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# The Sound of Music and Composing with Hexachords

A collection of articles and papers on  
fifteenth- and sixteenth-century music, 2001-2019

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*For Eva*

## *A few words about the origins of this collection*

Having worked for many years as a performer, as a freelancer in the radio, as music critic and running my own business in digital typesetting of music and books, I was in 1998 hired by the University of Copenhagen as associate professor. It was my first and only permanent position, and I had to teach music before 1600. In my seminars I referred to the current literature in English, German or French, but my students had to write papers in Danish. I soon realized that an up-to-date terminology in Danish was missing. To make up for this deficiency, I published four articles in Danish in the years 2001-03, in which I tried to establish a consistent Danish terminology covering topics in secular and sacred music. By translating these articles into English, I of course subvert part of their *raison d'être*, but I hope that they can contribute something to the projects I have been working on.

I have always been interested in researching the sounding presence of music, and especially in the many choices that a musician had to make when creating this presence by imagining and setting music down in writing. My studies in the big French manuscript *Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2°*, which were published as *French Music of the Early Sixteenth Century* in 1994, have had a strong impact on my thinking. This collection holds music from at least three generations before the 1520s, and it embraces music from ambitious art music to simple polyphony, sacred and secular, courtly and popular, with a sprinkling of everyday music. This multilayered world of music offered musicians a wide palette of models and sounds with which they could create new concepts of art music as well as functional music or – at the end of this period – commercial music.

My main projects for the last twenty years have been to study, comment and publish a lot of music in online editions. I have concentrated on two kinds of music, which may seem to represent opposite poles in the musical life during the years before 1500. On the one hand we have the refined French chansons in *formes fixes* preserved in the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers of the 1470s, and on the other hand the contemporary simple polyphony from French monasteries. These kinds of music proceed in separate layers, but aesthetics and ideas rub off on each other, and each contributed, along with the interest in popular song, to the new music around 1500. The two projects can be found in *Songs for funerals and intercession*, 2015, and the ongoing *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*.

The articles and papers in this collection represent some precursors to these projects and some points, which I felt called for a different treatment. I have reused elements from the editions in different contexts. At the same time these texts mirror the development of my understanding of the interplay between sound and compositional technique, in a sort of counterpoint to the online editions.

I had of course for many years known the hexachord theory and its use in analysis; in fact, its relevance was one of the most important realizations of my student days. However, my interest was strongly sharpened through the encounter with the artful bergerette "La plus bruyant" once in the 1980s. Its use of hexachords as love metaphors

in the poem and its parallel use of their principles in the music set in motion a process that would shape my research for the next many years. It was in a way the source itself, the little chansonnier in The Royal Library, *MS Thott 291 8°*, that spurred me on. When I wrote the first article in this collection, I had no idea how big a role the hexachords would come to take on in my writings.\*

During the translation of the Danish articles, I have shortened and simplified some of my long Danish sentences. The tedious repetitions of basic explanations have been left in the articles. Without a complete rewrite, they are unavoidable in discussions of closely related topics. All the texts have been reset in a uniform layout, and a few new references has been added as \*notes in the margins, which refer to notes after the original texts.

I could not resist the temptation to include as a supplement an article I wrote as a student. It is about a three-part song with birdsong imitations, which was re-worked by Janequin. The first item in the present collection refers to this article, and it has been much commented in the Janequin literature. I find that it has stood the test of time quite well.

Peter Woetmann Christoffersen  
February 2024

\* My wife has always been very helpful with reading my first attempts at a new article or the long introductions to my music editions. As the years went by, her first reaction tended to be, "Oh no, not on hexachords again?" But, however much I tried to avoid them, the hexachords crept into my text again and again, sorry.

## Contents

The braying of the ass and singing through tears Images in music in the popular and artful traditions of the fifteenth century	1
Josquin and the sound of the voices Analysing vocal instrumentation – a suggestion	41
What every choirboy should know Considering the motet <i>Ut Phebi radiis</i> by Josquin Desprez	59
Liturgical music in a tight rein Alternatim masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua	81
Alexander Agricola's vocal style – “bizarre” and “surly”, or the flower of the singer's art?	121
Busnoys in the hands of scribes, <i>or</i> : What did key signatures mean to the scribes?	163
The restoration of Antoine Busnoys' four-part Flemish song “In mijnen sijn”: An experiment in sound, imitation technique, and the setting of a popular tune	175
The French musical manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794, and the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers	205
Music, Competition and <i>l'Art de Seconde Rhétorique</i> : The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron	215
An experiment in musical unity, <i>or</i> : The sheer joy of sound The anonymous <i>Sine nomine</i> mass in MS Cappella Sistina 14	241
Freedom of creation and the virtuoso composer: Guillaume Du Fay exploring sound and rhythmic relations in <i>Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua</i>	263
<i>Supplement</i> <i>Or sus vous dormez trop</i> The Singing of the Lark in French Chansons of the Early Sixteenth Century	279
Index of names, compositions and sources	308



## The braying of the ass and singing through tears. Images in music in the popular and artful traditions of the fifteenth century

‘Æslets skryden og sang gennem tårer. Billeder i musik i 1400-tallets populære og kunstfulde traditioner’, *Musik & Forskning* 26 · 2001, pp. 97-134

This study is a tribute to my friend Svend Hendrup (1936-1997) who was associate professor of Romance languages at the University of Copenhagen. For many years I enjoyed his generous helpfulness in an interdisciplinary collaboration. We worked with aspects of French music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with reading and interpreting French and Latin texts, on the questions of translation and not least the pronunciation of the old poems and the role of the music of words in connection with the realisation in sound of the sources. Some results of this collaboration were published, while others had to wait for both of us to find the time for finishing touches. In the following, the editions of the texts build on our joint preliminary studies, while the context in which they appear – my present research interests – is new.

When we in the concert hall hear a symphony by Gustav Mahler, no one can doubt that the composer intended something more than just wrapping up the ceremonial of a concert of orchestral music in a spectacular way. In the middle of the fifteenth century composers began to write music of similar complexity, duration and ambition in masses and motets created for princely, clerical or civil institutions. In terms of liturgy this music was completely superfluous and mostly just annoying to the clergy, but it was highly valued and in demand in line with magnificent architecture and painting in all locations where leading circles of the society needed to manifest their might. What effect could fifteenth-century musicians expect their music to have on listeners apart from pleasing God? Which frames of understanding did musicians working on setting liturgical or secular texts take for granted? These questions are important to ask for a research in fifteenth-century music, which aspires to get closer to the music than it is possible through analyses of the technical disposition and the historical context of the preserved musical works.

Old music theorists and authors are largely silent on this subject. They are informative, although not always crystal clear, on techniques of composition, notation and modes, while they concerning the effects of music were immersed in the medieval understanding of music as vibrations in air with undeniable and useful effects by among others making the devil take flight and the saints happy, by its healing powers and by sanctifying the souls of the believers.<sup>1</sup> To hear music under influence of such ingrained concepts is to us totally foreign. However, these concepts are integral elements of the genesis of the music and of its reception, which we have to take note of – perhaps as another layer of *Verfremdung* on top of the great temporal distance we have from the conventions of the music and texts.<sup>2</sup>

1 Tinctoris, *Complexus effectuum musices* [c. 1472-75], edited by A. Seay in Tinctoris, *Opera theoretica* (Corpus scriptorum de Musica 22), s.l. 1975, vol. 2, pp. 159 ff.

2 Rob C. Wegman, ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls. Reading and Hearing Busnoys’s *Anthoni usque limina*’ in Dolores Pesce (ed.), *Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Oxford 1997 (Paperback 1998), pp. 122-41 (at p. 124). The introduction to Wegman’s article has been an inspiration for my work.

This distance in itself makes an inquiry into how music was perceived very difficult. In spite of that, investigations in the positions of the listeners in 'early music' have become a topic at the forefront of the research strategies during the 1990s, fully recognizing these nearly insurmountable obstacles.<sup>3</sup> While there cannot be any doubt that music had 'receivers' and 'users' – Heaven, the saints, patrons secular or ecclesiastic who paid for the music, and those exposed to the sounding reality of music –, we probably have to question the existence of 'listeners', if we equate 'listeners' with the audiences for art music of our times.

However, the position of the listener may be quite irrelevant in this connection. If one imagines a continuum of musical activity that extends from the composer to a person hearing the music, the field that I want to investigate is placed quite near the composer and correspondingly far from the listener. It is about isolating the pre-compositional ideas that governed the endless number of choices that had to be made in order to set a text to music. Maybe one could describe the field as trying to glimpse the contract, which a musician would think that he had with his receivers about the conventions for designing the music, which secured that certain elements of the music would be perceived as particularly significant statements. It is of less interest whether those who actually heard the music did understand these elements in exactly the same manner, or whether the music for them fulfilled entirely different needs. The 'contract' may well turn out to be wishful thinking only on the part of the composer or only valid for closed circles of colleagues and similar minded.

We have to enter into this work with an expectation that different music and different genres had widely different frames of understanding. The distinction between the sacred and the secular is obvious. We will also find clear differences within secular music itself. For example, that popular music used ways of setting texts that were immediately intelligible to everyone in the society – and probably still are to this day – and that this also applies to the intrusion of the popular song's stylistic idioms into the polyphonic art music. On the other hand, the courtly chanson, which in our time often has been characterized as an abstract, self-sustaining music setting poetry gone stale in a play with faded literary tricks, had to be understood on the background of ideas accessible only to narrow circles, in some cases only a few persons at the court where the musician and the poet made their living.

This study is about the direct mirroring in music of poetic pictures. The examples come from fifteenth-century popular song, where animal sounds, speech and maybe also sounds of the weather are part of humorous situations, and from a courtly chanson, which in its setting tries to live up to the poem's pictorial language that uses terms from music theory. To be blunt, we do not in these examples meet a 'subtle' relationship between text and music – it is about *imitatio* rather than *mimesis*.

The choice of examples has moreover made it natural to pursue a different, parallel track, the tempo relations between double and triple meter. For some years this has been discussed among researchers in fifteenth-century music without reaching any real clarification. These quite obscure songs too have their bit to say.

3 Cf. among others the in the preceding note mentioned collection of articles edited by D. Pesce, a theme issue of *Early music*, November 1997 ('Listening practice'), and Rob C. Wegman (ed.). 'Music as Heard' (Special Issue, *Music & Letters*, Fall/Winter 1998), 1999.

## I Sound imitation

In my contribution to *Festschrift Henrik Glahn* of 1979 I analysed the relationship between Clément Janequin's four-part chanson *L'alouette* and an older, three-part version of the same song.<sup>4</sup> I demonstrated that Janequin most probably adapted or re-composed a rather widely circulated chanson from the first decades of the sixteenth century "Or sus vous dormez trop" for inclusion in the collection *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin*, which Pierre Attaignant in Paris published in 1528. This print is something special. Not only it is one of Attaignant's earliest collections and for a long time the only one with music by a single composer, it also introduced a new genre in the printed chansonniers: the descriptive, onomatopoeic chanson that was to become a small, highly profiled and popular segment of the Parisian repertory. *L'alouette* appeared here alongside magnificent paintings in sound, which clearly were created late in the 1520s, and which make the listener hear, imagine, and nearly taste the events depicted: *La chasse*, describing the favourite sport of King François I, stag hunting, *La guerre* about the same king's greatest military triumph, the battle of Marignano in 1515 – a piece of political propaganda probably composed following the disaster at Pavia in 1525 that led to the captivity of François I in Spain –, *Le chant des oyseaux*, which multiplies the singing of birds in *L'alouette* using some of the same motifs, and finally a slight song, "Las, povre cuer" filling out the four part-books of the collection. Attaignant's incentive to send out Janequin's music as a single composer collection was surely that he had access to publishing the three big programmatic songs (the singing of birds, the war and the hunt) as a novelty. However, alone they could not fill out the 16 leaves of each part-book. Janequin was not able to speedily supply one more chanson of a similar nature, but he found a solution by reworking and extending the three-part chanson, which already had provided the inspiration for *Le chant des oyseaux*.

Whether Janequin himself in his very early years had composed the three-part "Or sus vous dormez trop" or – more likely – has appropriated an existing song,<sup>5</sup> is not of great importance. What is important is that this chanson positions the use of sound imitation in the musical sphere dominated by the influence of popular music. It is made like an arrangement of a popular tune, a genre that was in vogue at the French court around 1500, and which soon was adopted by other musical centres. It is very similar to an imitative arrangement with a tenor building on a pre-existent popular song. In the middle of this very common type of setting is interpolated an extended, static section with bird song.<sup>6</sup> Its text is a simplified version of the opening of a virelai, which appears in a three-part setting in several sources from the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The anonymous

4 P. Woetmann Christoffersen, '«Or sus vous dormez trop» The Singing of the Lark in French Chansons of the Early Sixteenth Century' in Mette Müller (ed.), *Festschrift Henrik Glahn*, Copenhagen 1979, pp. 35-67; including editions of the two chansons.

5 Lawrence F. Bernstein finds that this interpretation is hard to stomach: "Surely, it is more natural to view Janequin as the composer of both versions of the *Chant de l'alouette* than to suggest that his extremely unique style was modelled after a pre-existent genre, of which but a single anonymous example survives." ('Notes on the Origin of the Parisian Chanson', *Journal of Musicology* I (1982), pp. 275-326, at p. 301, note 68). It is, however, the only interpretation that enjoys any support from the musical sources.

6 See further Christoffersen, '«Or sus vous dormez trop»', pp. 36-44.

7 "Or sus, vous dormez trop, ma dame jolie" is published in Gordon K. Greene (ed.), *French Secular Music* (Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century Vol. XXII), Monaco 1989, p. 112, and Willi Apel (ed.),

fourteenth-century virelai uses many of the same musical motifs in its rendition of birdsong as we find in the late chanson, and these motifs reappear in several other fourteenth-century chansons.

In the years around and after 1400, this small group of chansons imitating sounds of nature and human activities enjoyed a quite wide circulation, especially in Northern France and Flanders.<sup>8</sup> Hunting, fire, birdsong and market scenes are vividly recreated in polyphonic *chaces* and *virelais*. They belong to the leading circles of the society; they are complex and demand a virtuoso technique of singing, but they incorporate popular elements and recall the excitement of the fairground. During most of the fifteenth century we do not find any wider use of sound imitation in art music. There are allusions to trumpets in some well-known tunes, among them tunes used in *cantus firmus* masses, and a single cuckoo now and then.<sup>9</sup>

When descriptive imitation reappears as a constitutive musical element in Janequin's big sound pictures, it happens within the boundaries of a new secular genre, the Parisian chanson, in which the courtly traditions enter a synthesis with the preceding generations' fascination with the popular songs.<sup>10</sup> While the *virelais* of the fourteenth century most likely remained an exclusive art, Janequin's paintings in sound soon became popular. This may be surprising, since they just like their predecessors are virtuoso show-pieces that, then as nowadays, demand performances by specialised vocal groups. They are to an even higher degree than the fourteenth-century chansons linked to the court culture, which during the reign of François I may be understood as a royal centralised power allied with the dynamism of emerging industry and commerce. In the sixteenth century they circulated widely in printed chansonniers in ever new editions, and publishers saw a profit in offering them in arrangements for instruments and as ensemble dances, especially the beloved *La guerre*, also known as *La bataille*, which generated several instrumental off-springs.

Concerning these special chansons from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries placed in parallel albeit different musical universes, where the songs' picturesque, often grotesque or even theatrical sound pictures were enjoyed, it is interesting to note that the 'rediscovery' of the genre was heralded by a three-part chanson formed as an imitative arrangement apparently setting a pre-existing popular tune. This leads naturally to the idea that sound-imitating songs might have been part of the popular song repertory that lived outside the sphere of art music. However, in my article in *Festskrift Henrik Glahn* I had to assert that no trace of such songs were visible among the preserved songs.<sup>11</sup> A closer look reveals that some traces in fact can be found, even if their use of sound imitation is less striking than in the polyphonic pieces.

*French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century I-III* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 53), s.l. 1970-72, vol. III, p. 42 (no. 212).

8 Cf. Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music 1380-1500*, Cambridge 1993, p. 68.

9 Trumpet flourishes can, for example, be found in Dufay's famous *Missa Se la face ay pale* (reused from his own chanson) and in the many masses upon the *L'homme armé*-tune; the cuckoo is heard in Johannes Martini's *Missa Cu cu*, cf. Strohm, *The Rise*, p. 615.

\*1 10 Cf. P. Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III*, Copenhagen 1994, vol. I, ch. 9 'The Parisian chanson', pp. 214 ff.

11 Christoffersen, '»Or sus vous dormez trop«', p. 42.

*The popular songs and the monophonic chansonniers*

Seen from our point of view, the fifteenth-century popular French chanson is a genre, which is preserved in written sources that in nearly all cases are linked to the consumption of music in the upper classes. It does, however, reflect an orally transmitted tradition of entertainment that found its audience among almost all groups of society. Love is the preferred theme of the songs. The courtly tradition's complete range of subjects is displayed in straightforward, down-to-earth interpretations, often with a humorous or satirical twist on the loftiest themes, but lyrical descriptions of nature or contemporary events may turn up too. The language is plain and colourful but displaying a stock of clichés apparently inherited from the courtly poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; likewise, certain poetic *formes fixes* such as *ballade* and *virelai* are frequently met with. However, stanzaic forms and refrains of all kinds eventually prevailed. The tunes are simple, catchy and formulaic. The perspective of the songs is that of the middle classes. It exhibits a completely realistic attitude to life in French cities, big and small, intermingled with romantically tinted notions about nature and the simplicity of rural life – in the last mentioned they do not differ from the courtly poetry. The songs often have a satirical sting against all the authorities with which ordinary people came in contact, such as priests, lawyers, rich old husbands and grumpy wives. They were disseminated by professional entertainers performing on the street or in the market place (*jongleurs*, *batteleurs* or *recordeurs*),<sup>12</sup> but their main medium was probably the secular theatre.

The theatre was a welcome distraction in the life of the cities. Guilds and theatre clubs might be responsible for the performances, but also professional companies and wandering players had a share in the varied theatrical offerings, ranging from huge mystery cycles, which could last days or even weeks, to the short *soties* (acrobatic slapstick plays) and rambling monologues delivered by entertainers. The semi- or fully professional theatre's typical repertory consisted of farces – easy transportable, amusing plays involving a few actors, simple scenery and lots of song and music provided by the actors themselves – and a paying audience was found in the market place, in noble palaces or in the homes of wealthy burghers, perhaps in connection with wedding festivities.<sup>13</sup> The music for the plays was picked up from all sides of the 'everyday music': from singing in the church, from the military and dancing, from courtly songs and from the rich store of formulas in the popular tradition; everything could be used and recycled, perhaps provided with a new text. Surviving farces abound in instructions for a well-known song to be sung on the stage or for a new text to be sung to a known tune.

The small and cheap printed collections of song texts and of religious songs based on known tunes are also important sources for the popular repertory of the early sixteenth century. They were intended for sale on the street or in the market places, and all are without music – the tunes were known, especially when used as *timbres*.<sup>14</sup>

12 On the oral transmission, see Jay Rahn, *Melodic and textual types in French monophonic song, ca. 1500*, Diss. Columbia University 1978, pp. 31-41.

13 Cf. Howard Mayer Brown's classical study, *Music in the French Secular Theater. 1400-1550*, Cam. Mass. 1963.

14 The secular songs in prints from the period 1512-1530 are published in Brian Jeffery, *Chanson Verse of the Early Renaissance I-II*, London 1971-76. Concerning *noëls* and *cantiques*, see Rahn, *Melodic and textual types*, pp. 44 ff.

The fact that the tunes were expected to be known by *everyone* is the main reason for categorizing them as ‘popular music’.<sup>15</sup> This familiarity is also the reason why the tunes have survived to such an extent. Professional composers appropriated them, used them as humorous elements in courtly chansons, as poetic-musical symbols in refined opposition to courtly or religious themes, or used their characteristic clear-cut musical phrases as building blocks in mass cycles. During the last decades of the fifteenth century the popular songs became such a craze at court that arrangements of the tunes, from the very simple to complex canons, so to say swept the courtly songs away. We are in fact able to reconstruct several songs by extracting them from polyphonic art music. This is also where we find the juicy or coarse erotic songs. The monophonic chansonniers, anthologies of popular songs, which around 1500 were compiled for the use of the ladies of the court or young people, are in contents otherwise well groomed.

They are the two chansonniers in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. fonds français 9346 (the so-called “Bayeux MS”) and Ms. fonds français 12744. They contain respectively 102 and 143 monophonic songs (in Paris 12744 one song is in two parts and two lack tunes).<sup>16</sup> They have several songs in common, 35 in all, which, however, show quite many variants. High quality expensive parchment has been used for both manuscripts, and they are quite large of format (c. 220 x 315 mm and c. 188 x 315 mm respectively). The Bayeux MS is the most luxurious with each song taking up one or two openings. The tune with the first stanza laid under the music is on the opening’s left hand page (*verso*) while the remainder of the poem stands on the right hand page (*recto*). If the song exceeds more than a single opening in the very big and clear script, it continues on the following opening with a clear marking of the continuity (“Residuun”). Around the music there are in frames above and in the left hand margin painted sumptuous decorations in many colours and gold, which include geometrical patterns, flowers and fruits along with an owner’s devise (cf. Ill. 3 below). Curiously, the manuscript was not originally foliated, but every song is numbered with minuscule Roman numerals above and Arabic numerals below on the pages with music.

Where the Bayeux MS appears as a music manuscript that includes complete texts, MS Paris 12744 is rather an anthology of poetic texts with the tunes appended. The poems start on top of the pages in a quite small script with one or two poems on each opening. The tune is added on small, compact staves at the bottom of the pages, and the appropriate text lines are repeated below the music. Decorations are sparse, but each song starts with a big golden letter. The foliation is normal with Roman numerals on the openings’ upper right corners. The manuscript does not retain any traces of its original owner or the person who commissioned it, but based on the similarities in repertory and redaction we may assume that it concerning dating and its owner’s social standing can be compared with the Bayeux MS.

The Bayeux MS was probably commissioned by or made as a gift for Charles de Bourbon. His name can be deduced from an acrostic involving the first 17 songs in the

15 On the discussion of *popular music* during this period of history seen in relation to *folk music*, *art music* and, as a general concept, ‘*everyday music*’, see Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. I, pp. 179-181.

16 The manuscripts have been published in Théodore Gérold (ed.), *Le Manuscrit de Bayeux. Texte et musique d’un recueil de chansons du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Strasbourg, fasc. 2), Strasbourg 1921, and Gaston Paris & Auguste Gevaert (eds.), *Chansons du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Société des Anciens Textes Français I), Paris 1875; the music has been published complete in Rahn, *Melodic and textual types*.

manuscript – a clear sign of how carefully its repertory was edited. His badge, a winged stag with the Bourbon motto “Esperance” inscribed on a ribbon, is found in all the border decorations.<sup>17</sup>

Duke Charles II de Bourbon (1490-1527), *Connétable de France*, was after the king the realm's most powerful person. His domains comprised most of Central France, and his court, his style of life and his pride represented an intolerable competition for the efforts of François I to centralize the power in the hands of the king. Charles and his English counterpart, *the Constable*, the Duke of Buckingham, have very much to the point been characterized as “feudal dinosaurs”<sup>18</sup> – they were too powerful, too headstrong and too visible for the new power structures. Buckingham ended up on the scaffold, while Charles de Bourbon's break with the king led to exile and service as commander of the army of Emperor Charles V. In that role he participated in conquering the French armies at the battle of Pavia in 1525, where François I as prisoner was taken to Madrid. In France, the titles and properties of Charles de Bourbon were seized. And soon the financial support from the emperor dried up, so Charles found no other way to pay his impatient troops than to lead them against Rome, which was sacked in 1527. He died during a futile attempt to take the refuge of the pope, the Castello Sant'Angelo.

Both manuscripts have a striking, somewhat distant relationship with indicating the mensuration or time of the songs, and they reveal this each in its own fashion: Paris 12744 has very few mensuration signs. This does not matter very much, since the great majority of the songs without any trouble can be performed in double time. In the Bayeux MS, on the other hand, every single song indicates at the start *tempus imperfectum diminutum* (shown by a semicircle with a vertical stroke,  $\text{C}\text{̣}$ ). Around 1500 this was the common way to indicate double time (with a binary division of all note values). However, the MS contains several songs that can be performed in triple time only or demand a change of mensuration. This, too, does not pose difficulties for the user of the song collection. The music simply has to be read in double time, but performed respecting the natural stresses, which the tune demands, disregarding the notation. Signs of triple time only appear twice in the MS, namely when changing from double to triple time inside the

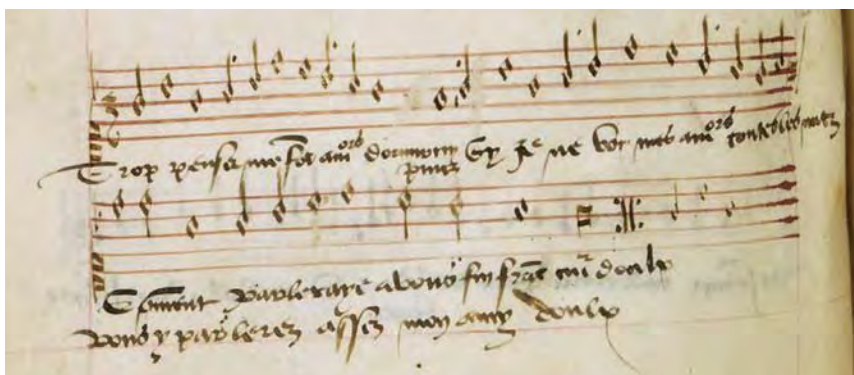
17 Fols. 1<sup>v</sup>-17<sup>v</sup> in Paris 9346 contain the following songs (see also Rahn, *Melodic and textual types*, p. 64):

C'est a ce jolly moys de may  
Hellas, mon cuer n'est pas à moy  
A la duché de Normendie  
Royne des fleurs que je desire tant  
Les bon espoir que mon cuer a  
En amours n'a sinon bien  
Souvent je m'esbatz et mon cuer est marri  
(blank page)  
Dieu merci, j'ay bien labouré  
En despit des faulx envyeux  
Belle, belle tres douce mère Dieu  
On doit bien aymer l'oyssellet  
Vostre beaulté et vostre beaulté, gente et jolie  
Royne des flours, royne des flours, la plus belle  
Bevon, ma commère, nous ne bevons point  
Or sus, or sus, par dessus vous les aultre  
Ne loseray-je dire

18 Desmond Seward, *Prince of the Renaissance. The Life of François I*, London 1973, p. 125.

songs. The reasons for the use of such unusual notation may be deduced by looking at a couple of examples.

The tuneful virelai “Trop penser me font amours” in Paris 12744 (f. 22<sup>v</sup>, see *Example 1*) is one of the few songs with a specific indication of its mensuration. The sign “3” here indicates *tempus imperfectum cum prolatione perfectum*. This means that each *brevis* (≡) must be divided in two, while a *semibrevis* (◇) consists of three *minimae* (♩). In this configuration, the mensural notation’s rich possibilities of notating even very complex rhythms in a simple way comes to the fore, as the real length of the note values depend on the context and their positions in the rhythmic pattern. These possibilities were fully exploited in art music, especially in first half and middle of the fifteenth century. This notation, of course, challenges the knowledge and experience of the performer and is therefore not the obvious choice for the recording of popular music.



Ill. 1, Paris 12744 f. 22<sup>v</sup> (at the bottom of the page)

The difficulties are manageable in “Trop penser”. The tune’s alternation between iambic and trochaic declamation results in a recurrent figure: ◇♩◇♩. If this figure appeared alone without any supporting marking, it should be interpreted according to the rules for diminution and augmentation of note values. However, if a *punctus divisionis* is placed between the two *minimae* in order to delineate the *semibrevis* values, it gives a completely different result:<sup>19</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} 3 \text{ ◇♩◇♩} &= \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot \\ 3 \text{ ◇♩◇♩} &= \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot \text{♩} \cdot \end{aligned}$$

This is the reason why *puncta* have been carefully placed in Paris 12744 in the first section of the song, so that no misunderstandings can arise (cf. Ill. 1; some erasures show that it has not been easy to get it right!).

This song may be regarded as an unusually attractive example of the lyrical side of the popular repertory, which build on the courtly tradition in *formes fixes* with refrain. The situation described is quite similar the *alba* or *aube* in the troubadour or trouvère repertoires where the lover’s time together was cut short by the first blush of dawn. Here it is not a rendezvous between two young nobles, but common youths, the girl and “Le gallant”, and their dialogue has a touch of real naiveté.

19 The note values have been halved in all the music examples and transcriptions in this article; ligatures and coloration are shown by customary markings, and text in cursive has been added by the editor.

Ex 1, Paris 12744 f. 22<sup>v</sup>, “Trop penser me font amours” (virelai)<sup>20</sup>

The tune is just as plain and terse. The music for the *refrain* of the virelai (text sections 1, 4, 7, 10) and *tierce* (3, 6, 9) repeats a short tune based on the G-Dorian scale's fifth *g'-d''* (supplemented by the note *f'* in the open ending of the first line), while the two *couplets* (2, 5, 8) form a contrast by a small reduction of the available notes to the fourth *d''-a'*. before ending on *g'*, and a change in rhythm into two trochees in row – simple and efficient.

\*2

However, the scribe of Paris 12744 could easily have bypassed the difficulty of understanding the mensural notation and its fine points in triple time and the use of *punctus divisionis*. There is no use of *alterations* in the tune. The note values have the length they would have in a regular binary division of all values. The song would possibly have been easier to read, if it had been notated with a C at the beginning. This is exactly the solution that the scribe of the Bayeux MS has chosen for the songs in triple time. The drinking song “Bon vin, je ne te puis laisser” (*Example 2*) is a very clear example. It is also typical of the strophic songs with different kinds of refrain in the popular repertory – here the internal refrain, the exclamation “Ane, hauvoy!”. The song is all the way through in triple time. One has to sing while ‘dodging’ the notation. This is not a problem either, as long as one just reads the mensuration sign as an indication of binary division and disregard it as signalling the time (cf. Ill. 2):

20 The two notes with fermatas are in the MS notated as breves. Translation of the text: (1) Love causes me so much worry that I cannot sleep, if I do not see my beloved every night! (2) “My sweet heart, how shall I come to speak with you?” “You will certainly speak with me, my sweet friend. (3) If you come to the window by midnight, when my father is asleep, I will open the door.” Love causes me ... (5) The young man did not forget what he was told about coming to the window by midnight. (6) The girl did not sleep. When she heard him, she opened for him stark naked in her chemise. Love causes me... (8) “My friend, the night is waning and the day is dawning. We have to depart from our love. (9) Let us kiss and embrace, my sweet friend, in secret just like true lovers do.” Love causes me ...

Ex. 2, Bayeux MS no. 41 (ff. 43<sup>v</sup>-44), “Bon vin, je ne te puis laisser”<sup>21</sup>

1. Bon vin, je ne te puis lais - ser,  
 2. Tu es plai - sant a l'em - bou - cher.  
 3. Soubz la ta - ble m'as fait cou - cher  
 4. Et ma ro - be a deulx dedz jou - er,  
 7 je t'ay m'a - mour don - né - - - e. A - ne, hau - voy!  
 8 J'ay-mes tant la vi - né - - - e.  
 9 main-cte foys cest an - né - - - e.  
 16 chan-ter main - te jour - né - - - e.  
 16 Je t'ay m'a - mour don - né - - - e.  
 17 J'ay-mes tant la vi - né - - - e.  
 18 Main-cte foys cest an - né - - - e.  
 22 Chan-ter main - te jour - né - - - e.  
 22 Sou-vent m'as fait la soif pas - ser,  
 23 Je prens plai - sir a te ver - ser,  
 24 Et si m'as fait dor-mir, rom - fler,  
 28 a la mai - son d'ung ta - ver - nier  
 28 bon vin, je ne te puis lais - ser  
 29 tu es plai - sant a l'em - nou - cher  
 30 soubz la ta - ble m'as fait cou - cher  
 34 et ma ro - be a deulx dedz jou - er  
 34 ne soir ne ma - ti - né - - - e. A - ne, ho - voy!  
 35 tout au long de l'an - né - - - e.  
 36 tou - te nuit a nui - té - - - e.  
 43 pas - ser ma des - ti - né - - - e.  
 43 Ne soir ne ma - ti - né - - - e.  
 44 Tout au long de l'an - né - - - e.  
 45 Tou - te nuit a nui - té - - - e.  
 46 Pas - ser ma des - ti - né - - - e.

Both the popular tunes have been used as starting points for polyphonic compositions in the period around 1500. Several among them are probably up to a generation older than the songs' inclusion in the monophonic chansonniers. “Trop penser” is used as a tenor tune in an imitative three-part popular arrangement by the otherwise unknown Bosfrin,<sup>22</sup>

21 Translation: (1) Good Wine, I cannot let go of you, / I have given you my love. Ass, hey! / Often you have quenched my thirst. / Good Wine, I cannot let go of you / neither evening nor morning. Ass, hey! / (2) You are lovely to taste. / How I love the vine. (Ass, hey!)/ I like to pour you, / you are nice to taste /all the year round. (3) Under the table you have made me lie / many times this year. / And you have made me sleep, snore, / under the table you have made me lie / all night long. (4) And gamble my clothes away with two dice, / sing many a day / in an innkeeper's house. / And gamble my clothes away with two dice / fulfilling my destiny.

22 *Et trop penser*, published in Howard Mayer Brown, *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Banco Rari 229. (Monuments of Renaissance Music VII), Chicago 1983, vol. II, pp. 455-456; the song appears in four Italian sources from the years 1490-1510, cf. *ibid.* vol. I, pp. 287-288.



Ill. 2: Bayeux MS f. 43<sup>v</sup> (top of the page)

and it is used in masses by Heinrich Isaac, Gaspar van Weerbecke and Jacob Obrecht.<sup>23</sup> “Bon vin”, which often appears with the text “Bon temps, je ne te puis laisser”, can be found in a number of very dissimilar arrangements, from simple cantus firmus settings to Antoine Brumel’s *Missa Bon temps*.<sup>24</sup>

The notation we find in the Bayeux MS and to some degree in Paris 12744 must be regarded as a ‘primitive’ variety, probably intended for noble amateurs who could not be expected to have insight into the secrets of professional musicians. The large format, the big writing and the notation of the Bayeux MS combined with its slightly childish aura despite its splendid execution must be compared with the date for Charles de Bourbon’s moving to front of the line for inheriting the dukedom. It happened when his uncle died in 1503 without a son. He was then 13 years old. The manuscript may very well have been a finely tailored gift for a boy just on the threshold of adulthood. This fits perfectly with the accepted dating of the MS based on style and repertory to just around 1500.

### *Three songs from the Bayeux manuscript*

I find some traces of sound imitation in three songs in the last, quite diverse section of the Bayeux MS (nos. 84, 87 and 97 among the 102 songs).<sup>25</sup> The most interesting is no. 97 “Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx enfant”, which cannot really be classified as ‘a song’. It appears much more like a scene or a monologue from the popular theatre, and it is for long stretches through-composed with a touch of musical prose. Not everything in the text is crystal clear, but the song includes strong contrasts, and its intended comical effect is beyond all doubt – the gap between crying and braying like a donkey is here very narrow.

\*3

At the start of the song a mother pitifully laments the absence of her son Mimin (two stanzas, bb. 1-18 and 19-36) – as if speaking to herself. Then she directly addresses another person, a teacher assigned to educate her son, stating that Raoullet, Mimin’s father, wants him kept on track (the music for this is repeated, bb. 37-51). Then comes the admonition: “Faictes qu’il se porte pesant (Make him conduct himself with dignity) et qu’il aille ces motz pensant en faisant de l’asne parmy (and that he keeps my words in

23 The tune is quoted exactly as tenor in the Confiteor section in Obrecht’s *Missa Plumimorum carminorum*! Cf. David Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480*, Oxford 1999, pp. 158-159.

24 In the MS Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in The Royal Library, Copenhagen, the tune is found in three different settings, see further Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. II, p. 115, and Helen Hewitt, ‘A Chanson Rustique of the Early Renaissance: Bon temps’ in Jan LaRue (ed.), *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music. A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, New York 1966, pp. 376-391.

25 All three are published here at the end of this section.

mind, at times acting like the donkey)”, culminating in the donkey imitation “hin han” in descending thirds. The braying can be performed by inhaling at the “i”-sound and singing normally on the “a”-sound. The first part of the passage, spanning *c'-f* (bb. 72-75), is notated in straight *semibreves*, second part *g-c* (bb. 75-80) becomes syncopated by *minima*-rests on the beats, a sort of *hoquetus* – is the ass flogged? In the end the teacher is given 100 écus in cash; no expense shall be spared to educate the son.

This scene is in rhythmic structure far more complex than almost any other popular song. The introductory stanza (bb. 1-18) is obviously in triple time with an upbeat and shows a similar alternation between iambic and trochaic patterns as “Trop penser”. The stanza’s three lines are rhythmically identical, and the last line “Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx amy” turns back as a refrain at the end of the second stanza (bb. 31-36) and as the song’s last line (bb. 95-101). The second stanza (bb. 19-36) seems like a variation of the first, where the regular triple time becomes somewhat blurred. In the third and fourth stanzas, in which the music is repeated (bb. 37-51), the triple time is gradually supplanted by double, most clearly in the two last lines (bb. 42-51). The remainder of the scene, the next two stanzas and the donkey imitation, develops into free alternations between triple and double time, into a musical prose in the service of the dramatic effect such as the ascent in sequences in bars 59-63 and the repeat of words and motifs in bars 63-69. Coloration appears in bars 56-57, where three *brevis* notes are blackened. Hereby they lose a third of their value in *tempus imperfectum*. The result is slow triplets, which in this context seem artificial and not very effective. We have to take in account that this passage may have originally been notated in *tempus perfectum*; in such a context the coloration had produced a sturdy hemiola effect in the triple rhythm, an interpretation of “porte pesant”. The song may originally have been notated with far more complex indications of changing mensurations. What we find in the Bayeux MS is probably an attempt to simplify the notation, just as in other songs in triple time.

The simplified notation in the Bayeux MS can be compared with some copies of songs in a register, which was kept by the city clerk of Namur around 1423.<sup>26</sup> Here the note values are indicated by strokes: A short stroke is the basic rhythmic unit; two strokes close together indicate a value that is twice as long etc. Among the songs is the tenor part belonging to “La belle se siet” with two complete stanzas of text – Du Fay in his famous song probably only added the elegant *Cantus II* to a slightly older setting of the tune.<sup>27</sup> This tune also needs *coloration*. Such complexity is beyond the stroke notation. The scribe had in these passages to use white *semibreves* in groups of three. This shows that the strokes must be read as black *semibreves* and their multiplications, and the white *semibreves* as triplets. In this way it would work out for weak readers of music.

26 Namur, Haute cour, Reg. 8 (1421-23). Published as facsimile in Ernest Montellier, ‘Quatorze Chansons du XVe siècle extraites des Archives Namuroises’, *Commission de la vieille chanson populaire: Annuaire 1939*, Antwerp, pp. 153-211, incl. erroneous transcriptions.

27 Guillaume Dufay (H. Besseler & D. Fallows ed.), *Opera omnia VI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1), no. 12. The “La belle se siet” tune is not a *ballade*; in *Opera omnia VI* this setting is classified as such. It is rather a popular *virelai*, in structure quite similar “Trop penser”. This tune was further basis for a three-part chanson by Josquin, a motet by Prioris and masses (anonymous, Ghiselin, De Orto and a Credo by Robert de Févin/Josquin), cf. David Fallows, *The Songs of Guillaume Dufay. Critical Commentary to the Revision of Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, ser. 1, vol. VI* (Musicological studies & documents 47), Neuhausen-Stuttgart 1995, pp. 61-63.

The song's first words "Mymy, Mymy" set in music with the notes *e* and *b*, both of which can be solmized with the syllable "mi" in *hexachordum naturale* and *hexachordum durum* respectively, bring to mind Ockeghem's famous *Missa My my*.<sup>28</sup> Any singer brought up and trained under the Guidonian Hand in a choir school, and having learned to place the intervallic structures and tunes he was studying against a mental map, where the hexachordal system provided the most important signposts, would instantly recognize the joke. However, it is not just a jest. The remarkable start has been construed with a purpose, and it may have something to tell also concerning Ockeghem's mass and the compositions related to it.<sup>29</sup>

The rendering of the braying at the song's comical high point stands as an independent element, as an emblem referring to something outside the music. It is probably not the only quotation: The refrain "Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx amy" and much of the first stanzas (bb. 1-36) may build on a popular song. If so, the song surely would not start in Phrygian, but keep to the C mode all the way and be in regular triple time. When this scene was created, the rhythm of the first line was probably not changed, but the pitches were transformed towards Phrygian, and perhaps only the two first pitches (they could very well have been *c* and *g*). In addition to the solmization joke this operation signals that something unusual is going on.

The Phrygian formation consisting of fifth movements forwards and back followed by a semitone movement emanates intensity, and the direction of the initial movement is not significant: *e-b-e-f-e*, *b-e-b-c'-b* or transposed *e-A-e-f-e* – the last one is Ockeghem's *Mi mi* motif. In the theatrical scene the motif creates a striking opening with a wistful text "Mimi, Mimi, my dear child, will you never come home to me?" There is no indication, however, that the Phrygian opening was always perceived as plaintive. The popular song

28 Johannes Ockeghem (ed. Jaap van Benthem), *Missa My my* (Masses and Mass Sections fascicle III,2), Utrecht 1998, and J. Ockeghem (ed. Dragan Plamenac), *Collected Works II* (2. ed.), s.l. 1966, pp. 1-20.

29 I am not the first to point out the connection between the monophonic song and Ockeghem's mass. Ross W. Duffin beat me in his article 'Mi chiamano Mimi but my name is *Quarti toni*: solmization and Ockeghem's famous Mass', *Early Music* 29 (May 2001), pp. 165-184. However, Duffin does not seem to get the whole story: 1) His business is to demonstrate that the title *Missa My my* does not refer to the descending fifth in the bassus in the motto of the mass or for that matter to the repeated *e*'s in the superius, but that "Mi mi" just is another way to denote the *Hypophrygian* mode or *quarti toni*. In this connection the monophonic song was not of any help. Duffin finds that the song opens with a Phrygian gesture with the solmization syllables below the notes without any connexion with the motto of the mass, and that the remainder of the song is obviously in C-mode. 2) His pointing out that it is wrong to solmize Ockeghem's opening fifth *e-A* as "mi-mi" builds apparently on untenable assumptions concerning the practices of singers and composers in the fifteenth century. Namely, that they considered intervals as isolated phenomena when solmizing a passage, not as a part of a melodic line, and that they strictly kept to the solmization theory as stated by Guido of Arezzo and his closest followers. Exactly such formations as the 'Mi mi-motif' in Ockeghem's bassus with movement forward and back to the same note *e-A-e-f-e* would be perceived in simplified solmization by the singers, and each time they would sing *e* as "mi" and apply the same syllable to *A* in order to emphasize the fifth relation. Such a practice is probably behind Georg Rhaw's rule that fourth, fifth and octave movements are to be solmized by repeating the syllable belonging to the first note (*mi-mi* or *fa-fa*). This was stated a few decades after Ockeghem's mass in *Enchiridion utriusque musicae practicae* of 1517 (see, for example, Karol Berger, *Musica ficta. Theories of Accidental Inflections in Vocal Polyphony from Marchetto da Padova to Gioseffo Zarlino*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 91 and 219). 3) Duffin's argument that the syllables "Mi mi" signal the fourth mode is in itself a banality, which does not import anything about the relations between the compositions that appeared designated with the syllables.

\*4 “Petite camusette, a la mort m’avez mis”, known in settings by Ockeghem and Josquin,<sup>30</sup> which builds on the same intervallic structure as Ockeghem’s *Mi mi* motif, is certainly intense, but not the least sad: “Little snub-nose, you have brought me close to death”. On the other hand, Ockeghem’s three-part courtly song “Presque transi ung peu moins qu’estre mort” is really depressive, where the unhappy love turns into weariness of life: “Almost gone, only a little bit from being dead, living in sorrow without having any consolation”.<sup>31</sup> Here the tenor’s declamation of the text on the notes *e-A-e-f-e* has a very strong appeal, possibly empowered by the parallel movement of the less expansive upper voice. Any way, Ockeghem expanded the material from “Presque transi”, primarily using the song’s beginning and end, not only in *Missa My my* but also in the late five-part motet *Intemerata Dei Mater*.<sup>32</sup> Ockeghem used this material in his mass and motet in such a cunning way that he so to say covered his traces – something which in recent times has been appreciated as a characteristic of his personality –, but in the mass he left the *Mi mi* motif in the open as an emblem. Other composers quoted the motif in masses as a tribute to Ockeghem or in recognition of its usefulness, either stating the quotation in the title of the mass (De Orto, Pipelare and one anonymous) or hidden in the spirit of Ockeghem (Obrecht).<sup>33</sup>

There is hardly any direct connection between the comic scene in the Bayeux MS and Ockeghem’s mass for the French royal chapel. The Phrygian colouring of the song’s start, however, does show a sensitivity to the effect of the musical phrase as a signal, a sensitivity that can help us understand the background for Ockeghem’s sublimation of the material in his works. The ‘Mi mi’ motif had perhaps already proved its durability and intensity as a signal/emblem in the ‘everyday music’, as part of the arsenal of the professional musician and entertainer (and in plainchant formulas which we need not go into). Therefore he could disregard “Presque transi” in his naming of the mass and be content with “My my” or “Mi mi” as an indicator of the mode of the mass but even more as a known musical signal, the motto of the mass.<sup>34</sup>

One may wonder why this theatrical scene, so different from the other popular songs, has found its way into the Bayeux MS. It is hardly thinkable that the noble receiver of the song collection should perform the piece. It requires a professional actor. Maybe it has to be understood as a piece for reading, intentionally placed by the person who ordered the collection in order to admonish the future duke *not* to act like an ass. In any case, Charles de Bourbon did not heed the song’s implied admonishment.

30 J. Ockeghem (ed. R. Wexler with D. Plamenac), *Collected Works III: Motets and Chansons*, Philadelphia 1992, p. 88, and Josquin Desprez (ed. A. Smijers & M. Antonowycz), *Wereldlijke Werken*. Amsterdam 1925-68, no. 17, p. 43.

31 Ockeghem, *Collected Works III*, p. 81.

32 *Ibid.* p. 8. On the relations between “Presque transi” and *Missa My my*, see Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models*, Paris 1997, pp. 159-77, and J. van Benthem’s introduction to Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa My my*. On *Intemerata Dei mater*, see Jeffrey Dean’s brilliant analysis in ‘Ockeghem’s valediction? the meaning of *Intemerata Dei mater*’ in Philippe Vendrix (ed.), *Johannes Ockeghem. Actes du XL<sup>e</sup> Colloque international d’études humanistes. Tours, 3-8 février 1997* (Collection «Épitome musical» 1), Paris 1998, pp. 521-570.

33 Concerning the related works, see Martin Picker, ‘Reflections on Ockeghem and *Mi-Mi*’ in Vendrix (ed.), *Johannes Ockeghem*, pp. 415-32 and Ross W. Duffin, ‘*Mi chiamano Mimi*’.

34 This discussion refers to the chapter ‘*Mi-mi*, prelude: What’s in a name?’ in Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem*, pp. 159-161.

**M**ymy my my modoulx enfant reuendres  
vous s'amaiz das my my my my modoulxamy  
Je n'ay le cuer si tres dolent Que oncqz puis deul  
ne dormy my my my my modoulxamy Zellas mo amy fori  
Enouillet deult al soit godi  
e no' w' auge a fessie Dmy my my my my my my my  
e car il a tut ex tendie Quel fait reuy petulz et grans  
fautes qu'il se porte pesant et qu'il aille ces mots pen  
sant en fausât de lasne en fausât de lasne par

Ill. 3, Bayeux MS, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fonds français 9346, ff. 95v, "Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx enfant" (beginning).

### Three songs from the Bayeux manuscript<sup>35</sup>

Paris 9346 no. 97 “Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx enfant” (ff. 95<sup>v</sup>-96<sup>v</sup>)<sup>36</sup>

Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx enfant,  
reviendrés vous jamaiz vers my?  
Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx amy.

J'en ay le cueur si tres dollent  
que oncques puis d'oeil ne dormy!  
Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx amy.

“Hellas, mon amy socié,  
nous vous avons assossié,  
O Mymy, O Mymy, nostre extendiant.

Raoullet veult qu'il soit gardié,  
car il a tant extendié,  
O Mymy, qu'il faict réux petitz et grans.

Faictes qu'il se porte pesant,  
et qu'il aille ces motz pensant  
en faisant de l'asne, en faisant de l'asne parmy:

Hin, han, han, hin, han, hin,  
han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han!

Or tenez cent escutz contant,  
n'espargnez point le demourant  
pour dieutriner men fieux Mymy, Mymy.

Mymy, Mymy, mon doulx amy.

Mimi, Mimi, my dear child,  
will you never come home to me?  
Mimi, Mimi, my sweetheart.

I have such anguish in my heart  
that I haven't been able to close an eye,  
Mimi, Mimi, my sweetheart.

“Alas, my esteemed friend,  
we have entrusted you with  
– O Mimi, O Mimi – our student.

Raoulet wants that he is looked after,  
because he has studied so much  
– O Mimi – that he has outdone little and big ones.

Make him conduct himself with dignity  
and that he keeps my words in mind  
at times acting like the donkey:

Hin, han, han, hin, han, hin,  
han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han!

Receive here 100 écus in cash,  
do not spare the remainder  
to educate my son Mimi, Mimi”

Mimi, Mimi, my sweetheart.

35 Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. fonds français 9346. This section was published in a small private *Festschrift* to professor Henrik Glahn, May 29, 1989 – as a supplement to my article ‘»Or sus vous dormez trop«’. Associate professor Svend Hendrup has been of great help during the work on the poems.

36 Errors in MS Paris 9346: Text, some repeated “my”s are missing; bars 49-51 have “faict ceux petitz et grans” – “ceux” is probably a misspelling for “réux”. Bar 52, the rest is missing; bar 78, the last note is a *semibrevis*; bars 18, 38 and 51 are in the MS notated as *longae* (without fermatas).

*The braying of the ass and singing through tears*

My - my, My - my, mon doux en - fant,

re - vien - drés vous ja - maiz vers my?

My - my, My - my, mon doux a - my.

J'en ay le cuer si tres dol - lent

que onc - ques puis d'oeil ne dor - my!

My - my, My - my, mon doux a - my.

"Hel - las, mon a - my so - ci - é,  
Raoul - let veult qu'il soit gar - di - é,

nous vous a - vons as - sos - si - é,  
car il a tant ex - ten - di - é,

O My-my, O My-my, nos - tre ex-ten - di - ant.  
O My-my, qu'il faict ré - ux pe - titz et grans.

Faïc - tes qu'il se por - te pe - sant,

et qu'il ail - le ces motz pen - sant en fai - sant de l'as - ne,

en fai - sant de l'as - ne par - my:

Hin, han, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han, hin, han!

Or te - nez cent es - cutz con - tant,

n'es - par - gnez point le de - mou - rant

pour dieu - tri - ner men fieux My - my, My - my."

My - my, My - my, mon doux a - my.

Paris 9346 no. 87 “Celuy qui nasquit sainctement” (ff. 90<sup>v</sup>-91)<sup>37</sup>

Celuy qui nasquit sainctement,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
veuille mener a sauveté  
l'ame du bon feu roy René.  
Il a prins son deffinement,  
hen henc, hen henc, *hen henc, hen henc,*  
pour certain, il est trespasé.  
C'est grant dommage de sa mort.

Et quant vendra le Jour du Jugement,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
que chascun y sera pour soy,  
le doulx Jesus par sa pitié  
nous vueille donner sauvement,  
hen henc, hen henc, *hen henc, hen henc,*  
...

He who was born in a holy way,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
if only he would lead to salvation  
the soul of the good, deceased King René.  
He has met with his end,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
it is certain that he has passed away.  
His death is great damage.

And when the Day of Doom arrives,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
when everyone will be on his own,  
if only the sweet Jesus by his grace  
will give us all salvation,  
hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
...

Paris 9346 no. 84 “Les fillettes de Montfort” (f. 87<sup>v</sup>)

Les fillettes de Montfort,  
ilz ont trouvé en leur voye  
ung cheval qui estoit mort.

Et sirdondieu, sirdondaine,  
va, siredondé, siredondieu!

Ho, hu, hayne, ha, huri ha,  
hé, hauvoy!

Sus la mer, quant il vente,  
il y faict dangereux aller.

The little girls from Montfort  
found on their path  
a horse that had died.

And sirdondieu, sirdondaine,  
go! Siredondé, siredondieu!

Ho, hu, hayne, huri ha!  
Hé hauvoy!

At sea, when the wind is blowing,  
it is dangerous to be.

37 Errors in MS Paris 9346, bar 34 consists two *minimae*, changed in accordance with bar 16. Maybe the first note of the song should be corrected to *d* in accordance with the upbeats in bars 11 and 29. The text is incomplete, the two last lines in the second stanza is missing. It is possible that the two last lines of the first stanza here should be repeated as a sort of refrain.

*The braying of the ass and singing through tears*

1. Ce - luy qui nas - quit saine - te - ment,  
 2. Et quant ven - dra le Jour du Ju - ge - ment,

hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
 hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,

veuil - le me - ner a sau - ve - té  
 que chas - cun y se - ra pour soy,

l'a - me du bon feu roy Re - né.  
 le doux Je - sus par sa pi - tié

Il a prins son def - fi - ne - ment,  
 nous vueil - le don - ner sau - ve - ment,

hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,  
 hen henc, hen henc, hen henc, hen henc,

pour cer - tain, il est tres - pas - sé.

C'est grant dom - ma - ge de sa mort.

Les fil - let - tes de Mont - fort,  
 ilz ont trou - vé en leur voy - e

ung che - val qui es - toit mort.

Et sir - don - dieu, sir - don - dai - ne, va, sire - don - dé, sire - don - dieu!

Ho, hu, hay - ne, ha, hu - ri ha, hé, hau - voy!

Sus la mer, quant il ven - te,

il y faict dan - ge - reux al - ler.

The other two songs from the Bayeux MS are both in double time and do not call for any new reflections on notation. No. 87 “Celuy qui nasquit saintement” mourns “le bon feu roy René” and can be dated after 1480. René d’Anjou (1409-1480), duke of Bar and Anjou, count of Provence and Piedmont, duke of Lorraine (1431-1453, by inheritance of his wife Isabelle de Lorraine), king of Naples and Sicily (1435-1442), titular king of Jerusalem and from 1466 titular king of Aragon and count of Barcelona, was one of history’s last, great knightly figures. His name was and is surrounded by a fairy tale sparkle. In his time he became a romantic figure, always in front, always on a mission, and almost always hit by bad luck in his endeavours. His striving to retain the inheritance of his wife in Lorraine led to imprisonment by his competitor, the duke of Burgundy. That he inherited Naples and the kingdom of Sicily only led to misfortune. René d’Anjou did not possess the military strength and political acumen to keep the power, and he was ousted by Alfonso V of Aragon in 1442. He sought during the remainder of his life by manoeuvring among princes with greater influence than himself to regain his lost Italian kingdom. He founded, so to say, the unfortunate drive of the French kings towards conquering the weaker Italian states. For more realistic thinking actors on the political scene “the good King René” came to stand in a tragicomic light as the eternally unlucky and troublesome hero.

This did not prevent that him from enjoying great respect as a competent and far-sighted administrator in times of peace, as a knight in the spirit of King Arthur, as an extravagant arranger of tournaments, a ladies man and as a faithful husband with a renown as a painter and author of love poems and a novel as well as an idealizing handbook of the noble art of tourneying (possibly these works were created by employees in his name). During his last years he concentrated on his domains in Southern France and his splendour- and art-loving court in Aix-en-Provence, where the young Josquin Desprez apparently started his career.<sup>38</sup>

The song expresses a pious wish that Jesus will lead the soul of the good King René to salvation. This is put forward in an almost reciting, simple tune that revolves around the notes *g* and *a* and does not transgress the range of *hexachordum naturale* (*c-a*). Two identical passages with *hoquetus* effects are inserted into the repeated phrases (bb. 6-11 and 24-29), which expand the range to *c'*. The words are the syllables “hen henc”, which may be interpreted as “alas” sounds, but given the somewhat overblown message of his death “Il a prins son definement, pour certain, il est trespassé. C’est grant dommaige de sa mort” everything is given a tinge of irony. The *hoquetus* passages seem to stand out as clatter or harrumphing. In the world of popular song the unfulfilled ambitions stand in a comical light.

The last song no. 84 “Les filettes de Montfort” is a nonsense song. It is not easy to find the connection between the girls who find a dead horse and the warning that it is dangerous at sea when it storms. The nonsense syllables “Et sirdondieu, sirdondaine, va, siredondé, siredondieu” may belong with the first three lines (bb. 1-24), while the wind at sea is introduced by a rhythmic displacement and *hoquetus* sounding “ho, hu, haine, ha, huri ha” – do we hear the howling of the wind?

38 C. 1475-80, cf. Richard Sherr (ed.), *The Josquin Companion*, Oxford 2000, p. 12 and the literature mentioned there.

## II Mirroring music theory as a metaphor for feeling

As contrast to the popular songs we shall now take a look at a polyphonic courtly song, in which love distress is expressed with the help of terms from music theory, and where the music tries to follow suit. The song is in a chansonnier in The Royal Library, Copenhagen, in the manuscript *Thott 291 8°* (hereafter “Copenhagen”). It is the smallest and possibly also the youngest member of a group of famous manuscripts that offers a fascinating picture of the expressive richness of the French chanson during the second part of the fifteenth century. Knud Jeppesen’s edition and discussion of the repertory of the manuscript in *Der Kopenhagener Chansonnier* from 1927<sup>39</sup> was decisive in recognizing the importance of this group of manuscripts. For generations of scholars his work came to stand as a model of how to do scholarly editions, and Jeppesen’s discussion of the manuscripts and their origin in the Burgundian court culture apparently influenced the writing of music history to such a degree that the secular music of the period in nearly all modern books is described under some variant of the heading ‘The Burgundian school’.

\*5

The Copenhagen chansonnier is a small parchment manuscript (12 x 17 cm), which originally consisted of 56 folios (and two flyleaves). Eight folios have in the course of time disappeared and with them three complete chansons and parts of six others. On all pages seven staves have been drawn in red ink in one operation. The remaining 48 folios (modern foliation 0-47) contain 33 chansons belonging to the original repertory of the manuscript (31 three-part and two four-part) entered in choirbook layout. As often seen, the scribe has left a number of pages blank at the end of the volume for a future owner’s own additions. The music hand is characteristic slim, tall and pointed, while the text is written in a careful, easy readable and quite upright *bâtarde* hand (see Ill. 4 and 5). The original repertory is adorned by illuminated initials, which the music scribe had left room for. In superius the first letter in the text is painted, while it in the lower voices is the voice designations – we find many variations of “T” and “C” in small drawings. The letters are made into grotesque figures, in which we meet imaginary beings such as dragons, there are knights and ladies, clerics, fairies, monkeys, birds, foxes, wild boars, butterflies and lots of snails. The colouring using all primary colours and gold is subtle and detailed.<sup>40</sup>

The manuscript does not convey any composer ascriptions, but with the help of other sources we can identify songs by Antoine Busnoys (5), Convert (3), Jehan Delahaye (2), Robert Morton (2), Johannes Ockeghem (2), Philippe Basiron (1), Hayne van Ghizeghem (1), Michelet (1), Jean Molinet (1), Symon Le Breton (1) and in addition 11 songs, which appear as anonymous in other manuscripts. To this repertory of mostly rondeaux and bergerettes later hands have added first a very early three-part version of Claudin de Sermisy’s “J’actens secours” (c. 1520)<sup>41</sup> and, dating from the late sixteenth century, a series of four-part recitation formulas, “primi-octavi toni”, “1<sup>er</sup> Litanie”, “Autre litanie” and “De profundis”.

The other manuscripts in the group of related sources are Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Dept. de la Mus., Rés. VmC Ms 57 (call name “Chansonnier Nivelles de La Chaussée” or

39 Munksgaard, København & Leipzig 1927; reissued with a new preface by Broude Brothers, New York 1965.

40 An online facsimile of the MS can be found at <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/702/dan/0+recto>.

41 Published and discussed in Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. I, p. 247.

\*6 just “Nivelles”), Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav. (“Wolfenbüttel Chansonnier”), Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517 (“Dijon”) and Washington D.C., Library of Congress, M2.1 L25 Case (“Laborde Chansonnier”). The five manuscripts are similar in design and format, even if they vary considerably in size, and their repertoires share many songs. They clearly belong within the same cultural circles. The scribe of the Dijon chansonier (the so-called “Dijon scribe”) was responsible for not only his own, big chansonier project, but for parts of the Laborde chansonier and all of the smaller Copenhagen chansonier. The grotesque miniature paintings in Copenhagen and in Wolfenbüttel may have been executed in ateliers not far from each other. In terms of dating, they may all have been produced during a decade stretching from the late 1460s into the 1470s, some finished quickly, others (Dijon and Laborde) only after a protracted process.

As mentioned, Knud Jeppesen’s discussion of the manuscripts and their repertory has been a fixed point in the research through generations. New editions of chansons have appeared and a wealth of details has been revealed. It was not until the mid 1980s that a new perception of the group of chansonniers began to gain traction. Without discarding Jeppesen’s ‘Burgundian’ viewpoint Martella Gutiérrez-Denhoff showed in her dissertation from 1985 on the Wolfenbüttel chansonier that its miniature paintings and the corresponding ones in the Copenhagen chansonier might be executed in ateliers in Nantes, Angers or Bourges.<sup>42</sup> A re-evaluation of the whole complex only came about when Paula Higgins in her dissertation on Antoine Busnoys from 1987 was able to show convincingly that the family of sources originated in the Loire valley, in an area comprising the royal seats of residence in Tours and Bourges and Charles d’Orléans’ residences in Blois and Orléans. This was discussed in a long chapter whose heading does not try to hide its polemical sting: ‘Music in the Loire Valley in the 1460s, Or: The Myth of the Burgundian-Netherlandish Schools.’<sup>43</sup> Hereby the sources were moved to the centre of French court culture, to the milieu where Ockeghem and Busnoys worked (Tours, Bourges and Paris) and near the poetical circles around the court of Charles d’Orléans in Blois, where also François Villon was a visitor. Latest Higgins’ interpretation was confirmed by David Fallows’ demonstration that the Wolfenbüttel chansonier in the same manner as the Bayeux MS announces the name of its receiver (or orderer). The 12 songs first entered form the name “Estiene Petit”. This person was most probably a courtier from Montpellier who in 1467 achieved an important position at the court of Louis XI as *notaire et secrétaire*. He succeeded his father of the same name and followed in his footsteps in Paris and Bourges.<sup>44</sup> Wolfenbüttel chansonier may have been a valuable gift for this occasion.

Towards the end of Copenhagen chansonier, on ff. 33<sup>v</sup>-35, we find a highly unusual chanson, the anonymous no. 29, “La plus bruiant”, also found without composer attribution

42 Martella Gutiérrez-Denhoff, *Der Wolfenbütteler Chansonier*. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav. *Untersuchungen zu Repertoire und Überlieferung einer Musikhandschrift des 15. Jahrhunderts und ihres Umkreises* (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 29), Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 20-21. She further published the edition *Der Wolfenbütteler Chansonier*. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav. (Musikalischer Denkmäler X), Mainz 1988.

43 Paula Higgins, *Antoine Busnoys and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century France and Burgundy*, Diss. Princeton 1987, pp. 210-308.

44 David Fallows, ‘»Trained and immersed in all musical delights«: Towards a New Picture of Busnoys’ in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, Oxford 1999, pp. 21-50 (at pp. 38-43).

in the Dijon chansonnier (ff. 71<sup>v</sup>-73). Actually, all the chansons in the last part of the manuscript are unusual – one can just mention Busnoys’ “Ja que li ne” (no. 32) or Ockeghem’s canon “Prenez sur moy” (no. 33). In *Example 3* the text is distributed as it might be sung by the three voices, and in that form it can be difficult to survey. Set up as a virelai with one stanza only (this form is in the artful poetry of the fifteenth century often called “bergerette”) together with an attempt at a translation, it looks like this:

La plus bruiant, celle qui toutes passe,  
a qui du tout mon amour est conjointe,  
chanter me fault d’une faincte conjointe,  
muant nature en becarré la basse.

Je soupire et pleure souvent  
en grief tourment est ma demeure.

Mon cueur noir come meure se sent  
piteusement fault que je meure.

J’ay ma rigle changee d’autre espace,  
ma haulte game est en estrange jointe  
pour grief douleur faindre qui m’est jointe  
pour la durté qui me fait je trespasse.

La plus bruiant, *celle qui toutes passe,*  
*a qui du tout mon amour est conjointe,*  
*chanter me fault d’une faincte conjointe,*  
*muant nature en becarré la basse.*

The most dazzling, surpassing everyone,  
with whom my love is utterly conjoined,  
I must sing of her in a false conjunction  
lowering the natural B-quadratum.

I often sigh and cry  
dwelling in grim torment.

My heart feels black as mulberry,  
piteously I have to die.

I have moved my scale into another range;  
my high hexachord is joined to a foreign one  
to feign the grievous dolour, to which I am enjoined,  
for the harshness, which causes me to die.

The most dazzling, surpassing everyone,  
with whom my love is utterly conjoined,  
I must sing of her in a false conjunction  
lowering the natural B-quadratum.

The love complaint spices its conventional poetic language with musical terms. Such a procedure is not unusual. We find it for example in four rondeaux by Charles d’Orléans.<sup>45</sup> However, while Charles with great precision uses a few terms as metaphors, this poet amasses them in order to say the same things over and over in slightly varied ways. Already in line 3 a tautology turns up, as “conjointe”, a *rime equivoquée* which in line 2 meant “joined to”, here must be understood as “coniuncta”, that is, a hexachord on a scale degree different from the three commonly used, which by mutation is joined to the Guidonian hand and consequently is fictional – it belongs to *musica ficta*. This clear statement is in line 3 intensified by the word “faincte”, which means “feigned” or again “fictional”.<sup>46</sup> This points out the theme of the song: It is about singing in fictional hexachords. The meaning of the last line in the refrain is not very clear; I shall return to that.

45 Cf. Charles d’Orléans (ed. Pierre Chanpion), *Poésies*, Paris 1923-24, rondeau nos. 34, 317, 404 and 422.

46 A concise introduction to the solmization system can be found in Rob C. Wegman’s chapter “Musica ficta” in Tess Knighton & David Fallows (eds.), *Companion to medieval and renaissance music*, London 1992, pp. 265-274; see further Karol Berger, *Musica ficta. Theories of Accidental Inflections in Vocal Polyphony from Marchetto da Padova to Gioseffo Zarlino*, Cambridge 1987.

Ex. 3, Copenhagen chansonnier no. 29 "La plus bruiant".<sup>47</sup>

[Superius] Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

1.4. La plus brui - ant, cel - le qui tou - tes pas - se,  
 3. J'ay ma rig - le chan - ge - e d'au - tre\_es - pa - ce,

Tenor

1.4. La plus brui - ant, cel - le qui tou - tes pas - se,  
 3. J'ay ma rig - le change - e d'au - tre\_es - pa - ce,

Contratenor

1.4. La plus brui - ant, cel - le qui tou - tes pas - se,  
 3. J'ay ma rig - le chan - ge - e d'au - tre\_es - pa - ce,

6

a qui du tout mon a-mour est con -  
 ma haul - te game est en es - tran - ge joinc -

a qui du tout mon a-mour est con -  
 ma haul - te game est en es - tran - ge joinc -

a qui du tout mon a-mour est con -  
 ma haul - te ga - me\_est en es - tran -

11

joinc - te, chan - ter me fault d'u-ne fainc -  
 te pour grief dou - leur leur fain - dre

joinc - te, chan - ter me fault d'u - ne fainc -  
 te pour grief dou - leur fain - dre

joinc - te, chan - ter me fault d'u - ne fainc -  
 ge joinc - te pour grief dou - leur fain - dre

17

te con - joinc - te, mu - ant na - tu - re\_en  
 qui m'est joinc - te pour la dur - té qui

te con - joinc - te, mu - ant na - tu - re\_en  
 qui m'est joinc - te pour la dur - té qui

te con - joinc - te, mu - ant na - tu - re\_en  
 qui m'est joinc - te pour la dur - té qui

47 The Royal Library, Copenhagen, *MS Thott 291 8°*, ff. 33<sup>v</sup>-35; also in Dijon ff. 71<sup>v</sup>-73. Signatures in Dijon differ a little from Copenhagen: In superius flats (*b'* and *f''*) in the first staves of each section only (bb. 1-5 and 30-51), and tenor has flats before *b* and *e'* in the first section (bb. 1-29). *Superius*: Bars 57-64 are in Copenhagen (and in Dijon) notated a third too low. *Tenor*: Bar 5.1 has in Copenhagen a flat before *b'* (not in Dijon); bar 6.2-3 is in Dijon a *minima*, a *semibrevis* rest and a *minima*; bar 9.1-2 is in Dijon two *minimae* and a *semibrevis*. *Contratenor*: Bar 8.3, the last note is in Copenhagen and Dijon a *semibrevis*; bar 60 is in Copenhagen and Dijon *e-flat* and *f* respectively (errors).

The braying of the ass and singing through tears

23

be - car ré la bas - - - - - se.  
me fait je tres - pas - - - - - se.

30

Mensura =

2a. Je sou - pi - re\_et pleu - re  
2b. Mon cueur noir come meu - re

38

sou - vent en grief tour - ment  
se sent pi - teu - se - ment

47

est fault ma que de - - - - - meu - re.  
est fault ma que de je meu - re.

55

(-re)

After the description of deathly sorrow in the two short couplets (lines 5-8), the *tierce* begins by declaring “J’ay ma rigne changee d’autre espace” (line 9). The rule, the scale, or just his usual singing has been moved into another space or range. It may allude to transposition or again at changes brought about by *musica ficta*. “Ma haulte game” (line 10), strictly “my high scale”, must also be interpreted as referring to a hexachord because the expression is found in rondeau no. 317 by Charles d’Orléans, and he unambiguously defines it as referring to a hexachord: “Trop entré en la haulte game, / Mon cuer, d’ut, ré, mi, fa, sol, la”.<sup>48</sup> The hexachord is again joined to something foreign, fictive, “est en estrange jointe”, all to imitate or feign (“faindre”) the “grief douleur”, which is nearly killing the poet. Charles d’Orléans also lets us hear agonies of love resound in *musica ficta* “musique notee par fainte”: “Chiere contrefaite de cuer, / De vert perdu et tanné painte, / Musique notee par Fainte, / Avec faulx bourdon de Maleur!”<sup>49</sup>

Line 4 heaps up musical terms for a striking ending to the refrain and thereby to the whole poem: “Muant” = “mutating”, “nature en becarré” = “*hexachordum naturale* to *hexachordum durum*”, “la basse” = “the bass”. The line lacks a preposition. The meaning may be “becarré [a] la basse”, which, however, gives the line a syllable too many, so either “a” is implied or the line should be emended to “becarré a basse”. We can find a parallel – less courtly elevated – of using words like “nature” and “becarré” in poems in the popular play *Sottie des sotz triumphans qui trompent chascun* (printed in Paris in the first decades of the sixteenth century) whose opening monologue rattle up “Sotz triumphans, sotz bruyantz, sotz parfaictz, sotz glorieulx, sotz sursotz autentiques ...”, and in line 10 gets to “Sotz de bemol, de becarre et nature”.<sup>50</sup> The nearest translation of this line is “Fools in every hexachord” or “fools in *hexachordum molle, durum* and *naturale*”. The juxtaposition of precisely these three terms does not permit any other interpretation. The hexachord interpretation of line 4 then must be that the poet mutates his song from *naturale* into *durum* by lowering the notes – that is again by the use of *musica ficta*. In my translation this is paraphrased as lowering B-quadratum, which “becarré” indeed also stands for.

Knud Jeppesen and Edward E. Lowinsky have commented on the special relationship between text and music in this song. They both took the obscure line 4 as their starting point. Jeppesen interpreted the line as an instruction to mutate from *cantus naturalis* into *duralis* in low position. But with support from Adam von Fulda’s tract *De musica* from 1490 he thought that the poet’s statement did not speak about hexachords and *musica ficta*, but rather about the three predominant modes, the major ones on *ut* and *fa*, the minor on *re* and *sol*, and the Phrygian on *mi* and *la*. Therefore the line implies a Phrygian colouring of the Dorian mode caused by the E-flat.<sup>51</sup> Lowinsky disagreed strongly and

48 Charles d’Orléans, *Poésies*, p. 473.

49 *Ibid.* p. 525, Rondeau 404.

50 Published in E. Droz & H. Lewicka (eds.), *Le Recueil Trepperel*, Vol. I, p. 35.

51 Jeppesen, *Der Kopenhagener Chansonier*, p. LXI: “Der verzweifelte Liebhaber, der seine Dame zu besingen hat, kann es nur in Trauertone vollbringen indem er zu einer ‘faincte conjointe’ Zuflucht nimmt, und dadurch von *nature* (cantus naturalis) zum *becarre la basse* (d. h. eine tiefe Lage des cantus duralis) mutiert: [quotes lines 1-4]. Dass es sich hier nicht um eine blosse Solmisationsangelegenheit dreht, geht daraus hervor, dass die Mutation aus dem C-Hexachord in den G-Hexachord nicht mit der *musica ficta* zu tun haben kann. Fasst man aber dagegen die Stelle im Sinne der oben gegebenen Interpretation von der Lehre Adams [pp. LIX-LX] auf, wird die Meinung auf einmal klar, denn in diesem Falle wird damit ausgedrückt, dass der singende Liebhaber die dorische oder mixolydische Tonart durch ein Verzeihen in die phrygische oder aeolische ändert. Vielleicht ist hiermit speziell an die dorische Tonart gedacht, die durch be in die phrygische übergeht. Ansichten wie Glareans über den weinerlichen Charakter dieser

turned the meaning of the line upside-down with the translation “Changing to high notes nature’s low hexachord”.<sup>52</sup> His reasons were in the first place that *hexachordum naturale* is placed lower on Guido’s hand than *durum*, and secondly that the superius at “becarré la basse” sings the so far highest passage in the song (bb. 25-29). Therefore he suggested to link “muant nature” with “la basse” because a passage just before uses *hexachordum naturale* in low position (bb. 19-20, which must be solmized as *la, sol, fa, mi*). Before and after *hexachordum molle* is used, and in bar 25 the *hexachordum durum* comes into full flowering with a sharp (natural sign) before *b'* – becarré!<sup>53</sup>

Both highly esteemed scholars allowed themselves to disregard part of what the sources in fact tell us in order to get a difficult point under control, because then “wird die Meinung auf einmal klar” and “everything falls into place”. It is a bit difficult to approve, even if elements of their contradictory interpretations do offer important insights. Jeppesen was probably right in his description of a mutation to a hexachord in low position, and that it by its tonal colouring effect has a modal significance. At the same time, Lowinsky’s calling attention to the correlation between the wording of the text and the shape of the superius’ vocal line in bars 17-29 has a touch of the obvious. The important thing is then to find an explanation, which is able to accommodate and reconcile the contradictory interpretations.

A problem, which has to be sorted out, is that Jeppesen as well as Lowinsky assumed that the superius in the Copenhagen chansonnier has a key signature of two flats inflecting *b'* and *e''*. This is not the case. The higher flat is very carefully written on the staff’s uppermost line (see Ill. 4). This flat alerts the singer that the song moves outside the Guidonian hand and employs a fictional hexachord based on *c''*, in which the note *f''* has to be solmized as “fa”, and consequently *e''* is “mi”.

Tonart scheinen hierdurch auch andererseits geäussert.”

- 52 Edward E. Lowinsky, ‘Foreword’ in H. Colin Slim (ed.), *Musica nova accommodata per cantar et sonar sopra organi; et altri strumenti, composta per diversi eccellentissimi musici. In Venetia, MDXL* (Monuments of Renaissance Music I), Chicago 1964, pp. v-xxi (at p. xii).
- 53 *Ibid.* pp. xviii-xix: “Jeppesen interpreted this [line 4] as a mutation from the *cantus naturalis* to a low position of the *cantus duralis*. The difficulty with this interpretation is twofold: 1) the natural hexachord, in the context of this composition, is the lowest of the three, the hard one is the highest; 2) the composer sets the words *en becarre la basse* to a high passage in the soprano, changing from the treble clef on the second to one on the first line to facilitate ascent of the melody to G”, the highest note of the whole chanson.

I propose that we construe *la basse* as belonging to *nature* although, with poetic licence, it is placed after *becarre*. As soon as we interpret the passage in this fashion, everything falls into place and the musical setting at once makes sense. The phrase preceding the words *muant nature* has to be solmized in this manner: [music example; cf the main text above] In other words, the composer changed from *hexachordum molle* to *hexachordum naturale*. Now, *muant nature*, he must change from the *hexachordum naturale* to a higher position requiring B-natural and indeed in measure 25, to insure the *becarre*, he inserts a sharp, which, in the usage of the time, stands also for a natural sign. The flat before B in the superius in measure 22 is surely notated so as to emphasize the change to B-natural. The poet-composer is careful not to speak of a change from the natural to the hard hexachord, but only from the low natural to *becarre*. The accompanying music, for a fleeting moment of three to four tones, requires a solmization in the *hexachordum durum*, but it executes the demands of the text in employing the use of B-natural and in changing from low to high.” Later (p. xx) Lowinsky mentions Jeppesen’s reference to the Phrygian colouring by accidentals and remarks that “much more is involved than a mutation from the natural to the hard hexachord. We need hexachords on F, B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, and, in measures 24-25, soprano, for a moment the hexachord on G.”



Ill. 4, Copenhagen chansonnier f. 33<sup>v</sup> (upper left corner)

This is, however, the only example in the Copenhagen chansonnier where the superius has a signature of more than one flat. It could be a writing error. The use of signatures in the superius with an extra flat added to the one inflecting *b'* is rare in this group of MSS, but it can be found: In the Dijon chansonnier, which was made by the scribe who wrote all of the Copenhagen chansonnier, we find “La plus bruian” (ff. 71<sup>v</sup>-73) with flats on *b'* and *f''* positions at the beginnings of the song’s two sections. In three further instances we find such an extra flat, all of them before *f''*, which have to be read as “fa” instructions for parts in G-clefs.<sup>54</sup> Final confirmation of this practice can be found by looking through the Nivelles chansonnier. It also contains four chansons with a flat before *f''* in high upper parts notated in G-clefs. In all instances, they are instructions to perform *e''* as “mi” and not inflect the note – the lower voices normally have a signature of one flat.<sup>55</sup>

This practice has to be regarded as relatively common in the environment in which these manuscripts belong as an important and understandable instruction to the singer, just like it was in earlier as well as later musical sources (including Petrucci’s prints). Reading the signature as a common two flat key signature transformed “La plus bruian” in Jeppesen’s transcription into a song in C-Dorian with some Phrygian colouring of the upper voice’s cadences on D, while Lowinsky in his transcription introduced so many accidentals that the song is close to c-minor.<sup>56</sup> The two scholars’ lifelong work on sixteenth century music apparently had weakened their feeling for the special character of this song.

\*7

- 54 Dijon ff. 127<sup>v</sup>-128 the unique “J’ay prins deux pous” indicates a flat before *f''* at the start of the upper voice; they can furthermore be understood as a warning not to sing *e-flat* anywhere in the opening, which contains for two *breves* an A major sound (including a notated *c#*) in bars 3-4. Dijon ff. 156<sup>v</sup>-157 “A qui vens tu” by Busnoys has flats before *b'* and *f''* in the two first staves of the upper voice – again a reminder that the Dorian mode uses *e*. Dijon f. 97<sup>v</sup>-98 “L’omme banny” by Barbingant demonstrates something completely different. This song is notated without any use of clefs in the three voices, only with hexachordal signs, flats in *b* and *f* positions (*fa-fa*) to indicate the placements of the voices. This shows a use of hexachordal signatures, which can be compared with the enigmatic notation of Ockeghem’s famous canon “Prenez sur moy” in Copenhagen f. 39<sup>v</sup>. The scribe did not understand this notation and botched the placement of the flats in the superius in Barbingant’s song (put them in *a'* and *e''* positions), which makes the notation difficult to understand. Leeman L. Perkins did not solve it in his edition, cf. Leeman L. Perkins and H. Garey (eds.), *The Mellon Chansonnier I-II*, New Haven 1979, vol. I, p. 97 and vol. II, pp. 285 ff).
- 55 Nivelles ff. 21<sup>v</sup>-22 “A quoy tient il” (unique rondeau), ff. 29<sup>v</sup>-30 “Puisqu’aultrement ne puis” (unique rondeau by Delahaye), ff. 32<sup>v</sup>-33 “Comment suis je” (rondeau by Delahaye; also found in Copenhagen ff. 0<sup>v</sup>-1 and in Dijon ff. 60<sup>v</sup>-61 *without* any signature in the upper voice), ff. 44<sup>v</sup>-46 “En tous les lieux” (a four-part bergette, which in Dijon ff. 83<sup>v</sup>-85 is ascribed to Busnoys and *without* this flat).
- 56 Jeppesen, *Der Kopenhagener Chansonnier*, pp. 54-55; Lowinsky, ‘Foreword’, pp. xiv-xvii.

“La plus bruiant” is in many ways peculiar. What is *not* unusual, is that its voices are supplied with different signatures. It is quite common that one or more lower voices, whose range in general is placed a fifth lower than the highest voice, have a flat more in order to prevent diminished concords. *Unusual*, on the other hand, is the high tessitura of the song. Superius and tenor each has a range of an octave plus a fourth and reaches  $g''$  and  $b\text{-flat}'$  respectively. As the contratenor too lies quite high, there could be reason to think that the song has been transposed up a fourth. Down a fourth, we see a song in comfortable, for its time absolutely ordinary ranges ( $a\text{-}d''$ ,  $c\text{-}f'$ ,  $F\text{-}a$ ) with only one flat in the contratenor, which signals that the part moves below the Guidonian Hand and uses *hexachordum molle* on  $F$ . The transposition away from a normal tessitura could very well be “Jay ma rigne changee d'autre espace”, exactly what the poet describes.

The song can be transposed, but *musica recta* cannot. Hexachords on any other degree than C, F and G remain *ficta* or “faincte conjointe”. In “La plus bruiant” the flat before  $f''$  in superius creates an expectation that hexachords on  $c''$  will sound. However, superius has for long stretches been fashioned consciously with a view to enforce an inflection of  $e''$  into  $e\text{-flat}''$ , either in order to avoid cross-relations or illegal intervals in relation to the other voices (bb. 3, 7, 58, 59), by virtue of imitation of a poignant phrase (b. 38), or by repeated, exposed leaps of a fourth up from  $b\text{-flat}'$  (bb. 12-13, 23-24, 48-49, 50). Every time the expected hexachord on  $c''$  is transformed into a hexachord on  $b\text{-flat}'$  – “ma haulte game est en estrange jointe”. Again exactly what the poet says.

Modally the chanson is in transposed Mixolydian. This is proclaimed by the tenor's final phrase, which in bars 24-28 goes up and down through most of the authentic scale ( $c - b'\text{-flat}$ ). But the characteristic major third of this mode is most of the time suppressed by *musica ficta*, and as a result the setting adopts a Dorian colouring. This may be what the ambiguous line 4 hints at – close to the interpretation by Knud Jeppesen. I am more inclined to think that “muant nature en becarré la basse” is just another way of paraphrasing the use of fictional hexachords. Lowinsky had a point in connecting the solmization of the phrases in superius to the words. His description can be modified as follows:

Bars 19-20 must be solmized in *hexachordum naturale*, bars 21-23 go in *hexachordum molle* with bar 24 mutating into a ‘high’ *hexachordum naturale*, which however – forced by the surrounding music – has to be lowered into a fictional hexachord on  $b\text{-flat}'$  (“muant nature ... a basse”), and finally in bar 25 *hexachordum durum* enters (“en becarré”) alternating with *naturale* until the end of the song. One cannot avoid the feeling that music and text were created concurrently as the ideas popped up, and that the *tierce* was added as an explanation of the not quite evident last line of the refrain.

Testing the offered interpretation of the relations between the elements of music theory in the text and the music, we can try to estimate if the interpretation describes relations, which can be heard in performance. Several of the points that I have brought to attention must be characterized as ‘music for reading’: The high tessitura may be normalized in performance (transposing down the song), and the modal profile designed by the flat before the high  $f''$  is nearly everywhere dispelled by *musica ficta* and was anyway primarily intended for the informed reader. All in all, the sharp distinction between *recta* and *ficta* was a pedagogical intellectual construction, which cannot be heard – certainly not in a transposed performance. What we can experience by hearing is the song's unusual tonal changeability. A C-Dorian tonal space with a minor third is established during the first lines of text, which turns towards F in bars 14-17, a Phrygian cadence on D is hinted

at in the following bars, but the final words in line 3 “d’une faincte conjointe” slide into an unstable imperfect concord in bar 20 (*c / c'-g / e''*). The final phrase starts again in C-Dorian, then suddenly rises and cadences in a luminous C-Mixolydian. This is a striking illustration of the poem’s emphasizing of the fictional – and it is clearly audible.

In a bergrette the two half-stanzas (couplets) often have to form a contrast with the refrain. These lines are in “La plus bruiant” quite conventionally about the lover’s heart, which “feels black as mulberry”. In addition to the rhythmical contrast created by the introduction of *tempus imperfectum diminutum*, the setting tonally proceeds in a direction opposite to the refrain: From Mixolydian major third and “becarré” (b. 35) it changes to a sound characterized by minor thirds in the imitation between tenor and superius on “souvent en grief tourment” (bb. 36 f) – remark the tenor’s notated and heartfelt *a-flat* in bar 40. Before the repetition sign tenor and superius cadence Phrygian on D, which, however, turns into a major triad upon *g* (bb. 53-54). To the words “est ma demeure” the superius sings the almost thematic leap up a fourth *b'-flat - e''-flat* twice! After the two couplets follows a highly unusual passage, which leads back to the refrain. It moves again to the highest range and re-establishes C-Dorian. The use of coloration in superius demonstrates the composer’s theoretical ambitions also in matters of rhythm. I shall return to that.

First we have to take a look at the song in the Dijon chansonnier. As it appears from the editorial report below *Example 3*, the two copies were made by the same scribe using the same exemplar a few years apart. In his first copy in Dijon the scribe seems to be slightly mystified. He added in the tenor’s signature a flat before *e'*, probably because it to him seemed to be necessary nearly all the way through. By this he obscured some of the tension characteristic of the song’s sound. It was – and is – difficult to get the lines of the couplets to fit the music. Maybe the scribe here tried to expand the short text lines in the couplets. An extra line has been inserted – placed in such a way that it looks as if it belongs to both couplets – and by repeating or adding a word at the start of the second line in each couplet, which makes the lines irregular:

Je soupire et pleure souvent,  
a ma chante pleure  
Souvent en grief tourment est ma demeure.

Mon cueur noir come meure se sant  
a ma chante pleure  
Content piteusement fault que je meure.

\*8 “A ma chante pleure” is an interesting addition. Maybe the poem’s use of musical terms did create an association to the poet and duke Charles d’Orléans. His beloved mother, Valentina Visconti, after being widowed, when Louis d’Orléans was murdered in 1407, took as her emblem a picture of a chantepleure, a sort of watering can pouring out big tears; as device she chose “Nil mihi praeterea, praeterea nihil mihi” or in French “Rien ne m’est plus, plus ne m’est rien”. This expression of faithful love to her dead husband became of great symbolic importance in a time when dynastic marriages of convenience were the norm among the nobility, and it was imitated and remembered for generations.<sup>57</sup> It is

57 Enid McLeod, *Charles of Orleans. Prince and Poet*, New York 1969, p. 50; opposite p. 44 is a picture of a chantepleure.

exactly this feeling of desolation, which “La plus bruiant” tries to express in words and music, so the addition is well chosen, even if Copenhagen chansonnier probably transmits the correct version of the poem.

However, “A ma chante pleure” does not need to have such courtly associations. *Chante-pleure* can also be a song or a dance, or both. In the farce *Bien avisé, mal avisé* (printed in Paris around 1500) the personified vices sing and dance “Le chantepleure”, and *Mal avisé* is lectured that the song in the beginning is happy (“commence par liesse”), but ends in tears and sadness (“Il chet en pleur et en tristesse”), for the song is wild and the words even more (“Car le chant en est sauvage / Les motz le sont encore plus”). In other farces and moralities “dancer/chanter la/le chantepleure” is used in similar sense: To drop from happiness into sorrow.<sup>58</sup> This meaning also fits into the tone of “La plus bruiant”.

#### *On brevis equivalence and acceleratio mensurae*

Among other less common features of “La plus bruiant” one could mention disrupted phrases, the ‘angular’ melody with many leaps and its tendency to let the phrases ‘run past the cadences’, which contribute to its troubled, floating nature. But in keeping with the second theme of this study the last comments on this song shall concentrate on the tempo relationship between its two sections.

There is no indication of mensuration at the start of the chanson in either Copenhagen or Dijon. It is not needed, as the mensuration only can be *tempus perfectum* (O). From the beginning the rhythmical interplay between the three voices gives a probably deliberate display of subdivisions of the perfect *brevis*. Superius divides it equally in two perfect *semibreves* (◊◊◊), tenor divides it in three equal parts, three imperfect *semibreves* (◊◊◊), while the contratenor divides it unequally in an imperfect *semibrevis* plus an imperfect *brevis* (◊≡). This sets up a rhythmical stage on which the singers have to re-enter with the *tierce* having performed the two couplets in *tempus imperfectum diminutum* (C). The re-entry is prepared by a short ‘bridge passage’ added to the couplets after the repetition sign – as a sort of *clos* after two times *ouvert*. In this passage the tenor and contratenor move in regular *breves* and *longae*, while the notes in superius are in coloration by which they loose a third of their duration. If we interpret the tempo relation between O and C as strictly proportional, a flawless gradual return to the rhythmical scene of the refrain (and *tierce*) appears. The triplets in superius (bb. 55-62) exactly match the *semibreves* in the tenor in the opening phrase, and the *breves* in tenor and contratenor (bb. 55-62) in the same way correspond to superius’ equal division of the perfect *brevis* (bb. 1-2) – the voices simply exchange roles in the rhythmical setup. How this ‘return’ was performed in practice is hard to know. Maybe the singers vocalised the return on the last syllable of the couplet; a possibility is to omit bar 54 and go directly to bar 55 as a *seconda volta* – and it might also be considered to sing here the words “a ma chante pleure”.

58 Cf. Howard Mayer Brown, *Music in the French Secular Theater. 1400-1550*, Cam. Mass. 1963, pp. 164-166, which includes a longer excerpt of *Mal avisé*. In modern French “la chantepleure” stands for a sort of bung for wine barrels with several holes to get out the last drops of wine from the barrel. From this a lot of words is derived in the wine industry (even as names for orders). The word is also identified with this meaning in *Dictionnaire de L’Académie française* from 1694.

This interpretation of the tempo relation between the two sections of the bergerette is the only one making sense, and it presupposes equivalence between *breves* in O and *breves* in *tempus imperfectum* (C) resulting in a 4:3 relation between C and O:

$$\begin{aligned} O \equiv &= C \equiv = \text{C} \equiv \equiv \\ O \diamond \diamond \diamond &= C \diamond \diamond = \text{C} \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{aligned}$$

With this we touch a prolonged discussion of the relations between mensuration signs involving proportions (most common is *proportio dupla* indicated by a stroke though the sign – ‘cut signatures’), when the signs do not occur simultaneously in different voices, but follow each other at the beginnings of sections. By simultaneous occurrence there is no doubt about their strictly proportional relation (a stroke effects a reduction 2:1). If a proportional interpretation of tempo relations is acceptable, the next question must be: On which basis should the proportion to be calculated? The French tradition going back to *ars nova* prescribes equivalence on the *minima* level, which results in a 2:1 relation (here shown in *semibrevis* values):

$$O \diamond = C \diamond = \text{C} \diamond \diamond$$

This will for very many compositions lead to that either the section in O must be performed in an uncomfortable slow tempo or the C section unrealistic fast. For the majority of music theorists including Bartolomeo Ramos de Pareja and Giovanni Spataro the solution was to insist on *brevis* equivalence. Johannes Tinctoris and Franchinus Gaffurius, on the other hand, adhered to *minima* equivalence. However, in the opinion of Tinctoris proportional signs should not be used at all as indication of mensuration. They do not make sense, as proportions must be in a relation to a given mensuration and ought to be expressed by exact numerical ratios. He sees the cut signs as indications of *acceleratio mensurae*, an increase in the tempo of the beats.

In “La plus bruiant” the treatment of dissonances in bars 43-44 and 51-52 makes it evident that the beat (*mensura*) has changed from being on *semibreves* (◇) in the first section to *breves* (≡) in the second section. This supports the proportional interpretation, which produces the 4:3 tempo relation presumed by the triplets in coloration. This treatment of dissonances may, however, according to Tinctoris’ point of view as well justify a strong acceleration in the second section of the equivalent *minimae*. So also by this route, one easily reach the same 4:3 relation between the sections.

By this simplified look at an extended and complex discussion, which played out in the generations after the middle of the 15th century, and which has been even more animated during recent decades,<sup>59</sup> I wish to draw attention to the bergerette “La plus bruiant” as one of the very few pieces of music, which so clearly support a certain music theoretical

59 For an overview of the 15th and 16th century theoretical positions and the modern literature, see Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Mensuration and Proportion Signs. Origins and Evolution*, Oxford 1993. In her conclusions Berger supports the position of the ‘proportionalists’ and the *brevis* equivalence. This has stirred up some debate, and the case of the ‘proportionalists’ seems now to loose ground. For an overview of newer contributions and a report on Tinctoris’ view, see Alexander Blachly, ‘Reading Tinctoris for Guidance on Tempo’ in Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context*, pp. 399-427. Systematic examinations of what musicians actually did, can be found in a series of articles by Margaret Bent, for example ‘The use of cut signatures in sacred music by Ockeghem and his contemporaries’ in Vendrix (ed.), *Johannes Ockeghem*, pp. 641-680, and ‘The Use of Cut Signatures in Sacred Music by Binchois’ in Andrew Kirkman & Dennis Slavin (eds.), *Binchois Studies*, Oxford 2000, pp. 277-312.

position. The really knowable author has placed within the music a key to the understanding of the tempo relations of the two sections. That the here prescribed relation between O and C in particular fits the bergerettes, which were in fashion during the 1460s and 70s, and where the O-C sequence was common, may tell us that the author was more concerned about adhering to a genre convention than participating in a theoretical discussion.

*Another 'courtly' chanson*

As mentioned earlier there is a not inconsiderable element of 'music for reading' in "La plus bruïant". The knowledgeable reader browsing the small, intimate and beautifully made manuscript has to admire the refinement and the manifold connotations put into these pages – and his own cleverness and comprehension. This must be the situation imagined by the compiler of the manuscript, by the scribe and the painter, and not least by the person who ordered and paid for the work. As a gift the manuscript was at the same time a tribute to the receiver's taste and musical intelligence. Were the songs to be performed, the singers had to learn it by heart or to read from copies in another format made by one of the household's musicians. So much erudition is bound up with "La plus bruïant" – maybe to such a degree that the music not really gets off the ground – and it becomes interesting to know what is on the next opening. The compiler evidently had some fun when he decided on "Sur mon ame" as the next.

Copenhagen chansonnier no. 30 "Sur mon ame, m'amy" is also found in one more source, in the Dijon chansonnier (ff. 35<sup>v</sup>-36) like the preceding one, and it too is anonymous in both sources. Likewise it was copied by the same scribe after the same exemplar without errors. Copenhagen is a bit more exact in its placement of the text lines. The poem is a rondeau with five lines in its refrain, a *rondeau cinquain*:

Sur mon ame, m'amy,  
je ne sçay nulle vie  
qui tant face a amer  
que vous; a brief parler:  
Qui veult, s'en ait emvie.

Car qui a tel partie,  
il a plus que partie  
de ce qu'il veult penser.

Sur mon ame, m'amy,  
je ne sçay nulle vie  
qui tant face a amer.

De riens ne se soussie  
fors faire chiere lie  
et esbatre et jouer;  
pour vous tel temps mener  
vueil je plus qu'a soussie.

Sur mon ame, m'amy,  
je ne sçay nulle vie  
qui tant face a amer  
que vous; a brief parler:  
Qui veult, s'en ait emvie.

By my soul, my girlfriend,  
I don't know any other being  
more worthy of loving  
than you; in short:  
Who wants to, may be envious.

For he who has such a match  
has more than part  
of what he might wish for.

By my soul, my girlfriend,  
I don't know any other being  
more worthy of loving.

He worries about nothing  
but to enjoy life  
and have fun and revel.  
For you, I want to live such a life  
rather than in worry.

By my soul, my girlfriend,  
I don't know any other being  
more worthy of loving  
than you; in short:  
Who wants to, may be envious.

Ex. 4, Copenhagen chansonnier no. 30 "Sur mon ame"<sup>60</sup>

[Superius] Mensura = 

Tenor

Contratenor

1.4. Sur mon a - me, m'a - my - e, m'a - my -  
3. De riens ne se sous - si - e, sous - si -

10  
me, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -  
se sous - si - e e fors fai - re chie - re li - - - -  
e, je ne sçay nul - le vi - - - -  
e fors fai - re chie - re li - - - -  
e, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi - - - -  
e, sous - si - e, fors fai - re chie - re li - - - -

21  
e qui tant fa - - - ce\_a a - - -  
e et es - ba - - - tre\_et jou - - - -  
e qui tant fa - - - ce\_a a - - -  
e et es - ba - - - tre\_et jou - - - -  
e qui tant fa - - - ce\_a a - - -  
e et es - ba - - - tre\_et jou -

31  
mer que vous; a brief par - ler:  
er; pour vous tel temps me - ner  
mer que vous; a brief par - ler:  
er; pour vous tel temps me - ner  
mer que vous; a brief par - ler:  
er; pour vous tel temps me - ner

60 The royal Library, Copenhagen, MS Thott 291 8°, ff. 35<sup>v</sup>-36; also in Dijon ff. 58<sup>v</sup>-59. Superius, bar 53 is in Dijon a *semibrevis*, a *semibrevis* rest and a *semibrevis*.

*The braying of the ass and singing through tears*

42

Qui veut, s'en ait plus qu'a

Qui veut, s'en ait plus qu'a

Qui veut, s'en ait plus qu'a

50

em - vi - - - - - e.  
sous - si - - - - - e.

em - vi - - - - - e.  
sous - si - - - - - e.

ait  
qu'a em - vi - - - - - e.  
sous - si - - - - - e.

2a. Car  
2b. Sur

qui a - tel par - ti - e, par - ti - e

mon a - me, m'a - my - e, m'a - my -

tel par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -  
 me, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -  
 e, il a plus que par - ti -  
 e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -  
 e, par - ti - e, il a plus que par - ti -  
 e, m'a - my - e, je ne sçay nul - le vi -

21

e de ce qu'il veult pen ser.  
e qui tant fa ce\_a a mer.

e de ce qu'il veult pen ser.  
e qui tant fa ce\_a a mer.

e de ce qu'il veult pen ser.  
e qui tant fa ce\_a a mer.

\*9 The rondeau is in principle a courtly poem, but its content is not quite courtly. Neither in language, meaning or music does this song fit completely within the courtly sphere – it has a touch of the ‘anti-courtly’.<sup>61</sup> The poet addresses “m’amyé”, not a lady, a princess or a goddess, but just a female “friend”. This woman is more worthy of love than any other woman, just like the lady in the preceding song “La plus bruïant”, but she probably does not belong to the high nobility. The poem exudes untrustworthiness: “Sur mon ame” (By my soul) – you do not start like that, if you really mean what you are saying. Charles d’Orléans only used the expression once in his rondeaux, and it was precisely in the playful rondeau speaking of “la haulte game”.<sup>62</sup> A love displayed for everyone in order to make them envious (line 5) is not nobly concealed, and the lover “worries about nothing but to enjoy life and have fun and revel” – in short, the poem does not describe a relationship according to the rules of *fin’amour*. It is likely to be about a relation involving a girl of lower social standing than the speaker, and most probable the poem is a parody of the not very credible, effusive assurances by which the man tries to find a way to the girl’s heart.

The music is of the same kind, absolutely untrustworthy (see *Example 4*). The song is not only *ficta* throughout having its *finalis* on the note B-flat, an unstable scale degree usually not found in this role, but its initial three-part imitation is also clearly sung in a slow triple time even though the music is notated in *tempus imperfectum diminutum*; that is, three *breves* (≡) of the notated mensuration are used for a whole bar in *tempus perfectum*. In order to be musically effective, the song has to start in a quicker tempo than the notation seems to indicate. In this way the song is in disguise. The last line of the refrain “Qui veult, s’en ait emvie” goes in an even faster tempo, *tempus perfectum diminutum*, corresponding to *proportio sesquialtera*; this means that the triple time now only takes up one of the *breves* heard at the start, a tripling of the tempo. There can be no doubt about the tempo relations as the parts overlap (from b. 41) and only fit together in one way.<sup>63</sup>

The music is evidently composed close to the meaning of the text, especially in the refrain. At the start of the second part of the refrain (line 4) the important words “que vous” appears, which by enjambment ends not only the sense of line 3 but the sense of the whole first section, but they are not included in the half refrain! These words are set homorhythmically in parallel thirds between tenor and superius, with the tenor on top (bb. 33-35) – they are virtually hammered out, “than you”, and the shouting does not exactly add to the credibility. Before that, the word “amer” is treated in a slightly grotesque melisma in the tenor over an organ point in the contratenor (bb. 27-30). At “a brief

61 Howard Garey used this term to characterize part of the repertory in the so-called Mellon chansonnier (New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91), which ‘undermines’ the courtly with irony or ‘turns it upside down’, cf. Leeman L. Perkins and H. Garey (eds.), *The Mellon Chansonnier I-II*. New Haven 1979, vol. II, p. 75; this topic was developed in Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. I, ch. 7.1 ‘Rondeaux between the courtly and the popular traditions’, pp. 143-155.

62 Cf. Claudio Galderisi, *Le lexique de Charles d’Orléans dans les «rondeaux»* (Publications romanes et françaises ccvi), Genève 1993. Rondeau 317 “Trop entré en la haulte game” is published in Charles d’Orléans, *Poésies*, p. 473.

63 In connection with the discussion of the tempo relations in “La plus bruïant”, it is quite funny to point out that the change from  $\text{C}$  to  $\text{O}$  as here described demands equivalence between the *semibreves*, else it would be superfluous to put the “3” in the mensuration sign! This is the opposite of the theoretical position of the preceding song, which demands equivalence at the *brevis* level.

Ill. 5 Copenhagen chansonnier f. 35<sup>v</sup> (upper left corner)



parler” (bb. 37-41) – again an ironic statement, because the rondeau having lines of only seven syllables is nearly as brief as possible – the colon, which you automatically add during the text edition, can be heard in the music by the change of mensuration and by the upper voices’ virtuoso, freely canonic, roulade through the full range of the parts.

The low tessitura for three male voices, the many slightly awkward details (see for example the old-fashioned cadence embellishments and the parallel final cadence), and the sudden change of tempo give the whole a comical, jaunty stamp. The song is an antithesis to “La plus bruiant”: High tessitura against low, high style against low style, a somewhat strained use of music theory as metaphors in text and music against a direct sensuality in rolling virtuoso music with the triple time disguised as *tempus imperfectum diminutum* – quite like what we saw in the Bayeux MS.

In addition to the meanings, which the poet and the composer has worked to give the individual chanson, we seem to find an extra overlying layer of meaning, associations, contrasts, and comments that appears in the work of art, the chansonnier, which the compiler or scribe created by his choice of repertory. I interpret the juxtaposition of “La plus bruiant” and “Sur mon ame” as a conscious artistic intervention, which puts the erotic atmosphere of both chansons in a new light; they cannot avoid the reciprocal influence.<sup>64</sup>

Knud Jeppesen did not think that the miniatures in the chansonniers had any connection at all with the texts of the chansons.<sup>65</sup> I cannot agree as regards these two chansons. The book painter clearly understood what they were about. At the beginning of “La plus bruiant” we meet a beautiful lady in courtly dress “celle qui toutes passe” apparently singing or reciting (see Ill. 4). while the “S” in “Sur mon ame” shows a stout kneeling person with the hands folded in an appealing gesture (see Ill. 5) – dressed in a hood, socks, bare ass, and a furtive smile!

64 The observation that certain musical sources and independent sections of complex sources often prove to be carefully composed selections of repertory was presented in Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. I, especially ‘Part Two: Genesis and function’ pp. 49-108, and in the analysis of the printed chansonniers by Pierre Attaignant, pp. 217 ff.

65 Jeppesen, *Der Kopenhagener Chansonnier*, p. XXVII: “Bemerkenswert ist, dass sich die Miniaturen in keinem der 5 Manuskripte näher an der Text anknüpfen, also illustrierenden Charakter ganz entbehren.”

## Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 Available online at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Cop1848.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Cop1848.pdf).
- \*2 In view of the great role hexachords play in the later part of this article, we could also say that “The music ... repeats a short tune kept entirely within the hexachord on *f*”.
- \*3 “Mymy, Mymy, mon doux enfant” is in fact related to the 15th century farce *Maistre Mimin étudiant*, where the student Minin, his teacher and his parents, Lubine and Raulet, are the main characters. E. Philipot thinks that “Mymy, Mymy, mon doux enfant” was to be performed by the mother Lubine as a prologue to the farce (cf. Emmanuel Philipot, *Recherches sur l'ancien théâtre français. Trois farces du recueil de Londres : le Cousturier et Esopet, le Cuvier, Maistre Mimin étudiant. Textes publiés avec notices et commentaires*. Rennes (librairie Plihon) 1931, pp. 64-67). Mimin and his mother Lubine also appear in another farce, *Maistre Mymin qui va à la guerre atout sa grant escriptoire pour mettre en escript tous ceulx qu'il y tuera*.  
The two farces are published by Philipot and by Gustave Cohen (ed.), *Recueil de farces françaises inédites du xve siècle*. Cam. Mass. 1949, respectively; and all the farces can be found online at the site *Sotties et farces du XVe et du XVIe siècles*, at <https://sottiesetfarces.wordpress.com/>.
- \*4 Some of the songs mentioned have been published with comments in my online edition *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*: Ockeghem, “Selle m'aymera je ne scay / Petite camusette” can be found at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH148.html>, and “Presque transi ung peu moins qu'estre mort” at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH077.html>.
- \*5 In the Danish version I tried to introduce “Thott” as a short name for the chansonnier. The idea did not catch, so in this translation I decided to go back to its traditional name. The entire MS has since 2013 been available as *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. An open access project*, which includes links to on-line facsimiles, transcriptions, translations of the poems and comments on the sources and the songs (at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>).
- \*6 This passage in Danish had become quite out-dated, and it has been abbreviated. The group of related sources now consists of six manuscripts. In 2015 the ‘Leuven chansonnier’ which obviously belongs in the group, surfaced in Belgium, cf. David J. Burn, ‘The Leuven Chansonnier: A New Source for Mid Fifteenth-Century Franco-Flemish Polyphonic Song’, *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 9 (2017), pp. 135-158. Further information on the sources can be found in Jane Alden’s book, *Songs, Scribes, and Society. The History and Reception of the Loire Valley Chansonniers*. New York 2010, and in the source descriptions in the online edition *The Copenhagen Chansonnier ...*.
- \*7 There is much more on this matter in my article ‘Prenez sur moi vostre exemple: The ‘clefless’ notation or the use of *fa*-clefs in chansons of the fifteenth century by Binchois, Barbingant, Ockeghem and Josquin’, *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 37 (2009), pp. 13-38.

- \*8 More about chantepleure in Anna Kłosowska, 'Tear-song: Valentine Visconti's Inverted Stoicism', *Glossator* 5 (2011) pp. 173-198 (<https://solutioperfecta.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/g5-ak4.pdf>).
- \*9 Even if Charles d'Orléans only used this expression once, "Sur mon ame" was quite common in the courtly poetry. However, it nearly always appears as a filler at the end of lines, because "ame" is a highly useful rime word meaning "soul" as well as "love" and riming on "dame" and "lame" (tombstone) and so on; cf. for example the anonymous songs "Le joly tetin de ma dame" (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH017.html>), "Tant est mignonne ma pensee" (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH019.html>) or Binchois' famous "Je ne vis oncques la pareille" (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH189.html>). I know of no other example, where this banality opens a poem.



## Josquin and the sound of the voices

### Analysing vocal instrumentation – a suggestion

‘Josquin og stemmernes klang. Et forslag om analyse af vokal instrumentation,’ *Musik & Forskning* 27 (2002) pp. 7-24

The startling dissimilar, but in its substance still nicely familiar, as a sound from another and better world, enthrals a modern audience to the same degree as we must assume that it was enjoyable to listeners in the early sixteenth century. We find the sound utterly beyond the everyday in the last Agnus Dei in *Missa L’homme armé Sexti toni* by Josquin Desprez. He lived between c. 1455 and 1521 according to the latest research in his biography.<sup>\*1</sup>

During the years after 1500 the fame of Josquin spread so far that he to his contemporaries, to the following generations, and not least in far later times to writers of music histories came to stand as the prototype of the modern composer, as a ‘genius’, whose musical perfection decided future standards.<sup>2</sup> His renown was much furthered by a new medium, music in print, not least when Ottaviano Petrucci in Venice in 1502 published his masses as *Misse Josquin*, the very first publication of large representative works by a single composer. In this way his music could reach a wider audience than by copies laboriously written by hand. In addition to reprints of this edition Petrucci followed up by publishing two further collections of masses by Josquin.<sup>3</sup>

The first printed collection of masses appeared precisely at a time when music, even outside the circles of scholars and professional musicians, began to be perceived as something more than its sounding reality, as more than the serviceable sounding result of the singers’ work on the basis of improvisatory practice or by performance of written music. The composed, written-down music, *res facta*, began to claim an identity of its own as an

1 Cf. Paul A. Merkley & Lora L.M. Merkley, *Music and Patronage in the Sforza Court* (Studi sulla storia della musica in Lombardia III). Turnhout 1999, pp. 425 ff.

2 On the development in the view of Josquin, see Edward E. Lowinsky, ‘Musical Genius – Evolution and Origin of a Concept’, *The Musical Quarterly* 1964, pp. 321-340 & pp. 476-495; Jessie Ann Owens, ‘Music Historiography and the Definition of the »Renaissance«,’ *Notes* 47 (1990), pp. 305-330; Jessie Ann Owens, ‘How Josquin Became Josquin: Reflections on Historiography and Reception’ in J.A. Owens & A. Cummings (eds.), *Music in Renaissance Cities and Courts: Studies in Honor of Lewis Lockwood* (Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music, No. 18) Warren 1996, pp. 271-279; Rob C. Wegman, ‘From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450-1500’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), pp. 409-479; Rob C. Wegman, ‘»And Josquin Laughed . . .« Josquin and the Composer’s Anecdote in the Sixteenth Century’, *The Journal of Musicology* 18 (1999), pp. 319-357; Rob C. Wegman, ‘Who Was Josquin?’ in Richard Sherr (ed.), *The Josquin Companion*. Oxford 2000, pp. 21-50; Andrew Kirkman, ‘From Humanism to Enlightenment: Reinventing Josquin’, *The Journal of Musicology* 17 (1999), pp. 441-458; Patrick Macey, ‘Josquin des Prez. §9. Reputation’ in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Second Edition*. London 2001, vol. 13, pp. 227-229.

3 *Missarum Josquin liber secundus*, Venezia 1505; *Missarum Josquin liber tertius*, Fossombrone 1514.

art form that could be evaluated and discussed, in short, as musical works. Concurrently, the names of composers became of interest to a larger public's discussion of music and art.<sup>4</sup>

*Misse Josquin* includes no less than two masses built on the well-known *L'homme armé* tune, which almost all composers since Du Fay, Ockeghem and Busnoys had to try their hands at.<sup>5</sup> Evidently, both publisher and composer have accorded these masses a special significance; their placements are revealing. *Missa L'homme armé Super voces musicales* opens the collection with a contrapuntal *tour-de-force* with extensive use of canon, where the popular tune in an unchanged notated shape is manipulated and brought forth on a new beginning note in each section of the mass, while rising up through the six steps in the C-hexachord. *Sexti toni* closes the collection and nearly makes the tune disappear in fantasy and free exploration of a sound world very like modern F-Major in Hypolydian mode notated with a one-flat signature.

In both masses, the outstanding culminates in the last Agnus Dei. In *Super voces musicales* the tune sounds without rests and in prolonged note values in the highest voice. Hereby it loses its melodic identity in spite of its exposed placement, and it becomes a string of sound floating slowly above the lower voices' web of polyphony. In *Sexti toni*, Josquin expands the four voices of the mass into six voices in *Agnus Dei III* – or rather, he redistributes the singers into three sets of canons: The low, slow-moving layer of two voices is created by letting them at the same time sing the B- and A-sections of the *L'homme armé* tune as notated and in retrograd, forwards and backwards, completely dissolving the contours of the melody in a calm two-part structure. The split superius and altus voices perform unison fugues using the same free motifs, which first alternate and then catch up with each other for a four-part fugue 'ad minimam', that is, with the shortest possible temporal distance between the entries. The end of the section is shown in *Example 1*, where it as in Petrucci is without text under the voices – the singers would probably at this point begin "dona nobis pacem".<sup>6</sup>

Josquin's masses are quite difficult to date owing to inconsistencies in the preserved sources. Our present knowledge seems to place the two *L'homme armé* masses in Josquin's early career, in the 1480s, with *Super voces musicales* as the first, very ambitious take on this tune. It is quite possible that *Sexti toni* in its first instance consisted of no more than the *Kyrie*, *Gloria* and *Credo* sections. *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei I* were composed later, and Josquin may have revised the mass and added *Agnus Dei II-III* shortly before Petrucci's publication of the masses – perhaps even with a view to its coming placement in Petrucci's print.<sup>7</sup>

4 Cf. Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987), pp. 210-284, and Wegman 'From Maker to Composer'.

5 *Misse Josquin*. O. Petrucci, Venezia 1502, contains *Missa L'homme armé Super voces musicales*, *Missa La sol fa re mi*, *Missa Gaudeamus*, *Missa Fortuna desperata*, *Missa L'homme armé Sexti toni*. All are published in A. Smijers (ed.), *Werken van Josquin des Prés. Missen I*. Amsterdam 1926-31.

6 As suggested in Smijers, *Werken van Josquin Missen I*, pp. 127 ff. For practical reasons, the example adheres to the bar numbering of this edition.

7 Cf. the discussion in Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'Masses Based on Popular Songs and Solmization Syllables' in Sherr, *The Josquin Companion*, pp. 51-87 (at pp. 65 ff).

Ex. 1, Josquin, *Missa L'homme armé Sexti toni* – Agnus Dei III (bars 126-152).

126 Superius: Fuga ad minimam  
Mensura =  $\circ$

Superius (resolutio)

Altus: Fuga ad minimam

Altus (resolutio)

Tenor & Bassus

135

141

147

I

This *Agnus Dei III* can be perceived in several ways. The two cd-recordings, which I have had access to,<sup>8</sup> choose to interpret the music as an aural bath in euphony, very slow and devout and transposed up a fourth in order to place the voices in ranges convenient for modern mixed choirs. Bonnie Blackburn's description of it as a carefully calculated culmination of a great fantasy upon the *L'homme armé* motifs is far more in accordance with the preserved sources "... ending the movement in a swirl of sound, as if the angels were beating their wings."<sup>9</sup> Compared with the recordings this demands a reversal of the perception of the tempo relations. The manuscript sources clearly prescribe an acceleration of the tempo through the three *Agnus Dei* sections, which results in a ratio between their *semibreves* corresponding to 3:4:6, that is, ending with a doubling of the opening tempo.<sup>10</sup> Petrucci was, however, out of consideration for his customers and his restricted selection of music type forced to simplify the notation and to supply resolutions of the cryptic canons. Josquin himself probably only indicated by means of a canon rule how the low voices should be made to fit together forwards and backwards.<sup>11</sup> The fast tempo combined with the exposed ranges of the divided male voices would indeed in *Agnus Dei III* generate "a swirl of sound".

*Agnus dei III* may also be viewed as a high point of a tradition for competition between learned musicians that began in the generations of Du Fay and Ockeghem. Composers tried to outdo each other in musical ingenuity and technical mastery, to create new music on a foundation that had won common approval in order to achieve personal fame and attractive employments. *L'homme armé* masses early on became the preferred battleground for this competition due to the tune's rich possibilities for mensural transformation and for transposition without loss of identity – around 35 masses are known to come in existence before the end of the sixteenth century – and *Agnus Dei III* became the stage for the decisive skirmishes.<sup>12</sup> Ockeghem here placed the tune an octave lower, added a one flat signature, and changed the mode and, more important, the whole tonal picture. Du Fay alienated the tune in retrograd in doubled note values before it returned in its normal shape. Busnoys brought it in inversion, and Obrecht trumped in retrograd inversion. Josquin surpasses with *Super voces musicales* his predecessors and contemporaries in mensural transformation and in modal transposition – and in contrapuntal density with the inserted mensuration canons inspired by Ockeghem's *Missa Prolationum* (*Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei II*). Against this background, the freedom in *Sexti toni* is striking. It is as if Josquin here is setting up an alternative sound picture, even though the *Sanctus* strongly features canons. However, when the tune appears in canon with its own retrograd in *Agnus Dei III* Josquin nevertheless challenges his successors to a difficult test, and at the same time he places the tune in a new world of sound.

8 The Tallis Scholars directed by Peter Phillips, Gimell CDGIM 019 (1989), and Oxford Camerata directed by Jeremy Summerly, Naxos 8.553428 (1995).

9 Blackburn, 'Masses Based on Popular Songs', p. 64.

10 Cf. Richard Sherr, 'The performance of Josquin's *L'homme armé* Masses', *Early Music* 1991, pp. 261-268.

11 Cf. James Haar, 'Josquin in Rome: Some Evidence from the Masses' in Richard Sherr (ed.), *Papal Music and Musicians in Late Medieval and Renaissance Rome*. Oxford 1998, pp. 213-233 (see pp. 222-223 and Plates 19-20).

12 David J. Burn, '« Nam erit haec quoque laus eorum » Imitation, Competition and the « *L'homme armé* » Tradition', *Revue de Musicologie* 87 (2001), pp. 249-287. This article offers a good overview of the competition and its conditions.

The *L'homme armé* tradition has sent many scholars hunting in the rich medieval realm of symbols to find an explanation for why just this tune was so attractive. Recently, Flynn Warmington has investigated masses for popes, emperors/kings and princes, where a drawn sword is part of the rituals, and where polyphonic *L'homme armé* masses might fit into the context.<sup>13</sup> Michael Long has examined its possible role in the defence of Christianity against the threat from the advancing, victorious Turks in the 1450s.<sup>14</sup> We find the richest interpretation of the phenomenon in Craig Wright's book *The Maze and the Warrior*,<sup>15</sup> where the historical and political conditions of the mid-fifteenth century combined with an anchoring in old Christian symbols form a complex network of meanings. The armed man is Jesus or St Michael, the defenders of the faith, and for example the use of retrograd is brought into context with the ritual dancing on the labyrinths that were laid in the floors of some French cathedrals, a symbol of the journey of Jesus to hell and back again, the downfall of the devil and the deliverance of the souls. *Agnus Dei III* in Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé Sexti toni* thus portrays Jesus both as the victorious warrior and as the sacrificial lamb, the beginning and end of everything: "The Armed Man is moving forward and backward simultaneously, just as the dancers do on the maze on Easter Sunday. When the exact midpoint of the section is reached, the roles are reversed ...".<sup>16</sup>

Josquin's *Agnus Dei* section reveals the wealth of meanings inherent in medieval intellectual production: The music can be perceived as a sound phenomenon representing a feeling or an experience (the angels, the climax of the Communion), it can stand as an abstract work of 'art' with technical artifice as a constitutive trait, by which the author may measure his accomplishment and status, and it vitalizes complex Christian symbols. The first element especially, the sound, has always appeared to me as not sufficient researched and discussed in the extensive Josquin literature. This view was recently thrown in relief by something seemingly totally unrelated to vocal music around 1500. It was during my reading of a Phd thesis on the role of instrumentation in the orchestral music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>17</sup> Jens Hesselager criticises the old metaphor that hears instrumentation as a layer of colour complementing the firm lines drawn by the musical structure. The thesis suggest "... that one may conceive of musical understanding as relating to how the music is realised in a concrete situation rather than to what structural qualities one may find if one seeks to reduce the musical texture and disregard the surface."<sup>18</sup> In particular, the discussion of Wagner's contrapuntal texture and the 'al fresco' technique and especially of the *stretto* technique in the prelude to *Das Rheingold*<sup>19</sup> reminds of parallel phenomena in Josquin's *Agnus Dei*. The myriad of individual voices fuses in Wagner into pure sound – the individual expressions of the voices are cancelled in favour of a palette of tonal colours that serves the composer's aims of expression.<sup>20</sup>

13 Flynn Warmington, 'The Ceremony of the Armed Man: The Sword, the Altar, and the *L'homme armé* Mass' in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*. Oxford 1999, pp. 89-130.

14 Michael Long, 'Arma virumque cano: Echoes of a Golden Age' in Higgins, *Antoine Busnoys*, pp. 133-154.

15 Craig Wright, *The Maze and the Warrior. Symbols in Architecture, Theology and Music*. Cam. Mass. 2001.

16 *Ibid.* p. 189.

17 Jens Hesselager, *Sound and Sense, The Role of Instrumentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Conceptions of Musical Understanding*. Phd thesis, University of Copenhagen 2001.

18 *Ibid.*, quote from *Abstract*, p. 224.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 67 ff and 109 ff.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

\*3 Of his cantus firmus material Josquin designs a slow-moving two-part structure, which for long stretches functions as a self-supporting *contrapunctus*. He then sets this structure in sound – ‘orchestrates’ it – by the two fast unison canons, whose motifs are triadic or form chains of parallel thirds. Where one of the voices in the cantus firmus duet comes to sing a scale segment alone, it is ‘harmonized’ by patterns of sequences, which – if the structure is reduced to a contrapunctus skeleton – is more like parallel passages in thirteenth-century organum than an actual contrapunctus structure. The parallel putting-in-sound technique lived on for centuries in improvised polyphony. *Example 2* shows an example for three voices (bb. 88-93), while a more elaborate passage for five voices can be seen in *Example 1* (bb. 137-143). The two canons in the upper voices are so closely bound to the slow cantus firmus structure that they almost seem like a ‘thickening’ of it. By the alternation of the higher duets, repeats and sequencing of simple figures and stretto-like piling up of tones and not least rests, Josquin creates a structure in sound in waves of changing density completely without cadence formulas or dissonances apart from passing notes. Its progress is precisely controlled: From the calm alternation of the upper voice canons at the beginning, it reaches the highest note clad in the sound of six voices in bar 98; from here on the music gradually winds down, nearly reaching a standstill with only the sound from the two cantus firmus voices, who then through the progression third-fifth-octave open the space for the final stretto (bb. 126 ff, cf. *ex. 1*).

Ex. 2, Josquin, *Missa L’homme armé Sexti toni* – Agnus Dei III (bars 87-93, reduced)

It is thought-provoking that Josquin, during the period when composed music through the efforts of Tinctoris and Gaffurius had become something that could be discussed and evaluated, goes a step further and reshapes the contrapunctus into a composition where the sound of voices appears as a key element<sup>21</sup> – and not least the prominent position this composition was granted in the first collection of masses in print. His inspiration may have been the everyday improvised sacred music, in which *cantus super librum* (singing

21 *Ibid.* p. 47, Walter Gieseler is quoted for the reversed litmus test “Je mehr instrumentaler Klangfarbe zum Wesen einer bestimmten Komposition gehört, desto weniger sinnvoll wird dagegen ein Klavierauszug.” (‘Instrumentation’ in Ludwig Finscher (ed.), *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe. Sachteil.* Bd. 4, Kassel 1996, Sp. 911-951). In this connection it is striking that neither Josquin’s *Agnus Dei III* nor the compositions by Brumel and Gombert, which will be discussed below, make any sense performed on the piano.

upon the book) for three or more voices could take the shape of free canon for equal voices using stock melodic figures in consonant concords and avoiding cadential formulas that would be difficult to coordinate in oral arrangements. In sound the result might be something like this *Agnus Dei*, but in the nature of things it would lack Josquin's careful design of the development and its rich world of symbols.<sup>22</sup> Joachim Thuringus described in his treatise *Opusculum Bipartitum de Primordiis Musicis*, printed in Berlin in 1625, Josquin's famous five-part motet *Stabat mater* as a work composed "ad imitationem sortisationis"; that is, in imitation of improvised polyphony by flourishing melodic lines over a sacred tune.<sup>23</sup> *Stabat mater* does not build on a sacred tune, but on a symbolic cantus firmus, the tenor from Gilles Binchois' rondeau *Comme femme desconfortée*, which without rests forms the tenor of the motet in triple augmented note values.<sup>24</sup> The four voices around it are composed much closer to the words of the *Stabat mater* sequence than the sound picture we experience in *Agnus Dei III*; they exhibit some imitation and melismatic lines and expressive chordal recitation. However, its type of setting with the governing, far drawn-out tenor, the freely declamatory, quickly changing combinations of voices, the Lydian mode with a signature of one flat, which to modern ears sounds like F Major all the way through, and its almost dissonance-free euphony was enough to bring to mind a still alive improvisatory practice more than a hundred years later.<sup>25</sup> In sound they are quite similar.

## II

Josquin was not alone in creating music with the sound of voices as a key feature. His contemporary Antoine Brumel (c. 1460 – after 1512) who in the years 1505-10 was chapel master in Ferrara, the position which Josquin had in 1503-04, and whose *Misse Brumel* (containing five masses, incl. a *Missa L'homme armé*) was published by Petrucci in 1503, created a twelve-part *Missa Et ecce terrae motus*. It is based on a quote from an antiphon for Easter morning "And behold, the earth shook", which is used in free canon in prolonged note values. The huge work is structured with alternating combinations of voices and contrasts between homorhythmic and imitative passages, but most impressive are the many-voiced sections, where a massive sound vibrates of teeming triadic figures running from voice to voice in slowly changing harmonies.

- 22 Willem Elders mentions in 'Symbolism in the Sacred Music of Josquin' in Sherr, *The Josquin Companion*, pp. 531-568, that unison canon is connected with the notion of 'heavenly music' (*Musica caelestis*) and points as example to the canon prescription in *Sanctus* in *Missa Sexti toni*, "Duo seraphim clamabunt alter ad alternatum" (Two seraphim cried out, the one calling the other – this prescription is found in the manuscript sources), which indicates unison canon between altus and tenor (p. 560). Elders might have prolonged this interpretation to include *Agnus Dei*.
- 23 Cf. Ernest T. Ferand, 'Improvised vocal counterpoint in the late Renaissance and early Baroque', *Annales musicologiques* IV (1956), pp. 129-174 (at pp. 134-135), and Ernest T. Ferand, "'Sodaine and unexpected" Music in the Renaissance?', *The Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951), pp. 10-27 (p. 22).
- 24 Published in Smijers, *Werken van Josquin Motetten II*. Amsterdam 1959, pp. 51-57.
- 25 On improvisation, see the articles by Ferand mentioned above. The discussion of *Sortisatio* appears in den theoretical music literature, especially the German, since Nicolaus Wollick used the term in *Opus aureum* from 1501, cf. "'Sodaine and unexpected" Music' pp. 11 ff. The term was first mentioned in the treatise *Capiendum erit et ultimum* in the MS Regensburg, Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek, Proske-Musikbibliothek, Th 98, p. 355 (c. 1476), cf. Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, »De modo componendi«. *Studien zu musikalischen Lehrtexten des späten 15. Jahrhunderts* (Studien zur Geschichte der Musiktheorie 2), Hildesheim 2002, p. 103.

The mass is known only from one single source coming from the court chapel in Munich and copied under the supervision of Orlando di Lasso in 1568-70. Lasso himself supplied the parts with the names of the 33 court singers responsible for the performance of the nine male voice parts of the mass, while the boys took care of the three high parts.<sup>26</sup> At its core, the mass is four-part for superius, altus, tenor and bassus. Each voice category has then been triplicated with an enormous ‘thickening’ of the sound as result – and for long stretches also with an abandonment of the contrapunctus foundation as a consequence. Even two generations after the death of Brumel, Lasso found the mass interesting to perform, although he never composed something similar himself. The date for the genesis of the mass is difficult to guess owing to the slender source material. It may be older or contemporaneous with Josquin’s *Agnus Dei III*. For that matter, they may have begun a competition of writing such music for Easter, whoever started. The only sure thing is that the two works must have the same background in inspiration from the sound of improvised sacred music.<sup>27</sup>

That Brumel’s *Missa Et ecce terrae motus* had an impact in his time and in the following decades is witnessed by Nicolas Gombert who in his six-part Easter mass *Missa Tempore pascali* incorporated a homage to Brumel.<sup>28</sup> In the last *Agnus Dei* the number of voices is expanded to twelve and the same cantus firmus as in Brumel’s mass, “Et ecce terrae motus”, is sung in very long note values in the tenor, while the eleven other voices in triadic figures, fast scale runs and insistent recitation paint a sound picture of the trembling of the earth, the resurrection and the radiance of the Pascal lamb in slow, majestic changes of chords – all with clear reference to Brumel. In the *Credo*, Gombert expands the number of voices to eight, but here he maintains his own dense imitative writing with clearly profiled motifs modelled on the words of the text. The biography of Gombert (c. 1495 to c. 1560) remains in mist. During the 1520s he was a singer in the imperial chapel of Charles V and from 1529 its *maître des enfants*. Heinrich Finck describes him in his *Practica musica* from 1556 as a pupil of Josquin, information that cannot be verified, but which is not contradicted by the character of his music.<sup>29</sup> The reference of Gombert to Brumel underlines the need for renewed research in the overlooked, versatile and very style- and sound-conscious Brumel<sup>30</sup> and – after the newest discoveries concerning Josquin’s year of birth<sup>31</sup> – in the relationship between the productions of Brumel and Josquin.

26 Published in Antoine Brumel (ed. Barton Hudson), *Opera omnia I-VI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 5) 1951-72, vol. III.

27 Clytus Gottwald has in ‘Antoine Brumels Messe »Et ecce terrae motus«, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 26 (1969), pp. 236-247, analysed the mass for the purpose of comparing with certain elements in György Ligeti’s work for choir, *Lux aeterna*, and the orchestral *Lontano*. Especially his analysis of *Klangfarben-melodik* and Brumel’s manipulation of the structure’s density and colour is rewarding.

28 Published in Nicolas Gombert (ed. Joseph Schmidt-Görg), *Opera Omnia I-XI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 6), vol. III, p. 53.

29 Cf. G. Nugent & E. Jas, ‘Gombert, Nicolas’ in Sadie (ed), *The New Grove Second Edition*, vol. 10, pp. 118-124.

30 As an example of this, one can mention Brumel’s tribute to Ockeghem in his reworking of Ockeghem’s *Fors seulement l’attente* into the double rondeau *Du tout plongiet / Fors seulement* for four very low voices in a deliberately old-fashioned style, published in Brumel, *Opera omnia VI*, p. 74.

31 Cf. note 1.

### III

It is evident that Josquin as well as Brumel and Gombert with the compositions just mentioned created music that falls outside the normal scope for sacred music around 1500. Moreover, there can hardly be any doubt that music showing up such effects in their sounding presence was created at least partly with a view of functioning as symbols for something outside the music, most often as sounding Christian symbols.

Also one of the earliest masses based on a secular model, Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale*, uses a sounding phenomenon as a constitutive element. It was probably written for the wedding between Amadeus IX of Savoy and Yolande de France, daughter of Charles VII, in 1452.<sup>32</sup> The main reason for linking the mass with this occasion is its model, Du Fay's own three-part ballade *Se la face ay pale*, which possibly was written for the wedding of the bridegroom's parents celebrated in Savoy in 1434 with Du Fay serving as chapel master.<sup>33</sup> The end of this quite unusual ballade is striking. It is formed as a festive fanfare in C, in which all three voices participate (bb. 25-29). We must assume that this effect was a main inducement for Du Fay to compose the mass on the song's tenor.<sup>34</sup> The polyphonic fanfare appears very audibly in all five main sections of the mass. Its appearance is strongest in the two longest sections, *Gloria* and *Credo*, in which the tune is sung three times, and where, like in an isorhythmic motet, it is accelerated. From being nearly unrecognizable in tripled notes, it ends triumphantly in the original tempo of the ballade and involves the other voices even more. The fanfare is a celebratory mimetic gesture, and if the interpretation of the occasion for and the driving force in the creation of the mass is correct, the fanfare must be among the decisive elements in its design.

\*4

We encounter a different situation with the earliest mass by Ockeghem, *Missa Caput*.<sup>35</sup> It builds on an anonymous English mass, which previously was attributed to Du Fay,<sup>36</sup> or, more accurately, it is modelled on the English mass.<sup>37</sup> The English *Missa Caput* had gained wide circulation and was often imitated, maybe also by Du Fay in his *Missa Se la face*. Apparently, its appeal lay in its successful organization of the four-part structure in two clearly separated layers (a calm tenor coupled with a lower contratenor against two livelier upper voices) and proceeding in alternation between free duets and full-voiced cantus firmus passages. Ockeghem turned this upside down: He quoted the English tenor, so that it on the page came out unchanged, but in a Latin instruction he ordered the singer to perform it an octave lower. Above it he put three higher voices, which primarily move in the *Dorian* mode and differ audibly from the borrowed, *Mixolydian* tenor. These two interventions give the mass, in addition to almost insurmountable difficulties with *musica ficta*, a distinctive sounding identity that can be hard to interpret. Fabrice Fitch

32 Cf. David Fallows, *Dufay* (The Master Musicians) London 1987 (rev. ed.), p. 70. The mass is published in Guillaume Dufay (ed. H. Besseler), *Opera omnia I-VI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1) 1951-66, vol. III.

33 Fallows, *Dufay*, p. 41. The song is published in Dufay (ed. H. Besseler, rev. D. Fallows), *Opera omnia VI – Cantiones*. 1995, p. 36.

34 The tenor tune, moreover, has some similarities with the *L'homme armé* tune; for example, the high central passage (bb. 11-16) triggers similar effects with note repetition and descending fifth.

35 Published in J. Ockeghem (ed. Dragan Plamenac), *Collected Works*. New York 1959-66 (2. ed.), vol. II, p. 37, and in J. Ockeghem (ed. Jaap van Benthem), *Masses and Mass Sections*. Utrecht 1994-, fascicle I,1. The mass is discussed in Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models*. Paris 1997, pp. 42 ff.

36 Published in Dufay, *Opera omnia II*, p. 75.

37 Cf. Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses*, p. 43.

speaks frankly of a 'subversive streak' in Ockeghem's procedure.<sup>38</sup> The ritual of washing the feet in imitation of Jesus (*pedilavium*) on Maundy Thursday, to which the *Caput* melisma (from the antiphon "Venit ad Petrum") belongs,<sup>39</sup> was a recurrent ceremony at the French court and is an obvious occasion for the young Ockeghem to show his prowess in the years after 1450. But which symbolic frame, except for the liturgical, that might have motivated the mass' singular appearance in structure and sound is left to the imagination – could the final French victory in the Hundred years war be influential?

The wide circulation of the anonymous English *Missa Caput* on the Continent and the inspiration that Continental composers received from it, created an ideal of sound for 'great' polyphonic music around and after 1450. Yet we hear the most prominent composers breaking this ideal in quite different ways. Du Fay by incorporating festive sound associations in *Missa Se la face ay pale*, and Ockeghem by 'overthrowing' the sound ideal.

#### IV

In the previous sections I have assumed the establishment of a sound ideal around 1450, and that the masses by Josquin, Brumel and Gombert infringed the prevailing norms for sound during the years around and after 1500. But is it fair to set it up in this way? With this I not only imply that norms for sound did exist, that they evolved and changed over the generations, but also that composers worked out consciously the music's tonal appearance. Something like this is discussed only sporadically in the scholarly literature, and not at all in any tangible form in the music literature of the period.

It is common historical knowledge that different models for setting polyphonic music existed during the period from the end of the fourteenth century and until the generations of Josquin and Ockeghem, models which were linked with different genres and changed over time, and that the selection of notes to use was expanded and thereby also the number of voice categories at composer's disposal. Likewise, musicology has a huge selection of tools and observation points for analysis and comparing of the music at its disposal. Usually one examines the use of cantus firmus, contrapuntal procedure, the roles, tessitura and distribution of the voices, the level of ornamentation, disposition of cadences, dissonance treatment and the elusive determination of mode. All this can in certain combinations help to date and place compositions when the evidence of the sources is insufficient. Taken together these and other points of analysis also describe a large part of the sounding presence of compositions, but one usually refrains from discussing this important issue.<sup>40</sup> This may make an analysis of Josquin's *Agnus Dei III*

38 *Ibid.*

39 Cf. Manfred F. Bukofzer, 'Caput: A Liturgico-Musical Study' in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music*. New York 1950, pp. 217-310 (at pp. 230 ff).

40 For example, the aspect of sound does not get much mention in the new Josquin book, *The Josquin Companion*. Richard Sherr writes in his introduction: "Further, this inventiveness is to be found at all levels of his musical output, from large-scale structure to the surface elements of counterpoint and melodic invention, down to the details of motivicity, yet all this inventiveness does not overwhelm the actual aural event of the music itself, which delights and moves us on its own terms." (p. 7) This statement quite precisely captures the preoccupation of scholarship with discovering coherence and structure in the music, while its sounding presence is more of an side benefit. Not surprisingly, the most insightful contribution in the book as terms of sound is by Alejandro Enrique Planchart, who is active as a conductor, see for example his description of *Missa de beata Virgine* pp. 124 ff; and among others John Milsom succeeds in showing that a motet, *Gaude Virgo*, which appears strikingly regular, rigid and ascetic

strangely unreal, when the exceptional originality of the music disappears behind a review of the fascinating canon technique. Only realizing that Josquin here uses his contrapuntal abilities to manipulate a complex of sound, does one dare to suggest that he for symbolic reasons borrowed the sound image of improvised sacred music.

The title of this article announces a 'suggestion'. My suggestion is – not surprising in this connection – that we in historical research incorporates the music's sounding presence as a decisive factor in the understanding of musical phenomena. The reasons for often to disregard it are not difficult to unearth: The music theorists of the fifteenth century mention music's sound only in vague terms, and apparently the musicians' employers primarily valued sacred music for its ability to fill liturgical and social functions. A modern scholarly tradition has relegated the realisation of music to a sister discipline, 'performance practice', which enjoys its own issues of sources and theory. Hereby sounding music has been placed outside scope of music analysis and the historical reflection. An understanding that in comparison with the musical expressions of later periods the music was abstract and foreign has led to a tendency to – to return to the classic orchestration metaphor – perceive the preserved musical work as a drawing, which with the help from performance practice can be painted out in colour.<sup>41</sup> To establish a satisfactory well-developed alternative to this perception, however, exceeds the boundaries of this article. I will outline a few points only.

1) The fifteenth-century system of teaching polyphonic music builds on simple two-part contrapunctus, note-against-note, which was taught by ear, possibly helped by simple textbooks and first and foremost through endless repetitions. Along with more advanced rules for subdividing the note values in the counter voice in rhythmized passages (*cantus fractus*), for the placements of dissonances and for making cadences, this knowledge formed the basis for all music, whether it was rehearsed and performed only in its sounding form, or it was further worked out and regulated before being secured in writing. The sounding presence of polyphonic music is thus found in two related forms, one produced primarily while singing (for example *cantus super librum*) and one relying on careful prepared written music (*res facta*). There are many indications that the contrapunctus structure was the means of that age for thinking about musical progressions even if it was superposed with other elements (imitation etc.) and even if composers eventually in practice relied on notions of triads.

A modern analysis of modal relations and larger structures in written music, which wants to be loyal to the concepts of the age, often uses a contrapunctus reduction as a tool. This approach has many features in common with the technique of *Schenker* analysis, and a modified *Schenker* analysis is often applied, especially in American musicology. The relationship between the surface of the music and the first layer in a reduction resembles the relation between an orchestrated score and a piano reduction in later music. One could say that the reduction represents the structures that are shared by improvised music and *res facta*, while the carefully worked out and detailed surface, what we meet in the

(not of interest for research), is highly effective and typical for its time is its sounding realisation of its text (pp. 264 ff). In both instances, however, the discussions do not systematically include the element of sound.

41 In his *Musikästhetik* (Köln 1967) Carl Dahlhaus expressed it in this way in a discussion of how many 'layers' (*Schichten*) music contains: "Die Klangform eines musikalischen Werkes, die Instrumentation oder Besetzung, ist seit dem 17. oder 18. Jahrhundert ein Teil der Komposition, während sie in früheren Epochen Sache der Aufführungspraxis war." (p. 122).

sources, represents what is characteristic for *res facta*, namely that all the voices relate to each other instead of to the tenor part only.<sup>42</sup> It is in this layer too that we find the composer's design of the music's sounding presence.

2) The development of sound elements, which musicians could work with in a sort of 'vocal instrumentation', is bound up with the expansion of the total range of the complex of voices and especially with the emergence of differentiated categories of voice types, each with a clearly defined role to fill. With this a tonal space was established with room for unfolding of the characteristics of the voice categories, the 'instruments' of the composers. This development depended on a demand for polyphonic music and the creation of musical institutions employing specialized singers able to fulfil the functions in an increasingly more complex sacred music.

When Machaut remarks in *Voir dit* about his tenors in the ballade *Nes que on porroit* (Ballade 33) that they are as "sweet as unsalted gruel",<sup>43</sup> it is a precise aesthetic assessment of a special use of concords, and it hardly refers to the sound of the in range undifferentiated tenor parts. The differentiation of range and sound happened mostly by virtue of the development of and growing independence of the role of the contratenor(s) in the contrapunctus structure. The development of improvisation involving several voices may naturally have led to the establishment of specialities in singing, which were transferred to music in notation. Each singer obtained an identity as upper voice (falsettist) or tenor (*tenorista*, also the leader of improvised polyphony), or as high or low contratenors, singers of extended range and vocal agility, and even regional differences evolved owing to the linguistic and educational qualifications of the singers.<sup>44</sup> The specialization of the singers caused that they only reluctantly sang parts outside their professional identity. This meant that if one function in an ensemble was missing owing to illness or absence, polyphonic music could not be performed. Concurrently, successful types of ensembles were formed at the leading musical institutions, which were imitated by other institutions. These ensembles might be rather different depending on whether they were based on a few adult falsettists on the upper voice or on boys with a few adult singers on the lower voices.<sup>45</sup> The composer used these general role characters in his sound image when a setting was planned; likewise, unusual features in compositions may be explained by being written for singers with special personal qualities.<sup>46</sup> This development falls chronologically within Du Fay's long career.

42 Cf. Tinctoris' distinction in *Liber de arte contrapuncti* (1477) quoted and translated in Blackburn, 'On Compositional Process', p. 249.

43 "Et sont les teneurs aussi douces comme papins dessales", quoted and commented on pp. 50 ff in Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Le Voir Dit and La Messe de Notre Dame: aspects of genre and style in the late works of Machaut', *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 2 (1993), pp. 43-73.

44 Cf. Rebecca Stewart, 'In principio erat verbum. A Physiological and Linguistic Study of Male Vocal Types, Timbres and Techniques in the Music of Josquin des Prez', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 35 (1985) pp. 97-193.

45 This paragraph owes much to the articles by David Fallows, 'Specific information on the ensembles for composed polyphony 1400-1474' in Stanley Boorman (ed.), *Studies in the performance of late medieval music*. Cambridge 1983, pp. 109-159, and 'The Performing Ensembles in Josquin's Sacred Music', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 35 (1985), pp. 32-66. See also Wegman, 'From Maker to Composer', pp. 444 ff.

46 See for example K. Kreitner, 'Very low ranges in the sacred music of Ockeghem and Tinctoris', *Early Music* 1986, pp. 467-479.

3) In the very idea of freezing the sounding presence of music, which is central for the worked out *res facta*, lies an awareness that the product is something special. This awareness can more precisely be described as a ‘consciousness of style and genre’, and it goes back to the earliest polyphony – with Machaut as a rather late and significant example. This gives rise to a number of types of compositions, each of which has a relatively well-defined sounding presence. To mention just a few:

*The ‘isorhythmic’ motet* for official occasions with a carefully designed tenor as the lowest part in the structure and faster moving upper voices with different text, where primarily the rhythmic differentiation is decisive for the two layers of sound. Perhaps Ockeghem played with this tonal formula in his *Missa Caput*.

*The cantus firmus mass around and after 1450*, the replacement for the isorhythmic motet as ‘big’ occasional music, with alternation between duos and compact cantus firmus sections, is well suited for symbolic representation, and provides in its schematic simplicity the composers with space for the development of personal stylistic traits.

*The leaner type of setting around 1500 with even more differentiated voice parts*, in which imitation plays a significant and constructive role, and where some transparency in sound is a condition for a higher degree of rhetoric word interpretation and mimetic representation. It is the model that Josquin relates to in *Agnus Dei III*.

With these rough deliberations, I suggest that the question posed at the start of this section, whether it is possible to describe sound ideals, which the composers could relate to, and whether sound ideals may be defined for generations, for regions, for groups of composers or applicable to a single composer, in general must be answered in the affirmative. A large part of the material that is needed to answer the question in more detail has already been examined by the existing research. What is needed is a renewed view on this material and probably several new enquiries to answer new questions.

4) I suggest a view of the sounding presence of music in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that unites two apparently opposite insights: That music’s surface (*res facta* or the shape in which music is found in the sources) is an integral part of the whole, and that, in addition, *res facta* represents a frozen realization in sound of the music, which contains a lot of concrete information, but that this realization is not the only possible one. For the time it seemed unthinkable that music should have only one form of manifestation. The amount of research categorized as ‘performance practice’ deals with the primary realization of *res facta* as well as with all the alternative ones. In short, the sounding form of music is available to us in two shapes, one specifically based on written music and one speculatively based on performance traditions in distant times. This duality in our handling of the music is a natural consequence of the basic foreignness that is caused by the great distance in time and culture, and which we in a superficial familiarity with the period best not forget – something often happening in heated debates on ‘authentic’ performances of ancient music. The primary realization, which research in composers’ handling of music’s sounding presence should deal with, has as its starting point the background of the composers and the environment and the institutional framework in which they worked. The vocal music and the sound of voices are here

domineering, first and foremost because the living of composers depended on the singing of liturgy in an eternal cycle.<sup>47</sup>

\*5 What to call research in the treatment of sound in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries poses a problem. ‘Instrumentation’ immediately sounds wrong. At its core, however, the word ‘instrument’ just denotes a tool, so the term ‘vocal instrumentation’, which previously has been used about the composers’ disposition of voice parts and their ranges, can well be extended to cover the entire treatment of sound in the sense of ‘the composer’s use of vocal sound tools’. As previously mentioned, this field can accommodate almost all the analytic strategies that so far have been used in research. It just needs a slight adjustment towards sounding phenomena. For example, an examination of the density of dissonances gets a different significance in this connection, and the intense debate on tempo relations, which has been prominent in scholarly circles during the last decade,<sup>48</sup> is obviously of importance. Points of special interest are composers’ choices of voice types (combinations, dominance of low or high voices, exceptional mixtures of voices), the relationship between figural setting and homorhythmic declamation (movement, effect of immobility, ‘figured stillness’), the design of the single voice (use of the different parts of its range, in particular the high/low tension of the registers according to our knowledge of the singing technique of the time), the balance of voice distribution (the impact of exposed voices, crossing of parts), the obvious vocal virtuosity – for example found in duos in some masses by Josquin, in music by Agricola and Brumel, what have often been called ‘instrumental’ style, etc.

A short, illustrative example from a Josquin mass may help to clarify my notion of vocal instrumentation. *Kyrie I* from *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae*<sup>49</sup> can be described as building on motivic patterns in symmetrical formations.<sup>50</sup> An analysis of the vocal instrumentation in the first bars may serve to nuance this picture (*Example 3*). *Cantus* presents in a low tension register the completely regular *cantus firmus*, which musicalizes the name of Duke Ercole I d’Este of Ferrara as solmization syllables. The forced repetition of the first notes (*Hercules Dux* = re, ut, re, ut) Josquin instruments by letting *Contratenor altus* sing an elementary figure, which could be found in improvisatory praxis, as a counter voice to the two descending notes in consonant intervals (octave-fifth-sixth/fifth-third-fifth-sixth), rhythmized buoyantly to tie the phrase together.<sup>51</sup> This figure is repeated exactly by *Contratenor bassus* in the two following bars. However, while *altus* sounds in its lowest and presumably weakest register (later in the mass *altus* is up to an octave higher), the *bassus* sings in a comfortable and resounding register. There will be a notable difference in sound and not just a repetition. In the continuation, the exchange of motifs

\*6 47 This sketch concerns the ‘big’ sacred music only. The views expressed are of course also of relevance for the lesser sacred genres and secular music, although the daily use of instruments in secular surroundings has probably been far more pronounced. For an attempt at describing sound awareness in French chansons in the 1460s, see my article ‘Æslets skryden og sang gennem tårer. Billeder i musik i 1400-tallets populære og kunstfulde traditioner’, *Musik & Forskning* 26 (2001), pp. 97-134 (at pp. 117 ff).

48 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 128 ff (especially note 69).

49 From *Missarum Josquin Liber secundus*. Petrucci, Venezia 1505. Published in Smijers, *Werken van Josquin Missen II*, p. 19.

50 Cristle Collins Judd, ‘Josquin des Prez: Salve regina (à 5)’ in Mark Everist (ed.), *Music before 1600* (Models of musical analysis). Oxford 1992, pp. 114-153 (at pp. 133-138).

51 See further James Haar’s comments on the same example in ‘Monophony and the Unwritten Tradition’ in Howard Mayer Brown & Stanley Sadie (eds.), *Performance Practice: Music before 1600*. London 1989, pp. 240-266 (at pp. 259-261).

Ex. 3, Josquin, *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae* – Kyrie I (bars 1-6; Tenor has rests only in these bars)

The musical score shows three staves: Cantus (top), Altus (middle), and Bassus (bottom). The Cantus staff has a G-clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Altus staff has a C-clef and the same key signature. The Bassus staff has an F-clef and the same key signature. The lyrics 'Ky - ri - e' are written below the notes. The Cantus part has a long note on 'Ky' followed by a rest, then a long note on 'ri' followed by a rest. The Altus part has a more active melody. The Bassus part has a more active melody.

happens faster, and altus moves up into a higher range along with cantus, until the tenor enters with the cantus firmus, followed up by an increased rhythmic activity in the three other voices. Across the symmetrical pattern of motifs, Josquin in this way composes a *crescendo* in sound and rhythmic activity, which is highly effective and makes the Kyrie sound not nearly as awkward as the structural description hints. While this works for singing voices, there is nothing to hinder that the composition could be performed to great effect by an ensemble of wind instruments, which was in high demand in Ferrara,<sup>52</sup> or, more plausible, that the musicians taking Josquin as model improvised something similar on the ducal *sogghetto*.

## V

Rob C. Wegman has commented on related topics in his article “Musical understanding’ in the 15th century’.<sup>53</sup> He discusses the demands from humanism and from composers, who as producers of art became still more self-aware, for an understanding of music that extends, on the one hand, beyond the sensual joy of music and, on the other, the mathematical proportions of intervals as the basis for euphony. But what was there to understand? It can be hard to know, especially since the writers of the time incl. Tinctoris as descriptive words for the appeal of music speak almost exclusively of its *dulcedo* (sweetness, niceness) or other synonyms for it, and often express that this *dulcedo* is incomprehensible, inexplicable or wonderful:

Undoubtedly, many listeners must have received training in counterpoint, and acquired a thorough understanding of the rules by whose application sweetness could be effected. Yet rules of composition did not necessarily determine the criteria for aesthetic appreciation. In fact, they might not even have been particularly helpful. Even the most knowledgeable musicians of the period, for all their understanding of the art of counterpoint, could confess to utter perplexity when they heard the sheer magic of consonant sweetness as listeners. Indeed, such perplexity was often considered a tribute to the effectiveness of musical sound as heard. A good example is the following, from one of the earliest treatises by Tinctoris, the *Proportionale musices*:

52 Cf. Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford 1984, pp. 141 ff.

53 *Early music* 30 (2002), pp. 47-66.

“But alas! I am astonished not only at [moderns like] Ockeghem, Busnoys, Regis and Caron but also at many other composers, for while they compose so ingeniously and with such refinement, and with incomprehensible sweetness, I have known them either to ignore musical proportions altogether, or to designate wrongly the few they did know.”<sup>54</sup>

I do not know if any contemporaries did comment that Josquin’s *Agnus Dei III* was of an ‘astounding sweetness’, but it would have been quite appropriate. However, the words were used of the occasion for which Du Fay’s isorhythmic motet *Nuper rosarum flores* was composed, the dedication of the cathedral in Florence in 1436.<sup>55</sup> This motet has been regarded, authorized by Tinctoris’ well-known declaration in *Liber de arte contrapuncti* that no music more than 40 years old was worth hearing, as the start of a ‘new music.’<sup>56</sup> It can stand as a representative of a new perception of sound, first and foremost due to Du Fay’s ingenious use of two cantus firmus tenors in free canon at the fifth, which gives the sound’s foundation a new sonority and self-supporting direction, and which is supported by divisions in the upper voices, which enrich the sound, combined with a logical structure of alternating duos and four-part harmony. Here (and in other big motets by Du Fay) several ‘sound spaces’ are defined with far greater authority than before. In a way, the motet anticipates the ideal of sound around the middle of the century, and it is in truth ‘astounding’.

With this, ‘vocal instrumentation’ is offered as part of the frame of understanding when we set out to discover what musicians of the time themselves did not have words for in their admiration for the music’s *dulcedo*. Tinctoris and others in the second half of the fifteenth century began wishing to ‘understand’ music intellectually and to evaluate it according to new criteria – as Wegman writes: “The ideal of consonant sweetness for its own sake began to be qualified, and another ideal was to become equally influential: that of the musical work which is *intrinsically good* – that is, well composed.”<sup>57</sup> The well-composed work includes not only the contrapuntal skill, but also the composer’s disposition and mastery of the music’s development in sound, an amazing facility for which even composers with dire deficiencies in other respects could be praised. In his *New Grove* article on Obrecht, Wegman began to outline a new concept:<sup>58</sup>

54 *Ibid.* p. 53, the emphasizing in the Tinctoris quote is Wegman’s.

55 In Giannozzo Manetti’s description of the occasion, quoted *ibid.* p. 53. The motet is published in Dufay, *Opera omnia* I, p. 70.

56 Cf. Blackburn, ‘On Compositional Process’, pp. 268 ff, and Reinhard Strohm, ‘Music, Humanism, and the Idea of a »Rebirth« of the Arts’ in Reinhard Strohm & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages* (The New Oxford History of Music. New Edition. Vol. III.1) Oxford 2001, pp. 344-405 (at p. 351).

57 Wegman, ‘»Musical understanding«,’ p. 56.

58 Rob C. Wegman, ‘Obrecht, Jacob’ in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Second Edition*, vol. 18, pp. 290-307. Wegman’s initial classification of the ‘sound’ of the generations of composers is fruitful too. Yet his characterization of the sound ideal of the Dufay-Ockeghem-Busnoys generations as a “wall of sound” is too summary (p. 300). The euphony of the full-voiced sections was certainly important, but one must not hear the duos as less sonorous and euphonic. The characterization seems more aimed at putting Obrecht’s personal style in relief than to present a nuanced picture of the ‘sound’ of the older generations.

When his works are heard in performance, the technically superlative part-writing reveals, in addition, an unparalleled ear for sonority and vocal timbre. Motets such as the five-part *Salve crux* and especially the six-part *Salve regina* have emerged as awesome edifices of sound, and may do much to explain Ambros's perception of Obrecht as 'a great, profound, serious and manly master, whose works show, almost throughout, a strain of stern loftiness'. Even the four-part music, including many of the cantus-firmus masses, turns out to be far more effective in performance than its often unassuming appearance on paper might suggest. In sound, Obrecht's use of the musical idiom of his time seems so inexhaustibly imaginative and inspired as to reduce the notorious tenor manipulations to virtual aesthetic irrelevance. The effect of all this on the modern image of Obrecht cannot be calculated as yet. (p. 294)

Obrecht's mature style foregrounded the composer's creative purpose by shifting the aesthetic focus onto intelligible compositional design. In this design one might discern the composer's voice resounding, as it were, through the singers' voices. And it was this design that would now come to be regarded as the defining dimension of the musical work *qua* work, and the touchstone of intrinsic quality – reducing consonant sonority to a mere surface quality, satisfying only to the indiscriminating ears of inexperienced listeners. (p. 300)

It may be advantageous to incorporate in Wegman's 'design' the concept of a conscious control of the sound of the voices, a vocal instrumentation, as it is clearly observable in the article's music example showing Obrecht's *Kyrie I* from *Missa Fortuna desperata*.<sup>59</sup> Obrecht uses repeats of motifs, which are 're-instrumentations' (including octave shifts) of musical elements in a sure-handed building of a sounding development – related to Josquin's *Missa Hercules* (Example 3). Wegman's new concept for describing the music of Obrecht seems to be a first step towards speaking about vocal instrumentation, but his concept in addition includes other important elements such as music's temporal organization and the construction of motifs.

59 *Ibid.* pp. 296-297.

## Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 In his big Josquin book David Fallows estimates Josquin's year of birth to 1450-53, cf. David Fallows, *Josquin*. Turnhout 2009, p. 21. Another recent book worth mentioning is Jesse Rodin, *Josquin's Rome. Hearing and Composing in the Sistine Chapel*, New York 2012.
- \*2 I did not here enter into an discussion of the different mensuration signs. To this possibly too short reference, I should like to add that the sequence of signs in manuscript sources is O – C – O2 producing the relation 3:4:6, while Petrucci's revision of the mass has O – C – C (3:4:4).
- \*3 On improvisation and simple polyphony, see my e-book *Songs for funerals and intercession. A collection of polyphony for the confraternity of St Barbara at the Corbie Abbey. Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, MS 162 D*. Edited by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen (2 vols. September 2015, at <http://amiens.pwch.dk/>).
- \*4 I am no longer convinced that Du Fay's mass was created for a wedding or for any of the other occasions that have been proposed, and I prefer a dating around 1450. See further my edition, Guillaume Du Fay, *Missa Se la face ay pale. Edited with an introduction by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen* (June 2018) at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Duf02.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Duf02.pdf).
- \*5 This article has been followed up by two other articles, which approach the matter from quite different angles, 'Hvad enhver kordreng skal kunne. Betragtning af motetten *Ut Phebi radiis* af Josquin Desprez', *Musik & Forskning* 28 (2003) pp. 97-118 (English version, 'What every choirboy should know. Considering the motet *Ut Phebi radiis* by Josquin Desprez', at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Ut\\_Phebi.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Ut_Phebi.pdf)); and 'Kirkemusik i stramme tøjler. Om alternatim-messer til Santa Barbara i Mantova', *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* 30 (2002), pp. 9-50 (English version, 'Liturgical music in a tight rein. *Alternatim* masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua', at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Mantua.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Mantua.pdf)). Further on the sound of sacred music in the article, 'An experiment in musical unity, or: The sheer joy of sound. The anonymous *Sine nomine* mass in MS Cappella Sistina 14', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 42 (2018), pp. 54-78 (at [http://www.dym.dk/dym\\_pdf\\_files/volume\\_42/dym42\\_1\\_03.pdf](http://www.dym.dk/dym_pdf_files/volume_42/dym42_1_03.pdf)) with the companion edition, *The anonymous Missa Sine nomine in MS Cappella Sistina 14. Edited with an introduction by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen*. October 2018 (at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_An01.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_An01.pdf)).
- \*6 It has since then appeared in an English translation as 'The braying of the ass and singing through tears. Images in music in the popular and artful traditions of the fifteenth century' (at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_braying.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_braying.pdf)).

## What every choirboy should know

### Considering the motet *Ut Phebi radiis* by Josquin Desprez

‘Hvad enhver kordreng skal kunne. Betragtning af motetten *Ut Phebi radiis* af Josquin Desprez’, *Musik & Forskning* 28 (2003) pp. 97-118

Inspired by the sumptuous sounding presence of Josquin’s *Missa L’homme armé sexti toni* I embarked on a discussion of the treatment of sound and vocal instrumentation in the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the last volume of *Musik & Forskning*.<sup>1</sup> I put forward the hypothesis that not only did norms of sound exist that developed and changed through generations, but also that composers consciously worked with the sonority of music. To begin with, the preliminary conditions were listed in a few schematic points:

- That the teaching of *contrapunctus* and its associated skills form the basis for the sounding presence of polyphonic music, both in the situations where it was improvised (*cantus super librum*) as where it was performed on the basis of carefully prepared written music (*res facta*);
- that the development of tonal awareness is linked to a specialization of professional singers and the emergence of corresponding ensemble types;
- that a ‘consciousness of style and genre’ concurrently resulted in relatively well-defined types of musical structures; and
- that *res facta* represents a ‘frozen’ realization in sound of the music.<sup>2</sup>

The vocal opulence in six- to twelve-part settings makes it quite easy to identify the role of sonorous elements in the music. It is a different matter to define the tonal means in the ‘normal’ music. By this I do not think of the sounding realization of melody and contrapunctus structures etc., but the conscious working out of sonority as an element alongside music’s many other constitutive elements. It is difficult, because much fifteenth-century music contains a wealth of meanings that may be linked to different elements in the music. These elements may change their meaning, and the meanings often exist in a mutual balance that is influenced by its framework (the performance situation) and by the expectations and assumptions of those who hear the music.<sup>3</sup> Basically, these elements can be the meaning of the text in relation to the function of music in liturgy, ceremonies or court life, the incorporation of well-known symbols (religious or courtly), the use of pre-existing music as a model or *cantus firmus* – all in relation to the musician’s/composer’s usual way of expression and/or local or genre traditions.

\*1 1 ‘Josquin og stemmernes klang. Et forslag om analyse af vokal instrumentation’, *Musik & Forskning* 27 (2002) pp. 7-24.

2 *Ibid.* pp. 16-22.

3 A discussion of the last subject can be found in Rob C. Wegman, ‘»Musical understanding« in the 15th century’, *Early Music* 30 (2002) pp. 47-66.

I have found it useful to start a series of studies of music that is limited in its spectrum of meanings in order to keep the discussion of the tonal aspects manageable. It can be limitations that may have been deliberately imposed on the music by the composer's employer, or which may be a natural consequence of the music's environment and traditions – or which the composer has imposed on himself.<sup>4</sup> A fruitful area to investigate may well prove to be the very simple, 'everyday' sacred music, which often has been characterized as retrospective or provincial, and which for a large part consist of hymns and prayers, especially music for intercession for the souls of the deceased.<sup>5</sup>

In the following I have chosen to look more closely at the four-part motet *Ut Phebi radiis* by Josquin Desprez (c. 1455-1521). It exhibits limitations that Josquin probably imposed on himself, because it combines a use of sounding symbols with an almost Spartan simplicity, and it directly relates to the skills and knowledge that any choirboy must have mastered. On the other hand, its 'cool' construction and improvisational ease are balanced by fervent prayer to the Virgin Mary and ecstatic appeal to Jesus as deliberate contrasts. The motet's way of constructing text and canon, its text and setting, and its musical expression are examined in turn in order to trace the composer's considerations and the sound concepts that he may have based it on.

### *Hexameters and hexachords*

When Josquin had devised the text for *Ut Phebi radiis*, the music must also have been ready in his mind. At least in terms of sound and course of the music, probably just a number of details were missing that had to be worked out more precisely during the writing down in parts. The text is reproduced in the next section of this article in the original Latin and in translation, and the music can be found in transcription at the end of the article.<sup>6</sup>

As in other motets, the text falls into two sections, addressing Mary and Jesus. The use of classical hexameters and references to antique and biblical subjects suggest the author's ambitions in terms of Latin erudition. What makes the text into something special, in particular for those who were close to the teaching of music, is that it incorporates syllables and words that represent sounding notes. The first six lines of each section start with solmization syllables that are more or less successfully incorporated into the sentences. The first line quotes only the syllable *ut*, the second line adds *re*, and so on until the syllables name the entire ascending scale segment of six notes that makes up a hexachord. In the second section, the text starts from the top with the syllable *la*, and in its sixth line the full, descending hexachord is recited in the same way. The text is thus a construction with the number six as the basic element (2 x 6 lines of six metrical

\*2 4 A study of music belonging to the first-mentioned category can be found in Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, 'Kirkemusik i stramme tøjler. Om altermatim-messer til Santa Barbara i Mantova', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 30 (2002) pp. 9-50.

\*3 5 A preliminary discussion of related topics can be found in P. Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III*. København 1994, vol. I, pp. 288 ff and 321 ff.

6 The Latin text is reproduced with italicized solmization syllables; for a diagram of the tone system and hexachords, see *figure 1* below. In the transcription of the motet, the use of hexachords is marked with letters: Letters in bold mark that the hexachord in question is forced by the text's solmization syllables, while 'normal' letters indicate where to mutate into another hexachord in order to follow the melodic progression; these indications take neither momentary semitone fluctuations above or below the current hexachord into account (here either *fa* or *mi* is sung) nor momentary pitch raises (*mi ficta*).

feet – hexameters, which use words to build formations of six tones – hexachords). Each section ends with a seventh line, a *punch line*, with the conclusion of the previous accumulation of statements. In the first section, it is the Virgin Mary who outshines all comparisons, and in the second section, the praise culminates in a prayer to Jesus to remember those who sing (and hear).

This structure is accurately reflected in the music. The hexameters are sung by the two highest voices (“Superius” and “Altus”) in such a way that whenever the text pronounces solmization syllables, they sing the notes that can be named with these syllables in one of the three hexachords (*hexachordum naturale*, *durum* and *molle*), which together are used to create order in the tone system of the time. In each section for the first six lines, it happens above a canon at the fourth between “Tenor” and “Bassus”, who sing solmization syllables only. The incremental ostinato, built into the text’s hexachord structure, appears undiluted in the canon of the lower voices. At first only a single *ut* is sung in two hexachords a fourth apart. Then there is a pause of eight *breves* in both voices. The next entry is increased to two notes, *ut-re*, and so on until the full hexachord sounds in the sixth line; in the second section it happens in the same way, only now the hexachord is built from top to bottom. The rests between their entries are each time of eight *breves*’ duration. In this way, the canon of the lower voices comes to stand as a series of sound columns that become ever wider, on top of which the more mobile upper voices are spun out like sung threads. As soon as the *comes* voice reaches the target of the canon’s incremental ostinato,<sup>7</sup> it remains on the final note; in the first section the tenor stays on *d*’, and in the second the bassus ends on *c*. At this moment, the music changes character: In the first section there is a change to a homorhythmic, flexible declamation of the end of the sixth and of the whole seventh text line, in which the bassus participates, a change to the ‘intercessory prayer’ type of music. The same character is marked at the end of the second section, but here it quickly turns into a triumphant fanfare, where imitations between superius, altus and tenor play around the triad on *c*’. To clarify the boundaries between the six lines of hexachord building and canon and the conclusion of the seventh line, the setting of the beginning of the sixth line in both sections is formed as a three-part canon in *brevis* notes on the now complete hexachords – altus participates in this while superius pauses.

The only source for *Ut Phebi radiis* from Josquin’s lifetime is Ottaviano Petrucci’s *Motetti libro quarto*, which was printed in four part-books in Venice in 1505. As Jaap van Benthem has demonstrated, Josquin’s own version of the motet in choir-book format was probably notated with three voices only.<sup>8</sup> The original tenor voice would have been accompanied by canon prescriptions using signs and text, which indicated the interval and the distance between the entries and where and how long the *comes* voice should remain on its last note.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, this procedure was not feasible in printed part-books.

7 I use the traditional terms from fugue descriptions, *dux* and *comes*, about the entries of the first and second voice into the canon.

8 Jaap van Benthem, ‘A Waif, a Wedding and a Worshipped Child. Josquin’s *Ut phebi radiis* and the Order of the Golden Fleece’, *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 37 (1987) pp. 64-81 (at pp. 69-70).

9 The original tenor part can be reconstructed by combining bassus in the first section with tenor in the second section. A remnant of the original notation is found in the tenor bar 134, where the editor in the print forgot to delete a now redundant *signum congruentiae* (Petrucci’s tenor-book, f. 37v). The original function of the sign was to show the *comes*-singer where he should stop and remain on his final note.

The customers expected ready-to-use music without having to understand a perhaps cryptic canon prescription, and the small format made it impractical for both the tenor and bass parts to be sung from the same book. Therefore, Petrucci's music editor took care to prepare resolutions of canons or – as here – to silently dissolve the canon into two printed voice parts.<sup>10</sup> The ending in bassus must be an editorial intervention intended to make the music look more 'normal'. This ending's long notes on *c* (consisting of a dotted *longa*, a dotted *maxima* and another *maxima*-value) seem confused in notation and lack two *breves* to reach the final note, a *longa* on *f*.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the tenor's long final notes in the first section of the motet seem logical considering the structuring of the canon around the number six (they consist of a *longa*, a *maxima* and a dotted *maxima*, or  $2+4+6 = 12$  *brevis* values). Therefore, if we can assume that *the comes* voice in the second section ought to proceed in a way similar to the first section, the ending will be three-part, as the bassus will then be five *breves* shorter than the other voices. It causes the *c*'s to sound while they are needed to legitimize the fourths appearing in the other three voices,<sup>12</sup> but leaves the stage free for the *fauxbourdon*-like ending.

*The text, the fleece of Jason and the fleece of Gideon – and Mary*

I

*Ut Phebi radiis soror obvia sidera luna,  
Ut reges Salomon sapientis nomine cunctos,  
Ut remi ponthum querentum velleris aurum,  
Ut remi faber instar habens super aera pennas,  
Ut remi fas solvaces traducere merces,  
Ut remi fas sola Petri currere prora,  
Sic super omne quod est regnas, O Virgo Maria.*

II

*Latius in numerum canit id quoque celica turba,  
Lasso lege ferens eterna munera mundo:  
La sol fa ta mina clara prelustris in umbra,  
La sol fa mi ta na de matre recentior ortus,  
La sol fa mi re ta quidem na non violata,  
La sol fa mi re ut rore ta na Gedeon quo,  
Rex, O Christe Jesu, nostri Deus alte memento.*

I

As the moon, sister of Apollo, with her rays [rules] the stars on her path,  
as Solomon [rules] the kings in the name of the wise,  
as the oar belonging to those seeking the Golden Fleece [rules] the sea,  
as the artisan with wings as oars [rules] the air,  
as [it is] the task of the oar to transport saleable wares,  
as [it is] the task of Peter's oar to steer the one ship,  
so you, o virgin Maria, rule all that is.

10 Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'Petrucci's Venetian Editor: Petrus Castellanus and his Musical Garden', *Musica disciplina* 49 (1995 (1998)) pp. 15-45 (pp. 33 ff).

11 Cf. the edition in A. Smijers (ed.), *Werken van Josquin des Prés. Motetten I*. Amsterdam 1925, no. 22, see also Benthem, 'A Waif', p. 70.

12 See bars 141 and 143.

## II

Far and wide the heavenly host sings this in verse  
bringing gifts to an exhausted world according to eternal law:

*La sol fa ta* – the diamond shining in the darkness,

*La sol fa mi ta na* – recently born by the mother,

*La sol fa mi re ta na* – truly unblemished

*La sol fa mi re ta na* – as [the fleece of] Gideon by the dew,  
King, O Christe, Jesus, high God, remember us.

In the first section Josquin makes great use of the first solmization syllable of the hexachord *ut*, which can start a series of comparisons “as ...”, in which the given syllables with a little imagination can find a place. In the second section the row of syllables goes backwards – starts with *la* – and this is not so easy to deal with.<sup>13</sup> After the first two lines, the solmization syllables can no longer be integrated into the meaning of the text, but must, along with the two filler syllables (“*ta na*”) that are good to sing, stand as word music that begins each praise.<sup>14</sup> Even without a meaningful content in parts of the lines, the text is rich in antique and biblical allusions and evokes an increasing intensity in the praise of Mary and Jesus.

In the first section strong images from antiquity are included in the comparisons: Here is the moon goddess Luna, Apollo’s sister (*Phebus/Phoebus* (the radiant) is Apollo’s most important epithet), Jason and the Argonauts from the widespread myth search for the Golden Fleece, and the craftsman Daedalos who built the labyrinth in Knossos and with his son Ikaros made wings to fly out of the labyrinth. Solomon belongs to the Old Testament, while the one ship that Peter’s oar steers is the Christian church that must look after the souls (cargo/goods). The second section describes the birth of Jesus with a reference to the Book of Judges, where Gideon asks for a sign and lays a sheepskin on the ground. After the first night the fleece had become wet from the dew, while the ground around and below was dry, the following morning the ground was wet, while the fleece was untouched.<sup>15</sup> This story was interpreted as a foreshadowing of Mary’s immaculate conception.

That Jason’s search for the Golden Fleece as well as Gideon’s fleece are mentioned has led William Prizer to connect the origin of the motet with the ceremonies at meetings of the Order of the Golden Fleece.<sup>16</sup> This order of chivalry was founded by the Burgundian duke Philippe le Bon in 1430 and had as its members representatives of the Burgundian

13 Virginia Woods Callahan has tried to solve this problem in a very subtle way by reading solmization syllables and words backwards in lines 10-13. Thus in line 10 “*La sol fa ta mina*” turn into “*amimata flos*”, cf. her translation in “*Ut Phoebi radii*”: The Riddle of the Text Resolved’ in Edward E. Lowinsky & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Josquin des Prez: Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference ... New York City, 21-25 June 1971*. London 1976, pp. 560-563. As demonstrated by Jaap van Benthem (‘A Waif’, p. 68), her solution does not make everything fall into place, so we are on safer ground, if we stick to what is written – in accordance with the music.

14 In the poem and the translation above, the solmization syllables are highlighted in italics, the filling syllables in bold. That the heavenly host in line 8 with a distinctive expression sings in metrical feet/quantities “*canit in numerum*”, may allude to what actually happens in the following, namely that the ‘quantity’ of the hexameters becomes more important than their meaning.

15 Judges 6:36-40.

16 William F. Prizer, ‘Music and Ceremonial in the Low Countries: Philip the Fair and the Order of the Golden Fleece’, *Early Music History* 5 (1985), pp. 113-153 (at pp. 129-133).

nobility with the duke himself at the head; later – in the sixteenth century with the emperor as head – the crowned heads of Europe were strongly represented among the members. The Golden Fleece of Jason was initially the most important symbol of the order, but later five other fleeces became equally important. With an intense worship of the Virgin Mary, Gideon's fleece came to the fore, and from 1458 the order used a special Marian *officium*, which emphasised Gideon's fleece. Prizer suggests that Josquin modelled his text on the texts of this office, and that the motet was composed for one of the meetings of the order in the years 1461 to 1501, with the one in Brussels in 1501 as the most likely.

With this hypothesis as a starting point and due to the logical and symmetrical structure of the motet, Josquin's work is open to numerological interpretations.<sup>17</sup> According to the far-reaching analysis by Jaap van Benthem, one finds hidden in the proportions of the whole not only the Golden Fleece in French and Latin (*Toison d'or* and *velleris aureum*), Josquin's own name as author as well as symbols for Mary and Jesus, but also a clarification of the reason for the motet, namely that it was commissioned by the Burgundian nobleman Philippe de Croy for a cancelled meeting in Brussels in 1479 or 1480.<sup>18</sup> As said, it builds entirely on a hypothesis, and when Barbara Haggh later found the text of the order's Marian office, it turned out that the text of the motet did not show any striking kinship with it.<sup>19</sup> In the scant information about Josquin's life and career, there is also nothing that can link him to a member of the order.<sup>20</sup> Finally, one must remember the starting point, namely the given syllables of the hexachord. In the first section, in lines 3-6, they give the meaning "as the oar...", and it is limited how many images that include oars it has been possible to come up with. Jason and the Argonauts is probably one of the most obvious. In the second section, the path from Mary to Jesus over the Immaculate Conception according to medieval thinking almost automatically leads past Gideon and his fleece.

17 Proportions between the numerical values of words calculated according to the alphabets of the time and counting and calculations of the elements of music.

18 Benthem, 'A Waif'. Later Benthem has more precisely pointed at the meeting that took place in Bois-le-Duc in 1481, cf. Barbara Haggh, 'The Archives of the Order of the Golden Fleece and Music', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 120 (1995), pp. 1-43 (p. 2, note 6). Benthem's calculations give thought-provoking results, but they are very sensitive to the uncertainties inherent in the transcription and reconstruction of a musical text. I cannot in all cases find his results, but funnily enough my use of the logical rhythmization of the final note in bassus reinforces Benthem's calculation (p. 72).

19 Reproduced in summary form in Haggh, 'The Archives', pp. 17 ff. Barbara Haggh suggests instead (p. 21) that the text may be derived from the three books on the fleeces that Guillaume Fillastre wrote for the order (six in total were planned). The De Croy family ordered copies of the volumes on Jason and Gideon (the books on Jacob (two copies) and Gideon's fleece are in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, as MSS Thott 463-465 2°, cf. N.C.L. Abrahams, *Description des manuscrits français du moyen-âge de la Bibliothèque Royale de Copenhague*, Copenhagen 1844, pp. 80-85).

20 In their eagerness to link well-known works to the musical practice of the order, musicologists usually forget that the knightly order of the Burgundian dukes was a political instrument, created to contain the influence of the great power France, and to keep wavering allies on their side. The French king and other princes created similar, competing knightly orders whose use of music has not been studied at all. Those of Josquin's patrons that we know – if we leave aside the papal chapel – all belong to or lean towards the French camp: René d'Anjou in Aix-en-Provence, the French kings, the Sforzas in Milan and Rome and Ercole d'Este in Ferrara. This should call for caution when hypothetically linking works to the order.

In this way, the meaning of the text is to some extent forced by the joint use of sounding syllables in the text and in the music, and therefore does not need to refer to the famous order of knights, but rather to generally known concepts. As also Willem Elders has pointed out, the sounding symbols, the scales and syllables of the hexachords, are the most important in the motet.<sup>21</sup> The ladder was an important symbol. In Jacob's dream in Genesis, a ladder connected heaven and earth, and God's angels ascended and descended it.<sup>22</sup> During the Middle Ages, the ladder was transformed into a symbol for Mary – she became *scala caelestis*, the connection to heaven. The tone series of the ascending hexachord raises the prayer to the all-controlling, all-forgiving Mary, while the descending hexachord shows that God descended to earth through her.<sup>23</sup> *Ut Phebi radiis* must then more probable be regarded as music for use in private devotion (the text excludes liturgical use) in the widespread worship of Mary, with the freedom that this function gives the composer.

*The ladder, hexachords and tone syllables*

*Scala caelestis*, the heavenly ladder up and down, sounds unusually clear in *Ut Phebi radiis*. Tenor and bassus consist largely of nothing but that, and their 'naked' canon differs in rhythmic and melodic formulation from the shapes of the upper voices. There is no doubt that the symbol must be audible.

It is well known that Josquin was happy to take advantage of the possibilities for symbol formation and musical structuring that are hidden in hexachords and in speaking solmization syllables. Frequently described examples of this need only be briefly mentioned here: The five-part motet *Illibata Dei virgo nutrix* contains – besides the composer's name as an acrostic (embedded in the first letters of the text lines) – as a cantus firmus in constant diminution an ostinato on the notes *la-mi-la*, which forms the name "Ma-ri-a", to whom the singers' prayer is addressed. It was printed by Petrucci in 1508 in *Motetti a cinque libro primo*, but also appears in an older manuscript.<sup>24</sup> In Petrucci's *Canti C* from 1503 we find the four-part textless piece *Vive le roy*, a regular canon for three voices that must be combined with a tenor voice, which according to the canon prescript can easily be deduced from the title: "Vive" = *ut-mi-ut-re*, "le" = *re*, "roy" = *sol-mi*. The found series of notes is sung three times in *brevis* values using the *hexachord naturale* and *durum*. Similarly, the cantus firmus in the *Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae* spells the duke's name (= *re-ut-re ut re-fa-mi-re*) mostly in regular *brevis* values, which are sung in different positions and then artfully manipulated. These works 'speak' in a distinct, poster-like manner using solmization syllables. Maybe *Missa La sol fa re mi* does too. According to the well-known anecdote about the creation of the mass, the syllables of the title can be heard as either "Laisse faire moy" or "Lassa far a mi" (Leave it to me). But here the resulting motif permeates the entire musical structure as an ostinato repeated more than 200 times, – both as a cantus firmus in the tenor and in the polyphonic play of the other voices – variedly rhythmized and in every imaginable hexachord transformation with the exertion of an incredible imagination. These two masses was published by Petrucci in *Missarum*

21 Willem Elders, 'Symbolism in the Sacred Music of Josquin' in Richard Sherr (ed.), *The Josquin Companion*. Oxford 2000, pp. 531-568 (pp. 547-549).

22 Genesis 28:12.

23 On the literary interpretations of this, see Elders, 'Symbolism', p. 547.

24 More about this and the other works by Josquin in Helmuth Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez I-II*, Tutzing 1962-65, and Sherr, *The Josquin Companion*, and their references to older and more recent literature.

*Josquin Liber secundus* and *Misse Josquin* from 1505 and 1502 respectively. In the first mass book from 1502 we also find *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*, where the hexachord – and the ladder – plays a more hidden, subtle role. The well-known “L'homme armé” tune is moved through the mass step by step up the six notes of the *hexachordum naturale* and changes its modal character with each move, even though the main sections remain anchored on D. Here is demonstrated not only a thorough familiarity with the possibilities of the hexachord and the mode system, but also an ability to combine them in a new way.

I have emphasized above that the mentioned compositions by Josquin are all found in print in Petrucci's collections, although several – especially masses – are also found in older manuscripts. As will also appear from the mention of other composers' production, Petrucci's editor seems to have had a predilection for music with symbols formed from the basic elements of music theory. This kind of music seems to have flourished among the composers of Josquin's generation in the decades before Petrucci's first printed music collection, *Odhecaton A* from 1501; perhaps this occurred as a sort of liberation from pre-existing tunes and as an exploration of the possibilities of abstract motifs in new constellations of sound and form.

James Haar has noted that the spread of the technique of deriving musical figures from the syllables of the hexachord in the late fifteenth century had Ockeghem's prestige behind it.<sup>25</sup> He alludes to the textless four-part motet *Ut heremita solus*, which Petrucci published without composer attribution in *Motetti C* in 1504, but which is mentioned in Guillaume Crétin's poem *Deploration sur la mort d'Ockeghem*, however without Crétin explicitly making it clear that Ockeghem is the author.<sup>26</sup> Its tenor must be derived from a very obscure canon prescription, where ‘relatives’ to the tones of the *hexachordum durum* from the note *G-sol-re-ut* must be included.<sup>27</sup> It would hardly be possible to solve its riddle, if Petrucci's print had not appended a *Resolutio* – and once the principle has been explained, the solution almost belongs to the choirboys' first lessons. As Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl has discussed, the anonymous setting, which is strongly characterized by teeming sequencing figures, can hardly be the same as Crétin refers to as Ockeghem's motet; possibly the tenor – or the idea for the canon – may be Ockeghem's, while the printed piece more likely originates from the circle of Josquin's contemporaries.<sup>28</sup>

It is very conceivable that *scala caelestis* and the worship of Mary is the background for masses by Antoine Brumel (c. 1460-c. 1512, *Missa Ut re mi fa sol la*) and Johannes

25 James Haar, ‘Some Remarks on the »Missa La sol fa re mi«’ in Lowinsky & Blackburn, *Josquin des Prez: Proceedings*, pp. 564-588 (p. 575).

26 Published in J. Ockeghem (ed. Richard Wexler with Dragan Plamenac), *Collected Works III: Motets and Chansons*. Philadelphia 1992, p. 18; see also the introduction, pp. XLV ff.

27 Andrea Lindmayr, ‘Ein Rätseltenor Ockeghems. Des Rätsels Lösung’, *Acta Musicologica* 60 (1988) pp. 31-42. If you look at the note *g* in *Figure 1* below, it is itself *ut*, its “socii” are therefore the notes *sol-re*, which must then be sung after the notated tone; in the same way the note *e'* comes to be called *la-mi* and has only *mi* as ‘relative’.

28 Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, ‘Ockeghem's motets. Style as an Indicator of Authorship. The case of *Ut heremita solus* reconsidered’ in Philippe Vendrix (ed.), *Johannes Ockeghem. Actes du XLe Colloque international d'études humanistes. Tours, 3-8 février 1997* (Collection « Épitome musical » 1) Paris 1998, pp. 499-520. She proposes Alexander Agricola as her most likely candidate for the composer (pp. 515 ff). If one has to enter into this kind of speculation, it is perhaps just as reasonable to point to a composer who in other contexts has shown himself to be fascinated by the possibilities of the hexachord, Josquin first and foremost, with e.g. Brumel, Isaac or Ghiselin-Verbonnet as alternative candidates.

Ghiselin-Verbonnet (c. 1460-c. 1507, *Missa De les armes*), who both had their masses printed by Petrucci in 1503, and both use the hexachord as a starting point for elaborate developments in the tenor parts.<sup>29</sup> However, *Ut Phebi radiis* probably rather should be compared to motets by Loyset Compère (c. 1445-1518) and Heinrich Isaac (c. 1455-1517).

The hexachord is used quite openly as a symbol in Compère's small five-part motet *Virgo celesti*, which opens Petrucci's *Canti B* from 1502.<sup>30</sup> *Hexachordum molle* sounds as cantus firmus in tenor secundus in dotted *breves*, which are rhythmically shortened in the two following repetitions of the tone ladder. The awareness of the importance of the hexachord is revealed by the imaginative choice of the second cantus firmus in the tenor primus. It is a hymn tune, on which the solmization hymn "Ut quent laxis" is often sung, but exactly not the hymn tune that in connection with the text "Ut quent laxis" gave the steps of the hexachord their names. In order to grasp the connection, one must know the Gregorian melodies by heart, especially since the text here is completely different. It is of course a prayer to the Virgin Mary "... look down on your servants, who unceasingly devote themselves to you, O Virgin Mary".<sup>31</sup>

29 Brumel's mass was printed in *Misse Brumel*. Its title suggests the hexachord, but Brumel's disposition of the course of the mass incorporates the entire traditional tone system with a passage up through the various hexachords (*durum*, *naturale* and *molle*) of which it consists (see *Figure 1*): Kyrie uses the hexachord on G, Gloria that on c, Credo on f, Sanctus on g, Agnus Dei I on c', Agnus Dei II on f' and Agnus Dei III on g' – thus the cantus firmus in the tenor includes the full range of the tone system from G to e". The tenor mostly sounds in long note values up and down through the hexachords; these motifs also occur occasionally in the other voices. Modern edition in Antoine Brumel (ed. Barton Hudson), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 5), vol. I, 1969, p. 41.

The mass with the cryptic title by Ghiselin-Verbonnet is found in *Misse Ghiselin*. Its tenor is based on the *hexachordum durum*, which in the Kyrie is presented in two segments in *brevis* values: g-a-h, rest, c'-d'-e', rest, and then down again. The hexachords appear again in Agnus Dei I (now on g, f and c'), but otherwise the material in the other parts is varied and expanded so that it looks more like an exploration of the authentic Mixolydian scale with motifs in long note values that are gradually moved up and down (in Gloria and Sanctus, four-tone scale segment; in Credo, movements in thirds; in Et iterum and Agnus Dei III (in superius), second steps; in Agnus Dei II, quarter leaps). Modern edition in Johannes Ghiselin-Verbonnet (Clytus Gottwald ed.), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 23) vol. II, 1964, p. 38.

30 Published in Loyset Compère (L. Finscher ed.), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 15) 1958-72, vol. III, p. 20, and Ottaviano Petrucci (Helen Hewitt ed.), *Canti B 1502* (Monuments of Renaissance Music II) Chicago 1967, p. 92. The motet occupies the first complete opening in *Canti B*; before it, Josquin's brief setting of "L'homme armé" is inserted to fill out the space.

31 See further Ludwig Finscher, *Loyset Compère (c. 1450 1518). Life and Works* ( Musicological Studies and Documents 12) 1964, pp. 124-127, and Petrucci, *Canti B*, pp. 25-27. Compère is also the author of a three-part motet-chanson *Royne du ciel / Regina celi* in Petrucci's *Odhecaton A* from 1501. In its contratenor, the first segment of the antiphon "Regina caeli" (*Antiphonale Romanum*, Tournai 1949, p. 691) is quoted as an ostinato. The motif (c-d-c-d-e) is moved up stepwise four times with fixed pauses between the repetitions. In this way it comes to precisely fill the *hexachord naturale* and constitute a *scala caelestis*. Throughout the section with ostinato countertenor (to bar 39), the tenor keeps within the *hexachord durum* (g-e); this stability only disintegrates when new melodic material is introduced in the countertenor. None of the sources for the song have more than text incipit. However, in the manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. f.fr. 1722, there are preserved two anonymous rondeaux quatrains, which fit the music perfectly, "Royne du ciel, chief d'œuvre de nature" (f. 1v) and "Royne de ciel du layt virginal" (f. 2). Both poems with the prayer from the earthly sinner to the Queen of Heaven fit equally perfectly into the *scala caelestis* genre. The song is published with the latter rondeau in H. Hewitt & I. Pope (eds.), *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A* (The Medieval Academy of America Publ. No. 42, Cam. Mass. 1942, p. 395; without text it is found in Compère, *Opera omnia*, vol. V, p. 7, and in Johannes Prioris (T. Herman Keahey & Conrad Douglas eds.), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 90) vol. III, 1985, p. 124.

The tenor in Isaac's five-part Marian motet in two sections, *O decus ecclesie – Te laudant*, is similar to Josquin's in *Ut Phebi radiis*, only it is even more strictly structured. It presents the *hexachord naturale* as an ostinato that both increases and decreases and includes notes as well as rests: First a *brevis ut* followed by a *brevis* rest, then *ut-re* plus two rests, *ut-re-mi* plus three rests, etc. until the entire hexachord sounds followed by six rests. After this, the whole thing comes in retrograde, where the hexachord and rests fade out, until only *ut* is back as the final note. This construction is used in both sections of the motet.<sup>32</sup>

Josquin's *Out Phebi radiis* thus falls into a pattern that was not unknown to his contemporaries or slightly older colleagues. But where Compère and Isaac build the ladder to heaven into a relatively common sort of setting, Compère in a very short and urgent setting close to the 'intercessory prayer' type, and Isaac's is widely varied around the strict tenor, Josquin creates a sound that cannot be found elsewhere in the music of the period.

*What every choirboy should know*

On top of all this artifice, *Ut Phebi radiis* seems simple, as if Josquin has deliberately limited himself to the possibilities of hexachords with the rigid fourth canon in *brevis* values, which gradually develops chains of parallel thirds, placed at the bottom of the structure and upper voices that expand the initiatives of the canon. The development is tied to the text line by line as the entries of the canon voices mark a new line of text with more and more hexachordal syllables.

The upper voices form a largely self-supporting *contrapunctus* structure that can of course be combined with the canon, but mostly does not need its notes to function. Only in bar 34 does a fourth appear between the upper voices (*c'/f'*), which must be legitimized by the concord of the canon (*f/a*). The fourth appears in connection with a refined idea: instead of imitating the movement *ut-re-mi-fa* in the upper voices, it is sung simultaneously in the two voices, each in its own hexachord (at the distance of a fourth) in different rhythmicizations. It functions as a 'simultaneous imitation' and is part of Josquin's strategy of constant variation in the upper voices' presentation of the solmization syllables. He meets the contemporary ideal of *varietas*, where it can be done within the predetermined structure of the motet.

At the beginning of the motet, an illusion of a normal three- or four-part imitation of the given melodic material with the involvement of all voices is created,<sup>33</sup> thereafter – until the sixth text line – the upper voices themselves develop the motifs of the solmization syllables using different hexachords. It happens in basically the same way in both sections of the motet, partly in canonical imitation<sup>34</sup> and partly in simple polyphony,

32 The first section is printed in Petrucci, *Motetti a cinque Libro primo* from 1508; complete it is found in the manuscripts Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 1494 (Apel-Codex; with several copies of the motet, of which some are fragmentary) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, mus. ms. 40021 (without text), published in R. Gerber (ed.), *Der Mensuralkodex des Nikolaus Apel II* (Das Erbe deutscher Musik 33) Kassel 1960, p. 155.

33 In fact, only the note *ut* is imitated, but Josquin lets superius and altus 'hear' the canon entry as a fourth movement, and they accordingly imitate it.

34 In the second line, the imitation of the canon's step up a second is 'hidden' by not cadencing before the entries (bb. 12-13), the first line is allowed to run out in parallel thirds (bb. 10-12). During the first two lines, the solmization syllables have been connected to the three elementary hexachords on C, F and G (see further the transcription, where the hexachords are indicated by letters). The third line starts as a

which in places approaches the ‘intercessory prayer’ type.<sup>35</sup> The first two lines are tied together without a cadence (bb. 12-13), while the following lines all cadence on F, at the same time as the bassus goes from *c* to *d* (bb. 21, 32 and 44) – all ‘deceptive’ cadences forced by the canon structure.

In the second section the descending cantus firmus gives rise to a greater number of cadence types, and a greater variety of steps are touched in this way (D, A, E and C).<sup>36</sup> The last three lines of each section are not separated by cadences, and they are very different in type of setting: As previously mentioned, the sixth text line starts as a three-part hexachord canon (bb. 55-62 and 127-35), where superius pauses. They stand out in the harmonic and tonal progression of the motet not only by the change in instrumentation, but also by virtue of the concords, which include the tritone that occurs between altus and tenor, and which neither can nor must be modified by means of *musica ficta* (bb. 57, 60 and 131). The preparation for this (the fifth line) is in the first section a close canon at the fifth of a scale segment (bb. 48-50), which shows the characteristic alternation between concords of fifths and sixths, which prevents the forbidden parallel movement of perfect intervals (displaced parallels). It is exactly the same principle that lies behind the relationship between altus and bassus in the following three-part canon in twice as long note values. In the descending canon in the second section, the reverse is overshadowed by resolutions of fourths into thirds between altus and tenor (bb. 128-132). In the second section, the preparation for the three-part canon is the last ‘simultaneous imitation’ (bb. 121-123). The final lines (line 7) in each part form a contrast to the rest of the motet, to which I shall return.

In his design of the upper voices Josquin shows a light hand, which in formulation can be close to the improvisational practice of the time. Imitation of undemanding motifs at the fifth and in unison belongs to what Tinctoris expected from skilled singers who improvised two or three voices over a given tune,<sup>37</sup> passages in parallel thirds and sixths, and stereotypical figurations as well. The ‘bridge passages’ that connect the lines of text, and which altus in particular takes care of, exhibit many standard figures, and the passage in bars 44-47 is a mechanical putting-in-sound of the ascending thirds in the canon voices – without any *contrapunctus* function.<sup>38</sup> Also the staggered parallel lines are typical improvisational procedures. The canon of the lower voices does not need to be noted at all. It can be described in a few words, and once the connection between the text and its

close canon at the fifth (bb. 23-25), but it turns out that the actual entry in altus only comes in bar 26 at the unison. The close canon on the first five notes of the hexachord comes in the 5th line (b. 48). The second section follows a slightly changed course with the first two lines in imitation at the fifth (bb. 75-76 and 86) and the 3rd line at the unison (bb. 96-97). The effect with ‘simultaneous imitation’ is saved to the 5th line in bar 121.

35 Bars 38-42 with the text “instar habens super aera”.

36 Bar 83 on D, Phrygian cadences bar 94 on A and bar 105 on E (the low voices reinterpret it to a chord on *a*), and bar 117 on C (*a*).

37 Cf. Bonnie J. Blackburn, ‘On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987) pp. 210-284 (pp. 255 ff).

38 Similar to corresponding places in Agnus Dei III in *Missa L’homme armé sexti toni*, cf. Christoffersen, ‘Josquin’, pp. 12-13 (incl. Ex. 2). Viewed as an independent structure, the upper voices in *Ut Phebi radiis* call to mind the ‘provincial’ French church music from the first decades of the 16th century, e.g. an anonymous two-part *Stabat mater* in the manuscript Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Ny Kgl. Saml. 1848 2°, p. 27-33, which shows exactly the same simple elements, just in a much more extended development, cf. Christoffersen, *French Music*, vol. I, pp. 283-285, and vol. III, p. 250.

realization is explained to the singers, much of their movement through the hexachords in the upper voices can also be verbally agreed upon. Music that corresponds to these, the longest passages in the motet, can thus in principle be performed solely on the basis of agreements with support in the hexachord theory supplemented with improvised filling in.

The hexachord system was among the basic knowledge when new choirboys had to learn the enormous church song repertoire and in addition to that learn to sing counter voices to given melodies. In order to navigate the tone system (see *figure 1*), they had to build a mental map, where they could learn to constantly anticipate where the important semitone step should be placed. They could achieve this by moving between the various positions in which the hexachord's invariable scale segment could be placed (*mutatio*). Through endless practice and lifelong use, fixed tracks emerged in this mental map, which gave singers the confidence to launch into complex polyphonic performances based on a pre-existent melody. Composers could also rely on these habitual tracks in written music, and even often challenge the singers with passages that they could not foresee.<sup>39</sup>

Something could indicate that it is precisely these skills, 'what each choirboy should know', which Josquin has imposed on himself as a limitation in this motet. However, it is hardly written as teaching material for young singers.<sup>40</sup> Rather, its sounding identity seems to be inspired by a process of oral instruction and learning by singing after the master's example. Adrianus Petit Coclico (c. 1500-62), who cannot in all respects be considered a witness to the truth, gives in his *Compendium musices*, printed in Nuremberg in 1555, a credible description of a successful master-apprentice relationship:<sup>41</sup>

My teacher Josquin des Prez never lectured or wrote a *Musica*, yet he created in a short time perfect musicians, because he did not keep back his pupils with long and thoughtless instructions, but taught them the rules in few words and by exercise and practise while singing. When he saw that the pupils were well grounded in singing, good pronunciation, embellishing the singing and applying the words in their right places, he taught them about perfect and imperfect concords and how to sing counterpoint over a plainsong using these concords. However, if he among them found some of sharp minds and promising disposition, he taught them in few words the rules for composing with three voices, and then with four, five, six voices etc., always providing them with examples, which they had to imitate.<sup>42</sup>

39 An easily accessible introduction to hexachords can for example be found in Rob C. Wegman's article 'Musica ficta' in Tess Knighton & David Fallows (eds.), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*. London 1992, pp. 265-274.

40 In 1926 Otto Ursprung assumed that the small motet was a practice piece for a church choir, a view Helmuth Osthoff could agree with; cf. Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez*, vol. II, p. 80.

41 Regarding the assessment of this passage, see Patrick Macey's article 'Josquin Desprez' in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Second Edition*. London 2001, vol. 13, p. 228.

42 Adrianus Petit Coclico, *Compendium musices*. Nürnberg 1555 (Facsimile edition by Manfred F. Bukofzer, Kassel 1954) f. Fii<sup>r</sup>: "Item Præceptor meus Iosquinus de Pratis nullam unquam præleget aut scripsit Musicam, brevi tamen tempore absolutos Musicos fecit, quia suos discipulos non in longis & frivolis preceptionibus detinebat, sed simul canendo præcepta per exercitium & practicam paucis verbis docebat. Cum autem videret suos utcunque in canendo firmos, belle pronunciare, ornate canere, & textum suo loco applicare, docuit eos species perfectas & imperfectas, modumque canendi contra punctum super Choralem, cum his specibus. Quos autem animadvertit acuti ingenij esse & animi lecti his tradidit paucis verbis regulam componendi trium vocum, postea quatuor, quinque, sex & c. appositis semper exemplis, quæ ille imitarentur."

What improvisation, on the other hand, cannot produce is the delicate balancing of the elements of the motet, its elegance in *varietas* and the many subtle details in the play with hexachords and symbols. Here the professional composer steps in and controls the flow and sound, so that the music, in accordance with the most developed aesthetics of the time, could become a pleasure for the senses as well as for the mind<sup>43</sup> – and strengthen the self-esteem of the initiates through the understanding of symbols and technique and thereby become an identity affirming pass to the ‘guild’ of former choir boys. In this way, the motet also comes to stand as an expression of the singers’ adoration of Mary, as a discreet counterpart to Josquin’s *Illibata Virgo Dei radix*.

There are three easily definable types of musical setting in the motet, of which the canon structure accounts for the longest developments and is balanced by the others. The first type of setting is distinctly layered, with the canon voices and the upper voices in separate layers. The first are stiff and calm, engaged in a slow construction of the motet's most important symbol, the others are mobile, close to the words and expressive. The relationship between them approaches a parodic rendering of the roles of the singers, the insisting *tenorista* against the teeming trebles and countertenors, and they are easy to distinguish from each other even when they are placed in the same range (altus, *f-a'*, and tenor, *f-d'*, in the passages in question) solely by virtue of their rhythmic design. That the role of the canon voices must be seen as primarily a sonorous/symbolic idea on the part of the composer is evident from the fact that, as previously described, they stand outside the *contrapunctus* structure that carries the coherence of the movement. Usually, the cantus firmus or another melodic formation takes part of this principal role. The sonorous/symbolic idea is potentiated through the use of the three-part hexachord canon at the start of the sixth text line, just before the contrasting types of setting are put into use.

The layering gives associations to the generations before Josquin, where the isorhythmic motet was a highly esteemed, learned form of music. Here the tenor melody (or less often two tenors) functions in long note values as the backbone of the composition, developed through repetitions and often mensural transformation, and most of the time in pronounced contrast to the upper voices singing a different text. This type of music survived on a smaller scale in Josquin's generation in the form of the motet-chanson, in which the upper voices sang a French poem in *forme fixe*, while the tenor performed an appropriate Latin quotation in calm note values. It is mostly associated with Loyset Compère, but Josquin himself contributed to the genre with three works.<sup>44</sup> Characteristic of both of these types is that an independent upper voice duo begins before the tenor(s) come in and take

44 Sherr, *The Josquin Companion*, pp. 336-340.

their place in the structure. Josquin starts *Ut Phebi radiis* opposite by presenting all four voices at once. If he consciously points to the separate sound layers of the old, learned motet type, it is probably more to its idea and sound than to its real design. He hardly wants to revive an outmoded model either, rather it is the play with sound in the form of the syllables of the hexachord that has made the model arouse his interest. And his start of the motet has become more of a play with sheer sound than a normal imitative presentation. The singers send out the syllables as individual sounds consisting of pronunciation, pitch and tone of voice, only later on does one gradually begin to perceive what they are becoming.

As unique as the timbre and design of the setting are in the canon passages, just as banal, and effective, is the style in the conclusion of the first section (bb. 62 ff). Recitation of prayers and praises in rhythmically flexible chordal settings with frequent use of parallels in thirds and sixths is used in countless masses and motets, where it is found as a contrasting element, and some compositions stick to this type of setting entirely.<sup>45</sup> Josquin lets this model, which had already been hinted at earlier by the upper voices, take care of the praise of Mary around the sustained notes in the tenor. Three voices are sufficient to produce it.

To finish the motet he chooses another model, the fanfare, which has the same right of birth in the vocabulary of his predecessors, just think of the end of Du Fay's ballad *Se la face ay pale* and the use that Du Fay made of it in the mass of the same name, or the whole accumulation of sound at the end of Josquin's own *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni*.<sup>46</sup> The close imitation of motifs that traverse the C-triad and are accelerated with the introduction of *sesquialtera*, brings the modally more varied second section to a very effective climax. At the same time, the fanfare was probably the only type of setting that could be used effectively, when the motet's internal logic dictates that it must be done over a sustained low *c* in bassus. After bassus' *c* has died away, the three remaining voices can go to the cadence with a sweeping *fauxbourdon*-like gesture, perhaps a hinted *cadeau* to style models of the past, which after all contributed some sonorous atmosphere to Josquin's motet.

As with most other music by Josquin, this motet is very difficult to date. Helmuth Osthoff considered it a very early work because of its simple technique,<sup>47</sup> while William Prizer would place its appearance late, at 1501, very close to the time of publication.<sup>48</sup> A more precise placement in time is probably irrelevant. It is more important to place it in the decades and in the same world of thought, where the work on the two *L'homme armé* masses belongs, where Josquin in *Super voces musicales* was preoccupied with the

45 Bonnie J. Blackburn has identified this type of devotional or intercessory prayer from another point of view, by studying the many passages in fermata chords, in the article 'The Dispute about Harmony c. 1500 and the Creation of a New Style' in Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450-1650. Actes du colloque international Louvain-la-Neuve, 23-25 septembre 1999* (Musicologica Neolovaniensia Studies 9) Louvain-la-Neuve 2001, pp. 1-37; see also the introduction and note 5 in the present article.

46 Christoffersen, 'Josquin', pp. 15-16.

47 Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez*, vol. II, p. 79; René Bernard Lenaerts goes so far as to call it "... obviously a scholastic work from an early date period of the master" in the article 'Musical Structure and Performance Practice in Masses and Motets of Josquin and Obrecht' in Lowinsky & Blackburn, *Josquin des Prez: Proceedings*, pp. 619-626 (p. 624).

48 Prizer, 'Music and Ceremonial', p. 132.

hexachord and with advanced canon technique and in the *Sexti toni* ventured into letting the tune sing forwards and backwards at the same time as the basis of a sound composition. In *Ut Phebi radiis* he could work purely in sound and canon without the demands of the large form.

I have dared to trouble the reader with this long-winded account of Josquin's *Ut Phebi radiis*, because I believe that on this background I can draw conclusions that set up some useful benchmarks for a future work with the treatment of sound and vocal instrumentation, even if they of course have to be adjusted to accommodate music that does not have the same unique appearance:

- That Josquin transformed a well-known musical symbol for the Virgin Mary (*scala caelestis*) into a sonorous idea by expanding the principles of the hexachords to the whole sounding complex, text as well as tones, and thus produced a motet for devotion, which was at the same time a summary of the singers' training and a symbol of the singers' worship of Mary.
- That the solmization syllables with associated tones appear at the same time as sound phenomena, as symbols and as part of a meaning-bearing text.
- That the perception of its sound in this case must have arisen together with the idea for the motet, and that the conception of the whole was largely finished at the same time as the writing of the text.
- That he reshaped existing setting and sound types and used them for purposes that he himself defined.
- That the idea for the motet may have arisen in connection with Josquin's work on other compositions and in agreement with similar efforts by contemporary composers, perhaps in some form of competition.
- That Petrucci's production of music prints shows that there was great interest in and perhaps also prestige tied to this type of music around the year 1500.
- That the simple can encompass much more than what the music's appearance in notation immediately suggests.

Josquin Desprez, *Ut Phebi radiis*

Petrucchi, *Motetti libro quarto* 1505, nr. 7

Superius Mensura =  $\circ$  C

Altus Ut Phe - bi ra - di - is so - ror ob -

Tenor F Ut Phe - bi ra - di - is so -

Bassus C Ut,

8

vi - a si - de - ra lu - na, Ut re - ges

ror ob - vi - a <sup>1)</sup> si - de - ra lu - na, Ut re -

ut rex,

ut rex,

15

Sa - lo - mon sa - pi - en - tis no - mi - ne cunc -

ges Sa - lo - mon sa - pi - en - tis no - mi - ne cunc -

ut

21

tos, Ut re - mi pon - thum

tos, <sup>2)</sup> Ut re - mi pon - thum, ut re - mi pon -

ut re mi,

re mi,

29

que-ren-tum vel-le-ris au-rum, Ut re-

thum que-ren-tum vel-le-ris au-rum, Ut re-mi

ut re mi fas,

ut re mi fas,

36

mi fa-ber in-star ha-bens su-per ae-ra

fa-ber in-star ha-bens su-per ae-ra

42

pen-nas, pen-nas, ut re mi fa

pen-nas, ut re mi fa sol,

48

Ut re-mi fas sol-va-ces tra-du-ce-re mer-ces,

Ut re-mi fas sol-va-ces tra-du-ce-re mer-

sol,

55

ces, Ut re - mi fas so - la

ut re mi fa sol

Pe - tri cur - re - re pro - ra, Sic su - per om - ne quod

Pe - tri cur - re - re pro - ra, Sic su - per om - ne quod

la, la,

Pe - tri cur - re - re pro - ra, Sic su - per om - ne quod

est reg - nas, O Vir - go Ma - ri - a.

est reg - nas, O Vir - go Ma - ri - a.

la.

est reg - nas, O Vir - go Ma - ri - a.

1) *Altus*, text, bars 9.2-10, the word “sidera” is missing (error).

2) *Altus*, text, bars 26.2-29.1, the words “Ut remi pontus” are placed here (error); obviously they must start bar 23.2 and then repeated when *Contra* repeats *Superius*’ preceding phrase.

3) *Bassus*, text, bars 94-96, “Latius” (error).

4) *Superius*, bar 128.1, *g*’ (error).

5) *Bassus*, text, bars 130 ff, “Rex o Christe Jesu” (error).

6) *Bassus*, bars 135 ff, dotted *longa c* – dotted *maxima c* – *maxima c* – *longa f* (error).

7) *Tenor*, before bar 138, a natural for *b*; the only *b* in the following appears in bar 148.1. At the change of staff in bar 144, the typesetter has retained the one-flat signature, which probably is an error.

74

C G C

La - ti - us in nu - me - rum ca - nit

F C

La - ti - us in nu - me - rum ca -

F

La,

C

La,

80

G

id quo-que ce - li - ca tur - ba,

nit id quo-que ce - li - ca tur - ba,

F

las

sol, C

las - so,

86

C F b

Las - so le - ge fe - rens e - ter - na mu -

F Bb C

Las - so le - ge fe - rens e - ter - na

92

b C

ne - ra mun do La sol fa ta mi - na

mu - ne - ra mun do La sol fa ta

F

la sol fa,

C

3) la sol fa,

99

G C

cla - ra pre - lu - stris in um - -

mi - na cla - ra pre - lu - stris in um - -

la

105

C F

bra, La sol fa mi ta na de ma -

bra, La sol fa mi ta na

sol fa mi,

la sol fa mi,

112

C F (b)

tre re - cen - ti - or or - - tus,

de ma - tre re - cen - ti - or or - tus,

la sol fa

la sol

119

F

La sol fa mi re ta qui-dem na non vi -

La sol fa mi re ta qui-dem na non vi -

mi re,

fa mi re,

126

o - la - ta, **C**

o - la - ta, La sol fa mi re ut ro -

la sol **C** fa mi re

<sup>5)</sup> la sol fa mi

134

ut ro - re ta na Ge - de - on quo, Rex, O

re ta na Ge - de - on quo, Rex, O

ut ro - re ta na Ge - de - on quo, Rex,

re ut, ut,

141

Chri - ste Je - su, no - stri De -

Chri - ste Je - su, no - stri De - us al - te

O Chri - ste Je - su, no - stri De - us al -

ut.

147

us al - te me - men - to.

me - men - to.

- te me - men - to.

### Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 English version, 'Josquin and the sound of the voices. Analysing vocal instrumentation – a suggestion' (at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Josquin\\_Sound.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Josquin_Sound.pdf)).
- \*2 English version, 'Liturgical music in a tight rein. *Alternatim* masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua' (at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Mantua.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Mantua.pdf)).
- \*3 These studies have resulted in an online book, *Songs for funerals and intercession. A collection of polyphony for the confraternity of St Barbara at the Corbie Abbey. Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, MS 162 D.* Edited by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, 2015 (at <http://amiens.pwch.dk/>; e-book version, 2 vols. at <http://amiens.pwch.dk/V1.pdf> and <http://amiens.pwch.dk/V2.pdf>).  
*French Music in the Early ...* is now available online at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Cop1848.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Cop1848.pdf).

## Liturgical music in a tight rein Alternatim masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua<sup>1</sup>

‘Kirkemusik i stramme tøjler. Om alternatim-messer til Santa Barbara i Mantova’,  
*Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* 30 (2002), pp. 9-50

The sacred music of the Palestrina period is at the same time very easy and exceedingly difficult for the music historian to deal with. On the one hand, this repertory is one of the best described and familiar by virtue of its historical status as an ideal for non-controversial music creation for the church and as a model for learning contrapuntal technique. This status has spawned volumes of new publications and studies in style history, sources and music theory throughout the now long working life of musicology. Certain parts of the repertory have even secured a permanent place in a still living performance tradition, both in the liturgy and in the concert hall. On the other hand, we are inclined to regard this music as the perfect expression of religious devotion, as resting within itself in harmonious balance without real contrasts and disturbing musical expressiveness. This means that we, despite the fact that the music is still a living part of musical life, think and hear it as if it were inside a glass bell as a perfectly preserved historical artefact, beautiful, distant and to a certain extent irrelevant.<sup>2</sup>

A significant part of this image is due to conscious choices on the side of the composers. As a result of the wave of evangelization that swept across Europe in the sixteenth century, with the Protestant reformations and the Catholic reforms as the most obvious consequences, church music distanced itself in various ways from the contemporary secular and sensual music, above all from the ‘lewd’ popular music, for example, the light madrigal and the erotic songs in the Italian, French and German traditions, but also

1 This article is indebted to a small group of students at the Department of Musicology, University of Copenhagen, Helle Sørensen, Karin Havsager, Jakob Faurholt and Christian Schlelein, who as participants in a seminar on Giulio Pellini’s *Missae Dominicales quinis vocibus diversorum auctorum* in the autumn of 1999 patiently listened to my ideas and contributed many impulses themselves – perhaps more than they themselves noticed.

The material has also been presented in a different form as a presentation at the 13th Nordic Congress of Musicologists in August 2000, which took place at the Department of Musicology at Aarhus University, an institution behind whose creation the famous Danish Palestrina researcher Knud Jeppesen was a driving force. Among Jeppesen’s merits is the discovery in 1949 of Palestrina’s masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua. The present article must therefore also be seen as a tribute to Knud Jeppesen’s contributions, not least because it is based on some of the material that Jeppesen had collected for use in his research, e.g. his own photographic recordings of manuscripts in Mantua and Milan (cf. P. Woetmann Christoffersen, ‘Knud Jeppesen’s Collection in the State and University Library (Århus, Denmark). A Preliminary Catalogue’, *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* 7 (1973-76), pp. 21-49). For the permission to use this material, I thank the State Library in Aarhus.

2 See e.g. the latest general introduction to Renaissance music, Leeman L. Perkins, *Music in the Age of the Renaissance*, New York 1999, which concludes on p. 881: “Everything contributes, in sum, to the overall sense of structural equilibrium and clarity that epitomizes the *ars perfecta* of the late sixteenth century.” However, Perkins’ presentation contrasts strikingly with the nuanced discussion of Palestrina in the shorter, only a year older introduction from the same publisher, by Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music. Music in Western Europe 1400-1600*. New York 1998, pp. 583-597.

from the serious madrigal with its elaboration and clarification of the words of the text. They obviously aimed for a sounding dignity that suited the reformed self-understanding of the church, a sort of objectification of the setting of the words of the liturgy.

One can choose to consider the 'glass bell' a historical condition for the church music of the Counter Reformation and for its dissemination. However, the very perfection of the music challenges scientific curiosity and piques the desire to penetrate behind its smooth surface and behind its reputation for being retrospective and conservative. The technical elements of form and structure in the music of Palestrina's time seem well described in the existing literature, likewise its relationship to mode and text setting and the many questions regarding the placement of its main genres in relation to the liturgy. Still, it seems extremely difficult with the analytical tools at our disposal to adequately describe the expression of the music or its ability to communicate. In an attempt to penetrate these problems, I have chosen to deal with a repertory of church music that has long since passed completely out of living tradition, namely a small selection of the *alternatim* masses that were written by a group of the most prominent composers, including Giaches de Wert, Giovanni Contino, Giangiaco­mo Gastoldi and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, for use in Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga's private princely church, *la Basilica Palatina Santa Barbara*, in the years from the 1560s and into the 1580s. It is a music that we can meet without preconceived expectations about its style and musical expression. However, we may encounter it with the expectation that it is music for use, characterized to such an extent by its function in the service that the music today can hardly be recognized as art and as an object of aesthetic reception. It is really in every detail regulated to an unusual degree by the prince who ordered and paid for the music.

It was a normal condition for the majority of musical activities in earlier times that it entered into a service relationship with an authority, in a client-patron relationship where musicians, singers and composers were the clients, while princes, institutions (typically the church), guilds or fraternities ordered and paid for the music. This relationship has been the subject of quite intensive research during the 1980s. Under the heading 'Patronage', such research was cultivated especially under English auspices as a side of historical music sociology with Iain Fenlon as a main figure.<sup>3</sup> Here the relationship of the decision-makers with music, its use and its management, was studied. The studies flourished in archival research: courts, ecclesiastical powers and cities were investigated and many new insights were gained, especially regarding the use of and creation of musical institutions for the legitimization of political power and spheres of interest.<sup>4</sup> The realization that the flourishing of polyphonic art music in the fifteenth century was largely due to the increased need for expensive performances of music, which arose by the establishment of foundations and endowments for the holding of memorial services and for intercession for the souls in Purgatory, is a branch of this. Barbara Haggh, in

3 See for example Iain Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua I-II*, Cambridge 1980 and 1982; Iain Fenlon (ed.), *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Patronage, Sources and Texts*, Cambridge 1981; and Iain Fenlon (ed.), *The Renaissance. From the 1470s to the end of the 16th century*, London 1989.

4 As very different examples of this rich literature can be mentioned, Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1984; Craig Wright, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris, 500-1550*, Cambridge 1989; Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, Oxford 1985; and Frank A. D'Accone, *The Civic Muse. Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Chicago 1997.

particular, has been prominent here in recent years.<sup>5</sup> It is characteristic of this research that it mostly takes place on the basis of documents, while there has been a rather shy attitude towards going into closer studies of the music, which can be concretely linked to these client-patron relationships. It is a difficult area to deal with, because often the people who commissioned the music do not seem to have set clear requirements for the music beyond the fact that it should naturally adapt to local liturgical traditions, and then of course be on par with and preferably enjoy a reputation on par with the music of the leading institutions – or at least be able to pretend.

In the case of Mantua, the situation is different. Here reigned a prince who was himself a respected composer. He had the power and insight to develop his own interpretation of the ideals of the Catholic reforms with regard to church music and to realize this interpretation through specific demands on his composers. By studying the Mantuan repertory, we can, on the one hand, get an impression of how composers of different temperaments, careers and ages responded to the duke's demands concerning the music, and through this also an impression of the latitude that the perfection of the music after all allowed the composer. On the other hand, we can try to uncover what interest the duke had in developing a distinctive art music for Santa Barbara and what role models he could rely on.

## 1. Duke Guglielmo and Santa Barbara

Guglielmo Gonzaga (1538-87) was not destined to be the ruler of the small northern Italian city-state of Mantua, whose territory lay on the fertile plain around the confluence of the Mincio and Po rivers and formed the eastern border of the German-Roman Empire against the papal states of Venice and Ferrara.<sup>6</sup> As the younger son of Federico Gonzaga, who in 1530 had been elevated from marquis to duke by Emperor Charles V, he could look forward to a career in the service of the church. When his older brother died childless in 1550, however, the twelve-year-old Guglielmo insisted on his right to the princely dignity, and he therefore took over the title as the third duke. His upbringing was characterized by a solid ecclesiastical education and a voracious interest in music. His interests were supported and nurtured by his uncle Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, bishop of Mantua, who ruled on his behalf and who had also been among his brother's guardians.

5 See for example Barbara Haggh, 'Foundations or Institutions? On Bringing the Middle Ages into the History of Medieval Music', *Acta Musicologica* 68 (1996), pp. 87-128; and Barbara Haggh, Frank Daelmans & André Vanrie (eds.), *Musicology and Archival Research. Colloquium Proceedings Brussels 22-23.4.1993* (Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique 46), Brussels 1994.

6 This and the following passages are greatly indebted to Knud Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi da Palestrina, Herzog Guglielmo Gonzaga und die neugefundenen Mantovaner Messen Palestrinas. Ein ergänzender Bericht', *Acta Musicologica* 25 (1953) pp. 132-179, as well as to Iain Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, where one can find a detailed study of the musical life of Mantua in the 16th century. See also Fenlon's updated descriptions in 'Patronage, music, and liturgy in Renaissance Mantua' in Thomas F. Kelly (ed.), *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony* (Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice 2), Cambridge 1992, pp. 209-235; and in Iain Fenlon, *Giaches de Wert, Letters and Documents*, Paris 1999, pp. 51 ff. The background for and development of the Mantua liturgy is reviewed in Paola Besutti, 'Un modello alternativo di controriforma. Il caso mantovano' in Oscar Mischiati & Paolo Russo (eds.), *La cappella musicale nell'Italia delle controriforme. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi del IV centenario di fondazione della Cappella Musicale di S. Biagio di Cento. Cento, 13-15 ottobre 1989* (Quaderni della Rivista Italiana di Musicologia 27), Florence 1993, pp. 111-121.

Ercole Gonzaga (1505-63) was Mantua's ruler for 14 years divided into two periods, a task he carried out with great skill. A leading force in the Catholic reform movement from the start, he made the diocese of Mantua a model of ecclesiastical administration with frequent inspections of diocesan offices and demands on the clergy concerning the proper way of living and sufficient education, and at the wish of the pope he pursued a harsh, repressive policy towards Mantua's large Jewish community – the latter was a policy which the financially foresighted Guglielmo did not continue. In 1545, the cardinal commissioned the architect Giulio Romano to renovate the cathedral San Pietro according to guidelines that would later become the Council of Trent's recommendations for the design and decoration of church buildings. Under him church music flourished; Ercole regarded the cathedral as his private domain, and he himself paid his internationally famous chapel master, the Frenchman Jacques Colebault (1483-1559), whose name became so closely associated with Mantua during his more than 30-year career that he is known only by the name Jacquet of Mantua. In keeping with the cardinal's reform ideas, apart from a few occasional works in Latin, Jacquet composed almost exclusively liturgical music, in his mature years in elegantly flowing, constantly imitating five-part settings with emphasis on correct accentuation of the text.<sup>7</sup> Ercole was three times just a few votes away from being elected pope, and he ended his days as the powerful president of the Council of Trent. He died in 1563 during the closing sessions of the Council.

There is no doubt that Guglielmo had his uncle as a role model and that it required an effort to surpass him in fame and esteem. Politically he continued his uncle's line in a delicate balance between the stronger powers of Northern Italy, between the emperor and the pope, assisted by a finely meshed network of alliances, which were further supported by dynastic marriages. He became a shrewd administrator who created wealth and security in his small state – brutal in his exercise of power and exacting in his finances. While his own household was almost frugal, he understood the value of ostentatious splendour on the proper occasions, especially at weddings and state visits, and he embraced the church and its music with a genuine and generous interest.

The Gonzaga chapel in the cathedral of Mantua soon became too constricting for his ambitions. In the middle of Mantua's large palace complex, in a courtyard that had previously been used for ball games, he had a new church built, which was dedicated to the family's patron saint, Santa Barbara. It was consecrated in 1565, but parts of it were demolished a short time later to make room for extensions. It was partly for the sake of the performance of the music in keeping with the duke's ambitions (completed in the years 1569-72),<sup>8</sup> and partly to have the same placement of the altar as in St. Peter's in Rome with a central location in the choir, so that the celebrant turned his face towards the congregation, a privilege that was otherwise reserved the pope.<sup>9</sup> The status of the

7 Cf. P. Jackson & G. Nugent (eds.), *Jacquet de Mantua. Collected Works* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 54) 1970.

8 Parts of this information are listed in *Figure 2* below.

9 "Facciamo un Papa di Santa Barbara" (Let's make a pope in Santa Barbara) Pius IV is said to have remarked when he approved the plans for the interior of the church, cf. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, p. 99. Four popes were involved in approving buildings, privileges and benefices, as well as the liturgy and liturgical books: Pius IV de Medici (1560-65), Pius V Ghislieri (1566-72), Gregor XIII Boncompagni (1572-85) and Sixtus V Peretti (1585-90), cf. Paola Besutti, 'Testi e melodie per la liturgia della Capella di Santa Barbara in Mantova' in A. Pompilio et al. (eds.), *Atti del XIV Congresso della Società Internazionale di Musicologia I-III* (IMS Bologna 1987), Turin 1990, vol. II, pp. 68-77 (at pp. 68-69).

priests was correspondingly high. The church was led by an abbot who had the status of a bishop and referred directly to the papal see, and by six other dignitaries and 12 canons that were given the rank of counts and apostolic prothonotaries. A total of 64 persons were permanently attached to the church, including the organist and singers. As the most important, Santa Barbara got its own liturgy with a special calendar of saints, and in the period 1568-79 intense negotiations were conducted with the Vatican about the ordering of the liturgy. The arrangement of Santa Barbara's *officium* and calendar obtained papal approval in 1571. This set in motion the duke's efforts to reform the entire liturgical chant repertory, both textually and musically, in accordance with the ideals of the Council of Trent. In 1583 this work had reached such a point that a new missal and breviary obtained the papal *imprimatur*, and the textual basis for the services could be published in print. The associated liturgical songs were copied into large manuscripts, of which a large number have been preserved. The Santa Barbara archive contains 24 handwritten books of reformed chant, which have been used exclusively in this church for about 200 years.<sup>10</sup> One of the most important, *Kyriale ad usum ecclesie Sancte Barbare*,<sup>11</sup> contains ten masses, which together cover the ordinary for all the days of the church year.

This large repertory of plainchant had concurrently to be clothed in polyphony by the duke's musicians. Around 200 manuscripts and prints originating from Santa Barbara's music collection are today preserved in the *Fondo Santa Barbara* in the library of the Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' in Milan.<sup>12</sup> In this collection's manuscript music we find the result of the enormous musical activity that the duke set in motion. First of all the musicians associated with the new church provided liturgical compositions, but also composers from outside gave lustre to the duke's project – his correspondence with Palestrina and the probably eleven masses that it resulted in are famous examples of this.<sup>13</sup>

Guglielmo Gonzaga was himself a prolific composer, although one should probably consider how big a role the advice from his employed musicians played; it was in any case part of the court and Santa Barbara chapel master Giaches de Wert's many duties to be available, when the duke composed.<sup>14</sup> The duke had at least three sets of printed collections published by Gardane in Venice, a collection of madrigals (c.1583), one of motets (same year), and one or two of settings of the Magnificat (1586, lost). All the collections are anonymous, but their author can be identified through other people's references to the duke's compositions or through handwritten music from Santa Barbara,

10 Cf. the overview in Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, p. 203, and Paola Besutti, 'Catalogo tematico delle monodie liturgiche della Basilica Palatina di S. Barbara in Mantova', *Le fonti musicali in Italia, studie e ricerche* 2 (1988), pp. 53-66.

11 Archivio Storica Diocesano di Mantova, Santa Barbara, Corali ms 1, sec. XVI, *Kyriale ad usum Ecclesie Sante Barbare*.

12 Cf. Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi'. *Catalogo della biblioteca, fondi speciali 1. Musiche della capella di S. Barbara in Mantova*, Florence 1972.

13 See further section 4 of this article. Of masses alone the collection preserves 10 by Palestrina, 7 by Giaches de Wert, 5 by Giovanni Contino, 4 by Francesco Rovigo, 3 by Guglielmo Gonzaga himself – in the music only identified as "Serenissimo" – and 2 by Gastoldi as well as many others (see for example the inventory in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 143 ff), and there are Magnificat settings, motets, hymns etc.

14 Cf. Carol MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert (1535-1596). Life and Works* (Musicological Studies and Documents 17), s.l. 1966, pp. 39-40. In a letter from August 1586, Wert apologized for being forced by circumstances to be away from the court, while the duke composed. The letter is published in Fenlon, *Giaches de Wert*, p. 141.

which contains much more of the duke's music (including three masses).<sup>15</sup> In this context it is quite striking that while the duke could not allow himself to appear in public as a professional composer, practicing a profession, the professionals hailed him as their superior in obsequious praises of his compositional abilities – apart from Palestrina, who without deviating from the respectful tone permitted himself to suggest corrections and improvements in the duke's music. The praise seemed even stronger, when well-known composers took the duke's music as a model and composed madrigals based on motifs and quotes from the duke's music as a musical supplement to dedications and letters of thanks.<sup>16</sup> However, there can be no doubt that he possessed considerable musical insight and that he managed to leave a mark on the music in Santa Barbara that extended beyond his lifetime.<sup>17</sup>

Duke Guglielmo ruled the visual arts with the same firmness. In the years 1578-80 he had eight large paintings executed for the newly built halls in the Palazzo Ducale, *Sala dei Marchesi* and *Sala dei Duchi*, by the famous Venetian painter Jacopo Tintoretto (1518-94), whose studio during the same years was busy with the decoration of the Doge's palace and the Scuola di S. Rocco in Venice. The picture series glorified the Gonzaga family's rise from *capitani* to *duchi* through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the main emphasis on their military exploits. In these large compositions Tintoretto was free to carry out his mannerist experiments with colour scheme and perspective, but the program of the series and the details of the pictures were closely watched over by the duke and his advisers, and changes were demanded if necessary.<sup>18</sup> Despite his strict religiosity Guglielmo was a true descendant of his equally autocratic grandmother Isabella d'Este (1474-1539), who shaped Mantua's musical court culture in a humanist, native Italian

15 Cf. Richard Sherr, 'The Publications of Guglielmo Gonzaga', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31 (1978) pp. 118-125; and Claudio Gallico, 'Guglielmo Gonzaga signore della musica' in *Mantova e i Gonzaga nella civiltà del rinascimento. Atti del convegno organizzato dall'Accademia Nazionale ... Mantova, 6-8 ottobre 1974*, Mantua 1977, pp. 277-283. The Duke's compositions are published in Ottavio Beretta (ed.), *The Gonzaga Masses in the Conservatory Library of Milan Fondo Santa Barbara* (Corpus mensuralis musicae 108), vol. I, *Masses of Guglielmo Gonzaga and Francesco Rovigo*, s.l. 1997 (three masses); G. Gonzaga (R. Sherr, ed.), *Sacrae cantiones quinque voces (Venice 1583)*, New York 1990; G. Gonzaga (J.A. Owens & M. Nagaoka, eds.), *Madrigali a cinque voci (Venice 1583)*, New York 1995.

16 So did, among others, Ludovico Agostino and Girolamo Belli d'Argenta, cf. Sherr, 'The Publications', pp. 121-122.

17 The special liturgy in Santa Barbara may also be behind a significant part of the music in Claudio Monteverdi's famous *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, which was printed in Venice in 1610. It is possible that the music was originally written for the second Vesper on one of the two annual feast days for Santa Barbara, possibly in 1609, and the retention of Gregorian cantus firmus in the psalm settings and the Magnificat can be explained by the ideals of church musical in Mantua – this also gave Monteverdi the freedom to combine the latest composition technique with a conservative ethos; cf. Graham Dixon, 'Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610: 'della Beata Vergine'', *Early Music* 15 (1987), pp. 386-89. Furthermore, Monteverdi's use of the hymn 'Ave maris stella' also seems to be closer to the Mantuan version than to the contemporary Roman rite, cf. Paola Besutti, 'Ave Maris Stella: La tradizione mantovana nuovamente posta in musica da Monteverdi' in Paola Besutti, Teresa M. Gialdroni & Rodolfo Baroncini (eds.), *Claudio Monteverdi: Studi e prospettive, Atti del Convegno (Mantova, 21-24 ottobre 1993)*, Florence 1998, pp. 57-78. The whole question is discussed in Jeffrey Kurtzman, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610. Music, Context, Performance*, New York 1999, pp. 28 ff.

18 Tintoretto's so-called 'Gonzaga cycle' can be seen today at the Alte Pinakotek in Munich, and it was in the summer of 2000 the centre of a large exhibition which, among other things, documented the changes in the images through X-rays, cf. the exhibition catalogue, *Alte Pinakotek, Der Gonzaga-Zyklus*, Stuttgart 2000.

direction and guided the painters Mantegna, Costa and Correggio with a firm hand in the decoration of her *studiolo* in the palace.<sup>19</sup>

With the construction of *la Basilica Palatina di Santa Barbara* and the obtaining of very special privileges for the church, the duke was able to create a princely church in the spirit of the Tridentine Council – as the name suggests a sovereign (*palatine*) church, independent of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, subject only to the authority of the pope – and the duke's – and located in the middle of the palace. The creation and strengthening of this institution occupied the duke throughout his reign (1557-87). With its synthesis of architecture, type of government, liturgy and, not least, the associated, uniquely well-regulated church music, it stood as a symbol of the princely family's rooted position in Mantua, of the duke's commitment to the spiritual life of the church and of his status as sovereign prince in the empire's loose network of states, as an equal of the emperor and the pope.

## 2. A reformed song repertory

The duke himself took eagerly part in the ordering of Santa Barbara's liturgy and in the reform of the chant repertory. It was regulated according to the most 'modern' principles: All barbarisms such as longer melismas and irregular cadence points were removed with a heavy hand, the stresses were rearranged according to neoclassical ideals, and all melodies were brought to fit the modal doctrine as it was taught in sixteenth century textbooks. The melodies were levelled to stay within a range of about one octave, leaps were removed and unnecessary embellishments straightened out. Beginning and ending notes in each major section of a chant (between two double bars) were limited to the mode's *finalis* and *dominant* (the fifth, in Phrygian the fourth) as well as the octave above *finalis*, and the *dominant* was the same note in plagal as in authentic modes. Something completely new was that the monophonic mass ordinary was viewed as a whole that had to stick to the same mode through all main sections. A demand for a stylistic and tonal unity was thereby placed on the plainchant, which was completely foreign to the tradition of Gregorian chant.<sup>20</sup>

A repertory that could meet these requirements was produced partly by combining elements from the Roman repertory in new contexts, partly by significant interventions in existing songs (re-composition) and finally by composing new songs. An analysis of the melodies in Santa Barbara's *Kyriale* shows that the last of the three solutions has been used extensively in this important collection.<sup>21</sup> Jeppesen points out, for example, that the same motifs have been used through several new sections in the *Missa in Festis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, and that the final editing and the composition of new melodies for this was done by the same person.<sup>22</sup>

19 Cf. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, pp. 15 ff.

20 See further Jeppesen's analysis of the *Kyriale* in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 138 ff, as well as Jeppesen's preface to *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, vol. XVIII, Rome 1954, pp. x-xii.

21 Cf. Besutti, 'Testi e melodie', p. 70, where 19 songs (6 Kyrie, 2 Gloria, 5 Credo, 5 Sanctus and 1 Agnus) have not been found elsewhere, while 16 songs exhibit variants of known melodic material, and 13 are taken over unchanged.

22 Cf. note 20. Besutti, 'Testi e melodie', pp. 75-76 gives more examples from the same mass. The entire *Kyriale ad usum Ecclesie Sante Barbare* is planned to be published in Ottavio Beretta (ed.), *The Gonzaga Masses in the Conservatory Library of Milan Fondo Santa Barbara* (*Corpus mensurabilis musicae* 108) as vol. VI.



Figure 1, Credo from *Missa in Dominicis diebus* in Archivio Storica Diocesano di Mantova, Santa Barbara, Corali ms. 1, sec. XVI, *Kyriale*, pp. 54-55 (photo: Knud Jeppesen).

The mass we shall deal with in the following, the Sunday mass, *In Dominicis diebus*, is quite close to the standard repertory. However, one element, the *Credo* melody, is not known from elsewhere. The beginning of the *Credo* is reproduced in *Figure 1* after Santa Barbara's *Kyriale*. The mass is like this melody kept entirely in the second mode, Hypodorian. The *Gloria* and *Sanctus* (from missa xi) and *Agnus Dei* (missa xiii) were Hypodorian already in the Roman repertory, so only minor adjustments have been necessary here. The *Kyrie* (also from missa xi), on the other hand, was in authentic Dorian, and has therefore been subjected to a thorough revision, where the effective contrast with the rise to *d'* in *Christe* has been levelled, so that *Christe* stays within the same range of a seventh as *Kyrie* (see *Example 1*). The chant is also a good example of the simplification that was made in Santa Barbara's melodic material. The repetitions of the invocations have been removed and the long form of the final *Kyrie* has been reworked into *Kyrie II*.

The image displays a musical score for the Kyrie, comparing two versions: the Roman version and the Santa Barbara version. The score is organized into four systems, each with two staves. The first system is labeled 'Roman' and 'Santa Barbara'. The second system is labeled 'R' (Roman) and 'SB' (Santa Barbara). The third system is labeled 'R' and 'SB'. The fourth system is labeled 'R' and 'SB'. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables spread across multiple notes. The Roman version uses a different melody for the 'Kyrie eleison' phrase compared to the Santa Barbara version, which uses a more traditional, simpler melody. The Santa Barbara version also includes a 'Kyrie eleison' phrase in the third system, which is not present in the Roman version.

*Roman*  
Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i - son.ijj

*Santa Barbara*  
Ki - ri - e e - - - le - i - son.

R  
Chri - ste e - - - le - i - son.ijj

SB  
Chri - ste e - - - le - i - son.

R  
Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i - son.ijj

SB

R  
Ky - ri - e e - - - le - i - son.

SB  
Ki - ri - e e - - - le - i - son.

Example 1, Comparison of the Kyrie from *Missa in Dominicis diebus* in the standard version (Roman – after *Graduale romanum*, Tournai 1962, p. 38\*) and in the Archivio Storica Diocesano di Mantova, Santa Barbara, Corali ms 1, sec. XVI: *Kyriale* (p. 50).

The version of the *Kyriale* that we know was probably copied long after the creation of much of the polyphonic music that the duke had ordered for Santa Barbara. The book represents the final redaction of the plainchant for the ordinary, which was the result of a long process. It is also striking that in the Sunday masses there is a difference in how close the Santa Barbara composers are to the final redaction of the standard melodies, while at the same time they all use the special Credo melody, which probably belonged to a local tradition from before the reforms.

### 3. *Missae Dominicales* 1592

Only one single collection of polyphonic music from Santa Barbara's rich repertory was printed in the sixteenth century: *Missae Dominicales quinis vocibus diversorum auctorum. A F. Iulio Pellinio carmel. mant. collectae*. It was published in Milan by Michael Tini in 1592.<sup>23</sup> The publisher Giulio Pellini describes himself as a Carmelite monk from Mantua. The Carmelites were one of Mantua's more important monastic orders that had a number of composers and musicians in its ranks.<sup>24</sup> Pellini dedicated his collection of six five-part Sunday masses to Duke Alfonso II d'Este of Ferrara, who was married to Guglielmo Gonzaga's daughter Margherita, probably in the hope that the collection would find use not only in Ferrara but also in Milan, which was strongly oriented towards the Catholic reform efforts.

I have chosen to focus on this collection, because the music was selected by someone who had a close knowledge of the music in Mantua, and who found that these masses constituted the part of the repertory that had the greatest chance to make an impact outside of Santa Barbara, probably because of the broad applicability of the Sunday masses, and because the underlying melodies were relatively close to the standard repertory. Furthermore, Pellini's selection of composers is very representative. Not only do we here find composers from almost three generations: Giovanni Contino was born around 1513, Palestrina around 1525, Giaches de Wert and Allessandro Striggio were born in the mid-1530s, Franscesco Rovigo around 1540 and Giangiacomo Gastoldi as late as around 1555. Pellini has also grouped the composers with care: First the staff at Santa Barbara – Wert and Gastoldi were together chapel masters in the long period 1564-1609, Contino helped to determine the church's musical expression during its early years, and Rovigo was organist 1573-82, in the years when the plainchant and a large part of the repertory was created. Then follow the Mantuan nobleman and Florentine composer Striggio and the papal chapel master Palestrina – they represent the duke's ability to attract the participation of famous musicians in the project.<sup>25</sup> And finally, the masses are available in an easily accessible new edition.<sup>26</sup>

All six masses are like the overwhelming majority of the masses in Santa Barbara's repertory based on the *alternatim* principle, that is, only every other phrase/section of the plainchant are set in polyphony, and the chant not set in polyphony is left to either monophonic, choral performance or serves as a basis for organ improvisation, both

23 The set of five part-books is preserved incomplete in two different libraries, which, however, complement each other: London, King's Music Library (Cantus, Altus, Tenor and Quintus) and Modena, Biblioteca Estense (Altus and Bassus); see RISM 1592/1. I have used Knud Jeppesen's microfilm which is preserved at the State Library in Aarhus, cf. Christoffersen, 'Knud Jeppesen's Collection'.

24 Cf. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, p. 28.

25 Furthermore, this arrangement places the two most interesting masses by the best-known composers, Wert and Palestrina, first and last in the part-books, a tactic that many publishers used.

26 Siro Cisilino (ed.), *Sei Missae dominicalis a cinque voci di diversi autori raccolte da Giulio Pellini frate carmelitano di Mantova* (1592), Padua 1981. Cisilino had like C. MacClintock in the edition of Wert's mass (Giaches de Wert *Opera omnia*, Vol. XVII (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 24), s.l. 1977, p. 1) no knowledge of the *Kyrie* of Santa Barbara and brings standard melodies in the monophonic *alternatim* sections, therefore these versions are not appropriate for practical use. References to other new editions of the masses (Wert, Rovigo, Contino and Palestrina) can be found in the respective entries in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Second Edition, London 2001.



Example 2, *Credo* “Genitum non factum” in *Santa Barbara, Kyriale*, p. 55.

alternating with the polyphonic choir.<sup>27</sup> In the *Santa Barbara* masses *alternatim* plays the greatest role in the text-rich main sections *Gloria* and *Credo*, while this liturgy’s short *Kyrie* does not allow *alternatim*. In the *Sanctus*, the alternation only appears in the “*Sanctus*” acclamations, while the remainder (*Dominus*, *Pleni sunt*, *Osanna* and *Benedictus*) are composed throughout. In the *Agnus Dei*, one of the three prayers is set in polyphony.

To get an impression of the composers involved, we have to look at a single complete element from the long series of *alternatim* sections. As example I have chosen a central place in the *Credo*, where Jesus is characterized as “Genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt” – “Begotten, not made, being of one substance with the father, by whom all things were made”. Precisely this sentence has been chosen, because it allows the differences of the composers to stand out in particular clarity. The *Credo* melody as a whole is very simple, resembling for long stretches an Italian sequence with varied double verses,<sup>28</sup> thus “Genitum non factum” repeats and varies the melody of the preceding phrase “Deum de deo” (the beginning of the *Credo* is reproduced in *Figure 1* above). In “Genitum non factum” the melody keeps within the second mode’s fifth, extended by a note below *finalis d*. The phrase consists of three segments, which most composers have chosen to treat individually in imitative settings, and which I in *Example 2* and in the following transcriptions have provided with numbers (see *Examples 3-8*, where also the appearance of the melody is marked with + above the notes).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> On *alternatim*, see further section 5 below and *Figure 3*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook*, Oxford 1993, pp. 183-185.

<sup>29</sup> The music examples are reproduced in a rhythmic reduction 1:2 after Pellini’s printed *Missae Dominicales* from 1592, which in the case of these sections is without errors. The text is also complete and free of errors (here it has only been necessary in the Palestrina example (*Ex. 8*) to move the syllable “-ctum” in Tenor b. 10 from a half note *a*’ to the first beat similar to Quintus b. 15). All six masses are in basically the same combination of clefs regardless of the transposition of the *Credo* melody, namely: Cantus c1, Altus c3, Tenor c4, Bassus f4 and Quintus c4 (in Contino and Gastoldi, c3).

*Liturgical music in a tight rein*

Cantus

Altus

Tenor

Quintus

Bassus

6 2

C con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa -

A ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri

T ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri

Q ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem

B Ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa -

12 3

C tri per quem om - ni - a fa -

A per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a

T per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a

Q Pa - tri per quem

B tri, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri

18

C - cta sunt, om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

A fa - cta sunt, om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

T fa - cta sunt, om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Q om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

B per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Example 3, Giaches de Wert, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

*The composers in Missae Dominicales*

*Giaches de Wert* (c.1535-96) came into contact with the Gonzaga family at the age of 18,<sup>30</sup> and at the end of 1564 he was appointed chapel master at Santa Barbara and the court of Mantua. He remained in Mantua for the rest of his life as the city's leading musical personality. From 1582, however, he dealt less and less with Santa Barbara. He has a very large production of music for the church, masses, psalms, hymns, Magnificat settings and a passion, which today is little known, as his reputation mainly rests on the printed collections of motets and madrigals.

His Sunday mass is in Hypodorian on G with the melodic material transposed up a fourth. "Genitum non factum" is an inventive and expressive, compact contrapuntal setting (*Ex. 3*). The cantus brings the entire chant in calm note values in a rhythmically floating form that may reproduce the way in which it was recited in monophony. The tune is only extended by a cadence pattern to *g'* in bars 18-19, and it has an extension to the open ending with the third at the top (*bb.* 20-21). It does, however, contain a striking change, namely the augmented second between *bb'* and *c#''* in bar 11, which effectively highlights the end of "consubstantialem Patri". Cantus 'floats' above an imitative texture in the lower voices that completely skips melody segment 2. The melodic material is used flexibly, but all the while maintaining the rhythmic characteristics that give each segment identity, for example, the dotted beginning that also sets Cantus in motion. Segment 1 occurs a total of seven times with varying spacing and segment 3 five times (in Altus tonally modified).

Wert masterfully uses the five voices in vocal instrumentation.<sup>31</sup> He delays the entry of Bassus in extended note values until it can provide Cantus with maximum support. Before that, he has kicked the 'floating' of Cantus into motion with a series of – for the church style quite unconventional – dissonances (*bb.* 4-5). The idea here must be a series of in itself inconspicuous fourth suspensions in two-part *contrapunctus* progressions, which all are correctly resolved: bar 4.1, between Quintus and Tenor, bar 4.2, between Cantus (also seventh in relation to Quintus) and Altus, bar 5.1, between Cantus and Altus, and bar 5.2 between Altus (also second to Cantus) and Quintus. The build-up is striking after the harmonically static but rhythmically accelerating introductory imitation. In particular, Cantus' first top note *c''* draws the attention to the presence of the melody at the top of the texture; it is certainly introduced consonantly in relation to Tenor, but enhances the effect of the syncope dissonance in Quintus, so that it itself gets an effect as a dissonance, before it actually becomes so in bar 4.2. In the bars 10-15 Bassus swings up and not only emphasizes the word "Patri" again with a rhetorical minor sixth leap above Quintus (*bb.* 13-14), but also effectively prevents by its ascent to *bb* (*b.* 11) that the Cantus' effect on "Patri" is weakened by the singers – moreover, Wert avoids parallels with Altus and Quintus. Without this, the Cantus singers could easily be seduced by the *c#'* and *f#'* in Quintus and Altus (*b.* 10.2) to sing *bb'* in bar 11; at the same time Bassus hereby supports a sudden 'drive' towards D. The third segment of the melody is shaped like a typical tenor ending in a *contrapunctus* texture. Wert avoids this banality by after an almost canonic development of the segment letting Bassus have the last word in

30 Fenlon, *Giaches de Wert*, p. 26.

\*1 31 For an outline of 'vocal instrumentation', see my article 'Josquin og stemmernes klang. Et forslag om analyse af vokal instrumentation', *Musik & Forskning* 27 (2002), pp. 7-24.

the double octave below Cantus, by taking advantage of the fact that the beginning of the segment can also be used as a bassus part for the cadence formula in Cantus and Quintus (bb. 19-20).

Within 21 *brevis* bars, which, if described by an analysis of its harmony, move quite conventionally from the tonic to the fifth and back again, Wert creates a steeply rising intensity curve until “Patri,” which tapers off through the canonic second half. This is achieved through the differentiation of the voices, a calculated use of dissonances and a single unusual melodic progression, by contrapuntal imagination and not least by ‘timing’ the density of the texture – the two ‘supernumerary’ entries in Tenor and Quintus on *d* (bb. 6 and 8) also play a role in the build-up – and by completely avoiding the delaying effects of conventional cadence patterns during its course. This section is not typical of all the sections in Wert’s *alternatim* settings. It is obvious that the meaning of the text has caused this particular interpretation, but everywhere one finds the same virtuoso, flexible mastery of the counterpoint technique.

Compared to Wert’s *tour-de-force*, the examples from the hands of the other composers may seem paler, but they all have characteristic features and in some cases interesting solutions to offer.

*Francesco Rovigo* (c.1540-97) studied organ from 1570 with among others Claudio Merulo in Venice and then became organist at Santa Barbara in the years 1573-82. After a period as organist in Graz, he worked again in Mantua from 1591. His setting is based on the same interpretation of the text as Wert’s with the main emphasis on “consubstantialem Patri” to such an extent that the third segment “per quem omnia facta sunt” almost becomes secondary, briefly presented in a regular tenor setting (*Ex. 4*). Only Tenor brings all three segments. The setting is formed as a rise in two stages: First, segment 1 is imitated in all five voices with Tenor as the last entry. What is striking here is that Altus and Bassus, which enter on the fifth, introduce a *b* for *e* that colours the texture towards Phrygian and drives the harmony towards D. The second segment starts as a free unison canon in Tenor and Quintus (bb. 8-12), but it almost drowns in the compact contrapuntal texture. After a ‘false’ start in Altus (b. 10), the segment almost triumphantly sounds out in canon at the fourth in Cantus and Altus and ends in an extended cadence to *d*” on “Patri” in the Cantus (bb. 15-17). Except for the initial imitation, Bassus does not participate in the development of the melodic material, but functions as harmonic bass.

The progression of its sonority is carefully calculated with a rise to a high note and change of modal colour. The start’s Phrygian colouring with the downward pull of the semitone step is felt all the way to bar 13. After the cadence to G in bar 8, the voices are placed close together with Cantus reciting on the low *d*’. This leaves room for Altus’ entry with the second melodic segment on *f*’ in preparation for the canon in Cantus and Altus from bar 12, which leads to the setting’s highest note *d*”, now in Dorian with *e* natural as exposed notes in Altus and Quintus (bb. 15-16).

*Giovanni Contino* (c.1513-74) had a long career centred on Brescia, Trent and Mantua. In 1539/40 he entered the service of Bishop (later Cardinal) Christoforo Madruzzo in Trent and served as his chapel master during the Council of Trent. His *Missarum liber primus* from 1561 is dedicated to Cardinal Madruzzo, and contains music performed during the council, for example three masses on liturgical *cantus firmi*, a rather old-fashioned procedure at this time. In his motet collections one finds motets written for specific occasions during the council, e.g. *Austriæ stirpis* for the wedding of Francesco Gonzaga

Cantus

Altus

Tenor

Quintus

Bassus

6

C

A

T

Q

B

13

C

A

T

Q

B

Example 4, Francesco Rovigo, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

and Katharina d'Austria in 1549, probably written for the bride's entry into Trent on her way to Mantua.<sup>32</sup> His music is characterized by extensive use of *cantus firmus*, discreet imitative style, and by his responses to images in the text being rare and restrained (this also applies to his madrigals).<sup>33</sup> He spent the years 1551-61 as chapel master at the cathedral in his native Brescia. He worked in Mantua in the period 1561-65 while maintaining

32 *Modulationum*, 5v (two books) and 6v, all from 1560, cf. Iain Fenlon, 'Contino, Giovanni' in *The New Grove Dictionary* 6 (2001), pp. 344-345.

33 *The New Grove Dictionary* 6 (2001) pp. 344-345. Fenlon also writes here that Contino for a short period was chapel master at Santa Barbara. There seems to be no evidence for this, especially since the information is rejected in Fenlon, *Giaches de Wert*, p. 53 note 99. It must be a misprint for San Pietro. However, there can be no doubt that Contino was connected to Santa Barbara in some capacity.

Liturgical music in a tight rein

Cantus

Altus

Quintus

Tenor

Bassus

8

15

21

Ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Ex. 5. Giovanni Contino, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

his connection to Brescia, in 1561 as chapel master at the cathedral of San Pietro and then attached to the court chapel. He was again in Mantua in the years before his death, perhaps as early as 1568 – in the latter part of the period almost as a highly respected pensioner, from June 1573 with the title of *decanus* (head of the college of priests) at Santa Barbara. Today he is nearly forgotten, but in the sixteenth century his music enjoyed a wide circulation, and there are many indications that his style had an influence on the duke's ideals. The young Guglielmo Gonzaga or perhaps rather Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga must have heard Contino and his music in Trent and arranged for him to work at the new church in Mantova. The intermediary may also have been Cardinal Madruzzo, who was an important patron of church music, a reformer and a close friend of Ercole Gonzaga – he also visited Mantua after Ercole's death.

Contino's mass does not transpose the melodic material and is consequently Hypodorian on D. The low tessitura counteracts to some extent the general efforts of the masses to make the melody as audible as possible. Therefore in "Genitum non factum" (Ex. 5), after entries in Altus and Bassus with the first three notes of the melody, Contino only brings the first melody segment transposed up a fifth, in Tenor (twice!), in Quintus and in Cantus – the last, high entry ensures that the melody is recognisable. After a cadence to the fifth, segment 2 is imitated from Bassus (*loco*) to Quintus (transposed up a fifth) and finally at the octave by Cantus. The last entry is partially covered by the higher Altus. The last melody segment is heard complete three times: in Cantus at the octave, and *loco* in Bassus (b. 18) and in Tenor, where it forms the basis for the open cadence. Along the way, Contino marks two entries in fourth transposition in Quintus (b. 16) and Bassus (b. 21), both times with a syncopated dissonance at the entry which could lead the singers to introduce a *c#* and thus further mask the use of melody. The beginning's harmonic direction towards the fifth is balanced in the second half by a drift towards the fourth, especially with the introduction of a *b*-flat in bars 15 and 22, which, however, at the same time emphasizes the Dorian anchoring. Contino's setting relates quite neutrally to the meaning of the text. It offers a dignified balanced, smoothly joined performance of the melody, a setting that fulfils all the prescriptions of contrapuntal knowledge.

*Giorgio Gastoldi* (c.1555-1609), the well-known composer of light madrigals and *balletti*, came to Santa Barbara as a singer at the age of 18, in the years 1579-87 he taught the new singers counterpoint and chant singing, and in 1588 he succeeded Wert as chapel master after acting as his substitute during Wert's periods of illness. He has a large production of church music, which gained renown outside Mantua as well and was distributed in many printed editions.

His "Genitum non factum" (Ex. 6) shows considerable awareness of Wert's accomplishments in the same section, but it also brings new elements into play. As in Wert's setting, segment 1 is presented seven times imitatively in the same at the same time characteristic and flexible rhythmization, first four times on the notes *g*, *d'*, *g* and *g'* (Quintus, Altus, Tenor, Cantus), establishing the G Dorian mode, then three times on *d*, *d'* and *g* (Bassus, Quintus, Tenor) – Bassus' late entry (b. 6) on the fifth suggests a turn towards *d*, which is however hindered by the Tenor's entry with a fully developed cadence to G. This cadence is emphasized with a series of as many as five seventh suspensions in a row in bars 8-10 in Altus and Cantus. As in Wert, the syncope dissonances serve to tighten the progression, but while Wert avoided the cadence, Gastoldi here emphasizes the direction towards the cadence in bar 11. After that, something new begins: Melody segment 2 is set as a *cantus*

*Liturgical music in a tight rein*

Cantus

Altus

Quintus

Tenor

Bassus

6

C

A

Q

T

B

12

C

A

Q

T

B

18

C

A

Q

T

B

Ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum, non fa - ctum, non fa - ctum, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Ex. 6. Giangiaco Gastoldi, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

*firmus* in two three-part formations, first in Altus (bb. 11-15) then in Bassus (bb. 13-17). Above these melody segments, Gastoldi has set a languishing phrase in predominantly parallel thirds with the text “consubstantialem Patri” in Cantus and Quintus (bb. 11-13) which is varied in Quintus and Tenor (bb. 13-16). These phrases are shorter than segment 2, allowing Gastoldi to overlap the three-part formations (shown graphically in *Ex. 6*). Segment 3 also overlaps these formations, as the Cantus already enters bar 15 on the top note of the setting, and this also becomes the only regular presentation of segment 3. In the following entries in Quintus, Bassus and Altus, the tune is modified so that it easier fits into an imitative texture, which is more lively figured than we have seen so far. The identity of segment 3 is reinforced by the fact that Gastoldi has consistently introduced a syncope dissonance at the start of the melody fragment and in three out of four cases also a sharp before the resolving note – it is hardly conceivable that the singers did not also sing *c#* in the last entry in Altus (b. 20).

After the calm start, Gastoldi lets the chain of dissonance underline the last, seventh entry of melody segment 1. After this, the character changes to an illusion of two three-part choirs answering each other. They are written over segment 2, which, however, is completely overshadowed by the euphonic parallel thirds. The contrast in texture and density of dissonance to the preceding highlights the words “consubstantialem Patri”. The ending is contrapuntally more neutral, balancing with lively figuration the contrast in the middle of the setting, at the same time as the movement peaks with the entry of segment 3 “per quem omnia facta sunt” above the last ‘half-chorus’. As Wert, Gastoldi gets maximum expression out of 23 *brevis* bars, which harmonically keep to G Dorian with a tendency towards the fifth in the middle.

*Allessandro Striggio* (c.1537-93) was a nobleman from Mantua, who performed the almost unheard-of balancing act of being a courtier in Mantua, a friend of the duke, while at the same time working for 28 years (1559-87) as a highly paid instrumentalist and court composer at the Medici court in Florence. The courtier and servant were kept apart by geography. While he enjoyed widespread fame as a virtuoso and composer of madrigals and theatre music, he had very little opportunity to compose church music. Two manuscripts in the Santa Barbara archive, dating from the period 1580-85, contain his Sunday mass, which is the shortest of the masses in Pellini’s collection. However, the majority of the *alternatim* sections are not as compact as his setting of “Genitum non factum” (*Ex. 7*), but use imitative texture to a greater extent. Here the melody is carried as an unbroken *cantus firmus* in Tenor, with only two extra notes added in bar 4. The counter voices to the tenor suggest imitation of a descending motif (in Cantus and Bassus) and an ascending one (Quintus and Altus). The tenor melody does not influence the other voices, but is presented deeply wrapped in an effective but unobtrusive five-part texture.

*Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina* (c.1525-94) was probably never in Mantua. A negotiation concerning his taking over the office of chapel master after Giaches de Wert ran aground on incompatible factors: Palestrina’s demands concerning his fee and the duke’s frugality. But they corresponded from 1568 until the Duke’s death – a total of twelve autograph letters from Palestrina are preserved in Mantua – and Palestrina soon came to advise the Duke on his own compositions. In the late 1570s the correspondence shows that Palestrina delivered at least nine masses to Santa Barbara. There is no evidence to include the Sunday mass, which is not preserved among the Santa Barbara manuscripts, in this delivery. It also has a few distinctive features that point to a different time of composition.

Cantus  
Altus  
Tenor  
Quintus  
Bassus

Ge - ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan -

stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

- ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

a - lem, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Ex. 7. Alessandro Striggio, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

“Genitum non factum” (Ex. 8) is in Palestrina’s hands an impressive composition in D Dorian, the longest among these examples, 28 brevis bars, where all three elements of the melody are given equal weight in a thoroughly imitative setting. The first segment begins and ends up a fifth to make the melody audible. Palestrina initially seems to suggest a triple rhythm in the first three entries, but then the Cantus enters ‘too late’ and the melodic segment becomes with each entry rhythmically shorter. At the same time the syncope dissonances support the feeling that Palestrina ‘sneaks in’ a bar in double time before the Cantus entry. The first syncopation appears during Altus’ entry (b. 4.1), the next comes where Cantus should have entered (b. 5.2), the third syncopation during Cantus’ actual entry (b. 6.2), and the last two in this round come (bb. 8.1 and 9.2) with three beats (*semibreves*) in between. With these ‘simple’ touches, Palestrina creates a wonderfully flowing rhythm and at the same time directs the ears to the melody of the Cantus. Bassus only enters with the setting of segment 2. This segment is imitated in flexible rhythmization in all five voices (as well as a hinted entry in Cantus at the fifth b. 12). The counterpoint is formed as two-part close imitations at the octave, first freely (Altus-Bassus and Quintus-(Cantus)), then strictly (Cantus-Tenor from b. 15). Without a cadence, this character continues in a five-part close imitation of the third segment (from b. 17), overlapping the setting of the previous segment. The movement ends with a real tenor setting of segment 3 – in accordance with the character of the melody.

It is clear that Palestrina has taken pains to treat all the melodic material in imitation and to do it artfully varied. This involves a balancing act between strict implementation of the segments and flexible phrasing. The setting is constantly thinned out with pauses

Liturgical music in a tight rein

Cantus

Altus

Tenor

Quintus

Bassus

8

non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa -

- ni - tum non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa -

- ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem,

non fa - ctum con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa

Con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri,

15

tri, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri

tri, con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a

con - sub - stan - ti - a - lem Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt,

tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt,

Pa - tri per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, fa - cta

22

quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

fa - cta sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt, om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

sunt, per quem om - ni - a fa - cta sunt.

Ex. 8. G.P. da Palestrina, *Missa Dominicalis*, Credo (3rd *alternatim* section).

so that it does not become too massively monotonous – most of the time only three or four voices sound. At the same time, fragmentation is avoided through the fluid, detailed harmony as well as by the addition of transition figures, ‘tails’, when a voice has reached its target note. The most characteristic ones are in Quintus in bar 10.1 and Cantus in bar 24.2. The main impression of the setting is elegant learning. The mentioned ‘tails’ and the placement of syncope dissonances in the opening imitation seem decidedly not characteristic of Palestrina.<sup>34</sup>

#### *The use of plainchant in Missae Dominicales*

In the examples reviewed there are no significant differences to be traced in the chant versions used by the composers. There are differences, as previously mentioned, in the other sections of the mass, which are based on lightly revised chants from the standard repertory, and here Palestrina to some degree stands out. He must have had the reworked plainchant for *Missa Dominicalis* sent to him, in the same way as when he had the chants sent to him in Rome, when he delivered nine masses in 1578-79, because his setting agree to a very large extent with the chant versions we see in the preserved *Kyriale*. Gastoldi clearly uses the same exemplars, although he relates more freely to them and does not, like Palestrina, follow them so closely that one can reconstruct even the texting of the exemplar.

To illustrate the appearance of the melodic material in the various composers, we can look at *Gloria*. In the standard repertory, the melody keeps to the fifth *c-g* with a turn up to *a* in the last phrase “... in gloria Dei Patris”.<sup>35</sup> In Santa Barbara’s *Kyriale* the most audible difference is that the range is extended downwards to *A*, so that the song covers the full Hypodorian range. In this way the tones *c* and *e* are also avoided in the beginning of sentences or invocations. Two of these revisions appear in subsections that are set to polyphony, namely in “Domine Deus, Rex celestis” and “Qui tollis peccata ... suscipe”. In the first case, the third invocation “Deus Pater omnipotens” starts on *c* in the standard version. This is what we find in Wert, Rovigo, Contino, and in Striggio (transposed up a fifth in Cantus), while in Gastoldi and Palestrina the invocation begins on *A*. “Qui tollis peccata” begins in the standard version with a characteristic descending third:



In Santa Barbara’s *Kyriale* this is changed to:



Wert, Gastoldi and Palestrina use the Mantua version with slight variations in the small two-note ligatures. Rovigo and Contino, on the other hand, both build on a version of the melody where the starting note has been changed from *e* to *d*. Contino shapes the beginning into a powerful motif, *d-c-d-G*, which Rovigo also uses in different variants. Striggio almost seems to stick to the descending third of the standard version (*e, c-d* – a fourth higher in Cantus and Tenor), although he also in the imitative entries uses a melody beginning more similar to the Santa Barbara version (*d, c-d*).

34 Knud Jeppesen accordingly regarded this mass as an *opera dubium*, until he found the other Mantua masses, where the same features appear sporadically, cf. Jeppesen, ‘Pierluigi’, p. 178, note 37.

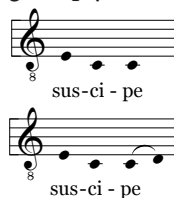
35 *Graduale romanum*, Tournai 1962, pp. 39\*-40\*.

- c.1513 Giovanni Contino is born in Brescia.
- 1525/26 Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina is born in Palestrina.
- 1535 Giaches de Wert is born in Ghent (?).
- 1536/37 Allessandro Striggio is born in Mantua.
- 1538 Guglielmo Gonzaga is born in Mantua.
- c.1540-51 Contino chapel master to Bishop Christoforo Madruzzo in Trent.
- 1541/42 Francesco Rovigo is born.
- c.1543 Wert comes in connection with the Gonzaga family, in the house of Guilio Cesare in Rome.
- 1550 Duke Francesco Gonzaga dies, his brother Guglielmo inherits the title, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga heads the guardianship, while Guglielmo is a minor.
- 1551-55 Wert in Novellare with Alfonso Gonzaga and in Mantua.
- c.1555 Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi is born in Caravaggio.
- 1557 Guglielmo Gonzaga takes over the government in Mantua.
- 1559-87 Striggio in service at the Medici court in Florence.
- 1561 Guglielmo Gonzaga marries Eleonora d'Austria; Ercole Gonzaga presides over the 3rd session of the Council of Trent; Contino chapel master at the cathedral of San Pietro in Mantua.
- 1561 Nov., construction of Santa Barbara begins.
- 1562 May, Santa Barbara is consecrated.
- 1563 Jan., work on a new and larger basilica on the same site begins.
- 1563 Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga dies in August and the council ends in December.
- 1563-65 Wert in Milan as chapel master to the governor.
- 1563-65 Contino attached to the court chapel and the cathedral next to obligations in Brescia.
- 1564 Oct., the altar and crypt in the new basilica are consecrated.
- 1564 Dec., Wert already functions as chapel master at Santa Barbara while in Milan and sends a mass to Mantua.
- 1565 May, the new Santa Barbara is consecrated.
- 1565 autumn, Wert in Mantua as chapel master at Santa Barbara.
- 1567 A madrigal by Guglielmo Gonzaga is published in Wert's 4th madrigal book.
- 1568 Feb. 2, Palestrina's first letter to Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga (probably attached to *Missa Sine nomine* a 4).
- 1568-79 Negotiations with the Vatican about a special Santa Barbara liturgy.
- c.1568 Contino returns to Mantua, status in the city's musical life unknown.
- 1569-72 The final extensions and completion of Santa Barbara.
- 1571 A papal bull approves the liturgy of the office in Santa Barbara.
- 1572 Gastoldi subdeacon at Santa Barbara.
- 1573 Work on a reform of the songs in the office begins.
- 1573 June, Contino *decanus* at Santa Barbara.
- 1573 Contino's *Missae cum quinque vocibus* published in Milan, contains among others three masses that paraphrase older *alternatim* masses for Santa Barbara.
- 1573-82 Rovigo organist at Santa Barbara.
- 1574 before March 4, Contino dies in Mantua.
- 1574 June, Palestrina's *Missa in Duplicibus Maioribus* is copied in Santa Barbara.
- 1578 Oct.-Apr. 79, Palestrina composes nine masses for Santa Barbara.
- 1579-87 Gastoldi teaches novices at Santa Barbara in counterpoint.
- 1580 Oct., a *Missa Dominicalis* by Palestrina is copied in Santa Barbara.
- 1580-85 Two manuscripts from Santa Barbara contain Striggio's *Missa dominicalis*.
- 1582 and 1585-86, Gastoldi chapel master at Santa Barbara during Wert's illness.
- 1583 Santa Barbara's missal and breviary obtain papal approval and are printed.
- 1587 Striggio returns to Mantua.
- 1587 Aug., Guglielmo Gonzaga dies.
- 1588 Gastoldi is permanently appointed chapel master at Santa Barbara.

Figure 2, Chronology of Santa Barbara and the composers in Pellini's collection.

In the middle of “Qui tollis” comes the word “suscipe”, which the majority of the composers emphasize, and in *Kyriale* it is sung simply and clearly without embellishments of any kind on the three syllables:

Palestrina uses the formula



set in recitation in bright C chords. It is one of the few places, where Palestrina abandons the constant imitative texture in favour of homophony, and it continues in expressively modulating double choir effects (with the introduction of first  $f^\sharp$  and then  $c^\sharp$ ).<sup>36</sup> Striggio, Gastoldi and Contino use the same version of the melody as Palestrina, only in a more imitative manner, which still makes the word stand out by virtue of the insistent figure. Only Wert and Rovigo use the short form, Wert freely with repeated chordal recitation and a striking false relation effect in G Dorian (see *Ex. 9*), while Rovigo imitates the figure *a-f-f* over an organ point on *d*.<sup>37</sup>

These observations suggest that the melodic material for Santa Barbara’s liturgy fluctuated in details during the decades before it was codified in the *Kyriale*, and that one cannot describe a linear development in the redaction of the melodies with the help of the Sunday masses. Looking at the chronological overview (*Figure 2*), it becomes clear that Wert and Striggio may have written their masses from the mid-1560s and until the early 1580s, Contino his before 1573 and probably in the late 1560s, Rovigo during the 1570s, Gastoldi from the end of the 1570s until the mid-1580s, while Palestrina’s mass probably must be placed in the 1570s.<sup>38</sup> In the three variant places in *Gloria* just mentioned, Contino follows either the standard version or an early Santa Barbara revision – and in *Kyrie II* he also uses the traditional form, while *Christe* is clearly the revised version in Hypodorian (see *Ex. 1*). The much younger Rovigo pretty much follows Contino all the way through his mass, though using the Santa Barbara version in *Kyrie II*. Striggio is also very much in line with Contino, but is closer to the standard melodies, as if his knowledge of the Santa Barbara version is limited to the most important places such as *Christe* and *Credo*; or that the revision at the time of composition was not particularly extensive. The chapel master Wert follows the versions of the *Kyriale* wording in two of the three featured places, but ignores the revised version of *Christe* – instead uses a sweeping Hypodorian melody, perhaps his own take on how *Christe* should be sung. In the same way, the short version of “suscipe” may be his bid for a revision of the melody, which unlike *Christe* found inclusion in the *Kyriale*; Rovigo agrees with Wert on this point. Palestrina and Gastoldi follow the *Kyriale* with variants of the same character as with the word “suscipe”. The six masses thus give the impression that the composers have been working with a liturgical melodic material under development – and that perhaps the polyphonic arrangements of the melodies have also contributed with new formulations and testing of proposals during the revision work.

36 Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, pp. 181-182, bb. 10-18. The other instance of homophonic declamation is not surprisingly found in *Credo*, “Et incarnatus”, p. 192, b. 1.

37 Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, p. 10, bb. 10-13, and p. 41, bb. 13-16.

38 An examination of the handwritten sources for five of the masses might narrow down the temporal frames, but that falls outside the scope of this article.

Ex. 9. Giaches de Wert, *Missa Dominicalis*, Gloria (6th *alternatim* section, bb. 10-13).

Santa Barbara's music collection contains no less than five masses by Giovanni Contino,<sup>39</sup> and it is easy to see that Contino's younger successors, incl. the duke himself, modelled their masses on his. As a whole, his Sunday mass is very varied, using almost all types of setting that were common around 1550, characterized by a thoroughly imitative, learned texture alternating with shorter, more *cantus firmus*-like settings of the chant in the *alternatim* sections. Often the chant is heard at the end of the sections at a high pitch, transposed up a fifth or a fourth. For the sake of variety, some subsections in the middle of the main sections are written for a reduced number of voices, thus "Domine Deus Rex celestis" in *Gloria*, "Et resurrexit" in *Credo* and "Benedictus" in *Sanctus* are for three voices; "Confiteor" in *Credo* is in triple time. Sections such as *Kyrie*, *Agnus Dei* and *Sanctus* (after the three "Sanctus" acclamations) are written in a broadly unfolded imitative texture with a more motet-like development of the liturgical melodic material. Contino sets the second prayer in *Agnus Dei* in polyphony, which means that the first and third prayers are to be song in plainchant or performed by the organ (Rovigo, Gastoldi and Striggio do the same, while Wert and Palestrina set the chant for the first and third prayers). Harmonically the music adheres to concords on the steps of the Dorian scale with the variable sixth step as the main opportunity for harmonic fluctuations, and with an emphasis on the mode's *finalis* and *dominant* in accordance with the principles that came to govern the revision of Santa Barbara's chant.

This model is largely followed by the other composers, who, however, preferred to have two subsections in *Gloria* for a reduced number of voices (Wert, Rovigo and Gastoldi) and two or three (Striggio) in *Credo*. Only Palestrina follows suit with fewer voices in "Benedictus" (a 4), and he and Striggio also reduce the number of voices to four in "Pleni sunt". Wert, Striggio and Palestrina also switch to triple time in "Osanna". All are quite common procedures in mass composition. What may be surprising is how large a proportion of the music in each mass is composed in five-part imitative texture.

The biggest differences between the six masses appear in their lengths, and here clear divergences can be traced between the composers who worked in Mantua and the 'foreigners'. The total numbers of *brevis* bars in masses by the Mantua composers are between c.450 and 480 with Contino and Gastoldi at the highest numbers of bars. Striggio only reaches c.370 bars with his mostly terse formulated imitation patterns, which quickly change into a chordal conceived polyphony. Palestrina's conscientious contrapuntal treatment of every single phrase in the plainchant, which in several places is conducted in calm canon over a contrapuntal weave of free motifs, extends to no less

39 He published three of them in 1573 in Milan in the collection *Missae cum quinque vocibus* in reworked non-*alternatim* versions; *Missa Dominicalis* is unfortunately not among them, cf. Giovanni Contino (Ottavio Beretti, ed.), *Missae cum quinque vocibus: liber primus* (1572), Milan 1997.

than 660 bars, and it is more than a third longer than the four Mantuan masses. It is a very voluminous mass, even longer than the nine masses, which Palestrina wrote for the duke in 1578-79, where the average number of *brevis* bars is just under 550 – which is still higher than that of the Mantuan composers.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. The duke's correspondence with Palestrina

In Archivio di Stato in Mantua there is a letter from Palestrina to Duke Guglielmo dated February 2, 1568. It probably begins the correspondence between the two. Here Palestrina asserts his willingness to be of service and encloses a mass, which he has been ordered by the duke to write through the intervention of the famous musician Giaches de Wert. This mass has been composed according to the instructions of the duke's agent Annibale Capello. Palestrina then poses his famous and oft-quoted question to the duke: "If in this first attempt I have not fulfilled your Excellency's wishes, I beg you to inform me how you prefer it – whether it should be short, or long, or written so that the words can be understood" ("... se li piacerà comandarmi, come la voglia, o, breve, o, longa, o che si sentan le parole ...").<sup>41</sup>

At this time, Palestrina was chapel master to Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, at whose residences in Rome and Tivoli Capello also visited. Knud Jeppesen has identified the accompanying mass as *Missa sine nomine* for four male voices "a voci mutate", which is found among the manuscripts from Santa Barbara.<sup>42</sup> Palestrina composed it in close agreement with the discussions about the greatest possible text intelligibility and restraint in the expression that had been conducted during and after the Council of Trent. It cannot get much simpler and more direct than in this mass, which is predominantly homophonic with lots of parallel thirds and sixths. *Example 10* reproduces the setting in this mass of the same paragraph of text in *Credo* that we looked at in *Examples 3-8*. It seems that Palestrina knew of the duke's interest in reforms and tried to surpass his successful *Marcellus* mass in textual clarity.

The duke profusely thanked Palestrina for the mass in a personal letter and sent a gift of 50 ducats.<sup>43</sup> However, the repertory from Santa Barbara makes it quite clear that it was a different kind of music that the duke preferred. In an exchange of letters ten years later, the duke gets the opportunity to clarify his wishes. On October 18, 1578, Don Capello reported to his employer from Rome:

40 Cf. *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, vols. XVIII-XIX, Rome 1954. The shortest mass here is *Missa Beatae Mariae Virginis II* of c.470 bars, and the longest is *Missa in Festis Apostorum II* of c.600 bars.

41 The letter is reproduced in Italian transcription and facsimile in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 147-148 (and in Jeppesen's preface to *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, vol. XVIII, Rome 1954), an English translation is found in Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (Lewis Lockwood, ed.), *Pope Marcellus Mass. An Authoritative Score. Backgrounds and Sources. History and Analysis. Views and Comments*, New York 1975, p. 24. The translation of this and the following quotations is my responsibility.

42 Cf. Jeppesen's analysis in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 149-155; the mass is published by Jeppesen in *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, vol. XIX, Rome 1954, p. 168.

43 Cf. Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', p. 149, where the Duke's letter and Palestrina's letter of thanks are reproduced. The value of the gift can be compared to the fact that from 1571 Palestrina received slightly more than the double as his annual pay as head of the Cappella Giulia in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Ex. 10. G.P. da Palestrina, *Missa Sine nomine*, Credo (bb. 41-50).

... Giovanni da Palestrina is now recovering from a serious illness and is thus hardly able to collect his thoughts, just as his eyesight is failing him in his efforts to fulfil Your Highness' wishes. However, he has begun to set the Kyrie and Gloria of the first mass for the lute [literally "to put on the lute" – *porre sul Leuto*], and he has let me hear them. I found them indeed full of sweetness and elegance. Now that Our Lord [the pope] has commanded that there shall be two choirs in St. Peter's ... Palestrina begs, if your Highness permits, to have also the other parts [of the chant for the masses] to set and use in that said church instead of the organ on solemn feast days, for he assures that your Highness has truly cleansed these plainsongs of all the barbarisms and imperfections that they contained. I am sure that he will not do it without your permission. As soon as he is well enough, he will continue to work on what he has done on the lute with all possible care.<sup>44</sup>

In Mantua's archives is preserved not only a draft of a letter formulated by an anonymous cabinet secretary, but also the duke's handwritten corrections to this letter. In the first version, the answer reads:

... His Highness commands that you should tell Mr Giovanni da Palestrina that he should take care to recover completely and not rush to set the Kyrie and Gloria to the lute together with the other compositions; since there are so many other skilled men here, there is no need for compositions for the lute, but rather for compositions made with great care [*fatta con molto studio*]. His Highness thinks that music written for Santa Barbara will not resonate in Rome because of the amount of imitation [*le molte fughe*] found in it, since simple music [*musica piana*] is preferred there. However, if it pleases Mr Giovanni and he wishes to use them, His Highness will order that, just as Palestrina has already been sent half of the chants, he will have the chants in their entirety.<sup>45</sup>

44 The letters are found in Italian transcription with facsimile of the duke's corrections in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 158-162. The relevant sections can also be found with an English translation in Jessie Ann Owens, *Composers at Work. The Craft of Musical Composition 1450-1600*, New York 1997, pp. 293 ff.

45 Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 158-162.

The end of the first sentence the duke changed to:

... and not hasten to set the masses to the lute, since he wants them to use imitation throughout and build on the chant [fugate continuante et sopra soggetto], just as the other composers have done, and as Palestrina himself did in the mass *Missa in duplicibus majoribus*.<sup>46</sup>

It was of course a misunderstanding that Palestrina should be working on lute music – or with music that was so simple that it could be reproduced adequately on the lute. Jessie Ann Owens has suggested that because of his illness, Palestrina had not managed to write anything down, but wanted to show the duke's envoy that he was working diligently on the commission, so he played his ideas for Capello on the lute.<sup>47</sup> Palestrina soon recovered and delivered at least nine masses during the autumn of 1578 and the spring of 1579. The agreement was for a mass every ten days, and he almost achieved it.

Duke Guglielmo made his wishes so that they could not be misunderstood. It was almost a downright order: The melodies sent – where the duke had ensured the correct structure by sending Palestrina only the sections that were to be used in the *alternatim* settings – were to be dressed in learned polyphony in constant imitation (*fugato*), and in addition to the efforts of his 'own' composers, he referred to a mass that Palestrina had previously delivered. Hereby we learn that Palestrina's involvement in the efforts to create a new church music for Santa Barbara had already started before 1578. Documents show that the music scribe at Santa Barbara, Don Giuseppe Vicentini, was paid in June 1574 to copy the now lost *Missa in Duplicibus Majoribus*, and in October 1580 for the work of copying a "messa della domenica di canto figurato in forma grande di messer Gio. Palestrina", which may be identical to his *Missa Dominicalis* printed in 1592.<sup>48</sup> The contrapuntal complexity and length of this Mass could indicate that it was slightly earlier than the nine masses of 1578-79, and that Palestrina had not yet found the final formulation of this type of mass.

To a modern observer it is astonishing that the famous composer, who had begun his association with Duke Guglielmo by sending a mass that was a demonstrative example of textual clarity, and who earlier in the dedication of his *Missarum Liber Secundus* (1567) to the Spanish king Philip II had declared that he had taken great pains to embellish the holy sacrificial act of the mass in a new way,<sup>49</sup> and had even taken the liberty of chastising a motet by Duke Guglielmo for its lack of clarity in the text delivery because of too close imitations,<sup>50</sup> that he apparently without objections received commissions for a large number of works of almost the opposite observance. From the reply from Mantua it appears that the duke was quite aware that he wanted something different from what was available in Rome. We are perhaps most surprised that Palestrina already in his first

46 Ibid.

47 Owens, *Composers at Work*, pp. 295-296.

\*2 48 This information comes from an as yet unpublished article by Paola Besutti, 'Quante erano le messe mantovane? Nuovi elementi su Palestrina e il repertorio musicale per S. Barbara'. I am very grateful to Prof. Besutti for the access to read her manuscript.

49 The volume contains the *Missa Papae Marcelli*; the dedication can be found in English translation in Gary Tomlinson (ed.), *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History. Revised Edition. Vol. 3: The Renaissance*, New York 1998, pp. 95-96.

50 Letter from Palestrina to the duke of March 3, 1570, reproduced in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 156-157, English translation in Owens, *Composers at Work*, p. 292.

approach left it to the duke to choose the design of the church music, as if there was no artistic or religious/liturgical conviction behind the alternatives that Palestrina presented (short, long or so that the words can be understood).

It was a normal condition for the 'modern', professional composer of the sixteenth century that others had great influence on how his music was to be shaped, whether the influences came from an employer, a client, from its marketability in the flourishing trade in printed music collections, or from discussions in the cultured public, where the composer, his name, fame and style had become topics of interest. This modern type of composer and the public associated with him had slowly developed through the fifteenth century on the basis of the productivity of the composing musician and his resulting reputation, which mostly concerned colleagues and scholars. Precisely the limited publicity surrounding the work of the typical fifteenth-century musician conditioned the rapid development of polyphonic music and its often startling originality and freedom of stylistic means. With the success of the composing artist around 1500, inspired by humanism, a large part of the freedom of inconspicuousness was lost. Josquin Desprez has been singled out by history as the first 'musical genius' due to the spread and impact of his name as a symbol of a new 'public' music. But as a composing musician he was firmly rooted in the traditional freedom to determine the design and expression of his music himself.<sup>51</sup>

Palestrina's and the Mantuan composers' relationship with the duke is far more characteristic of the conditions of the 'modern' composer. To be sure, Wert and Gastoldi were famous artists, whose publications enjoyed circulation all over Europe, but in Mantua they were servants. They were respected, but socially they belonged to a different world than their employer, when it was not about music.<sup>52</sup> Palestrina was never employed by Duke Guglielmo. Rather, he was bound to him in a client relationship with elements of a collegial trust relationship, where Palestrina's loyalty was cemented by the duke's monetary gifts. Like Tintoretto he lent lustre to the duke's project, and he was probably particularly valued because – again like the famous painter – he could fully honour the client's directives with his technical perfection.<sup>53</sup>

If we wish to assess whether Palestrina, in complying with the duke's demands, compromised with his own ideals, we must take into account that textual clarity was probably not Palestrina's only criterion for relevant church music. The same volume of masses that contains the Marcellus Mass also includes the contrapuntal artifice in *Missa Ad fugam*, where the text clarity comes second,<sup>54</sup> and he later published, among other things, two masses for five and four voices on the old tune *L'homme armé*, which joined a

51 This development is outlined in Rob C. Wegman, 'From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450-1500', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), pp. 409-479.

52 Cf. for example, the love affair of the aging Wert with the lady of the court and musician Tarquina Molza, which the duke of Ferrara effectively put an end to, MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, pp. 45-46.

53 Palestrina's resourcefulness can be studied especially in the masses where he worked on exactly the same melodic material without repeating himself or lapsing into mechanical counterpoint, for example in the three settings of *Missa Beatae Mariae Virginis*, where the textures are more varied than in *Missa Dominalis*, cf. *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, vol. XVIII, Rome 1954, pp. 83 ff.

54 Cf. Jeppesen's analysis in *The Style of Palestrina and the Dissonance. Second revised and enlarged edition*, Copenhagen 1946, pp. 42 ff.

long tradition of technical virtuosity.<sup>55</sup> Something else is that Palestrina apparently among the composers of Sunday masses was the one who most faithfully followed the duke's instructions, that the geographical distance seems to have made the conditions of the order more binding, while the composers who performed the music on a daily basis in Santa Barbara had a surer sense of where the limits of individual expression went.

As is hopefully evident from the previous section's review of a small portion of each of the six masses, the duke's directives in practice offered some freedom for the composers. It first and foremost concerns the instrumentation for voices itself and the temporal organization ('the timing') of the music, of entries, of the density of dissonances and texture, and of the floating or firmness of the rhythm; then it concerns the prioritization of the melodic material and weighting of different structural models (from canon to dialogue) – all in relation to an active interpretation or a neutral rendering of the meaning of the text. Much was locked in advance by the duke, but with these elements in play, one can still find outlines of personalities in the music – it comes out of the 'glass bell'. While Rovigo builds confidently on the tradition of Contino, Wert manages in the constant imitation (*fugate continuamente*) to incorporate some of the expressive means we know from his motets, and Gastoldi uses his generation's penchant for breaking up the voice complex into fluctuating, dialogizing groups, occasionally with an obligatory counterpoint to the given melodies.<sup>56</sup> Striggio, like Palestrina, comes from the outside and tries with the same loyalty to dress the melodies in *fugates* without, however, being able to completely hide the fact that his tonal language is fundamentally more chord-based than that of his colleagues.

One can also turn the question of the tight rein restricting the composers' freedom on its head: The Palestrina style is often regarded as backward looking. This reputation for conservatism must be attributed even more to the Mantova repertory. However, there is no indication that the duke or his composers saw the matter from this point of view. Perhaps they were rather working on a project that was supposed to appear as the musical answer to the problems of the Catholic reforms, an answer with roots in the tradition and with great demands on the liturgical music of the future. In this way, the tight rein becomes the foundation for a 'new music'.

In order to get an impression of what such a reform project could contain, we must in what follows look briefly at the relationship of the Mantua repertory to discussions and decisions during the Council of Trent, at the special way of performing the music (the *alternatim* principle), and finally at the role models that may have been the Duke's inspiration for the project.

55 David J. Burn, '« Nam erit haec quoque laus eorum » Imitation, Competition and the « L'homme armé » Tradition', *Revue de Musicologie* 87 (2001) pp. 249-287.

56 These broad characteristics refer to the Masses as a whole, cf. the editions in Cisilino, *Sei Missae*.

## 5. A reformed imperial church music

In accounts of music history the result of the Tridentine Council's deliberations on a reform of polyphonic church music is usually summarized as a ban on all worldly and inappropriate elements, as well as a wish that the text should be made as easy to understand as possible for the congregation.<sup>57</sup> This representation is in itself quite accurate, but often in the literature attention is not drawn to the fact that a prohibition and a wish do not have the same status.<sup>58</sup> Prior to the council's 22nd session in September 1562, where a purification of the rituals of the mass from all irrelevancies was on the agenda, a committee had been working which in its recommendation to the decision-making assembly was extremely critical of the practice of polyphonic music, including especially its blurring of the text. However, the decree of September 17 adopted by the council was extremely short and terse with regard to the music: "Ab ecclesiis vero musicas eas ubi sive organo sive cantu lascivum aut impurum aliquid miscetur ..." <sup>59</sup> (One must especially keep such music away from the churches, whether it is sung or for organ (instruments) in which something licentious or impure is mixed). The Council under the chairmanship of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga could not approve a reduction in the composers' possibilities to embellish the Mass with complex polyphony – only obviously reprehensible elements that could undermine the dignity of the service were condemned.

Even after the death of Cardinal Gonzaga, the most reform-minded did not manage to get through with their views. Before the 24th session in November 1563, strong efforts were underway to limit the importance of polyphonic music in the liturgy, which elicited a vigorous defence of the 'great' music on the part of Emperor Ferdinand I.<sup>60</sup> The result of the negotiations was again a concise passage in a decree of November 11, in which all questions concerning singing and music (canendi et modulandi) in the service were referred to decision at local church meetings, which were to draw up guidelines in accordance with the traditions of each area.<sup>61</sup>

However, that the scope of the council's decisions was limited did not mean that the previous discussions were without effect. The question of the intelligibility of the text remained on the agenda of the cardinal commission, which in 1564-65 in accordance with the decree of the council from 1563 worked on regulations for church music at the

57 In the article 'Mass' (*The New Grove Dictionary* 16 (2001), p. 74) Lewis Lockwood/Andrew Kirkman puts it this way: "The rise of powerful Catholic militancy in the papal dominated areas of Europe was in direct proportion to the huge losses of political and spiritual control suffered by the Church in Germany, England and elsewhere in Europe. In sacred music this militancy was particularly evident in the mass; in 1562 the Council of Trent issued a canon prohibiting all 'seductive and impure' melodies from Church use, and the primary goal of the reformers was to see that the Mass text was made as intelligible as possible to congregations."

58 See for example Atlas, *Renaissance Music*, pp. 580-581, and Perkins, *Music in the Age*, p. 873.

59 Cf. Edith Weber, *Le Concile de Trent et la musique. De la Réforme à la Contre-Réforme* (Musique – Musicologie 12) Paris 1982, p. 89. The committee's draft resolution, Weber pp. 88-89, is often reproduced together with this decree as if they were one and the same text, see e.g. G. Reese, *Music in the Renaissance*, New York 1954, p. 449. The whole question of what the council actually passed and what was merely worked on in committees during and after the council is presented with exemplary clarity in an article by Craig A. Monson, 'The Council of Trent Revisited', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55 (2002), pp. 1-38, to which I refer for details.

60 Monson, 'The Council', p. 16.

61 Weber, *Le Concile*, pp. 94-95 and Monson, 'The Council', p. 18 (with English translation).

papal court, and it played a major role in Cardinal Carlo Borromeo's reforms in Milan. Among musicians and those who were responsible for the form of the services, the opinion gradually spread that this question had been clearly answered by the council in favour of textual clarity.<sup>62</sup> Palestrina's four-part *Missa Sine nomine* stands as an expression of these tendencies in the late 1560s.

Duke Guglielmo chose a different path for church music in Santa Barbara. He adhered closely to the wording of the decrees of the council – and thus probably also to the views of his uncle, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga – on the revision of the books of the service and the associated plainchant<sup>63</sup> and on the removal of all musical elements that could contain associations with worldly life. The reformed, purified plainchant had to be presented with great dignity in learned polyphony, and the formulations of the melodies had to not only permeate the musical textures, but also be clearly exposed at important places. With this, consideration of the meaning of the text was also taken care of in the duke's church music.

The *alternatim* performance, which characterizes the majority of Santa Barbara's liturgical repertory, supported the solemnity and dignity of the music in a decisive way. The alternation between different groups belongs to the oldest traditions in Christian music, the antiphonal principle. For polyphonic music this principle was the norm in a large part of the liturgy. In hymns, sequences, psalms, Magnificat, Te Deum, etc. it was customary in many places to let polyphony alternate with monophonic singing and thus let the structure of the texts in stanzas or prose verses stand out clearly; also in the mass ordinary we meet this principle of setting of the liturgical melodies from Du Fay's time.<sup>64</sup> Often it was the organist who took care of the polyphonic part of the alternation, or the organ alternated on special occasions with polyphonic singing.<sup>65</sup> The preserved written compositions probably represent only a very small proportion of what was used of this kind of music in the churches. Its simple structure with decoration of the chant line by line was probably the prerequisite for most of the polyphony that was performed without notes other than the liturgical songbooks, *cantus supra librum*, and organ improvisation.<sup>66</sup> If the 'improvised' polyphony covered most of the need for *alternatim* music for the

62 Weber, *Le Concile*, pp. 109-113, and Monson, 'The Council', pp. 22-28, section "Post-Tridentine Revision of the Original Meaning of »Iuxta Formam Concilii«".

63 A reform of the breviary and the missal was placed in hand of the pope by a bull of December 5, 1563, and during the following decade commissions were appointed by the pope to take care of this work, cf. Weber, *Le Concile*, pp. 103, 115-133 and 145-153.

64 Du Fay's *alternatim* compositions can be found in G. Dufay (H. Bessler, ed.), *Opera omnia I-VI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1) 1951-66, vol. IV, pp. 63ff (Kyrie and Gloria settings) and vol. V (including sequences, hymns and Magnificat). The vast repertory of Magnificat settings is mapped in Winfried Kirsch, *Die Quellen der mehrstimmigen Magnificat- und Te Deum-Vertonungen bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Tutzing 1966 (contains 1160 different compositions).

65 See for example the overview in Knud Jeppesen, *Die italienische Orgelmusik am Anfang des Cinquecento*, Copenhagen 1960 (2nd ed.), pp. 120 ff., which is still relevant.

66 An introduction to this subject can be found in the already mentioned article by Rob C. Wegman, 'From Maker to Composer'. Examples of how music that was 'improvised' over liturgical songs may have appeared can for example be found in the manuscripts in Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Mss. 34 and 35 written 1500-1520 in Wittemberg, where the anonymous repertory is notated with tenor in chorale notation, while the other three voices are in mensural notation, cf. Christian Meyer, 'Sortisatio. De l'improvisation collective dans les pays germaniques vers 1500' in Chr. Meyer (ed.), *Polyphonies de tradition orale – histoire et traditions vivantes. Actes du colloque de Royaumont – 1990*. Paris 1993, pp. 182-200 (pp. 189 ff).

ordinary, it is not surprising that this type of music has left relatively few traces in the preserved sources, where the through-composed mass cycles from the mid-fifteenth century onwards dominate. Their status as 'the great music' with rich symbolic associations through the use of non-liturgical *cantus firmus* or the use of other models could only be maintained through performances on the basis of written, carefully elaborated music, *res facta*.<sup>67</sup> Their dominance in the sources should, however, not obscure the possibility that their share of the actual use in the churches was considerably less than that of the 'improvised' *alternatim* performances, as many of them were written for specific occasions or feast days and thus have limited use. Their status as 'works of art' and the resulting interest they eventually enjoyed also removed them from the core of the liturgy, as they in many cases referred to matters outside the liturgy such as princely and ecclesiastical power ambitions, political events, etc. – they celebrated the liturgy plus something more, whether it consisted in religious or in social associations. The chorale-based polyphonic mass music, on the other hand, celebrated the liturgical melodies themselves, and where the through-composed music usually has a relatively tight temporal progression, the line-by-line settings spread out calmly in sounding dignity. This applies to the simple compositions as well as to the few larger complexes of very ambitious music that have been preserved<sup>68</sup> – including Duke Guglielmo's church music.<sup>69</sup>

The majority of the Mantua masses follow a distinctive, fixed pattern in *Gloria* and *Credo*, where after the celebrant's intonation the first subsection starts monophonic and then change to polyphony in the middle of the section. It allows for a completely regular alternation between monophony and polyphony throughout the text, ending with polyphony and with nine polyphonic sections in each main section, cf. *Figure 3*. Five of the Sunday masses in *Missae Dominicalis 1592* follow a more common practice and set the entire first subsection in polyphony. This brings them in line with the majority of sixteenth-century organ masses (shown in *Figure 3* in brackets).<sup>70</sup> Contino follows the normal Mantua pattern, and several of the masses by the other composers can actually

67 The contemporary public (especially after 1500 and the advent of printed music) paid most interest to the cyclic mass, and posterity and musicological research have had the same priority, cf. Andrew Kirkman's thought-provoking article 'The Invention of the Cyclic Mass', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54 (2001) pp. 1-47. This has meant that the scholarly basis for commenting on not only the *alternatim* masses, but also on choral masses as a whole, and proprium and plenary masses as well, is much weaker than it ought to be.

68 As examples can be mentioned the troped Marian masses in France and England (Lady Masses), e.g. an anonymous, compiled French mass from c.1500, cf. P. Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III*. Copenhagen 1994, vol. I, pp. 266-270, published in vol. III, pp. 143 ff; or Nicolas Ludford's cycle of seven Lady-masses on *squares* from the 1520s, published by John D. Bergsagel in N. Ludford, *Collected Works I* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 27) s.l. 1963; as well as Isaac's c.20 *alternatim* masses arranged in sets for four, five and six voices and written for the imperial court chapel, which will be mentioned below.

69 In the CD recording of Palestrina's *Missa in Duplicibus Minoribus II* with Ensemble Gilles Binchois (Deutsche harmonia mundi 05472 77317 2) the mass lasts 34 minutes at a fairly brisk pace (*Gloria* 8:11 and *Credo* 11:30), similarly the three Marian masses with Solisti della Cappella Musicale di San Petronio (Bongiovanni CD 5556/57-2) last between 30 and 35 minutes, and I would think that the Sunday mass, which is Palestrina's longest, lasts up to 45 minutes.

70 More detailed charts can be found in Jeppesen, 'Pierluigi', pp. 169-171, and Fenlon, 'Patronage, music', pp. 227-229, as well as in William Peter Mahrt, *The Missae ad organum of Heinrich Isaac*. Dissertation, Stanford University 1969, ch. III 'The Organ Mass', pp. 19 ff.

<i>Plainchant / (organ)</i>	<i>Polyphonic setting</i>
<i>Celebrant, Gloria in excelsis Deo</i>	
Et in terra pax hominibus	bonae voluntatis
(	Et in terra ... bonae voluntatis)
Laudamus te.	Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te.	Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus ...	Domine Deus, Rex ...
Domini Fili ...	Domine Deus, Agnus ...
Qui tollis ... miserere ...	Qui tollis ... suscipe ...
Qui sedes ...	Quoniam tu solus ...
Tu solus Dominus.	Tu solus Altissimus ...
Cum sancto ...	Amen.
<i>Celebrant, Credo in unum Deum</i>	
Patrem omnipotentem	factorem caeli ...
(	Patrem omnipotentem factorem caeli ...)
Et in unum ...	Et ex Patre...
Deum de Deo ...	Genitum non factum ...
Qui propter ...	Et incarnatus est ...
Crucifixus ...	Et resurrexit ...
Et ascendit ...	Et iterum ...
Et in Spiritum ...	Qui cum Patre ...
Et unam sanctam ...	Confiteor ...
Et expecto ...	Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

Figure 3. *Alternatim* patterns in *Gloria* and *Credo* in the Mantua masses. In parentheses are shown the Sunday Masses in *Missae Dominicalis* 1592 (apart from Contino's which uses the normal pattern).

be made to do so as well: In the handwritten sources from Santa Barbara, Gastoldi's mass is in MS 166 in a form where *Gloria* begins with "Bonae voluntatis" and *Credo* with "Factorem coeli";<sup>71</sup> and in MS 128 Rovigo's *Credo* begins with "Factorem coeli";<sup>72</sup> finally, "Et in terra pax hominibus" and "Bonae voluntatis" in Wert's mass are separated by a

71 Milan, Conservatorio di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi', MS Santa Barbara 166: *Gloria* begins at the start of the imitation in bar 6 in Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, p. 108, and *Credo* similarly begins at the start of the imitation in bar 7, p. 116.

72 In MS Santa Barbara 128 it starts at the beginning of the imitation in bar 7 in Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, p. 44; *Gloria* probably started in a similar way in the handwritten versions, but it is difficult to determine because of the incomplete state of the sources, cf. the revision report in Ottavio Beretta (ed.), *The Gonzaga Masses in the Conservatory Library of Milan Fondo Santa Barbara I* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 108) s.l. 1997.

vertical stroke, making it optional whether one want to sing both or just the last one.<sup>73</sup> Exactly the same separation is found in Palestrina, both in *Gloria* and *Credo* with full cadences and vertical strokes.<sup>74</sup> Much suggests that the Sunday masses by the four Mantua composers Contino, Wert, Rogivo and Gastoldi as well as the ‘outsider’ Palestrina were heard in Santa Barbara in forms that closely corresponded to the church’s norms. Whether the expansions of the music are due to a redaction on account of the printed edition or are due to changing practice in Santa Barbara, it is not possible to determine. The expansions are very skilfully done and may originate from the composers themselves. Perhaps the masses written later than Contino’s are designed to be performed in different ways according to the status of the Sunday or according to the role of the organ on different Sundays.

Concerning the details of how the masses were performed, we are left to speculations, although Santa Barbara’s ordinance on the duties of the associated persons, the *constitutiones* of 1568, is quite detailed.<sup>75</sup> The well-known organ builder Graziadio Antegnati from Brescia built the organ of the church in 1565 under the supervision of the famous organist Girolamo Cavazzoni, who in these and the following years was in close contact with Duke Guglielmo. The organist held a very high position at Santa Barbara and was remunerated on a par with the chapel master, and like him was perhaps closer connected to the court than to the church. It is certain that the organ provided music for a large part of the liturgy, but we do not know exactly which part.<sup>76</sup> The layout of the church made it impossible for the organ to accompany the polyphonic choir, which was placed on a large pulpit at the west end of the church (opposite the altar), while the organ was fitted to a small pulpit in the middle of the north wall of the building. The four *mansionarii* in charge of singing the plainchant probably had seats in the choir behind the freestanding altar.<sup>77</sup> In this way a large spatial dispersion of the sound sources arose, when the entire musical staff participated in large church services.

The question is whether the organ took part in the performance of the *alternatim* masses with improvisations over the chant subsections not set in polyphony. Palestrina apparently considered it a matter of course that the parts of the chant, which he had not been sent, had to be performed on the organ; if he was to compose something in its place (or to let the singers participate) he had to know the exact form of the melodies.<sup>78</sup> Jeppesen suggested that the distinctive arrangement with the division of the first subsection in *Gloria* and *Credo* can perhaps be explained by the desire to achieve a stable pitch (as in the organ mass), since the organ started after the intonation from the altar and before the polyphonic choir came in.<sup>79</sup> It is not inconceivable that the two versions of the Sunday masses, which could be used on several Sundays throughout the church year when there was no feast of higher rank, reflect two different performances: a more

73 Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, p. 6; Wert’s *Credo* starts by telescoping the melodies for “Patrem” and “Factorem” in Tenor and Cantus, p. 13, so that simply by changing the text the section can be performed with two different beginnings.

74 Cisilino, *Sei Missae*, pp. 175 and 187.

75 Extracts are published in Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, pp. 186-187 and in Besutti, ‘Un modello’, p. 116, note 15.

76 Cf. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage*, p. 104 and Fenlon, ‘Patronage, music’, p. 229.

77 See detailed diagram in Fenlon, ‘Patronage, music’, p. 230.

78 Cf. the correspondence with Duke Guglielmo referred to in section 4.

79 Jeppesen, ‘Pierluigi’, p. 172.

solemn one where the organ starts and alternates with polyphonic choir, and a simpler one where the polyphonic choir starts and alternates with *cantus planus*. If the organ did participate in the alternations, and if the organist's performance of the liturgical melodies could be compared to what Girolamo Cavazzoni published in his three organ masses, printed in Venice after 1543 in *Intabulatura d'organo, cioe messe ... libro secondo*, then this practice could double the duration of the ordinary and truly radiate a solemnity worthy of a prince.<sup>80</sup>

When the role of the organ in the performance of the masses in Santa Barbara attracts attention, it is mainly because one cannot help but wonder where Duke Guglielmo got inspiration for his special, reformed church music. The most striking thing is its use of *alternatim*, but also the church's special liturgy, calendar and entire organization belong in this context. One cannot avoid implicating Mantua's geographical and political location and the duke's lifelong struggle to secure his own position and that of his small principality.

Two power factors were decisive for the duke's political balancing act, namely his feudal overlord, the holy Roman emperor, and his religious head, the pope in Rome. Santa Barbara leaned heavily on papal symbols in design and organization, for example the special location of the altar, the organization of its college of canons and not least the status of the church in the ecclesiastical hierarchy directly below the papal see. Its special liturgy, with its own calendar and breviary, made the most of the possibilities that the Council of Trent had opened up for. The liturgy had obtained papal approval, but only after long and difficult negotiations. With the musical *alternatim* practice and the demand for 'learned' music, it brings to mind the traditions of the imperial chapel under Maximilian I (reigned 1493-1519). Here, since the mid-1490s, a tradition of mass music based on the liturgical melodies had been built up, which placed an unusual emphasis on the large repertory of proprium songs, and which was headed by two of the time's important musical personalities, the court organist Paul Hofhaimer (1459-1537) and the court composer Heinrich Isaac (c.1450-1517).

The musical form of the services at the imperial court seems to have been created as a collaboration between Hofhaimer's organ improvisations and Isaac's elegant – and highly complex – choral compositions. In any case, Isaac composed for the court chapel at least 19 mass ordinaries in *alternatim* form arranged in sets for four, five and six voices.<sup>81</sup> In the manuscript Codex 18745 in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, a selection of these masses are each referred to as "Missa ad organum", and William Mahrt's study of the *alternatim* patterns of the instrumental and vocal sources has made it probable that

80 Cavazzoni's *Missa Dominicalis* lasts incl. the alternation with *cantus planus* 35 minutes in the recording with Sergio Vartolo and Nova Schola Gregoriano (Tactus CD 1000-01). Before and after the Council of Trent, one of the points of criticism of the reform movement was the abbreviations and omissions in the text of *Credo* (cf. Weber, *Le Concile*, pp. 90 and 138, and Monson, 'The Council', p. 30). This led to that *Credo* usually not was performed in organ masses, but sung in its entirety. If one still used the organ *alternatim* in *Credo*, the missing parts of the text could be recited from the choir while the organ played, a practice that started at the same time as the reform movement gained momentum in the 16th century, cf. John Caldwell, 'Plainsong and polyphony 1250-1550' in Thomas F. Kelly (ed.), *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony* (Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice 2) Cambridge 1992, pp. 6–29 (p. 25).

81 Published in Heinrich Isaac (E.R. Lerner, ed.), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 65), vols. I-V, s.l. 1974.

Isaac's masses are intended for alternation with organ music.<sup>82</sup> In this context, it is interesting that Isaac's *Missa Dominicale in Quadragesima* is the only one in this manuscript not labelled "ad organum".<sup>83</sup> This means that in the Sunday mass during Lent the organ playing was omitted. Something similar could be the background for the two ways in which the Sunday masses from Mantua could be performed.

Maximilian's personal preferences probably played a large role in shaping the ecclesiastical court music. Reinhard Strohm has outlined a development from Maximilian's time in the Netherlands to the imperial music. When Maximilian's wife, Marie de Bourgogne, died in 1482, daily masses with polyphonic music were instituted in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw in Bruges, where the organ was to participate on Sundays and in all more solemn celebrations. In 1496 Maximilian expanded this foundation with larger sums of money and a classification of the services (by feast) as polyphony with organ participation, polyphony without organ and *cantus planus* masses – exactly the same arrangement as in the court chapel with an important role for the organist.<sup>84</sup> As Ludwig Finscher has noted, the imperial musical tradition is hardly based on a particular *German* tradition, but was created by Isaac at Maximilian's behest, and with its artful concentration on the liturgical melodies it became of great importance for the Protestant church music.<sup>85</sup>

The imperial court's liturgy and chant had many features in common with the church in Constance. During the German *Reichstag* in Constance in 1508, the chapter of the cathedral commissioned proprium masses for feasts of the highest degree in the local calendar from the imperial court composer. It became the beginning of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus*. This commission constitutes the work's second volume and lesser parts of the other volumes; the rest of the collection probably consists mostly of music written for the emperor's chapel during the years before and after, including five *alternatim* ordinary masses for four voices.<sup>86</sup> It is likely that the emperor encouraged Isaac to continue the monumental work, which, however, remained unfinished at Isaac's death. The repertory in *Choralis Constantinus* is largely learned contrapuntal music made with great imagination and variety in the course of the music despite the limitations of his task, where the chant must be heard clearly in one or more of the voices. The notation uses all the subtleties of mensural notation and especially of proportions, and it has put the

82 Mahrt, *The Missae*.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

84 Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, Oxford 1990 (rev. ed.), pp. 48-49. On the music under Maximilian, see also Louise Cuyler, *The Emperor Maximilian I and Music*, London 1973.

85 Ludwig Finscher (ed.), *Die Musik des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft 3) Laaber 1989-90, ch. III 'Die Messe als musikalisches Kunstwerk' (Finscher) pp. 262-263; "... bedenkt man ferner die zeitweise enge politische Zusammenarbeit Maximilians und Friedrichs des Weisen, das besondere Musikinteresse des Kaisers und seine Neigung zu kulturpolitischen Maßnahmen als Mittel der Machtdarstellung und Machtfestigung, dann liegt die Annahme recht nahe, daß Isaac unmittelbar im Auftrag des Herrschers arbeitete und keine »deutsche« Tradition aufnahm, sondern eine habsburgische gründete, deren »Export« nach Kursachsen ungewollt die Grundlage für die lutherische Gottesdienstmusik schaffen sollte." (p. 263).

86 Manfred Schuler, 'Zur Überlieferung des 'Choralis Constantinus' von Heinrich Isaac', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 36 (1979), pp. 68-76 and 146-154. The masses are published in Louise Cuyler (ed.), *Five Polyphonic Masses by Heinrich Isaac. Transcribed and Edited from the Formschneider First Edition* (Nuremberg 1555), Ann Arbor 1956.

performers to difficult tests.<sup>87</sup> *Choralis Constantinus* is at the same time an expression of the respect that surrounded the medieval learned *musicus*, and of a new age's monumentality in the use of music in the service of the empire. Isaac was employed as the emperor's composer, but worked most of the time from his home in Florence on the commission from Constance and for the emperor – as a prototype of 'the modern composer'.

The imperial German court chapel disintegrated after Maximilian's death. By the restoration in Vienna of the imperial chapel after the division of the empire and the accession of Ferdinand I in 1558, many of the old traditions had been lost. Chapel masters and composers such as Jacobus Vaet and Philippe de Monte were employed, who wrote in the international style of a more recent era. Before then, the reverberations of the old imperial repertory had taken root at the South and Central German courts, and German music publishers, especially in the Protestant cities, increasingly relied on Josquin Desprez' motets and masses – or on imitations of his style. In humanistic Protestant circles the 'great' music from the beginning of the century, both the imperial represented by Isaac and Josquin's more international, was canonized as the authoritative basis for the musical expression of the new spiritual currents.<sup>88</sup> In these circles the idea of a publication of Isaac's *magnum opus* did not seem impracticable, and Johannes Ott in Nuremberg obtained in 1545 the privilege of Emperor Charles V to print the work. Only after Ott's death did Hieronimus Formschneider succeed in getting the financially demanding publication completed, so that the three large volumes of *Choralis Constantinus* could reach the public in 1550-55.<sup>89</sup>

For Guglielmo Gonzaga, whose father had been raised to *duce* by Charles V, the relationship with the emperor was crucial – both he and his brother Francesco had acquired family connections through marriage to daughters of Ferdinand I. In the church music to which he devoted so much attention, he seemed to fully embrace the idea of an imperial tradition. The masses for Santa Barbara fulfil all the conditions for an 'imperial' status: here we find the special chant repertory, the strictly chorale-based, *alternatim* performance, the learned, imitative five-part texture (modernized since Isaac's time), only the complicated musical notation he had to renounce on. The setting of the *proprium* was no longer applicable either – here it was sufficient with a motet, usually in the place of the Offertorium. Whether Duke Guglielmo knew of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus* we do not know. The publication itself is not recorded among the surviving music from Santa Barbara.<sup>90</sup> But it is thought provoking that the work became available to circles outside the leading German courts precisely during the period when Duke Guglielmo would start planning his new church, and in any case he was undoubtedly introduced to older church music traditions by his uncle Ercole Gonzaga.

87 Published in H. Isaac (E. Bezecny & W. Rabl, eds.), *Choralis Constantinus, erster Teil ...* (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich 10), Vienna 1898; H. Isaac (A. von Webern, ed.), *Choralis Constantinus, zweiter Teil ...* (DTÖ 32), Vienna 1909; and H. Isaac (L. Cuyler, ed.), *Choralis Constantinus Book III. Transcribed from the Formschneider First Edition* (Nuremberg, 1555), Ann Arbor 1950.

88 Jessie Ann Owens, 'How Josquin Became Josquin: Reflections on Historiography and Reception', in J.A. Owens & A. Cummings (eds.), *Music in Renaissance Cities and Courts: Studies in Honor of Lewis Lockwood* (Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music 18) Warren, MI 1996, pp. 271-279 (pp. 277-278).

89 Cf. Schuler, 'Zur Überlieferung', pp. 74-75.

90 The reception of *the Choralis Constantinus* is another uncultivated area of research.

Now we can return to the question of whether the music at Santa Barbara should be perceived as unambiguously conservative? Maybe it should. It contains plenty of elements that point to personal imperial ambitions, to a dream of a unified church in the empire, and to a confirmation of power through a retrospective cultural program that kept his employed musicians in tight reins. But one cannot completely reject the idea that behind the duke's reform lay an idea of a church and a music that, to a far greater degree than the Council of Trent, took the teachings of the Protestant reformations seriously, and which, at least in the musical area, linked to the same ideals of artistically ambitious settings of the melodies of the liturgy that prevailed at the Protestant German courts. From such a point of view, Duke Guglielmo's project could constitute the actual avant-garde within Catholic church music and perhaps thereby secure a support from the leading musicians of the day that reached beyond the Duke's ability to pay.

### Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 English version, 'Josquin and the sound of the voices. Analysing vocal instrumentation – a suggestion' 2023, at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Josquin\\_Sound.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Josquin_Sound.pdf).
- \*2 Published in Giancarlo Rostirolla, Stefania Soldati, Elena Zomparelli (eds.), *Palestrina e l'Europa, atti del III convegno internazionale di studi (Palestrina 6-9 ottobre 1994)*, Palestrina, Fondazione G. Pierluigi da Palestrina, 2006, pp. 707-742.
- \*3 See also, Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, 'Alexander Agricola's Vocal Style – »bizarre« and »surly«, or the Flower of the Singer's Art?' in Nicole Schwindt (ed.), *Alexander Agricola. Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus* (Trossinger Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik 6 – 2006), Kassel 2007, pp. 59-79 (pp. 60-68), and 'Improvisation und schriftliche Komposition', in Michele Calella und Lothar Schmidt (eds), *Komponieren in der Renaissance. Lehre und Praxis* (Handbuch der Musik der Renaissance, Band 2), Laaber 2013, pp. 233-247.

## Alexander Agricola's vocal style – “bizarre” and “surly”, or the flower of the singer's art?<sup>1</sup>

Nicole Schwindt (ed.), *Alexander Agricola. Musik zwischen Vokalität und Instrumentalismus* (Trossinger Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik 6 - 2006), Kassel 2007, pp. 59-79

There can be no doubt that the ‘classical’ works by Josquin are easy to understand and accessible to a modern audience, just as they were to his contemporaries and subsequent generations. One can say that elements of his musical expression were canonized as a stylistic norm during the first half of the sixteenth century. Agricola, on the other hand, seems rather inaccessible to the modern music lover, and even to the music historian, in spite of the fact that during his lifetime his music enjoyed a favour comparable to the popularity of Josquin's music.<sup>2</sup> Ever since August Wilhelm Ambros characterized Agricola with the words “Among his contemporaries, he is the strangest and most bizarre, and indulges in the most peculiar flights of fancy – moreover, he tends to write a kind of surly, bad-tempered, dark counterpoint,”<sup>3</sup> most commentators have tended to focus on the richly decorated surface of his music, with its many runs, sequences, leaps, and restless, syncopated part writing. His modern fame seems to be based on the reputation of him being rather peculiar. Perhaps as a result, his music – especially his sacred music – is rarely heard in live performances. The discrepancy between his fame around the year 1500 and his reputation today suggests that Agricola's musical language contains elements whose appeal was lost in the generations following 1500.

This essay will offer a new premise for understanding Agricola's music by isolating one of these elements. I shall explore the possibility that Agricola, to a greater degree than his

1 I wish to express my gratitude to Nicole Schwindt and the Hochschule für Musik Trossingen for the invitation to speak about Agricola's vocal style. Without this gentle push in the right direction, I probably would not have turned to this subject at the present stage of my research. My warmest thanks also to Jane Alden for her great help in transforming my English into something readable.

2 Cf. Honey Meconi, ‘Josquin and Musical Reputation’, *Essays on Music and Culture in Honor of Herbert Kellman*. Collection « Épitome musicale » 8, ed. Barbara Haggh (Paris, 2001), pp. 280–297. Agricola's secular music had an especially wide circulation: in a French provincial collection of music from around 1520, Agricola is the only composer whose name is attached to several pieces of music (seven); he is represented in the MS by 14 compositions in all (including four duplicates), surpassed only by Loyset Compère with 17 (two duplicates), while Josquin accounts for only two, see Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the Music Collection of a Copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen*, (Copenhagen, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 36–40.

3 August Wilhelm Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, vol. 3: *Geschichte der Musik im Zeitalter der Renaissance bis zu Palestrina* (Leipzig, 1868), p. 243: “Er ist unter seinen Genossen der wunderlichste und bizarrste und ergeht sich in höchst sonderbaren Phantastereien – gleich daneben setzt er irgend einen mürrischen, übellaunigen, finstern Contrapunkt.” Translated by Fabrice Fitch in the article ‘Agricola’ in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second ed. (London, 2001), vol. 1, p. 228.

\*1

contemporaries, held on to or embraced the sound world of professional singers from the second half of the fifteenth century. I will suggest that this is part of the reason why his music came, in posterity, to be viewed as “bizarre” and difficult. I wish to shift focus away from an analysis of structures and towards an interest in the sound and meaning of the music – to consider how the music was heard and how it relates to the performance traditions of the age. Consequently the music of Agricola and his colleagues has to be heard against a background of some necessarily hypothetical notions of the music created *alla mente* as part of the singers’ daily work in courtly and ecclesiastical institutions. However, this background of improvised traditions should in general not be regarded as provider of actual models for written compositions, even though exactly this relationship can easily be found in the surviving repertory (to be discussed below). The improvised traditions should rather be kept in mind as widespread frameworks of musical understanding and sound identities, which composers had to relate to in the contemporary sound world.<sup>4</sup>

### *The singer's art*

That Agricola was very much in demand as a singer is confirmed by the few facts we know concerning his life and career. One cannot think of any better recommendation than the preserved letters from King Charles VIII of France, and from Ferrante I of Naples, who both wanted the services of the singer.<sup>5</sup> The epitaphs praise Agricola as much as a singer as a composer; one French commemorative poem admonishes Death for removing “a singer excelling all other musicians” – a “triumphant voice” and an “exquisite mouth famed in music”.<sup>6</sup>

I always wondered what could make a singer from the northern regions of Europe so highly sought-after. It is hard to believe that a singer gifted only with a beautiful voice and a good technique, who served alongside other singers of the same category of voice, could cause kings to put diplomacy in action. We need to ponder some questions: Was such a singer in demand as a soloist in the courtly musical life outside the church? The enormous production of secular music suggests that this might have been the case. Was the backlist of written music, which the singer/composer could bring along, and his ability to create new music, something that added value to his services? It is probable that this was more important than we often presume. However, music could easily be circulated in handwritten copies, and the position as composer was just about to be established and still a rarity. As Pamela Starr has shown, with Jean Cordier as her main witness, composing was not a necessity in order to be one of the most sought-after singers.<sup>7</sup> Likewise the positions in the Burgundian court chapel of Pierre de La Rue and

4 For a discussion of the term ‘Improvisation’ see Leo Treitler’s essays ‘Medieval Improvisation’ and ‘Written Music and Oral Music: Improvisation in Medieval Performance’ with new introductions in *With Voice and Pen. Coming to know Medieval Song and How It Was Made* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 1–67.

5 Cf. Allan W. Atlas, ‘Agricola and Ferrante I of Naples’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 30 (1977), pp. 313–319, and Allan W. Atlas and Anthony M. Cummings, ‘Agricola, Ghiselin, and Alfonso II of Naples’, *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989), pp. 540–548.

6 “O dure mort ... Tu as frappé dessus maistre Allexandre, / Chantre excellent sur tous musiciens. / ... Tu as cassé la triumpante voix, / ... Tu as rompu ... La bouche exquise en musicque famée, / ...” The poem is published in Rob C. Wegman, ‘Agricola, Bordon, and Obrecht at Ghent: Discoveries and Revisions’, *Revue belge de musicologie* 51 (1997), pp. 23–62 (pp. 61–62).

7 Cf. Pamela F. Starr, ‘Musical entrepreneurship in 15th-century Europe’, *Early Music* 32 (2004), pp. 119–133.

later Agricola seem to be less dependent on their fame as composers than on their service as dependable singers.<sup>8</sup>

The high status of singers like Jean Cordier, Agricola and their other northern colleagues was probably the result of the education and knowledge of performance traditions that they had acquired in the Flemish and French institutions of their youths. Employers must have valued their ability to create attractive music *alla mente*, on the spot, and to lead colleagues with the same educational background in satisfactory performances of music based on multi-voice improvisation, as well as on notated music. These skills were in demand all over Europe. Such special abilities became slowly less important as the diffusion of printed music became established, but on the other hand, the easy access to printed music created a much wider labour market for professional composers and chapel masters.

It lies outside the scope of this study to go into the many problems and uncertainties connected to the study of improvisatory practices. For now, I will refer just to Rob Wegman's influential article 'From Maker to Composer',<sup>9</sup> and to our growing recognition of the degree to which the double experience of working *alla mente* with music as well as in writing enhanced the achievements of composers and singers – as recently demonstrated in Anna Maria Busse Berger's book *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*.<sup>10</sup>

For some time my research has focused on a very simple sort of polyphony and improvisation in the period up to 1500. It is the repertory often referred to as *cantus planus binatim* in which a sound-enhancing counter-voice, or maybe two voices, following traditional rules is added to a pre-existing tune.<sup>11</sup> It is an art of singing without the need for *contrapunctus*-rules. This type of song is a long way from Agricola's art, but the practice merits our attention because it puts actual singing in the foreground, which enables us to focus on how different the backgrounds and abilities of the singers in the service of the church were, and how different the sound of suitable musics could be.<sup>12</sup> It is helpful to list, as a sort of intellectual experiment, the various types of performances of sacred music involving improvisation current during Agricola's youth, paying special attention to the interaction between improvisation and written music:

- 8 Cf. Honey Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court* (Oxford, 2003); I read in this study a steady undercurrent of veiled wonder that La Rue was not more rewarded and valued as a composer by his patrons, see especially the section 'La Rue's Significance at the Court', pp. 83–92.
- 9 Rob C. Wegman, 'From Maker to Composer: Improvisation and Musical Authorship in the Low Countries, 1450–1500', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996), pp. 409–479.
- 10 Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley, 2005).
- 11 *Cantus planus binatim* was defined by F. Alberto Gallo in '«Cantus planus binatim». Polifonia primitiva in fonti tardive', *Quadrivium* 7 (1966), pp. 79–89. A few years ago Christian Berkold showed that Gallo's definition building on Prosdocimus de Beldemandis' *Expositiones tractatus practive cantus mensurabilis* (Padua, 1408), is questionable, and that Prosdocimus' remarks rather referred to a discussion of mensural interpretation of ligatures than to two-part unmeasured polyphony; cf. Christian Berkold, '"Cantus planus binatim". Ein musiktheoretischer Beleg zur Mehrstimmigkeit?', *Beiträge zur Musik, Musiktheorie und Liturgie der Abtei Reichenau. Bericht über die Tagung Heiligenkreuz*, 6.–8. Dezember 1999. *Musica mediaevalis Europae occidentalis* 8, ed. Walter Pass and Alexander Rausch (Tutzing, 2001), pp. 149–165.
- 12 Further on these topics in a forthcoming article with the preliminary title 'Prayers for the dead, funeral music and simple polyphony in a French music manuscript of the early sixteenth century (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale Louis-Aragon, Ms. 162 D)'.

1. Simple polyphony *alla mente* based on tradition and patterns (*cantus planus binatim* and related types) was a very durable musical tradition that lasted for centuries, as late as the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The same sort of music can be found in written form, intended for use of singers not able to improvise, usually singers whose musical competences were restricted to the singing of *cantus planus*; it is typically in black non-mensural or semi-mensural notation. Around 1500 the sound of simple polyphony had changed from strings of parallel perfect concords to a dominance of parallel thirds and sixths; and in some examples we also find traces of conventional contrapuntal devices, such as cadential figures. This music was closely connected to intercessory prayers, and its idioms can be traced in innumerable works by famous composers, for example in passages with a reduced number of parts (duos etc.) or in highlighted passages in block harmony with fermatas.<sup>14</sup> *Fauxbourdon*, *gymel* and simple polyphony for two, three or more voices as described by Guilielmus Monachus belong to this family of improvisatory practices.<sup>15</sup>

2. *Cantus super librum* – *cantus fractus alle mente*, for two or more voices on a pre-existing tune, is typically functional music for use in the liturgy; many of the rules of composition are applied.<sup>16</sup> This way of singing lives on as *sortisatio* until at least the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> We find many examples of this type of music in sources copied for the use of singers without a cathedral education, or for use by choirs. In these sources the liturgical tune is often written in chant notation or, if mensurally notated, in uniform note values.<sup>18</sup> Late examples of this tradition can be found in the *Chorbücher* 34 and 35 in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Jena<sup>19</sup> or in the vastly more ambitious Lyons *Contrapunctus seu figurata musica super plano cantu missarum solemnium totius anni* of 1528 (probably composed *in toto* by Francesco Layolle).<sup>20</sup> The only respects in which this

13 Cf. *Le polifonie primitive in Friuli e in Europa. Atti del congresso internazionale Cividale del Friuli, 22–24 agosto 1980*. Miscellanea musicologica 4, ed. Cesare Corsi and Pierluigi Petrobelli (Roma, 1989), and *Un millennio di polifonia liturgica tra oralità e scrittura*. Quaderni di «Musica e Storia» 3, ed. Giulio Cattin and F. Alberto Gallo (Bologna, 2002).

14 A study of the last-mentioned fermata passages can be found in Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'The Dispute about Harmony c. 1500 and the Creation of a New Style', in *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450–1650. Actes du colloque international Louvain-la-Neuve, 23–25 septembre 1999*. Musicologica Neolovaniensia: Studia 9, ed. Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans and Bonnie J. Blackburn (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2001), pp. 1–37.

15 Cf. Guilielmus Monachus, *De preceptis artis musicae*. Corpus scriptorum de musica 11, ed. Albert Seay (American Institute of Musicology, 1965), pp. 29–30 and 38–42; see also the interesting development of models based on Guilielmus' descriptions in Markus Jans, 'Alle gegen eine. Satzmodelle in Note-gegen-Note-Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 10 (1986), pp. 101–120 (especially pp. 104–106).

16 Klaus-Jürgen Sachs has drawn up the basis for these practices in 'Arten improvisierter Mehrstimmigkeit nach Lehrtexten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 12 (1983), pp. 166–183; see also *idem*, 'De modo componendi'. *Studien zu musikalischen Lehrtexten des späten 15. Jahrhunderts*. Studien zur Geschichte der Musiktheorie 2 (Hildesheim, 2002), p. 103.

17 Cf. Ernest T. Ferand, '“Sodaine and unexpected” Music in the Renaissance', *The Musical Quarterly* 37 (1951), pp. 10–27.

18 Cf. Marco Gozzi, 'Cantus firmus per notulas plani cantus: alcune testimonianze quattrocentesche', *Il cantus firmus nella polifonia. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Arezzo, 27–29 dicembre 2002*. Quaderni di polifonie 3, ed. Francesco Facchin (Arezzo, 2005), pp. 45–87.

19 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 54–61, and Christian Meyer, 'Sortisatio. De l'improvisation collective dans les pays germaniques vers 1500', *Polyphonies de tradition orale – histoire et traditions vivantes. Actes du colloque de Royaumont 1990*, ed. Christian Meyer (Paris, 1994), pp. 182–200.

20 Published in *The Lyons Contrapunctus (1528)*. Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance 21–22, ed. David A. Sutherland (Madison, 1976).



Example 1, Johannes Tinctoris, example of *cantus super librum* from *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, III, iv.

category of music differs from the next and last one is the level of the singers' aspirations and the compositional skills of those who, on the basis of such practices, wrote music down.

3. *Cantus super librum*, for groups of virtuoso singers who – Johannes Tinctoris tells us in his manual of counterpoint for singers and composers – were sufficiently skilled and experienced to create a sound comparable to what we hear in composed music.<sup>21</sup> In *Example 1* Tinctoris shows how to vary the two contrapunctus-voices with leaps and fluent motion against a cantus firmus in regular *semibreves*. The example demonstrates the virtuosity and high degree of complexity he expected from multi-voice *cantus super librum*.<sup>22</sup> The biggest difference to composed music is a certain lenience towards a strict adherence to rules<sup>23</sup> and – even more importantly – narrow limits on how long the stretches of polyphony could be that were planned in this way. This is not music characterized by temporally extended, involved developments – such phenomena were reserved for composed music. Rather, it is likely that this sort of polyphony was applied to the widespread line by line *alternatim* performance of chant.<sup>24</sup> Improvised music making of this class created a scene for the virtuoso singer where he could dazzle an audience by his virtuosity and the beauty of his voice; he could also impress the learned in music with new artifice and new sounds as leader of a group of singers. But paying

21 *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, II, xx–xxvii, and III, i, iv, and vi–ix, in Johannes Tinctoris, *Opera theoretica*. Corpus scriptorum de musica 22, ed. Albert Seay, vol. 2 (American Institute of Musicology, 1978).

22 *Ibid.*, III, iv: “Sed ab hac regula eximuntur, qui magis contrapuncto dulciori ac venustiori student quam propinquiore. Quique pluribus super librum canentibus ut contrapunctum diversificent, eum cum moderatione instar quodammodo compositorum longinquum efficiunt, ut hic patet ...” (“But those who seek a sweeter and more delightful counterpoint than one based on neighbouring notes are freed from this rule. With many singing *super librum*, so that the counterpoint may be varied, certain ones employ this great [leap] with moderation, like composed music in a certain way, as is seen in the following ...”, translation by A. Seay in Johannes Tinctoris, *The art of Counterpoint. Liber de arte contrapuncti*. Musicological studies and documents 5 (American Institute of Musicology, 1961), p. 135); see also Bonnie J. Blackburn, ‘On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987), pp. 210–84, especially pp. 256–258.

23 Tinctoris advises training and more training from an early age to overcome the difficulties in singing *super librum* by internalizing the rules of counterpoint (*Liber de arte contrapuncti*, cf. Tinctoris, *Liber de arte*, III, ix), and he highly recommends the singers to rehearse and agree on how to perform their parts and in this way minimize the differences between music *alla mente* and composed music (II, xx); cf. Blackburn, ‘On Compositional Process’, p. 256, and Wegman, ‘From Maker to Composer’, p. 444.

24 This theme is further discussed in my article ‘Kirkemusik i stramme tøjler. Om alternatim-messer til Santa Barbara i Mantova’, *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* 30 (2002), pp. 9–50, especially pp. 42–50.

specialized and highly educated singers was an expensive way of embellishing the liturgy, and it probably died out with the establishment of bigger choirs made up of local singers, as well as the accompanying easy access to composed music through prints.

Today it is only possible to study the virtuoso singer's art with the help of the preserved musical sources. It can be difficult to identify traces of improvisatory traditions, especially if the written music was created by a gifted composer. To compose is a performance for a single performer who has the power to control long musical developments as well as every detail. He can choose to implement a grand scheme using long-range manipulation of the musical material; this can eventually be combined with simple procedures that are easy to grasp by ear, or he can try to hide behind a glittering, highly worked out surface. No matter how he shapes his music, he has to communicate with the singers through musical notation in order to bring the composition to life in sound. The singers, for their part, have to try to live up to the challenges posed by the composer. These challenges may be demands on their virtuosity, their ability to solve riddles or to understand and implement new musical concepts. This process is important in the reciprocal relationship between writing and performance, which in many ways is related to the interaction between memory and writing.

It is well known, owing to the anecdote published by Johannes Manlius in 1562, that Josquin disapproved of singers elaborating their performances of his music with their own added embellishments.<sup>25</sup> A likely reason for his discontent might have been that the singers' conventional ornaments could easily have transported his carefully balanced musical surface and characteristic sound into the realm of collective improvisation. A striking example of such an elaboration is preserved in one of the sources of Antoine Brumel's four-part *Magnificat Secundi toni*. It appears in a 'normal' version in manuscripts in the Biblioteca Central in Barcelona (MS 454) and in the Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel (MS 4° Mus. 9) and in a more embellished version in the French manuscript Ny Kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, which was copied at Lyons around 1520.<sup>26</sup> In the four-part verses the diminutions occur primarily in the superius, causing free dissonances as well as parallel fifths and octaves foreign to the contrapuntal rules on which Brumel's setting of the Magnificat tone is otherwise based.<sup>27</sup> In the two-part verse 8, "Esurientes implevit", both parts are decorated. *Example 2* shows the start of the verse in both versions; the black triangles mark dissonances created by the added diminutions. Note the cluster of dissonances in the superius in bar 15, caused by melodic figuration; these would hardly be acceptable in composed music, but probably recall a sound acceptable in improvised polyphony.

It is easy to find examples of Agricola's use of techniques from improvisatory traditions – I could have used this essay to call attention to examples of his use of free-flowing counter-voices set to a *cantus prius factus*, or to traces of *cantus super librum*-techniques, which can be found everywhere and especially in his reworkings of the music of other composers. But that would not produce a true picture of Agricola as a composer. Indeed,

25 Rob C. Wegman, "And Josquin Laughed ..." Josquin and the Composer's Anecdote in the Sixteenth Century, *The Journal of Musicology* 18 (1999), pp. 319-357 (at p. 322).

26 For a description of this source, see Christoffersen, *French Music*. The two versions of Brumel's *Magnificat Secundi toni* are published in an instructive parallel edition in Antoine Brumel, *Opera omnia*. *Corpus mensurabilis musicae* 5, ed. Barton Hudson, vol. 6 (American Institute of Musicology, 1972), pp. 7-38.

27 It has to be remarked that Brumel's music even without these embellishments can be compared to Agricola's in its detailed surface.

**A** Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

E - su - ri - en - tes im - ple - vit

E - su - ri - en - tes, e - su - ri - en -

bo - nis, im - ple - vit, im - ple -

en - tes im - ple -

tes im - ple -

vit, im - ple - vit

vit bo - nis

Example 2, Antoine Brumel, *Magnificat Secundi toni* a 4, verse 8, “Esuriente”, bars

1–25 (based on Brumel, *Opera*, vol. 6, p. 15):

A, as in Barcelona 434, ff. 91<sup>v</sup>–94, and Kassel. 9, no. 12

B. as in Copenhagen 1848 2<sup>o</sup>, pp. 324–29

the main results of my studies are firstly that Agricola is much less dependent than some of his contemporaries (Josquin primarily) on highly stylized improvisatory traditions, and secondly that he, to some degree, relies in his music on the entire world of sound cultivated by groups of virtuoso singers, exploiting his rich imagination in structuring this sound on paper.

Mensura = 



A - ve Ma - ri - a. gra - ti - a ple - na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, gra - ti - a ple - na, vir - go se - re - na, se - re - na. A - ve, cu - ius conce - pti - o so - lem - ni ple - na gua - di - ius conce - pti - o, con - ce - pti - o so - lem - ni ple - na gua - di - o, A - ve, cu - ius conce - pti - o so - lem - ni ple - na gua - di - o.

Example 3, Josquin Desprez, "Ave Maria ... virgo serena" a 4, bb. 1–53 (after the edition by A. Smijers)

44

o, Cae - le - sti - a, ter - re - sti - a no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.

Cae-le-sti - a, ter - re - sti - a no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.

o, Cae-le - sti - a, ter - re - sti - a no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.

o, Cae - le - sti - a, ter - re - sti - a no - va re - plet lae - ti - ti - a.

Example 3 (continued).

### Sound and singing in two motets

Let us turn to a couple of very simple examples. This may seem odd when the subject is Agricola, but it is too easy to bury the point in a lot of notes when dealing with this composer. It may seem unfair, too, to compare a very early work by Josquin with a mature work by Agricola, but I find that this confrontation may make my point clear.

Josquin's famous motet "Ave Maria ... virgo serena" dating from around 1480<sup>28</sup> can be read as a catalogue of very simple techniques – or, one could be tempted to say, as a pedagogical stylization of good singers' skills in improvisation.<sup>29</sup> The motet starts with a four-part imitation at the octave and prime of the very simple tune for the introductory strophe of the sequence "Ave Maria ... virgo serena", schematically unfolding in four phrases (see *Ex. 3*, bb. 1–30).<sup>30</sup> There is nothing here that could not be agreed verbally and performed satisfactorily by professional singers after a short rehearsal. The next section demonstrates simple harmony in the setting of a stanza from the strophic poem "Ave, cuius conceptio": In bars 31–35 we hear a two-part texture in parallel sixths with octaves at the start and end – this conforms entirely to the preference in simple *cantus planus* settings for thirds and sixths. The short line is then repeated by the lower pair of voices, supplemented by parallel fourths to the highest part in the altus transforming the texture into a beautiful *fauxbourdon*-setting (bb. 35–39). In the second line of the stanza (bb. 40–44), the parallel sixths between superius and tenor are expanded to four parts completely in accordance with Guilielmus Monachus' description of how to perform such things.<sup>31</sup> The stanza's last two lines (bb. 44–53) exhibit a traditional procedure in polyphonic improvisation: a jubilant rising sequence in superius and tenor, which basically

28 Joshua Rifkin dates the copying of the motet into the MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 3154 (fols. 147v–148) to ca. 1485, cf. pp. 305–307 in 'Munich, Milan, and a Marian Motet: Dating Josquin's *Ave Maria ... virgo serena*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56 (2003), pp. 239–350.

29 David Fallows remarks in 'Approaching a New Chronology for Josquin: An Interim Report', *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 19 (1999), pp. 131–150, that "... for all its beauty, *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* does not actually contain anything that is at all contrapuntally difficult: technically speaking, it could have been composed by almost anybody." (p. 137).

30 The complete motet is published in *Werken van Josquin des Prés. Motetten*, vol. 1, ed. Albert Smijers (Amsterdam, 1925), no. 1, and, perhaps more conveniently, in *Anthology of Renaissance Music. Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600*, ed. Allan W. Atlas (New York, 1998), pp. 159–165.

31 Guilielmus Monachus, *De preceptis*, p. 39.

moves in parallel fifths (alternating with an octave after every three fifths), made functional, or contrapuntally acceptable, by the insertion of a single note (*b*) in the tenor (in b. 44), which displaces this voice by a minim interpolating a sixth between every fifth; the bassus follows the superius slavishly in parallel tenths and altus fills out the harmony.<sup>32</sup> In a comparable manner the motet sets the next four stanzas and the final prayer in an expert simplification of basic techniques known to and recognized by every singer – with every single phrase confined to the horizon of *musica alla mente*. The success of this motet may have been prompted by the young composers' bold dismissal of everything in the setting of the words not essential to the prayer, which gives the music an immediacy rare in composed music; it is also very easy on the ears.<sup>33</sup>

Agricola's motet "Transit Anna timor" (*Exx. 4a–b*) was probably composed more than twenty years after Josquin's "Ave Maria". Edward Lerner suggests that it celebrates the recovery of the French King, Louis XII, in 1504.<sup>34</sup> After a broad opening gesture, a four-part imitative passage starts in bar 9, which is almost as straightforward as Josquin's opening of "Ave Maria". However, the imitation includes a detail, which I find rather characteristic of Agricola and the composing singer. It is a small circling figure first heard in the tenor in bars 10–11 (each occurrence is put in a box in *Ex. 4a*), which adds life and character to the imitation. It introduces unaccented dissonances, fourths in the tenor and seconds in superius and bassus, generating energy for the rather majestic advance to the cadence in bar 21.<sup>35</sup> It is telling that Agricola keeps the little figure as the characteristic

\*4

32 The rhythmic displacement of a single voice part was a well-known technique, beginning in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, used to create momentum in composed music. Guilielmus describes it as a traditional way of performing fauxbourdon with "sincopas per sextas et quintas" (Guilielmus Monachus, *De preceptis*, p. 38) and gives an example of how to harmonize raising and descending scales in syncopation (p. 53). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Vicente Lusitano and Nicola Vincentino still mention it as a basic technique in polyphonic improvisation; see Ernest T. Ferand, 'Improvised vocal counterpoint in the late Renaissance and early Baroque', *Annales musicologiques* 4 (1956), pp. 129–174 (here pp. 148–151). Richard Sherr has made the same observation concerning this passage in Josquin's "Ave Maria" without, however, associating it with traditional techniques, cf. *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford, 2000), pp. 333–334; Josquin also uses the fifth-sixth pattern – possibly with a hint at improvised practices – in his motet "Ut Phebi radiis", especially in its first section on the ascending hexachord (see my edition of the motet bb. 23–25, 48–50, and 55–61, pp. 113–118 in the article 'Hvad enhver kordreng skal kunne. Betragtning af motetten Ut Phebi radiis af Josquin Desprez', *Musik & Forskning* 28 (2003), pp. 97–118. The same technique of rhythmically displacing the tenor, now at a semibreve value, can be found in the setting of the fourth stanza "Ave, vera virginitas" in triple time (bb. 94–109 in the Smijers edition). Here the simple sixth-fifth formations evolve into a strict canon at the lower fifth between superius and tenor inside the four-part texture. John Milsom correctly identifies this procedure as belonging to the basic skills of singers and composers, as part of the 'grammar' of counterpoint, using this passage and others by Guillaume Dufay and Josquin as examples, see pp. 146–151 of "Imitatio", 'Intertextuality', and Early Music', in *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*. Studies in medieval and Renaissance music 4, ed. Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 141–151.

33 For more on the declamation of the text in the motet, see Ludwig Finscher, 'Zum Verhältnis von Imitationstechnik und Textbehandlung im Zeitalter Josquins', in *Renaissance-Studien. Helmuth Osthoff zum 80. Geburtstag*. Frankfurter Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 11, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Tutzing, 1979), pp. 57–72, and Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *Textdeklamation in der Motette des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 167–169.

34 Cf. Alexander Agricola, *Opera omnia*. Corpus mensurabilis musicae 22, ed. Edward Lerner, vol. 4 (American Institute of Musicology, 1966), p. XIII; the motet is published pp. 41–46.

35 This circling figure followed by a leap of a fourth is not a common feature of Agricola's music. I have only

Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Tran - sit An - na ti - mor

Tran - sit An - na ti - mor

Tran - sit An - na ti - mor ni - ve -

Tran - sit An - na ti - mor

10 ni - ve - os re - gi - na per - ar -

ni - ve - os re - gi - na per - ar -

ni - ve - os re - gi - na per - ar -

ni - ve - os re - gi - na per - ar -

21 tus mar - ci -

tus mar - ci -

tus as - scri - pta est cor - dis di - ra fa - vil - la tu - i mar - ci -

tus as - scri - pta est cor - dis di - ra fa - vil - la tu - i mar - ci -

Example 4a, Alexander Agricola, “Transit Anna timor” a 4, bars 1–30 (based on the edition by E. Lerner).

feature in the shortened entry of the altus. After the cadence, tenor and bassus take over in a canon at the octave, using a more extended version of the theme until all parts – *subito* – come together in homorythmic declamation. Agricola uses, in a relatively simple structure, the same procedures we saw in the Josquin example, but without Josquin’s ear-catching simplifications.

been able to find it in two other compositions in his *Opera omnia*: in his “Salve regina” (II) a 4 (published in Agricola, *Opera*, vol. 4., pp. 20–27) where it occurs in a three-part imitation (S–Ct–B) on “misericordiae” bars 7–10, and in the introductory imitation between superius and tenor (bb. 1–3) in the motet-chanson “Belle sur toutes / Tota pulchra es” a 3 (*ibid*, pp. 52–53). It does not have the same striking effect on the sound as in “Transit Anna timor” in any of these occurrences, and in the second instance it does not produce any dissonances at all.

47

gal - li - ca neu re - mis

gal - li - ca neu re - mis

va - ri - is per - tu - sa

va - ri - is per - tu - sa

56

vi -

fa - ti - scat

fa - ti - scat

Example 4b, Alexander Agricola, “Transit Anna timor” a 4, bars 47–62.

Of course Agricola also knows the lure of parallel imperfect concords. A bit later in the motet, the upper parts sing “gallica neu remis” in thirds spreading out to sixths into the cadence at the octave (*Ex. 4b*). Again the lower voices respond in bar 52, now in imitation, and they are drawn out in a long sequence (with traces of the fifth-sixth model, now descending), so that the simplicity of expression in the start of the passage somehow is renounced in favour of an asymmetric complication of the course of the music – quite unlike the techniques in Josquin’s “Ave Maria”.

#### *Agricola's Missa Malheur me bat*

This insignificance of symmetry, and the effect on the sound of the music of the small circling figure, are each in their own way essential to Agricola’s vocal style. This view can be supported by a study of Agricola’s greater sacred compositions and especially by looking at his *Missa Malheur me bat* (on a chanson probably by the Flemish singer Malcort),<sup>36</sup> while keeping the corresponding masses by Josquin and Jacob Obrecht in mind. All three masses were published by Ottaviano Petrucci in respectively 1503 (Obrecht),

36 See the discussion of the attributions to Ockeghem, Johannes Martini and Malcort in Johannes Ockeghem, *Collected Works*, vol. 3: *Motets and Chansons*, ed. Dragan Plamenac and Richard Wexler (Philadelphia, 1992), p. CVI; the chanson is published *ibid*, p. 95, and elsewhere; see also the article ‘Malcourt’ by Barbara Haggh in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second ed. (London, 2001), vol. 15, pp. 682–683.

1504 (Agricola) and 1505 (Josquin) – and all were thus current during the first decade of the sixteenth century.<sup>37</sup>

The masses by Obrecht and Josquin have several features in common. Josquin's mass was probably composed with a knowledge of Obrecht's – possibly with a sense of competition. Both of them use segmentation and ostinato, and they make part of their techniques demonstratively audible: Obrecht does this by his long-term scheme of segmentation in the highest voice, which for long stretches unfolds in long note values; Josquin puts text-derived ostinato motives on the musical surface, every time presenting these motives in such a simple manner that the listener can confidently follow the musical development. No matter how sophisticated their contrapuntal techniques are, or how involved their *cantus firmus* treatment, both composers rely in many passages on the sound of simplified or stylized improvisatory techniques – a feature that also helps to make the music recognizable and safe for the listener.

In Agricola's sound world it does not seem to be as desirable to expose the compositional skeleton – or to help the listener feel at home in the music. He is, in this respect, more in line with Johannes Ockeghem, who is also somewhat reticent about his working methods, evading too obvious means of phrasing in his music's surface.<sup>38</sup> Agricola's music shows him as an expert in the art of singing, and he did not like to leave anything to the whims of singers. Therefore every detail is carefully worked out and his demands on the singers are high. It is rare to find simplified versions of improvisatory techniques in his music. On the contrary, he seems to prefer to produce the sounding universe of the singers by subtle means, which can be thought out and developed only with the help of notation. Agricola's music, we might say, looks more like *res facta* than much other contemporary music. For example, he likes, at times, to undermine the stability of the music's basic pulse. This procedure is utterly anti-improvisatory – something that would cause an immediate breakdown in a performance *super librum*. We find a striking example in the Agnus Dei III of his *Missa In myne Zyn*, where we hear the impressive sound of an improvising ensemble in full flow, while the tune in the bassus is organized in units of at first eleven *minimae* and later seven *minimae* – an astonishing, out-of-the-world, jazzy effect, and probably not an everyday experience of singing 'on the book'.<sup>39</sup>

I will use a final example from Agricola's *Missa Malheur me bat* to try to clarify my point. It is from the second part of the Gloria, near the middle of the "Qui tollis"-section (see Ex. 5).<sup>40</sup> A lot is happening in this section. Just before the example starts, we hear a

37 Published in *The New Obrecht Edition*, vol. 7, ed. Barton Hudson (Utrecht, 1987), pp. 1-37; Agricola, *Opera*, vol. 1, pp. 66-104; and *The New Josquin Edition*, vol. 9, ed. Barton Hudson (Utrecht, 1994), pp. 2-42. For an introduction to the masses by Obrecht and Josquin, see Rob C. Wegman, *Born for the Muses. The Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 239-244 and 332-333, and M. Jennifer Bloxam, 'Masses Based on Polyphonic Songs and Canonic Masses' in *The Josquin Companion*, pp. 176-186; cf. also Barton Hudson's very extensive commentaries to the two editions.

38 Cf. Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem. Masses and Models*. Collection Ricercar 2 (Paris, 1997), p. 9: "... the secret of his art lies in the deftness with which he covers his tracks. Thus the twin themes of subversion and concealment run like *leitmotifs* throughout his work."

39 Agricola, *Opera*, vol. 1, pp. 143-144.

40 The example corresponds to bars 90-120 of the Gloria in Lerner's edition, Agricola, *Opera*, vol. 1, pp. 77-79. It has not helped Agricola's modern reputation that Lerner chose to transcribe every section in *tempus imperfectum diminutum* in a 1:4 reduction of the note values, while the current editions of Obrecht and Josquin keep to halved or original values respectively. This ought not make any difference in performances. However, the psychological impact of the pages' accumulation of small note values on singers and

Alexander Agricola's vocal style

189  $\text{C}$

tris, mi - se-, mi - se-, mi - se - re - re, mi -

Pa - tris, mi - se-, mi - se - re - re, mi - se -

tris, mi - se-, mi - se - re - re

mi - se - re - re, mi - se - re - re

197

se - re - re no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so - lus

re - re no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so - lus sanc -

no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so - lus

no - bis. Quo - ni - am tu so - lus sanc -

205

sanc - tus. Tu so - lus Do - mi -

sanc - tus. Tu so - lus Do -

sanc - tus. Tu so - lus Do -

tus.

214

nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus.

Tu so -

- mi - nus. Tu so - lus al - tis - si - mus.

Tu so - lus

Example 5, Alexander Agricola, *Missa Malheur me bat* a 4, Gloria, bb. 189–249 (based on the edition by E. Lerner).

224

lus al - tis - si - mus. Je -

233

su Chri - Je - su Chri - ste.

241

Chri - ste. Cum Sanc - to Spi - ri - tu in glo

Cum San - cto Spi - ri - tu

Example 5 (continued).

three-part passage on the words “ad dexteram Patris” ending in a Phrygian cadence to  $b - b'$ , which the entry of the bassus (and the final notes in the altus) reinterprets as major thirds over  $G - g$  (b. 189). Now comes a quite remarkable echo-passage on “miserere nobis” – almost in *‘hocquetus’*-style – emphasizing the major triad on G. Everything picks up again at “Quoniam tu solus” (b. 200), in a four-part texture with the chanson tenor as *cantus firmus* in the tenor. This short, quite conventional, passage cadences on C in bar 205. The following three- and two-part passages present Agricola at his most fluent and refined. The descending lines in the superius evolve freely from the tenor’s almost strict reproduction of Malcort’s Phrygian chanson tenor – with a hint of the improvisational trick of repeating scale segments in varied rhythms.<sup>41</sup> In the next phrase, where the altus

instrumentalists cannot be ignored. The very few performances and recordings of Agricola’s music have a tendency to be too fast and strained and fuzzy, not allowing its expressive qualities to come to the fore. The examples in the present essay are all reduced in the ratio 1:2.

41 Cf. Ferand, ‘Improvised vocal counterpoint’, pp. 152–153.

repeats the words “Tu solus altissimus” (starting in b. 222), the *cantus firmus* moves to the altus and the bassus takes over the florid counterpoint; the tune suddenly loses its momentum in drawn-out note values (bb. 226–230) – the bassus has to work hard alone to keep the music going. When the tenor enters again on “Jesu Christe” (b. 234) with a repeat of the motive (quoted from the chanson tenor) just sung in the altus, the feeling of the strong beat in the brevis-bars has become rather vague, even if there has been articulated cadences on strong beats in the preceding phrases. This floating accentuation forces the introduction of a brevis-bar containing three beats into the transcription (marked with a fat bracket in bar 241). Agricola establishes a new strong beat at “Cum sancto Spiritu” marked by regular brevis values and upbeat phrasing – it comes as a sort of ‘wake up’ call. The strong beat has now moved to the former position of the relative weak beat in the *brevis*-bar, and here it stays (with the Holy Ghost) for the remainder of the movement.

This rhythmically floating episode illustrates Agricola's precise calculation of the musical effect and how he exploits the model tune. The place where the *cantus firmus* changes from the tenor to the altus is marvellously heard by the composer. The tenor here quotes the model literally;<sup>42</sup> the long note *e* and the semitone movement sets the scene for a strong Phrygian cadence (bb. 220–222), but the superius just fades out with the semitone step *c'* – *b*. The cadence never materializes; it sounds more like a semitone ‘sigh’ echoed a fifth below in the tenor in doubled note values. The literal quote continues in the altus, but the bridging, syncopated pre-imitation in the bassus underscores the rhythmical limbo of these moments. The text in this section has the solemn acclamations to Jesus, “Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus altissimus”, but the music almost disappears into two thin, syncopated strands of melody, very subdued. It is a rather individual interpretation of the text, comparable to the jubilant ‘hocquetus’ on “miserere nobis”.<sup>43</sup> From “Quoniam tu solus sanctus” (b. 205) to “Cum sancto Spiritu” (b. 241) we experience an inverted curve of musical intensity, tightly controlled by Agricola. We meet a composer free from conventional thinking, writing for and expressing his ideas through virtuoso singing voices in a music that could never have emerged from improvisation. This music has been heard in the composer's mind and developed on paper using the notation to communicate with the singers.

In Josquin's and Obrecht's masses on the same chanson I hear personalities speak though the collective of the singing voices very convincing and with clearly argued points; they invite admiration for their grand structures. In both cases the four (or six) voice parts express a single, fictional, rounded personality, helped by stylization and simplification of the musical details. Agricola, on the other hand, composes for the singing voices without the same degree of simplification and without rhetorical appeals to the listener. His personality comes out just as strong but different. His music builds on the traditions of the virtuoso ensemble of singers, with their richly detailed, multi-dimensional sound. This is a lost tradition, and one less easily accessible to later audiences. It is in the ever-changing sonorities and the care for expressive details that we find Agricola the singer.

42 The literal quotes in the tenor and altus (of the chanson “Malheur me bat” as published in Ockeghem, *Collected Works*, vol. 3) are marked with boxes in the example.

43 Settings of this “miserere nobis” moment in the Gloria in very active, dotted rhythms can also be found in Agricola's *Missa Je ne demande* (Agricola, *Opera*, vol. 1, pp. 43, bb. 78–80) and in his *Missa In myne Zyn* (*ibid.*, p. 112, bb. 134–135). A sort of ‘hocquetus’ appears also in the Sanctus of the *Missa Malheur me bat*, bars 9–11 (*ibid.*, pp. 91–92).

### Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 Online at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Cop1848.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Cop1848.pdf).
- \*2 Published as the introduction to the e-book, *Songs for funerals and intercession. A collection of polyphony for the confraternity of St Barbara at the Corbie Abbey. Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, MS 162 D*. Edited by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, 2 vols., September 2015, at <http://amiens.pwch.dk/>.
- \*3 English version, 'Liturgical music in a tight rein. *Alternatim* masses for Santa Barbara in Mantua', at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Mantua.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Mantua.pdf).
- \*3 English version, 'What every choirboy should know. Considering the motet *Ut Phebi radiis* by Josquin Desprez', at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Ut\\_Phebi.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Ut_Phebi.pdf).



## *Prenez sur moi vostre exemple:*

### The ‘clefless’ notation or the use of *fa*-clefs in chansons of the fifteenth century by Binchois, Barbingant, Ockeghem and Josquin

Revised 2023

This article originally appeared in the *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 39 (2009), pp. 13-38. In 2015 a new source, a sixth member of the group of ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers, was found in Belgium. The small manuscript in its original covers has since become known as the ‘Leuven chansonnier’, and it contains two of the songs discussed in the following in a notation without conventional clefs. I have included this chansonnier in the discussion, and at the end I have added some links to other chansons, which may originally have been notated in *fa*-clefs.

The bibliography for Ockeghem’s famous puzzle canon “Prenez sur moi vostre exemple amoureux” is as large as the piece is small, as Peter Urquhart remarked.<sup>1</sup> I have no intention of contributing new insights to the enormous amount of learned scholarship, which has been performed on the enigmas surrounding this song since the sixteenth century. By now most questions concerning its notation, tonality and Glarean’s characterization of it as a *katholikon* seem to be answered satisfactorily through the latest publications by Fallows, Urquhart and van Benthem.<sup>2</sup>

However, in most publications Ockeghem’s song is classified as member of an exclusive group of ‘clefless’ compositions. That this is a too comprehensive categorization becomes clear after a browse through David Fallows’ eminent catalogue of polyphonic secular songs in the 15th century.<sup>3</sup> In his enumeration of songs the term ‘clefless’ describes pieces without any clef at all as well songs using combinations of flats in all or some of its voices to organize pitch structures.<sup>4</sup> The last-mentioned songs do not use the conventional ‘letter

1 Peter Urquhart, ‘Another Impolitic Observation on *Absalon, fili mi*’, *The Journal of Musicology* 21 (2004), pp. 343-380 (at p. 369, n. 42). My thanks to David Fallows, Claus Røllum-Larsen, the Center for Music and Theatre at The Royal Library, Copenhagen, and the Music Department of the State and University Library, Aarhus, for their help with information and materials.

2 David Fallows, ‘Prenez sur moy: Ockeghem’s tonal pun’, *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 1 (1992), pp. 63-75; Peter Urquhart, ‘Calculated to Please the Ear: Ockeghem’s Canonic Legacy’, *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 47 (1997), pp. 72-98; Jaap van Benthem, “Prenez sur moy vostre exemple”. Signae, text and cadences in Ockeghem’s *Prenez sur moy* and *Missa Cuiusvis toni*, *ibid.*, pp. 99-118.

3 David Fallows, *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480*. Oxford 1999.

4 Several sources especially from Central Europe contain examples of music entirely without clefs as the *Schedelsches Liederbuch* and *Lochamer Liederbuch* (cf. Bettina Wackernagel (ed.), *Das Liederbuch des Dr. Hartmann Schedel. Faksimile*. (Das Erbe deutscher Musik 84) Kassel 1978, and Konrad Ameln (ed.), *Lochamer-Liederbuch und Das Fundamentum organisandi von Conrad Paumann, Faksimile-Nachdruck*. Kassel 1972), or for example the sources catalogued in Kurt von Fischer (ed.), *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales. Handschriften mit mehrstimmiger Musik des 14., 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts I*, (RISM BIV/3) München-Duisburg 1972, pp. 360-372 (D-Mbs5023), 385-389 (D-TR322) and 421 (DK-Kar102).

clefs' to specify the pitch, but they are certainly not 'clefless,' since the flats or rather the *fa*-signs, which refer to contemporary hexachordal theory, carry out some of the functions of the normal clefs, and it is thus most productive to regard them as using '*fa*-clefs'.

Ockeghem's famous *Missa Cuiusvis toni* may stand as an example of an extended composition, which uses neither letter- nor *fa*-clefs, only different symbols to specify the placement of the music's final tones – it is really clefless.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, its companion in the Chigi Codex, the *Missa Prolationum*, was most likely originally notated entirely in *fa*-clefs.<sup>6</sup>

How to decode the notation of "Prenez sur moi" and other songs in *fa*-clefs was established in two short articles by Carl Dahlhaus in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Here he rejected the prevailing interpretation of the sign formations in the examples under discussion as erroneous key signatures or as insufficient directions for the performers,<sup>8</sup> and he recognized that they rather should be interpreted as hexachordal signs, which identify the positions of the semitone steps in the tone system. His interpretation has been the point of departure for later work on these topics.<sup>9</sup>

David Fallows did put his finger on a crucial question, when he concerning the notation of "Prenez sur moi" asked "Why are the pieces written without clefs?":

These writers are mainly concerned to derive appropriate transcriptions but fail to explain convincingly why the pieces are written without clefs. I cannot fill that gap except in offering two observations. The first is that the notion of a puzzle or game was plainly intriguing to many composers, particularly if it involved the kind of economy resolved by simple logic that we find here. The second observation is that composers have always derived inspiration from challenges erected by their predecessors; then as now, they show an awareness of the tradition within which they write.<sup>10</sup>

The notion of a puzzle and the awareness of tradition are certainly of relevance for Ockeghem's design of the notation of "Prenez sur moi", but they fail to answer the why-question about earlier songs. Here Knud Jeppesen proposed that an important characteristic of the 'clefless' notation was that it allowed performances at different pitches a fifth apart.<sup>11</sup> And in line with Dahlhaus' description of the *fa*-clef system Jaap van Benthem thinks that its features included an undefined sounding pitch of the music:

- 5 Although the copyist of the Chigi Codex (Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi C VIII 234) did put flats in some parts of the Credo section, which may be traces of an alternative reading of the music; cf. Johannes Ockeghem (ed. Jaap van Benthem), *Missa Cuiusvis tone upon re and mi*. (Masses and Mass Sections, fascicle III,3; Utrecht, 1996), VII-X (see further below).
- 6 Cf. Jaap van Benthem's reconstruction in Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa Cuiusvis tone upon fa-ut. Missa Prolacinum*. (Masses and Mass Sections, fascicle III,4) Utrecht 1996, pp. XII-XVII.
- 7 Carl Dahlhaus, 'Ockeghems »Fuga trium vocum«', *Die Musikforschung* 13 (1960), pp. 307-310, and 'Zu einer Chanson von Binchois', *Die Musikforschung* 17 (1964), pp. 398-399.
- 8 In the case of "Prenez sur moi" he opposed Joseph S. Levitan's interpretation in 'Ockeghem's Clefless Compositions', *The Musical Quarterly* 23 (1937), pp. 440-464, and in the case of Binchois' "Mon seul et souverain desir" the edition by Wolfgang Rehm in *Die Chansons von Gilles Binchois (1400-1460)*, (Musikalische Denkmäler II) Mainz 1957, p. 27.
- 9 Knud Jeppesen independently found a similar solution in his comments on "L'homme banny" (see below) in *La Frottola*. Vol. II, Copenhagen 1969, pp. 14-16.
- 10 Fallows, '*Prenez sur moi*', p. 66.
- 11 Jeppesen, *La Frottola* II, p. 15.

Since clefs are not provided in any source, performers are free to intone the music at whatever pitch is convenient for them. Any [modern] notation of the music remains editorial ...<sup>12</sup>

This is also the position of Margaret Bent in her discussion of these pieces in connection with the understanding of the *musica recta* system:

The problems of signatures and transposition is posed in a more pointed form by the phenomenon of “clefless” pieces, or rather, pieces signed only with flat signatures of undetermined and undeterminable letter-name pitch, often with differentiated signatures, whose pitches indeed do not need to be named except for purposes of transcription into modern notation ...<sup>13</sup>

The whole idea of a repertory of pieces sounding at indeterminate pitch – how small this repertory may be – is of great importance for the discussion of pitch in the 15th century. That unaccompanied liturgical chant was performed at a flexible pitch standard is well known, songs in different modes and ranges were intoned and sung within the same convenient tessitura. How much such practices influenced the performance of sacred or secular polyphony is difficult to ascertain.<sup>14</sup> But as a consequence of the expansion of the total vocal range in polyphony during the 15th century it is apparent that the leeway for a flexible pitch standard must have been considerably reduced.

My current research includes an online edition of the French chansonnier, MS Thott 291 8° in the Royal Library of Copenhagen (the Copenhagen Chansonnier),<sup>15</sup> and in this project its relations with contemporary chansonniers is highly prioritized, first and foremost its relations with the group of sources dated around 1470, which we today designate as the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers.<sup>16</sup> The edition presents the songs in the different sources as independent performances and focuses on their sound and expressive qualities.<sup>17</sup> There seems to be a close connection between their expression as sounding entities and their vocal instrumentation, their total range and pitch and the relations between the single voices. Great care has been lavished on these parameters, not only concerning the individual song but also in the selection and combination of compositions in series or in complete chansonniers. Here we often meet a careful balancing of contrasts in tessitura with changes in sound and mood, but also series of songs in the same range in which other features have to ensure variety and individuality. All this presupposes that the songs were composed with a relatively fixed pitch standard in mind, which of course does not preclude that practical issues at times overruled the notated pitch in performances. In this connection the existence of a small repertory of songs possibly created

12 Benthem, “Prenez sur moy ...”, p. 100.

13 Margaret Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, New York 2002, p. 9.

14 Cf. the article ‘Pitch. I. Western pitch standards’ by Bruce Haynes in *Grove Music Online* (December 2009), and Kenneth Kreitner’s very balanced account in ‘Renaissance pitch’, in Tess Knighton & David Fallows (eds.), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, London 1992, 275-283.

15 Edited by Knud Jeppesen in *Der Kopenhagener Chansonnier*, Copenhagen 1927 (reprinted with a new preface New York 1965).

16 By Jeppesen characterized as ‘Burgundian chansonniers’. The acknowledgment of them as Central French sources began with Paula Higgins Princeton dissertation of 1987, *Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century France and Burgundy*.

17 The project is described in detail on its site <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

with an undefined or optional sounding pitch in mind is thought provoking. In addition, without the existence of a quite fixed pitch standard the *fa*-clef notation might appear meaningless.

“Prenez sur moi”, which I shall return to at the end of this article, is the final song of the Copenhagen Chansonnier and originally it also opened the Dijon Chansonnier (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517).<sup>18</sup> The scribe who wrote both MSS (and part of the Laborde Chansonnier, Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case) was well aware of the exceptional character of Ockeghem’s canon. Moreover, the Dijon Chansonnier also contains two of the most interesting chansons appearing in *fa*-clef notation. They will be starting points for the following attempt to chart and elucidate the musical and notational tradition, which Ockeghem refers to in his canon. First, however, we have to take a short look on models of how the *fa*-clefs may be regarded.

### *Fa-clefs and the musica recta system*

The history of the development of staff notation is well known. Since the 12th century it became more and more common to assign pitches to positions in a staff system by means of letters and coloured lines. C and F quickly became the most commonly used letters, but other letters were used too – even the B-*rotundum* and the B-*quadratum* in spaces between lines can be found alone as clefs in English sources.<sup>19</sup> In the 15th century the stylized C- and F-clefs dominate musical notation as unmistakable indicators of the pitch and octave positions of the musical contents. Their normal use can easily accommodate a polyphonic range of nearly three octaves (*F-e''*), i.e. the gamut of the Guidonian hand, and when a greater range was needed the high G-clef (G2) came more and more often in use (and some much rarer low pitch clefs).<sup>20</sup>

To read a pattern of B-*rotundum* signs alone as *fa*-clefs is quite different from reckoning pitches from letter clefs. It means to correlate the positions of the signs on the staff with the hexachords contained in the traditionally used tone system, the Guidonian gamut. *Figure 1* presents in schematic form the gamut of the Guidonian hand correlated with the positions of the hexachords, on which all pedagogical training in music depended. With the help of the inflexible structure of the hexachords (the semitone step *mi-fa* is always placed between two sets of whole tone steps *ut-re-mi* and *fa-sol-la*) the performer could build a mind map of the scale’s possibilities with its single variable step (B-*rotundum* and B-*quadratum* or B flat and natural) and always keep the placement of the semitones in mind. Combining *hexachordum naturale* and *hexachordum durum* it was possible to navigate through music using the high or hard B, and should the soft B be needed, the *hexachordum molle* came into play. This system was thought of as *musica recta*, while differing placements of hexachords (for example to obtain transitory leading notes etc.) were regarded as *musica ficta* (or *falsa*).<sup>21</sup>

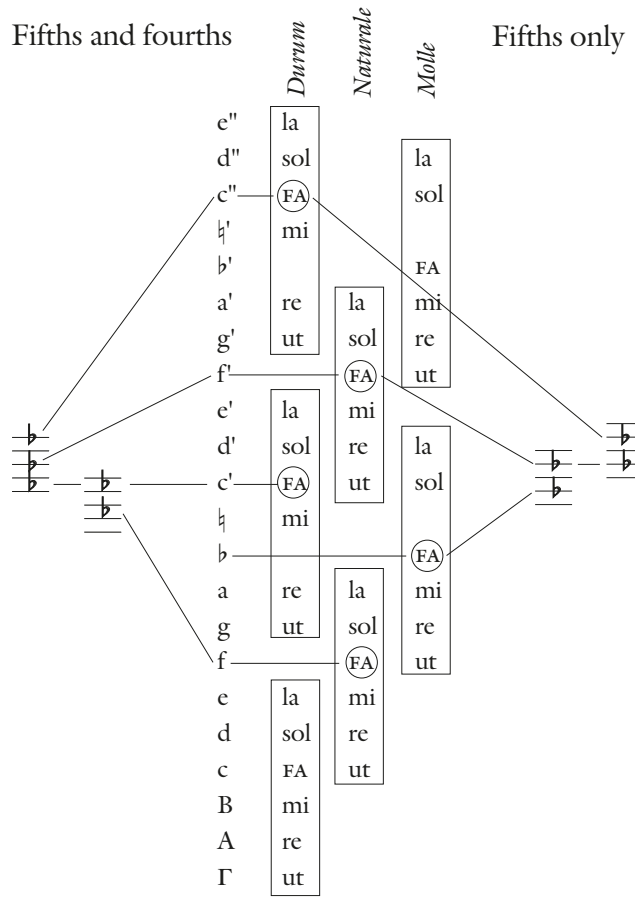
18 For a complete list of source *sigla*, see the Appendix at the end of this article.

19 B-*rotundum* in the famous Notre Dame MS W1 (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek, Helmstedt 628), especially ff. 58v [50v], 195v [178v], and 213-213v [196-196v] – Scottish, 13th c. (cf. J.H. Baxter (ed.), *An Old St. Andrews Music Book (Cod. Helmst. 628). Published in Facsimile*. London 1931); and B-*quadratum* in Bruno Stäblein, *Schriftbild der einstimmigen Musik*, (Musikgeschichte in Bildern III.4) Leipzig 1975, pp. 120-121 (Irish, 12th c.) and 158-159 (English, 12th c.).

20 Cf. David Hiley’s article ‘Clef’ in *Grove Music Online* (December 2009).

21 Cf. Margaret Bent, ‘Musica Recta and Musica Ficta’, *Musica Disciplina* 26 (1972), pp. 73-100. Space does not permit any comments on the discussion of the transposition of the Guidonian system by

Figure 1, The Guidonian tone system, the placement of hexachords, and *fa*-clefs



A default reading of *fa*-clefs must logically (as the notation does not indicate anything else) be defined as the reading resulting from the positions of the steps, which can be named *fa* in the standard tone system (the untransposed *musica recta* system). In figure 1 two models of arrangements of *fa*-clefs are drawn up:<sup>22</sup>

- 1) To the left a configuration of flats in distances of alternating fifths and fourths, which interlocks in the voices, with three flats in every voice (some of the octave doublings may be omitted). They constitute a scale in which the structure is repeated in every octave. The default position will have C as the upper *fa* of the fifth and F as the lower. In this way the *fa*-clefs will function like the quite common phenomenon of C- and F-clefs a fifth apart found on top of each other in the same staff in older sources, and can thus be read without any hexachordal signatures. However, it must be underscored, they do not prescribe pitches, only a scale structure.

flat signatures and its possible categorization as *ficta*; see further Karol Berger, *Musica ficta. Theories of Accidental Inflections in Vocal Polyphony from Marchetto da Padova to Gioseffo Zarlino*, Cambridge 1987, and Bent, *Counterpoint*, pp. 1-25.

- 22 These models only show minimum configurations of *fa*-clefs to demonstrate the principle, and only two voices, one higher and one lower. The other notes in *fa*-positions can of course also be involved as octave doublings. If we add a *fas*1 to the lower voice to the left, it will designate c; and a *fas*5 added to the lower voice in 'Fifths only' will designate *bb*'.

- 2) To the right in *figure 1* is a corresponding arrangement of interlocking fifths only, in which the lower *fa* in a voice denotes the same note as the upper *fa* of the next voice. This arrangement will typically have two flats in every voice, but nothing hinders that a flat sign in a voice can be doubled at the octave as long as the basic structure is retained. This coupling of two fifths causes that there cannot be octave identity between all pitches of the voices, and that all three species of hexachords will be used; and that means that at least one voice will need a signature of one flat or one sharp more than the other voices. In *figure 1* the default reading can only be placed in the *musica recta* system in a high position (designating the notes *b♭*, *f'* and *c''*, because the system does not contain the *B-rotundum* in its low octave. In practise this arrangement of *fa*-clefs will be read as sounding an octave lower, with a *B♭* in the low octave.<sup>23</sup>

However, in many cases the sources force us to view the *fa*-clefs in a completely different light. When a piece in such pitch-indeterminable notation is copied into normal notation the scribes usually just added fitting combinations of letter clefs before the *fa*-clefs, which is then changed into normal hexachordal signatures (and reduced to the essential flats), and the pitch becomes locked. In this way contemporary practise reveals clef substitution as an appropriate procedure, and we have to discuss which and how many clef combinations can be used to read the chansons.

In the following discussion *fa*-clefs is mentioned in abbreviated form according to the same principles as used concerning letter clefs (C1, C4, F4, G2 etc.): *fa*1(-5) means a *fa*-sign or a flat on one of the five staff-lines (numbered 1-5 from below); *fas*1(-5) – *fa*-sign in one the five spaces of the staff; *mi*1(-5) – *mi*-sign or sharp/natural placed in the same way (only used by Ockeghem). All the chansons mentioned below without references to modern editions, even if in some cases several are published, can be found in complete transcriptions along with a more detailed commentary and complete lists of sources on the website *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers*, which can be accessed through the links in the footnotes.

#### *Barbingant's "L'omme banny de sa plaisance" in many versions*

This sad song about a man abandoned by all pleasures had in *fa*-clef notation the widest circulation of all during the second half of the fifteenth century. It was probably written in the 1450s or earlier as it appears in sources from the 1460s on in versions, which show up such a wide variation in notation that we must presume that it already then had been circulating for some time, and that its original notation without letter-clefs was on its way to oblivion.<sup>24</sup>

The name of the composer is found in the Mellon Chansonnier (New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91), which was prepared or supervised by the famous

23 It must be this phenomenon of octave duplication that lies behind the suggestion of the preponderance of the role of the scale system rather than of the hexachordal system (which is a pedagogical subsystem of the former) in Stefano Mengozzi, "Clefless' notation, counterpoint and the *fa*-degree", *Early Music* 36 (2008), pp. 51-64.

24 Edition at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH099.html>. The song and its sources have been discussed several times in the scholarly literature, cf. Jeppesen, *La Frottola* II, pp. 14-16, and Urquhart, 'Another Impolitic ...', pp. 373-375, which both include tables of incipits (with some misprints).

music theoretician Johannes Tinctoris in Naples around 1475,<sup>25</sup> and it is confirmed by his quote of the beginning of the song under Barbingant's name in a theoretical treatise. Barbingant was a French composer flourishing in the middle of the century and was highly regarded by writers as Eloy d'Amerval and Guillaume Crétin. A younger Italian source, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl. xix.176 (Florence 176), ascribes the song to the contemporary French composer Johannes Fedé (alias Jean Sohier), but Tinctoris' ascription must be regarded as the authoritative one, not least because he lived and worked in Northern and Central France during the years when the song found favour.<sup>26</sup>

The earliest sources, the Laborde, Leuven (Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number), Dijon, Nivelles (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57) and Pavia (Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. Aldini 362) chansonniers, transmit the chanson in differing clefs, and the scribes of Laborde, Leuven and Dijon did not understand its *fa*-clef notation at all.

The Dijon scribe placed the flats in the upper voice exactly as in the lower voices (fas2, fas4, cf. *Ex. 1.1*); they should probably have been placed one step higher (fa3, fa5, cf. *Ex. 1.9*). The Laborde scribe could not get the clefs to make any sense, so he wrote them apparently at random, letting them vary from staff to staff (*Ex. 1.2*). Leuven shows up a sort of 'reduced' *fa*-clef notation. It has no letter-clefs, but one flat only in each voice, in the upper voice on the 3rd staff line and in the lower voices in the 2nd space. (*Ex. 1.3*) This obviously means that letter-clefs must be imagined, namely G2, C3 and C3, which produces a song in high range (*e-g''*) with signatures of one flat in all voices. The Leuven scribe also used this type of notation in his copy of "Comme femme desconfortee" on ff. 25v-27 in his chansonnier.

To get an impression of the original notation we must look at the clefs transmitted by some slightly younger sources, which were copied with greater care and understanding. The Florentine MS Florence 176 has a set of *fa*-clefs, which conforms perfectly to the model with interlocking fifths (see *Ex. 1.4*). This means that according to a default reading the flats from top to bottom designate the following scale positions: in the upper voice *f''*, *c''*, and *f'*, in the tenor and contratenor *f'* and *bb*; and it produces a tonal layout widespread in the middle of the century with an upper voice with a flat less than the lower voices.

We find exactly this layout again in the contemporary MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Rothschild 2973 (Chansonnier Cordiforme) and in the older Nivelles Chansonnier (see *Ex. 1.5*), but now in pitch locked notation with letter clefs: G2 without flats and two voices in C3 with one flat – Cordiforme has even retained the single *f''*-flat, which also can be used to warn the singer that the music exceeds the Guidonian gamut by using a high *ficta* hexachord on *c''*.

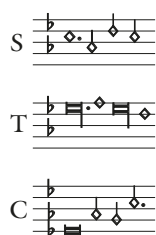
The chansonnier Pavia 362 also locks the pitch of the chanson (see *Ex. 1.6*), but only in the upper voice, which has a G2 clef without flats, while keeping the three-flat clefs in tenor and contra, which then must be read as *f'*, *bb* and *f*. Unlike the Nivelles, Pavia and

25 Cf. Leeman L. Perkins and H. Garey (eds.), *The Mellon Chansonnier I-II*, New Haven 1979, and Ronald Woodley, 'Tinctoris's Italian Translation of the Golden Fleece Statutes: A Text and a (possible) Context', *Early Music History* 8 (1988), pp. 173-244 (at pp. 188-194).

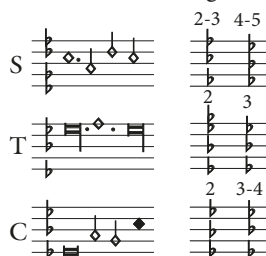
26 Nivelles Chansonnier contains three chansons attributed to Fedé, all copied by the Nivelles scribe, but the MS' version of "L'omme banny" is anonymous. This, too, speaks against Fedé's authorship. See further Christoffersen, *The music of Jean Sohier dit Fedé: Comments and edition*, at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Fede.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Fede.pdf).

Example 1, Barbingant, "L'omme banny de sa plaisance"

1.1 Incipits,  
Dijon, ff. 97v-98



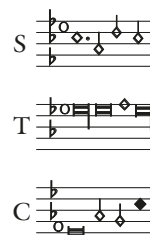
1.2 Incipits,  
Laborde, ff. 66v-67, and  
clefs in the following staves



1.3 Incipits,  
Leuven, ff. 11v-13



1.4 Incipits,  
Florence 176, ff. 54v-55



1.5 Nivelles, ff. 24v-25

[Superius]

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

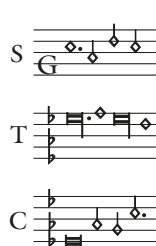
Tenor

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

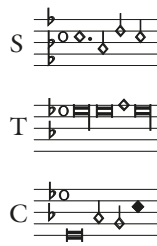
Contra

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

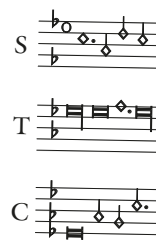
1.6 Incipits,  
Pavia 362, ff. 21v-22



1.7 Incipits,  
Pixérécourt, ff. 29v-30



1.8 Incipits,  
Mellon, ff. 30v-31



1.9 Dijon, ff. 97v-98 (clefs corrected)

[Superius]

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ba - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

Tenor

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ba - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

Contratenor

1. 4. L'om - - - me - ba - - -  
3. For - - - tu - ne

## 1.10 Laborde, ff. 66v-67 (clefs corrected)

[Superius]

1. 4. L'om - - - me ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu ne - - -

Tenor

1. 4. L'om - - - me ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu ne - - -

Contra

1. 4. L'om - - - me tu - - - ban - - -  
3. For - - - tu ne - - -

## Example 2, Anonymous, “L’omme qui vit en esperanche” (Pixérécourt MS, ff. 182v-183)

[Superius]

L'om - - - me qui vit - - - en

[Tenor]

L'om - - - me qui vit - - - en

Contra

L'om - - - me qui vit - - - en

Cordiforme chansonniers the Florence 176 version is not locked to any pitch, and it can just as easily be performed a fifth lower by imagining a different set of letter clefs: C2 with one flat and F3 with two flats in the lower voices.

MS Pixérécourt (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. f.fr. 15123), also from Florence and possibly a few years younger than Florence 176, transmits the song in a different configuration of *fa*-signs (see *Ex. 1.7*). It corresponds to the fifths-fourths model described above and produces a default reading of the flats in the upper voice as *c''*, *f'* and *c'*, and in the tenor and contratenor as *c'* and *f* – a fourth lower than in MS Florence 176, and no signatures are needed in any voice.

It was probably such a combination of *fa*-signs that the Dijon scribe saw in his exemplar when he was copying the song into his own collection. *Example 1.9* shows the beginning of this default reading in pure G Mixolydian according to the Dijon Chansonnier. Of course, this set of *fa*-clefs may also be read with imagined letter clefs, in C-Mixolydian with one G2 and two C3 clefs, all with a signature of one flat, and a fifth lower in F-Mixolydian with one C2 and two F3 clefs, all with two flats. The Leuven version apparently has been ‘reduced’ from this version of the *fa*-clef notation. By keeping only one flat in each voice it forces a reading corresponding to the C-Mixolydian with a signature of one flat.

The Mellon Chansonnier does not specify the fifth in the upper voices (see *Ex. 1.8*). It could refer to any of the two models, but most probable it is meant to be read with the last mentioned combination of letter clefs in mind, one C2 and two F3 clefs, now with one flat in the upper voice and two in the lower voices.

If we presume that the Laborde scribe in some instances got the clef right, and that he in the 2nd and 3rd staff of the upper voice and in the 2nd staff of the contratenor (see *Ex. 1.2*) really wrote what he saw in his exemplar, then Laborde could present the same set of clefs as Florence 176. It could be performed at any pitch, but an obvious reading is – like the Mellon Chansonnier – the one in low clefs (see *Ex. 1.10*). This reading of Laborde is interesting because it conforms perfectly to Tinctoris' censoring of Barbingant in his *Liber imperfectionum notarum musicalium* of 1474-75, where he tells us that a note, which has been augmented by a dot, of course cannot be imperfected by a following short note, and he gives the start of the superius and tenor from Barbingant's "L'omme banny" as an illustrative musical example – in F-Mixolydian.<sup>27</sup> In the tenor the first *longa* is augmented by a *punctus additionis* but then shortened by the following *semibrevis*, which to make things clearer in some sources is followed by a *punctus divisionis* (see *Ex. 1.10*). We only find this 'error' in the older sources (cf. *Examples 1.1, 1.2 and 1.6*), while the younger sources have corrected the error by dividing the long first note into a *longa* and a *brevis* (which can be imperfected correctly), but so did also Nivelles and Leuven, which probably can be dated a little earlier than Tinctoris' *Liber*.

Tinctoris' and the assumed Mellon low-clef reading of "L'omme banny" is confirmed by a *responce* to it, the anonymous "L'omme qui vit en esperanche", about the man who lives in hope, in the Pixérécourt MS, ff. 182v-183, which cites the beginning of Barbingant's tenor and paraphrases its structure and cadential scheme (see *Ex. 2*).<sup>28</sup> Here a set of C2, C5 and F3 clefs is combined with a setup of flats very like the ones in Barbingant's song in the Pixérécourt MS (and probably the Dijon Chansonnier). A possible relation to the high pitch reading is the anonymous three-part song "Plus que pour mille vivant" in the MS Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q16, ff. 71v-72, mentioned by David Fallows, which quotes the opening music of "L'omme banny". The likeness is obvious in the first eight bars hereafter the connection becomes looser.<sup>29</sup>

To sum up – and disregarding other interesting variants in the music and presuming that the song was composed at some time before 1450 – the investigation of "L'omme banny" shows:

- 1) That it circulated in *fa*-clef notation during a long period of time. The sources can be dated between the 1460s and the middle 1480s, and already during the 1460s the knowledge of the notation was weakening (MSS Dijon, Laborde and Leuven).
- 2) That both configurations of *fa*-clefs are found in the sources, the pattern of fifths only (Florence 176) and the pattern of fifths and fourths (Pixérécourt), but the resulting differences in performance become negligible by the conventional practice of inflecting melodic lines. The default readings put the song in C- or G-Mixolydian, but performances can be at any convenient pitch.
- 3) That several sources (Leuven, Nivelles, Pavia 362 and Cordiforme) lock the pitch of the song in high clefs according to the configuration in fifths only. In this process irrelevant flats (designating F or C) were usually suppressed.

27 Book 1, Ch. 3, "De tredecim generalibus imperfectionum regulis", see the online edition and translation by Ronald Woodley (<http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/deimperfectionenotarum/#>).

28 Edition at [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Par15123\\_183.pdf](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Par15123_183.pdf).

29 Fallows, *A Catalogue*, p. 261; edition at [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/BolQ16\\_072.pdf](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/BolQ16_072.pdf).

- 4) That Tinctoris and presumably the Mellon Chansonnier (supervised by Tinctoris) may have regarded the *fa*-clefs as signatures, which just needed an appropriate array of letter clefs imagined or in writing in order to work. A reworking of Barbingant's music in the Pixérécourt MS confirms that this was not an uncommon procedure.

*"Comme femme desconfortee" and other chansons by Binchois*

Binchois' rondeau "Comme femme desconfortee" enjoyed great popularity during the period from c. 1460 and until at least after 1500. It supplied materials for secular arrangements, to motets and masses, and it appears in many sources, among them four of the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers, Dijon, Laborde, Leuven and Wolfenbüttel.<sup>30</sup> However, the composer is only specified in the same authoritative source, which attributed "L'omme banny" to Barbingant, the Mellon Chansonnier. In by far the majority of sources this appealing song about a woman deploring her miserable loveless state is notated conventionally and in a normal tessitura with an upper voice in the range *b-c''* – the version of the Dijon Chansonnier may stand as a representative for these sources (see *Ex. 3.1*).

The song may have appeared rather old-fashioned to some of the compilers of the chansonniers. Quite a lot of musical variants show up in the sources, especially in the contratenor, and the voice has been partly recomposed in the Chansonnier Cordiforme.<sup>31</sup> Some of the uneasiness surrounding the chanson could come from it being originally conceived in *fa*-clefs. In three sources it appears entirely without conventional letter-clefs. In the Leuven chansonnier it is notated in a sort of 'reduced' *fa*-clefs, just like we found in Barbingant's "L'omme banny" with only a single flat in each voice to show the relationship between the voices. They can be understood only if letter-clefs are imagined: In superius a C1, in the tenor a C4, and in the contratenor a F4 – all with a signature of one flat. The upper voices in Leuven are close to the oldest version of the song (see below), but in order to fit the one flat signature it has been supplied with a new, more modern, low contratenor (range *F-a*), which reorients the harmonic stance of the setting.<sup>32</sup>

"Comme femme" appears in *fa*-clefs among the latest additions, from the 1460s, to the Italian chansonnier Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, Biblioteca y Archivo de Música, MS IV.a.24 (often called EscB), ff. 131v-132,<sup>33</sup> and two of its voices are found among the fragments of a contemporary Burgundian chansonnier, München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus.Ms. 9659, f. 3v.<sup>34</sup> The Neapolitan copyist of Escorial IV.a.24 apparently was bewildered by the notation of his exemplar and placed the *fa*-clefs in wrong positions, which according to a default reading would produce a song in D-Dorian and

30 See the list of sources and citations in Fallows, *A Catalogue*, pp. 116-117.

31 Cf. G. Thibault & D. Fallows (eds.), *Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu* (Bibliothèque nationale, Rothschild 2973 [I.5.13]). Paris 1991, no. 20. On the different 'families' of variants, see Allan W. Atlas, *The Cappella Giulia Chansonnier*. Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, C.G.XIII.27, (Musicological Studies Vol. XX-VII/1-2) New York 1975-76, vol. 1, pp. 183-185, Martella Gutiérrez-Denhoff (ed.), *Der Wolfenbütteler Chansonnier*. Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav., (Musikalischer Denkmäler X) Mainz 1988, pp. 122-123, and Perkins & Garey, *The Mellon Chansonnier*, II, pp. 292-297.

32 All the 'Loire Valley' versions and the one in Munich 9659 can be found in new editions at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH065.html>.

33 Cf. Martha K. Hanen, *The Chansonnier El Escorial IV.a.24*, (Musicological Studies 36) Henryville 1983, and Dennis Slavin, 'On the Origins of Escorial IV.a.24 (EscB)', *Studi musicali* 19 (1990), pp. 259-303.

34 Cf. C. Petzsch, 'Fragment mit acht dreistimmigen Chansons, darunter Lochamer Liederbuch Nr. 18', *Die Musikforschung* 22 (1974), pp. 319-322.

Example 3, Gilles Binchois, "Comme femme desconfortee"

3.1 Dijon, ff. 41v-42

[Superius]

1.4. Com - me fem - me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doi maul - di - re la jour - ne -

Tenor

1.4. Com-me fem - me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doi maul - di - re la jour - ne -

Contratenor

1.4. Com-me fem-me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doi maul-di - re la jour - ne -

3.2 Incipits,  
Escorial IV.a.24, ff. 131v-132

S

T

C

3.3 Munich 9659, f. 3v (default reading,  
contratenor according to Escorial IV.a.24)

[Superius]

1.4. Com - me fem - me  
3. Bien doy maul - di -

[Tenor]

1.4. Com - me fem - me des - con -  
3. Bien doy maul - di - re la

[Contratenor]

1.4. Com - me fem - me des - con -  
3. Bien doy maul - di - re la

3.4 Munich 9659, f. 3v (alternative reading, contratenor according to Escorial IV.a.24)

[Superius]

1.4. Com - me fem - me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doy maul - di - re la jour - ne -

[Tenor]

1.4. Com-me fem - me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doy maul - di - re la jour - ne -

[Contratenor]

1.4. Com-me fem-me des - con - for - te -  
3. Bien doy maul-di - re la jour - ne -

*Example 4*, Gilles Binchois, “Mon seul et souverain desir”, Oxford 213, f. 71v: Binchois, and Escorial V.III.24, ff. 20v-21: Anonymous

[Superius]  
1. 4. Mon seul et sou - ve - rain de -  
3. Car je voel a vous o - be -

Tenor  
1. 4. Mon seul et sou - ve - rain de -  
3. Car je voel a vous o - be -

Contratenor  
1. 4. Mon seul et sou - ve - rain de -  
3. Car je voel a vous o - be -

*Example 5*, Binchois?, “Tous desplaisirs n'en sont prochains”, Escorial V.III.24, ff. 7v-8: Anonymous

[Superius]  
1. 4. Tous des - plai - sirs m'en  
3. Se dez - griefs maux ou

Tenor  
1. 4. Tous des - plai - sirs m'en sont  
3. Se dez - griefs maux ou je

Contratenor  
1. 4. Tous des - plai - sirs m'en sont  
3. Se dez - griefs maux ou je

create difficult problems for the harmony (see *Ex. 3.2*). Luckily the fragment of the song in Munich 9659 transmits enough, the whole superius and half of the tenor, for us to conclude that the two sources have basically the same version of the song. In Munich 9659 the *fa*-signs are placed correctly and show that all three voices had a clef of three signs, namely *fa*<sub>2</sub>, *fa*<sub>4</sub> and *fa*<sub>5</sub>.

This is exactly the formation of interlocking fifths only, which is shown in *Figure 1*, and it produces a sound picture with a flat less in the upper voice than in the lower voices. A default reading of the combined sources (superius and tenor from Munich and contratenor from Escorial), in which we imagine a C<sub>4</sub> and two F<sub>4</sub> letter clefs, gives us a very low pitch, *F-f'*, hardly fitting for a song in a female voice, but with the entirely conventional combination of signatures of no flat in the upper voice and one flat in the lower voices (see *Ex. 3.3*). It can of course also be read an octave higher, but this is less probable as it then will exceed the Guidonian gamut.

At this point the *fa*-clefs prove their value, because we can just as easily imagine another set of clefs a fifth higher, C<sub>2</sub> and two times C<sub>4</sub>, and pitch and range then come into the same tessitura as in the fixed pitch sources, namely from *c* to *c''* (see *Ex. 3.4*). However, in this reading the notes revealed as *fa* by the flat signs are *c''*, *g'* and *c'* in the upper voice and *f'*, *c'* and *f* in the lower voices, and the upper voice thus has to operate with a fictive hexachord on *d'* comprising the semitone step *mi-fa* on *f#'-g'*.

A hexachordal signature of one sharp was close to unthinkable in fifteenth century polyphony, and it is not found in any of the main sources of French chansons.<sup>35</sup> But using *fa*-clefs you can perform the song at any pitch, even sing within the usual tessitura with a one-sharp signature without writing it. The performance of “Comme femme” according to these rules brings about in a natural way the F-sharps otherwise demanded by the counterpoint in bar 4 (cf. *Ex. 3.1*) and other places, and we hear a tonal shading rather characteristic of Binchois with a first section centred on G, while in the second section one has to sing naturals and firmly anchor the music on C. We can theorize that the Burgundian source Munich 9569 preserves Binchois’ original notation including the tonal shadings, which were lost when the popular song was transformed into fixed pitch notation.

Such a theory can be supported by two songs in older sources. The other chansonnier in the Escorial library, MS V.III.24 (called EscA), whose origins can be placed in Burgundian lands around 1436-1440 and very close to the court musician Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460),<sup>36</sup> contains two three-part rondeaux in *fa*-clef notation, “Tous deslairs n’en sont prochains” and “Mon seul et souverain desir” (ff. 7v-8 and 20v-21). Both are anonymous in the MS, but the second song is firmly ascribed to Binchois in the slightly older North Italian MS Oxford 213.<sup>37</sup> Both songs show exactly the same two-octave range and the same system of *fa*-clefs as “Comme femme”, and the same reading procedure again results in a high clef alternative with a one sharp signature, which in both cases becomes inflected by an accidental flat after a few bars (see *Examples 4* and *5*).<sup>38</sup>

While Binchois’ “Mon seul et souverain desir” has been discussed in scholarly literature,<sup>39</sup> “Tous deslairs” has received less attention. Walter H. Kemp tentatively ascribed it to Binchois based on its use of imitation, which does not appear to be a very convincing criterion.<sup>40</sup> The two songs’ identical system of notation and the resulting sound world is a much more convincing argument, and Dennis Slavin mentions this

35 According to Jeffrey Dean in ‘Okeghem’s attitude towards modality: Three-mode and eight-mode typologies’, in Ursula Günther, Ludwig Finscher, and Jeffrey Dean (eds.), *Modality in the music of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Modalität in der Musik des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, (Musicological studies & documents 49) Neuhausen-Stuttgart 1996, pp. 203-246 (at p. 219), only one example of a B-quadratum used as a signature in a Continental chanson survives from the fifteenth century, in the anonymous four-part arrangement of “Se la face pale” in Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali, Ms. 89, ff. 424v-425, in which the three upper voices have a sharp at the start; cf. Guillaume Dufay (ed. H. Besseler, rev. D. Fallows), *Opera omnia VI – Cantiones*, (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1) American Institute of Musicology 1995, p. 107.

36 Cf. Walter H. Kemp, *Burgundian Court Song in the Time of Binchois. The Anonymous Chansons of El Escorial, MS V.III.24*. Oxford 1990, and Dennis Slavin, ‘Questions of Authority in Some Songs by Binchois’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 117 (1992), pp. 22-61. A facsimile edition is in *Codex Escorial: Chansonnier. Biblioteca del Monasterio El Escorial, Signatur: Ms V.III.24, hrsg. und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Wolfgang Rehm*, (Documenta musicologica ii/2) Kassel 1958.

37 Cf. H. Schoop, *Entstehung und Verwendung der Handschrift Oxford Bodleian Library, Canonici misc. 213*, (Publ. der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft, Ser. II, Vol. 34) Bern 1971, and the facsimile edition by David Fallows (ed.), *Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Misc. 213. With an Introduction and Inventory*, Chicago 1995.

38 New editions of the two songs can be found at [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Binchois\\_Tout\\_deslairs.pdf](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Binchois_Tout_deslairs.pdf) and [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Binchois\\_Mon\\_seul.pdf](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefmusic/Binchois_Mon_seul.pdf).

39 Cf. Dahlhaus, ‘Zu einer Chanson’, Mengozzi, ‘Clefless’ notation, and Slavin, ‘Questions of Authority’, pp. 46-47.

40 Kemp, *Burgundian Court Song*, pp. 39-40.

trait as a “technical procedure otherwise unique to Binchois” when discussing Binchois’ authorship of “Comme femme”.<sup>41</sup> The late appearance of “Comme femme” in the sources has put a question mark on the ascription in the Mellon Chansonnier, but David Fallows argues convincingly for keeping it within the Binchois canon.<sup>42</sup> And we can add that its perceived ‘late style’ fade away when the text’s unusual poetic structure (*rondeau sixain*) and high literary quality is taken in account and it is heard in the notation of Munich 9659 and Escorial IV.a.24. Then it becomes evident that a song not much younger than the two songs from the 1430s was slightly modified when it was transformed into the fixed pitch notation of the late chansonniers.

I think that we can safely assume that Binchois composed all three chansons. Possibly he also invented the special notation with two flats a fifth apart in every voice, which permitted him to make songs with a sharp in the upper voice without putting such unheard things down in notation. This, however, raises the question if Binchois ever intended the notation to be of indeterminable pitch? There is a good possibility that the notation must be read a fifth higher than the default reading and that it is a substitute for the ‘unwriteable’: a superius with a sharp hexachordal signature. It is impossible to know for sure, but worth keeping in mind.

#### *The other songs in the Pavia Chansonnier*

The small paper chansonnier Pavia 362 probably originated in the region of Savoy sometime in the years around 1470.<sup>43</sup> In addition to Barbingant’s “L’omme banny” it contains three more three-part anonymous chansons with the lower voices notated in *fa*-clefs, while the upper voice has a letter clef. They may all have been created originally in pure *fa*-clef notation, and we will just take a short look at them.

The *rondeau* “Pour avenir a mon actainte” (ff. 37v-38, see *Ex. 6.1*) has an arrangement of three flats and a C2 clef in the upper voice, while the lower voices only have flats. According to the pitch indicated in the superius the clefs in tenor and contratenor have to be C4 and F3. The formation of flats belongs to the model with fifths and fourths alternately. A default reading of the flats without taking the letter clef in account will translate into these pitches from top to bottom: *c''-f'-c'* in superius, *f'-c'-f* in tenor, and *c'-f* in the contratenor, and the song will sound in pure D-Dorian without any hexachordal signatures, a tone higher than in the locked reading of Pavia 362 in C-Dorian. Its two-octave total tessitura can be moved up and down quite a bit, but the most natural alternative reading with a set of G2, C2 and C3 clefs all with one flat remaining is probably not relevant as it produces the very high tessitura of *g-g''*.

The song reappears in the Nivelles Chansonnier (ff. 23v-24) and in the slightly later Florentine chansonnier, MS 2356, in the Biblioteca Riccardiana (ff. 83v-84), in normal notation with C2, C4, C4 clefs and signatures of two flats (see *Ex. 6.2*).<sup>44</sup> That the song

41 Dennis Slavin, ‘Genre, Final and Range: Unique Sorting Procedures in a Fifteenth-Century Chansonnier’, *Musica Disciplina* 43 (1989), pp. 115-139 (at pp. 121-122).

42 In *Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu* (cf. note 31), p. CXII.

43 Cf. Frank A. D’Accone’s Introduction to *Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Aldini MS 362*, (Renaissance Music in Facsimile 16) New York 1986, and Henrietta Schavran, *The Manuscript Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Codice Aldini 362: A Study of Song Tradition in Italy circa 1440-1480*. Ph.D. dissertation, New York University 1978, 2 vols.

44 In Florence 2356 the upper voice omits the second flat, but is otherwise quite close to the Nivelles Chansonnier.

Example 6, Anonymous, “Pour avenir a mon actainte”

6.1 Pavia 362, ff. 37v-38

[Superius]

[Tenor]

[Contratenor]

1. 4. Pour a - ve - nir a mon fas -  
3. Trou - ver pe - ti - te mon fas -

6.2 Incipits,  
Nivelle, ff. 23v-24

S

T

C

Example 7, Anonymous, “Par  
ung seul mot bien ordonné”,  
Pavia 362, ff. 45v-46, incipits

S

T

C

Example 8, Anonymous, “Puis  
qu’il ha pleu a la tres belle”,  
Pavia 362, ff. 60v-61, incipits

S

T

C

originally really was conceived in *fa*-clefs is confirmed by its appearance in the Nivelle Chansonnier. Here it stands shoulder to shoulder with Barbingant’s “L’omme banny” (as nos. 19 and 20), and they probably followed each other through the transformation into standard notation.

The two remaining songs in Pavia 362 are both unique and follow the same pattern as “Pour avenir” in interpreting a fifth-fourth arrangement of flats as C-Dorian. “Par ung seul mot bien ordonné” (ff. 45v-46) is moreover musically related to “Pour avenir” (cf. Ex. 7), while its text is a paraphrase of Guillaume Du Fay’s famous song “Le serviteur hault guerdonné”,<sup>45</sup> which inspired many other pieces and is also notated in C-Dorian. “Puis qu’il ha pleu a la tres belle” (ff. 60v-61, see Ex. 8) is a *tour-de-force* in proportional notation. From the beginning the *tempus perfectum* of the superius is juxtaposed with *proportio dupla* in Tenor and Contra, which must be performed twice as fast as the notes in the upper voice, and later on passages in the voices by turns has to be reduced to a fourth and an eighth of the notated values (*longa* = *minima*). All of this could just as well have been notated in *integer valor*, in normal values, and the composer might have avoided some clumsy passages and the copyist a lot of errors. Here the notation was created

45 Edited in Dufay, *Opera omnia* VI, p. 112, see further David Fallows, *The Songs of Guillaume Du Fay. Critical Commentary to the Revision of Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, ser. 1, Vol. VI*, (Musicological studies & documents 47); Neuhausen-Stuttgart 1995, pp. 259-265.

to make a visual impact and one cannot help wondering if the probable original *fa*-clef notation was part of this *Verfremdung*.

Especially the last song is in a low tessitura, in a range from G to *ab'*, and can with some advantage be performed a fifth higher by using another set of letter clefs (G2, C4, C4 with only one flat), but as we have seen before the copyist has chosen to use the clefs, which transform the *fa*-clefs directly into a key signature.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Guillaume le Rouge and the Schedelsches Liederbuch*

Hartmann Schedel's private collection of music of many sorts (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex germ.mon. 810) was created in Germany around 1460 and contains many songs with no clefs at all.<sup>47</sup> Such notation demands a good knowledge of music of its user. But it also has at least one chanson in *fa*-clefs, the three-part *bergerette* "Se je fais duel je n'en ouis mais", which in the Mellon Chansonnier (ff. 40v-42) is ascribed to the French composer G. le Rouge. In the *Schedelsches Liederbuch* it is not copied as a integral composition because the first part of the song, the *refrain*, is found on ff. 103v-105 with only a short text incipit, while the short *couplets* with complete text are placed on f. 24v – they appear as two separate compositions. Nonetheless, its version of the music is better than the one in Mellon, which in some passages interchanges the musical lines of Tenor and Contra, blurs the musical structure, and makes the performance of its complete text difficult. Mistakes in copying could easily happen as the song is composed for equal voices. In both sources all three voices have three flats as signatures: *fas1*, *fas3*, *fa5*.<sup>48</sup> They can be interpreted in combination with several imagined letter clefs: G2 without signature, C2 with one flat, and the obvious C4 with two flats.

By virtue of its restricted range of only 11 notes this charming song can effortlessly be moved between different tessituras, and here the *fa*-clefs really could be meant to signal indeterminate pitch. In this spirit *Example 9* offers the song in a default reading without letter clefs and a tonality based on A, but the users of the *Schedelsches Liederbuch* as well as of the Mellon Chansonnier would probably prefer a reading with C4 clefs and in G-Dorian.<sup>49</sup>

The *Liederbuch* contains other pieces with signatures of two or three flats, in which it looks in at least two cases as if some of the letter clefs have been added as an afterthought. All of them are unique and anonymous three-part compositions, which probably originated as French chansons, all use fifth-fourth formations of *fa*-signs, and they have a somewhat greater total range (two octaves and a third or fourth) than the songs, which we have been looking at until now, making them less flexible concerning placement of tessitura. When copying "Tant me desplet" (ff. 70v-71) and "Du desir que tant" (ff. 105v-106) the scribe started without any letter clefs at all, only rather careless *fa*-clefs, but reaching the Contra voice he wrote a letter clef first to clarify the reading, and he also squeezed in some letter clefs between the flats in the already copied upper voices or in the margins. The Latin (contrafactum) "O florida rosada" (ff. 50v-51) was copied after an exemplar with letter clefs, but the original French song might well have been in *fa*-clefs as it is quite similar to the others. Tonally they are more varied than the songs in the Pavia

46 All the songs from Pavia 362 mentioned in this section can be found in modern editions at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefs.html>.

47 See note 4.

48 In *Schedelsches Liederbuch* the flats are placed one step too low in the Contra, but are given correctly in the second section.

49 This reading is published in Perkins & Garey, *The Mellon Chansonnier* I, no. 31.

Example 9, G. le Rouge, “Se je fais duel”, *Schedelsches Liederbuch*, ff. 103v-105+24v

[Superius]

1. 4. Se je fais duel,  
3. Aul tre - - - ment lan - guir

Tenor

1. 4. Se  
3. Aul - - - - -

Contra

1. 4. Se  
3. Aul - - - - -

1. 4. Se je fais duel,  
3. Aul tre - - - ment lan - guir

chansonnier; they are D-Phrygian, F-Mixolydian and C-Dorian respectively, all with two flats.<sup>50</sup>

Keeping Hartman Schedel's habit of omitting clefs in mind, it is hard to know how much we can rely on this evidence. But it is thought provoking that he realized that precisely these songs needed clefs, when it did not matter in many other cases. The two- or three-flat arrays look difficult, but in reality they convey adequate information for a performance.

Many songs with a multi-flat signature may have started life in a flexible *fa*-clef notation, which allowed performances on several pitches. For example, the songs just mentioned could all in default readings be performed a tone higher without any flats. In a few cases copying errors seem to indicate that a transformation from one system into another has taken place.<sup>51</sup> Another interpretation, which we have to take in account,

50 All the songs mentioned in this section can be found in modern editions at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Faclefs.html>.

51 See the discussion of the anonymous rondeau “La plus mignonne de mon cuer” in the Copenhagen and Dijon chansonniers at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH022.html>.

Something similar might be the case with the three-part motet “Beata dei genitrix” ascribed to both Dunstable and Binchois. It appears without letter clefs in the tenor and contratenor voices in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, ff. 282v-283 (311v-312): Binchois; and Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS A.X.1.11, ff. 133v-134 (136v-137): Dunstable. Other sources in normal notation ascribe it to “Anglicus” (Aosta. Biblioteca del seminario maggiore, MS A.1.D19, ff. 167v-168) and to Dunstable (St Emmeran Codex. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex lat.mon. 14274, ff. 7v-8v). In the anonymous version in Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali, Ms. 90, ff. 335v-337 the motet appears without hexachordal signatures and with wrongly placed clefs. Cf. *Bologna Q15. The Making and Remaking of a Musical Manuscript. Introductory Study and Facsimile Edition* by Margaret Bent, Lucca 2008, vol. 1, p. 232; the motet is edited in John Dunstable (Manfred Bukofzer, ed.), *Complete Works* (Musica Britannica VII) London 1953, no. 41, and Gilles Binchois (Philip Kaye, ed.), *The sacred music of Gilles Binchois*, Oxford 1992, no. 56. The disposition of the signatures could indicate that the motet originally was notated in *fa*-clefs only, namely in superius fas2, fa4, and in tenor and contratenor fa1, fas2, fas4, which offers an obvious reading with one flat in every voice in the letter clefs C1, C3, C3, in the range *f-d'*, but the *fa*-clefs could of course also be read as hexachordal signatures, as four sources do, with two flats, C3, F3, F3, and range *Bb-g'*. A default reading of the interlocked *fa*-clefs in fifth-fourth formation (as *f'-c' / c'-f-c*) produces a motet in C without flats and a range *c-a'*. Maybe the idea that *fa*-clefs do not designate hexachordal signatures lies behind the version without flats and the misplaced clefs in Trento 90. The single *bb* signature (fas4) in the first staff on f. 337 suggests that his exemplar was in *fa*-clefs, which he tried to interpret with an inadequate result. The other scribes succeeded by just interpreting the signs as hexachordal signatures and providing letter clefs.

could be that in some circles during a period around 1450 it might be regarded as sufficient to notate the multi-flat signatures for pieces in for example C-Dorian; the letter clefs were obvious and superfluous. All the pieces under discussion are French, and the sources in which the letter clefs are added to clarify the music (Pavia 362 and *Schedelsches Liederbuch*) are Italian and German. But this, on the other hand, does not exclude that an element of pitch indeterminateness still was at work, even if music scribes later, when the notation was on its way to oblivion, made short work of this element.

The theories of pitch indeterminateness cited at the start of this article still hold true, but the investigation has shown that the situation turns out to be a bit more complicated than that. In addition to allowing performances of indeterminate pitch as such the *fa*-clefs may have had additional functions as means

- 1) to indicate alternative performing pitches a fifth apart by exchanging sets of (imagined) letter clefs,
- 2) to allow the notation of songs, which needed a signature of one sharp in the uppermost voice (limited to formations of fifths only),
- 3) to make shorthand notation for letter clefs in compositions with two- or three-flat signatures (limited to formations of fifths and fourths).

#### *Ockeghem's "Prenez sur moi" and Missa Cuiusvis toni*

While it is quite possible that the common music scribe's knowledge of the meaning and advantages of the *fa*-clef notation was waning around the middle of the fifteenth century, Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1420-1497), the leading musician in the French kings' chapel, certainly knew all its secrets, and he was the first to see and hear its full potential. Of course he was well versed in the music of his friend, the older master Binchois, on whose death he wrote the lament "Mort, tu as navré",<sup>52</sup> and at Tours he lived with the music of Barbingant and Guillaume le Rouge, a singer in the ducal chapel in nearby Orléans during the years 1451-1465.

With "Prenez sur moi" he reduced the concept of *fa*-clefs to essentials and used it to develop or signal a new technique of *diatonic canon* and *imitation*, with here is presented emblematic in its stacked canon at the fourth and at the seventh. Canonic imitation was in the middle of the fifteenth century and earlier always exact or strict and restricted to the intervals of unison and octave, and fifth and fourth. Diatonic imitation, which Ockeghem unfolded in large dimensions in *Missa Prolationum*, reproduces the number value of an interval exactly, while its quality might change (for example minor third changed to major third or *vice versa*). This method of imitation soon became very common as it is easier to incorporate in harmony, and it was decisive for the development of the imitative style.<sup>53</sup>

The canon is notated as one single voice part with a famous enigmatic array of flats and sharps (see *Ex. 10.1*). With a knowledge of the *fa*-clefs the enigma is easily solved

52 See latest Fabrice Fitch, 'Restoring Ockeghem's *Mort, tu as navré*', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 51 (2001), pp. 3-24.

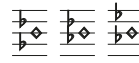
53 Urquhart, 'Calculated to Please', pp. 76-79, and *idem*, 'Three Sample Problems of Editorial Accidentals in Chansons by Busnoys and Ockeghem' in J.A. Owens & A. Cummings (eds.), *Music in Renaissance Cities and Courts: Studies in Honor of Lewis Lockwood*, Warren MI, 1996, pp. 465-481.

Example 10, Johannes Ockeghem, “Prenez sur moi vostre exemple amoureux”

10.1 Incipits, Copenhagen Chansonnier, f. 39v



10.2 Alternative incipits



10.3 Canon realization

when the signs is read as clefs two at a time: The first two flats a fifth apart designate  $c'$  and  $f$ , and the first note is  $a$ ; the next two, a flat and a  $mi$ -sign, are  $f'$  and  $b\flat$ , and the second voice starts on  $d'$ ; and the last two  $mi$ -signs have to be  $b\flat'$  and  $e'$  with the last voice starting on  $g'$  (cf. Ex. 10.3). Hereafter the canon unfolds without any signatures, with the voices in three different intervallic realisations, and at a pitch convenient to the performers.<sup>54</sup>

Ockeghem's indubitable expertise in *fa*-clefs and the whole theoretical system surrounding them may have inspired the idea itself of the fourth-seventh canon “Prenez sur moi vostre exemple amoureux” in combination with the poem's words. The point is that in a fifth-fourth formation of *fa*-signs moving one of the signs framing the fifth creates an automatic transposition of the following musical notation. The mechanics are drawn up in Ex. 10.2: The basic fifth  $c'$ - $f$  defines the note  $a$ . If the lower flat is moved one step up, the signs become  $f'$ - $c'$ , and the written note is now  $d'$ . Moving also the upper sign creates a new fifth  $c''$ - $f'$  and the pitch  $g'$ . Instead of moving the *fa*-signs Ockeghem just replaced them with the sign for the lower note of the hexachordal semitone, the *mi*-sign, and in this way he was able to create a very elegant solution by retaining the signs on the same lines, and it flabbergasted theoreticians for centuries.

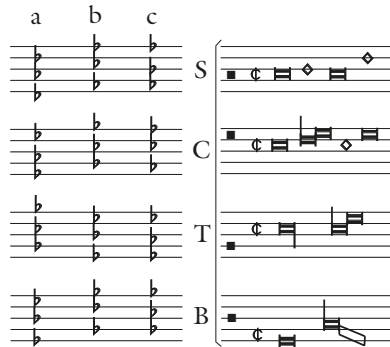
On this background we can return to Ockeghem's *Missa Cuiusvis toni*. Musicologists from Ambros to van Benthem have struggled to design selections of letter clefs to interpret Ockeghem's notation in such a way that the three possible species of fourths and their related modes – as observed by Glarean – can work in performances.<sup>55</sup> Can superimposing formations of *fa*-clefs on the mass' pitch indeterminate notation be of advantage? As an example we can look at one of the few places in the mass where all four

54 For an edition and a complete bibliography of editions and scholarly literature, see <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH033.html>.

55 See the detailed explanation in Benthem, “Prenez sur moy”, pp. 100-104, and Dean, ‘Ockeghem's attitude’, pp. 233-237.

Example 11, Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa Cuiusvis toni* – *Sanctus*

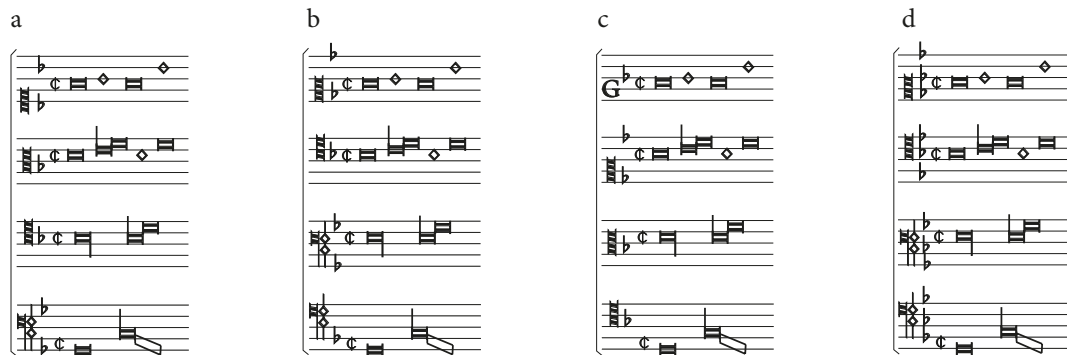
11.1 beginning of “Osanna” with three arrays of *fa*-clefs in front (a-c)



11.2 defaults readings in *ut*, *re* and *mi* (a-c)



11.3 Hypothetical clef combinations (a-d)



voices start simultaneously, at “Osanna” in the Sanctus, in Chigi Codex ff. 104v-105. The first notes are shown in *Example 11.1*.<sup>56</sup> Three different arrays of *fa*-clefs in conventional fifth-fourth formations may be imagined in front of the notes (a-c). Default readings produce performances of the music on *ut*, *re* and *mi* without the use of hexachordal signatures as *Examples 11.2a-c* show: in C-tonality (Lydian with a flattened fourth), in A-Dorian, and E-Phrygian. If such readings were to be notated and pitch-locked according

56 The different symbols used in the MS to indicate the position of the final notes are here replaced by a black square.

to the principles we have studied above, that is with *fa*-clefs combined with letter-clefs and superfluous flats removed, they could result in the notations in *Examples 11.3a-d* – this is definitely hypothetical. The first is in *fa-ut* (Lydian with a flat signature), the second in D-Dorian, and the third in A-Phrygian. But in the last case as we have seen earlier, a reading which retains all the flats, is more probable; it produces a version in D-Phrygian (*Ex. 11.3d*).

It is remarkable how easily *fa*-clefs operate the different possible modes. For example, the singers have to mentally move just a single flat in every array in order to change from Dorian to Phrygian (compare *Ex. 11.1b* and *c* and *Ex. 11.3b* and *d*). If arrays of *fa*-clefs are imagined when performing from the notation of the Chigi Codex it is possible to sing the three modes at the pitches, which best fit the ranges of the singers involved, and all three modes can be performed in the same general tessitura. The notated (still hypothetical) results of these readings moreover as regards the two first (*Ex. 11.3a-b*) agree perfectly with the versions published in van Benthem's complete edition, while the most probable Phrygian version (*Ex. 11.3d*) with regard to tessitura keeps much closer to the normal than the one proposed by van Benthem.<sup>57</sup> It is also interesting that the *fa*-signs used by the copyist in the Chigi Codex in the second section of Credo ("Et iterum venturus est", ff. 101v-103) agree with a reading in Dorian (corresponding to *Ex. 11.1b* or *11.3b*), as if the scribe for a time forgot that he was copying according to a different principle and relapsed into a *fa*-clef interpretation.<sup>58</sup>

### *Josquin remembering Ockeghem*

Composers one or two generations younger than Ockeghem had not completely forgotten the intricacies of *fa*-clef notation. Josquin Desprez (c. 1455-1521) erected a monument for the deceased master in his setting of Jean Molinet's lament "Nymphes des bois, déesses des fontaines" combined with the Latin introit "Requiem eternam" for five voices. In the Italian MS of 1518, the so-called Medici Codex, Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Acquisti e doni 666, the song appears on ff. 125v-127 in *fa*-clefs, and it is copied entirely in black notes. Petrucci had printed it in *Motetti a cinque libro primo* (Venice, 1508) as a motet with only the Latin textincipit "Requiem" and transposed into letter clefs. Without doubt the version of the Medici Codex is the original.

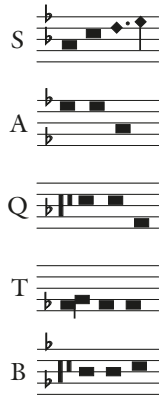
By using a nearly obsolete pitch notation Josquin honours Ockeghem – and puts his own knowledge of music's history on display. His *fa*-clefs are simple to read (see *Example 12*), only a canon prescription in the tenor creates a bit of mystery. Read in the same way as Ockeghem used them in "Prenez sur moi" the flats designate the following pitches: superius *c''-f'*, altus *f'-f*, quinta vox *f*, tenor *f*, and bassus *f-F*, and the music sounds without signatures in E-Phrygian within the range *E-d'*.<sup>59</sup> Petrucci's reading with letter clefs sounds a fourth higher with a flat in every voice (clefs: G2, C2, C3, C2, F4).

57 Ockeghem, *Missa Cuiusvis tone upon re and mi*, and *Missa Cuiusvis tone upon fa-ut*. *Missa Prolacinum* (see notes 6-7); Benthem's edition proposes a very low Phrygian version on *B-mi*.

58 See also Dean, 'Ockeghem's attitude', p. 236.

59 See further. Jaap van Benthem, 'La magie des cris trenchanz : Comment le vrai trésorier de musique échappe à la trappe du très terrible satrappe' in Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450-1650. Actes du colloque international Louvain-la-Neuve, 23-25 septembre 1999*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2001, pp. 119-147 (including an edition of the chanson based on the *fa*-clefs).

Example 11, Josquin Desprez, “Nimphes des bois / Requiescant”, Medici Codex, ff. 125v-127, incipits



The canon in the tenor is a bit deceptive. It says “Canon. Pour eviter noyse et debat / Prenez ung demy ton plus bas” (To avoid noise and quarrel, take it a semitone lower), but the voice-part is correctly notated on the staff, only the *fa*-sign has to be moved up on the line above, or Josquin could – like Ockeghem – have replaced it by a *mi*-sign.<sup>60</sup> The point is that the *cantus firmus* tune, the well-known introit for the Mass of the Dead, by this canonic operation changes its intervallic content, the Hypolydian tune is transformed into Phrygian by moving the *fa*-sign. This if anything is a reference to “Prenez sur moi vostre exemple” – respectful and possibly with a playful twist!

*Postscript 2023.* Further exploration of this repertory has brought to light some chansons which could very well have started their careers in *fa*-clef notation similar to the one mentioned in note 51, and more will surely appear. See further Morton’s “Le souvenir de vous my tue” (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH020.html>), Barbingant’s “Esperant que mon bien vendra” (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH102.html>), Ockeghem’s “Ma maistresse et ma plus qu’autre amye” (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH173.html>) and the two songs by Mureau, “Je ne fais plus, je ne dis ne escriis” (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH275.html>) and “Grace attendant ou la mort pour tous mes” ([http://www.pwch.dk/chansonniers/Mureau/Flo176\\_31.html](http://www.pwch.dk/chansonniers/Mureau/Flo176_31.html)).

60 How difficult this ‘Canon’ is to handle in letter notation is demonstrated by E.E. Lowinsky in his comments on the song in *The Medici Codex of 1518 I-III* (Monuments of Renaissance Music III-V) Chicago 1968, vol. I, p. 215 (the volumes also includes a facsimile and a transcription of the repertory). For further possible repercussions of the *fa*-clef notation in the music of Josquin and others, see Urquhart, ‘Another Impolitic Observation.’

*Appendix:* List of manuscript sources mentioned in the text

Aosta	Aosta. Biblioteca del seminario maggiore, MS A.1.D19
Bologna Q15	Bologna, Civico museo bibliografico musicale, MS Q15
Bologna Q16	Bologna, Civico museo bibliografico musicale, MS Q16
Chigi Codex	Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi C VIII 234 (Chigi Codex)
Copenhagen	Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8° (Copenhagen Chansonnier)
Cordiforme	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Rothschild 2973 (Chansonnier Cordiforme)
Dijon	Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517 (Dijon Chansonnier)
Escorial IV.a.24	Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, Biblioteca y Archivo de Música, MS IV.a.24 (EscB)
Escorial V.III.24	Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, Biblioteca y Archivo de Música, MS V.III.24 (EscA)
Florence 176	Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl. xix.176
Florence 2356	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2356
Laborde	Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier)
Leuven	Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number (Leuven chansonnier)
Medici Codex	Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Acquisti e doni 666 (Medici Codex)
Mellon	New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91 (Mellon Chansonnier)
Modena	Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS A.X.1.11
Munich 9659	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus.Ms. 9659 (fragments)
Nivelle	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelle de la Chaussée)
Oxford 213	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Misc. 213
Pavia 362	Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Codice Aldini 362
Pixérécourt	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. f.fr. 15123 (Chansonnier Pixérécourt)
Schedelsches Liederbuch	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex germ.mon. 810 (Schedelsches Liederbuch)
St Emmeran Codex	München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex lat.mon. 14274 (Codex St Emmeran)
Trento 89	Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali, Ms. 89 (1376)
Trento 90	Trento, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali, Ms. 90 (1377)
Wolfenbüttel	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag. (Wolfenbüttel Chansonnier)

## Busnoys in the hands of scribes, *or*: What did key signatures mean to the scribes?

Paper presented at the Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference, 5th-8th July 2010, Royal Holloway, University of London, revised 2023

\*1 It is well known that Busnoys got his knuckles rapped by Tinctoris on issues of notational and compositional procedures. When we at great temporal distance read Tinctoris' consistent efforts to create a theoretical foundation for regulating the musical practises of his time, it becomes clear that Busnoys' background and education – and maybe also his artistic temperament – placed him in a tradition different from the one Tinctoris' logic had to recommend. But when we study sources, which were created while Busnoys' fame was in ascendance, it also stands out that the scribes, who were professional musicians, encountered problems with his musical imagination and boldness when they did their best to communicate it in writing.

\*2 My project is centred on the five related chansonniers known as the 'Loire Valley Chansonniers' from the years around 1470, and its first stage is an online edition of the  
\*3 Copenhagen Chansonnier, which is nearly completed (<http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>). This project started more than 25 years ago, but was laid to rest as rather futile in recognition of how little we actually knew about the manuscripts and of their place in fifteenth century society. It was revitalized as a result of Jane Alden's research into the chansonniers and her new description of the scribes' role in their genesis and of the books as multi-faceted cultural artefacts. On this groundwork it has been obvious also to try to change the view of what they tell us about music.

Of course the chansonniers are important sources for lots of musical works. But they also represent performances in the minds of the scribes frozen on parchment, and they are witnesses of serious efforts to communicate how a musical mind wanted the songs to appear in sound. In many cases the divergent versions of the songs in the related sources must reflect the scribes' experiences with the music as sounding realities. Therefore I have chosen to make use of the capacity of the online format to transcribe every version of the songs as performances in their own right.

Analysing the repertory from this angle brings out a lot of questions. For most of them I have only preliminary answers. One question in particular I find intriguing. It concerns the degree of prescriptiveness of key signatures in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Did the scribes regard a flat sign as a prescription changing all occurrences of the signed position into a *fa*-step? Or was it just, especially in situations involving partial signatures, a marker of a default reading of the tone system's variable step, a marker of which alternative the performers should consider first? Many discussions of music theory depend on the answer to this question, and it certainly influences the sound of

<b>Cop</b>	Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8°
<b>Dij</b>	Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517
<b>Niv</b>	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelles de la Chaussée)
<b>Lab</b>	Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier)
<b>Wolf</b>	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag.

Table 1

Content of Copenhagen Chansonnier		Dij	Cop	Lab	Niv	Wolf
1	ff. 0v-1 »Comment suige de vostre cueur« 3v [Delahaye]	Red	Red			
2	ff. 1v-2 »Pour changier l'air ne pour fouir les lieux« 3v [Convert]			Red		
3	ff. 2v-3 »N'araige jamais mieulx que j'ay« 3v [Morton]			Green		Light Green
4	ff. 3v-4 »Ma plus, ma mignonne, m'amy« 3v [Convert]			Red		
5	ff. 4v-5 »De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse« 3v [Hayne van Ghizeghem]			Red		
6	ff. 5v-6 »Puis qu'il convient que le depart se face« 3v [Delahaye]					
7	ff. 6v-7 »Se mieulx ne vient, d'amours peu me contente« 3v [Convert]	Red	Red			
8	ff. 7v-9 »Tart ara mon cueur sa plaisance« 4v [Molinet]	Red	Red		Hand C	
9	ff. 9v-11 »Nul ne l'a tele, sa maistresse« 3v [Baziron]		Red			Light Red
10	ff. 11v-13 »M'a vostre cueur mis en oubli« 3v [Busnoys]	Red	Red	Red		
11	ff. 13v-14 »Riant regard, acompli en douceur« 3v (unicum)					
12	ff. 14v-15 »Seulement une fois le jour« 3v [Anonymous]	Red	Red			
13	ff. 15v-17 »Ma plus qu'assez et tant bruiante« 3v [Busnoys]	Red	Red			
14	ff. 17v-19 »Garison sçay / Je suis mire« 4v [Anonymous]					
15	ff. 19v-20 »Je ne requier que vostre bien vueillance« 3v [Anonymous]		Red	Light Red		Light Red
16	ff. 20v-21 »Puisque honneste vie la pare« 3v (unicum)					
17	ff. 21v-23 »Le joly tetin de ma dame« 3v [Anonymous]		Red			Light Red
18	ff. 23v-24 »Mon cueur et moi d'une alliance« 3v [Anonymous / ?Prioris]		Red			Light Red
19	f. 24v »Tant est mignonne ma pensee« 1v [3v] Only S [Anonymous]	Red	Red			
20	f. 25 »Le souvenir [de vous me tue]« 2v [3v] (Only T and C) [Morton]	Red	Red	Green		Light Green
21	ff. 25v-26v »Ostez la moy de mon oreille« 3v (incomplete) [Anonymous]	Red	Red			

22	f. 27 »La plus [mignonne de mon cueur]« 2v [3v] (T and C only) [Anonymous]					
23	ff. 27v-29 »Soudainement mon cueur a pris« 3v [Busnoys]					
24	ff. 29v-30 »Quant vous me ferez plus de bien« 3v [Busnoys]					
25	f. 30v »Je le prens sur ma conscience« 1v [3v] (S only) [Anonymous]					
26	f. 31 »S'il advient [que mon deul me tue]« 2v [3v] (T and C only) [Michelet]					
27	ff. 31v-32 »Mon tout, mon souvenir, m'ameye (1)« 3v (unicum)					
28	ff. 32v-33 »D'un autre amer mon cueur s'abesseroit« 3v [Ockeghem / ?Busnoys]					
29	ff. 33v-35 »La plus bruiant, celle qui toutes passe« 3v [Anonymous]					
30	ff. 35v-36 »Sur mon ame, m'ameye« 3v [Anonymous]					
31	ff. 36v-37 »Nul ne s'i frocte a ma maistresse« 3v [Magister Symon]					
32	ff. 37v-39 »Ja que lui ne s'i actende« 3v [Busnoys]					
33	f. 39v »Prenez sur moi vostre exemple amoureux« 3v ex 1v Canon [Ockeghem]					

performances. In by far the majority of such discussions the question has not been raised, and the modern understanding of key signatures has tacitly been assumed. It is, however, a question that I feel confident enough to try to answer for the scribes of the related chansonniers based on an examination of only the 33 preserved chansons in the Copenhagen chansonnier.

The short answer is that the scribes showed great insecurity in these matters, and that it is impossible to assign the prescriptive power to the concept of key signatures that it acquired in later music. For that reason, it will be appropriate to avoid using the term "key signatures" in this repertory and instead refer to the formations of flats as "hexachordal signatures", which denote default hexachordal positions.

Copenhagen chansonnier offers a unique opportunity to examine this question, because many songs in its repertory were copied two or three times by the same scribe, the so-called Dijon scribe, who made most of the Dijon, all of Copenhagen and a good part of the Laborde Chansonnier. And one soon realizes that he probably used the same exemplar for all his copies, but he did not interpret the exemplar in the same way every time.

Table 1 shows in red colour all the versions made by the Dijon scribe using the same exemplar. The lighter shades of colour designate the use of exemplars so similar that they in fact could be the same thing. The table shows furthermore that in four instances the Dijon and the Wolfenbüttel scribe used very similar exemplars, that the Laborde and Wolfenbüttel scribes in three cases (in green) could have exchanged exemplars, and that a

Table 2

Copenhagen Chansonnier		Dij	Cop	Lab	Niv	Wolf
2	ff. 1v-2 »Pour changier l'air ne pour fouir les lieux« 3v [Convert]					
4	ff. 3v-4 »Ma plus, ma mignonne, m'ame« 3v [Convert]					
11	ff. 13v-14 »Riant regard, acompli en douceur« 3v (unicum)					
12	ff. 14v-15 »Seulement une fois le jour« 3v [Anonymous]					
13	ff. 15v-17 »Ma plus qu'assez et tant bruïante« 3v [Busnoys]					
16	ff. 20v-21 »Puisque honneste vie la pare« 3v (unicum)					
21	ff. 25v-26v »Ostez la moy de mon oreille« 3v (incomplete) [Anonymous]					
25	f. 30v »Je le prens sur ma conscience« 1v [3v] (S only) [Anonymous]					
27	ff. 31v-32 »Mon tout, mon souvenir, m'ame (1)« 3v (unicum)					
29	ff. 33v-35 »La plus bruïant, celle qui toutes passe« 3v [Anonymous]					
30	ff. 35v-36 »Sur mon ame, m'ame« 3v [Anonymous]					

later hand added a song to Nivelles Chansonnier using the Dijon scribe's work as model. But this is a different story about the relations between the sources.

The table also makes clear that the count (3) of compositions unique to Copenhagen is slightly misleading. In fact, it is no less than a third (11) of the 33 songs that we know solely through the eyes and ears of the Dijon Scribe (see *Table 2*). He is thus an important witness.

Let us zoom in and take a closer look at three virelais or bergerettes by Busnoys to see how the Dijon scribe handled the signatures. Here I can only give very broad outlines of the cases - details can be found in the comments to the online editions. A single glance on

Table 3

	Dij	Cop	Lab	Niv	Wolf
»M'a vostre cueur mis en oubli«	(b), b, b / b, -, b	b, -, b / -, b, b	-, -, b / -, b, b		
»Soudainement mon cueur a pris«	-, -, - / -, -, -	-, -, - / -, -, -		-, b, b / -, b, -	
»Ja que lui ne s'i actende«	-, -, - / -, -, -	-, b, (b) / -, b, -	-, (b), b / -, -, -		-, -, - / -, -, -

a tabulation (*Table 3*) of the three songs' hexachordal signatures will tell you that the scribe had to make a lot of choices while working (a flat in parentheses = one flat in 1-2 staves).

*Soudainement mon cuer a pris*

Nivelle:            -, b, b / -, b, -  
 Dijon:            -, -, - / -, -, -  
 Copenhagen:    -, -, - / -, -, -

I will start with the most straightforward case: The main difference between the sources for "Soudainement mon cuer a pris" lies in their use of signatures. Copenhagen/Dijon has none, while Nivelle has flats in the lower parts. However, in performance this difference is only really audible in the last line of the first section, where the punch lines of the poem suddenly changes to a colouring of minor thirds in Nivelle (from bar 31, see *Ex. 1a*). The Dijon scribe's version retains the high Bs much longer, until bar 39. Contrasts are the lifeblood of fixed forms with their rigid pattern of repetitions. In the rondeau contrasts between the first and the second section and in the bergerette between refrain and couplets are important for the unfolding of the form. Tonal contrasts using the variability of the tone system are here crucial.

*Example 1*, Busnoys, "Soudainement mon cuer a pris", after Nivelle, a) bars 17-39, b) bars 47-57

a

b

In Nivelles the flat affecting the B in the tenor in bar 19 would probably have been sung as a natural in view of the tenor's circling around the note E during the preceding six bars. This shows the type of problems the Dijon scribe had to decide on.

The Dijon scribe's exemplar could very well have been quite similar to the Nivelles scribe's including flats. My research shows that the Dijon scribe often analysed the music and performed it in writing according to his own taste. Realizing that flats are kind of optional in a piece in D-Dorian, and that some of the song's charm depended on a fluid state of the scale's variable step, he decided not to put in any signatures. He did put in the important flat before B in the contratenor in bar 24, and the usual rules for choosing between high and low Bs would automatically produce the intended turn to the flat side at the end of the refrain. The resulting performance is completely predictable, but slightly different from Nivelles's, without in any way changing the song's identity. Maybe one of his goals was to ensure a correct performance of the contrasting couplets – the cancellation of the B-flat in the contratenor in Nivelles (*Ex. 1b*) could easily be overlooked.

*M'a vostre cuer mis en oubli*

Dijon:	(b), b, b / b, -, b
Laborde:	-, -, b / -, b, b
Copenhagen:	b, -, b / -, b, b
Florence 176:	-, -, - / -, -, -
Rome 2856:	-, -, - / -, -, -
Bologna Q16:	-, -, b / -, -, b
Florence 2794:	-, -, (b) / -, -, (b)
Seville 5-I-43:	-, -, b / -, -, b

"M'a vostre cuer" offers an instructive example of how difficult it could be for a meticulous music scribe to present the sounding reality of music in writing. The sources for this chanson show the complete range of possibilities. In the slightly later Italian and French manuscripts (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Banco Rari 229, Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 2856, Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q16, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794 and Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina, MS 5-1-43) it appears without any signatures at all or with a one flat signature in the contratenor only. Only the Dijon scribe has used three different configurations of signatures in the two sections of the bergerette.

The sources evidently transmit two different interpretations of the tonal development and contrasts in the song. In the sources without any flats quite a lot of B-flats will have to be performed in the contratenor to correct fifths, but B-flats will not be needed in the opening of the second section, and in this way a contrast between the two sections is established. In all the sources with at least a flat in the contratenor this tonal contrast will be eradicated in performance, and the contrasts reduced to what happens inside each section.

The Dijon scribe apparently struggled with these internal contrasts. We can only guess what his exemplar looked like, but it probably had a signature of one flat in the contratenor like the majority of other sources and no signatures in the upper voices. The

Example 2, Busnoys, “M’a vostre cueur mis en oubli”, after Copenhagen, a) bars 13-22, b) bars 50-57

a

b

scribe tried different strategies to convey the changing quality of Bs in the upper voices to the performers. It never occurred to him to put some unambiguous accidentals in their parts.

I'll spare you the details. After trying different combinations of flats in Dijon and Laborde, he ended up in Copenhagen, his last copy of the exemplar, with flats in superius and contratenor in the first section and flats in the lower voices in the second section. This solution gives the music a rich tonal colouring, and the singers only have to supply a few naturals and, of course, some flats (cf. *Ex. 2*) – it might be his final word on this chanson.

The Dijon scribe's difficulties in deciding how best to communicate the fluidity of the variable scale degree and its influence on the sound of the music clearly demonstrates that to him and to many others of his generation the concept of a signature had not acquired its modern prescriptive meaning.

#### *Ja que lui ne s'i actende*

Wolfenbüttel: –, –, – / –, –, –  
 Dijon: –, –, – / –, –, –  
 Laborde: –, (b), b / –, –, –  
 Copenhagen: –, b, (b) / –, b, –

New Haven 91: –, –, – / –, –, –  
 Seville 5-I-43: –, –, – / –, –, –

Example 3, Busnoys, “Ja que lui ne s’i actende”, after Dijon, bars 1-33

[Superius] Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Tenor

Contratenor

1.4. Ja que lui ne s’i ac - ten - -  
3. Plus que que ja - mais de sa ben - -

1.4. Ja que lui ne s’i ac - ten - de,  
3. Plus que que ja - mais de sa ben - de

9

de, car tous au - tres sont de cas - -  
de, car me ten - dray et sont de cas si - -

car me tous ten - au dray - tres et sont de cas si - - sez,  
car me tous ten - au dray - tres et sont de cas si - - sez, pres

17

sez, et je l’ai - me plus qu’as ex - - sez af -  
pres qu’il voir - ra bien par ex - - pres que

et je l’ai - me plus qu’as ex - - sez  
qu’il voir - ra bien par qu’as ex - - pres

je voir - - - ra bien plus par qu’as ex - - sez  
je voir - - - ra bien plus par qu’as ex - - pres

26

- - fin son que fait chas - - cun l’en -  
son fait tous - - jours a -

af que - fin son que fait chas - - cun  
af que - fin son que fait tous - - jours

af que - fin son que fait chas - - cun  
af que - fin son que fait tous - - jours

For “Ja que lui ne s’i actende” there is a majority of sources without any signatures: Dijon, Wolfenbüttel, as well as the Mellon Chansonier in New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91, and the Colombina Chansonier in Seville, Biblioteca Capitulare y Colombina, MS 5-1-43. But two sources, Laborde and Copenhagen, introduce flats in curious patterns. And still more curious, Dijon and Copenhagen were copied after the same exemplar, and Laborde and Wolfenbüttel might on their side also have been after the same exemplar, and yet we see these differences. They have a story to tell.

It is a very special song. The equivocal sense of the poem's first line, "Though he does not expect it" or "Jaqueline expects", places this bergerette firmly in the famous series of Jaqueline d'Hacqueville songs by Busnoys. And that something unusual is going on here is made audible by the music: The contratenor hammers out "Ja / que / lui / ne" in four repeated brevis notes on *c* (bb. 1-4, *Ex. 3*). For once, neither the superius nor the tenor is the most important voice to present the text. Busnoys' song offers a bold perception of the courtly chanson. The three voices were conceived as a unity, probably with the contratenor as its principal voice and with a heavy reliance on hexachordal procedures.

The opening of the contratenor is unique in this repertory, and it marches on in equal semibrevis notes. The contratenor extends the four Cs by a complete statement of the natural or the C-hexachord, which reigns until bar 15. Then the hard or G-hexachord is brought into play, first in high position (bb. 16-20) then in low position (bb. 21-32). At the end of the refrain it mutates back to the C-hexachord.

The tenor supplements the hexachordal play of the contratenor. In bars 1-16 it keeps entirely within the G-hexachord, only in bar 17 it moves to the C-hexachord – when the contratenor changes to the G – and so on. The strict hexachordal play of the lower voices gives the first section its own distinctive sound.

This is how the song appears in the Dijon Chansonnier and most sources without signatures. In Wolfenbüttel the scribe introduces a flat before *B* in bar 28, which immediately causes flattening of *E* in the next bar and of *B* in the tenor. It was possibly provoked by an uneasiness about the stressed diminished fifth *b-f'* between tenor and superius at the start of bar 29 – the diminished fifths in passing in the preceding bars apparently did not bother the scribe.

The Laborde scribe went a step further in order to dispel his anxiety about diminished fifths. He placed signatures of one flat in first two staves of the tenor as well as of the contratenor. The flat in the contratenor does not cause any real problems; the fifths become perfect, but apart from that it does not influence the superius much. The tenor flat is different. Owing to the tenor's oscillation between *E* and *B* the performer has to supply many naturals in order not create serious problems.

When the Dijon scribe worked on completing the Laborde Chansonnier he could not copy "Ja que lui ne" into the MS. It was already there. But he studied the version made earlier by the Laborde scribe carefully, and in stead he entered a song modelled on "Ja que lui ne", namely the anonymous rondeau cinquain "*La pourveance de mon cuer*" (ff. 94v-95). This song quotes the start of Busnoys' contratenor as its tenor and duplicates the hexachordal roles of the lower voices – it may be a sort of *reponce* (*Ex. 4*). He notated it without any signatures in the upper voices and a signature of two flats in the contratenor and created a sound world modelled on the Laborde version of "Ja que lui ne". It was either composed by himself or possibly edited from an effort of someone in his circle of musical colleagues – probably originally without any hexachordal signatures.

\*4

Having 'learned' a lot from the Laborde "Ja que lui ne" the Dijon scribe copied it into the Copenhagen chansonnier using his own exemplar but introducing signatures inspired by Laborde. The tenor in Copenhagen has a one flat signature in both sections, which causes and extends similar problems in performance as in Laborde; the contratenor only has a flat in the first staff of the first section. While the Wolfenbüttel and Laborde versions appear to work satisfactorily in performances, the cross-fertilization whose result is the Copenhagen version was less successful.

Example 4, Anonymous, “La pourveance de mon cueur”, after Laborde, bars 1-18

[Superius] Mensura =  $\bullet / \bullet$

1.4. La pour - ve - an - ce de mon cueur, la en -  
 3. Mais si par for - ce de su - eur, en -

1.4. La pour - ve - an - ce de mon cueur,  
 3. Mais si par for - ce de su - eur,

1.4. La pour - ve - an - ce de mon cueur,  
 3. Mais si par for - ce de su - eur,

10  
 seu - le ver - tu de mon heur, neur,  
 ne - mi - e de tout hon - - - neur,

la seu - le ver - tu de de mon heur,  
 en - ne - mi - e de tout hon - - - neur,

la seu - le ver - tu de de mon heur,  
 en - ne - mi - e de tout hon - - - neur,

A crucial spot in “Ja que lui ne” is the cadential figure in the superius, which ends the first line (bb. 7-9, see *Ex. 3*). It includes the tritone movement from  $b'$  to  $f'$  in the superius above an  $f$  in the contratenor and seems to demand a flat in the superius, and it may have forced the thought of flats in the lower voices on the Laborde and Dijon scribes. This figure is present in all six sources and thus with a high probability goes back to a first generation clear copy of the song. But it may still be an error. If we dare to correct a detail, which all the sources agree on, and replace it with another standard figure, no thoughts about flats are induced at this point (*Example 5*).

Example 5, Busnoys, “Ja que lui ne s'i actende”, restored, bars 7-9

ten - de,  
 ben - de

ten - de,  
 ben - de

ten - de, car  
 ben - de me

### Supplementary notes (2023)

- 1) Instead of reworking this text into an article with footnotes etc., I decided to leave it as a conference contribution with a selection of the illustrations from the PowerPoint presentation transformed into music examples.

Tinctoris' criticism of Busnoys is discussed, for example, in Rob C. Wegman, 'Mensural Intertextuality in the Sacred Music of Antoine Busnoys' in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*. Oxford 1999, pp. 175-214; Jane Alden's research has been published in the book *Songs, Scribes, and Society. The History and Reception of the Loire Valley Chansonniers*. New York 2010.
- 2) As is now widely known, the Leuven chansonnier (Leuven, Alamire Foundation, Manuscript without shelf number) has since 2015 been part of the group of 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. I have chosen not to include this new source in this revised text, since the chansons referred to do not appear in the Leuven chansonnier. It does, however, contain concordances to Copenhagen chansonniers (nos. 3, 5, 7, 19, 20, 26 and 28 in *Table 1*), but they do not contribute anything new regarding the issues discussed here.
- 3) The first stage of *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. An open access project* was completed in 2013. Since then editions and discussions of many other chansons have been added to the site; among them a large part of the repertory in the Leuven chansonnier.
- 4) Restored editions of "La pourveance" as well as "Ja que lui ne" have been published at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH215.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH032.html>.



## The restoration of Antoine Busnoys' four-part Flemish song "In mijnen sijn": An experiment in sound, imitation technique, and the setting of a popular tune

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Important aspects of my discussion of Busnoys' "In mijnen sijn" are most adequately represented by the musical editions appended to this article. They include separate editions of the song's only two complete sources, which date from the first decade of the sixteenth century. For anybody who wants to perform the song, these sources raise some thorny questions about how to understand the music. The editions include my attempt to answer these questions by means of a restoration of "In mijnen sijn".<sup>1</sup> The process of restoration highlights some issues of importance to our perception of the development of compositional practice in the second part of the fifteenth century. These issues concern the extent and meaning of the roles of key signatures, strict canon techniques and the development of polyphonic settings of popular songs. Furthermore, in my opinion this Flemish song has not received the attention it deserves from musicology.<sup>2</sup>

### *Sources and composer attribution*

The song's presumably oldest source is Petrucci's third printed collection of secular music, *Canti C*, which was published in Venice in 1504 (hereafter *Canti C*).<sup>3</sup> It appears on ff. 55v-56 without any composer attribution and with only the first line of a French poem "Le second jour d'avril" as a text incipit below each voice part. The other, slightly later, source is the chansonnier in Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica Luigi Cherubini, MS Basevi 2439, the so-called "Basevi Codex", where it is found on ff. 29v-30 under Busnoys' name and with "In myne zynn" as text incipit in all four parts. At first glance, this information calls for circumspection concerning the composer attribution. None of the sources are among the important ones for the dissemination and preservation of Busnoys' music, and both sources were produced several years after Busnoys' death. He probably spent his last years as choirmaster in Bruges and died in November 1492 after a career which had included the French royal court in the 1450s or earlier, Tours and Poitiers in the 1460s, and the Burgundian court from 1467.<sup>4</sup> After the turn of the century, his music disappeared from the general repertory except for a handful of four-part songs.

1 For the impetus to take up this little piece of research, I wish to thank Mr. Arnold den Teuling whose correspondence made me aware of the special problems concerning the edition of Busnoys' song; he has also contributed important information on the edition of Flemish poems.

2 The research by Martin Picker has been the natural point of departure for my work. He has charted the family of compositions building on the "In mijnen sijn" tune, found the connection to the Anthonisz painting, and he is the only one who points to the correct solution of the song's structure (cf. notes 19, 22, and 38 below). Regrettably, I have to disregard the very detailed analysis by Clemens Goldberg in his *Die Chansons von Antoine Busnois. Die Ästhetik der höfischen Chansons*. (Quellen und Studien zur Musikgeschichte von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart, Bd. 32), Frankfurt am Main 1994, pp. 206-221, as it builds on a transcription with no real foundation in the sources (cf. note 29), discusses a poetic text far removed from Busnoys' time, and fails to recognize the structure of the tune on which the song is based, and thus makes most of the discussion slightly irrelevant.

3 *Canti C. N° cento cinquanta*. O. Petrucci, Venezia, 1504 (RISM 1504/3).

4 For biographical information, see Paula Higgins, "Busnoys, Antoine," *Grove Music Online*. Aug. 2009.

Petrucchi printed a few compositions by Busnoys in his early collections, mostly four-part French chansons. Six of these were attributed to Busnoys, and in all cases musicology has accepted them as his.<sup>5</sup> Among the anonymous compositions in Petrucci's anthologies, eight are attributed to Busnoys in other sources; of these four are unlikely to be works by Busnoys,<sup>6</sup> while four others (including "Le second jour d'avril" (In mijnen sijn)) are not contested by contradictory ascriptions.<sup>7</sup>

The following points convince me that the attribution of the song to Busnoys in the Basevi Codex is credible:

- 1) In Basevi Codex the song is placed among contemporary songs, and the manuscript's attributions are highly reliable.
- 2) The placing of the cipher "3" below passages in coloration is a practice which Tinctoris criticized in the music of Busnoys.
- 3) The song contains features of an experimental nature, which later scribes and editors found difficult to handle, but which match patterns that are apparent in parts of Busnoys' production.

The Basevi Codex is a parchment manuscript, which was produced sometime during the years 1505-1508 in the scriptorium of the Burgundian court chapel by the copyist known as *Main Scribe B* – this is in the workshop which became famous under the direction of Petrus Alamire.<sup>8</sup> The chansonnier was most probably produced on commission from a member of a noble Italian family, the Agostini Ciardis of Siena. It is in oblong choir book format (168 x 240 mm), which is a rather unusual format for a Northern manuscript, but it closely matches the size, layout and disposition of the Petrucci chansonniers and like them it in most cases supplies only a few words of the texts – only enough for an identification of the pieces.<sup>9</sup> It seems to have been commissioned as a companion volume to the collections of Northern secular music by Petrucci with the same mixture of four- and three-part pieces. In the manuscript nearly all the compositions are attributed to a composer with Agricola, La Rue, Ghiselin and Prioris as the predominant names; and it has proved to be a very reliable source for composers' names.<sup>10</sup> However, Busnoys is a rather seldom guest in the Burgundian court manuscripts. In fact, they contain only one single additional composition under his name, and it is his famous *Missa L'homme armé* in the earliest

5 In *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A*. Venezia 1501 (RISM 1501), "J'ay pris amours tout au rebours", "Je ne demande aultre de gré", "Le serviteur"; in *Canti B. numero Cinquanta B*, Venezia 1502 (RISM 1502/2), "L'autrier que passa"; in *Canti C*, "Maintes femmes m'ont dit souvent", "Corps digne / Dieu quel mariage". Petrucci also printed one piece of sacred music under Busnoys' name, the unique "Patrem Vilayge" in *Fragmenta missarum* of 1505 (RISM 1505/1), which is rather uncharacteristic of Busnoys' music. It may be a late work or (more likely) a misattributed work by a younger colleague; cf. Antoine Busnoys (Richard Taruskin ed.), *Collected Works*, vol. 3, New York 1990, pp. 52-54.

6 In *Odhecaton A*, "Amours fait moult / Il est de bonne heure / Tant que nostre argent" (Japart), "Je ne fay plus" (Mureau); and in *Canti C*, "Cent mille escus" (Caron), "Fortuna desperata" (Felice).

7 In *Odhecaton A*, "Acordes moy ce que je pense", "Mon mignault / Gratieuse"; in *Canti C*, "Une filleresse destoupes / Vostre amour / S'il y a compaignon".

8 Herbert Kellmann (ed.), *The Treasury of Petrus Alamire. Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500-1535*, Ghent 1999, p. 11; for a different view of the continuity between *Scribe B* and Alamire see Fabrice Fitch, 'Alamire versus Agricola: The Lie of the Sources' in Bruno Bouckaert & Eugene Scheurs (eds.), *The Burgundian-Habsburg Court Complex of Music Manuscripts (1500-1535) and the Workshop of Petrus Alamire* (Yearbook of the Alamire Foundation 5), Leuven 2003, pp. 299-308.

9 Kellmann, *The Treasury* ..., p. 79.

10 *Ibid.*

manuscript of the complex, the MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi CVIII.234 (the so-called “Chigi Codex”), which contains most of Ockeghem’s sacred music.<sup>11</sup> In the Basevi Codex Busnoys’ “In myne zynn” stands shoulder to shoulder with two four-part chansons by Ockeghem, namely the rondeau “Je n’ay dueil” in a late version which had also been printed in Canti C, and the combination chanson “Petite camusette” (ff. 30v-32); it thus appears in a small enclave with music of an older generation. Moreover, a notational feature in “In myne zynn”, the use of coloration in combination with the cipher “3”, lends additional authority to the manuscript’s attribution of the song to Busnoys.

*Minor color* is a notational concept identified by modern editors in music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. According to convention dotted figures could be written either as a dotted note followed by one or two shorter notes or as blackened notes of the next higher order (e.g. a black *semibrevis* followed by a black *minima* could be replaced by a dotted *minima* and a *semiminima*) at the scribes’ discretion. However, the way of interpreting passages in coloration (black notes) endorsed by 15th century music theory is to read them as *sesquialtera*, where they are shortened by a third of their value and form triplet patterns or change the accentuation of the musical line (in triple time). It is possible that modern editors rely too heavily on the *minor color* interpretation and may thereby obscure rhythmical subtleties,<sup>12</sup> but that the convention existed is a fact documented by the many musical sources containing the same pieces in differing notations.

Figure 1. Coloration in “In myne zynn” in the Basevi Codex.

a) Superius, bars 59-60    b) Contra, bars 57-58



Figure 2. The same passages in Canti C



In his book on musical mensuration and proportions (*Proportionale musices*, c. 1473), the theorist and composer Johannes Tinctoris strongly criticized Busnoys, and only Busnoys, for his habit of adding the cipher “3” below passages in coloration. It is superfluous according to Tinctoris, since the colouring alone obviously indicates *sesquialtera*, and he gives a musical example whose rhythmical shape exactly matches the two passages in coloration found in “In myne zynn” in the Basevi Codex (see Fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> Rob C. Wegman

- 11 Kellmann, *The Treasury* ..., pp. 125-127; see further Fabrice Fitch, *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models*. Paris 1997.
- 12 Cf. Ronald Woodley, ‘Minor Coloration Revisited: Ockeghem’s *Ma bouche rit* and Beyond’, in Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Théorie et analyse musicales 1450-1650. Actes du colloque international Louvain-la-Neuve, 23-25 septembre 1999* (Musicologica Neolovaniensia Studia 9). Louvain-la-Neuve 2001, pp. 39-63.
- 13 Tinctoris’ remarks and example are reproduced and translated on p. 184 in Rob C. Wegman, ‘Mensural Intertextuality in the Sacred Music of Antoine Busnoys’, in Paula Higgims (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, Oxford 1999, pp. 175-214, and in Woodley, ‘Minor Coloration’, pp. 46-47.

speculates that this and other special features in Busnoys' mensural use (all condemned by Tinctoris) stems from ingrained musical habits founded during his youth and education somewhere in Flanders where Continental and English musical traditions intermingled.<sup>14</sup> The cipher "3" below coloration seems to be so characteristic that it has been used to help identify probable works by Busnoys among the anonymously preserved repertory.<sup>15</sup> The appearance of "3" below coloration in such a late source as the Basevi Codex suggests that the scribe had access to an exemplar closely connected to the period and to the musical circles of Busnoys.

While it hardly posed any problems that musical notation slightly more difficult than in common use appeared in an anthology commissioned by a private patron who surely had competent musicians at his disposal, it was a different matter in a printed collection aimed at a wider circle of buyers. For this reason Petrucci's editor<sup>16</sup> has routinely normalized these passages by replacing *sesquialtera* with an alternative reading as dotted figures, which perfectly fit the counterpoint (compare Figs. 1 and 2, and see Edition C, bb. 57 ff). As we will see, it is not the only normalization of the music he carried out. The discarding of the *sesquialtera* reading of coloured figures in favour of dotted figures was quite widespread already in the 15th century, and as Richard Sherr has remarked, the *sesquialtera* reading was not as obvious as Tinctoris thought it was. If Busnoys really wanted this interpretation, it might be better to be sure by putting in the "3".<sup>17</sup>

The repertories of Canti C and the Basevi Codex were probably intended first and foremost for instrumental ensemble performances in Italy, where the vocal performance of rather old-fashioned songs with French or Dutch texts was no longer in vogue. A great part of the repertory may even be composed with such performances in mind, especially the highly figured reworkings of well-known art songs, for example of international hits like "De tous biens plaine" or "D'ung aultre amer", although it cannot be excluded that they originally were show off pieces for virtuoso, highly paid, and francophone singers.<sup>18</sup> But are we compelled to include Busnoys' composition within an instrumental repertory because both its complete sources point in that direction? Here a much later, but fragmentary source comes our assistance.

14 Wegman, 'Mensural Intertextuality', pp. 185-193.

15 *Ibid.* pp. 199-204, and Sean Gallagher, 'Busnoys, Burgundy, and the Song of Songs' in M. Jennifer Bloxam, Gioia Filocamo, and Leofranc Holford-Strevens (eds.), *Uno gentile et subtile ingenio. Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Bonnie J. Blackburn*. Tours 2009, pp. 413-429. Moreover, Gallagher pinpoints another fingerprint of Busnoys, the figure "z", which he has found 30 times in his music, but not in "In mijnen sijn" (p. 419). It is, however, identical to the exposed figure in the Tenor, bb. 35-36.2, and a variant is heard at the start of the Contra, bb. 2-3.2, so our song can be added to Gallagher's Table 2 (p. 420).

16 For the early editions probably Petrus Castellanus, cf. Bonnie J. Blackburn, 'Petrucci's Venetian Editor: Petrus Castellanus and his Musical Garden', *Musica disciplina* 49 (1995), pp. 15-45.

17 Richard Sherr, 'Thoughts on Some of the Masses in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 14 and its Concordant Sources (or, Things Bonnie Won't Let Me Publish)' in Bloxam, *Uno gentile*, pp. 319-333 (at p. 328); to Sherr's list of Busnoys compositions with normalized notation in the early 16th century one can add "Le second jour d'avril" (In mijnen sijn).

18 Cf. Howard Mayer Brown and Keith Polk, 'Instrumental music, c. 1300-c.1520' in Reinhard Strohm & Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.), *Music as Concept and Practise in the Late Middle Ages* (The New Oxford History of Music. New Edition. Vol. III.1), Oxford 2001, pp. 130-131, and John Bryan, "Very sweete and artificial': Lorenzo Costa and the earliest viols', *Early Music* 36 (2008), pp. 1-17.

### *The restoration of “In mijnen sijn”*

The Dutch painter Cornelis Anthonisz (c. 1499-c. 1555) in 1533 portrayed his companions in the fourth company of crossbows in Amsterdam in a picture now known as *Banquet of Members of Amsterdam's Crossbow Civic Guard* (Oil on panel, 130 x 206,5 cm, Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, see Fig. 3). Anthonisz depicted himself with a pen in his hand in the upper left corner, just below the year 1533, and the company's number emerges in the letter “D” painted on the front of the tablecloth. A seated man (fourth from the right) is holding a sheet of music clearly marked as “Superius” as if he is about to propose that the banquet should open with the members participating in the performance of a polyphonic song. In 1964, Martin Picker identified the song on the sheet as Busnoys’ “In mijnen sijn”.<sup>19</sup> The superius has text below the notes, and the words “In mijnen sin heb ick vercoren, vercoren, een meijksen” are legible, which clearly identifies the music as vocal.



Figure 3. Cornelis Anthonisz, *Banquet of Members of Amsterdam's Crossbow Civic Guard* 1533 (Historisch Museum, Amsterdam; photo in public domain).

19 Martin Picker, ‘Newly Discovered Sources for *In Minen Sin*’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17 (1964), pp. 133-143.



Figure 4. Detail from Anthonisz, *Banquet of Members* (after Picker, ‘Newly Discovered Sources for *In Minen Sin*’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17 (1964), picture following p. 134).

The painter's sheet of music is much narrower than it would be in real life; therefore he has chosen to reproduce bits of music found on the opening of an exemplar not unlike the Basevi Codex but with text – and with some free fantasy added. He was not able to reproduce of the music exactly. No wonder, as the sheet is curved and upside-down. If we compare it with the version in the Basevi Codex (see Edition B), the sheet has the Superius' bars 3-7, bars 11-12 with a picturesque c.o.p.-ligature added – probably inspired by the corresponding place in the opposite Contra part –, bars 15-16.1, a tone too low, but underlaid with the correct words, and bars 20-22 (compare Figure 4).<sup>20</sup> We must remember that even if the painting is rather big, the sheet of music only takes up a very small part of its surface. If the painted song is to fulfil its symbolic mission, the painter has to make some elements noticeable. The start of the tune must be recognizable, and the text readable, likewise, the viewer must notice the part designation and the complex ligature, which unmistakably identifies the music as professional polyphony. The music sheet thus describes the civic guard as members of a society in Amsterdam which is characterized by its musical culture as Dutch (language), secular (love song), and learned (mensural

20 David Fallows lists the painting's version of the song as an anonymous setting “similar to that of Busnoys but surely different” on p. 456 of his *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480*. Oxford 1999. The comparison with the Basevi Codex convinces me that Picker was right in his identification of the setting as Busnoys' with text – reproduced with a painter's eye, not a musician's. The transcription of the music sheet published in Jan Willem Bonda, *De meerstemmige Nederlandse liederen van de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw*. Hilversum 1996, p. 127 is quite misleading; it is better to rely on the photograph of the detail in Picker's article (Figure 4).

polyphony). Martin Picker has commented on the relationship between the music and the painting:

Busnois' treatment of the popular melody reveals a tentative grappling with the technique of imitative paraphrase, which he has chosen to employ in place of traditional cantus firmus structure. His experiment in deriving the polyphonic voices from a single source melody can be compared to Antoniszoon's attempt to combine a number of individual portraits as a unified design. Both works are stiff, even primitive, in comparison with later accomplishments of the kind. ... Busnois' use of imitation seems rigid and repetitive when placed against Isaac's masterly handling of paraphrase technique in his two four-part settings, ... The painter reveals archaic taste in his style as well as in his choice of music. Features more characteristic of the 15th than of the 16th century dominate his work, among them the isolation of figures and objects, the ambiguous space, and the high eye level. Music by Busnois appropriately complements the artist's archaic vision.<sup>21</sup>

While it is somewhat counterproductive to compare Busnoys' setting with later techniques and aesthetics in secular music, one must agree with Picker in emphasising the painter's choice of such old-fashioned music. Busnoys' "In mijnen sijn" must have been composed many years before the birth of Anthonisz; it was probably a hit in his grandfather's time, and as such it represents a fresh and daring experiment in placing a popular tune in polyphony.

#### *The tune, the settings, and the text*

Busnoys sets a popular Flemish tune, a love song, which in canonic imitation permeates all four voices; it is easy to extract from the polyphonic web. Example 1 presents the tune as sung in Busnoys' distinctive rhythmization in the Tenor (or Bassus) without intervening rests, continuations and free sections. It is cast in a popular ballade form (AAB with a refrain at the end) and its melodic shape is typical of a popular song with a range of an octave and every line segment accentuating a species of fifth and fourth contained within the scale. Its mode is Dorian, and the scale's high sixth degree is very prominent along with the seventh. The opening rise to the octave is made memorable by its accentuation of the high sixth degree, and it combines the mode's basic interval of a fifth *d-a* with a higher fifth *d'-g*, which rules the remainder of the repeated A-section. The B-section also opens with a rising figure, now spanning the contrasting fourth *g-c'* and again involving the scale's high sixth degree; the B-section's second line balances this by concentrating on the fourth *a-e*, and both lines get a shortened repeat in the next line ending on the final. The song's last line, the refrain, confirms the transformation of the fourth *e-a* into the basic fifth (see Ex. 1).

The modular shape of the tune, which takes turns in placing the scale's semitone steps in different scale segments, must have inspired Busnoys to try his hand at clothing the tune in four-part polyphony in the most difficult way available at the time. Every line of the song is treated in canonic imitation at the octave in pairs of voices, first in Tenor-Superius, then in Bassus-Contra a fourth lower. In the A-section the distance between the canonic entries is two breves, while in the B-section it is varied between one and two and a half breves, and the tune's fifth and sixth lines are treated as a unit. It must have been

21 Picker, 'Newly Discovered Sources', p. 138.

## The restoration of “In mijnen sijn”

5th d-a      5th d'-g      5th d'-g

In mij - nen sijn heb ick ver-co - ren, een mej-sken al soe ionck van da - ghen,  
noyt schoon-der wijf en was ge-bo - ren, ter we relt wijt, na mijn be ha - ghen.

4th g-c'      4th a-e      4th g-c'

Om ha-rent - wil so wil ic wa - ghen beij - de lijf en - de goet, mocht ic noch

5th a-d      5th a-d

troost aen haer be - ia - ghen, so waer ick vro, daer ic nu true-ren moet.

Example 1. Tune extracted from Busnoys' “In mijnen sijn”.

important to Busnoys to maintain the intervallic structure of the tune in its transpositions with the resultant fluctuations in sound – giving the Dorian sound space a distinctive Mixolydian flavour – or else the whole exercise would not have had much meaning.

Busnoys' polyphonic setting was probably the first one of this tune, and it provoked a whole family of other settings during the following generations. Among them is a three-part setting by Alexander Agricola, who also based his mighty *Missa In myne synn* a 4 on it, and Heinrich Isaac made two four-part paraphrases; Josquin Desprez used a French variant of the song, “Entré suis en grant pensee”, in a three-part setting, which he later reworked into four parts, and this version was also set by Prioris in five parts.<sup>22</sup>

None of the sources containing the different settings of the tune gives more than the first three words of the Flemish text beginning “In mijnen sijn”. And like Busnoys' setting some of the settings are in the sources connected with several different texts. For example, Agricola's three-part setting appears with words from a different Flemish poem, with Latin text, and with two different French texts. Apparently, Flemish was not universally acceptable to performers and their audiences. The exception is a fragmentary music print from the Dutch town Kampen, published by the printer Jan Peeterzoon around 1540, the so-called “Kamper liedboek”,<sup>23</sup> which on folio G1v contains the contratenor of Isaac's second setting with the words:<sup>24</sup>

In mijnen sijn heb ick vercoren  
een mejsken al soe ionck van jaren.  
Om harentwil so wil ic waghen

22 For lists of all the related settings and editions, see Martin Picker, ‘Polyphonic Settings c. 1500 of the Flemish Tune “In minen sin”’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 12 (1959), pp. 94-95, in combination with Picker, ‘Newly Discovered Sources’; see also P. Woetmann Christoffersen, *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library, Copenhagen I-III*. Copenhagen 1994, vol. II, p. 147, and Fallows, *A Catalogue*, pp. 455-456.

23 Cf. Bonda, *De meerstemmige*, pp. 77-80, and F. van Duyse, ‘Oude Nederlandsche meerstemmige Liederboeken’, *Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis* 1890, pp. 125-175. A facsimile page from Peeterzoon's print can be seen in Willem Elders, *Composers of the Low Countries*. Oxford 1991, p. 13.

24 According to Bonda, *De meerstemmige*, p. 79, and R. Lenaerts, *Het Nederlands Polifonies Lied in de zestiende Eeuw*, Mechelen 1933, p. 65. The setting is published in Heinrich Isaac (J. Wolf, ed.), *Weltliche Werke* (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich 28), Wien 1907, p. 82.

beijde lijf ende goet.  
Och, mocht ic troost verwerven,  
so waer ick vro, daer ic nu trueren moet.<sup>25</sup>

This stanza is obviously incomplete as the lines for the repeat of the tune's A-section is missing. A more complete version with five stanzas in all is found in the big song collection *Een schoon liedekens Boeck*, Antwerp 1544, “Antwerps liedboek”, where it appears on f. 133 as “een oudt liedeken” (an old song):

In mijnen sin hadde ick vercoren  
een maechdeken ionck van daghen;  
schoonder wijf en was noyt geboren  
ter werelt wijt, na mijn behaghen.  
Om haren wille so wil ick waghen  
beyde lijf ende daer toe goet;  
mocht ic noch troost aen haer beiaghen,  
so waer ick vro, daer ic nu trueren moet.<sup>26</sup>

It is impossible to know which version of the Flemish poem Busnoys knew nearly eighty years before these versions were printed. It is quite conceivable that it did not have much in common with them except for the first words. However, Anthonisz' painting contains traces which should not be overlooked. The visible words agree perfectly with the version in the *Kamper liedboek*, and in addition Busnoys' treatment of the tune demands the short sixth line offered by this version (“beijde lijf ende goet”). Therefore a reconstruction has to build on the *Kamper liedboek*. The missing lines can be brought in from the *Antwerps liedboek* as shown in the text below; the changes in the wording of lines 2 and 3 as proposed by Jan Willem Bonda<sup>27</sup> have been accepted in order to achieve a better agreement with the music:

In mijnen sijn heb ick vercoren  
een meijnsken al soe ionck van daghen;  
noyt schoonder wijf en was geboren  
ter werelt wijt, na mijn behaghen.  
Om harentwil so wil ic waghen  
beijde lijf ende goet,  
mocht ic noch troost aen haer beiaghen,  
so waer ick vro, daer ic nu trueren moet.

This accounts for the text incipit in the Basevi Codex. Hereafter, the text underlay is easy to carry out and nearly mechanical, as all parts use the tune in identical shapes and the text lines succeed each other nicely in the paired voices all the way through the setting. If the notes between the stretches of pre-existent tune are left only vocalized, the canons will stand out strikingly in the sound picture. Text repetitions are nonetheless clearly in evidence on the music sheet of Anthonisz' painting (see Fig. 4). In my restoration of the

25 Cited after Bonda, *De meerstemmige*, p. 79.

26 Cited after Howard Mayer Brown, *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Banco Rari 229*. (Monuments of Renaissance Music VII), Chicago 1983, vol. 1, p. 235.

27 Bonda, *De meerstemmige*, p. 79.

song (see Edition A) the text lines are consequently placed below the citations of the tune in the canonic passages, while repetitions of words and lines (marked in italics) discretely colour the remainder of the musical lines.

The text incipit in Canti C, "Le second jour d'avril", is something of a dead end because the French poem seems to be lost. It was apparently associated with the "In mijnen sijn" tune since Agricola's setting in the French chansonnier in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2794 (from the 1480s) also has been supplied with this text, but only with the first four lines, which have nothing in common with "In mijnen sijn":

Le second jour d'avril courtoys  
Je chevauchoye par la montagne.  
Helas! j'ay perdu ma compaignie.  
Je ne scay ou requiera.<sup>28</sup>

*The restoration of the music*

While only one poetical text needs to be considered, we have two readings of the music in sources from just after 1500 to be concerned about. As remarked above, the whole point of setting the tune in two canonic duets a fourth apart seems to be the creation of an exciting, fluctuating sound picture. This can be cumbersome to transmit in writing through constant recopying of the music, and it is evident that neither the scribe of the Basevi Codex nor the editor of Canti C entirely recognized Busnoys' intentions.

The decisive factor is the key or hexachordal signatures. The editor of Canti C placed a signature of one flat in every staff in every voice, and an extra flat in the Superius on the *f''*-line – I shall return to this later on (see the music incipits in Edition C). However, he recognized that just normalizing the signatures would not produce a correct realization of the piece, but merely an item in his book that looked like any other piece of four-part music around 1500. To give a hint of how to perform the music he rather exceptionally inserted sharps (or rather naturals or *mi*-signs) in the Contra and Bassus parts in passages where they cite the "In mijnen sin" tune (in Contra before b. 10 and in Bassus before bb. 18 and 36). It is not very systematically done, but it may have been sufficient to inform a sixteenth century player that the tune of the canons should be played with a high sixth degree.

The Basevi Codex presents the piece with exactly the same signatures as regards the three highest voices but without any signature in the Bassus part (see incipits in Edition B).<sup>29</sup> Were this disposition of signatures to be followed strictly, it would result in some harsh clashes between the Bassus and the other voices. On the other hand, there is good reason to believe that the signature in the Contra is the result of a misreading of the scribe's exemplar. If the Bassus was without signature, then it is logical that the Contra,

28 Cited after Alexander Agricola (E. Lerner, ed.), *Opera omnia V* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 22), American Institute of Musicology 1970, p. LV.

29 A modern edition based on the Basevi Codex is found in Lenaerts, *Het Nederlands Polifonies Lied*, pp. (24)-(26). Rather strangely, Lenaerts only indicates the use of b-naturals in the tune in Contra and Bassus in the setting's second section; this principle could just as well have been applied in the first section. Another edition with flats in all parts, allegedly building on the Basevi Codex, but quite inaccurate in details and completely disregarding Basevi's signatures as well as the *mi*-signs in Canti C, is published in Goldberg, *Die Chansons von Antoine Busnois*, pp. 370-374. The edition in *Ogni Sorte Edizioni: Renaissance Standards*, Vol. 8 (1984). no. 7, has been inaccessible.



Figure 5. Left half of the Contra voice (Basevi Codex, f. 30).

which for long stretches performs an octave canon with the Bassus, likewise should be without. Scrutinizing the Contra on f. 30 it is possible to find an explanation (see Fig. 5 and the facsimile in Picker, 'Newly Discovered Sources'). The Contra opens with a two-note ligature  $g'-b'$  in which the  $b'$  must be flattened. The flat was placed before the ligature in the exemplar, and the sixteenth century scribe routinely shifted it to a place before the mensuration sign. A little way into the third staff comes a ligature  $b'-c''$  (b. 48), which also had to be flattened. This flat was probably placed before the start of the phrase; that is before the *brevis a'* (b. 44) and conceivably quite near the beginning of the staff. Also this flat ended up just after the clef. Now the scribe looked at his three staves of music and saw that the second staff missed a flat, and he (or a later user) cautiously added a very small flat to the left of the staff, not in the staff. It was probably in this way the part acquired a one-flat signature all the way through. In the Bassus part, this temptation did not occur, and the scribe just copied the only flat really needed before the note in bar 47. I do not believe in a similar genesis for the signatures in Canti C. Here the editor probably just brought the notation in line with most contemporary pieces.

If this interpretation of the notation in the Basevi Codex is accepted, the restoration of the song simply follows the notation of this source including the implied accidental flats in the Contra (see Edition A) combined with the text underlay described above. In a few places the Canti C version has been preferred: Contra bar 24.1 ( $c''$  instead of  $b'$ , cf. the little canon at the fifth between Contra and Bassus, which appears bb. 22.2-26), Superius bar 11.2, Tenor bars 24 and 43.2-44.1, Superius bar 30, and Bassus bars 40.2-41.1 (all because of the strict canon); and finally Contra bar 55 (to avoid the dissonance, probably an error in the Basevi Codex).

The result of the restoration is a piece of music with a signature of one flat in two voice parts and no signature in two other parts, which mirrors the structure of the canonic treatment of the *cantus prius factus*. In this respect, the song does not differ in principle from a number of other songs from Busnoys' hand that build on pre-existing tunes and use some sort of canonic imitation. They first appear in a group of chansonniers from

## The restoration of “In mijnen sijn”

Example 2. Busnoys, “On a grant mal / On est bien malade”, Dijon Chansonnier, ff. 180v-181 (bb. 1-7).

Central France, which preserves chansons from the 1460s and earlier, the chansonniers Nivelles (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57), Wolfenbüttel (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag.), and Dijon (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517). In the following the musical examples are all taken from the Dijon Chansonnier.<sup>30</sup>

Busnoys’ double chanson “On a grant mal / On est bien malade” combines what sounds like a popular tune as *cantus prius factus* in the tenor with a rondeau written with the popular song as model in the superius (Ex. 2). The *c.p.f.* is imitated quite strictly in the high and low contratenors, a fourth higher and at the fifth below, respectively, and later it also puts its stamp on the upper voice carrying the rondeau text when this voice imitates the tune of two verse lines at the octave. As an indication of the strict imitation in fifths, the voices have different signatures: without flats in the G-Mixolydian superius and tenor, and with one flat in the C-Mixolydian contratenors. In this chanson the composer created a rather ingenious formal construction in order to handle the conflict between the repeat scheme of the rondeau and the ABA-form of the popular tune. It can be viewed as an experimental setting exploring the possibilities of this chanson type.<sup>31</sup>

In “Vous marchez du bout du pie” Busnoys sets two different texts, both in a popular vein, and apparently uses the lines “Vous marchez ...” as a common refrain (Ex. 3). The tenor and the contratenor altus share a popular tune as *cantus prius factus*. While the refrain lines are set in four-part imitation, which also involves the upper voice, the tenor and contratenor altus alternate in the verse lines by taking two lines each. The first refrain-section, in which the tune is imitated canonically in octaves in superius and tenor *loco* and a fourth lower by the two contratenors, can also boast a sort of *obligato* counterpoint in the tenor and contratenor bassus on the words “vous Marionecte”. Here we find flats in the tenor and contratenor altus parts, while the superius and contratenor bassus are without (Nivelles Chansonnier puts in the much needed flat in the superius). According to

30 All three chansons can be found with complete editions of the related sources, translations and comments on text and music in my online edition *The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers* at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>.

31 See further <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH161.html>.

*The restoration of “In mijnen sijn”*

Example 3. Busnoys, “Vous marchez du bout du pie”, Dijon Chansonnier, ff. 185v-186 (bb. 1-6).

the structure of the *c.p.f.* the flat in the high contratenor has no effect in the imitative refrain, and it could have been discarded just as it is in the low contratenor. If the chanson had been composed in strict canonic imitation all the way through, it could have had the same disposition as “In mijnen sijn” with flats in the superius and tenor and no flats in the two contratenors. In this case, however, it was more important that the tenor and contratenor altus alternated in the middle section and accordingly had to share the signature.

“In mijnen sin” opens with a single *brevis* note in the superius that may connect it to “Vous marchez”, where a single *brevis* appears in the tenor. In “Vous marchez”, this note partakes in the first presentation of an obligate counterpoint to the canonic imitation, which is sung in the contratenor bassus in bars 11-13 and 44-47.<sup>32</sup> It is divided among the tenor and contratenor bassus with “Vous” in the tenor (Ex. 3, b. 1) and the remainder in the bassus (bb. 2-3), so that the following tenor entry is not masked. This beginning, with the single *brevis* in the tenor, may have been inspired by Ockeghem’s well-known “Selle m’amera / Petite camusette” (Ex. 4),<sup>33</sup> but in that case Busnoys certainly outdid his mentor in his very elegant and inventive double chanson, which comes up with an effective solution to setting common refrain lines around two different texts, and it is funny and a bit tongue-in-cheek.

In “Selle m’amera / Petite camusette” (Ex. 4), the only explanation of the single *a* in the tenor is that it could support the superius and help to stabilize the intonation. Nothing similar is called for in “In mijnen sijn”. Possibly the note should not be sung at all in the start of the song, but only in the repeat of the first section, where it functions as the final note of the cadence of the *prima volta* (see editions bb. 21-22). In Ockeghem’s double chanson a popular Dorian tune in the tenor too is imitated at the fifth in the contratenor altus (and the superius) and at the fourth below in the contratenor bassus; both voices “imitating at the fifth” are without flats, and the tenor itself does not need one as the rules for performance automatically provide a *b-flat* in bar 5.

32 See further <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH166.html>.

33 Cf. David Fallows, “Trained and immersed in all musical delights’: Towards a New Picture of Busnoys’ in Higgins, *Antoine Busnoys*, pp. 21-50 (p. 31). For Ockeghem’s song, see further <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH148.html>.

# The restoration of “In mijnen sijn”

[Superius] 1.4. S'el - le m'a - me - ra je ne scay,  
3. Puis a - pres le cop me pen - say

[Contratenor altus] 1.3.4. Pe - ti - te ca - mu - sec - te, a la mort

[Tenor] 1.3.4. Pe, pe - ti - te ca - mu - sec - te, a

[Contratenor bassus] 1.3.4. Pe -

Example 4. Ockeghem, “S’elle m’amera / Petite camusecte”, Dijon Chansonnier, ff. 164v-165 (bb. 1-7).

In this very small selection of songs we can discern a progression in experimentation with the setting in four parts of popular tunes. Ockeghem’s “S’elle m’amera / Petite camusette” builds on the classic combination chanson with a rather fickle love song in the form of a rondeau in the superius and a forthright popular song about the love of the ever-young Robin and Marion pair in the lower voices. And the superius joins the imitation of its opening gesture creating a four-part opening imitation. In Busnoys’ “On a grant mal / On est bien malade” the rondeau poem was created with the popular song as its model, and in “Vous marchez du bout du pie” two popular texts are combined, and still greater parts of the superius line cite the popular tune as a consequence of the use of more or less canonic imitation. “In mijnen sijn” represents the final step away from the combination chanson, and the means to achieve the dominance of the popular tune is pervading canonic imitation.

The technique of canonic imitation was in the middle of the 15th century and earlier always exact or strict and restricted to the intervals of unison and octave, and fifth and fourth in what Tinctoris classified as *fuga*,<sup>34</sup> and often to be derived *alla mente* from a notated part according to a written *canon*. Ockeghem appears to be the first composer to use *diatonic imitation* in which the number of the interval is reproduced precisely while its quality might change (for example minor third changed to major third or *vice versa*), as found in canon-compositions such as “Prenez sur moi vostre exemple amoureux” and *Missa Prolationum*.<sup>35</sup> The diatonic way of imitation soon became widespread as it is much easier to incorporate in harmony. It is also found in the imitative lower voices in combination chansons of the 1460s, but Busnoys decided on the traditional and difficult strict imitation at the fourth and fifth in his experimental setting of a popular tune.

The imitation plan of the first repeated section in “In mijnen sijn” looks mechanical: an octave canon at the distance of two bars in Tenor and Superius is twice followed by

34 *Terminorum musicae diffinitorium*, before 1475: “*Fuga* is the identity of the parts of a melody with regard to the value, name, shape, and sometimes even place on the staff, of its notes and rests” (translation cited after p. 74 in Peter Urquhart, ‘Calculated to Please the Ear: Ockeghem’s Canonic Legacy’, *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 47 (1997), pp. 72-98).

35 *Ibid.* pp. 74-78.

Bassus and Altus a fourth lower (bb. 1-12 and 13-22), but in the first line Tenor and Superius prolong the canon with a small cadential figure (bb. 8-10 and 10-12), which serves as an *obligato* counterpoint to the entries of Bassus and Contra – a device known from “Vous marchez du bout du pie”. In the second part, the scheme is somewhat softened and the texture lightened: The fifth and sixth lines of the poem are treated as a unit and imitated in Tenor and Superius at the distance of two and a half bars (bb. 23-33), which grows to three and a half bars when only the Superius lets the final note of the fifth text line get its full value (bb. 28.2-29.1). In the meantime Contra and Bassus have performed a snippet of canon at the fifth (bb. 22.2-26), which bridges the surprising, disrupted cadence of the *seconda volta* – a striking idea! Starting in bar 33, Contra and Bassus repeat literally the Tenor-Superius imitation a fourth lower, but in inverted counterpoint as the highest voice, Contra, now starts the canonic imitation with the Tenor’s entry, while the Bassus brings the longer Superius entry. Tenor and Superius here give support in a quite expressive manner: Tenor with a typical long “Busnoys” phrase (bb. 32-37)<sup>36</sup> followed by Superius with a wonderful insertion bb. 39-40.<sup>37</sup> In the last two text lines the setting is complicated by stretto effects and dense polyphony around the now well-known pattern of T-S and B-C, where the distance between the entries is first one bar (bb. 44-52), and then one and a half (from bb. 53). A side effect of all this ingenuity is a bit of harshness in some places, but not more than in other early four-part chansons.

#### *Sound and musica recta*

The most extraordinary feature of this restoration of Busnoys’ “In mijnen sijn” (or of a performance according to Canti C or the Basevi Codex if one follows the hints given by the natural signs or the missing signature<sup>38</sup>) is the fact that there is not one single sounding B-flat in the two structural voices Tenor and Superius in the repeated A-section; and it makes no difference if the song is notated with a flat in two, three or four voices. In fact, the only sounding flat in the restored version’s A-section comes in the first bar of the Contra voice. B-flats only come to play a role in the second part, at first discretely, and then only with any weight and colouring of the harmony from about bar 40.

This is caused by the nature of the *cantus prius factus* in combination with the paired canonic imitation at the fourth below. The tune’s insistence on the Dorian octave’s high fifth (*g-d’*, cf. Ex. 1) twists the sound world perceived by the listener in the direction of Mixolydian rather than of Dorian in the first section (*c’-g’* (transposed) and *g-d’* (untransposed) put together produce a Mixolydian octave). In the setting’s second section the modules of fourths (cf. Ex. 1) slowly move towards the low Dorian fifth, which allows it to end regularly in G Dorian.

The prominence of this high fifth is clearly marked in the two completely preserved sources, both of which in the Superius voice have a signature with a second flat added before *f*” (see the incipits in Editions B and C). This flat indicates that a high tessitura is used in the upper voice with a fictive (*ficta* or *falsa*) hexachord on *c*”, *extra manum*, and

<sup>36</sup> Cf. note 15 above.

<sup>37</sup> Of course, it is possible in these two canonic duets to raise also the leading notes in the lower voices and thereby keep the canons absolutely strict (Tenor bb. 28.2-29.1, and Bassus bb. 42.2-43.1), but this can be left to the discretion of the performers. The present performer would prefer not to do it.

<sup>38</sup> My edition of the song in the Basevi Codex (Edition B) is very close to Picker’s Ex. 1, which gives the first section of the song, cf. Picker, ‘Newly Discovered Sources’, pp. 136-137.

that one can expect a sound characterized by high E-naturals (the hexachordal step *mi*).<sup>39</sup> This phenomenon occurs quite often in fifteenth century manuscripts and is still encountered in Petrucci's prints. In this case it also looks like a natural consequence of the transposition of the Dorian tune in the Superius up a fourth from its normal pitch – the flat insists on the scale's high sixth degree.

Why, then, did Busnoys not compose his setting with the tune at its normal pitch in the tenor as, for example, Agricola did? It would simply be impossible for him to carry out the ideas laid down in “In mijnen sijn” if he had composed it in D Dorian. The two voices performing the tune a fourth lower would have to be notated with a signature of one sharp in order to keep the structure intact. Such a notation was not known or used in the second half of the fifteenth century, and if it had been possible, the piece would belong entirely to the realm of *musica ficta* without any poetic motivation.<sup>40</sup> By working out the piece on a tenor with a one flat signature, Busnoys was able to keep its sound world within the limits of what contemporary music theory viewed as *musica recta*.

That is the tonal system consisting of the notes offered by the *Guidonian Hand*, a brilliant teaching tool used for centuries to teach children and beginners to find their way around in the tunes of plainchant. It was ruled by a scale from *Gamma-ut* (= G) to *e*”, which included only one variable scale degree, B, which could be natural or flattened in order to facilitate movements to or from melodic figures in which the note F was of importance. This scale was organized by identically constructed hexachords on overlapping positions on C, F and G, called *hexachordum naturale*, *molle* and *durum*. If a flat is added at the beginning of the staves, this *recta* system is transposed down a tone with F as its lowest note. B-flat then acquires a fixed position in the scale, and consequently E becomes the variable degree.

This is – shortly told – how the function of the key signature (in reality a concept belonging to the 17th century) of one flat is often presented in the musicological literature, even if there is some disagreement, as a transposition of the hexachordal system.<sup>41</sup> It is however difficult to find supporting evidence in contemporary literature. The hard and fast rule is that a note in a position ruled by a flat has to be sung as *fa*, that is, as a tone in a scale segment where it has a semitone below and a whole tone above. In compositions with flats prescribed in all voices, this will often automatically result in a scale transposition, for example in pieces ending on F, and after a few generations in common use these key signatures acquired something like their modern meaning to such a degree that

39 The classical (if rather incomplete) explanation of these flats before *f*” was published by Edward E. Lowinsky in his article ‘The Function of Conflicting Signatures in Early Polyphonic Music’, *The Musical Quarterly* 31 (1945), pp. 227-260, see pp. 254-256.

40 On using fictive scales for poetic reasons, see the commentary on the unique chanson “La plus bruiant, celle qui toutes passe” in the Copenhagen Chansonnier (Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8°), at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH029.html>. Concerning composition with sharps without notating them, see my article ‘Prenez sur moi vostre exemple: The ‘clefless’ notation or the use of fa-clefs in chansons of the fifteenth century by Binchois, Barbingant, Ockeghem and Josquin’, *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 37 (2009), pp. 13-38 ([http://www.dym.dk/dym\\_pdf\\_files/volume\\_37/volume\\_37\\_013\\_038.pdf](http://www.dym.dk/dym_pdf_files/volume_37/volume_37_013_038.pdf)).

41 Cf. Margaret Bent, ‘Musica ficta’ §3 (ii), *Grove Music Online*. Aug. 2009, and *idem*, ‘Musica Recta and Musica Ficta’, *Musica Disciplina* 26 (1972), pp. 73-100; Bent's position is slightly modified in *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*. (Criticism and Analysis of Early Music), New York 2002, pp. 7-12. The opposite view that the scale is transposed into a partial *ficta* domain can be found in Karol Berger, *Musica ficta. Theories of Accidental Inflections in Vocal Polyphony from Marchetto da Padova to Gioseffo Zarlino*. Cambridge 1987, pp. 64 ff.

copyists and editors had difficulties in completely understanding the notation of slightly older music.

What modern music theoreticians seem to have overlooked, and what Busnoys’ “In mijnen sijn” so clearly demonstrates, is that a signature in a piece with differing signatures in its voices need neither transpose the scale or the system nor have the prescriptive consequences of the modern key signature. Rather, it seems to be just an indication of *default positions within musica recta*, at the same time perhaps signalling compositional procedures such as the transposition of the well-known tune, and a notice of the composition’s tonal ending. To the performers it suggests which interpretation of the scale’s variable step to consider first, but it does not exclude that the alternative position, a semitone higher, has to be preferred when demanded by the context – without in any way transgressing the boundaries of *musica recta*. The reverse is of course just as true: In a voice with no signature, it may just as often be necessary to sing the lower alternative.

In Busnoys’ generation we meet this exploration of *musica recta*’s possibilities in many songs, especially songs in the Dorian mode. Here we can see how the music scribes tried quite different instructions to the performers in the form of hexachordal signatures in order to obtain the expected flexible sound picture. Busnoys was a master of exploiting the tonal system and the music theory of his time to the limit. Maybe that is why he in particular was censored by the pedantic Tinctoris for his knowledge of the traditionally taught theory’s loopholes and irregularities – and why his music is among the most difficult for the modern editor to handle.<sup>42</sup> However, the recognition of the non-prescriptive nature of partial signatures so clearly indicated by “In mijnen sijn” can be a great help in solving knotty problems in many other works by Busnoys, and by his younger colleagues.

The rigid structure, almost schoolmasterish, might suggest a genesis of “In mijnen sijn” during Busnoys’ years of apprenticeship. But sung with text in the restored version the music does not seem to be so squarely cut, sooner quite elegant and not completely predictable with its varying leading voices and slow change of harmonic colour, and the free passages help to hide the scaffolding. Compared to Busnoys’ combination chansons from the 1460s, the song reveals close connections with the problems occupying a composer during his best years, namely in the development of new genres of secular music. In the composing of polyphony based on popular texts and tunes one of the challenges was how to extend the characteristic and fresh melodic style of the popular song to the whole polyphonic fabric. “In mijnen sijn” convincingly puts forward a solution involving widespread canonic imitation. The idea of imitation became the dominant technique, but the canonic concept as well enjoyed great success as testified by the canonic multi-voice arrangements of popular chansons by Josquin Desprez.

42 See for example the comments on the bergerette “M’a vostre cuer mis en oubli” and other chansons by Busnoys in the Copenhagen Chansonnier at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH010.html>.

Antoine Busnoys, *In mijnen sijn*

Restored by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, based on the version in  
 Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini, Ms. Basevi 2439 ff. 29<sup>v</sup>-30: Busnoys

Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Superius

In, ghen, In noyt mij - nen sijn heb ick ver - co -  
 ghen, noyt schoon-der wijf en was ge - bo -

Contra

In noyt mij - nen sijn, wijf, schoon-der

Tenor

In mij - nen sijn heb ick was ver-co - ren,  
 noyt schoon-der wijf en was ge-bo - ren,

Bassus

In, ghen, In noyt mij - nen schoon-der

7

ren, ver - co -  
 ren, ge - bo -

In noyt mij - nen sijn heb ick was ver - co -  
 noyt schoon-der wijf en was ge - bo -

8

ver - co - ren,  
 ge - bo - ren,

sijn heb ick was ver - co - ren,  
 wijf en was ge - bo - ren,

12

ren, een mej-sken al soe ionck van da - ghen,  
 ren, ter we - relt wijt, na mijn be - ha - ghen,

ren, ver - co - ren,  
 ren, ge - bo - ren,

8

een mej-sken al soe ionck van da - ghen,  
 ter we - relt wijt, na mijn be - ha - ghen,

ver - co - ren,  
 ge - bo - ren,

[illegible]

33

goet,

goet, om ha - rent - wil so wil ic wa - ghen beij - -

ha - - rent wil so wil ic wa - ghen

goet, om ha - rent - wil so

38

lijf en - de goet,

de lijf en - de goet, mocht

bei - de lijf en - de goet,

wil ic wa - ghen beij - de lijf en - de goet,

44

mocht ic noch troost aen haer be - ia - ghen, mocht ic noch

ic noch troost aen haer be ia - ghen,

mocht ic noch troost aen haer be - ia - ghen,

mocht ic noch troost aen haer be - ia - ghen, mocht ic noch

50

troost aen haer be ia - - ghen, so  
mocht ic noch troost aen haer be - ia - - ghen,  
so waer ick vro,  
troost aen haer be - ia - - ghen,

55

waer ick vro, daer ic nu true - ren moet, 3 so waer ick  
daer ic nu true-ren moet, so waer ick  
so, so waer ick vro, daer

61

nu true - ren moet.  
vro, daer ic nu true-ren moet.  
vro, daer ic nu true - ren moet.  
ic nu true - ren moet.

Antoine Busnoys, *In myne zynn*Firenze, Biblioteca del Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini, Ms. Basevi 2439 ff. 29<sup>v</sup>-30: Busnoys

[Superius] Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

In myne zynn

Contra

In myne zin

Tenor

In myne zynn

Bassus

In myne zynn

7

12

Busnoys, *In myne zynn*, p. 2

18

First system of music, measures 18-20. It consists of four staves: two treble staves and two bass staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 18 starts with a treble staff containing a quarter note B-flat, an eighth note A, and a quarter rest, followed by a half note G, a half note F, and a half note E. The bass staff contains a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. Measure 19 continues with a treble staff containing a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B, followed by a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F. The bass staff contains a half note E, a half note D, and a half note C. Measure 20 features a first ending bracket over the final two measures, which end with a repeat sign. The treble staff contains a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, followed by a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. The bass staff contains a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F.

21

Second system of music, measures 21-23. It consists of four staves: two treble staves and two bass staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 21 starts with a treble staff containing a quarter note B-flat, an eighth note A, and a quarter rest, followed by a half note G, a half note F, and a half note E. The bass staff contains a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. Measure 22 continues with a treble staff containing a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B, followed by a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F. The bass staff contains a half note E, a half note D, and a half note C. Measure 23 features a second ending bracket over the final two measures, which end with a repeat sign. The treble staff contains a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, followed by a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. The bass staff contains a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F.

26

Third system of music, measures 26-28. It consists of four staves: two treble staves and two bass staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 26 starts with a treble staff containing a quarter note B-flat, an eighth note A, and a quarter rest, followed by a half note G, a half note F, and a half note E. The bass staff contains a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. Measure 27 continues with a treble staff containing a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B, followed by a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F. The bass staff contains a half note E, a half note D, and a half note C. Measure 28 features a first ending bracket over the final two measures, which end with a repeat sign. The treble staff contains a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a quarter note E, followed by a half note D, a half note C, and a half note B. The bass staff contains a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F.

33

Measures 33-37. The score is in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. Measure 33 is a whole rest in the soprano. Measures 34-37 show the vocal line (soprano and alto) and the lute tablature (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line features a melodic phrase starting on a half note G4, moving through A4, Bb4, and C5, with various rests and eighth notes. The lute tablature provides harmonic support with chords and single notes.

38

Measures 38-43. The vocal line continues with a melodic phrase starting on a half note G4, moving through A4, Bb4, and C5, with various rests and eighth notes. The lute tablature provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. Measure 43 ends with a double bar line.

44

Measures 44-48. The vocal line continues with a melodic phrase starting on a half note G4, moving through A4, Bb4, and C5, with various rests and eighth notes. The lute tablature provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. Measure 48 ends with a double bar line.

50

55

61

1) *Contra*, bar 64, the final note is a *longa*.

Antoine Busnoys, *Le second jour d'avril* [In mijnen sijn]Canti C, O. Petrucci, Venezia 1504, ff. 55<sup>v</sup>-56: Anonymous

[Superius]      Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Le second jour d'avril

Contra

Le second jour d'avril

Tenor

Le second jour

Bassus

Le second jour

This system contains the first four staves of the musical score. The Superius part begins with a mensural sign and a common time signature. The lyrics are written below each staff. The Contra part features a melodic line with a sharp sign. The Tenor and Bassus parts provide harmonic support with longer note values.

7

This system contains staves 5 through 8. The Superius part continues with a series of eighth notes. The other parts follow with corresponding rhythmic patterns, including some rests and tied notes.

12

This system contains staves 9 through 12. The Superius part continues with a series of eighth notes. The other parts follow with corresponding rhythmic patterns, including some rests and tied notes.

18

1.

21

2.

26

8

33

38

44

1) *Superius*, *mi*-sign before bar 39 is placed a third too low.

50

55

61

1) *Contra*, bar 64, the final note is a *longa*.



# The French musical manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794, and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers

Online paper 2012

This preliminary discussion of Florence 2794 builds on the available literature and a microfilm, as I have not yet been able to study the manuscript in place. The material has been supplemented by close readings of selected concordances with the Dijon and Laborde chansonniers.<sup>1</sup> The readings prompt some intriguing hypotheses concerning the genesis and early history of the manuscripts.

## *Description*

Florence 2794 is a parchment manuscript of medium size, 240-245 x 166-170 mm, ordered in ten fascicles, of which the last is missing a bifolio (between ff. 75 and 76). Modern foliation is stamped in the upper right corner of the recto pages, and the manuscript is bound between modern covers of reddish-brown tooled leather with brass locks. One principal scribe entered the original layer of music and texts, and several later hands added music and supplemented texts – see the [List of contents](#), which also specifies the hands and the fascicle structure.

The main scribe (hand A or FlorenceA) designed the manuscript as an entity with a planned musical repertory. In the long run he was not able to carry through his plans. He ruled all pages with spaces left for initials and decorations, but none of them were ever filled in (a later hand (C) drew some inked initials in the spaces in the superius parts on ff. 72v and 73v). For most openings he used a basic pattern, which on the left-hand page consists in five or six staves for the upper voice and the additional text, and four and five staves respectively for the tenor and contratenor (bassus) parts on the right-hand page. The position of certain pieces in the manuscript was clearly prearranged, as he here modified his staff-pattern to fit their special needs. For example, the un-texted motet »Gregorius presul« certainly was meant to open the finished volume as it begins on the only opening with spaces left for initials, which in all three voices should cover the beginnings of two staves (ff. 1v-2). Similarly, he had planned to enter the two four-part songs by Busnoys (nos. 22-23, ff. 25v-27), which have voices of more equal length than the three-part songs, at the start of the 4th fascicle and adjusted the layout accordingly. In other cases he just modified the basic pattern by adding staves on the left-hand pages etc. All the pages he left without music are ruled according to his basic pattern of 5-6 staves on the left side of the opening and four and five staves (or just nine) for the lower voices on the right-hand page.

1 Concerning the Dijon (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 517) and Laborde (Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case) chansonniers, see the detailed discussions in Jane Alden, *Makers of a Songbook: The Scribes of the Laborde Chansonnier* (Ph.d.-diss., Univ. of North Carolina) 1999, and idem., *Songs, Scribes, and Society. The History and Reception of the Loire Valley Chansonniers*. New York 2010; and my online edition of The Copenhagen Chansonnier and the related 'Loire Valley' chansonniers (at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>)

In 1973 Joshua Rifkin published his identification of the main scribe with the hand of the scribe who added some songs to the Laborde Chansonnier (hand LabordeC: ff. 101v-104, 105v-106, and 120v-121), and furthermore, that also the second scribe of Florence 2794 added some songs to the Dijon Chansonnier (hand DijonB: ff. 187v-192).<sup>2</sup> A few years later the same author published his finding in Florence 2794 of the signatures and handwriting of the French singer and composer Pietrequin Bonnel – ff. 67v-68, the song “Qu'en dictez vous, suis je en danger”, and on the folios 3v, 4v, and 7v he added his name above the songs.<sup>3</sup>

### *Date and place*

In the musicological literature Florence 2794 has been regarded as a French source because of its repertory and the native French orthography of its texts, and its has been dated in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, the manuscript has been connected with the French royal chapel and dated in the early part of the 1480s,<sup>5</sup> and the contribution of Pietrequin Bonnel has been placed before 1488 when he left France for Savoy and later Italy – and possibly brought the MS with him to Italy.<sup>6</sup>

### *Structure and genesis*

The main part of the manuscript must be designated as a chansonnier; also its small format identifies it as a secular music manuscript. However, sacred music turns up in the first fascicles in a way uncharacteristic of a chansonnier. Not that an opening motet is foreign to a chansonnier; on the contrary, an introductory short sacred song was welcome

2 Joshua Rifkin, 'Scribal Concordances for Some Renaissance Manuscripts in Florentine Libraries', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1973, pp. 305-326 (at pp. 318-326).

3 Joshua Rifkin, 'Pietrequin Bonnel and Ms. 2794 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1976, pp. 284-296.

4 "Le fait qu'aucune pièce italienne n'y figure et que les textes français y soient particulièrement corrects, laisse penser que la copie a été faite en France par des scribes du pays [...], copie que l'on peut situer dans le dernier quart du XVe s., époque qui correspond avec le répertoire [...]" (RISM BIV/5, p. 222),

5 George Morton Jones, *The "First" Chansonnier of the Biblioteca Riccardiana, Codex 2794: A Study in the Method of Editing of 15th Century Music*. PhD-dissertation, New York University 1972, pp. 16-18, dates the MS 1475-85 and proposes that it was commissioned by or for a member of the Sforza family in Milan! Louise Litterick, *The Manuscript Royal 20.A.XVI of The British Library*. PhD-dissertation, New York University 1976, pp. 66-76, dates the MS before 1488, and confirms its connection with the French court by a comparison with physical traits and repertories of other court MSS.

6 Rifkin 'Pietrequin', p. 288. This dating may very well be correct, but Rifkin's reasoning does not hold up for scrutiny. He writes: "We can, however, almost definitely rule out the Florentine phase of his career. "Qu'en dictez vous" belongs to a series of works written by several different scribes in the last gatherings of Florence 2794; it falls in the middle of a gathering, which no doubt means that Pietrequin entered it as part of the series, not as an addition made subsequently to fill a gap left by the other scribes." This means, that Rifkin presumes that a wide selection of scribes were at work concurrently on the pages following f. 61, that is nearly all the hands found in the manuscript: A, B, C, E, F, G (Pietrequin?), and H (cf. [Contents](#), and see Litterick (cf. note 5) pp. 78-79). This is not likely. As the present analysis shows, the main scribe (A) left his work unfinished with lots of empty pages, which were filled by later hands at several occasions. There is nothing to tell us when Pietrequin made his additions; it might have in Italy, or later in the 1490s when he sang in the chapel of Queen Anne de Bretagne. The last hypothesis would explain his underlay of all parts with text.

here, but the two four-part motets by Compere and Ockeghem which open the second fascicle belong to another category of music, and »Gregorius presul« is not quite comparable to, for example, Frye's "Ave regina celorum" which opens the Laborde and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers. In fact, the two first fascicles do not seem to belong to the main scribe's original plan for his collection.

An explanation of this could be that the collection was commissioned by a wealthy patron who wanted a chansonnier, and that the conditions for the project had to be changed quite early in the process of compilation. Maybe the intended receiver fell away, so that the main scribe had to try out other measures in order to attract a new prospective owner; apparently he did not succeed. This may be the point where the opening motet »Gregorius presul« appeared in the picture. The main scribe also added a fascicle with the two attractive four-part motets by Compere and Ockeghem – at this stage the collection existed in the form of loose fascicles. Obviously he did not count on laying his hands on any further comparable motets, as he filled out the remainder of the pages in the fascicle with staves destined for three-part music. Fascicle 3, too, was a separate entity containing only four songs by composers connected to the royal chapel or well known in these circles (Du Fay, Hayne, Ockeghem and Fresnau, nos. 14-17). Fascicles 4-10 make up the proper chansonnier and were presumably ruled in one operation and filled out successively by the main scribe. It is very common for chansonniers to contain at the end one or more fascicles with musical staves drawn in and no music entered. They function as repositories where the owner may get new favourite songs copied. But in this case the main scribe apparently planned to open a new section of the chansonnier with a four-part song, namely the double chanson "Adieu mes amours on m'attent / Adieu mes amours" by "Josequin", and just before this song he entered the final song of the section containing mainly three-part songs, namely the "Rondeau royal", "Ung aultre l'a n'en queres plus", "De okeghem", which connects fascicles 8 and 9.<sup>7</sup>

All his work on fascicle 3 and most of fascicles 4-10 was probably done before he added fascicles 1-2. The textless tribute to Pope Gregory I, »Gregorius presul« (no. 1)<sup>8</sup> was probably planned as a sort of "dedication" piece, and most probable first and foremost as a musicians' motet, a tribute to music and the collegium of musicians, rather than to the myth of Gregory as the creator of the yearly cycle of plainchant. It is remarkable that only when the plainchant tune reaches the words "musice artis" in bars 92-96 the setting becomes declamatory chordal. We cannot know whether the text he intended to use was in fact the old trope or a new text fashioned to honour a wished-for receiver of the manuscript or a contemporary musician (Ockeghem, the leader of the court chapel, could be a candidate for praise as the father of modern music!). Maybe the planned text failed to appear – and the main writer gave up his project. His last entry in the chansonnier was a textless version of the rondeau "En effait se ne reprenes" (no. 52, ff. 60v-61), for which a later hand added the beginning of the poem on f. 1.

7 The appearance of Josquin Desprez here alongside Ockeghem confirms David Fallows' dating of "Adieu mes amours" as an early work in the style of Ockeghem, and that the young "Josequin" at an early date was well known in French court circles, cf. David Fallows, *Josquin*. Turnhout 2009, pp. 41-43.

8 See further the edition at [http://www.pwch.dk/chansonniers/CH\\_X/Flo2794\\_01.html](http://www.pwch.dk/chansonniers/CH_X/Flo2794_01.html), and as a separate publication, *Gregorius presul meritis. The anonymous three-part motet in the manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794. An abandoned dedicatory song from the 1470s? Introduced and edited by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen* (December 2018) at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Mo\\_An01.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Mo_An01.pdf).

At this stage the main scribe abandoned his project. It was a collection of fascicles: a chansonnier with a lot of empty, ruled pages at the end (fascicles 4-10); a fascicle with four songs and empty pages (fascicle 3); one fascicle containing an unfinished three-part motet and another with two fully texted four-part motets, both fascicles having many empty pages (fascicles 1-2). The main scribe may have died or left his position at the musical institution. In any case, a second scribe (hand B) very soon took over work on the collection, had it bound, and copied music on most of the empty pages – probably in collaboration with other scribes working in the same institution (mainly hands C and D), any temporal difference between the hands is not discernible, and they are like the main scribe all professionals and educated in similar institutions. Their repertory is basically of the same sort and generation as the main scribe's. It encompasses, however, no more songs by Ockeghem and Busnoys; the foremost names are now Agricola, Compere, Hayne and Pietrequin Bonnel, but hand C also knew some old songs by Du Fay and Binchois, which he placed alongside a song by a younger composer, Prioris (nos. 19-21). The last pages in the manuscript were filled by guests, each adding a single song (hands E-H, including Pietrequin).

#### *Relations between scribal hands*

Joshua Rifkin's identification of the scribal hands working on Florence 2794 and the Laborde and Dijon chansonniers respectively has been accepted in the musicological literature.<sup>9</sup> My investigation based on photographic reproductions of the pages in question fully supports Rifkin's results (I do not believe that it ever will be permitted to bring these sources together in one location in order to compare the hands directly). The information that two scribes who in turn worked on Florence 2794, both supplemented the repertory of two older chansonniers, represents a nearly unbelievable lucky chance, which demands a closer inspection. However, in the existing literature this information is just recorded without much further discussion.

Already by a close reading of the songs, which the scribes each entered in two manuscripts (Florence 2794 and Laborde, and Florence 2794 and Dijon respectively), the relationships becomes even more amazing: As one of his first efforts the main scribe entered Fresnau's »De vous servir m'est prins envye« into the third fascicle of Florence 2794 (no. 17, ff. 20v-21). When he copied the same song into the last, nearly empty section of the Laborde chansonnier (no. 84, ff. 103v-104), he used a better exemplar or he revised the one he had – most significantly by correcting the hexachordal signature in the tenor as well as the text.<sup>10</sup> And exactly the same happened when the second scribe (FlorenceB) copied Compere's »Dictes moy toutes vos pensees« into Florence 2794 as part of his completion of the first fascicle (no. 7, ff. 8v-9) and into the Dijon chansonnier (no. 159, ff. 191v-192) – again the improvements concern a misleading signature in the tenor and a faulty text line.<sup>11</sup>

Considering the professional status of the scribes it seems impossible that they made the entries in Laborde and Dijon before their work on Florence 2794. They either got

9 The rejection of Rifkin's identifications by Martella Gutiérrez-Denhoff builds on her incorrect identification of the different hands found in the Laborde chansonnier; cf. *Der Wolfenbütteler Chansonnier. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav. Untersuchungen zu Repertoire und Überlieferung einer Musikhandschrift des 15. Jahrhunderts und ihres Umkreises*. (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 29) Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 101-102.

10 Cf. the discussion and edition of the song at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH218.html>.

11 Cf. the discussion and edition of the song at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH170.html>.

hold on better exemplars or revised the ones they had, possibly after consulting with the composers. The obviously higher status of the two big chansonniers, both much nearer completion than Florence 2794 and partly illuminated, may also have contributed to a sharpening of the scribes' attention. Of course, we are here on speculative ground, but I think that we may safely assume that the additions to Laborde and Dijon by the Florence scribes were made later than the two scribes' entries of the same songs in the Florence MS.

*How could this have happened?*

The first and simplest explanation must be that the Dijon scribe did in fact deliver the two chansonniers Dijon and Laborde to patrons close to the French court, and that their owners then some years later independently approached the court chapel's suppliers of music in order to have new pieces added to the manuscripts. In this case, the work of the two Florence scribes is evidence that Dijon and Laborde were still in royal court circles when the additions were made.<sup>12</sup> But this story does not seem very convincing. On the other hand, it does not either sound plausible that two manuscripts of their size and with so much work and money invested just lay fallow in the Dijon scribe's atelier during a long period of time – if we adopt the current datings of the MSS involved –, until his successor, the Florence scribe and his associates, had them supplemented with extra music, had the index of Laborde updated and some existing pieces corrected,<sup>13</sup> and finally disposed of.

However, what speaks for the last hypothesis is that Florence 2794, Dijon and Laborde all probably represent different sorts of 'failed projects', which remained in the possession of their scribes for some time, and during their career passed through the same hands. While the small Copenhagen chansonnier (Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8<sup>o</sup>) stands as a finished product, which was handed over to the person who commissioned it from the Dijon scribe's workshop, the scribe was not able to close the deals on the Dijon and Laborde MSS even if a lot of expertise and expenditure was invested in their production. On the other hand, they were hardly available to the Florence scribes through an extended period. Nothing indicates that the main scribe had access to the repertory when he made his part of Florence 2794. The shared repertory in fact only includes a small number of songs already present in Dijon and Laborde, that is Florence 2794 nos. 15, 16, 31 and 48 – all except Basiron's song (no. 48) belonging to the standard repertory. Neither the songs later added to the three MSS show any close mutual dependency (Florence 2794 nos. 4, 12, 18-20, 32, 37, 39, 50, 57, and 65), though the still later added songs in Laborde and the songs, which Hand C entered in Florence 2794, are closely related. Likewise the main scribe's entries in Laborde (as Hand LabordeC) do not show any signs that he had Dijon's versions of the same songs before his eyes, cf. the editions and the comments on Laborde nos. 82 and 86, Busnoys' »A une dame j'ay fait veu« and Ockeghem's »Les desloyaulx ont la saison«.<sup>14</sup>

Maybe the proposed datings of the MSS concerned have to be revised somewhat. Jane Alden places the activities of the Dijon scribe in the 1470s, and Rifkin and Litterick

12 Cf. Alden, *Songs, Scribes, and Society*, p. 127.

13 Most of the songs entered by hands LabordeC (FlorenceA) and LabordeD have been added to the index in Laborde, cf. Alden, *Makers of a Songbook*, pp. 78-79 and 245-253, and Alden, *Songs, Scribes, and Society*, pp. 91-93.

14 See <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH085.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH042.html>.

date Florence 2794 in the early 1480s. Fresnau was a singer in the French court chapel before he went to Milan and became a colleague of Compere. Duke Galeazzo of Milan was murdered in 1476, and the following year his heir disbanded his chapel. It is a possibility that Fresnau accompanied by Compere more or less directly went back to the French court chapel where both of them stayed on for a long time – as it is well known nearly all archival documentation concerning the personnel of the chapel has disappeared.<sup>15</sup> If they were present in the last years of the 1470s, and the dating of Florence 2794 is moved backwards correspondingly – and possibly also the main activities of the Dijon scribe may be dated a bit later – then the whole process appears more plausible.

By these adjustments we can establish a picture of a group of sources for the history of the French chanson, which is closely interweaved and shows continuity – quite different from the traditional picture of scattered sources. Concurrently a picture emerges of a setting for the production of musical artefacts, which is bigger and more institutionalized than what we earlier have been able to imagine. The best proposals for places of origin for the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers have been scribes active at the cathedral in Tours, at the palace church in Bourges or similar. Our picture depicts a more extended group of scribes or musicians who in turn or according to their periods of employment handled these functions. The role of scribe to the French court chapel seems to be an alternative proposal.

Persons attached to the court chapel had access to all the musical circles represented in the manuscripts, the local circles in Bourges, Orléans, Blois or Tours as well as the international scene of Burgundy or Paris as they followed the king around between the palaces in the Loire Valley, to diplomatic meetings in his extensive realm or on war campaigns

However, the sources do not tell us much about the function of the scribe in connection with the court chapel. And it is hardly likely that projects involving elegant, commissioned chansonniers were hauled around with the chapel on its journeys. Maybe we should rather imagine that the court chapel was associated with a supplier based in a big city, where access to affluent customers was steady. Paris, residence of for the central administration with its many highly educated, rich and socially ambitious officials, is an obvious guess, but also Tours, which during the decades following the end of the Hundred Years War for long periods *de facto* functioned as the capital of the kingdom,<sup>16</sup> and other localities must be considered. Centrally placed book entrepreneurs or *libraires* organised productions of luxury goods such as the costly illuminated books of hours, magnificent missals, or collector's editions of literary works by financing the purchasing and preparation of materials, by ordering the copying of texts (and in these cases of music), and they had business relations with illuminators in several cities. If the so-called 'Loire Valley' chansonniers result from such activities, which in some way or another involve the expertise present in the royal chapel, it may explain many of the obscure points in their genesis, and also their relations with Florence 2794.

The lack of research on these topics of course makes all this hypothetical. But a simplified working scenario could be that the Laborde and Wolfenbüttel scribes in some way or another were colleagues who occasionally borrowed exemplars from each other.

15 Concerning Fresnau and Compere, see Allan W. Atlas/Jane Alden, "Fresneau, Jehan" and Joshua Rifkin, Jeffrey Dean & David Fallows, "Compère, Loyset" in Grove Music Online; and Jean Fresnau (O. Carrillo & A. Magro, eds.), *Messe et chansons*. Turnhout 2004, pp. vii-xii.

16 Bernard Chevalier, *Tours ville royale (1356 - 1520). Origine et développement d'une capitale à la fin du Moyen Age*. Louvain 1975.

The Dijon scribe probably ran a different business in the same circles, and he had suddenly to take over the Laborde scribe's project – and the Florence scribe and his workshop succeeded the Dijon scribe.

*A hypothetical chronology concerning Florence 2794 and the Dijon and Laborde chansonniers*

- ▷ Some time during the late 1470s the main scribe (Hand A) began a chansonnier, probably on commission from a member of the French court. The 3rd fascicle, which originally contained four attractive songs only, might have been a sort of trial pages to show his patron; he never got around to get this fascicle integrated into the manuscript. Having obtained the approval of the recipient he then produced the fascicles 4-10 and most of their contents.
- ▷ A change of plan; probably the original recipient was no longer available. Hand A tries to make his collection more attractive to a new customer by sketching two fascicles with sacred music and a dedication motet; the manuscript may now be intended as a gift.
- ▷ The Dijon and Laborde MSS pass into the care of the Florence scribe's workshop; these not quite finished projects were transferred or inherited from the Dijon scribe. Fresnau and Compere enter the royal chapel, and their music becomes easily accessible to the scribes before 1480.
- ▷ Hand A adds some songs to Laborde including Fresnau's "De vous servir" in an amended version. Another scribe (Laborde D) helps out with the complement of repertory, the index is updated, and finally Laborde is delivered to a buyer.
- ▷ Hand A abandons his own project without finishing the copying of no. 52 – he dies or changes position – or the intended receiver definitely drops the project; the opening dedication motet never receives a text.
- ▷ Hand B assumes responsibility for Florence 2794 and supplies chansons by first and foremost Pietrequin, Compere and Agricola (in due course assisted by hands C and D); he probably has the manuscript bound in some form.
- ▷ Hand B copies three songs into Dijon, two by Compere, and one of them, "Dictes moy", in an amended version in comparison with the same scribe's entering of it in Florence 2794. The Dijon chansonnier is as a finished product handed over to an owner.
- ▷ Other hands gradually fill out the majority of the empty pages in Florence 2794, but the manuscript was never "completed" with painted illuminations and decorations and released to a wealthy owner. At some point it ends up in Florence, possibly by the mediation of Pietrequin. If this is the case, the development of the manuscript in France may have ended before 1488.

## Florence 2794

Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794

### Contents

No.	Item	Hand	Fasc.
	f. 1 »En effait se ne reprenes« text (Refrain and couplet, cf. no. 52) [Anonymous]	C	1 (ff. 1-8)
1	ff. 1v-3 »[G]Regorius [presul meritis]« 3v (unicum)	A	
2	ff. 3v-4 »En desirant ce que ne puis avoir« 3v Pietrequin (unicum)	B	
3	ff. 4v-5 »Sans y penser a l'aventure« 3v Pietrequin (unicum)	B	
4	ff. 5v-6 »Pour voz plaisirs et solas« 3v [Agricola]	B	
5	ff. 6v-7 »Esse cela ouy peult estre que non est« 3v (unicum)	B	
6	ff. 7v-8 »Mes douleurs sont incomparables« 3v Pietrequin (unicum)	B	
7	ff. 8v-9 »Dictes moy toutes vos pensees« 3v [Compere]	B	2 (ff. 9-16)
8	ff. 9v-11 »O genetrix gloriosa - Ave virgo gloriosa« 4v [Compere]	A	
9	ff. 11v-13 »Alma redemptoris mater« 4v De Okeghem	A	
10	ff. 13v-14 »[Ha] cueur perdu et desolé« 3v [Anonymous]	B	
11	ff. 14v-15 »Si dederò sompnium oculis meis« 3v [Agricola]	D	
12	ff. 15v-16 »Ave regina celorum« 3v [Frye]	B	
13	ff. 16v-17 »Contre le mal que le vostre cueur porte« 3v [Anonymous]	B	3 (ff. 17-24)
14	ff. 17v-18 »De ma haulte et bonne aventure« 3v du fay (unicum)	A	
15	ff. 18v-19 »De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse« 3v [Hayne van Ghizeghem]	A	
16	ff. 19v-20 »D'ung aultre amer mon cueur s'abesseroit« 3v de okeghem	A	
17	ff. 20v-21 »De vous servir m'est prins envye« 3v Jo fresnau / [Hayne]	A	
18	ff. 21v-22 »Amours, amours trop me fiers de tes dars« 3v [Hayne van Ghizeghem]”	C	
19	ff. 22v-23 »Le serviteur hault guerdonné« 3v [Dufay]	C	
20	ff. 23v-24 »Pour prison ne pour maladie« 3v [Binchois]	C	
21	ff. 24v-25 »Vostre oueil c'est bien tost repenty« 3v [Prioris]	C	4 (ff. 25-32)
22	ff. 25v-26 »Amours nous traite honestement / Je m'en vois« 4v [Busnoys]	A	
23	ff. 26v-27 »Amours fait moult tant / Il est de bon heure / Tant que nostre« 4v [Busnoys / Japart]	A	
24	ff. 27v-28 »De vous amer follement m'ascenty« 3v heyne	A	
25	ff. 28v-30 »Je n'ay dueil que de vous ne viegne« 4v Agricola	A	
26	ff. 30v-31 »Se vous voulez m'estre loyalle et bonne« 3v Agricola	A	

No.	Item	Hand	Fasc.
27	ff. 31v-32 »C'est vous seulle que chacun doit amer« 3v Jo fresnau (unicum)	A	
28	ff. 32v-33 »L'eure est venue / Circumdederunt me« 3v Agricola	A	5 (ff. 33-40)
29	ff. 33v-34 »Ha fortune« 3v (unicum)	A	
30	ff. 34v-36 »O tres piteulx / Omnes amici« 4v "Lamentacio sancte matris ecclesie constantinopolitane" [Du Fay]	A	
31	ff. 36v-38 »M'a vostre cueur mis en oubli« 3v [Busnoys]	A	
32	ff. 38v-39 »Nuyt et jour sans repos avoir« 3v Fresnau	A	
33	ff. 39v-40 »Aultre Venus estes sans faille« 3v De okeghem (unicum)	A	
34	ff. 40v-41 »Je n'en veulx plus j'ay suffisance« 3v (unicum)	A	6 (ff. 41-48)
35	ff. 41v-42 »J'ay beau huer avant que bien avoir« 3v [Agricola]	A	
36	ff. 42v-43 »Femme de bien s'il en est point au monde« 4v (unicum)	A	
37	ff. 43v-44 »Ce n'est pas jeu d'esloigner ce qu'on ame« 3v heyne	A	
38	ff. 44v-46 »Se je vous esloigne de l'oeil« 3v heyne [Agricola]	A	
39	ff. 46v-47 »Mes pensees ne me laissant une heure« 3v [Compere]	A	
40	ff. 47v-48 »Je te veulx desavouer oeil« 3v [Anonymous]	A	
41	ff. 48v-49 »A tousjours mais vous puis donner le nom« 3v [Anonymous]	A	7 (ff. 49-56)
42	ff. 49v-50 »J'abandonne le souhaitier« 3v [Anonymous]	A	
43	ff. 50v-51 »Je ne fais plus, ne ne ditz ne escrie« 3v [Mureau]	A	
44	ff. 51v-52 »Au travail suis sans espoir de confort« 3v [Compere]	A	
45	ff. 52v-53 »Se je fais bien ou mal aussi« 3v [Agricola]	A	
46	ff. 53v-54 »Le renvoy d'ung cueur esgare« 3v [Compere]	A	
47	ff. 54v-56 »Serviteur soye de par vous retenu« 3v Agricola	A	
48	ff. 56v-57 »De m'esioir plus n ay puissance« 3v [Basiron]	A	8 (ff. 57-64)
49	ff. 57v-58 »Pour entretenir mes amours« 3v [Busnoys]	A	
50	ff. 58v-59 »Allez regret, vuidez de ma plaisance« 3v Heyne	A	
51	ff. 59v-60 »Puisque c'est force que icy je demeure« 3v [Anonymous]	A + I	
52	ff. 60v-61 »[En effait se ne reprenes]« 3v [Anonymous]	A	
53	ff. 61v-62 »Le second jour d'avril courtoys [In mijnen sin]« 3v agricola	E	
54	ff. 62v-64 »[D]'Amer je me vueil entremetre - Quant je suys« 2v [Anonymous]	F	
55	ff. 64v-65 »Ung aultre l'a n'en queres plus« 3v "Rondeau royal" De okeghem	A	9 (ff. 65-72)
56	ff. 65v-66 »Adieu mes amours on m'attent / Adieu mes amours« 4v Josequin	A	
57	ff. 66v-67 »La saison en est ou jamais« 3v L. Compere	C	
58	ff. 67v-68 »Qu'en dictez vous, suis je en danger« 3v Pietrequin (unicum)	G	

No.	Item	Hand	Fasc.
59	ff. 68v-69 »Faisons boutons, le beau temps est venu« 3v [Compere]	H	
60	ff. 69v-70 »Entre suis en grant pense« 3v Josquin des pres	B	
61	ff. 70v-71 »Des troys la plus des aultres l'eslite« 3v Loyset compere (unicum)	B	
62	ff. 71v-72 »A la mignonne de fortune« 3v (1st section only) [Agricola]	C	
63	ff. 72v-73 »Soit loing au pres tousjours me souviendra« 3v [Agricola]	C	10 (ff. 73-78)
64	ff. 73v-75 »Je scay tout ce qui me nuist a scavoir« 3v [Hayne]	C	
65	f. 75v »Mon souvenir me fait mourir« 1v [3v] (S only) Heyne	C	
66	ff. 76-78 »Quomodo sedet sola civitas« 3v (S of 1st section missing) [Agricola]	C	
	f. 78v »Les dames a vous je me rands« text (rondeau)		

## Music, Competition and *l'Art de Seconde Rhétorique*: The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron

*Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 41:1 (2017), pp. 3-31

Excellency in creating and understanding poetry – or at least some skill – was highly regarded in fifteenth-century France. The cultivation of poetry in aristocratic and royal circles has been interpreted by modern research as a sort of pastime or courtly parlour games, which occasionally involved virtual or staged *cours d'Amour*. Lately these activities and the production of poems in *formes fixes* have come to be regarded more as vital and competitive elements in the participants' social interaction, as vehicles of meanings derived from rich literary traditions and contexts, and as dialogues on esthetical and social convictions; in short, poetic endeavours were tools for securing positions in a closed cultural field, where everyone were guarding their cultural investments. Poems are preserved in prestigious presentation manuscripts containing works by single authors, and they appear in miscellaneous collections, where the most diverse texts interact and invite the informed reader to explore his expertise of literary canons and traditions in order to participate in this poetic universe.

The two well-known poets from the middle of the century, Charles d'Orléans and François Villon, may stand as representatives of opposite poles within this culture. Charles d'Orléans, a duke, father of the future king Louis XII, ranked third in the kingdom, and he was the most accomplished aristocratic poet, a self-assured and demanding *primus inter pares* in his circle of peers and servants. Villon was a professional poet, a clerk of unknown origins, and just as virtuosic in exploring the play with traditions and genres, but far more provoking and subversive in his stimulation of the reader's imagination. In spite of the near total obscurity of his life, art made him a guest and occasional participant in the duke's poetic circle.<sup>1</sup> The dynamic of this cultural field spilled over into the slightly less elevated social circles of rich merchants and well-educated groups of lawyers and clerks who were poised to achieve noble status by purchase or through the offices as royal notaries and secretaries. For these people who shouldered much of the responsibilities of running the economy and the administration, it was important to be able to participate in this field and gain the resultant prestige.

In addition to an institutional education and private teachers an upcoming versifier could get help from manuals of writing poetry. Such books circulated throughout the century under titles like *Rhétorique*, or more precisely, *L'Art de seconde rhétorique* – the first art being the art of writing prose.<sup>2</sup> Inspiration could also be found in less ambitious

1 This interpretation of French poetry is based on a recent book by Jane H.M. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry. Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies*, Turnhout 2007, in which the author convincingly (and quite discreetly) adopts the terminology of Pierre Bourdieu to describe the interactions of poets and poetry; and as regards Villon, see the same author's readings of his works in the book *The Poetry of François Villon. Text and Context*, Cambridge 2001.

2 The main fifteenth-century manuals of the craft of poetry were published by Ernest Langlois in *Recueil d'arts de seconde rhétorique*, Paris 1902.

anthologies of poems, where the reader furthermore could gather information on the behaviour and vocabulary expected in courtly circles. Many of these collections included texts that had become widely known through musical settings, which to some degree made them stand out as memorable.<sup>3</sup> Music for poems in *formes fixes* is preserved in a group of small format polyphonic song collections known as the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers, which were produced in Central France in the years around 1470.<sup>4</sup> Owners and purchasers of such luxury items, in which poems, music, careful layout and nice illuminations seem to create an imaginary world of noble living, were indeed, as demonstrated by Jane Alden, to be found among the new nobility, among secretaries and notaries amassing wealth and influence.<sup>5</sup>

That the fascination with formal poetry was not just a short-lived trend can be ascertained by the successful commercial venture of the Parisian publisher, Antoine Vérard, who in 1501 printed and marketed the enormous anthology of the then quite old-fashioned poems in *Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de Rhétorique*.<sup>6</sup> The editor of the collection supplied as a preamble a versified treatise titled *L'Instructif de seconde rhétorique*, a manual of the making and discussion of poems. Jane H.M. Taylor points out that this arrangement fulfils an "[...] important role as a guide to reception, to the decoding which provides an upwardly mobile audience with a set of cognitive rules which govern the process of reading and which therefore give it the tools to judge the success or failure of any particular poem."<sup>7</sup> Analogous to this, the musical Dijon chansonnier begins by offering the reader a basic introduction to the understanding of note values and ligatures, "S'ensuit La declaration des valeurs des notes ligaturees de chansons ..." (fols. 5-6).<sup>8</sup> It simply helps the users of the chansonnier to avoid the most obvious traps when discussing music in contemporary mensural notation. These two instances of taking the reader by the hand give us a hint of how important it was to be competent in deliberations on poetry and music in order to secure one's position in the leading circles.

My aim in the following is to raise the question if a similar competitive urgency and wish to participate in the greater cultural field were part of the driving forces behind the composing of polyphonic chansons. Internal competition and spectacular use of material

3 Three such manuscripts and a print, Vérard's *Le Jardin de Plaisance* of 1501, are carefully analysed in Kathleen Frances Sewright, *Poetic Anthologies of Fifteenth-Century France and Their Relationship to Collections of the French Secular Polyphonic Chanson*, PhD-dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008 (available at <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/zs25x943r>).

4 The literature on these manuscripts is voluminous. The most important recent discussions are found in the dissertation by Paula Higgins, *Antoine Busnois and Musical Culture in Late Fifteenth-Century France and Burgundy*, Princeton 1987, and in Jane Alden's book, *Songs, Scribes, and Society. The History and Reception of the Loire Valley Chansonniers*, New York 2010. The group of manuscripts consists of the following: Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Thott 291 8° (Copenhagen); Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 517 (Dijon); Washington D.C., Library of Congress, MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde Chansonnier – Laborde); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57 (Chansonnier Nivelles de la Chaussée – Nivelles); Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Codex Guelf. 287 Extravag. (Wolfenbüttel). I have published Copenhagen and parts of the other chansonniers online in commented editions in *An Open Access Edition of the Copenhagen Chansonnier and the Related 'Loire Valley' Chansonniers* (at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/>).

5 Alden, *Songs, Scribes*, pp. 178-214.

6 Cf. Eugénie Droz and Arthur Piaget (eds.), *Le Jardin de Plaisance et Fleur de Rhétorique. Reproduction en fac-simile de l'édition publiée par Antoine Verard vers 1501*, Paris 1910-14; the facsimile volume (1910) is now made available online at <http://archive.org/details/lejardindeplaisa00vera>.

7 Taylor, *The Making*, pp. 259-260.

8 See also Alden, *Songs, Scribes*, pp. 160-61 and 239.

lifted from the production of other musicians are well-known phenomena in the period around 1470 – one can just think of the boom in polyphonic masses. However, emulation and borrowing were also emerging in the secular music.<sup>9</sup> With the intention of keeping this question apart from the expectations that a musician could be met with when working for a secular court, I shall discuss solely chansons preserved from the hands of musicians who as far as we know spent their entire working life in the service of the church during the relevant period. I also disregard the musical dominant figures of the time, personified in Du Fay, Ockeghem and Busnoys, whose music has been intensely researched, whose learning was undisputed, and whose standings in society ended up secure, probably by means of their musical prominence alone. The few secular songs by Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron have never enjoyed the same attention. They were rather young composers when the repertory in the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers was collected, and it has been important to chart their careers to throw light on the dating of these chansonniers.<sup>10</sup> Both spent much of their time teaching choirboys in their *maîtrises*, both probably composed chansons during their youth only, and their chansons disclose interesting intertextualities and tendencies concerning musical innovation and the cultivation of poems that exhibit a bit more literary ambition than usual. I have published online all the songs mentioned in the following along with detailed commentaries.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Gilles Mureau*

None of the chansons by Mureau can be found in the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers. The three songs that I will look at are preserved, two of them uniquely, in a small paper chansonnier, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl.xix.176, which was copied by a Florentine scribe around 1480.<sup>12</sup> This Italian scribe apparently had access to French exemplars that must have been practically contemporary with the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers. He copied the music of his exemplars accurately enough, but he did not understand French at all, and consequently his poetic texts are either missing, fragmentary or consisting in incipits only, and he did not supply any composer names. A later scribe has added the index, foliation, composer attributions and other completions. This user had an intimate knowledge of French music, and especially of music in the royal lands in Central France, and he identified three songs as being by “muream”. It is worth mentioning that

- 9 See, for example, Howard Mayer Brown, ‘Emulation, Competition and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35 (1982) pp. 1-48, and the volume edited by Honey Meconi, *Early Musical Borrowing*. New York & London 2004.
- 10 Cf. Paula Higgins in her introduction “The Origins of the Manuscript” to the facsimile edition, *Chansonnier Nivelles de la Chaussée* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Rés. Vmc. ms. 57, ca. 1460). Genève 1984, p. x; and Alden, *Songs, Scribes*, pp. 120-21 and 126. A detailed discussion can be found online in Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *The chansons of Basiron’s youth and the dating of the ‘Loire Valley’ chansonniers* (at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/NOTES/BasironYouth.html> – html- and PDF-versions).
- 11 See Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, *The Complete Works of Gilles Mureau (c1442-1512) – poet-musician of Chartres* (at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/Mureau/01Start.html> – html- and PDF-versions), and Christoffersen, *The chansons of Basiron’s youth*. For detailed lists of sources etc., see also the entries in David Fallows’ indispensable *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480*, Oxford 1999.
- 12 In the following I use the abbreviation Florence 176; further abbreviations include (in addition to those mentioned in note 4): Florence 2794 – Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2794; Florence 229 – Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Banco Rari 229; Mellon – New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91 (Mellon Chansonnier); Seville 5-I-43 – Seville, Biblioteca Capitulare y Colombina, MS 5-I-43; Le Jardin 1501 – Antoine Vérard, *Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de Rhetorique* (Paris [1501]).

he recognized the music of composers hardly ever mentioned in other musical sources, names such as Mureau, Raoullin, Tinctoris and Fedé – it looks as if his view of contemporary France was shaped by a recent stay in Orléans, Blois or Tours.<sup>13</sup> For Mureau's chansons, it is in all cases possible to recover the missing texts with the help of other French musical or poetical sources. This is a lucky situation, because the poems hold the key to much of the distinguishing traits of Mureau.

Gilles Mureau (c.1442-1512) spent his long career in the service of the Notre Dame cathedral of Chartres. The cathedral, a royal institution situated in a region that since the thirteenth century had belonged to the crown and had close connections to the Orléans region, was served by one of the big musical organizations in France. The confraternity of *horarii et matutinarum Ecclesiae Carnotensis* (called the *heuriers*) was a body of 24 professional singers performing plainchant as well as polyphony, which can be compared to the *petit vicaires* at the Cambrai Cathedral.<sup>14</sup> Mureau probably started as a choirboy, and in 1462 he was mentioned as a *heurier*, in 1467 he was appointed *maître de grammaire* at the cathedral's *maîtrise*, and before 1472 he was installed as a canon.<sup>15</sup> He kept these posts for the remainder of his life, occasionally sharing the teaching of the boys with other musicians and for short periods functioning as the cathedral's organist, but his role as administrator of the *maîtrise* seems to have been permanent. His position in the clerical world was apparently very secure. At an early date he appears to have become quite affluent with land holdings in the areas near Blois and Bourges. An additional source of income was that he took in sons of noblemen to board and look after in order to teach them grammar and the art of performing polyphonic music, "et aussi les enseigner et monstrer dechant aux mieulx qu'il pourra", all agreed to in written contracts with the fathers.<sup>16</sup> The prosperity resulting from his many activities made it possible for him to embark on two major journeys. From March to October 1483 he visited Jerusalem, and again the following year he was away for half a year on a pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostella.

This busy life did not offer much incentive to compose new music after the early years of his career – for example, no sacred music is preserved from his hand – and music formed only a part of his professional life. His talents apparently unfolded just as much in the arts of language and words and in connection with his administrative capacities as a canon of the cathedral. The main threads through his life were the roles of singer (*heurier*) and teacher (*maître de grammaire*). He built his career on an early success in these roles, and his four surviving ascribed secular compositions can with great probability be placed during his formative years, before his position as canon became secure. And we have to ask if the texts and music of his songs were designed as efforts to acquire approval (cultural standing) as well as attracting paying pupils among the nobility and bourgeoisie of the city.

13 For a more detailed description, see Christoffersen, *The Complete Works of Gilles Mureau*, at <http://chanson-niers.pwch.dk/Mureau/03Work.html>.

14 Cf. Nicole Goldine, 'Les heuriers-matiniers de la cathédrale de Chartres jusqu'au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Organisation liturgique et musicale', *Revue de Musicologie* 54 (1968) pp. 161-175.

15 All information concerning the biography of Mureau comes from André Pirro, 'Gilles Mureau, chanoine de Chartres' in Walther Lott, Helmuth Osthoff & Werner Wolffheim (eds.), *Musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge, Festschrift für Johannes Wolf zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstage*, Berlin 1929, pp. 163-167.

16 A contract dated 1471 between "Robert de Garenne, seigneur de Saugis" and "Gilles Mureau, maistre des enfants du cuer de l'Eglise de Chartres" is reprinted in Abbé A. Clerval, *Les écoles de Chartres au moyen du V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Mémoires de la Société archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir, Tome XI) Chartres 1895, pp. 428-429.

The texts of his chansons show him as a competent follower of the literary *l'art de rhétorique*, of the skills of poetic role-play and of the complicated rules of versification cultivated in courtly circles. Let us start with *Grace attendant*, in which the text as well as the ascription in Florence 176 gives evidence to Mureau's authorship. The initial letters of the lines in the poem, a bergerette with a four-line refrain, form the acrostic GILLES MUREAU; the rime syllables are in the first section (refrain and *tierce*) "-mes/-mais" and "-usé" in the pattern ABBA, while the contrasting second section (*couplets*) uses "-oureux" and "-ame", CDCD.<sup>17</sup> These rimes combined with the acrostic place the poem securely in the literary sphere. While most of the poems used for music depend on perfectly satisfactory rimes (*rimes suffisantes*), a *rhétoriqueur* prefers *rimes riches*, which can be graded from *rimes léonines* to a still higher complexity in diverse forms of *rimes équivoques*.<sup>18</sup> Mureau's rimes in this poem belong to the *léonines* by showing identity in three elements each. This fashionable love complaint has everything one might expect from a *maître de grammaire* in charge of the children of the nobility – a veritable visiting card of a poet-musician:

Grace attendant ou la mort pour tous mes	Waiting for grace or death as my reward
J'ay trop esté d'esperance abusé,	I have too often been abused by hope,
Labuer en vain j'ay mon temps en usé,	on labour in vain have I used my time,
Leure maldis que tant ame jamays.	miserable ever to love so much.
En grant peril est ung povre amoureux	An unlucky lover is in great peril
S'il se submet au danger de tel dame:	if he submits to the danger of such a lady:
Mourir pourroit chetif et langoureux	He may die frail and longing
Vingt foiz et plus sans que pitié l'entame.	twenty times or more without her being bothered by pity.
Riens n'y vault sens ne servir d'entremes,	Nothing, neither wisdom nor being amusing,
Estre subtil ne faire le rusé	nor cunning nor guile
A non chaloir, car g'y ay trop musé.	makes any difference, for I have wasted enough time on this.
Viengne qui peut, je vivray desormais	Whatever happens, I shall live hereafter
grace attendant ou la mort pour tous mes.	waiting for grace or death as my reward.

(Florence 176, fols. 46<sup>v</sup>-48, and Le Jardin 1501, fol. 96)

Acrostic GILLES MUREAU

The music of *Grace attendant* is for sure Mureau's most ambitious effort. The song is composed for four voices in the first section, for two high voices, a tenor and a low contratenor, and for three high voices in the second section (see *examples 1a-b*). This layout is an original working out of the principle of contrast characteristic of the bergerette.<sup>19</sup>

17 Exactly the stringent formation of the rimes permits the reconstruction of the original appearance of the poem. It survived to be printed in Le Jardin 1501, fol. 96, where the last lines of the *tierce* (lines 11-12) have been exchanged and revised: "Viengne qui peut, je vivray desormais / En non chaloir, car g'y ay trop musé", which produces a misleading acrostic: GILLES MUREUE; cf. the faulty edition of the song in E. Droz et G. Thibault, *Poètes et musiciens de xv<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1924, pp. 43-48.

18 See for example the lists under the heading "Et premièrement une règle de moz léonines et plains sonans et esquivoques et presonans" in the anonymous treatise *Les Règles de la Seconde Rhétorique* from the early fifteenth century in Langlois, *Recueil*, p. 15.

19 It is not a three-part song with a "fragmentary added 4th voice" as stated by Richard Freedman in 'Mureau, Gilles' in *Grove Music Online* (accessed May 2011).

The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron

[Superius]

1. Gra - ce\_ac - ten - dant ou la mort  
3. Riens n'y vault sens ne ser - vir

[Superius 2]

1. Gra - ce\_ac - ten - dant ou la mort  
3. Riens n'y vault sens ne ser - vir

Tenor

1. Gra - ce\_ac - ten - dant ou la mort  
3. Riens n'y vault sens ne ser - vir

Contratenor

1. Gra - ce\_ac - ten - dant ou la mort  
3. Riens n'y vault sens ne ser - vir

7

pour tous mes, J'ay trop es -  
d'en - tre - mes, Es - tre sub -

pour tous mes, J'ay trop es -  
d'en - tre - mes, Es - tre sub -

pour tous mes, J'ay trop es -  
d'en - tre - mes, Es - tre sub -

pour tous mes, J'ay trop es -  
d'en - tre - mes, Es - tre sub -

Example 1a, Gilles Mureau, *Grace attendant* (Florence 176, fols. 46<sup>v</sup>-48), bars 1-13.

Here the contrast is not brought about by a change of mensuration, rhythmical ductus or modal colouring, but by vocal instrumentation. Two worlds of sound are juxtaposed, both quite new in the secular music of the 1460s: a four-part voice disposition (a group of boys on the upper parts and two grown-up singers) contrasting with three equal high parts (three boys solo?).

The boys of the *maîtrise* were in demand as musical performers outside the cathedral, not only in religious institutions but in noble houses as well; *Grace attendant* could very well be composed for some noble entertainment. The gifts that the boys received in recompenses for their performances had, according to the decision of the chapter, to be shared between the master of music and the master of grammar, the latter being responsible for the boys' expenses.<sup>20</sup>

*Grace attendant* is composed with careful regard to the words in all four voices. It is easy to place the text in such a way that the words either are pronounced simultaneously or in turn in the parts without disturbing the clarity too much, and the composing with four parts is handled very skilfully (*example 1a*). In the *bergerette*'s second section, the tenor and contratenor drop out, and a new, third superius part enters. The second superius takes over the tenor functions, while the new voice is placed between the first

20 Clerval, *Les écoles*, p. 430.

The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron

[Superius] 44

2a. En grant pe - ril est ung pov -  
 2b. *Mou* - rir pour - roit che - tif et

[Superius 2]

2a. En grant pe - ril est ung pov -  
 2b. *Mou* - rir pour - roit che - tif et

[Superius 3]

2a. En grant pe - ril est ung pov -  
 2b. *Mou* - rir pour - roit che - - - tif et

52

re\_a - - - mou - reux *S'il* se sub - met au  
 lan - - - gou - reux *Vingt* foiz et plus sans

re\_a - - - mou - reux *S'il* se sub-met  
 lan - - - gou - reux *Vingt* foiz et plus

re\_a - - - mou - reux *S'il* se sub - met au dan - ger  
 lan - - - gou - reux *Vingt* foiz et plus sans que pi -

Example 1b, Gilles Mureau, *Grace attendant* (Florence 176, fols. 46<sup>v</sup>-48), bars 44-58.

and the second. This brings along some *fauxbourdon*-like passages, especially in bars 52-55, which form a nice contrast to the sound of the first section, and in bars 55-60 all three participate in a free unison canon on a triadic motive – the second superius speeding up the activity (*example 1b*).

Poems intended for musical setting were traditionally made in such a way that it seemed natural in the rondeau to repeat the first half of the refrain after the short *couplet* and the complete refrain after the *tierce*, and likewise the complete first section at the end of the *bergerette*. When these forms became popular as poetry for reading or reciting without music during the fifteenth century (Christine de Pisan, Charles d'Orléans and others), repeats were often reduced to a single line or the first words (*rentrement*) only, which had to be integrated into the discourse of the preceding formal section; accordingly, Charles d'Orléans distinguished between *rondeaux* and *chansons* (rondeaux made for music).<sup>21</sup> The literary ambitions of Mureau are clearly in evidence – he did work and experiment with the form. In *Tant fort me tarde* (see below) the sense of the refrain does not permit a repeat of the first three lines as a unit, while the first line alone constitutes a satisfactory 'short refrain' after the *couplet*; nothing hinders a complete repeat of the refrain at the end of the song. Conversely, in *Grace attendant* it is the music that resists a repeat of the complete first section at the *bergerette*'s end, because this would result in a quite implausible ending on the mode's fifth degree and with a third in the final chord. The solution is again the 'short refrain' of the first line only, that is to say, that the refrain has to stop in bar 10 on the word "mes" on the mode's finalis with the fifth sounding in the second superius. This brings a natural completion to the music as well as to the sense of the poem (cf. *example 1a*).

21 Cf. Daniel Calvez, 'La Structure du rondeau: mise au point', *The French Review* 55 (1982) pp. 461-470.

The artful constructed poem, the use of contrasts by vocal instrumentation and the ingenious use of a 'short refrain' at the end of the song are not the only ambitious traits in *Grace attendant*. The song may, just like *Je ne fais plus* (see below), have left the composer's hand notated in *fa*-clefs, that is, notated without letter-clefs, but in formations of *fa*-signs (or flats) alone – three or two flats to each voice are typical. This means that the songs were notated not at a fixed pitch, but could be performed at any convenient pitch. The *fa*-clef notation seems to have been used by composers around Binchois and in Central France in the 1450s and the early 1460s (Ockeghem, Barbingant, Le Rouge). Knowledge of the notation soon faded away, and the songs were then in later sources transmitted in fixed-pitch notation.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that Mureau in these high-range songs made use of a notational praxis, which was relatively well known in his region, in order to make the songs performable for other singers than groups with boys. Of course, another possibility could be that he imitated the notation of songs by older composers, which at that time circulated in fixed notation including 'superfluous' flats, in order to gain some additional status. In short, it looks as if Mureau with *Grace attendant* pulled all stops to show off his credentials.

The two other poems in the same vein, *Tant fort me tarde* and *Je ne fais plus*, take the art of the *rhétoriciens* a step further as they both use *rimes équivoques*, artful rimes where the same words or syllables are repeated as rime words, looking or sounding alike, but with different meanings. Characteristic of this are the rimes of *Je ne fais plus*, in which the first set of rime words sounds: "escris / escri / descri / et cris / acris / escri / precris / qu'Antecris", while the second rime says alone: "plains / plains ..." – a quite virtuosic performance. In addition, this song is cast in the rather uncommon form of a *rondeau tercet layé* with only five lines in its refrain – usually short lines are interpolated into the four or five lines of the refrain, but here we find only three long lines, handled by a very sure poetic hand. The poem can be retrieved from a contemporary, or even slightly older, French source, Florence 2794, where the song appears anonymously, but with a complete text. The utterly desolate content of the poem matches the rather pretentious formal layout. Its focus is on the act of writing poetry itself, from which the author now will abstain, and it might be written in a female voice. But who is the man to whom the author wishes to complain "il est a naistre, cil a qui je m'en plains" – he is not born yet? Probably just a piece of literary artifice evoking the Second Coming of Christ as an antithesis to those "more treacherous than Antichrist":

Je ne fais plus, je ne dis ne escri,	I do nothing more, I do not speak nor write,
en mes escri	in my writings
l'en trouvera mes regretz et mes plains	you will find my regrets and complaints
de larmes plains,	filled with tears,
Ou, le moins mal que je puis, les descri.	or I, the least poorly I can, describe them.
Toute ma joye est de souppirs et cris	All my joy has by sighs and cries
en dueil acris;	grown into pain;
il est a naistre, cil a qui je m'en plains.	he is still to be born, he to whom I will complain.

22 Cf. my article '*Prenez sur moi vostre exemple*: The 'clefless' notation or the use of *fa*-clefs in chansons of the fifteenth century by Binchois, Barbingant, Ockeghem and Josquin', *Danish Yearbook of Musicology* 37 (2009) pp. 13-38, and the detailed commentaries to the editions of the Mureau's chansons.

## The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron

[Superius]

1.4. Je ne fais plus, je ne ditz  
3. Se mes sens ont au - cuns doulz

Tenor

1.4. Je ne fais plus, je ne ditz  
3. Se mes sens ont au - cuns doulz

Contra

1.4. Je ne fais plus, je ne ditz  
3. Se mes sens ont au - cuns doulz

Example 2, Gilles Mureau, *Je ne fais plus* (Florence 2794, fols. 50<sup>v</sup>-51), bars 1-9.

*Je ne fais plus, je ne dis ne écris,  
en mes écris  
l'en trouvera mes regretz et mes plains.*

I do nothing more, I do not speak nor write,  
in my writings  
you will find my regrets and complaints.

*Se mes sens ont aucuns doulz motz écris,  
il[s] sont prescrist;  
je passe temps par desers et par plains,  
et la me plains  
d'aucunes gens plus traittres qu'Antecrix.*

If my mind ever did write any sweet words,  
they are damned;  
I pass time in abandonment and grievance,  
and there I grieve  
that some people are more treacherous than Antichrist.

*Je ne fais plus, je ne dis ne écris,  
en mes écris  
l'en trouvera mes regretz et mes plains  
de larmes plains,  
Ou, le moins mal que je puis, les descriis.*

I do nothing more, I do not speak nor write,  
in my writings  
you will find my regrets and complaints  
filled with tears,  
or I, the least poorly I can, describe them.

(Florence 2794, fols. 50<sup>v</sup>-51)

*Je ne fais plus* was Mureau's only international *hit* song. It appears in ten French and Italian musical sources dated before c.1500, and in at least seven sources from the sixteenth century. After around 1490 the scribes began to attribute this highly successful song to composers of greater fame as Antoine Busnoys and Loyset Compere, probably mainly because Mureau at that time was forgotten as a composer. The lyrical musical setting adheres closely to the text. It is varied with a declamatory first section and a more animated second. The tessitura is high with the tenor occasionally crossing above the superius. It is perfect for boys' voices, but it was like *Grace attendant* probably originally notated in *fa*-clefs making it performable at any pitch. A characteristic trait of Mureau's music is his ability to make the upper voice seemingly 'float' upon the web of the lower voices. *Je ne fais plus* is a particularly successful example of this, and it may be one of the reasons for the song's lasting popularity. This furthermore calls attention to a musical trait, to which he apparently resorted quite often, namely to exploit the driving force of the traditional cadence configuration with suspension and resolution in order to set off or animate a melodic development long before the arrival of the phrase's ending. The memorable opening of *Je ne fais plus* can stand as a sort of paradigm of this technique, and already in bars 6-7 on it is used to energize the flow after the calm beginning (see *example 2*).

Mureau's rondeau cinquain *Tant fort me tarde ta venue* appears uniquely in Florence 176 under his name and has text incipits only for the song's two sections (fols. 71<sup>v</sup>-73). However, as these incipits are in complete agreement with the setting by Philippe Basiron in the Laborde chansonnier (fols. 34<sup>v</sup>-35), which has the complete poem, it is easy to restore Mureau's song. Notwithstanding that Mureau's setting is preserved exclusively in an Italian source, which must be dated later than the 'Loire Valley' group of chansonniers, it is most likely the original setting. The music is quite ordinary in the style of the 1460s. It may be an early work, while *Grace attendant* and *Je ne fais rien* probably date from around 1470, just a bit too late to be included in the repertory of the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. It is in a 'normal' tessitura (B-c'') with tenor and contratenor in the same range, and the contratenor often crosses above the tenor and takes the fifth at several cadences. The sound of the setting is quite old-fashioned, even if the upper voices abound in parallel thirds and sixths. All three voices relate to the text, and the setting is varied with alternating declamatory and melismatic passages involving sequences in canonic imitation; it ends in a *fauxbourdon* cadence.

It is most likely that Mureau is the author of this artful poem. In some ways, for example in the theme of keeping back what one really wants to say, it appears like a preparation for the much more concentrated poem in *Je ne fais plus*. It is clearly in a female voice, and its tone is intimate, addresses a male of equal social standing by the use of "ta (tu)" and "mon plus qu'ame". It is in *rimes équivoque* with the rime words "(-)nue" and "(-)ame", and its construction demands a one-line refrain following the *couplet*, not the half refrain as is usual in poems made for music. The sense does not permit a stop in the refrain after three lines. In the musical setting, the first line alone with its cadence to the mode's fifth degree makes a fine, varied bridge to the *tierce*.

Tant fort me tarde ta venue pour compter ma desconvenue, mon plus qu'ame, que sur mon ame je ne prens plaisir en nul ame qui soit aujourduy soubz la nue.	Your appearance so strongly holds me back from explaining my disappointment, my more than beloved, that by my soul I do not get pleasure from any love that today might be found under the sky.
De joye mon plaisir se desnue, si douleur t'est puis souvenue; mille foiz le jour te reclame:	My pleasure strips off any joy, if you still bring back the pain; thousand times a day I cry to you:
Tant fort me tarde ta venue.	Your appearance so strongly holds me back.
Or est ma sante certes nue, je ne scay quel est devenue, desconfort m'assault que point n'ame et me veult mectre soubz la lame; je suis mort, s'il me continue.	Certainly my sanity is gone, I do not know what has happened to it, worry assaults me that (he) does not at all love (me) and will put me below the tombstone; I shall die, if this continues for me.
Tant fort me tarde ta venue pour compter ma desconvenue, mon plus qu'ame, que sur mon ame je ne prens plaisir en nul ame qui soit aujourduy soubz la nue. (Laborde, fols. 34 <sup>v</sup> -35)	Your appearance so strongly holds me back from explaining my disappointment, my more than beloved, that by my soul I do not get pleasure from any love that today might be found under the sky.

It is noteworthy that the later user of the MS Florence 176 recognized the music and added Mureau's name, when he looked at three settings of poems, which were more ambitious literarily than the usual run of polyphonic chansons. If he had not remembered them, two of the three would have remained anonymous in the repertory. Maybe the text incipits triggered his memory, and the ascriptions relate to the poems as well as the music.

I am well aware that my interpretation of the achievements of Gilles Mureau includes several improvable assumptions. The sources keep quiet about many circumstances. As it is well-known, the identification of the composer of a given song often depends on sheer luck as in the case of Mureau, and information on the authors of the poems is even more difficult to unearth. Here I confidently assume that Mureau wrote the poems as well as the music, because the story to tell would not be much different if I am wrong about this. If he simply set music to poems obtained from others or delivered from patrons, his knowledge of and involvement with contemporary poetic practice would make a just as interesting story. And, with a look forward, if Basiron did not know of Mureau's setting of *Tant fort me tarde*, then his two reworkings of the topic, and the radical different result he ended up with, would again be just as interesting as in my story.

The double role of poet and composer matches the impression of an industrious young man eager to advance his prospects inside the church by impressing the secular powers active in the cathedral's surroundings. In Mureau's music, it is remarkable that three of his songs use a very high tessitura as if they were explicitly destined for boys' voices.<sup>23</sup> This seems relevant considering Mureau's occupation as a teacher and performer with the boys at the Chartres *maîtrise*. Still more characteristic is his tendency to declaim the words clearly in tranquil note values for longer stretches and preferably in more than one voice at the same time. His concern for the intelligibility of the words in performance and his interest in the use of sound as a compositional tool seem modern and forward-looking on the background of contemporary tendencies and may have influenced younger chanson composers. However, this is to some degree contradicted by such old-fashioned traits as his use of a high contratenor crossing above the tenor at cadences, and the tendency to parallelism between voices, or passages in *fauxbourdon*-style.

### *Philippe Basiron*

Gilles Mureau was on the fast career track to a secure position in the clerical hierarchy, and he may have appeared as a role model for a striving young *magister puerum*. Philippe Basiron (c.1448-1491) was a few years younger than Mureau and had a career parallel to his, but probably not as successful. Philippe Basiron was in October 1458 admitted as a choirboy in the ducal chapel in Bourges along with his younger brother Pierron (d. 1529).<sup>24</sup> The Sainte-Chapelle of the Bourges Palace was constructed between 1392 and 1405 as the private chapel of Duke Jean de Berry. Its personnel included 13 canons, headed by the treasurer and the cantor, 13 chaplains, 13 vicars, and 6 choirboys. This quite tight organization had according to its statutes wide-ranging musical duties in performing polyphony on a daily basis, with important roles bestowed on the organ and the organist.

23 In addition to the two already mentioned, also the rondeau quatrain *Pensez y se le povez faire*.

24 All information concerning the biography of Basiron comes from Paula Higgins, 'Tracing the Careers of Late Medieval Composers. The Case of Philippe Basiron of Bourges', *Acta musicologica* 62 (1990) pp. 1-28.

The reception at the same time of two talented choirboys, who probably had begun their education in another institution, must have been an event of some importance to the daily musical work. The chapter bought a keyboard instrument, a *manichordum*, in 1463 for Philippe, still a choirboy, in order to further his studies of counterpoint and his ability to play the organ; this occurred shortly after the composer Guillaume Faugues' three-months stint in 1462 as master of the choirboys. Starting in 1464 Basiron began to assist in the teaching of the younger choirboys, and gradually he took over a greater share of the master's duties. He obtained the rank of *vicarius* in 1467, and finally, after some complications he was in 1469 elected to the position of *magister puerum*, which the chapter had promised him at an earlier date. In January 1474 a new *magister puerum* was installed. Lack of sources prevents us from knowing anything of Basiron's whereabouts and activities during the years between 1474 and 1487. At the end of the 1480s Basiron appears as occupying a house and garden in Bourges, which he possessed as part of his vicariate in the church Saint-Pierre-le-Guillard, a position affiliated with the Sainte-Chapelle. He died just before the end of May 1491, and his position and house was transferred to his younger brother Johannes, *capellanus* at the Sainte-Chapelle.

Even if the situation of Basiron does not appear to be flourishing at the end of his life, he does seem to have enjoyed the protection and appreciation from powerful men in his surroundings. When compelling the chapter of the Sainte-Chapelle to fulfil its promises of the post as *magister puerum*, he was able to invoke alternative prospects of entering the service of clericals like the cardinal of Angers, Jean Balue, or the archbishop of Bourges, Jean Coeur, both magnates close to the king; and in another controversy with the chapter over a canonry and prebend in 1471, King Louis XI intervened on the side of Basiron.<sup>25</sup> Exactly during these years Basiron had created a name for himself as a chanson composer. Four of his songs found their way into the original layer of the Laborde chansonnier, and three of them can be found in the Wolfenbüttel chansonnier.

The Wolfenbüttel scribe in fact seems to have had a weak spot for the music of Basiron. In the planning of the chansonnier, he had first to make the initial letters of the first 13 songs (12 plus Frye's *Ave regina celerum* added as the opening piece) spell out the name of the receiver, a royal secretary, in the form of an acrostic, "A Estiene Petit".<sup>26</sup> As soon as he had finished this closely defined job, he entered two songs by Basiron (fols. 13<sup>v</sup>-17) followed a few pages later on by a third one (fols. 20<sup>v</sup>-22) – thereby displaying a striking interest in his music. Furthermore, it is conceivable that some of the songs placed in between or after the songs by Basiron might be ascribed to him as well. Basiron's name does not originally appear in the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. Just like it was the case with Mureau, the three songs under Basiron's name in Laborde would have remained anonymous, if not the so-called "Index-Scribe II" had recognized them as his works and added his name during the finishing of Laborde in the atelier of the scribe of Florence 2794 and his successors around 1480, a workshop with close connections with the French

25 Higgins, *Tracing*, pp. 7-11.

26 Cf. David Fallows, "Trained and immersed in all musical delights': Towards a New Picture of Busnoys', in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, Oxford 1999, pp. 21-50 (at pp. 41-43 and 49-50); Alden, *Songs, Scribes*, pp. 188-206; *idem*, 'Ung Petit cadeau: Verbal and Visual Play in the Wolfenbüttel Chansonnier', in Fabrice Fitch and Jacobijn Kiel (eds.), *Essays on Renaissance Music in Honour of David Fallows: "Bon jour, bon mois et bonne estrenne"*, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 33-43.

court chapel.<sup>27</sup> The fourth chanson in Laborde, *Tant fort me tarde*, Basiron's most successful song, surfaces in an Italian source transmission, where it is ascribed to "Phelippon" in the slightly later Ferrarese chansonnier, Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, MS 2856.<sup>28</sup>

On the whole, Basiron gives the impression of being well integrated in a milieu, where it was of value to be able to appreciate and participate in poetry and music. During the years around 1470 he was well regarded by clerical and secular powers, and the scribes of the Wolfenbüttel and Laborde chansonniers assumed that his music was of interest to their patrons – and he was still a very young man, only around twenty years of age. His songs do indeed reflect an attention to artful poetry, and moreover they show an even stronger interest in the music of his older colleagues and in trying to sharpen his own powers on it and in developing the musical material.<sup>29</sup>

*Nul ne la telle, sa maistresse* may well be one of his earliest songs, and it can be found in three of the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers. It is a charming bergerette, exuberant in its adoration of the "maistresse". Its theme as well as its music has been developed from a direct quote of the widely circulated rondeau *Je ne vis oncques*, which was performed at the famous *Banquet de Faisan* hosted by the Burgundian duke Philippe le Bon in Lille in 1454. *Je ne vis oncques* appears with an ascription to Binchois in the Nivelles chansonnier (anonymous in Laborde and Wolfenbüttel), while it is ascribed to Du Fay in the Italian manuscript, Montecassino, Biblioteca dell'Abbazia, MS 871. The ascription to the Burgundian musician Binchois seems most convincing, and it was apparently under his name that the song circulated in the Loire Valley.<sup>30</sup>

The quote of both text and music from Binchois' opening line occurs in the second line of the bergerette's first *couplet* (line 6, see below). The poet moreover carefully paraphrased the first line of Binchois' first *couplet*, which is sung to the same music as the opening line, as his second line in the second *couplet* (line 8). In this way, both times the musical quote is sung, it is with words identical to or very close to the words belonging with Binchois' music (see the lines in bold in the poems below). For the remaining lines in the *couplets* he has found rimes of the same quality as heard in Binchois, *rime équivoque*, "me semble / ensemble"; and the same quality is maintained in the refrain and *tierce* with *rimes léonines*. The concept of an 'I' and his heart who together praise the lady is clearly adopted from *Je ne vis oncques*. Its tone is possibly a bit more secular than the obvious allusions to the Virgin Mary in Binchois' song; but maybe the musical quote was meant to convey a remembrance of the spiritual tone of Binchois' song.

27 Cf. Peter Woetmann Christoffersen, 'The French musical manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ms. 2794, and the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers', available at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/NOTES/Flo2794art.html> (html- and PDF-formats).

28 Paula Higgins has resolved the questions surrounding different forms of Basiron's name (P. Basiron, Phelippon, Philippon de Bourges) in the sources, cf. Higgins, 'Tracing', pp. 17-21.

29 Typical are his two arrangements or double chansons for four voices based on the superius from the rondeau *D'un autre amer mon cuer s'abesseroit* by Ockeghem, which appear in a Florentine manuscript from the 1490s, Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q17, as part of a series also including an anonymous three-part arrangement of Ockeghem's superius. Also interesting in this respect are the two rondeaux, *Puis que si bien m'est advenu* and *De m'esjouir plus n'ay puissance*, which stand side by side in Laborde (fols. 20<sup>v</sup>-21<sup>v</sup>). Basiron's name appears above the last one only, but they evidently are connected by the use of similar material; see further Christoffersen, *The chansons of Basiron's youth*. Basiron also participated in the highly competitive game of composing cantus firmus masses, among them his *Missa L'homme armé*, probably dating from the early 1470s.

30 Cf. the discussion of the sources at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH189.html>.

Nul ne l'a telle, sa maistresse,  
mon cuer, que vous et moy avons,  
se bien considerer savons  
les biens dont elle a grant largesse.

Au vray dire ce qu'il me semble,  
**je ne viz oncques la pareille.**

Tant belle et tant bonne est ensemble  
**que plus la voiz, plus me merveille.**

De son maintien regardons qu'esse,  
affin que nous parachevons  
cest bruit si grant que nous devons  
dire en tous lieux sans point de cesse:

Nul ne l'a telle, sa maistresse,  
mon cuer, que vous et moy avons,  
se bien considerer savons  
les biens dont elle a grant largesse.<sup>31</sup>

(Laborde, fols. 13<sup>v</sup>-15)

**Je ne vis oncques la pareille**  
de vous, ma gracieuse dame,  
car vo beaulté est, sur mon ame,  
sur toutes aultres nonparaille.

**En vous regardant m'esmerveille**  
et dis: "Qu'est cecy Nostre Dame?"

Je ne vis *oncques la pareille*  
*de vous, ma gracieuse dame.*

Vostre tresgrant douceur esveille  
mon esperit et mon oeil entame,  
mon cuer donc puet dire sans blasma,  
puis qu'a vous servir s'apareille.

Je ne vis *oncques la pareille*  
*de vous, ma gracieuse dame,*  
*car vo beaulté est, sur mon ame,*  
*sur toutes aultres nonparaille.*<sup>32</sup>

(Nivelle, fols. 51<sup>v</sup>-52)

There cannot be any doubt that the poem was created by the composer, and that the music already then was at its planning stage. The musical quote is placed with great care in order to give it maximum effect. The *couplets* open in a subdued homorhythmic declamation of "Au vray dire ce qu'il me semble" (To tell in truth what appears to me), which is brought to a cadence on F (bars 29-40). Here the contratenor drops out and intones Binchois' ear-catching opening line from the note *d*: "je ne viz oncques la pareille" (I have never seen her equal), which is then imitated in unison and at the octave by tenor and superius – the only three-part imitation in the song (bars 40-44, see *example 3*). The continuation of the musical quote in the upper voice is supported by a *fauxbourdon*-like texture in the tenor and the high contratenor, the last singing in parallel fourths below the superius. This is quickly replaced by staggered descending triads in all voices; as we shall see, this is something of a trademark for Basiron. Otherwise, the setting is varied and with extensive melismas at the end of lines. There is not much further imitation, only a short snatch of octave canon, and *fauxbourdon* progressions seem to be the composer's favourite way of cadencing; accordingly the song's contratenor lies above the tenor in

31 Translation: No one has such a woman, as his mistress, / as you and I have, my heart, / if we know well to consider / the virtues she has in abundance. // To tell in truth what appears to me, / I have never seen her equal. / She is all at once so beautiful and so good / that the more I see her, the more I marvel. // Let us regard her manner as it is, / that we can enhance / her grand reputation, which we ought to / spread everywhere and without cease: // No one has such a woman, as his mistress, / as you and I have, my heart, / if we know well to consider / the virtues she has in abundance.

32 Translation: I have never seen the equal / of you, my gracious lady, / for your beauty is, by my soul, / by all others unrivalled. // When I see you, I wonder / and say: Could this one be Our Lady? / I have never seen the equal / of you, my gracious lady. // Your perfect sweetness rouses / my spirit and blinds my eye, / my heart then can say so without guilt, / because it is ready to serve you. // I have never seen the equal / of you, my gracious lady, / for your beauty is, by my soul, / by all others unrivalled.

The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron

a

1.4. Je ne vis oncques la pa-reil-le  
2a. En vous re-gar-dant m'es-mer-veil-le

b

ble, je ne viz oncques la pa-rail-ble  
que plus la voix, plus me mer-veil-

Example 3a-b, Gilles Binchois, *Je ne vis oncques* (Nivelle, fols. 51<sup>v</sup>-52), upper voice, bars 1-5 (a);  
Philippe Basiron, *Nul ne l'a telle* (Laborde, fols. 13<sup>v</sup>-15), bars 40-50 (b).

many passages. The song's formal layout conforms perfectly to the conventions of *bergerette*-settings in the Busnoys generation. It shows the clear contrast between the *refrain/terce* section and the *couplets* by means of mensuration, *tempus perfectum* followed by *tempus imperfectum diminutum*. Furthermore, the *seconda volta* of the *couplets* ends in a glittering flourish like many other songs of this type from the early 1460s. While the form seems up-to-date, the sound and technique of the song appear a bit dated. In this song, we discover that a young composer in the 1460s still found the techniques of the Binchois generation attractive and useful. However, in comparison with his admired model, his effort fades somewhat; it seems far from Binchois' technical maturity and precision of expression.<sup>33</sup>

Mureau's *Tant fort me tarde* apparently stimulated Basiron to try his hand on creating something like it. The result was two chansons – with quite different results. The version of the story of their genesis, which to me seems the most plausible, goes as follows: The poetic text of *Je le scay bien ce qui m'avint*, a rondeau quatrain, was created as a response to or a continuation of the rondeau cinquain *Tant fort me tarde*.<sup>34</sup> Both poems use (or try to use) the highly literary form of *rimes équivoques*. *Je le scay bien* not only reuses one of the rime words, “ame”, of *Tant fort me tarde* (highlighted in bold in the poems below), the opening words of the first couplet (“De joye”), and the crucial formulations of the *terce* (“soubz la lame; / je suis mort” – “car il est mort soubz la lame”, all in bold), but it also transforms the other rime word “venue” (accentuated in italics below) into compounds of “-vint” and thereby moves the situation from something happening or about to happen into a contemplation of the past.

33 The French-Italian chansonnier Seville, Biblioteca Capitulare y Colombina, MS 5-I-43 transmits an anonymous *bergerette* with text incipits only, *Le bien fet*, which is an exact parallel to *Nul ne l'a telle* as regards the use of a quotation of all three voices from the first line of *Je ne vis oncques* as its second line of music in the couplets (see further <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH556.html>). This song could be an early attempt at the theme of *Nul ne l'a telle* by Basiron. A more credible explanation may be that the relative success of *Nul ne l'a telle* inspired a colleague to try his hand at something similar.

34 The relationship between the two poems was first described by Paula Higgins in Higgins, ‘Tracing’, pp. 18-21.

Tant fort me tarde ta *venue*  
pour compter ma *desconvenue*,  
mon plus qu'**ame**, que sur mon **ame**  
je ne prens plaisir en nul **ame**  
qui soit aujourduy soubz la *nue*.

**De joye** mon plaisir se *desnue*,  
si douleur t'est puis *souvenue*;  
mille foiz le jour te **reclame**:

Tant fort me tarde ta *venue*.

Or est ma sante certes *nue*,  
je ne scay quel est *devenue*,  
desconfort m'assault que point n'**ame**  
et me veult mettre **soubz la lame**;  
je **suis mort**, s'il me *continue*.

Tant fort *me tarde ta venue*  
*pour compter ma desconvenue*,  
*mon plus qu'ame, que sur mon ame*  
*je ne prens plaisir en nul ame*  
*qui soit aujourduy soubz la nue.*<sup>35</sup>

(Laborde, fols. 34<sup>v</sup>-35)

Je le scay bien ce qui m'avint;  
  
dernier jour que vous vy, **madame**,  
je eu tant de dueil que, par mon **ame**,  
je ne sceus que mon cueur *devint*.

**De joye** onc puis ne me souvint  
  
et n'ay pas tort, par Nostre **Dame**:

Je le scay bien *ce qui m'avint*  
*dernier jour que vous vy, madame.*

Oncques puis a moy ne revint

se ne l'avez, Dieu en ait l'**ame**,  
car **il est mort soubz la lame**,  
il estoit bon des ans a *vingt*.

Je le scay bien *ce qui m'avint*;

*dernier jour que vous vy, madame,*  
*je eu tant de dueil que, par mon ame,*  
*je ne sceus que mon cueur devint.*<sup>36</sup>

(Wolfenbüttel, fols. 20<sup>v</sup>-22)

The poetic voice of *Tant fort me tarde* fears for its mental health, and feels that the beloved will put it “below the tombstone”, that it shall die, if the situation remains unchanged (as far as I can understand this opaque poem). In *Je le scay bien*, the poet’s heart is dead and lies “below the tombstone”; it had only twenty years of good life. Basiron was young when he wrote this poem, but we probably should not put too much weight on the “twenty years”, as the number was produced by the rime structure – but it is thought provoking, and fits into the chronology. The connections between the two poems are clear enough, but the differences in attitude are just as striking. The poet of *Tant fort me tarde* is bold, takes on a persona who addresses the beloved as “ta / tu” and “mon plus qu’ame”, which signals an equal social standing and an intimate relationship, and the persona is *female*. In sharp contrast, the voice of *Je le scay bien* is conventionally *male* and uses the standard courtly addresses of “vous” and “madame”, and in line 6 slides into the invocation of “Nostre Dame” (Our Lady – a reminiscence of Binchois’ *Je ne vis oncques?*).

The poetic voices we meet in these two poems are clearly different. The *maître de grammaire* from Chartres, Gilles Mureau, is a quite self-assured poet entering into the role-play of ambitious clerks and nobles, while the poet of the traditional love-complaint

35 Translation, see above, p. 224.

36 Translation: I know well what happened to me; / the last day I saw you, my lady, / I had such pain that I, by my soul, / did not know what became of my heart. // Never hereafter could I recall any joy, / and I am not in the wrong, by Our Lady, / I know well what happened to me / the last day I saw you, my lady. // It will never again come back to me, / if you do not catch it, God help the soul, / for it lies dead under the tombstone; / it had twenty good years. // I know well what happened to me; / the last day I saw you, my lady, / I had such pain that I, by my soul, / did not know what became of my heart.

*Je le scay bien*, who we can be quite sure is the young Basiron, depends heavily on his model in order to produce something workable. Basiron's musical setting of the poem or rather his general style may also show some affinity with Mureau's music. Basiron uses the same disposition of voices and ranges (superius and tenor an octave apart within a range of *Bb-d*"; Mureau: *B-c*"). However, there is no traces of Mureau's trademark, the use of the tension of cadential figuration at the beginning of phrases or along the road to push the music forward, neither do we at any substantial degree meet Mureau's care for adjusting the lower voices to the text. The aesthetic ideals of composing with stretches of canonic imitation and cadences in *fauxbourdon*-style are common to both musicians, but Basiron uses them to expand his phrases over longer stretches. His setting of the fourth line in *Je le scay bien* is characteristic; it goes on for 22 *brevis*-bars in straight octave canon between tenor and superius and really draws out the words. An ear-catching feature is the staggered play with *brevis*-values in triadic formations, which next are elaborated with the help of stepwise motion and differentiated note values, and in the process is chopped up in shorter segments.

Apparently quite satisfied with his efforts of matching Mureau's chanson with his own words and music, Basiron found that the ideas laid down in *Je le scay bien* could be reused to much greater effect in a setting of Mureau's original poem. Basiron's *Tant fort me tarde* uses the same voice disposition and overall range as *Je le scay bien*, but the ranges of the upper voices have been restricted to eight and nine notes respectively, and the mensuration is now *tempus imperfectum* without diminution. The elements from *Je le scay bien* that he develops are primarily the use of canonic imitation, the passage in staggered descending thirds and fifths, and the drawn out ending in short segments. Basiron has made it possible to respect Mureau's formal layout of the poem and to perform his own setting with a short one-line second *couplet*. But this is as far as his respecting the intended meaning of the poem reaches; his setting seems rather like a travesty of a lovesick courtly song.

The octave canon between the upper voices is here explored to a much higher degree. It covers most of the song except for the run-ups to the cadences. The canon is flexible, the distance between the voices is fluctuating between a *semibrevis* and a *brevis*. It starts with the tenor in the lead, but this is reversed in the third line, placing the upper voice in the lead until the end. The basic material of the song is presented in the first line: A triad on G is 'chopped up' with rests, and the resulting single notes and short segments sound in alternation or staggered and are followed by conjunct motion up and down (see *example 4a*).

This idea dominates the setting; four out of the five verse lines are set in this 'chopped' fashion. The second line (bars 11-23) starts like the first, but then prolongs the *semibreves* with dots, which have the effect of displacing the feeling of a steady beat. This effect is strongly supported by the contratenor, which enters in *minima*-syncopation already in bar 14 (see *example 4b*). The displacement of the beat and the staggered descending thirds create a floating, 'kaleidoscopic' passage, which is more effective than the corresponding passage in *Je le scay bien*; and it contrasts nicely with the following third verse line – the only one without 'chopping'.

The rondeau's second section starts as a variation of the song's opening, now with the superius in lead. A lively canon in complementary rhythms leads to the fifth and last line, in which the idea of 'chopping' is developed into a sort of antiphony between the upper

*The Youthful Chansons of Gilles Mureau and Philippe Basiron*

[Superius]

1.4. Tant fort me tar - de ta ve - nu -  
3. Or est ma san - te cer - tes nu -

Tenor

1.4. Tant fort me tar - de ta ve - nu -  
3. Or est ma san - te cer - tes nu -

Contra

1.4. Tant fort me tar - de ta ve - nu -  
3. Or est ma san - te cer - tes nu -

Example 4a, Philippe Basiron, *Tant fort me tarde* (Laborde, fols. 34<sup>v</sup>-35), bars 1-7.

11

e pour comp - ter ma des - con - ve - nu -  
e, je ne scay quel est de - ve - nu -

pour comp - ter ma des - con - ve - nu -  
je ne scay quel est de - ve - nu -

pour comp - ter ma des - con - ve - nu -  
je ne scay quel est de - ve - nu -

Example 4b, Philippe Basiron, *Tant fort me tarde* (Laborde, fols. 34<sup>v</sup>-35), bars 11-19.

voices. Here the contratenor has to function as the structural counter voice to the resulting monophony of the upper voices.

The canon technique displayed in this setting is extremely simple. Basiron has discovered that everything works out painlessly if he keeps the canonic voices within the range of a fifth (occasionally a sixth) and lets the contratenor take care of everything else below or in between the canonic duet. Passages in *fauxbourdon*-style, which characterized the sound in *Je le scay bien*, are mostly absent. The setting was made with close attention to the text. The ‘chopping’ patterns are made to fit the words: “Tant / fort / me tarde” (cf. *example 4a*) or “pour / compter / ma / desconfort” (*example 4b*) etc. The resulting effect of stammering and word repetitions can only have been designed to make fun of Mureau’s sincere love poem, turning it into a travesty of courtly affectation.

Basiron has transformed the poem by Mureau with his music. Mureau’s own setting was loyal to the poem, made a sensitive/intimate performance possible, if perhaps a bit conventional. Also Basiron’s derived poem in *Je le scay bien* took the meaning of Mureau’s poem at face value, even if the music here begins to get the upper hand in long self-growing phrases and canons. In Basiron’s setting of *Tant fort me tarde*, one has to take in the words of Mureau differently because of the musical setting, which is flamboyant, ironic and entertaining in a new way, making thoughts about ending “below the tombstone” appear somewhat stilted or comical. The music has here in a way grabbed the power.<sup>37</sup>

37 Maybe Basiron’s setting gained Mureau’s rondeau a place in the popular song repertory. Its refrain is paraphrased in a strophic song, which was printed in two popular song anthologies from the second decade of the fifteenth century. The popular song reuses its first line and many of the original words, but now the female speaker is rather bored with her lover, she cannot be content with only one lover; cf. Brian Jeffery, *Chanson Verse of the Early Renaissance* I-II, London 1971-76, vol. I, pp. 174-175.

Example 5, Caron, *Helas m'amour* (Laborde, fols. 12<sup>v</sup>-13), bars 30-38.

We can now try to track some of the impulses for this change. The stimulus to develop the techniques already explored in *Je le scay bien* was with great probability proffered by a highly successful song by an older composer, namely Caron's famous *Helas, que pourra devenir*, or alternately the impulse was propagated through a song by Johannes Tinctoris, *Helas, le bon temps que j'avoie*.

Caron was active during the period 1455-75 in Northern France,<sup>38</sup> and his *Helas* was well known in Basiron's region as is clearly confirmed by its appearance in the Dijon and Wolfenbüttel chansonniers. In Laborde, Caron's setting appears with the rondeau quatrain "Helas m'amour, ma tresparfaicte amye", which was probably the song's original text.<sup>39</sup> Its presence in these three sources in different versions indicates that the song had been in circulation for some time already in the 1460s. Caron's music demonstrates the same exploration of canon technique as Basiron's and has a spectacular, rhythmically disruptive passage in staggered descending thirds and triads in dotted values sung by all voices (see *example 5*), and Caron's setting might in its own way treat the poem ironically; or maybe we should rather say that Caron was more challenged by the formal layout of the rondeau and by the virtuosity of the free canons than by the words of the poem. In terms of the use of canon at the fifth, rhythmical flexibility and sheer craftsmanship, Caron's song was much more accomplished.

The idea of this ear-catching passage combined with canon could also have reached Basiron with a song by Johannes Tinctoris (c.1435-1511), *Helas, le bon temps que j'avoie*, as intermediary. This song is without any doubt modelled on Caron's *Helas*, and it is most probably also composed with the poem "Helas m'amour, ma tresparfaicte amye" as its original text.<sup>40</sup> Tinctoris here displays his command of the same technical elements as Caron including free canon and the passage in staggered triads in irregular rhythms (see

38 Cf. Rob C. Wegman, 'Fremin le Caron at Amiens: New Documents', in Fabrice Fitch and Jacobijn Kiel (eds.), *Bon jour, bon mois et bonne estrenne: Essays on Renaissance Music in Honour of David Fallows*, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 10-32.

39 The song is in many sources and appears in several modern editions (cf. Fallows, *A Catalogue*, pp. 181-182, and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH092.html>), but only the three 'Loire Valley' chansonniers (Laborde, Dijon and Wolfenbüttel) transmit the complete texts.

40 The earliest source for this song is Seville 5-I-43, which was copied in Italy by a northern scribe around 1480; further on sources and editions, see Fallows, *A Catalogue*, p. 178, and [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH\\_X/Sev5-I-43\\_60.html](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH_X/Sev5-I-43_60.html). Nothing speaks against that he composed it during the 1460s, while he worked in the Loire region. It could very well be contemporary with his rondeau, "Vostre regart si tresfort m'a feru", which the Dijon scribe copied into Dijon and Laborde, in both cases with an ascription to "Tinctoris", and it seems that the version of Caron's *Helas* that Tinctoris knew was very similar to the version preserved in Laborde.

Example 6, Johannes Tinctoris, *Helas le bon temps* [*Helas m'amour*] (Seville 5-I-43, fols. 44<sup>v</sup>-45), bars 17-24.

example 6; the example shows my reconstruction of the text underlay). Tinctoris was certainly well acquainted with Caron's song. In his *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, *Liber secundus* of 1477, Capitulum XXXIII, Tinctoris brings a music example from precisely this song.<sup>41</sup>

While the two songs by the older composers, Caron and Tinctoris, are technical complex and skilful, but exhibit a weak coordination between the poetic text and the music, Basiron's simplification of the technical parameters enables him to coordinate the music with the words. This makes it considerably easier to hear what is happening in the song – and why it is funny. An examination of *examples 4-6* makes it evident that Basiron and Tinctoris are indebted to Caron who made this effect popular. Of course, the idea of staggered triads are quite obvious in connection with canons in unison or at the octave, and possibly their use was en route to become clichés,<sup>42</sup> but the effective rhythmical disruptions and the placement of the passages in the rondeau form here make the inspirational and competitive threads between the songs and their composers credible.

To continue the discussion of the songs and the reworkings, which Caron's *Helas* inspired, it is interesting to take a look at Heinrich Isaac's interpretation of the song. Isaac (c.1452-1517) reworked all the voices of Caron's *Helas*, and moved the music a generation onwards – he too wanted to show off his prowess against this venerated background. His piece is preserved in five late fifteenth century sources and in some sixteenth century MSS and prints as well, among them the Florentine chansonnier, Florence 229, where it appears with the text incipit "Helas que de vera mon cuer" and an ascription to "Henricus Yzac"; in most sources it has the text incipit "Helas" only or is without text.<sup>43</sup> Also this composition can in a satisfactory way be combined with the rondeau quatrain, which appears with Caron's song in Laborde; this text transmission apparently was the one known

41 The Latin text can be found at <http://earlymusictheory.org/Tinctoris/texts/dearte23/#>; a modern edition in J. Tinctoris, *The Art of Counterpoint (Liber de arte contrapuncti)*. Translated and edited by Albert Seay (Musicological Studies and Documents 5, 1961) pp. 130-131. Besides the strong structural similarities and the similar ranges of the voices, the majority of sources for Tinctoris' *Helas* have the same disposition of key signatures, with a flat signature in the tenor only, as in Laborde's version of Caron's *Helas* and in the music example in Tinctoris' *Liber de arte contrapuncti*.

42 Cf. Jenny Hodgson, 'The Illusion of Allusion', in Meconi, *Early Musical Borrowing*, pp. 65-89, and John Milsom, 'Imitatio', 'Intertextuality', and Early Music', in Suzannah Clark & Elizabeth Eva Leach (eds.), *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture. Learning from the Learned*, Woodbridge 2005, pp. 141-151.

43 For lists of sources and modern editions, see Howard Mayer Brown, *A Florentine Chansonnier from the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Banco Rari 229 (Monuments of Renaissance Music VII) Chicago 1983, vol. I, p. 209.

29

ce, je ne re-quier heu-re, temps, lieu,  
ce; et si Pi-tie ma grant dou-leur

ce, je ne re-quier heu-re, temps, lieu,  
ce; et si Pi-tie ma grant dou-leur

ce, je ne re-quier heu-re, temps, lieu,  
ce; et si Pi-tie ma grant dou-leur ny\_es-  
n'ef-

Example 7, Heinrich Isaac, *Helas que devera* [*Helas m'amour*] (Florence 229, fols. 5<sup>v</sup>-6), bars 29-36.

to Isaac as well as to Tintoris. In a way, Isaac missed the whole point of Caron's rondeau, when he streamlined it into a regular, systematic music typical of a younger generation. Every imitation is now neat and preferably involving all three voices, the intervallic strict canons at the fifth are changed into diatonic canons, and its rhythm is steady without exciting surprises – and the whole is quite elegant. The musical excitement we may experience by Caron's *Helas* – when the staggered descending thirds and triads in dotted values sung by all voices suddenly suspend the steady beat of the preceding long melismas – is ironed out in favour of clarity and regularity (see *example 7*; the example shows my reconstruction of the text underlay).<sup>44</sup> This simplification of musical expression and its evident kindness to the listener may eventually be seen as a fulfilment of some of the ideas that Basiron was playing with in his *Tant fort me tarde*.

With these last examples we have glimpsed a tendency in which the development of musical ideas has been gaining the upper hand in relation to the texts of the songs. In the case of Basiron (and Isaac to some degree) this has been tempered by a new respect for an intelligible delivery of words. Mureau's care for the words and in some spots for the meaning of the words is only one of the tendencies pointing to the future of the French chanson; another is the extended involvement with imitation and sequences. It is interesting to discover that the two young composers during the years up to and around 1470 – the preserved material is silent about them composing chansons later on – really took part in developing tendencies, which became of great relevance during the next decades in the music of much more productive composers as Loyset Compere and Alexander Agricola. Another point is that the stylistic foundation for the young composers' working 'at the front of the art' may seem a bit out-dated. They and many of their contemporaries in the same sources used old-fashioned cadences, contratenors above the tenors and passages in *fauxbourdon*-style as valid alternatives to more modern sounding devices as low contratenors, three-part imitation etc. – completely unaware that musicology has classified such traits as stylistic markers of an older generation.

As part of my discussion of the songs of Basiron's youth I have searched for candidates for an attribution to the young Basiron. The search has been directed primarily at the songs that could have been copied along with the ascribed songs from a common exemplar.<sup>45</sup> In Wolfenbüttel between *Nul ne l'a telle*, no. 15 in the manuscript, and no. 18, *Je le scay bien*, both by Basiron, we find two anonymous three-part songs, which are in

44 The entire reconstruction can be seen at [http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH\\_X/Flo229\\_006.html](http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH_X/Flo229_006.html).

45 Cf. Christoffersen, *The chansons of Basiron's youth*.

Laborde and Copenhagen as well, *Je ne requiers que vostre bien vueillance* and *Le joli tetin de ma dame*. A study of the sources shows that both of them could have been copied into the three chansonniers along with Basiron's songs by three different scribes using the same or closely related exemplars, and both of them are obvious candidates for an ascription to Basiron. In *Je ne requiers* the composer is experimenting with the musical layout of a rondeau, and in the happy erotic song *Le joli tetin*, the 'chopping up' of melodic lines and the repetition of melodic cells in the final phrase is clearly related to Basiron's *Tant fort me tarde*.<sup>46</sup>

In Laborde four folios have disappeared between folio 21 and folio 22. The careful index to the original contents provided by the Dijon scribe permits us to reconstruct the original sequence of songs: First came Basiron's *De m'esjouir* (fols. 21<sup>v</sup>-21a), followed by two songs now completely missing, *Ce qu'on fait a catimini* (fols. 21a<sup>v</sup>-21b) and *Le joli tetin* (fols. 21b<sup>v</sup>-21d). Everything points at that we must include also *Ce qu'on fait a catimini* among the candidates for an ascription to Basiron, especially as it is present also in Wolfenbüttel (fols. 48<sup>v</sup>-49).

I think that the song is typical of Basiron and offer it as my last example. If not by Basiron, it still shows the urge to compete with and develop the material in the situation where a composer thinks that he may do better. It is a setting of a macaronic poem, which mixes French with Latin. It is blatantly erotic – and much more cynic than the happy *Le joli tetin*. The poem "Ce qu'on fait a catimini" was also set by the older composer Gilles Joye (c.1425-1483) in a different version. His song is preserved in the Mellon chansonnier, New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 91, fols. 10<sup>v</sup>-11, and in three later sources.<sup>47</sup> The text in Wolfenbüttel could very well have been revised by the composer with Joye's setting as his model. He has only reworded the lines without Latin words (shown in *Italics* in the example below), and he reused some words from the older version (shown in **bold**); all in order to obtain a more effective and rich rime word, "-ement" instead of just "-é", and one which contrasts stronger with the first rime "-mini". Not much is changed in the meaning of the poem.

Ce qu'on fait a catimini touchant multiplicamini, <i>maiz qu'il soit fait secretement,</i> <i>est excuse legerement</i> in conspectu Altissimi.	Ce qu'on fait a quatimini touchant multiplicamini, <i>mais qu'il soit bien tenu secre,</i> <i>sera tenu pour excuse</i> in conspectu Altissimi.
Et pourtant operamini, mez filles, et letamini, <i>ce n'est que tout esbatement</i>	Et pourtant operamini, mes fillez, et letaimini, <i>car jamais n'est revele</i>
ce qu'on fait a catimini touchant multiplicamini, maiz qu'il soit fait secretement.	ce qu'on fait a quatimini touchant multiplicamini, mais qu'il soit bien tenu secre.

46 See also the editions of the songs at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH015.html> and <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH017.html>.

47 Edited in Leeman L. Perkins and H. Garey (eds.), *The Mellon Chansonnier I-II*, New Haven 1979, no. 9. The anonymous setting is edited in Martella Gutiérrez-Denhoff (ed.), *Der Wolfenbütteler Chansonnier. Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav.* (Musikalischer Denkmäler X) Mainz 1988, no. 39, and at <http://chansonniers.pwch.dk/CH/CH237.html>.

Et se vous ingrossamini,  
soit in nomine Domini;  
*endurez le tout doucement,*  
*ja n'en perdrez vo saulvement,*  
maiz que vous confitemini.

Ce qu'on fait a catimini  
touchant multiplicamini,  
maiz qu'il soit fait secretement,  
est excuse legerement  
in conspectu Altissimi.<sup>48</sup>

(Wolfenbüttel, fols. 48<sup>v</sup>-49)

Et se vous ingrossemmini,  
soit in nomine Domini;  
*vous aves a proufit ouvre,*  
*qui vous sera tout pardonne,*  
mais que vous confitemini.

Ce qu'on fait a quatimini  
touchant multiplicamini,  
mais qu'il soit bien tenu secre,  
sera tenu pour excuse  
in conspectu Altissimi.

(Mellon, fols. 10<sup>v</sup>-11)

The setting is light-hearted and much funnier than the quite pedestrian setting by Joye. It uses a structural duet of superius and tenor an octave apart complemented by a contratenor, which for much of the time keeps below the tenor, but rises above it in the first line. The song opens in what sounds like a three-part imitation; but soon after the entry of the last voice, it turns into an extended passage in *fauxbourdon*-style that underscores the words “fait a catimini” (do covertly) with striking clarity. The rest of the words are set tongue-in-cheek using flexible canonic imitation on triadic motives and chasing descending thirds with lots of syncopation, which disturbs the steady beat. The second section of the rondeau runs the lines together and accumulates the syncopations, so that the last line of the refrain and of the *tierce* are performed by the upper voice off-beat all the way through: the assurances to young girls, “in conspectu Altissimi” and “maiz que vous confitemini”, are apparently not quite trustworthy.

The few traces we have of the two young musician's activities as chanson composers can be interpreted as indicators of their efforts to improve their social standings and cultural capital by displaying capabilities in music and poetry. The targets of Basiron's efforts were probably to be found in courtly circles, and Mureau's were his patrons in the Chartres area. They show a competitive edge that may be connected with the nature of their service in the church. Both were choirmasters, *maître d'enfans*, *maître de grammaire* or *magister puerum*, and thus responsible, wholly or in part, for a musical and educational institution within the church, the *maîtrise*. Tinctoris worked in Orléans as *succentor* at the cathedral and studied canon law at the university in the early 1460s, and according to his own account in *De inventione et usu musicae*, Tinctoris spent some time in the 1460s as teacher of music to the choirboys at the Chartres Cathedral, probably teaching side by side with Mureau.<sup>49</sup>

48 Translation: What you do covertly / concerning 'let us multiply', / as long as it is done secretly, / is easily excused / in the sight of the Most High. // And then, let us do it, / my girls, and enjoy, / it is nothing but good sport / what you do covertly / concerning 'let us multiply', / as long as it is done secretly. // And if your bellies grow, / let it be in the name of the Lord; / endure it all sweetly, / you will not miss your salvation by that, / provided that you confess. // What you do covertly / concerning 'let us multiply', / as long as it is done secretly, / is easily excused / in the sight of the Most High.

49 Cf. Ronald Woodley, 'Johannes Tinctoris: A Review of the Documentary Biographical Evidence', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981) pp. 217-248 (at p. 229), and Tinctoris' text at [http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/15th/TININV\\_TEXT.html](http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/15th/TININV_TEXT.html).

As Paula Higgins pointed out the role of the choirmaster became more important during the middle of the century as the education of singers able to master polyphony came in still greater demand.<sup>50</sup> A choirmaster renowned in polyphonic music could add considerably to the prestige of the institution and help to attract gifted pupils and not least rich donations from patrons. Maybe we should understand the choirmaster's endeavours in poetry and song as an artistic bridge to the secular world – a good standing according to the cultural values of this sphere could only be to advantage. Naturally, this increased the demands on the qualifications of the choirmaster, and if wanting, a master was quickly replaced by another. Mureau's lifelong attachment to the *maîtrise* of Chartres may have been something of a record of staying power, but Basiron's more than four years in Bourges were respectable too. It is highly probable that they all knew each other personally. Not only did choirmasters circulate between positions and therefore kept an eye on open positions, but in this case there are many possibilities for personal meetings with Mureau as the central figure. He was a colleague of Tinctoris in Chartres, maybe he had even studied at the university of Orléans along with Tinctoris to qualify for the post as *maître de grammaire*, and later he held land near Bourges, which strengthened his ties to this area. The upcoming composer Basiron on his side probably did not remain stationary at home. In 1469 he did journey to Paris to be approved in his new position as *magister puerum* by the treasurer of the Sainte-Chapelle who resided in Paris.<sup>51</sup> En route it would be natural to stop over in Orléans or Chartres. To become personally acquainted with his somewhat older colleagues, Mureau and Tinctoris, could evidently mean a lot to the young Basiron. He may have had opportunities to absorb different impulses from them; from Tinctoris the advantages in learning from musical precursors and trying to imitate and surpass them, and from Mureau possibly the power of poetry!

August 2013

### Postscript April 2017

Late in 2014 a small music manuscript was sold at an art sale in Brussels. The buyer then approached the Alamire Foundation for a musicological evaluation. It appeared with great probability to be a new member of the group of music manuscripts known as the 'Loire Valley' chansonnier from the 1470s. And it was in pristine condition in its original binding and without losses of folios. In 2016 it was bought by the King Baudouin Foundation and deposited on permanent loan with the Alamire Foundation in Leuven. It will be presented to the public at an exhibition in New York in July 2017 under the call name the Leuven Chansonnier.

The songbook contains 50 songs, 49 for three voices and one for four voices, all without composer attributions. Its repertory of French chansons and one small motet belongs for the majority to the core repertory of the Loire Valley chansonniers, but it also

50 Cf. Paula Higgins, 'Musical "Parents" and Their "Progeny": The Discourse of Creative Patriarchy in Early Modern Europe', in J.A. Owens & A. Cummings (eds.), *Music in Renaissance Cities and Courts: Studies in Honor of Lewis Lockwood*, Warren, MI 1996, pp. 169-186 (at pp. 173 ff), and *idem*, 'Musical Politics in Late Medieval Poitiers: A Tale of Two Choirmasters', in Higgins, *Antoine Busnoys*, pp. 155-174.

51 Higgins, 'Tracing', p. 7.

adds 12 new songs. This 'sixth' chansonnier has on fos. 27v-29 the well-known song »Je ne fays plus, je ne dys ne escripts« in the same musical version as it is found in the manuscript Florence 176, but in the new source it is accompanied by the complete poem. In this way my statement that "None of the chansons by Mureau can be found in the 'Loire Valley' chansonniers" (p. 217) is proved wrong. The only hit-song by Gilles Mureau did in fact make it into the Leuven chansonnier.



## An experiment in musical unity, or: The sheer joy of sound. The anonymous *Sine nomine* mass in MS Cappella Sistina 14

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In his book *The Rise of European Music 1380–1500* Reinhard Strohm introduces the cyclic cantus firmus mass as the most outstanding genre of sacred polyphony in the later part of the fifteenth century in terms of numbers of settings as well as of the artistic effort involved: “The genre was obviously concerned with the problem of musical unity, or rather, diversity within unity.”<sup>1</sup> In the following I want to take a closer look at a mass dating from the decade just after 1450, the *Missa Sine nomine* in MS Cappella Sistina 14, in which the anonymous composer was intensely involved with the problem of unity, so involved that he – according to our ideas about music – has focused on ‘unity’ to such a degree that it became rather to the detriment of ‘diversity’.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, his ambition was to create a sounding ‘unity’, that is, a unity incorporating all the five ordinary settings of the cyclic mass that was immediately perceptible by hearing alone. I think that most of today’s listeners and readers will agree that the mechanical construction of his mass, its simplistic musical language and not least its repetitiveness make it a bit unappealing in the role of a musical work of art. Obviously, the contemporary assessment of the mass was different as compilers of prestigious choirbooks included it in their repertoires, and this fact puts our aesthetic understanding of the period’s music to test. In addition to the classical analysis of how such a cantus firmus mass is structured as a musical architecture transmitted in writing, we have to ponder how it served as a sounding reality, and how it may have related to the little we know about the musical practices of the period.

### *Context, sources and origin*

The polyphonic mass cycle emerged as an important musical genre during the first half of the fifteenth century. Beginning with pairs of settings of mass ordinary items, which were sung in close succession during Mass such as Gloria and Credo as well as Sanctus and Agnus, a cycle of five ordinary settings (including the Kyrie) crystalized in the second quarter of the century. The polyphonic settings making up a cycle might be united by a shared voice disposition, shared rhythmical and formal layouts and by recurrent motifs

- 1 Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music 1380–1500*, Cambridge 1993, p. 228. Strohm’s book tells among many other things the story of the early mass cycles, which is summarized in the following paragraphs, and it contains references to the classical literature on the subject.
- 2 The mass is readily available in my online edition, *The anonymous Missa Sine nomine in MS Cappella Sistina 14*. Edited with an introduction by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen ([http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_An01.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_An01.pdf)). Furthermore, it has appeared recently in two printed editions: Reinhard Strohm (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music VI. Mass Settings from the Lucca Choirbook*. Transcribed and edited by Reinhard Strohm (Early English Church Music 49) London 2007, pp. 98–133, and Richard Sherr (ed.), *Masses for the Sistine Chapel*. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cappella Sistina, MS 14. Edited and with an Introduction by Richard Sherr (Monuments of Renaissance Music XIII) Chicago, 2009, pp. 273–315.

or polyphonic modules. A simple way to unite the mass sections was to let each section begin with the same music or variations of it, functioning as a *motto* or head-motif, which was easy to recognize by hearing alone; also subsections could have secondary *mottos*.

The *motto masses* often were freely composed and without any connection to a designated feast or saint, therefore they today appear in lists of named masses as *missae sine nomine*, masses without names. In another type of mass a different sort of unity was obtained by setting the liturgical tunes belonging to the five ordinary songs in a plainchant mass. Both types of mass continued during the fifteenth century. During the late 1440s, however, the main focus of the musicians shifted towards another type of mass, which had developed in England, the *tenor mass*.

Composers had begun to expand the technique of the motet with a repeated cantus firmus in the tenor voice to include the whole mass ordinary. In addition to shared voice disposition and the presence of head-motifs, the unity of the polyphonic mass was immensely strengthened by a fixed pattern of mensurations connected to the repeats of the same tenor in all mass sections. The use of a pre-existent tune in the tenor, the cantus firmus, a sacred or – in later masses – a secular tune, provided the mass with a name and attached it to a specific function in the liturgy, to a feast or a class of feasts, or it made it fit to adorn an important courtly or civic event, or the choice of a tune simply reflected the preferences of a patron instituting a sacred service.

Most mass music was composed for three voices with the tenor as the generally lowest sounding voice. An English mass of the 1440s composed for four voices turned out to be of enormous influence on the development of the genre. Its anonymous composer used as his tenor a strict rendering of the long melisma on the final word “caput” in the antiphon “Venit ad Petrum” for Maundy Thursday, which is found in liturgical sources from England and France from this period.<sup>3</sup> This Mixolydian tune begins on and insistently returns to the note *b*-natural, which in the diatonic scale system of the Guidonian hand could not sound combined with a fifth above – the tune was singularly unfit for a polyphonic setting with the tenor as the fundamental voice. The solution was to add a free voice, a low contratenor, below the tenor, which offered the composer freedom to control and vary the harmonies in the now four-part texture. This made it possible for this type of cantus firmus masses to obtain a clearer identity, and it anchored it in the tradition of the motet with its rhythmical manipulation of the repeated tenor tune as well as making its sound distinct from other mass types.

*Missa Caput* was a resounding success. It appears in sources copied in England, Flanders, Southern Germany and in North Italian Trent, which testify to a wide and varied early circulation of the mass. In two Trent manuscripts (MSS Trent 88 and 89) it even was mistakenly attributed to “Duffay” (Guillaume Du Fay) and was long regarded by modern musicology as a central work by the most prominent composer of the period.<sup>4</sup> A

3 Concerning its place in the liturgy, an analysis of the tune and its transformation into a mass tenor, see Manfred F. Bukofzer's classical study ‘*Caput: A Liturgico-Musical Study*’ in his book *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music*, New York 1950, pp. 217–310.

4 It was included in Guillaume Dufay (ed. H. Besseler), *Opera omnia I–VI* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1) American Musicological Society 1951–1966), vol. III, p. 33; see further Alejandro Enrique Planchart, ‘Guillaume Dufay's Masses: Notes and Revisions’, *The Musical Quarterly* 58 (1972), pp. 1–23, and Reinhard Strohm, ‘Quellenkritische Untersuchungen an der Missa “Caput”’, in Ludwig Finscher (ed.), *Datierung und Filiation von Musikhandschriften der Josquin-Zeit. Quellenstudien zur Musik der Renaissance II* (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 26) Wiesbaden 1983, pp. 153–176.

short time later, another anonymous English mass, almost a twin of *Missa Caput*, the *Missa Veterem hominem* began to circulate on the Continent. Their influence on the Continental mass repertory was unmistakable.

Some musicians expanded the *Caput* model into brilliant concepts, which defined new developments of the mass cycles for the next generation. This is what we, for example, meet in Petrus de Domarto's *Missa Spiritus almus*, in Guillaume Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale* or in Johannes Ockeghem's *Missa Caput*, which all seem to be created under the spell of the early triumphal progress of the English *Missa Caput*.<sup>5</sup> Other named or anonymous musicians emulated the model during the next decade without quite the same degree of originality.<sup>6</sup> Christopher Page has said it very clear: "In fact the structure and layout of *Caput* and *Veterem hominem* became the blueprint for a spate of four-voice Continental Masses in the 1450s, some of which clone their models so comprehensively that it is difficult or even impossible to determine whether their composers were English or Continental."<sup>7</sup> *Missa Sine nomine* belongs to the group of followers of the *Caput* model.

*Missa Sine nomine* is preserved complete in one source only. It appears in a very large, illuminated choirbook on paper, Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 14 (hereafter *Rome CS 14*), where it is found fols. 65<sup>v</sup>–75. It stands like something of a misfit among masses by famous composers whose music has attracted far more interest: Du Fay (three masses), Regis (two masses), Domarto, Vincenet, Eloy d'Amerval, Busnoys, Ockeghem, Caron, Faugues, Weerbeke and Wrede – all witnessing the dominance of French-Flemish music in leading Italian institutions.<sup>8</sup> It is the only mass in the Vatican manuscript not identified by a written composer ascription or a title.<sup>9</sup> Only a large painted letter "K" with a depiction of God the Father with the

5 On the development of cantus firmus techniques through canon prescriptions and mensural and proportional manipulation, see Rob C. Wegman, 'Petrus de Domartus's *Missa Spiritus almus* and the early history of the four-voice mass in the fifteenth century', *Early Music History* 10 (1991), pp. 235–303.

6 The study of this repertory has been greatly facilitated by the publication of Rebecca L. Gerber (ed.), *Sacred Music from the Cathedral of Trent. Trent, Museo Provinciale d'arte, Codex 1375 (olim 88)*, (Monuments of Renaissance Music XII; Chicago, 2007). The MS Trent 88 was copied in Trent during the years 1456–1460/61 and contains a repertory from the 1440s and the first part of the 1450s. Especially the representation of anonymous polyphony for the Proper as well as the Ordinary is overwhelming and produces a much more balanced impression of the music of the period than the complete works of known composers.

All the masses mentioned (except for *Sine nomine*) are present in Trent 88 and edited by Gerber: *Veterem hominem* (no. 1), *Caput* (no. 11, Kyrie and Agnus dei only, for a complete edition see latest Strohm, *Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music*, pp. 46–81), *Se la face ay pale* (no. 29), Ockeghem, *Caput* (no. 98), *Spiritus almus* (no. 143).

7 Booklet for *Missa Veterem hominem. An anonymous English Mass setting from c1440* (The Spirits of England and France 5). Gothic Voices directed by Christopher Page. Hyperion CDA66919 (1997).

8 Cf. Sherr, *Masses*, pp. 26–45, and Adalbert Roth, *Studien zum frühen Repertoire der päpstlichen Kapelle unter dem Pontifikat Sixtus' IV. (1471–1484). Die Chorbücher 14 und 51 des Fondo Cappella Sistina der Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Capellae apostolicae sistinaeque collectanea acta monumenta 1 (Città del Vaticano 1991, pp. 471–483. The MS can be visited online at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Capp.Sist.14](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Capp.Sist.14).

9 *Missa Puisque je vis* on fols. 161<sup>v</sup>–171 is anonymous too, but has a title. Therefore, to name our mass '*Missa Sine nomine* in CS 14' constitutes an unambiguous identification of it among the multitude of *missae sine nomine* in other sources.

Book of Life functions as a visual marker at the start of the Kyrie.<sup>10</sup> MS Rome CS 14 was probably created at the end of the 1470s in Naples, Ferrara or Rome for a wealthy sacred institution or as an expensive gift, and it ended up in the then new papal institution, the Sistine Chapel, some years before 1487. It contains a carefully selected repertory of masses from the preceding 25 years, quite retrospective in nature, representing exactly the sort of music that Johannes Tinctoris knew and commented upon in his series of treatises written in Naples during the 1470s. The selection of repertory for the big choirbook may very well have been strongly influenced by Neapolitan circles.<sup>11</sup>

The other source for *Missa Sine nomine* consists of a single folio, which on its front side has the high contratenor and the tenor of the final sections of its Credo, and on its reverse side the beginnings of the highest voice and the “Contra bassus” of the Sanctus. The folio once formed part of a choirbook belonging to the cathedral of Lucca. Today only a collection of more or less connected bifolios and single sheets remains, because the book in the early seventeenth century was dismembered and used as binding materials for account books. Pieces of the manuscript are found in other archives, and new may still turn up, but the main corpus is preserved in the Archivio di Stato in Lucca as MS 238 (hereafter *Lucca 238*). Reinhard Strohm identified the fragments in 1963, and he has reconstructed the manuscript and its provenance. It was a costly production, written on large format parchment and embellished with illuminated initials, and Strohm proposes that the choirbook was created for use in the chapel of the English Merchant Adventurers in the Carmelite friary in Bruges during the years 1463–64.<sup>12</sup> A few years later, the banker Giovanni Arnolfini acquired the choirbook and donated it to the choir school of the cathedral in his hometown Lucca. Arnolfini died in 1472, so the transference of the choirbook to Lucca must have happened around 1470. Its original repertory consisted of 14 masses and a smaller group of motets from the preceding decades by English musicians (masses by Henry Thick, Walther Frye and several anonymous including *Missa Caput*) and by Continental musicians (including Domarto’s *Missa Spiritus almus* and Du Fay’s *Missa L’homme armé*).

*Missa Sine nomine* must have enjoyed a circulation that was much wider than these two sources suggest. Even if only a very small part of it is preserved in Lucca 238, we can establish that the manuscripts belonged to different transmission traditions, and that the younger source, Rome CS 14, probably represents the original version of the mass. The single folio of Lucca 238 contains the complete high contratenor of the duos, which begin

10 Reinhard Strohm has tried to identify the miniature as a representation of St Andrew, the patron saint of the house of Valois (*Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, (rev. ed.) Oxford 1990, pp. 126–27. That is why he refers to this mass as *Missa [de Sancto Andrea?]* in this book p. 165 and in *The Rise of European Music* p. 430. Roth has convincingly refuted this identification in his *Studien*, p. 118.

11 Cf. John D. Bergsagel, ‘Tinctoris and the Vatican Manuscripts Cappella Sistina 14, 51 and 35’, *Collectanea II. Studien zur Geschichte der Päpstlichen Kapelle. Tagesbericht Heidelberg 1989* (Capellae apostolicae sistinaeque collectanea monumenta 4) Città del Vaticano 1994, pp. 497–527.

12 On its provenance, see Reinhard Strohm, ‘Alte Fragen und Neue Überlegungen zum Chorbuch Lucca (Lucca, Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca Manoscritti 238 = I-Las 238)’, in Ulrich Konrad (ed.), *Musikalische Quellen – Quellen zur Musikgeschichte. Festschrift für Martin Staehelin zum 65. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 2002, pp. 51–64. A facsimile edition has been published by Reinhard Strohm, *The Lucca Choirbook: Lucca, Archivio di Stato, MS 238; Lucca, Archivio Arcivescovile, MS 97; Pisa, Archivio Arcivescovile, Biblioteca Maffi, Cartella 11/III* (Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Music in Facsimile II) Chicago 2008. A partial facsimile is available online at <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/196/#/images>; this does not include the folio with *Missa Sine nomine*.

the second half of the Credo, and this permits us to reconstruct the Lucca version of them.<sup>13</sup> As in many other Credo-settings of the mid-fifteenth century, *Sine nomine* omits some sentences of the Credo text. In Rome CS 14 words and music fit like fingers in glove, while it in Lucca can be difficult to place the words. The selection of sentences has here been revised in order to include the words “qui ex patre filioque procedit”, which were central to a long-standing controversy between the Eastern and Western churches concerning the understanding of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup> This shows that in the North the mass circulated in a version, where someone before the early 1460s had found it important to take the trouble to revise the text of the Credo in order to include the controversial word “filioque”.

Nearly every scholar who has commented on *Missa Sine nomine* has assumed that it was of English origin. There are some good reasons for this view, first and foremost its very long setting of the Kyrie, its placement among English masses in MS Lucca 238, and the appearance of certain ‘English’ cadential formulas. Its Kyrie could in fact have had a nine verse Kyrie-trope, a prosula, as its original text, just like it is the case with the English masses *Caput* and *Veterem hominem*; in Lucca 238 *Missa Caput* has retained its prosula text. In the introduction to my online edition of the mass, I have discussed the question of its Englishness in some detail.<sup>15</sup> My conclusion is that it is most probable that *Missa Sine nomine* was composed in Northern France or in Burgundian Flanders by a musician who had personal experiences of the English masses and who had sung the masses *Caput* and *Veterem hominem* and probably several other English works at services around 1450, during the years when these masses were widely admired and emulated on the Continent. The many English traits in the mass are results of the composer’s decision strictly to adhere to a simplified version of the *Caput* model, and of – as we shall see – direct quotations. Here I find myself in agreement with Strohm who seems to maintain his early characterization of the mass as ‘Burgundian’, even if he included the mass in his volume of *Early English Church Music*.<sup>16</sup>

The anonymous composer reacted to the *Caput* model in a similar way as contemporary colleagues, but the sound of his efforts became different. Composers from this part of Europe grabbed the *Caput* model and created new types of masses: Petrus de Domarto instituted an influential use of mensural transformation of the tenor tune in *Missa Spiritus almus*, Guillaume Du Fay perfected the proportional transformation in *Missa Se la face ay pale*, and Johannes Ockeghem in his early *Caput* mass borrowed the *Caput* tenor more or less as written in the English mass, transposed it down an octave in order to let it sound at the bottom of the texture, and thereby defied the whole idea of the *Caput* model. The anonymous composer of *Missa Sine nomine* made his contribution in the same spirit as his colleagues. It has been difficult for modern musicology to realize this, because the obviousness of its many English traits routinely has placed the mass in a different category.

13 The Lucca version of the duos is published in the Appendix to my online edition.

14 Cf. Ruth Hannas, ‘Concerning Deletions in the Polyphonic Mass Credo’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 5 (1952), pp. 155–186.

15 Christoffersen, *The anonymous Missa Sine nomine*, Introduction, pp. xvi–xxi. Concerning the sources, the tenor tune and the layout, this introduction contains more detailed discussions and bibliographic references than space permitted in the present article.

16 Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, p. 95, and *Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music*, p. x.

## *An experiment in musical unity*

[illegible]Ex. 1, *Missa Sine nomine*, Kyrie, bars 1–46

*An experiment in musical unity*

28

ri - e e e

ri - e e e

Ky - ri e

Ky - ri e

34

ley son, Ky

ley son,

40

ri e

Ky - ri e

45

e

(Ex. 1 continued)

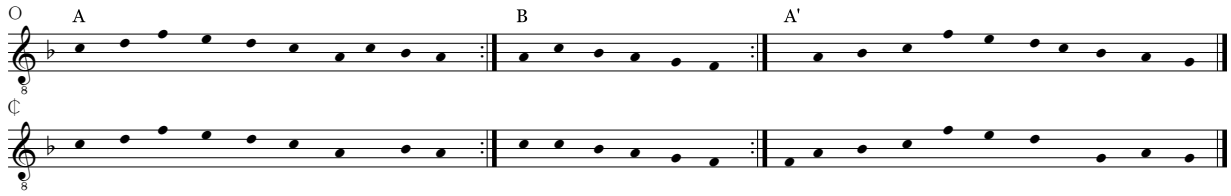
*The music of the mass, its tenor tune and layout*

*Missa Sine nomine* is composed for voices having the same ranges in all the five settings: The tenor has a range of an octave ( $f$ – $f'$ ) only. The two contratenors share this range, but add respectively a third above ( $f$ – $a'$ ) in the high one (altus) and a fourth below ( $c$ – $f'$ ) in the low voice, named “Contra” in Rome CS 14. This quite compact complex of grown male voices is supplemented by a superius, usually performed by boys, which moves between a fifth and an octave above the tenor ( $c'$ – $e''$ ). The total range of the mass,  $c$ – $e''$ , lies comfortably within the Guidonian Hand, and it may easily be set at a lower pitch to enable a performance by grown up voices alone.

In Kyrie, the beginning of which is shown in *Ex. 1*, only the tenor has a key signature of one flat, which signals that the part has to be performed with a combination of the soft hexachord on  $f$  and the natural hexachord on  $c'$  as the default choice. In Rome CS 14 the tenor has this one-flat signature in all the settings. The superius is without any signature all the way through, but exhibits several accidentals that signal hexachordal shifts. Signatures with or without a b-flat changes constantly in the two contratenors. They are not inconsistent in notation, even if we cannot exclude a few copying errors, rather, in most cases they are practical. If a flat would govern a very few notes only, it does not appear on the staves. On the single folio left of the mass in Lucca 238, the high contratenor has a one-flat signature, where Rome CS 14 has none. It makes no difference for the performance of the music, as the hexachordal positions are unmistakable.

The constant oscillation between F- and G-hexachords, causing a fluctuation between B-natural and B-flat, is a characteristic of the music of the mid-fifteenth century. If we study *Ex. 1*, the Kyrie opens with a duo in free polyphony for the two highest voices. The superius sets out in an inverse melodic curve within the combined  $g'$ - and  $c'$ -hexachords with a counter voice based entirely on the  $c'$ -hexachord, and of course the first phrase ends in a cadence to C. The next phrase forces the superius into the combined  $f'$ - $c'$ -hexachords, while the altus voice jumps into the  $f$ -hexachord, and accordingly the duo ends with a cadence on F. Now a new duo between the two contratenors takes over, in F, with chains of parallel thirds and sixths. When the duo nears a cadence to C in bar 21, the voices seem to get struck on a unison imitation of a small motif, formed by the main notes of the F-hexachord:  $c'$ – $d'$ – $c'$ – $a$ – $f$ , which occupies both voices in bars 20–23, before they run on to the cadence to C. This motif, which I have named “x”, is to become of great importance for how we hear the mass.

When the tenor comes in bar 28 on  $c'$ , the other three voices dress it in consonant harmony. Not so much by singing counter melodies as by presenting steps consonant with the tenor notes as well as with each other, enlivened by passing notes. The low contra keeps mostly below the tenor and moves often in leaps between fundamentals of triads, more or less functioning as a real bass voice. Only when the tenor rests or holds a long note, the melodic profiles of the two contratenors may become stronger, more linear (bars 38–39, for example). The highest voice seems to be added to the rather self-contained structure of the three voices in the tenor range. After its melodic swung in the first duo it becomes curiously restricted, almost keeping within one single hexachord at the time. It goes back and forth within either the sixth  $f'$ – $d''$  (bars 28–33 and 35–37) or the sixth  $g'$ – $e''$  (bars 34–36 and 39–45), inserting cadential movements wherever they may fit.



Ex. 2, *Missa Sine nomine*, pitches of the tenor tune

When the tenor reaches  $f'$  in bars 32–33, the music comes to a standstill, while the superius and the altus make a short imitation of the x-motif at the octave. The superius succeeds in getting this motif placed again in bars 36–37. This melodic dependency on motifs and lines formed by a changing array of hexachords must be a trait derived from improvised counterpoint. If you keep to the selection of steps offered by a hexachord and keep an eye on the tenor tune while selecting the steps to sing, it cannot go very wrong. This technique is characteristic of all the four-part music in *Sine nomine*, and it clearly contributes to the prominence of ostinato passages, which we here see the first glimpses of. Of course, *Missa Sine nomine* is not improvised music. It was painstakingly worked out in notation, but its composer consciously relied heavily on the style and sound of singing polyphony *super librum* in the liturgy.

After getting acquainted with the first pages of the mass, we know broadly the music of the whole cycle. But before going on with that, we have to take a short look on its tenor tune and whole layout.

It has not been possible to identify the tune, which the tenor voice presents twice in every part of the mass. If we remove the tenor's mensural attire, disregard a few decorative notes and most of the repeated notes we get a very simple structure (see Ex. 2). As already mentioned, *Missa Sine nomine* adheres to the mass model set up by the English *Missa Caput*. The Mixolydian antiphon melisma, which *Caput* builds on, is long and highly repetitive. The much shorter *Sine nomine* tune is repetitive as well: A A B B A', and could be a quote from a similar melisma lifted from some plainchant. Its melodic shape is, however, a bit peculiar: Most of the tune tends towards F, but it ends on G, which places the tenor in the G-Dorian realm, and much of the tune – four or five notes at the end of each segment – is taken up by descending patterns, which are convenient for cadencing in four-part polyphony. This makes it rather implausible that it had existed as part of a real song. It looks more like a construct made by its composer in emulation of the *Caput* tune; it was just very much easier to set in four parts. Where the *Caput* tune lacks descending lines and cadencing opportunities, this one is nearly nothing but such possibilities.

The *Caput* model requires that the tenor tune is sung twice in each setting, the so-called double *cursus*, first rhythimized in triple time (O) then in double time (C), while keeping the pitches unchanged. In *Sine nomine* this repeat is not absolutely strict. In the double time version the cadencing on A in first segment and on G in the last segment has been made more emphatic, and by repeating the last note in the B-segment at the start of the last segment he gets the full  $f-f'$  range to sound before ending on G. Why he choose this ending is impossible to know. Maybe he simply wanted to follow his model by ending in G. A bright Mixolydian sound colours the final chords of most sections in the mass.

Gloria

58

Credo

129

Sanctus

72

Kyrie

63

Agnus dei

61

Ex. 3. *Missa Sine nomine*, comparison of tenor parts

The mensural shape of the tenor is shown in Ex. 3. It is obvious that the Gloria tenor presents the original layout on which the other settings are based (the example only shows the differences that appear in the other settings; numbers indicate the many whole-bar rests). In Gloria, Credo and Sanctus the sound of the tenor is exactly the same. The differences in ligatures affect solely the distributions of the words. This is also true of most of the differences in Kyrie and Agnus dei, which do not change pitches – except for some conventional formulas at cadences – or the total duration of phrases. In Agnus dei I, bar 35, a *brevis*-bar rest is transformed into an upbeat *semibrevis a* preceded by rests (marked by an “a” in the example). This was a decision made while composing the four-part structure and probably caused by the wish to hear the tenor imitate the superius two bars earlier. This, however, prolongs the sounding duration of the tenor to 45 bars instead of the 44 bars we hear in all other sections. The composer apparently liked the idea and made a similar insertion in the Kyrie (b. 40), which along with a prolongation of the notes *d'-e'* shifts the tenor by two *brevis*-bars in relation to the fixed plan. This delay is, however, soon recovered by shortening the two long *c'*-notes in the following phrases (marked by “b”). Apparently, the structure of regular durations in the tenor part was important to the composer.

The double *cursus* layout stands out in the schematic representation of *Missa Caput* shown in Fig. 1.<sup>17</sup> The patterns of the tenor tune (shown as the lowest line in the scheme) appear unchanged in every setting except for the shortened Agnus dei. It sings for 30+12+16+12 *brevis*-bars in the sections in triple time (O), and in double time sections (C) it is segmented into 46+44 bars (Agnus dei, 32+32). The tenor only comes in after introductory duos between the superius and the highest contratenor in every section. The tenor is normally set in four-part polyphony, which can be prolonged by changing the durations of the rests in the tenor tune and by insertion of duo passages of varying length, all in order to accommodate the number of words in the texts. In this way the Kyrie, which includes the long trope or prosula “Deus creator omnium” has become of nearly the same length as Credo. The long stretches of four-part polyphony may be lightened by longer rests in the other voices, see Gloria and Credo. This thinning out is in Sanctus and Agnus dei in the triple time sections developed into duo (and trio) passages, in which the tenor participates, in order to set off “Pleni sunt” and Agnus II as independent sections. The relationship between the settings consists not only in their building on the exactly same double *cursus* tenor and in varying the same pattern, each setting opens with a short two-part part *motto* (see Ex. 4a), slightly varied through the mass.

That this pattern became an established standard is demonstrated by the English *Missa Veterem hominem*, which is close being a clone of *Caput*. It appeared along with Guillaume Du Fay’s *Missa Se la face ay pale* in the 1450s in the manuscript Trent 88. Du Fay changed the pattern to include a triple *cursus* in his Gloria and Credo, developing the motet tradition into a ‘modern’ concept.<sup>18</sup>

Compared to *Missa Caput*, the overview of *Missa Sine nomine* appears simple (Fig. 2). Every single section of the five settings of the mass ordinary texts consists, as we saw in Ex. 1, of first a duo between the superius and the high contratenor followed by another duo between the two contratenors; then the tenor comes clad in four-part harmony. In

17 Based on the edition in Strohm, *Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music*, pp. 46–81.

18 Schematic overviews of these masses can be found in my introduction to the online edition; concerning *Missa Se la face ay pale*, see further my online edition at [http://sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Duf02.pdf](http://sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Duf02.pdf).

Figure 1, schematic overview of *Missa Caput*

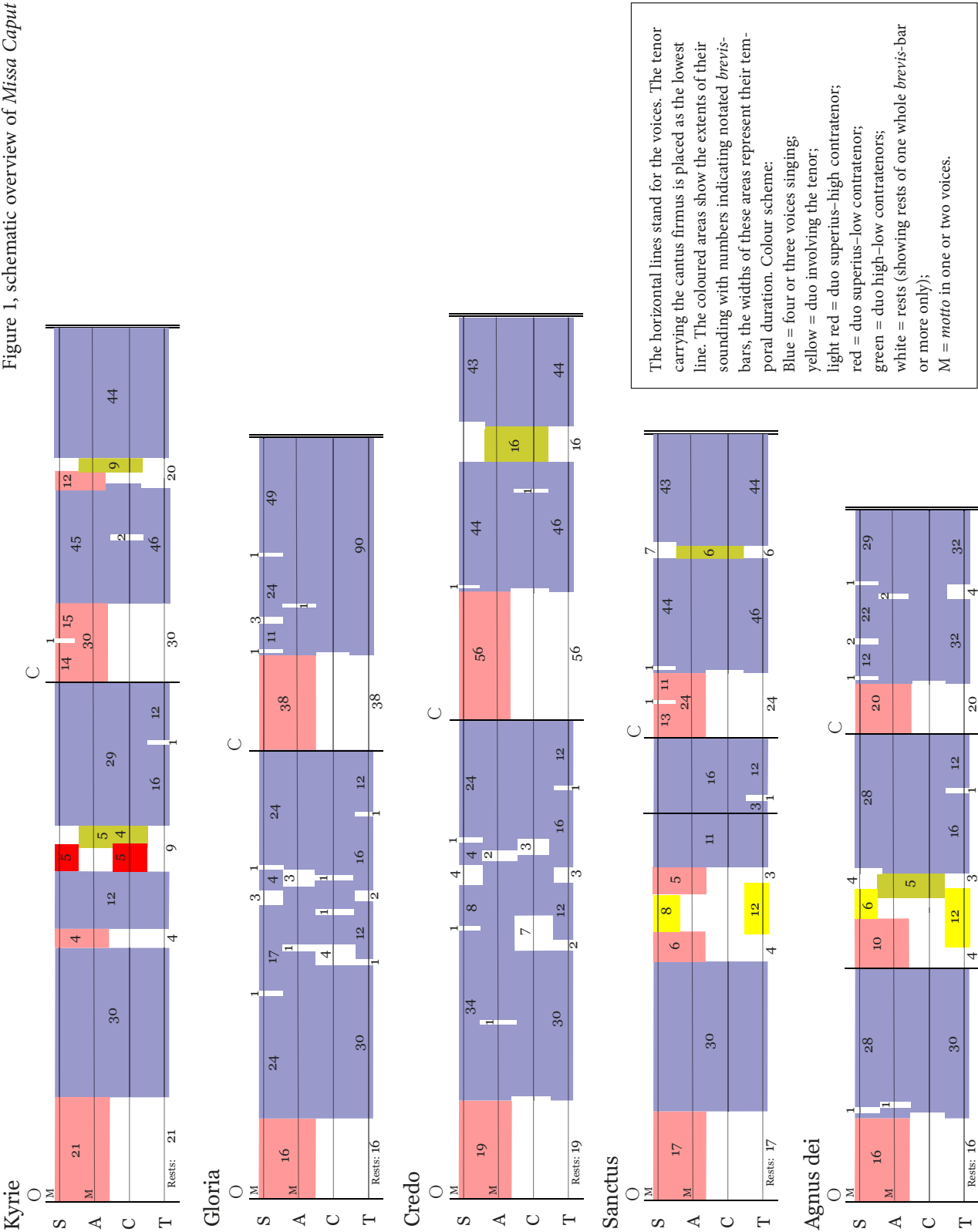
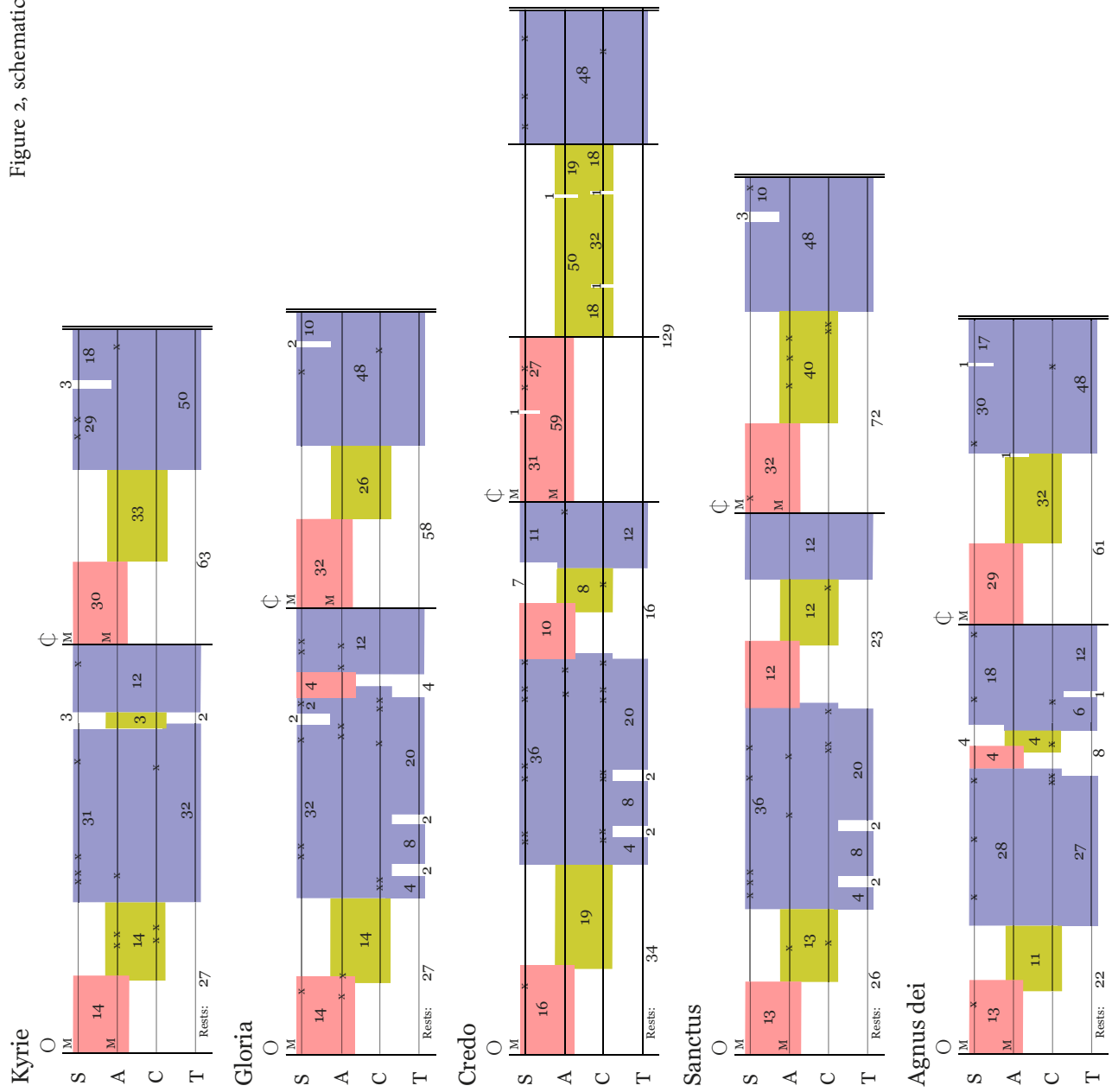


Figure 2, schematic overview of *Missa Sine nomine*



Credo an extra round of duos has been inserted into the triple time tenor presentation (O), probably to lengthen the section and give it musical weight, because the last fourth of this section sets quite a few words. We find the same procedure in the two last settings, but here the duos mark the start of “Pleni sunt” in Sanctus and the second “Agnus” in Agnus dei. In Credo the two duos in double time has grown to independent sections, “Et incarnatus est” and “Et resurrexit”, both set off by double lines in the voice parts. Nowhere in the music does the tenor take part in anything like duos, as it does for short passages in other masses. A special trait is the appearances of the *motto* in every section of the mass, not only at the beginnings of the settings as normal, but also at the start of the sections repeating the tenor in double time (♢). It looks as if the composer was familiar with the *Caput* double *cursus* pattern, simplified it radically for use in his first sections in triple time, and then just repeated the whole procedure in the double time sections in a near mechanical manner. In the overview the four-part passages look denser than in *Caput*, and this is also how the music sounds, counterbalanced, however, to some degree by the long, more airy duo passages.

Its *motto* or head-motif was clearly derived from the *Caput* tradition. Ex. 4 shows the *mottos* of four masses. They are all constantly varied through the masses but easily recognizable. The *Caput motto* (Ex. 4a) presents the basic idea, an inverted melodic curve reaching from the opening *c''* to *d'* and up again involving some rising fourths. This idea is further developed in *Missa Veterem hominem* (Ex. 4b), which moved the leap of a fourth forward and imitated the melodic line in the contratenor. Presumably Du Fay knew this opening and took it over in a more elegant, less fuzzy shape (Ex. 4c). The *motto* of *Missa Sine nomine* is of the same mould (Ex. 4d). One could say that the descending line of the superius simply passes through the ‘safe’ concords for an improvised voice against a long-held note: octave, sixth, fifth etc., until the held note changes. However, its inversed curve is so similar to the others’ that the *motto* most probably was inspired by this tradition. Moreover, the composer discovered that the *caput motto* could be combined with a short quotation of his tenor tune in the contratenor: *c'-d'-f'-e'-d'*. This combination of the superius figure and the tenor tune appears more or less prominent at the start of the Kyrie (see Ex. 1), in “Et incarnatus est” in Credo, in both sections of Sanctus, and at the start of Agnus dei. The use of a *motto* to underscore the unity of the mass settings was common in the middle of the fifteenth century. But to let the *motto* open both halves of each setting seems like some sort of overkill.

A certain cadential figure has become known as the ‘English figure’, as it “appears time and time again in pieces known to be by English composers, and in anonymous pieces exhibiting other English features.”<sup>19</sup> Rob Wegman has, however, pointed out that “the ‘English Figure’ was far more widespread in Continental music than its name suggests. Yet its frequency there was indeed significantly lower than in English music, and becomes all but negligible after the 1450s.”<sup>20</sup> Maybe its appearance was a consequence of the trend of emulating English models.

19 Charles Hamm, ‘A Catalogue of Anonymous English Music in Fifteenth-Century Continental Manuscripts’, *Musica Disciplina*, 22 (1968), pp. 47–76, at p. 59.

20 Rob C. Wegman, ‘Mensural Intertextuality in the Sacred Music of Anyoine Busnoys’, in Paula Higgins (ed.), *Antoine Busnoys. Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, Oxford 1999, pp. 175–214, at p. 202.

Ex. 4, *mottos* in four masses

a, *Missa Caput*, Sanctus



b, *Missa Veterem hominem*, Gloria



c, *Missa Se la face ay pale*, Sanctus



d, *Missa Sine nomine*, Sanctus



The typical version of the ‘English figure’ as encountered in English sources appears in triple time and in blackened notes (*minor color*). This is exactly how it is found at the end of the first section of Sanctus (bb. 94–95, see *Ex. 5a*). The figure here takes on a secondary role as a supporting line in the high contratenor, a fourth below the highest voice, the real counter voice to the tenor. Exactly the same can be found in *Missa Caput* at the end of Gloria (*Ex. 5b*). The two cadences are so similar that it is noteworthy – not the first sign that *Sine nomine* was modelled on *Caput*, and not the last either. Variants of the ‘English figure’ may appear in quite dissonant textures. In Kyrie, bars 145–146 (*Ex. 5c*), two sets of cadential movements are played out simultaneously, one to A (in altus and tenor with the ‘English figure’) and one to C (superius and the low contra). This is what happens in improvisatory music!



Ex. 5a, *Missa Sine nomine*, end of first section in Sanctus

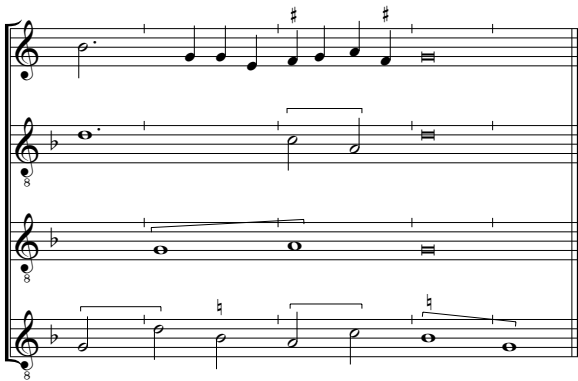


Ex. 5b, *Missa Caput*, end of Gloria



Ex. 5c, *Missa Sine nomine*, Kyrie,  
bars 145-147

Like *Caput* and its companion *Veterem hominem*, the mass excels in non-standard embellishments of cadential points, with or without suspensions. A typical one can be found at the end of Gloria (see Ex. 6a). A very close relation to it ends the first section in the Kyrie of *Caput* (Ex. 6b). These examples demonstrate that *Missa Sine nomine* was composed by someone with an intimate knowledge of the *Caput* mass more than they are signs of an English origin. They stand out as quotations. Like much else in the mass they appear to fit in with the composer's preconceived plan.



Ex. 6a, *Missa Sine nomine*, end of Gloria



Ex. 6b, *Missa Caput*, end of first section in Kyrie

*An experiment in unity in sound – the sound of improvised polyphony*

The most remarkable trait of *Missa Sine nomine* is its curious, absolutely rigid construction scheme. As mentioned above, it seems as if the composer did analyse the *Caput* model, and reduced its essential characteristics into a minimum setup. He distilled it so to say into a basic formula. In every setting of the mass items this formula is first presented in triple time (O) and then repeated in double time (C), the only variable being the lengths of the sections, which may be expanded or slightly reduced. The last 12 *brevis*-bars of every first section and the last 48 bars of the second are close to being fixed elements (cf. Fig. 2). In this way *Missa Sine nomine* comes out as a musical entity, which ten times runs through the same overall course of events, where only some of the notes, those not sung by the tenor, may be varied.

131

Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis: sub Pon-ci-o Pi-la-to

Cru-ci-fi-xus e-ti-am pro no-bis: sub Pon-ci-o Pi-la-

Ex. 7 *Missa Sine nomine*, Credo, bars 131–40

Singing in two voices occupies a great part of the duration of its settings, between 43 and 55 per cent, almost double the time the duos fill out in *Missa Caput*, where their percentages lie between 24 and 34 per cent. A great number of contemporary masses can be found with long introductory duets, but these duets nearly always involve the two highest voices only, or are quite variable in their choice of voice-pairs. *Sine nomine* seems to be unique in its adherence to this rigid scheme. The duos are as we saw in *Ex. 1* very easy on the ears. After the motto, the voices continue in free polyphony, which often turn to imitative passages, but always at the unison or the octave. In general, there are much more imitation in the duos than in the four-part music, and we find even passages in canon as in *Sanctus* bars 66–68, a unison strict canon resulting in parallel thirds.

The first impression of hearing the mass is that much of it is pure sound, the sound of singing voices. This impression stems from the *Kyrie*, the *Sanctus*, the *Agnus dei* and passages in the *Credo*, where only a few words or syllables carry long stretches of music. The composer, however, has been careful to place the text so it can be heard without difficulties. The words for the three “*Kyrie*”-invocations are, for example, precisely notated in the tenor voice, which is quite unusual. In the settings of long wordy texts as *Gloria* and *Credo*, a syllabic declamation of the words is quite common. Especially the duos take care to let the words be clearly heard, and they can be quite expressive – see for example the syllabic setting of “*Cruxifixus etiam pro nobis*” in bars 131–137 in the second section of the *Credo* (*Ex. 7*). In the music for four voices we find another sort of text setting, which rather may be characterized as a polyphony of words: The words can be heard distinctly in the top voice, stretched out in long melismas or recited in fast notes, all on top of lower voices trailing behind or participating with the superius in the delivery of words.

In *Ex. 7* we hear again the motif I named “x” combined with triadic figures in imitation on ‘etiam pro nobis’. I have singled out and marked this figure with an “x” in the schematic overview of *Sine nomine* (see *Figure 2*) in places where it is foregrounded in varying shapes, also in inversion. A single glance at the scheme shows that this figure appears so often that it becomes a strong element in the sounding identity of the mass. This figure belongs to the stock of trade of improvised polyphony, of singing a counter voice against a held tenor note. The concords of fifths, sixths and thirds are safe to use, and moving between them in the shape 5–6–5–3 only and variants hereof are even safer (*Ex. 8a*), and they can be combined into interlocking imitative patterns (*Ex. 8b*), which produce an

Ex. 8a, basic figures of counterpoint

Ex. 8b, combined into an imitative pattern

Ex. 9, *Missa Sine nomine*, Gloria, bars 72–79

ostinato effect. In Credo and Sanctus the composer seems to be ‘in love’ with his x-motif, which generates a lot of imitating ostinatos. Agnus dei is similar, but here he succeeds in letting the melodic lines flow more freely, less busy and obsessive with hexachordal figures. Especially the end of Agnus dei is successful.

The last appearance of this figure in the first section of Gloria is in the form of a linear ascent  $a'-d''$  and then back to  $a'$  repeated three times (Ex. 9, bars 72–76). It creates an ostinato effect similar to the three-part imitations on the x-figure. The ostinato is a characteristic technique of improvising multiple voices against an unmoving tenor. Here the composer performs the ostinato against a moving tenor. It is a very effective way of building up tension towards the final cadence. The first sections of Kyrie, Credo and Sanctus make similar use of ostinato passages leading to their final cadences, and ostinato effects are heard in several other places, in the duos as well.

In the duos that introduce the second section of Gloria another basic motif appears, which also belongs to the improvisatory bag of tricks. In bars 112–119 the two contratenors moves down and up the F-triad in unison close imitation on the words “Qui tollis peccata mundi” (Ex. 10). The triadic motif, which we could call “y”, appears often in the mass in different guises (Kyrie, bb. 58 and 119, Credo, bb. 3, 19, 110, 141, 162 and 207, Agnus dei, bb. 17, 89 and 117). Along with the x-figure this imitative motif reaffirms the musical sameness of all the mass sections.

To conclude on the sound of *Missa Sine nomine*, we must say that it contains nothing spectacular, only smooth unchallenging counterpoint in an unchanging pattern of duos leading to four-part carpets of sound decorated with swarms of standard figures, a sound of many concords of thirds and full triads with the occasional improvisatory sharp dissonance. If anything, we experience the same sound picture again and again. It is not that exactly the same music is repeated; in fact, it is quite admirable how the composer has avoided repeating passages note for note, even if some of the imitative passages on the x-figure are close. However, all the diversity put into his use of expressive, declamatory passages, imitations and his play with imitative figures only serves to maintain an extremely consistent sound picture.

On the whole, *Missa Sine nomine* observes the rules of artful polyphony, which was codified in the famous *Liber de arte contrapuncti* from 1477 by Johannes Tinctoris. This book appeals to improvising singers as well as to musicians creating polyphony on



Ex. 10, triadic imitation figure in altus and contra (Gloria bars 112–24)

paper.<sup>21</sup> It describes the process of creating music as the same one in both cases, but with differing expectations of how strictly all rules can be kept. The composer is responsible that all voice parts relate correctly to each other, while the singers in *cantus super librum* (improvising on the book) often are able to relate only to the tune of the tenor, which they can see in the page of ‘the book’, a liturgical chant collection. There cannot, however, be any doubt that for Tinctoris the ideal was the artful music, and in his last rule he underscores that the request for *varietas*, variety, during the sounding of music to the same degree applies to improvised music as to composed music. In his eight rule Tinctoris defined *varietas*:

Also, any composer or improviser . . . of the greatest genius may achieve this diversity if he either composes or improvises now by one quantity, then by another, now by one perfection, then by another, now by one proportion, then by another, now by one melodic interval, then by another, now with suspensions, then without suspensions, now with fuga, then without fuga, now with pauses, then without pauses, now diminished, now plain ...<sup>22</sup>

This means composing with variation in tempo and rhythmic activity and in melody, with changes between simple declamation and textural complexity, with and without fuga etc. – everything but repetitions. It is not a very clear definition of the desirable *varietas*. It could include Tinctoris’ own *Missa L’homme armé*, of which Edgar Sparks remarked that “Tinctoris, without doubt, is following his own recommendation that a composer make use of all artifices in a large composition such as a Mass, but the effect, on the whole, is rather jumbled.”<sup>23</sup> If we disregard some repetitive elements, *Missa Sine nomine* could also fit his definition of *varietas*, even if it is near being the opposite of Tinctoris’ own *cantus firmus* mass. However, we must keep in mind that Tinctoris formulated his rules and opinions on the background of his knowledge of the music of the preceding generations, to which *Missa Sine nomine* belongs. It is highly probable that in the middle of the century, long before, for example, pervading imitation became a standard structural device in sacred polyphony, there was no consensus on the balance between unity and diversity.

21 Allan Seay (ed.), *Johannis Tinctoris Opera theoretica* (Corpus scriptorum de musica 22) American Institute of Musicology 1978, vol. 2.

22 Tinctoris, *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, Liber III, Cap. VII. Translation quoted after Alexis Luko, ‘Tinctoris on *varietas*’, *Early Music History*, 27 (2008), pp. 99–136 (at p. 129).

23 Edgar H. Sparks, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet, 1420–1520*, Berkeley 1963, p. 241. The mass is published in J. Tinctoris (W. Melin. ed.), *Opera omnia* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 18) American Institute of Musicology 1976, p. 74.

In a sister manuscript to Rome CS 14, the contemporary MS Cappella Sistina 51, we find an anonymous mass building on Ockeghem's chanson "D'ung aultre amer" (fols. 113<sup>v</sup>–122), which Rob C. Wegman characterized as "an experiment". Here the experiment went strongly in the direction of diversity. The anonymous composer used "the whole range of contemporary cantus firmus treatment—from strictest to freest—" within a double *cursus* framework in order to create the greatest possible variety. This resulted in reaching 'a point where the tenor had ceased to be effective as a structural voice. ... The composer's solution, the chain structure, was a masterstroke, it not only enabled him to present a wide range of styles in succession, but also offered the possibility of creating a new type of musical coherence, replacing the coherence provided by the cantus firmus."<sup>24</sup> This mass may be a decade younger than *Missa Sine nomine*, and it too relies heavily on two-voice passages. In Gloria and Credo especially, we find duos just as extended as in *Sine nomine* – and in similar patterns – but also quick exchanges between changing pairs of voices. The voices move through their ranges in a way quite different from the hexachord fixation in *Sine nomine*; the long stretches of four-part polyphony are characterized by the greatest possible variety and care for word expression. As Wegman remarked, *Missa D'ung aultre amer* is far more listener-oriented than the pure cantus firmus mass.

Alexis Luko offers a different interpretation of Tinctoris' concept of *varietas*. It must first and foremost be understood as advice on the organizing of music as well-formed and impressive speech in accordance with the classic rules of rhetoric. In her analysis of Tinctoris' freely composed four-part *Missa Sine nomine III*, she finds that he was in favour of using motif repetitions (*redictae*) and musical modules as expressive means at rhetorical important moments. "What is new ... is Tinctoris's propensity for employing units of *redictae* at rhetorically significant musical junctures. Ideas presented in his *Liber de arte contrapuncti* and his *Missa sine nomine no. 3* suggests that his attempts at forging links between music and rhetoric were not only theoretically based, but also textually motivated."<sup>25</sup> Decades earlier, *Missa Sine nomine* may in all its repetitiveness have represented a different musical experiment concentrating on the unity of the mass music.

### *The sound of the Sanctus*

Musical unity is a constituent trait of the four-part cantus firmus mass as it emerged during the decades around 1450. The use of a liturgical or a secular tune as a recurrent element could link the single mass cycle to a specific liturgical feast, to a civil occasion, to a donor's preferences, or it could enrich the mass music as participant in a rich network of symbolic associations. And combined with the recurrent motto, it assured a degree of unity between the five elements of the ordinary. Moreover, the majority of composers

24 Rob C. Wegman, "The Anonymous Mass *D'ung aultre amer*: A Late Fifteenth-Century Experiment", *Musical Quarterly*, 74 (1990), pp. 566–594 (at p. 588). The mass was published in Rex Eakins (ed.), *An Editorial Transnotation of the Manuscript Cappella Sistina 51, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, Liber Missarum*, The Institute of Mediaeval Music, Ottawa, Canada, vol. 3, 2001, pp. 235–315; an online edition is available as Agostino Magro (ed.), *Missa D'ung aultre amer (4 vv)*, (Le Corpus des Messes Anonymes du XVe siècle) Programme Ricercar 2016 at <http://ricercar-old.cesr.univ-tours.fr/3-programmes/EMN/MessesAnonymes/sources/75.pdf>.

25 Alexis Fleur Luko, *Unification and Varietas in the Sine nomine Mass from Dufay to Tinctoris* (PhD-diss., McGill University, Montreal) 2007, p. 371. The mass is published in Tinctoris, *Opera*, p. 55.

sought to keep the music within carefully circumscribed stylistic boundaries, not least in order to maintain a recognizable personal style in the developing fierce competition among musicians. The *Caput* model carried on from the older motet a heritage of varying a set of melodic ideas within a strict framework. This comes into a full flowering of expertly varied elegance in Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale*, and it may have inspired the composer of *Missa Sine nomine*. However, after a short time the fast development of the complexity of contrapuntal skills, of displays of musical artifice, tended to make the musical surface of many masses difficult to perceive for the lay listener; the unity of the liturgy became veiled by a maze of sound, which was enjoyable to the expert listener, and which intrigued the reader of musical notation.

In his book *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass* Andrew Kirkman concludes that for the believers participating in the High Mass the sacred moment of transubstantiation and Elevation of the Host, which was performed by the celebrant in secrecy during the singing of Sanctus, could be stretched out through the whole Mass. "It is not hard to see how the spread of imagery ... of the redeemer throughout the Mass could have encouraged a similar consistency in physical phenomena devised to enhance and adorn its message, including the music. This, I propose, is the ultimate force behind the creation of the cyclic cantus firmus Mass and its celebrated musical unity."<sup>26</sup> This may also be the reason for the creation of *Missa Sine nomine*. It is difficult to think of any candidate better equipped to demonstrate the unity of the mass music in a way so easily perceivable to any believer, even when the listener was placed in a humble position outside the choir, far away from the altar. The musical world of the sacred actions performed during the Sanctus sounds already from the first notes of the Kyrie, and it never stops or changes.<sup>27</sup> It celebrates the Eucharist in a musical language of relative anonymity that was cultivated in improvised polyphony, in the practice of *Singing upon the book*, which adorned a great number of liturgical services.

*Missa Sine nomine* may be regarded as an experiment in musical unity comprehensible to everybody. Obviously, it was a conscious compositional decision to reduce the *double cursus* layout from the *Caput* model to essentials in a rigorously maintained structure of duos and four-part polyphony, to introduce every first and second section of the setting with a *motto*, and to pervade the music with easily recognizable contrapuntal commonplaces. We have as little knowledge of the identity of the tenor tune as the fifteenth-century scribes. If it was a tune constructed by the composer for use in this mass composition, it fits perfectly into the way he planned all its other elements. The composer has shown the utmost care to assure that coherence and structure are immediately accessible to listeners as well as to the officiating clergy. The total effect may be bordering on the naive, but there is nothing naive about his boldness in using improvisatory practices to create a pervasive, sacred sound. It offers the participants in the Mass a feeling of security and predictability – in its core not very different from much popular modern music for relaxation.

26 Andrew Kirkman, *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass. Medieval Context to Modern Revival*, Cambridge 2010, p. 203.

27 A digital performance of Kyrie and Sanctus can be heard at <http://sacred.pwch.dk/>; a different interpretation of the complete mass is available on Rob C. Wegman's site *Renaissance Masses, 1440–1520* (at <http://www.robcwegman.org/mass.htm>).

The existence of two such ‘experimental’ masses, however different they are, in the repertory of the representative collections, which ended up in the Cappella Sistina in the early 1480s, shows that the development of the cyclic cantus firmus mass during its first decades was anything but linear. Alongside the masses developing complex cantus firmus treatment, canonic sophistication and use of multiple tunes as in the works by Du Fay, Domarto, d’Amerval and Regis and the series of five *L’homme armé* masses in Rome CS 14, a keen interest in the direct appeal of sacred music persisted, even if musicology largely disregarded such music when telling the history of the cyclic mass. The legacy of the *Caput* model had many facets. *Missa Sine nomine* is evidence of the model’s success and potential of opening up for different directions, and as such it fits perfectly among the masses of Rome CS 14. Like *Missa D’ung aultre amer* the mass was received favourably in international musical life from Flanders to Italy during the second half of the fifteenth century and is preserved in the same sources as the works by famous musicians.

## Freedom of creation and the virtuoso composer: Guillaume Du Fay exploring sound and rhythmic relations in *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*

Kathrin Kirsch und Alexander Lotzow (eds.), »*Music is different*« – *isn't it? Bedeutungen und Bedingungen musikalischer Autonomie. Festschrift für Siegfried Oechsle zum 65. Geburtstag*. Kassel 2021, pp. 49–67 (revised 2023)

In his last will, signed and witnessed in Cambrai July 8, 1474, Guillaume Du Fay (c.1400-74) left detailed instructions about the music he wished to hear during his last hours and what was to be performed at his funeral and as part of future memorial rituals. He founded a number of mass services of which two stood out because they required polyphonic music of his own composition. One was his annual memorial mass on August 5, which included his now lost Requiem, and the other the feast of St Anthony of Padua on June 13. He bequeathed two choir books to the St Stephen chapel in the Cambrai Cathedral, where the services were to be celebrated, one a paper manuscript containing his *Missa Sancti Anthonii Viennensis* and the mass *De Requiem*, the other a costly parchment volume with *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua* and several other sacred songs – both choir books are now lost. Concerning the last-mentioned St Anthony mass, Du Fay requested that the better singers of the cathedral (“sufficientiores de choro”) participated in its performance along with the choirboys and their master. Du Fay had, according to the accounts of his executors, founded this yearly celebration of St Anthony of Padua a long time before his death.<sup>1</sup>

Du Fay apparently wished to be remembered in particular by this mass, an old setting composed for three voices, and thus he made it take precedence over his – in our time – more famous cantus firmus masses in four parts, the masses *Se la face ay pale*, *L'homme armé*, *Ecce ancilla* or the then quite recent *Missa Ave regina celorum*. His wish was fulfilled. The feast of St Anthony was celebrated with his music at the Cambrai Cathedral at least until 1579,<sup>2</sup> and leading music theorists like Tinctoris, Gaffurius, Spataro and Aaron knew and discussed the mass during the next couple of generations.

The mass ordinary for St Anthony was composed well before the early 1450s, because its Kyrie at that time had reached Munich and was entered into the MS Trent 93.<sup>3</sup> Shortly hereafter, the young Johannes Wiser copied this Kyrie into a new codex, the MS Trent 90, which he made for his own use.<sup>4</sup> After having moved to Trent before July 1455, Wiser got access to a complete copy of the ordinary for *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*. Using this new exemplar he added the name “Duffay” above his extant copy of the Kyrie in MS Trent 90 (ff. 72v-73), and below the music he inserted a reference to the remaining

1 A biography of Du Fay can be found in Alejandro Enrique Planchart, *Guillaume Du Fay. The Life and Works*, 2 vols., Cambridge 2018, which includes an up-to-date bibliography (vol. 2. *The works*, pp. 857-908); Du Fay's will and the executors' accounts are reproduced in full in its Appendix 4 (ibid., pp. 798-856).

2 Planchart, *Du Fay*, p. 218.

3 Trento, Archivio Diocesano, ms. 93\* (olim BL).

4 Trento, Museo Provinciale d'Arte, Castello del Buonconsiglio, ms. 1377 (olim 90).

sections, which he entered in the last part of the codex (ff. 395v-406). Some years later, in the late 1450s, Wiser got hold of a set of propers, which completes the ordinary as a full service for St Anthony and which possibly also was present in the parchment manuscript that Du Fay left to the St Stephen chapel. It was entered on ff. 182v-189 in the MS Trent 88 as part of a long series of proprium masses of which Du Fay may have composed several items and even complete masses.<sup>5</sup>

There can be no doubt that the liturgical function of the plenary mass, which constitutes a complete service for St Anthony and may have been accompanied by vespers and motets in Du Fay's choirbook,<sup>6</sup> is the main reason for Du Fay's preference for this mass among his rich legacy – as a manifestation of his lifelong veneration of the Franciscan saint. But we may be permitted to guess that in addition *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua* in his mind occupied a special position as a musical work. It was composed during a period crucial for the development of the polyphonic mass cycle, and it is a work that combines personal expressivity with some of the most complex music of the period, music that underscores his high demands on performances as well as his status as a learned *musicus*. Here he permitted himself the freedom of creation that he experienced in composing secular songs, and he was able to explore this freedom in large-scale music.

The English *Caput* mass and its many Continental followers that adhered to its four-part model with a cantus firmus in the tenor was successful in the 1440s, and it established the ordinary mass cycle as the most prestigious musical genre. The use of a liturgical or a secular tune as a recurrent element in all five main sections granted the cantus firmus mass a distinguishing musical unity, which was supported by several other means, and it could link the single mass cycle to a specific liturgical feast, to a civil occasion, to a donor's preferences, or it could enrich the mass music as a participant in a network of symbolic associations. Moreover, during the next generations this genre constituted a forum for fierce competition among musicians, accelerating a development of technical refinement, which besides the masses' liturgical function underpinned their standing as musical 'works' and the musicians as artists or 'composers'.

Evidently, Du Fay was aware of these new tendencies. During the 1440s he was busy revising and renewing the music books of the Cambrai Cathedral, and he seems to have composed a lot of new mass music, especially settings of proprium masses. Furthermore, he was writing a *Musica*, a short, comprehensive book of music theory, which told everything beginners had to know before mastering the singing of plainchant and the difficult mensural polyphony. Scattered traces of this treatise have survived.<sup>7</sup>

5 Trento, Museo Provinciale d'Arte, Castello del Buonconsiglio, ms. 1375 (*olim* 88). Further on the sources, see the introduction to my online edition, *Guillaume Du Fay, Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua (Mass ordinary)*. 2019 (at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Duf01.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Duf01.pdf)). Examples and references in the following refer to this publication.

6 Planchart, *Du Fay*, pp. 219-223.

7 A now lost manuscript of Du Fay's *Musica* was seen in 1824 by François-Joseph Fétis (cf. *Mémoire sur cette question: Quels ont été les mérites des Néerlandais dans la musique*, Amsterdam 1829, pp. 12-13), and quotes of its text survive in margin notes in two early treatises by Franchinus Gaffurius (cf. F. Alberto Gallo, 'Citazioni da un trattato di Dufay' in Mario Fabbri (ed.), *Studi di musicologia in onore di Guglielmo Barblan in occasione del LX compleanno* (Collectanea historiae musicae 4, 1966), pp. 149-152), and Christian Meyer has identified some of these quotes as coming from a fragmentary treatise on solmization, hexachords and modes, ff. 106v-111, in a German compilation of theoretical texts, MS Clm 15632 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (cf. Christian Meyer, *Un témoin de la Musica de G. Dufay*. PDF Dépôt hal (6 novembre 2013), <http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00879743>).

Du Fay may have sought to bolster his renown as a learned *musicus* by writing the book. Apparently it circulated widely and was quoted by other writers during the next decades. His last big occasional motets (so-called “isorhythmic motets”) and two ordinary cycles, the St Anthony mass and *Missa Se la face ay pale*, may represent the very different results from his reactions to the new challenges posed by the unified cantus firmus mass as well as from his rethinking of basic music theory.

The discussion of *Missa Sancti Anthonii* in the scholarly literature has not been exhaustive. In his dissertation of 1960, Rudolf Bockholdt analysed its characteristics with special attention to the dissonance treatment, the layout of the mass and its treatment of the text, while maintaining a view of the mass as a unified whole, even if the connections between the elements were weaker than in the cantus firmus masses.<sup>8</sup> The opposite view was taken in Charles Hamm’s book of 1964 where he analysed its use of mensuration and proportional signs. He found reason to doubt the coherence of the cycle as well as Du Fay’s authorship: “The mass is not organized in any way that I am able to detect and thus I cannot imagine Dufay’s having written such a piece, at any period of his life.”<sup>9</sup>

Much has been written about the difficulties of recognizing the identity of this mass. Heinrich Bessler had published it as *Missa Sancti Anthonii Viennensis*, because he was not able to recognize it as the Padua mass from the descriptions by later music theorists.<sup>10</sup> Only in 1982 David Fallows was able to secure the correct identification based on an ingenious analyse of the Spataro music examples.<sup>11</sup> Here he also could confirm an ascription to Du Fay of at least one of the sections in the proprium mass in MS Trent 88, which Laurence Feininger in 1947 had proposed was composed by Du Fay.<sup>12</sup> Since then it has been discussed how far we can extend the authorship of Du Fay for the many proprium masses in Trent 88.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, the ordinary mass for St Anthony was not discussed in two PhD dissertations, where its contribution might have been important; in Andrew Kirkman’s on three-voice masses because it was placed just outside his temporal boundaries, and in the one by Alexis Fleur Luko on *Sine nomine* masses because Du Fay dedicated it to St Anthony and consequently it was not a *Sine nomine* mass.<sup>14</sup> The mass, however, does belong to the *Sine nomine* tradition along with Du Fay’s earlier three-part *Missa Sine*

- 8 Rudolf Bockholdt, *Die frühen Messenkompositionen von Guillaume Dufay I-II* (Münchner eröfentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte. Bd. 5), Tutzing 1960.
- 9 Charles E. Hamm, *A Chronology of the Works of Guillaume Dufay. Based on a Study of Mensural Practise*. Princeton 1964, pp. 103-113 (at p. 113).
- 10 Guglielmi Dufay (ed. H. Bessler), *Opera omnia II* (Corpus mensurabilis musicae 1) Rome 1960, pp. 47-68; this edition includes some misprints and misunderstandings of the notation.
- 11 David Fallows, *Dufay*. London 1982 (2nd rev. ed. 1987), pp. 182-193.
- 12 Laurence Feininger (ed.), *Monumenta Polyphoniae liturgicae sanctae ecclesiae romanae. Series II, Proprium missae. Tomus 1, Auctorum anonymorum, Missarum propria xvi quorum xi Guiielmo Dufay auctori adscribenda sunt ...*. Roma 1947, pp. 134-147.
- 13 In many writings by Planchart, Fallows and Rebecca L. Gerber, see further the introduction to my online edition of the proprium mass at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Duf01a.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Duf01a.pdf). A.E. Planchart has published it as a plenary cycle, *Missa Sancti Antonii de Padua and Sancti Francisci*, in his online edition of the complete works of Du Fay at <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/resources/music-editions/du-fay-opera-omnia/>.
- 14 Andrew Kirkman, *The Three-Voice Mass in the Later Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries. Style, Distribution and Case Studies*, New York 1995, and Alexis Fleur Luko, *Unification and Varietas in the Sine nomine Mass from Dufay to Tinctoris*, PhD-dissertation, McGill University, Montreal, 2007.

	Kyrie			Gloria					Credo				
Sections	3			5					5				
Voices	3	3	3	3-2	3-2	3	3-2	3-2	3-2	2	3-2	3-2	3
Mensuration	O	♢	O	O	♢	O	O	♢	O	O	♢	♢	O
Final	F	F	F	F	F	D	F	F	F	C	F	C	F
Total range	c-c''			c-c''					c-f''				
Ranges S-T-C	a-c'' · c-f' · c-f''			g-c'' · c-f' · c-f''					g-f'' · e-a' · c-a'				
Length*	64 bars			214 bars					281 bars				

	Sanctus					Agnus		
Sections	5					3		
Voices	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3
Mensuration	O	O	O	♢	O	O	♢	O
Final	F	F	F	F	F	F	C	F
Total range	d-f''					e-f''		
Ranges S-T-C	a-f'' · e-a' · d-a'					g-f'' · e-g' · e-a'		
Length	167 bars					87 bars		

Figure 1, Du Fay, *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*, overview

\* The length of each main section is given in numbers of *brevis*-bars in *tempus perfectum*. For the sections in diminished *tempus* the count has been halved; final bars count as one bar.

*nomine*, even if Du Fay intended it to function along with the *proprium* settings as a plenary mass.<sup>15</sup> Like the *Sine nomine* masses, the St Anthony mass was composed without references to any pre-existing material. It is bound together by a network of mottos and recurrent motives, and variation in sound is created by extensive duo passages, by use of imitation and changes of pace; and Gloria and Credo each consists of five shorter sections (see Figure 1) instead of the massive sections of the cantus firmus mass of the so-called *double cursus* model.

Writers have commented on the rhythmic complexity of the mass, its song-like character and its beauty, but to my knowledge no one has tried to explain the means by which Du Fay obtained its internal balance and the coherence of its five main sections. Two traits have often been singled out for comment, the sudden occurrence of a strong personal expression at the words “*suscipe deprecationem nostram*” in the Gloria,<sup>16</sup> and the steady expansion of the range of its highest voice along with a rise of the tessitura of the lower voices.<sup>17</sup> The mass is written for a wide-ranging superius and tenor and contratenor parts, which share the same range. The discrepancies in ranges between the main sections (see Figure 1) could possibly be seen as indications that all sections did not originally belong together. It was exactly this trait that instigated the present investigation.

The layout of the mass, its carefully structured alternation between full-voice passages and varying duos, the agile voices that often change places, and the use of recurrent motives and of imitation between the voices, all these elements are important for our experience of its musical unity. However, they are not at the centre of interest in the

15 The *Sine nomine* mass was composed in the early 1420s (published in Dufay, *Opera II*, pp. 1-14); it shares motives and ideas with his slightly later ballade “*Reveilliés vous et faites chiere lye*” of 1423.

16 See, for example, Andrew Kirkman’s comparison of this passage with the famous “*Miserere*” in Du Fay’s last mass, *Missa Ave regina celorum*, in *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass. Medieval Context to Modern Revival*. Cambridge 2010, pp. 68-75.

17 Fallows, *Dufay*, p. 187.

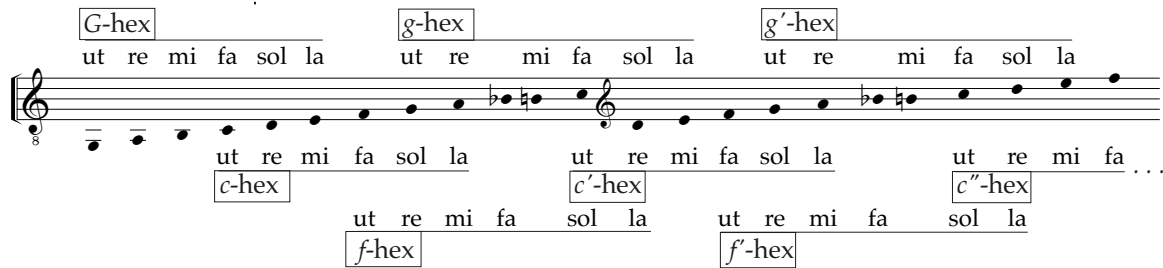


Figure 2, hexachords appearing on the Guidonian hand

following discussion. I shall concentrate on two procedures, which I find decisive for Du Fay's pioneering conception of his cycle, namely his development and expansion of simple hexachordal structures and his persistent investigation of a simple rhythmical relationship.

### Hexachordal structures

The basic teachings of the Guidonian hand and the positions of the hexachords formed the starting point for any choirboy's meeting with the repertoire of plainchant and polyphony. The hexachords mapped the scale system and laid out roads to take or to avoid, and had to be internalized by every singer. For the singer it was a pedagogical system and a help to keep one's position in improvised polyphony, but here we meet it in a different role, as a supplier of building elements for Du Fay's music.

Figure 2 shows the tone system with only one variable step, the fluctuation between B-*quadratum* (B-natural) and B-*rotundum* (B-flat). The positions of the half-tone steps are indicated by the syllables *mi-fa*.<sup>18</sup> The hexachords contained naturally within this tone-system (the *musica recta*) can be named in many different ways, but I have chosen simply to designate them by their starting notes (*c*-hex, a hexachord starting on the note *c* – one of the positions for the *hexachordum naturalis* –, and the two hexachords with variants of the note B, *f*-hex and *g*-hex (*molle* and *durum*) and their octave transpositions). All other hexachords are fictive, those, for example, on the notes B-flat or D, which we meet in Du Fay's music, both belong to *musica ficta* or *falsa*. Already the *c''*-hex shown in Figure 2 belongs to the *ficta* sphere, because it stretches outside the Guidonian hand (*G-e''*).

At this point in the history of music, a hexachordal signature (a flat notated at the beginning of a staff) is not to be confounded with a key signature, a prescriptive sign that involves a transposition of the scale. Rather it is an indication of which hexachordal position ought to be the default, the one first taken in consideration by the singer. This means that in a part with a one flat signature, the singer may have to sing B-naturals and thus create a tonal contrast to his default choice, the B-flat.

The Kyrie is notated without hexachordal signatures in both sources (see *Example 1*). This may very well have been the intention of the composer. The music is so simple that no signatures are needed. It opens with easy recognizable figures that clearly indicate the hexachordal positions. In Kyrie I all voices start in a F-hexachord and glide into a

18 The best introduction to hexachords is still Rob C. Wegman's short chapter "Musica ficta" in Tess Knighton & David Fallows (eds.), *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*. London 1992, pp. 265-274.

Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Ky - ri - e - ley - son.

Ky - ri - e - ley - son.

Ky - ri - e - ley - son.

Example 1, Kyrie, bars 1-12

C-hexachord. The tenor builds a perfect melodic curve on the *f*-hex up and down and mutates into the *c*'-hex – up a sixth nicely balanced by a dip to the fourth below the final note, all in graceful rhythms.<sup>19</sup> It sings: *ut mi fa sol sol la sol mi fa sol ut/fa fa mi ut re ut fa la sol fa/ut* ... The superius sings a variant of this melodic line, and the contour of the hexachord built into the melodic opening serves as a motto in slightly different shapes at the beginnings of all the main sections (in Gloria and Agnus drawing the contours of the *c*'-hex) and of several subsections. The little motive *mi-fa-sol* in short note values that runs through all three voices as a sort of opening imitation, returns again and again in the mass as a connective element and hexachordal marker in very audible ways.

When the tenor in bar 3 reaches the fifth (*sol*) above its opening note (*ut*), the superius and the contra mutates into *c*'- and *c*-hexes; and when the tenor in bar 5 changes to the *c*-hex, the contra mutates into the *f*-hex. Likewise, the tenor's change back to the *f*-hex in bar 8 is followed by the *f*'- and *c*-hexes in the other voices. In this way, two voices sing in the same hexachord, or hexachords an octave apart, while the third voice moves within one placed at the fifth or at the fourth. It happens in a smooth complementary interplay, which can be met with in countless freely composed songs. And every singer trained in improvising polyphony based on a given tune knew how to manoeuvre by choosing the right hexachordal position in order to create a varied harmony out of concords and traditional dissonance patterns offered by the shifting combinations of hexachords.

The simplicity of Kyrie I soon becomes challenged. The tenor in *Christe* builds on the *f*-hex with a higher central passage using the *c*'-hex (bb. 46-50), and the superius responds by moving for the first time into the *g*'-hex, while the wide-ranging contra keeps to the

19 The tenor is notated in this and all the following three-part examples as the middle voice, and note values are reduced by half compared to the original notation.

Example 2, Kyrie, bars 81-89

In *Example 2* we get a presentation of the shifting hexachord combinations accentuated by the many leaps between the positions, which give the final passage an aura of a chase involving three independent voices responding to each other. Every segment of melody is kept within a single hexachord, but we may trace a tendency to combine hexachords into larger scale-segments in which the music can develop with greater freedom. Strict hexachordal formations can be found in Du Fay's secular songs as well as in music building on pre-existing material, but in this mass Du Fay opens the music in a manner much simpler than what we find in the great majority of his songs. The Kyrie seems designed as an exemplification of hexachordal singing, and in the remaining sections the pedagogical aim of showing the use of hexachords in still more complex formations may hide just below the surface.

After the Kyrie, the hexachords on G come to the foreground, and in the remainder of the mass sections the composer (or a safety-minded copyist) has put in one-flat hexachordal signatures in the lower voices in order to anchor the music in the F-tonality. The oscillation between the F- and G-hexachords with hard and soft B respectively is varied endlessly during the mass, and nearly all the way through Du Fay keeps the voices within *musica recta* – the notes on the hand. As the music evolves, Du Fay moves farther away from stock phrases and creates long elegant lines in chains of hexachords. Furthermore, he tends more and more to let the hexachords on F and G sound simultaneously in different voices. In some places, he does so in the service of expressivity.

126

te - Jhe - su

140

Cri - ste. Do - mi -

Example 3, Gloria, "Domine deus", bars 126-151

In the Gloria-section "Domine deus" (Example 3) he does not call on block chords with fermatas as often seen in masses, but lets the name of Christ stand out by slowing down the pace and changing the sound radically. The first words of the acclamation, "Domine unigenite" are set in a superius-tenor duo, which ends in a long melisma confirming the F-tonality with a notated accidental (b. 127) and full cadence. "Jesu" in long notes starts as if the phrase could be sung in the *f'*-hex in the superius, and the two lower voices strongly accentuate the F-sound. However, the superius has to look ahead and recognize that the phrase has to mutate into the *g'*-hex, and the *b'*-natural on "Christe" comes as a ray of light. That we here have a special situation is underscored by the tenor, which sings two descending fifths in very long note values, *c'-f* and *g-c*, supporting the change of light.

For long stretches the smooth progress of the play with hexachords is used to assure tonal stability, especially in passages where other elements are in the foreground. In the service of musical expression, the composer may choose to disrupt it, and thus cause a sort of hexachordal breakdown. This is what seems to happen in the "Qui tollis"-section in Gloria (Example 4). After a regular period with cadences to G and D – all safely within *musica recta* – the structure breaks up at "suscipe deprecationem nostram" (receive our prayer, bb. 221 ff). A supplicating diminished fourth in the superius harmonized in chords opens an unusual passage, where the music suddenly becomes intimate, a sound of personal anguish. Viewed from the side of the hexachords, it leaps into *musica falsa*, and instead of smooth lines the lower voices excel in abrupt motion in wide intervals. Rapid changes between hexachords on F, D, B-flat and C in different octaves simply take the music off the hand. The fictive D-hexachord including the F-sharp *mi* jolts the sound away from the domineering F-hexachord, and it retains a prominent role; it is the only subsection in Gloria that ends away from F – in D.

218

pec - ca - ta mun - di, sus - ci - pe

tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, sus - ci - pe de -

lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, sus - ci - pe

224

de - pre - ca - ti o - nem

- pre - ca - ti o - nem

de - pre - ca - ti o - nem, de - pre - ca - ti o - nem,

230

no - stram.

no - stram.

no - stram.

Example 4, Gloria, "Qui tollis", bars 218-235

The exploration of new hexachordal combinations induced Du Fay to expand the range of the upper voice until the singers in the last three main sections had to master or share a range between *g* and *f''*. If the music was sung at something near notated pitch, he thereby introduced the participation of boy singers. The highest note, *f''*, only appears in two places in the Credo, at "Et ascendit in celo" (bb. 174-176) and at "Et expecto resurrectionem" (b. 374), both clearly for symbolic reasons. It later reappears twice only in two duos, "Benedictus" in Sanctus and in Agnus II. The *f''* lies, as already remarked, outside the Guidonian hand, and should be treated carefully as *musica ficta*, and that is exactly what Du Fay did. A more important consequence of the expansion of the range is that it leaves room for a fuller use of the complete *g'*-hex; the note *e''* appears often as the top note of phrases. This grants Du Fay freedom to combine hexachords in wide-ranging chains of notes and room to display the effect of three simultaneously sounding hexachords. In order to keep the relations between the three voices he had to gradually move up the ranges of the lower voices (see Figure 1).

## Rhythmic relations

In his *Tractato di musica* printed in Venice in 1531 Giovanni Spataro describes the Credo section “Et in spiritum sanctum” (bb. 254 ff) as being notated under the mensural designation C2,<sup>20</sup> while we in the Trent MS find the sign  $\Phi$  in all the sections in duple time. This could very well mean that Spataro had at his disposition a copy of *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*, which transmitted Du Fay’s original notation of the duple time sections in C2, in imperfect *minor modus*. This notation organizes the music in *longa*-values of two *breves* each containing two *semibreves*, all diminished by half. In practise, this mensuration is not different from normal cut double time, *tempus imperfectum diminutum*. The majority of music scribes simply replaced it by the more common sign  $\Phi$ . Thereby they obliterated the subtle difference between the *longa*-pattern of C2 and the  $\Phi$  pattern in *breves*. In this mass Du Fay consequently keeps all the sections in double time in the *longa*-pattern (the double bars are in the examples marked by ticks appearing in all voices on the lowest line of the staves, see *Examples 3, 6 and 7*). He even retains this double bar organization in Gloria’s fast finish in *proportio dupla* ( $\Phi$ ).

In this mass Du Fay besides the hexachords seems preoccupied with the relation between triple and double time, or with the equivalence of *brevis* values in different mensurations. This is highly interesting, because during the period when he composed the St Anthony mass he also systematically explored the possibilities of maintaining the equality of the next lower note value, the *semibrevis*, in his four-part *Missa Se la face ay pale*. This mass was composed entirely in perfect *minor modus*, that is, organized in perfect longae or in groups of three *brevis*-bars. The mass is all the way through built on a cantus firmus, the tenor voice from Du Fay’s own three-part song “Se la face ay pale”. The tune is placed in the tenor exactly as it is found in the song, only with long rests added and canon instructions for singing it first in tripled note values, then in doubled values and at last as written (in Gloria and Credo). In the shorter sections (Kyrie, Sanctus and Agnus) the tune appears once only in doubled note values.<sup>21</sup> This strictly proportional manipulation of the tenor, in which the notes and rests must be multiplied by the singers during performance, is only made possible by Du Fay’s adherence to a view of note equivalence, which is opposite to the one displayed in the Saint Anthony mass. When *brevis*-equivalence is not possible, he instead maintains the equivalence of the *semibreves*, the same relation which Tinctoris later advocated. In this way, the two roughly contemporary mass ordinaries come to stand as Du Fay’s quite methodical examination of the musical potentials of different notions of rhythmic organisation.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 3 draws up the relations between the rhythmic signs which we find in *Missa Sancti Anthonii*. The equivalence of the *brevis*-values is shown in Figure 3a, where the triple-time *brevis* in *tempus perfectum* (O) contains three *semibreves* and has the same rhythmical value as the two double-time *breves* in *tempus imperfectum diminutum* (or imperfect *minor modus* C2) each containing two *semibreves*. On the *brevis* level this produces a straight 1:2 relation owing to the halving of the double time, while the

20 Cap. xxxi, see the facsimile at [http://imslp.org/wiki/Tractato\\_di\\_musica\\_\(Spataro%2C\\_Giovanni\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Tractato_di_musica_(Spataro%2C_Giovanni)).

21 See further the introduction to my online edition, *Guillaume Du Fay, Missa Se la face ay pale*, 2018, at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Duf02.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Duf02.pdf).

22 Concerning *brevis* contra *semibrevis* equivalence in the 15th century, see Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Mensuration and Proportion Signs. Origins and Evolution*. Oxford 1993.

Figure 3, Du Fay, *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*, rhythmic signs

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 \text{O} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \text{O} \end{array} = \text{C}(\text{C2}) \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \text{O} \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \text{O} \end{array} & & 1:2 \\
 \begin{array}{c} \diamond \diamond \diamond \\ \text{J} \text{ J} \text{ J} \end{array} & & \begin{array}{c} \diamond \diamond \diamond \\ \text{J} \text{ J} \text{ J} \end{array} \quad 3:4
 \end{array}$$

Figure 3a, basic relation between the sections in triple time (O) and in duple time (C)

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 \text{O} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{C} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{O} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 1:1 \\ 2:3 \end{array} \\
 \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{O} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 2:1 \\ 2:1 \end{array} \\
 \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \quad \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{O} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 2:1 \\ 4:3 \end{array} \\
 \text{C} \quad 3 \text{ or } \text{J} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 1:1 \\ 3:2 \end{array} \\
 \text{O3} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 3:2 \\ 9:4 \end{array} \\
 \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} & = & \text{C} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{H} \quad \text{H} \quad \text{H} \\ \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \diamond \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 4:3 \\ 8:6 \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

Figure 3b, signs appearing in the voice parts in the sections in triple time (O) and in duple time (C)

*semibrevis* values become unequal in length in the relation 3:4. Du Fay was interested in the rhythmic tensions inherent in the last relation, and he seems to have explored almost all possible variants of this relation. This happened by introducing signs in one or more voices, which change the relations between the voices. *Figure 3b* shows the signs appearing in sections under O and C respectively. We do not have to go into complicated explanations of the mensural and proportional signs. The table makes it easy to see that Du Fay explores simple as well as complex relations, 1:1, 1:2, 2:1, 2:3, 3:2, 3:4, 4:3 and 9:4 on the *semibrevis* level as well as on the *brevis* level; from rhythmic relations easy to perform to the very difficult.

Similar to the level of complexity in hexachordal use, the mass opens peacefully. The changes of pace that we find between the Kyrie- and Christe-sections (O – C – O) are absolutely conventional. The beat changes from being on the *semibreves* in O to the *breves* in the Christe-section (from J to O), and even if the speed of the *semibreves* are faster under C, we experience the tempo as calmer, more relaxed. This tempo relation is found in a great number of masses, motets and songs. The free-flowing melodic lines incorporating dotted figures, coloration and abundant syncopations create in themselves quite complex rhythmic configurations, which in the Gloria and Credo, the longest and most ambitious sections of the mass, gradually become layered with other rhythmic difficulties.

The first section in Gloria “Et in terra pax” continues the sound of the Kyrie, confirming the sound-space centred on F, but allotting space for alternating duos. This stability is shaken in the next section “Domine deus” in C by a notated *f*-sharp in the contra

258 C

so - lus do - mi - nus. Tu so -

*f*c'-hexs *c'/g'*-hexs

265 C

lus al - tis -

lus al - tis -

270 3

si - mus, Jhe - su Cri - ste.

si - mus, Jhe - su Cri - ste.

*f*-hex

Example 5, Gloria, "Qui sedes", bars 258-275 (superius and contra)

already in bar 6, which introduces a new prominence of the G-hexachord (see *Example 3*). Rhythmically it is enlivened by the introduction of *sesquialtera* with the signs ♪ or just 3, which create a 3:2 relation on the *semibrevis* level, first appearing in the highest voice in bars 90-105, then in alternation between superius (bb. 186-205) and contra (bb. 178-185 and 192-205), where they end up creating a mild 'rush' to the cadence.

The third and middle section of Gloria, "Qui tollis" in O, is quite dense, and this is where we experience the breakdown of the tonal stability. In bar 216 (just before the start of *Example 4*) the superius changes into *tempus imperfectum cum prolatione maior* (C). This creates an important change in the phrasing of the expressive superius line by the 2:3 relation between the perfect and the imperfect *semibreves*.

"Qui sedes" opens much calmer with a broad tenor tune reaffirming the F-tonality. It ends in an extended duo, which as mentioned displays the combined and juxtaposed hexachords (*Example 5*). Superius from bar 258 again creates a 2:3 relation with the sign C against the contra, which stays in O. The sign C in bar 265 accelerates it into 4:3, a *sesquiertia* relation on the *semibrevis* level. This is really difficult for the singers to perform, but it is topped by the final, virtuoso flourish, which adds *sesquialtera* (3:2) to the superius and thereby letting four perfect *semibreves* sound against three imperfect ones. Du Fay here combines *sesquiertia* (4:3) on the *semibrevis* level with *sesquialtera* (3:2) on the *minima* level combined with syncopations – the singers are only saved by the rock-steady regularity of the contratenor line towards the end. The accelerando leads directly into the final section "Cum sancto spiritu" in diminished perfect time, Φ, which doubles the initial tempo. The triumphant "Amen" ends in a canon at the fifth on the combination of three hexachords.

206

Et i - te - rum ven - tu - rus est cum glo - ri -

*c'-hex* *g'-hex*

*f'-hex* *tris.* *c'-hex*

*c'-hex* Et i - te - rum ven - tu - rus

214

a, ju - di - ca - re *f'-hex* vi -

Et i - te - rum ven - tu - rus est

*c'-hex* est ju - di - ca - re

Example 6, Credo, "Crucifixus", bars 206-220

The five sections of the Credo build on the script presented in Gloria. The first two explore the now extended range of the superius, which reaches *e''* for the first time at bar 19 in a sudden change into the *g'-hex* on "visibilium omnium" (all things visible). Again, the third and middle section, "Crucifixus", exhibits the strongest emotional tensions in constant alternations between the F- and G-hexachords, and at "et ascendit" the highest note *f''* is reached. After a cadence to F, the music comes to a standstill with an unison imitation or ostinato on the *c'-hex* in all three voices with the words "Et iterum venturus est" (And he shall come again in glory, *Example 6*).

Here Du Fay creates the utmost rhythmic and harmonic stability in order to set the stage (while the voices come again) for the final words of the section "Cuius regni non erit finis" (whose kingdom shall have no end). He pictures the "no end" by letting the highest voice seemingly trail behind the others (*Example 7*). In fact, the  $\textcircled{\circ}$  in the superius makes the notes a bit faster than in the other voices, but after the first notes it sounds as if the singers just miss the beat – not wanting to end the music! A sort of partial ritardando, while the three voices sing in three different hexachords. These twelve bars in  $\textcircled{\text{C}}$  (bb. 240-251) – six *longa*-bars in imperfect *modus* – seem to be forced into perfect *minor modus* or four times three bars by the sign  $\textcircled{\text{C}}$ . In these circumstances it effectuates a *proportio sesquitertia* consisting of four imperfect *breves* sung in the duration of three *breves*, or a 4:3 relation on the *brevis* level between superius and tenor. After the second group of three bars, Du Fay complicates the situation by introducing the sign 3 indicating *sesquialtera* in the contratenor voice in combination with coloration, which produces a 3:2 relation on the *semibrevis* level (bb. 246-251). The relation between the three voices singing together can only be expressed in whole numbers over a three-bar period as 8:6:9 on the *semibrevis* level. It certainly looks peaceful on paper with movement in *breves* and *semibreves* only,

240

Cu - jus re - gni non e - - -

*g'-hex*

Cu - jus re - gni non

*c'-hex*

Cu - jus re - - - gni non

*c'/f-hex*

246

rit fi - - - - nis.

*c'-hex*

3 *f-hex* e - - - rit fi - - - nis.

3 e - - - rit fi - - - nis.

Example 7, Credo, "Crucifixus", bars 240-253

but is fiendishly difficult to perform. Somebody, Wiser or an earlier copyist, offered an alternative, simplified ending to the superius without any proportional change. It is easy to sing, has a similar melodic line, and is absolutely pedestrian.<sup>23</sup>

The fourth section "Et in spiritum", also in  $\mathbb{C}$ , restores like in Gloria the calm by slowing down in longer note values, and it also ends in a long duo, this time between superius and tenor. The high voice sings under the sign  $\text{O}\mathbb{3}$ , which staying on the *brevis* level produces a 3:2 relation by juxtaposing three perfect *breves* with two imperfect *breves* in the tenor (bb. 300-345); viewed at the *semibrevis* level it is 9:4 relation. This may seem difficult, but results in a flexible, elegant duo. And following in the steps of the Gloria, the last section ends in *proportio dupla* ( $\Phi$ ), but this now only appears in the upper voice, where it creates a simple 2:1 relation (bb. 385-401); the singers perform their notes at double speed. In practise it works as two beats in the upper voice against three in the lower voices, a 2:3 relation. It sounds exactly the same as the combination of  $\mathbb{C}$  with  $\text{O}$  in the preceding bars (bb. 372-384), only notated in double note values.

Gloria and Credo with five subsections each follow parallel courses, just like the two longest sections in *Missa Se la face ay pale* do, but the means favoured by Du Fay are in this mass completely different. The freely composed music based on hexachordal figures and procedures is first established and then expanded in diversity of sound as well as in voice-range. The crisis point, technically and emotionally, is reached in the third subsection either as a hexachordal breakdown or as a comparable rhythmic complication. After re-stabilization and calming down of the musical space, Du Fay then displays the vocal virtuosity of his singers, in Gloria fittingly as a veritable "rush" to the end, while it in Credo is toned down slightly.

23 See the alternative modern transcription in the online edition along with the simplified version.

With Credo Du Fay has explored most of the possible relations between two and four beats against three or *vice versa* and established the maximal tone space for his play with hexachords. In the remaining shorter mass sections he did not need complications, and the full use of ranges and hexachordal variety is mastered in easily flowing music. The affective tone is underscored in the Agnus II duo, where superius after touching *f* on “dei” goes below the contra to sing “miserere” in Italianate parallel thirds plunging to its lowest note, *g*. In the “dona nobis pacem” of Agnus III all three voices in complete serenity move freely through the hexachords.

It is no wonder that Du Fay was proud of this mass for his favourite saint. In every aspect of composing mass cycles it looked forward from the situation in the mid-fifteenth century, more so than the four-part cantus firmus masses, which were not able to offer the composer the same degree of freedom. His pedagogical intent, or his wish to explore technical devices, with this mass music seems quite obvious, but it is far outshone by the artistic integrity and balance of the ordinary cycle.

It is difficult to answer the question if the St Anthony mass had any influence on the composing of mass music during the following period. It is of course the direct ancestor of the rhythmic complications as well as of the tonal language in Du Fay's *Missa L'homme armé*, and of younger composers constructing masses, motets and songs on hexachordal *cantus firmi* and similar structures.<sup>24</sup> Du Fay's foundation of a yearly performance of his difficult work may have made many of his colleagues aware of the mass given his status as the leading *musicus* of his time. The mass may have contributed somewhat to the widespread competition in musical artifice, the display of technical ingenuity.

Ockeghem stayed with Du Fay in his house in Cambrai for two weeks in 1464, and it is unthinkable that he was not well acquainted with the mass. The three free masses that Ockeghem composed after this visit are all dependent on hexachordal thinking. The four-part masses *Cuiusvis toni* and *Prolationem* take hexachordal figures as their points of departure, and the three-part *Missa Quinti toni* seems modelled on *Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*, even if its musical goals are quite different.<sup>25</sup> This, however, is a subject for another article.<sup>26</sup>

24 Cf. the short overview in my article ‘Hvad enhver kordreng skal kunne. Betragtning af motetten *Ut Phebi radiis* af Josquin Desprez’, *Musik & Forskning* 28 (2003) pp. 97-118, available in translation as ‘What every choirboy should know. Considering the motet *Ut Phebi radiis* by Josquin Desprez’ at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Ut\\_Phebi.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Ut_Phebi.pdf).

25 All three masses are published in J. Ockeghem (ed. Dragan Plamenac), *Collected Works I-II*. New York 1959-66, or J. Ockeghem (ed. Jaap van Benthem), *Masses and Mass Sections*. Utrecht 1994-2004.

26 See further the introduction to my online edition of Johannes Ockeghem, *Missa Quinti toni*. Edited with an introduction by Peter Woetmann Christoffersen (2021) at [http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma\\_Ock01.pdf](http://www.sacred.pwch.dk/Ma_Ock01.pdf).



## Supplement

### *Or sus vous dormez trop.* The Singing of the Lark in French Chansons of the Early Sixteenth Century<sup>1</sup>

*Festschrift Henrik Glahn.* Ed. Mette Müller, Copenhagen 1979, pp. 35-67

A four-part chanson known as “Lalouette” (“Or sus vous dormez trop”) was published in 1528 by the Parisian music printer Pierre Attaingnant in an edition entirely devoted to the music of Clément Janequin. Many other chansons exhibit better musical qualifications to be singled out for comment from among the vast repertory of Parisian chansons than this rather awkward composition. Nevertheless, “Lalouette” has been discussed several times by musicologists since François Lesure pointed out in 1951 that basically the same text and music could be found in a three-part chanson printed as early as 1520 by Andrea Antico in Venice.<sup>2</sup> This interest in “Lalouette” is due to the fact that, if the two chansons could be proven to be different versions of the same composition, it would be the earliest datable composition from Janequin’s hand and also the first example in the sixteenth century of an extensive use of sound-imitation, in this case bird song, a technique closely associated with Janequin.

It might seem a bit exaggerated to increase the literature on this topic, had the discussion not so far been conducted on the basis of a rather incomplete study of the sources, and the most interesting aspects only hinted at in passing. The following study aims at demonstrating that the three-part chanson is an independent composition closely connected with the repertory of ‘popular arrangements’ flowering in the first decades of the century, and that Janequin’s achievement is to develop and transform this tradition. Some of the theories advanced by others will be considered later on.

- 1 The following libraries have supplied microfilms and other material, Bibliothèque Nationale, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Deutsches Musikgeschichtliches Archiv Kassel, Statsbiblioteket (Århus) and Det kgl. Bibliotek (Copenhagen); without their assistance this article had not been possible. I also wish to thank Jerry Call and the Archives for Renaissance Manuscript Studies, University of Illinois, and Nanie Bridgman, Bibliothèque Nationale, for their help in clarifying some problems, and John Bergsagel who read my manuscript and offered numerous valuable suggestions. Above all, with this article I wish to express my thanks to Prof. Henrik Glahn for his support and patience during my years of study.
- 2 Fr. Lesure, ‘Clément Janequin. Recherches sur sa vie et son oeuvre’, *Musica disciplina* V (1951), p. 157. Further comments on “Lalouette” can be found in Fr. Lesure, ‘Les chansons a trois voix de Clément Janequin’, *Revue de musicologie* 1959, p. 193; Cl. Janequin (eds. Fr. Lesure et A. Tillman Merritt), *Chansons polyphoniques*, Monaco 1965-71, vol. I, p. 182; Daniel Heartz, ‘Les Goûts Réunis, or The Worlds of the Madrigal and the Chanson Confronted’ in *Chanson and Madrigal 1480-1530. Studies in comparison and contrast*, (ed. J. Haar), Cam. Mass. 1964, p. 88; A. Tillman Merritt, ‘Janequin: Reworkings of Some Early Chansons’ in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music* (ed. Jan LaRue), New York 1966 p. 603; Yves F.-A. Giraud, ‘Zu Clément Jannequins „Chant de l’Alouette”’, *Die Musikforschung* 22 (1969), p. 76; Lawrence F. Bernstein, ‘La Courone et fleur des chansons a troys: A Mirror of the French Chanson in Italy in the Years between Ottaviano Petrucci and Antonio Gardano’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1973, p. 1; Courtney Adams, ‘Some Aspects of the Chanson for Three Voices during the Sixteenth Century’, *Acta Musicologica* 1977, p. 227.

*The three-part chanson*<sup>3</sup>

An examination of the sources containing the three-part chanson shows that it must have been widely circulated during the first quarter of the sixteenth century; sources whose places of origin were in France, Italy and Spain transmit it independently as an anonymous composition:

*Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl.XIX.117* is rather difficult to date exactly. The MS was probably written in Florence, it contains Italian pieces ascribed to “Laiolle” and “Dbaccio fioretino”, and in the course of time several scribes have worked at it. The contribution of the original scribe, who was either a Frenchman or an Italian with a good knowledge of French, consists mainly of three series of chansons, each one unusually homogeneous in contents: fols. 1-13, three-part popular arrangements, fols. 37-41 (new foliation 31-35), Burgundian chansons for three voices all with the word “regretz” in the first line of text (“Sourdez regretz”, “Venez regretz” etc.), fols. 65v-66 and fols. 67v-82 (42v-43 and 44v-59), four-part popular arrangements. This repertory seems to be collected during the years 1510-20. “Or sus vous dormez trop” is placed in the first series (fols. 8v-10), a circumstance we shall return to later.

\*1 *Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Ny kgl. Saml. 1848 2°* is a collection of small booklets, independent fascicles and a few single bifolios containing 280 compositions, mainly French chansons (172 items), but also including many motets, four masses and several other groups of pieces, e.g. eight German Lieder without texts. The whole collection was copied and used as a private archive during some years up to c. 1525 by an unknown musician-copyist at Lyons.<sup>4</sup> When the music passed out of date he had the collection bound carelessly, maybe in a paper cover, which must have come apart after a short time, since the MS later (c. 1800) had to be rebound. As a result of this, its structure can only be realized after an extensive reconstruction of the original contents.<sup>5</sup> “Or sus vous dormez trop” on pp. 439-440 is placed within the last very disordered third of the MS (pp. 319-450); originally the chanson belonged to a small fascicle, which chiefly contained three-part popular arrangements and was copied in a single operation (consisting of the present pp. 375-376, 419-422, 439-442 and 393-394).

*Barcelona, Biblioteca Central, M.454*, a large choir book written in Spain during the first part of the sixteenth century by many different scribes.<sup>6</sup> Apart from a number of secular Spanish songs the repertory is dominated by sacred music of Spanish or Franco-Flemish origin (by Josquin, Mouton, A. de Fevin, J. Anchieta, Peñalosa, A. de mondejar, Escobar etc.). “Or sus vus dromestrop madama joliete” (fols. 155v-157) is the only piece

3 See Appendix I; the transcription differs in several details from the modern edition in Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. 106.

4 Only two fascicles were not written by this scribe, but used and completed by him; also, some pieces have been added by a later user.

\*2 5 For further information, see my thesis *Musikhåndskriftet Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2°, Det kgl. Bibliotek, København*. University of Copenhagen 1978 (unpublished), which includes a complete reconstruction of the MS.

6 I have not been able to consult a microfilm of the whole MS, but have relied on a thematic catalogue prepared by the late Prof. Knud Jeppesen (cf. ‘Knud Jeppesen’s Collection in the State and University Library (Århus, Denmark). A Preliminary Catalogue’, *Dansk Årbog for Musikforskning* VII (1976), pp. 21-49), and the description in H. Anglés, *La Musica en la Corte de los Reyes Católicos*, vol. 1, Madrid 1941, p. 112. Anglés dates the MS to the end of the 15th century and the first years of the 16th century.

with French words in the MS. It was copied on some pages that apparently had been left without music between two bodies of Latin church music, each one mainly consisting of motets by Spanish composers (fols. 138v-154 and fols. 158v-178v). On fol. 140 a date “20 faber 1525” is mentioned, and on fol. 162 “1532”.

Only two part-books remain of the set of three, which Andrea Antico printed in Venice for the publisher A. de Giunta in 1520 as *Chansons a troys* (RISM 1520/6). These volumes reflect the popularity the French three-part arrangements enjoyed in Rome where Antico worked between 1510 and 1520, that is during the reign of Pope Leo X (1513-21) who himself had tried his hand at this type of composition.<sup>7</sup> *Chansons a troys* contains forty French chansons, the last one being “Or sus vous dormez trop” (no. 40), and a Virgil motet “Dulces exuviae” by Mouton or Willaert (no. 41), all printed without names of composers.<sup>8</sup>

Actually, one further source exists that contains the three-part chanson, the manuscript known as *Tschudi's Liederbuch* (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Ms. 463), of which only the discantus and a fragment of the altus part have survived. Arnold Geering assumed in 1933 that Aegidius Tschudi from Glarus, a pupil of Zwingli and Glarean, had started his collection of music while studying in Paris 1517-20.<sup>9</sup> This assumption has later been stated as a fact by several authors, who regarded the MS as a source for the musical life in Paris around 1520.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, this is not true, the MS must have been written at least ten years later.<sup>11</sup> Not only has Tschudi tried to organize the separate groups of compositions according to the system of twelve modes formulated by Glarean in his great work *Dodecachordon* (1547), a theory Glarean had not yet arrived at in his *Isagoge in musicen* from 1516,<sup>12</sup> but it also appears that Tschudi has carefully copied the whole section in which “Or sus vous dormez trap” is found from Antico's *Chansons a troys*.<sup>13</sup> For our purpose the MS is just a testimony of the wide dissemination the Antico print obtained.

The sources of the chanson differ from each other in several textual and musical details; these variants are tabulated in Appendix I under *Sources*. They show without any doubt that each scribe or editor has worked from a different, now lost source of music and that, accordingly, the Florence MS, the Copenhagen MS, the Barcelona MS and the Antico print are independent sources. The musical variants are primarily found in the second part of the chanson (bb. 29-102), the section containing onomatopoeia and nonsense verses, and characteristically the superius and bassus voices show the greatest variability.<sup>14</sup>

7 A five-part setting of the tune “Cela sans plus”.

8 See Bernstein, ‘*La Courone*’ pp. 8-15, which also contains an annotated table of contents.

9 A. Geering, *Die Vokalmusik in der Schweiz zur Zeit der Reformation* (Schweizerische Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft VI) Aarau 1933, p. 92.

10 See e.g. *Chanson and Madrigal*, p. 6 (Brown) or p. 113 (Heartz).

11 Tschudi did not follow Glarean to Paris, cf. H.-C. Müller, art. “Tschudi” in MGG 13 (1965-66, cols. 928-929; Müller dates the MS c. 1540-50.

12 Cf. F.B. Turrell, ‘The *Isagoge in Musicen* of Henry Glarean’, *Journal of Musical Theory* III (1959), pp. 97-139.

13 St. Gall, MS 463, nos. 33-46 are identical with the following numbers in Antico's print: nos. 24, 12, 40, 22, 11, 1, 4, 37, 14, 29, 5, 38 and 6; Tschudi has written in full the repetitions only indicated in the print and corrected a few errors in text and music; he has maintained Antico's Italianate spellings for the words of “Or sus vous dormez trop”.

14 The version printed by Antico is four *brevis* bars shorter than the other versions. Bars 51-52, 72 and 92, all of which are repetitions of the immediately preceding bars, are omitted, presumable on typographical

The first part of the chanson (bb. 1-29) and the final lines (bb. 95-102) are very close to the three-part popular arrangements. Howard Mayer Brown has described the three- and four-part popular arrangements as varieties of the polyphonic 'chanson rustique', both of which crystallized during the years around 1500.<sup>15</sup> Their use of monophonic models is characterized in that the melodic and rhythmic formulation of the popular tune tends to permeate all voices of the chansons. In the four-part arrangements the pre-existing tune is often paraphrased and wanders freely among the voices or is arranged in duos alternating with four-part homorhythmic passages, where the meter can change from double to triple, in brief, the style well-known from Petrucci's editions. The three-part arrangements on the other hand adhere to a somewhat simpler and more old-fashioned style. A practice often met with is to accompany the unadorned pre-existing tune in the tenor by simple imitations and conventional counterpoints in the outer voices. This typical arrangement can be found in other shapes, e.g. with the tune placed in the superius and accompanied homorhythmically by the lower voices, but also considerably more sophisticated compositions exist which involve paraphrasing and genuine imitative textures. The three-part arrangements were greatly favoured in French court circles during the first decades of the sixteenth century, and their popularity spread quickly to every musical establishment.

The tenor of "Or sus vous dormez trop" has every appearance of being a pre-existing tune. It sets the first lines of text in a simple pattern of repeating phrases: ABAB' (bb. 1-29), and at the close of the chanson the B-element turns up again in the tenor (bb. 95-102). In these sections, the outer voices are imitative, the technique being in some instances slightly more adventurous than what is seen in the typical arrangements, e.g. the augmentation of the tenor in the first measures or the close imitation with an extra entry of the tenor in bars 8-10. The long middle part of the chanson forms a striking contrast to these sections. Here the representation of the lark and other birds in virtuoso singing and the rapid declamation of mock threats are the main things; the harmonic flow comes to a near standstill, in a long passage (bb. 60-94) the tenor only sounds two different notes, c'-a, whereas the rhythmic activity greatly increases. In this way the whole section makes up a humorous-lyrical interpolation in a chanson otherwise in the style of the three-part popular arrangement.<sup>16</sup>

The use of sound-imitations has precedents in the history of music. In the French chace and the Italian caccia of the fourteenth century vivid situations were created by imitating the sounds of nature and of human activities, e.g. hunting, fishing or market

considerations, the superius part-book could not have contained any more notes, the text being adjusted accordingly.

- 15 H.M. Brown, 'The *Chanson rustique*: Popular Elements in the 15th- and 16th-Century Chanson', *JAMS* 1959, p. 16; 'The Genesis of a Style: The Parisian Chanson 1500-1530' in *Chanson and Madrigal*, p. 1; 'The Music of the Strozzi Chansonniere', *Acta* 1968, p. 115; *Music in the French Secular Theater 1400-1550*, Cam. Mass. 1963; *Theatrical Chansons of the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries*, Cam. Mass. 1963.
- 16 D. Heartz points out in 'Les Goûts Réunis', p. 112, n. 32, that "Sebastiano Festa uses the same tenor as Janequin in his 'L'ultimo di di Mazo un bel matino'". This four-part villota was printed in RISM 1526/6 and can also be found in several Italian MSS dating from c. 1520-30; for a complete concordance, see K. Jeppesen, *La Frottola* I, (*Acta Jutlandica* XL:2), Århus 1968, p. 138; modern ed. in F. Torrefranca, *Il Segreto del Quattrocento*, Milano 1939, p. 486. However, only the first eight notes of the tenor have any resemblance to the tenor of "Or sus vous dormez trop", and this similarity is too slight to be significant considering the elementary character of the short phrase. This tenor intonation also opens the anonymous centone "L'ultimo di di maggio senti cantar" 4v in Bologna, Civio Museo, MS Q21; ed. in Torrefranca, *Il Segreto*, p. 488, cf. also Jeppesen, *La Frottola* II, (*Acta Jut.* XLII:1), Århus 1970, pp. 82-90.

scenes, often, especially in the caccia, with an undercurrent of eroticism. While the onomatopoeia in the caccia forms part of a genre that is as much a literary as a musical one, the shouts, playing of instruments, bird songs etc. are used with an entertaining virtuosity in a more directly descriptive and straightforward way in the French chace.<sup>17</sup> This tendency can be seen even more clearly in a group of polyphonic virelais dating from the second half of the fourteenth century. Compared with contemporary French secular music and poetry as exemplified by the elaborate ballades, which were the highly esteemed expression of courtly life and love, they show a surprising simplicity and vivacity in both text and music; Willi Apel finds in them a possible “echo of thirteenth-century village poetry” and assumes “that they belong to a bourgeois culture of northern France”.<sup>18</sup>

A much-beloved subject for these songs was the call to awake and enjoy the day of May, love and the singing of the birds. In a widely diffused virelai the theme is treated in this way:<sup>19</sup>

Or sus, vous dormez trop, Ma dame joliette  
Il est jour levez sus, Escoutes l'aloecte:

Que dit Dieu, que te dit Dieu ...  
Yl est jour, yl est jour, yl est jour, jour est, si est ...  
Dame sur toutes en biaute souveraine,  
Par vous, jolis et gay,  
Ou gentil moys de may,  
Suy et seray,  
Et vuel mectre paine.  
Or tost nacquaires, cornemuses sones:  
Lire, lire, lire, ly, liron, ly, liron, lire,  
Tytinton, tytinton ...

The text of the sixteenth-century chanson was evidently moulded upon the first part of the older virelai, transforming the virelai into a popular lyric of the later period by the addition of the burlesque continuation. Also the bird motives show a strong resemblance to the virelai:

27  
yl est jour, yl est jour, yl est jour, jour,

24  
que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu,

65  
li - re, li - re, li - re, ly, li - ron, ly, li - ron, li - re

Ex. 1, Anonymous (virelai), “Or sus, dormez trop” superius.

17 Cf. e.g. the delightful chace “Tres dous compains” in the Ivrea Codex; modern ed. in *Medieval Music. The Oxford Anthology of Music*, (ed. W. Thomas Marrocco and N. Sandon), London 1977, p. 161.

18 Willi Apel, *French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century*, Cam. Mass. 1950, p. 16 and p. 3.

19 In the Codex Ivrea and the MSS Paris, Bibl. Nat. nouv. acq. fr. 6771 (Codex Reina) and It. 568; for a complete concordance, see G. Reaney, ‘The MS Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Fonds Italien 568’, *Musica Disciplina* 1960, p. 62; modern ed. in Apel, *French Secular Music*, no. 70.

These motives are found in shapes nearly identical in all the chansons depicting birds; in Vaillant's virelai "Par maintes foyz" the lark sings in the same manner "Lire, lire, lire, liron. Que te dit Dieu ... Il est jour ..." (bb. 64-92), the cuckoo sings "cucu, cucu ..." (bb. 23-25), and the nightingale "Tue, tue ... oci, oci, oci ... fideli, fideli ..." (bb. 38-48).<sup>20</sup> The two last-mentioned are also heard in the sixteenth-century chanson. The fixed rendering of bird song obviously had a traditional background building on common knowledge.

There is good reason to assume with W. Apel that the virelais did not fulfil the same functions as the courtly ballades. However, in all probability they were not sung at dance festivals as Apel writes,<sup>21</sup> their still rather complicated and refined structure betrays the court musician, but the intention was without doubt to render an atmosphere not unlike that of a popular festival with all its entertaining qualities, and thus transferring elements belonging to popular music to the courtly sphere and to another musical idiom, possibly cultivated, as Apel proposed, in courtly circles less elevated than those of southern France.

The sixteenth-century "Or sus vous dormez trop" does not show any musical similarity to the virelai "Or sus ..." except for the bird motives. However, the tenor of the sixteenth-century chanson is very like the popular tune "Rossignol du bois" (*ex. 2*) as regards melodic outline and general appearance; this tune is used as tenor *c.f.* in another well-known fourteenth-century virelai, which appears in two rather different versions, "He, tres doulz roussignol" 4v by Borlet and "Ma tredol rosignol" 3v.<sup>22</sup>



Ex. 2, Anonymous, "Ma tredol rosignol" tenor

The onomatopoetic songs may have survived during the fifteenth century in shapes resembling this tenor, one must imagine that their opening verses were followed by bird imitations, as a colourful ingredient of a popular musical culture, a culture of which we only catch a glimpse thanks to the rare cases where popular elements have been introduced into the music of the ruling classes. As for "Or sus vous dormez trop", it is impossible to decide whether the widely known virelai had passed into the popular music and lived on thus transformed, or it is a popular song unknown to us which during the centuries has inspired the virelai as well as providing the model for the sixteenth-century chanson. However, this type of song is not to be found among the repertory of the two monophonic chansonniers from the end of the fifteenth century, which are our chief sources of the popular songs.<sup>23</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the onomatopoetic song did not exist in this century, only that the compilers of these rather one-sided collections did not show any interest in it. Only along with the popular arrangements does this type emerge again. It occurs during a period with strong political tendencies towards the establishment of absolute monarchies and at a time when the life of the upper classes was characterized by ceremonial splendour as well as a bourgeois fondness for

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* no. 69; cf. also the virelais nos. 50, 67-68 and 71.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* nos. 67 and 68.

<sup>23</sup> Paris, Bibl. Nat. Ms. f.fr. 9346, cf. Th. Gérold (ed.), *Le Manuscrit de Bayeux*, Strasbourg 1921, and Ms. f.fr. 12744, cf. G. Paris et A. Gevaert (eds.), *Chansons du XVe siècle*, Paris 1875.

14

ti-re li-re li - re, ti-re li-re li - re, mon jo - ly cueur luy res - pond,

ti-re li-re li - re, ti-re li-re li - re, mon jo - ly cueur luy respond,

ti-re li-re li - re, re li - re. ti-re li-re li - re, ti-re li-re li - re, mon jo - ly cueur

Ex. 3, Anonymous, "Pleust a la vierge Mari" bars 13-18.

popular entertainment. And after the beginning of music printing in France the onomatopoeic compositions were soon exploited commercially by Attaignant in his editions of Janequin's large-scale programme chansons.

Finally, the close connection of the sixteenth-century "Or sus vous dormez trop" with the repertory of three-part popular arrangements is confirmed by its location in three of the sources. In the Florence MS and the Antico print it forms part of musical anthologies, the repertories of which were carefully selected by the compilers from among the mass of compositions circulating in small fascicle manuscripts. The Antico print contains a unified repertory of three-part chansons, chiefly popular arrangements,<sup>24</sup> whereas the original scribe of the Florence MS has organized his repertory in three markedly different series: one each of three- and four-part arrangements and one series of Burgundian "regretz"-chansons; this plan of his was not carried on by the later scribes. The section of the Copenhagen MS in which the chanson is found was apparently copied in its entirety directly from a fascicle manuscript, which on its central opening had a Latin piece, while the first and last pages were filled out with popular compositions and a single five-part chanson by Josquin, a structure characteristic of fascicle manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> The first series of three-part chansons in the Florence MS (fols. 1-13) includes some other interesting compositions. Certainly, onomatopoeic chansons like "Or sus vous dormez trop" are not to be found in any known source dating from the first quarter of the sixteenth century, but a few chansons here display features revealing tendencies of this kind were not alien to the popular arrangements; see for example the tiny yelping dog in "Je m'en alle voir m'amy" (fols. 4v-5)<sup>26</sup> or this teasing passage from "Pleust a la vierge Marie" (fols. 5v-6) using a standard birdlike refrain (see *ex. 3*).<sup>27</sup>

24 Cf. Bernstein, 'La Courone', pp. 8-15. Bernstein writes p. 15: "The compilers seem to have been cognizant of the unique properties of this piece ("Or sus vous dormez trop" no. 40), however, printing it last among the chansons of this collection, and thereby setting it off from the other pieces in the book." This opinion was apparently not shared by the contemporary scribe of the Florence MS or by Aegidius Tschudi who copied some parts of the contents. Moreover, the traditional contrasting role of the last composition is in this collection assigned to the Latin piece "Dulces exuviae" (no. 41).

25 Concerning fascicle manuscripts, see Ch. Hamm, 'Manuscript Structure in the Dufay Era', *Acta* 1962, p. 166, and my thesis, pp. 61-86 (cf. note 5 above)

26 Modern ed. in Brown, *Theatrical Chansons*, no. 37.

27 Other chansons with "Tirelire / Turelure" refrains, cf. Brown, *Music in the French Secular Theater*, pp. 277-278.

*The four-part chanson*<sup>28</sup>

In 1528 Pierre Attaignant brought out as one of his very first publications the *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin*. This collection contained five four-part chansons, “Le chant des oyseaux”, “La guerre”, “La chasse”, “L’alouette” and “Las povre cueur”, all except for the last one programme or descriptive chansons.<sup>29</sup> Most authors discussing Janequin’s “L’alouette” consider it practically identical to the three-part chanson if the contratenor part is ignored. And two authors, Yves F.-A. Giraud and Courtney Adams, argue that the four-part chanson should be regarded as the original version. Both of these statements are erroneous. The contratenor gives, as A. Tillman Merritt writes, clear evidence of being the last voice composed.<sup>30</sup> It does not participate in the opening imitation, but enters with the words “Ma dame joliette” even while the other voices are singing the opening words. And it has a tendency to run its own course moving a bit faster than the other voices, and it introduces phrases of text and musical motives that do not occur in the other parts; worthy of note are the passages bars 66-69 and 71-72, where it repeats the slightly blasphemous phrase “Te rogamus audi nos saincte teste Dieu”. The continual crossing of the contratenor and superius parts (bb. 1-8, 13-16, 34-36 etc.) resulting from the low tessitura of the latter (*c'-c''*, mostly *c'-a'*), destroys the melodic design of the superius and changes the charming lightness of the imitative first section into a rather disconcerting texture. This crossing of upper parts certainly occurs in other chansons by Janequin,<sup>31</sup> but always in an unobtrusive way, e.g. in connection with points of imitation or as deliberate sound effects, and never as frequently as here.<sup>32</sup>

If the contratenor is problematic in the first part of the chanson, this is due to the fact that here the voices of the three-part chanson are adopted almost unaltered – in bars 30-31 the version of the Barcelona MS is followed. Later on, in the onomatopoetic sections, where the composer had free play so to say, the superius, tenor and bassus are to a great extent rearranged: in bars. 50-53 the rhythmical activity is increased by the use of *fusae* (semiquavers) in complementary patterns – normally the *fusae* are met with only as grace notes in popular arrangements and other chansons from the beginning of the century; the long passage bars 68-94, where in the three-part chanson the tenor had only two different notes, is recomposed not only by means of rhythmical modifications, the rapid declamation in the superius and bassus and the use of coloration in the tenor and superius, but also of newly composed passages (superius bb. 89-94 and tenor bb. 70-90). As a result of the now much greater number of notes the text had of course to be adjusted by additional repetitions and the insertion of new phrases; compared with the four

28 See Appendix II.

29 Modern eds. in Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, pp. 5-118.

30 Cf. Tillman Merritt ‘Janequin: Reworkings’, p. 605.

31 Cf. “Le chant des oyseaux”, bars 39, 64-65 and 194; “La guerre” II bars 56-60, 89-91, 112-113, 125-127 and 140; “La chasse” I bars 33-34, 37-38, 64, 77 and 138-139, II bars 11 and 107-110.

32 Yves F.-A. Giraud regards the three-part chanson as an extremely faulty copy of Janequin’s four-part original made by the scribe of the Florence MS and then printed by Antico (‘Zu Clément Janequins’, p. 77). This theory can safely be regarded as disproven by the discussion of the sources of the three-part chanson above. Comparing the three-part chanson with the eight chansons known to be composed by Janequin in three parts, all appearing after 1550, Courtney Adams (‘Some Aspects’, p. 236 and p. 245) finds it entirely dissimilar, and from this the author draws the inevitable conclusion that the four-part chanson must be the original version!

preserved versions of the three-part chanson the text shows the greatest conformity to the one printed by Antico (cf. bb. 61-64, 69-70 and 80-85). The whole onomatopoetic section is in this adaptation more impressive than before, and here also the four voices go together more successfully.

It is beyond doubt that Janequin and his contemporaries regarded “L’alouette” as his work. In the *Verger de musique contenant partie de plus excellents labeurs de M. G. Janequin ... revuez et corrigez par luy mesme* published in Paris by Le Roy & Ballard in 1559,<sup>33</sup> a year after the death of the composer, it is carefully noted that “La guerre” appears “avec la cinquiesme partie adjoutee par Verdelot sans y rien changer”. But concerning “L’alouette”, no mention is made of it being an adaptation of an earlier chanson.

“L’alouette” is also included without any alterations in the revised edition of *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin* printed as *Les chansons de La guerre La chasse Le chant des oyseaux Lalouette Le rossignol Composees par maistre clement Jennequin* by Attaignant in 1537.<sup>34</sup> In this edition the last chanson of Attaignant’s 1528 edition has been replaced by the short programme chanson “Le rossignol”,<sup>35</sup> which is much more consistent with the other chansons than the insignificant “Las povre cuer”. And two of the chansons are revised: in the first part of “La chasse” four bars (bb. 8-11) are suppressed, while in the second part three new voices are added, making it a seven-part composition; “Le chant des oyseaux” has been cut down to little more than half its original length by merging the singing of the different birds into one long section and omitting the passages, which introduced and ended the original separate sections.<sup>36</sup> Within a short time the contents of the revised edition were reprinted in *Le Difficile des Chansons. Premier livre contenant xxii Chansons ... de la facture & composition de maistre Clement Jennequin* by Jacques Moderne at Lyons.<sup>37</sup> However, Moderne’s musical editor apparently was dissatisfied with the edition of 1537 and made his own independent revisions. Only the altus partbook belonging to this print has survived, but it is to a certain extent possible to reconstruct the editor’s efforts. “La guerre” and “Le rossignol” are taken over unaltered; “La chasse” is printed in the seven-part version (the partbook also contains the “Secundus Altus”), but the deleted four measures are here retained in the first section; “Le chant des oyseaux” is the original version of 1528; and for “L’alouette” he has composed an entirely new altus part.<sup>38</sup>

The new altus is in several respects superior to the contratenor of the Attaignant editions: It enters in imitation of the other voices with the proper words “Or sus ...”, it does not use phrases of text not found in the other voices, and the crossings between the superius and altus are fewer in number. It fits the other parts perfectly and performs its share of the sound imitations just as well as the Attaignant contratenor without being in the same degree independent; only in the passage where it joins in the triplets of the

33 RISM A/I J456.

34 RISM A/I J444.

35 Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. II, p. 197.

36 The shortened version of “Le chant des oyseaux” is found in Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. II, p. 184; for a more detailed discussion of these revisions, see Tillman Merritt, ‘Janequin: Reworkings’.

37 RISM A/I J459; the five chansons (nos. 17-21) are printed in exactly the same order as in the 1537 edition, cf. Samuel F. Pogue, *Jacques Moderne. Lyons Music Printer of the Sixteenth Century*, Genève 1969, pp. 163-165.

38 See Appendix II; the Bourdeney-Pasche MS contains a complete version of the “L’alouette” printed by Moderne. The Moderne altus is in the transcription placed below the Attaignant contratenor.

Tenor (bb. 73-79) it may seem less effective.<sup>39</sup> The editor showing such familiarity with Janequin's production was hardly Janequin himself, since the new altus part for "L'alouette" was never used in later editions. Moderne's editor for secular compositions was in all probability the composer P. de Villiers, as Layolle was for the sacred repertory.<sup>40</sup>

In the foregoing there have been several allusions to the role of music publishers and editors in the history of "L'alouette". Their importance is evident in the case of Moderne's edition of c. 1540, but the same presumably applies to Attaignant's editions as well. There are reasons to assume that Attaignant was his own musical editor as well as publisher and printer at least during the first years. His first publication demonstrating the new method of music printing, the *Chansons nouvelles* of 1528, was the result of a long period of preparation and experiment. The choice of music to print must have been very carefully considered, the success of his enterprise depended on it. The chief part of the four-part chansons found in the series of chansonniers, which he brought out during the years 1528-1530, must have been collected by Attaignant even before the edition of *Chansons nouvelles*. Not until 1530 did newly composed chansons begin to occupy a prominent place in his chansonniers, and when in 1529 his stock of four-part chansons was running low, Attaignant resorted to old-fashioned three-part pieces for *Quarante et deux chansons a troys parties*.<sup>41</sup> Attaignant's repertory in these early editions, which he used once again as models for the arrangements contained in the collections of lute and keyboard tablatures issued 1529-1531, constitutes what we today term 'the early Parisian chanson'.

Stylistically these chansons are more diversified than one would expect from the usual textbook descriptions; in the chansonniers popular arrangements stand side by side with freely composed settings of poems by, for example, the court poet Cl. Marot, or in many chansons the popular and the courtly elements are intermingled. The early Parisian chanson has not yet been sufficiently studied and at several points its history is still obscure. It is outside the scope of this article to discuss these questions in detail. It must suffice to note here that Attaignant, when selecting his repertory, included many of the most beloved and widespread compositions of the preceding decade,<sup>42</sup> of which he could be reasonably certain that they would appeal to his customers.

In the light of this the *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin* looks like something of an experiment. If it was, its lasting success was also a proof of Attaignant's ability to judge the potentialities of the music market correctly. There can be no doubt that Attaignant thought highly of Janequin's music and that they maintained close contact with each other in spite of the composer's residence at Bordeaux.<sup>43</sup> Janequin was for many years the only composer whose secular works were brought out by Attaignant

39 Yves F.-A. Giraud and Courtney Adams (cf. note 32 above) regard the altus as an unhappy (Giraud) attempt on the part of Moderne to make the version printed by Antico into a four-part composition because he had no access to Janequin's chanson. The authors apparently consulted the sources in a very superficial way.

40 Cf. Pogue, *Jacques Moderne*, pp. 64-67.

41 For a chronology and catalogue of the Attaignant prints, see D. Heartz, *Pierre Attaignant. Royal Printer of Music*, Los Angeles 1969.

42 The Copenhagen MS, written at Lyons c. 1520-25, contains many concordances with Attaignant's early prints; cf. note 5 above.

43 Concerning Janequin's biography, see P. Roudie et Fr. Lesure, 'La jeunesse bordelaise de Clément Janequin (1505-1531)', *Revue de musicologie* 1963, p. 172, and Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. I-V.

in separate editions.<sup>44</sup> The contents of this collection comprised presumably Janequin's entire production of programme chansons until then, since he failed to deliver enough to fill out the standard 16 leaves of the part-books, a shortcoming made good in the new edition of 1537 as previously mentioned. These extended chansons certainly did not fit into the chansonniers Attaignant normally printed or planned to print. But what in all probability prompted Attaignant to embark upon this apparent experiment was the nature of these compositions. Among the four programme chansons were not only two chansons continuing the old tradition of bird chansons, but also two others in which the onomatopoeic tradition was transformed into a new type of entertaining chanson, which to an eminent degree could as well propagate political messages as represent in sound pictures the life of the various classes of society during the reign of François I.

In "La chasse" Janequin treats the stag hunt, the favourite sport of the nobility and the King's passion, with a realism and vividness never heard before. "La guerre" tells the story of the battle of Marignano in 1515, the greatest military triumph of François I. Janequin presumably composed this homage to the king's heroism and generalship during or after 1525, the most difficult year of François' reign, when the king after the disastrous battle of Pavia was kept prisoner in Spain.<sup>45</sup> The political message of this chanson is just as clear as it is in "Chantons sonnons trompettes", written in celebration of the return of the princes, who had been detained as hostages in Spain instead of their father. After the peace of Cambrai, which imposed enormous burdens on the people of France, the princes passed through Bordeaux in the summer of 1530; Janequin's chanson of rejoicing was published by Attaignant within a few months.<sup>46</sup> After the first success of the programme chansons, Janequin chose as his subjects not only the deeds of the king and the nobility but also scenes of daily life, as, for example, in "Voulez ouyr le cris de Paris" 1530.<sup>47</sup> Compared with his total production of chansons (c. 250) the programme chansons never became numerically an important part of Janequin's work, but having regard to reeditions and the preferences of his public they have a tendency to overshadow the rest.

The use of onomatopoeia was not common during the years just before the publication of *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin*, but it is occasionally found in short passages in the early Parisian chansons.<sup>48</sup> Attaignant printed in *Chansons nouvelles* the anonymous chanson "A mon resveil ung oyseaulx j'ay oy" (no. 22), which contains passages (bb. 11-17, 20-23 and 26-30) of bird song (see *ex.* 4). Besides, *Chansons nouvelles* contained Claudin de Sermisy's setting of a presumably popular tune on the "Lalouette"-subject "Il est jour dit lalouette" (no. 7).<sup>49</sup> Claudin's chanson does not use sound-imitations, but its opening motive "Il est jour" is identical with the corresponding motives in "Lalouette".

44 Three new collections of chansons by Janequin appeared in 1533, 1540 and 1549 respectively, cf. Heartz, *Attaignant*, nos. 40, 90 and 155; not until 1550 did Attaignant bring out a collection of chansons by another composer, Josquin Desprez (no. 162).

45 Cf. Heartz, 'Les Goûts Réunis', p. 112.

46 *Trente et six chansons musicales*, no. 1, RISM 1530/4; modern ed. in Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. 175.

47 *Ibid.* p. 146.

48 Short passages of sound-imitations also appear in Italian pieces, see e.g. the rendering of a crane in "Dal letto me levava" by Michael, in Petrucci's *Frottole libro primo*, Venezia 1504, modern ed. in Torrefranca, *Il Segreto*, p. 434, or the "cucu"-passage in the centone "L'ultimo di di maggio", cf. note 16 above.

49 Modern ed. in Seay (ed.), *Pierre Attaignant. Transcriptions of chansons for Keyboard*, (Corpus mensuralis musicae 20), AIM 1961.

*Or sus vous dormez trop*

21

tu tu tu tu au - res jouys - san - ce

tu tu tu tu au - res jouys - san - ce

tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu au - res jouys - san - ce

tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu au - res jouys - san - ce, jouys - san - ce

Ex. 4, Anonymous, “A mon resveil”, bars 20-26.<sup>50</sup>

In *Trente chansons musicales a quatre parties*,<sup>51</sup> published the following year, Attaignant included the charming “Et moulinet vire tourne” (no. 16), in which the sounds of a mill are used along with a ‘rotary’ melodic motion; for the last four measures a fifth part enters:

16

vi - re tour - ne, vi - re tour - ne, vi - re tour -

tour - ne vi - re, tour - ne, tour - ne vi - re, vi -

ger - gueo, ger - gueo, ger - gueo,

et vi - re tour - ne, vi - re tour - ne, vi - re

vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne, vi - re, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne, vi - re, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne,

17

ne, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne toy.

re tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne toy.

ger - gueo, tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne, tour - ne toy.

tour - ne, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne

vi - re, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne, vi - re, vi - re tour - ne, tour - ne toy.

Ex. 5, Anonymous, "Et moulinet vire tourne", bars 15-18.

50 Transcribed after RISM c. 1528/8, no. 30.

51 RISM c. 1528/4.

The earliest published chanson by Janequin, “Reconfortez le petit cueur de moy”, printed in *Chansons nouvelles* (no. 28) and also found in the Copenhagen MS,<sup>52</sup> is related to the chansons rustiques. It is in fact a four-part arrangement using as model for the superius a tune found in both of the monophonic chansonniers,<sup>53</sup> but Janequin not only paraphrased the tune freely but also treated the whole type of composition in such a free way that he, as in the case of the programme chansons, transformed it completely. It became a Parisian chanson with its synthesis of different elements. Also the two bird chansons in *Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin* are closely connected with the popular tradition. In “L’alouette” Janequin rearranged the three-part chanson of c. 1510 as a four-part piece, and he also used the layout of the three-part chanson as pattern for the original version of “Le chant des oyseaux”. This extended chanson consists of five sections: An introduction (music A) and four sections (I-IV), each section consisting of an introduction (music B) followed by a long passage of bird imitations and an ending, which uses the music of the introduction; the last section repeats both text and music of the introduction:<sup>54</sup>

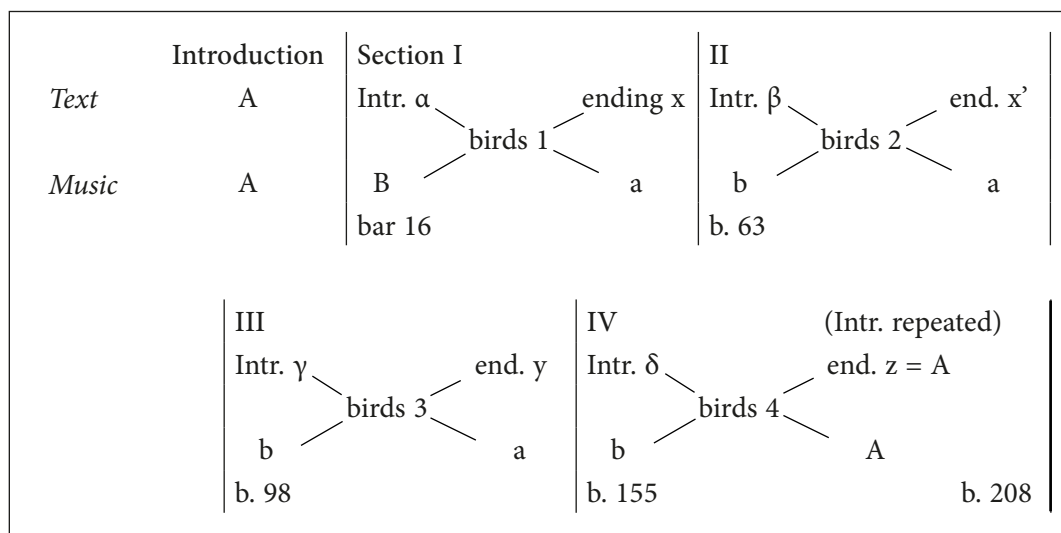


Fig. 1, layout of “Le chant des oyseaux”.

Each of the four Sections could actually serve as a complete bird chanson very similar to “L’alouette”. The music of the introductions and endings, the elements B and A, closely adheres to the style of the four-part arrangements. Apart from this the two chansons also have many of the bird motives in common; one passage in the contratenor of “L’alouette”, the previously mentioned phrase bars 66-69 and 71-75, can be heard in a shape nearly identical in “Le chant des oyseaux”:

sainc - te tes-te dieu,      sainc - te tes-te dieu,      sainc - te tes-te dieu,      il est temps, temps d'al - ler boy-re, il est temps,

Ex. 6, Janequin, “Le chant des oyseaux” superius.

52 No. 168 (pp. 276-277), cf. note 5 above; modern ed. in Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. 1.

53 Paris, Bibl. Nat., ms. f.fr. 9346, no. 21, and ms. f.fr. 12744, no. 54, cf. note 23 above.

54 Cf. also Tillman Merritt, ‘Janequin: Reworkings’, pp. 610-613.

Finally, we will consider the roles of “Or sus vous dormez trop” and “L’alouette” in the creation of the programme chanson, the most colourful feature of the early Parisian chanson. The three-part chanson has often as a matter of course been accepted as a work of Janequin’s youth. However, the sources furnish strong evidence in favour of considering it an anonymous composition. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that Janequin could be the author all the same, but at present every proof is wanting.<sup>55</sup> Still, there can be no doubt that “Or sus vous dormez trop” represents the very type of chanson which inspired Janequin’s great programme chansons, and that he beforehand was well acquainted with this chanson.

The four-part “L’alouette” may be Janequin’s first attempt at programme chansons; the rather awkward part writing at some points is not characteristic of Janequin, and “L’alouette” is also rhythmically more complicated than his other programme chansons. The present writer, however, prefers another explanation of these peculiarities: Having seen “La guerre”, “La chasse” and “Le chant des oyseaux”, Attaignant at once became interested in marketing the chansons. With the intention of printing a homogeneous collection of real ‘chansons nouvelles’ he urged Janequin to deliver more chansons of this sort. Janequin was unable to do this at short notice and resorted to making an arrangement of the widely known three-part chanson, incidentally quoting his own “Le chant des oyseaux” in the new contratenor. In making this arrangement of an older chanson and including it among his own compositions Janequin acted in complete accordance with common practice of the time.

### Supplementary notes (2023)

- \*1 In the original article I wrote that the manuscript was written and collected by a certain “Charneyron”. I have since discovered that Claude Charneyron was a later owner of the bound manuscript, a priest in Villefranche-sur-Saône north of Lyons during the 1540s; see further *French Music*, vol. 1, pp. 14-18.
- \*2 The thesis in Danish is now superseded by my dissertation *French Music in the Early Sixteenth Century. Studies in the music collection of a copyist of Lyons. The manuscript Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2° in the Royal Library*, Copenhagen I-III, Copenhagen 1994; available online at [http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH\\_Cop1848.pdf](http://www.pwch.dk/Publications/PWCH_Cop1848.pdf).

55 Formerly one could refer to the existence of two other three-part chansons by Janequin in Antico’s *Chansons a troys*, but his authorship of these compositions was later disproved; cf. Lesure, ‘Les chansons a trois voix’.

## APPENDICES

### Sources

Abbreviations: S = Superius; C = Contratenor; A = Altus; T = Tenor; B = Bassus; lo = *longa*; br = *brevis*; sbr = *semibrevis*; mi = *minima*; smi = *semiminima*; fu = *fusa*; · = the preceding value is dotted. Bar numbers may be followed by position (in *semibreves*) in the *brevis* bar. Text in *cursive* is added by the editor.

### I Anonymous, “Or sus vous dormez trop” 3v

*Flo117* – Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ms. Magl.XIX.117, fols. 8v-10: 47.2 B, missing  
54-56 B, 3 br  
Anonymous. The transcription of music and text is based primarily on this source. 59.2-60 S B, sbr - br  
63-64 S, missing

#### Bar(s)

6.2 B, mi - 2 smi

7.1 T, mi - 2 smi

11.2 T, mi - 2 smi

32.2 T, sbr-rest

34.1 S, sbr - mi-rest

60 S, br

88.2 B, mi

*Text*, bar 9.1 T, “joliette”; bb. 36-39 T, “Que te dict dieu”.

*Cop1848* – Copenhagen, The Royal Library, MS Ny kgl. Saml. 1848 2°, pp. 439-440 (no. 269): Anonymous. Superius is called “Altus” in MS.

6.2 S, mi - 2 smi

7.1 T, mi - 2 smi

9.2 S, *f'* - *e'*

22.2 S, mi-rest - sbr

36.1 T, 3 smi are missing

37-43 S,



40-41 B, 2 br

44 T, br

45 STB,



79.1 T, mi-rest - mi

81.1 B, is followed by 3 superfluous mi *f*

83 S, 2 sbr *g'-c''*

88.1 B, sbr

93.2 B, 2 mi *f*

95.1 S, 2 mi *e'*

*Text* as *Flo117* with differences in spelling:

S, bb. 9-11, 15-16.1 and 20.1-end, no text;

T bb. 8.1-13, 16-19, 23.2-end, no text, but

the scribe has erroneously placed the re-

mainder of T's text under B; B, bb. 11-13.1,

no text, bb. 13.2-15 “Il est jour il est jour

lesus”; bb. 17-18, 23-24 and 29-end, no text

(the text bb. 29 ff has to be moved to T).

*Bar454* – Barcelona, Biblioteca Central, M. 454, fols. 155v-157: Anonymous “Or sus or sus vus dromestrop”.

#### Bar(s)

15.1 S, 2 mi *e'*

27 B, sbr· - 2 smi

30-31 STB,



37.1 S, mi-rest

42-43 S, 2 br

44-45 T, lo

48.1 STB, fermata

52-53 B, 

53.2 S, mi· - smi

54-56 B, lo - br

82 B, 4 mi

84 T, same as b. 83

84 B, 2 sbr

88 T, same as b. 89

93.2 B, 2 mi

*Text:* The words are quite similar to those in Flo117 and written very carefully by a Spanish scribe who obviously had no knowledge of French. His version is so corrupt that it is superfluous to note the textual variants.

*Ant1520 – Chansons a troys*, A. Antico, Venezia 1520 (RISM 1520/6), no. 40: Anonymous. Only S and B part-books have been preserved.

*St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Ms. 463* (Tschudi's Liederbuch), no. 36: Anonymous. This piece was copied from the Antico print; only the S part has survived.

Bar(s)

5.1 S, *f'*-*f'*

6.1 B, sbr

25.1 S, 2 smi *e'*-*d'* - mi *f'*

27 B, sbr· - 2 smi

31 S, mi *f'* - sbr *c'* - sbr *f'*

35.1 B, mi - smi-rest - smi *f*

36.1 B, smi-rest - 3 smi *f*

38-39 S, mi-sbr-mi-sbr *e'* - mi *d'* - sbr *e'*

42-43 S, lo

51-52, 72 and 92 are left out in S B

54-55 S, 

71.1 S, mi - 2 smi

78 S, mi - 2 smi - mi - 2 smi

93.2 S, sbr-rest

95.1 S, 2 mi

96 and 100 S, mi *f'* - mi· *a'* - smi *g'* - sbr *f'*

*Text* as Flo117 with differences in spelling: bb. 35.2-36.2 B, “que te dit dieu ij”; bb. 57-68 S B, “con tue ses faulx jaloux cornu cornu, tout maloutru, tout esperdu, il ne vault les brayes dung viel pendu”; bb. 68.2-73.2 B, “que son hache, dechiquette, batu, frappe, qui soit huste”; bb. 80-85 S, “tue ij ij les vieux cornu coquus”; bb. 77.2-95.1 B, “quil est lait, qui soit prise, bane, serre, trousse, incontinant perdu, ou aultrement que souffre que a samye on offre de la baisier, de la oller, soubrioter que chinprengne son plaisir”.

Modern editon; Clément Janequin, *Chansons polyphoniques*, (eds. A. Tillman Merritt et François Lesure), vol. 1, Monaco 1965, p. 99.

II Janequin, *L'alouette*: “Or sus, vous dormez trop” 4v

*First version:*

*Att1528 – Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin*, P. Attaignant, Paris n. d. (1528) (RISM A/I J443), no. 4.

Bar(s)

44.2 and 45.1 S, mi *b'* - 2 smi *a'-a'*  
89 T, sbr. *c'* - smi-rest - smi *f*  
91-92 SATB, missing.

Bar(s)

9.1 S, *e'*

*Text*: C, bars 34.2-36.2, “fere lire ly ti ty fere  
lire li ty piti fere li”.

For later 16th-century editions of this version, see Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. 182.

Modern editions: H. Expert, *Les Maîtres Musiciens de la Renaissance Française* VII, Paris 1898, p. 105; A.T. Davison and W. Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, Cam. Mass. 1964, vol. I, p. 109; Janequin, *Chansons*, vol. I, p. 106.

*Second version:*

*Mod1540 – Le Difficile des Chansons. Premier livre contenant xxii Chansons nouvelles a quatre parties ... de la facture & composition de maistre Clement Jennequin*, J. Moderne, Lyon s. d. (1540) (RISM A/I J459), no. 20, “L'alouette”. Only the altus part-book has survived. The Altus part for this piece is different from the Attaignant contratenor; in the transcription it is placed below that part.

Bars

1-14, the clef is misplaced.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Rés. Vm<sup>a</sup> 851 (Bourdeney-Pasche MS), p. 577, “La Alouette de Clement Jennequin a quatre voix”. The A-part is identical with the A in Moderne’s print; presumably the chanson was copied from that source.

I Anonymous, *Or sus, or sus, vous dormez trop*

Flo117 Cop1848 Bar454 Ant1520 Mensura =  $\text{c}/\text{d}$

Or sus, or sus, vous dor - mez trop, ma

Or sus, or sus, vous dor - mez

Or sus, or

5 da - me jo - li - et - - te, ma da - me jo - li - et -

8 trop, ma da - me jo - li - et - te, ma da - me jo - li, ma da - me jo - li -

sus, vous dor - mez trop, ma da - me jo - li - et - te,

11 te. Il est, il est jour, le - vez sus, es -

8 et - - - te. Il est, il est jour, le - vez

ma da - me jo - li - et - te. Il est, il est jour, le - vez sus, es - cou,

17 cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, es - cou, es - cou, es -

8 sus, es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et -

es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, es - cou,

23 cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, pe - ti - te,

8 te, es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, il est jour, il

es - cou, es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, pe - ti -

30

pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, que dict dieu, que dict dieu, que dict

est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, jour, jour,

te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il

34

dieu, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est, il est jour, jour,

jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, que dict dieu, que dict

est jour, il est jour, il est jour, que dict dieu, que dict dieu, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il

38

jour, jour, jour, que dict dieu, que dict dieu,

dieu, que dict dieu, que dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict

est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour,

42

que te dict dieu, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe -

dieu, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - ti - ti - ti - te,

que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, que te dict dieu, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te,

47

ti - te, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re,

il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re,

pe - ti - te, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re,

*Or sus vous dormez trop*

[illegible]

57

qu'on tue ce faulx vil-lain ja - loux co - cu cor - nu, tout mal-heu - reux,

dieu, tout mal-heu - reux, tout mal - au -

qu'on tue ce faulx vil-lain ja - loux co - cu cor - nu, tout mal-heu - reux,

63

63

tout mal - au - tru, qui ne vault my - e les bray - es d'ung pen - du,

tru, tout far - ci - neux, co - cu,

tout mal - au - tru, qui ne vault my - e les bray - es d'ung pen - du, qu'il soit ba -

69

d'ung pen - du, qu'il soit pen-du, qu'il soit brus-le, qu'il soit pen-du, qu'il soit brus-le, ce

co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu,

tu, qu'il soit ly - é, qu'il soit hu - ché, de - chi - que - té, qu'il soit has -

73

mal - au - tru, *ce mal-au - tru*, ho, ho, ho, ho, qu'il est

co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu,

té, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, qu'il est

77

lait, fi - de - ly, de ce vil - lain co - cu cor - nu, fi - de - luy,

co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co -

lait, fi - de - ly, qu'il soit pris, li - é, ba -

80

tu - ez, frap - pez, ba - tez ce faux vil - lain com - me ung co -

cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu,

tu, ser - ré. trous - sé, in - con - ti - nent pen -

85

cu, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny,

co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, co - cu, souf - fre,

du, ou aul - tre - ment qu'il souf - fre que sa fem - me on s'of - fre de la bai -

90

ny, ny, ny, ny, se - ny, se - ny, se - ny, ou aul - tre -

souf - fre, souf - fre, souf - fre, souf - fre, souf - fre, ou aul - tre -

ser, de l'em-bras - ser, de l'a - col - ler sans kot - ter, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir, ou aul - tre -

96

ment t'en va mou - rir, mou - rir, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir.

ment t'en va mou - rir, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir.

ment t'en va mou - rir, mou - rir, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir.

II Clément Janequin, *L'alouette*: Or sus, or sus, vous dormez trop 4v

Att1528      Mensura =  $\text{♩}$

Mod1540

Or sus, or sus, vous dor - mez trop, ma da - me jo - li -

Ma da - me jo - li - et - te, vous dor-mez

Or sus, or sus, vous dor - mes

Or sus, or sus, vous dor - mez trop, ma

Or sus, or sus, vous

et - te, ma da - me jo - li - et - te,

trop, ma da - me jo - li - et - te, ma da - me jo - li - et - te, il

trop, ma da - me jo - ly - et - te, ma da - me jo - ly -

da - me jo - li - et - te, ma da - me jo - li, ma da - me jo - li - et -

dor-mez trop, ma da - me jo - li - et - te, ma da - me

il est, il est jour, le - ves sus, es - cou, es - cou - tez

est, il est jour, le - vez sus, es - cou, es - cou, es - cou - tez l'a - lou - et - te, es -

et - te, ma da - me jo - ly - et - te. Il est, il est jour, le - vez sus,

te. Il est, il est jour, le - vez sus, es - cou,

jo - li - et - te. Il est, il est jour, le - ves sus, es - cou, es - cou,

19

l'a-lou-et - te, es-cou, es-cou, es - cou, es-cou - tez l'a-lou-et -  
cou-tez, es - cou-tez, es-cou, es - cou-tez l'a - lou-et - te, es - cou-tez, es -  
es - cou - tes l'a-lou-et - te, es-cou - tes l'a-lou-et - te, es-cou -  
es - cou - tez l'a-lou-et - te, es - cou,  
es-cou - tez l'a-lou-et - te, es-cou, es-cou - tez

26

te, es - cou - tez l'a-lou-et - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe -  
cou-tez, es - cou - tez l'a-lou-et - te, pe-ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe-ti -  
tes, es - cou - tes l'a - lou-et - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti -  
es - cou - tez l'a-lou-et - te, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour,  
l'a-lou-et - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te,

31

ti - te, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit  
te, pe - ti - te, pe-ti - te, que te dit dieu, il est jour, il est jour, que te dit dieu, pe -  
te, pe - ti - te, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il  
il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, jour, jour,  
pe - ti - te, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il

34

dieu, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est, il est jour,  
 ti - te, ty ty fe-re li - re ly ty, fe-re li - re li pi ti fe-re-li,  
 est jour, il est jour, jour, jour, pe - ti -  
 jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, que  
 est jour, il est jour, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, il est

37

jour, jour, jour, jour,  
 pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe -  
 te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti -  
 dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que  
 jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est

40

pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, ty,  
 ti-te, ty, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu,  
 te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu,  
 te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe -  
 jour, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit dieu, que te dit

44

pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti -

ty, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour, il est jour,

pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, et

ti - - - - te, il est jour, il est jour, il est

dieu, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te,

48

te, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re,

li - re, li - re, ly - ron, fe-re li-re ly ti ti pi

li frere li-re li ti ti pe - ti et li - re li - re fre - re li-re li

jour, li - re, li - re, li - re, li - re, ly fe-re li-re

te, li - re, li - re, li - re,

51

li - re, li - re, li - re, ly, fe-re li-re li ti ty pi ty - re li-

ti - re li - re li - ron, li - re fe-re li-re ly,

li - re li - re li - ron, et fre - le li le li et li - re li -

li ti ty pi ti - re, ly fe-re li-re li ti ty pi ti - re, li - re, li -

li - re, ly fe-re li-re li ti ty pi ty - re li-re, li - re, li - re, li -

*Or sus vous dormez trop*

54

ron, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, qu'on tu - e  
 que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, fe-re li-re ly, fere li-re ly, ti ti pi ty,  
 ron, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, pe - ti - te, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que tue soit  
 ron, que dit dieu, que dit dieu, que dit dieu,  
 ron, qu'on tu - e

58

ce faux ja - lous cor - nu co - cu, tout es - per -  
 qu'on tu - e ce faux ja - lous co - cu, tout chas - si - eux,  
 ce faux ja - lous cor - nu co - qu, tout ma - lus - tu, tout  
 tout chas - si - eux,  
 ce faux ja - lous cor - nu co - qu, tout ma - los -

62

du, tout ma - lo - stru, il ne vault  
 tout mar - mi - teux, pin chere li-re li chin, chin,  
 es - per - du, tout ca - chi - eux, il ne vault point  
 tout far - ci - neux, tout mar - mi - teux,  
 tru, tout as - par - du, il ne vault

66

mye les bray - es d'ung vieulx pen - du, tu - e, tu - e

Te ro - ga - mus au - di nos, saine - te tes-te dieu, pe - ti - te,

les bra - yes d'ung viel pen - du, que soit ha - chié de cin-quan - te, ba -

co - qu, co - qu, co - qu, co-qu, co -

mye les bray - es d'ung vieulx pen - du, qu'il soit tor - ché, des - si - que - té, ba - tu, frap -

71

ce co-quin, co-quin, co-quin, co - quin, co-quin, co-quin, co-quin, co - quin, pin

saine - te tes - te dieu, saine - te tes - te dieu, il est jour, il est temps,

tu, frap - pé, que soit fue - té, que soit brus - lé co -

qu, co - qu, co - qu, co - qu, co - qu, co - quin, ma - eault lour -

pé, qu'il soit brus - lé, qu'il soit hul - lé,

74

chore-li-re li chim, chin, choc, choc, flocc, flocc, chere-ly li chim, pin chore-li-re li chim, chin, choc, choc, flocc,

il est temps, temps d'al - ler boy - re fan, fa-ri la-ri la - ron

quin, ma - rault, lour - din, lour-dault, pe - tin, pe - tau, ni -

din, lour - dault, pe - tin, pe - taut, ny - ault, ny - gault, be -

hou, hou, hou, qu'il est lait le ja-loux, hou, hou, hou, qu'il est

77

floc, chyre-ly li chim, fi - de - ly, fi - de - ly o - cy, o - cy, tu - e.

fan, fa-ri la-ri la - ron fan, or oy - ez, or oy -

au, ni - gau, be - din, be - dau, re - sin, re - sau, le vil - lain co - qu, co-qu, co -

din, de - dault, res - sin, res - saut, co - qu, co-qu, co-qu, co - qu, co-qu, co-qu,

lait le ja-loux, qu'il soit li - é, tres bien ba - qué, ser - ré. trous -

81

tu - e, tu - e ce vil - lain cor - nu co - cu,

ez, or oy - ez, fa-ri la-ri la - ron, fa-ri la-ri la - ron, fa-ri la-ri la - ron

qu, hou, hou qu'il est lait, tor - tu, bos-su, cor - nu co-qu ou

hou, hou qu'il est lait, hou, hou qu'il est lait ce co-qu co - qu tor - tu, bos -

sé, fort gar - ro - té, et puis get - té dens ung fos -

85

che - ny, che - ny, che - ny, che - ny, che -

fan on vous fait as - sa - voir de par les oy-seaulx que cou - rez tost pour veoir par mons et par

aul - tre - ment que seuf - fre quant a sa fem - me

su, va faulx tru - ant co - quin pe - ant, tout mal - pen - sant

se, ou aul - tre - ment qu'il seuf - fre quant a sa

88

ny, che-ny, che - ny, les-sez la es-jou - yr fault-er, jou-er, gau - dir, cha-cun en-tre - te -

vaulx le trais-tre co-qu tei-gueux ton - du, mor - veuf, bos - su, boi - teuf, tor - tu, rou -

s'of - fre de la bai - ser, de l'ac - co - ler, de l'em - bras - ser et

et mes - di - sant, souf - fre, soeuf - fre, soeuf - fre,

fem-me\_on s'of - fre de la bai - ser, de l'a - co - ler, de l'em - bras -

92

nir, par - ler a son plai - sir, veil - ler et dor - mir, cro-quer a plai - sir, ou aul - tre -

gneux, tes - tu, bri - gueux, ba - tu, que l'on con - dam - né\_a

re - ver - ter, que chas-cun pren-gne son plai - sir, ou aul - tre - ment va

soeuf - fre, soeuf - fre, soeuf - fre, ou aul - tre -

ser et ren - ver - ser, que cha - cun fa - ce son plai - sir, ou aul - tre -

96

ment va t'en mou - rir, mou-rir, ou aul - tre - ment va t'en mou - rir.

mou - rir, mou-rir, que l'on con-dam-né\_a mou - rir.

t'en mou - rir, ou aul - tre-ment va t'en mou - rir.

ment t'en va mou - rir, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir.

ment t'en va mou - rir, mou-rir, ou aul - tre - ment t'en va mou - rir.

## Index of names, compositions and sources

- Abrahams, N.C.L., 64  
 Adams, Courtney, 279, 286, 288  
*Adieu mes amours on m'attent / Adieu mes amours*, Josquin, 207  
 Agostino, Ludovico, 86  
 Agricola, Alexander, 54, 66, 121–123, 126–127, 130–136, 176, 182, 208, 235  
 Alamire, Petrus, 176  
 Alden, Jane, 38, 205, 209, 216, 226  
 Alfonso V of Aragon, 20  
 Amadeus IX, 49  
 Ambros, August Wilhelm, 121  
 Amerval, Eloy d', 145, 243, 262  
*A mon resveil ung oyseaulx j'ay oy*, 289–290  
 Anglés, Higini, 280  
 Anglicus, 156  
 Antegnati, Graziadio, 115  
 Anthonisz, Cornelis, 179–181  
 Antico, Andrea, 279, 281, 286, 292  
 Apel, Willi, 283–284  
*A qui vens tu tes coquilles*, Busnoys, 28  
*A quoy tient il le cuer me vole*, 86  
 Argenta, Girolamo Belli d', 86  
 Arnolfini, Giovanni, 244  
 Atlas, Allan W., 81, 111, 122, 129, 149  
 Attaignant, Pierre, 3, 279, 286–292, 295  
*A une dame j'ay fait veu*, Busnoys, 209  
 Austria, Eleonora d', 103  
 Austria, Katharina d', 95  
*Ave Maria ... virgo serena*, Josquin, 128–132
- Balue, Jean, 226  
 Barbingant, 28, 144–149, 153–154, 157, 161, 222  
 Basiron, Johannes, 226  
 Basiron, Philippe, 21, 217, 224, 225–238  
 Basiron, Pierron, 225  
*Beata dei genitrix*, Binchois/Dunstable, 156–157  
*Belle sur toutes / Tota pulchra es*, Agricola, 131  
 Benthem, Jaap van, 14, 61–64, 139, 140–141, 158, 160  
 Bent, Margaret, 32, 141, 142, 156, 190  
 Beretta, Ottavio, 86, 87  
 Berger, Anna Maria Busse, 32, 123, 272  
 Berger, Karol, 13, 143, 190  
 Bergsagel, John D., 244, 279  
 Bertold, Christian, 123  
 Bernstein, Lawrence F., 3, 279, 281, 285  
 Bessler, Heinrich, 265
- Besutti, Paola, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 108, 115  
*Bien avisé, mal avisé* (farce), 31  
 Binchois, Gilles, 39, 47, 140, 149–153, 156, 157, 208, 227–229, 230  
 Blachly, Alexander, 32  
 Blackburn, Bonnie J., 42, 44, 52, 56, 62, 69, 72, 124, 125, 178  
 Bloxam, M. Jennifer, 133  
 Bockholdt, Rudolf, 265  
 Bonda, Jan Willem, 180, 182–183  
*Bon temps. See Bon vin*  
*Bon vin, je ne te puis laisser*, 9–11; edition & translation, 9  
 Borlet, 284  
 Borromeo, Carlo, 112  
 Bosfrin, 10  
 Bourbon, Charles de, 6–7, 14  
 Breton, Symon Le, 21  
 Bridgman, Nanie, 279  
 Brown, Howard Mayer, 5, 10, 31, 178, 183, 217, 282, 285  
 Brumel, Antoine, 46, 47–50, 54, 66, 126–127  
 Bukofzer, Manfred F., 50, 70, 242  
 Burn, David J., 38, 44, 110–113  
 Busnoys, Antoine, 21–22, 28, 42, 44, 45, 56, 163–173, 175–203, 205, 209, 217, 223, 243
- Caldwell, John, 116  
 Calvez, Daniel, 221  
 Capello, Annibale, 106, 108  
 Caron, 56, 233–235, 243  
 Castellanus, Petrus, 178  
 Cavazzoni, Girolamo, 115–116  
*Cela sans plus*, Leo X, 281  
*Celuy qui nasquit sainctement*, 20; edition & translation, 18–19  
*Ce qu'on fait a catimini*, 236–237  
 Joye, 236–237  
*Chansons de maistre Clement Janequin*, 3, 279, 286–292, 295  
*Chantons sonnons trompettes*, Janequin, 289  
 Charles V, 7, 48, 83, 118  
 Charles VII, 49  
 Charles VIII, 122  
 Charneyron, Claude, 292  
*Choralis Constantinus*, Isaac, 117–118  
 Christine de Pisan, 221  
 Cisilino, Siro, 90, 104, 110, 114, 115

- Clerval, A., 218, 220  
 Coclico, Adrianus Petit, 70  
 Colebault, Jacques. *See* Jacquet of Mantua  
*Comme femme desconfortée*, Binchois, 47, 145, 149–153  
*Comment suis je de vostre cueur*, Delahaye, 28  
*Compendium musices*, Coclico, 70  
 Compere, Loyset, 67–68, 71, 121, 207–211, 223, 235  
*Complexus effectuum musices*, Tinctoris, 1  
 Contino, Giovanni, 82, 85, 90, 91, 94–97, 102–105, 110, 113, 114, 115  
*Contrapunctus seu figurata musica super plano cantu*, Layolle, 124  
 Convert, 21  
 Cordier, Jean, 122–123  
 Correggio, Antonio da, 87  
 Costa, Lorenzo, 87  
 Crétin, Guillaume, 66, 145  
 Cummings, Anthony M., 122  
 Cuyler, Louise, 117
- D'Accone, Frank A., 153  
 Dahlhaus, Carl, 51, 140, 152  
*Dal letto me levava*, Michel, 289  
*Das Rheingold*, Wagner, 45  
 Dbaccio fioretino, 280  
 Dean, Jeffrey, 14, 152, 158  
 Delahaye, Jehan, 21, 28  
*De mèsjour plus n'ay puissance*, Basiron, 227, 236  
 De Orto, Mabrianus, 14  
*Deploration sur la mort d'Ockeghem*, Cretin, 66  
*De preceptis artis musicae*, Monachus, 124, 129–130  
*De tous biens plaine*, Hayne van Ghizeghem, 178  
*De vous servir m'est prins envye*, Fresnau, 208–211  
*Dictes moy toutes vos pensees*, Compere, 208–211  
 Dixon, Graham, 86  
*Dodecachordon*, Glarean, 281  
 Domarto, Petrus de, 243–245, 262  
*Du desir que tant*, 155  
 Du Fay, Guillaume, 4, 12, 42, 44, 49, 50, 52, 56, 58, 72, 112, 130, 154, 207–208, 217, 227, 242–243, 244–245, 262, 263–277  
 Duffin, Ross W., 13–14  
*Dulces exuviae*, Mouton / Willaert, 281, 285  
*D'un autre amer mon cueur s'abesseroit*, Basiron, 227  
     Ockeghem, 178, 227, 260  
 Dunstable, John, 156  
 Duyse, F. van, 182
- Eakins, Rex, 260  
*Een schoon liedekens* Boeck, 183  
 Elders, Willem, 47, 65, 182  
*En effait se ne reprenes*, 207  
*En tous les lieux ou j'ay este*, Busnoys, 28  
*Entré suis en grant pensee*, Josquin, 182  
     Prioris, 182  
*Esperant que mon bien vendra*, Barbingant, 161  
 Este, Alfonso II d', 90  
 Este, Ercole I d', 54, 64  
 Este, Ippolito II d', 106  
 Este, Isabella d', 86–87  
*Et moulinet vire tourne*, 290  
*Et trop penser*, Bosfrin, 10  
*Expositiones tractatus pratice cantus mensurabilis*, Prosdocimus, 123
- Fallows, David, 11, 23, 49, 52, 58, 129, 139–140, 148, 149, 152, 154, 180, 187, 207, 217, 226, 265–266  
 Faugues, Guillaume, 226, 243  
 Faurholt, Jakob, 81  
 Fedé, Johannes, 145, 218  
 Feininger, Laurence, 265  
 Fenlon, Iain, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 90, 93, 95, 113, 115  
 Ferand, Ernest T., 47, 124, 130, 135  
 Ferdinand I, 111, 118  
 Ferrante I, 122  
 Festa, Sebastiano, 282  
 Fétis, François-Joseph, 264  
 Finck, Heinrich, 48  
 Finscher, Ludwig, 67, 117, 130  
 Fitch, Fabrice, 14, 49–50, 133, 157, 176, 177  
 Formschneider, Hieronimus, 118  
 François I, 3–4, 7, 289  
 Freedman, Richard, 219  
 Fresnau, Jehan, 207–211  
 Frye, Walther, 244  
 Fulda, Adam von, 26
- Gaffurius, Franchinus, 32, 46, 264  
 Galderisi, Claudio, 36  
 Gallagher, Sean, 178  
 Gallico, Claudio, 86  
 Gallo, F. Alberto, 123, 264  
 Garey, Howard, 36, 145  
 Gastoldi, Giangiacomo, 82, 85, 90, 91, 97–99, 102–105, 109, 110, 114, 115  
*Gaude Virgo*, Josquin, 50  
 Geering, Arnold, 281

- Gerber, Rebecca L., 243, 265  
 Ghiselin-Verbonnet, Johannes, 66, 176  
 Gieseler, Walter, 46  
 Giraud, Yves F.-A., 279, 286, 288  
 Glahn, Henrik, 279  
 Glarean, Heinrich, 139, 281  
 Goldberg, Clemens, 175, 184  
 Goldine, Nicole, 218  
 Gombert, Nicolas, 46, 48–50  
 Gonzaga, Alfonso, 103  
 Gonzaga, Ercole, 83–84, 97, 103, 111–112, 118  
 Gonzaga, Federico, 83  
 Gonzaga, Francesco, 94, 103, 118  
 Gonzaga, Guglielmo, 82–119  
 Gonzaga, Guilio Cesare, 103  
 Gonzaga, Margherita, 90  
 Gozzi, Marco, 124  
*Grace attendant ou la mort pour tous mes*,  
 Mureau, 161, 219–222  
*Gregorius presul meritis*, 207  
 Gutiérrez-Denhoff, Martella, 22, 149, 208
- Haar, James, 44, 54, 66  
 Hagg, Barbara, 64, 82, 83, 132  
 Hamm, Charles, 254, 265, 285  
 Hanen, Martha K., 149  
 Hannas, Ruth, 245  
 Havsager, Karin, 81  
 Haynes, Bruce, 141  
 Hayne van Ghizeghem, 21, 207–208  
 Heartz, Daniel, 279, 282, 288–289  
*Helas, le bon temps que j'avoie*, Tinctoris, 233–235  
*Helas m'amour, ma tresparfaite amye*,  
 Caron, 233–235  
 Tinctoris, 233–235  
*Helas que de vera mon cuer*, Isaac, 234–235  
*Helas, que pourra devenir*, Caron, 233–235  
 Hendrup, Svend, 1, 16  
 Hesselager, Jens, 45  
*He, tres doulz roussignol*, Borlet, 284  
 Hewitt, Helen, 11  
 Higgins, Paula, 22, 141, 175, 216, 217, 225, 226,  
 227, 229, 238  
 Hiley, David, 91, 142  
 Hofhaimer, Paul, 116–117  
 Hudson, Barton, 126, 133
- Il est jour dit lalouette*, Sermisy, 289  
*Illibata Dei virgo nutrix*, Josquin, 65, 71  
*In mijnen sijn heb ick vercorenm*, Busnoys, 175–  
 203; editions, 192–203; poem, 182–183  
*In myne zynn*, Busnoys, 177
- Intabulatura d'organo, cioe messe ... libro secondo*,  
 Cavazzoni, 116  
*Intemerata Dei Mater*, Ockeghem, 14  
 Isaac, Heinrich, 11, 66–68, 113, 116–118, 182,  
 234–235  
*Isagoge in musicen*, Glarean, 281
- Jacquet of Mantua, 84  
*J'actens secours de ma seulle pensee*, Sermisy, 21  
 Janequin, Clément, 3–4, 279, 286–292, 300–307  
 Jans, Markus, 124  
*Ja que lui ne s'i actende*, Busnoys, 169–173  
*J'ay prins deux pous a ma chemise*, 28  
 Jean de Berry, 225  
 Jeffery, Brian, 5, 232  
*Je le scay bien ce qui m'avint*, Basiron, 229–232, 235  
*Je m'en alle voir m'amy*, 285  
*Je n'ay dueil*, Ockeghem, 177  
*Je ne fais plus, je ne dis ne escriis*, Mureau, 161,  
 222–223, 239  
*Je ne requiers que vostre bien vueillance*, 236  
*Je ne vis oncques la paraille*, Binchois, 39, 227–  
 229, 230  
 Jeppesen, Knud, 21, 22, 26–30, 37, 81, 83, 85, 87,  
 88, 90, 102, 106–109, 112, 113, 115, 140, 141,  
 144, 280, 282  
 Jones, George Morton, 206  
 Josquin Desprez, 14, 20, 41–58, 59–80, 118, 126,  
 128–132, 136, 160–161, 182, 207, 289  
 Joye, Gilles, 236–237  
 Judd, Cristle Collins, 54
- Kamper liedboek*, 182–183  
 Kellmann, Herbert, 176  
 Kemp, Walter H., 152  
 Kirkman, Andrew, 41, 111, 113, 261, 265–266  
 Kirsch, Winfried, 112  
 Kłosowska, Anna, 39  
 Knighton, Tess, 23  
 Kreitner, Kenneth, 52, 141  
 Kurtzman, Jeffrey, 86
- La belle se siet au pied de la tour*, Du Fay, 12  
*La chasse*, Janequin, 286–287, 292  
*La guerre*, Janequin, 286–287, 289, 292  
*L'alouette*, Janequin, 3–4, 279, 286–292, 294;  
 edition, 300–307  
 Langlois, Ernest, 215, 219  
*La plus bruiant, celle qui toutes passe*, 22–33, 37;  
 edition & translation, 23–25  
*La plus mignonne de mon cuer*, 156

- La pourveance de mon cuer*, 171–173  
 La Rue, Pierre de, 122–123, 176  
*Las povre cuer*, Janequin, 286–287  
 Lasso, Orlando di, 48  
 Layolle, Francesco, 124, 280, 288  
*Le bien fet*, 229  
*Le chant des oyseaux*, Janequin, 286–287, 291–292  
*Le chantepleure*, 31  
*Le Difficile des Chansons ... Jennequin*, 287–288, 295  
 Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel, 52  
*Le Jardin de plaisance et fleur de Rhetorique*, 216  
*Le joly tetin de ma dame*, 39, 236–237  
 Lenaerts, René Bernard, 72, 182, 184  
 Leo X, 281  
 Lerner, Edward, 130, 133  
 Le Rouge, Guillaume, 155–156, 157, 222  
*Les desloyaulx ont la saison*, Ockeghem, 209  
*Le second jour d'avril*,  
     Agricola, 184  
     Busnoys, 175–176, 184  
*Le serviteur hault guerdonné*, Du Fay, 154  
*Les filettes de Montfort*, 20; edition & translation, 18–19  
*Le souvenir de vous my tue*, Morton, 161  
 Lesure, François, 279, 288, 292  
 Levitan, Joseph S., 140  
*L'homme armé* (tune), 42, 45, 49–50, 66, 109–110  
*Liber de arte contrapuncti*, Tinctoris, 52, 56, 125, 234, 258–259  
*Liber imperfectionum notarum musicalium*, Tinctoris, 148  
 Lindmayr-Brandl, Andrea, 66  
 Litterick, Louise, 206, 209  
 Lockwood, Lewis, 55, 106, 111  
*L'omme banny de sa plaisance*, Barbingant, 28, 140, 144–149, 153–154  
*L'omme qui vit en esperanche*, 148  
 Long, Michael, 45  
 Louis XI, 22, 226  
 Louis XII, 130, 215  
 Lowinsky, Edward E., 26–30, 41, 161, 190  
 Ludford, Nicolas, 113  
 Luko, Alexis Fleur, 260, 265  
*L'ultimo di di maggio senti cantar*, 282, 289  
*L'ultimo di di Mazo un bel matino*, Festa, 282  
 Lusitano, Vicente, 130  
  
 MacClintock, Carol, 85, 90, 109  
 Macey, Patrick, 41, 70  
 Machaut, Guillaume de, 52–53  
 Madruzzo, Christoforo, 94, 97, 103  
*Magnificat Secundi toni*, Brumel, 126–127  
  
 Magro, Agostino, 260  
 Mahrt, William Peter, 113, 116–117  
*Maistre Mimin estudiant* (farce), 38  
*Maistre Mymin qui va la guerre* (farce), 38  
 Malcort, 132, 136  
*Malheur me bat*, Malcort, 132, 136  
*Ma maistresse et ma plus qu'autre amye*, Ockeghem, 161  
 Manetti, Giannozzo, 56  
 Manlius, Johannes, 126  
 Mantegna, Andrea, 87  
 Marie de Bourgogne, 117  
 Marot, Clément, 288  
 Martini, Johannes, 4, 132  
*Ma tredol rosignol*, 284  
*M'a vostre cuer mis en oubli*, Busnoys, 168–169, 191  
 Maximilian I, 116–117  
 McLeod, Enid, 30  
 Meconi, Honey, 121, 123, 217  
 Mengozzi, Stefano, 144  
 Merkley, Lora L.M., 41  
 Merkley, Paul A., 41  
 Merritt, A. Tillman, 279, 286, 291  
 Merulo, Claudio, 94  
 Meyer, Christian, 112, 124, 264  
 Michelet, 21  
 Milsom, John, 50, 130  
*Missa Ad fugam*, Palestrina, 109  
*Missa Ave regina celorum*, Du Fay, 263, 266  
*Missa Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Palestrina, 106, 109, 113  
*Missa Caput*,  
     Anonymous English, 49–50, 242–245, 249, 251–252, 254–257, 261–262, 264  
     Ockeghem, 49–50, 53, 243, 245  
*Missa Cu cu*, Martini, 4  
*Missa Cuiusvis toni*, Ockeghem, 140, 158–160, 277  
*Missa de beata Virgine*, Josquin, 50  
*Missa De les armes*, Ghiselin, 67  
*Missa De Requiem*, Du Fay, 263  
*Missa Dominicale in Quadragesima*, Isaac, 117  
*Missa Dominicalis*,  
     Cavazzoni, 116  
     Contino, 94–97  
     Gastoldi, 97–99  
     Palestrina, 99–102, 103, 109  
     Rovigo, 94–95  
     Striggio, 99–100, 103  
     Wert, 92–94, 104–105  
*Missa D'ung aultre amer*, 260, 262  
*Missa Ecce ancilla*, Du Fay, 263  
*Missae cum quinque vocibus*, Contino, 103, 105

- Missae Dominicales quinis vocibus diversorum auctorum*, Pellini, 81, 90–106, 113–115  
*Missa Et ecce terrae motus*, Brumel, 47–48  
*Missa Fortuna desperata*,  
 Josquin, 42  
 Obrecht, 57  
*Missa Gaudeamus*, Josquin, 42  
*Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae*, Josquin, 54–55, 57, 65  
*Missa in Dominicis diebus*, 88–89  
*Missa in Duplicibus Maioribus*, Palestrina, 103, 108  
*Missa in Duplicibus Minoribus II*, Palestrina, 113  
*Missa in Festis Apostorum II*, Palestrina, 106  
*Missa In myne Zyn*, Agricola, 133, 136, 182  
*Missa Je ne demande*, Agricola, 136  
*Missa La sol fa re mi*, Josquin, 42, 65  
*Missa L'homme armé*,  
 Basiron, 227  
 Brumel, 47  
 Busnoys, 44, 176  
 Du Fay, 44, 244, 263, 277  
 Obrecht, 44  
 Ockeghem, 44  
 Palestrina, 109  
 Tinctoris, 259  
*Missa L'homme armé Sexti toni*, Josquin, 41–48, 53, 56, 59, 69, 72–73  
*Missa L'homme armé Super voces musicales*,  
 Josquin, 42, 44, 66, 72–73  
*Missa Malheur me bat*,  
 Agricola, 132–136  
 Josquin, 132–133, 136  
 Obrecht, 132–133, 136  
*Missa My my*, Ockeghem, 13–14  
*Missa Papae Marcelli*, Palestrina, 108–109  
*Missa Plumimorum carminorum*, Obrecht, 11  
*Missa Prolationum*, Ockeghem, 44, 140, 157, 188, 277  
*Missa Puisque je vis*, 243  
*Missa Quinti toni*, Ockeghem, 277  
*Missarum Josquin liber secundus*, 41, 54, 65–66  
*Missarum Josquin liber tertius*, 41  
*Missarum Liber Secundus*, Palestrina, 108  
*Missa Sancti Anthonii de Padua*, Du Fay, 263–277  
*Missa Sancti Anthonii Viennensis*, Du Fay, 263  
*Missa Se la face ay pale*, Du Fay, 4, 49, 58, 72, 243, 245, 251, 261, 263, 265, 272, 276  
*Missa Sine nomine*, Palestrina, 103, 106–107  
*Missa Sine nomine a3*, Du Fay, 265–266  
*Missa Sine nomine (CS 14)*, 241, 243–262  
*Missa Sine nomine III*, Tinctoris, 260  
*Missa Spiritus almus*, Domarto, 243–246  
*Missa Tempore pascali*, Gombert, 48  
*Missa Ut re mi fa sol la*, Brumel, 66–67  
*Missa Veterem hominem*, 243, 245, 251, 254–256  
*Misse Brumel*, 47, 67  
*Misse Ghiselin*, 67  
*Misse Josquin*, 41–42, 66  
 Moderne, Jacques, 287–288  
 Molinet, Jean, 21, 160  
 Molza, Tarquina, 109  
 Monachus, Guilielmus, 124, 129–130  
*Mon seul et souverain desir*, Binchois, 140, 151–153  
 Monson, Craig A., 111–112, 116  
 Montellier, Ernest, 12  
 Monte, Philippe de, 118  
 Monteverdi, Claudio, 86  
 Morton, Robert, 21, 161  
*Mort, tu as navré*, Ockeghem, 157  
 Müller, H.-C., 281  
 Müller, Mette, 279  
 Mureau, Gilles, 161, 217–226, 229–232, 235, 237–239  
*Mymy, Mymy, mon doux enfant*, 11–17, 38; edition & translation, 16–17  
*Nes que on porroit*, Machaut, 52  
*Nymphes des bois, déesses des fontaines / Requiem eternam*, Josquin, 160–161  
*Nul ne l'a telle, sa maistresse*, Basiron, 227–229, 235  
*Nuper rosarum flores*, Du Fay, 56  
 Obrecht, Jacob, 11, 14, 44, 56–57, 132–133, 136  
 Ockeghem, Johannes, 13–14, 21–22, 23, 28, 38, 42, 44, 48–50, 52–53, 56, 66, 132, 133, 139–140, 142, 157–161, 187–188, 207–208, 209, 217, 222, 227, 243, 245, 277  
*O decus ecclesie – Te laudant*, Isaac, 68  
*O florida rosada*, 155  
*On a grant mal / On est bien malade*, Busnoys, 186–188  
*Opus aureum*, Wollick, 47  
*Opusculum Bipartitum de Primordiis Musicis*, Thuringus, 47  
 Orléans, Charles d', 22, 23, 26, 30, 36, 39, 215, 221  
 Orléans, Louis d', 30  
*Or sus, vous dormés trop, ma dame jolie (virelai)*, 3–4, 283  
*Or sus vous dormez trop 3v*, Anonymous, 3–4, 279–299; edition, 296–299  
 Osthoff, Helmuth, 70, 72  
 Ott, Johannes, 118  
 Owens, Jessie Ann, 41, 107, 108, 118

- Page, Christopher, 243  
 Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 90, 91, 99–110, 112, 113, 115, 120  
*Par maintes foys*, Vaillant, 284  
*Par ung seul mot bien ordonné*, 154–155  
 Peeterzoon, Jan, 182  
 Pellini, Giulio, 81, 90, 91, 99, 103  
*Pensez y se le povez faire*, Mureau, 225  
 Perkins, Leeman L., 28, 81, 111, 145  
 Pesce, Dolores, 1  
*Petite camusette*, Ockeghem. *See S'elle m'amera*  
*Petite camusette, a la mort m'avez mis*, Josquin, 14  
 Petit, Estiene, 22, 226  
 Petrucci, Ottaviano, 41–42, 44, 47, 54, 58, 61–62, 66, 73, 132–133, 175–178, 282, 289  
 Petzch, C., 149  
 Philip II, 108  
 Philipot, Emmanuel, 38  
 Philippe de Croy, 64  
 Philippe le Bon, 63, 227  
 Phillips, Peter, 44  
 Picker, Martin, 14, 175, 179–181, 182, 185, 189  
 Pietrequin Bonnel, 206, 208, 211  
 Pirro, André, 218  
 Plamenac, Dragan, 132  
 Planchart, Alejandro Enrique, 50, 242, 263–265  
*Pleust a la vierge Marie*, 285  
*Plus que pour mille vivant*, 148  
 Pogue, Samuel F., 287–288  
 Polk, Keith, 178  
*Pour avenir a mon actainte*, 153  
*Practica musica*, Finck, 48  
*Prenez sur moi vostre exemple*, Ockeghem, 23, 28, 38, 139–140, 142, 157–158, 160, 188  
*Presque transi ung peu moins qu'estre mort*, Ockeghem, 14, 38  
 Prioris, Johannes, 176  
 Prizer, William, 63–64, 72  
*Proportionale musices*, Tinctoris, 55, 177  
 Prosdocimus de Beldemandis, 123  
*Puis qu'aultrement ne puis avoir*, Delahaye, 28  
*Puis que si bien m'est advenu*, 227  
*Puis qu'il ha pleu a la tres belle*, 154–155  
  
*Qu'en dictez vous, suis je en danger*, Pietrequin, 206  
  
 Rahn, Jay, 5–7  
 Ramos de Pareja, Bartolomeo, 32  
 Raoullin, 218  
 Reaney, G., 283  
*Reconfortez le petit cueur de moy*, Janequin, 291  
  
 Reese, G., 111  
 Regis, Johannes, 56, 243, 262  
 Rehm, Wolfgang, 140  
 René d'Anjou, 20, 64  
*Reveilliés vous et faites chiere lye*, Du Fay, 266  
 Rhaw, Georg, 13  
 Rifkin, Joshua, 129, 206, 208–209  
 Rodin, Jesse, 58  
 Røllum-Larsen, Claus, 139  
 Romano, Giulio, 84  
 Roth, Adalbert, 243  
 Roudie, P., 288  
 Rovigo, Francesco, 85, 86, 90, 94–95, 102–105, 110, 114  
*Royne du ciel / Regina celi*, Compere, 67  
  
 Sachs, Klaus-Jürgen, 47, 124  
*Salve regina*, Agricola, 131  
 Schavran, Henrietta, 153  
 Schedel, Hartmann, 155–157  
 Schlelein, Christian, 81  
 Schmidt-Beste, Thomas, 130  
 Schoop, H., 152  
 Schuler, Manfred, 117–118  
 Schwindt, Nicole, 121  
 Seay, Albert, 124, 125, 289  
*Se je fais duel je n'en ouis mais*, Guillaume le Rouge, 155–156  
*Se la face ay pale*, Du Fay, 49, 72, 272  
*Se la face pale* (a4), 152  
*S'elle m'amera / Petite camusette*, Ockeghem, 14, 38, 177, 187–188  
 Sermisy, Claudin de, 21, 289  
 Seward, Desmond, 7  
 Sewright, Kathleen Frances, 216  
 Sforza, Galeazzo, 210  
 Sherr, Richard, 44, 50, 71, 86, 130, 178, 241, 243  
 Slavin, Dennis, 149, 152, 153  
 Smijers, Albert, 129  
 Sørensen, Helle, 81  
*Sottie des sotz triumphans qui trompent chascun*, (farce), 26  
*Soudainement mon cueur a pris*, Busnoys, 167–168  
  
**Sources**  
 Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, MS 162 D, 58, 80, 137  
 Antico, Andrea, *Chansons a troys*, 281, 285, 286–287, 292, 294  
 Aosta. Biblioteca del seminario maggiore, MS A.1.D19, 156

- Attaignant, Pierre,  
*Chansons nouvelles*, 288–289, 291  
*Quarante et deux chansons a troys parties*,  
 288  
*Trente chansons musicales*, 290  
*Trente et six chansons musicales*, 289
- Barcelona, Biblioteca Central,  
 MS 454, 126–127, 280–281, 286, 293–294
- Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Stiftung Preussischer  
 Kulturbesitz,  
 mus. ms. 40021, 68
- Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale,  
 MS Q15, 156  
 MS Q16, 148, 168–169  
 MS Q17, 227  
 MS Q21, 282
- Copenhagen, The Royal Library;  
 MS Ny kgl. Samling 1848 2°, 69, 121, 126–  
 127, 280–281, 285, 291, 293  
 MS Thott 291 8° (Copenhagen), 21–37,  
 141–142, 156, 163–173, 209, 236
- Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale,  
 MS 517 (Dijon), 22, 23, 28, 30–31, 33–34,  
 142, 145–150, 156, 165–172, 186–188,  
 205, 208–211, 216, 233
- Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo,  
 Biblioteca y Archivo de Música,  
 MS IV.a.24 /EscB), 149–153  
 MS V.III.24 (EscA), 151–152
- Florence, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di  
 Musica ‘Luigi Cherubini’,  
 MS Basevi 2439 (Basevi Codex), 175–203
- Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale,  
 MS Banco Rari 229, 168–169, 234–235  
 MS Magl. xix.117, 280–281, 285–286,  
 293–294  
 MS Magl. xix.176, 145–148, 217–222,  
 224–225
- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana,  
 MS 2356, 153  
 MS 2794, 168–169, 184, 205–214, 222–223,  
 226; contents, 212–214
- Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana,  
 MS Acquisti e doni 666 (Medici Codex),  
 160–161
- Ivrea, Biblioteca capitolare,  
 Codex Ivrea, 283
- Jena, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek,  
 Chorbücher 34–35, 124
- Kassel. Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche  
 Bibliothek,  
 MS 4° Mus. 9, 126–127
- Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek,  
 MS 1494 (Apel-Codex), 68
- Leuven, Alamire Foundation,  
 Manuscript without shelf number (Leuven),  
 38, 139, 145–149, 238–239
- Lucca, Archivio di Stato,  
 MS 238, 244–245, 248
- Mantua, Archivio Storica Diocesano,  
 Corali ms 1, Kyriale, 85, 87–91, 102, 104
- Milan, Conservatorio di Musica ‘Giuseppe  
 Verdi’,  
 MS Santa Barbara 128, 114  
 MS Santa Barbara 166, 114
- Modena, Biblioteca Estense,  
 MS A.X.1.11, 156
- Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,  
 Codex germ.mon. 810, 155–157  
 Codex lat.mon. 14274, 156  
 MS Clm 15632, 264  
 Mus. ms. 3154, 129  
 Mus.ms. 9659, 149–153
- Namur, Haute cour, Reg. 8 (1421–23), 12
- New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library,  
 MS 91 (Mellon Chansonnier), 144–149,  
 155, 169–171, 236–237
- Oxford, Bodleian Library,  
 MS Canon. Misc. 213, 151–152
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale,  
 Dept. de la Mus., Rés. VmC Ms 57  
 (Nivelle), 21–22, 28, 145–148, 153–154,  
 166–168, 186, 227–229  
 Ms. fonds français 15123 (Pixérécourt),  
 146–148  
 Ms. fonds français 1722, 67  
 Ms. fonds français 9346 (Bayeux MS), 6–8,  
 9–20, 22, 37, 284, 291  
 Ms. fonds français 12744, 6–9, 11, 285, 291  
 Ms. Fonds Italien 568, 283  
 Ms. nouv. acq. fr. 6771 (Codex Reina), 283  
 Ms. Rés. Vma 851 (Bourdeney-Pasche MS),  
 287, 295  
 Ms. Rothschild 2973 (Chansonnier Cordi-  
 forme), 145, 149
- Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria,  
 Ms. Aldini 362, 145–148, 153–155, 157
- Petrucchi, Ottaviano,  
*Canti B*, 67, 176  
*Canti C*, 65, 175–203  
*Fragmenta missarum*, 176  
*Frottole libro primo*, 289  
*Motetti a cinque libro primo*, 65, 68, 160  
*Motetti libro quarto*, 61–62  
*Odhecaton A*, 66–67, 176
- Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense,  
 MS 2856, 168–169, 227

- Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,  
MS Cappella Sistina 14, 241, 243–245, 248, 260  
MS Cappella Sistina 51, 260  
MS Chigi C VIII 234, 140, 159–160, 177
- Seville, Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina,  
MS 5-I-43, 168–171, 229, 233
- St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek,  
Ms. 463, 281, 294
- Trent, Archivio Diocesano,  
NS 93\* (olim BL), 263
- Trent, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e Collezioni Provinciali,  
MS 88, 242–243, 251, 264–265  
MS 89, 152, 242  
MS 90, 156, 263
- Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,  
Codex 18745, 116–117
- Washington D.C., Library of Congress,  
MS M2.1 L25 Case (Laborde), 22, 142, 145–149, 165–172, 205, 208–211, 224, 226–227, 230, 232–234, 236
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Codex Guelf. 287 Extrav. (Wolfenbüttel), 22, 149, 165, 169–171, 186, 210, 226–227, 230, 233, 235–237  
Helmstedt 628 [W1], 142
- Sparks, Edgar, 259
- Spataro, Giovanni, 32, 272
- Stabat mater* a2, 69
- Stäblein, Bruno, 142
- Starr, Pamela F., 122
- Stewart, Rebecca, 52
- Striggio, Alessandro, 90, 99–100, 102–105, 110
- Strohm, Reinhard, 4, 56, 117, 241–242, 244–245, 251
- Summerly, Jeremy, 44
- Sur mon ame, m'amy*, 33–37; edition & translation, 33–35
- Sutherland, David A., 124
- Tant est mignonne ma pensee*, 39
- Tant fort me tarde ta venue*,  
Basiron, 227  
Mureau, 221–222, 224, 229–232
- Tant me desplet*, 155
- Taylor, Jane H.M., 215, 216
- Terminorum musicae diffinitorium*, Tinctoris, 188
- Teuling, Arnold den, 175
- Thibault, G., 149
- Thick, Henry, 244
- Thuringus, Joachim, 47
- Tinctoris, Johannes, 1, 32, 46, 52, 55, 56, 69, 125, 145, 148–149, 163, 177–178, 188, 191, 218, 233–235, 237–238, 258–260
- Tini, Michael, 90
- Tintoretto, Jacopo, 86
- Torre Franca, F., 282, 289
- Tous desplaisirs n'en sont prochains*, Binchois?, 151–153
- Tractato di musica*, Spataro, 272
- Transit Anna timor*, Agricola, 130–132
- Treitler, Leo, 122
- Tres dous compains*, 283
- Trop penser me font amours*, 8–10; edition & translation, 9
- Tschudi, Aegidius, 285
- Turrell, F.B., 281
- Urquhart, Peter, 139, 144, 157, 161, 188
- Ursprung, Otto, 70
- Ut heremita solus*, Ockeghem?, 66
- Ut Phebi radiis*, Josquin, 59–80, 130; translation & edition, 62–63, 73–79
- Ut quent laxis* (hymn), 67
- Vaet, Jacobus, 118
- Vaillant, 284
- Vérard, Antoine, 216
- Vespro della Beata Vergine*, Monteverdi, 86
- Vicentini, Giuseppe, 108
- Villiers, P. de, 288
- Villon, François, 22, 215
- Vincenet, 243
- Vincentino, Nicola, 130
- Virgo celesti*, Compere, 67
- Visconti, Valentina, 30
- Vive le roy*, Josquin, 65
- Voir dit*, Machaut, 52
- Vostre regart si tresfort m'a feru*, Tinctoris, 233
- Voulez ouyr le cris de Paris*, Janequin, 289
- Vous marchez du bout du pie*, Busnoys, 186–189
- Wagner, Richard, 45
- Warmington, Flynn, 45
- Weber, Edith, 111–112, 116
- Weerbecke, Gaspar van, 11, 243
- Wegman, Rob C., 1–2, 23, 41–42, 52, 55–57, 59, 71, 109, 112, 122, 123, 125, 126, 133, 177–178, 233, 243, 254, 260–261, 267
- Wert, Giaches de, 82, 83, 85, 90, 92–94, 95, 97, 99, 102–105, 106, 109, 110, 114, 115

Wexler, Richard, 132  
Wiser, Johannes, 263–264, 276  
Wollick, Nicolaus, 47  
Woodley, Ronald, 145, 148, 177, 237  
Woods, Virginia, 63  
Wrede, Johannes, 243  
Wright, Craig, 45

Yolande de France, 49

Zwingli, Huldrych, 281