

Alleluia: A Question of Syllabification, c. 1550–c. 1625

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It is perhaps inevitable that despite the ever-conscientious efforts of scholars and performers to establish authentic performing texts and to forge historically informed performances, some significant areas of editorial and performing practice will always elude full attention. In part, such a situation merely reflects the contrasting priorities of scholars and of performers. Consequently, at a time when editors resort to increasingly sophisticated techniques to reconstruct authoritative performing texts, and when music directors are increasingly knowledgeable concerning the arguments surrounding areas of performing practice that may be topical from time to time (pitch is perhaps the most fashionable example), other equally important aspects of the interpretation of early music will contrive to slip through the scholarly net.

So far as texted music is concerned, the domain of pronunciation is one such area of conspicuous neglect. This is perhaps understandable, since it is a somewhat forbidding territory. In the last decade or so the topic of pronunciation has crept into increasing prominence, as a number of specialist publications bear witness.¹ Even so, attempts by some

¹See, for instance: Charles Kreidler, *The Pronunciation of English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Harold Copeman, *Singing in Latin* (Oxford: Copeman, 1990); Alison Wray, "Authentic Pronunciation for Early Music," in John Paynter et al., *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 1051-64; John Potter, "Reconstructing Lost Voices" and Alison Wray, "Restored Pronunciation," both in Tess Knighton and David Fallows, eds.,

present-day ensembles to bring authentic pronunciation into greater focus can hardly be claimed to have captured public appeal, in part since certain features of "authentic" early pronunciation are far from ingratiating to the modern ear.²

Of all the words that occur frequently in late Renaissance and early Baroque liturgical music, "alleluia"³ lends itself particularly well to investigation, since its pronunciation—or, to be more precise, its syllabification—is unlikely to have been contingent upon regional taste or upon the context of performance. This Hebrew exclamation of praise to God, accepted into early English usage via Greek and Latin, occurs frequently in English sacred music to Latin texts. It is found also in some sacred music—both liturgical and domestic—to English texts, and it occurs occasionally even in the contemporary English madrigalian literature.⁴

The word "alleluia" is almost invariably printed in modern editions of Renaissance music as four syllables, with the final syllable "-ia" comprising a single diphthongal unit (i.e., a combination of a sonantal and a consonantal vowel). There are some notable exceptions to this generalization in the Carnegie Trust's Tudor Church Music series, in some volumes of which the word's division appears to have been given

Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music (London: Dent, 1992), pp. 311-16 and 292-99 respectively; Alison Wray, "The Sound of Latin in England before and after the Reformation," and "English pronunciation, c. 1500-c. 1625," both in John Morehen, ed., *English Choral Practice, 1400-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 74-89 and 90-108 respectively; Timothy J. McGee, ed., with A. G. Rigg and David N. Klausner, *Singing Early Music: The Pronunciation of European Languages in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

²See, for example, the performance of Orlando Gibbons's "This is the Record of John" as recorded by Red Byrd with the Rose Consort of Viols on *Elizabethan Christmas Anthems*, Amon Ra Records, CD-SAR 46.

³The form "alleluia" is adopted here in preference to "alleluya" and other forms found in contemporary manuscripts and prints.

⁴E.g., William Byrd, "This day Christ was born" (*Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets*, 1611), in *The Byrd Edition*, XIV, ed. John Morehen (London: Stainer and Bell, 1987), no. 27, pp. 128-35; Thomas Morley, "Hark, Alleluia" (*Canzonets or Little Short Aers to Five and Sixe Voyces*, 1597), *The English Madrigalists* 3, ed. E. H. Fellowes (London: Stainer and Bell, 1987), no. 21, pp. 114-19; Thomas Ravenscroft, "Donec a boire," *Pammelia* (London, 1609), no. 52.

scrupulous consideration, with the final two vowels, “i” (or “y”) and “a,” often being allocated separate notes. Indeed, one of the earliest examples of five-part division that I have located in modern editions can be found in John Taverner’s “Alleluia. Salve virgo” and in his “Alleluia. Veni electa mea,” in volume one of *Tudor Church Music*.⁵ Five-syllable treatment can be seen also in Taverner’s three settings of the Easter respond “Dum transisset sabbatum,” although even here there are some illogical inconsistencies.⁶ In Tallis’s manuscript motet “Alleluia. Ora pro nobis”⁷ the *Tudor Church Music* editors perceptively opt for five syllables, departing from this only in phrases which consist of fewer than five notes or where the presence of a two-note ligature suggests that “-ia-” should be undivided.⁸ The same procedure has been adopted by the editors of the *Tudor Church Music* and *Early English Church Music* editions of Robert White’s setting of the Marian antiphon “Regina caeli.” In most editions of this repertory, however, departures from a four-syllable division are so rare as to suggest that other alternatives may not even have been considered.

It will be proposed here that the internal evidence of much English music of the period 1550–1625 suggests that a *five*-syllable division of the word “alleluia” was firmly established as an available option at that time, and that it was probably practiced considerably more frequently than has hitherto been suspected. It will not for one moment be claimed that in every composition the word was always pronounced the same way, nor that it necessarily received the same pronunciation in every

⁵(London: Oxford University Press, 1923), pp. 52, 53. Hugh Benham, in his edition *John Taverner: III, Ritual Music and Secular Songs*, *Early English Church Music* 30 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1984), consistently adopts four syllables.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 37–45.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.

⁸With the exception of Nicola Vicentino (1555) all the early Italian writers on text underlay—Giovanni Maria Lanfranco (1533), Gioseffo Zarlino (1558), Gaspar Stocker (c. 1580), and Paolo Luchini (c. 1590)—explicitly prohibit the placement of a syllable within a ligature.

⁹*Tudor Church Music, V* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 180–84, and David Mateer, ed., *Robert White: II, Six-Part Latin Psalms; Votive Antiphons*, *Early English Church Music* 29 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1983), pp. 102–12.

voice part of a polyphonic composition,¹⁰ nor even that it was necessarily pronounced the same way for all occurrences within a given part.

The present study is based on an examination of the primary and secondary sources of a cross section of manuscript and printed English music of the period c. 1550–c. 1625. Particular attention has been accorded to John Amner's *Sacred Hymnes of 3. 4. 5. and 6. parts for voyces & viols* (London, 1615), a collection of twenty-six sacred madrigals, full anthems, and consort anthems (no fewer than fourteen of which involve multiple occurrences of the word “alleluia”), to the Latin church music of Thomas Tallis, and to William Byrd's two books of *Gradualia* (London, 1605/7), where—as a result of the significance of the liturgical Alleluia within the Proper of the Mass—the word appears frequently.¹¹

On first sight the pronunciation of “alleluia” would not appear to be controversial. In many manuscript compositions from this period it is set to four equal (or predominantly equal) notes, implying a straightforward four-syllable division “al-le-lu-ia.” The numerous examples—both in manuscript and in print—of the word's transmission as implicitly four syllables embrace compositions covering a wide period, in different meters, and representing a variety of musical functions. There are seemingly very few instances where manuscript copyists clearly imply five syllables; these include the eight-part motet “Ascendens Christus” by Derick Gerarde, found in British Library Royal Appendix MSS 26–30.¹² The form, too, in which the word is transmitted in most 16th- and 17th-century English printed partbooks offers little ammunition for those who wish to challenge the conventional four-syllable division. Some printers'

¹⁰There are many examples of syllabifications differing between the voice parts of a composition. One representative example is the juxtaposed two- and three-part division of the word “motion” in Orlando Gibbons, “See, the word is incarnate”; see David Wulstan, ed., *Orlando Gibbons: Verse Anthems*, Early English Church Music 3 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1964), and in *Tudor Church Music, IV* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 274.

¹¹References are to the following editions: John Morehen, ed., *John Amner, Sacred Hymnes of 3. 4. 5. and 6. parts for voices and viols* (1615), The English Madrigalists 40 (London: Stainer and Bell, 2000); Philip Brett, ed., *The Byrd Edition*, II and V–VII (London: Stainer and Bell, 1989–93); and *Tudor Church Music*, VI and VII (London: Oxford University Press, 1928 and 1927 respectively).

¹²See MSS 26 and 30, fol. 11v.

compositors set the word without any division into syllables, and so in anything other than four-note settings any editorial syllabification is subjective. As we shall shortly see, I have so far found only a single instance where the word is divided into five syllables, although a wide variety of four-part divisions proliferates.¹³ In the joint Tallis/Byrd *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575) the word occurs in two motets by Tallis—"Dum transisset sabbatum" and "Candidi facta sunt." In the original edition, printed by the Huguenot refugee Thomas Vautrollier, it is usually divided "al-le-luy-a," although "alleluy-a," "al-leluy-a," "al-le-luya," and even an undivided "alleluya" also are found. In both these motets the word is frequently associated with a four-note motive, and it is hardly surprising that the editors of Tudor Church music opt for four-part division.¹⁴

In Byrd's 1589 *Cantiones* the word "alleluia" appears only in "In resurrectione tua,"¹⁵ where it is usually treated highly melismatically, thus leaving all options open; in five passages, however, it is set to four notes. As might be expected, the most frequent occurrences of the word in Byrd's music are to be found in the two books of *Gradualia*. Here again, it is frequently set melismatically, sometimes to the point of extravagance,¹⁶ although, as with "In resurrectione tua," there are many occasions where it is predominantly set as four notes. While it is often set as five notes, the presence of a ligature sometimes suggests that only four syllables are expected.¹⁷

At this point it might be concluded that the evidence in favor of four-syllable division is sufficiently unimpeachable as to be allowed to pass uncontested. Indeed, one may well ask whether any arguments at all can be adduced for the theory that the word was ever pronounced as five

¹³The tendency of printers' compositors not to divide *-ia* at this period may be construed as a reluctance to enter an unnecessary level of precision and sophistry. In this respect subdivision of *-ia* differs from the division into *-ti-on* of the terminal *-tion* in such words as *ac-ti-on*, *salva-ti-on*, etc., a subdivision that is encountered both in contemporary manuscripts and prints (e.g. Amner's "With mournful Musique" in the 1615 print).

¹⁴*Tudor Church Music*, VI, 257-61 and 186-88 respectively.

¹⁵*Byrd Edition*, II, no. 10.

¹⁶As in "Regina caeli," *Byrd Edition*, IIb, no. 17.

¹⁷As in "Beata es virgo Maria," *Byrd Edition*, V, no. 10, Medius, bar 39; and "O sacrum convivium," VIa, no. 14, Bassus, bar 55.

syllables. Although evidence in favour of five-part division at this period is hardly plentiful, it certainly exists internally within the music itself, and it will be proposed that extrapolation from the examples given below strongly implies that five-part division may even have been widespread.

Irrefutable evidence of five-part division is surely presented by those contexts where "alleluia" is set to five notes of identical pitch,¹⁸ such as in Amner's "And they cry," in the Cantus part, bars 36-end (Ex. 1):

(bars 31-end)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes parts for Cantus Primus, Cantus Secundus, Quartus, Sextus, Tenor, and Bassus. The second system includes parts for CP, CS, Q, S, T, and B. The lyrics are 'glo ry. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a.'

Example 1. "And they cry."

¹⁸In all the music examples here the placement of the conjectural fourth syllable of "alleluia" is editorial. All references are to original note values.

The image shows a musical score for six voices: CP (Coprino), CS (Cantabile Soprano), Q (Quintus), S (Soprano), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The score is written on six staves. The lyrics are: "lu i a. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a." The music is in a single system with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The notes are mostly quarter and half notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words like "Al" and "le" appearing on multiple staves.

Example 1 (continued). "And they cry."

An almost equally strong case can be made where the word is set to five notes of which the first four are repetitions. Thomas Weelkes's sacred madrigal "Alleluia. I heard a voice," which is found both in secular and sacred sources, provides many examples of this. Although the underlay given in the principal source (British Library, London, Add. MSS 29372-77) lacks hyphens, the letter "i" in "Alleluia" is sufficiently separated from the preceding "u" and succeeding "a" as to suggest that the copyist envisaged five-part division. In the first main section (bars 7-22), with which the composition also concludes (bars 42-65), it is unambiguously clear from the motivic cell—which is developed extensively in taut imitation at intervals of one bar—that only five-part syllabification makes any sense at all (bars 7-13 [Ex. 2]):¹⁹

¹⁹This material reappears with slight rhythmic modification in Weelkes's Fourth Evening Service ("for Trebles") to the words "and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." See *Church Services* series, no. 327 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1962).

(bars 7-13)

I
II
III
IV
V

Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

I
II
III
IV
V

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Example 2. "Alleluia. I heard a voice."

Extrapolating from this example, almost equally incontrovertible are those instances where the first four of the five notes comprise two pairs of repeated notes. This can be seen not only in bars 33-34 of the *Cantus Secundus* part of Example 1, but also in all voice parts of two other pieces of Amner (Exs. 3 and 4)—“Away with weak complainings,” bars 21-24 and 30-32 (Ex. 3),²⁰ and “He that descended man to be” (Bassus, bars 36-end [Ex. 4]):

²⁰In theory the second and third notes could be slurred, though this seems highly unlikely, particularly in quavers or eighth notes.

(bars 21-24)

Canto Primus
for good es - teem - ed. Al - le - lu - i - a. Al -

Canto Secundus
all for good es - teem - ed. Al - le - lu - i - a. Al - le - lu - i - a. Al - le -

Bassus
for good es - teem - ed. Al - le - lu - i - a.

CP
le - lu - i - a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

CS
lu - i - a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

B
Al - le - lu - i - a.

Example 3. "Away with weak complainings."

(bars 36-end)

Canto Primus
(he) i a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

Canto Secundus
Al - le - lu - i - a.

Quintus
a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

Tenor
a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

Bassus
a. Al - le - lu - i - a.

Example 4. "He that descended man to be."

Hardly less persuasive are those five-note passages where merely the third and fourth notes are identical in pitch. Amner's 1615 collection provides several examples of this formation too, such as the Tenor part in bars 53-54 of "Fear not" (Ex. 5), and the Quintus part in bars 57-58 of "I bring you tidings of joys" (Ex. 6):

(bars 53-54)

Example 5 is a musical score for six voices: Cantus Primus, Cantus Secundus, Quintus, Sextus, Tenor, and Bassus. The score covers bars 53 and 54. The lyrics are: Cantus Primus: lu i a; Cantus Secundus: [ia. Al le lu i] a; Quintus: Al le lu i a; Sextus: (lu) i a; Tenor: Al le lu i a; Bassus: (lu) i a. The Tenor part has a large blacked-out section in bar 53.

Example 5. "Fear not."

(bars 53-end)

Example 6 is a musical score for six voices: Cantus Primus, Cantus Secundus, Quintus, Sextus, Tenor, and Bassus. The score covers bars 53 to the end. The lyrics are: Cantus Primus: ry. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i; Cantus Secundus: ry. Al le lu ia. Al le lu i; Quintus: glo ry. Al le lu i a. Al le; Sextus: ry. Al le lu i a. Al le lu i a; Tenor: ry. Al le lu i; Bassus: ry. Al le lu i a. Al le. The Tenor and Sextus parts have large blacked-out sections in bar 53.

Example 6. "I bring you tidings of joys."

Sometimes the repeated notes involve a dotted figure, as in the Cantus Secundus part of Amner's "Away with weak complainings," bars 22-23 (see Ex. 3 above). Five syllables appear also to be required where, following an extended melisma, the antepenultimate and penultimate

Example 6 (continued) shows a musical score for six vocal parts: C (Cantus Primus), CS (Cantus Secundus), Q (Quintus), S (Soprano), T (Tenor), and B (Bassus). The lyrics are "Al - le - lu - i - a." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are some blacked-out sections in the original image, likely representing redactions or errors in the scan.

Example 6 (continued). "I bring you tiding of joys."

notes of a phrase are identical in pitch, as in the Bassus of "I will sing unto the Lord," bars 35-end (Ex. 7):²¹

Example 7 shows a musical score for five vocal parts: Cantus Primus, Cantus Secundus, Quintus, Tenor, and Bassus. The lyrics are "Al - le - lu". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are some blacked-out sections in the original image, likely representing redactions or errors in the scan.

Example 7. "I will sing unto the Lord."

²¹The two double whole notes in bars 40-42 may perhaps be interpreted as a substitute for a long, for which two double whole notes were occasionally used (possibly because of a shortage of the relevant pieces of type), as in no. 24 of Amner's collection, bars 66-67, Cantus Secundus.

CP i - a, Al - le - lu - ia.

CS le - lu i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a.

Q i - a, Al - le - lu i - a.

T le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu i - a.

B

Example 7 (continued). "I will sing unto the Lord."

At other times repetition of the final three notes of a melismatic phrase positively *demands* five-syllable division, as in the Cantus Primus part of Example 6 above. Another example is afforded by Amner's "He that descended man to be," Cantus Primus, bars 13-14 (Ex. 8):

(bars 9-14)

Cantus Primus le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a.

Cantus Secundus high Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a.

Quintus high Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a.

Tenor high Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a.

Bassus le - lu i - a, Al - le - lu i - a.

Example 8. "He that descended man to be."

Even the presence of repeated notes as the final *two* notes of a phrase may suggest division of "-ia," especially when the presence of repeated notes earlier in the phrase has already eliminated all acceptable alternative underlay possibilities. This can be seen in the Cantus

CP
CS
Q
T
B

Al - le - lu - i - a

Example 8 (continued). "He that descended man to be."

Secundus of Amner's "I will sing unto the Lord," bars 37-39 (in Ex. 7, above). Five-syllable division would also seem to be appropriate when the associated five-note motive consists not of repeated notes but of continuous *scalic* movement (ascending or descending), especially when the unit of movement is predominantly the eighth note, as in bars 28-30 of "O love beseeching well" (Ex. 9):

(bars 28-end)

Cantus Primus
Cantus Secundus
Basses

Al - le - lu - i - a

CP
CS
B

Al - le - lu - i - a

Example 9. "O love beseeching well."

If it is accepted that such stepwise motion in eighth notes can be shown to imply five syllables, it may be assumed to be legitimate to extend this principle to embrace stepwise motion where the first four notes are quarter notes, as in bars 36-37 of the Cantus Secundus part of Example 7. If this, too, is deemed legitimate, is there then any reason why this principle should not be further extended to cover the countless instances of five-note passages of *mixed* durations involving uninterrupted stepwise movement, whether ascending *or* descending? Instances can be seen here in Example 6 above, bars 53-54 (Cantus Primus, Quintus and Sextus) and bars 56-57 (Sextus). The opening section of Weelkes's "Alleluia. I heard a voice," bars 1-3, where the principle of five-part division is conceded by the editors of the collected edition of Weelkes's sacred music,²² shows identical configurations (Ex. 10):²³

(bars 1-3)

I
II
III
IV
V

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a

Example 10. "Alleluia. I heard a voice."

²²David Brown, Walter Collins, and Peter le Huray, eds., *Thomas Weelkes: Collected Anthems*, Musica Britannica 23 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1966), pp. 1-6.

²³The bar-numbering is that of the edition by Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Tudor Church Music*, octavo series no. 45 (London: Oxford University Press, [1925]), which represents the domestic version. For the liturgical arrangement see Musica Britannica 23.

Other compositions in which five-part division might be deemed appropriate in some (though not necessarily all) scalic passages include Tallis's manuscript motet "Loquebantur variis linguis."²⁴

There are two other contexts where the arguments favouring a five-part division of "alleluia" would seem compelling. The first is where the word is associated with five notes of which the fourth is of short duration, particularly where the short note is approached or quitted by a leap. This can be seen in bars 8-11 of Amner's "The heavens stood all amazed" (Ex. 11):²⁵

(bars 8-12)

Cantus Primus
ed. gaz Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-lu

Cantus Secundus
le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i

Quintus
(bless) ed. Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-

Tenor
(bless) ed.

Bassus
(bless) ed.

CP
i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a.

CS
a. Al-le-lu-i-a. Al

Q
lu-i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a.

T
Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a.

B
Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a. Al-le-lu-i-a.

Example 11. "The heavens stood all amazed."

²⁴E.g., *Tudor Church Music*, VI, 275.

²⁵See also bars 9-10 of the Quintus part of Amner's "He that descended man to be," in Example 8 above.

The second context is where the antepenultimate and penultimate notes of the phrase involve a descending octave leap, especially where the leap is in half notes and is formed by a transition from the strong to the weak part of the *tactus*. This can be seen in the last bar of the Sextus part of Example 6 above (from Amner's "I bring you tiding of joys"), in bars 2-3 of the lowest voice part of Example 10 above (Weelkes, "Alleluia. I heard a voice") and in bar 29 of the Contratenor part of Example 17 below (Byrd, "Felix es sacra Virgo Maria").²⁶ An analogous passage, albeit with the octave leap formed by quarter notes, can be seen in the final bar of the Sextus part of Amner's "My Lord is hence removed and laid" (Ex. 12):

(bars 29-31)

The musical score for Example 12 shows six parts: Cantus Primus, Cantus Secundus, Quinta, Sextus, Tenor, and Bassus. The lyrics are "Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a." The Sextus part has a shaded area in the final bar, indicating a descending octave leap.

Example 12. "My Lord is hence removed and laid."

On the strength of the above examples, it is proposed here that in Amner's *Sacred Hymnes* five-part division of "alleluia" should be adopted as the norm, especially when the word is set to five notes. Indeed, for opportunities for this we need look no further than the opening two

²⁶ Vicentino calls for a new syllable in an octave leap, though this is ideally the first syllable of a new word. See Don Harrán, "Vicentino and His Rules of Text Underlay," *Musical Quarterly* 59 (1973): pp. 620-32.

It should be stressed that even the setting of “alleluia” to four notes does not of itself preclude five-syllable performance, merely that the penultimate vowel “i” would have been articulated less prominently than setting to five or more notes would normally suggest.

The above examples of five-syllable division of “alleluia” cover music from *c.* 1560 (Tallis/White) to *c.* 1615. Since the principle of five-part syllabification must clearly be accepted as an option, it remains to examine how far it may be extended to music by other composers of the period, most importantly William Byrd.

There are some contexts in Byrd's Latin music where the presence of repeated notes effectively rules out anything *other* than a five-syllable division. There are two consecutive phrases in “Tollite portas” (*Gradualia* I, 1605), for instance, where in bars 38-41 the word is set in the Medius part to five repeated notes (Ex. 15):²⁸

(bars 38-41)

The musical score displays five staves for the parts: Superius, Medius, Contratenor, Tenor, and Bassus. The lyrics 'Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a,' are written below the staves. The Medius part is highlighted with a shaded background and shows five repeated notes (G-A-B-A-G) corresponding to the syllable 'lu' in 'alleluia'. The other parts have various note values and rests.

Example 15. “Tollite portas.”

A passage in the Contratenor part of “Ave Maria gratia plena,” bars 22-23, suggests that the similar motive in the Superius part two bars earlier should be broken up and treated in the same way (Ex. 16):²⁹

²⁸ Byrd Edition, V, 82.

²⁹ Byrd Edition, V, 85. The present writer is guilty of having underlaid this Alleluia section incorrectly in Peter le Huray, ed., *The Treasury of English Church Music*, 2 (London: Blandford, 1965), pp. 102-03.

(bars 21-24)

Superius
a, Al - le - lu

Medius
A' - le - lu - i - a, A' - le - lu - ia,

Contrateneor
Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a,

Tenor
Al - le - lu - i - a,

Bassus
Al - le - lu - i - a,

Example 16. “Ave Maria gratia plena.”

A passage in the Superius part of Byrd's "Felix es sacra Virgo Maria" demands five syllables, while, for reasons already given, a descending octave leap in the Contratenor strongly implies it (bars 24-26, and also Medius, bar 29 [Ex.17]):³⁰

(bars 20-31)

Superius
Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a, Al -

Medius
Al - le - lu - i -

Contraténor
Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a,

Tenor
Al - le - lu - i - a, Al - le - lu - i - a,

Bassus
Al - le - lu - i - a, Al -

Example 17. “Felix es sacra Virgo Maria.”

³⁰*Byrd Edition*, V, 58-59.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a choir, featuring Soprano (S), Alto (M), Contralto (C), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) parts. The lyrics are "le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a".

System 1:

- S:** le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- M:** a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- C:** Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- T:** Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- B:** le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a

System 2:

- S:** a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- M:** Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- C:** le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- T:** Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a
- B:** Al-le-lu-i-a, Al-le-lu-i-a

System 3:

- S:** le-lu-i-a
- M:** Al-le-lu-i-a
- C:** ia
- T:** lu-i-a
- B:** i-a

Example 17 (continued). "Felix es sacra Virgo Maria."

Philip Brett, when editing these works for *The Byrd Edition*, was well aware of the problems of principle raised by these passages, which he dismisses variously as “underlay difficulties” and “word-underlay anomalies.” In the case of “Tollite portas” he endeavours to explain the “difficulty” by suggesting that the fourth of the five repeated notes is an error in each case, but sportingly concedes that his explanation is “. . . unlikely as a double mistake on the part of Byrd or the compositor.”³¹ My examples at the very least suffice to demonstrate that his *ex cathedra* statement that five-syllable division “can definitely be ruled out”³² is unreasonably dismissive. It is submitted here that both “Tollite portas” and “Felix es sacra Virgo Maria” call for consistent five-part division of “alleluia,” with the exception of the last bar of the Contratenor voice of Example 17. Indeed, in “Tollite portas” Byrd goes so far as to make a feature of this syllabification by allocating the weak part of the diphthong to the strong part of the *tactus*. There are very few motets indeed by Byrd in which five-syllable division of “alleluia” can be completely ruled out, although there are some where it can be discounted in certain passages.³³

I have also found new evidence for my argument in a work at Christ Church, Oxford (Printed Music 703-06), in which a printer’s compositor explicitly divides the word “alleluia” into five syllables throughout. Thomas Tomkins’s posthumous publication *Musica Deo Sacra* (1668) includes the five-part full anthem “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth”,³⁴ this is a contrafactum of the composer’s madrigal “See, see the shepherds’ Queen,” which appeared in his *Songs of 3. 4. 5. & 6. parts* (1622). In this sacred piece the word “alleluia” occurs on no fewer than

³¹ *Byrd Edition*, V, 82, note.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Five-syllable division would appear to be inappropriate, for instance, in most of “Quotiescunque manducabitis” (*Byrd Edition*, Via, no. 11) and “O sacrum convivium” (*ibid.*, no. 14), and in “Surge illuminare,” in *Tudor Church Music*, IX, pp. 244-46. On the other hand, it works well in “Sacerdotes Domini” (*Byrd Edition*, Via, no. 10) and “Psallite Domine,” in *Tudor Church Music*, VII, 293. Five-syllable division would be apt also in the five-note scalic passages in “Alleluia. Cognoverunt discipuli” and “Terra tremuit,” (in *ibid.*, VII, 248 and 278 respectively).

³⁴ For a critical edition see Thomas Tomkins, *Musica Deo Sacra*, V, ed. Bernard Rose, *Early English Church Music* 37 (Stainer and Bell for the British Academy, 1991), pp. 1-6.

75 occasions, sometimes set to four notes, sometimes to five, and sometimes as a longer melisma. In the case of four-note phrases the compositor usually sets the word in its entirety without any hyphens or spaces. However, where five-note or melismatic phrases are used the division is usually either "Alle-lui-y-a" or "Al-le-lu-y-a" (with or without hyphens in each case). This clearly shows not only that five-syllable division was practiced during the first half of the seventeenth century, but also that four- and five- syllable division could exist alongside each other within the same composition, and even within a single musical phrase. The explicit five-syllable division in this print should in no way be taken to imply that the absence of a discrete penultimate syllable ("i" or "y") in other prints of the period necessarily implies four-syllable division.

There is little evidence that five-syllable division was ever expected in Continental music, or that it is applicable to the work of those English composers who worked abroad or of those foreign musicians who worked in England. The word "alleluia" occurs numerous times in the Latin sacred music of Monteverdi. In his edition of the collected works,³⁵ Gian Francesco Malipiero (and Denis Arnold, the revising editor) almost always underlays it as four syllables. However, out of many hundreds of occurrences there are at least a handful of instances—in compositions to be found in prints covering a period of over sixty years—where the word is studiously underlaid as five syllables: in chronological order these are "Tu es pastor,"³⁶ "Currite populi,"³⁷ "Exulta filia Sion,"³⁸ "Laudate dominum,"³⁹ and "Venite videte."⁴⁰ In those instances where I have been

³⁵G. F. Malipiero, ed., *Claudio Monteverdi: Tutti le opere* (Asolo, 1926-42, rev. 1954), supplementary volume XVII (1966).

³⁶*Sacri cantiuunculae tribus vocibus* (Venice, 1582); see *Opere*, XIV, pt.1, p. 19.

³⁷Leonardo Simonetti's *Ghirlanda sacra* (Venice, 1625); see Monteverdi, *Opere*, XVI, pt. 2, p. 491. In providing a musical quotation from this work, Henry Prunières, in *Monteverdi: His Life and Work* (New York: Dutton, 1926), p. 125, consistently spells the word *Alleluja*. The present writer has not been able to consult the original editions.

³⁸*Quarta raccolta de Sacri Canti* (Venice, 1629); see *Opere*, XVI (supplement), p.13.

³⁹*Selva morale e spirituale* (Venice, 1641); see *Opere*, XV, p.753.

⁴⁰*Motetti a voce sola de diversi Eccellentissim Autori* (Venice, 1645); see *Opere*, XVI (supplement), 32.

able to check Malipiero's text against the original sources it is clear that the five-syllable treatment is not implicit in the originals.

In summary, the contexts in which the word "alleluia" was necessarily sung as four syllables at this period are relatively few in number. Perhaps the only instances are those passages where the word is set as four notes of which the third is a quarter note (or shorter), since in such cases the third quarter note is surely too short to permit division of the diphthong. Examples of this rhythmic formation abound in the music of Peter Philips.⁴¹ Five-syllable pronunciation of "alleluia" is out of the question, of course, where the third note of a four-note figure is as short as a eighth note. Examples of this are relatively rare, although it can be seen in Richard Dering's "Quem vidistis pastores?"⁴²

The period covered here is only about 75 years, however, and the possibilities for extrapolation outside these limits must clearly be considered. The internal evidence of the music suggests that there is little justification for extrapolating five-syllable syllabification of "alleluia" into the Commonwealth and the Restoration period. For example, the word appears in four domestic pieces by William Child in Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS Mus. Sch. c.32-36 : "Alleluia. Awake my soul," "Alleluia. O Holy Ghost," "Alleluia. Therefore with angels," and "Alleluia. Thou, who when all." In all four the word is set predominantly as four notes, while in those instances where five notes are set the presence of a slur indicates unequivocally that only four syllables are expected. "Alleluia" sections also appear in several verse anthems by Purcell, Blow, Humfrey, and others, often as the concluding sections. Here, again, the presence of source slurs suggests that only four syllables were intended. On the other hand, the highly florid style of the Latin music immediately preceding the Reformation certainly makes five-syllable underlay a practical possibility. Indeed, the process may legitimately be taken back further still, for the use of liquescent neumes in early manuscript plainsong

⁴¹E.g. "Hodie concepta est" (bars 49-59), in John Steele, ed., *Peter Philips: Cantiones Sacrae Octonis Vocibus* (1613), *Musica Britannica* 61 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1992), pp. 27-28. This is only one of several motets in this volume in which Philips sets "alleluia" to this rhythm. Other motets which treat the word in a similar fashion include "Benedicta sit sancta trinitas," "Ecce vicit Leo" (last section), "Exurgens Maria," and "Regina caeli laetare."

⁴²Peter Platt, ed., *Richard Dering, Cantica Sacra* (1618), *Early English Church Music* 15 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1974), pp. 141-43.

sources provides considerable support for the theory of five-syllable pronunciation. See, for instance, the antiphon to the four Compline psalms of the Octave of the Epiphany, "Lux de luce." In the first two occurrences of "Alleluia" the liquescence seems designed to suggest transition over the semiconsonantal "y."⁴³

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⁴³W. H. Frere, ed., *Antiphonale Sarisburiense* (London: The Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society, 1901-24), II, 84, col. 2, system 5. I am indebted to Ian Bent for pointing out this example—and a number of similar instances—in the Sarum Antiphoner. The author also wishes to thank David Mateer, Anthony Milledge, John Milsom, Denis Stevens, Philip Weller and Alison Wray for many helpful suggestions.