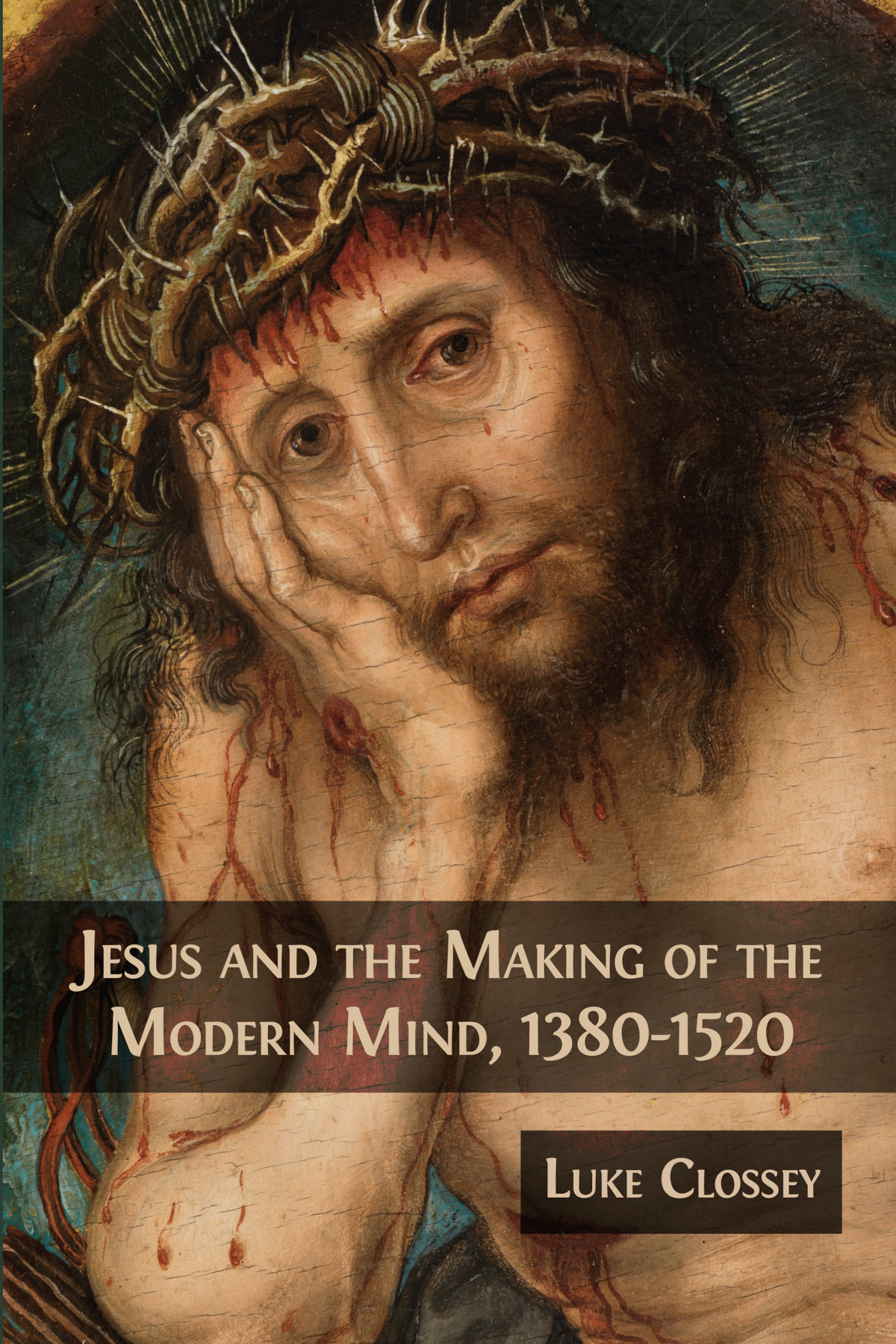

Jesus and the Making of the Modern Mind, 1380-1520

Luke Clossey

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18. Elevated Speech and Song

Jalal-al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505) wants to control how you say "Jesus" in Arabic. For the word "Isa," he insists the letter alif ("a") be voiced, just a bit, like an "e." This tendency, called *imala* [inclination], is the subject of an entire chapter in his treatise the *Itqan* [Precision]. With a plain-ken interest in particular variations on normative pronunciation, al-Suyuti noted that this inclination occurred among the Bedouins of central Arabia. The entire chapter—on a modified pronunciation of this one vowel—includes ten "causes," four "reasons," instructions for the tongue, and dozens of citations of authorities.[1] Precision mattered.

When people referred to Jesus as a personal name, or invoked Jesus in prayer, they needed to only speak carefully enough to be understood. This chapter looks at more systematic and controlled ways of vocalizing the word "Jesus" and Jesus-related texts, in terms of factors like pronunciation, volume, breath control, and coordination with other peoples' utterances.

Systematizing Jesus vocalization with regular rules created subtle connections accessible only through the deep ken. Some Muslims scholars, especially, who were inclined towards the plain ken did take into account human limitations and historical, cultural particularities, as with al-Suyuti's interest in the Bedouins. For the most part, however, this chapter serves as an acoustic lake for the deep ken to dive into. Two phenomena usually separated in scholarship are considered together here: Christian performance of their liturgy, and Muslim recitation of their Qur'an.

1 Al-Suyuti, *The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'an*, trans. Ḥamid Algar (Reading: Garnet, 2011), 225–31. In contrast, the Franciscan theologian Pierre des Gros (ca. 1464) worried that too much concern with pronunciation could be counterproductive. Pierre des Gros, *Jardin des Nobles*, in BnF MS Fr. 193, fol. 348rv. See Paul Saenger, "Books of Hours and Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages," in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1989), 144–50; Laura Sterponi, "Reading and Meditation in the Middle Ages: *Lectio divina* and Books of Hours," *Text & Talk* 28 (2008): 667–89 (671–72), https://doi.org/10.1515/TEXT.2008.034

 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0371.18

The Power of Sound

Traditionally, sound had an importance that is not obvious to us moderns. In 1400, the spoken word was generally considered superior to the written. Reading was social and vocal.[2] Before 1300, normally a prayer would be spoken, and even a "silent" prayer would be minimally audible, if not understandable. Prayers were usually not freestyle, but were set texts to be read aloud. Thus, one would "say" the Book of Hours, not "read" it, even if saying the prayers silently. Pierre des Gros explained that vocal prayer was good because of "redundancy"—through it the body externalizes internal devotion, as Jesus said, "the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (Mt 12:34).[3] Sometimes a theologian, like Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420), made an attempt to argue that the written word was not inferior, but this was an unusual perspective.[4] In the Islamicate world, the belief in the goodness of orality was even stronger. Arabic poets, as well as the Bedouin nomads before Islam, had a strong preference for the oral over the written, which was suspicious and low status. Most Muslims were not fluent Arabic readers, and approached the Qur'an with their ears rather than their eyes.[5]

The priority of the oral over the written can even be seen in the punctuation of the Qur'an, designed to serve pronunciation, not grammar. Punctuation marks conformed as much, if not more, to the pronunciation and oral rhythm as to the syntax of the text itself. A long sentence might be broken up into verses as a kindness to the reciter. The marks were numerous, and their meanings looked to the practice of recitation—as well as to a plain-ken reasoning based on human opinions and human limitations: some pauses were required or prohibited,

2 Alessandro Arcangeli, "Reading Time: The Act of Reading and Early Modern Time Perceptions," *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 6 (2017): 17–37, https://doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-20387; Robert Darnton, "History of Reading," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1991), 140–67 (150); Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of Reading* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 159–64; Elspeth Jajdelska, *Silent Reading and the Birth of the Narrator* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442684805; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham UP, 1982), 72–73; Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 50–51; Paul Saenger, "Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society," *Viator* 13 (1982): 367–414; Saenger, "Books," 142–43.

3 Pierre des Gros, *Jardin des Nobles*, fol. 346v.

4 Pierre d'Ailly, *Concepts and Insolubles*, trans. Paul Vincent Spade (Dodrecht: Reidel, 1980), 36.

5 Martin Lings, *Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: Scorpion Publishing, 1987) 11–12; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006), 1–20 (6).

while optional ones included signals like "at times the reciter is obliged to pause because of coughing or lack of breath" or the "majority view is that one should pause here."[6]

Consonance

The best tool for understanding the deep ken's approach to music is consonance. As Chapter 2 explains, the deep ken values and attends to consonance, and the plain ken, dissonance. These concepts were also paramount in the fifteenth century. Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72) wrote about beauty as a kind of harmony, "a form of sympathy and consonance of the parts within a body." His term for beauty, taken from Cicero's (106–43 BC) theories of rhetoric, is *concinnitas*, which evokes ideas of harmony and proportion, of balanced parts harmonizing into a perfectly integrated whole.[7] Luca Pacioli (d. 1517) listed thirteen qualities of the "divine" ratio of parts to each other or to the whole, in terms of worthiness, uniqueness, and ineffability; his list ended at thirteen to consonate with the number of Jesus and the disciples.[8] One fourteenth-century theorist described the *mixturam suavem* [sweet mixture] of consonance, which could be reached mathematically or vocally.[9] Johannes Tinctoris (d. 1511) stressed the plain-ken particularism involved in appreciating consonance: "Some of these harmonies were suitable, appropriate, and beneficial for different ages and customs. There was not an equal pleasure or estimation of them among all." Even at the level of the individual, "a relaxed spirit enjoys relaxed harmonies…"[10]

6 Syed Barakat Ahmad, *Introduction to Qur'anic Script* (London: Routledge, 1999), 104–06. See Frederik Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān," in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), IV, 353–54.

7 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 303 (9.5). See Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art*, 3 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2013), I, 124–25; Robert Tavernor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1998), 43.

8 Luca Pacioli, *Divina proportione*, ed. Constantin Winterberg (Vienna: Carl Graeser, 1889), 58–59.

9 Walter Odington, *De speculatione musice*, in *Scriptorum de musica medii ævi*, ed. Edmond de Coussemaker, 4 vols. (Paris: Durand, 1864), I, 199. See John L. Snyder, "Theinred of Dover on Consonance: A Chapter in the History of Harmony," *Music Theory Spectrum* 5 (1983): 110–20.

10 Johannes Tinctoris, *Liber de natura et proprietate tonorum*, in *Opera theoretica*, ed. Albert Seay, 2 vols. (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1975–78), I, 68–69. See Rob C. Wegman, "Johannes Tinctoris and the Art of Listening," in *Recevez Ce Mien Petit Labeur: Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Ignace Bossuyt*, ed. Mark Delaere and Pieter Bergé (Leuven: Leuven UP, 2008), 279–96.

Today we might think of consonance primarily in term of harmonic music. In the fifteenth century, consonance transcended boundaries. Harmony and proportion created consonance in and between a variety of fields: primarily mathematics and theology, but also textual study, architecture, music, and the visual arts. Alberti was prolific in making links. He compared the harmony among parts of a visual composition with that among phrases, clauses, and sentences of a textual passage. He saw music underlying his architecture, and in one instance worried that with an alteration in a set of pilasters "all that music becomes a discord."[11] He joined the mathematical, the audio, and the visual: "The very same numbers that cause sounds to have that *concinnitas*, pleasing to the ears, can also fill the eyes and mind with wondrous delight."[12]

In the Far West, theorists continued a longer tradition of linking music, and particularly consonance, with morality. An anonymous ninth-century *Liber enchiriadis de arte musica* [Handbook of the Art of Music] notes that the "same guiding principle that controls the concord of pitches regulates the natures of mortals," for it is through the numerical, audible consonances that "the eternal harmony of life and of the conflicting elements of the whole world is united as one with material things."[13] Tinctoris explained the ethical potential of music in terms of numerical consonances between earthbound music and the movement of celestial bodies.[14] Carlo Valgulio (1440–98) wrote a preface (proem) to his own Latin translation (1507) of Plutarch's (d. after 119) *De Musica* [On Music]. He emphasized the morality of music and how that related to consonant intervals: "The essence of music is the movement of the soul, which drives away evils from the soul invaded by confusion."[15] The Sister Clara of Ostren developed a pedagogical system, to teach the youngest nuns musical notes, which linked each note to a virtue of Jesus.[16] The subtle connections she makes between tone, virtue, and canon are not all clear, but

11 Leon Battista Alberti, *Opere volgari*, ed. Cecil Grayson, 3 vols. (Bari: Gius, Laterza, and Figli, 1973), III, 292.

12 Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, 305 (9.5). See Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), 135–37.

13 *Musica Enchiriadis and Scolica Enchiriadis*, ed. Raymond Erickson (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1995), 30–31.

14 Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017), 47–48.

15 Carlo Valgulio, "The Proem on Plutarch's *Musica* to Titus Pyrrhinus," in *The Florentine Camerata Translations*, trans. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1989), 32.

16 Johannes Meyer, *Women's History in the Age of Reformation: Johannes Meyer's Chronicle of the Dominican Observance*, trans. Claire Taylor Jones (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2019), 99–100. Note that this is the hexachord, not the diatonic scale.

space seems to be involved: the lowest note evokes humility and the physical lowering required to wash feet, while the highest links to a raising up from the dead, and into heaven. Similarly, Jean Gerson (1363–1429) developed his own system of consonance between music and virtue, and expanded it to include language.

	VOWEL	TONE[17]	VIRTUE	SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE
Clara of Ostren		ut/do	humility	Incarnation, washing disciples' feet
		re	obedience	Jesus's human parents, God at the Crucifixion
		mi	charity / divine love	Jesus's self-sacrifice
		fa	patience	Passion
		sol	serenity	"willingly and serenely" allowed Crucifixion (despite asking, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")
		la	prudence	Resurrection and Ascension (because "each person should swing up above all earthly things")
Jean Gerson	U	do (ut)	pain (*dolor*)	
	E	re	hope (*spes*)	
	I	mi	compassion (*compassio*)	
		fa		
	O	sol	fear (*timor*)	
	A	la	joy (*gaudium*)	

Table 18.1 Medieval Music Theories.

Here, text determined music and emotion. Thus, the written note not only fixed the pitch it should be sung *at* but the emotion it should be sung *with*. If the sung syllable had an "a" vowel, it would be sung with the pitch of "la" and with

17 The traditional solmization names of the notes, attributed to the eleventh-century Guido of Arezzo, come from the first syllable of each line of a hymn to John the Baptist, each of which begins on a one-step-higher note: **Ut** queant laxīs / **re**sonāre fibrīs / **Mī**ra gestōrum /**fa**mulī tuōrum... Giovanni Battista Doni (d. 1647) replaced "ut" with "do," the first syllable of *dominus*, on the grounds of easier pronunciation.

the emotion of joy. Note that the (imperfect) deep-ken correspondence between each vowel, the vowel in the name of the note, and one of the vowels in the name of the emotion. For example, **e** = r**e** = *spe*s. Gerson structured these emotion-notes as a cross: a vertical from u/pain up to a/joy and a horizontal from o/fear on the left to e/hope, with i/compassion representing Jesus in the middle.[18] Gerson, like Sister Clara, here engineered a deep-ken system by which a rich and deep hidden meaning could be extracted from a restrained melody.

This chapter hears consonance in this narrow sense of two harmonious notes, but also with a panoramic deep ken finds consonance more broadly across music, and beyond. The disparate musical pieces composing a mass sought consonance with each other, and with the liturgical context. A note in a passage of transplanted music allowed consonance between the original and the new. The elevation of speech consonated with the greatness of God's ear.

Varieties of Jesus Speech and Song

In what contexts would we hear "Jesus" being voiced in this elevated, regulated way?

Beyond personal names, Muslims most often spoke Jesus's name when reciting the Qur'an, where it occurs twenty-five times. Usually, Qur'anic recitation was soloistic, unmetered, and used an improvised melody. Proper recitation of the Qur'an was only in Arabic.[19] The Qur'an should be recited partially during the five Friday prayers, and completely during the month of Ramadan. Recitation might also happen to mark a death, or the Prophet's birthday, and could occur both in private and public.[20] This modern recording recites surah 61, which mentions misguided people's condemnation of Jesus as a sorcerer (see Audio Clip 1).

18 Jean Gerson, "Collectorium super Magnificat," in OC, VIII, 165–79; Jean Gerson, "Canon ad intellectum monocordi," in OC, IX, 704–05; Jean Gerson, "Ad intelligentiam canticordi," in OC, IX, 714–17. For the application of Gerson's Jesus musical theory to Ockeghem's "My my mass," see Gayle C. Kirkwood, "My my as Theological Allegory," in Johannes Ockeghem, *Masses and Mass Sections*, ed. Jaap van Benthem, 3 vols. (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1994–2004), III, xiii–xv. For the argument that "my my" refers instead to its being in the Phrygian mode, see Ross W. Duffin, "Mi chiamano Mimi… but My Name is Quarti toni: Solmization and Ockeghem's Famous Mass," *Early Music* 29 (2001): 164–84, https://doi.org/10.1093/earlyj/XXIX.2.164

19 Al-Suyuti, *Perfect*, 276.

20 Jan Just Witkam, "Written in Wax: Quranic Recitational Phonography," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 138 (2018): 807–20 (818–19), https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.138.4.0807

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/604afd6c

Audio Clip 1 Recitation of the Qur'an (surah 61), Saad al-Ghamdi, recorded before 2005, Internet Archive, public domain, https://archive.org/details/Quran-MP3-Ghamdi/061.mp3

Jesus looms larger in the Christian liturgy, especially in the mass, which in fact celebrates the creation of the blood and body of Jesus. Jesus is central to five of the six textual parts of the mass called "ordinary," as they were mostly identical regardless of the calendar date. The Kyrie begs, "Christ, have mercy" (see Audio Clip 2 and Fig. 18.1). The Gloria repeats this request for mercy, and further asks Jesus, "who takes away the sin of the world," to hear our prayer. The Credo affirms belief in the divinity and sonship of Jesus, as well as his Incarnation, Execution, Resurrection, Ascension, and Future Coming. The Sanctus does not explicitly mention Jesus, but declares that "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." To the deep ken, this reference to the Psalms (118:26) would be a literal reference to Jesus, and that connection is reinforced by the gospels' accounts of bystanders jubilantly quoting this line as Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Mt 21:9, Mk 11:9, Lk 19:38, Jn 12:13). The Agnus Dei asks the "Lamb of God," an epithet for Jesus used in Jn 1:29, for mercy and peace. Of the six ordinary parts, only the final, a three-word dismissal, does not reference Jesus. Besides the mass, the second part of the liturgy was the daily office, which annually cycled through the Psalms, with their many literal references to Jesus only visible to the deep ken (see Chapter 11).

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/f5fc5d1b

Audio Clip 2 Kyrie 55, Vatican ad lib. VI, Rick Dechance, recorded 25 June 2006, Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kyrie_55,_Vatican_ad_lib._VI,_Cambrai.ogg

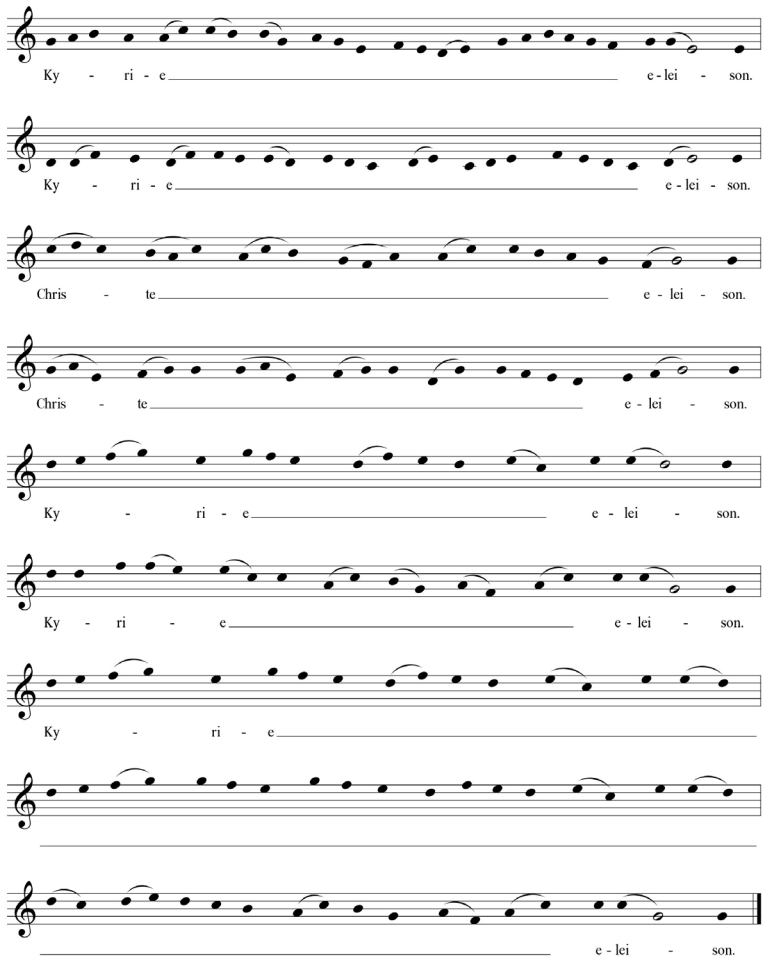


Fig. 18.1 Kyrie 55, Vatican ad lib. VI, Cambrai, Bibl. Mun. 61 (twelfth century), fol. 155v. Transcription by Christina Hutten, CC BY-NC.

In Christian societies in 1400—and in 1500, and perhaps even in 1600—most trained vocalists earned their living by plainchant, especially the "Gregorian" chant collection traditionally associated with the towering sixth-century Pope Gregory I; three centuries after his death Rome still venerated the whip the Pope used to teach choirboys.[21] In terms of complexity, Christian liturgical

21 Richard Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 5–6.

music ranged widely from the restrained monophonic plainchant, through its ornamented and elaborated variations, all the way to the splendour of multi-voice polyphony. Most forms of Qur'anic recitation would join plainchant on the restrained side of the spectrum. While English typically talks of Christian "chanting" and Muslim "reciting," both words describe the same action. Spare or exuberant, all these forms followed rules of beauty that spoke to the deep ken.

Purpose

Why should Muslims recite the Qur'an? Al-Zarkashi (1344–92) advised that a Muslim was obliged to hear and learn the Qur'an, to teach and recite it. He cited a relevant hadith: "The best of you is he who learns and teaches the Qur'an." Al-Zarkashi noted further that one Companion taught that "teaching the Qur'an is a collective duty, and therefore its memorization is incumbent upon the community." Memorization fulfilled that duty, but itself created its own expectations to be especially moral. The Timurid Sultan Ulugh Beg (1394–1449) memorized the Qur'an in all seven variant readings.[22]

Repeated recital aided memorization of the Qur'an, an undertaking which one hadith reported Muhammad comparing to "a camel that is always trying to run away."[23] Al-'Askari (d. 1005) described the challenges and rewards of "memorized knowledge," which was "the most difficult and, at the same time, the most useful and rewarding kind of knowledge that swims with you when your ship sinks."[24] Preservation demanded memorization, and further insisted that the memorized text not be recited from memory, which would allow the introduction of errors. According to al-Zarkashi, the eye should follow the written text as the mouth speaks it, working in harmony for a great act of worship.[25] Al-Suyuti, repeating al-Zarkashi's characterization of memorizing the Qur'an as a collective duty for Muslims, noted that the purpose of this is "that it should not cease to be known by a number of people [...] so that it

22 Anna M. Gade, "Recitation," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 481–93 (488); Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), 84; Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur'an* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), 53–54.

23 Gade, "Recitation," 487.

24 Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 282.

25 Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 60.

can never be altered or corrupted…"[26] Memorization thus shored knowledge up against plain-ken degradations of the ideal text.

We err if we think of the Qur'an as a book that serves as a source of information, or merely as a source of authority that can be referred to for the resolution of disputes. Al-Zarkashi understood the Qur'an not merely as something to be read, but rather something to be experienced deeply. It was a tool for the glory of God, and its recital repeated, reaffirmed, recapitulated, and renewed the revelation.[27]

We see this same attitude in statements establishing charitable institutions, the *waqf* endowment documents. Occasional records left funds for the copying of Qur'ans, but the overall pattern indicates that far greater merit came from recitation. The tomb of Safi al-Din Ardabili (1253–1334) in Persia, for example, had a Lantern Hall with an endowment for team-reading of the Qur'an.[28]

In contrast, outside of the Psalms recited in the daily office, Christians encouraged memorization of the Bible less frequently. One argument, for example, held that because Jesus's mother Mary had herself memorized each of his words, there was no need for anyone else to duplicate her work.[29]

If not for text preservation, why did Christians chant? Unlike in a modern concert, the singing was intended for God, not the audience. In the deep ken, the words needed to be sung, not spoken, to achieve a decorum appropriate for that high audience. Singing made speech something more than ordinary since, as one music historian explains, "one does not 'call upon God' in the kind of voice one uses to converse with one's neighbor."[30] Chanting became extraordinary, something more than mere speech.

The Christian chant was independent of the performer, the composer, and the human audience. At least in theory, any audiences heard this music with a deep-ken attention to the cosmic, rather than a plain-ken interest in fleeting human sensibilities. In practice, most chant was sung in settings without a human audience. The performer was not expressing himself or herself through the music, nor was the composer releasing some artistic impulse. Almost all chant was anonymous, and associated with divine origins. They likely considered

26 Al-Suyuti, *Perfect*, 251.

27 Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 58–59. See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), I, 366–69.

28 C. E. Bosworth, X. de Planhol, M. E. Weaver, and M. Medley, "Ardabīl," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, 16 vols. (London: Routledge, 1985-present), II, fasc. 4, 357–65; David James, *Qur'āns of the Mamlūks* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 125.

29 BodL MS Laud Misc. 200, fol. 193v (re: Lk 2:19).

30 Taruskin, *Music*, 5, 21.

themselves mere channels for transcendental sound, but, as far as we know, they appreciated that the music was non-self. The "performers"—to use a misleading word—were merely instruments rather than authors. There was no real or theoretical sense that the chanter expressed his or her own feelings in the text or music. The repetition of words might remove meaning from them. We are a long way from genius composers and moody guitarists. In the fifteenth century, music was probably not written with the intention of expressing emotion, nor did even theory propose such expression as music's purpose.[31]

Despite these independences, chant had a dependence on context. The spatial and ritual circumstances of a chant reinforced and deepened its meaning. Today, chant serves as movie soundtracks and "easy-listening" music for students wanting background noise (!) to study with. Such radical re-locations of a music dependent on location amounts to such contradictions that, despite superficial sameness between a chant performed in church and in a recording studio or YouTube video, the two are ontologically different kinds of music. Likely ugly human motivations inflected chant in 1400 as well, but chant designed for God was still designed for God even if it also flattered a listening pope.[32]

Some theorists in 1400 described the music humans made and heard as an audible expression of, or even a metaphor for, the true, divine music beyond the range of our ears or understanding. Although human music was not expressive of performer, composer, or even text, it did express something far more sublime—Music itself. Human music was an echo of the divine. Augustine (354–430) and Boethius (ca. 480–524) remained the foundation of ideas of music around 1400. They, drawing on an undeveloped (so pre-skeptical) and hyperdeveloped (neo-platonic) academic Platonic aesthetics, saw the value of music not in itself, not in its own beauty, but because it resonated (so to speak) with divine beauty. Theorists wrote on *musica speculativa*, music that audibly reflected (so to speak) the Real—*speculativa*, derived from *speculum*, meaning mirror. This resonance and reflection gave it a sublime quality. The simple consonance between two notes reflected the deep order of the universe. The music one could hear could serve, though roughly, as a metaphor for Music, for cosmic and human harmony.[33] Chant resonated in the deep-ken ear.

31 Bonnie J. Blackburn, "For whom do the singers sing?" *Early Music* 25 (1997): 593–610, https://doi.org/10.1093/earlyj/XXV.4.593; David Hiley, *Gregorian Chant* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009), 3–4, 158.

32 Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: Norton, 1978), 91.

33 Taruskin, *Music*, 70.

The Rules of Restraint

In general, a common thread across the chant of both subcults was restraint. Their chanters restrained themselves for different reasons. In Islam, the explicit motivations for restraint focused on communicating meaning to a human audience, a typical priority for the plain ken. Sometimes, Christians had a similar motivation: the Council of Basel called chants to be recited "not in a mumble or between their teeth, nor swallowing or abbreviating their words, nor intermingling conversation and laughter, but [...] reverently and distinctly."[34] In most Christian theoretical writings, however, as the audience was often understood to be divine, the goal was the kind of beauty valued in a more deep-ken perspective.

The set of rules for intoning the Qur'an is called *tajwid*. Al-Suyuti explained that "*tajwid* is the adornment of recitation. It consists of giving the letters their due and their proper order, and pronouncing each letter from its point of articulation and its source, and pronouncing it gently, in its perfect form..."[35] Throughout our period there were short, popular, rhymed manuals of *tajwid*, probably intended for beginners, as they were too terse to make sense without a teacher's commentary, such as that by the Syrian Ibn al-Jazari (1350–1429) (in 107 verses).[36]

The key to proper *tajwid* was restraint. Al-Suyuti urged recitation "without excess, exaggeration or affectation."[37] Al-Jazari went into greater detail on how not to chant: "*Tajwid* is not slurring of the tongue, nor hollowing of the mouth [so as to make deep tones], nor twisting of the jaw, nor quavering of the voice, nor lengthening of the doubled consonants, nor cutting short the lengthened vowels, nor buzzing the nasals, nor slurring the r's." Indeed, the ideal chant, "with no inaccuracy, nor affectation, nor manneredness, nor extravagance," actively "shuns these impressions and the hearts and ears reject them."[38]

Al-Jazari noted that restraint was also a limitation against going beyond Arabic's nature (see Chapter 10). Recite, he advised, with "no straying from the natural hallmarks of the Arabs, and the speech of the truly eloquent and

34 *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), I, 490–91.

35 Al-Suyuti, *Perfect*, 253.

36 Frederick M. Denny, "Quran Recitation: A Tradition of Oral Performance and Transmission," *Oral Tradition* 4 (1989): 5–26 (17–18).

37 Al-Suyuti, *Perfect*, 253.

38 Frederick M. Denny, "Exegesis and Recitation: Their Development as Classical Forms of Qur'anic Piety," in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions: Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Theodore M. Ludwig (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 91–123 (121).

pure with respect to the 'readings' and accepted performance." This followed a long tradition. Recitation should be done, said the Companion Ibn Mas'ud in one hadith, in a specifically Arabic way: "Render beautifully [with *tajwid*] the recitation of the Qur'an and adorn it with the best of voices and give it Arabic inflection, for indeed it is Arabic and God loves it to be inflected in the pure Arabic manner."[39]

Restraint could also entail a slow speed. We find more positive descriptions of recitation clustered around the term *tartil*. Roughly a synonym with *tajwid*, *tartil* sometimes had the sense of being even less ostentatious. The Qur'an itself (73:4) admonished the faithful to "recite the Qur'an with *tartil*." For al-Zarkashi, this kind of recitation required that the speaker intone at a speed that allowed appreciation of each word's meaning. He identified low-level, but admirable, *tartil* as speaking "in a grand manner" and keeping each "letter distinct."[40] Speed should not detract from the recitation's clarity. Quoting Ibn Mas'ud, al-Suyuti also recommended a slow speed and enough care to preserve and express meaning: "Do not shake as one shakes a palm full of dates." Even a non-native speaker who does not understand the Qur'an should speak at a slow speed, as a demonstration of a worshipful attitude and as more salutary for the audience.[41]

Some deviation from slow was allowed. A reciter who gave a meaningful recitation could recite at any speed. Al-Zarkashi pointed out that the varying particular strengths of the reciter, such as fervour or concentration, made it necessary to authorize varying speeds, again always to preserve meaning. He urged that the reciter's "heart must be occupied in contemplating the meaning of what his tongue expresses, for he must know the meaning of each verse." Thus, attentive to meaning, the reciter will have "achieved complete *tartil*."[42]

How fast was slow? Some theorists had a deep-ken interest in how quickly the Qur'an *should* be recited. According to al-Zarkashi, it should be recited in a single night, as the Caliph Uthman (ca. 573–656) did, especially during Ramadan. Hadith reported that Muhammad thought the complete text should take at least three days. Reading the text multiple times multiplied the deep-ken power gained from such piety. Shifting to a more plain-ken perspective that maximized rather than optimized, others evinced greater interest in how

39 Denny, "Exegesis," 117, 121.

40 Denny, "Exegesis," 96; Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 85–86.

41 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel des sciences coraniques al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān de Ǧalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (849/1445–911/1505)*, trans. Michel Lagarde (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1296 (80.3), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004357112. Speed was such an important attribute of recitations that it became a primary criterion for their classification, and specific terms developed to indicate specific speeds. See Gade, "Recitation," 487.

42 Quoted in Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 60, 85–86.

quickly it *could* be recited. Al-Suyuti noted that the record was eight complete recitals in a twenty-four-hour day. The Mughal Emperor Babur (1483–1530) found inspiration here to calculate that one could recite the *bismillah* and the *fatihah* (the short opening surah of the Qur'an) 8,640 times in 24 hours (and could blink 216,000 times in the same period).[43]

The importance of meaning feeds into a new question, of loudness. Al-Suyuti followed hadith in distinguishing between two volumes of recitation, with the voice audible and with the voice inaudible. Neither was obviously superior. Some liked to vary between the two to avoid fatigue and tedium. Certainly, the audible recitation was of greater advantage to listeners. The inaudible recitation, on the other hand, avoided the danger of impious pride, just as charity was best done secretly. Al-Zarkashi thus concluded that inaudible recitation was better for prayer rituals and for day-time recitations, since under those circumstances the reciter was more likely to take dangerous pride in his abilities.[44]

The reciter should express with his voice the proper feeling for the meaning of the various passages, a gentle voice in the encouraging passages, a severe voice for the reprimands. For al-Zakarshi, *tartil* could also adapt the recitation to the emotional flavour of the text: "If one recites a passage containing a threat, one does so in a threatening manner, and if one recites a passage glorifying God, one does so in a glorifying manner." One hadith gave the Prophet's standard for beauty in recitation, the voice of the reciter whom "when you hear him recite" you understand "that he fears God." Especially in the first third of our period, sorrow was an important attendant on meaning. Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) reminded his readers that the Qur'an was "something that causes awe [*khushu'*], as it reminds [man] of death and what comes after it. It is not an occasion to give pleasure in the perception of beautiful sounds."[45] Al-Suyuti drew on a long tradition of, but gave his own fresh emphasis on, the need to recite with sorrow [*huzn*]. "The best reciter," he advised, "is the one who, when reciting it, becomes sad." Because this was a recapitulation of the original revelation, sorrow in the

43 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 369 (35.1). See Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 59–60; Stephen F. Dale, *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India (1483–1530)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 59, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047413141

44 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 381 (35.16). See Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 60–62, 70; Frederick M. Denny, "Qur'ānic Recitation," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), III, 400-04. Gade, "Recitation," 490 notes Al-Ghazali worried about a reciter's skill interfering with the main act of recapitulating divine revelation.

45 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1958), II, 400 (ch. 5, sec. 31). See Denny, "Exegesis," 96; Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 85–86.

recitation should consonate with the sorrow of the Qur'an's descent. For those who could not cry, al-Suyuti had suggestions: you could force tears. You could reflect on its content as a way of intimidating yourself. You could reflect on your inability to cry as itself a tragedy that should prompt weeping.[46] This concern for the emotional states of the reciter (modesty, sorrow) and of the audience (awed) reflects a deep-ken understanding by which meaning depends on context.

Another concern for al-Suyuti was that musical tunes had entered recitation, and some recitation happened with melodic modes. Both he and Ibn Khaldun held that such musicalization was acceptable only if it in no way interfered with the *tajwid* guidelines.[47] In part, this allowance was justified by reports that the Prophet, when he himself was reciting, decorated the recitation with prolongation. Muhammad's recitation, according to one popular hadith, was careful and clear, conducted "letter by letter." Ibn Khaldun cited a hadith in which Muhammad likened a Qur'an reciter to "a flute of those belonging to the family of David," but noted this was not a reference to musicality, but "refers to a beautiful voice, a clear pronunciation in reciting the Qur'an, and a clear distinction in the articulation and enunciation of the letters." He condemned those who "know well how to modulate their voices, as if they were flutes. They thus cause emotion through the beauty of their performance and the harmony of their modes." His caution worried that a musicalized Qur'an might create a distracting beauty rather than a concentrating awe. Thus, fancy music was prohibited, but modulation and cadence were begrudgingly allowed.[48]

Christian chant, to a degree, shared this Muslim esteem for restraint. In part, necessity was the mother of restraint: few churches could afford an organ, and a poor parish could not maintain a well-trained, well-equipped musical ensemble. To the extent it was voluntary, restraint created a beauty that reflected the divinity of the audience. Chant has its origins in asceticism, and was still in 1400 linked to the monastic life, which shared with chant an appreciation for restraint.[49] This restraint reflects and promotes deep-ken values. In contrast, art criticism today celebrates expansion, innovation, and provocation, with little interest in recovering essential and holistic beauty and truth. Unlike today, where art is only considered true art when it pushes limits, in a traditional world the art lay inside and within the limits themselves. Art by its nature had restraints.

46 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 379 (35.13); Denny, "Qur'ānic"; Nelson, *Art of Reciting*, 90–91, 97–98.

47 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, II, 399–400 (ch. 5, sec. 31).

48 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 375 (35.10), 378 (35.11), 380 (35.14); Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, II, 399–401 (ch. 5, sec. 31). See Shehadi, *Philosophies of Music*, 151.

49 Taruskin, *Music*, 9.

Liturgical chant's first restraint restrains timbre, by including only sounds made by the human voice. Since instruments have different timbres, the unity of timbre is achieved through chant being performed *a capella*. To find the best way to express the divine music, Christians turned to their Bible, and found passages like Ps 150:3–5, which reverberates with sound:

> Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;
> Praise Him with the lute and harp!
> Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
> Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
> Praise Him with loud cymbals;
> Praise Him with clashing cymbals

Christians knew their canon was obviously true, and that the best music was restrained in timbre, and so they concluded that this canonical music full of instruments was merely a metaphor. They, then, would praise God with loud and clashing cymbals quietly and without any instruments. Chant's timbre would neither darken nor brighten beyond the range of the human voice. The following verse, Ps 150:6, indeed, returns to a more literal emphasis on breathing to trump the previous verses: "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" The Orthodox used this verse in particular to exclude instruments from their own liturgy: unlike humans, cymbals did not have souls—do not "breathe"—and therefore were not appropriate for formal Jesus music.[50]

Chant's second restraint restrains voices to a unity of pitch. That is, normally chant restrains its singers onto the same notes, *quasi una voce*, as if a single voice. This is monophony, music with once voice. No matter how many singers chant, they are all essentially chanting the same note, perhaps an octave apart to accommodate voices of varying ages and sexes. As the previous restraint excludes everything beyond human voices, and this restraint unifies all those human voices into one, ears recognize in chant a powerful unity and simplicity.

We have inhaled enough Enlightenment Fairy Dust that we have a sense of progress, and if long ago people sang monophonically, it is easy to accept that it was because they were not advanced enough to have alternatives. Many histories of Western music begin with this simple monophonic music, and in a later chapter introduce more complex polyphonic music, with multiple independent voices, as a forward step of progress—but our chanters in 1400 were capable of polyphonic chant. The co-existence of polyphonic and monophonic

50 In the fifteenth century, a wealthy church might supplement the human voice with an organ or tuba marina. Christian music became loud and instrumental again with the Reformation, just when some scholars were turning away from the allegorization of the Bible.

music indicates that the latter was a conscious choice made to participate in the beauty of restraint, through the understanding of an essential truth to music.[51] As a bonus, it also created a disciplined community. This has strong deep-ken resonance, as the unison of many voices is the ultimate consonance, and those voices are singing the same texts. They become a unified One.

Chant's third restraint restrains that "one" human voice from sounding certain pitches. Pitch is a continuum, and the gap between notes can be very small, essentially limited only by your instrument and your skill. Impressive and fundamental was the octave. A string and another string half its size produce together two notes that sound especially consonant. For the scholar Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), the regularity of the octave suggested a round shape, specifically a kind of oval, as in the mouth and the ear.[52] Within the octave, notes were chosen in a fixed pattern that maximized the harmony between them, including interval combinations called the perfect fourth and perfect fifth, respectively sounding the 3:2 and 4:3 ratio of strings. The melody usually moved among the most consonant intermediary notes, plus the octave, creating patterns.

Those melodic patterns (which notes were played most frequently? which most significantly?) were used to classify chants into different "modes." These were distinctive to contemporary ears and created a kind of tonal vocabulary. These modes proved useful in coordinating the weekly cycle of Old Testament psalms with the annual cycle centred around Jesus. Each day of the Church calendar specified chants called "antiphons" for the office, to precede and follow the day's psalms. The text of an antiphon might be a single verse plucked out of a psalm and repurposed to allude to the day's feast. Books called tonaries sorted antiphons into modes, and learning an antiphon probably meant learning its mode classification as well. That classification allowed the psalms and antiphons to coordinate musically.[53] In a sense, then, music theory in the Far West began as

51 Taruskin, *Music*, 44.

52 Marsilio Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, 10 vols. (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 2003), VII, 82–87; Edward E. Lowinsky, "The Concept of Physical and Musical Space in the Renaissance (A Preliminary Sketch)," in *Music in the Culture of the Renaissance and Other Essays*, ed. Bonnie J. Blackburn, 2 vols. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), I, 6–18 (15–16).

53 For example, in the Roman use Ps 138 was sung on Vespers on Thursday. The antiphon *Confortatus est* was one of several often assigned to it. *Confortatus est* is in mode 7, which motivated singing the psalm in the seventh psalm tone. At the end of the verse, the choirmaster would choose one of three cadences, based on what fit best the repeated antiphon after the psalm was finally over. *Confortatus est* begins on C, so we would choose the ending that ends on C. See Hiley, *Gregorian*, 4, 45–50, 169; Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 68, 72; Taruskin, *Music*, 22, 72.

a way to link the Hebrew psalms to the Christian calendar—a problem parallel to finding implicit references to Jesus in the text of the Old Testament.

Finally, chant also retrained itself from extreme pitches, the high and low ranges of the pitch continuum. Psalm verses and lesser doxology have very narrow range; antiphons range more widely. The lowest and highest notes of a typical chant might be a fifth apart.[54] In comparison, "Happy Birthday to You" has a range of an octave, and Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" stretches across three octaves.

The Possibilities of Exuberance

Ornamented Chant

Sometimes, restraint was not enough. Reflecting the dominance of the plain ken in Muslim chant, communication was key; the historical record mostly reports authorities condemning exuberance as detrimental to clear expression. The repetition of such condemnations suggests that actual recitations continued to be less restrained than the norms desired. For the Christian subcult, in contrast, the audience was God, who could enjoy exuberance just as much as restraint.

In Islam, fancy ornamentation, potentially problematic for its interference with clarity, was associated with animals and unbelievers. One kind of decoration was the *tarji`*, apparently some kind of trill. One fourteenth-century writer defined it as the sound of a rider whose voice was periodically interrupted by his jiggling mount. Ibn Khaldun historicized this by saying that the *tarji`* first appeared among Arabic caravan songs. He, too, saw the inspiration in the rhythmic gait of the camel to encourage recitation with *tarannum*,[55] an obscure term linked to the twang of an archer's bow, the cooing of a dove, and the chirp of a locust. Others, including the thirteenth-century al-Qurtubi, compared it to the noise not of camels, but of Christians: it was the imitation of the Christian style of recitation using repeated phonemes[56]—presumably melismatic chant (see below). Al-Turtusi (d. ca. 1100) in his description of this innovation mentioned a musicalization called *al-rahab* [monastic] in which every Qur'anic passage referencing Jesus was said in a Christian accent, in imitation of how Christians

54 Nigel Nettheim, "On the Accuracy of Musical Data, with Examples from Gregorian Chant and German Folksong," *Computers and Humanities* 27 (1993): 111–20.

55 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, II, 402–03 (ch. 5, sec. 31).

56 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 380 (35.14). See Edward William Lane, "ترنّم," in *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, ed. Edward William Lane, 8 vols. (Beirut: Liban, 1968), III, 1166.

sounded. In the eleventh century, al-Bayhaqi (994–1066) collected a hadith advising reciters to steer clear of the "tunes of the love poets and the airs of" Christians and Jews. The fifteenth-century poet Jami (see Chapter 20) exhorted his audience to "Go, dwell in a monastery, among those whom Jesus inspires."[57] Thus, in Islam exuberance was particularly associated with Christianity.

In the Christian subcult's plainchant, moments of exuberance break forth, and sound all the more exuberant for the restraint of their restrained backdrop. A chant might increase the range of pitches. One study of 10,592 chants found that while most kept within the typical range of a fifth, a small minority were more daring: 6% used the full octave, and 3% an even wider range. Chants were classified according to the style of their text setting—syllabic (predominantly one pitch per syllable), neumatic (predominantly two or three pitches per syllable), and melismatic (containing long passages of music sung to a single syllable). A melisma might even have two dozen notes on a single syllable: Alleluia a a a aa a a a. In chant, melismas rarely featured pattern repetition—we cannot anticipate that the highest or lowest note would be in the middle—and after any note one would not be able to predict the next. In the mass, the sections with the most text (the Credo, the Gloria) would typically have the least melismatic adornment, and the section with the least text (the Kyrie) would have the most. The melisma had little connection between the words and the melody, in the plain-ken sense of emphasizing key words, unlike the arias that would later come with opera.[58] Mostly, a melisma expressed an exuberance, as at key moments linked to the gospel reading and the Eucharist. Augustine called them the "sound of joy without words."[59]

That exuberant melisma could even be drawn out to include a whole new melody, perhaps repeated. Adding new words to this new melody created what is called a "sequence" or a "trope." Take an existing chant and expand it by adding new words or new notes before or between the chant, extending or adding melismas, or filling in melismas with text. Music had priority: it was more common to fill in music with text than to fill in text with music. This also

57 Denny, "Qur'ānic"; Javad Nurbakhsh, *Jesus in the Eyes of the Sufis* (London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi, 2012), 46; Mohamed Talbi, "La qirā'a bi-l-alḥān," *Arabica* 5.2 (1958): 183–90 (183–84).

58 Richard L. Crocker, *An Introduction to Gregorian Chant* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2000), 62; Hiley, *Gregorian*, 43, 67, 165; Nettheim, "On the Accuracy of Musical Data," 114. In contrast, office hymns had freer melodies, climbing by seconds and thirds to a peak, and then falling in a cadence—a typical Western melody even today.

59 Augustine of Hippo, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Christian Literature, 1905), 488; Latin original at Augustine of Hippo, *Opera Omnia IV*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols. (Paris: Fratres Garnier, 1865), XXXVII, col. 1272.

expanded, or restricted, the meaning of the original text, as the new words rubbed shoulders with the old ones.[60] Mass IV of the Liber Usualis, one of the most popular Gregorian masses, is known as *Missa Cunctipotens Genitor* because of the trope of its Kyrie (see Fig. 18.2).

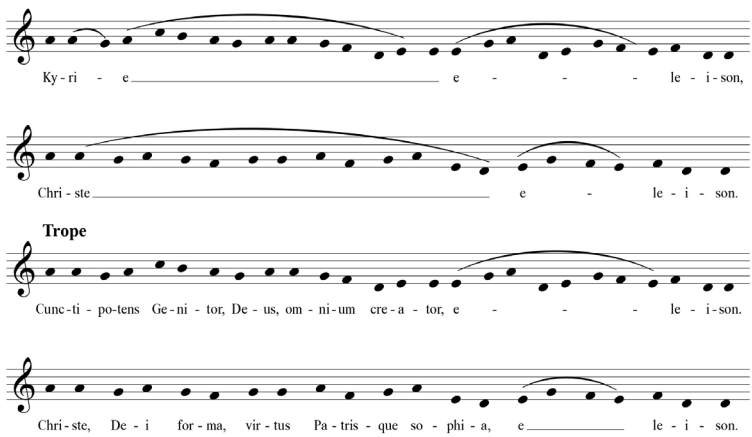


Fig. 18.2 Mass IV of the Liber Usualis (Kyrie Cunctipotens Genitor). Transcription by Christina Hutten, CC BY-NC.

Some sequences and tropes may have sounded once or twice before disappearing forever, but a successful one would take root in the local liturgy, spread beyond the local, and perhaps even find a home in the "universal" liturgy. As this process settled, "sequence" came to refer specifically to the drawn-out melodies that flowed from the alleluia's final melisma in the mass, sung only on particularly important feast days. Typically, verses would come after the alleluiaaaaaaaa melisma, which would be repeated after them. These sequences were syllabic.[61]

Repetition—of melody, of texts, of responses—can also be seen as an exuberance in its multiplication. The same pitch could be repeated, creating resonance (like pushing a swing) and reverberation: it bounced off walls, perhaps with a four-second delay, especially if it matches the building's own reciting-pitch frequency. Reverberation reinforced resonance by the magnification of overtones. The repeated pitch also created a memory in the ear ("temporary pitch memory") that might last an hour or more. Short melodic formulas ("idioms") could also be repeated.[62]

60 Hiley, *Western*, 172–236.
61 Hiley, *Gregorian*, 121–22, 127–36.
62 Crocker, *An Introduction*, 26–32, 54–55.

Thus, in Christian chant there was a continuum between the restrained and the ornate. On the spare side, we have greater clarity—with a one-to-one correspondence between notes and syllables—found especially in simple hymns and antiphons, prosulas, and sequences (because they add text to textless notes). On the ornate side, we have greater solemnity—with one syllable given multiple notes (melisma)—found especially in the Great Responsories (office) and gradual, tract, and offertory sections of mass. Multiple voices could be improvised to enrich a normally monophonic chant on high feast days. Where a passage of chant was located on this continuum would consonate with where it was located in the larger music, and where it was located in the Church year: the more awesome was appropriate for awesome occasions.[63]

In plainchant, musical exuberance was often independent of the chanted words. One formula of melody could be used for multiple verses of a single text, or for wholly different texts. A decorative melisma might make an offertory more awesome, but that melisma was more likely to reflect the awesomeness of chant in general, rather than any specific textual passage. Some passages appear to have "word painting," where the melody reflected the text, such as the gradual *Ecce quam bonum*'s inclusion of "a cup of fine oil that overflows and runs down the beard of Aaron" matched with a long sustained descent in the melody. It is difficult to be conclusive, but many scholars are inclined to believe that these are just coincidence.[64]

Polyphony

One Saturday in 1400, between noon and three o'clock, four voices, *simultaneously*, before a side altar in Reims Cathedral vocalized some of the prayer, the meaning and some of the words. While in a moment of exuberance, plainchant might use dozens of notes to sing the single word "Christ," here, among the four voices, a total of 228 notes came together in one sung "Christ." This was the *Messe de Nostre Dame* (see Audio Clip 3 and Fig. 18.3). It was composed by Guillaume de Machaut (ca. 1300–77), probably in the 1360s. When his brother died, Machaut made this a memorial mass, and it continued to be performed even after the composer's own death. The memorial intentions established by his will were honoured, though not with the intended music, into the eighteenth century.[65]

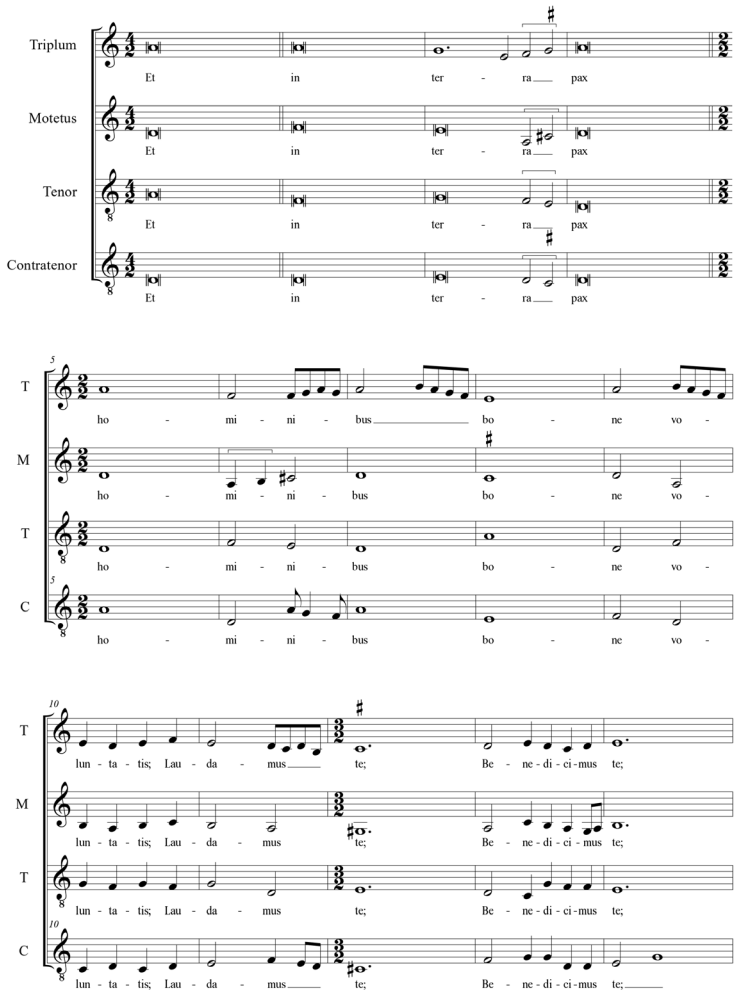
63 Hiley, *Gregorian*, 42–43.

64 Crocker, *An Introduction*, 62; Hiley, *Gregorian*, 69; Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 90.

65 Anne Walters Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims: Context and Meaning in His Musical Works* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002), 257–75; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Machaut's Mass: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990).

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/6e1135ef

Audio Clip 3 Guillaume de Machaut, Gloria from the *Messe de Nostre Dame* (before 1365), The Gesualdo Six, recorded at Ely Cathedral, February 2018. All rights reserved. For the performance video, see Ely Cathedral, "Gloria from La Messe de Nostre Dame (Machaut) The Gesualdo Six at Ely Cathedral," online video recording, YouTube (1 April 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIBYfdSH9GI



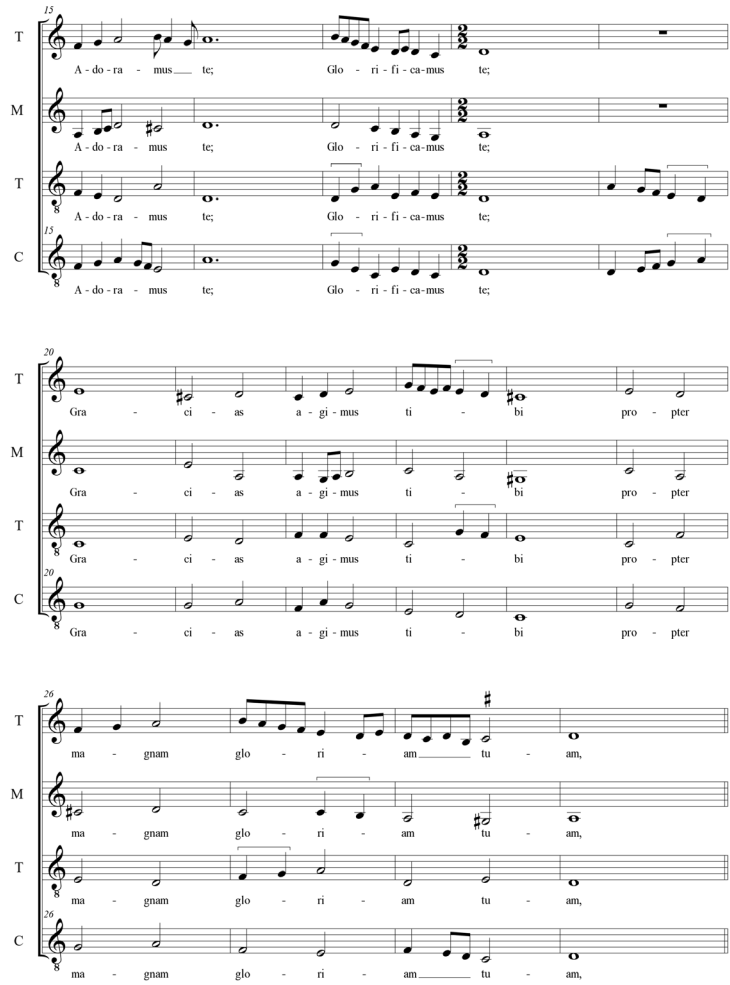


Fig. 18.3 Guillaume de Machaut, Gloria from the *Messe de Nostre Dame* (before 1365). Transcription by Christina Hutten, CC BY-NC.

Polyphonic music is made up of multiple voices that are partially independent. One voice does not follow another lockstep at a perfect octave, nor does it pick its own path oblivious to the others. Polyphony's meaningful complexity immediately contrasts with monophonic chant's restraint. Polyphony creates a sonic depth well suited for the deep ken's ear.

The idea that polyphony is a late invention of the Far West is not true. As far as our evidence allows us to see, polyphonic chant was as old as chant itself. Around the world, voices joined together simultaneously to create music.

Probably, much performed music had been polyphonic, even if not written down as such. What was unique to the Far West was polyphony that was composed, not improvised, and was therefore repeatable. Composed polyphony began around the twelfth century in the Far West and remained, for centuries afterwards, a distinctive feature of that region's music. This also gave an importance to the composer, an emphasis unknown in other regions.[66]

Still, in 1400, most music even in the Far West was monophonic. Perhaps this was because monophony was easier to sing, or because its unmatched clarity and expressive force found favour among Church elites. The more cautious Franciscans preferred a chant that focused hearers' attention over a polyphony that scattered attention across multiple voices and across the multiple books needed to contain compositions too complex for memorization. Well into the fifteenth century, most Europeans were not listening to fancy music, and even a cutting-edge composer like Guillaume Du Fay (ca. 1397–1474) was still writing monophonic chants. While Bourges Cathedral insisted upon polyphony, at Notre Dame, just 200 km north, it was outlawed. Even if we restrict the question to composed works, most new music in Central Europe, and maybe also in Iberia and Italy, remained monophonic. In Italy, polyphony was more improvised than composed; in Germany, it was avoided except for the rare occasions that called for exuberance. Only in the Far West's northwest was polyphony more rule than exception.[67]

The result was a powerful sonic experience that impressed contemporaries for being as far from normal, unelevated speech as possible. That contrast underlay the irony in the assertion by the Dominican theologian Bartholomaeus Rimbertinus (d. 1466) that Jesus was able to speak and sing polyphony simultaneously. His only proof of this assertion was that it was impossible, and, as Jesus himself explained (Lk 18:27), "What is impossible with man is possible with God."[68] Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64), following an older tradition reaching back to Boethius, held polyphony as so complex as to be partially inaccessible to

66 Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 187; Albert Seay, *Music in the Medieval World* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 72; Taruskin, *Music*, 2, 499, 542.

67 Hiley, *Gregorian*, 154; Deborah Howard, "Architecture and Music in Fifteenth-century Italy," in *Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2015), 333–60 (336–37), https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781139057813.026; Seay, *Music in the Medieval World*, 150; Richard Sherr, "Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony," in *Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2015), 771–84 (780–81), https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781139057813.053; Taruskin, *Music*, 454.

68 Bartholomeus Rimbertinus, *De deliciis sensibilibus paradisi* (Venice: n.p., 1498), 31v.

animals, who could enjoy polyphony, but could not understand their enjoyment, because of their inability to do math.[69]

Polyphony had consequences. How could the melodies of different voices integrate with each other? Coordinating multiple voices required composers to reconsider rhythm, the relationship between text and the music, and the expansion of the limited tonal range inherited from monophonic chant.

Rhythm is supremely useful for coordinating voices. In the thirteenth century, the idea developed that a long unit of musical time was composed of three short ("breves") subunits. This, to the deep ken, reflected the Trinity, as well as the philosophical belief that time necessarily has three parts, a beginning, a middle, and an end. Division by two, in contrast, was imperfect.[70]

The fourteenth century witnessed new composing possibilities, called "Ars Nova" [New Art]. Ostentatiously clever, its composers were painfully aware that they were doing something new. In terms of rhythm, the Ars Nova expanded the perfect. Johannis de Muris (early fourteenth century) and Nicole Oresme (ca. 1320/25–82) broadened rhythmic possibilities by bridging between the "sensible" music of experience and the "speculative" music of reason. They developed what were essentially integral exponents $3^x \times 2^y$, for all x and y, where the sums of x and y are greater than 0 and less than 5.

3^1x2^0	3^2x2^0	3^3x2^0	3^4x2^0		3	9	27	81
3^1x2^1	3^2x2^1	3^3x2^1		that is,	6	18	54	
3^1x2^2	3^2x2^2				12	36		
3^1x2^3					24			

... were all now perfect, because in their composition any imperfection from the two was subsumed into the perfection of the three. Oresme and the Trinity thus helped bridge the gap between what musical notation accepted and what dance music executed. What had been perfect only in theory could now achieve perfection in practice; anything sung could now be written. Experiments with complex polyrhythms around 1400 sparked concern that music would be perfected, for the deep ken, to such an extent that time itself would end, with the apocalypse and the return of Jesus.[71]

69 Nicholas of Cusa, *De Ludo Globi* (*The Bowling-Game*), trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis, MN: Banning, 2000), 1229–30 (2.90).

70 Dorit E. Tanay, "Jehan De Meur's Musical Theory and the Mathematics of the Fourteenth Century," *Tractrix* 5 (1993): 17–43 (22).

71 Johannis de Muris, *Notitia artis musicae et Compendium musicae practicae*, ed. Ulrich Michels (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1972), 69, 84, 94–96; Oresme, *Le Livre de Politiques d'Aristote*, ed. Albert Douglas Menut, *Transactions of the American*

Cantus firmus and Deep Meaning

In the Far West, the fifteenth century's major innovation in the most highly learned Jesus music was virtuoso use of the *cantus firmus* (CF) to explore new dimensions of complexity and depth in creating polyphony. The basic CF technique was simple, and had been in use for centuries: take any pre-existing melody and press it into service as the basis for a new piece of polyphony. The idea of a composer finding inspiration in nature or in his own genius was not a good fit for this period. Composers looked to tradition, not to invention; a stylish composer would recycle music already in existence. Often the source music was chant, which could be selected for consonance with the liturgical context, to build on an overall consonance with authority and the past. The composer would then use that preexisting melody as the musical heart for his new polyphonic composition. The CF was a way of unifying, through non-innovative, pre-existing sources, the diversity of polyphony.

The range of possible sources for CF was broad. A CF could be taken from liturgical chants, other sacred music, or even secular music. Equally impressive is how the source material was used, especially the high level of abstraction. Melody was abstracted from the rhythm, and pitch from the melody, which created a unity that abstracted the ordinary cycle from the ordinary. What was the motivation? It could be aesthetic. It could be a way to link the unchanging ordinary to specific occasions. It could treat the original source music as having meaning that was symbolic, mathematical, allegorical, and oriented towards the deep ken, meaning which might survive the transformative relocation into the new musical piece. Josquin des Prez (ca. 1450/55–1521) used melody from the superius voice in the popular rondeau *J'ay pris amours* [I Have Taken Love] as a CF in his motet *Christe Fili Dei* [O Christ the Son of God]. Thus, the original romantic tune in this new Jesus context might signal a secret love letter to Mary. In this way, the compositions for the mass and popular music influenced each other.[72]

The use of the CF changed in 1450s. Instead of borrowing a single melody to serve as a CF, a composition might appropriate entire passages of polyphony. In addition, composers more frequently and significantly sourced their CFs from secular songs. This tendency culminated a long medieval tradition in devotional literature. The German mystic Henry Suso (1295–1366) described his pious

Philosophical Society 60 (1970): 1–392 (347–48). See Seay, *Music in the Medieval World*, 172; Taruskin, *Music*, 252.

72 Johannes Riedel, ed., *Leise Settings of the Renaissance and Reformation Era* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1980); Edgar H. Sparks, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet, 1420–1520* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1963), 63, 83–85; Taruskin, *Music*, 530.

protagonist's appropriation of secular songs: "Whenever he heard love songs or suchlike, he would turn all these about and apply them to his Wisdom [that is, Jesus], whom he loved with the most pure love of his heart, so that they encouraged his love for her to grow."[73]

What did the secular-sacred division look like in this period? As far as historians can reconstruct its soundscape, the fourteenth century saw little musical distinction between secular and sacred, and if anything the secular dominated. In 1400, sacred and secular music were roughly in balance, and the next hundred years would lean towards the sacred. The vernacular secular song was written and sung by troubadours and others, perhaps a gift of the Islamic world to the Far West. Long medieval tradition saw poet-composers, often nobles, writing both the textual and musical facets of song. In the fourteenth century, the polyphonic secular song, and its new technical complexities, demanded the concentrated attention of the text's authors, and lyric poetry split off as a separate art form. Only exceptional individuals would still write songs with inventive music and poetry. Machaut was the last important poet-musician, and Oswald von Wolkenstein (1376/77–1445), who wrote both monophonic and polyphonic songs, the last famous Minnesinger.[74]

Slowly the musical distinction between secular and sacred faded, and music was categorized by its words. Melody was preserved for its melodic ideal, regardless of its origins. For example, Juan Cornago's (d. after 1475) 1450s *Missa Ayo visto lo mappamundo* ["I Have Seen the World Map" Mass], takes as CF a popular song by that name which praises Sicily as the most beautiful island, even for one who has seen a world map. This, with Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale* ["If the Face Is Pale" Mass], is one of earliest secular CFs.[75] We will see below the use of the secular tune *L'homme armé* [The Armed Man] as a CF in the 1460s, and, by 1475, most CFs were secular. *Victimae paschali laudes* [Praises to the Paschal Sacrifice] also served as a CF for a variety of Jesus-related musical compositions.

A similar possibility occurred in religious songs outside of the mass: the Italian poet Feo Belcari (1410–84) wrote his "Giesù, Giesù, Giesù" [Jesus, Jesus, Jesus] as an updated version of a commercial jingle for chimneysweeps,

73 Henry Suso, *Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours*, trans. Edmund Colledge (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1994), 74 (1.1.15). See *Wisdom's Watch*, 55 (preface.4), 76 (1.2) for the identification of Jesus and Wisdom.

74 Alec Harman, *Mediaeval and Early Renaissance Music* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1988), 96, 141, 217–23; Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 267, 311–18, 343–45.

75 Juan Cornago, "Ayo visto lo mappa mundi," in *Complete Works*, ed. Rebecca L. Gerber (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1984), vii–xi, 1–35. See Rebecca L. Gerber, "External Influences on Spanish Composers' Musical Styles between 1450 and 1500," *Revista de Musicología* 16 (1993): 1499–1504 (1499–1500).

the "Canzona de' spazzacamini."[76] The published version (1486) of "Giesù" includes an explicit instruction to "sing like 'Vicin, vicin, vicin, chi vuol spazar camin,'" the first line of the jingle: "Neighbours, neighbours, neighbours, who wants the chimney swept?" In Belcari's "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" the original *ci done pane o vin*, accepting payment in bread or wine, becomes *sente nel cor Giesù* [feels Jesus in the heart]. The updated version still sounds catchy, like a jingle: in the last stanza, the first five lines begin with *Giesù*, and the sixth ends with it.[77]

How did a composer use the CF as the melody in a new composition? This would typically involve different kinds of elaboration: a new cadence might split what had been a single phrase, rhythm might change, the melody might be transposed by a perfect fourth or a fifth—which in turn might change the mode or induce added accidentals. The CF might migrate between different verses, either briefly or structurally. In some essential way, however, the melody would be preserved. A cadence in the new composition probably preserved a cadence in the original. The phrase in the composition would end on the same note as the phrase in the original. The same notes would come in the same order, and any new free notes added would be too quick and trivial to detract from the original melody. Sometimes the entire melody would be run through once, thus highlighting and preserving it, perhaps before repeating it with new free notes attached. The degree of elaboration varied over time and especially by individual style. Words usually stayed close to the original CF, perhaps one or two notes off. In this period, a note was not associated with a syllable; rather, a phrase of text was associated with a phrase of melody. Even without words, melodies maintained meanings.[78]

Especially in the latter half of the fifteenth century, composers became ostentatiously creative in how they processed their sources for incorporation into the newly engineered music. Some of these new mass compositions lacked CFs, and instead took their names from some structural principle. In *Missa di dadi* [Mass of the Dice], traditionally attributed to Josquin, the faces of two dice depicted at the tenor part indicate the ratio between the tenor and the other voices: in the Kyrie, 2:1, the Gloria, 4:1, the Credo, 6:1, and the Sanctus,

76 The music for "Visin, visin, visin" (*Canzona de' spazzacamini*) is in Serafino Razzi, ed., *Libro primo della laudi spirituale* (Florence: n.p., 1563), fol. 60rv. "Giesù, Giesù, Giesù," in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Panciatichiano 27, fol 45v.

77 Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 44–47 for dating. Note that the up-an-octave interval on the last "chimney" (suggesting a sweep going up a chimney) was removed from the music for "Giesù."

78 Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 16–31, 40, 54–55, 60–63, 73–74, 83–84, 323.

5:1. Johannes Ockeghem's (ca. 1410–97) *Missa cuiusvis toni* [Mass of Whatever Tone] allowed the performers to select a mode to sing in (see Audio Clip 4 and Fig. 18.4). Jacob Obrecht's (1457/58–1505) *Missa Forsseulement* ["Fors seulement" Mass] took the superius voice of its CF but omitted all the silent rests. In other masses, Obrecht rearranged the CF's notes by order of duration, like a musical Qur'an. Josquin used solmization to create a new CF, as in his *Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae* [Hercules the Duke of Ferrara Mass], which spelt out the patron's name using the designation of notes ("do re me fa"). His *Missa "La sol fa re mi"* ["La Sol Fa Re Mi" Mass] employed the notes in that order as a kind of artificial CF.[79]

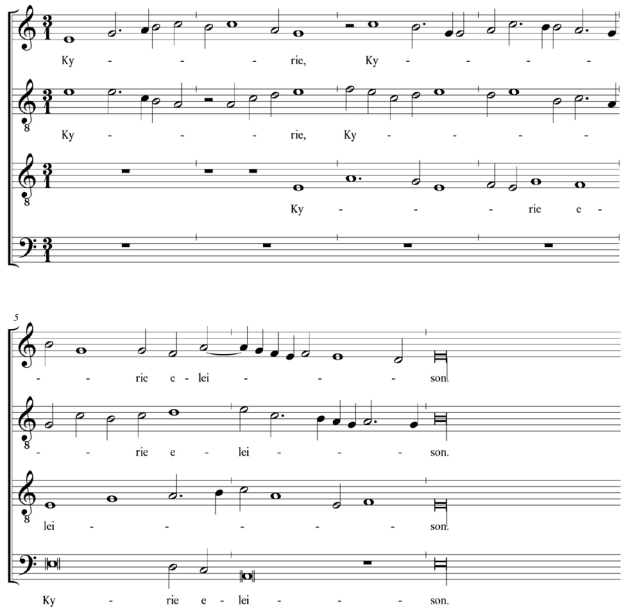
https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/b73c875e

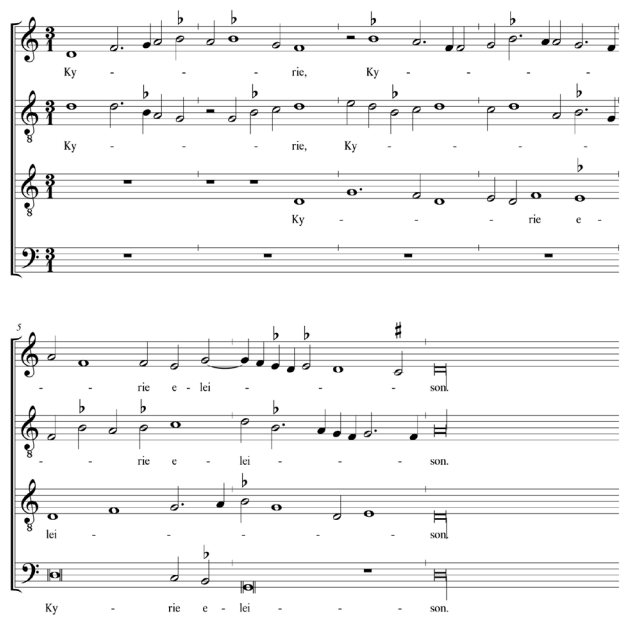
https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/cb9b6ad6

https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/5deb5e56

Audio Clip 4a, 4b, 4c Johannes Ockeghem, Kyrie (on mi, re and ut) from the *Missa Cuiusvis toni*, Blue Heron, recorded at First Church in Cambridge, 13 October 2018, CC BY 4.0.

79 David Fallows, *Josquin* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 179–87, 256–62; Hoppin, *Medieval Music*, 205; E. Eugene Helm, *Melody, Harmony, Tonality* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2013), 78; Michael Long, "Symbol and Ritual in Josquin's Missa Di Dadi," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 42 (1989): 1–22; Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 249–50, 326–37, 367, 394; Taruskin, *Music*, 477–49, 560; James Tenney, *History of Consonance and Dissonance* (New York: Excelsior, 1988), 30. See also Jesse Rodin, *Josquin's Rome: Hearing and Composing in the Sistine Chapel* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 236, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199844302.001.0001, for Obrecht's *Missa Prolationum.*


Ky - - - - rie, Ky - - - - -
Ky - - - - rie, Ky - - - - -
Ky - - - - rie e -
5
- - rie e - lei - - - son.
- - rie e - lei - - - son.
lei - - - - - - son.
Ky - rie e - lei - - - son.


Ky - - - - rie, Ky - - - - -
Ky - - - - rie, Ky - - - - -
Ky - - - - rie e -
5
- - rie e - lei - - - son.
- - rie e - lei - - - son.
lei - - - - - - son.
Ky - rie e - lei - - - son.

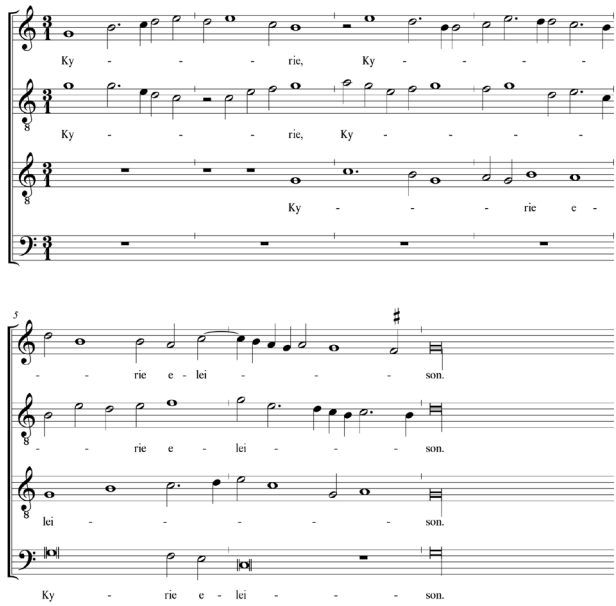


Fig. 18.4a, 18.4b, 18.4c Johannes Ockeghem, Kyrie (on mi, re and ut) from the *Missa Cuiusvis toni*. Transcription by Christina Hutten, CC BY-NC.

Some composers added cryptic references that gave a rule (a "canon") for how to interpret the written score. Most canons were biblical, and most of these came from the Psalms or gospels.[80] For example, Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* [Mass on "The Armed Man" over Musical Themes] directs performers to *Noli me tangere* [do not touch me] (from Jn 20:17's post-Resurrection Jesus asking for personal space), meaning to not "touch," or "change," anything beyond the rhythm. Soon afterwards he quotes Isaiah 58:1

80 Bonnie Blackburn, "The Corruption of One is the Generation of the Other: Interpreting Canonic Riddles," *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 4 (2012): 182–302, https://doi.org/10.1484/j.jaf.1.102969; Bonnie J. Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, "Juno's Four Grievances: The Taste for the Antique in Canonic Inscriptions," in *Musikalische Quellen, Quellen zur Musikgeschichte*, ed. Ulrich Konrad (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002), 159–74; Denis Collins, "Creative Collaborative Thought and Puzzle Canons in Renaissance Music," in *Collaborative Creative Thought and Practice in Music*, ed. Margaret S. Barrett (London: Routledge, 2014), 111–25; Christopher A. Reynolds, "The Counterpoint of Allusion in Fifteenth-Century Masses," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45 (1992): 228–60; Katelijne Schiltz, *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2017), 132–33.

clama ne cesses [shout it aloud, do not hold back] to advise performers to ignore rests.[81] The Jesus quotation *Dum lucem habetis credite in lucem* [Believe in the light while you have the light] (Jn 12: 36) means to ignore black notes.[82] A quotation of Jesus quoting a proud pharisee (*decimas de omnium qu*[*a*]*e possideo* [I ... give a tenth of all I get] (Lk 18:12)) orders one voice paralleling another in tenths.[83] Heinrich Isaac's (ca. 1450–1517) *Missa Tmeiskin was jonck* ["The Maiden Was Young" Mass] uses a paraphrase of Mt 15:14 and Lk 6:39 (*Si cecus cecum ducat ambo in foueam cadunt* [If the blind leads the blind, they both fall into the pit]) as well as a reference to the two thieves crucified with Jesus (*Ait latro ad latoronem* [A thief said to a thief]) to refer to the interdependence of two musical voices. Jean Japart (fl. 1474–81) made a composition with the text of Jesus's rebuke to Satan (*Vade retro* [Get thee behind me]) as a clue that it should be played backwards.[84] Through such complex processes, composers could enhance the music itself with additional layers of deep-ken meaning.[85]

A secular tune called *L'homme armé*, the "armed man" (LHA), was used as the CF in masses from the middle of the fifteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century.[86] The identity of the armed man, in both the original and the polyphonic music, remains obscure. It might refer to Jesus himself, to the soldier Longinus who pierced his side with a spear or sword at the Crucifixion,[87]

81 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Capp.Sist.197, "Noli..." at Agnus Dei II (fol. 9v) and "Clama..." at Agnus Dei III (fol. 10v). See Fallows, *Josquin*, 148–54; Schiltz, *Music*, 161–65.

82 Pietro Aaron, *Libri tres de institvtione harmonica* (Bologna: n.p., 1516), fol. 26r (book 1, ch. 15). See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, "Juno's Four Grievances," 166.

83 For example, Isaac, Angus III, *Missa Quant j'ay au cor* or Obrecht, Agnus II, *Missa Je ne demande*. See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, "Juno's Four Grievances," 165–66.

84 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Capp.Sist.49, fol. 84v, 88r. See Richard Scherr, *Papal Music Manuscripts in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries* (Neuhausen: Hänssler-Verlag, 1996), 192–201. See Helm, *Melody, Harmony, Tonality*, 73; Schiltz, *Music*, 154; Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 88, 97–98; Taruskin, *Music*, 539.

85 Schiltz, *Music*, 73–74, also talks about the advantages of "notational compactness," by which a pithy single rule expresses information about a more extensive piece of music.

86 Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music: Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600* (New York: Norton 1998), 148–50; Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 241; Taruskin, *Music*, 483–99, 528–29; Flynn Warmington, "The Ceremony of the Armed Man: The Sword, the Altar, and the L'homme armé Mass," in *Antoine Busnoys: Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, ed. Paula Higgins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 89–130; Craig Wright, *The Maze and the Warrior: Symbols in Architecture, Theology, and Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001), 159–205, 282–88, 325–32.

87 Andrew Kirkman, *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2010), 98–134; Lewis Lockwood, "Aspects of the 'L'homme armé' Tradition," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 100 (1973–74): 97–122;

to George the dragon-slaying saint,[88] or to the Holy Roman Emperor, armed and brandishing a sword to challenge the Turks symbolically.[89] One of the most famous LHA masses was Du Fay's. Here, the CF moves among the various voices. Du Fay owned a copy of Guillaume de Deguileville's (d. before 1358) 1355 poem *Le Pèlerinage de l'Âme* [Pilgrimage of the Soul], which considered the crab, because of its backwards movement, a symbol of Jesus, who made three forward and retrograde trips, "three glorious returns": to earth and then back to heaven, to death and then back to life, and to hell and back.[90] Jesus also connects to the constellation Cancer, the crab: at Cambray, where Du Fay probably composed the mass setting, on the summer solstice the sun would rise in the northeast, at 52 degrees, its northernmost point, before heading south, eventually reaching 128 degrees in the southeast at the winter solstice. John van Ruysbroeck (1293/94–1381) connects the dots for us: "When the sun rises as high as possible in the heavens, that is, when it enters the sign of Cancer (which means the Crab, because the sun cannot rise any higher but begins to move backwards, like a crab)... In the same way, when Christ, the divine sun, has risen as high as possible in our hearts..."[91] Du Fay signals the canon in the Agnus Dei: "let the crab go forward fully but go backward from the middle." Like the crab,

Alejandro Enrique Planchart, "The Origins and Early History of L'homme armé," *The Journal of Musicology* 20 (2003): 305–57, https://doi.org/10.1525/jm.2003.20.3.305; Jesse Rodin, "Form and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Music: Problems, Fallacies, New Directions," *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 8 (2016): 284–92, https://doi.org/10.1484/j.jaf.5.111882; Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*, 233–68; Adalbert Roth, "'L'homme armé, le doubté turcq, l'ordre de la Toison d'or': Zur 'Begleitmusik' der letzten großen Kreuzzungsbewegung nach dem Fall von Konstantinopel," in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter: Paderborner Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. Detlef Altenburg, Jörg Jarnut, and Hans-Hugo Steinhoff (Sigmaringen: Throbecke, 1991), 469–80; Richard Taruskin, "Antoine Busnoys and the L'homme armé Tradition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39 (1986): 255–93; Emily Zazulia, "Composing in Theory: Busnoys, Tinctoris, and the *L'homme armé* Tradition," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 71 (2018): 1–73, https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2018.71.1.1

88 Sean Gallagher, *Johannes Regis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 59–114.

89 The Emperor was permitted to read the gospel at Matins on Christmas Day. Later in the century, the composer Giovanni Tommaso Cimello (d. 1591) thought that the name LHA was itself a coded instruction, indicating that the reference to an armed man, a man of both flesh and of steel, meant that the piece's notes and rests should be played doubled. James Haar, "Lessons in Theory from a Sixteenth-Century Composer," in *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, ed. Paul Corneilson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998), 153–54, 173.

90 Guillaume de Deguileville, *Le Pèlerinage de l'Âme*, ed. J. J. Stürzinger (London: Nichols and Sons, 1895), 336. Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 175–77 notes that the triple journey is also in the *Golden Legend*.

91 John Ruusbroec, *The Spiritual Espousals and Other Works*, trans. James A. Wiseman (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1985), 84–85.

the LHA CF reappears, in a variety of subtle and complex manipulations, in the mass itself.[92]

The most esoteric way to add deep-ken meaning into a composition is through mathematics. Josquin's masses, among others, numerically encoded Jesus references. Numbers could be derived by counting notes (in total, or just those of one particular tone) and counting rests in specific parts of the mass. Then, new numbers could be created by performing basic arithmetic on those first numbers, as well as factorizing them and permutating their digits. Thus, in Josquin's LHA, 225 yields 35 ($225 = 3^2 \times 5^2$), and 512 becomes 888 ($512 = 8^3$). The resulting second-round numbers correspond to numerical values of key Jesus words, by summing the values assigned to the letters according to a system of equivalence. Thus "Jesus" in Greek (Ἰησοῦς) = 87 or 888 (depending on counting systems), and IHS = 35. The mathematics would be inaudible to most listeners, but known to the composer, to God, and to anyone who investigated the music carefully.

Finding meaningful numbers in music can be controversial. Dieter Heikamp notes, among several numerical correspondences, that the Josquin LHA CF has the same number of notes as the gematria for "Ockeghem," a composer whose works helped inspire Josquin's LHA. In his own evaluations of proposed correspondences, Jesse Rodin prefers the simple ones that do not depend on "second-order calculations." Thus, he concludes, "The probability of such correspondences being significant diminishes with each new operation." I would suggest that, in theory, higher-order calculations "should" not weaken a correspondence, since they are mathematical and *a priori*. Rodin takes a plain-ken approach, expressed in terms of probability, to evaluate the human psychology behind a possible deep-ken logic.[93]

Although the ordinary mass cycle's text remained the same day to day, the CF allowed reference to a specific event or occasion, specific to the calendar. This was a technique once used in motets, now adapted to settings of the mass ordinary. Aegidus of Murino (d. ca. 1400) explained how: "first take for your tenor any antiphon or responsory or any other chant from the book of Office chants, and its words should accord [*concordare*] with the theme or occasion for

92 Jacob Obrecht, *Missa L'homme armé*, in *Collected Works*, ed. Thomas Noblitt, 9 vols. (Utrecht: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1986), VI, 1–34. Translation from Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 176. See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, "Juno's Four Grievances," 171; Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*; Schiltz, *Music*, 107–09; Taruskin, *Music*, 331, 497–99.

93 Dieter Heikamp, "Zur Struktur der Messe 'L'omme armé super voces musicales' von Josquin Desprez," *Die Musikforschung* 19 (1966): 121–41; Rodin, *Josquin's Rome*, 253–54.

which the motet is being made," and "then take your tenor and arrange it and put it in rhythm."[94]

The CF also added a new level of possible deep-ken, symbolic consonance, between the new music and the CF's original context. The English *Missa Caput* [Head Mass], and later similar masses by Obrecht and Ockeghem, found a CF in a long melisma on the word "caput" from an antiphon of the Maundy Thursday foot-washing ceremony. The antiphon comes from Jn 13:6–9, when Peter, rethinking his earlier refusal of Jesus's offer to wash his feet, invited Jesus to also wash "my hands and my head [*caput*]." In the new setting, *caput* might refer instead to Jesus crushing the head (*caput*) of the serpent, a christological interpretation of Genesis 3:15.[95]

The CF's source could thus bring in new layers of meaning. For example, composed in the 1450s, Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale* was the earliest extent mass completely based on a secular CF. He used his own 1430s composition for that CF, the ballade "Se la face ay pale." Du Fay may have composed this mass for some specific purpose involving the Savoy court, where he resided. It might have been a nuptial mass for the 1452 union of Yolande of Valois (1434–78) and Amadeus of Savoy (1465–72), or it might have been for the 1453 reception of the Holy Shroud at Savoy (see Chapter 8).[96] The pallor referenced by the title could be caused by either swelling love or impending death. This multivalence is most prominent in the triple pun playing on *amer*, which can mean love or bitter, and rhymes with *la mer*, the sea. The canon text declares that "Se la face ay pale / La cause est amer / C'est la principale / Et tant m'est amer / Amer, qu'en la mer / Me voudroye voir" [If the face is pale / The cause is love / That is the main cause / And so bitter to me / Is love, that in the sea / Would I like to see myself].[97] This conjunction of meaning was clever but not unique.

Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1486–ca. 1543) added a new dimension of complexity and resonance to his two four-voice motets. His coded instruction to play in double-retrograde movement comes from Ps 85:10: "Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi / Justitia et pax osculatae sunt" [Mercy and truth have met each other /

94 Edmond de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica*, III, 124–25. The translation is from Taruskin, *Music*, 259. See also Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 88.

95 "Venit ad Petrum dixit ei," *CANTUS: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant*, https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/chant/671156 (audio recording available at https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/20915/104/MA-05-091%20A%20Venit.mp3). See Kirkman, *Cultural Life*, 53, 77–97; Anne Walters Robertson, "The Savior, the Woman, and the Head of the Dragon in the Caput Masses and Motet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59 (2006): 537–630, https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2006.59.3.537

96 Anne Walters Robertson, "The Man with the Pale Face, the Shroud, and Du Fay's *Missa Se la face ay pale*," *Journal of Musicology* 27 (2010), 380–88, is dubious.

97 Robertson, "Man," 391 (her translation).

Justice and peace have kissed]. He compounds the message by physically arranging the written music in a cross, to reinforce both the connection to the Crucifixion and the double-retrograde rule.[98]

Lays, Motets, Carols, and Sequences

By the end of the century, the mass ordinary was the most prestigious musical genre in the Far West, but it had wrested that distinction away from isorhythmic polyphonic compositions called motets. These remained popular, and often Jesus-focused.[99] This final section looks more broadly at some of the Jesus-related musical forms.

In particular, the late fifteenth century saw a combination of devotional text and music in the development of prayer motets.[100] These were not drawn from chant, and sometimes used no CF at all. Composers created music specifically for the given text. Often the inspiration came from devotional work, including the writings of Bonaventure (1221–74) and of Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444). No clues suggest any tension between the necessarily group performance of the polyphony and the typically individual nature of meditative prayer. Examples include several works by Josquin and by Loyset Compère (d. 1518). The popular *Salve sancta facies* [Hail Holy Face], in various settings, was meant to be said before the Veronica image (see Chapter 16).[101] In the Low Countries, the sequence "O dulcissime iesu" [O Sweetest Jesus] asked Jesus, "let me read about you, write about you, seek you, sing about you, praise you, Jesus sweetest boy." "I" was sick, "convicted of a crime and locked in a grim prison," but Jesus "the brightest mirror shining throughout the world," came as cure and liberator.

98 "Quatuor vocum Lud. Senfl. Canon Misericordia & Veritas obviaverunt sibi, Iustitia & Pax osculatae sunt." The two versions are (1) Crux fidelis, at BSB 2 Mus.pr. 156/4, and (2) O crux ave, at Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, SA.87.D.8. Mus 32. See Schiltz, *Music*, 172, 305–07 and Schiltz, "La storia di un'iscrizione canonica tra cinquecento e inizio seicento: Il caso di 'Ad te, Domine, levavi animam meam' di Philippus de Monte (1574)," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* 38 (2003): 227–56, esp. 231–33.

99 Seay, *Music in the Medieval World*, 136; Sparks, *Cantus Firmus*, 460.

100 Anne Walters Robertson, "Affective Literature and Sacred Themes in Fifteenth-Century Music," in *Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2015), 545–60, esp. 556–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781139057813.039; Blackburn, "For whom," 593–609.

101 One setting had been attributed to Josquin, and another is by Obrecht. Similarly, Josquin's prayer-motet cycle on O domine Jesu Christe was meant to be said before an image of the Man of Sorrows. Howard Mayer Brown, "On Veronica and Josquin," in *New Perspectives on Music: Essays in Honor of Eileen Southern*, ed. Josephine Wright (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1992), 49–61.

The "I" asks Jesus to kindle the fire of his love. The poem does the same for the "I."[102]

With a more public function, Du Fay composed a motet for Pope Eugene IV (1383–1447), *Supremum est mortalibus bonus* [The Greatest Good for Mortals], on the occasion of peace between the Pope and Emperor Sigismund (1368–1437). Consonant with its occasion, it emphasizes internal consonance in its harmonies and in the final chords reverberating with the names of the two pacified belligerents.[103]

We have unusually rich information about the performance context of one motet. During Easter Week in 1431 at Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome, clergy carried up to the altar a platter of little balsam-and-wax figurines stamped with an image of the Lamb. As they walked, they chanted the responsory *Isti sunt agni novelli* [These are the New Lambs]. Then someone sang Du Fay's freshly composed four-voice motet *Balsamus et munda cera* [Balsam and Pure Wax], which builds on the *Isti sunt*—including the old chant once, then repeated, and then done again in reverse order. This retrograde motion may symbolize Jesus's complexities (human/divine, warrior/sacrifice, dying/living). At the altar, Eugene IV was celebrating the mass. Before giving them to members of his curia, he asked God to bless the wax lambs. Their power would pacify "the crash of hailstorms, the storm of whirlwinds, the attack of tempests, the rage of winds," and "malignant spirits would tremble before the banner of the holy cross which is carved" on these images, "because, with death engulfed by the crossbeam of the cross, Jesus Christ reigns in the glory of God the Father." The mass continued, and in the *Agnus dei* (a three-voice, also by Du Fay), the chant goes forward before going backwards when repeated.[104]

Among the most unusual Jesus compositions were two genealogy motets by Josquin. *Liber generationis* [Book of Begetting] set to music Jesus's forward genealogy from David to Joseph (Mt 1), and *Factum est autem* [And It Happened] set Jesus's backwards genealogy from Joseph to Adam (Lk 3). The two texts are prominent in the Christian liturgy, bookending the twelve days between

102 Ulrich Hascher-Burger, *Gesungene Innigkeit* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 122–23, 251–54. See Reinhard Strohm, "Sacred Song in the Fifteenth Century: Cantio, Carol, Lauda, Kirchenlied," in *Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, ed. Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2015), 763–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/cho9781139057813.052

103 Mikołaj z Radomia (fl. 1420s) composed a Gloria that pursued peace, after an introductory chase canon with a dance rhythm. Johannes Ciconia's (d. 1412) Gloria No. 1 dramatically emphasized "pax," peace, in its first seven measures. See Atlas, *Renaissance Music*, 39; Taruskin, *Music*, 346–48.

104 Agostino Patrizi de Piccolomini, *L'oeuvre de Patrizi Piccolomini ou le cérémonial papal de la première Renaissance*, ed. Marc Dykmans, 2 vols. (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980–82), I, 136–39. See Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 107–09.

Christmas and Epiphany, and these motets were probably composed for the 1480–81 winter. What could be chanted in five minutes took three times as long to perform in Josquin's sophisticated polyphony.

Within a century of their debut, critics were already sharing a negative assessment of these two motets' texts, a sentiment that continues today. Humanist Heinrich Glarean (1488–1563) spoke of such *sterili* [barren] material. In our time, Ludwig Finscher points to the length and "dullness" of the texts and melodies. Jeremy Noble has called them "apparently unpromising texts." Given the "sheer craziness of setting" to music "two of the most improbable motet texts available," David Fallows finds it hard to imagine anyone "composing such motets for any normal purposes." The low estimation made all these commentators marvel all the more at what Josquin engineered from these genealogies. Except for a flourish on the name Zorobabel, which gets repeated five times, the resulting polyphony did not express musically the textual meaning; it was an abstract, purely musical piece.[105] We might consider what the deep ken might hear in these motets. Could it have found beauty in the list of names to correspond to the beauty in the music? Could it find delight or reassurance in these chains passing through centuries between Adam to Jesus? If humans were indeed bored by the words, perhaps God was not.

Most of what we call carols are actually hymns developed in and after the eighteenth century, but a different musical genre of carols were sung in the fifteenth. Often used in religious processions, these carols, monophonic or polyphonic, were distinctive for their repeated verse, called a "burden," between stanzas. Carols current in our century included "Resonet in laudibus," "In dulci jubilo," "Angelus ad virginem," "Narodil se Kristus Pán," and "This Endris Night." The "Boar's Head" carol mostly celebrates the yule tradition of eating the head of a decapitated boar, and indirectly concedes a single clause for Jesus, as the speaker is "singing praises to the Lord."[106] A variation, "The Boar's Head that We Bring Here," focuses more on Jesus: the boar's head itself "betokeneth a prince without peer," and the fact that it is "acceptab[l]e at every feste" consonates with the universal relevance of Jesus, who should be likewise acceptable "to most & least."[107] In one carol, Sir Christmas ("Syre

105 Fallows, *Josquin*, 95–96; Ludwig Finscher, "Four-Voice Motets," in *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000): 249–80 (266–67); Henricus Glareanus, *Dodecachordon* (Basil: n.p., 1547), 365; Jeremy Noble, "The Function of Josquin's Motets," *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 35 (1985): 9–22 (19–21).

106 Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354, fol. 228r. For the traditions, see James E. Spears, "The 'Boar's Head Carol' and Folk Tradition," *Folklore* 85 (1974): 194–98.

107 BL Add. MS 5665, fol. 7v–8r. The most exuberance comes with the melisma on the preposition "without."

Cristesmasse") arrives singing Noel, Noel ("Nowell, nowell") to announce that Jesus had been born from a virgin.[108] This is one of Father Christmas's earliest known appearances.

Victimae paschali laudes was a sequence—a troped extended melisma—already centuries old in 1400. It was one of over a dozen sequences used by the Western Rite. *Victimae* would be chanted near or on Easter, either during the mass or as part of a liturgical drama, such as the visitation to the tomb. By 1400, *Victimae* was metrical and strophic.[109] In the German-speaking lands, popular vernacular hymns (*Leise*) would be sung after *Victimae* in mass, and sometimes in liturgical dramas.

For the liveliest *Victimae*, we go to the Cathedral of Auxerre, France.[110] There, as was the custom, the youngest canon at the cathedral would purchase a leather ball, called a *pilota*. He would present it to the cathedral's dean, who would hold it in his left hand, and begin to dance around a labyrinth while intoning the *Victimae*, accompanied by an organ. The other canons would join hands and join the dance, and the dean would throw the ball at each of them. After concluding the sequence, the dean and canons would join other Church officials and local nobility for a feast of dead rabbit, boar, and deer, and wine (not more than two refills per person), all at the youngest canon's expense, while a sermon was intoned. After the meal, they went to vespers as the cathedral's large bells rang.[111]

We know the dance happened annually from at least 1396, since in that year we begin to see protests against the tradition that the most junior canon pays for the ball and the feast. By 1412, the size of the ball was reduced enough to make it less a financial burden, but not so reduced to allow the dean to palm it. In 1471, the newest canon protested again, turning for assistance to Guillaume Durand's (ca. 1230–96) handbook, which advised that ballgames were best left at the church doors. The cathedral chapter, the clergy assisting and advising the bishop, did not make him pay—they found a ball from a previous year—but did not give up the ballgame.[112]

108 Ibid., fol. 8v–9v.

109 Taruskin, *Music*, 86.

110 Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 138–47. For an example see the *Missale ad usum ecclesiae Autissidorensis*, BnF MS Lat. 17312, fol. 199r.

111 "Explication d'un terme de la basse latinité," *Mercure de France* (May 1726): 921–22; Constant J. Mews, "Liturgists and Dance in the Twelfth Century: The Witness of John Beleth and Sicard of Cremona," *Church History* 78 (2009): 512–48 (518–19), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640709990412; Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 139–140.

112 "Explication," 915–16; Jean Lebeuf, *Mémoires concernant l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique d'Auxerre*, 4 vols. (Auxerre: Perriquet and Rouillé, 1855), IV, 321–22.

Auxerre was not unique; similar dances happened at Reims and at Sens. In 1413, clergy asked the chapter at the Cathedral of Sens (50 km north of Auxerre) for permission to "play the game as well during the ceremony" of Easter. A century later, the Sens chapter was nervous about men and women dancing together during the game: the clergy was "dancing a round-dance—not jumping as in other peculiar dances" when suddenly "a large number of people of both sexes ran to join in the said round-dance, where perhaps much evil might be perpetrated." Apparently, each canon would dance while holding the hand of a choirboy, and the entire tradition was sustained only because the canons made large financial donations to the church. Around 1517 it was abolished.[113]

Envoi

Fifteenth-century elevated speech was so inclined towards the deep ken that some contemporaries took up that same perspective to criticize it. Al-Suyuti denounced Qur'an reciters who followed the fashions of rapidly delivered secular poetry; instead, he advised, "stop at its marvels" and "stimulate your heart."[114] Church authorities and scholars deplored the dissonance between music that was secular, even in its origins, and the sacredness of the liturgy. In 1435, the Council of Basel explicitly forbade "secular songs" to be sung in church.[115] The theorist Carlo Valgulio, who wanted music to have a positive moral effect on its listeners, complained about the contemporary "adulterous songs which bastardize music."[116] Despairing that "sacred texts are accompanied by the most unholy sounds," Erasmus condemned music brought "out of the dance-halls and taverns and into the churches."[117] Other deep-ken theorists had concerns about perceived dissonance between contemporary and ancient music, and between actual music and the divine music. They denounced as "barbarisms" the clashes between melodies and modes, between melodies and Latin grammar (such as grammatically long syllables being musically abbreviated), and between musical divisions and grammatical divisions.

A plain-ken attitude, however, was gaining ground. The plain-ken concerns among textual scholars about degradation over time (see Chapter 11) spilled

113 Quoted in Wolfgang Krönig, "Osterfreude und liturgisches Spiel," *Quatember* 43 (1979): 115–16.

114 Al-Suyuti, *Le parfait manuel*, 375–76 (35.10).

115 Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, I, 491.

116 Quoted in Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo della musica antica e moderna* (Florence: Giunti, 1602), 83.

117 Erasmus, "Institutio Christiani Matrimonii," trans. Michael J. Heath, in *Spiritualia and Pastoralia*, ed. John W. O'Malley and Louis A. Perraud, CWE 69, 427.

over into music. Before and during the Protestant Reformation there were liturgical reform movements, particularly opposed to sequences because of their extra-biblical texts. In particular, Carthusians and Cistercians were not happy with tropes introducing non-biblical text into the proper of the mass. The Carthusians had little interest in the elaborations of sequences and melismas. The Cistercians accepted sequences, but disliked tropes and blocked the expansion of the office cycle; they actively simplified the more extreme melismas. Like the Protestant reformers, both orders sought to reach a pure original source for liturgy. Already by 1400, most tropes, outside the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, had all but disappeared.[118]

In some eyes, polyphony was as problematic as textual innovations. Some critics, like John XXII (1244–1334) in the 1320s, were simply conservative, protesting against the modern rhythm, vernacular, rapid melismas, secular songs, and these newfangled, intoxicating motets. Others feared the encroachment of plain-ken perspectives on music, for polyphony dangerously distracted from God to the human artiste, and could undermine the deep-ken unity among music, text, and ritual. In the last decades of the century, the criticism increased, becoming a broader opposition to all polyphony.[119]

Admittedly, the composer's sense of being a genius was growing. Machaut's mass was special in part because it was known to be written by one person. Previously, only secular music had named authors. The author was irrelevant compared to the intended "recipient," God. One anecdote recalls Josquin cussing out someone who had attempted to enhance one of his works with additional ornamentation beyond what he had composed: "You ass, why do you add ornaments? If I had wanted them, I would have added them myself."[120]

The next century would hold some delights for the deep ken, like the extreme polyphony of Alessandro Striggio's (ca. 1536/37–92) ca. 1565 mass that coordinated not four or five, but sixty different voices. The future, however, slowly pivoted towards the plain ken: a loosening of deep-ken rules, reorientation of music towards a human audience, the focus on clear enunciation of words for that audience, a sense that music evolves over time, and an increased sense of composers' genius (like that of visual artists), to the extent that a passage of Beethoven is now important because it "is Beethoven." The rising instrumental music could express fuzzy emotions, but without words had no capacity to

118 Hiley, *Gregorian*, 132–34, 154–55.

119 Harman, *Mediaeval and Early Renaissance Music*, 122–23; Kirkman, *Cultural Life*, 135–51; Seay, *Music in the Medieval World*, 93, 122; Rob C. Wegman, *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe, 1470–1530* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

120 Johann Manlius, "Scholae et stvdia lingvarum artium ac facultatum," in Johann Manlius, *Locorum communium collectanea* (Frankfurt: n.p., 1566), 542.

articulate precise doctrinal or narrative truths about Jesus. Eventually, even dissonance became, if not beautiful, something that commanded attention and respect. In the twentieth century, Arnold Schoenberg celebrated his "emancipation of the dissonance" from the rules of consonance, and dissonant music would be variously celebrated as reflecting core values of Black America, Buddhism, and democracy.[121] In sounds that would have scratched the deep ken's eardrums, the plain ken could find a crude, craggy beauty.

121 Arnold Schoenberg, "Opinion or Insight?," in *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 258–64 (258); Dane Rudhyar, *Dissonant Harmony* (Carmel: Hamsa, 1928); Duke Ellington, "Interview in Los Angeles [1941]," *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), 148–51.