RODOBALDO TIBALDI

Style and structure in the motets of Orazio Vecchi.
With an appendix on the Ave virgo gratiosa *of Monte and Porta**

The name and fame of Orazio Vecchi are associated, today as in his own day, almost exclusively with the secular output, and above all with the six books of *Canzonette* for three, four and six voices, the large and (at times) experimental collections, like the *Selva di varia ricreatione* (1590), *Il convito musicale* (1597) and *Le veglie di Siena* (1604), and of course what is probably his most original work, *L'Amfiparnaso* (1597). It is in this direction that most modern research has been directed, as one can easily verify by consulting the entries in the major musical encyclopaedias and the extensive bibliography on the composer. And of course this is understandable, if we consider the historical importance and quality of his compositional art. One consequence, however, is that his sacred music, which was the direct consequence of his being a church musician by training and by professional career, has been largely neglected. Indeed still today the only work of a certain scope to be dedicated to the subject is Raimond Rüegge's study *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, published 1967.[1] And if anything the situation of the modern editions, almost completely lacking, is even worse.[2]

Let us here briefly summarize the main stages of his career.[3] From 1581

---

[1] RAIMOND RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, Bern-Stuttgart, Paul Haupt, 1967 (Publikationem der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft-Publications de la Societé Suisse de Musicologie, serie II, 15).
[2] To the list given in RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, pp. 92-93, which includes 'classic' 19th-century editions such as the *Musica Sacra* of Franz Commer and the *Musica Divina* of Carl Proske, there is still almost nothing to add.
[3] The most complete account of Vecchis life is still *Orazio Vecchi precursore del melodramma (1550-1605) nel IV centenario della nascita. Contributi di studio raccolti dalla Accademia di Scienze lettere ed arti di Modena*, ed. Evaristo Pancaldi and Gino Roncaglia, Modena, Stampa Tipografica Modenese, 1950. For exemplary short accounts of Vecchi's biography, see the encyclopaedia entries by Oscar Mischiati in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 15 vols., hrsg. von Friedrich Blume, Kassel-Basel, Bärenreiter, 1949-1968, vol. 13, coll. 1346-1353, and

to 1584 he was head of music at the Duomo of Salò; from 1584 to 1586 he was *maestro di cappella* at the Cathedral of Modena, after which he applied for the same post in the Cathedral of Reggio Emilia; then he was at Correggio from 1586 to 1593 as canon of the local Collegiata; and finally, in 1593, he returned to Modena, where he stayed until his death, again as *maestro di cappella* of the Cathedral. In addition he held other positions. In 1596 he was appointed *mansionario* and admitted to the Confraternita dell'Annunciazione in the churches of S. Maria and S. Pietro (where he had received his earliest religious instruction) with musical responsibilities on particular occasions, and in 1598 he was appointed *maestro di corte* by Duke Cesare d'Este, who was apparently deeply impressed when he heard one of his masses. In 1603 the Imperial ambassador, on a visit to Modena, proposed that he should accept the post of *maestro di cappella* at the court of Rudolph II as the successor to Monte; but the composer, by then old and sick, was unable to accept the prestigious offer. Finally, it is also as a church musician that Vecchi suffered his last serious disappointment. The new bishop of Modena prohibited him from teaching music to the nuns, an ancient privilege conceded to the *maestro di cappella*; Vecchi disobeyed and (as it would appear) his pupil Geminiano Capilupi, desiring to succeed him, reported the fact to the bishop, who prompted sacked the old master.[4] Whether this was the cause or not, the fact remains that Vecchi died only a very few months later.

The collections that Vecchi dedicated expressly to sacred music, though not numerous, are diverse in character. The first publication known to us contains the Lamentations for Holy Week for four equal voices (1587).[5] This was

---

William R. Martin in *The New Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie, 29 vols., London, Macmillan, 2001, vol. 26, pp. 366-368.

[4] See GINO RONCAGLIA, "Documenti inediti su Orazio Vecchi, la sua famiglia e l'allievo Geminiano Capilupi", in *Collectanea historiae musicae*, II, Firenze, Olschki, 1956 (Historiae musicae cultores, 6), pp. 367-372, and ID., *La cappella musicale del Duomo di Modena*, Firenze, Olschki, 1957, pp. 65-68.

[5] RISM mentions a book of motets for eight voices, printed in Venice in 1579 and surviving very incomplete (just the parts of Cantus and Bassus) in the Archivio Capitolare of Pistoia. This information, included in the *New Grove* entry, is certainly taken from UMBERTO DE LAUGIER–MARIO VIERI, *Città di Pistoia. Archivio Capitolare della Cattedrale*, Parma, Fresching, 1936-1937 (Pubblicazioni dell'Associazione dei Musicologi Italiani-Catalogo delle opere musicali teoriche e pratiche [...] esistenti nelle biblioteche d'Italia, 4). On p. 60 of the catalogue we find the following entry: "– (1579) – Mottetti a 8 voci Libro 1°. Sola parte del Canto. Venezia, Gardano 1579", with shelf-mark B.22.22; however, this shelf-mark actually corresponds to a fragment of the Septimus part of the book of motets of 1590 (pp. 27-33 and index), and probably belonged to the copy of the same book of motets preserved in the Archivio Capitolare under shelf-mark B.1.7, a copy lacking the Octavus part, but with an incomplete Septimus part. It is not easy to explain the mistake made by De Laugier and Vieri and above all the

followed by two books of motets for four to ten voices (1590 and 1597) and a book of four-voice hymns (1604). In 1607 (two years after Vecchi's death, therefore), his pupil Paolo Bravusi collected and published four hitherto unpublished Masses for six and eight voices, including a Requiem. Individual compositions also appeared in celebrated Italian and foreign anthologies, while the book of Masses was reprinted complete in Antwerp in 1612 with the addition of Monteverdi's *Missa in illo tempore* (a coupling that deserves thorough examination, above all from the point of view of compositional style). A five-voice Magnificat and the so-called *Messa Julia* for eight voices survive today in manuscript in the archive of the Cathedral of Modena, and there is some indirect evidence of other works that have never surfaced (yet are perhaps concealed, unattributed, in the Modena archive). For example, in the posthumous edition of the Masses Bravusi tells the reader that there were still other Masses, psalms and motets to be printed (as well as madrigals, dialogues and other things).[6] And in the following century Muratori listed a series of works by Vecchi that "remain to be printed" (though he disconsolately adds "but I do not know where"), including thirty-two motets, Vespers of our Lord for five voices, two series of Vespers of the Virgin for five and eight voices respectively, and two Masses, as well as some canzonettas "along with other noble caprices".[7]

At a conference devoted to Vecchi's secular music and to the reform of the Roman Gradual (an operation he accomplished with Andrea Gabrieli and Lodovico Balbi), the theme of my paper might appear off the subject. And in part, of course, it is, for I shall deal with the two collections of motets published respectively in 1590 and 1597.[8] In the course of my paper I shall

---

date 1579, except as a muddle over the various entries made at the moment of final editing, given that the damaged B.22.22 lacks the title-page and all typographical data and given that the final index mentions motets for four to ten voices; more understandable is the reference to the part of the Cantus, seeing that p. 27 contains the Cantus of the second choir (but the other pages contain different vocal ranges). A further error in RISM is the mention of a non-existent Bassus. Naturally various hypotheses are possible, such as the genuine existence of this partbook in the 1930s and its subsequent disappearance and the substitution of the fragment surviving today. Whatever the case, the present situation is that described here. I wish to thank the archivist of the Biblioteca Capitolare of Pistoia, Don Alfredo Pacini, for sending a copy of the material.

[6] "Reliquum tamen mihi erat, ut ea typis darem, quae ipse morte praeventus non valuit, et hunc Missarum librum praemittere decrevi, quemadmodum multa alia, quae adu me reperiuntur, tum Latino, tum Thusco sermone, Missae item, Psalmi, Cantiones Sacrae atque profanae, Dialogi, aliaque huiuscemodi, que omnia quoties haec grata animadvertam, deinceps exibunt [...]"; quoted in RONCAGLIA, *La cappella musicale*, pp. 69-70.

[7] Document quoted in RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, p. 15.

[8] Complete sources of the two editions are found in Bologna, Museo internazionale e bibliote-

endeavour to show that his constant experience and practice of the secular repertoire were decisive and fundamental at all levels, and that this compositional manner can be clearly perceived even in a genre as different as that of the motet, a genre that also had a liturgical function, though not exclusively, as also in the Lamentations (at least apparently, since the real situation was a little more complex than appears at first glance), Hymns and Masses. This is not the place to revive Cummings' documented discussion of the paraliturgical typology of the 16th-century motet,[9] above all because there is still too often a tendency on the one hand to classify everything somewhat rigidly according to simple preconstituted formulas, on the other hand to confuse different aspects, which, though by no means separate from one another, are nonetheless necessarily distinct. I refer in particular to the question of motet texts, of their use in the liturgy and of the moment in which they could be most frequently performed. In this regard I once again stress that there is not necessarily a connection of cause and effect between text and function when there is a polyphonic setting. In other words, the polyphonic setting of an antiphon or a responsory does not indissolubly link that motet to the Office of a particular feast; and above all, it does not make it automatically more 'liturgical' than one composed, for example, through an original centonization of passages from the Song of Songs or other texts that were traditional but no longer accepted in the official post-Tridentine books.[10] In addition, it is perhaps not so significant (or important) to identify the points of the Mass or the liturgy of the Hours in which they were most frequently performed; this could depend on the customs of the place, on the type of feast-day, as well as on post-Tridentine ritual practice (which tends to establish the particularly suit-

---

ca della musica, earlier Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, U.284 and U.290; for other copies, see RISM V 1005 and 1006, to be completed at least with the *Catalogue of Early Music Prints from the Collections of the Former Preußische Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Kept at the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow – Katalog starodruków muzycznych ze zbiorôw byłej Pruskiej Biblioteki Państwowej w Berlinie, przechowywanych w Bibliotece Jagiellońskiej w Krakowie*, edited by / opracowała Aleksandra Patalas, Kraków, Musica Iagellonica, 1999, n. 2099 (copy of the *Motecta*). Once again I thank the library in Bologna for so kindly and promptly sending me the material and for its authorization to publish the photographic reproductions.

[9] ANTHONY M. CUMMINGS, "Toward an interpretation of the sixteenth-century motet", *Journal of American Musicological Society*, XXXIV, 1981, pp. 43-59.

[10] For an extended and detailed examination of these and other aspects connected with the texts, their functions and meanings in the liturgical-musical sphere and in strict connection with the motet repertoire, I refer to the highly informed and methodologically up-to-date article by DANIELE TORELLI, "I mottetti di Merulo: un'indagine attraverso i testi", in *Le arti del virtuosissimo Claudio*, Proceedings of the international congress, Parma, 11-12 November 2004 (in press). Here I also take to the opportunity to thank my friend Daniele Torelli for the many exchanges of opinion on the subject and for allowing me to read his article in advance.

able moments, such as the Offertory, Elevation, Communion and Dismissal, though naturally other possibilities are not excluded). A particularly significant example is that of the various motets "pro defunctis" found in various motet collections, with or without explanatory indications, and also to be found in Vecchi's motet output. Normally the text consists of a responsory with the omission of the verse, though we would hesitate to hypothesize that the work was performed at the precise moment indicated for the funeral liturgy, i.e. Matins. In the Mass it would not occupy a given moment in substitution for the Introit or Offertory or anything else, because these parts are already present in the polyphonic Requiem. On the other hand, the final rite of Absolution during the benediction of the dead is often very long and requires the singing of responsories (one in the ordinary rite, five in the solemn rite) which could be replaced by motets that use a responsory text but are polyphonic responsories neither in structure (they lack the verse and hence also the repetenda) nor in function. By this I do not wish to rule out their use in another contexts, whether liturgical, paraliturgical or devotional: one possibility does not exclude another; if anything it widens the range of functions.[11] Finally, it is worth mentioning that the performance of motets in generically devotional, spiritual or even 'secular' contexts is also widely attested: evident proof of how multifaceted this type of composition was at various levels.[12]

I have briefly treated this question above all because the works contained in the two books of 1590 and 1597 all carry indications of the liturgical occasion in which they can be performed, and hence show that the composer's intentions were fairly clear about the occasion of the celebrational context, but certainly not (or not necessarily) about their positioning within the specific rite.

The two collections are partly similar in content and overall organization

---

[11] Consider, for example, the *Officium defunctorum* for six voices by Victoria (Madrid, 1605), in which the Mass is followed by the motets *Versa est in luctum* and *Taedet animam meam* before concluding with the responsory for the Absolution *Libera me, Domine* that ends the rite. Given that *Taedet animam meam* uses the second lesson of Matins as its textual source, and that this situation is specified by a rubric, in certain editions and in most performances (and recordings) the motet is placed before the Requiem, since it is considered as either a part of the Office or an introductory piece to the Mass proper. Instead it is evident, both from its position in the edition and from its actual text that its function is another (regardless of the textual source): in other words, that of preparing for the concluding part of the Mass, perhaps the most moving and solemn in the post-Tridentine liturgy.

[12] See, for example, the various instances of evidence from the Sistine Diaries on the performance of motets during the Pope's meals, reported in CUMMINGS, "Toward an interpretation", p. 45, fn. 5 (from the classic contributions of Raffaele Casimiri and Herman-Walther Frey).

and an element of continuity is suggested by the term "liber secundus" for the edition of 1597. The title-page of the second set, however, uses the cultured term "sacrae cantiones", whereas the earlier edition (not referred to as "liber primus") had employed the more current "motecta".

The 1590 edition, dedicated to Prince William of Bavaria, has thirty-one works (two of which in two parts) for four to ten voices. More specifically there are seven for four voices, five for five, five for six, thirteen for eight and one for ten. The title-page, however, makes no mention of the final ten-voice piece:

> MOTECTA HORATII / VECCHII MVTINENSIS / CANONICVS CORIGIENSIS / Quaternis, Quinis, Senis, & / Octonis Vocibus. / Nunc Primum in lucem edita. / SERENISSIMO PRINCIPI GVGLIELMO, / Palatino, Rheni Comiti, & vtriusque Baua- / riae Duci &c. Dicata. / CVM PRIVILEGIO. / [printer's mark] / Venetijs Apud Angelum Gardanum / — / M.D.LXXXX.

The second book, published when Vecchi was once again *maestro di cappella* in Modena, has fewer motets: seven for five voices, seven for six, two for seven and eight for eight, all in one part only, but two of them (one for six voices and one for eight), must be left out of the calculation, since they are attributed in the edition to Geminiano Capilupi (Vecchi's pupil and the man responsible for his last great disappointment). This time the work is dedicated to the members of the Congregazion Cassinese of Santa Giustina in Padua. The different dedicatees of the two editions could perhaps also explain the change in denomination from the more neutral "motectum" to the more precise and apparently less ambiguous "sacra cantio":

> SACRARVM / CANTIONVM / HORATII VECCHII / In Cathedrali Ecclesia Mutinae Musicae Magistri. / LIBER SECVNDVS. / Nunc primum in lucem aeditus. / CVM PRIVILEGIO / [printer's mark] / Venetijs Apud Angelum Gardanum / — / M.D.LXXXXVII.

Various motets in these two collections were reprinted in northern anthologies, mostly German ones. Among these editions were some of the most important collections of late-16th-century and early-17th-century sacred music, which attest the spread of Italian music for one or more choirs, such as the volumes of *Sacrae symphoniae* edited by Kaspar Hassler, Hans Leo's brother, or the 17th-century collections of Schadeus, Bodenschatz and Donfrid.[13] As well as offering tangible proof of Vecchi's fame and importance as a

---

[13] Appendix I gives a list of the anthologies, also found in RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche*

composer of sacred music both in his own day and in the period immediately following, the anthologies also include other works not to be found in Vecchi's two motet books:

– *Apostolus Paulus vas electionis* for eight voices, contained in the third part of the *Promptuarium musici* edited by Schadeus (Strasburgo 1613);
– *O beate Dominice* for eight voices, surviving in the *Rosarium Litaniariun Beatae V. Mariae*, compiled by Lorenzo Calvi (Venice 1626). Among other things, this is the only anthology published in Italy to contain sacred works by Vecchi;
– *Ecce quam bonum* for ten voices, known only in the form of an organ tablature included in the monumental *Nova musices organicae tabulatura* of Johannes Woltz (Basel 1617).

The copious 17th-century manuscript tradition transmits numerous copies of works contained in the various printed sources. In most cases they are derived from the German anthologies, but in isolated cases there are also works otherwise unknown, perhaps from printed anthologies today lost:[14]

– *Decantabat populum* for eight voices, in Mus. ms. 40039 (formerly Z 39) of the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin (MS of 1628);
– *Deus in adiutorium* for six voices, in Mus. ms. 40044 (formerly Z 44) now in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska of Krakow (formerly in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek of Berlin);
– *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus* for five voices, of which only the organ part has survived, in Ms. 4012 of the Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk of Danzig.

We must also take into account, however, the possibility of mistaken attributions. For example, in the last-mentioned manuscript the motet *Velociter exaudi me, Domine* is attributed to Orfeo Vecchi, a composer with a similar name.

Werke, p. 83. Also added here is an index by composition, which gives an immediate idea of the publishing history of each motet.

[14] Rüegge (*Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, p. 84) also mentions the motet *Sacrabo cor et corpus* for eight voices, preserved in Mss. 20 and 23, Sammlung Bohn della Staatsbibliothek of Berlin (from the private library of Emil Bohn in Breslau/Wroclaw); but as Bohn already states in his catalogue, it is a *contrafactum* of the madrigal *In questa piaggia amena* (see EMIL BOHN, *Die musikalischen Handschriften des XVI und XVII Jahrhunderts in der Stadtbibliothek zu Breslau*, Breslau, Hainauer, 1890 [facsimile reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1970], p. 249). This *contrafactum* is found in the third volume of the *Hortus musicalis* edited by Michael Herrer (Munich, Adam Berg, 1609; RISM 1609[15]).

To this already large motet corpus we must finally add the works contained in the posthumous edition of Masses and comprised in the *Missa in resurrectione Domini* for eight voices and two choirs: a genuine plenary Mass.[15] Also specified are the liturgical moments in which they take place. Here again, however, we have a situation that is somewhat varied and does not always correspond to what seems clear and obvious at first glance:

– the "introitus" *Resurrexi* uses the corresponding text of the Easter Introit, complete with psalm verse and doxology. It is the only section of the Mass that fails to apply a two-choir division of the eight voices. It also uses the whole Gregorian melody, partly in the form of intonations for the opening parts of the individual sections, partly as a cantus firmus in the Septimus part (C4 clef);

– the "graduale" *Haec dies* sets the solo response of the Easter Gradual, omitting the verse. Again the Gregorian melody performs the functions of intonation and cantus firmus, though this time in the bass parts of both choirs (we shall return to this point later);

– the "offertorium" *Surgite populi*, on the other hand, has nothing to do with the Easter Offertory *Terra tremuit*. It is a genuine motet on a non-liturgical text, derived from the centonization of various psalm verses. It performs the function of an Offertory even if the text is not: this is yet further evidence that one of the most frequent places for performing motets was during the celebration of the Eucharist;

– The piece "in Elevatione" *O dulcis Jesu* naturally has no elements for direct comparison, given that the Elevation was one of the most common moments for performing vocal or instrumental music, but it did not coincide with a chant of the formulary (unless it was performed in substitution of the *Benedictus*; but that is not required in Vecchi's Mass, at least not explicitly);

– finally, "loco Dei gratis", there is the motet *Cantemus laetis vultibus*, a work that is almost completely in triple time in the manner of an Alleluiatic conclusion.

* * *

As I mentioned earlier, all the motets of both collections carry an indication of the liturgical moment when they can be performed. This reminds us of similar collections by Palestrina, Marenzio, Andrea Gabrieli and Merulo, just to mention the most famous (though many others could be cited). As regards

---

[15] Modern edition: Orazio Vecchi, *Missa in resurrectione Domini zu 8 Stimmen*, hrsg. von Raimund Rüegge, Wolfenbüttel, Möseler, 1967 (Das Chorwerk, 108).

the organization of the content, however, these collections have very little in common with Vecchi's. Where elsewhere we find a sequence of works following the order of the liturgical year (Temporale, Proper of the Saints, Common of the Saints), in neither of Vecchi's books is there a pre-established order except for that of the number of voices (Tables 1 and 2). Naturally it would be exceedingly difficult – indeed surely impossible – to give a liturgical order to works requiring different forces (there would also be practical difficulties in the printing process); the only solution was to organize internal mini-cycles, as in Lorenzo De Lorenzi's *Sacrae cantiones*, published in Venice in 1604 (Table 3).[16] There we find an evident liturgical order within the three groupings created by the number of voices required. The exception is the motet *O Patriarcha* for the feast of St Francis, placed first because the work is dedicated to Francesco Gonzaga, bishop of Mantua and marquis of Ostiano. The placing of the Nativity of St John Baptist after the Visitation of the Holy Virgin can be explained either as a desire to begin the part of the Proper of the Saints with a Marian feast or as a mere slip on the printer's part.

In neither of Vecchi's two collections do we find a solution of this kind; nor do we find a modal criterion that is either generalized or adopted within the various groupings (indeed the use of the E mode is extremely scarce); the rubrics, therefore, must be understood in relation to the individual motet as such, and not within a nonexistent wider context. The idea of a certain 'confusion' is then increased by the presence, among the rest, of works that cannot be strictly be called motets. One of the pieces in the 1590 edition, to be used "ad Sacramentum", is *Pange lingua gloriosi*, set and treated as a genuine hymn; only the first strophe is set, to be used identically in the other unevennumbered strophes, in alternation with the Gregorian chant (or with the evennumbered strophes of the composition of the same name contained in the hymns of 1604). The work is for eight voices not divided into two choirs (the only work with this feature in both books), but the writing shows a degree of complexity that is greater than that generally found in the hymn repertoire of the late 16th century. And in spite of its strophic nature, the work can in some way (with a little effort) be classed as a motet. In the second book, among the works for six voices, there are the Litanies of Loreto (rubric: "Ad Mariam in omni tempore"), set in accordance with the compositional techniques customary to the genre. It is certainly not rare to include some Litanies in a collection of motets or Masses; what is a little less common is to mix them up instead of setting aside a particular place for them, generally the end of the

---

[16] *Sacrae cantiones (vulgo motecta appellatae) quinque, sex, et octo vocum. Tum viva voce, tum omnis generis instrumentis cantatu commodissimae. Auctore F. Laurentio de Laurentiis, lendenariensi nunc primum in lucem editae. Liber primus*, Venezia, Ricciardo Amadino, 1604.

set. In any case I do not intend, at least here, to dwell in detail on matters concerning the texts, their sources and different features, for this would require separate treatment and a different kind of study into the context and liturgical customs, perhaps also at a local level.[17] While promising to return to this subject on another occasion, for the moment I will merely make a few general observations and offer some sufficiently clear exemplification. From the Breviary and the reformed Missal are taken antiphons and responsories, the latter without the verse as is consolidated practice in the motet repertoire, and also readings, such as *Per feminam mors* (1597). The text for this last-mentioned work is taken from the beginning of the third lesson of Matins of the Saturday Office of the Holy Virgin for the month of May, in turn drawn from different passages from St Augustine's works, above all the *Tractatus de Symbolo ad Catechumenos*, to which the rubric of the Breviary make a direct reference. We also find parts of rhythmic offices, such as *Salve sancte pater* (1590) for the feast of St Francis,[18] and rhymed texts presumably drawn from the hymn repertoire prior to the Tridentine reform, such as *Magdalenae cor ardebat*. Among these works one that deserves a special mention is *Ave virgo gratiosa*, at least in relation to the motet repertoire. It is a single-strophe version of a hymn known in various sources and with variable lengths as regards the number of constituent strophes and lines; depending on the possible sources of reference, it is generally taken from either the first strophe or the first two. It belongs to the tradition of the *Psalterium maius Beatae Mariae Virginis*, attributed to St Bonaventura ("oratio ad Beatam Virgine, Sabbato ad Completorium"), and it seems to have been more popular in the French area

---

[17] A curious fact, for example, is that the Requiem Mass should present as a Gradual text *Si ambulem in medio umbrae mortis* instead of *Requiem aeternam*, the official text of the Missal of Pius V. This is curious both because this is pre-Tridentine text and above all because it was widespread in countries north of the Alps (above all in France and the German-speaking countries), but not in Italy, where the Gradual *Requiem aeternam* V. *In memoria aeterna* was preferred. To limit myself to one 'official' example, see the Missal of 1474, one of the very first printed edition of the Roman Missal (facsimile reprint *Missalis Romani editio princeps. Mediolani anno 1474 prelis mandata*, ed. Anthony Ward and Cuthbert Johnson, Roma, Edizioni Liturgiche, 1996 (Bibliotheca "Ephemerides Liturgicae"-Subsidia Instrumenta Liturgica Quarreriensa, Supplementa, 3), pp. 330-336 "Missa in agenda mortuorum": 331). Equally curious is the polyphonic setting of the Gradual in general, again quite frequent north of the Alps but not in Italy. I am in no position to say whether this was a tradition peculiar to the Cathedral of Modena that survived after the Council of Trent or whether we are dealing with a composition written earlier and most likely intended for a different liturgical context.

[18] See CLEMENS BLUME–GUIDO MARIA DREVES–HENRY MARRIOTT BANNISTER, *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*, 55 vols., Leipzig, Reisland 1886-1922 (with indexes in three vols. *Analecta Hymnica. Register*, hrsg. von Max Lütolf, Bern-München, Francke Verlag, 1978), vol. 5, p. 178 and vol. 52, pp. 179 and 183.

as from the 15th century.[19] It did not become a part of the official liturgy, though it is frequently found, above all in the single-strophe version, in Books of Hours and devotional texts, often with an oscillation between "gratiosa" and "gloriosa" in the first line, as well as certain internal variants. Mainly in its single-strophe form it is often used as a motet text, again with the possible "gratiosa/gloriosa" variant, from the early 16th century (if not earlier) at least until the last 17th century. From a preliminary (and wholly provisional) inquiry, it would appear that the version "Ave virgo gloriosa" was that preferred in the French environment, while the Italian composers, or in any case those active in Italy, normally used the "gratiosa" reading. Sometimes a conclusion is added, such as "Amen" or "Alleluia"; but below I shall have occasion to return to certain details of this text in connection with the various motet settings.

A considerable number of the texts are from the Psalter; in a few cases they are settings of a complete psalm; and an 'all-round' function is exploited for the motets "in omni tempore", almost all based on psalm verses or inter psalms.

Not infrequently texts of liturgical derivation are reworked either by adaptation in accordance with their provenance or to make them suited to different feasts. To the former category belongs *Euge serve bone* (1590), which we shall discuss below; to the second, *Dies sanctificatus* (1590), which can be used "in Nativitate Domini, et in Pascha" and combines texts from both the Christmas and Easter rites (*Dies sanctificatus* and *Haec dies*).

Here, in any case, we shall offer a summary picture of the situation that takes into account the rubrics and respective destinations. The numbers also take into account the fact that, in some cases, the destination indicated is a double one, as in the above-mentioned case of *Dies sanctificatus*.

Proper of the Time: 17
    Christmas (2)
    St Stephen Protomartyr (1)
    Lent (1)

---

[19] See Franz Joseph Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters*, 3 vols. Freiburg, Herder'sche Verlagshandlung, 1853-1855 (facsimile reprint Bologna, Forni, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 284-288 (a version 200 lines long); Blume–Dreves–Bannister, *Analecta Hymnica*, vol. 19, p. 22 (a much shorter version with tetrastic strophes); Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, I: *Von der ältesten Zeit bis zum Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, (facsimile reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1990), no. 297, pp. 190-191 (substantially the same as that published by Mone) and no. 298, p. 191 (the single-strophe version). The pseudo-Bonaventurian version, from an edition of 1626, can be consulted in Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, no. 228, p. 141.

Passion Time (1)
Easter and Easter Time (5)
Pentecost (2)
Corpus Domini (5)

Proper of the Saints: 7 (of which 5 in Book I)
St Benedict   21 March
St Mark   25 April
Invention of the Holy Cross   3 May
St Mary Magdalen   22 July
St Roch   16 August
St Francis   4 October

B.V. Mary: 13 (of which 9 Book II)
Annunciation   25 March
Assumption   15 August
In omni solemnitate (5)
In omni tempore (6)

Common of the Saints: 5
Confessors (1)
Virgins (1)
Dedication of a Church (1)
Dead (2)

Devotion to the Sacrament: 5 (1 by Capilupi)

In omni tempore: 12 (1 by Capilupi)

* * *

As Raimond Rüegge has pointed out in his work, Vecchi's motets are for-mally constructed in a very free manner, without any rigid framework.[20] Nat-urally that does not mean that they are *durchkomponiert*; it rather means that the two books present a wide sampling of all the formal solutions used in the *sacrae cantiones* of the late 16th century. The number presenting a free struc-ture without musical repetition (and hence authentically *durchkomponiert*) is very low; they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In these cases what

---

[20] An account of the solutions used by Vecchi is given in RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, p 89.

sustains the form is the extended and continuous use of imitation. At first glance this solution could remind one of the formal models of the first half of the 16th century. Rüegge, analyzing the characteristics of *Speciosa facta es* for five voices, the opening motet of the second book, even speaks (also with a certain surprise) of a mid-century Franco-Flemish style.[21] This impression is given by the way in which Vecchi organizes the entire composition, and above all by the constant, structural use of the avoided cadence, which helps to weld the whole work into a single block. This, however, is an aspect that exclusively concerns the overall form, certainly not the style and type of counterpoint, which juxtaposes wide melodic arcs of a melismatic character and close imitations using shorter phrases or even motifs of a more syllabic, or even pseudo-contrapuntal, nature. Moreover, there is no lack of examples of such types of formal organizations in composers contemporary to Vecchi, or even younger ones: there we observe the coexistence of novelty and tradition, and a trust in the well-tried solutions without that necessarily meaning barricading oneself behind consolidated positions.

In any case it is an established fact that Vecchi preferred a structure that is marked off by repetitions and reprises that are either melodic or thematic, according to circumstances. The resulting solid organization is at times suggested by the text itself; elsewhere it forces the text into preconstituted moulds of a merely musical nature. Some examples could clarify this.

Unquestionably problematic cases are those posed by very long texts, like that of an entire psalm. One such instance is the seven-voice motet *Domine Deus noster* (Book II), setting the whole of Psalm 8. This psalm, however, calls for the repetition of the first verse, which prompts Vecchi to reuse the music presented at the start, and to restrict the use of the full forces to these two moments, thereby marking out the overall form. The same solution is used also in the six-voice motet *Benedicite omnia opera Domini* (Book I), which sets the first eight verses of the Canticle of the Three Youths; at the end the text and music of the first verse are repeated (though not indicated in the liturgical text), thereby again generating a musically logical structure.

The opposite problem is posed by very short texts, which could even be as short as one psalm verse, as in the four-voice motets *Velociter exaudi me* (Psalm 142, v. 7) and *Misericordias Domini* (Psalm 88, v. 1), both in Book I.[22]

---

[21] "Die Motette [*Speciosa facta es*] zeigt somit durchaus die Wesenszüge des niederländischen Stiles der Jahrhundertmitte – und dies in einem Motettenerstdruck aus dem Jahre 1597!": RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, pp. 19-20.

[22] A transcription of the motet *Velociter exaudi me* is given in the anthology edited by Carl Proske, *Musica Divina, Tomus II, annus I, Liber Motettorum*, Regensburg, Pustet, 1855; *Misericordias Domini* is in RODOBALDO TIBALDI, "I mottetti di Orazio Vecchi: un'antologia", *Polifonie*, V/2, 2005, pp. 47-123: 57-61.

In the first case the solution is similar to the preceding ones, for the first hemistich is repeated, again to create the ternary form ABA. In the second case an expansion of form is obtained by the complete repetition (with variants) of almost the whole motet, with the exception of the first statement of the subject and the respective answers; this creates a sort of ABCB'C structure. The repetition of entire episodes, for the most part at the end, is a means frequently adopted to create broader structures, both in the motets of four to seven voices and in those for two choirs. In the same way we find reprises that return identically (or slightly varied) within the composition, at textual repeats, often with a contrasting rhythm and/or vocal forces. The text of the four-voice motet *Euge serve bone* is made up by combining three antiphons of Vespers and Lauds of the Common of Confessors, *Euge serve bone*, *Fidelis servus et prudens* and *Serve bone et fidelis*, the first and third of which end with the words "intra in gaudium Domini tui".[23] The same conclusion is also added to the text of the second antiphon, and is exploited as a reprise within and at the end of the motet, in homophonic triple time and four-part writing, while the three preceding episodes are always for three voices, in duple metre and with imitative writing in the first two episodes, pseudo-contrapuntal in the third:

Euge serve bone in modico fidelis	C.A.B.	¢
intra in gaudium Domini tui.	Tutti	₵ ³₂
Fidelis servus et prudens, quem constituit Dominus super familiam suam	A.T.B.	¢
intra in gaudium Domini tui.	Tutti	₵ ³₂
Serve bone et fidelis	A.T.B	¢
intra in gaudium Domini tui.	Tutti	₵ ³₂

The overall result, which takes also its cue from similar procedures used by Venetian composers above all in works for two or more choirs, seems almost an anticipation of the so-called concertato "cantilena-motet".

Alongside these solutions, which were firmly consolidated and typical of the late-16th-century repertoire, we still also find recourse to the cantus fir-

---

[23] Transcription in *Musica Divina, Tomus II, annus I, Liber Motettorum*.

mus. I am not referring here to those (already familiar) cases where Vecchi quotes or reworks fragments of Gregorian melodies, as in the motets *Salve, sancte Pater* (from Book I) or *Salve, radix sancta* (from Book II).[24] In both cases the presence of the word "Salve" suggests the evocative use of the start of the Gregorian antiphon *Salve Regina* (see Example 1); here, of course, the purpose is to quote a well-known melody and it does not assume a particular significance in the actual organization of the work (nor does it seem to refer to anything else). Instead, I will draw attention to a group of three works in which we find a structural use of the cantus firmus in at least one of the voices of the ensemble.

The first case, the simplest and one corresponding to certain compositional traditions of the northern environment, is the five-voice motet *Haec dies* (1597), which sets the response of the Gradual of the Easter Mass (see Example 2). It is Vecchi's only composition in triple time from start to finish, and it is based on the Gregorian melody (in strictly equal values of perfect breves), given in the Bassus, also preceded by a cantus firmus intonation by the same voice;[25] this prompts Vecchi to alter the cantus firmus at the end so as to have a *clausula basizans* in the final cadence. Among other things, at other times the cantus firmus would have clearly been written in a different *mensura*, i.e. simply duple. It is a sign of the times and of what the individual signs mean at the end of the 16th century that recourse is made to triple-time only in all voices together, so as not to generate difficulties or doubts (though this was not necessarily the only possibility; in other composers, even later ones like Viadana, we occasionally find the coexistence of a Cantus in duple time and other voices in triple time).[26] The structural use of a Gregorian melody in the manner of a cantus firmus placed in the lowest voice is a technical procedure that one can still find at the start of the 17th century in various works, without that implying archaism or merely didactic aims, as has sometimes been hypothesized. There are examples in Costanzo Porta and Lodovico Viadana, just to mention two names.

---

[24] RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, p. 26; MICHELE FROMSON, "Melodic citation in the sixteenth-century motet", in *Early Musical Borrowing*, ed. Honey Meconi, New York-London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 179-206: 197. The two motets can be consulted in TIBALDI, "I mottetti di Orazio Vecchi", pp. 72-77 (*Salve, radix sancta*) and 91-97 (*Salve, sancte Pater*).

[25] It is interesting to note that certain other works that set the response of the Gradual of the Easter Mass are composed on a cantus firmus, though placed in the Tenor instead of the Bassus. Examples are the motets *Haec dies* by Jacquet of Mantua (from the *Motecta* for five voices, Book I, Venezia, Gerolamo Scotto, 1539) and Ingegneri (from the *Sacrae cantiones* for five voices, Venezia, Angelo Gardano, 1576).

[26] In the strophe "Qui Mariam absolvisti" of the four-voice Requiem included in the *Officium defunctorum* op. X (Venezia, Giacomo Vincenti, 1600) the Bassus has the cantus firmus in semibreves notated in C, whereas the other three voices have the sign 3.

One curious point worth mentioning is that the same motet *Haec dies* reappears as the Gradual of the *Missa in Resurrectione Domini* included in the 1607 edition. This Mass, however, is for eight voices and two choirs, and hence also the motet was merely adapted to the same forces, using somewhat simplistic methods (Example 3):

– the Bassus, which has the cantus firmus, has been doubled and made the foundation of both choirs;
– Cantus, Altus and Quintus, with only minimal differences, have been placed in the First Choir, thereby completing it;
– the Tenor has been moved to the Second Choir;
– the second Cantus has been created by doubling the cantus firmus at the upper tenth (with only a small change in intervals at the end);
– as a result the Altus of the Second Choir is the only voice that has been truly created *ex novo*.

These are very elementary procedures that suggest methods derived from *contrappunto alla mente* (e.g. the doubling of the cantus firmus at the tenth), and could even suggest that the operation was undertaken by the editor of the posthumous print, Paolo Bravusi (though obviously we cannot rule out the possibility that Vecchi himself was hard-pressed for time).

In addition, there is another curious aspect: the fact that the liturgical melody used as a cantus firmus does not exactly match the reading of the 1591 Gradual, i.e. that revised also by Vecchi. The variants are of varying degrees of importance, running from the omission of single notes to different text underlay and the reduction of certain melismas (Example 4). This could perhaps be a clue suggesting that the work was written before the revision of the Gradual. Another possible case is the posthumous Easter Mass: not so much the work itself (for the reasons stated above), as the Introit, for there again the cantus firmus is not based on the Gardano edition.[27]

In the other two works the cantus firmus consists of an ostinato repeated various times in accordance with the instructions of a motto, somewhat in the manner of the Franco-Flemish enigmatic canon (though much simpler to decipher). In *Ecce Virgo sancta* (1597) the Sextus (a second Cantus) consists of an ascent and descent of breves in stepwise motion on the entire hard hexachord, against which are set the words "duodecim stellae corona Mariae", to be repeated three times. In the edition the situation is visualized by showing a

---

[27] I wish to thank Marco Gozzi for providing me with a reproduction of the Easter Proper according to the 1591 Gradual, from the copy preserved in Trento, Biblioteca del Castello del Buonconsiglio, Biblioteca musicale "L. Feininger".

crown with a musical staff in which the notes are replaced by stars, while the correct mode of performance is indicated in a Latin rubric: "Hos gradus ter reitera Sed tene vocem postea In fine, quinque tempora" (see Example 5).[28] The overall result, with the other parts moving above and below in an imitative counterpoint that is rhythmically animated and rich in melismatic embellishments,[29] reminds one somewhat of another Marian motet, *Gaude Maria virgo* by Victoria (Example 6), in which the two upper voices, in canon at the unison, stand out strongly from the other parts, at least initially (for the situation then becomes more varied and contrapuntally interesting with the addition of the two voices within the full group). Above all, I would say that the end result anticipates that type of mixed vocal-instrumental composition of the 17th century based on the repetition of a litanical invocation "Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis", a genre that also includes Monteverdi's *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*.[30]

The two examples given above have already been pointed out in Rüegge's work, so I have restricted myself to clarifying a few minor points. The last case, on the other hand, that of the motet *Ave Virgo gratiosa* (1590), seems to have escaped his notice. So here it is worth dwelling on the matter a little longer, both because of the various issues raised by the work and also because it constitutes a moment of synthesis of the aspects examined (Gregorian melody, cantus firmus, ostinato).

The text, *Ave Virgo gratiosa*, which we briefly discussed earlier, was often set by French composers such as Crecquillon, Lhéritier (two different settings), Phinot, Manchincourt and Jacquet de Berchem as *Ave virgo gloriosa*, whereas Italian composers or those working in Italy (Festa, Layolle and Jachet of Mantua) preferred the reading "gratiosa".[31] In line with the Italian tradition, therefore, Vecchi adopts the latter version, at least in general outline:

---

[28] For a correct interpretation of the motto one must consider that the final longa is excluded from the five held breves.

[29] See the transcription of the motet in TIBALDI, "I mottetti di Orazio Vecchi", pp. 78-83.

[30] This particular character was most clearly grasped by Adam Gumpelzhaimer, who copied it and set it out in score though without adding the text (apart from that of the Sextus, with respective Latin rubric) in a personal anthology preserved today in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mus. ms. 40028 (*olim* Z 28), in which, among things, he made the Sextus the highest voice. On Gumpelzhaimer's manuscripts see the fundamental work of RICHARD CHARTERIS, *Adam Gumpelzhaimer's Little-Known Score-Books in Berlin and Kraków*, Neuhausen, American Institute of Musicology, 1996 (Musicological studies and documents, 48). The lack of text did not allow the scholar to identify its presence in the 1597 edition, so the piece was considered as instrumental and in a sole source (p. 41, n. 30). In the same manuscript were also copied two other motets from the 1597 edition: *O Domine Jesu Christe* (no. 49) and *Domine Dominus noster* (no. 69).

[31] In spite of the increasing urgency need for a reference work on sacred music a provisional list can be found in HARRY B. LINCOLN, *The Latin Motet: indexes to printed collections, 1500-*

> Ave Virgo gratiosa,
> stella sole clarior,
> mater Dei gloriosa,
> favo mellis dulcior,
> rubicunda plusquam rosa,
> lilio candidior.
> Omnis virtus te decorat,
> omnis sanctus te honorat,
> Iesus Christus te exaltat
> in caelis sublimior.
> Alleluia.

The text is divided into two parts, on which Vecchi builds two different sections, with the second beginning at l. 6 ("Omnis virtus te decorat"). In this way the first section has three pairs of lines with the same structure of alternating rhymes (-osa and –ior), and the second section has three lines sharing same consecutive rhyme (though the last is admittedly more assonance than genuine rhyme) rounded off by a different rhyme connected to the preceding section (-orat, -altat and -ior). Of the previous composers only Crecquillon subdivides it into two sections at the same point, but in his version he adopts the form "Ave virgo gloriosa"; moreover, there are a few textual variants and above all lines 6 and 7 are inverted (so his second part opens with "Omnis sanctus te honorat"). Among the other composers who set the "Ave virgo gratiosa" version, such as Festa and Layolle, there is no division of the text, and above all there is an important textual variant that they also share with the various settings of "Ave virgo gloriosa": in l. 8 the 'normal' reading used by composers (also from the metrical point of view) and that also attested in Books of Hours and other devotional books is "coronat" and not "exaltat".[32] A concluding addition to the text is found in Layolle and Jacquet of Mantua: in both an "Amen". From the compositional point of view, in no respect do we find any connection with the motet by Vecchi.

The most evident feature in Vecchi's setting, one that clearly distinguishes it from all the preceding ones I have been able to examine, is the structural application of a Gregorian melody. It is used in both sections and is technically diversified, i.e. in the form of paraphrase and as a cantus firmus proper. The melody, which is clearly recognizable right form the start of the motet, is *Ave maris stella*, the Marian hymn *par excellence*, transposed up a fourth

---

1600, Ottawa, The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1993 (Wissenscaftliche Abhandlungen-Musicological Studies, 59).

[32] The reading "coronat" is also found in WACKERNAGEL, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, p. 191.

with a flat (Example 7). I am unable to say whether Vecchi's choice was suggested by some monodic tradition of setting *Ave virgo gratiosa* to the melody of *Ave maris stella*, or whether it was freely made, perhaps inspired by the words "Ave" and "stella" at the start of the first two lines (as well as other similar expressions). Obviously I cannot rule out the possibility that there was a polyphonic model; but for the present I have been unable find a trace.[33] As I do not aim to offer a full analysis of the work (which would go beyond the purpose of this article), I shall limit myself to certain general points on the treatment of the cantus firmus and the consequent organization of the form. In addition I shall propose in the appendix a complete and, so to speak 'annotated', edition of Vecchi's motet, highlighting the presence of the hymn in the various sections in each voice.[34]

The first part, corresponding to the first six lines of the text, is organized into six episodes that are clearly marked by cadences in at least two voices; there is an avoided cadence by the overlap of various voices in two successive episodes only at bb. 37-40, at the passage from the fifth to sixth line. In all six episodes the four phrases of the hymn are used consecutively, always paraphrased yet very lightly, either complete or limited to the opening motif, depending on the episode. At the end of the hymn, for the last two lines the melody is repeated from the beginning and breaks off after the second phrase. As one can observe in the brief table summarizing the formal structure (Table 4), the 'carrying' voice is unquestionably the Quintus, which has the melody complete. But the melody is also found in the Tenor, which acts as a voice that introduces the hymn (though only the head of the theme, bb. 2-4), the Cantus (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th episodes, generally limited to the opening motif) and occasionally also the Bassus (2nd episode), though never the Altus, at least not in any recognizable manner. It is also interesting to note how the passage from one voice to another is accomplished in such a way as to ensure continuity in the melodic line, if only with respect to the beginning of the phrase. Here one example will suffice (for others, see the 'annotated' edition): that of the second episode (bb. 8-19). Here the head of B, stated by the Bassus, immediately follows the preceding phrase (in the Quintus), and is in turn

---

[33] I offer here a short list of composers prior to, or contemporary with, Vecchi, examined through bibliographies, reference books, indexes, modern editions and occasional checking, who did not compose an *Ave virgo gratiosa/gloriosa*: Annibale Padovano, Asola, Baccusi, Bassano, Clemens non Papa, Contino, Croce, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Gombert, Guerrero, Ingegneri, Lasso, Marenzio, Massaino, Morales, Mouton, Palestrina, Pallavicino, Ponzio, Rore, Ruffo, Victoria, Vinci, Wert and Willaert.

[34] The modern edition has already appeared in TIBALDI, "I mottetti di Orazio Vecchi", pp. 66-77; nonetheless I considered it fitting to present it again here owing to the different aims of the present article.

restated in imitation by the Quintus and Cantus, before returning to the Quintus for a complete exposition (on the conclusion of which the Cantus dovetails phrase C). In the overall cadential scheme, which is solidly anchored on G and D, there is an interesting caesura on F at b. 25. In a First Mode in G this would be a *clausula peregrina*, but it is fully justified by the degree in which the third phrase of the hymn concludes.

In the second part the Quintus has just one line of music with the text of line 7 ("omnis virtus te decorat") and with the rubric "vado et venio ad vos", an obvious quote from the Gospel according to St John, 14, 28 (Example 8). This indicates that the melody must be sung first in direct motion, then in retrograde motion, followed by a fresh start from the beginning and so on until the end, making a total of six times: in other words, there are three complete repetitions of the direct-reversed phrase, exactly as in the motet *Ecce Virgo sancta*, again a structure that "comes and goes". Unlike that case, however, this time we are confronted with a genuine melodic line, consisting of Phrase C. Note the continuity of the overall design: the first part broke off at the second phrase and the new section is constructed on the third, significantly entrusted to the voice that had the main role in stating the monodic line. Unlike *Ecce Virgo sancta*, the cantus firmus does not consist just of breves (or notes of equal value), but instead has a rhythmic scheme of a certain complexity, since it is in duple time with two triple-time motifs within it. This allows it to integrate rhythmically in the texture outlined by the other parts. Only at the end is its 'otherness' (musical and textual) evident, in the rhythmic intensification of repeated crotchets given by the voices on the broad conclusive "Alleluia" (bb. 70-82). The connection with the overall structure is instead ambiguous, outlining a sort of descending climax:

– the first statement (in direct motion) corresponds entirely to the first episode (l. 7 "Omnis virtus te decorat"), and also determines the cadential degree, F, on which the Gregorian phrase terminates;
– the second (in contrary motion) coincides again with the second episode (l. 8), yet its integration in the cadence is subordinated to movement of the other voices (also because the text is naturally different from this episode onwards);
– the third does not match the structure of the third episode (l. 9), since the fourth episode enters on its last notes;
– similarly the fourth statement occurs between the last episode and the "Alleluia" (within which we find the last two repetitions).

In this second part the use of the hymn melody in the other voices is almost non-existent. The only voice involved is the Cantus: at bb. 53-56 it limits itself to introducing the beginning of C, while at bb. 64-67 (corresponding

to the last line) D is present in a way that is very evident yet not integrated in the genuine conclusion on which the "Alleluia" is introduced without any interruption; however it coincides with the concluding note of the cantus firmus (the exposition of which, from that moment on, as we saw, no longer coincides with the individual episodes of the motet), in accordance with that desire for (at least melodic) consecutiveness found in the first part. In this way, the fact of entrusting to the Cantus the melodic closure of *Ave maris stella* is a way of stressing the importance of this voice, which fulfils a role second only to that of the Quintus in the first part of the motet.

At this point it is natural to ask oneself whether at least the idea of using a cantus firmus could have been prompted by the preceding tradition (obviously in relation to this text). To my knowledge there are two cases that make use of this compositional technique and might have inspired Vecchi in some way, if only distantly.

Among the works attributed to Jacquet of Mantua there is an *Ave virgo gratiosa* for six voices published by Gardano in 1542 in Willaert's First Book of Motets for six voices as the work of "Iachet".[35] The same work, however, had already been issued a few years earlier in an anthology published by Attaingnant as the work of Pierre Vermont and with the incipit *Ave virgo gloriosa*, more in line with the French tradition of the text. The work is in the untransposed 1st mode using a set of natural clefs; it has one section; and the Tenor (using the C3 clef) has as cantus firmus "O clemens, o pia", the text and melody of which are drawn from the Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*. The cantus firmus is repeated eight times, both in the home mode and at the upper fourth (always in direct motion), in broad, differentiated note values, but with no definite proportional relationship between the various statements. The cantus firmus stresses the Marian destination of the text in an 'alternative' form and hence shows a different approach from that found in Vecchi (even though we also find a bitextuality almost throughout the second part of Vecchi's motet). Jacquet's version, however, does not completely match Vecchi's, given that it lacks l. 9 ("Iesus Christus te exaltat/coronat"): a situation sometimes encountered in French composers, but never in Italian composers or composers active in Italy.[36] The motet closes with a short "Amen".

---

[35] *Liber tertius: viginti musicales quinque, sex, vel octo vocum motetos habet* […], Paris, Pierre Attaingnant, 1534 (RISM 1534⁵). In Lincoln's index the work is attributed to Berchem, while in *Grove* it is assigned among the works of Jachet of Mantua. There is a modern edition, as the work of Jacquet of Mantua, in ADRIAN WILLAERT, *Opera omnia*, IV: *Motetta VI vocum (1542)*, ed. Hermann Zenck, Roma, American Institute of Musicology, 1952 (Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, III/4), pp. 117-123.

[36] It is interesting to notice that with the omission of l. 9 and with the version transmitted in the

A very similar, if not identical, technique is found in the *Ave virgo gloriosa* of Jacquet de Berchem: a work that again has suffered from problems of attribution. It was first published in the *Moteti de la Simia* (Ferrara, 1539) by Bughlat as the work of "Jachet de Berchem", and later included in the reprint of the Second Book of Motets for five voices by Jacquet of Mantua (1565).[37] However, recent research, including the doctoral dissertation of van Berchum,[38] attributes it to Berchem. The motet has five voices, is in Mode 1 transposed to G and adopts a combination of high clefs (G2-C2-C3-C4-F3). It is not divided into sections and the Quintus (in the C4 clef) has a cantus firmus consisting of the text and melody of the antiphon *Pulchra es et decora* transposed to G with a flat, complete and repeated twice. The first statement uses mainly breves and the second mainly semibreves, though this does not mean that the values have been halved throughout (this occurs only in certain passages, not in the entire melody). Again, the text set lacks l. 9 and is identical to that set by Lhéritier and Jachet of Mantua (according to Attaingnant's edition).

If we restrict ourselves to observing the general technical idea, i.e. the use of a cantus firmus, we could say that these two works, and perhaps particularly Berchem's motet (which has the same mode, Mode 1 transposed to G, and the same set of clefs), may have inspired Vecchi's approach. But as I anticipated earlier, it could only be a distant influence, given that they lack all the other elements that radically differentiate his setting from the preceding ones, principally the structural use of *Ave maris stella*. Finally, it is interesting to note that while Vecchi's motet appears to be without precedents, there are at least later cases in which we find the same Gregorian melody fulfilling a similar structural function. The names of Monte and Porta clearly make the subject an extremely appealing one, but to avoid all further distraction from this discussion (which is after all centred on Vecchi's motets), I refer the reader to Appendix II, where I have made some summary remarks on these other works.

1534 edition the text would fully correspond to that adopted by Lhéritier in both settings (for three and four voices).

[37] *Motetti di Iachet da Mantoa a cinque voci, libro secondo. Di novo ristampati*, Venetia, Girolamo Scotto, 1565.

[38] MARNIX J. VAN BERCHUM, *De motetten van Jacquet de Berchem (c 1505-1567)*, Doctoraalscriptie opleiding Muziekwetenschap, Instituut Kunstgeschiedenis en Muziekwetenschap, Faculteit der Letteren, Universiteit Utrecht, 2002 (a work that can be consulted online at http://asterix.library.uu.nl/files/scrol/r4/Jacquet_de_Berchem.doc). I take the opportunity to thank Marnix van Berchum, who very generously let me have his transcription of Berchem's *Ave virgo gloriosa*.

* * *

The few examples just illustrated, however, are drawn from a wider sample that unequivocally shows a priority interest in closed forms obtained by repetitions of melodic structures or even entire sections (depending on the situation). Rüegge points out that some of these solutions are peculiar to the secular repertoire and therefore betray the hand of a composer accustomed to such compositional techniques. This is unquestionably true, though it is also true that similar patterns are used in the late-16th-century motet tradition (we need only think of the various instances offered by Palestrina and of his manner of expanding form by repetition when necessary). So it is not so much in this direction that we can profitably search for interaction with secular genres. A more rewarding line of investigation is that of examining the stylistic-compositional elements in the melodic structure and the typology of the counterpoint. But to avoid widening the discussion excessively, and at the risk of simplification, it is above all worth remembering that counterpoint and imitation lie at the basis of Vecchi's style, at least in the motets for single choir. He exploits all the resources contemplated by the late-16th-century compositional techniques: from continual and prolonged imitation to pseudo-contrapuntal solutions; from the alternation of vocal forces as a means of generating lighter textures and antiphonal contrasts to the use of fuller textures; from the use of broad melodic arcs to the exploitation of short motifs. And yet, it is evident that often the demands of horizontality coexist with those of verticality, and that sometimes the latter prevails over the former, showing that what Vecchi cares about is the overall result and the global impression, not the individual voice. At times it seems evident that a polarity is created by the two outer voices, in a way that highlights the Cantus, while the movement of the inner parts and the Altus in particular is often understood only in relation to the other voices, rather than as an independent entity. Of course this is by no means a stylistic feature peculiar to Vecchi, for it conforms to the general picture of 16th-century compositional practice and was the object of considerable debate. In this respect and above all towards the end of the century, it is the Cantus that assumes the most independent and finished melodic profile, while increasingly frequently the Bassus assumes a role of support (also 'harmonic' support) of the whole structure.[39] As Rossana Dal Monte and Massi-

---

[39] These tendencies can be seen, for example, in the late-16th-century parody technique, as pointed out by VERONICA FRANKE, "Borrowing procedures in the late-16th-century imitation Masses and their implications for our view of 'parody' or 'imitation'", *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft. Beihefte der Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*, XLVI, 1998, pp. 7-33: 9-11. On the subject, with regard to Porta, see also LILIAN PIBERNIK PRUETT, "Parody technique in the

mo Privitera have pointed out, after studying the style of the six-voice can-zonettas, "there is no doubt that the respective demands of horizontality and verticality coexist not only peacefully, but also very happily under Orazio Vecchi's pen".[40] Naturally in motet compositions there is a greater interest in linear part-writing, but often the interval movements of the individual inner parts, the interruptions in melodic flow determined by rests and changes in pitches in answers seem to obey demands of verticality and to sacrifice inde-pendence for the sake of the overall effect.

In some cases the composer makes use of choral declamation of a chordal nature, though on the whole this is restricted to particular cases. We find it, for example, in the two motets mentioned above (*Benedicite omnia opera Domini* and *Domine Deus noster*, also because of the sheer length of the text). In these cases the composer resorts to a type of fairly rapid declamation, almost completely without repetition, at the same time dividing the ensemble into half-choirs to generate some kind of colouristic interest, as found in the double-choir technique used in psalm composition. Undeniably, however, we find a certain fixity in its concrete application, as is shown by the structure of *Benedicite omnia opera*:

Masses of Costanzo Porta", in *Studies in Musicology. Essays in the history, style, and bibliography of music in memory of Glen Haydon*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1969, pp. 211-218.

[40] See ROSSANA DALMONTE–MASSIMO PRIVITERA, *Gitene, canzonette. Studio e trascrizione delle* Canzonette a sei voci d'Horatio Vecchi *(1587)*, Firenze, Olschki, 1996, pp. 47-51, para-grafo "La melodia delle voci" (the passage quoted is on p. 49) and respective bibliography, and above all the classic study by SIEGFRIED HERMELINK, *Dispositiones modorum. Die Tonarten in der Musik Palestrinas und seiner Zeitgenossen*, Tutzing, Schneider, 1960 (Münchner Veröf-fentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, 4), p. 70 and 103.

Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.	A 6, homorhythmic declamatory writing
Benedicite angeli Domini Domino; benedicite coeli Domino.	A 4: C.6.A.5. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite aquae omnes, quae super caelos sunt, Domino: benedicite omnes virtutes Domini Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite sol et luna Domino: benedicite stellae coeli Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite imber et ros Domino: benedicite omnes spiritus Dei Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite ignis et aestus Domino: benedicite frigus et aestus Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite rores et pruina Domino: benedicite gelu et frigus Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite glacies et nives Domino: benedicite noctes et dies Domino.	A 3: C.6.A. A 3: T.5.B.
Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino; laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.	A 6, as at the beginning

This results in two works that are fairly lengthy in terms of text though remarkably short in overall size (55 breve bars in *Domine Deus* and as few as 47 in *Benedicite omnia opera*, one of the shortest of all the motets).

The structural use of counterpoint must not be seen to contradict in any way what Vecchi himself seemed to assert concerning the need for a style that was easy, intelligible and clear to all. After the discussion and debate both at the Council of Trent and, above all, later in the local synods, a composer who was so alert and sensitive to the various stimuli of a period and culture in the process of profound transformation could not avoid considering the problem of what writing music for the liturgy meant: i.e. what type of polyphony should be used in sacred music. His approach seems to have been stated with the greatest clarity in the *Lamentationes cum quattuor paribus vocibus* of 1587, his first sacred publication. In the dedication of this work (to Sisto Visdomini, bishop of Modena) he begins with the following well-known declaration of intentions:

> non v'è chi niega, Reverendiss. Sig., che la musica non dobbia essere in ogni tempo, e più anche nei giorni santi, intelligibile e chiara a tutti, perché questa candidezza d'armonia è più capace al comun senso degli ascoltanti; non è dubbio che non è per l'ordinario la musica da dotta mano elaborata, la quale spesse volte aviene che, invece di rapir gli animi altrui alla devo-

tione, gli confonde e gli distempra in maniera ch'essi non sanno udir altro che armonia senza l'anima delle parole. Però ho preso fatica di porre in musica queste lagrine di Gieremia profeta con speranza (né ciò mi sia ascritto a superbia) non solo di apportar consolatione a gli animi devoti, ma d'haver ancho in parte sodisfatto al desiderio di V. Sig. la quale ama tanto (né senza ragione) questo genere di musica. [...]

The reference to the distraction and confusion that a certain learned elaboration could bring upon the listener to the detriment of "devotion" is immediately reminiscent of one of the key moments that prompted the discussion on the significance of polyphony in the liturgy: the harsh admonishment that Pope Marcellus II addressed to the singers of the Sistine Chapel (including the then young Palestrina) on that famous Good Friday of 1555 when the pope deplored the evident discrepancy between the liturgical moment and the music (which was highly unsuited to the occasion), accompanied by a warning to pronounce the words in a way that was perceptible to all.[41] This helps to explain Vecchi's radical decision to use *falso bordone* in a continuous and structural way (abandoned only sporadically), following a model proposed a few years earlier by Pietro Vinci in his own Lamentations of 1583.[42]

Again in another later collection, that of the Hymns of 1604, it is explained in the dedication that they were composed "stylo quidam brevi, sed non obscuro, facili". And yet, as I have just stated, there is no contradiction at all. Here we are faced with a different compositional genre; indeed we are dealing with the highest genre of all (along with the Mass), one that required a learned and complex style, capable of throwing light on various aspects present in the text. His motet style reveals itself to be indebted in some way to both Lassus and Palestrina (above all the Palestrina of the "novum genus"). From Lassus he takes the concentrated interpretation of the text by highlighting, where necessary, individual words or motifs clearly separated from the phraseological context. From Palestrina he takes the manner of laying out the

---

[41] The papal document, drawn up by the secretary Angelo Massarelli, is quoted in KARL WEINMANN, *Das Konzil von Trient und die Kirchenmusik. Eine storische-kritische Untersuchung*, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1919 (facsimile reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1974), p. 148. See also OSCAR MISCHIATI, "'Ut verba intelligerentur': Circostanze e connessioni a proposito della *Missa Papae Marcelli*", in *Atti del convegno di studi palestriniani*, ed. Francesco Luisi, Palestrina, Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1977, pp. 415-426: 420-423.

[42] *Di Pietro Vinci siciliano della città di Nicosia il primo libro delle Lamentationi a quattro voci, con altre compositioni convenienti alla Quadragesima. Novamente posto in luce*, Venezia, Scotto, 1583. On the subject, see JOHN BETTLEY, "'La compositione lacrimosa': musical style and text selection in north-Italian lamentations settings in the second half of the sixteenth century", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, CXVIII, 1993, pp. 167-202: 181-183.

voices in order to obtain a clear and transparent polyphonic texture, alternating broad and melismatic melodic arcs with lean and essentially syllabic lines. Obviously we must not exclude other models, above all in the general organization of the composition. Quite the reverse. As Schlötterer has also stressed recently in his important work on Palestrina, "would it not also be better to have the ambition of broadening the viewpoint, detaching oneself from just Palestrina and Lassus and taking into consideration the contemporary picture in the late 16th century, seeing it as a wider circle of 'illustrious composers'?".[43] This would in any case require a study and detailed analysis of every single motet in relation to the tradition of the various texts, somewhat as Michèle Fromson did for a significant (though necessarily restricted) group of motet settings from the last decades of the 16th century.[44] Such a study, naturally conducted with all due prudence and caution, would reveal a very wide range of models.

The overall sonority achieved, the harmonic background and certain rhythmic structures, on the other hand, show the influence of the Venetian composers. This is understandable and indeed easily verifiable in the works for double choir, though it is also evident in the motets for four, five and six voices. In this case the obvious landmark is first and foremost the work of Andrea Gabrieli, and particularly his collection of motets for five and four voices, respectively dated 1565 and 1576, for which Denis Arnold spoke of a "new motet style", along with the works of Claudio Merulo and also, to a lesser extent, Giovanni Croce.[45] An example of this can be seen in *O sacrum convivium*, one of the texts considered by Fromson. In her analysis of the different settings she tends to place Vecchi in the third stylistic group, that dependent on Wert and typical of the composers active in Cremona, Mantua and the central-eastern Po plain. Nonetheless she also observes other features that link him to the habits of the Venetian composers, and in the end points to Andrea

---

[43] REINHOLD SCHLÖTTERER, *Palestrina compositore*, Palestrina, Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 2001 (Musica e Musicisti nel Lazio, 5), p. 323.

[44] See MICHÈLE YVONNE FROMSON, "A conjunction of rhetoric and music: structural modelling in the Italian counter-reformation motet", *Journal of the Royal Music Association*, CXVII, 1992, pp. 208-244 (largely drawn from *Imitation and Innovation in the North-Italian Motet, 1560-1605*, 2 vols., PhD. diss., The University of Pennsylvania, 1988). In this work, as in the doctoral dissertation, Fromson compares various settings of *O sacrum convivium* and *Quem vidistis pastores* by various composers, also including Vecchi, aiming to find structural models and to indicate possible stylistic and compositional derivations from those very models.

[45] See DENIS ARNOLD, *Gabrieli and the new Motet Style*, in *Andrea Gabrieli e il suo tempo,* Proceedings of the international congress, Venice, 16-18 September 1985, ed. Francesco Degrada, Firenze, Olschki, 1987 (Studi di Musica Veneta, 11), pp. 193-213.

Gabrieli's five-voice motet (from the *Sacrae cantiones* of 1565) as a possible model of reference.[46]

For the two-choir works the decisive influence of Andrea Gabrieli's work is evident. The rhythmic structures, the rapid antiphonal play, the colouristic use of ensembles and the sonic differentiation of the two groups most clearly refer to that model, even if, as is obvious, they are incorporated in a sonic environment that is different from the Venetian. Most of the motets use different clef combinations and the two choirs are differentiated, pitting a high choir against a low choir. In Book I the division works both ways, whereas in Book II the succession first/high choir – second/low choir is always respected (Table 5). Often, however, it is only the range of the highest voices that is different (as in *Repleti sunt omnes* or *Exultate iusti*), or only that of the two basses, though this is more apparent than real (as in *Haec requies nostra*). In any case the lowest voice is never extended into the more extreme regions; the contrabass clef (F5) is never used, and when the highest voice has a G2 clef the lowest voice has at most an F3 clef, if not a C4 clef. The only ten-voice work is organized according to the same principle, with two identical choirs using natural clefs and a doubling of the tenor register. What is evident, therefore, is the adaptation of the two-choir formula to more 'normal' situations and, conversely, the exceptional character of the Venetian model when assessing the forces that could be used, precisely as is found in certain composers (such as Ingegneri or Merulo) who were very familiar with the solutions of the Venetians but happened to operate in very different environments.

Even the overall compositional technique betrays Venetian influences, which Vecchi would have had the opportunity to assimilate during the various periods spent in the city. Perhaps two eight-voice motets – *Congratulamini omnes* for the feast of San Rocco and *Sancte Marce praedicator* for the feast of St Mark, both in Book I – can be attributed to these phases of his life. The two choirs proceed with a certain independence as regards the writing of the bass parts; as a rule these parts proceed in octaves and unisons in contrary motion (exceptionally in unison in direct motion), with occasional intervals of a third. Very rarely do they outline a fifth, an interval almost always more

---

[46] FROMSON, *Imitation and Innovation*, vol. 1, pp. 247, 268-270. More controversial is the situation of the motet *Quem vidistis, pastores?*, who would seem to be influenced by the setting of the same name by Giovanni Maria Nanino. The problem lies in the fact that the motet remained unpublished, and hence Fromson conjectures that Vecchi could have known the composition when Nanino went to Mantua in 1586, the year when Vecchi was in Correggio (FROMSON, "A conjunction of rhetoric and music", p. 223 fn. 29; *Imitation and Innovation*, vol. 1, pp. 195-196). I find the American scholar's hypothesis unconvincing, given that the possibility of a reversed influence (Nanino imitating Vecchi) is very unlikely, but the fact remains that one of the two works was strongly influenced by the other.

apparent than real given that the 'dangerous' situation is often resolved by a crossing with the Tenor, which clarifies the situation. When that does not happen (which is rare), the fourth in the bass arises from a movement of a contrapuntal-imitative character, on the weak point of the tactus and with somewhat short note values. Very rare is the genuine fourth in the bass in a single choir, as in the motet *Haec requies nostra* (1597), where the imitation is distributed between the two choirs yet conceived for a unified group (see Example 9).

However, the independence of the individual choir, which seems to assign Vecchi's style to a previous phase of double-choir writing, only concerns the organization of the two basses. As regards the harmonic completeness, we observe an evident search for integration between the two groups in the *tutti*, where both are necessary to obtain the full sonority (the third or fifth can be lacking in one or other of the two choirs). Moreover, in spite of the structural use of chordal writing, the foundation of his musical thinking is always contrapuntal vivacity. In the conclusions for superimposed choirs the distribution of the material in rhythmic imitation is achieved in terms of the whole choral ensemble, not of two separate choirs. As we also find in many works by Andrea Gabrieli, the spatial distribution of the two groups would be possible only at a somewhat limited distance. Even though both the bass parts generally act as harmonic support, the complexity and rhythmic vivacity of the *tutti* would be very difficult to manage if the choirs were positioned at a fair distance from one another.[47]

At this point it would be legitimate to suspect that Vecchi based himself on the 'classical' models established in the 1570s and 80s and that he revealed himself to be a worthy continuer of that compositional tradition. In part this impression may be true, but in part it needs to be rectified, thanks to the evident interactions with madrigalistic practice. It is not a question of form, as we have seen; nor is it matter of using those figures that we call 'madrigalisms', i.e. sound painting. Such elements are to be found, to be sure, but such elements were also well established in sacred music: the melismas on key words; rapid, flighty movements on "velociter"; the use of *color* on "nigra"; melodies broken up by rests on "suspirabat"; semitone movement on "gemebat" or "miserere"; the use of chromaticism; the use of ten perfect breves on "in psalterio decem chordarum"; and so on.[48] Rüegge draws attention to a particularly interesting case of very similar melodic-rhythmic struc-

---

[47] See the observations on Andrea Gabrieli in ANTHONY F. CARVER, *Cori spezzati. The Development of Sacred Polychoral music to the time of Schütz*, 2 vols., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 135-136.
[48] A summary sample in RÜEGGE, *Orazio Vecchis geistliche Werke*, pp. 29-32.

tures in the motet *Misericordias Domini* (1590) and in the madrigal *Cara mia Dafne*, from the Five-voice Madrigals published in Venice in 1589 (see Example 10).[49] But though certainly one of the most significant moments, this is not the only place showing a mixture of different elements. What interests Vecchi is to extend the rhythmic possibilities also in the motet. Although the *brevis* substantially remains the measure of reference, the range of values extends right down to the crotchet (with syllabic value) and hence the quaver (with ornamental value). Finding such rhythmic shifting in the works for two choirs should, however, cause no surprise; for already the works of Andrea Gabrieli and, even more so, those of Giovanni offer a very wide range of solutions, along with the presence of other features clearly derived from instrumental music. Passages such as the following, from the motet *Exultate iusti* which ends the 1597 collection (though many others could also be found) (see Examples 11 and 12) can be understood in the context of the late-16th-century Venetian instrumental repertoire, as well as that of polychoral composition (note, for example, the manner of ornamentation, the type of rhythmic scansion and the vertical logic governing the individual parts). What is interesting, however, is that these melodic and rhythmic procedures are also used in the motets for single choir: borrowed from Venetian double-choir and instrumental experiences, but above all from madrigalistic composition technique.

In the 1590 edition the same intention also clearly transpires from an external element, given by the use of C as a mensuration sign alongside the 'normal' ¢, along with the relative adjustment of the note values, thereby indicating a composition that is more relaxed in terms of tempo yet rhythmically faster and more lively. It is interesting to observe that it is above all the four-voice motets that are used as a kind of experimental workshop for such compositional variety. Though the very use of ¢ can apparently be interpreted as normal compositional practice, it is in fact a signal of multiple performing solutions, depending on the text and liturgical occasion, as well as on the different metrical typologies used, which inevitably bear on its traditional significance.[50] Here it is surely necessary to remember what Ponzio said in his *Ragionamento di musica* on how to compose a motet:

---

[49] Modern edition: ORAZIO VECCHI, *Madrigali a cinque voci*, ed. Mariarosa Pollastri, Bologna, Ut Orpheus, 1997 (Odhecaton-Musica vocale, 3), pp. 36-39.

[50] Consider, for example, the "sad gravity" of Marenzio in the *Madrigali a quatro cinque, et sei voci, Libro primo* (Venezia, 1588), or the comments of Zacconi, Rossi and even Praetorius on ¢ and the tactus actually used. On the subject, I refer the reader to the wide-raging compendial work by UWE WOLF, *Notation und Aufführungpraxis. Studien zum Wandel von Notenschrift und Notenbild in italienischen Musikdrucken der Jahre 1571-1630*, 2 vols., Kassel, Merseburger, 1992 (Göttinger philosophische Dissertation, 7); on Marenzio, see FRANCESCO LUISI, "La 'maniera assai differente dalla passata' nei Madrigali a 4-5-6 voci del 1588", in *Luca*

le inventioni debbono essere gravi; ancora c'hoggi in alcuni compositori fra suoi motetti et cose ecclesiastiche non servano tal ordine, ma talmente pongono le parti insieme con moto veloce et velocissimo, che paiono madrigali e canzoni; et valersi in luogo della semibreve sincopata della minima sincopata, qual non conviene alla gravità del motetto; et ancora si servino della pausa di semiminima, et ancora della chroma; et questo non dirò una sol volta (che sarebbe nulla) ma vanno continuando in questo modo fin'al fine, talchè per mio giudicio è stile da madrigale, e non da motetto.[51]

These are words of exemplary clarity, that seem to sum up perfectly some of the compositional choices made by Vecchi. Ponzio evidently had in mind an ideal model of motet, one that in some way derived from a definite aesthetic of sacred music, and that nonetheless seemed to have had a very short and limited lifespan in actual compositional practice, at least if we judge by the features he identified as suited to the motet. What is certain is that this is a very complex subject and one that cannot be tackled satisfactory here. In any case, the procedures apparently adopted by Ponzio are those of the 1560s and 70s; and we must also remember that his argument is also (if not prevalently) didactic in intent. In my opinion, the conviction and naturalness with which Vecchi tackles the mixing of different genres are a response to an evident need to renew the style: a need that was increasingly urgently felt towards the end of the century. This renewal took its cue from counterpoint and remained within the realm of counterpoint. The path followed by Vecchi might not seem altogether direct, or at least always consistent, given that in Book II he completely abandons the use of ₵ as a mensuration sign, exclusively in favour of ¢, though not the broadening of the rhythmic range and the attribution syllabic value to short figurations. Is this perhaps an external expedient to disguise a real situation? In my opinion it is an evident signal of what was by then a reality.

The ¢ was becoming (or had already become) an external sign indicating

---

Marenzio: poetica, stile e tecnica dell'opera profana e sacra, 10th European Congress on Choral Singing promoted and organized by the Corale goriziana "C.A. Seghizzi", Gorizia, 30-31 August 1979, Gorizia, Corale goriziana "C.A. Seghizzi", 1980, pp. 51-71. For similar procedures used by featuring the mixture of ₵ and ¢, I refer the reader to the conclusions of Dal-monte-Privitera, Gitene, canzonette, p. 83.

[51] Pietro Ponzio, Ragionamento di musica, del reverendo M. Don Pietro Pontio parmigiano. Ove ai tratta de' passaggi delle consonantie, et dissonantie, buoni, et non buoni; et del modo di far motetti, messe, salmi, et altre compositioni; et d'alcuni avertimenti per il contrapuntista, et compositore, et altre cose pertinenti alla musica, Parma, Erasmo Viotto, 1588 (Faksimile-Neudruck htrsg. von S. Clercx, Kassel-Basel, Bärenreiter, 1959), p. 154.

a genre (sacred music) and a generic compositional practice (contrapuntal writing), at times with bearings on tempo, at times not. And the use of a madrigalistic style, or even of only structures of another genre in a composition that continues to maintain ¢ as a mensuration sign can only signify a full acceptance of that 'new', or at least different, way of writing within the traditional approach to motet composition. It was one of the possible answers to the different demands for a renewal of style, and perhaps the only answer (or at least the most consistent one) that could be given by a composer trained at the strict school of counterpoint. The new assertions of the 17th century and the continual demand for a different repertoire (a simpler one, if need be) were to provide other answers, though they were not always so consistent or satisfactory.