

CORPVS MENSVRABILIS MVSICAE

52

CLAUDIN DE SERMISY

OPERA OMNIA

*Ediderunt*

GASTON ALLAIRE & ISABELLE CAZEAUX

VII. 28 Motets Published by Attaignant in 1542

Edidit

GASTON ALLAIRE†



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY

CORPUS MENSURABILIS MUSICAE

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Claudin de Sermisy  
COLLECTED WORKS

GASTON ALLAIRE & ISABELLE CAZEAUX, *Editors*

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## PREFACE

Known as the creator of the Parisian French Chanson of the late Renaissance, Claudin de Sermisy (1490?–1562), composer and choirmaster at the court of Francis I, has also left his mark on the sacred polyphony of his time. With the present collection of motets printed by Pierre Attaignant in 1542, we witness the last important contribution of French polyphony to sacred music of the period.

Especially influenced by the late contrapuntal style of Josquin des Pres (ca. 1440–1521), Claudin exhibits in this collection some of the same stylistic characteristics as are found in his polyphonic chansons. In effect his motets are earmarked with what Gustave Reese has called the “light terse French style”<sup>1</sup>: a predominance of the duple meter, strong rhythms, the Josquinian voice-pairing, a light lattice-work texture of a pseudo-contrapuntal style with chordal effect, and an occasional *forme fixe* A–B–A. Claudin’s Franco-Parisian motet style of sacred polyphony was a parallel to the Franco-Flemish style of Adrian Willaert, Clemens non Papa, and Nicolas Gombert in filling the gap between the motets of the generation of Josquin, Jean Mouton, Pierre de la Rue, and those of the generation of Orlando di Lasso, Philippe de Monte, and Palestrina after 1550.

Some of Claudin’s motets appear to have been quite popular, as is shown by his *Aspice Domine* and *Congratulamini mihi omnes*, found respectively in eight and three manuscript sources. They were reprinted respectively ten and seven times before the end of the century, and after a quick survey, it appears to me that they may even have been the most often reprinted motets of the whole Renaissance. Among other motets of this collection which came out as reprints, we find *Ave Sanctissima Maria*, *Miserere mei Domine*, *Da pacem Domine*, four times, *Quare fremuerunt gentes*, *Regina caeli laetare*, *Spes mea ab uberibus*, twice, and *Regi saeculorum I*, *Veni sancte spiritus*, *Gyrum caeli*, *Michael archangele*, and *Euntes ibant et flebant*, once each.

This collection of 28 motets is particularly interesting for the unnotated diatonic modulations<sup>2</sup> conceived by the composer, recreated by the performers after a jealously kept secret performance practice,<sup>3</sup> and indicated here by our modern signs ♯, #, and ♭, inserted above the notes and between the staves.<sup>4</sup> Except for an occasional chromatically raised leading tone, the motets of Claudin are of a diatonic nature. The chromatically raised leading tones in the diatonic cadences notated here with a sharp sign in parenthesis, are prescribed by Jean de Muris (14<sup>th</sup> c.), Maximilian Guillaud, and Stefano Vanneo (16<sup>th</sup> c.) for the cadential formulas *la–sol–la*, *sol–fa–sol*, and *re–ut–re* characteristic of the modes of the fifth species, *re–la*.<sup>5</sup> The secret performance practice yielding the unnotated signs marking the modulations rests on the reconstruction of a sophisticated manner of reading music by the mental use of the solmization syllables *ut*, *re*, and *mi* to ascend, and *fa*, *sol*, and *la* to descend in naming the notes of the

---

1. Gustave Reese, *Music in the Renaissance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), 340.

2. “Modulation” stands for passing from a modal octave to a different one: from an arithmetically divided octave to a harmonically divided one and vice versa on “the white keys of the piano,” as well as unsigned modal and hexachordal octaves notated at different pitch levels.

3. See Thurston Dart in his Foreword to R. Alec Harman’s modern edition of Thomas Morley, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973).

4. The musical alphabet used in this Preface consists of the notes in the *natural scale* (Octaves G–g and C–c) plus those of its transposition a fourth higher (or a fifth lower) which make up the *hexachordal* Octaves F–C–f–c and G–C–g–c of the three hexachord Guidonian hand, as expounded by Ramos de Pareia: F–G–A–B♭–B♮–C–D–E–f–g–a–b♭–b♮–c–d–e–ff–gg–aa–bb♭–bb♮–cc–dd–ee. The traditional solmization syllables *ut*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, and *la* are kept not only for greater affinity with the early treatises, but also because it is more practical to say *ut–sol* for the Ionian and Mixolydian fifths (11<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> modes), than whole-step, whole-step, half-step, whole-step.

5. *Johannes de Muris*, “*Ars discantus*”: CS, III, p. 73; Stefano Vanneo, *Recanetum de musica aurea* (Rome: Valerio Dorico, 1533), fol. 91; Maximilian Guillaud, *Rudiments de musique pratique* (Paris: Nicolas Du Chemin, 1554), fol. Aiiii. In this edition I have avoided raising the leading tone in cadences that were neither full nor final, and were not featuring the harmonic major sixth leading to an octave, as I suspect a certain freedom (and abuse?) to have existed in the practice of the chromatically raised leading tones in cadences.

Example 2. Of fourths, Fifths, Unisons, and Octaves (Claudin de Sermisy, *Verba mea*, mm. 82–90).

Example 3. Of Modal and Hexachordal Fifths (Claudin de Sermisy, *Alleluia. Angelus Domini*, mm. 1–7).

Example 4. Of Fifths and Unisons (Claudin de Sermisy, *Miserere mei, Domine*, mm. 21–27).



# 1. O Maria stans sub cruce

**S** O Ma - - - ri - - - a,

**Ct** O Ma - ri - a,

**T1** O Ma - ri - - - a, O Ma - ri -

**T2** O Ma - - - ri -

**B1** O Ma - ri -

**B2**

6

O Ma - ri - - a stans sub

O Ma - - - ri - a stans sub cru - ce, stans sub

- a stans sub cru - ce,

- a stans sub cru - ce,

- - a stans sub cru - ce, stans sub

O Ma - ri - - a stans sub cru - ce,

## 2. Regina caeli laetare

*Prima pars*

S Re - gi - na cae - li

Ct Re - gi - - - na cae - - - - li,

T1 Re - gi - na cae - li,

T2

B Re -

6 lae - ta - - - - - re,

re - gi - na

re - gi - na cae -

Re - gi - na cae - li,

- gi - na cae - li, re - gi - na cae -

11 re - gi - - - - na cae - li, re - gi -

cae - li, re - gi - na cae - li, cae - - - li

- - li lae - ta - - - -

re - gi - na cae - - - li lae - ta -

- - li, re - gi - na cae - - - li

## 5. Verba mea

*Prima pars*

S Ver - - - ba me - a

Ct Ver - - - ba me - a,

T

B Ver - ba me - a,

6 au - ri - bus per -

8 ver - ba me - - - - a

8 Ver - ba me - a, me -

8 ver - ba me - a

12 - ci - pe, Do - - - mi - ne;

8 au - ri - bus per - ci - pe, Do - mi - ne; in -

8 - - a au - ri - bus per - - - ci - pe, Do - - - mi -

8 au - ri - bus per - ci - pe, Do - - - mi - ne; in - tel - li -

