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WHO IS THE *VIELLATOR* ON FOLIO 18R OF THE SANKT FLORIAN PSALTER? A MINIATURE FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF POLAND AS SEEN THROUGH THE MEDIEVAL IMAGINATION

In the Middle Ages it was rare for the graphic representation of concepts to remain static and uniform in meaning. A dog, for instance, in its perception passed down from antiquity, could be the embodiment of impurity, but in medieval iconography, with time, the dog began to assume the connotation of a noble and faithful animal. The lion in turn represented a triumph over evil, but also signified violence and duplicity.[1] The meaning of one and the same figure in an illustration could differ according to the context in which it appeared, but also retain several layers of meaning. This was especially the case in biblical texts, read in four different senses: the literal, the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical.[2] Umberto Eco tells the story of the St Albans Psalter, now in Hildesheim, in which next to the image of a fortified

1 J. Le Goff, *La Civilisation de l'Occident médiéval*, [Paris] 2008, pp. 304–309.

2 See more: H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis. The Four Senses of Scripture*, vol. 1: transl. M. Sebanc, Edinburgh 1998, vol. 2: transl. E.M. Macierowski, Edinburgh 2000.

town under siege the illuminator includes a comment about not taking his depiction solely at a literal level. His miniature is not just to be understood in its basic sense – *corporaliter*, but also in the allegorical or spiritual sense – *spiritualiter.* The scene seeks to remind the reader of their own battle to be fought when they come under siege from evil.[3]

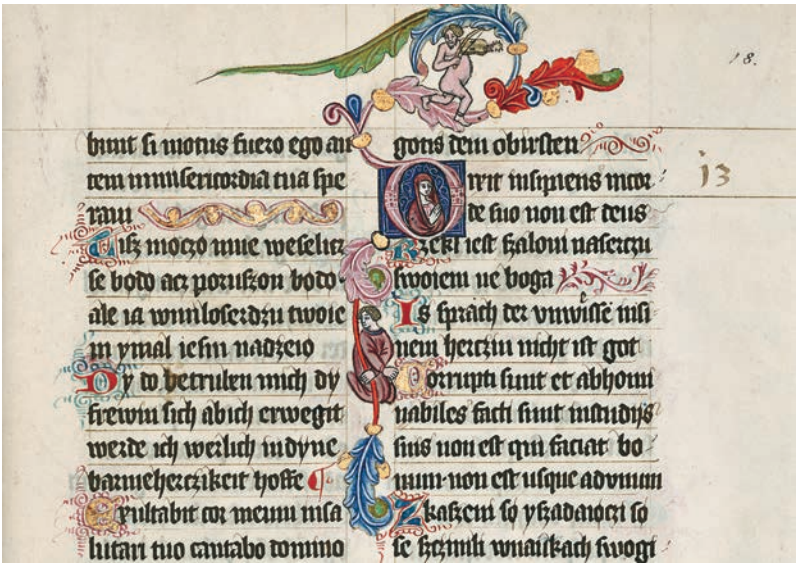

FIG. 1. Sankt Florian Psalter, folio 18r, Rps 8002 III, BN, Warsaw

Study of the iconography in the Sankt Florian Psalter (Polish: *Psałterz floriański*) in Polish National Library (8002 III) has been relatively limited hitherto. To begin with, studies were attempted of those illuminated elements, which might shed light on the artistic milieu, from which it might have originated, as well as seeking to establish who commissioned it. Hence the concentration of study on heraldry in the manuscript and the enduring mystery of the "mm" monogram, which was the subject of academic enquiry by Mieczysław Gębarowicz.[4] However, in her monograph, Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot

3 U. Eco, *Arte e bellezza nell'estetica medievale*, Milano 1987, p. 92.

4 M. Gębarowicz, *Psałterz floriański i jego geneza*, Wrocław 1965, pp. 15–84.

placed the Psalter's iconography within an astrological framework which, it was held, expressed the then royal couples' endeavours to have children.[5] While the assumptions of this academic are intriguing and wholly in keeping with medieval attitudes towards astrology, other scholars have observed that they are not totally adequate to apply to the interpretation of this historical gem.[6] It is also worth noting Andrzej Dróżdż's idea about verifying the mnemonic potential of the manuscript's decorative aspects and to review the level of awareness of the technique in Kraków.[7] Given that mnemonic associations may differ in character and assume various degrees of erudition, and in spite of applying one of the more precise systems (e.g. like those of the Preaching Order)[8], specific miniature images set in their artistic contexts may essentially always be put to mnemonic use.

The tiny image on folio 18r of the Sankt Florian Psalter depicts a naked man (fig. 1), his legs apart, as if he were either running or about to jump. Each leg carries an anklet (or perhaps the outline of some element yet to be added). He is playing a stringed instrument and his image has been set into a whimsical undulating foliate composition which is joined to the illuminated initial of Psalm 13 (14) below. The psalm opens, in Latin, with the words „Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus" and the initial incorporates the head and shoulders of a woman with her hands joined in a gesture of prayer. From the initial, the illuminator extends downwards a second foliate offshoot between two columns of the text. This is embellished with the image of a kneeling man in a long robe.

5 Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Tajemnice dekoracji Psałterza floriańskiego*, Warszawa 1992, p .75. Polemic with Śnieżyńska-Stolot: K. Ożóg, "The Intellectual Circles in Cracow at the Turn of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries and the Issue of The Creation of The Sankt Florian Psalter", *Polish Libraries*, vol. 1 (2012), (regarding the astrological attribution and competence in the astrological milieu), M. Kuźmicki, op. cit., p. 57–70 (also regarding the attribution) and A. Dróżdż, "Propozycja badawcza dekoracji Psałterza floriańskiego", *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej* 2003, vol. 35, pp. 207–209 (regarding the examination of the problematic and poorly argued interpretations in the light of the Christian reception of the Zodiac).

6 K. Ożóg, op. cit., pp. 93–113.

7 See A. Dróżdż, op. cit., pp. 201–210.

8 See A. Dróżdż, op. cit., p. 209.

Few interpretations exist for these depictions. In her popular science publication on the subject Zofia Rozanow calls the naked man a "biblical fool" playing a *fidel*,[9] but without detailing her reasons. Śnieżyńska-Stolot, however, describes the figure as "a man, dancing and playing the viol", at the same time stating that the image "is a depiction of Muse playing the lyre". Muse (or Moses) is meant to be the name of a man who represents an ancient Egyptian stellar constellation – the "Carrier of the Lyre."[10]

Both authors refer to the same type of musical instrument, being in all probability nothing more than an early forbear of the violin, a popular instrument in the Middle Ages known as the *vielle* in French, and in Latin as a *viella.* A performer on the *viella* might be described as a *viellator,* again from the Latin. In Anglo-Saxon literature one comes across the term *fiddle*, or its derivative the *fidel*.[11]

Psalters, given their content, usually boasted highly developed musical imagery.[12] The Psalms, intended to be sung or recited to music, were by tradition composed by the Musician-King, typically depicted carrying a harp, lyre or psaltery. And so also the Sankt Florian Psalter has King David appearing in the illuminated initial of Psalm 1 (f. 3r). Although the image remains unfinished, as does the gilding, one may assume that the latter would have outlined the shape of a musical instrument. However, musical depictions in the Sankt Florian Psalter are by no means abundant – besides the *viellator* in the margin of a folio, only a few trumpet playing figures are evident elsewhere, and their depictions would, however, require a separate commentary (ff. 3r, 16v, 23r, 28v, 50r, 53v). The purpose of the presented study is not, however, to depict the decorations of the Sankt Florian Psalter as a whole, not to discover the key to understand the entire icono-

9 Z. Rozanow, *Muzyka w miniaturze polskiej*, Kraków 1965, p. 124.

10 E. Śnieżyńska-Stolot, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

11 M. Remnant, "Rebec, Fiddle and Crowd in England", *in: Instruments and their Music in the Middle Ages*, ed. T. J. McGee, Farnham 2009, pp. 326–327; T. J. McGee, "The Medieval Fiddle: Tuning, Technique, and Repertory", in: *Instruments, Ensembles, and Repertory, 1300-1600*, ed. T. J. McGee, S. Carter, Turnhout 2013, pp. 33–34, 49

12 J. Montagu, *Musical Instruments of the Bible*, Lanham 2002, pp. 71–85.

graphic programme, but rather to reveal the literary, theological and stereotypical background of a single image included in the more complex decorated codex, that is to arrive at possible answers to questions about the meaning of the performing *viellator*.

Musicus vs. Cantor. Remarks On Musical Theory And Performance In The Middle Ages

One cannot emphasise too strongly the impact that Augustine's (354–430) and Boethius's (480–525) understanding of music had on the medieval mind. For generations their writing perpetuated an approach to music drawn from antiquity. Due to its harmony and proportionality music was regarded as akin to mathematics. Thus it became included in educational programmes, and from Martianus Capella (fl. ca. 410–420) onwards medieval theorists set it down as one of the seven liberal arts.[13] Aurelian of Réôme (Aurelianus Reomensis; fl. c. 840–850) in his ninth century treatise *Musica disciplina* wrote, altering somewhat the words of Boethius: "It is known that there are three kinds of music: the first is the music of the world, the second - the music of man, the third - music drawn from instruments."[14] According to the Frankish monk, the music of the world is present in heaven and on earth "in the diversity of the elements and seasons of the year." On the basis of the then popular *Somnium Scipionis* by Cicero, he maintained that the celestial spheres which rotate in the Ptolemaic universe emit a sweet though inaudible sound thus making for the harmonious arrangement of the cosmos. More prevalent, however, was the music of man, present in his vicinity, in the microcosm, thus in man himself. For, as Aurelian of Réôme asks rhetorically, "what else conjoins the constituent parts, body and soul", if not the music of man? And then, only beneath these

13 E.A. Lippman, "The Place of Music in the System of Liberal Arts", in: *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. J. La Rue, New York 1966, pp. 545–559.

14 Quotations: Aurelianus Reomensis, *Musica disciplina*, ed. L. Gushee, [Dallas] 1975, p. 64: "Musice genera tria noscuntur esse: prima quidem mundana, secunda humana, tertia quae quibusdam constat instrumentis."; ibidem "Mundana quippe in his maxime perspicienda est rebus quae in ipso coelo vel terra, elementorumque vel temporum varietate videntur."; ibidem pp. 65–66: „Humana denique musica in microcosmo (...) plenissime abundat. (...) Quid est aliud, quod ipsius hominis inter se partes animae corporisque iungat?".

two categories of music which remain in a cosmic relationship with each other, is there the third category, the music played on and drawn from musical instruments – organs, citharas, lyres and many others. In the hierarchy advanced by Aurelian, the very making of music appeared pale and represented but a shadow of the dazzling vastness of a harmonious world created by God.

Adam of Fulda widened the classification found in the work of Aurelian and others to include those with expertise in the various kinds of music.[15] Important issues, such as that of the tones, belonging to the world and also to man, were the respective preserve of the mathematician and the physicist, reducing instrumentalists and vocalists to mere music makers. Domingo Gundisalvo (Dominicus Gundissalinus, c. 1150–after 1181) offered a different approach – music could be practiced through composition and performance, or through theory by teaching "how it should be done in accordance with the art."[16] Also known are more robust evaluations, such as those of John Cotton (Johannes Affligemensis, fl. c. 1100), an English monk, and the author of *De musica*. He maintained that music-makers and singers belonged to completely different orders of things: "because a musician always acts appropriately as a result of his art" while the singer only occasionally finds the correct road forward, and more often than not can be aptly compared to a drunk, who is on his way home, but has absolutely no idea how he is able to reach it.[17]

15 Adam de Fulda, *Musica*, in: M. Gerbert, *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra*, vol. 3: Sankt Blasien 1784, p. 333: „Musica est duplex, naturalis et artificialis. Naturalis est mundana et humana. Mundana est supercoelestium corporum ex motu sphaerarum resonantia, ubi maxime creditur fore concordia: ethoc henus considerant mathematici. Humana exstat in corpore et anima, spiritibus et membrorum complexione, nam harmonia durante vivit homo, rupta vero eius proportione moritur. Et hoc genus considerant physici. Artificialis: hoc genus tenent musici. Est vel instrumentalis vel vocalis."

16 Quotation: W. Tatarkiewicz, *Estetyka średniowieczna*, Wrocław 1960, p. 160: „Artifex practice est, qui format neumata et harmonias (...), huius officium practice est cantilenas secundum artem componere, quae humanos affectus possint movere (...). Artifex vero theorice est, qui docet haec omnia secundum artem fieri."

17 Quotation: Johannes Affligemensis, *De musica cum tonario*, ed. J. Smits van Waesberghe, Rome 1950, p. 52: „Musicus et cantor non parum a se invicem discrepant; nam cum musicus semper per artem recte incedat, cantor rectam aliquotiens viam solummodo per usum tenet. Cui ergo cantorem melius comparaverim quam ebrio, qui domum quidem repetit, sed quo calle revertatur penitus ignorat?"

It can be observed that the medieval treatises on music differentiated between the theorist and the practitioner, the learned and the layman, the knowledgeable and the ignorant. These works served to compartmentalize two perceived professional yet irreconcilable aspects of music: the theoretical, which being closer to mathematics was proper to ecclesiastic intellectuals (and later also to secular specialists), and the practitioners associated with their specific way of life, generally held in low regard. The wandering poet, minstrel, actor or juggler pursued an itinerant way of life which, particularly in the late Middle Ages, was viewed negatively, especially as people's way of life was changing with the rise and consolidation of permanent settlements. The ever-larger settlements and townships generated wealth, which in turn precipitated migration towards them. All newcomers, both those who intended to settle and those who by virtue of their work circulated among the new settlements, were regarded as a threat – despite of the fact that both groups were indispensable for the growth of commerce.[18] The monk and chronicler Richard of Devizes (c. 1150–c. 1200), who held London's townspeople in low esteem, identified the city's parasites – in one breath – as actors, jesters, effeminate boys, the dark skinned, charlatans, belly dancers, witches, confidence tricksters, magicians, lunatics, mimes, and beggars.[19] Indeed Bronisław Geremek considered that street artists of the 14th century were treated worse than before: they were commonly associated with "promiscuity, debauchery and all manner of sexual licence."[20] He was able to show that in Paris, in spite of earnest attempts to institutionalize street artists, and even though performers had achieved their own guild, their prestige failed to rise in comparison to other trades, as local minstrels and others had permanent competition from a substantial influx of unincorporated itinerant performers.[21]

18 J. Rossiaud, "Le Citadin", in: *L'Homme médiéval*, ed. J. Le Goff, Paris 1989, pp. 166–168.

19 Ibidem, p. 159.

20 B. Geremek, *The margins of society in late medieval Paris*, transl. J. Birrell, Cambridge 1987 pp. 158–159.

21 Ibidem, pp. 160–161.

Cotton's comparison is not solely a vivid rhetorical flourish, but evidence of certain notions about a specific social group – music makers. In one of his works Peter the Chanter (Peter Cantor, d. 1197) described the utility of various trades, but when mentioning performers, he states with animosity, that only this activity is neither useful nor necessary, so that we may only say of it, that it was only created to do ill.[22] Not without significance is the fact that out of all these Peter the Chanter pointed to those who were „artifices instrumentorum musicorum" – these are to a certain degree useful, they dissipate boredom and discontent.[23] Even a medical compendium already in circulation in the 13th century and known under its abbreviated title *Tacuinum sanitatis*, refers to the pleasures derived from music played harmoniously together with a consonant vocal accompaniment (as opposed to non rhythmical music which could do the listener harm).[24] According to contemporary thinking, this equilibrium brought about by the playing of sweet and harmonious music evidently had a soothing effect, making for good sleep, and the regeneration of the body and senses.[25]

Although appraisals such as John Cotton's fail to describe the full picture surrounding performers of music, they serve to perpetuate stereotypes. It is also telling that despite the high "status of music as perceived within the general theory explaining the beauty of the cosmos, it is possible to hold a morally negative view of those who executed music in its most mundane form – instrumentalists or vocalists. Various assessments within the sphere of music, here we must

22 Petrus Cantus, "Verbum abbreviatum", in: *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina* (further abbreviated as *Patrologia Latina*), ed. J. P. MIgne, vol. 205: Paris 1855, col. 253: „artifices etiam instrumentorum musicorum (...) devotio non lascivia excitur (...). Illi, inquam, non necesarii sunt, quibus nisi prius arti suae abrenuntiassent, poenitentiam non iniungerem."

23 C. Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale. Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300*, Berkeley 1989, p. 20.

24 See Lat. 9333, BnF, f. 101v. For English translation see: L. Cogliati Arano, *The Medieval Health Handbook – Tacuinum Sanitatis*, New York 1976, Plate 66. See also: C. Hoeniger, "The Illuminated 'Tacuinum Sanitatis' Manuscripts from Northern Italy ca. 1380–1400", in: *Visualizing Medieval Medicine and Natural History, 1200–1500*, eds. J. A. Givens et al., Aldershot 2006, pp. 51–82.

25 See Lat. 9333, BnF, f. 97r.

assume the music accessible to the human ear, are already proposed by Boethius, who writes: "the rotten person finds pleasure in wicked noises [...], a more austere person will delight the in more stirring tones or will be fortified by them."[26]

Yet the distaste for certain types of performers must have had its causes. According to Guido of Arezzo music (that is a variety of sounds) wondrously penetrated deep into the human heart as if through a window.[27] Aware of its potency, Johannes de Muris, a 14th century music theorist and writer on the *ars nova* style, emphasised that an "appropriate way of singing displays the piety of the singer and awakens devout sentiments in the listener, if he be a man of good will."[28] Yet perhaps the measure of what was right and fitting lay not only in the repertoire but also in its execution. This idea would have met with the approval of Pope John XXII, who in his papal bull of 1324 railed against counterpoint in the following words: "they introduce effeminacy through descant [...] sounds run on and do not find pause, they intoxicate the ears without healing the soul, and render piety to oblivion."[29]

For the Pope, counterpoint was new-fangled and represented a break with tradition, whose roots went back as far as the Gregorian reforms which served to unify Western Christendom.[30] Medieval theorists, however, did not abandon the judgement of their ears for the sake of mere mathematical precision. They appreciated the enjoy-

26 Boetius, *De musica*, in: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. MIgne, vol. 63: Paris 1847, col. 1168: „Lascivus quippe animus, vel ipse lascivioribus delectatur modis, vel saepe eosdem audiens, cito emollitur at frangitur. Rursus asperior mens vel incitatirioribus gaudet vel incitatioribus asperatur."

27 Guido Aretinus, *Micrologus*, in: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 141: Paris 1880, col. 393: „Sic enim per fenestram corporis delectabilium rerum suavitas [=varietatis sonorum] intrat mirabiliter penetralia cordis."

28 Ionnes de Muris, *Tractatus de musica*, in: M. Gerbert, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 197: „Modus (...) canendi et ipsius cantoris devotionem ostendit, et in auditore, si bonae voluntatis est, suscitat devotionis affectum et propter hoc in ecclesia merito frequentatur humiliter ac devote."

29 Quotation: W. Tatarkiewicz, op. cit., p. 155.

30 See A.T. Nowak, *Paideia w procesie formowania europejskiej kultury muzycznej*, Nowa Wieś 2010, pp. 445–451.

ment derived from well-crafted harmonies, even stating that the better they were composed, the more pleasure in the music.[31]

This is perhaps why the Pope viewed this musical technique as leading toward temporal things. Though Johannes de Muris and Pope John XXII represented diametrically opposed positions on music, they would have agreed that the manner in which it was played might well decide on how it should be judged from a moral perspective.

The *Viellator* And Society. Was It Good Form To Play The *Viella*?

Christopher Page argues that during the 12th century, instrumentalists emancipated themselves from among the many different types of entertainers.[32] One might note that this was not necessarily synonymous with general approval – at least some instrumentalists were regarded as posing danger to the souls of believers. In the sermons of the French Benedictine Jean Raulin (1443–1514), probably from the beginning of the 16th century, we come across an interesting comparison which testifies to the endurance of the negative stereotype:

> When a sinner realises that his conscience is burdened with many and various sins, he is reluctant to visit there for four reasons. First of all because he discovers nothing of good there – like a comic actor (*histrio*) or a *viellator* for whom a solitary existence is preferable to living at home, because in his home there is nothing good. He has there no means of making a fire and no clean dishes, no fire of piety, and no vessels of the heart which can be cleansed with tears of remorse or piety. That is why he is reluctant to revisit his conscience for he finds there nothing but malice.[33]

31 R.L. Crocker, "Discant, Counterpoint, and Harmony", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1962, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 4–5. See also E.E. Leach, "Counterpoint and Analysis in Fourteenth-Century Song", *Journal of Music Theory* 2000, vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 45–70.

32 C. Page, op. cit., pp. 8–41.

33 J. Raulin, *Itinerarium paradisi (...)*, Parisii [1512], f. C_2r: „Quoniam cum peccator videt conscientiam suam multitudine et magnitudine peccatorum oneratam, non vult redire ad conscientiam suam propter quatuor. Primo, quia nullum bonum ibi reperit: sicut histrio, vel viellator, qui invitus habitat domum suam et libentius frequentat alienam, quia in domo sua nihil est boni. Neque enim est ibi vas ad ignem, nec scutella lota, nec ignis devotionis, nec scutella cordis lota lacrymis contritionis vel devotionis. Ideo non libenter redit ad conscientiam suam, quia nihil ibi invenit nisi malitiam." English translation by Wojciech Kordyzon.

Jean Raulin is not the actual author of this passage. In the main, these words have been taken from the *Tractatus moralis de oculo,* a 13th century treatise by Peter of Limoges (Petrus Limovicensis, ca. 1240–1306). In the original text the comparison is less complex and the author writes only of itinerant players – be they jesters and mimes, be they actors and musicians. Arguably, the semantic field occupied by the word *histrio* could be filled with these professions. The *histriones* would be primarily comic actors and dancers, often accompanied by musicians, and acting in a comic and jocular convention. They would have been associated with jongleurs (*ioculatores)* and mimes.[34]

For Raulin comic actors and *viellatores* are people who rarely live in their homes, they neglect their households, they do not know how to, nor want to, settle down. It is difficult to be surprised that such a way of life is not conducive to ardent devoutness. This in turn is in keeping with the notion that beauty and goodness are not only invisibly reflected in the soul, but also tangibly perceived in external appearance and observed behaviour. And thus their inability to keep order at home and their resulting unwillingness to return there, can be carried across to their inability to retain a clear conscience.

The persistence of this specific stereotype demands consideration. First of all, the use of the figure of the itinerant entertainer in sermons, which by their nature delivered vivid and telling illustrations, testifies to such comparisons being widespread and understood by at least part of the congregation. Moreover, if Raulin made use in his own sermon of passages from a treatise some two hundred years old, it clearly signifies that the words had lost nothing of their immediacy and pertinence.

It was surely revolutionary that St Francis of Assisi should have described himself and his followers as the jugglers of God, *ioculatores Dei*.[35] In the many editions of his hagiography, St Francis's juggling

34 M. Clouzot, "Homo ludens, homo viator. Le jongleur au cœur des échanges culturels au Moyen Age", in: *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*, Dunkerque 2001, pp. 295–296.

35 Ibidem, pp. 294-295.

was given musical connotations. Yet not until the 16th century do we read how St Francis was enraptured by the strains of a *violetta* played for him by an angel – its sweet sound enabled him to experience the transcendental.[36] Even earlier accounts, such as *Seconda vita* (ca. 1246) by Thomas of Celano, portrayed St Francis as longing to hear the sound of instrumental music: feeling an extraordinary need to hear music, he demanded the loan of a lyre from a fellow friar, so that he could secretly play the instrument himself. Only after the friar refused, fearful of causing a scandal, St Francis had a vision in a dream in which the most beautiful heavenly music came to him, far sweeter than anything played by an earthly being.[37] Yet Celano's and other's lives of the saint failed to secure the acceptance of the Order and were commanded to be burnt. Bonaventure's biography of St Francis, the *Legenda maior*, approved in 1266, became the canonical version.[38] The section analogous to the one in *Seconda vita* was radically diluted. The passage continues to refer to St Francis's urge to listen to earthly music, but he himself wishing to avoid scandal, decides not to ask anyone for the loan of a musical instrument. The message of the reward is then different: he is himself capable of quelling a temporal craving, and then is rewarded in his nocturnal vision sent from God, when he hears the unbelievably beautiful sounds of a lyre.[39]

Some scholars also tell of a group of preachers who referred to themselves as *viellatores Dei*. Resembling minstrels in their approach, they wished to laud the great deeds and achievements of the saints. They realized that wandering singers had a substantial influence on what was thought about certain personages, and that their songs could excite real fascination with various people.[40] It cannot be ruled out that this was in line with the thinking of the Church, to tame or change the potentially dangerous impact of the wandering singer. However,

36 A. Dell'Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley 2011, p. 26.

37 Ibidem, p. 164, fn. 37 (reprinted therein). A parody of this motif may also be found in Chaucer, see J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 44–46.

38 A. Dell'Antonio, op. cit., p. 164.

39 Ibidem, pp. 164-165, fn. 37.

40 L. Gautier, *Épopées Françaises*, Paris 1892, pp. 209–210.

there is no evidence that these preachers borrowed more – apart from the name – from the purveyors of popular songs or melodies. At the very least and in all probability, the terms *ioculatores Dei* or *viellatores Dei* contained a note of provocation. They offer no apologia for the wandering players and *viellatores* – not until the dawning of modern times could St Francis be enraptured without censure by melodies played on stringed instruments by angels[41] – but paradoxically they exploit the saint's radicalism, his postulate of poverty patterned on the lowest, and least trustworthy classes of society – indeed such people as jugglers.

Singing A New Song

Scholars still debate what would have made up the repertoire of the medieval *viellator*. Certainly the *viella* was central to performances by wandering players of all types, providing a musical accompaniment to their verses and dancing.[42] This places the *viellatores* or fiddlers as performers of primarily secular music.[43] They would have accompanied renditions of epic poetry – *chanson de geste* – as well as popular dances, of which the dynamic *estampie* or the playful *carole* with their pagan pedigrees could spark great controversies among theologians.[44]

Page has shown that some *viellatores* and other instrumentalists enhanced their prestige by offering musical accompaniment for epic poetry. In the *chanson de geste* they could praise the deeds of great men to the edification of their audiences. They were even appreciated by some members of the clergy, as was the case with the 12th century Thomas of Chobham for whom only tavern performers and their vain ditties were worthy of contempt.[45] Though these musicians still wandered from town to town their material circumstances were improv-

41 A. Dell'Antonio, op. cit., p. 26.

42 E.A. Bowles, "La hiérarchie des instruments de musique dans l'Europe féodale", *Revue de Musicologie* 1958 , vol. 42, no. 118, pp. 164–165.

43 F.L. Harrison, "Instrumental Usage 1100–1450", in: *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music*, New York 1966, pp. 324–325.

44 E.A. Bowles, op. cit., pp. 164–165.

45 C. Page, op. cit., pp. 30, 69–70.

ing. They were increasingly being asked to perform in the homes of the gentry, and lavishly endowed with fine garments and other expensive presents for their performances. These gifts were rarely retained and reasonably quickly converted to cash.[46] The best of them earned the reputation of outstanding artists, testimony of which can be found in the decorative initials of a Provençal *chansonnier* (songbook) from the second half of the 13th century, some of which can be identified as the 'portraits' of famous minstrels. In one such initial we find a depiction of a *viellator* assumed to be the Provençal troubadour Perdigone.[47] In another work, Page convincingly argues that medieval *viellatores* performing ludic dance music, as well as minstrel songs for an aristocratic audience, acquired more sophisticated technical skills, demonstrating a basic grasp of polyphony and counterpoint.[48] The treatise *De musica* by Johannes de Grocheio (ca. 1250–ca. 1320) offers a written "acknowledgement of the virtuosity a *viellator* could achieve:

> A good player of the *viella* generally performs every *cantus* and *cantilena*, [...]. The genres which are usually performed before magnates in festivities and sportive gatherings can generally be reduced to three, that is to say the *cantus coronatus* [courtly song], [and the dances] the ductia and the *stantipes* [estampie].[49]

Dance music, including the sophisticated *ductia* and *estampie* became increasingly associated with courtly culture. As is known the clergy viewed these dances with some distaste, and made them into the inglorious protagonists of many sermons, warning their con-

46 Ibidem, pp. 176–177.

47 See e.g. MS Français 12473, BnF, Paris.

48 C. Page, *Voices and Instruments in the Middle Ages*, London 1987, pp. 53–76.

49 Translation after: C. Page, "Johannes de Grocheio on secular music: a corrected text and a new translation", *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 1993, vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 31–32. *Die Quellenhandschriften zum Musiktraktat des Johannes de Grocheio*, ed. E. Rohloff, Leipzig 1972, p. 134: „Bonus autem artifex in viella omnem cantum et cantilenam [...]. Illa tamen, quae coram divitibus in festis et ludis fiunt communiter, ad tria generaliter reducuntur, puta cantum coronatum, ductiam et stantipedem." The term *cantus coronatus* may for example (as in the quoted treatise) assume the broader sense of *musica vulgaris*, courtly ballads, but also often in the precise sense of "ballads which have received an award in a competition".

gregations that they could well find themselves in the snares of the devil. The *estampie* was something of a spectacle – dancing couples would execute their formations in a manner which onlookers could read.[50] Johannes de Grocheio, who better understood the musical arts, indeed viewed this dance in particular as a means of turning the wealthy away from depravity.[51] The clergy, however, were concerned that the rhythm and repetitions in the tunes would make them stick in the mind. There is a well known anecdote, in which a priest saying mass sang the refrain from one of the *carole* instead of the customary *Dominus vobiscum*.[52] So the *carole* had something of a bad press: preachers sometimes referred to the execution of these dances as akin to the black mass.[53] Albertus Magnus comes to the conclusion that in many aspects such dancing could constitute a mortal sin, though he was ready to note exemptions, such as dancing at a wedding reception, or after a military victory, or in celebration of a friend returning from a long journey. In such cases, one cannot speak of mortal sin providing the dancers show the requisite integrity.[54] Page is undoubtedly right in tracing the gradual development in the 12th century of tolerance for certain popular dances, as indeed for instrumental music in general. What is, however, important to note is that the starting point for medieval scholarly deliberation on these matters is the assumption that the practice of dancing is harmful, and acceptable only under certain conditions or in certain circumstances.

One of the most puzzling passages about a *viellator* comes from a commentary on Psalm 32 (33) by Peter de Palude (Petrus Paludanus, ca. 1275–1342), a French theologian and archbishop, who writes:

> "Sing a new song", because the new song requires a renewed man. For see, a minstrel wishing to play the fiddle takes off his outer clothing, adjusts his

50 A. Arcangeli, "Dance and Punishment", *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 1992, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 30–42.

51 C. Page, *The Owl...*, p. 40.

52 Ibidem, pp. 125–126.

53 Ibidem, pp. 14–15.

54 Ibidem, pp. 130–131.

inner garments, takes off the belt of his tunic, puts down his hood, smoothes down his hair, puts a woollen cap [*feltrum*] on top of it.[55]

Page suggests that this is a unique description of a *viellator* preparing for a performance. Much indeed points to this, although the passage is not entirely clear. Page interprets *feltrum* to mean a woollen cap, but this is not the only meaning for the word – it could also denote a woollen tunic, the sort that was often worn under armour. It is thus difficult to say whether the *viellator* will perform in only his underclothes or remain half naked? Neither can it be ruled out that this preparation of his inner garments alludes not to the physical action, but to some spiritual or psychological preparation. Paradoxically, therefore, this very interesting passage – which might indeed throw light on a medieval practice – actually begs further questions without supplying too many answers.

Aside from the above, we do know something about how the human body was used by entertainers of the day. The earlier quoted Thomas of Chobham, who displayed a degree of tolerance towards instrumentalists, writes of the *histriones* in the following terms: "they transfigure their bodies and pretend to be someone else by jumping around in an unsightly manner, or by gesticulating hideously, or by revealing their bodies in a disgusting way [...] and all such are worthy of condemnation [...]."[56]

It is clear that the human body engaged for onstage entertainment was considered as morally questionable. This might go some way to explain the forbearance shown towards instrumentalists. The strictures expressed aimed at limiting the form and scope of a performance to the rendition of an epic poem or to the performance of a melody which could offer solace to the human soul. It was the acting

55 Quotation: ibidem, p. 21: "'Cantate canticum novum', quia canticum novum requirit hominem innovatum. Ecce enim mimus volens viellare exuit vestem exteriorem, parat interiorem, cincuts in tunica exuit, deponit cucusam, componit capillos, superponit feltrum."

56 Quotation: ibidem, p. 21: „Quidam enim transformant et transfigurant corpora sua per turpes saltus vel per turpes gestus, vel denudando corpora turpiter [...] et omnes tales damnabiles sunt [...]".

FIG. 2. Psalterium triplex, folio 1r; MS B.18, Saint John's College, Cambridge

dimension which the theologians took issue with, because it involved the body, and we can surmise from the passage above that this body could be naked, and often certainly "transformed": surely here meaning the actor's costume, his disguise, his pretending to be someone other than he is. Medieval attitudes towards nakedness were at the very least ambivalent: Norbert Elias has pointed out that for a considerable time it did not excite controversy.[57] Nevertheless, the *histrio*'s

57 N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, transl. E. Jephcott, eds. E. Dunning et al., Oxford 2000 , pp. 138–140.

performance was not connected with everyday nakedness, rather with its ostentatious exhibition – and here perhaps lies the source of anxiety for theologians – during the entire Middle Ages they were unable to resolve the tension between the innocence of nakedness and its sinfulness.[58]

The *Viellator* As Illustrated In Illuminated Books. A Review Of The Iconography In Various Contexts.

The 12th century *Psalterium triplex* in Cambridge contains a full page illustration (fig. 2) which offers additional clues. In its top section David is depicted playing on a harp while the bottom section shows a hairy creature beating a barrel or drum. The main figures assume differing postures in these two corresponding depictions: David's humble gaze is directed downwards as he plucks his harp, while the grimacing beast – possibly a bear[59] – bangs with its left paw at the drum hanging from his neck. The secondary figures in both sections are ranged to complement the imagined rhythm of the two melodies. The men standing to David's left have been arranged serenely: one of them appears to be blowing into a horn (though the configuration of his fingers might suggest a recorder), another is playing a syrinx, while the third is holding an open book with illegible writing on its cover. Beneath this trio a fourth man is kneeling before David, pointing towards the king. It would appear that the salient point of this ostensive gesture is to indicate the king, who can be seen as a figure worthy of imitation. The four corresponding figures in the lower section are displayed very differently. They stand in two rows, hold no instruments, and are turned towards the beast with the drum. One has his legs crossed and his arms resting on his hips – suggestive of a dancing posture. None points to the beast, they all seem to be engrossed in the music and dance. The unsavoury beast with its disconcerting features

58 See more: J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *Une histoire du corps au Moyen Age*, Paris 2003, pp. 121–123; D. Régnier-Bohler, "Fictions: exploration d'une littérature", in: *Histoire de la vie privée*, ed. G. Duby, vol.2: *De l'Europe féodale* à *la Renaissance*, Paris 1985, pp. 357–372.

59 J.C. Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l'occident medieval*, Paris 1990, p. 263: dancing bears, or actors dressed in bear skins, then formed part of the jongleur's entertainment.

is perhaps directing our gaze with his outstretched right paw towards another group of figures located to its right.

Needless to say, this gesture is not directed towards anyone who might begin to resemble King David playing sweet sounds on his harp to soothe the tormented Saul. The beast is pointing towards somersaulting acrobats who bring disarray to the order of the microcosm which is man - their legs are thrown upwards, while their heads touch the ground. Behind the acrobats we can see musicians, one with a signal horn, the other with a fiddle. In the analogous location in the top section with King David, we see a musician making subtle sounds from a sequence of bells, and an organ with two men below working enormous bellows. By the late Middle Ages organs were slowly becoming an increasingly essential source of music to accompany the liturgy.[60]

The top section of the illustration offers refinement, to be associated, one may assume, with the sacred; the bottom section, vulgar and base, representing secular music. In both compositions we observe a pointing gesture - human free will allows us to make a choice between these opposites. The choice before us will play out between, on the one hand the recognition and reproduction of the music of the humble David indicated to us by a man, and on the other hand placing one's trust in the beast beating the drum who incites us to deviate from the right path, presenting its music which is most fitting to the breakneck antics of the acrobats. The two sections represent two sharply contrasting orders of things and each has, surely, been well furnished with the salient features of each. Musical instruments have been attributed to these two worlds, and allow us to suppose that it is no accident of iconography that the *viella* has been assigned to the lower, base register representing principally what is temporal and secular.

Similar observations could arise from an illuminated initial to be found in a later Latin psalter in French National Library (Lat. 10435,

60 E.A. Bowles, "The Organ in the Medieval Liturgical Service", *Revue belge de Musicologie* 1962, vol. 16, pp. 13–29.

FIG. 3. David and Bathsheba in the initial B[eatus], folio 1r, MS Lat. 10435, BnF, Paris

f. 1r), where the sexes and the interplay between them are comprehensively discussed by Michael Camille.[61] His analysis of the illustrations in the psalter places the battle of sexes in the forefront and demonstrates the ascendancy of women. In many medieval codices the illuminated initial of the first Psalm, usually very much of a type, depicts David playing a harp or psaltery. However, in the codex discussed by Camille, the illuminator plays with this visual convention in an intriguing way. Depicted in the initial are King David and his wife Bathsheba (fig. 3) who, according to Camille, is shown as dominating her husband, whereas the whole composition alludes to Eve's temptation of Adam in the Garden of Eden (the iconographic antecedent of all depictions displaying a disturbance of the hierarchy between the sexes as understood in the patriarchal Middle Ages).[62] The replacement of the harp with a fiddle, which belongs to the secular scheme of things, may strengthen Camille's thesis and complement those de-

61 M. Camille, "Bodies, Names, and Gender in a Gothic Psalter", in: *The Illuminated Psalter*, ed. F.O. Büttner, Turnhout 2004, pp. 377–386.

62 Ibidem, p. 378. Camille's argument is somewhat weakened by the fact that on the heraldic right we find David and not Bathsheba.

pictions of David in which he succumbs to sins of the flesh, such as when he spies on Bathsheba bathing. The fiddle might well have fitted in as a "stage prop" when alluding to the baseness of carnality, the disruption of harmony and deviation from the spiritual. If such was the intended meaning of the illuminated initial, then it would indeed have conveyed a serious admonition. However, it should be said that Camille's interpretation is presented only in outline, and warrants more exhaustive enquiry.

A similar hierarchy of instruments is present on one of the folios of the Bohun Psalter and Hours in the British Library (Egerton 3277,

FIG. 4. Miniature from the left margin of folio 46v, Egerton MS 3277, British Library, London

f. 46v). To the side of the initial of Psalm 69 (70), in which there are a number of scenes with King David – including the transferral of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem – there are several figures ranged vertically (fig. 4). At the top is King David sitting on a double headed winged beast and playing the organ. It is worth noting that the beast has a practical purpose: both its mouths are pumping air through bellows into the organ pipes. Below on the vertical axis is another representation of David, this time with his characteristic attributes: his harp and his sword, denoting his monarchical power. Perhaps the most surprising of these images, however, is the lowest one, which depicts yet another creature – and it is playing precisely a fiddle. It is difficult to know its nature, but it is redolent of the grotesque figures which have faces in the place of genitalia evoking, as suggested by Camille, voyeuristic erotic content: a *dirty look*.[63] It is fair to say that it is no accident that this creature is ranged below the two depictions of King David. At the top, the King is associated with that quintessentially liturgical instrument, the organ, and then with the monarch's traditional harp, whereas the creature's instrument is the fiddle – representing what is lowest, the most base.

FIG. 5. Melusine with *viella*, folio 42r, MS 34294. British Library, London

63 M. Camille, *Image…*, fig. 19, pp. 40–41.

FIG. 6. Musician with a fiddle from the Gorleston Psalter, folio 19v, MS 49622, British Library, London

It is clear from Lillian Randall's catalogue of iconographical motifs, that the contexts in which the fiddle appears have the realm of chaos as a common denominator. Few are the angels who play the fiddle to praise the Lord with the heavenly choirs.[64] Indeed, the margins are populated by *viellatores* who evoke many different specific associations. A large number of these *viellatores* are hares, boars, asses, lions, cats and finally monkeys, *simiae*, the latter being recognisable symbolic caricatures of human behaviour.[65] There are also many *viellatores*, like the bizarre creature in the Bohun Psalter and Hours (British Library, MS 34294, f. 42r), which are hybrid in form and represent what is disordered and bad.[66] There are also representations of mer-

64 L. Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts*, Berkeley 1966, p. 47. In his enquiries into late medieval material, E. Bowles takes a somewhat different view: in the miniatures discussed by him predominate angelic choirs and concerts by court musicians. See E.A. Bowles, "A Checklist of Musical Instruments in Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscripts at the British Museum", *Notes* 1973, vol. 29, no. 4; idem, "A Checklist of Musical Instruments in Fifteenth Century Illuminated Manuscripts at the Bibliotheque Nationale", *Notes* 1974, vol. 30, no. 3; idem, "A Checklist of Musical Instruments in Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscripts at the Pierpont Morgan Library", *Notes* 1974, vol. 30, no. 4; idem, "A Checklist of Musical Instruments in Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscripts at the Walters Art Gallery", *Notes* 1976, vol. 32, no. 4. However, it appears that Bowles's material does not contradict Randall's arguments, rather it widens the spectrum of possible meanings.

65 See also: R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Trask, Princeton 2013, pp. 538–540.

66 A. Wieczorkiewicz, *Monstruarium*, Gdańsk 2009, pp. 31–57.

maid *viellatores* (among them those which are reminiscent of Melusine with her double tail spread in an erotic pose)[67] (fig. 5), centaurs, and other hybrids of both sexes. A good example of such is the maiden in the Gorleston Psalter (British Library, MS 49622, f. 19v), whose legs are covered in fur and end in claws like a lion's, an impression reinforced by her tail (fig. 6).

Often, these human and hybrid figures do not use a bow, but vibrate the strings with pincers or a rake. Randall suggests that these represent caricatures of musical performance, and it is difficult to disagree with her.[68]Figures using these non-musical objects to play the fiddle appear rather as false musicians, who indeed do not offer their listeners sweet music, but dissonance and cacophony. Among them are often found clerics, whose seeming monkish exterior forms a blatant contrast not only with their instrument, but in some cases even with their hybrid forms.

Concerning these conclusions it shoud be noted that the depiction of a *viellator* in the 14th-century Maastricht Hours (British Library, Stowe MS 17). This man on the left side of folio 233v with his legs crossed as if in dance (fig. 7), most probably forms a group with the dancer or

FIG. 7. The *jongleurs* in the Maastricht Hours, folio 233v – 234r; Stowe MS 17, BL, London

67 L. Randall, op. cit., table CIV.

68 Ibidem, tables CVI-CVII.

acrobat at the bottom of the page and with the figures from the page opposite: a bagpipe player and a woman in a diadem wearing a red and white dress, accompanied by a mysterious short figure carrying a round object, that may be recognized as a fool.[69] It is striking that these colourful figures decorate that part of the codex which contains the Office for the Dead. The accompanying text is a fragment from St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

> What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Come to your right mind, and sin no more. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.[70]

It is hard to say with all certainty how far these marginal decorations relate to these verses. Their dominating emphasis appears to be St Paul's summons to sinners to wake. The Apostle adds that he says this to shame sinners who feast, with no expectation of resurrection, corrupting their way of life with wicked talk. It cannot be ruled out, then, that the carefree dancer, bagpiper and *viellator* are the true addressees of St Paul's summons in the pages of the manuscript. It was similar in Jean Raulin's sermon – the figures of the *viellator* and the

69 Similar figure may be found i.e. in the Latin Bible kept in Lyon Bibliotèque municipale, MS 6260, f. 307v. The miniature is an initial that accompanies the Psalm 13. Half naked man carrying an unidentified orb may be a version of an inspiens, a fool. I owe this observation to one of the Reviewers of this article, and for that I would like to kindly thank.

70 1 Cor. 15:32–38. This and the following quotations from the Bible come from the English Revised Version (ESV). In the ms discussed, Stowe 17, British Library, f. 233r–234r the text has: "Si secundum hominem ad bestias pugnavi Ephesi, quid mihi prodest si mortui non resurgunt manducemus et bibamus cras enim moriemur. Nolite seduci corrumpunt enim mores bonos colloquia mala. Evigilate iuste et nolite peccare. Ignorantiam enim dei quidam habent ad reverentiam vobis loquor. Sed dicet aliquis quomodo resurgunt mortui quali autem corpore veniunt insipiens tu quod seminas non vivificatur nisi prius moriatur et quod seminas non corpus quod futurum est seminas, sed nudum granum ut puta tritici aut alicuius ceterorum. Deus autem dat illi corpus sicut voluit et unicuique seminum proprium corpus."

histrio (actor) were used by him to exemplify aptly the condition of the sinner who fears to look into his own conscience.

In some illuminations one can, albeit rarely, come across *viellatores* who are naked. One can look for an example in the Beaupré Antiphonary (Walters Art Museum, W.759, f. 99r), where we find the Benedictine antiphon *Sanctissime confessor Domini*... In the initial the illuminator has placed a meekly praying monk (fig. 8). In the context of this devout portrayal, and indeed of the religious content of the Antiphonary, the scene in the marginal illustration at the foot of the same page is therefore striking. Here are placed two naked figures: a dancer on the left and a *viellator* on the right (fig. 8). Comparison of the head of the monk in the initial with the head of the dancer from the lower margin allows us to conjecture that their hairstyles are identical – clerical tonsures. Such anticlerical depictions in religious codices are of no surprise to researchers: they often express criticism of dissolute and unworthy members of religious orders.[71] It is possible that we also have here a miniature of such an unworthy monk, who has been swept up in the dance by the sound of the fiddle, depicting a counter-example to the devotion shown in the initial.

FIG. 8. Fragment of an Initial and of the lower margin from folio 99r in the Beaupré Antiphonary, W.759, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

71 M. Camille, "Dr Witkowski's Anus: French Doctor, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art", in: *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. N. McDonald, Woodbridge 2006, pp. 17–38.

But probably the most problematic depiction comes from the Macclesfield Psalter (Fitzwilliam Museum, Ms.1-2005). In the left margin of folio 80v the illuminator of this richly ornamented manuscript has placed a naked *viellator*, making music, in a dancing pose, legs crossed in vigorous movement. This representation is almost analogous to the object of our interest – the miniature in the Sankt Florian Psalter. Jeremy Montagu does not discuss the iconographic background to the Macclesfield Psalter marginalia, therefore neither to any hypothetical connection to the Psalms.[72] However, it appears we have a trail we can follow, which is at the very least interesting. The Macclesfield *viellator* is painted in the margin alongside Psalm 55 (56), although this psalm, in distinction to the two preceding psalms, does not possess a prologue with the indication "for stringed instruments", which could have provided a good pretext. However, the fifth verse according to this manuscript reads "In Deo laudabo sermones meos, in Deo speravi. Non timebo, quid faciat mihi caro"[73]. This passage can provide a link to the naked *viellator* in the margin. If we acknowledge that the stereotypical understanding of a musician with a fiddle associates him with base carnality, with the temporal, set against spiritual, elevated piety, then the inclusion of the *viellator* near the words of the Psalm increases in significance. His nakedness undoubtedly underlines his link to carnality. As in the passage from Paludanus cited previously, quite apart from the degree of realism in the portrayal of the unclothed *viellator*, or the actual performing practices of these musicians, the very depiction of a naked performer, making use of his body for the purpose of entertainment, could in medieval times have provoked aversion. This marginal illustration would have been intended as antithetical to the text it accompanies: the psalmist now has no fear of his body mastering him, and the illumination serves as an extreme representation of this base sphere where the body and carnality dominate.

72 J. Montagu, "Musical Instruments in the Macclesfield Psalter", *Early Music* 2006, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 189–203. Here also a reproduction of a miniature unavailable in digital libraries.

73 Ms. 1-2005, Fitzwilliam Museum, f. 80v.

On looking into Augustine's *Expositions on the Psalms*, a verse which stands out in its literal sense reveals a somewhat different meaning in exegesis. Augustine lays the accent on its first part: "In God will I praise the word", which is to signify that, above all, one is to return to God what is God's, and in one's words – given by God – to recognise His gift.[74] The deeds of the flesh do not end in debauchery, but in the physical pain which it can bring. And this suffering can lead us in the imitation of Christ: "A grape I was, wine I shall be."[75] Additionally, in his exposition of the verse on the succeeding page of the manuscript (81r), Augustine explains the words "Inhabitatunt et abscondent" in this way:

> Every man in this life is a foreigner: in which life ye see that with flesh we are covered round, through which flesh the heart cannot be seen. (...) Furthermore, those men of whom the counsels are against this man for evil, shall sojourn, and shall hide: because in this foreign abode they are, and carry flesh, they hide guile in heart; whatsoever of evil they think, they hide. Wherefore? Because as yet this life is a foreign one.
> For it is in this way that they enter a large house, but do not stay therein. (...) "Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth for ever." [John 8, 34-35]. He who enters like a son shall not merely sojourn, but shall abide to the end. Beware of him who enters like a slave, devious, a sinner (...) he enters merely to sojourn, not to abide there and persevere. (...) Even if they sojourn, even if they go in, even if they feign, even if they hide, flesh they are.
> All men, therefore, that with false heart go in, sojourning and hiding, do not thou fear.[76]

The key concept here becomes the journeying life, the life of a traveller. According to Augustine, this journey has the purpose of concealing their pain. We are reminded of this deception in the statements of Peter of Limoges and Raulin, according to whom the actor and the *viellator* fear returning to their house, and also to their conscience, because they know that nothing good awaits them there. They harboured bad thoughts, for they did not allow themselves to self-reflect.

74 Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 3: Oxford 1849, pp. 63–64.

75 Ibidem, p. 64.

76 Ibidem, pp. 64–65.

The sinner, the captive, the wanderer, assuaging his pain with his wandering, enter – as Augustine says – into a great house, but do not stay therein, do not persevere. Perhaps the condition of the wandering musician then seemed identical. This passage does not contradict any earlier reflections on carnality: Augustine's commentary serves to underline the wandering sinners' existence solely as of the flesh, accompanied by the illusions they make use of. And illusion and the flesh are also the main tools of the actor. Maybe this is why the *viellator* here is naked – deprived of what is required to mask his corporeality, not covered by a garment: the naked body is the one attribute of the wanderer, who "hides himself" but does not have the inner spirituality which would allow him to persevere to the end.

These examples of *viellatores* appearing in medieval iconography serve solely to support the arguments set out here, and to indicate the possibility of linking the thread under discussion with society's stereotype of this occupation. However, a decided majority of the miniatures discussed call for separate and more detailed analysis – the conclusions suggested here make no claim of being any final interpretation. The examples gathered here witness to a general consensus as to the motif of the *viellator*, understood as representing the class of vagabonds, travelling *jongleurs* – which is depicted in a similar visual convention on the pages of codices from diverse parts of western Europe in the mid to late Middle Ages.

The Meaning Of Psalm 13 (14). Interpretations In The Commentaries And In Marginal Illuminations

The interpretation of the Book of Psalms, and also of many other books of the Bible, went through two important stages: the first was in the early initiatives to develop an understanding of the Psalms and providing commentaries on them, undertaken by the Church Fathers who recognised their teaching potential; the second was in the intensive studies carried out by scholars in the developing universities of western Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries. The authority of patristics was not abandoned, but biblical studies gained new tools and

methods; and it was in this time that both the status of the Book of Psalms and the general character of glosses on it were consolidated.[77]

Neither could the Florian Psalter have come into "being in isolation from medieval theological realities, especially as the literal understanding of the psalms often varies markedly from their systematic theological exposition.[78] Philological study of the manuscript text allowed a few significant issues to be settled. Aleksander Brückner, and after him Rudolf Hanamann, drew attention to the first of the manuscript's two prologues. It resembles part of a commentary on the Psalms written by the 14th century theologian Ludolph of Saxony (ca. 1295–1377).[79] However, Mieczysław Mejor stresses that this part of Ludolph's text varies in different manuscripts, with its source being the circa 8th century fragment titled *De virtute psalmorum*,[80] and long attributed to Augustine. Brückner had realised this, but nevertheless deemed the prologue of the Sankt Florian Psalter to be closer to Ludolph than to Pseudo-Augustine.[81] Mejor on the other hand indicates yet another author, Remigius of Auxerre (ca. 841–908), and argues that his edition of the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* with its own pseudo-Augustinian pedigree, introduces something new, with his version being the closest to the Polish manuscript.[82]

Although the direct sources for the prologue of the Sankt Florian Psalter may be discussed, throughout the whole Middle Ages Augustine's *Expositions on the Psalms*[83] are the key source used in attempts to reconstruct how individual psalms were perceived in more ge-

77 T. Gałuszka, *Super Psalmum XXIII. Badania nad Biblią w XIII wieku*, Kraków 2005, pp. 27–28.

78 S. Wittekind, "'Verum etiam sub alia forma depingere'. Illuminierte Psalmenkommentare und ihr Gebrauch", in: *The Illuminated Psalter. Studies in the Content, Purpose, and Placement of Its Images*, ed. F.O. Büttner, Turnhout 2004, pp. 271–280.

79 A. Brückner, *Psałterze polskie do połowy XVI wieku (Polish Psalters up to the middle of the 16th century)*, Kraków 1902, pp. 262–263. R. Hanamann, *Der deutsche Teil des Florianer Psalters: Sprachanalyse und kulturgeschichtliche Einordnung*, Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 144.

80 M. Mejor, "Comments on the Text of the Florian Psalter", *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 2009, vol. 14, pp. 314–315.

81 A. Brückner, op. cit., p. 262.

82 M. Mejor, op. cit., p. 315.

83 Augustine, *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1: Oxford 1847.

neral perspective. Then there is the inseparable connection between Psalms 13 and 52, so that whatever is said here of the former will be supplemented by interpretation of the latter.[84]

Augustine, in his commentary on Psalm 13 (14), observes that the fool has said in his heart; for that no one dares to say it, even if he has dared to think it.[85] He carries on, citing the words of the Psalm:

> "They are corrupt, and become abominable in their affections" that is, while they love this world and love not God; these are the affections which corrupt the soul, and so blind it, that the fool can even say in his heart: "There is no God." (...) And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct [*dedit illos Deus in reprobum sensum*].[86] (Rom. 1:28)

Augustine observes how growing an attachment" to the temporal world leads a Christian down a road of irrationality, foolishness. In a further argument he adds that this was exactly how the Jews behaved, in their foolhardy disbelief in the message of Christ – from this perspective their behaviour was irrational. *Insipiens* stands in the foreground in the interpretation of this psalm, and the linking of irrationality with corruption will be taken up subsequent exegetes. Peter Lombard (1095–1160) specifies further that this also applies to those attached to passions and emotions.[87] For Ludolph of Saxony, the *insipiens* is the one who persists in his sinfulness.[88] Remigius of Auxerre in turn illustrates this problem by comparing it to Sodom.[89] All commentators since Augustine have, with the philosopher from

84 C. C. Torrey, "The Archetype of Psalms 14 and 53", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1927, vol. 46, pp. 186–192.

85 Augustine, op. cit., vol. 1: *Psalms 1–36,* p. 130.

86 Augustine, *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1: Oxford 1847, p. 106–107.

87 Petrus Lombardus, "Commentaria in Psalmos", in: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 191: Paris 1880, col. 163: "Hoc ideo dicunt, quia corrupti sunt, id est caeci sunt, ut dicant: «Non est Deus.» (..) Et hoc, in studiis suis, vel affectionibus, ideo est quia saeculum amant, et non Deum."

88 Ludolphus de Saxonia, *In Psalterium expositio (..)*, Parisii [1514], f. C_3: "'Dixit insipiens', id est peccator in malis obstinatus."

89 Remigius Antissiodorensis, "Enarrationes in Psalmos", in: *Patrologia Latina,* vol. 131: Paris 1884, col. 209.

Hippo, identified the Jews as the most apposite embodiment of the fools who declare that there is no God. The anti-Jewish significance of this Psalm is a second predominant interpretative thread.

Augustine deemed that the Jews, by rejecting Christ, although they were the closest to the one God, became as pagans.[90] He then lists the characteristics of the ignorant, including Jews and pagans, who say "non est Deus", glossing the words of the Psalm "they are become unprofitable together" [*simul inutiles facti sunt*]: these sinners are literally voracious, or impose on others their perfidious ways, not heeding the precepts of the law. He also says of them "flattery is the companion of the greedy and of all bad men. [...]", adding "Now they devour the people, who serve their own ends out of them, not referring their ministry to the glory of God, and the salvation of those over whom they are."[91] And here one can discern a certain parallel with the way that *viellatores* were perceived, since they were recognised as worthless, of no use, not conducive to the flowering of piety.

In his commentary on the companion Psalm 52 (53) we can see rather more pointers. The theologian states there that we rarely meet the wretch who will straightforwardly deny the existence of God, although there are many who are "profligate, daring, and wicked". They had even lost a sense of shame. He then considers the essence of their characteristic corruption:

> Corruption begins with evil belief, thence it proceeds to depraved morals, thence to the most flagrant iniquities, these are the grades. But what with themselves said they, thinking not rightly? "A small thing and with tediousness is our life." From this evil belief follows that which also the Apostle has spoken of, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die."[92]

He emphasises that such a corruption of morals engenders the most heinous crimes and heresies. As in the commentary on Psalm 13 (14) he also raises the subject of the Jews, who do not recognise the Lord

90 Augustine, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 107.

91 Ibidem, pp. 107-108.

92 Augustine, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 4.

in Christ. The whole commentary sets the issue of unbelievers in the foreground, together with the corruption of morals, which leads to things significantly more dangerous to the soul. It is characteristic that Augustine invokes a passage from St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, which sharply criticises indulging in worldly goods and comforts, which are as temporary as human life, and thereby nonsense in relation to the greater cosmic plan, for they do not bring us closer to God. This is the same passage which was included in the Office for the Dead in the Maastricht Hours, with its surrounding marginalia of a troupe of actors (fig. 7). To some degree, the medieval illuminators must have connected these figures with worldly and fleeting pleasures, devoid of any element of spirituality.

Augustine mapped out the most important themes which recur in the commentaries prepared by later exegetes. In the main they took up the thread of foolishness, of the imprudence of non-belief – and used this as the starting point for their own scholarly enquiries. Nevertheless, it appears that in addition to understanding the text of the Psalms, it is worthwhile to turn to some specific phrases, which could have some bearing on the enquiry into finding connections between the iconography of the *viellator* and its grounding in the text. Some of these are presented by Ludolph of Saxony. In his commentary on Psalm 13 (14) he says:

> We are not speaking here about all men, but about those who live according to the flesh [*sunt imitatores carnalium*], whose life is thereby corrupted. There is not one among them, who would act righteously. For if a man is evil, he cannot do good.[93]

In this sentence our attention is primarily caught by the phrase *imitatores carnalium* – for it is they who are the true object of Ludolph's strictures. Here he is undoubtedly drawing on an earlier commentary by Rufinus of Aquilea (340–410), who used this phrase when interpret-

93 Ludolphus de Saxonia, op. cit., f. C_3v: "Non intelligitur de omnibus in humano genere, sed de his, qui sunt imitatores carnalium, quorum corrupta est vita: ex quibus non est aliquis, qui faciat bonum. Quamdiu enim homo malus est, bonum facere non potest."

ing this and the previous verse of this Psalm, contrasting *imitatores carnalium* with the phrase *imitatores Dei*.[94] In using the latter phrase, Rufinus was drawing a connection – as Migne's edition also suggests – to St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, where we find this expression at the beginning of the text as a call to rendering obedience to God. In a later text by Ludolph, however, if the 16th century edition is reliable, this juxtaposition does not appear. Standing on its own, the phrase *imitatores carnalium* has no biblical provenance, but it opens up the field to new associations. The nearest New Testament connection may be a verse from the Epistle to the Romans: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5). Neither can it be ruled out that the phrase *imitatores carnalium* draws an even more direct connection with the troupes of comic actors and mimes, whose very art is based on the imitation of aspects of the human body. It cannot, however, be doubted that the phrase cited by Ludolph allows us to go beyond Augustine and interpret Psalm 13 (14) and its key character – the imprudent *insipiens* – as the figure of a man surrendering to worldly things, to the flesh. A similar analogy between the bodily and the spiritual condition is expressed also by Remigius of Auxerre, who says: "corruption in the flesh, unhappiness in the soul."[95]

Because the Jews are understood by the exegetes as unreasonable non-believers, the consolatory ending of Psalm 13 (14) also expresses the hope of conversion for the *insipientes*. Peter Lombard,[96] for example, sees it in this way, but then so do Augustine and Remigius. All invoke the prophecy of Isaiah that: "He will come to Zion as Redeemer". For no-one else can lead a Christian unto redemption except Christ. Only he will "abolish the slavery of pain and death, which keeps his

94 Rufinus Aquileiensis [ascribed], "Commentarius in LXXV Psalmos", in: *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 21: Paris 1878, col. 693.

95 Remigius Antissiodorensis, op. cit., col. 209.

96 Ibidem, col. 166.

people in bondage"[97]. Augustine says further, citing St Matthew's Gospel, that God waits even for those who have turned away from him, calling them back with these words "Take my yoke upon you (...) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:29–30) Also too, according to Augustine, this is why near the end of the Psalm appear the words "Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be glad".

The Iconography Of Psalm 13 (14)

As with the commentaries on Psalms 13 (14) and 52 (53), their visual presentation is in many cases similar. Büttner draws attention to the fascination with the motif of the predilection towards evil, towards Satan, which is so often dramatically evident in the iconography of these Psalms.[98] He recognises that a common element in both psalms is the motif of the fool, and that most characteristic for Psalm 52 (53) is the depiction of stories from the Bible: these could be the suicide of Saul or Judas, also the evocation of the Devil as the *insipiens* of the Psalms, sometimes tempting Christ, sometimes juxtaposed with King David, who expelled the evil demon from Saul with his music.[99] Moreover, a similar contrast is also discernible in the title of the Psalm, which in some editions is "pro Amalek" – according to Peter Lombard the Amalekites personify the powers of the Antichrist, against whom is set the Psalmist David, *vere manu fortis*, typologically linked to the figure of Christ himself, and prophesying His coming.[100]

In the iconography of Psalm 13 (14) – as also in the exegetical texts – the motif of the imprudent *insipiens* predominates. For example, we find the fool in an illuminated initial in the 14th century Bedford Psalter and Hours (fig. 9) – a figure in a jester's cap, with a bell hanging from its tip. His features suggest a base soul: his lips parted in a somewhat unsettling smile, small, opaque eyes looking upwards, and

97 Ibidem, col. 210.

98 F. O. Büttner, "Der illuminierte Psalter im Westen", in: *The Illuminated Psalter. Studies*, ed. idem, p. 24.

99 Ibidem, pp. 25–26.

100 Petrus Lombardus, op. cit., col. 499.

FIG. 9. D[ixit] from folio 82 r. of the Bedford Psalter; MS 42131, BL, London

FIG. 10. D[ixit] from folio 28 r. of the Luttrell Psalter; MS 42130, BL, London

FIG. 11. D[ixit] from folio 98 v. of the Luttrell Psalter; MS 42130, BL, London

an upturned nose, reminiscent of the figures depicted in the mocking of Christ in scenes of the Passion, perhaps an allusion to venereal disease, thus testifying to a dissolute life. In the almost one hundred year earlier Luttrell Psalter we find a similar depiction of a jester (fig. 10) – this allows us to suppose a certain continuity in the iconography. However, as it was observed, throughout the 14th century there had been a slow, but major change in the manner of imagining a fool: the *insipiens* was becoming a court jester (as we see it in the discussed initials) replacing a half-naked man, holding a stick (or a club) and a round object (fig. 7).[101] Initially the figure of the fool in 13th century was often juxtaposed within one initial with king David (being a clear opposition to the symbolical depiction of stupidity, foolishness).[102] Court jester, a consequent iconographical motif in 14th century, might be linked to these earlier compositions that involved a royal figure of David (implying wisdom and piety) contrasted with the fool, who was at first a general depiction with readable attributes (like a club), then shifted to the institutionalized and recognizable character of jester, well known from the courts (with a change of attributes, i.e. cap with bells) and stereotypically antithetical to the monarch.

The jester figure in the Lutrell Psalter is presented with perhaps a shade more charity: his features are not disfigured by illness, but his gaze too is unsettled, his eyes fixed somewhere to the left – as if on

101 See more: F. Garnier, "Les conceptions de la folie d'apres l'iconographie medievale du psaume 52", in: *102e Congrès national des Sociétés Savantes. Limoges, 1977. Philologie et Histoire*, vol. 2, Paris 1977, pp. 215–222; A. Gross, "L'exégèse iconographique du terme 'insipiens' du Psaume 52", *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 1989, vol. 16, No. 2–3, pp. 265–285; eadem, "L'idée de la folie en texte et en image: Sébastian Brandt et l'insipiens", *Médiévales* 1993, no. 25, 1993, pp. 71–91. Not being a rule, however, the iconography of the Psalm 13 (14) could have included motifs evoking *inspiens* in a different manner, i.e. various depictions of Antichrist, see: A. Belkin, *Antichrist as the Embodiment of the 'insipiens' in Thirteenth-Century French Psalters*, *Florilegium* 1988–91, vol. 10, pp. 65–81.

102 Broad surveys of iconography of the Psalm 52 (53), having the same incipit as in 13 (14), were provided by: G. Haseloff, *Die Psalterillustration im 13. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Geschichte der Buchmalerei in England, Frankreich, und den Niederlanden*, [Kiel] 1938, tables 1–12, pp. 101–115 (for descriptions see: ibidem, pp. 17, 29, 32, 45, 47, 49, 52); K.G. Pfändtner, *Die Psalterillustration des 13. und beginnenden 14. Jahrhunderts in Bologna. Herkunft – Entwicklung – Auswirkung*, Neuried 1996, tables A1–7, unpaged, after p. 143 (for descriptions see: ibidem, pp. 43–45, 62, 82).

the text coming after the initial. Here again, we find precisely this attribute of the jester's cap with its bell. The marginal miniature accompanying the text on the same page – a hybrid blue creature with an almost human head, wings, and a bird's head in his crotch – may provide content to supplement the message by alluding to sexuality. A jester's image, depicted full figure and in a cap with asses' ears, can be found in the same manuscript in the initial of Psalm 52 (53) (fig. 11).

FIG. 12. D[ixit] from folio 14v of Cod. 1826* Han, Österreichische Nationalbibliotek, Vienna

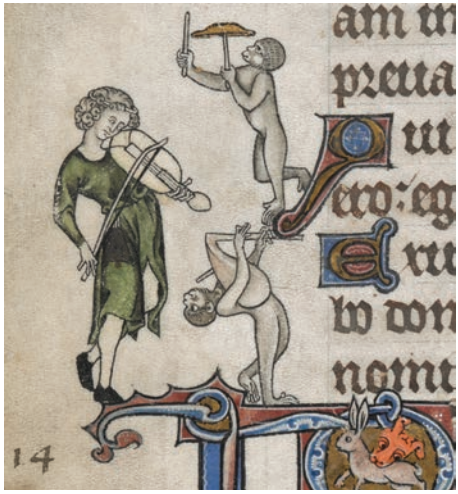

FIG. 13. *Viellator* and two monkeys from folio 17 v. of the Alphonso Psalter; MS 24686, BL, London

Worthy of note is an example found in a Viennese manuscript, known as the Vienna Bohun Psalter (fig. 12). In the initial D[ixit] the fool has been depicted in his characteristic cap, to which are fixed two jester's bells. He holds a bag fixed on a stick, he may well be a vagabond. The miniature supplies an almost literal illustration of the words of the Psalm "The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men" (Ps. 13 (14):2): from the clouds above the human figure appears the face of Christ, gazing at the man. And the man returns the gaze, pointing with one hand to one of his jester's bells. It is interesting to speculate whether this clownish "child of men" is here presented as a general representation of the human condition, or specifically of the imprudent who say in their hearts "there is no God". We cannot rule out that the gaze exchanged by Christ and the fool expresses the hope for the conversion of the *insipientes*, of which the exegetes wrote. The whole question of the literalness of the depictions in this manuscript has been the subject of scholarly study.[103]

The hybrid figure playing the fiddle referred to earlier – with the body and head of a woman, but below the waist with lion's legs and a tail (fig. 6) – can be found on the bottom margin of the folio on which Psalm 13 (14) starts. In this case it is difficult to unambiguously declare to what degree the miniature is associated with the text – similarly formed monsters can be found on other folios of the manuscript. But it may well be that this attribute is not accidental and can be associated with a lack of reasoning, understood as leading a godless life, whose import is reinforced by the music-making monster.

A miniature on the left margin of a folio from Psalm 13 (14) in the Alphonso Psalter (fig. 13) is perhaps the most pertinent example illustrating the conjectured closeness of *viellatores* with fools. The three figures grouped there form a somewhat unlikely musical ensemble: a young man will well-coiffed hair plays on the fiddle, and with him are two monkeys – bent in convulsive movements – who play on the

103 L.F. Sandler, "Word Imagery in English Gothic Psalters. The Case of the Vienna Bohun Manuscript", in: *The Illuminated Psalter. Studies in the Content, Purpose, and Placement of Its Images*, ed. F.O. Büttner, Turnhout 2004, pp. 387–395.

bagpipes and on some sort of percussion instrument like a gong: a copper or tin cymbal and a stick to hit it with. The composition of this group demands comparison with the previously mentioned figures in the Maastricht Hours, where a *viellator* and a bagpiper also appear (fig. 7). We should recall that the miniature in the Dutch Hours appears beside a passage from St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. Here, among other things, the Apostle calls: "You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (1 Cor. 15:36). In the Latin edition used in the manuscript, the cited phrase reads "Insipiens tu, quod seminas, non vivificatur."[104] It appears in this case that *insipiens* is a type of keyword, for it can trigger the association with the musical ensemble, in which the fiddle so often appears. *Insipiens* is after all the key concept in understanding the essence of Psalms 13 (14) and 52 (53): as pointed out above, illuminators therefore often made use of the basic motif of the jester in cap and bells. Yet it is clear that the same concept may also serve as the basis for depicting comic actors and musicians. Clearly, the nature of their calling can be associated with ignorance of faith leading to licentiousness. In the Alphonso Psalter, the very mechanical nature of what they are doing, devoid of any spiritual motivation, is underscored by the presence of the monkeys, *simiae*, the embodiment of evil arising from attachment to the physical.

An Attempt To Interpret The Miniature, And The Narrative Of Folio 18r

The various themes introduced here had the purpose of leading the reader to a deeper understanding of the cultural background, the influence of which can surely be found in the Florian Psalter. The naked *viellator* placed in the upper margin of the folio (fig. 14) on which Psalm 13 (14) begins, need not solely be written into an astrological program as proposed by Śnieżyńska-Stolot. Analysis of the commentaries on the Book of Psalms allows to state that one of the dominant threads in the exegesis of Psalm 13 (14) is the motif of the unreasoning

104 MS ref. Stowe 17, British Library, f. 233v.

insipiens. Whereas this motif is exploited iconographically in various ways to accompany this key word, one of its variants is the group of musicians, among whom appears a *viellator*.

This is not surprising, when we confront the mindset of the mid and late Middle Ages, with its prevailing assumptions about the way of life of these musicians. Their material status had grown considerably, and they themselves were invited to play in palaces, and amply remunerated. This, however, did not alter the stereotyped view of *viellatores* – in religious literature they were still associated foremost with troupes of comic actors, jugglers and acrobats. The music they played evoked rather the realm of the profane, the lower sphere, and its status remained independent of any potential artistry or aesthetic value. The iconography of the fiddle itself was exploited variously, and it was quite possible to place it in an openly negative context: through association with hybrid-creature musicians or with troupes of comic actors, the instrument could become a sign of attachment to worldly things, transient values, and in some cases not only the instrument but the *viellatores* too were held to be tainted with these characteristics. These then were set as an example of people who are not concerned with their consciences – their restless wanderings stifle the echoes of their sins.

FIG. 14–15. Details from folio 18 r. of the Florian Psalter, Rps 8002 III, BN, Warsaw

The nakedness of the *viellator* fails to have its explanation in the text of the Psalm, nor in any of the commentaries. Therefore, while interpreting it, it seems necessary to include other visual elements of the folio. Another figure on this folio, that of the kneeling man (fig. 15), also appears to have a link to Psalm 13 (14), since he appears in the second floral flourish growing out of the initial D[ixit]. It is difficult to pronounce unambiguously on what he represents. The viewer immediately remarks on the arrangement of the figure's hands, which one may find for instance in the typical image of the *Ecce Homo*, Christ shown to the people, meekly giving himself up to further torment, representing the one who has given Himself up to the will of the Father, the one who allowed His body to suffer unto death. In case of *Ecce homo*, the arrangement of the hands results from a simple physical factor – the hands are held by bonds. The body language of the analogous gesture by the kneeling man in the Sankt Florian Psalter might therefore call to mind this recognisable parallel of a man showing his bonded hands.

We can say with a high degree of probability that this is not a gesture of prayer: from about the 11th century this fixes on a kneeling position with the palms of the hands together at chest level and the fingers straight.[105] With time the repertoire of praying gestures grows as they become codified in the monasteries, and suitable gestures are adapted for various strata of society, for the sexes, and so forth – but still there is no similar position among them.[106] It is interesting, however, that we do find a similar gesture in Cistercian sign language (*signa*) used by the monks when they observed the rule of silence.[107] In some monasteries, the position of the hands of the man in the Sankt Florian Psalter signified uselessness.[108] Such signing systems, largely developed on the basis of an intuitive grasp of at least some of the gestures, and by now also functioning in secular society, can of course only be a pointer and do not constitute a fixed con-

105 J.C. Schmitt, op. cit., p. 295.

106 Ibidem, pp. 321–329.

107 Ibidem, pp. 265–270. See also: J. Umiker-Sebeok, T.A. Sebeok, *Monastic Sign Languages*, Berlin 1987, pp. 88–91.

108 Ibidem, p. 215.

clusion. However, the specific comparison of the man from folio 18r with Christ as *Ecce Homo* can make us see his gesture as one of humility, of dedication, and can perhaps be seen as a response to our understanding of the exegeses of Psalm 13 (14). As mentioned above, in his commentary Augustine cites a fragment of St Matthew's Gospel, in which the Lord calls us to take on His yoke, though it be "easy, and my burden is light." It seems that we can read the figure's submissive position – kneeling, holding out his hands as if to be tied – as his assent to taking on Christ's yoke.

Geoffrey Koziol has researched the ways in which religious and lay prayed for grace and forgiveness in the early Middle Ages, and pointed out that despite the variety of rituals serving to express this, the one dominating aspect of all these gestures is the abasement of oneself.[109] He held that efficacious penitence restored the right order of things, reinstating what might be called the *ordo rationis*.[110] And it may be precisely that this restoration of order is the key to reading the relationship between the two miniatures embellishing the text of Psalm 13 (14) in the Sankt Florian Psalter. The *viellator* then stands for all *insipientes*, enslaved by their inability to understand, though physically without a care, as in St Paul's call to us in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. He also exhibits the shameless nakedness of folly, and therefore on this reading of the marginalia, he cannot be clothed. The kneeling man is both his antithesis, and also illustrates the second part of the Psalm. Dressed in a simple garment, kneeling meekly, he holds out his hands to be tied in acceptance of God's easy yoke.

This interpretation of the miniatures opens the field to further discussion, and at the same time paves the way for the use of these proposed research methods in the examination of other marginal decorations. Above all, it demonstrates the potential for exploiting direct connections with the text they accompany, and with commentaries on that text. In use, their significance can still be twofold: on the one hand, by making a direct reference to how Psalm 13 (14) was understood, which is chiefly re-

109 G. Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France*, Ithaca 1992, pp. 181–213.

110 Ibidem, pp. 203–204.

vealed by its exegetes, and on the other hand by revealing the social reality of how the figure of the *viellator* became a set stereotype. In this sense, one can discuss the illustrations to the text as having mnemonic potential, by visually fixing a concrete understanding of the text, facilitating its subsequent recall. In another sense, the eloquence of the artistic embellishment also has a complementary resonance, and can be itself read alongside the words (though not without prior knowledge of the text).

Matters For Further Discussion

The interpretation outlined in this text was an attempt to identify and research the many elements which make up the meaning of even this modest miniature, originating from a time which is now culturally remote. Reconstruction of then current meanings and of their significance is undoubtedly – if only because of the passage of time – not wholly possible, and this interpretation was completed in the full knowledge that it may be mistaken. This section serves to set questions for further discussion and to itemise the problems which were not resolved in my text.

It cannot be ruled out, that the visual marker, the foliate extension to the Initial of Psalm 13 (14), does not at all have the meaning I have ascribed to it. It could be merely decoration, and the *viellator* does not have to be linked in meaning with this psalm. If he were to have a connection to the text, it could just as well be to the end of the previous psalm, which ends with the words: "but I have trusted in thy mercy. My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation: I will sing to the Lord, who giveth me good things: yea I will sing to the name of the Lord the most high" (Ps. 12 (13):6). In this interpretation, many of the theses established in this work would have to be reversed. The naked man would represent a rejoicing soul. It would be relatively easy to link the viellator with song – as shown also in this work – these instrumentalists often engaged in singing. But first of all it would be necessary to show that the *viellator* – a lone figure and not a member of a heavenly choir or courtly retinue – could represent a spiritually rejoicing, positive figure. I am, however, convinced that the established stereotype of the *viellator* was the opposite, was unfavourable: (both in iconography and in literature), although one should not a priori

rule out the possibility that wider research might reverse this evaluation. The arguments put forward by Page would support this; although it seems to me that his research goals were different, he was speaking of historical social reality, not of the *viellator* as a symbolic figure appearing in religious literature and iconography was used as a key to evoke the negative connotations of the profession..

Another issue requiring further review would be work on comparative visual material. Many of the examples which I called upon in my text came from the same period, but with an English and French provenance, culturally and geographically distant from Central Europe. The *viellator* might have yet more analogous figures, and also in iconography originating in the same region as the Polish manuscript. Should finding closer equivalents prove impossible, one should research the frequency with which depictions forming links in the chain between the *insipiens* and the *viellator* appear in this part of Europe, to be able to say with all certainty that such an "iconographic line of reasoning" had been carried out. While trying to reconstruct how *viellatores* were perceived as against other entertainers, I tried to avail myself of texts which, more or less, could have been known in the region. Nevertheless the conclusions represented here, even assuming the strong cohesiveness and universality of European culture in the Middle Ages, are much simplified, and it would be worth considering at a later stage how far this portrayal corresponds with the realities of this part of Europe.

In the interpretation outlined in this work I therefore tried to choose, in the light of the material which I had collected, the more probable elements making up the world view and mode of thinking which influenced the artwork of the Sankt Florian Psalter. However, this does not change the fundamental objective of the work presented here, which is initiation of discussion about the immensely rich iconography of the manuscript in the National Library of Poland. In this sense the world of miniatures opens up a vast field, which so fascinated Michael Camille, iconography which relates to the entire spectrum of then contemporary reality: social and private, religious and lay, every-day and festive. The presumed, probable, astounding significance of these miniatures prompts us to ask successive questions about how those who lived at that time imagined

the world, how they attempted to comprehend it, find their place in it, and give it order.

translated by Jan Chodakowski and Andrzej Szkuta

SUMMARY

The article presents a possible interpretation spectrum of the miniatures, especially that of the fiddler (*viellator*), that appear on folio 18r of the Florian Psalter, containing the text of Psalm 14(13) (*Dixit insipiens...*). The methodology applied involves recognizing the roots of cultural sources of the motif. In the case of the fiddler miniature, these are i.a. changes in medieval musical culture, its conceptualization by the theologians of the time, representations of fiddlers in book illuminations, as well as iconographic and exegetical tradition of Psalm 14(13). In the context of the debate about the iconography of this work the article attempts to interpret it based on considering possible meanings of the visual material in relation to the text it accompanies.

KEYWORDS: Sankt Florian Psalter, book illumination, musical iconography, fiddler, viellator, medieval theology