cominciar fanno al duro e 'l molle'; XIV. 7–8, 'Non vedi tu ch'i' ho più d'una spanna | lunga et largha la foggia che 'l becchetto', is equally reminiscent of *SdB*, CLII. 16–17, 'di giudici e pedanti sì scorretti | che hanno maggior la foggia che 'becchetti'; for XXI. 9, 'trote, carpioni, anguille di Bolsena', see *SdB*, CLVI. 14, 'che recaron le anguille di Bolsena'.

(c) Sometimes the allusion combines more than one passage: XI. 4, 'chol vespro degli Armini in guaçabuglio', conflates *SdB*, CCIX. 8, 'che sonerebbe il vespro degli Armini', and XXXI. 11, 'con femine e poeti in guazabuglio' (in both instances rhymed with *mesuglio*).

²⁰ In period manuscripts, the *Studio d'Atene* (in Stefano di Tommaso Finiguerra detto il Za, *Poemetti*, ed. by Antonio Lanza (Rome: Zauli, 1994)) is often found accompanied by *SdB*, LXXXI, 'Questi ch'andorngià a studiare Àthene', and XCII, 'Questi c'hanno studiato il Pecorone', sonnets which were probably considered as a kind of preface to Za's work.

In the historical perspective outlined above, the anonymous author of the *alla burchia* corpus transcribed in the Riccardiano manuscript may appear as a late, excessively orthodox follower of Burchiello's authentic style; however, such exceptional continuity reaches well beyond the extensive use of intertextuality, and reveals an intimate knowledge of and affinity with the technicalities of the model. Such meticulous and, one might say, philological use of Burchiello's poems was closely associated with the nature of the text and its peculiar transmission process in the Quattrocento.²¹ One of the main reasons for the obscurity of *alla burchia* sonnets is that this interaction between the text and its copyists and imitators remained specific to a well-defined circle of enthusiasts, who shared the social standing, writing habits, and cultural background of those protagonists of the early Renaissance whom Christian Bec aptly described as *marchands écrivains* in a well-known study.²²

The Riccardiano manuscript does not offer sufficient grounds to establish the social context in which our poetic collection was assembled, nor indeed does it provide clues to the identity of the author; nevertheless, the only relevant annotation present in the manuscript appears to be sufficient to place this work within a specific, albeit scarcely studied, cultural context, that of editors and printers working on Burchiello's text in the first two decades of the Cinquecento. In the same handwriting, although much smaller, one of the very rare marginalia in the manuscript reads (fol. 85^r): 'Sp(ectabi)li viro S(er) Piero Pacinj da P[es]cia maiorj mio hon(orando)'.²³ The note is very likely to be a *probatio pennae*, and it appears to be the *intitulatio* of a letter that the scribe and author was about to send to one of the most prestigious publishers of the early Cinquecento, Pietro or Piero Pacini, a native of Pescia who moved to Florence, where he actively promoted the printed diffusion of vernacular texts, with a preference for popularizing and comic genres. Especially in the last few years of his production, before his son Bernardo took over the business on his father's death in 1514, Pietro published books such as Luca Pulci's *Epistole al magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici* (twice, in 1513 and 1514) and the *Sonetti di messer Mattheo Franco & di Luigi Pulci iocosi & da ridere* (1514); even more significantly from our viewpoint, his son Bernardo published Burchiello's sonnets later in the same year.²⁴ The circumstance of personally corresponding with one of the most prominent professionals involved in the diffusion of comic poetry of the latest generation may add an important piece of information to the portrait of the anonymous enthusiast for *alla burchia* poetry who composed and copied our manuscript.

Returning to the collection itself, it may be worth noting that the vast, multi-faceted, and often exclusive intertextuality that the text establishes with its

²¹ I have investigated this in my recent article 'Morfologia e patologia' (see n. 10).

²² *Les Marchands écrivains: affaires et humanisme à Florence* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

²³ In the word *Pescia* two letters (shown here in square brackets) are missing owing to paper damage; as usual, abbreviations are shown expanded in parentheses.

²⁴ The edition bears no indication of its place of printing, but it is likely to have been Florence, as suggested by the general catalogue of Italian sixteenth-century editions (*EDIT 16*, available online at <http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it>); the colophon reads: 'ad petitione di Bernardo di Piero Pacini. 1514'. Pacini had previously published a palinode of Dante's *Comedy*, Federico Frezzi's *Quatiregio in terza rima volgare* (1508), and the *Cantari d'Aspramonte*, 'di nuouo racconio in lingua toschana & storiato tucto' (1504).

main model is playfully confessed by the author himself in the following tercet, which—in a circular, metaliterary play—draws on some passages from Burchiello himself:

Domandane il Burchiello che dice che 'l marrobbio in insalata fu quel che diede a' Greci la chaçata. [R, XII. 15-17]	Ask Burchiello about it, as he said that a horehound salad was the reason why the Greeks were put to flight.
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These lines should be read in connection with, at least, *SdB*, XXIII. 16, 'fagli pestar col sevo del marrobbio', and c. 17, 'sì ch'io v'annuntio ch'ella fia cazata'.

Such literary strategies may sometimes be aptly described as patchwork, but they often appear, more interestingly, as deliberate allusions to specific texts that were assumed to be known in the specific circle of readers to whom the collection is addressed. Such 'internal' reception seems to lie behind some esoteric sonnets in which Burchiello's experimental verve seems to be pushed to extreme consequences. As was neatly illustrated by Giuseppe Mazzoni,²⁵ the sonnet 'Sabato Tessa ci fu mona sera' (*SdB*, CCII) is encrypted through systematic inversion of words or verbal stems: for example, line 2, 'con un gran maccheron di catinoni', should be read as 'con un gran catinone di maccheroni'. Sonnet XVI of our collection develops this transpositional technique (which recalls the medieval rhetorical exercise of *permutatio*) and combines it with the trademark paratactic articulation of *alla burchia* texts: as a result, the first consonant of each term is exchanged within each pair, as jokingly explained by the author in the *cauda*: 'Hor fa' che ritrovati | habbi questi schompigli s(anto) Antonio, | che tutti hanno schambiato il primo chonio' (ll. 15-17). Before translating the first two quatrains, I shall therefore offer a 'plain' version of the passage:

Brardo luchato (et) morri parçolini,
 sporbide mine (et) spamberi ginosi,
 rasi nifrici (et) modi naliosi,
 mebbie nalesce (et) schugni farlattini,
 luffie combarde (et) mocholi çancini, 5
 suciada recha (et) bomiti ravosi
 fampane cesse e rariti mitrosi,
 troda bedescha (et) sichi fementini
 [R, XVI. 1-8]

[Lardo brucato e porri marzolini morbide spine e gamberi spinosi nasi rifritti e nodi maliosi, nebbie malesce e funghi scarlattini, cuffie lombarde e zoccoli mancini, rugiada secca e romiti bavosi, campane fesse e mariti ritrosi, broda tedesca e fichi sementini]	Grazed lard and spring leeks, soft spikes and spiky prawns, stir-fried noses and malicious knots, insidious fogs and scarlet mushrooms, Lombard bonnets and left-footed clogs, dry dew and dribbling pilgrims [hermits?] cracked bells and reluctant husbands, German broth and seeded figs.
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Forms of Parody in the Anonymous Collection

As in Burchiello's corpus, linguistic and dialectal parody play an important part in the anonymous collection; almost all the areas present in the model

²⁵ 'Una filastrocca burchielleca', *Lingua nostra*, 2 (1940), 4-7.

are covered, but in some instances our poet joins a flourishing tradition. The caricature of pedantic and scholastic Latin, for example, was often employed by comic poets of the Quattrocento: in our text, sonnet cxvii follows this pattern, used by Burchiello in *SdB*, xvii, 'Quem queritatis vel vellere in toto'. However, intertextuality in the collection tackles a variety of Burchiello's texts, combined with a mocking allusion to Stilnovistic themes (the lover's heart that cannot remain hidden, line 4 of the quotation below):

Venite, gentes, mecho in capusmondi:	Come with me, folks, to the world's end!
docebo vos de natura gementes,	I shall teach you the nature of weepers:
vinum Barletta nil valet bibentes	Barletta wine is no good for drinkers
et chuur d'amantis non potes ascondi.	and a lover's heart cannot stay hidden.
[R, cxvii. 1-4]	

In order, see *SdB*, xlviII. 2, 'tractantur de natura', cxlvii. 17, 'vin di Barletta', and xl. 17, 'la salsa nil valet'. The rest of the sonnet adopts a caricatural Latin to pursue a different strand of Burchiellism, that of oxymoronic versification: 'Currite firmi et vigilans dormite, | oculi claudi si vultis videre' (ll. 9-10), which should be compared, for example, to *SdB*, cxlvii. 9-11, 'Legati e sciolti hanno di molti emoli, | parlati muti e vescovi scopati | ne vanno da Piancaldoli a Pontriemoli'.

Another text centred on linguistic parody is a Greek-Latin pastiche:

Dexis esti meros elatichon,	The right hand is the moving part:
memento pullos cum fagianibus	do not forget chicken with pheasants
in mensa bonum cum pippionibus,	that are good served with pigeons,
tu loghu menas diaretichon.	the difference [is] the folly of these words.
[R, xxxiv. 1-4]	

Interestingly, Burchiello often indulges in linguistic parody but does not seem to practise multilingual pastiche, i.e. two or more languages coexisting in the same text, in spite of a long-established and flourishing tradition that allowed for this (suffice it to quote Raimbaut de Vaqueiras's famous *descort* 'Domna, tant vos ai preiada' amongst dialogic, dramatized poems, and Dante's trilingual *canzone* 'Ai faux ris' as an example of a 'pure' plurilinguistic text where the presence of different languages does not imply mimetic representation of different speakers).²⁶ On the other hand, the combination of Latin and Italian does indeed appear in Burchiello (*SdB*, xlviII. 1-3: 'Democrito, Germia et Cicerone | tractantur de natura pipius, | quod bonum est in domicilius | quando 'gli è il sole in segno di Scarpione') within the same metrical structure, whereby the two languages would be used for the A and B rhymes respectively (that is, lines 1-4-5-8 and 2-3-6-7 in the ABBA scheme). A quatrain by the Bolognese poet Niccolò de' Malpigli (second half of the Quattrocento) may offer a further example where Latin and Italian appear in reverse order:

Reperi in hoc libro casum legalem,	In this book I found a legal case,
il qual, quantunque studii molto spesso,	that no matter how often I study it,

²⁶ Raimbaut de Vaqueiras's *descort* (c. 1190) may be read in *The Poems of the Troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras*, ed. by Joseph Linskill (Mouton: The Hague, 1964), pp. 98-107; Dante's *canzone* is no. 63 in D. Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. by Gianfranco Contini (Turin: Einaudi, 1946), p. 240.

egli e la moglie'; cxxx. 9, 'che pazia è crucciarsi di Se' mele | come fece Giunon contra 'Thebani', with the same phonic *aequivocatio* and Dantean reference to Juno's wrath),³⁰ and the metrical placement of such names appears to support and enhance the exclusivity of such intertextual connections (see XLIII. 7, 'e Bacco fè nel Po mille zampilli'):

<p>Chavol bruchato (et) Nebrotto e ' pestello dièr la maestra a Siena delle torte che schonfisson la torre di Babello. Ma così volle la malvagia sorte che, tenendo Machon gli ochi a sportello, da' Filistei gli fûr chiuse le porte.</p> <p>Chi vuole aceto forte mettavi dentro sugho di ranochi et saprà quanti piedi hanno e pidocchi. [R, ix. 9-17]</p>	<p>9 Grazed cabbage, Nimrod and the pestle gave Siena the mother of all twists, as they defeated the Tower of Babel, 12 yet a malicious Fate had such a plan that Mohammed who was half asleep was locked out of the doors by the Philistines. 15 Anyone who likes sour vinegar should add some frog juice to it, and he will know how many feet lice have.</p>
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Devoted to biblical rather than mythological parody, the passage is a rearrangement of *SdB*, LX. 9, 'Nebrotto fé la torre di Babello', combined with further, less obvious quotes: 'gli occhi a sportello' (i.e. half-closed) is a borrowing from *SdB*, CLI. 17; 'aceto forte' comes from *SdB*, xxxvi. 8; 'Machon' is a variant of the 'Macometto' quoted in the previous paragraph from *SdB*, cvi. 2.

The strand of cultural parody that is perhaps most characteristic of Burchiello's style is the satire of the representatives of spurious and presumptuous wisdom (mainly judges, lawyers, astrologers, and doctors). I have dealt with this 'satira del saccente' in the light of a traditional antithesis between *naturale* (common sense, intelligence as an innate quality) and *accidentale* (superficially acquired knowledge supported by no real intellectual qualities) in a recent article.³¹ In our collection, this strand is represented by a diptych *adversus iuriconsultos* (xxxvi, 'Dolce ser Ugo con la çeta in testa', and xxxix, 'Echo venire un doctor chammufato'), but also—more indirectly—by some caricatural recipes, listing inconsistent and/or paradoxical ingredients, as in sonnet CIX, 'Se l'arte imparar vuoi dello inghannare' (almost a quotation of *SdB*, III. I, 'Se vuoi far l'arte dello 'ndovinare'). An even more significant example of inconsistent elements appears in another text from the collection:

<p>Di lombrichi ossa (et) sangue di moscioni, penne di granchi (et) chode di bertuccia con una spalla et meço d'una gruccia guariron della lebbra tre poponi. [R, xxxv. 1-4]</p>	<p>Dew-worms' bones and midges' blood, crabs' feathers and monkeys' tails with a coat-hangers' shoulder and a half cured three melons of leprosy.</p>
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The model addressed here is again Burchiello and his typical verbal virtuosity, which—again with a caricature of Dante's style—describes trivial things with

³⁰ See *Inferno*, xxx. 1-2: 'Nel tempo che Giunone era crucciata | per Semelè contra 'l sangue tebano'. Bacchus's birth was traumatically caused by lightning: his pregnant mother Semele was treacherously persuaded by Juno to ask her lover Jove to appear in all his glory, and the latter had vowed to grant all her desires.

³¹ M. Zaccarello, 'Indovinelli, paradossi, naturale e accidentale nei "Sonetti del Burchiello"', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 15 (2000), 111-27.

highly artificial periphrases, e.g. ‘Cimatura di nugoli stillata’ for ‘rain’ (*SdB*, XXII. 1); the following is perhaps the most relevant comparison:

<p>Et tre spiragli d'ombre e tre di sole cotti nel sugo di spugna marina con midollo di canna di saggina: con questi t'ugnerai dove ti duole. [R, CIII. 5–8]</p>	<p>5 And three glimmers of shadow and three of sunlight boiled in the juice of a sea sponge with some marrow of sorghum reeds: you'll spread this on the painful spot.</p>
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Although practised more systematically by Orcagna, strictly literary parody, addressing a wide range of academic targets such as (1) lofty lyric poetry in the Petrarchan tradition, (2) allegorical narrative poetry of a Dantean type, and (3) scientific and didactic poetry, is also found in Burchiello's corpus and in our collection. As in many examples in Burchiello, such caricature is often accompanied by the comic pattern of *deminutio*, whereby lofty literary elements are drastically brought down to a human, down-to-earth dimension:

<p>Benigne stelle donde Amor deriva che la mondana spetie al seme induce, ma q(ue)lla mano achorta che 'l produce non è men degna di suo comitiva. [. . .] et né Vulchan geloso della Venere sua, ch(é) per decreto di Marte andò podestà di Chorneto. [R, XVII. 1–4, 15–17]</p>	<p>Benign stars whence Love is born, he who leads mankind to sow the seed, though that skilful hand that produces it is no less worthy of his company. [. . .] 15 nor indeed (was) Vulcan jealous of his Venus when by Mars's decree he was made governor of Corneto.</p>
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Another distinctive feature of the anonymous poet's Burchiellism is his use of bizarre, invented, or blatantly unmatching *auctoritates*, again with a function of anti-academic parody; this is a frequent feature of Burchiello's sonnets (typically located in the *cauda*: see e.g. xxxv. 17, 'le geneologie di Pier Frusta'; XLVI. 17, 'le favole d'Isopo'; XLVIII. 16, 'il primo testo del Vannino'). The Riccardiano manuscript has clauses that appear to be phrased directly after the model, such as xxxi. 15–17: 'Leggi nel nono Statio | et troverai come 'l sole inacquato | non può mai rasciugar bene un buchato', to be read against *SdB*, cXLVI. 15–17: 'Chi cercasse con pena | per ritrovare il capo d'un gomitollo | legga nel terzo Ovidio sine titolo'. However, it may be worth noting that such devices were exploited by writers of the following century within the newly established genre of the pseudo-commentary, bizarre annotations that took a given text as an excuse to expand on a wide range of allegedly related aspects. Invented anecdotes and sources adduced to support textual interpretation offered the commentator a number of cues to exhibit his own literary erudition as well as his knowledge of related academic fields such as history, mythology, and philosophy.³²

The close imitation of Burchiello's sonnets illustrated above should not be deemed to be the only interesting feature of this manuscript collection. The

³² This peculiar strand of Cinquecento comic literature, largely arising from the meetings of Italian *accademie*, and thus closely related to the contemporary *cicalate*, is extensively studied in the recent volume 'Cum notibusse et comentaribusse': *l'esegesi parodistica e giocosa del Cinquecento. Seminario di letteratura italiana (Viterbo, ottobre 2001)*, ed. by Antonio Corsaro and Paolo Procaccioli (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2002).

author also seems capable of interpreting and contextualizing his sources in the light of the existing comic tradition, including recent developments that were—of course—inaccessible to Burchiello and the other main representatives of the *alla burchia* style. Such contextualization may be described as having two aspects:

(a) consolidating the stylistic links with pre-Burchiellan comic and realistic poetry. For example, the *bisticcio*, a very popular pattern in the Trecento whereby poems were constructed almost exclusively using assonance and phonic reduplication, is not found in Burchiello's corpus—at least according to the hypothetical canon I have edited—but it is still common in the late Quattrocento and is employed by Niccolò de' Malpigli: 'Amore amaro io moro e tu non miri | mare nè mura, o mora terra, o torre' (*Rimatori bolognesi*, p. 33). This pattern does appear in two texts of our anonymous collection: xv, 'Busse di bosso et busso giù da basso', and cxxxI, 'Un beccho, un baccho chon la beccha in boccha'. A similar form of continuity with pre-Burchiellan comic literature may be seen in several misogynistic sonnets of traditional language and structure that are found in the Riccardiano; xxvii, for example, is an invective *in vetulam* whose allocutive style recalls Rustico Filippi: 'Che guardi, ciecha? Ch(ε) fiacchi la coscia, | asinaccia di feccia cesamuça? | No ch'io no(n) ti vo ben, ribaldelluça, | va' chol malan, che ti vengha l'angoscia!' (ll. 1–4). A second *vituperatio* combines misogynistic themes with an extensive use of antiphrasis, a device frequently found in comic poets of the Sienese school (Cecco Angiolieri, Meo de' Tolomei, Muscia da Siena): 'Donna veçosa (et) gentil più ch'arlotto, | morbida più che pelle di spinoso | col naso all'erta (et) chol viso chacioso, | bene a tuo modo m'ài richoncio (et) chotto' (R, xxxii. 1–4).³³

(b) updating Burchiello's distinctive style through the acquisition of similar comic and satirical experiences of the late Quattrocento, thus extending the scope and the boundaries of the *alla burchia* style. Within this intriguing form of cultural integration, the most evident instance found in our collection is the following:

Amor mi fa pur dir del mio gighioço	Cupid makes me sing of my sweet lily
la qual qua(n)t'io più vegho men la ghuardo,	whom I contemplate less the more I
	see her,
che viene a dir: per lei chome neve ardo,	which means: I burn for her like
	snow
per gran voghia ch'i' ò di darghi un çoço	for the longing I have to give her a
	bang
so ben io dove! Odi chom'io singhioço,	5 I well know where! Now hear me
	sigh,
tanto s'è facto Amor di me ghaghiardo.	Such is the power Cupid has gained
	over me.
Ell'è più biancha assai che structo o lardo,	She is whiter than butter or lard,
chon quel suo faucighion si ghaghiardoço.	with her jaws so strong and vigorous.
Ghuata que' ricci begni arroncighiati:	9 Look at those beautiful twisted curls:

³³ Rustico's poems may now be read in the critical edition by Giuseppe Marrani, 'I sonetti di Rustico Filippi', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 57 (1999), 33–199; for Cecco, see C. Angiolieri, *Rime*, ed. by Antonio Lanza (Rome: Archivio G. IZZI, 1990); for Meo de' Tolomei, Anna Bettarini Bruni, 'Le rime di Meo de' Tolomei e di Muscia da Siena', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 32 (1974), 31–98.

e' paion proprio di stoppa et chapecchio,	they really seem made of tow and hemp,
tanto son bene alla 'nsù struffonati;	they're so well combed and brushed upward.
ghuata quel cighio, e' luce chome specchio	12 Look at that brow, it shines like a mirror
che mi ha insino a' talloni imperversati:	that's tormented me from head to toe:
un po' grattar gli potess'io el penneccio.	I wish I could scratch her bush a little!
Et dirle nello orecchio:	15 And whisper in her ear:
—Dammi agio et buio et fa' ch'io sia sichuro	—Give me some time in a safe dark place
et sonerèno el piffero e 'l tamburo.	and we'll play the pipe and beat on cymbals.

[R, xcvi]

This sonnet has all the ingredients of the *nenciale* tradition: extensive use of the suffix *-oço*, parody of the high-style (especially Petrarchan) *descriptio mulieris*, grotesque exaltation of awkward physical traits, paradoxical and often antiphrastic similes, and explicit allusions to earthy, carnal desire, but especially the distinctive linguistic trait attributed to Mugello-speakers by Lorenzo de' Medici, Luigi Pulci, and others, the generalization of the voiced velar sound *gh* to replace standard Italian voiced palatal sound *gl* (although, as illustrated by Arrigo Castellani, *gh* is the legitimate Florentine result for words containing Latin -GL-): *gighioço*, *voghia*, *darghi*, *ghaghiardoço*, *cighio*.³⁴

By way of a conclusion, I should like to sum up the main reasons why the Riccardiano manuscript collection illustrated in this paper is of interest. The diverse and articulate forms of interaction that had characterized the textual transmission of Burchiello in the Quattrocento may well exemplify and explain the experimental and 'deconstructive' inclination of early imitators: without hesitation, and often while copying the original, Burchiello's followers would modify the canon and text of their model, and indeed elaborate on its structure, using it as a repertory for their poetic training rather than as a finished text. The structural fluidity of Burchiello's corpus, which was never properly consolidated by authorial intention, reinforced the typically occasional and 'centrifugal' character of the *alla burchia* style, the main consequence being that the obvious linguistic antagonism with the other triumphant poetic format at the time, the Petrarchan *canzoniere*, was expanded to a macrotextual dimension, effectively sanctioning a contradiction between Burchiellism and the *canzoniere* form; *alla burchia* poems were thus deprived of a cohesive textual transmission and are either found piecemeal, filling blank pages in contemporary manuscripts, or collected according to extrinsic criteria in corpora that soon featured indices, an instrument of analytical access that seems to pinpoint the selective and non-sequential reading that characterized the early reception of Burchiello. The poetic collection found in R is peculiar and interesting precisely because

³⁴ See A. Castellani, 'GL intervocalico in italiano' (1954), in id., *Saggi di linguistica e filologia italiana e romanza*, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno, 1980), I, 213–21 (especially p. 218, where the doubled velar *g* is indicated as the legitimate development of Latin GL).

it features an attempt to create and structure a Burchiellesque *canzoniere*, in a unique, and doomed, attempt to overcome an aporia in contemporary versification. Understandably, the coherence of the book is not achieved through thematic and/or narrative connections as in other poetic genres: such issues are simply non-existent in Burchiellesque poetry. The author opts instead for a solution which is strikingly consistent with the genre: he adopts one of the most common instruments found in manuscripts of Burchiello, the alphabetical index, and elevates it to the structuring principle of his collection. Extrinsic as it may be, the alphabetical order is a faithful expression of the diversity and contrast of the ingredients of the *alla burchia* style. The very nature of this genre, as admirably assimilated by our anonymous author, banishes any kind of logical, thematic, or narrative developments, yet its poetics must be considered from a 'medieval' viewpoint which is indispensable to understanding Burchiello: the comic macrotext becomes a kind of *repertorium universale*, whose coverage spans virtually all aspects of life; hence the need for a finished structure, modelled on a universal key such as the alphabet. The incompleteness and uncertainty displayed by our anonymous author in applying this criterion may be taken as representative of a much broader failure, that of old-fashioned, orthodox imitators of Burchiello's style on the eve of the advent of a new and *à la page* form of Burchiellism, the courtly *poesia burlesca* that substituted Berni for Burchiello as the main source of its codification. In order to emancipate their model from its provincial, vernacular language and make it suitable for the broader audience that Tuscan enjoyed in the new century (thanks to the Medici popes and the advent of Cosimo's *principato*), the new poetic generation did not hesitate to overturn the very foundations of *alla burchia* poetry, eliminating most of Burchiello's linguistic innovations and reassimilating his style to a pre-existing, far more flexible and intelligible tradition of *vituperium* and satire.

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