

The One Who Comes After Me: John the Baptist, Christian Time, and Symbolic Musical Techniques

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Among art historians, there is no disagreement that late medieval Christian visual culture was saturated with symbolic imagery. The question has been where to draw the line between what is symbolic and what is not. In a landmark article unlocking symbolism in Jan van Eyck's famous *Arnolfini Portrait*, Erwin Panofsky coined the term "disguised symbolism" to account for a larger trend in the fifteenth century that saw artists investing increasingly realistic or naturalistic images with traditional Christian allegories.¹ The principle of "disguised symbolism" brought many adherents but also touched a nerve with other iconologists, particularly those studying Netherlandish sacred art of the early fifteenth century. One of the critics, Jan Baptist Bedaux, figured that historians could be confident of "disguised symbolism" only if the "disguises" were ineffective. He argued conversely that the most successful of concealed symbols that a modern historian could posit might well have been unintended by the artist.² Uncomfortable with terms like "disguised symbolism," art historians now tend to view the artillery of Christian symbols as being in no need of obscuring. Rather, it is modern viewers—not informed late medieval observers—who have wrestled with some seemingly inscrutable iconographic representations. As James Marrow has suggested (again with reference to fifteenth-century Netherlandish works), artists seem to have drawn quite conservatively on a set of conventional signifiers to

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1. Panofsky, "Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*." According to Panofsky, the increased technical proficiency of fifteenth-century Dutch artists led to a rigorous infusion of heavily cloaked representations in their works; *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 1:142.

2. Bedaux, "Reality of Symbols," 7, 21. See also Benjamin, "Disguised Symbolism Exposed"; Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art"; and Lane, "Sacred versus Profane in Early Netherlandish Painting."

encode sacred ideas.³ The prevailing thinking among modern historians has thus swung back to the notion that artists employing symbols in their works for educated, elite members of late medieval society would have avoided arbitrary representations in favor of time-honored symbols that effectively distilled complex and meaningful truths in the Christian imagination.⁴

Generally less prone to ideological battles on this subject, historians of early music—particularly those writing in the last two decades on music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—have steadily uncovered symbolism in sacred music of the Latin West that has gone undetected for centuries. On the face of it, the sound world would seem to pose significant barriers to illustrating Christian concepts or figures in a clearly legible manner, but composers' tactics have been typically as discernible as those of their artistic counterparts. Several studies have highlighted Christian allegories communicated in music with symbolic techniques and processes, whether found in mathematical design at the deep structural level ("sounding number"), in emblematic cantus firmi, or in more readily perceived, surface-oriented phenomena.⁵ Willem Elders has devoted considerable ink to musical symbolism, notably in his discussion of three-voice canons in masses and motets as illustrative of the Holy Trinity, or God in three persons.⁶ Fifteenth-century cantus firmus techniques offered a significant platform for divulging theological conceits in larger musical structures, as Craig Wright has shown for example in the curious proportioning of the tenor in Guillaume Du Fay's well-known motet *Nuper rosarum flores*, reflective of the dimensions of Solomon's temple.⁷ The theological underpinnings of select *L'Homme armé* masses and the Caput tradition have

3. Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art," 151.

4. The traditional view of unwavering Christian symbolism is also given in Ladner, "Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism," 227–28; and Huizinga, *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, 234–48.

5. The transition from mathematically conceived compositions to those rhetorically conceived has been noted in Sparshott and Goehr, "Philosophy of Music, II." On symbolic musical techniques in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Rothenberg, "Marian Feasts, Seasons, and Songs in Medieval Polyphony," 68–85 and idem, *Flower of Paradise*, 4–13. See also Arlt, "'Triginta denariis'"; and Bent, "Deception, Exegesis and Sounding Number in Machaut's Motet 15." For criticism of "sounding number," "Pythagoreanism," and, more broadly, "cathedralism," see Page, *Discarding Images*, 11–36. On symbolic cantus firmi, see Robertson, "Man with the Pale Face"; Rothenberg, "Marian Symbolism of Spring"; Long, "Symbol and Ritual in Josquin's *Missa di Dadi*"; Bloxam, "Cultural Context for the Chanson Mass"; idem, "'I have never seen your equal'"; Zayaruznaya, "What Fortune Can Do to a Minim"; and Kirkman, *Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass*, esp. 39–164.

6. Elders, *Symbolic Scores*, 189–95; and idem, *Composers of the Low Countries*, 39, 71.

7. Wright, "Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*." For an expansion of Wright's thesis based on the architecture of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, see Trachtenberg, "Architecture and Music Reunited." Christian numerology has been a strand of scholarship on late medieval and early modern music that has been marginalized but still cannot be ignored. See, for example, Trowell, "Proportion in the Music of Dunstable"; and Elders, "Symbolism in the Sacred Music of Josquin."

also been unlocked by scholars' recognition of other distinctive compositional procedures.⁸ Composers further employed highly localized musical effects to emphasize suggestive texts in an almost madrigalistic fashion. A hemiolic shift enacted through coloration or a temporary turn to triple mensuration are but two examples of how a composer of the late fifteenth or sixteenth century might treat the "tertia die" (on the third day) of the Credo.⁹ A growing body of fairly deliberate musical symbolism is gradually being exposed, which demonstrates composers' inclinations to inscribe Christian personages or theological concepts using available musical processes.

Identifications of symbolic musical design in recent scholarship have usually involved Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Trinity, though occasionally there is a more pointed theological or biblical reference, as in the proportions of Solomon's temple expressed in *Nuper rosarum flores*. Admittedly, it would be difficult to develop a compelling musical ground plan or technique to illustrate a figure or idea that was not deeply ingrained in the minds of the faithful, such as an obscure saint.¹⁰ But one high-ranking and evocative Christian figure, John the Baptist, has been overlooked for his impact on musical design in the pre-modern repertory. The Baptist is already an indelible figure for historians of early music, as he is the subject of the didactic melody *Ut queant laxis*, which Guido of Arezzo introduced as an aid to sight-singing in the early eleventh century.¹¹ While John's connection to music pedagogy and the hexachordal system cannot be dismissed and was indeed perpetuated by theorists for centuries, the hymn melody itself scarcely determined musical structures.¹² On the whole, the Baptist is a figure whose attributes were communicated without problem in visual art; the exception being John's role as precursor, which would require a way to illustrate time. This is where composers filled the void: they seized upon this fundamental image of the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ and expressed the implications of that basic relationship in temporal designs as early as the late fourteenth century.

In this investigation I begin by illuminating the reception of John the Baptist as a figure allied with particular aspects of Christian time, an essential

8. Wright, *Maze and the Warrior*, 159–205; and Robertson, "Savior, the Woman, and the Head of the Dragon."

9. See, for instance, the setting of "tertia die" in m. 124 of the superius in the Credo of Josquin's *Missa de Beata Virgine* (NJE 3.3, p. 58).

10. Bent ("Rota versatilis") has shown that the voice exchange of the upper parts in the English motet *Rota versatilis* reflects the wheel associated with Catherine of Alexandria. On the representation of Dame Fortune in music of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Zayaruznaya, "What Fortune Can Do to a Minim"; Leach, *Guillaume de Machaut*, 197–262; and Zayaruznaya, "'She Has a Wheel That Turns'."

11. The use of *Ut queant laxis* as both a didactic chant and gloss is discussed in Boynton, "Orality, Literacy, and the Early Notation of the Office Hymns," 111–15.

12. For a catalogue of *Ut queant laxis* settings, see Ferer, "Feast of John the Baptist," 111–261. One setting of *Ut queant laxis* that does use the hexachordal syllables to generate the piece's architecture comes from Orlande de Lassus. See Lasso, *Complete Motets* 12, 98–99.

part of his character that has surprisingly remained “disguised” to art and music historians alike. By exploring several cases in which late medieval composers experimented with conspicuous temporal procedures in motets about John the Baptist, I set the stage for a more focused symbolic understanding of the forerunner in association with the high intellectual art of the canon, as unequivocally exposed in several sixteenth-century canonic inscriptions in manuscripts from the papal chapel. The breadth of evidence reveals not only that John the Baptist’s precursorial nature was best represented in the temporal art of music but also that references to John the Baptist mediated a deep-seated cultural idea that found meaningful expression through this saint across almost two centuries.

Images of the Baptist and Christian Temporality

Because the life of John the Baptist is given in the gospels, his character was firmly etched in Christian memory with several traits that were easily adopted into visual culture. As relayed most vividly in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, the Baptist led an ascetic lifestyle and conducted his ministry in the wilderness. His ruggedness was captured enduringly in the image of his coarse clothing made of camel hair and his diet of locusts and wild honey.¹³ John is clearly identifiable in scenes of Jesus’s baptism by these markers of outward appearance. Another image permanently fastened in the Christian imagination is John’s connection to Jesus as the Lamb of God. When the forerunner first encountered Christ in his baptizing ministry, he “pointed him out” and made his testimony, “Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi” (Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world) from John 1:29, a text which by the late seventh century formed the basis for a Mass Ordinary plainchant accompanying the Fraction.¹⁴ In approaching the subject of John the Baptist in their works, medieval and Renaissance artists often inscribed the “Ecce Agnus Dei” text on banners, sometimes with the saint physically pointing his finger to Christ, to a lamb, or to these prophetic words. A miniature in a book of hours of Sarum usage from the first quarter of the fifteenth century combines several ciphers typical in visual representations of John the Baptist, from the wilderness setting and the clothing made of camel skin, to his finger pointing to the Lamb of God with a banderole “Ecce agnus [*sic*] dei” (Fig. 1). Another important scene involving the precursor saint, primed for artistic renderings, was the story of John’s notorious beheading at the banquet of Herod the Tetrarch, widely observed in a feast day (29 August) by the Western church. The sensational narrative of the beheading—complete with a

13. Mark 1:6 and Matthew 3:4. That the nourishment of locusts and wild honey was a familiar Jewish diet (thus diminishing the sanctity of this aspect of John’s asceticism) has been explained by Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 10–11.

14. Crocker and Hiley, “Agnus Dei.”



Figure 1 Suffrage to St. John the Baptist, holding a lantern and a scroll with inscription “Ecce agnus [sic] dei.” Book of Hours, Use of Sarum, ca. 1400–1425. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Lat. 15, fol. 12v. Used by permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

femme fatale, incest, and murder—did not lose favor in music and drama, enduring to the present day.¹⁵

Consider, however, some salient aspects of John the Baptist communicated in Scripture that were more difficult to represent visually. While John’s disheveled appearance and the desert scenes were easy to portray, his role as the “voice crying out” (*vox clamantis*)—a fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah (40:3) in the gospels of Mark (1:3), Luke (3:4), and John (1:23)—was ill suited to pictorial realization. Similarly, it was no small challenge to represent the idea that the Baptist’s ministry must eventually cede to that of Christ, memorably encapsulated in John’s declaration: “He [Christ] must increase; I must decrease” (John 3:30). Yet, more than one composer attempted to portray the Baptist’s “diminishing” quality either through the transformation

15. The gospels of Matthew (14:3–12) and Mark (6:17–29) devote the most attention to the events leading up to and including the Baptist’s beheading at the banquet of the tetrarch Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great). Modern versions of the story focus on the figure of Salome, with nearly four hundred artistic, literary, musical, and theatrical presentations during the years 1840–1940 alone; see Pym, “Importance of Salomé,” 312–13. On the North American fascination with the character of Salome, reflected in popular songs through the 1920s, see Hamberlin, “Visions of Salome.”

of mensuration or the truncation of note values. It is the central premise of John's predecessor nature and the notion of his distinct chronological distance from Christ, however, that consumed believers and would have an impact not only on theology but also on practical and material elements of the faith, musical composition among them.

The place of John the Baptist in the story of Christ tapped into particular beliefs about time in Christian consciousness, and his association with temporal matters was expressed in many forms, beginning in Scripture itself and echoing through late medieval thought and ritual, which will be important for witnessing distinct expressions of time in music for the saint. The scene of the Visitation reveals that the births of John and Jesus were separated by six months (Luke 1:36), but it is scarcely recognized by Christians today that this important detail helped determine the shape of the liturgical year. Though there are no exact birth dates in Scripture, the Church Fathers set the nativity feasts of John and Jesus six months apart in the year. The position of the natiivities was conspicuously allied with the movements of the sun. The celebration of Mary's conception of Jesus on 25 March (Annunciation) was an overlay to the spring equinox in the Roman calendar (AD VIII Kalendas Aprilis), which in turn situated Christmas (25 December, or AD VIII Kalendas Ianuarias) around the time of the winter solstice. The feasts of John the Baptist's nativity (24 June) and his lesser-known conception date (24 September) complete the four so-called quarter days—the summer and winter solstices and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes.¹⁶ These four critical moments in the year won popular acceptance likely because they were in fact solar phenomena, physically observable and demonstrative of the cyclical nature of the heliological year, no doubt reassuring to the principally agricultural societies of the Middle Ages.

John's nativity feast, coincident with Midsummer Day, was well known as a day of solar crisis. At this moment in the year, the length and power of sunlight were at their greatest and would diminish for the next six months. The festival day was celebrated with an array of activities, including the lighting of bonfires, the celebration of nature's foliage (at its seasonal peak), the gathering of a curative "dew," and the public repudiation of authority (emulating the day of solar reversal). These Midsummer rituals commemorating the turning point in the year were in full force in the late Middle Ages, and some vestiges of these public festivities are still in practice today.¹⁷ The winter solstice (or

16. The late fourth-century treatise *De solsticia et aequinoctia conceptionis et nativitatibus domini nostri Iesu Christi et Iohannis baptistae* (On the solstices and equinoxes of the conception and nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ and John the Baptist), formerly attributed to John Chrysostom and now considered anonymous, arrives at this precise placement of natiivities and conceptions by starting with the conception of John the Baptist. For an edition of *De solsticia et aequinoctia*, see Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*, 88–105. On the connection between spring and Eastertide and their echo in Marian polyphony, see Rothenberg, "Marian Symbolism of Spring," esp. 319–28.

17. On the late medieval rituals enacted at Midsummer, see Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, 311–21; and Anderson, "Fire, Foliage, and Fury."

Midwinter) around the time of Christ's birth was its own cause for celebration, as the promise of increasing daylight followed the depths of darkness at that time of the year.¹⁸ The Scottish anthropologist James George Frazer referred to the calendrical equilibrium between Christmas and the Nativity of John the Baptist as the "golden hinges" of the year.¹⁹ These hinges created two seasons (one of decreasing daylight, one of increasing daylight), and the solar pivot on the Baptist's 24 June feast had the added advantage of concretizing the theology from John's final witness mentioned earlier: "He must increase; I must decrease" (John 3:30).²⁰ The "decreasing" effect began at the summer solstice and was symbolic of John's ministry, which was said to diminish once Christ's ascended to prominence. By holding the nativities of Jesus and the Baptist at the poles of the solar year, early Christian theologians established an important analogy in the calibration of the annual Christian cycle. The correspondences were articulated most notably by Augustine but were also repeated in the following millennium, for example by the influential thirteenth-century bishop and liturgical writer Guillaume Durand.²¹ John's inimitable connections to Christian temporality were indeed significant in medieval Christian thought and had repercussions beyond his role as precursor. The feast of his nativity marked a crucial moment in the liturgical year and was legitimated by the rhythms of nature, which could be internalized by believers.

A number of composers, almost certainly aware of the temporal connotations associated with the Baptist, experimented with ways to embed John-inspired ("Johannine") conceits in the structures and surfaces of musical

18. For discussion of the early history involving the Christianization of a Roman festival on the winter solstice called the "Birth of the Invincible Sun" (*dies natalis solis invicti*), set on 25 December in the Julian calendar, see Urbain, *Ein Martyrologium der christlichen Gemeinde*, 13–18; and Talley, *Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 85.

19. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 10:181–82.

20. Vulgate: "Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui." The use of the words *crescere* and *minui*, which suggest a lunar metaphor, strengthen the analogy. The powerful influence of the moon on the summer solstice and the attendant imagery of the Midsummer season have been demonstrated by Coussée, *La Saint-Jean, la canicule et les moissons*, 31–48. For lunar metaphors applied to mensuration signs in Renaissance music, see Schiltz, "Space Odyssey."

21. Augustine: "And as for John himself: He, he said, must increase; and I must also decrease" (John 3:30). And so it was formed with the days in which they are born and in their deaths. For John is born when the days begin to diminish: and the Lord is born when the days begin to increase in length." (Et Joannes ipse: Illum, inquit, oportet crescere, me autem minui [Joan. III, 30]. Quod et diebus quibus nati sunt, et mortibus quibus passi sunt, figuratum est. Nascitur namque Joannes ex quo dies incipiunt minui: nascitur Dominus ex quo dies incipiunt crescere.) *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, 40:42. Durand: "The sun then descends in a circle; and thus the repute of John, who was thought to be Christ, descends. According to this testimony, John asserts it thus, saying: I must diminish, and he must increase, for they say that it was said by him that the days begin to diminish, but at the birth of Christ, the days increase in length." (Sed tunc sol descendit in circulo; sic et fama Iohannis qui putabatur Christus descendit, secundum quod ipse testimonium perhibet dicens: Me oportet minui, illum autem crescere, quod, dicunt quidam, dictum esse eo quod tunc dies incipiunt minui et in Nativitate Christi crescere.) Durandus, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, 3:58.

creations with techniques reflective of his character. The pieces under consideration are by no means representative of the full range of pre-modern compositions in honor of the Baptist; rather, they emerge because of their temporal peculiarities that have already been noticed in the literature.²² Transmitted in sources of the late fourteenth century, the earliest of these works are broadly concerned with calculated manipulations of time and are not strictly allied with a particular musical genre. A set of later cases from the Sistine Chapel points to an institution that understood the forerunner in connection with the musical art of canon in Magnificats and motets. For nearly two centuries, composers projected the Baptist's most outstanding attribute cleverly in a way that could not be put to canvas but only experienced in the unfolding of time.

A Mensural Sequence and the Waning Effect

Some two dozen motets from the thirteenth century survive on the subject of John the Baptist with the tenors IOHANNE and MULIERUM. While there are references to the Midsummer season and its rituals throughout this large family of works, there is no indication of an attempt to portray the precursor saint in any symbolic musical structures that draw on the temporal parameters of music.²³ The first case that appears to illustrate the Baptist's impact on musical design occurs not in a motet, but in an anonymous mensural sequence from the late fourteenth-century manuscript Ivrea, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS 115. As Karl Kügle pointed out in his survey of the manuscript, the sequence *Basis prebens firmamentum* (fols. 39v–41r), which takes the forerunner as its subject, has suffered the neglect of scholars because of the difficulty it poses for classification. Its text and music not known from any other medieval source, this monophonic sequence is the only one of its kind in the Ivrea Codex, a manuscript dominated by polyphonic Mass Ordinary sections and motets.²⁴ The strophes of *Basis prebens firmamentum* are organized into a Victorine rhyme scheme (*aabaab*). The text, provided in its entirety in Appendix A, reveals a host of images that retell the life of the Baptist, includ-

22. For an expansive survey of Renaissance works for John the Baptist, see Ferer, "Feast of John the Baptist."

23. On this family of Johannine motets and their allusions to ritual practices of the Midsummer season in the late Middle Ages, see Anderson, "Fire, Foliage, and Fury."

24. The compilation of the Ivrea Codex seems to have occurred in the 1380s or 1390s, but the repertory was likely composed prior to 1360, extending as far back as the beginning of the fourteenth century. The manuscript represents the second largest collection of liturgical settings in the fourteenth century, exceeded only by the manuscript Apt, Basilique Sainte-Anne, Trésor de la cathédrale, MS 16 bis. For an examination of the repertory and codicological evidence in the Ivrea Codex, see Kügle, *Manuscript Ivrea*, 46–79. On the sequence *Basis prebens firmamentum*, see *ibid.*, 180.

ing references to his ascetic lifestyle (1b, 4a, 9b). Moreover, allusions to dew (14a, 15b) and light (9b), particularly burning light (2a, 12a), may evoke the surviving rituals associated with the feast.²⁵ *Basis prebens firmamentum* also curiously breaks into polyphony for two of its sixteen strophes.²⁶ Equally peculiar to the sequence is that these sixteen strophes collapse into eight independent melodic groups, each with *ouvert* and *clos* endings, giving it properties of the vernacular repertory in this period.²⁷ These anomalies have surely caused the range of scholarly categorizations of this setting, from a “two-part discant” to a “Latin ballade,” and even a “motet.”²⁸ What has yet to receive attention is how the striking mensural progression brings the construction of this sequence into dialogue with the work’s subject matter.

The most remarkable aspect of *Basis prebens firmamentum* concerns its systematic mensural organization. As Kügle already noted in his seminal study of the manuscript, the eight groups of verses are methodically divided among the four mensurations (Table 1).²⁹ The composer has taken this sequence for the Baptist and organized a kind of mensural progression across the work, each pair of strophes shifting to a new tempus or prolation. The alternation of mensurations was rare in fourteenth-century music, but did occasionally surface in

25. A particularly curious analogy for the musicologist can be found in first line of half-verse 10b, in which John the Baptist is said to be “playing the lyre” (*nablum tangens*). I have already noted the Baptist’s association with the practice of music through the venerable *Ut queant laxis* tune on which young singers were raised, but the extension of the Baptist’s dominion into the realm of musical instruments is a truly unique image in the canon of Johannine works. A variant of this same phrase (a command: *nablum tange [vocis]*, “play the voice’s harp,” i.e., “sing”) can be found in the text of the motet *Apta caro plumis ingenii/Flos virginum/ALMA REDEMPTORIS*, which is also found in the Ivrea Codex (fols. 5v–6r).

26. A discant voice supplements the monophony for two strophes in the sixth major section of the sequence (verses 11a/b and 12a/b). The interpolated upper voice could have been motivated either by the heightened melismatic activity found only in these particular verses or by cues in the text, including the first formal mention of John the Baptist. This same section also emphasizes forms of the word “sweet” (*dulcis, dolci, suaviter*). In fourteenth-century music theory treatises including the *Speculum musicae* of Jacques de Liège, harmonic consonance (*consonantia*) was conceptually linked with the taste of sweetness. At least two passages in *Speculum musicae* associate the words *dulciter* and *suaviter* with the subject of consonance or discant voices. See Jacobi Leodiensis, *Speculum musicae*, 2:21; and Coussemaker, ed., *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi nova series a Gerbertina altera*, 2:386–87.

27. One would expect an independent melody to be set to the internal repetition of each strophe (*aabaab*), yielding sixteen, not eight, segments. Instead, the arrangement of designated endings is peculiar to this sequence, somewhat reminiscent of Machaut’s *lais*. On the structure of *Basis prebens firmamentum*, see Kügle, “Aspects of Composition in the Late Middle Ages,” 53–57.

28. Heinrich Bessler called *Basis prebens firmamentum* a “zweistimmige Diskante in der Rhythmik des 14. Jahrhunderts” in his “Studien zur Musik des Mittelalters, I,” 187. Peter Jeffery referred to it as one of two “Latin ballades” in “A Four-Part *In seculum* Hocket,” 24. *Basis prebens firmamentum* was considered part of a series of Latin “motets” by Tomasello, “Scribal Design in the Compilation of Ivrea Ms. 115,” 81.

29. Kügle, *Manuscript Ivrea*, 181–83.

Table 1 Mensuration scheme of *Basis prebens firmamentum*

| Melodic Group | Strophes | Tempus | Prolation |
|---------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | 1–2 | Perfect | Major |
| 2 | 3–4 | Perfect | Minor |
| 3 | 5–6 | Perfect | Major |
| 4 | 7–8 | Perfect | Minor |
| 5 | 9–10 | Imperfect | Major |
| 6 | 11–12 | Imperfect | Minor |
| 7 | 13–14 | Imperfect | Major |
| 8 | 15–16 | Imperfect | Minor |

the chanson repertory, though without structural implications.³⁰ The extent and scrupulous control of mensural shifts in *Basis prebens firmamentum*, however, cannot be accidental and indeed plays a crucial role in the design of the sequence. It is no exaggeration to say that it is without precedent for the time, only outdone a century later by Ockeghem in his *Missa Prolationum*, which presents the four prolations simultaneously, as the canonic interval expands.³¹

In one sense, the systematic mensural scheme of *Basis prebens firmamentum* can be viewed as a lesson in mastering the four possibilities of tempus and prolation. Each combination is repeated, possibly for didactic emphasis. Perhaps it was not a coincidence that the composer of *Basis prebens firmamentum* drew upon a text from the Baptist in this disciplined demonstration of the four mensurations, since by that time John had a special relationship with music pedagogy. Yet closer examination of the sequence’s meticulous arrangement of mensurations reveals a more profound resonance with the precursor saint, particularly in light of the temporal and seasonal images associated with his persona. Table 1 indicates that the perfect tempus occupies the first half

30. Examples from Chantilly, Bibliothèque de Musée Condé, MS 564 include Cuvelier’s *Lorsque Arthus* (fol. 40v) and *Ne Geneive, Tristan, Yssout* (fol. 41v), along with Galiot’s *Le Sault perilleux* (fol. 37r). The changes in mensuration do not coincide with new verses, nor do they appear motivated by the sung texts. As prime “Ars subtilior” examples from the chanson repertory, these pieces appear in no way didactic (in contrast to *Basis prebens firmamentum*). That the French composer and theorist Jehan Vaillant (fl. 1360–90) is said to have used Galiot’s *Le Sault perilleux* to demonstrate the 9:8 proportion to his students in Paris (see Günther, “Galiot, Johannes”) does not mean that the pieces were still easily executable. Instead, the complex notational style and use of polymeters seem to challenge the singers and also test the limits of rhythmic and contrapuntal interaction between voices. In the Ivrea Codex, the monophonic *Credo* (fol. 64v), also found in Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 1361 (fol. 178r–v), features mensural alterations that at least coincide with major breaks in the text, but again, they do not begin to approach the level of sophistication and systematic treatment of mensurations found in *Basis prebens firmamentum*. On this *Credo* setting and the alternative manuscript, see Catalunya, “¿Ars subtilior en Toledo?”

31. For an edition of the *Missa Prolationum*, see *Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Mass Sections*, III/4, 25–59.

of the piece and is exchanged for the imperfect tempus at the midpoint of the sequence. Within each tempus, the prolation alternates between major and minor, with the minor variety always concluding each set of four strophes before repeating the succession. Evidently, the composer has designed *Basis prebens firmamentum* to have the net effect of proceeding from subdivisions of three (perfect tempus/major prolation) to subdivisions of two (imperfect tempus/minor prolation). The rhythmic scheme thus projects an overall “waning” trend, a decreasing mensural profile that compellingly resonates with the “decreasing” image of the Baptist expressed in John 3:30 (“He must increase; I must decrease”). Further, it may not be a coincidence that the most “diminished” mensuration (i.e., imperfect tempus and minor prolation) is first reached in the sixth section of the piece, noted earlier for its polyphony. These verses also represent the sequence’s first formal mention of John, born six months prior to Christ.

Although the small burst of polyphony in strophes 11–12 has attracted the most musicological attention in *Basis prebens firmamentum*, strophe 9 of the sequence was positioned at the head of the work’s second half, bringing the symmetry into yet sharper focus with the reference to light (emphasis added).

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| 9a. Illibatus reclinasti natum summe reformasti promptus et novissimus | You bent back, O high one, and restored the son intact, eagerly and at long last. |
| 9b. antra petens iudicasti quanta luce radiasti porro preclarissimus. | Seeking the caves, you judged by how much light you have shone and hereafter you were very bright/famous. |

The nativity feast of John—the halfway point to Christmas—signaled the beginning of a period in which daylight would diminish, only to be reversed again at the celebration of Christ’s birth. Significantly at the center of this sequence, the composer replaced the governing perfect tempus with the imperfect variety that persists for the remainder of the piece, an undisguised shift that needed to be internalized and executed by singers. Coupling the truncated mensural identity (repeated for effect) with allusions to the light associated with the Baptist, the anonymous composer of *Basis prebens firmamentum* seems to have found a way to inscribe the “diminishing” attribute of John’s ministry into the sound world, the only expressive medium that could accommodate it.

Basis prebens firmamentum is a peculiar mensural monophonic sequence found in a section of the Ivrea Codex that otherwise contains polyphony. Kügle singled out this work for its unique emphasis on “John,” possibly referring to the patron saint of the native diocese of the manuscript’s two main scribes, Jehan Pellicier (himself a “John”) and Jacometus de Ecclesia, as well as its assumed instigator, Pierre de la Chambre.³² All three hailed from the valley of Maurienne in Savoy, in which the principal town St-Jean-de-Maurienne and

32. Kügle, *Manuscript Ivrea*, 74.

cathedral were dedicated to John the Baptist.³³ The unusual systematic organization of “waning” mensurations in the manuscript’s only sequence—far more sophisticated than a proportionately diminished tenor of a motet—encourages an exegetical view of its design that further reinforces the association of the Baptist with a state of decreasing. *Basis prebens firmamentum* is one of two early experiments that demonstrate composers’ potential to imbue Johannine conceits in musical constructs. The second of the early examples, from around the turn of the fifteenth century, is the work of another anonymous composer and makes an important step toward linking the Baptist to the craft of canon, a connection that would continue into the later sixteenth century.

An Early English Mensural Canon for the Baptist

In an overview of the late medieval motet, Margaret Bent pointed out that motets from the fourteenth century onward began to display symbolic relationships often motivated by texts and emblematic numbers. Providing a hint about how the figure of John the Baptist might be chiseled into musical works, she noted the cues that composers might take from suggestive texts in motets:

The added texts may prescribe a unique canonic or proportional performance of the cryptic tenor (for example, “twice by hemiola” for the 9:6:4 proportion; **“precursor” to signal both John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ and the canonic *dux* of the tenor going ahead**); numerical references—to twelve Zodiac signs, twelve musicians, seven stars, seven names—may be closely mirrored in local and long-term aspects of musical design.³⁴ (Emphasis added)

Bent had a few pieces in mind when she wrote this sentence, most conspicuously the three-voice musicians’ motet *Apollinis eclipsatur nunquam lux/Zodiacum signis lustrantibus*. She also put forward the analogy between the leading voice of a canon (*dux*) and the forerunner John the Baptist, also prompted by a piece not specified in her summary. Here, Bent was thinking of the anonymous motet *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* from a turn-of-the-fifteenth-century Yoxford manuscript once held in private possession and now archived in the Suffolk Record Office, together with a portion of the familiar English motet *Sub Arturo plebs* by Johannes Alanus.³⁵ *O amicus sponsi/*

33. For the relics, cult, and cathedral in honor of the Baptist in Maurienne, see Gros, *Histoire du Diocèse de Maurienne*, 1:19–27, 46–49.

34. Bent, “Late-Medieval Motet,” 115.

35. Ipswich, Suffolk Record Office, shelfmark HA30: 50/22/13.15 Yoxford, Cockfield Hall (YFch). *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* is found on fols. i (verso)–ii (recto). Bent has suggested that this motet may be a companion to Alanus’s *Sub Arturo plebs*. On the confusion surrounding the identity of Alanus and the forward-looking musical style of *Sub Arturo plebs*, see Fallows, “Alanus, Johannes.”

Precursoris is indeed rife with theological symbolism for the Baptist. As Bent has already demonstrated in collaboration with David Howlett, the subject of the upper voices—the forerunner John the Baptist—almost certainly determined the extraordinary canonic design of the motet’s tenor and contratenor.³⁶

The two texted upper voices of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* (texts and translations in Appendix B) each declaim a separate description of the Baptist. These texts are staggered in the music, resulting in a remarkably high level of comprehensibility in performance. Cantus I, the longer of the two texts, delivers a biography of the Baptist, spanning events from his conception to his death. The upper voices are set above a rigorously controlled tenor and contratenor, though the manuscript reveals a tenor and a solus tenor, the latter voice being a conflation of the tenor and contratenor parts. The solus tenor partially divulges the missing contratenor, a contrapuntally essential voice in the motet. More information is needed concerning the length of notes in the contratenor, especially when the tenor and contratenor are both sounding. The solution to the missing contratenor can be surmised from the enigmatic text of the Cantus II voice, which Bent has unlocked.³⁷

The composer of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* set the tenor and contratenor in canon, based on an uncomplicated six-note melody (possibly a segment of plainchant), likely chosen or devised for its simplicity, symmetry, and pliability.³⁸ At the turn of the fifteenth century, strict imitation was by no means a new invention. But *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* offers no ordinary canon. In fact, it has the distinction of being the first known motet to produce (all at once) a canon at the fifth, a canon with tenor diminution, a canon on a plainchant, and a mensuration canon fashioned through an unusual form of coloration.³⁹ That canonic techniques might occur in conjunction with a work on the subject of John the Baptist is not surprising: John was not only Christ’s precursor, but also had much in common with him. Both have a parent who receives a visit from the angel Gabriel to announce the coming of a child conceived miraculously. The annunciations, nativities, circumcisions, and the naming of the two boys were also constructed as parallel in the gospel of Luke.⁴⁰ In a sense, it is only time that separates the two. What better way to illustrate in music the parity between the Baptist and Christ set apart at a temporal distance than to engage in imitative counterpoint or, more strictly, canon?

36. Bent and Howlett, “*Subtiliter alternare*,” 46.

37. Ibid., 59–60 and 83.

38. The source of the chant melody is not certain, but John Caldwell proposed that the cantus firmus derives from the middle of the introit *De ventre matris meae* from the feast of the Baptist’s nativity. The correspondence is imperfect however and may be the result of characteristic motion in the D-mode. Caldwell’s suggestion is examined in Bent and Howlett, “*Subtiliter alternare*,” 45.

39. I avoid the term “isorhythm,” as suggested in Bent, “What Is Isorhythm?”

40. Luke’s gospel (1:5–23, 57–66) provides copious details about the conception and birth of John the Baptist, which are highly patterned after Old Testament models of a barren mother. The angel’s announcement to Mary and the birth of Jesus appear in Luke 1:26–38, 2:1–40.

Of all the types of canons in *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris*, it is the mensuration canon in particular that intensifies the connection between the technique and the precursor saint, an idea left unmentioned in Bent's discussion of musical symbolism. As the text of the Cantus II suggests, the (missing) contratenor must read the tenor's notes in reverse coloration. The "reversal" here signals an extension by the ratio 2:3 when cast in red notation, not the hemiolic 3:2 relationship that such coloration usually entails. In contrast to traditional imitative counterpoint, the two canonic voices of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* enter together at a fifth apart (mathematically at the 3:2 ratio) and then become subject to temporal manipulation by the operation of reverse coloration in order to fill the musical space, avoiding parallel fifths (Ex. 1). In Talea I, the tenor begins in black notation, while the contratenor imagines red coloration for these same notes, making them elongated by half (precisely as a dot would add half the value to a note) and thereby slowing down the pace of the cantus firmus. In the middle of Talea I, the tenor then switches to red coloration, and the contratenor to black, to allow the contratenor to "catch up."⁴¹

Moreover, through the deliberate manipulation of mensurations, the composer of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* fashioned the tenor to run ahead of the contratenor, only to be eclipsed by that voice in time. The ingenious design goes far to embody the idea that the Baptist at once prepared the way for Christ and then was surpassed by him. In the motet, the *dux* is just a temporary role for the tenor, the structure instead being defined by the calculated increases and decreases in mensuration for the tenor and contratenor. In addition to the basic idea of one voice running ahead, it is also hard to resist the notion that the composer of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* sought to capture John 3:30 in a musical guise: "He must increase; I must decrease."

That the anonymous composer produced these effects through a rare use of "reverse" coloration may also be significant and invites hermeneutical speculation. Despite its roots in early fourteenth-century sources such as the *Roman de Fauvel*, the technique of coloration to indicate a mensural change was scarcely employed for the remainder of the century.⁴² This makes the appearance in *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* all the more remarkable. The execution of the red coloration in a relationship of 2:3 and not the typical 3:2 ratio

41. Bent and Howlett, "Subtiliter alternare," 44–49. As Bent has shown, the canon can be executed only if the tenor includes two rests in imperfect modus in the middle of the talea. The contratenor must also sing all notes before (not after) the rests following them in order to perform the canon properly.

42. Fourteenth-century examples of coloration in the tenor and/or contratenor are rare for both English and French motets. The earliest use is found in the *Roman de Fauvel* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 146) with Vitry's *Garrit gallus/In nova fert/NEUMA* (fol. 44v) and the anonymous *Quomodo cantabimus/Thalamus puerpere/[TENOR]* (fol. 32r). Later examples include Machaut's motet *Felix virgo/Inviolata genitrix/AD TE SUSPIRAMUS* (M23), his ballade *Biaute qui toutes autres pere* (B4), and several English motets. I would like to thank Margaret Bent for bringing these examples to my attention.

Example 1 *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris*, Talea I. Reproduced from Bent and Howlett, “*Subtiliter alternare*,” 47. Used by permission of Bent.

1a. Solus Tenor (with redundant dots removed)
Tenor notes*
* * ** * *

1b. Tenor
30 tempora = 4 2 2 2 2 6 4 6 1 1
(These red rests should be inserted mentally.)

1c. Contratenor (derived from Tenor by reverse coloration prior to solution of rests)

1d. Contratenor (as derived from Tenor, with rests)
30 tempora = 6 3 3 3 3 4 6 1 1
(Brackets show reversals of note and rest in relation to Tenor.)

1e. Tenor (presumed original form, permitting Contratenor derivation)

Contratenor

Tenor

seals the uniqueness of the method and may call to mind John the Baptist’s calendrical significance, his nativity feast being situated at a moment of solar crisis, directly opposite that of Jesus on 25 December. It would be further enticing to see the uncommon use of expressly red coloration in the lower voices as having implications for the Baptist. Red is the universal symbol for both fire and blood, two images that customarily have held special meaning for the

precursor saint. While the ubiquitous practice of lighting St. John's fires finds no place in *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris*, the "redness" of the tenor and contratenor might connote the blood of the victim, whose martyrdom plays no small role in the motet. Although the Cantus I text surveys John's life, the very first stanza suggests that the crime of Herod and subsequent death of the Baptist will be the crucial events in the narrative: "ut dicam quod finit ausus" (that I may tell of the crime that ended his life).⁴³ The imaginative use of red coloration thus may take on special significance as John's head is severed at the request of a girl. Admittedly, it can be hard to know where to draw the line with these possible allegories, but given the clarity of emblems in contemporary iconography, the sonic representations might not be as arbitrary to a performer or informed listener of the period as the modern analyst might assume.

At minimum, the experimentation both with canon and with an unusual form of coloration in *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* is exceptional, exposing aspects of a piece that inscribes John the Baptist in its musical construction as much as through the declamation of its text. As these compositional techniques became more pervasive in the fifteenth century, one would guess that a definitive association with the Baptist would fade. But additional cases, beginning with one of the largest repertoires of early fifteenth-century music, strengthen unexpectedly the connection between Christ's forerunner and the use of imitative counterpoint and coloration.

The Baptist, Tenor Diminution, and Introductory Imitation

There are two further examples in a single source—Torino, Biblioteca nazionale, MS J.II.9 (commonly called the "Turin Codex")—that reveal familiar Johannine musical symbols in the fifteenth century. This repertory has been associated traditionally with the French Lusignan house, a Crusader dynasty that ruled the island of Cyprus and the Kingdom of Jerusalem from the late twelfth century until the late fifteenth century, but a recent discovery by Kügle points to the manuscript's compilation in the mid-1430s in the circle of an Italian noble, Pietro Avogadro of Brescia.⁴⁴ Containing well over three

43. This description of the death scene in the Cantus I narrative comes at the beginning of the second talea in the proportionally reduced section at the words "Tandem quod dampnat incestum." The sparse text underlay of Cantus II makes the Cantus I text especially audible in performance. For a complete transcription of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris*, see Bent and Howlett, "Subtiliter alternare," 68–77.

44. Kügle, "Glorious Sounds for a Holy Warrior." It was previously thought that the manuscript accompanied Anne of Lusignan as part of a dowry in her marriage to Louis of Savoy in 1433. For earlier studies, see Hoppin, "Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca nazionale, J.II.9"; and the essays in *Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino J.II.9: Report*, ed. Günther and Finscher. For a complete color facsimile of the manuscript with commentary, see *Il Codice J.II.9, Torino, Biblioteca nazionale universitaria*, with introductory study by Data and Kügle.

hundred polyphonic and monophonic items, the Turin Codex is one of the richest sources of early fifteenth-century music. Its five fascicles are given to both sacred and secular repertory spanning plainchant, mass sections, motets, and French vernacular pieces in the *formes fixes* (ballades, rondeaux, and virelais).⁴⁵ Despite its incomparable breadth of repertory, the music has been somewhat marginalized in scholarship, no doubt dogged by the fact that all of its musical contents are both anonymous and *unica*.

The third fascicle of the Turin Codex offers forty-one polytextual motets—thirty-three have Latin texts, and the remaining eight are in French. Of the Latin motets, two highlight John the Baptist, and, surprisingly, each features a discernible compositional property that seems to allude to the precursor's characteristic connections with matters of time already witnessed in this study. The first of the two examples—*Gemma florens militie/Hec est dies gloriosa* (Ex. 2), the eighth motet in the collection—draws a parallel between Janus I, King of Cyprus, and his patron saint John the Baptist (full text in Appendix C).⁴⁶ The motet's Cantus I hails the king (here unnamed) as a valiant defender of Christianity in the East with no mention of the Baptist, but the Cantus II voice issues an entreaty to the king's namesake (“[the one] who has washed all in the river Jordan”) to preserve and protect Janus (here named) from the “gloomy mist, which hides the true light.” Cantus II also indicates that “this is the glorious day on which noble Elizabeth bore her fruit.” It seems obvious, then, that the motet commemorates the Baptist's 24 June nativity, evidently an important feast for Janus and possibly the day the piece was first sung.

Bent has already observed that *Gemma florens militie/Hec est dies gloriosa* is one of only two motets in this section of the Turin Codex that contains a diminution of the tenor.⁴⁷ The other reduced tenor occurs in the manuscript's eighteenth motet (*Sanctus in eternis/Sanctus et ingenitus pater*).⁴⁸ Both motets have similar ground plans: they are divided into two colores of equal length and identical rhythm. Each color statement contains two taleas, the latter repetition in diminution.⁴⁹ Where the tenors diverge is in the use of coloration. *Gemma florens militie* signals its diminution through a reduction in note values (3:1) and the use of coloration for the talea restatement (Ex. 2b), while the latter motet also diminishes the tenor but only through

45. Other early fifteenth-century manuscripts containing large amounts of polyphony (such as Q 15 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canonici misc. 213) do not have nearly this range of genres.

46. Fols. 65v–66r.

47. Bent, “Some Aspects of the Motets,” 358.

48. Fols. 75v–76r. For editions of both motets, see *Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9*, 2:34–38 [*Gemma florens militie*] and 2:75–80 [*Sanctus in eternis*].

49. The voices beyond the tenor differ in design. *Gemma florens militie* may be considered “panisorhythmic” as all voices recycle their initial rhythmic values at the second color statement. In *Sanctus in eternis*, the tenor and contratenor are the only voices that participate in the structure of color and talea restatements.

Example 2 *Gemma florens militie/Hec est dies gloriosa*, excerpts that show the beginnings of tenor statements of color and talea, along with the use of coloration. All follow the transcription in *The Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca nazionale, J.II.9*, ed. Richard Hoppin, 2:34–38.

(a) Beginning of Color I, Talea I in Tenor

Cant. I
Gem - ma flo-rens mi - li - ti - e, Pal - ma

Cant. II
Hec est di - es glo - ri - o -

Ct.
8

Ten.
C

(b) Beginning of Color I, Talea II in Tenor (reduced 3:1, with coloration in all voices)

49
sup - pli - ci - a; Quo ru - unt y-do - la - tri - e

Vir - tu - ti - bus de - co - ra - tur San

Ct.
8

Ten.
C

Example 2 continued

(c) Beginning of Color II, Talea I in Tenor (Talea I in other voices)

65

e Pas - tor in - no - cen - ti - e Per _____ mi - li -

co na - sce - ba - tur Ve - re

(d) Beginning of Color II, Talea II in Tenor (reduced 3:1, with coloration in all voices)

113

glo - ri - e, Lo - cet _____ o - van - tes ho - di - e

vit Pre - ser-vet _____ dans _____ gau - di - um Ce - li qui

reduced note values (2:1)—that is, without coloration. The scribe of *Gemma florens militie* drew further attention to the proportional reduction in the tenor by setting those segments with coloration in the other three voices. The supplemental coloration, however, does not perform an exclusive operation in the motet. Only some of it is necessary, and the technique could have been used in a more localized way, as it is in other parts of the motet (see m. 3 of Cantus II, for instance, in Color I/Talea I). As Richard Hoppin has noted, red breves may be perfect or imperfect, and red semibreves may be altered.⁵⁰ The colored sections thus seem to function only to alert the singers to the section of proportional reduction in the motet's tenor statements.

By the early fifteenth century, it was common to indicate the diminution of a tenor talea by means of coloration, but, importantly, this procedure is not found among the motets in the Turin Codex. This exceptional usage in *Gemma florens militie* suggests that the tenor reduced by coloration might act as a kind of musical fingerprint marking the subject of John the Baptist, who declared that he must decrease so that Christ may rise up in prominence. That the Cantus II celebrates the nativity feast of the Baptist—when the (red) fires were lit and the length of days began to diminish in the solar year—seems to bolster the analogy between the saint and the exclusive use of coloration in conjunction with the proportional reduction of the tenor in the Turin Codex. Singers and probably informed listeners would be able to sense the relative quickening of *Gemma florens militie*/*Hec est dies gloriosa* in performance through the decreased values in the tenor and the heightened rhythmic activity in the other voices. A different symbolic technique, which is not only illustrative of the Baptist but even more readily audible to an elite court audience, comes in the section of imitative counterpoint found at the outset of the other Johannine motet in the Turin Codex, *Hunc diem festis/Precursoris verbi solennia*, the fifteenth piece in the motet fascicle.⁵¹ Unlike *Gemma florens militie*, *Hunc diem festis* is the only motet in the Turin Codex in which the texts of both upper voices address the life of John (complete texts in Appendix D). More crucially, it is also the only motet in the manuscript with a texted section of imitative counterpoint preparing the entrance of the tenor and contratenor.⁵²

50. *Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9, 2:ix*. As editor, Hoppin set the reduced sections with perfect tempus and minor prolation, though he noted that this was an “exceptional” decision. It is not clear if Bent regards the reduced sections of the tenor as a new mensuration, but she does signal in her table (“Some Aspects of the Motets,” 368) that perfect tempus and minor prolation does play a role in the motet. To be sure, no change of mensuration is denoted in the course of this motet.

51. Fols. 72v–73r. For an edition, see *Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9, 2:63–67*.

52. The seventeenth motet of the Turin Codex (*Magni patris magna mira/Ovent Cyprus*, fols. 74v–75r) honors St. Hilarion (a saint prominently featured in the manuscript's first fascicle with an Office and Mass) and contains an untexted opening section, which Hoppin (*Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9, 2:xiii*) assumed was

In some fourteenth-century motets, composers began to dramatize the authority of the tenor voice through a calculated delay of its arrival. By the fifteenth century, this introductory section (sometimes called an *introitus*), often of considerable length, was not uncommon. Voices could enter one by one, sometimes echoing each other in direct imitation. The effect produced anticipation for that governing voice or perhaps for the beginning of a musical design built around repeating tenor statements of melody and rhythm.⁵³ A musical depiction of John the Baptist's precursorial role is not hard to imagine in connection with *introitus* sections, as the ancillary voices "prepare the way" for the voice that provides the motet's scaffolding.

The motet *Hunc diem festis* contains an opening duet of clear imitative counterpoint, which acts an exordium to a full four-voice texture (Ex. 3). Without directly naming the subject of the motet, Cantus I begins with a texted statement extending twelve breves in length. This cantus voice announces the work as celebrating the feast of a man unsurpassed among those "born of a woman," an unmistakable allusion to the words of Jesus describing John the Baptist.⁵⁴ Without support from the other voices, Cantus I may be considered a kind of "voice crying out in the wilderness" at its initial presentation. This cantus voice declaims its opening statement with unusual pacing, beginning with a long and then falling into brief rhythmic diminution, before being interrupted by three consecutive breves. In the absence of another texted voice or an accessory tenor, there are no obstacles to the comprehensibility of the text about the Baptist. Cantus II repeats the musical statement of Cantus I though with different text. It too does not name John, but rather refers to him unambiguously as a "precursor." Not operating from a *signum congruentiae* in the Cantus I part, Cantus II simply reads his own part after four *maxima* rests, a substantially large gap between entries in this type of

instrumental. Its appearance is something of an anomaly: two of the three parts in the textless opening part were inscribed in the upper margin of the folio on a thirteenth stave, above the respective cantus parts. The third voice part (contratenor) for the opening section, however, is supplied with the original contratenor part, suggesting that the exordium was not a revision to the work.

53. Although resembling the hunting-themed genres (*chace*, *caccia*, *fuga*), thinly textured opening sections with imitative counterpoint were rare in the fourteenth century, especially in the motet repertory. None of Guillaume de Machaut's last three motets (Motets 21–23), each of which contains a duet *introitus*, is canonic. Only two motets attributed to Philippe de Vitry (*Tribum/Quoniam secta*/MERITO HEC PATIMUR and *Tuba sacre fidei/In arboris/VIRGO SUM*) have staggered upper-voice entrances preceding the tenor; however, neither of these motets reveals clear imitative counterpoint. Vitry's motet *Petre clemens/Lugentium*/[NON EST INVENTUS] does contain a phrase of imitation between triplum and motetus at its outset, but the tenor also enters at that time (not unlike a *caccia*).

54. Matthew 11:11: "Amen dico vobis non surrexit *inter natos mulierum* maior Iohanne Baptista qui autem minor est in regno caelorum maior est illo" (Amen I say to you, there hath not risen *among them that are born of women* one greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he).

Example 3 Anonymous, *Hunc diem festis/Precursoris verbi solennia*. Opening, following the transcription in *The Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca nazionale, J.II.9*, ed. Richard Hoppin, 2:63–67.

The musical score is written for four voices: Cant. I, Cant. II, Ct. (Contralto), and Tenor. The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are in Latin and are distributed across the vocal staves.

First System:

- Cant. I:** Hunc ____ di-em fe - stis ce - le - bre-mus hym-nis
- Cant. II:** (rest)
- Ct.:** (rest)
- Tenor:** (rest)

Second System (starting at measure 8):

- Cant. I:** na - tus est in quo mu - li - e - re ____ na - tus ____
- Cant. II:** (rest)
- Ct.:** (rest)
- Tenor:** (rest)

Third System (starting at measure 15):

- Cant. I:** Ne - mo qui ____ ma - ior vi - gu - it per ____
- Cant. II:** cur - so - ris ver - bi sol-len - ni - a ____
- Ct.:** (rest)
- Tenor:** (rest)

Example 3 continued

21

— or — — — — — bem O —

Quem mi — sit qui cre — a — vit o — mni — a Ve —

I.

I.

introductory section.⁵⁵ When the tenor and contratenor enter by sounding F at the octave, the canonic imitation ceases in the upper voices.

The nomenclature for an introductory section of this nature has been up for debate in studies of the fifteenth-century motet. Julie Cumming and others have clung to the term “introitus” to describe broadly this kind of opening imitation. She has observed a few subcategories of the introitus, while Robert Nosow has identified two discrete subsets (solo and canonic introitus). Bent recommends a more conservative use of the term “introitus,” reserving it only for parts labeled as such (invariably, untexted introductions).⁵⁶ However the

55. For instance, in the manuscript Q 15, no motet contains a canonic opening of more than eleven breves. Canonic distances ranging from zero to seventeen breves have been demonstrated by Loyan, *Canons in the Trent Codices*, x. The distance of twelve breves between canonic voices may embed a calendrical reference to the months of the year associated also with John the Baptist. On the calendrical significance of the number 12 in the Middle Ages, see Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, 12, 62, 103, 130.

56. Cumming, *Motet in the Age of Du Fay*, 79–80; Nosow, “Florid and Equal-discantus Motet Styles,” 44–45. Bent’s position was noted in personal communication from July 2007. As explained by Cumming, the simplest form of opening imitation is “echo imitation,” in which the second cantus merely repeats the statement of the first cantus, the latter falling silent at the entry of the former. Two examples of echo imitation from Q 15 include Johannes Ciconia’s *O virum omnimoda veneracione/O lux decus Tranensium/O beate Nicholae* (fols. 284v–285r) and Christoforo de Monte’s *Plaude decus mundi/Venetum clarissima* (fols. 250v–252r). Another variety of opening imitation extends to more than two voices. Here, the strictness of the imitation tends to dissipate more quickly, as in Antonius de Civitate’s *O felix flos Florencia/Gaude felix Dominice* (Q 15, fols. 244v–245r) or as in Du Fay’s *Apostolo glorioso/Cum tua doctrina* (Q 15, fols. 270v–271r). The final type of opening imitation confines the counterpoint to the two equal-discantus voices but, unlike echo imitation, maintains counterpoint between these two voices. See, for example, Du Fay’s *Vasilissa ergo gaude* (Q 15, fols. 276v–277r). Bent has observed that the term “introitus” is encountered in Q 15 in two contiguous motets, prominently labeled in Du Fay’s *Apostolo glorioso/Cum tua doctrina*, but also contained in the motet directly preceding

introductory section of imitative counterpoint in *Hunc diem festis* might be characterized, it seems most similar to that found in Du Fay's *Vasilissa ergo gaude* from 1420.⁵⁷

The idiosyncratic use of the imitative opening section in the Turin Codex has not gone unnoticed in scholarship on the manuscript. In the critical commentary to his edition of the motets from the Turin Codex, Hoppin noticed both the anomaly of the texted exordium and the reduced texture in *Hunc diem festis*, remarking that "despite the apparently canonic entries of Triplum and Duplum in the vocal *introitus*, there is no reason to invoke any influence of the Italian *caccia*."⁵⁸ Hoppin was right to call attention to the atypical opening section, but in the process of dismissing a connection between the imitative counterpoint and the Italian *caccia* tradition, he overlooked the association between the technique and the motet's subject, John the Baptist. The saint is no mere accessory to the opening section, but rather at the heart of its design. The use of this *introitus* goes well beyond its customary function which, according to Nosow, is to establish "the identity and equality of the two upper voices."⁵⁹ In this case, the forerunner saint seems to have served as an inspiration for the use of the introductory imitation in *Hunc diem festis*, imprinting in music the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus—of precursor and follower.

The exceptional diminution of the tenor in *Gemma florens militie* and the opening imitative duet in *Hunc diem festis* highlight the symbolic aims of the composer of these motets. (It is believed at present to be a single composer.)⁶⁰ But one may also take into account the other clever ideas embedded in works from the motet section of the Turin Codex. As Bent has illuminated, the section of forty-one motets was not lacking in intellectual games. Four of the motets in the fascicle in fact have acrostics as literary encoding mechanisms, while other texts contain highly ambitious internal and consecutive rhymes, all

it in the manuscript, *Ave virgo lux Maria* (fols. 269v–270r) by Johannes Franchois de Gemblaco. The upper voices of *Ave virgo lux Maria* are not labeled "introitus" as in Du Fay's motet. The word *introitus* in Gemblaco's motet is instead found in the "trompette introitus" part on fol. 269v. For discussion of this motet, see Bent, "Trompette and Concordans Parts in the Early Fifteenth Century," 58–59. The "introitus" label is also found in Johannes de Lymburgia's *Recordare virgo mater* (Q 15, fols. 297v–298r). Without exception (and significant to Bent's definition), these examples of "introitus" occur as untexted opening sections, not even presented as a melisma on the first syllable of the text. In each of these cases, the *introitus* is also self-contained, demarcated by a bar line.

57. For an edition of *Vasilissa ergo gaude*, see Dufay, *Opera Omnia*, 1:21–24.

58. *Cypriot-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, J.II.9*, 2:xii. Hoppin calls these entries "apparently canonic" because of the lack of a *signum congruentiae* to mark the entry of the Cantus II, despite the obvious rests at the beginning of this part.

59. Nosow, "Florid and Equal-discantus Motet Styles," 45.

60. Kügler, "Glorious Sounds for a Holy Warrior," 641.

graspable by a contemporary performer or noble listener.⁶¹ Given the uniquely reduced tenor of *Gemma florens militie* and the opening imitation in *Hunc diem festis* from the Turin Codex, it seems likely that the composer endeavored, indeed, to create symbolic connections between John the Baptist and “chronological” musical techniques.

The two Johannine motets from the Turin Codex represent a fulcrum in my study of the Baptist in musical design. Subsequently, symbolic compositional diminution moved beyond coloration in particular, and the Baptist instead remained allied with the art of canon. As the use of the introitus grew in the fifteenth century and more formal musical canons spread into the sixteenth, it would seem that the pervasiveness of such contrapuntal techniques would expand—or, conversely, eliminate—the possibilities for symbolic interpretation. How could one identify a referential technique for depicting the precursor saint with any certainty? How can one know whether the association had reached the status of a conventional signifier akin to the symbols noticed in visual culture? Take for instance the motet *Gaude tu baptista christi* for John the Baptist from Bologna Q 15, roughly contemporaneous with the compilation of the Turin Codex. This motet displays a canonic introductory section with a “fuga sex temporum” and *signum congruentiae* between cantus voices, preceding the entry of the tenor and contratenor. The single-texted motet, composed by the French singer and composer known simply as “Benoit,” contains one of the longer self-contained opening sections in Q 15.⁶² In this same manuscript, however, there are two additional pieces for John the Baptist that show no discernible sign of a representative musical device.⁶³ In addition, fifteen other motets in Q 15 reveal a section of opening canonic imitation and have nothing to do with the forerunner. How can one be sure of a conceptual link between John the Baptist and the vehicle of musical expression, when

61. The large section of Latin motets in the Turin Codex ends on fols. 90v–91r with a pair of *Deo gratias* motets (*Da, magne pater, rector Olimpi/Donis affatim perfluit orbis* and *Dignum summo patri/Dulciter hymnos*) each with the acrostic “Deo gratias” in their texts. Similarly, the texts of two contiguous Marian motets—*Assumpta gemma virginum/Gratulandum mente pia* (fols. 60v–61r) and *Aurora vultu pulchrior/Ave virginum flos et vita* (fols. 61v–62r)—each contain the acrostic “Ave Maria.” On the rhyme schemes in the motets of the codex, see Bent, “Some Aspects of the Motets,” 363.

62. For Benoit’s *Gaude tu baptista christi*, see Q 15, fols. 232v–233r. An edition can be found in *Early Fifteenth-century Music*, 3:98–102. For commentary, see Bent, *Bologna Q15: The Making and Remaking of a Musical Manuscript*, 1:208–9. In addition to the canonic inscription and *signum congruentiae*, the motet also has a fermata denoting the end of the introductory section.

63. The two pieces in Q 15 that take John the Baptist as their subject are Du Fay’s alternatim setting of the hymn *Ut queant laxis* (fol. 323v) and Johannes de Lymburgia’s motet *O baptista mirabilis* (fols. 309v–310r). Although not a *fauxbourdon* setting typical of the composer’s hymns, Du Fay’s *Ut queant laxis* still fits into the style that characterizes the cycle of his hymns grouped together in the manuscript and leaves little or no room for exegesis with its compositional strictures. Lymburgia’s *O baptista mirabilis* had been illegible until it was restored under ultraviolet light by the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music and transcribed in Bent, *Bologna Q15: The*

there are other motets with introitus and fugae, as well as other works for the precursor that lack any obvious symbolic compositional procedures? How can it be known further if a canonic distance of six breves (or twelve breves, as seen in *Hunc diem festis*) has calendrical significance in these Johannine motets? What of the opening imitation in the motet *Elizabet Zacharie/Lingua pectus concordēs*/ELIZABET (possibly by Du Fay) in honor of John the Baptist, or the numerous points of imitation in Jean Mouton's motet *Inter natos mulierum* and Henricus Isaac's motet *Prophetarum maxime*, also on the subject of the forerunner?⁶⁴ The musical emblems potentially multiply.

What instead sustained the unconcealed symbolic referents in the earlier works was the fortuitous presence of extramusical rubrics in some sixteenth-century motets and Magnificats. Witty inscriptions, it turns out, perpetuated the analogy between the Baptist and canonic technique in an age when imitative writing suffused the culture of elite composition. In the previous cases, the relationship between the saint and the technique arose through the uniqueness of the context in which these elements occurred. In the examples from the sixteenth century, at a time when imitative counterpoint would seem to lose its identity as a device with symbolic potential, the connection between John the Baptist and canonic technique materialized with even less of a disguise for the modern analyst.

Canonic Inscriptions in the Magnificats of Costanzo Festa

At the Cathedral of Siena in the late fifteenth century, an anonymous canon for an unknown number of voices was inscribed on one of the nineteen panels found on the choir stalls of the chapel of St. John the Baptist. While the music for the canon does not survive, one Stefano Landi recorded its text in his 1655 catalogue of the cathedral's holdings.⁶⁵ The text of the canon is drawn from

Making and Remaking of a Musical Manuscript, 1:320–21. Lymburgia's piece is not canonic; rather, it proceeds in perfect tempus and minor prolation, beginning with a long held note in all three voices.

64. For a modern transcription of *Elizabet Zacharie/Lingua pectus concordēs*/ELIZABET, see *Four Late Isorhythmic Motets*, 4–12. An edition of Mouton's *Inter natos mulierum* can be found in Shine, "Motets of Jean Mouton," 1:400–408. For a keyboard edition of Isaac's *Prophetarum maxime* (lacking text), see *St. Galler Orgelbuch: Die Orgeltabulatur des Fridolin Sicher*, 3:296.

65. The fact that this canon was found within a panel affixed to one of the nineteen choir stalls carved by Antonio Barili is fortunate on its own. Only seven of Barili's nineteen inlaid panels for the chapel for John the Baptist at the Siena cathedral survive. Two of the extant panels depict scenes involving music—one of a man listening to an organ, the other of a lutenist performing. One panel that has not survived from Barili's nineteen inset panels also contained written music, specifically a lost hymn to John the Baptist (*Ut queant laxis*) attributed to Alexander Agricola. Landi's observations are noted in Carli, *Scultura lignea senese*, 94–96, and D'Accone, *Civic Muse*, 25–26.

a conflation of verses from the Gospel of John (1:27, 30), attributed to John the Baptist: “Qui post me venit ante me factus est cuius non sum dignus calceamenta solvere” (The one who comes after me was made before me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie). The first part of this text is also found just a few verses earlier in the same chapter and represents the Baptist’s profound and paradoxical declaration: “He that shall come after me is preferred before me, because he was before me” (John 1:15).⁶⁶ These related Johannine verses concerning “the one who comes after me” would be an attractive anthropomorphism for the art of canon, shrewdly “validated” by the authority of Scripture. As any student of counterpoint knows, the *comes* of canonic technique is conceived along with, or even before, the *dux* to ensure that the two can agreeably intertwine at a temporal distance. While there is nothing more to say about the lost Sieneese canon, its suggestive “personified” text is not only a clue as to how the Baptist would be memorialized in the art of canon during the sixteenth century but also a surprising point of continuity between the early and later examples of this analogy. This provides the analytical context for a number of works from Vatican sources that both draw on the Baptist’s testimony and exhibit increasingly erudite canonic techniques.

Anchored by biblical verses, the nexus between the Baptist and imitative counterpoint now shifts quite literally to the margins of composition in the form of canonic inscriptions that accompany select sixteenth-century motets and Magnificats.⁶⁷ As I focus on this “peripheral” aspect of the music, the discussion extends beyond the hermeneutical methods of the earlier works, especially in the case of compositions not properly for the precursor saint. Despite the subjects moving away from the Baptist, Vatican sources confirm my suspicions about the relationship between the forerunner and canonic techniques in particular. John the Baptist’s multiple declarations about “the one who comes after me” were often supplied in rubrics that reveal a remarkably consistent view in the papal chapel of how certain canon techniques could be rationalized.

One early sixteenth-century composer whose works appear with Johannine inscriptions was Costanzo Festa, the first notable Italian native in the papal chapel, who served the institution from 1517 until his death in 1545. He composed many liturgical works for the choir’s use during his long tenure at the Sistine Chapel, including a complete Magnificat cycle (tones I–VIII) that exemplified an expressly Roman tradition in which each verse of Mary’s canticle was set polyphonically.⁶⁸ Two of Festa’s Magnificat settings invoke John

66. John 1:15 (Vulgate): “Iohannes testimonium perhibet de ipso et clamat dicens hic erat quem dixi vobis qui post me venturus est ante me factus est quia prior me erat.”

67. I extend my sincere gratitude to Bonnie Blackburn, who kindly shared several of these examples with me.

68. In addition to his complete tonal cycle of Magnificats, there are other Magnificat settings by Festa that may or may not have been part of larger cycles: four “Magnificat” (tones I, III, VI, VIII, for four voices, all verses polyphonic) and two fragmentary settings of the “Sicut locutus est” (tones III and VI, for two voices). See Festa, *Opera Omnia*, 2:ix–xiii.

the Baptist in rubrics. Each of these inscriptions occurs in conjunction with the setting of the final verse of the Magnificat ("Sicut erat"). For sixteenth-century composers of polyphonic Magnificats, the "Sicut erat" usually called for the grandest setting among the verses, sometimes through the addition of another voice derived from a canon. In fact, Festa provided a canon for the "Sicut erat" in all but one of his polyphonic Magnificats. Moreover, he seems to have ignited the trend to impose this kind of textural expansion at the end of the Magnificat.⁶⁹

Festa's *Magnificat Tertii toni* expands from four voices to six at the "Sicut erat" (Ex. 4). In two of its three sources (SMM 32 and CS 64), the first alto voice is tagged with the following inscription: "Canon. Qui post me venit ante me factus est" (Canon: The one who comes after me was made before me).⁷⁰ With the words of John the Baptist drawn from select verses from John's gospel, the work features a canon between the voices transcribed here as A1 and T1. The *tenor primus* simply reads the music of A1 at a fifth lower and at a distance of two breves.⁷¹ The melody of the canon is itself a paraphrase of the third-tone Magnificat recitation, but only in the *comes* does the tune present itself at the chant's proper pitch. Therefore, the "one who comes after me"—the *comes*—was indeed "made before" the *dux* in the form of the actual Magnificat tone. In the third source of this Magnificat (CS 21), the resolution is provided for this newly generated part and not prompted by a verbal canon. In the two manuscripts that bear the inscription, the resolution of the canon is not supplied for the canonic voice, a normative practice of the early sixteenth-century Vatican scribes.⁷²

69. See Gasch, "Sursum deorsum aguntur res mortalium," 255, 262; and Schmidt-Beste, "Dying Art," 346. Festa's only "Sicut erat" not set in canon can be found in the *Magnificat Quarti toni* from the complete cycle of Magnificats (*Opera omnia*, 2:34–35). It was typical to have at least one interval canon in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century polyphonic Magnificats, but Festa is credited as the first composer to employ canonic techniques systematically in order to enlarge the polyphonic Magnificat expressly at its close.

70. The rubric occurs in the large choirbooks SMM 32 (fols. 10r–14r, at 14r, ca. 1567) and CS 64 (fols. 14v–21r, at 21r, copied in a stage between 1550 and 1555). On the dating of the latter, see Brauner, "Parvus Manuscripts," 245 (table), 247. The inscription is not in CS 21 (fols. 37v–44r, at 43v); instead, it provides a resolution to the canon in the *tenor primus*. CS 64 varies the arrangement of the opening clause, with no change to the meaning: "Canon. Qui venit post me, ante me factus est." A scribal quip in CS 21 instead can be found at the "Sicut locutus est" on fol. 42r, where the tenor's tacet section is labeled "Rumores fuge" (Avoid noise . . .), a reference to one of Cato's distichs, 1.12. For a full study of classical references in canonic inscriptions, see Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, "Juno's Four Grievances."

71. The *tenor secundus* is a contrapuntally inessential "si placet" part, labeled as such in two of the three concordant manuscripts (CS 64 and SMM 32). The expansion to six voices is thus achieved through the addition of a voice derived from the *altus primus*, as well as the si placet part. In CS 64, the *signum congruentiae* is situated below the point of entry, indicating the canonic interval of a fifth below.

72. On the typically unresolved canons in the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Vatican sources, see Rodin, "Unresolved," 535–36.

Example 4 Costanzo Festa, *Magnificat Tertii toni*, "Sicut erat." Opening, transcribed from SMM 32, fols. 13v–14r.

S
Si - cut e - - rat in prin - ci - pi -
Canon. Qui post me venit, ante me factus est.

A1
Si - cut e - rat in prin - ci - pi -

A2
Si - cut e - - rat in prin - ci - pi - o
[Resolutio]

T1
Si placet Si - cut e - rat

T2
Si - cut e - rat in prin - ci - pi - o in prin -

B
Si - cut e - rat in prin - ci - pi - o

5
o in prin - ci - pi - o et nunc et sem - -
o et nunc et sem - per
in prin - ci - pi - o et nunc et sem - -
in prin - ci - pi - o et nunc et sem -
ci - pi - o et nunc et sem-per et nunc et
in prin - ci - pi - o et nunc et sem - per et

A more sophisticated “Sicut erat” summoning John the Baptist in a canonic inscription is found in Festa’s *Magnificat Octavi toni* transmitted in a single source (CS 21), the same one that bore no rubric for the previous Magnificat. The part writing of the “Sicut erat” of this Magnificat expands from four voices to five with the addition of a *tenor secundus*. A reference to Christ’s forerunner is still apparent in the canonic instructions, although this time the Baptist’s words are joined with another allusion to the Gospel of John (italicized): “Canon. Qui post me venit *praecedet me, et non transibit per tenebras*” (The one who comes after me *will precede me, and will not pass through the darkness*).⁷³ Here, the statement begins with a prompt from the Baptist now combined with the words of Jesus (John 8:12): “The one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (Qui sequitur me non ambulabit in tenebris sed habebit lucem vitae). The author of this anthropomorphized rubric linked the utterances of John and Jesus seamlessly in this canonic inscription through the synonymous verbs *venire* (*post*) and *sequor*. The citation further draws on the image of light common to both Christian figures.⁷⁴

Like many canonic inscriptions, the instructional rubric attached to the “Sicut erat” of Festa’s eighth-mode Magnificat is too vague for the *comes* (i.e., the *tenor secundus*) to execute properly. The resolution is mercifully supplied in CS 21, so that the *tenor secundus* could discover its part. In order to derive the canon correctly (Ex. 5, pp. 670–71), the *comes* must sound at a fifth lower than the *dux* (*tenor primus*), omitting all black notes, dots, and rests (i.e., “dark” notation).⁷⁵ In the canonic inscription, the use of the future tense in the word *praecedet* (will precede) replaces the idea and tense from the predicate *ante me factus est* (was made before me) from the first chapter of John’s

73. Festa’s *Magnificat Octavi toni* occurs on fols. 50v–56r of CS 21, with the inscription on fol. 56r. The manuscript is dated 1576, more than thirty years after the death of the composer. Despite its chronological distance from Festa, CS 21 is the chief source of his four *Magnificats*, which were not part of a known cycle. See Festa, *Opera Omnia* 2:xvii.

74. A similar inscription, though one void of a Johannine tilt, appears in CS 64 (fols. 23v–29r) in connection with the “Sicut erat” of Festa’s *Magnificat Sexti toni*: “Qui sequitur me in subdyatesaron non quiescet ultimam brevem” (“The one who follows me at the fourth below will not rest until the last breve”). For an edition of Festa’s *Magnificat Sexti toni*, see *Opera Omnia*, 2:114–21. This Magnificat also appears without inscription in CS 21, fols. 44v–50r.

75. Festa’s canon and other “omission” canons (one category of enigmatic canons) are discussed in Blackburn, “Corruption of One,” 191–93. Lodovico Zacconi (*Prattica di musica*, pt. 1, fol. 130v) reports an inscription—nearly identical with Festa’s *Magnificat Octavi toni*—found in connection with a lost motet by Isaac (*Per signum crucis*): “Qui sequitur me non ambulet in tenebris” (“May the one who follows me not walk in darkness”). Other riddles playing on the omission of dark notation have been noted by theorists Pietro Cerone, *El melopeo y maestro*, 1105–6, and Pietro Aaron, *Libri tres de institutione harmonica*, 26r. A comprehensive treatment of these and numerous other musical puns is forthcoming in a monograph by Katelijne Schiltz (tentatively titled *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance*). This book will contain an appendix of sixteenth-century canonic inscriptions compiled by Blackburn. I thank both of them for sharing in advance several canonic inscriptions and their implications.

gospel. The conflation of the two biblical excerpts in this canonic rubric captures the nature of the activity between the two tenor parts precisely: Festa's canonic display—cued ingeniously and persuasively by the partially Johannine inscription—illustrates the essence of the relationship between the Baptist and Christ, namely that Jesus was born after John but would surpass him eventually with his ministry. As the *comes* ignores the black notes, dots, and rests stated by the *dux*, it finds itself ahead of the *dux* rather quickly in the “Sicut erat” (Ex. 5, m. 5).⁷⁶ Consider further that the operation on the *dux* is a kind of diminution, reminiscent not only of the Baptist's proclamation from John 3:30 (“He must increase; I must decrease”) but also of the early musical experiments with “diminishing” time.

The “Sicut erat” of Festa's *Magnificat Octavi toni* reflects the rubric so well that it is hard to imagine that the composer did not have a hand in the witty description of this canon. In his *Magnificat Tertii toni*, however, it is less clear whether the rubric of the “Sicut erat” was devised by Festa, or whether it was a creative release by the scribe. All three manuscripts that contain the Johannine canonic instructions for Festa's two “Qui post me venit . . .” inscriptions were copied by Johannes Parvus, the chief scribe for the Sistine Chapel during the mid-sixteenth century and a “John” himself. As mentioned, the *Magnificat Octavi toni* appears in just a single source (CS 21). This was a manuscript confined to the works of Festa and his colleague Cristóbal de Morales. CS 21 is dated 1576, long after the death of both composers, and it is probable that it was a copy of earlier sources (or singers' fascicle manuscripts) that were worn from use during Festa's lifetime. The composer's *Magnificat Tertii toni* can also be found in CS 21, but it appears in two additional manuscripts (CS 64 and SMM 32), copied before CS 21.⁷⁷ Yet the manuscript that is common to both Magnificats (CS 21) is inconsistent in its transmission of the Johannine inscriptions. CS 21 does not provide the rubric “Qui post me venit ante me factus est” from Festa's third-mode “Sicut erat,” but it does bear the inscription for his eighth-mode setting. Because Parvus copied each of the manuscripts in question, one cannot isolate a set of circumstances that explains the omission of the John-inspired rubric in the *Magnificat Tertii toni* from CS 21. Nevertheless, the fact that this garrulous scribe included numerous other epigrams within CS 21 and was otherwise known for his rhetorical quips (particularly in his amusing annotations in the tacet sections of polyphonic works) might justify shifting the spotlight away from the composer and toward him.⁷⁸ As this and another manuscript from the papal

76. Some decoration of the *tenor primus* later in this verse setting suggests that it may try to recover lost time, but it trails behind by an entire breve through the end of the short verse setting.

77. Brauner has dated SMM 32 between 1566 and 1567, while CS 64 was copied during a much wider range of dates—beginning 1541–42, with the last stage ca. 1576.

78. Parvus's inscriptions continue a tradition begun in manuscripts from the Alamire workshop. On Parvus's tacet inscriptions, see Brauner, “Parvus Manuscripts,” 42. On the tacet inscriptions found in Alamire sources, see Blackburn, “Eloquence of Silence.”

Example 5 Costanzo Festa, *Magnificat Octavi toni*, "Sicut erat." Opening, CS 21, fols. 55v–56r, following the transcription in Festa, *Opera Omnia*, 2:120–21.

S
Si - cut e - - - rat in

A
Si - cut e - rat in prin-ci -
Canon. Qui post me venit praecedet me, et non transibit per tenebras.

T1
Si - cut e - - - rat in

T2
Resolutio
Si - cut e -

B
Si - cut e - - -

4
prin-ci - - pi - o, in prin-ci - pi - o
pi - o, et nunc
prin-ci - pi - o, et
rat in prin-ci - pi - o et
et
rat in prin-ci - pi - o, et nunc, et sem

Point at which comes leads dux

Example 5 continued

et nunc et sem - per, et in se - cu - la se - cu -

et sem - per et in se - cu - la se - cu -

et nunc, et sem - per et in

nunc, et sem - per et in se - cu - la

per et in se - cu - la

chapel reveal, Parvus was an important witness to a brief revival of the analogy between John the Baptist and canonic technique in this environment.

The Case of CS 38

The papal chapel earned a reputation for upholding musical traditions; it was an institution slow to surrender to contemporary tastes in composition. One of the practices to which its singer-composers clung was the art of canon. It was precisely the chapel's unwavering commitment to perpetuating canonic techniques that helped define it as the "most important—and by implication, most able—musical institution of Christendom."⁷⁹ As protectors of what was becoming a declining compositional strategy, composers such as Morales and even Palestrina continued to nourish the repertory with canonic works more than a generation after their heyday. In early sixteenth-century papal manuscripts, inscriptions sometimes borrowed ancient Greek theoretical nomenclature to express the canonic interval (e.g., diatesseron, diapente) in high-flown though not cryptic rhetoric. Frequently, more enigmatic inscriptions accompanied the canons, and resolutions were not normally supplied, forcing the singer to solve the compositional riddle. Composers also put forward various canonic puzzles, including the reversal of singers' roles in the execution of

79. Schmidt-Beste, "Dying Art," 345. On the conservative nature of the chapel, see also Dean, "The Evolution of a Canon at the Papal Chapel," and Pietschmann, *Kirchenmusik zwischen Tradition und Reform*.

canonic works.⁸⁰ Yet whereas some inscriptions accompanying the canons originated with the composer, others were added by the scribe.

There was certainly a precedent for incorporating biblical verses in canonic inscriptions as a clever way of describing the nature of the musical transformation at hand, as in the Johannine rubrics for two of Festa's "Sicut erat" settings.⁸¹ This symbolism of canonic technique emerges in a particularly undisguised way in a single Vatican source, again copied by Parvus, but without any works by Festa. The appearance of a striking number of references to the precursorial role of John the Baptist in conjunction with canonic pieces suggests that the analogy was deliberately sustained in the later sixteenth century, appropriately in the very institution that protected of the art of canon.

The manuscript CS 38, a large choirbook from 1563 with thirty-nine motets, is an example of a "retrospective" source, given that its two most represented composers—Josquin (seven motets) and Mouton (four motets)—died more than forty years before the manuscript was copied.⁸² As a telltale sign of the importance of maintaining musical traditions, more than a quarter of the manuscript's motets, including two by a young Palestrina (who makes his earliest datable appearance as a motet composer in CS 38), contain a structural cantus firmus, a technique that had diminished significantly in sacred music across the sixteenth century, giving way to pervasive imitation, parody techniques, homophonic style and (eventually) music with divided choirs.⁸³

80. An example is found in the Gloria and Credo of the five-voice *Missa L'Homme armé* (CS 49, fols. 23v–35r) of the late fifteenth-century papal singer and composer Bertrandus Vaquerus. The composer called for various canonic scenarios involving the two tenor voices, which each carry the governing melody at all times. The tenor I voice is notated only for the Kyrie but must derive his part from the tenor II for the remainder of the mass sections. The instruction to reverse parts is indicated by the inscription "Qui sequebatur preit" (The one that followed [now] precedes), first encountered at the "Qui tollis" in the Gloria and then again at the "Qui propter" in the Credo. This rubric is not properly Johannine but rather belongs to a larger set of generic inscriptions that have some resonance with the biblical verses connected to the forerunner. For an edition of this *Missa L'Homme armé*, see Vaquerus, *Opera Omnia*, 1–52.

81. For instance, in an alternative setting of the Agnus II from Obrecht's *Missa Je ne demande* in a set of printed partbooks (*Misse obrecht. Jene demande. Graecorum. Fortuna desperata. Malheur me bat. Salve diva parens*), the canonic inscription in the superius quotes Luke 18:12: "Decimas do omnium que possideo" (I give tithes of all that I possess). There is a play on the object *decimas*, which also points to the ordinal "tenth" (i.e., the interval of the tenth). The bassus reads the superius part down a tenth at no temporal distance (i.e. simultaneously with the superius, creating continuous parallel tenths) for the entire piece.

82. Josquin died in 1521 and Mouton in 1522. Other composers who died closer to the date of compilation include Andreas de Silva, Philippe Verdelot, Pierre Moulu, Jean de la Fage, and Jean Richafort. The manuscript is not entirely "retrospective," however, because it contains works by living composers including Adrian Willaert and Jacob Clemens non Papa, and some of the earliest works by Palestrina. On the composers and works of CS 38, see Brauner, "Parvus Manuscripts," 321–22. About half of the motets in CS 38 are scored for five or six voices; the others are written for four voices.

83. Palestrina's two works in CS 38 (*Estote fortes in bello* and *Beatus Laurentius*) both exhibit cantus firmus technique. See Ackermann, "Die Werke Palestrinas im Repertoire der Cappella Sistina," 406.

Confitemini Domino/Per singulos dies—a work with conflicting attributions to Josquin and Mouton—is a polytextual motet for six voices. It survives not just in CS 38 but also in the partbooks Vall 35–40. It is assigned to Mouton (the likely composer) in the former source and to Josquin in the latter, yet neither source was copied during the composers’ lifetimes.⁸⁴ The motet’s primary text, sung by four of the six voices, is a patchwork of verses from Psalm 117. The two tenor-range canonic voices assume the cantus firmus of the motet with the text *Per singulos dies*, excerpted from the multipurpose *Tē Deum* chant.⁸⁵ There is nothing “Johannine” in these two motet texts.

Primary text [from Ps. 117]:

| | |
|--|---|
| [v. 1] Confitemini domino, quoniam bonus, | Give praise to the Lord, for he is good, |
| quoniam in seculum misericordia eius. | For his mercy endureth forever. |
| [v. 24] Hec est dies quam fecit dominus, exultemus et letemur in ea. | This is the day which the Lord hath made, Let us be glad and rejoice in it. |
| [v. 23] A domino factum est istud. | This is the Lord’s doing. |
| [v. 26] Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini. | Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. |

Canonic voices [from *Tē deum*]:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Per singulos dies benedicimus te | Every day we bless thee, |
| et laudamus nomen tuum in seculum, | and we praise thy name forever, |
| et in seculum seculi. | and forever and ever. |

Atypical of later sixteenth-century Vatican sources, the resolution to the canon of the motet is not provided in CS 38, but an inscription in the left margin holds the instructions for the canonic voice: “Preibis parare viam meam” (You will go before [me] to prepare my way), as shown in Figure 2. Although unusual, the rubric is thoroughly Johannine in nature. The inscription alludes to the Canticle of Zechariah (father of John the Baptist) from the gospel of Luke (1:76): “Tu puer propheta altissimi vocaberis *praecibus* enim ante faciem Domini *parare vias eius*” (You, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for *you will go before* the face of the Lord *to prepare his way*).⁸⁶

84. CS 38, fols. 50v–52r. In Vall 35–40, the piece is attributed to Josquin in the index of the altus partbook. The six paper partbooks of Vall 35–40, which contain ninety motets for five, six, seven, and eight voices, were copied by Antonius Morus in Florence around 1530–31. For a description of these partbooks, see the *Census-catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400–1550*, 3:119. Scholars favor the attribution to Mouton on stylistic grounds, specifically for its canonic structure (the short canonic distance in particular), treatment of the cantus firmus, richness of harmonies, and lenient handling of points of imitation. See NJE CC 15.9, pp. 117–25.

85. The *Tē Deum* was typically heard each Sunday at the end of Matins and also on certain feast days after the last responsory of that office. For a case study involving a ritual use of the *Tē Deum* under the French king Henry III in the late sixteenth century, see van Orden, *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France*, 136–56.

86. This same scriptural verse (“Tu puer propheta . . .”) served almost universally in western Christendom as the text of the communion antiphon for the nativity feast of the Baptist. See *Graduale sacrosanctae romanae ecclesiae de tempore et de sanctis*, 525.



Figure 2 Canonic voice (top staff) plus tenor (two lower staves) in Mouton, *Confitemini Domino/Per singulos dies*. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 38, fol. 50v, middle. © 2013 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Used by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Mouton's canonic scheme in *Confitemini domino/Per singulos dies* differs from the earlier examples, but it is nevertheless one that projects a sonically uncomplicated image of the forerunner. In this scenario, the instructions suggest that the canonic voices will reverse roles for the entire motet. The canon is a 2-*ex*-1 type in which the *comes* normally would derive its part from the *dux*. However, it is the *comes* in this case that is directed paradoxically to "go before" and "prepare the way" for the notated *dux*. A *signum congruentiae* is positioned above a breve rest, before the initial entrance of the written-out canonic voice. The inverted method of execution can be confirmed in the concordant source (Vall 35–40), in which the scribe (Antonius Morus) elected to provide the canon's resolution, with no written instructions given for its realization. As the transcription indicates (Ex. 6), the unnotated "follower" in CS 38 must begin at the distance of a fourth, one breve earlier than the notated *dux*. The urge to experiment with a canonic design in which the *comes* enters before the *dux* (i.e., the notated voice) was not unprecedented. In fact, a number of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century motets, mass sections, and secular pieces aimed for a similar effect through the use of canon.⁸⁷

87. Several of these examples occur in papal manuscripts and carry Latin rubrics not directly on the subject of John the Baptist. For example, the Latin inscription "Precedat mea me semper odda proles" ("Let my offspring always precede me with a song") in the three-voice anonymous hymn for Holy Week *Vexilla regis prodeunt* suggests that the tune-carrying superius will be preceded by the altus at a fourth below. See Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS San Pietro B 80 (fol. 1r) and discussion in Blackburn, "The Corruption of One," 192. There are also a number of works that switch the roles of the *dux* and *comes*. For instance, the simple vernacular instruction "Le devant va derriere" to exchange the canonic leader and follower occurs in several sources that transmit the Credo of Josquin's *Missa de Beata Virgine* (NJE 3.3, ed. Elders). For commentary, see NJE CC 3.3, p. 110.

Example 6 Jean Mouton, *Confitemini Domino/Per singulos dies*. First entry of the canonic voices, transcribed from CS 38, fols. 50v–51r.

20

bo - - - nus, quo - ni - am in se - cu -
 - ni - am bo - nus, quo - ni - am bo - nus, quo - ni - am in
 UNNOTATED DUX Per sin - gu -
 NOTATED COMES Per sin -
 quo - ni - am bo - nus quo - ni - am in se -
 ni - am bo - nus quo - ni - am in se - cu - lum mi -

27

lum mi - se - ri - cor - di - a ei - us mi - se - ri - cor - di - a
 se - cu - lum mi - se - ri - cor - di - a
 los di - - - es
 gu - - - los di - - - es,
 cu - lum mi - se - ri - cor - di - a mi -
 se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius, in

Mouton had a penchant for canon in his five- and six-voice motets, with nine of fourteen employing the technique.⁸⁸ In these canonic works, the accompanying inscriptions describe generically the interval of imitation using the aforementioned Greek terminology, not uncommon for motets in Vatican sources.⁸⁹ Explicitly Johannine inscriptions are absent in Mouton's other canons, and there is no particular emphasis given to John the Baptist in his oeuvre.⁹⁰ Given that the "Preibis parare . . ." inscription draws attention to the leader-follower exchange in Mouton's *Confitemini domino* and that the rubric does not appear in the concordant manuscript for Mouton's motet, it is possible that the inscription was the contribution of Parvus, the scribe of CS 38. The rubric could also have originated closer to the date of composition or perhaps was copied from a manuscript that does not survive. There is much more to the story of CS 38, however, as one finds a curious emphasis on the Baptist among the thirty-nine motets of the manuscript. Not only are there other works in CS 38 on the subject of John proper, but also more Johannine-styled inscriptions associated with pieces not about the precursor.

Fifteen motets separate Mouton's *Confitemini domino* from the anonymous unicum *O panem vere sacrum*, another six-voice canonic motet.⁹¹ Similar to *Confitemini domino*, the canonic voices of *O panem vere sacrum* declaim a text different from the four principal voices of the work, and neither sings a text about the Baptist.⁹² In both the prima and secunda partes, the canonic voices sing "Hoc est corpus quod pro vobis detur te dicit Dominus" (This is [my] body, which is given for you, says the Lord), not a known cantus firmus or plainchant melody, but a strong indication that the work might have

88. I am grateful to Patrick Macey for sharing an essay in preparation tentatively titled "Mouton and Josquin, Motets for Five and Six Voices."

89. For instance, in the case of his motet *Tua est potentia* from the 1518 Medici Codex (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Acq. e Doni 666), the personified rubric placed above the tenor declares, "Sequere me in diatesseron" (Follow me at the fourth). For the facsimile edition of this piece in the codex, see *Medici Codex of 1518*, 3:96v–98r. For a transcription, see *ibid.*, 2:250–54.

90. Out of the nearly one hundred motets he composed, Mouton wrote only two for John the Baptist (*Inter natos mulierum* and *Regem confessorum*), one of which might have been requested by Anne of Brittany to commemorate the saint in 1506, after the queen had been cured of an illness, apparently by one of the saint's relics. See Brown and MacCracken, "Mouton, Jean."

91. *O panem vere sacrum*, CS 38, fols. 110v–114r.

92. The origin of the text is not known, and I am not aware of other settings (monophonic or polyphonic) of this text: "[Prima pars] O panem vere sacrum per quem penitentium corda usque ad eo beantur et pinguescunt ut unum fiant unumque sint cum eo quod accipiunt. [Secunda pars] Panem vere pinguem et prebentem desitias regibus qui sese obstringunt in obsequium in amorem et caritatem Jesu xpi cui vere servire et regnare est et qui ei vere servit et vere felix et dominus et rex est." (O truly holy bread, through which the hearts of the penitents are blessed to such a point and become strong so that they may become one and are one with that which they are taking. Truly satisfying bread, offering relief to kings, who bind themselves in obedience in the love and charity of Jesus Christ, whose duty it is to serve and reign and who truly serve him who is truly blessed both lord and king.)

functioned as a motet for the Elevation. Although the moderate length of the anonymous *O panem vere sacrum* (120 breves) falls within the range of six-voice canons by Josquin and Mouton, the contrapuntal density of the motet exceeds that by the two composers dominating CS 38.⁹³

Both sections of *O panem vere sacrum* carry clear canonic instructions. In the prima pars of the motet, the scribe has written “Sequere me in diapente” (Follow me at the fifth) above the canonic voice, a routine personified label with Greek theoretical nomenclature. The *signum congruentiae* of the first section suggests that the *comes* should derive its part at an interval of a fifth above the notated part and at a distance of three breves. In the secunda pars, the *signum* is inverted and the *comes* discovers its part at a fifth below the *dux*. This time, however, the canonic inscription uses Johannine verbiage: “Qui post me venit ante me factus est”; this recalls the inscription from the “Sicut erat” of Festa’s *Magnificat Tertii toni* in CS 64 and SMM 32 (both copied by Parvus). Both inscriptions and the accompanying musical incipits of the canonic voices in the first and second part of the motet are given in Figure 3.

The “Qui post me venit . . .” rubric in the anonymous *O panem vere sacrum* is not meant simply to denote the presence of a canon, but to call attention to a reversal or exchange that has taken place relative to the prima pars, independent of the canon’s new intervallic instructions. Specifically, the *dux* of this section begins singing the same notes as the *comes* of the prima pars.⁹⁴ Yet the corresponding relationship between the canonic voices does not hold. Although the pitch content is nearly identical between the *dux* of the prima pars and (what has to be imagined as) the *comes* of the secunda pars, the rhythmic values assigned to these pitches diverge after just five notes. The pitch material and contour throughout the secunda pars was evidently enough to make the rubric a plausible description of the canonic activity.⁹⁵ At least at the outset of the secunda pars, the inscription “Qui post me venit ante me factus est” is quite accurate: “The one who comes after me [the *comes* of the secunda pars] was made before me [as the *dux* in the prima pars].” The personified “me” is understood as the *dux* of the secunda pars. Here again, one finds a new application for the Baptist’s testimonial words, albeit still within the confines of

93. In *O panem vere sacrum*, the voices rest 23% of the time. In Josquin’s and Mouton’s six-voice motets, the voices rest 30% and 28% of the time, respectively. *O panem vere sacrum* contains canonic distances of three and four breves, closer to Josquin than Mouton. Modular repetitions in the motet, particularly toward the ends of sections, are similar to the larger motets of Josquin and Mouton. *O panem vere sacrum* most closely resembles Josquin’s *Absolve quesumus* in its length (107 breves), density (20%), and canonic interval (at fifth above), although the latter is a canon built on a cantus firmus. The calculation of density is discussed in Macey, “Mouton and Josquin, Motets for Five and Six Voices.”

94. The opening musical gesture of the canon in *O panem vere sacrum* is also previewed in the tenor of the prima pars.

95. The canon of the secunda pars contains diminution and repetition of some of the internal gestures found in the canon of the prima pars. This melodic material was thus “made before” its statement in the secunda pars, though not precisely replicated in its original rhythms and form.

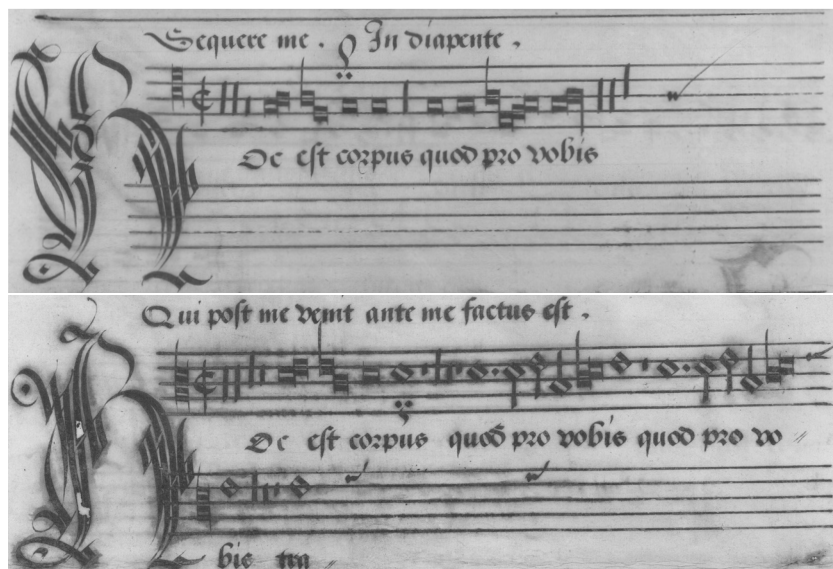


Figure 3 Canonic voices of anonymous, *O panem vere sacrum*. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 38, fol. 110v, middle (beginning of prima pars); fol. 112v, middle (beginning of secunda pars). © 2013 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Used by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

canonic technique. The inscription suggests, but does not fully disclose, the inversion or undoing of the canonic interval (upper fifth → lower fifth), a reciprocal function not unlike the opposing nativities of the Baptist and the Messiah in the liturgical year. The inscription also implies an exchange of roles, just as John yielded his ministry to that of Christ upon the arrival of the latter. Whether or not Parvus contributed this inscription or merely copied it, the Baptist's association with the art of canon and other temporal techniques lost no steam in the mid-to-late sixteenth-century papal chapel.

The thirty-sixth motet of CS 38 offers another canonic inscription that invokes Christ's forerunner. The six-voice *Fratres mei elongaverunt* was composed by Jean Maillard (fl. ca. 1538–70), who possibly had ties to the French royal court of Charles IX.⁹⁶ A rare canon in Maillard's oeuvre, *Fratres mei elongaverunt* appears in two sources besides CS 38: both are prints issued by Le Roy and Ballard and separated by a decade (1555 and 1565).⁹⁷ The text of

96. Fols. 148v–151r. Two of the composer's motet collections from 1565 were dedicated to King Charles IX and the Queen consort Catherine de' Medici, which suggests a connection to the French court. See Colin and Dobbins, "Maillard, Jean."

97. *Ioannis Maillard Musici Excellentissimi Moteta*, 16r; and *Modulorum Ioannis Maillardi, Quaternis, quinis, senis, & septenis vocibus*, 1:24v. For an edition, see Maillard, *Modulorum Ioannis Maillardi*, 2:143–49. It should be noted that CS 38 was overlooked as a source of *Fratres mei elongaverunt* in this edition.

Maillard's motet paraphrases two verses from the Book of Job, drawn from a Matins responsory sung on Palm Sunday. These select verses explain how Job was abandoned by his closest relatives and friends.⁹⁸ There is again no trace of a reference to the Baptist. All three sources of *Fratres mei elongaverunt*, however, preserve an unequivocally Johannine inscription in the tenor: "Canon. Me oportet minui. Illum autem crescere." (Canon: I must decrease, he must increase). Although the syntax is reversed from John 3:30 ("Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui"), the meaning remains unchanged, and the inscription hints at the execution of the canon. The canon presents another exceptional manipulation of time that reflects the temporal and reciprocal relationship between John and Jesus in the gospels.

Fratres mei elongaverunt is no garden-variety canon but rather a mensuration canon, familiar from the English motet *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris*. The canonic voices (labeled "Quinta pars" and "Tenor" in Ex. 7) are written out in CS 38, and their initial melodic gestures are foreshadowed by the surrounding four voices.⁹⁹ Despite the full notation of the six voice-parts in CS 38, the singers still would not be able to execute the canon, since the scribe expressed the level of diminution required for the voices incorrectly. CS 38 notates the canonic voice (fol. 149r) with time signature C, whereas the part from which it is derived ("Quinta pars") is notated in Φ , the same signature as the other voices of the motet. Because the same note shapes are copied for the canonic voice, only a 1:2 level of augmentation is achieved. The motet however demands a 1:4 proportion between the tenor and Quinta pars for successful execution.

While both Le Roy and Ballard prints provide a model from which the two canonic voices can be derived, only the 1565 print provides the resolution for these two voices—the tenor realized through augmentation (by doubling the length of notes in the model) and the Quinta pars realized through diminution (by halving the length of notes in the model).¹⁰⁰ This latter print reinforces the Johannine analogy by labeling the Quinta pars as a "diminishing resolution" (*resolutio minuentis*). The tenor also carries an inscription that identifies its function as an "increasing resolution" (*resolutio crescentis*), a supplement to its "Me oportet . . ." canonic instruction. Maillard makes no

98. The responsory and verse from the office of Matins on Palm Sunday paraphrase Job 19:13–14 and correspond to CAO 6747 with verse CAO 6747c. Text: "Fratres mei elongaverunt se a me, et noti mei quasi alieni, recesserunt a me" (My brothers withdrew themselves from me, and my acquaintances, as if strangers, have left me).

99. Macey ("Mouton and Josquin, Motets for Five and Six Voices") has likened the resultant texture to *Vorimitation* found in connection with the five- and six-voice motets of Mouton (including *Confitemini domino/Per singulos dies*), as well as with Josquin's *Inviolata, integra et casta es* (NJE 24.4, ed. Elders).

100. The 1555 print of *Fratres mei elongaverunt* merely places the "model" melody in the tenor in Φ , but this line supplies neither the realized melody for the tenor nor the quinta pars resolution. The 1565 edition is explicit: the model melody and two resolutions are supplied (all in Φ with the properly adjusted note values). A 1555 partbook for the quinta pars has not survived.

Example 7 Jean Maillard, *Fratres mei elongaverunt* (opening). Edited from *Modulorum Ioannis Maillardii: The Five-, Six-, and Seven-Part Motets*, 2:143–44.

Superius

Fra - tres __ mei e - lon - ga -

Secundus Superius

Fra - tres __

CT

Fra - tres __ mei e - lon - ga - ve - runt _____
Canon. Me oportet minui. Illum autem crescere.

Quinta Pars:
Resolutio minuentis

[Tenor]
Resolutio crescentis

Bassus

5

ve - runt se a _____ me, _____

mei _____ e - lon - ga -

__ se _____ a me, e - lon - ga - ve - runt se

Fra - tres __ mei e - lon - ga - ve - runt se a me,

Fra - tres __ mei e - lon - ga - ve - runt se

Example 7 continued

10

Et no - ti mei

ve - runt se a me, Et

a me, Et no - ti mei

Et no - ti me - i qua - si a - li - e - - -

a me, Et no - ti

15

qua - si a - - - li - e - - - ni, re -

no - ti mei qua - si a - li -

qua - si a - li - e ni, re -

- - - ni, re - ces - se -

Fra - - -

me - i qua - si a - li - e ni, re -

Example 7 continued

19

ces - se-runt a me re - ces - se-runt

e - - ni, re - ces - se - runt

ces - se - runt a me re

runt a me re - ces - se

tres mei

- - ces - se - runt a

attempt to eclipse the course of the “diminished” Quinta pars by speeding up the tenor, unlike the canonic voices seen in both the anonymous motet *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* and Festa’s *Magnificat Octavi toni*. Therefore, the “augmented” tenor of *Fratres mei elongaverunt* completes just one-fourth of the melody sung by the Quinta pars. On account of the characteristic repeat built into responsories, the slow-moving tenor fortuitously sings the same text as the remaining voices (“recesserunt a me”) toward the end of the motet. One might reflect also on the double meaning of the word “elongaverunt” from the responsory. Maillard has literally elongated the notes of the tenor, illustrating in sound the increasing distance intimated between Job and his brethren in the motet’s text.

Raymond Rosenstock has posited that *Fratres mei elongaverunt* might have had biographical significance for Maillard.¹⁰¹ The text from Job seems to imply that the composer felt ostracized at the time of composition and that perhaps Protestant sympathies might have caused his removal from the French court. More pertinent to my investigation, however, is the chronology of the three sources that contain *Fratres mei elongaverunt*. The two prints and the manuscript CS 38 each bear the Johannine rubric “Me oportet minui. Illum autem crescere” in the tenor, which may indicate that the idea lay with either Maillard (a “John” himself) or Le Roy and Ballard, and probably not the Vatican scribe Parvus. CS 38 was completed in 1563 and could not have

101. Maillard, *Modulorum Ioannis Maillardi: The Five-, Six-, and Seven-Part Motets*, 1:xiv.

been compiled much earlier than this date.¹⁰² The most likely scenario is that the papal chapel obtained the 1555 motet print, and Parvus proceeded to copy Maillard's *Fratres mei elongaverunt* soon thereafter. Although he notated the canon improperly, it is likely that the scribe lifted the inscription from the print and placed it in a manuscript collection that also would contain other Johannine allusions. Given this probable order of events, it seems to be true that Parvus need not have contributed every inscription found in "his" manuscripts.

The decipherable Johannine fingerprint in CS 38 extends beyond the three motets just surveyed. Apart from the Johannine rubrics, there are three additional works in CS 38 that deliver texts properly concerning the Baptist. The very opening work in the manuscript is Josquin's well-known *In principio erat verbum* for four voices (fols. 1v–8r), a text that sets the first fourteen verses of the fourth gospel, describing not only the incarnation of Christ in the prima pars but also the importance of John the Baptist as his forerunner in its secunda pars. The motet offers no canons but rather paraphrases the gospel tone, which emphasizes C and F.¹⁰³ Another motet with a clear nod to John the Baptist—again without any canonic technique—is the anonymous *Inter natos mulierum* (fols. 132v–136r), assigned to Josquin in two other sources but now considered a spurious attribution.¹⁰⁴ The text of the prima pars derives from a Matins responsory (CAO 6979), the opening of which quotes the gospel of Matthew (11:11): "Inter natos mulierum, non surrexit maior Iohanne baptista" (Among those born of women, none has arisen greater than John the Baptist). This biblical verse is quintessentially Johannine and was often found, among other places, as the caption to miniatures of John the Baptist in books of hours and as the basis for the tenors of numerous thirteenth-century motets.¹⁰⁵ The text of the secunda pars of *Inter natos*

102. Brauner (private communication) has remarked on the similar assembly of works in CS 38, CS 20 and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Giulia XII.4, all copied by Parvus. The scribe began with individual works and small sets of works before the final order of the manuscript was determined. Copying had already begun however. This sequence of events is comparable to the compilation of the Medici Codex, as described in Rifkin, "Creation of the Medici Codex."

103. For an edition of *In principio erat verbum*, see NJE 19.8; for commentary, see NJE CC 19.8, pp. 84–105. The melodic basis for the work bears some resemblance to the "Alter tonus ad libitum" found in the *Graduale sacrosanctae romanae ecclesiae de tempore et de sanctis*, 127*–129*.

104. This motet is discussed in NJE CC 19.10 (ed. Just), pp. 109–13. It is attributed to Josquin in Vall 35–40, 2nd series, no. 6; and Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna, MS R 142, fols. 30r–31r. *Inter natos mulierum* is further found without ascription in Florence, Duomo, Archivio Musicale dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, MS 11 (fols. 121v–125r). Two of these sources (Vall 35–40 and the Duomo manuscript) have Florentine provenance, and John the Baptist is the patron saint of that city. For an edition, see Josquin des Prez, *Werken van Josquin des Prés, Motetten*, no. 84, afl. 49, pp. 125–30.

105. Matthew 11:11 was set as the verse of the Alleluia for the nativity feast of John the Baptist. This Alleluia verse in turn provided the melodic underpinning to some two dozen motets,

mulierum (“Fuit homo missus”) echoes that of the *secunda pars* from Josquin’s *In principio erat verbum*, the opening motet of CS 38.

There is one final John-inspired motet in CS 38: a five-voice setting of *Me oportet minui* (I must decrease) by Jacob Clemens non Papa.¹⁰⁶ The incipit of the motet references John 3:30; however, it reverses the syntax from that of the Vulgate, an unexpected connection to the similarly inverted inscription seen in Maillard’s *Fratres mei elongaverunt*. The text of *Me oportet minui* joins John 3:30 with a conflation of John 1:15, 27, and 30, namely the familiar words “the one who comes after me was made before me. . . .”¹⁰⁷ The motet is sparsely textured overall, creating passages with either lengthy melismas or frequent repetitions of text. Unlike Josquin’s motet *In principio erat verbum* and the anonymous *Inter natos mulierum*, Clemens’s five-voice *Me oportet minui* contains an unconcealed compositional response to the theology expressed in the text, including the “waning effect” noted in earlier cases. Although the folios are somewhat damaged and illegible in places, close examination reveals that Clemens began the motet in relatively long notes (i.e., breves and semi-breves), but at the text “illum autem crescere” (he must increase), he transformed the setting into noticeable diminution with an abundance of minims and semiminims, as well as some *fusae*, without any indication of a shift in mensuration (Fig. 4). The composer increased the amount of notes (of decreased length) in the interior of the motet, only to return to markedly long notes by the work’s end.¹⁰⁸ Clemens’s motet engages otherwise in pervasive imitation, a hallmark of the composer’s output of well over two hundred motets and also the style favored increasingly in sixteenth-century polyphony.

Across the contents of CS 38, it is difficult to dismiss the fact that more than fifteen percent of the manuscript—six of thirty-nine works—is given to music that either refers to John the Baptist or includes rubrics that associate

built on the tenors MULIERUM and IOHANNE and discussed in Anderson, “Fire, Foliage, and Fury.”

106. The motet is found on fols. 73v–76r of CS 38 and also incompletely in two partbooks. See Warsaw, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Oddział Zbiorów Muzycznych, MS 7.41.5.14 VII–VIII, fols. 22v–23v (bassus), fols. 24v–25v (Quinta pars). For an edition of *Me oportet minui*, see Clemens non Papa, *Opera omnia*, 21:162–66.

107. Full text: “Me oportet minui, illum autem crescere. Qui post me venit ante me factus est, cuius non sum dignus corrigiam calciamenti eius solvere” (I must decrease, he must increase. The one who comes after me was made before me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie).

108. The editor of *Me oportet minui* noted that CS 38 was badly damaged (Clemens non Papa, *Opera omnia*, 21:XIII) and that his edition “partially reconstructed” the motet, which may explain flaws in the transcription. Specifically, the sections of widely varying rhythmic values in CS 38 are not properly transcribed, clouded by an inconsistent level of diminution given without explanation. The manuscript and edition both show a cut signature (*tempus imperfectum diminutum*) at the text “Qui post me venit . . .” after the diminutions have taken place. Later in the motet, as each voice part arrives at the text “cuius non sum . . .,” there is a “2” marked in the choirbook, and the note shapes revert to the longer ones found in the first part of the motet.



Figure 4 Clemens non Papa, *Me oportet minui* (Quinta pars and Tenor). Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 38, fol. 73v. © 2013 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Used by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

the precursor with canonic techniques. This disproportionate amount of music highlighting the Baptist is surprising for an institution more likely to honor Peter and Paul or the Virgin Mary, the patroness of the Sistine Chapel. That the manuscript, from its very first motet offering, is peppered with allusions to Jesus's forerunner seems to shine a light either on the scribe or the patron of the motet collection: it was well out of the hands of the composers whose works form the contents of CS 38, several of them dead for decades. Not only John the Baptist but more generally the art of canon is on full display in the manuscript, with exactly one-third of the motets (thirteen of thirty-nine) containing a canon and an inscription, including five of the last six pieces in the choirbook.¹⁰⁹

Parvus received his authority to copy the motets from the College of Singers, so it is hard to know precisely who prompted this particular assemblage of works. Although the scribe often supplied entertaining rubrics in his

109. The canonic works do not point to a single generation of composers. The manuscript mixes older repertory (Josquin, Mouton, De Silva) with canons by younger composers (Morales and Maillard). See Schmidt-Beste, "Dying Art," 348.

manuscripts, he might simply have been a transmitter of other inscriptions from older papal manuscripts. In CS 38, the Johannine rubrics for *Confite-mini domino* and *O panem vere sacrum* could well have been Parvus's own contribution, but he seems to have recycled the inscription that accompanied Maillard's motet *Fratres mei elongaverunt* from an earlier print. While it is possible, for example, that the scribe contributed the proverbial-sounding rubric attached to the canon in Mouton's *Benedicam dominum* ("Aspetta el tempo e sarai contento"), he might well have borrowed the French canonic inscription accompanying Josquin's *De profundis clamavi* ("Les trois estas sont assemblees pour le soulas des trespases"), even though the latter is preserved solely in CS 38.¹¹⁰ Although Parvus's amusing remarks around the edges of the notated music would increase into the mid-1570s with the copying of CS 21, he was certainly well aware—if not fully in control—of the unusual emphasis on John the Baptist in CS 38, a feature not observed in other Vatican manuscripts that he copied.¹¹¹

It is possible that the thematic accent on the forerunner in CS 38 points in the direction of the manuscript's patron. The Medici coat of arms that appears in the altus part of the opening motet (Josquin's *In principio erat verbum*) could lead to the view that the Johannine cues in the collection were a tribute to Pius IV (r. 1559–65), during whose papal reign CS 38 was completed. While Pius was not from the Florentine Medici stock, he was a "John" (born Giovanni Angelo de' Medici), and he used the same arms as the previous Medici popes. But the retrospective nature of CS 38 might also suggest a different honoree, the first Medici pope and another "John," albeit one who had been dead for nearly two generations: Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici). Recent scholarship in art history has pointed to Leo X's unusual identification with John the Baptist, well beyond the reverence one might cus-

110. While the rubric associated with Josquin's *De profundis clamavi* (NJE 15.13, ed. Macey) in CS 38 (fols. 106v–110r) is not found in the four other sources of this motet, Parvus likely picked up this inscription from an earlier manuscript (or from singers' fascicle manuscripts), one closer in time to the funereal events suggested in the inscriptions, whether for Louis XII (d. 1515), Philip I of Castile (d. 1506) or Anne of Brittany (d. 1514). See Kellman, "Josquin and the Courts of the Netherlands and France," 189–90; and NJE 15, p. xix. See also Milsom, "Motets for Five or More Voices," 305n51. Mouton has a number of colorful inscriptions associated with his motets, but his *Benedicam dominum* is uniquely found in CS 38, and thus one must allow for the possibility that Parvus supplied it himself.

111. Sixteen manuscripts copied for the Sistine Chapel are attributable to Parvus either by his signature or by scribal hand concordance. The Cappella Sistina manuscripts are numbered 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 38, 39, 54, 57, 64, 149, 154, and 155. Other non-Sistine Chapel manuscripts that were copied entirely by Parvus include Lucca, Biblioteca del Seminario Arcivescovile, MS A VIII; Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore, Archivio del Capitolo, MS 26; Toledo, Biblioteca capitular, MS Mus. B.30; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cappella Giulia, MSS XII.4, XII.5, and XII.6; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Santa Maria Maggiore, MSS 29, 32, and 36; and a set of partbooks in a private collection described in Miller, "New Source Attributed to Johannes Parvus."

tomarily give to his patron namesake.¹¹² Further, CS 38 also shares a handful of concordances with the Medici Codex, the 1518 manuscript given as a wedding gift from Leo X to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne.¹¹³ The latter manuscript, too, has an expressly Johannine tilt.¹¹⁴ Perhaps the repertorial and extramusical emphasis on the Baptist in CS 38 might be considered homage to Leo—a perceived “precursor” and one of the most ardent patrons in the history of the papal chapel.¹¹⁵

The Phenomenon Diluted

In the later sixteenth century, the craft of canon was becoming a rare phenomenon. Pervasive imitation and rhetorical (even mimetic) responses to texts were beginning to supplant the art of strict canon. Entrenchment in these novel techniques in turn saw the evaporation of the practice linking Christ's forerunner to canonic technique and other experiments in rhythm and time. As a result, I am left with some of the same questions I asked about musical symbolism from an earlier period. For example, what is one to think of the seventeenth-century composer Manuel Cardoso's two Advent motets on the subject of the Baptist (*Cum audisset Joannes* and *Ipse qui post venit*), which happen to display imitative counterpoint?¹¹⁶ Some vestiges of the phenomenon I have explored, it turns out, can be found in pieces inspired by generic texts about “following.”

Lured by the possibility of textual mimesis, late sixteenth-century composers took cues from any biblical reference to the act of “following” to

112. Contemporaries of Giovanni de' Medici in fact drew parallels between John the Baptist and him. See Shearman, “Florentine Entrata of Leo X, 1515,” 140; and Minnich, “Raphael's Portrait *Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi*,” 1041.

113. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Acq. e Doni 666. Its concordances with CS 38 are Josquin's *Miserere mei deus*; Mouton's *Per lignum salvi* and *Salva nos domine*; Moulu's *Vulnerasti cor meum*; and Richafort's *Veni sponsa Christi*. On the concordances, see NJE CC 15.9, pp. 118–19. Both CS 38 and the Medici Codex are generally dominated by the works of Josquin and Mouton. The latter composer was held in particularly high regard by Leo, and the pope greatly valued the work of other French composers such as Richafort and Moulu, whose works are found in both manuscripts.

114. On the self-identifying aspects of Leo X in the Medici Codex, including pieces referring to John the Baptist, see Shephard, “Constructing Identities in a Music Manuscript,” 113–14; and Rifkin, “Creation of the Medici Codex,” 548–49.

115. Leo X might be considered the most “musical” pope of the Renaissance, following the Medici tradition of lavish patronage of the arts. See Ongaro, “Italy i: 1520–1560,” 62. Other studies relating to music at the court of Leo X include Pirro, “Leo X and Music”; Blackburn, “Music and Festivities at the Court of Leo X”; Anderson, “‘His Name Will Be Called John,’ ” and Cummings, *Lion's Ear*.

116. The motets, written for the second and third Sundays of Advent respectively, were printed in Cardoso, *Livro de varios motetes* (1648), fols. 13v–16r. For an edition containing both motets, see Cardoso, *Livro de vários motetes* (ed. Alegria), 23–27.

employ obvious madrigalisms that showcased finely woven imitative fabrics of varying degrees of strictness. Orlando de Lassus's *Qui sequitur me*, found in a printed collection of didactic motets for two voices from 1577, maintains a relatively strict canon and draws on John 8:12, which, as mentioned earlier, is wholly Christological. The text of Matthew 16:24 provides an even more persuasive image of "following," and it was one that Lassus set with an imitative texture in the same motet collection.¹¹⁷ This single verse in fact provides two tailor-made references that could have encouraged the use of staggered entrances: "Qui vult *venire post me*, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et *sequatur me*, dicit Dominus" (If any man *will come after me*, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and *follow me*, says the Lord). Monteverdi likewise set this text imitatively in a motet for three voices.¹¹⁸

Motets by the two leading Spanish composers of the sixteenth century—Francisco Guerrero and Tomás Luis de Victoria—both used the allusive verse from the Song of Songs "Trahe me post me et curremus" (Draw me after you, and we will run), again far from the realm of John the Baptist. Guerrero's motet features pervasive imitative counterpoint while that of Victoria unfolds a 4-*ex*-2 canon.¹¹⁹ A much later trace of this musical response to a leader-follower text can also be found in the bass aria "Ich folge Christo nach" from Bach's cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (BWV 12), in which a small melodic fragment echoes through the obbligato instruments and the voice. Alfred Dürr has remarked that this simple emulative technique was a natural response to illustrate how believers are called to imitate Christ.¹²⁰

There is one final domain to probe that could have brought the Baptist into dialogue with the canonic technique in particular. Recall the "Sicut erat" verses from two different Magnificats by Festa, each of which presented a canon accompanied by an inscription inspired in whole or in part by a Johannine conceit. The "Sicut erat," it will also be remembered, was set most opulently compared to the other verses of the Magnificat, whether through a supplemental voice or a canon (or both). The broader fashion for an "end accent" in the Magnificats throughout the sixteenth century corresponds to a similar practice observed for Mass Ordinary settings, with the Agnus Dei receiving musical enhancements that rendered it the most dramatic of the Mass

117. For editions of both motets, see Lasso, *Liber mottetarum trium vocum* (Munich, 1575); *Novae aliquot, ad duas voces cantiones* (Munich, 1577), 79–80 and 84–85.

118. Monteverdi's imitative counterpoint is considerably loose. The work appeared in his *Sacrae cantiunculae . . . liber primus*, 3v. For an edition of *Qui vult venire*, see Monteverdi, *Claudio Monteverdi: Tutte le opere*, 14:48–49.

119. Guerrero's five-voice setting from 1555 can be found in Guerrero, *Opera omnia*, 3:85–91. For an edition of Victoria's six-voice *Trahe me post te* from 1583, see Victoria, *Opera omnia*, 1:140–42. In 1592, Victoria composed his *Missa Trahe me post te* with a 4 *ex* 2 canon in the Agnus Dei, reflecting the structure of the 1583 motet. See *ibid.*, 2:145–61.

120. Dürr, *Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 308.

sections.¹²¹ Canons were among the most popular techniques of amplification that composers reserved for the Agnus Dei. One may point to Pierre de la Rue's *Missa L'Homme armé* (I), Josquin's *Missa Fortuna desperata*, and Christopher Tye's *Euge bone* Mass as examples.¹²² What draws John the Baptist into the picture is of course the fact that the principal text of the Agnus Dei derives from the words of the forerunner in the gospel of John (1:29)—“Ecce agnus dei qui tollit peccatum mundi”—exactly the trope most frequently used to identify the Baptist in visual representations (see Fig. 1, p. 643). The question is whether canonic techniques brought out in settings of the Agnus Dei are somehow recalling the Johannine principles outlined in my study. Might it be possible that a canon found only in the final Mass section reflects the idea of the Baptist “running ahead” of Jesus? In the absence of explicit rubrics and other extramusical factors connecting the two ideas, a relationship between the two phenomena must remain speculation and, indeed, risks the pitfall of “disguised symbolism.”¹²³ Further, there are simply too many Agnus Dei settings that do not exhibit canonic displays to posit a general relationship extending to this part of the Mass as rooted in John's words.

What is not in doubt, however, is the symbolism in the exceptional cases I have discussed that demonstrate across a broad chronology and geography a steady urge among composers to employ temporal musical techniques to illustrate sonically an idea that could not be represented visually. The examples in this study reveal a small but significant set of works spanning the late fourteenth to the later sixteenth centuries that offer particularly ambitious techniques (canon especially) exemplifying the relationship between John the Baptist and specific parameters of time in the Christian imagination. While the early cases coupled texts about the precursor with an array of clear temporal designs emphasizing his attributes in the sound world, the later manifestations all but secure the analogy not through an intensification of subject matter but rather through the inscriptions found in the margins of scores. As Michael Camille has most compellingly demonstrated with regard to late

121. See, for example, Kirkman, *Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass*, 203–4; Rice, “Canonic Technique in a *L'Homme armé* Mass by Pierre de la Rue (?),” 125; and Gasch, “*Sursum deorsum aguntur res mortalium*,” 254.

122. On La Rue's textural expansions in the Agnus Dei, including the use of canon, see Meconi, *Pierre de la Rue and Musical Life at the Habsburg-Burgundian Court*, 96. The Agnus Dei of Josquin's *Missa Fortuna desperata* (NJE 8.2, ed. Hudson) features a canon in the bassus with a resolution *ad longum*. See the commentary in NJE CC 8.2, p. 94 and a recent interpretation by Zayaruznaya, “What Fortune Can Do to a Minim,” 353–67. The third section of the Agnus Dei from Tye's *Euge bone* Mass derives four of its voices from a single canonic voice. For an edition, see Tye, *Christopher Tye II: Masses*, 152–54.

123. Zayaruznaya (“What Fortune Can Do to a Minim,” 367–71) cautions similarly against forcing analogies between musical techniques and sacred referents (or sacred contexts). On the analogical collapse in the chanson mass, see Bloxam, “Cultural Context for the Chanson Mass,” 20.

medieval manuscripts, it is the edges of sources that hold a remarkable interpretive power over the central images one encounters.¹²⁴ In the milieu of the Vatican scribe Parvus, they confirm the Baptist's resonance with various canonic techniques.

John the Baptist is a central figure in the Christian narrative, and his character traits were unmistakable in visual culture. In his handbook of Christian symbols, George Ferguson lists eight scenes related to the Baptist that were depicted with great frequency.¹²⁵ Yet John's most fundamental attribute as forerunner of Christ does not appear on Ferguson's list. The precursor "image" was not suitable to pictorial representation; instead, it required symbolic access to time to demonstrate sufficiently the dynamic interplay of the two figures. In the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, composers rose to the challenge, experimenting with ingenious manipulations of time in explicit connection with John the Baptist. The representation of theology in musical design—hitherto confined mainly to compositions for Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Trinity, and a few scattered theological concepts—can now be extended in a substantial way to a saint, namely the precursor, even when the work did not have the Baptist as its subject. As a consequence, such musico-theological explorations might be discerned in the sizable amount of music for other notable figures of the Christian narrative and the accompanying legends expressed in cultural artifacts. In the present case, the fundamental association between John the Baptist and Christian temporality has emerged undisguised in symbolic connection with the art, not of images, but of music, using a range of techniques including canon. By recognizing that music of this period can convey conventional representations as forcefully as visual art, we are able to retrieve traditional encryptions of Christian truths across the disciplines, now with the ear as well as with the eye.

Appendix A Text and translation of *Basis prebens firmamentum* from Ivrea, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS 115, fols. 39v–41r

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| 1a. Basis prebens firmamentum | He is the foundation offering up the support, |
| frasis Christi non in ventum | the preaching of Christ |
| fidem fundans nimiam | spreading, not into the wind, the great faith, |
| 1b. vera docens documentum | teaching truths, crying out the doctrine |
| ter clamitans per desertum | three times throughout the desert, |
| probans legis gratiam. | approving the favor of the law. |

124. Camille, *Image on the Edge*.

125. Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art*, 69–71. The typical scenes range from the angel Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah in the temple to the beheading and burial of the Baptist.

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| 2a. <i>Ardens lucens firmamentum luctans sic per documentum quod futuram gloriam</i> | Burning and illuminating a support, struggling thus with the doctrine that there would be glory. |
| 2b. <i>ambiens sed non incertum multiplicato talentum hic per penitenciam.</i> | Walking about here, may he increase his talent, but not his uncertainty, through his penitence. |
| 3a. <i>Preter cursum geniture es genitus unus pure exultans in gaudium</i> | With the exception of the course of your birth, you were one begotten purely, leaping with joy, |
| 3b. <i>limphisque nostre nature labem lavans creature baptisando dominum.</i> | with the waters, washing the sins of our nature by baptizing the Lord of creation. |
| 4a. <i>Gravis gustans transiture cibum mellis vite dure trastris trahens plurimum</i> | O you who are about to cross over, tasting the food of the thick honey of a difficult life, drawing much from the crossbeams, |
| 4b. <i>illum predicans secure a futuro quem scripture promunt Dei filium.</i> | foretelling him fearlessly whom the Scriptures bring forth as the Son of God. |
| 5a. <i>Iaspis virens flore virgineo inolevit virtutum cuneo fugans morbum pulsa formidine</i> | The jasper blooming with its first flower grew upon the stamp of the virtues, fleeing disease, after the dreadfulness of the walls was struck down. |
| 5b. <i>moenium sic fit cacusneo dum exausit aquam de balneo saporatus pia dulcedine.</i> | In this way, he becomes a servant, while he drank water perfumed with a devoted sweetness. |
| 6a. <i>Opus dispar in animalibus presignatus signis regalibus alta petens gradis ut aquila.</i> | You are a work unlike other living beings, remarkable for its regal signs. Seeking the heights you climb like the eagle. |
| 6b. <i>ima linquens pandis hominibus ferens cedri medulam tristibus plidentes [plictentes?] non [sis] tuendo pila.</i> | Leaving the lowest depths, you stretch out and bear the marrow of the cedar to wretched men by not saving those striking their spears. |
| 7a. <i>Belam decus doctor mundicie norma legis dono sciencie tu superni Libani fructicem</i> | Teacher of purity, parent of power, you rightly believe that the glory—the beautiful tree of lofty Lebanon— was made by the standard of the law, |

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| <p>7b. Reris recte parens potencie caro factum tractu clemencie non reliquens etiam simplicem.</p> | <p>by the gift of knowledge, by the precious extension of clemency, yet still you do not abandon your simplicity.</p> |
| <p>8a. Artos iugis et custos iugiter matris Christi virgo similiter te comendans sic dum piaculum</p> | <p>The unending bread and constant guardian of the mother of Christ, herself a virgin, pointing you out thus,</p> |
| <p>8b. agonisans lamentabiliter pro genere humano nequiter dire mortis atraxit poculum.</p> | <p>while struggling mournfully against the sacrifice on behalf of humankind, but in vain, drank the cruel cup of death.</p> |
| <p>9a. Illibatus reclinasti natum summe reformasti promptus et novissimus</p> | <p>You bent back, O high one, and restored the son intact, eagerly and at long last.</p> |
| <p>9b. antra petens iudicasti quanta luce radiasti porro preclarissimus.</p> | <p>Seeking the caves, you judged by how much light you have shone and hereafter you were very bright/ famous.</p> |
| <p>10a. Scandens ergo dedicasti mundum mundus condempnasti pugil potentissimus.</p> | <p>You, as the one purified, consecrated the world, and you, as the most powerful fighter, condemned it.</p> |
| <p>10b. Nablum tangens personasti agnum sic cum demonstrasti qui esset iustissimus.</p> | <p>Playing the lyre, you proclaimed the Lamb in this way, when you pointed out the one who was most just.</p> |
| <p>11a. Tacens dulcis sine felle iustus iudex recta calle gradiens veraciter</p> | <p>Sweetly silent without anger, the just judge walking truly in a rightful path,</p> |
| <p>11b. nos Iohannes procul pelle morbum quod sub diva pelle sellavimus nequiter.</p> | <p>O John, drive us far from sickness for the disease that we hid in vain under the divine skin.</p> |
| <p>12a. Ardens malos in procelle pie bonos dulci melle refovens suaviter</p> | <p>Burning the evil ones in the storm, dutifully restoring the good sweetly with sweet honey,</p> |
| <p>12b. nos Iohannes pollens tolle verbi sancti toto velle laudans trinis pariter.</p> | <p>almighty John, raise us up with power and demolish us with the whole of holy scripture, praising the members of the Trinity equally.</p> |

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| <p>13a. Rectis gemmas divino munere et cratonis nostri reprimere ut extirpes protinam verticem.</p> | <p>You are adorned with virtues, the divine gift, and you will be restrained from our power, so that you might tear out the head straight away.</p> |
| <p>13b. miro modo veneni propere cunctos hemus [humus?] posset coercere exausisti tremendum calicem.</p> | <p>Provided that the earth was able to quickly constrain everyone by the miracle of a drug, you emptied the dreadful cup.</p> |
| <p>14a. Nimbus rorans precordia intima relegatus circa maritima sine virtos [virtutes?] codicem promere</p> | <p>As a cloud which drops dew into the innermost heart and which has been banished around the sea-coasts, you tried to bring forth for a good reason</p> |
| <p>14b. atemptasti causa legitima manu sordes manu ditissima ex Olimpo ferens pro decore.</p> | <p>a testament, but without the power, as if bringing filth by hand, a very rich hand, down from Olympus for the sake of honor.</p> |
| <p>15a. Ergo pater mire dulcedinis consors fausti divini luminis esto sponsus sponsis psallentibus</p> | <p>Therefore wondrous father of sweetness, partaking of the favorable divine light, be the bridegroom to those bridegrooms singing psalms,</p> |
| <p>15b. vetus chile superni claminis nitens rorem rosei flaminis celibatus supra fruientibus.</p> | <p>an ancient extraction from a celestial chlamys, shining forth dew of a rosy burst, celibate above those who feel pleasure.</p> |
| <p>16a. Stola viva fun[d]ens pro merito gracia in quo fulget merito nunc diceris propolem posteris</p> | <p>You are the living stole pouring out for the deserving on whom grace deservedly shines. Now you are said to be forerunner for posterity.</p> |
| <p>16b. sta pro nobis ut in fine debito perfungamur ne morte subito devastati iungamur superis.</p> | <p>Stand firm for us, so that we might endure at the well-deserved end and be joined to those above, not devastated by a sudden death.</p> |

Appendix B Texts and translation of *O amicus sponsi/Precursoris* from Ipswich, Suffolk Record Office, shelfmark HA30: 50/22/13.15 Yoxford, Cockfield Hall (YFch), fols. i (verso)–ii (recto). Reprinted from Bent and Howlett, “*Subtiliter alternare*,” 82–83. Translations by Howlett.

Cantus I

[O A]micus sponsi primus
en zakarie filius
baptista domini purus
ut dicam quod finit ausus.

O first friend of the Bridegroom
Lo! The son of Zechariah,
the pure baptizer of the Lord,
that I may tell the crime that ended his
life.

Antequam puer nascitur
renatus ipse creditur,
sed et propheta dicitur
cum dat plausus alvo clauses.

Before the boy is born
he is believed reborn
but he is also called a prophet,
because he gives approval enclosed in the
womb.

Senex mutus substituit
ac propheta convaluit
ex quo circumsisus fuit

The old man, mute, cut short his speech
and regained his health as a prophet
from the time when the little boy was
circumcised
who into the desert,

parvulus, qui in desertum

Sedulus iam a tenero
cum victu cultu aspero
dirigit rege superno
in expertum iter certum.

Attentive now from a tender age,
with rough food and clothing,
directs his certain journey
toward Him who has been tested by the
supernal king.

Plusquam propheta merito
fit, agnum promens digito,

More than a prophet deservedly
he becomes, pointing out with his finger
the Lamb,
whom he baptizes and thus quickly
heard the sound of the Father.

quem baptizat, et sic sito
sonitum patris audivit.

Spiritum sanctum meruit
videre quod nullus fuit
maior, Christus asseruit,
ut qui scivit diffinivit,

He deserved to see the Holy Spirit
because none was greater,
Christ asserted,
so that he who knew stated definitively,

Forciorem prophetavit
venturum, et increpavit
quam plures et quos vocavit
limpha verbo lavit pavit.

He prophesied and roared out
that a stronger man was to come,
and very many people whom he called
he cleansed with water and fed with his
word.

Tandem quod dampnat
incestum non licere, non honestum,
puelle caput in questum
dat abscisum festum mestum.

Finally, because he judges that
incest is not allowed, not honest,
an ill-omened feast gives his head
cut off on the request of a girl.

O Johannes, cum devota
mente cano voce tota
precando pro me schemata
labe sume nota vota.

O John, with a devout mind
I sing, with my whole voice
praying for myself, take my compositions,
my noted offerings with their defect(s).

Cantus II (with parenthetical commentary from Bent)

Precursoris preconia
mellisona concordia
uti prona memoria
promant gaudia previa,

alternatis coloribus
epogodois plenis tribus
atque scemo scandentibus
modis parisbus pascibus.

Alternare subtiliter
posit duum viriliter
Currens suum simpliciter
Cursum vel iter breviter

Sic patronum meum tota
Vi laudare laudis nota
iure poscunt mea vota.

Let the preachings of the precursor make known the harbinger joys in sweet-sounding concord as from straightforward tradition [This alludes to John the Baptist's announcement of the coming of the Messiah as foretold by the Prophets. But as the rest of the text bristles with musical terminology it might also be construed: Let the declaimings of the one who runs ahead (the canonic dux) bring out from concealment (i.e., hidden conceit of the musical canon notated in a single statement and expressed in hidden language) delights that lead the way from sweet-sounding concord (the fifth that starts the canon) as from a monument (i.e., the "Gregorian" tenor of this composition) turned upside down (rather: inside out, with color and mensural reversals, makes better sense than the implication of inversion).],

With alternating colors/*colores* in three full *epogodoi* [recte *hemioli*?] [There may be a further pun on "color"; red and black colors/*colores* alternate, as do the alternating *colores* in canonic statements.] and by a scheme with *accelerating* modi [presumably meaning the tenor color repetition in duple proportions; or as suggested by Thomas Walker, treating *scemus* as an alternative spelling of *semus* (=imperfection):

by imperfection with accelerating modi] and with paired [foot]steps [Tenor and Contratenor mutually reversing the order of notes and rests, red and black; *passibus* may also include a play on the English fourteenth century usage of *pes* for tenor, especially when there are two *pedes* on equal terms.],

One of two [i.e., each] can in manly fashion alternate subtly [in presenting the chant, alternating notes and rests], running his own course simply or his journey briefly [with a play on brevially].

Thus do my noted [i.e., both written and famous] offerings seek by right to laud my patron [saint and temporal lord] with the whole power of praise.

Appendix C Texts and translation of *Gemma florens militie/Hec est dies gloriosa*, from Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS J.II.9, fols. 65v–66r

Cantus I

| | |
|---|--|
| Gemma florens militie, Palma nitens iusticie: Magnalia Macharii preconia Depromat plebs lutetie, Odulis pro leticie, | O radiant gem of courage, O gleaming hand of justice, May the people of Paris celebrate with little songs of joy the mighty deeds and high praises of Macarius, |
| Cum Gallia, | through whose agency, together with France, |
| Quo preclaruit Grecia Refulgentis prosapie genere. | Greece has become famous, through the family of his distinguished progeny. |
| Gentis impie feralia | He does not fear the funereal punishments of that |
| Non veretur supplicia; Quo ruunt ydolatrie Cultu roborat latric | impious race, which comes so quickly. Where the idolatries fall to ruin, he strengthens them with the cultivation of worship |
| Ovilia suggerentis frugalia Populis diffidentie. Pastor innocentie Per milia Ediserit vitalia, Eminent quo prophetie | which offers temperate sheepfolds to the people who lack faith. May this shepherd of innocence declare for thousands the living message, in which the prophets have been preeminent. |
| Et corruunt nequetic, Gentilia numinum sacrificia. | Their wicked ways, the pagan sacrifices to their gods, fall to ruin. |
| Hierusale, Armenia, Cipri regem, Uranie Clementia Numinis in presentia, | May the compassion of Urania, in the presence of the Lord, gleaming in the crown of glory, now assure the |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Laurea fulgens glorie, | King of Jerusalem, Armenia, and Cyprus, |
| Locet ovantes hodie, | and those |
| In patria | who rejoice with him today in the land of |
| Tempe donans celestia. | Thessaly, |
| Amen. | now be reassured, |
| | granting them the promises of heaven. |
| | Amen. |

Cantus II

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Hec est dies gloriosa | This is the glorious day, |
| in qua fructum generosa | on which noble Elizabeth |
| Elysabeth genuit, | bore her fruit, |
| Delens improperium; | wiping out reproach; |
| Votum legis implevit, | She fulfilled the promise of the law, |
| Reserans misterium. | revealing a mystery. |
| Virtutibus decoratur, | She is decorated with virtues, |
| Sanctitate roboratur, | strengthened with sanctity |
| Ante puerperium. | before labor. |
| Nondum precur nascebatur | The herald was not yet born, |
| Vere regem fatebatur, | but truly he proclaimed the king, |
| Predicens imperium. | foretelling his kingdom. |
| Caligine tenebrosa | May he who has washed all |
| Janum regem speciosa | in the river Jordan |
| Veram lucem que pavit | preserve King Janus |
| preservet dans gaudium | from the gloomy mist, |
| Celi qui cuncta lavit | which hides the true light, |
| In Jordanis fluvium. Amen. | granting him the joy of heaven. Amen. |

Appendix D Texts and translation of *Hunc diem festis/Precursoris verbi solennia*, from Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS J.II.9, fols. 72v–73r

Cantus I

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Hunc diem festis celebremus hymnis | Let us celebrate this day with festive |
| Natus est in quo muliere natus | hymns, |
| Nemo qui maior viguit per orbem. | the one born of a woman—an offspring |
| | of which |
| | none greater has flourished throughout |
| | the earth. |
| Ore celesti canitur futurus | He who is about to come into being is |
| Iam patri cano dubius, sed ille | acclaimed with a celestial voice, |
| | now doubtful to his aged father, but he |
| | brought forth the |
| Damna sublate peperit loquelle. | injuries of that cursed speech, which had |
| | been put aside. |
| Ventre matris sanctificatur atque | He is sanctified in the womb of the |
| | mother |

Spiritu sancto subito repletur,
Mox deum novit thalamo latentem.

Primus elegit heremi latebras
Polui celi lubricis recusans
Limpha, mel, victum dedit et locusta.

Previs lucis tamen ipse non lux

Ast erat lucis potius future

Testis in mundo radiantis omne.
Nam palam clamat:
Domino parate
Tramite, monstrans digito sed agnum
Celicum mundi scelus auferentem.

O dei prece meritis decore
Inclitis, istam tibi nunc ovantem

Adiuva plebem, valeant ut astra

Scandere celi.

Cantus II

Precursoris verbi solennia,
Quem misit qui creavit omnia
Veri testis foret ut luminis
Naturi thalamo de virginis,
Nostra gaudens peragat contio

Modis ut sit mixta devotio.

Magnus hic est dies et celebris

Sacrisque festandus illecebris;

Nam nullius sancti nativitas,
Illius nisi qui est veritas
Ac Johannis in orbe colitur,

Nam utraque miranda cernitur:
Utranque Gabriel prencipiat
Docens quod sterilis concipiat
Necnon virgo, fore possibile
Non natura sed per mirabile.

and is filled suddenly with the holy spirit.
He soon recognized God lying in the
womb.

First, he chose a hermit's hiding place,
refusing the goods of the earth;
spring water, honey, and locusts gave him
nourishment.

Preceding the light, nevertheless he
himself

was not the light; rather, he was the
witness of the light to come,
radiating into the entire world.
For he cries out openly:

Prepare the way for the Lord,
but pointing out the heavenly lamb
with his finger, taking away the sin of the
world.

O herald of God, deserving of honor,
help this your people who are now
rejoicing,
so that they might be able to rise up to
the stars of
heaven.

May our joyful address
complete the solemn parts
of the precursor of the Word
whom the creator of all things sent,
so that he might be a true witness of the
light,

which is about to be born from the
womb of the virgin,

so that our devotion may be mixed in its
methods.

This is a great and festive day, which must
be celebrated

With sacrifices and enticements.

For the birth of no holy person
except of him who is truth and of John, is
honored in the world.

For each is seen as miraculous,
and Gabriel announces each,
teaching that the sterile
and also the virgin might conceive.

Not by nature but only through a miracle
would this be possible.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Ergo lucerna, tanta gratia | Therefore you are a lantern, such a grace, |
| Que refulges, ad lucis gaudia, | which you reflect toward the joys of the |
| | light, |
| Cui prebuiſti testimonium. | to whom you offered witness. |
| Noſtrum perduc pie conſortium. | O holy one, lead our aſſembly. |

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Abbreviations

- CAO *Corpus antiphonarium officii*. Edited by René-Jean Hesbert. 6 vols. Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series maior, Fontes 7–12. Rome, 1963–79.
- CS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina [manuscript number follows].
- NJE Josquin des Prez. *New Edition of the Collected Works (New Josquin Edition)*. Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1987–. Editions of individual works are named with volume-dot-position (e.g., NJE 3.3). Page numbers are given only when necessary. Editors are included for individual volumes, and volumes of critical commentary will be denoted with the letters “CC” after NJE.
- Q 15 Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna (formerly Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale; earlier Liceo Musicale), MS Q 15 (foliation given in Arabic numbers).
- SMM 32 Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Santa Maria Maggiore 32 (formerly JJ.III.10).
- Vall 35–40 Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, MS S¹ 35–40 (formerly S.Borr.E.II.55–60).

Psalms use the numbering in the Septuagint/Vulgate.

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Abstract

Studies of the past two decades have shown that late medieval and Renaissance composers participated in a culture of symbolic representation by inscribing Christian figures and concepts into musical design. One figure who has been overlooked in this line of scholarship is John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ. This essay outlines the Baptist's historical impact on the conception of Christian temporality and proceeds to demonstrate some distinct experiments in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century music for John that express his predecessor character through emblematic manipulations of temporal parameters. By the sixteenth century, several inscriptions found in Vatican manuscripts reveal that the Baptist was associated with a particular musical craft that controls masterfully the unfolding of time: the art of canon. Drawing heavily on Scripture (especially John 1:15, 27, 30) to articulate the compositional conceits, the rubrics likened the leader (*dux*) and follower (*comes*) of a canon to the relationship between John (the forerunner saint) and Jesus. The analogy intensified around the papal chapel choirbook Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Cappella Sistina 38.

Keywords: John the Baptist, canon, symbolic representation, manuscripts, Johannes Parvus