ITALIAN LECTURE

Music and the Early Veneto Humanists

MARGARET BENT
All Souls College, Oxford
Fellow of the Academy

THE TWIN TEXTS *Venecie mundi splendor / Michael qui Stena domus*, sung simultaneously, in praise of Venice and her doge Michele Steno, incorporate the name of the composer who set them to music, Johannes Ciconia of Liège.[1] They open an Italianate motet by the northern master that was probably first performed in the Piazza San Marco in January 1406 when Padua formally acknowledged her conquest by Venice and the overthrow of the Carrara dynasty. The ceremony may have been less grand and populous than the famous procession painted by Gentile Bellini much later in the century,[2] but it cannot have been insignificant. The official witnesses included the leading Greek scholar Manuel Chrysoloras; the civil lawyer and humanist Ognibene della Scola represented the Paduan jurists; and an oration of surrender was delivered by his close colleague the great canon lawyer Francesco Zabarella (1360–1417), then archpriest of Padua cathedral, later Cardinal and bishop of Florence, to whom more than any other individual are credited the negotiations that finally ended the papal schism at the Council of Constance, with the election of the Colonna Pope Martin V in 1417.[3]

Read at the Academy 16 April 1998.

[1] The text ends: *Pro te canet voce pia / tui statum in hac via / el conservet et Maria / Johannes Ciconia*, uniquely preserved in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale Q15 (henceforth Q15).

[2] See, for example, Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven and London, 1988).

[3] Most recently on Zabarella, see Dieter Girgensohn, Francesco Zabarella aus Padua, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung*, Band 79

Proceedings of the British Academy, **101**, 101–130. © The British Academy 1999.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

The Serenissima undertook to protect the privileges of Padua, its trade and its university. Like so many Franco-Flemish musicians, Ciconia gravitated to Italy, where he adopted and in turn played a major part in reshaping Italian musical styles. He is documented in Rome in the household of Cardinal Philippe D'Alençon in 1391; circumstantial evidence may suggest subsequent musical contact with the court of Giangaleazzo Visconti in Pavia; he certainly spent the first decade of the fifteenth century in close contact with Zabarella in Padua, where he wrote most of his datable compositions, and where he died in 1412.[4]

This is just one of several testimonies to the naturalisation of high-level international art music alongside humanist oratory in Italian public ceremony. Yet the period from the late fourteenth century to the end of the fifteenth has been considered a musical wasteland:

> Dall'anno in cui la Sede Pontificia ritornò a Roma da Avignone—dunque dal 1377—sino al fiorire delle prime frottole, sullo scorcio del quattrocentro, la storia musicale italiana è stata considerata, sino ad oggi, a quota zero: livello del mare senza mare. Deserto.[5]

Thus wrote Fausto Torrefranca in 1939, when a nationalistically coloured or unsafe judgement might be expected. For him, home-grown talent was choked out of the courts and curias by the invasion of Franco-Flemish musicians like Ciconia, until the pure Italian spirit revived in modest indigenous genres, notably the *villotta*, whose origins he rashly backdated to the mid fifteenth century.

What Torrefranca had called 'Il segreto del quattrocento' was next

(1993), pp. 232–77, and Anne Hallmark, '*Protector, imo verus pater*: Francesco Zabarella's Patronage of Johannes Ciconia', *Music in Renaissance Cities and Courts: Studies in Honor of Lewis Lockwood,* ed. Jessie Ann Owens and Anthony M. Cummings (Warren, Michigan, 1997), pp. 153–68.

[4] For an edition of Ciconia's works with biographical introduction, see ed. Margaret Bent and Anne Hallmark, *The Works of Johannes Ciconia.* Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, vol. 24 (Monaco, 1985). For more recent biographical discoveries see John Nádas and Giuliano Di Bacco, 'Verso uno 'stile internazionale' della musica nelle cappelle papali e cardinalizie durante il Grande Scisma (1378–1417): il caso di Johannes Ciconia da Liège', *Collectanea I, Capellae Apostolicae Sixtinaeque collectanea acta monumenta* 3 (Vatican, 1994), pp. 7–74, and ibid., 'The Papal Chapels and Italian Sources of Polyphony during the Great Schism', *Papal Music and Musicians in Late Medieval and Renaissance Rome* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 44–92. Reinhard Strohm has made the case that Giangaleazzo's court in Pavia was the Italian centre for the cultivation of the so-called *ars subtilior* in 'Filipotto da Caserta, ovvero i francesi in Lombardia', in F. della Seta and F. Piperno, eds, *In cantu et in sermone. For Nino Pirrotta on his 80th Birthday* (Florence 1989), pp. 65–74.

[5] Fausto Torrefranca, *Il Segreto del Quattrocento* (Milan, 1939), p. 15.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

addressed from a different perspective by Nino Pirrotta,[6] who in an influential article asked 'why the age that saw an enormous display of native ingenuity in architecture, [and] the fine arts . . . should have leaned so heavily on foreign talent only for music', noting a 'sharp decline of polyphonic practice in Italy after 1437'.[7] By 'relating it to the diminishing influx of foreign prelates', he continued to align polyphony with churchmen assumed not to be humanists. Reinhard Strohm has put a different slant on this observation, distinguishing between polyphonic cultivation in Italy and the admitted shortage of native Italian composers around the middle of the century: 'Italy was the cradle of the Renaissance but she did not give birth to what is often called "Renaissance Music". . . . Embarrassment . . . did not arise until Romantic historians had coined the term "Renaissance" and had requested that age to conform, in all or most of its manifestations, to an ideal, homogeneous type of civilisation—in other words to foster only its own children.'[8] Pirrotta went on to develop a pessimistic view of the fertility of even major Italian cities like Padua and Milan as environments for advanced musical cultivation, judgements, however, that were necessarily based on patchy and incomplete gleanings from cathedral archives published by various scholars. In the case of Padua, for example, Casimiri had missed the well-documented decade-long presence of Ciconia there, and much more besides.[9] Pirrotta conflated the apparent dearth of native talent in music with a subtler form of the nationalist argument, namely that the forces which generated the Italian Renaissance in arts and letters were inimical to and incompatible with northern polyphonic music. He subsequently sharpened this position even further, and affirmed a polarisation of old scholastic tastes on the one hand, and the new *studia humanitatis* on the other:

> With the spreading of humanistic thoughts and attitudes, the new breed of literati came to despise polyphony as a contrived, unnatural form of musical expression, and to see its procedures and theory as typical examples of medieval lore. As a result, art polyphony regressed to the original status of

[6] The passing in 1998 of this leading musicologist, a Corresponding Fellow of the Academy, marks the end of an era for Italian musicology; this lecture is dedicated to his memory, even though its main thesis counters one of his. His legacy is major, and his wise inspiration will be sorely missed.

[7] 'Music and Cultural Tendencies in 15th-century Italy', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XIX (1966), 127–61, at pp. 129, 135.

[8] Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 540.

[9] Raffaele Casimiri, *Musica e Musicisti nella Cattedrale di Padova nei sec. XIV, XV, XVI* (Rome, 1942).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

> an art entrenched in the most scholastically-oriented milieus of monasteries and cathedral chapters, for nobody objected to its liturgical uses. For an ornament to their lives, and for musical activities better attuned to the fabulous powers attributed to music by classical writers, . . . the humanists turned to the unwritten tradition.[10]

Notable among younger scholars who have expressed discomfort with such simple contrasts and periodisations is Strohm, who observed that

> this solution to the perceived 'imbalance' between the Italian Renaissance and the fate of its music is brilliant in so far as it turns an alleged cultural weakness (rejection of written polyphony) into a strength (rise of unwritten practice). It is the more ingenious as it uses the men of letters, the humanists, as heralds of a potentially illiterate practice. Pirrotta maintains that, at least in the eyes of the humanists and their followers, the unwritten practice of music reflected Italian 'native ingenuity' just as did the novel works of architecture, painting or literature, whereas the rejected northern polyphony represented the scholasticism of the Middle Ages.[11]

Indeed, there seems to be no basis for Pirrotta's distinction and his surprising claim, certainly not in the first half of the fifteenth century, which concerns us here. Most humanist educators made a place for music and some were musically adept themselves.[12]

Theory and practice, Italians and northerners, sit side by side: in Padua, the early fourteenth-century theorist Marchettus wove his name as an acrostic into the text of a motet of his own composition; Ciconia the composer, who also signed his texts, dedicated his treatise on proportions to a canon of Vicenza, Giovanni Gasparo, describing him as a renowned singer.[13] Prosdocimus de Beldemandis dedicated a treatise to the companion together with whom he had read music theory, Luca da Lendinara, who may be the composer of a Gloria in the manuscript Q15, and/or Luca the cantor of S. Giustina who was a witness when Ciconia took physical possession of his first Paduan

[10] Nino Pirrotta, 'Novelty and Renewal in Italy: 1300–1600', *Studien zur Tradition in der Musik: Kurt von Fischer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht and Max Lütolf (Munich, 1973), pp. 49–63, at p. 55.

[11] Strohm, *The Rise . . .* , pp. 542. Lewis Lockwood delivers an even sterner verdict on Torrefranca in reviewing Strohm's book in the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 120 (1995), 151–62 at pp. 160–1, and a more sympathetic critique of Pirrotta.

[12] Paul F. Grendler's excellent book *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1989) nevertheless neglects music. See also the classic study by W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators* (Cambridge, 1897, repr. 1963, 1996).

[13] ' . . . presbytero Johannes Gasparus, canonico vicentino bene merito necnon cantori preclaro'. See Johannes Ciconia, *Nova musica and De proportionibus*, ed. and trans. by Oliver B. Ellsworth, Greek and Latin Music Theory, vol. 9 (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1993), p. 412.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

benefice at S. Biagio.[14] Fairly typical, and from the same circle around Zabarella that produced Ciconia's motets, is Pier Paolo Vergerio's counsel to the young prince Ubertino Carrara, a passage which is longer than he devotes to poetry:

> As to the art of Music (for it pleases the listener too) the Greeks denied the title of 'liberally educated' to anyone who could not sing or play the lyre. Socrates both learnt these things himself in old age, and bade free-born youth to be educated in them, not as a sensuous indulgence, but in order to govern the movements of the soul by rule and reason. Just as not any sound, but only one which is properly consonant, is suitable for melody, so not all movements of the soul, but only those agreeable to reason, pertain to proper harmony of life. But since the use of melody contributes a very great deal to relaxation of the mind and allaying the passions, knowledge of its discipline is worthy of the liberal mind; it is according to this principle that we study the various natures and powers of the sounds, (to find) from which relations between them it comes to pass that consonances and dissonances are caused.[15]

Vergerio invokes a Greek model for the value of studying music in theory and practice; but nowhere does he recommend emulation of Greek music. He shared with Zabarella the canonical house—formerly Petrarch's—during the decade in which Ciconia was also nearby. What they heard, literally, at home must have included music by Ciconia and other composers in the Paduan repertory. Ciconia, however, produced

[14] Dum quidam mihi carus ac uti frater intimus lucas nomine de castro lendenarie policinii rudigiensis oriundus Sacerdos quam honorandus et ego fraternalem caritatem a puerili etate in simul duxissemus multa uariaque uolumina musicalia transcurissemus [sic] unum inuenimus ualde erroneum atque ueritati dissonum lucidarium nominatum quem quidam Marchetus nomine michi conciuis Paduanus compilauerat.

Prosdocimus de Beldemandis, *Tractatus musice speculative*. See D. Raffaello Baralli and Luigi Torri, 'Il Trattato di Prosdocimo de' Beldomandi contro il Lucidario di Marchetto da Padova per la prima volta trascritto e illustrato', *Rivista musicale italiana*, 20 (1913), 731–62.

[15] Ars vero musicae (nam et audientem delectat) magno quondam apud Graecos honore habebatur, nec putabatur quisquam liberaliter eruditus, nisi cantu et fidibus sciret. Quamobrem Socrates ut ipse senex didicit, ita ingenuos adulescentes erudiri in his jussit; non quidem ad lasciviae incitamentum, sed ad motus animae sub regula rationeque moderandos. Ut enim non omnis vox, sed tantum, quae bene consonat, ad soni melodiam facit, ita et motus animae non omnes, sed qui rationi conveniunt, ad rectam vitae harmoniam pertinent. Verum cum ad remissionem animi, sedandasque passiones plurimum valeat modulationis usus, tum vero ejus disciplinae cognitio digna est ingenio liberali, secundum quam rationem speculamur sonorum varias naturas ac potestates, ex quibus invicem proportionibus consonantias dissonantiasque causari contingat.

Pietro Paolo Vergerio, il Vecchio, *De ingenuis moribus et liberalibus studiis adulescentiae*, ed. Attilio Gnesotto, Atti e memorie della R. Accademia delle Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova, 34 (1917–18). I am indebted to Dr Leofranc Holford-Strevens for refining this translation, and to Professor David Robey for bibliographical help with Vergerio.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

an impressive display of Greek-based music theory in his *Nova musica* (see above n. 13), a speculative treatise in which he conspicuously avoids most concerns that are germane to measured polyphony; conversely, his own compositions are apparently untouched by his theory. Also lodged in the same house, and one of the witnesses to Zabarella's presentation of Ciconia to the aforementioned benefice in 1401, was the Flemish law student Arnold von Geilhoven, who devoted a long chapter of his *Sompnium doctrinale* to music.[16] For both Vergerio and Geilhoven, the practice of music seems to be a natural extension of study of the liberal arts; poetry is likewise justified as a second rhetoric. This is no merely slavish following of Greek precepts, for Vergerio says that drawing, although it was prized by the Greeks, has no value in liberal education except when exercised as draughtsmanship in writing.

Aenius Sylvius Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius II, also advocated music in his treatise for the young King Ladislaus of Hungary, to be pursued under a sober master and not as a sensuous indulgence. Vittorino da Feltre was likewise entrusted by Gianfrancesco Gonzaga with the education of princes and other young nobles; the great care he took over all aspects of his charges' environment, including physical surroundings, recreation and exercise, led him also to recommend practical music. Vittorino's musical formation took place in Padua, where he also came into contact with the mathematician and music theorist Biagio Pelacani (d. 1416); he taught at Padua and more famously at Mantua,[17] where music-making was combined with and moderated by musical understanding, in the Boethian sense.[18] The conservative humanist Maffeo Vegio devotes a chapter of his *De educatione liberorum* to music, cautioning against unchaste songs that

[16] See Nicholas Mann, 'Arnold Geilhoven: an early disciple of Petrarch in the Low Countries', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 32 (1969), 73–108.

[17] Generally on Vittorino, see ed. Nella Giannetto, *Vittorino da Feltre e la sua scuola: umanesimo, pedagogia, arti* (Florence, 1981), and especially for music, Claudio Gallico, 'Musica nella Ca' Giocosa', 189–98.

[18] Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus, *De institutione musica libri quinque*, ed. Godofredus Friedlein (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1867), I. 34, Quid sit musicus: . . . isque est musicus, cui adest facultas secundum speculationem rationemve propositam ac musicae convenientem de modis ac rythmis deque generibus cantilenarum ac de permixtionibus ac de omnibus, de quibus posterius explicandum est, ac de poetarum carminibus iudicandi.

'That person is a musician who exhibits the faculty of forming judgments according to speculation or reason relative and appropriate to music concerning modes and rhythms, the genera of songs, consonances, and all the things which are to be explained subsequently, as well as concerning the songs of the poets.'

Translated by Calvin Bower as *Fundamentals of Music* (New Haven, 1989), p. 51.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

could corrupt youth. The music theorist Johannes Gallicus (b. Namur *c.* 1415, d. Parma 1473) made Mantua his home and became a Carthusian monk. He strikingly declares that France had made him a singer, Italy, thanks to Vittorino, a Latinist and musician, attesting that he had read Boethius and stressing his adherence to those ideals:

> Gallia namque me genuit et fecit cantorem. Italia vero qualemcunque sub Victorino Feltrensi, viro tam litteris graecis quam latinis affatim imbuto, grammaticum et musicum. Mantua tamen Italiae civitas indignum Cartusiae Monachum, neque tam doctoris egregii Boetii cultorem in hac re, seu commendatorem, quam et solicitum proponendae vetustatis in omnibus sectatorem et inquisitorem.[19]

Like other conservative theorists, his writings adopt a severe stance in relation to what he regarded as the excesses of polyphony in which he had nonetheless been trained; such men are certainly not advocating rhapsodic improvisation as an alternative, and Gallicus's model is rather of Christian than of pagan antiquity. His brief and grudging treatment of counterpoint is counteracted by his loyal student and copyist, the theorist Nicolaus Burtius, who treats mensural music more sympathetically. Humanists continued to advocate music to calm the passions, not to inflame them and, with varying degrees of personal austerity not necessarily correlated with humanist agendas, give little encouragement to the uninhibited expressions sometimes deemed central to the classicising spirit. Despite repeated reminders that rebirth need not depend on imitating the ancients, which music unlike art and letters cannot do because sound is no longer physically present, emulation of the ancients continues to be a conspicuous concern of music historians.[20]

Gloomy perceptions of poor institutional support for music in Italy, and of the dilution rather than the invigoration of Italian talent by foreigners, are compounded by assumptions that the liveliest minds

[19] Gallicus is the author of three music treatises; *De ritu canendi* contains several autobiographical statements of which this is one. They are edited in E. de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de Musica Medii Aevi novam seriem . . .* (Paris, 1876), vol. IV, 298–421. His pupil, the music theorist Nicolaus Burtius, provides his death date. Known also to scholarship, and in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* primarily, as Legrense, Dr Holford-Strevens informs me that this denomination derives from a misreading by Albert Seay of 'Legiensis', properly Leodiensis, or 'from Liège'.

[20] Leo Schrade is almost alone in identifying 'a falsely constructed relationship to Greek music': 'none of the early humanists ever stated that the rebirth came about because of imitating the ancients'. See his 'Renaissance: the Historical Concept of an Epoch', *Kongressbericht der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft, Utrecht 1952* (Amsterdam,

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

would have been impatient with erudite churchy music, and that musicians, even if not intellectually retarded, were characteristically slow to step in line with the vanguard programme of antique emulation. These are threadbare arguments applied to phantom phenomena. Musical activity in Italy was no less lively, and no less distinctively Italian, for being internationally stiffened by 'foreigners' from other Italian cities, as well as those from north of the Alps whose talents found better deployment, patronage and support in Italy than at home. The best available on the international market had no less kudos than the entirely homegrown, any more than the vitality of American universities over the last fifty years has suffered from international recruiting.

Self-consciously humanist manifestos furnish little corroboration of the kind of musical activity attested by polyphonic manuscripts, and they had no reason to. Humanist references to music, whether positive or negative, cannot be assumed to apply to composed, written polyphony unless this is expressly mentioned. As the formal minutes of a meeting may conceal the flavour and content of discussion, we should perhaps not too readily take literary humanist exercises at face value, either as documentary accounts or with respect to what they exclude. The presumed antipathy between polyphony and humanists depends precisely on artificially narrowing humanists' cultural interests to their literary concerns; music simply did not at first form part of that literary agenda. Or, viewed from another angle, it arises from the proposition repeatedly voiced by Kristeller, citing Petrarch, that humanism considers 'classical antiquity as the common standard and model by which to guide all cultural activity'.[21] It is not my purpose and it is certainly not within my competence to enter the long-running debates about the balance of philosophy, rhetoric, and civic concerns in definitions of humanism, but we can now produce some counter-arguments to the inference *ex silentio* that, just because their formal prose neglects to discuss the main-stream international high art music of their own age, they either discounted or did not care about it, or were doggedly chauvinistic.

Several elaborate Ciceronian essays on music were written later in

1953), pp. 19–32. In a fine essay that offers some corrective to the idea of 'rebirth' as a valid term for music history, 'Music Historiography and the Definition of "Renaissance"', *Music Library Association Notes*, 47 (1990), 305–330, Jessie Ann Owens demonstrates that the conventional dating of the Renaissance in music from around 1430 rests partly on imperfect knowledge by early historiographers of the musical traditions immediately preceding and continuous with what followed.

[21] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and its Sources* (New York, 1979), pp. 87–8.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

the century; Pirrotta adduces examples by Cornazano and Cortese to support a claim of generalised continuing contempt for polyphonic music by humanists ('there was no place in Cornazano's revival of the Homeric climate for anything less than a classical rhapsodist').[22] Pirrotta interprets Cortese's highly mannered delivery of qualified praise of Josquin as a reservation about polyphony in favour of improvisation by virtuoso performers such as Serafino Aquilano and Pietrobono; but a case could be made for seeing these pronouncements not so much as barometers of musical taste, or prescriptions for politically correct humanist music, but rather as attempts by prose stylists to find an elevated language appropriate to music, to bring not music itself but music theory and criticism within the classical temple. Pirrotta's conclusion, that 'of all the mythical powers of music only one seems to have been most familiar to the humanists, that of diverting the mind and bringing relaxation' and that 'for the rest, they still seemed to rely on their own forte, the power of words', likewise reduces music to a marginal status that now merits some challenge. In a more recent article, Pirrotta has refined his thesis but not substantially changed it. He acknowledges a shortage of literary mentions of the unquestionably luminous trecento musical tradition, but only in the case of later humanist writings does he find such absence derogatory to the surviving music. Indeed, he charges fifteenth-century clerics with failing to support polyphonic music in the way that their fourteenth-century predecessors had done.[23]

The musical yield from literary sources has been at best perfunctory, at worst arid, leading to its neglect by modern scholars seeking to place music in relation to humanism. The visual arts have fared better. Vergerio admitted musical study, as we have seen, but judged that 'drawing has no place amongst our liberal studies'. The literary status of the visual arts was about to change dramatically. Leon Battista Alberti was nearly an exact contemporary of Guillaume Du Fay (*c.*1397–1474). Alberti is widely discussed in the context of humanistic ideas, Du Fay hardly at all. Yet both were major talents, highly

[22] Pirrotta, 'Music and Cultural Tendencies . . . ', 141 ff; Appendix I, 'Laudes Petri Boni Cythariste' from Antonio Cornazano's *Sforziade*, and Appendix II, from Paolo Cortese, *De cardinalatu libri tres* (Castel Cortesiano, 1510).

[23] Nino Pirrotta, 'Musica e umanesimo', *Lettere italiane*, 37 (1985), 453–70: 'lo scadere di creatività nel campo della musica polifonica che caratterizzava il '400 potesse almeno in parte ricollegarsi ad una *trahison des clercs*, ad un venir meno dell'interesse da parte della categoria che aveva fornito il principale appoggio all'*ars nova*' (at p. 456).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

educated, peripatetic internationals. Both overcame illegitimate birth to achieve high status, lucrative benefices and time in papal service. Both deployed their arts for humanists in humanistic contexts. Alberti's Tuscan translation of *De pictura* was dedicated to Brunelleschi in 1436, praising his famous dome in Florence for whose consecration that year Du Fay composed *Nuper rosarum flores*, one of the few motets known outside musicology, if for partly wrong reasons.[24] Ideas of rhetoric, eloquence, emulation are above all manifest in the verbal arts, and have always been harder to apply to music than to the visual arts.

Was music a specialised activity merely incidental to the culture of an educated man? Did early humanists endure music that they considered to be tired, old-fashioned, and scholastic as a necessary trapping of church or state, albeit unworthy of their intellectual concerns? We are surely not to assume that they spent their hours of recreation in silence until musicians finally produced something compatible with their new ideology. There is now evidence that at least one major circle of Veneto humanists not merely tolerated northern polyphony, but cultivated it with enthusiasm, as compatible with, and even as a potent vehicle for, those concerns; but that evidence arises largely from following up contextual clues drawn from the music, not from reading the letters and literary works of accredited humanists. Meanwhile, northern composers living in Italy, such as Ciconia, grafted many Italianate features of trecento music onto their own stylistic palettes, leading to a fruitful fusion of styles sometimes called 'international'.

The neglect of music in most studies of humanism is a loss to both sides. General appreciation of the cultural world of early humanists is the poorer for ignoring their music; and musicologists have neither helped nor been helped by adopting too narrow an understanding of humanism. Palisca addressed the musical response to literary humanism, setting out

> to show that the revival of ancient learning and of certain ancient artistic and musical practices that it revealed was a potent force in the development of

[24] Projected to fame in an article by Charles Warren, 'Brunelleschi's Dome and Dufay's Motet', *The Musical Quarterly*, 59 (1973), 92–105. Several scholars have challenged the figures from which Warren argued that the motet's proportions reflected those of Brunelleschi's dome. Most recently, Craig Wright has argued convincingly that the proportions represent, rather, Solomon's Temple, in 'Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*, King Solomon's Temple, and the veneration of the Virgin', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XLVII (1994), 395–441.

For Alberti's treatise, see Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, ed. with translations and notes by Cecil Grayson (1972).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

> music in the Renaissance. Much more fundamental than any practical musical revival of antiquity was the transformation of musical thought brought about by the renewed pursuit of ancient learning.[25]

He admits that the search for direct connections has not been very fruitful. Pirrotta, on the other hand, addressed the response of literary humanism to music. None of these scholars has addressed the different issue of what music the early humanists were content or indeed eager to cultivate, by asking the complementary question: 'who was using the most sophisticated music that does survive from the early fifteenth century?' An answer came more specifically from asking: 'for whom was our largest and most important anthology of early fifteenth-century international repertory compiled?' The answer to this question corrects some generalisations about humanist tastes and ideologies, and weakens the sharp polarity, originally patriotically directed, that was erected between medieval scholastic northern polyphony on the one hand, and renaissance emulation of antiquity and indigenous Italian musical forms on the other.

* * *

The manuscript that provided the point of departure was compiled in the Veneto, a huge book with 343 folios and 328 pieces, put together by a single scribe between about 1420 and 1435.[26] Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale Q15 is the largest and most important international anthology of the first third of the fifteenth century, containing mass and other liturgical music, sacred and ceremonial motets, and a few Italian *laude* and secular French songs. Franco-Flemish and English composers are represented side-by-side with native Italians. Its most astonishing feature is that it embodies at least two 'superimposed' anthologies, siamese twins no longer fully separable, with only a third of their physical material in common, and about half their repertory. Repertory overlap often occurs between different successive anthologies which preserve some old pieces, discard others and add new ones; but it is rare for manuscripts thus related to survive sufficiently intact to permit definitive repertorial comparison. A single document may

[25] Claude V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven, 1985), p. 6.

[26] For a preliminary account of the repertorial features summarised here, see Margaret Bent, 'A Contemporary Perception of Early Fifteenth-Century Style: Bologna Q15 as a Document of Scribal Editorial Initiative', *Musica Disciplina*, 41 (1987), 183–201.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

include new additions, but in no other case known to me are there such rich traces of discarding, rewriting, revision, and renewal by the same scribe, within the same book. This obsessive activity provides an isolated case study, not necessarily typical, of how a single anthologist's musical taste evolved; how he made active choices, both of selection and exclusion; what his editorial preferences were and how we might approach the versions thus preserved. Not least, it provides a caution against presuming unique witnesses to be neutral.

This one collector's changing tastes can be traced in some detail. He actively retained, without textual change, motets with sub-humanistic syllabic texts in honour of long-dead bishops, texts which might well discourage the assertion that they were created in humanist circles; he did, however, implement musical updatings to these pieces. On the other hand, he discarded some neutrally-texted liturgical pieces in favour of more up-to-date settings of the same texts. These changes were driven by musical considerations, sometimes radically affecting the sound by the addition of new parts, sometimes merely affecting the appearance by changing cosmetic aspects of the notation or presentation, not by implementing any humanist code. His script develops from a neat Italian hand through a phase with French mannerisms, to a final stage which shows some influence of humanist script. Most of the collection is devoted to neutrally-texted liturgical compositions, but some Venetian and Paduan pieces occur in the older repertory from the early 1420s, and a Vicenza ingredient appears in the early 1430s. The scribe seems to have worked first in Padua, then in Vicenza. The dates are locked in by script chronology and *termini post quos.* Padua and Vicenza are now separated by a thirty-minute train journey, and were then efficiently linked by water. They are more major, and more closely related, musical centres than was realised by earlier scholars, then unaware of the manuscript's strong Veneto links and the depth of musical cultivation implied by its mere existence and presumed use, irrespective of whether such cultivation is conventionally documented. For despite the fact that the copying of this manuscript was the jealously-guarded prerogative of a single scribe, polyphonic music is not a solitary enterprise and cannot come to life in a vacuum. Separately notated part-music is not under the control of a single reader or performer, but requires usually at least three or four highly trained singers to bring it to sound. Likewise, the copying of music required musical understanding and could not be done mechanically; this scribe's editorial activity shows him to

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

be a practitioner of advanced skill, doubtless one of the singers who used the manuscript.

Few music manuscripts are illuminated at all; three surviving initials mark this one out as a quality if not a *de luxe* manuscript. Two were done around 1425 in the Paduan style associated with Cristoforo Cortese. The first page of the manuscript opens the mass section of the book with an Introit heading a composite mass cycle assembled by our scribe. Just where we might expect a portrait of author or scribe, its illuminated initial S shows three singers, two young men and one older, perhaps the *magister cantus*, precisely the combination it would take to sing this three-part introit (Plate 1). Whether or not this senior musician might be intended to represent the composer or scribe, his depiction along with younger singing musicians is telling, for their combined role in realising the notated music was necessarily an active one. A second initial (A) by the same artist may originally have headed the motet section. It has here been cut and pasted for arbitrary re-use on a different recopied Ciconia motet (Plate 2). It depicts the relatively rare subject of the martyrdom of St Christopher, a saint much honoured in the Veneto. About 100 other plain capitals were cut from the manuscript in its original state for later re-use, to be mentioned below. The third capital (N), by a different artist, depicts St James with pilgrim insignia. It heads Du Fay's *Sancti Jacobi* mass, to be discussed later, and opened what was at first planned as a second, companion volume before the two projects were merged (Plate 3).

The 'smoking gun' from which the humanist context of the manuscript unfolds is the name of Pietro Emiliani, Bishop of Vicenza from 1409 to 1433, inserted in the text of a dedicatory motet *Excelsa civitas Vincencia*, where the name *Petrum emilianum* has been crossed out, and that of his successor Francesco Malipiero substituted in a later hand (Plate 4). Earlier scholars assumed that it was written for Emiliani's installation in 1409 and recycled for Malipiero in 1433,[27] but it was in fact composed for Malipiero: Emiliani's name is itself over an erasure of Malipiero's and therefore can only have been entered after Emiliani's death. Who would make such a change and why? This is not the place to recount the lurid events that reveal this to be a pious act by Emiliani's loyal retainers after coming into conflict

[27] See André Pirro, *Histoire de la musique de la fin du XIVe siècle à la fin du XVIe* (Paris, 1940), p. 65; F. Alberto Gallo and Giovanni Mantese, *Ricerche sulle origine della cappella musicale del Duomo di Vicenza* (Venice, 1964), pp. 20–3; Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505* (Cambridge MA, 1984), p. 35.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

with the new bishop who arrived to find his palace stripped of all its furniture by his predecessor's heirs.[28] Unusually for a bishop, Emiliani had been married prior to entering the church, and had children by his deceased Contarini wife. He made his will in 1429, having obtained from Martin V in 1422 permission to dispose not only of his own patrimony, as permitted by canon law, but also of some of the property pertaining to the Bishopric of Vicenza. Some of the will's provisions led to lengthy law suits; others are germane to our present argument.[29]

Along with Guarino and Vergerio, Emiliani was one of the earliest Italians not only to study Greek with the charismatic Manuel Chrysoloras, but to collect Greek manuscripts, possibly on travels in the eastern Mediterranean. An important figure who changed the course of Emiliani's life was Pietro Filargo of Candia, a Greek Franciscan theologian from Venetian Crete, who was elected Pope Alexander V at the Council of Pisa in 1409. The two men undoubtedly shared deep intellectual interests. Filargo, possibly Emiliani too, was associated with the humanist circles around the Visconti court at Pavia in the 1390s, circles that included Antonio Loschi, Uberto Decembrio, Gasparino Barzizza, some of them also with Veneto associations, and possibly some of our composers. Two significant composers of learned music were in Filargo's retinue at various times, one of them, Humbertus de Salinis (a northerner most recently employed in Portugal), also represented in Q15. Along with other Venetians then in Rome, Emiliani severed relations with the Venetian Correr Pope Gregory XII and defected to Pisa. There he joined the camp of Filargo who, when elected pope, used his early patronage to reward friends and supporters. First among these was the appointment of Emiliani to the See of Vicenza; Filargo in turn is the only deceased patron to be commemorated by a provision of Emiliani's will.[30]

[28] For a partial account, see Giovanni Mantese, *Memorie storiche della chiesa vicentina* (Vicenza [1952]–1974), vol. 3, part. 2.

[29] The useful summary biography in Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance*, (Princeton, 1986) p. 402, can be amplifed from Giovanni Mantese, *Memorie storiche della chiesa vicentina*, vol. 3, part 2, Vicenza 1964, and most importantly from Dieter Girgensohn, 'Il testamento di Pietro Miani ("Emilianus") vescovo di Vicenza (+ 1433)', *Archivio Veneto*, Serie V vol. CXXXII (1989), pp. 5–60, and Giovanni Mantese, *Movimenti di riforma ecclesiastica pretridentina nel quattrocento vicentino* (Vicenza 1990), and from further yet unpublished findings in the Vicenza archives.

[30] 'Et in ipsa missa is qui celebrabit oret pro anima mea et pro animabus tam vivorum quam defunctorum domus nostre, et precipue pro anima felicis memorie Alexandri pape V^{ti}, qui michi motu proprio contulit episcopatum Vincentinum.'

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

Like most Venetian patricians, Emiliani was acutely aware of his future male lineage; daughters are not mentioned in his will, though one of them left a will of her own. He was also aware of his own pastoral descent as a bishop from the Apostle Peter. He requested burial in the Frari in Venice, in what was to be the latest large addition to the structure of this most distinguished of mausoleum churches. Over the door of his grand funerary chapel, now the tourist entrance, God the Father raises his hand in blessing over Saint Peter with key and book, surmounting the Emiliani arms. Inside the chapel, his sarcophagus halfway up the wall is surmounted by, again, St Peter, flanked by four saints, those bearing the names of Emiliani's male heirs, his sons Faustino and John (shown as the Baptist, and already deceased), and his grandsons Matthew and Philip; all but Faustino are names of Apostles. St Peter, this time with an open book, watches over the recumbent Bishop Peter (Plates 5 and 6). A similar hierarchy of Peters is expressed in a piece which Ciconia apparently wrote for Emiliani to address to Filargo back in 1409. The text addresses Saint Peter, protector of Peter the new Pope, who in turn watches over our Bishop Peter, that is, Filargo and Emiliani respectively. Both the musical text (Plate 7) and the later sculpture boldly stress his lineage from the first Pope Peter, though Filargo is of course absent from the funerary sculpture:

O Petre, Christi discipule, prime pastor ecclesie, funde preces quotidie pro Petro nostro presule.	Peter, Christ's disciple, thou first shepherd of the Church, pour forth thy prayers daily for our bishop Peter.
O princeps apostolice, turbe Cephas dominice, pastorem nostrum dirige, quem omni malo protege.	O prince of the apostles, Cephas, rock for the Lord's multitude, guide our shepherd and protect him from every evil.
Da sit in cunctis providus, corpus et mentem candidus, omni virtute splendidus, in bono semper fervidus.	Grant that he be foresighted in all things, fair in body and mind, resplendent in all virtue, ever eager in what is good.
O Christe, ductor ovium, perenne presta gaudium; pastorem, clerum, populum salva per omne seculum.	O Christ, thou leader of the sheep, grant eternal joy; save thy shepherd, clergy and people for ever and ever.

Translated by Leofranc Holford-Strevens

Emiliani was appointed Bishop of Vicenza and his fellow humanist, Venetian, patrician and brother to his son-in-law, Pietro Marcello, was

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

appointed Bishop of Padua, both in 1409, but by different popes. Both are honoured by Ciconia in compositions in our manuscript. The two men were connected by cultural, family, and dynastic ties to each other and to the highest levels of ducal and papal power and influence. Both belong to the small core group of first-generation clerical Venetian patrician humanists defined by Margaret King, and had connections to all the others.[31] Indeed, the majority of her first group belong to Emiliani's extended circle of family and acquaintance, and King's list does not even include the Paduan and Vicenzan humanists. Emiliani was extraordinarily well connected. One major humanist of this group is Bishop Marcello's younger brother Giacomo Antonio Marcello, whose first wife was Emiliani's daughter Fiordelies; he was a patron of Mantegna and the recipient of elaborate consolations on the death of a later son;[32] there is a well-known picture of him, dressed as a nobleman, receiving Guarino's translation of Strabo.[33] Guarino had earlier addressed to Emiliani an effusive dedication of his own translation of Isocrates' *Laus Helenae.* Emiliani's son Giovanni was married to the sister of Daniele Vetturi, another notable humanist. Emiliani changed his name from Miani when he became bishop, already in his mid forties—a classicising affectation that has camouflaged some of his earlier activities. He loaned his Greek Thucydides successively to Vergerio and Leonardo Bruni, both influential figures in the new historicism of the early fifteenth century, and book loans from his enviable library figure in correspondence with and between major humanists of his time, including Bruni, Guarino, Andrea Giuliani, Francesco and Ermolao Barbaro, Pietro del Monte and Ambrogio Traversari; the latter enquired about his library within days of his death.

A network of connections reaching perhaps from Visconti Pavia and Carrarese Padua, from Venice to the Roman Curia, through the Councils of Pisa and Constance, back to Padua and Vicenza and on to the Council of Basle, included both honorees and composers represented in our manuscript, which now takes on almost the appearance of a commonplace book for the extended family and cultural circle that Emiliani shared with Bishop Marcello and the musical canons of Padua and Vicenza cathedrals.

The artistic legacy of Carrara patronage in Padua was still visible

[31] Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism* . . . table 7, pp. 298–9.

[32] Margaret L. King, *The Death of the Child Valerio Marcello* (Chicago, 1994).

[33] Reproduced as the frontispiece to Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism* . . . and in colour as the frontispiece to Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination 1450–1550* (Munich, 1995).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

and, I believe, audible, long after their downfall.[34] Giotto and his school left not only the surviving Scrovegni chapel but 300-odd secular scenes in the old Palazzo del Ragione, burned down in 1420. The baptistery of Padua cathedral with its stunning frescos by Giusto da Menabuoi was in effect a Carrara temple; yet more series of frescos by Giusto, and by Altichiero, adorn family chapels in and near the basilica of St Anthony of Padua, often including portraits of members of the Carrara and other families, and their famous protegés including Petrarch. Even after their downfall, the cultural depth and richness built up under the Carraras continued to thrive, nourished by the university, cathedral chapter and individual patrons, revitalised by the attractions of the university for the Venetian intelligentsia.

Two centres where clerical humanists cultivated polyphonic music around 1400 were the Visconti court at Pavia and Carrarese Padua, both of which in turn had access to Petrarch's own library, and where his disciples fostered his crucial role in the definition and evolution of literary humanism, starting with his rediscovery of influential Ciceronian texts. Much has been written about later Petrarchism in music, little about Petrarch and music in his own time. More significant for our purposes than his ownership of a lute is how, one by one, his closest intellectual companions turn out also to have been musical. It is true of Petrarch, as of other significant figures like Filargo, Zabarella, and Emiliani, that some of those especially close to him were accomplished practitioners of precisely the kind of highbrow music that has been judged unfit for humanist consumption. Philippe de Vitry, Petrarch's senior by thirteen years, has left us a series of motets whose texts and music testify to extraordinary learning and culture, as do his known dealings with other scholars and his personal library. Andrew Wathey has recently expanded our knowledge of the circulation of Vitry's motet texts alone in later German humanist manuscripts.[35] Vitry was the recipient of two letters from Petrarch, and the most recent view identifies him with the 'Gallus' of the Eclogues.[36] And yet Vitry has been

[34] For the Carrara background see Benjamin G. Kohl, *Padua under the Carrara, 1318–1405* (Baltimore, 1998).

[35] See Andrew Wathey, 'Philippe de Vitry's Books', *Books and Collectors, 1200–1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. J. P. Carley and C. G. C. Tite (1997), pp. 145–52, and Andrew Wathey, 'The Motets of Philippe de Vitry and the Fourteenth-Century Renaissance', *Early Music History*, 12 (1993), 119–50.

[36] Nicholas Mann, 'In margine alla quarta egloga: piccoli problemi di esegesi petrarchesca', *Studi Petrarcheschi*, IV (1987), 17–32.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

upheld by Pirrotta as the arch example of the old-style medieval scholastic ecclesiastic. Petrarch's friend Louis Sanctus von Beringen, another northerner, was a singer in the chapel of Cardinal Colonna and author of a short musical treatise.[37] His general culture likewise can hardly have been insignificant to have earned him from Petrarch the nickname 'Socrates'. The deaths of both men, the Frenchman Vitry ('Gallus') and the Fleming 'Socrates', are conspicuously and feelingly commemorated in consecutive private entries on the front flyleaf of Petrarch's famous Milan Vergil. A third intimate of Petrarch and co-beneficiary of Carrara patronage, Giovanni Conversino da Ravenna, is acknowledged by Vittorino da Feltre as his music teacher; Vittorino in turn taught the above-mentioned Johannes Gallicus who taught Burtius.

The so-called father of humanism retained a strong influence in Padua where he had been a canon at the Cathedral, and spent his last twenty years in his canonical house in Padua and at nearby Arquà. In the 1420s, the Padua chapter accounts record an annual payment of the rather large sum of £25 to celebrate the vigil of Petrarch's obsequies on 20 July. It is not impossible that Du Fay's unique setting as a song-motet of Petrarch's canzona *Vergene bella*, preserved in Q15 and elsewhere, was destined for just one of these celebrations, perhaps even for the fiftieth anniversary in 1424. This conspicuous attention to Petrarch seems to have survived the demise of the Carrara regime and its sheltering patronage, as well as the presumed dispersal under the Visconti of a library whose former presence in Padua had nurtured early humanist learning there; it provides further testimony to the comfortable fit between a community of humanistically inclined churchmen and the music they loved; members of the Padua chapter had competence in both. Petrarch's canonical house has been re-identified by Claudio Bellinati,[38] working backwards from later occupancies, not as the long-since-demolished location on the south side of the cathedral formerly believed to be Petrarch's house, but an as-yet unrestored shell, with medieval wall paintings, on the north side near the bishop's palace. It was this house that Francesco Zabarella inherited as his canonical

[37] Andries Welkenhuysen, 'Louis Sanctus de Beringen, ami de Pétrarque, et sa *Sentencia subiecti in musica sonora* rééditée d'après le ms. Laur. Ashb. 1051' *Sapientiae doctrina: mélanges de théologie et de littérature médiévales* (Leuven, 1980), 386–427.

[38] Claudio Bellinati, 'La casa canonicale di Francesco Petrarca a Padova', *Contributi alla storia della chiesa padovana nell'età medioevale 1,* Fonti e ricerche di storia ecclesiastica padovana XI (Padua, 1979), pp. 83–224.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

residence; it was here that he lived with Vergerio and a succession of poor law students, including Geilhoven who was present when Zabarella presented Ciconia to his first Paduan benefice. Our starting-point was Ciconia's motet in praise of Venice probably written for the occasion of Paduan surrender; also among Ciconia's Paduan motets are two for Zabarella. Vergerio must have heard this music too, in the house that had been Petrarch's.

Pietro Marcello's ceremonial installation as Bishop of Padua in 1409 included another oration by Zabarella and, surely, Ciconia's motet in Marcello's honour, *Petrum Marcello Venetum/O Petre, antistes inclite.* Ciconia had been dead for a year when the discovery of Livy's tomb in Padua on 13 August 1413 kindled not only humanist rapture but much civic pride. The Ciceronian notary Sicco Polenton reported the find, which was credited to Rolando da Casale, later beatified, monk of Santa Giustina and another student of Zabarella.[39] Rolando is also known to us as the music scribe of a now-fragmentary polyphonic manuscript recovered from bindings, with repertory similar to that found later in Q15. Several pages are not only copied but signed by him: *frater rolandus monachus scripsit.* So here we find humanist interests and the same musical repertory cultivated by a monk—another surprising combination. In October of the same year, Marcello delegated his powers as chancellor of Padua University to Pandolfo Malatesta da Pesaro[40] (the dedicatee of a later motet by Du Fay) in order to receive a degree at Malatesta's hands two days later. He had earlier studied law at Bologna, and was presented for a Paduan doctorate of laws by Zabarella (*in absentia*). Yet another grand occasion in the cathedral brought together illustrious grandees, humanists, professors, clerics, and humanist oratory (an oration was given by Marcello's humanist relative Zaccaria Trevisan). There was also music: the next day, the Paduan

[39] See Giulio Cattin, 'Tradizione e tendenze innovatrici nella normativa e nella pratica liturgico-musicale della congregazione di S. Giustina', *Benedictina XVII* (1970), 254–99, and 'Ricerche sulla musica a S. Giustina di Padova all'inizio del I Quattrocento: Il copista Rolando da Casale. Nuovi frammenti musicali nell'Archivio di Stato', *Annales musicologiques* VII (1964–1977), 17–41.

[40] Not to be confused with Pandolfo Malatesta da Rimini, a military man and captain of Brescia, on whom as a musical patron see Allan W. Atlas, 'Pandolfo III Malatesta mecenate musicale: musica e musicisti presso una signoria del primo quattrocento', *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, XXIII (1988), 38–92. Pandolfo Malatesta da Pesaro, little commented by early Malatesta chroniclers, was Archdeacon of Bologna, briefly Bishop of Brescia, and it is for him and his brothers that Du Fay wrote three pieces in the 1420s; he was present in Padua throughout the 1410s.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

Sacristy accounts record payment to a long-established canon not otherwise known as a composer, the Venetian Nicolao del Vida, for a 'new mass (*missa novella*) for Pietro Marcello'. The 'missa novella' is the term commonly used for the first mass of a newly ordained priest, but this occasion was clearly the first mass neither of del Vida nor of Marcello; the two names presumably indicate that it was Marcello's doctorate and no one's ordination that was being celebrated. Only if this was a newly composed polyphonic mass does this singular payment make sense.[41]

The Bishop of Padua lived in Padua, but so, although absenteeism was frequently censured, did the Bishop of Vicenza. Emiliani had a house close to Padua cathedral where he kept his famous library; he stayed there frequently between 1410 and 1430, nearly constantly between 1420 and 1426, precisely during the compilation of the first, Paduan, stage of our music manuscript. Emiliani seems to have conducted a small household school there in the early 1420s. This is not surprising, faced with the examples of his school-master friends Guarino, Barzizza, and Vittorino. He engaged a teacher of grammar; two of his own personal chaplains were qualified respectively in music and rhetoric. When Padua was ravaged in the late 1420s by the plague that killed many including the music theorist Prosdocimus de Beldemandis and Bishop Pietro Marcello, it is reported that Emiliani escaped to Sossano near Vicenza with two young humanists who may have been studying with him: Ermolao Barbaro the elder and his sometime pupil Pietro del Monte. Both had been at Guarino's school; both later became bishops, continuing a tradition of humanism within the ranks of the clergy.

Witness lists in notarial documents show that humanists, cathedral chaplains, and university students were frequent visitors to Emiliani's house. What is hitherto unknown and indeed hard to discover is that those on hand to witness documents, and those in Emiliani's inner circle, including at least one member of his *familia*, can be shown from other, later, and various credentials to be musicians. Most of the latter are hardly known to music history, but have left a trail of clues

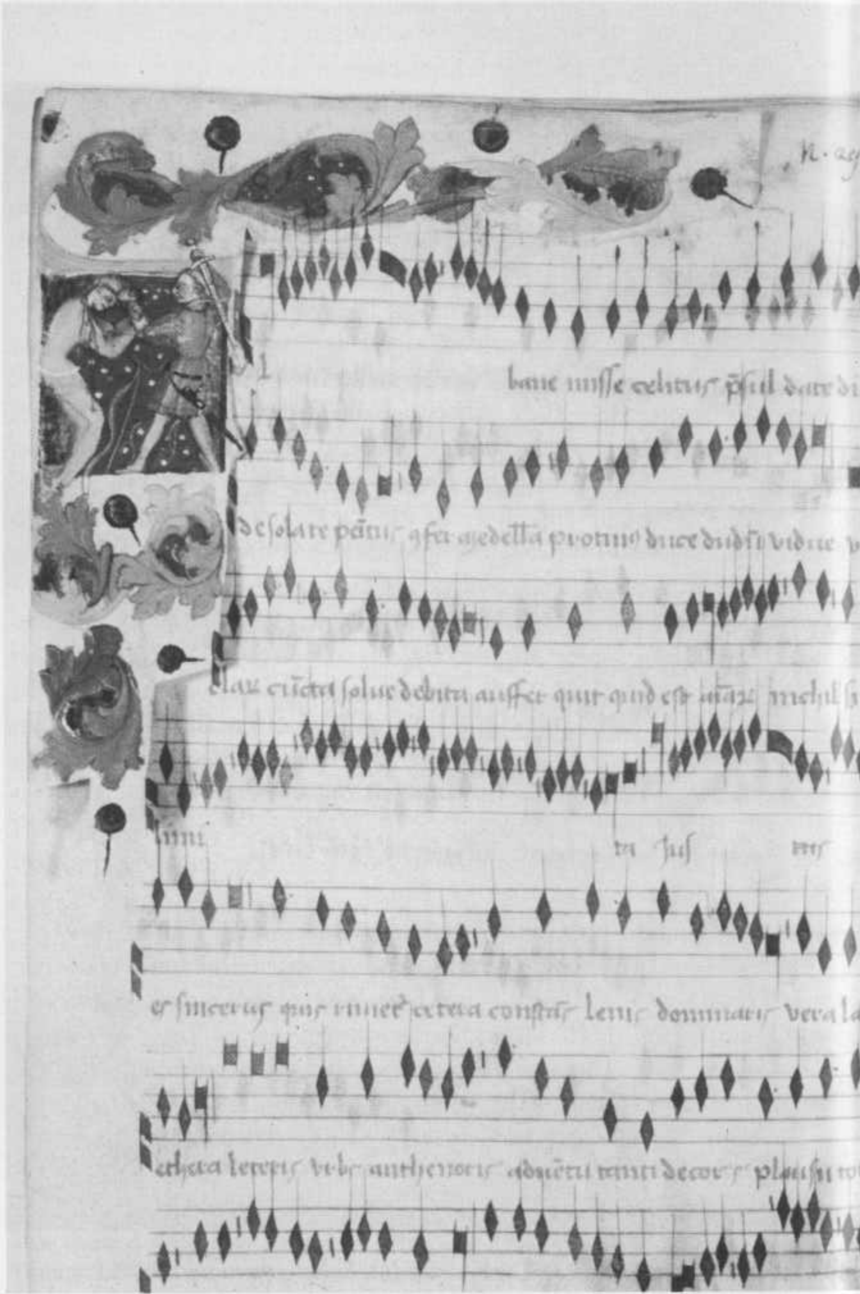
[41] See for example Elena Quaranta, *Oltre San Marco: Organizzazione e prassi della musica nelle chiese di Venezia nel Rinascimento* (Florence, 1998), pp. 100–4. But on 8 June 1447 in Ferrara, Leonello D'Este reimbursed his chapel singer Giovanni Filiberto two ducats he had paid two Frenchmen for six 'new masses': '. . . donandos duobus francigenis qui dederunt prefato domino nostro librum unum cantus sex missarum novarum'. See Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400–1505*, p. 52.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

Initial with singers. Arnold de Lantins, Introit, *Salve sancta parens*. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, f. 1r

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

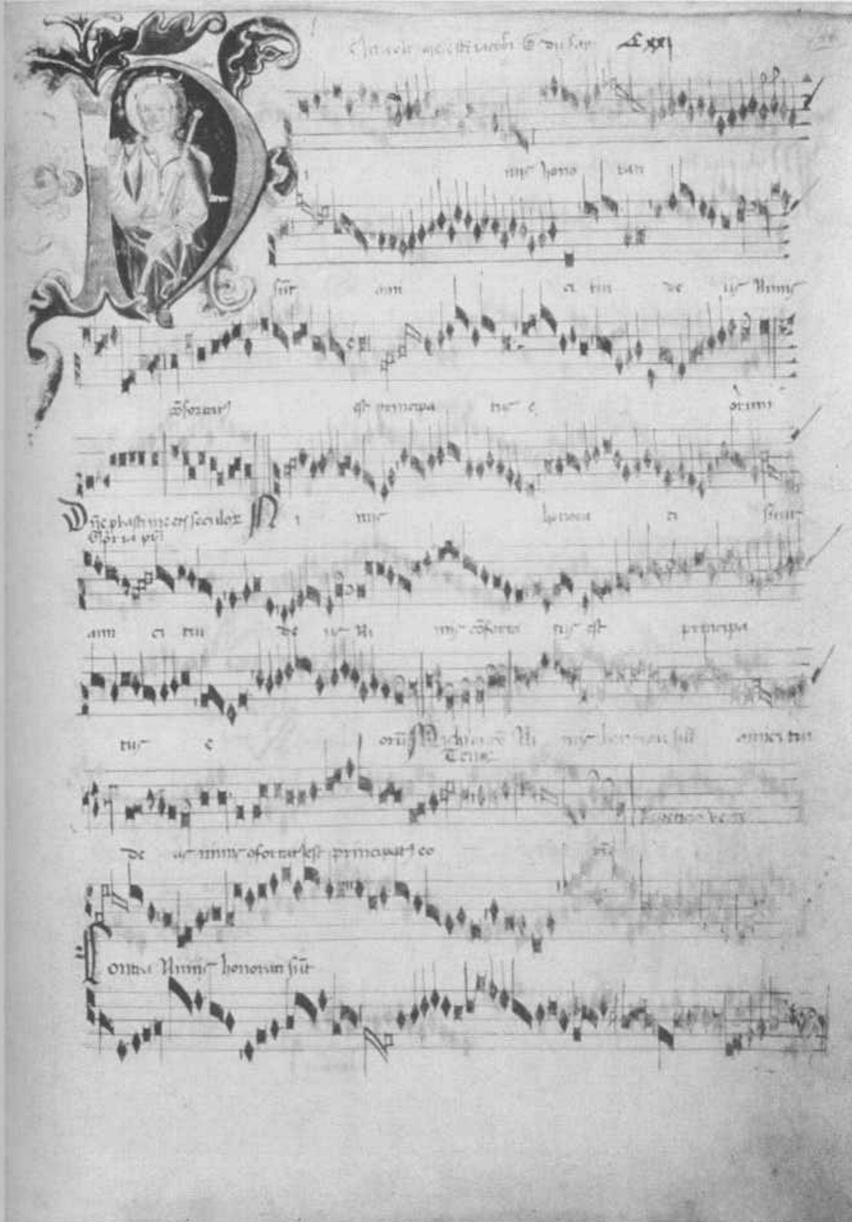
PLATE 2



Initial with martyrdom of St Christopher. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, now at f. 271v

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

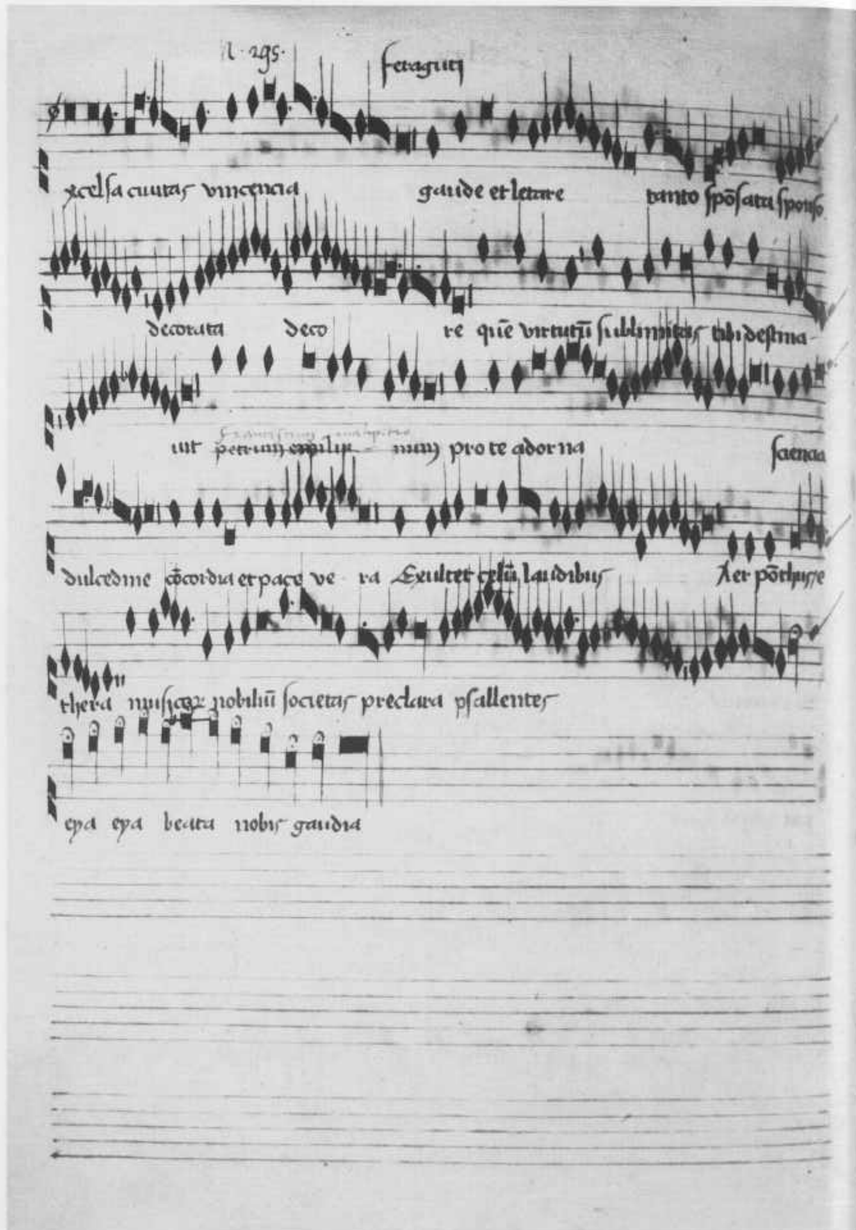
PLATE 3



Initial with St James. Du Fay, Introit, *Missa Sancti Jacobi*. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, f. 121ʳ

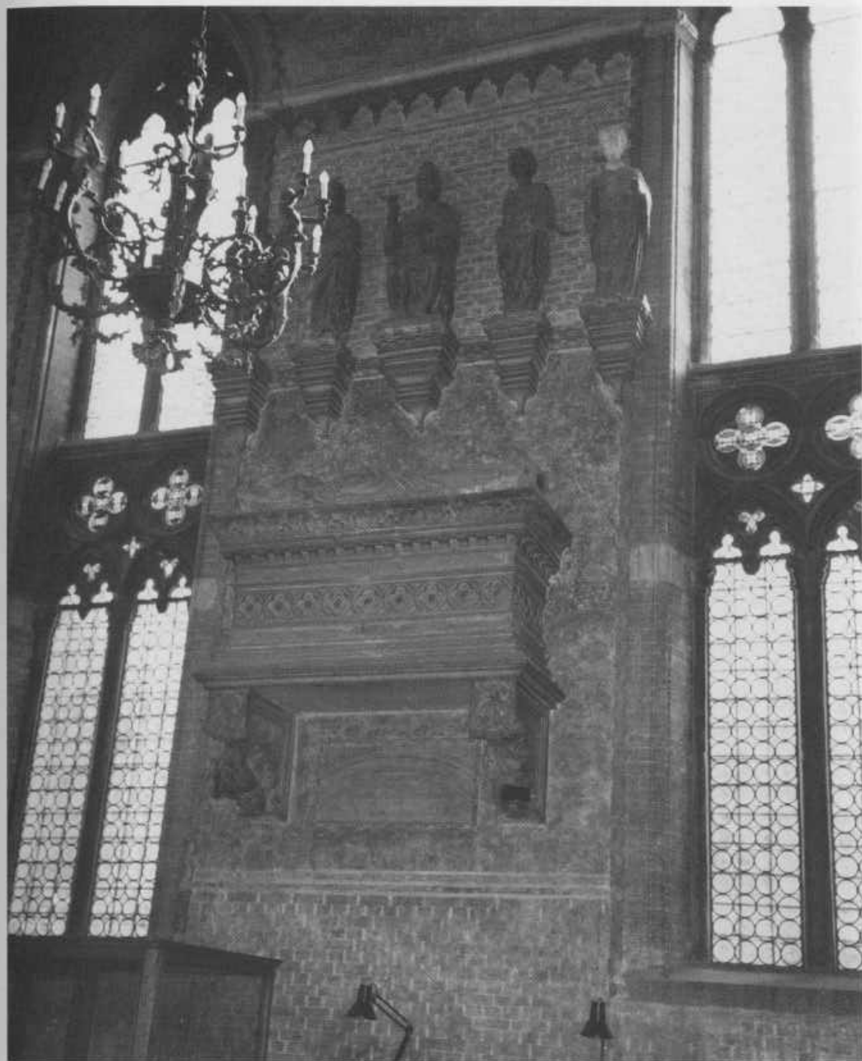
Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

PLATE 4



Feragut, *Excelsa civitas vincencia*, top voice, showing deletion of ‘petrum emilianum’, itself over an erasure of the final name, ‘franciscum maripetrum’. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, f. 269v

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved



The tomb of Bishop Pietro Emiliani, Church of the Frari, Venice

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

PLATE 6

Effigy of Bishop Pietro Emiliani, Church of the Frari, Venice

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

Ciconia, *O Petre, Christi discipule,* second voice. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, MS Q15, f. 260^{r}

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

PLATE 8

First page of the Lamentations copied in accordance with Carpi's will. Vicenza, Seminario Vescovile, MS U.VIII.11

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

supporting a musical avocation, sometimes not apparent until a will made many years later. One such is Bartolomeo Rossi da Carpi, a personal chaplain who was at his side for 25 years. Only from the 1453 will of this chaplain do we learn of his musical interests; besides classical books including Cicero, Livy, and Seneca, perhaps acquired from his bishop, he left *omnes suos libros de cantu*, all his [polyphonic] music books, to the Vicenza chapter. Since he allocated other books elsewhere, we can perhaps infer that both the classical texts and the music responded to the tastes of his chapter colleagues. He also made the only known musical testamentary bequest of its kind, precise instructions for the copying of a book containing polyphony, which still miraculously survives in the Vicenza chapter library[42] (Plate 8). Another is the aforementioned canon of Vicenza, Giovanni Gasparo da Castelgomberto, to whom, as *preclarus cantor*, Ciconia dedicated his treatise on musical proportions in 1411, the year before he died. Giovanni Gasparo subsequently adopted the patronymic Leocornis as the more common form of his name, was often in Emiliani's house in Padua, and still able in the 1430s to accompany the Vicenza delegation to the Council of Basle, praised for its singers.

Liber de cantu seems to have been the standard term for quarto anthologies of polyphony like Bologna Q15, and several are documented. What they had in common was polyphonic art, in whatever combination of sacred and secular repertory, for private and public use. Many such books were personal possessions, continually being added to, sometimes loaned, bequeathed to or purchased by communities, such as the chapters at Padua and Vicenza individually and collectively. One book containing secular ballatas as well as motets was evidently on deposit in the Padua sacristy, whose accounts record payments for adding to the book before the sacristy eventually purchased it from its owner. Clearly for private recreation rather than liturgical use, this was almost certainly one source for the mixed repertory of the slightly younger Q15. Motets originally composed for public occasions evidently passed into a semi-private repertory of chamber music, for the pleasure of musical connoisseurs, both within the sacristy, which served

[42] See Margaret Bent, 'Pietro Emiliani's Chaplain Bartolomeo Rossi da Carpi and the Lamentations of Johannes de Quadris in Vicenza', *Il Saggiatore musicale*, II (1995), 5–16. For a sketch of some of the contexts developed here, see Margaret Bent, 'Humanists and music, music and humanities', *Tendenze e Metodi nella Ricerca Musicologica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Latina 27–29 Settembre 1990)*, ed. Raffaele Pozzi. (Florence, 1995), pp. 29–38.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

as a kind of common room for the chapter, and, as we may now surmise, in the bishop's house in Padua and his palace in Vicenza. This claim is supported by the continuing copying and recopying of, for example, pieces for new bishops without the textual changes that would have permitted their recycling for later incumbents, at the same time that those pieces were being musically revised to reflect changes in style.[43] Such informal use of this and similar manuscripts may account for the long after-life of obsolete special-occasion pieces; and it also encourages a much softer functional dividing line, or none at all, between the categories of sacred and secular music. Only liturgical music, paraliturgical music, and occasional non-liturgical motets would have been performed in church services, but formal worship was not the only context in which they were performed.

Some testimony to the benign spirit that presided over humanist gatherings may come from a later treatise on the vices, *De Vitiorum Differencia,* dedicated to the younger brother of Henry V, the humanist patron Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, by Pietro del Monte. David Rundle has shown that del Monte reworked Poggio's *De Avaritia,* splitting up Poggio's continuous conversation into separate discussions, and disguising his plagiarism by changing the location from Rome to the Venetian house of Pietro Emiliani (by then dead), with a different entourage of humanists from those named by Poggio. It is a Ciceronian dialogue, and the chief protagonists are Emiliani (referred to as *Pontifex*, but here identified by his pre-episcopal name of Miani), Francesco Barbaro, Guarino Veronese, and Andrea Giuliani, all prominent humanists.[44] Emiliani appears as a cultured mentor to the group, versed in the classics and noted for his hospitality, who proposes that they imitate 'a symposium of philosophers at which, we read, they were accustomed to gather, with nourishment of the mind more than the stomach their aim'. Although this cannot be taken literally as a documentary account, if similar meetings actually took place in any of Emiliani's houses, we might guess that music was not absent from such gatherings, even if it did not figure in the self-consciously humanist re-enactment as would be set down in a formal or idealised record of the proceedings. Might

[43] Bent, 'A Contemporary Perception . . . '

[44] I am much indebted to Dr David Rundle for sharing with me the results of his work on this treatise, especially his identification of del Monte's debt to Poggio, and for providing me with texts of the portions original to del Monte, i.e. the beginning of the dialogue and of its second and third books. See his 'Of Republics and Tyrants: aspects of *quattrocento* humanist writings and their reception in England, *c.*1400–*c.*1460' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1997).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

such humanist meetings have been among the occasions on which Ciconia's motets for long-dead bishops, recopied many years later, were sung, perhaps together with the orations that went with them? Paolo Cortese's later advice to cardinals on 'How passions should be avoided, and music enjoyed after dinner' may not have been such a new idea in 1510, and music may have been no more or less recreational than literary debate.[45] While music was not part of the humanist literary agenda at this time, it was present in the richly-textured lives of humanists, actively cultivated by some, and must be counted as part of their general culture.

These same singers took care to perpetuate their precious art. Like modern enthusiasts, they often seem ready to travel for a good evening's music-making and sometimes pay high fees to visiting stars. In making their wills, they complain about the shortage of good singers, provide for singer-priests, and carefully bequeath books to their singing communities. Music books, acquired by legacy or purchase, were as much prized within the Paduan and Vicenza cathedral chapters as were Greek books among humanists. For reasons of specialist competence, music books were never numerous, being only comprehensible to a few, making them especially vulnerable to destruction; and because musical style was evolving with such vigour, in this case unlike classical texts, there was constant discarding and renewal of repertory items, and indeed of the books containing them.

Was this an isolated phenomenon? By implying that it may be typical of a more general pattern of cultivation, am I placing too much weight on the testimony of this one extant book? I don't think so. Its repertory overlaps with a few others which are not yet as firmly anchored, perhaps because we have been looking in the wrong places, or more likely because they lack the internal clues found here. If more of the music books referred to in wills and archives still survived, we would doubtless be able to attach them to an even wider network of humanist interests. Emiliani's was not a closed circle, but in music as well as in letters had tentacles in many directions. Of course we can't presume that all prelates and humanists shared the musical connoisseurship of Emiliani or indeed of Filargo. If Emiliani's household included paid singers, we lack those accounts. At least he seems to have selected his personal staff to provide as a bonus the spread of talents he wanted, and above all his favourite music.

[45] See note 22 (Pirrotta, 'Music and Cultural Tendencies . . . ').

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

One Vicenza canon, Matteo Betini da Brescia, again combines theory and practice: he composed one of the motets in Q15, left in his will a book of music theory (*musica*: probably Boethius) and a *liber de cantu*; he also endowed a post for a singer-priest—perhaps in part to ensure that the music he loved would live on. Lamenting the shortage of good singers, Emiliani made a provision in 1431 to endow a sort of bursary scheme to train up three young musician-clerics.[46]

* * *

Guillaume Du Fay, the foremost composer of the mid fifteenth century, is also the leading composer of Q15, accounting for a quarter of its contents, many of the pieces in unique copies. It is not only one of the most important sources for his music, but also the earliest; Du Fay can have been little more than 20 when it was started. The scribe had prompt access to accurate copies of new compositions as Du Fay wrote them, which must indicate good relationships with this circle. A personal connection may have arisen through Du Fay's Malatesta associations in the Veneto; at any rate, some wider networking must underlie this link. He has left us both a mass and a motet, presumably related, in honour of St James the Great. Both survive only here, and seem to have been composed at about the same time, within the period *c*.1426–30. The motet, *Rite majorem/Artibus summis*,[47] names one Robert Auclou both in the text and in an acrostic which signals his curacy at St Jacques de la Boucherie in Paris. Attempts to link the compositions to Paris or to San Giacomo in Bologna are not so compelling as to eliminate other possibilities: I now propose an alternative hypothesis.

This is not only Du Fay's first plenary mass cycle with Ordinaries and Propers, but the first such plenary cycle anywhere. It is therefore tempting to overstate its cyclic integrity. It may not originally have been planned by Du Fay as a full Ordinary cycle at all, let alone a plenary mass with Propers. The first three Ordinary movements form a unit, and others seem to have been added to them in stages, in such a way that some opportunities for cohesion are taken, others waywardly avoided. There are some musical connections between mass and motet. Techni-

[46] Gallo and Mantese, *Ricerche . . .*, pp. 28–29.
[47] Published in *Guillelmi Dufay, Opera omnia* ed. Heinrich Besseler, Corpus mensurabilis musicae I, vol. I (Rome, 1966).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

cal details of the stylistic relationships have been set out by Fallows and Planchart.[48] One source preserves the individual Ordinary movements separately, labelling them more neutrally *de apostolis*, but even that is more specific than warranted by an Ordinary cycle without Propers. Other scattered movements of the Ordinary and one of the Propers survive elsewhere, again with no hint of a St James connection. Nor did the mass have any later circulation. Without the Q15 copy, we would have none of the three matching Proper movements, of which only the unique Alleluia text is specific to St James; the others are general-purpose texts for Apostles. Everything that links the mass to St James is unique to Q15: the Alleluia, the title, the St James capital, as well as the St James motet. Without this manuscript, there would be no reason to suspect that Du Fay had composed anything for St James, indeed, the five Ordinary movements would have appeared as two separate fragmentary masses in the modern edition.

I believe that the two items unique to St James, the Alleluia and the motet, were added to an already composite compilation—an incomplete mass for Apostles—in order to customise the mass for St James. The scribe's emphatic superscription at the beginning, *Missa Sancti Jacobi*, also occurs only here, alongside the miniature of St James complete with shell, staff, and pilgrim scrip, the earliest illuminated initial that Du Fay gets in any music manuscript. Everything points to this compilation as being special and primary; without it we would have no idea either that the cycle existed, or the motet, or that the music that does appear elsewhere had to do with St James.

Our scribe completed his first-stage work by about 1425, having started with a composite Mass of his own compilation. About 1430 or a little before, he resumed work on the manuscript, precisely with this *Sancti Jacobi* mass, likewise composite. I believe that this mass started what was planned either as a separate fascicle, or as a new, independent manuscript. The two beginnings are strikingly parallel. Immediately after copying the St James mass, the scribe made the fateful decision to merge the new book with his existing one. Apart from this opening illumination, the scribe completed the mass, all ten openings, with pen strapwork capitals. Then, when he moved on to the next piece, he began to erase these and to paste over them initials cut from the existing

[48] David Fallows, *Dufay* (1982, 2/1987); Alejandro Planchart, 'Guillaume Dufay's Masses: a view of the manuscript traditions', *Papers read at the Dufay Quincentenary Conference*, ed. Allan Atlas (New York, 1976), pp. 26–33, at p. 32.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

manuscript; traces of the pen capitals are visible on the backs of the pasted initials as well as erased traces on the pages themselves. He had now decided to cannibalise his own jealously guarded *liber de cantu* by cutting up the earlier book for amalgamation with the new project, rendering the damaged pages musically useless. Once he started doing this, the commitment to replace the earlier book was made, at least in part, and there was no going back; the two projects had become a single book.

This mass seems to have been the occasion for re-opening the project. But why a St James mass, and why was it to be given pride of place and an illuminated capital in a new manuscript? Emiliani's will provided 25 gold ducats each for four pilgrims to go to Compostela on his behalf. This is a striking entry when set beside the special devotion to St James shown in at least the copying and, as I now believe, the compilation, of the *Sancti Jacobi* mass. Four pilgrims, a four-part motet, and a largely four-part mass. St Peter is flanked by four saints over Emiliani's tomb in the Frari,[49] and on the altar of the funerary chapel by four further male saints.[50] These four saints are Jerome (perhaps because he, of the four doctors of the church, was a model translator from the Greek for Emiliani and his circle), John the Baptist (for whom his son was named, also represented above the tomb), James the Great and St Francis (for the Franciscan Church in which he was buried). St James is immediately to Peter's left. All carry books. Whatever the reason for the new start with the Sancti Jacobi mass, it occasioned a radical remaking of our music manuscript. On independent grounds, it can be inferred that the manuscript moved from Padua to Vicenza in the late 1420s, at about the same time as Emiliani did, and new work on it resumed—again, on independent grounds—somewhere between about 1428 and 1430. But this date, and the close association with Emiliani, are confirmed by a distinctive watermark pair, both members of which are shared by a fascicle of documents promulgated by Emiliani in 1429/30 and by precisely the gathering of Q15 in which the *Sancti Jacobi* mass appears. The documents start in Padua and continue in Vicenza; one could hardly hope for a more concrete case to corroborate the same transfer, at the same time, of Emiliani and of the manuscript.

Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was not unusual. What

[49] Named for his male descendants, see above.
[50] This altar, by Dalle Masegne, dates from the 1460s.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

distinguishes Emiliani's bequest as more than routine is the evidence of parallel special effort and the possibility of significant timing in a project near to his heart. The watermark clinches the timing. But many unanswerable questions remain. How and why was the almost simultaneous compilation of the *Sancti Jacobi* mass connected to the bequest? Had Emiliani made a vow of some kind? Did he intend that a new manuscript or at least a fascicle, with this quite austere mass, should be used in commemorations for him? Was it compiled during his lifetime in order to be sung at his death-bed? Was it intended to bless the pilgrims as they set out for Compostela? And then there are the musical questions. How were initiatives balanced between Emiliani, Du Fay, and the scribe-compiler? At least the Alleluia and motet must have been provided by Du Fay in response to some request or commission, but perhaps that was all he was able or asked to do. The scribe reasserts Du Fay's authorship throughout, conspicuously so for the Alleluia. I am not now so sure, as has been generally assumed, that this compilation and the St James dedication were at Du Fay's initiative. The Compostela provision in the will immediately precedes Emiliani's personal bequest to Bartolomeo, the chaplain who was at his side for a quarter of a century. Bartolomeo may have played a key role in the compilation of Q15, or even have been the scribe. Alas, we do not have his signature; space was left for it in his will, but the notary had to enter his name, presumably because the dying Bartolomeo was too enfeebled to do so. We have already mentioned Bartolomeo's own musical testamentary provision, the bequest of his music books and the provision for copying a new memorial volume, with a set of polyphonic Lamentations and other funereal music. Emiliani died in 1433, Bartolomeo in 1453, Du Fay in 1474. Could Bartolomeo's idea of a sounding memorial have been inspired by Emiliani's precedent, should this hypothesis find favour? Could it even, in turn, have prompted Du Fay's striking incorporation of his own name into the motet he specially requested be sung at his own deathbed and whose text he customised for that purpose?[51] Even if this mass cannot be Du Fay's lost Requiem, these circumstances at least make his *Sancti Jacobi* mass a possible candidate for the arena of memorial works.

The only other saint depicted in a Q15 illumination is St Christopher, who shares a feast-day—25 July—with St James. The martyrdom of St Christopher is quite rare in art; its most famous occurrence is probably

[51] *Ave regina celorum*. See *Guillelmi Dufay, Opera omnia* . . . vol. V (Rome, 1966).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

in Padua, in the Ovetari chapel of the Eremitani church, where Saints Christopher and James were paired in the war-damaged Mantegna frescos of about 1450. The life of St James is also fully set out in frescos by Altichiero in San Antonio in Padua. St Anthony is of course the other major pilgrimage saint, later to be honoured in Du Fay's only other plenary mass cycle.

Could 25 July have had some special association for Emiliani, the anniversary of his birth or ordination, perhaps, or of private advance notice of his elevation to the bishopric? His will of April 1429, remembering Alexander V 'who made me a bishop' was written a week after the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the council of Pisa. He doubtless recalled Alexander's election as pope on 26 June and the public announcement of his own elevation to the bishopric on 12 August. Did he have some personal reason to celebrate 25 July? I have already linked the programme of his Petronian funerary iconography with that of Ciconia's motet written for him at Pisa.

The unique survival of the cycle in a manuscript prepared in the circle of Emiliani may be, then, not the importation of a ready-made second-hand mass, but the primary and perhaps the only execution of a customised cycle that reflected Emiliani's own *ante mortem* devotions to St James, aided and abetted by Du Fay at least by the provision of the motet and Alleluia, and by the assembly of mass movements, by Du Fay and our scribe in some combination as yet unclear. This would go some way towards explaining why Du Fay might not have designed it from the start as a unified cycle.

The music of this generation of northerners in Italy is a highly disciplined art, fully compatible with humanist tenets on education and decorous recreation. It also offers a parallel to, and an elevating vehicle for, the prized verbal arts of rhetoric. The polytextual motet can unite different verbal and musical ideas simultaneously and equally, in a superhumanistic way unmatched by any other art form, verbal or pictorial. It can ideally embody the 'convergence of difference' identified as *unanimitas*—a fundamental concept specifically of Venetian humanism,[52] and which might here be stretched to include internationalism. Celebratory motets moreover could be perfect partners to humanistic genres. Laudatory orations flourished among these humanists, for

[52] See Margaret L. King, *Venetian Humanism . . .*

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

academic, dynastic, ecclesiastical, and civic occasions, several of which were evidently enriched by music.[53]

* * *

My conclusion, therefore, is that there is more ample evidence of musical cultivation by some early humanists than they have been given credit for; that their musical tastes embraced the most sophisticated international repertory of high-art music of their time, whose composers and performers were not merely hired lackeys but learned and valued companions, not caricatures of old scholasticism but as forward-looking in their own fields as their erudite patrons and friends in literary and historical studies; not mere *cantores* but true *musici* in the Boethian sense. This activity is best documented in precisely the places where Petrarch's literary legacy was strongest, in Pavia and Padua; it is mistaken to exclude such music from humanist circles on the specious grounds that it is scholastic. So to exclude it imposes on early humanist ideologies canons of musical taste that have nothing to do with those ideologies.

Testimony to humanistic musical interest as usually understood comes not until much later, from self-conscious literary expressions in letters, orations, and translations, which even then tell us little about humanists' other tastes and interests outside literature. Documentation of musical interests in the earlier period comes from grubby and understated archival testimony of diverse kinds, wills, payments for books and singers, inventories, witness lists, choice of domestic companions and staff. From such hints can be pieced together, below the surface of better-known figures, a shadow network of high-level musical activity and a flexible pattern of patronage, as farflung in their own sphere as were scholarly contacts between the humanists themselves. Above all, it comes from the surviving music, which indeed has internal connection to these circles, and in the case of Q15 can be firmly located in a humanist orbit, poised between personal possession and collective ownership of books.

Just as learned Italians imported the exotic Manuel Chrysoloras to teach them Greek in person, so also the same people head-hunted prestigious northerners like Ciconia and the young Du Fay as living

[53] There are, for example, wedding orations and wedding motets (including one by Du Fay for Cleofe Malatesta), consolatory epistles or orations, and a consolatory ballata by Ciconia on the death of Francesco Carrara (il Novello).

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved

practitioners of their admired tradition, a process facilitated by Church councils. In both cases, highly prized and costly skills were acquired at first hand. The new learning was the latest thing, fast-moving and in no sense merely pious antiquarianism; the new international musical repertory and its performers were likewise fast-growing, the best that discerning patronage could afford and foster.

Isidore of Seville lamented that musical sounds perish because they cannot be written down. Even when notation was well developed, changing musical styles, obsolescence, and renewal left manuscripts as vulnerable as old clothes after their moment had passed. Live music is dangerously easy to silence, its written record vulnerable to destruction when it passes out of the hands of those competent to use it, or even, as here, to destruction by its own obsessively modernising scribe. As we reinstate this music as a worthy partner to humanist eloquence, we might remember that for music and speech what has survived is only the written record, and that the live speech of performed orations, no less than live musical sounds, has also fallen silent.

Copyright © The British Academy 1999 – all rights reserved