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Beautiful torment: Interpreting dissonance and text-painting in selected sacred choral works of William Byrd and Carlo Gesualdo

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Beautiful Torment

Interpreting Dissonance and Text-Painting in Selected Sacred Choral Works of William Byrd and Carlo Gesualdo

(TITLE)

BY

Janet M. McCumber

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BEAUTIFUL TORMENT: INTERPRETING DISSONANCE AND TEXT-PAINTING IN SELECTED SACRED CHORAL WORKS OF WILLIAM BYRD AND CARLO GESUALDO

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ABSTRACT

The end of the sixteenth century was filled with social, religious, and political turmoil; and yet, the musical atmosphere in England and Italy was conducive to new ideas in text-setting and chromatic inflection that had not been seen in previous eras. This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach in looking at two late sixteenth-century composers, William Byrd and Carlo Gesualdo, and describes their personal and political sufferings and how these torments may have affected their compositional styles.

Brief explorations of England and Catholicism in the time of the Protestant Reformation, the Mannerist movement in the arts, the movement toward chromaticism in Italy and the meditative exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are included as preparation for the discussion of the Latin motets chosen for this thesis: *Ave verum corpus* and *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem* by Byrd and *Aestimatus sum* and *Ave dulcissima Maria* by Gesualdo.

The themes of these motets represent Byrd's political statements against the Anglican Church and his encouragement to a recusant community which envisioned itself as being similar to the Jews in their Babylonian captivity; and Gesualdo's personal pleas for forgiveness and possible desire for relief from guilt in the deaths of his wife and her lover.

The texts of the motets are examined in detail as to their liturgical or non-liturgical functions, their history, and their inclusion in the collections of the composers (the *Gradualia* of Byrd and the *Sacrae Cantiones* and *Responsoria* of Gesualdo). The thesis proposes that both composers were influenced by St. Ignatius and the teachings of the Jesuit order, in particular the *Spiritual Exercises* and their intense devotion to modes of prayer and reflection upon individual words and phrases of text. The motets are analyzed for their text-painting and treatment of dissonance.

Finally, issues of twenty-first century performance of the motets are discussed, with suggestions for articulations, text stress, and rhythmic groupings.

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Introduction

Aestimatus sum cum descentibus in lacum (I am counted among them that go down to the pit). The servant to the priest was in great agony. Though he had suffered for years from a rupture that should have kept him from the torture chambers, the inquisitor chose to ignore this common practice and instead had the servant racked with large weights hanging from his feet for hours at a time, day after day. Eventually, the intense stress to his body caused the rupture to give way, and the servant's "bowels gushed out"[1]; but the torturers were not done with him yet. In an attempt to prolong his life so that he might offer them the information on Father Henry Garnet that they were looking for, they tried in vain to hold in his intestines with a band of iron. All that was accomplished was a further wounding of his already spent body. The next day, March 2, 1606, Nicholas Owen died in the Tower of London.[2]

Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber (I am become like a man without help, free among the dead). Donna Maria knew the danger she faced: there were people who knew about her affair with Don Fabrizio, and yet she could not bear the thought of being parted from the man she loved. Even the threat of her husband discovering the affair would not dissuade her from continuing in her treachery. Retribution was cunningly executed by Don Carlo, the man with whom her father had arranged her loveless marriage. Carlo told Maria that he and a party were going hunting; this allowed her to make plans with her lover at the castle. Later that evening Don Carlo and his men returned, to find Maria and Fabrizio sleeping unclothed, in each other's

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[1] Philip Caraman, *Henry Garnet (1555-1606) and the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company, 1964), p. 366.
[2] Ibid.

arms, in her bed. It is unclear whether Don Carlo actually wielded the knife that stabbed the lovers again and again, or if he ordered his obedient servants to complete the grisly task. After the deed was done, they dressed Fabrizio in Maria's clothes and dragged the bodies to an open stairway. There they remained for all to see, with a placard propped up nearby telling why they had been so punished. It was the 16th of October in the year 1590.[3]

Poserunt me in lacu inferiori, in tenebrosis et (in) umbra mortis (They laid me in the lower pit, in dark places, and in the shadow of death). Words which, centuries later, describe the utmost despair and suffering, from a mass for Holy Saturday, the Easter vigil … words depicting the darkest moment in the Christian calendar year, the time between the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection … words that are the choice of text for a Sabbato Sancto responsory, *Aestimatus sum,* and words that also describe a very personal torment. There are other words, other texts that paint a picture of torment, often not as bleakly or clearly as the ones above. And then there is the music, music by its very construct that enhances and emphasizes the suffering and torment of the people who wrote it—and of the people for whom it was written…

The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines the word *torment* as "severe physical or mental suffering." Thus *torment* aptly describes the lives of two late Renaissance composers, William Byrd (1540?-1623) and Carlo Gesualdo (1560?-1613), but for very different reasons. Byrd's torment was political and ideological, born of his existence as a recusant Catholic during the height of the English Protestant Reformation;

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[3] Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music* (Chapel Hill, NC: The North Carolina University Press, 1973), chapter 1.

Gesualdo's torment was a result of grief and guilt over his part in the murders of his first wife, Donna Maria d'Avalos, her lover, Don Fabrizio Carafa (Duke of Andria), and possibly an infant son. Regardless of the cause, the personal torment of both Byrd and Gesualdo provides a fascinating and necessary consideration when studying their sacred choral music.

The music to be discussed in this thesis is both liturgical and non-liturgical; I have chosen to look at two of Byrd's Catholic settings of Latin texts (both liturgical, from the Feast of Corpus Christi mass and from the Epiphany mass) rather than his Anglican settings in English largely because of the implications of writing (and publishing) music for Catholic recusants in Elizabethan England. The texts of Gesualdo which are included here are of course also in Latin, as he was a Roman Catholic in Italy and there were no governmental restraints against the Church (although there were certainly internal disputes in this era of the Counter-Reformation). One text is a responsory for Holy Saturday taken from the book of Psalms; one is a Marian devotion that is set to Gesualdo's own words. A conductor wishing to accurately portray the emotional and stylistic aspects of these works must understand them in not only an analytical and theoretical sense, but also in the historical and personal frameworks of the composers themselves.

Lord, we pray not for tranquility,
nor that our tribulations may cease,
we pray for thy spirit and thy love,
that Thou grant us strength and grace to overcome adversity through Jesus Christ.
Amen.
-Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498)[4]

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[4] Various Authors, *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1996), p. 531.

1. Catholicism and Recusancy in Elizabethan England

"This quarrell was neuer began for Gods fake, neither for his fake ſhall it be ended."[5]

Fr. Gregory Martin, Jesuit martyr

The period in English history known as the (Protestant) Reformation began during the reign of Henry VIII (1491-1547), who ascended to the throne in 1509 at the age of 17. Henry had married his brother Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon, but the marriage failed to produce a male heir, and by the late 1520s Henry wanted a divorce from Catherine. Not only was Henry tired of Catherine and her inability to give him an heir to the throne, but he also had his eye on the young Anne Boleyn. Henry asked Pope Clement VII to annul the marriage, saying that it had never been legal, as there had been a special papal dispensation required for him to marry his brother's widow. Clement refused Henry's request, and so Henry decided to circumvent the Pope's decision by declaring himself the head of the newly established Church of England, thereby giving him the power to grant his own divorce.[6] In order to bestow this new title upon himself, he had to threaten to charge the entire English clergy with *praemunire,* which is a legal term meaning to forbid allegiance to foreign rulers (including the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor). In proclaiming himself "sole protector and Supreme Head of the Church and clergy of England" he was able to dissolve his marriage with Catherine, marry Anne, and continue his quest to produce a male heir to the English throne. Henry was subsequently excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church as a result of his

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[5] Gregory Martin, *The Love of the Soule (1619),* English Recusant Literature (1558-1640), 363, D.M. Rogers, ed. (London: The Scolar Press Limited, 1978), p. 12.
[6] Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed. in chief, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation,* vol.2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 45.

bold actions and for his refusal to accept Clement's decision against the annulment of his disastrous marriage to Catherine.

After this break with Rome, the actual English Reformation began; the movement coincided with and ran parallel to the Protestant Reformation started by German monk Martin Luther. After Henry's death, his successors (Protestant son Edward VI [by Jane Seymour]; Henry's Catholic daughter [by Catherine of Aragon] Mary I; and his Protestant daughter [by Anne Boleyn] Elizabeth I) tossed the country back and forth between Protestantism and Catholicism, with varied results.

In fact, Mary I (1516-1558) thought that she could simply return England to Catholicism merely by decreeing it so: she began by reversing the changes introduced in the previous reign such as restoring the Mass to its full importance, reintroducing Lenten ceremonies, reinstating confession as a sacrament, replacing statues which had been removed and withdrawing permission for priests to marry.[7] However, Mary was only on the throne for five years (1553-1558), and that was not enough to squelch the Protestant movement, particularly after Elizabeth I (1533-1603) came into power after her sister's death. Elizabeth was very much Henry's daughter in her religious beliefs, and although she began her reign with some tolerance toward the Catholic practitioners in her realm, she eventually found herself with less and less patience with those who stayed loyal to Rome.

Elizabeth began by issuing a proclamation in December of 1558 that "forbade contentious preaching, and for the time being 'until consultation may be had by Parliament' required the continuing use of the Sarum rite, modified only by the reading

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[7] Lynne Long, "Spiritual Exile: Translating the Bible from Geneva and Rheims," in Sharon Ouditt, *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture,* Studies of European Cultural Transition, ed. Martin Stannard and Greg Walker, vol. 14 (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), p. 12.

of the Epistle and Gospel and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in English, and the optional use of Cranmer's English litany."[8]

The Act of Uniformity, which passed by "a nerve-racking margin" of three votes in April 1559 and came into use in June 1559, abolished the Mass and reintroduced a slightly modified version of the Anglican prayer book established by Edward VI.[9] In July 1559, a set of Injunctions was passed which began a series of royal visitations of the country, with the intent of ridding all churches of any Catholic symbols or icons, including altars, vestments, books (especially missals and prayer books), images of saints, and any references to the Host being the actual body of Christ. All of this was intended to return England to the reforms begun by Edward.

Regardless of where the country and her ruler stood, the Catholics of England did not want to change their beliefs or order of services. While their numbers eventually decreased (due to death or emigration to more sympathetic climes), their loyalty to the Roman Church remained steadfast. This was partly due to the religious pendulum swinging back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism in the years following Henry VIII's death; at the time Elizabeth ascended the throne there was much question as to whether or not her Protestant re-establishment would remain constant. Her Catholic subjects had some options, therefore, for their religious state: they could convert (and many of them did); they could continue worshiping as Catholics, but "unobtrusively, or

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[8] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992; reprint 2005), p. 565.
[9] Ibid., p. 566.

surreptitiously, especially if they were persons of some power"; or they could work toward restoration of England to the Catholic faith.[10]

The instigation of a restoration of England to Catholicism was attributed to the foundation in Rome of an order of priests called the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. The order came into being at approximately the same time as the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign. In the late 1570s, Jesuit seminary priests from the English College in Rome began coming home to England as missionaries to the small but determined community of Catholics there. In 1581 three Jesuits, Edmund Campion and two others, were brutally executed for their activities;[11] this event set off the "grim chain of Elizabethan religious persecutions.[12]" It was two Jesuit priests, Robert Southwell and Henry Garnet, who became associates of William Byrd in 1586. Both of these men eventually lost their lives for their insistence upon helping English Catholics practice Mass in a traditional and what they considered to be accurate manner, and also for their involvement in the movement toward Restoration.

According to the third volume of the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation, *recusancy* (from the Latin *recusare)* "was the refusal to attend the services of the established church as commanded by English law."[13] Kerry McCarthy, in her book *Liturgy and Contemplation in Byrd's Gradualia,* describes the Catholic loyalists in England thusly:

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[10] Joseph Kerman, "Music and Politics: The Case of William Byrd," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* vol. 144, no. 3 (Sep 2000), p. 276.
[11] The traditional means of public execution for treason at the time was quartering, a process in which the accused was hung until almost dead, then cut down and tied by the hands and feet to four horses, which were whipped into running in opposite directions until the body was pulled apart. The quarters were often displayed on pikes as an example to those who considered committing the same crime.
[12] Joseph Kerman, "Byrd, William," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04487 (accessed August 17, 2009).
[13] Hillerbrand, *Encyclopedia of the Reformation,* p. 388.

The recusants refused to transfer their allegiance from Rome to the state church, with all that implied in terms of public conformity; they refused to take part in established worship, or be ministered to by the established clergy … Some of the most valuable evidence for the cultural influence of English Catholic musicians (including Byrd) survives in the form of accusations that they were boycotting the activities of the established Church or persuading others to do the same.[14]

At first, those Catholics who did not comply with the rule of church attendance were fined one shilling for each service missed. However, during the reign of Elizabeth I, the stakes grew higher--the *Act to Retain the Queen Majesty's Subjects in Their Due Obedience* (1581) stated that all recusants must conform to the rule of attendance to Anglican services at least once a month, with a £20 fine for each month's absence. Anyone daring to leave the Queen's church for the Church of Rome was charged with high treason.[15]

The Jesuit priest (and William Byrd's friend) Henry Garnet compared English Catholics' attending the state Church to Judas' betrayal of Christ, saying:

So fareth it with those which will needes with Protestation go to the Church with heretickes. For whereas without a Protestation they confesse it a sinne: yet they thinke that by Protestation they can make it a meritte: not considering that for all their Protestation in this acte they shew them selves Protestants. So ofte as I thinke of these men, I am putt in Mind of the acte of Judas … Even so these Protesters if not Protestants, with a Protestation will seeme to kisse our Saviour, but with their presence amongst such a Pharsicall company they do in deed betray him.[16]

This attitude of the Jesuit missionaries coupled with the intense religious persecution of the Elizabethan Catholics caused the recusant community to retreat underground for worship purposes; while the more radical priests, including Garnet and Southwell, continued their quest to restore the country to its Catholic roots, most Catholics, especially those of higher class and breeding, chose to worship privately,

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[14] Kerry McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation in Byrd's Gradualia* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 6.
[15] Hillerbrand, *Encyclopedia of the Reformation,* p.389.
[16] Henry Garnet, *A Treatise of Christian Renunciation (1593)*, English Recusant Literature, 1558-1640, vol. 47 (Menston, Yorkshire, England: Scolar Press Limited, 1970), p. 150.

unobtrusively, and hopefully unobserved in their homes. They dared not attempt to have Mass said in a chapel or church—their only option was to find a priest willing to come to their homes, preferably one who could bring as many of the accoutrements for the service as possible. If the danger of discovery seemed imminent, the priest was often forced to run for his life, leaving the tools of his trade behind, or to hide while his parishioners scrambled to conceal the evidence of their illicit worship practice.

The English Catholics truly were a people in exile; not physical exile, perhaps (although some of them did leave England for the Continent, where they could worship as they pleased openly), but as Lynne Long explains: "Exile, defined as expulsion or the state of being expelled from a person's native land, involves dislocation on several levels. There is physical dislocation, intellectual separation, cultural exile and the linguistic exile of functioning in an unfamiliar language."[17]

Although the Catholics were not forced to leave England, they certainly did suffer a cultural and religious exile and perhaps even a form of intellectual separation.

The immense amount of literature published (albeit secretly) by the English recusants speaks to their intense suffering and torment.[18] In 1619 Gregory Martin wrote a tract dedicated to his two sisters, who had married Protestants and were attending the Anglican Church. Martin feared for his sisters' eternal salvation, and although he understood their desire not to be charged with the crime of recusancy, he could not accept any Catholic person turning their back on the "true Faith":

> And within theſe forty yeares, in *England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmarke,* and *Germany,* there was no other Faith openly profeſſed but ours. And now alſo in al theſe Coũtries, how many are there thinke you of ſecret Catholikes, that wiſh for the old

[17] Long, "Spiritual Exile," p. 11.
[18] A search of "English recusant literature" in the I-Share library system (a system comprised of academic institutions in the state of Illinois) alone yields over 10,000 hits.

Religion againe with al their heart, and follow the new only for feare? Nay, how many are there, eſpecially in *England*, that doe yet openly profeſſe the Catholike Faith? Aske, good Siſters, aske, and you ſhal learne that al the Priſons, not only of *London*, but of *England* are full of them, becauſe they will not yield to theſe new proceedings, not contaminat their ſoules with this new Seruice, and leaue the olde true and Catholike Faith...[19]

Later, Martin describes his feelings about leaving England for a Catholic country, where he could worship as he saw fit:

For a time I lay ſecretly in England, afterwards I came beyond the Seas into theſe Catholike Countries, out of Schiſme (sic) and hæreſie; for the which I done thanke Almighty God much more then for all the eſtimation that I had, or might haue had in England. Whatſoever my eſtate is here, I doe more eſteeme it then all the riches of England, as it now ſtands.[20]

Whether or not Martin's heartfelt words were able to convince his sisters of the error of their ways is unknown; however, there were thousands of books and tracts written and printed during the period between 1548-1640 that show in aching detail the mental and physical pain experienced by the English Catholics.

The persecution of the English Catholics continued throughout the reign of Elizabeth I and after James I (1566-1625) ascended the English throne in 1603. Robert Southwell was executed on the third day of March, 1585, at Tyburne, for treason; it was not until 1606 that the inquisitors were finally able to find and arrest Henry Garnet, and after much torture, execute him on the third of May, 1606, in St. Paul's churchyard for the crime of "not reuealing that, which he was ſuppoſed to know by Sacramental confeſſion."[21]

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[19] Martin, *Soule*, p. 8-9.
[20] Ibid,, p. 25.
[21] The record of Southwell and Garnet's executions is found in *A Catalogve of Martyrs in England: for profeßion of the Catholique Faith, ſince the yeare of our Lord, 1535, being the 27. of King Henrie the viij: vnto this yeare 1608 the 6. of King James*, English Recusant Literature, vol. 363, D.M. Rogers, ed. (London: The Scolar Press Limited, 1978), p. 20, 23. This tract lists the names, dates, and crimes of men and women who were executed in the name of their faith, by year. After Garnet's listing in the catalogue is the following: "The forme of his face appeareth in his bloud (sic) remaining vpon an eare of corne, which a

The King's Council that was invested in finding, torturing and executing those accused of treason (mostly by virtue of being Catholic) tried their best to implicate Father Garnet in the Gunpowder Plot (1605), which was a plan by a group of disgruntled recusants to blow up the House of Parliament, in retribution for the heavy fines doled out by the government on those who refused to attend the Anglican Church. The plot was discovered before it could be executed, and the men involved were brought to justice. However, as these men were all Catholic, it was assumed that their confessors (and Garnet was one of these) were in on the plans as well. In fact, the men responsible for the Gunpowder Plot had not confessed their intentions to Father Garnet until right before the evening on which the explosion was to take place. The Council was unable to force Garnet to expose either the men involved, any priests who may have acted as confessors for the group or plans for the Plot itself. Therefore, the Council had to resort to an accusation of Garnet not revealing all he knew in confession, which was enough to have him executed for treason.[22]

The Gunpowder Plot shows the despondency of the English Catholics at this time: policies toward the Catholics were supposed to be more lenient under James I than they had been under Elizabeth I, but this had not proved to be the case. The Jesuit Father John Gerard (1564-1637) wrote of the "broken and bitter spirit of the Catholic community":

> But now what shall we think to have been the state of all Catholic minds when all these hopes did vanish away; and as a flash of lightning, giving for a time a pale light unto those that sit in darkness, doth afterwards leave them in more desolation? What grief we may imagine they felt generally, when not only no one of these hopes did bring forth the hoped fruit, nor any promise was performed, but when, on the contrary side, his Majesty did suffer himself to be guided and as it were governed by those that had so long

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Catholique tooke from the place of his martyrdom. This yeare alſo manie prieſtes and others were baniſhed."

[22] J.H.Pollen, "The Gunpowder Plot", *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* www.newadvent.org/cathen/07081b.htm (accessed February 3, 2010); and Caraman, *Henry Garnet,* p. 391.

time inured their hands and hardened their hearts with so violent a persecution; yea, when he did not only confirm the former laws with which we were afflicted, but permitted new and more grievous vexations to fall upon us than before we had felt, and prepared yet more and more heavy whips wherewith to scourge us?[23]

It was in this atmosphere of desperation, despondency, and torment that the composer William Byrd found himself pulled toward writing music for his church, the Roman Catholic Church, and not the Church of England which had sustained him and his family for so many years. His personal and political sufferings would lead to some of his most beautiful and expressive settings of liturgical texts; not in English but in Latin, the language of the one Church with thousands of years of history; not the Church of Queen Elizabeth or King James but of the Popes. A dangerous undertaking, to be sure, but one that Byrd could no longer ignore.

[23] Ibid., p. 308.

2. William Byrd (1540?-1623)

In the words themselves (as I have learned from experience) there is such hidden and mysterious power that to a person thinking over divine things, diligently and earnestly turning them over in his mind, the most appropriate measures come, I do not know how, and offer themselves freely to the mind that is neither idle nor inert.

William Byrd, in the preface to *Gradualia I* (1605)[24] [see Appendix, fig. A.1]

William Byrd was born sometime around the year 1540 in London, a son of Thomas Byrd, "of whom little is known." In the year 1598 Byrd makes mention of being "58 yeares or ther abouts," and it is this reference that causes scholars to concur that the date of his birth is approximately 1540.[25]

Byrd was a pupil and later friend of the organist and composer Thomas Tallis, who was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. It is assumed that Byrd was a chorister there, although there are no records of the choristers there at that time. Byrd's older brothers Symond and John were choristers at St. Paul's Cathedral, but because Byrd was a student of Tallis, it is more likely that he was in the Chapel Royal.[26] Eventually Byrd became Tallis' assistant, and then procured a position as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral.[27]

In February 1572, Byrd was sworn in as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where he served for approximately twenty years. The purpose of the Chapel Royal is described as such:

The primary duty of the Chapel Royal was to provide daily religious services for the monarch and his court in any of the palaces in the London area, and occasionally …

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[24] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. ix.
[25] Kerman, "Byrd, William," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.*
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

in progresses further afield. It was not a fixed body like the royal chapel at Windsor, but part and parcel of the sovereign's retinue. Its sphere, however, extended beyond the daily religious office into the ceremony and entertainment which constantly surrounded and supported the Crown.[28]

Byrd also served as joint organist of the chapel with Tallis.[29]

He was married to his first (and likely only) wife, Julian Birley, in 1568, and they had five children: Christopher, Elizabeth, Thomas, Rachel, and Mary.[30]

It is not known whether or not William and Julian were Catholics in their early lives or had converted to the religion at some point. John Harley states that "the personality revealed by Byrd's music suggests that, given his gift of faith, he might have been drawn to Catholicism as a comprehensive intellectual system, informed by emotion and supported by tradition—a framework within which all aspects of life found a place."[31]

No one else in Byrd's family was known to be Catholic. It is possible that William and Julian's intensity of faith was a gradual process; neither of them is listed in the listings of recusants until 1577.[32] This may be partially due to the Queen's approval of Byrd and his music, particularly that which was written for Anglican services and the 1575 book *Cantiones, quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* by Byrd and Tallis which was dedicated to her "with much ceremony … including a poem in Latin elegiacs by Richard Mulcaster … praising the art of music, the queen and the two composers in lavish terms …"[33] Another possible reason for leniency toward the Byrds' recusancy was the

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[28] Philip Brett, *William Byrd and His Contemporaries: Essays and a Monograph* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 80.
[29] Kerman, "Byrd, William," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.*
[30] Ibid.
[31] John Harley, *William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1997), p. 68.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Kerman, "Byrd, William," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online.*

attendance of William at services at the Lincoln cathedral while he was in the position of Organist and Master of the Choristers there in the 1570s.[34]

Although Byrd was eventually charged with recusancy, and fined £200, it is most likely that he never had to pay it. The Queen viewed him as a source of national pride—his music had become well known outside of England, especially after the publication of the *Cantiones Sacrae*—and was willing to overlook some suspicious activities. According to Kerman,

> ...if Elizabeth was persuaded that Byrd was England's pride she would have kept him in her good graces so long as, and just so long as, he stayed clear of anything she judged treasonous. He and Tallis received from her several leases and a license for music printing, and—most important—she gave Byrd a remittance of some sort for his recusancy.[35]

However, Elizabeth was not so gracious to Catholics other than Byrd, and in the last years of her reign the persecution of the recusants increased. Byrd refused to acquiesce to the Queen's demands for Catholics to convert to the state religion, and he became increasingly involved with the Jesuits and their mission to restore England to its Catholic roots. His Latin motets composed in the 1580s could have no place in the Anglican church, and were "not meant for church but for private performance, and their texts tell us something about the circles to which they were directed, or principally directed. About half of the texts voice covert laments, protests, and exhortations on behalf of the recusant community."[36]

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[34] Joseph Kerman, in his article "Music and Politics," p. 281, also points out that Elizabeth's policy toward the Catholics in the first half of her reign was much more tolerant than in the later years. She liked the Catholic "high church" form of Mass, and her main concern was loyalty to the Crown—if a person such as Byrd demonstrated that quality, she would be likely to overlook religious dissidence.
[35] Ibid., p. 282.
[36] Ibid., p.277.

There was no question that Byrd was deeply involved with the Jesuits. In 1586 he was "summoned to a week-long secret gathering to welcome two of the most important priests ever to enter the country, Fathers Robert Southwell, the poet, and Henry Garnet, future Principal of the mission."[37] The meeting took place at Hurleyford, the residence of Richard Bold, former sheriff of Lancastershire and a staunch Catholic. He was a friend of the Jesuit William Weston, who describes the meeting and Byrd's presence there especially:

> Mr Byrd, the very famous musician and organist, was among the company. Earlier he had been attached to the Queen's chapel, where he gained a great reputation: he had sacrificed everything for the faith—his position, the court, and all those aspirations common to men who seek preferment in royal circles as means of improving their fortunes.[38]

This was the beginning of a friendship between Byrd and Garnet that would last the rest of their lives—Garnet was also an excellent musician and singer. Caraman surmises that Southwell probably also benefitted from meeting Byrd and being able to familiarize himself with "new forms of English verse then current only in manuscripts."[39] After the execution of Father Edmund Campion and his companions in 1581, Byrd had set a song to a notorious poem, "Why do I use my paper, ink, and pen?" which indirectly addressed the startling event[40], and when the 1586 meeting with Garnet and Southwell took place, was involved in setting the poems included in his *Psalms, Sonnets and Songs of Sadness and Piety.*[41]

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[37] Ibid., p.276.
[38] Caraman, *Henry Garnet,* p. 33. It is interesting to note that Weston did not list any of the other men except for Byrd who were attending the meeting—he refers only to the "many gentlemen" who were there.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Kerman writes in "Music and Politics" (p. 278) about the Campion execution: "their quartered bodies were nailed onto a gate on Tyburn Hill, to be mutilated further that night by the scavengers for holy relics. This event shook all of England and elicited protests from the Continent ('those round about us')."
[41] Ibid.

There were a "considerable number of martyrs" who were executed either for being priests; for harboring priests; or for some other form of "treason" related to being Catholic, and Byrd's Gradualia setting of the All Saints' Mass is a celebration of these men and women who lost their lives to the persecution of Elizabeth's reign.[42] Sadly for Byrd, his Jesuit friends Southwell and Garnet would be among these martyrs, as would William Weston.

In the 1590s Byrd would devote his composing to music for the Masses that could no longer be performed in England. Kerman explains:

> The texts were not taken from Habbakuk or Psalms but from the official Catholic liturgy … Byrd's new musical program reflected a new sense of realism and resignation on the part of many English Catholics after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. It acknowledged a turn inward, I think, a turn away from hopes for Catholic restoration toward an acceptance of minority status. As the number of recusants in England shrank more and more, indignation and activism gave way to cultivation of the faith, through its services, in perpetuity.[43]

Byrd was sympathetic to the Jesuits and their cause of restoration in England; he also, as have many composers before and since his time, compared the suffering of his people (in this case, the English Catholic community) to the Jews and the Babylon captivity, as found in the Old Testament. His *Gradualia* would become a reflection of his own suffering and a testament on behalf of the valiant people who tried in vain to hang onto their Catholic identity and died attempting to save England from the reformation of the Protestants. I shall let Kerman have the last word:

> Byrd's political advocacy would not have been possible if he had not been the composer he was. Not just any music would have interested Father Garnet and his predecessor as Principal, Father William Weston, and sustained England's Catholics over a quarter century. The efficacy of Byrd's politics was made possible by the quality of his music.

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[42] William Byrd, *Gradualia I (1605): All Saints and Corpus Christi,* Philip Brett, ed. (London: Stainer and Bell, 1991), p. vii.
[43] Kerman, "Music and Politics," p. 282.

More specifically, Byrd's project would not have succeeded had he not developed a powerful musical rhetoric, one that was to all intents and purposes new in England, though musicologists have shown without difficulty its derivation from Continental sources …

In short, Byrd's music works to move and impress the listener like oratory, like Jesuit oratory. Since this rhetoric was new in English music, it would have made a particularly strong impression on Byrd's contemporaries. Since it was not a private thing but a current in the stream of European music history, it is a rhetoric we still respond to today.[44]

[44] Ibid, pp. 284-5.

3. The *Gradualia*

Loe heer's a BYRDE explains the difference Twixt what he ſhewes, and what they did inferre, And proues perſpicuouſly that thoſe did erre. They so the Diuel ſacrifis'd oppreſſed, By this your hearts are vnto God addreſsed.

From an epigrammatic poem in the preface to the second volume of the *Gradualia,* 1607[45] [see Appendix, fig. A.3]

At the turn of the seventeenth century, hatred of Catholics was nothing new, but it had become much more commonplace rather than simply the territory of Protestant extremists. By the time of Elizabeth I's death, "no good Englishman could have defined his national identity without some mention of his distaste for Rome, and this remained the case for the greater part of the seventeenth century."[46]

It was for these persecuted people, desperate to carry on their Catholic traditions and worship in a Protestant country, that Byrd wrote his two volumes of the *Gradualia,* one published in 1605 and the other in 1607. The first book includes music for Marian devotions, All Saints, and Corpus Christi—the portion of the liturgy that was the most meaningful and relevant to the recusants and Jesuits in this troubled time—and the second book is devoted to the portion of the Christian calendar between Christmas and Easter, which holds the major festivals of the Church year. Byrd never expected that the music contained in these volumes would be heard in a chapel or cathedral, but rather that his fellow recusants would have music for the church year that could be sung in a more

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[45] William Byrd, *Gradualia II (1607): Christmas to Easter,* Philip Brett, ed. (London, Stainer and Bell, 1997), p.xxiv.

[46] Carol Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism," *Past and Present,* vol. 51 (May 1971), p. 27.

intimate setting, such as a personal chapel in the home. A description of how Mass occurred in this setting was made by historian John Bossy:

> It may help us to grasp the extent of the ... domestication of the Mass if we remember that it was for a long time unusual for it to be offered in anything that was architecturally speaking a Chapel. The idea that gentry families in any significant number had Mass said more or less continuously in their chapels from before the Reformation to modern times has been found attractive by some and irritating by others, but it is in any case true.[47]

Edmund Fellowes speculated that since so many English Catholics had fled to the Continent, "it is likely that Byrd hoped that, partly through their influence, his Latin Church music might make its way in foreign countries, if not in England."[48]

Byrd was in his late middle age when he composed the music for the *Gradualia.* He had certainly been more politically outspoken in his music during his younger years, but in undertaking a project such as the *Gradualia,* which consists of 109 pieces dedicated to the major feast days of the Roman Catholic Church year, Byrd placed himself in grave danger. Not only were there pieces for the most famous and ancient days such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, but also for festivals celebrated only by the Catholic church, such as Corpus Christi, All Saints' Day, and the Assumption of Mary. It was forbidden in England to compose such music, let alone publish it, and Byrd was doing both during a time of intense political turmoil.[49] According to Brett, "the appearance of the All Saints Mass at the end of the fascicle, however, is greater reason to look for allegorical meaning. For the recusant Roman Catholic community, still

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[47] William Byrd, *Gradualia I,* Philip Brett, ed, p. xv.
[48] Edmund H. Fellowes, *William Byrd* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 79.
[49] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. ix.

reeling under the increased persecution of the later years of Elizabeth's reign, this feast was a celebration of its considerable number of martyrs."[50]

The popularity of the *Gradualia* was great enough that in 1610 there was demand for a second edition of both books [see Appendix, fig. A.4].[51] There is also the possibility that, as the first volume was published in the year of the Gunpowder Plot, copies of this volume were confiscated or withheld and so the 1610 reissue was done once the political climate had settled down.[52]

Byrd and his fellow educated English Catholics were, due to the lack of opportunity for open corporate worship, very centered on the written word. The Jesuits, and others on the Continent during this time of Catholic Counter-Reformation, were propagating the idea of intense meditation on liturgical and other sacred texts. They went so far as to encourage meditation on each word of a line of text, rather than on the text as a whole, which would supposedly cause the person in meditation to receive enlightenment and understanding of the texts they were reading or singing. There were two major influences in this concept of textual meditation: the practice of devotions such as the Rosary and Marian litanies; and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Jesuit Order.[53]

Ignatius would take a text, such as (most famously) the Pater Noster, and break it down into phrases, or, where necessary, into individual words, and reflect upon the true meaning and implications of each. For a worshipper to glean the full meaning of any text

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[50] Byrd, *Gradualia I,* Philip Brett, ed., p. vii.
[51] Fellowes, *William Byrd,* p. 79.
[52] Brett, *William Byrd and His Contemporaries,* p. 6.
[53] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 19.

in the Mass, Ignatius considered it necessary to meditate in this intricate manner until understanding was obtained, enriching and purifying the Mass experience.

Byrd used a variation of this technique in the *Gradualia* texts. McCarthy makes the example of the Corpus Christi text *Ave verum corpus*, suggesting to her readers that they speak and sing aloud the opening words of the motet in several different ways, with stresses on different syllables each time, ending with the way that Byrd set them. Byrd called this process "turning over and over *(pervolutare)*", meaning testing out the various resonances of the words.[54] It is unknown where and when these settings were sung in Byrd's time, given the danger of gathering for the Mass. Furthermore, as Philip Brett observes, Byrd's *Ave verum* represents "a decisive turn from the hieratic mood of the Corpus Christi Propers,"[55] and McCarthy goes on to describe it as "a shift from ritual activity to the most intimate level of personal and domestic devotion."[56]

The English recusants used the events of the church year not only to define their community against outside forces, but also to build up their own faith. Byrd, therefore, wanted to turn from his earlier motet subjects of captivity, pain, and lamentation toward a more positive approach to faith and the celebration of the Mass in his *Gradualia.* However, "their tone seems calculated to reassure those familiar with the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1589 and 1591 that the composer's new project does not represent acquiescence or resignation to the political situation facing Roman Catholics in Protestant

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[54] Ibid, p. 18-9.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

England."[57] No one had attempted a project on such a scale as this, even in pre-Reformation times.[58]

Although Byrd's outcome proved to be more positive than his earlier works, the torment of his existence as a Catholic in Protestant England shows through in many of the settings of the texts used in the *Gradualia*.

[57] Byrd, *Gradualia I,* Philip Brett, ed., p. vii.
[58] Ibid., p. xi.

4. Mannerism

The term "mannerism," when used to describe a movement in art, literature, and music, has a rather vague meaning. The word comes from the Italian *maniere,* meaning "style" or, more precisely, "stylization." This word first appeared in the sixteenth century, and was used initially by the writer, painter and architect Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). As with other terms used to describe a movement or period, such as "Gothic" and "Baroque," the word originally had a negative connotation. Vasari wrote in 1550 and 1568 of the *bella maniera* as a "uniform technique of painting according to the 'idea' in the mind of the artist."[59] In the Italian High Renaissance, it was considered desirable for artists to imitate nature in their works. The two artists who were held up as the ideal for this concept were Raphael and Michelangelo (although Michelangelo's late period works are now considered to be Mannerist, as will be discussed below). This desire to imitate nature came from the idea that there should be a return to the classic Greek ideals. Once Raphael and Michelangelo were lauded as the pinnacle of classical Greek revival, it became impossible for other artists to surpass them, and so all they could do was to imitate what Raphael and Michelangelo were creating. This is what Vasari refers to when he talks about the "idea" in the mind of the artist; it is not based on imitating nature but rather imitating other artists' styles.[60] (brief discussion of neo-Platonism?)

The High Renaissance is dated from 1500-1530 or later[61], and it was during this time of beauty, imitation of nature, and elegance in the arts that the European world was

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[59] Maria Rika Maniates, "Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?," *The Musical Quarterly,* vol. 57, no. 2 (Apr 1971), p. 273.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Frederick B. Artz, *From the Renaissance to Romanticism: Trends in Style in Art, Literature, and Music, 1300-1830* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 56.

changing drastically. In her article entitled "Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?" Maria Rika Maniates gives the following as a partial list of the social and political events happening at the time:

> The sacking of Rome, French and Spanish wars in Italy, the inroads of the Reformation, the reaction of the Counter-Reformation, economic insecurity resulting for the rise of large-scale capitalism, skepticism in philosophy after the Copernican revolution, the Index (the first massive attempt at censorship), the Inquisition, are only some of the main signs of deep-rooted upheaval. [62]

Although some experts in the art and music history fields refuse to make a connection between the sociopolitical events of mid-to late sixteenth century and the rise of the Mannerist movement, it has been shown throughout the ages that the arts often do reflect changes in society at any given time. The mid-to-late sixteenth century was a time of anger, insecurity, revolution and fear, and the arts began to show these intense emotions in the works produced by artists, composers, architects, and poets.

Michelangelo is credited with the concept of *figura serpentinata,* "a pose in which the human body was twisted into a complex rising spiral, achieved without visible strain."[63] Artists such as Jacopo Pontormo (1494-ca.1556) and Parmigianino (1503-1540; his real name was Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola) specialized in human figures with elongated limbs and distorted features, which often were placed in positions that were seemingly impossible to achieve, with no visible means of support [see Appendix, figs. A.5, 6]. [64] Also characteristic of these artists, and of Michelangelo in his later years were scenes with no obvious focal point, with odd groupings of subjects placed in unexpected

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[62]Maniates, "Musical Mannerism," p. 277.

[63] Michael Bury, "Mannerism," *Oxford Art Online, Oxford Art Online,* http://www.oxfordartonline.com.80/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e1583 (accessed September, 6, 2009).

[64] Note that these artists are technically in the High Renaissance period (1500-1530). As in other historical or artistic "periods," there are no cut-and-dried lines defining them—often characteristics of one period bleed into another.

areas of the canvas. Two extreme examples of these techniques are the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, where some of Michelangelo's figures are so distorted that they are almost painful to look at; and the portraits of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593), where "grotesque faces emerge from arrangements of fruits, flowers, animals, and other objects" [see Appendix, fig. A.7].[65]

While visual artists had examples of classic Greek and Roman sculpture and architecture to guide them in their quest for perfection and harmony, there were no examples of Greek or Roman music extant for composers in the Renaissance to study. It was certainly possible to read what the Greeks and Romans had to say about their music, but it was impossible to hear a note of it, or to see a manuscript.[66]

James Haar points out that there was, in the early sixteenth century, what he calls a "generally recognized moment of classical balance" in music. He describes it in this manner:

> The qualities of the rounded melodic line, smoothly joined counterpoint in which dissonance is carefully regulated, equality of melodic interest in four voice parts linked together by sparing but judicial use of common material (what we have come to call by a slight misuse of Zarlino's term "imitation"), balanced phrase structure with clear points of articulation and plenty of light and air suffusing the texture, reasonable attention to the prosodic accents and the meaning of words: these are all present in the late work of Josquin des Prez.[67]

As was the case of Raphael and Michelangelo in the visual arts, Josquin (c. 1450-1521) was held up to be the ultimate example of perfection in the musical art. In fact, he was lauded as not only the best composer of the century by theorists and critics, but also by musicians and music lovers. Haar mentions that musicians of both the fifteenth and

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[65] Maniates, "Musical Mannerism," p. 275.
[66] Tim Carter and John Butt, eds., *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6.
[67] James Haar, "Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music,* vol. 25, no. 1/2 (Jun.-Dec.1994), p.8.

sixteenth centuries saw the most recent music as the best, and in addition to the pedestal upon which Josquin was placed, there were praises for Cipriano de Rore (a Franco-Flemish composer of the early-mid sixteenth century) and Palestrina (c.1525-1594).[68]

The concept of *ars perfecta* and the achievement of this fifteenth-century concept by Raphael, Josquin, and others left both visual and musical artists in a quandary. How does art progress after perfection has been obtained? There appeared to be only two options: to continue to imitate these masters or to react against them.[69]

Eventually, the elegance and beauty of perfectly achieved counterpoint, including the use of imitation, or *fuga* (as it was called in the sixteenth century) and carefully thought-out balance among the voices gave way to the need for expression of text, including dark emotions such as sadness, anger, depression and fear. This was done by emphasizing words through repetition, tone color, and by one of the most drastic means possible at the time--extensive chromaticism. The late sixteenth century saw composers such as Orlando di Lasso (c.1530-1594), Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), and Carlo Gesualdo (c.1560-1623) experimenting with freer use of dissonance not usually found in the classical counterpoint of their predecessors.

Soon these composers, and others like them, were using chromaticism and dissonance for the sake of style, and Mannerist music was born. There was no attempt at imitation of nature in this music, or of imitation of the *ars perfecta* composers, but rather the search for expression of pure emotion, and often that meant emotion that was dark and disturbed. That, however, did not mean that Mannerist music was harsh or ragged; in

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[68] Ibid., p. 9.
[69] Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 96.

fact, it included "ornamental and elegant qualities as well as... the bravura apparent in [its] execution and the density of [its] application."[70]

Glenn Watkins gives perhaps the most interesting description of the core of musical Mannerism for our purposes:

> But there is another side to Mannerism, which is nourished continuously throughout the period, and is of greater importance for subsequent developments in the art. This is a capacity to create new and expressive sonorities—at first perhaps conceived partly in accordance with a theoretical subscription of Antiquity, but later adopted to the task of textual reflection in a manner far more affective than the decorative figures so characteristic of the madrigal. This was a discovery which was to prove of far-reaching importance, and eventually transcended the Mannerist period which gave it birth.[71]

These "new and expressive sonorities" placed the emphasis on a more homophonic style of writing, which was becoming evident in all types of music, including vocal (both sacred and secular) and keyboard and lute music.[72]

At the heart of the chromatic style of the Mannerist composers was not only the need for expression of darker emotion and style, but a desire to imitate the ancient Greeks in their use of chromaticism. The Mannerists in all art forms held the ancients in high regard. But, "the imprecision which necessarily accompanied their interpretations gave the practicing artist sufficient leeway to forge a language which was as individual as it was dependent."[73] Therefore (unlike the imitation of *ars perfecta,* or of nature itself), the music, art, architecture, and literature of the Mannerists became its own unique movement with its own characteristics and tendencies.

Gray and Heseltine make this observation:

> "In a sense, both the harmonic and the musico-dramatic experiments of the sixteenth century were influenced by the characteristically Renaissance desire to revive

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[70] Ibid., p. 100.
[71] Ibid., pp. 100-101.
[72] Haar, "Classicism and Mannerism," p. 13.
[73] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 101.

the arts in the forms in which they were practiced in ancient Greece, but the experiments undertaken in this spirit resulted in the discovery of something very much more vital than a mere revival of long-forgotten principles."[74]

Although historians are sometimes reluctant to generalize that Mannerist artists of any discipline were people with deep-seated emotional problems, there is no question that many of these artists suffered from mental issues. Maniates states it thusly:

> The sixteenth century was a time when neurosis, melancholia and schizophrenia were fashionable ailments. Many mannerists seem to be queer personalities whose oddities range from superficial eccentricities such as narcissism and affected melancholy to serious derangements such as manic depression and suicidal tendencies ... Góngora, Tasso and Orlando Lassus became manic depressives near the end of their lives and died insane. El Greco was an eccentric, and Sodoma adopted a name that advertised his sexual aberration, and so the list goes.[75]

By the twentieth century, "mannerism" had become simply another descriptive term for the style of the period from roughly 1530-1600, or between the High Renaissance and the Baroque. Daniel B. Rowland explains that "such terms as Renaissance, Baroque, and Mannerism can be seen as signifying certain emotional predispositions, a mood common to an age which results in similar artistic expressions."[76] Haar describes the intent of the Mannerist composers as follows:

> ...the cultivation of musical mannerisms took place inside, and on the basis of, a recognized classical style, without any overt desire to break down that style. What happened is that mannerisms were absorbed, their sharp edges filed down a bit; and classical, normal style continued to be practiced—but subtly changed by this process of absorption.[77]

No longer a derogatory term, "mannerism" has come to mean a style which exists for the sake of style, as a reaction to what has come before it, and perhaps as a predictor of what is to come. What started as a term used strictly by art historians has expanded to

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[74] Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine, *Carlo Gesualdo: Prince of Venosa: Musician and Murderer* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1926; reprint ed., Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 81.
[75] Maniates, "Musical Mannerism," p. 277.
[76] Daniel B. Rowland, *Mannerism—Style and Mood: An Anatomy of Four Works in Three Art Forms* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), p. xi.
[77] Haar, "Classicism and Mannerism," p. 14.

include music, architecture, and literature. Originally, Mannerist art forms were thought to exist mainly in Italy;[78] however, artists such as the Spaniard El Greco and writers from England like John Donne and even William Shakespeare are now considered to be Mannerist. Mannerists came also from France, Germany, and Northern Europe, and some historians will use the term to describe art forms from later centuries, even into the twentieth century, as each century has proven to have reactionary artists whose works reflect troubling and turbulent times.

[78] Italy is generally recognized as the place of impetus for Mannerist thought and practice; however, it appears that Mannerist tendencies were occurring in Northern Europe and France at very nearly the same time. The trend spread throughout Europe and to England later in the sixteenth century.

5. Carlo Gesualdo (1560?-1613)

Don Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, Count of Conza was the son of Fabrizio and Girolama Gesualdo. Girolama was a member of the Borromeo family, and her ties to the Roman Catholic Church included her brother, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo (later Saint Carlo Borromeo), and her uncle, Pope Pius IV. After the marriage between Girolama and Fabrizio, the family was "invested with the principality of Venosa by Philip II in 1560."[79] The village of Gesualdo "sits lonely and isolated in the foothills one hundred kilometers east of Naples." [80]

Fabrizio and Girolama had four children: Luigi, Carlo, Isabella, and Eleanora.[81] Luigi, the eldest, died at the age of 20, which left Carlo as the only surviving male heir.

Little is known of Don Carlo's early life, particularly his musical life. The historian Scipione Ammirato (1531-1601) stated that Fabrizio was very much interested in music and was possibly even a composer himself, although this seems to be the only source for that fact.[82] Fabrizio was, however, a modest collector of artists, especially musicians, and so Carlo would have been exposed to composers and performers in his childhood.

It is also uncertain from where Gesualdo's music instruction would have come; it was long considered that Pomponio Nenna (1555?-1617) was one of his teachers, but this has come into question considering that Nenna and Gesualdo were close in age. Another possible candidate is the composer Giovanni Macque (1548?-1614), a Netherlander who

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[79] Lorenzo Bianconi, "Gesualdo, Carlo, Prince of Venosa, Count of Conza," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.80/subscriber/article/grove/music/10994 (accessed September 6, 2009).
[80] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 3.
[81] Ibid., p. 4.
[82] Ibid.

was in service to Fabrizio prior to Nenna. At the time of Macque's service, Gesualdo would have been close to thirty years of age; however, there is no evidence that his composing began before this time.[83]

The year in which Luigi died, 1585, was also the year in which Fabrizio arranged a marriage between his son Carlo and the reportedly beautiful Donna Maria d'Avalos, who incidentally was the daughter of Fabrizio's sister Donna Sveva … and Carlo's first cousin. Donna Maria was no stranger to marriage: although she was only twenty-five years of age, she had been widowed twice, and because she was still in the period of mourning for her second husband, a papal dispensation had to be obtained in order for her to marry Carlo.[84] Donna Maria's beauty was not her only qualification for being a good candidate for marriage—she also had given birth to two children, and therefore proved that the new marriage would most likely be a fruitful one.

With all the pomp that a royal wedding could muster, Don Carlo and Donna Maria were married in 1586, and there was much celebrating thereafter, for several days.[85]

The year 1590 marked the event that would forever change Carlo Gesualdo's life, an event that would be throughout the centuries the first thing on people's minds when they thought of Gesualdo the man. The story has been told in many sources and situations; it has been sensationalized beyond even the startling truth. This event, however, was a defining moment for Gesualdo, not only personally but perhaps in his compositional style as well.

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[83] Ibid., p. 5.
[84] Ibid., p. 6.
[85] Ibid., p. 7.

Glenn Watkins uses two original sources to tell the tale. The first one is a manuscript called the Corona MS, and it is somewhat of a contemporary tabloid, if you will, not only of the Gesualdo story but other scandalous stories of the time.[86] The other source for Watkins' narration is the chronicle of the Venetian ambassador to Naples at this time. As it was written in 1590, this document is the closest to the event chronologically, dated 19 October.[87]

As the focus of this paper is not to give all the details of Carlo Gesualdo's life, I will attempt to combine and abbreviate these sources that Watkins uses so dramatically and give an abridged version of the tragedy that ensued:

Donna Maria d'Avalos entered her marriage to Carlo Gesualdo as she had probably entered her previous ones—a young and beautiful woman who was promised to the men she married by her father. Unfortunately, it was after her marriage to Don Carlo that she fell in love with a man named Don Fabrizio Carafa, the duke of Andria. Don Fabrizio returned Donna Maria's love with passion and vigor. Their affair began with mere glances; moved on to secretly exchanged letters; and finally progressed to rendezvous after rendezvous, for months on end.

It was Don Carlo's uncle, Don Giulio, who noticed the affair and, in a fit of jealousy (he was also in love with Donna Maria), told Don Carlo of it.

Eventually, the two lovers became aware that they had been found out, and the Duke tried to put an end to the affair, knowing that it would not go well for either him or Donna Maria if things continued as they had been. Donna Maria was irate, and accused the duke of not loving her enough to die for it. Don Fabrizio confessed his cowardice in

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., p. 14.

his dying, for he knew that she could not live without him, and that gave him great fear. Her response: "If I die with you, I shall never be far from you; but if you leave me, I shall die alone far from all my heart holds dear, which is you. Resolve, then, either to show yourself disloyal by going away, or to show yourself faithful by never abandoning me." [88] *And so the affair continued.*

Don Carlo, knowing all about his wife and her lover, quietly and quickly had all of the locks in the Palace disabled or removed, and then let it be known that he was going hunting and would not return until the next day. As he was ready to leave, he instructed some of his most faithful servants to leave the necessary doors open, but to pretend that they were actually shut; then he left and went to the house of a relative to hide until nighttime.

As expected, the Duke paid a visit to Donna Maria upon hearing the news of Don Carlo's absence. After an evening spent in each other's arms, the couple fell asleep. It was in her bed that the Prince found them together. Before they could awake, Don Carlo and his men thrust a dagger into them again and again, driving the blade so deep that it passed through the bodies in several places. In addition, he slit his wife's throat. He and his men left Donna Maria in the bed; but they took the Duke's body and dressed it in the nightclothes of Donna Maria and then left it on the floor.

One account states that the bodies were in fact dragged to an open stairway and left for any passersby to see, with a placard nearby explaining what had happened to the pair. Another account has them impaled on the same sword and put at the top of a staircase in the palace for the Prince's dinner guests to gaze upon. Both of these accounts say that a passing monk, struck by Donna Maria's beauty even in death, had his

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[88] Ibid., p. 11.

way with her as she lay naked in the passageway. But the testimony and evidence gathered by the Grand Court of the Vicaria on 27 October, 1590, in the house of Don Carlo Gesualdo,[89] *says by all witnesses that the couple was left in her bedroom, she on the bed and he on the floor dressed in her clothes.*

Once the Prince had his revenge upon his faithless wife and her lover, he fled to his home in the country—not because he feared arrest and trial by the authorities, but rather to escape any of Donna Maria's relatives who might wish to do him harm in retribution for his actions. There was no consequence from the authorities, due to the Prince's status as nobility, and in fact many people in the town thought he was justified in killing them for their deceit.

Don Carlo, once things died down, returned to his normal life. His suffering, however, was not over.

I italicize here only because the story of Donna Maria and Don Fabrizio's deaths has been so sensationalized over the centuries (the facts themselves are sensational enough). Speculation seems rife over not only the details of the murder itself, but of the events following. Cecil Gray, in his essay *Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa; Musician and Murderer*, gives a translation of a French chronicle (the *Vies de Dames Galantes)* that discusses the reaction of Donna Maria's family to the murder:

> There were some among the relatives of the said lady who were deeply grieved and offended thereat, even to the point of wishing to revenge themselves by death and murder, according to the laws of the country; all the more because she had been done to death by knaves and servants whose hands were unworthy to shed such fair and noble blood, and for this reason alone they would have had vengeance upon the husband, either by law or otherwise, and not if he had dealt the stroke with his own hand; but nought came of it.

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[89] Ibid., p. 15.

Here indeed is a crazy and extravagant notion, concerning which I invite the judgement of our great lawyers and good juris consults: namely, whether it is more monstrous to kill the wife you have loved by your own hand or by that of a vile lackey.[90]

Of course, there were rumors of the castle of Gesualdo being haunted after Don Carlo fled; supposedly every night at midnight the people who lived nearby would hear an anguished cry and see the phantom shape of Donna Maria "gliding in the darkness through the alleys and passages which surrounded the palace."[91] As in any heinous crime, there are always rumors and gossip surrounding the story, and it is often difficult to separate fact from fiction. As best we know, there were no repercussions from Donna Maria's family, who seemingly were more offended by the possibility of "vile lackey's" hands having committed the act than by Don Carlo having the need to kill his unfaithful wife. There was no indictment of Don Carlo for the crime; no punishment ordered by a court; no prison sentence served.

Don Carlo's next attempt at marriage would be with Donna Leonora d'Este of Ferrara. Not much is known of Leonora before her marriage to Carlo, and particularly little is known of her physical appearance. She is described by a certain Annibale Romei in 1594 as "'this most gracious maiden, as one who is beyond measure inclined towards virtue and desirous of learning'"[92] In 1608 Ridolfo Arlotti (1546-1613) said: "'The Princess of Venosa is the princess of Venosa, and let that be enough; since to be the Princess is to be endowed with every great virtue, excellence, and glory; which, if I were to try to describe their greatness and number, it would be like trying to measure the

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[90] Cecil Gray, *Contingencies and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947; reprint ed., Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), p. 178.
[91] Ibid., p. 179.
[92] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 43.

waters of the ocean or count its grains of sand.'"[93] One could perhaps surmise, since the descriptions of Donna Maria so eloquently spoke of her great beauty, that Donna Leonora's qualities were more cerebral than physical. Gesualdo's attraction to Leonora, if any, was probably due more to her membership in the Este family, which was well known for its association to the arts and encouragement of artistic (particularly musical) endeavors, rather than being a physical attraction. Leonora and Carlo were very nearly the same age; she was born in November 1561.[94]

The marriage of Donna Leonora and Don Carlo took place in February 1594. The celebration following the wedding lasted for three days, from the 20th through the 22nd of February.[95]

From 1594-96 the Prince and Princess lived in Ferrara, where there was much activity at the court of Este by some of the most outstanding and forward-thinking musicians of the time. It was here that Gesualdo's attraction to chromaticism was kindled by an interesting new instrument (owned by the Duke of Este) called an *arcicembalo.*[96] The term is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of Music as "a harpsichord equipped with many divided keys, or even a second manual, in order to permit playing in his [Nicola Vicentino's] reconstructions of the diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic genera of the ancient Greeks."[97]

At some point, probably during 1596, Don Carlo returned to Gesualdo. There were rumors circulating that he was mistreating Donna Leonora, but she also had given

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p.42.
[95] Gray, *Contingencies,* p. 189.
[96] The word is also spelled *archicembalo.*
[97] Edwin M. Ripin, "Arcicembalo." *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01184 (accessed January 23, 2010).

birth to a son, Alfonsino, sometime during the two-year period that they lived in Ferrara, so it is possible that she did not want to make the journey to Gesualdo with an infant.[98]

Don Carlo's life was far from happy in his later years. He hoped for a divorce from Leonora; she would not consider it, even though things had not been good between them for some time. In 1600, their son, Alfonsino, died. This is the child rumored to have been killed by Don Carlo after the murders of Donna Maria and Don Fabrizio, but this cannot have been possible, since the child's murder was supposedly at the same time as the other two, and also because Don Emmanuele, the son of Don Carlo and Donna Maria was still living. Leonora had come back to Gesualdo by this time, and was extremely unhappy, although she professed to still have affection for Don Carlo.

It was suggested that perhaps Leonora played a part in Don Carlo's death, but this is unlikely, as she could not even bring herself to consider the possibility of divorce.[99] It is assumed, based on his own descriptions of his condition, that he was "violently asthmatic."[100] More bizarre, and the subject of much speculation, was the fact that he was affected by "a strange illness, which made it soothing for him to be given blows on the temples and other parts of the body by putting over those parts a small bundle of rags."[101] Evidently he kept several young men in his employ, whose sole responsibility was to administer this "treatment" on a daily basis, prompting labeling of his condition by some as sheer masochism. However, it was recorded in Tommaso Campanella's *Medicinalium juxta propria principia* of 1635 that "the Prince of Venosa, one of the best musicians of

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[98] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 73.
[99] Ibid., p. 82.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., p. 83.

his age, was unable to go to the stool, without having been previously flogged by a valet kept expressly for the purpose."[102]

Whatever the exact nature of his illness, there is no question that Carlo Gesualdo finished his days on this earth in both physical and mental torment. His death occurred on September 8, 1613. Leonora died at the age of 76 in 1637, having spent her last years in a house near the convent of St. Eufemia, where she was involved "in continuous prayers, alms, and holy works."[103]

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., p. 89.

6. The *Sacrae Cantiones* and *Responsoria*

Carlo Gesualdo's published secular output far outweighs the sacred. He is generally better known for his madrigals than for his sacred music,[104] and yet there is such poignancy to his settings of sacred texts of suffering and despair that they are well deserving of serious scrutiny.

According to Watkins,

> The only reference to any of Gesualdo's sacred works before the twentieth century is in a letter from Fontanelli to Duke Alfonso stating that the Prince had been busy writing and had composed, in addition to several madrigals, a motet and an aria. Heseltine was one of the first to mention their existence, but he did not examine them and was correct in stating at that time that his fame as a composer rested entirely upon his madrigals.[105]

There were three books of sacred music that were published in Gesualdo's lifetime—two volumes of *Sacrae Cantiones,* one for five voices and one for six and seven voices. These were published in 1603 in Naples. The third volume, published in 1611, was a book of Responsoria for Holy Week. Of these three books, only the six-and seven-voice *Sacrae Cantiones* volume is incomplete, with the Bassus and Sextus parts missing.[106] Both of the *Sacrae Cantiones* books are labeled *Liber primus,* but this is a differentiation in texture rather than indicating possible volumes in a series, for no other volumes in any of the various voicings have been found.[107]

The volume for five voices contains nineteen motets; beginning with the antiphon *Ave, Regina coelorum* and ending with the Marian hymn *Maria, mater gratiae.* The

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[104] Gray and Heseltine (*Carlo Gesualdo,* p. 82) firmly state that "His fame as a composer rests entirely upon his madrigals, 147 in number, which were published at various dates between 1594 [the year of his second marriage] and 1626."
[105] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 245.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

volume for six and seven voices begins with *Virgo benedicta* and ends with the twentieth piece, the antiphon *Illumina nos.*

Illumina nos (for seven voices) is the piece which was discovered by Igor Stravinsky in 1956 to be missing only two (and not three) of the original parts. Stravinsky had been enamored of Gesualdo's compositional style in his madrigals and so, based on his knowledge of the madrigals, decided to complete the piece by composing the missing parts. The resulting composition, while staying true to Gesualdo's basic style, reflects Stravinsky's "daring and composer's imagination."[108]

It is in the sacred music that assumptions can be and are often made about Gesualdo's feelings of guilt over the murders surfacing in his compositional style. Particularly in the *Sacrae Cantiones,* the texts are laden with "contrition, self-deprecation and a sinner's supplications to the Virgin Mary and to St. Francis."[109] It was at this time, toward the end of his life that he was suffering from some mental illness, possibly what we would now call bipolar disorder.

Robert Craft classifies the *Sacrae Cantiones* into two general types:

> The first of these is the 'sacred song' of uninterrupted polyphony in which, straight through, rectilinearly, and with hardly a silent beat, a simple motive and one or more subsidiary motives are developed... The second form is more sectional. It begins homophonically, goes on to a longer polyphonic section, and concludes by repeating either the first or the second sections, but with significant changes.[110]

Of these two, the through-composed form is the more common.

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[108] Robert Craft, "A Note on Gesualdo's 'Sacrae Cantiones' and on Gesualdo and Strawinsky," *Tempo,* New Series, no. 45 (Autumn 1957), p. 7.
[109] Bianconi, "Gesualdo."
[110] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 255.

Generally, the sacred music of Gesualdo is considered to be more "diatonic" than his secular music, but in both the *Sacrae Cantiones* and the *Responsoria* chromaticism and dissonances are used in a similar way to his madrigals.

Lorenzo Bianconi has this to say about Gesualdo's *Responsoria*:

> The latter [the Responsoria] are treated, in disturbing contravention of all rules of post-Tridentine liturgical practice, in a free style enriched with the *molles flexiones* of the madrigals. In [*Tristis est anima mea*] there is a concentration of dissonance, chromaticism and melodic extravagance, especially in the Sextus part, which is nearly as affecting as the elaboration of the erotic madrigals; despite the textual clarity of the setting, it contravenes the liturgical decree that ordains a complete renunciation of all ornament during Holy Week.[111]

Watkins writes:

> While the response may be classified as a motet, it is the only one of the main categories for which Gesualdo wrote which had a fixed design, an aBcB scheme in which aB represents the Response proper and c the Versus. Not that Gesualdo resisted repetition in the other forms of madrigal and motet. But their appeal for him as expressive vehicles stemmed largely from their formal flexibility and their textual variety. That his style does not crumble under the rigid schematic restrictions of the Responsoria is therefore of special interest.[112]

There are a couple of interesting assumptions about the *Responsoria* made by Bianconi and Denis Stevens that are in direct conflict with each other. Stevens, in 1962, says that the 1611 publication of the *Responsoria* is particularly important because the responsories had been sung at the time and later, "at least in the Convento di Cappucini which the Prince had built at Gesualdo in expiation of his crime."[113] Bianconi, on the other hand, asserts that "it must be admitted that like the madrigals, the *Responsoria* were meant for private performance at Gesualdo's castle, and, moreover, were intended for one

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[111] Bianconi, "Gesualdo," p. 8-9.
[112] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 259.
[113] Denis Stevens, "Gesualdo in a New Light," *The Musical Times,* vol. 103 (May, 1962), p. 333.

listener, the composer himself."[114] Stevens does not say what his source was for proof of public performance of the *Responsoria*; perhaps merely the fact of publication led him to this assumption. However, as Gesualdo was not in service to any person or to the Church as a composer, it certainly would not be out of the realm of possibility that he wrote these pieces for himself; and, if it were true that he suffered from deep guilt and mental illness, perhaps the sacred motets were written as an exercise to purge himself of the demons that plagued him.

Watkins, however, sees a different interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Responsoria.* To him, it makes no sense that Gesualdo would have meant the motets therein to be performed only for himself, as he had commissioned his personal church, the Santa Maria della Grazie, to be built only a few blocks from his castle. In addition, a Capuchin monastery capable of seating several hundred people and with a large choir balcony stood nearby.[115] Gesualdo had commissioned the church and its altarpiece, *Il perdono* (The Forgiveness) once he returned to his home in Gesualdo after the murders of Donna Maria and Don Fabrizio, most likely as a way of assuaging the guilt that he was feeling over the act he had committed.

But there is another, more important distinction in the *Responsoria* that Watkins addresses, and that is the fact that the work would prove to be Gesualdo's last, and as he was probably aware of his impending demise, he had put his name on the frontispiece of the work. This would not have been necessary if he were only intending to print a few copies to give to those close to him. He had also brought printing presses from Naples to

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[114] Bianconi, "Gesualdo," p. 9.
[115] Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth, and Memory* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 80.

his rural village to print not only the Tenebrae responsories but also his last two volumes of madrigals. Based on this evidence, Watkins surmises that Gesualdo not only intended the *Responsoria* for public performance, but also viewed them as part of his final legacy.[116]

Up until the time of Gesualdo, the Holy Week liturgical responsory cycle had not been often set. There were several settings of the Lamentations of Jeremiah texts, which are the first three lessons of the first Nocturn for each of the last three days of Holy Week. The Tenebrae Responsoria are closely related, as they follow all nine of the lessons which make up the hour of Matins on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Each of these days has nine responses, making a complete cycle of twenty-seven responsories.[117]

The Council of Trent had issued a statement concerning music for the Mass—it felt that polyphony had become too concentrated, too involved, and that the texts had become unintelligible. Therefore, it decreed that music for the service must be easily understood. Carlo Borromeo, Gesualdo's uncle, evidently had solicited a mass in a "chromatic style" by the composer Vicentino, although no evidence of this mass exists. "The chromatic manner by its very nature tends towards the homophonic, at most lightly polyphonic style, and the introduction of chromaticism would in no way, as Borromeo undoubtedly understood, stand in the way of a careful declamation of the text, the principle at the heart of the Tridentine reformation."[118] Borromeo, in a rather Mannerist way, applied his beliefs about service music to church architecture as well; asserting "that the Church itself and the services held in it must be as dignified and as *impressive* as

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[116] Ibid., pp. 80, 77.
[117] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 261.
[118] Ibid., pp. 264-5.

possible, so that their splendour and their religious character may force themselves even on the casual spectator."[119] His ultimate goal was for Church music and architecture to return to the ancient traditions in an attempt to have an extreme emotional impact on the worshipers, and for the service itself to do the same.

It would seem that Borromeo's fervor for emotionalism was not lost on his nephew; in fact, perhaps this explains why Gesualdo chose to set the Holy Week Responsoria at all. Watkins includes this fervor, as well as the "predominating individuality characteristic of the tortured spirit of the late Mannerist genius" and the influence of the Jesuit Ignatius of Loyola and his philosophy of meditation upon text, in his rationale explaining Gesualdo's approach to the *Responsoria.* Even if Gesualdo's motives are not entirely known, the result of his late compositional efforts in these sacred settings is powerful and effective still today.

[119] Ibid., p. 266.

7. The Texts

For the purposes of this thesis, four works, two of Byrd's and two of Gesualdo's will be considered. The motets were chosen based on several criteria, as follows:

1. The texts depict suffering in some form, be it personal, political, or religious;
2. The music makes use of chromaticism and text-painting to describe through sound the torment and suffering of either the composer or the people (or both) for whom the motet was intended;[120]
3. The texts are traditional Roman Catholic texts in Latin; I have purposely avoided Byrd's Anglican music because he felt much more connected to the Latin texts that were intended for the Mass;
4. The settings are sacred rather than secular. While much has been made of Gesualdo's madrigals and Byrd's sacred and secular music in English, the devices each composer used in their sacred music in Latin that may or may not have been similar to the secular music they produced are intriguing.
5. Each motet displays certain challenges in interpretation and execution for twenty-first century performers.

Aestimatus sum

This is the eighth responsory and verse in Gesualdo's *Sabbato Sancto* cycle. The text is taken from Psalm 88, verses 5-7:

℟: *Aestimatus sum, cum descentibus in lacum:*
Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber.
℣: *Poserunt me in lacu inferiori, in tenebrosis et (in) umbra mortis.*

℟: I am counted among them that go down to the pit:
I have become as a man without help, free among the dead.
℣: They have laid me in the lower pit, the dark places, and in the shadow of death.[121]

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[120] I realize that it may be difficult to separate the music and the text when it comes to a discussion of portraying emotion; however, the point of this thesis is to show how the composers used such devices as chromaticism and text-painting in a very personal way that also reflected the style of the time and the transition between the late Renaissance and early Baroque.

[121] This translation is taken from the *New Advent Bible*, www.newadvent.org/bible/psa088/htm (accessed January 23, 2010).

This text is used in the third Nocturn at Matins. The Holy Saturday service is a very dramatic one; Watkins quotes from the 1952 edition of the *Liber Usualis* the rubric for both Matins and Lauds:

> At the end of each Psalm of Matins and of Lauds, one of the fifteen candles is extinguished on the triangular candlestick before the altar, the candle at the top being left lighted.' And by the end of the service each evening, 'fourteen of the candles of the triangular candlestick having been extinguished as has already been explained, the one at the top of the triangle alone remains lighted. During the Canticle *Benedictus* the six candles on the altar are likewise extinguished one by one, from each side alternately, at every second verse, so that by the last verse all are extinguished. All other lights and lamps in the church are also put out. During the repetition of the Antiphon *Traditor* the lighted candle is taken from the top of the candlestick and hidden behind the altar at the Epistle side.' The prayer *Respice, quaesumus Domine* follows. 'At the end of this Prayer, a noise is made by knocking on the stalls of the choir until the lighted candle re-appears from behind the altar. All then rise and retire in silence.[122]

The Tenebrae are the Matins and Lauds of the last three days of Holy Week. Originally, the Matins would have been sung at midnight on Thursday, Friday and Saturday—this was eventually moved to the evening of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The focus of these last days of Holy Week is the last week of Christ's life, and the lights were gradually extinguished until the church would be in darkness for the Saturday service. The Office of these three days was "treated as a sort of funeral service, or dirge, commemorating the death of Jesus Christ."[123]

The observance of Holy Week apparently goes back to the fourth century; in 329 St. Athanasius of Alexandria talks about the fasting that took place during "those six holy and great days [preceding Easter Sunday] which are the symbol of the creation of the world."[124]

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[122] Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 262.
[123] Herbert Thurston, "Tenebrae," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14506a.htm (accessed January 19, 2010).
[124] Herbert Thurston, "Holy Week," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07435a.htm (accessed January 19, 2010).

The words of Psalm 88 are words of despair—the author of the Psalm is asking God why He has forsaken him, even though the penitent has sent up prayers and cries for forgiveness. All he feels is the wrath of God.

It was common in the Church to pair an Old Testament text, such as a Psalm, with a New Testament text, such as a reading from one of the Gospels. The rationale behind this practice was that there were corresponding themes between many Old and New Testament passages, and in these verses from Psalm 88 the correlation is obviously between the suffering of the subject (author) of the Psalm and Christ in His suffering on the Cross. Another correlation is made by twentieth-century scholars between the suffering of Christ and the suffering of Gesualdo, at least in Gesualdo's mind: he likens his mental torment to the physical torment experienced by Christ in His final hours. "We sense that Gesualdo, the creator of those endless pleasure-pains in his madrigals, has seized here upon the ultimate vehicle for self-flagellation."[125]

Ave dulcissima Maria

As in many of Gesualdo's other texts (both sacred and secular), *Ave dulcissima Maria* makes use of "sensual imagery and language (*dulce refrigerium, flos virginum*)."[126] It is an antiphon of devotion to Mary, and was written for the second Vespers at Epiphany. The antiphon is the third motet in the volume of *Sacrae Cantiones* for five voices, and its text runs as follows:

Ave, dulcissima Maria,
vera spes et vita,
dulce refrigerium!

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[125] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 268.
[126] Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, vol. 1: Sacred Latin Texts* (Corvallis, OR: earthsongs [Cascade Printing Co.], 1988), p. 99.

O Maria, flos virginum,
ora, pro nobis, Jesum, O Maria.

Hail, sweetest Mary,
true hope and life,
sweet refreshment!
O Mary, flower of virgins,
pray, for us, to Jesus, O Mary.[127]

While at first glance this may not seem to be an obvious choice for a text portraying suffering, Gesualdo paid particular attention to the last line—"pray for us, to Jesus, O Mary"—and used it in his motet as a tortured plea for intercession. Whereas *Aestimatus sum* represents the hopelessness of one who feels that God has turned His back upon him, *Ave dulcissima Maria* becomes a desperate attempt to obtain God's attention and relief from suffering through the graces of the Blessed Virgin.

Ave dulcissima Maria is an example of a non-liturgical text—although the piece is meant for a specific service, nowhere in the traditional Epiphany service does this text present itself. Joseph Kerman writes:

> From the earliest time, we also hear of non-liturgical categories of Latin sacred music, such as the hymns of St. Ambrose, categories which were sometimes finally accepted into the official liturgy. By the mid-sixteenth century, the situation had grown to be thoroughly tangled: especially on the Continent, but also in Britain … there is a rather large grey area of music set to sacred texts that do not correspond with any official liturgical items. The words are selected directly from the Bible, or freely composed, or patched together from one passage or another in the service books. But in any case there is no place specified for them in the actual services.[128]

In the upheaval of the sixteenth century, the liturgy was in a state of some change, and some non-liturgical material found its way into the Mass. Composers who were concerned with the late sixteenth-century idea of music, text, and meaning forming a

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[127] Ibid.
[128] Joseph Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 21.

"perfect union"[129] often found non-liturgical texts easier to treat than liturgical ones that had been set hundreds of times in the past, especially by *ars perfecta* composers such as Palestrina and Josquin. Perhaps these non-liturgical settings were intended for use in places other than the Mass, such as "private devotions, or [they] served as a sort of pious chamber music."[130]

Ave verum corpus

This text comes from one of the most controversial feasts of the Roman liturgy. The feast of Corpus Christi presented a problem for both Catholics and Protestants at various times in religious history due to the concept of transubstantiation. In England, the feast (which was added to the Roman calendar in 1318 by Pope Urban IV and celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday) was "seized on by authorities as an occasion for the promotion of both charity and Christian catechesis" and it "rapidly won popular allegiance."[131] Corpus Christi day was the only day other than Palm Sunday that the Host was paraded outside of the church, and there were many gilds that came into existence for the purpose of honoring the Host as it was carried in procession.[132]

The propers for the feast were compiled by St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1564 John Rastell (1532-1577) said of Aquinas:

O S. Thomas Aquinas, whose labors in the makyng of the service for Corpus Christi daye, I can not but remember, the octaves of that feast being now present, are thei all lost, and art thow thi self together with them condempned? It was not for a man alone, to compile out of bothe testamentes so manye testimonies, for the sacrament, and so

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[129] Ibid., p.22.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Duffy, *Altars*, p. 44.
[132] Ibid.

compile them, that like two Cherubins, the old should looke upon the new, and the new answer the old: It was not of flesh so to doe, but of the spirit of God.[133]

Rastell's words were in response to the Protestants who did not see the benefit of feast days such as Corpus Christi, and in fact found them dangerous in their promotion of Catholic "superstition" (meaning in this instance the belief in the miracle of the bread and wine becoming the Real Presence, or body and blood of Christ).[134] Rastell uses texts from both Testaments ("like two Cherubins, the old should looke upon the new, and the new answer the old") to prove the scriptural authority of the feast:

> The first respond owt of the old lawe is theis: *The number of the children of Israel, shall offer up a kydd, at the evening tyde of their Passover, and thei shall eate flesh and unleavened bread.* The versicle answering the same, out of Sainct Paul's epistle, is this: *Christ our passeover is offered up, therefore lett us eate in the unleavened bread of sinceritie and veritie.* Againe, an other respond is: *Helias looking back, dyd see at his head a cake, and rising, did eat and drinck: and with the strength of that meate, he walked unto the hyll of God.* This is the respond, but what is there in the new testament to answer this? It foloweth out of Sainct John his Ghospell. *Yf any man eate of thys bread, he shall lyve for ever.* It is written in Job: *The men of my tabernacle have sayd, who might geve us of his flesh, that we might be satisfied?* And the respond is, *that whyles thei were at supper Christ toke bread, and brake it, and gave it, and sayed, take ye, and eate ye, this is my bodie.* What could have been devised more agreeable and comfortable?[135]

In the early fifteenth century, gazing upon the Host at the elevation was considered looking upon Christ Himself, and therefore a means of salvation. Even then, however, there was concern that people could become too attached to (or even obsessed with) the Sacrament and the Host, and there was more than a little discussion in the Church whether or not the elements actually became the body and blood of Christ during

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[133] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 96.

[134] In 1574 Richard Bristow, in *A briefe treatise of diverse plaine and sure wayes to find out the truthe in this doubtfull and dangerous time of Heresie,* defends the Catholic church year as a cycle that cannot be reduced to a "handful of feasts" acceptable to the Protestants—those being Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, and the Transfiguration. Bristow cites the long history of the liturgical year as a defense for its continuance, as well as the scriptural passages that narrate the events of the year, and, as McCarthy puts it, "these events in turn interpret the relevant passages of scripture (McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 86.)."

[135] Ibid., p. 96-7.

the service. McCarthy calls the discussion of Corpus Christi by Rastell "a surprising argument from—and through—liturgy in defense of a controversial liturgical practice."[136]

For Protestants in the sixteenth century, salvation could only be obtained by faith in Christ, and they used scriptural means as well to prove that the elements of communion were only bread and wine--a representation of Christ's body and blood and remembrance of His ultimate sacrifice but not the actual body and blood. Therefore, a feast commemorating and worshipping the Sacrament as the actual Christ was heresy and was considered treasonous by Elizabeth I and her fellow Protestants.

McCarthy states that "close identification with ritual texts and practices was common among recusants, above all when threatened with heterodoxy or disorder."[137] This might explain Byrd's choice of including the Corpus Christi mass in the *Gradualia,* even though he knew the danger of setting such controversial texts as *Ave verum corpus.*

According to Jeffers, the hymn *Ave verum corpus* was possibly written by either Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) or Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254). It is associated mainly with the votive Mass of the Most Holy Sacrament and the feast of Corpus Christi. Jeffers says:

> The text of ***Ave verum corpus*** commemorates Christ's redemptive Sacrifice, and especially focuses on the great symbol of Baptism: the pouring forth of water from his pierced side. Ezekiel's Old Testament vision of Baptism (see *Vidi aquam,* "I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple"), St. John's account of the fulfillment of this prophecy during the Crucifixion (John 19:34), the prophecy of Zacharias ("And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of prayers: and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced"), and St. John's Apocalyptic vision of the river of Life ("a river of the water of life, flowing forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb" – Apocalypse [Revelation] 22:1) are all recalled in the Eucharistic sequence.[138]

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[136] Ibid., p. 98.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Jeffers, *Translations,* p. 105.

Ave verum Corpus,
natum de Maria Virgine:
vere passum,
immolatum in cruce pro homine:
cujus latus perforatum,
unda fluxit sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum
in mortis examine.
O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie,
O Jesu Fili Mariae,
miserere mei. Amen.

Hail, true Body,
born of the Virgin Mary,
Who has truly suffered,
was sacrificed on the cross for mortals,
Whose side was pierced,
whence flowed water and blood:
be for us a foretaste (of heaven)
during our final examining.
O Jesu sweet, O Jesu pure,
O Jesu son of Mary,
have mercy upon me. Amen.[139]

Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem

Unlike *Ave dulcissima Maria, Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem* is a liturgical text found in the Mass for Epiphany.

Epiphany is an ancient feast that originated in the Eastern Church and did not appear in the West until after the year 364 A.D. Christmas and Epiphany were sometimes celebrated on the same day, January 6, with the idea that Christ was born and baptized on the same day; occasionally Christmas was celebrated on that day and Epiphany on January 10. December 25 was not originally accepted as the day of Christ's birth as it coincided with the day of a pagan festival celebrating the birthday of the sun.

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[139] Ibid.

Later, Epiphany became less a festival of the Baptism of Christ and more about the visitation of the Magi. It was also the day to announce the date of Easter, as well as other important festivals, as ordered by several councils, including the Council of Orléans in 541. The dedication of virgins happened especially on that day as well.[140]

The text comes from the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 60, verse 1, and is as follows:

Surge, illuminare Jerusalem,
Quia venit lumen tuum,
et gloria Domini super te, orta est,
Alleluia.

Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem,
for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord risen upon you.
Alleluia.[141]

Verses 2 and 3 of Isaiah 60 are often included in settings of the *Surge illuminare* text ("For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a gloom shall come over the people: But the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you.");[142] in the original plainchant verse 1 is the *versus* of the gradual *Omnes de Saba venient.*[143]

St. John the Evangelist spoke of a vision of the New Jerusalem that was similar to Isaiah's:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth … And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God … And the city has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it. For the glory of God shall light it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations shall walk by the light thereof; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it" (Apocalypse [Revelation] 21:1-2, 23-24.[144]

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[140]Cyril Charles Martindale, "Epiphany," *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05504c./htm (accessed January 16, 2010).
[141] Translation in the *New Advent Bible*, http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa060.htm (accessed January 23, 2010).
[142] Jeffers, *Translation,* p. 210.
[143] The Benedictines of Solesmes, *The Liber Usualis* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1956), pp. 459-60.
[144] Jeffers, *Translation,* p. 210.

Kerman describes Byrd's *Surge, illuminare* as a "liturgical waif—it is placed out of order in the partbooks, it omits the whole gradual and uses slightly wrong words for the verse" and states that because of these idiosyncrasies that it really should not be used when "the Epiphany Mass is sung as a unit."[145]

At first glance, Epiphany texts such as *Surge, illuminare* do not seem particularly charged with any sort of political or emotional torment; however, as McCarthy explains,

> For a recusant composer at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a statement that all the Kings of the earth (and "of the islands") would come bringing gifts to worship the Christ child, that all the nations would serve him, was both bittersweet and highly volatile. The annotators of the Douai Bible make similar comments on the relevant passage in the Nativity story: the Three Kings' statement that "we have come to adore him" is seen as a defense of the hotly contested practice of pilgrimage to faraway lands, and their worship of him physically present as an infant lying in the stable is read, following Chrysostom, as an exhortation to worship of the Sacrament.[146]

Byrd saw the English Catholic post-Reformation community as the modern Jerusalem, and the exhortation to "rise up and be enlightened" as good advice for a people weary of persecution, torture, and execution for their beliefs. He strongly agreed with the Jesuits that there should be a counter-Reformation and a return of England to Catholicism, even though the possibility of that seemed highly unlikely. In texts like *Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem* or *Plorans, plorabit et deducet oculus meus lacrimas* (weeping it shall weep, and my eyes shall run down with tears), the sorry state of the English Catholics was being lamented: "The Latin motet, a prime ornament of Catholicism in its time of ascendancy, was now being used to voice prayers, exhortations and protests on behalf of Catholics in time of need."[147]

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[145] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 303.
[146] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* pp. 141-2.
[147] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 42. Kerman goes on to say, on p. 45, that "only when the Catholicism of the motet was called in question did it assert that Catholicism in a newly militant, newly personal, half-surreptitious fashion. The thinking of Byrd's Jesuit friends comes into play strongly here,

8. From *La Musica Comuna* to Chromaticism in the Sixteenth Century

In our times they have put all their industry and effort into the composition of fugues [i.e., points of imitation], so that while one voice says "Sanctus," another says "Sabaoth," still another "Gloria tua," with howling, bellowing, and stammering, so that they more nearly resemble cats in January than flowers in May.

-Bishop Cirillo Franco (c.1500-1575), in a letter of 1549[148]

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, and indeed well into it, both music and the visual arts were devoted to the concept of balance and order. In the visual arts, the height of this was the imitation of nature, which was considered to be perfect; in music, the preference was for an idea called *la musica comuna,* which Jeppesen translated roughly as "something like easily comprehensible, regular, perhaps academic music."[149] In generalizing the music of the first half of the sixteenth century, Jeppesen stated: "The sixteenth century loves clearness; directness, naturalness. It wants order, strict conformity to rule, and not too much of the superfluous."[150] He presented Palestrina as the model for this style of balanced and ordered music, saying that Palestrina's art "seeks universality and is characterized by a deep joy in the development and fulfillment of the law ... it is the perfect, masterly expression of the *musica comuna*..."[151]

Chromaticism had been a topic of consideration for composers and theorists since the time of ancient Greece. In the fourteenth century, there was discussion among

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and it is doubtful that Byrd would have devoted such effort to the motet, and developed it so far, had it not been engaged, broadly speaking, in Catholic propaganda."

[148] Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), p. 137.

[149] Knud Jeppesen, *Counterpoint: The Polyphonic Vocal Style of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Glen Haydon (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), p. 23.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

theorists about combining all of the "possible *musica ficta* notes into the diatonic series to make a complete chromatic scale, already a feature of keyboard instruments of the time."[152]

In the fifteenth century, one can look to the theorist Johannes Tinctoris (c. 1435-1511) for the common thought regarding dissonance and its treatment in music. Tinctoris defines dissonances (in his second book) simply as "combinations that sound bad,"[153] and evidently does not consider them to be essential at all, since he gives no explanation of how to use dissonances with consonances, or what combinations thereof might be available to the composer.

Don Nicola Vicentino (1511-c.1576) turned the sixteenth century on its ear with his theories of chromaticism and its association with ancient music. Jeppesen called him "a zealous advocate of everything which he considered ancient music."[154] Not only did he publish a collection of chromatic madrigals in 1546, but he also wrote a book on theory entitled *L'Antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (The Music of Antiquity Reduced for Modern Practice) in which he "demonstrated, according to the ancient models, not only the diatonic but also the chromatic and enharmonic tonal systems."[155] He also advocated the use of the tritone in suspensions, something that was unheard of in the previous centuries.

In 1571 Vicentino published a book of motets for five voices. What makes this unusual is that up to this point published chromatic works had been in the form of chamber music (madrigals). The reason for this seems to be that it was considered more

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[152] Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall, "Chromaticism," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.80/subscriber/article/opr/t1114/e1396 (accessed March 15, 2010).
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.

appropriate to perform chromatic music in a quieter setting, or as Henry Kaufman says, "It would appear that the more subtle the intonation, the quieter a piece should be sung to assure accuracy."[156] Vicentino himself stated that his motets were written to demonstrate the chromatic genus, but also "so that every one may see that the chromatic music can be sung in the churches in a loud voice."[157]

Vicentino even went so far as to compose a piece with the first verse in the diatonic genus, the second in the chromatic, and the third in the enharmonic. This ode in Latin, "Musica prisca caput," was a summarization of "the essence of his theoretical innovations,"[158] and, along with works by Josquin and Willaert before him, "concentrated on featuring a wide variety of experimental techniques of a most advanced nature."[159]

As shall be seen in both Byrd's and Gesualdo's works, the use of chromaticism by composers such as Vicentino was not just an experiment in melody and harmony, but also could be a text-painting device. Chromatic semitones were used for invoking the name of Jesus (and Mary, in his Marian motets), and rhythms were augmented at cadential points, because, as Vicentino says in *L'Antica musica,* "in motets, according to the devout words, coming somewhat to a stop induces a great deal of devotion."[160]

Unlike Byrd or Gesualdo, however, Vicentino was usually more interested in portraying the emotion of an entire passage or work than individual words. He would use techniques such as scoring a piece for only the lower voices, a combination he called

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[156] Henry W. Kaufman, "The Motets of Nicola Vicentino," *Musica Disciplina* vol. 15 (1961), p. 170.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid., p. 171. Interestingly, the texts of most of these motets were ones that had been removed from the Catholic liturgy after the Council of Trent, even though Vicentino's publishing date fell well after that event. The texts had been eliminated in an attempt to counter the encroaching Protestant Reformation, and some of the texts Vicentino used were ones that could not be defended by the Church due to their basis in legend rather than Biblical fact (p. 175).
[160] Ibid., p. 179.

mutata voce. Use of *mutata voce* created the appropriate somber, contemplative, or mournful mood. His specific instructions for composing in this style included not having the extreme ranges of the piece "exceed fifteen tones (two octaves) and at most, sixteen with the semitone, and this will give these pieces seriousness."[161]

Vicentino's experiments with chromaticism in vocal and instrumental works and the development of the *arcicembalo,* or enharmonic harpsichord, were certainly an influence on Gesualdo (and other chromaticists) late in the century at the court of Este. Vicentino and others like him saw the human voice as the perfect vehicle for the chromatic expression of emotions, especially sadness, suffering and torment. Others, however, disagreed with the chromaticists' beliefs and their applications of those beliefs to music. Zarlino devoted an entire chapter of his *Le istitutioni harmoniche* to "A Rebuttal to the Opinions of the Chromaticists." He explained that the chromaticists felt that since the voice is capable of singing any interval, and since singing should imitate ordinary speech in portraying the words, as orators would do, therefore it would be acceptable and appropriate, to use any interval necessary to express the words:

> I reply that it is indeed inappropriate. It is one thing to speak normally and another to speak in song … I have never heard an orator use the strange, crude intervals used by these chromaticists … it would be possible to include such things comfortably in one voice of a composition, where these accents, properly used, would have a good effect. Were this voice combined with others, however, the result would compel one to seal one's ears.[162]

Zarlino even compared the voice's capability to sing any interval justifying the use of those intervals to man being capable of both good and evil, and therefore able to commit any evil act without retribution. He held the belief that the ancients, in their

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[161] Ibid., p. 180.

[162] Gioseffo Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche,* trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca, Music Theory Translation Series 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 288.

views on the chromatic genus, did not intend for chromaticism to be used in an uncontrolled manner, or in such a way "as to spoil anything good in music."[163]

Finally, there was this admonition from Zarlino to the chromaticists:

> I have said all this for those who cannot see the difference between a flea and an elephant to make them realize that nothing good can be accomplished outside of our genus, used, as we are accustomed to, with chromatic and enharmonic steps where appropriate. Only if we return to the practice of the ancients and coordinate meter, melody, and words can we use these genera otherwise.[164]

It is evident from this quote that Zarlino was not opposed to chromaticism in moderation; but he believed that the ancients themselves would not have used it in such extreme ways as Vicentino and his contemporaries.

Zarlino's words would fall upon deaf ears, in the late sixteenth century and beyond, as composers searched for ways to express any and all emotions through music and its portrayal of text. While this practice began with madrigals, it eventually found its way into sacred music as well. The Church would soon be asking for masses and motets that expressed the intense emotions of the liturgy, and chromaticism seemed to some late sixteenth-century composers the best means of accomplishing this feat. It was a development that would change both secular and sacred music forever.

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[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid., p. 290. "Hò voluto dir tutto queſto, per quelli, che credono, che vn Pulice ſia uno Elefante; accioche poßino uedere & udire, che mai ſono per hauer coſa buona, fuori del noſro Genere: uſando nel modo che facemmo le chorde Chromatiche & le Enharmoni che con propoſito; ſe non ſi ritornaſſe a congiungere inſieme (come faceuano gli Antichi) il Numero, l'Harmonia, & le Parole."

9. *Ave verum corpus, Ave dulcissima Maria,* and the Jesuit Influence

As we have seen, Byrd was heavily influenced by the Jesuits in his personal and religious life, not only by the Jesuit priests he counted among his friends, but also by the meditative teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola. However, Gesualdo was also influenced by Ignatius' teachings, and the motets *Ave verum corpus* by Byrd and *Ave dulcissima Maria* by Gesualdo are prime examples of how each composer used text meditation when setting the music.

St. Ignatius created a system of meditative exercises that he called the *Spiritual Exercises,* and through these exercises the subject would reflect not only upon Christ's life but also his own life. In an ideal situation, the subject would be taught the meditation during an intensive month-long retreat. Wherever the Jesuits were active, this method was taught, and it was "the religious and intellectual discipline most characteristic of the order."[165]

Ignatius' devotion to spiritual meditation came about because of his conversion to Christianity at the age of thirty, after suffering a serious injury in battle. It took him several decades to develop and refine the *Exercises,* and they did not appear in final written form until eight years before his death.[166]

Ignatius laid out a four-part plan for the *Exercises* that covered four weeks:

Four weeks are taken for the following Exercises, corresponding to the four parts into which they are divided: in the first week, there is consideration and contemplation of sins; in the second, of the life of Christ our Lord up to and including Palm Sunday; in the third, of his sufferings; and in the fourth, of his resurrection and ascension, to which are

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[165] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 21.
[166] Ibid. McCarthy mentions the interesting fact that by 1948, four centuries after their first printing, the *Exercises* were estimated to have been "published in more than four thousand separate editions."

added the three modes of prayer. This does not mean, however, that each of these "weeks" must necessarily consist of seven or eight days … They must sometimes be shortened and sometimes drawn out … Nonetheless, the Exercises should be completed in thirty days, more or less.[167]

It is easy to see how Gesualdo would have been attracted to this plan of meditation— he could have compared it to his own sins, life and suffering, with hope of forgiveness from God and "resurrection" to a better life in the afterlife. He evidently was greatly influenced by St. Ignatius, as he chose for his burial site a chapel devoted to Ignatius in the Neapolitan Jesuit church of Gesù Nuovo.

If the texts of Gesualdo's sacred motets continue to emphasize the images of despair, suffering, and death … visions of his own life's conclusion move conspicuously to the fore … *Ars moriendi,* or the art of dying, had become a familiar conceit in literature of the time and had begun to escalate under the promotion of the Jesuits.[168]

As for Byrd, any of the Jesuits with which he was in contact would have been intimately familiar with the *Exercises* and would have been bound as members of the Order (and missionaries of it) to teach laypeople the method of meditation. Given the political climate in which Byrd was working with these sensitive texts, intense meditation over individual words and phrases would have been necessary to give stress to the ideas he most wanted to convey, whether overtly or covertly.

Both Gesualdo and Byrd would have also benefited by the "three modes of prayer" referred to in the McCarthy quote above; these were methods of "gaining some profit" from biblical and devotional texts, as follows:

The first mode is a systematic reflection and examination of conscience, made by working through the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the five senses, and similar traditional lists, considering how each one pertains to the subject at hand … *the second mode of prayer consists in contemplating the meaning of each word of a prayer*

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[167] Ibid., p. 23. This quotation comes from Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises,* §4.
[168] Watkins, *Hex,* p. 63.

... *The third mode of prayer is by measures, or by duration, in the form of rhythm* (italics are McCarthy's).[169]

For each of the composers, setting texts to music using this method of meditational exercise might have addressed and perhaps eased their personal suffering, but with very different outcomes: Byrd was literally taking his life in his hands by setting a forbidden, politically charged text such as *Ave verum corpus*. He could lose his life by torture and execution, or at the very least be thrown into prison. However, his Catholic beliefs were so strong that he could not ignore the tenet addressed in *Ave verum* which had caused it to be forbidden—that of the ultimate holy Mystery. The concept of the Real Presence in the Eucharist is central to Catholic theology and dogma, and for Byrd it was impossible to leave either the Corpus Christi feast or the *Ave verum* text out of the *Gradualia*. Kerman writes, "But what is being hailed is not the Body of Christ but the Eucharist which miraculously *is* the Body. The declamation 'Ave *verum* corpus' makes a doctrinal point of great importance to Catholics of Byrd's time, who were locked in controversy over the issue of Transubstantiation."[170]

Ave verum corpus

A basic modal analysis of *Ave verum corpus* suggests that it is in the Aeolian mode on G, although that is not an entirely clear-cut assessment. By this time in the sixteenth century, music was not being written entirely in a given mode, and the movement toward tonality and a system of keys was developing.[171] However, the *tenor* part of *Ave verum corpus* does outline the *finalis, chorda mezzana, and tenor* (root, third

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[169] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 27.
[170] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 288.
[171] John Harley, *William Byrd's Modal Practice* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Press Limited, 2005), p. 26.

and fifth) of the Aeolian mode on G, and the *superius* line of the piece outlines the corresponding Hypoaeolian mode, supporting the Aeolian in the *tenor.* There are also F# leading tones that help to establish the key tone as G.

Zarlino gives conflicting opinions by the Greeks as to the emotions expressed by the use of the Aeolian mode. Various "ancients," as he refers to them, assigned the qualities of simplicity, tranquility and serenity, cheerfulness, sweetness, mildness, severity ("because it had in itself a pleasant severity mixed with a certain cheerfulness and sweetness beyond the usual"),[172] and suitability to lyrical verses. Perhaps this is putting words into Byrd's mouth, but could it be that he saw the "severity mixed with a certain cheerfulness and sweetness" as the perfect vehicle for a text dealing with the forbidden subject of transubstantiation?

One need look no farther than the opening phrase to see evidence of the *Spiritual Exercises* at work. The phrase *Ave verum corpus* (Hail, true Body) can be interpreted in three different ways, by placing importance on each word in turn. Byrd wanted to make the point that the Host does indeed become the body of Christ at Communion by stressing the word "true," and while he could have done so quietly by simply using groupings or note length to emphasize the word, he chooses instead to flaunt his belief (and that of his fellow recusants) by combining pitches in a jarring manner that completely steps outside his chosen mode (fig. 9.1). Even if we look at the example using tonal harmony, the chord progression i-V-VII (in the key of Gb) is unusual and striking in its dissonance.

Kerman discusses this "famous false relation":

> At the very beginning, a famous false relation stresses the word 'verum' rather than 'corpus,' ... the declamation 'Ave *verum* corpus' makes a doctrinal point of great

[172] Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes: Part Four of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche,* trans. Vered Cohen, Music Theory Translation Series 7 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 25.

importance to Catholics of Byrd's time, who were locked in controversy over the issue of transubstantiation. And perhaps it is not too abstruse to suggest that by echoing this false relation later in the piece—at 'O dulcis, o pie,' 'Iesu,' and most directly at 'miserere mei'—Byrd meant to keep the Eucharist more clearly before our eyes than the text itself manages to do.[173]

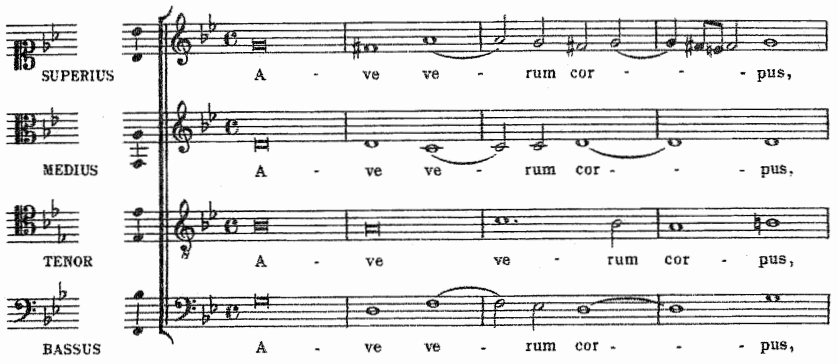

Fig. 9.1 The opening phrase of *Ave verum corpus*.[174]

The piece is mostly homophonic; there is no place where it heads into full-on polyphony. Points of imitation are brief and either paired and layered, as in the phrases *miserere mei* and *O Jesu fili Mariæ*, or they happen between one voice and the other three, as in *O dulcis, O pie,* where the *superius* is echoed by the other three voices (fig. 9.2, 3).

Of course, one can point to the post-Tridentine existence of this work as a reason for the lack of polyphony; however, McCarthy makes another case for it:

Unlike the annual cycle of Mass propers, *Ave verum* was a primer text of the sort taught to children, a simple, easily memorized rhyme. Any Catholic consumer of the *Gradualia* would likely have muttered it hundreds of times in the course of his or her life. Byrd's interpretation, like any successful meditation on an old theme, must have brought with it the shock of both the new and the familiar.[175]

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[173] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 288.
[174] Byrd, *Gradualia I (1605)*, p. 82.
[175] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 19.

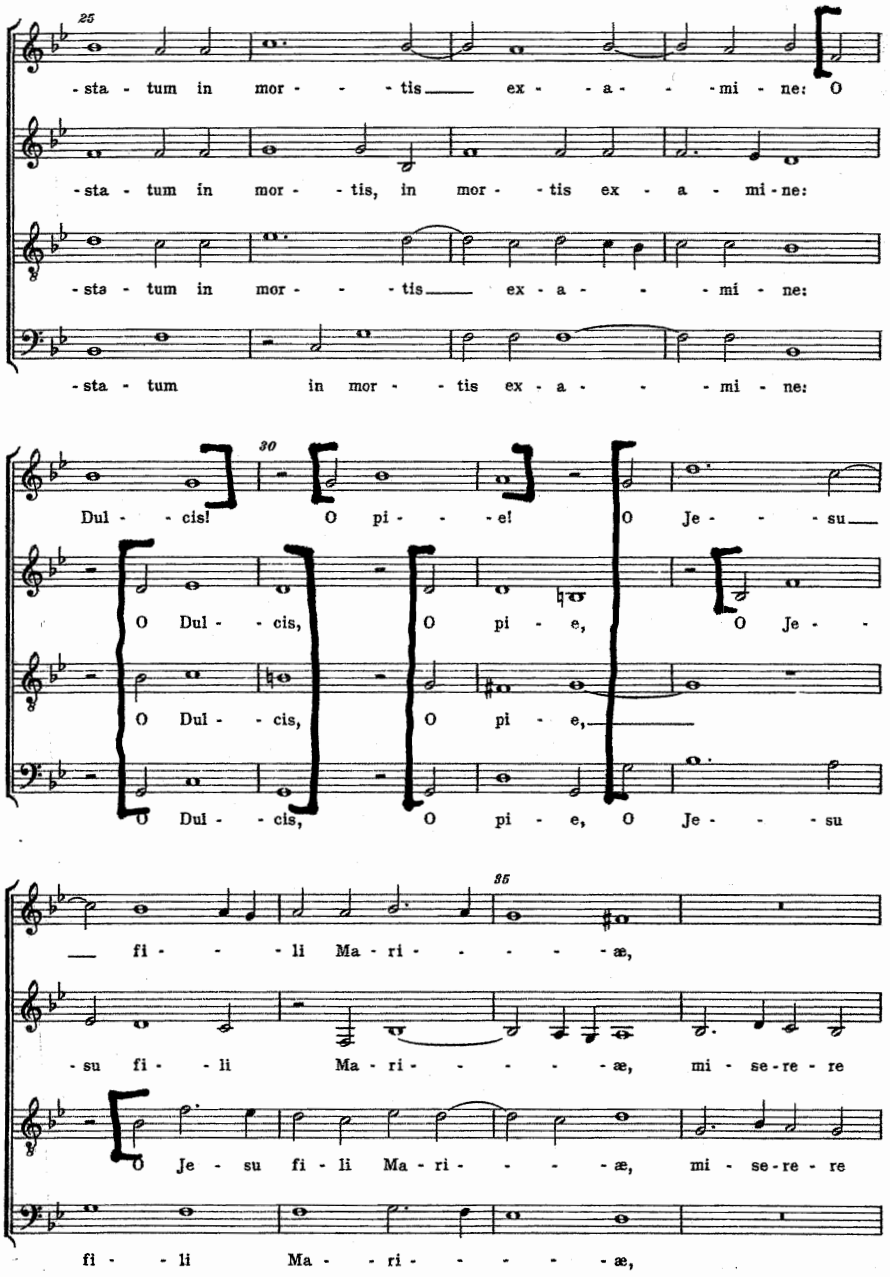


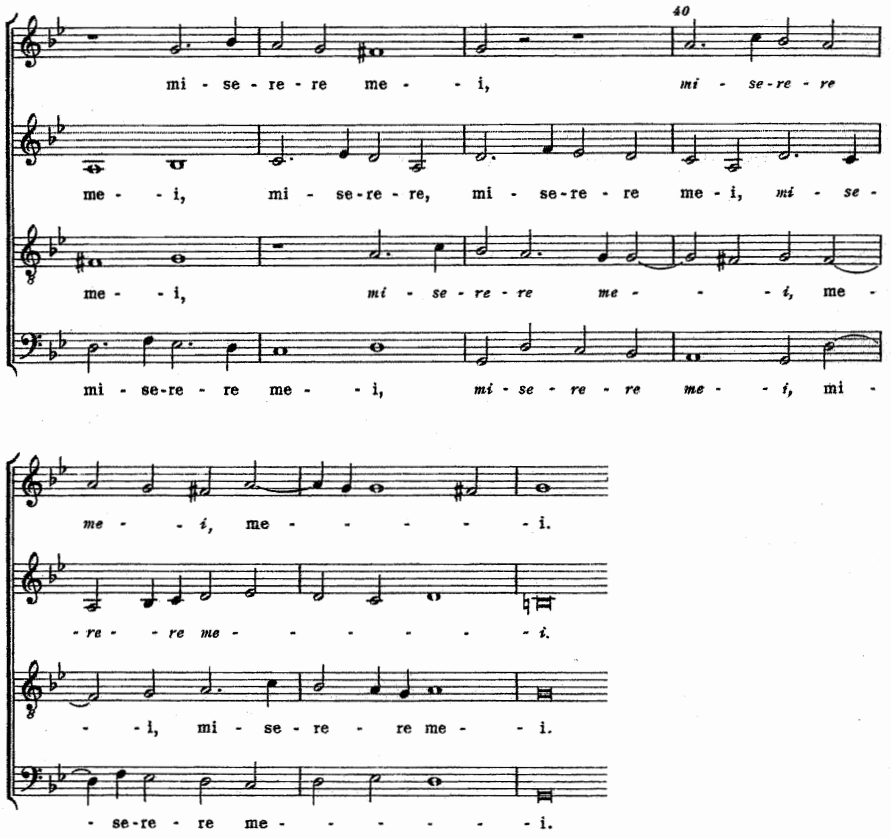
Fig. 9.2. Examples of imitation in *Ave verum corpus.*[176]

The setting is indeed deceptively simple. Byrd obviously thought that the entire text was an important one, as evidenced by the clarity and, at times, starkness of the text-setting. There is very little repetition of text, with the exception of *miserere mei* (have mercy on me), which occurs among the four voices ten times (of course, the entire text

[176]Byrd, *Gradualia I*, p. 84.

from *O dulcis* to the end is repeated, which is certainly not unexpected as it is the plea for mercy from Christ). The polyphony here results in no collective breath being taken between the first *miserere* and the cadence at the end of the phrase eight bars later, which basically follows St. Ignatius' recommendation for the third mode of prayer:

> ...so that one word only is said between one breath and another; and, in the length of time between one breath and another, one is to look chiefly to the meaning of such word, or to the person to whom one recites it, or to one's own lowly estate, or to the difference between such high estate and such lowliness of my own.[177]



Fig, 9.3. Byrd's meditative setting of the phrase *miserere mei* in *Ave verum corpus*. [178]

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[177] Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1915), p. 218. "...de manera que una sola palabra se diga entre un anhélito y otro; y mientras durare el tiempo de un anhélito á otro, se mire principalmente en la significacion de la tal palabra, ó en la persona á quien reza, ó en la bajeza de si mismo, ó en la diferencia de tanta alteza á tanta bajeza propria."
[178] Byrd, *Gradualia I*, p. 85.

The "sweetness and severity" mentioned by Zarlino as attributes of the Aeolian mode are in evidence in the phrase *O dulcis, O pie*. The *superius* and *bassus* voices outline the mode here in textbook fashion, giving stress to the *finalis* (G), *chorda mezzana* (Bb) and *tenor* (D)--and emphasizing the characteristic species of fifth and fourth--while the *altus* and *tenor* voices are allowed a bit of musica ficta in the "leading tone" F# and the occasional raised *chorda mezzana*. The use of the *superius* voice to state the initial *O dulce* (O [Jesu] sweet) makes complete sense, as this highest voice would be associated with sweetness and light; the stark setting of the text in the other voices, with no ornamented or passing notes, would represent the severity in its plainness. This technique happens again on the word *mortis* (death), where the syllable "mor" is stressed by the upper three voices on sustained notes (echoed by the *bassus* immediately following), producing a startling affirmation of the meaning of the word. (fig. 9.4).

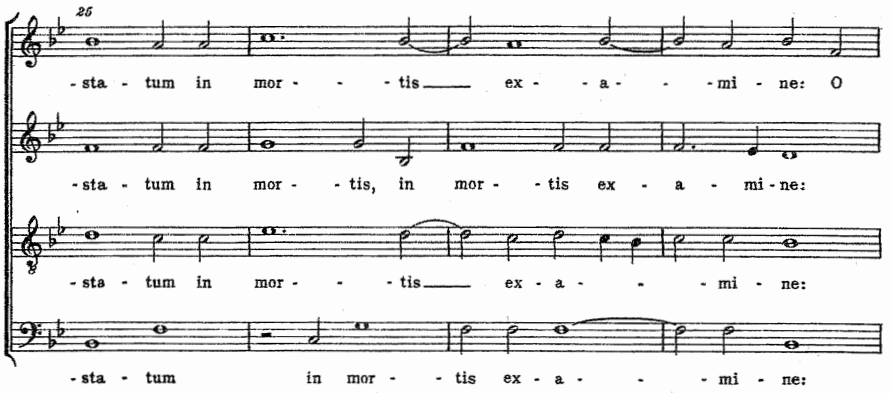

Fig. 9.4. Setting of the word *mortis* in Byrd's *Ave verum corpus*.[179]

A forbidden text for a forbidden feast celebrating a forbidden belief, *Ave verum corpus* was an opportunity for Byrd to use the Jesuit teachings of St. Ignatius and Byrd's

[179] Byrd, *Gradualia I*, p.84.

friends Garnet and Southwell to make his political statement in a powerful yet simple way that would have been easily understood by the recusant community.

Ave dulcissima Maria

The *Responsoria* for Holy Week by Gesualdo bear no political weight, other than perhaps a minor rebellion against the post-Tridentine liturgical conventions—even that, however, is debatable, given the letters of Gesualdo's uncle Carlo Borromeo in which he requests more chromaticism in Masses, and the fact that Nicola Vicentino had already set *Hierusalem convertere* from the Lamentations of Jeremiah in a chromatic style as early as 1555.[180]

Watkins quotes Einstein in classifying the *Sacrae Cantiones* texts as "cries of anguish, self-accusation, and repentance."[181] While the first part of *Ave dulcissima Maria* may not fit that description, the second part does, where the sinner alternates between crying out to Mary (*O, o Maria*) and begging her to pray to Jesus for us (*ora pro nobis, Jesum*), and it is possible to see the influence of the meditations of the *Spiritual Exercises* here.

It is difficult to assign modes to Gesualdo's later compositions, although *Ave dulcissima* appears to be based on the Aeolian mode centered on D with sections that almost lend themselves more to harmonic analysis.

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[180] Watkins, *Hex,* pp. 78-9.
[181] Watkins, *Gesualdo,* p. 252.

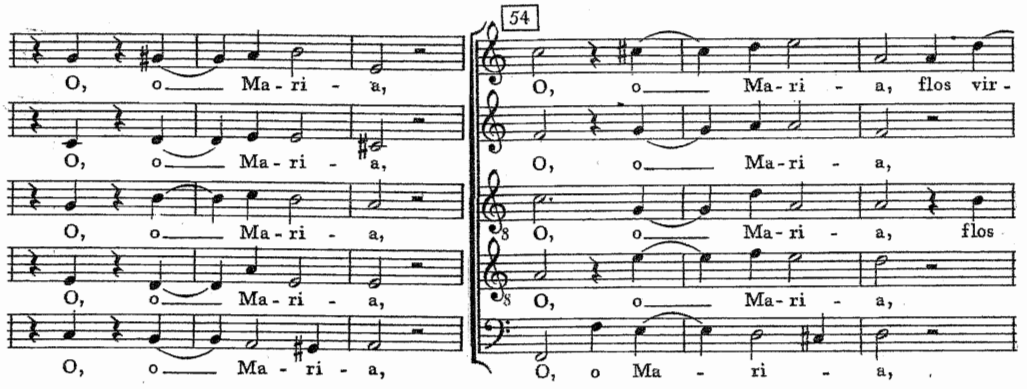

Fig. 9.5. Chromatic progression in *Ave dulcissima Maria.*[182]

In the section beginning with the text *O, o Maria* (fig. 9.5), there is the improbable progression G#dim-A min-E-A, followed by the same text to the progression C#dim-D min-A-D. Not only does Gesualdo repeat the word *O* as suggested by St. Ignatius in the second mode of prayer when addressing the *Pater Noster*:

> ...and rests on the consideration of this word for so long a time as he finds meanings, comparisons, relish and consolation in considerations belonging to such a word. And in like manner let him do with every word of the Our Father, or of other prayer whatsoever that he shall wish to pray in this way.[183]

but he also repeats the phrase *O, o Maria* with the same progression a fourth apart, using the chromaticism to stress the plea of the sinner.

Gesualdo uses repetition of phrase again on the words *ora pro nobis* in various combinations: *ora, ora pro nobis; pro nobis; ora pro nobis, pro nobis* (fig. 9.6). If we look at those words in English, they are: *pray, pray for us; for us; pray for us, for us*. He has combined the words in basically every way in which they make sense, using the same technique as Byrd when he suggested the process of *pervolutare* ("turning over

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[182] Gesualdo di Venosa, *Sacrae Cantiones,* pp. 19-20.

[183] Rickaby, *Spiritual Exercises,* p. 216. "...y esté en la consideracion desta palabra tanto tiempo quanto halla significaciones, comparaciones, gusto y consolacion en consideraciones pertinentes á la tal palabra. Y de la misma manera haga en cada palabra del *Pater Noster*, ó de otra oracion cualquiera, que desta manera quisiere orar."

and over"—see chapter 3, p. 22). It is essentially the next step in the *Exercises*; meditating upon an entire phrase after meditating upon its individual words. Then, carrying this a step farther, he repeated the entire text of *O, o Maria, flos virginum, ora pro nobis Jesum* with the same musical setting as the previous statement—"and rests on the consideration of this word for so long a time as he finds meanings, comparisons, relish and *consolation* in considerations belonging to such a word (my italics)."[184]

Did Gesualdo find consolation in setting the text of *Ave dulcissima Maria* in such a manner? Or was it a need for assuaging his guilt that caused him to beg again and again for mercy? All we can say for sure is that he used a meditative means of looking at the text and chromatic devices in the musical setting to depict the emotions of despair and longing.

It is also at the end of this section that we find a cadential point happening in all voices but the *cantus* in the same bar (the *cantus* has its cadence in the previous bar). With the exception of the cadence ending the phrase *dulce refrigerium* (sweet refreshment) prior to the *O, o Maria* section, all other cadences are dovetailed. These universal cadential points serve to divide the two main sections of the motet concisely as well as to divide the original statement and repeat of the *O, o Maria* section (fig. 9.6). Again, Gesualdo wanted to make sure that it was obvious which the most important part of the text was.

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[184] See footnote 183 above.

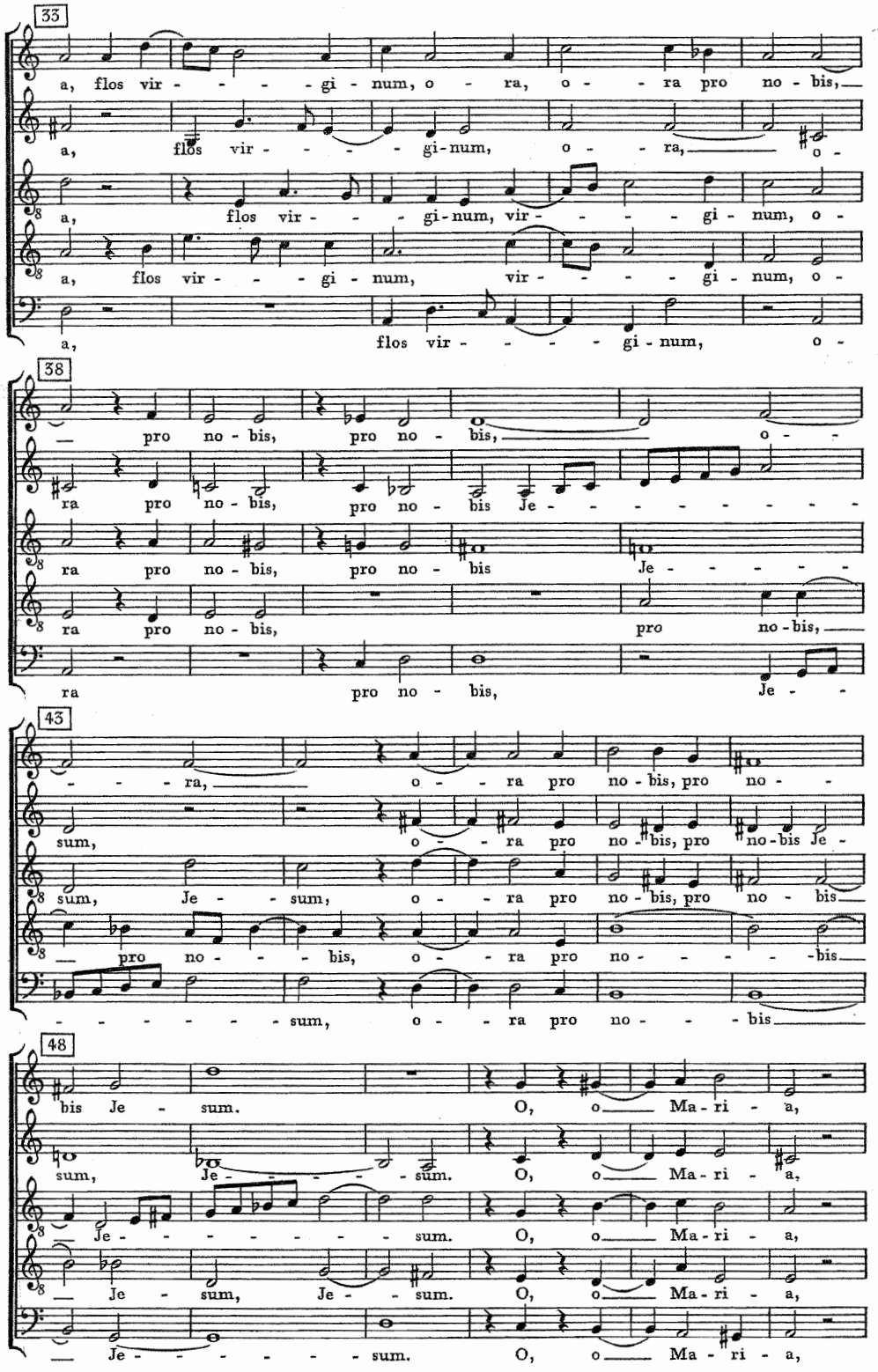

Fig. 9.6 The *ora pro nobis* section of *Ave dulcissima Maria.*[185]

[185]Gesualdo di Venosa, *Sacrae Cantiones,* p. 19.

The influence of St. Ignatius and the Jesuits upon these late sixteenth-century composers is obvious, although probably more so in Byrd's case because of his friendship with the two Jesuit missionaries Garnet and Southwell. However, as we have seen in *Ave dulcissima Maria*, there is a strong possibility that Gesualdo used meditative techniques when setting text; and, as the Jesuits were centered in Italy he probably had plenty of contact with them. Gesualdo's journey into anguish and despair shows itself even in a motet with the title "Hail, sweet Mary," and his quest for relief from that anguish becomes evident with his plea to Mary for intercessory prayer.

10. Faint Hope: *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem* and *Aestimatus sum*

It is part of the human condition that, in the midst of great suffering, we are able to bring forth feelings of hope for the future. Both Byrd and Gesualdo were able to express this feeling of hope, however faint, in the music they created which was born of physical, mental, and religious torment. *Aestimatus sum* and *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem* are examples of the use of late-sixteenth century text-painting devices that convey despair, exhortation to a persecuted people to rise above their current existence, and hope that the future, particularly the afterlife, will be brighter.

While the attitude among composers toward text in the fifteenth century was "characterized for the most part by a striking indifference, and while the use of effective, unequivocal tone painting as a means of expression can be found only in very rare cases in European music before 1500, the sixteenth century brought a decisive change in this situation."[186] Jeppesen attributed this change to the development of the madrigal, and stated that while sacred music was generally more conservative in style than secular, eventually it began to follow the example of secular music in its treatment of text.[187]

> The decisive change, however, did not take place in the year 1594 or 1600, but at the moment when the concept appeared that music is not merely a decorative factor but a means of portraying human ideas and emotions. This new point of view marks the sharp distinction between the older and the newer music; the attitude toward the text is decisive in the evolution. And this attitude characterizes especially the music of the later sixteenth century in comparison with that of a century earlier. It accompanied the general refinement of musical technique and the superior culture.[188]

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[186] Jeppesen, *Counterpoint,* p. 17.
[187] Ibid., p. 18.
[188] Ibid., p. 19.

Kerman discusses the "highly personal" use of motets before the sixteenth century and explains that on the Continent this had been displayed by such composers as Guillaume Dufay (1397?-1474), who inserted a prayer to the Virgin on behalf of himself in his setting of *Ave Regina coelorum*; and Josquin Desprez, who set "a humanistic poem to the Virgin containing an acrostic on his own name and also set the psalm *Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo* as a reminder to his employer that his salary was due."[189]

In England, however, using motets for personal or political statement was a brand-new concept, and William Byrd was one of the most outspoken practitioners of the method. *Surge, illuminare* is one of his so-called "Jerusalem" motets, in which Byrd calls for liberation of the English Catholics in their state of persecution, just as liberation for Jerusalem and its people is called for in the Bible. The Jerusalem metaphor was a common one for sixteenth-century English Catholics—they were used to "hearing their plight likened to that of the captive children of Israel, and their country to ravaged Jerusalem."[190]

Again, from Kerman: "At a time when Catholics tended to view the eclipse of their faith as a temporary aberration, Byrd set 'political' texts looking forward to the coming of God, announcing that the children of God would return from the East and that their patrimony would be restored, and lamenting the plight of the City."[191]

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[189] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 45.
[190] Ibid., p. 43.
[191] Ibid., p. 53.

Surge, illuminare, Jerusalem

Surge, illuminare is in the Dorian mode based on G.[192] At first glance that may not seem correct--in the opening of the *tenor* part (which is the defining indicator of mode) there is an F#; however, it is merely another "leading tone" that is emphasizing G as the *finalis*. Zarlino wrote that "there are innumerable sacred chants in this mode ... among modern musicians there are also innumerable compositions written in this mode, including Masses, motets, hymns, madrigals, and other songs."[193] In his chapter "The Nature or Properties of the Modes (Della Natura, o Proprietà delli Modi)", Zarlino said:

> Thus they called the Dorian a stable mode and claimed that it was by its nature very fit for the ethos of civilized men ... Lucian calls the Dorian mode severe because it has a certain severity, and Apuleuis calls it bellicose ... the ancients ... applied to it subjects which were severe, grave, and full of wisdom.[194]

Zarlino also stated that the ancients believed that the Dorian mode "disposed people to a certain virile steadiness and modesty."[195]

Severity and gravity would certainly describe the situation in which the English Catholics saw themselves, and while the rapidly ascending lines of imitation that open *Surge, illuminare* might seem rather light-hearted, they are actually a message from Byrd to the recusant community to "arise and be enlightened," as the phrase translates.

The opening imitation begins in the *cantus secundus* on D and is immediately followed by the *tenor* (with a rhythmic variation of the line) on G. The *bassus* and *cantus primus* motives, almost but not quite identical to that of the *cantus secundus,* also begin

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[192] Kerman, however disagrees with this and presumes that Byrd saw the piece in D Aeolian (as was the case with the Christmas and Epiphany masses) with G Dorian "touches." He justifies this by saying that Byrd wrote G cadences in the D mode "often enough." (*Masses and Motets,* p. 304)
[193] Zarlino, *On the Modes,* p. 54.
[194] Ibid., pp.20-1.
[195] Ibid., p. 22.

on D. Pairs of eighth notes lend energy and drive to the ascending line, which perfectly paints the word *surge* (arise) (fig. 10.1).

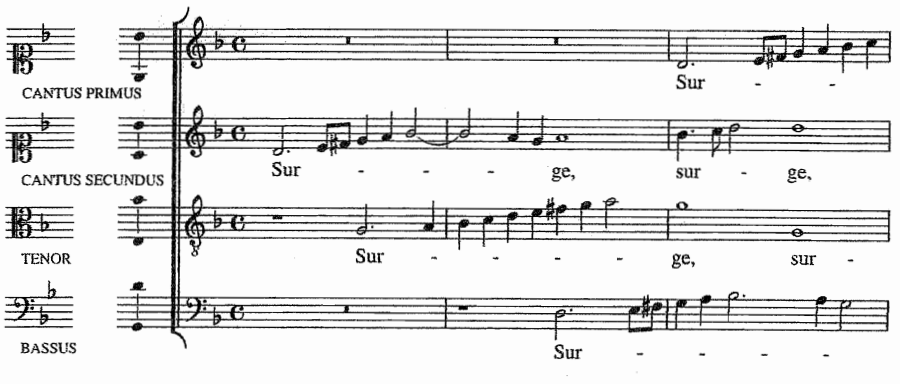

Fig. 10.1. The opening phrase of *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem.*[196]

Byrd uses this "three against one" technique of having three voices sing imitative phrases on the same starting pitch and with very nearly the same rhythmic values several times throughout the piece, while the fourth voice starts on a different, although modally complimentary pitch and has a different rhythmic characteristic. He turns away from this in the phrase *Et gloria Domini,* however, and pairs the *cantus primus* and *tenor* on starting Es and the *cantus secundus* and *bassus* on starting As (fig. 10.2).

Unlike *Ave verum corpus,* there is much repetition of text, which emphasizes the meaning of each phrase. However, the repetition only occurs in each phrase section; there are no repeated sections.

The cadential points in *Ave verum* mostly occur in all four voices at once. Here, the cadences are dovetailed throughout, with only the final cadence at the end of the *alleluia* section being universal among parts.

A word on the *alleluia* section of this piece by Kerman:

> At the beginning of our discussion of the *Gradualia* motets it was pointed out how Byrd makes use of alleluia sections to punctuate sectional motets and to terminate non-sectional ones brilliantly and concisely. The point is well illustrated by *Surge,*

[196] Byrd, *Gradualia II,* p. 58.

illuminare Hierusalem [sic], especially when this is heard or considered along with its associated offertory and communion, where in the absence of alleluias Byrd felt called upon to conclude with unusually heavy points of imitation.[197]

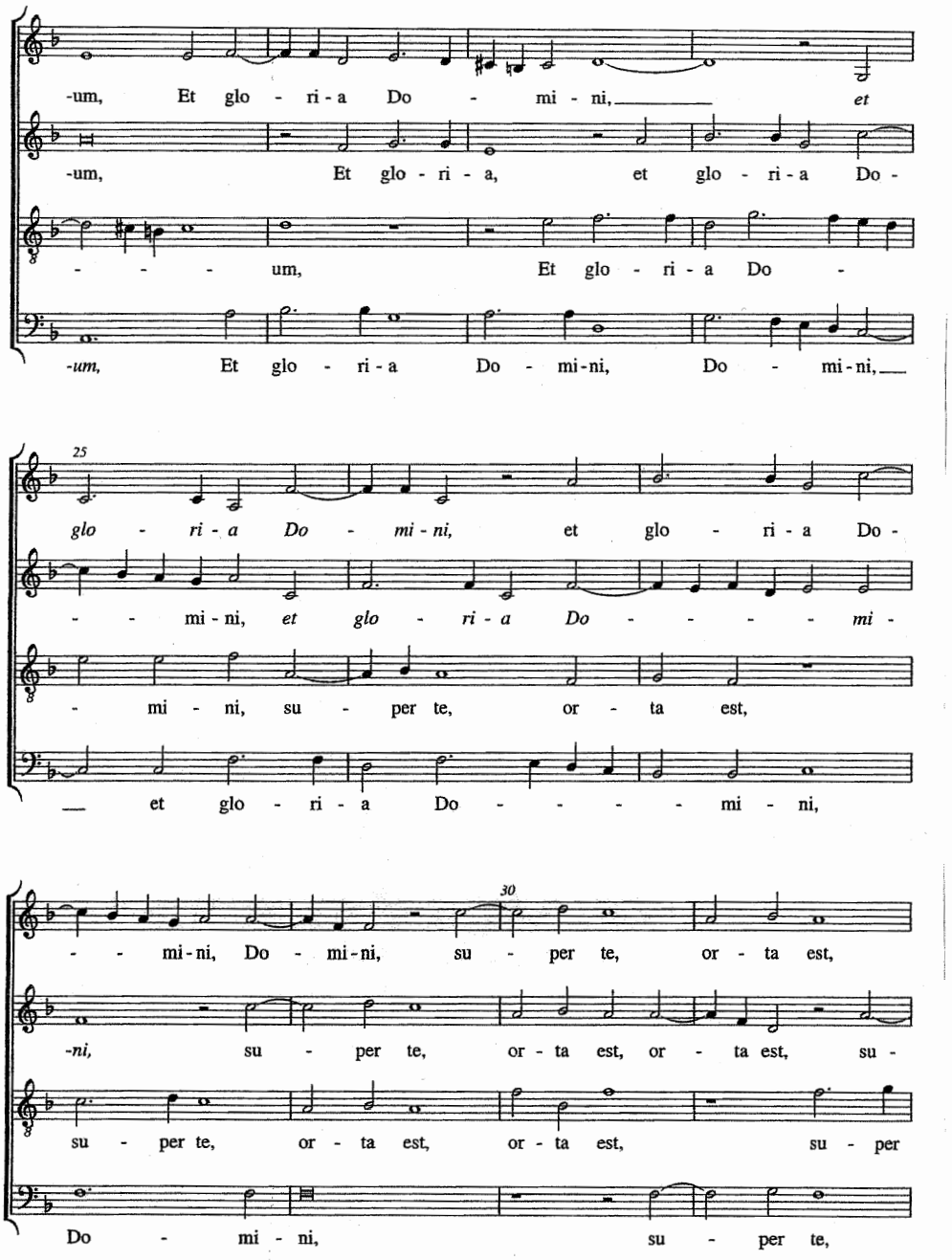

Fig. 10.2 Paired imitation on the phrase *et Gloria Domini (Surge, illuminare)*.[198]

[197] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p.303.
[198] Byrd, *Gradualia II*, p. 60.

The polyphony displayed in *Surge, illuminare* does not detract from the text by extensive use of small note values. Even the first phrase uses no more than pairs of eighth notes, and those are used no more than twice in any given voice. The ranges of each voice, however, are extensive, with the *cantus secundus* having the smallest range of a ninth and the other voices having ranges of a twelfth or fifteenth. This gives the piece a lighter, more open feel overall than *Ave verum* and supports the notion that Byrd was trying to encourage the English Catholics not to give up (or give in to Protestant leanings) on their bleak situation.[199] If the Jews were able to survive the Babylonian captivity, should the recusants not be able to do the same?

Aestimatus sum

Byrd repeatedly "dwelled on the theme of sin and repentance as though searching in the individual soul for the sources of the affliction visited by God upon his congregation."[200] This certainly echoed Gesualdo's quest for self-redemption and relief from his physical and mental torment. However, we must not forget that Gesualdo was a Mannerist composer and as such used typical Mannerist devices to illustrate the point he was trying to make in his compositions.

Consider, then, the opening of *Aestimatus sum.* A common trait of the Mannerist composers was to use visual techniques in the music to demonstrate or illustrate a phrase or concept.[201] The opening phrase, *Aestimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum* (I am counted among them that go down into the pit) incorporates the technique of using black

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[199] McCarthy calls *Surge, illuminare* the "least dense" of the pieces in the gradual/alleluia genre of the *Gradualia II* (*Liturgy and Contemplation,* p. 142.).
[200] Kerman, *Masses and Motets,* p. 53.
[201] Maria Rika Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), p. 332.

notes to "color" pertinent words.[202] Therefore, not only does Gesualdo use descending scales on the word *descendentibus*, he also uses black notes to show the darkness of the entire phrase (fig. 10.3).

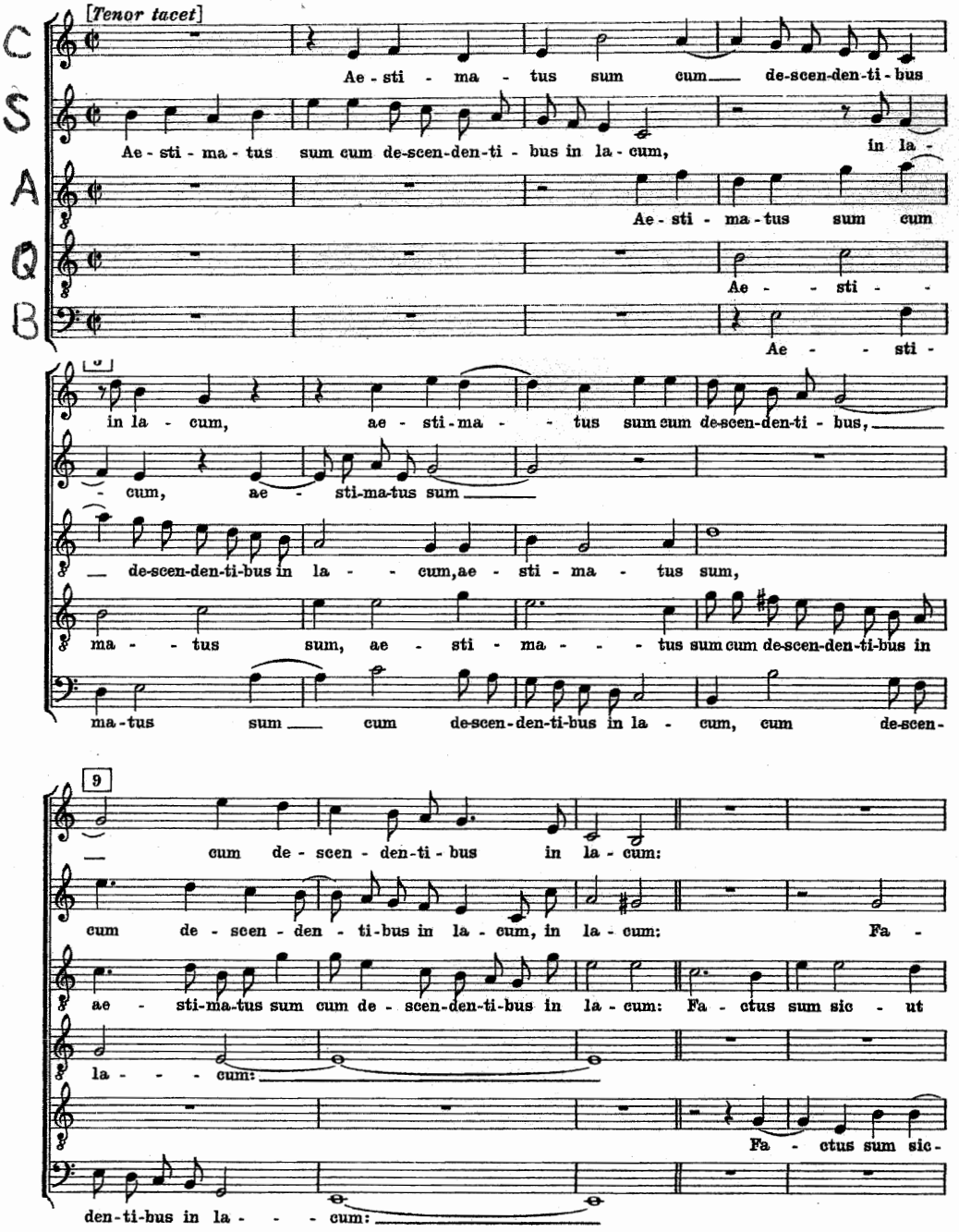

Fig. 10. 3. The opening phrase of *Aestimatus sum.*[203]

[202] Ibid. While the use of "eye music" was decidedly more of a madrigalian effect, it is not out of the realm of possibility to think that a composer known for his madrigals would have brought some of those techniques into his sacred music.

Again, modal analysis of the piece is difficult, to say the least; it appears to be in a mode that is centered on the Phrygian on E. Turning to Zarlino once more for a description of the nature of the Phrygian mode, we find the following:

> The ancients attributed to the Phrygian mode (as Plutarch shows) the nature of sparking the soul and inflaming it with anger and wrath, and of provoking lasciviousness and lust; for they considered the Phrygian to be a somewhat vehement and furious mode, possessing a most severe and cruel nature, capable of rendering a man senseless … Aristotle called this mode bacchic, namely, furious and bacchanal, and Lucian called it furious or impetuous. Apuleius, however, called it religious.[204]

Certainly the Phrygian mode would have been an appropriate choice for a composer who, like his Mannerist brethren, revered the ancients and their ideas and who wanted to choose a mode to depict emotion that could "render a man senseless" and yet at the same time reflect an aura of religious belief.

Gesualdo's chromaticism, while not as striking as that in his madrigals, is still in evidence here. He does not hesitate to use flats and sharps with abandon, as in the phrase *inter mortuos* (fig. 10.4), where the *sextus* part moves rapidly from C#-C-Bb-A. Another example of chromaticism used freely is in the verse section *Posererunt me in lacu inferiori, in tenebrosis, et umbra mortis* (they laid me in the lower pit, in the dark places, and in the shadow of death).

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[203] Gesualdo di Venosa, *Responsoria*, p. 87.
[204] Zarlino, *On the Modes*, p. 22.

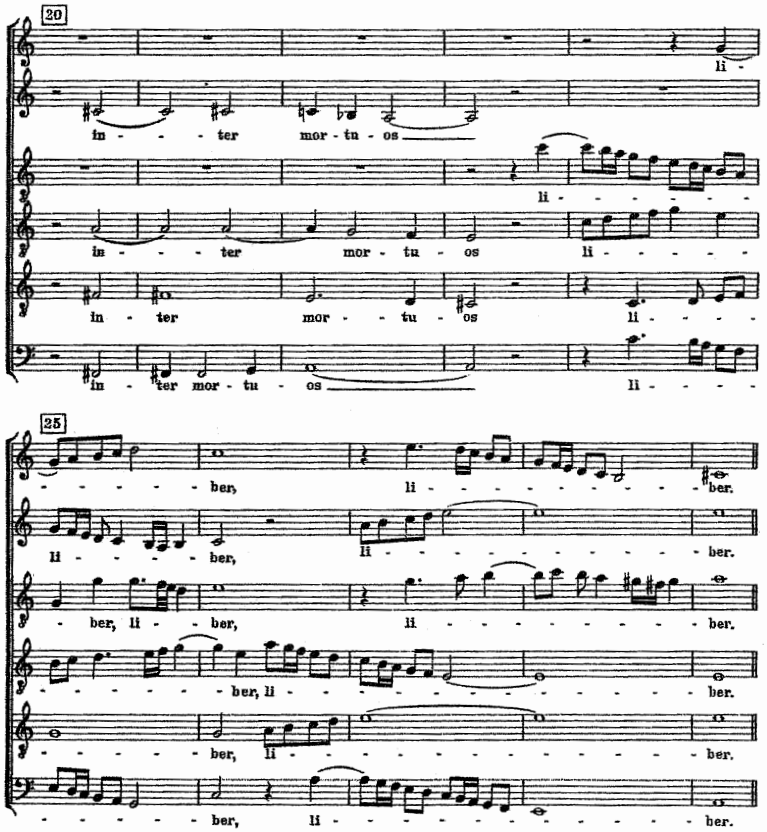

Fig. 10.4. *Inter mortuos liber (Aestimatus sum).*[205]

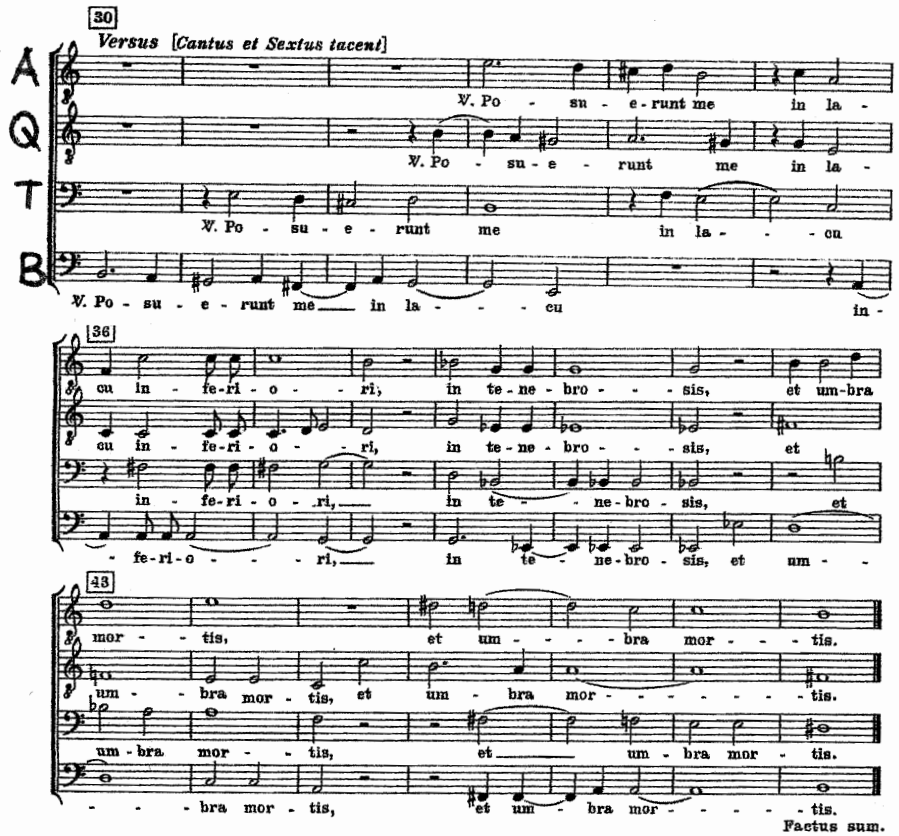

Fig. 10.5. The verse section of *Aestimatus sum.*[206]

[205]Gesualdo di Venosa, *Responsoria*, p. 89.

Not only does the chromaticism displayed here emphasize the darkness of the text, but Gesualdo uses only the lower four voices in this section, the *altus, quintus, tenor,* and *bassus*, which by their timbres would add a darker color (fig. 10.5).

Perhaps the most colorful section of all occurs on the word *liber*, which means free, but here it follows the words *inter mortuos* and creates the phrase "free among the dead." Obviously not a happy thought, Gesualdo once again uses black notes to paint the picture of darkness and gloom, but also uses a sudden explosion of ascending and descending, predominantly stepwise passages in all parts (fig. 10.4). The spiraling effect on the page echoes the spirals so beloved by the Mannerist visual artists, and also creates not only an aural but visual shock to the performers. Maniates discusses this concept of "musical shock" in reference to madrigals, but Gesualdo is obviously using it in this Responsory as well:

> The penchant for grotesque exaggeration evident in all the arts penetrates secular music in a profound way. The refinements grafted onto earlier innovations provide only one proof of this situation. Even more salient is the fact that conservative elements, such as diatonic and contrapuntal ideals, fade into the background as composers seek to pile up one musical shock after another. They are the means they use to surprise and move the jaded tastes of connoisseurs who are all too familiar with novel stereotypes.[207]

So where is the sense of hope here? Although the treatment of the word *liber* gives it a lighter feel than anywhere else in the piece, it is not so much a happy affect as an off-kilter, almost crazed one. However, it is important to remember that after Holy Saturday and its dark despair comes Easter Sunday, with its message of hope and salvation, and Gesualdo did have the tendency to compare his life and suffering with that of Christ. Therefore, he must have fervently hoped that he would also receive a heavenly reward of eternal peace.

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[206] Gesualdo di Venosa, *Responsoria*, pp. 89-90.
[207] Maniates, *Mannerism*, p. 349.

For Gesualdo, this music seems to have been a cathartic exercise; for listeners and performers, it is a musical experience unlike any other:

> Replete with vivid and incisive visions, the texts of the *Responsoria* inspired Gesualdo to some of his most intensely beautiful, sublime, and terrifying music. Though cast in the guise of the Responsoria cycle, its completeness provides a telling of the Passion story, and within the history of that form it must stand as one of the earliest examples in which music rose to the challenge of the emotion inherent in the text.[208]

[208] Watkins, *Gesualdo*, p. 284.

11. "Accompany the senses with reason": Realizing the music of Byrd and Gesualdo in the Twenty-first Century

...we should not surrender judgment of musical matters to the senses alone, for they are fallible, but rather we should accompany the senses with reason.

--Gioseffo Zarlino, *On the Modes,* chapter 35[209]

The performance practice of early music is often a hotly debated issue among twentieth-and twenty-first century musicians, and for the conductors and performers of the music contained in this thesis, there is indeed much to discuss. We have looked at the biographies of both Byrd and Gesualdo, and the political and religious climates in which they lived; we have examined the music from an analytical standpoint, including both modal analysis and text analysis; and we have devoted some time to a movement in the arts (Mannerism) that greatly influenced Gesualdo's compositional style.

This, however, is merely the background research, and this chapter is devoted to the actual rehearsal and performance techniques necessary for an "accurate" portrayal of the music. I put the word "accurate" in quotes because we have no way of knowing exactly how the music sounded during Byrd and Gesualdo's time, just as they had no way of knowing how the ancient music that was considered to be so perfect sounded. We can read texts by late sixteenth-century theorists, composers, and historians that describe the techniques and desired performance goals involved, but people of the sixteenth century differed from us greatly in many aspects, including the physical, intellectual, and cultural.

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[209]Zarlino, *On the Modes*, p. 102: "che nel fare giudicio delle coſe della Muſica, non dobbiamo attribuire tal giudicio in tutto alli ſentimenti; percioche ſono fallaci; ma ſi bene accompagnarli la ragione."

We have such a broad range of musical experience in this day and age, covering several centuries of music that has been passed down to us in many styles and types. Performers in the late sixteenth century had a rather limited range of musical experience—much of the music that came before their time had not been circulated among musicians of varying cultures, and the method of printing music by movable type, developed in 1501 by Ottaviano Petrucci (1466-1539), had been in use for less than a hundred years.

Zarlino's statement about "accompanying the senses with reason" is based more on theoretical ideas than performance issues; however, it is still a good piece of advice for performers of early music in our time. We cannot and must not assign Romantic or twentieth-century ideals to music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque—they may seem more "right" to our ears, but they are not what the composers of this music had in mind.

One thing that is not in question is the concept that the human voice held a special place as the best conveyor of emotions and religious ideas. In the frontispiece of his book *Psalmes, sonets, and songs of sadness and pietie,* written in 1588, William Byrd gives several reasons why everyone should "learne to sing," including the following:

> 7. There is not any Musicke of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voices of Men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.
> 8. The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honor and serve God therewith; and the voice of man is chiefly to be imployed to that ende.
>
> Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.
>
> Since singing is so good a thing
> I wish all men would learne to sing.[210]

[210] Weiss and Taruskin, *Music,* p. 156.

Zarlino, in chapter 35 of the fourth book of *Le Istitutioni harmoniche*, described in no uncertain terms what "anyone must know who desires to arrive at some perfection in music:"[211]

> The aspiring musician should also know how to play the monochord or the harpsichord, if not perfectly, then at least moderately well; the harpsichord, because it is more stable and perfect in its tuning than any other instrument … It is also necessary to be instructed in the art of singing in particular, and in the art of counterpoint or composing as well, and to have a good knowledge of these arts, in order to know how to carry out everything that occurs in music and to judge whether or not it could be successful. For bringing things of music to life is really nothing other than leading them to their ultimate end, or perfection, as also happens in other arts and sciences (such as medicine) which contain both speculative and practical aspects.[212]

Indeed, it was expected of singers of the late Renaissance and early Baroque to be able to improvise above a *cantus firmus*; the prerequisite for composition was singing and improvising in church on a daily basis. "The word *counterpoint* in the sixteenth century referred to improvisation, not to a compositional technique."[213]

Musicians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both singers and instrumentalists, were highly trained. They were expected to know all aspects of music, from composition and theory to performance, and the composers knew that the musicians who would be performing their music would be highly qualified. Martha Elliot, in her chapter on early Baroque performance practice, explains:

> In the seventeenth century, composers and performers did not expect notation to be self-sufficient or to convey every detail in a work. Composers did not believe they had to notate the music exactly as it should sound or even to include all the information the performers needed, such as tempo, dynamics, instrumentation, or consistent rhythms and ornaments. Often composers collaborated closely with performers or participated in performances themselves. If a composer were involved in the rehearsal process, he could tell the performers exactly what he wanted. If not, performers felt knowledgeable enough about the stylistic conventions of the time to make their own choices about tempo,

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[211] Zarlino, *On the Modes*, p. 102.
[212] Ibid., p. 103.
[213] Peter Schubert, *Modal Counterpoint: Renaissance Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. xvii.

dynamics, instrumentation or other variables. All performers, including singers, were also expected to know harmony and counterpoint in order to add embellishments and alter the rhythms in appropriate places.[214]

Scores and editions

Elliott is primarily concerned with the solo voice in her research of early Baroque performance practice; however, she does give some excellent criteria for elements to consider when singing early music. Her first subheading is "Scores and Editions," and she stresses the importance of finding good editions of the music chosen. The ultimate in performance practice research is finding and learning to read original manuscripts, which may or may not be practical for the conductor or performer, depending upon their situation. At any rate, at least making the attempt to look at and to learn to read an original manuscript is desirable, and with facsimile versions more readily available on the Internet, not an impossible task [For examples of original editions of printed music, see Appendix, figs. 8,9].

The advent of the Choral Public Domain Library (www.cpdl.org) has ushered in a variety of editions of early music, all in a format that is free for anyone to print and use. One must be careful of these editions, however—they are not always altered in a scholarly manner, and in an attempt to make the pieces more accessible to modern performers, may bear little resemblance to the original in notation, key, clef, and time signature.

Critical editions of many early composers' works may be found in university libraries, and are usually quite true to the originals. More editing may need to be added to these to give performers an idea of phrasing and articulation, but they are easy to read

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[214] Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 6.

and are true to the original clefs, key and time signatures. Also, these editions have been completed by scholars who are extremely knowledgeable about the composers and their styles.

Pitch

Another consideration is that of pitch. There were no exact "keys" in the music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque, and a group of singers was at liberty to choose whatever starting pitch was comfortable for them. Elliott talks about the complexity of pitch and range for singers of early music today:

> We are accustomed to singing in a much higher range than most seventeenth-century music demands, so the actual height of the notes at modern pitch is not necessarily a problem. But the technical ramifications of singing in a lower pitch range and the physical sensations affecting diction, breath support, and general muscular tension or relaxation can contribute significantly to the overall sound and style a singer can create.[215]

For a vocal group, as for a soloist, range is the primary consideration when choosing a starting pitch for a piece. One must consider the ranges of especially the highest and lowest voices in the piece, and whether the tessitura they represent will produce the desired sound. As was the case with Vicentino's *mutata voce*, a lower tessitura sounds more mournful and plaintive than a high one. Vicentino was not the only composer to use lower voices to express darker emotions, and today's conductor may decide that using a lower range for the piece in question will give a more accurate emotional effect. Another consideration here is the age of the singers—the physical immaturity of younger singers limits them in being able to sing well and in a healthy manner in lower ranges.

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[215] Ibid., p.14.

Pronunciation and resources

Pronunciation of the language of the song can be a complex problem—the English language, for example, has changed greatly over the past five hundred years, and even today's British English is not the same as Renaissance English in spelling, grammar, or pronunciation. Using authentic pronunciation of Renaissance English may result in a performance that is unintelligible to today's audiences, and so the conductor must decide whether to choose intelligibility over authenticity. Twenty-first century Italian pronunciation, on the other hand, differs little from Renaissance pronunciation, and so it is not as much of a consideration for singers as English (or French or German).[216] Again, the conductor who wishes to present a performance that is as historically and stylistically accurate as possible must do the research involved in finding good pronunciation guides.

I must insert a word here about the vast importance of listening to really good recordings of early music. This is not only important for conductors, but for singers as well, and it is an excellent rehearsal tool to provide some listening time for the group as a whole. There are some exemplary modern vocal groups, such as the Tallis Scholars, Stile Antico, or The Cardinal's Musick whose performances are based upon much scholarly research, not only by the conductors but the performers themselves. While these groups may not be entirely accurate in their portrayals of early pieces (and I say that only because we cannot be exactly sure of how the music sounded), they are the result of the current trend toward a more historically accurate performance practice, and an obvious contradiction to recorded performances of thirty or forty years ago.

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[216] Ibid., p. 19.

Phrasing and articulation

While the sacred music of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries may have been considered more "tame" than its secular counterpart, the emotions displayed in the motets we have been analyzing are as intense as any madrigal. In addition, while there are some discrepancies between music of various nationalities, there are phrasing and articulation techniques that apply to all genres and styles:

1. Syllabic stress is vital to the flow of the melodic line of each voice. Emphasis must be placed on the most-stressed syllable, with less emphasis on the others, particularly the final syllable. This can pose a problem if the line is ascending and the highest note falls on the final syllable, but it is essential for correct declamation of the text. In the example of *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem* (fig. 11.1) an accent tenuto on the opening note of each voice's entrance not only emphasizes the dominant syllable, it also sets up the energy and motion of the ascending notes that follow.

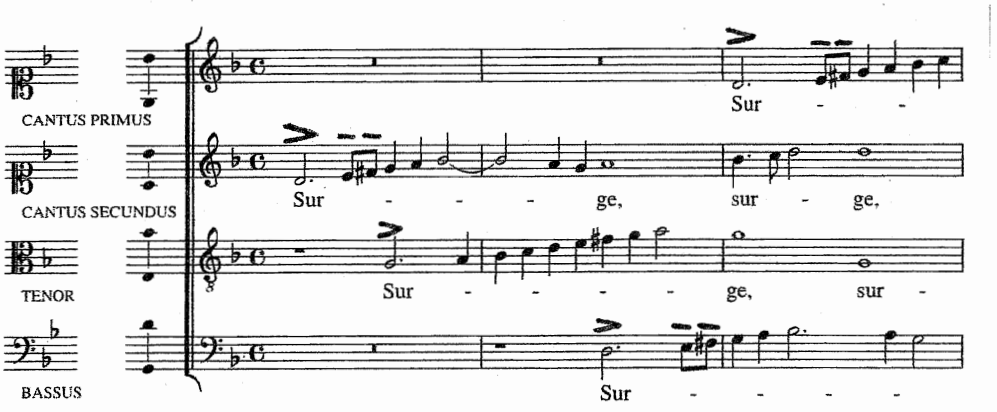

Fig. 11.1. Articulation markings on the first phrase of *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem.*[217]

[217] Byrd, *Gradualia II*, p. 58.

2. Moving notes (those of the smallest denomination, in general) receive emphasis, as in the example above of the opening measures of *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem*. The eighth notes give urgency to the ascending lines describing the word *surge* (arise), and the tenuto markings indicate this emphasis. In *Ave, dulcissima Maria* the altus, quintus, and bassus parts have eighth-note passages on the word *Jesum* that again lend movement to the word and the phrase that it concludes (fig. 11.2).

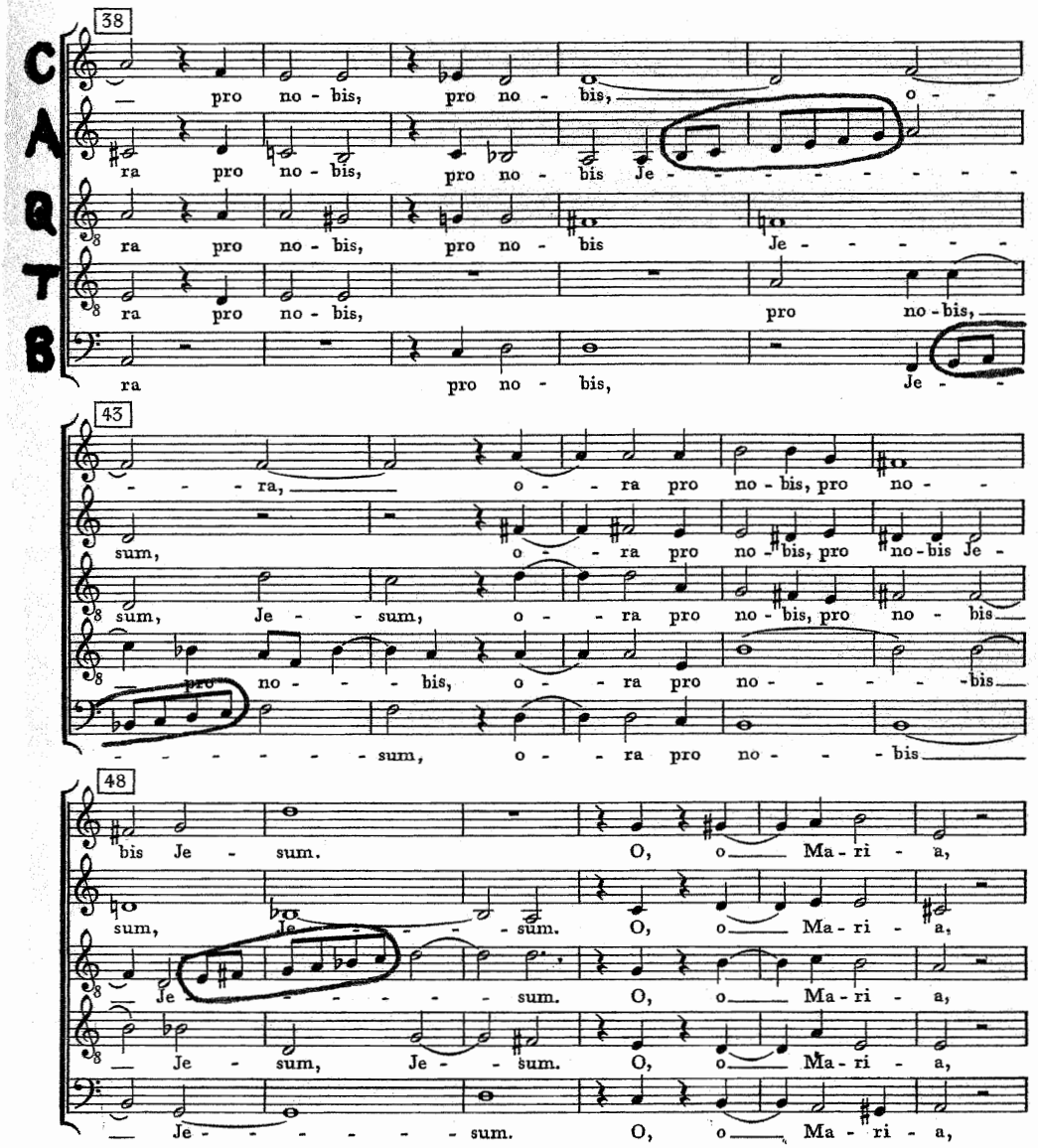

Fig. 11.2. Moving lines on *Jesum* in *Ave, dulcissima Maria.*[218]

[218] Gesualdo, *Sacrae Cantiones*, p. 19.

3. Long notes (breves, semibreves, notes tied over the bar) need motion and shape as well in order not to become static. Vicentino had observed in his treatise that "in motets, according to the devout words, coming somewhat to a stop induces a great deal of devotion."[219] However, letting the voices sit on the notes without any shaping of them results in a flat affect that is part of the reason that some listeners find Renaissance music boring and hard to understand. In the second phrase of *Ave verum corpus*, with the words "natum de Maria Virgine," the *superius*, *medius*, and *tenor* voices have a sustained note on the syllable "ri" while the *bassus* part continues its motion. This calls for the use of a *messa di voce* (or crescendo/decrescendo, in more modern terms) over the sustained note to allow for a swell in the middle before pulling back dynamically for the last syllable of "Maria" (fig. 11.3). Not only does this keep the sustained note in motion, it also gives added emphasis to the most important word of the phrase, "Maria."

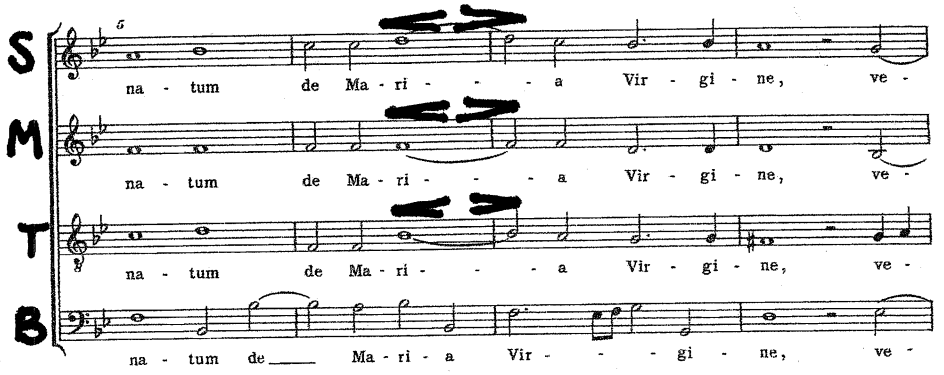

Fig. 11.3. *Ave verum corpus,* second phrase, with *messa di voce.*[220]

Once one begins to pay close attention to how the composer set the text, there are many clues for phrasing and articulation. For example, in fig. 11.3, notice that while the

[219] Kaufman, "Motets," p. 179.
[220] Byrd, *Gradualia I,* p. 82.

top three voices are emphasizing the word "Maria," the *bassus* is preparing for a stress on "Vir" of "Virgine" in the upper voices by the moving eighth notes that lead into the syllable. Byrd has really done the work for us, if we are only careful in examining and preparing the score.

Groupings

Another guide to phrasing and articulation is in rhythmic groupings. Musical lines in the Renaissance were grouped by twos and threes, and an example of this can be found in *Ave verum corpus* (fig. 11.4). The superius, medius, and bassus voices all have groupings of three at the half note on "esto," "nobis," and the "praegu" of "praegustatum." The tenor voice, however, only has one grouping of three on "no" of "nobis." These groupings of three, when the first note is stressed, put the emphasis directly on the primary syllables in the words "esto" and "nobis," and put the primary accent on "prae" of "praegustatum." Returning to duple groupings on "statum" in all voices places the secondary accent on the correct syllable as well. In addition, stress on the first note of each group of three changes the feel of the piece at that point from a duple meter to a triple, when in fact the piece is still in *alla breve*; a common compositional technique of the time, although some modern editions will change the time signature rather than allow the singers to follow the natural rhythm of the groupings. It is a good idea to have singers do grouping analysis themselves once they understand the process, as this helps them to internalize the flow of the rhythms that the composer intended.

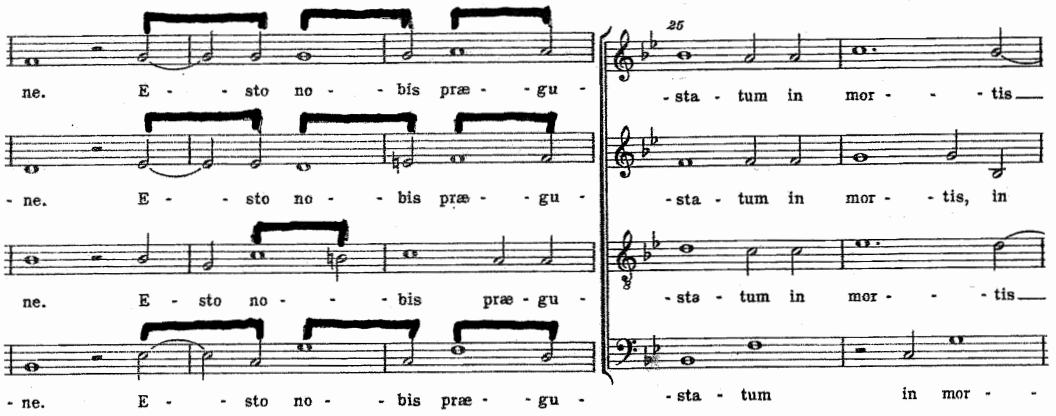

Fig. 11.4. *Ave verum corpus,* rhythmic groupings.[221]

Gesualdo uses a similar technique in *Ave, dulcissima Maria* (fig. 11.5). The stressed syllables here are "O" and the "ri" of "Maria." In the upper four voices, the groupings of three occur on both the first and second "O," with a return to grouping by twos at "ri-a," which allows stress on the proper syllable. The bassus voice has slightly different groupings, presumably because of the leading tone that occurs on "Maria," as part of the cadential pattern. In this example, although "Maria" is obviously a very important word, it evidently was not as important to Gesualdo as the plea of the sinner, "O" being used to gain Mary's attention for intercessory prayer.

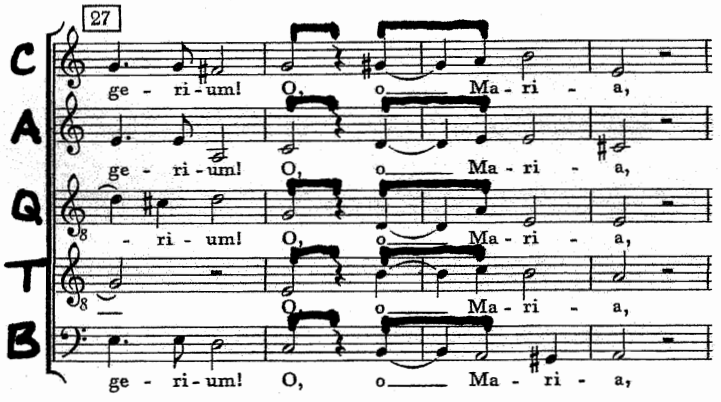

Fig. 11.5. *Ave dulcissima Maria,* rhythmic groupings.[222]

[221] Bryd, *Gradualia I,* p. 83.

Both of these examples show groupings in all or most of the voices concurrently; however, that is not always the case in Renaissance music, and care must be taken to organize and mark the groupings correctly for all voices. Groupings are another detail that takes performance of Renaissance music from a bland and homogenous sound to the intensity and vitality intended by the composers.

Texts

How, as conductors, do we address the issue of sacred texts in today's politically correct climate, especially in the educational arena? In the late Renaissance, no one would have thought that this sacred music, often drawn from the Liturgy, would ever be performed in a concert setting, and yet that is precisely what takes place today, since the Mass no longer lends itself to using these motets in regular service.

While it is important to know what Byrd, Gesualdo, and any other composer of sacred music was thinking and feeling about the texts involved, their thoughts and ideas belong to their time, not ours. Therefore, we must approach the settings of these texts from a historical perspective rather than a religious one, and explain to students and performers why they were important to people of the Renaissance and how, in that historical context, they remain important to us in this day and age.

In addition, instruction in proper ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation is helpful to singers in any setting when they are learning diction in other languages, particularly Italian. The purity of vowels required in correct Latin diction will help singers not only with pronunciation, but with tuning and "spin" of the tone and cadential harmonies.

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[222] Gesualdo, *Sacrae Cantiones*, p. 18.

Conducting

The music of the late sixteenth century was probably not conducted, at least not in the way we would think of conducting. Beat patterns as we know them did not exist, and as this music was written with time signatures very different from our modern ones, our beat patterns would have been useless. Composers often were also performers in the groups that were singing their music, and so they could have explained or demonstrated to the other singers elements of expression and articulation.

For our purposes, using modern conducting techniques with early music can result in a performance that is choppy and places emphasis on the wrong beats or syllables. Modern conducting patterns were developed for music that is measured and has key signatures, but early music is concentrated on the flow and energy of individual lines. It most certainly is important to keep a regular "beat," or *tactus*, while rehearsing a piece, but that must eventually become internalized within the singers themselves.

Therefore, a horizontal rather than vertical approach to conducting will give the desired effect of linear motion rather than "chordal" motion. Conducting the music, rather than a pattern, paying attention to groups of twos and threes, and recognizing which lines need to be emphasized at any given moment are essential for the conductor of early music.

Attention to performance practice of the late Renaissance and early Baroque will result in music that becomes a living, organic being to both the performers and listeners. Elements like pitch, range, tuning, phrasing, articulation, and diction create a performance experience that brings life to this music which so many have discounted as being staid, tired, or boring. An understanding of the lives and times of those who created

this music is crucial for effective performance of it today, and, especially for students, will allow them to see the people of the late sixteenth century as people not all that different from us. We face political, societal, and religious issues just as they did, and as they did, we create music that reflects those struggles. These motets represent a vital part of not only our musical history, but our history at large, and therefore are worthy of our attention and performance.

Conclusion

The late sixteenth century was a turbulent time in England and on the Continent. Dramatic changes in the arts were apparent, particularly by artists and composers turning against earlier Renaissance ideals, resulting in the Mannerist movement. Increased use of chromaticism and emphasis on depiction of text and emotion paved the way for the Baroque and set the stage for the advent of both opera and the solo song.

At the same time, the Church was still reeling from the impact of the Protestant Reformation and the resulting Catholic Counter-Reformation. Post-Tridentine reforms included a call for more understandable music with less polyphony and eventually invited the use of chromatic homophony in the Mass as a means of expressing intense sadness, despair, and torment. Catholics in England and other Reformation countries found themselves either moving to openly Catholic countries or risking their lives to secretly observe the Mass in private homes. England, seesawing between Catholic and Protestant monarchs, would be headed toward civil war in the middle of the seventeenth century because of religious strife.

William Byrd and Carlo Gesualdo were only two of the composers whose lives and compositional styles were deeply impacted by the political, socio-cultural and religious climate of the late Renaissance. While their situations were quite different, their personal torment affected their composing in similar ways, and they were both strongly influenced by the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola and his spiritual exercises in their text-setting. Byrd used his *Gradualia* to give hope and strength to his fellow recusants

while also making a political statement against the Protestant governments of Elizabeth I and James I. Gesualdo used his *Sacrae Cantiones* and especially his *Responsoria* to assuage his guilt over the murder of his first wife while trying to ease the suffering of probable mental and physical illness.

While Gesualdo was evidently strongly influenced by the works and treatises of the chromaticist Nicola Vicentino, the movement was not quite as influential in England as it was on the Continent. Still, Byrd and other English composers of the time did experiment with some chromaticism in their sacred and secular works, with the similar (though not as extreme) result of effective expression of darker emotions.

Both composers created works in which the text took precedence over the music, as was considered desirable by Rome. Gesualdo used liturgical and non-liturgical texts that depicted devotion to Mary as well as the despair of every sinner and pleas for intercessory prayer. Byrd's texts were sometimes outright political rebellion against the Protestant refusal to accept and believe the concept of transubstantiation, and were also texts that, as in popular recusant literature, compared the suffering of the English Catholics to the Jews in the Babylonian captivity.

It is only fitting that we, in the present day, should honor the intent of these composers by researching their methods and background in regard to their music. An understanding of their compositional techniques, beliefs, and use of text are crucial in interpreting and performing this music in the concert setting, as is an understanding of the mores and conventions of the Church in the late Renaissance and early Baroque. Attention to pitch, range, text and syllabic stress, phrasing and articulation must be paid

in order to have effective and accurate performances, and the performers must be aware of differences in pronunciation and production as compared to music of later periods.

The music of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is as vital and complex as the people who created and performed it. It is a reflection of the society and culture from which it came, and it is our responsibility to do our utmost to bring it once again to life.

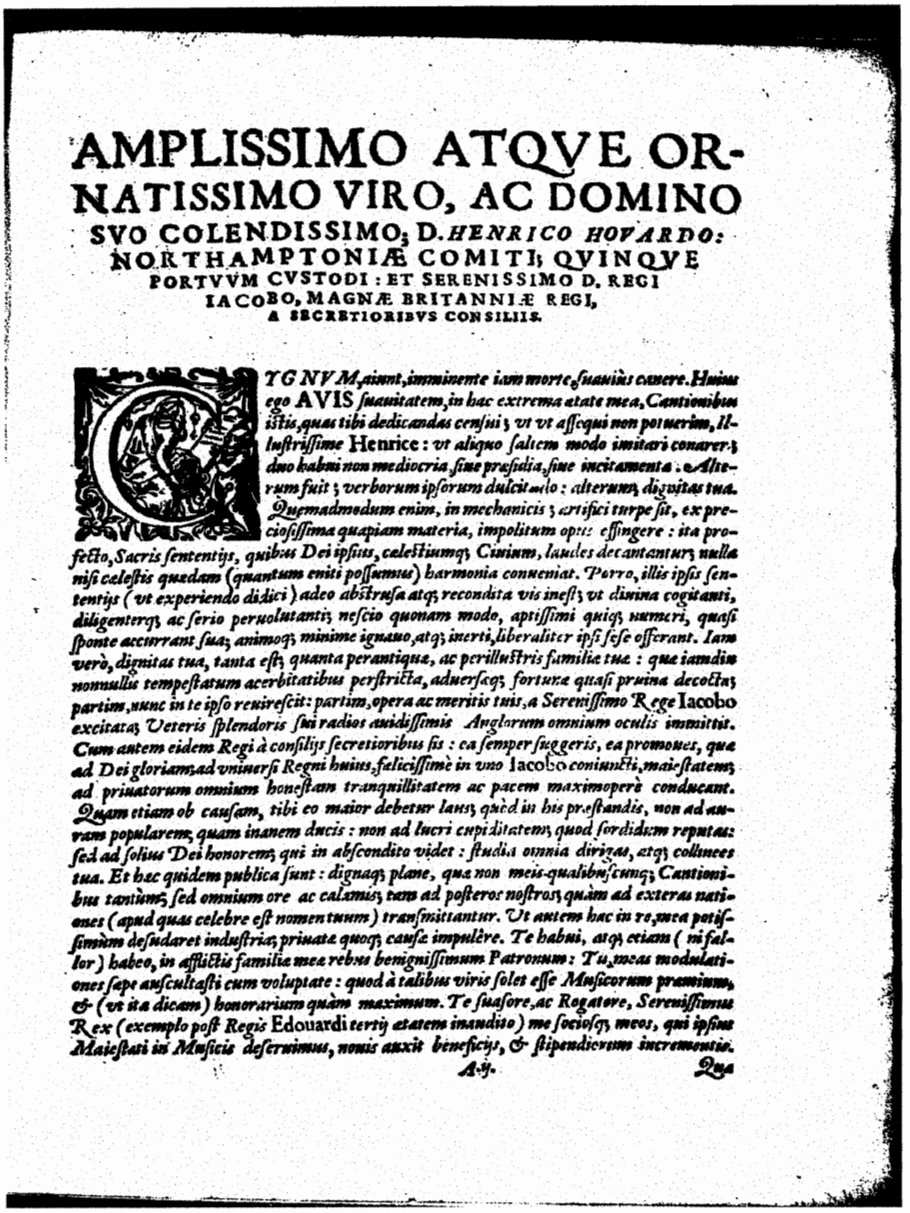
For just as it is unfitting to construct a rough work out of an extremely precious material, so the holy words in which are sung the praises of God and the citizens of heaven deserve nothing less than a heavenly harmony, to the extent that we can attain it.

William Byrd, in the preface to *Gradualia I*, 1605[223]

[223] McCarthy, *Liturgy and Contemplation*, p. 11.

Appendix

Document and Art Images



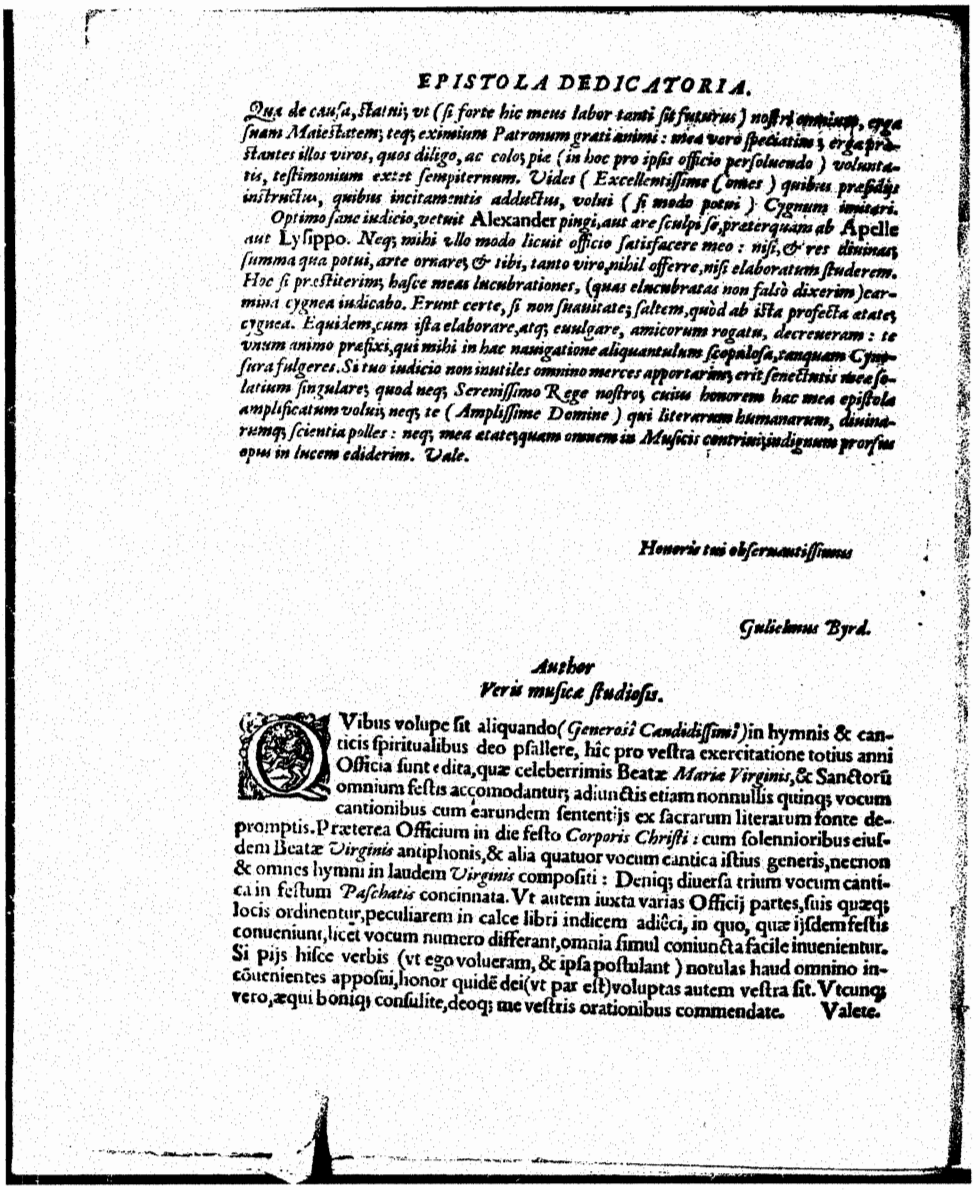
AMPLISSIMO ATQVE ORNATISSIMO VIRO, AC DOMINO SVO COLENDISSIMO, D. *HENRICO HOVARDO:* NORTHAMPTONIÆ COMITI, QVINQVE PORTVVM CVSTODI: ET SERENISSIMO D. REGI IACOBO, MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ REGI, A SECRETIORIBVS CONSILIIS.

CYGNVM aiunt, imminente iam morte, suauius canere. Huius ego AVIS *suauitatem, in hac extrema ætate mea, Cantionibus istis, quas tibi dedicandas censui; vt vt assequi non potuerim, illustrissime* Henrice: *vt aliquo saltem modo imitari conarer; duo habui non mediocria siue præsidia, siue incitamenta. Alterum fuit; verborum ipsorum dulcitudo: alterum, dignitas tua. Quemadmodum enim, in mechanicis; artifici turpe sit, ex pretiosissima quapiam materia, impolitum opus effingere: ita profecto, Sacris sententijs, quibus Dei ipsius, cœlestiumq; Ciuium, laudes decantantur; nulla nisi cœlestis quædam (quantum enim possumus) harmonia conueniat. Porro, illis ipsis sententijs (vt experiendo didici) adeo abstrusa atq; recondita vis inest; vt diuina cogitanti, diligenterq; ac serio peruolutanti; nescio quonam modo, aptissimi quiq; numeri, quasi sponte occurrant sua; animoq; minime ignauo, atq; inerti, liberaliter ipsi sese offerant. Iam verò, dignitas tua, tanta est; quanta perantiqua, ac perillustris familiæ tuæ: quæ iamdiu nonnullis tempestatum acerbitatibus perstricta, aduersaq; fortuna quasi pruina decocta; partim, nunc in te ipso reuiruit: partim, opera ac meritis tuis, a Serenissimo Rege* Iacobo *excitata; Veteris splendoris sui radios auidissimis Anglorum omnium oculis immittit. Cum autem eidem Regi à consilijs secretioribus sis: ea semper suggeris, ea promoues, quæ ad Dei gloriam, ad vniuersi Regni huius, felicissimè in vno* Iacobo *coniuncti, maiestatem; ad priuatorum omnium honestam tranquillitatem ac pacem maximoperè conducant. Quam etiam ob causam, tibi eo maior debetur laus; quòd in his præstandis, non ad auram popularem, quam inanem ducis: non ad lucri cupiditatem; quod sordidum reputas: sed ad solius Dei honorem; qui in abscondito videt: studia omnia dirigas, atq; collinees tua. Et hæc quidem publica sunt: dignaq; plane, quæ non meis-qualibus-cunq; Cantionibus tantùm; sed omnium ore ac calamis; tam ad posteros nostros; quàm ad exteras nationes (apud quas celebre est nomen tuum) transmittantur. Vt autem hac in re, mea potissimùm desudaret industria; priuatæ quoq; causæ impulêre. Te habui, atq; etiam (ni fallor) habeo, in afflictis familiæ meæ rebus benignissimum Patronum: Tu, meas modulationes sæpe auscultasti cum voluptate: quod à talibus viris solet esse Musicorum præmium, & (vt ita dicam) honorarium quàm maximum. Te suasore, ac Rogatore, Serenissimus Rex (exemplo post Regis* Edouardi *tertij ætatem inaudito) me socios; meos, qui ipsius Maiestati in Musicis deseruimus, nouis auxit beneficijs, & stipendiorum incrementis.*

A.ij. Qua

Fig. A.1. Byrd's Epistola dedicatoria, *Gradualia, liber primus,* 1610 edition.[224]

[224] *Early English Books Online*, University of Michigan.



EPISTOLA DEDICATORIA.

Quæ de cauſa, ſtatui, vt (ſi forte hic meus labor tanti ſit futurus) noſtri omnium, ergà ſuam Maieſtatem, teq; eximium Patronum grati animi: mea verò ſpeciatim, erga præſtantes illos viros, quos diligo, ac colo, pie (in hoc pro ipſis officio perſoluendo) voluntatis, teſtimonium exiret ſempiternum. Vides (Excellentiſſime (omes) quibus præſidijs inſtructus, quibus incitamentis adductus, volui (ſi modo potui) Cygnum imitari.

Optimo ſane iudicio, vetuit Alexander pingi, aut are ſculpi ſe, præterquam ab Apelle aut Lyſippo. Neq; mihi vllo modo licuit officio ſatisfacere meo: niſi, & res diuinas, ſumma qua potui, arte ornare, & tibi, tanto viro, nihil offerre, niſi elaboratum ſtuderem. Hoc ſi præſtiterim, hæſce meas lucubrationes, (quas elucubratas non falsò dixerim) carmina cygnea iudicabo. Erunt certe, ſi non ſuauitate, ſaltem, quòd ab iſta profecta ætate, cygnea. Equidem, cum iſta elaborare, atq; euulgare, amicorum rogatu, decreueram: te vnum animo præfixi, qui mihi in hac nauigatione aliquantulum ſcopuloſa, tanquam Cynoſura fulgeres. Si tuo iudicio non inutiles omnino merces apportarim, erit ſenectutis meæ ſolatium ſingulare, quod neq; Seremiſſimo Rege noſtro, cuius honorem hac mea epiſtola ampliſicatum volui, neq; te (Ampliſſime Domine) qui literarum humanarum, diuinarumq; ſcientia polles: neq; mea ætate quam omnem in Muſicis contriui, indignum prorſus opus in lucem ediderim. Vale.

Honoris tui obſeruantiſſimus

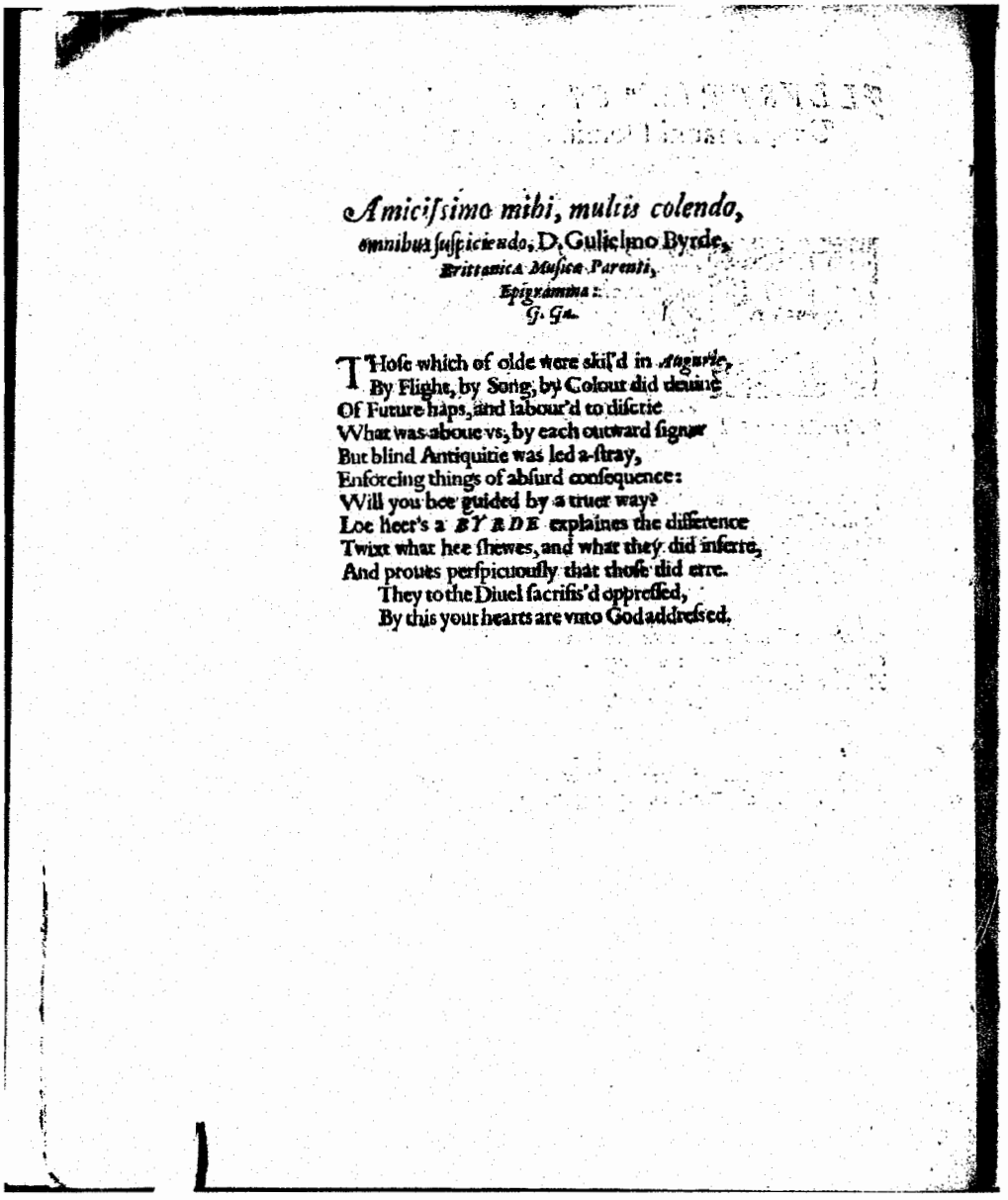
Gulielmus Byrd.

Author
Verè muſicæ ſtudioſis.

QVibus volupe ſit aliquando (Generoſi Candidiſſimi) in hymnis & canticis ſpiritualibus deo pſallere, hîc pro veſtra exercitatione totius anni Officia ſunt edita, quæ celeberrimis Beatæ Mariæ Virginis, & Sanctorũ omnium feſtis accomodantur; adiunctis etiam nonnullis quinq; vocum cantionibus cum earundem ſententijs ex ſacrarum literarum fonte depromptis. Præterea Officium in die feſto Corporis Chriſti: cum ſolennioribus eiuſdem Beatæ Virginis antiphonis, & alia quatuor vocum cantica iſtius generis, necnon & omnes hymni in laudem Virginis compoſiti: Deniq; diuerſa trium vocum cantica in feſtum Paſchatis concinnata. Vt autem iuxta varias Officij partes, ſuis quæq; locis ordinentur, peculiarem in calce libri indicem adiẽci, in quo, quæ ijſdem feſtis conueniunt, licet vocum numero differant, omnia ſimul coniuncta facile inuenientur. Si pijs hiſce verbis (vt ego volueram, & ipſa poſtulant) notulas haud omnino incõuenientes appoſui, honor quidẽ dei (vt par eſt) voluptas autem veſtra ſit. Vtcunq; vero, æqui boniq; conſulite, deoq; me veſtris orationibus commendate. Valete.

Fig. A.2. Byrd's Epistola dedicatoria and address to reader, *Gradualia, liber secundus,* 1607 edition.[225]

[225] *Early English Books Online*, University of Michigan.

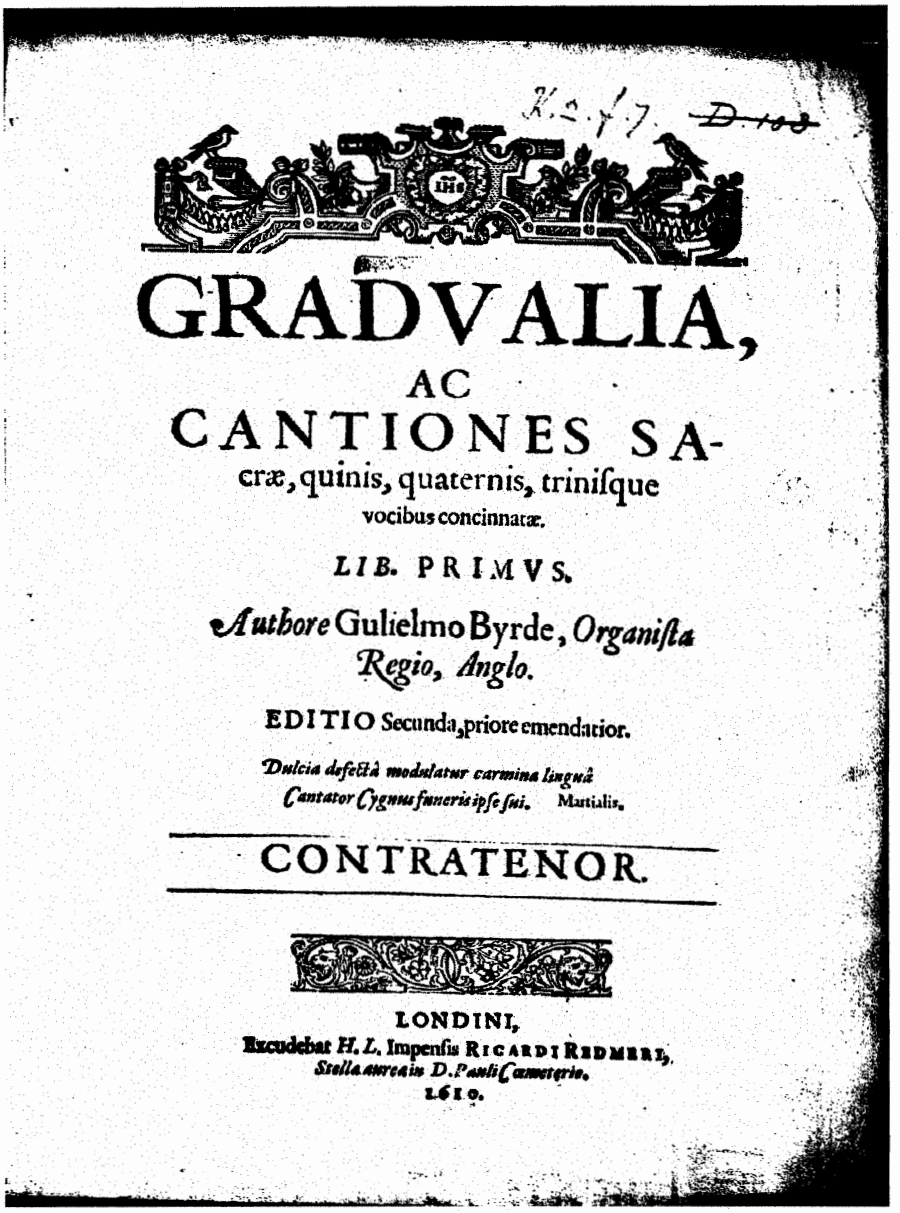


Amiciſsimo mihi, multis colendo,
omnibus ſuſpiciendo, D. Gulielmo Byrde,
Brittanicæ Muſicæ Parenti,
Epigramma:
G. Ga.

THoſe which of olde were skil'd in *Augurie*,
By Flighe, by Song, by Colour did deuine
Of Future haps, and labour'd to diſcrie
What was aboue vs, by each outward ſigne
But blind Antiquitie was led a-ſtray,
Enforcing things of abſurd conſequence:
Will you bee guided by a truer way?
Loe heer's a *BYRDE* explaines the difference
Twixt what hee ſhewes, and what they did inferre,
And proues perſpicuously that thoſe did erre.
They to the Diuel ſacrifis'd oppreſſed,
By this your hearts are vnto God addreſsed.

Fig. A.3. Epigrammatic poem from the preface to the *liber secundus* of *Gradualia,* 1607 edition.[226]

[226] *Early English Books Online*, University of Michigan.



GRADVALIA,

AC

CANTIONES SA-

cræ, quinis, quaternis, triniſque

vocibus concinnatæ.

LIB. PRIMVS.

Authore Gulielmo Byrde, *Organiſta Regio, Anglo.*

EDITIO Secunda, priore emendatior.

Dulcia defectâ modulatur carmina linguâ
Cantator Cygnus funeris ipſe ſui. Martialis.

CONTRATENOR.

LONDINI,
Excudebat H. L. Impenſis RICARDI REDMERI,
Stella aurea in D. Pauli Cœmeterio.
1610.

Fig. A.4. Frontispiece, *Gradualia, liber primus,* 1610 edition.[227]

[227] *Early English Books Online*, University of Michigan.

Fig. A.5. Jacopo Pontormo, *Deposition,* c. 1528, oil on wood. Note the unnatural placement of figures, such as Christ's body on the man's shoulders beneath, and the impossible way that the man is balanced on his toes. The entire composition creates an elongated spiral that draws the eye upward. [228]

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[228] Emil Kren and Daniel Marx, *Web Gallery of Art.*

Fig. A.6. Parmigianino, *Madonna dal Collo Lungo (Madonna with Long Neck)*, 1534-40, oil on panel. This is an example of typical Mannerist distorted and elongated figures- note the odd proportions of the Christ Child, the length of the arm on the figure in the lower right-hand corner, and the placement and length of the leg on the figure on the lower left, in addition to the unusual length of the Madonna's neck.[229]

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[229] Emil Kren and Daniel Marx, *Web Gallery of Art*.

Fig. A.7. Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Summer,* 1573, oil on panel. Note the artist's name and the year of composition worked into the neck and sleeve of the figure's jacket, which is made of wheat. Arcimboldo created several "portraits" of this sort, using fruits, vegetables, and grains to portray a human figure, with the results being rather grotesque.[230]

[230] Emil Kren and Daniel Marx, *Web Gallery of Art.*

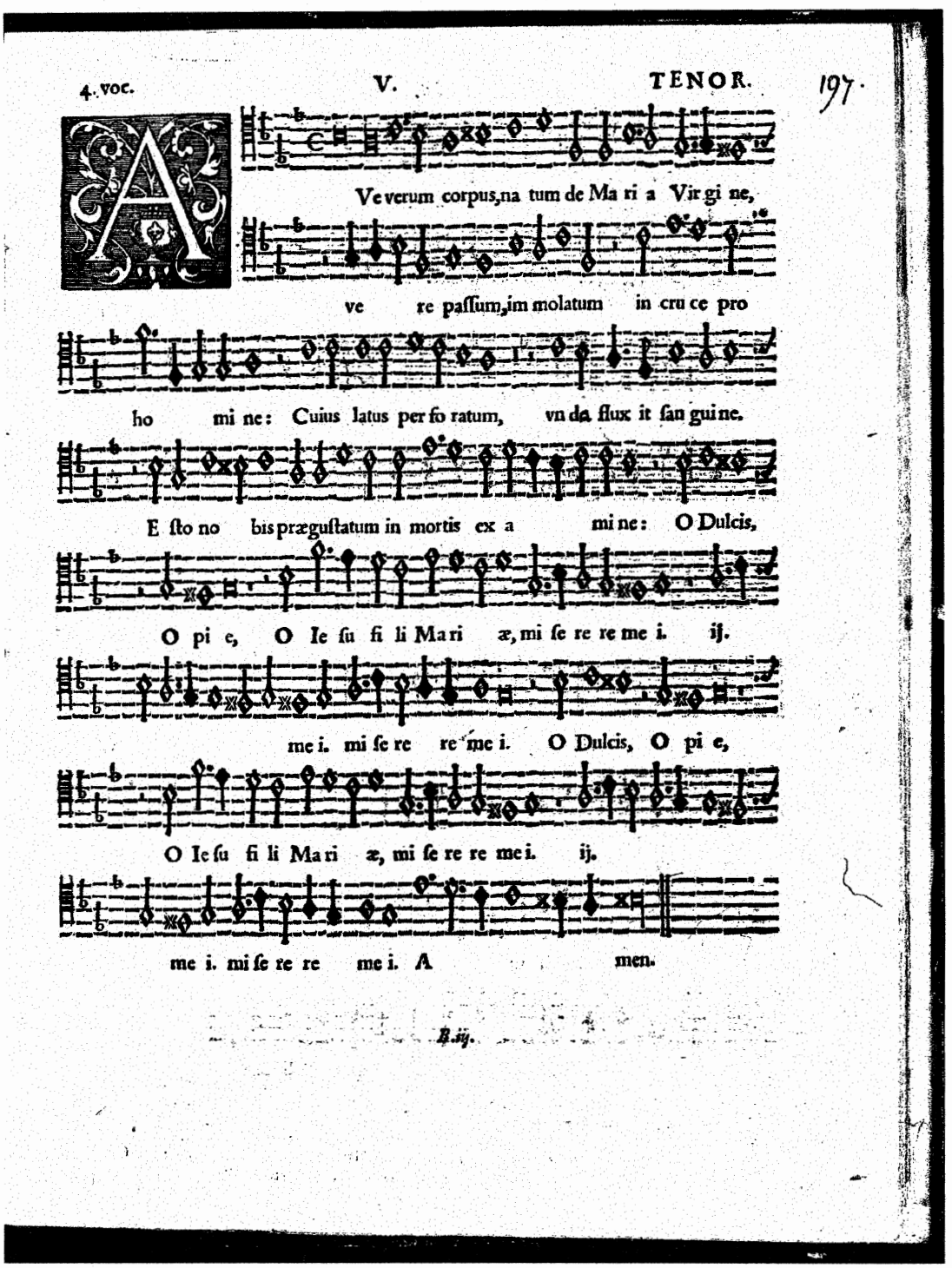

Fig. A.8. *Ave verum corpus, tenor* part.[231]

[231] *Early English Books Online,* University of Michigan.

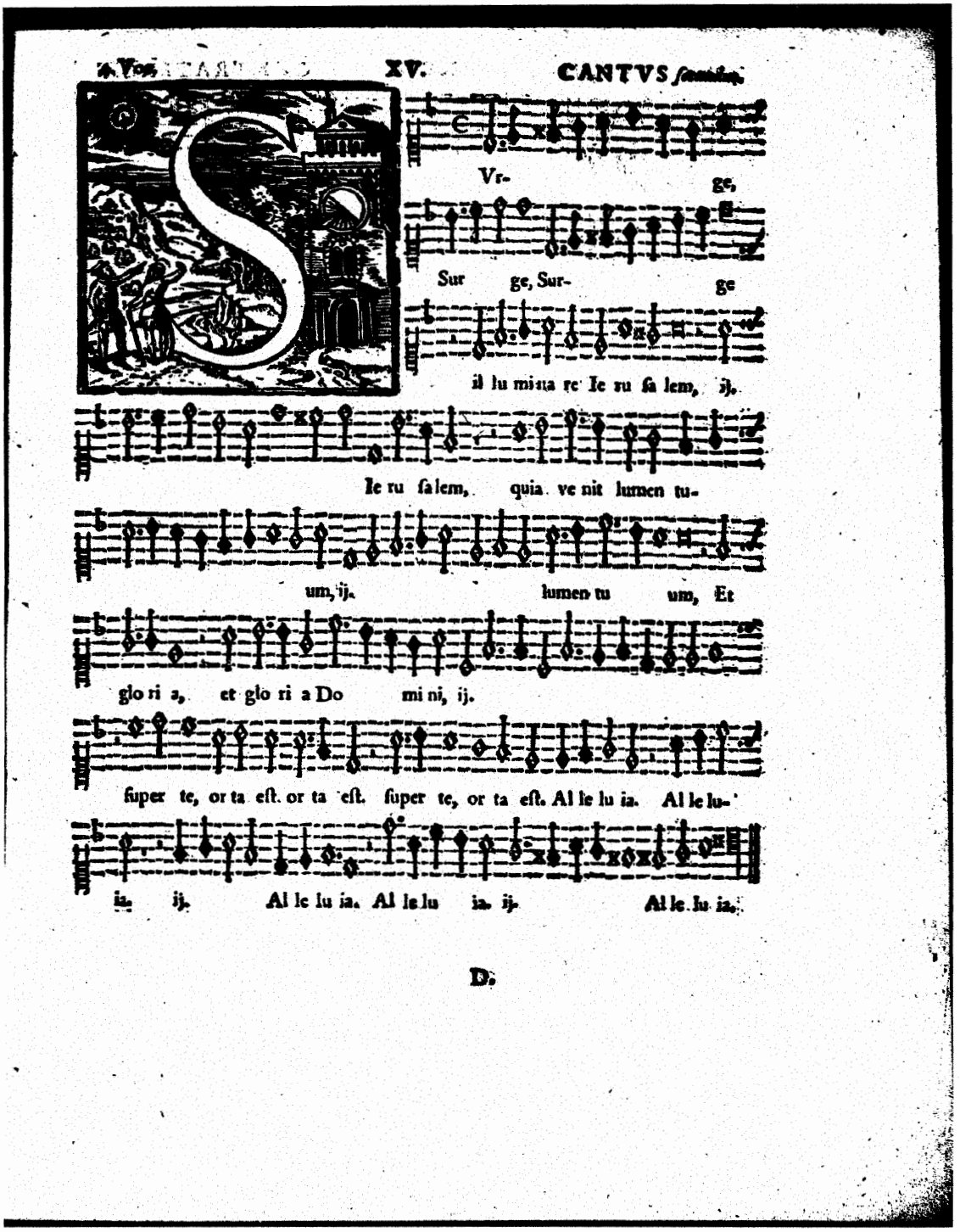

Fig. A.9. *Surge, illuminare Jerusalem, cantus secundus* part.[232]

[232] *Early English Books Online,* University of Michigan.

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