

A New Source for the Text of Josquin's Passion Motet Cycle *O Domine Jesu Christe*¹

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The free 'Italian' motet, composed without c.f. and emphasizing text declamation and interpretation by means of musical contrast and analogy, imitation, duet writing, syllabic declamation in block chords and similar devices, was the epochal 'invention' of the Flemish composers working in Italy shortly before and around 1500. As far as we can see today, the development of this new motet type began as early as about 1475 in the Milanese court chapel...²

Finscher's judicious summary of a significant achievement of composers in the 'Josquin' era remains as perceptive and as valid as it was when he wrote it over thirty years ago. The new motet type is delineated in terms of its musical characteristics, but it is also clear from Finscher's description that the text is the central element in generating musical ideas and choices on the part of these composers. A complete understanding of the motet as a cultural phenomenon of this period depends then on understanding the texts and their contemporary associations and functions. Unfortunately this aspect of the subject has not been widely or effectively explored by musicologists, and a number of important questions such as where and how composers obtained the texts they set, and about the function of motets in general, remain unanswered. The discovery of any new source for a motet text in this period is therefore potentially significant in throwing light on to these questions.

The range of text types found in this repertory is wide, from texts with long-established liturgical connections (antiphons, responds, hymns, etc., where the polyphonic setting usually incorporates the plainsong in some way)³ to contemporary or comparatively recent texts in either prose or verse which do not have any apparent liturgical connection, or associated plainsong melody. Since the absence of a *cantus firmus* is one of the features rightly singled out

¹ Revised version of a paper given at the XIX conference of the Musicological Society of Australia, Melbourne, July 1996. It is related to work in progress on a new edition of Petrucci's *Motetti B* (Monuments of Renaissance Music, University of Chicago Press, forthcoming), and incorporates some of the ideas I discussed with the late Howard Mayer Brown, General Editor of the series from 1984 until his untimely death in 1993; I gratefully acknowledge my debt to him. Our work on the early Petrucci motet repertory in relation to contemporary devotional practice also formed the background of his article 'The Mirror of Man's Salvation: Music in Devotional Life about 1500,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990) 744-73.

² Ludwig Finscher, *Loyset Compère* ([Rome]: American Institute of Musicology, 1964) 181.

³ In the case of *Compère* the *cantus firmus* settings are of the older tenor motet type and Finscher excludes such settings from the category of the new Italianate motet. In the works of other composers however the distinction is not always so clear, and works based on a *cantus firmus* may also have musical characteristics of the new motet-type.

by Finscher, the latter type clearly assumes some significance, and suggests something of the importance of this new kind of text as a catalyst for the new type of *cantus firmus*-free motet.

Josquin's motet cycle *O Domine Jesu Christe* was published in Petrucci's *Motetti B* where it is given the title *Officium de Passione*. Its text is exemplary of the new motet type, as are many of the motets in the series of four books brought out by Petrucci from 1502 to 1505.⁴ Until now the text has been found almost entirely in *Horae* or 'books of Hours,' those compendia of *pia dictamina* (private, pious devotions) for all seasons and occasions which from the thirteenth century on served for the spiritual edification of noble and wealthy members of the laity. Although such books drew on a wide range of sources, including the liturgy, they also created their own repertory of devotional texts, some of which, by the late fifteenth century, had become firmly established and copied into virtually every book of Hours, sometimes finding their way into breviaries and missals as well. Three subjects dominate these texts almost exclusively: the Blessed Virgin, the Eucharist and the Passion/Cross, and it is not surprising that these subjects constitute the full title of *Motetti B* (1503): *Motetti de Passione, de Cruce, de Sacramento, de Beata Virgine et huiusmodi*.

Although the text of Josquin's *Officium de Passione* is never found under that title in the *Horae*, Petrucci's title clearly reflects its association with such books: the term refers not to the breviary Office, the 'official' liturgy recited or sung daily by those canonically bound to do so, but to the more informal offices or 'Hours' which gave *Horae* their name, and which are found in other manuals of lay devotion such as *Hortulus animae*, primers, and so forth.⁵ The Hours most commonly found are those of the Blessed Virgin (rarely absent), the Passion, the Cross, the Holy Spirit and the Office of the Dead. Typically *Horae* also contained other material, some of which is almost invariably found: a Calendar, excerpts from the four gospels, the penitential psalms, prayers before, during and after mass, prayers to patron and other favourite saints and prayers before meals or when travelling.⁶ While the term 'Hours' reflects the fact that each office is arranged according to the traditional liturgical format which provides for services at various hours of the day (Matins, Lauds, Prime etc.), the actual texts of the Hours vary greatly in their degree of resemblance to the breviary offices. Usually the connection is minimal: they may begin with the usual formula *Deus in adiutorium* etc. but thereafter are drastically shortened, often consisting of simply an antiphon (often rhymed), perhaps a psalm and/or hymn, versicle and response, and collect. In some cases the whole office is in rhymed metrical Latin, possibly the origin of the later Protestant metrical psalters. Sometimes excerpts from hymns and sequences are used, but there is also a huge repertory of both prose and rhymed texts which are unique to these devotional books, and many of these texts also appear in Petrucci's motet repertory, as well as in choirbooks and motet manuscripts of a more private character.

The Hours of the Cross found in most *Horae* consist of a single poem probably dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and may be given in full here as an extreme example of

⁴ François Lesure, *Recueils imprimés XVI–XVII siècles*, RISM B.II (Munich: Henle-Verlag, 1960) 1502¹, 1503¹, 1504¹, 1505². See also Claudio Sartori, *Bibliografia delle opere stampate da Ottaviano Petrucci* (Milan, 1957), Warren Drake, 'The first printed books of motets, Petrucci's *Motetti a numero trentatré A* (Venice, 1502) and *Motetti de Passione, de Cruce, de Sacramento, de Beata Virgine et huiusmodi* (Venice, 1503): a critical study and complete edition,' diss., U of Illinois, 1972, 2 vols., and Brown, 'The Mirror of Man's Salvation.'

⁵ Brown points out that throughout the middle ages the term 'officium' was used to refer to the Mass introtit, and thence by extension to the Mass itself. In my view, however, he overstates the case in asserting that these cycles are therefore 'explicitly labeled as intended for performance at Mass.' 'The Mirror of Man's Salvation' 762–63.

⁶ The most extensive study of manuscripts of this kind is Victor Léroquais, *Les livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 3 vols (Paris: n.p., 1927; supplement, 1942). A wide-ranging study of devotional texts, though focussing mainly on an earlier period (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) than the *Horae* is André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin* (1932; Paris: Études Augustiennes, 1971).

this kind of compressed 'office.' The events of the Passion are recounted in such form that each strophe corresponds to one of the liturgical hours:⁷

Subscriptas horas edidit de Jesu passione
Egidius episcopus ex devotione
Trecentisque diebus indulgentiae dotavit
Quos et apostolicus Johannes confirmavit.

Out of devotion Bishop Egidius composed the hours of Jesus' passion written below. He endowed them with three hundred days of indulgence, which were confirmed by Pope John (XXII).

Patris sapientia, veritas divina,
Deus homo captus est hora matutina,
Notis a discipulis cito derelictus,
A Judaeis traditus, venditus et afflictus.

At the hour of Matins God-made-man, the Father's wisdom and divine truth was captured. Quickly deserted by disciples and friends, he was delivered up by the Jews, sold and afflicted.

Hora prima ductus est Jesus ad Pilatum,
Et a falsis testibus multum accusatum,
Colaphis percutiunt manibus ligatum,
Vultum Dei conspuunt lumen coeli gratum.

At the first hour [Prime] Jesus was led to Pilate and accused by false witnesses, he was beaten and his hands bound; the face of God and light of heaven was spat on with contempt.

Crucifige, crucifige hora tertiarum,
Illusus induitur veste purpurarum,
Caput ejus pungitur corona spinarum,
Crucem portans humeris ad loca poenarum.

At the third hour [Terce] the cry was 'crucify him!' He was mocked, clothed in purple, his head pricked with a crown of thorns, and made to carry his cross to the place of execution.

Hora sexta Jesus est in cruce clavatus,
Et est cum latronibus morti deputatus,
Prae tormentis sitiens felle saturatus,
Agnus crimen diluens sic ludificatus.

At the sixth hour [Sext] Jesus was nailed to the cross, and put to death with thieves. In torment and thirsting he was given gall to drink; the lamb washing away sin was thus made sport of.

Hora nona Dominus Jesus expiravit,
Heli clamans spiritum Patri commendavit,
Latus ejus lancea miles perforavit,
Terra tunc contremuit et sol obscuravit.

At the ninth hour [None] Jesus died, crying 'Eli' he commended his spirit to his father. A soldier pierced his side with a spear, the sun was obscured and the earth shook.

De cruce deponitur hora vespertina,
Fortitudo latuit in mente divina,
Talem mortem subiit vitae medicina,
Heu, corona gloriae jacuit supina.

In the evening [Vespers] he was taken down from the cross; alas, the crown of glory lies powerless. The divine mind remained steadfast: such death leads on to healing life.

⁷ The text may be found in Guido Maria Dreves et al., *Analecta Hymnica*, vol. 30 (Leipzig, 1886–1922) 32, and, with slight variants, Franz Joseph Mone, *Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Freiburg, 1853–55) 106. The translations of this and the other texts in this article are my own.

Hora completorii datur sepulturae
 Corpus Christi nobile spes vitae futurae,
 Conditur aromatae complentur scripturae,
 Jugis sit memoria mortis mihi curae.

At the hour of Compline the scriptures were fulfilled: the body of Christ, the great hope of future life, was placed in the tomb, embalmed with spices. May the never-failing memory of that death be my salvation.

Loyset Compère's setting of this text was also published by Petrucci in *Motetti B*, where the index lists it as *Officium de Cruce*, and in this case Petrucci's title does reflect the common usage of books of Hours, where the text is very widely found as the Hours of the Cross (or Passion).⁸ A motet cycle which sets a similar compressed "office" was included by Petrucci in *Motetti B* immediately after *O Domine Jesu Christe*. Like the latter it is attributed to Josquin, but as this is the unique source for these motets, we have to take his word—not always completely reliable—for Josquin's authorship. In this case, however, there seems little reason to question it. Both motets are masterpieces of large-scale design and sensitive text-setting. They stand at the beginning of the print, just as Josquin's famous *Ave Maria* was given pride of place at the beginning of *Motetti A*. The second cycle, *Qui velatus facie fuisti* in six *partes*, consists of hymns taken from various parts of an office of the Passion by the great Franciscan theologian and poet St. Bonaventura.

Both cycles have always been seen as remarkable for their adoption of the simple homophonic texture and block chordal progressions associated with the Italian polyphonic *lauda*, though *O Domine Jesu Christe* is the more whole-hearted in this respect. Josquin also experimented with this style in a third motet, *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia* (which is also printed in *Motetti B*). Modern critics have admired these works for their harmonic expressiveness, and made much of the *lauda* style in general because it seems to represent one of the first decisive indications of Italian influence on the mainstream Netherlandish style. It has also been seen as the *fons et origo* of the harmonic awareness which seems increasingly to inform sixteenth-century polyphony and to lead ultimately to functional harmony and tonality. But it might be suggested that this is to some extent anachronistic and that the composer's concern was above all with clarity of text presentation, directness, and avoidance of ornament and artifice which might detract from the expressiveness of the text.

Helmuth Osthoff's comments touch on both views. According to him 'these early Passion motets show the young Josquin under the spell of that Franciscan piety which had gripped Italy since the early thirteenth century' and they express 'that spontaneous, simple Christianity inspired by the spirit of love which Francis of Assisi and his followers had learned and lived.' He speaks on the one hand of the 'simplicity of musical style, shunning all artifice, astonishing for a Netherlandish composer,' and on the other of the 'euphonious style, giving forth a gentle radiance, [which] is the unmistakable sign of Italian influence.'⁹ To the Netherlanders of Josquin's generation, these works must have sounded decidedly austere and restrained when compared with the luxuriant polyphony of the north. *O Domine Jesu Christe* however is quintessential: the low tessitura of the top two voices gives the solemn harmonies a dark, sombre colouring which is highly appropriate for these prayers (see Example 1). The Italianate *lauda*

⁸ Compère omits the first verse and prefaces the text with the introit *In nomine Jesu* (for the Wednesday of Holy Week) and the short respond *Adoramus te Christe* from the (liturgical) office of the Cross.

⁹ 'Diese frühen Passionmotetten zeigen den jungen Josquin in Bannkreis jener franziskanischen Frömmigkeit, die seit dem Anfang des 13. Jahrhunderts Italien ergriff. Aus seinen Werken... spricht jene spontane, schlichte und vom Geist der Liebe inspirierte Christlichkeit, die Franz von Assisi wie seine Nachfolger gelehrt und gelebt hatten. Charakteristisch in diesem Sinne ist die für einen niederländischen Komponisten erstaunliche, auf alle Artistik verzichtende Schlichtheit der musikalischen Diktion... Der euphonische, einem milden Glanz ausstrahlende Klangstil ist ein unerhörbares Kennzeichen des italienischen Einflusses.' Helmuth Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez*, vol. 2 (Tutzing: Schneider, 1962–65) 82.

style is used here in a more consistent and sustained way than in any other Josquin motet, though it is noteworthy that in the final section the texture becomes progressively more linear and diffuse—Josquin achieves here a sense of culmination simply not possible within the limited architectural resources of the *lauda* style. Even so it may be said that in its use of largely unrelieved homophony *O Domine Jesu Christe* represents an extreme position which Josquin never approached again.

C
O Do - mi - ne Je - su Chri -

A
O Do - mi - ne Je - su Chri -

T
O Do - mi - ne Je - su Chri -

B
O Do - mi - ne Je - su Chri -

5

ste. a - do - ro te in

ste. a - do - ro te in

ste. a - do - ro te in cru - ce pen - den -

ste. a - do - ro te in cru - - -

10

cru - ce pen - den - tem et co - ro - nam spi - ne -

cru - ce pen - den - tem et co - ro - nam spi - ne -

tem et co - ro - nam spi - ne -

ce pen - den - tem et co - ro - nam spi - ne -

15

Example 1: Josquin des Prez, *O Domine Jesu Christe*, prima pars.

20

am in ca - pi - te por - tan - - - tem: de -

am in ca - pi - te por - tan - - - - - tem: de -

am in ca pi - te por - tan - - - - - tem: de -

am in ca - pi - te por - tan - - - - - tem: de -

25

pre - cor te ut i - psa crux li - be - ret me ab an -

pre - cor te ut i - psa crux li - be - ret me ab an -

pre - cor te ut i - psa crux li - be - ret me ab

pre - cor te ut i - psa crux li - be - ret me ab an -

ge - lo per - cu - ti en - te.

ge - lo per - cu - ti - en - te.

an - - - ge - lo per - cu - ti - - - en - te.

ge - lo per - cu - ti - en - te.

Example 1: (continued)

O Domine Jesu Christe in the form set by Josquin is a late fourteenth-century meditation on the Passion found almost entirely in *Horae*, manuscript and printed. It is, in fact, of all the motet texts found in Petrucci, the one most frequently met in such books. It first appears in manuscripts from the late fourteenth century, and enjoyed huge currency for two centuries. It is a series of seven prayers, each devoted to some image or aspect of the Passion, usually entitled *Orationes* or *Meditationes sancti Gregorii*. Fictitious attributions of this kind are endemic to the repertory of such texts, as are the accompanying legends of origin, miraculous powers, spiritual or corporeal benefits to be obtained and indulgences gained from its recitation.¹⁰ While many sources assign authorship to St. Gregory, others merely assert that the prayers are based on a vision of the Passion seen by him in the church of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem (a 'stational' church in Rome), but actually composed by some other person such as Nicholas IV. Others claim that only five prayers are by St. Gregory, two being added by some other person such as Nicholas V, Sixtus IV, etc. Some sixteenth-century sources give an eighth prayer, variously assigned to Innocent VIII or Leo X. Internal evidence also supports this, the parallel wording of the original five not being followed exactly in the additions. Details of the indulgences to be gained by reciting these prayers vary, but there is general agreement on *multa milia annorum*. An early sixteenth century book of hours from Bruges sets the figure at 46,012 years and 40 days(!), a Parisian missal printed in 1530 (which includes the prayers as *Preces ante missam*) gives 56,000 years, and so on. To obtain these benefits it was usually necessary to recite the prayers kneeling before a crucifix, concluding each one with a *Pater* and *Ave*. The most common form, which could be called the standard text, together with a typical accompanying rubric, is as follows:

Orationes sancti Gregorii

[Paris, Bibl. nat. MS lat. 1072 (Hours, usage of St. Denis, late fifteenth century), fol 120]

Dominus Jesus Christus apparuit beato Gregorio in ecclesia sancte Crucis de Jherusalem celebranti in forma inferius descripta. Qui postmodum concessit omnibus vere penitentibus et devote genibus flexis quinque Pater noster dicentibus omnes indulgencias prefate ecclesie concessas videlicet viginti milia annorum et triginta dierum. Deinde Nicholaus papa IIII composuit quinque oraciones sequentes et eis dicentibus post Pater noster tria milia annorum indulgenciarum concessit. Domum Sixtus papa IIII composuit alias duas oraciones et eas cum predictis dicentibus, seu legere nescientibus qui quindecies Pater noster et totidem Ave Maria decerent, concessit prefatas indulgencias eas duplicando, que sunt in summa duodecim [sic!] milia annorum et sexaginta dierum.

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to blessed Gregory celebrating [Mass] in the church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem in the form described below. Who afterwards granted to all those who, truly penitent and devoutly kneeling, say fifteen Pater noster, all the indulgences granted to the said church, namely twenty thousand years and thirty days. Then Pope Nicholas IV composed five of the following prayers and to those saying them after the Pater noster[?]s granted three thousand years of indulgence. His Lordship Pope Sixtus IV composed the other two prayers, and to those saying them, except that those unable to read may say fifteen times Pater noster and the same number of times Ave Maria, he granted all the aforementioned indulgences duplicated, which in sum are twelve [sic!] thousand years and sixty days.

¹⁰ Léroquais asserts that almost all the indulgences claimed for texts in books of Hours are 'apocryphal and false.' *Les livres d'Heures*, vol. 1, xxxi.

O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te in cruce pendentem et coronam spineam in capite portantem: deprecor te ut tua crux liberet me ab angelo percutientem. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te in cruce vulneratum, felle et aceto potatum: deprecor te ut tua vulnera sint remedia animae meae. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te in sepulchro positum, myrrha et aromatibus conditum: deprecor te ut mors tua sit vita animae meae. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te descendantem ad inferos, liberantemque captivos: deprecor te ne permittas me illuc introire. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te resurgentem a mortuis ascendentem in coelis et sedentem a dextris Dei patris: deprecor te miserere mei. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, pastor bone, justos conserva, peccatores justifica, omnibus fidelibus miserere et propitius esto mihi peccatori. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Domine Jesu Christe, rogo te propter amaritudinem passionis tuae quam pro me sustinuisti in cruce, maxime in illa hora quando anima tua nobilissima de benedicto corpore tuo est egressa: miserere animae meae in egressu suo. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ. I adore you hanging on the cross, and bearing on your head a crown of thorns: I beseech you, that your cross may save me from the angel of punishment. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, I adore you wounded upon the cross, given gall and vinegar to drink: I beseech you, that your wounds may be healing to my soul. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, I adore you laid in the tomb, embalmed with myrrh and spices: I beseech you, that your death may be my life. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, I adore you descending into hell, liberating the captives: I beseech you, that you never let me enter that place. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, I adore you, rising from the dead, ascending into heaven and sitting at the right hand of God the Father: I beseech you, that you have mercy upon me. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the good shepherd, save the righteous, make sinners righteous, have mercy on all the faithful, and be gracious to me, a sinner. Amen. Pater. Ave.

O Lord Jesus Christ, I ask you for the sake of that most bitter suffering which you endured for me upon the cross, and above all when your most noble soul departed from your blessed body, have mercy on my soul at its departing. Amen. Pater. Ave.

The order of the prayers varies somewhat in the devotional sources. The Parisian missal mentioned earlier has the final invocation as no. 3, following a logical narrative sequence. Josquin's motet follows the same order as the standard text but omits nos. 4 and 5.¹¹ Many motet texts at this time compile bits and pieces from disparate sources, omit passages from or rearrange standard texts, or set texts which appear to be unique to the composition. It is difficult to be quite sure what to make of this. It is possible that the composer has arbitrarily rearranged the text to suit his musical purposes, that he has followed the instructions of a patron, that he has followed some version of the text current at the time, or in the case of unique texts, composed his own. Given what we know of the status of composers at this time, is it likely that composers chose or compiled their own texts? A hitherto unknown source reveals that in the case of *O Domine Jesu Christe* the selection and arrangement of the verses exactly as set by Josquin had

¹¹ Sixteenth-century composers setting the text continue the practice of selecting one or more of the seven prayers. Brumel set only no. 6, while Palestrina and G. Gabrieli set only no. 1. Willaert composed a four-part motet which sets nos. 1, 2, 3 and 6. The most complete and elaborate setting is that of Gombert, who sets nos. 1, 2 and 3 continuously as *prima pars* and nos. 5, 6 and 7 continuously as *secunda pars*.

been published in a contemporary book, and we therefore do not necessarily have to postulate any involvement by the composer. In 1471 the great German-born printer Nicolas Jenson brought out a series of popular devotional handbooks, one of which, *Decor puellarum*,¹² includes the text. Jenson is perhaps the greatest figure of the early Venetian press; like other lesser masters he discovered that however keen the demand for the Classics and Humanists, these hardly constituted a market either permanent or large enough to absorb the quantities of books which the new presses were capable of turning out. In fact, as early as the 1470s there was serious overproduction and a disastrous crash.¹³ Printers then turned their attention to a wider and less discriminating market, producing books in larger numbers, more cheaply, and with less concern for artistic beauty. In diversifying their efforts, Jensen and other printers moved more decisively into the territory of professional scribes and copyists, with books of sermons, meditations, 'school books' in law, medicine and theology, missals, breviaries and books of Hours. Books of a moral and spiritual character like *Decor puellarum* had a wide appeal, with their direct, personal nature. The title, like that of another Jenson book, *Gloria mulierum*, reflects the fact that many books of this kind were aimed at a female clientele. *Decor puellarum* is an elaborate series of sermons for devout women; its seven books correspond to the seven 'ornamenti nuptiali.'¹⁴ Chapter 2 of Book 1 gives a list of prayers which should be known and recited out loud; these include the *Pater noster* and Ave Maria, hymns, canticles, diverse prayers to the saints, the penitential psalms and the office of the dead. The text continues (original punctuation and orthography are reproduced exactly):

Item molte altre oratione so ritrovano esser molto frate al signor dio dicendole devotamente tra lequale so retrofa scripto a roma in una capella di san Pietro dome per san Gregorio: e per altri papa sie sta dato indulgentia de cinque milia anni per uno a zeschaduna persona che contrita e confessa: e senza peccato mortale dira ogni zorno devotamente davanti de uno christo passo cum le misterii de la passione cinque pater nostri e ave maria cum queste cinque infrascripte oratione...
 O Domine iesu christe, adoro te in cruce pendentem...
 O Domine iesu christe, adoro te in cruce vulneratum...
 O Domine iesu christe, adoro te in sepulchro...
 O Domine iesu christe, pastor bone...
 O Domine iesu christe, rogo te propter amaritudinem...¹⁵

A few Marian devotions follow, including one which seems to be modelled, in its form, on the 'Gregorian' prayers. The fact that the passion prayers are singled out in this way as especially

¹² The full title is QUESTA SIE UNA OPERA LA / QUALE SI CHIAMA DECOR / PUELLARUM: ZOE HONORE / DE LE DONZELLE: LAQUALE / DE REGOLA FORMA E MODO / AL STATO DE LE HONESTE / DONZELLE (f.2); the colophon reads ANNO A CHRISTI INCARNA / TIONE MCCCCCLXI. PER MAGISTRUM NICHOLAUM IENSON HOC OPUS QUOD PUELLA / RUM DECOR DICTUR FELICI / TER IMPRESSUM EST. LAUS DEO. The date 1461 in the colophon is a misprint. My observations on this now rare book are based on the copy in the magnificent collection of incunabula in the Austrian National Library in Vienna, where it bears the shelfmark 5.G.57. The other titles which appeared in 1471 are *Palma Virtutum* and *Parole Devote*.

¹³ See Horatio Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press: A Historical Study Based on Documents for the Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (New York & London, 1891) 21ff.

¹⁴ This term is not explained; its meaning remains unclear to me.

¹⁵ There are many other prayers which are said devoutly to the Lord God by many religious, among them being these written at Rome in a chapel of St. Peters by St Gregory: and there are indulgences of five thousand years given by other popes to whoever, contrite and having confessed: and without mortal sin, recites these five prayers written below every day before [an image of] the suffering Christ with the mysteries of the passion and five Pater nostri and Ave Maria: O Lord Jesus Christ, etc.

worthy of the reader's attention is hardly surprising given their importance in contemporary devotional practice. It is noteworthy that the invocations selected and their order are identical with the text of Josquin's motet. Apparently the composer drew on a version of the text which was current in northern Italy at the time, one which the Jenson print may have popularized, or perhaps even initiated.

It is not at all clear for what circumstances or immediate function Josquin might have composed a motet such as this. Howard Mayer Brown found it difficult to imagine even settings of rhymed *horae* being sung in small segments, one *pars* at a time at intervals throughout the day.

It is altogether more credible to suppose that they were performed section by section at stations set up along the way of a procession, or more probably as single pieces at some point during a devotional service dedicated to the Cross or to the Passion or as an interpolated item at some other part of the votive service in question.¹⁶

Part of the problem of interpretation in the motet is the fact that this whole area of popular religious life has been *terra incognita* to musicologists. Manuscript books of hours, which are frequently sumptuously decorated, have attracted attention largely from art historians, for they are a major source for the Flemish miniature painting which brought a new realism into European art. Their studies of particular manuscripts tend to ignore the texts completely, except as a source of inspiration for the artwork, and several magnificent facsimiles include only those pages which are of pictorial interest. So it is a pleasure to observe that historians are now beginning to take this subject area seriously, and to welcome two recent publications. R.N. Swanson's *Religion and Devotion in Europe 1215–1515*, in the Cambridge medieval textbooks series, is aimed at students, and hence rather general.¹⁷ More specialized and more penetrating is Eamon Duffy's study *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*.¹⁸ From Duffy we learn that *O Domine Jesu Christe*, while it appears in the form found in Josquin's motet in about the fourteenth century, actually has an immensely longer history than hitherto suspected. It can be traced back to ninth-century Britain, possibly to a northern English monastic setting with Celtic affiliations.¹⁹ Invocations 2 to 6 of the standard text are found in its earliest recorded version, among a series of fifteen which begins with Christ's work in Creation, and progresses through his dealings as the Word of God with the Patriarchs and ancient Israel, through the Incarnation and ministry, and concluding with the second coming. There is thus no particular emphasis on the Passion. But by the mid-tenth century the Passion invocations had become detached from the rest, and the first five invocations of the later text established as a liturgical prayer by the celebrant at the solemn veneration of the cross on Good Friday. It is similarly prescribed in the tenth-century monastic consuetudinary, the *Regularis concordia*, and in a number of later missals. But the prayer also passed into private devotion and this is the tradition represented in the *Horae* and motet texts. In so doing it became associated with a pictorial image known as the Image of Pity (*Imago Pietatis*), which depicted Christ standing in or seated on his tomb, displaying his Wounds and surrounded by implements of his Passion—lance, scourge, crown of thorns, nails, etc.²⁰ This was the vision which, according to legend,

¹⁶ Howard Mayer Brown, 'Music for Christ's Passion by Anchieta and others: Spanish music ca. 1500 in a pan-European context,' unpublished paper (c.1986) 2.

¹⁷ Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.

¹⁸ Yale UP, 1992.

¹⁹ This summary of the text's history is based on Duffy, *Stripping* 238ff.

²⁰ The image is also variously described as the Mass of St Gregory, and the Man of Sorrows.

Pope Gregory had experienced, and to which the rubric quoted above refers. The legend appears to derive from a Byzantine icon which was once located in the Church of Santa Croce in Gersusalemme, also referred to in the rubric.

Although the prayers of the motet text do not allude to the *Imago Pietatis* (which does not depict Christ on the cross), the association of the prayers with the Image would account for the attribution of the prayers to St. Gregory.²¹ At the same time the text was reshaped in accordance with the currents of late medieval devotion, an age when, as Emile Mâle has pointed out, 'the Passion became the chief concern of the Christian soul.'²² Just as the crucifix became the central liturgical image, and to dominate even the domestic surroundings of men and women, 'in England as elsewhere the Bernadine tradition of affective meditation on the passion, enriched and extended by the Franciscans, became without rival the central devotional activity of all serious-minded Christians.'²³ Duffy makes a telling point with respect to the text of the first invocation, which was originally 'O Domine Jesu Christe, adoro te in cruce *ascendentem*,' suggesting the same theology found in the Latin hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi* used in the modern Roman rite on Good Friday, and in early medieval art which portrays Christ crucified not as an anguished and defeated figure but as a tranquilly victorious king robed and crowned. The substitution of *pendentem* for *ascendentem* occurs only in the late medieval devotional sources and transforms its whole theological resonance.

The crucifixion is now something which happens to Christ, rather than his triumphal act: he does not ascend the cross, he hangs upon it, and the final section of the expanded version [the *quinta pars* of Josquin's motet]...increases this understanding of the Passion as passive suffering by directing the devotee's attention to Christ's 'bitter suffering' and the moment of his death, emphases entirely absent in the original and its liturgical derivatives.²⁴

While the Jenson print does not suggest an original function for Josquin's motet markedly different from that suggested by its presence in *Horae*, it does widen the range of possibilities slightly. Brown has argued that the presence of votive offices and similar material from *Horae* in Petrucci prints suggests that the motets functioned as musical adornment to the votive services held in court chapels and even at the side altars of cathedrals and churches.²⁵ It is becoming clear that even settings of liturgical texts were only rarely used as substitutions for chanted items of the liturgy. We know that they were often sung during or after Mass, for example at the offertory or the elevation of the Host, but not during the (regular) Office services. They were also associated with processions and extraliturgical services such as the Exposition or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament or the Marian service known as the *Salut*. There is also

²¹ Duffy gives several examples of the *Imago* from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English sources, so the association of the text with this image would seem to have been longer lasting in England than elsewhere. Only one of the French sources known to me alludes to it, a *Missale Romanum* published at Paris in 1530. There the rubric before the prayers begins 'Quicumque in statu gratie existens dixerit devote septem orationes sequentes cum septem Pater noster et septem Ave Maria ante imaginem pietatis' ['Whoever being in a state of grace says devoutly the seven following prayers together with seven Pater noster and seven Ave Maria before the Image of Piety']. See Robert Lippe, *Missale Romanum*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1907) 380. The wording of the Jenson print, 'davanti de uno christo passo cum le misterii de la passione', is also a clear allusion to the *Imago Pietatis* (see n.15 above).

²² Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986) 83; cit. Duffy, *Stripping* 234.

²³ Duffy, *Stripping* 234–5.

²⁴ Duffy, *Stripping* 241. André Wilmart found the first prayer in the context of a private devotional text as early as the eleventh century, where it still retained the formula 'in cruce *ascendentem*.' See Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels* 144, n.4.

²⁵ Brown, 'Mirror of Man's Salvation' 756–57.

evidence that they were sung as entertainment of an edifying kind at mealtimes in the household of a prelate or nobleman.²⁶ There is no reason to suppose that settings of devotional texts did not serve similar functions.

Decor puellarum was, as already noted, directed at a female clientele, so if it was the immediate source for Josquin's motet text it seems possible that the composer's attention was directed to it by a female patron. If Osthoff is right and the motet was an early composition, and thus from Josquin's Milanese period,²⁷ a likely figure in this regard would be Bona of Savoy, the wife of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Everything we know of the Duchess suggests that it would be quite reasonable to assume that she acquired copies of the Jenson books.²⁸ It would be quite natural for a person in her position, who had a special attachment to a particular text, to order a polyphonic setting of it for performance by the *cappella*, either at a votive service in the chapel or in some more personal context within the Sforza family's daily life.

O Domine Jesu Christe is unusual among fifteenth-century devotional texts in having a history which extends back beyond the thirteenth century. The Jenson print would also appear to be a somewhat atypical context for prayers of this sort.²⁹ While it is directed at a similar clientele as the *Horae*, it differs from them in its essentially didactic and homiletic function. It does, however, illuminate further the background of Josquin's motet cycle.

²⁶ See Anthony Cummings, 'Towards an interpretation of the sixteenth-century motet,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981) 43–59.

²⁷ This has been questioned by some scholars, who believe the Italianate *lauda* style did not influence Josquin until the 1490s. See for example Edward Lowinsky, rev. of *Josquin des Prez*, vol. 1, by Helmuth Osthoff, *Renaissance News* 16 (1963) 255–62.

²⁸ See for example Caterina Santoro, *Gli Sforza* (Milan: dall'Oglio, 1968) 118ff. Josquin moved from the *Duomo* to the court *cappella* in 1474.

²⁹ I have searched the books of this kind in the Incunabulum collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna and found only this single occurrence. While this collection provides only one sample of printed devotional manuals, it is a large and representative one. It would seem that motet texts of this kind are associated almost exclusively with *Horae* and similar books.