

The Las Huelgas codex: some theories concerning its compilation and use

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THE importance of the Las Huelgas Manuscript (*Hu*) became apparent following its discovery by two monks from Silos in 1904, since which time numerous technical analyses and studies into its contents have been undertaken. In this study repetition of information already in circulation is intended only to underscore discussions pertaining to the present topic, which, within the constraints of a journal article, seeks to present new ideas concerning the unusual nature of the manuscript, the reasons for its compilation and use at the Monastery of Las Huelgas, and an appraisal of the role of Johan Rodrigues, who has been attributed with the creation of the manuscript.

1. The Las Huelgas Manuscript: physical characteristics and contents

The Las Huelgas Manuscript (*Hu*) is dissimilar to most other polyphonic manuscript sources in that its rugged calligraphy and internal organization suggests a notebook, functional or portable performance copy, similar to a processional, rather than a reference copy or collector's manuscript.¹ Compositions are set out on a matrix of 6 staves of choirbook notation to 7-9 staves of successive or score notation. Higini Anglès believed that one hand could be identified up to f. 152', but suggested that, excepting the *Ars Nova* composition on f. 8, 11 different, but approximately contemporaneous hands could be detected from f. 153 to the end.²

¹ C. de HAMEL, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, London, 1994, p. 224.

² H. ANGLÈS, *El Codex Musical de Las Huelgas (Música a veus dels segles XIII-XIV)*, Barcelona, 1931, vol. 2, pp. XVII-XVIII.

The contents of the manuscript consist of 186 compositions of peripheral and Notre Dame origin. Of these, 45 are monophonic chants, comprising 20 sequences, 15 conductus and 10 Benedicamus tropes. The 140 polyphonic pieces include two- and three-part motets, mass ordinaries and propers, tropes, sequences and some unica. There is one polyphonic piece for which the musical notation is lacking. The compositions are not grouped into masses or offices following the temporal or sanctoral cycle, as is usual for liturgical compilations, such as antiphoners and graduals, but are grouped according to form or genre. The first four quinions, ff. 1-32, contain *organa*, the next five, ff. 33-81, contain *prosaes*, the next five, ff. 82-128, contain motets, and the final four quinions, ff. 129-168, are taken up with *conductus*.³ This arrangement seems to occur as the result of specific intention on the part of the compiler. If the manuscript was used as a performer's copy, as is here proposed, this arrangement would be both practical and logical. Although not unique, it is certainly evidence in favour of a functional rather than a decorative manuscript. The accepted date of compilation, 1300-1325, conflicts with the age and conservative bent of many of the 61 motets, evidently 50-100 years older. However, *Hu* gives rhythmic interpretations of many mainstream, traditional or central compositions, including *conductus* and *clausulae*, which exist elsewhere only in non-mensural forms. It also contains some unusual and modernistic compositional devices. The impression of conservatism occurs partly because some compositions, usually encountered in three parts, appear in *Hu* as two-part compositions, and partly because all the texts are in Latin. This is a fact significant in itself because almost all motet collections in other manuscripts have some compositions with French texts. Many of the Las Huelgas texts are in the idiom of the conductus-motet or clausula-motet and all are liturgically orientated, a characteristic which is logical in context with the proposed use of the manuscript when it was compiled. The collection of *organa* includes some recognizable Notre Dame compositions and others which are stylistically similar and seem in fact to be modest imitations. The number of sequences is impressive but not unusual considering the pre-Tridentine popularity of this form.⁴

³ I. FERNANDEZ DE LA CUESTA, 'Aspectos codicológicos del manuscrito polifónico de Las Huelgas' *Revista de Musicología*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1990, pp. 394-398.

⁴ Cf. A. W. ROBERTSON, *The Service-Books of the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis*, Oxford, 1991, pp. 175-185.

The large number of medieval Castilian orthographic characteristics, 'tenura' in place of 'tenor' etc., and majuscule constructions, have been considered by various scholars as evidence of Castilian origin.⁵ Of various texts which could be described as proper to the sanctoral, the inclusion of *planctus* or laments such as *Rex obiit*, composition no. 169, in honour of Alfonso VIII, the founder of Las Huelgas, and others dedicated to D. María González, fourteenth abbess, and Sancho III (1157-1158) are significant because they establish the chronology and provenance of the manuscript.

Notational idiosyncrasies, such as the precise use of rests perhaps intended as rhythmic guide, the sparing use of accidentals, and the frequent use of rhomboids, often with the value of an ascending *binaria* 'cum opposita proprietate', support a peripheral origin for the manuscript. Gordon Anderson believed the *plica* and *hocket* to be favoured in Spain, basing his opinion on the widespread Moorish influence in Iberia, and in particular following Henry Farmer's proposal concerning the *mudéjar* origins of *hocket*, and also the reference by Anonymous IV to a *hocket*, 'quidam Hispanus fecerat'.⁶ Anonymous IV probably knew the composition from *Mo*, but the original is almost certainly the version in the earlier Iberian polyphonic source, *Ma* (MS 20486). How he could have known the nationality of the composer is a mystery but a possible explanation for the statement is that the *hocket* as a form was traditionally associated with Spain. The double *conductus* in *Hu*, in which text and vocalization alternate, begins with an up-beat and concludes with a *melisma* incorporating *hocket*. If Anderson is correct, the preference for the use of the *plica* in *Hu*, in positions where concordances usually show a single note or a two-part ligature, is further evidence of familiarity with Spanish compositional idioms.⁷ Individually the Las Huelgas compositions are important in the broad consideration of the evolution of Iberian music. Unfortunately, the lack of editorial uniformity in no way augments our already imperfect knowledge of the various methods used to compose and record music in the late Middle Ages, using either aural methods or written exemplars.

⁵ Cf. ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, pp. XIX-XXII.

⁶ C. E. H. de COUSSEMAKER, *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi nova series a Gerbertina altera*, Paris, 1864-1876 (reprint 1931), vol. 1, p. 350; H. G. FARMER, 'Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1925, p. 75; W. DALGLISH, 'The Origin of Hocket' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 31, no. 1, Spring 1978, pp. 1, 7-9.

⁷ G. A. ANDERSON, 'The Notation of the Bamberg and Las Huelgas Manuscripts' *Musica Disciplina*, vol. 32, 1978, p. 62.

In spite of its association with the Castilian court, the core liturgy in use at Las Huelgas followed the very strict Cistercian rite. Because a large proportion of the most vitriolic complaints concerning the use of polyphony, mensural music and decorative effects were made by Cistercians Fathers, including St Bernard himself, the compilation of a polyphonic manuscript such as *Hu* at a Cistercian nunnery must have occurred as a result of unusual circumstances. Although Heinrich Husmann and Otto Ursprung were able to relate the use of certain motets in *F* to processions in the secular liturgy used at Notre Dame, it is much less likely that motets were used in the monastic liturgy of the nuns at Las Huelgas.⁸ (The austere Cistercian liturgy contained only three official processions, Candlemass, Palm Sunday and the Ascension.⁹) However, it will be shown that there were very good reasons why 'modern' music, ie polyphony, mensural or otherwise, would have been desirable at Las Huelgas because it could have been incorporated in peripheral liturgies, such as requiem masses, anniversary and foundation masses and offices, and royal ceremonies. The appearance of certain annotations to particular compositions, predominantly in the later folios, is central to any discussion of the origin and use of the Las Huelgas motets. Of exceptional interest is the recurrence of the name of Johan Rodrigues or latinized, Johannes Roderici. It can be presumed from the annotations that Rodrigues combined the role of composer, compiler and editor of a majority of the constituent pieces. A transcription of the annotations, with a commentary and possible interpretations, is supplied in the appendix at the end of this article. It is therefore of interest that Anglès discovered an original reference which stated that Rodrigues was a copyist serving the Castilian Princess D. Isabel (daughter of D. Sancho IV), known to have been in residence at Las Huelgas in the early years of the 14th century, and that he believed Rodrigues might have been one of the 'clergues beneficiats' or 'capellanes' at Las Huelgas.¹⁰ A João Rodrigues is described in another source as being the personal servant, scribe and/or chaplain to the Portuguese princess D. Branca,

⁸ O. URSPRUNG, *Die katholische Kirchenmusik*, Potsdam, 1931-1933, p. 129f.

⁹ J. A. JUNGSMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, New York, 1950, vol. 1, p. 270, n. 36. The feast of St Francis was elevated from Com. to 12LM in 1259. St Antony was elevated from Com. to 12LM in 1260. V. also Fr. M. B. BACKAERT, 'L'Evolution du Calendrier Cistercien' *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum*, vol. 19, fasc. 2, April-June 1957, p. 121.

¹⁰ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. XI.

who transferred from the Portuguese Monastery of Lorvão to Las Huelgas c.1295.¹¹ If Rodrigues, the royal servant, can be identified as the author of the annotations in the manuscript, and its compiler, then a number of valuable facts become clear. Rodrigues was living at Las Huelgas from c.1295, he had a specific post within the royal entourage, and, because he annotated the Las Huelgas collection with a view to obtaining more assured performances, he may be seen as a superintendent of polyphonic music at Las Huelgas, selecting pieces, altering them to accommodate available resources, and adding his own compositions.

2. Johan Rodrigues and his association with the Las Huelgas Manuscript

The various annotations which appear throughout *Hu* are best described as comments about the compositions and directions and cautions relating to their performance. The writer's name appears as Johan Rodrigues, but a spelling using 'z' could well have been more common in Spain (certainly so after the 16th century). The use of 's' was more common in Portugal. This orthography in *Hu* is supportive, but not unequivocal evidence in favour of the writer being of Galician or Portuguese origin.

Anderson believed that Rodrigues may have been a redactor or editor, that he added some tenors and changed others he considered to be erroneous, and that he was responsible for the 'transmutatio modi' of some motets. It is possible that Anderson is correct and that changes such as upward vertical strokes on minimae in motet nos. XXIII *Res nova mirabilis-Virgo Deus-Alleluia* and XLVIII *Ex Illustri-Ex illustri* and the conductus no. XXVIII *Ergo vide*, and downward strokes in motet nos. XXV *Et florebit-Et florebit* and XXVI *Idola-Dum subdola*, because of their appearance, were made during copying.¹² On the other hand, changes such as occur in motet no. XXIV *Salve virgo-O dulcissima*, and motet no. LIX *In seculum*, must be considered with much greater caution. Because of their somewhat untidy appearance, they appear to be the work of a different hand and could be later additions.¹³ The motet

¹¹ J. M. L. GARRIDO and J. J. G. GONZALEZ, *El Monasterio de las Huelgas: Historia de un Señorío Cisterciense burgales (siglos XII y XIII)*, Burgos, 1988, p. 376; cf. M. COCHERIL, 'Les Abbesses de Lorvão' *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, vol. 55, no. 4, 1960, pp. 929-931.

¹² All numbers refer to the index in Anglès' catalogue, *op. cit.*, pp. XXIV-XLV.

¹³ ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Ave, caro, splendida which occurs as nos. XVII, LI and LIII (composition nos. 99, 136 and 138), seems to represent an attempt to adapt a text to a melody not entirely suited to it.¹⁴ Anglès and Anderson do not always agree as to whether discrepancies such as occur in composition nos. 91, 102, 110, 119, 158, etc. are scribal errors or intentional attempts at modernization.¹⁵ There is certainly no doubt that some questions concerning the originality of the notation and the intentions of the writer remain unresolved.

Apart from their value in linking Rodrigues with the composition or alteration of some items, the inscriptions, some of which are personified, are of technical interest. Written in Latin, Galician or old Portuguese, they are in an idiom that was meaningful at the time, but from the present-day standard the constructions are grammatically less secure and hence difficult sometimes to interpret. Their general purpose, the avoiding of a poor performance, should be viewed in context with evidence suggesting that the compositions in *Hu* were most used in solemn ceremonies for which payment had been made in the expectation of a performance of the highest standard. Rodrigues' detailed knowledge of the repertory and the difficulties involved in the performance of some compositions is evident from the precautionary captions attached to *conductus* no. XXII and the motet nos. XXIII, XXIV, XXV, etc.

The fact that most of Rodrigues' inscriptions pertain to the motets, with a lesser number applicable to the *conductus*, variously suggests that motets were of most interest to him, that he considered that these compositions were the most difficult to perform, or that they were the most important or frequently used. The inscriptions are in a semi-formal chancery script and are boxed or enclosed, perhaps to make them more noticeable. Directions within the text are in liturgical script. The use of catchwords or keywords in some of the motet tenors would have been useful mnemonics or visual

¹⁴ Notes and papers of the late G. A. ANDERSON in possession of the author. Also useful are the concluding comments which evaluate Franconian and Garlandian influences on the Las Huelgas notation, in ANDERSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-65, and G. A. ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, CMM 79, Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1982, vol. 2, p. XXIV, but cf. the opinion of H. VAN DER WERF concerning the Las Huelgas compositions and also the cantigas of Alfonso el Sabio, in *The Oldest Extant Part Music and the Origins of Polyphony*, Rochester, USA, 1993, vol. 1, pp. 185-187.

¹⁵ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 241, 255-256, 340-341, but cf. ANDERSON, 'The Notation...', pp. 59-65, and H. VAN DER WERF, 'The Chronology of Motet and Discant Passages and The Origin of Modal Notation', *The Eleventh Gordon Athol Anderson Memorial Lecture for the University of New England*, Armidale, 1995, p. 12; W. ARLT, 'A propos des notations pragmatiques: le cas du codex Las Huelgas - remarques générales et observations particulières' *Revista de Musicología*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1990, pp. 403-419.

guides in the alignment of the tenors with the upper voices during performance, but they would also have been of considerable benefit to the scribe when he was setting out the text and music.

Some of Rodrigues' comments serve to identify him as the creator of various compositions, which, polyphonic or so-intended, and original or very substantially so, include composition nos. 81, 82, 84, 87, 100, 110, 111, 112, 117, 119, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 141, 145, 151 and 159. There might have been a reason, yet to be identified, for the adjacent location of composition nos. 81 and 82, 110 and 111, 129, 132, 134 and 135, 139 and 141 and 170, 171 and 172, but this might have occurred simply as a result of chance. Although it could be inferred that Rodrigues was probably the composer of most or all of the unica, some of them seem to be based on, or inspired by, earlier compositions.¹⁶ That the motet corpus contains 18 items which probably are substantially unique (7 two-part motets, if items 110 and 117 are included, 3 three-part motets, 7 double motets and 1 four-part motet – composition nos. 110, 111, 112, 117, 129, 139, 141; 82, 84, 87; 100, 119, 130, 132, 135, 136, 138; 81), which represent approximately 25% of the total motet corpus, is further evidence of Rodrigues' fascination with the motet form and/or the usefulness of this type of composition to him.¹⁷

There is no doubt that *Hu* contains many mysteries. Why were older three-part motets reduced to two-parts, sometimes without a tenor, as in composition no. 110, or with an obliterated tenor, composition no. 117? Why do two-part motets appear in *Hu* with an added triplum in *conductus* style, why were French texts replaced with Latin *contrafacta*, and bilingual motets changed to Latin doubles or reduced to two-part compositions? Why were tenors left without an *incipit*? These questions confirm that the present investigation into the use of the motets and some of the unusual circumstances pertaining to the manuscript itself is well warranted, but also that a study devoted to methods of transmission, copying,

¹⁶ The term 'composer' in the present day applies to one who conceives an original musical composition, and the 'compiler' or 'editor', to one who is an arranger. The use of 'composer' when referring to a unicum seems to be valid even if the item was based on existing material. 'Compiler' or 'scriptor', the former based on the Latin 'compilare' to rob or steal, is best used for one who collates or arranges already existing material. In the interests of practicality, some licence has been used when referring to Rodrigues, who was clearly both compiler and composer. V. also Mark EVERIST, *French Motets in the Thirteenth Century: Music, Poetry and Genre*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ Motets in this study are designated thus: the two-part motet has two voices and one text excluding the tenor, a three-part motet has two upper voices sharing a text, the double motet has a text for both the upper voices, a bi-lingual or mixed motet combines French and Latin texts.

compilation and arrangement of these manuscripts would be very useful. This opinion is substantiated by the fact that although it is thought to be a unicum, motet no. XXXV in *Hu* (composition no. 119) in fact shows some similarities with motet no. XLII in *Cl*. That much remains to be discovered concerning the transmission of the Notre Dame sources, especially within the provinces, is confirmed by unresolved technical questions which arise from a comparison of Las Huelgas composition nos. 106 and 123 (double motets on the tenor 'Aptatur'). Similarly, the omission of the tenor from no. 92 *Non orphanum te desiram* and the 'Et florebit' tenor (further discussed in the Appendix) suggests that, although Rodrigues might have known of them, he did not have sources from which to copy.¹⁸ The captions for motet nos. XXIV and XXV suggest that although Rodrigues was copying or arranging from a written source, the text and music might not have been together. Furthermore, a tenor is occasionally incorrectly located and there are technical problems and questions surrounding the tenors of motet nos. XVII, LI and LIII.¹⁹ These features suggest that *Hu* might have been compiled from a collection of

¹⁸ The 'Et florebit' tenor, taken from mass, no. 53, *Justus germinabit*, survives in two complete transmissions in the manuscripts *W1* and *F* and in fragmentary form in *AbA*. If *W1* was either written at St Andrews, Scotland, or was there by the early 14th century as Baxter, Hiley, Roesner, Brown and Patterson, Everist et. al. believe, then Rodrigues' unfamiliarity with it would be understandable. It is possible that he knew of the existence of *F* and perhaps some of its contents, because this manuscript is thought to have been written in Paris, c.1240. V. G. CHEW, 'A Magnus Liber Organi Fragment at Aberdeen' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 31, 1978, pp. 326-343; M. EVERIST, 'From Paris to St. Andrews: The Origins of *W1*' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1990, pp. 2-3 and notes 6-11. Manuscript *F* is in fact significant to the present discussion because on f. 451 there is a version of the lament *Sol eclipsum patitur*, for Ferdinand III of León and Castile, the nephew of Blanche of Castile. Furthermore, the orthography is somewhat similar to that of the version used for the first abbess of Las Huelgas, D. María o Sol, usually contracted to Misol. The lament, added to the manuscript after Ferdinand's death in 1252, shows that there must have been a link between Iberia and Paris, or at least an interest in Iberian events. Cf. D. HILEY, 'Sources, MS, IV, 4: Organum and discant, Parisian etc.' in S. Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London, 1980, vol. 17, p. 653. On the other hand, C. WRIGHT, *Music and Ceremony at Notre Dame of Paris 500-1500*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 244, echoes the sentiments of many scholars with his statement that most of the repertoire which today exists in only one or two manuscripts, was readily available in the Middle Ages from other sources, which are not known to us. However, there is no way that this statement or the converse can be proven. Nonetheless, Wright's opinion would explain the presence of *Sol eclipsum patitur* in a French manuscript, but it compounds the problems relating to the 'Et florebit' tenor. Was it obscure? Was it omitted from the manuscript because the compiler did not know it, or was it omitted for the opposite reason, because it was a very well known melody, similar to 'L'homme armé' and was not always written out in full. (Cf. the common use of incipits in antiphoners and graduals of the era but also the arrangement used for the tenors of *Hu* motets nos. XVII, LI and LIII; only the tenor of no. XVII is given in complete form in the manuscript.)

¹⁹ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 258-259, 296-297.

sources, notes or fragments, such as would have been accumulated over a period of years by a singer who had a use for this type of music.

The many scribal inconsistencies which are evident throughout the manuscript need not pertain to an unskilled or amateur scribe any more than they pertain to a change of scribe.²⁰ Adjacent inconsistencies are not greatly significant and need not indicate lack of training or discipline, because scribes were only as accurate as they were required to be, and orthographic consistency, especially in a working or performance manuscript, would have been neither important nor necessary. The rugged calligraphy is in the style of one who could write competently but who was not an expert. The inscriptions and annotations suggest that Rodrigues was familiar with the repertory, that he was closely associated with the creation and use of *Hu*, and that its 'raison d'être' was a functional source of information rather than an 'objet d'art'. The choice of musical structures that appear in the manuscript must have depended on Rodrigues' knowledge and understanding of the liturgy, the trends in contemporary musical culture, and his interpretation of the polyphonic styles which could have been used in the cultural currency at Las Huelgas, where royal and ecclesiastical authority coincided.

3. The Monastery of Las Huelgas: its foundation and structure

Monasteries founded and endowed by a monarch and administered by a female religious community had their origins in the Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon establishments of the 7th and 8th centuries. The aim of these institutions was to provide a refuge for widows, daughters and unmarried women from aristocratic families who wished to retire from secular society.²¹ The aristocratic Spanish nunneries founded during the 12th and 13th centuries were thus based on ancient and venerable precedents. Those populated by Cistercian communities of nuns prospered and their numbers increased rapidly, but they were Cistercian primarily because of the use of liturgical customs used by their male counterparts.

²⁰ Proof of this can be found in the Gradual of Lorvão, which was probably also written at Las Huelgas about a century earlier and in which the construction of the ampersand often changes several times within one or two lines. This cannot reflect a change of scribe. (v. f. 9' lines 5 and 8 and f. 27, lines 1, 2 and 9 etc.). V. W. D. JORDAN, 'An Introductory Description and Commentary concerning the Identification of Four Twelfth Century Musico-Liturgical Manuscripts from the Cistercian Monastery of Las Huelgas, Burgos' *Cîteaux*, fasc. 1-4, 1993, pp. 153-236.

²¹ R. W. SOUTHERN, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, London, 1970, p. 309.

They were not subject to the discipline or organization imposed on the male houses and they were in fact ignored by the Cistercian General Chapter until c.1184. This situation would probably have continued unchecked had it not been for an ill-considered missive to the General Chapter by the founder of Las Huelgas in 1191.²² Pope Boniface VIII attempted to limit the increasing influence of the female houses by enclosure, with the decree *Periculosi* in 1290, but by this time some of the abbesses had assumed priestly powers.²³ They preached, held benediction, heard the medieval equivalent of confessions and held their own Chapters. They had attained positions of power and influence impossible for women in secular society. Under their auspices, liturgical art developed in a way which was not possible in the normal monastic world, and which might often have been difficult in the secular churches. Las Huelgas itself represented the confluence of Cistercian monastic austerity and the finery and fabric demanded by the higher aristocracy.

Cistercian settlement in Spain was introduced by Alfonso VII of Castile, who founded 13 Cistercian houses between 1132 and 1148. His successor, Alfonso VIII, founded another six similar institutions between 1158 and 1214.²⁴ One of several reasons for the proliferation of monasteries of this type related to the fact that in the emerging medieval bureaucracy, legal and religious activities often overlapped, *eg* the monasteries performed important administrative functions relating to the preparation and witnessing of legal documents.²⁵ The aristocratic monasteries were linked to the secular activities of the regent and his court as legal, moral and diplomatic advisers and were involved in the associated secretarial procedures. In return for generous grants and privileges, the liturgical communities in the royal monasteries were also expected to wage spiritual war to protect the king and his realm from

²² J. M. CANIVEZ, *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, Louvain, 1933 *et seq.*, vol. 1, 1191, cap. 27, p. 139; SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316; L. J. LEKAI, *The Cistercians, Ideals and Reality*, Kent State, 1977, pp. 349-352.

²³ Enclosure began as a security measure during the barbarian invasions. The tradition became more relaxed from the late Middle Ages until the Council of Trent, which insisted on unequivocal compliance with the old rules. V. A. B. CORREA, *Monasterios Reales del Patrimonio Nacional*, Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional-Luna Wennberg, undated (1988?), pp. 198, 202; B. CASTILLO, J. C. ELORZA, M. NEGRO, *El Pantheon Real de Las Huelgas de Burgos: Los Enterramientos de Los Reyes de León y de Castilla*, León, 1990, p. 13; LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 349, but cf. WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, p. 347, where the long-term effects of the *Docta sanctorum patrum* of Pope John XXII on polyphony at Notre Dame, Rouen and elsewhere are discussed.

²⁴ SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-262.

invisible and intangible enemies whilst he was alive and to make perpetual intercessions for the well-being of his soul when he was dead.

Officially founded in 1187 by Alfonso VIII, Las Huelgas was intended as a visible gesture of piety following victory over the Moslems at Cuenca on September 21, 1178. It was also to function as a royal residence north of the Alcazar in Segovia and 'caput castellae' in Burgos for the hitherto peregrinative Castilian court, a mausoleum, convent and a refuge for noble ladies, 'infantas' (princesses) and pious aristocratic widows.²⁶ The adjacent Hospital del Rei, founded shortly after the monastery, from 1212 was administered by the abbess and intended for the respite and care of pilgrims en route from France to Santiago de Compostela. It also served also as a centre of cultural communication. The first nuns to inhabit Las Huelgas came from Tulebras in 1187 under the care of San Martín Muñoz de Finojosa, Cistercian Abbot of the Monastery of Santa María de Huerta and the Bishop of Sigüenza-Guadalajara, a suffragan of Toledo.²⁷

As an 'abadengo' or 'imperio ad imperium', Las Huelgas had its own legal and administrative system, unaffected by normal interdicts pertaining to commerce and usury, and throughout the 13th century the monastery engaged in money lending.²⁸ Grants by the founder had given the abbess control of 64 towns and villages and their associated territories in an attempt to provide adequate income to cover the temporal necessities of the community.²⁹ Nonetheless, as a result of the generosity of these

²⁶ CORREA, *op. cit.*, pp. 203, 207. Details of the areas covered by the royal entourage are given in W. D. JORDAN, *The Liturgical Manuscripts of the Cistercian Monastery of Saint Peter & Saint Paul, Arouca, Portugal*, Brisbane, 1990, vol. 1, p. LVI, n. 125. V. also E. CONNOR, 'The Royal Abbey of Las Huelgas and the Jurisdiction of its Abbesses' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 23, 1988, pp. 128-129; M. COCHERIL, *Routier des Abbayes Cisterciennes du Portugal*, Paris, 1978, p. 141.

²⁷ *Coronica de los Senores Reyes de Castilla*, cap. XXXV: *de la Coronica de Rey de Castilla Don Alfonso Octavo*, f. 173, Madrid, 1665, reproduced in J. M. ESCRIBA DE BALAGUER, *La Abadesa de Las Huelgas, Estudio Teológico Jurídico*, Madrid, 1974, p. 18. V. also G. SANCHEZ DONCEL, 'Sigüenza-Guadalajara, Diócesis de' in Q. A. Vaquero, T. M. Martinez and J. V. Gatell, eds., *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, Madrid, 1975, vol. 4, p. 2475 (5); ANON. (?Alberic Wulf), *Compendium of the History of the Cistercian Order*, Kentucky, 1944, pp. 94-96; ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. V-XII; CONNOR, *op. cit.*, pp. 131, 140. The wider scene of affiliations of the Portuguese houses and the influence of Cîteaux on the Iberian houses is discussed by M. COCHERIL in 'Recherches sur l'Ordre de Cîteaux au Portugal' *Bulletin des Études Portugaises et de l'Institut Français au Portugal*, nouvelle serie, vol. 22, Lisbon, 1959-1960, pp. 31-102; M. COCHERIL, 'Les Abbayes cisterciennes portugaises du XIIe siècle' in *Actas do Congresso Histórico de Portugal Medievo, Bracara Augusta*, vols. 14, 15, 1963, pp. 281-300; A. A. KING, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, Milwaukee, 1955, p. 91, n. 1; ANGLÈS, *op. cit.* p. IX. V. H. JEDIN, ed., *History of the Church*, New York, 1969, vol. 4; H. G. BECK, K. A. FINK, et. al., eds., p. 14; LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 342, and W. BRAUNFELS, *Monasteries of Western Europe*, London, 1972, p. 82.

²⁸ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; v. the map between pp. 248-249.

actions, from the time of its foundation and the first chapter of the Spanish Cistercian abbesses in 1189 (which most of the Castilian abbesses considered to be invalid) the monastery faced difficulties with bellicose nobles and feudal lords relating especially to land and its use.³⁰ Successive bishops of Burgos resented the fact that neither they nor the apostolic delegate had the rights of visitation or control over the churches or clergy in any of the territories under the jurisdiction of the abbess of Las Huelgas. They ceased to be sympathetic to the monastery after 1205, when Alfonso gave a diocesan church to Las Huelgas.³¹

The realization by the founding nuns soon after establishment that their situation would always be difficult, prompted them to petition the King of Castile to ratify a special position and title for a 'señora' or 'mayora', to be held by an 'infanta', who would rank below the abbess but whose presence would ensure that the monastery was always under royal protection.³² The original petition was eventually ratified by Fernando IV in 1305, as a result of solicitations by D. Branca Afonso of Portugal, niece of Sancho IV of Castile. It was approved by the Cistercian General Chapter in 1319, an action which, considering the wary attitude of the Cistercian hierarchy towards matters involving the female houses, is evidence of its necessity.³³

The prestige and fortunes of the monastery were furthered by a long succession of erudite abbesses, whose local authorities and prestige were only slightly less than those of the pope and the King of Castile himself.³⁴ Although most of them lacked papal approval, the customs of the Abbess of Las Huelgas endured until the bull *Quam diversa* of 1373, which is testimony to the power and influence of the aristocratic abbesses and their institutions.³⁵ The golden age at Las Huelgas seems to have extended from its foundation in 1187 to c.1300, with a high point around 1250,

30 CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 134. The monasteries often could not work all the land at their disposal with the labour available to them and leased out the less useful areas, cf. LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 307. C. V. da Silva BARROS, *Monastery of Alcobaça*, Lisbon, 1972, p. 6, points out that the monastery effectively became the overlord of the peasant workers who were theoretically safe from conscription by a secular overlord.

31 B. PENNINGTON, 'Monastic Autonomy' *Cistercian Studies*, 3, 1968, p. 44; CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

32 COCHERIL, 'Les Abbesses de Lorvão ...', pp. 930-931, n. 1, but cf. GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

33 COCHERIL, 'Les Abbesses de Lorvão ...', pp. 930-931, n. 1.

34 D. W. LOMAX, 'Huelgas de Burgos' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, reprint, Washington, 1981, vol. 7, p. 186.

35 J. P. MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, Paris, 1844-1864, vol. 216, p. 356, but cf. the opinions of SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 315; CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 147; CASTILLO, ELORZA, NEGRO, *op. cit.*, p. 13; LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 349; CORREA, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

following earlier turmoil relating to succession following the death of the founder and his wife in 1214, who were strong and effective rulers. Between c.1300 and 1335, conflicts between landholders and nobles disrupted the smooth operation of monastic affairs, especially those which involved agriculture and which depended on secular labour.³⁶ This was typical of a general decline in monastic fortunes which resulted from secular enterprises such as farming. It ultimately forced a re-evaluation of the desirability of income from other sources, such as foundations and anniversaries.

4. D. Branca, daughter of Afonso III and her role at Las Huelgas

An attempt to discover the identity and activities of Johan Rodrigues at Las Huelgas demands particular reference to his patroness D. Branca, the daughter born in Guimarães in 1259 to the Portuguese king, Afonso III. D. Branca was the niece of D. Teresa, whose name is linked with the male Benedictine monastery of SS. Mamede and Paio at Lorvão, and its conversion to a Cistercian 'abadengo' in 1200, following the dissolution of her marriage to Alfonso IX of León in 1195.³⁷ D. Branca was probably the nineteenth abbess of Lorvão from c.1283. Her subsequent translation to Las Huelgas is best understood in the light of the close relationships and congruencies which linked the two Portuguese aristocratic Cistercian nunneries of Arouca and Lorvão with their Castilian counterpart of Las Huelgas. In 1215, the Portuguese princess D. Mafalda, younger sister of D. Teresa, resided at Las Huelgas during her brief marriage to Henrique I, the underage son of the founder of Las Huelgas. After Pope Innocent III annulled the marriage in 1216, she returned to the monastery at Arouca, transforming it into the premier aristocratic nunnery in Portugal by use of liturgical customs she had observed at Las Huelgas. The impressive list of daughters of Portuguese kings who resided at Las Huelgas during the late medieval and early Renaissance eras includes Urraca, Teresa, Mafalda, Constansa, Maria, Isabel and Joana.

Letters and records of the abbesses of Lorvão state that D. Branca went to Las Huelgas to institute reforms and that she became its tenth abbess in 1305, but a letter of presentation or introduction to the

³⁶ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

³⁷ T. Lino de ASSUMPCÃO, *As Freiras de Lorvão*, Coimbra, 1899, pp. 15-16; P. M. de OLIVEIRA, 'Origens da Ordem de Cister em Portugal' *Revista Portuguesa de História*, vol. 5, Coimbra, 1951, p. 348; C. BORGES, *O Mosteiro de Lorvão*, Coimbra, 1977, p. 14, and COCHERIL, ROUTIER..., p. 195.

community of Las Huelgas, written by Sancho iv, King of Castile and León from 1284-95, on D. Branca's behalf, suggests that the most likely date was February 1, 1295.³⁸ It is improbable that D. Branca became abbess of Las Huelgas, but it is possible that from 1339, perhaps much earlier, she was 'priora', a rank very close to that of abbess.³⁹ Although it can be inferred that Rodrigues came to Las Huelgas as part of D. Branca's retinue, the fact that in September 1308 he was scrivener to the Castilian princess, D. Isabel, who also resided at Las Huelgas, tends to confirm that he was held in high esteem by both his royal superiors.⁴⁰ Anglès affirms that D. Branca's date of death was April 12, 1321, but it has not been possible to locate the original document on which his statement is based. However, to be said against this is the discovery by the contemporary historian Juan José Rodríguez that the Las Huelgas documents of 1339 and 1340 include the name of a prioress, D. Blanca (sic). This almost certainly refers to the former abbess of Lorvão who, after a long tenure at Las Huelgas, became its priora, and following the death of the Abbess María González late in 1339, was probably the acting abbess until 1341.⁴¹ Rodrigues himself was active in 1339 when he wrote the planctus to the memory of D. María

³⁸ M. COCHERIL, 'Les Abbesses de Lorvão ...', pp. 929-31, gives dates from other sources. GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 376, give the date as 1295.

³⁹ The names of all the perpetual abbesses of Las Huelgas have been identified and are listed by D. YANEZ, 'Monasterios: Las Huelgas' in Q. A. Vaquero, T. M. Martínez and J. V. Gatell, eds., *Diccionario de Historia Ecclesiástica de España*, Madrid, 1975, vol. 4, pp. 1575-1576, where it is stated that the abbess from 1326-1332 was D. María González and from 1332-1351 the abbess was D. María Rodríguez de Rojas, but cf. ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. XI.

⁴⁰ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. XI.

⁴¹ The private communication from Juan José Rodríguez, Departamento de Historia Medieval del Colegio Universitario de Burgos, dated November 6, 1991, based on extensive examination of the original documents and in particular Archivo Palacio Real de Madrid, Caja 3061, no. 31, 1326, and Archivo Monasterio Huelgas de Burgos, Leg. 13, no. 432-F, 1328, reveals that although most authors state that D. María González was Abbess of Las Huelgas from 1326-1332, her name does not appear in the Las Huelgas documentation until 1326 and she is never referred to as 'de Agüero', which is the terminology used by Johan Rodrigues in his inscription in *Hu*. Furthermore, there are no references to an abbess in the Las Huelgas documents from 1339 to 1340, but there are references to the 'priora' named 'D. Blanca [Branca] Afonso' and the 'sospriora', D. Anderquina Pérez. The probable explanation is that the Abbess D. María González died towards the end of 1339 but her successor may not have been elected until 1341. From 1326, the administrator of the monastery seems to have been the Princess D. Leonor. This was not in accordance with custom but it could have occurred if the elected abbess was infirm and required assistance. Thus it is possible that D. Leonor acted as commercial administrator and, for a time, D. Branca acted as abbess, perhaps because of her position as 'priora' and her previous experience as Abbess of Lorvão. (v. COCHERIL, 'Les Abbesses de Lorvão ...', p. 931, n. 1). These events could also explain the references in some secondary sources, apparently based on the letters of the abbesses of Lorvão, which state (erroneously) that D. Branca went to Las Huelgas as tenth abbess, in 1305. There is no doubt that in 1305, the abbess of Las Huelgas was D. Urraca Alfonso.

González (composition no. 171, appendix item no. 13). According to J. J. Rodriguez, Rodrigues is described as 'criado' and 'clérigo' to D. Branca in documents dated 1346 and 1347, which implies that both were still living at the time. Because of possible discrepancies due to the 38 year difference between the Iberian chronological system of 'era' (used until the 15th century) and the Roman system of 'anno', statements concerning the 'terminus post quem' and 'terminus ante quem' of D. Branca and Rodrigues at Las Huelgas should be afforded some flexibility.⁴²

5. The medieval chaplaincy and the chaplains at Las Huelgas

The monastic social structure at Las Huelgas and many other Cistercian monasteries included 'conversi', 'freyres', 'capellanes', 'clérigos', lay-brothers, lay-sisters and 'donati' or 'oblato', terms which were often used in a broad and imprecise context such that demarcation is now often difficult.⁴³ The 'clérigos' and 'capellanes' are the only groups important to this discussion.

The male Cistercian houses were not permitted to admit boys, and their novices were usually aged about 20, with an exceptional admission in his late teen years, certainly not younger than 15. This requirement was perhaps one of the reasons for the decline in numbers from c.1175-1225, when many abbeys were unable to supply sufficient numbers of chaplains, confessors and 'protectoras' for the nunneries under their auspices.⁴⁴ To remedy the deficiency, secular priests were recruited by the male Cistercian houses for training in the chaplaincy.⁴⁵ They entered as novices,

⁴² GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 384, n. 60. Evidence that the two chronological systems were used simultaneously can be found in the 15th-century Gradual of Arouca, where the foundation charter written by the Abbess Melicia de Mello gives the date calculated according to era 1528 (ano 1490), but an adjacent inscription is given according to ano (1486). There is no doubt that the inscriptions are contemporaneous within a period of four years.

⁴³ ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-336.

⁴⁴ The duties of the small community of priests, monk-priests or brothers resident in the female houses were defined by Stephen Lexington, the Abbot of Savigny, c.1230. They were to protect the nuns physically and legally, manage their finances and afford them theological and spiritual guidance. V. LEKAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 350, 355, and A. HERCULANO, 'As Freiras de Lorvão' in *Opusculos*, vol. 1, third ed., Lisbon, 1880, p. 200, who gives a description of the activities of the frades or freyes, probably from Alcobaça, resident at the nunnery of Lorvão. Many other cases existed in Iberia until the extinction and spoliation of the convents, eg the nuns at Nossa Senhora de Abadia, Amares, were under the protection and guidance of the monks of the Abbey of Bouro. V. also C. PAGE, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100-1300*, London, 1989, p. 135.

⁴⁵ Useful information concerning priests in the 'cenobium' is given by A. de VOGÜÉ, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of Saint Benedict*, Michigan, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 291-303, *et passim*.

were educated in the Cistercian philosophy and were then sent as chaplains to the nunneries, where they vowed obedience to the abbess. Although they wore the Cistercian habit, they were not professed monks, they did not take the vow of stability and technically they did not belong to a male monastery.⁴⁶ According to the opinions of José Lizoain Garrido and Juan García Gonzalez, between 1187-1225 there were 21 'freyres' and the same number of 'capellanes' working at the monastery. However, by 1276-1300, the numbers had decreased to 5 and 7 respectively, seemingly in keeping with changes and fluctuations in monastic activities and a general decrease in numbers of non-professed religious.⁴⁷

The Cistercian monk-priests of the 12th century and their counterparts, the regular canons at the secular churches, such as St Denis, Paris, were of a somewhat different genre to the Cistercian chaplains of the 13th century, who had been recruited from the ranks of the secular priests. The monk-priests and regulars usually began liturgical life in lower orders and after profession, were given limited priestly powers so they could work in the nunneries. Conversely, the secular priests trained to be monastic chaplains were more sophisticated. Some often were bibliophiles and booktraders and many had scribal and administrative skills which were learned during their training as clerks.⁴⁸ Some would have been able to play the organ because in the late Middle Ages, no particular person specialized as an organist, but clerks, chaplains, vicars and some monks were given basic instruction in playing the instrument.⁴⁹ The most skilled chaplains should have been able to copy music from a written exemplar, and a few among their numbers would have been able to write music from dictation. Some may have been composers. In contrast many monks of the lower orders, and even choir monks, were only semi-literate. They were taught chant in the traditional manner by 'recordatio', or memorization, from the traditional sources such as the 'ecclesiastica officia'.⁵⁰

The fact that monastic chaplains could have been of either genre

⁴⁶ LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

⁴⁷ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 382, but cf. SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 266f. for the years from 1259-1299. V. also ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, p. IX, and CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

⁴⁸ M. DEANESLEY, *A History of the Medieval Church 500-1500*, London, 1985 (reprint), pp. 120, 204.

⁴⁹ F. ROUTH, *Early English Organ Music from the Middle Ages to 1837*, London, 1973, p. 7; C. F. Aaby WILLIAMS, *The Story of the Organ*, Detroit (reprint), 1972, p. 184.

⁵⁰ A. LAWRENCE, 'English Cistercian Manuscripts of the Twelfth Century' in C. Norton and D. Park, eds., *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 288; cf. BRAUNFELS, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79; M. HUGLO, 'Breviary' in S. Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London, 1980, vol. 3, p. 271.

(monks or secular priests), especially after the first quarter of the 13th century could explain the use of the terms 'clérigo' (clergyman, clerk, cleric) and 'capellán' (chaplain, priest). Documentary references such as 'clérigo y capellán' can be explained, at least in part, as they would be today, 'clérigo' (priest) being the qualification and 'capellán' (chaplain) the position, justifying references such as 'priest and chaplain to the princess'. However, in the Middle Ages, the 'clérigo' was theoretically a man of letters and ecclesiastical study, who had a specific knowledge of academic Latin and usually Greek, as opposed to other religious and educated people, who had no specialist Latin skills. 'Capellán' was a term which could be applied to a priest who said or sang mass in private, in an oratory, or in royal palaces. It is likely that in many cases, especially in the late 13th century, a 'capellán' was in fact a 'clérigo', referred to as a 'capellán' only because of his aristocratic employment. The Las Huelgas documentation confirms that the 'clérigos' at Las Huelgas acted in various important capacities, as confessors and chaplains, teachers, linguists, scribes, accountants, musicians, secretaries and counsellors. Domingo Ibáñez from Revilla de la Fuente is referred to as 'escribano de la infanta', 'clérigo' and 'capellán' and also as a 'freyre' and 'clérigo-confessor' to the married ladies of Las Huelgas. In 1279, the same Domingo Ibáñez is referred to as scribe to the mayora.⁵¹ In 1273, there is a reference to 'don frey Domingo, el clérigo confesador de las duennas'.⁵² On the other hand, Domingo Martínez, who worked at Las Huelgas from c.1288-1322, may have been a monk-priest, because he is described as a 'capellán' and a 'sobredoro', ie a metalplater especially familiar with silver, a skill more likely to have been learned and used in a monastery.⁵³

Unlike the male Cistercian houses, the nunneries conducted schools, because they could admit girls of any age (they were frequently the recipient of 'filhas da roda' or foundlings), and had to educate them, especially in the areas of religion and the liturgy. Latin was necessary for those aspiring to service in the choir and to all who would read scripture, so those

⁵¹ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385. In 1246 the supervisor of works at the Cistercian Monastery of Meira (Lugo), was a religious, Domingo Ibáñez, who might have been the clérigo of the same name at Las Huelgas.

⁵² GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

⁵³ LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 352; GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.

⁵⁴ LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 353. Chantry priests, the English equivalent of the Iberian capellanes and clérigos, were curates, schoolmasters and chaplains until their activities were suppressed (in England) in 1547. The value of their activities and the loss to education because of their suppression was soon very apparent and attests to their usefulness regardless of location.

chaplains in the 'curia monialium', who had previously been secular priests, ie the 'clérigos', would have been useful as teachers.⁵⁴

If Las Huelgas had been on more cordial terms with its liturgical neighbours it could have obtained its chaplains and clerics from a proximate male monastery or from the diocese of Burgos. The 'De construendis abbatiis', in the Cistercian *Exordium Cistercii*, cap. VIII, verse 4, c.1123, obliged a (male) mother-house to supply its daughters with choir books.⁵⁵ This implies a spiritual and liturgical responsibility, such that if chaplains could not be obtained locally, Las Huelgas could have legitimately turned to Cîteaux for assistance. Ultimately, it is possible that some of the chaplains at Las Huelgas had been French clerics, familiar with French fashions, including polyphonic and mensural music.

There is no doubt that most priests were familiar with chant, some would have been familiar with Notre Dame polyphony, and as a result of either scholarly interest or financial gains, might have learned to sing polyphony. These skills would have been useful to any institution wishing to attract foundations (an easy and secure source of revenue) and their employment in an institution where paraliturgical or peripheral liturgical rites such as anniversaries and regal ceremonies were common would have been of mutual financial benefit.⁵⁶

There is evidence that in the 13th century polyphony was not taught in the universities and even theoretical musical training was often neglected.⁵⁷ Although remuneration might not have been overly generous in the secular churches, it seems that this is where the basic polyphonic skills were learned, the incentive being financial betterment. The possibility that suitable musicians might not have always been readily available from the ranks of the clergy, and that there may have been a genre of skilled lay singers, who found employment in ecclesiastical performances, is given credence by occasional illustrations in manuscripts such as Ludwig IX.7, which shows five tonsured singers and one, lacking tonsure, perhaps a secular.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ J. De La Croix BOUTON and J. B. VAN DAMME, *Les Plusieurs Textes de Cîteaux, Sources, Textes et Notes Historiques*, Archel, 1974, p. 121; D. F. L. CHADD, 'Liturgy and liturgical music: the Limits of Uniformity' in C. Norton and D. Park, *op. cit.*, n. 2, but cf. n. 68. V. also S. J. P. VAN DIJK and J. H. WALKER, *The Origins of the Roman Breviary*, London, 1960, p. 347, and C. WADDELL, 'The Origin and Early Evolution of the Cistercian Antiphonary' *The Cistercian Spirit: A Symposium in Memory of Thomas Merton*, CS 3, Shannon, 1970, p. 210 and n. 49.

⁵⁶ PAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-142.

⁵⁸ MS Ludwig IX.7, f. 131', J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, U.S.A.

6. The liturgical use of polyphony, 'ars moriendi' and its relevance to Las Huelgas

Although the senior clergy at major centres were well beneficed, for various reasons at least some of them subcontracted their musical duties to juniors for as little payment as possible, *eg* Christopher Page mentions that polyphonists at Notre Dame were actually unbeneficed clerics who were paid by their beneficed seniors who seldom undertook their liturgical duties. Furthermore, remuneration varied according to the level of feast, information which indicates a distinction between singers of monophony and the liturgical polyphony (organum) used in solemn masses.⁵⁹ In the aristocratic institutions, the 'capellanes' or 'clérigos' acted as chaplains and confessors to the religious community and the royal family, but they were also responsible for the anniversary masses, because although the nuns could attend the liturgies 'ex devotio', or because the founder of a particular anniversary mass had made a payment to the monastery to guarantee a holy and prayerful congregation, they could not celebrate mass.

Craig Wright proposes that polyphony was beyond the scope of most monastic choirs and that it was the domain of specialists, an opinion confirmed by the fact that at Notre Dame polyphonists were paid extra for their skills.⁶⁰ Page, however, states that the Notre Dame 'clerici matutinatorum' were unbeneficed and lived a precarious existence, also that the 'magistri organici' performed motets in secular surroundings for cash in hand, because their benefices were inadequate.⁶¹ This information is not conflicting; to be paid extra does not imply generosity and it can be inferred that payments to musicians and lower orders were not generous, a condition which until the close of the 19th century had changed minimally. Anne Walters Robertson mentions that at St Denis the music at important royal occasions, such as coronations, was undertaken by members of the king's chapel, not the monastic choir. This implies the use of specialists, perhaps polyphonists, because there was no polyphonic choir at St Denis.⁶²

Although polyphonic music was used by some secular churches, especially larger cathedrals such as Notre Dame, to embellish important

⁵⁹ PAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 136, 138-142.

⁶⁰ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-240, 339. The foundation of Magister Natalis of Notre Dame (v. p. 265) which stipulates two rates of pay, one for polyphonic music, the other for monophonic music, is evidence that this was usual procedure.

⁶¹ PAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 149, but ref. also pp. 135, 136, 144: cf. H. VAN DER WERF, *The Extant Troubadour Melodies*, Rochester, USA, 1984, p. 11.

⁶² ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

liturgies, the complaint by Pope John XXII in 1324 confirms that only the simple form of polyphony had the approval of Rome.⁶³ For the most part polyphony was condemned by the monastic orders because it disrupted their traditionally simple and austere ritual. The use of polyphonic music was avoided by the Dominicans because it extended their liturgy, tired the friars and reduced the time available for study.⁶⁴ The peregrinative Franciscan mendicants would have found choral performance impractical except in the larger houses with a stable population.⁶⁵ The Cistercians considered the authentic and precise performance of chant as a form of discipline and submission, and a means of accumulating spiritual riches.⁶⁶ The Cistercian General Chapter, and on several occasions, St Bernard himself, took exception to distractive devices such as ornaments, exhibitionism, and decorative singing and the use of an excessive compass of notes or a high pitch (falsetto?). These attitudes were perhaps influenced by St Augustine's warnings in *De musica* concerning sensual and secular music, and Cistercian preoccupation with 'sancta simplicitas'.⁶⁷ Virtually all the monastic orders believed that traditional temperate performance of plainchant was desirable because it was the best means of delivery and enhancement of the text.⁶⁸ The music

⁶³ V. n. 105.

⁶⁴ R. F. BENNETT, *The Early Dominicans*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 180.

⁶⁵ Attitudes by the various orders to measured music and polyphony ie 'irregular' musical forms, are discussed by P. SALMON, *The Breviary through the Centuries*, trans. Sr. D. Mary, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1962, pp. 13-14; R. B. HALLER, *Early Dominican Mass Chants: A Witness to Thirteenth Century Chant Style*, diss., Catholic University of America, Washington, 1986, pp. 343-344; S. TUGWELL, *Early Dominicans: selected writings*, New York, 1982, p. 455f.; R. F. BENNETT, *The Early Dominicans*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 66; W. D. JORDAN, 'The Hone Fragments' *Studies in Music*, 1992, pp. 25-26. Cf. also WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, p. 345, and S. FULLER, 'An Anonymous Treatise Dictus de Sancto Martiale: A new Source for Cistercian Music Theory' *Musica Disciplina*, vol. 31, 1977, pp. 26-27, but cf. also M. HUGLO, 'Notational Practices in Parisian Manuscripts of the Thirteenth Century' in T. F. Kelly, ed., *Plain-song in the Age of Polyphony*, Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice, vol. 2, Cambridge, 1992, p. 43; C. PARRISH, *The Notation of Medieval Music*, New York, 1978, p. 37; H. RIEMANN, *Geschichte der Musiktheorie im IX-XIX Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 173-185. The latter work contains useful comments, comparisons and citations from the theorists. Also useful is the article by W. H. FRERE, 'The Paleography of Early Music' in *Walter Howard Frere: A Collection of his Papers on Liturgical and Historical Subjects*, Oxford, 1940, pp. 90-106, and VAN DIJK and WALKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-333.

⁶⁶ PAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-35, 156-157.

⁶⁷ C. WADDELL, 'Cistercian Chant' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, 1983, vol. 3, p. 402, specifies 'a tenth', but in WADDELL, 'The Origin and Early Evolution...', n. 44, states 'ten notes'. However, cf. M. T. LEVEY, *Migration of the Liturgy of the Divine Office of the Roman Rite into Portugal using as example Codex 4* of Arouca*, Sydney, 1991, pp. 197-198; also PAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 156-157 and n. 13; MIGNE, *op. cit.*, vol. 307, p. 1272.

itself had to be pure and lacking sensuality because, assisted by acoustic squinches and sounding vases, it was thought to ascend from the human realm via the church to the heavenly city.⁶⁹

The success of the Cistercian attempts to suppress polyphony and rhythmic music is difficult to estimate, but because of communicative difficulties and indifferent attendance by abbots at the General Chapters it could not have been immediate or complete. Furthermore, theoretical treatises produced at Rievaulx, Dore and Fountains, and use of polyphony, described as 'more secularum', at Dore and Tintern in 1217 confirm that at least some of the Cistercians had a progressive attitude towards chant theory and practical performance and that experiments with polyphony could not be suppressed by the Cistercian General Chapter.⁷⁰ The conclusion by Sarah Fuller in her study of the 'Lafage Anonymous' that some monasteries could not resist experimentation with polyphony is supported by Mark Everist's study of polyphonic fragments from Morimond or Maulbronn.⁷¹ However, experimentation should be viewed as a natural part of overall progress and cultural and scholastic development for which many Cistercian houses were famous, especially in areas such as agriculture, alms-giving and medicine.⁷² However, experimentation does not necessarily imply approval or common usage.

The use of relatively high pitch in polyphonic singing seems to have particularly aggravated the church authorities because of its association with secular music. Rinaldo Alessandrini, discussing the Monteverdi motets, states: 'Ornaments came to be a tangible representation of Heavenly music; the voices of the castrati symbolized by their sweetness (and pitch) the voices of the angels...' This adds weight to Donald Grout's theory that at Notre Dame polyphonic organum was performed by boys and men, the latter singing in falsetto.⁷³ St Bernard possibly took exception to this type of

⁶⁸ The Church Fathers frequently relate music to psalmodic performance. Perhaps influenced by Plato they believed that music was the best means of supporting the text, they believed that the ethical sentiments and didactic elements of the texts could be accentuated and made more palatable and clear to the listener by use of a musical performance.

⁶⁹ A. STOCK, 'A Sounding Vase at Fountains Abbey' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 23, 1988, pp. 190-191, and 'Resonances from the Sounding Vases' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 24, 1989, pp. 154-160; R. LEWCOCK, 'Acoustics, I: Rooms' in S. Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 53-58.

⁷⁰ FULLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26, but cf. CANIVEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 473, and PAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁷¹ S. FULLER, 'Communications' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 35, issue 3, 1982, p. 586; FULLER, 'An Anonymous Treatise...', pp. 5-30; M. E. EVERIST, 'A Reconstructed Source for the Thirteenth-Century Conductus' *Gedenkschrift Gordon Athol Anderson*, Musicological Studies, vol. IXL/1, 2 vols, Binningen, 1984, vol. 1, pp. 112-113.

⁷² Silva BARROS, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8, and G. FINLAYSON and F. TUOHY, *Portugal*, London, 1970, p. 19.

⁷³ D. J. GROUT, *A History of Western Music*, third ed., London, 1981, p. 98.

singing because it was effeminate or decorative, or because elevated pitch was associated with secular actors and stage-plays, in which participation by priests was forbidden. Nonetheless, one of the reasons proposed for the original introduction of chant was that it carried better than the spoken word. The use of falsetto by men, if it occurred at Notre Dame, might have been preferred because strong voices at higher than normal pitch carried better and were more comprehensible in the large building.

In virtually every musical era the solo voice has been the object of special attention and the prestige enjoyed by the castrati, the coloratura soprano and the importance of the *da capo* aria are self-evident. There is no reason why the quest for decorative effects based on vocal finesse and unusual or abnormal pitch and tone should have been confined to the last three centuries. Even today, the voice of the boy-soprano is desirable because of its purity, its ability to carry with little acoustic distortion, the consideration that low pitches are less audible and more lacking direction than high pitches, and the fact that high, pure sounds are more inspiring, ethereal and spiritually uplifting. Consequently, it is possible that St Bernard's complaint concerning effeminate singing is correct, that the statement by Pope John XXII relating to decorative singing involving excessive subdivision of notes is also correct, and that Grout's ideas concerning the performance of organum at Notre Dame is also accurate. The many references to decorative effects, including improvisation, hocket, gesticulation etc., contrasted with approved, 'bland' or undecorated or natural singing suggest that it was the manner of performance rather than the type of composition which was unacceptable. Furthermore, there was a conceptual difference between plainsong as used in the secular churches and the monasteries. In the latter it was considered as a form of communal prayer, penance and devotion. In the former, outward ceremony often obscured inner meaning and a multi-media exhibition was coloured by clerical vanity and inspired by financial considerations in return for a good performance.⁷⁴

Although we can conclude that polyphony could have been used on solemn or special occasions, in fact in any ceremony accentuating pageantry, such as the anniversary masses, it was not universally popular in the secular church. It was banned for a time at Rouen and it was infrequently used at St Denis, Paris, because the concept of polyphony was not in accord with

⁷⁴ DALGLISH, *op. cit.*, p. 20; PAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-137; ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

the pseudo-Dionysian bases of its liturgy.⁷⁵ Its use under normal circumstances in the monastic liturgy was almost certainly unusual.⁷⁶

6.1. *Ars moriendi*

There are clear reasons why polyphony would have been a useful accoutrement to the anniversary masses, just as there are reasons why it could have been used in the aristocratic monasteries without fear of discipline by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In justification of the former, the medieval attitudes to sin, purgatory, the mercy of God, and the fate of the soul were of paramount importance, but these topics were poorly defined. In the 13th century natural apprehension and uncertainty relating to the afterlife was magnified because it was widely believed that the second coming and judgement was soon to occur, 1260 being a popular date for this event. The Platonic opinions relating to the after-life and the fate of the soul were well circulated by the late Middle Ages but the Christian attitude was poorly explained, because there were only two biblical references to the subject.⁷⁷ Although the need for preparation for physical death had been documented by Lorens d'Orléans in 'Somme le Roi', there were no written tracts on the subject before Jean Charlier Gerson's 'De arte moriendi' included in *Opusculum tripartitum* c.1400.⁷⁸ Purgatory, the most difficult problem, was defined as the preparation of the soul to see God face to face in Heaven, but the conventional doctrine promoted by SS Ambrose and Augustine stressed that the soul by itself could not achieve salvation. Its progress was influenced by earthly record, this enhanced by penance and acts of piety before death, also the intervention of God, the assistance of the saints and, after death, the efforts of the Church on earth. Lacking the latter in the form of anniversary masses, the soul could be trapped forever

⁷⁵ ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-48, 247; P. ROREM, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols within the Pseudo-Dionysian Synthesis*, Toronto, 1984, p. 122.

⁷⁶ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

⁷⁷ The usual explanation of the era was akin to the allegorical description of human life used by Bede during his attempts to convert the Northumbrian court, wherein earthly existence is likened to a swallow which flies out of the darkness into a lighted hall and out into the darkness. V. Acts 26: 13-26 and Corinthians 15: 35-52.

⁷⁸ N. F. BLAKE, 'Ars Moriendi' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, 1982, p. 547.

⁷⁹ It is interesting to compare these Gothic and late medieval attitudes and practices with the use of indulgence and similar practices which were used from the early 16th century, such as Luther's objections nos. 27, 28 and 32. V. J. ROMER, *Testament: The Bible and History*, Melbourne, 1989, pp. 299-301.

in purgatory.⁷⁹ The need for pious, visible acts of charity resulted in the often uncharacteristic foundation of institutions such as the Hospital del Rei at Las Huelgas by Alfonso VIII and the Hôtel Dieu at Beaune by the despot Nicholas Rolin and his wife. Penance could be undertaken in a number of ways, usually by undertaking a difficult pilgrimage, or making suitable payment to a proxy to undertake the journey. The intercessions, commemorative masses and office liturgies which followed the requiem could also be purchased. Even non-Christians believed that the dead required the prayers and rituals of the living, otherwise they would be impelled to revisit the world of the living.⁸⁰ The origin of the Christian practice of celebrating anniversaries can be traced both to the Roman 'parentalia', which was a family meal, often at the tomb, on the anniversary of the death of a family member, and also to the general memorial celebrations which took place in the third week of February.⁸¹ Also relevant is the fact that in all cultures from the most ancient times, the death ceremonies have been the most elaborate and complex, probably because they were considered to be the most important.

The popularity of processions as part of anniversaries was not based only on visible pomp and pageantry but was arguably the most important part of the ritual because it symbolized the triumphal march and the final return of man to his Creator.⁸² The earthly procession was symbolic of the divine procession, the revelations of God and the processions of saints and the concept of a procession from and a return to the Creator.⁸³ Processions were also used as a visible form of piety, from the narthex or west end (symbolizing Christmas and Birth), from the crossing (Easter, Crucifixion and Resurrection) and from the east end (Whitsunday and Ascension). Musical accompaniment of processions dates from ancient usage of the 15 gradual psalms by Jewish pilgrims returning to Jerusalem for major feasts.

⁸⁰ V. FLINT, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, Oxford, 1991, p. 213.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Another aspect to the funeral and anniversary rituals can be traced to Roman customs of the pre-Christian era. Initially, a duel between two slaves was held at aristocratic funerals. The duel was gradually expanded into a series of privately funded games and gladiatorial contests on the occasion of significant funerals. Lacking a suitable funeral, Julius Caesar used the games as a festivity to commemorate the death of his daughter. The underlying theory behind both pagan and Christian usages was that the festivity would assist the spirit during transition to the afterlife or on the road to salvation. SS. Ambrose and Augustine condemned the games for obvious reasons, but realizing that a Christian counterpart was necessary, inaugurated a Christian liturgy.

⁸² Cf. Suger's use of processions at St Denis, noted in ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, p. 242. V. also A. C. RUSH, 'Burial II (Early Christian)' in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, reprint, Washington, 1981, vol. 2, p. 895.

⁸³ ROREM, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

Processions had traditionally been accompanied by special antiphons, which although monophonic, were more melismatic and decorative than normal examples. It can be shown that the novel sounds and decorative qualities of polyphonic and/or mensural motets, which might have been considered inappropriate for normal liturgical services, were viewed differently in the funeral and anniversary liturgies which incorporated processions and in which polyphonic compositions could have been used as replacements for monophonic processional antiphons.

According to neo-Platonic tradition, earthly events were symbolic of more perfect and splendid counterparts in Heaven and therefore funeral rites were an earthly representation of the Heavenly liturgy which would accompany and welcome the soul to Heaven. The concept was perhaps most comprehensively expressed in medieval and post-medieval paintings and has never been extinguished, a 20th-century musical rendering occurring in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, when the dying Gerontius is surrounded by angels and earthly choirs. The same concept underlies the medieval allegory that the cathedral was a jewelled city and an earthly version of a more splendid heavenly counterpart.⁸⁴ It can be inferred from Peter Damian's attitude to penance and the financial means by which it could be commuted, that the success of any religious enterprise depended on the effort expended, or the cost, this being, theoretically at least, a form of penance.⁸⁵ By extension, the success of the post mortem ceremonies was determined by their size and content and the attendant congregations but it should also be kept in mind that the religion of the Middle Ages was impersonal. Sin was a merely a supernatural debt, payable in a variety of ways such as penance, but both debt and payment were transferable and did not require payment by specific or individual effort.⁸⁶ These beliefs are the reason for the request for a holy congregation in D. Branca's testament (see below).

Polyphonic motets would have been desirable in the anniversary liturgies because this form of music was probably neither easy to obtain nor inexpensive. The cost of it could have been viewed as a form of penance and, according to medieval dogma, the efforts involved in obtaining it would have assisted the soul trapped in purgatory. The theological justification of indulgences as described by SS Bonaventure

⁸⁴ C. FRAYLING, *Strange Landscape*, London, 1995, pp. 61f., 74.

⁸⁵ MIGNE, *op. cit.*, vol. 144, pp. 351-52.

⁸⁶ SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 227.

and Aquinas was in fact not so different from this explanation. Polyphony, especially mensural motets, would have been viewed as the most novel form of music available, especially desirable because of its refined musical texture in which the words were particularly comprehensible. The use of motets would have added impact and distinction to the earthly requiem and anniversary ceremonies, the ultimate aim according to neo-Platonic concepts being a more perfect Heavenly reflection. The belief of the medievals in regard to the afterlife has been well summarized by Alessandrini:

There is one ideological factor above all which has had enormous influence on the arts, including music. This concerns the attitude of the church regarding life after death and paradise. The medieval view is greatly removed from the Romantic concept, in which the afterlife is seen as something spiritual, and totally dissociated with earthly life and the usual modes of communication. In seicento Italy, the vast splendid church buildings were intended to represent ideal or Heavenly dwellings. Paintings, frescoes and statues spoke of superterrestrial dimensions, but the vocabulary was that of the earth and the human world. In painting, the sumptuous and gilded ornaments worn by the various characters, the serene vaults of the heavens, the rosy hues, the opulence of bodily shapes, facial expressions full of serenity, however agitated the overall scene may be, are intended to convey the ecclesiastical belief that life after death was a resolution of earthly problems. Again, the lesson could only be comprehensible by use of a language which spoke to everybody. Ornamentation, a marked characteristic of music (representative of special things and the use of things not part of the normal continuum) was an axiomatic sign of wealth and well being. Ornaments (ie decorative music), came to be a tangible representation of heavenly music...⁸⁷

The practical arrangements for the establishment of anniversary masses varied according to the means of the benefactor. On the whole, monasteries rather than secular churches were more likely to be entrusted with the observances. The secular church and clergy of the late 12th century had not been held in high repute since the financial scandals involving the crusade vows, but also because of papal

⁸⁷ R. ALESSANDRINI, dir., *Monteverdi: Musica Sacra* (CD), 1996, Paris, pp. 8-9.

megalomania and more general abuses, kept in public attention by writers such as Pierre Cardenal c.1230.⁸⁸ The tenet of the monasteries was quite different. Their 'raison d'être', and major liturgy, the office, was based on constancy (even at inconvenient hours) and their community could provide a congregation at an anniversary mass if requested. Therefore, in the consideration of the establishment of a medieval foundation, the monasteries were a better choice than the secular churches.⁸⁹ Mindful of the fact that the monastic liturgies were usually very simple and sincere but lacking decorative effects, the royal female monasteries represented the best choice. These institutions were virtually autonomous, the chaplains had vowed obedience only to the abbess, and they could accommodate requests from the simple and basic to the most elaborate. All the desirable elements, including the documentation, were available under the one roof. The memorials and plaques at Las Huelgas confirm that it attracted many aristocratic interments.

Evidence for the beliefs that led to the establishment of foundations exists in numerous personal testaments, of which the following two examples may be taken as typical. The first is part of a medieval Spanish Cistercian foundation established by a member of the second estate:

I fear the pains of hell and I desire to come to the joys of paradise and for the love of God and his glorious Mother and for the salvation of my soul and those of my parents, I give to God, St Mary and all the saints [ie the church], my entire inheritance in Retoria.⁹⁰

The second contains the instructions left by D. Branca, who according to the Las Huelgas documents, had established six foundations prior to 1313, and in 1313, following contemporary practice, she established another six chapels, which would have attracted endowments.⁹¹ There were at least 8 benefices to pay the clergy and congregation for her own anniversary ceremonies:⁹²

⁸⁸ J. RILEY-SMITH, ed., *Atlas of the Crusades*, London, 1991, p. 81.

⁸⁹ SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁹⁰ F. ANTON Y CASASECA, *Monasterios medievales de la Provincia de Valladolid*, 2nd ed., Valladolid, 1942, p. 256.

⁹¹ The founding of new chapels in the early 14th century is best explained by ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, p. 50. The foundation arrangements of Charles V (d. 1380) and others are given by ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, p. 91f. The foundations of Natalis of Notre Dame, Leoninus of Notre Dame, and Petrus Succentor are given by WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 265, 284 and 293-294 respectively.

⁹² ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. x; COCHERIL, *op. cit.*, 'Les Abbesses de Lorrão ...', p. 930, n. 1.

I order that there might always be in the monastery eight of my chaplains and the abbess... And the said chaplains should say masses each day in the monastery for my soul thus: one for the Trinity, another for the Virgin Mary and of Fidelium Deus and the other five of requiem, especially for me... And each one of the said chaplains [should] help in processions and masses and in other duties just as the other clergy of the monastery and the benefices should be perpetual... And each one of the said chaplains, having completed his mass each day, shall go to my tomb and say a response with its collect for all of the dead. Also, I order that they give each year to the convents of Burgos... and to those of San Augustine, 200 maravadies and that they come each year to my anniversary at the Monastery of Las Huelgas in the same way they go to the anniversaries of their majesties and the princesses.⁹³

The medieval obsession with the afterlife and the necessary liturgical precautions can be best understood by reference to the bizarre but popular 13th-century practice of dismemberment, whereby sections of the deceased were sent to a number of churches at which independent anniversaries were established.⁹⁴

Elaborate funeral and anniversary rites had originally been established by medieval royalty, the feudal nobles and the higher clergy, because these were the only classes who could afford them, and who very often were most in need of them. However, by the 13th century, the fortunes of these classes were in decline. Changing social structures and attitudes to trade and banking had resulted in an increasingly prosperous merchant class, many of whom were concerned with salvation. Even when agents and charters of protection became common, it was customary for merchants to make occasional long journeys, before which they revised their wills and put their financial affairs in order, often leaving large sums to religious institutions so that if they met with misfortune their salvation was prepurchased.⁹⁵ Many of the merchants were widely travelled, they appreciated fine art and music and they understood philosophy and dogma as it existed in the late Middle

⁹³ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. X. The original document is not cited and it has not been possible to locate it in the monastic collections.

⁹⁴ R. E. REYNOLDS, 'Death and Burial, in Europe' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, 1984, vol. 4, pp. 120-122.

⁹⁵ P. DOLLINGER, *The German Hansa*, trans. and ed. by D. S. Ault and S. H. Steinberg, Stanford, Cal., 1964, p. 181f.; also M. McCLOSKEY, 'Medieval Merchants and Artisans' *The Compleat Anachronist*, no. 63, California, 1992, pp. 32, 38.

Ages. Their requests for elaborate funeral and anniversary ceremonies were relative to their means. Although probably not entirely free from status-orientated considerations, they were instigated because they were believed to be necessary and were not intended as public exhibitions, which the funerals and *post mortem* ceremonies of the aristocracy had become.⁹⁶ (Modern funerals are probably somewhat similar, often motivated by status and amelioration of the consciences of the living). Legal contracts, rather than liturgical considerations, defined the performance, based on the criterion 'the more you pay the more we pray'. A agreement was therefore struck between the size of endowment of the founder and his expectations.⁹⁷ The occurrence of anniversaries linked to income from property, ie 'missas ligadas', increased during the late 13th century as the use of written wills became more common.⁹⁸

Garrido and Gonzalez mention that the expenses associated with the conduct of the anniversary masses at Las Huelgas for the year 1263 amounted to 180 maravedis, some of which was spent on making and acquiring books. No mention is made of music, only that the return justified the expenses.⁹⁹ The desirability of attracting foundations, learning to sing polyphony, and performing it at institutions such as Las Huelgas is evident from the financial arrangements. In 1245, a certain Moriel and his wife Elvira established a perpetual foundation at Las Huelgas by giving 1000 maravedis to the monastery and the annual rent of 30 maravedis from their houses in Burgos, to two clérigos, so that 'anniversary masses could be sung at the altar of St Peter forever'.¹⁰⁰ Anniversary ceremonies were considered as business agreements between the celebrant, the monastery and the founder, and as mentioned above, according to contemporary beliefs it was actually desirable that the ceremonies should be as elaborate and expensive as possible. To an extent, these characteristics survive in the modern-day wake. The chaplains at Las Huelgas were not bound by monastic vows of individual poverty and they bought houses and property in Burgos, presumably from income received from benefices from foundations, *eg* in December 1263, the capellán Pedro Yáñez de Santibáñez Zargaguda (Sarçaguda) bought some

⁹⁶ The medieval attitudes to the rich and their possible salvation are explained in FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 81f.

⁹⁷ SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 227, but cf. Page, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁹⁸ SOUTHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁹⁹ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-385, n. 63-65, and pp. 398-399.

houses in the Bairro de San Pedro de Burgos. Domingo Ibáñez, clérigo and capellán of Las Huelgas and scribe to the princess D. Berenguela, bought houses in Burgos in 1265 and 1279.¹⁰¹

The deeds of founders, benefactors and persons of local liturgical fame, such as abbesses, encouraged groups of religious devotees or cults, confraternities and tertiaries (third orders), both sacred and secular, whose existence was centered around veneration of their patron. In later eras especially, these groups often consisted of, or were sponsored by, wealthy merchants interested in a paraliturgical lifestyle. Little is known concerning confraternities at Las Huelgas, but Anglès' belief that many cults were established there is supported by the conductus no. XXXI *O monialis concio Burgensis* in honour of Abbess D. María González (de Agüero) and conductus no. XXXII *Plange Castella misera* in honour of Sancho III (1157-1158).¹⁰² Reese suggests that item 177, f. 154', the two-part *solfeggio*, was sung by the nuns in honour of D. Misol, the first Abbess of Las Huelgas, because her name occurs in the sol-fa text: fa fa mi fa mi re mi ut mi sol re mi ut...¹⁰³ Perhaps it was used as a vocal mnemonic, incantation or jingle.

7. The performance of paraliturgical polyphony

The preceding information represents an attempt to describe the cultural environment that led to the desirability and use of motets as the most up-to-date musical genre in anniversary masses and other peripheral liturgies, in spite of hierarchical opposition to polyphony. It attempts to explain why they and other polyphonic forms could have been used at the female aristocratic monasteries, especially Las Huelgas, with more freedom than in the normal monasteries and the lower orders of secular churches. Within the limits of the available evidence and space available for presentation, it justifies the compilation and use of the Huelgas polyphony at Las Huelgas.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 385, 388, but cf. WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.

¹⁰² ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. x. The Venerável Irmandade da Rainha Santa Mafalda at Arouca, Portugal, is one such society. V. also the list of Portuguese confraternities and societies given by M. G. Vieira da Rocha BEIRANTE, *Confrarias Medievais Portuguesas*, Lisbon, 1990.

¹⁰³ G. REESE, *Music in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1940, p. 323. The statement by Reese that moveable clefs were used in music of this type, because it was sung by both women and men, is meaningless unless the music was played simultaneously on an instrument of fixed pitch, such as the organ. The main reason for use of the moveable clef was to keep the notation within the confines of the staff.

The most difficult part of the study of *Hu*, and of any historical investigation of the medieval motet, relates to use and performance. The situation arises because the medieval chronicles lack sufficient specific details and present-day performance practices are probably much different to their late medieval counterparts. The omission on the part of the chroniclers might have occurred because medieval priorities were probably quite different to those of the present (perhaps moderated by their readers). Because polyphony and mensural music were new forms, there might have been no standard approaches and documentation of multiple different practices might have been too difficult to attempt. It may also be that this aspect of music, ie polyphony, was not considered important enough to them to warrant their attention. The writers appear to have been more interested in recording general observations, somewhat similar to their later Pickwickian counterparts and there is no evidence that any of them were experts. Even Johannes de Grocheo, the Parisian student, priest, and philosopher, in *De musica*, mentions only that 'measured music' ie secular and sacred polyphony, could be used ecclesiastically.

Although it is possible to propose a variety of theories as to how the motets in *Hu* might have been performed, considering the utilitarian and adaptable character of Middle Age art, one reasonable conjecture is that performance practices varied both according to geography and with prevailing fashions and tastes and consequently the only certainty is that no single unequivocal conclusion can be developed. However, two factors need particular consideration. The first is the medieval preoccupation with linear melody as opposed to vertical harmony and texture. The second relates to the Middle Age definition of richness of sound, which lay in the use of multiple lines and different timbres, not in a massing of instruments used in combination to give depth and sonority in the Romantic or Wagnerian sense.

There is very little doubt that the written versions of some medieval music were intended only as a sketch somewhat similar to the later figured bass, the final picture having to be completed by the performer, according to prevailing customs and fashions, or following his own inclinations. In this regard, according to Wright, masses, motets and chansons performed in the Clementine court at Avignon were subjected to the most extreme rhythmic experiments.¹⁰⁴ The curial use of French music itself cannot be considered as unusual because of Pope Clement v's

¹⁰⁴ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

preoccupation with French culture, but the implication that polyphony itself was subjected to further polyphonic embellishment during performance is interesting. The complaint of Pope John XXII, writing in Avignon in 1324, relates the sins of the performers followed by those of the composers:

Certain disciples of the new school, preoccupied with the measured dividing of time, display their method in notes which are new to us, preferring to devise ways of their own rather than to continue singing in the old manner; thus the music of the divine office is now performed with semibreves and minims and these notes of small value have infiltrated every composition. Moreover, these composers truncate the melodies with hocket and disfigure them with discantus. Sometimes secular song is used for the upper parts... We therefore hasten to banish these methods... and remove such music far from the house of God more effectively than previously...¹⁰⁵

The inculcation implies that office chants were being disfigured by interpolation of polyphony, perhaps by sections of discant or clausulae and various decorative practices.¹⁰⁶ It suggests the basic processes used in Perotine organum, but taken to excess. Perhaps the Avignon polyphony was similar to polyphony in the *Magnus Liber*. A reference to disciples of a 'new school', written in 1320, suggests a comparison of the style of de Vitry and the Ars Nova school to Garlandian and Franconian polyphony rather than a comparison of mensural polyphony and non-mensural polyphony or, one step further in the past, Notre Dame polyphony compared to Gregorian chant. There is in fact no proof that the office was being corrupted by use of a specific form such as the motet, or that 'in ways of their own' refers to improvised polyphony. According to Pope John, Italian polyphony was the only 'approved' species. It could be used on high feasts, in solemn masses and the office. Concords (polyphony) were to consist of the octave, fourth and fifth, and the added voice was to be in the form of a descant so as not to obscure the Gregorian melody.¹⁰⁷ As represented in the two experimental

¹⁰⁵ *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 2 vols, Graz, 1959, pp. 1255-1257, *Extravagantes communes*, LIB. III, TIT. I, cap. I, p. v; also O. URSPRUNG, *op. cit.*, p. 138f.; J. A. JUNGSMANN, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 125-126. The text is given in H. E. WOOLDRIDGE, ed., *The Oxford History of Music*, vol. 1, second ed., Oxford, 1929, p. 294; cf. WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-347.

¹⁰⁶ H. VAN DER WERF, *The Emergence of Gregorian Chant*, Rochester, 1983, vol. 1, p. 164, notes that improvisation had an ancient liturgical precedent, being traceable to improvisation of melodies for use in the mass, before the era of Charlemagne.

¹⁰⁷ V. n. 105.

'cantus binatum' of Magister Dominus Paulus Abbas de Florentia (Paolo da Firenze), this was a restrained and conservative musical language compared to French polyphony.

Turning to the Las Huelgas Manuscript, there is no doubt that Rodrigues would have known the renditions which would be acceptable for the proposed purposes and he therefore notated the compositions accordingly. An alternative proposal is that because he was the person most likely to use the compilation, he wrote only what was necessary to ensure a competent performance. Consequently, do the Las Huelgas compositions represent sketches or the finished product? There is another important consideration. Although Rodrigues might have been a singer or polyphonist, and he clearly had an interest in polyphony, it cannot be assumed that he knew all of the repertory or that he knew all the parts of the compositions with which he was familiar. This raises another more important question, particularly pertinent to peripheral manuscripts. Did singers of polyphony specialize in one part, as contemporary singers are wont to do, or were they more versatile and able to sing any part? If the former, a singer familiar with each part would have been required in the production of a written copy of a polyphonic composition.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the absence of a singer familiar with the tenor repertory when fascicle 2 of *Ma* was being written down could explain the omission of the tenor voices. Unfortunately, this question cannot be easily resolved by comparison to present-day practices, because in SATB writing the range for each voice is greater than that used in medieval motets. Soloists are expected to possess a much greater range and to be more skillful than normal singers or choristers. The pitch centre of each part in SATB writing is also quite different to those of medieval motets and in the case of the latter it is not known for certain if the parts were performed at the written pitches. It is not inconceivable that transposition to an octave occurred, as it must have done in the performance of monophonic chant by a mixture of old and young voices.

Melismatic organum might not have attracted improvised decoration during performance because of the florid nature of this form. On the other hand, the texture of the older Franconian motets is relatively simple and transparent, and at first glance it would seem to have been an ideal vehicle for improvised embellishment. However, the fact that the triplum and motet melodies and texts of many three-part motets fit so neatly

¹⁰⁸ Cf. H. VAN DER WERF, *Anonymous IV as Chronicler*, Rochester, USA, 1990, p. 14.

together suggests that these compositions were conceived simultaneously. They therefore represent original compositions not arrangements or compilations, in which case the composer probably had a preconceived idea as to how they should sound, certainly from the melodic viewpoint. Small details tend to support this theory. The use of a plica in *Hu* in a position where other manuscripts show a single note or a binaria is evidence that the writer knew and wrote exactly what he required, or that the written version was made from a performance and that the plica and binaria were musically indistinguishable. The deciding factor is that in the more sophisticated Petronian motets, the construction of the melodies is very important. Subdivision of notes and short melismas at the end of phrases are used as a contrast to longer notes at the beginnings, and the fact that the phrase endings do not coincide is intentional, not accidental. Similarly, in the Franconian motets, the simultaneous cadencing of the voices is part of the style. In many double motets, the contrast between the note values of the *tripulum*, *motetus* and *tenor* is paramount, but could easily be destroyed by addition of notes into the motetus melody.

There is, however, another side to this argument. The fact that some of the Cantigas of Alfonso were modernized in an attempt to make them resemble motets leaves little doubt that in the late Middle Ages, the motet was the fashionable popular musical form.¹⁰⁹ An important consideration in this regard is that present-day popular music is seldom performed according to the written copy. Could the same be said of the medieval counterpart? Considering any composition, especially those which consist of a melody above a chordal accompaniment, the approach of the jazz musician would be to use the basic theme and construct an entirely new improvised composition around it, involving complex harmonies, rhythms, melodic intricacies etc. On the other hand, although the so-called 'pop group' musicians would use repetition of large sections, or the entire composition, the basic format, harmonies and melodies would not be much changed. The important changes would more likely involve rhythmic subtleties based on syncopation. The written form of this type of music shows a nominated melody note above the chord to which it belongs, but in performance, the note almost certainly precedes the chord by a half-beat, resulting in notes tied over bar lines etc. In written form, this would appear very confusing and it is not necessary because most performers require only the chord and melody. The rest is at their

109 VAN DER WERF, *The Oldest Extant Part Music...*, p. 187.

discretion within the confines of the style. The gist of the matter is that rhythmic changes are usually based on style and known to the performer. They do not change the basic melodic or harmonic structure of the composition, whereas melodic or harmonic changes do the opposite. This argument is of some relevance because in *Hu* the substantial number of obvious changes spread over at least 16 compositions do not affect the melodies or the harmonies but relate to the rhythms.

Although perhaps the ultimate example of 'double entendre', the level of recognition and the impact of a composition such John Lennon's *Let it be* to a 20th-century audience probably would be comparable to that of a familiar Marian motet to a member of medieval society because both are based on distinct melodies, a modern or popular musical language and devotional texts.¹¹⁰ In the present era, music based on popular harmonic, melodic and formal idioms is used in both secular and sacred contexts, the determining factor often being only the text. By way of comparison, present-day barbershop quartets are somewhat similar to the medieval motet in that the three or four component voices remain strictly within their register, the melody is in the second voice from the top and the harmony lacks noticeable dissonance, especially on strong beats. There is no doubt that excessive or injudicious improvisation during performance of this type of music would obscure the very characteristics on which the form is based.

We do not know the numbers of singers likely to have undertaken the performance of the Las Huelgas compositions and the matter is somewhat complicated by the special conditions that applied to the Las Huelgas liturgy. Papal indults gave permission for use of an extraordinary or 'rich' liturgy involving special feasts, clothing and indulgences.¹¹¹ This suggests an alteration to the normal conservative calendar or festal cursus used by the Cistercians at the time, by inclusion of special feasts, or to more elaborate festal ceremonies. Special liberties granted to Las Huelgas included the feast for SS Justa and Rufina, which was approved by the Cistercian General Chapter before 1231.¹¹² In 1250, Pope Innocent IV gave permission for inclusion of feasts of 12 lessons for St Francis and St

¹¹⁰ 'When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me...', Mother Mary could refer either to the Virgin or the hallucinogenic drug.

¹¹¹ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 370, 373-374; ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. x.

¹¹² GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 373. Provincial feasts and commemorations were relatively common. They were often approved by the General Chapter only because of their local popularity and after lobbying by the various societies or fraternities which they attracted. However, the reason for the observation of the feasts for the saints Justa and Rufina at Las Huelgas has yet to be identified.

Antony and in 1255 Pope Alexander iv allowed a special ceremony on All Saint's Day.¹¹³ In 1253 he granted an indulgence of one year for those assisting (attending) the commemorative masses for the kings of Castile and León, and an indulgence of forty days to those who attended feasts of the Virgin.¹¹⁴ This information is useful, because if Las Huelgas used an extraordinary calendar, the liturgies and rituals which constituted it could have been likewise. We do not know the composition of the peripheral rituals associated with anniversaries, coronations and other special occasions at Las Huelgas, nor do we know who sang the various basic parts of them, but at St Denis, Paris, an institution somewhat similar to Las Huelgas, some of these occasions were more elaborate than major duplex feasts and feasts for saints of which the abbey possessed a relic.¹¹⁵

Although the music at St Denis was usually monophonic, the number of singers was surprisingly small. Introits for Christmas and the requiem mass were sung by 3 cantors. The final responses for feasts, such as that for St Hilary of Mende, were sung by from two to five singers, usually monk-priests. At second vespers, the final significant Office of the day, and on anniversaries, they were sung by 4 'antiquiores' (old monks).¹¹⁶ (This is an interesting statement considered in conjunction with the interpretation of Rodrigues' comment accompanying the double conductus no. v, *Duplum casta catholica-Da, dulcis domina*, composition no. 134, which is discussed in the appendix.) Two cantors in copes sang the introit and the solo parts of the gradual in the mass for Philip V in 1314, the procession consisted of 5 deacons and 5 subdeacons, and the sequence was chanted by 4 monk-priests in copes.¹¹⁷ A somewhat similar format for the performance of polyphony during Christmas week was prescribed at Notre Dame by Odo of Sully.¹¹⁸ These examples confirm that even in the most important Parisian churches, monophonic or polyphonic music for high feasts and special occasions was the domain of a small number of performers probably specialists of high calibre. This is reasonable evidence that the number of singers involved in performances of motets and paraliturgical forms might have been equally small.

Although motets and other polyphonic forms might have been

¹¹³ GARRIDO and GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, p. 374, n. 27.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

¹¹⁵ ROBERTSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 87.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93, n. 200. Other examples are given on p. 92f.

¹¹⁸ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-243.

performed in different and perhaps inappropriate ways, it is clear that the stylistic traits of the motet style were quite delicate and could be obscured by melodic decoration. It is not possible to make a decision concerning the polyphonic abuses described by Pope John XXII, writing at Avignon, not so distant from Las Huelgas and virtually at the same time as *Hu* was compiled, but it can be concluded that the motets and probably the other forms in *Hu* should be performed as they were written by their medieval compiler and/or composer.

With this conclusion in mind, a single voice for each part would probably have been the most desirable, thereby preserving the individuality of the melodies and the colours of the voices. Practically, this might have been all that was possible for much of the time, especially in peripheral locations. The use of a second tenor voice in organum could have been beneficial from the performer's viewpoint, because the voices could sing alternate notes, especially if these were of great duration. However, there is no evidence that each or all of the tenor notes in organum or motets were given full value. Theoretically at least, tenors could have been sung by a single voice, especially in motets, where the duration of the tenor notes is much closer to that of the upper voices. The use of even one instrument in conjunction with singers would have increased the performance possibilities immensely, and the likely contribution of instruments to renditions of the Las Huelgas compositions will now be discussed.

Although it has been suggested that the motet melodies might have been performed (sung) as they were written, the format, absence of texts and the rubric 'In seculum viellatoris' is evidence that the conductus and clausulae (or clausula-motets) in the appendix on f. 63'-64' of *Ba* were intended for instrumental use and that in spite of its name, the motet was not a purely vocal form.¹¹⁹ The hocket *In seculum*, in *Ma* f. 122' is further evidence in this regard. The medieval attitude to ensemble composition and performance involved a separate line for each instrument, as opposed to the present-day duplication of instruments to obtain depth of sound. Because of the close relationship which existed between voices and instruments during the medieval era in the pursuit of sonority based on contrast, the presence of the rubric for the *Ba* compositions is more surprising than the absence of rubrics or untexted compositions in other manuscripts, ie a combination of instruments and voices would theoretically have been more desirable than

¹¹⁹ P. AUBREY, *Cents Motets du XIII^e Siècle*, New York, 1964, (reprint), vol. 1, f. 63v.

¹²⁰ A manuscript illustration of this exists in *A Popular History of the Arts*, London, 1968-1984, p. 193 (1).

voices or instruments alone.¹²⁰ There is no doubt that motets would have been ideal instrumental repertory, regardless of the fact that the written or source version had a text. Later editions of instrumental and keyboard collections such as the Robertsbridge and Mulliner Codices are probably based on an earlier and unwritten tradition whereby vocal music of any genre was used instrumentally when the need arose.

In *Hu*, compositions such as the four-part motet, *O Maria, maris stella-O Maria, virgo davitica-Veritatem* are set out in score. Choirbook notation might have been easier for instrumental (string) players to read, but a competent keyboard player, especially an organist, should have been able to read from either type of format. From the era of Pope John VIII (872-882), the organ was used in the teaching of chant, from which position it gradually came to be used in the monophonic liturgy in the *Te Deum*, introit, postlude processions, sequence and possibly in the hymns.¹²¹ Francis Routh mentions that in the late Middle Ages, there was no repertoire for the organ, and vocal repertoire, presumably polyphonic, was used.¹²² In this regard, a useful reference to the instrumental use of motets occurs in a manuscript in Toledo Cathedral, in a poem by Juan Ruíz written c.1330, which describes the performance of songs using some 35 medieval rustic instruments and motets played on the organ:

Dulce caño entero sal con el panderete
Con sonajos decazofar fasen dulce sonete
Los órganos y dizen chanzones e motete¹²³

Anglès interpreted the last line as 'Los órganos y disen chanzones e motete', ie 'Los órganos por si mesmo...' or 'the organs (by) themselves...' or 'alone'.¹²⁴ The reference is of interest because the source of the motets might have been *Ma* (MS 20486), which is thought to have been written c.1275 at Toledo Cathedral, and which remained in the cathedral library until 1869. It is also evidence that canzonetas and motets were played on the organ, suggesting that some organs in Spain were advanced enough for this purpose by this date. As Maria Blanquet points out, the reference

¹²¹ P. WILLIAMS, *The Organ in Western Culture 750-1250*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 89f., 361f.; F. L. HARRISON, *Music in Medieval Britain*, London, 1967, pp. 205-206; Abdy WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*, p. 55; J. PERROT, *L'Orgue de ses origines hellénistiques à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1965, p. 399.

¹²² ROUTH, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹²³ A. G. HILL, 'Medieval Organs in Spain' *Sammelbande der IMG*, 1912-1913, vol. 14, p. 490.

¹²⁴ ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 46; Abdy WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

might describe secular use of liturgical motets or possibly secular motets of which we have no knowledge.¹²⁵ If the former is the case, which is most likely, it supports the theory that popular music might have been used liturgically on certain occasions. As John Caldwell points out 'We should not assume that their use [vernacular interpretations of plainchant] in the liturgy would have been unthinkable, either in the thirteenth century or later'.¹²⁶ The opposite might also have occurred: William of Auvergne's use of the terms *quadruplum* and *tripulum* played on bagpipes presumably applies to vocal polyphony, which suggests that liturgical polyphony might also have been used in secular context.¹²⁷ It is, however, difficult to define the medieval interpretations of secular and vernacular, especially when the manifold sacred and secular uses of the cathedrals are taken into consideration.¹²⁸ Distinctions between liturgical and vernacular music almost certainly were not as clearly defined in the pre-Tridentine era as subsequently.¹²⁹

There is no doubt that the early motets were intended for liturgical use but the later compositions with secular and/or French texts were probably intended for entertainment in polite company and thus might represent the earliest academic or scholarly form of polyphonic music. Because the present-day boundaries between secular and liturgical music are now again somewhat blurred, and contemporary hymns are often similar to popular songs, the proposal that music which was not ecclesiastical in tone could have been used in certain paraliturgical situations is not unreasonable. Folk hymns played on traditionally secular instruments now form the basis of the musical liturgy in many provincial churches, and popular songs are frequently used at weddings and funerals, not because of any religious content, but because they have personal significance to those involved in the event. If ballads and adaptations of popular songs can now be used liturgically, there is no reason why the same process could not have occurred in an era in which there were many fewer creations, musical or otherwise, and in which flexibility and adaptability must have played a much greater role.

Further evidence for the use of the organ comes in the consideration

¹²⁵ M. A. V. BLANQUET, *La Escuela Castellana de Organo*, Valladolid, 1992, pp. 16-17.

¹²⁶ J. CALDWELL, *Liturgical and Vernacular Music, Music in the Medieval English Liturgy*, Oxford, 1993, p. 291.

¹²⁷ PAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹²⁸ FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 75.

¹²⁹ CALDWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

of the position and relevance of the *clausula* form as part of Perotine reworkings of much longer Leonine originals suggests that the non-melismatic *clausulae* were intended to allow respite, not only for the singers of the preceding melismatic polyphony but also the congregation.¹³⁰ The *clausulae* could have been sung, perhaps by a different 'relief' group of singers, or they could have been played on the organ. At Notre Dame there was a monophonic precedence for this latter type of performance, where although the organ could be used with the choir, it often did not accompany it, ie some sections of the music were played as organ solos and other sections were unaccompanied.¹³¹ This antiphonal use of organ or choir 'cum vocibus vel organis' is mentioned by John Grandisson in the Exeter *Ordinale* of 1337, and the practice of 'alternatibus organis' was also known in Castile: 'los organos tañèan un verso et los clérigos (chaplains) cantavan otre'. Johannes de Florentia writing c.1350 mentions a similar practice.¹³² Wolfgang Braunfels points out that the design of the aristocratic Iberian monastic churches of Santa Creus (Oviedo), Poblet, the Escorial and Las Huelgas itself had no counterparts in the rest of Europe and it is very likely that liturgical life and customs, including the use of music, in these institutions ranged from the unusual to the unique.¹³³ Later discussion concerning the tenors of compositions ascribable to Rodrigues himself, yet lacking the traditional incipit (in an earlier era probably used for vocalization), raises the question that the composer intended this voice to be played not sung.

8. The use of the Las Huelgas motets

Polyphonic forms such as motets could have been used at opportune times during the mass, before and after the epistle or after the collect or oration, especially if the texts of the collect and motet were similar in sentiment.¹³⁴ Another suitable place for a motet would have been during the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Dufay's motet *Nuper rosarum*, written for the dedication of Florence Cathedral,

¹³⁰ Cf. the examples and uses cited by HARRISON *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹³¹ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153; Adby WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹³² PERROT, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

¹³³ BRAUNFELS, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-200.

¹³⁴ The original use of the collect was a short group prayer said before processing. There is no reason why the motet should not be considered as its musical equivalent.

confirms the importance of the formal motet form at important liturgical occasions. The numerous *conductus*-style motets by Dunstable, Pyamour and others confirm that the motet was also associated with masses from the sanctorale, especially those which are Marian. Motets such as *Dominus glorie*, which does not appear in *Hu*, but which occurs on f. 136' of *Ma*, could have been used in the regal litany or 'laudes regiae'.¹³⁵ Bach's use of the motet form for introits for burials and anniversaries probably represents a continuation of a tradition established in the late Medieval and early Renaissance eras. Motets could have also been used in processions, although Wright notes that monophonic processionalists were chanted by the clergy whilst it was processing, whereas polyphony was sung in station because of the much greater musical complexity and perhaps, the necessity to use a book.¹³⁶ However, this does not mean that polyphony was not used in processions, but only that the polyphonists were not part of the procession, just as the organ was used in later eras to accompany processions, but was not part of them.¹³⁷ Frank Harrison mentions that in the 13th and 14th centuries liturgical motets were sung by soloists in the 'pulpitum' and the tenor was played on the organ, this presumably being a small portable instrument and not the main gallery organ.¹³⁸ According to Routh, one of the functions of the polyphonic choir was to sing the motet from the 'pulpitum' during the canon of the mass, the tenor being played on the organ.¹³⁹ Although some of these references are of English origin, they confirm the existence of a liturgical practice such that similar usages elsewhere are a distinct possibility. Quite apart from the fact that they refer to the motet performed by voices and organ, the latter used for the tenor (an important element of the following discussion), the references are otherwise informative. If the pulpit was used for motet singing, this elevates its status considerably because the pulpit was the domain of the priest. Nonetheless, pulpits sometimes had canopies to deflect the sound downwards, although no more than three people could fit into them. The reference could also be to the ambo, which in ancient and medieval times was near the screen. The positions mentioned suggest that performance might have been from a manuscript, because the area was well lit by the illumination of

¹³⁶ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, pp. 341, 342.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 340-342.

¹³⁸ HARRISON, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹³⁹ ROUTH, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 15; Adby WILLIAMS, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 53, 55.

the rood (crucifixion) and other icons on the screen. The reference to 'teneur' keys, perhaps the keys of a short lower octave on which the tenor part was played, on a medieval organ at Rouen, is particularly interesting in conjunction with the above statements.¹⁴⁰

9. Unusual attributes of the Las Huelgas Manuscript

Although some of the unusual characteristics of *Hu* have already been mentioned, some important characteristics remain to be discussed. One of the most interesting is that some motets appear to be modifications or recastings of compositions, the apparent result of omission of a part or replacement of a French text with a Latin *contrafactum*.¹⁴¹ Where a two-part motet in *Hu* is more usually found as a three-part concordance, it is easy to conclude that the former is the result of omission of a voice from the latter. Other anomalies relate to the substitution of French texts with Latin counterparts and that in both *Hu* and *Ma*, some tenors are incomplete, lack *incipits* or are missing entirely. Although it is possible to assign these discrepancies to scribal lapses, the inscriptions and directions in *Hu* are evidence that this criticism cannot be sustained in the case of this manuscript. The situation concerning *Ma* is less certain, but it is logical to suspect that there might be reasonable explanations for these discrepancies.

9.1. The omission of upper parts

Although it is not appropriate to make a complete comparative investigation of the Las Huelgas motets in the present study, a superficial consideration of concordances and transmissions suggests that many motets in *Hu* have at least some similar concordances and the supposed reduction of a motet from three-parts to two-parts is not as unusual as it seems. A non-exhaustive list of examples might be useful. Las Huelgas motet no. v has a three-part concordance in *Mo* and two-part concordances in *ArsA* and *ArsB*. *Hu* no. x has two-part concordances in *F* and *W2*, three-part concordances in *Mo* and *Ba* and *Hu* no. XII has two-part versions in *ArsB*, *LoC*, *Cl* and *W2* and three-part versions in *F*, *Ma*, *W2* and *Mo*. Other examples include *Hu* no. XXIX: three-part versions in

¹⁴⁰ P. WILLIAMS, *A New History of the Organ from the Greeks to the Present Day*, London, 1980, p. 53.

¹⁴¹ ANDERSON, *Notes and papers...*, v. n. 14.

F and *Mo*, two-part transmissions in *LoD* and *W2*; Las Huelgas no. XLVII: three-part concordances in *F*, *W1*, *Ma* and *W2*; *Hu* no. LV: three-part concordances in *F*, *Mo*, *LoB* and a two-part version in *W2*; and *Hu* no. LVII: three-part concordances in *Ba* and *Da* which are similar. In contrast, *Hu* motet nos. XVI and XXX-XXXII appear to exist in two-part transmissions in all sources and the motet no. III, in three-parts in *Hu*, has two-part concordances in *F*, *Ma* and *W2*. *Hu* motet no. XXI *O Maria, maris stella-O Maria, virgo davitica-Veritatem* is perhaps the most useful evidence that the chief criterion for inclusion of a composition in *Hu* was its intended use. This motet occurs in various concordant forms as follows: as a three-part *conductus*-motet in *F* f. 397', *W2* f. 125, *Ch* f. 14; two-part motet in *ArsA* f. 290', *Gautier D-1* f. 2', *Bes* no. 19, *Ca* f. 129', *Erf* f. 5', *Lyell* f. 164'; as a three-part motet in *Cl* f. 369', *Mo* f. 88', *Ba* f. 48', and *Da* f. 1a'.¹⁴² It is set out in *Hu* so that it can be performed as a three-part motet, a two-part motet and, written in score, as a four-part motet.

There are two explanations for the existence of motets with concordances in two or three parts. The first is that the two-part versions are the original compositions and the third voice was added later as part of an upgrading or development of the original. Based on this reasoning, it has often been stated that the primitive motet evolved from the *clausula*, which it might well have done. However, this does not mean that all motets are of later date of composition or compilation than *clausulae* to which they might be related, or that the *clausula* and motet must be considered as separate genres which underwent independent evolution and development. Certainly, some *conductus*-motets and motets are based on an earlier *clausula*, but the reverse may also be true. *Hu* motet no. XXI *O Maria, virgo davitica*, although of central origin, seems not to have an identifiable source-*clausula*.¹⁴³ As Everist points out, it is necessary to maintain a bifocal view of the *clausula*, because it is far from certain that this form (always) served as a model for the motet.¹⁴⁴ Evidence in favour of the fact that form might not always relate to chronology and that the motet might not always

¹⁴² H. VAN DER WERF, *Integrated Directory of Organa, Clausulae, and Motets of the Thirteenth Century*, Rochester, USA, 1989, p. 68; cf. D. F. WILSON, *Music of the Middle Ages, Style and Structure*, New York, 1990, p. 236, and *Music of the Middle Ages, An Anthology for Performance and Study*, New York, 1990, example 48, pp. 139-148.

¹⁴³ N.E. SMITH, 'The Earliest Motets: Music and Words' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, vol. 114, 1989, p. 142; ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, p. XXIV, but cf. EVERIST, *French Motets...*, pp. 29, 35, 38, 66f.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

have been preferable to the *clausula* occurs in collections such as *F*, which contains motets in two or more parts as well as the *clausulae* on which they appear to be based. Furthermore, discussing the origins of the motet form, Norman Smith quotes the opinions of Rokseth and Waite concerning the possible conversion of motets into substitute *clausulae* and/or religious compositions by omitting the *motetus* text and changing the notation from 'cum littera' to 'sine littera'.¹⁴⁵ The preceding information considered in conjunction with present day arrangements and simplifications of orchestral or difficult compositions, suggests that we should not take for granted the fact that complex compositions have always evolved from more simple versions and that medieval compositions of three- or four-parts began as two- or three-part compositions.¹⁴⁶ As a postscript, it should be mentioned that polyphony was originally defined as a composition for two voices and the only example of a three-part composition prior to 1200 seems to be *Congaudeant catholici*. However, there is a good possibility that in this composition the upper parts might have been intended as alternatives. Even in the 15th century, the *triplum* was considered as a decorative addition rather than an essential part of the composition and it might not always have been suitable for liturgical use, especially during solemn occasions.¹⁴⁷ It seems that in the majority of cases, radical changes involving omission of parts cannot be explained by scribal ineptitude but more likely relate to composer preference or lack of the necessary information.

The existence of concordant motets with different numbers of voices could be explained as the result of major differences which occurred after a small number of copyings, or they could be the result of less radical changes spread over many copyings, of which some of the versions have been lost. Neither explanation is entirely satisfactory and the matter is clearly far more complicated than it appears. Moreover, it is very difficult to identify what might have been an original version of any motet, and even when a considerable number of concordant readings exist, it is virtually impossible to show that any one version was copied from another existing version.

Several related reasons can be offered for the diversity of concordances. The motet was both a new genre and a new art form, not completely liturgical, nor completely secular, perhaps the first scholarly

¹⁴⁵ SMITH, *op. cit.*, 'The Earliest Motets...', pp. 142-143.

¹⁴⁶ EVERIST, *French Motets...*, pp. 15, 20, 29; VAN DER WERF, *The Chronology of Motet and Discant Passages...*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴⁷ M. BUKOFZER, *Geschichte des englischen Diskants und des Fauxbourdons nach den theoretischen Quellen*, Strassburg, 1936, pp. 138, 149.

form, and perhaps lacking traditions relating to composition and transmission. Motets were composed in an era when individuality was no longer anathema and when competition was already well established. Discrepancies between concordances may reflect an increasing creative independence on the part of the compilers. This individualism was a characteristic of the age and most clearly manifests itself in the Gothic cathedrals. The buttresses of Chartres for example, when rebuilt following the fire of 1194, followed various designs. The units of measurements (the size of the building blocks), the decoration and the finish of the stonework varies markedly throughout the building, as do many of the secondary and service doorways. The explanations relate to the fact that the medieval artisans worked only to the level of uniformity required and, following ancient traditions, the various stages of the work were conceived not from an abstract plan but as a tangible unit explicable, understood and constructed sectionally.¹⁴⁸ The same could well be said of the motet.

The Gothic cathedrals are in fact a testimony to individuality and competition, which must have pervaded all aspects of medieval creation in an epoch in which artistic anonymity was declining. Significantly, *Hu* is one of the earliest manuscripts, and probably the only motet manuscript, which is not anonymous. It can be concluded that one explanation for the existence of diverse versions of any motet might be that there was no longer an underlying tradition which required them to be any more uniform than they are. In fact, it may have been the desire of the various composers and compilers that their versions should be individual – if not original compositions, then original arrangements. The Perotine revisions of Leonine organum is evidence that the practice of arrangement and alteration was neither unknown nor badly considered in the Notre Dame era.

A comparative study of the known transmissions of selected motets made by the present author in 1979 showed that in almost all cases, the core melodies, especially those of the *motetus* and *tenor*, for the most part remained relatively intact and clearly recognizable, regardless of the final form of each composition.¹⁴⁹ This occurs because variations or changes to the parts were never sufficiently radical to obscure the common melodic thread discernable in all versions of the same motet. Even if a *contrafactum* was used, the core melodies remained intact and were still recognizable. The

¹⁴⁸ FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁹ VAN DER WERF, *The Oldest Extant Part Music...*, p. 178; WILSON, *Music of the Middle Ages...*, p. 232; W. D. JORDAN, *A Comparative Study of Motets in Selected Manuscripts*, diss., 2 vols, University of New England, Armidale, 1976.

motet *Hypocritae pseudopontifices* appears in no less than eight forms, in complexity from a two-part *clausula* to a three-part French motet, but it is always recognizable from the core melodic structure involving the *motetus* and *tenor*. If the component melodies or musical phrases were to be changed, ie individual notes added or removed to excess, there would be a real danger that the composition would be changed beyond recognition. Addition or removal of the *triplum* simply changes the composition of final picture, but not the original subject.

The preceding discussion assumes that the compilers of the polyphonic manuscripts possessed all the information when they needed it, and especially in the case of the motets, discarded or included parts as they desired. This might be a completely false picture. Much depends on the decision taken as to who compiled the manuscripts, who sang the various parts of motets and if any one singer of polyphony specialized in a particular part, or was expected to be familiar with all the parts of motets which he included in his repertory. Although this matter is discussed in more detail presently because it is more relevant to undomiciled and missing tenors, it should be mentioned at this point that it is at least a possibility that the most complete versions of polyphonic compositions might not always have been available, especially in the provinces, at the time a manuscript was being compiled. In the case of *Hypocritae pseudopontifices*, there must be doubt as to whether each version represents the needs or desires of the compiler, or the extent of the information available to him at the time. Consequently, three-part motets might represent two-part antecedents to which another part has been added by preference. On the other hand, two part motets could represent three-part motets minus the third part, which was not available at the time the copy was made. There is some evidence to support this final proposition because vertical as opposed to linear expansion seems to have been a feature of the later Middle Ages. Musically, it occurred in the Perotine revisions of Leonine *organum*. Architecturally it is manifest in the Gothic Cathedrals, the size of which increased throughout the era, but not lineally, and certainly not to keep pace with any practical need such as capacity for an expanding population, because the most significant dimensional increase was vertically, ie height, yet this characteristic posed the greatest practical difficulties, sometimes unsolvable, as at Beauvais.

9.2. The absence of French texts

Several explanations can be offered for what seems to have been a conscious effort to avoid the use of French texts in *Hu*, although

consideration of the place of Las Huelgas in the stream of medieval society reveals that there were many reasons why French culture and French motets would not have been out of place at this institution. According to Thomas Tyrwhitt, French was a universal language which members of the religious movements were expected to use for conversational purposes.¹⁵⁰ It was nonetheless, vernacular and not for liturgical usage. The distinction might have begun in the priesthood, but by the 13th century French had become the language of the merchant and business classes. These facts are relevant because Las Huelgas was affiliated with a French mother-house, and the Abbess of Las Huelgas had the authority to license village fairs and trade markets in the towns and villages under her control and to tax merchants.¹⁵¹

The nun in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* sang the divine service in a nasal tone, she spoke French in the English dialect and apparently was not familiar with Parisian French. Harold Copeman points out in his study that pronunciations varied considerably according to location, so although Rodrigues' rubrics 'manera francesca' and '(manera) hespanona' written in the tenor stave of the *conductus* no. XV probably refer to the rhythmic contrast between bars 31-36, 37-49 and 50f., it cannot be discounted that they imply a change of tone, accent, or pronunciation, or a combination of these characteristics.¹⁵² The final decision concerning the rubrics might be that rhythmic mode 2 was a Spanish trait but the important inference is that Rodrigues was aware that the alternative interpretation was the one favoured in France.¹⁵³

If French music had not reached Castile by way of the pilgrim route from France to Santiago de Compostela, then it could have arrived by

¹⁵⁰ G. CHAUCER, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. T. Tyrwhitt, London, undated, IV, p. 6, n. 6.

¹⁵¹ V. n. 27; M. McCLOSKEY, 'Medieval Merchants and Artisans' *The Compleat Anachronist*, no. 63, Society for Creative Anachronism, California, 1992, pp. 32-38.

¹⁵² However, note the melodic similarity between the *tripulum* corresponding to 'manera francesca' and the *tenor* preceding 'hespanona'. Cf. ANGLÈS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, f. 147, l.4 (tr.), f. 148, l.3, (ten.). Cf. ANGLÈS, *Biblioteca de Catalunya*, VI, Barcelona, 1931, p. 357, bars 31-36, pp. 358, bars 37-49, 359, bar 50f. Cf. *Hu* no. 156, bars 66-75, similar to *Hu* no. 154, bars 89-99, except for the *duplum* of *Hu* 156, bar 68 'c' and *Hu* no. 154, bar 91 'd'. The interpretation by ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, item 61, p. 76f. is much more complex: p. 77 shows different interpretations for the section indicated 'manera francesca', but the implication concerning mode 2 and the section marked 'hespanona' is similar.

¹⁵³ CHAUCER, ed., Tyrwhitt, n. 6. Concerning this latter, cf. Harris Nicholas' conflicting opinion about Chaucer's intentions in the addenda to Tyrwhitt's discussion, p. 586; also the interpretation of this section given by DALGLISH, 'The Origin...', n. 18. V. also H. COPEMAN, *Singing in Latin*, Oxford, 1990, where pronunciation of Latin according to geography is discussed; also P. JEFFERY, 'Liturgical chant bibliography 2' *Plain-song and Medieval Music*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1993, p. 174.

way of the migration of troubadours from Languedoc to the court of Alfonso X of Castile in the era post-1229.¹⁵⁴ Even without reference to the predilection for French accoutrements in the papal court at Avignon (Pope Clement's first act was to appoint nine French Cardinals) there is enough evidence to suggest that French culture was well known and fashionable in the north of Spain.

A few popular Latin medieval texts could have been avoided because they had been parodied or profaned. *Verbum bonum et suave* became *Virum bonum et suave* in the hands of the Goliards. However, contradictory, secular and/or irreverent texts such as *Hypocritae, pseudopontifices-Velut stellae-Et gaudebit* seem not to have been thought to be incongruous or sufficiently irreverent to be avoided in normal liturgical use.¹⁵⁵ Use of texts which were acrostics, or contained repetition of important syllables such as Ma-ri-a were justifiable and did not require other liturgical content.¹⁵⁶ There are only eighteen known examples of motets with French texts which are clearly devotional.¹⁵⁷ Most French texts were amorous, the *triplum* merry, the *motetus* complaining, yet because of medieval predilection for, and familiarity with, allegory, metaphor and symbolism, references to love and lover could have either earthly or Marian connotations and use of some apparently inappropriate texts need not have been avoided.¹⁵⁸

There is, however, a vast gulf between the intention and tone of many Latin and French texts, eg compare the sober, moralistic Petronian motet *Caligo terrae scinditur-Virgo Maria-tenor* based on St Luke 23, 27f.: 'Women of Jerusalem do not shed tears for me...' with *On parole-À Paris-Frère nouvelle*, the *tenor* of which is based on a monophonic street-vendor's song, or *Chançonnete, va t'en tost-Ainc voir d'amours ne joi-A la cheminée*. Decorations in the Books of Hours, especially those such as 'The Three Riders', usually included in the 'bas du page' of the Office for the Dead, show a fusion of sensual art with biblical and moralistic stories, a development which occurred as part of an increasing interest in personal piety by the upper classes. Secular art in religious buildings was certainly

¹⁵⁴ A. R. LEWIS, 'Luedoc' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, vol. 7, 1986, pp. 340-341.

¹⁵⁵ M. C. UHL, 'Goliards' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, vol. 5, 1985, pp. 574-576; GROUT, *op. cit.*, p. 105; cf. EVERIST, *French Motets...*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵⁶ F. A. GALLO, *Music of the Middle Ages II*, Cambridge, 1985, p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ EVERIST, *French Motets...*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁵⁸ GROUT, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

not proscribed because the latter were intended to be an encyclopedia of this world and the next. Of 176 windows in Chartres, 43 are historical in content or depict the activities of the guilds who paid for them.¹⁵⁹ This evidence points to a coexistence and usage of liturgical and secular art in the late medieval era. Although some ecclesiastical use of motets of inappropriate character might be inferred from the complaints of Durandus the Younger (William Duranti) who scolds against it in his memorandum of church abuses submitted to the Council of Vienne, 1311-12, the motets at Las Huelgas must have been used in a way such that texts in French and, perhaps, some music traditionally associated with these texts, was felt to be inappropriate.¹⁶⁰ If the manuscript was intended as a collection of usable repertoire rather than a collection of popular or generally used repertoire and if there was no use for the French texts, it is logical that they would not have been included.

There is other evidence that the liturgical use of vernacular texts was not favoured. Fascicle 6 of *Ma* contains 12 compositions also found in *Hu* but in few other sources, and of these, there are three motets which have concordances only in *Hu*. This is surely proof that motets were written in Castile, and perhaps throughout the rest of Iberia. The important conclusion which must relate to the omission of French texts, is that there are no motets with texts in Castilian or Portuguese. Anglès pointed out that apart from Latin and French, there is some use of Provençal, some fragments in English, and one German text. Discussing the poem by Ruíz, *Libro de Buen Amor*, he suggests that motets in the vernacular (Castilian) did exist but have been lost. Perhaps this is true and this type of composition was preserved either by memory or in books dedicated to the genre which have been lost. However, if motets with liturgical texts in the vernacular were part of the motet repertory, they should appear in *Hu* because this manuscript is of known Castilian origin, probably written, but if not, certainly supervised, by an Iberian composer of motets, who was familiar with the repertory and who was working in conditions which must have been more liberal than those in most other secular or monastic institutions. Such a confluence of favourable circumstances must have occurred infrequently. If liturgical motets with Iberian texts were to be found, they should occur in *Hu*. That they do not exist suggests that there

¹⁵⁹ FRAYLING, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 71.

¹⁶⁰ W. DURANTI, *Tractatus de modo concilii generalis celebrandi et corruptelis in Ecclesia reformandis*, Lyon, 1531, 1534, f. 24'.

was no use for them and they were avoided as were the French texts. The use of Latin in poetic anthologies such as the *Carmina burana*, its use by the mendicant scholars, most notably the Dominicans Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, and the predilection of the Franciscans with devotional poetry, especially Marian, eg Walter of Wimborne's *Marie carmina* and *De laudibus beatae Virginis Mariae* by Richard de St Laurent, is evidence that Latin was the language of scholars and liturgists.¹⁶¹ The facts support the conclusion that the omission of French texts relates not only to the avoidance of the French language, but to the avoidance of all vernacular languages. The few medieval motets which have French liturgical texts simply represent experiments and the abutting edges of French secular and Latin liturgical usages.

There are many medieval examples of textual decoration and elaboration and examples of 'common', ie non-specific texts, being made into 'propers' by insertion of suitable phrases.¹⁶² The use of Latin texts which were a gloss or trope, or an elaboration of the original liturgical statement were not proscribed, nor was there a ban on Latin polyphonic compositions in which the upper text was a gloss or explanation of the tenor motto.¹⁶³ Latin remained the official ecclesiastical language until the late 14th century but the fact that it remained the preferred ecclesiastical language virtually to the present day is confirmed by the fact that later composers, such as Monteverdi and Dunstable, used it in their motets.¹⁶⁴

Omission of the French elements in *Hu* therefore almost certainly relates to maintenance of a tradition, the possible abuse of which was brought to the attention of Pope Clement V at Vienne and which provoked papal utterance by Pope John XXI. It is clear that although the motet as a form had desirable qualities, there were musical and textual characteristics in some types of motets which were not suitable or were undesirable for ecclesiastical uses. Sections or voices exhibiting these characteristics might not have been included in a performance manuscript such as *Hu* because of its intended use, but they would have been of little relevance in a collector's manuscript such as *Mo* and *Ba*.

¹⁶¹ A. G. RIGG, 'Latin Literature' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, vol. 7, 1986, p. 368f.

¹⁶² Fenwick WILSON, *An Anthology...*, p. 22f.

¹⁶³ WRIGHT, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

¹⁶⁴ J. BURKE, *The Day the Universe Changed*, London, 1985, p. 63.

9.3. Untitled and missing tenors

One of the most interesting aspects of the Las Huelgas Manuscript is that it contains 16 compositions which could qualify for description as *unica*, but all except two either lack tenors or have tenors which lack an *incipit* or cannot be identified.

Several explanations can be proposed for the occurrence of untitled tenors (those which lack *incipits*, but which can be identified as having a traditional chant source) and unidentified tenors (those which lack *incipits*, ie they do not have an identified chant source and could have been newly-composed for the motet in question). Although the latter might have been composed when the motets were documented, in which case they would not have *incipits* from a chant text, they could possibly be based on originals which although they now pose an identificative problem, might have been well known in the late medieval era. Occurrence of untitled tenors could suggest that the textual inscriptions were no longer required, ie the manuscript was compiled and used by a performer who knew them or, alternatively, that the identification or identities of the compositions by way of the *incipits* of the liturgical themes were no longer relevant because the tenors were either not sung or were not sung using the original Latin liturgical text as denoted by the *incipits*. The existence c.1300, of secular motet tenors and the *cantus firmus* or newly-composed tenors used in the *conductus*, as noted by Grocheo, might have been an influencing factor in this regard. Because medieval documentation invariably followed usage, Grocheo's comments almost certainly pertain to practices in use decades earlier.

The problem is that the existence of a tenor *incipit* implies that the tenor was to be sung, using syllables from the *incipit*. Lack of a tenor *incipit* could suggest scribal omission but also that the tenor was performed on an instrument, as suggested by Harrison.¹⁶⁵ Although it can be argued that an *incipit* was not necessary for commonly used liturgical tenors because the information was well known to performers, considering usual practices in liturgical books such as antiphoners, use of an *incipit* without music would have been more likely than use of music without an *incipit*. This apology is not valid for unidentified tenors, especially if they were original compositions. If they were intended to be sung, how would a singer know what to sing or what syllables to use for

¹⁶⁵ HARRISON, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

vocalization if the *incipit* had been omitted? Presumably, a composer such as Rodrigues would have realized this problem, yet some of the unidentified tenors are in compositions almost certainly written by him. He must have known the requirements of performance and his rubrics are evidence of his thorough approach, so unless a convention existed whereby a section of text or directions for vocalization were inferred from a superior part, the lack of *incipit* or rubrication could be interpreted as an implication that these tenors were intended for instrumental performance.

There is some evidence that this is not an inappropriate explanation. Even in the era of Monteverdi, sonority was based on the medieval definition as opposed to the Romantic, and doubling, which must have developed from the earlier practice of performing vocal parts instrumentally, was still a matter of preference and depended on circumstances. In the medieval context, a mixture of a small number of voices of individual qualities would have been considered sonorous, but as has been mentioned previously, a combination of voices and instruments, such as the organ, would have been considered more desirable.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the organ could have replaced the polyphonic choir if and when necessary, because its sound is made up of a number of voices of diverse pitch and quality and it could be used in church. According to the Iberian Franciscan Juan Gil de Zamorra, in *Ars musica* (c.1270), the organ was the only approved liturgical instrument, being used in hymns, sequences and proses.¹⁶⁷ According to Grandisson, in 14th-century England, polyphony, either vocal or played on the organ, could on suitable occasions replace the *Benedicamus* at vespers and matins in the office and after the *Sanctus* in the mass.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, it is possible that in at least some cases the absence of a text *incipit* signified instrumental performance. A reasonable conclusion which could be generally applied might be that the occurrence of tenors without *incipits* relates to their intended use, either vocal or instrumental, whereas the problem of missing tenors more likely relates to the more enigmatic matter of manuscript preparation.

The absence of some tenor parts in *Hu* is not unique for a polyphonic source. Although the manuscripts have many common traits, including the close proximity of their origins, *Ma* contains relatively more motets without tenors than *Hu*. Consequently, it is tempting to explain the

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁶⁷ G. CATTIN, *Music of the Middle Ages I*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 185-189; BLANQUET, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁸ ROUTH, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

missing tenor parts as an Iberian characteristic. There might be several explanations for the incomplete tenors in *Ma*, which although they might not apply to *Hu*, will almost certainly apply to deficient motets in other manuscripts. Their mention here 'en passant' is therefore justifiable.

A different hand was responsible for each of the two sections which constitute the original corpus, ff. 5-24v and ff. 25-142 of *Ma*. Fascicle 1 does not belong to the main body of the manuscript and contains only three pieces, of which the three-part motet lacks a tenor. Fascicle 2 probably began with four, four-part *conductus*-motets. There are staves for the tenors, but most of the notes were never added. However, the original intention was that they should have been included. Fascicle 4 although incomplete because of a loss after f. 106v, contains 18 motets but only two have tenors. Of these motets, one is a unicum, but based on a *clausula*, the others are all well known, with six occurring in *W2*, fascicle 1-2. Fascicle 5, f. 119' contains *Serena virginum*, a well-known motet found in *W1*, *W2*, *F* and elsewhere, written in score, but lacking its tenor. Fascicle 6 contains 19 two-part motets and four three-part motets. Only the last 10 motets have tenors and all are untitled. Only once in *Ma* fascicle 4, f. 105, is the tenor designated: 'tenura de mors morsu'. There are 12 compositions found in this fascicle which are also found in *Hu*, so it could be assumed that either the manuscripts are in some way related or the repertory was common to the area.

Although almost all of the majuscules of fascicle 6 of *Ma* are lacking, which indicates that the scribal work was never completed, the layout of the pages suggests that the music was intended as a source of data or for reference. Space was not left for the missing parts so there seems not to have been any intention to include those tenors which do not presently appear. As mentioned, numerous explanations can be proposed for this anomaly, eg the upper voices were intended as thematic material for improvisation, tenors were no longer actually used in or required for performance, familiar parts were not always written out, or some tenors were played on the organ and they were written in another manuscript or were known to the player. If all the tenors were present and had *incipits*, it would be assumed that they were to be sung, but because only some tenors are untitled or missing, the intentions of the compiler or composer appear to be more doubtful.

In the late Middle Ages, methods use to retain and convey information were in transition. The old system based on memory theatre and other devices was in a state of decline but was certainly not extinct,

and if the chants in an antiphoner or gradual could be remembered and performed from memory, the same might have been possible concerning the polyphonic repertory, especially motets, which were relatively simple and short. The upper voices had texts, so key words and imagery could have been used as mnemonics. Memory and dictation might have played a prominent part in the preparation of polyphonic manuscripts, as Anderson suggested, but this need not imply that the scribe always knew any or all of the repertory or that he could sing it, only that he possessed the skill of writing music from dictation.¹⁶⁹ The fact that all the notation in any manuscript is in one hand is not proof that the scribe was familiar with any of the music or could even read it, or that it was copied by one process from a single exemplar. Based on the fact that in the Middle Ages reading and writing were regarded as separate skills, and those who could read could not always write, and vice versa, singers who could write music and scribes who could sing might have been very rarely encountered. However, medieval writing was intended to be read aloud and the act of copying from a written exemplar involved identifying the word, saying or singing it and then re-writing it. This is not much removed from writing directly from dictation, which according to James Burke, certainly occurred, but resulted in errors.¹⁷⁰ (The same results can be seen in legal documents of all eras; familiar words are correctly spelled but unfamiliar words, especially proper names, even if repeated, are spelled according various phonetic interpretations. Music copied by dictation would have been subject to the same types of error.)

Most present-day singers have knowledge of much of the vocal repertory, but it would be beyond the capability of most to write all the parts, especially those which they do not sing. It would be logical to expect that somewhat the same circumstances existed in the medieval era, but because the pitches of the parts were much closer and the ambitus of the voices more restricted than in present-day SATB combinations, voice

¹⁶⁹ The author's investigation of the fragment Sala do Arcas 251, probably from Salvador de Paderne, in which the black square notation is placed around a single line staff suggests that the stems which appear on the notes actually preceded the notes and were the scribal cues. (One example near a line ending was wrongly placed and had to be re-drawn. This is evidence that at least some stems were not written as part of the note itself.) The use of cues suggests that this fragment was written by dictation because cues would have been quicker to write than the actual notes. Cf. the use of stems in the Kodály method of dictation, where stems are used as cues to notate rhythm because of the high speed at which they can be written and, to a certain extent, the use of cues to represent consonants in the Pitman shorthand system.

¹⁷⁰ BURKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106

timbre and technical ability could have been the factors which influenced singer's choices concerning parts. On the other hand, in an era when conditions and circumstances cannot often have been ideal, flexibility involving the knowledge of, and ability to sing any part would have been a desirable skill. Because of the proximity of pitch centres of the upper voices, the juxtaposition of the upper voices of *Agmina milicie* in *W2*, f. 123 and *Hu* f. 90' is virtually meaningless and, excepting a relationship between voice quality and part, it does not affect the final performance. From the singer's viewpoint, the question might not have been the physical ability to sing a given part but rather the desire to learn it. We can therefore conclude that the missing tenors may be due to lack of knowledge by the singer who provided the parts or to the lack of knowledge of the scribe.

There is little doubt that motets were composed in the central or Notre Dame region, but the precise origin of many others and of most polyphonic manuscripts is not certainly known. Copies of central Notre Dame compositions might have been easily obtainable, but copies of those from the provinces might have been difficult to obtain in a form written or otherwise. Although from the modern-day viewpoint it is difficult to decide upon those characteristics would have made some motets more popular than others, the possibility that the most commonly occurring motets were the most popular should not be overlooked. Manuscripts such as *F* or *Mo* could in fact represent the product of an extensive process of accrual and the final written collation of information obtained by a collector, when and where available, over a long period of time. Pursuing this reasoning somewhat further, if tenors were not required for the motets in fascicle 6 of *Ma*, then it would be logical to expect that none of them would be present, but because some of them were included, it is reasonable to assume that the omissions occurred because the information was not available.

The important questions thus seem to relate to the means by which the information was obtained, the methods used to produce manuscripts and the ability or desire of performers to be able to sing all parts of a motet, only one part, or the upper voices, and why incomplete compositions were included in manuscripts, especially the first-generation manuscripts.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ The central, first-generation or original sources, pre-1270, include *F*, *MuA*, *W2*, *Ma* and *Cl*. Most scholars consider that *F* is Parisian. The others are thought to be of French provenance except *Ma*. The second-generation of manuscripts, those of high artistic calibre and probably collectors manuscripts include *Mo*, *Tu* and *Ba* which were written around 1300. Their provenance is less certain but *Mo* is probably French provincial, the provenance of *Ba* is disputed and ranges from Germany to Paris and *Tu* is thought to have been written in Liège. It is generally accepted that *W1*, *F* and *W2* represent successive states of the chronological repertorial

The fact that some compositions in *Hu* and *Ma* could not be recorded in complete form might not have been viewed as a serious deficiency in an era in which completion of many projects took decades, some were never achieved and as a result, uniformity at the miniscule level often did not exist. Buildings were used for centuries before final completion occurred; the spires of many cathedrals, although one of the most important parts, were often never completed, or were in a style much dissimilar to that of the main structure. Many monastic churches were dedicated long after foundation, *eg* June 1, 1187 was the date of the privilege and the official day of foundation of Las Huelgas, but the church was not dedicated until September 2, 1279.¹⁷² Whilst the complete was desirable, the medievals must have understood that completion and the achievement of the final form was a continuing process. Based on the crusader adage of 'just cause, right intention', the process of completion and the intention to do so was almost certainly as important as the final result. In an era when information could not be easily obtained, especially from distant places, and when construction depended on favourable financial and weather conditions which often did not occur (there were no fine days at all in the summer of 1315), preoccupation with deadlines and completion was far less certain and considerably less important than it is today. The state of being incomplete almost certainly did not mean deficient, and therefore a motet lacking a tenor and triplum, although considered deficient and

development because *W1* has less discant than *F*. *F* has discant and *clausulae* and virtually no motets, whereas *W2* disregards independent *clausulae* but includes many motets. Specialist indices, directories and commentaries which show the various interrelationships of the repertoire include F. LUDWIG, *Repertorium organorum recentioris et Motetorum vetustissimi stili*, vol. 1, Frankfurt, 1961, vol. 2, 1962 (reprints of the 1910 edition), and 'Die Quellen die Motetten ältesten Stils' originally in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 5, 1923; H. VAN DER WERF, *Integrated Directory of Organa, Clausulae, and Motets*, *op. cit.*; N. E. SMITH, *The Clausulae of the Notre Dame-school: a Repertorial Study*, diss., Yale University, 1960; N. E. SMITH, 'Interrelationships among the Alleluias of the Magnus Liber' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 35, 1972, pp. 175-202; M. EVERIST, *Polyphonic Music in Thirteenth-Century France: Aspects of Sources and Distribution*, New York, 1989; M. EVERIST, 'From Paris to St. Andrews...', pp. 1-42; M. E. WOLINSKI, 'The Compilation of the Montpellier Codex' in I. Fenlon, ed., *Early Music History: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Music*, vol. 11, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 263-301 (but note Everist's opinion of Wolinski's conclusions in M. EVERIST, 'The Polyphonic rondeau' *Early Music History*, vol. 15, 1996, pp. 59-96), p. 89. V. also R. FLOTZINGER, 'Der Discantussatz im Magnus Liber und seiner Nachfolge' *Weiner Musikwissenschaftliche Beiträge*, vol. 8, Vienna, 1969. Other publications containing useful comments and opinions by various reputable authors are too numerous to be listed here individually.

¹⁷² The foundation privilege is reproduced in A. R. LOPEZ, *El Real Monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos y el Hospital des Rey*, Burgos, 1907, vol. 1, doc. 2, pp. 325, 356. V. also J. L. Y MONTEVERDE, 'Date de la Foundation de Las Huelgas' *Cîteaux*, 10, 1961, pp. 330-332, and CONNOR, *op. cit.*, p. 130, n. 10 and n. 12.

incomplete by present standards, might not have been viewed so critically in medieval times. It was still recognizable as a motet. The fact that a part could not be obtained was the result of circumstance and could not be attributed to anyone. Presumably, it was thought better to preserve a part or section than nothing at all.

Keeping the preceding comments in mind, another side to this matter must be expounded even if it cannot be fully developed in this discussion. Referring to the monophonic chant tradition, although performance of the mass and office chants was from memory, a written copy of the chants existed for reference purposes in the graduals and antiphoners. As John Romer pointed out in his television series *Testament*, even in Jewish times, the final authority was always the written word.¹⁷³ Burke, discussing the transition from a memory-based society to one in which writing predominated, mentions that the need for written records can probably be traced to the merchants and traders and monarchical predilection for tax collection, but that the transition did not gather full momentum until after the Black Death.¹⁷⁴ Scholars of 'New Age' music, such as Joaquim Ernst-Berendt have suggested that music in printed form predominates only in the Western tradition, a fact which can be confirmed by the importance given to analysis of music from the printed version.¹⁷⁵ In non-Western musical traditions and the early Middle Ages, music implied something heard and performed from memory, not a series of written symbols subject to interpretation.

If it is agreed that manuscripts such as *Mo* were collector's objects, then it is logical to believe that the versions of the compositions were the best or most popular available and that omissions are a result of scribal imprecision or lack of information. These polyphonic collectibles can be compared to the antiphoners and graduals in that they are a written authority. In the case of first-generation manuscripts and performance manuscripts, a different assessment may be necessary, based on the following explanation.

That sight was a less important path to comprehension than hearing in the early Middle Ages can be illustrated as follows. It can be argued that Indo-European culture is speculative or visual, and that sight and

¹⁷³ J. ROMER, *Testament: The Bible and its History*, London, 1988, p. 107.

¹⁷⁴ BURKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57, 108.

¹⁷⁵ This topic is discussed extensively in J-E. BERENDT, *The Third Ear: on Listening to the World*, T. Nevill, trans., New York, 1992, and *The World is Sound, Nada Brahma: Music and the Landscape of Consciousness*, New York, 1991.

understanding by seeing is the most important sense. This is implied in the relevant verbs, which mean to see in the sense of to understand, eg German, 'wissen'; Anglo-Saxon, 'to wit, wot'; Norwegian, 'viten'; Sanskrit, 'vidya' (cf. 'veda' = a sacred book or book of knowledge) and Greek, 'idéa'. The Latin counterpart of the Greek verb is 'video, videre', but the Roman and early medieval use was exceptional in that it was literal, ie 'I see', rather than 'I understand'. (Note the use of 'video' in the Advent response *Aspiciens a longe ecce video...* – Searching from afar, behold I see the power of God coming and the cloud touches the whole earth. The cloud refers to the cloud of unknowing which surrounds the person of God). 'Video' was chosen from a number of Latin verbs with subtle but specific meanings referring to the type and means of understanding, eg 'cognosco, intellego, sapio, capio, tango, sentio, tractio' etc. 'Sapio, sapere' was the verb which implied seeing beneath the surface, having wisdom or understanding. That seeing or reading a text did not imply understanding in medieval Christianity (c.750) is illustrated by a statement by St Boniface during his encounter with Sturm(i), son of the priest Wigbert, in the diocese of Hess. Sturm could recite the psalms from memory and although he could read the gospels, he did not understand the actual text he had read. He knew the general meaning from a traditional verbal explanation, ie although he could translate the written words into phonetically correct sounds, the words themselves did not generate concepts. Five centuries later, as a result of the change from memorization and verbal instruction to reading and understanding the reader would more likely have understood the precise meanings of the gospels, even without prior explanation. This would have occurred because he understood the meanings of the individual words, the associated concepts and therefore, the broader significance of the text in question.

Somewhat similar problems relate to differences between looking and seeing and knowing what it is, as opposed to what it means. The potential for inaccuracies and misinterpretations in a verbal and memory-based system can perhaps be illustrated by a contemporary example. Most priests during the course of pre-confirmation examinations will have encountered the *Confiteor* recited thus: ... 'Blessed Mary ever-burgeon', and 'Blessed John the Blacksmith'. These substitutions occur as the result of an inadequate vocabulary and the misinterpretation of sounds. They would almost certainly not occur in the recitation of these texts from printed copies. On the basis of this information, which regrettably cannot be fully developed here, it is possible that the first-generation and performance polyphonic manuscripts appear as they do because they belong to an era of transition, in which

precision and the written witness were of increasing relevance. Furthermore, the performance of polyphony requires rhythmic organization, which in turn requires mensuration, either written or implied. Unless all note values were of equal duration, the performance of polyphony written in non-mensural notation must still have involved an underlying ictus or rhythm to ensure correct progress and alignment of the parts. Therefore, polyphonic compositions written in non-mensural notation must have been performed according to some system of mensuration or rhythm to ensure reasonable musical accuracy. It can be argued that if an inherent system of mensuration existed in the non-mensural repertory, it must have been transmitted by some tradition to the later writers of the mensural versions. Alternatively each note could have been given equal value, in which case there would have been very little use for notes of different shapes. Anderson held the opinion that within one era, the various versions of any one polyphonic composition might not have been performed with rhythmical similarity, and it is quite possible that rhythmic interpretations might have changed considerably over a period, and/or varied according to location.¹⁷⁶ It is also possible that the form of manuscripts such as *Ma* was moulded partly by memories of mnemonic compilations such as the monophonic antiphoners, and partly by visions and influences of the era to come, in which music was realized from a written copy, not by recourse to memory. The discrepancies which occur in these manuscripts are serious shortcomings from the modern-day assessment; they may have been undesirable in the era of their compilation, but they were probably not viewed as serious deficiencies because these manuscripts did not have the potency and authority of those which represented the written authority. They contain elements of both literary and mnemonic traditions.

10. The motet in the wider context of the evolution of polyphonic music

There is no doubt that the motet was the most adventurous musical form of composition during the late Middle Ages and that all but a few examples of its nearest competitor, the *conductus*, were musically archaic by comparison. After c.1300, the *conductus* form began to lose its earlier definition, a defect which never infected the motet.¹⁷⁷ The *conductus* text was often historical, the *cantus firmus* tenor had no ancient liturgical

¹⁷⁶ J. STEVENS, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 488.

¹⁷⁷ CALDWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

authority and was not based on a plainchant motto. It did not resemble the traditional sustained plainchant tenors, which contributed to the overall polyphonic texture, but was rhythmically similar to the upper voices.¹⁷⁸ Consequently, the parts of many early French *conductus* often lack rhythmic distinction and contrast and the resulting texture is homophonic, as in *Praemii dilatio* and *Mundus vergens*. In contradistinction to the average *conductus*, the motet consists of clear linear strands which result in true polyphony. That this is a correct assessment of the form is confirmed by Grocheo, who states that the *conductus* was considered as a species of organum, not as an independent genre.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, although the gulf between the *conductus* and the motet was considerable, all the evidence points to the fact that the *conductus* was used in paraliturgical ceremonies (the name itself implies a 'leading' or processional composition), but it might have been performed differently to the motet and in different circumstances.¹⁸⁰

Perhaps one of the most intriguing musicological questions relates to a possible relationship between the development and evolution of the medieval motet, the Iberian organ, and the proposal that the Baroque organs of Portugal and much of Spain were modelled on a design from Castile, which in turn was influenced by use of the motet. Compositions by Coelho, Carreira, Cabezón, Mudarra, Agostinho da Cruz, Olague, Macedo, Heliodoro de Paiva etc., in which the parts frequently cross middle-c, were almost certainly written for organs which had at least some continuous registers or for organs which had divided registers of similar quality in both treble and bass. These compositions suggest that before 1700, the Portuguese organ was in fact similar to the Italian Renaissance instruments, a proposal which is supported by the original design of the only surviving Lusitanian Renaissance organ, in Évora Cathedral.

In a favourable economic climate which developed c.1700, a new era of Baroque organbuilding began in Portugal. The design of the instruments almost certainly did not evolve in Portugal, but was brought into the country by predominantly Castilian builders, whose work

¹⁷⁸ S. FULLER, 'Early Polyphony' in R. Crocker and D. Hiley, eds., *New Oxford History of Music*, vol. 2: *The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, Oxford, 1990, 2, pp. 563-564.

¹⁷⁹ A. SAEY, 'Johannes de Grocheo' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, New York, vol. 7, 1986, p. 119.

¹⁸⁰ However, notable exceptions of *conductus* occur in the two-part examples in fascicle 3 and 4 of *Ma* (ff. 25-65, 66-97), which are sophisticated polyphonic compositions, often producing the texture of two-part inventions. If these compositions were textless it could be inferred that they were intended as two-part inventions for instrumental performance.

followed a common design. The instruments included many unusual characteristics, including the arrangement of flue pipes in the façade and 'en chamade' reeds on the case, but most noticeably, the single keyboard divided at middle-c, a short lower octave, and different registers for the treble and bass sections. Except for the short lower octave, this design remains traditional. On these organs, the performance of music of the earlier era, wherein the parts cross middle-c, is difficult if not impossible and it is clear that the Baroque organs were designed for a different type of repertory, which was suited to a divided keyboard and contrasting registers. The Portuguese forms which utilized these characteristics in the 18th century were the 'obras de meio registo' or 'tientos' and 'batalhas', most of which also require a solo bass reed register.¹⁸¹ However many, perhaps most, of the Portuguese compositions in this style seem to have been written after 1700 and thus they exploit an existing characteristics of the new organs. If the Portuguese Baroque organs were based on earlier Castilian counterparts, the latter must have been used in conjunction with an existing and much earlier repertory. Correa de Arauxo in *Facultad organica* of 1626 states that compositions for half-registers originated in Castile and were well known there.¹⁸² Arauxo implies that by this time, compositions for organs with a single divided keyboard and half-registers had reached a very high level of development in Castile. This opinion is supported by Hilarion Eslava, who describes numerous compositions used in 16th-century Spain, all of which would, for effective performance, require an organ of two keyboards, or a single divided keyboard. However, Eslava refers especially to the 'organos partidos' and the compositions 'partidos' or 'de meio registo' intended for a divided keyboard and independent bass and treble registers.¹⁸³ His description suggests that in the 16th century, an era not so far removed from that of the later motet, this type of organ and composition were highly developed in Castile. Careful study of the 'meio registo' forms reveals that the motet could well be their ancient precursor.

There is considerable evidence that the Iberian medieval polyphonic sources, *Ma* and *Hu*, were based on both experimental and performance-related intentions.¹⁸⁴ They confirm not only that motets were composed in

¹⁸¹ G. DODERER, *Orgelmusik und Orgelbau im Portugal des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Tutzing, 1978, p. 159: III.3 'Kompositionen de meio registo'.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁸³ H. ESLAVA, *Museo organico español*, 2 vols, Madrid, 1860-1862, p. 14f.

¹⁸⁴ ANDERSON, *Notes and papers...*, asserted that *Bes* was a manuscript designed specifically for practical usage: 'Certainly, the Ms. was carefully planned, as its ordered contents show, and its repertory suggests that it was used for performance.' He made no such claims for *Hu* or *Ma*.

Iberia, but also that experiments were conducted with polyphonic forms, eg the four-part *organa*-motet in the second fascicle of *Ma* shows how a basic piece of polyphonic *organum* could be converted into a *conductus*-motet by the addition of a text. Experiments of this type would have been of interest to musicians in Toledo, a city which was long the centre of Arabic, Latin and Jewish cultures and a major seat for scientific experiment, philosophical discourse and translation of major classical treatises. It is conceivable that experiments with the organ, polyphony and motets were taken very much further in Castile than elsewhere, a supposition confirmed to an extent by the complex texture of the contrapuntal *conductus* in fascicles 3 and 4 of *Ma*. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the design of the Castilian, Portuguese and Galician organs is still quite different to that of all other European types.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that regardless of provenance, larger medieval organs had divided keyboards and therefore, divided windchests, because some manuscript illuminations show two bellows and a long drone pipe at the treble end of the windchest. This position would be irrelevant on an instrument with one windchest (it actually detracts from the appearance), but on an instrument with a divided windchest, it would have had an equalizing effect on the wind requirements to treble and bass sections because of the lesser quantity of wind needed for the smaller treble pipes.¹⁸⁵ Organs with divided keyboards would not have been necessary for the performance of monophonic Gregorian chant, so if organs of this type did exist, the reason must relate to the performance of polyphony or part-music. The repertory which would have been most suited to them would have been motets or the *conductus*-type compositions such as in *Ma*. Even today, because of the restricted ambitus of the voices, a medieval motet can be effectively played on a small Portuguese organ without undue difficulty, using the short lower octave for the tenor, the tenor range for the *motetus* and the treble for the *triplum*. Consideration of later compositional devices usually associated with the organ, eg canon and fugue, in conjunction with their medieval counterparts such as counterpoint, 'stimmtausch', isorhythms, augmentation and diminution of tenors, as in the Ars Nova motet *Alpha vibrans monumentum-Coetus venit heroicus-Amicum quaerit*, hocket, imitation, the cauda or coda, *cantus firmus* etc., used in, predominantly, the motet, and the existence in the late medieval era of organs, which, from their

185 L. M. C. RANDELL, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts*, Los Angeles, 1966, p. 117. A useful facsimile is included in *A Popular History of the Arts*, London, 1968-1984, p. 193 (2).

appearance, must have been quite sophisticated, suggests that whilst there could have been a repertory for the organ which has been totally lost, the most likely repertory was one which was based on usage of existing polyphonic vocal material, such as motets. That compositions based on polyphonic devices were considered to be versatile can be proven by reference to the *ricercare*, which was known as the fugue in the Netherlands and Germany, and which could be played on any instrument. If it became popular, words were added so that it could be sung. The reverse process might have been applied to the motet in the medieval era. Consideration of later motets, especially those in six parts by Monteverdi, confirms that over a period of time, the number of parts, attention to sonority and instrumentation increased, and that all of the decorative idioms used in the medieval motets, either in their original form or further developed, became a part of the musical language of later motet composers.

Even if the use of vocal repertory as instrumental music was not desirable, it could have occurred as a result of necessity, such as a shortage of singers after the Black Death, during which the second estate alone lost about 40% of their members. Remembering that in the medieval liturgy the act was often more important than the action, even a small organ could have supported a depleted choir or replaced it entirely.

The fact that motets are still composed in a form little different to their medieval counterparts is without doubt remarkable, but occurs because the motet is an extremely flexible and useful means of musical reinforcement of liturgical themes. In assessing the development and importance of the medieval motet since its inception, its possible use in peripheral or paraliturgies or as a form of scholarly and less-scholarly musical entertainment, and its possible use as primitive polyphonic organ repertory, must be taken into account in conjunction with the importance of later polyphonic forms, such as the string quartet, which must have been influenced by earlier polyphonic writing for small ensembles, either vocal or instrumental.

11. The legacy of the Las Huelgas Manuscript

Perhaps the most remarkable attribute of *Hu* is its survival, especially when consideration is given to the fact that apart from a few fragments, *Hu* and *Ma* are the only polyphonic sources in Spain and Portugal. There were certainly royal monasteries in Portugal and those at Arouca and Lorvão were both Cistercian, the former closely modelled on Las Huelgas,

Burgos, which itself had 24 daughters, of which Las Huelgas in Valladolid, founded by María de Molina in 1282, was intended to be a faithful replica of the Castilian mother-house.¹⁸⁶ Medieval antiphoners, graduals and other liturgical manuscripts still exist in some of these institutions, in good state of repair, but there are no collections of polyphony. In the case of Arouca and Lorvão, manuscripts might have been removed from monastic collections in 1854, 1857 and 1858, and 1853 and 1884 respectively when Alexandre Herculano took some artifacts to the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon, but there are no sources of medieval vocal polyphony in the Lisbon archives.¹⁸⁷ It is difficult to believe that the cultured inmates of the Portuguese aristocratic institutions were not aware of polyphony, a fact more incredible when the close ties between Arouca, Lorvão and Las Huelgas from the time of D. Mafalda and D. Teresa are considered. Similarly, it is difficult to believe that the Portuguese and Spanish courts did not possess collections of polyphonic music. The wide dispersion of polyphonic material, and the survival of polyphony itself in the face of considerable opposition is such that there can be no doubt that polyphony in its various forms must have been well known over a wide area. It can be argued that motets and *conductus* might not have normally been used in the normal liturgy, and as a result, polyphonic manuscripts might have been much rarer than collections of chant. The evidence which attests to the popularity of the motet form is that unlike most other early polyphonic forms, it survived, and with use of the *cantus firmus*, evolved into the votive antiphon, polyphonic mass and anthem. Nonetheless, all things considered, very few polyphonic manuscripts have survived and the number of motet-orientated sources is even less.

The answer to this puzzle might not be that the use of polyphony was relatively unusual and that the manuscripts never existed, or that the manuscripts existed as part of monastic collections but have been lost, or that for the most part, the preservation of the repertory was memory orientated. The answer could be that unlike ecclesiastical collections, the monasteries and churches never owned the polyphonic manuscripts. Polyphony was used at Las Huelgas, but almost certainly not by the nuns. If *Hu* had been commissioned by one of the nuns or important person as a collectable, it should have been of better presentation. If the theory that polyphony at Las Huelgas was used by the chaplains or those associated

186 V. n. 34.

187 HERCULANO, *op. cit.*, p. 200; COCHERIL, *Routier...*, p. 144.

with the anniversaries and peripheral liturgies, it is not unreasonable to propose that under these circumstances, most polyphonic manuscripts, especially those of the first-generation, were the possessions of the singers who used them. *Hu* could have been left at the Cistercian monastery as a result of oversight or the demise of its owner.

It is unusual to encounter signatures or comments in liturgical manuscripts and it is doubtful if Rodrigues would have included his signatures and rubrics in a book which was being prepared for a monastic or private collection. Rodrigues' inscriptions in *Hu* are probably reasonable evidence in favour of the proposal that he owned it or that it was not owned by the monastery. This theory is further supported by the fact that most of the second-generation manuscripts which include *Hu* (but not *Ma*) appear to have been conceived as art works and collections for bibliophiles. *Hu*, *Ma* and first-generation sources are functional, portable books of very small format, although a larger format would have been more convenient from the practical aspect. The rarity of polyphonic sources becomes explicable if most of these manuscripts were the property of individuals, either singers or collectors. In the case of the former, many were probably itinerants, although not vagrants, but they required their tools of trade to be compact. Collectors, if the Duc du Berri was typical, used their manuscripts as a form of currency or security when financially embarrassed. In both cases, the manuscripts would not have been as secure as those in a monastic or church library.

In spite of these comments, it should not be presumed that manuscripts of this type were commonplace. From the present-day commercial viewpoint, if polyphony was used at anniversaries because it was exclusive or unusual, and polyphonic singing was a skill in demand, it would have been in the interests of polyphonists to maintain this status. Whilst source manuscripts could have been hired out as exemplars, it would not have been good business to circulate copies of the repertory unnecessarily, nor to train too many performers.

The nature of this article is such that most of the conclusions have been made within each section and lengthy recapitulation is not required. The study has sought to cover a large area in a small space: the probable Portuguese origin of the compiler of *Hu*, why the manuscript was compiled, how the polyphony, especially the motets, were used, why texts and some superior parts were omitted, why some tenors are missing or have no *incipit*, how Rodrigues' comments relate to the compositions and how the motets might have been used as organ repertory.

It is as certain that Las Huelgas was a major cultural centre in the late Middle Ages as it is that the Las Huelgas Manuscript holds more secrets, which eventually will probably be revealed, but perhaps not easily. As with most matters pertaining to the medieval era, one proposal gives rise to another of greater complexity and the subject is eventually found to be far more complicated than at first apparent. Each of the topics referred to in this paper could be used as a basis for more detailed study.

Although the medievals could not have envisaged the present world and its cultural and technical accoutrements, it is equally difficult for us to complete an accurate picture of their environment, especially in the late 13th century, when attitudes and technology were far from static. It would be arrogant to believe that we have a complete picture of medieval society, much of which was not recorded and which, it is certain, cannot now be communicated to us. We cannot agree on the origins of the pyramids or the shroud of Turin, nor of the skills which allowed them to be made. It is thus almost certain that there are medieval skills which, as they became irrelevant, were forgotten. We can only guess as to the importance of music in general to the vast morass of medieval peasantry and the first and second estates which constituted medieval society. Evaluation of a specific form such as the motet, at a specific time is even more difficult. Human nature changes but little and mindful of the rate and extent of change of fashion in all artistic expressions, even the most recent, it seems wise not to be too dogmatic when assessing the social and artistic currencies of the Middle Ages. Although a hopeless and impossible dream, even the briefest return to the Middle Ages would be useful, but almost certainly there would be many shocks in store and it would be necessary to reconsider many long-established beliefs.

Scholarly assent has seldom produced worthwhile results. On the other hand, scholarly dissent usually provokes further thought and investigation of the topic in question. Consequently, the aim of this discussion was not to produce arguments and conclusions which were safely based on those of past authors, but rather to present ideas which could generate further thought and discussion. As a final statement, it seems important to point out that the preceding discourse is based primarily on documentary evidence, accepted scholarly opinions concerning medieval mentality, society and liturgy, logic, hypothesis, and a little speculation. The discussion attempts only to present the reasons and means as to what might have occurred and how it could have occurred. It is left to the reader and later scholars to decide if it did occur.

Appendix 1. Rubrics and marginal notes attributable to Johan Rodrigues

The Anglès number (A) refers to the composition number and motet number in volume 2, pp. XXIV-XLV, of H. ANGLÈS, *El Codex Musical de Las Huelgas (Música a veus dels segles XIII-XIV)*, 3 vols, Barcelona, 1931. The best reference from which to obtain concordances is H. VAN DER WERF, *Integrated Directory of Organa, Clausulae, and Motets of the Thirteenth Century*, Rochester, USA, 1989.

1 - A88, motet no. VIII, *Mulier mysterio*, and A89, motet no. IX, *Agmina militiae*, f. 90'-92. On f. 90' '**esta tenura es de agmina et esotra deyuso de mulier**' [this tenor is for 'Agmina' and the other for the use of 'Mulier']. *Mulier mysterio* exists as a two-part transmission in *F*, f. 164. In *Hu* it begins on f. 90. It lacks an *incipit*. The tenor begins on the same folio and continues onto f. 90' as the lowest line of music. The *Mulierum* tenor which appears in *Mo* as no. 83, should conclude in *Hu* after the fourth ligature on f. 90', but it continues for the whole line because of a repetition of the section of f. 90, plus another section of 18 notes. The tenor fragment which appears in the *Ma* version of *Mulier mysterio* on f. 135' is similar to the second half of the lower line on f. 90' of *Hu* (which begins beneath the text 'de mulier') but it lacks the last ten notes and is also without *incipit*. The *Mulierum* tenor used in *Mo* no. 130 has a section omitted.¹⁸⁸ The *Mulierum* tenor as it occurs in *Hu* before the beginning of the repeat (after the thirteenth note) has a counterpart which is almost identical in *W2*, f. 174' as the tenor of *Mulieris mantens*. Another possible occurrence, in *W2* on f. 173, *Mulierum natus est* is without notation. The *Agmina* text (A89) occurs on f. 123 of *W2* with the upper voices reversed (the *W2 triplum* is the *Hu motetus*) but the tenor on f. 124 shows that the *Hu* version is incomplete. The tenor for *Agmina* (A89) begins as the penultimate line of music on f. 90', but it is not continued across the page, either as a result of scribal negligence or because the scribe thought it was complete. The *Mulierum* tenor is too long but the *Agmina* tenor is lacking approximately two thirds of its required length. The evidence suggests that the two tenors existed in different versions in different motets and the problems in *Hu* suggest an error or confusion of the tenors during

188 Cf. Y. ROKSETH, *Polyphonies du XIII^e siècle: Le Manuscrit H196 de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier*, 4 vols, Paris, 1935-1948, vol. 2, p. 249, bars 36-46.

compilation, ie the wrong (long) tenor was used for *Mulier misterio*, whilst the version for *Agmina militiae* was too short or incomplete. There is probably more to be discovered about this motet, eg the *triplum* 'Quant froidure trait a fin' (no. 535 in Van Der Werf's catalogue, p. 89) of the four-part motet *Agmina* in *Cl* f. 377, seems to be related to, and to be a transposition of the motetus 'Agmina milicia' in *Hu*.¹⁸⁹ Although this motet exists in diverse forms and mutations (nos. 532-538 in Van Der Werf's catalogue, pp. 89-90) the *Hu* version is based on the version in the central sources (*F* and *W2*) so confusion need not have occurred. There is probably a complex explanation for the situation which relates to methods of transmission and the sources used by Rodrigues at Las Huelgas.

2- A106, motet no. XXII, *Benedicite*, f. 105. On f. 105 '**qui en se quisiere loar en nos non comience cantar**' [he who would want to pride himself should not begin to sing with us]. The direction seems to apply to the complete motet rather than only to the tenor and is possibly a warning to the singers, perhaps because of the use of mode 2. Anderson was of the opinion that the *triplum* and *motetus* of this motet might have been reversed because of the pitches of the voices. However, the concordance in *Da* shows the voices similarly arranged. The first phrase of the *triplum* (bars 1-4) and of the *motetus* (bars 1-2) of A106 are used in similar orientation in quasi-head-motif style in A123. A relationship between *Da* and *Hu* is possible because seven of the 15 remaining identifiable motets in *Da* occur in *Hu*. One occurs twice.¹⁹⁰

3- A107, motet no. XXIII, *Res nova mirabilis*, f. 105. Beneath the *triplum* '**ex inprouiso fallitur omnis homo; so yo acordado esto et aun est otro con su tenura**'. This instruction is best interpreted literally: 'suddenly all the men stop [singing]', in other words, the tenor part ends at this point. 'We realize that the tenor is written out once below and needs to be repeated'. This direction for repetition of the tenor can be implied from the rubric 'iterum' written at the conclusion of the composition. The origin of the tenor is not certainly known.

4- A108, motet no. XXIV, *Salve Virgo Virginum*, ff. 106'-107. Above the *triplum* on f. 106' '**bueno so yo, mas los cantores dubdan en mi et aun me yessan e no con O dulcissima**' [I am good but the singers doubt me and indeed mistake me and not with 'O dulcissima'.] Below the *triplum* '**a mi cantat me con la tenura que Johan Rodrigues me enmendo**'

¹⁸⁹ Cf. EVERIST, *French Motets...*, p. 135; ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ ANDERSON, *Notes and papers...* (concerning the relationship of *Da* to *W*, 2 1-2)

[sing me with the tenor that Johan Rodrigues corrected]. The interpretation depends on the calligraphy, which is not perfectly clear. The verb could be 'yessen' to ignore or probably 'yerren' to miss. This is an example of a motet where the French text has been removed and a Latin text, probably proper to *Hu*, has been substituted. The version in *Hu* is unique because of the use of the Latin *motetus* text 'O dulcissima'. Rodrigues implies his knowledge of this fact in his inscription, which is an assurance to the singers 'even though you are unfamiliar with this arrangement because of the *motetus* 'O dulcissima', the voices are compatible.' If this is a correct interpretation, it implies that Rodrigues probably knew the motet in its usual form in *Mo* no. 268, *Ba* no. 33 etc., as it might have been known to other singers with the French *motetus* text 'Est il dont enssi'. Perhaps he composed the new *motetus* so that the French text could be omitted, checked that it would fit the melody, then realized that the *Hu* version would be unfamiliar to the singers. Alternatively, the statement could be a reassurance because of the difficult rhythms and note values throughout the composition. This theory is supported by the presence of cues from the *triplum* text under the appropriate tenor notes, so that the parts could easily be aligned, resulting in a more secure performance. The second statement is more difficult to explain but implies that Rodrigues was aware of another version of the motet in which the tenor was faulty. In *Ba* the penultimate ligature shows the notes c-f-g, compared to d-f-g in *Hu*. In *Mo* the fourth ligature is a-c, in *Hu* and *Ba* it is f-a-c, which is almost certainly correct.

5- A109, motet no. XXV, *Et florebit lilium*, f. 107'. On f. 107' **'la tenura fallisce aqui e nosotros acordados estamos que Johan Rodrigues nos acordo mas sin tenura non valemus mas que valen las compannas sin cabdiello o tanto'**. The writer is informing the singers that the tenor is lacking. A semi-literal translation suggests that Rodrigues was the compiler rather than the composer: 'we are agreed that Johan Rodrigues arranged us [the *triplum* and *motetus*] but without a tenor we have no more value than bells without tongues'. In *Hu* there is no tenor for this composition. Rodrigues states that he arranged the upper parts. Presumably this means he aligned the text and music (the verb is from 'acordar', to align vertically, as in chord) but without the tenor, the composition could not be used. The tenor 'Et florebit' from the gradual *Justus germinabit* occurs in *W2* on f. 217 with the upper voice 'Chascun qi de bien amer' beginning on f. 216'.¹⁹¹ The melody of the upper voice of this composition in *W2* f. 216, which is similar

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

to that used in *Hu* f. 107', also occurs in *W2* on f. 191 with the text 'Homo mundi paleas' but with the tenor 'Et gaudebit'. The tenor 'Et florebit' is also used in the four-part French motet *Le premier jour de mai*, in *Mo*, no. 32, ff. 49'-52. Anglès notes that the various Parisian sources are monophonic.¹⁹² The *duplum* melody as used in *Hu* occurs in both the 'Et gaudebit' and 'Et florebit' tenors, but the problem is that nowhere is the *Hu* text used with the 'Et florebit' tenor. It is possible that Rodrigues knew the *duplum* melody as in *Hu* and either wrote the 'Et florebit' text for this use or checked an earlier arrangement for suitability, but he did not know the correct tenor to be used with the melody. The inclusion of this incomplete composition in an apparently performance-orientated manuscript seems to be unusual and it raises the possibilities that tenors were sometimes improvised or that upper voices of motets might have been performed as duets, without the tenor.

6- A110, motet no. XXVI, *Ydola dum subdola mens*, ff. 108-108'. On f. 108 above the upper voice '**yo soy muy fremoso, mas non me saben todos cantar e no tonos florebit**' [I am very beautiful but not everybody knows how to sing me in the tone florebit, alternatively not everybody knows how to sing me with the tenor 'Et florebit']. The tenor of this composition is missing. Rodrigues may not have known the correct or original tenor but he seems to have known that 'Et florebit' was compatible with the upper voices, although it needed a few modifications, necessitating the caution to the singers.¹⁹³ Motet nos. XXV and XXVI (A109 and A110) both require the tenor 'Et florebit' but it is not given, so it is reasonable to assume that Rodrigues knew of it but did not know the actual melody. The tenor does not occur in *Ba* or *Mo* and is in fact quite rare (refer to the notes for A109 above) which supports the preceding opinion. Another explanation for the warning relates to the fact that the motet has no concordances. It is curious that Rodrigues seems to have been able to distinguish those compositions which were well known and those which were not. If the upper voices were arranged by Rodrigues without access to or knowledge of the tenor, how could he have known that the parts were compatible? If Rodrigues knew the tenor, why did he omit it? This information suggests that both motets are copies from a source which either noted the tenor but did not actually give it, or which was incomplete or fragmentary. 'E no' is Galician or Portuguese, the

¹⁹² ANGLÉS, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. XXXV.

¹⁹³ Cf. ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, p. XXV.

Spanish equivalent being 'y en el' (and in the). In old Spanish, 'e no' means 'and not'. The intended meaning is 'in the...'. The orthography is of interest relative to Rodrigues' proposed Portuguese.

7- A111, motet no. XXVII, *Tres sunt causae*, f. 109. On f. 109' above the upper voice: **'Primo me confirmat que me cantedes'** [First be sure that you are able to sing me]. There are some errors in the musical notation. Perhaps the compiler was aware of them, and although he did not consider them as errors, felt that a warning was required because of the resultant discords. However it is more likely that the caution was prompted by the musical texture, although it is much less complex than that of motet no. XXIV.

8- A112, motet no. XXVIII, *Virgo Virginum*, ff. 109'-110. On f. 109, above the *triplum*: **'cantat me sin miedo que Johan Rodrigues me enmendo'** [sing me without fear because Johan Rodrigues corrected me]. The composition is thought to be a unicum, and the annotation implies that it should be sung without fear because an error in it had been corrected. This in turn implies that at least one other version existed, which was erroneous and which had therefore caused difficulties for the singers. From this defective copy, Johan made the corrected version.

9- A113, motet no. XXIX, *Mulierum hodie*, f. 110. On f. 110 **'Tenura de Mulierum et cantasse por natura'** [(This is) the tenor of 'Mulierum' and is sung naturally]. This could imply 'in the normal way', ie 'in the same mode as the upper voices' (mode 1), as opposed to the version which follows (A114) wherein the tenor is in mode 6 and the upper parts are in mode 1. The directions on ff.147'-148' of *Hu* 'manera francesa' and '(manera) hespanona', ie 'in the French manner' and 'in the Spanish manner' have been discussed in the main text.

10- A134, *conductus* no. V, *Casta catholica*, ff. 121'-122. On f. 122 **'da dulcis domina ...el qual me canta toda barba que me quisiere cantar'** [(every person) who would want to sing would want to sing me]. This composition is exceptional because of its voice-exchange, rhythmic subtlety and artistic balance. It is the only identified double *conductus*, which justifies the statement from the modern-day aspect, but how could Rodrigues have known that it was a rarely encountered composition or a unicum, unless he was the actual composer? Nonetheless, he does not record that he was the composer of this piece. It is possible that he had an exceptional knowledge of the repertory of which this composition formed a part, and/or had access to a source which is as yet undiscovered. 'Toda barba' is interesting in context because 'barba' and 'barbifer' were used to

refer to those with beards and bearded friars in the late 13th century. As part of a range of Middle Age dress traditions to denote status or rank, and which included the wearing of red turbans by artists, younger men were usually clean shaven, older ones were bearded.¹⁹⁴ 'Barba' could have been intended to denote 'old' in the sense of senior and/or experienced singers. Elderly monks were preferred as confessors.¹⁹⁵ 'Barba' also referred to a hood and mourning veil and could also have been used to refer to dalmatics, tunics, chasubles and stoles, robes or cowls etc. It also denoted things sharp or pointed, such as axes and arrows, but also beards, which were often trimmed into two or three points. 'Barba' could have been used idiomatically in the sense of 'to the point', 'exact' or 'precise'. Thus 'all the bearded ones' could be interpreted as 'everybody' or 'those in cowls' (priests), or 'all those at the mourning or commemoration', or 'all those who can sing well'. Anderson raises another question concerning a possible unidentified acrostic use of the four letters of the text, 'C', 'M', 'D' and 'P' where the voice exchange occurs.¹⁹⁶ The letters probably relate to the sentiments of the text. The 'sweet mistress' is probably a personification of Abbess D. María Gonzáles less likely it is a reference to the founding Abbess, Dona Misol or the Virgin. D. María Gonzáles is referred to as 'de Agüero' in the inscription for *conductus* no. XXXI and although a relationship cannot be unequivocally proven, there was a famous family of this name from Paterna, Castile. Hence, a possible interpretation of the four letters is 'Dona María (de) Paterna, Castile'.¹⁹⁷ The reference to 'chaste Catholic marriages' (the professed nuns who were married to the church), complements the reference to the Abbess of Las Huelgas as their mistress.

11- A151, *conductus* no. XXII, *O gloriosa Dei genetrix*, ff. 140'-142'. On f. 140' **'a los que poco sabedes en mi non cantedes si non errar me hedes que yo so condutz e fuerte de cantat e los que me non saben ayna me erraran mas primo me apprendet que ex improviso fallitur omnis homo'**. The intentions of the writer are probably best translated as 'To those who do not know much, do not sing me if you do not know how, because I am a *conductus* and difficult to sing; those of you who would sing me will sing me erroneously and you will all stop suddenly if you

¹⁹⁴ M. K. NELLIS, 'Beauty Aids, Cosmetics' in T. M. Andersson, N. G. Garsian, H. L. Kessler, J. Leyerle and A. L. Udovitch, eds., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, 1983, p. 149.

¹⁹⁵ LEKAI, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, pp. XXV-XXVI.

¹⁹⁷ ANDERSON, *ibid.*, gives a less specific interpretation.

do not learn me before you begin'. Rodrigues' warning to the singers is justified because of the difficult musical texture of the piece and the fact that it is a unicum. Although it is not stated in the inscription, the first section of it implies that Rodrigues knew the piece was a unicum, which he could not have known positively unless he wrote it himself.

12- A157, motet no. LIV, *Mellis stilla*, ff. 166. The tenor occurs on f. 152' with the direction '**esta tenura es de mellis stilla**' [this tenor is for 'Mellis stilla']. The direction '**tenura sso de este canto que vedes aqui**' [I am the tenor of this song that you see here], appears on f. 166'. These inscriptions are in a liturgical hand but the signature '**johannes roderici me fecit**' on f. 152' is in an informal hand and could refer to the tenor for 'Mellis stilla' or to the new *triplum* on f. 166, but most likely it refers to the *conductus Ave Maria*. The signature is repeated in a liturgical hand on f. 166 where it is 'boxed' or enclosed in the rudimentary manner typical of Rodrigues. In this position it probably pertains to the new *triplum*.¹⁹⁸ The importance of the boxing is that it links the liturgical hand and the informal hand to the same writer. A later scribe recording the piece as having been composed by Johan would probably have used different phraseology, such as 'Johan hoc fecit'.

13- A171, *conductus* no. XXXI, *O monialis concio Burgensis*, f. 159'. A possible transliteration of the original is '**de dompna Maria Gundissalus de Aguero abbessa et nobilissima super omnes abbatissas quis scripssi scribat senper cum Domino bivat**'. This is above the *planctus* for D. María González, abbess of Las Huelgas in 1326. A possible interpretation of the inscription is 'for dona Maria Gundissalus of Aguero, abbess and most noble above all abbesses, for whom I have written as scribe, may she always live with the Lord'. However, closer scrutiny suggests that several interpretations could be possible. The inscription is not boxed or enclosed as are virtually all inscriptions attributable to Rodrigues, but comparison of letter formations suggest that it is in his hand although it might not be contemporaneous with earlier inscriptions. The inscription has been much quoted but a reasonable translation and interpretation is difficult because the meaning of the second section is very much open to debate. The final word appears to be 'bivat' or 'vivat', (the former a labialized version of the latter), followed by a symbol which is usually

¹⁹⁸ A. ZIINO, *op. cit.*, 'Some Observations on the motet *Mellis Stilla-Domino*' *Revista de Musicología*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1990, pp. 487-499.

used as a contractive substitution for 'us'. The problems relate to 'quis scripssi scribat' and 'bivat'. If the final word is taken as 'bivat', the two phrases ending 'scribat' and 'bivat' rhyme and the latter phrase has the character of a simple blessing 'may she always live with the Lord'. The first phrase could be considered as an injunction wherein 'quis' must be interpreted as a contraction of 'quisquod' or 'quisquæ', which permits the interpretation 'whoever may write that which I have written may he (she) always live with the Lord'. This makes very little sense except in the context that the composer was keen to have his work copied and propagated. An alternative translation is based on 'scribat' being interpreted as a contraction of 'scribatus', a clerical office, or an incorrect writing of 'scriba' (as scribe) and incorporation of the 'us' contraction so that 'bivatus' rhymes with 'scribatus'. Nonetheless, 'scripssi' (I have written) seems to be correct. 'Quis' is the main problem. However, if it is considered as a contraction of 'de quibus', or as an archaic classical dative, as a scribal error, or as an irregular variant of 'de quibus' (for whom), this section of the statement becomes quite meaningful as 'for whom I have written as scribe'. The only difficulty is in fact 'scribat'. The 't' could be an error or it could have been added on the grounds of poetic licence to give rhyme to the two final sections of the statement. The statement could read thus: 'of' or 'for D. María González of Agüero, abbess and most noble above all abbesses, for whom I have written [worked] as scribe, may she always live with the Lord'. This is an acceptable statement considering the proposal given earlier in the text that Rodrigues may have worked at the monastery for about half a century. There were only four abbesses at Las Huelgas in the 45 years from c.1294, when D. Branca went to Las Huelgas, until 1339, when D. María González died, but if Rodrigues was scribe to D. Branca at Lorvão he would have acted as scribe to four Spanish abbesses and perhaps one acting Portuguese abbess. Another reading given by Anderson interprets the 'v' of the final word of the inscription as a 'b' and ignores the contractive symbol for 'us'.¹⁹⁹ Other compositions in the Las Huelgas Manuscript which are signed by Johan Rodrigues include nos. 156, 173, 174, 178 and 183. Of these compositions, all show the usual boxed inscription, 'johannes Rodrici me fecit'.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. ANDERSON, *The Las Huelgas Manuscript*, vol. 2, p. XLV.

Appendix 2. Manuscripts according to location

Aberdeen, University Library, MS 2379/1 (*AbA*)
Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, MS Lit 115, *olim* Ed.IV.6 (*Ba*)
Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1.716 (*Bes*)
Burgos, Monasterio de Las Huelgas (*Hu*)
Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS A410, *olim* 386 (*Ca*)
Chalons-sur-Marne, Archives, Dep. 3.J.250 (*Ch*)
Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 3471 (*Da*)
Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek, f. 169 (*Erf*)
Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Pluteus 29.1 (*F*)
Gautier de Coincy, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame* (*Gautier*)
Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 20486, *olim* Hh167 (*Ma*)
Montpellier, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de Médecine, MS H196 (*Mo*)
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 72 (*Lyell*)
Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 135 (*ArsA*)
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS nouv. acq. fr. 13521 (*Cl*)
Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS 627 (*W1*)
Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS 1099 (*W2*)

