SYMBOLIC SCORES

Studies in the Music of the Renaissance

SYMBOLA ET EMBLEMATA

Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Symbolism

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BY

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"No symbols where none intended"
(Samuel Beckett, *Watt*)

JOHANNAE UXORI MEAE

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ABBREVIATIONS

AcM	Acta musicologica
AMw	Archiv für Musikwissenschaft
CMM	Corpus mensurabilis musicae
DTÖ	Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich
EMH	Early Music History
EMN	Exempla musica neerlandica
IM	Imago musicae
IMSCR	International Musicological Society Congress Report
IMusSCR	International Musical Society Congress Report
JAMS	Journal of the American Musicological Society
KJb	Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch
LU	Liber Usualis (edition Paris 1957)
MB	Musica britannica
Mf	Die Musikforschung
MGG	Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart
ML	Music and Letters
MQ	The Musical Quarterly
MRM	Monuments of Renaissance Music
NGD	The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians
NOE	New Obrecht Edition
PalMus	Paléographie musicale
RBM	Revue belge de musicologie
RdM	Revue de musicologie
ReM	La revue musicale
SMw	Studien zur Musikwissenschaft
TVNM	Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis

PREFACE

This book is about symbolism in Renaissance music. It differs in several respects from my earlier *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968). While the latter publication was meant as an attempt to review systematically the various features in Netherlandish music which were utilized as symbols as well as to develop a means for controlling the process of their interpretation, the present studies are concerned with the symbolism inspired by ideas and themes inherent in the musical culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It differs further in that attention is given to the theoretical premises of the use of the terms 'sign' and 'symbol', and the material which is discussed comprises examples of musical symbolism collected from my own analyses rather than from publications by other musicologists.

The book is devoted mainly, though not exclusively, to sacred music. The compositions are placed in the religious environment in which they were produced, and which was dominated by the notion of the omnipresence of God, of hell as the final dwelling-place of the damned after the Last Judgment, and of the role of the Virgin as mediatrix between Heaven and Earth. Familiarity with these aspects of Christian religion is a necessary precondition for a deeper and more intimate understanding of a composer's treatment of sacred texts, and for rediscovering the symbolical values he sometimes attached to his music.

Biblical passages are quoted from the Douai Bible. This Bible is named after the French town Douai where the Latin Vulgate was translated by scholars at the English College. The New Testament was published at Reims in 1582 and the Old Testament at Douai in 1609. For the translation of quotations from liturgical texts I have followed, whenever possible, the *Saint Andrew Daily Missal with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts*, Large edition, edited by Dom Gaspar Lefebure O.S.B. (Montreal 1943).

The works discussed are listed in the Index of Compositions. Manuscript sources are in general referred to by the name of the city where they are preserved and the manuscript's call number of the library concerned. More information may be found in the *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, 5 vols., compiled by the University of Illinois Musicological Archives for Renaissance Manuscript Studies (Neuhausen-Stuttgart 1979-88). All musical examples are given at the original pitch and in the original note-values. I have not compiled a bibliography, but all authors quoted or referred to are listed in the Index of Names.

Two studies have been published before. Guillaume Dufay's Concept of Faux-bourdon appeared in Revue belge de musicologie 43 (1989). *Josquin's Mass for All Saints and the Book of Revelation* is the revised and enlarged

version of *Josquin's Gaudeamus Mass. A Case of Number Symbolism in Music*, which was earlier printed in Studi Musicali 14 (1985).

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude to my brother Leo for reading four of these studies and for supplying me with information about various philosophical and theological questions; to Albert Clement and Eric Jas for reading the entire manuscript and proposing a number of improvements; and to David Collyer for revising very carefully the English text.

W. E.

St. André d'Olérargues,
December, 1992

INTRODUCTION

The musical compositions which form the subject of this book were for the greater part conceived for performance in Christian worship, and in numerous cases were based on biblical and/or liturgical texts. To the composers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries many of these texts meant more than they do to most present-day historians of music, for besides their obvious literal sense, they were also believed to contain spiritual or symbolic meaning. The search for symbolism in the scores of these compositions ought therefore to take its starting-point in medieval and renaissance exegesis, which was largely allegorical. For our purpose here an outline of the Christian concept of symbolism will suffice to give some insight into the theological and mystical world in which these composers lived.

The theory and use of allegory go back to Hellenism. While Plato wanted to banish the reading of certain poets from the schools because of their stories about the immoral behaviour of the gods, and Aristotle, for his part, paid no attention to the issue, the Stoics attempted to read philosophical or ethical concepts into these accounts.[1] The allegorical interpretation of the myths of Greek religion was further developed by the Neoplatonists, in particular by Iamblichus (ca. 250-ca. 330). Meanwhile, Jewish scholars in Alexandria had begun to give allegorical interpretations to certain texts of the Bible, upholding nevertheless that there was always also an underlying literal sense.[2]

From the very beginning of the Church, Christians were aware of the allegorical meaning of the Old Testament. St Paul declared that the story of Abraham having two sons, one by his free-born wife and the other by a slave woman, had an allegorical sense (Gal. 4:22-24). In the first epistle to the Corinthians 10:11, he even intimates that the entire Old Testament has a figurative meaning. The ensuing search for biblical allegories, coupled with the spirit of Platonism, gave rise to a literature in which allegories are ubiquitous. In the first three books of his *De doctrina christiana*, the early Church Father St Augustine described certain procedures for arriving at a proper explanation of the Scriptures. Because the presence of foreign words – he uses the term "signum" (sign) – prevents the reader from understanding the real meaning of a text, Augustine says that one should try to elucidate the symbolism which is concealed in such passages.[3] To illustrate this he refers to the explanations given by "some men who were experts in these foreign languages". After having mentioned some meaningful proper names (e.g.

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[1] See E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Darmstadt R1963), part 3/1, pp. 322ff.

[2] Cf. H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. The Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Cambridge, MA, ²1948), vol. 1, pp. 87ff. (Behind the allegorical method); 115ff. (The allegorical method).

[3] Cf. Corpus Christianorum. Series latina, vol. 32, II.xvi.23-26.

"Abraham") and names of cities (e.g. "Zion"), he points to other examples taken from nature – *viz.* animals (the particular characteristics of the serpent), stones (the red garnet shining in the dark as an allusion to the symbolic meaning of the passage in which the name of the stone is found), plants (the olive-branch seen as a sign of peace because of its peculiar qualities), – from numbers (why the number forty appears as a symbol of fasting), and from music (the ten strings of the psaltery symbolizing God's Ten Commandments). In his *Confessions* Augustine underlines the multiformity of the figurative aphorisms in the Bible: "For I know a thing to be manifoldly signified by corporeal expressions, which is understood one way by the mind; and that understood many ways in the mind, which is signified one way by corporeal expression."[4]

Augustine was but one of many early theologians who stipulated that the spiritual truths hidden in biblical texts were more important than the literal meaning of these same texts. Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604), Hugo of St Victor (1096-1141), and Honorius of Autun (ca. 1090-ca. 1156) employed allegory also in connection with sacred objects. In the words of Arthur Cushman McGiffert: "Every portion of the cultus, every appurtenance of the services, every part of the sacred buildings was given its symbolical significance. Cathedrals were not simply places of worship, but sermons in stone. The nave, the aisles, the choir, the columns, the windows, all had their figurative meanings and invited the worshippers to the contemplation of things unseen and spiritual."[5] This author further remarks that Christian symbolism, as we saw already in the first quotation from Augustine, was also applied to nature. According to Vincent of Beauvais, nature is a book written by the finger of God.[6] Consequently, it was to be read allegorically and it often provided analogies such as those found, for example, in the famous sermons of Anthony of Padua.[7] Thomas Aquinas even says that the relation between cause and effect is one of analogy: "since a thing which is a cause acts according as it is in act, every cause produces an effect resembling itself: *omne agens agit sibi simile.*"[8] In my view, the medieval concepts of analogy, allegory, and natural symbolism form the context of images and ideas needed for understanding some striking examples of musical expression as well (see pp. 36ff., 230).

Biblical allegories became the common possession of all Christians, so therefore "the religious significance of mediaeval symbolism can hardly be exaggerated. With the whole world recognized as a revelation of God, and with visible objects on every side testifying to the unseen and spiritual, it was not easy for a person to forget religion altogether and to become wholly absorbed in material things. Reminders of the divine were everywhere, and he must be callous indeed who paid no attention to them."[9] It should come as no surprise that, for their part, artists and musicians devised new types of symbolic expression and incorporated these into their works.

[4] *The Confessions of Saint Augustine.* Translated by E.B. Pusey (New York 1961), p. 247.
[5] *A History of Christian Thought* (New York/London 1947), vol. 2, pp. 253-4.
[6] Cf. *ibid.*
[7] See F. Zambon, *La simbologia animale nei 'sermones' di s. Antonio di Padova*, in Le fonti e la teologia dei Sermoni Antoniani, ed. by A. Poppi (Padua 1982), pp. 255-68.
[8] Cf. E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* (New York 1940), p. 95. The English translation of Thomas's thesis is by my brother Leo.

Allegory, Sign, and Symbol

The concepts relating to the terms 'allegory', 'sign', and 'symbol' used in the outline above, are undoubtedly complicated. In a certain sense, these terms pose a philosophical problem, the solution of which begins with agreement over the relationship between thought and reality. Each of these terms denotes objects or actions which, in addition to their own ontological content, possess an extra significance. 'Allegory' (from Gk. and Lat. *allegoria*) literally means 'speaking otherwise than one seems to speak'. 'Sign' (from Lat. *signum*) has the larger sense of "a thing which brings something to our cognition beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses."[10] 'Symbol' (from Gk. *sumbolon*) originally meant a fragment of an object divided by contracting parties, each party keeping a piece of the object. Subsequently the term acquired the sense of both an identity token and of a pre-arranged sign which leads to the knowledge of something else. In this way any conventional sign[11] could be called a symbol, but the use of the term symbol is generally restricted to those signs which point to a higher reality.

One of the most studied works of the Middle Ages, the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-636), describes the terms 'allegory' and 'symbol' in the following way:
– "The allegory is alien to habitual language. For the sound is different, and it is understood differently."
– "In Greek [the word] 'symbol' means sign or cognition."[12]
The term 'symbolum' recurs in the *Expositiones super Hierarchiam celestem* of John Scotus Erigena (ca. 810-ca. 877), where it is said to represent resemblances with immaterial realities. The resemblances themselves can be pure and exact, or confused and mixed with dissimilarities.[13]

[9] McGiffert, *op. cit.* (fn. 5), vol. 2, p. 256.
[10] Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* (fn. 3), II.i.1: "Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire ..." More than eight centuries later, Thomas Aquinas defines the term in almost the same way; see his *Quaestio disputata de veritate*, 9, 4 ad 4.
[11] Conventional signs such as the words of a language, certain gestures, coins and paper money, different ways of dressing, etc. are to be distinguished from the so-called natural signs which are spontaneously understood to signify a further reality. For William of Ockham's theory of signs see B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy in Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London ²1962), p. 463.
[12] *Isidori hispalensis episcopi etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. by W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1966): "Allegoria est alieniloquium. Aliud enim sonat, et aliud intellegitur" (I.xxxvii.22). "Symbolum per linguam Graecam signum vel cognitio interpretatur" (VI.xix.57).
[13] Cf. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 122, col. 132: "Per symbola, hoc est, per signa sensibilibus rebus similia, aliquando ei pura, aliquando dissimilia et confusa."

Apparently the terms 'allegory' and 'symbol' partly overlap and are sometimes used indiscriminately. However, a distinction between them could be made by placing symbolism on the level of thought and allegory on that of (linguistic) expression.[14] J. Huizinga proposed a similar interpretation: "[Allegory] is not the same thing as symbolism. Symbolism expresses a mysterious connexion between two ideas, allegory gives a visible form to the conception of such a connexion. Symbolism is a very profound function of the mind, allegory is a superficial one. It aids symbolic thought to express itself, but endangers it at the same time by substituting a figure for a living idea. The force of the symbol is easily lost in the allegory."[15]

The terms 'allegory' and 'symbol' are used over and again in scholarly publications, and the choice between them for the title-word in a musicological study is not an easy one.[16] Early musical treatises, incommunicative as they are about these forms of musical expression, do not give any help. Yet the ideas of a symbol being a doorway to knowledge, and possessing multiformity, do certainly apply to the various forms of symbolism in the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The same seems to be true in the case of Renaissance art. In his *Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art* Erwin Panofsky says: "In thus conceiving of pure forms, motifs, images, stories and allegories as manifestations of underlying principles, we interpret all these elements as what Ernst Cassirer has called 'symbolical' values."[17] And in the same paragraph he describes the object of iconology as "the discovery and interpretation of these 'symbolical' values." Sir Ernst Gombrich gave the second volume of his studies in Renaissance art the title *Symbolic Images.*[18] He elaborates upon the meaning of the terms 'allegory' and 'symbol' (p. 183), and concludes that the word 'symbol' has become an alternative for 'allegory'. Compilers of dictionaries on art employ almost without exception the term 'symbol'. The language of Christian art which describes "the never-ending experiences man has with truth, beauty and goodness" has been called one "of the sign and the symbol, the outward and visible form through which is revealed the inward and invisible reality that moves and directs the soul of a man."[19] For a study which deals largely with music of the Christian Church it thus seems a sound decision to adopt the terms 'sign' and 'symbol' to express the fact that certain things are used to signify spiritual relations. In the following pages I will explain in greater detail the different shades of meaning which can be applied to both terms.

[14] Cf. C.S. Lewis, *Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford 1953), p. 48.
[15] *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth 1976), p. 197.
[16] Reviewing my *Studien zur Symbolik* of 1968, Maria Rita Maniates elaborates on its title, and says: "Since Dr. Elders is contributing to a fairly sophisticated body of research in intellectual history, he would have done his excellent study greater service by calling it *Studien zur Allegorie in der Musik der Niederländer*"; cf. MQ 58 (1972), p. 484. Yet the following comments may well demonstrate that neither the term 'allegory' nor 'symbol' cover the whole repertoire of symbolical values.
[17] *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, NY, 1955), p. 31.
[18] (Oxford ³1985).
[19] G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961), p. 7.

Susanne Langer, in her lecture *The Art Symbol and the Symbol in Art*, stressed the function and nature of symbolical values in art by saying that they show various "degrees of complexity, from simplest directness to extreme indirectness, from singleness to deep interpenetration, from perfect lucidity to the densest overdetermination." Different though these forms of expression may be, they all have meanings "in the full sense that any semanticist would accept. And those meanings, as well as the images that convey them, enter into the work of art as elements in its composition."[20] This quotation clearly reflects the situation we are faced with when searching for symbolism in music. It also shows that the choice of any single term whatsoever to indicate all cases in which something is used to signify a reality beyond itself leaves room for discussion.

The American pioneer of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), developed a theory of signs which clarifies the problems involved. According to this logician, "the essential function of a sign is to render inefficient relations efficient."[21] In other words, what man experiences as reality he establishes in signs, and these signs are perceptible. The particular way in which they are made recognizable is not of the essence. But signs will always refer to something beyond themselves. It is self-evident that the representative character of the sign is inextricably bound up with its interpretative character. Another feature of many signs is that they are essential to the complex of rules, agreements, etc. that we call codes. However, something can also be a sign if used incidentally without precedent; in this case the sign works without a code. Finally, it should be pointed out that what makes a sign valid as such exists only by the grace of its being recognized by the users of signs. Therefore, signs can refer to more than one thing and are furthermore subject to certain restrictions. They come into being, they are used, they disappear. The historian can make it his aim to uncover signs that have disappeared.

Dependent on the nature of the relation between the sign and the thing to which it refers – the *denotatum* – Peirce distinguishes three types of signs: icons, indices and symbols. The iconic sign is expressive. It can exist without having a *denotatum*. However, because of its resemblance to the *denotatum* the iconic sign can be connected with it. Thus we perceive the ascending melody at the words "et ascendit in celum" (and he ascends into heaven) as an iconic sign. The index, on the other hand, is dependent on the existence of a *denotatum*: it draws attention to something. The index generally has some quality in common with its *denotatum*. For example, the threefold tempus perfectum sign in the soprano part of the Sanctus of Josquin's *Gaudeamus* Mass denotes the number three as the number of sanctity (see p. 46). The index, therefore, is denotative. Lastly, the symbolic sign is applicable in cases in which the relation between sign and *denotatum* is determined by general

[20] See *Problems of Art. Ten Philosophical Lectures* (New York 1957), p. 139.
[21] *Collected Papers*, vol. 8 (Cambridge, MA, 1958), p. 227. The following outline is based on A. van Zoest, *Semiotiek* (Baarn 1978), pp. 20-34.

rules. It exists only within a social context and is, broadly speaking, less clearly perceptible. The symbol is rightly regarded as being more sophisticated. The more abstract a sign is, the more symbolic force it gains. For those unfamiliar with the past, symbols remain hidden. The explanation of Peirce's theory makes it perfectly clear that symbolism is an art of expression, the rules of which one must learn.

Number symbolism

Ever since the beginnings of Greek religion and philosophical speculation numbers were believed to have a particular symbolic value. In Pythagoreanism they were credited with being the structure and order of all things. The theory of number, subsequently, became an important element of philosophy, theology, the sciences, and the arts. The first theologian who attempted to reconcile Plato's arithmological cosmology with the account of creation as given in the first chapter of Genesis was Philo of Alexandria.[22] According to this Jewish contemporary of Jesus, the significance of the number six in creation can only be understood by allegorical exegesis. Philo conflated the biblical story with Greek number symbolism to make "the Old Testament seem both superior to Greek myth, and equal to Greek philosophy."[23]

Augustine, also, was convinced "that the numerical relations in the world created by God, the dates of the history of salvation, and the use of numbers in the Bible are characterized by a hidden meaning which allegorical interpretation could uncover."[24] In his *De libero arbitrio* he exclaims: "Behold the sky, behold the sea, what shines up there and what creeps on the earth, behold the beings which fly or those which swim: everything is beautiful because it encloses a number" (II.vi.42). For Augustine beauty is nothing else but a numerical equality of proportion. This influential Church Father thus approved of numerological thinking as a basic element of exegesis. In dealing with the six days of creation he writes: "We must not despise the science of numbers, which, in many passages of Holy Scripture, is found to be of eminent service to the careful interpreter. Neither has it been without reason numbered among God's praises[:] 'thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight' [Wisdom 11:21]."[25]

The man who codified the numerological tradition of allegorical exegesis was Hugo of St Victor. Of the six types of symbols, he described numbers in great detail because of the abundance of possibilities for meaning inherent in them.[26] Several Christian thinkers soon went on to assign essential significance to the divine use not only of numbers but also of music, related to

[22] Cf. Chr. Butler, *Number Symbolism* (London 1970), p. 22.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[24] H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter, Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975), p. 9.
[25] Cf. Butler, *op. cit.* (fn. 22), p. 24.
[26] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 24), p. 42.

number, in creation. For Bonaventure (ca. 1217-1274) nothing in the universe is unorganized ("nihil in universo est inordinatum").[27] Nicholas of Cusa, in his major work *De docta ignorantia* (1440), reiterated this doctrine: "In creating the world God availed himself of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy, arts that we also use when we investigate the elements and movements and the relations of things... By means of music he put them [the elements] in such relations that there is no more earth in the earth than water in the water, air in the air, fire in the fire, and that no element can be totally changed into the other, which is why the frame of the world cannot collapse ... In so ordering this the eternal wisdom proceeded in accordance with a proportion which cannot be deciphered."[28]

Because the approach to music in the liberal arts tradition was primarily mathematical, it can easily be understood why Cusa used musical harmony as an analogy to describe the creation of the world. If we further take into account the basic function of numerological exegesis in medieval Christian hermeneutics, it is not surprising that composers from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were encouraged to combine sacred numbers with new forms of symbolism when setting texts drawn from or inspired by the Scriptures. In 1494, the Italian monk Luca Pacioli published in Venice his *Summa de arithmetica*. The book deals, among other things, with the mysticism of numbers, and became very popular. Fifteen years later the same author addressed his *De divina proportione* "to each student of philosophy, perspective, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and other mathematical subjects".[29] Surely, the close contacts which Netherlandish musicians had with Italian culture may well justify the presumption that they, too, became familiar with the contents of Pacioli's theories. A third treatise on numbers, Pietro Bongo's *De mystica numerorum significatione*, appeared in 1583 in Bergamo. According to Bongo, number is essential to theology and his book is therefore chiefly written for theologians. The author explicitly refers to the secret character of number symbolism: he says that secrecy is inseparably linked with the knowledge of numbers.[30] At the same time, however, he admits that the grace of God allows one to fathom the mysteries of numbers. Bongo's view, meanwhile, may well explain why no references to number symbolism in music are found in contemporary theory. Yet, some music theorists were familiar with numerological exegesis. For example, Gioseffo Zarlino, in his *Istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice 1558), says: "Nelle sacre lettre un'infinito numero di secreti mirabilissimi e divini col mezo de i numeri si uengono a discoprire, della cognitione ed intelligenza de i quali (come piace Augustino) senza l'aiuto de numeri noi certamente saremmo privi." (In the Scriptures we can

[27] Cf. V. E. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York ²1969), p. 94.
[28] After the German translation: *Des Cardinals und Bischofs Nicolaus von Cusa wichtigste Schriften*, ed. by F.A. Scharpff (Freiburg i. B. 1862), pp. 69f.
[29] The woodcuts for this book were designed by no less a person than Leonardo da Vinci.
[30] Cf. F. Feldmann, *Numerorum mysteria*, in AMw 14 (1957), p. 106.

discover by means of numbers an infinite amount of the most miraculous and divine secrets; and (as it pleases Augustine) we would certainly be deprived of the cognition and understanding of these without the help of numbers.)[31]

One of the best modern guides for numero-symbolical research is Heinz Meyer's *Zahlenallegorese*.[32] It presents the methods of interpretation and the meaning of individual numbers as found in the most important writings on the subject. Among them are St Augustine, Gregory the Great, St Bede, Hugo of St Victor and Honorius of Autun. A work more often referred to in musicological publications is Vincent F. Hopper's *Medieval Number Symbolism*,[33] which surveys the sources of number symbolism – namely the astrological numbers of antiquity and the Pythagorean theory of number – and describes its influence on the early Christian writers with the aim of illustrating their understanding of the numerology. However, as Meyer argues, Hopper overstrongly emphasizes medieval number symbolism as being a remnant of oriental astrology and Greek mathematics without sufficiently pointing out the typical quality of Christian interpretation regarding these numbers from the past.[34] To the interpretations of numbers listed in Meyer's book we can add some from the world of late medieval devotion. In particular the development of the veneration of the Virgin Mary contributed new elements to number mysticism. The numbers seven and twelve, for example, often symbolize special characteristics or functions of the Virgin.[35]

Gematria

Fifteenth-century number symbolism in Western Europe saw the rise of yet another way of transforming numerals into music, *viz.* gematria, which is the substitution of numbers for letters or vice versa, a method originally applied to Hebrew texts by medieval Cabbalists in order "to derive mystical insights into sacred writings or obtain new interpretations of the texts."[36] This form of esoteric Jewish mysticism, called cabbala, became important also in Western Europe. Since, throughout all church history, Christian theology has reached back continuously to Jewish biblical scholarship, it is obvious that cabbala was bound to exert influence on Christian mysticism. Cabbala's most significant spokesman was the German humanist Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522). In his *De arte cabalistica*, published in 1517, he says that "the Cabbala is indeed the symbolic reception of the divine revelation", and he calls it "a symbolic theology".[37] None the less we must realize that most of Reuchlin's

[31] Book I, cap. 12.
[32] See fn. 24.
[33] See fn. 27.
[34] Cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 24), p. 11.
[35] See my study *Music and Number*..., pp. 151-84.
[36] The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropaedia 4, p. 454.
[37] Translation after the French edition, Johann Reuchlin, *La Kabbale (De arte cabalistica)*, ed. by F. Secret (Paris 1973), pp. 45 and 209.

treatise is devoted to a practical application of the program proposed by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) in his *De hominis dignitate oratio* (Oration on the Dignity of Man). This work, written in 1486, comprises 900 theses drawn from Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Latin writers.

Although one might suppose that a composer like Josquin – who lived for so long in Italy and was a contemporary of Pico – did resort to gematria in some of his works because of Pico's interest in this method of text interpretation, an earlier source for it is conceivable as well. The application of gematria in medieval Spanish literature, which was itself influenced by Arabic literature, testifies to its existence long before the fifteenth century.[38] In fourteenth-century France no less a composer than Guillaume de Machaut used gematria in the text of his rondeau *Dix et sept, cinc*. The first two lines of the poem run: "Dix et sept, cinc, treze, quatorze et quinze / M'a doucement de bien amer espris." The numbers 17, 5, 13, 14, and 15 form the word "Renop", which is a number anagram for the name of his girlfriend Péronne (d'Armentières).[39]

From the Middle Ages onwards, number symbolism and gematria continued to fascinate both composers and writers. While Johann Sebastian Bach is considered as its most famous exponent in music, in modern literature it is employed by the greatest twentieth-century German novelist, Thomas Mann, who confessed his love for number mysticism and letter games in his autobiographical essay *Meine Zeit*. An analysis of his *Doctor Faustus* (1947) has unveiled several very sophisticated gematric puns.[40] The significance of numbers in this novel is illustrated by the magic square of Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I*, which hangs above Adrian Leverkühn's piano. The square produces the number 34 in eight different ways, and symbolizes the age at which Leverkühn wrote his *Apocalypsis cum figuris*. This composition is named after Dürer's series of engravings of the Apocalypse. Mann prepares the reader for the mathematical aspect of music in chapter eight, where the music teacher Wendell Kretschmar devotes one of his lectures to "Music and the Eye". Quoting from a sonnet of Shakespeare – "To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit" – he asserts "that in all time composers had secretly nested in their writings things that were meant more for the reading eye than for the ear."[41] As an example he refers to the art of the Netherlanders, which, in

[38] See for example, H. de Vries, *Zahlenbau in spanisher Dichtung*, in Mensura, Mass, Zahl, Zahlensymbolik im Mittelalter. Miscellanea Mediaevalia 16 (Berlin/New York 1983-84), pp. 407-34.
[39] Cf. R.H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York/London 1978), p. 403. A good introduction to the use of numbers in medieval music may be found in J. Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages. Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge 1986), pp. 14-8. The author rightly makes a distinction between number symbolism and numeric disposition.
[40] See G.A. von Winter, *De halfgod en het monster*. Vermoedens omtrent Doctor Faustus, in Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus* (Amsterdam 1985), pp. 570-3.
[41] *Doctor Faustus* (London 1949), p. 61.

Leverkühn's words, is "excogitated by pure calculation" to the glory of God.[42]

Aims, Limits, and Principles of Musico-Symbolical Analysis

Although this book presents studies on various types of musical symbolism and topics regarding musical themes, I have applied the same principles of analysis to most compositions. The description of these principles will be preceded by some comments on the aims and limits of symbolical research in Renaissance music.

Studies on Renaissance music do not generally deal with its possible symbolical import. One cannot object to this as long as the main purpose of the author is not to give an evaluation of the functional or esthetical aspects of this music. The situation changes, however, when musicologists wrongly describe the character of a particular piece or misinterpret the composer's intention simply because they are not familiar with the inherently esoteric aspects of the compositional procedures. To illustrate such mistaken interpretations one may refer to the discussions of William Byrd's eight-part *Diliges dominum*. The motet is characterized as follows:

– "its aesthetic interest is far below his [i.e. Byrd's] ordinary standard" (Edmund Fellowes)[43]

– "frankly a very dull piece" (Hugh Benham)[44]

– "a *tour de force* of little artistic merit" (Joseph Kerman)[45]

Since the last of these authors has his own personal view of the purpose of musicology, his characterization is particularly striking. Edward Lowinsky, in his controversy with Kerman in 1965, amplified Kerman's statement about the task of the music historian in the following words: "Criticism can gain new perspectives by being combined with cultural, historical, social trends that have a shaping influence on the work of art. If we search for deeper insight, we must abandon our one-sided preferences and strive instead for integration of as many approaches to the composer's work as have a bearing on its understanding."[46] In applying Lowinsky's perspective to Byrd's *Diliges dominum*, we have to conclude that Fellowes, Benham, and Kerman all failed to trace the origin of the text or study its significance in the context of the musical setting. Consequently, they were not able to understand why Byrd constructed his piece as a fourfold canon and repeated the music of the first section backwards for the second, thus 'translating' God's two greatest

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 68. However, that Lassus in *Nuptiae factae sunt* would have "used six voices to represent the six water-jugs" (p. 61) is unlikely. The piece is published, together with 28 other six-part motets, in *Orlandi Lassi sacrae cantiones ... sex et octo vocum liber quartus* (Venice 1566). The scoring, therefore, is anything but unusual.

[43] *William Byrd* (London ²1948), p. 179.

[44] *Latin Church Music in England c. 1460-1575* (London 1977), p. 221.

[45] *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (London/Boston 1981), p. 117.

[46] JAMS 18 (1965), p. 225.

commandments into sonorous symbolism. (For a discussion of the motet, see p. 115-6.)

Besides providing one with a more adequate evaluation of the musical quality of a particular piece, the understanding of symbolism may also lend support to the identification of the composition involved. This, too, can be exemplified. For example, in his Dufay monograph, David Fallows convincingly relates the three-part *Missa Sine nomine* to the composer's ballade *Resvelliés vous*. The latter piece was written for the wedding of Vittoria di Lorenzo Colonna and Carlo Malatesta da Pesaro in July 1423. Fallows writes: "... the opening of *Resvelliés vous* is so distinctive that it is instantly recognizable when it appears in the Gloria of the Mass at the words 'Qui sedes', beginning a new section."[47] And he continues: "but it may well be wrong to conclude that the Mass is a 'parody' of the ballade." Referring to the few surviving examples of Mass music in the first half of the fifteenth century that share material with other compositions, Fallows suggests that the ballade may rather be a parody of the Mass.[48] This view has been challenged by Allan Atlas. On the basis of an ingenious numerological analysis of the ballade, he argues "that Dufay, in composing the Mass, borrowed that harmonic motive from the chanson, where its symbolic significance – [that is, the Pythagorean marriage numbers five and six] – had already been established, and placed it at the juncture of the Golden Section of the Gloria in order to give that aesthetically favored structural point an appropriate symbolic meaning. Since the Gloria seems devoid of any other readily apparent symbolism, it appears unlikely that the harmonic progression itself would have had any such significance had it originated as part of the Mass. And that Dufay would have adopted the 'Qui sedes' motive for the symbolically rich ballade because he recognized the presence in it of the marriage numbers after the fact seems less likely still."[49]

Whether or not Dufay, as Atlas supposes, conceived the striking harmonic progression in the opening of the ballade to stress the Pythagorean marriage numbers five and six remains an open question. Yet both Fallows and Atlas have omitted pointing out the meaning of the text where the respective passage in the Gloria appears. It reads: "Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father." If we take into account that Carlo was the first son of Malatesta di Pandolfo (1368-1429),[50] the father of the Pesaro line of the family – neither author remarks on this fact – we see at once that Dufay 'designates' the bridegroom, during the liturgical celebration of his wedding, as the legal successor to his father. No text in the Mass is better suited to underline symbolically this idea. And if Dufay indeed quoted the opening bars of the festive

[47] *Dufay* (London 1982), pp. 165-6.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-8.

[49] *Gematria, Marriage Numbers, and Golden Sections in Dufay's* Resvellies vous, in AcM 69 (1987), p. 126.

[50] Cf. P. Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire Universel* (Paris s.a.), vol. 10, p. 1000.

wedding ballade for this reason, the cycle can only be regarded as an early case of parody.

While these two works sufficiently underpin the usefulness of the search for symbolism, it is not difficult to give examples of the opposite but equally faulty approach. In my *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* I repeatedly demonstrated how musicologists, without consulting the sources of a composition or taking note of the context in which it originated, ascribe to particular works a symbolical significance which surely would have surprised the man who wrote it. My assertion can be illustrated by the following example.

In her monograph on John Dunstable, Margaret Bent connects the number of notes on which the composer bases the *talea* of his double motet *Veni sancte spiritus / Veni creator spiritus* with the number of the apostles: "Eleven notes of the chant are paraphrased [in the first voice], then (with one duplicate) eleven each are taken for the two *taleae*: eleven apostles remained to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."[51] The following objections can be made to this interpretation. Firstly, we do not know for sure whether the first line of chant quoted in Bent's example 33 represents the version of the hymn "Veni creator Spiritus" which Dunstable employed. The fourteen notes of the first voice are therefore not necessarily a "paraphrase" of eleven notes. Secondly, the only description in the Scriptures of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is found in The Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4. The first chapter of Acts deals, among other things, with the election of Matthias as the twelfth apostle. That indeed twelve apostles witnessed the miraculous coming of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in Acts 2:14. This passage reads: "But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them ..." Medieval and Renaissance artists, representing the descent of the Holy Ghost, usually depict twelve apostles grouped around Mary, who personifies the Church itself, and above them the dove of the Holy Spirit. I cannot think of any reason why Dunstable would have borrowed eleven notes from chant to purposely deviate from this tradition.

Meanwhile, we must not pass over the fact that hardly any discipline of musicology is more likely to meet with scepticism than numerological analysis. Having observed the results produced by this discipline during the last twenty-five years or more, I cannot but find this easy to understand. Yet the situation reminds me of a statement made by Erwin Panofsky, the father of the iconological school. This great authority on Renaissance art once said, with several of his followers in mind, that his method had become a caricature.[52] In a similar way, several musicologists have yielded to the temptation of making far-reaching speculations about the possible connections between music and numbers. The *Bachforschung* in particular is well known for this.

[51] *Dunstaple* (London 1981), p. 55.

[52] See the interview with Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, in the Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad of 17 November 1989, Cultureel supplement, p. 7.

But in Renaissance musicology, too, it is not difficult to mention a few names. The studies on Dufay, Obrecht, Ockeghem, and Josquin by H. Ryschawy and R.W. Stoll,[53] Marcus van Crevel,[54] Marianne Henze[55] and Gösta Neuwirth[56] respectively speak volumes in this respect. The analytical procedures in these publications can, for the most part, be shown to be false without much trouble.

In spite of the disbelief which many studies on number symbolism in music actually face, one such study has thus far largely escaped criticism. More than that, Charles W. Warren's theory of the structural and symbolical connections between the Dome of Florence and Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*[57] has been widely approved in several musicological studies, and its basic argument has been incorporated in such well-known handbooks as *A History of Western Music* by Donald J. Grout[58] and *Arts and Ideas* by William Fleming.[59] However, this general approbation does not alleviate the weakness of Warren's theory.[60] The supposed proportional relationships between architecture and music have recently been invalidated by the art historian Arjan de Koomen.[61] In the following lines (and footnote 62) I will delate upon two other propositions in Warren's article which are not dealt with in De Koomen's contribution.

Warren sees a numero-symbolical connection between Dufay's motet and the Santa Maria del Fiore, namely, their extraordinary reliance on the number seven. "There are 8x7 breves in each of the four main sections of the motet, 4x7 breves in each two-voice and four-voice subsection, 2x7 tones in the cantus firmus, seven lines of text in each strophe, and seven syllables in each line." In medieval number allegory, "seven was the number of the Church ...: 'Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars' (Prov. 9:1). In fact, one of the documents having to do with the construction of Santa Maria del Fiore records a payment ... for the *fundamenti* of the seven columns called 'ecclesia' " (p. 102). My comment on this is as follows: The prominence of the number seven seems undeniable. Although Dufay's oeuvre contains other works based on verses of seven syllables (e.g. *Inclita stella maris* and *O proles Hispanie*), the unknown author of

[53] *Die Bedeutung der Zahl in Dufays Kompositionsart*: Nuper rosarum flores, in Musik-Konzepte 60 (1988), pp. 3-73

[54] See his introductions to *Jacobus Obrecht Opera omnia editio altera*, vols. 6 and 7.

[55] *Studien zu den Messenkompositionen Johannes Ockeghems* (Berlin 1968).

[56] *Erzählung von Zahlen*, in Josquin des Prés. Musik-Konzepte 26/27 (1982), pp. 4-38.

[57] *Brunelleschi's Dome and Dufay's Motet*, in MQ 59 (1973), pp. 92-105.

[58] (London 1973). Also Claude V. Palisca, the editor of the 1988 edition of Grout's handbook, seems to be convinced by Warren's arguments.

[59] (New York ³1986), p. 193.

[60] David Fallows is, as far as I know, the only musicologist to remark that "Warren's figures on the proportions of the building seem open to discussion." But he, too, adopts the theory about the correspondence between architecture and music. See *Dufay* (London 1982), pp. 45-6, and p. 283, fn. 46.

[61] *Dufay's* Nuper rosarum flores *and the Dome of Florence: A Case of Misinterpretation* (forthcoming). Mr. De Koomen is member of the staff at the Istituto Universitario Olandese di Storia dell'Arte in Florence.

"Nuper rosarum flores" may well have versified his text numero-allegorically. Yet, it seems questionable whether the number seven also determines the musical plan in the way Warren maintains. The total number of breves in each of the four sections is resolved into the factors eight and seven. The number eight, however, is awarded no significance in the context of the motet. Moreover, the same number of breves is found in the four sections of *Salve flos Tusce gentis*. The identification of the number seven in the cantus firmus is no less arbitrary. The Introit "terribilis est locus iste" is quoted exactly except for the *tristropha* on the second syllable of "locus", and the *oriscus* on the first syllable of "iste". Dufay omits these notes, apparently, because they have merely a rhythmical function in the chant: adopting them also in the basic voices of his motet would have led to a prolongation of the preceding notes, thus resulting in long, monotonous harmonic progressions. What is left are fourteen notes. These fourteen notes are musically not divided into two groups of seven but into several smaller units. In the first tenor they are grouped as follows: 1+3+2+2+1+5; in the second tenor as 1+3+3+2+5. To say that the cantus firmus has 2x7 tones is correct from an arithmetical, but misleading from a musical point of view. If Dufay really had intended to give the number seven prominence in this composition, he could have easily designed an isoperiodic plan in which the cantus firmus appeared in groups of seven notes alternating with groups of seven rests.[62]

[62] The second proposition to be challenged is the following. Warren: "Brunelleschi describes his dome as having two shells – an inner one and an outer one separated by a space ... This double cupola has a close musical counterpart in the double tenor of *Nuper rosarum flores*. Breaking with tradition, Dufay has two tenors sound the same cantus firmus a fifth apart" (p. 98). My comments: Dufay's motet indeed quotes the Introit "Terribilis est locus iste" in both its two lowest voices. However, the composer had applied a similar device five years before in his *Ecclesie militantis*. Here, the appropriately chosen antiphons "Gabriel angelus" and "Ecce nomen domini" form the basis of a motet written for the papal coronation of Gabriele Condulmer in 1431. When these antiphons sound together they mostly, as is normal between the lowest voices of early fifteenth-century counterpoint, produce the interval of a fifth. In the case of the consecration of the cathedral of Florence, the two-tenor construction – unique because only one melody is used – may simply have seemed to the composer to be the most ideal basis for the work. It should be added that, in Dufay's time, the low cantus firmus voice was generally considered the foundation of the composition. About 1300 the Parisian theorist Johannes de Grocheo wrote: "The tenor [of the composition] is the voice on which all the others are based, just as the parts of a house or building are erected on the foundations ..." (See E. Rohloff, *Der Musiktraktat des Johannes Grocheo*. Media Latinitas Musica, vol. 2 (Leipzig 1943), p. 57.) Grocheo's theoretical approach to the function of the tenor contradicts, I think, the idea of an analogy between Dufay's double tenor and Brunelleschi's double vault. If Dufay intended the double tenor to form an analogy with any architectural element at all, one might rather suppose that he wanted to make this construction accord with some *supporting* architectural element. This could, for example, have been the two so-called *cantorie*. With an eye to the consecration of the cathedral, the officials had commissioned Luca della Robbia and Donatello in 1432 and 1433 respectively to each execute a new organ gallery, one for the old organ and one for the new organ, which had been under construction already for a long time. Due to several circumstances, the old and new organs were not played from the *cantorie* until 1450. (Cf. W. Braunfels, *Der Dom von Florenz* (Olten 1964), pp. 57, 62-3.) None the less, when Dufay was required to write a motet for the consecration of the Santa Maria del Fiore the two organ tribunes may well have stimulated his imagination.

Most of Warren's claims to sustain his theory of the relationship between Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores* and the Santa Maria del Fiore turn out to have their starting-point in the faulty assumption that the design for the cupola was based on the ratio 6:4:3:2. His procedure, therefore, contravenes a basic rule of scientific research. With reference to iconology, Sir Ernst Gombrich determined this rule as follows: "However daring we may be in our conjectures – and who would want to restrain the bold? – no such conjectures should ever be used as a stepping stone for yet another, still bolder hypothesis."[63]

After these comments on the aims and limits of musico-symbolical analysis I want to present a brief outline of the principles which I have endeavoured to apply as consistently as possible.

(1) One must always ask oneself whether the symbol could have occurred by chance.
(2) Irregularity of musical syntax or musical structure as well as a detail of apparent insignificance may point to the presence of symbolism.
(3) A text may have more than one level of meaning. The textual idea symbolized in a musical setting must be shown to have been part of the world of thought of the composer's time.
(4) The occurrence of symbols in the visual arts as the expression of a particular idea may sustain arguments in favour of comparable forms of symbolism in music.
(5) In determining various numbers one must realize that, as far as the sum of the elements in a particular work is concerned, the consulted source of a composition may not always represent its presumed authentic reading.
(6) If in separate voices or sections of a composition individual numbers convey their own appropriate meaning, these numbers, in general, should not be added or multiplied with each other to form a new number with another significance.
(7) There must be an obvious connection between the significance of the numbers that have been ascertained in a composition and its message.
(8) With regard to ideas that may be signified by numbers in musical settings of sacred texts one must consult the writings which have influenced fifteenth- and sixteenth-century thought. Apart from biblical exegesis, contemporary devotional works and the visual arts are to be accepted as constant sources of inspiration for new forms of musical symbolism.
(9) Musical symbolism seldom discloses itself to the ear; it is rather to be detected by a close reading of the score.

It remains to be said that, in order to penetrate the secrets of a work of art, breadth of scholarship as well as imagination are required.[64] None the less, both the identification of an element as a symbol and its interpretation remain dependent on the 'cooperation' of the artist who employed the symbolic code. One may illustrate this with an example from literature. Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)[65] – this story of patricide is famous for its profound psychological and spiritual implications –

[63] *Symbolic Images* (Oxford ³1985), p. 21.
[64] Cf. J. Bergsagel in his review of my *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer*, ML 54 (1973), p. 490.
[65] Penguin Books (London 1958).

exhibits in a moving way how esoteric a symbol can be, and with how much anguish and restlessness man may seek for its meaning. In chapter 6 of the second book the elder Zosima, at a meeting in the monastery, unexpectedly makes a step forward in the direction of Dmitry, and reaching him, goes down on his knees before him. The staggered Dmitry, covering his face with his hands, rushes out of the room. His father, Fjedor, wonders if the genuflection has a symbolic meaning. Dimitry's brother Alyosha, who lives as a young monk in the monastery of Zosima, is even more concerned about the elder's genuflection. He believes blindly that it has a secret and terrible significance. Only in book six, chapter 1, will the reader find that, some hours before his death, the elder Zosima says to Alyosha: "I bowed down yesterday to the great suffering that is in store for him." – The suffering referred to is the indictment and conviction of the innocent Dmitry for patricide.

GUILLAUME DUFAY'S CONCEPT OF FAUX-BOURDON*

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that the term 'faux-bourdon'[1] is "enigmatic"[2] and that the creation of the technique is "one of the most strenuously-debated and enduring mysteries of musical history".[3] Therefore, the reader who is familiar with previous studies on this musical phenomenon may expect from the author of a new essay on faux-bourdon that he will justify his project carefully. Although the various studies by Brian Trowell,[4] Ernest Trumble,[5] and Ann Besser Scott[6] offer different views on the historical meaning and development of faux-bourdon, they provide a good survey of the problems involved and suggest at the same time that some of Heinrich Besseler's earlier theses, formulated in his epoch-making study *Bourdon und Fauxbourdon*,[7] can no longer be maintained. After summarizing in the next paragraphs the quintessence of our present knowledge of the subject, I shall raise the question which has made me search for an interpretation of the origin and application of faux-bourdon technique in works by Guillaume Dufay. I shall then argue that the composer invented faux-bourdon to express, allegorically, Christ's words "You that have followed me" in the Communion of his *Missa Sancti Jacobi*, and that he chose the name given to the drone (Fr. *faux bourdon*) for the new musical technique, prompted by the well-known medieval analogy between the world of the bees and the Christian Church.

Faux-bourdon is "a technique of either improvised singing or shorthand notation",[8] utilized by musicians in the fifteenth century and occurring in manuscripts from about 1425 to about 1510. Over 170 compositions are preserved with the instruction 'faux-bourdon'. They are notated as two-part pieces with the *cantus prius factus* normally in the top voice, but they are meant to be performed in three parts. In its simplest form, a faux-bourdon piece results in a series of parallel sixth chords. Its style has fittingly been

* I would like to acknowledge the many valuable comments and criticisms offered by Larry Bernstein, Barton Hudson, and Rob C. Wegman, who read the last draft of this essay. I also thank my colleagues Kwee Him Yong and Chris Maas for their remarks in the preparation of this study.

[1] In accordance with French orthography, I spell the musical term 'faux-bourdon' in two words, connected by a hyphen. In this study, the French word 'faux bourdon', as a designation of the male drone, is spelled without a hyphen and printed in italics.

[2] B. Trowell, *Fauxbourdon*, in NGD 6, p. 434.

[3] A.B. Scott, *The Beginnings of Fauxbourdon: A New Interpretation*, in JAMS 24 (1971), p. 345.

[4] See fn. 2.

[5] *Fauxbourdon: An Historical Survey*. Musicological Studies 3 (Brooklyn 1959); *Authentic and Spurious Faburden*, in RBM 14 (1960), pp. 3-29.

[6] See fn. 3.

[7] (Leipzig 1950), pp. 229-39.

[8] Trowell, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 444.

described as "essentially monotonous".[9] In the excellent introduction to his *Fauxbourdon: An Historical Survey*, Trumble provides a census of the repertoire. It consists of 46 hymns, 31 psalms, 22 Magnificat-settings, 19 Introits and 2 Communions, 14 Kyries and 3 Kyrie litanies, 14 antiphons, 12 sequences, 9 settings of the Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus dei and Benedicamus domino, 1 St Matthew Passion, 1 Preface, 1 versicle, 1 secular motet, 1 Latin song, and 1 chanson.[10] With the exception of three secular compositions, all texts utilizing this technique belong to the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.[11] More than half of the transmitted faux-bourdon settings are anonymous. The remaining part can be attributed to 21 composers. Trumble lists, among others, 24 pieces by Dufay, and six each by Binchois, Brassart, and Roullet. Johannes de Lymburgia, with his five faux-bourdon compositions, also belongs to the group of Franco-Netherlandish composers that made the most substantial contribution to the written repertoire. Trumble's Analytical Index (pp. 68-80) is impressive and very useful as a survey, but it cannot reflect accurately the frequency with which faux-bourdon technique may actually have been used. Just how does one identify the presence of this particular technique? If, like Trumble, one relies on the actual appearance of the rubric 'faulx bourdon' in the manuscripts, then one is completely at the mercy of the accuracy and consistency of the scribes. However, there are obvious dangers inherent in this approach because "occasionally ... works designated 'a faulx bourdon' in one manuscript appear in another without this direction".[12] In no less than 21% of Trumble's faux-bourdon compositions, this direction is missing in one of the sources. Clearly, the actual repertoire of faux-bourdon pieces must have been larger than the corpus of music that is transmitted along with the rubric 'faulx bourdon' (as is surely the case with plainchant, to which, incidentally, faux-bourdon technique was most frequently applied).[13]

In this context it should be remembered that, as a harmonic phenomenon, continental faux-bourdon has much in common with English faburden. It has even been advocated that the practice of singing in faux-bourdon grew directly from the English model.[14] Whether or not this was the case, it is very

[9] Trumble, *Fauxbourdon: An Historical Survey* (fn. 5), p. 1.

[10] Trumble later added a Magnificat by the Polish composer Nicolaus de Radom, a Magnificat sexti toni by Busnois, and the anonymous sequence *Eya recolamus*. See *Autobiographical Implications in Dufay's Song-Motet 'Juvenis qui puellam'*, in RBM 42 (1988), p. 72, fn. 125. I am indebted to Professor Trumble for having sent me the typescript of his article. To the census should also be added the Sanctus of Isaac's six-part *Missa Paschalis*. For a discussion of the chanson see *Excursus 2*, p. 40.

[11] The anonymous carol *Te deum laudamus ... O blesse God* (Trumble, *Fauxbourdon: An Historical Survey* (fn. 5), no. 171), is, according to Catherine Miller (*The Early English Carol*, in Renaissance News 3 (1950), p. 63), para-liturgical. However, the music of the burden cannot, as both Miller and Trumble say, be performed in faux-bourdon.

[12] Scott, *op. cit.* (fn. 3), pp. 350-1.

[13] Cf. R. Strohm, *Round Table on Constitution and Conservation of Polyphonic Repertories in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, in AcM 59 (1987), p. 11.

[14] Cf. Scott, *op. cit.* (fn. 3), p. 361.

probable that "faux-bourdon was used quite early in its history, like faburden, as a simple means of harmonizing a plainchant *super librum*".[15] The tenor in faux-bourdon pieces shows a more flexible shape at the beginning of the fifteenth century than it does later in the century, and Trumble cites this trend in support of his view that "the historical style must have consisted of more than unadulterated sixth chords".[16] Surely, though, we should not exclude the possibility that the direction 'faux-bourdon' was often used simply to save time in the process of copying the music.

Of the various aspects by which faux-bourdon can be characterized, the following are essential for our discussion: (1) Faux-bourdon was above all connected with the performance of Gregorian chant. (2) It was mostly employed in syllabic chants which were sung *alternatim*, that is with two alternating choirs. (3) The technique was primarily a simple procedure to enhance the sonority of *liturgical* music and did not make significant demands of the singers' capacities. (4) The duration of a passage in faux-bourdon was usually relatively short. (5) Its artistic value is determined by the degree in which the mechanical duplication takes place (see below).

Since these statements indicate that as a compositional technique, faux-bourdon offered very little possibility of development, one may wonder why Guillaume Dufay, the greatest composer of his generation, appears to have favoured this "essentially monotonous style" more than any other of his colleagues. His contribution to this 'genre' consists of no fewer than 24 pieces. Trumble's index mentions 9 hymns, 1 Magnificat, 4 antiphons, 5 movements of Mass ordinary, 2 sequences, 1 motet, 1 Communion, and 1 Latin song. One explanation for Dufay's curious penchant for faux-bourdon may lie in the liturgical nature of the compositions in which this technique was used: most of the listed pieces by Dufay are settings of liturgical texts in which, traditionally, some form of *alternatim* is practised. Only the four antiphons, the Communion, the motet, and the secular song do not belong to this type of chant. Further, the pieces represent categories of liturgical texts in which fifteenth-century composers displayed less interest than they did in the Mass cycle and motet. It was in the latter two genres, of course, that they tended to exhibit the stronger measure of their musical creativity.

Half of Dufay's faux-bourdon pieces are settings of hymns, a genre in which he was the most prolific composer of his time and in which he always paraphrased the plainsong melody in such a way that the old chant was 'translated' into the language of the fifteenth century.[17] His hymn settings remained in use until the 1490s, and some of his finest adaptations served as models for later composers.[18] Because of their simplicity of style, however, Dufay's hymns are in marked contrast with his other polyphonic settings of

[15] Cf. Trowell, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 434.

[16] Trumble, *Fauxbourdon: An Historical Survey* (fn. 5), p. 2.

[17] Cf. D. Fallows, *Dufay* (London 1982), p. 136.

[18] Cf. T.R. Ward, *Hymn: Polyphonic Latin*, in NGD 8, pp. 841-2.

liturgical texts. The answer to the question why Dufay used faux-bourdon so often in settings of hymns may be that he wanted to show his unmatched melodic inventiveness in adapting well-known chants into a style which was so widely disseminated throughout Western Europe. The hymn settings by Binchois, for example, are, compared with those by Dufay, in a more simple, almost mechanical fashion, akin to the sound of faburden.

It is obvious that in the performance of both polyphonic settings and the plainsong version of hymns, psalms, and the Magnificat, the incorporation of verses in faux-bourdon was functional, since it could help alleviate the monotony of the continual repetition of the same melodic formulas. The same kind of variation was, in Dufay's days, applied to such sectional types of chant as the introit and sections of the Mass like the Kyrie. However, how can we justify the use of faux-bourdon in the short antiphon and the Communion? And why does faux-bourdon occur, at least partially, in three settings of secular texts? Altogether, these compositions form only about ten percent of the total number of transmitted faux-bourdon pieces.

It is my aim to propose an answer to these questions by investigating the relevant works of Dufay's oeuvre. Particularly Dufay's secular pieces, in which the style of the faux-bourdon passages contrasts so clearly with the music in the other parts of the compositions, seem to offer a clue. In *Supremum est mortalibus bonum*, for instance, it appears from the musical context that faux-bourdon is not introduced as a means of achieving variety, but as a deliberate transgression of the contemporary rules of musical composition. According to Prosdocimus de Beldemandis (1412) a violation of musical syntax would occur "when one voice sings the same as the other" (*quum idem cantaret unus quod alter*) – which is the case in faux-bourdon.[19] Now the 'irregularity' in musical syntax was only accepted by contemporary music theory when its application was determined by a rational intention of the composer. In a context such as that of *Supremum est* the irregularity had to be understood as a so-called *color rhetoricus*, a concept formulated by Gobelinus Person in his *Excusatio irregularitatis cantuum* of 1417.[20] It is not surprising, therefore, that in Burmeister's *Musica poetica* of 1606, which was the first printed treatise on rhetoric and music, the term 'faux-bourdon' was acknowledged as a rhetorical figure along with a number of other musical figures, which were analogous to the rhetorical tropes found in writings of the ancients.[21] Person's concept of *color rhetoricus* deals with the theme of duplication that we also encounter in Tinctoris's *Liber de arte contrapuncti* of 1477. Here it is stated that the same melodic note-group should not be repeated (i.e., there should be no *redicta*) unless as imitation of bells, trumpets, etc.[22]

[19] *Tractatus de contrapuncto*, ed. by E. de Coussemaker. Scriptorum de musica medii aevi 3, p. 197. See also Besseler, *op. cit.* (fn. 7), p. 16.
[20] *Tractatus musicae scientiae*, ed. by H. Müller, in KJb 20 (1907), p. 195.
[21] (Rostock 1606), p. 65.
[22] Ed. by A. Seay. Musicological Studies and Documents 5 ([Rome] 1961), p. 137.

In other words, Tinctoris also accepts a divergence of the normal musical structure if it is intended as a rhetorical figure, that is *hypotyposis* (a figure which stresses the pictorial nature of a word). I think that we therefore can consider Dufay's two secular works as *pièces de résistance* in our investigation of his concept of faux-bourdon.

The Motet Supremum est mortalibus bonum

Dufay wrote the motet *Supremum est mortalibus bonum* for the celebration of the first meeting of Pope Eugenius IV and Sigismund, king of Hungary, the German territories, Bohemia, and Lombardy. After having been involved in a political conflict for many years, the two rulers of the Christian world had made a peace treaty that was signed on April 8, 1433. Ten days before the coronation of Sigismund on May 31, 1433, the emperor-elect was received in Rome by the pope, an event depicted by Filarete on the bronze central doors of Old St Peter's.[23] Dufay had joined the papal chapel in 1428. Probably to celebrate the coronation of Pope Eugenius IV in 1431, he had written *Ecclesiae militantis*, a grandiose isoperiodic motet for five parts. It is therefore likely that it was the pope himself who two years later commissioned Dufay to write a musical ode to peace.[24] *Supremum est mortalibus bonum* has a strict formal design, as does the coronation motet, but unlike *Ecclesiae militantis*, in which all voices have a different text, *Supremum est* has only one text.

Dufay may have made the decision to use the same text in all voices in order to enable a more effective coordination of music and text. Despite the fact that both works are isoperiodic, they differ considerably with respect to the rhetorical presentation of their texts. The complete text of *Supremum est* follows, along with its translation:

Supremum est mortalibus bonum
Pax, optimum summi Dei donum.

Pace vero legum præstantia
Viget atque recti constantia.
Pace dies solutus et lætus
Nocte somnus trahitur quietus.
Pax docuit virginem ornare
Auro comam crinesque nodare.
Pace rivi psallentes et aves
Patent læti collesque suaves.
Pace dives pervadit viator
Tutus arva incolit arator.

O sancta pax, diu expectata,
Mortalibus tam dulcis, tam grata,

[23] In Book XIII, p.18, of his *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter*, neu herausgegeben von W. Kampf (Basel 1957), F. Gregorovius gives an account of the event.
[24] Eugenius IV is one of the first popes after the restoration of the papacy in 1417 who appeared to be a great patron of arts and letters.

Sis eterna, firma, sine fraude.
Fidem tecum semper esse gaude.
Et qui nobis, o pax, te dedere
Possideant regnum sine fine:

Sit noster hic pontifex eternus
EUGENIUS ET REX SIGISMUNDUS.
Amen.

The supreme good for mortals is
Peace, the best gift of God the Highest.

In true peace the rule of law
And the constancy of the right prevail.
In peace the day closes, and at night
Joyous and quiet sleep is brought.
Peace teaches the maiden to adorn
Her hair with gold and to bind her tresses.
In peace the streams psalmodize and the birds
Are joyous and the hills are soft.
In peace the rich traveller reaches his destination,
And the ploughman inhabits the arable in safety.

O holy peace, long awaited,
So sweet and welcome to mortals,
Be eternal, firm, without deceit.
Rejoice that faith in you is everlasting.
And may those, o peace, who gave thee to us
Rule over their reign for ever:

May our eternal pontiff be
EUGENIUS AND OUR KING SIGISMUND.
Amen.

The poem is composed of decasyllables, and is based on two different metres, iambic (1-2) and trochaic (3-20). Its first two lines form the *exordium*. Lines 3 to 12 describe the world of mankind in time of peace and have a narrative character. They correspond to the part of a speech which, in rhetorical terminology, is called *narratio*. Line 13, "O sancta pax ...", opens with an exclamation. The idea here expressed can best be considered the central purpose of the text, and this part should therefore be called the *propositio*.[25] With the mention of the names of both the 'apostles of peace', the peace treaty has its *confirmatio* (19-20). The "Amen", finally, is the *peroratio*.

In the musical design of the motet, the disposition of the text can be outlined as follows: (see Table 1)

The *exordium* is set as a free introduction. Then starts the first isoperiodic section (bars 11-55) which covers only the *narratio*. In the second isoperiodic section (bars 56-100), we find the *propositio*. Although of the same length,

[25] Cf. H.-H. Unger, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg 1941), p. 51.

Table 1. The Rhetorical Plan of *Supremum est mortalibus bonum*

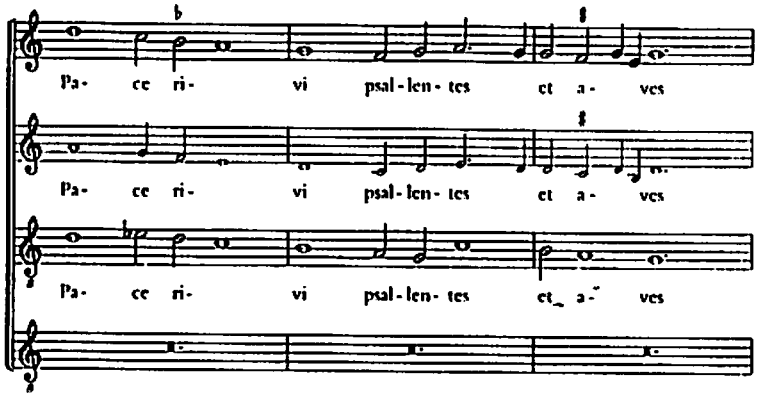
	Exordium	Narratio			Propositio			Confirmatio	Peroratio
color	[free]	I...			II...			[free]	
talea	[free]	1...	2...	3...	4...	5...	6...	[free]	
text	1-2	2-6	7-9	10-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	"Amen"

the first section has four lines more text than the second. From this division it is evident that the motet's isoperiodic structure was not merely a matter of allotting equal portions of text to predetermined sections but of creating a synchronous textual and musical organisation. For the *confirmatio*, a new section is introduced. This one lies out of the isoperiodic plan. The same holds for the *peroratio*. There are several places in the music that illustrate clearly the composer's intention to underline the contents of the text with rhetorical figures. The most conspicuous examples have been described in my article *Guillaume Dufay as Musical Orator*.[26] It is apparent, however, that the application of some well-known ornaments had hardly exhausted the composer's oratorical powers. The attention of the audience and their readiness to believe what they heard must certainly have been increased by an effect, which had never been heard before, as far as we know, in this kind of music: the effect to which I am referring is the use of faux-bourdon. Four times, and at prominent junctures in the rhetorical design of the text, the discant is sung simultaneously at the fourth below, which produces the remarkable series of sixth chords described in the introduction above. The second time that faux-bourdon technique is applied is in line 9: "In peace the streams psalmodize ..." Because the sound of faux-bourdon was clearly evocative of a liturgical context – its principal use, as we have seen, was in the setting of liturgical forms, including psalms – this passage of Dufay's motet can be interpreted as an imitation of psalmody (Ex. 1).

We may further suggest that such imitation has the rhetorical character of *parodia* as it is defined by Quintilian.[27] However, since faux-bourdon is first used at the very beginning of the *exordium*, then later on at a central place in the *propositio* after the words "O holy peace, long awaited, So sweet and welcome to mortals", and, finally, in the *peroratio*, there can be little doubt about the nature of its function: At these places the unity of the two voices in parallel fourths corroborates the idea of peace, which is the result of the new friendship between Eugenius and Sigismund! Below I will return to this symbolic function.

[26] TVNM 31 (1981), pp. 11-3.
[27] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. by H.E. Butler. The Loeb Classical Library (London/Cambridge, MA, 1959-68), IX.ii.35.

Ex. 1



The Latin Song Iuvenis qui puellam

The other secular composition by Dufay which exhibits some passages in faux-bourdon technique is *Iuvenis qui puellam*. The date of this piece, which is only preserved in incomplete form, cannot be fixed precisely and has been the subject of some dispute.[28] In its unique source, the Ms. Munich 3224, it is headed "decretalis Guill[er]mus du fay", that is Guillaume Dufay, skilled in Canon law. According to the most recently discovered documents, Dufay obtained the degree of Bachelor of Canon law after 1435. It seems to have been credited to him by papal fiat when he acquired a prebend at Cambrai;[29] but *Iuvenis qui puellam* may very well have been written some years earlier. This is indicated by the use of major prolation in the last section.[30]

The text of the song and its translation follow:

(a) Juvenis qui puellam nondum septennem duxit, quamvis aetas repugnaret, ex humana tamen fragilitate forsan temptavit quod complere non potuit.
(b) Quia igitur in his quae dubia sunt, quod tutius est tenere debemus, tum propter honestatem ecclesiae.
(c) Quia ipsa coniux ipsius fuisse dicitur, tum propter dictam dubitationem:
(d) Mandamus quatinus consobrinam ipsius puellae quam postea duxit, dividas ab eodem.
(e) *Primum argumentum.* Contra vos arguitur: Ubi per vos innuitur affectum velle

[28] Cf. C. Wright, *Dufay at Cambrai: Discoveries and Revisions*, in JAMS 28 (1975), p. 187; Trumble, *An Interpretation of Dufay's 'Juvenis qui puellam'*, in Abstracts of Papers of the American Musicological Society, Annual Meeting 1978, p. 36; and Fallows, *op. cit.* (fn. 17), p. 49.

[29] Cf. A. E. Planchart, *Guillaume Dufay's Benefices and his Relationship to the Burgundian Chapel*, in Abstracts of Papers of the American Musicological Society, Annual Meeting 1984, p. 10.

[30] Cf. Ch. Hamm, *A Chronology of the Works of Guillaume Dufay, Based on a Study of Mensural Practice* (Princeton 1964), pp. 34-5, 56. The sole piece later than 1433 in which this mensuration appears is the sequence *Isti sunt due olive*; see *ibid.*

puniri et effectum non sortiri, quod clare probaretur, sed brevitas non patitur.
(f) *Solutio primi argumenti.* Ad hoc sic dico breviter non recitando fontem quae contra me dixitis: Quod publicae honestatis justitia non patitur id quod per vos innuitur.
(g) *Secundum argumentum.* Quamvis bene dixeritis, tamen contra vos arguo. Nam in fine vos dicitis, quod dividatur ab eo, et contrarium videtis in capitulo unico quod alias allegastis sexto eodem titulo.
(h) *Solutio secundi argumenti* [missing].

(a) A young man took a girl of not yet seven years to himself and, in spite of her age, he attempted, out of human weakness, perhaps to fulfil what nature did not permit.
(b) Because in matters of doubt we must keep to safe paths, on account of the honour of the Church [and]
(c) Because this girl is considered to be the wife of this young man, on account of the said doubt,
(d) We command that her cousin, whom he thereafter married, be separated from him.
(e) *Primum argumentum.* This is brought forward against you: Where you emphasize that the natural tendency must be punished and may effect no results, that might be clearly shown if time were not too short.
(f) *Solutio primi argumenti.* To this I say briefly, without repeating the source, that which you have said to me, namely that the justice of public honour does not permit that which you yourself maintain.
(g) *Secundum argumentum.* Although you have spoken well, yet I argue against you. For in the end you say that she must be separated from him, and you can see the contrary in the one chapter which you have brought forward elsewhere, under the sixth heading.
(h) *Solutio secundi argumenti* [missing].

Ernest Trumble summarized his paper on this composition, read at the Annual Meeting of the AMS in Minneapolis, 1978, as follows: "The text has, understandably, been interpreted as a joke, but there is a serious intent behind the humorous façade. This motet summarizes, in pseudo-legal form, a difficult and crucial decision Dufay had to make in 1439 whether to stay with the schismatic House of Savoy, losing his lucrative income and respected position in the Roman church, or return to the Roman obedience. He chose the latter, and the fictional characters and situations represent his wry view of his dilemma. The young man is Dufay himself. The young girl not yet seven represents his contracts with the Roman Popes Martin V and Eugenius IV in whose chapels Dufay sang and composed for approximately six years, nine months. Then, the young man allegorically married the young girl's cousin on her mother's side. This refers to his contract with the House of Savoy in the 1430s to serve as Maître de Chapelle. The head of the House of Savoy was Amadeus VIII who, in November 1439, was elected anti-Pope as Felix V by the Council of Basel. Dufay thought of Eugenius IV and Felix V as cousins because they had a common ancestor, the Council of Constance, which had created both a papal and conciliar line of ecclesiastical government. The fact that the relationship was said to be on the mother's side refers to the Holy Mother Church within whose bosom the whole drama

unfolded. The time of 'uncertainty' refers to the impending schism in 1439, and the 'safer course' is the Roman obedience. This interpretation also clarifies his reference to a desire to protect the 'respectability of the church'."[31]

Another interpretation, derived from this one and hardly less subjective, has been put forward by David Fallows: "Couched in the manner of a legal argument ..., the text seems on the surface to be a discussion of the canonical propriety of a youth marrying a girl 'not yet seven years old' and then marrying her cousin. But that girl is surely the Council of Basle, which had opened in July 1431 and was therefore not quite seven years old when Dufay joined it."[32] About four months after the competing Council of Ferrara had opened (8 January 1438), Dufay was appointed to be one of the representatives of Cambrai Cathedral at the Council of Basle.[33]

Both interpretations lean on the assumption that Dufay wrote a kind of parody of a case in Canon law, and stand or fall on the fact that the girl is nearly seven years old. However, it is not so much the girl's age that is crucial, but the question as to whether a marriage, once made, can be dissolved. The sentences (a) to (d) present a legal argument, that can be found in the *Epistolae et privilegia* by Pope Eugenius III (1145-53) and have been transcribed by Migne as follows: *Ad Æsculapium presbyterum* ... "Juvenis ille qui puellam nondum septennem duxit, quamvis aetas repugnaret, ex humana tamen fragilitate tentavit quod complere non potuit. Quia igitur in his quae dubia sunt, quod certius aestimamus, tenere debemus; tum propter honestatem Ecclesiae, quia ipsa ipsius conjux esse dicitur, tum propter praedictam dubitationem, mandamus tibi, ut consobrinam ipsius puellae, quam postmodum duxit, ab eo dividas."[34] It is these sentences that build the basis of both Trumble's and Fallows's interpretations. The *argumenta*, however, are incomplete, and the judge's findings are missing. As a consequence, Dufay's opinion of the question remains unknown, and it is therefore dangerous to connect the text with his biography.

What cannot be denied is a correspondence between the girl's age and the periods of nearly seven years which have been put forward by Trumble and Fallows.[35] Yet it is difficult to see why Dufay should have chosen a twelfth-century legal case to disguise contemporary ecclesio-political issues when contemporary writers did not hesitate to deal with these same issues in a most outspoken manner. Surely a more convincing interpretation would be that Dufay tried to settle a historic medieval case. Indeed, if one considers the word "decretalis" in the heading of the song, it seems more plausible that he made use of the example in order to give proof of his skill in law and rhetoric

[31] *An Interpretation* ... (fn. 28), p. 36.
[32] *Op. cit.* (fn. 17), p. 49.
[33] Cf. *ibid.*
[34] Eugenius III, *Epistolae et privilegia.* Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 180, col. 1564. I wish to thank Maria van Daalen and Hans Voorbij for kindly providing me with this information.
[35] Trumble: 1428-33; 1435-37 / Fallows: 1431-38.

than to allude to his personal situation in 1438 or 1439. The choice of the text can perhaps also be connected with the pope who awarded the degree of Bachelor of Canon law to the composer: Gabriele Condulmer (i.e. Pope Eugenius IV) took in 1431 the name of Eugenius out of regard for the pope under whose pontificate the case originated.

For a proper understanding of the text one should realize that it confronts Canon and Roman law of divorce, in particular in connection with the problem of the *matrimonium non consummatum.* After the introduction, in which the case is explained (a), the public prosecutor pronounces on the basis of Canon law (b, c) a command (d), which is disputed by the defender of the young man (e). The defender's argument, then, is refuted (f) after which the latter brings forward a second argument (g). The continuation of the text, which certainly also contained the peroration, is missing.

Although the text of *Iuvenis qui puellam* follows a late medieval form, its rhetorical plan can best be described by comparing it with the guidelines for forensic oratory as formulated in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria.* A complete copy of this treatise was rediscovered in 1416 by Poggio Bracciolini at St Gall. Normally, the forensic speech has five parts: the *exordium*, the *narratio* (statement of facts), the *probatio* (proof), the *refutatio* (refutation), and the *peroratio* (peroration). By *exordium*, "we mean the portion of speech addressed to the judge before he has begun to consider the actual case" (IV.i.3). Its "sole purpose ... is to prepare our audience in such a way that they will be disposed to lend a ready ear to the rest of our speech" (IV.i.5). This prescription is clearly followed within our text in sentence (a). According to Quintilian, the *narratio* is not indispensable: some cases are so evident that one may "dispense with the *statement of facts*, when for instance the charge can neither be denied nor palliated, but turns solely on some point of law" (IV.ii.8): "What statement of the case can be made when a wife is accusing a jealous husband of maltreating her" (IV.ii.30)?

Of the three kinds of *probatio* as described by Quintilian, the prosecutor of *Iuvenis qui puellam* adheres to the second class. In this class the "proofs are wholly the work of art and consist of matters specially adapted to produce belief" (V.viii.1). For, "since an argument is a process of reasoning which provides proof and enables one thing to be inferred from another and confirms facts which are uncertain by reference to facts which are certain, there must needs be something in every case which requires no proof" (V.x.11). Now, while there is obviously doubt whether or not the young man has had intercourse with the girl, the prosecutor refers to the ecclesiastical prescription that in matters of doubt one should keep to the safe paths; and since the fact of the marriage of the man and the girl "is believed to be true, ... doubtful things [i.e., whether the intercourse occurred] may be rendered credible" by it (V.x.12). After giving his evidence, the prosecutor comes to the conclusion: the cousin of the girl, whom the man thereafter married, must be separated from him. Thus arises the legal question that has to be solved.

The refutation by the man's lawyer follows. Quintilian tells us: "As a rule

no strong appeal to the emotions is made in refutation" (V.xiii.2). And he adds: "When it is impossible either to deny the facts or to raise the question of competence, we [i.e. the defender] must attempt to justify the facts" (V.xiii.7). Dufay seems to let the defender speak precisely according to this advice: if, after all, it would appear that the man had no child out of his second matrimony, his natural tendency should not have effected results, and, thus, be punished. To this the prosecutor brings forward that justice to public honour does not permit what the defender maintains. And again, Dufay reacts as prescribed by Quintilian: "It is, however, sometimes an orator's duty to make it appear that some argument of his opponent is contradictory..." (V.xiii.17). No further analysis of the text is possible, because of its incompleteness.

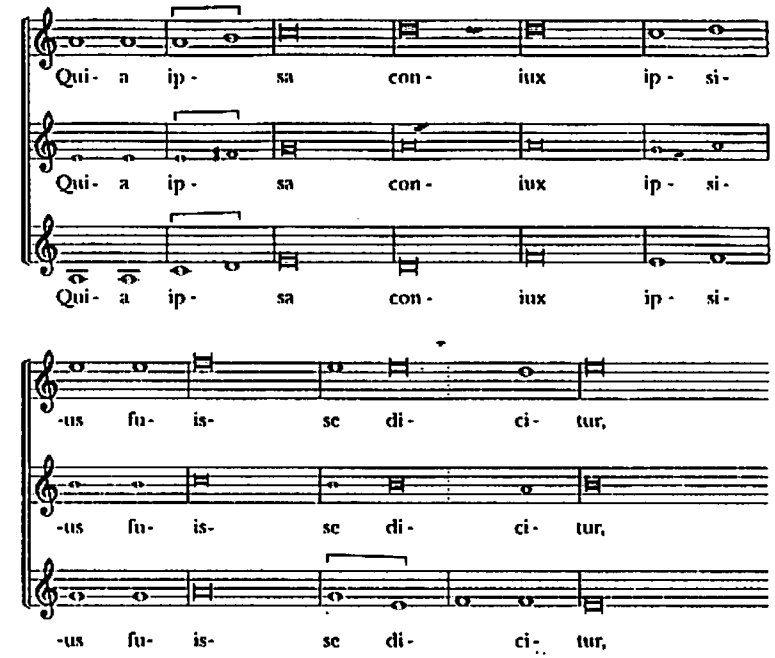
As in *Supremum est*, Dufay used several rhetorical figures as 'embellishments' of his musical discourse. A description is given in the article mentioned above.[36] It should not come as a surprise, however, that if one compares the settings of *Supremum est* and *Iuvenis qui puellam* from the rhetorical point of view, the latter is more impressive. Writing about the study of law, Petrarch pointed to the example of antiquity, "when lawyers and orators had been one and the same ... The proper pursuit of law ... required that it be joined with rhetoric."[37] Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of the *Signoria* in Florence in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, himself a professional rhetorician, described the study of law as being even more than an art of speech. In his opinion, "jurists had taken over some tasks which had once belonged to orators, including representing clients in court. Thus he thought it legitimate to defend the dignity of law with arguments drawn from the tradition of rhetoric."[38]

Also in *Iuvenis qui puellam*, Dufay introduces faux-bourdon at conspicuous moments. The technique is used once in the prosecutor's statement and once in that of the defender, for stretches of no less than 13 and 18 bars, respectively. It is present in the following contexts. The prosecutor says: this girl *is considered to be the wife* of this young man (c) (Ex. 2).

The defender refutes, arguing that the cousin *can not be separated from* the young man (g). It appears that Dufay, who seems to have used faux-bourdon for distinctly rhetorical purposes in *Supremum est*, does the same in *Iuvenis qui puellam*. At both places in the latter work where the technique is used, the text stresses the idea of permanent union in matrimony. Surely, the unity of the two voices in parallel fourths can be seen not merely as the composer's attempt at achieving textural variety, but as a *color rhetoricus*, designed to underscore in musical terms the essential rhetorical point of the legal argument.

[36] See fn. 26, pp. 5-8.
[37] J. E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton 1968), p. 41.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Ex. 2



Faux-bourdon in Dufay's Antiphons

In addition to the two secular compositions, Dufay set four antiphons in faux-bourdon. In pursuit of an answer to the question why he applied the technique in this liturgical category, I have compared the texts of these pieces with those of Dufay's ten other antiphon settings.[39] The texts of the antiphons in faux-bourdon are as follows:

- Hic vir, despiciens mundum et terrena, triumphans, divitias celo condidit ore, manu. [LU, 1199: De Confessore non Pontifice] (This man, despising the world and earthly things, hath by word and deed laid up treasure in heaven, where he is triumphant.)
- Petrus Apostolus et Paulus Doctor gentium, ipsi nos docuerunt legem tuam Domine. [LU, 1547: In Octava SS. Apostolorum Petri et Pauli] (The apostle Peter and the teacher Paul have taught us the Law of God.)
- Propter nimiam caritatem suam, qua dilexit nos Deus, Filium suum misit in similitudinem carnis peccati, alleluia. [LU, 440: In Circumcisione Domini] (For his exceeding charity wherewith God loved us He sent his

[39] Not included is *Si queris miracula*. This piece is normally listed as an antiphon, but it is actually a responsory.

Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, alleluia.) – This last text is derived from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans 8:3.

– Sapiente filio, Pater gloriatur, Hoc et in Antonio, Digne commendatur. [In festo Sancti Antonio] (When a son is wise, the Father rejoices; also Anthony is rightly praised for this.) – Anthony of Padua taught theology at Bologna, Montpellier, and Toulouse, and won great admiration as a preacher. In art he is often portrayed with a book. He is called 'Doctor of the Gospel'.

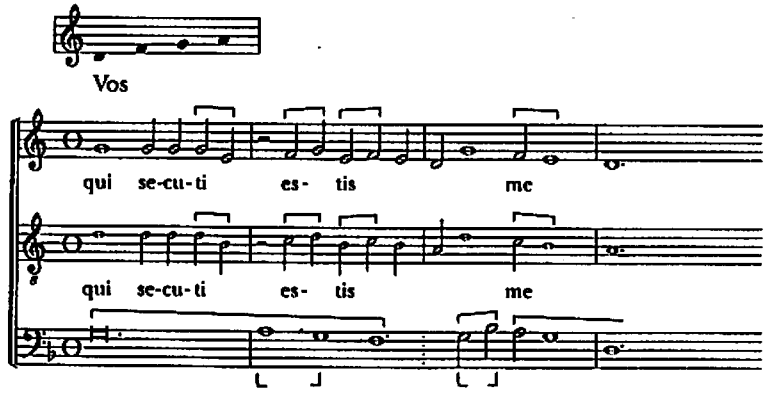
It is remarkable that the texts of the first two antiphons have the idea of two equal 'elements' ("words *and* deeds"; Peter *and* Paul) in common, which is absent in Dufay's other antiphons. Possibly faux-bourdon expresses here in the harmony of its parallel fourths the oneness of two constituent parts. This may be the case also in the third antiphon since St Paul here points to the fact that in the person of Christ both his divine and human nature are united. More difficult to explain is the reason why Dufay used faux-bourdon in the fourth antiphon. There is no common denominator here that could have prompted the composer to express it in faux-bourdon harmony.

The Communion Vos qui secuti estis me

Finally, the Communion antiphon of the *Missa Sancti Jacobi*, Dufay's earliest faux-bourdon composition, has as its text:

– Vos qui secuti estis me, sedebitis super sedes, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel. [LU, 1570: Sancti Jacobi Apostoli] (You that have followed me shall sit upon seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. - after Matth. 19:28) (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3



Here it is surprising that faux-bourdon occurs in the last movement of the Mass. If the composer had introduced faux-bourdon at this place merely as a musical conclusion, rather than as a rhetorical figure, we would be forced to accept the unlikely assumption that Dufay allowed his Mass to end with a pointless anticlimax. Therefore, I consider it as certain that Dufay, using faux-bourdon probably for the first time of his life, chose the technique of a middle voice in strict togetherness with the upper voice in order to express, allegorically, the idea implied in the words "You that have *followed* me". In Matthew 19, Jesus teaches about matrimony and divorce, and about perfect living in general. To the rich young man he said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me" (Matth. 19:21). It is important to remember that Christ gives the admonition to the young man in the presence of his disciples. One of them is the apostle James the Great, to whom the Mass is dedicated. In Matthew 20:20-21, the mother of James and John comes to make a request to Christ: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." As the first apostle to die for the Christian faith – he is the only one whose martyrdom is recorded in the New Testament (Acts 12:2) – James followed Jesus unconditionally.

The Symbolic Function of Faux-bourdon

I now come to the concluding part of my study. Here I will try to show that in two of the compositions dealt with above, Dufay has conceived faux-bourdon not only as a figure of style, but also as a figure of thought,[40] and that he may have been prompted to do so under the influence of the revival of ancient music theory.

As one of the first Netherlandish composers who worked in Italy, Dufay was deeply impressed by the movement of humanism.[41] The texts of several of his Italian compositions show the influence of humanist thought in the exhibition of certain ideas, in the use of specific words, as well as in the composition of the poetical form. The musical structure of these pieces is highly dependent on the premises of rhetoric, and sometimes the composer even seems to observe to a certain degree the word-accent, verse metre or both of the highest-sounding part. However, "Renaissance music is not a set of compositional techniques but a complex of social conditions, intellectual states of mind, attitudes, aspirations ..., which add up to a thriving matrix of musical energy. Eventually many of these impulses were translated into mu-

[40] Cf. Quintilian (fn. 27), IX.i.26: "As regards the composition of continuous speech, as soon as we have acquired the smoothness of structure and rhythm of which I have spoken, we must proceed to lend brilliance to our style by frequent embellishments both of thought and words."

[41] See W. Elders, *Humanism and Early-Renaissance Music: A Study of the Ceremonial Music by Ciconia and Dufay*, in TVNM 27 (1977), pp. 65-101.

sical style ..."[42] In my view, faux-bourdon, being a manifestation of a new harmonic technique, must also be considered against the broad background of Renaissance culture.

In ancient times and in the Middle Ages harmony was thought to consist in the natural relations between numbers. This idea recurs with Leon Battista Alberti and Nicholas of Cusa, who pointed out that arguments for praising the arts should mainly be derived from the use of number and proportion. In his *De re aedificatoria* (1452) Alberti repeats Plato's statement, "that the same numbers by means of which the agreement of sounds affects our ears with delight, are the very same which please our eyes and our mind."[43] Here the word harmony is used as a union created out of diversity of voices or pitches. Cusanus wrote in his *De docta ignorantia* (1440): "The highest harmony is proportion in equality, which man, living in the flesh, cannot hear" (*Maxima harmonia est proportio in aequalitate, quam vivus homo audire non potest in carne*).[44] Although this could mean that the interval of the unison indeed produces the highest degree of consonance, it is obvious from the second part of the sentence that a theological doctrine is explained by means of an analogy with a musical phenomenon. Cusanus was but one of many scholars drawing analogies between "different processes, events, and objects" to indicate "the ways in which people think".[45] Analogies witness to similar states of affairs, or to similar relations. In his fine study on Cusanus's metaphysics, Werner Schulze gives the following explanation of the analogy principle: "Different spheres of being are set together in comparison, while the highest possible similarity of the elements of the analogy is pursued. A mere similarity (*similitudo*) exists when the single terms of the analogy can be brought only conditionally into a meaningful connection."[46]

In humanistic discussions on proportions during the early Renaissance, instances of ratios expressing natural harmony were accepted mainly from Pythagorean and Platonic sources.[47] However, the Pythagorean idea of music had already been set out for subsequent generations in Boethius's *De musica*, along with Platonic and Aristotelian views of the moral and educative powers of music.[48] Like Cusanus, Boethius expressed his aesthetic doctrines in the form of analogies: "for, human beings appreciate music by use of reason, not by the ear alone. Although consonance and dissonance are initially perceived, they are not understood until men comprehend them through the science of

[42] Cl. V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven/London 1985), pp. 5-6.
[43] D. Koenigsberger, *Renaissance Man and Creative Thinking: A History of Concepts of Harmony 1400 - 1700* (Hassocks 1979), p. 7.
[44] Cf. W. Schulze, *Zahl, Proportion, Analogie: Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphysik und Wissenschaftshaltung des Nikolaus von Kues* (Münster 1978), p. 147.
[45] Koenigsberger, *op. cit.* (fn. 43), p. 2.
[46] See *op. cit.* (fn. 44), p. 129.
[47] Cf. Koenigsberger, *op. cit.* (fn. 43), p. 50, fn. 5.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

number."[49] Several Boethian ideas were reiterated, in the first half of the fifteenth century, by the Italian theorist and composer Ugolino of Orvieto, an older contemporary of Dufay's. In his *Declaratio musice discipline*, which was probably completed in Ferrara between 1430 and 1435, Ugolino draws "an analogy between speculation, in which he includes the understanding of music, and ethics."[50] It is not known whether Dufay, who had connections with Ferrara at the time of Ugolino's stay in this town, became acquainted with the contents of the *Declaratio*. In any event, his musical oeuvre shows that he was strongly indebted to the humanistic ideal of a renewal of learning in which the *artes liberales* were combined.

It has been argued above that Dufay used faux-bourdon in *Supremum est* and *Iuvenis qui puellam* as a figure of style in the Quintilian sense of the term. It is very probable, however, that the series of parallel fourths must also be understood as a figure of thought, that is as a phenomenon with an extra-musical meaning. If its function would indeed be that of analogy-based harmony, it is not difficult to uncover the elements of the analogies: The texts of both compositions, which deal with the values of the friendship in time of peace and the unity in matrimony, point to moral philosophy as the domain in which we have to seek. Since many of the writings of the early humanists deal with moral questions,[51] anyone who undertook higher courses of instruction could not but become involved with them. Certainly, one of the most popular and influential classical authors was Plutarch. His surviving writings on moral topics are known as Ηθικα (Lat. *Moralia*). These essays were introduced into Italy by Byzantine scholars. The *Moralia* are even the first of Plutarch's works to be printed in the original Greek (Venice 1509). Although probably unauthentic, the dialogue *De musica* (Περι μουσικης) was, in Dufay's time, thought to be by Plutarch.[52] Along with the *Moralia*, *De musica* is one of the most important sources for the study of ἁρμονία (harmony) and musical humanism. Thomas Mathiesen has shown that early in the fifteenth century translations were made of this treatise by Leonardo Bruni.[53] I hold it to be probable that parts of Plutarch's writings were known to Dufay in some way. Before setting forth the arguments which support this belief, I shall briefly summarize some of Plutarch's observations on the theory of music.[54]

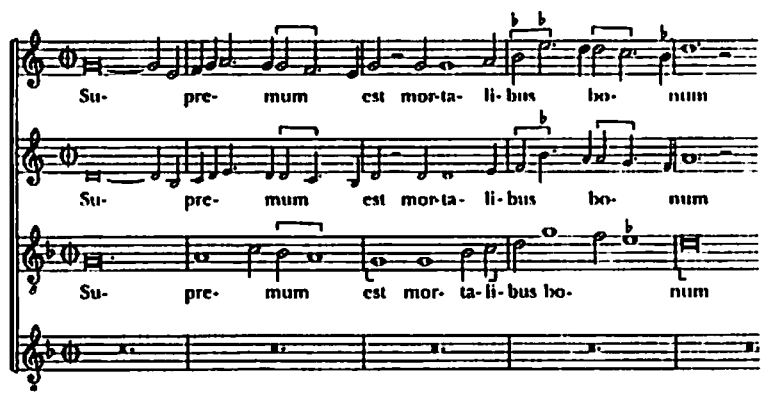
Plutarch was convinced that numbers and their symbolic meaning are indispensable in human life. To demonstrate this, he worked out the theory of

[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[51] Cf. P.O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York 1961), p. 17.
[52] Cf. Th.J. Mathiesen: *Round Table Humanism and Music*, in IMSCR Berkeley 1977, ed. by D. Heartz and B. Wade (Kassel 1981), p. 890.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 891.
[54] The following considerations are based upon J. Smits, *Plutarchus en de Griekse muziek* (Bilthoven 1970). For a translation in English of Plutarch's *Moralia*, ed. by F.C. Babbitt, see The Loeb Classical Library (London/Cambridge, MA, 1959).

the harmonious proportions of numbers. "Plutarch ... frequently points to musical ἁρμονία, in order to show how one can attain the right equilibrium and the *tranquillitas animae* in one's own life. Plutarch does this above all in his *Moralia*, particularly in those essays which have to do with a balanced disposition, with the quest of the right mean between two extremes and with the attempt to find a compromise between two contrasting things. These essays deal with matrimony and friendship, harmony in civil government, self control and the rule of reason in human life."[55]

Plutarch's comments on the harmonious proportions are based on the Pythagorean concept of symphony. According to this concept, there is harmony in the octave and in all consonant intervals within the octave. Of these intervals, only the fourth, with the numerical proportion 4:3, could in fifteenth-century music be used in a parallel movement of voices.[56] When Dufay had the texts of *Supremum est* and *Iuvenis qui puellam* before him, he must have realized that the technique of faux-bourdon could offer him a most spectacular effect if used as an analogy between harmony and the idea of friendship and unity in matrimony (Ex. 4).

Ex. 4



Astonishing though it may seem, his model may have been Plutarch's *Moralia*, for precisely these two forms of relationship are used to explain the principle of analogy-based harmony: In *Coniugalia praecepta* (*Moralia*, 139D), Plutarch compares the unity of man and woman in matrimony with two consonant tones, which despite the difference in pitch nevertheless form a unity, on the understanding that one of the two tones is carrying on the

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1.
[56] Cf. H. Besseler, *op. cit.* (fn. 7), p. 22; Kl.-J. Sachs, *Der Contrapunctus im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert. Untersuchungen zum Terminus, zur Lehre und zu den Quellen.* Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 13 (Wiesbaden 1974), p. 135.

melody. In *De amicorum multitudine* (*Moralia*, 96E), Plutarch draws an analogy between friendship and harmony, which results when dissimilar tones flow together to become a unity ("... and it must be as if one soul were apportioned among two or more bodies"). Of course, these comments of Plutarch have never become common property in the fifteenth century. And people who were familiar only with the use of faux-bourdon in the performance of psalms, hymns, and other liturgical chants, may have asked themselves, when listening to *Supremum est* and *Iuvenis qui puellam*, why Dufay produced this particular musical effect in these compositions. But they must have felt that an orator was speaking.

As an epoch in the history of culture, the Renaissance gave rise to a long series of new artistic and scientific experiences. The artist was bent on investigating his own possibilities and the possibilities of his *ars*, he explored the confines that were given, and tried to pass beyond them.[57] To impress patrons and public, difficulties were created and surmounted. In his thorough contribution to Karl Gustav Fellerer's *Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik*, Rudolf Bockholdt has rightly pointed out that the historical importance of faux-bourdon should not be over-estimated: it had no influence on the later textural innovations in four-part music.[58] However, as a stylistic phenomenon faux-bourdon inspired Dufay to show his creativity and flexibility both within and beyond the bounds of the *ars musicae* of his time.

A New Thesis on the Origin of the Term 'faux-bourdon'

Several explanations have been offered of the meaning of the term 'faux bourdon' or 'au(x) faux bourdon', as it is found in its earliest source, the Ms. Bologna Q15. The explanations vary from 'false staff' as an allusion to St James's *bourdon* or 'false support' (of the unwritten contratenor for the discantus) to a low voice part or the ghostly 'fictus bardunus', produced by the strong resultant tones from the consecutive fourths.[59] Ernest Trumble rightly remarks that since the term 'faux-bourdon' is not found in Latin, its original concept probably "refers to something outside the body of classical and musical doctrine of Dufay and his circle."[60] I would like to advance a new thesis on the origin of the term, which derives its argument from the generally accepted assumption that it was indeed Dufay who first used the term in his Communion antiphon *Vos qui secuti estis me*.[61] This fact seems to be confirmed by the presence of a Latin canon in the Communion which tells

[57] Cf. S. Dresden, *Wat is Creativiteit? Een Essay* (Amsterdam 1987), p. 101.
[58] *Englische und franko-flämische Kirchenmusik in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, in Geschichte der katholischen Kirchenmusik, vol. 1, ed. by K. G. Fellerer (Kassel 1972-76), p. 430.
[59] Cf. Trowell, *op. cit.* (fn. 2) p. 435.
[60] *Op. cit.* (fn. 5) p. 19.
[61] Cf. Trowell, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 435; see also Trumble, *Autobiographical Implications* ... (fn. 10), pp. 50 and 82.

the singers how to perform the third voice, that is the faux-bourdon part, a canon which occurs only here.

Soon after Besseler's *Bourdon und Fauxbourdon* appeared, the German philologist Flasdieck pointed out that from the fourteenth century onwards one of the meanings of the word 'bourdon' was 'drone bass'.[62] Before the term 'faux-bourdon' originated in the context of musical composition, it would have meant, according to Flasdieck, 'a false drone bass'. Its normal meaning, however, was 'drone' (male bee)! According to Flasdieck, the adjective *faux* in connection with bourdon probably refers to the redundancy of the drones after the queen has been fertilized. (For this reason drones are eliminated in the autumn by the workers.)[63] As far as I know, Flasdieck's etymological observation has never been explored in later studies on faux-bourdon. In the following part of my study I shall try to show that the *original* meaning of the word 'faux-bourdon' (i.e., as an entomological term) may have led to its genesis as a musical term and to its use to denote a musical technique.

Drones, male bees, are characterised in two ways. In the first place, they are larger than the workers (the undeveloped females), and they produce, when flying, a strong, *buzzing* noise. In the past, this noise must have led to the musical term 'drone' (Fr. *bourdon*), which was given to a sustained droning sound. "Instrumentally produced drones generally accompany melodies played on the same instrument ... and are usually tuned to the keynote of the melodies and often to its 5th also."[64] The drone occurs in primitive music, but its origins are uncertain. The second remarkable feature is that in early summer the drones fly out of the hive together with the new young queen, when she makes her bride's flight. This flight is really an endurance test for the drones, who try to *follow* their queen as well as they can. Also in this respect, the term 'faux-bourdon' fits the musical technique perfectly.

Earlier we have seen that the phenomenon of a middle voice *following* the discantus in Dufay's Communion may have been inspired by Christ's admonition to the rich young man in Matthew 19. The apostle Peter replies to the words of Jesus that the disciples have indeed followed him, that is, that they have been trying to *behave* like him (Matth. 19:27). In this connection it seems to me of the utmost interest, that in the Middle Ages the apostles were compared with bees. In Ms. 151, fol. 107v, of the Stiftsbibliothek in Lilienfeld, which dates from the mid-fourteenth century, there is a representation of Christ sending out Apostles, under which bees are depicted, surrounding the queen bee.[65] (Fig. 1) Christ has in his right hand a scroll with an inscription from Matthew 28:18 – "Data est mihi omnis potestas in celo et terra." (All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.)

[62] H.M. Flasdieck, Franz. *'faux-bourdon' und frühneuengl. 'faburden'*, in AcM 25 (1953), p. 118.

[63] Mrs. Janneke Bodewitz (Utrecht) has suggested that the word *faux* instead may refer to the fact that a faux bourdon is not a real bourdon.

[64] A.C. Baines, *Drone* (i), in NGD 5, p. 637.

[65] Cf. Index of Christian Art, 'bee'.

These words precede Christ's instruction: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The text occurs in the Gospel of Easter Friday. Although representations of this bee allegory are scarce, medieval Christian writings provide more examples. Christian bee symbolism goes back to ancient times, when it was customary to connect poets with bees, as they did, for instance, with Sophocles, Homer, Horace, and Vergil.[66]

The patron of bee culture is St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (374-397), to whom tradition has assigned "a musical significance exceeding that of any other early Christian leader."[67] He was particularly noted for having introduced into the Latin church antiphonal singing and hymns, two elements in music which are markedly represented in Dufay's faux-bourdon repertoire. No less than eight hymns set by Dufay have been attributed to Ambrose.[68] Ambrose's patronage of bee culture has its origin in the legend that a swarm of bees had alighted on his mouth as he lay in the cradle. The miraculous event, which is connected with Ambrose's eloquence as an early-Christian preacher, is related in the *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1229-1298).[69] The *Golden Legend* is a collection of saints' lives and accounts of events in the lives of Christ and Mary that became immensely popular and was translated into all Western European languages. Also Dufay owned a copy of it![70] Undoubtedly, the composer was interested in hagiography, and may have known that in his *Hexaemeron* ("On the Six Days of Creation"), St Ambrose devoted a chapter to the bee.

Drawing on the fourth book of Vergil's *Georgics*, Ambrose defended by erudite philosophical allegory the spiritual meaning of the praise of the bee by referring to Proverbs in the Old Testament: "merito quasi bonam operariam Scriptura apem praedicat dicens: *Vade ad apem, et vide quomodo operaria est. Operationem quoque quam venerabilem mercatur, cujus laborem reges et mediocres ad salutem sumunt. Appetibilis enim est omnibus et clara* [cf. Prov. 6:6-8]. Audis quid dicit propheta? Mittit utique te ut apiculae illius sequaris exemplum, imiteris operationem." (Scripture rightly commends the bee as a good worker: 'Behold the bee, see how busy she is, how admirable in her industry, the results of whose labors are serviceable to kings and commoners and are sought after by all men.' Do you hear what the Prophet says? He enjoins on you to follow the example of that tiny bee and to imitate her

[66] See H. Wagenvoort, *Inspiratie door bijen in de droom*. Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe reeks, vol. 29/8 (Amsterdam 1966), p. 60.

[67] J.W. McKinnon, *Ambrose*, in NGD 1, p. 314.

[68] For an edition of these hymns see Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 16, cols. 1473-6 and vol. 17, cols. 1209-60.

[69] *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*. Translated and adapted from the Latin by Granger Eyan and Helmut Ripperger (New York 1969), p. 25.

[70] Cf. Wright, *op. cit.* (fn. 28), p. 215.

work.)[71] The quotation makes clear that Ambrose, while imitating the analogy of the ant in Proverbs, recommends the community of the bees to the attention of his readers as an example that should be followed, and reveals at the same time the analogy between the society of the bees and the Church.[72]

Animal allegory played a central role in medieval bestiaries, a literary genre based on the description of certain qualities of animals, which were often used as a metaphor to depict virtues or vices. The tradition to use allegories of animals in Christian religious and moral instruction partly finds its basis in Aristotle's concept of animal sagacity, but the numerous manuscripts of medieval bestiaries are ultimately derived from the *Physiologus* ("Naturalist"), a Greek work from the second century AD. In the Middle Ages, the *Physiologus* was widely disseminated throughout the Christian world. Bestiaries were especially popular in France and the Low Countries. Vincent of Beauvais, Thomas of Cantimpré and Bartholomew the Englishman belong to the most famous compilers. As one of the characteristic features of the bee it is mentioned that the commoners follow the 'king' with marvellous obedience.[73] In Christian thought, the 'king' was seen as Christ.[74]

Bishop Ambrose's allegory of the society of the bees and the Church was further elaborated by Thomas de Cantimpré (1201-1263). Before he settled as a Dominican friar in Louvain, Thomas lived fifteen years in the Augustine abbey of Cantimpré, near Cambrai.[75] In his *Bonum universale de apibus*, a manual that instructs the ecclesiastical leader how to reach the state of perfection, Thomas compares the life of the bees with the community of the Church, the hive being the Church.[76] The leader's main task is the *imitatio Christi*. While referring to passages in the Holy Scriptures like Matthew 19, from which Dufay's Communion text derives, Thomas names the apostles Peter and Paul as models. The *Bonum* universale is considered to be one of the most influential books of allegorical examples of the late Middle Ages. King Charles V (1337/1364-1380), who founded a magnificent library, had a French translation made of it. Soon afterward, Dutch and German translations also appeared. In view of the fact that the abbey of Cantimpré was so near to Cambrai, where Guillaume Dufay served as a choirboy at the cathedral from 1409 until 1414, it seems plausible that the young chorister visited the famous place, and became acquainted with the life of Thomas and with the contents of his most popular treatise.

[71] Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 14, col. 250. The translation is after The Fathers of the Church, vol. 42 (New York 1961), p. 215.

[72] See M. Misch, *'Apis est Animal - Apis est ecclesia'. Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von Naturkunde und Theologie in spätantiker und mittelalterlicher Literatur*. Europäische Hochschulschriften I/107 (Bern/Frankfurt a. M. 1974), pp. 49-50.

[73] See for instance the description of the bee in Brunetto Latini's bestiary, ed. by G. Biancotto, in *Bestiaires du Moyen Age* (Paris 1980), p. 198.

[74] Cf. L. Koep, *Biene*, in Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum (Stuttgart 1950-....), vol. 2, p. 280.

[75] Cf. W. A. van der Vet, *Het Bïenboec van Thomas van Cantimpré en zijn Exempelen* ('s-Gravenhage 1902), p. 4. The abbey was demolished in 1580.

[76] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 35-73; Misch, *op. cit.* (fn. 72), pp. 74-9.

It may indeed surprise people from the twentieth century to see that the allegory of the bee seems to emerge again in liturgical music in the fifteenth century. However, in the early and later Middle Ages animals were currently used by man in art and literature to symbolize not only his social and political, but also his religious life. An example of bee allegory can be found in Roman liturgy of that time. Once a year, on Holy Saturday, the *Exsultet* was sung during the solemn Easter Vigil. This text, which has its origin in the sixth century, "treats the essential themes [of Easter] in lyrical vein"[77] and, while celebrating the purity of the candle's wax, mentions the work of the bees. (cf. LU, p. 776N) This passage too draws on the *Georgics* of Vergil and "recalls the literary habits of St Ambrose".[78] Like the artists who decorated the *Exultet Rolls* with bees gathering honey,[79] (Fig. 2) musicians who had been ordained as priests, as was the case with Dufay, must have been familiar with this attitude.

The last question to be answered is, why the literal meaning of the French word *faux bourdon* never before has been connected with the musical term. I think there are two reasons for this. In the first place, no fifteenth-century theorist dealing with *faux-bourdon* as a musical phenomenon gives an explanation of the term. Only Adam von Fulda connects its "awkward" sound with the invention of the term 'faulx bordon' (see *Excursus 1*). But can we expect a German theorist to have known the literal meaning of the word faux bourdon? Secondly, the insight that the musical term has probably been derived from the entomological meaning of the word faux bourdon can only be reached after one has become conscious that the musical style does conceal an extra-musical meaning. Until now, however, no musicologist has ever acknowledged the fact that faux-bourdon in Dufay's Communion antiphon *Vos qui secuti estis me* can only be understood as a climax in his Mass if it indeed means *more* than a series of sixth chords. Finally, the sole musicologist discussing faux-bourdon who may have been aware of the normal meaning of the word *faux bourdon* is Suzanne Clercx. She concentrated, however, on the question in which country Dufay's first faux-bourdon composition originated and came to the conclusion that Dufay invented both term and technique in Italy.[80]

In medieval etymology, it was generally accepted that terms in particular branches of knowledge were derived from words used in the realm of natural history.[81] The writings by Isidore of Seville – they comprise, among other things, the *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, and the *Allegoriae* – which "influenced a broad range of writers and thinkers throughout the Middle

[77] M. Huglo, *Exultet*, in NGD 6, p. 334.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 335. Page 335 reproduces part of an Exsultet Roll from the twelfth century showing "the chaste and fecund bee" in the context of an homage to the Virgin mother.

[79] Cf. F. Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London 1971), p. 248.

[80] *Aux origines du fauxbourdon*, in RdM 40 (1957), p. 165.

[81] Cf. Klingender, *op. cit.* (fn. 79), pp. 163-7.

Ages",[82] testify to this habit. The musical term 'bourdon', indicating a drone or pedal point, a musical instrument or part of an instrument, is certainly an example of it. As a designation of low organ pipes 'bourdon' occurs as early as 1382 in Rouen.[83] And that this term indeed was inspired by the insect of the same name is proven by the equivalents *hommel* in Dutch and *Hummel* in German.[84] Therefore I believe, that, *mutatis mutandis*, the onomatopoeical character of the sound of faux-bourdon and the analogy described above are two mutually reinforcing arguments in favour of my thesis.

Excursus 1: *The Twofold Meaning of Faux-bourdon in Rhetoric*

If my interpretation of the meaning of faux-bourdon in *Supremum est mortalibus bonum* and *Iuvenis qui puellam* is to be upheld, this style figure is both a *virtus orationis* and a *vitium orationis*. At first it appears to be a literal representation of harmonious living, invented as such by Dufay. Later in the fifteenth century, however, its meaning changed. In his *De musica* (1490), Adam von Fulda calls the fourth a "semidissonantia" and describes its sound as "awkward" ("tetrum reddit sonum"), for which reason, he says, musicians started to speak of *faulx bordon* if fourths are used in combination with consonances.[85] In Josquin's *Miserere mei, deus*, the parallel progression of sixth-chords underlines the idea that God would not delight in holocaust (bars 331-333; the sin is symbolized by the eleven statements of the words "non delectaberis"). In Lassus's *Omnia que fecisti nobis*, sixth-chords emphasize the words "peccavimus" (we have sinned). Cipriano de Rore employs in his madrigals sixth-chords to express harshness and pain.[86] For Zarlino, the fourth accompanied by the major third below it, "is not really very consonant" (non è veramente molto consonante).[87]

Excursus 2: *Faux-bourdon in Busnois's Chanson* Terrible dame

Dufay's *Supremum est* and *Iuvenis qui puellam* are not the only secular compositions that employed faux-bourdon. Antoine Busnois's *Terrible dame* provides another example.[88] It is likely that Busnois also utilized faux-bourdon in his chanson to express an extra-musical meaning. In Brian Trowell's view, "the two lower voices, in 'empty' and unsatisfied gymel, represent the lover who complains that he is dying 'par deffau[l]t', while his lady, characterized by the top two voices with a third in fauxbourdon, asks 'Que vous fault?' ('What do you lack?'), after which the four voices mesh contentedly together for four beats in four-voice fauxbourdon."[89] Joshua Rifkin has suggested that the *faux* (= false) harmony possibly symbolizes the unyielding lady.[90] If the use of faux-bourdon in Busnois's chanson would conceal a hidden meaning, it can be considered as an argument in favour of my symbolic interpretation of faux-bourdon in Dufay's secular compositions. I think Busnois's chanson and Dufay's song *Iuvenis qui puellam* also call into question Bonnie Blackburn's suggestion that Dufay would have used faux-bourdon in *Supremum est* only because it "is better suited acoustically to the large space in which the piece must have been performed."[91]

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[82] D.M. Randel, *Isidore of Seville*, in NGD 9, p. 340.
[83] Cf. N. Dufourcq, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'orgue français* (Paris 1934-35), p. 25.
[84] Cf. M.A. Vente, *Bouwstoffen tot de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse orgel in de 16e eeuw* (Amsterdam 1942), p. 30; G. Persoons, *De orgels en organisten van de Onze Lieve Vrouwkerk te Antwerpen van 1500 tot 1650* (Brussels 1981), p. 30.
[85] Ed. by M. Gerbert. Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica 3, pp. 351-2.
[86] D.P. Walker, *The Expressive Value of Intervals and the Problem of the Fourth*, in the same author's *Studies in Musical Science in the Late Renaissance* (London 1978), p. 80. About the function of faux-bourdon in the sixteenth century see also B. Meier, *The Modes of Classical Vocal Polyphony Described According to the Sources* (New York 1988), pp. 246-7. Sixth-chords are used, with the same significance, in compositions by H. Schütz and J.S. Bach; see A. Clement, *'O Jesu, du edle Gabe'. Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Musik in den Choralpartiten und Kanonischen Veränderungen von Johann Sebastian Bach* (Ph.D. diss. Utrecht 1989), p. 119.
[87] *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice 1558), III, 60, p. 246.

[88] See for a transcription of the first part of the chanson A. Pirro, *Histoire de la musique de la fin du XIVe siècle à la fin du XVIe* (Paris 1940), p. 120. In this transcription, the faux-bourdon voice has not been added.
[89] *Op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 435.
[90] See his comments on the sleeve of Nonesuch recording H-71247.
[91] *On Compositional Process in the Fifteenth Century*, in JAMS 40 (1987), p. 228, fn. 29.

Fig. 1. Christ sending out Apostles.
Lilienfeld, Stiftsbibliothek, Ms. 151, fol. 107v (fourteenth cent.).
The manuscript contains the Concordantie Caritatis by Ulrich of Lilienfeld.

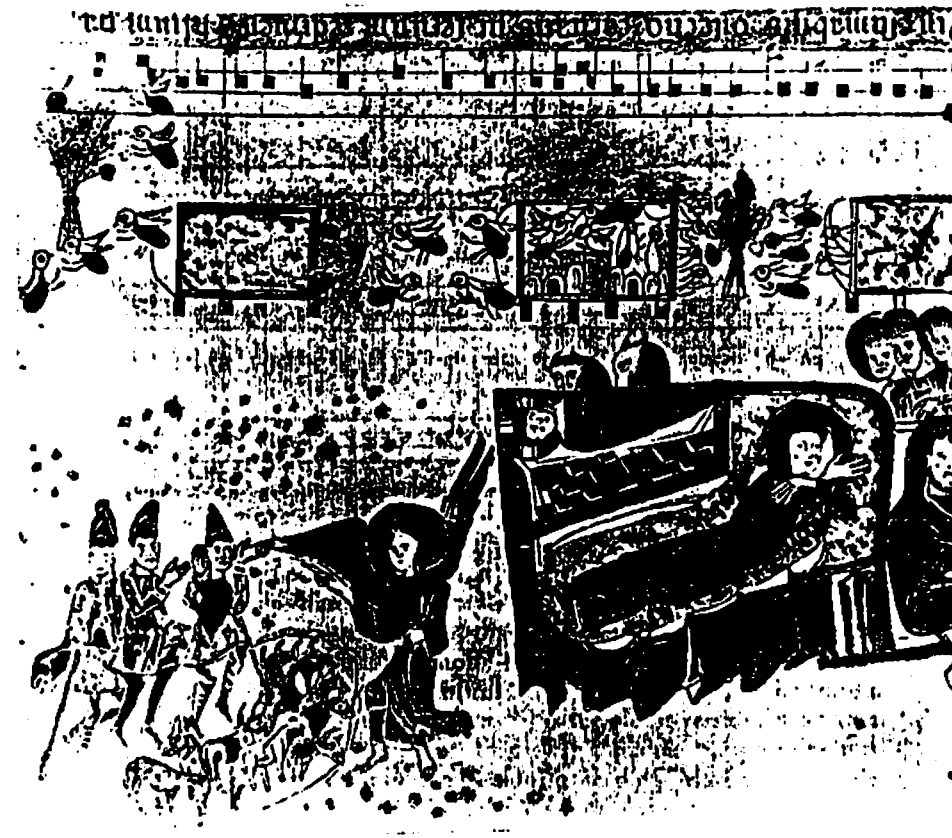
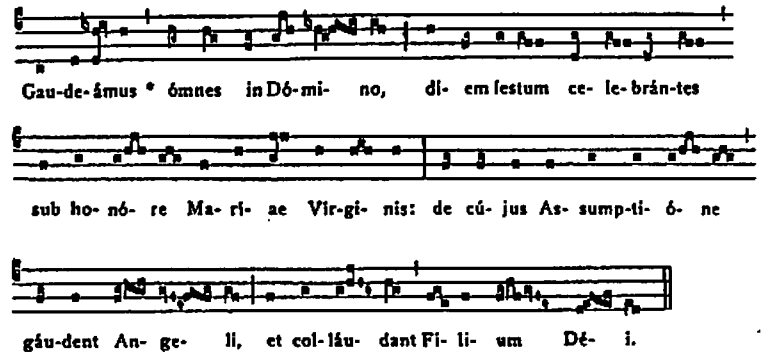


Fig. 2. Bees gathering honey (Detail of the Nativity).
Exsultet Roll (eleventh cent.).
Gaeta, Cathedral Archives.

JOSQUIN'S MASS FOR ALL SAINTS AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In 1923 Albert Smijers published in the *Werken van Josquin des Prez* the *Missa Gaudeamus*. In his Introduction the editor contented himself by stating that the composer utilized as *cantus prius factus* a free adaptation of the plainsong melody of the Introit "Gaudeamus". As evidence he reproduced the version sung at the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (Ex. 1):

Ex. 1



Ever since Smijers's edition appeared, it has usually been stated that Josquin based his Mass on a Marian Chant.[1]

It should be pointed out, however, that the Introit "Gaudeamus" – as ascertained already by Helmuth Osthoff[2] – is also used for a large number of saints' days as well as for the feast of All Saints (November 1).[3] The Introit sung in the Mass of St Agatha (February 5) is the oldest version.[4] Its text is the same as that of Example 1, except that it has "Agathae martyris: de cujus passione" (Agatha martyr, at whose passion) instead of "Mariae virginis: de cujus assumptione" (the Virgin Mary, for whose Assumption). From the eleventh century onwards the antiphon appears in at least seven other Masses. In the Introit of All Saints the text passage quoted above reads "Sanctorum omnium de quorum solemnitate" (of all the Saints at whose solemnity).

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[1] See for instance G. Reese, *Music in the Renaissance* (London 1954), p. 241; S.R. Charles, *Josquin des Prez. A Guide to Research* (New York/London 1983), p. 47.

[2] *Josquin Desprez* (Tutzing 1962-65), vol. 1, p. 136.

[3] A.W. Ambros is probably the first musicologist to remark that the "Gaudeamus" chant is sung at All Saints; cf. his *Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig ³1887-1909), vol. 3, p. 216.

[4] Cf. *Antiphonale missarum sextumplex*, ed. by R.-J. Hesbert (Brussels 1935).

Although the Mass combines the techniques of cantus firmus and ostinato, it is generally the incipit of the Introit which, thematically, occupies the foreground. In the Ms. Cambrai 18 the motif even appears several times with the word "gaudeamus" instead of the liturgical text. The ostinato technique has its culmination in the final Agnus dei, where, as Jeremy Noble remarks, "the memorable opening phrase of the introit is put through a vertiginous series of transpositions."[5] It has never been noticed that the arrangement of the total number of "Gaudeamus" statements in the five sections of the Mass is anything but proportional. The motif occurs 6, 14, 2, 5+7, and 4+23 times respectively. If we take into account that it appears more often in Agnus dei III, which is 58 bars long, than in the Kyrie and Gloria which together make up 220 bars, and that it appears only twice in the Credo which contains 274 bars, the conclusion seems inescapable that Josquin deliberately determined the various numbers of statements. Evidence of the justness of this conclusion can be found by comparing the present Mass with Josquin's *Missa Ave maris stella*. Both works are based on a Gregorian chant, the incipits of which are used in ever-changing melodic and rhythmic shapes. Moreover, both present the *cantus prius factus* in the tenor. Contrary, however, to the irregular distribution of the "Gaudeamus" motifs in the various Mass sections and the individual voices, the employment of the "Ave maris stella" incipit is much more balanced. Noble says: "... one senses that in *Ave maris stella* the exuberance of *Gaudeamus* has begun to be tamed, even spiritualized."[6]

In view of the general high level of the music it seems no coincidence that the Mass has been preserved in quite a number of sources. These sources comprise two printed editions and four reprints as well as seven manuscripts, all containing the complete cycle. A comparison of the sources of the Mass and a look at the folios with the melodies, often executed in beautiful calligraphy, reveal that in the Mss. Basel F.IX.25 and Cambrai 18 a striking notation is used for the soprano part of the Sanctus (Ex. 2):

Ex. 2

Anyone acquainted with Renaissance mensural notation will recall that the circle signifies a three-part metre and as such symbolizes the number three, which represents holiness and the Trinity. Although all the other known Sanctus settings by Josquin indicate that the soprano sings the entire text "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, dominus deus Sabaoth", the notation mentioned above makes it seem plausible that the *Gaudeamus* Sanctus should be considered an exception to this rule. The motif – consisting of the first notes of the

[5] *Josquin Desprez*, in NGD 9, p. 725.
[6] *Ibid.*

Gregorian Introit "Gaudeamus" – is more reminiscent of a voice which, like a trumpet (Rev. 4:1) three times proclaims: "Sanctus", leaving out the "dominus deus Sabaoth".

The words "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, dominus deus ...", taken from Isaiah 6:3 and also used by St John in the Book of Revelation (4:8), greatly fired Josquin's imagination. At this particular point in his *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni* the composer introduces a canon at the unison in the two middle voices; the key to this canon is the text "Duo seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum" (Two seraphim cried out, the one calling to the other). This is an allusion to Isaiah 6:2-3: "Seraphim stabant super illud ..., et clamabant alter ad alterum et dicebant: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus exercituum: plena est omnis terra gloria eius" (Upon it stood the seraphim ... And they cried one to another, and said: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory"). The two voices of the canon therefore personify two seraphim who alternately intone a song of praise to the glory of God, the original text of which had been incorporated into the liturgy of the Mass.[7] As in the original Jewish morning prayer, the three-fold "holy" was understood as an exclamation by the angels, to which the people replied with another expression of praise.[8]

The "Gaudeamus" motif in Josquin's Mass of the same name has more than a purely musical significance. It functions, as I shall attempt to show, as a sign which refers explicitly to the composer's profession of faith. On the basis of the allegorical meaning of the numbers 6, 14, 2, 5, 7, 4 and 23 (see above), it can be said that the Mass in all probability was intended as an All Saints' Day liturgy and that the application of number symbolism may have been inspired by the Book of Revelation.

All Saints (November 1) was already an old feast in Josquin's day; it was also one of the high festivals of the Church Year. It was celebrated everywhere in the Western Church ever since the ninth century. The large place occupied by the communal veneration of the saints in the daily Mass took on a special significance when, under Pope Gregory III (731-741), the relics of apostles, martyrs and others who professed the faith were brought from all over the world to the chapel which he founded in St Peter's, namely All Saints' Chapel, "in honour of the Redeemer, his Holy Mother, all apostles, martyrs, and all those who were thoroughly just", as the *Liber Pontificalis states*.[9] The text of the epistle for All Saints' Day is taken from the Revelation of John (7:2-12). The author gives a wonderful vision of heaven, in particular showing us the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are signed with the seal

[7] See W. Elders, *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 102-3.
[8] Cf. *Liturgisch Woordenboek* (Roermond 1958-68), vol. 2, col. 2507.
[9] Cf. L. Eisenhofer in *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik* (Freiburg i. B. 1932-33), vol. 1, p. 606, and J. Hennig, *The Meaning of All the Saints*, in Medieval Studies 10 (1948), p. 149.

of the living God. The number 144.000, a multiple of (the) twelve (tribes) and twelve thousand, refers both to the great amount of people as well as to the idea of completeness, this latter being important since the twelve tribes constitute the whole people of Israel. St John further "saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: And they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."

The meaning of the epistle text for the feast of All Saints is clarified by the choice of the gospel of the same day, which is taken from Matthew 5 and which reports Christ's sermon on the mount and the eight beatitudes. It could be summarized as follows: among those millions of the just who were faithful disciples of Christ on earth will be those who are especially blessed, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matth. 5:3).

Since All Saints is the feast of the redeemed who are believed to be in heaven, the association of its liturgy with this idea should not come as a surprise. The text, written at the end of the first century AD, foretells "the destruction of the wicked, the overthrow of Satan and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth."[10] It is the only book of the New Testament that, because of its extensive use of visions, symbols and allegory, especially in connection with future events, is classified as apocalyptic. The central figure is Christ; he is represented in his sacrificial role as the Lamb who redeemed mankind with his blood. Thus, the Church always saw the message of Revelation as being relevant, even to future generations of Christians.

The Book of Revelation exerted a great influence on European culture up until the late Renaissance, and it inspired numerous artists to produce outstanding creative works. Among them were the anomymous makers of mosaics in the Roman basilicas, the makers of sculpture and of glass windows in Romanesque and Gothic churches (e.g. the beautiful rose window in the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris); illuminators of manuscripts, among them the Limburg Brothers, who illustrated the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry, and the anonymous author of the West-Flemish Apocalypse (ca. 1400), now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; Jan Bondol and Nicolas Bataille, who produced the Apocalypse tapestries in Angers; the Master of the Vision of St John and the Master of the Coronation of Mary (both in Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum); Lucas Cranach, Hans Holbein and Hans Memling. In 1498 the twenty-seven-year-old Albrecht Dürer published his Apocalypse consisting of fifteen woodcuts. When Dürer made his first sketches for the woodcuts he had not yet visited Flanders. Only in 1521 in St Bavo's Church in Ghent would he see with his own eyes the earlier portrayal by Jan van Eyck of the same vision of John. "No one can describe

[10] J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1979), p. 23. Popular belief wrongly identified the author with St John the Evangelist.

the thoughts which this sight calls forth, the ordinary person no more than Dürer, who saw a hundred times as much with his trained eye but said nothing and finally, as the story goes, kissed the frame in silence."[11] The main panel of van Eyck's polyptych shows the worship of the Lamb by the great multitude of saints. (Fig. 3) The person viewing the painting feels he has been transported into a fairy-tale landscape. The Lamb, to whom two angels are offering incense, stands on an altar in the middle of the great multitude, as described in Revelation 7:9. After the completion of the altarpiece in 1432 van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb* attracted many visitors. It was known as one of the "seven Antijcque wonderen van Ghent" (seven Ancient wonders of Ghent). Already before Josquin's birth it became necessary to close off the Vijd Chapel – Joos Vijd had donated the altarpiece – from the choir ambulatory by means of a wrought-iron screen.

Did Josquin also stand and admire van Eyck's work before he went to Italy? This is a question which can probably never be answered. But he definitely did see another portrayal of the same theme in Milan where he was active as a cathedral singer from 1459, for at that time the apse of the cathedral contained a magnificent rendering of the apocalyptic visions in the glass windows made by Stefano da Pandino. One of the fragments which has been preserved portrays the Lamb of God.[12] (Fig. 4)

A study of Josquin's musical oeuvre shows that he was the first composer in Western music who frequently sought inspiration in Holy Scripture for the texts of his motets. Of the 164 motets attributed to this master in at least one source, 90 motets deal with texts from the Old or New Testament. And at least on one occasion the visionary imagination of John inspired Josquin to produce a composition of great beauty.[13]

The epistle text for All Saints' Day quoted above alludes, as we saw, to the question of prime importance in the life of the Christian: will I also be part of that "great multitude"? The efforts which artists in the Middle Ages put into making this longing a reality becomes apparent in the themes which were central to their work. The veneration of Mary in itself shows that many works of art actually constituted an act of faith: through Mary salvation was born; she is the mother with whom the Christian has communion and who can effect his redemption. No composer realized this communion more profoundly than Josquin did when he created his musical self-portrait, the *Illibata dei virgo*: the name of the composer is gematrically contained in the sum of all the la-mi-la (= Maria) motifs.[14]

[11] F. van der Meer, *Apocalypse* (Antwerp 1978), p. 237.

[12] Cf. C.G. Pirina, *Franceschino Zavattari, Stefano da Pandino, Maffiolo da Cremona, 'magistri a vitratii' e la vetrata della 'raza' nel Duomo milanese*, in Arte Antica e Moderna 33 (1966), pp. 25-44.

[13] For a discussion of Josquin's five-part *Salve regina*, see my study *Music and Number ...*, p. 175.

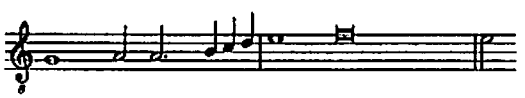
[14] Gematria: a method of exegesis employed by medieval Kabbalists in which letters are converted into numerical values. The motet *Illibata dei virgo* is dealt with in W. Elders, *Composers of the Low Countries* (Oxford 1991), pp. 80-1.

It was suggested above that Josquin, by means of the incipit of the Introit "Gaudeamus" in the five sections of his *Missa Gaudeamus*, probably refers to his profession of Christian faith. In view of the liturgical purpose of the Mass, this is to be considered as the first counterpart in Western music of the representations of the Apocalypse in art.[15] It is also tempting to assume that the esoterically conceived number structure was inspired by the frequent employment of symbolic numbers in the Book of Revelation as well as by John's description of the *canticum novum*. In chapter 14, verse 3, he says that a new canticle – sung by the elect before the throne – could only be learned by the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the world. The motivation to incorporate a series of numbers in order to symbolically express particular ideas may have been reinforced by the fact that number symbolism itself is inherent in Christian worship. For example, numbers make their appearance in the repetition of acts and prayers, in the dating of Masses for the departed, and in liturgical objects such as candles. In the following part of this study I will identify the "Gaudeamus" motifs in the various Mass sections and give an explanation of the allegorical meaning of the respective numbers.[16]

Kyrie

In the Kyrie the "Gaudeamus" motif occurs six times, namely in the following form (Ex. 3):

Ex. 3



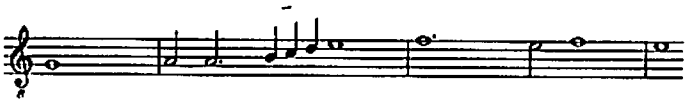
It is found in the following places: superius bars 2-4; altus bars 1-3; tenor bars 5-7; bassus bars 6-8, 9-11 and 12-14. The meanings associated with the number six can all be traced to a single source. The days of creation constitute the common root of the various interpretations. The number six is in the first place a sign of the history of salvation and refers, in the medieval view, to both the passing of time and to the six ages of the individual human being.[17] Because the passion of Christ falls on the sixth day of the week and comes to completion in the sixth hour of that day, a second significance of the number six is found in the salvation of man. The door of heaven opens to him after a life filled with good works: the number six links the *opera Dei* in creation with the six works of mercy (Matth. 25:34-36).

By giving the clearly recognizable "Gaudeamus" motif a place of prominence in his Mass already in the text of Kyrie I – "Lord, have mercy on us" – and by making it the motto of the entire Mass, Josquin lays the foundation for his profession of faith.

Gloria

In the Gloria, too, the "Gaudeamus" motif is found at the beginning of all four voices. Thereupon, it is repeated ten times in the tenor, and always at the same pitch. The motif is therefore sung a total of fourteen times. While Josquin makes the first and second occurrences of the motif identical to the motif in the Kyrie, he also lengthens it by a semibreve in all the following instances by embellishing the breve in ternary rhythm (Ex. 4):

Ex. 4



The performance direction in the tenor, "Undecies canito, pausas linquendo priores" ([the motif] is sung eleven times, omitting the foregoing rests), which is found in the editions of Petrucci (1502) and Petreius (1539), seems to have a practical rather than a symbolical significance.

When he interpreted the number fourteen, Gregory the Great thought in terms of the addition of the numbers ten and four.[18] Because of the Decalogue the number ten stands for the Old Testament; four, the number of the four Gospels, designated the New Testament.[19] The plausibility of Josquin having conceived fourteen motifs to symbolize the two testaments finds support in the fact that he presents the motifs in two series: the first series formed by the incipits of the four separate parts, the second by the ten occurrences of the motif in the tenor following the (afore-mentioned) incipits; perhaps they allude to the obligatory character of the Ten Commandments. It seems to me that Gregory's interpretation of the number fourteen does indeed fit the text of the Mass where this number occurs.

The Gloria begins with the angelic hymn taken from Luke's account of the birth of Christ and continues with a series of short expressions of praise to the Lord. Seen within the context of the feast of All Saints, the birth of Christ

[15] Heinrich Isaac's setting of the Proper texts of the Mass for All Saints, beginning with the Introit "Gaudeamus omnes", is merely a part of his large cyclic work, *Choralis Constantinus*.

[16] The interpretation of numbers in the following exposition is based on H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter, Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975). The numbers of the bars correspond to those in the edition *Werken van Josquin des Prez*, ed. by A. Smijers, part 12.

[17] Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 16), p. 131.

[18] *Ibid.* In the earlier version of this study (see the Preface), I followed an interpretation of the number fourteen different from the present one. After having reconsidered the various meanings of the number fourteen in medieval number allegory, I found that the interpretation by Gregory the Great given below better suits the meaning of the Gloria text as well as the succession of numbers expressed in the five sections of Josquin's Mass.

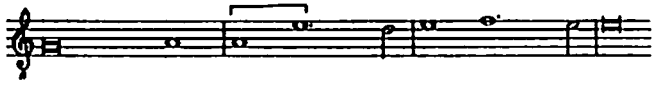
[19] *Ibid.*

can surely be regarded as the moment he established his kingdom on earth. With this in mind it is important to point out that the words "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14) are preceded by the text: "For, this day, is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Luke 2:11). The name 'Christ' is the Greek translation of the Hebraic word 'Messiah', which means 'the Annointed', and which in the first century BC came to signify the Deliverer and Saviour promised to the Jews. Matthew 1:21 also refers to this. Because Jesus Christ abolished the Old Covenant as presented in the Old Testament and made, through his own blood, a New Covenant – Revelation 5:6 refers to this in the following way: "And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain ..." – the use of the number fourteen in the Gloria acts as a logical sequel to the number six which, being a reference to the history of man's salvation, marks the beginning of Josquin's Mass.

Credo

It is certainly surprising that what is by far the largest section of the Mass, the Credo, contains the smallest number of "Gaudeamus" motifs; only twice, at the very beginning, does the motto make itself heard – again in a new form – in the tenor bars 1-4 and the superius bars 4-7 (Ex. 5):

Ex. 5



"Two is almost always a sign of the ascent from the Old to the New Covenant, from the earthly to the eternal ..."[20] The meaning of the number two in terms of the history of salvation can be traced back to St Paul: "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born according to the flesh: but he of the free woman, was by promise. Which things are said by an allegory. For these are the two testaments" (Gal. 4:22-24).

Keeping in mind what has been said about the meaning of the number fourteen in the Gloria, the introduction of the number two as yet another reference to the two testaments forms a logical continuation of Josquin's exegesis of the liturgy of All Saints: the number two places the death of Jesus Christ in relation to the Christian covenant. Since Jesus Christ made the New Covenant with God, the believer enters a personal union with the Father through the Son: "Credo in unum deum ... / I believe in one God, the Father Almighty ... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

God ..." The number two also represents the interdependence of faith and action, the abstention from evil and the realization of that which is good.

Sanctus

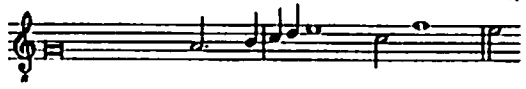
In the Sanctus we find two groups of "Gaudeamus" motifs. The text, as in all of Josquin's Masses, is organized as follows:

(1) Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, dominus deus Sabaoth
(2) Pleni sunt celi et terra gloria tua
(3) Osanna in excelsis
(4) Benedictus / qui venit / in nomine domini
(5) Osanna *ut supra*

The motif occurs five times in the first part and seven times in the third (and fifth) part(s).

"If five is understood as the sum of 3+2, it signifies faith in the Trinity and action in accordance with the command to love God and man."[21] Although the song of praise was directed to God the Father in the early liturgies of the East, in the West it had taken on a different character ever since the fifth century, namely that of praise of the Trinity.[22] This trinitarian interpretation was further perpetuated in the Middle Ages. In this connection it is important to note that the five motifs fall into two very distinct groups: altus bars 2-4 and tenor bars 4-6 each sing the following motif once (Ex. 6):

Ex. 6



In the superius, the motif which was presented already at the beginning of this study (Ex. 2), is sung three times at a higher pitch. The motif may refer to Revelation 4:8 in which the four animals sing: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."

The fact that, in the Sanctus, Josquin presents a song of praise in honour of the Trinity enables us to explain the seven "Gaudeamus" motifs in the "Osanna in excelsis". The motifs occur in the following places: superius bars 54-58; altus bars 58-62, 65-69, 72-76, 79-88; tenor bars 52-56; bassus bars 56-60. According to Matthew 21:9 the Osanna is an expression of praise to God who lives on high. In his commentary on the Book of Revelation, Gilles Quispel says that St John "has a special preference for the number seven, a sacred number meaning wholeness."[23] We find almost twenty different occurrences of it in his text. In view of the character of the Sanctus text as a

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[22] Cf. *Liturgisch Woordenboek* (fn. 8), col. 2508.
[23] *The Secret Book of Revelation* (Maidenhead 1979), p. 26.

whole, it seems that Josquin combined Revelation 8:1-2 with Matthew 21:9. The former passage reads: "And when he [the Lamb] had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour. And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God; and there were given to them seven trumpets." (Fig. 5) The second passage is as follows: "And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

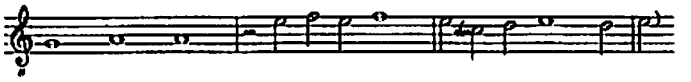
The seven trumpets represent the seven events which will characterize the Last Day:[24] "And he swore ... that time shall be no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:6-7). In the Dutch Willibrord translation (1981) this passage is interpreted as follows: The secret design is the all-embracing plan of God to bring about through Christ both final salvation and total victory over evil. Perhaps to focus attention on the space of time the faithful have to wait until God's promise will be fulfilled, Josquin prolongs the last note of the seventh(!) "Gaudeamus" motif before intoning the Benedictus: "Blessed is he that comes (*qui venit*) in the name of the Lord." In Matthew 21:9 the "qui venit" is surely meant as present tense. In the liturgy it can be interpreted as being in the perfect tense (referring to the incarnation of Christ) but also as present tense: he who is still on the way and whose second coming will be completed at the Parousia. In the New Testament the return of Christ constitutes the central object of Christian hope because it gives final form to the salvation brought by Christ.[25] By conceiving the Sanctus in this way, Josquin created a masterly connection between the hymn of praise to God and the Book of Revelation, which he then placed in the context of the All Saints' celebration.

Agnus dei

Since the adoration of the Lamb occurs so often in works of art inspired by the Book of Revelation, it is not astonishing to find that the last section of the Mass, the Agnus dei, is imbued with the "Gaudeamus" motif. Originally a text which was sung during the breaking of the bread, the Agnus dei was a Communion song ever since the eleventh century. The text reminds us that Christ was sacrificed for mankind and brought salvation through his death on the cross: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." Fully consonant with this, the "Gaudeamus" motif occurs four times in Agnus I. In the first bars of the superius, altus, tenor and bassus the motto is sung in the following way (Ex. 7):

[24] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 16), p. 139.
[25] Cf. Encyclopedie van het Christendom. Katholiek Deel (Amsterdam-Brussels 1956), p. 640.

Ex. 7



Among the many meanings attributed to the number four, its use as a symbol of the cross and of salvation occupies an important place. Honorius emphasizes that even the 'structure' of the number four is related to the figure of the cross.[26] According to Heinz Meyer this should probably be understood in such a way that from the individual parts of the Roman numeral IIII the figure ⊹ can be formed. The medieval theologian interprets the form of the cross as "Christ's sign of lordship by connecting the four arms of the cross with the points of the compass and the parts of the world ... The cross rules the world but this rule has to be understood as salvation: *Christus ... in cruce pependit, et in cruce quadrupulum mundum redemit*" (Christ ... hung on the cross and on the cross redeemed the four part world).[27]

If we assume that Josquin symbolized the request for salvation – "have mercy on us" – in this way, the 23 motifs in the Agnus III serve to confirm our exegesis.[28] I quote Meyer once more: "According to Honorius the liturgy provides for 23 signs of the cross for the Canon of the Mass, which number he understands to be a reference to the just in the age of the law (10) and in the age of grace (13). The law is valid for both ages (10+10), that is, the ages of the Old and New Covenant, while faith in the threefold God (+3) is an added characteristic for the New Testament."[29] It is clear that ten, the number of perfection, is a sign of God's commandments and stands for the law and the Old Testament. The number thirteen, according to Honorius, manifestly relates the Old (Law) and New Testament (*cognitio Trinitatis*).[30]

The structural application of the number 23 in Agnus dei III is obvious: the last words, "grant us peace", contain the meaning of the history of salvation. When Josquin presents his "Gaudeamus" motif for the 23rd time at the end of the Agnus III, which is the peroration of the whole Mass, his mission also is accomplished.

From what has been said about the unusual distribution of the motif material over the entire Mass, it will be apparent that the work was conceived in terms of a plan. In the Kyrie, Josquin initiates his prayer for salvation by using the number six. In stating the "Gaudeamus" motif fourteen times in

[26] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 16), p. 126.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] The motif is found in the following places: superius bars 95-99, 102-106, 108-112; altus bars 112-114, 115-117, 117-119, 126-128, 129-135; tenor bars 70-74, 77-81, 84-88, 91-95, 120-122, 122-124, 125-127, 127-129, 130-132; bassus bars 81-85, 87-91, 119-121, 121-123, 123-125, 126-128. Osthoff, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 141, erroneously counts 24 statements.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

the Gloria, he focuses our thoughts on the fact that the history of salvation begins with the birth of Christ. In the Credo, the two motifs symbolize the Christian's personal union with the Father through the Son. In the Sanctus, the composer creates a connection between the hymn of praise to God and the Book of Revelation by means of the numbers five and seven. Finally, in the Agnus dei, Josquin symbolizes the request for salvation and connects the number four with the 23 signs of the cross for the Canon of the Mass, thus making this last section of his *Gaudeamus* Mass an apotheosis.

Our analysis of the *Missa Gaudeamus* has revealed that Josquin considered the message of the Book of Revelation as relevant. His Mass, moreover, bears witness to the fact that one of the main characteristics of Gothic art – namely "that it is a symbolic code"[31] – was still operative at the end of the fifteenth century. And just as in thirteenth-century France "the artist, as the doctors [of the Church] might have put it, must imitate God who under the letter of Scripture hid profound meaning",[32] so Josquin in his Mass testified to the secret message of the Book of Revelation. The composer's concept of number symbolism seems to reflect a particular doctrine of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). This famous German mathematician and philosopher describes the game of the world as being both theological and symbolic, and he sees Christ as the 'games-master'. "On the one hand, mathematics and music should come together to form a synthesis of science and art; on the other hand, man – conscious that he is to the image of God – will meet the everlasting presence of the sustaining Principle of all things [*scil.* God] in the symbolism of the game."[33] Emile Mâle, the great *connoisseur* of religious art in the Middle Ages, has remarked that "a detail of apparent insignificance may hide symbolic meaning."[34] In Josquin's Mass, the notation of the soprano part in the Sanctus could be identified as such. It helped us to discover the composer's conception of his art, which, like the liturgy of the Christian Church, should be a vehicle of endless symbolism.

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[31] E. Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century* (New York 1972), p. 14.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] W. Schulze, *Zahl, Proportion, Analogie: Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphysik und Wissenschaftshaltung des Nikolaus von Kues* (Münster 1978), p. 123.
[34] *Op. cit.* (fn. 31), p. 15.

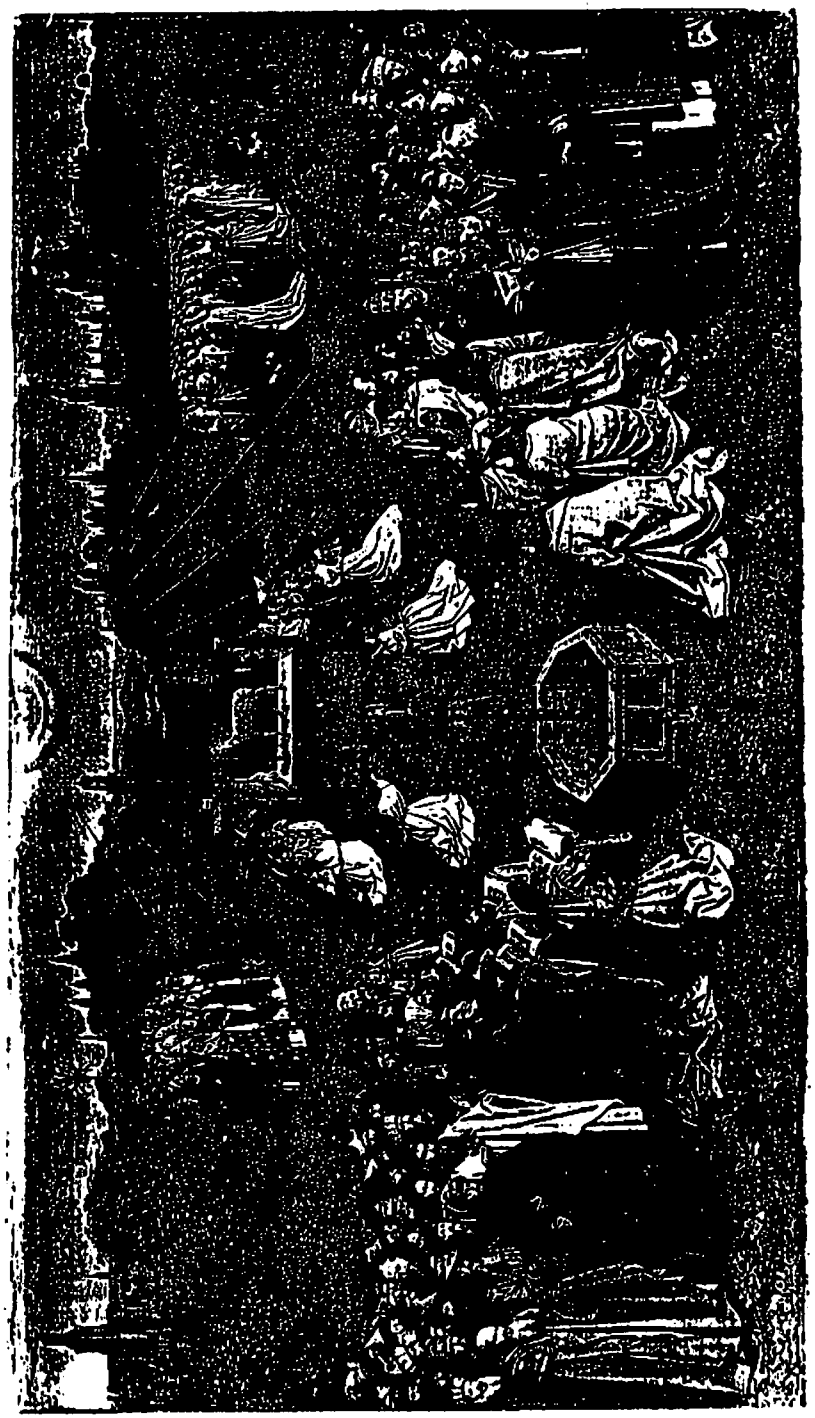

Fig. 3. Jan van Eyck, *The Adoration of the Lamb*, detail of the main panel (1432). Ghent, St Bavo's Cathedral. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

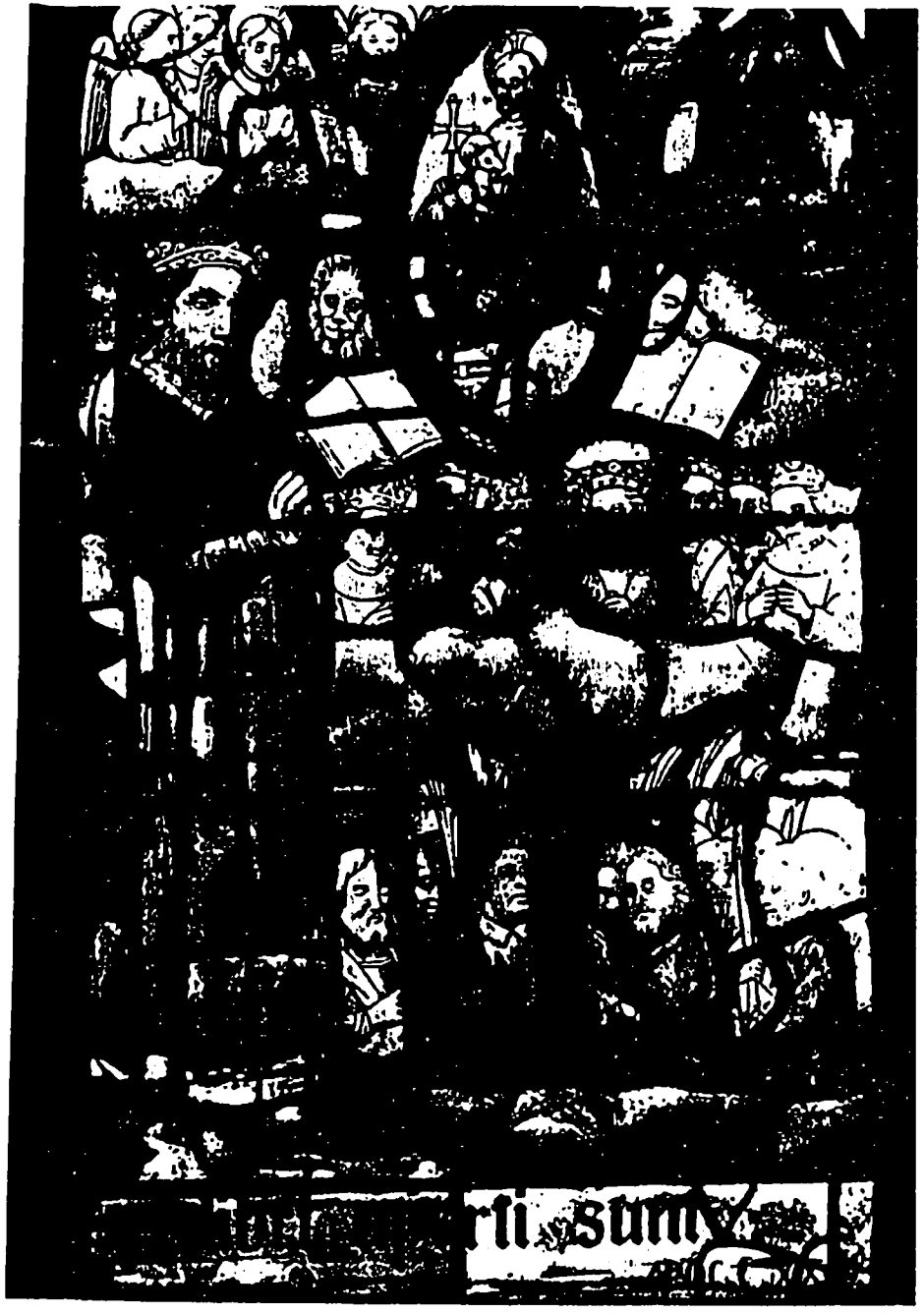

Fig. 4. Stefano da Pandino, *The Lamb of God* (ca. 1450). Milan, Cathedral. The words "Et libri aperti sunt" (and the books were opened) are taken from Revelation 20:12.

Fig. 5. Albrecht Dürer, *The Apocalypse*, Figure VI. "And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God; and there were given to them seven trumpets" (Rev. 8:2). Woodcut, Nuremberg, 1498.

THE *SOGGETTO OSTINATO* AS A CONTEXTUAL SIGN IN MASS AND MOTET

After the use of the *cantus prius factus* as a starting-point for composition had begun to decline at the end of the fifteenth century, composers of the sixteenth century showed a certain predilection for Masses and motets involving a *soggetto ostinato*. This technique can be described as the use of "a clearly defined phrase [which] is repeated persistently, usually in immediate succession, throughout a composition or a section."[1] In a number of pieces the *soggetto ostinato* constitutes the chief element in the polyphonic structure. The technique then resembles the principle of isoperiodic writing in as far as the *color*, that is, the melodic pattern, forms the point of departure for the overall planning of the composition. Normally, the *soggetto ostinato* consists in a brief melodic unit that is reiterated in the same voice. The successive appearances may occur on the same pitch, be transposed stepwise, or be related by alternation between two different pitches.

It is surprising that, in theoretical treatises preceding and written during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the term *soggetto ostinato* does not occur.[2] Theorists obviously felt that the medieval term *color* should be used to describe this procedure. From the mid-thirteenth century to the fifteenth century this term signified embellishment and, more particularly, repetition. For our purposes it is important to point out that, according to Prosdocimus de Beldemandis, both the term and its meaning originated in rhetoric. In his *Tractatus pratice cantus mensurabilis* of 1412 he says: "Rhetorical color is called repetition, and the term is applied metaphorically, since just as in rhetorical color there is frequent repetition of the same phrase, in musical color, too, there is frequent repetition."[3]

Since rhetoric and musical symbolism are so frequently found in each other's company, we may expect that often the composer's primary concern was the matter of a *soggetto ostinato* and its relationship to the work in which it occurred. This is particularly the case when the *soggetto ostinato* also has its own text, since the two levels of meaning sometimes appear to intentionally conceal various elements of the fascinating world of medieval Christian faith.

For the present study I collected a number of examples of the symbolic use of the *soggetto ostinato*. About half of these I discussed earlier in my *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer*.[4] The ways in which the

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[1] W. Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA, ²1972), p. 634.

[2] The term *ostinato* appears for the first time in Angelo Berardi's *Documenti armonici* of 1687. Cf. M.E. Columbro, *Ostinato Technique in the Franco-Flemish Motet: 1480-ca. 1562* (Ph.D. diss. Case Western Reserve Univ. 1974), vol. 1, p. 28.

[3] Ed. E. de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi 3* (Paris 1869), p. 248. The translation of the quotation is by Ernest H. Sanders; cf. NGD 4, p. 584.

[4] (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 75-85 and 124-8.

soggetto ostinato can appear are quite varied. As stated above, it can have its own text, although there are some examples in which the *ostinato* theme has the same text as that of the composition in which it figures. Quite often a series of restatements of the musical phrase or motif appears to be based on number symbolism, in which case a meaningful inner connection with the text of the composition or with its subject is intended. The number of restatements in the works under consideration varies from five to twenty-one. Perhaps the finest specimen of the symbolical application of ostinato technique is Josquin's *Missa Gaudeamus*. Elsewhere I have described how the impressive series of "Gaudeamus" motifs in this Mass functions as a sign which refers explicitly to the composer's profession of faith.[5] Other forms of symbolism can be found where the technical elaboration of the *soggetto ostinato* was inspired by a particular scene from the life of a saint, and in the so-called *soggetto cavato*. Finally, the ostinato reiteration of the hexachord sometimes represents a popular symbol in Christian art, namely the *scala celestis*. In the following sections I shall review 26 pieces, starting with those in which symbolic numbers are clearly in evidence.

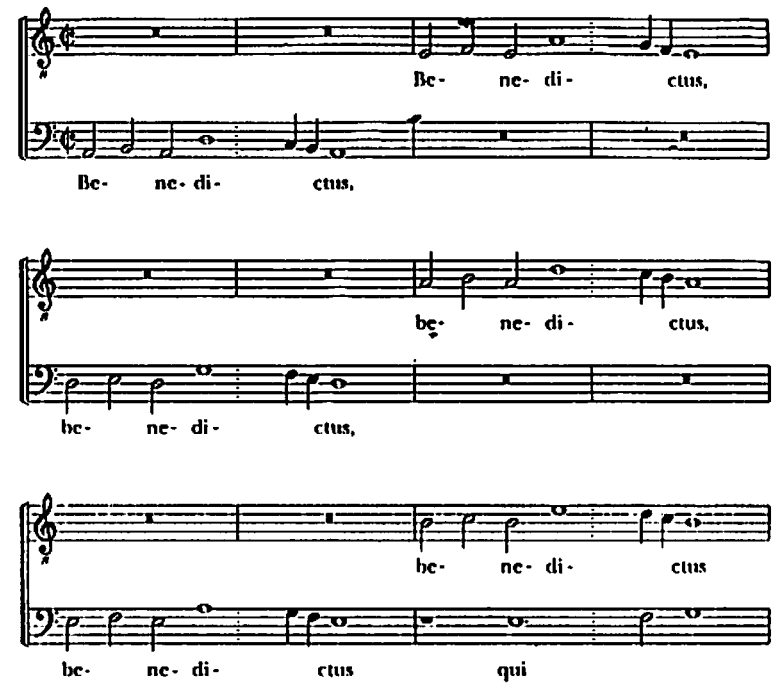
The soggetto ostinato *and number symbolism*

In Christian numerology one of the connotations of the number five is the passion of Christ. In discussing Christ's five wounds, Honorius refers to the five signs of the cross which the priest makes over the bread and wine during the Canon of Mass; this he performs together with a prayer that they become the Body and Blood of Christ: "...through the five orders of the crosses the five ages of the world are designated, which through the cross and the Body of Christ are saved. Whence in the Canon [of the Mass] it is said five times 'Through Christ our Lord', since the world is redeemed through the five wounds of Christ."[6] The surfaces of altar-stones often show five crosses, and in the Roman Missal the five blessings are marked with a red cross. (Fig. 6) In his *Missa Pange lingua*, based on the hymn of the same name sung at the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, Josquin gives five solo statements of the opening of the Benedictus (Blessed is he ...) (Ex. 1).

This section of the Sanctus is performed either just before, during, or immediately after the elevation. Josquin's procedure is highly remarkable and unique among all his works: he must have intended to symbolize the consecration of the bread and wine. The first strophe of the *Pange lingua* hymn declares: "Sing, my tongue, the mystery of the glorious Body and the precious Blood ..."[7]

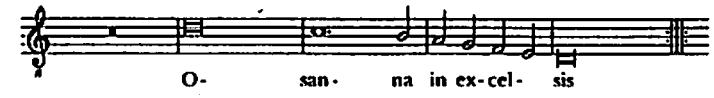
[5] See my study *Josquin's Mass for All Saints* ..., pp. 44-59.
[6] Cf. H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter: Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975), p. 128.
[7] In his article *Symbol and Ritual in Josquin's* Missa Di Dadi, JAMS 42 (1989), pp. 1-22, Michael Long gives good arguments for connecting this Mass with the *Missa Pange lingua*, and refers, among other things, to the passage quoted above.

Ex. 1



Whether or not the *soggetto ostinato* in the Osanna of the *Missa Adieu mes amours* by Andreas de Silva should also be considered as an example of number symbolism is less easy to prove. The Mass was based on Josquin's well-known chanson and is preserved in the Ms. Cappella Sistina 45. The *soggetto*, which descends stepwise from *d'-d*, has the text "Osanna in excelsis" and must be stated six times (Ex. 2):

Ex. 2



Both the simplicity of the subject – which is not derived from the chanson – as well as the direction "Dinumerabo nomen tuum in eternum" (I shall count your name in all eternity), point to an extra-musical meaning. The number six is sometimes connected with the Sanctus because of the passage in Isaiah 6:2-3. The prophet describes how two seraphs, each with six wings, sing alternately the text of the Sanctus. From the Baroque period we know of at least two composers who used six-part scoring in their setting of the

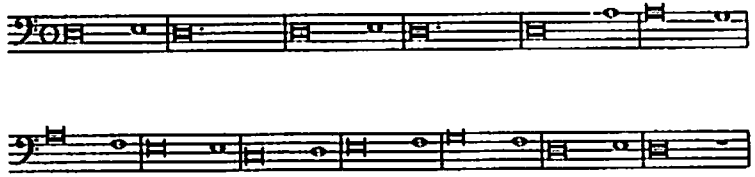
Sanctus to express this idea.[8] However, even if this interpretation should be considered invalid, the direction "I shall count your name in all eternity" nevertheless very appropriately justifies the persistent character of the *soggetto*.

The number seven occurs mostly in connection with the Virgin and the remission of sins. The first of these connotations originated in the commonly accepted number of Mary's joys and sorrows which, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gave rise to many private forms of devotion, evidenced in worship as well as in the arts.[9] It was this devotion which undoubtedly inspired Nicolas Gombert to create the musical structure of his five-part motet *Veni dilecta mea*. The tenor sings the formula "Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis" seven times. The syllabically recited *soggetto* appears alternately on *f'* and *c'*. The other voices combine two different liturgical texts from the Common of Virgins and Non-Virgins, of which the second, "Nigra sum sed formosa", is drawn from the Song of Songs. As a result of the ostinato theme, both these texts become Marian in reference.

The connection of the number seven with sin is based on certain Scriptural passages and on the early Christian writers.[10] The discovery of two examples of the sevenfold statement of a *soggetto* prompted this idea, which I discussed in my *Studien*. They are found in Guillaume Dufay's Gloria *De quaremiaux* and the "Confiteor" passage in the Credo of Johannes Verbonnet's *Missa Je n'ay dueil*.[11]

The unique source of Dufay's Gloria is the Ms. Bologna Q 15. The piece is for three parts and is based on the following ostinato (Ex. 3):

Ex. 3



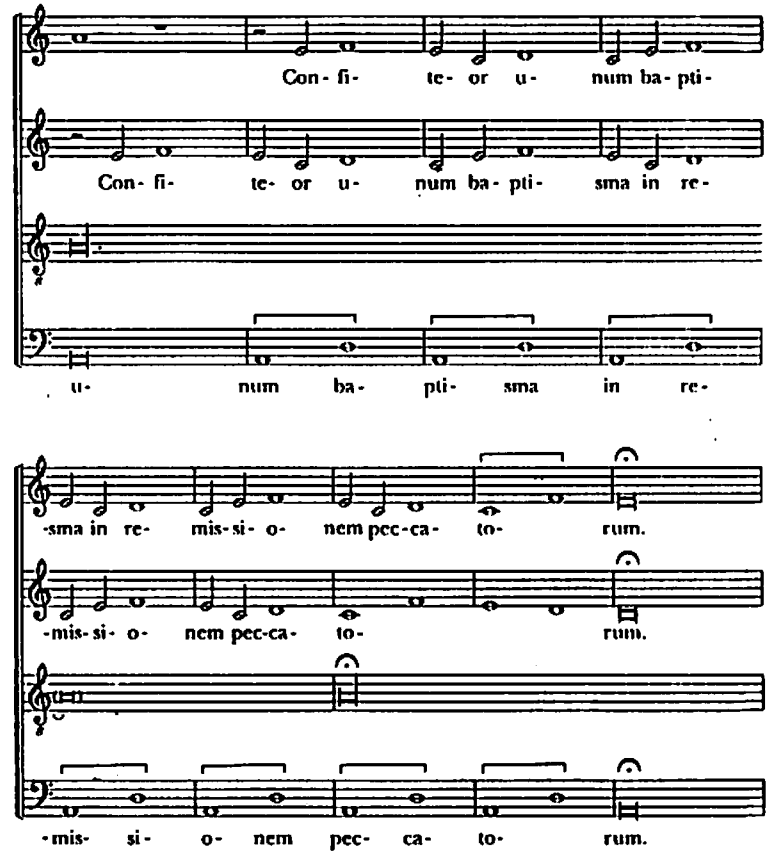
This subject is repeated under three different mensuration signs. Remarkably, it is the sixth statement that has the concluding words of the Gloria: "In gloria dei patris." The "Amen" is set to two final chords, prior to which the seventh statement of the *soggetto* appears without text. The meaning of the *soggetto* is therefore unquestionably as follows: through its title the Gloria is

[8] See A. Clement, *'O Jesu, du edle Gabe'. Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Musik in den Choralpartiten und den Kanonischen Veränderungen von Johann Sebastian Bach* (Ph.D. diss. Utrecht 1989), pp. 217-21.
[9] See my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 151-7.
[10] See my study *Symbolic Scoring* ..., pp. 105-7.
[11] See fn. 4, pp. 124-5.

connected with Lent, the time of penitence for sinners, and through the seven statements the composer refers to the *remissio peccatorum*.[12]

In the bassus of the Credo of Verbonnet's above-mentioned Mass, based on Alexander Agricola's chanson *Je n'ay dueil*, the composer repeats a two-note motif in the following way (Ex. 4):

Ex. 4



Surely, this is a fine example of the contravention of Tinctoris's rules for good counterpoint.[13] While the sevenfold repetition coincides with the arti-

[12] For a discussion of the liturgical purpose of Dufay's Gloria and the performance of the tenor part, see W. Elders, *Zur Aufführungspraxis der altniederländischen Musik*, in Renaissance-Muziek 1400-1600, Donum natalicium René Bernard Lenaerts (Louvain 1969), pp. 91-3.
[13] Cf. *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, Book iii, rule 6, ed. by A. Seay. Musicological Studies and Documents 5 ([Rome] 1961), p. 137.

cle "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins", the composer obviously makes the forbidden *redicta* in order to express – at the most appropriate place in the Mass – his sinfulness through the number seven.

In the Middle Ages man's sinful condition was connected also with the number nine. The principal allegorical interpretation of this number was derived from the parable of the lost drachma as told by Jesus to illustrate God's mercy (Luke 15:8-10).[14] In his six-part responsory motet *Tribularer si nescirem*, Palestrina restates the opening of Psalm 50, "Miserere mei, deus", nine times in each of the two *partes*. For his *soggetto* the composer took the famous refrain of Josquin's setting of the same psalm. In both *partes*, the *soggetto* appears in the sixth voice, ascending from *d'* to *a'*, and descending again to *d'*. Each statement has the duration of eleven semibreves. Statements nos. 1 and 10 are each preceded by a seventeen-semibreve rest, all other statements are preceded by a seven semibreve rest. The final notes of statements 9 and 18 are extended by eight semibreves. If we exclude the additional tied long at the end of each of the two *partes*, we find that each *pars* totals exactly 180 semibreves, that is 90 *tempora*. For a composer whose method of composing was remote in time from the principles of isoperiodic writing, this was certainly designed in a remarkable way. Bearing in mind that the responsory *Tribularer* is sung on the First Sunday of Lent, it is not surprising to find that the liturgical texts for this day draw heavily upon Psalm 90, for it is this psalm which pre-eminently assures us that the just are safe under God's protection. The text of the responsory reads as follows: "I would suffer greatly if I did not know that you are merciful, o Lord; You said: I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted from his way, and live." Just as William Byrd acknowledges his sinfulness by means of the nine-part writing in his setting of Psalm 90, *Domine quis habitabit*,[15] which is perfectly in accordance with the contents of the Proper of the Mass for Septuagesima Sunday, so Palestrina, at the beginning of the yearly period of penitence, conveys to God the measure of his imperfection through the musical elaboration of the number nine.

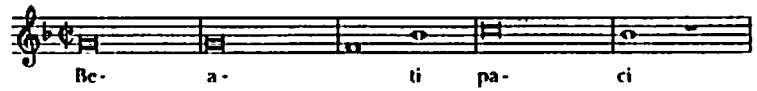
The next example of the manifold repetition of a musical motif in association with number symbolism can be found in La Rue's *Missa L'homme armé* (I). In the passage "... miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus dominus. Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe" of the Gloria, one phrase of the *L'homme armé* melody is presented ten times in all four voices. In the Credo, the passage "Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine" has a freely-invented motif which is set against the *cantus prius factus* and stated ten times, but which is also stated once more in the following "Et homo factus est". This time it is the Greek alphabet which forms the basis of the number symbolism. In the Greek numeral system, 'jota' – the first letter of the name

[14] Cf. H. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), p. 142. See also V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism. Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York ²1969), p. 101.
[15] See my study *Symbolic Scoring* ..., pp. 116-7.

'Jesus' – signifies ten. The Greek letter 'chi', used as the first letter in the name 'Christus', is similar in form to the Roman numeral X. Since the striking repetition of motifs occurs in sections where the liturgical text deals with Jesus Christ, there is no doubt that the composer intended the number of motifs to be interpreted symbolically: the number ten is employed as a symbol for the name Jesus Christ. That it was indeed La Rue's intention to base these passages on this particular number appears from the fact that the number ten is changed into eleven exactly at the point where the Credo mentions the incarnation of Christ. The symbolical 'transgression' of the number ten denotes (original) sin,[16] and in the present context refers to the story of man's salvation through the incarnation of the Son of God. It is certainly not by accident that here the motif sounds in the lowest voice, the bassus, which traditionally is connected with Christ.

The *soggetto ostinato* in the short motet *Beati pacifici* by Crispinus van Stappen poses a difficult question. Is there a symbolic message hidden in the ostinato structure of the superius? The four-part motet was published in Petrucci's *Canti C* of 1504. The tenor performs the popular "De tous biens playne" tenor from Hayne van Ghizeghem's chanson. While the altus and bassus are newly composed, the superius is constructed from the *soggetto* "Beati paci", which appears to be the abbreviated incipit of the antiphon *Beati pacifici*, sung at the Common of Apostles and Evangelists (Ex. 5):

Ex. 5



This *soggetto* is stated ten times, each time in a different rhythmic shape. It sounds five times on *g'* and five times on *d'*, and each statement is separated by short rests. The composer then quotes the full incipit. The added word "pacifici" first enters in bar 61, that is, one bar after the final note of Hayne's love-song has been intoned; in this way it is given an important place in the final close. The text of the antiphon is borrowed from the eight Beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God" (Matth. 5:8-9). If Stappen intended to give prominence to a particular number, it could not have been the number eleven, for the text forbade any connection with a number seen as a 'transgression' of the perfect number ten and held to be a sign of sin.[17] Since, however, the eleventh statement is the only one to quote the incipit "Beati pacifici" in full, it acts as a new and independent motif. If this transformation should indeed be considered significant, it seems most plausible to assume that the superius brings two numbers to the fore, namely ten and one. Both these numbers are easily related to

[16] Cf. Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 14), pp. 87 and 152, and Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), p. 146.
[17] See fn. 16.

the idea of the antiphon. According to St Gregory the number ten symbolizes salvation.[18] The source of this allegorical interpretation is found in the parable of the ten virgins (Matth. 25:1-13): "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride ..." Medieval exegesis took the bridegroom for Christ and the bride for Mary or the Church.

Both the appearance of the *soggetto ostinato* and the choice of the cantus firmus support our explanation. As we saw above, there are five statements of the soggetto "Beati paci" on *g'* and five on *d'*. These statements occur in an irregular order: four times on *g'*, three times on *d'*, once on *g'* and twice on *d'*. Although the layout of the preexisting tenor may partly be the reason for this, the free rhythmic organization of the motifs would have allowed Stappen another ordering as well. It therefore seems that the two series of five statements are intentional and allude, respectively, to the five virgins that were wise and the five that were foolish. The text of the *cantus prius factus* offers additional evidence. Originally a love song, Hayne's *De tous biens plaine* could easily be adapted to a hymn that extols the qualities of the Holy Virgin:

De tous biens plaine est ma maistresse
Chascun lui doibt tribut d'onneur
Car assouvye est en valeur
Autant que jamais fut deesse.

(My mistress is full of goodness,
Everyone owes her homage,
For she has every quality
As much as ever any goddess.)

The sole statement of the whole motif "Beati pacifici" that follows on the final tone of the *cantus prius factus* acts – by illustrating the number one – as a symbol of the unity with God.

Although, under the influence of the early Christian writers, the number twelve was used in medieval number symbolism primarily to indicate the Apostles or to represent the entire Church, it was also associated with the Virgin after the 'apocalyptic woman' had become a favourite theme in medieval art. Many a composition bears witness to this particular interpretation of Revelation 12:1-2 through the use of twelve-fold statements of the *cantus prius factus*, or through twelve-part scoring.[19]

There exist three motets in which the incipit of the antiphon *Salve regina* serves as a *soggetto ostinato*, which – as a hidden allusion to Mary – is restated twelve times. Foremost among these is Josquin's five-part *Salve regina*. Elsewhere in this book I have discussed the structural design of this beautiful composition, which by means of the number symbolism contained in the

[18] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), p. 145.
[19] See my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 171-9.

fifth voice not only honours the Virgin but also makes reference to her Child (see p. 175).

Dating from the same period as Josquin's *Salve regina* is an anonymous motet based on the text "Tota pulchra es". It is preserved in the Ms. London 8 G vii, a richly illuminated parchment codex copied in Brussels or Malines in the years 1516-1522, and presented to Henry VIII of England and Catherine of Aragon. It contains motets and settings of passages from Vergil's *Aeneid*. None of the compositions bears an attribution, but on the basis of concordant sources about seven of them can be ascribed to Josquin, La Rue, and Mouton. The two *partes* of *Tota pulchra es* are a centonization of verses from the Song of Songs, taken from the poems of the bridegroom.[20] The anonymous composer treats the chant incipit of the antiphon *Salve regina* as a canon at the upper fourth. In the first part, the four-note motif is presented in the superius and altus, in the second part in the tenor and bassus. As with Josquin, the metrical scheme is very regular: each statement is preceded by a four-breve rest. The mensural plan of the canonic voices in the two *partes* is identical, and in each pars the "Salve" is stated twelve times (Ex. 6).

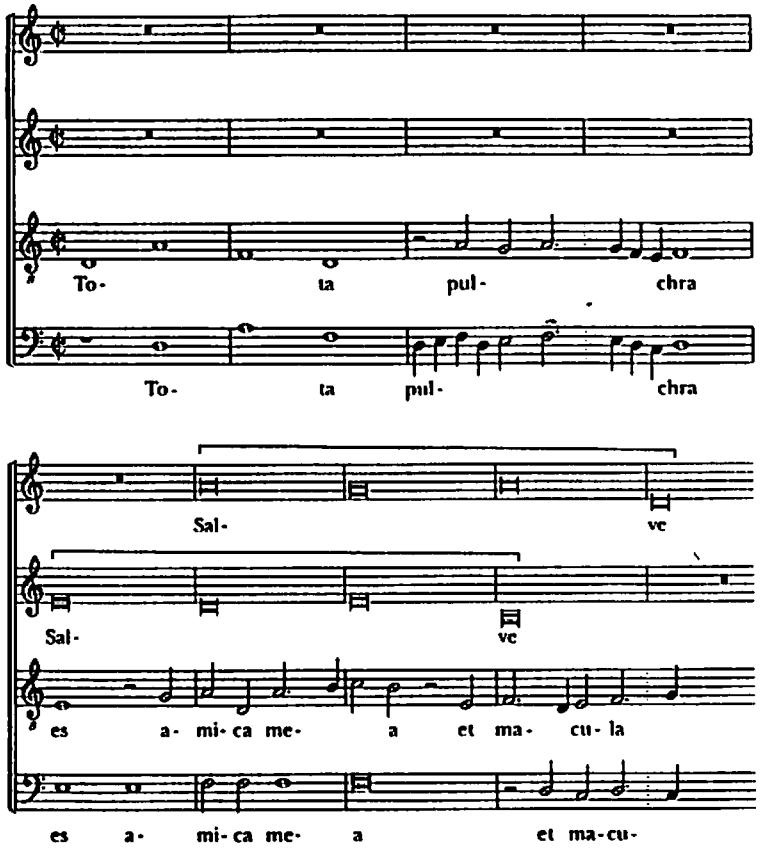
Although the text of the motet might have served perfectly as an homage to Henry's first wife, the two series of twelve "Hails" are best explained as a symbol of the Virgin (see below).

About forty years after Josquin composed his five-part *Salve regina*, it was copied into one of the choirbooks of Seville cathedral. One of the singers who may have performed the motet there was Francisco Guerrero. In his five-part *Ave virgo sanctissima*, he evidently aimed to follow Josquin's example. However, instead of presenting each "Salve" in the same voice, he made a *congeries* of 'Hails' in all voices: in the course of fourteen bars (bars 21-34), the 'Salve' sounds fifteen times (SI: 3; SII: 3; A: 3; T: 2; B: 4). Since the motet's two upper voices form a canon at the unison, of which only the *dux* needs to be notated, we encounter here an example of 'eye music': the singers can hardly have failed to discover the twelve motifs of four notes, and the notation may perhaps have reminded them of the twelve pearls of Mary's heavenly crown.[21]

The third book of the monumental *Thesaurus musicus*, published in Nuremberg in 1564, contains the six-part *Parce mihi, domine* by Philippus de Monte. The text of this prayer-motet is drawn from Job 7:16-21. In the passage quoted, the famous suffering figure of antiquity bewails the miseries of man's life, and addresses himself to God: "Spare me, oh Lord, for my days are nothing ..." The tenor sings continuously: "Sana me, domine" (Heal me, oh Lord). The motif consists of six notes, and appears alternately on *d'* and *a*,

[20] Contrary to Rose Mary Columbro, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), vol. 1, pp. 170-3, I see no reason to discuss the question whether or not the *partes* should be considered as two independent motets.
[21] For a detailed discussion of the motet see my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 176-8.

Ex. 6



always preceded by a two-breve rest. In the *II. pars* it is sung in retrograde motion, illustrating Job's words, "Why hast thou set me opposite to thee?" The *soggetto* is stated eighteen times. Honorius divides this number into ten and eight in reference to Jesus' healing of the crippled woman on the sabbath, as described in Luke 13:10-13: he thereby interprets eighteen as the redemption of the synagogue through the (Christian) Church.[22] Luke writes: "And he [i.e. Jesus] was teaching in their synagogue on their sabbath. And behold there was a woman, who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately

[22] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), pp. 151-2.

she was made straight, and glorified God." According to Honorius, the bowed figure and the number ten refer to the Law, while the healing of the woman and the number eight designate the grace of God. This interpretation by Honorius recurs in Pietro Bongo's compendium on the mystical significance of numbers, first published in 1583; here, the number eighteen stands for *liberatio a malo*, the deliverance from evil. The way in which the *soggetto* is presented in the two *partes* of Monte's motet reflects its two numerical components: "Sana me, domine" is stated ten times in the *I. pars*, and eight times in the *II. pars*.

The last case of a symbolically conceived number of *soggetto* statements is again by Josquin. His famous five-part setting of Psalm 50, *Miserere mei, deus*, has been the subject of numerous discussions. Although several musicologists have carefully described the remarkable nature of the tenor-part, no one has thus far offered a satisfactory explanation for its wonderful structure. Josquin divided the nineteen verses of Psalm 50 into groups of seven, seven, and five verses. While each verse is followed by the opening words of the psalm, the character of the composition resembles that of a litany. In the first and second *partes*, Josquin inserts an additional "Miserere mei, deus" in the midst of verses 1 and 13, thereby increasing the number of statements in these sections to eight and eight respectively. It should be asked, of course, why the composer decided on this structural 'irregularity'.

The *soggetto* appears in the three *partes* respectively in descending, ascending, and descending form, moving stepwise between *e'-e*, *e-e'*, and *e'-a*. Whereas the tone *e* functions as finalis in the Phrygian mode, the nature of which offered the composer the possibility of strongly emotional writing, the last statement on *a* enables him to give the psalm an 'open', plagal ending. This effect may very well have been devised to express the hope that the prayer would be answered by God. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the addition of the two "Miserere mei, deus" statements sprang from nothing more than a purely musical reason. However, there is one aspect that, in my opinion, should not be overlooked. Josquin's *Miserere mei, deus* is his only composition that we know (from a sixteenth-century poem) to have been written at the special request of Ercole d'Este.[23] Possibly the Duke intended the penitential psalm to be sung at his funeral. And that he may have wanted the piece to be connected with his name is made plausible by examining the following considerations.

Ercole's name is linked also with another composition by Josquin, namely the *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie*. In this work, the patron is continuously 'identified' by the rigorous repetition of the *soggetto cavato* (see below). To me it does not seem impossible that Ercole gave Josquin some particular instructions when he commissioned the Mass. My supposition is suggested by the fact that, some time before 1485, the Duke engaged the sculptor Guido Manzoni to execute the so-called *Mortorio* (the Burial of Christ), with

[23] Cf. L. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505* (Oxford 1984), p. 261.

Ercole himself and his wife represented as the figures of Joseph of Arimathaea and Mary of Cleophe (see below). Likewise, in commissioning the Mass, he may have informed the composer that his name was to be made "a part of the fabric of the Mass" and should become "a counter-subject to the liturgical text".[24] Indeed, at a time when artists were usually obliged to include their patrons in the representation of any religious subject whatsoever, it is hardly likely that Ercole d'Este would not have insisted upon his name being incorporated in Josquin's setting of Psalm 50.

As Lockwood has observed, the continuously repeated polyphonic soggetto acts "as a symbol of Ercole's personal devotion, placing him figuratively in the role of the Psalm singer."[25] Taking into account Josquin's love for gematric constructions,[26] it seems possible to me that, in his setting of Psalm 50, he 'named' Ercole esoterically in the voice that performs the "miserere" motif. We may take it for granted that Josquin's *Hercules* Mass is intended to focus on the formal name of his patron. The gematric value of "Hercules Dux Ferrarie" – the name is spelled in this way in two of the Mass's oldest sources, Petrucci's *Missarum Josquin liber secundus* of 1505 and the Ms. Cappella Sistina 45 – can be calculated as follows:

H	e	r	c	u	l	e	s		D	u	x		F	e	r	r	a	r	i	e	
8	5	17	3	20	11	5	18		4	20	22		6	5	17	17	1	17	9	5	= 210

On account of the surprising agreement between the number 210 and the 21 "miserere" statements we can safely conclude that the interpolation of the refrain in verses 1 and 13 appears to entail more than a mere musical significance.

The soggetto ostinato *in music in honour of the saints*

There exists a small number of compositions in which the *soggetto ostinato* serves as a hidden allusion to the single most conspicuous event in the lives of the saints in whose honour they were written. With the exception of the *Missa Stephane gloriose* by Pierre Moulu, the *soggetto ostinato* is in the form of the litany formula "Sancte (Sancta) N., ora pro nobis." This theme can take

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 249. In his paper *Ercole's Marian Mass: An Anglo-Burgundian Source for Josquin's* soggetto cavato, read at the Nineteenth Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference, Oxford 1991, Christopher Reynolds has proposed "that the famous tenor of Josquin's *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* makes a compound allusion, that it refers not only to the syllables of his patron's name, but also to a segment of Walter Frye's *Missa Nobilis et pulchra*." (Quotation after Reynolds's summary.) However, notwithstanding the fact that Josquin's Mass shows some motivic similarity with that of Frye, the obvious relation between Ercole's official title and Josquin's musical theme forbids in my opinion any thematic connection with other compositions.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 264.

[26] See D. Heikamp, *Zur Struktur der Messe* L'omme armé super voces musicales *von Josquin Desprez*, in Mf 19 (1966), pp. 121-41; W. Elders, *Das Symbol in der Musik von Josquin des Prez*, in AcM 41 (1969), pp. 164-85; W. Elders, *Josquin's* Absolve, quaesumus, domine: *A Tribute to Obrecht?*, in TVNM 37 (1987), pp. 14-24.

on various musical shapes: an ostinato *recto tono*, a *pes descendens*, a *pes ascendens*, or a *cancrizans*. Obviously, composers aimed to stress as realistically as possible the particular type of martyrdom of the saint involved, and 'translated' the saint's most common attribute into a musical technique. In so doing, they converted the *soggetto ostinato* into a contextual sign that was understood only by the *connoisseur*.

The earliest example known to me of the use of the *soggetto ostinato* in this way is by Loyset Compère. His five-part *Gaude prole regia* dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The motet is based on the text of a sequence in praise of Catherine of Alexandria, a poem that probably originated in France or Flanders, and for which, up to now, no literary source has been found.[27] Appended to the sequence is the line "Sancta Catherina, ora pro nobis", from the Litanies of All Saints. The first tenor sings this same formula four times, more or less as a proportionally changing *talea*. As Ludwig Finscher has noted, the second statement is sung in retrograde motion,[28] but he does not give a reason for this. Taking the text as the starting-point, I would like to propose the following explanation.

The particular section of the motet text that deals with Catherine's martyrdom is:

> Laudes erumpit annuas
> Colens passiones tuas
> Duraque supplicia.
>
> ([The Church] utters the yearly praises,
> Commemorating your sufferings
> And cruel punishments.)

Being one of the most popular early martyrs, Catherine of Alexandria was highly venerated in France, the Low Countries, and England. The *Legenda aurea* tells us that she was of noble birth and extremely learned. After she had converted to Christianity she protested against the persecution of Christians under Maxentius II, who shared the imperial crown with Constantine, and had selected Alexandria as the capital of his part of the Empire. Much impressed by Catherine's beauty, the emperor vainly sought to win her hand. He then ordered that a new instrument of torture be devised for her. According to the legend, however, the engine failed to work. Catherine was then beheaded. Jacobus de Voragine, author of the *Golden Legend*, gives the following account of the event: "Thereupon a certain prefect commended the following plan to the furious king: in three days four wheels, studded with iron saws and sharp nails, should be made ready, and by this horrible device the virgin should be cut to pieces, that the sight of so dreadful a death might deter the other Christians. It was further ordered that two of the wheels

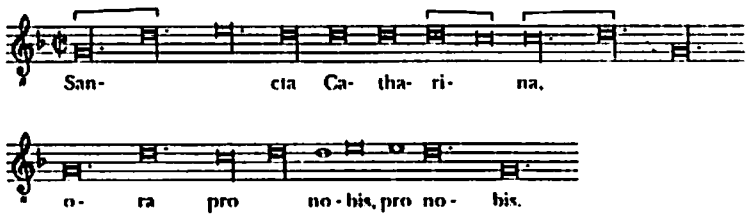
[27] Cf. L. Finscher, *Loyset Compère (c. 1450-1518). Life and Works*. Musicological Studies and Documents 12 ([Rome] 1964), p. 127.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

should revolve in one direction, and two be driven in the opposite direction, so that grinding and drawing her at once, they might crush and devour her. But when the engine was completed, the virgin prayed the Lord that for the praise of His name and for the conversion of the people who stood by, the machine might fall to pieces. And instantly an angel of the Lord struck the monstruous mill, and broke it apart with such violence that four thousand pagans were killed by its collapse."[29]

There are plenty of examples of Catherine's depiction in paintings, manuscripts and ivories. Among the most beautiful is a painting by Hans Memling (Hans Memling Collection in the twelfth-century Hospital of St John, Bruges); another has been attributed to both Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus (private collection, Brussels).[30] A moving picture of Catherine's torture was made by Jean Fouquet in his Book of Hours for Etienne Chevalier. (Fig. 7) However, that which was so difficult to express in the miniature, namely the wheels' retrograde motion, could indeed more easily be 'painted' by the composer. Example 7 gives the first two statements of the *soggetto*:

Ex. 7



Here one can say that legend and reality are condensed into a single musical motif.

In as far as the treatment of the *soggetto ostinato* is concerned, Compère's sequence addressed to Catherine is closely related to the five-part motet *Tota pulchra es* that Jacobus Clemens non Papa dedicated to Margaret of Antioch. This should not surprise us, as, according to the *Legenda*, the life and martyrdom of Margaret was in some ways similar to that of Catherine. After her Christian conversion, Margaret was turned out of home by her father, who was a pagan priest. Thereupon she lived as a shepherdess, but was carried off to the palace of Olybrius, the governor of Antioch, who tried to seduce or to marry her because of her beauty. When she refused, she was cruelly tortured and thrown into a dungeon, where Satan appeared to her in the form of a

[29] *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine.* Translated and adapted from the Latin by Granger Eyan and Helmut Ripperger (New York 1969), p. 713.

[30] For a reproduction of this latter painting see *Flanders in the Fifteenth Century: Art and Civilization.* Catalogue of the Exhibition Masterpieces of Flemish Art: Van Eyck to Bosch (Detroit 1960), p. 100.

dragon. After he had swallowed her whole, the cross in Margaret's hand induced Satan's stomach to reject her, and let her out unharmed. She too was finally beheaded and taken up into heaven, where she was crowned.

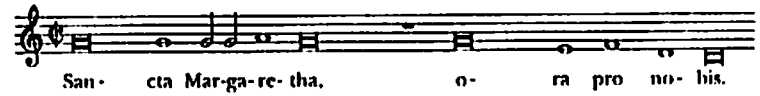
Although her Legend was declared apocryphal by Pope Gelasius in 494, the cult of Margaret of Antioch became widespread at the time of the Crusades, and from then on, artists depicted her quite frequently. Her distinguishing attribute is the dragon. The Gruuthuse-Museum in Bruges possesses a fine sculpture from the end of the fifteenth century showing Margaret crowned and standing on the dragon. The hands, probably once holding a cross, are lost. (Fig. 8) Clemens's motet, first published in 1555 by Waelrant in Antwerp, is based on a compilation from the Song of Songs 4:7-8 and 2:13-14 that perfectly fits the Legend:

I. pars
You are all beautiful, my love,
And there is no stain on you
Come bride, come dear one;
Come, and you will be crowned.

II. pars
Rise, my love,
My beautiful one, my dove;
Come, and you will be crowned.

The *soggetto*, set alternately in the *hexachordum naturale* and *durum*, is presented in the fifth voice (Ex. 8):

Ex. 8



In the *II. pars* this voice has the direction "Vade retro Satanas" (cf. Matth. 4:10; Mark 8:33), which produces a retrograde version of the invocation "Ora pro nobis, sancta Margaretha". Surely, Clemens's technique reveals the story of this saint in a remarkable way.[31]

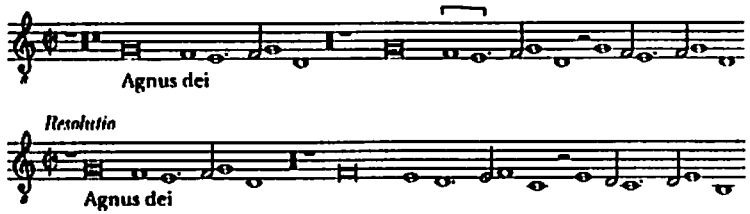
Our next example, Pierre Moulu's four-part *Missa Stephane gloriose*, dates probably from the early 1520s. Stephen is the protomartyr of the Christian Church. His story is told in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. After arousing the wrath of the Jewish legislative council in Jerusalem, he was taken out of the city and stoned to death. The witnesses laid their coats at the feet of Saul, who had consented to Stephen's death. In the Middle Ages, Stephen was the patron of innumerable churches, including several French cathedrals such as Bourges and Sens. The tympanum of

[31] Cf. K.Ph. Bernet Kempers, *Jacobus Clemens non Papa und seine Motetten* (Augsburg 1928), pp. 41f.

Stephen's porch in Notre-Dame, Paris, depicts his torture in a very expressive way. He is also the theme of a series of frescoes by Fra Angelico in the Chapel of Pope Nicholas V, which marks the culmination of this painter's development as a Renaissance artist. Stephen's special attributes – one or more stones – are found in numerous representations. Sometimes they are stained with blood. By far the finest examples of manuscript illumination are the two miniatures in Jean Fouquet's above-mentioned – but unfortunately, subsequently dismembered – Hours of Etienne Chevalier. The double folio, that probably once formed the frontispiece, shows the donor and his patron saint praying to the Holy Virgin and the Child. In Stephen's right hand we see a large stone. The scene is a heavenly palace, with angels playing musical instruments. The same Hours also contains another miniature of the stoning of Stephen. A picture of Stephen's martyrdom that is contemporary with Moulu's Mass may be found in the Musée de la Chartreuse at Douai. (Fig. 9)

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Moulu was a singer of the French royal chapel. His Mass in honour of St Stephen may have been composed therefore in Paris. Its basic motif is a theme consisting of the first six notes of the sixth verse of the sequence *Christo inclita candida*, which was sung at the Feast of All Saints.[32] While these six notes form, literally, the 'corner-stones' of the musical setting, the text incipit of this verse, "Stephane gloriose", functions as the title of Moulu's Mass. As so often happens in settings of the Ordinary, the final Agnus dei is climactic: two additional voices are introduced, and they sing the six-note motif six times *recto tono* (first tenor) and six times as *pes descendens* (second tenor) (Ex. 9)

Ex. 9



Probably the earliest source of the Mass, the Ms. Cappella Sistina 55, copied during the years 1515-1527, gives not only the musical resolution but also a direction that reveals the composer's intention: "In Stephanum jactus lapis ut descendit ab alto. Hic gradibus sensus canon ad yma ruit" (As the stone that was thrown at Stephen came down from high, so this canon-part rushes down by degrees until the end).[33] Both the ostinato character and voice-leading of the tenor parts, as well as the visual appearance of the note-shapes,

[32] Cf. J.G. Chapman, *The Works of Pierre Moulu: A Stylistic Analysis* (Ph.D. diss. New York Univ. 1964), vol. 1, p. 153.

[33] The Ms. Rome CG XII.2 has "sensim" instead of "sensus".

must have reminded the singers of the stoning of the martyr in whose honour they were singing.

The subject of the two following compositions is Saul's conversion, the most widely represented of the Pauline themes. One famous depiction of this event is undoubtedly the fresco in the Cappella Paolina in Rome, executed by Michelangelo in 1542-1545. We have seen that the Acts of the Apostles relate how Saul officially witnessed the stoning of Stephen. Soon afterwards he committed himself to destroy the Christian community in Damascus.

The first Saul motet is by Christian Hollander, a composer of Dutch origin who, after he had been choirmaster at St Walburga in Oudenaarde from 1549-1557, joined the chapel of Ferdinand I. His six-part motet, *Saulus cum iter faceret*,[34] was published by Gardano in 1568 in the third book of his *Novi atque catholici thesauri musici*. The text is drawn from Acts 9:3-5, where Saul's conversion is described as follows: "And as he [i.e. Saul] went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven shined around him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Who said: 'Who art thou, Lord?' And he: 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad'." After being struck blind by the heavenly light, Saul's sight was restored in Damascus, where he converted to Christianity and assumed the name of Paul. The sextus sings the litany formula "Sancte Paule, ora pro nobis." The ostinato theme is presented as *pes descendens* in the *I. pars*, and as *pes ascendens* in the *II. pars*. The canonic directions are taken from Luke 14:11. In the *I. pars* it reads: "Qui se exaltat humiliabitur" (Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled); in the *II. pars*: "Qui se humiliat exaltabitur" (He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted). It is obvious that the voice which performs the *soggetto ostinato* should allude to the events described above: the descending motif represents Saul's humiliation; the ascending form symbolizes his conversion.[35]

The second motet is the six-part *Qui operatus est Petro* by Jacobus Vaet, in which the music and text should perhaps be accorded two levels of meaning. According to Milton Steinhardt, the piece could well be an expression of "the innermost thoughts and [suppressed Protestant] inclinations" of Vaet's patron, Maximilian II,[36] but in this present study I will deal with the motet's more obvious message only. The work uses the text for the Gradual of the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul: "He who worked in Peter for the apostleship, worked also in me among the Gentiles: and they recognized the grace that was given to me by the Lord Christ." The composer presented his motet to Maximilian in 1560. It was printed on a large parchment folio,

[34] There is an edition of the motet in *Collectio operum musicorum batavorum*, ed. by F. Commer, vol. 4, no. 5.

[35] Both Commer (see fn. 34) and Bernet Kempers (cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 31), p. 42) are in error in giving only the direction: "Qui se exaltat humiliabatur."

[36] *A Musical Offering to Emperor Maximilian II: A Political and Religious Document of the Renaissance*, in SMw 28 (1977), p. 26.

probably as a single copy, by Raphael Hofhalter in Vienna. This copy, now preserved in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, is beautifully decorated and coloured.[37] In constructing the two ostinato parts, Vaet performed a *tour de force*: in the musical notation the canonic voice carries two different *soggetti*, each of which is repeated once, and each of which gives the litany formula "Sancte Petre, ora pro nobis, Sancte Paule, ora pro nobis" twice. Figure 10 gives the complete voice in facsimile. The sixth voice functions as the *dux*, the fifth voice answers in retrograde motion after three breves. The composer alluded to the resolution by placing the attributes of Peter and Paul, the key and the sword, at the beginning and the end of the canon. But there is also a further indication that helps in discovering the resolution. It reads: "Iratus Petrus, Paulo contrarius exit, Sed Paulus Petri clavem, tandem obtinet ense" (The wrathful Peter runs counter to Paul, but in the end Paul obtains, through the sword, the key of Peter). Although the Gradual text does not connect the motet with Saul's conversion, the liturgical source does. Moreover, the canonic direction makes it clear that the fifth and sixth voices have a deep symbolical meaning. We have already seen that Saul persecuted the Christian Church which Christ had placed under the leadership of Peter. In other words, at first the two men ran counter to each other, as is indeed also the case with the two canonic voices. Finally, however, through the sword, that is, through beheading, Paul obtained Peter's key and could enter the kingdom of heaven. That Vaet wanted to express Paul's conversion can also be seen visually in the colour of the key, which is of gold: as the silver (or iron) key signifies the gates of hell, so the golden key signifies the gates of heaven.[38]

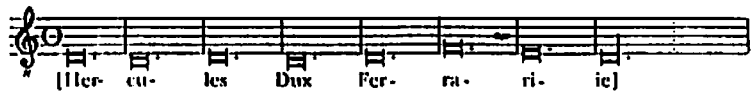
The Soggetto cavato

There are seven or eight Masses and at least ten motets built on a *soggetto cavato* that were composed in honour of certain monarchs. In these works, the *soggetto* serves to reiterate a textual acclamation of praise. The term itself occurs for the first time in Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice 1558) as "soggetto cavato dalle parole". This expression means that the vowels of a sentence are taken ("carved out of the words") and transformed into a musical theme by matching them to the corresponding vowels of the solmization syllables of the Guidonian hexachord. The *soggetto* of Josquin's *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* is not only the earliest but also the most frequently quoted example (Ex. 10):

[37] There is a full-colour facsimile in Jacob Vaet, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by M. Steinhardt, DTÖ 103/104, frontispiece.

[38] See J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1979), p. 240.

Ex. 10



The Mass served as a model for Cipriano de Rore's *Missa Vivat felix Hercules*, Jacquet of Mantua's *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* and *Missa Ferdinandus Dux Calabrie*, Lupus's *Missa Carolus Imperator Romanorum quintus*, Bartolomé de Escobedo's *Missa Philippus Rex Hispanie*, and Philippe Rogier's *Missa Philippus secundus Rex Hispanie*.[39] Various composers also followed Josquin's example in their motets.[40]

It is obvious that the reiterated theme found in these works can be called a contextual sign. Nevertheless, the question must be asked if the use of such a technique ought not to be seen, first of all, as an expression of 'play', in other words, as an example of the composer playing the part of a *homo ludens*.[41] In his discussion of these works by composers of the Low Countries, Hellmuth Christian Wolff denies the *soggetto cavato* any symbolic function.[42] His view can certainly be accepted with regard to, for example, the secular motet *Discessu dat* by Pieter Maessens, written in 1548 in honour of Maximilian II; the *soggetto ostinato* is derived from the words "Maximilianus Archidux Austrie". However, contrary to the usual *soggetto cavato*, it is notated *recto tono*. According to the composer's indication, it can be performed in sixteen different ways, most of which have, for the first time, been resolved by Chris Maas; but some remain a riddle.[43]

The idea that the *soggetto cavato* technique might also represent a 'game' in Josquin's *Hercules* Mass is unacceptable. For a better understanding of the character of this work, something firstly must be said about Ercole d'Este's religiosity and the celebration of the Eucharist. In his fine monograph on music in Renaissance Ferrara, Lewis Lockwood points out that in the last period of his life the ageing Duke "became ever more deeply preoccupied with the fate of his soul and the expression of religious belief."[44] In 1498, one of Ercole's chroniclers wrote that the Duke "remained in Ferrara ... and rode every day, now to one church and now to another, to hear Mass sung."[45]

[39] It seems doubtful whether the *soggetto* in Lupus's *Missa Ferrarie Dux Hercules* indeed enigmatically conceals Ercole's name, as suggested by Thürlings. See A. Thürlings, *Die* soggetti cavati dalle vocali *in Huldigungskompositionen und die Herculesmesse des Lupus*, in IMusSCR Basel 1906 (Kassel 1907), pp. 188-94; and B. Blackburn, *The Lupus Problem* (Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Chicago 1970), pp. 109-11. I am grateful to Ignace Bossuyt for having brought Rogier's Mass to my attention.

[40] For a survey, see Columbro, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), vol. 1, p. 65. The anonymous motet *Ecce odor filii mihi*, Munich Ms. 77, can also be added.

[41] The concept of the 'play' element in culture has been thoroughly investigated in J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens* (Haarlem 1938).

[42] *Die Musik der alten Niederländer* (Leipzig 1956), p. 82.

[43] See A. Dunning, *Die Staatsmotette* 1480-1555 (Utrecht 1970), pp. 227-31.

[44] *Op. cit.* (fn. 23), p. 196.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

According to Roman Catholic teaching, the Mass is, among other things, "a memorial in which the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are sacramentally re-enacted; ... it is a sacred meal in which the community symbolically expresses its unity and dependence upon God ..."[46] During the Canon of the Mass the priest prays for the dead: "Be mindful also, O Lord, of Your servants and handmaids N. and N. who are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace ..."

Like so many people of the Renaissance, Ercole was proud of himself and his achievements. That he wanted to be remembered after his death is testified by the various portraits he had made.[47] In a painting by Dosso Dossi, the Duke is dressed in armour. In 1485 Guido Manzoni carved Ercole as one of Jesus's disciples: in the above-mentioned *Mortorio* (Ferrara, Chiesa del Gesù), the Duke and his wife are standing at the head of the tomb of Christ; he is represented as Joseph of Arimathaea, she as Mary of Cleophe.[48] It is in particular this last representation that truly expresses his interest in Christian devotion and his vow to remain as close to his Creator as possible.

It is further important to realize that Josquin, in creating Ercole's Mass, devised a technique that was unprecedented in the history of music. The probably oldest source of the Mass, Librone 3 of the Duomo in Milan, gives at the tenor part a direction ("Fingito vocales: sequentibus signis") that tells the singers how they must derive their notes from the phrase associated with the part ("Hercules dux ferarie"). The musical resolution that follows this direction is preceded by the words "Dilucidatio enigmatis" (The riddle will come to light). The scribe, thus, seems to stress that a performance of the Mass is made possible only after the dedicatee has been 'identified'. If we take into account the repeat of the Hosanna, the *soggetto* is stated altogether 47 times. It appears mostly in the tenor, but occurs also in the superius – at the very beginning of Kyrie I and Agnus dei III – and once in the altus at the beginning of the Sanctus; it is always stated in breves.[49] Attempts to sing the subject with the liturgical text do not produce a satisfactory result. Lockwood calls instrumental performance of the subject "a familiar alternative"; as "the most suitable alternative" he proposes that the tenor sing the words "Hercules Dux Ferrarie" throughout the Mass against the liturgical text. However, both these performance suggestions share certain disadvantages: an instrumental rendering of the *soggetto* would imply the uneconomical situation of engaging an extra musician to play the superius and altus parts

[46] The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropaedia 6, p. 672: 'mass'.

[47] See Lockwood, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), plate 7.

[48] For a reproduction see L. Chiappini, *Ferrara: Guida artistica illustrata* (s.l., s.d.), p. 39.

[49] Lockwood has suggested that the twelve complete threefold expositions on *d*, *a* and *d'* may allude to the twelve labours of the mythological hero Hercules (p. 243). One might ask, however, why Josquin, if he indeed intended to evoke an association between the number of Hercules's labours and the restatements of his cantus firmus, 'interferes' with the regular threefold presentation of the *soggetto*, while inserting in the tenor part of the Sanctus (bars 9-16) an extra single statement of the *soggetto* on *d*

just for a few statements of the subject; allocating the words "Hercules Dux Ferrarie" to the *soggetto cavato* would cause an anomaly where it is used in retrograde form, as occurs three times in the Credo and three times in Agnus dei I. There is, however, a third possibility which is prompted by two of Josquin's motets, *Illibata dei virgo* and *Ut Phebi radiis*. In these works, the tenor parts are constructed from solmization syllables; in the former motet these are "la-mi-la", in the latter "ut, ut re, ut re mi", etc. There can be little doubt that only a vocal rendering of the Guidonian note names in these works fulfills the composer's intention and contributes to the symbolic meaning of these parts.[50] If this same procedure were followed in the present Mass, the composition would include a hidden 'message' that was understood by the initiated, and, as the Duke also firmly believed, by God.[51] Therefore, the conclusion seems inescapable that Ercole commissioned Josquin to write the Mass not merely to serve the glory of God, but also for his own glorification.[52] What is more, if, as I assume, he founded a private endowment to have his 'own' Mass sung as a memorial after his death, Josquin's music continued to confer on him an earthly 'immortality' as well as expressing a prayer for his soul. Considering what has been said above about the same composer's *Miserere*, my thesis fits perfectly with Ercole's presumed ideals.

Apart from Josquin's *Illibata dei virgo*, there are only two motets in which a *soggetto cavato* appears for reasons other than that of praise. These are by Lhéritier and Willaert, and both are preserved in the Ms. Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, S[I] 35-40. Contrary to the motets and the Mass ordinary in which, as we have seen, this particular type of *soggetto ostinato* is introduced to identify the dedicatee, in Lhéritier's and Willaert's motets the themes that emerge from the text seem to have a primarily musical significance.

The text of Jean Lhéritier's six-part motet *Redde mihi letitiam* is taken from Psalm 50, verse 14: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with a perfect spirit." The combination of this psalm verse with the *soggetto* "Nigra sum sed formosa" from the Song of Songs 1:4 may indeed be

[50] For *Ut Phebi radiis*, see below, p. 86; for *Illibata*, see W. Elders, *Composers of the Low Countries* (Oxford 1991), pp. 80-1. In its recording of the Mass (EMI 7499602), the Hilliard Ensemble has partially adopted the suggestion given above: in the Credo the singers perform the tenor part while practising solfeggio.

[51] A diplomatic dispatch sent to Mantua on 7 December 1481 testifies to the practice of solmizating vocal parts in sacred music at the court of Ercole d'Este. The official report states the following: "While I was writing this, there arrived the messenger with letters from Your Excellency. On reading them, I dropped my own letter and went off to His Excellency the Duke [i.e. Ercole]. I found him together with some of his singers; and when they had sung for his pleasure quite a while, not a song but solmization syllables in a book of Masses, he drew me over to the window and learned from me what Your Excellency has written to me ..."; see Lockwood, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), p. 136, where also the original Italian text is printed.

[52] In *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford 1985), p. 2, Michael Baxandall gives evidence to show that, in Ercole's time, this was a common motive in patronage.

called "strange".[53] In trying to find an explanation for the use of the *soggetto* in the fifth voice, Rose Mary Columbro has suggested that it may refer to Savonarola. After his death, the Dominican friar was widely regarded as a martyr and a saint. Columbro's view suggests that the motet's main text should be considered as a prayer for "the joy which comes from a reformed world", and the *soggetto ostinato* as a reference to Savonarola "as the new messiah to bring this about."[54]

Interesting though this interpretation may be, it is, in my view, quite speculative. To be sure, Leeman Perkins suggests that Lhéritier may have had connections with Florence in the late 1520s because seven of his motets are included in the Vallicelliana manuscript.[55] But it must also be asked whether the inclusion of seven works can indeed prove such a relationship. As is well known from Edward Lowinsky's study on the historical position and origin of the manuscript, a number of the Vallicelliana motets "feature some of the most important political events of the time".[56] However, Lowinsky did not aim to give a full account of the artistic significance of the manuscript; consequently, the fact is easily overlooked that, of the 90 motets in the manuscript, 25 are devoted to the Virgin. In any case, the number of motets that may have been composed in connection with Savonarola's activities is rather small. Significantly, the manuscript also contains fifteen motets by Willaert and seven motets by Jachet of Mantua, two composers whose biographies have as yet shown no trace of a link with the city of Florence.

I believe that the deeper meaning of the *soggetto cavato* in *Redde mihi letitiam* cannot be found without taking into account the fact that the same composer used the text "Nigra sum sed formosa" for three other motets. The motet for four voices has no special elements that point to its dedicatee, but since medieval liturgy saw the bride of the Song of Songs as a symbolic representation of the Virgin, it may indeed have been composed in her honour. The settings for five and six voices should also be seen as paying homage to the Virgin: in the five-part motet the 44 statements of the words "et introduxit me [in cubiculum suum]" were probably inspired by Psalm 44, which, because of its Royal wedding-song character, according to Christological exegesis stresses the 'marriage' of Christ and Mary; the tenor of the six-part motet quotes the verse from the Introit of Septuagesima Sunday, and hereby introduces the allegory of Mary as the Second Eve.[57]

The question which now requires answering is why Lhéritier should have used a text from the Song of Songs – its liturgical function being that of an antiphon connected with the Common of the Virgin – as a contextual sign to refer to Savonarola. Had the composer really wished to devote his motet to

[53] Cf. Columbro, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), vol. 1, p. 299.
[54] See *ibid.*, p. 300.
[55] Cf. *Johannes Lhéritier Opera omnia* 1, p. xvii.
[56] E.E. Lowinsky, *A Newly Discovered Sixteenth-Century Motet Manuscript at the Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Rome*, in JAMS 3 (1950), p. 175.
[57] See my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 163-5.

Savonarola, the incipit of Psalm 132, "Ecce quam bonum", would have provided a far more appropriate *soggetto*: it is told by one of Savonarola's early sixteenth-century biographers that the reformer invented a special tune for singing the words "ecce quam bonum"; they occur in many of his sermons and became the motto of his followers. Several other composers, including Verdelot, Richafort, Mouton and Gombert, used this tune in their compositions.[58] The motet's main text works perfectly as a prayer to the Holy Virgin, since she intercedes for the souls of the faithful. A second argument in favour of my interpretation is derived from the number of reiterations of the words "Nigra sum sed formosa". After the *soggetto cavato* has been stated six times in the fifth voice, this same voice continues with a free melodic elaboration of the theme, thus creating a musical transition to the end of the motet, where it joins the other voices in the final "alleluia". The transition from the persistently repeated pattern in an ostinato part to new melodic material is so unusual that it can best be explained in the context of number symbolism: the seven statements of the words "Nigra sum sed formosa" may well symbolize the Marian number seven.

The other motet based on a *soggetto cavato* is Adrian Willaert's five-part *Peccavi supra numerum*, the text of which was a responsory at that time. The *II. pars* quotes Psalm 50, verse 5, and takes its *soggetto* from verse 6 of the same psalm: "Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci" (To thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee). It is tempting to assume that the composer chose this particular psalm verse not only because it offered him the possibility of strengthening textually his musical 'prayer' for forgiveness of sins, but also for its numerological potential. The fifteen syllables and vowels of verse 5 produce fifteen notes, a number that should perhaps be associated with the rungs of Jacob's ladder. Genesis 28:12 relates Jacob's dream: "A ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven; the angels also of God ascending and descending by it." The subject of Jacob's ladder appeared in early Christian art and was widely represented thereafter. Honorius associates the rungs of the ladder with the ascension of the fifteen virtues.[59] The text of the *I. pars* states: "I am not worthy to look to the heights of heaven because of the multitude of my iniquities." As Willaert's motet contains the word "numerum" (number) in the opening line, it seems worthwhile to look for some form of more disguised number symbolism and to study the motet's arithmetical design. In each *pars*, the *soggetto* is stated two and a half times. Remarkably enough, the note-values of the last *soggetto* are halved, obviously for an arithmetical reason: the *I. pars* is 77 bars long; the end of the last statement of the *soggetto* coincides with the 126th breve.[60] The number 77 can easily be explained with the help of the

[58] Cf. P. Macey, *Savonarola and the Sixteenth-Century Motet*, in JAMS 36 (1983), pp. 426-34.
[59] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), p. 150.
[60] For my argumentation in support of this calculation, see Elders, *Studien zur Symbolik* ... (fn. 4), p. 139.

Scriptures. In Genesis 4:24, Lamech says to his two wives: "Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken for Cain, but for Lamech seventy times sevenfold." The number recurs in the New Testament. In the Gospel according to Luke (3:23-38), the genealogy of Jesus contains 77 names, symbolizing the fact that mankind continued in sinfulness for 77 generations before the Redeemer appeared.[61] Finally, in Matthew 18:21-22, Peter's question: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" is answered by Jesus as follows: "I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times." In view of the esoteric play with numbers in the *I. pars*, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest that the truncation of the *soggetto* at the end of the motet was made to obtain the number 126. If this number is divided by seven, the result is eighteen. These two factors symbolize respectively the seven mortal sins and the deliverance from evil.[62] Luke 13:10-13 relates how Jesus healed a woman who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit. As we have seen above, the number eighteen in Pietro Bongo's *De mystica numerorum significatione* (Venice 1583) is interpreted as the deliverance from evil.

The Hexachord as Soggetto ostinato

The last symbolical form of the *soggetto ostinato* to be discussed is the reiteration of the hexachord pattern. There exist four motets in which the role of the hexachord is much more than simply that of the principal structural element of the composition. It will be shown that in these works the association of the hexachord with the *scala celestis* is the most obvious symbolic link a composer could use whenever he wanted to realistically represent the ladder motif or a related topic in the arts. He thus made the theme of the hexachord central to the textual meaning of his work.

In 1984, James W. McKinnon drew attention to a miniature in the Isabella Breviary painted by a Flemish artist at the end of the fifteenth century, and which has frequently been used today to illustrate works on music history, without, however, bearing the correct caption.[63] His study concerns the illustration of Psalm 119, *Ad dominum cum tribularer*, which shows, as Robert Wangermée puts it, musicians in the square before a church. By means of an investigation of some seemingly minor details, McKinnon came to the convincing conclusion that what we actually "observe in the picture [are] Levite musicians on the fifteen steps of the Temple at Jerusalem."[64] Clearly, the miniature exemplifies the way in which the medieval fifteen-step motif is connected with the fifteen so-called Psalms of Ascents, a series that begins with Psalm 119. As such it demonstrates one of the numerous means by which Netherlandish artists were capable of transferring either legend or

[61] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 6), p. 169.
[62] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 135 and 152.
[63] *The Fifteen Temple Steps and the Gradual Psalms*, in IM 1 (1984), pp. 29-49.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

reality into symbolism.[65] Stair symbolism occurs, however, also in other forms.

As we have seen in the discussion of Willaert's motet *Peccavi supra numerum*, the ladder motif is first found in Genesis 28:12. Medieval mysticism developed Jacob's vision into a theory which stated that everyone who wanted to reach the summit of humility, and heavenly salvation, through ascetism here on earth, had to 'raise a ladder' by means of his good deeds. Thus the idea of 'the ladder of virtue' came into being. Since early Christianity could conceive of the way to heaven in no other form than that of an ascension, this motif soon appeared in works of art. In several Roman catacombs, frescoes depict the ladder as a sign of the ascension of the soul to heaven. Dante uses the motif in his *Divine Comedy*: "Within the crystal I saw a ladder set up, so far above, my eyes could not follow it."[66]

In Byzantine as well as in Western art the ladder of Jacob was transformed into a Marian symbol. One of the invocations in the *Litania Lauretana* – the prototype of which, incidentally, was the great akathistos hymn of the Byzantine Church[67] – reads: "Scala Jacob, ora pro nobis." It occurs, for example, in Monte's seven-part setting of the litany. The symbolic modification of this sign is not surprising if one realizes that, according to the theologian Fulgentius of Ruspe (468-532), Mary herself "has become a ladder to heaven, since God through her descended to earth and men through her may ascend to heaven."[68] The *Scala celestis* is also found in fifteenth-century Italian poetry. Leonardo Giustiniani describes the Virgin as follows: "Maria Vergine bella, Scala: che ascendi, e guidi a l'alto cielo" (Mary, Beautiful Virgin, the Ladder: which one climbs and directs toward the highest heaven).[69] In 1495, Domenico Benivieni's study *La scala spirituale sopra el nome di Maria* appeared in Florence; it is an investigation into the mystical inferences resulting from his analyses of Mary's name. At about the same time the young Michelangelo – then a member of the Medici household – completed his *Madonna della scala*. (Fig. 11) Perhaps the first composition in which the hexachord pattern symbolizes the Virgin as the *scala celestis* is Josquin des Prez's *Ut Phebi radiis*.

The association of the hexachord with the *Scala regni celestis* may have been supported firstly by the fact that late medieval devotion to Mary recognized six upward steps towards the blissful throne of the Virgin,[70] and secondly by the normal practice of describing the Guidonian gamut in Latin as *scala*. In

[65] Cf. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Cambridge, MA, 1953), chapter 5: "Reality and Symbol".
[66] *Paradiso* XXI, 25-30.
[67] Cf. NGD 11, p. 74.
[68] G. Heinz-Mohr, *Lexikon der Symbole. Bilder und Zeichen der christlichen Kunst* (Düsseldorf/Cologne 1976), pp. 185-6.
[69] Cf. *Ottaviano Petrucci Canti B*, ed. by H. Hewitt, MRM 2, p. xvi.
[70] See, for instance, the description of these six steps by Thomas de Villanova (1488-1555), preacher at the court of Charles V, in B. Schneyer, *Mariale. Ein Werkbuch für Marienpredigten* (Würzburg 1954), p. 129.

his explanation of the canonic directions for Ockeghem's motet *Ut heremita solus*, the German theorist Hermann Finck writes: "Then you examine each note and add to it the remaining *voces* [solmisation syllables] which are assigned to it in the scale."[71] A Latin epitaph on the death of Palestrina in 1594 even uses the Guidonian pitch-names as an example to describe how the composer's name ascends to the height of the stars: "Ut re mi fa sol la ascendunt, sic pervia coelos Transcendit volitans nomen ad astra tuum o Prenestine" (Ut re mi fa sol la ascend, in the same way your flying name, oh Prenestino, transcends heavens into the stars).[72]

Josquin's four-part *Ut Phebi radiis* has been the subject of studies by Virginia Woods Callahan, William Prizer, and Jaap van Benthem. Whereas Callahan primarily attempted to solve the "riddle" of the text,[73] Prizer[74] gave evidence that the composition should be associated with the Order of the Golden Fleece: in the third line the poem refers to Jason's quest for the golden fleece, and in line 13 mention is made of Gideon's test of the woollen fleece. Van Benthem made a numerological analysis to try to find an answer to the question of whether or not the motet was written for some particular meeting of the Order; he connects the piece with the sovereign Duchess Mary of Burgundy and the birth of Philip the Good in 1478.[75] Apart from uncovering the gematric values of the Order's emblem in some structural aspects of the text and music, Van Benthem also extracts the number 100 from the motet's 'low voice', which, since it symbolizes 'totality', is claimed to stress the special relationship between *Ut Phebi radiis* and the Order of the Golden Fleece.[76] In some respects his analysis is ingenious. However, as I will show in the following paragraph, the primary significance of Josquin's ostinato voice-parts is none the less the fact that they are connected with private worship.

The devotional character of this composition can be deduced from the nature of the tenor and bassus. These voices sing in canon the solmisation syllables ut, ut re, ut re mi, etc., until the whole hexachord is included, performing the tones as a *pes ascendens* in the *I. pars* and as a *pes descendens* in the *II. pars*. These groups of syllables are separated by rests of seven breves. The central themes of the text in the first and second *partes* of the motet focus respectively on the Virgin Mary who "rules over all that exists" (line 7) and on Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary without her "being violated" (line

[71] See F.E. Kirby, *Hermann Finck's 'Practica Musica'* (Ph.D. diss. Yale Univ. 1957), p. 206.

[72] Cf. R.Casimiri, *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. Nuovi documenti biografici* (Rome 1918), p. 35.

[73] Ut Phoebi radiis: *The Riddle of the Text Resolved*, in Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference New York 1971, ed. by E.E. Lowinsky (London 1976), pp. 560-3.

[74] *Music and Ceremonial in the Low Countries: Philip the Fair and the Order of the Golden Fleece*, in EMH 5 (1985), pp. 113-53.

[75] *A Waif, a Wedding and a Worshipped Child: Josquin's Ut Phebi radiis and the Order of the Golden Fleece*, in TVNM 37 (1987), pp. 64-81.

[76] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

12). Of course, the allegory of the dew on Gideon's fleece (line 13) should be seen as a "prefiguration of the Virgin impregnated by the Holy Ghost".[77] It is essential that, in interpreting the two lower voices, we call to mind the words of St Fulgentius, who, as we saw, compares the Virgin with a ladder. His allegory fits perfectly with Josquin's technique of the *pes ascendens* – underlining the text of the *I. pars*, which is a prayer to the Virgin in heaven – and the *pes descendens*, symbolizing that "God through [Mary] descended to earth", which forms the central theme of the *II. pars*. If *Ut Phebi radiis* can nevertheless be shown to refer to a particular event in the history of the House of Burgundy, it appears that Josquin, while conceiving the lower voice-parts of his motet, actually pursued two levels of significance, the first connected with the Virgin and Child, the second with the Order of the Golden Fleece.

Petrucci's *Motetti libro quarto* of 1505 is the unique source for Josquin's *Ut Phebi radiis*. The motet is, however, generally considered an early work. It has its counterpart in Heinrich Isaac's five-part *O decus ecclesie* that Petrucci published without text in his *Motetti a cinque* of 1508. Two earlier sources of Isaac's composition are the Apel Codex (ca. 1490-1504) and the Ms. Berlin 40021 (ca. 1485-1500). The text is an ode to the Virgin, who is praised as an ornament of the Church and a pillar of God. Remarkably enough, the scalar structure is similar to that in *Ut Phebi radiis*; that is, the hexachord is stated with its syllables in additive fashion, first ascending and then descending, while each syllable group is followed by the equivalent of its own mensural duration in rests. Instead of Josquin's canonic imitation, we find that Isaac repeats the whole row. Here too, the tenor voice solmizates the hexachord in ladder figuration, thus evoking a symbol of the Virgin. This cantus firmus-like voice is set between four other parts that perform florid counterpoint. The texture as a whole gives the impression that the composer wanted to 'paint' the Virgin standing in the midst of colourful flowers. It is tempting to think of Isaac having written *Ut decus ecclesie* in emulation of Josquin's *Ut Phebi radiis*.[78]

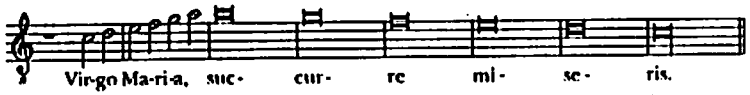
Any doubt about the correctness of the foregoing interpretation regarding the hexachord's symbolic function is eliminated by considering another piece

[77] Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 38), p. 138. In the Middle Ages the theme of the dew on the fleece was associated with the Annunciation; see also J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London 1976), p. 86.

[78] There are two other motets that suggest some kind of rivalry between the two composers, namely Isaac's *Rogamus te, piissima virgo Maria* and Josquin's *Illibata dei virgo*. The first of these is mentioned in Gian de Artiganova's well-known letter of 1502 to Ercole d'Este, in which the agent recommended that Isaac be brought to Ferrara. It also states, among other things, that Isaac "made a motet on the motif 'la mi la so la so la mi' in only two days". Both works, published by Petrucci in 1504 and 1508 respectively, are devoted to the Virgin and are based on a solmisation theme. However, the text of Isaac's motet as presented in Petrucci's *Motetti C* is certainly a contrafact. The incipit of the original text was probably "O praeclara"; see W. Elders, *Zur Frage der Vorlage von Isaacs Messe 'La mi la sol' oder 'O praeclara'*, in Von Isaac bis Bach. Studien zur älteren deutschen Musikgeschichte (Festschrift Martin Just zum 60. Geburtstag), ed. by F. Heidlberger, W. Osthoff and R. Wiesend (Kassel 1991), pp. 9-13.

in Petrucci's *Motetti a cinque*, namely *Exaudi nos filia Syon* by Crispinus van Stappen. Only eight compositions by this musician have been preserved. In 1492 he was registered as *magister cantus figurati* of Padua Cathedral, and in 1506 his name appeared in the accounts of the *Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap* in 's-Hertogenbosch as priest and canon of Cambrai. Of the original five parts of *Exaudi nos*, only four are extant. The text is a prayer to "the daughter of Syon" who is extolled as a "fragant blossom" and a "red hyacinth". She is asked to pray to her Son for all Christians and especially for the "illustrious dominion" of the Venetians. The tenor, which is silent for the first 34 bars, enters with the invocation "Virgo Maria", set as an ascending hexachord in breves. The six statements of the *soggetto* are equally divided over the two *partes* and have the following proportional structure – 3:2:1:3:2:1. The third and sixth statements are musically and textually extended so as to become an ascending hexachord and a descending one which accompany the text: "Virgo Maria, succurre miseris." (Ex. 11)

Ex. 11



Stappen thus produces the effect of a singer in the act of prayer, expectantly awaiting a propitious answer from the Virgin.

The fourth example of the hexachord as a reference to the *scala celestis* is found in Petrucci's *Motetti B* of 1502. It is the five-part *Virgo celestis* by Loyset Compère. In the text, Mary is beseeched to "look down upon" her dedicated servants. Helen Hewitt assumes that Petrucci intended this motet to open his second collection of polyphonic music.[79] The first tenor quotes the melody which was also sung to "Ut queant laxis", the hymn in honour of St John, and famous in the history of musical notation. Furthermore, this *cantus prius factus* must also be seen as an allusion to the important role which the hexachord plays in the second tenor of the same motet: the hymn "Ut queant laxis" designates the six tones of the hexachord by means of the initial syllables of the first words of its six lines. The *soggetto ostinato* is presented three times, and on each occasion in smaller note-values. The context described above shows that Edward Lowinsky had good reason to suggest a connection between the hexachord and the *scala regni celestis*.[80] In Compère's *Virgo celestis* the hexachord recalls the image of the ladder along which the musicians, as Mary's servants, endeavour to climb to heaven.

Just how strongly the symbolic relationship between the ascending hexachord and the ladder appealed to the musical imagination becomes manifest when we study the source situation regarding an instrumental

[79] See the edition of *Canti B* (fn. 69), p. 25.
[80] Cf. *ibid.*, p. XVI.

piece, attributed to both Isaac and Alexander Agricola, although probably composed by the latter.[81] Eight sources are known of this long fantasia *a tre*, and most bear the indication "Cecus non judicat de coloribus", which refers to the use of coloration, and the 'blind' player's inability to discern it. Beginning in bar 42, the tenor performs the hexachord in the same way as in Isaac's motet *O decus ecclesie*, that is, according to the principle of addition: ut, ut re, ut re mi, etc. It is amazing that this piece, though intended to be played instrumentally, was transformed into a motet in four of the sources. In the Ms. Berlin 40021, the text is "Regali quam decet"; in the Bohemian Codex Speciálník, it is "Ave ancilla trinitatis"; in the Ms. Leipzig 1494, it is "Gaude virgo singularis"; and in the Ms. Munich 3154, it is "Gaudent in celis". Since all these texts are devoted to the Virgin, the sole explanation for their presence must be sought in the fact that the hexachord reminded these musicians of the *scala celestis*.

[81] I am grateful to Martin Just for having brought this piece to my attention.

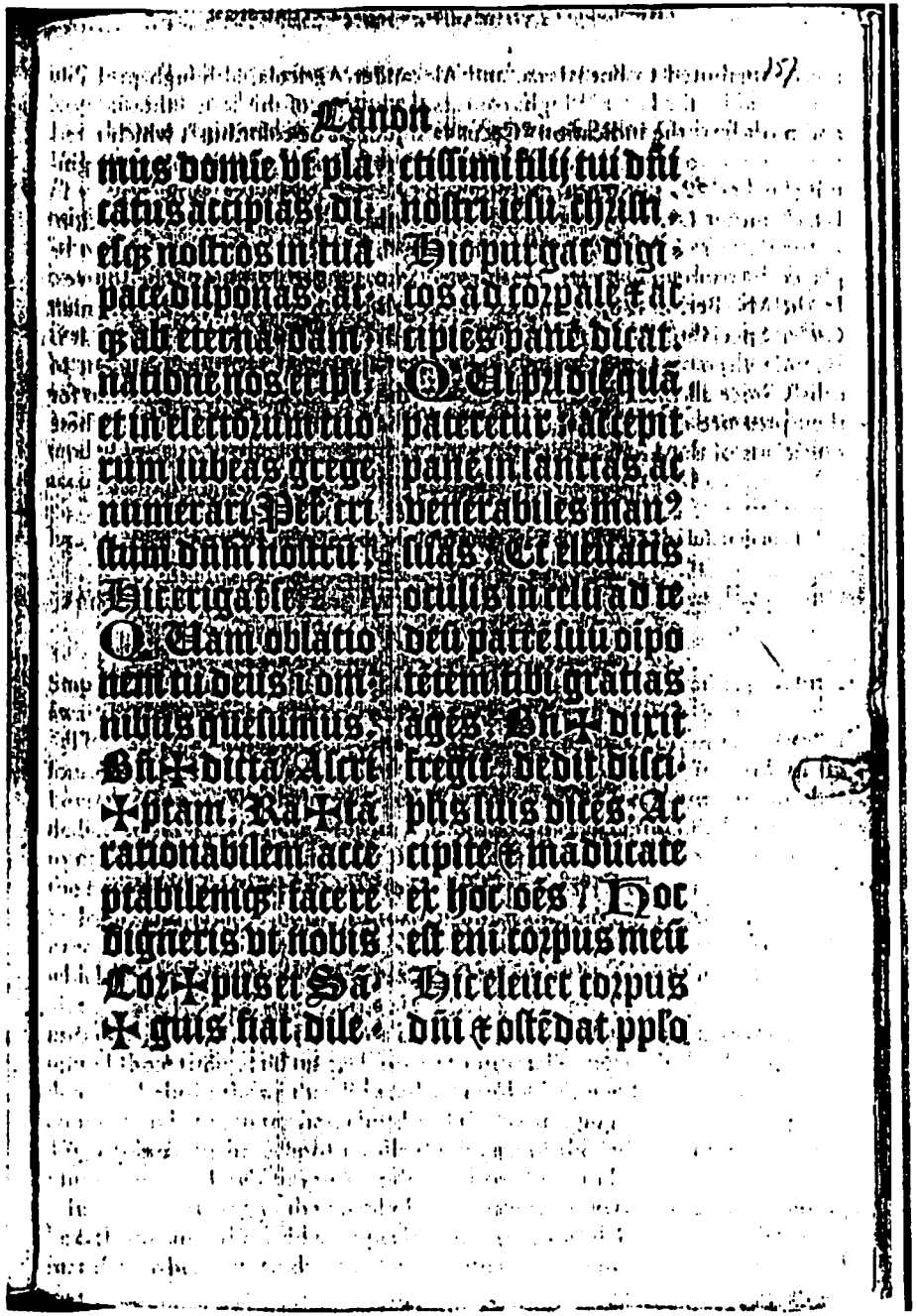


Fig. 6. The prayer "Quam oblationem" with the five signs of the cross.
Missale ad usum insignis ecclesie Traiectensis ritum (Parisiis, Wolfg. Hopyl, 1515).

Fig. 7. Jean Fouquet, *The Martyrdom of Catherine of Alexandria*.
Illumination from the Hours of Etienne Chevalier (1452-56).
Chantilly, Musée Condé. (Photo: Giraudon)

Fig. 8. Anonymous, *St Margaret of Antioch* (Brabant? ca. 1460-70).
Bruges, Gruuthuse-Museum. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

Fig. 9. Jan van Scorel, Triptych of *The Stoning of Stephen*, main panel (ca. 1540).
Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse.

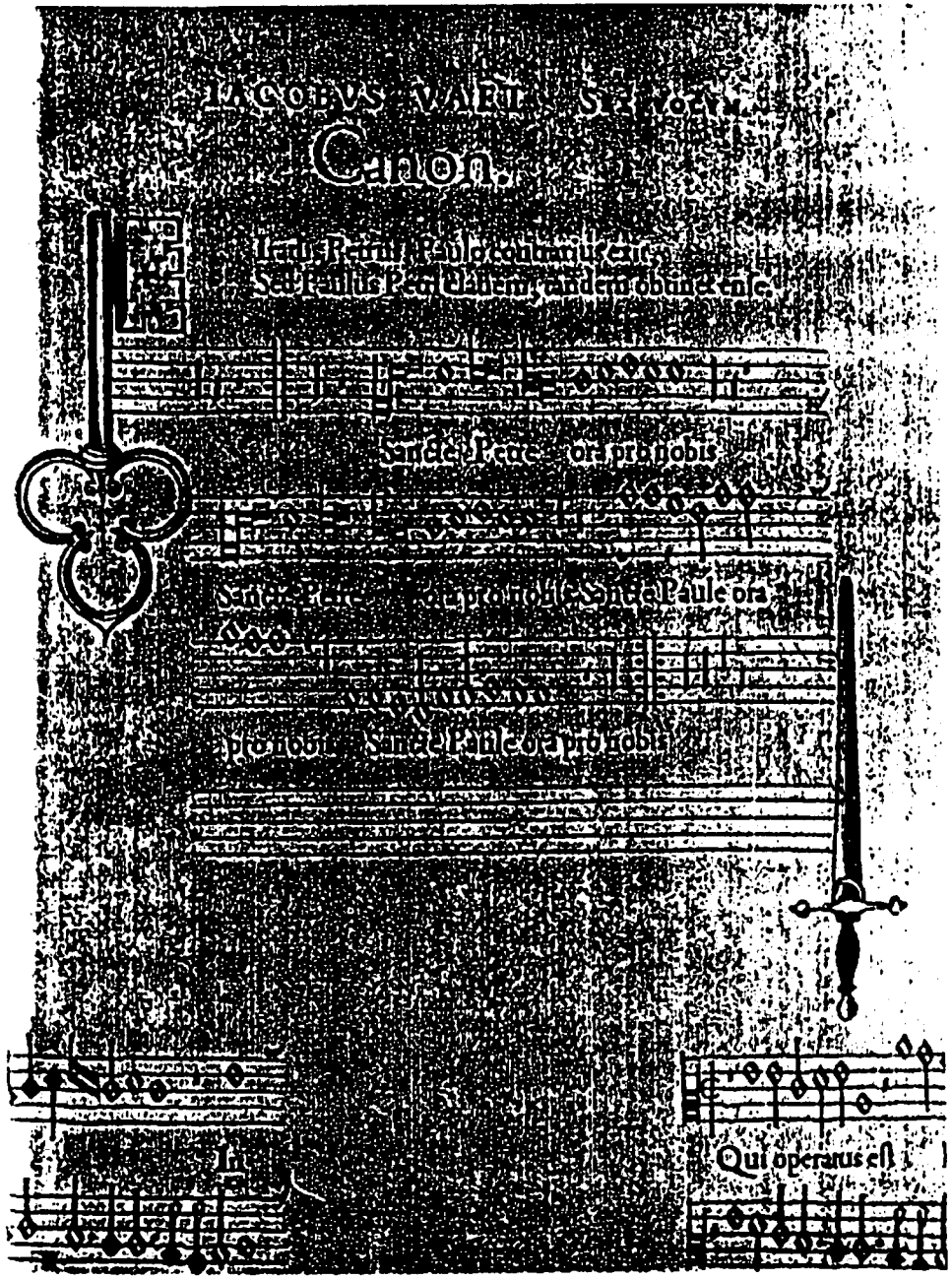


Fig. 10. The *soggetto ostinato* in Jacob Vaet's motet *Qui operatus est Petrus* (Vienna, Raphael Hofhalter, 1560).
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

Fig. 11. Michelangelo, *Madonna of the Stairs* (ca. 1492).
Florence, Casa Buonarroti.

SYMBOLIC SCORING IN TUDOR ENGLAND

It has been pointed out quite often that polyphony in Tudor Engeland is in some way analogous to the most striking elements of Perpendicular architecture. Both styles display the late medieval tendency to embellish public worship with well-considered formal principles and with almost overabundant ornamentation. In our own day and age the music of the Tudor composers is generally appreciated first and foremost for its aesthetic appeal, and likewise the cathedrals for which the music was intended. Yet one should realise that such an approach does not justice to one of the most essential parts of its character. If we want a deeper understanding of its original meaning, we must concentrate on its original function, which was closely related to worship. Sacred music had its own epistemological presuppositions, its own context in the existing system of concepts and beliefs, in which symbolism played a substantial role. For the composer symbols were not just something to be taken figuratively or metaphorically, but a reality which was founded on the highest and all-embracing values known to his religion. Indeed, one of the essential features of Tudor polyphony remains concealed from those who are not familiar with Christian symbolism.

In both the general and more detailed musicological studies which deal with the Latin church music of the Tudor period, the symbolism underlying the scoring has hitherto received insufficient attention. Only two works by Robert Wylkynson and the 40-part motet *Spem in alium* by Thomas Tallis have aroused any comment about the relationship between the number of parts and a possible extra-musical factor. We will not discuss the question now of whether these existing interpretations of the compositions are correct, but it is certainly possible that the exceptionally great number of parts betrays a particular attention on the part of the composer; the use of more than six parts is unusual, even at a time when church music was characterized by a 'big sound'. By searching through the sacred music of the period 1485-1603, I have found that only the following pieces have more than six parts: (see Table 1).

The works of the first four composers can be found in the Eton choirbook, and form part of a repertoire which, in a sense, marked a culminating point in the English church music around 1490. It is possible that Tye's votif antiphon *Peccavimus cum patribus* dates from the reign of Henry VIII. The four seven-part works by Tallis most likely date from Mary Tudor's time. His *Spem in alium* was possibly composed in 1571. The hymns by Sheppard and his antiphon *Libera nos* also seem to have been composed for the Latin rite at the time of Mary. With the exception of *Diliges dominum*, whose *terminus ante quem* is 1575 (*Cantiones sacrae*), Byrd's many-voiced compositions have been handed down in manuscript. *Quomodo cantabimus* was written in 1584, but the two other motets are not easy to date.

Table 1. Compositions for Seven or More Voices

John Browne	Magnificat à 7
	O Maria, salvatoris mater à 8
Hugh Kellyk	Gaude flore virginali à 7
John Sutton	Salve regina à 7
Robert Wylkynson	Salve regina à 9
	Credo in deum/Jesus autem transiens à 13[1]
Christopher Tye	Peccavimus cum patribus à 7
Thomas Tallis	Missa Puer natus est à 7
	Loquebantur variis linguis à 7
	Miserere nostri à 7
	Suscipe quaeso à 7
	Spem in alium à 40
John Sheppard	A solis ortus cardine à 7?
	Beata nobis gaudia/Ignis vibrante à 7
	Libera nos, salva nos à 7 (two settings)
	Sacris solemniis à 8
William Byrd	Ad dominum cum tribularer à 8
	Diliges dominum à 8
	Domine quis habitabit à 9
	Quomodo cantabimus à 8

The table shows eleven compositions for seven parts, five for eight parts, two for nine parts and one for thirteen parts.[2] The forty-part motet by Tallis holds a special place. The Eton choirbook has a mere thirteen six-part compositions, indeed very few in comparison with Sheppard and Byrd. Sheppard wrote the following works for six parts: the Mass *Cantate*, the Gradual *Haec dies*, a Magnificat, a Te deum, ten responsories, eight hymns and two antiphons. No less than thirty six-part motets by Byrd have been preserved.

It is not easy to give an immediate answer to the question why composers chose to use more than six parts. However, structural and textual analysis can help to find an answer. In this study I will discuss these aspects further.

The Eton Composers

The Eton choirbook contains a repertoire that is completely dedicated to the Virgin, with the exception of the Passion by Davy and the *Credo in deum* by Wylkynson. Of the three seven-part Marian motets, the Magnificat by Browne is now lost.[3] In Kellyk's *Gaude flore virginali* and Sutton's *Salve regina* we see that full scoring is not used during the whole piece. The hymn *Gaude flore virginali* has seven strophes. each of which begins with the Marian greeting "Gaude" and sings of Mary's seven heavenly joys.[4] As in the other many-part compositions in the Eton choirbook, the actual text of the passages which have been set in full scoring is in black, while that of the passages set for a lesser number of voices is in red. Strophes two, four (lines 1-3; 5-6), six (lines 1-2) and seven (lines 1, 4-6) have been set for seven parts. The other strophes or lines, as the case may be, use two to six parts and sometimes there is a strong contrast: for example, the entire fifth strophe is set for two parts. The transition from the two-part third line in the last strophe to the full-voiced final line is also remarkable: the words "Quod haec septem gaudia" (line 3: And that is why these seven joys ...), which are two-part, form an upbeat to the climax in the seven-part final passage. In the *Salve regina* by Sutton, the first word sung by all seven voices is "salve", which occurs at the end of the first line. The following section of text, up to and including "Et Jesum", is also set for seven voices. The three seven-part invocations at the end are preceded by tropes, which are predominantly three-part.

The seven-part scoring of the Eton choirbook can be primarily explained by the fact that the number seven is a Marian number. This is confirmed by a contemporary seven-part composition from the Low Countries devoted to the Virgin, namely Matthaeus Pipelare's motet *Memorare mater Christi* for the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the BMV.[5] The four compositions already mentioned all date from the end of the fifteenth century and form the earliest seven-part repertoire in Western music.

Ever since the fifteenth century the number seven has been generally used to signify the seven joys ans sorrows of Mary. The basis for this preoccupation with Mary's joys and sorrows can be found in late medieval piety, which showed an emotional interest in the inner life of Christ and his mother.[6] In 1423, the Synod of Cologne introduced the Seven Sorrows as a Church festival, to form a counterpart to the existing series of Seven Joys. The choice of the number seven certainly goes back to the fact that seven is the number which stands for completion, plenitude, and completeness. In many ways, fifteenth-century poetry and visual arts bear special witness to the popularity of this particular devotion for Mary. Thus Tallis's antiphons *Ave rosa sine spinis* and *Ave dei patris* both have a verse text of seven stanzas. Canterbury Cathedral's treasury of stained glass may once have contained a representation of the Seven Joys of the Virgin. The original ensemble of the large window in the north-west transept which was completed towards the end of the fifteenth century – the Eton choirbook dates from the same time – comprised, among other things, the Virgin Mary 'in seven glorious appearances'.[7]

While there is only one symbolic interpretation possible for the use of seven parts in these Marian antiphons, the eight-part *O Maria, salvatoris*

[1] The composition is also known as the Apostles' Creed.
[2] Not listed is the nineteen-part *O bone Jesu* from the early-sixteenth century by the Scottish priest Robert Carver.
[3] This work is mentioned in the original index.
[4] See Analecta hymnica 31, no. 189: *De VII Gaudiis celestibus BMV.*

[5] See my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 151-3.
[6] Cf. *Liturgisch Woordenboek* (Roermond 1958-68), vol. 2, cols. 2982-3.
[7] Cf. J. Keates & A. Hornak, *Canterbury Cathedral* (London ²1987), p. 63.

mater by Browne causes problems in this respect, for the number eight is not connected with Mary. Nevertheless, some arguments can be found in favour of a symbolic interpretation of this number of parts. As far as I know, Browne's *O Maria, salvatoris mater* is the earliest and also the only eight-part composition from the fifteenth century. It is no wonder that the Eton choirbook begins with this exceptional work. Frank Harrison has already pointed out the cumulative addition of the parts in the first two verses from bar 14 onwards.[8] What, however, is just as striking in this passage is the arrangement of the last line of the second verse: the seven-part section does not, as one would expect, lead directly into the eight-part third verse; rather, a three-voiced insert of two bars has been placed in between, so that the line "Cunctaque peccamina" has become isolated. We may certainly see this as an indication of the symbolic meaning of this scoring, for the verse states that Christ bears "all our sins". One of the meanings of the number seven also has to do with the seven mortal sins and the seven types of forgiveness. Another argument in favour of a symbolic interpretation of the eight-part scoring can be found in the setting of the first line of verse four. Here the composer's intention becomes clear when we consider the subject of his motet.

The text of the hymn consists of twelve verses – this number possibly alludes to the Marian number twelve as the Woman of the Book of Revelation[9] – and is a song in praise of Aaron's rod, which was one of the well-known Marian metaphors in the Middle Ages. Numbers 17:1-11 relates how Iahweh settled the issue of the leadership among the twelve tribes of Israel by ordering that each of them lay up a rod in the tabernacle of the covenant before the testimony. Iahweh said: "Whomsoever of these I shall choose, his rod shall blossom." Through this example of the unfertilized bearing of fruit, and because of the similarity of the Latin *virgo* with *virga* (rod), the Middle Ages adopted Aaron's rod as a symbol of Marian virginity. In the Mary porch (from the thirteenth century) in the Cathedral of Amiens there is a capital on which the *virga Aaron* is depicted above the Annunciation. We also encounter the sprouting staff in the Octagon of Ely Cathedral (see below). Here it is connected with the *Legend of St Etheldreda* which is represented in one of the eight corbel reliefs.[10]

The sixth verse of the hymn starts with the line "Illam ergo recolamus" (That is why we honour him again). The word "illam" refers back to the "virga Aaron" mentioned in the last line of verse three. Both verses are set in

[8] Cf. *Music in Medieval Britain* (Buren R1980), p. 315.

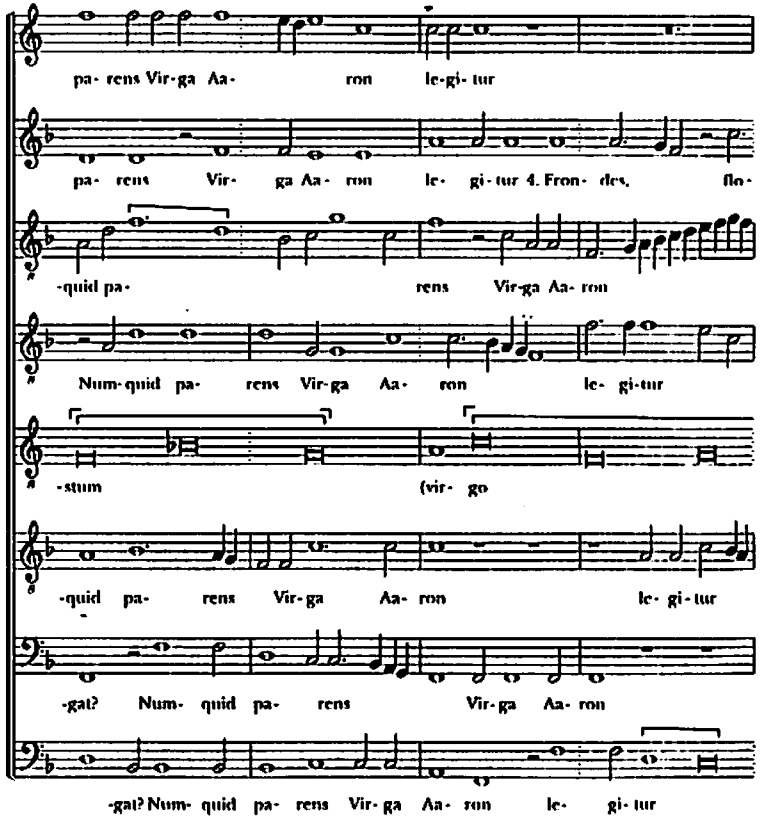
[9] See my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 171-2.

[10] Cf. Ph. Lindley, *The Imagery of the Octagon at Ely*, in Journal of the British Archaeological Association 139 (1986), p. 81. G. Heinz-Mohr, *Lexikon der Symbole: Bilder und Zeichen der christlichen Kunst* (Düsseldorf/Cologne ⁴1976), p. 21, records the presence of the rod in one of the stained-glass windows of Canterbury Cathedral. The scene in question is the proclamation to the shepherds. However, since this medallion is not mentioned in B. Rackham's description of the cathedral windows (*The Stained Glass Windows of Canterbury Cathedral. A Guide for Visitors and Students* (Canterbury 1957)), it probably has not survived.

eight parts and contrast with the fourth and fifth verses, which employ from two to four parts. While from a structural point of view it would have been natural for the composer to have alternated the scoring in conformity with the strophic plan of the poem, it turns out that he took the contents of the text as his guide in this matter. Example 1 shows that the first line of verse four retains the eight-part writing of the preceding verse.

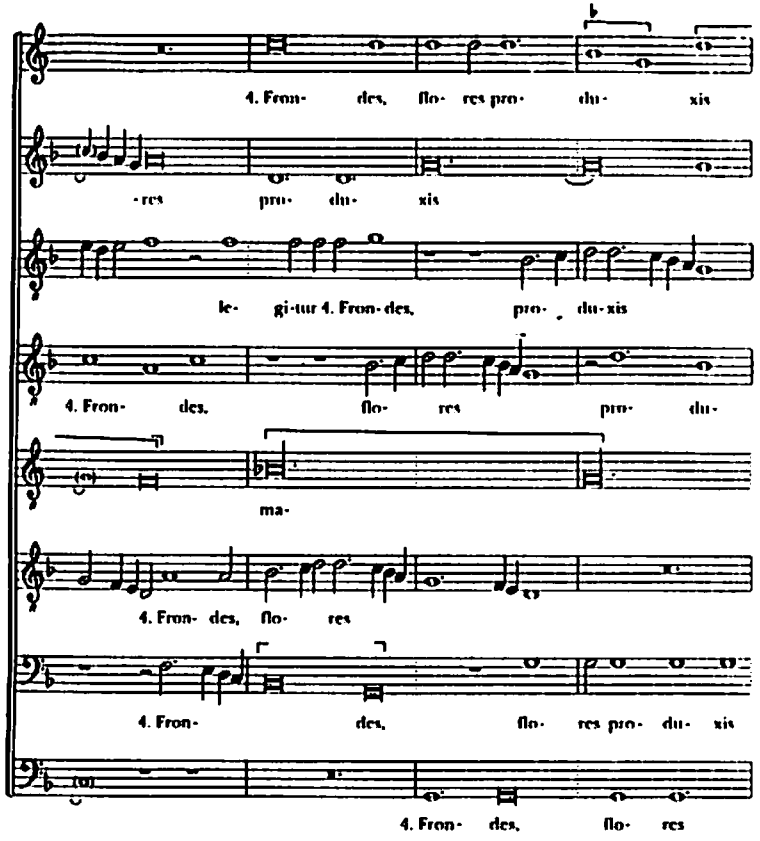
The reason for this is to be found in the textual contents of this line. The text is as follows: "Frondes, flores produxisse" (Foliage and flowers have been brought forth [by the *virga Aaron*]). The Eton repertoire shows that Browne had a special preference for an exceptionally varied choice of vocal forces,[11]

Ex. 1



[11] Cf. H. Benham, *Latin Church Music in England c. 1460-1575* (London 1977), p. 83.

Ex. 1 (continued)



and his seven-part Magnificat proves that he applied the principle of symbolic settings. The subtle variety evident in his deployment of the voices in *O Maria, salvatoris mater* leaves no doubt that, in this case, Browne was not just interested in massiveness of sound but rather in using eight-part writing to give a deeper meaning to the motet.

In Romanesque art one often finds flowers with eight petals.[12] This symbol came into use because of the fact that the early-Christian writers invariably connected the number eight with the *regeneratio*.[13] The Regeneration is the re-birth into a new or supernatural life. In the Christian tradition baptism is the foundation for this, and is often brought into connection with the eight

[12] Cf. G. Heinz-Mohr, *op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 311.
[13] Cf. V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York ²1969), p. 77; H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter. Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975), pp. 139-41.

who were saved in the ark: "... when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20). This is why the baptismal font and the baptisterium are often octangular.[14] For Dante, too, the eighth age is the age of Final Redemption,[15] and the vision he had of this is described in his *Divine Comedy* (Paradise, canto 27).

The text which relates this interpretation of the number eight with the eight-part setting itself is found in the first verse of the hymn:

O Maria, salvatoris
Mater, fragrans flos pudoris,
Superans nascentia.

(O Mary, mother of the Redeemer,
fragrant flower of chastity,
who excels everything that is born.)

The significance of Mary's role in the Redemption had become recognized since the early Christian centuries. The title 'Mother of God', which is of Alexandrine origin, was regarded as orthodox at the Council of Ephesus in 431. In my opinion, the composer has underlined the particular character of the hymn text by his use of eight parts: on the one hand the rich inflorescence of the *virga Aaron* is celebrated in song as a Marian metaphor, and on the other hand Mary is extolled as the mother of the *Salvator mundi* (Saviour of the world), through whom the *regeneratio* can take place.

Although John Browne is one of the greatest English composers of his age, nothing is known about his life, and we can only guess the place where he wrote his motet *O Maria, salvatoris mater*. If he ever visited the Cathedral of Ely, he must have gazed into the wonderful Octagon and have observed how the idea of salvation through Christ is expressed in its eight-angular vault. The Octagon was conceived, after the collapse of the Romanesque central tower in 1322, by Alan of Walsingham, the monastic sacrist in charge of works, and it became, in both conception and execution, one of the boldest constructions in the whole of medieval Europe. Above the Octagon rises the lantern, the main timber construction of which supports 400 tons of wood and lead. It rests upon eight large beams, each measuring sixty-four (i.e., eight times eight) feet.[16] As we see so often in octagonal buildings, the vault exhibits an eight-pointed star. That the number eight must be taken as an allusion to salvation is obvious: the figure of Christ showing his wounds appears in the large central boss of the star-vault.[17] (Fig. 12)

[14] Cf. P. v[on] Naredi-Rainer, *Architektur und Harmonie: Zahl, Maß und Proportion in der abendländischen Baukunst* (Cologne ³1986), pp. 51-6.
[15] Cf. Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 199.
[16] Cf. I. Richards, *Church and Court in the Gothic Age*, in Art Treasures in the British Isles, ed. by T. Copplestone and B.S. Myers (London/New York 1969), p. 43.
[17] Cf. Lindley, *op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 84.

A few years after Browne had expressed the idea of salvation in eight-part scoring, Leonardo da Vinci painted his *Salvator mundi* for King Louis XII of France. In this representation of Christ as 'Saviour of the world', Leonardo created a counterpart of the wonderful octagon of Ely: the orphrey of Christ's stole shows two series of threads, both eight in number, while "the jewel prominent in the crossing of the stole is surrounded by an eight-pointed embroidered star."[18]

Any doubt about whether or not the eight-pointed star symbolizes salvation is dispelled when one examines Fra Angelico's *Virgin and Child Enthroned*. The fresco was painted in the 1440s for the Monastery of San Marco in Florence. While the Child is portrayed as the Saviour of the world, holding the globe and making the sign of the benediction, Mary's conspicuous attribute is the golden eight-pointed star on her blue coat. Even more striking is the number of the saints – eight – who stand, in two groups of four, on either side of the throne. One of them is St Dominic. In memory of the star that, according to a contemporary account, is said to have appeared on Dominic's forehead at his baptism, a second eight-pointed star has been depicted on the saint's halo.

Wylkynson's nine-part *Salve regina* and the thirteen-part round *Credo in deum* are the only compositions of the Eton choirbook that have been discussed with regard to number-symbolism in musicological literature. John Bergsagel has already pointed out the symbolic meaning of these settings in 1973.[19] According to Harrison, the *Salve regina* was most likely copied into the choirbook by Wylkynson himself between 1502 and 1515. The antiphon, in white notation, shows illuminated initial letters at the beginning of each of the nine voice parts, in which the names of the nine orders of angels are written; thus: quatruplex *Seraphym*; triplex *Cherubin*; primus contratenor *Dominaciones*; and so forth. A rhyme is added at the bottom of the right-hand folio which says that this antiphon praises Christ and Mary, and resounds throughout the ranks of the angels. Wylkynson's *Salve regina* is one of the fifteen settings of this text in the manuscript. There can be no doubt that he was inspired to compose this work by the previously mentioned antiphon by John Sutton, but he also felt challenged to surpass that seven-part composition. Both motets show a striking similarity in lay-out, as can be seen in the altered grouping of the lines of text and in the choice of those particular sections of text that are sung by all the voices. Whilst namely the words "Et Jesum" in the original version of the antiphon introduce a new line of text, Sutton and Wylkynson join them to the preceding line and set them for the full complement of voices. In both works the word "ostende" (show [unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb]) also sounds like a climax. Finally, the treatment of the full sections in the invocations, which are introduced by

[18] J. Snow-Smith, *The Salvator Mundi of Leonardo da Vinci* (Seattle 1982), p. 61.
[19] See his review of my *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer*, MI. 54 (1973), p. 492.

tropes – "O clemens", "O pia", "O dulcis Maria, salve" – is identical. It is obvious that in Wylkynson's version the nine parts personify the nine orders of angels. In the fourteenth century, carved figures of the nine angelic choirs had been placed in the west front of Wells Cathedral.[20] (Fig. 13)

Wylkynson's canonic setting of *Credo in deum*, the so-called Apostles' Creed, is one of the most remarkable polyphonic pieces from Tudor England. The composition, probably again in his own hand, appears on the last page of the Eton choirbook. The text starts with the incipit of the antiphon *Jesus autem transiens in medio illorum, ibat* (Jesus, passing through the midst of them, walked away). To the antiphon's incipit are added twelve voice parts, entering successively in the manner of a round with the text of the Creed, "Credo in deum ..." Each of the twelve articles of faith is marked in the manuscript with the name of the apostle to whom it traditionally was assigned. The words "Jesus autem transiens ..." form the last line of a passage in Luke Ch. 4, in which the first appearance of Jesus in Narazeth is described. Thus the parts here personify our Lord and his twelve apostles. If the round were repeated thirteen times – this is also the number of its total compass! –, the effect is indeed that of Jesus passing through the midst of his apostles.[21]

Tye, Tallis, and Sheppard

Of the other seven-part compositions, three are based on texts that have an identical theme. Tye's *Peccavimus cum patribus*, and Tallis's *Miserere nostri* and *Suscipe quaeso* are prayers for the forgiveness of sins. Tye's *Peccavimus* stands out as one of the best of his late votive antiphons, and is regarded as his most important composition.[22] The first phrase of the text comes from Psalm 105:6, to which a prayer is added in which the merciful Lord Jesus is asked to heed the unhappy sinners, and to wash them of their innumerable transgressions. The first half of the first section is a four- to five-part, and the second half a seven-part setting. The long second section has been kept two-part to four-part to emanate into the seven-part closing, in which the fervent desire for the heavenly fatherland is expressed. The *Miserere* by Tallis contrasts sharply with this. Its short text consists of the words "Miserere nostri, domine, miserere nostri", and the motet is only twelve bars long. Yet it is a remarkable demonstration of technical skill: above a free tenor, the composer has written a triple canon, in which six voices are derived from three; from this a continuous seven-part scoring results. The first sentence of Tallis's second confessional motet is: "Suscipe, quaeso domine, vocem confitentis; scelera mea non defendo; peccavi, peccavi, deus miserere mei; dele culpas meas gratia tua" (Receive, I beseech Thee, O Lord, the voice of the confessor;

[20] For a more detailed discussion of Wylkynson's *Salve regina* see my study *The Conception of* Musica celestis ..., pp. 224-8.
[21] Cf. Harrison, *op. cit.* (fn. 8), p. 415.
[22] Cf. D. Wulstan, *Tudor Music* (London/Melbourne 1985), p. 276.

I do not defend my faults; I have sinned, I have sinned, God, have mercy upon me; wipe out my guilt through Your grace). The piece was published in 1575 as no. 27 of the *Cantiones sacrae*. It is certainly possible, as Jeremy Noble has suggested,[23] that the composition was intended for one of the ceremonies in London during the visit of Philip II in 1554. At one of these meetings cardinal Reginald Pole, later the archbishop of Canterbury, formally absolved the English nation and received it back into the Catholic fold.

One of Pole's predecessors at Canterbury, John Pecham, directed in 1281 that the parish priest was to instruct his flock in Six Points: the Fourteen Articles of Faith, the Ten Commandments of the Law and the two of the Gospel, the Seven Works of Mercy, the *Seven Deadly Sins*, the Seven Virtues, and the Seven Sacraments. These instructions were later used everywhere in England as a model.[24] A Last Judgement painting of the fourteenth century in Trotton Church (Sussex) shows the Seven Works of Mercy on the right and the Seven Deadly Sins on the left. Already in the Pentateuch the number seven is presented as the number signifying sin and expiation: "... and [I] will strike you seven times for your sins" (Leviticus 26:24). The same number is repeated in the New Testament. In Matthew 18:21-22, we read: "Then came Peter unto him and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him, I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times." St Augustine also mentions the number seven in connection with sin, in his *Harmony of the Gospels* VI, 13.[25] Gregory the Great related the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the sinfulness of man: the number seven conforms with the deadly sins from which man is freed through the grace of the Holy Ghost.[26] Honorius mentions the seven sorts of forgiveness when he explains the number of weeks before Easter: "Quia septem modis peccata remittuntur. Primo per baptismum, secundo per martyrium, etc. (Because sins are forgiven in seven ways, first through baptism, second through martyrdom, etc.)[27] Since Cassiodorus (d. ca. 570) Christianity recognizes seven penitential psalms; this number has been retained in the liturgical books up until the present day. There is no doubt that the Tudor composers were acquainted with this symbolic tradition of the number seven and applied it in their music. The Seven Sins are also presented in Elizabethan theatre. Towards the end of the first part of Christopher Marlowe's *Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus* (ca. 1589), the prince of hell rewards Faustus for having abjured Christian faith with a peculiar *divertissement*. The passage is as follows: [BELZEBUB] Faustus, / we are come from hell in person / to show thee some pastime: sit down, / and thou shalt behold the Seven Deadly Sins / appear to thee in their own proper

[23] Cf. P. Doe, *Tallis* (London 1976), p. 40.
[24] Cf. C. Platt, *The Parish Churches of Medieval England* (London 1981), p. 48.
[25] Cf. Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 85.
[26] Cf. H. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 135.
[27] Cf. *ibid.*

shapes / and likeness. (Follows the masquerade of Pride, Covet, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery.)

Tallis's third seven-part motet is a setting of the text "[Loquebantur] variis linguis apostoli. Alleluia. Magnalia dei. Alleluia" (The apostles spoke in divers tongues the wonderful works of God, alleluia). This passage is taken from the Responsory *Repleti sunt* of the de First Vespers of Pentecost, and is derived from The Acts of the Apostles (2:4-11): "And they [i.e. the apostles] were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues ... we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." According to Christian teaching the gifts of the Holy Ghost render man congenial to God's influence in him. In the Septuagint reading of Isaiah 11:2 the following seven names are applied to the Spirit of the Lord, which rest upon Christ: *Sapientia, Intellectus, Consilium, Fortitudo, Scientia, Pietas and Timor*.[28]

As is the case in France, witness the stained-glass windows in the cathedrals of Chartres, Le Mans and St Denis, the seven doves surrounding Christ or the Virgin and Child may have been depicted in medieval English glass also. But since almost all glass in England suffered severely during the Reformation and Civil War or perished through lack of care, today it is hard to find a single example. Yet the window of the Chapel of St John the Evangelist in the south-east transept of Canterbury Cathedral portrays, in the 1852 reconstruction by George Austin, God the Father surrounded by seven doves. Although the representation is certainly not an exact copy of the original – nineteenth-century restoration has been criticized because it "was often undertaken in an opiniated and insensitive way"[29] – we owe a great debt to the Victorians for having passed on to later generations much of the language of medieval Christian symbolism. Since the sixteenth century, only the dove and the seven tongues of fire have been used as representations of the Holy Ghost. In both the sequence *Veni sancte Spiritus* as well as in the hymn *Veni creator Spiritus*, "the sevenfold gift of grace" is mentioned. Like Palestrina, who was inspired by the same Whitsun Responsory to compose a motet based on number symbolism,[30] Tallis expressed this very particular meaning of the number seven in his music.

The survey presented above of compositions with more than six parts contains three other seven-part motets which are connected with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Sheppards hymn *Beata nobis gaudia* is also intended for the Whit Vespers. As with *Veni creator Spiritus*, this hymn-text likewise consists of seven stanzas: it is a song of praise to the Holy Ghost in His role as Intercessor, and a prayer for succour and the forgiveness of sins. *Libera nos, salva nos* is imperfectly preserved in two seven-part settings by Sheppard. The text, which begins with the words "Libera nos, salva nos, mitifica nos, o

[28] Cf. *ibid.*
[29] A. Clifton-Taylor, *The Cathedrals of England* (London 1976), 236.
[30] Cf. H. Rahe, *Der Aufbau der Motetten Palestrinas*, in KJb 35 (1951), p. 69.

beata trinitas" (Free us, save us, mitigate us, O Holy Trinity), is sung during the Matins of Trinity. This office dates from the tenth century. In 1334 Pope John XXII commanded that this feast be celebrated by the universal Church. The writings of Abbot Rupert (twelfth century) show how strongly Trinity is connected with Whitsun in the Church calendar: "As soon as we have celebrated the coming of the Holy Ghost, we hail in song the feast of the Holy Trinity, the following Sunday, a place in the calendar well chosen, for immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, preaching and conversion began and faith through baptism and confession in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."[31] The doctrine of the Trinity contains the assertion that the Holy Ghost is the Author of man's sanctification.

The Thursday after Trinity is the Feast of *Corpus Christi*. After the dogma of the Holy Trinity, the Christian is reminded of the dogma of the Incarnation of the Lord. Since early times the Church on this day has commemorated Christ's institution of the Eucharist – the greatest of all sacraments – on Maundy Thursday. During Matins the hymn *Sacris solemniis* is sung. The fourth stanza poetically expresses the deep meaning of Holy Communion:

Dedit fragilibus corporis ferculum,
Dedit et tristibus sanguinis poculum,
Dicens: Accipite quod trado vasculum,
Omnes ex eo bibite.

(He gave his flesh,
He gave His precious Blood, and said:
'Receive and drink ye all of this,
For your salvation shed'.)

The breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine are recognized by the Christian as the central symbols of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and consequently as symbols of man's redemption and salvation. With the discussion of Browne's *O Maria salvatoris* we have seen that the use of eight parts symbolises the Regeneration represented by the number eight. The eight-part setting of the hymn *Sacris solemniis* by Sheppard shows that this idea still existed among English composers half a century later.

The Tudor repertoire has confronted us up to now with three different symbolic meanings of the number seven, but these by no means exhaust all the interpretative possibilities of this pre-eminently "holy" number. By virtue of various arguments the number seven can also be seen as a sign of earthly life and earthly time.[32] While the early-Christian authors viewed the number eight as a sign of eternity in the context of Christ's resurrection on the eighth day, they regarded the number seven a sign of transient life in analogy with this. In his *Moralia* St Gregory says the following about this matter: "One

[31] Cf. *The Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. Large edition (Montreal 1943), p. 757.
[32] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 137.

sees even better that, by the number seven, the totality of human life on earth is signified when the number eight is made to follow it immediately. For since yet another number follows upon seven, its very augmentation expresses the fact that our existence in time, which is finite, must find its resolution in eternity. For this very reason Solomon [i.e., in Honorius's view, Christ] admonishes, saying: 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight.' (Ecclesiastes 11:2) By the number seven He expressed this present time and world which is enacted in seven days; by the number eight He in fact designated eternal life, to which He gave us access through His resurrection. For He rose from the dead on the Day of the Lord which, following on as it does from the seventh day, that is the Sabbath, has the distinctive qualities of the eighth day."[33] Augustine called the number seven the number of the universe and of man, signifying the creature as opposed to the Creator.[34]

We know one or two compositions from the Tudor period in which the use of seven parts was most likely inspired by this interpretation of the number seven: the *Missa Puer natus est* by Tallis and the hymn *A solis ortus cardine* by Sheppard. Both works were intended for the Christmas liturgy and have been handed down incomplete. The Mass by Tallis is for seven parts; only six voices of Sheppard's hymn still exist, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the music had more than seven parts.[35]

Missa Puer natus est has almost exactly the same disposition of voices and compass as Tallis's *Suscipe quaeso*. It has been suggested that the Mass was written for the combined choral forces of Mary and Philip II during the residence of the Spanish king in London.[36] That the choice of the Introit text "A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us ..." could in this case be connected "with the then highly topical news that [Queen] Mary was expecting an heir",[37] is rather speculative in my opinion. Yet even if this relationship is a historical one, the evidently symbolic purpose of the scoring in Tallis's previously mentioned motets suggests that the composer worked in a similar way in his Mass. Furthermore, in the light of the unusual choice of the Introit fom the third Mass of Christmas,[38] the symbolic meaning of the number seven described above would prove to be highly significant: through the birth of the Son of God as Man, Christmas marks the beginning of a period of time that will conclude with the resurrection on the eighth day.

Tallis's Songe of fortie partes

Tallis's forty-part *Spem in alium* is indisputably the most impressive composition from Tudor England, and it is not surprising that it has been the cause

[33] For the Latin text see Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 76, col. 759.
[34] Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 84.
[35] Benham, *op. cit.* (fn. 11), p. 196, says "37/38".
[36] Cf. NGD 18, p. 543.
[37] Cf. Doe, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), p. 21.
[38] According to Benham, *op. cit.* (fn. 11), p. 183, it is "the only case discovered so far where a cantus firmus comes from the Mass proper instead of from the Office."

of much comment and discussion. Of the many ideas raised in various publications regarding the possible meaning of the use of forty parts, I will mention the quintessential ones first.

In his article on the composer for the MGG, published in 1966, Denis Stevens suggested that there might be a link between the number of forty voices and the sum of £ 40, which is mentioned in the royal household accounts of 1558/59 as a fee for Tallis.[39] Two years later the Tallis biographer Paul Doe wrote: "... *Spem in alium* is more obviously an occasional piece, for which various state occasions have been suggested. The extraordinary number of forty voices must surely have some greater significance, however, and an attractive theory is that it was written for the fortieth birthday of a sovereign: either Mary's in 1556 or Elizabeth's in 1573. The latter is perhaps more likely on stylistic grounds."[40] Doe studied the particular character of the text and in 1970 he came to the conviction that Tallis had possibly set the text "as part of a dramatic enactment of the apocryphal story of Judith presented at the court of Queen Elizabeth."[41]

The discovery by Elizabeth Roche in 1981 of a letter concerning the anecdotal account of the commission and performance of Tallis's motet formed a starting-point for renewed research by Denis Stevens, who now suggested that *Spem in alium* was written in emulation of Alessandro Striggio's forty-part *Ecce beatam lucem*, after this composition had become known in England when the young Italian visited London in 1567. Stevens concludes: "Assuming that Tallis was indeed challenged to compose a work for 40 voices ..., numerological theories that attempt to associate the number of parts with finance or chronology tend to crumble. The number 40 – whether it refers to days, nights, pounds, shillings or winks – can only extra-musically be an arbitrary one; it has long been known in the East as one of the famous 'multitude' numbers."[42] Stevens further writes that it was none other than Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk, who commissioned this exceptional piece, and that it was presumably performed in Arundel House in 1571, that is, during Norfolk's year of freedom. As a political prisoner the duke was incarcerated from October 1569 until August 1570.

The text is a Responsory from the liturgical *historia* of Judith: "Spem in alium nunquam habui preter in te, Deus Israel, qui irasceris, et propitius eris, et omnia peccata hominum in tribulatione dimittis. Domine Deus, Creator celi et terre, respice humilitatem nostram" (I have never founded my hope upon [any] other than thee, O God of Israel, who shalt be angry, and yet be gracious, and who absolvest all the sins of mankind in tribulation. Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth, be mindful of our lowliness). This

[39] Cf. MGG 13, c. 69.
[40] Doe, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), p. 41.
[41] P. Doe, *Tallis's 'Spem in alium' and the Elizabethan Respond-Motet*, in ML 51 (1970), pp. 9-12.
[42] D. Stevens, *A songe of fortie partes, made by Mr. Tallys*, in Early Music 10 (1982), p. 172.

passage is based on two fragments from Judith (9:19 and 6:15), and must be seen against the background of Judith's prayer to the God of Israel to aid her in her imminent battle against Holofernes.

It was already suggested in the 1850s that Ockeghem's 36-part *Deo gratias* was the prototype of *Spem in alium*,[43] but Stevens contradicts this: "Tallis could not have known Ockeghem's 36-voice canonic response to *Benedicamus Domino*."[44] Whether this is really the case cannot be proven one way or the other. In this connection, however, it is worth mentioning that there was a copy of the *Thesaurus musicus* in the library of Arundel House.[45] The *Thesaurus* is an anthology of motets printed in Nuremberg by Montanus & Neuber in 1564, the same publishing house that issued the *Cantiones triginta* containing Ockeghem's canon some four years later. Of this latter publication no copy has been preserved in England, but in the British Museum there is a copy of the *Tertius tomus psalmorum* (Petreius: 1542), which was also printed in Nuremberg. This was the first publication of the *Deo gratias*. Tallis's handling of the eight five-part choirs in imitative expositions shows a remarkable similarity with the plan of Ockeghem's piece for four nine-part choirs.

The question that must be answered now is whether Tallis decided to use forty parts merely to compete with Striggio's motet, or whether he also aimed at symbolically expressing the meaning of the text. At the opening of the motet the forty parts enter successively by way of an octuple canon, each canon consisting of five voices. Therefore it seems that three numbers could have played a part in the plan of the work: forty, eight and five. If Ockeghem's *Deo gratias* indeed led the way, it is obvious that we should look first of all for the meaning of the two factors, for with Ockeghem the four nine-part canons symbolise the nine angelic choirs that convey thanks to God from the four points of the compass.[46]

The book Judith is a story with an eschatological character. Dealing with the conflict between the God of Israel and the ungodly, the author exposes the providential view that the almighty Lord leads Israel to victory through his chosen instrument, that is, the hand of a woman. That Judith's hand should indeed be considered the central issue in the account – in Renaissance art she is widely depicted with a sword (Fig. 14) – is obvious from several passages. In her prayer to God, we read: "For this will be a glorious monument for thy name, when he shall fall by the hand of a woman" (9:15). After having cut off the head of Holofernes Judith says: "And by me his handmaid he hath fulfilled his mercy, which he promised to the house of Israel: and he hath killed the enemy of his people by my hand this night" (13:18). The

[43] Cf. *ibid.* (For the attribution of this piece to Ockeghem see my study The *Conception of* Musica celestis ..., pp. 235-8.)
[44] *Ibid.*, and p. 178.
[45] Cf. *The Lumley Library*, ed. by S. Jayne and F.R. Johnson (London 1956), p. 284.
[46] See my study *The Conception of* Musica celestis ..., p. 238.

canticle of Judith once more refers to her hands: "But the almighty Lord hath struck him, and hath delivered him into the hands of a woman, and hath slain him" (16:7). Biblical interpreters have recognized in the frequent scriptural references to the hand of God a symbol of his power and will. In the Old Testament the number of the fingers are used several times to denote that a 'hand' can impose a burden upon. Examples may be found in Numbers 31:8, Josue 10:5, and Judges 3:3. However, the fingers also denote that a group of five persons is strong enough to defeat a great army: "Five of yours shall pursue a hundred others ..." (Lev. 28:8). Isaias 30:17 says the same as follows: "A thousand men shall flee for fear of one: and for fear of five shall you flee, till you be left as the mast of a ship on the top of a mountain ..." In 2 Machabees 10:29 five celestial horsemen put themselves at the head of the Jews, who then vanquish the all powerful enemy. Psalm 143:1, which in the Greek translation is called a song of David against Goliath, mentions both hand and fingers: "Blessed be the Lord my God, who teacheth my hands to fight, and my fingers to war." Still another example in which the number five signifies force is found in 1 Samuel 17. It describes how Goliath, whose breastplate weighs "five thousand sicles of brass", is slain by David who only has "five smooth stones" in his shepherd's bag.

Considering the fact that Tallis emphasizes the words "who shalt be angry", we are perhaps allowed to connect the biblical image of the hand with the number of parts in each of its eight choruses. An argument in favour of this thesis is the following. According to the text of *Spem in alium*, the God of Israel is not only angry but also gracious. In the present context the word "gracious" expresses that the children of Israel will find salvation with the Lord, which is also said by Judith after she has killed Holofernes (cf. 13:18). As we have seen in the discussion of Browne's eight-part *O Maria, salvatoris mater*, Christianity symbolizes in the number eight not only the concept of the Regeneration but salvation as well: Christ rose from the dead on the eighth day after his entry into Jerusalem. The eight beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-10 are also connected with this.[47] It therefore seems that the division of the forty voices over eight choirs, each of which consisting of five parts, is of symbolical nature.

Having established the meaning of the structure of Tallis's motet I now will try to interpret the choice of the number forty itself. The premise for receiving the help of God's hand and his mercy is the trial of Israel. Therefore the text says: "and who absolvest all the sins of mankind in tribulation." The book of Judith relates that the children of Israel offer "the sacrifices to the Lord girded with haircloth, and with ashes upon their head" (4:15), and that also Judith puts on a goat-hair cloth and strews ashes on her head (9:1). For our purpose it is important to recall that Christian symbolism connects the number forty with trial, fasting and penitence. In Genesis 7:17 the flood lasts forty days, and there are forty years of Hebrew wandering in the desert (Exodus 16:35). Moses prayed and fasted for forty days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18), as did Elijah when he was travelling to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). The forty days of fasting in the Christian liturgy originate from Christ's long period of fasting after he was baptised in the Jordan.

[47] Cf. Meyer, *op.cit.* (fn. 13), p. 140.

Returning to Stevens's comments on the number of forty voices it is interesting that, at the end of his contribution on Tallis's *Songe of fortie* partes, this author mentions the five bequests of forty shillings in the last will of the composer and his wife. He thereupon suggests that "it may be more than mere coincidence that Thomas and Joan Tallis made [this number] a conspicuous feature of theirs", this despite evidence that the amount of forty shillings also occurs in other Elizabethan wills.[48] The question arises how we must understand this comment after Stevens's afore-mentioned conclusion that the number forty merely should be labeled as "an arbitrary one".[49] Is it not more probable that the obviously established custom of bequeathing the amount of forty shillings to the meaning of forty as the number of prayer and penitence must be seen in the context of the number forty as an expression of precisely these ideas? And if this were the case, may we then not assume that this was partly the reason why Tallis wrote his *Spem in alium* for forty parts? Such an interpretation, eventually, would be in perfect agreement with the connection which Stevens observes between the choice of this particular Responsory text and the sad human condition of the man who commissioned the piece: "While Norfolk languished in prison, Tallis wove his incredibly intricate polyphonic web about the meaning of hope, the absolution of sins, and the blessedness of humility."[50] It only remains to add that, in the Christian context of Tudor England, no other scoring would have been more appropriate to show openly Norfolk's presumed penitence.

Byrd

The four compositions by William Byrd presented in the survey on p. 98, form chronologically the last contribution to the many-voiced repertoire of the Tudor period. *Ad dominum cum tribularer* (Ps. 119) is one of Byrd's most monumental psalm-motets. It is preserved in London Add. 31390 – "A booke of In nomines & other solfainge songes of v: vi: vii: & viii: p[ar]ts for voyces or Instrumentes" – with text incipits only; the remainder of the text can, however, be underlaid without much difficulty. The eight voices continuously maintain the full-choir texture. *Ad dominum cum tribularer* is the first of the fifteen gradual psalms. Bruno the Carthusian (d. 1101) calls these psalms the spiritual steps by which the faithful ascend to heaven.[51] According to modern commentators, Psalm 119 describes the site from

[48] Cf. *op.cit.* (fn. 42), p. 180.
[49] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 172.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 179.
[51] Cf. J.W. McKinnon, *The Fifteen Temple Steps and the Gradual Psalms*, in IM 1 (1984), p. 43.

where the pilgrims travelled to the Temple at Jerusalem; its text excellently serves to stimulate the longing for the Holy City of Zion.[52] Jerusalem, which means "the city founded on the holy mountain" (Ps. 87:1), is given an apocalyptical meaning in the New Testament: "And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). This is why the city is seen as the sign of eternal salvation. This is also the way the renowned medieval liturgist Gulielmus Durandus interprets Jerusalem. He calls the celestial Jerusalem "the home on high".[53] In its function as a symbol of the New Testament, the number eight announces the bliss of the coming aeon, that is, of eternity.[54] The use of eight parts in Byrd's setting of Psalm 119 ought, in all probability, to be interpreted in this way.

Surprisingly we find the same idea in another eight-part psalm-setting of Byrd, *Quomodo cantabimus* (Ps. 136:4-7). Here too the scoring is for 2S2A2T2B. *Quomodo cantabimus* was written in 1584 in response to Philippe de Monte's setting of the same psalm. While Monte chose the verses 1, 3, 4 and 2, Byrd chose the verses 4 to 7.[55] The beautiful text of the Psalm "Super flumina Babylonis" is from the time of the Babylonian exile and is a lament on the destruction of Jerusalem, the city for which the poet has a passionate love. Especially in view of the fact that Monte's motet is also in eight parts, it seems likely that the scoring has a symbolic meaning. This phenomenon – the symbolic use of many parts – can also be found in the oeuvre of the Netherlandish master. For instance, he used seven parts in his large Marian cycle *Virgo vetustis edita*.[56] Byrd follows his model only in the number of voices, not in the deployment of the forces; in the first section he treats three of the parts canonically. Contrary to the structural function that canonic parts often lend to a many-voiced composition, here the two altos and the bass are melodically and rhythmically almost indistinguishable from the other parts. May we deduce from this that the composer merely had a 'textual' purpose in mind concerning the incorporation of the three canonic parts or did he, in other words, also want to express some other idea? Christianity attributes various different meanings to the number three. When the number is used in relation to Christ, it refers to the resurrection, because Christ rose from the dead on the third day. In this connection the number three is also a symbol of death and repose in the grave.[57] If Byrd did indeed

[52] Cf. *Bijbel in de Nieuwe Vertaling van het Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap met verklarende kanttekeningen: Het boek der psalmen* (Baarn 1952), p. 299.
[53] Cf. E. Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century* (New York 1958; R1972), p. 139.
[54] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 140.
[55] For the story of the two motets see J. Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (London/Boston 1981), pp. 44f.
[56] See W. Elders, *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 11 and 129f.
[57] See Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 118.

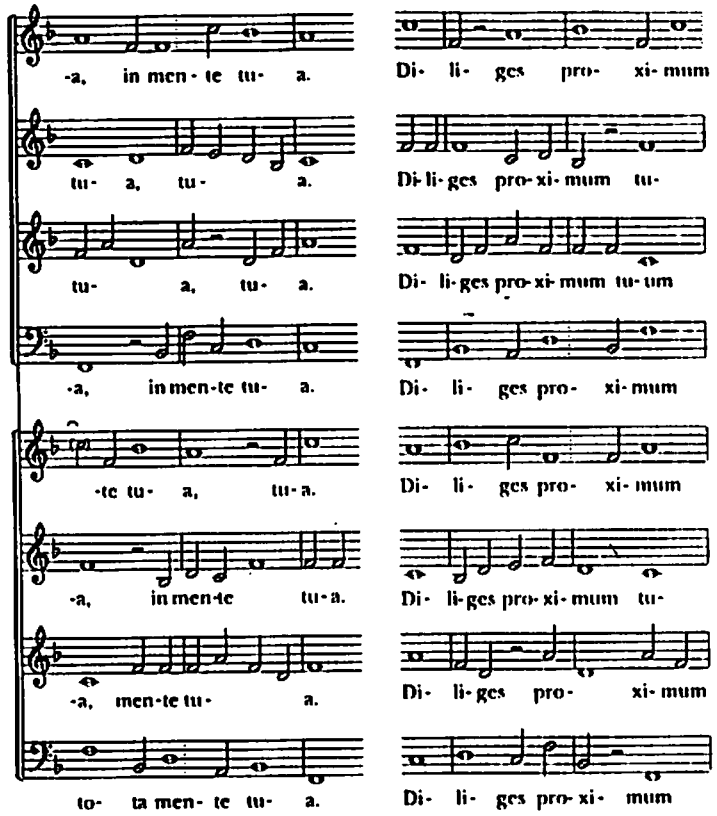
use eight-partwriting as a symbol of his longing for eternal salvation, we may perhaps interpret the canon as an expression of his belief that this salvation exists because Christ has conquered death for us.

Joseph Kerman, in his monograph on Byrd, has rightly called this composer's *Diliges dominum* a *tour de force*.[58] The piece is set for two SATB choirs and consists of twenty-two breves of consonant polyphony. Contrary to Kerman, however, who further remarks that the music is "of little artistic merit", I rather prefer to see the piece as one of the finest motets by Byrd in the *Cantiones sacrae* of 1575. The text is derived from Matthew 22:37-39, a passage in which Christ declares before the Pharisees the two greatest commandments of the Law. Instead of setting the whole passage, Byrd purposefully selects the text of the two commandments, for this enables him to apply a particular form of symbolism. The device, "Octo partes in quatuor recta et retro" (Eight parts in four forwards and backwards), indicates that the voices perform their lines up to the middle of the piece, whereupon the two choirs exchange parts and repeat each other's melodies backwards (Ex. 2).

It is certainly not accidental that the turning-point of the motet falls precisely between the two commandments, since only in this way can the intended effect be produced, that is, that the music for the first commandment – "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" – serves also as the setting of the text of the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". This construction is surely to be explained by the fact that Christ introduces the latter commandment with the words: "And the second is *like* to this". At the same time, the declamatory and statical character of the music is perfectly suited for underlining the obligatory content of both commandments. The question must now be asked whether the eight-part scoring is also meant to act as a symbolic representation of the motet's text. Medieval number symbolism does not connect the number eight with the ideas expressed in Matthew 22:37-39. However, as we have seen above, Byrd scores his piece for *two* choirs, each having *four* parts. If, in other words, *Diliges dominum* was indeed conceived to display the numbers two and four, the scoring elucidates the textual message as follows: the number two symbolizes the two commandments, the number four designates the four true forms of one's conduct toward God and man. These four forms are: faith and the performance of the rightful actions (the love of God), patience and goodness (the love of the neighbour). They have been formulated by St Gregor in his *Homiliae in Ezechielem prophetam*, in imitation of the four so-called cardinal virtues: justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance.[59] The latter enumeration is already found in Plato's *Republic* "as the virtues required of the citizens of the ideal city-state."[60] Gregor, wanting to describe the practical atti-

[58] *Op. cit.* (fn. 55), p. 117.
[59] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 13), p. 127.
[60] J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1979), p. 336.

Ex. 2



tudes and habits adopted in obedience to the principles of morality, was one of the medieval moralists who sanctioned these four virtues for Christians.

The last many-voiced composition by Byrd is his nine-part setting of Psalm 14, *Domine quis habitabit*. The unique source of this highly ambitious work is John Baldwin's 'Commonplace Book', in which a long eulogy yields pride of place to the composer. Like *Ad dominum cum tribularer, Domine quis habitabit* is preserved without text. The scoring is for 2S2A2T3B. Kerman concludes his ample discussion of both motets with the statement that they "constitute Byrd's most impressive evocations of the ancient sound-ideal of Taverner and early Tallis."[61] Psalm 14 is a didactic poem in which ten requirements are stated one must fulfil in order to participate in God's salvation. Because of its position immediately below the number ten, nine is a symbol of imperfection. The early-Christian writers looked especially to the parables in Luke 15 when interpreting the number nine. According to this passage, the lost sheep and the lost drachma symbolize the sinner. The loss of one sheep and one drachma corresponds to the arithmetic subtraction of 100 – 1 and 10 – 1, and stands for the unfaithfulness of man towards God. The numbers 100 and 10 designate perfection, which is shown, for instance, in the psalm *Domine quis habitabit* and the Ten Commandments. So it seems evident that, by using nine parts, Byrd wanted to express his incapacity to completely fulfil the ten requirements demanded in the psalm. Just as the Islamite always deliberately makes one mistake in his work – only Allah is perfect! – the Christian in Byrd's day was conscious of his own imperfection.

The use of many parts in the four motets by Byrd turns out therefore, to conceal a profound symbolism. Kerman's remark that it "was mass, mass above all" which interested Byrd in these works,[62] is, accordingly, indicative of a historically incorrect approach to the notion of how the last great Tudor composer wrote his music.

From the survey of many-voiced works with Latin texts, it appears that a good twenty compositions for more than six parts have been preserved from the Tudor period. Although the twelve seven-part works were composed for a diversity of liturgical feasts, the number of parts can in each case be called symbolic: late-medieval mysticism connects the number seven with the Virgin, the Holy Ghost, Christ's coming to earth and the prayer for the forgiveness of sins. In three of the four eight-part motets the scoring turns out to express the longing for eternal salvation. Finally, in the other motets the many-voiced scoring always represents a unique interpretation of a symbolic number that is known for its association with the subject of the text. A critical examination of the compositions reveals that scoring for a number of parts greater than six, was practised in English polyphony not so much for musical reasons as for the purpose of symbolism.

[61] *Op. cit.* (fn. 55), p. 114.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

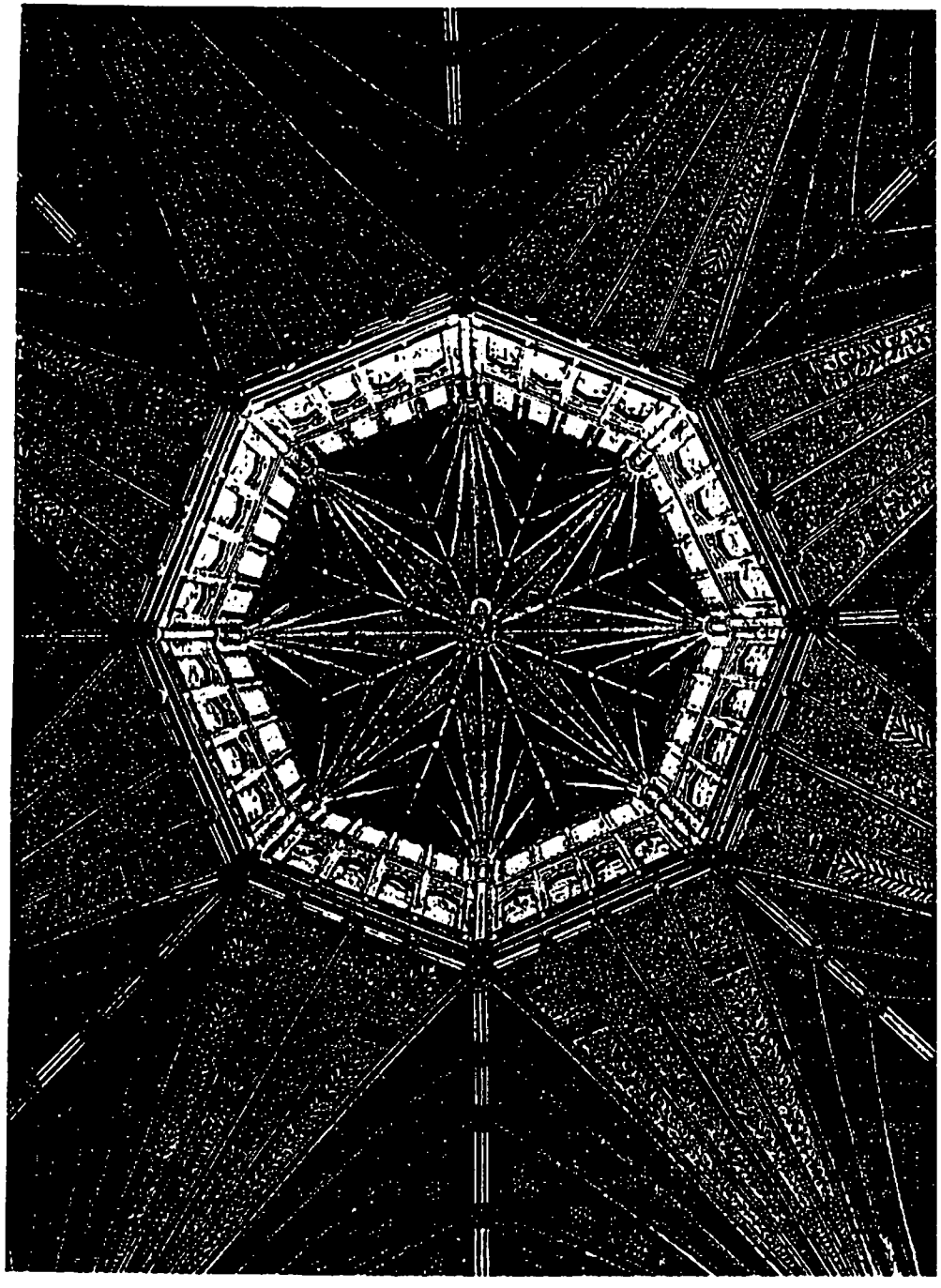


Fig. 12. The Octagon (1322-46) of Ely Cathedral with the figure of the Saviour.

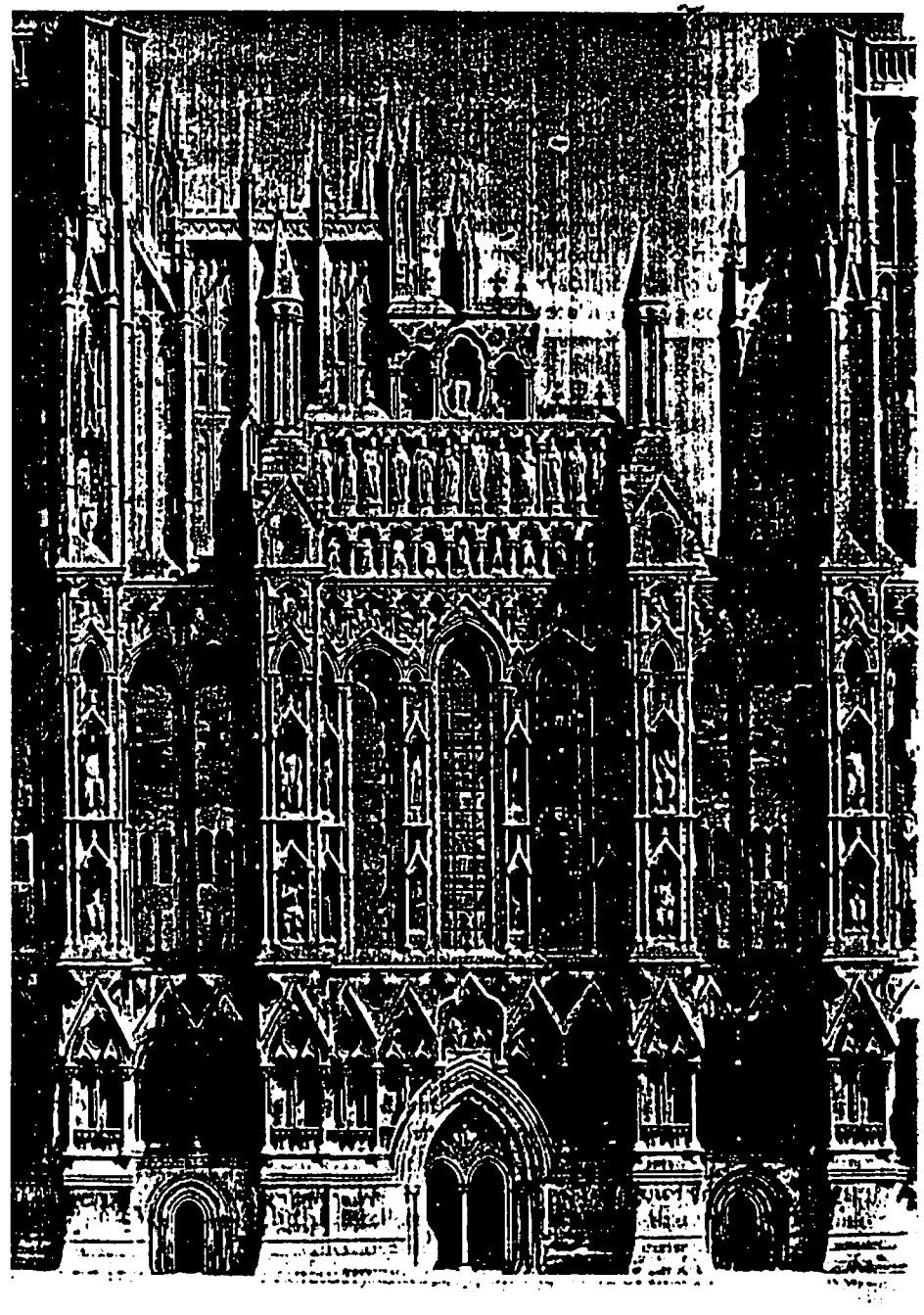


Fig. 13. The West Front of Wells Cathedral with the Nine Orders of Angels in the second row from the top (thirteenth cent.).

Fig. 14. Anonymous, *Judith beheading Holofernes* (detail). Scene from the choir stalls (last quarter fifteenth cent.). Bolsward, St Martin's Church. (Photo: Martien Coppens)

SIGN AND SYMBOL IN MUSIC FOR THE DEAD

In the literature about the history of music from the Low Countries, little attention has so far been paid to the theme of death. In a certain sense this is understandable, for in contrast to painters and sculptors who have provided a rich legacy of funerary art, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century composers occupied themselves only sporadically with this subject. Yet the composer too was not uninfluenced by Christian thinking concerning death. This is evident both in certain settings of liturgical texts for the dead as well as in funeral compositions on the occasion of the death of a musician or a person of high rank. The present study aims to illustrate various aspects of this by interpreting passages from some Requiem Masses and laments. It will be demonstrated that the composer sometimes introduced a particular sign or symbol in order to focus attention on some internal or external idea which, obviously, was of great importance to him. In this respect, he imitated the artist who also used inscriptions of magical texts or symbols to testify to the Christian attitude towards death (see Fig. 15 and p. 133). As explained in the Introduction to this book, signs occur as a *signum iconicum* (a sign with a certain similarity to the thing to which it refers) and as an *index* (a sign that brings something in particular to our notice). When the relation between a sign and its denotation is determined by a general rule – in reality this relationship is generally more sophisticated – we call it a symbol (see pp. 5-6).

The Mass for the Dead

In ancient Israel, death was viewed as "the denial of all positive aspects which were characteristic of life".[1] Death emanated from sin, through which man hid himself from God's merciful favour, as even Adam and Eve had experienced. There is clearly mention here of a conception in which death is viewed as a punishment for sin. Later, however, this conception was felt to be inadequate. In the Middle Ages in particular, greater personal devotion and an eschatologically orientated concept of life developed, which together introduced the possibility of leading a life in God's grace, on earth and in the world to come, with the resurrection in prospect. Christianity, like many other religions, began to regard the soul as being essentially immortal. The belief that human beings survive in some form after death profoundly influenced the art of the cathedrals. As we see in the entrance porches of these churches, a small elite of intellectuals "told themselves that Christ had conquered death. They denied death. At each break of day the beams of Easter morning lit up the sanctuary and fell upon the scene of mankind, redeemed,

[1] Encyclopedie van het Christendom. Katholiek deel (Amsterdam/Brussels 1956), p. 530.

emerging from the grave as from a bad dream, illustrated on the registers of the tympanum."[2] For the cathedral builders, "death was but a passage and the tomb a place of germination where each carnal being made ready to open out in glory" which it would behold after the Last Judgement.[3] This is the spirit in which we must understand the liturgy for the dead to which the Requiem Mass belongs. The *Missa pro defunctis*, or Mass for the Departed, is called 'Requiem Mass' after the opening words of the Introit: "Requiem eternam, dona eis, domine" (Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord), a petition which is constantly sung or recited also in the Office of the Dead. The image of rest, of course, refers to the transformation of life after death. The Preface of the Requiem Mass expresses this idea as follows: "For unto thy faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away: and the abode of this earthly sojourn being dissolved, an eternal dwelling is prepared in heaven."

A beautiful evocation of the image of rest is found towards the end of Orlando di Lasso's five-part *Missa pro defunctis*. The text is as follows: "Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam" (Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest eternal). The deep significance of this text is expressed in the peaceful mood of the musical setting. Its serene dignity functions clearly as an iconic sign. The opening of the Mass contrasts markedly with this. After the word "Requiem" has been intoned in plainsong, "eternam" is sung by the full ensemble, with the soprano part standing out due to its moving melody, great intervallic leaps and the fourfold repetition, hereby drawing all attention to the special meaning of the word "eternam". However, there is no question of word-painting here. The function of the striking melody is rather that of an *index*, pointing forward to the end of the Mass, where the composer seems to suggest that God indeed will grant rest to the faithful.

The idea of eternal rest is connected with life in paradise. It is through redemption in Christ that the faithful gain salvation. This dependence on the Lord is symbolized in the imagery of light. In the liturgy for the dead, therefore, the words "and let perpetual light shine upon them" are heard frequently. In the Introit of his Requiem Mass, Pierre de la Rue employs triplets to give strong emphasis to "luceat eis" (Ex. 1).

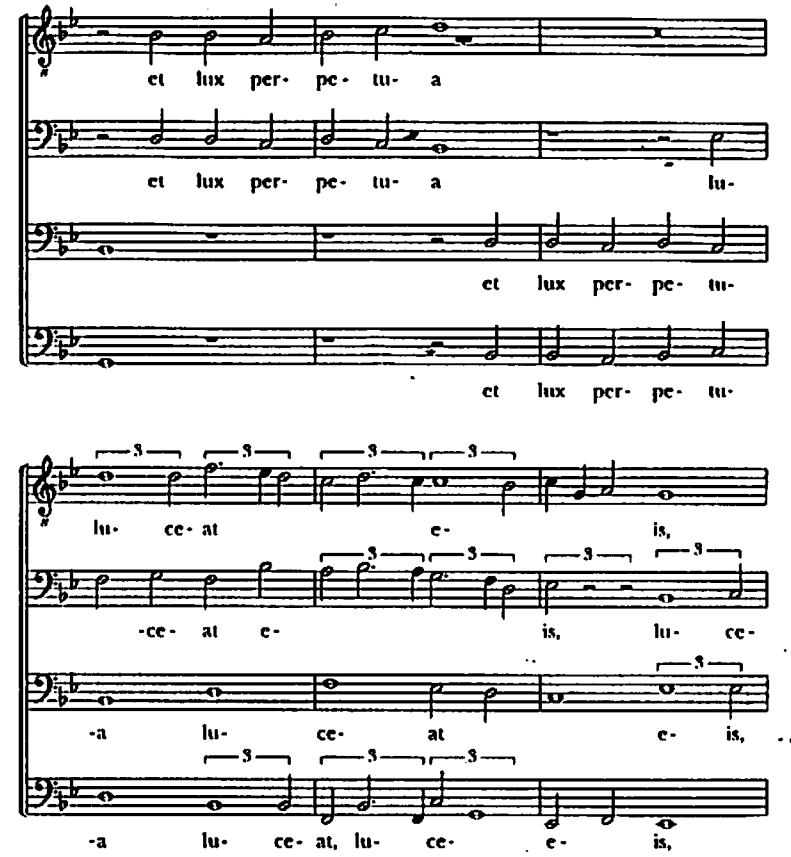
The example illustrates how, after the words "et lux perpetua" have been sung in binary rhythm, the triplets suggest illumination. The function of this rhythmic configuration is again that of an iconic sign.

In order to creating a dark colour and sombre mood in his Mass La Rue employs very low tessituras indicated by the following clefs: c^4, c^4, f^4, Γ. The lowest part often descends to $B_\flat$-flat. More or less normal clefs (c^1, c^3, c^4, f^4) are used in the Tract and Communion. It has been argued that "La Rue would have expected his singers to transpose the movements at sight", leading to the result of an 'equalized' performing version.[4] However, since such differences between the individual sections are very unusual in Renaissance Mass composition, it is more probable that the reason for these scorings must be sought in the changing textual contents of the various sections. The Tract, especially, emerges as it were out of the low register, and it is obvious that the composer wanted to create an extraordinary effect at the very moment of its intonation. The inclusion of the text "Sicut cervus" (Ps. 42:2-4) was part of the Northern tradition of the Mass for the Dead. The Council of Trent codified the Roman tradition, which has the text "Absolve, domine, animas omnium fidelium defunctorum ..." The text of the "Sicut cervus" Tract has been adopted from the liturgy of the Vigil of Easter. In earlier times, the catechumens were baptized towards the end of the Watch, just before day-

[2] G. Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals. Art and Society 980-1420* (London 1981), p. 290.
[3] *Ibid.*.

[4] See the comments by J. Milsom on the sleeve of Amonra recording SAR 24.

Ex. 1



break. Thereupon they were clothed in white garments to show that they had been reborn to the life of grace. During this ceremony, the Tract "Sicut cervus" was sung. The effect of La Rue's high voices intoning the words "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God", is indeed that of the fervent desire of the faithful for their God. The fact that the different scorings show a perfect balance – there exists a subtle variety between the sections and the highest voices return, as a rhetorical climax, at the end of the Mass in the Communion "Lux eterna" – is another argument in favour of the interpretation given above.

Whereas most Requiem Masses from the Renaissance are based on the corresponding liturgical melodies, the six-part setting by Jean Richafort uses as *cantus prius factus* the chant "Circumdederunt me gemitus mortis, dolores inferni circumdederunt me" (The sorrows of death surrounded me, the sorrows of hell encompassed me; Ps. 17:5-6).[5] The chant is presented as a two-part canon. Not only in its melodic and rhythmic form, but also in its canonic scaffold is the chant – as it appears in the Introit – identical with the two-fold cantus firmus in Josquin's *Nimphes, nappés*. If we consider that, moreover, bars 58-69 of the Kyrie have been borrowed from the Josquin's chanson bars 38-49, the relationship between both works is undeniable. To strengthen the effect of the words "dolores inferni", Richafort makes an interpolation at various points in his Mass. After these words a significant phrase from another chanson by Josquin, *Faulte d'argent*, is quoted (Ex. 2).

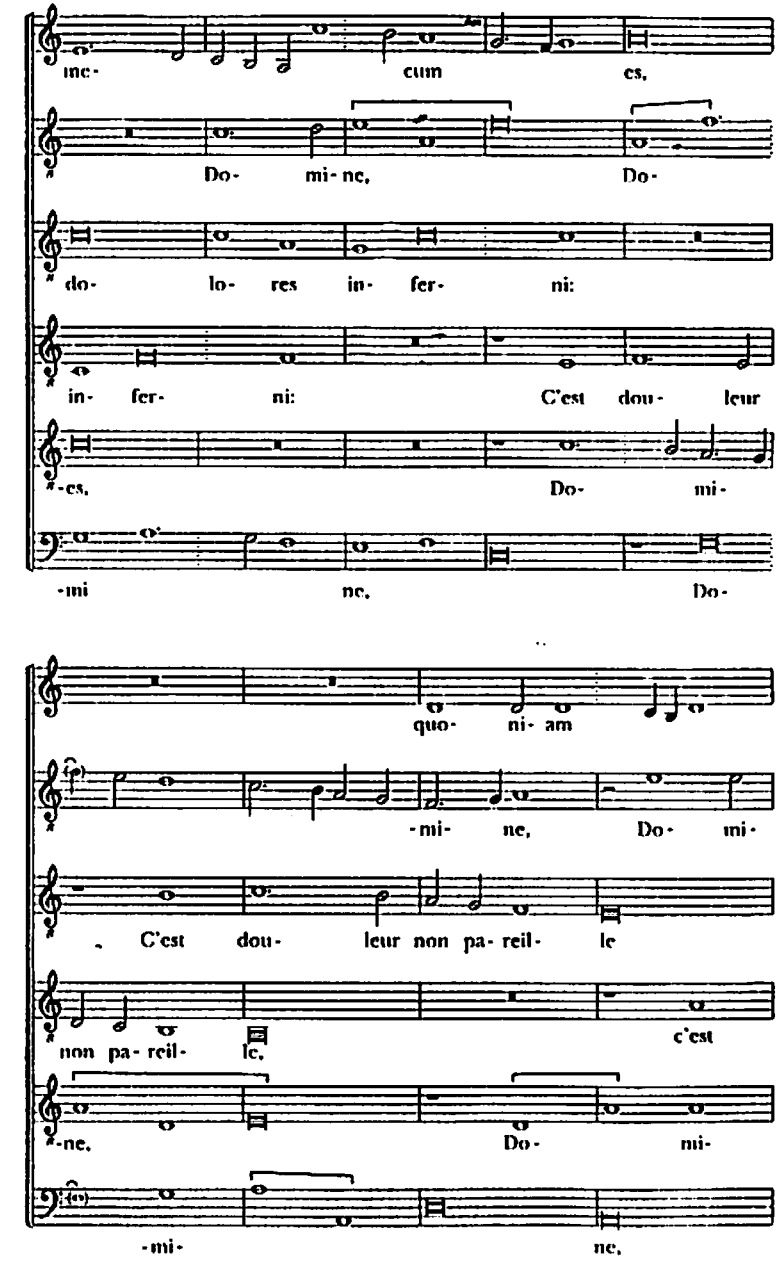
This latter chanson, too, lends itself to adaptation as a lament, since it contains a passage which sings of anguish. Surely, due to their ostinato character and the reference to the "unequalled" pains of hell, both quotations function as a *memento mori*.

Considering the quotations from Josquin, Paul Kast has suggested that Richafort possibly wrote his Requiem Mass in commemoration of this composer.[6] It seems to me that his view is correct. For if Richafort would have confined himself to using solely the "Circumdederunt" canon, one could point out that, because the text of the Offertory gives such a terrifying vision of hell, this chant is a very appropriate cantus firmus for the Mass for the Dead. However, the act of adopting the phrase "there is no sorrow equal to this one" from the chanson *Faulte d'argent* could only have been understood as pointing directly to Josquin. This is particularly true because around 1520 interpolations in French in polyphonic settings of the Ordinary of the Mass are quite uncommon. Further arguments in favour of Kast's hypothesis can be brought forward: (a) Gombert also employed the chant "Circumdederunt

[5] The origin of the chant is unknown. The Worcester Antiphonary, PalMus 12, p. 438, contains the text set to a melody that begins with the same *initium*. This melody is very similar to the one found by G. Reese (*Music in the Renaissance* (London 1954), p. 255, fn. 369) in a *Sarum Manuale* of 1526.

[6] Cf. MGG 11, c. 442.

Ex. 2



me" in his *Musae Iovis*, a monody written on the occasion of Josquin's death. (b) Richafort's *Missa pro defunctis* is preserved in a choirbook at Leiden (De Lakenhal, Ms. 1440) with an attribution to Josquin. Obviously, the scribe was misled either by the famous quotations or by the fact that the Mass was connected with Josquin's name. (c) Pierre de Ronsard, in the dedication to *Livre des meslanges* of 1560, names Richafort as a pupil of Josquin. Granted that Ronsard's remark is of a rhetorical nature, none the less it cannot be excluded that Richafort did have personal contact with Josquin.[7]

The lament

The theme of death inspired several Netherlandish composers to write laments; this was surely the result of one or more of the following considerations. First of all, the lament was an expression of regard for the dead person and the homage could help to perpetuate his fame; secondly, the composition was meant as a prayer to God to preserve the soul of the departed; thirdly, the lament could be a ritual aid to help reconcile the deceased with his new condition; finally, the writing of a lament may have served to ease the composer's personal grief.

The lament is a form of composition the text of which was newly written, either in Latin or in French.[8] The text normally identifies the person who is being commemorated. If the text is in French, it almost always at some point contains a liturgical phrase that has the character of a prayer for salvation. The Latin text can also be derived from the liturgy for the dead or compiled from various Biblical passages. One example of the latter procedure is Pierre de la Rue's *Delicta juventutis*, a lament in honour of Philip the Fair (d. 1506).[9] While referring to several basic ideas expressed in the liturgy for the dead, the text closes with the prayer "ut Philippus carne exutus pervenire ad gloriam regni celestis. Amen" (May Philip, after his death, attain to the glory of the celestial reign. Amen). Another example of this procedure is the motet *Absalon, fili mi*, a piece that is attributed to Josquin in a late German print, but recently has been claimed to be a work by La Rue.[10] The text freely

[7] Cf. H.M. Brown, in NGD 15, p. 839.

[8] S. Clercx, *Johannes Ciconia: un musicien liégeois et son temps* (Brussels 1960), vol. 1, p. 91, has suggested that Ciconia's ballata *Con lagrime bagnandome nel viso* was written at the death of Cardinal Albornoz in 1367, or that of Francesco da Carrara in 1406. If this is true, *Con lagrime* is one of the few laments on an Italian text by a composer from the Low Countries. (Another example is Alvise Willaert's *Pianza'l grego pueta* on the death of Adrian Willaert; see I. Bossuyt, *Adriaan Willaert (ca. 1490-1562). Leven en werk; stijl en genres* (Leuven 1985), p. 86, and P. van Nevel, *Vier neniae op de dood van Adriaan Willaert*, in Vlaanderen 34 (1985), pp. 160 and 166.)

[9] The unique source of this work is *Secundus tomus novi operis musici ...*, RISM 1538[3].

[10] See J. van Benthem, Lazarus versus Absalon. *About Fiction and Fact in the Netherlands Motet*, in TVNM 39 (1989), pp. 61-9, and J. Rifkin, *Problems of Authorship in Josquin: Some Impolitic Observations. With a Postscript on* Absalon, fili mi, in Proceedings of the International Josquin Symposium, Utrecht 1986 (Utrecht 1991), ed. by W. Elders in collaboration with F. de Haen, pp. 45-52.

conflates fragments of 2 Samuel 18:33 ("Absalon, fili mi, quis det ut moriar pro te, fili mi Absalom?"), Job 7:16 ("Non vivam ultra"), and Genesis 37:35 ("sed descendam in infernum plorans"). These lines reflect the same spirit as the anonymous Se *je souspire* (see below, p. 137), in that the purpose of boths laments seems to be – and in this respect they differ from all other laments to be discussed in this study – to make the narrator the object of pity. The meaning of the closing phrase of the Genesis text is expressed in the sequence of falling triads that moves the extremely low-scored voices into *D*-flat major. Edward Lowinsky's proposition that *Absalon, fili mi* commemorates the murder of Juan Borgia, son of Alexander VI, in 1497[11] appears untenable in view of the recently postulated authorship of Pierre de la Rue, who did not have any connection with Rome at the time of the Borgias. However, if *Absalon, fili mi* was indeed commissioned by a grieving father, Jeremy Noble's suggestion to connect the lament with the death of Philip the Fair seems easier to defend:[12] La Rue was the court composer of Maximilian's daughter, and the earliest source of the piece, London Royal 8 G VII, belongs to the Netherlands court complex.[13] The exclamation "Absalon, fili mi" forms in this case a pendant to the words "doleo super te, frater mi Philippe" in *Se je souspire*. This last phrase was also drawn from David's lament (2 Sam. 1:26). Yet if "Absalon" must be read as "Philippus", it is hard to understand why Marguerite did not have this impressive composition incorporated in her chanson album Ms. 228, as she did with both *Se je souspire* and *Proh dolor*, the lament for her father (see below, p. 132). It therefore remains possible that *Absalon, fili mi* should simply be considered as a motet belonging to the genre of settings of lamentations of Old Testament fathers. Other examples are La Rue's *Considera Israel* (2 Sam. 1:18b-26) and Josquin's *Planxit autem David* (2 Sam. 1:17-25).

Although small in number, the laments by Netherlandish composers represent a musical genre that arouses our interest because of its extraordinary quality. In some laments particular aspects of human interrelationships come to the fore. Even more remarkable, however, is the frequent use of special technical devices. The late Middle Ages saw the flourishing of brotherhoods, many of them developing their own ways of thinking and acting, in which rites, signs and symbols played an important role. Therefore, laments written for another musician often testify to this tradition.

It is further known from contemporaneous literary theory on funeral poetry that this genre was strongly influenced by rhetoric.[14] Since the lament was an occasional piece, both the poet and the composer, while addressing themselves to the audience, applied certain principles from the *ars oratoria* in

[11] *Josquin des Prez and Ascanio Sforza*, in Congresso internazionale sul Duomo di Milano. Atti, ed. by M.L. Gatti Perer (Milan 1969), vol. 2, pp. 20-1.

[12] Cf. NGD 9, p. 721.

[13] Cf. *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, vol. 2, p. 103.

[14] See S.F. Witstein, *Funeraire poëzie in de Nederlandse Renaissance* (Assen 1969), pp. 38ff.

order to give an emotional direction to their work. Jean Molinet, who himself wrote an elegy for Johannes Ockeghem, says in his *L'art de rhétorique* that rhetoric is the main constituent of poetic technique. According to Aristotelian theory, poetic art should be concerned with imitating (and improving) reality, hence the poet of a lament was bound to show evidence of this. And the composer followed suit: he often tried to express musically the elegiac mood of the text. And more often than not he did not stop at this form of *imitatio*. The quotation of a musical motif from a work by the deceased composer demonstrates that a second form of *imitatio*, the imitating of a 'model', occurs in the lament as well.

Musical figures

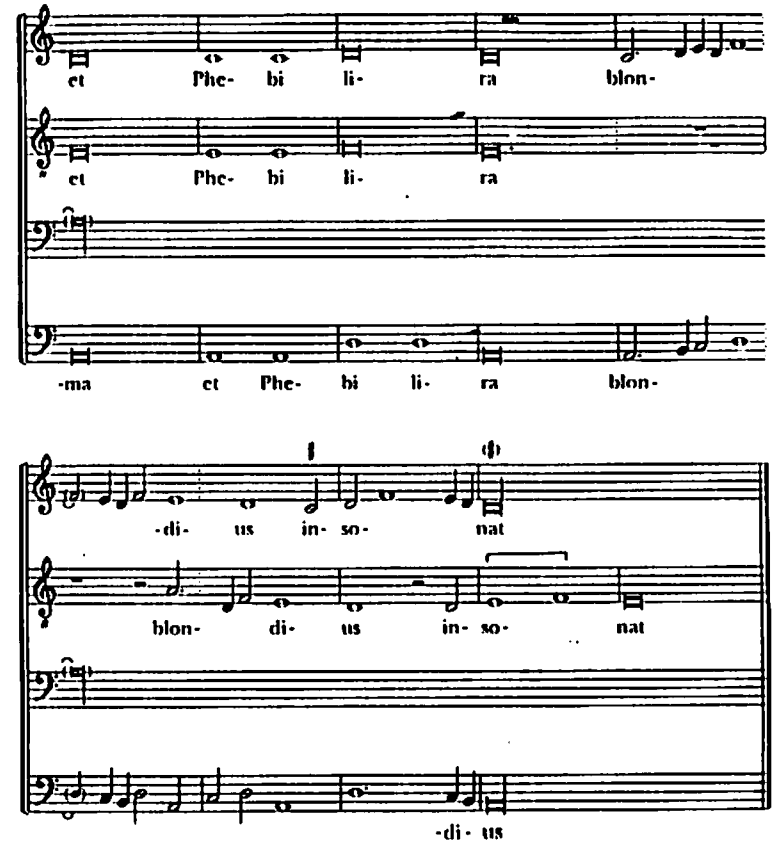
When Lorenzo de'Medici died in 1492, at the age of forty-three, the population of Florence was sincerely grieved at his premature death. As he had requested, his obsequies were simple.[15] Angelo Poliziano, the friend and protégé of Lorenzo, wrote an elegy which in his *Opera* is entitled *Monodia in Laurentium Medicum*. The composer's name too is mentioned: "Intonata per Arrighum Isac".[16] Isaac, who taught in the De' Medici household in Florence from ca. 1484 to 1492, and who after Lorenzo's death had to seek employment elsewhere, was certainly no less grieved than Politian: text and music both express similar feeling of sadness.[17] The second part of the poem calls Lorenzo, who himself was respected as a poet of great talent, the "Laurel", honoured by the choirs of muses and nymphs. In the third part Politian permits Phoebus's lyre and voice to sound more sweetly than ever beneath Lorenzo's spreading hair (Ex. 3).

Stressing the affections of harmonic intervals, Zarlino[18] prescribes the use of minor thirds and minor sixths in a low register – these intervals being by nature sweet – when the composer wishes to express grief. Example 3 illustrates how Isaac already anticipates this rule. Above the long-held *a* in the tenor the low(!) soprano-part, with its minor thirds and sixths, manifests both the notions of sorrow and sweetness, and acts therefore as a *signum iconicum*.

The topos of the lyre, this time connected with Orpheus, was also used by Jean Lemaire de Belges in his elegy "Cueurs desolez" for Louis de Luxembourg (d. 1503) or Jean de Luxembourg (d. 1508).[19] There exist two musical settings of the poem, one in the chanson album 228 of Marguerite of Austria

[15] Cf. M. Rowdon, *Lorenzo the Magnificent* (London 1974), p. 220.
[16] Cf. M. Staehelin, *Die Messen von Heinrich Isaac* (Bern/Stuttgart 1977), vol. 2, p. 37.
[17] Staehelin, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 32-3, argues that Isaac, perhaps being pressed for time, adapted considerable portions from his *Missa Salva nos* and skilfully linked them by means of new transitional passages.
[18] *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venice 1558), book III, ch. 10 (p. 156).
[19] Cf. H. Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez* (Tutzing 1962-65), vol. 1, pp. 64-7.

Ex. 3

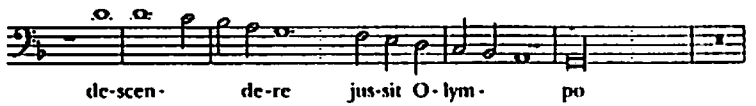


without the composer's name, and one in Attaingnants *Trent sixiesme livre* with an attribution to Josquin. Contrary to Isaac, who sets the word "lyre" to two simple chords, the composers of Lemaire's text illustrate the idea of the instrument actually being played by setting the word "lyre" to an elaborate melody. Example 4 is extracted from the anonymous setting in the Ms. Brussels 228:

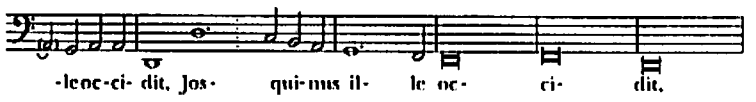
Ex. 4

Another example of this so-called *hypotyposis* is found in Nicolas Gombert's six-part lament for Josquin des Prez (d. 1521). The text, by Gerardus Avidius of Nijmegen, summons the muses to bewail the "fallen" composer. At the words "Josquinus ille occidit", all voices except the tenor, which carries the cantus firmus, sing a descending scale. Moreover, it is possible that this passage serves another purpose too. The descending scale was used in several works of Josquin to illustrate various textual ideas. There is, for instance, a certain similarity between a passage in Josquin's *Huc me sydereo* and Gombert's monody (Exx. 5a and b):

Ex. 5a



Ex. 5b



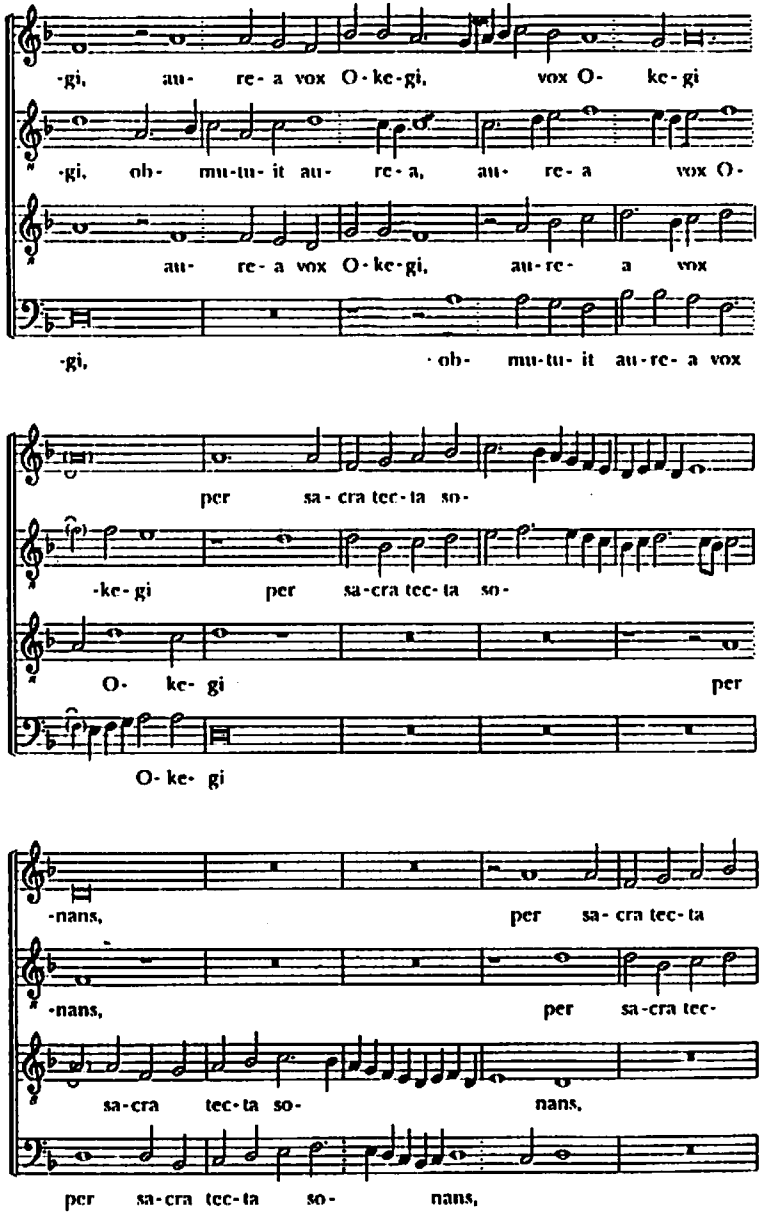
If Gombert did indeed intend to imitate one of Josquin's stylistic features, the descending scale can be considered as an *index* as well.

On the death of Johannes Ockeghem in 1497, several dirges were made. The setting of Erasmus's elegy "Ergone conticuit" was published by Susato in 1547 with an attribution to Johannes Lupi. It seems more likely, however, that the music is by Lupus.[20] The text praises the golden voice of Ockeghem, which resounds underneath the sacred vaults [of the church]. Only at this point in the long composition is the technique of paired imitation used, its occurrence clearly having the character of an allusion to the echos of the composer's music (Ex. 6). Here too, a rhetorical figure (*mimesis*) serves as a *signum iconicum*.

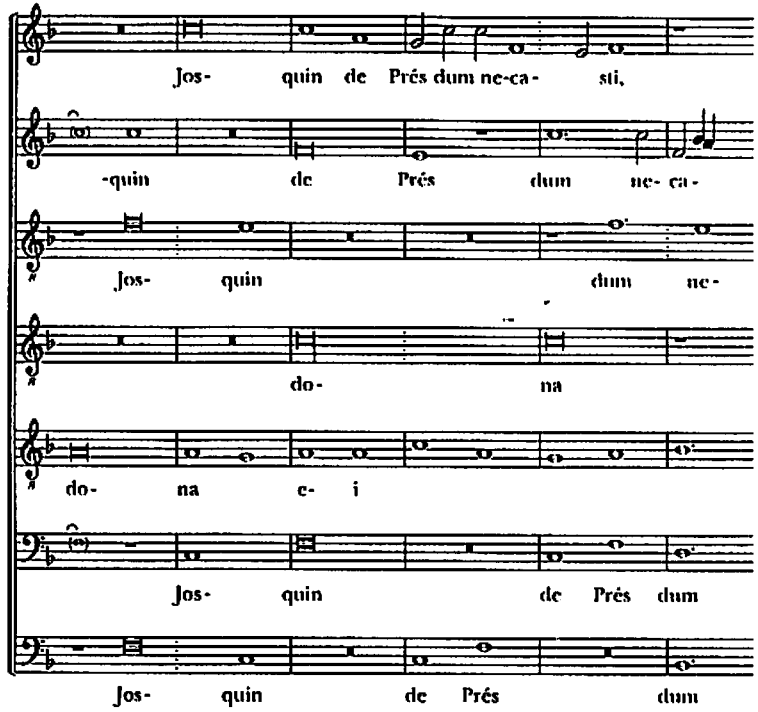
In Jheronimus Vinders's *Lamentatio super morte Josquin de Prés* motifs in fourths, sometimes interspersed with seconds, occur repeatedly in the two lower voices (Ex. 7). This is obviously the composer's imitation of the tolling of the death-bells. It is tempting to regard this passage too as a *signum iconicum*. Yet, I believe that Vinders designed the remarkable sequence of motifs first of all as an *index*. The text, instead of containing a word denoting bells (Lat. sing. *campana* or *signum*) which would justify the former approach, mentions the name of the deceased musician, "Josquin de Prés". Though the music thus evokes the image of the toll, it is the text that proclaims the name of the person who died.

[20] Cf. NGD 11, p. 338.

Ex. 6



Ex. 7



Black notation

Among the laments written by Netherlandish composers there are three in entirely black notation: Josquin's *Deploration de Johan.* Okeghem; Josquin's *Absolve, quesumus, domine* in Ms. B.21 from Toledo Cathedral (Fig. 16); and the anonymously preserved *Proh dolor* in the Ms. Brussels 228. Although the Toledo choirbook, the unique source of *Absolve,* does not mention the name of the deceased – as is usual in liturgical texts, the source contains the letter 'N' (for *nomen*) – some years ago I made an attempt based on various arguments to relate this motet to the death of Obrecht.[21] The text of *Proh dolor* as well as its source – Brussels 228 is one of the chanson albums of Marguerite of Austria – point to Maximilian I as the person in whose honour this lament was written. Several musicologists claim *Proh dolor* also as a work by Josquin.[22] The use of black notation was exceptional in mensural music at

[21] See *Josquin's* Absolve, quesumus, domine: *A Tribute to Obrecht?*, in TVNM 37 (1987), pp. 14-24.
[22] Cf. W. Elders, *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 22-4.

the time of Josquin. In all three pieces, mensuration signs are absent, and a transcription of three breves to the bar seems justified.[23]

While to-day it would not surprise us to find the colour black connected with the idea of death, around 1500 this relationship was less self-evident. In ancient times, black was a symbol of death and the underworld. But in the Middle Ages, when Christian colour symbolism began to develop, black was adopted firstly as a sign of the Prince of Darkness and witchcraft.[24] Moreover, as we have seen above, the Christian vision of death as described in the texts of the liturgy for the dead is rather associated with the imagery of light. Those who are thought to be in heaven are accordingly clothed with white robes. (See, for example, Revelation 7:9: "After this I saw a great multitude ... clothed with white robes"; the *Te deum* refers to "the white-robed army of martyrs".) The early-Christian apologist, Tertullian, says in his *De mortalitate*: "Since death means the entrance of man in heaven, it is not befitting to wear black clothes, because he himself is clothed with white."[25] Mourning in white has therefore something Messianic; mourning in black rather gives the impression that there is no hope,[26] or alludes to the doctrinal belief concerning purgatory.[27] In his representation of the Requiem Mass (Fig. 15), Jan van Eyck dressed the persons standing around the coffin in dark-coloured clothes, perhaps following a tradition which to-day is still found in the Byzantine burial service. The blue of the catafalque and the red of the cloth covering the coffin possibly refer to colours of the arms of the dukes of Bavaria.[28] On the other hand, the miniature of the Requiem Mass painted by Jean Colombe between 1485 and 1489 (*Très riches heures* of John, Duke of Berry) shows a coffin covered by a black cloth; the celebrant, his ministrants, and four other clerics are likewise clothed in black. (The white dog at the foot of the coffin in Van Eyck's miniature is a symbol of fidelity and may signify that the deceased had been a faithful Christian. The small brown dog, a personification of the unbeliever, has ostentatiously been placed to one side.[29])

The answer to the question why Josquin, for the first time in the history of Western music, applied the colour black to the musical notation in his laments, must be sought in the texts of these compositions. The earliest piece, a setting of the French dirge "Nymphes des bois" by Jean Molinet, summons the singers of all nations to change their voices "into sharp cries and lamentations" and "to weep great tears from their eyes for they have lost their good father". The text of "Absolve", the Postcommunion from the lit-

[23] Cf. Proceedings of the Josquin Symposium Cologne 1984, ed. by W. Elders, in TVNM 35 (1985), pp. 69 and 87.
[24] G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961), p. 151.
[25] Translation based on *Liturgisch Woordenboek* (Roermond 1958-68), vol. 2, col. 1352.
[26] Cf. G. Heinz-Mohr, *Lexikon der Symbole* (Düsseldorf/Cologne 1976), p. 101.
[27] Cf. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Macropaedia 5, p. 536.
[28] Cf. A. Châtelet, *Early Dutch Painting* (Oxford 1981), p. 196.
[29] Cf. G. Heinz-Mohr, *op. cit.* (fn. 26), p. 140.

urgy for the dead, is a prayer to God to "[absolve] the soul of the faithful [Jacob] from every bond of sin, so that he may be raised up in the glory of the resurrection and live amongst the saints and elect". The lament for Maximilian has as its text a humanistic Latin elegy that opens with the exclamation, "O sorrow!", and calls on the "people of German lands" to mourn the death of their magnanimous king. It ends with the line, "And may the heavenly host admit this great man". Both the laments for Ockeghem and Obrecht are based on the Introit of the Requiem Mass; the funeral song for Maximilian has as cantus firmus the last line of the Sequence "Dies ire". In view of the fact that all three compositions incorporate the prayer for eternal rest, it is hardly conceivable that Josquin employed black notation to refer to death.[30] As a faithful Christian, he must have preferred to see the end of earthly life in a positive sense. Since the texts of the laments for Ockeghem and Maximilian, moreover, plainly point to sorrow and lamentation, it seems more likely that the composer wanted to express these feelings not only in his music but also in the notation. In so doing, he created a new and unique example of the system of musical communication.

Seven-part scoring

Proh dolor is not only striking because of its visual appearance, it can also be claimed as the first seven-part funeral work in Western music, and as such it set a standard for later laments. Since ancient times the number seven has signified mourning. Proof for this is found in several passages from the Old Testament. In Genesis 50:10, Joseph commands seven days of mourning for Jacob. The last chapter of the book of Judith (16:28-29) contains the following lines: "... and she [i.e., Judith] died, and was buried with her husband in Bethulia. And all the people mourned for seven days." In the book of Job (2:11-13) we read: "Now when Job's three friends heard of all the evil that had befallen him, ... they wept, ... and they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights ..." Any doubt as to the question whether or not the appearance of the number seven in funeral music does signify mourning is dispelled by a composition of English origin. In 1606, John Coprario published in London his *Funeral Teares for the Death of the Right Honorable the Earle of Devonshire.* The subtitle says that they are "figured in seaven songes".

Josquin's presumed authorship of *Proh dolor* is reinforced by the fact that two laments, written on his own death, are also for seven voices. These are Vinders's *O Mors inevitabilis* (see pp. 130 and 137) and the anonymous *Absolve,*

[30] This interpretation is a revision of the one offered in my contribution to the symposium "Zeichen und Struktur in der Musik der Renaissance", Münster 1987. In this paper I suggested that the colour black refers to death; see *Struktur, Zeichen und Symbol in der altniederländischen Totenklage*, Bericht des Symposium, ed. by K. Hortschansky (Kassel 1989), p. 35.

quesumus, domine in Piacenza, Archivio del Duomo, Ms. s.s.[31] More than forty years after Josquin's death, seven-part scoring still appears in two other funeral works, both having their origin at the Habsburg court in Vienna. The death of Ferdinand I in 1564 was commemorated by Johannes de Cleve in his *Austria Danubii.* Three years later Jacob Regnart dedicated his *Defunctum charites Vaetem* to the imperial chapelmaster Jacobus Vaet.

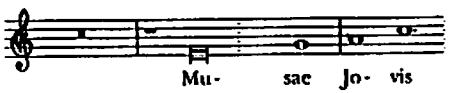
Musical quotation

In laments written in honour of a great composer, the superius may derive its opening motif from a work by the deceased master. Again we must look at Josquin's oeuvre to find the earliest example of this procedure. The first notes of *Nymphes des bois* show a certain similarity with the opening of Ockeghem's *Missa Cuiusvis toni* (Ex. 8):

Ex. 8

That the similarity is not accidental is suggested by the absence of clefs – the position of the parts must be deduced from the flats denoting the key – in the sources of Josquin's lament: Ockeghem's Mass was a famous model in this respect. A further argument supporting the assertion that here we do indeed have a case of deliberate citation is found in Gombert's elegy for Josquin. The words "Musae Iovis" at the beginning of his soprano part are likewise set to these same notes (Ex. 9)

Ex. 9



The "Nymphes des bois" motif seems also to govern the various transpositions of the *cantus prius factus* "Circumdederunt me" in the sexta pars: the initial notes of the four statements are *e, g, a,* and *b.* Since, moreover, the entries of statements two to four cannot be derived from the key at the beginning of the cantus firmus voice – there is only a repetition sign to indicate that the chant must be restated – the absence of clefs may well be considered as another reference to Josquin's lament for Johannes Ockeghem.

Benedictus Appenzeller also selected the dirge by Avidius for a lament to honour the "princeps omnium". The motif with which this composer's

[31] For the latter composition see W. Elders, *op. cit.* (fn. 21), pp. 14-5.

Musae Iovis is intoned was possibly taken from Josquin's psalm motet *Domine, exaudi orationem meam* (Ex. 10):

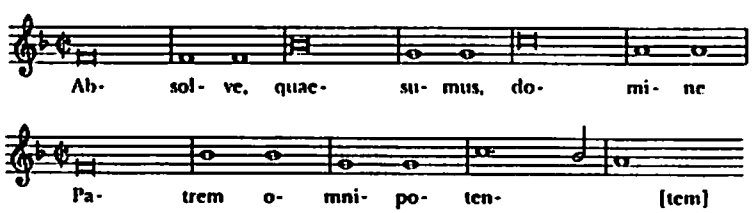
Ex. 10

The text of the latter piece is the last of the seven penitential psalms. This group of psalms has played an important role in Christian worship since at least the sixth century. In "Domine, exaudi" (Ps. 142), the psalmist calls on God for deliverance. Since the text forms part of the Office of November 2, the day on which, in the Roman Catholic liturgy, all the faithful departed are commemorated, Appenzeller's reference to the setting by Josquin seems very appropriate indeed.

Whereas the citations from the *Missa Cuiusvis toni* and *Nymphes des bois* are primarily an expression of esteem – we may thus see these motifs as an *index* – Appenzeller's alleged reference to the psalm motet *Domine, exaudi* adds another dimension to this citatory practice. In view of the words with which the motif is associated in its original setting, the citation may have been intended to incorporate into a lament on Josquin's death a prayer by the composer himself. If so, we enter hereby the realm of symbolism: the motif has now an esoteric function, and only its former text unveils Appenzeller's intention.

Josquin's *Absolve* opens with a motif, partly in imitation, which occurs in a more or less similar form at the beginning of the Credo of Jacob Obrecht's *Missa Fortuna desperata* (Ex. 11):

Ex. 11



Below I will discuss the postulated symbolical function of this citation.

Chant as a cantus prius factus

In studying the corpus of laments by composers from the Netherlands, one soon discovers that the Introit melody of the Gregorian Requiem Mass was a favourite musical basis. We encounter this *cantus prius factus* over a period of eighty years. Obrecht was the first composer who chose the chant, namely as

the cantus firmus for his *Mille quingentis*, a four-part lament written in 1488 on the death of his father, Willem Obrecht. About ten years later, the chant was employed by Josquin in his *Nymphes des bois* for Ockeghem, and in 1505 he adapted the same melody as a canon for two voices in his *Absolve* for Obrecht. Surprisingly, it was also used twice for Josquin himself: the unknown composer of the Piacenza *Absolve* introduces the Introit as a two-part canon, and Vinders, in *O Mors inevitabilis*, constructs an impressive scaffolding by combining the Introit with a melody to the same text from the Office for the Dead (the Invitatory of Matins). The next example is by Jacobus Vaet: his *Continuo lachrimas* commemorates Jacobus Clemens non Papa, who died in 1555 or 1556. Finally, the above-mentioned laments by Cleve and Regnart share not only their symbolical seven-part scoring but the cantus firmus "Requiem eternam" as well.

Though these eight laments are based on texts of different character – as to their contents the texts are either elegiac, laudative or liturgical – the inclusion of the words, "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord ...", must invariably be seen as a sign that the lament was meant as a prayer too.

The tradition of utilizing a chant from the liturgy for the dead in funeral music probably started with Ockeghem. In his four-part *Mort tu as navré de ton dart*, a ballad in honour of Gilles Binchois on his death in 1460, he places the text in the soprano. All three strophes close with the words "Priez pour l'ame" (Pray for the soul). At these words the tenor voice reiterates the last line of the sequence *Dies ire*. The purpose of this Latin phrase, "Pie Jesu domine, dona ei requiem" (Merciful Lord Jesus, grant him rest), is clearly to reinforce the prayer in the top voice. The same quotation returns in the lament for Maximilian, *Proh dolor*. Below I will deal in more detail with the import of the *cantus prius factus* in this motet.

In the first part of this study I have pointed out that Richafort's Requiem Mass is based on the cantus firmus "Circumdederunt me". The chant is sung also in Gombert's lament *Musae Iovis*. However, unlike Josquin and Richafort, who set the chant as a two-part canon, Gombert states it four times in different proportional note-values, and he transposes it up from *e* to *g*, *a*, and *b*. It is tempting to suggest that Gombert's use of "Circumdederunt me" was inspired by the occurrence of the chant in *Nimphes, nappés*. Yet the melodic and rhythmic shape of Gombert's cantus firmus differs somewhat from Josquin's. Since the precise origin of the chant has not been traced thus far,[32] the question why the two composers did not use the same version is hard to answer. Maybe Josquin found himself forced to modify the traditional melody to make it suitable for canonic elaboration.

Other quotations from chant include verses from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The anonymous *Se je souspire* for Philip the Fair (d. 1506) is preserved in the Ms. Brussels 228, one of the chanson albums of Marguerite of Austria. Martin Picker believes that Marguerite herself wrote the French

[32] See fn. 5.

and Latin text of the bass part in the *I. pars*.[33] The bass of the *II. pars* quotes Jeremiah 1:12: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." Both the French and Latin texts of this lament illustrate that, in writing and selecting these lines, Marguerite may have tried to overcome her personal grief. Josquin's (?) *Cueurs desolez* (see above) borrows verse 1:2, "Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her." While the cantus firmus of *Cueurs desolez* follows almost completely the well-known liturgical formula, in *Se je souspire* only the first half-verse is set to the plainsong melody. Pierre Moulu based his lament *Fiere Attropos* for Anne of Brittany (d. 1514) on the antiphon "Anxiatus est". The text, "And my spirit is in anguish within me: my heart within me is troubled", is derived from the Psalm "Domine, exaudi orationem meam" (see above). The antiphon is sung at Lauds on Good Friday. Finally, Isaac, in the *II. pars* of his *Quis dabit capiti meo aquam* (see above), repeats the prayer "Et requiescamus in pace" six times in the bass. Why does the composer, in contrast to all other laments in which the additional prayer refers through its form to the third person, make the supplication in the first person? The text and melody form the closing line of the antiphon "Salva nos", a chant from Compline that is sung at the end of the day before retiring. Before Lorenzo's death in 1492, Isaac had based a four-part Mass on the same antiphon. Possibly since he was pressed for time, he drew heavily upon this Mass for his setting of Poliziano's dirge.[34] The second strophe of the poem says that Lorenzo "is suddenly struck down by a flash of lightning". It is thus easily understood why the words, "May we rest in peace", are always intoned at a lower pitch. As we have seen above, Gombert likewise used a descending line for the words "Josquinus ille occidit".

The affection of the mode

Several of the laments described above are set in the Phrygian mode, and there can be no question that the composers did so deliberately. With the revival of interest in ancient Greek music theory around 1500, the proper choice of mode became an important consideration in the process of composing. As Claude Palisca remarks: "The modes were fascinating to Renaissance musicians not simply because they were a link to a noble past but because they were thought to unlock the powers of music over human feelings and morals."[35] In his *Practica musicae* of 1496, Franchino Gaffurio equated the modern with the ancient modes. And, associating the effects of the ancient modes with the modern modes, Gaffurio also transferred the efficacy of the

[33] *The Chanson Albums of Marguerite of Austria* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1965), p. 56. The French lament expresses the grief at the death of a "sweet friend" by the "sad, unfortunate one". The Latin text names the deceased as "my brother Philippe, greatest king".
[34] See M. Staehelin, *op. cit.* (fn. 17), vol. 3, pp. 31-3.
[35] *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Thought* (New Haven/London 1985), p. 12.

former to the latter. Although the explanations of the modes given by individual theorists may vary somewhat, the third mode was mostly connected with feelings of anger, indignation and lamentation.[36] The choice of this mode for an elegy was therefore in perfect agreement with contemporary music theory.

None the less, two laments in the Phrygian mode testify to a more sophisticated compositional procedure. As we have seen, Obrecht's *Mille quingentis* and Josquin's *Nymphes des bois* are based on the Introit of the Mass for the Dead. The melody is originally in the fifth mode.[37] That some medieval theorists characterize this mode as 'joyful'[38] need not surprise us: this affection accords with the Christian expectation that eternal rest will be granted to the soul of the departed. However, in order to accommodate the Introit to the Phrygian mode as was demanded by the mood of lamentation, both Obrecht and Josquin employ the cantus firmus a semitone lower. At the same time, they give the pre-existing melody compositional primacy in that they fit the other voices to it. Since the melody is sung in long notes in the tenor, the melodic transformation is indiscernable for the listener. We therefore encounter in these two compositions an example of symbolism that can only have been appreciated by the musicians themselves. In the case of the lament on Ockeghem's death, the *cantus prius factus* even appears in its original notation: the Medici Codex alludes to the transposition by the direction: "Pour eviter noyse et debas, Prenes ung demy ton plus bas" (To avoid noise and debates, take it [i.e. the melody] a half tone lower). In *Mille quingentis*, it is the Muses of Sicily who bemoan the composer's father; in *Nymphes des bois*, the poet Molinet invites the skilled singers to change their "clear and lofty voices into sharp cries and lamentations". Although the choice of the third mode may have been prompted primarily by the mournful character of the texts, I do not exclude the possibility that extra-textual feelings of indignation and anger, inherent in the lamenting process, may have played a role as well.

Symbolic canons

Another form of symbolism occurs in the seven-part *Proh dolor* and in Josquin's five-part setting of *De profundis*, the sixth penitential psalm (no. 129). Both works contain a canon for three voices. The latter composition is found in the Ms. Cappella Sistina 38 (dated 1563) with the canon direction "Les trois estas sont assembles / Pour le soulas des trespasses" (The three estates are assembled to console the departed). The other sources do not give

[36] For the qualifications by Johannes Afflighemensis, Burtius and Finck, see NGD 12, pp. 398-9; for Gaffurio, see Palisca, *op. cit.* (fn. 35), p. 13. Glarean, *Dodecachordon*, book II, ch. 23 (p. 123), calls the third mode 'mournful', and says that "it excites the emotions to lamenting".
[37] Editions of Solesmes erroneously indicate the sixth mode.
[38] For example, Frutolfus, NGD 12, p. 398.

a motto. Considering the late date of the manuscript we remain in uncertainty as to whether or not the direction stems from Josquin himself. Helmuth Osthoff has stated that, in the context of the closing lines of the motet's text – the words "Requiem eternam ... Pater noster" form part of the burial service – the canon must refer to Louis XII (d. 1515): the three estates had played a significant role only during his kingship. Nevertheless, even if we accept that the canon direction is indeed original, Herbert Kellman has raised the objection that "the social structure of the three estates ... as a constitutional body existed in the Netherlands as well."[39] Consequently, he mentions Philip the Fair as another possible dedicatee. Subsequent to Philip's death in 1506, funeral services were celebrated in 1507 at Malines, the residential place of his sister Marguerite of Austria. However, Kellman does not deny that Josquin's psalm indeed may have been written for the funeral services of Louis XII. As other nominees he mentions Anne of Brittany and Maximilian I.

In Christian burial and commemoration services the community prays not only for the person who died, but for all the faithful who have departed as well. Therefore the text of *De profundis* closes with the words "Eternal rest give unto them ..." The plural "trepasses" of the canon direction corresponds with this usage. While Josquin quite often employed two-part canons in his motets, three-part canonic writing occurs but once; if *Proh dolor* also happens to be a work of his, there are no more than two examples. Hence it is likely, as Osthoff has suggested,[40] that this exceptional compositional procedure was conceived in order to symbolize a particular situation. In the case of the funeral psalm motet *De profundis* it may very well be that the voices personify the three estates: while medieval society was normally organized into three classes (clergy, nobility, and commoners) that, for political purposes, were strictly divided, it now forms a unity which prays for the soul of some deceased royal personage. Together with the two other parts, the canonic voices perform the prayer of the sinner who trusts in the mercies of God.

Proh dolor, the lament for Maximilian, is preserved in one source only, the Ms. Brussels 228 (see above, p. 132). The manuscript was written between 1516 and 1523 at the request of Marguerite of Austria, and it contains the canon direction: "Celum terra mariaque Succurrite pio" (Heaven, earth, and seas, succour the pious one). The lament may have been performed at one of the memorial services for Maximilian held in Malines on 27 and 28 February, 1519. As Martin Picker has shown, the direction implicitly refers to the three different pitch levels of the canonic voices in descending order, *a'* (heaven), *e'* (earth), and *a* (seas).[41] Though the Latin inscription virtually

[39] *Josquin and the Court of the Netherlands and France: The Evidence of the Sources*, in Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference New York 1971, ed. by E.E. Lowinsky (London 1976), p. 189.
[40] Cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 19), vol. 2, p. 126.
[41] *Op. cit.* (fn. 33), pp. 89-90.

'pictures' the execution of the canon – as such it acts more or less as an iconic sign – its probable symbolical significance is less easy to grasp. However, the following interpretation may lie close to the composer's intention.

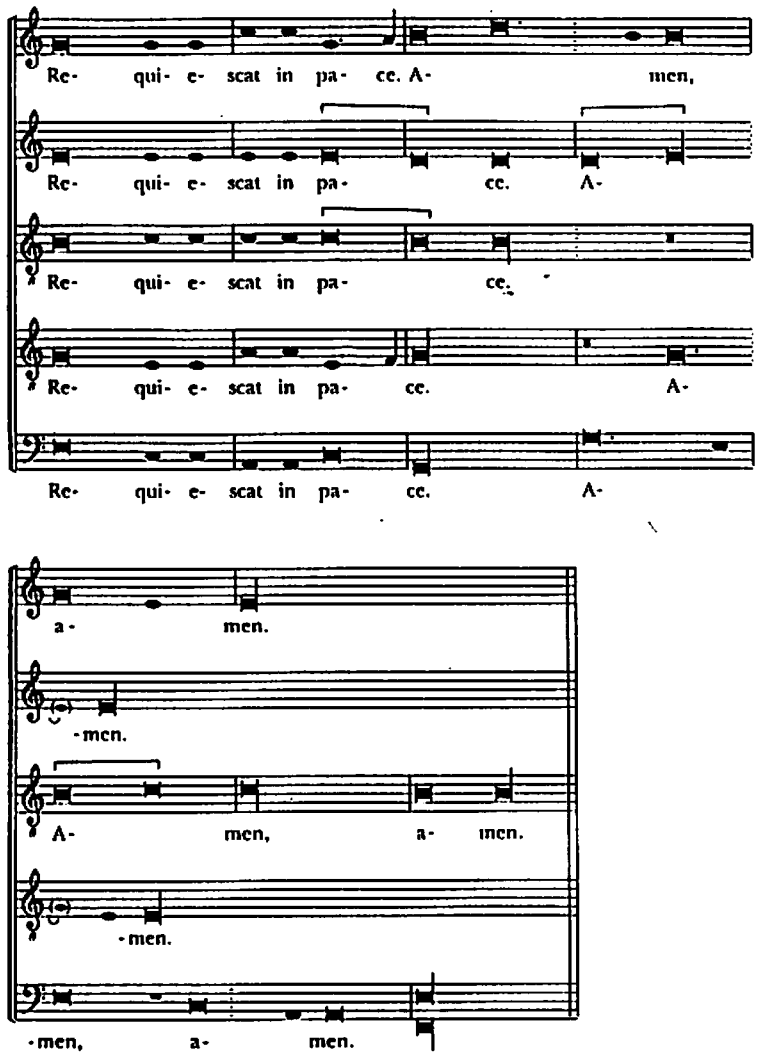
In Christian iconography, God's worldly power is sometimes represented by heaven, the earth and the seas.[42] The basis for this type of representation lies in the Old Testament, in particular in Isaiah 66:1 and Psalm 120. The latter text, "Levavi oculos meos", is the second of the fifteen gradual psalms. Verse 2 reads: "My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." The gradual psalms have been called the spiritual steps by which the faithful ascend to heaven.[43] The second psalm of this group states that God is the keeper of his servants. The hope that God indeed will protect the faithful in whose honour *Proh dolor* was composed, is expressed both by the canon direction "succour the pious one", and by the text that is sung: "Lord, all pitying, Jesus blest, Grant him thine eternal rest. Amen." This text is the final verse of the sequence *Dies ire*. The idea of a three-part canon that would symbolize the power of God over the whole cosmos may have been formed to allude to the fact that, as the head of the Holy Roman Empire, the deceased person had been the most powerful man on earth.

Gematria

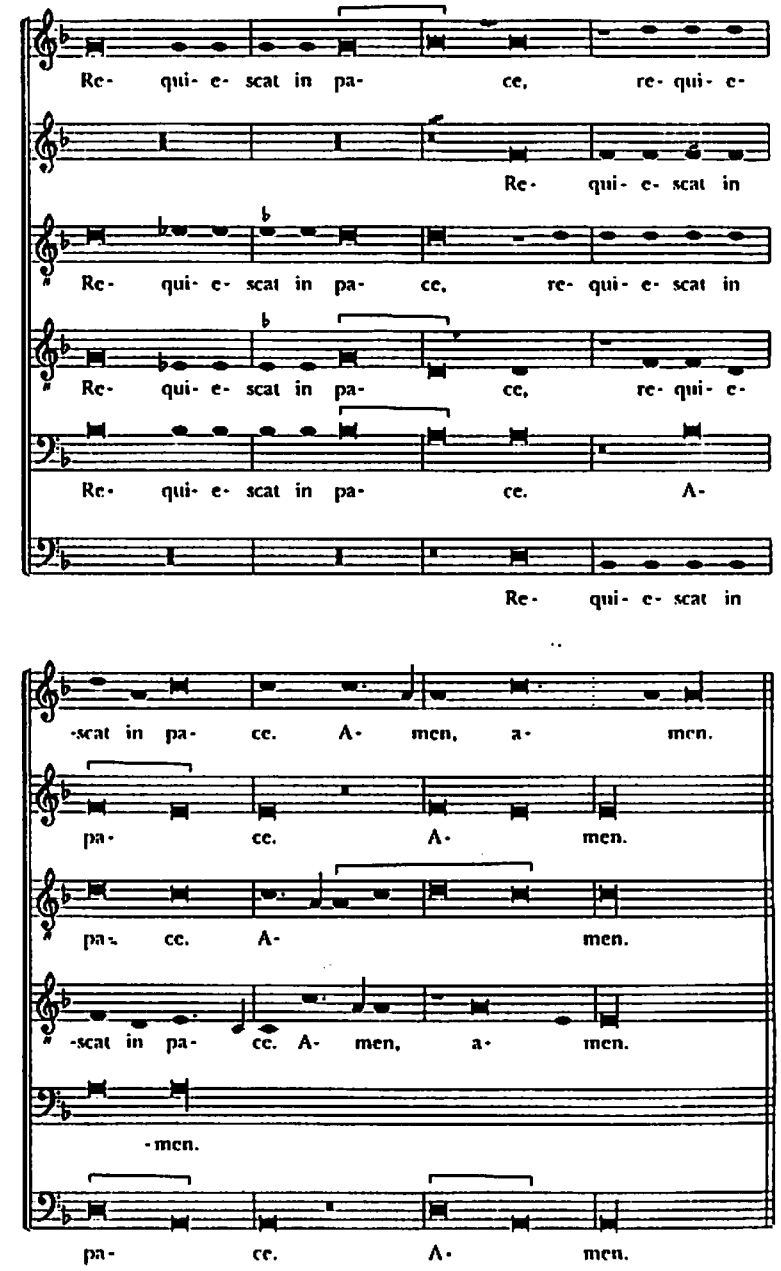
As we have seen above, Josquin probably wrote two laments in honour of fellow musicians. It is in these works that we encounter a form of symbolism that rightly can be called esoteric. Both compositions, *Nymphes des bois* and *Absolve, quesumus, domine*, are similar in three aspects: (a) the notation is entirely black, (b) the Introit of the Mass for the Dead forms the cantus firmus, (c) the peroration, "Requiescat in pace. Amen", is freely composed. The similarity between the final section of the laments is shown in Examples 12a and 12b:

[42] See *Lexikon christlicher Kunst*, ed. by J. Seibert (Freiburg 1980), p. 102.
[43] See my study *Symbolic Scoring* ..., pp. 113-4.

Ex 12a


Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce. A- men,
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce. A-
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce.
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce. A-
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce. A-
a- men.
-men.
A- men, a- men.
-men.
-men, a- men.

Ex 12b


Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce, re- qui- e-
Re- qui- e- scat in
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce, re- qui- e- scat in
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce, re- qui- e-
Re- qui- e- scat in pa- ce. A-
Re- qui- e- scat in
-scat in pa- ce. A- men, a- men.
pa- ce. A- men.
pa- ce. A- men.
-scat in pa- ce. A- men, a- men.
-men.
pa- ce. A- men.

The transcription of the final section of the lament for Ockeghem is based on its earliest source, Petrucci's *Motetti a cinque.*[44] Here it appears with the text of the cantus firmus only.[45] The use of the third person singular – God is asked that he (the dedicatee) may rest in peace – is, of course, a means of referring to the composer in whose honour the lament was written. In order to identify him Josquin has employed the principle of 'gematria',[46] that is, he has made the total number of notes correspond with the name of the deceased composer:

O	c	k	e	g	h	e	m	
14	3	10	5	7	8	5	12	= 64

In his *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*, of which Ockeghem's *Missa Prolationum* is the 'father', Josquin shaped his cantus firmus in such a way that it should contain 64 notes, the same amount thus as found in the final section of his lament *Nymphes des bois.* There can be no doubt that in both compositions, as Dieter Heikamp and Jaap van Benthem have discovered, this number represents Ockeghem's name.[47]

The final section of *Absolve* contains 97 notes. Kees Vellekoop has found that this number is a kind of 'signature' in Obrecht's three-part *Parce domine.*[48] On the basis of the distinctiveness of the final section of *Absolve*, I hypothesized some years ago that the 97 notes in this composition stand for 'Jacob Obrecht':[49]

J	a	c	o	b		O	b	r	e	c	h	t		
9	1	3	14	2		14	2	17	5	3	8	19	=	97

Fortuna

Above we have seen that the Netherlanders liked to intone their laments with a motif from a work by the composer who was being commemorated. Josquin's *Absolve* starts in all voices – except those which state the cantus firmus – with the motif presented in Example 11. Myroslaw Antonowycz has shown that the sequence of two rising fourths was a favourite with Josquin.[50] The motet *Absolve*, however, is his sole composition which has

[44] In my study of 1987 (fn. 21), p. 17, I erroneously referred to Susato's edition.

[45] In Smijers's edition, Motetten no. 29, the tenor bars 146-150 should be emended to the reading as offered in Ex. 12a.

[46] Gematria is a method of exegesis used by medieval cabalists in which letters are converted into numerical values or vice versa.

[47] See *Zur Struktur der Messe* L'omme armé super voces musicales *von Josquin Desprez*, in Mf 19 (1960), p. 121; and *Struktur, Zahl und Symbol in den Kompositionen von Johannes Ockeghem*, in Musica antiqua. Acta scientifica (Bydgoszcz 1982), supplementary vol. 3.

[48] *Zusammenhänge zwischen Text, Musik und Zahl in der Kompositionsart Jacob Obrechts. Analyse der Motette* Parce domine, in TVNM 20 (1967), p. 108.

[49] See fn. 21, p. 18.

[50] *Zur Autorschaftsfrage der Motetten* Absolve, quaesumus, domine *und* Inter natos mulierum, in TVNM 20 (1967), pp. 155-8.

this motif right at the beginning and in full imitation. As head-motif it occurs only once with Obrecht, at the opening of the Credo ("Patrem omnipotentem") of his *Missa Fortuna desperata.* This Mass, together with Josquin's Mass based on the same chanson, was incorporated into the Estense Ms. α. M.1.2, a choirbook written in 1505 or shortly thereafter, probably in commemoration of Obrecht and Ercole, who had both died from the plague in Ferrara in 1505.[51] A long quotation in Obrecht's Osanna from the Agnus dei II by Josquin not only establishes a definite relationship between the two Masses,[52] but reveals Obrecht's reverence for Josquin as well.

We shall, in all likelihood, never know when or where the news of Obrecht's death reached Josquin. However, the aging master must have been profoundly shocked by it. While having himself prudently left Ferrara in 1504 because of the increasing threat of plague, his nearest colleague had fallen victim to it! For an artist as familiar with Italian humanist thinking as himself, Josquin must have considered Obrecht's fate as simply a consequence of bad fortune. Yet, at the same time, in view of his Christian conviction he must have realised that none other than God could save the soul of his companion. If this indeed was the basic consideration from which Josquin's tribute originated, the choice of the opening motif for his prayer motet can be interpreted as follows: the *Pater omnipotens* quoted represents the "almighty Father", who is invoked to help Jacob Obrecht, the musician who was struck down by *Fortuna desperata*, the ill-fated goddess, whose malicious policy is well described in the song that served as a model for the Mass. The idea of God's intervention in the action of Fortune is testified by the arts of the time. A mid-fifteenth-century tapestry from the Low Countries, now in Toledo, represents the Celestial Sphere, the Astrolabes and the Signs of the Zodiac, and illustrates how God the Father acts as Supreme Power while at the same time Fortune turns her wheel.[53] (Fig. 17)

One further argument which may favour my interpretation is offered by Philippe Verdelot. Although the connections between this composer and Obrecht are far less sure that in the case of Josquin, Verdelot too wrote a tribute to him. His five-part motet is based on the text of the Introit "Recordare domine" from the *Missa pro vitanda mortalitate* (Mass for Deliverance from Mortality). This Mass is said in time of pestilence; in Attaignant's edition of 1534, Verdelot's motet bears the superscript "contra pestem". The relation with Obrecht is proven by the cantus firmus: the com-

[51] Cf. L. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505* (Oxford 1984), p. 208.

[52] Cf. B. Hudson in his edition of the Mass, NOE 4, p. XXXIII.

[53] That the idea of God guiding Fortune was well known in the fifteenth century can also be seen in an engraving by the Master of 1464, showing the Wheel of Fortune and the Tree of Life; cf. A. Doren, *Fortuna im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance.* Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1922/23 (Leipzig 1924), vol. 1, plate 5.

plete bass part of Obrecht's *Parce domine* is stated once in the two *partes* of Verdelot's motet.[54]

It should come as no surprise to find that the search for examples of the use of sign and symbol in the Requiem Mass and the lament has been more fruitful in the case of the latter. The language of symbolism was mainly understood by the initiated. The composer who wanted to honour his deceased master or colleague was, therefore, more apt to display his ability in compositional subtleties in a lament rather than in the liturgical texts of the Mass for the Dead. Yet the high quality found in examples of the employment of signs in the Requiem Masses by La Rue and Lasso prove that, sometimes, the Lord also was seen as a 'comprehending listener'.

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[54] Cf. N. Böker-Heil, *Die Motetten von Philippe Verdelot* (Ph.D. diss., Frankfurt a. M. 1967), p. 93.

• Nigel Davison, who read a part of this study in its final proof, kindly communicated to the author that there exists a second source of *Delicia juventutis* (Vatican, Pal. Lat. 1976-9) with a substantially different and, obviously, more original text. It thus appears that the 1538 print presents *Delicia juventutis* as a 'second hand' funeral motet.

Fig. 15. Jan van Eyck, *The Mass for the Dead.*
Illumination from the Milan-Turin Hours (1414-17).
Turin, Museo Civico.

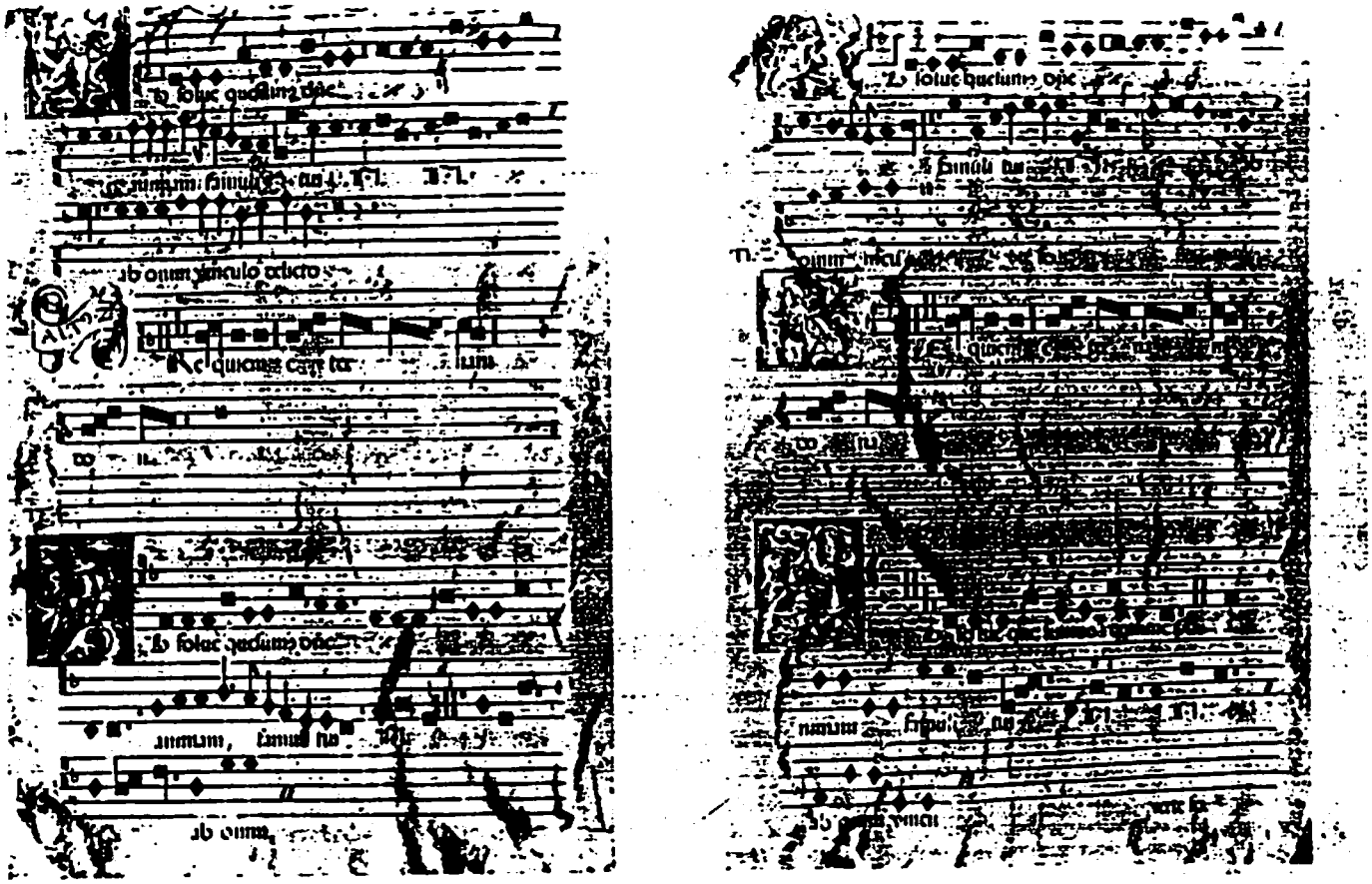

Fig. 16. The motet *Absolve, quesumus, domine* by Josquin des Prez.
Toledo, Biblioteca Capitular de la Catedral Metropolitana, Ms. B.21, fol. 118v-119.

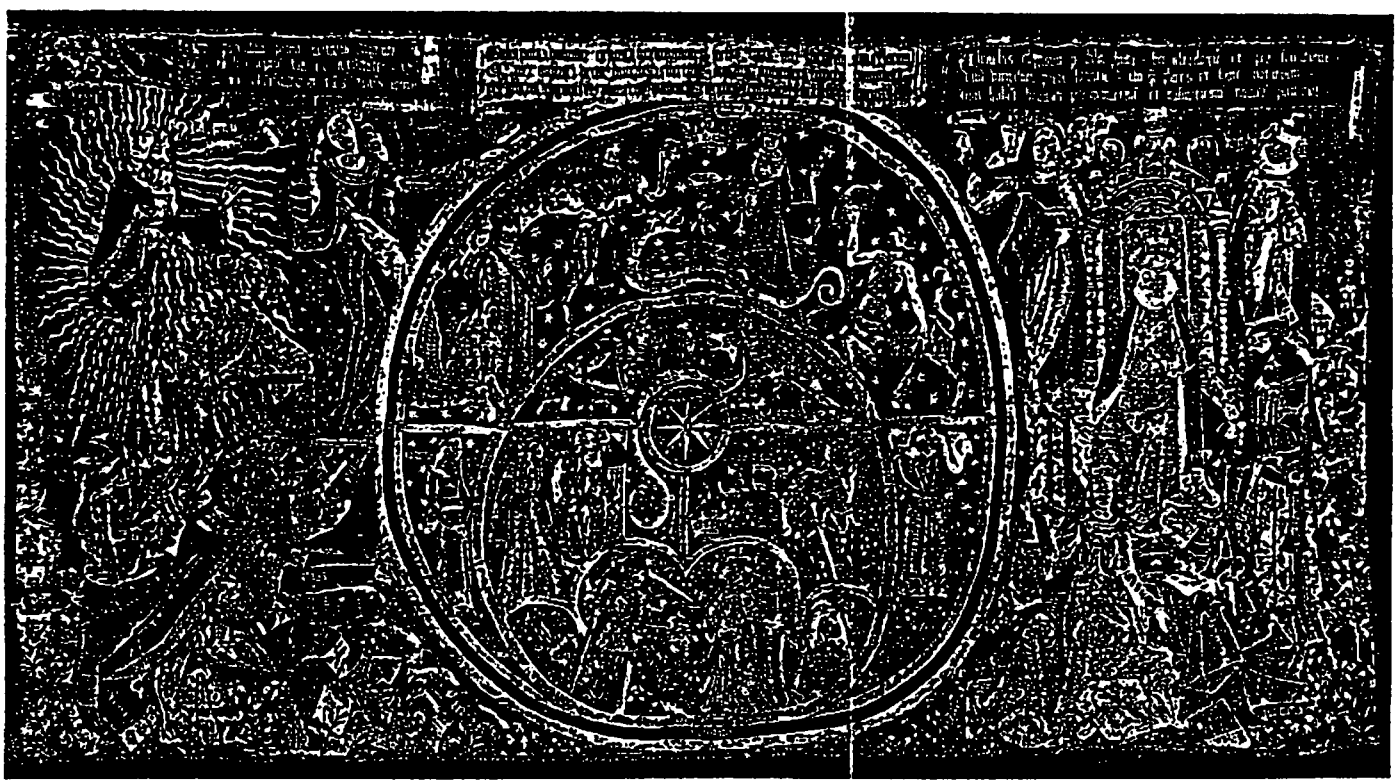

Fig. 17. The Tapestry of the Celestial Sphere (Low Countries ca. 1450).
Toledo, Museum of Santa Cruz (Property of Toledo Cathedral).

MUSIC AND NUMBER IN TOKEN OF THE HOLY VIRGIN

Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christ, has been an object of veneration in the Christian Church since its earliest days. Over the course of the centuries such media as art, music, and literature have testified to her cult from various different angles. Western literature saw her as the personification of grace and purity, and the Virgin symbolized therefore the nobility of woman. In art, Mary was portrayed together with all kinds of symbols and attributes to emphasize her many outstanding gifts. In the texts of musical compositions, which were normally derived from the liturgy, the Bible or prayer books, she is often called 'the Mother of God' and is entreated to intercede for man with the Lord.

While Mary has rightly been described as "a universal theme in the history of the arts",[1] the same can be said with respect to her role in music: hundreds of compositions have been devoted to her, and, significantly, some of the devotional and idealized representations of the Holy Virgin in art have also inspired composers. Among these representations are Mary as the Mother of Sorrows or *Mater dolorosa* and Mary as the Queen of Heaven (*Regina celi*). In art and letters the number seven was often connected with the first representation, the number twelve with the second. We shall see that this also happened in music.

The Virgin of the Seven Sorrows

Our first example of the use of number symbolism in honour of the Virgin comes from the Netherlands and is by Matthaeus Pipelare. In 1498, the composer became Master of the Choristers for the *Illustre lieve Vrouwe Broederschap* in 's-Hertogenbosch. His *Memorare mater Christi* is for seven voices, one of which presents the cantus firmus taken from the famous canción *Nunca fué pena mayor* by the Flemish composer Johannes Urreda (Wreede). The text of this canción is a poem by Don García Álvarez de Toledo, the first Duke of Alva and Urreda's patron in 1476-77.[2] The musical setting may therefore very well date from the 1470s. It appeared in 1501 in Petrucci's *Odhecaton*. The *terminus ante quem* for Pipelare's motet is 1512-16, the period in which its unique source, the Ms. Brussels 215-216, was probably copied.[3] Brussels 215-216 contains polyphonic music and chant for the feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. The text of the hymn *Memorare mater* is

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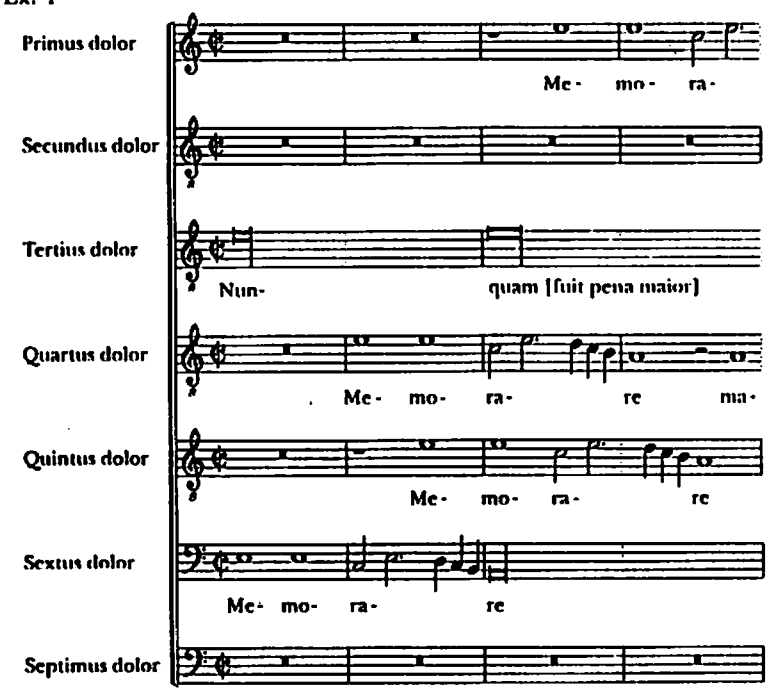
[1] J.J. Pelican, *Mary*, in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Macropaedia 11, p. 563.
[2] Cf. R. Stevenson, *Spanish Music in the Age of Columbus* (The Hague 1960), p. 254.
[3] Cf. H. Kellman, *Josquin and the Courts of the Netherlands and France: The Evidence of the Sources*, in Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference New York 1971, ed. by E.E. Lowinsky (London 1976), pp. 211-2.

borrowed from the sequence *Stabat mater*. Pipelare's setting demonstrates more clearly than any other composition that the number of voices can have a symbolical meaning: the composer alludes to this by naming his voice-parts 'Primus dolor' (first sorrow), 'Secundus dolor', etc. (Ex. 1).

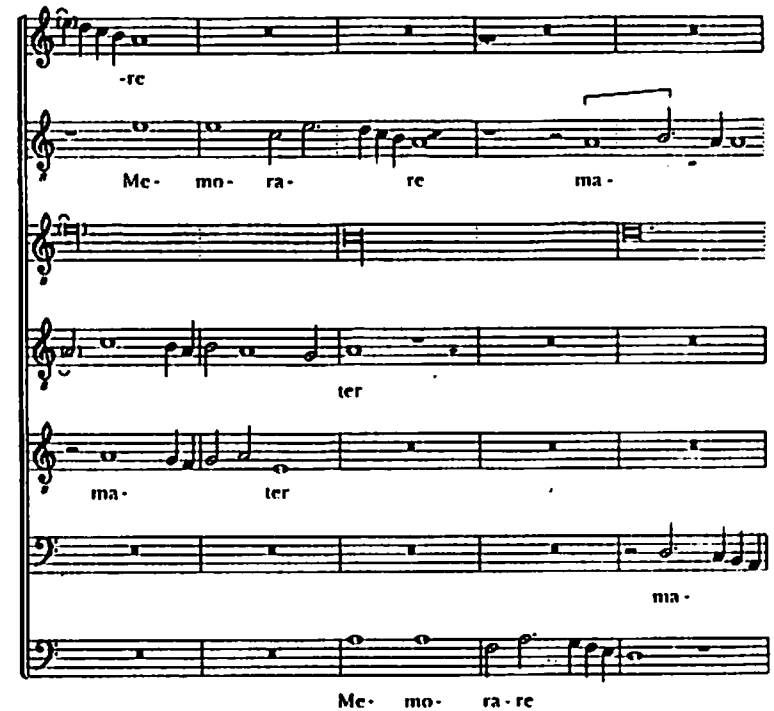
In the miniature which embellishes the first folio of the motet, the *Mater dolorosa* is depicted in a blue robe embroidered with gold, while behind her back the hilts of seven swords are visible. The seven swords are a reference to Simeon's prophecy, spoken at the Presentation in the temple, that a sword of grief would pierce Mary's soul (Luke 2:35). Pipelare's motet has its correlate in a painting by the Flemish master Adriaen Isenbrandt from about 1530. It was commissioned by the Church of Our Lady in Bruges. In this painting Mary is seated on a Renaissance throne, while on either side of her and above her seven scenes are depicted in which each sorrow is represented separately. (Fig. 18) The Seven Sorrows are: Simeon's Prophecy, the Flight into Egypt, Christ lost by his Mother, the Bearing of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Entombment.[4] Whereas the hymn *Memorare* is a prayer to

Ex. 1



[4] Instead of the Entombment, one also finds the Ascension, that is, when Christ finally parted from his mother.

Ex. 1 (continued)



the Virgin, the *mater dolorosa* herself speaks in the voice that carries the *cantus prius factus*. The text "Numquam fuit pena maior" is a Latin translation of the first line of Don García's poem: "Never was there greater sorrow nor wilder torment than the pain which I have suffered because of [your] deceit."[5] These words were transcribed in red ink in the 'Tertius dolor' part, which, being otherwise textless and presented in long augmented note values, was probably performed instrumentally. The quotation from the love song reminds one of the emergence of a new ideal of the Madonna, and of the new trend in fifteenth-century painting to imitate emotion through the language of gesture.[6]

Although *Memorare mater Christi* has its origin in what is now called 'the devotion of the *Seven Sorrows* of the Virgin', until the end of the fifteenth century this devotion was characterized by great diversity. At first the most

[5] After Stevenson, *op. cit.* (fn. 2), p. 228.

[6] Cf. R.G. Kecks, *Naturstudium und ikonographische Bildtradition: Madonna und Kind in der Kunst des Quattrocento*, in Die Kunst und das Studium der Natur vom 14. zum 16. Jahrhundert, ed. by W. Prinz and A. Beyer (Weinheim 1987), p. 290.

widely accepted number of sorrows was five,[7] but we also find the number twelve. In Ms. X.116 of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, which dates from about 1400, an anonymous author writes: "Just as St John relates that Mary, on the day of her Assumption, is crowned with a crown of twelve stars, so may one state that on the day of her Passion she is crowned with a crown of twelve thorns." The author thereupon enumerates the twelve sorrows in Mary's heart at the death of her Son.[8] Even other numbers are reported by Michel François, a Dominican friar in the service of Philip the Fair. Writing on the seven sorrows of Mary, he recalls that he once encountered the number of fifteen sorrows in a prayer book.[9] For people living in the twentieth century this diversity concerning the number of Mary's sorrows may appear quite naïve. For the fifteenth-century Christian however, it was real. After the first Brotherhoods of the Seven Sorrows of Mary had been founded in Roemerswaal (formerly on the island of South-Beveland), Abbenbroek, and Bruges in 1492, the young archduke Philip the Fair, then in Malines, commissioned his confessor, Michel François, and his teacher Frans van Busluyden, to make an inquiry into the Brotherhood's objectives. Although the number of Mary's sorrows was debated at great length – it was even discussed at the theological faculty of the University of Louvain – the Brotherhood acquired the protection of Philip. The archduke authorized that a petition be addressed to his uncle David of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht, submitting the foundation of the Brotherhood to ecclesiastical approbation; in the petition Philip is named as "Heer" (Lord) and "Meester" (Master) of the Brotherhood. Soon after, the 'Royal' Brotherhood also counted Maximilian I and Marguerite of Austria among its members, as well as Philip himself.[10]

As a consequence of the situation described above, the interest of artists in the devotion of the sorrows of Mary was also aroused. A great many prayer books were illuminated with representations of Mary with the sword(s) of sorrow or other motifs. In 1519, a woodcut was made in Antwerp showing Mary as the Mother of the Seven Sorrows with the inscription "Sicut lilium inter spinas" (As the lily among thorns) from the Song of Songs. (Fig. 19) In the field of music, evidence of this activity is found in the composition of a new Gregorian office[11] as well as polyphonic settings of sacred texts such as those preserved in the Ms. Brussels 215-216.[12] Pierre de la Rue also made a contribution to the new repertoire. Although it is evident from the way in which his *Missa De septem doloribus* has been entered in several manuscripts

[7] J.A.F. Kronenburg, *Maria's heerlijkheid in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1903-14), vol. 2, p. 227.
[8] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 231.
[9] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 232.
[10] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 262-3.
[11] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 241-2.
[12] Cf. J. Robijns, *Eine Musikhandschrift des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts im Zeichen der Verehrung unserer lieben Frau der Sieben Schmerzen*, in KJb 54 (1960), pp. 28-43.

that the setting of the text of the Ordinary was based on pre-existent chants, until now the search for the sources of these chants has yielded no result. In his discussion of the Mass, Jozef Robijns points to the remarkable fact that Brussels 215-216 contains two Masses *de septem doloribus*, both based on the same sequence but showing different *cantus prius facti* in melodic respects.[13] Unlike Pipelare, who wrote a seven-part motet, La Rue set his Mass for five voices. The question to be answered is whether the number seven possibly influenced the design of his Mass in a more esoteric manner.

All five movements of the Mass open with a head-motif derived from the chant *Dolores gloriose recolentes*, which is the Invitatory from the Matins of the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, and which serves as the cantus firmus for Kyrie I. In its simplest form (see Patrem omnipotentem and Sanctus) it consists of just seven notes (Ex. 2):

Ex. 2

In the five successive movements, the motif occurs seven, two, five, seven, and three times respectively. Though it is tempting to assume that the composer had something special in mind by restating this motif in the Kyrie and Sanctus seven times, I am reluctant to interpret this series of numbers as being prompted by the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin. Rather I am inclined to connect the entire presentation of the *cantus prius factus* with number symbolism.

Apart from Kyrie I and Christe, which are based on different chants, the newly-composed rhymed sequence *Salve virgo generosa* acts as cantus firmus in the first tenor. This sequence consists of eight double or sixteen single stanzas.[14] Whereas the first double stanza is of an invocatory nature, the seven following stanzas deal successively with the Seven Sorrows. Yet it is important to note that the composer replaces the first three single stanzas by the Invitatory *Dolores gloriose* and the chant *Trenosa compassio*. While from a rhetorical point of view the Invitatory clearly acts as the *exordium*, it was probably not its textual contents that suggested this change. Rather it seems likely that La Rue preferred to start with the Invitatory for musical reasons: the head-motif mentioned above is a very expressive one.

La Rue's manipulation of the pre-existent chants results in exactly fifteen entries of borrowed plainsong in the whole Mass. The stanza dealing with the cruxifixion of Christ coincides with the passage "Crucifixus est" in the Credo. The sole explanation, then, for this remarkable lay-out of pre-existent

[13] Cf. J. Robijns, *Pierre de la Rue (circa 1460-1518): een bio-bibliographische studie* (Brussels 1954), p. 65.
[14] See for the complete text of the sequence Analecta hymnica 8, no. 57.

musical material seems to be offered by the composer's wish to connect the number of entries with the number of fifteen sorrows mentioned above. It may be objected that one should not expect the composer to incorporate the number fifteen in a Mass which carries in its title the number seven. Yet, it must be remembered that Michel François, who was strongly involved in the question of how many sorrows Mary had felt, and who acted as Philip's prime adviser on religious matters, also discussed the number of fifteen sorrows in his *Quodlibetica decisio de septem doloribus V. Mariae* (Antwerp ca. 1496). And since La Rue was so closely linked with the court, he cannot but have become familiar with all these details of the new devotion to Mary.

The Virgin of the Seven Joys

The Marian number seven was not, however, connected solely with the Seven Sorrows. Medieval devotion also described the Joys of the Virgin. In the thirteenth century, the Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant enumerated five Joys, a number that later grew to fifteen. Nevertheless, most often we find seven Joys, a number propagated by the Franciscans. The Joys were celebrated from the fifteenth century onwards in the *Missa in festo Septem Gaudiorum BMV*, as well as in hymns and sequences such as *Gaude, virgo, mater Christi* which were written for this festival. The following events in the life of Mary are commonly mentioned as her Seven Joys: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Kings, Christ found by his Mother, the Resurrection, and the Assumption of the Virgin.

At about the same time, that is ca. 1480, in which Hans Memling depicted the Joys of Mary in his *Scenes from the Life of Christ and the Virgin* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), the English composer Hugh Kellyk set the seven stanzas of the hymn *Gaude, flore virginali* for seven parts. It is one of his two extant compositions preserved in the Eton Choirbook.[15] Each stanza of the text begins with the word "Gaude". Surely, Kellyk's piece can best be considered as a pendant of Pipelare's previously-mentioned seven-part *Memorare mater Christi*. Although we do not know of any connection between the two composers, it is tempting to assume that one motet served as a model for the other.

As a result of the rise of the devotion of Mary's Seven Sorrows and that of her Joys, the number seven became widely associated with the Virgin as a universal symbol. It should therefore come as no surprise that, during the Renaissance, several composers set texts in honour of the Virgin, scoring their music for seven voices, planning the text in seven *partes*, or using seven different *cantus prius facti*. In the following paragraphs I shall deal with each of these three aspects of composition.

[15] See also my study *Symbolic Scoring* ..., pp. 98-9.

The oldest repertoire of works for seven parts originated in England. Apart from Kellyk's *Gaude, flore virginali* we find two other motets for seven parts in the Eton Choirbook, both devoted to the Virgin. They are a *Salve regina* by John Sutton and a *Magnificat* by John Browne. How exceptional seven-part scoring remained in the course of the sixteenth century becomes clear when we study the oeuvres of individual composers or the output of certain publishers. For example, between 1543 and 1561 Susato published no less than 1387 compositions. Among these we find 53 pieces for six parts, 8 for eight parts, and only one for seven parts, namely Jheronimus Vinders's lament for Josquin, a piece in which the number seven acts as a symbol of mourning.[16]

Mary as the Eternal Virgin

One of Philippe Verdelot's two seven-part motets, *Beata es, virgo Maria*, is a setting of the third responsory of the Matins *In festis BMV per annum*. The text is as follows: "Beata es virgo Maria, que dominum portasti, creatorem mundi: genuisti qui te fecit, et in eternum permanes virgo. [*II.pars*]: Ave Maria, gratia plena, dominus tecum, genuisti qui te fecit, et in eternum permanes virgo." Although Verdelot does not use the melody of the responsory – instead he quotes two other Marian chants, the sequence *Ave Maria* and the antiphon *Ave Maria* – he adheres to the responsory form. This means that the music of the words "in eternum permanes virgo" is repeated. As a result, these two sections account for more than half of the motet's total length, and in this way the composer emphasizes the motet's central theme of the 'Eternal Virgin'. "As far back as we can trace it the Christian consensus seems to have been that [Mary] was not only a virgin when she conceived and bore Jesus, but a virgin totally, for the rest of her days."[17] The question arises whether the composer chose a seven-part scoring for this text simply because the number seven is a Marian number, or also perhaps because, in ancient times, the number seven was considered the 'virginal' number. Although such a connection may seem far-fetched, it is worth-while to look at it more closely. After Plato had distinguished the planetary heptad as "the movable image of eternity",[18] the number seven itself became well known as such in Neo-Pythagorean number philosophy. This idea may even have been familiar to Renaissance artists through the writings of the Gnostics. Gnosticism saw the seven planets as the 'Seven Virgins of Light', or the 'Seven Maidens of Sophia', the Virgin of Wisdom.[19] In this dualistic religious system, Sophia was the female emanation of the *pleroma*, the fullness of the godhead,

[16] See my study *Sign and Symbol* ..., pp. 130 and 137.
[17] G. Ashe, *The Virgin* (London 1976), p. 63.
[18] Cf. V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York ²1969), p. 43.
[19] Cf. Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 18), p. 59, and H. Bayley, *The Lost Language of Symbolism* (London/New York R1968), pp. 205f.

responsible for the coming into being of the Demiurge, the creator of the material world.[20] It is true that the Gnostic movement was fought by leading early-Christian theologians; none the less, together with Neo-Pythagoreanism, it survived and retained its influence particularly with regard to the development of the theory of numbers in the Christian West. The early Fathers of the Church, up to and including St Augustine, moulded these views into what was to become the fundamental theory of medieval number symbolism.[21] All the elements in the doctrine described above are present in the text of Verdelot's motet: (1) Mary is said to be the Mother of Him who made her; she is full of God's grace ("genuisti qui *te* fecit"; "gratia *plena*"); (2) she is responsible for the creator of the world coming into being as man ("que dominum portasti, *creatorem mundi genuisti*"); (3) Mary is 'Virgin forever' ("*in eternum* permanes *virgo*").-Moreover, medieval litanies to the Virgin often contain the epithet "sedes sapientiae", Seat of Wisdom.

The theme of the 'Eternal Virgin' is also encountered in the sequence text *Inviolata*, which was published in a seven-part setting in Adrian Willaert's *Musica nova*. This monumental edition was issued in 1559, but the music may have originated many years before.[22] The first and last lines of the sequence state that Mary is inviolate, spotless and chaste, and that she alone has remained inviolate. Like Verdelot, Willaert based his motet on Gregorian chant: the melody of the sequence is treated as a canon in three voices. *Inviolata* is one of the five seven-part motets in Willaert's *Music nova*, all of which show this 'symbolic' scoring.[23]

As the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity implied the integral purity of body and soul, many medieval theologians defended the idea of her 'immaculate conception'. This term refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of Anne, her mother. In particular the Franciscan friar Duns Scotus strongly upheld the position that she alone of all mankind was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin. The late appearance in Christian art of the theme of 'the Immaculate Conception' is probably due to "the difficulty of establishing a representational type for so abstract a concept."[24] It may also have been caused by the fact that the question of how to reconcile the universality of original sin and the need for redemption with Mary's exemption and preservation, was only resolved towards that time. From the fifteenth century onwards, however, one finds attributes which designate the 'Virgin of the Immaculate Conception'. Some of these symbols, for instance the *flos campi*, the *lilium inter spinas* and the *hortus conclusus*, inspired musicians to write seven-part compositions.

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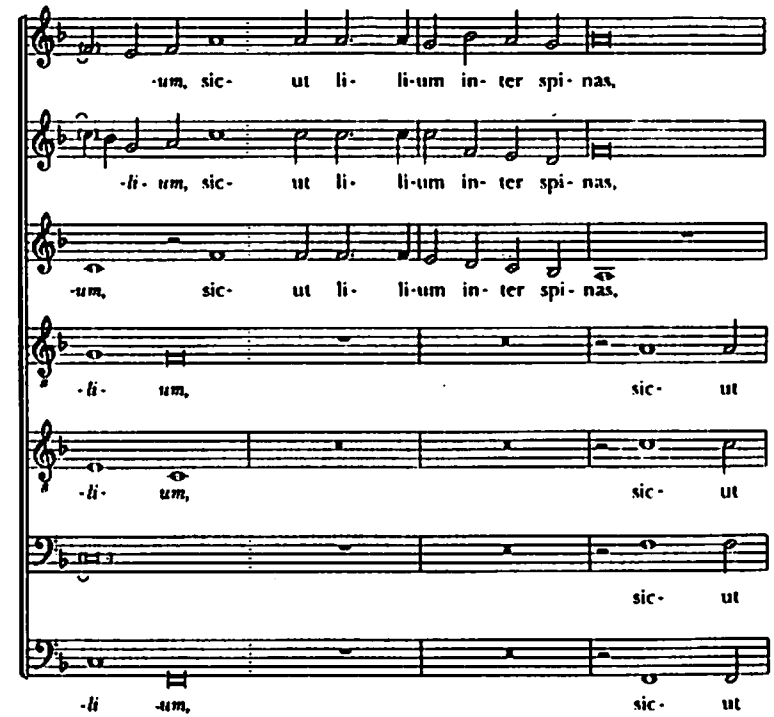
[20] Cf. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropaedia 9, p. 355.
[21] Cf. Hopper, *op. cit.* (fn. 18), p. X.
[22] The preface by the Ferrarese musician Alfonso Viola describes the collection as having been "concealed and buried" for many years.
[23] See W. Elders, *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 105-7; 111.
[24] J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1974), p. 326.

Mary and the Song of Songs

Perhaps the earliest musical example illustrating this is *Ego flos campi* by Jacobus Clemens non Papa. After having been employed by the *Illustre lieve Vrouwe Broederschap* in 's-Hertogenbosch from 1 October until 24 December 1550, the composer, on his departure, presented the brotherhood with a motet "ter eeren onser lieven vrouwen" (in honour of Our Lady). There can be no doubt that this motet is the only seven-part composition Clemens ever wrote, namely *Ego flos campi*. The text, which is derived from the Song of Songs (2:1-2; 4:15), calls Mary 'the flower of the field' and 'the lily among thorns'. The words "sicut lilium inter spinas" are given prominent treatment in the contrasting homophonic voice-parts; they were and still are the brotherhood's motto (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3



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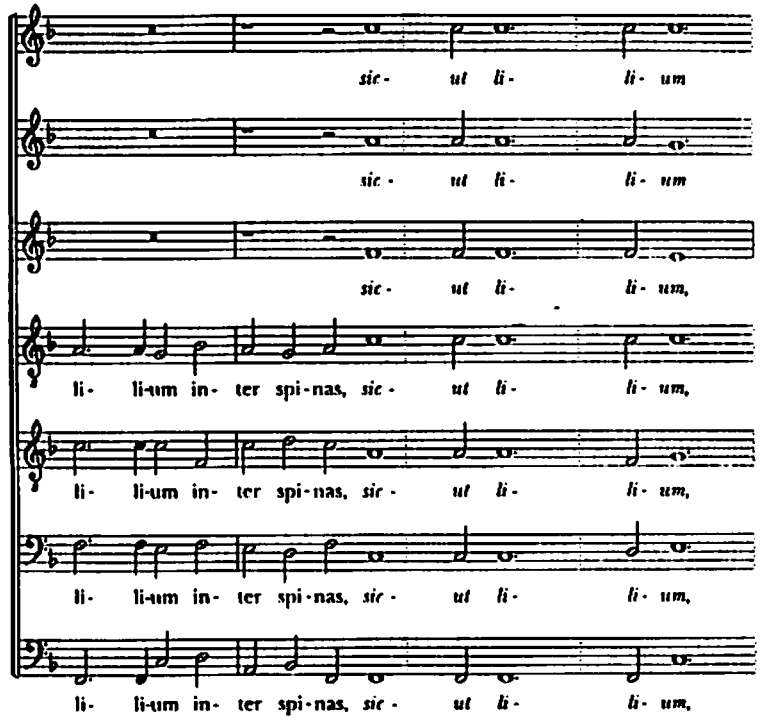


Twenty-eight years later, the Flemish composer Andries Pevernage published a volume of *Cantiones sacrae* in Douai in which the same text occurs, also set for seven voices.[25] This volume contains a second Marian motet à 7 which has the incipit "O virgo generosa".

The Song of Songs "has been accepted as an elaborate allegory of the love story of God and his people Israel."[26] But in Christian tradition the book was also explained as a poetic depiction of the relation between Christ and his bride, the Church. Medieval liturgy saw the bride of the Song of Songs as a symbolic representation of the Virgin Mary, and reinterpreted the effusions of praise as referring to her.[27] The theologian who strongly inspired this attitude was Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Thus, the following text came to be used as an antiphon *In festo Assumptionis BMV*: "Descendi in hortum nucum, ut viderem poma convallium, et inspicerem si floruisset

[25] Cf. J.A. Stellfeld, *Andries Pevernage: Zijn leven - zijne werken* (Louvain 1943), pp. 37-40.
[26] *The Jerusalem Bible*, Reader's Edition (New York 1968), p. 865.
[27] See *De Heilige Schrift: Vertaling uit de grondtekst met aantekeningen* (Utrecht/Antwerp 1955), p. 729.

vinea, et germinassent mala punica. Revertere, revertere, Sulamitis! Revertere, revertere ut intueamur te"(6:10-12)[28] (I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valleys, and to look if the vineyard had flourished, and the pomegranates budded. Return, return, O Sulamitess: return, return that we may behold thee). Several times the poet of the Song of Songs describes the bride as a sweet-smelling, enclosed garden. In the Middle Ages the *Hortus conclusus* was adopted as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception. There is a beautiful seven-part setting of the antiphon by Cipriano de Rore which opens the famous parchment choirbook Munich Mus. Ms. B; this collection is devoted exclusively to this composer and contains twenty motets and six secular pieces. It was copied in Munich in 1557-9. The manuscript was commissioned by Duke Albrecht V and is elaborately decorated with miniatures by Hans Mielich. The same codex has two more seven-part motets, *Ave regina* and *Quem vidistis pastores*. Since medieval number mysticism also connected the number seven with Christmas,[29] there can be no doubt that Rore used the seven-part scoring in all three motets for a symbolic purpose.

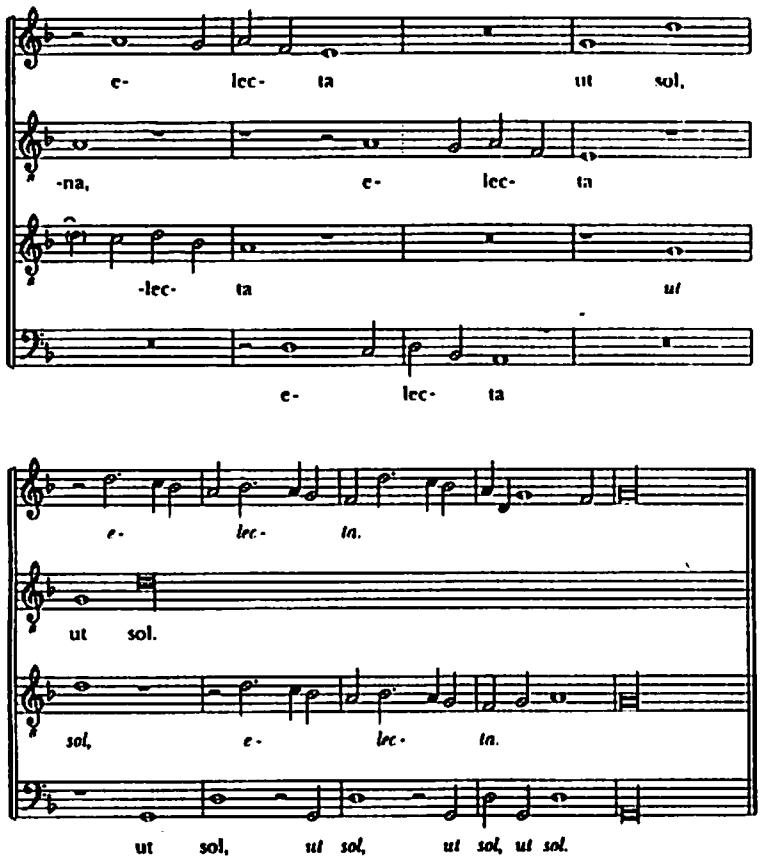
Another Marian metaphor is derived from the Song of Songs 6:9. It appears at the end of the antiphon *Virgo prudentissima*, which is sung for the Magnificat of the First Vespers of Assumption. The Daughter of Zion is called "pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol" (fair as the moon, bright as the sun). In a seven-part setting of the antiphon Palestrina sustains a three-part canon and solmizates the last two notes of the bassus: ut-sol.[30] In his four-part motet on the same text, Josquin presents the ut-sol seven times, making unmistakable by its fourfold repetition in the bass part that he employs the motif as a rhetorical figure (Ex. 4).

Although Renaissance artists often used the sun and moon as attributes of the Queen of Heaven since the Woman of the Book of Revelation (12:1) is said to be standing on the moon and clothed with the sun, the fact that 'ut-sol' is used seven times proves that Josquin was well aware of the source of this metaphor. For, as we will see below, he reserved the number twelve for use as a sign of the twelve apocalyptic stars in Mary's crown in one of his settings of the *Salve regina* antiphon.

The oeuvre of Philippe de Monte offers several examples of seven-part music in honour of the Virgin. No other composer favoured this scoring more strongly as a way of expressing belief in the magic power of the Marian number seven. It is tempting to assume that this artistic 'behaviour' was per-

[28] See for the antiphon the Antiphonaire of Worcester, PalMus 12, p. 356.
[29] See my study *Symbolic Scoring* ..., pp. 108-9.
[30] Among Palestrina's 250-odd motets there are only two for seven voices, *Virgo prudentissima* and *Tu es Petrus*. In the latter motet, the scoring symbolizes the text: "That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church" (Matth. 16:18). For the number seven as a symbol of the Church see H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter: Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975), pp. 137-8.

Ex. 4



haps a consequence of Monte's character: in 1555, Georg Seld, Chancellor of Albrecht V of Bavaria, compared the then thirty-year-old composer to a girl because of his remarkable modesty.[31] One of his compositions belongs to that general group of motets based on texts from the Song of Songs; since here also the text is part of the liturgy for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, the beautiful daughter of Jerusalem who is celebrated in the Biblical poem is identified with Mary. Monte combines two antiphons at Lauds, *Pulchra es et decora* and *Quae es ista que ascendit*. The antiphon texts are a modification of 6:3 and 6:9. The incorporation of two two-part canons marks Monte's motet as a highly 'artificial' work.

[31] " ... ist ain stiller eingezogener zuchtiger mensch wie ain junkfrau ..." Cf. G. van Doorslaer, *La vie et les oeuvres de Philippe de Monte* (Brussels 1921), p. 217.

The motet *Pulchra es et decora* is one of the few works by Monte which seems never to have been printed. It was discovered only a few years ago in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Cracow. The manuscript, which belonged formerly to the Preussische Staatsbibliothek (Mus. Ms. 40027), also contains another seven-part motet by this composer. Its text reads: "Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui. Et concupiscet rex decorem tuum, quoniam ipse est dominus deus tuus, et adorabunt eum. Et filiae Tyri in muneribus vultum tuum deprecabuntur; omnes divites plebis." These lines are derived from Psalm 44, which is a Royal wedding song: they form the beginning of the second half of the psalm in which the bride's praises are sung, while the first half is devoted to the bridegroom. Surprisingly, part of Monte's text is found in the verse of the Gradual for 15 August, the feast of the Assumption: "Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thy ear: for the King has greatly desired thy beauty." This text is closely related to the poetry of the Song of Songs. Once more, the bride of the King is no other than Mary: if she can forget her nation and ancestral home, God will fall in love with her. By using canon technique in three of the voices, Monte raises his motet to a very high musical level indeed.

It would seem that Jean Lhéritier also expressed the relationship between Psalm 44 and the Song of Songs through the use of number symbolism in his five-part *Nigra sum*, a Vesper antiphon for common feasts of the Virgin. The earliest source of the motet, Ms. 35-40 of the Vallicelliana library in Rome, gives the year 1530 as *terminus ante quem*.[32] The antiphon opens with the Song of Songs 1:4, "I am black but beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem", and continues with a free elaboration of the preceding sentence: "The king hath brought me into his store-rooms." The metaphor of Mary as the bride of Christ seems to have originated in the poetry of Ephraem of Syria (ca. 306-373).[33] In *Nigra sum* we come across a procedure seldom used by Lhéritier, namely the literal repetition of a long passage. As in his *Beata es, virgo Maria*, where the motet's main clause, "Genuisti qui te fecit et in eternum permanes virgo", is stated twice in the same musical setting, the words "et introduxit me" (and he has brought me [into his rooms]) are repeated musically in all parts so that bars 41-55 are identical with bars 61-75. The composer's intention is clear: he wants to stress the motet's key issue, that is, the 'marriage' of Christ and Mary. In the smaller text units, the device used is that of pervading imitation. While the imitative entries of the first "et introduxit me" section in the three upper voices are found in bars 44-46, the repetition of the section shows that this section of the text starts already in bar 41.

[32] Cf. E.E. Lowinsky, *A Newly-Discovered Sixteenth-Century Motet Manuscript at the Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Rome*, in JAMS 3 (1950), pp. 195-6.
[33] Cf. Ashe, *op. cit.* (fn. 17), pp. 172-3.

Although arguing on the basis of text underlay in sixteenth-century polyphony is often not very convincing, in the composition under consideration we nevertheless seek to derive our argument in favour of a symbolic interpretation not from musical, but from textual components. The reason is that, with respect to reiterations of smaller text units, the relationship between music and text is fairly unambiguous in the present motet. Moreover, the syntactic 'irregularity' in the musical structure in bars 41-45 seems to confirm that the exceptionally high number of "et introduxit me"-presentations must not be passed over in silence. Leeman Perkin's edition repeats the words twenty-two times in each of the two identical passages, and there is in my view not a single instance where his text underlay raises doubts about its plausibility. However, in bars 78-80 of the second tenor, another "et introduxit me" statement follows after "in cubiculum suum", which falls outside the fore-going repeated passage. Though this text statement is in accordance with the reading of Vallicelliana 35-40, the manuscript has a ligature immediately before that must be broken in order for there to be enough notes for a syllabic placement of the text "in cubiculum suum et introduxit me". The earliest print, Moderne's *Secundus liber cum quinque vocibus* (Lyon 1532), has no ligature; and although this source would therefore allow the underlay as in the Roman manuscript, it actually repeats the words "in cubiculum suum". There is, I believe, no reason to give priority to the Roman source in this respect over the printed edition. Thus it seems likely that Lhéritier designed the present section with its repetition in order to 'conceal' precisely forty-four reiterations of the words "et introduxit me". Psalm 44 is a Royal wedding song. Perhaps the composer knew that Honorius, particularly because of this psalm, interpreted the number 44 as the wedding of Christ and the Church.[34]

My supposition that Lhéritier has introduced a metaphor of the Virgin into his five-part setting of "Nigra sum" finds support in his six-part setting of the same text: this motet, too, reveals its symbolical intention only after an examination of the most distinctive elements of the composition. Contrary to the five-part scoring, the six-part version is based on a *cantus prius factus*, namely the Introit for Septuagesima Sunday. The chant, which appears in long-note values in the tenor, quotes the following words from Psalm 17: "Circumdederunt me gemitus mortis, dolores inferni circumdederunt me" (The sorrows of death surrounded me, the sorrows of hell encompassed me). On first reading it is difficult to connect the contents of these lines with the text of the Song of Songs. However, when we study the meaning of the Introit in the context of Septuagesima Sunday, we can understand why Lhéritier used the chant as the cantus firmus. The gospel for Septuagesima Sunday is Matthew 20:1-16, a passage in which Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with a vineyard. According to St Gregory, this parable is an allegory: the proprietor of the vineyard is God, the King of Heaven; the labourers called to work for God's glory are the elect, and they will receive the reward of eternal life as wages for their labour.[35] The verse of the Introit which refers to this is: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength: The Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer" (Ps. 17:2-3). This verse should be understood as the answer to the first part of the Introit, which recalls the situation St Augustine described in the following words: "Being exiled [from Eden ...], the first man involved all his descendants in the penalty of death and reprobation."[36] By choosing the Introit as the starting-point for his motet, Lhéritier has, in my view, widened the allegory of the words "the king has brought me into his store-rooms" to mean that all the faithful will go to Heaven. There can be little doubt that the composer combined the verses from the Song of Songs with the verse from the Introit for Septuagesima Sunday, since he saw the Virgin as the 'Second Eve', and thus ascribed to her an active role in the redemption of the human race: "All men had died in Adam, but Eve had participated in the sin that brought this on; all men were saved in Christ, but Mary had participated in the life that made this possible."[37]

[34] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 30), p. 162.

Large-scale seven-part compositions

Apart from the two shorter seven-part Marian motets mentioned above, Monte set two large-scale texts in honour of the Virgin for seven voices. They are the *Litania Lauretana* and the motet cycle *Virgo vetustis edita*. The first of these compositions, published in Munich in 1596, is almost 400 bars long. It is not known when this medieval litany became associated with the famous pilgrim shrine of Loreto, but by the sixteenth century it had spread over all Europe. Since it was the Jesuits in particular who recommended the litany for devotion and worship – among whom Petrus Canisius must be mentioned, the author of the text of *Virgo vetustis edita* (see below) – it appears that Monte was inspired here, as on other occasions, by the religious activity of this order. In 1587, the litany was officially approved by the pope. The diversity of laudatory Marian metaphors does not prevent us from considering the text primarily as a prayer to the *Mater misericordiae*. The continuously repeated "ora pro nobis" links this text with that of the antiphon *Sub tuum presidium*, which belongs liturgically to the Litany of Loreto and on which Obrecht based his three- to seven-part Mass.[38] In the Mass the Virgin is also invoked as mediatrix and is asked to bring about the salvation of man. In the most common representation of the Mother of Mercy in Christian art, Mary is shown in a standing position, sheltering supplicants under her cloak.[39] In

[35] See *The Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. Large edition (Montreal 1943), p. 240.
[36] *Enchiridion* VIII, 26.
[37] Pelican, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), p. 561.
[38] See Elders, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), pp. 111f.
[39] Cf. Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 24), pp. 325-6.

their scores both composers 'paint' the effect of literally being under Mary's protection: Obrecht states the chant in long note-values always in the top voice and even has it sung with its original text; Monte has the *Chorus primus* (discant, alto and bass) recite all the invocations, but lets the discant of the *Chorus secundus* share in this, thus creating a treble-dominated medium which contrasts with the brief responses sung by the full choir.

Monte's *Litania Lauretana* was preceded by Costanzo Porta's seven-part setting of the text, published in 1580. The lay-out of the two works is almost the same, but Porta adheres more strictly than Monte to the *alternatim* principle, that is, the consistent alternation of two choruses: the invocations are sung by the *Chorus primus*, while the *Chorus secundus* responds. The litany was one of the 52 motets in the composer's important collection dedicated to the governor of Loreto.

Although much smaller in number, there are also some Mass-settings from the sixteenth century which prove that it was only the dedication to the Virgin that prompted the composer to use seven parts. The earliest example is probably Rore's *Missa Preter rerum seriem*, which can be dated before 1557.[40] Rore based his work on the six-part motet of the same name by Josquin, which was one of this master's most widely disseminated works. Although the text of the sequence *Preter rerum seriem* deals with the sacred mystery of the birth of Christ, it is actually a song of praise to the Virgin. Instead of Josquin's transparent polyphony the Mass shows a denser texture, this despite the fact that for entire sections the number of voices is reduced to five, four, three or even to two. This reveals the composer's real intention, that is, to employ an 'ideal' number of voices rather than to create a big sound.

In 1578 a sumptuous edition of the *Octo missae* by George de la Hèle was issued by the Plantin press in Antwerp. This choirbook, containing parody Masses on motets by Josquin, Rore, Crecquillon and Lassus, sold well. The table of contents lists the works by their number of voices. From this it is easily seen that not only are the two Masses *Preter rerum seriem* and *Benedicta es celorum regina* the sole compositions for seven parts, but also that in these works alone the number of voices of the model grew from six to seven. Since the composer parodied two other six-part motets in his Masses for six voices which are not devoted to the Virgin, there is again but one conclusion possible: the number seven is purely symbolic.

Yet another example of a Marian Mass for seven voices is found in Spain, though it also was composed by a Fleming. Géry de Ghersem's *Missa Ave virgo sanctissima* appeared in Madrid in 1598, and was the last of five Masses published by Philippe Rogier, who had succeeded La Hèle as chapelmaster at the court of Philip II in 1588. Although the Mass is based on a motet by Guerrero (see below), the composer appears to have been indebted also to his

[40] Cf. A. Johnson, *The Masses of Cipriano de Rore*, in JAMS 6 (1953), p. 232.

former tutor.[41] Why else should he have felt himself incited to honour the Virgin in seven-part music if it were not that such well-known examples by La Hèle were available?

The number seven revealed in seven 'partes'

Above we mentioned Monte's seven-part motet cycle *Virgo vetustis edita*. More than any other Marian composition, this cycle demonstrates that not only the vertical organization but also the horizontal form of music was sometimes based on number symbolism. The text of the cycle has been identified as a poem of Petrus Canisius.[42] This Dutch Jesuit author published the second book of his *De Maria virgine ... Libri quinque* in Ingolstadt in 1577. The study is considered an apologetic Mariology, and the poem, which appears at the very end under the title *Hymnus ad dei param virginem*, consists of twenty-two stanzas. Monte, however, obviously wishing to express the number seven not only in seven voices but also in seven *partes*, omitted the second stanza, thus reducing the text in such a way that he could divide it up equally into seven sections. With its over 220 bars, *Virgo vetustis edita* can be called a late polyphonic monument in honour of the Virgin.

Among Jacob Obrecht's motets are three settings of the antiphon *Salve regina*. One is for three voices and is preserved in the Ms. Regensburg B.216-219. Contrary to his four- and six-part settings, in which polyphony alternates with the chant, the three-part setting is through-composed. A remarkable aspect of the motet is its lay-out of the text. Whereas the antiphon has nine lines of text and music, Obrecht contracts verses 2, 3 and 4. That this exceptional treatment of the liturgical text was possibly inspired by the Marian number seven is suggested by the fact that the composer symbolically presented the same number in his *Missa Sub tuum presidium* (see below).

Thomas Tallis's *Ave rosa sine spinis* is based on a text of seven stanzas. It is a 'farsed' version of the *Ave Maria*.[43] This time, however, it is not the composer but the poet who applies number symbolism to the form of his work. That Mary is called a 'rose without thorns' is "because of the tradition that she was exempt from the consequences of original sin."[44]

With Josquin's famous *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* we encounter a fine example of text compilation, possibly undertaken in order to establish a numerical relationship between the text and the Virgin which is not present in the original version of the text. This is a rhymed, metrical hymn consisting of five stanzas. Each stanza deals with one of the five greatest events in Mary's life:

[41] Cf. NGD 7, p. 338.
[42] P. Nuten, *De 'Madrigali spirituali' van Filip de Monte (1521-1603)* (Brussels 1959), pp. 122-5; the music is edited in the same publication.
[43] See for the text Analecta hymnica 30, no. 126.
[44] G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961), p. 37.

the conception, the nativity, the annunciation, the purification, and the assumption. However, Josquin framed the hymn with two additional components: at the beginning he quotes Gabriel's salutation, using the melody of the sequence *Ave Maria*; at the end we find the petition "O Mater dei, memento mei". These last words, which occur in medieval books of hours and on various tombstones and portraits of the time, qualify the motet as the personal petition of the composer. The seven-part lay-out of the text as compiled by Josquin is easily recognizable in the musical structure.[45]

Much larger in scope and perhaps also textually based on the number seven is Josquin's motet cycle *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur*. The situation surrounding its sources offers an extremely interesting example of the rather scattered diffusion of Josquin's music. Although there are eleven manuscripts which preserve from one to five of the *partes*, Petrucci's *Motetti libro quarto* of 1505 presents the cycle in seven *partes*, as given in the Smijers edition. The loose transmission of *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur* suggests that the cycle had not been conceived as such by the composer. Patrick Macey, therefore, has proposed that Josquin originally wrote a series of eight motets which were intended as *motetti missales* or a 'substitution' Mass for the Ambrosian rite of Milan: in this case, the cycle would have consisted of the seven motets published by Petrucci plus Josquin's *Ave Maria ... benedicta tu* (Petrucci, *Motetti C* 1504) and *Tu lumen* (Petrucci, *Fragmenta missarum* 1505).[46] The order of the motets as a substitution Mass would, additionally, be slightly different. Macey's proposition is certainly ingenious. But the question why Petrucci published the *Ave Maria* a year before the other 'motetti' is difficult to answer. Clearly, the series as arranged in his *Motetti libro quarto* has a logical sequence: the *partes* one to six are addressed to the Virgin, the seventh is a prayer to Christ directly, referring however to the petitions of his mother. The sole 'hitch' that seems to remain is the "Amen" at the end of the sixth motet. It is the only *pars* of the cycle that closes with the "so be it", and one would rather expect this at the very end of the cycle. However, since this prayer ends with the Lesser Doxology and thus contains the "Amen", it does not weaken the hypothesis about the seven-part arrangement. But even if it was not Josquin who 'edited' *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur* as a cycle in seven *partes*, we may conclude, I think, that it was Petrucci who acted deliberately in favour of a case of number symbolism. He may have been prompted to do this by the unusual text compilation of Josquin's *Ave Maria ... virgo serena* which he had printed three years before. If this were the case, we can consider the cycle a 'forerunner' of Monte's *Virgo vetustis edita*.

[45] Cf. C.C. Judd, *Some Problems of Pre-Baroque Analysis: An Examination of Josquin's 'Ave Maria ... virgo serena'*; in Music Analysis 4 (1985), figure 3 on p. 206.

[46] Cf. P. Macey, *Josquin's little Ave Maria: A Misplaced Motet from the* Vultum tuum *Cycle?*, in TVNM 39 (1989), pp. 38-53.

The number seven revealed in seven cantus prius facti

The musical repertoire from the Netherlands contains three compositions in each of which seven Marian chants have been quoted. They are, in their presumed chronological order, the *Missa Ecce ancilla domini* by Johannes Regis, the *Missa Sub tuum presidium* by Jacob Obrecht, and the motet *Salve regina* by Nicolas Gombert.

Regis's Mass is for four voices. All seven antiphons are taken from the office of Annunciation as found in the liturgy for this feast in the usage of Cambrai.[47] In the earliest source of the Mass, the Ms. Brussels 5557 (before 1480), the scribe has consistently entered the antiphon texts together with the text of the Ordinary.[48] If these texts indeed are sung, they form the ideal background for the Mass in which the mystery of the Incarnation is celebrated, something which has earned for Mary her most glorious title, that of 'Mother of God'. In this context it seems likely that the composer, in quoting seven different antiphons, wanted to stress in an esoteric way the fact that the number seven represented the Virgin.

It can hardly be doubted that the *Missa Ecce ancilla domini* served as the model for Obrecht's *Sub tuum presidium Mass*, for both composers worked in Cambrai, in 1460 and 1484 respectively, as *magister puerorum* of the cathedral. While it seems possible that Obrecht's three- to seven-part Mass is the earliest example of symbolic scoring on the continent, as far as the use of seven *cantus prius facti* is concerned, his former colleague in Cambrai had already taken the initiative. Unlike Regis, however, Obrecht used only fragments of Marian chants, with the exception of the title antiphon that occurs in the superius of each of the five parts of the Mass. Most fragments appear to have been chosen for their textual rather than for their melodic character.[49] Mary is asked to be a mediatrix with Christ and to facilitate man's salvation. The texts therefore strongly support the 'leitmotif' of the Mass, that is, the prayer to the Mother of Mercy.

The third example is Nicolas Gombert's antiphon *Salve regina*. This work is surely exceptional in the manner in which it crams as much chant into as little space as possible. The motet bears the motto "Diversi diversa orant" (Diverse singers sing diverse prayers). Each of the three lower voices paraphrases two Marian antiphons in succession; the superius 'displays' the title antiphon very elaborately, thus enabling the others to be 'covered' by it.[50] The order of entry of these antiphons is: *Salve regina, Ave regina celorum,*

[47] Cf. M.J. Bloxam, *A Survey of Late Medieval Service Books from the Low Countries: Implications for Sacred Polyphony 1460-1520* (Ph.D. diss. Yale Univ. 1987), pp. 232-7.

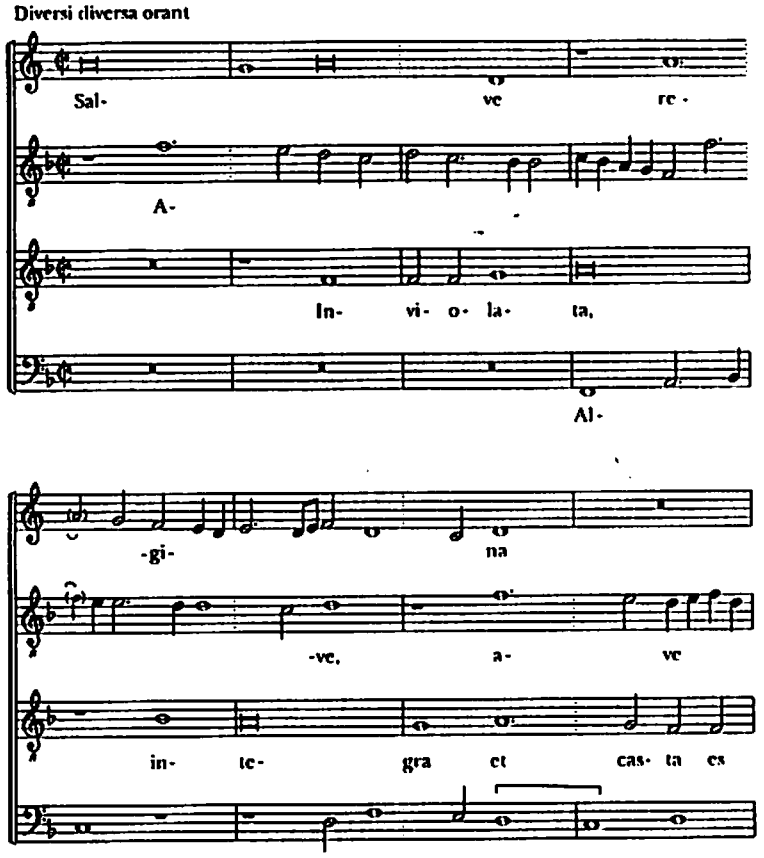
[48] On pp. 21-6 of his Ph.D. dissertation on Regis (Amsterdam 1938), C. Lindenburg gives the titles of the antiphons and the places where they are found in the Mass but without connecting their presence with number symbolism.

[49] For a survey of the chants see the edition of the Mass by Marcus van Crevel in *Jacobus Obrecht Opera omnia editio altera*, vol. 7, pp. XLVI-LI.

[50] That only the length of the *Salve regina* would have prompted the composer to consistently quote two chants in the lower parts, as suggested by Schmidt-Görg (cf. MGG 5, col. 505), is certainly not the case.

Inviolata, Alma redemptoris mater, Beata mater, Ave Maria, Hortus conclusus[51] (Ex. 5).

Ex. 5



At the end of the motet, the four voices share in singing the last words of the title antiphon, "O dulcis virgo Maria". The seven antiphons belong to various feasts of the Virgin. None the less there are several epithets embedded in their texts that are commonly applied to the crowned Virgin. She is called, for instance, 'Queen of Heaven', 'Queen of the Universe', 'Queen of Mercy', 'Mistress of the Angels', 'Star of the Sea', 'Ever-open door into Heaven',

[51] See for the antiphon *Inviolata* the Antiphonale Romanum, p. 133*; for *Hortus conclusus* the Antifonale Hartker (PalMus, 2nd series, 1), p. 299.

'Mother of the Redeemer'. Gombert's motet can thus best be seen as a pendant to the countless medieval and Renaissance representations of the Virgin and Child enthroned.

The number twelve and the Queen of Heaven

Renaissance music also contains some compositions in which the number twelve is used symbolically to express the fact that they were written in honour of the Queen of Heaven. Foremost among composers who contributed to this repertoire was Pierre de la Rue. In three of his Masses I discovered a certain procedure that is based on the twelve-fold presentation of a particular fragment of chant. The Masses are *Assumpta est Maria, Ista est speciosa*, and *Conceptio tua*; they are for four, five and five voices respectively.

The number twelve plays an important role in number symbolism because of its many appearances in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 12:1-3 St John describes how a great sign appeared in heaven: "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars: And being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns: and on his heads seven diadems." In early Christianity this woman was accepted as an allegory of the Church. But medieval interpretation of the Holy Scriptures tended to see her, above all, as Mary.[52] The dragon, Satan, vainly sought to destroy her child, who is Christ, the Messiah. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux, in his third sermon on Mary's twelve prerogatives (*Sermo de XII praerogativis BMV*), comments upon the crown as follows: "Who would be able to appraise these precious stones, who could name the stars of which Mary's royal diadem is composed? It is beyond [all] human power to interpret the significance of this crown and to explain its composition. None the less, in our modest opinion, and without engaging ourselves in a dangerous examination of the mysteries involved, it would not be inappropriate to consider these twelve stars as the twelve prerogatives of grace which adorn Mary in such a particular way. For Mary has the prerogatives of heaven, prerogatives of the body, and prerogatives of the heart. And if one multiplies these three with the number four, we then perhaps obtain those twelve stars by which the diadem of our Queen greatly surpasses all [other] stars."[53] Bernard thereupon enumerates the four prerogatives of heaven as well as those of the body and the heart.

The impact of medieval thought on Christian art is clearly reflected in the various ways the apocalyptic woman is represented. While in the earliest illustrations of Revelation 12:1-2 the woman usually appears as orant standing on the crescent, from the twelfth century onwards artists began to depict

[52] Cf. Ashe, *op. cit.* (fn. 17), pp. 117ff.

[53] Translation based on B. Schneyer, *Mariale. Ein Werkbuch für Marienpredigten* (Würzburg 1954), p. 131.

several Marian features. For instance, one of the tapestries of the famous *Apocalypse* of Angers shows the Child in the arms of the Virgin who is dressed in a red skirt and a blue coat. The colour red symbolizes love, blue symbolizes grace. (In Hebrew the proper name Maria designates 'the one who is loved by God'.) In the fourteenth century the crown of stars came into use as another attribute of Mary. About 1480 the Dutch master Geertgen tot Sint Jans painted his *Maria in Sole*, in which she is depicted carrying the Child, clothed with the sun, with the moon and the dragon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.[54] It is easy to understand why this new attribute became popular also in representations of the Virgin enthroned. The Master of Moulins lays particular emphasis on the apocalyptic crown in his *Crowning of the Virgin*, a triptych which he painted in the last decade of the fifteenth century for the Cathedral of Moulins. (Fig. 20) How strongly the number twelve was associated with the Virgin comes to the fore in an anonymous tapestry from the Niederrhein dated about 1500. The artist devoted his work to the Virgin and the unicorn. As is well known, from early times the unicorn was linked with the theme of Mary's virginity in the context of Christ's incarnation. "The legend of the mythical beast, whose horn had the power of purifying whatever it touched, and which could not be captured except by a virgin, was adopted as a Christian allegory in spite of its unmistakable phallic overtones."[55] The Virgin and the unicorn are represented in the *hortus conclusus*, one of the accepted symbols of Marian virginity. Twelve epithets relating to Mary are given in Latin: *Sol aurora, Tribus Moisi, Virga Aaron, Archa domini, Urna aurea, Fons signatus, Vellum Gideonis, Virginitas, Castitas, Iustitia, Porta celi, Humilitas.* (Fig. 21)

Mary was, moreover, often associated with the Daughter of Zion, who in the Song of Songs represents Israel. We see indeed in the very first bars of La Rue's Kyrie *Ista est speciosa* that Mary is called "speciosa inter filias jherusalem", that is, 'beautiful among the daughters of Jerusalem'. The Mass *Assumpta est Maria* celebrates the Assumption of the Virgin into heaven. Although the Roman Catholic Church waited until 1950 to solemny define the doctrine that Mary – after having completed the course of her earthly life – was assumed in body and soul to heavenly glory, belief in the Assumption of Mary was alive among Christians from a very early date. Thus numerous painters in the past centuries, especially during the Renaissance, have depicted this event. They often represented the crowned Virgin enshrined by angels who are singing or playing musical instruments.[56] The Ms. Brussels 228, fol. 1v (La Rue's motet *Ave sanctissima Maria*), the Ms. Jena 4, fol. 8v (the Kyrie of La Rue's *Missa Ave sanctissima* Maria), and the Ms. Brussels 15075, fol.1v (the Kyrie of La Rue's *Missa Conceptio tua*) are also decorated with miniatures that depict the crowned Virgin standing on the crescent-shaped moon.

An investigation of the treatment of the *cantus prius facti* in the Masses *Assumpta est Maria* and *Ista est speciosa* shows that La Rue proceeded in both works more or less in the same way. The chants are paraphrased freely in the tenor, but the initial notes are always clearly recognizable and function therefore as a motto. We can certainly associate these 'contextual signs' with the inscriptions that occur in contemporary paintings and tapestries.[57] The borrowed melodies occur in the following sections of the Mass text: (see Table 1)

Table 1. Quotations from Chant in *Missa Assumpta est* and *Missa Ista est speciosa*

Missa Assumpta est
Kyrie I and Christe – Kyrie II – Et in terra – Qui tollis – Patrem omnipotentem (bar 12...) – Genitum non factum – Sanctus – Osanna – Benedictus – Agnus dei I (bar 1...) – Agnus dei I (bar 21...) – Agnus dei II
Missa Ista est speciosa
Kyrie I – Christe – Kyrie II – Et in terra – Qui tollis – Patrem omnipotentem – Crucifixus – Sanctus – Osanna I – Osanna II – Agnus dei I – Agnus dei II

In *Missa Assumpta est* the antiphon for the feast of the Assumption is stated twelve times.[58] *Missa Ista est speciosa* has a different lay-out which is less explicit. The Mass derives its title from the antiphon "Ista est speciosa inter filias Jerusalem". But at least one, perhaps two other antiphons are quoted. Although the plainsong melodies differ, the text interpolations in the Mass point to the two antiphons "Viderunt eam filiae Sion vernantem in floribus rosarum et beatissimam praedicaverunt" and "Viderunt eam filiae Sion et beatam dixerunt et reginae laudaverunt eam". These antiphons belong to the feasts of the Holy Rosary (October 7) and the Maternity of the Virgin (October 11). In this Mass too, there are twelve statements of chant altogether. It is therefore most likely that the composer, by connecting the elaboration of the appropriate Marian antiphons in his *Missa Assumpta est* with the number twelve, followed the well-known interpretation of Revelation 12:1.

The Masses *Assumpta est* and *Ista est speciosa* constitute, as it were, the side-panels of an altar-piece whose central panel consists of *Missa Conceptio tua*. In this Mass, La Rue applies yet another contrapuntal technique. Although

[54] A. Châtelet, *Early Dutch Painting: Painting in the Northern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford 1981), p. 134, ascribes this painting to the Master of the Antwerp Triptych, but this attribution is not adopted by Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. For a reproduction in colour see W. Elders, *op. cit.* (fn. 23), frontispiece.

[55] Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 24), p. 327.

[56] For a survey of the theme in Italian painting see V. Ravizza, *Das instrumentale Ensemble von 1400-1550 in Italien* (Bern/Stuttgart 1970), pp. 79-107.

[57] See also my study *The* Soggetto ostinato ..., pp. 61-95.

[58] See also the edition of the Mass by Ludwig Finscher in *Musica divina* 18, p. [III].

the *cantus prius factus* is quoted in the tenor here also, the chant's *incipit* often occurs as a brief initial motif in the other voices (Ex.6):

Ex. 6

If we count all the statements which contain the first six 'key' notes of the antiphon shown in example 3, the total is 24: (see Table 2)

Table 2. Quotations from Chant in *Missa Conceptio tua*

Kyrie	Ct bar 1; S bar 7; BI bar 11; T bar 16
Et in terra	Ct bar 1; S bar 7; T bar 28
Qui tollis	BII bar 1; T bar 3; BI bar 5; S bar 12; Ct bar 17
Patrem	Ct bar 1; S bar 5; T bar 64
Et resurrexit	T bar 24
Sanctus	Ct bar 1; S bar 5; T bar 31
Agnus dei I	Ct bar 1; S bar 7; T bar 13; BI bar 16
Agnus dei II	S bar 5

There are only two exact quotations of the complete antiphon without melodic change or interpolation. The first occurs in the Credo at the passage "Et ex patre natum ... Et incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine: Et homo factus est ... passus et sepultus est." Obviously, the composer wanted to draw attention to Mary's integral purity at the most appropriate place in the Mass devoted to her immaculate conception. The doctrine of her immaculate conception implied that she was also free from all sin. The second statement is found in Agnus dei II. In this final part of the Mass, La Rue places the antiphon in the superius, and by using this high range to emphasize the last occurrence of the original melody of the antiphon, he brings his devotion to the Virgin to its culmination.

The thoughtful treatment of the antiphon in *Missa Conceptio tua* makes the hypothesis plausible that La Rue also determined that there would be precisely 24 initial statements: again, this number – a multiple of twelve – probably symbolizes the Woman in the Book of Revelation. An allusion to this is made in the large miniature that was painted for the Kyrie of La Rue's Mass in the Ms. Jena 4, fol. 29v. Under the vine of life, the Virgin is depicted with a crown on her head, carrying the child and treading on the serpent.[59]

[59] For a detailed description of the miniature see K.E. Roediger, *Die geistlichen Musikhandschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Jena. Text* (Jena 1935), p. 43.

(Fig. 22) Since Duns Scotus is portrayed as well, who, as we saw on p. 158, defended the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception, we discover at once the context in which the Mass must be placed. After Sixtus IV had instituted the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin in 1475, the composition of polyphonic music for Offices and Mass was soon influenced by this new cult.

A composition that, as far as the number of its chant presentations is concerned, can best be compared with La Rue's *Missa Conceptio tua*, is the five-part setting of the antiphon *Salve regina* by Josquin. The motet is structurally unique. The chant's head-motive, la-sol-la-re, is repeated 24 times as an ostinato in the quinta vox and appears alternately on *g'* and *d'*, always preceded by three breves rest. In other words, each *talea* numbers seven bars and the 24 motives form a series of twelve full statements. Since the motive is quoted in breves, a real cantus firmus is produced. Josquin divides the text of the antiphon into three *partes*. The *soggetto ostinato* is heard twelve times in the *I.pars*, four times in the *II.pars*, and eight times in the *III.pars*. The total number of notes in the cantus firmus voice is thus 96. Puzzling is why the composer has added some notes in the cantus firmus voice at the ends of the three *partes*. There are one, one and two extra notes respectively. These four additional notes bring the total up to 100. This 'perfect' number can hardly be accidental. In order to find the explanation for Josquin's procedure, we have to turn our attention to the text in the third section of the antiphon, which reads: "And after this our exile, show unto us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb." The 100 notes should be seen as an intensification of the number ten, which in Christian number symbolism means Christ.[60] In the Greek numeral system the *iota*, the first letter of the name of Jesus, is equal to the number ten. The Greek letter *chi*, the first letter of the name of Christ, is identified with the Roman numeral X. This beatic vision of Christ represents, of course, man's salvation. Josquin alluded to this by adding a motto to the ostinato: "Qui perseveraverit (usque in finem, hic) salvus erit" (The man who perseveres [in singing this motive] will be saved).[61] The numbers twelve and one hundred mark Josquin's five-part *Salve regina* as a prayer to the Queen of Heaven in which the composer once more demonstrated how esoterically he used number symbolism.

The Ms. Pepys 1760 of Magdalen College, Cambridge, contains a twelve-part canon by Mathieu Gascongne on the text "Ista est speciosa inter filias Jherusalem". Edward Lowinsky has suggested that the manuscript was written for Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon to celebrate the birth of their daughter Mary in 1516.[62] Gascongne is represented by no less than ten

[60] Cf. Meyer, *op. cit.* (fn. 30), p. 144.

[61] For the sources in which the motto occurs see W. Elders, *Das Symbol in der Musik von Josquin des Prez*, in AcM 51 (1969), p. 179.

[62] Cf. E.E. Lowinsky, *A Music Book for Anne Boleyn*, in Florilegium Historiale: Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson (Toronto 1970), pp. 163-4. See, however, also footnote 135 in my study mentioned in the next footnote.

pieces. Truly, his canon is highly remarkable. Only one voice is notated, but the entries of all the following voices are indicated with a corona. The exceptional number of twelve canonic voices must be viewed as a way of relating the text symbolically to the Woman of the Book of Revelation 12:1. It is further very likely that Gascongne conceived this piece in order to make a contribution to the repertoire of *musica celestis*.[63]

Josquin's twelve-part *Inviolata* and Gombert's twelve-part *Regina celi* are songs in praise of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception and the Queen of Heaven. Both are identified by a crown with twelve stars.[64] The first of the compositions is preserved in the mid-sixteenth-century Ms. Kassel 38 only. The melody of the sequence is treated as a migrant cantus firmus until bar 27, where the tenor primus enters with the words "O Maria, flos virginum", sung in long note-values. Although doubt has been cast on its authenticity because the source might be "unreliable",[65] a performance of the composition shows that it is indeed an impressive motet.[66] The perfect balance and colourful contrasts between the different vocal groupings are not unworthy of the Netherlandish master. The *Regina celi* by Gombert was published in 1535 by Attaingnant in his *Lib[er] duodecim[us] XVII. musicales ad virginem christiparam salutationes habet* ... The chant, in the tenor primus, is embedded in a rich polyphonic texture. The forces are not divided as in the northern Italian coro spezzato style, but the combination of voice-groups is constantly changing.[67]

My last example of the use of the number twelve as a symbol in music in honour of the Virgin is from Spain. It is the five-part motet *Ave virgo sanctissima* by Francisco Guerrero. Soon after the piece was published in 1566 it became his most famous work. No less than four parody Masses were based on it.[68] There can even be little doubt "that the uniform estimate that makes of Guerrero a merely mellifluous composer of Marian praises owes something of its origin to the excessive popularity of this one motet ..."[69] The two discant voices form a canon at the unison. It is due to the canon that we can discover a case of *Augenmusik* here. At the beginning of the second sentence, the composer sets the word "salve" to the well-known la-sol-la-re chant intonation of the *Salve regina* antiphon. Here, Josquin's widely disseminated five-part setting, discussed above, is recalled. Since this motet was copied

[63] See my study *The Conception of* Musica celestis *and Musical Composition*, pp. 243-5.
[64] Cf. Ferguson, *op. cit.* (fn. 44), pp. 44 and 95-6.
[65] Cf. NGD 9, p. 734.
[66] The motet has been recorded by the Early Music Consort of London under the direction of David Munrow (EMI SLS 5049), and by the Schola Cantorum "Die Sangheren onser liever Vrouwen" under the direction of Maurice Pirenne (Phonogram S6802 823).
[67] See also my study *The Conception of* Musica celestis ..., pp. 242-3 and 245-8.
[68] The Masses are by Géry de Ghersem (1598) (see p. 166), Pedro Rimonte (1604), Juan Esquivel (1608), and Juan del Vado (ca. 1670).
[69] R. Stevenson, *Spanish Cathedral Music in the Golden Age* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1961), p. 204.

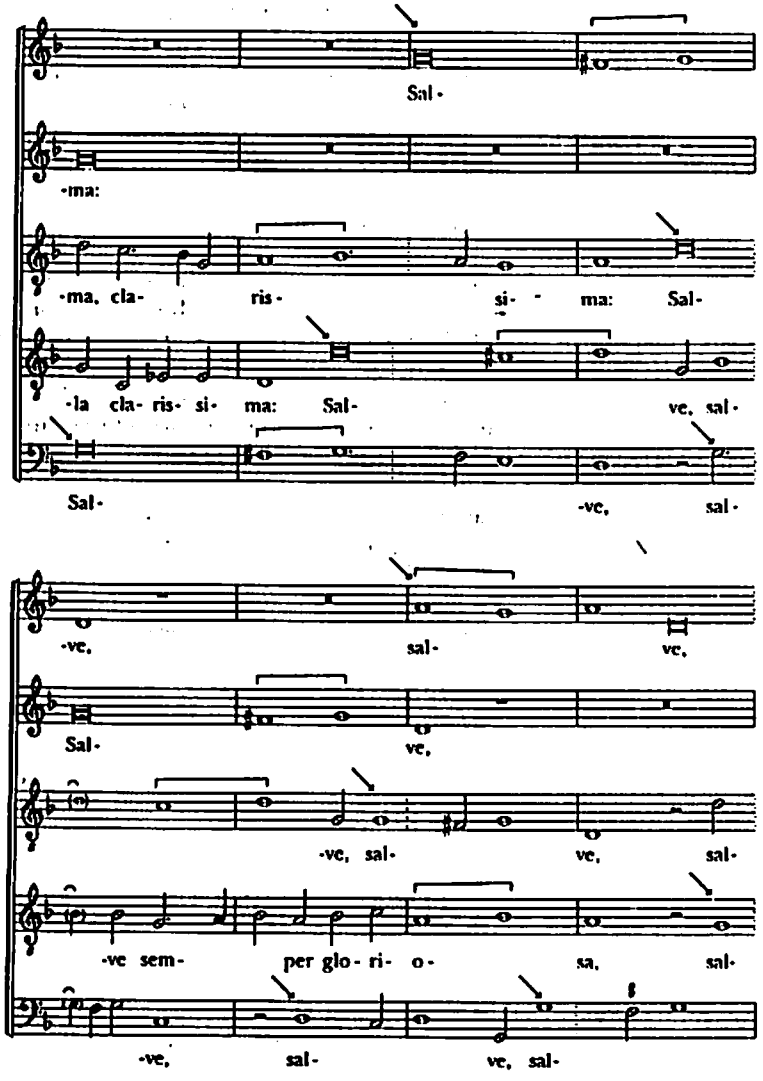
between 1550 and 1554 into one of the cathedral choirbooks at Seville – where Guerrero had become an associate to the chapelmaster in 1551 – and which also contained eight of his own works,[70] the latter must have known the composition intimately. Though it is entirely different and has as yet never been connected with it, Guerrero's beautiful "salve"-passage surely had its model in Josquin's motet. However, whereas Josquin presents the "salve" motive twelve times in one voice and always alternately in two hexachords, Guerrero distributes the "salve" statements over all the voices, changing their tonality. Three of them occur in both the *dux* and *comes* voices, three in the altus, two in the tenor, and four in the bassus[71] (Ex. 7).

Since the *comes* is not written down, the singers actually see no more than twelve motives. The second sentence of the text reads: "Salve semper gloriosa, margarita pretiosa, sicut lilium formosa, nitens, olens velut rosa" (Hail, ever glorious, precious pearl, lovely as the lily, shining and smelling like the rose). In short, Mary is compared to a pearl, and the twelve "hails" may therefore represent the pearls which are sometimes found in paintings of the Virgin's crown. One of the most beautiful examples is Jean Fouquet's *Virgin and Child* (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten). If my interpretation is correct, it appears that the composer wanted to allude to the apocalyptic Woman by changing the twelve stars into twelve 'pearls'. Yet, while having visually symbolized Mary's crown of twelve pearls in his score, Guerrero may have used the canon technique to express, audibly, another Marian attribute as well. Owing to the presence of three "salve" statements in the first canonic voice, the five parts together perform fifteen "salve" motives. This number could refer to the rosary. From about 1500 onwards, after the devotion of the rosary had begun to spread widely, the string of beads sometimes appears in representations of the Virgin. In its most comprehensive form the rosary is composed of 150 small and fifteen large pearls. The small pearls serve to count the "Hail Mary's", and with each large one the Lord's Prayer is said. The fifteen mysteries of the Virgin connected with the rosary are divided into three series: the Joyful, the Sorrowful, and the Glorious. Guerrero's song in praise of Mary shows that the music of the composers of the Low Countries not only influenced the Spanish polyphonic style but also served as a model for the application of musical symbolism.

An inventory of all compositions in which Marian numbers can be discovered show that they form but a small part of the exceedingly rich repertoire devoted to the Holy Virgin during the Renaissance. Moreover, it should be pointed out that seven- or twelve-part scoring need not always be regarded as

[70] Cf. *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, vol. 3, p. 138.
[71] The motives are distributed as follows: cantus I, bars 23, 27, 30; altus bars 24, 26, 31; tenor bars 22, 28; bassus bars 21, 24, 26, 27.

Ex. 7



symbolic. For example, it was probably not intended as such in the first book of Litanies of Loreto for 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 voices by Giovanni Battista Gnochus (Bologna, 1597).[72] Music for twelve parts is, more often than not, polychoral. Two examples are Palestrina's *Salve regina* and Andrea Gabrieli's *Magnificat*. It should, finally, come as no surprise that the use of number symbolism was particularly favoured in the Low Countries. In this part of Western Europe the religious societies known as 'Marian brotherhoods' flourished and patronized the composition of music in honour of the Virgin much more strongly than elsewhere.

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[72] Cf. J. Roth, *Die mehrstimmigen lateinischen Litaneikompositionen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg 1959), p. 13.

Fig. 18. Adriaan Isenbrandt, *The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin* (ca. 1530).
Bruges, Church of Our Lady. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

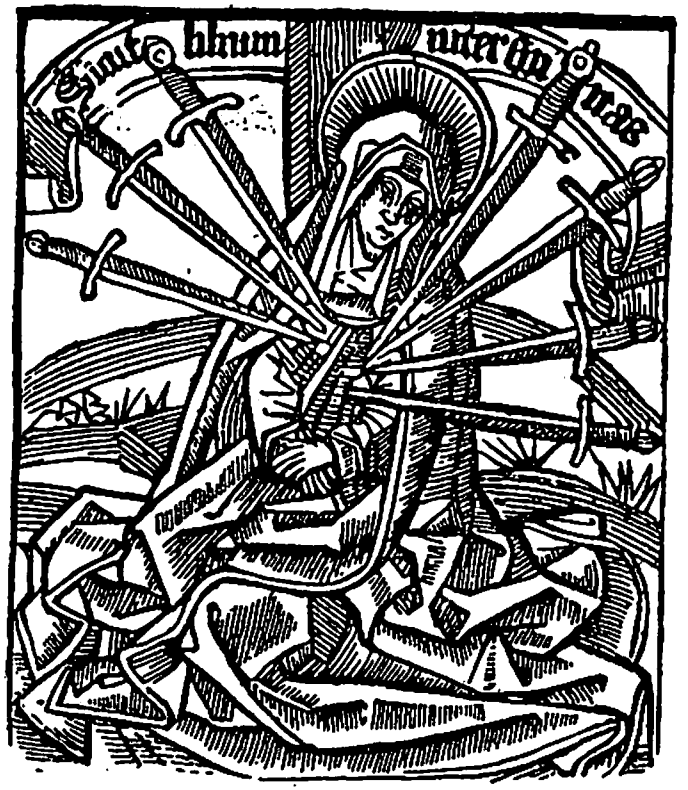

Fig. 19. Mary as the Mother of Seven Sorrows. The inscription "Sicut lilium inter spinas" (As the lily among thorns) is taken from The Song of Songs 2:2.
Woodcut, Antwerp, 1519.

Fig. 20. Master of Moulins, Triptych of *The Coronation of the Virgin*, main panel (1498-99).
Moulins, Cathedral.
The Latin inscription, which is inspired by Revelation 12:1, can be translated as follows: This is she upon whom one sings sacred eulogies. Clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, she deserves it to be crowned with twelve stars.

Fig. 21. The Tapestry of the Virgin and the Unicorn (Niederrhein, ca. 1500).
Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum.

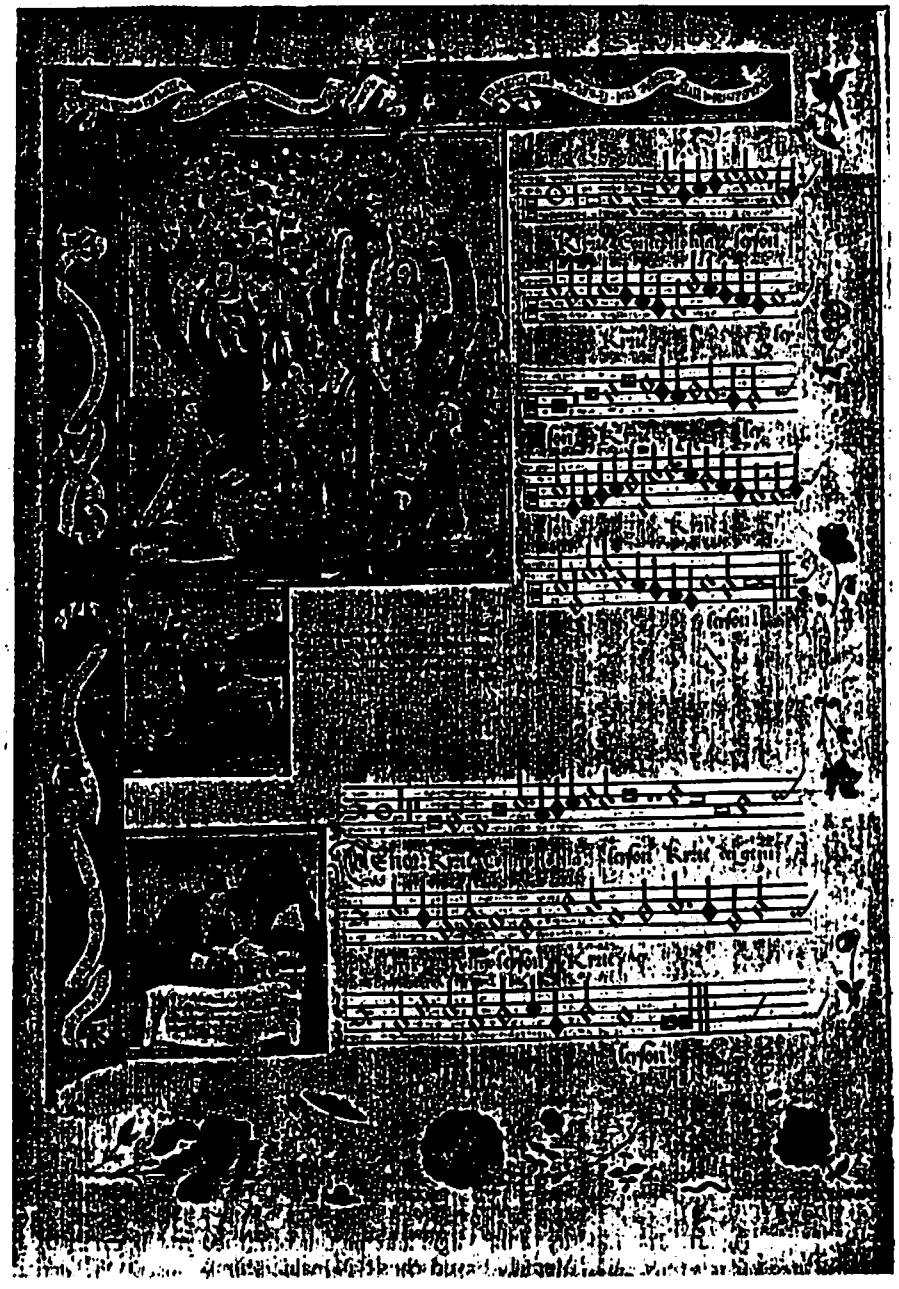

Fig. 22. The Virgin as the Queen of Heaven (1512-18).
Illumination from Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. 4, fol. 29v.
The kneeling friar in the second miniature from the top is Duns Scotus.
The inscription refers to his doctrine on Mary's immaculate conception.

CANON AND IMITATION AS MUSICAL IMAGES OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS*

The mystery of the Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three Persons' has not only fascinated theologians since the early days of Christianity, it has also impressed on artists, poets and musicians from the Middle Ages onwards. The present article deals with some compositions which exemplify two related contrapuntal techniques used by musicians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to contribute to the rich diversity of Trinitarian representations.

Although neither the word Trinity nor the doctrine as such appear in the New Testament, the apostolic teaching expressed in such passages as Matthew 28:19,[1] the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians 13:13,[2] and other New Testament texts have formed the basis for the definition of both the distinctness and the unity of the three Divine Persons. In 325, as a counter to heterodoxy the Council of Nicaea stated formally the divinity of Christ, confessing that the Son is "of the same substance as the Father" (*consubstantialis patri*). In the same century, the first Council of Constantinople (381) extended this definition to the divinity of the Holy Spirit as well. This twofold determination of codivinity has proved decisive for the formulation of the Trinitarian dogma. The doctrine that God is of one nature yet three persons was expounded by St Augustine in his great treatise *De Trinitate* (400-416). The Church Father thought of God as one single personal being "who exists in three forms or manifests himself in three ways."[3] In the first ten books Augustine brings together the texts of Holy Scripture which witness to this mystery of the faith; in the following books he attempts to provide some clarifications. Since man as a spiritual being was created according to the image of God, Augustine used the basic structure and faculties of the human mind to shed some light on the central mystery of the Christian faith. The Father was compared to memory, the Son to understanding, and the Holy Ghost to will and love. Augustine's writings as well as those of such Eastern Fathers as Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil of Cappadocia were instrumental in giving the Trinitarian mystery a central place in Christian worship.

The doctrine of the consubstantiality, which was disputed by the Arians but defended by Athanasius and defined at Nicea, continued to develop gradually over several centuries before being further elaborated. At the Synod of Toledo in 589, the text of the Nicene Creed was adopted in the Ordinary

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* I am grateful to Paul Raasveld for his careful reading of the manuscript.

[1] "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

[2] "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

[3] A.C. McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York/London 1947), vol. 2, p. 87.

of the Mass. With regard to the procession of the Holy Ghost the article "Qui ex patre, filioque procedit" (Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son) was added. The Eastern Church, however, never accepted the "filioque".[4]

The Trinity has always had a special place in worship. In all Christian regions, churches and monasteries were erected in honour of the three Divine Persons. Sometimes the form of these buildings reminds one of the number three. For example, the foundations of the monastery at Fleury (St Benoît-sur-Loire) were shaped like a triangle (see below).[5] At St Riquier (Picardy), Angilbert (ca. 740-814) had three small churches built at the three entrances of his abbey. This former prelate at the court of Charlemagne selected three hundred monks and one hundred boys who together formed three independent choirs which collectively sang the office but at the same time acted separately.[6] One only has to imagine these three ensembles singing the lesser doxology at the end of the psalms at office[7] to become aware of the extent to which medieval worship was placed under the sign of the Trinitarian dogma.

Symbols of the Trinity in Art and Music

Probably because the reluctance of the Church "to represent naturalistically the first person of the Trinity who, being unseen, was unknowable",[8] the Trinitarian theme appears rather late in art and was first expressed in symbolic form. The oldest ideogram is the equilateral triangle. It occurs in Manichaeism but was opposed by Augustine, and it subsequently disappeared until its further employment in the eleventh century.[9] Other symbols were the three concentric or intersecting circles. The first was described by the Rhineland mystic Heinrich Suso (1295-1366);[10] it is frequently found as an expression of Eastern ecclesiastical theology.[11] The three intersecting circles, bearing the inscription *Trinitas / Unitas*, are depicted on a French miniature dating from the end of the thirteenth century.[12] (Fig. 23) Below I will refer again to this symbol. In later medieval and Renaissance naturalistic Trinitarian representations, we see that either the Unity of divinity may be emphasized or the Three Persons may be depicted. A remarkable example of

[4] Cf. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 14, p. 301.
[5] Cf. A.H. Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne* (Paris 1843), p. 530.
[6] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 531. For more details on Angilbert's ideas on music in worship, see my study *The Conception of* Musica celestis ..., p. 222.
[7] This doxology consists of the phrase "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and to the ages of ages."
[8] J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York ²1979), p. 309.
[9] Cf. W. Braunfels, *Dreifaltigkeit*, in Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, ed. by E. Kirschbaum (Freiburg i. B. 1968-1976), vol. 1, col. 528.
[10] Cf. *ibid.*
[11] See O. Messner, *Die konzentrische Trinitätsdarstellung als genuiner Ausdruck der ostkirchlichen Theologie*, in Actes 1er Congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes, Sofia 1966 (Sofia 1969), vol. 2, pp. 961-3.
[12] Chartres, Bibliothèque communale, Ms. 1355.

the art of representing the doctrine "One in Three and Three in One" is the three-headed figure of God. (Fig. 24) A fine example of the portrayal of the three individual Persons may be found in the so-called *Credo of Siena*, a series of twenty-two inlay works in wood by Domenico di Niccolò (1415-28), which depict the various articles of the Creed. (Fig. 25) The most common representation of the Trinity, however, shows God the Father as an old man, holding before him the body of the dead Christ, or Christ on the cross; the dove – a symbol of the Holy Ghost – is placed above the head of Christ or that of the Father. This representation has become known as the 'throne of mercy', a name proposed by Luther, who used the term in his translation of Hebrews 9:5 – "Oben drüber aber waren die Cherubim der herrligkeit, die vberschatteten den Gnadenstuel."[13] The theme of the 'throne of mercy' is found in painting, sculpture and book illumination from the twelfth century onwards. Its occurrence on medieval gravestones shows that this Trinitarian portrayal had become a devotional theme. Among the most famous examples are Masaccio's *Trinity* (ca. 1427; Santa Maria Novella, Florence), *The Trinity* by the Master of Flémalle (ca. 1430; Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt a. M.; Fig. 26), Albrecht Dürer's *Adoration of the Trinity* (1511; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), and El Greco's *Trinity* (1577; Chicago Art Institute).

The Middle Ages witnessed a growing number of secular and ecclesiastical brotherhoods which placed themselves under the protection of the Trinity. One of the most famous ecclesiastical orders was that of the Trinitarians, founded in France in 1198 to free Christian slaves from captivity in the Near East. These corporations had a need for representations of the Trinity as an ornament in church and chapel. Artists were therefore commissioned to portray the three divine images.[14] In view of this situation it should not surprise us to learn that composers of sacred music also sought particular means to convey the Trinitarian dogma. Because the various musical possibilities of expressing the concept 'three-in-one' almost have the character of an ideogram, a composer had to be less concerned about the theological problems involved in any naturalistic visualization than the painter or sculptor.[15] A further advantage for the musician was that the creation of a musical image of the Divine Persons could be intimately bound up with texts that were part of the liturgical celebration of the Trinitarian mystery.

The dogma 'one God in three Persons' can be musically represented in the following ways:

[13] Quoted after *Die Bibel ... in der deutschen Übersetzung von D. Martin Luther* (Gütersloh 1986).
[14] Cf. G. Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals* (London 1981), p. 238.
[15] Nicholas of Cusa, for example, says: When there is question of the Divine Oneness-Trinity, it cannot be that with this triunity a threesome is meant such as is communicated by arbitrary created objects. Cf. W. Schulze, *Zahl, Proportion, Analogie: Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphysik und Wissenschaftshaltung des Nikolaus von Kues* (Münster 1978), p. 70.

(a) the number three can be expressed in the rhythmic movement of the composition, *viz.* by means of perfect mensuration or *proportio sesquialtera*;
(b) the concept 'three-in-one' may be symbolized in the triad;
(c) the same concept can also be expressed by way of three canonic voices.

Perfect mensuration is indicated in early musical practice by the whole circle, a geometric figure that, because it has no beginning and end, was used as a symbol of God. It is already mentioned by some medieval theorists,[16] and is sometimes found in settings of the article of the Creed, "Qui cum patre et filio simul adoratur". However, as I have argued in my earlier monograph on symbolism, passages in triple mensuration are often introduced into compositions governed by duple mensuration in order to bring about a greater rhythmic variety.[17] The setting of the respective text should therefore be studied in the context of this whole section of the Creed before proposing any symbolical connection.

The occurrence of the triad as a possible symbol of the Trinity must clearly be approached with even more caution. The thirteenth-century poet Pierre de Peckham, perhaps inspired by Augustine's interpretation of the ten strings of the psaltery as representing the Ten Commandments,[18] remarks that three strings of the harp, vibrating 'in unity',

> Sount par accord come la trinité[19]
> (Sound in accord as the Trinity).

It is also tempting to see the notes *c-g-e'* held by the angel playing the positive in Jan van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb* as a reference to the Trinity, which forms the central image in the upper level of the retable.[20] Yet it is hard to give evidence of this particular use of the triad as an image of the Trinity in Renaissance composition. Until the sixteenth century the theory of polyphonic composition considered triadic chords as complexes of two harmonic intervals. Thus, though it is true that Walter Odington (*fl.* 1298-1316) already recognized the third as a consonant interval,[21] and while it cannot be denied that the triad became a common phenomenon in three-part music from about 1300 onwards, the chord as an indivisible unit is only described much later. In his *Synopsis musicae novae* of 1612, Johannes Lippius says the following: "The simple harmonic triad is the true and three-in-one sounding root of all the most perfect and complete harmony found in the world ... and the image and shadow of that great divine mystery, which alone is to be

[16] Cf. G. Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (London 1941), p. 274.
[17] See *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (Bilthoven 1968), pp. 24ff. and 148ff.
[18] See the Introduction, p. 2.
[19] For the literary source of this comment see A. Pirro, *Histoire de la musique de la fin du XIVe siècle à la fin du XVIe* (Paris 1940), p. 53.
[20] On the interpretation of the central figure as the Trinity, see L. Brand Philip, *The Ghent Altarpiece and the Art of Jan van Eyck* (Princeton 1971), p. 54.
[21] Cf. NGD 13, p. 502.

adored, the Unitrinity."[22] If we further take into account that triads occur as often in settings of texts dealing with the Trinity as they do in settings of other texts, it becomes apparent that any possible symbolic purpose of the major and minor third will not be easy to prove.

The third means of representing musically the Divine Persons, that is, by way of canonic writing, forms the actual theme of this study. In the following paragraphs I will deal with this subject in more detail.

The Father and the Son

If we define 'imitation' as "the restatement in close succession of a melody (theme, motif) in different parts of a contrapuntal texture",[23] it is obvious that the technique used in canonic writing differs from imitation only by virtue of the extension of the imitated voice-part and the greater strictness with which this latter technique is applied. The imitating parts follow generally at a short temporal distance and at different lower or upper intervals. A very complex form, which is important for our subject, is the so-called mensuration canon, that is, a canon by augmentation, diminution, or by proportional changes of note values.

The application of canonic writing as a musical image of the Divine Persons coincides with its classical stage of development – the period from about 1450 until approximately 1550 – and it is found in particular in the works of those Netherlandish masters who dominated the musical scene in Western Europe at that time. Among these are Guillaume Dufay, Josquin des Prez, Pierre de la Rue, and Adrian Willaert.

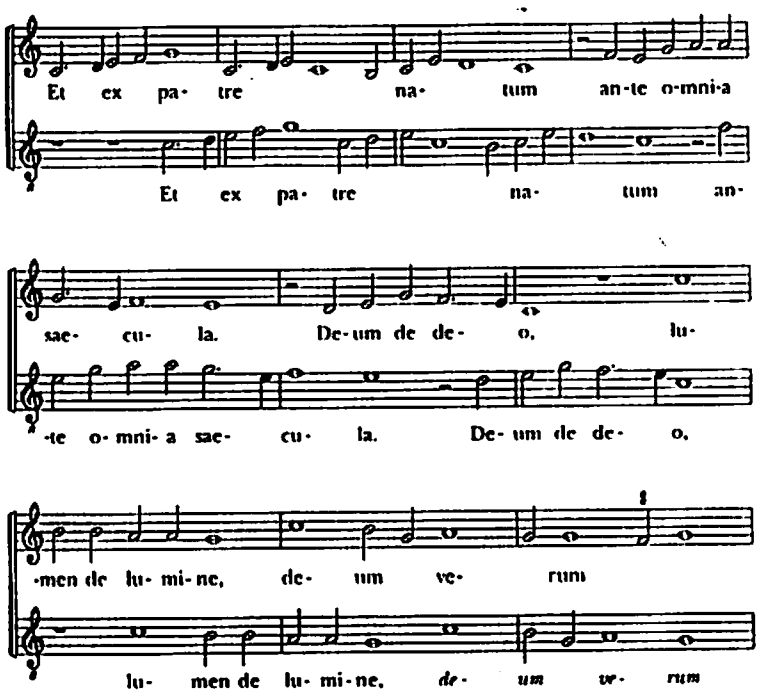
Arnold Schering is the first music historian to point out that, already in Dufay's time, canonic writing was employed to symbolize the triunity of the Divine Persons. In order to illustrate his thesis, the author referred to some Mass sections in the Trent codices found in vol. 61 of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, on pages 28, 73, 74, 78 and 96.[24] Schering's remarkable observation, albeit basically correct, does however hardly apply to these respective passages. While these pages show imitation technique at places where the text deals with one of the Divine Persons, there is no question of the musical representation of either two or of all three Persons. The sole instance that seems to support Schering's thesis is the article "Qui cum patre et filio simul adoratur" in a Credo by Dufay on p. 74: the idea of the Holy Ghost being adored *together with* the Father and the Son finds expression in the close succession of *three* imitating voices. The preceding article, "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son", is set to a two-part canon in the superius and tenor voices. Here, the number of two voices cannot be related

[22] Quoted according to NGD 11, p. 17; see also R. Dammann, *Der Musikbegriff im deutschen Barock* (Cologne 1967), pp. 40-9.
[23] W. Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA, ²1972), p. 402.
[24] *Das Symbol in der Musik* (Leipzig 1941), p. 29.

to the three Persons, but the imitation as such may have been conceived to allude to the idea expressed in the words "proceeding from".

Half of the Credo text is devoted to the Son. His relationship to God the Father is described in the following way: "Born of the Father before all ages; God of God, light of light, true God of true God." At this place in his *Missa Ave regina celorum* – the Mass was perhaps composed for the dedication of the Notre Dame of Cambrai on July 5, 1472[25] – Dufay introduces a long duo in overlapping imitation. During the first seven bars the altus follows the superius at the unison; thereafter, perhaps to stress the significance of the words "light of light", the imitation is at the octave (Ex. 1):

Ex. 1



Although imitation becomes more common in Dufay's later Mass cycles and although the Credo of *Missa Ave regina celorum* exhibits still two more imitative passages, the possibility that the composer employed this technique for other than purely musical reasons cannot be ruled out. As has been said in the introduction to this study, the mystery of the divinity of the Second

[25] Cf. A.E. Planchart, *Guillaume Dufay's Masses: Notes and Revisions*, in MQ 58 (1972), pp. 21-2.

Person strongly fascinated medieval and Renaissance artists. However, the depiction connected with the words "Deum de deo ..." in the above-mentioned *Credo of Siena* very appropriately illustrates how difficult it was for people not schooled in theology to reach some understanding of what the Trinitarian doctrine implied. The text points to both the unity *and* the otherness of Father and Son. But Domenico di Niccolò, by portraying the seated figure as a young man and by giving him a cross nimbus, places Christ in the centre of the scene. (Fig. 27) His interpretation of the text seems therefore to be that the *pre-existing* Son, obeying the order of the (invisible) Father – Christ raises the finger of his right hand, – shows his face as incarnate God, "shining like the sun" (Matth. 17:2).[26] If this is true, one can well say that this artist, unlike Dufay, failed to grasp the deeper import of the text. None the less, Domenico's picture may help us to explain the second passage of imitation. Anticipated by a point of imitation at the words "Who for us" in bars 54-56, the two upper voices follow each other at the interval of the octave from bar 61 to bar 69. The text of this passage reads: "And [who] for our salvation came down from heaven." This article of the Creed establishes both the divine and human nature of Christ. In other words, Christ's two natures "do not exist beside one another in an unconnected way but, rather, are joined in him in a personal unity."[27] Should we thus not assume that Dufay's aim was to emphasize this mystery of the sonship of God by symbolizing Christ's divine nature in the high voice and his human nature in the lower one? Needless to say, the octave interval between the two voice-parts makes this mysterious distinction almost 'audible'.

At the end of the Credo section dealing with the Second Person of the Trinity, Dufay once more uses the technique of imitation. The respective articles read: "And he ascended into heaven ..." (bars 109-117); "And he shall come again with glory ..." (bars 117ff.) The imitation occurs again in the superius and altus, at the octave, but this time a bass part is supplied as well. Must we assume that the technique here, too, serves an extra-musical purpose? The use of a rhetorical figure (*anabasis*) in the bass at bars 109-111 confirms that the composer did indeed have some form of symbolism in mind. The Ascension crowns the whole of Christ's life on earth, and it is only by the union of the triumphant ascension with Christ's passion and resurrection that man is saved.[28] The Ascension, too, underlines both the divine and human nature of Christ: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven" (The Acts 1:11). That Christ, at the Last Day, will appear once more in his two-fold nature is also testified in Matthew 24:30 – "and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty." By musically connecting the present

[26] Cf. F. Boespflug, *Das Credo von Siena* (Freiburg i. B. 1985), p. 18.
[27] E.W. Benz, *Christianity*, in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Macropaedia 4, p. 481.
[28] See *The Saint Andrew Daily Missal*. Large edition (Montreal 1943), p. 679.

articles with the one that determines Christ's descent to earth (bars 61-69). Dufay shows that he was perfectly aware of the relevant Christian import of this part of the Creed. This aspect of the composer's religious attitude undoubtedly developed from his theological training as a seminary student.

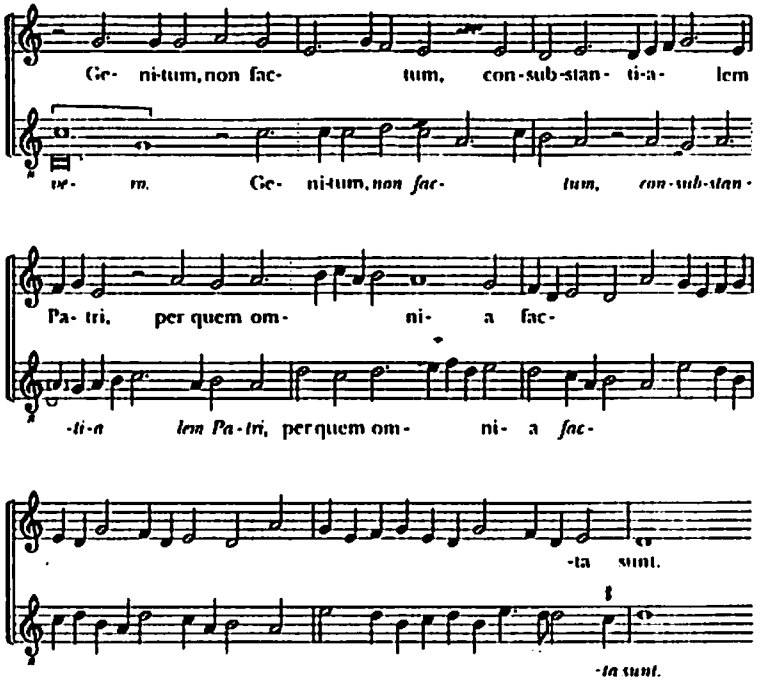
The Credo of Dufay's earlier Marian Mass, based on the antiphons "Ecce ancilla domini" and "Beata es Maria", exhibits various points of imitation, especially between the two upper voices. Clearly, here the technique is integrated into the texture as a means to achieve a higher degree of homogeneity in the sections without a cantus firmus. The only duo in the two contratenor voices occurs in the article: "Begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made." The central part of this phrase, "consubstantialem patri", is treated in imitation, and the passage as such is very remarkable indeed. I think we may therefore assume that Dufay wanted to symbolize the idea of the unity between the Father and the Son through this two-part imitation.[29]

In the later decades of the fifteenth century, the technique of imitation gradually took the place of the cantus firmus technique. An investigation of Josquin's compositional style shows that imitative writing is a regular source of his counterpoint. Yet it seems that Josquin, too, was familiar with the use of imitation as a musical image of the Divine Persons, and that he sometimes availed himself more intensively of this particular technique in order to establish a symbolic relation between words and music. For example, the Credo of the *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* contains two long passages in strict two-part imitation. Extending over eight bars, these imitation points are at the unison (bars 16-23) and the fifth (bars 33-40) resp., and occur in the section dealing with Jesus Christ. The first article of this section reads: "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God." The fourth article reads: "Begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made." (Ex. 2) In both passages the two voices are singled out in the overall scoring. Since the articles emphasize the relationship between the Father and the Son, the purpose of the imitation at this place in the Creed can hardly escape the attentive listener.

Proceeding chronologically, our next example of two-part counterpoint symbolizing the first two persons of the Trinity is found in the hymns of Costanzo Festa. Since two of his compositions seem to have originated in France, it is not unlikely that the composer knew Jean Mouton and was influenced by him. Festa's predilection for canonic writing, which comes to the fore in his music for the vesper services, could have its roots in Mouton's great contrapuntal skill. The collection of thirty hymns for the church year contains a setting of the "Pange lingua". According to tradition, the even-

[29] How earnestly Dufay was concerned to elaborate upon the contents of the Mass text goes also from the way in which he combines the textual elements of the two *cantus prius facti* in his *Missa Ecce ancilla domini*; see M.J. Bloxam, *A Survey of Late Medieval Service Books from the Low Countries: Implications for Sacred Polyphony 1460-1520* (Ph.D. diss. Yale Univ. 1987), pp.232-7.

Ex. 2



numbered verses are set polyphonically and they alternate with chant. The last strophe reads:

Genitori, Genitoque
Laus et jubilatio;
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio.

(To the everlasting Father,
And the Son who reigns on high
With the Holy Ghost proceeding
Forth from each eternally,
Be salvation, honour, blessing,
Might and endless majesty.)

Our initial reaction might be to suppose that the opening words of the strophe prompted the two-part canon at the lower octave. However, the mention of the Holy Ghost in the following lines, as well as the fact that all of Festa's thirty hymns contain a canon in at least one of the polyphonic strophes, should recommend caution in interpreting the function of this technique.

The purpose of canonic writing is more obvious in the seven-part motets of Adrian Willaert's *Musica nova* of 1559. As is the case with Festa's *Pange lingua*, the hymn *Verbum supernum* belongs to the office of the Feast of *Corpus Christi*. On this day of the liturgical year the Church celebrates the presence of Christ in the Eucharist; in other words, the remembrance and re-enactment of the Last Supper and Christ's death on the cross are celebrated through the consecration of the bread and the wine. Receiving the Eucharist symbolizes a spiritual communion with Jesus Christ and with other Christians. Both "Pange lingua" and "Verbum supernum" were most likely written by Thomas Aquinas in or shortly after 1264, and became familiar hymns when, in the fourteenth century, the Feast of *Corpus Christi* developed into an annual celebration on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.[30] All six strophes of Willaert's hymn are set for seven voices, and all state a paraphrased version of the hymn's chant melody in the tenor and altus at the interval of the fifth. In strophes one to five, the canonic voices bear the text of the popular fifth strophe, "O salutaris hostia ..." (O saving Victim, opening wide / The gate of heaven to man below! / Our foes press on from every side: / Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow). The last strophe has the text "Uni trinoque domino ..." in all voices.

It seems clear that the key to understanding the two-part canon must be sought in the particular theme of the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, which is manifested in the third strophe of Thomas's hymn. This strophe deals with the Lord's presence under the appearance of bread as being that of the body of Christ, and under the appearance of wine as being that of his blood. Here a reference can be made to Jesus's own words as recorded in John 6:56 – "For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed." Proof of Willaert's intention to symbolize the deeper meaning of the hymn text musically can also be found in the rhythmic movement of the final strophe. While this strophe glorifies the Trinity, the sign of the circle that changes the binary mensuration into *tempus perfectum* at this point in the text, acts as an index of the holy number three.

The last example of a two-part canon as a musical image of the Divine Persons comes from Spain. Some years before his ordination in 1584, Fernando de las Infantas published a number of motets and counterpoints, one of which reflects his interest in theology.[31] As Rafael Mitjana has pointed out, the motet *Domine ostende nobis patrem*, written for the Feast of the apostle Philip, is based on John 14:8-10 and contains a symbolic two-part

[30] Thomas was requested by Pope Urban IV (1264) to compose the liturgy for the Feast of *Corpus Christi*. Thomas used some existing texts and hymns, revised them and wrote new ones: "Pange lingua" (concluding with the "Tantum ergo"), "Sacris solemnia" (concluding with the "Panis angelicus"), "Verbum supernum" (concluding with "O salutaris hostia"), and the sequence "Lauda Sion". There is no sufficient reason to doubt the testimony of Tolomeo of Lucca in favour of Thomas's authorship of these hymns. See J.A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas de Aquino. His Life, Thought and Works* (Washington 1974), pp. 176-85; 400ff.

[31] In 1601, Infantas published three theological treatises in Paris.

canon.[32] The Johannine text relates how Philip asks Jesus to show unto him the Father. Christ answers: "Have I been so long a time with you; and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" These last words are sung by the soprano and bass parts in canon, the significance of which is obvious.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Trinitas in unitate

As the dogma 'one God in three Persons' lends itself so perfectly to being expressed in a three-part canon, one easily understands why composers invented this form of musical allegory soon after two-part imitative writing had become a new symbol for the Father and the Son. Probably the earliest composition to contain the unambiguous direction "Trinitas in unitate" is the chanson *Ha que ville* of Antoine Busnois.[33] Remarkably, this work seems to offer two possible realizations: the performer can choose the standard, non-imitative texture of the *rondeau quatrain*, or he can separate the highest voice from the two lower ones and turn it into a three-part canon which, for instance, could serve as *ad libitum* music for the second *quatrain* of the rondeau.[34]

The question why Busnois gave his love song, which is dedicated to Jacqueline d'Haqueville, the form of a *double entendre*, is intriguing. The text of the chanson offers no obvious clues and to explain the canon only as a musical variant of the non-imitative setting would mean that one has to accept the composer making a peculiar exception to the rules governing the *formes fixes* of the fifteenth century. I am therefore rather inclined to assume that Busnois included the canon as an independent piece of instrumental music in this love song in order to show Jacqueline his great ability both as poet and composer.[35] It is written at the interval of the unison in the form of a round, which suggests that the music could sound without ceasing: the superius part of the chanson *Ha que ville* is surely a fine specimen of a Trinitarian canon (Ex. 3).

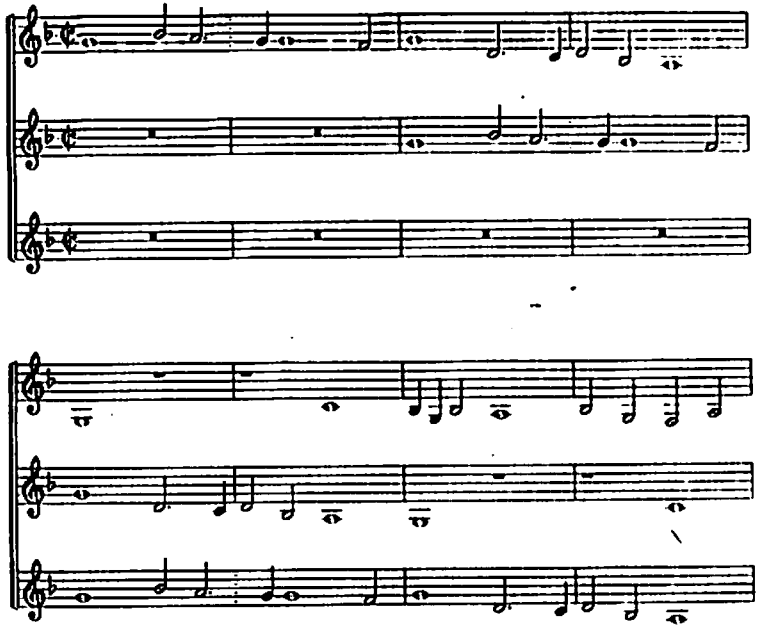
[32] *Don Fernando de las Infantas, teólogo y músico* (Madrid 1918), p. 74.

[33] Depending on the source the canon reads "Trinus in unitate" or "Trinitas in unitate". In the transcription by A. de la Fage, *Essais de diphthérographie musicale* (Paris 1864; R1964), vol. 2, no. 10, the direction reads: "Trinitas in unitate veneremur". It may well be that this wording stems from Giuseppe Baini, the Roman musicologist whose library was consulted by La Fage for the publication of the musical documents in his *Diphthérographie*.

[34] Catherine Brooks, *Antoine Busnois, Chanson Composer*, JAMS 6 (1953), p. 114, correctly points out that the canon does not allow for a medial cadence. Yet Joshua Rifkin, in his performance of the chanson for Nonesuch H-71247, uses the canon for the medial strophes. His treatment of the second voice in bar 14 is, however, not convincing.

[35] *Ha que ville* is one of four chanson texts by Busnois which include the name of Jacqueline d'Haqueville, wife of a Parisian councillor.

Ex. 3



Conceived as it was in France, the country that contributed so strongly to the Trinitarian cult, one may well wonder whether Busnois's circular canon was perhaps not inspired by one of those circular ideograms which occur in French manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see above). Another source of inspiration may have been Dante's *Divine Comedy*. At the end of his journey through Paradise the poet describes his vision of the Trinity as follows: "In the profound and clear ground of the lofty light appeared to me three circles of three colours and of the same extent, and the one seemed reflected by the other as rainbow by rainbow, and the third seemed fire breathed forth equally from the one and the other" (*Canto* XXXIII, 115-120).[36] In using the circle as an emblem of perfection, Dante for his part was perhaps influenced by Thomas Aquinas, who transposed this Neoplatonic

[36] Quotation taken from *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*. Translation and Commentary by J.D. Sinclair (London 1971). The structure of Dante's *Commedia* is generally regarded as being modelled on the Trinitarian concept. Divided into three books, each having 33 *canti* which are composed of hendecasyllables in *terza rima*, the whole work comprises one hundred canti. (The first one is a prologue.) Thus the number three, a symbol of the Trinity, is present in every part of the work, and the number one hundred symbolizes perfection and completeness.

theme so as to express the return of all created things to God: "Circularity completes the movement of the soul in that it leads to God."[37]

The Trinitarian Canon in Mass

If Busnois's chanson is the first example of a Trinitarian canon, the most famous one is certainly by Josquin. The second Agnus dei of his *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* is a canon for three voices, which are derived from a single notated part by performing each voice in a different mensuration. The Mass is preserved in almost twenty sources. Additionally, the canon appears – obviously due to its ingenuity – in some theoretical treatises and didactic anthologies. The painter Dosso Dossi inscribed the music in the form of a triangular canon in his *Allegory of Music* (ca. 1524-34; Florence, Museo Horne). According to H. Colin Slim, Dossi uses the triangle as a visual symbol for musical perfection.[38] The canon was, curiously enough, also depicted on the back of a choir-stall in the Basilica of S Sisto in Piacenza in 1514, where a fourth mensuration sign was added.[39] The anonymous artist took a Latin distich instead of the text of the Agnus dei; it can be translated as follows: "This [i.e. Josquin's] well-known talent has brought all the arts to life and the whole world rejoices in eternal song." In fact, the Piacenza reading deprives the canon of its original meaning which is revealed in the mottos that occur in the musical sources. Among these mottos we find, "Trinitas" (Modena, Ms. α.M.1.2; Cappella Sistina Ms. 197; Vienna Ms. 11778), "Tria in unum" (Petrucci 1502), and "Sancta Trinitas, salva me" (Basel Ms. F.IX.25).

Even if the text of the Ordinary of the Mass is a more appropriate place for introducing a canon as the musical image of the Trinity than a French love song, yet one would not expect Josquin to employ this symbol for the text "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us" unless he had given the matter careful consideration. In view of the presence of some two-part mensuration canons in the Kyrie of the same Mass, the three-part canon at the end may therefore have been planned in order to achieve a compositional climax. None the less, if we assume that Josquin conceived this canon with the three different voice-parts as an image of the three Divine Persons – the mottos quoted above are an indication of this – each of the voice-parts may well stand for a particular Person. (For another example illustrating a similar musical expression of what is proper to each of the Persons, see below.) In this case, the voice symbolizing the Father takes the middle position – it starts on *a*, and it has the longest note values, thus

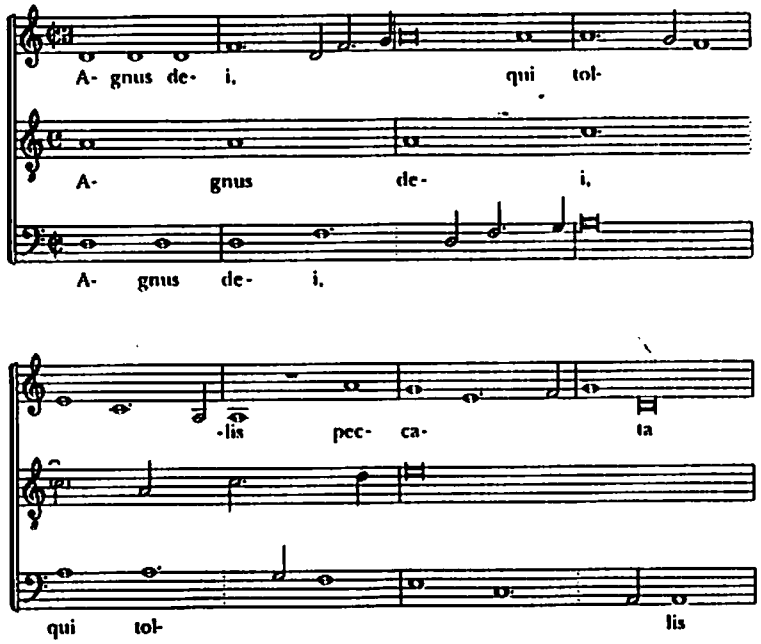
[37] Cf. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*. Translated, with a Commentary, by Ch.S. Singleton (Princeton [1970-75]), Commentary on the *Paradiso*, p. 589.

[38] *Dosso Dossi's Allegory at Florence about Music*, in JAMS 43 (1990), pp. 43-98, esp. p. 66.

[39] See J. van Benthem, *Einige Musikintarsien des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts in Piacenza und Josquins Proportionskanon "Agnus Dei"*, in TVNM 24 (1974), pp. 97-111.

acting as the moderator of the outer voices.[40] The voice symbolizing the Son takes the lower position, as is usual in the plainsong Passion – it starts on *d*, and it has shorter note values. The voice symbolizing the Holy Ghost takes the highest position – it starts on *d'*, and has the liveliest rhythm, which seem to suggest a portrayal of the rays of light or flames that appear in representations of Pentecost (Ex. 4).

Ex. 4



I do not deny that this is a daring interpretation. Yet it offers the key to understanding why Josquin actually conceived this canon in the Agnus dei. His arrangement of the Three Persons corresponds with that found in the so-called 'throne of mercy', a Trinitarian representation which, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was widespread in the Southern Netherlands and was also found in other West-European countries (see above). In this image the Father shows the spectator the body of the crucified or dead Christ, that

[40] Another example of a voice-part forming the structural basis of the composition and acting as the moderator of the other voices can be found in Robert Wylkynson's nine-part *Salve regina*. In this work the tenor symbolizes the Powers, the order of angels that keeps all things within bounds; see my study *The Conception of* musica celestis ..., pp. 224-7.

is, the Lamb of God. In the Agnus dei it is this Lamb of God to whom the believer prays for mercy.[41]

Three other Masses also have three-part canons in the Agnus dei, each headed by the motto "Trinitas in unitate". The earliest of these, the Missa *Salve regina*, is anonymously preserved in the Ms. Vienna 4810, a choirbook dating probably from ca. 1521-25 and belonging to the Netherlands court complex.[42] The two other Masses are the *Missa Ad fugam* by Palestrina, published in 1567, and the *Missa Benedicta es* by George de la Hèle, published in 1578.

The first of these Masses, which is based on the well-known Marian antiphon of the same name, is scored for four voices. The Agnus dei, consisting of three independent sections, is set for four, three and six parts respectively. The latter section contains the three-part canon sung by the higher voices to the text, "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace." The antiphon's incipit is quoted in long notes. In the *Missa Ad fugam* both the two upper and the two lower voices are written throughout in canon at the fourth. As is usual in Palestrina, the Mass ends with an Agnus dei which has one voice more than the former sections, and which means that here a two-part and a three-part canon are combined. The latter is worked out in the high voices at the unison and the upper fourth. In La Hèle's *Missa Benedicta es*, the Agnus dei is through-composed. The Mass is scored for seven voices, a symbol of the Holy Virgin.[43] The number of voices increases by one in the Agnus dei to include three canonic voices written in long note values and set at large time intervals. Because this canon cannot be called a great contrapuntal achievement – the freely-written parts hardly overlap – its symbolic purpose comes clearly to the fore. It is difficult to say whether any of the "3 ex 1" canons in these Masses was inspired by the famous piece of Josquin. None of them is a mensuration canon, but in view of the popularity of the 'throne of mercy' as a Trinitarian image, it seems reasonable to assume that Josquin's famous example paved the way for the symbolical connection of the Agnus dei text with three-part canonic writing as an image of the Trinity.

Another remarkable canon is found in an anonymous treatise on music, which was copied ca. 1580 in Scotland. The manuscript, presently known as London, British Library, Add. 4911, contains a chapter with a large number of canons in the section on mensural music; one of these canons, example 57,

[41] In his recent monograph on Bach's St John Passion (Munich 1991) Martin Geck suggests that the Trinity is symbolized in the three motivic-semantic strands which characterize the orchestral part of the opening choir, and he likewise sees a connection between the conception of this music and the 'throne of mercy' (cf. pp. 45-50). A painting by Lucas Cranach the Older, which represents God the Father holding before him the body of Christ while the Holy Ghost sits on Christ's left knee, hung in Bach's time above an altar in the Church of St Nicholas in Leipzig.

[42] Cf. *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, vol. 4, p. 88.

[43] See also my study *Music and Number* ..., p. 166.

is the Agnus dei II from Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* (fol. 42v). The thirteenth canon (example 36) can best be labelled a Trinitarian canon. The two tenor parts are derived from the same melody notated in breves; the melody has two *tempus perfectum* mensuration signs at the key, one on the line for *d*, and one on the line for *a*. The rhythm of these two voices is indicated by a series of figures, namely 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and its retrograde. (One stands for a minim, two for a semibreve, three for a perfect semibreve, etc.)[44] The superius voice has its own melody, also in perfect time. Whereas the two tenor parts each have 37 notes and are rather ponderous, the superius contains no less than 103 notes and is very lively. The text (or inscription) explaining the canon allots the three voices to the three Divine Persons: "Pater in filio, filius in patre, spiritus sanctus ab utroque procedens" (The Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both). Because of this indicative character of the parts – the two melodically identical lower voices representing the Father and the Son, and the richly embellished higher voice representing the Holy Ghost – I think that we can view this assignment of voices as very appropriately Trinitarian indeed.

A Mass setting wholly devoted to the Trinity is the *Missa Trinitas in unitate* by P(?ierre) de Villiers, a French composer active from 1532 to about 1550. It is Villiers's only Mass, and was published in Moderne's *Liber decem missarum* of 1540 where it is listed in the table of contents as "Missa de beata virgine". Since, however, the Mass includes no references to any chant in honour of the Virgin, the title heading the music may well be the original one. This is also confirmed by the incipit of the Kyrie, which is identical with that of Kyrie XI in the *Liber usualis*. To this Kyrie the trope "Orbis factor" (Maker of the earth) is sung, a text which clearly praises the Trinity – the trope's second-last line reads: "Deum scimus unum atque trinum esse eleison" (We know that God is three in one and one in three, have mercy on us).

The direction related to the canonic voices is as follows: "Incipe parve puer cantus proferre suaves. Ad duplam bassus quartam tenor apte sequentes" (You, little boy, begin to put forth the sweet songs. The bass aptly follows after two breves, and the tenor after four).[45] Written for three voices throughout – the bassus is at the lower octave, the tenor at the lower sixth – and stemming from a composer who is further only known for five motets and a number of French chansons, the Mass occupies a special place in the liturgical repertoire of the period. As to the reason for its origin, it has been

[44] Cf. J.D. Maynard, *An Anonymous Scottish Treatise on Music from the Sixteenth Century, British Museum, Additional Manuscript 4911*. Edition and Commentary (Ph.D. diss. Indiana Univ. 1961), vol. 1, pp. 60-1; vol. 2, pp. 95-6.

[45] Samuel F. Pogue's translation of the direction – "Bass and tenor follow at the fourth"; cf. his monograph *Jacques Moderne, Lyons Music Printer of the Sixteenth Century* (Geneva 1969), p. 66 – is both incomplete and incorrect.

suggested that the composer dedicated the Mass to the Collège de la Trinité at Lyons, where he may have taught music.[46] If so, the composition was primarily of local importance. One motive for its publication in Moderne's second Book of Masses is perhaps to be found in the circumstance that the composer offered musical assistance to the publisher[47] – the musical prints of Moderne are of special importance for Pierre de Villiers. A second motive may have been that the publisher had a particular group of users in mind, namely the Trinitarians. This Order of the Most Holy Trinity, which had been founded in the diocese of Meaux in 1198, had many settlements scattered all over Europe and would certainly have been interested in a polyphonic Mass which so clearly featured the doctrine that God is of one nature and yet three persons.

The Trinitarian Canon in the Motet

In the last section of this study I will deal with some motets which contain Trinitarian canons. Among Pierre de la Rue's 20-odd motets there are a few that show the composer's predilection for the application of canon technique. He even gives the impression of having compiled a single text for two different works, one which could suitably be combined with symbolical canonic writing. The four-part *Laudate dominum omnes gentes*, preserved as 'unicum' in the Ms. Kassel 24, is based on Psalm 116, which summons the nations to praise the Lord and is the shortest of all the 150 psalms. An initial perusal of the text reveals that neither of its two verses contains an idea that could convincingly be expressed as a three-fold canon. However, after the psalm's second verse La Rue repeats the first verse, using it as a transition to some new lines of text. The motet's final part reads as follows:

Laudate dominum, omnes gentes,
Laudate eum, omnes populi:
Gloria tibi, domine,
Qui natus es de virgine,
Cum patre et sancto spiritu,
In sempiterna secula. Amen.

(O praise the Lord, all ye nations:
Praise him, all ye people.
Glory to thee, o Lord,
Born of a Virgin,
Together with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
For ever and ever. Amen.)

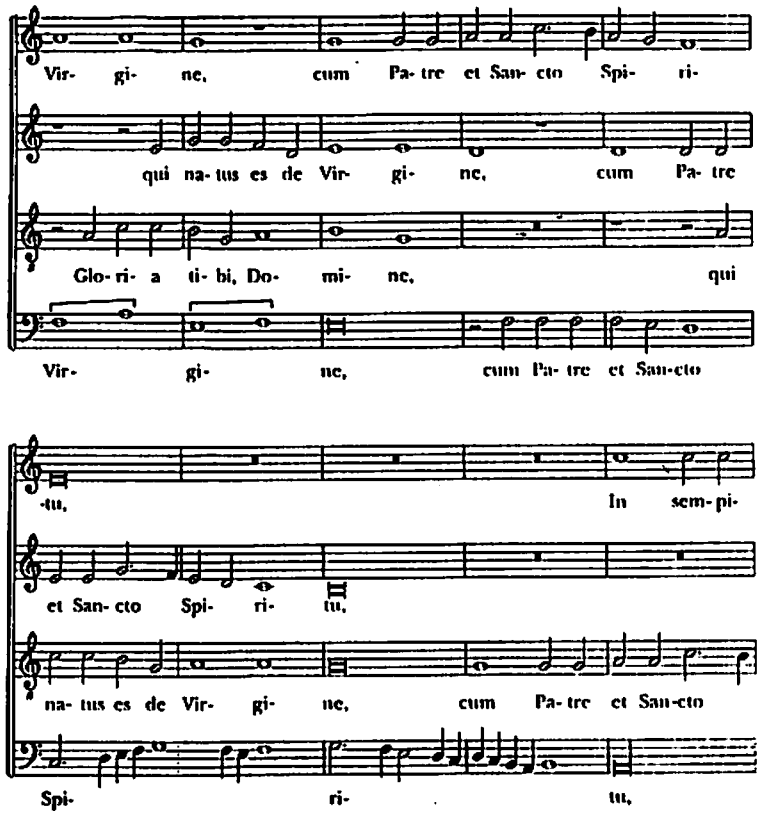
From this quotation it can be seen that the text of Psalm 116 is transformed into a hymn devoted to Christ and the other Divine Persons. The direction "3 ex 1" signifies that the superius is imitated by the tenor an octave lower

[46] Cf. F. Dobbins, *P(?ierre) de Villiers*, in NGD 19, p. 777.

[47] Cf. S. Pogue, *Jacques Moderne*, in NGD 12, p. 453.

and by the altus a fourth lower. The free bass voice sometimes alludes to the canonic melody. Example 5 is drawn from the beginning of the final part:

Ex. 5



The text of La Rue's second Trinity motet, the six-part *Pater de celis*, consists of two *partes*. The *I. pars* is based on the four Trinitarian invocations that occur in all litanies, the *II. pars* comprises the verses sung after the Te deum, and the motet closes with the text of the blessing "Benedicat et custodiat nos omnipotens deus, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Amen" (May the almighty God bless and guard us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen). The sole theme, thus, of all three sections is the praise of the three Divine Persons. Set for six voices and containing more than 300 bars, the motet offers a splendid example of La Rue's superlative skill in developing an extended strict three-part canon, while the non-canonic voices, though structurally independent, derive much of their melodic material from the canon. *Pater de celis* was first published in Augsburg by Grimm and Wyrsung in the

Liber selectarum cantionum of 1520. The diffusion of most of La Rue's motets in Lutheran Germany, where many choirs kept these works in their repertoire until the middle of the sixteenth century, shows that this country attached special value to his oeuvre.

Among the hymns of Costanzo Festa there is one based on the text "O lux beata trinitas" which is sung on Trinity Sunday. After Alcuin had compiled the text of the Mass proper in ca. 785, Bishop Stephen of Liège (d. 920) added a complete office to it. Thereafter, the celebration of the Feast of Trinity spread widely and in 1334 Pope John XXII, who resided at Avignon, extended the observance of the feast to the universal Church. "O lux beata trinitas" is the only hymn which has all its strophes set polyphonically. The number of voices increases by one in each of the three strophes. In strophes 2 and 3, composed for five and six voices, Festa employs a canon "3 ex 1" which paraphrases the chant melody. These two groupings of canonic voices are set at the upper octave and upper fourth, and at the upper fourth and lower fifth respectively, and both reveal their symbolic purpose in the directions given. In the second strophe the direction reads: "Quicumque vult salvus esse de trinitate sentiat" (Whoever wants to be saved must believe in the Trinity); in the third strophe it reads: "Pater, filius et spiritus sanctus".

Like Festa, Adrian Willaert used the canon to symbolize the numbers two and three as a reference to the Divine Persons. In his seven-part motet *Te deum patrem*, published in the *Musica nova* of 1559, the composer combines two antiphon texts from the Second Vespers of Trinity Sunday. The *I. pars* is based on the Magnificat antiphon, the *II. pars* on the antiphon to the fourth psalm. Both canons derive their melodic material from chant and the *resolutiones* are carried out at the upper fifth and octave. While the text of each *pars* mentions all three Persons individually, that of the *I. pars* also displays the mystery of the only and undivided Trinity. The number of seven voices clearly symbolizes the act of praise which finds expression in the following words: "With all heart and voice we confess, praise and bless: to thee be glory for ever." This symbolical significance of the number seven is testified by verse 164 of Psalm 118: "Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice."

Willaert's second Trinitarian canon is found in the seven-part *Preter rerum seriem*. This motet has Josquin's six-part motet of the same name as its model, as is also the case with the Masses by Cipriano de Rore, Matthaeus Le Maistre and Ludwig Daser, and the Magnificat by Orlando di Lasso. Like Josquin, Willaert uses the medieval sequence as *cantus prius factus*.[48] But unlike Josquin who, in the *I. pars*, has each of the chant's successive phrases sung alternately by the first tenor and the superius, Willaert treats the melody

[48] For the origin of this sequence see M. L. Göllner, Praeter rerum seriem: *Its History and Sources*, in Von Isaac bis Bach. Studien zur älteren deutschen Musikgeschichte (Festschrift Martin Just zum 60. Geburtstag), ed. by F. Heidlberger, W. Osthoff and R. Wiesend (Kassel 1991), pp. 41-51.

in a strict three-part canon headed by the motto 'Trinitas in unitate'. Yet it is difficult to say that the result is a fine piece of counterpoint: in the *I. pars* only the third canonic voice coincides for the duration of one phrase with the first canonic voice, and bar 12 shows a variant compared to the original version of the chant – the fourth note of the second phrase is changed from *b*-flat to *g* – in order to accommodate the two canonic parts. Likewise, the *II. pars* shows hardly any overlapping of the canonic voices. Rather, the compositional procedure stresses the composer's main concern, namely to symbolize the theological contents of the text. Though it is a Christmas song that sets forth the mystery of the birth of a child from a virgin contrary to the order of nature, each of the three text strophes deals with one of the three Divine Persons. The subject of the first strophe is Christ who was born from the Virgin, that of the second strophe is the Holy Ghost by whose power the heavenly work was accomplished, and that of the third strophe is the Father who is praised for his sweet providence. Although Willaert's *Musica nova* contains two more seven-part motets which include three-part canons bearing no relation to the text of the composition – these motets are *Inviolata* and *Benedicta es*, both devoted to the Virgin – I believe we need not doubt the symbolic function of the canons in *Te deum patrem* and *Preter rerum seriem*.

The last example of a Trinitarian canon may be found in an anonymous setting of the hymn "Eterna mundi serie". The piece is preserved in the Ms. Cappella Sistina 57, fol. 116v-122r, a composite choirbook, the fascicles of which date from about 1535 to 1577.[49] As in Willaert's *Te deum patrem*, both the seven-part scoring and the three-part canon convey symbolic numbers: the number seven stands for the act of praise, the number three symbolizes the three Divine Persons who sit "on the throne of glory". (The first line of the *II. pars* reads: "Tres sunt in throno glorie".) The canon direction also emphasizes the doctrine of the Trinity: "Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in celo, et hi tres unum sunt" (There are three who give evidence in heavens, and these three are one). Finally, the text of the canon melody, a freely-composed cantus firmus that occurs once in each of the two *partes*, leaves no doubt as to the intention of the composer. (Fig. 28)

[49] Cf. *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, vol. 4, p. 54.

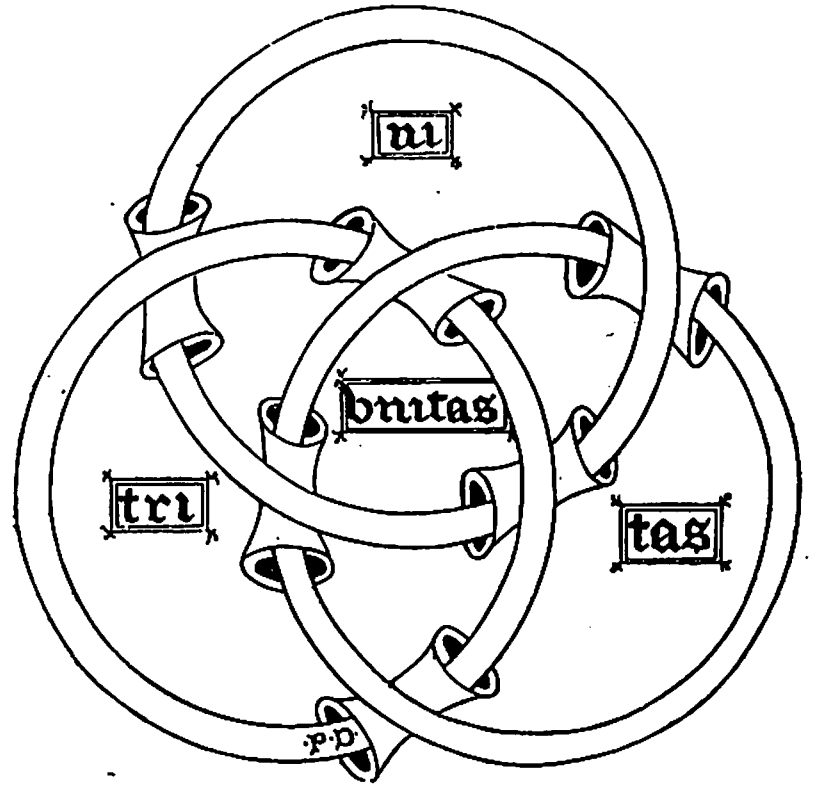


Fig. 23. The Trinity represented by three intersecting circles.
Chartres, Bibliothèque communale, Ms. 1355.
(Reproduced from A.H. Didron, *Iconographie chrétienne* (Paris 1843), p. 545.)

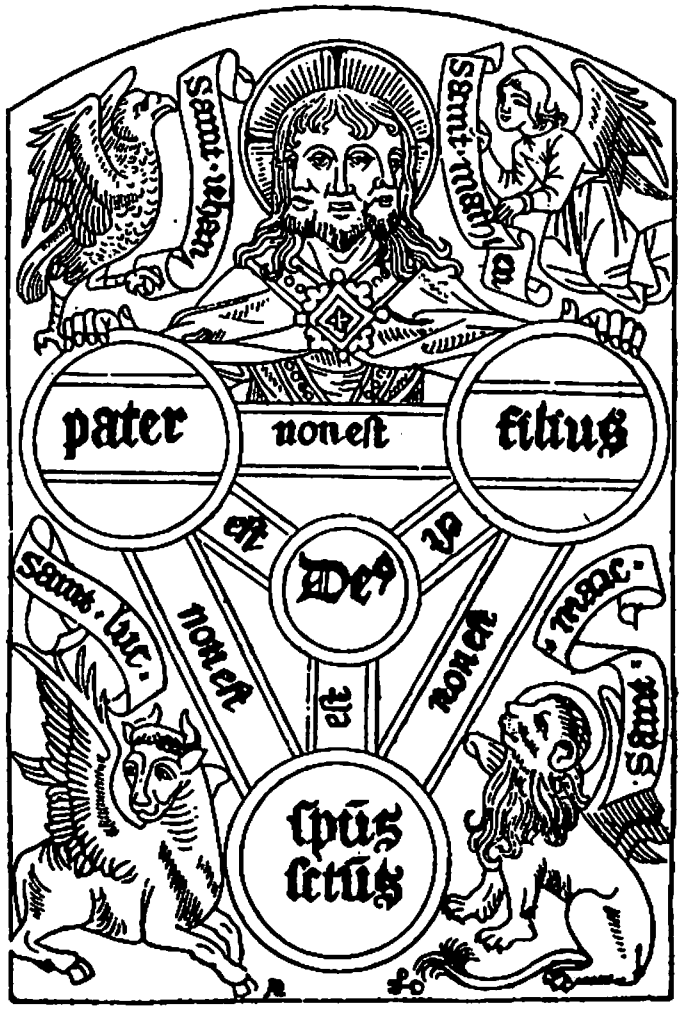


Fig. 24. The Trinity, represented as a person with three heads, and the four evangelists. The inscription reads as follows: "The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father." The picture of three faces on one the body was forbidden by Pope Urban VIII in 1628.
Woodcut in a book of hours, printed by Simon Vostre (Paris 1524).

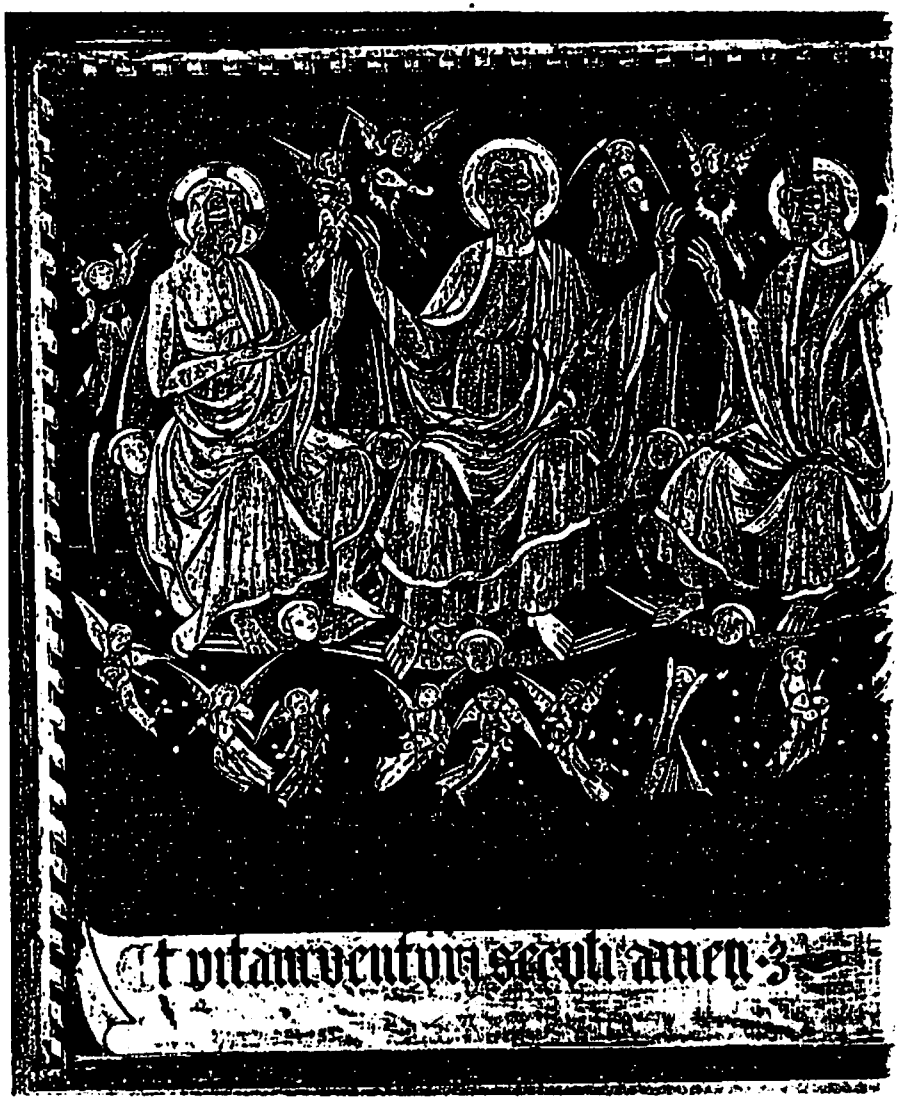


Fig. 25. Domenico Spinelli di Niccolò, Scene from the choir stalls, depicting the Creed article "And the life of the world to come" (1415-28).
Siena, Palazzo Pubblico.

Fig. 26. Master of Flémalle, *The Trinity* (grisalle; the reverse of *St Veronica* (ca. 1430).
The socle inscription reads: "Sancta trinitas unus deus".
Frankfurt a. M., Städelsches Kunstinstitut. (Photo: Ursula Edelmann)

Fig. 27. Domenico Spinelli di Niccolò, Scene from the choir stalls, depicting the Creed article "God of God, light of light, true God of true God." (1415-28).
Siena, Palazzo Pubblico.

Fig. 28. Trinitarian canon in the anonymous motet *Eterna mundi serie*. Rome, Cappella Sistina, Ms. 57, fol. 116v.

THE CONCEPTION OF *MUSICA CELESTIS* AND MUSICAL COMPOSITION

The large repertoire of musical compositions that originated during the Renaissance was written for a great variety of social purposes. While the environment in which these compositions were performed usually can be determined without much difficulty, it is also commonly accepted that, except for a small number of musical examples in theoretical treatises, the whole repertoire was conceived for practical performance. None the less, we should also ask whether certain composers may not have contributed to a genre that belongs to another world, that is, a world different from that of musical practice and theory.

If one compares the subject matter of sacred music with that of religious painting, many common themes can be found. To name but a few examples, these subjects comprise scenes from the Old and New Testament, the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, and the Saints. A further common theme may be sought in the so-called angelic or heavenly music. While painters of the Renaissance frequently depicted that celestial harmony which was produced by angels and saints but was inaudible to human beings, composers sometimes echoed these idealised elevated harmonies in their music. In his comprehensive and outstanding study on the music of the angels,[1] Reinhold Hammerstein deals with all the various aspects of heavenly music. In the first part he examines accounts of angelic music in literature. Numerous literary sources, from the Bible to Dante, are surveyed, as are the writings of the Church Fathers, mystics, and musical theorists. The author concentrates, among other things, on those categories of liturgical texts that, because of their function and character, have been repeatedly connected with the singing of the angelic musicians. These texts include in particular the Sanctus, Gloria, Kyrie, psalms, and hymns.[2] Especially interesting are the writings of certain mystics who describe their visions of heavenly music (see below). Such descriptions do indeed tell us something about the way in which medieval people experienced life: they felt that they were not just living in the world but in a picture or vision of it also. In another chapter Hammerstein shows the connection between the music of the spheres and *musica celestis*. He passes several musical theorists in review to illustrate the development of musical thought with respect to the phenomenon of angelic music. The second part of the book is devoted to the arts, and focuses our attention on representations of heavenly music in mosaic, book illumination, sculpture, and painting. The examples

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[1] *Die Musik der Engel: Untersuchungen zur Musikanschauung des Mittelalters* (Bern/Munich 1962).

[2] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 36-9.

cover a period of more than ten centuries, from the fifth to well into the sixteenth.

While Hammerstein's monograph is devoted mainly to the silent testimonies of *musica celestis* in written texts and works of art, it is also true that the author discusses several genres of Gregorian chant, and that he points to the medieval inclination to identify the church choir with the heavenly choruses of angels. However, in spite of the fact that a number of medieval authors actually declared themselves in favour of such a comparison, especially with regard to monastic singing, there existed at the same time also the notion of the unbridgeable distance between heavenly and earthly liturgy. According to the early Christian writer Theodore of Cyrus (ca. 390-458) only the angels are able to praise God adequately; man is not in a position to do this.[3] The same opinion is already met in the preceding centuries with such authors as Lactantius (ca. 240- ca. 320) and Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315-386).[4]

The conclusion that can be drawn from this period is that theologians held a dualistic notion of the music composed and sung in praise of God. The present study seeks to answer the questions of whether or not the composer in the age of the Renaissance, while honouring God and the Virgin through the performance of his settings of liturgical or sacred texts, may have recognized the 'earthly' limitations of these very same compositions, and how, possibly, he reacted to this. My findings will be presented in the second part of this study. However, in order to prepare the reader beforehand for my point of view, I shall first give an outline of the origin and history of the term *musica celestis* and its influence on art.

Musica celestis: *origin and history*

Ever since St Benedict formulated his rule for the monastery of Monte Cassino around 535, it has become the universal norm for Western monasticism.[5] Chapters eight through nineteen of the rule are devoted to an extensive description of the Office and its horarium. Already by the time of the monks of Cluny in Burgundy, the singing and praying of the liturgy consisted of seven daily 'hours' or services plus the night service of matins. The Divine Office had been designed by Benedict so as to cover the full cycle of 150 psalms every week. The hours themselves include varying proportions of psalmody, lessons from the Bible, and texts of prayer and praise set to music – canticles, antiphons, responsories, and hymns.

The place which music occupies in Benedict's rule is one of enormous importance. "In his view, the choir of monks prefigured the heavenly choir, did away with the partitions separating heaven and earth, and was in itself an introduction into the ineffable and the realm of uncreated light."[6] Benedict

[3] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 33.
[4] Cf. *ibid.*
[5] For a short article on the historical significance of St Benedict see NGD 2, pp. 477-8.
[6] G. Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals. Art and Society 980-1420* (London 1981), p. 73.

writes: "When we sing psalms, we stand before the Godhead and his angels."[7] It seems quite probable that the writings of St Augustine induced the monk of Nursia to make music such an effective instrument in the liturgy. In his *De civitate dei*, the most profound Father of the Church considered music as an indispensable element in the worship of God: "And it was to serve Him that David made use of music in order to express a tremendous truth by means of mystical symbols, for what can better suggest the unity in variety of a well-ordered city than the harmony produced by the rational and controlled concord of differing tones?"[8]

The imagination of medieval authors often led them to describe heavenly music in prose or poetry. Bishop Radbod of Utrecht (d. 917), in his *Carmen allegoricum de sancto Switberto*, sings:

> Angelicus coetus decies centena chororum
> Milia *symphoniis* commodulando sacris
> Auribus in celo semper felicibus audis,
> Quorum "*ter sanctus*" sine fine ora sonant.[9]

These lines give a picture of the angelic host which consists of ten times one hundred choirs, and their mouths sing the "thrice holy" without ceasing.

Further descriptions of heavenly music can be found in the writings of St Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179). In the preface to the third section of the *Scivias* (Know the ways), she states that she had seen a "most luminous sky" in which she heard a "sound like the multitude singing in harmony, in praise of the celestial hierarchy."[10] She intended her *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations) for performance in liturgical services at her monastery on the Rupertsberg in the Rhine valley near Bingen. The term *symphonia* is identical with 'harmony', and the title of this poetic cycle points unmistakably to the phenomenon of celestial music. In the centuries after Hildegard we find many mystics who also experienced visions of angelic choruses singing during the Holy Mass or the Divine Office.

The growing appreciation of liturgical music as a mirror of heavenly liturgy made musical theorists reconsider the traditional classification of the three kinds of music: *musica mundana*, *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis*. The first of these categories, which is also called the music of the spheres, was based on the Pythagorean doctrine of the harmonious relationships between the planets. This idea was further elaborated by neo-Platonists until the very end of the Renaissance.[11] Yet some fourteenth-century theorists tried to con-

[7] Cf. *ibid.*
[8] *The City of God*, Books 17-22, translated by G.G. Walsh and D.J. Honan. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 24 (New York 1924), XVII, c. 14 (p. 61).
[9] Cf. F. Lochner, *Un évêque musicien au Xe siècle: Radbod d'Utrecht († 917)*, in TVNM 38 (1988), p. 17.
[10] Cf. *Saint Hildegard of Bingen. Symphonia*, ed. by B. Newman (Ithaca/London 1988), pp. 7-8.
[11] Cf. J. Haar, *Music of the Spheres*, in NGD 12, p. 835.

nect this classification with Christian theological concepts by adding to it the notion of *musica celestis*, that is, the singing of the angels in heaven.[12] The first theorist who points to the existence of *musica celestis* is Jacques de Liège. In his *Speculum musice*, he writes: "Heavenly or divine music is music that comprehends the numerical order of the transcendental things. But I have distinguished this kind of music from cosmic harmony (*viz.* music of the spheres) because Boethius applies cosmic harmony to natural, mobile, and sensible things only. However, the things which I have said to pertain to this kind of music are metaphysical and transcendental things, without movement and sensible matter."[13] This definition shows that, according to Jacques de Liège, *musica celestis* is identical with pure harmony, and that it is an object of contemplation rather than audition. On the other hand, Nicholas of Capua, who in his *Compendium musicale* of 1415 substitutes the term *musica angelica* for *musica celestis*, underlines the fact that this kind of music is real: "Musica angelica est illa quae ab angelis ante conspectum dei semper administrat[ur]" (Angelic music is music which is performed unabatedly by angels in the sight of God).[14]

The idea of *musica mundana* was transformed by humanism, witness Ugolino of Orvieto's *Declaratio musice discipline*, a treatise probably completed in Ferrara between 1430 and 1435. Claude Palisca summarizes Ugolino's view as follows: "Instead of being the font of all harmony, *musica mundana* is seen as an offshoot of a higher harmony, the ineffably sweet song of the celestial hierarchy of angels proclaiming without end, 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.' This, says Ugolino, is the beginning and origin of all cosmic, human, and instrumental music; from it flows the proportion of all melodies, the conjunction of all consonances, the concord of all notes, the smooth and uniform mixture of all grave and acute sounds, that agreeable union (*coaptatio*) in which there is no discord or asperity, no break in smoothness, no disproportion or awkward distance. All this harmony, moreover, imitates the celestial music that exists to praise the creator."[15] A contemporary of Ugolino, Giorgio Anselmi, declares in his dialogue on *harmonia celestis* (1434) that "those spirits that Socrates in Plato's *Republic* (10.617b) called sirens are regarded by 'our theologians' as angels ranged in

[12] The first theorist who mentions the singing of angels is Aurelian of Réôme. In his *Musica disciplina*, written between 840 and 850, he refers to the music of the twenty-four elders and the angels. He also recounts some anecdotes about people hearing the angelic choirs on earth; see Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 125-6. After Aurelian several more theorists point to the existence of angelic music but without connecting it with the traditional threefold classification of music.

[13] *Jacobi Leodensis Speculum musicae*, Books 1-7, ed. by R. Bragard. Corpus scriptorum de musica 3 (1955-1973), I.12.

[14] Nicholas of Capua, *Compendium musicale*, ed. by A. de la Fage, *Essais de diphthérographie musicale* (Paris 1864; Amsterdam R1964), pp. 309-38; spec. 311.

[15] *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven/London 1985), pp. 163-4. See also the edition by A. Seay, Corpus scriptorum de musica 7 (Rome 1959), I.1, pp. 15-6.

nine orders."[16] Palisca adds that "Anselmi is torn between the Christian model of angels perched on their spheres singing 'Sanctus' and the traditional explanation of spheres emitting musical sounds because of their rapid movement."[17] He also emphasizes that Franchino Gaffurio repeats Anselmi's exposition almost verbatim in his *Theorica musice* of 1492,[18] but refrains from mentioning the angels; he places the Muses once more in their position of coordinators of planetary and earthly harmony in his *De harmonia* of 1518.[19]

Musica celestis *in art*

The artistic visualization of *musica celestis* reveals itself in a number of different images. Besides the figures of angels singing or playing on musical instruments in many different situations, most of which are representations of miscellaneous biblical passages, Hammerstein also mentions the twenty-four elders and the four animals,[20] these latter images inspired by the Book of Revelation, 4:4-8 and 5:8-9 resp. In these passages St John describes how the elders and the animals unite in their praise of God and the Lamb. The first passage mentions the singing of the Sanctus, which, as we saw above, belongs to the liturgical texts often connected with *musica celestis* in medieval writings: "And the four living creatures ... rested not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." In the second passage the Lamb receives adoration: "And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, o Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof ..."

Of course, not every angelic instrumentalist might be expected to be playing heavenly music. The *tuba* angel, for example, is variously depicted as the voice of God, as the voice of the angels, as a herald and as the angel of the Last Day; only in a more figurative sense can he be said to appear as a minister of heavenly liturgy.[21] Until about 1100 the *tuba* seems to have been the sole musical instrument hold and played by the angels. Concomitant with this type of angel musician we find the so-called *Exultet* angel, who sings praise to God. His name is derived from the *Exultet*, a lyrical chant found in the Easter Vigil which was inscribed on long rolls and was often richly illuminated, sometimes with pictures of angel musicians.

From the twelfth century onwards artists began to depict angels with other musical instruments. The first evidence of this new development can be

[16] Cf. Palisca, *op. cit.* (fn. 15), p. 164.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[18] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 165.
[19] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.
[20] *Op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 196-9.
[21] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 205.

found in England and Spain. England also provides the earliest representations of angels who are depicted with musical instruments to symbolically refer to the celebration of heavenly liturgy.[22] It is striking that English and French Gothic art differ in this respect. Whether the reason for this, as Hammerstein suggests,[23] should be sought in the absence of musical instruments in liturgical performances in medieval France seems questionable, since there is no evidence to suggest that the performance practice of church music in England and France was widely divergent.

For our purposes it is important to know that pictures of angel musicians, despite their increasingly realistic appearance, were rarely meant to be seen as representing an absolutely realistic situation. They rather manifest the notion of the human incapability of imagining the phenomenon of *musica celestis*. Musical instruments, therefore, have often merely a symbolic function. For example, illuminated manuscripts of the *Legenda aurea* show musical instruments whenever the text uses expressions such as *dulcis* and *dulcedo* in connection with the singing of the angels.[24] In such cases, the instruments in question merely point to something beyond their own essence. The iconography of the numerous representations of the Coronation of the Virgin and the Virgin with Child, surrounded by angel instrumentalists, needs to be interpreted very carefully. We may not suppose, as Victor Ravizza does,[25] that one can derive from these pictures any insight as to the problem of the formation of instrumental ensembles in the Renaissance.

The ambivalence of image and meaning seems also to be present in one of the most famous paintings that fifteenth-century Flanders has produced: Jan van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb* (Ghent, St Bavo's Cathedral; Figs. 3, 29 and 30).[26] Its two panels with angel musicians have been described in several musicological publications. Although a more detailed description is outside the scope of this study, it is, with regard to our topic, useful to summarize the most important musico-iconological interpretations of the panels. These are written by Reinhold Hammerstein,[27] Tilman Seebass,[28] and Alexandra Goulaki Voutira[29] resp.

According to Hammerstein, the music visualized by van Eyck is both realistic and symbolic at the same time. "Heavenly and earthly liturgy are in it

[22] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 219-21.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 222.
[24] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 237.
[25] See his study *Das instrumentale Ensemble von 1400-1550 in Italien. Wandel eines Klangbildes* (Bern/Stuttgart 1970).
[26] For more comments on this altarpiece see my study *Josquin's Mass for All Saints ...*, pp. 48-9.
[27] *Op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 249-51.
[28] *The Visualisation of Music through Pictorial Imagery and Notation in Late Medieval France*, in Studies in the Performance of Late Mediaeval Music, ed. by S. Boorman (Cambridge 1983), pp. 30-3.
[29] *Die musizierenden Engel des Genter Altars*, in IM 5 (1988), pp. 65-74.
[30] *Op. cit.* (fn. 1), p. 249.

united."[30] Hammerstein is of the opinion that the expression of the singing angels on the left panel points to three-part music, possibly a Mass section, but he adds that the inscription on the bottom frame of the panel – "Melos deo laus perhennis gratiarum a[cti]o" – exalts the ensemble to the perennial heavenly liturgy. The musical instruments on the right panel – positive organ, harp and fiddle – should, because of the inscription "Laudent eum in chordis et organo" (Ps. 150:4), be understood as psalter instruments, which, since they are being played by angels, "are projected into heaven and thus endorsed as vessels of heavenly praise."[31] Hammerstein is reluctant to suppose that the two ensembles have been created as a single musical performance in "the sense of a joint action."[32]

While repeating much of what has been said by Hammerstein, Seebass stresses the naturalism of the angel pictures which makes one "consider the scenes as depictions of contemporary church music. The angels are hardly to be distinguished from mortals: they wear liturgical garments of the utmost preciousness. Their way of singing suggests three-voice polyphony – with the three figures in the left foreground singing the tenor, the two on the right (with their somewhat strained visual expression) singing the superius in a high range, and the three in the back performing the less important middle voice. On the other panel, an angel is playing a positive organ: behind him, two others hold a fiddle and a harp in their hands. Given van Eyck's symbolism and *raffinement*, it is safe to interpret the difference in playing and holding an instrument as intentional: the organ is accepted in the liturgy, while the two other instruments stand as symbols for praise *per se*."[33] Seebass further confirms Hammerstein's interpretation of the two inscriptions, adding that van Eyck decided to realise his subject "with so much attachment to contemporary life ... because he considered contemporary sacred music and contemporary craftsmanship in instrument-making to be on a level of such perfection that they were both very well capable of symbolising the most divine music imaginable."[34]

In her meticulous description of the two panels, Voutira proposes that the organist angel is playing the last chord of some musical section, which chord she identifies as *c-g-e'*.[35] The organist's part being concluded, the two other angels seem to be starting their performance. Voutira believes that the singing angels on the left panel could be holding a three-part chord, and she sees this as an indication of the chronological agreement between the two scenes.[36] Proof of the fact that van Eyck has painted the end and the begin-

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 250.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[33] *Op. cit.* (fn. 28), pp. 30-1.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[35] *Op. cit.* (fn. 29), p. 68. Voutira, though, is not the first musicologist who specifies the chord. Already in 1971, Maarten Albert Vente came to the same conclusion on the basis of the position of the fingers and the chromatic row of pipes; see F. Peeters and M.A. Vente, *De orgelkunst in de Nederlanden van de 16de tot de 18de eeuw* (Antwerp 1971), p. 42.
[36] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

ning of two heavenly compositions can be found in the letters P (for *Principium*) and F (for *Finis*) which are visible on the floor tiles.[37] Referring to some studies on medieval performance practice the author thereupon suggests that the angels on the left panel, while being accompanied by the organ, perform the final chord of a Mass section, after which the two angels on the right panel begin to play Psalm 150 on their instruments.[38] At the conclusion of her study, Voutira, who obviously doubts whether van Eyck himself would have had enough knowledge of music to render visible his alleged conception of heavenly music, mentions the name of Gilles Binchois as the possible musical advisor of the painter.

My comment on these interpretations is as follows. It will be evident that the function of the angel musicians is best studied in the context of the whole of the altarpiece. Any description of van Eyck's supposed conception of heavenly music should therefore start with an investigation into the origin of the Ghent altarpiece and its meaning. However, when one begins to acquaint oneself with the special literature on van Eyck's painting, it soon becomes obvious that art historians have divergent opinions as to the question of the original form of the polyptych. Erwin Panofsky, for example, has pointed out that the altarpiece, as it is, "can hardly be accepted as a work of art executed according to plan", and he sides with those who believe that "it was composed of originally unrelated elements left behind by Hubert van Eyck in various stages of noncompletion, and subsequently adapted, supplemented and finished by Jan ..."[39] The same author also suggested that the angel panels originally may have served as the shutters of a small organ.[40] Stimulated by Panofsky, Elisabeth Dhanens continued the search for the genesis of the altarpiece. She draws attention, among other things, to the figure of Michael and the dragon, which has a very conspicuous place on the side cheek of the music stand on the left panel. Notwithstanding the absence of conclusive evidence, Dhanens thinks that this figure could well have functioned as the emblem of some St Michael's guild, and/or may refer to the Church of St Michael in Antwerp, which, in van Eyck's time, could boast an important musical tradition.[41]

The theories of both Panofsky and Dhanens have been challenged by Lotte Brand Philip. In a thorough study this author tries to place the *Adoration of the Lamb* in the context of its original setting and practical purpose, and, in so doing, succeeds in deriving some important new insights about the meaning of the altarpiece.[42] In Brand Philip's view the altarpiece was formerly

[37] *Ibid.* It should be noted, however, that the tiles show many more signs and symbols than the letters P and F.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[39] *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge, MA, ²1966), p. 217.
[40] Cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 39), p. 221 and p. 443, note 7.
[41] *Het retabel van het Lam Gods in de Sint-Baafskathedraal te Gent* (Gent 1965), p. 71.
[42] *The Ghent Altarpiece and the Art of Jan van Eyck* (Princeton 1971).

surrounded by an immense ciborium consisting of a large two-part frame made of stone and wood, and which was the work of Hubert van Eyck.[43] This ciborium was presumably demolished during the religious upheaval in the second half of the sixteenth century.[44] The different sizes of the various panels that made Panofsky think of a compilation would then simply have been the result of later mutilations. Brand Philip also believes that the Vijd chapel, ciborium, and altarpiece were planned together as a 'private cathedral' within the St Bavo's Church.[45]

According to Brand Philip both levels of the interior representation depict the celestial hierarchy. The lower region shows the Eternal Mass in the Heavenly Jerusalem; the enthroned Christ in the upper region, who is flanked by the Queen of Heaven and St John the Baptist, acts as the celebrating priest. The angel musicians form the celestial choir.[46] None the less, with respect to the angels the author ignores a remark by Panofsky to the extent that retable representations were governed by the rules of religious iconography, which implied that angels had wings and were fluttering about the central group or placed between the worshippers.[47] In this context it is worth-while to consider a painting (copy) attributed to Petrus Christus, namely the *Fountain of Life* (Madrid, Prado). This work, too, represents the Eucharistic theme and could very well be a reflection of the Ghent altarpiece itself.[48] For our purpose it is important that, to the left and the right, at the feet of the Lamb, there are groups of three instrumentalists in a paradisiac garden. As is the case with the Ghent panels, these figures have the appearance of angels but they lack those distinctive attributes of their celestial nature, the wings. Since both Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus have also depicted some angels with wings in their representations of the Heavenly Eucharist, the question arises whether indeed their choristers and instrumentalists were conceived as musical angels.[49]

By the very fact that the Ghent altarpiece was so clearly inspired by the Book of Revelation, we must take into account the possibility that van Eyck, while painting his musicians, may have wanted to draw attention to Revelation 14, which describes the singing of the new canticle by the virgins that follow the Lamb. If this view is correct, the choristers and musicians in the upper storey do not form an ensemble of musical angels but symbolize the

[43] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 26-9. Opposite to p. 26 of the monograph one finds the author's reconstruction of the Ghent altarpiece in its framework. In this diagram, the wings of the retable can be unfolded.
[44] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 33
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 32
[46] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 58 and 61-2 resp.
[47] Cf. Panofsky, *op. cit.* (fn. 39), pp. 214 and 221.
[48] Cf. Brand Philip, *op. cit.* (fn. 42), p. 12. A reproduction of the whole painting can be found in Brand Philip, fig. 19; a detail is reproduced in R. Wangermée, *La musique flamande dans la société des XVe et XVIe siècles* (Brussels 1965), p. 80.
[49] True to the iconographic tradition in the North, fifteenth-century painting does show invariably winged angels. This tradition culminates in Memling's angelic musicians.

one hundred and forty-four thousand virgins before the throne.[50]

In all three above-mentioned musicological studies the choristers are said to be performing three-part music. Voutira goes even so far as to suggest that the singers produce the same chord as the one held on the organ. Though it must be admitted that the almost photographic exactitude with which the faces are painted does invite one to speculate about the music performed, anyone who attempts to identify what precisely is being sung [or played] runs the risk of being blamed for overinterpretating the picture. An inquiry about this issue among independent vocal specialists will merely demonstrate the dubiousness of such a kind of definition.[51]

Finally, it is out of the question that, as Seebass writes, it was the high level of "contemporary sacred music and contemporary craftsmanship in instrument-making" which would have inspired van Eyck to create such a faithful reproduction of the musical ensembles. Does not the whole of the Ghent altarpiece prove the painter's desire and competence to copy all things he saw with the utmost precision? The realism in the representation of the musicians is therefore nothing more or less than the result of the naturalistic principles in art to which van Eyck adhered.

Image and meaning are less ambivalent in *The Ecstasy of St Cecilia* by Raphael (Bologna, Pinacoteca; Fig. 31). The painting dates from 1514/15 and was commissioned for the newly-built Cecilia chapel in San Giovanni at Monte Oliveto.[52] Cecilia is believed to have lived in the second or third century. The *Legenda aurea* gives an account of the vow of the saint on her wedding day: "... she wore a hair shirt next to her flesh, concealed by her gown of cloth of gold; and when the organs [i.e., the instruments] rang out [*cantantibus organis*], she sang in her heart to God alone, saying: 'O Lord, let

[50] "... and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins" (Rev. 14:3-4).

[51] According to Dr. Rebecca Stewart, the various facial expressions does only allow one to say that different vowels are sung. For example, the two singers in the left foreground and the one in the middle probably perform the 'a' *à la français*, the two singers on the right perform the 'u'. Of the three singers at the back, the face of the left one shows that the singer is completely at rest, the mouth of the middle one is not visible, and the singer on the right is probably singing 'a' or 'e'. Dr. Stewart also notices that these singers are not performing their music in the normal way. In all other singers-with-choirbook pictures the singers are looking at the music. In this depiction, however, the singers' eyes are unfocused and pointing in different directions. This fact alone already demonstrates that van Eyck's representation is less realistic than generally is suggested. (Verbal communication to the author).

Apart from the performance of a three-part Mass section by the choristers it has also been suggested that, while the retable was opened during Mass, heavenly melodies may have been produced by a small automatic organ; cf. Brand Philip, *op. cit.* (fn. 42), p. 114. The art of making musical cylinders had developed in the fourteenth century. From various accounts we know that automatic mechanical organs were installed in churches in Strasbourg, Beauvais, and Prague. Was the Ghent altarpiece also provided with such an organ? If so, music historians are left with the intriguing question what kind of melody might have served as an imitation of the *canticum novum*.

[52] Cf. O. Fischel, *Raphael* (London 1948), vol. 1, pp. 245-6.

my heart and my body be undefiled, that I be not confounded'."[53] Although Cecilia, during her lifetime, was reputed for having been able to hear the singing of the angels as well as to play various instruments herself, her patronage of music does not appear in works of art until the fifteenth century. From this time onwards the organ has become her particular attribute.

Raphael's painting also has been interpreted in various ways,[54] and the present-day view is as follows. Raphael has painted the saint with the portative organ upside down and some other instruments lying around her to symbolize the idea that, because earthly music has proved to be temporal, she rejects her own instruments for heavenly music.[55] Even her portative is losing some of its pipes. Instead of playing herself, the virgin is listening in ecstasy to the heavenly music produced by the voices of angels that are visible in the bank of clouds. We therefore may conclude that Raphael's concept of *musica celestis* was the same as that of Theodore of Cyrus and some other early Christian writers (see above, p. 212).

Musica celestis *and Musical Composition*

The numerous descriptions and representations of *musica celestis* in literature and art demonstrate that medieval and Renaissance imagery was intimately bound up with spiritual realities. Because medieval Christian mysticism was greatly indebted to Jewish biblical scholarship,[56] the study of the heavens in Jewish esotericism may well have influenced the Christian conception of heavenly music. According to the *Cabbala*, a true knowledge of the heavenly kingdom "can only be obtained through the 'heart's seeing', the perception of the universal mind which dwells in the innermost depths of man."[57] With people living in an age that gives credence to reason and sense perception only – the two bases of the natural sciences – imagination has been relegated "to the vagaries of a 'personalistic' inner world, without proper structure, foundation, or reality."[58] At the time of the early-Netherlandish composers, however, imagination was considered as a faculty with a real cognitive value, and acted "as a vital bridge between senses and intellect ..., spirit and matter."[59] Even Johannes Tinctoris, who denied the existence of a sounding

[53] *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*. Translated and adapted from the Latin by G. Eyan and H. Ripperger (New York 1969), p. 690.

[54] See Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), p. 255.

[55] Cf. J. Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1974), p. 61.

[56] Cf. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Macropaedia 4, p. 467.

[57] L. Schaya, *The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah* (London 1971), p. 74.

[58] R. Cook, *The Tree of Life. Symbol of the Centre* (London 1974), p. 8.

[59] *Ibid.* Although Cook uses this qualification in the context of the influence of the imagination of William Blake on the Romantic Movement, it applies to earlier times as well. How the realm of imagination could determine, for example, the conception of sacred music in the baroque era can be seen in several musical editions from this period; see R. Dammann, *Der Musikbegriff im deutschen Barock* (Cologne 1967), p. 452.

cosmic harmony,[60] did accept the reality of angelic music and referred to pictorial representations thereof.[61]

While angels formed a favourite image for artists who painted particular religious subjects, it appears that at various times musicians also 'represented' angels, albeit in their own manner. Sometimes they were stimulated to do this by certain details of church architecture. It has been shown that many medieval churches had a so-called *chorus angelicus* or *chorus angelorum* in an elevated part of the building.[62] Both these terms point to a chapel with an angels' altar where music was performed by boys. In some cathedrals we even find a small gallery, built high against one of the inner walls. A fine specimen occurs in Exeter Cathedral; it is richly decorated with angelic musicians. (Fig. 32) From this gallery, a number of choristers sang antiphonally with the choir in procession below. The Church of Notre-Dame in Reims has a similar gallery on the inner West front, where, on Palm Sunday, boys stood and sang the refrain "Gloria, laus et honor" from the hymn of the same name; the choir below alternated with the strophes.[63] In Salisbury Cathedral this refrain was sung by seven choristers *in eminentiori loco* (in a higher place).[64] During the performance of the *Officium pastorum* in Rouen, boys sang "Gloria in excelsis" from the vaults of the cathedral.[65]

The tradition of youthful choristers, imitating with their bright voices the music of the angels, can be traced back well into the ninth century, and it lasted until the Baroque. We know from the *Institutio de diversitate officiorum* (ca. 800) by abbot Angilbert of the abbey of St Riquier, near Abbeville in France, that on special days the *chorus puerorum* sang from behind the arches of the church tribune.[66] Eight centuries later, Johann Letzner described in his *Corbeische Chronica* of 1590 how on Trinity Sunday the choir was divided into three alternating groups: one group was placed *in infimo Choro* (on the stairs of the crypt); another group stood *in supremo Choro*; and the boys were positioned *sub turribus* (under the towers).[67]

Just as the musician might imagine heaven and earth to be united through the singing of the angels, so he may have felt as well that his musical works,

[60] Cf. Palisca, *op. cit.* (fn. 15), p. 183.
[61] Cf. *Complexus effectuum musices*, ed. by A. Seay in Johannes Tinctoris, *Theoretical Works* ([Rome] 1975), vol. 2, p. 168.
[62] Cf. F.J. Ronig, *Der architektonische Ort der Kirchenmusik: 4. Jahrhundert bis Gegenwart*, in Schwarz auf Weiss 15 (1983), p. 14.
[63] Cf. B. Kahmann, *Tussen traditie en toekomst* (Utrecht 1988), p. 25.
[64] Cf. J.W.N. Valkestijn, *Geschiedenis van de jongenszang tot aan de reformatie* (Bruges 1989), p. 111.
[65] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 112. At Our Lady's in Bruges, the boys were expected to have a 'vox angelica'; see R. Strohm, *Music in Medieval Bruges* (Oxford 1985), p. 49.
[66] Cf. Ronig, *op. cit.* (fn. 62), pp. 11-2.
[67] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 13. Early in the Baroque, the nine muses seemed to take over the role of the nine angelic choirs. (Regarding these choirs see below, p. 224.) One of the engravings in the *Musae novem* by Lucas and Wolfgang Kilian shows Clio as an organist, playing a four-part setting of the words "Gloria in excelsis deo"; cf. P. Fischer, *Clio, een verchristelijkte Muze*, in Tijdschrift voor Oude Muziek 5 (1990), part 4, pp. 15-6.

even when not performed, could reach up to the Highest. In other words, God and the Holy Virgin were not only considered as listeners but they were also believed to be capable of reading a score. This is confirmed by the existence of a small number of pieces belonging to a category of music that seems not primarily to have been conceived for practical performance.[68] As a Latin term for this category I should like to propose *musica non exsequenda*. The two main criteria for determining whether a particular composition falls within this category are its extraordinary musical character in combination with an uncommon scoring, and a text that can be classified as a song of praise. Such works as Lasso's twelve-part *Laudate dominum*, showing the influence of the Venetian polychoral style, fall outside this definition. Below I will discuss eleven compositions, dating approximately from the period 1490 through 1590, and investigate which of these should be considered as belonging to this category. Nine or ten are attributed to composers of the Low Countries and France, and one is from England. The fact that in all of these works either the scoring is symbolic, or the number of parts can be explained by the allegorical interpretation of the text, is another relevant feature which links them to *musica non exsequenda*. Thus, 'musica non exsequenda' acts as *musica celestis*, to which, in the words of Jacques de Liège, "the inhabitants of heaven are devoted".[69] Precisely because this latter kind of music is related to the order of all things, number (*numerus*) is its basic element.[70]

The 'performers' of *musica non exsequenda* are first of all the angels. Five of the twelve compositions are for nine voices, and one consists of four nine-part canons. Ever since Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (*fl.* ca. 480) wrote his treatise on the celestial hierarchy, the order of the angels has become strictly defined.[71] Dionysius, who wanted to pass himself off as a convert of St Paul,[72] codified the various angelic ranks in a hierarchy that was based on the Judaic tradition. But in addition to Angels, Archangels, Seraphim, and Cherubim, five other spiritual angelic groups – named in the letters of Paul in the New Testament – were added. These nine choirs are arranged in a descending scale and grouped in three hierarchies: (1) Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, (2) Dominations, Virtues (or Authorities), Powers, (3) Princedoms, Archangels, Angels. Dionysius describes in detail the triads and their functions. Their mission is to make God known, and through their ministrations "we become acquainted with his perfections and are incited to imitate

[68] This naturally does not mean that these works could not have been sung. Of two of these pieces, Pevernage's *Gloria in excelsis*, and Wylkynson's *Salve regina*, a recording was made. (See *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, Christoforus-Schallplatte SCGLB 75966 and fn. 80, resp.) The former piece is repeated once, evidently in order to disguise its short duration.
[69] See Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), p. 132.
[70] Number is a basic element in the cabbalists' conception of the kingdom of heaven as well. There are seven heavens stretched out and stored in the supernal treasure-house ..., and the ten firmaments are symbolized in the ten curtains of the Tabernacle; cf. L. Schaya, *op. cit.* (fn. 57), p. 75.
[71] *De celesti hierarchia.* Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, vol. 122, cols. 1037-70.
[72] See J. Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 55), p. 236.

him."[73] Though the nine choirs originated in the East and are more common in Byzantine art, they provided Western artists throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance with a suitable framework for the representation of heaven.

Salve regina

Probably the earliest nine-part example of *musica celestis* – it is, as far as I know, also the first composition for nine voices in Western history – is the *Salve regina* by Robert Wylkynson. The piece is preserved as a later addition in the Eton choirbook, which was produced shortly before 1502.[74] Since the composer was active at this college from 1496 to 1515, he may have copied the music into the choirbook himself between 1502 and 1515. There can be no doubt regarding Wylkynson's intention to 'represent' the choristers of heaven in the parts: each of the voices opens with the illuminated initial 'S', showing three angels with a scroll on which one of the Latin names of the respective orders is written. Thus, as is to be expected, the highest voice, *quatruplex*, is called "Seraphyn"; the second highest voice, *triplex*, is called "Cherubyn", and so on. The two lowest parts, the *secundus bassus* and *primus bassus*, are marked "Archangeli" and "Angeli". The following explanatory inscription is given at the bottom of the right-hand page: "This antiphon sings the praise of Christ and Mary / And the glory sounds simultaneously with the angelic orders. / These are the Angels, [with whom] the Archangels will be; following is the order / of the Virtues: and of the Powers; next are the Principalities. / After the Dominations you must add the Thrones and Cherubim, / And you shall join [these] with the Seraphim that hold the highest places."[75] The choice of the antiphon "Salve regina" for a performance by angels accords with the legend that, when the Virgin appeared unto a group of pilgrims during a plague in Italy, she was surrounded by angels who sang the "Salve regina".[76]

The antiphon "Assumpta es Maria" from the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin serves as the cantus firmus which Wylkynson places in the tenor. Amazingly, the tenor is performed by the "Potestates" (the Powers), that is, the order to which – in the medieval view – the ordering of all elements is entrusted. In his *Summa contra gentiles*, III.80, Thomas Aquinas elaborates upon the nine pseudo-Dionysian *chori*, and with respect to the third order of the second hierarchy he writes: "In the third place, the universal order of providence [*viz.* God's plan by which he has ordered created things to their

[73] A.C. McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York/London 1947), vol. 1, p. 298.
[74] Cf. F.Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (Buren R1980), p. 312. For more information about the number of parts in works contained in the Eton choirbook see my study *Symbolic Scoring in Tudor England*, pp. 98-105.
[75] The original Latin version, which consists of three distichs, may be found in MB, vol. 10, p. 147.
[76] Cf. Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), p. 51.

end], which has already been established in the things God made, is preserved without confusion in that those factors which could disturb this order are repressed. Now this task belongs to the order of Powers. For this reason Dionysius says that 'the name Powers implies a certain well-arranged and unconfused ordering with regard to divine undertakings'. And therefore Gregory says that it is the task of this order of angels 'to defend against contrary powers'."[77] Since the very same idea is expressed in the popular *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1229-1298),[78] it certainly was widely accepted.

The cantus firmus only appears in the nine-part sections. It is anticipated in bars 1-6. Its first phrase is stated in bars 29-53, the second phrase in bars 67-74, the first four notes of the third phrase in bars 102-108, and the last notes in bars 155-162. Thereupon it recurs in an abbreviated version in the motet's closing section, bars 212-229. In between the nine-part passages there is three- to four-part writing. The character of the nine-part texture is illustrated in example 1.

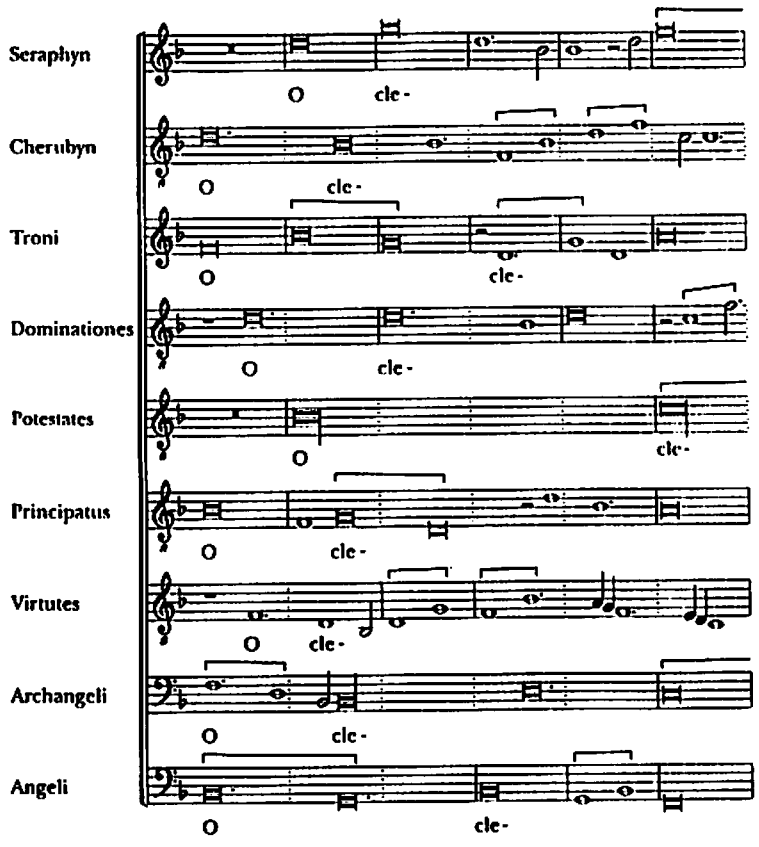
The passage shows that the eight contrapuntal voices are primarily organized vertically. The composer's main concern seems to be to create a sweet sound. The range of the voices within the individual musical phrases is wide, sometimes encompassing an eleventh. Moreover, as a result of their complementary rhythmic character these voices form a sharp contrast with the tenor, which therefore has very much the appearance of a 'moderator': the Powers, as Pseudo-Dionysius says, keep the other voices within bounds.

A further remarkable point is that the composer signed his work no less than three times: firstly at the second opening in the initial of the mean, secondly at the third opening in the initial of the second bass, and lastly in the last note of this same voice.[79] The inscription of the bass initial reads: "Robertus Wylkynson cuius anime propicietur deus" (May God be merciful to the soul of Robert Wylkynson). Why should the composer have made this tiny inscription? Since such inscriptions are quite uncommon in official choirbooks its presence here may well confirm my hypothesis with regard to the composer's supposed belief, which could be worded as follows: "while reading the score of my *Salve regina*, God and Mary will surely discern this little prayer for my own salvation." Wylkynson did not enter the title into either of the two indices. The reason for this may be found in the circumstance that *Regina celi* is a later addition. But it is also possible that the absence of the title in the indices says something significant about the composer's attitude. For if he had not conceived the piece for practical performance, there was also no need for it to be quickly located.[80]

[77] The English translation of this passage is by my brother Leo.
[78] *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* (fn. 53), p. 581.
[79] Cf. MB, vol. 10, p. 147.
[80] The motet has been recorded by The Sixteen on Meridian CDE 84175.

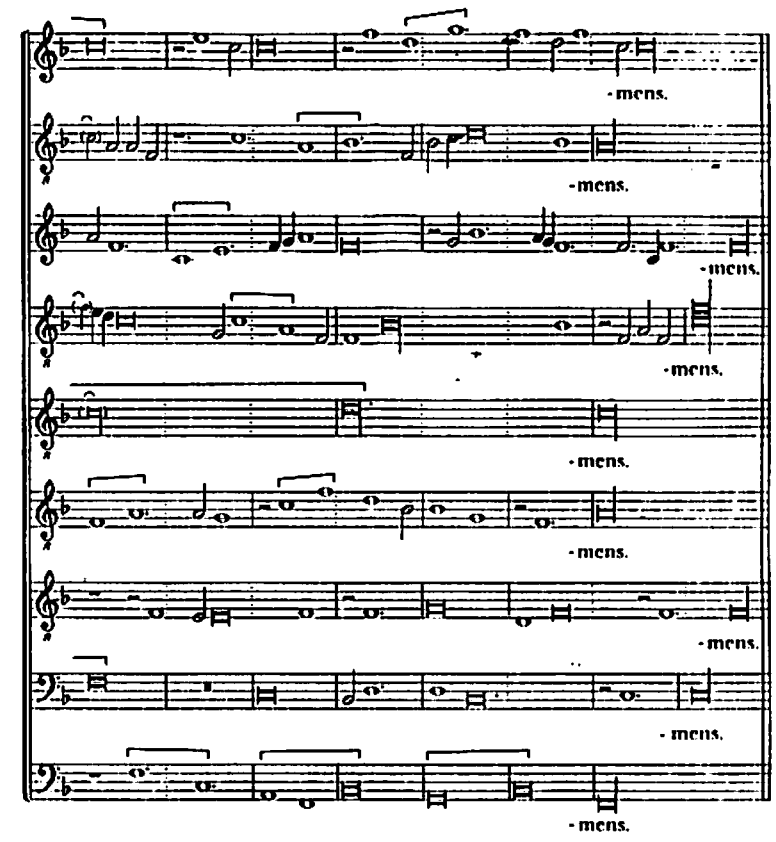
Wylkynson's nine-part motet should be considered as a musical counterpart of the angel pictures in the religious art of medieval England. The richness of this tradition is readily apparent in many cathedrals, cloisters, and churches. From Winchester to York, from Exeter to Ely, fronts, vaults, ceilings, roofs, choir-screens and glass windows were extensively decorated with musical angels. Fine examples can be found in the choir vault of Gloucester Cathedral which has a heavenly orchestra of fifteen angels, in the choir vault of Lincoln Cathedral which shows thirty angels, seven of whom have a musical instrument,[81] and on the ceiling of the apse of Peterborough Cathedral which has 64 angels, a quarter of them playing an instrument. Perhaps even

Ex. 1



[81] All angels are reproduced in A. Gardner, *The Lincoln Angels*. Lincoln Minster Pamphlets, first series, no. 6. The instruments depicted are the lute, viol, harp, pipes, trumpet, and pipe and tabor. One of these angels appears as King David with wings and harp.

Ex. 1 (continued)



more spectacular however, are the wooden roofs of several parish churches such as, for instance, those of All Saints in Martock, St Cudberth in Wells, St Wendreda in March, and St Thomas in Salisbury. In the latter church there are nearly 250 representations of angels on the roofs, walls and pillars.

Gothic England also produced some representations of the nine angelic orders. The west front of Wells Cathedral, with its impressive rows of almost 400 sculptured figures, once displayed, high above the central porch, the coloured statues of the nine orders of angels. Dating from the thirteenth century, these statues have suffered badly, not only owing to time and weather, but also to the iconoclasts. (Fig. 13) In Exeter Cathedral, there is a mural painting of the Assumption of Mary in the ambulatory before the Lady Chapel. It dates from the early sixteenth century, and is also badly damaged. The orders of the angels standing around the Virgin are partly labelled with their Latin names, partly with English names. Only seven an-

gels are shown above the battlements on the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, but the Archangels and Angels may well have been depicted underneath at one time.

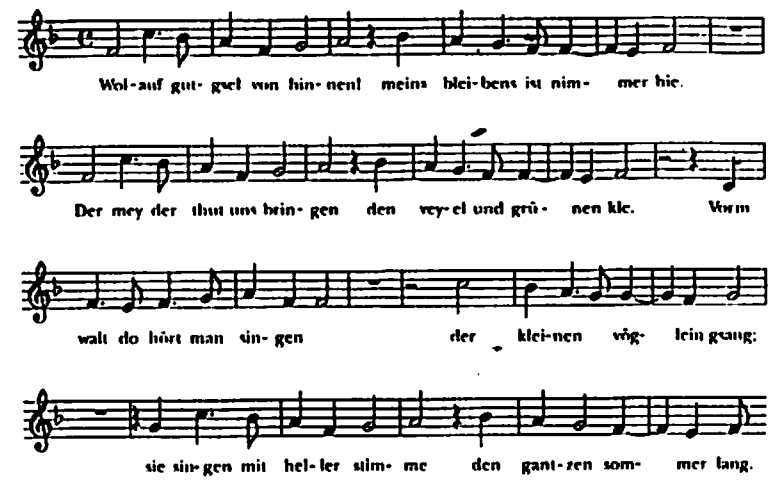
Celorum decus Maria *and* Laudate dominum

For the next two angel motets we turn our attention to the Ms. Verona 218. The eight partbooks contain 24 motets for seven to ten voices, two of which can perhaps be placed in the category of *musica celestis*. The nine-part pieces comprise – apart from Jean Lhéritier's *Locutus est dominus*, which treats of the mission of Moses as recounted in Exodus – the motets *Celorum decus Maria*, attributed in the second index of the manuscript to Josquin, and *Laudate dominum omnes gentes* by Philippe Verdelot. The only ten-part motet is a *Regina celi* by Nicolas Gombert (see below). Dating from about 1536, the manuscript was probably copied in Padua, and may primarily have been compiled as a collection of compositions in which real and complex polyphony for a large number of voices formed a new element within the polychoral repertoire of the 'Venetian School'.[82]

The text of *Celorum decus Maria* opens with a praise of Mary, who is called "the splendour of heavens", "all fair and without spot" (The Song of Songs 4:7), and "a fountain sealed up" (*ibid.* 4:12). Thereupon she is asked to reveal her face, and to let her sweet voice sound in our ears. In the last lines of the text the voice of the Virgin herself speaks and says that Mary has borne the fruits of her honour and grace, and that all hope of life and truth rests upon her. The musical texture of *Celorum decus* is dense – about 25 per cent of the motet's 107 bars is fully voiced; the harmonic progression distinguishes itself by its many sweet sounding chords. The text as well as the musical setting fit into our picture of *musica celestis*: the scoring is certainly uncommon for the period, and the text shows a curious mixture of phrases of praise, prayer and direct speech. Although these aspects, if taken together, make it quite improbable that the motet belonged to the regular repertoire of religious music in early sixteenth-century Italy, I do not wish to exclude the possibility that the work was indeed performed on certain occasions, in which case the motet may nevertheless be called 'heavenly music' but should not be included in the group of the *non exsequendum* pieces. There is perhaps even another element in *Celorum decus* that reveals the composer's main objective. As Norbert Böker-Heil has shown, the motet is based on a twofold canon on the song "Wohlauf, gut G'sell von hinnen"[83] (Ex. 2; quoted from Osthoff – see below):

[82] Cf. N. Böker-Heil, *Zu einem frühvenezianischen Motettenrepertoire*, in Helmuth Osthoff zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag (Tutzing 1969), pp. 79-80.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Ex. 2



The melody is stated twice in non-proportional diminution. In an article devoted to the song, Helmuth Osthoff has traced a number of vocal and instrumental arrangements with German and French text incipits, and concluded that it was known on both sides of the Rhine.[84] Glarean's *Dodecachordon* even contains a sacred contrafact of the four-part setting by Josquin, which is preserved with the incipit "Comment peut avoir joye".[85] Because of the use of the repeat-barform, a favourite structural principle in medieval German monophonic song, and because of the ideal agreement between words and music, Osthoff considers the German version as the older one.[86] The question, then, is why this German folk song should have been taken as a *cantus prius factus* for *Celorum decus*. If the motet were to have formed part of the regular repertoire, it would be hard to give a satisfying explanation for this choice of song. Its text does not contain any element that can be associated with the textual content of *Celorum decus*. If, however, the composition was indeed conceived as an angel motet, I think the text of the song may offer a suitable basis for associating it with angelic singing. The first strophe reads as follows:

[84] Wohlauf, gut G'sell, von hinnen! *Ein Beispiel deutsch-französischer Liedgemeinschaft um 1500*, in Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung 8 (1951), pp. 128-36.
[85] Cf. pp. 356-7. Glarean has drawn the text "O Jesu fili David" from Matthew 15: 22, 26-27. The theorist alludes to the *cantus prius factus* as being "taken from the German and French languages" (p. 354).
[86] *Op. cit.* (fn. 84), p. 136.

Wolauf gut gsel von hinnen!
Meins bleibens ist nimmer hie,
Der mey der thut uns bringen
Den veyel und grünen kle.
Vorm walt do hört man singen
Der kleinen vöglein gsang;
Sie singen mit heller stimme
Den gantzen sommer lang.

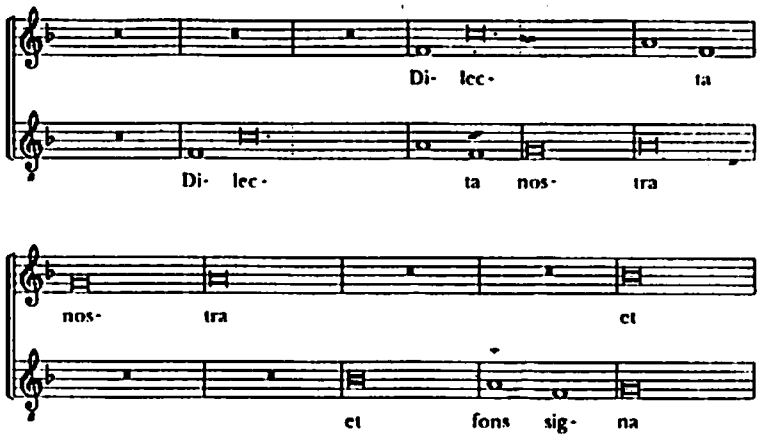
(Come on! from hence, good fellow!
I can no longer bide;
With violets and green clover
May dots the countryside.
At forest's edge one hears it –
The little birdlings' song –
They sing with bright, clear voices
Throughout the summer long.)[87]

Several early texts characterize the voices of the angels as bright – Letzner's *Corbeische Chronica*, to which I referred above, says: "so hat Chorus Angelicus ... das Gloria patri mit heller und deutlicher Stimm ... singen müssen" – and their singing as endless. It is precisely these features that are mentioned in the last two lines. No less important is the fact that various popular medieval legends give an account of pilgrims who had visions of bird-angels performing liturgical chants.[88] Among them are Brendan (sixth cent.), whose *vita* was transformed into the famous *Navigation of St Brendan* in the tenth century, Adomnan (seventh cent.), and Tundalus (twelfth cent.). The last of these legends, which circulated widely, describes how the pilgrim arrives at the heavens and observes that these are made up of five departments. In the fourth department Tundalus sees a tall tree with singing birds on its branches. It thus becomes obvious that the birds' singing forms one of the well-known topoi connected with celestial harmony. And it proves once more that, as I have shown in the first study of this book, animals played a role not only in medieval art and literature, but in musical thought as well.

Whereas the German text of the *cantus prius factus* of *Celorum decus* appears to evoke the idea of angelic singing, the French poem does not.[89] Ending with the lines "He whose life is sad and mean / Cares not at all to sing", this text deals with misfortune. In addition to the textual contents of "Wohlauf" the incipit of the song can perhaps also be considered as an element that made its melody appropriate for adaptation to the text of "Celorum decus". The incipit's beautiful arc visualizes the arch of the heavens (Ex. 3):

[87] The translation by N.B. Spector is quoted from *Ottaviano Petrucci, Canti B*, ed. by H. Hewitt, MMR 2, p. 49.
[88] Cf. Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 64-8, 70.
[89] For the text see Hewitt's edition of the *Canti B* (fn. 87), p. 47.

Ex. 3

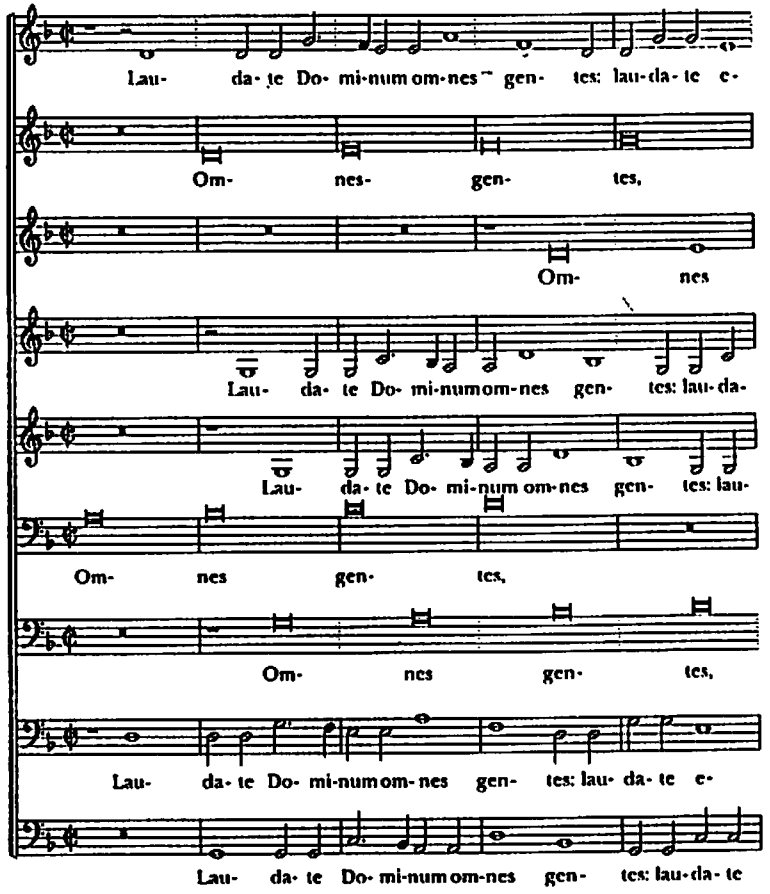


Meanwhile the use of a German song in a motet of Italian provenance may well cast some light on the composer. Although the index of Verona 218 ascribes *Celorum decus* to Josquin, the existence of two other examples of *musica celestis* in this composer's oeuvre (see below) as well as the musico-textual quality of the motet do make the attribution questionable. On account of the *cantus prius factus* it seems more appropriate to search for a composer who was active in both the German and Italian areas; certainly no other musician's career was so intimately bound up with Italy as well as Germany as that of Heinrich Isaac. What is more, Isaac was very familiar with the melody of "Wohlauf", and used it in both a four-part and a six-part Mass which have survived in several German and Italian manuscripts. The German sources give the titles in German, the Italian ones in French. As is the case with *Celorum decus Maria*, both Masses state the song melody in canon in various sections. Three-part arrangements with the cantus firmus in the contra bassus and superius respectively are preserved in the Mss. Rome, Cappella Giulia XIII.27, and Vienna 18810. These pieces, however, were drawn from the "Et incarnatus est" and the "Qui tollis" of the four-part Mass. Although Isaac may not yet have been familiar with the "Wohlauf" version of the song when he composed the four-part Mass, his six-part Mass setting most probably dates from after his appointment as composer to the Habsburg court in 1497. Moreover, he loved to return to musical material which he had worked on before. If we combine this information, the conclusion seems legitimate to consider Isaac as a serious candidate for the authorship of the *Celorum decus*, a motet that, due to its unique character, nevertheless falls outside the general musical style of any composer of the early sixteenth century whatever.

The purpose of the second Verona piece, Verdelot's *Laudate dominum*, is not open to question. The text is based on Psalm 116, which is, with its two

verses, the shortest of all the 150 psalms. Psalm 116 is used for the Tract of the Mass of Holy Saturday, but contrary to Norbert Böker-Heil, who does not exclude a liturgical destination,[90] I prefer to consider the setting as a composition *per se*: Verdelot's text differs slightly from both the liturgical text and the Vulgate. Five of the motet's nine voices are set canonically; the four other voices perform, in ostinato fashion, the words "omnes gentes, plaudite manibus ..." (O clap your hands, all ye nations ...) (Ps. 46:1)[91] (Ex. 4):

Ex. 4



[90] *Die Motetten von Philip Verdelot* (Ph.D. diss. Frankfurt a. M. 1967), pp. 83 and 226.

[91] The transcription by A.M. Bragard in CMM 28/3, no. 10, is incorrect at two points. From bar 7 onwards, the two outer voices produce parallel twelfths; these disappear if the *punctum* in the first voice, bar 7, is eliminated. The second and seventh voices produce parallel fifths from bar 12 onwards; these disappear if the rest in bar 12 of the second part is eliminated.

The polyphonic progression is based on a stereotype harmonic pattern. Disregarding the repetition of the last phrase, the motet is only twenty bars long. Böker-Heil rightly remarks that the piece "impresses more because of its technical than because of its artistic quality."[92] However, it seems doubtful that the composer would have written this setting of the psalm first of all as a proof of his contrapuntal ability.[93] In my view, Verdelot's intention was clearly to create another specimen of *musica celestis*, and in doing so he clinged to a tradition in which Josquin and Ockeghem had already paved the way (see below). The number of voices of *Laudate dominum* corresponds with that of the nine angelic orders, and the text is a song of praise which, because of the canonic treatment, can be repeated endlessly. This procedure calls to mind the situation described in the last phrase of the Preface of the Mass, which states that the various angelic ranks sing the praise of God without ceasing, whereupon the Sanctus is intoned.

The Verona angel motets bear a similar relationship to contemporary art as Wylkynson's *Salve regina*. Italian painting of the Renaissance produced a multitude of religious representations in which angels are depicted performing music.[94] Although these were mostly panels made for private use, chapels and churches also could be decorated with scenes of heavenly music, visible to every visitor. Examples may be found in the chapel of the Castello Sforzesco at Milan (Bonifacio Bembo's *Resurrection and God the Father surrounded by angel musicians*), at S. Lorenzo in S. Gimignano (*Mary in the Glory* by Cenni di Francesco di Ser Cenni), and in the Pinacoteca in Vatican City. The latter art collection preserves Melozzo da Forlì's frescos of angel musicians which formerly were part of *The Ascension of Christ*, the apse decoration of the Basilica dei Santi Apostoli. These frescos are discussed by Vasari, who speaks with admiration of the choir of angels leading Christ up to Heaven.[95]

Justorum anime *and* Gloria in excelsis

The last two nine-part angel motets date from the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1584 the Habsburg court at Innsbruck witnessed the performance of the *Speculum vitae humanae* (A mirror of human life) for which Jacob Regnart wrote some choral interpolations. The text of this "Comedy" in prose was by Archduke Ferdinand of Tirol, a great-grandson of Maximilian I. The play consists of nine acts, and sets the seven works of mercy against the seven capital sins. Regnart's nine-part *Justorum anime* was

[92] *Op. cit.* (fn. 90), p. 117.

[93] Cf. *ibid.*

[94] See the monograph by V. Ravizza (fn. 25). See also E. Winternitz, *On Angel Concerts in the 15th Century: A Critical Approach to Realism and Symbolism in Sacred Painting*, in the same author's *Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art* (London 1967), pp. 137-49.

[95] Cf. *The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art* (New York 1982), p. 149.

sung in the sixth act, a mime in which an angel brings the souls of the blessed before the Trinity. The text of the motet is based on Wisdom 3:1, and deals with the happiness of the just.

Justorum anime has not survived with the text of the play, but a motet of the same name in the Ms. Wroclaw 30A was identified by Helmuth Osthoff as one of the original interpolations.[96] The author rightly stresses the brevity of the motet, a mere 24 bars long. However, Osthoff does not connect its remarkable scoring with the nine angelic orders. While there can be little doubt as to the fact that the piece was actually performed, none the less, with its quasi- homophonic texture, it gives one a good impression of the composer's concept of heavenly music. Just as in the case of the two Verona motets, this concept reveals itself in sweet-sounding harmonies. Yet the harmonic progression with Regnart is more varied, and he even introduces a quite unexpected *E*-flat alteration in bars 14-15 at the words "the torment of death".

Our last nine-part piece is Andreas Pevernage's *Gloria in excelsis*. It dates from 1587. The short composition – it has only 23 bars – is a so-called picture motet and belongs to a genre that constitutes a unique phenomenon in music history. The centre of the art of the picture motets was Antwerp, where in the 1580s and 1590s, thirteen such works appeared.[97] The cooperation of artist, engraver and composer produced a work of religious value which included a polyphonic motet usually written especially for this purpose. The composer gave the artist his music, the artist copied it note for note into his painting, and the engraver transferred the representation onto a copper plate, from which prints were eventually made. Apart from Pevernage, who with his five motets is the most prolific composer of the genre, there are contributions by Orlando di Lasso, Daniel Raymundi, Francesco Soriani, Cornelis Verdonck, and Cornelis Schuyt. In some cases the motet for the picture was taken from an already existing musical source. Eight of these thirteen engravings were produced by Johan Sadeler.

Sadeler's engraving of Pevernage's *Gloria in excelsis* was made from a painting by Martijn de Vos. It shows the announcement of Christ's birth to the shepherds. (Fig. 33) Each of the nine angels holds a roll with one of the nine music parts. The fact that a complete composition can be represented in such a small format is amazing. The plate with our example measures 38cm x 30cm, and the music rolls take up only sixteen per cent of the total surface of 1.140cm². While in normal music printing of the time about 160 notes could appear on a surface of these dimensions, Pevernage's picture motet contains no less than 496 notes. Several textual as well as musical features designate the motet as a fine example of *musica celestis*. The text is confined to the angelic hymn sung at the Nativity, "Glory to God in the highest; and

[96] See *Eine unbekannte Schauspielmusik Jacob Regnarts*, in Festschrift für Johannes Wolf zu seinem sechzigsten Geburtstage (Berlin 1929), p. 157. The contribution also contains an edition of the motet (pp. 159-61).

[97] Ten of these works are published by M. Seiffert in Organum, first series, no. 19. See also fn. 68.

on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14), and the music perfectly underlines the idea of angelic singing: the harmonic progression produces exclusively sweet sounds, the words "et in terra pax hominibus" are sung by two alternating groups, and occasional melismatic runs evoke the image of the *jubilus* which, in the writings of the Church Fathers, often was connected with the celestial praise of God.[98] The contributions of the painter and the engraver further augmented the idea of heavenly music: the angels do indeed descend "from the invisible celestial halls to the earthly vaults of heaven in order to continue the Song of Praise for God incarnate",[99] and the Latin text on the roll of the lowest angel makes the intention of the artists manifest. It reads: "Triumphus chori angelici de pace hominibus per incarnationem verbi divini facta" ([This is] the triumph of the angelic choir because of the peace among men which is made through the Incarnation of the divine word).

If one compares the short musical inscriptions in similar pictures from earlier times with the present one,[100] it becomes obvious that the appearance of a complete composition illustrates an increasing interest in the value of composed music as opposed to the rather speculative and theoretical aspects of former musical thought. None the less, the pictorial use of a real musical work should not prevent us from concluding that Pevernage's picture motet – being nothing other than an imitation of what the composer imagined the song of praise of the nine angelic choirs to be – was definitely not conceived for practical performance.

Deo gratias

About one century before Pevernage's *Gloria in excelsis* began to circulate in print, Johannes Ockeghem is thought to have written his 36-part *Deo gratias* in manuscript. In the three rather late sources of the motet – two prints and one manuscript, all of German origin – it is preserved as an anonymous work. The earliest print, Petreius's *Tomus tertius psalmorum*, dates from 1542 and contains the motet at the very end; Neuber's *Cantiones triginta* from 1568 and the Ms. Heilbron IV/2 are both derived from Petreius. Ockeghem's authorship was discussed by Dragan Plamenac, the editor of his works, in 1928, who concluded that only with difficulty could the *Deo gratias*-canon in the German sources be identified as the same piece for which the composer was so highly praised after his death[101] (see below). In his 1961 article on the composer, Plamenac repeated this same viewpoint.[102] However, after the motet had been published in 1971 by Edward Stam in its probable

[98] Cf. Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 41.

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[101] *Autour d'Ockeghem*, in ReM 9/4 (1928), p. 30.

[102] MGG 9, col. 1834.

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[102] MGG 9, col. 1834.

original version,[103] he was prepared to include a reprint of this fine engraving in vol. 3 of Ockeghem's *Collected Works*.[104] Yet Leeman Perkins[105] and Martin Picker[106] list *Deo gratias* under Ockeghem's doubtful motets. On the other hand, Ernst Krenek[107] and Edward Lowinsky[108] both accepted it. According to Mariko Teramoto, the canon may have been written by the editor of Petreius's psalm volume, Georg Forster.[109] However, the mere fact that Petreius offers a corrupt reading of the piece makes Forster's authorship highly unlikely. Finally, Andrea Lindmayr sees in the description of Ockeghem's canon by Sebastian Virdung (see below) a solid argument against the thesis that this canon is the same as the one under discussion here.[110]

While *Deo gratias* is preserved anonymously, there is complete and general agreement on Ockeghem's authorship of a 36-part motet. Here following, in chronological order, are five testimonies which date from the time after the composer's death:

(1) "Sans ung seul poinct de ses reigles enfraindre / Trente six vois noter, escripre et paindre / En ung motet; est ce pas pour complaindre / Celluy trouvant telle novalité? / C'est Okergan" (Without violating one single point of the rules, to notate, inscribe, and depict thirty-six voices in one motet; should we not mourn for the man who discovered such novelty? It is Ockeghem).
Guillaume Crétin, *Déploration ... sur le trespas de feu Okergan*.[111]

(2) "... ein meister aller c(om)ponisten, Hatt geheissen Johannes ockeghem ... Der hatt ein mütett mit sex stymmen gemacht. Der stymmen itlich ist ein füg mit sex stymmen, und alzüsamen XXXVI stymm" (A master of all composers ... has made a motet for six voices. Each of the voices is a *fuga* (canon) for six parts, and together [they make] 36 parts).

[103] At my request, the late Edward Stam edited *Deo gratias* together with Josquin's 24-part *Qui habitat* in EMN 6. By eliminating a number of errors in the sources, he succeeded, for the first time, in having all 36 voices sound together. However, he did not follow my advice to publish *Deo gratias* as a textless piece, as it is in the sources.
[104] This is stated in a letter of February 7, 1975, which Plamenac addressed to the present author. Regrettably, Plamenac, who died in 1983, did not live to see the last volume of Ockeghem's *Complete Works* in print. Richard Wexler, the editor of this volume, has included the piece as *opus dubium*.
[105] Cf. NGD 13, p. 495.
[106] *Johannes Ockeghem and Jacob Obrecht. A Guide to Research* (New York/London 1988), pp. 28-9.
[107] *Johannes Ockeghem* (New York 1953), p. 11: it seems "clear that only a man with unusual interest and skill in contrapuntal techniques [like Ockeghem] would attempt such a tour de force."
[108] *Ockeghem's Canon for Thirty-six Voices: An Essay in Musical Iconography*, in Essays in Musicology in Honor of Dragan Plamenac (Pittsburg 1969), pp. 157-80.
[109] *Die Psalmmotettendrucke des Johannes Petrejus in Nürnberg* (Tutzing 1983), p. 347.
[110] *Quellenstudien zu den Motetten von Johannes Ockeghem* (Laaber 1990), p. 188.
[111] Cf. *Johannes Ockeghem en zijn tijd*. Catalogue of Exposition in Dendermonde, 1970, p. 127.

Sebastian Virdung, letter to Count Ludwig of Bavaria, dated 1504.[112]

(3) "Nam Johannes Okeken mutetum 36. vocum composuisse constat" (For it is certain that Ockeghem has composed a 36-part motet).
Andreas Ornithoparchus, *Musicae activae micrologus* (Leipzig 1517), fol. k3v.

(4) "Ung facteur fut Okghem nommé / Roy sur tous chantres renommé / Qui feist en des pars trente six / Ung motet tellement assis / Qu'on ne veist onc oeuvre sembable" (There was an artist named Ockeghem, famous king of all singers, who composed in thirty-six parts a motet of such soundness, that a similar work was never seen).
Nicole Le Vestu, *Chant royal* (1523). These lines form part of the *Argument*, which precedes the *Chant royal*, and which has been attributed to Guillaume Crétin.[113]

(5) "Quippe quem constat triginta sex vocibus garritum quendam instituisse. Eum nos non vidimus" (It is an established fact that he [i.e. Ockeghem] has arranged a certain twittering for thirty-six voices, which, however, we have not seen).
Glarean, *Dodecachordon* (Basel 1547), p. 454.

With regard to these quotations, two remarks should be made. Firstly, no author mentions the title of Ockeghem's motet. This may well mean that, as Glarean explicitly says, some of them perhaps never saw the piece, a situation that could well be explained if there had been no intention to circulate the work. Secondly, the structure of Ockeghem's motet as specified by Virdung differs from that of *Deo gratias*. This has been taken as an argument against Ockeghem's authorship. But since, as Virdung admits in the same letter, the two Ockeghem compositions in his possession are "altogether incorrectly written",[114] he simply may have had a wrong idea of its actual shape.

In 1969 Edward Lowinsky argued that "the canon [*Deo gratias*] was merely the instrument needed to carry out an idea. The idea that prompted Ockeghem to such an extraordinary enterprise ... was the concept of the heavenly music of the angels sung in praise of God."[115] He further rightly stressed the functional aspect of the canon, namely "to create a sounding likeness of the unity of angelic harmony ... and to reproduce the aspect of never-ending praise."[116] Taken as a whole, Lowinsky's fine study can be

[112] Cf. B. Wallner, *Sebastian Virdung von Amberg*, in KJb 24 (1911), p. 97.
[113] Cf. *Johannes Ockeghem* ... (fn. 111), p. 69. For the attribution to Crétin, see Plamenac, op. cit. (fn. 101), pp. 36-7.
[114] "aller Ding ungerecht geschrieben"; cf. Wallner, *op. cit.* (fn. 112), pp. 97-8. The evidence that Virdung was not in the possession of an accurate score of Ockeghem's motet counts against Plamenac's statement about the performance of the piece by the chapel of the Palatine court in Heidelberg; cf. *op. cit.* (fn. 101), pp. 29-30. Virdung may surely have endeavoured to perform this extraordinary work, but it is very doubtful whether he ever had access to a reliable source.
[115] *Op. cit.* (fn. 108), p. 157.
[116] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

considered as exhaustive, and the only apects that in my opinion need more comment are the following. Firstly, the Latin word "garritus" used by Glarean to describe the effect of all 36 voices sounding together, could denote, according to Lowinsky, "not only the chatter of human beings but also the warbling of birds."[117] It may be true that, in the Greek tradition, "[the] ecstatic language of the seer is at times compared with the twittering of the swallow."[118] Yet it seems more plausible that, in choosing this particular word to compare the singing of the angels with the twittering of birds (see above), Glarean displays his proximity to medieval tradition rather than his familiarity with Greek literature. The second aspect concerns the significance of the four groups. The number four symbolizes the four points of the compass as well as, in this case, the idea that the words "Thanks be to God", sung by the nine angelic orders, resound from all quarters of the world. In Matthew 24:31 Christ foretells that he shall send his angels with a trumpet to gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The fact that the words "Deo gratias" can hardly be made to fit the music gives the composition an incontestable place in the category of *musica non exsequenda*. None the less, some reservation should be made. If the present *Deo gratias* would indeed be a work by Ockeghem, we cannot pass over the statement on its performance contained in the lines following the passage from Le Vestu's *Chant royal* quoted above. However, does the presumed author, Guillaume Crétin, here describe a real occasion, or is he rather mingling truth with fantasy? As for the latter suggestion, this kind of imagination is certainly essential to the world of late fifteenth-century poetry. Probably the first example of Renaissance music not conceived for actual performance, Ockeghem's *Deo gratias* may well have inspired later composers to imitate him, the most celebrated musician of his time. One such composers was Josquin des Prez.

Qui habitat in adjutorio altissimi

It has been suggested that Josquin's psalm motet *Qui habitat* for twenty-four parts "may have been an answer to Ockeghem's unprecedented enterprise."[119] Just like his master, Josquin writes for four choruses, each performing its own canon. Although these choruses consist of only six voices as against Ockeghem's nine, and the work therefore might seem to be a less impressive achievement, it surpasses that of Ockeghem as far as the compositional procedure is concerned: while the first two canon groups in *Deo gratias* hold their final note in a long fermata chord for 22 bars starting from the entry of the fourth canon, the four six-part canons of *Qui habitat* do indeed move towards their termination in real twenty-four-part counterpoint. Josquin, moreover, succeeded in carefully setting verses one to eight of Psalm 90, and he underlined rhetorically the meaning of several words (e.g. "altissimi", "obumbrabit", "cadent").[120]

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[118] Cf. *ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Contrary to *Deo gratias* which he edited as an anonymous work, Petreius assigned *Qui habitat* to Josquin. It appears as the opening piece in his *Tomus tertius psalmorum selectorum* of 1542, a collection in which, as we saw above, *Deo gratias* is included as the final work. The Ms. Kassel 24 is one additional source for the motet, which is further preserved in the same sources as *Deo gratias*. Whereas a symbolical interpretation of the numbers four and nine in *Deo gratias* almost forces itself upon the mind, the meaning of the canonic structure of *Qui habitat* is less easy to explain. The psalm text is a canticle of David, and affirms that the just are secure under the protection of God. Should we, as in *Deo gratias*, regard the number of the four choruses and that of the multiple canonic parts as significant, or rather the total number of voices? There is, I think, much to say for Lowinsky's proposal that "Josquin may have chosen the number twenty-four to represent the twenty-four elders of the Book of Revelation."[121] Although it is not definite who are meant by the twenty-four elders, most commentators consider them to be the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament – that is, the twelve sons of Jacob – and the twelve apostles. Thus they represent the old and the new people of God. Their white garments remind us of the purification of the elect through the blood of the Mediator, and their crowns signify that they rule as kings in all eternity. The elders are also described as "having every one of them harps" (Rev. 5:8). This passage undoubtedly is the literary source of the many representations in medieval and Renaissance art in which the elders are depicted with musical instruments. One of the finest of these may be found on the right panel of Hans Memling's *Triptych of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist* (Bruges, Memlingmuseum; Fig. 34) The picture shows Christ enthroned, with around him four six-winged creatures resembling a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle – the Church fathers later made the 'apocalyptic' beasts into symbols of the four evangelists – and around these the twenty-four elders. The elders were also mentioned by Adam of Fulda and Gioseffo Zarlino as heavenly musicians in the immediate vicinity of God.[122] It thus seems very appropriate to associate the number of voices of *Qui habitat* with the elders of the Book of Revelation.

One question still remains unanswered. Why should Josquin have chosen the complicated form of a quadruple canon, with each canon consisting of six parts, if – as Lowinsky has suggested – the elaboration of the number twenty-four was his *only* aim? I believe we must rather speculate on the possibility that Josquin, as did Ockeghem, considered a double numerological allusion,

[120] Cf. E. Stam, *Die vierundzwanzigstimmige kanonische Psalmmotette* Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi *von Josquin des Prez*, in TVNM 22 (1971), pp. 8-10.
[121] *Op. cit.* (fn. 108), p. 179.
[122] Cf. *ibid.*

an allusion that may be detected if we look more closely at the composer's source of inspiration. Two passages in St John's vision describe the elders in connection with the four creatures: "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats four and twenty ancients sitting ...; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind" (Rev. 4:4-6). The second passage is found in Revelation 5:8-9: "And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints: And they sung a new canticle ..."

A number of arguments can be put forward in favour of a symbolical interpretation of the four six-part choirs. No other psalm has such frequent change of speakers as does "Qui habitat".[123] Josquin follows the arrangement of verses by giving the first verse to the first choir, the second verse to the second choir, the third verse to the first and third choirs. From here onwards, the division of the verses according to choirs is made subservient to the canonic structure. Perfectly in tune with the presumed musical subject of his text – that is, the *Canticum novum* of Revelation 5:8-9, which he saw as a piece of music that surrounds God and that is endless – Josquin chose the form of the circular canon, which only can be realized if the four choirs enter one after the other. The circular movement which results seems to act as a musical image of the *mandala* as envisioned by John, and painted by Memling. That the presence of the four creatures may have inspired the idea of employing four choirs seems, moreover, to be confirmed by the circumstance that each of the creatures has six wings (Rev. 4:8). Accordingly, the wings are transformed into the six voices – the material, so to speak from which each of the four canons is built. This interpretation, of course, is rather speculative. None the less, since the number of twenty-four voices can also be reached by various other vocal combinations such as, for example, six four-part or three eight-part choirs, I think that the double meaning of the number twenty-four as described above could well have been conceived by Josquin as pertaining to the vision of heavenly music. Not only would this explain the three basic numbers in the canonic structure – four, six, and twenty-four – but it would also accord with the medieval tradition of participation by animals in the praise of God.[124] The last argument that supports my view is found in the psalm's first verse: "He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob." Of all celestial beings the four creatures and the twenty-four elders are, in the vision of St John, nearest to God.

[123] Cf. *Psautier polyglotte contenant les psaumes en hébreu, en grec, en latin et en français*, ed. by F. Vigouroux (Paris 1903), p. 221.

[124] Further examples are the birds (see p. 230) and the bees (see pp. 36ff.). See also Hammerstein, *op. cit.* (fn. 1), pp. 198-9, who gives some examples found in medieval art of the four animals as performers of the heavenly liturgy.

Regina celi

Our next two examples of heavenly music are a ten-part and a twelve-pa setting by Nicolas Gombert of "Regina celi", one of the four so-calle Marian antiphons. Although these chants are of a relatively late date, "th are justly famous for their beauty."[125] Gombert's ten-part version is preserve as *unicum* in the Ms. Verona 218, which, as we have seen above, also co tains the nine-part *Celorum decus Maria* and the nine-part *Laudа dominum*. Stylistically, the motet is characterized by pervading imitatio Portions of the chant are freely elaborated in several voices. The structure not antiphonal but the different combinations of voice groups are consisten ly varied. Full-part scoring occurs from the second sentence ("Quem meruis portare") onwards. The composer brings his motet to a climax at the en where the exclamation "Alleluia" is sung eight to ten times in all voices.

Even though the number ten is not associated with the Virgin, it ca nevertheless, be connected with Mary's heavenly domicile. In Renaissan thought the music of the spheres was afforded a spiritual meaning: "In pla of the sirens, [Giorgio] Anselmi ... assigned to each sphere angels of vario ranks, who sing forth not from rims but spheres, in keeping with the ge metric universe of concentric globes that was then the accepted view."[126] F a music theorist, Anselmi's approach was certainly original. But nearly mo than two centuries before Anselmi, Thomas Aquinas thought it probabl that the angels were created by God to participate in the ruling of the cosm inasmuch as they generate the motion of the heavenly bodies.[127] Dante als passing through the nine spheres on his way to the heavens in his *Divi Comedy*, was aware of the fact that these are moved by the nine angelic o ders. In *Canto* XXVIII of the *Paradiso* the poet has a vision of nine concentr circles wheeling round a point of the most intense light (13-39), and he given instruction by Beatrice in the Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy of ange (97-129). Now it is surprising that, after they have arrived in the nin sphere, Beatrice bids Dante to look upon the garden of Christ, the Virgi rose and the Apostolic lilies (*Canto* XXIII:70-75). The poet then says: "An when the quality and magnitude of the living star who surpasses there abo as she surpassed here below were pictured in both my eyes, there descend through the sky a torch which, circling, took the likeness of a crown th encircled her [i.e. Mary] and wheeled about her. Whatever melody soun sweetest here below and most draws the soul to itself would seem thund bursting from a cloud compared with the sound of that lyre that crowned th fair sapphire by which the sky is so brightly ensapphired" (91-102).[128] Ther

[125] W. Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA, ²1975), p. 42.

[126] Palisca, *op. cit.* (fn. 15), p. 164.

[127] Cf. Th. Litt, *Les corps célestes dans l'univers de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain/Pa 1963), pp. 99-108; L. Elders, *Les cosmologies médiévales*, in Revue Thomiste 93 (1993), p 97-110.

[128] This and the following quotations from Dante are taken from *The Divine Comedy Dante Alighieri*. Translation and Commentary by J.D. Sinclair (London 1971).

upon Dante describes how the Virgin rises through the *Primum Mobile* far out of sight, while the saints reach up tenderly after her with their flames, but he has to admit that his "eyes were not able to follow the crowned flame that rose after her seed (118-120)." Since the key to understanding Gombert's ten-part scoring is perhaps to be found in the ensuing three *terza rime*, I shall quote Dante once more: "And like an infant that stretches out its arms to its mother after it has taken the milk, its impulse kindling into outward flame, each of these white radiances reached upward with its flame, so that the deep affection they had for Mary was made plain to me; then they remained there in my sight, singing Regina coeli so sweetly that the delight has never left me" (121-129).

Two remarks are in order. Firstly, Dante's description of the ascension of the Virgin is one that defines the *Empyreum* as the tenth sphere, that is, the world of Light and Love.[129] Secondly, his comparison of Mary's crown with the sweetest melody ever heard cannot but have strongly appealed to every musician reading the *Divine Comedy*. If we assume that Gombert was familiar with Dante's *Paradise*, he may well have intended to reinforce his beautiful evocation of the poet's heavenly praise of the Holy Virgin – which mentions the text of his composition at such a central place – by devising for it the unusual scoring of ten parts, a symbol of the Virgin's ultimate dwelling-place.

However imaginative this interpretation may be, we cannot exclude the possibility of yet another complementary meaning of the ten-part scoring of Gombert's *Regina celi*. The text of the antiphon, which is sung at Paschaltide, draws Mary into the joy surrounding the resurrection of Christ: "Joy to Thee, O Queen of Heaven. For He whom Thou wast meet to bear, as He promis'd, hath arisen ..., alleluia." Dante clearly refers to the contents of the antiphon in the text of "the sweetest melody" he ever heard: "I am angelic love who encircle the supreme joy which breathes from the womb that was the inn of our desire, and I shall circle thee, Lady of Heaven, until thou follow thy Son and make more divine by entering it the highest sphere" (103-108). A popular medieval interpretation of the number ten was to see it as a symbol of Christ. The Greek letter 'chi', used as the first letter of the name 'Christus', is similar in form to the Roman numeral X. And in the Greek numeral system, 'jota' – the first letter of the name 'Jesus' – signifies ten.[130]

Gombert's second 'heavenly' *Regina celi* is scored for no less than twelve voices. It was published in 1535 by Attaingnant in his *Lib[er] duodecim[us] XVII. musicales ad virginem christiparam salutationes habet* ... The four

[129] For a diagram of the ten spheres which shows, among other things, the names of the planets and the nine angelic orders, see the edition of Dante's *Paradiso* by F. Bremer (Haarlem 1941), p. 17. An early seventeenth-century diagram containing the same system may be found in Robert Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi ... historia* of 1617.

[130] Cf. H. Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter. Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich 1975), p. 144.

partbooks contain seventeen antiphons in honour of the Virgin: six à 4, five à 5, four à 6, one à 8, and one à 12. There are two settings of "Ave regina celorum", eight of "Regina celi", and seven of "Salve regina". As far as its scoring is concerned, the setting by Gombert may indeed be called exceptional, especially in view of the form of the publication, that is, four partbooks for a piece that was not conceived as a canon. The *cantus prius factus* lies slightly paraphrased, in the first tenor. Above this part there are three cantus and two altus voices, and below two more tenors and four basses. The texture is unusually dense: more than a quarter of the motet's 143 bars is fully voiced, and more than half of it is performed by at least nine voices.

The use of twelve voices was undoubtedly inspired by the Book of Revelation 12:1. It describes "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars ..." In the late Middle Ages this woman was accepted as an image of the Queen of Heaven.[131] The apocalyptic crown became, consequently, one of Mary's most frequently depicted attributes. (Fig. 20) Its popularity is clearly shown in, for example, the seventeenth-century musical setting of the First Vespers of a special feast of Our Lady by Bonaventura Rubino. The work was performed in Palermo on August 27, 1644, in the Church of the Friars Minor. The title is as follows: *Il festevole trionfo per la coronazione dell'immacolata reina, co' diadema delle dodeci stelle ombreggianti li dodeci privileggi rimembrati nella corona del Santissimo Stellario* (The Festive Triumph for the Coronation of the Immaculate Queen, with the Diadem of Twelve Stars that overshadow the Twelve Prerogatives Recollected in the Crown of the Most Holy Star). Thanks to a contemporary description of this musical event we know that, on this very day, a series of twelve Hails was sung not only in all the churches of Palermo but in private houses as well.[132] For the performance in the Franciscan basilica, twelve stands were erected in the central part of the church, and on these stands there was an equal number of choirs.

Although the scoring of Gombert's *Regina celi* was indeed very unusual for the time, the motet may well have been conceived for a practical purpose. None the less, the chord progression, which is characterized by long sustained harmonies – F-major chords persist sometimes for three to six successive bars – defines this antiphon as Gombert's reflection of heavenly music 'par excellence'.

Ista est speciosa *and* Inviolata

The image of the apocalyptic crown, an attribute of the *Regina celi*, was given, as we have seen, to the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception as

[131] For more details see my study *Music and Number* ..., pp. 171-2.

[132] See the program notes of the performance in November 1990 in the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi in Palermo. I am indebted to David Collyer, one of the musical participants, for having supplied me with information about this remarkable event.

well.[133] Our last two examples are textually related to this latter subject, although they do not form part of the liturgy of December 8, which celebrates the feast of Mary's conception. Mathieu Gascongne's twelve-part canon *Ista est speciosa* is preserved as unicum in the Ms. Cambridge, Pepys 1760. The short piece has only 34 bars, and is notated in one part, in the F-clef, on two staves at the bottom of fol. 1v. The miniature at the head of the canon was approximately 9cm by 8, but was cut out of the manuscript sometime after 1697. A catalogue of that year mentions that the book was made "in the time of King Hen. VII for the then Prince of Wales; being the Prince's Original Book, elegantly prickt and illuminated with his Figure in Miniature."[134]

There exist various theories as to the original dedicatee of the manuscipt.[135] One theory, defended by Edward Lowinsky in his study referred to above, is that it was written for Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon to celebrate the birth of their daughter Mary in February 1516. If true, the selection of the first three motets could hardly have been more appropriate. On fol. 1r we find an initial salutation to the newborn princess in the form of an *Ave Maria* by Jo. Bortel; the second work on this same folio is Antoine de Févin's *Que est ista*, the text of which is drawn from the Song of Songs 3:6. It reads: "Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh?" The *pièce de résistance* on fol. 1v is Gascongne's *Ista est speciosa*, which at that time appeared together with the manuscript's sole miniature, and which is based on a text also inspired by the Song of Songs: "This one is beautiful among the daughters of Jerusalem." The question which raises itself is how the prince's "Figure in Miniature", now lost, can be associated with this latter text, originally an antiphon sung in the Common of the Virgins.

I believe the answer depends on the precise subject of the miniature. If perchance this represented the Prince of Wales [the future Henry VIII] kneeling before the Madonna, the association is plain. Similar miniatures are

[133] See also Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 55), p. 327.

[134] Cf. E.E. Lowinsky, *A Music Book for Anne Boleyn*, in Florilegium Historiale: Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson (Toronto 1970), p. 163.

[135] Cf. *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550*, vol. 1, p. 129. Louise Litterick has suggested that the manuscript almost certainly was compiled in France some time before 1514, and that it was probably originally intended for the royal couple, Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. At some point, there should have been a change of plans, and it was then presented to an English king, most likely Henry VIII. (See *The Manuscript Royal 20.A.XVI of the British Library*, unpublished Ph.D. diss., New York Univ. 1976, pp. 46-54; I am indebted to Prof. Larry Bernstein for having provided me with the details of this theory.) I believe, Litterick's theory needs not to interfere with my idea on the function of the three first motets (see below). These motets may well have prompted someone to think that particularly their textual contents would make the manuscript a suitable present to Henry VIII at the occasion of the birth of his daughter Mary. The sole question which in this case remains to be solved is at what time the miniature with Henry's 'figure' would have been added. But it is also feasible that the texts of the second and third motets are an homage to Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

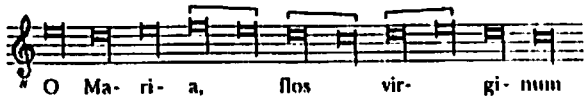
found in several books of hours from the fifteenth century. That of Catharine of Cleves as donor, in prayer before the Apocalyptic Madonna, appears also on the verso side of the first folio of her breviary.[136] Of course, the birth of Mary I as the possible occasion for the compilation of Pepys 1760 should not inhibit our appreciation of the symbolism that can be connected with Gascongne's canon motet in its original function. For even if Henry VIII did indeed order the preparation of the manuscript to commemorate the birth of the princess Mary, the symbolism of the twelve canonic voices remains only applicable to the Virgin Mary in her quality as Woman of the Revelation, who is crowned with twelve stars (Rev. 12:1). Finally, as is the case with most of the other compositions dealt with in the present study, the canon's preservation in only one source may well support my thesis that it, too, was not primarily intended for practical performance.

The voices enter on successively higher steps at two-bar intervals.[137] From bar 23 onwards all twelve voices participate (Ex. 5).

Sometimes a clash between *e* and *b*-flat is inevitable. As a whole the piece is more intriguing as a contrapuntal exercise than a charming example of musical development. My conclusion seems therefore justified that Gascongne conceived *Ista est speciosa* as an example of heavenly music.

The impressive sequence motet *Inviolata* by Josquin des Prez – the motet is attributed to this composer in its unique source, the Ms. Kassel 38 (see also p. 176) – forms an apex in the repertoire of *musica celestis*. In the first 26 bars the chant melody migrates back and forth between discant, alto and bass parts, which form contrasting vocal groups of three or four voices. Thereupon a new cantus firmus enters in the first tenor, stating in longae the words "O Maria, flos virginum" (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6



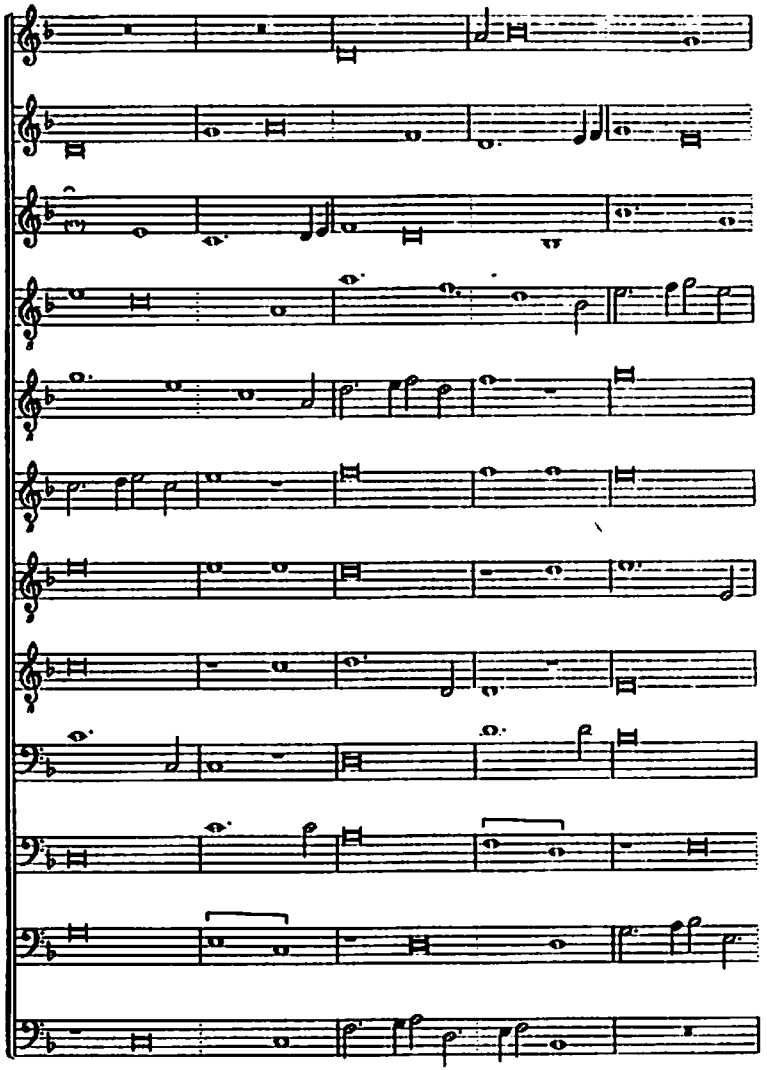
The melody, in all probability freely composed,[138] has a circular form, and is in rhetorical terminology called a *circulatio*. Warren Kirkendale has connected the use of this figure with the desire of composers to depict such

[136] Cf. *The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting*. Exhibition Catalogue. Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent Utrecht / The Pierpont Morgan Library (Stuttgart/Zürich 1989). Pl. 45a on p. 123, and Fig. 76 on p. 148. Other examples in this catalogue of donors kneeling before the Madonna may be found on p. 17, Plate 1a (Book of Hours of Margaret of Cleves), and on p. 197, Fig. 100 (Book of Hours by Masters of the Delft Half-Length Figures).

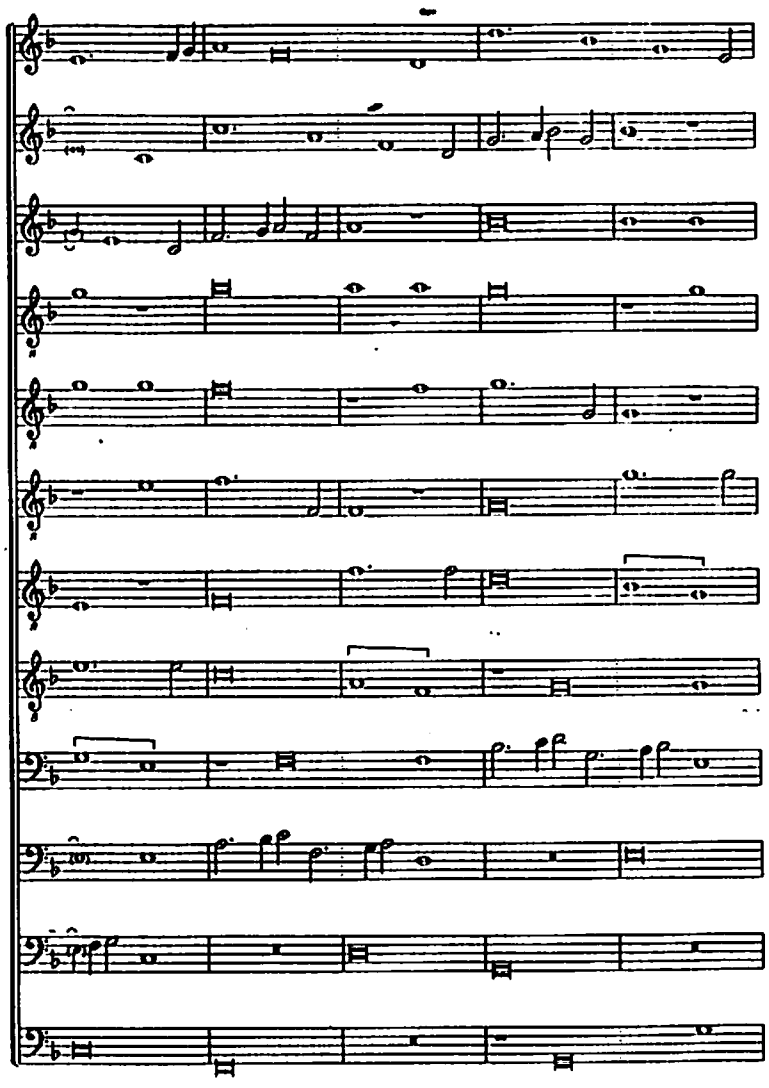
[137] I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Chris Maas, for having worked several hours in pursuit of the transcription of Gascongne's canon.

[138] Cf. W. Elders, *Plainchant in the Motets, Hymns, and Magnificat of Josquin des Prez*, in Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference, New York 1971, ed. by E.E. Lowinsky (London 1976), p. 540.

Ex. 5



Ex. 5 (continued)



concepts as, for example, the nimbus or halo of saintly persons, or the crown when employed as a sign of everlasting life.[139] It is tempting to assume that Josquin gave the tenor voice the form of the *circulatio* in order to allude to the fact that Mary, as the Queen of Heaven, bears a crown. The last line of the sequence, "O Mary, thou tender Queen, who alone inviolate didst stay", is appropriately combined with the words "flower of maidenhood". In works of art these two outstanding characteristics of Mary are most strongly emphasized in the so-called enclosed garden: Mother and Child are depicted in a rose bower or before a trellised fence of roses that form an enclosed space. The image of this garden is derived from the Song of Songs 4:12, where the *hortus conclusus* came to signify Mary's virginity.[140] Among the finest examples in fifteenth-century painting are Stefan Lochner's *Madonna of the Rose Bower* (ca. 1448) in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum at Cologne, and Martin Schongauer's *Madonna of the Rose Hedge* (1473) in the Dominican Church at Colmar.

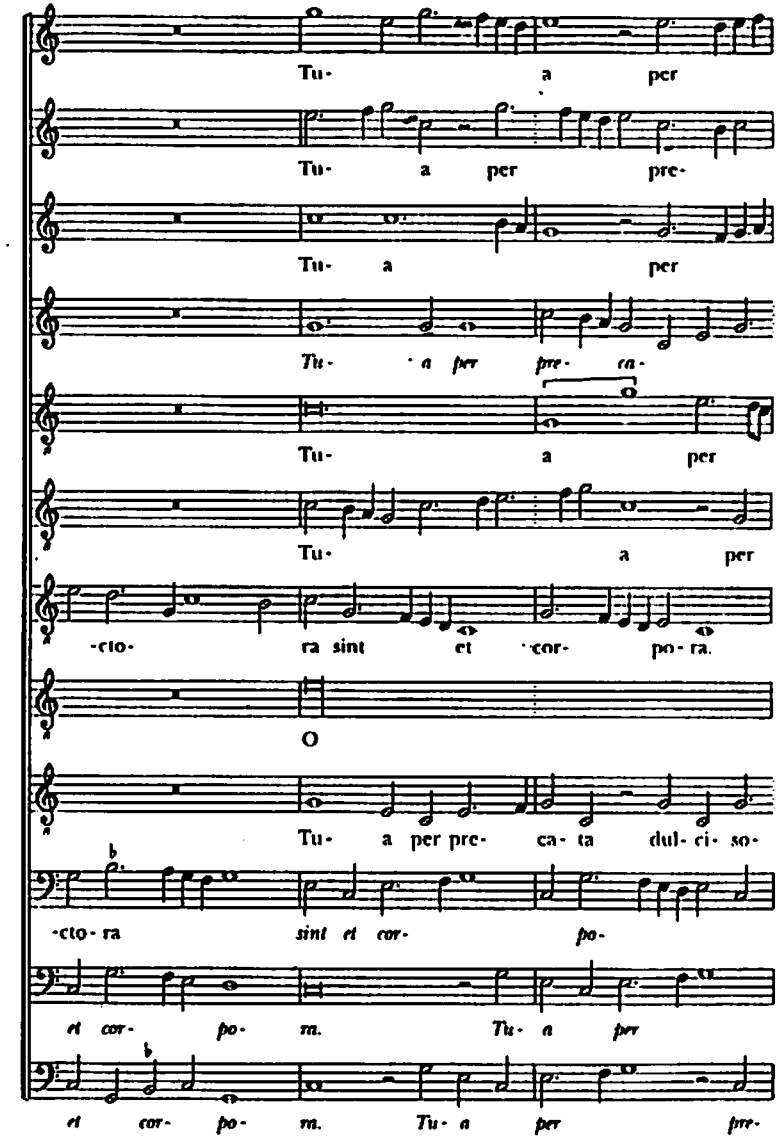
The new cantus firmus, "O Maria, flos virginum", is consistently surrounded by the other voices. While the first lines of the sequence text, with their praise of Mary's chastity, act as *exordium* for the prayer that begins in bar 11, Josquin postpones the entry of the cantus firmus until the line, "Obtain for us, through thy sweet-sounding prayers, pardon for ever." There can be no doubt that the words "precata dulcisona" (sweet-sounding prayers) incited the composer to the remarkable explosion of sound in bar 27 (Ex. 7).

An abundance of short mellifluous motifs – there are more than 150 of them in the course of only 22 bars – characterizes this final part of the composition. Most motifs have their own rhythmic shape, and the continuously changing chord formation lends them utmost splendour. The effect, then, of the circular cantus firmus melody within this dazzling polyphonic texture is clearly one of a crown or a chaplet, in which are mounted innumerable jewels and flowers. This part of the composition reminds one of the exquisite crown of Lochner's above-mentioned Madonna. Being musically so different from his five-part setting of the same sequence, Josquin's twelve-part *Inviolata* was surely conceived as a portrayal of what the composer thought the sound of heavenly music to be.

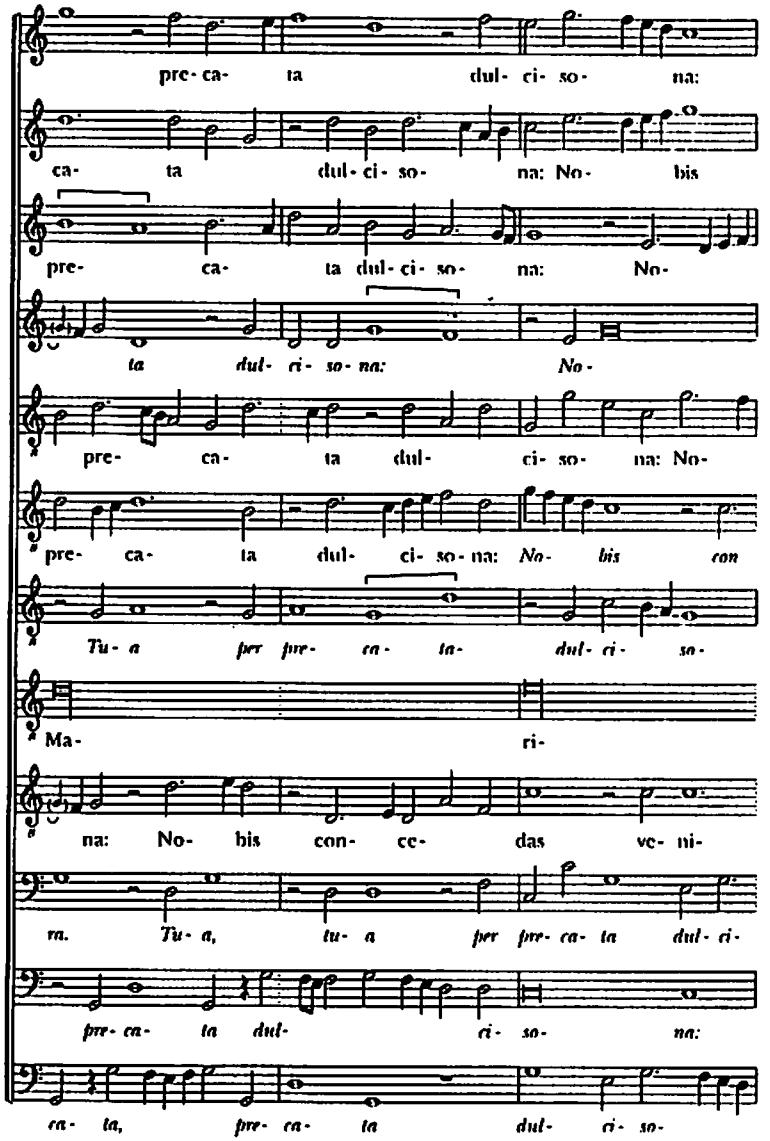
Our investigation of the theological, literary, and musico-theoretical concepts behind *musica celestis* has shown that musical composition in the Renaissance was definitely affected by these ideas in various respects. While Jacques de Liège called 'numerus' the fundament of heavenly or divine music,[141] the scores of heavenly music are invariably determined by consid-

[139] Circulatio-*Tradition*, Maria Lactans, *and Josquin as Musical Orator*, in AcM 56 (1984), p. 80.
[140] Cf. Hall, *op. cit.* (fn. 55), p. 329.
[141] See p. 214 for the definition given by this early-fourteenth century theorist.

Ex. 7



Ex. 7 (continued)



erations of a numero-symbolical nature. The next important feature of *musica celestis*, namely, its identification with pure harmony,[142] finds expression in the sweet-sounding musical texture of these multi-voiced pieces. Finally, various arguments have been given in support of the idea that most probably for about half of these compositions, no practical performance was intended. Composers apparently wanted to realize their own vision of heavenly music, precisely as did, for instance, the Dutch master Jan Gossaert when he depicted St Luke drawing the Madonna in Glory, his right hand guided by an angel. (Fig. 35)

[142] See *ibid.*

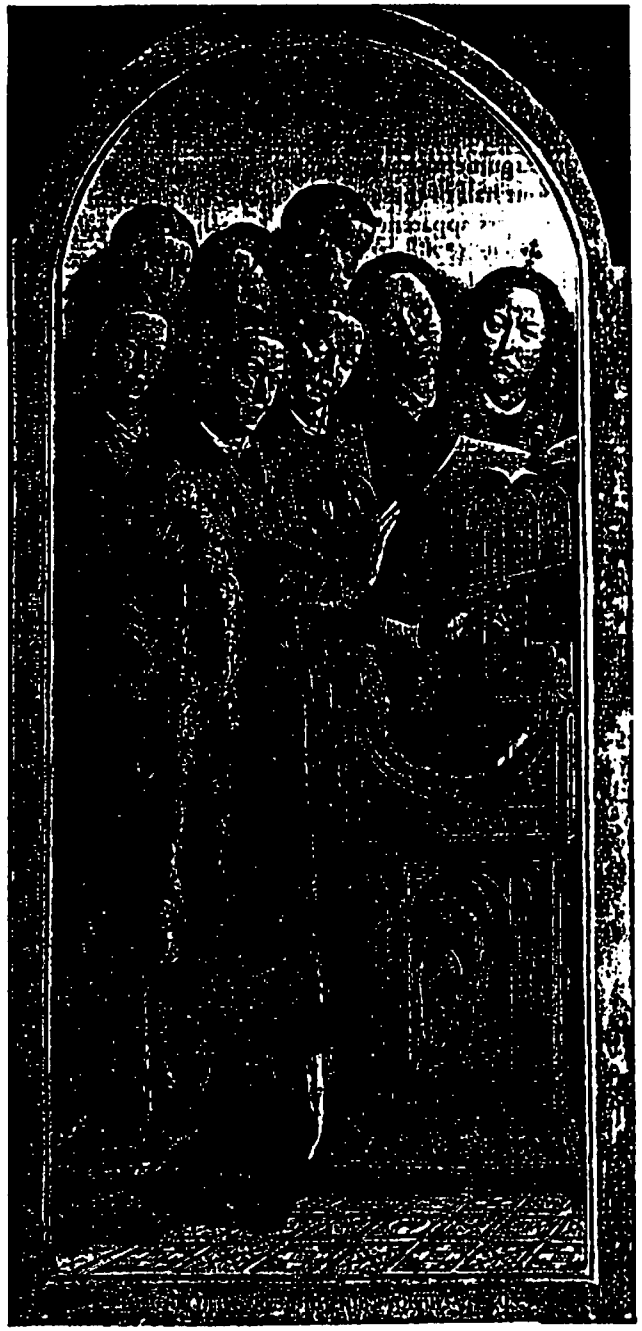


Fig. 29. Jan van Eyck, Choristers, panel of *The Adoration of the Lamb* (1432).
Ghent, St Bavo's Cathedral. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

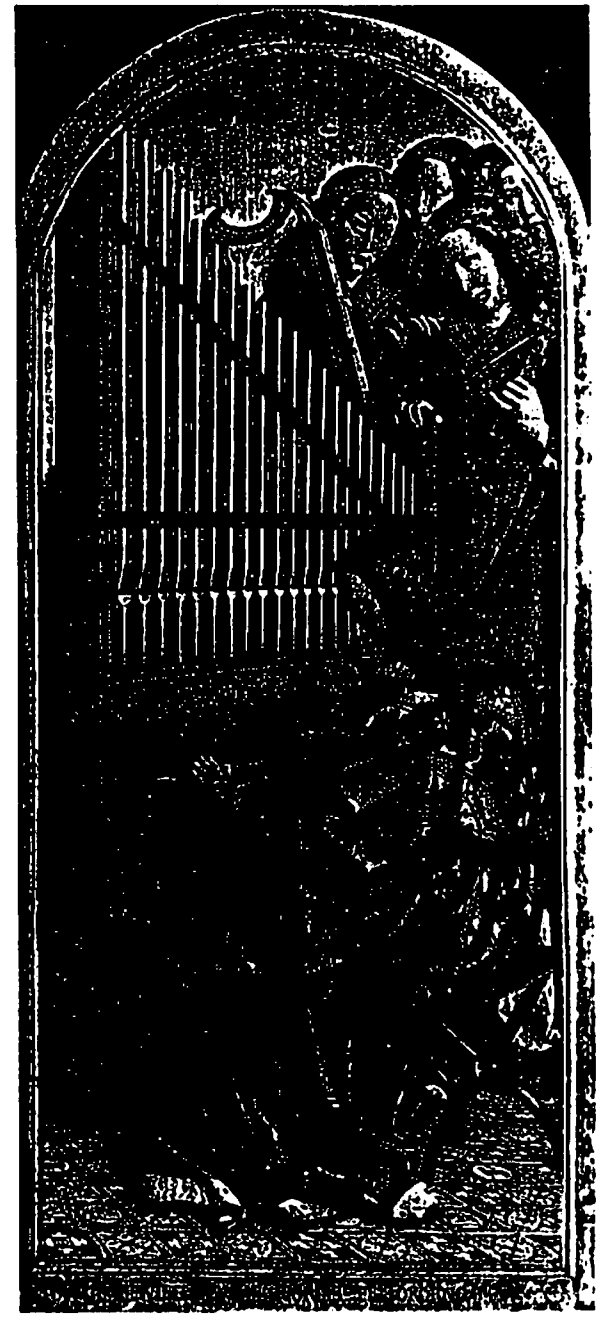


Fig. 30. Jan van Eyck, Instrumentalists, panel of *The Adoration of the Lamb* (1432).
Ghent, St Bavo's Cathedral. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

Fig. 31. Raphael, *The Ecstasy of St Cecilia* (1514/16).
Bologna, Pinacoteca.

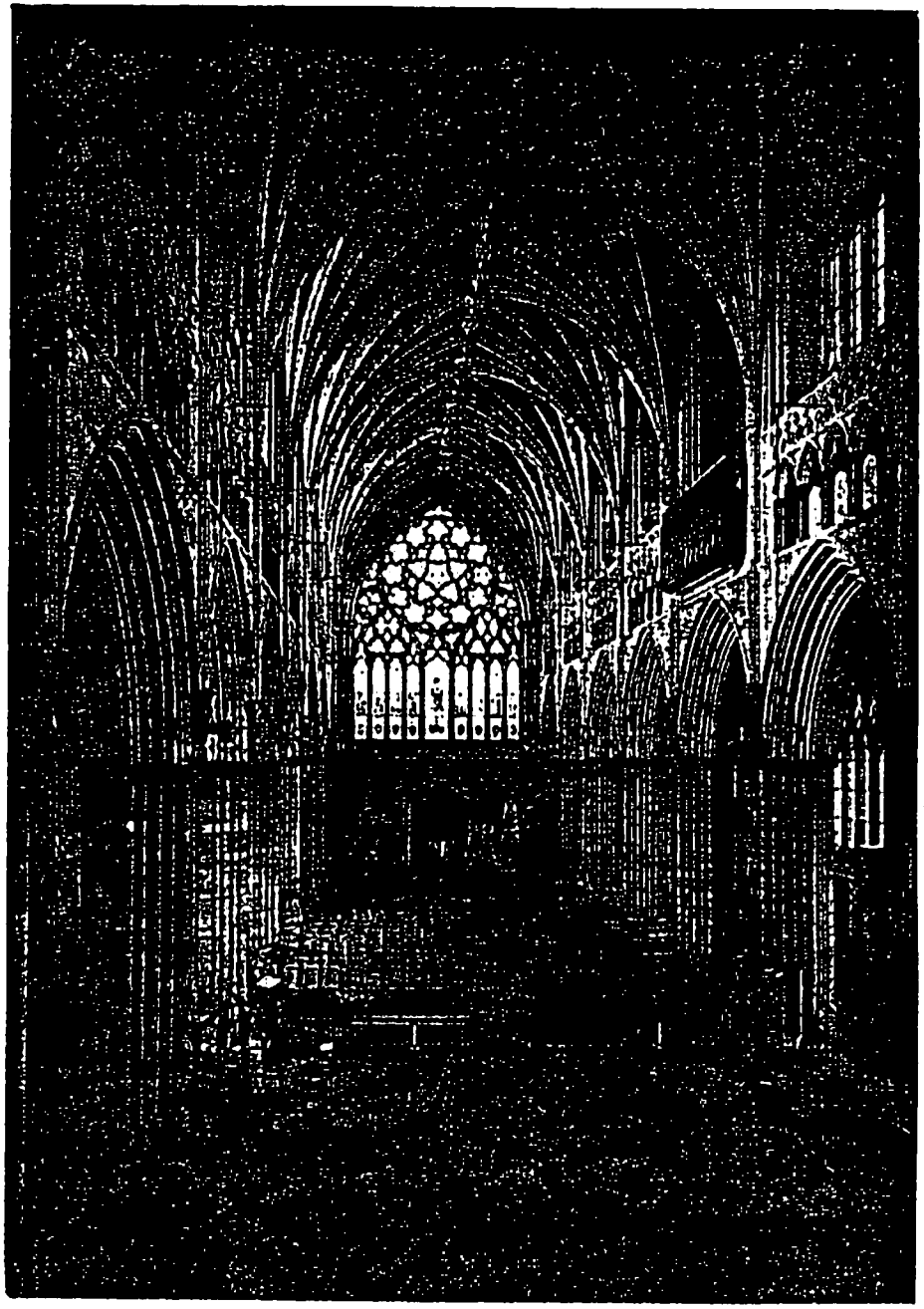


Fig. 32. The nave of Exeter Cathedral with the so-called Minstrels' Gallery (1354-69).
The gallery has each of twelve of its fourteen angels playing a musical instrument.

Fig. 33. *The Annunciation to the Shepherds.* The image was engraved by Jan Sadeler after a painting by Martijn de Vos; it contains a nine-part motet by Andreas Pevernage, performed by the nine angelic orders.
Engraving, Antwerp, 1587. (Copyright Bibliothèque Royale Albert I - Brussels)

Fig. 34. Hans Memling, The Twenty-four Elders of the Revelation, panel (detail) of *Triptych of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist* (1479).
Bruges, Memlingmuseum. (Copyright A.C.L.-Brussels)

Fig. 35. Jan Gossaert, *St Luke Drawing the Madonna* (ca. 1520).
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

INDEX OF COMPOSITIONS

(For modern editions of the compositions included in this index see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London 1980) which, in the entries on the respective composers, provides a survey of the extant editions.)

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