

The Symbolism of Reconciliation in Agnus Dei Settings of Josquin des Prez*

Abstract

The present study seeks to demonstrate that the theme of Reconciliation has inspired Josquin de Prez, in some of his settings of the Agnus Dei, to the application of remarkable compositional procedures. By means of three-part canons, the use of the minor perfect mode and motif occurrences based on number, the significance of Christ's death on the cross is musically emphasized.

The theme of Christ's passion and the doctrine of reconciliation with God has, as far as I know, never been studied as to its place in Renaissance music. While it is evident that J.S. Bach loved to express his belief in the benefits of Christ's passion by means of various musical elements, the question at what point in the history of Western music the idea of man's reconciliation with God began to have its impact on polyphonic practice is not easy to answer. Of course, an inquiry into the extant musical repertoire would show that already at the beginning of the fifteenth century some composers made musical settings of texts based on sacramental theology, such as Guillaume Dufay's hymn *Pange lingua*. In 1503, the Venetian printer Ottaviano Petrucci issued the well-known edition *Motetti de passione, De*

* I am grateful to Robert Tusler for his careful reading of the manuscript.

cruce, De sacramento ..., in which more than fourteen composers are represented with settings of texts that are mostly drawn from prayer books. The following decades of the sixteenth century were marked by an ever increasing interest on the part of composers to set texts devoted to the Eucharist.

Instead of trying to compile a historical survey of musical works that, by the mere choice of their texts, are connected with the themes of Christ's passion and the Eucharist, I think it is rather more profitable to make an inquiry into those text settings of which we may expect that they possibly testify to the composer's profession of faith in a more symbolic way. In doing so, we may succeed in unveiling intentions that have laid the foundation of a conception of the doctrine of reconciliation which enabled later composers such as J.S. Bach to develop this conception into a prominent aspect of their musical creativity. It should hardly surprise us that Renaissance composers did make use of a symbolic code behind which profound meanings were hidden. Near the end of the Middle Ages, religious life was dominated by 'a marked tendency of thought to embody itself in images', many of which were 'related with Christ or salvation'.¹

The doctrine of salvation through Christ and the sacraments was discussed at considerable length by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa contra gentiles*. Among his eight reasons in favour of the incarnation of Christ we find the following statement: if man is to attain salvation he must have his sins forgiven, and this is possible only if satisfaction be rendered by one who is at once God and man (*Summa* iv.54).² In his last work, the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas stresses as the main reason for the incarnation 'the goodness of God to which it belongs to communicate itself to the creature in the highest way possible'.³ As the benefits of Christ's pas-

sion he enumerates: the forgiveness of sin, deliverance of Satan, release of punishment, reconciliation with God, and the opening of heaven's gates (*Summa* III, 49:1-5).⁴

The doctrine of Christ's work of salvation has been the norm in Catholic theology ever since.⁵ But also within Lutheranism, it formed a central issue. Although there existed among the reformers of the first half of the sixteenth century doctrinal differences about the Eucharist, Luther insisted that Christ's words 'This is my body' must be understood literally.⁶ In his opinion, allegory is not to be used in explaining Scripture unless the context plainly requires it.

While the doctrine of salvation was of prime importance for Luther, so it has been for Bach. Yet, if we admire Bach for having imbued so many of his works with musical symbolism that evidences the composer's deep belief in the benefits of Christ's passion, we may not forget that one of his great precursors, namely Josquin des Prez (ca. 1440-1521), repeatedly acted in the same way. Remarkably, it is this composer, whom Luther held in high esteem,⁷ who exerted considerable influence on compositional practice in Lutheran Germany.⁸

Although we encounter in Josquin's oeuvre two large motet cycles and various other motets based on texts dealing with the passion of Christ, I will limit my contribution to some of his settings of the Agnus Dei text. The introduction of this text into the Ordinary of the Mass at the end of the seventh century, is attributed to Pope Sergius I. He prescribed that, during the breaking of the host, the priest should repeat three times the words spoken by St John the Baptist when he proclaimed to the Jews the Messiah who was to save them (John 1:29).⁹ The fraction of the host was seen as a striking recollection of the passion of Christ,¹⁰ now believed to be present in and through the sacramental bread and wine.

My first example of Josquin's musical interpretation of the theme of Christ's passion is the second Agnus of his *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*. In this section, the four-part scoring is reduced to three voices which are set as a canon, and which are derived from a single notated part by performing each voice in a different mensuration. The Mass is preserved in almost twenty sources. Additionally, the canon appears – obviously due to its ingenuity – in some theoretical treatises and didactic anthologies. The painter Dosso Dossi inscribed the music in the form of a triangular canon in his *Allegory of Music* (ca. 1524-34; Florence, Museo Horne).¹¹ The canon was, curiously enough, also depicted on the back of a choir-stall in the Basilica of S Sisto in Piacenza in 1514, where a fourth mensuration sign was added.¹² The anonymous artist took a Latin distich instead of the text of the Agnus Dei; it can be translated as follows: 'This [i.e. Josquin's] well-known talent has brought all the arts to life and the whole world rejoices in eternal song.' In fact, the Piacenza reading deprives the canon of its original meaning which is revealed in the mottos that occur in the musical sources. Among these mottos we find 'Trinitas' (Modena, Ms. M.α.1.2; Cappella Sistina Ms. 197; Vienna Ms. 11778), 'Tria in unum' (Petrucchi 1502), and 'Sancta Trinitas, salva me' (Basel Ms. F.IX.25).

Even if the text of the Ordinary of the Mass is an appropriate place for introducing a canon as the musical image of the Trinity, one would not expect Josquin to employ this symbol for the text 'Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us' unless he had given the matter careful consideration. In view of the presence of some two-part mensuration canons in the Kyrie of the same Mass, the three-part canon at the end may therefore have been planned in order to achieve a compositional

climax. None the less, if we assume that Josquin conceived this canon with the three different voice-parts as an image of the three Divine Persons – the mottos quoted above are an indication of this – each of the voice-parts may well stand for a particular Person.¹³ In this case, the voice symbolizing the Father takes the middle position – it starts on *a*, and it has the longest note values, thus acting as the moderator of the outer voices. The voice symbolizing the Son takes the lower position, as is usual in the plainsong Passion – it starts on *d*, and it has shorter note values. The voice symbolizing the Holy Ghost takes the highest position – it starts on *d'*, and has the liveliest rhythm, which seems to suggest a portrayal of the rays of light or flames that appear in representations of Pentecost (see Example 1).

I do not deny that this is a daring interpretation. Yet it offers the key to understanding why Josquin actually conceived this canon in the *Agnus Dei*. His arrangement of the Three Persons corresponds with that found in the so-called ‘throne of mercy’, the most common among the Trinitarian representations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was especially widespread in the Southern Netherlands, but was also found in other West-European countries. It shows God the Father as an old man, holding before him the body of the dead Christ, or Christ on the cross; the dove – a symbol of the Holy Ghost – is placed above the head of Christ or that of the Father. That this representation has become known as the ‘throne of mercy’ is due to Luther, who used the term in his translation of Hebrews 9:5: ‘Oben drüben aber waren die Cherubim der herrligkeit/ die vberschatteten den Gnadenstuel’.¹⁴ The theme of the ‘throne of mercy’ is found in painting, sculpture and book illumination from the twelfth century onwards. Its occurrence on medieval gravestones

shows that this Trinitarian portrayal had become a devotional theme. Among the most famous examples are Masaccio’s *Trinity* (ca. 1427; Santa Maria Novella, Florence), *The Trinity* by the Master of Flémalle (ca. 1430; Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt a. M.), and Albrecht Dürer’s *Adoration of the Trinity* (1511; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). (For representations of the ‘throne of mercy’ see the contribution by Helene Werthemann in this same volume.) A painting by Lucas Cranach the Older, which represents God the Father holding before him the body of Christ while the Holy Ghost sits on Christ’s left knee, hung in Bach’s time above an altar in the Church of St Nicholas in Leipzig.¹⁵ The image, of course, coincides perfectly with the text of St John: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.’ It is this circumstance, I think, that may have inspired Josquin to translate this particular image into musical sound.¹⁶

The following two examples that possibly symbolize the idea of Christ’s passion and the reconciliation with God occur in Josquin’s *Missa l’homme armé sexti toni* and *Missa Pange lingua*. The passage which has helped me to perceive the symbolic value of a particular metrical sign in these compositions is found at mm. 88-107 in the third *Agnus Dei* of the latter Mass. *Pange lingua* is Josquin’s last Mass setting, and is preserved in no less than sixteen sources. One of these is the beautiful Ms. iv.922 of the Royal Library at Brussels, the so-called *Occo Codex*, named after Pompejus Occo.¹⁷ This Amsterdam businessman decided to have the choirbook compiled. Part of its contents is closely related to the feast of *Corpus Christi*. In 1537, ten days after the death of Pompejus, his family presented the codex on loan to the ‘Heilige Stede’ of Amsterdam, which is now called the Nieuwe Zijds Kapel

Example 1. *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*, Agnus Dei II.

The musical score is written for three voices: Superius (Soprano), Altus (Alto), and Bassus (Bass). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four systems, each containing three staves. The lyrics are in Latin and are written below the staves. The first system starts at measure 40, the second at measure 45, the third at measure 50, and the fourth at measure 55. The lyrics for the first system are: "A - gnus De - i, a - gnus De i, qui". The lyrics for the second system are: "tol - lis, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, i, a - gnus". The lyrics for the third system are: "mi - se - re - re no - bis, mi - se - re - qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di,". The lyrics for the fourth system are: "re no - bis, mi - se - re - re no - bis. tol lis. mi - se - re - re no - bis." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The lyrics are written in a stylized font, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across measures.

Superius
A - gnus De - i, a - gnus De i, qui

Altus
A - gnus De - i, a - gnus

Bassus
A - gnus De - i, a - gnus

tol - lis, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, i, a - gnus

De - i, qui tol - lis,

mi - se - re - re no - bis, mi - se - re - qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di,

re no - bis, mi - se - re - re no - bis. tol lis. mi - se - re - re no - bis.

and which is situated in the Kalverstraat. The chapel was founded in 1347, shortly after a famous happening, generally known as the Miracle of the wonderworking host of Amsterdam.

The passage referred to is the only one in the whole Mass where Josquin presents the chant partly in long notes, lending it the character of a real cantus firmus. The prominence of the chant's incipit is reinforced by its position in the soprano part.

Now it is remarkable that, as Richard Sherr recently has demonstrated, in all four existing scholarly re-editions of the Mass the two ligatures in this passage have been wrongly transcribed (see Example 2).¹⁸

While it is true that the first of these ligatures should be solved always as an imperfect long followed by a breve, the transcription of the second one depends on the prevailing mode. The metrical organization chosen by Josquin for the setting of the third Agnus in this Mass as well as in his *L'homme armé* Mass is the minor perfect mode, which is indicated by the circle followed by the number 2 (O2), a signature that around 1500 had become uncommon.¹⁹ This, obviously, explains why several musicologists failed to correctly transcribe the ligatures.

As a figure without beginning, middle, and end, the circle has, in Christian iconography, been universally accepted as the symbol of God.²⁰ In thirteenth-century musical practice, the ternary division of notes was considered perfect because it, likewise, consists of beginning, middle, and end. Hence the term *tempus perfectum* came into use, and was indicated by the circle. According to Willi Apel, the dogma of the Holy Trinity played some part in this concept and terminology.²¹ Of course, in view of its frequent occurrence we should not interpret the circle in this Agnus as a symbol of God if no addi-

tional elements point to some hidden meaning. Now, the circumstance that the circle is combined with the number two, which in this configuration is a rare signature in Josquin's time, seems to indicate such an additional element. In this case, the number two could signify the human and divine nature of Christ.²² I will not pretend that my interpretation of the signature O2 thus far is based on definitive arguments. One should, indeed, postulate other conditions before accepting it as the said symbol. Therefore, I propose that we study Josquin's use of O2 in a broader context.

An inquiry among Josquin's collected musical compositions shows that the same signature occurs three to five more times. The respective works are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Works with the signature O2

1. Missa L'ami Baudichon (date: ca. 1460-1470)	Credo: 'Et resurrexit ... venturi seculi. Amen.'
2. Missa N'auray je jamais ³⁸ (date: ca. 1470-1480)	Gloria: 'Qui tollis ... Jesu Christe' Credo: 'Crucifixus ... venturi seculi. Amen.'
3. Missa L'homme armé sexti toni (date: ca. 1490-1500)	'Agnus dei [III] qui tollis peccata mundi...'
4. Missa Pange lingua (date: ca. 1510-1520)	'Agnus dei [III] qui tollis peccata mundi...'
5. Preter rerum (date: ca. 1500)	[I. pars:] 'Preter rerum seriem, Parit deum hominem, Virgo mater...'
6. Credo La belle se siet (?) (date: ca. 1460-1480)	'Et iterum venturus est ... venturi seculi. Amen.'
7. Ave verum (?) (date: printed 1545)	[I. pars:] 'Ave verum corpus natum de Maria virgine...'

The works listed cover the composer's whole career. *L'ami Baudichon* and *Pange lingua* are his first and last Mass settings respectively. *Missa N'auray je jamais* is rather early, and *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni* dates from the last decade of the fifteenth

Example 2. *Missa Pange lingua, Agnus Dei* 1.

Superius

Altus

Tenor

Bassus

85

A - gnus De - i,

A - gnus De - i,

A -

A - gnus De -

correct superius part

90

a Pan - gnus ge lin De gua

a - gnus De i a gnus

- gnus De i, a gnus De

i, a gnus De i,

95

-i, De i, a gnus De i, a glo

-i, a gnus, a gnus De

a gnus De i, a

100

gnus De i, a gnus De i, a gnus De

century. The motet *Preter rerum* was composed about 1500. Credo *La belle se siet* is attributed to Josquin in Petrucci's *Fragmenta missarum* of 1505 but ascribed to Robert de Févin in the Ms. Capella Sistina 41. The *Ave verum* is only found in a German print of 1545. Josquin's authorship of the latter work is regarded suspect on stylistic grounds.²³

It should be stressed that, except for *Missa Pange lingua* and *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni*, the function of the minor perfect mode in these compositions is, first of all, of purely technical nature: the mode is applied to regulate the metrical scheme of the tenor part which carries the cantus firmus, and in which the *longa* is equal to three *breves*.²⁴ Yet, the mode seems to serve another purpose as well. All text passages in question deal with Jesus Christ. A symbolic function is least evident in *Missa L'ami Baudichon* and the dubious Credo *La belle se siet*, since here the signature is introduced at a more or less arbitrary moment in the long Credo passage devoted to the second person of the Trinity. It would not seem sound, however, to expect Josquin, whose career as a composer lasted for about fifty years, to practice all this time the same com-

positional habits. The use of the signature in his later works is more explicit. By placing the passages 'Qui tollis peccata mundi' and 'Crucifixus etiam pro nobis' in *Missa N'auray je jamais* both under the signature O2, Josquin seems to deliberately connect them. His message then is easy to understand, that is, that mankind was freed from sin by Christ's death on the cross.²⁵ In the *L'homme armé* and *Pange lingua* Mass, the minor perfect mode covers the complete third Agnus Dei. In the latter Mass, the words 'qui tollis peccata mundi' are subtly combined with the text of the hymn that is devoted to the Eucharist: 'Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory, Of his flesh the mystery sing; Of his blood, all price exceeding, Shed by our immortal king, Destined for the world's redemption, From a noble womb to spring'. That Josquin indeed wanted to stress the dogma of Christ's incarnation is shown moreover by the relevant passage in the Credo of his Mass, where 'Et incarnatus est' is highlighted in a homophonic chord progression (see Example 3).

Preter rerum seriem is a Christmas motet. Its text points to the fact that, thanks to God's sweet providence, the virgin mother

Example 3. *Missa Pange lingua, Et incarnatus est.*

95

Et in - car - na - tus est de Spi - ri -

Et in - car - na - tus est de Spi - ri -

Et in - car - na - tus est de Spi - ri -

Et in - car - na - tus est de Spi - ri -

100

- tu sanc - to, ex Ma - ri - a Vir - gi -

- tu sanc - to, ex Ma - ri - a Vir - gi -

- tu sanc - to, ex Ma - ri - a Vir - gi -

- tu sanc - to, ex Ma - ri - a Vir - gi -

105 110

- ne, et ho - mo fac - tus est.

- ne, et ho - mo fac - tus est.

- ne, et ho - mo fac - tus est.

- ne, et ho - mo fac - tus est.

brings forth Christ in his twofold nature. The dubious *Ave verum* commemorates that Christ redeemed mankind by his death on the cross.

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, I would like to conclude, be it with some caution, that the signature of the minor perfect mode in the last Agnus Dei of the *L'homme armé* and *Pange lingua* Mass may well fit St Paul's image of reconciliation. Dealing with Christ as the head of all creation, the apostle says: 'because God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross' (Col. 1:19-20).

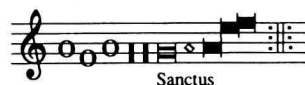
The fourth and last example that illustrates how Josquin, in his settings of the Agnus Dei text, musically symbolized the idea of man's salvation through Christ is found in *Missa Gaudeamus*. Elsewhere I have shown that the composer intended this Mass as an All Saint's Day liturgy, and that its underlying numerical structure may have been inspired by the Book of Revelation.²⁶

Although the Mass combines the techniques of cantus firmus and ostinato, it is generally the incipit of the Introit 'Gaudeamus' which, thematically, occupies the foreground. In one of the thirteen sources of the Mass, the Ms. 18 of the Bibliothèque Municipale at Cambrai, the motif even appears several times with the word 'gaudeamus' instead of the liturgical text. The ostinato technique has its culmination in the final Agnus Dei, where, as Jeremy Noble remarks, 'the memorable opening phrase of the introit is put through a vertiginous series of transpositions.'²⁷ It has never been noticed, however, that the arrangement of the total number of 'Gaudeamus' statements in the five sections of the Mass is anything but proportional. The motif occurs 6, 14, 2, 5+7, and 4+23

times respectively. If we take into account that it appears more often in Agnus Dei III, which is 58 measures long, than in the Kyrie and Gloria which together make up 220 measures, and that it appears only twice in the Credo which contains 274 measures, the conclusion seems inescapable that Josquin deliberately determined the various numbers of statements.

The notation used in two manuscripts for the soprano part of the Sanctus presents the incipit of the Introit in a highly remarkable way (see Example 4).

Example 4. *Missa Gaudeamus*, Sanctus.



At this place the motif is reminiscent of a voice which, like a trumpet (Rev. 4:1), three times proclaims: 'Sanctus', leaving out the 'dominus deus Sabaoth'. The words 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, dominus deus ...', taken from Isaiah 6:3 and also used by St John in the Book of Revelation (4:8), greatly fired Josquin's imagination. At this particular point in his *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni*, the composer introduces a canon at the unison in the two middle voices; the key to this canon is the text 'Duo seraphim clamabant alter ad alterum' (Two seraphim cried out, the one calling to the other). In Isaiah, this text precedes the words 'Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus'.

All Saints (November 1) was already an old feast in Josquin's day; it was also one of the high festivals of the Church Year. The text of the epistle is taken from the Revelation of John (7:2-12). The author gives a wonderful vision of heaven, in particular showing us the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are signed with the seal of the living God. Since All Saints is the feast of the redeemed who are believed to be in heaven, the association of its liturgy with

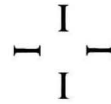
this idea should not come as a surprise. The text, written at the end of the first century AD, foretells 'the destruction of the wicked, the overthrow of Satan and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth'.²⁸ It is the only book of the New Testament that, because of its extensive use of visions, symbols and allegory, especially in connection with future events, is classified as apocalyptic. The central figure is Christ; he is represented in his sacrificial role as the Lamb who redeemed mankind with his blood. Thus, the Church always saw the message of Revelation as being relevant, even to future generations of Christians.

The theme that most frequently occurs in works of art inspired by the Book of Revelation, is the adoration of the Lamb. It is therefore not astonishing to find that the last section of the Mass, the *Agnus Dei*, is imbued with the 'Gaudeamus' motif. Fully consonant with the idea that Christ was sacrificed for mankind and brought salvation through his death on the cross, the 'Gaudeamus' motif occurs four times in *Agnus I*. In the first bars of the superius, altus, tenor and bassus the motto is sung in the following way (see Example 5):

Example 5. *Missa Gaudeamus, Agnus Dei I*.



Among the many meanings attributed to the number four, its use as a symbol of the cross and of salvation occupies an important place. Honorius emphasizes that even the 'structure' of the number four is related to the figure of the cross.²⁹ According to Heinz Meyer this should probably be understood in such a way that from the individual parts of the Roman cipher IIII the figure of the cross can be formed:



The medieval theologian interprets the form of the cross as 'Christ's sign of lordship by connecting the four arms of the cross with the points of the compass and the parts of the world ... The cross rules the world but this rule has to be understood as salvation: *Christus ... in cruce pendit, et in cruce quadrupulum mundum redemit*. (Christ ... hung on the cross and on the cross redeemed the four part world.)³⁰

If we assume that Josquin symbolized the request for salvation – 'have mercy on us' – in this way, the 23 motifs in the *Agnus III* serve to confirm our exegesis.³¹ 'According to Honorius the liturgy provides for 23 signs of the cross for the Canon of the Mass, which number he understands to be a reference to the just in the age of the law (10) and in the age of grace (13). The law is valid for both ages (10+10), that is, the ages of the Old and New Covenant, while faith in the threefold God (+3) is an added characteristic for the New Testament'.³² It is clear that ten,

the number of perfection, is a sign of God's commandments and stands for the law and the Old Testament. The number thirteen, according to Honorius, manifestly relates the Old (Law) and New Testament (*cognitio Trinitatis*).³³

The structural application of the number 23 in *Agnus Dei III* is obvious: the last words, 'grant us peace', contain the meaning of the history of salvation. When Josquin presents his 'Gaudeamus' motif for the 23rd

time at the end of the Agnus III, which is the peroration of the whole Mass, his mission also is accomplished.

From what has been said about the unusual distribution of the motif material over the entire Mass, it will be apparent that the work was conceived in terms of a plan. In the Kyrie, Josquin initiates his prayer for salvation by using the number six. In stating the 'Gaudeamus' motif fourteen times in the Gloria, he focuses our thoughts on the fact that the history of salvation begins with the birth of Christ. In the Credo, the two motifs symbolize the Christian's personal union with the Father through the Son. In the Sanctus, the composer creates a connection between the hymn of praise to God and the Book of Revelation by means of the numbers five and seven. Finally, in the Agnus Dei, Josquin symbolizes the request for salvation and connects the number four with the 23 signs of the cross for the Canon of the Mass, thus making this last section of his Gaudeamus Mass an apotheosis.

My analysis of the *Missa Gaudeamus* has revealed that Josquin considered the message of the Book of Revelation as relevant. His Mass, moreover, bears witness to the fact that one of the main characteristics of Gothic art – namely 'that it is a symbolic code'³⁴ – was still operative at the end of the fifteenth century. And just as in thirteenth-century France 'the artist, as the doctors [of the Church] might have put it, must imitate God who under the letter of Scripture hid profound meaning',³⁵ so Josquin in his Mass testified to the secret message of the Book of Revelation. The composer's concept of number symbolism seems to reflect a particular doctrine of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). This famous German mathematician and philosopher describes the game of the world as being both theological and symbolic, and he sees Christ as the 'games-master'. 'On the one hand, mathematics and mu-

sic should come together to form a synthesis of science and art; on the other hand, man – conscious that he is to the image of God – will meet the everlasting presence of the sustaining Principle of all things [*scil.* God] in the symbolism of the game'.³⁶ Emile Mâle, the great *connoisseur* of religious art in the Middle Ages, has remarked that 'a detail of apparent insignificance may hide symbolic meaning'.³⁷ In Josquin's Mass, the notation of the soprano part in the Sanctus could be identified as such. It helped us to discover the composer's conception of his art, which, like the liturgy of the Christian Church, should be a vehicle of endless symbolism.

Curriculum vitae

After his musical education at the Dutch Institute of Catholic Church Music in Utrecht, Willem Elders (b. 1934) studied musicology at the University of Utrecht. He was editor of the *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* from 1968 to 1988, and Professor at Utrecht University from 1971 to 1992. In 1982 he was appointed General Editor of the *New Josquin Edition*. His studies deal in particular with early Netherlandish music.

Books: *Studien zur Symbolik in der Musik der alten Niederländer* (1968; awarded the Dent medal in 1969); *Composers of the Low Countries* (1991); *Symbolic Scores. Studies in the Music of the Renaissance* (1994).

Notes

1. J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth 1976), p. 147.
2. Thomas von Aquin, *Die Summe wider die Heiden in vier Büchern* (Leipzig 1937), Vols. 1-5; Vol. 5, pp. 302-303.
3. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of*

- Christian Thought* (New York 1947), Vol. 2, p. 289.
4. *Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica... Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province* (Christian Classics. Westminster MA, R1981), Vols. 1-5; Vol. 4, pp. 2281-2286.
 5. Cf. McGiffert, *ibid.*
 6. See his treatise *Daß diese Worte Christi "Das ist mein Leib" noch feststehen wider die Schwärmgeister* ['That these words of Christ "This is my Body" still stand firm against the Fanatics'; 1527].
 7. See Helmuth Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez* (Tutzing 1962/65), Vol. 1, pp. 88-89.
 8. See Winfried Kirsch, 'Josquin's Motets in the German Tradition', in: *Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference New York 1971*, ed. Edward E. Lowinsky in collab. with Bonnie J. Blackburn (London 1976), pp. 261-278.
 9. Cf. *Saint Andrew Daily Missal*, ed. Dom Gaspar Lefebure (Montreal 1943), p. 991.
 10. Cf. *Liturgisch Woordenboek* (Roermond 1958-1962), Vol. 1, col. 80.
 11. See H. Colin Slim, 'Dosso Dossi's Allegory at Florence about Music', in: *JAMS* 43 (1990), pp. 43-98, esp. p. 66. According to Slim, Dossi uses the triangle as a visual symbol for musical perfection.
 12. See Jaap van Benthem, 'Einige Musikintarsien des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts in Piacenza und Josquins Proportionskanon "Agnus Dei"', in: *TVNM* 24 (1974), pp. 97-111.
 13. Another example illustrating a similar musical expression of what is proper to each of the Persons may be found in an anonymous treatise on music, which was copied ca. 1580 in Scotland. The manuscript, presently known as London, British Library, Add. 4911, contains a chapter with a large number of canons in the section on mensural music; one of these canons, example 57, is the *Agnus Dei* II from Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* (fol. 42v). The thirteenth canon (example 36) can best be labelled a Trinitarian canon. The two tenor parts are derived from the same melody notated in breves; the melody has two *tempus perfectum* mensuration signs at the key, one on the line for *d*, and one on the line for *a*. The rhythm of these two voices is indicated by a series of figures, namely 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, and its retrograde. In this case, one stands for a minim, two for a semibreve, three for a perfect semibreve, etc. (Cf. Judson Dana Maynard, *An Anonymous Scottish Treatise on Music from the Sixteenth Century, British Museum, Additional Manuscript 4911. Edition and Commentary* (Ph.D. diss. Indiana Univ. 1961), Vol. 1, pp. 60-61; Vol. 2, pp. 95-96). The superius voice has its own melody, also in perfect time. Whereas the two tenor parts each have 37 notes and are rather ponderous, the superius contains no less than 103 notes and is very lively. The text (or inscription) explaining the canon allots the three voices to the three Divine Persons: 'Pater in filio, filius in patre, spiritus sanctus ab utroque procedens' (The Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both). Because of this indicative character of the parts – the two melodically identical lower voices representing the Father and the Son, and the richly embellished higher voice representing the Holy Ghost – I think that we can view this assignment of voices as very appropriately Trinitarian indeed.
 14. Quoted after *Biblia [...] Auff's new zugericht. D. Mart. Luth.* (Wittenberg 1545).
 15. For the possibility that J.S. Bach, too,

- was inspired by the image of the 'throne of mercy' see Martin Geck in his recent monograph on Bach's *St John Passion* (München 1991). This author suggests that the Trinity is symbolized in the three motivic-semantic strands which characterize the orchestral part of the opening choir, and he likewise sees a connection between the conception of this music and the 'throne of mercy' (cf. pp. 45-50).
16. The second Agnus of Josquin's *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie* is also set as a three-part canon. For the possibility that this canon, too, symbolizes the 'throne of mercy' see this author's 'Symbolism in the Sacred Music of Josquin', in: *The Josquin Companion*, ed. Richard Sherr (Oxford; forthcoming). Three other Masses also have three-part canons in the Agnus dei, each headed by the motto 'Trinitas in unitate'. The earliest of these, the *Missa Salve regina*, is anonymously preserved in the Ms. Vienna 4810, a choirbook dating probably from ca. 1521-1525 and belonging to the Netherlands court complex. The two other Masses are the *Missa Ad fugam* by Palestrina, published in 1567, and the *Missa Benedicta es* by George de la Hèle, published in 1578. It is difficult to say whether any of the '3 ex 1' canons in these Masses was inspired by the famous piece of Josquin. None of them is a mensuration canon, but in view of the popularity of the 'throne of mercy' as a Trinitarian image, it seems reasonable to assume that Josquin's famous example paved the way for the symbolical connection of the Agnus Dei text with three-part canonic writing as an image of the Trinity.
 17. See the edition in the series *Facsimilia Musica Neerlandica*, ed. Willem Elders, Vol. 1. The facts presented are based on the introduction by Bernard Huys and Sebastien A.C. Dudok van Heel.
 18. 'Josquin's "Missa Pange lingua": A Note on Agnus Dei III', in: *Early Music* 18 (1990), pp. 271-275.
 19. An early mid-sixteenth century source for the Mass (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ms. E.46. Inf.) even replaces this signature by *tempus imperfectum diminutum* (♩).
 20. Cf. George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford 1961), p. 153.
 21. Cf. *The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900-1600* (Cambridge MA 1953), p. 96.
 22. Cf. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
 23. See Edgar H. Sparks, 'Problems of Authenticity in Josquin's Motets', in: *Josquin des Prez. Proceedings of the International Josquin Festival-Conference New York 1971*, ed. Edward E. Lowinsky in collab. with Bonnie J. Blackburn (London 1976), pp. 350-353.
 24. The situation of *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni* requires some additional comments. Three sources of the Mass give the four upper voices of Agnus III in O2, the tenor and bass in O. For a discussion of the implications which this combination of signatures may have for the performance of the Agnus, see Richard Sherr, 'The Performance of Josquin's L'homme armé Masses', in: *Early Music* 19 (1991), pp. 261-268. It should be noted that Sherr's plea for a faster tempo needs not to interfere with the proposed symbolic function of the signature O2. It seems even feasible that Josquin's decision to combine the signatures O2 and O was prompted first of all by his wish to convey the symbolism of reconciliation in the upper voices, while sticking at the same time to the original note values of the cantus firmus in the lower parts. The practice of changing the signature O2 into ♩, as is done in most of the sources

- of Josquin's Mass, is in agreement with Tinctoris's recommendation (cf. Sherr, *ibid.*, note 10) but deprives the score from its extra-musical message.
25. In his 'Symbol and Ritual in Josquin's *Missa Di Dadi*' [= N'auray je jamais], in: *JAMS* 42 (1989), pp. 1-22, Michael Long has attempted to make the case that this Mass was intended for the liturgy of *Corpus Christi*. He associates the structure of the Mass, which is based on the numbers of the dice, with contemporary liturgical ritual. If Long's thesis indeed would stand the test, it clearly underlines my interpretation of the signature O2 in this same Mass.
 26. See Willem Elders, 'Josquin's Mass for All Saints and the Book of Revelation', in this same author's *Symbolic Scores. Studies in the Music of the Renaissance* (Leiden 1994), pp. 44-60.
 27. 'Josquin Desprez', in: *NGD*, Vol. 9, p. 725.
 28. James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York 1979), p. 23. Popular belief wrongly identified the author with St John the Evangelist.
 29. Cf. Heinz Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter, Methode und Gebrauch* (München 1975), p. 126.
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. The motif is found in the following places: superius mm. 95-99, 102-106, 108-112; altus mm. 112-114, 115-117, 117-119, 126-128, 129-135; tenor mm. 70-74, 77-81, 84-88, 91-95, 120-122, 122-124, 125-127, 127-129, 130-132; bassus mm. 81-85, 87-91, 119-121, 121-123, 123-125, 126-128. The numbers of the measures correspond to those in the edition *Werken van Josquin des Prez*, ed. A. Smijers, part 12. Helmuth Osthoff, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 141, erroneously counts 24 statements.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
 34. Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century* (New York 1972), p. 14.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. Werner Schulze, *Zahl, Proportion, Analogie: Eine Untersuchung zur Metaphysik und Wissenschaftshaltung des Nikolaus von Kues* (Münster 1978), p. 123.
 37. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
 38. The unique source of the Mass, Petrucci's *Missarum Josquin liber tertius* (Venice 1514), gives in both cases the mensuration sign $\text{c} 2$. But see Barton Hudson in his edition of the Mass, *New Josquin Edition*, Vol. 9, Critical Commentary, p. 73.