Discantare Super Planum Cantum : new approaches to vocal polyphonic improvisation 1300-1470

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4 IMPROVISED COUNTERPOINT 1400-1470*

The primarily oral and aural understanding of counterpoint in the fifteenth century has become widely recognised by scholars and practitioners of early music in recent decades. Practice-oriented scholarship has already been carried out on fifteenth-century improvised polyphony chiefly by pedagogues and researchers such as Jean-Yves Haymoz (Haute École de Musique de Genève), Peter Schubert (McGill University, Montreal), and Markus Jans (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis). The treatise *De preceptis artis musicae*, written by one Guillelmus Monachus around 1470, has played an essential role in this recent pedagogical revival of 'cantare super librum'.[293] Introductory texts on fifteenth-century improvised counterpoint, such as the articles by Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, Markus Jans, and Ross Duffin in the *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis,* and Barnabé Janin's improvisation manual *Chanter sur le livre*, rely heavily on *De preceptis* for their information.[294] This chapter will take *De preceptis* as a point of departure, so that several types of fifteenth-century polyphonic improvisation, such as canons, that are not mentioned in *De preceptis* will not be discussed.[295] I have found that the models of two-, three, and four-voice counterpoint discussed in this chapter form an excellent practical introduction to singing on the book.

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293 The treatise survives in a single manuscript: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. 336 (Contarini), coll. 1581. Andrew Hughes dates the treatise around 1470; see Andrew Hughes, 'Guillelmus Monachus', *Grove Music Online* [accessed 16 August 2016]. For a modern version, see Eulmee Park, 'De Preceptis Artis Musicae of Guillelmus Monachus: A New Edition, Translation and Commentary' (Ohio State University, 1993) <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/osu1220457317/inline> [accessed 16 August 2016].
Park's dissertation, the most recent and accessible edition of the treatise, will be used for references, including indicating the pages of the corresponding translation.

294 Klaus-Jürgen Sachs, 'Arten improvisierter Mehrstimmigkeit nach Lehrtexten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts'; Jans, 'Alle gegen Eine: Satzmodelle in note-gegen-note Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts'; Ross W. Duffin, 'Contrapunctus Simplex et Diminutus: Polyphonic Improvisation for Voices in the Fifteenth Century', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 31 (2007), pp. 69–90; Barnabé Janin, *Chanter sur le livre. Manuel pratique d'improvisation polyphonique de la Renaissance* (Langres: Éditions Dominique Guéniot, 2012).

295 For a more comprehensive overview see for instance Peter Schubert, 'Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. by Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 503–533; 'Musical Commonplaces in the Renaissance'.

What is the best way to use the information in *De preceptis* to teach counterpoint in our modern classrooms? This is the main question I address in this chapter. Existing modern scholarship on *De preceptis* extensively treats its three- and four-voice models,[296] but little attention has been given to the useful insights the treatise can provide into two-voice counterpoint. In my discussion of Guillelmus's parallel three-voice techniques, I will point to some hitherto unobserved relationships with composed polyphony and offer some suggestions as to how these can inform us about improvisation. The three- and four-voice techniques involving a contratenor bassus that *De preceptis* gives in its sixth chapter will be examined with special attention to the relation between the two. Due to the rather unsystematic nature of the treatise, I will not discuss the contrapuntal models in the order in which they appear in the source.[297] The original place of these techniques in the text and examples of *De preceptis*, is given in Appendix B. For the purposes of this chapter, I have opted for the order that appears most logical to me as a modern reader and pedagogue: a progression from simple to complex two-voice counterpoint, with the three-and four-voice models as a final step. A comparison of the different contrapuntal models of *De preceptis* with several late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century compositions will provide further insights into singing on the book. On the basis of these observations I will propose a model for teaching improvised counterpoint.

The most important obstacle to a proper assessment of Guillelmus's contrapuntal techniques is the somewhat surprising fact that no completely satisfactory edition or translation has been published of this important text. Albert Seay's 1965 edition of the treatise is limited to a diplomatic transcription and does not offer score-transcriptions of the examples. Seay also does not consider how the examples should be placed in the text, a matter which is

[296] See for instance 'Alle gegen Eine: Satzmodelle in note-gegen-note Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', pp. 104–105; Duffin, pp. 80–81.

[297] Andrew Hughes has proposed that *De preceptis* might be a compilation, taking passages of earlier, now unknown, texts, because of the unsystematic, haphazard structure of the treatise. Counterpoint, for instance, is discussed in chapters IV and VI of the treatise, and briefly returned to in chapter VIII. The different types of counterpoint are not discussed in any apparent order and a lot of information from chapter IV is repeated in chapter VI. See Hughes, 'Guillelmus Monachus', in *Grove Music Online* [accessed 16 August 2016].

particularly important because of the haphazard composition of the source.[298] Eulmee Park's edition of 1993 is more useful in this respect, but has some problems of its own; firstly, it is regrettable that Park's transcriptions of the examples fail to indicate that the 'cantus firmus' part is not to be sung together with the other voices. In fact, this part appears to serve the purpose of illustrating how a florid superius can be derived from a chant in long notes. The musical examples in the single source of *De preceptis* contain some remarkable errors, for which a correction should be offered in a critical edition.[299] Finally, some passages in Park's translation seem to be at odds with the teaching of the treatise: for instance references to the visualisation technique of 'sighting' are confused with doubling in parallel octaves.[300] Although a comprehensive revision of Park's work lies outside of the scope of this chapter, I will draw attention to a few of these problems in my discussion of Guillelmus's contrapuntal models.

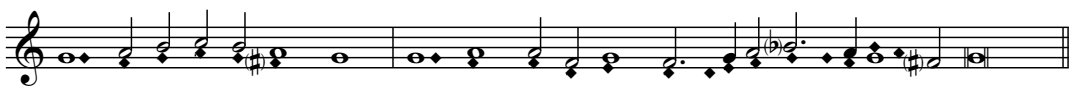
[298] Albert Seay, *Guillelmus Monachus De preceptis artis musicae*, Corpus Scriptorum de Musica 11 (American Institute of Musicology, 1965). On the problems of this edition see also Park, pp. 5–6.
[299] See for instance the musical example on fol. 34r-34v (Park, pp. 72-73, Ex. 61 [transcr. pp. 192-193]), where the scribe seems to have notated the contratenor a third too high, from b. 10 of the transcription. See Example 4.18 below.
[300] See my remarks below on Park's translations of 'reiterando ad octavam bassam' in cap. IV § 6 of *De preceptis*, and the chapter heading 'Regula ad componendum cum tribus vocibus non mutatis' (cap. IV § 7).

4.1 Two-Voice Counterpoint

In the first part of this chapter I will present an itinerary for acquiring the skill of extemporising two-voice counterpoint based on *De preceptis artis musicae,* and a comparison of its teaching with other theoretical sources and compositions. Starting from singing in parallel intervals, more free types of extemporisation can be learned through alternating between parallel intervals and the use of simple contrary motion. In this way, two-voice counterpoint can be taught using elementary techniques or 'recipes' which invite students to improvise, rather than giving them a strict set of rules and prohibitions.

4.1.1 The Gymel

In his treatise, Guillelmus first refers to singing two-voice counterpoint in chapter IV, entitled 'Ad habendum veram et perfectam cognitionem modi Anglicorum' ('To have a true and correct understanding of the ways [to sing counterpoint] of the English').[301] After discussing three-voice fauxbourdon, Guillelmus introduces another way of singing in two voices, called 'gymel'.[302] The consonances used in this technique are the lower and higher third and the unison, which can be 'repeated at the lower octave' ('reiterando ad octavam bassam') as the octave, sixth, and tenth.[303] The example Guillelmus gives for this technique shows the improvised voice in black dots, as opposed to the white mensural notation of the *cantus prius factus* (see Example 4.1).[304]



Example 4.1 Gymel (*De preceptis*, fol. 20r).

[301] Park, pp. 43-44 (transl. pp. 159-61).
[302] The name for this technique was clearly derived from the word *gemellus,* the Latin for 'twin'. This is corroborated by a sixteenth-century English-French vocabulary giving the translation 'iumeau' for 'Gymmell song'. See Ernest H. Sanders, 'Gymel', *Grove Music Online* [accessed 16 August 2016].
[303] Guillelmus corrects his omission of the tenth as an interval for gymel in ch. VI § 43 (Park, p. 64 [transcr. p. 180]).
[304] See also Park, p. 44, Ex. 46 (transcr. p. 160).

Park confusingly translates 'reiterando ad octavam bassam' as 'doubling at the lower octave', implying that gymel could be performed in three or four voices singing in parallel octaves.[305] My interpretation would be that, instead of digressing into three-voice music, Guillelmus is referring to a kind of visualisation technique related to the English 'sighting' procedure. This system entailed the imaginary transposition of the plainchant an octave up in the 'treble sight', a twelfth up the 'quadruple sight' and a fifth down in the case of the 'countir sight'.[306] In this way contrapuntal intervals could be visualised conveniently within the range of a four- or five-line staff. Of these imaginary transpositions Guillelmus only retains the 'treble sight': a visualised third below 'in sight' will produce a sixth above the cantus firmus, whereas visualised upper thirds will produce tenths above.[307] In several of his examples, Guillelmus shows a way to visualise counterpoint when the superius is paraphrasing a chant at the higher octave ('at treble sight'). The lower voice visualises upper or lower thirds with the written chant, which could be called a 'phantom tenor', producing sixths or tenths below the superius.[308]

In addition to generating gymel, this visualisation technique is very useful for singing the kinds of three-voice fauxbourdon which will be examined later in this chapter. I have found Guillelmus's version of the 'sights' to be very easy to use in the classroom. Asking a student to sing her counterpoint or the chant 'in her own octave' suffices to let her use the 'treble sight'. Practice of parallel organum in fourths, fifths, and octaves will quickly introduce students to the idea of reading a chant on different pitches as well. In my pedagogical practice, I have found that this visualisation technique works best on cantus firmus melodies in original clefs, as these tend to fit neatly within the musical staff without using ledger lines, making it easy to visualise thirds above and below every chant note.

After considering these issues, the description and example of gymel in *De preceptis* paint quite a straightforward picture:

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[305] *De preceptis* ch. IV § 6. See Park, p. 44 (trans. p. 160). This idea is also advanced by Markus Jans, who ascribes to Guillelmus several three-voice techniques involving parallel octaves, presumably based on this passage. Jans, 'Alle gegen Eine: Satzmodelle in note-gegen-note Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', p. 106, Example 7–8.
[306] Fuller, 'Organum - Discantus - Contrapunctus in the Middle Ages'; Brian Trowell, 'Sight, Sighting', *Grove Music Online* [accessed 16 August 2016].
[307] See also Fuller, 'Organum - Discantus - Contrapunctus in the Middle Ages', p. 498.
[308] See Examples 4.4 and 4.14.

1. The improvised gymel begins in unison with the cantus firmus.
2. Then it follows it in thirds below or above.
3. At the cadences the gymel returns to the unison.[309]
4. These intervals can be 'reiterated at the lower octave' as sixths, tenths, and octaves when the cantus firmus is paraphrased in the upper voice, or above the cantus firmus if it is sung in the written octave.

Guillelmus discussion of parallel singing in imperfect consonances as 'modi Anglicorum' seems to suggest that this type of music was considered an 'English speciality', and that it might have been introduced to continental Europe from England. The phrase 'contenance angloise' drawn from the poem *Le Champion des Dames* (ca. 1440) by Martin Le Franc, is traditionally used to describe this transmission.[310] English music was held in high esteem during the fifteenth century, Tinctoris for instance called it the 'fons et origo' of the music of his day.[311] It remains unclear what qualities Tinctoris and Le Franc exactly appreciated in English music, but it appears that—already in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the extensive use of imperfect consonances was considered a specific trait of English music by continental musicians.

The Paris-educated theorist Anonymous IV, writing in late thirteenth-century England, reports that there are certain *organistae* from the 'Westcuntre' who count the major and minor thirds as 'the best consonances, because they are much in use with them.'[312] Anonymous IV calls the sixth 'vile and tedious

[309] If the cantus firmus presents an upward soprano clausula, the gymel must sing a few (sighted) thirds above and make a downward tenor-clausula, as the last three notes of Example 4.1 illustrate. Another option is to arrive at the final note of the chant and add a cadence with a tenor-clausula in the gymel and a soprano clausula in the cantus firmus.
[310] The poet describes the excellence of Du Fay and Binchois, having 'taken the English countenance and followed Dunstaple' ('ont pris la contenance angloise et ensuy de Dompstable'), but is rather unspecific about what this influence would have consisted of. See David Fallows, 'Contenance Angloise', in *Guide de la musique du Moyen Âge*, ed. by Françoise Ferrand (Paris: Fayard, 1999), p. 642.
[311] In the preface to his *Proportionale Musices* Tinctoris writes: 'ut ita dicam, novae artis fons et origo, apud Anglicos quorum caput Dunstaple exstitit, fuisse perhibetur (...)' ('and the source and well-spring, so to speak, of this new art is held to have been among the English, with Dunstable standing pre-eminent at their head.') See Woodley, p. 313. Translation after Woodley.
[312] 'Tamen apud organistas optimos et prout in quibusdam terris sicut in Anglia in patria, quae dicitur Westcuntre, optimae concordantiae dicuntur, quoniam apud tales magis, sunt in usu.' See cap. V in Anonymous IV, 'Musica', *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum*

dissonance', and he complains of singers who sing many such intervals in succession: 'There are some who multiply dissonances before a perfect concordance, for instance an octave, and rejoice and laugh about this, and it appears a great and wonderful thing to them. This can be done as follows: d'f'c'd'c'b'c' in the upper voice and ddefedc in the lower.'[313] Johannes Boen, a Dutch theorist who had studied in Oxford, also mentions the particular love of the English for imperfect consonances in his *De musica* (ca. 1355): 'Laymen there, and clerics, and old men, youths and just about everybody loved thirds and sixths so fondly that I've seen them invoke these alone as though in reverent prayer, in preference to octaves and fifths.'[314] Boen seems to have been very surprised to hear music of such a different nature in a nearby country.

As has been argued by Sylvia Kenney, English fourteenth- and fifteenth-century theorists do not give more licence for singing imperfect intervals in parallel than their continental counterparts.[315] It would appear therefore that, like many of the techniques discussed in Chapter 3, this type of proto-gymel is at odds with the official discant teaching. The surviving English repertory does provide a few examples of this kind of polyphony, such as the two-voice *Virgo salvavit hominem*, dating from the end of the fourteenth century (see Example 4.2).[316]

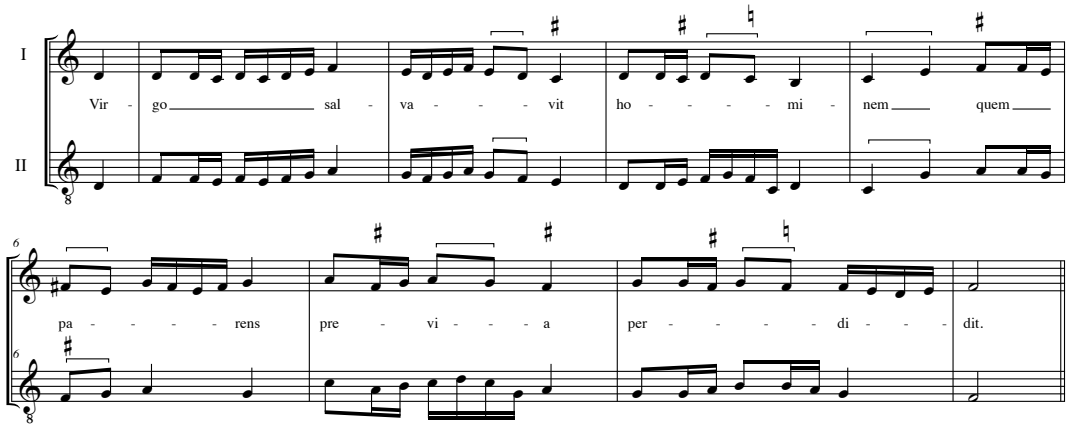
<http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/13th/ANO4MUS> [accessed 16 August 2016]. Translation by the author.

[313] 'Iterato sunt quidam, qui multiplicant multiplices discordantias ante unam perfectam concordantiam sicut ante diapason, et nimis inde gaudent et rident, et videtur esse mirabile magnum inter ipsos, quod hoc potest fieri sicut dfcdcbc in superiori, in inferiori sic: DDEFEDC.' Ibid. Translation by the author.

[314] '... audito, quod layci ibidem et clerici, senes, iuvenes et indifferenter omnis tertiis et sextis tantam atribuebant affectionem quodque, duplis et quintis postpositis.' See Johannes Boen, 'Musica', *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum* <http://boethius.music.indiana.edu/tml/14th/BOENMUSI_MVBM8-24> [accessed 16 August 2016]. Translation after Rob C. Wegman, 'The State of the Art', in *Renaissance? Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity in Europe 1300-c1550*, ed. by Alexander Lee, Pit Pérporté, and Harry Schnitker (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 129–160 (p. 155).

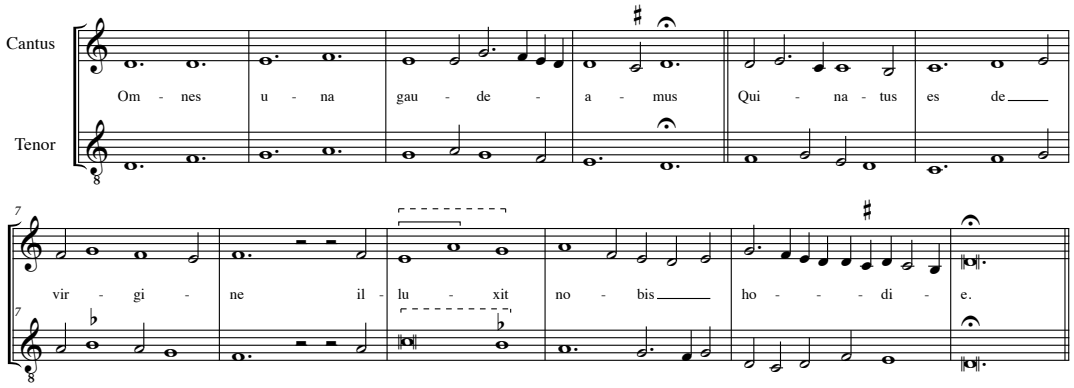
[315] Kenney, '"English Discant" and Discant in England'.

[316] Manuscript breves are transcribed as crotchets, and semibreves as quavers or semiquavers. See also no. 30 in Sanders, Harrison and Lefferts, *English Music for Mass and Offices (II) and Music for Other Ceremonies*, pp. 61–63.



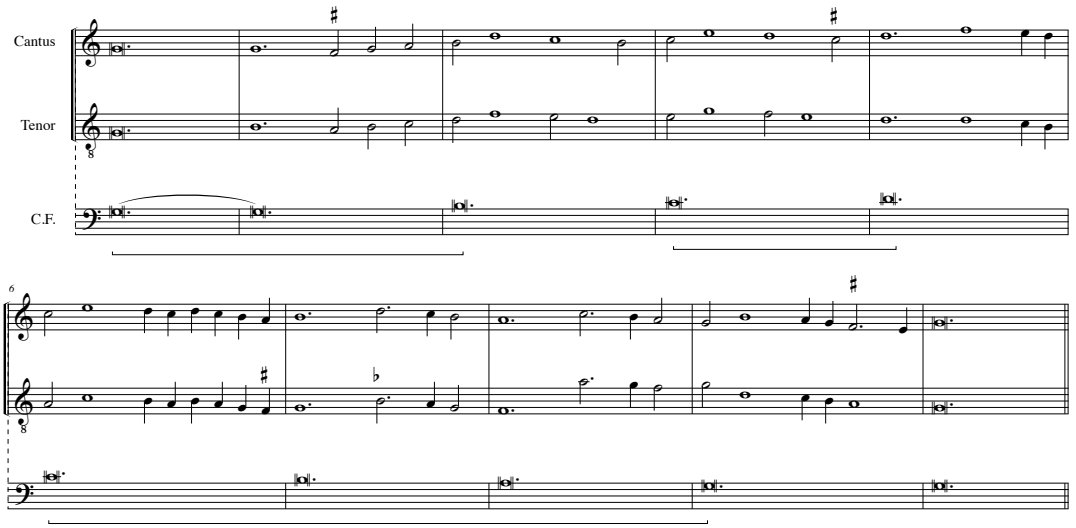
Example 4.2 *Virgo salvavit hominem*, excerpt (London, British Library, Ms. Sloane 1210, fol. 139v-140r).

An example of the use of the same technique in the fifteenth century is the carol *Omnes una gaudeamus* (see Example 4.3). The texture is enlivened by the use of suspensions and other ornaments, but—except for the final phrase—the counterpoint is of exactly the type we have seen in Example 4.1. Similar suspensions could be created in Guillelmus's example; the 'improvised' gymel could for instance delay the penultima of the soprano clausula in b. 1 and advance the penultima of the tenor clausula in b. 2 (compare b. 5 and 7 of Example 4.3).



Example 4.3 *Omnes una gaudeamus* (London, British Library, Ms. Egerton 3307, fol. 68v).

Guillelmus continues his discussion of the 'contrapunctus Anglicorum' in chapter VI. Some of the 'exempla notata' at the end of this chapter can shed further light on the practice of gymel. The first of these examples is a straightforward gymel at the lower sixth, in which the superius is derived from the cantus firmus.[317] The two following examples also show two-voice gymels, but now alternating between sixths, tenths, and thirds (see Example 4.4).[318]



Example 4.4 'Mixed gymel' (*De preceptis*, fol. 30r-30v).

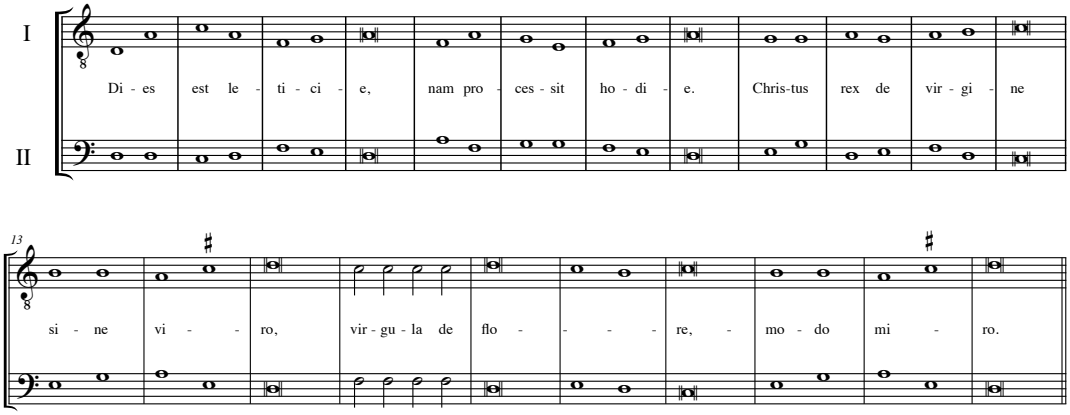
[317] Park, p. 66, Ex. 56-1 (transcr. p. 182). See my remarks above on this 'phantom tenor'.
[318] Ibid., p. 67, Ex. 56-2 (transcr. p. 184).

This horizontal combination of different gymels – analogous to the vertical combination of them in fauxbourdon – I have dubbed 'mixed gymel', and this is actually the technique we encounter most often in Guillelmus's examples, as well as in fifteenth-century compositions. Presumably there would have been little point for the simple gymel illustrated by Guillelmus in chapter IV to be written down, since every choirboy could produce it *ex tempore*. The pedagogical benefit of mixed gymel is that it offers students a somewhat restricted choice, preparing them for more advanced types of two-voice counterpoint.

4.1.2 Simple Counterpoint

The next step is to learn to improvise a counterpoint in contrary as well as parallel and oblique motion. This is not much harder than singing a gymel if the right kind of instruction is provided. As we have seen already in Chapter 3, Guillelmus is the last theorist to cite the principle of counterpoint by adjacent consonances in chapter VI of *De preceptis*. This technique can provide a good introduction to singing contrary motion in fifteenth-century counterpoint. After doing exercises alternating consonances above a sustained tenor note (oblique motion), adjacent consonances (contrary motion), and gymel (parallel motion), students will be able to quickly extemporise a simple counterpoint on plainchant. As examples, 'archaic' note-against-note settings may be used, which can be found in sources up to the end of the fifteenth century (see Example 4.5).[319]

[319] Puncta transcribed as semibreves, and double puncta as breves. See no. 19 in *Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS II 270. Collection of Middle Dutch and Latin Sacred Songs (ca. 1500)*, ed. by Bruno Bouckaert and others, Monumenta Flandriae Musica 7 (Leuven, Neerpelt: Alamire Foundation, 2005), p. 114.



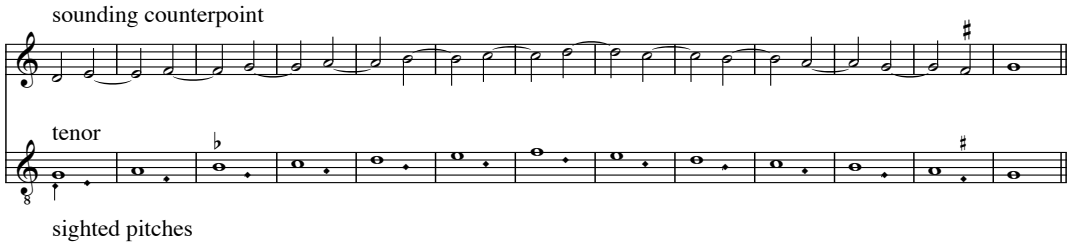
Example 4.5 *Dies est leticie*, excerpt (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. II 270, fol. 137v).

After some initial practice it may be convenient to provide students with a number of 'rules of counterpoint'.[320] It is important—in my opinion—that, as when learning the grammar of a language, such rules be connected to music with which one is already familiar. Most elements of contrapunctus theory can simply be provided as 'rules of thumb' in doing exercises.

4.1.3 Syncopation and Species-Counterpoint

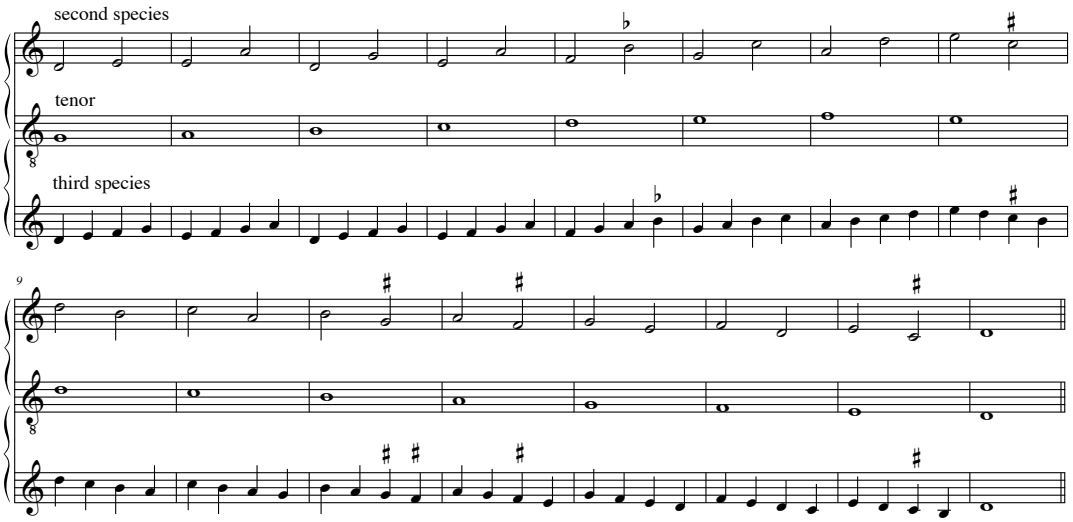
In chapter VIII ('Regula circa cognitionem syncoparum') Guillelmus provides two more important pieces of information for the pedagogy of singing on the book.[321] The first is, as the title of the chapter suggests, the rule of syncopation: when the cantus firmus ascends stepwise we can make syncopations with a sixth changing into a fifth on the next note of the tenor, and when it descends, with a sixth changing into a seventh. He explains, as is also shown in the example, that the fifths and sixths—in ascent—can be visualised as fourths and thirds below, the sixths and sevenths—in descent—as seconds and thirds below (see Example 4.6).[322]

[320] For Guillelmus's rules of counterpoint see Park, pp. 54-57 (trans. pp. 170-173). On the use of such *regulae* or *praecepta* see Sections 2.2.2 and 6.1.2.
[321] Park, pp. 95-96 (trans. p. 218).
[322] Ibid., p. 95, Ex. 66-1 (transcr. p. 218).



Example 4.6 Syncopations (*De preceptis*, fol. 42v).

The other example given in this chapter is not accompanied by a description, but has a similar stepwise tenor, and two counterpoints (see Example 4.7).[323] The first one, given together with the tenor in score, is composed entirely in semiminims, four notes against one ('third species'); the second, presented as a separate part, uses only minims ('second species').



Example 4.7 Two and four notes against one (*De preceptis*, fol. 42v).

The 'third species' part fills the melodic fourths and thirds of the 'second species' mechanically with four semiminims. Octaves are used on every downbeat when the tenor descends, even if this produces 'bad counterpoint' from beat to beat.[324]

[323] Ibid., p. 96, Ex. 66-1 (transcr. p. 218).
[324] This is generally prohibited in counterpoint manuals in the tradition of Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*. Fux forbids such successions because 'the intervening note on the upbeat is regarded as hardly existing, since owing to its short duration and the small distance between the tones it

In this respect the example is consistent with the preceding one on syncopation, and also with Antonius de Leno *Regulae de contrapunto*, copied in the same manuscript as *De preceptis* but written at least fifty years earlier.[325] It remains unclear to me whether de Leno's treatise influenced *De preceptis*, and why they were eventually bound into the same manuscript. The two treatises seem to belong to different traditions of counterpoint pedagogy, de Leno's to the Italian, hexachord-based system of the 'gradi', and Guillelmus's to the English tradition of visualisation (the 'sights') and singing in parallel imperfect consonances.[326]

The fact that one of the core pedagogical concepts of species counterpoint is prefigured by de Leno as well as Guillelmus seems largely to have been ignored in counterpoint scholarship. [327] To my knowledge, de Leno's is the first treatise to teach counterpoint in an increasing amount of notes against every note of the cantus firmus, a standard feature of sixteenth-century counterpoint pedagogy[328] which would eventually be termed the first-, second-, and third-species counterpoint by Johann Joseph Fux in his *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725). Let us therefore take a closer look at the teaching of de Leno's *Regulae*.

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cannot compensate to such an extent that the ear will not notice the two succeeding fifths or octaves'. See Alfred Mann and John Edmunds, *The Study of Counterpoint from Johann Joseph Fux's Gradus Ad Parnassum* (New York, London: Norton, 1965), pp. 42–43.

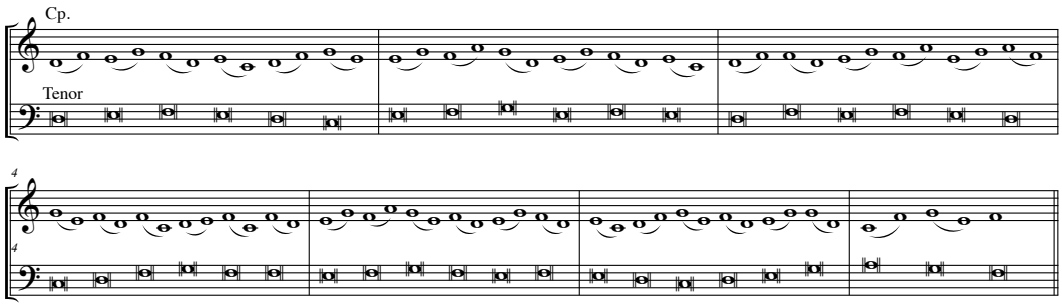
[325] See F. Alberto Gallo and Andreas Bücker, 'Antonius de Leno', *Grove Music Online* [accessed 16 August 2016]. Don Harrán has argued that de Leno's and Monachus's treatises were bound into a single codex in the late 1400s or early 1500s, whereas the text of the *Regulae de contrapunto* was probably conceived in the first decades of the fifteenth century. See Don Harrán, 'Intorno a un codice Veneziano Quattrocentesco', *Studi Musicali*, 8 (1979), pp. 41–60 (pp. 43–44). Carla Vivarelli has argued, based on internal references in the treatise's text, that the *Regulae* originally formed part of a *summa musicae* encompassing plainchant, counterpoint and instrumental music. See Carla Vivarelli, 'Antonius de Leno: Teorico della tradizione o teorico d'avanguardia?', in *Musica e liturgie nel Medioevo Bresciano (secoli XI-XV). Atti dell'incontro nazionale di studio (Brescia, 3-4 aprile 2008)*, ed. by Maria Teresa Rosa Barezzani and Rodobaldo Tibaldi (Brescia: Fondazione Civiltá Brescia), pp. 519–540 (p. 520).

[326] See Fuller, 'Organum - Discantus - Contrapunctus in the Middle Ages', p. 496.

[327] The *Grove Online* states that 'the division of counterpoint into species goes back at least to Lanfranco's *Scintille di musica* of 1532'. Peter Schubert cites Vicente Lusitano's *Introdutione facilissima* (1553) as the first treatise to employ this type of teaching. See Schubert, 'Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance', p. 509, n. 21. Philippe Canguilhem hypothesises that the absence of species in Italian sixteenth-century texts may point to it being a Spanish invention. See Canguilhem, *Chanter sur le livre à la Renaissance. Les traités de contrepoint de Vicente Lusitano*, p. 9.

[328] On the 'proto-species' counterpoint of the sixteenth century see Schubert, 'Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance', pp. 509–510. The anonymous fourteenth-century treatise *De diminutione contrapuncti* also shows examples of what looks like second- and third-species counterpoint. These examples are however conceived of as 'diminutions', which also include other—irregular—rhythmic patterns. See Sarah Fuller, 'Contrapunctus, Dissonance Regulation, and French Polyphony of the Fourteenth Century', in *Medieval Music in Practice: Studies in Honor of Richard Crocker*, ed. by Judith A. Peraino (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2013), pp. 113–152 (pp. 128–129).

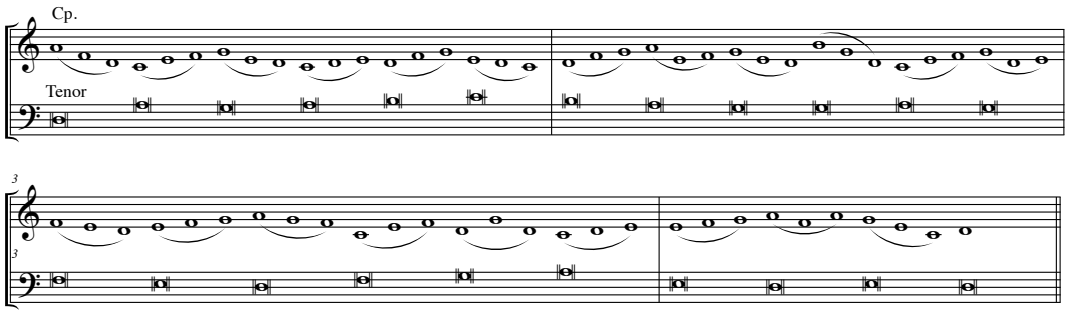
De Leno first presents twenty-two examples of note-against-note counterpoint ('contraponto di nota per nota'). The counterpoint of the first twelve examples makes use only of the hard hexachord (fol. 43v-55r), after which also the natural hexachord is introduced (fol. 56).[329] In the following chapter on 'contraponto de due notte per una', de Leno clearly encourages the use of octaves and fifths on successive downbeats of the tenor. In Example 4.8 the counterpoint follows the cantus firmus in octaves above, breaking them up on the upbeat. [330] This typically happens with octave-tenth in ascent and octave-sixth in descent.



Example 4.8 Two notes against one. (*Regulae*, fol. 58r).

De Leno's next chapter is devoted to three notes against one ('contraponto di iii note per una'). Here de Leno introduces the possibility to sing dissonances: 'If you wish to sing three notes, always make the first and last of them consonant, or all three if possible. In case you can not make the middle note consonant, it does not matter, as long as the others will be'.[331] In de Leno's examples dissonant middle notes tend to move stepwise to a consonance on the third beat. They are not always reached by step (see Example 4.9).[332]

[329] See Albert Seay, *Antonio de Leno Regulae de Contrapunto* (Colorady Springs: Colorady College Music Press, 1977), pp. 6–8 and 11–13. For this reason Examples 4.8 and 4.9 have been reproduced without editorial accidentals. (In the early fifteenth century the singing of *ficta* sharps would probably have entailed singing the syllables of a fictive hexachord).
[330] Ibid., p. 16.
[331] 'Volendole far de iii, fa sempre che de esse iii la prima e la ultime nota di contraponto siano bone, e anchi tute iii se poy. Caso che non potesse far bona quella de mezo, non monta niente, pur che le altre siano bone.' Ibid., p. 19.
[332] Ibid., p. 19.



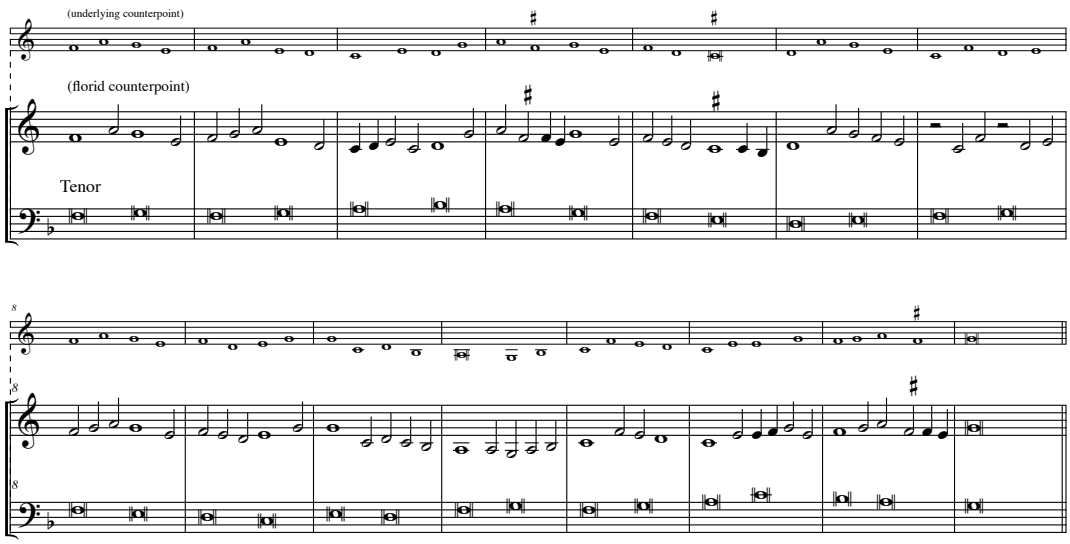
Example 4.9 Three notes against one. (*Regulae*, fol. 59r).

It is clear that species counterpoint did play an important role in the training of young singers. However, the earliest examples of it show a very different approach from the Fuxian species counterpoint with which we tend to be familiar today. They do not seem concerned with establishing normative rules for voice-leading and dissonance treatment but rather with training students to 'rattle off' consonances above every conceivable progression of the tenor. This would give them a secure knowledge of the different options available to them in singing above a plainchant.

I have drawn the following conclusions from Guillelmus's and de Leno's examples for my own pedagogical practice: octaves or fifths on a few successive downbeats are an integral part of the system and may be encouraged; when singing two or three against one, every tenor note can receive an octave or fifth so long as another consonance follows on the second or third beat. It follows that independent motion between the voices is not obligatory. Finally, the counterpoint does not necessarily have to present a well-balanced or varied melody, resembling written composition.[333] This is because these counterpoints would be 'finished' at a later stage by embellishing them with standardised melodic formulae, as is illustrated in the later chapters of de Leno's *Regulae*.[334]

[333] This point was made for sixteenth-century counterpoint by Peter Schubert against Carl Dahlhaus' claim that the species approach is 'hardly reconcilable with the historical reality of Palestrina's style'. He notes that Cerone's note-against-note counterpoint 'often contains voice-leading errors that will be corrected when the line is diminished', See Schubert, 'Counterpoint Pedagogy in the Renaissance', p. 510.
[334] See the examples of 'fiortise' in Seay, *Antonio de Leno Regulae de Contrapunto*, pp. 27–39.

The ‘fiortise’, as de Leno calls these ornamental formulae, are used to provide the necessary surface polish to the underlying framework (see Example 4.10).[335]



Example 4.10 Florid counterpoint. (*Regulae*, fol. 65r).

4.1.4 Towards Free Two-Voice Counterpoint

I propose the following itinerary for teaching and learning to extemporise fifteenth-century two-voice counterpoint:

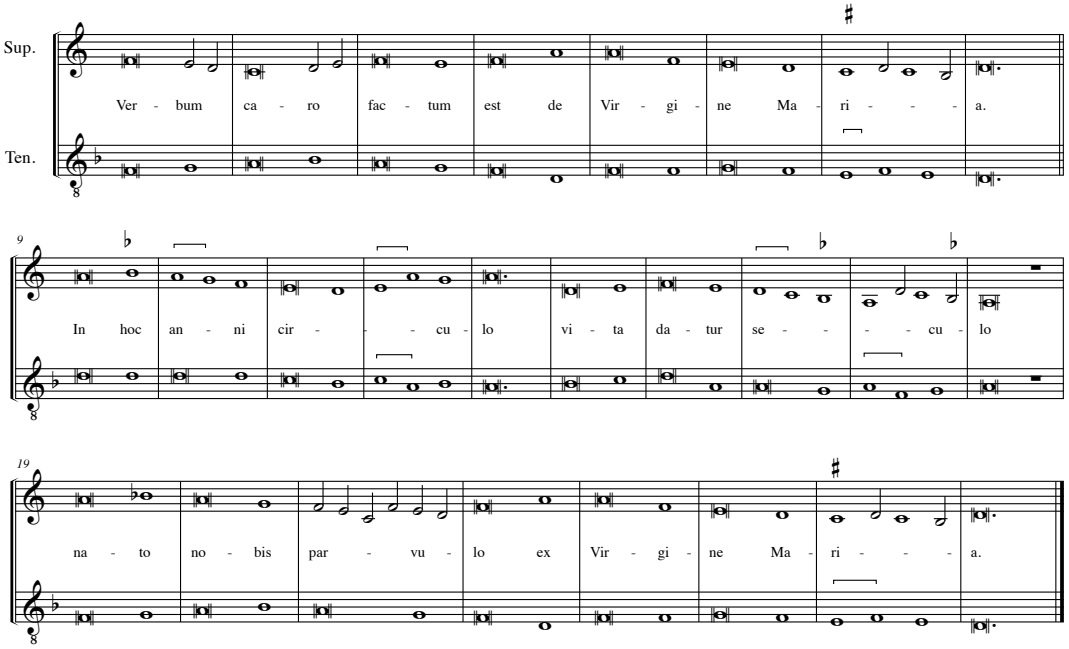
1. The student learns to sing a simple gymel in thirds, above and below the cantus firmus.
2. With the help of the treble sight, the sixth and tenth above and below are introduced.
3. ‘Mixed gymel’: the student learns to alternate between these different types.
4. After some introductory exercises in contrary and oblique motion, the student learns to extemporise a short piece in discantus style, in which

[335] In her analysis of Petrus dictus Palma Ociosa’s examples, Sarah Fuller also notes that diminutions can be used to ‘cover up’ underlying parallel perfect consonances. See Fuller, ‘Organum - Discantus - Contrapunctus in the Middle Ages’, pp. 494–495. An early voice against this practice of disguising underlying perfect parallels is the Berkeley Treatise. See Ellsworth, pp. 130–131.

the use of parallel imperfect consonances is restricted to one or two at a time (see also Section 3.1.3).

5. When the gymel and discantus techniques are combined, a florid upper voice can be extemporised on top of a metric tenor (including syncopation, ornamentation, etc.).

For this final stage, two-voice fifteenth-century pieces in homophonic style, such as English carols, Italian laude, or French chansons, can be used as models. In the piece quoted in Example 4.11, a setting of the New Year song *Verbum caro factum est*, the voices move from an octave to a third, using the principle of the adjacent consonances in the first bar. This is then followed by two bars of gymel in thirds and sixths, leading to a cadence on *F*. After some oblique motion in bb. 4-6, we have two bars in sixth gymel leading to a cadence on *D*. The tenor remains stationary in bb. 9-10, causing the upper voice to use oblique motion, followed by a gymel in thirds in bb. 11-12. When the initial cantus firmus melody comes back in b. 19, the composer has opted for a passage in tenths and sixths with an additional ornament on the word 'parvulo'. It is not difficult to imagine how such a setting could have been obtained by extemporising an upper voice upon a tenor. In fact, it is a good exercise to first extemporise counterpoint on a tenor before singing it with its original upper voice, in order to compare the two.



Example 4.11 *Verbum caro factum est* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Canon. Misc. 213, fol. 16v).

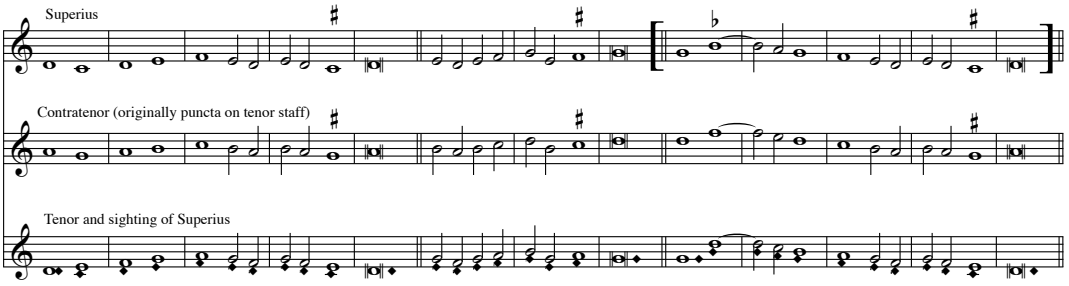
4.2 Three- and Four- Voice Counterpoint

Similarly to two-voice counterpoint, where different gymels can be combined successively to create a more diverse setting, two simultaneous gymels can be used to create simple kinds of three-voice polyphony. *De preceptis* contains descriptions of different ways to sing fauxbourdon, a first with the chant in the tenor and a second with the chant paraphrased in the superius. The other option, placing the chant in the middle voice, described as 'faburden' in English treatises, is not mentioned by Guillelmus. Such faburden extemporisation leads to exactly the same result as the procedure described here as the second variety of fauxbourdon: in both these versions, superius as well as contratenor paraphrase the chant, a fourth apart.[336] Besides a parallel contratenor, a gymel can also be supplemented with a third part moving in a fixed interval-pattern below the tenor, called 'contratenor bassus' ('low contratenor'), precursor to the sixteenth-century bassus voice. In its sixth chapter, *De preceptis* also illustrates a four-voice version of fauxbourdon which is commonly known as 'falso bordone'.

4.2.1 Fauxbourdon I

We encounter Guillelmus's first description of fauxbourdon in chapter IV of *De preceptis*. This fauxbourdon is sung in three voices: superius, tenor, and contratenor.[337] The superius is derived from the cantus firmus, exactly like gymel at the upper sixth. It reads lower thirds in 'treble sight', with a sighted unison—sounding an octave—as the initial and final notes. The contratenor starts and ends with a fifth above the cantus firmus, singing thirds in between. Essentially, we are dealing with a combination of sixth-gymel in the superius and third-gymel in the contratenor. This procedure is illustrated by an example that shows the contratenor and the visualised pitches of the superius in dots, along with the sounding pitches of the superius on a separate staff (see Example 4.12).[338]

[336] On this topic see Schmidt, pp. 230–250.
[337] Park, pp. 43-44 (trans. p. 159). The original—slightly unusual—name for the upper part in *De preceptis* is 'suprano'.
[338] See also Park, p. 43, Ex. 45 (transcr. p. 159).



Example 4.12 Fauxbourdon I (*De preceptis*, fol. 18v).

The treatise provides only one example of this type of counterpoint (given above), and I do not know of any fourteenth- or fifteenth-century composition in which this model is used.[339] Perhaps this technique, like simple gymel, was practised *ex tempore* but not considered refined enough for use in composition.

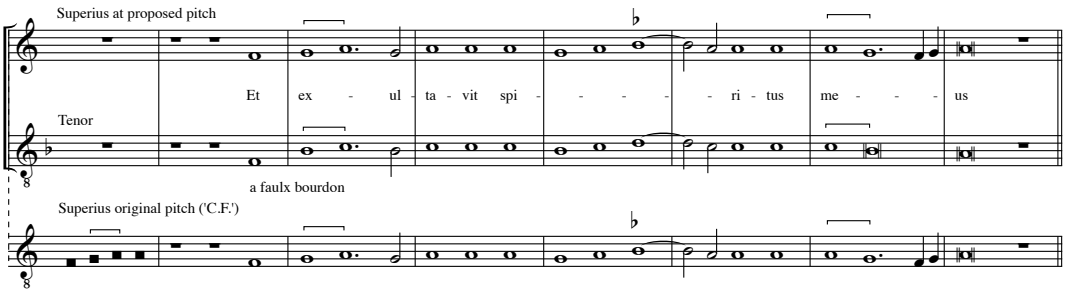
The value of this technique for teaching improvised counterpoint today lies in the fact that it can provide a smooth passage from simple two-voice singing into three-voice singing, and later to four-voice fauxbourdon with the tenor singing the cantus firmus. At any rate, the lack of composed examples makes it hard to go beyond the strict note-against-note style illustrated by the example. This is the reason I tend in my teaching to focus more on the second kind of fauxbourdon described by Guillelmus.

4.2.2 Fauxbourdon II

The second type of fauxbourdon, described by Guillelmus in chapter VI, is similar to what we see in compositions by, for instance, Du Fay and Binchois (see Example 4.14). The cantus firmus is read an octave up in the superius. The tenor follows the cantus firmus in thirds above, with unisons at the beginning and at the cadences (sixths and octaves with the superius). The contratenor 'does as the superius' ('vere dicitur sicut supranus'), singing the cantus firmus a fifth up, which results in thirds and fifths above the tenor (fourths below the superius).[340]

[339] Similarities, however, exist with the example of fauxbourdon given by Tinctoris, which uses the sequence *Lauda sion* as its tenor. See Seay, *Johannes Tinctoris The Art of Counterpoint (Liber de Arte Contrapuncti)*, p. 29.
[340] *De preceptis* ch. VI § 40. See Park, p. 63 (trans. p. 179).

As we can see, this improvisation technique relies wholly upon visualising intervals on a 'ghost tenor', a chant which is not sung at its actual pitch. This practice may explain a remarkable phenomenon we find in one of the fauxbourdon Magnificats in the manuscript Trent, Museo Provinciale d'Arte, Ms. 1374 (olim 87), where the scribe appears to have notated the superius *below* the tenor, on the pitch where a plainchant would typically be written (see Example 4.13).[341]

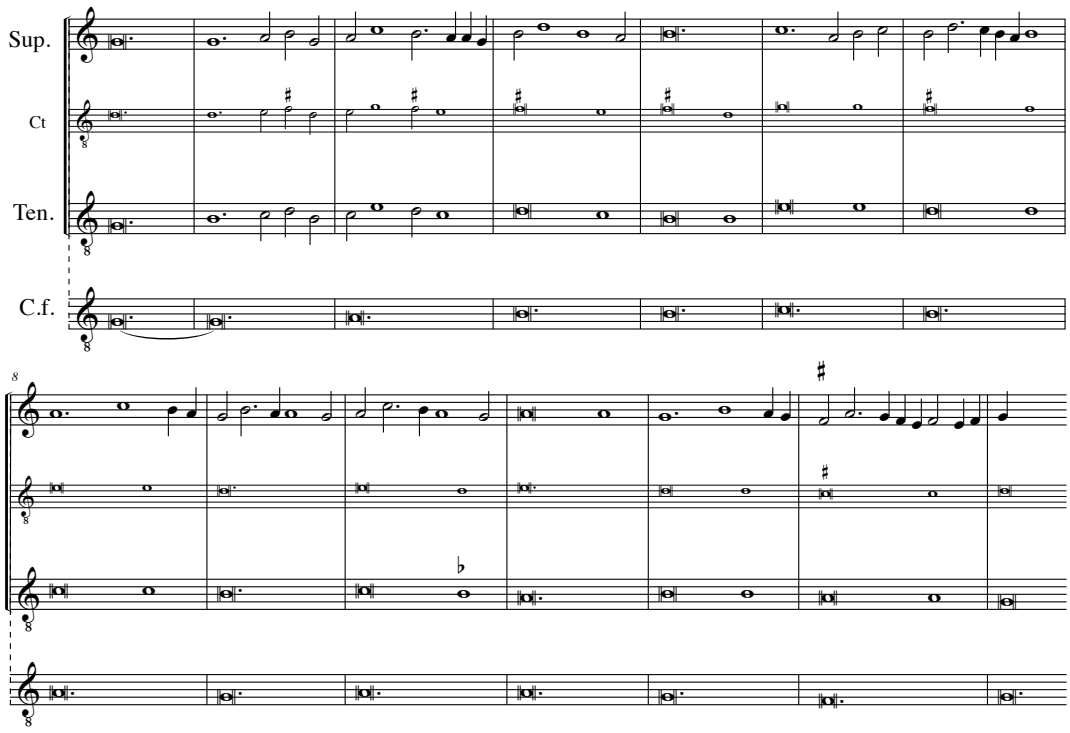


Example 4.13 *Magnificat primi toni*, excerpt (Trento, Museo Provinciale d'Arte, Ms. 1374 [olim 87], fol. 110v).

Leaving aside the basically identical contrapuntal procedure, there are a number of differences between compositions using fauxbourdon and Guillelmus's illustration of this technique (see Example 4.14).[342] The cantus firmus in Guillelmus's example moves in breves and longas, whereas composed settings seem to prefer a faster succession of chant pitches. As a consequence Guillelmus's cantus firmus is broken up into fast figurations by the superius, using standardised melodic formulae reminiscent of the 'fiortise' discussed earlier. Most fauxbourdon compositions use a relatively homorhythmic texture, where the upper voice is only slightly more ornate than the tenor. The improvised contratenor can use the same rhythm as the tenor: this kind of rhythmic treatment of the lower voices can be seen in Example 4.24, and has also been used in Example 4.14, below. The contratenorist may also attempt to follow

[341] A similarly notated fauxbourdon was identified by Craig Wright in the second strophe of the sequence *Cultor Dei memento* in Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 29, fol. 159. Wright, 'Performance Practices at the Cathedral of Cambrai: 1475-1550', pp. 315–318.
[342] See Park, p. 63, Ex. 54 (transcr. pp. 178-79).

the figurations of the upper voice, as happens in fauxbourdon compositions; however, doing this by ear requires a lot of collective practice in my experience.



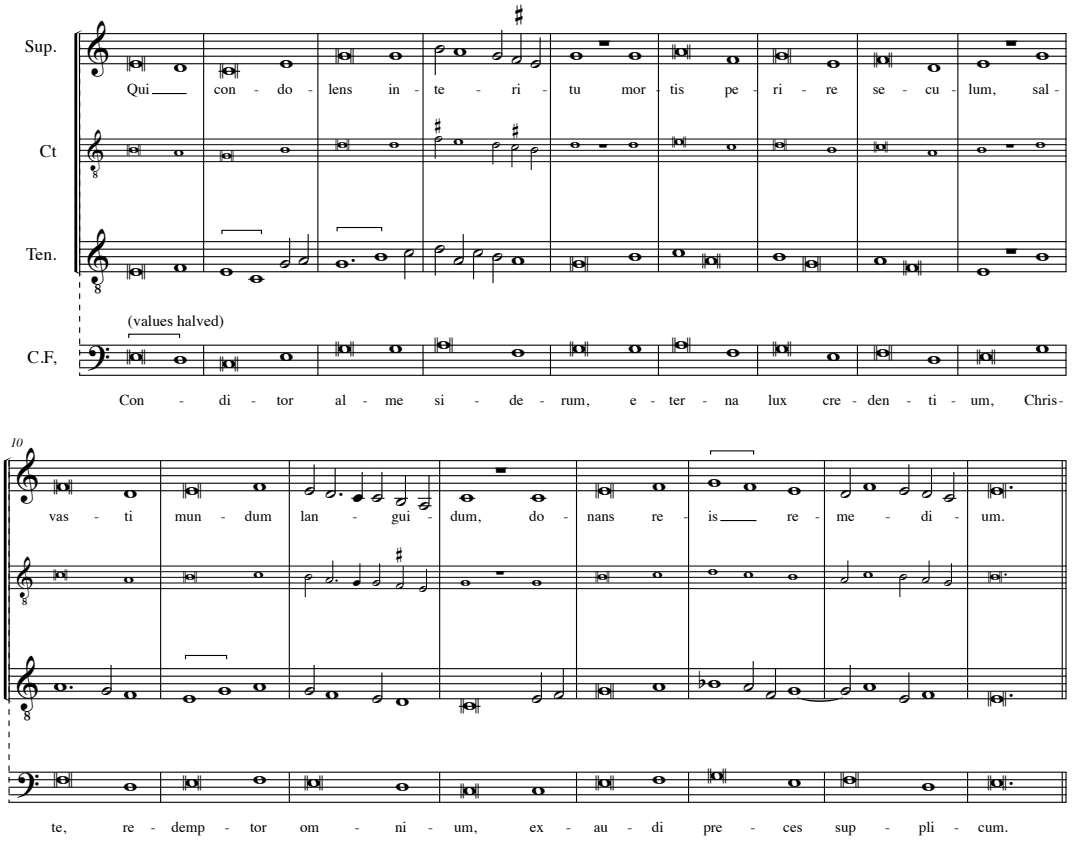
Example 4.14 Fauxbourdon II, excerpt (*De preceptis*, fol. 28r-28v).

Improvising a fauxbourdon using Guillelmus's procedure requires a superius-singer with extensive experience of florid counterpoint. Guillelmus's own ornamental formulae could be learned from the treatise and applied to this kind of improvisation. However, since this takes a long time to learn, I will propose an alternative, combining Guillelmus's method of visualisation with the more homorhythmic texture of fauxbourdon hymns by Du Fay.

4.2.3 Improvising a Fauxbourdon Hymn

Looking at Du Fay's *Conditor alme siderum*, we observe that the top part consists almost entirely of alternating breves and semibreves, coinciding with the iambic meter of the text. Directly above Du Fay's setting, in its source, the chant is

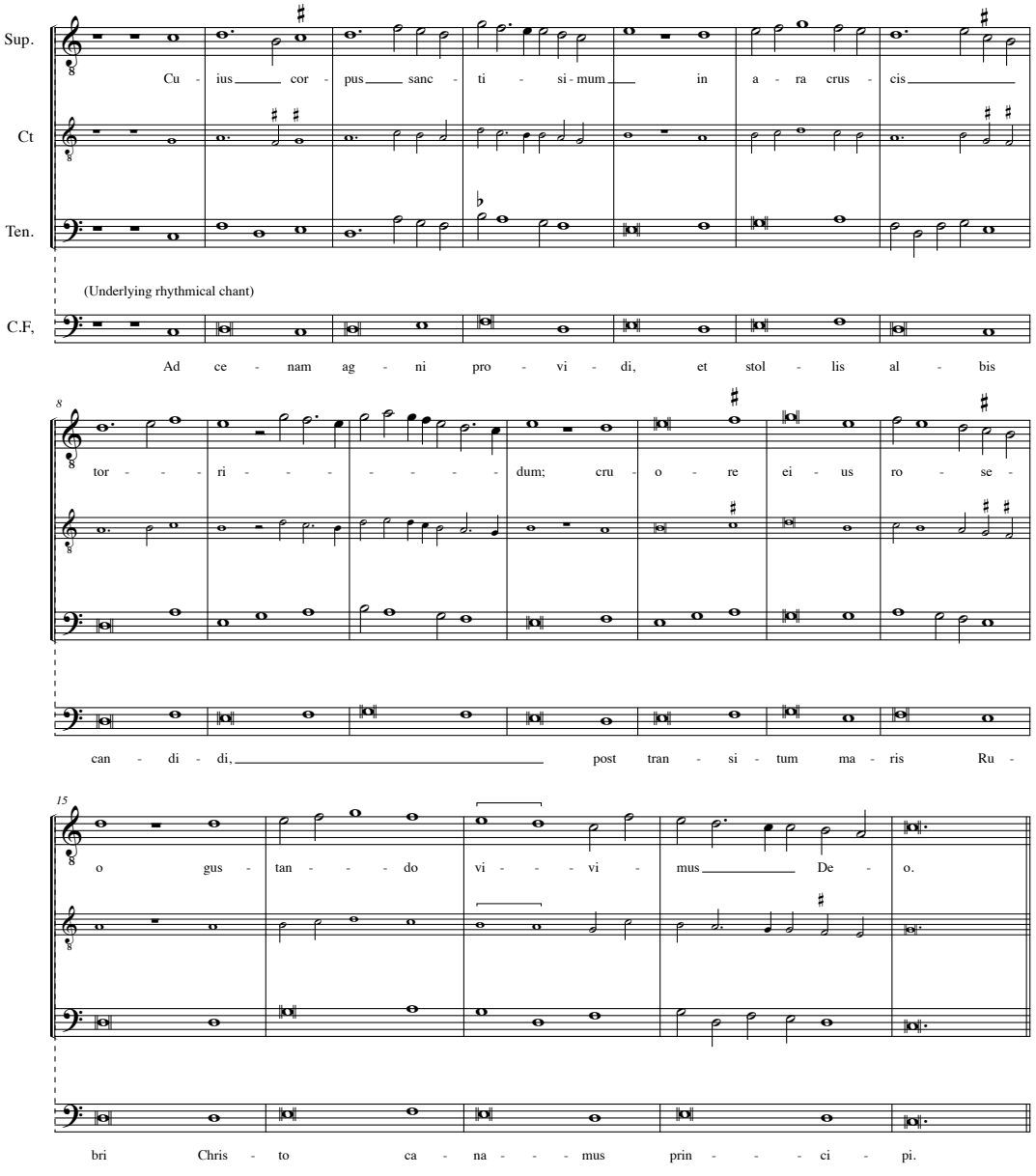
notated with the same rhythmical pattern in black longas and breves (see Example 4.15).[343]



Example 4.15 Guillaume Du Fay, *Conditor alme siderum* (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. Alfa X.1.11, fol. 4r; plainchant values halved).

In the same source we find this pattern again in the plainchant of *Vexilla regis* on fol. 9v, as well as in Du Fay's setting of *Ad cenam agni* on fol. 11r. In *Ad cenam agni* Du Fay has used the same rhythmic principle, but this time significantly more decoration has been added to the top-part (see Example 4.16).[344]

[343] See no. 11 in Heinrich Besseler, *Guillaume Dufay Opera Omnia Tomus V: Compositiones Liturgicae Minores*, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae I (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1966).
[344] Ibid., no. 17.

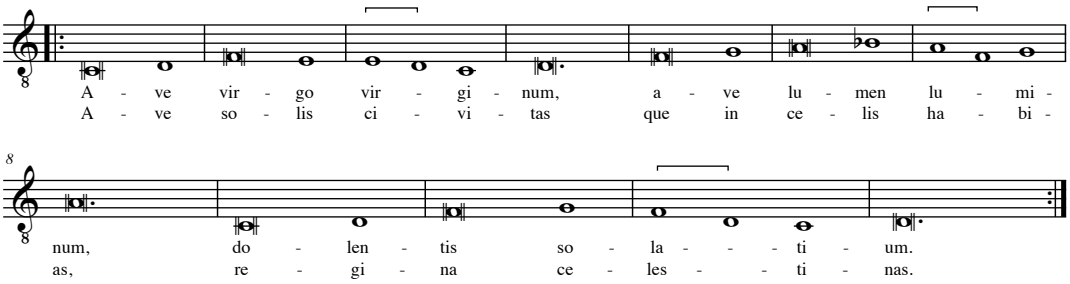


Example 4.16 Guillaume Du Fay, *Ad cenam agni* (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. Alfa X.1.11, fol. 11r).

The longa-brevis (or brevis-semibrevis) pattern can technically be applied to any chant in seven- or eight-syllable Latin poetry, such as hymns, sequences, and devotional songs, be they trochaic or iambic.[345] In the case of an iambic metre,

[345] Tinctoris explains a slightly similar procedure for rhythmicising plainchants in Liber II, cap. XX of his *Liber de arte contrapuncti*. He applies a short rhythmic cell to the melody of an Alleluia, on top of which a florid counterpoint is sung. See Seay, *Johannes Tinctoris The Art of Counterpoint (Liber de Arte Contrapuncti)*, pp. 108–109. On the interaction between the performance practice of chant and composed polyphony see Richard Sherr, 'The Performance of Chant in the

such as *Ad cenam agni*, one has the choice of either singing the first syllable as a perfect breve, or to treat it like an upbeat, as in Du Fay's fauxbourdon. In the case of a trochaic chant, such as the following trope of the sequence *Veni sancte spiritus*, the procedure is entirely straightforward, as one can start directly on the beat (see Example 4.17).



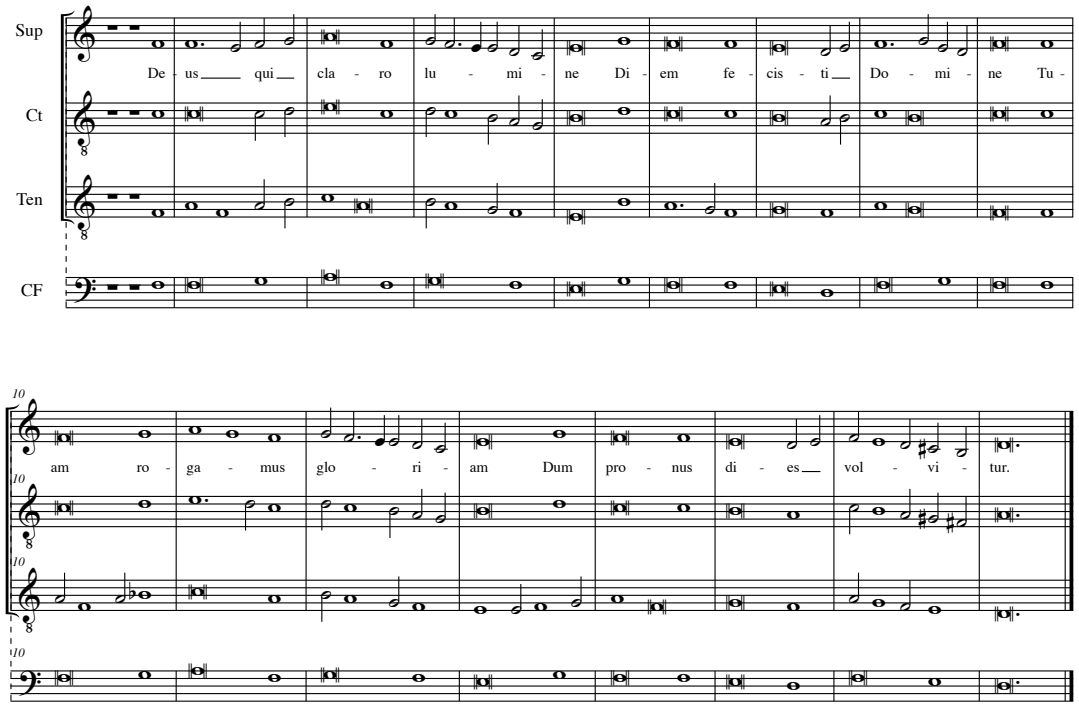
Example 4.17 *Ave virgo virginum*, excerpt (Provins, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 011, fol. 205v-206r).

The numerous traces of this procedure found in sources both of chant and polyphony seem to indicate that it was quite a common way to perform metric chants and devotional songs.[346] More relevantly, the procedure may help us to reconsider the relation of the Du Fay hymns to improvisation: if such chants possessed a rhythm known to singers—even if it was not notated—no prior communication would have been necessary to attain an improvisation in the flowing triple meter that is so typical of Du Fay's rendition of them. I have found in practice that singing fauxbourdon with this kind of lightly undulating rhythm leads to a more refined result, closer to the written settings, than singing in 'square' equal notes. Such a rhythm also helps tremendously for singing together, because the tactus is immediately clear to all the singers. For the superius, it facilitates the use of ornaments, which can be easily adapted from Du Fay's hymns. Example 4.18 I have transcribed an exercise which my students, after studying the technique and repertoire examples, have been able to put together.

Renaissance and Its Interactions with Polyphony', in *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony*, ed. by Thomas Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 178–208.

[346] Many chants and pieces of simple polyphony can be found in Gozzi. We have already encountered it in Examples 3.8, 3.21 and 4.11 as well.

Another effective way to put this idea into practice during the counterpoint lesson is to let the students 'improvise towards' a composition: let students first sing a simple fauxbourdon on a hymn using this rhythm, then gradually introduce syncopations and other ornaments, in such a way that the result will become close, or equivalent, to a written setting based on the same chant.

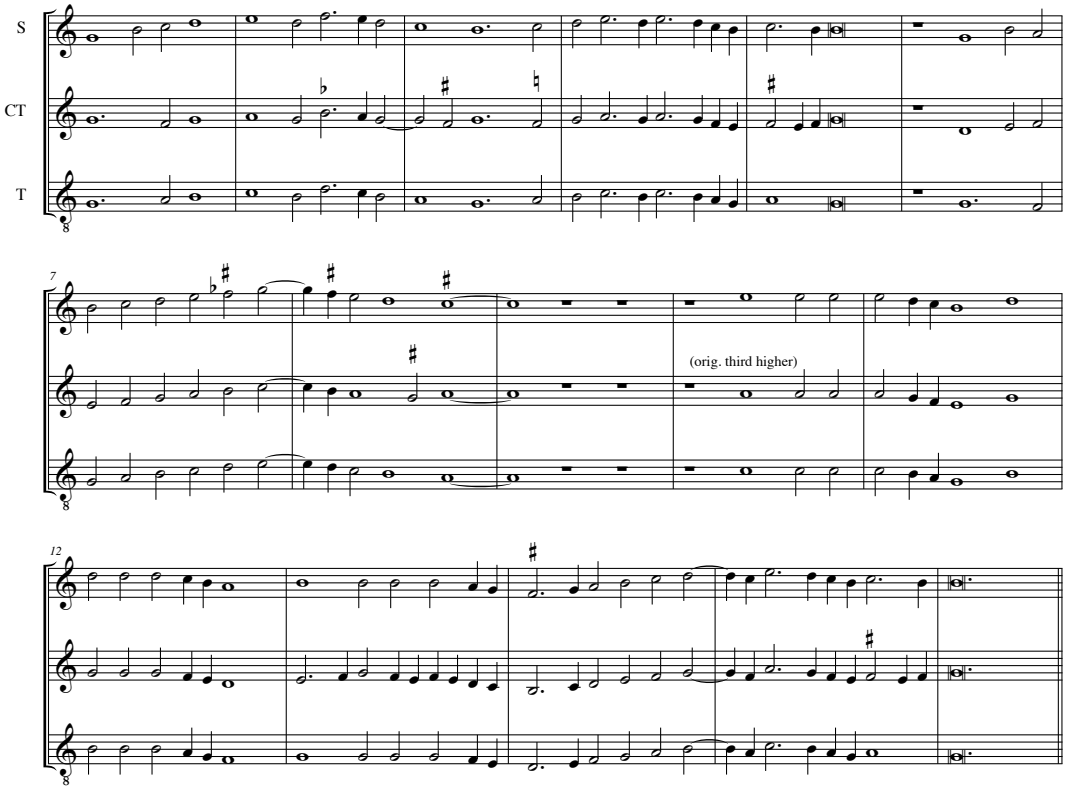


Example 4.18 Improvised fauxbourdon on *Deus qui claro lumine* (*Liber Hymnarius* p. 233)

4.2.4 Three-Voice Models with Parallel Tenths

Besides the two types of fauxbourdon, Guillelmus informs us of another parallel type of counterpoint in three voices in chapter VI. This is a rather curious technique in which the upper voices simultaneously sing sixths and tenths above the tenor, creating parallel fifths between them. Guillelmus provides a few rules

of thumb and an example for producing this kind of polyphony, which he calls 'easy and useful' ('levis et utilis'; see Example 4.19).[347]

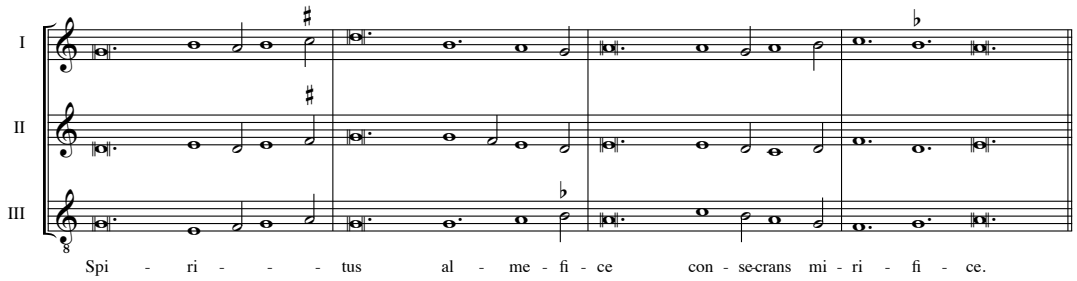


Example 4.19 Sixth-tenth model. (*De preceptis*, 34r-34v).

However strange the parallel fifths in this example may seem to us, they are not actually at odds with the core teaching of fifteenth-century contrapuntal theory: counterpoint was theoretically still considered a dyadic process, in which every voice was related to the tenor only and in this sense combined sixths and tenths are as 'correct' as combined thirds and sixths above a tenor such as in

[347] See also Park, Ex. 61, pp. 72-73 (transcr. pp. 192-93). Transcribing the example illustrating this technique poses a number of problems. First, the contratenor part is probably written a third too low from b. 10 onwards. I have corrected the parallel octaves with the tenor to sixths. Note that in Park's transcription the syncopation in the contratenor part in bb. 2-3 is overlooked, as well as the 'G-fa' sign in the superius, indicating an F-sharp in b. 8 (apparently the scribe did not have a preference for *musica recta* in correcting diminished fifths). Second, the example does not seem to fit the *tempus perfectum prolatio minor* indicated in the contratenor part (see, for instance, the long, oddly placed rest in bb. 8-9). No easy solution can be found for this problem. A transcription in tempus imperfectum would show similar problems, and the final note would arrive on a weak beat.

fauxbourdon.[348] As Markus Jans has argued, the technique in Example 4.19 can be seen as a kind of 'upside down fauxbourdon', in which contratenor and superius have exchanged places.[349] We have seen that certain authors, for instance Tinctoris, do discourage secondary parallel fifths and octaves as an 'implementation rule', but it is possible that such criteria were less strictly applied in extemporised music than in composition.[350] Nevertheless, it should be noted that this type of counterpoint would have been quite old-fashioned by the 1470s. Parallel fifths can be seen in many early fifteenth-century compositions in cadences, but we have to go back to the fourteenth century to find pieces using them as regularly as Guillelmus's example. Some late fourteenth-century English pieces show traces of this technique, such as the first bars of the *Gloria* trope *Spiritus almefice* shown in Example 4.20.[351]

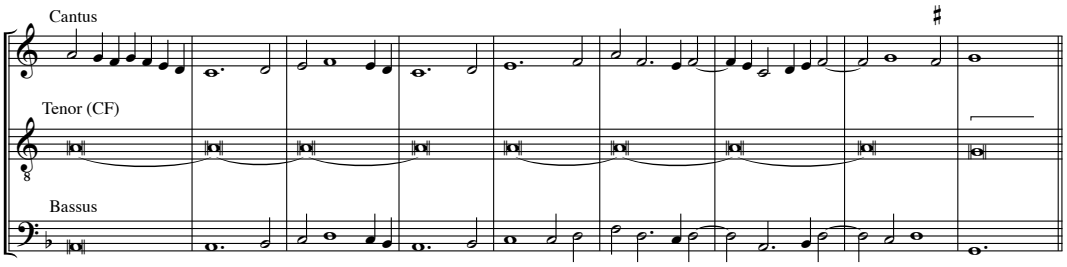


Example 4.20 *Spiritus almefice*, excerpt (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. II 266, fol. 1r).

The last of Guillelmus's 'modus componendi', described in the end of chapter VI, is also a three-voice technique based on parallel tenths. [352] This time the gymel, sung by bassus and superius, is draped around a cantus firmus in long notes.

[348] This had evidently changed by the mid- sixteenth century, as may be witnessed from Zarlino's *Instituzione Harmoniche* (Venice, 1558). In chapter 61 of the third book, Zarlino exchanges the upper voices of a fauxbourdon to demonstrate 'how little logic there is to such a usage' (meaning fauxbourdon). See examples 138 and 139 in Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca, *Gioseffo Zarlino. The Art of Counterpoint. Part Three of Le Istitutioni harmoniche, 1558* (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 195.
[349] Jans, 'Alle gegen Eine: Satzmodelle in note-gegen-note Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', p. 106, Ex. 8.
[350] See Section 3.3.1 and 2.2.1.
[351] See also no. 31 in Sanders, Harrison and Lefferts, *English Music for Mass and Offices (I)*, pp. 54–57.
[352] Park, pp. 73-74 (transl. pp. 194-196).

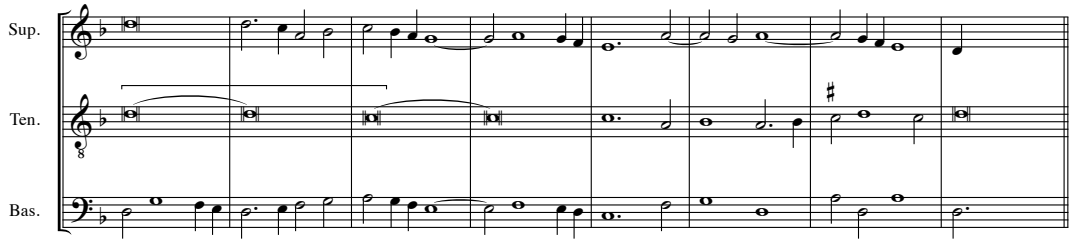
Guillelmus instructs that the contratenor bassus can make use of the lower octave, fifth, sixth and third. He must use a fifth as the penultimate, and octave or third as the antepenultimate consonance before the octave; the superius is to use the sixth as the penultimate consonance. The example shows the superius starting out from an octave above the tenor, reaching the tenth above the bassus by means of a flourish in seminiminae (see Example 4.21).



Example 4.21 Tenth-gymel with cantus firmus, excerpt (*De preceptis*, fol. 35).

In his *Practica musice* (Milan, 1496), Franchinus Gaffurius also mentions this 'very famous progression of notes in counterpoint' ('celeberrimus quidam in contrapuncto processus notularum'), in which superius and bassus sing in tenths, while the tenor harmonises with each of these parts.[353] According to Gaffurius, this procedure was used by Johannes Tinctoris, Josquin des Prez, Gaspar van Weerbeke, Alexander Agricola, Loyset Compère, Antoine Brumel, Heinrich Isaac and other 'delightful composers' ('iocundissimi compositores'). Guillelmus's example uses a tenor exclusively in long notes, behaving much like what one would expect of a cantus firmus in *super librum* performance, while the example provided by Gaffurius shows a rhythmically more active tenor that abandons its cantus firmus function before the cadence (see Example 4.22, b. 6-8). This elegant adaptation of the technique is perhaps to be associated more with composition than with *super librum* singing.

[353] Gaffurius, *Practica musice* (Milan, 1496), Liber III, cap. 12 (fol. 57r). For a translation see Irwin Young, *The Practica Musicae of Franchinus Gaffurius* (Milwaukee, London: The University of Winsconsin Press, 1969), pp. 154–155.

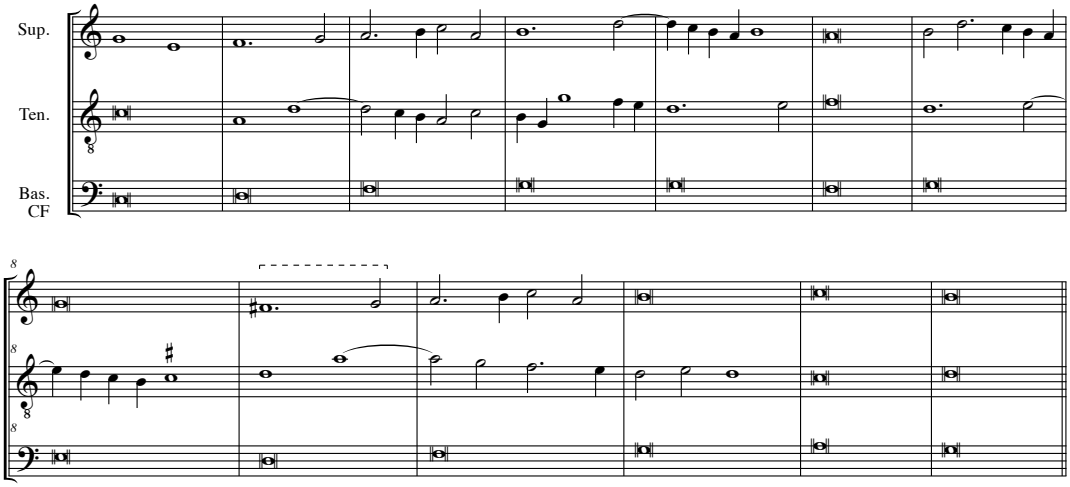


Example 4.22 Tenth-gymel with tenor, excerpt (*Practica musice*, fol. 57v).

The difficulty of having to 'shadow' a melody at the tenth, as it is being invented in real time, can probably be alleviated by copious collective practice and a shared collection of melodic commonplaces. In fact, this type of parallel singing is not more complicated than what Guillelmus illustrates elsewhere in the treatise for gymel and fauxbourdon (e.g. Examples 4.4 and 4.14), which would presumably be read from an 'unbroken' plainchant as well. Nevertheless, to the modern student of improvised counterpoint this may seem like a kind of wizardry, and he may want to look for a somewhat easier way to use this technique in improvisation.

Vicente Lusitano's *Introdutione facilissima et novissima* (1553) provides a good, relatively easy, alternative for singing counterpoint of a similar type. In the chapter on 'concerted counterpoint above the bass' ('del contrapunto in concerto sopra 'l basso') he gives the following instructions: 'One can sing easily in concert when the superius will always sing tenths from one note to the next, and the third part as it pleases him, except for parallel thirds or sixths (...)'[354] The example shows a florid superius, relying on structural tenth parallels with the bassus but using twelfths and double octaves as well (see Example 4.23). A way for superius and bassus to sing counterpoint around a cantus firmus in the tenor, exactly as in the Gaffurius and Guillelmus examples, is also explained; however, it is clear that this is considered the more difficult procedure.

[354] 'In concerto si può facilmente cantare quando 'l soprano fará sempre decime, voglio dire al mover d'una nota a l'altra, e la terza parte come li piacerá, ecceto due terze, o seste, in diverse linee, o spattii...' Vicente Lusitano, *Introduttione facilissima* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1553), fol. 1. See Canguilhem, *Chanter sur le livre à la Renaissance. Les traités de contrepoint de Vicente Lusitano*, p. 356. Translation by the author.



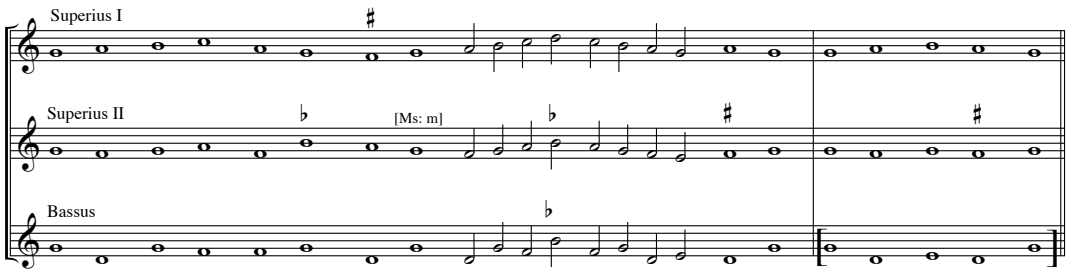
Example 4.23 Concerted counterpoint above the bass (*Introdutione*, fol. 14v).

This simple way of accompanying a bass by one voice in parallel tenths and another avoiding parallels was to have a long afterlife in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music. Partimento and basso continuo treatises often instruct to accompany a stepwise bass in parallel tenths combined with, fifth-sixth syncopations in ascent and seventh-sixth in descent.[355] By adding a superius in parallel tenths to Guillelmus's example of syncopations we can obtain exactly such a result (see Example 4.7). One can easily imagine how the parallel sixth-tenth and the parallel fifth-tenth models used in fourteenth and early fifteenth-century polyphony evolved into this technique: parallel fifths between the lower voices would have gradually disappeared in the fifteenth century, due to more universal application of contrapunctus theory.[356] By the end of the fifteenth century, singers may have wished to suppress the secondary parallel fifths of the sixth-tenth model as well, either by avoiding parallels altogether in the middle voice, or by syncopating it and thereby 'disguising' the parallelism.

[355] See Sanguinetti, pp. 136–137 and 141–142. ('Ascending 5-6' and 'descending 7-6').
[356] On the parallel fifth-tenth model in English fourteenth-century music see Section 3.2.2.

4.2.5 Three-Voice Models with Contratenor Bassus

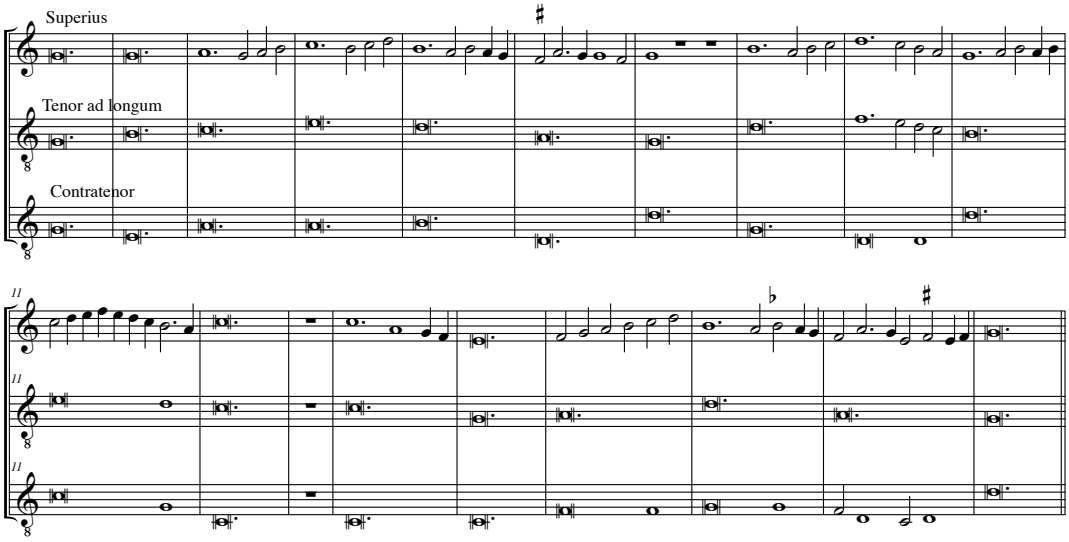
The first mention of a non-parallel contratenor is made in chapter IV of *De preceptis*. Directly after his initial exposition on fauxbourdon and gymel, Guillelmus explains a 'rule to compose with three unchanged [boys] voices ' ('regula ad componendum cum tribus vocibus non mutatis').[357] The theorist explains how to make a *secundus supranus*, starting in the unison with the *cantus prius factus* and following in thirds below. When the given melody presents an upward soprano clausula, the second part is to sing an upper third to approach the cadence (compare Example 4.1). The contratenor also begins in unison, but then alternates in fifths and thirds below. As Guillelmus instructs, its penultimate interval is to be a fifth, producing a bass clausula at the cadence.



Example 4.24 Composition for unchanged voices (*De preceptis*, fol. 20v).

In chapter VI, Guillelmus also explains that a contratenor bassus can be sung in fifths and thirds below the tenor, if the superius sings sixths above it.[358] This technique, a kind of inversion of the one shown in chapter IV, is illustrated by an example on fol. 31r, which shows an ornate superius above a tenor and contratenor in long notes (see Example 4.24). The contratenor in this example uses so-called octave leap cadences in bb. 6-7 and 18-19, creating three-voice final sonorities instead of doubling the tenor.

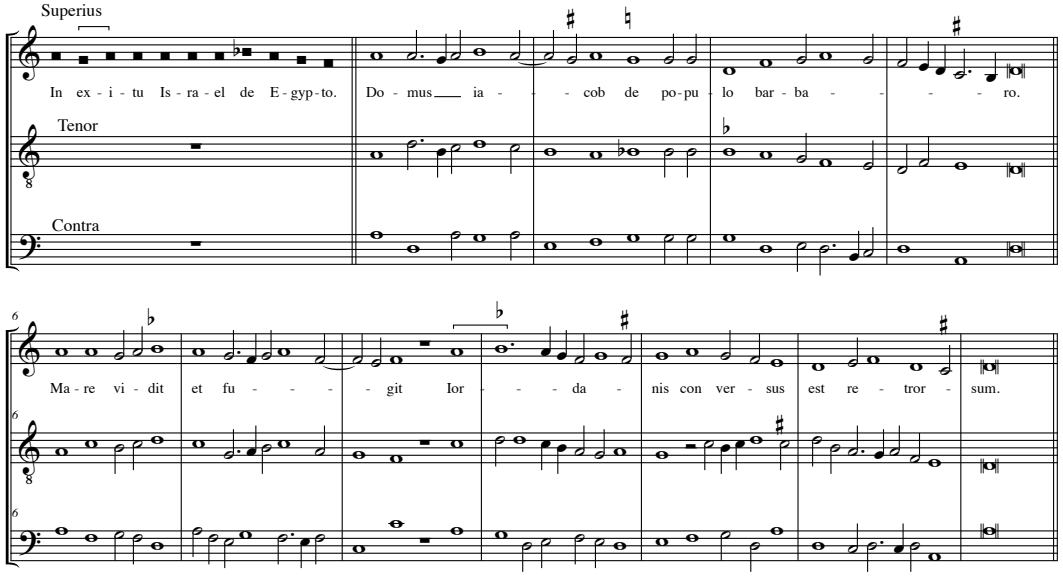
[357] Park, pp. 44-45 (transl. pp. 160-161). Park confusingly translates the heading as 'rule for composing with three *independent* voices'. Italics mine. This translation makes sense neither with the text nor the example on fol. 20v, Example 4.24, which shows a homophonic, largely parallel technique. A hexachordal interpretation of 'mutatio vocis' is irreconcilable with the example as well (none of the voices stays within one hexachord). It follows that Guillelmus is referring to polyphony for 'unchanged' boys voices.
[358] Ibid., pp. 64-65 (transl. pp. 180-181).



Example 4.25 Sixth-gymel with contratenor bassus. (*De preceptis*, fol. 31v).

The other three-voice examples in chapter VI of *De preceptis* illustrate the construction of a contratenor against duos in 'mixed gymel'.[359] These contratenors, even though they function mostly as a bassus, retain some characteristics of the early fifteenth-century 'mobile countertenor'. In one of these examples, a gymel in thirds and sixths is accompanied first with a bassus, and later with a fauxbourdon-contratenor in parallel thirds.[360] A somewhat freer version of this type of texture can be observed in an *In exitu Israel* setting from the Modena choirbooks (see Example 4.25).[361] In this homophonic psalm setting for two antiphonal choirs, we see a structural duo between superius and tenor, primarily in sixths, but making use of parallel thirds and contrary motion as well. These voices are accompanied by a 'contra' which uses thirds and fifths below the tenor when the superius is in sixths above it.

[359] Ibid., examples 55 (p. 181) and 57 (p. 186).
[360] See the example on fol. 31r, transcribed in Park, Ex. 57, p. 186.
[361] A reproduction of the source can be accessed through



Example 4.26 *In exitu Israel*, excerpts (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Ms. Alfa M.1.11 (fol. 4v-5r) .

4.2.6 From Three- to Four-Voice Fauxbourdon.

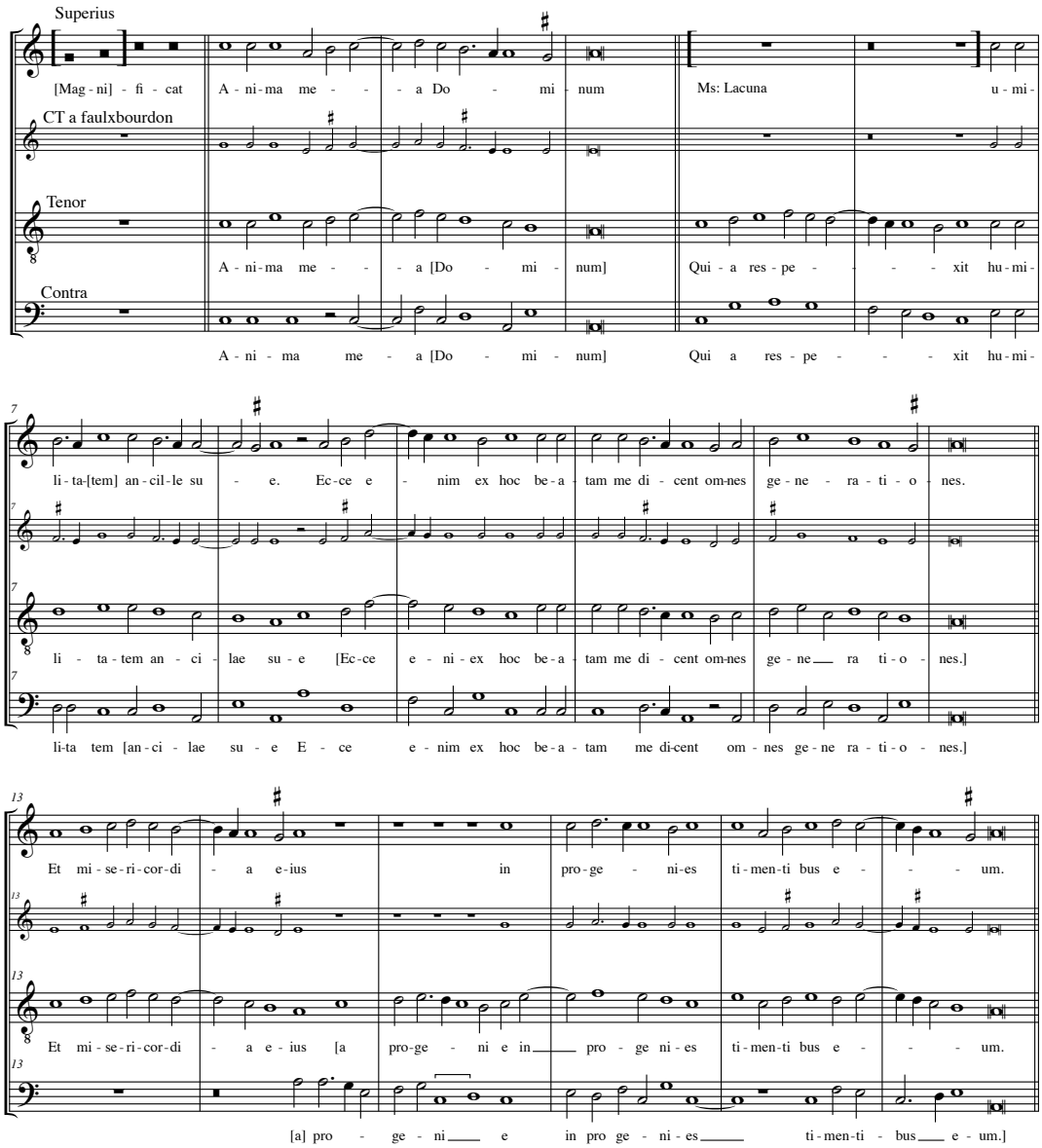
In chapter VI of *De preceptis*, Guillelmus explains that, besides the three-voice versions discussed before, fauxbourdon can also be sung in four voices. He informs us that a gymel in sixths between tenor and superius can be combined with a contratenor bassus in thirds and fifths below the tenor, as well as contratenor altus, which is to use a third and fourth above as its final consonances.[362] This technique of harmonisation is usually referred to as 'falso bordone' as opposed to 'fauxbourdon', which is used to refer the three-voice techniques discussed earlier in this chapter.[363] Guillelmus uses 'faulxbourdon' for both the three- and four-voice varieties. Even though it became very popular in Italy, the 'falso bordone' was not considered a particular Italian phenomenon during the Renaissance.[364] Guillelmus's dual use of 'faulxbourdon' also seems to

[362] Park, pp. 64-65 (transl. p. 180).
[363] This usage goes back to Michael C. Bradshaw, *The Falsobordone: A Study in Renaissance and Baroque Music*, Musicological Studies and Documents 34 (Rome, Neuhausen, Stuttgart: American Institute of Musicology, 1978).
[364] On this issue see Canguilhem, 'Le Projet FABRICA: Oralité et écriture dans les pratiques polyphoniques du chant ecclésiastique (xvie – xxe siècles)', pp. 278–279. It seems that also the English 'faburden', like 'fauxbourdon', could refer to different versions of the technique. See John Aplin, '"The Fourth Kind of Faburden": The Identity of an English Four-Part Style', *Music and Letters*, 61.3-4 (1980), pp. 245–265.

imply that there was no need to make a sharp distinction between the techniques.

The flexibility of the concept of fauxbourdon may also be observed in a number of 'hybrid' fauxbourdon compositions, in which an fourth voice is added to the three-voice texture. One such example is a *Magnificat tertii toni* by Johannes Martini, which has three parts, but also bears the rubric 'faulx bordon'.[365] The notated contratenor is apparently not an alternative contratenor ('sine faulxbourdon'), but composed to harmonise with tenor, superius, and the contratenor in fourths below it. In the four-part sections of the piece, the bassus mostly alternates octaves and tenths below the tenor, avoiding parallels with the upper parts, but making a fifth-octave bass clausula at the cadences. (I have opted to adapt the cadences of the fauxbourdon-contratenor to an alto clausula to avoid a clash with the bassus). The only real contrapuntal flaw in the piece seems to be the semiminim parallel octave between tenor and bassus in b. 10.

[365] Due to the removal of a capital on fol. 41, the superius lacks the beginning of the intonation and the second verse. The concordance on fol. 91-95 of the Ms. Capella Sistina 15 shows that we are dealing with a *Magnificat tertii toni*. This manuscript casts the piece in tempus imperfectum, and also provides music for the even verses. Remarkable also is that the inscription 'a faulx bourdon' is repeated twice on fol. 91. On this piece, see Christianus Joannes Maas, 'Geschiedenis van het Meerstemmig Magnificat tot Omstreeks 1525' (Amsterdam University, 1967), pp. 73–74; Winfried Kirsch, *Die Quellen der mehrstimmigen Magnificat - und Te Deum Vertonung bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1966), p. 356, item 907.



Example 4.27 Johannes Martini, *Magnificat tertii toni*, excerpt (Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Alfa M. 1.11, fol. 41v-42r).

Even though the technique seems to be unique to Martini's setting, one wonders if it would indeed have been a 'remarkable and exceptional experiment' as Chris Maas has suggested.[366] The fact that the piece was copied into the Ms. Capella Sistina 15 shows that it must still have been considered fit for performance in the early sixteenth century. The contents of this manuscript also showcase the tendency of Renaissance musicians to 'update' older three-part compositions to

[366] Maas, p. 74.

the new four-voice standard by adding 'si placet' voices.[367] It seems probable that such additional parts were sung *super resfactam* as well as composed.[368] Martini's way of constructing a bassus in alternating tenths and octaves could have provided musicians with a simple and effective method to turn any three-voice fauxbourdon into a four-part version, with only minimal alterations to the fauxbourdon-contratenor.

Another interesting fauxbourdon 'hybrid' can be found in Josquin des Prez' *Missa Mater Patris*, based on Antoine Brumel's motet of the same name.[369] This mass is something of a *cause célèbre* in Josquin scholarship, as some scholars have doubted Petrucci's attribution of the mass to Josquin because of its 'bizarre' counterpoint.[370] David Fallows, who calls the mass 'probably the strangest work of its generation', describes it as 'an alternation between duos written in an absurd manner with homophonic passages in triads, often in parallel motion, giving the impression of a parody of bad composition'. [371] Willem Elders has interpreted these homophonic passages as written in 'the old-fashioned fauxbourdon style, with an extra voice a third above' (see Example 4.28).[372]

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[367] See for instance the four-voice arrangement of Du Fay's fauxbourdon hymns on fol. 2v-46 and 50v-70. An inventory of the source can be accessed through <http://www.diamm.ac.uk/jsp/Descriptions?op=SOURCE&sourceKey=966> [accessed 16 August 2016].

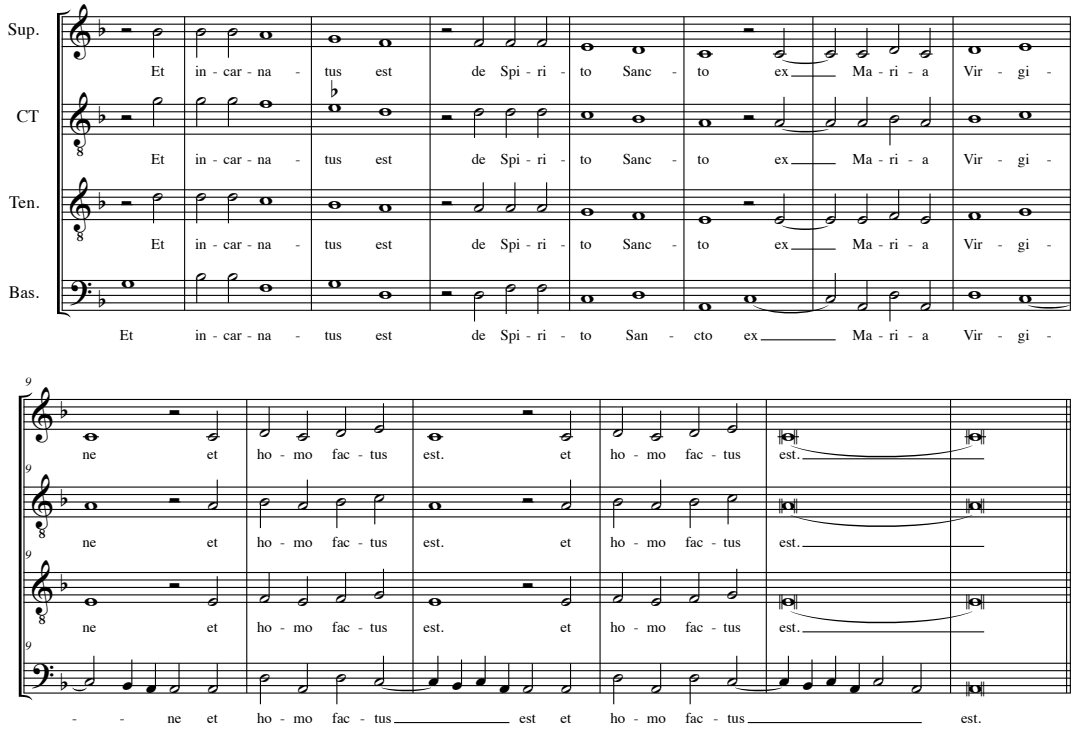
[368] On the extempore adding of voices to a pre-existing composition see for instance Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le instituzione harmoniche* (Venice: Zarlino, 1558), Liber III, cap. 64. For a translation see Marco and Palisca, pp. 221–225.

[369] Petrucci, *Missarum Josquin Liber Tertius* (Fossombrone, 1514). For a transcription see *Masses Based on Polyphonic Songs*, New Josquin Edition 10 (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis, 1999). Willem Elders (ed.), *New Josquin Edition* vol. 10 (Utrecht, 1999). The passages in question occur in the *Kyrie* (NJE 10, bb. 18-22, 43-47, 56-60 and 74-83), the *Credo* (NJE 10, bb. 19-24, 29-36, 46-55, 63-75, 87-115, 127-135, 142-145, 159-160) and the *Sanctus* (NJE 10, bb. 99-101, 105-109, 114-118, 123-127).

[370] Opposition to attribution to Josquin was voiced among others by Helmuth Osthoff, *Josquin Desprez* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1962), pp. 151–155. For an overview of the discussion around the authenticity of the *Mater Patris* mass, see Jennifer Bloxam, 'Masses Based on Polyphonic Songs and Canonic Masses', in *The Josquin Compendium*, ed. by Richard Sherr (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 151–210 (pp. 186–188).

[371] David Fallows, 'Josquin Des Prez', in *Guide de la musique de la Renaissance*, ed. by Françoise Ferrand (Paris: Fayard, 2011), pp. 344–364 (p. 356). Translation by the author. For Fallows, the very strangeness of the mass argues in favour of Petrucci's attribution. Had he had any doubts as to the mass's authenticity, it is unlikely that Petrucci would have placed such a piece at the beginning of his third volume of Josquin's masses.

[372] Willem Elders, *Josquin Des Prez and His Musical Legacy: An Introductory Guide* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), p. 177.



Example 4.28 Josquin des Prez, *Credo* from *Missa Mater Patris*, excerpt (NJE bb. 63-75).

Contrary to what one might expect, this procedure does not lead to parallel octaves between the superius and bassus, because the bassus – playing the role of the fauxbourdon-tenor – alternates thirds and fifths below the tenor.[373] Both Tinctoris and Gaffurius mention that in fauxbourdon fifths as well as thirds may be placed below the fourth in the upper voices,[374] and skilfully composed fauxbourdons like Examples 4.16 and 4.17 regularly alternate between 6/3 and 5/8 sonorities. One the other hand, avoiding parallel 6/3 sonorities altogether is rather untypical of fauxbourdon, and one can ask the question if the bass voice does not behave more like an actual contratenor bassus in Example 4.28. As Guillelmus explains (and as we have observed in Examples 4.24 and 4.25), such a

[373] Contrary to David Fallow's claim (see note above), I have been able to identify only one forbidden parallel in the homophonic sections of the *Missa Mater Patris*. See NJE 10, *Credo* b. 10 (p. 15), where superius and bassus sing a seminim in parallel octaves.
[374] Franchinus Gaffurius, *Practica musice*, Liber III, cap. V ('De consentanea suavitate quartae'). See Young, p. 140. Tinctoris, *Liber de arte contrapuncti*, Liber I, cap. V ('De diatessaron id est quarta'). Seay, *Johannes Tinctoris The Art of Counterpoint (Liber de Arte Contrapuncti)*, p. 29.

voice also uses mainly thirds and fifths. Jennifer M. Bloxam has also pointed out the similarity of the four-voice passages in the *Kyrie*, *Credo* and *Sanctus* to Guillelmus's examples of fauxbourdon.[375] A similar passage, featuring a sequence in parallel 4/6 sonorities in the upper voices and a bass 'covering' the fourths may be indentified in the third Agnus of Jacob Obrecht's *Missa Malheur Me Bat*.[376] More than anything Example 4.28 shows the fluid border between the techniques known as 'fauxbourdon' and 'falso bordone'. It would be a small step, for instance, to adapt the altus part to alternating thirds and fourths below the superius, thus obtaining the classic four-part fauxbourdon texture that will be described below.

We may conclude that the four-voice adaptations of fauxbourdon discussed above are found in only a few composition, but that they demonstrate viable methods for creating simple four-voice settings.[377] As such, these techniques might not have been the result of a compositional experiment but traditional techniques, usually reserved for extemporisation and—like some of the techniques described in *De preceptis*—leaving only a tiny imprint on the written record.[378]

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[375] See Bloxam, p. 190. Bloxam suggests that the chordal sections of the *Gloria*, in contrast to the sections discussed above, are constructed in 'a more varied, composed style', using a freer type of voice leading. In fact, many of these passages show a permutation of the four-voice fauxbourdon, in which the basic duet is sung in parallel thirds between the altus and tenor or superius and altus (see below). The writing of the duos shows a similar predilection for the use of simple, commonplace elements like 'stretto fuga' and gymel. It seems to me that a large part of the aesthetic 'objections' to the *Missa Mater Patris* originate from its rather straightforward use of improvisational techniques, which must have been very familiar to Renaissance musicians, but may strike the modern analyst as odd and unsophisticated.

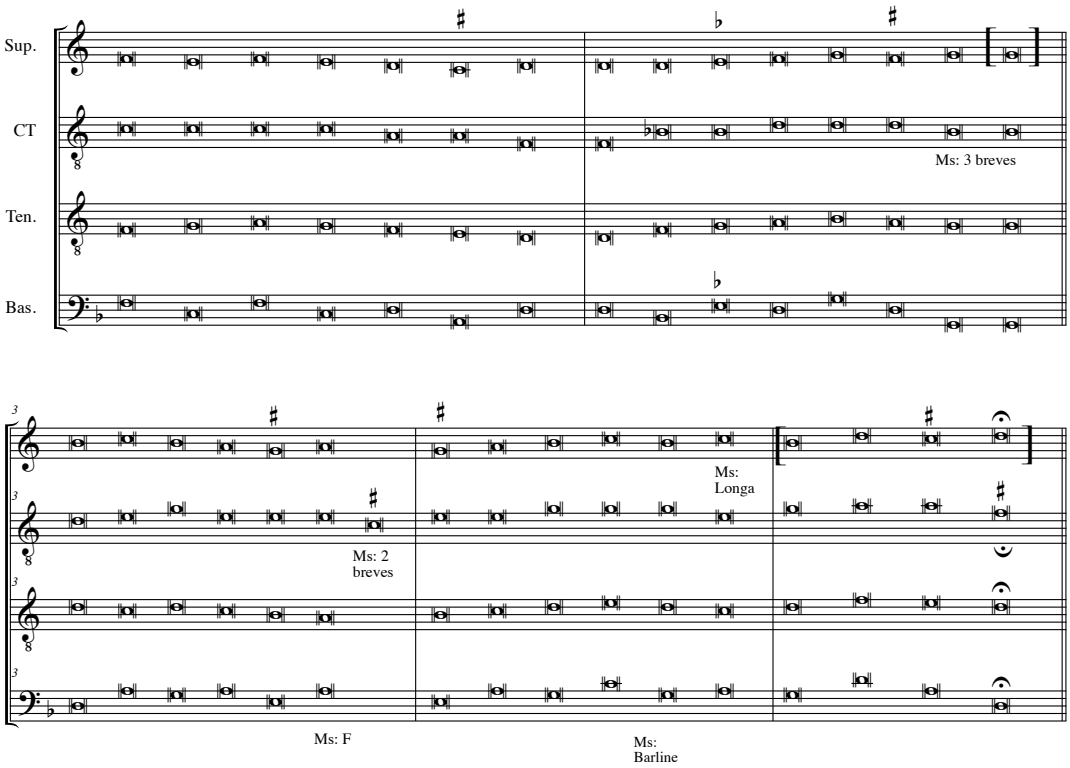
[376] Barton Hudson, *Missa Malheur Me Bat, Missa Maria Zart*, New Obrecht Edition 7 (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlands Muziekgeschiedenis, 1987). See p. 37, bb. 182-195.

[377] At a late stage of work on this dissertation, I have come to realise that the technique shown in Example 4.28 is identical to that of an 'exemplum aliud quatuor vocum faulbourdon' on fol. 53 of Adrianus Petit Coclico's *Compendium musices descriptivum* (Nuremberg: Johannes Montani and Ulrich Neuber, 1552). This example, in turn, has been compared to a technique called the 'ferd kynd of faburdoun' described on fol. 104v-111r of the sixteenth-century Scottish anonymous treatise British Museum, Add. Ms. 1911. See Judson Maynard, 'An Anonymous Scottish Treatise on Music from the Sixteenth Century' (Indiana University, 1961), pp. 309–331. Like Josquin's and Coclico's technique, this 'ferd kynd of faburdoun' involves continuous parallel fourths between the tenor – notated in plainchant neumes – and the altus. To illustrate this model, the Scottish Anonymous provides an entire setting of the Mass ordinary, which shows a much more florid texture than the continental examples quoted above. See also Aplin, pp. 248–250. I intend to pursue my investigations of these 'fauxbourdon hybrids' in a future, separate publication.

[378] A good example is the persistence of the parallel 6/10 model in improvisation untill the 1470s, whereas the last compositions using it date around 1400 (see Example 4.18).

4.2.7 Four-Voice Fauxbourdon

Guillelmus returns to four-part fauxbourdon as a 'modus componendi' at the end of chapter VI.[379] The same intervallic rules for the bassus are explained, and the example shows that the altus, after starting out at a fifth above the tenor, can continuously alternate in fourths and thirds, coinciding with the lower fifths and thirds of the bassus (see Example 4.29).[380]

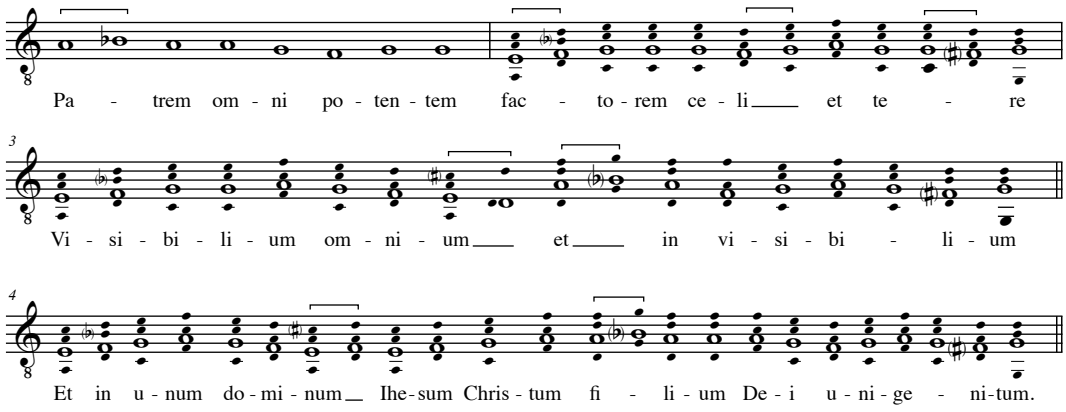


Example 4.29 Four-voice fauxbourdon. (*De preceptis*, fol. 32).

An abundance of examples of this technique exists in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources, in fully elaborated compositions in mensural notation, and in

[379] Park, pp. 69-71 (transl. pp. 188-191).
[380] See also Park, Ex. 59, (p. 70 [transcr. 189]). The example on fol. 32 present a number of problems: the altus ('contra') in b. 2 contains nine breves in the manuscript, against only seven in the superius. The bassus and altus in b. 3 sound F against e on the sixth breve, I have opted to emend the bassus to A. The scribe seems to have misplaced the line between the bars 3 and 4 in the bassus part. The superius—though it finishes with a long—seems to be lacking the whole of b. 5. I believe these emendations make for a more convincing reading than Park's.

the form 'aides-mémoire' in the margins of liturgical books.[381] Like the simple polyphony discussed in Chapter 3, fauxbourdons were also commonly notated in plainchant neumes. Presumably such notations were used to emphasise the 'plain', unadorned character of the music, as well as making it accessible to singers unacquainted with the intricacies of mensural notation.[382] An interesting example of this practice is to be found in a fifteenth-century gradual from Ghent, in which the *Credo V* is realised as a four-part fauxbourdon (see Example 4.30).[383] The superius, altus and bassus are written in small notes against the larger plainchant neumes, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Guillelmus's puncta illustrating the visualisation of a counterpoint (see Examples 4.1 and 4.6).



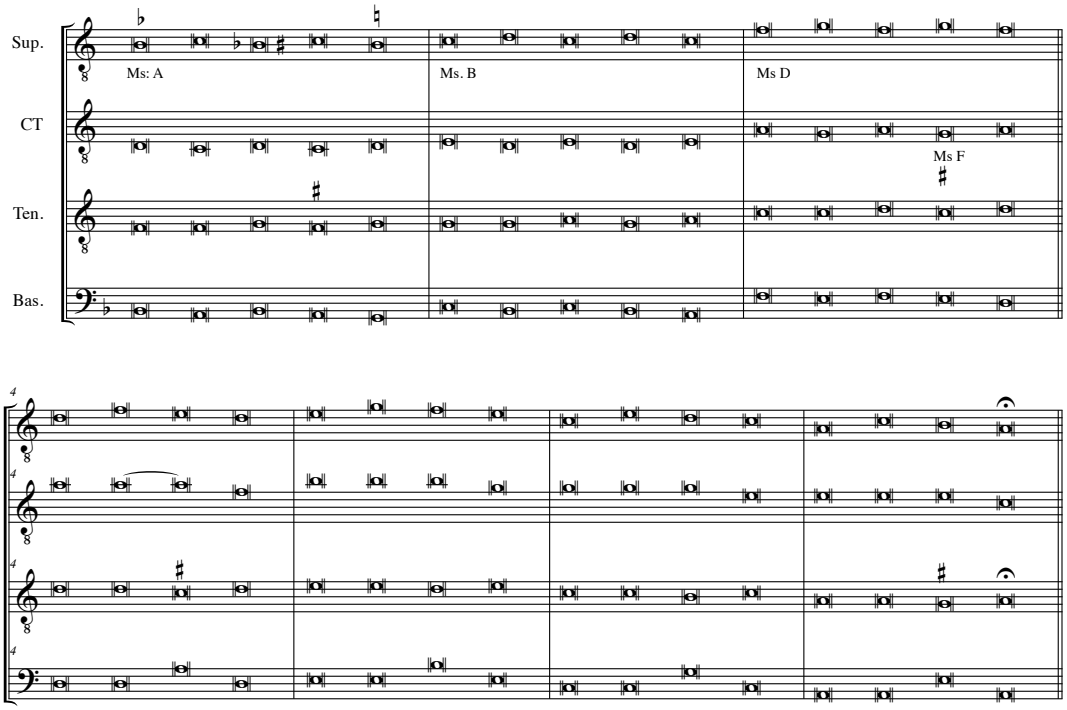
Example 4.30 *Credo V* in fauxbourdon, excerpt (Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek Ms. 14, fol. 272r).

A few exceptions to Guillelmus's rules are to be observed in this fauxbourdon. At the beginning of bars 2, 3 and 4 the altus sings parallel fourths above the tenor, as in Example 4.28. The other voices abandon their regular intervallic relations with the tenor when it presents a soprano clausula at the end of bars 2, 3 and 4

[381] See Canguilhem, 'Le Projet FABRICA: Oralité et écriture dans les pratiques polyphoniques du chant ecclésiastique (xvie – xxe siècles)', pp. 274–275; Wright, 'Performance Practices at the Cathedral of Cambrai: 1475-1550', pp. 318–321.
[382] Examples of fauxbourdons in this type of notation may be found from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries For an inventory of the fauxbourdon in France, published by the FABRICA project <http://blogs.univ-tlse2.fr/fabrica/files/2012/11/Faux-bourdons-franc%CC%A7ais-Sources-blog.pdf> [accessed 16 August 2016].
[383] Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek Ms. 14, fol. 271v-274r. A similarly notated three-voice fauxbourdon can be found on fol. 153v-154. I am grateful to Hendrik Vanden Abeele for pointing these pieces out to me.

to produce a cadence to G.[384] Interestingly, Guillelmus also gives 'exceptiones' to his model, making a cadence when the tenor presents a soprano clausula ('si cantus firmus teneat modum suprani'). The first option is for the bassus to make the tenor clausula with the contratenor singing a third and fifth above the bassus (fourths below the tenor) and the superius singing parallel tenths above the bassus (fifth and third above the tenor). The superius of the example illustrating this type of cadence presents significant problems, but I believe it can be reconstructed based on a comparison with the treatise's text (see Example 4.30).[385] The second option is to make a third to unison progression between tenor and superius, a third to octave bassizans clausula in the bassus and a sixth to third progression in the altus. (This type of cadence is somewhat similar to the one in bar 2 and 4 of Example 4.30.) [386]

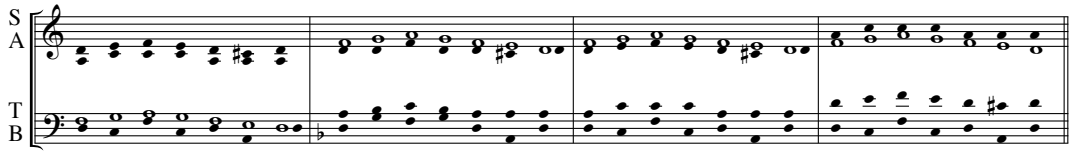
[384] The B *penultima* of the contratenor in b. 3 could be changed to A, matching the other cadences.
[385] See also Park, Ex. 60 (p. 71 [transcr. p. 19]). As Park's examples also show, the example on fol. 33 contains parallel octaves between superius and bassus at the end of every bar in the Ms. Since the treatise advocates making parallel tenths between superius and bassus, I assume that the clef of the 'cantus' would have been C2, not a C3. This would also account for the flat and sharp before and after the third brevis in b.1, which would now apply to B, not G. This leaves the problem of the initial note of every segment, which—when transposed—is no longer consonant. These notes may have been octaves above the bass (B-flat in the first bar) before the corruption of the example. B. 5, with its diminished penultimate sonority, is also problematic. This type of cadence may be used to *D, C* and *A*, as the example shows, or to *F* and *G*.
[386] It may seem that Guillelmus is laying down the rudiments of a theory of cadential functions, but his suggestions—like much of the rest of the treatise—are actually very practical in nature. Guillelmus simply provides standard closes for the most frequent terminations of a *cantus prius factus*, which can serve as well for singing on the book in fauxbourdon as simple compositions in four voices. A more complete treatment of the exchange of cadential functions, presumably for use in compositions, can be found with Gaffurius in Liber III, cap. XXI of his *Practica musice*. See Young, pp. 149–153. On this topic see also Cumming, 'From Two-Part Framework to Movable Module', pp. 149–153.



Example 4.31 Alternative cadences. (*De preceptis*, fol. 33v).

When a melody behaves more like a top part altogether, singers could presumably elect to use it as a superius with a tenor in sixths below, obtaining the same sonorities by singing a bassus in octaves and tenths and an altus in thirds and fourths below the written melody. The bassus of such a fauxbourdon can be visualised in unisons and thirds with the cantus firmus. Markus Jans has convincingly argued that the four-voice fauxbourdon can also be 'inverted' in a number of other ways,[387] as shown here in Example 4.32. The gymel-duo can for instance be sung by superius and altus in thirds, with the tenor taking over the alto function, alternating in thirds and fourths below the altus. It is also possible to place the gymel between the inner voices and having the superius taking over the alto-function, singing thirds and fourths above the altus.

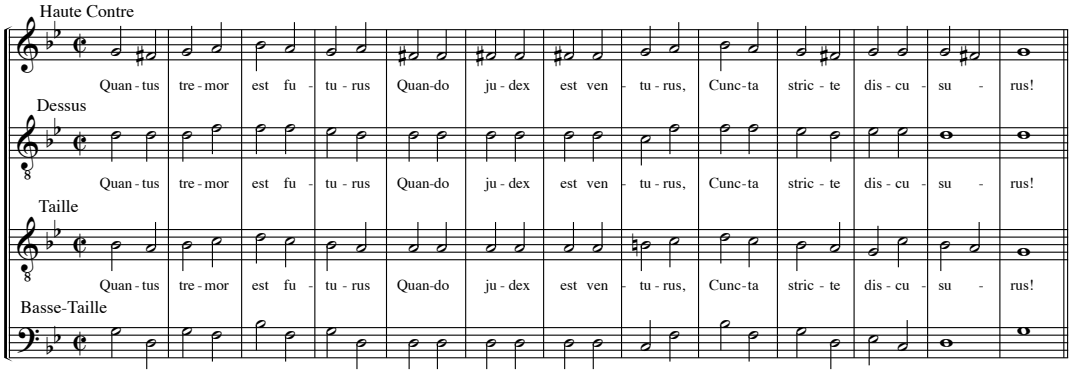
[387] Jans, 'Alle gegen Eine: Satzmodelle in note-gegen-note Sätzen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts', p. 102. See example 1 where he identifies different distributions of contrapuntal functions in homophonic passage from Victoria's *Missa quarti toni*.



Example 4.32 'Inversions' of the four-voice fauxbourdon.

The crucial role of the four-voice fauxbourdon in the development of Western music has been stressed by a number of scholars.[388] The model gave rise to dance basses like the folia, romanesca, passamezzo antico and moderno in the sixteenth century, which would in turn form the kernel of nascent basso continuo practice in the early seventeenth. As a designation for liturgical pieces in simple (often four-voice) counterpoint the fauxbourdon also had a long afterlife, especially in France, where collections of 'faux-bourdons' continued to be printed up to the end of the nineteenth century.[389] A few of the chant harmonisations in Père M. Bonhoure's *Méthode théorique et pratique de plain-chant* (Toulouse, 1840) still use the old fauxbourdon technique.[390] A good example is the sequence of Bonhoure's *Messe des morts a quatre voix*, which—apart from a few rather striking dissonances—strongly resembles Guillelmus's examples of four-voice fauxbourdon (see Example 4.33).[391]

[388] See for instance Carl Dahlhaus and Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality* (Princeton University Press, 2014); Markus Jans, 'Modale "Harmonik" Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Logik der Klangverbindungen im 16. und Frühen 17. Jahrhunderts', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, 16 (1992), pp. 167–188; Johannes Menke, '"Ex Centro" improvisation - Sketches for a Theory of Sound Progressions in the Early Baroque', in *Improvising Early Music*, Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute, ed. by Dirk Moelants (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), pp. 69–92.
[389] See note 382.
[390] Bonhoure, M. (père), *Méthode théorique et pratique du plain-chant* (Toulouse: Imprimerie Augustin Manavit, 1840).
[391] Bonhoure, pp. 200–201. The 'faux-bourdons' are written in plainchant notation, which, however, is clearly intended to be sung rhythmically. The time-signature '2' indicates 2/2 ('alla breve'). This way of singing in 'notes égales et carrées' is also explained on p. 86. The *Kyrie* of the *Messe des morts*, performed by the Ensemble Gilles Binchois, can be heard on <http://blogs.univ-tlse2.fr/fabrica/anthologie-du-faux-bourdon-francais-2/kyrie-1840/> [accessed 16 August 2016].



Example 4.33 M. Bonhoure, *Messe des morts*, excerpt (*Méthode*, pp. 200-201).

4.3 Conclusion

De preceptis artis musicae informs us that the learning of counterpoint can start from singing parallel imperfect consonances, called gymel. As has already been pointed out by Klaus-Jürgen Sachs and others, these gymels can be combined into different types of simple three-voice counterpoint known as fauxbourdon. Guillelmus's technique of combining gymels in a horizontal way, alternating between them to create a more diverse two-voice counterpoint, has hitherto been overlooked. Another important element the treatise can shed light on is the technique of 'sighting'. By imagining a fifth or an octave as a unison with the cantus firmus, it becomes easy to visualise counterpoint on the musical staff. With the use of these elements, students can quickly learn to extemporise a simple counterpoint on a given melody. A gymel in thirds or sixths can also be combined with a contratenor bassus alternating in thirds and fifths with the tenor. Finally, such a texture can be amplified into a four-voice fauxbourdon with an altus filling out the 'left-over' notes in every sonority.

Comparing Guillelmus's teaching with the extant composed repertoire of the same period and earlier leads to the following observations. Firstly, strictly parallel settings in two voices are rare; this points to the importance of contrary motion, presumably in improvisation as well as in composition. Therefore, I propose to add to Guillelmus's technique of 'mixed gymel' the principle of adjacent consonances described in Chapter 3. Secondly, Guillelmus's way of organising the rhythm of a fauxbourdon does not conform to what we find in most fauxbourdon compositions. I have proposed an alternative based on the hymns of Du Fay, where the poetic metre dictates the rhythm of the setting. Guillelmus's 'inversion' of fauxbourdon, using parallel 6/10 rather than 6/3 sonorities, can also be used if the voice-distribution requires it. Apart from the 'classic' four-voice fauxbourdon described in Guillelmus's treatise, I have identified two 'hybrid' models, which amplify the three-voice fauxbourdon into a four-voice texture.

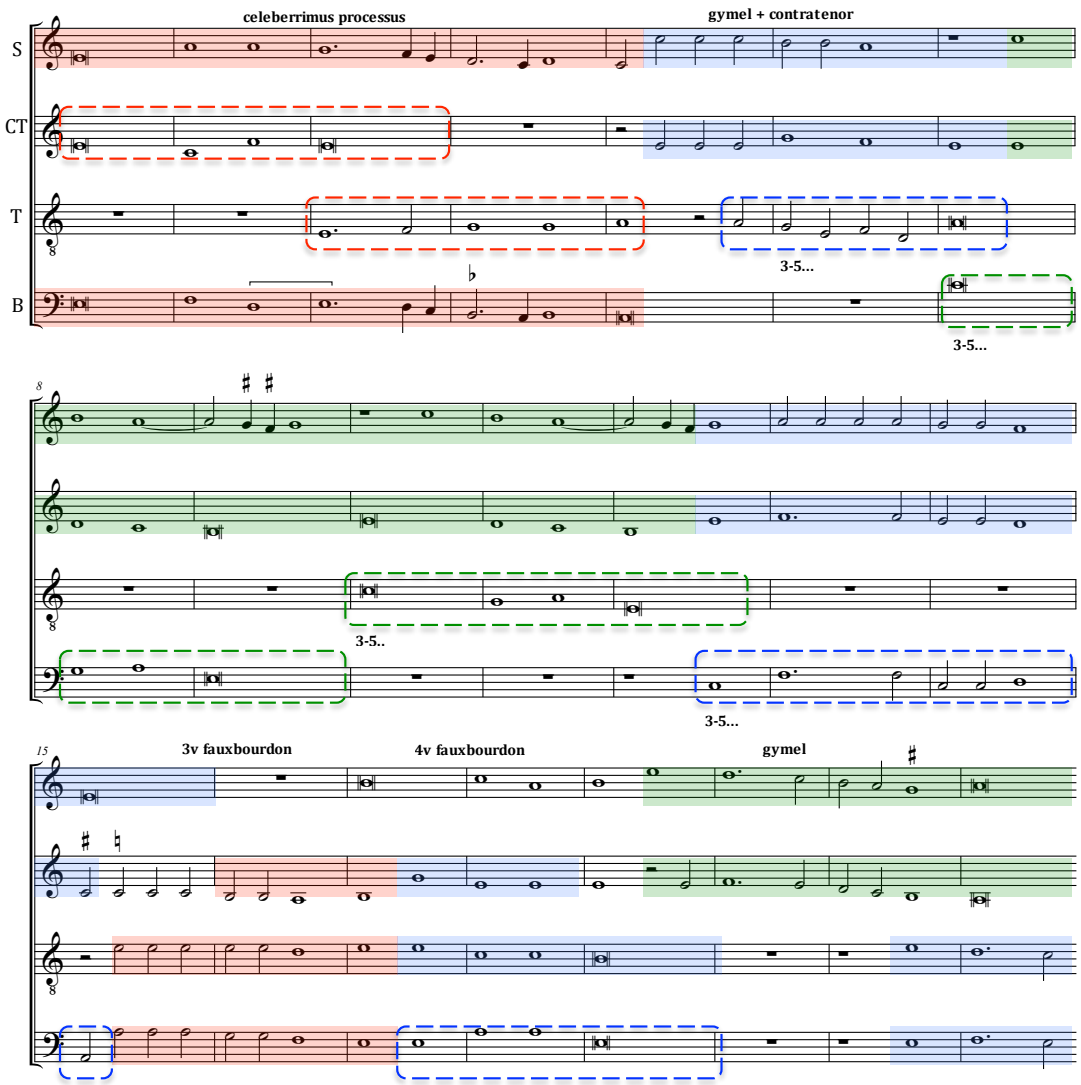
A musician familiar with these techniques through improvisation will also be able to recognise them when singing fifteenth-century compositions. (This type of analysis can be done from a score, but it is more interesting to do it by

ear, while singing from parts). The first step is to identify which parts are singing in parallel, and form the basic duet of a particular passage. After this, accompanying voices, such as a contratenor bassus, can also be identified. The famous and well-loved chanson *Mille regretz,* for instance, is composed almost exclusively of techniques that have been discussed in this chapter (see Example 4.34).[392] The piece starts out with Gaffurius's 'famous progression' in parallel tenths (bb. 1-5), and after several varieties of gymel with bassus (bb. 6-15), it also uses three- and four voice fauxbourdon (bb. 16-19). Rather than a 'chef d'oeuvre' the piece turns out to be an elegant collage of simple contrapuntal techniques, easily diagnosed by the trained ear. The conscious listener may delight in the way the composer cleverly morphs the different contrapuntal models and manages to create and frustrate expectations, notably in b. 11, but the 'ingredients' of the chanson are entirely commonplace.

One may argue that in studying simple polyphonic procedures, we can see something of the 'histoire de longue durée' of European music. [393] Musical techniques—much like buildings—were not abandoned after they had gone out of fashion, but adapted to contemporary needs and tastes. As we have seen, the singing of two-part polyphony in imperfect consonances originated in the late thirteenth century, probably in England. This practice, which became known as gymel, was then amplified into the parallel three-voice versions discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. These models were adapted to suit the new aesthetic of Renaissance music, either by obscuring parallelism in perfect concordances, or by amplifying them—again—into four-part textures. The four-voice fauxbourdon itself also had an impressive lifespan, from the fifteenth to the very end of the nineteenth century in notated music, and arguably even beyond in the oral traditions of rural southern Europe.[394] As such I would argue that the study of

[392] Tylman Susato, *L'onziesme livre contenant vingt & neuf chansons amoureuses a quatre parties* (Antwerp: Susato, 1549). See no. 25 in David Fallows, *Secular Works for Four Voices*, New Josquin Edition 28 (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1999).
[393] The concept of a 'long term history' was developed by historians of the French 'Annales school', and Fernand Braudel in particular. It concentrates on the gradual social and economic developments in a society. On the concept and its use see Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Braudel on the Longue Durée: Problems of Conceptual Translation', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 32.2 (2009), p. 155–170.
[394] The project FABRICA (Faux-BouRdon Improvisation et Contrepoint mentAL) was therefore also specifically conducted as an interdisciplinary research by both historical an ethno-

elementary musical forms and procedures is eminently suited to viewing European music less as a succession of 'great composers', musical 'inventions', and clear-cut periods, than a gradual process, in which musical styles evolve from one into another.



Example 4.34 Josquin des Prez (?), *Mille regretz*, excerpt.

musicologists. For a mission statement of this project, which ran between 2009 and 2012, see <http://blogs.univ-tlse2.fr/fabrica/a-propos/> [accessed 16 August 2016].