

**No. 8: “AGGIO VISTO LO [M]APPAMONDO” [I have seen the world map]***Commentary*

This anonymous poem consists of three stanzas, each of which is followed by a refrain from which the song takes its title. The poem is a source for the fifteenth-century composer Joan Cornago's "*Missa Ayo visto lo mappamundi*." It survives in two manuscripts, suggesting its broad popularity in the Mediterranean. One was compiled by a Catalan poet-notary who lived in Naples. The composer Cornago probably gained familiarity with the song and its melody at the Neapolitan court of Alfonso I, which he visited in April 1453. This dates the song from before the middle of the fifteenth century.

The use of the image of a map is of particular interest because it suggests a court audience's familiarity with world maps, portolan charts, and with the genre of island books known as *isolarii*. The poem puns the toponym Sicily against the proper name Cecilia, using both names to recall the memory of both Sicily (Cicilia) and his love Cecilia, each of which he calls more beautiful "islands" than could be seen in a tour around the Mediterranean. The anonymous court poet plays the sailor's absence from his beloved against his familiarity with the islands on world maps by making a circular journey away from Sicily, first to Corsica and Sardinia, then east to Cyprus, Crete, and the Morea, and outside of the Mediterranean to the Castillian possessions in the Atlantic, and to England and Scotland. The itinerary traces a spiral departing from his homeland and his love as an occasion to remember his love for both. The final stanza compares his love to the "Kingdom of Two Sicilies," as the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily were known under the Aragonese, and to the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia.

The poem succeeds because it resonates with the cartographic imagination of its audience. The first stanza compares Sicily to islands that belonged to the Castillian throne, the Canary or Fortunate Islands, islands lying just outside the Mediterranean that were visited on merchant galleys. The literary scholar Francesco Novati mistakenly interpreted the "nine islands of Castile" as a reference to the discovery of the Americas, fitting with the identification of "Re Alfonso" in the second stanza as Alfonso II of Naples (reigned January 1494-January 1495). The poet is more likely to have discussed the Fortunate Islands, part of Fernand Braudel's "Mediterranean Atlantic." The islands were an important part of sugar production in the Castillian economy. The absence in the Aragonese song of the Balearics (Ibiza, Majorca, and Minorca), which belonged to the Crown of Aragon, or the Cape Verde and Madeira islands, which belonged to Portugal, is conspicuous. The trading privileges

of Andalusian sailors with the Canaries was defended by the Castillian crown in the 1430s, in response to expanding Portuguese trade along the West African coast in sugar, ivory, and slaves. After 1438, the Portuguese king ordered subjects not to land at the Castillian islands. The Canaries (Tenerife, La Palma, Hierro, Gomera, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, Algranca, and the "Savage Islands") were important trading posts throughout the century and among the farthest shipping routes. The islands are evident in the 1413 Viladestes chart. Although suggested in Fra Mauro's map, they are not labeled in the 1490 map of Henricus Martellus.

In the third stanza, the poet describes the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, ruled by Alfonso "the Magnanimous" (r. 1442-58), to evoke the absence of his love Cecilia. He tells his audience that his love is unlike three "Sicilies": the two Kingdoms of Sicily and the annual feast-day of St. Cecilia, patron saint of music. (The reading "in the calendar" is not present in the manuscripts, but one codex offers a variant reading—"la terç' à n lo calandari"—which suggests some corruption in the Italian text.) The poet's love cannot be found on any chart because, unlike them, he implies, she is divine.

Two manuscripts of the poem are printed in Allan W. Atlas, "*Aggio visto lo mappamondo: A New Reconstruction*," in *Studies in Musical Sources and Style*, ed. Eugene K. Wolf and Edward H. Roesner (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1990), 109-17. The Waverly Consort performs the song on "1492: Music from the Age of Discovery" (EMI CDC 754506 2). Felipe Fernández-Armesto describes the colonization of the Canary Islands in *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987).

Translation and commentary by Daniel Brownstein. The image of Sicily and part of Italy is taken from map 10 in Battista Agnese [portolan atlas] ca. 1544 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, G1001.A4 1544, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gnrlagn.html>). The broadsheet is printed on Fabriano with a Vandercook No. 4 press at the Juniper Press, Madison, Wisconsin. The type is Narrow Bembo Condensed Italic set by Michael and Winifred Bixler, Skaneateles, New York. Block by Royal Graphix, La Crosse, Wisconsin. 216 copies have been initialed and numbered.

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