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Yonge Versus Watson and the Translation of Italian Madrigals[1]

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Traduttore, traditore—the translator is a traitor—expresses a well-known caution concerning the translation of poetry, for so often in achieving a literal translation the poetry of the original text is lost. But there is an even greater caution concerning the translation of texts for the performance of music, since these translations must not only convey the sense of the original, but they must also do so in the same number of syllables and with the same pattern of accent and unaccent. Generations of opera-goers have purchased libretti of their favorite operas, only to find, facing the original text, a translation that seems to go out of its way to be obtuse and inexact. They are not told that the translation has simply been extracted from the vocal score of the opera, where it served as a singing translation.[2]

But it is precisely the use of poetic texts in musical settings that makes their sensitive translation the more imperative. Nicolas Yonge, a London merchant and amateur singer, provided (as he says in introducing his *Musica Transalpina*, 1588), "a great number of Gentlemen and Merchants of good account . . . the exercise of Musik daily used in my house," and especially music brought from Italy, "verie well liked of all, but most in account with them that understand that language." *Musica Transalpina* was a collection principally of Italian madrigals whose texts

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[1]Works discussed here were first studied, directed, and sung when the author was a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Newberry Library.

[2]A notable exception, a singing translation that reads well, is Richard Wagner, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, tr. Andrew Porter (New York: Norton, 1977).

"a gentleman" (possibly Yonge himself) had translated into English.[3] Though the translator or translators of these works remained anonymous, Yonge published the settings claiming the support of "many skilfull Gentlemen and other great musiciens," who affirmed "the accent of the words to be well mainteined, the discant not hindred (though some fewe notes altered), and in everie place the due decorum kept."

Two years later Thomas Watson, an accomplished poet and translator, published another collection, *The First Set of Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590), consisting mainly of madrigals by Luca Marenzio.[4] Watson provided no practical preface, but his title page professed a different purpose from Yonge's; he has translated the texts, he says, "Not to the sense of the originall dittie"—the original text—"but after the affection of the Noate." Within the same decade, three more such publications appeared, including a second volume of *Musica Transalpina* (1597) as well as works of Thomas Morley. The story of these publications and its context has been discussed expertly by Joseph Kerman in *The Elizabethan Madrigal*,[5] and more recently Laura Macy has focused upon the two earliest collections.[6]

My interest centers on what these translations can reveal about the relation of music and poetry, and to study this closely I shall address two texts based on a single poem of Petrarch which appear in Yonge's and Watson's collections. Petrarch's poem is a 12-line ballata beginning with a three-line ripresa, continuing with two three-line piedi, and concluding with a three-line volta. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina set the whole ballata, while Luca Marenzio, dropping the opening ripresa, produced a

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[3]*Musica Transalpina* (London: Thomas East, 1588); facsimile ed., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972. Citations from Yonge and (below) Thomas Watson are taken from Alfredo Obertello, *Madrigali Italiani in Inghilterra: Storia, Critica, Testi* (Milan: Valentino Bompiani, 1949), a work that includes title pages, prefaces, and texts.

[4]London: Thomas East, 1590. There is a complete modern edition, *Italian Madrigals Englished*, ed. Albert Chatterley, Musica Britannica, LXXIV (London: Stainer and Bell, 1999).

[5]Joseph Kerman, *The Elizabethan Madrigal*, American Musicological Society, Studies and Documents 4 (New York: American Musicological Society, 1962).

[6]Laura Macy, "The Due Decorum Kept: Elizabethan Translation and the Madrigals Englished of Nicholas Yonge and Thomas Watson," *Journal of Musicological Research* 17 (1997): 1-21.

nine-line text beginning "Ahi dispietata Morte."[7] Palestrina's setting appeared in Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* (1588), while Marenzio's appeared in Watson's *Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590). I shall focus upon the two translations as they reflect two very different strategies in providing a singing translation and look at them critically to see whether they convey the intimate relation between music and poetry found in their originals.

Petrarch's poem is a beautifully constructed ballata, suffused with paradox and poetic irony, in response to the death of Laura, his beloved. The parts of the form—four tercets—articulate three principal paradoxes, and their succession creates a forceful and arresting progression from exterior to interior:[8]

Ripresa	Amor, quando fioria	7	x
	mia spene e'l guidardon di tanta fede,	11	a
	tolta m'è quella ond' attendea mercede.	11	a
Piede	Ahi dispietata Morte, ahi crudel vita!	11	b
	l'una m'à posto in doglia	7	c
	et mie speranze acerbamente à spente;	11	d
Piede	L'altra mi ten qua giù contra mia voglia,	11	c
	et lei che se n'è gita	7	b
	seguir non posso, ch'ella no'l consente.	11	d
Volta	Ma pur ogni or presente	7	d
	nel mezzo del meo cor Madonna siede,	11	a
	et qual è la mia vita, ella se 'l vede.	11	a

Literal translation:

Love, when my hope
and the reward of so much faithfulness was flowering,
she was taken from me, from whom I awaited mercy.
Ah, merciless death, Ah, cruel life!

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[7]Palestrina, *Il Libro Secondo dei Madrigali a 4 Voci* (1586), ed. Lino Bianchi, *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, XXXI (Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 1965), pp. 50-53; Marenzio, *Madrigali*, Libri I a 4 (1585).

[8]Italian text from Robert Durling, ed. and tr., *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The* Rime sparse *and Other Lyrics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 507.

One has placed me in sorrow,
and all my hopes has bitterly extinguished;
the other holds me down here against my will,
and her who has gone
I cannot follow, for she does not permit it.
And yet always present
in the midst of my heart my lady sits,
and what my life is, she sees it herself.

The ripresa states the first paradox, which is historical, setting the context for the others: just when the poet had received recompense for his faithfulness, his beloved was taken away from him.[9] In the face of this historical context, the first piede begins with an exclamation exposing the second and central paradox of the poem: though death and life are opposites, both mercilessly and cruelly separate the poet from his beloved. This paradox is stated most directly, nearly as an outburst; it is expressed in sheer exclamations unchecked by grammatical function. From the first line alone, it is not clear whether "Morte" and "vita" are being addressed or only spoken of. Moreover, these exclamations have a typically Italian phrase accent; that is, the strongest accent of both the half line and the line comes upon its final accented syllable, and those are the crucial words: "Morte," "vita." These exclamations are then amplified throughout the piedi: the first piede amplifies "Morte"—it has placed me in sorrow and extinguished all my hopes; the second amplifies "vita"—it holds me here away from her, whom I cannot follow, since she does not consent. Here, the obvious meaning of "she" is death—unless the poet dies he cannot follow Laura in death, and death does not consent. Still, there is an ambiguity—grammatically it could also be Laura who does not consent, and this would then present a third layer of paradox. It is part of the effect of the poem to leave the ambiguity unresolved, reinforcing the expression of the state of the poet on the horns of an exquisitely constructed psychological dilemma.

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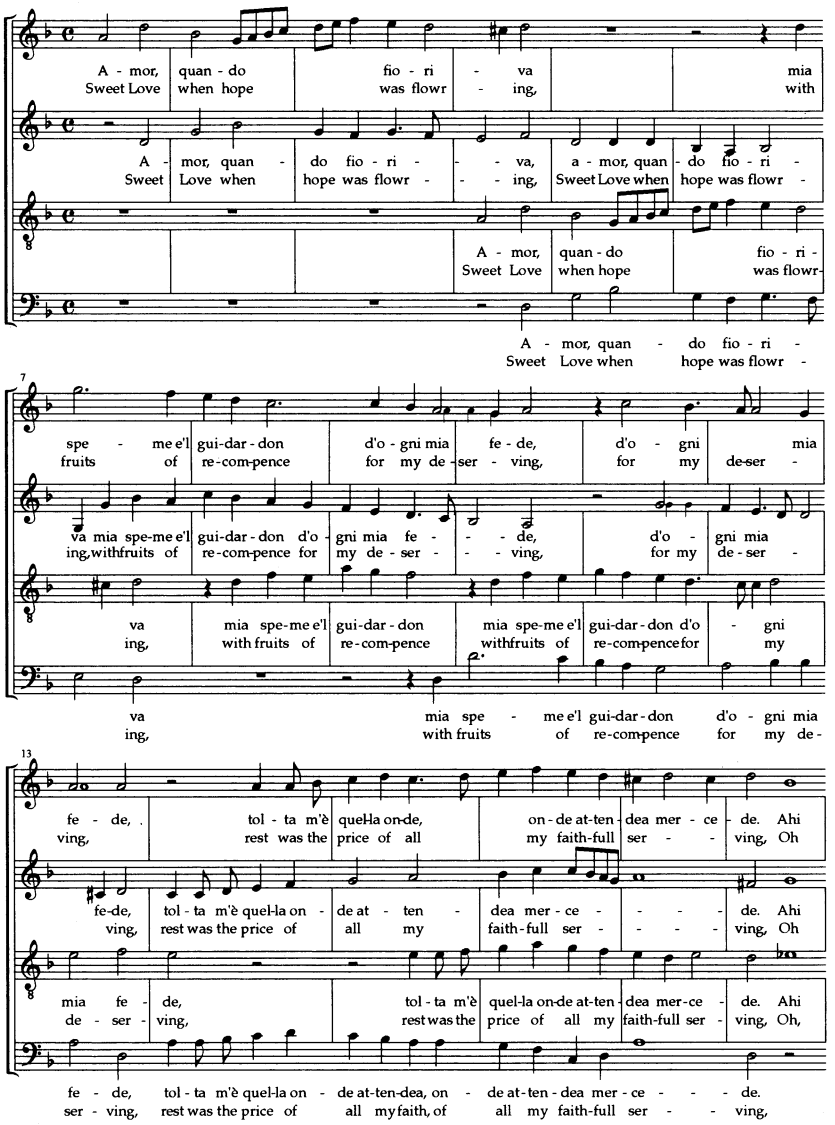
[9]Mark Musa relates the specifics in his gloss on "guidardon": "Reward for his faithfulness, that is, the colors of his lady, given to him when they sat together in truce just before she died"; Petrarch, *The Canzoniere or rerum vulgarium fragmenta,* tr. with notes and commentary by Mark Musa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 698.

In the traditional ballata, the volta is the terzet which recapitulates the line- and rhyme-scheme of the refrain and forms a link back to the repetition of the refrain. There is no question of a repetition of the refrain here, but the content of the volta completes a thematic circling back to something of the sense of the refrain. The refrain had expressed the poet's hope with an implicit recall of his meeting with his beloved. In the interim, the most forceful expression has made it clear that their separation by death is final. But yet, "Ma pur," in a turn to his most interior reflections, the poet recognizes the continuing presence of his lady in the midst of his heart in a fashion so real that he knows she sees his sorry state.

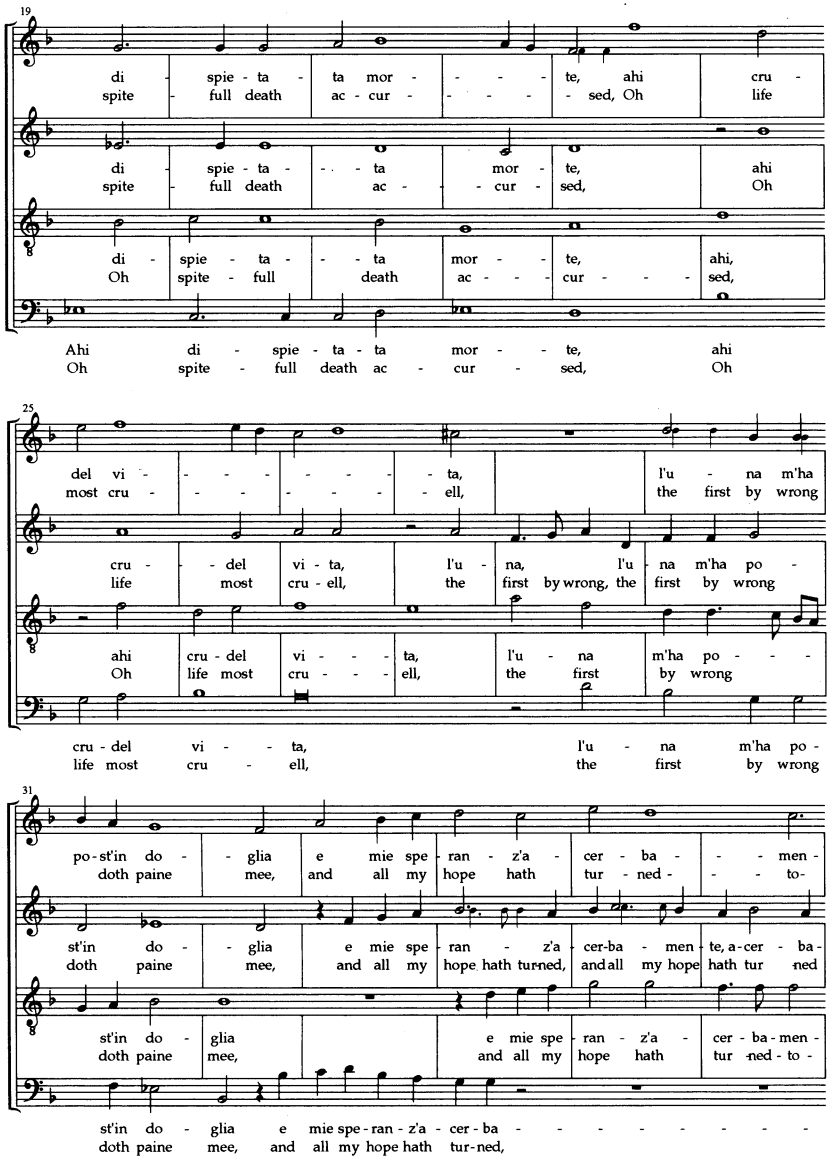
Palestrina's "Amor, quando fioriva" (Ex. 1) is the work of a contrapuntist, whose metier is four-part imitation. From the very beginning, where imitation of soprano by alto (measures 1–4) is paired with the same figure in the tenor imitated by the bass (mm. 3–6), there is only one phrase without any real contrapuntal imitation (mm. 39–40). But Palestrina treats the ripresa with considerable care: its historical character and its introductory function are well represented by a somewhat facile imitative style, reminiscent of madrigalists fully a generation older. Yet he treats the principal subject of the first sentence, "speme" ("hopes"), uniquely: in the soprano, this word is placed upon the highest pitch of the piece, G at the top of the treble clef (m. 7), a pitch which never recurs. The soprano melody then proceeds from this high point down a whole octave to a Phrygian cadence on A (m. 10), after which the section is articulated by two strong D cadences (mm. 13, 18).[10]

The most expressive point in Palestrina's piece comes at the beginning of the piedi, the exclamations about death and life. Here, immediately after the strong D cadence closing the ripresa, the

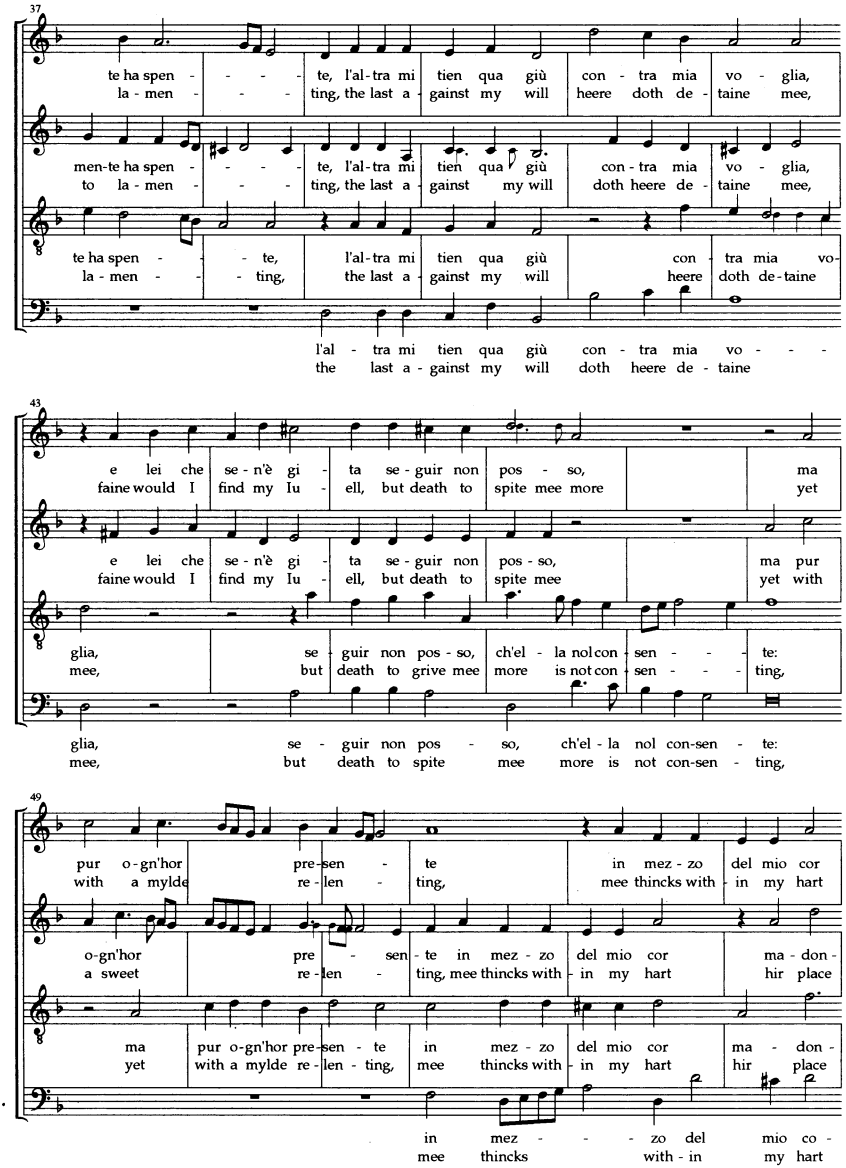
[10]In Renaissance music the cadence, which articulates phrases based upon elements of the text, proceeds principally in two voices to the final, one voice descending by step, the other ascending by step after the resolution of a suspension. The normal cadence makes a descent of a whole step, accompanied by an ascent of a half-step, a leading tone (see Ex. 1, m. 18, between tenor and soprano). The Phrygian cadence, on the other hand, makes a descent of a half-step, accompanied by an ascent of a whole step (see Ex. 1, m. 10), between alto and soprano). This descent of the half-step is unusual and accounts for the highly affective character of this cadence.



Example 1. "Amor, quando fioriva."



Example 1 (continued). "Amor, quando fioriva."



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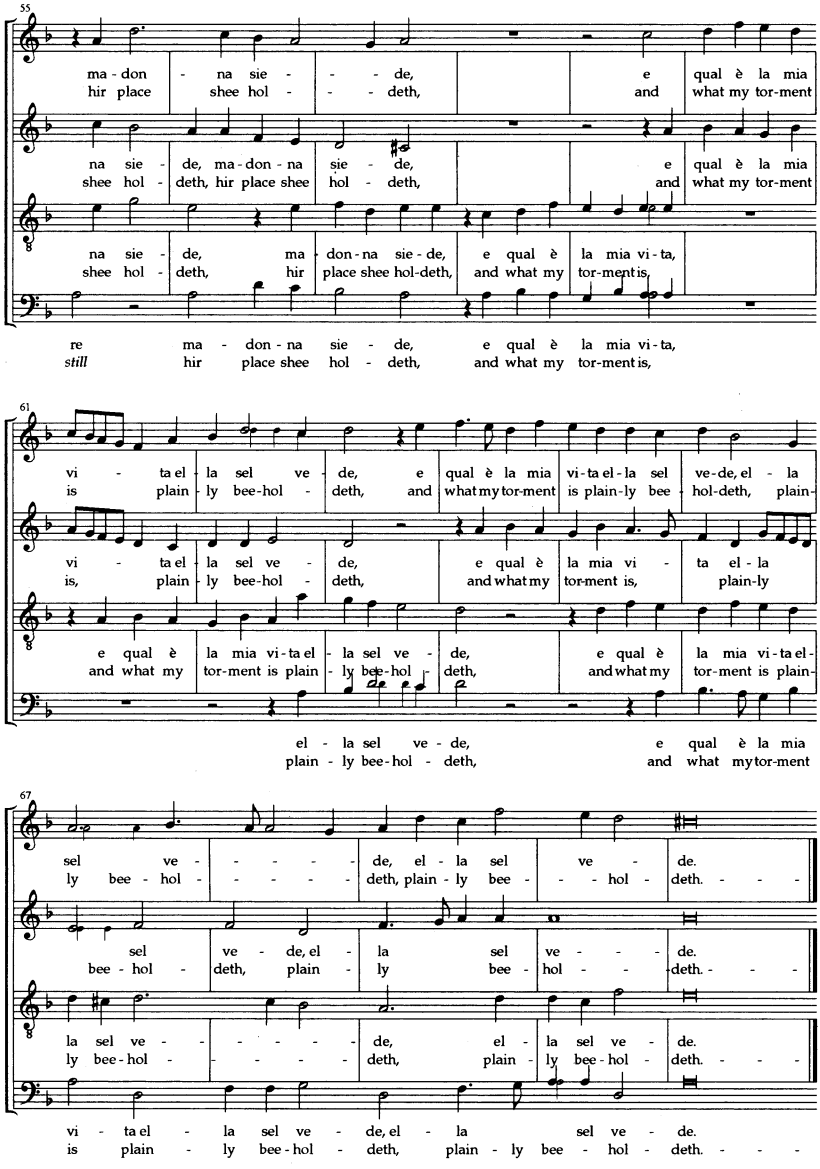

Example 1 (continued). "Amor, quando fioriva."

exclamations begin over E-flat, a strikingly new sonority in a strikingly new texture and rhythm. There is direct imitation of the soprano by the bass on "Morte" (mm. 18–23) and similarly on "vita," a fifth higher (mm. 23–27), and Palestrina takes advantage of the phrase accents by giving extra length to the essential words, "Morte" and "vita."

The amplification descends in the bass to its lowest pitch, to B-flat on "doglia" (m. 22), and in the soprano "acerbamente" is extended as if to prolong the bitterness; at this point, it returns to D. The beginning of the next piede is one of explicit word painting. On "l'altra mi tien qua giù" ("the other [life] holds me down here," mm. 39-40), all four voices descend to a low chord on "giù" ("down"), again, to the lowest pitch of the bass voice. This is followed immediately by a very obvious counterpoint between bass (B-flat, C, D) and soprano (D, C, B-flat), a simple subject treated by inversion in counterpoint against itself, expressing "contra mia voglia" ("against my will"). Finally, on "lei che se n'è gita" ("she who has gone," mm. 43–45), the melody rises from A to D, and the succeeding phrase, "seguir non posso" ("it is not possible to follow," mm. 45–46), descends back down to A as a discreet expression of this impossibility. The concluding part of the line "ch'ella no'l consente" ("for she does not consent," mm. 46–48), concludes the piedi with a strange modulation to F. This suggests that Palestrina is reading "ella" ("she") as my lady, and not death, for it leads directly to the mention of the presence of the lady in that same key.

The volta thus begins curiously on F, with the soprano melody centered on A. The phrase "ma pur ognor presente" ("but yet always present") is represented by the reiterating A pitch; its major sonority reinforces the sense that this reminiscence of the lady's presence is, at least fleetingly, very pleasant.[11] There is a return to D, and on "madonna siede" ("my lady sits"), Palestrina highlights "ma*don*na" with an exquisite high note, which then descends directly to a Phrygian cadence.

The peroration or conclusion[12] of the piece consists of a manifold repetition of the last line, at first with avoided cadences (mm. 63, 64, 66)

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[11]The F-mode is often the location of chants about sensible pleasures, such as food and drink or eternal reward.

[12]Italian madrigals often extend the final line or pair of lines far beyond their length in proportion to the rest of the poem, for the sake of a peroration—an eloquent and affective conclusion.

and finally with a conclusive cadence to D (m. 67), but the motion continues past this cadence to a Phrygian cadence to A (between tenor and soprano, with D in the bass, to be sure). The motion continues for two more measures, coming to rest on A, not on the D final, as might be expected from the context of the piece, but rather the A final which has been the previous location of Phrygian cadences. Mm. 67–69 reiterate the A, recalling its function from mm. 48–52 as symbolizing the lady's presence and identifying it with her seeing him here. There is to this ending a lack of finality and resolution, in which the inconclusive ending is intimately linked with "ella se 'l vede" ("she sees it"). This is all the resolution to be had—a separation, but combined with a reminiscence. The poet can no longer see her, yet he feels her constant presence and knows that she sees him. This Phrygian ending, in a piece in which the Phrygian mode was most expressive at the very exclamation "Ahi dispietate Morte, ahi, crudel vita," links the separation by death and by life with reminiscence, the vivid awareness of her presence despite her absence.

It is not surprising to find such a madrigal in Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* of 1588, for as Kerman reports, it is a collection of quite conservative taste. Though the declamation of the Italian text is agile, the word-painting is, for a madrigal, exceedingly discreet. Only the remarkable exclamation on "Ahi dispietata morte" could challenge Kerman's assertion that in Yonge's collection, "one looks in vain for a single striking pathetic passage, a bold dramatic stroke, a chromaticism (however mild), or any kind of daring experiment,"[13] particularly since the exclamation is reinforced in the peroration.

Yonge's purposes are stated in his preface: he sought to provide translations for those who did not read Italian, specifically offering texts in which "the accent of the words [is] to be mainteined, the discant not hindered (though some fewe notes altered) and in everie place the due decorum kept."[14] He thus places his priority first upon the declamation of the text, and only secondly upon the integrity of the music. Laura Macy has given a good explication of "due decorum," but both she and Kerman simply assert that accuracy of translation was also a goal, at least where

[13]Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, p. 56.
[14]Obertello, *Madrigali*, pp. 209-10.

there is some explicit representation of the text by the music.[15] Yet nowhere does Yonge espouse accurate translation as he does careful declamation. While it is true that the general sense of the text is preserved (and certainly more than is the case, as we shall see, in Watson's translation), a close look at Yonge's translation for Palestrina (Obertello, *Madrigali*, p. 219) yields surprising results:

> Sweet Love, when hope was flowring
> with fruits of recompence for my deserving,
> rest was the price of all my faithfull serving.
> Oh spitefull death accursed, Oh life most cruell!
> the first by wrong doth paine mee
> and all my hope hath turned to lamenting;
> the last against my will doth heere detaine mee,
> faine would I find my Iuell,
> but death to spite mee more is not consenting.
> Yet with a mylde sweet relenting,
> mee thincks within my hart hir place shee holdeth,
> and what my torment is plainly beeholdeth.

First of all, Yonge's declamation is considerably more fastidious than Palestrina's. Yonge's alterations of Palestrina's rhythms (shown here in smaller notes in the score) are in most cases corrections of the latter's misdeclamations; characteristically, Palestrina places a penultimate accented syllable upon the resolution of a suspension, a relatively weak position (see mm. 10, 12, 42, 51, 62, 63). In the most striking cases, Yonge's alteration breaks the suspension in order to place the accented syllable on the beat (mm. 10, 42, 51, 62, 63). In other instances, shorter values are introduced to create a more direct reflection of the English word rhythm (mm. 23, 34). These minute changes indicate Yonge's close attention to maintaining the accent of the words.

When it comes to the accuracy of translation, however, the silence of Yonge's preface is appropriate. While this translation was sufficient to convey the general meaning of the text to gentleman singers who knew no Italian, it falls quite short of the mark in conveying the specific meanings which are the basis of Palestrina's sensitive setting. Consider the central exclamation in the text, "Ahi dispietata morte!," translated as

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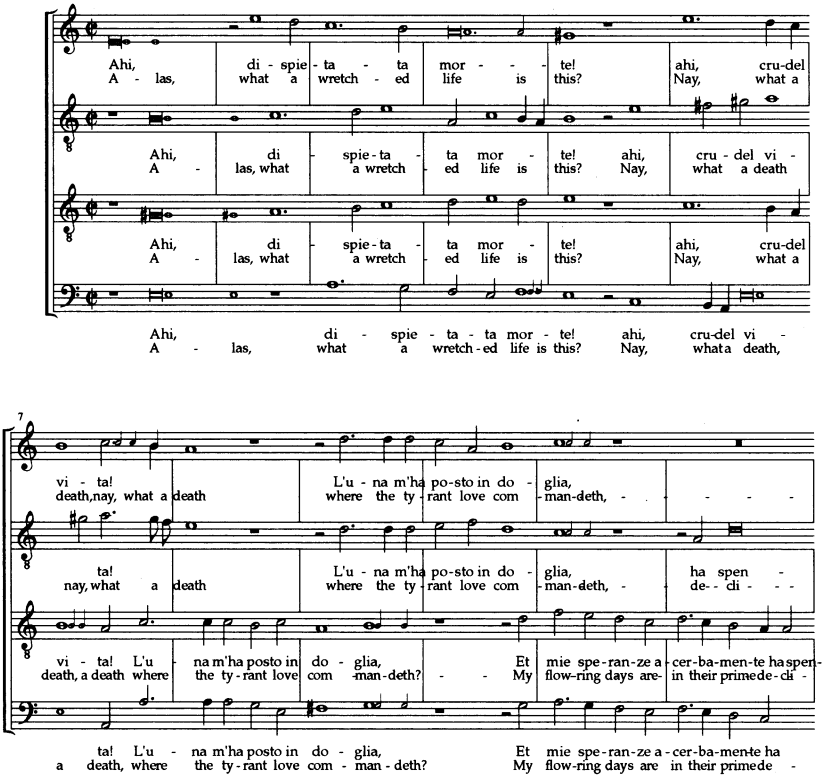
[15]Macy, "Due Decorum," pp. 6-9.

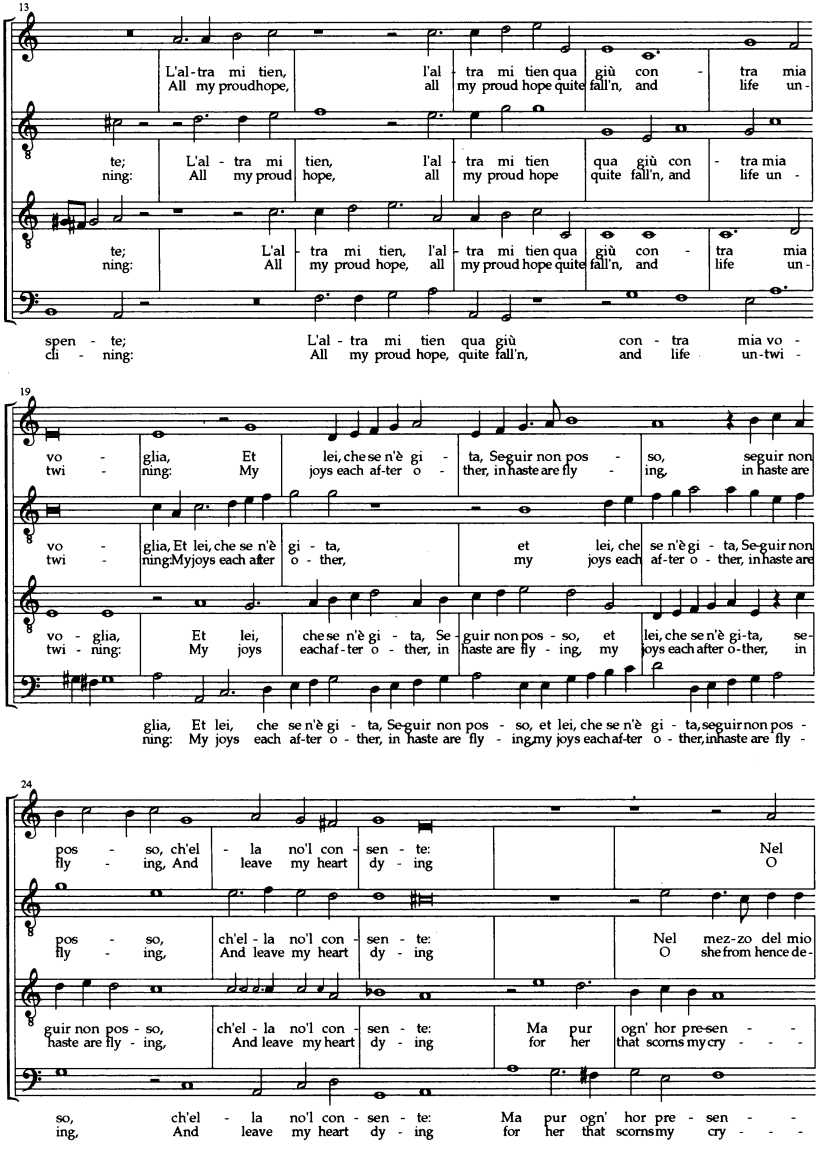
"Oh, spiteful death accursed." There is no ambiguity in the Italian "Ahi," a cry of pain and distress; "Oh," on the other had, could be a vocative particle, transforming the exclamation into a direct address to death. Petrarch's "death" throughout the text is wonderfully impassive—"dispietata" ("merciless"), is a negative quality, while "spiteful" is a characteristic absent from Petrarch's text. "Accursed," adding the requisite three syllables, detracts from Petrarch's picture of death by supplying a human response to it that is completely absent in Petrarch. Likewise, the phrase accent, upon "Morte" in Italian, falls upon "accursed" in English, the adjective, not the noun. Words are not well-enough placed even to fulfill the modest word-painting Palestrina employs. At the passage "l'altra mi tien qua giù contra mia voglia" ("the other holds me down here against my will," mm. 39–43), where "giù" ("down") receives the lowest notes and "contra" (against) receives contrapuntal inversion, the order is inverted in Yonge: "the last against my will doth heere detaine me." Not only has "down" been simply omitted, but the inversion of the clauses completely removes them from the music by which Palestrina illustrated them. Palestrina's subtle reading on "ella no 'l consente" (" she who has gone does not consent") is bluntly contradicted by translating "ella" as "death" with a gratuitous "to spite me."

Yonge's task was difficult: English requires fewer syllables than Italian, practically forcing the translator to supply additional, redundant syllables. The very first word of the translation is one such: "Sweet love" translates "Amor," and "sweet" is somehow out of character with the rest of the poem. The task is even more difficult if the poet is a stone-cutter like Petrarch, who leaves nothing unessential in the verse, stating the matter directly and without baggage, and whose poetry thrives on the resulting ambiguities. Perhaps the most interesting result of examining Yonge's translation is the realization of how strong and integral Petrarch's text really is and the extent to which Palestrina's setting responds to it, conservative though it may be.

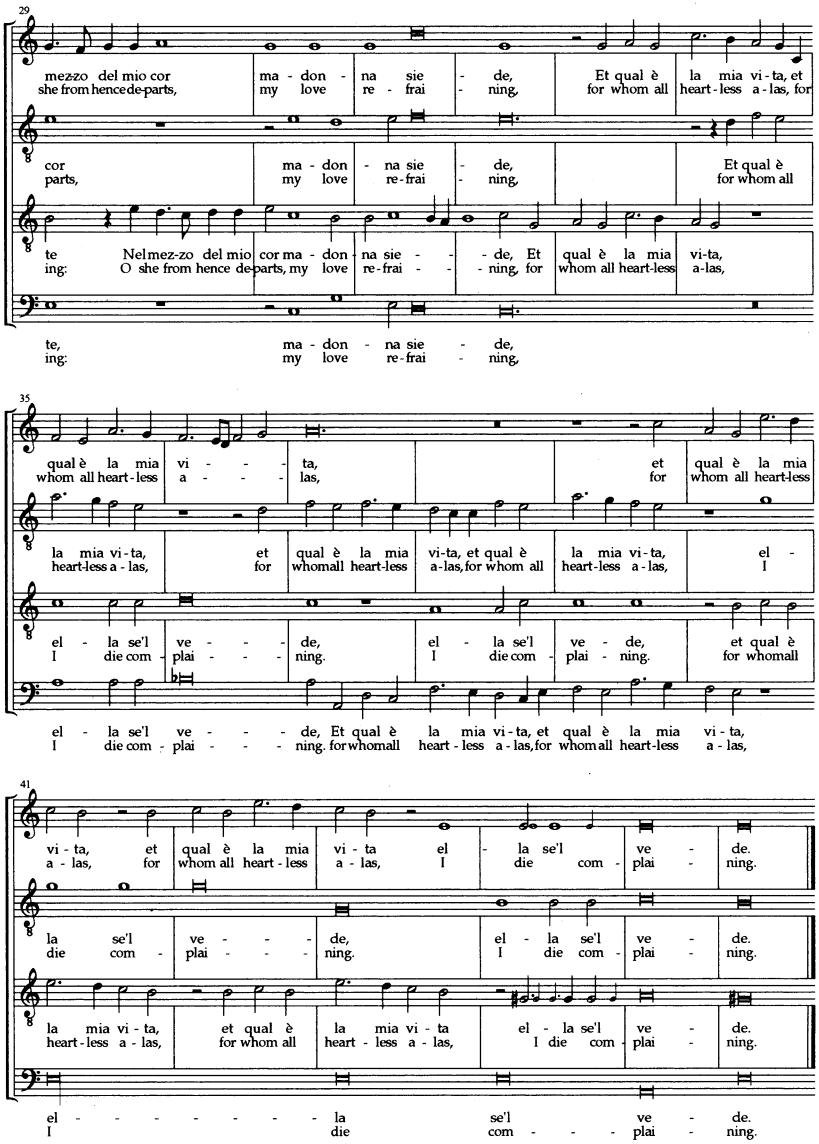
Conservative Marenzio's setting is not (Ex. 2):



Example 2. "Ahi, dispietata morte!"



Example 2 (continued). "Ahi, dispietata morte!"



Example 2 (continued). "Ahi, dispietata morte!"

Marenzio drops the refrain and begins immediately with the exclamations, proceeding with an economy of statement worthy of Petrarch (his setting has 46 measures, compared with Palestrina's 71). Each successive segment of text receives a texture suitable to its poetry, and most bear witness to Marenzio's genius in constructing apt musical figures to represent the particularities of his text.[16] There is only a year's separation between the publication of Marenzio's (1585) and Palestrina's (1586) settings, yet there are some close points of contact. In many cases, however, it is Marenzio's setting which cuts to the quick. While in Palestrina's setting the exclamation at "Ahi" (mm. 18–28) answers three voices with one, Marenzio's begins with a lone voice, answered by three, a most arresting beginning. Marenzio's setting of "l'altra mi tien qua giù" (mm. 14–17) places a remarkable octave leap downwards on "qua giù," with the tenor below the bass on "contra mia voglia," techniques very similar to those of Palestrina on the same words, but more effectively drawn. Though Palestrina's madrigal was published a year later than Marenzio's, the parallels are so close and Marenzio's "improvements" so effective, that one might speculate that he knew Palestrina's setting. The reverse would make much less sense.

Marenzio includes many more madrigalisms. A notable one is found on the word "spente" ("extinguished"). Here the final unaccented syllable is placed on a short note followed by a rest, an abrupt cessation of the word representing its sense.[17] Another madrigal convention occurs on "Et lei che se n'è gita, seguir non posso" ("And I cannot follow her, who goes forth," mm. 20–24). The convention is that an action can be represented, even though the text negates the action; thus "seguir" ("to follow") is represented by a quickly moving scale being imitated between the voices in spite of the fact that the text says "it is not possible to follow." This motion comes to a quick end, when the text asserts that "she does not consent to it." Yet another word-setting convention occurs on "madonna siede" ("my lady sits"); the word "sit" is often represented by stopping on

[16]Kerman goes so far as to name Marenzio "the greatest composer of the end of the cinquecento" (*Elizabethan Madrigal*, p. 43).

[17]This is a favorite figure of Cipriano de Rore; see, e.g., his "Datemi pace," in which the final syllables of "colpo," "rompa," and "errore" are so treated (mm. 58, 62, 67) ; Cipriano de Rore, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Bernhard Meier, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 14 (n. p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1969), IV, 75.

long notes, as here. Then comes the peroration "e qual è la mia vita, ella se 'l vede" ("And what my life is, she sees it"). Marenzio depicts her vision in the midst of his life by combining the two halves of the phrase, pairing "e qual è la mia vita" with a discreet melodic motive, and "ella se 'l vede" with a sustained pitch or two, representing the constancy of her presence through the entire peroration.

The first cadence of the piece is Phrygian on E, with subsequent cadences on A, G, and C. The end of the piedi (m. 26) is articulated by an A-Phrygian cadence, and from there Phrygian cadences dominate:

meas.	*cadence*	*voices*
5	E Phrygian	T-B
7	A	A-T
9	G	T-B
11	C	S-A
13	A	T-B
20	A	A-B
24	C	S-T
26	A Phrygian	T-B inverted
29	E Phrygian	A-B
32	C	T-B
37	A Phrygian	S-B

The last nine measures of the peroration are without formal cadence; the persistence of the lady's vision is effectively represented by sustaining the pitch E for the last six measures, and by avoiding the temporal finality of a formal cadence. This Phrygian-Aeolian link is yet another point of contact with Palestrina's setting. The greatest point of difference is that practically every line of Marenzio's setting makes use of some device of musical rhetoric, representing one or another aspect of that text with a particular musical figure. While Palestrina's setting makes occasional and effective use of such figures, it is in the context of thorough-going imitation. For Marenzio the context is the rhetoric itself.

Watson's text cannot rightly be called a translation; it should fall into Kerman's category of paraphrase.[18] While Petrarch's poem is a point of departure as in Yonge's version, it has been so altered in Watson's rendering (given in Obertello, *Madrigali*, p. 269) as to have lost all the

[18]Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, p. 60.

subtle features of paradox and interiority that must have made it attractive to both Palestrina and Marenzio:

> Alas, what a wretched life is this? Nay, what a death,
> where the tyrant love commandeth?
> My flowring days are in their prime declining:
> all my proud hope quite fall'n, and life untwining:
> my joys each after other
> in haste are flying and leave my heart dying
> for her that scorns my crying:
> O she from hence departs, my love refraining,
> for whom all heartless, alas, I die complaining.

Where Marenzio set "Ahi" and "Morte" with long notes on their final open syllables, Watson chooses English words articulated by noisy consonant endings; his "alas," coupled with "wretched," significantly alters not only the level of consonants, but the niveau of the poetry itself, bringing it farther down to earth than Petrarch or Marenzio could have imagined. Marenzio sets the parallel exclamations to parallel musical phrases (mm. 15, 6–8), waiting to distinguish "Morte" and "vita" in the amplifications which follow. Watson has reversed the order, life then death, but made them adversaries: one is a question, the other a negative answer. He took a cue from Marenzio's natural Italian declamation, deriving from the dotted rhythm a pompous affect on "tyrant love," (mm. 8–10), but in the process made a serious misdeclamation of the English "commandeth"; later the same rhythm accompanies "all my proude hope" (mm. 14–16). Not for Watson is the subtlety of Marenzio's setting of "seguir non posso" (mm. 20–24); the quick imitations now bear the text "My joys each after other / in haste are flying." Marenzio's subtle turn to the interior at the beginning of the volta (m. 27) becomes a mere continuation of the previous statement, "and leave my heart dying / for her that scorns my crying." Marenzio's affective stop on "siede" is turned to expressing "my love refraining." Finally, the peroration speaks of the poet's death rather than his life, and the persistent long notes represent his complaining death, rather than the mysterious presence of the lady of Petrarch's original. Watson is thus a strange Petrarchan to have replaced the elegantly poetic death of Laura with the more commonplace madrigalian death, and in the process to have lost her presence entirely.

Yet it must be conceded that each of Watson's new phrases seems to serve a musical purpose—they create an overt and persuasive presentation of the musico-rhetorical figures inherent in Marenzio's composition. It is the nature of such rhetoric that it emphasizes successive particularities of the text, somewhat at the expense of its continuity; this is the mannerism for which Marenzio is famous. Watson thus took Marenzio one step farther. In discussing Watson's purpose, Laura Macy suggests:

> The question, then, is whether a musical rhetoric written to fit one text can be appropriated by a completely different one without losing its appropriateness of style and figure—its decorum.
>
> I would argue that Watson's English texts do just that, by allowing the style and figures of music to dictate those of the poetry. By reversing the process of composition, Watson allowed the musical language to suggest the poetic language. In other words, his poems are indeed translations—not of the original Italian, but of the music that sets it. His madrigals are, just as he said, "translated after the affection of the note."[19]

Kerman sees Watson's work as propaganda for Italian art, holding, perhaps, not as important a place as his *Hekatompathia* (1582) held for the writing of the sonnet, but still with significant followers.[20]

It remains a serious question whether the due decorum has, in fact, been kept. There is no question, however, that this text of Watson was admired, since John Wilbye in 1598 actually composed and published a new madrigal upon the same text unaltered, "Alas, what a wretched life."[21] He responds to Watson's text by composing more overt musico-rhetorical figures than Marenzio's from which the text was drawn. Two examples may illustrate the process: Marenzio's discreet "spente" ("declining") now becomes in mm. 16-22 the subject of a drawn-out decline (Ex. 3):

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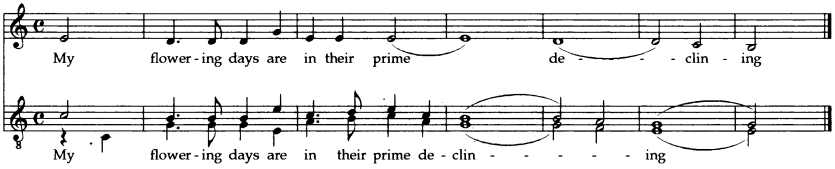
[19]Macy, "Due Decorum," p. 13.

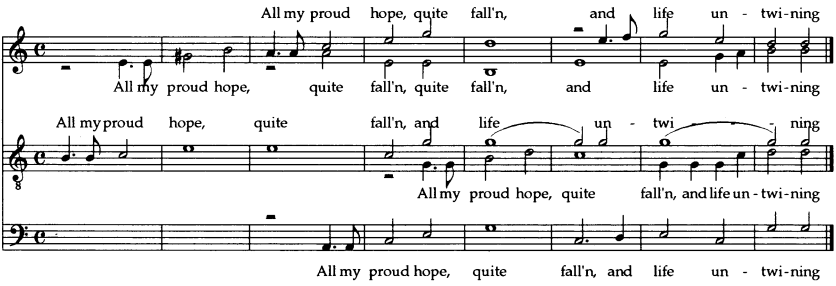
[20]Kerman, *Elizabethan Madrigal*, p. 57.

[21]John Wilbye, *First Set of Madrigals* (1598), The English Madrigal School, ed. Edmund Horace Fellowes, vol. VI (London: Stainer and Bell, 1914), pp. 86-91.



Example 3. "Alas, What a Wretched Life."

Again, a musico-rhetorical figure emerges when Watson's militaristic inference on "all my proud hope," becomes in mm. 27-34 a complete point of imitation of a rising musical subject, elaborating upon it (Ex. 4):



Example 4. "Alas, What a Wretched Life."

In directing performances of Marenzio's Italian version, Watson's English version, and Wilbye's new setting together in succession, I have observed a generation of students respond consistently: they are enormously persuaded by Wilbye's recomposing of Watson's paraphrase. Even though Watson's version left many subtleties of Marenzio's setting behind, it created a new paradigm of the potential musical rhetoric of its text, such that Wilbye could write a more overt and expressive piece than is Watson's version of Marenzio's madrigal itself.

Even in the most explicit word-painting, it is the link between the musical gesture and the connotation given it by the text which accounts

for its concreteness. It should not be surprising, then, that the same musical figure can bear texts of diverse meaning and still be received as word-painting.[22] Likewise, even in the most general kind of text representation, where the importance of a word is given a unique position in a melody, the link between that word and its expressive position can be received as the most intimate and explicit expression of the word. It should not be surprising, then, that the slightest misplacement of such a word in translation can destroy that same intimacy of expression.

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[22]I have addressed a similar question concerning Gregorian chant in "Word-Painting and Formulaic Chant," in *Cum angelis canere: Essays on Sacred Music and Pastoral Liturgy in Honour of Richard J. Schuler*, ed. Robert A. Skeris (St. Paul, MN: Catholic Church Music Associates, 1990 [1992]), pp. 113-44.