***Voci pari* motets and convent polyphony in the 1540s: the case of *Musica…motetta materna lingua vocata* (1543)[[1]](#footnote-2)\***

In the 1540s, the great publishing houses of Venice headed by Girolamo Scotto and Antonio Gardano issued a cluster of publications, all advertising a particular vocal disposition – *voci pari*, or equal voices - prominently on their title pages (See Table 1). The cluster comprises three original editions by Scotto - one each of masses, four-voice motets, and five-voice motets – and later partial reprints from both presses.[[2]](#footnote-3) While composition for equal voices, rather than the by now predominant disposition of mixed ranges (cantus+altus+tenore+bassus) was not an innovation, its acknowledgement on the books’ covers was a new feature. The appearance of these books has been interpreted as a sign of a deliberate strategy, either to encourage a niche market or as a way of exploiting material that no longer fit into the publisher’s preferred format, but the books’ contents have not hitherto been examined more closely.[[3]](#footnote-4) The obscure origins of many of the motets they contain remain an obstacle to complete understanding, yet analysis of their texts and their musical treatment reveals an intimate connection with convents and conventual worship. The five-voice motets of *Musica quinque vocum: motteta materna lingua vocata* (RISM 15432), in particular, are doubly significant, as the majority are freely imitative polyphony, with no reliance on a canon or a *cantus firmus* to determine their structure, and almost unprecedented in equal-voice composition. The cluster is therefore an important set of sources for the study of sixteenth-century print culture, sacred polyphony, and the history of women making music.

<Table 1 near here>

There are probably good reasons why musicologists have overlooked the 1540s *voci pari* books: First, they are collections assembled by the publishers (or appear to be), and the works they contain that are likely to be of interest – that is, those by important composers such as Willaert or Morales – were and are available in other printed and manuscript sources. Second, a substantial proportion of works they contain is anonymous, and the lack of a more specific context than simply the early sixteenth-century motet is a disincentive to investigation. A more practical issue may also have perhaps contributed to the relative invisibility of *voci pari* music in general: because it is, by definition, music that is appropriate for an ensemble of voices operating within the same (or nearly the same) vocal range, it is of limited interest to performing groups established in the SATB choral tradition.

*Voci pari* music also sits outside the bell curve of what is considered “normal” for sixteenth-century polyphony; while contemporary theorists may have cursorily acknowledged its existence and its uses, by its very nature its procedures differ from and even challenge the rules presented in their treatises. This may explain why, although far from rare, early to mid-sixteenth-century equal-voice composition has received little dedicated musicological interest. Only four studies stand out: Otto Kinkeldey published a short repertoire overview and list late in the 1950s; Frank Carey’s article, “Composition for Equal Voices in the Sixteenth Century,” posthumously published in 1991, put the beginnings of what would have been a comprehensive study into the public domain; Robert Kendrick explores the phenomenon in relation to compositions for Holy Week; and Katelijne Schiltz’s investigation focused on Cipriano de Rore’s 1563 *voci pari* motets has recently emerged.[[4]](#footnote-5) Each of these scholars takes a different approach: Kinkeldey hoped to provide a resource for male-voice choirs; Carey wished to establish a taxonomy for the sixteenth-century repertoire, based on overall range, clef choices, and genre; Kendrick considers the implications of scoring for a particular genre; and Schiltz poses new questions regarding *voci pari* as a compositional choice. These studies do not treat early sixteenth-century conventual performance in any depth or at all; Kinkeldey did not consider contemporary female choral singers adequately skilled, Carey did not acknowledge any female interest in sacred polyphony, and it is not relevant to Schiltz’s approach. On the other hand, Kendrick elsewhere pinpointed the importance of the later sixteenth-century *voci pari* repertoire for nuns, and highlighted the potential for female-voice choirs to perform music with an overall range greater than two octaves.[[5]](#footnote-6)

The musical practice of sixteenth-century nuns is also generally only sketchily understood.[[6]](#footnote-7) While the negative rhetoric concerning nuns and music that accompanied post-Tridentine reform has been examined at length, along with the mature musical establishments in the convents of a number of Italian cities, the scarcity of evidence relating to earlier periods has hampered understanding.[[7]](#footnote-8) Nonetheless, what evidence does exist tells us that as it was after Trent, so it was before: while many convents enjoyed a rich musical life and shared that enjoyment with those who came to hear them sing daily Offices, there were powerful churchmen who were clear about the moral dangers of singing for women religious. For instance, just prior to the publication of Scotto’s books, in 1539, the Bishop of Verona issued a diocesan prohibition on any singing beyond “simple and uniform chant”:[[8]](#footnote-9)

Et perche gli canti enervano gli animi et la professione de monache le quali deveno piu presto piangere solitarie con tristeza (come hanno il nome), cantantes et psalentes in cordibus come dice lo apostolo che stare a cantare con arte accio la varieta del canto non movi a vanagloria le serve et spose del Signore, strettamente prohibemo che da mo inanzi niun monasterio di monache over suore possi usare in choro senon canto fermo semplice et uniforme, anzi più presto doverebbe leggere le sacre littere plano et chiaro con voce quieta con attention di mente che occupar lintelletto et il tempo nelle notole et raggione di musica.

And because singing weakens the souls and the commitment of nuns, who should rather weep alone with sadness (as they are named) [from Ancient Greek *μοναχός ‎- monakhós*, “solitary”] – ‘singing and psalmising in their hearts’ as the Apostle says – than to stand [together], singing with art; so that the variety of song does not move the maids and brides of the Lord to vanity, we strictly prohibit from this moment on that no convent of nuns or sisters may use anything in the choir except simple and uniform plainchant. Better still, they should read the sacred liturgy plain and clearly with quiet voices, with the [same] mental attention used to understand rhythm and notes, and the rules of music.

Giberti’s ban would certainly have encompassed polyphony, and would also have placed restrictions on any elaborations of chant that might need knowledge of notation and rules, including troping, *falsobordone*, *contrappunto alla mente*,and ornamentation.[[9]](#footnote-10) But despite such bans, nuns’ music thrived in some places, and *voci pari* composition, whether bespoke or garnered from existing works, was probably essential. For example, a unique manuscript collection from a Florentine convent, dated 1561 (Brussels Conservatoire Royal MS 27766) shows that equal-voice repertoire was at the core of its practice, transmitting not only works that appear to have been composed expressly for the convent, but also repertoire by some of the most esteemed composers of previous generations: Josquin, Compère, Festa, and Willaert.[[10]](#footnote-11) But MS 27766 alone cannot tell us everything we need to know: the 1540s *voci pari* collections, particularly 15432, have the potential to add substantially to our understanding of how nuns made music in the pre-Tridentine sixteenth century, perhaps even shedding light on why reformers considered their music so problematic.

*Structural characteristics of the 1540s collections*

The structural features of the seven books that make up the 1540s *voci pari* books (hereafter the “*materna lingua* complex”) reflect the broader context of their publishers’ contemporaneous output. During the 1530s and 1540s, Scotto and Gardano employed a variety of approaches to increase their profits, as well as the desirability of their products. The books emerged during this fluid and fertile period, as the Venetian printers became ever more sophisticated in their marketing strategies. The firms could rely on a particular composer’s fame to sell not only single-composer editions, but also anthologies with titles that highlighted their most illustrious contributors.[[11]](#footnote-12) Both single-composer and anthology series were also popular, especially with collectors who could bind their multi-volume sets together for presentation and preservation.[[12]](#footnote-13) And while both Gardano and particularly Scotto actively sought to produce new editions of hitherto unpublished works, the firms were also continually reprinting, repurposing, and repackaging existing repertoire, experimenting with the best way to exploit the music they had available to them. The books’ contents are given in the indices in Appendices A-F, along with composers (where identifiable), cleffing, and the relevant feast and liturgical association for each text: hereafter, motets will be identified by their RISM and index number.[[13]](#footnote-14)

The *materna lingua* complex is united by more than just clef disposition, but the temptation to view the books as a homogenous set is troubled by inconsistencies and differences. Some correspondences are straightforward, others more complicated. The most instantly visible relationships between the books are in their titles: through the inclusion of the phrase “Moralis hispani” prominently on the title page, 15423 and 15435 appear to be related to Scotto’s other collections of works by Cristobal Morales, and therefore ostensibly unrelated to the wholly anonymous 15432. 15432 uses the phrase “materna lingua vocata” in its title, which is taken up for Gardano’s two books of motets, 15496 and 15499: these later volumes are clearly intended to complement each other, for their names are almost identical and they are issued in the same year. Scotto reappropriates the title of Gardano’s four-voice volume – and everything else – for his own four-voice publication 15499a. Only Gardano’s book of masses, 15443, has a title unrelated to any other in the complex; but its label “Liber quartus” situates it within Gardano’s ongoing series of mass Ordinary publications.

For each genre, Gardano re-issues repertoire from Scotto’s collections: 15443 contains four masses printed in 15423; 15496 contains sixteen motets from 15432; and 15499 contains five motets from 15435. These are not always straightforward reprints, however: many of the motets in 15496 have substantial differences, not just corrections; and two works originally in high clefs – “Candida virginitas” from 15435 (15435/1; 15499/16) and “O salutaris hostia” from 15432 (15432/8; 15496/3) – are transposed down an octave and given in low clefs in the Gardano books. Mary Lewis has described the relationships between pairs of prints, arising from the sharing of content, in familial terms: twins, cousins and heirs. Within the *materna lingua* complex there are “twins” (15499 and 15499a) that result from direct copying; “heirs” (15423 and 15443) which involve some revision; and “cousins” (15432 and 15496; 15435 and 15499) that could have been prepared from different exemplars (See Table 2).[[14]](#footnote-15)

<Table 2 near here>

Alongside the decision to transpose the high-clef works, Gardano’s selections for both his *voci pari* masses and his four-voice *voci pari* motets suggest that his criteria for publication, and perhaps even his use of the term “voci pari,” differed from Scotto’s. The clef combinations in Scotto’s original publications show that he was willing to entertain a greater variety under the *voci pari* umbrella. They include both works that adhere to Frank Carey’s narrowest understanding of the term – that is, where the difference in range between the highest and lowest clef is no more than a seventh – and others that widen this notational distance to a ninth. This disposition is not recognized separately in contemporaneous theory, but I shall call it “compressed cleffing,” as it sits in between *voci piene* and *voci pari* (Example 1).[[15]](#footnote-16)

<Example 1 near here>

The five-voice 15432 is by far the most consistent of Scotto’s books: while it contains both high- and low-clef *voci pari* works, only one motet, “Dum complerentur” (15432/2; 15496/7) is in compressed clefs (Table 3). Scotto’s 1542 masses also contain only one compressed-clef work, Morales’s *Missa Vulnerasti cor meum* (15423/3), but the compressed-clef disposition accounts for nearly half the works of 15435: here it is used for eleven motets, alongside seven *voci piene* and seven *voci pari* works.[[16]](#footnote-17) The subsidiary text to the title of 15435 states that the majority of its contents may be sung by equal voices – “cuius *magna* pars paribus vocibus cantanda est: reliqua verò plena voce apta est decantari [my emphasis]” – therefore, Scotto seems to have considered compressed-clef works in the same category as *voci pari*.

<Table 3 near here>

Gardano’s strategy is different. He excluded Morales’s *Missa Vulnerasti cor meum* from his 1544 book, and included instead works that adhered more strictly to the *voci pari* disposition. And when he came to reissue the contents of 15435 in a separate publication bearing the same title, *Moralis hispani, et multorum eximiae artis virorum musica cum vocibus quatuor, vulgo motecta cognominata* (RISM 15469), he included only one of the *voci pari* motets from Scotto’s book, “Signum crucis” (15435/22), perhaps on the basis that its four voices use different clefs: c1c2c3c4. All but one of the remaining *voci pari* works from 15435 appeared later in Gardano’s 15499. This volume presents a much more uniform set of clefs for each voice than 15435, and in nineteen of its twenty works, two voices are paired by the use of the same clef.[[17]](#footnote-18)

The discrepancy between Scotto and Gardano’s choices suggests that Scotto either used the term *voci pari* more loosely, or to indicate something slightly different. Although both Gardano’s 1549 volumes each contain one compressed-clef work - “Dum complerentur” (15432/2; 15496/7) in five voices, and “Veni Domine et noli tardare” (15499/20) in four - the near uniformity of Gardano’s books indicates that he sees *voci pari* primarily as a notational category – like system, final, or mode, a way of describing music by its structural features.[[18]](#footnote-19) Scotto, on the other hand, seems to be using the term as a performance indication: the equality of his equal voices appears to rest in the performers’ sex, rather than the *tessiture* of their voices – this becomes clear when the texts in these collections are examined more closely, below.

The texts in Scotto’s three original collections do not show any strong sense of overarching coherence that would suggest they were planned as a set; instead each exhibits a logic of its own. The earliest, 15423, is a collection of Marian masses, but exceptionally it also includes a *voci pari* motet for the Annunciation, Morales’s “Missa est Gabriel angelus.” The motet is paired with the same composer’s *Missa Ave Maria*: musically these two works are related through the use of the *Ave Maria* chant melody.[[19]](#footnote-20) The five-voice motets of 15432 look at first glance to be a random selection of texts for liturgical and devotional use, but in fact they offer a near-complete coverage of solemnities and feasts with octaves, also with an additional strong focus on Marian texts. It includes texts taken from Offices of Easter Sunday, and during the octave of Christmas (Saint Stephen, Saint John the Evangelist), and the feasts of All Saints, Saint John the Baptist, Saints Peter and Paul, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Epiphany, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, the Nativity (or Visitation) of the Mary, and the Assumption.[[20]](#footnote-21) The four-voice motets of 15435, while still covering many important feasts from the temporal cycle, include more works for individual saints that may indicate a specific geographical source or market for the book: for instance, there are two motets for Saint Martin, one for Saint Marina, one for Saint Lucy – all of whom had important cults in Venice.[[21]](#footnote-22)

Gardano’s decision to publish revised collections of exclusively *voci pari* works may have been entirely economic, although he may have had some other or additional incentive, such as an anonymous sponsor, particularly for the 1549 *materna lingua* pair. Nonetheless, his collections and Scotto’s 15435 have the appearance of books at least partially assembled from already available resources, as they all include works by composers of several different generations. Gardano’s masses are also predominantly Marian, but the theme is troubled by the addition of Charles d’Argentille’s *Missa Quem dicunt homines* (15443/4) – supporting the idea that for Gardano, notational consistency was more important than other considerations. Significantly, Gardano’s 1549 books cement the Venetian connection suggested by 15435 – the four-voice book retains the motets for Saint Marina and Saint Martin; the five-voice book introduces motets for Saint Mark. The impression is enhanced by the composers represented in Gardano’s books, for he added works by (or attributions to) Perissone Cambio, Adriano Willaert, Jhan Gero, and potentially Cipriano de Rore to the motets drawn from Scotto’s publications – all composers active in Venetian musical circles.

The issue of composer attributions, particularly between original and reprint, is also vexed: 15432 and 15435 bear no attributions, although 15435 does have Morales’s name on the title page. Nonetheless, ten motets from 15435 are attributed to composers other than Morales in other sources. Of those that remain, only two are attributed to Morales in sources that demonstrably do not rely on this print itself for their attribution, which gives pause to the consideration of their origin.[[22]](#footnote-23) In 15499, Gardano added attributions to four of the five motets from 15435, one to Morales (“Candida virginitas” (15435/1; 15499/16)) and three to Gero (“Cum inducerunt puerum Iesum” (15435/12; 15499/9), “O quam veneranda es virgo Marina” (15435/11; 15499/11), and “O beatum pontificem Martinum” (15435/13; 15499/12)), leaving the composers of only two works unidentified.[[23]](#footnote-24) However, of the sixteen motets from 15432, only one – “Ego sum panis vitae” (15432/7; 15496/11) - received an attribution in 15496, to Dominique Phinot.[[24]](#footnote-25) Gardano’s choices for re-issue among the five-voice motets require further consideration below, but it is clear that he was either unable or unwilling to identify the composers of these works.

The lack of attributions in 15432 would not be so troubling were it not also for the exceptional nature of its contents. The collection should have represented something of a coup for Scotto, for while some of its twenty-three motets use paraphrases of chant melodies for their imitative subjects, all but three are freely imitative, composed without the obvious structural device of a canon or tenor *cantus firmus*.[[25]](#footnote-26) This style was still relatively progressive in the early 1540s and it would have been considered a substantial challenge, particularly if executed with the additional constraint of composing for equal voices.[[26]](#footnote-27) In contemporary prints, five-voice *voci pari* motets appear rarely, and freely imitative ones even more infrequently. There are none in the five-voice books of the *Mottetti del frutto* (Venice: Gardano, 1538) and *Fior de motetti* (Venice: Gardano, 1539) series, nor in Gombert’s two books of five-voice motets (Venice: Scotto, 1539 and 1541). While the *Moteti de la simia* (Ferrara: Buglhat and Hucher, 1539), the *Liber quartus XXIX. Musicales quatuor vel quinque parium vocum modulos habet* (Paris: Attaingnant, 1534), and Willaert’s *Musica quinque vocum* (Venice: Scotto, 1539) each contain one five-voice *voci pari* motet, they are all based on a cantus firmus.[[27]](#footnote-28) Jacquet of Mantua’s *Motecta quinque vocum liber primus* (Venice: Scotto, 1539) is unique in containing three *voci pari* works, two of which are freely imitative.[[28]](#footnote-29)

Only one contemporary corpus – the works by Willaert that were eventually published as the *Musica nova* – contains a significant number of *voci pari* compositions in five or more voices: there are four motets, of which two are freely imitative; and four madrigals.[[29]](#footnote-30) But this collection was the private fare of Venice’s most elite musical circles in the 1540s, and it did not reach publication until 1559, some sixteen years after Scotto’s five-voice volume.[[30]](#footnote-31) So we may understand that the motets of 15432 were truly groundbreaking, and it seems remarkable that no composers wished to lay claim to what are, quite apart from any aesthetic merit, technical *tours de force*.

*Indications of conventual music-making in the* materna lingua *complex*

The singular attributes of 15432 – its blanket anonymity, its unique repertoire – begin to make sense if it is viewed as a collection for nuns, and the first clue to suggest this possibility is in its title. The front page of a sixteenth-century musical edition had to bear a certain amount of data to enable a purchaser to make a decision to acquire the print.[[31]](#footnote-32) Yet publishers keen to advertise a particular repertoire to a select constituency, but without drawing attention to the fact or narrowing their broader commercial base, might also insert a coded phrase into the book’s full title that would be significant to those “in the know.”[[32]](#footnote-33) The indication “vocibus paribus” plainly advertises that the works are suitable for single-sex ensembles, and this is the most important indicator that the books are different to others on the market. Beyond this, the flourish “motteta materna lingua vocata*”* ("music... called motets, in the mother tongue”) on the title page of 15432 seems innocuous and it could easily be overlooked by the casual observer. Yet to someone experienced in handling music books it would stand out as something unusual: of all the sixteenth-century music prints currently known, only the 1540s *voci pari* books use the phrase; by far more common are variants on “vulgus”: *vulgo motecta cognominata*, *vulgo moteta vocant*, *vulgo moteta vocantur*. Nuns were often referred to as “madri” and novices as “madrini,” so “materna lingua vocata” may have been chosen to play on both the singers and their voices, a subtly punning identifier for the reader, summoning the idea of conventual music-making. There is an intriguing precedent: Franchino Gaffurio’s *Angelicum ac divinum opus Musicae materna lingua scriptum* (Milan: de Ponte, 1508), which is the only printed sixteenth-century theoretical work advertised as having been written for the benefit of convent musicians.[[33]](#footnote-34)

The texts in the *materna lingua* complex show an affinity for the kinds of music-making we know took place in sixteenth-century Italian religious houses: seasonal Office music, particularly Matins responsories (usually with a full respond), and Vespers antiphons and hymns; Marian devotion; Gospel motets. Most striking, perhaps, are settings for feasts of founders of religious orders solely for the use of monastics: “Adest [nobis] dies celebris,” (15432/10; 15496/14: 15435/10) for Augustine; “Salve sponsa Dei” for Clare (15432/11).[[34]](#footnote-35) Both are Magnificat antiphons for Vespers II, and polyphonic settings of these texts are almost unique to these collections.[[35]](#footnote-36)

Nevertheless, 15432 has stronger connections to Clarissan worship. The high-clef setting of “O salutaris hostia” (15432/8 ; 8vb in 15496/3) is not based on the usual chant melody, but on the melody of the hymn for Vespers II for St Clare, “Concinat plebs fidelium,” making it suitable for the Elevation at Mass on her feast day.[[36]](#footnote-37) Also strongly reminiscent of Franciscan spirituality are the indulgence prayer “Ave sanctissima Maria” (15432/14; 15496/2), created by the Franciscan pope Sixtus IV, and the tiny “Sicut lilium inter spinas” (15432/16; 15496/5), only thirty-two breves long.[[37]](#footnote-38) The latter’s brevity and simplicity recall the earlier setting by Brumel, but a liturgical context is offered by the “Sicut lilium” Office, created by Leonardo Nogarolo for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on the orders of the Sixtus IV, in which the text opens the Vespers service.[[38]](#footnote-39) However, the clearest indication of a Clarissan environment is the setting of the Vespers II antiphon, “Salve sponsa Dei” (15432/11). Its unique cantus firmusindicates a high level of integration between musical activity and institutional identity. The cantus firmus is unrelated to the antiphon’s usual melody, but instead is inspired by matching the vowels of the text to solmization syllables (see Examples 2a and 2b).[[39]](#footnote-40) The technique - *soggetto cavato* – is usually used to create a short, recurring phrase that forms the scaffold for a longer piece of polyphony; however, here the entire antiphon melody is generated in this way.[[40]](#footnote-41) Such a melody could have been a didactic exercise, ideal for young Clarissan novices learning to solmise, which was then incorporated into a polyphonic work to introduce them to ensemble singing.[[41]](#footnote-42)

<Example 2a near here> [link to soundfile]

<Example 2b near here>

Apart from the works for the founders of orders, there are also works that celebrate individual saints. Some of these are major feasts and part of the temporal cycle central to the Church’s calendar, but others are not, and may relate either to specific suffrage or titular celebrations at individual institutions and places of worship. Two plague saints, Saint Giles and Saint Roch, are included in the 1543 books, although one is named and the other is not.[[42]](#footnote-43) “Clementissime Christe confessor” (15435/3) is explicitly directed to Giles; “O beate Christe confessor” (15432/21) unusually has an “N.” where Roch’s name should be – although it is clear that the setting is for Roch, as the quintus has a unique text based on a responsory from the saint’s office.[[43]](#footnote-44) While the setting for Giles is a more general suffrage, the Roch setting particularly elicits the saint’s protection from disease.[[44]](#footnote-45)

Closer examination of the motets, both their texts and the way they are set, also reveals that a number would be strongly self-referential for nun musicians. The text “Veni sponsa Christi” (15432/9; 15496/15), for instance, not only had general use as the Vespers antiphon for the Common of Virgins, but it also featured in vestition and profession rites for many orders.[[45]](#footnote-46) The two settings (four-voice, 15499/15: five-voice, 15432/20; 15496/12) of Susanna’s defiant speech to the Elders, “Angustiae mihi sunt,” are based on a Matins responsory chant; Susanna’s refusal to submit her marital chastity to the Elders, even under pain of death, provided a model for saintly behavior for all, but nuns, as brides of Christ, had a special appreciation of her constancy.[[46]](#footnote-47)

Other texts show evidence of adaptation that could make them more meaningful for nuns. This can involve simple elimination of text that specifies the sex of the speaker, as in the three-part “Inclina domine aurem tuam” (15435/14), anonymous in 15435 but elsewhere attributed to both Jacotin and Courtois. The motet abridges Psalm 85/86 by omitting a number of passages including, “da imperium tuum puero tuo et salvum fac filium ancillae tuae” (“give Thy command to Thy servant and save the son of Thy handmaid”) hence removing the reference to a male supplicant. The alterations to the litanic prayer, “Ave Domine Jesu Christe” (15435/8) are more sophisticated.[[47]](#footnote-48) Based on a medieval Eucharistic salutation, the prayer enjoyed a resurgence of popularity at the end of the fifteenth century, and was included in Bernardino Busti’s *Tesauro spirituale* among other indulgence prayers. Unlike most other settings of the prayer that set each salutation separately, this setting joins two salutations together in both *prima* and *secunda pars* (Table 4):[[48]](#footnote-49)

<Table 4 here>

The text of the motet is clearly closely related to Busti’s, but it is altered twice to highlight the word “virginitatis” (“virginity”), the cornerstone of a nun’s profession. The first emphasis is engineered simply by reordering the salutations, making the phrase “sponsus virginitatis” (“Bridegroom of virginity”) the culmination of the *prima pars*. The second changes the text from “flower and fruit of the virgin mother” to “flower and life of virginity,” removing the reference to the BVM, and substituting it with a metaphor for Christ’s relationship to nuns. Again, this change appears at the end of the *secunda pars*, making that relationship the crucial feature of the prayer’s greeting. Even as these alterations do not affect the overall meaning of the text, they still personalize it for conventual use.

The most subtle textual editing appears in Maistre Jhan’s non-liturgical “Ecce amica mea,” (15435/24), which sets an adaptation of a well-known passage from Chapter 2 of the Song of Songs.[[49]](#footnote-50) The text is generally faithful to the Biblical verse and the alterations are only very slight – some added endearments and a change from “delictus” to “delicta” in v. 9. Nonetheless, they are significant, even transformative (Table 5).

< Table 5 here>

Although both texts are spoken by the Bride, in the Scripture the Groom’s reported speech begins at v.10, after “en dilectus meus loquitur mihi” (“and my [male] beloved said to me”). However, because in the motet the gender of the beloved in v.9 has been altered to the feminine, all of the motet text apart from “en dilectus meus loquitur mihi” may be understood as reported speech, as the Bride recounts what the Groom has said to her.[[50]](#footnote-51) In the setting, Maistre Jhan separates her words, “en dilectus meus loquitur mihi,” from the Groom’s reported speech by an abrupt change in texture and rate of declamation. Sung by a male ensemble, the point of the text is almost completely obscured; sung by a nun, the text acquires an appealing realism, as she tells of Christ calling to her as she peers from behind the convent’s grille.

Scotto’s conventual programme for the two 1543 volumes seems clear, although the differences between them suggest that they may not have been conceived together. Consisting entirely of new works, even if anonymous and potentially by a number of composers, 15432 may well have been curated, either by Scotto or his agents, exclusively or nearly exclusively from compositions emanating from musically superior convents across northern Italy.[[51]](#footnote-52) The four-voice 15435, while potentially also containing music gathered from or for convents, shows signs of a more eclectic approach, with selections of existing repertoire alongside newly published works, in both *voci pari* and compressed cleffing. Some of these would be suitable for single-sex ensembles at Venetian institutions: for instance, the Scuola di San Martino and the Augustinian convent of Santa Lucia would specifically have been served by motets for their titular saints, and all Venetian houses would have found use for a motet celebrating Santa Marina, one of the city’s most important patrons. Gardano seems to have been less interested in providing a specifically feminine locus in his reprints, and instead strengthened the Venetian associations, particularly by adding motets for Saint Mark. Like Scotto, he may have relied on material that was readily available to him in Venice to complete his collections, but he may also have considered these works attractive to a market that extended across the Venetian republic.

*Performing contexts for the* materna lingua *repertoire*

The question of performance context is always present when considering motets: by whom and for whom were they sung, and when?[[52]](#footnote-53) Much of the *materna lingua* repertoire fits comfortably into what we already know of early- and mid-sixteenth-century nuns’ musical and spiritual practice. Outwardly, the nuns were most likely to be heard by the secular world on the principal feasts and at significant events for the convent, such as visits by the nobility, professions, and saints’ days; inwardly, they were likely to focus their worship on their collective husband, Christ, and their maternal role-model, the Virgin.[[53]](#footnote-54) A strong concentration on Matins responsories, most of which are liturgically correct with a full repeat of the respond after the verse, creates a powerful connection with religious discipline. A significant number of these are from the offices of Holy Week, and the octaves of Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter – seasons that in later decades were known to be among the busiest times for conventual music-making.[[54]](#footnote-55) This sense of seasonal performance is strengthened by the Gospel motets, which feature in the four-voice books.

It is conceivable that some of these works were intended as an accompaniment to the centerpiece of a dramatic presentation that involved procession, mime, or some sort of *tableau vivant*.[[55]](#footnote-56) Certainly “Tria sunt munera” (15432/4; 15496/4) which relates the gifts of the Magi, functioned not only as a Matins responsory for the Octave of Epiphany, but also as part of a traditional drama that preceded Mass on the third day of the octave.[[56]](#footnote-57) The setting is 252 breves, ample accompaniment for a silent representation of the scene. The visual representation of the Nativity, particularly as championed by the Franciscans, was so engrained in the liturgy that it was not eradicated by the Council of Trent; nor were convents excluded from the tradition. Corpus Domini in Ferrara retained the practice until at least the middle of the seventeenth century, when the outer church was destroyed on Christmas night 1665, by a fire that began in the “stable” straw.[[57]](#footnote-58) The four-voice Gospel motets in 15435 and 15499 may have served a similar purpose. They are almost as long as the responsory motets of 15432 and they, too, lend themselves to a dramatic context; convents would have found the Gospel of the women at the Cross particularly suitable.

Whereas some of the motets could conceivably be used as part of an elaborate liturgical occasion at which one might expect a significant congregation, or during a special performance for visitors, others seem entirely unsuited to performance in an “audience”-oriented context.[[58]](#footnote-59) These include lengthy devotional and supplicatory texts to both Christ and the Virgin Mary, and their prominence in the collections forces the consideration of an alternative. This subset of the repertoire is intensely focused on the physical presence of the Divine: there are familiar Eucharistic texts meditating on the Host, but also Song of Songs verses, or texts heavily derived from the same tropes of physical love; these tropes in turn are shared with texts venerating Mary. At between two and three hundred breves, the full responsory settings and non-liturgical devotional texts stand apart from the shorter antiphon settings. Their length, combined with an almost hypnotic use of canon, repetition and static harmony, suggests a rarified, contemplative context for their composition and use.[[59]](#footnote-60) In the most extreme examples, the texture is almost continuously polyphonic, with very little homophony and few cadences articulated fully in every part. Although dissonance is present, it is not used in direct relation to the text; rather it appears to function as a fleeting disturbance to the otherwise continuous flow, a momentary disruption that offsets, and paradoxically increases, the affective, meditative tranquility of the whole.

At 293 breves, the five-voice Easter responsory “Angelus Domini descendit” (15432/18), which tells of the angel comforting the women at the tomb and rolling away the stone, is the longest setting in 15432. It was omitted in the Gardano reissue, possibly because of its high clefs (c1c1c2c2c4) but more probably because of its length.[[60]](#footnote-61) Listeners might find themselves quickly lost in its dense textures and its slow-moving harmonies, as the close scoring ensures the pitch level remains relatively constant, even if the parts themselves are moving. The composer uses repetition as a strategy for emphasis, although there is a sense that the performers themselves might benefit more from hearing a phrase passed from one voice to another than an audience, who at any distance would hear only a wash of sound. In each *pars*, the beginning of the repeated portion of the respond, “Nolite timere,” is dovetailed with the previous “dixit ad mulieribus” or “dixit eis,” but once all the voices have arrived on the text, a pair of related phrases is passed between each of the upper four voices (A b. 69; T b. 71; C b. 73; Q b. 75), the repeated notes generating a regular alternation on “tonic” and “dominant” chords. The next section, “Scio enim quia crucifixum quaeritis” (b. 77), is the only part of the motet that is set homophonically. The rate of declamation changes dramatically, as does the meter at “quia crucifixum”: not a proportional change, but placing the word stresses every three semibreves rather than every two minims. Nevertheless, it maintains the overall pitch and the same alternating sonorities: again, the performers might be more aware of the change in texture than the listener (Example 3):

< Example 3 near here> [link to soundfile]

While certainly unusual, the qualities displayed by “Angelus Domini descendit” are not entirely unique in the contemporary repertoire. During the 1540s, Gioseffo Zarlino was occupied in the composition of a large-scale motet cycle setting on the Song of Songs that has similar characteristics. Cristle Collins Judd has identified the source of Zarlino’s text as a Cassinese translation, and has speculated on the ways in which the Congregation might have used the motets:

For each *individual* singer of these motets, the text is extraordinarily clear and complete, both visually in the print, and aurally in his own line…. But the polyphonic realization appears to disregard such clarity completely – internal punctuation is wholly obscured by the way individual lines interact and cadential articulation is near absent. Indeed, there is a kind of harmonic stasis that is uncharacteristic of most contemporary counterpoint, created by the ways voices shift and change pitches. No one *not* singing has much hope of actually comprehending much of the text sung by the ensemble. No one but God, of course.[[61]](#footnote-62)

Were this subset of the *materna lingua* repertoire limited to responsory texts, it might be harder to imagine a private context for these immense works. However, it also includes quasi-litanic devotional texts and popular prayers that had no set place in the established liturgy, but which might appear in a domestic Book of Hours. For instance, “Ave Domine Jesu Christe” (15435/8), at 286 breves, is as substantial as “Angelus Domini descendit” and shares its harmonic simplicity, achieving the same sense of static homogeneity through the close similarity of its main points of imitation, all of which describe the major triad of the Lydian modes. These works suggest music-making that, in its emphasis on the experience of participation rather than the relationship between performer and audience, mirrors the social use of music in the secular, courtly world. 15432 contains three such settings: “Rogamus te, beatissima virgo Maria” (15432/15; 221 breves) and “Virgo Maria speciosissima” (15432/6, 15496/10; 134 breves), and the somewhat shorter “Ave sanctissima Maria” (15432/14. 15496/2; 69 breves). “Virgo Maria speciosissima” is harmonically more adventurous than the other prayers, yet it, too, projects a sense of stasis, achieved through the use of a *soggetto ostinato*, a technique closely associated with the demonstration of compositional expertise.[[62]](#footnote-63) The composer extends the display of technical flair through incorporating the opening *soggetto* – text and music – of Brumel’s three-voice motet, “Mater, patris, et filia” in the *secunda pars*.[[63]](#footnote-64)

Like “Virgo speciosissima Maria,” “Rogamus te” and “Ave sanctissima Maria” also use fragments of existing music as part of their polyphonic fabric, in both cases chant melodies: “Ave sanctissima Maria” incorporates the opening phrase of *Regina coeli*, and “Rogamus te” contains fragments of *Regina coeli* and *Salve Regina*. All three texts are prayers to the Virgin that centonize and paraphrase Marian antiphons, Biblical verse, and even existing meditative texts.[[64]](#footnote-65) These fragments of text and music would have become familiar as a result of both worship and the monastic tradition of *lectio divina*, the regular active reading of Scripture and prayer, in which language is subsumed into the memory of the worshipper through slow and simultaneous reading aloud and meditation.[[65]](#footnote-66) The performance of these motets, then, is an enhanced active reading: the repetition of words, phrases, and pitches between equal voices in closely imitative polyphony keeps the brain in a constant state of simultaneous recollection and renewal.

*Performing the* materna lingua *repertoire*

The discussion of performance context for the sixteenth-century motet deals with questions of why, when, and where, but it leaves open the question of how these motets might have been performed, and how they would have sounded. The motets of the *materna lingua* complex not only provide more repertory for sixteenth-century nuns, but they also indicate performance practices that both corroborate and extend what we already know about music and performance in Italian convents throughout the sixteenth century. Some lend themselves to instrumental accompaniment through a polarised disposition of the upper voices and the bass; others suggest an understanding of of simultaneous or improvised ensemble ornamentation practices. Closely related to the consequences of diminution in equal voices, dissonance is introduced and handled more freely than one might expect, particularly in the five-voice works.

For female single-sex ensembles, the execution in performance of the bass voice is nearly always a negotiation.[[66]](#footnote-67) Even when comfortably within the ranges of the lower voices, it may need reinforcement in order to be heard in balance. When the bass voice is opposed by two or more voices singing in only a slightly higher range, the issue of balance is even more acute. Here, in works for four or five voices, the convent organ could have been used at the very least to fortify the bass line; in practice, other parts may also have been doubled. The copy of 15499 in the British Library demonstrates clear evidence that at some point in its existence, the bass partbook was used for keyboard accompaniment: each motet is prefaced with a triad marked in by hand, either to help the singers find their starting notes, or to remind the organist of the motet’s tonal focus; bar lines (not regular, but corresponding to the overall phrase structure of the motets) have also been added.

In works where equal or near equal high voices are in opposition with a lower bass part, it is possible to imagine a performance practice that anticipates continuo realization. In “Salve sponsa Dei” (15432/11) the bassus is clearly separated from the upper voices by its register; the original cleffing is c3c3c3c3F4, so it sounds a seventh below. It is also continuous throughout the work, and its only motivic interplay with the upper voices occurs in the opening imitations – thereafter its function appears to be solely to provide the root of the vertical triads. In a female-voice performance, the line could be sung in upwards octave transposition along with the other four voices; however, it could equally be provided by an organ alone, sounding either in the same transposition as the upper voices or at its original written pitch. Crucially, because it is entirely harmonic, the organist would not need an intabulation, only the bass part itself, to realise a full accompaniment.

Another motet that places four equal voices against a lower voice, “Felix namque es” (15432/19, 15496/13) opens with a passage that is strongly reminiscent of another practice more readily associated with later female ensembles, that of simultaneous quasi-improvisatory ornamentation.[[67]](#footnote-68) Tiny *semicrome* decorations appear at various points in the motet, but they are concentrated at the beginning (Example 4):

< Example 4 here> [link to soundfile]

The art of ensemble ornamentation is discussed in sources dating from slightly later than 15432. Writing in the early 1560s, Giovanni Maffei briefly counsels: “when one finds four or five singing together, the one should give place to the other; because if two or three are making *passaggi* at the same time, it will confuse the harmony.”[[68]](#footnote-69) In his 1555 treatise, Vicentino advises that diminution works best in fuller ensembles or with instruments, as the unadorning voices can ensure that no part of the harmony is lost:

Such persons are advised that diminutions made in the proper places and in tempo will seem good. Moreover, such diminutions should be used in more than four voices, because diminution always causes the loss of numerous consonances and the burden of many dissonances. Even though the diminution may seem smooth to inexperienced listeners, it nevertheless impoverishes the harmony. To avoid losing harmony in compositions while singers display a refined talent for diminution, it is a good idea to have such diminutions accompanied by instruments that play the composition accurately, without diminution.[[69]](#footnote-70)

The *crome* and *semicrome* decorations at the beginning of “Felix namque es” follow the rules set out by Maffei and Vicentino: the voices do not clash with each other, but take turns in imitation against slow-moving, full textures without “impoverish[ing] the harmony.”

Vicentino also notes that ensemble ornamentation introduces “the burden of many dissonances.” The “burden” is exaggerated in *voci pari* works, for the voices are constrained by the narrowed compass, and it is exacerbated even more as the number of voices increases. In “Salve sponsa Dei” (15432/11) , for instance, clashes are created by a standard cadential formula superimposed on a cantus firmus (bb. 26-27 AQT), and by decoration (b.29 CA); a false relation occurs when decoration – perhaps introduced to avoid a lengthy unison between *altus* and *quintus* - and a cadential formula are sounded together (b. 30) (Example 5):

< Example 5 here> [link to soundfile]

Dissonance, prepared and unprepared, multiple and consecutive, is a feature of the *materna lingua* repertoire, particularly in 15432. Its use is one of the unifying characteristics of the book, creating the sense of at least a shared aesthetic between composers, if not a single composer’s creative voice. The motets are distinguished by the expressive use of unprepared clashes (often tritones), frequently placed at points of tension in the text. For instance, in “O salutaris hostia” (15432/8, 15496/3) the quintus forms multiple dissonances with the other voices to colour the phrase “bella premunt hostilia” (hostile wars press [us]) (b. 32): a tritone with the cantus and a major second with the tenor. The tritone cannot be resolved with the use of ficta because of the potential semitone clashes with the tenor and altus, and tritones with the cantus and bassus; it is the least-worst solution to leave it as it is (Example 6):

< Example 6 here> [link to soundfile]

“Felix namque es” (15432/19, 15496/13) uses dissonance for a different purpose, not so much to express the words’ meaning as to give them extra emphasis. The text is a full responsory and verse, sung at Matins with minor variations for most of the Marian feasts (this setting celebrates Mary’s birth, “natitivatem”: other iterations of the text substitute “visitationem,” “commemorationem,” or “assumptionem”). The verse incorporates part of the prayer “Sancta Maria succure miseris” in its requests for intercession: “ora pro populo, interveni pro clero, intercedi pro devoto femineo sexu.” While the phrase “ora pro populo” is afforded three breves and “interveni pro clero” six, the setting of “intercedi pro devoto femineo sexu” expands to fill eighteen breves – twice the length of the people and the clergy together, and a fifth of the entire motet (Example 7):

< Example 7 near here> [link to soundfile]

The elaborate melismas that set the words “devoto” and “femineo” create both prepared (AT b. 54) and unprepared (CA b. 53; CB b. 61) dissonances; the penultimate iteration of the word “sexu” (Q bb. 62) is ornamented with semiminims. The false relation between altus and tenor at b.48 becomes a melodic feature first for the quintus (b.58) and then the tenor (b.60). Again, the possibility of using ficta to resolve the “problem” dissolves as soon as the other parts are considered – in five equal voices there is very little room for maneuver – but this does seem to be a conscious gesture on the part of the composer, as the melodic B-flat/B-natural false relation coincides with the word “sexu.” The “softness” of the *b-molle* illustrating the softness of the feminine sex is a recognizable device in the contemporary secular repertoire; the composer of “Felix namque es” was clearly keen to try it out in a different context.[[70]](#footnote-71) The rich combination of melisma, ornamentation, dissonance, and chromatic inflection would leave both the listener and the Virgin in no doubt of who most deserves her assistance.

The use of parallel intervals as an expressive gesture, either directly or aurally through the crossing of parts, is a feature of later repertoire for equal female voices.[[71]](#footnote-72) The closely-scored polyphony of 15432 regularly and unavoidably produces sounding parallel fifths and octaves, but there are also instances of written parallel major thirds. This practice was sufficiently aurally distinctive to have warranted admonishments to caution by both Vicentino and Zarlino, as a “forbidden” progression that might be used only as an accompaniment to an appropriately acerbic text.[[72]](#footnote-73) An extreme example from 15432, in which a string of parallel major thirds, by step and then by leap, may be found in the *secunda pars* of the setting of “Ego sum panis vivae” (RISM 15432/7, 15496/11) underscoring the first instance of the words “ex hoc pane” (AT, b. 113; Example 8). We may read these striking major sonorities as a device to emphasise the miraculous gift resulting from the transubstantiation (“if any eats *of this bread*, he will live forever”). The phrase is repeated note for note four bars later (b. 117), confirming that the parallelisms are intentional and significant.

< Example 8 near here> [link to soundfile]

Of all the works in 15432, the great setting of the Gradual for Easter Sunday, “Haec dies” (15432/5, 15496/9) is the most insistent in its challenges to harmonic decorum. At 153 breves, it is of an average length for the book, but the dissonance here is almost continuous from the first bar, very rarely resolved completely until the final cadence of each part. Two examples will illustrate, from either end of the *prima pars.* The opening phrase introduces parallel major thirds (CA) and a tritone (CQ) by the end of the second breve, and the vertical stacking of tone plus semitone (AQT) then major sixth plus a tone (BQC) at the end of the fourth breve (Example 9):

< Example 9 here> [link to soundfile]

The chaotic *alleluia* at the end of the *prima pars* layers offset regular and irregular phrases - five, six, seven, or eight minims - based on a *nota cambiata-*like melodic cell, simultaneously generating diminished octaves (CT, b. 52; CQ, b. 54) along with fleeting seminimim dissonances. The notation of the E-flats is not haphazard, for the section is repeated note for note (Example 10 shows the repeat). At the cadence (bb. 56-57), however, order is restored, both rhythmically and harmonically.

< Example 10 here> [link to soundfile]

The key to understanding this extraordinary work is its association with Easter. Bells are not rung during the Triduum, nor are Alleluias sung as part of the liturgy during Lent, but on Easter morning, both joyfully return. In performance, this work sounds like nothing less than all the bells of the city ringing at once, eventually resolving together. It is masterful programmatic writing that stretches the capacities of both singers and listeners with its unrelenting tension. Such is its disregard for harmonic propriety, one might be tempted to see it as an aberration, carelessly constructed by an incompetent composer. However, it appears to have been particularly favoured by the owners of the manuscript copy of 15496, Prelátské Knihovny III S 17.2/391, for above the *secunda pars* of the Easter Gradual text, the scribe has added the Matins Invitatory for Christmas morning, “Christus natus est nobis: venite adoremus,” giving the choir the chance to sing the motet at least twice a year.

Even more remarkably, the distinctive melodic cell and downwards sequence of the *prima pars* Alleluia surfaces at the end of the *secunda pars* of Gero’s Christmas motet “Hodie scientis” (RISM15499/2) (Example 11):

<Example 11 near here>

The dissonance is not as extreme, but the reference is clear. It is tempting to think, on this basis, that Gero might be the composer of “Haec dies,” but this seems unlikely. Gardano *adds* attributions to Gero in 15499 that were not present in 15435; if Gero had also contributed works to 15432, then we might expect that Gardano would have added those attributions, too. Another explanation, fitting what we already know about Gero’s relationship with the Venetian publishing houses, is that Gardano commissioned “Hodie scientis,” requesting that Gero create something like “Haec dies” for his four-voice volume, or that Gero had become familiar with “Haec dies” as an editor.[[73]](#footnote-74) Either way, his emulation of one of the most radical passages in 15432 suggests that Gardano felt the sweetly dissonant, slightly anarchic harmonic language of the earlier book was deeply attractive to buyers, and he wished to provide it for a wider clientele by including it in his four-voice book.

*Questions of authorship in the* materna lingua *complex*

Although the evidence regarding convent music is thinly scattered in the documentary record, the *materna lingua* complex can tell us about music-making in single-sex institutions in a way that no other kind of reported evidence can. We should trust its compilers to have understood their target market: the very existence of Gardano’s reworked editions implies that he felt there was some more commercial value to be had in creating *voci pari* volumes. It seems clear that the collections were intended for convents and likely that their contents were gathered *from* convents, even if these conclusions are deductions, not facts. We should perhaps not read too much into the fact that the repertoire is preserved only in bindings and manuscripts copied from prints belonging to all-male institutions - Coimbra MS 48 (some of 15435), Treviso MS 29 (some of 15496), Prelátské Knihovny III S 17.2/391 (all of 15496); and the libraries of the Electoral College, Jena, and the Accademia Filarmonica, Verona (bindings containing 15432). After all, if works are easily sung by single-sex choirs, even if their subject matter is not entirely *a propos* they would be suitable for male voices, too. Many Italian convent libraries were dispersed or destroyed during the Napoleonic suppression, with no trace of them or their contents left, so if the books were purchased for convent choirs we would have very little way of knowing. However, the manuscript copies attest to the aesthetic value of the music, particularly the selective copying of 15496 in Treviso MS 29.[[74]](#footnote-75) The anonymity of the bulk of the motets did not prevent them from becoming established in the repertoire, but it does prevent a fuller understanding of precisely how they came into being.

The attributions and the multiple amendations in Gardano’s reissues are important to the consideration of the origin of the anonymous works in Scotto’s 1543 collections. While he kept the title virtually intact, when Gardano issued his reprint of 15432 in 1549, he introduced a range of significant changes. Some, to the repertoire and the ordering, appear to be commercial decisions. One attribution was added (“Ego sum panis vitae” (15496/11) to Phinot) and seven motets were withdrawn, including those with limited liturgical use and the longer meditative works, among them “Salve sponsa Dei” (RISM 15432/11), “Rogamus te, beatissima Virgo” (RISM 15432/15) and “Angelus Domini descendit” (RISM 15432/18), one of the two motets originally printed in high clefs. The other high-clef work, “O salutaris hostia” (15432/8, 15496/3) was not removed, but was transposed down an octave so that its cleffing corresponded to the other works in the book. Eight new works were added, five of which were attributed – one to Arcadelt, one to Phinot, one to Arnoldo [Ernoul Caussin], and two to Pierrisson [Perissone Cambio]. Phinot’s setting of “Illuminare hierusalem” (15496/1) opens the book, while the rest of the new motets are placed after the remaining sixteen works from 15432. Within this careful arrangement, the new attribution of “Ego sum panis vitae” to Phinot seems anomalous, for it appears isolated in the middle of the anonymous motets.

Crucially, according to the criteria laid out by Mary Lewis in her taxonomy of related editions, 15432 and 15496 most closely fit her description of books that have been prepared from different transmissions.[[75]](#footnote-76) There are significant differences in underlay; compositional variants; no correspondence in line endings (except “Adest nobis dies celebris” (15432/10, 15496/14)); many additional ligatures; differences in accidentals. Most changes seem to be in the order of improvements achieved through repeated performance, typically the recasting of textual rhythms and much more detailed underlay. It seems unlikely that Gardano was working from separate transmissions of sixteen motets from a diffuse group of anonymous composers, so either the changes represent very extensive revisions by an editor or Gardano knew who the composers were and had the amendations directly from them: notably, the four-voice motets newly ascribed to Gero in 15499 bear exactly the same kinds of amendations.

There are inconsistencies, however, that suggest “revised copying”: while a few errors are introduced, 15496 also retains a very small number of errors that one might have expected to see corrected, even in pieces that have other amendations. If the attribution of “Ego sum panis vitae” to Phinot is to be trusted, then we may assume that the composer or his agent – who had supplied him with three *unicae* by Phinot in the four-voice 1549 volume, and “Illuminare hierusalem” (another *unica*) in the five-voice book – also provided him with a new copy of “Ego sum panis vitae.” However, although the changes include new underlay, new ligatures, and amended rhythms, crucially they do not include a correction to what appears to be an clear error (Example 12):

<Example 12 near here> [link to soundfile]

The *c* in the altus at b. 105 can only be made to work in performance if it is a minim, not a semibreve. Despite the liberal attitude to dissonance elsewhere in the book, to leave the note unaltered creates an unresolved dissonance, or at least one resolved only by the termination of the vocal phrase. Even if intentional, this treatment appears nowhere else in the five-voice motets, so it is more logical to assume that it is an error retained in copying directly from Scotto’s partbooks, or that Gardano’s exemplar itself was copied from Scotto’s, with the attribution to Phinot accrued somewhere along the way. Moreover, in all respects “Ego sum” fits closely into the composition style established in 15432, and there is no good reason to assume the attribution to Phinot is safe.[[76]](#footnote-77)

It is just possible that Gardano used a very heavily amended set or copy of Scotto’s partbooks as his exemplar, but in some cases, the nature of the amendations goes beyond the sorts of corrections an editor might introduce, suggesting instead re-composition. Compare, for instance, the closing bars of the *prima pars* of “Tribulationes civitatum audivimus” RISM 15432/1, 15496/8 (Examples 13a and 13b):

< Example 13a near here> [link to soundfile]

< Example 13b near here>

Unusually, the final vertical sonority cannot accommodate a major third because to do so (to raise the *b-flat*) would create a tritone with the cantus *f’* – which itself is already clashing with the final *g*.In a gesture that normalises this remarkable cadence, the cantus in 15496 is altered to remove both the dramatic octave leap and the dissonance on the final breve; as a result, the final note in the tenor, the *b*, which is also the third in the final chord, may be raised.[[77]](#footnote-78)

Putting the differences between the books in a wider context, the alterations found in 15496 are similar in scale and scope to those in Gardano’s reprints of two books by composers established in Ferrara, Rore’s *Terzo libro de madrigali a cinque voci*, and Francesco della Viola’s *Primo libro de madrigali a quattro voci*, both of which he issued in 1550, and both of which may have been intended to supersede works previously printed by Scotto without authorization from the composers.[[78]](#footnote-79) In the late 1540s, Gardano began to cultivate a close relationship with the Este court. [[79]](#footnote-80)It may be that Gardano knew who had written at least some of the *materna lingua* motets, and undertook to reissue them on the same basis as the Rore and della Viola books, but chose not to acknowledge their authorship in print. Bearing in mind the quality and sophistication of the works, this choice seems difficult to understand, unless the composer or composers were unwilling to reveal their identities. While it is certainly true that, later in the sixteenth century and beyond, male composers were commissioned by convents or dedicated music to them, we cannot rule out the possibility that some of this music was by a nun or nuns, who for reasons of propriety would be unlikely to wish to see their names in print.[[80]](#footnote-81)

While the lack of attributions in 15435 was perhaps a way of disguising the fact that very few of its works were actually by Morales, the blanket anonymity of 15432 is less easy to explain. Completely anonymous musical collections published in the sixteenth century are exceedingly rare: 15432 stands almost alone in the repertoire, with only a handful of publications from later in the century for company.[[81]](#footnote-82) Martha Feldman has suggested that anonymity in sixteenth-century publications was linked to the social status of the authors: musicians looking to secure employment and reputation were much more likely to use publication as a form of advertisement and advancement, whereas both the professionally insignificant (rank-and-file musicians on *ad hoc* commissions employed to fill a publication’s pages) and the aristocratically significant (members of the elite whose reputation might be damaged by the impression of seeking public acclaim for their works) might see their works published without acknowledgement of their source.[[82]](#footnote-83) Women, too, were more likely to be obscured by the shield of anonymity when publishing, as a matter of both decorum and access. A nun composer might fulfil each of these categories: obliged by her profession to a loss of her secular identity, prevented by her vow of stability from accessing print culture or formally circulating her compositions, and very possibly restrained by her nobility from seeking acknowledgement of her authorship in the market – for a nun with the technical ability to compose polyphony would have had to have received a solid (and expensive) musical education, either before monachisation in the family home, or afterwards in the cloister.

A nun composer sufficiently skilled to produce any of the five-voice *voci pari* motets would have had to have been a formidable musician. We can hardly doubt that such a woman existed in the early sixteenth century, even though we have no direct proof on which to base an identification in relation to 15432. However, one such nun is, in fact, well documented in sixteenth-century musical literature, and she fits Feldman’s criteria perfectly: Suor Leonora d’Este (1515-1575), the only surviving daughter of Duke Alfonso I d’Este and Lucrezia Borgia.[[83]](#footnote-84) Suor Leonora was four years old when her mother died, and without a female household to care for her in her father’s court, she was raised in the Clarissan convent of Corpus Domini, where her mother and grandmother were buried. At the age of eight, she decided that she wished to stay at the convent for the rest of her life, to her father’s continued consternation. Nonetheless, throughout her life her father and brothers Ercole II and Ippolito II ensured that her musical needs were met through the provision of music, keyboards, and keyboard maintenance.[[84]](#footnote-85)

The composer Nicola Vicentino - inventor of the *archicembalo*, a keyboard instrument on which the octave was divided into thirty-one notes - praised Suor Leonora in his 1555 publication, *L’antica musica ridotto alla moderna practica*, suggesting that he had met her, and possibly even taught her when he had been in Ippolito’s service in Ferrara: “stripped of the snares of this world, [she] has completely dedicated her present life to God... [and she] no less admirably combines the study of the theory and practice of the three genera [of Music] with that of instruments and of fine literature.”[[85]](#footnote-86) In order for her to master the “three genera” (diatoni, chromatic, and enharmonic), and to combine that skill with the mastery of instruments, she would have needed access to an archicembalo. While there were probably only ever two made, it appears she could have had one at her disposal. A contemporary inventory of furniture, belonging to Ippolito but which was kept in Corpus Domini, concludes with “un’instromento cromatico.”[[86]](#footnote-87) Later sources from the 1580s locate an archicembalo in the Ferrarese *castello*; the inventory suggests that the instrument may have been housed in Corpus Domini after its arrival in Ferrara with Vicentino himself.[[87]](#footnote-88) Also included in the inventory is a “pietra da contrapunto.” As the inventory lists only large objects (there is also “Uno instromento con la sua cassa di noce et gli piedi dipenti di marmore” – “an instrument with its walnut case, and marbled feet,” probably either a harpsichord or a clavichord), this *pietra* would appear to be a large slate used for the drafting of polyphony.[[88]](#footnote-89) It seems highly unlikely that Ippolito would have commissioned a *pietra* for his own, or his musicians’, use when in Ferrara, but it would have been a very valuable tool for Suor Leonora as she developed her musical skills.

Other musicians associated with the Este also honored her musical abilities: Francesco della Viola dedicated his (revised) works in his *Primo libro a quattro voci* to her, and Gioseffo Zarlino credited her with the inspiration for his *Sopplementi musicali* of 1588.[[89]](#footnote-90) One might speculate also that Maistre Jhan’s “Ecce amica mea” (15435/24) was intended as a tribute to Suor Leonora. Maistre Jhan served the Este family for twenty-six years, between 1512 and 1538; during that time he composed motets for many members of the family, including Suor Leonora’s aunt Isabella, and her brother Ercole II, his children, his brother and his uncles.[[90]](#footnote-91) The *prima pars* of “Ecce amica mea” ends with a line added to the biblical verse, “Columba mea, veni” (see Table 5); the endearment is also emphasised at the beginning. The Este symbol was a white eagle, but in certain texts related to Este women – including a eulogy for Suor Leonora’s niece, the Princess Leonora – the eagle is transmogrified into a white dove.[[91]](#footnote-92)

Serendipitously, Suor Leonora’s profile also fits at least some of the repertoire in 15432. She was a Clarissan nun, and so those works – “Salve sponsa Dei” (15432/11) and “O salutaris hostia”(15432/8, 15496/3) – that pertain particularly to the feast of St Clare would be appropriate for her institution. The *soggetto cavato* technique that gives rise to the cantus firmus of “Salve sponsa Dei” was introduced by Josquin des Prez at her grandfather’s court, and was deeply admired by her brother, Ercole II.[[92]](#footnote-93) It may also be important that “O salutaris hostia” (a text for the feast of Corpus Christi) is so closely related to Willaert’s setting through its highly unusual choice of melodic model: the hymn for Vespers II for St Clare, “Concinat plebs fidelium.”[[93]](#footnote-94) Willaert’s setting (also in high clefs) is thought to belong to his early years in Italy, specifically those during which he was in Ferrara.[[94]](#footnote-95) Moreover, during his final years in Ferrara, between 1525 and 1527, Willaert was in the household of Ippolito II.[[95]](#footnote-96) Ippolito’s close relationship with his sister, and with the convent of Corpus Domini, lasted a lifetime.[[96]](#footnote-97) Coincidentally, Willaert joined Ippolito’s *famiglia* in the same year from which we have the earliest evidence of Suor Leonora’s musical activity: in 1525, strings were purchased for a clavichord being constructed for her, paid for from her father’s exchequer.[[97]](#footnote-98) If Willaert were to have taught Suor Leonora, she would have been twelve years old when he left Ferrara.

Apart from “O salutaris Hostia,” “Ego sum panis vivae” (15432/7, 15496/11), which includes an additional verse not normally included in Elevation motets, would also be appropriate to a house dedicated to Corpus Domini. The opening of “Felix namque es” (15432/19, 15496/13) may even suggest which nuns are to be the particular recipients of the Virgin’s aid: the melody of the Corpus Christi hymn, *Pange lingua gloriosa*, is embedded in the opening phrase (the melody begins in the cantus [E-F-E] and continues in the altus [G-A-C]; see Example 4).[[98]](#footnote-99)

There is a consistency in style across the contents of 15432 that might support the notion that a single composer is responsible for at least some of the motets.[[99]](#footnote-100) A number of recurring features set these works apart from the few contemporary freely-imitative five-voice *voci pari* works by Jacquet and Willaert.[[100]](#footnote-101) Like the two established composers, the composer(s) of 15432 is capable of maintaining vertical consonance if desired - as is clear from the setting of “Sicut lilium” (15432/16, 15496/5), for instance – but neither Jacquet nor Willaert engage in the radical exploitation of dissonance seen in 15432. The melodies in 15432 are well formed, but at times they take a distinctly odd direction, either through unusual intervals or through manipulating the rhythmic declamation to avoid unwanted clashes – this, again, is not characteristic of Jacquet or Willaert. Most revealing is the way melodic imitation is handled. Willaert never chooses to introduce a *soggetto* at the same pitch in more than two voices, and Jacquet does it only twice, whereas this is a distinct strategy that occurs in almost every motet in 15432, where three or even four voices will enter at the same pitch, in quick succession or at a more measured distance (see Example 3 for illustration).[[101]](#footnote-102) The reinforcement of a single melodic tessitura in imitation may then be peculiar to convent polyphony, reliant upon or exploiting the sound of higher voices, which have fewer audible partials than lower ones – but it also may indicate that 15432 is primarily the product of a single musical mind.

Nonetheless, it would be rash to claim that Suor Leonora was the composer of every work in 15432: the Augustinian vespers antiphon in 15432 seems particularly anomalous. This work may well not be by her: it is the most likely of the re-issued motets to have been copied directly from Scotto’s imprint, as there is no evidence of revision and it is the only one for which the line endings of each staff correspond in both prints, so Gardano genuinely may not have known its origin. But even in this instance, in our nun’s favour the community of Corpus Domini in Ferrara had its roots in Augustinian piety, having begun as an Augustinian community in the mid-fifteenth century.[[102]](#footnote-103)

Corpus Domini was also steeped in a meditative practice that had music at its core, expressed in the writings of its most famous daughter, Caterina Vigri (St Catherine of Bologna) – perhaps accounting for the lengthy meditative works.[[103]](#footnote-104) The existence of an advanced musical ensemble at Corpus Domini has so far been very difficult to prove, despite the stipulations in Alfonso I’s will for a “bello et solemne offitio” to be sung regularly in his memory, and records of Suor Leonora’s ownership and maintenance of multiple keyboard instruments, including the choir organ.[[104]](#footnote-105) It may be that, as the burial place of choice for generations of Este scions, the music there was considered as private as the later courtly ensemble, the *concerto delle dame*. Certainly, when Pope Clement VIII visited Ferrara to mark its devolution to the Papal States in 1598, he celebrated a Requiem Mass at the convent and was party to at least three separate musical performances by the nuns, as recorded in his majordomo’s diary.[[105]](#footnote-106)

However, the most prominent motet in 15432, “Tribulationes civitatum audivimus” (15432/1, 15496/8) suggests an even more intimate musical link with the Este. A setting the first responsory at Matins in the liturgy of Judith from the Summer Histories, we may assume by its placement at the opening of the book that it had significance for either the composer or the book’s financiers, or both. Like many texts in the book, it is relatively rare in the motet repertoire: there are only four known concordances, three of which do not originate in Italy. Two of these - that attributed to Clemens non Papa and William Byrd’s - seem to have been composed for a specific politico-religious context.[[106]](#footnote-107) The only other extant Italian setting is Palestrina’s, which itself may have been composed while Palestrina was in the employ of Ippolito II d’Este, possibly after the terrible earthquakes that afflicted Ferrara in 1570 and 1571.[[107]](#footnote-108)

Tribulationes civitatum audivimus, quas passae sunt, et defecimus. Timor et hebetudo mentis cecedit super nos et super liberos nostras. Domine miserere. Peccavimus cum patribus nostris, injuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus. Domine miserere.

[We have heard the trials of the citizens, which they have suffered, and we have lost heart. Fear and dullness of mind has overcome us and our children. Lord have mercy. We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Lord have mercy.]

The opening *soggetto* of the *materna lingua* “Tribulationes civitatum audivimus” bears a resemblance to the *soggetto ostinato* of Josquin des Prez’s monumental setting of Psalm 50/51, *Miserere mei Deus*. The text was strongly associated with Savonarola, who wrote the meditation “Infelix ego” on the psalm shortly before his execution in 1498. Josquin composed his motet during his brief tenure as *maestro di cappella* to Ercole I in the first decade of the century, and throughout the 1500s musicians either directly employed by or with strong links to the Este family - including Willaert, Rore, Vicentino, Lupus Hellinck, Palestrina, and Zarlino - composed works related to Josquin’s.[[108]](#footnote-109) None set the same text as the original, but all are linked through the quotation of its *soggetto ostinato* – a short phrase that recurs throughout the piece in a single voice – setting the text “Miserere mei, Deus.” The opening bars of “Tribulationes civitatum” recall these *soggetti*, in particular that of Willaert’s *Infelix ego*. Moreover, its open-fifth entries with downwards scalic resolution are reminiscent of the opening of Josquin’s original motet, with the similarity particularly striking between Josquin’s tenor and the quintus of 15432 (Examples 14a, 14b, and 14c).

<Example 14a here>

<Example 14b here>

<Example 14c here>

Willaert’s *Infelix ego* was probably composed in the 1530s or 1540s, but was not published until 1556, when it appeared in a Nuremburg anthology.Josquin’s motet was published in 1519, so could have been available to the composer of 15432, regardless of any connection to the Ferrarese chapel. Nonetheless, its importance to the Este is made clear by the number of imitations it generated, composed under their patronage. Moreover, the intricate trail of manuscript sources for the pieces in the *Miserere* tradition shows that the Este – from Ercole I through to Alfonso II – considered the works part of their private music, in particular, Willaert’s *Infelix ego*, to which the *soggetto* of “Tribulationes civitatum” bears most resemblance.[[109]](#footnote-110) “Tribulationes civitatum” was clearly thought important and interesting enough to open 15432; if it indeed a conscious imitation of Josquin’s *Miserere* and is related to the tradition, then another link to Ferrara and the Este may be established.

Suor Leonora would have known of, and may have shared, her family’s interest in Josquin’s *Miserere mei, Deus* and its imitations; as a member of an observant order in a convent with historical associations to Savonarola, she may have also shared the politico-religious sentiments that underpin the tradition.[[110]](#footnote-111) The deeper meanings of the text itself provide a final compelling circumstance. In Judith’s story, the chaste widow successfully defends her city Bethulia (Hebrew for “God’s virgins”) against the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar.[[111]](#footnote-112) At the birth of the Florentine Republic, Judith was adopted as a symbol by Savonarola’s followers, who confiscated Donatello’s statue from the Palazzo Medici, placing her in Piazza della Signoria with a new inscription: “for the public good.”[[112]](#footnote-113) In the monk’s own sermons, Judith stood for chastity, resistance, and righteousness, and she remained a symbol of defiance of Papal rule well into the sixteenth century. In 1543, at the time of the motet’s publication, Ferrara was beset by anxiety over the Pope’s newly established Inquisition, for the city had become a haven for heterodoxy and heresy, due to the Protestant leanings of Ercole II’s wife, Renée. “Tribulationes civitatum” weaves together the story of the strong leader of God’s virgins, in a city in conflict with an overbearing external power, with Este’s private Savonarolan musical tradition: how better might a daughter of the Este encode her identity to stand at the opening of a significant musical publication?

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The *voci pari* books of the 1540s must represent some form of deliberate commercial enterprise, but they are not homogenous in terms of their collecting and presentation strategies. Scotto’s programme was perhaps speculatively begun with the 1542 book of equal-voice masses and the 1543 book of four-voice motets, brought out under the name of their most illustrious contributor, Cristobál de Morales. These books present the works of established composers alongside anonymous works – perhaps the products of nun musicians - using Morales’s fame as a promotional draw, while simultaneously addressing a very specific buying market, the single-sex institution, and even more particularly, convents. Although its shares the equal-voice format, the five-voice book is a substantially different project, marketed solely on its suitability for single-sex ensembles. Rather than a composer’s name, the innocuous but unusual phrase “materna lingua” on its title page may have been the promotional device, signalling its affinity with convent music-making. Perhaps its intended buyers would also have recognized more readily than modern readers its unique status as a collection of five-voice, freely imitative *voci pari* works, offered in a quantity never before available.

Scotto’s collections represent a wide variety of music-making opportunities for convents: Marian masses, motets suitable for liturgy, for exegesis, and for private devotion and contemplation. 15432 exhibits a coherence around the liturgical year that is not present in the other books, which more overtly signal a geographical locus in the Veneto, a concentration that is strengthened in Gardano’s 1549 *materna lingua* collections. How Scotto obtained this repertoire still remains a mystery, and one not likely to be solved: if the works were by male composers, their anonymity defies the logic used to explain the lack of attribution to anonymous works in other contemporary volumes. If the works were by nuns, they would predate by fifty years the earliest published volume by a known nun composer.[[113]](#footnote-114)

It seems unlikely that Scotto’s agents solicited works directly from convents, but it seems equally unlikely that up to sixteen individual nuns would volunteer their works for publication directly to the printer; therefore the possibility emerges that the motets are by a smaller group, or even predominantly by a single hand. There are no known compositions that bear Suor Leonora d’Este’s name, so we cannot consider the merit of any claim to her authorship of the 1543 motets against any other work, but we cannot discount her altogether. We know two of her second cousins, Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga and San Francisco de Borja, were accomplished composers, and Guglielmo even sought anonymous publication of his works with the Gardano firm, stipulating they should bear no attribution that would debase him by entering him into the world of commerce.[[114]](#footnote-115) Like Guglielmo, Suor Leonora may also have desired to have her compositions preserved in print, and like Guglielmo, she may have sought later to have the print corrected.[[115]](#footnote-116) And if Suor Leonora were the composer of at least some of the 1543 motets, then Gardano’s partial reissue of 1549 fits more clearly together with his other reprints during the same period of Ferrarese music initially issued by Scotto.

There may never be enough evidence securely to identify the composers of the anonymous motets of the *materna lingua* complex, but the lack of attributions should not also obscure the achievement the motets represent, nor their importance as evidence of convent music in the first half of the sixteenth century. What remains is a corpus of music – sophisticated, modern, challenging, and expressive – that emerges from behind the veil of anonymity to offer an explanation for why nuns’ music met with such fear and disapproval from those who would have it silenced.

1. \* This essay includes material presented at a number of conferences, including the Seventy-sixth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society in Indianapolis, November 2010. I am grateful to my anonymous readers for their invaluable comments I would like to extend particular thanks to Bonnie Blackburn, Marcello Mazzetti, Craig Monson, Katelijne Schiltz, and Livio Ticli for their continued scholarly generosity and support; and to Madre Maria Flavia Cavazzana for allowing me access to the archive of Corpus Domini, Ferrara. Sixteen of the motets from 15432 have been recorded by Musica Secreta and Celestial Sirens and issued on *Lucrezia Borgia’s Daughter* (Obsidian CD717, 2017), which was recognised with the 2016 Noah Greenberg Award. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Gardano also issued a partial reprint of the 1543 four-voice book, removing the reference to equal voices in the title and all but one of the equal-voice motets: *Moralis hispani, et multorum eximiae artis virorum musica cum vocibus quatuor, vulgo motecta cognominata* (Venice: Gardano, 1546 / RISM 15469). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Jane Bernstein implies the early Scotto prints were issued as companion editions; Bernstein, *Music Printing*, 294. Johnstone sees the *voci pari* collections as the byproducts of a gradual standardization in music printing that favoured CATB compositions; Johnstone, “‘High’ clefs,” 34–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Kinkeldey, “Equal Voices”; Carey, “Equal Voices”; Kendrick, *Singing Jeremiah*, in particular pp. 65-85; Schiltz, “Rore’s *a voci pari* Motets.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 190–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. I discuss existing research on late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century convents in relation to music, and present additional findings on their polyphonic practice in Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The literature on post-Trent music-making in convents in Italy includes Monson, *The Crannied Wall*; Monson, *Disembodied Voices*; Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*; Montford, “The Convents of Counter-Reformation Rome”; Glixon, “Images of Paradise”; Reardon, *Holy Concord*; Glixon, “‘Standing al in a rowe’”; Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices*; Sirk and Smith, *Soror mea, sponsa mea*; Bonsante and Pasquandrea, *Celesti sirene*. While some of this literature includes sections on pre-Conciliar music, it is not the primary focus. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Giberti, *Constitutioni de le monache* Cap. II. With thanks to Giulio Ongaro and Marcello Mazzetti for their help with the translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. When Giberti’s successor, Bernardo Navagero, issued a second edition of the *Constitutioni* immediately after the conclusion of the Council of Trent in 1565, he made the ban more explicit: “Che non si tenga ne in Monasterii instromenti da suonar di sorte alcuna, ne libri di canto figurato, ne si admetti ne in Chiesa, ne altrove suonatori, ò cantori per suonar’, et cantar’, sotto pena à quelle che lo faranno, ò permetteranno di esser private per tre mesi di parlatorio”; “that convents should not retain any sort of instrument whatsoever, nor books of polyphony, nor should there be admitted – neither in the church, nor elsewhere - musicians or singers for playing and singing, on pain (for those who do it or permit it) of prohibition from the visiting parlor for three months”; Navagero, *Decreto*, 58r–58v. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Boscolo, “L’antologia polifonica fiorentina”; Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony.” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music*, 150–52. See also van Orden, *Music, Authorship and the Book*, 38–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music*, 152–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Although no quintus partbook has survived of 15496, the motets were copied into a late sixteenth-century manuscript now held by the State Archive in Český Krumlov: Prelátské Knihovny III S 17.2/391, so it is possible to examine the contents *in toto.* My grateful thanks to Geoffrey Chew, Christian Leitmeir, and especially Jan Bat’a for helping me to obtain a reproduction of this manuscript. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Lewis, “Twins, Cousins, and Heirs.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. See the summary in Carey, “Equal Voices,” 314–16. See also Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Carey noted that *Missa Vulnerasti cor meum* is not truly *voci pari*, and assumed on this basis that Scotto had included it in his book by mistake; Carey, “Equal Voices,” 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. The consistency of 15499 suggests it was produced under Gardano’s initiative, and that Scotto’s identical publication 15499a was copied from it. Mary Lewis considers the relationship between 15435 and 15469 in Lewis, “Twins, Cousins, and Heirs,” 205–9. She does not discuss the role of 15435 in the compilation of 15499 and therefore reaches no conclusion regarding which of the 1549 volumes was produced first; Ibid., 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. For more on Gardano’s use of structural features as a means for ordering contents, see Lewis, *Antonio Gardano*, 1997, 2:123–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. See also Lockwood, *Ruffo*, 140–42. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. The only octave feasts missing are Lawrence (10-16 August) and the Holy Innocents (28 December-3 Jan) which overlap with significant Marian feasts (Assumption, 14 August, and the Circumcision of Christ, 1 January). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Glixon notes that although nuns’ music was celebrated in early sixteenth-century Venice, in later years it was largely eclipsed by the music-making at the *ospedali*; Glixon, “Images of Paradise,” 443–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. See Bernstein, *Music Printing*, 291–92. Martin Ham feels the scribe of P-Cug 48 might have been in a position to know these motets were by Morales, but this manuscript was clearly copied directly from 15435; Ham, “Morales: The Canon,” 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. The fifth, “Regina coeli” (15435/5; 15499/4) is probably by Festa; Ham, “Morales: The Canon,” 267. The only other anonymous motet in 15499 is “Vidi spetiosam” (15499/6) which has a single concordance in I-VEcap 760, 86v-87; Lewis, *Antonio Gardano*, 1988, 1:659. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Only one other motet in 15432 has a potential attribution: “Virgo Maria speciosissima” (15432/6; 15496/10) appeared posthumously attributed to Morales in an arrangement for vihuela and voice in 1554; Miguel de Fuenllana, *Orphénica Lyra* (Seville: Martin de Montesdoca, 1554), 57r-59v, modern edition in Morales, *Opera omnia*, 117–26. “Virtute magna” (15496/21) also received a posthumous attribution, in Angelo Gardano’s 1595 print, *Cypriano de Rore sacrae cantiones … cum quinque, sex & septem vocibus*; see Schiltz, “Rore’s *a voci pari* Motets,” forthcoming. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. “Hodie Simon Petrus” (15432/13) and “Salve sponsa Dei” (15432/11) are composed on a tenor cantus firmus; “Virgo Maria speciosissima” (15432/10; 15496/6) has a *soggetto ostinato*. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. See Lewis, “Gardano’s *Motetti del frutto*,” 141–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. The *Moteti de la simia* work is Jacques de Pont’s “Laetabundus exsultet fidelis”; the Willaert is “Ave Maria ancilla sanctem.” Attaingnant’s book contains four five-voice motets in all, but only Verdelot’s “Recordare domine” is *voci pari*. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. The two freely imitative *voci pari* motets, “Iste est discipulus” and “Virgo prudentissima,” appear on the same opening in Scotto’s 1539 edition. “Inclita sancta virginis Catherina” is based on a cantus firmus; Jacquet of Mantua, *Opera omnia*, 5:36–41, 42–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. The freely imitative five-voice *voci pari* motets in *Musica nova* are “Miserere nostri Deus omnium” and “Sub tuum praesidium confugimus”; the others are the five-voice “Omnia que fecisti” and the six-voice “Aspice Domine,” both based on canons; Willaert, *Opera omnia*, 1957, 5:56–62, 62–66, 80–87, 144–54. The madrigals are “O Invidia nemica di vertute,” “Più volte già dal bel sembiante humano,” “L’aura mia sacra al mio stanco riposo,” and “Mentre che 'l cor dagli amorosi vermi”; Willaert, *Opera omnia*, 1977, 14:14–19, 19–22, 28–32, 32–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. The literature on the *Musica nova* is considerable, covering its acquisition by the Este, its journey to print, and the rich symbolism of its contents. See, for instance: Newcomb, “Editions of Willaert’s *Musica Nova*”; Owens and Agee, “La stampa”; Butchart, “‘La Pecorina’”; Fromson, “Themes of Exile.” [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Generally, the composer’s – or *a* composer’s - name, his reputation, the types of compositions and their comparative novelty, the care with which the edition had been assembled, and even rudimentary performance directions were highlighted for the potential buyer; Lewis, *Antonio Gardano*, 1988, 1:13–14; Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music*, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. In the 1550s, for instance, both Girolamo Scotto and Antonio Gardano used the term *villotta alla padoana* to indicate the presence of obscene or equivocal texts in books of an otherwise ostensibly respectable nature. See Marshall, “Cultural Codes and Hierarchies,” 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. The introduction states: “Perche molti illiterati fano professione de musica… havemo consyderato subvenire non solamente a lor voti et desiderii: ma anchora a la devotione de molte donne religiose intente ad laudare lo eterno Dio con tutta la corte celeste: imitando le angelice Ierarchie: et ad ornamento del culto divino … descrivaremo in lingua materna con brevitade molte degne consyderatione necessarie a che e studioso de pervenire ad perfecta cognitione de questa angelica doctrina”; “Because many illiterate persons make a profession of music… we have thought to submit not only to their wishes and desires, but also to the devotion of many women religious intent on praising the eternal God with all the celestial court, imitating the angelic hierarchies, and to the ornament of the divine worship… we will describe in the mother tongue with brevity many worthy considerations necessary to one who is studious to arrive at a perfect understanding of this angelic doctrine”; Gaffurius, *Angelicum ac divinum*, Bi(r). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. The texts for both these antiphons appear only in offices for use by their respective orders, given in appendices to Scotto’s 1563 edition of the Breviarium Romanum; *Breviarium*, 441; 461. In the main text of Scotto’s breviary, Clare is superseded by the octave of St Lawrence, while Augustine has an abbreviated office with a different text, “Doctor optime,” for the Magnificat antiphon. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Whilst settings of both antiphon texts re-emerge at the end of the sixteenth century, the only contemporary printed setting is Ernold Caussin’s “Adest nobis dies” in his *Motectorum luculenti diligentia nuperrime editorum, liber primus cum quinque vocibus* (Venice: Gardano, 1548). “Adest dies celebris” appears in both four- and five-voice versions, and is retained by Gardano in 15496, perhaps indicating that he thought it more widely useful, as it pertained to both male and female houses. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. For a discussion of the substitution of hymn melodies for the usual chant for “O salutaris hostia” at the Elevation, see Johnson, “Review of *Opera omnia, IV*,” 136. For the complete rhymed office of St Clare, composed by Julian of Speyer in the thirteenth century, see Baroffio and Kim, *Iam sanctae Clarae*. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. The illustrious history of “Ave sanctissima Maria,” a prayer affirming the Immaculate Conception of the BVM, the enormous popularity of which was surely enhanced by the generous indulgences attached to its recital, is traced in Blackburn, “The Virgin in the Sun.” [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. See Cavicchi, “Osservazioni.” [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. A four-voice setting, given entirely in square notation, in Brussels MS 27766 – the only contemporary setting of the antiphon – follows the melody from the rhymed office of St Clare: see Boscolo, “Una composizione a 4 voci.” [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. The technique is strongly associated with the musical establishment at the court of Ferrara. Many secondary sources discuss Josquin’s *Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae*, written for Ercole I; for a proposed chronology of its composition and influence, see Reynolds, “Interpreting and Dating.” [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. My thanks to Barbara Haggh-Huglo for leading me towards this insight. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Roch was the titular saint of at least four institutions, male and female, in Northern Italy: Ferrara, Dominican nuns; Vicenza, Canons regular; and Venice, the Scuola Grande and the Cistercian nuns of Santi Rocco e Margherita. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. The Quintus text “O beate Christi confessor N. quam magna apud deum sunt merita tua quibus credimus nos morbo epydemie posse liberari; et aeris temperiem concede”; “O blessed confessor of Christ, N., how great before God are your merits, which we believe will deliver us from the epidemic and grant us moderation of the air.” The Commemoration for the saint’s Mass reads: “Veni et salva nos a morbo epidimie et aeris temperiem nobis concede”; Diedus and Gresemund, *Vita sancti Rochi*, 15v. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Significant pestilence and famine events in Northern Italy in 1527-29 and 1539-40 may have sparked a need for these motets; Wheeler, “Stench in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” 30. As a relatively new disease syphilis, too, was much feared and, like plague, was thought to be transmitted by miasma, or bad air; Fracastoro, *Fracastoro’s Syphilis*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Reardon, “Veni sponsa Christi.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. The four-voice setting is attributed to Phinot; apart from the reliance on the chant melody for the initial subject, the settings are not otherwise related. For other settings based on the Susanna chant, see Smith, “Imitation as Cross-Confessional Appropriation.” Susanna’s story was recited at Matins three times weekly throughout the month of November; Tkacz, “Singing Women’s Words,” 306–26. It is also included in the *Omiliario quadragisimale* of Lodovico Pittorio (Modena: Domenico Rococciola, 1506), a book of readings for use in the refectory at mealtimes dedicated to Suor Beatrice d’Este, mother abbess of San Antonio in Polesine in Ferrara, which was in print throughout the sixteenth century. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Although attributed to Morales in 15469, this setting has no other independent concordance, only a late sixteenth-century manuscript apparently copied from either 15435 or 15469. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Busti, *Tesauro spirituale*, 108r–108v. The medieval origins of this prayer are discussed in Thompson, *Cities of God*, 261. More comments on its evolution as a musical text are in Ziino, “Ipotesi sulla tradizione.” [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. The motet was first published in the *Liber cantus (vocum quatuor) trigenta novem motetos habet* (Ferrara: Buglhat, Campis, Hucher, 1538/ RISM 15385), attributed to Maistre Jhan. Its inclusion in Buglhat’s volume is explained by Maistre Jhan’s position as *maestro di cappella* in Ferrara, but it also suggests that works for nuns could exist as part of the broader repertoire in printed circulation. This text may have originated as a tribute to a Suor Leonora d’Este; see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. For a similar text, ostensibly a man’s speech, but reported by a woman, in which the speaker’s true gender is only revealed by a single line, see Brooks, “Catherine de Médicis,” 426–27. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. This does not rule out the later attributions of “Ego sum panis vitae” (Phinot) and “Virgo Maria speciosissima” (Morales), but neither attribution is secure. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. For a considered discussion, see both Blackburn, “For Whom Do the Singers Sing?”; Blackburn, “The Virgin in the Sun.” [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. For accounts of nobility attending musical events at convents in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony.” [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. See, for instance, Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 123–52. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Muir, *Ritual In Early Modern Europe*, 62–88. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Coussemaker, *Drâmes liturgiques du Moyen Age*, 241–46. For a summary of Franciscan “affective devotion” and representation at Christmas, see also Mulvaney, “The Beholder as Witness,” 177–79. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Borsetti, *Supplemento*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. On the performance of motets in liturgical and non-liturgical settings, see Crook, “The Exegetical Motet,” 255–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. The use of repetition as an inducement to contemplation is characteristic of music for and by nuns in other eras; see Fassler, “Melodious Singing,” 161–62; Reardon, *Holy Concord*, 175–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. This is nearly twice as long as Philippe de Monte’s setting, in the *Sacrarum cantionum, cum sex et duodecim vocibus* (Venice: Gardano, 1585), which at 153 breves is itself one of his longest motet settings; see Silies, *Die Motetten des Philippe de Monte*, 338–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. Zarlino, *Motets from 1549*, xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. See the discussion of *soggetto ostinato* in Stras, “‘Al gioco si conosce,’” 222. A second *soggetto ostinato* motet appears in 15469, Ernoul Caussin’s “Rosa de spinis” (15469/20),which uses the beginning of the chant “Ave Maria, gratia plena” as its *soggetto*. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Brumel’s motet was first published in *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton*, Canti A (Venice: Petrucci, 1501). Many thanks to Bonnie Blackburn for alerting me to the quotation. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. “Rogamus te” contains a portion of a prayer from a popular book of meditations, the *Antidotarius animae* of Nicolaus Salicetus, first published in Strasbourg in 1489, which was still in publication at the beginning of the seventeenth century. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Leclercq, *L’Amour des lettres*, 72–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. Kendrick addresses this issue in relation to the late sixteenth and seventeeth-century repertoire; Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens*, 188–204. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. The close relationship between the singing ladies of the Ferrarese court and the city’s convents is investigated in my forthcoming monograph, Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. This translation, together with the musical example, appear in Foreman, *Late Renaissance Singing*, 20–25. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. Vicentino, *Ancient Music*, 300. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. For the significance of B-flat as an indicator of femininity, see Blackburn, “The Lascivious Career of B-Flat,” 20–21. These devices, emphasizing the “consecrated feminine sex” through extending its musical treatment and flattening the sixth degree at the word “sexu,” also feature in the four-voice setting of “Sancta Maria succure miseris” (15453/7). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Stras, “‘Non è sì denso velo.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. McKinney, “A Rule Made to Be Broken.” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. For notes on Gero, see Lewis, *Antonio Gardano*, 1997, 2:93–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. “Illuminare hierusalem” (15496/1), “Virtute magna” (15496/21), “Veni sponsa Christi” (15432/9, 15496/15), “Sicut lilium” (15432/16, 15496/5), “Virgo Maria speciosissima” (15432/6, 15496/10), “Ave sanctissima Maria” (15432/2, 15496/14), “Felix namque es” (15432/19, 15496/13), “Suscipe verbum Maria” (15432/3, 15496/6), “Rosa de spinis” (15496/20): See Blackburn, *Music for Treviso Cathedral*, 8; 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. Lewis, “Twins, Cousins, and Heirs,” 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. The editor of Phinot’s *Opera omnia* (which does not include motets published in anthologies) considers Phinot’s style not particularly innovative, and notes that he “avoids striking dramatic emphasis,” as a rule. The edited volumes include only one *voci pari* motet, “Zachee festinans descende”; Phinot, *Opera omnia*, 2:viii. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. The final sonority of “Felix namque es” also has an un-ficta-able minor third, although it is not recomposed in 15496. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. For a history of Rore’s volume, see Lewis, “Rore’s Setting of Petrarch’s ‘Vergine Bella.’” Twelve madrigals in della Viola’s book, originally published in Scotto’s *Madrigali de la Fama* (Venice: Scotto, 1548), were substantially reworked before publication in 1550 - see Chapter 3 in my forthcoming monograph; Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*. In the dedication to Suor Leonora d’Este, della Viola complained that his works had been printed without his permission. For a translation of the dedication, see Jessie Ann Owen’s introduction to the modern edition, della Viola, *Il primo libro*, vii–xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music*, 155–56. It may be significant that Scotto obtained sixteen motets by Maistre Jhan and published them in 1543, the same year as 15432. This would suggest that he had contacts in Ferrara in the early 1540s; see Bernstein, *Music Printing*, 286–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. At least fourteen books of polyphony, secular and sacred, were dedicated to nuns in the late sixteenth century. The first three books of motets are all *voci pari*: Tiburtio Massaino, *Sacri cantus quinque paribus vocibus...liber secundus* (Venice: Gardano, 1580); Costanzo Antegnati, *Sacrae cantiones, vulgo motecta, paribus vocibus...quatuor vocum* (Brescia: Sabbio, 1581); and Giammatteo Asola, *Duplex completorium romanum unum communibus, alterum vero paribus vocibus decantandum* (Venice: Vincenzi and Amadino, 1583); see Stras, “The Performance of Polyphony,” forthcoming. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. A book of madrigals, a book of motets, and two books of magnificats (now lost) by Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga were published anonymously; see Sherr, “The Publications of Guglielmo Gonzaga.” The *Villotte mantovane* (Venice: Scotto, 1583) may well also have been by Guglielmo Gonzaga; Gallico, *Damon pastor gentile*. Madrigal books by Count Alfonso Fontanelli and Prince Carlo Gesualdo were also published without attributions on the title pages; Fontanelli, *Complete Madrigals, Part 1*, ix–x. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. Feldman, “Authors and Anonyms,” 169, 185–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. Suor Leonora was not the only member of her mother’s family both to take religious vows, and to be a musician: her contemporary and second cousin San Francisco de Borja (1510-1572) was a Jesuit priest and also an accomplished composer; see Schwartz, “From *Criado* to Canonization.” [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Schiltz, “Gioseffo Zarlino,” 214. For additional archival material, see also Stras, *Women and Music in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara*. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. “Ne meno l'Illustriss. Signora Suor LEONORA Estense sua Zia donna di santissima vita, la quale si come spogliata da lacci di questo mondo, ha tutta dedicata a Dio la presente vita: così fra le continui studij delle buone lettere accompagna mirabilemente la Teorica e prattica delli tre generi Musicali, insieme con instrumenti.”Vicentino, *L’antica musica ridotta*, 10v. Translation from Vicentino, *Ancient Music*, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. Ferrara, Archivio del Monastero di Corpus Domini, Cartella D, no. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Ippolito had no permanent residence in Ferrara after becoming a Cardinal, preferring instead to stay at the Casa Romei, a small *palazzo* that adjoined Corpus Domini, and which was absorbed into the convent estate in 1483; see [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. See Owens, *Composers at Work*, 74–107, at 77 and 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Zarlino, *Sopplimenti musicali*, 288. For further evidence of their relationship, see also Schiltz, “Gioseffo Zarlino,” 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. See, for instance, the motets composed for the Princess Anna, Ercole II’s eldest daughter; Jas, “A Sixteenth-Century Ferrarese Partbook,” 47–48. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Princess Leonora died in 1581, six years after her aunt. The sonnet, by Vitale Papazzoni begins, “D'Aquila bianca, candida colomba / Divenir volle”; Ducchi, *Lagrime di diversi*, 59. In 1595, Lucrezia Marinella dedicated her first published volume, an *ottava rima* history of the life of St Colomba, to Margherita Gonzaga d’Este, the wife of Suor Leonora’s nephew, Duke Alfonso II; Marinella, *La colomba sacra*. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. For more on Ercole II’s patronage of further *soggetto cavato* composition, see Jackson, “Two Descendants of Josquin’s ‘Hercules’ Mass.” [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Willaert’s setting of the hymn for St Francis, “O proles de caelo,” to the same melody, appears in his *Hymnorum musica* (Venice: Scotto, 1542). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Willaert’s setting of “O salutaris hostia” appears first in print in his *Motetta VI vocum* (Venice: Gardano, 1542), in the same year as the *Hymnorum*, but its manuscript transmission in Vallicelliana MS 35-40 shows that it is relatively early, probably dating from his years in Ferrara; Lowinsky, “A Newly Discovered Sixteenth-Century Motet Manuscript.” [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Lockwood, “Adrian Willaert and Cardinal Ippolito I d’Este,” 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal’s Hat*, passim. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. Schiltz, “Gioseffo Zarlino,” 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. I am grateful to Paula Higgins for pointing this out. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. While potentially just an inevitable product of working within the constraints of *voci pari* composition, a cadential formula - best described as *cantizans* approached with a leap downwards preceding a rising-fifth scalar approach to the suspension, most often harmonized by *tenorizans* in the bass – appears in over half the motets in 15432. In “Tribulationes civitatum audivimus” (15432/1; 15496/8), “Tria sunt munera” (15432/4; 15496/4), and “Angelus Domini descendit” (15432/18) the fragment recurs frequently enough for it to function as a unifying motif: see Example 3, bb. 77-81 for a typical instance, with the *cantizans* first in the quintus, then the tenor. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Jacquet was also present in Ferrara contemporaneously with Willaert in the 1520s, so could also have had contact with the young princess; [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. Three voices enter on the same pitch in Jacquet’s “Virgo prudentissima,” 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. McLaughlin, “Creating and Recreating,” esp. pp. 298-303. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. Vigri composed dozens of *laude*, which she shared with her community; she also saw music as central to the soul’s preparation for union with Christ. See, for instance, Vigri, *Laudi etc.*, 118–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. In 1569, a notarial document was drawn up regulating the convent’s purchase of a property, the rental proceeds of which were to cover the tuning and maintenance of the convent’s church organ. The document states that Ippolito II had set aside 200 *libri marchesane* for the convent to obtain a property for this specific purpose. The opening paragraph of the contract reveals the convent church’s former organ had been one given to Suor Leonora, but she had subsequently had one made by the Cipri family at her own expense; Archivio Notarile Ferrara, Giovanni Battista Codegori, Matr.582, pacco 24s. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. “Monasterii veniente Pontifice, et dum oraret ante, et post missam fecerunt optimam musicam presertim una earum in ea arte peritissima, quae antequam in monasterium ingrederetur, fuit Damicella Ducesse Urbini proxime defuncte, et erat singularis et unica in suavitate et melodia vocis, ut omnes iudicabant”; “On the Pontiff’s arrival, and while he prayed before and after mass, the nuns of the aforesaid monastery made excellent music, especially one of them, most expert in that art, who before entering the monastery was a lady of the Duchess of Urbino lately deceased, and was singular and unique in the sweetness and melody of her voice, as all judged”; Mucanzio, “Diarorum, 1598,” 236r–236v. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. The earliest is a four-voice setting by Mortera, a composer about whom nothing is known and by whom no other works exist, published in Moderne’s *Motetti del fiore, quartus liber cum quatuor vocibus* (Lyon: Moderne, [1539]; RISM 153911). An anonymous four-voice setting, elsewhere attributed to Clemens non Papa, appears beneath the rubric “Tempore angustiae” in *Liber primus ecclesiasticarum cantionum quatuor vocum, vulgo moteta vocant, tam ex veteri quam ex Nouo Testamento, ab optimis quibusque huius aetatis musicis compositarum* (Antwerp: Susato, 1553 [RISM 15538]). William Byrd’s setting, published in 1589, is considered to refer to the continuing religious conflict in England after its break from the Catholic church: Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd*, 40ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Palestrina’s setting is published in his *Motectorum liber quintus* (Rome: Gardano/Coattino, 1584), issued twelve years after Ippolito’s death. The chronology of the works in this book has been questioned, as the volume appears to have been rushed into print very soon after the Fourth Book in order to be presented to its dedicatee, Stephen Bathory, before his departure from Rome – hence the suggestion that it contained works composed, but not published, some years before its compilation: Pyne, *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, His Life and Times*, 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. See Macey, *Bonfire Songs*, 184–252. For Zarlino’s contributions to the tradition, see Schiltz, “Gioseffo Zarlino.” Like Vicentino’s *Infelix ego,* Palestrina’s contribution, “Tribularer si nescirem,” is likely to have been composed for Ippolito II; Macey, *Bonfire Songs*, 236. At the end of the century, in the first book of sacred music published by a named nun, the *Sacrae cantiones: quinque, septem, octo & decem vocibus decantandae* (Venice: Amadino, 1593) another Ferrarese nun, Raffaella Aleotti, published her own contribution to the tradition, “Miserere mei Deus”; modern edition, Aleotti, *Sacrae cantiones*, 57–61. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. Macey, *Bonfire Songs*, 212; Schiltz, “Gioseffo Zarlino,” 203–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. Corpus Domini received an endorsement of sorts from Savonarola, who wrote a published letter - *On the perfection of the religious state -* to Maddalena Pico, Countess of Mirandola, on the occasion of her monachization there in 1495; Savonarola, *Oeuvres spirituelles*, 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. Pellicanus, *Commentaria bibliorum*, 5:84v. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. McHam, “Donatello’s *Judith*,” 320–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. The Ferrarese nun Raffaella Aleotti’s collection of motets, published in 1593, is in modern edition; Aleotti, *Sacrae cantiones*. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Sherr, “The Publications of Guglielmo Gonzaga,” 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Ibid., 124–25. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)