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## Chapter 14      Motets

### 14.1      The motet at the time of Gheerkin

Around 1500 the motet had become a commonly-used genre among composers of polyphonic music. Because of the sacred Latin text, the compositions could be used in church, but also in a private (devout) environment at home. The motet was pre-eminently suitable for composers to show their capabilities and develop their own personal styles. It usually consisted of two parts (the *Prima Pars* and *Secunda Pars*), but the one-part motet had also found its place in the musical soundscape. The length of the text chosen by the composer often determined whether a motet consisted of one or two parts.<sup>1648</sup>

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, Josquin des Prez was the most influential composer in the development of the genre, bringing it to a new level. His choice of texts was innovative, because in addition to the traditional texts of, for example, antiphons and sequences, he also set psalms and texts from the Old Testament. Another novelty was the relation between the text and its musical setting, sometimes in a symbolic way. Josquin and many of his contemporaries preferred to use paired imitation of two voices, alternating with a full texture of four, at times using chordal passages, which made the text clearly audible. The Josquin generation still used chant melodies as the basis for their motets, for example as a *cantus firmus* in the tenor voice, sometimes in canon with another voice. The composers preferred to make clear sections in their compositions, corresponding to the phrases of the text, often set syllabically, without long melismas.

Josquin's Franco-Flemish successors, for example Gombert, Crecquillon and Clemens non Papa, were highly productive when it came to composing motets. They expanded the number of voices from the most common four to five, although not all composers followed suit. But Nicolas Gombert especially became an expert in composing five- and even six-voice motets, abandoning both the paired imitation of a limited number of voices and the chordal passages (although chords were still used to stress specific words), and preferring a full texture with pervasive imitative counterpoint, the entries following each other closely. These entries were usually

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<sup>1648</sup> This paragraph and the next three are based on Perkins/Macey ('Motet') and Schmidt-Beste 2005. See also: § 1.2 and § 1.3. On the subject in general: Schmidt-Beste 2003 and Schmidt-Beste 2012.

built in motifs, continuing in free melodic material after, for example, four or five notes. Chant melodies are only rarely used.

The texts chosen by the composers of the post-Josquin generation were preferably in prose, frequently taken from the Bible. The psalm motet still existed, but it often had a new look: instead of complete psalm texts only a few phrases were set to music, and even phrases from different psalms were combined. The separate lines of prose often overlap in the music; therefore there were no clear breaks or full stops. As a result, the text was not always clearly audible. This tendency was reinforced by using fewer syllabic passages and more melismas, especially towards the end of a phrase. Concomitantly, the accentuation of the syllables of a word is not always correct; this seems to be a mark of this generation of composers.

## 14.2 Texts

Three of Gheerkin's motet texts have a biblical origin.<sup>1649</sup> First, there is the motet *Vox dicentis*, which is based on three verses from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, 40:6-8.<sup>1650</sup> The two other motet texts are based on psalms. *Jubilate Deo omnis terra* is a setting of the complete text of Psalm 99,<sup>1651</sup> in the tradition of Josquin des Prez, and therefore of the previous generation. An approach more in line with Gheerkin's contemporaries is his use of Psalm 85, *Inclina Domine aurem tuam*.<sup>1652</sup> Here, he did not use the complete text, but he took only parts of it. In the Prima Pars he uses verses 1 and 3-5, in that order, leaving out verse 2. The Secunda Pars is more complicated, since Gheerkin seems to have used verses 11-12 and 14-16, but not in that order. Furthermore, he also did not maintain the original text, but made some variations, although they do not have consequences for the meaning of the text. Table 14.1 shows the verses from the original psalm text which were used by Gheerkin; the differences are underlined.

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<sup>1649</sup> The complete texts of the motets and their translations are in Appendix 16.

<sup>1650</sup> Identified by Diehl 1974, pp. 530-531.

<sup>1651</sup> Identified by Diehl 1974, p. 585. The numbering of the psalm is according to the Vulgate; in the English Authorized and Revised versions (following the Hebrew) it is number 100.

<sup>1652</sup> Identified by Diehl 1974, pp. 598-599. The numbering of the psalm is according to the Vulgate; in the English Authorized and Revised versions (following the Hebrew) it is number 86.

Table 14.1 Original lines of Psalm 85 versus the text Gheerkin used in the Secunda Pars of his motet *Inclina Domine aurem tuam*

Original verse number	Original text	Gheerkin's text
11.	Confitebor tibi Domine Deus meus in toto corde meo, et glorificabo nomen tuum in aeternum:	<u>Ideo confitebor {tibi Domine [S]/ nomini tuo [Ct]}</u> <sup>1653</sup> in toto corde meo, et glorificabo nomen tuum in eternum:
12.	Quia misericordia tua magna est super me: et eruisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori.	Quia misericordia tua magna est super me. <u>Et redemisti servum tuum de manu inimici [sic].</u>
14.	Et tu Domine Deus, miserator et misericors, patiens, et multae misericordiae, et verax:	<u>Quoniam tu Domine</u> , miserator et misericors, patiens, et multae misericordiae, et verax:
15.	Respice <u>in me</u> et miserere mei, da imperium tuum puero tuo: et salvum fac filium ancillae tuae.	Respice et miserere mei, da imperium <u>servo tuo</u> : et salvum fac filium ancillae tuae.
16.	Fac mecum signum in bonum, ut videant qui oderunt me, et confundantur: quoniam tu Domine adjuvisti me et consolatus es me.	Fac mecum signum in bonum, ut videant qui oderunt me, et confundantur: quoniam tu Domine adjuvisti me et consolatus es me. Inclina Domine aurem tuam et exaudi me quoniam inops et pauper sum ego.

A unique piece among Gheerkin's motets is *Benedicite Dominus*. Not only is it the solitary motet with just one pars, it also has no biblical background. The text is a table blessing.<sup>1654</sup> Table blessings were widespread in the Middle Ages.<sup>1655</sup> The texts were meant for daily use before having a meal. Several 16th-century composers wrote music to table blessing texts, for example Gombert, Crecquillon and Clemens non Papa. But the text used by Gheerkin has not been used by any of his

<sup>1653</sup> The superius sings: *ideo confitebor tibi Domine* (I will praise thee, O Lord); the contratenor sings: *ideo confitebor nomini tuo* (I will praise thy name). The tenor and bassus do not sing this phrase at all. Since the words of the superius fit better to the music, these words have been chosen in the transcription.

<sup>1654</sup> Diehl 1974, p. 658. The results in this paragraph and the next were previously published in Roelvink 2002, p. 176.

<sup>1655</sup> Smith 1965.

contemporaries.<sup>1656</sup> The oldest mention of this specific text comes from a prayer book from around 1450 written in the region of Valenciennes and Mons in Hainaut.<sup>1657</sup> A slightly different reading is found in a French manuscript from 1557,<sup>1658</sup> which has an almost identical version in a Mexican print (in Spanish) from 1544.<sup>1659</sup>

Gheerkin's *Benedicite Dominus* was entered in the Zeghere van Male partbooks, written between 1540 and 1542. But it might have been one of the four motets he wrote for the Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap shortly after he had arrived in 's-Hertogenbosch to take up his position on 31 December 1539.<sup>1660</sup> The Broederschap held about nine banquets each year and an account item from 1509 specifically mentions that before the meal a *Benedicite* was to be said. To set these words to music was a nice tribute from the new *zangmeester* to his employer.

The three biblical texts all had a function during liturgy. Table 14.2 gives an overview of the origins of the texts used by Gheerkin for his motets. Remarkable is that two of them were used during the canonical hours on Christmas Day, a high feast: *Vox dicentis* (at Matins) and *Jubilare Deo* (at Lauds). *Jubilare Deo* was also part of the Lauds of feasts in general. The text *Inclina Domine aurem tuam* was used on All Souls (2 November), also a feast celebrated widely in the sixteenth century. Both psalms of course had their weekly function during the liturgy as well.

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<sup>1656</sup> See also § 15.5.

<sup>1657</sup> USA, Bryn Mawr College, Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, Special Collections Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts, MS France 24, s. XV<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1658</sup> USA, New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, MS 314. Mr. Robert Babcock kindly sent me the complete text: *Benedicite. Dominus. Nos et ea que sumus sumpturi benedicat dextera christi unigeniti et omnipotentis: et benedicat nos trinus et unus +. In nomine patris et filii. et spiritus sancti. Amen.*

<sup>1659</sup> Smith 1965, p. 255. The title of the print is: *Doctrina Cristiana para Instrucción y Información de los Indios*. The text: *Nos et ea quae sumpturi sumus: benedicat Deus trinus et unus Pater et Filius; et Spiritus Sanctus. Amen. Pater noster.*

<sup>1660</sup> See also § 6.4.12 and § 7.1. The fact that Gheerkin de Hondt had someone represent him in a legal matter in Bruges in February 1540 shows that he was still in contact with the city (see § 5.1). Besides: *Benedicite Dominus* is in the last part of the partbooks.

Table 14.2 Gheerkin's motet texts and their origin

Text	Origin	Use
<i>Benedicite Dominus</i>	Unknown, oldest mention France ca. 1450	Table blessing <sup>1661</sup>
<i>Inclina Domine aurem tuam / Quia misericordia</i>	Prima Pars: Psalm 85: 1, 3-5 Secunda Pars: derived from Psalm 85: 11-12, 14-16	Friday at Compline (LU 306); November 2 at Sext (LU 1740) <sup>1662</sup>
<i>Jubilare Deo omnis terra / Laudate nomen eius</i>	Prima Pars: Psalm 99: 1-4 Secunda Pars: Psalm 99: 5-7 and 'Gloria Patri'	Lauds of Feasts (LU 221); Sunday at Prime (LU 226); the Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day at Lauds (LU 397) <sup>1663</sup>
<i>Vox dicentis / Exsiccatum est fenum</i>	Prima Pars: Isaiah 40:6-7 Secunda Pars: Isaiah 40:8	The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day at Matins <sup>1664</sup> (LU 376).

## 14.3 Gheerkin's style

### 14.3.1 Form

Gheerkin's motets do not seem to be composed according to a certain formal plan: all of them differ in length and even the division of the music between the Prima and Secunda Pars varies from motet to motet and seems not very well balanced (see Table 14.3).

<sup>1661</sup> Diehl 1974, p. 658.

<sup>1662</sup> Diehl 1974, p. 598-599. This goes for the whole psalm.

<sup>1663</sup> Diehl 1974, p. 585. The 'Gloria Patri' (the Minor Doxology) is only included at the feast of the Nativity of the Lord.

<sup>1664</sup> Cantus Database.

Table 14.3 Length of Gheerkin's motets in breves (each breve equalling a bar)

Motet	Length Prima Pars	Length Secunda Pars	Total length <sup>1665</sup>
<i>Benedicite Dominus</i>	63	-	63
<i>Inclina Domine aurem tuam</i>	113	125	238
<i>Jubilate Deo omnis terra</i>	109	91	200
<i>Vox dicentis</i>	83	37	120

But if we take a closer look, there is more balance than we would expect at first sight, because the length of the verses seems to be the determining factor in the length of the music. The three short lines of *Benedicite Dominus*, followed by Amen, clearly did not need as many notes as the seven long phrases of the Secunda Pars of *Inclina Domine*. And the Secunda Pars of *Jubilate Deo* only contains two verses, while the Prima Pars is built on four phrases.

The text is indeed pre-eminently the decisive feature in the form of Gheerkin's motets. As with the Masses, Gheerkin prefers to make obvious sections, respecting the lines of the texts, even making divisions at subsections. Almost every single unit of a sentence is clearly visible; overlaps between phrases and even well-defined parts of phrases are rare, and if they do appear, they only occur for one or two bars. On the other hand, full stops in the music (with rests) do not occur frequently either; normally at least one voice continues. Only in the final section of *Jubilate Deo* (before 'et in secula') and in the Secunda Pars of *Inclina Domine* (after 'ideo confitebor tibi Domine' and before 'in toto corde meo') rests force the music to a full stop (Example 14.1 and Example 14.18 below). However, the use of chordal passages and a very thin texture often serve as 'full stops', and in the motet *Benedicite Dominus* fermatas are used on breves, giving the same effect.<sup>1666</sup>

Example 14.1 Full stop of the music with rests in bar 184 of *Jubilate Deo*

183

The musical score shows four staves. The lyrics are: Soprano: 'Et in se-cu-la'; Alto: 'Et in se-cu-la'; Tenor: 'sem-per Et in se-cu-la se-cu-lo-rum'; Bass: 'per Et in se-cu-la se-cu-lo-rum'. Bar 184 is marked with a full stop and rests in all voices.

<sup>1665</sup> The final longas of the Prima and Secunda Pars have been counted as one bar.

<sup>1666</sup> A complete transcription of *Benedicite Dominus* is given in Roelvink 2002, pp. 371-374.

Another formal feature of Gheerkin's four motets splits them up according to their textual origin: the two psalm motets *Inclina Domine* and *Jubilate Deo* are based on voice pairs, whereas in *Benedicite Dominus* and *Vox dicentis* Gheerkin prefers a full texture, although voice pairs do occur. The use of voice pairs has the consequence that imitation is carried out at greater length and at shorter intervals, usually a semibreve (Example 14.2), than when full texture is used. In the last case, Gheerkin relinquishes imitation after four or five notes. In full texture imitation occurs both at short and longer intervals: usually a semibreve, but also after breves or even minims (Example 14.3); sometimes the intervals are irregular and the first notes had to be adapted in length (Example 14.4).

Example 14.2 Long imitation in voice pairs in *Jubilate Deo*

38

Sci - to - te quo - ni - am Do - mi - nus

Sci - to - te quo - ni - am Do -

43

ip - se est De - us

mi - nus ip - se est De - us

sci - to - te quo -

sci - to - te

48

Sci - to -

Sci -

ni - am Do - mi - nus ip - se est De - us

quo - ni - am Do - mi - nus ip - se est De - us



Example 14.3 Irregular and short imitation in full texture in *Vox dicentis* (Prima Pars)

Example 14.3 shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in *Vox dicentis* (Prima Pars). The lyrics are: num et ce - ci - dit flos. The score illustrates irregular and short imitation in full texture. Arrows indicate the imitative entries between voices: Soprano enters first, followed by Alto, then Tenor, and finally Bass. The lyrics are: num et ce - ci - dit flos.

Example 14.4 Irregular imitation in full texture in *Jubilate Deo* (Prima Pars), with adapted first note in the tenor

Example 14.4 shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in *Jubilate Deo* (Prima Pars). The lyrics are: In - tro - i - te in con - spec - tu e - ius. The score illustrates irregular imitation in full texture. Arrows indicate the imitative entries between voices: Soprano enters first, followed by Alto, then Tenor, and finally Bass. The lyrics are: In - tro - i - te in con - spec - tu e - ius. The Tenor part shows an adapted first note.

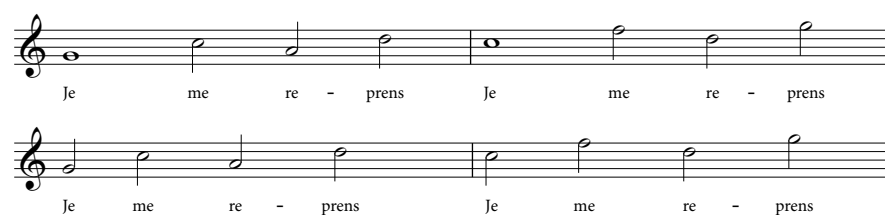
Gheerkin has a certain preference in creating his voice pairs: in most cases the superius and contratenor form a pair, while the tenor and bassus also make a pair. Because Gheerkin often chooses to imitate a voice at another pitch, as a consequence the voice pairs are formed by superius/tenor and contratenor/bassus (Example 14.2 above). Especially in his psalm motets, Gheerkin alternates the use of voice pairs with full texture passages, sometimes in chords, creating variety.

### 14.3.2 Specific compositional techniques

Besides the alternation between chordal and imitative passages, Gheerkin also uses contrasting themes. Smooth melodies alternate with melodies using leaps in both directions (ascending and descending). Gheerkin especially seemed to like the rising leap of a fourth.

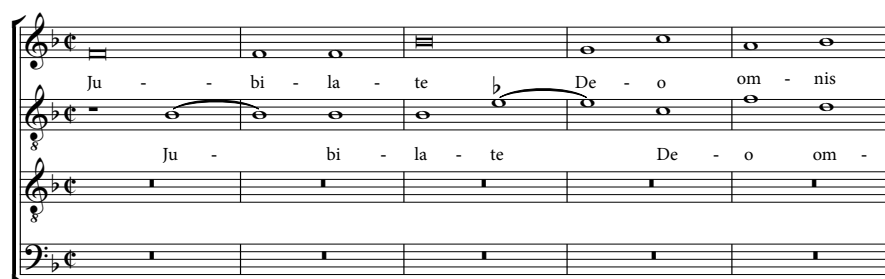
Specifically one theme containing this leap reoccurs in three of his motets, although in quite a few variations. But in its purest and also most persistent form, it appears as the opening theme of his chanson *Je me repréens*; therefore I would like to call it the *Je me repréens* motif.<sup>1667</sup> Example 14.5 shows the motif of the chanson, which occurs on c and on g, both with a semibreve and a minim as first note.<sup>1668</sup>

Example 14.5 Opening motif of Gheerkin's chanson *Je me repréens*



This same motif, although in a different form and on different pitches, appears as the opening theme of the motet *Jubilate Deo* (Example 14.6). It reoccurs as the finale of the second phrase 'in exultatione', but only in three of the four voices and in two rhythmic variants (Example 14.7). In the Secunda Pars of this motet, the opening strongly reminds us of the motif, but it only has the first two characteristic leaps and then continues in a different way (Example 14.8).

Example 14.6 Opening of the motet *Jubilate Deo* with the *Je me repréens* motif



<sup>1667</sup> On this chanson: § 15.2 (text) and § 15.3.2 (use of text). By naming this motif after the chanson (where it occurs so persistent), I do not want to suggest that the chanson was there first. The name '*Je me repréens* motif' only refers to the musical motif of a rising fourth, a descending third and a rising fourth again.

<sup>1668</sup> The twelve opening bars of the chanson are given in § 15.3.2, example 15.18.

Example 14.7 End of phrase 2, 'in exultatione', in motet *Jubilate Deo* with the *Je me repréens* motif

33

in ex - ul - ta - ti - o - ne

ius - in ex - ul - ta - ti - o - ne

in ex - ul - ta - ti - o - ne

in ex - ul - ta - ti - o - ne

Example 14.8 Beginning of the Secunda Pars of the motet *Jubilate Deo*

110

Lau - da - te

Lau -

Lau - da - te no - men e - ius

Lau - da - te no - men e - ius

In the motets *Benedicite Dominus* and *Vox dicentis* the *Je me repréens* motif also occurs, but not as a theme in all voices: it only appears in the bassus, in an isolated form (Examples 14.9.a and 14.9.b). In *Benedicite* it clearly is a motif, which is repeated, but in *Vox dicentis* it is a question if it was used on purpose as a separate motif.

Example 14.9.a *Je me repréens motif in the bassus of Benedicite Dominus*

ti et spi - ri - tus et spi - ri - tus sanc -  
 ti [et spi - ri - tus et spi - ri - tus]  
 ti [et spi - ri - tus sanc -  
 ti et spi - ri - tus [et spi - ri - tus]

Example 14.9.b *Je me repréens motif in the bassus of Vox dicentis*

gri] ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum  
 gri] ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num [ex - sic - ca - tum]  
 sic - ca - tum est fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num  
 est fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num ex -

In the more original capacity as a clear theme and in all voices the *Je me repréens* motif appears in the Credo of Gheerkin's *Missa In te Domine speravi*, in the 'cum gloria' section (Example 14.10).<sup>1669</sup> Again, it is repeated as an isolated motif, only in one voice, a few phrases later (Example 14.11).

<sup>1669</sup> This motif does not have any relation with the motifs from Hellinck's model for this Mass. In fact, this is what is usually called 'freely composed material'.

Example 14.10 *Je me repréens motif in the Credo of the Missa In te Domine speravi*

153

ven - tu - rus est cum glo - ri - a ju - di - ca - re

est cum glo - ri - a ju - di - ca - re vi -

est cum glo - ri - a ju - di - ca - re vi - vos et

Example 14.11 *Je me repréens motif in the Credo of the Missa In te Domine speravi*  
(superius)

205

am con - fi - te - or u - num ba -

am con - fi - te - or u - num ba -

am con - fi - te - or

am con - fi - te - or

am con - fi - te - or

The reuse of this single motif is not unique in Gheerkin's motet oeuvre. In fact, he actually 'recycled' musical material. For example, the main theme of *Benedicite Dominus* also appears twice in *Jubilate Deo*, but in a different rhythmic form (Examples 14.12 and 14.13.a. and 14.13.b), the first time even combining the *Benedicite* motif with the *Je me repréens* motif (Example 14.13.a.)

Example 14.12 Opening of *Benedicite Dominus*

Example 14.12 shows the opening of the hymn 'Benedicite Dominus'. It is a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'Be - ne - di - ci - te Do - mi - nus'. The score begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and homophonic, with each part entering in sequence. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables spread across multiple notes.

Example 14.13.a Section 'introite portas eius' in Prima Pars *Jubilate Deo*

Example 14.13.a shows the section 'introite portas eius' from the Prima Pars of 'Jubilate Deo'. It is a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'in - tro - i - te por - tas e - ius in con - fes - si - o - ne'. The score begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is more complex than the opening, with some syncopation and longer note values. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables spread across multiple notes.

Example 14.13.b Section 'sicut erat in principio' in *Jubilate Deo*

Example 14.13.b shows the section 'sicut erat in principio' from 'Jubilate Deo'. It is a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'si - cut e - rat in prin -'. The score begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and homophonic, with each part entering in sequence. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables spread across multiple notes.

But if we take a look at text repetition within a single motet, Gheerkin cannot be accused of being a lazy composer. In *Vox dicentis*, for example, the phrase ‘Exsiccatum est fenum, et cecidit flos’ of the Prima Pars literally reappears as the opening of the Secunda Pars. At the first instance, Gheerkin repeats the music literally, but halfway through the phrase, at ‘et cecidit flos’, he decides to create something new (Examples 14.14.a and 14.14.b).

Example 14.14.a Section ‘Exsiccatum est fenum’ in Prima Pars of *Vox dicentis*

38

gri [flos a - gri] ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num

a - gri [flos a - gri] ex - sic - ca - tum

gri ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num

ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum est

43

ex sic - ca - tum est fe - num (b) - num

est fe - num [ex - sic - ca - tum] est fe - num et

ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num est fe - num

fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num

48

et ce - ci - dit flos et ce - ci - dit flos

ce - ci - dit flos et ce - ci - dit flos

et ce - ci - dit et ce - ci - dit flos

et ce - ci - dit flos

Example 14.14.b Section 'Exsiccatum est fenum' in Secunda Pars of *Vox dicentis*

84

Ex - sic - ca - tum est

Ex - sic -

Ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num

Ex - sic - ca - tum [est] fe - num ex - sic - ca - tum

88

fe - num ex sic - ca - tum est fe -

ca - tum est fe - num [ex - sic - ca - tum] est fe -

ex - sic - ca - tum est fe - num [est fe -

est fe - - num ex - sic - ca - tum est

92

- num et ce - ci - dit flos

num et ce - ci - dit flos

- num] [et ce -

fe - num et

96

et ce - ci - dit flos

[et ce - ci - dit flos] ver -

- ci - dit flos

ce - - - ci - dit flos



In his motet *Inclina Domine* Gheerkin continues this last approach. Here, the first phrase of the motet is repeated as the last one, but the music is paraphrased (Examples 14.15.a and 14.15.b).

Example 14.15.a Phrase 'Inclina Domine aurem tuam et exaudi me: quoniam inops et pauper sum ego' in Prima Pars of *Inclina Domine*

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in C major and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The lyrics are: 'In - cli - na Do - mi - ne au - rem tu - am In - cli - na et ex - au - di me quo - ni - am in - ops et am et ex - au - di me quo - ni - am in - ops et pau - Do - mi - ne au - rem tu - am et In - cli - na Do - mi - ne au - rem tu - am et ex - pau - per sum e - go per sum e - go'. The score shows a four-part setting of a Latin phrase, with the first system ending at measure 6 and the second system ending at measure 11. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words split across lines.

16

ex - au - di me quo - ni - am in - ops et pau - per sum et

21

per sum e - go mi - se - re - re

Example 14.15.b Phrase 'Inclina Domine aurem tuam et exaudi me: quoniam inops et pauper sum ego' in Secunda Pars of *Inclina Domine*

219

In - cli - na Do - mi - ne au - rem tu

223

am et ex - au - di me

227

quo - - ni - am in - - ops

quo - ni - am in - ops

ni - am in - - ops et

quo - - ni - am in - ops

231

et pau - - per sum e - -

et pau - - per sum

pau - - per sum

et pau - - per sum

235

go [sum] go

e - - go sum e - go

e - - go sum e - go

e - - go sum e - go

A final aspect to consider here, is if Gheerkin used chant melodies in his motets.<sup>1670</sup> Only in the case of *Vox dicentis*, there seems to be a possible relation between a chant melody and the first motif of Gheerkin's motet. The chant is for Christmas (as is Gheerkin's motet) and is found in a Cambrai antiphoner dated between 1508 and 1518.<sup>1671</sup> Example 14.16 shows the beginning of the chant original and Example 14.17 gives the opening of Gheerkin's motet. It is only this small four-

<sup>1670</sup> On the basis of the titles of the motets (Prima and Secunda Pars), chant melodies with the same titles were checked in Bryden/Hughes 1969 and Cantus Database.

<sup>1671</sup> Cambrai, Mediathèque Municipale, Impr. XVI C 4, fol. 7r (Cantus Database). On the antiphoner: Haggh 1995.

note motif that might have been derived from the chant original. The rest of the chant is not found in Gheerkin's motet. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves the question if Gheerkin is really referring to this chant.<sup>1672</sup> He probably was not, since he also used the melody in his motet *Jubilate Deo*, on the words 'scitote quoniam' (Example 14.2).

Example 14.16 Chant melody of *Vox dicentis*, according to a Cambrai antiphoner dated 1508-1518



Example 14.17 Opening of *Vox dicentis*, with the head motif in all voices on four different pitches (c, f, a, d)

A four-part musical setting of the opening of *Vox dicentis*. The notation is in a four-staff system (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The lyrics are: 'Vox di - cen - tis di - cen - tis'. The head motif is repeated in all voices on four different pitches (c, f, a, d). The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and brackets.

<sup>1672</sup> We have to keep in mind that Gheerkin de Hondt never worked in a church of the Cambrai diocese. Besides, he is not using the chant in the classical way of the previous generation of composers (Josquin): as a cantus firmus in the tenor voice.

### 14.3.3 Use of text

Gheerkin's preference to make clear musical parts for (sub)sections of texts has the result that the words are very audible. Several other characteristics also contribute to make the text easy to hear: the use of voice pairs instead of full texture, the use of chords in full texture, correct stressing of the syllables and syllabic setting, especially of the first words of a (sub)phrase. In short: Gheerkin wanted his audience to hear the text he set to music.

Therefore, we may assume that the words he set to chords were highly important to him.<sup>1673</sup> There seems to be a pattern here: chords are always used in combination with the word God or Christ or a reference to (one of) them.<sup>1674</sup> Table 14.4 gives an overview of the texts set to chords and their meaning.

Table 14.4 Overview of chordal passages and their texts in Gheerkin's motets

Motet	Text	Meaning
<i>Benedicite Dominus</i>	Dextera Christi	The right hand of Christ
	In nomine Patris et Filii	In the name of the Father and of the Son
<i>Inclina Domine</i>	Miserere mei Domine	Have mercy on me, O Lord
	Quoniam tu Domine miserator et misericors patiens et multe misericordie et verax	And thou, O Lord, art a God of compassion, and merciful, patient, and of much mercy, and true
<i>Jubilare Deo</i>	Ipse est Deus	He is God
	Suavis est Dominus, in eternum	The Lord is sweet, for ever
	Et in secula	'God's Kingdom'
<i>Vox dicentis</i>	Quia spiritus Domini	Because the spirit of the Lord

The words 'et in secula' even receive more attention, since they are preceded by rests (Example 14.1).

A few interesting cases of word-painting appear in Gheerkin's motets. A simple form of word-painting is the repetition of words in a short period of time, to stress

<sup>1673</sup> Chordal passages comprise fragments with a rather static rhythm in which three or more voices (in a four-voiced composition) sing the same text at the same time.

<sup>1674</sup> In doing so, he follows an old tradition (Blackburn 1970, p. 233-234).

them. An example is the beginning of *Vox dicentis*, where the first words ('The voice of one, saying') occur nine times in eight bars (Example 14.17 above).

Another form of words expressed in music is in the 'falling flower' in *Vox dicentis*, which has been painted by a small stop in the music, which is not reached by a full cadence and also by a falling line in the music (Examples 14.14.a. and 14.14.b above).

Another curious cadence occurs at the end of the phrase 'de manu inimici' in *Inclina Domine* (bars 137-138). Normally the leap of a fifth downwards would be in the bassus, and the leading tone C sharp would be in the superius (Example 14.18). The text explains the upside-down situation: enemies. The passage is remarkable as a whole, since specifically at this point in the text, Gheerkin deviates from the original psalm text, clearly preferring his own (Table 14.1). It is also at this spot that he writes one of the rare full stops in his motets (Example 14.18).

Example 14.18 Passage in *Inclina Domine aurem tuam* with word-painting and full stop

134

um de ma-nu in-ni-mi - ci id -

um de ma-nu in-ni-mi - - - ci

de ma-nu in-ni-mi - ci

de ma-nu in-ni-mi - - - ci

140

- e - o con - fi - te - bor ti - bi Do - mi -

id - e - o con - fi - te - bor [ti - bi Do - mi -

143

ne in to - to cor - de me - o et glo - ri - fi - ca -

ne] in to - to cor - de me - o

in to - to cor - de me - o

in to - to cor - de me - o et glo -

Then there is the rather unusual imitation of a motif on four different pitches in the motet *Jubilate Deo*, making the imitation far from perfect (Example 14.19).<sup>1675</sup> Normally Gheerkin would imitate his melodies on two different pitches, the notes following each other in exactly the same movement. But the text at this point says: ‘populus eius’ (we are his people); the imitation therefore might be interpreted as a reflection of the many-sided society.<sup>1676</sup>

Example 14.19 Motif on four different pitches in the motet *Jubilate Deo* (a, d, g, c)

70

po pu - lus e - ius et o - ves pas - cu -

po pu - lus e - ius et o - ves pas -

nos po - pu - lus e - ius et o - ves

nos po - pu - lus e - ius et

<sup>1675</sup> The distances between the notes are different: a-b-flat is a semitone, whereas d-e/g-a/c-d are whole tones.

<sup>1676</sup> There is one other place where this rather remarkable form of imitation also occurs, and that is at the beginning of the motet *Vox dicentis* (example 14.17). However, this is in a slightly different form, since the imitation occurs in two voice pairs at the beginning, but the motif sounds on four different pitches in total. Curiously, the text says: ‘the voice of one’, whereas the music – in imitation and on different pitches – is clearly not speaking in one voice. Perhaps a case of stressing the opposite?

Remarkable too is the repetition of the first phrase of the motet *Inclina Domine*: 'Incline thy ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am needy and poor.' This repetition is not in the original psalm text. In fact, the music could have stopped after the words *Quoniam tu Domine adiuuisti me et consolatus es me* ('Because thou, O Lord, hast helped me and hast comforted me'). Instead, Gheerkin chose to repeat the first line, but he adapted the music to the words (Examples 14.15.a. and 14.15.b above). By doing so, he stresses the never-ending request for relief of an individual to God, although this request may have different forms at different times.

#### 14.3.4 Gheerkin and other composers

Compared to the motet production of Gheerkin's contemporaries Clemens non Papa (233), Crecquillon (ca. 125), Gombert (ca. 160), Appenzeller (ca. 40), Lupi (ca. 35) and even Lupus Hellinck (15) Gheerkin's legacy of four motets is rather slim. But we still can distinguish his work from his contemporaries, because he seems to have developed his own style.<sup>1677</sup> In his motets, Gheerkin is in the middle of two generations: on the one hand he still uses techniques from the Josquin generation, but on the other hand he follows his contemporaries.

Characteristic for Gheerkin is that the text dominates the music, making clear sections in the music according to the (sub)phrases of the text, with correct declamation. In this way, he does not follow his contemporaries Gombert, Clemens non Papa, Hellinck and Crecquillon, who more often subordinated the text to their music,<sup>1678</sup> but he composes more in the style of the previous generation. However, more in accordance with the conventions of his own time, at some points he does use irregular imitation at very short intervals, ceasing the imitation after only four or five notes.

In his psalm motet *Jubilare Deo* Gheerkin copies the style of Josquin: he sets the complete psalm text to music and uses voice pairs, alternating with passages in full texture. This last technique is also found in *Inclina Domine*, but here he looks more to his contemporaries, because he creates a different text out of the classical psalm.

In reusing themes from one motet in another Gheerkin clearly follows the same procedure as his contemporary and Bruges colleague Lupus Hellinck, who had a liking for 'self-borrowing'.<sup>1679</sup> But when text is repeated in the same motet, he does not automatically copy the music previously used, but creates something new out of

<sup>1677</sup> Comparison is made with the different styles described in § 14.1 and the descriptions of the composers' styles in <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>1678</sup> Blackburn 1970, p. 267.

<sup>1679</sup> Blackburn 1970, for example p. 236.



the existing material. In that respect he followed his contemporaries Clemens non Papa and Crecquillon.<sup>1680</sup>

#### 14.4 Doubtful motets: *Ave Maria* and *Dum penderet* / *Petrus in cruce*

In the past, two motets have been connected to Gheerkin de Hondt, but also to other composers. A setting of the *Ave Maria* was also linked to Jacobus Clemens non Papa and Thomas Crecquillon, and the motet *Dum penderet* was attributed to Gheerkin Corael/De Wale. The question arises if both motets could also have been composed by Gheerkin de Hondt, on the basis of his style.

As we have seen in Chapter 12, in the Zeghere van Male partbooks CambraiBM 125-8 *Dum penderet* was actually not ascribed to Gheerkin de Hondt, but to Gheerkin de Wale, also named Gheerkin Corael, who probably is to be identified as the Gheeraert de Wale mentioned in the accounts of the Sint-Jacobskerk of 1559. The style of the Prima Pars of this motet confirms that indeed we have to do with two different composers.<sup>1681</sup> Where Gheerkin de Hondt prefers clear musical sections based on the lines of the text, Gheerkin de Wale favours a more through-composed technique: nowhere in the Prima Pars does the music come to a (full) stop, and lines of text flow over each other continuously. Therefore, Zeghere van Male's differentiation between the two Gheerkins is correct.

The clear musical distinction between text lines, even marked by double bar lines, is a remarkable feature of the *Ave Maria* in the Leiden choirbook Leiden 1442.<sup>1682</sup> In 1928 Bernet-Kempers concluded that this work could hardly be by Clemens non Papa, since it was 'no more than a mediocre schoolwork'.<sup>1683</sup> But according to the biographers of Thomas Crecquillon in Oxford Music Online, it 'was probably by Clemens'.<sup>1684</sup> Indeed, the work is generally accepted as written by Clemens, perhaps because it does contain one of Clemens's main compositional techniques, namely: 'the textures are dense and busy throughout, with motion most consistently in minims and semibreves'.<sup>1685</sup> This certainly is not one of Gheerkin's

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<sup>1680</sup> Schmidt-Beste 2005, p. 274.

<sup>1681</sup> An edition of the Prima Pars is in De Coussemaker 1975<sup>2</sup>, Supplement/Specimen de musique, no. 11, pp. 27-32.

<sup>1682</sup> An edition is provided for by Bernet Kempers 1951-1976, volume XXI, pp. XII, 93-95.

<sup>1683</sup> Bernet-Kempers 1928, p. 53.

<sup>1684</sup> Hudson/Ham 2001.

<sup>1685</sup> As described by Elders/Forney ('Clemens non Papa, Jacobus').

main compositional characteristics. Therefore, although the appearance of an *Ave Maria* by Gheerkin de Hondt in a Leiden choirbook should not come as a surprise,<sup>1686</sup> and the composition reminds us of Gheerkin's work because of the clear divisions in text lines, this piece of music probably is not his.

## 14.5 Other composers using the same texts

All motet texts used by Gheerkin de Hondt were also the basis for a composition of at least one other composer. Table 14.5 gives an overview.<sup>1687</sup>

Table 14.5 Other composers using the same texts for their motets

Motet	Composer	Source(s) or edition
<i>Benedicite Dominus nos et ea</i>	Anonymous: for 3 voices	Sources: - Uppsala Universitetsbiblioteket, MS Vokalmusik i Hanskrift 76a, fol. 9v-10r; - Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2356, fol. 64v.
<i>Inclina Domine aurem tuam</i>	Claudin de Sermisy: for 8 voices (Primus & Secundus Chorus)	Edition: - Allaire/Cazeaux 1972 (CMM 52, II), pp. IX-X, 39-64.
	Nicolas Gombert: for 5 voices (also attributed to 'Berchem')	Edition: - Schmidt-Görg 1970 (CMM 6, VIII), pp. IX, 8-16.
	Jacotin: for 4 voices	Edition: - Tillman Merritt 1962, pp. 151-164.
	Jacobus Clemens non Papa: for 4 voices	Edition: - Bernet Kempers 1976 (CMM 4, XXI), pp. XIII, 140-145.
	Dominique Phinot: for 4 voices	Edition: - Höfler 1974 (CMM 59, II), pp. XIII-XIV, 63-69.

<sup>1686</sup> Substantiated in Chapter 13.

<sup>1687</sup> The list was put together by using Thomas (Motet Database), the work lists of composers in <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, secondary literature on prints in general, for example Vanhulst 1990, and by checking tables of contents of manuscripts and prints.

<i>Jubilate Deo omnis terra</i>	'Josquin des Prez': <sup>1688</sup> for 4 voices	Edition: - A. Smijers, <i>Werken van Josquin des Prés, Motetten</i> , deel IV, Amsterdam 1956, pp. XII, 41-46.
	Antoine de Mornable: for 4 voices	Source: - Antoine de Mornable, <i>Motetorum musicalium, liber primus XXV modulorum</i> , Paris, Pierre Attaignant, 1546, fol. IXv-Xr (S), VIIIv-IXv (Ct), Xr-XIr (T), VIIIv-IXr (B).
	Jacobus Clemens non Papa: for 6 voices	Edition: - Bernet Kempers 1976 (CMM 4, XVI), pp. VIII, 30-39.
	Nicolas Gombert: for 4 voices (incomplete text, only the first four words) <sup>1689</sup>	Edition: - Schmidt-Görg 1970 (CMM 6, X), pp. XI, 61-66.
<i>Vox dicentis</i>	Jacobus Clemens non Papa: for 5 voices (as Secunda Pars of the motet <i>Vox clamantis</i> )	Edition: - Bernet Kempers 1968 (CMM 4, XVI), pp. IX, 81-84.

By far the most popular texts were the two psalm settings *Inclina Domine aurem tuam* and *Jubilate Deo omnis terra*. The Motet Database gives 47 and 147 hits respectively on the first two words of these psalms.<sup>1690</sup> But as it turns out, in the case of *Inclina Domine aurem tuam*, none of these texts is the same one Gheerkin used. His colleagues made different choices, none of them using exactly the same text, some of them even combining verses from different psalms.<sup>1691</sup> Musically too, there

<sup>1688</sup> The attribution to Josquin is doubtful; it might have been written by a follower (Jas 2009).

<sup>1689</sup> The text could therefore also be Psalm 65, which begins with the same words *Jubilate Deo omnis terra* (among others used by Thomas Crecquillon for a motet).

<sup>1690</sup> Thomas (Motet Database), accessed November 2014.

<sup>1691</sup> Only the compositions of Gheerkin's contemporaries originating from the same area have been checked (with addition of the verses of the psalm used according to the editions): Claudin de Sermisy (complete psalm text), Nicolas Gombert (Prima Pars: vv. 1, 5, 6; Secunda Pars: v. 3 plus Psalm 90, v. 2 and Psalm 141, v. 6), Jacotin (Prima Pars: vv. 1 and parts of 2 and 3, not in the right order; Secunda Pars: vv. 10 and variant of 12; Tertia Pars: variants of vv. 14-16), Jacobus Clemens non Papa (conflation of verses of Psalms: 85:1, 85:6, 5:2, 5:3, 69:6, 69:7), Dominique Phinot (vv 1-4).

are no relationships between Gheerkin's motet with the title *Inclina Domine aurem tuam* and the works with the same opening words by other composers.

For *Jubilate Deo* there are more similarities:<sup>1692</sup> the settings attributed to Josquin des Prez, Antoine de Mornable and Jacobus Clemens non Papa have the same words, except that the final lines from 'Gloria Patri' to 'Amen' are missing. However, this Minor Doxology was often added to psalms for liturgical use.<sup>1693</sup> In Gheerkin's case, the words and music could easily be left out, since the music comes to a final (full) cadence on the word 'eius', as shown in Example 14.20.

Example 14.20 End of the psalm text in *Jubilate Deo*, followed by the Minor Doxology

150

tas e - - ius Glo - ri - a pa - tri et fi - li - o

8 tas] ve - ri-tas e - ius Glo - ri - a pa - tri et fi - li - o

8 tas e - - ius Glo -

tas e - - ius

'Josquin' and De Mornable divided the text in exactly the same two parts as Gheerkin did, with the Secunda Pars starting at 'Laudate nomen eius'. Clemens non Papa made a different choice: he starts the Secunda Pars at 'Populus eius'. However, none of these compositions seems to be related to the setting by Gheerkin.

The text of the motet *Vox Dicentis* is also used by Jacobus Clemens non Papa, but with Clemens it is the Secunda Pars of his motet *Vox clamantis*. Here too, there are no musical relationships between Gheerkin's and Clemens's settings.

A special case is *Benedicite Dominus*. There is one other setting of this text, which survives in two sources dating from the late 15th century, but it turns out to be a contrafact: the music to which this *Benedicite* was set is the music of the anonymous chanson *La plus dolente qui soit nee*.<sup>1694</sup> Musically, there are no relations between this composition and the one by Gheerkin de Hondt.

<sup>1692</sup> Only the compositions of Gheerkin's contemporaries originating from the same area have been checked: Jacobus Clemens non Papa, Nicolas Gombert, Antoine de Mornable, 'Josquin des Prez'.

<sup>1693</sup> Blackburn 1970, p. 237.

<sup>1694</sup> Thomas (Motet Database); Brown 1987 and Brown 1983.

## 14.6 Summary

Gheerkin's motet oeuvre is very small, and only survives through the Zeghere van Male partbooks. The texts he chose are varied: one of them is a complete psalm (*Jubilate Deo*), another is derived from a psalm text (*Inclina Domine*), the third originates in the Book of Isaiah (*Vox dicentis*) and the fourth motet is a table blessing (*Benedicite Dominus*). Three texts are usable during the liturgy in the churches where Gheerkin worked, but also in a more private surroundings.

Typical for Gheerkin's motet style is his treatment of the text. He makes clear sections in the music that correspond to the phrases of the text, and even subdivisions within text phrases are often clearly separated from each other; overlapping of text phrases is rare. Because of this, Gheerkin's motets have a clear formal structure, further shaped by the use of contrasting themes. Gheerkin likes to use his themes in more than one motet, a method of composing also favoured by Lupus Hellinck. To accentuate the text, Gheerkin uses chordal passages, especially when the text refers to God or Christ. On the whole, his declamation is correct. Word-painting is rare.

There is no doubt about the authenticity of the four motets attributed to Gheerkin de Hondt, but the two motets that have been connected to him previously (*Ave Maria* in a Leiden choirbook and *Dum penderet* in the Zeghere van Male partbooks) are not by his hand.

All the texts Gheerkin used for his motets have also been set to music by other composers, although not always in exactly the same way. Of the motets that do have the same text, none has any musical relation with Gheerkin's work.

In composing motets, Gheerkin is in the middle of two generations. The use of voice pairs, the preference for a clearly audible text and a correct text declamation place him closer to the older generation of Josquin. But the practice of irregular imitation at short intervals for a limited number of notes positions him among such contemporaries as Gombert, Hellinck, Clemens non Papa and Crecquillon. In his choices of text he also straddles two generations: on the one hand he adapts a psalm text to his own personal taste (*Inclina Domine*), as do composers of his own generation; on the other hand he sets a complete psalm to music (*Jubilate Deo*), as Josquin preferred.<sup>1695</sup> Therefore, we may conclude that Gheerkin de Hondt created his own personal style, in which the text was very important to him, taking compositional elements from his own and from the previous generation of composers.

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<sup>1695</sup> The different settings of *Jubilate Deo* prove that also in Gheerkin's own generation complete versions of psalm texts were used.