Vive le roy: A Case Study in Music History

Lester D. Brothers

이 글은 2005년 가을, 당시 미국 북텍사스 주립대학(University of North Texas)의 음악학, 이론, 음악인류학 프로그램의 과장이었던 브라더스 박사(Dr. Lester D. Brothers)가 한국에 방문하여 한국예술종합학교와 한양대학교에서 강연한 내용을 보충, 정리한 것으로 주어진 역사적 사료에 역사가가 어떻게 접근하고 또 그로부터 어떻게 역사서술을 이끌어 내는지를 친절하게 설명하고 있는 글이다.

저자의 표현에 의하면 역사가의 첫 번째 작업은 "이야기의 발견(Finding Story)"이다. 이 단계에서는 역사가가 자신에게 주어진 사료를 어떻게 다루어야 하는지 설명하고 있다. 라 루의 전통적인 접근법에 기초하여 음악을 분석적으로 서술한 후 전적으로 사료에 근거하여 이 작품이 '누구의,' '언제의' 작품인지 파악한다.

두 번째 작업은 "해석: 역사 만들기"로, 앞선 서술 작업에 이어 작품이 만들어진 맥락을 자세히 살펴보게 하는 '왜'라는 문제를 다룬다. 이 부분에서 브라더스 박사는 "Vive le roy"라는 작품의 양식적, 사회적, 정치적 함의를 깊이 살펴, 이 작품에 대한 단순한 서술의 차원을 넘어 보다 폭넓고 깊은 이해를 시도한다.

이 글은 르네상스 음악사가로 활발하게 활동하고 있는 저자가 실제로 자신이 작업하는 방식을 학생들에게 친절하게 설명하는 방식으로 서술한 것으로, 음악사 연구의 방법을 이해하는데 많은 도움과 영감을 줄 수 있을 것이라고 생각된다. 특히 이 글의 저자는 각 부분의 제목이 보여주듯 역사 서술이라는 것이 기본적으로 실증주의적인 바탕에서 이루어지나 실증주의적인 서술로서 끝나는 것이 아니라 그 후에는 해석의 단계로 넘어가야 한다는 점을 잘 보여주고 있다. 그러나 그렇다고 저자가 역사가의 해석을 실제 사료보다 더 중요하게

여기는 것은 아니다. 오히려 저자는 역사가가 사료 앞에 겸손해야 함을 주장하며 웨스트럽(Jack Westrup)의 말을 빌어 역사가가 “역사의 패턴을 발견하여야 하지만 그것을 억지로 부여하면 안 된다(to find pattens without imposing them)”고 주장하고 있다. (정경영)

Part One
Discovery: Finding the Story

History

If understood as events from the past, history is all around us. It forms the core of who we are as long as we have memory. Its artifacts surround us, as in a picture, a building, a painting, or a song. Each has it own story, unique on one level, and collective on another. The historian specializes in connecting these unique stories with their collective stories in order to understand the past. In a sense, HIS/HER story becomes THEIR story. Why study the past? Because THEIR story may be OUR story: we study the past to understand ourselves in the present. Moreover, some believe that history contains valuable lessons that can help us avoid the mistakes of the past. Some of us study history because it is so fascinating, regardless of applicability.

Today, I would like to examine some of these assumptions by taking a single piece of music from the past as an artifact representing one or more events, and using it as a case study of the process by which we may understand early music. In Part One, we will be concerned with the process of discovery: how we go about like a reporter getting the basic

information we need to form any understanding of it at all. I call this part "Finding the Story". In Part Two, we will be concerned with the process of interpretation: how we go about sorting information we have found to place the artifact within the collective story to which it belongs and by which we may better understand it. I call this part "Making History".

To begin, let's listen to the subject of our case study, a piece of music as we might hear it accidentally on the radio or television.

What kind of impression did it make on you? How many liked this piece? How many disliked this piece? Either way, how many would choose to listen to this again? Often we are more receptive to music we like, and we tend to like what we know. If we don't, we may not bother to listen. In music history, we will find many pieces we simply don't like. To comprehend history, then, we must find ways to overcome the simple like/ dislike response. I would suggest two. I call them critical listening and cultural listening.

Critical Listening

First, it is helpful to listen to the sounds inherent in the piece itself. Jan La Rue, in his *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, has suggested a handy way to ensure that we consider the important ingredients that make up the listening experience in an objective way.[1] If we listen in this way, we are practicing critical listening. The components make up an anagram, SHMRG, consisting of SOUND, HARMONY, MELODY, RHYTHM,

1) Jan La Rue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 10－12.

GROWTH. SOUND is very inclusive of those traits that contribute to sound, including timbre and texture. GROWTH is the term encompassing what we usually call form, and refers simply to the way a piece unfolds organizationally over time.

As an exercise in critical listening, let's listen to our piece again, each one concentrating on just one of the components of SHMRG.

In summary, by critical listening we have discovered the following

SOUND: timbre, brass instruments; texture: four parts, polyphonic; motivic, imitative, a slow－moving sustained part seamless texture

HARMONY: major, no obvious cadences

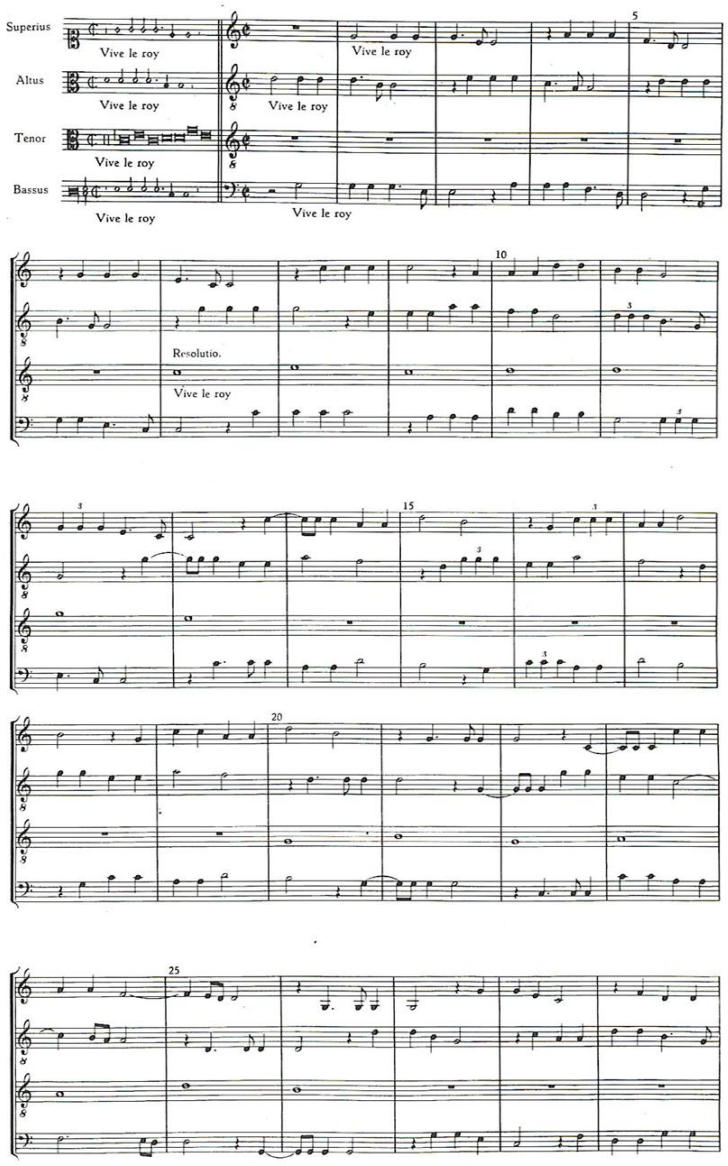
MELODY: one slow－moving sustained melody; three imitative, repeated notes then falling thirds

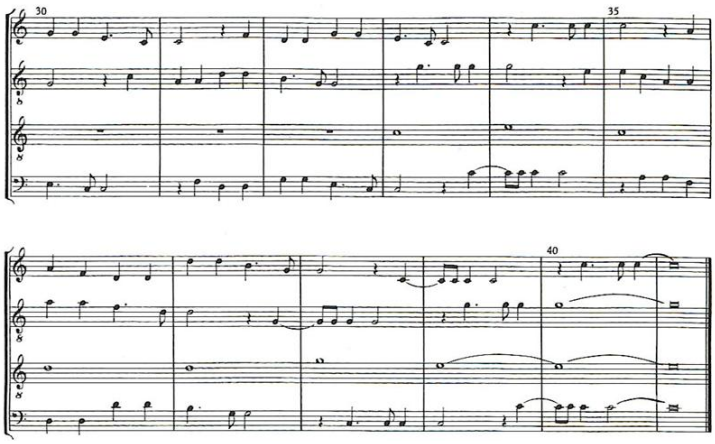
RHYTHM: duple meter, prominent dotted rhythms throughout, frequent repeated note anacrusis; slow part moves in even note values, the same throughout

GROWTH: three sections with sustained melody repeated down a fourth and then returned (a a' a)

Most of the time it is helpful to see a score as well as listen in order to process details. Let's now listen with score.

Ex. 1. "Vive le roy"





What additional things did you observe? On the basis of style alone, we can speculate about the date and possible composer of this piece. But if there is further information that may help us begin to understand this piece, we need a way to think about it. I suggest what I call Cultural Listening. Like a reporter, we will ask key informational questions to guide us. These are: Who, What, Where, When, and Why? I call it Cultural Listening, because these questions can help us to understand the work beyond itself, that is, in its cultural context. Often we cannot take up these questions until we have applied critical listening.

WHO

In asking this question, we begin to personalize the story. In our culture authorship is important because it gives identity to an event. Accuracy is important because we can be greatly misled if we mistake the identity. Then the question is what do we really know about the composer, and

how? Finally, if we are interested in the significance of the artifact, there is the question of how well-known (meaning influential) was the composer in his/her day and beyond?

Fortunately, we have a name to work with. The only source for our piece gives the composer simply as "Josquin".At this point, who is impressed? How many of you have heard this name before? But first let's consider the accuracy issue. We call this authenticity. How can we be sure that this piece is really by Josquin, whoever he/she is?

Authenticity

Early music sources may indicate the name of the composer—we call this an ascription— or they might not. If the work is not ascribed, that is, anonymous, we may still have clues in the source, such as other ascriptions, especially nearby ones. Frequently we have a range of composers cited in a source that would suggest the general date of the composition and geographical location. Finally, we can check the style of the composition against other known pieces by a composer and confirm our guess.

The name "Josquin" in found in the only source we have, a print by the Venetian printer, Ottaviano de'Petrucci. It is an anthology of pieces the ascriptions of which turn out to be relatively accurate, but there are some mistaken ones. In other words, at this point, from the source, we have an idea that it may be by Josquin, but we cannot be absolutely certain.

Biography

Even if we have a name to go on, in early music often we have to sift through spotty information to form a picture of who the composer was. These sources include institutional records, such as those of a court or church, simply because these were more likely to keep records and preserve them. If we are lucky to find it preserved, correspondence with and from the composer can be very helpful for biographical information. Rarer, but useful is contemporary commentin books or manuscripts and, not until the 18th century, newspapers.

It turns out that Josquin is a big name in music history, one of the biggest. In fact, a recent article in a top musicological journal suggests that his reputation has been detrimental to a true understanding of his place in music history.[2] Despite his reputation, our information about him is scanty in places and downright unreliable in others. His name is usually given as “Josquin des Prez”, and in the past if you wanted to look it up in reference sources, you had to look under “des Prez” or “Despres”. Now it is accepted to list him under “Josquin”. Only in 1998 did we learn his official family name, “Lebloitte”. His full name, we finally know, is “Josquin des Prez dit Lebloitte”. No wonder we have mixed him up with other Josquins and have placed him in the wrong places at the wrong times!

The latest word is that Josquin was born around 1450 (we think!) and died in 1521 (we know), both in a specific area of Northern France. His

2) Paula Higgins, “The Apotheosis of Josquin des Prez and Other Mythologies of Musical Genius, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 443－510.

early training, if typical, must have been in this region, and between the ages of ten and 33 he was most likely still there. Age 34－39 he was in Milan part of the time, from 39－45 was a singer in the Papal Chapel in Rome, the most prestigious position of all. Around the turn of the sixteenth century, we have yet to pinpoint his location but most likely he was variously in Italy and France(no documentation), and spent a year in Ferrara 1503－1504, before returning home to France for the remainder of his life, ages 54－71.

Reputation

If our piece is by this Josquin, then we are dealing with one of the most significant composers in the Renaissance, a man considered to be without equal by his very illustrious contemporaries, and the first composer to be historically venerated, for centuries.

What did he look like? The only likeness we possess is a woodcut made ninety years after Josquin's death, reproduced in a book published in Antwerp in 1611. Such is the nature of much that we must work with in early music, so we keep this portrait in front of us, as uncertain as we are about its accuracy, because it is the only thing we have.

Fig. 1. Josquin des Prez, Woodcut, Petrus Opmeer, Opus chronographicum (Antwerp, 1611)

WHAT

Just what is this piece of music turns out to be a thorny issue. It would be convenient to group it into a genre with other compositions like it and thereby sense more about its history. Style features, including compositional technique, should help us. Even what is the medium is not immediately apparent.

Style

Style is an important indicator of what we have. This refers to the features of a work that characterize it within a period, region, or genre. At this point we know that it is a wordless polyphonic piece that uses imitation around a slow-moving tenor. And its source places the printing in Venice. It also yields a name for the piece, at least as an incipit (words indicated at the opening of each part) that reads “Vive le roy”. “Long live the king” seems to be a salutation for royalty. It is printed in Italy, but the text is French. So what is the genre to which it belongs?

Genre

By “genre” we refer to a category of musical composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content. We are familiar enough with genres such as symphony, song, or sonata. Similarly in the Renaissance there were common types of pieces. Because it has a French incipit we take for a title, this piece has often been classified as a chanson. A chanson is a French secular polyphonic song. Does this make sense

within the source? Yes, there are many chansons listed in the source. But, where are the words? We heard this as a purely instrumental piece. We will return to this question later.

Compositional Techniques

Two compositional techniques may help us understand just what this piece is: cantus firmus, and canon. We can understand that slower-moving melody in the tenor as belonging to a tradition beginning to grow old-fashioned in Josquin's day, the cantus firmus. This is a pre-existent melody used as the basis of a new polyphonic composition. It was the principal means of organizing Masses in the fifteenth century and continued to be used throughout the sixteenth. By Josquin's day, a pre-existent melody could be found in any voice and could blend with the others. The oldest tradition of the cantus firmus was to place it exclusively in the tenor voice and to give it longer note values so that it stood out against the other faster-moving voices. This is the case in *Vive le roy*. But is it a pre-existent melody? We don't know. It consists of seven even notes and the four syllables of the incipit hardly seem to go with it. At least it acts like a cantus firmus, so we will call it that. If so, then, it is a decidedly long-standing, that is, traditional compositional technique for the time of its print early in the sixteenth century. But another matter to observe is the fact that this melody is very brief with only seven notes, and is rigidly reiterated even when at a different pitch level in the middle, and therefore qualifies as an ostinato cantus firmus, something Josquin loved to use.

Another compositional technique we may have already observed is the

canonic nature of the accompanying voices. In fact, there are two definitions of a canon in Josquin's day, and this piece exemplifies both of them.

Most obvious is the strictly imitative nature of the accompanying voices. This meaning is one with which we are familiar today from counterpoint classes. Here canon means imitation of a complete subject at fixed intervals of pitch and time. The first page of our score reveals the triple canon of the Soprano, alto, and bass that continues without ceasing from beginning to end. Contrapuntally, it is, in fact, amazing.

But an older use of the term canon is apparent in our piece as well. Here canon means a rule or instruction for creating a composition. It refers originally to a verbal motto or rule by which additional voices are derived from a single notated voice. Josquin apparently provided originally just one presentation of the seven－note cantus firmus along with verbal instructions telling how to finish the part. The Venetian printer (Petrucci) provides this in his print, but he was more interested in making the part immediately playable than in teasing performers with such a puzzle. So he provides what he calls a "resolution," the actual resolution of the canon. Grateful tenors need only read what Petrucci provides and don't have to worry about any tricks or puzzles. This itself is a cultural marker of a time when tricks and conundrums are starting to lose their luster.

Medium

When we ask what this piece is, there is yet another problem. Whether it belongs to the genre of chanson or not, for what medium is it intended?

I chose for you to first hear it for brass ensemble because it appeals readily. But these modern instruments did not exist in their current state in the Renaissance, so it couldn't have sounded like what we heard. The original print only names two of the four parts (Contra = Alto and Bassus). But these are commonly indications of voice ranges not actual media. In fact, clarification of medium in scores is not usual at the time this work was published. Specification was presumably not important, perhaps indicating that many combinations were possible.

It is easiest to presume that this is an instrumental piece—it is fanfare—like, provides no text for singing, and the accompanying parts are decidedly instrumental in nature. If we are interested in historically informed performance, and want to approximate the brass ensemble, then we could substitute Crumhorns for trumpets and Sackbuts for trombones. Crumhorns have a distinctively reedy sound and carry much like a trumpet would. They have a curved wooden body and a capped double reed mouthpiece. The Cornetto is a curved wooden instrument played like a trumpet. The Sackbut is the closest early instrument to its modern successor, the trombone. This group of instruments would be classified as a loud consort, appropriate for outdoor performance. Alternatively, we could relegate the four parts to a consort of shawms in four different sizes. A shawm is the predecessor to the modern oboe. To Josquin, Vive le roy more likely would have sounded like this.

But *Vive le roy* might have been performed inside, if not initially, then later, and a possibility for this could be an arrangement for solo plucked stringed instrument such as the lute. There are many such arrangements of vocal pieces, suggesting that this would have been usual.

Here is an arrangement for modern guitar, but it is the closest

approximation I could find to the far more typical lute of Josquin's day.

But this assumes that Josquin's fanfare is an instrumental piece. Recent performance practice study has suggested that many presumed instrumental parts would have been actually sung, especially in the chanson. But what about words? It would be simple to add a few more words to the incipit, at least to accommodate the seven-note cantus firmus, and produce a real chanson. Some performers have done this by adding to "vive le roy" the three additional syllables, "le bon roy," making sense as "Long live the king, the good king". It sounds like this.

All of these are possible media for performing *Vive le roy*. Appropriateness would be determined by the occasion for the performance, and we have no sure information about this.

In sum what we have is a four-voice piece that may or may not be a French chanson that is either instrumental or vocal, that uses a cantus-firmus-like melody derived from an instructional canon to sound three times in a symmetrical pattern, surrounded by three more rapidly moving voices in triple imitative canon with each other.

WHERE

Just where all of this took place is an interesting question. It may be divided into three separate issues. (1)Where *Vive le roy* was written places it with the composer, Josquin, and we are dependent upon biographical information. It may be less important than (2) where it was performed first, which we would take to be the central event in the story of the piece. Finally (3) where it was published, since it was, is a separate question because it must have been first written in manuscript. For us

in the present, too, where we can find an edition of the music is a relevant question.

Very simply, we have no information about where Josquin wrote *Vive le roy*, or where it was first—or even subsequently—performed. What we do have information on, however, is where it first appeared in print.

Vive le roy survives in no extant manuscript, but rather in one of the earliest printed sources in the history of Western music. In 1501 the Venetian printer Ottaviano de Petrucci printed the first ever collection of polyphonic music, the *Odhecaton*, we usually call it. It was a collection of nearly 100 secular compositions popular at the turn of the century. The selections are of interest because this was a commercial enterprise intended to attract buyers from a music loving public. It must have been a hit, because Petrucci published follow-up volumes we call *Canti B* in 1502 and *Canti C* in 1503. Vive le roy appears in *Canti C*. There is an alphabetized table of contents, first of four-part compositions, then of three-part works. Under the four-part works, we find *Vive le roy* listed as the title to be found on folio 132. A folio is not the same as a page; it means 'leaf" and refers to both the front and back of a paper leaf. We find the music on facing pages, folios 131 verso (backside) and 132 recto (front side), so arranged that all four players/singers can perform their separately written part. This is what we call choirbook fashion, so popular in manuscripts. The soprano part is always in the upper left quadrant, the alto on the upper right. The tenor will be below the soprano on the left, and the bass will be under the alto on the right. Note that there is no title in the place we might expect it, rather simply the indication of the composer, "Josquin".The three imitatively canonic parts all have "Vive le roy" underlaid at the opening,

but no more text. This a common way of indicating the incipit (opening words by which the piece can be identified) so the singers/players know they are on the right piece. Normally in a chanson, the text would appear complete at least in the soprano part. Interestingly, the tenor part, on the other hand, contains no such indication. Rather we see the verbal canon－that is, instruction－headed by “Vive le roy”. Above the actual music is the word “resolutio”. The music is supplied as a solution to the puzzle －a bonus, in other words, because all that Josquin supplied were the words “Vive le roy” and the instructional canon from which clever performers would need to produce the music. While this is a convenience for us, it was at its time a commercial matter: obviously Petrucci wanted the piece to be readily playable by a public that might not know how to solve the puzzle.

On the facing page, we see the remaining two parts. Conspicuous here is the labeling of the parts since there are no such indications on the other “page”. “Bassus” clearly indicates the bass part, but the alto part is headed “Contra”. This reminds us of the fifteenth－century evolution of the voice names, when above the tenor part was a contratenor altus (part above) and below the tenor was a contratenor bassus. Soon the alto part would come to be consistently be called Altusin Latin for Alto, as Bassus is Latin for Bass. Incidentally, note how obvious is the canon between the two parts juxtaposed over each other, just by the shape of the lines.

There could be a whole story woven around where *Vive le roy* was published, so fascinating is its place in such a monumental collection－an experiment in the new technology of printing with movable type, one the first commercial ventures we can document in Western music history

—especially since it was so successful that we have been printing music ever since.

Where we might find a score to *Vive le roy* today is worth mentioning. As one of the greatest composers of the Renaissance, Josquin was given a scholarly collected edition early in the twentieth century by a Dutch musicologist, interested because Josquin's hometown in present Northern France borders the low countries, present Belgium and the Netherlands, and there was a certain nationalism involved in early monuments of music edition. It contains scholarly information about the original and is carefully edited to represent the original score, the purpose of a scholarly edition.

Finally, where Josquin might have been during composition and performance of *Vive le roy* is uncertain, but at the time it was published by Petrucci, he held his last appointment in Italy, at Ferrara, 1503—1504. He was selected by the Duke of Ferrara precisely because he was the best composer then known to him, and not because of a particularly pleasant personality. We know this from correspondence between the duke and his recruiter.

Did his proximity to Venice have anything to do with inclusion in *Canti C*? Probably not since Josquin was so famous at the time. Italy was comprised of a group of city states organized into various territories, most notable south of the Papal States, being the Kingdom of Naples and the Kingdom of Sicily. But before taking up his one—year post in Ferrara, we don't know for sure where Josquin was. Most likely it was in Italy or France, perhaps with the King of France in Paris. It is peculiar to lack this information for someone so famous, but that is typical in the Renaissance, with missing records or big gaps in them. This means

there is much room for speculation in the absence of facts.

WHEN?

The question of when the events in the story of *Vive le roy* took place parallel those of where, but in history when is a paramount issue. Otherwise we cannot establish a clear chronology and sort out trends or patterns. And we can only answer this in the case of the publication of Petrucci's *Canti C*. The date given in the publication is February, 1503, but since it is based on the Julian calendar, which only changed to the new year in March, February falls in 1504 by our present calendar. That is why scholarly sources often cite a dual date 1503/1504. This is one of the special factors that scholars of the Renaissance and before must contend with. By Josquin's day it was apparent that the Julian calendar was woefully inadequate. By 1582 the issue became critical, because the vernal equinox, by which Easter was determined, had moved nearly 10 day backward, and 10 days had to be dropped from the calendar. This crisis prompted the adoption of the Gregorian calendar we use today.

The only date we can work from is a *terminus ante quem*, that is a date before which *Vive le roy* was written. It had to be written before 1503 by at least several years. But the date of the source does not mean that *Vive le roy* necessarily was written immediately before. It might have been popular enough to have survived even several decades, as in the case of a number of the pieces included in Petrucci's anthology.

But the turn of the century is an important demarcation for understanding the piece historically. First, for the history of style, it is important for its use of imitation. While imitative canon was an old-

fashioned technique, well used in the 15th century, the motivic arrangement of it to produce successive imitation between the voices indicates a late 15th century technique. But by 1500 a momentous change of compositional practice had taken place, away from successive conception－that is composing first one part, then adding layers of the other parts－to simultaneous conception－that is, conceiving all the voices at one time. This made possible pervasive imitation, a texture in which a motive is introduced in successive entries leading to a cadence, repeating this process throughout a composition. Pervasive imitation is a hallmark of 16th century style, not found in 15th century music until at least 1480. *Vive le roy* is exceptional in producing a continuous texture from beginning to end of the short piece, but we can readily pick out the equivalent of points of imitation without intervening cadences.

Another compositional technique of the 15th century by which we may understand *Vive le roy* historically is cantus firmus. Whether the seven－note ostinato melody is actually borrowed from pre－exiting musicor not, it is an old－fashioned technique, long associated with the emerging mass cycles of the century. It is the ostinato nature of this melody that makes it characteristic of the late 15th century and Josquin in particular. For instance Josquin composed a whole mass based on an eight－note ostinato dedicated to Duke Hercules of Ferrara.

The place of *Vive le roy* in the history of canon is another matter for which chronology can be important. After Josquin's time such contrapuntal challenges as canon lost their popularity with composers, then they re－emerged in the Roman Schoolaround Palestrina. But from 1460 to 1500 contrapuntal complexity reached a peak with Franco－Flemish composers in a wave set off by Johannes Ockeghem around

1460. In this perspective the use of canon is an important cultural as well as historical marker.

WHY

The ultimate question we face in finding the story of *Vive le roy* is: why? Motivation for an event or piece of music is very difficult to determine unless the composer or a witness tells us what it is. All we have established so far is the textual cue "Vive le roy," well known even today as a salutation for a king. For this reason we have assumed that this piece was written as some kind of a fanfare, a royal greeting. Determining for whom requiresa much further speculative stretch. The story of *Vive le roy* has to stop here from a reporter's perspective because we begin to move beyond established and verifiable facts. And here we must ask ourselves, is reporting history? It is not the place of a reporter to speculate. This is, of course,the question that propels historians.

We have found aspects of the story of *Vive le roy*, and in uncovering it, we have touched upon many important issues. These are the issues musicologists have to confront first before history can be created. We encountered the sound of a composition first by critical listening, and then by cultural listening. Under WHO, we talked about authenticity, biography, and reputation. Under WHAT, we considered style, genre, compositional techniques, and medium. We emphasized under WHERE the location of composition, performance, and publication. WHEN involved dating and chronological significance. But we were unable to take WHY beyond the most immediate cues. It is not the place of a reporter to speculate. But with the information we do have, historians

take up this question as a primary challenge. And that is another story.

Part Two
Interpretation: Making History

History

History, in the sense that historians think of it, it not just events from the past. It is rather the story of what they mean. In Part One we looked at diverse sources to find the story of Josquin's *Vive le roy*. This is raw material for the historian, whose task really begins with the final question in Part One: why? It is our task to form a coherent explanation based on perceived patterns and links. The eminent English musicologist Sir Jack Westrup long ago stated our charge: "to find patterns without imposing them". Why certain outcomes happened as they did, and how they are linked to earlier events become our fascination. It is all a matter of interpretation.

Whose interpretation? Today we are conscious of the fallibility of our charge. Whose interpretation is a nagging question, because it is personal. We sense that we are prisoners of perceptive boxes with which we have been conditioned. It is hard to escape the values that shapeour own culture, that are ingrained in our very way of thinking, that set limits on how and even what we perceive. I often express this pointedly: history is made by the historian. It is how the historian interprets the raw data that is the "story" in history. History is not "out there," just waiting to

be discovered; it is created. The act of creation necessarily makes it fallible, and by whom necessarily makes it personal.

There are a number of ways to think about all of this in the case of *Vive le roy*. We have so far sought to discover its unique story, or more accurately, stories. But to understand its place in history, we must connect it with larger stories to which it contributes and that mutually contribute to it.

One way to think about this is to consider a picture and its frame. In this imagery, the picture is the relatively unchanging material we have discovered: the story of *Vive le roy*. But the picture takes on richer meaning by its frame, the larger issues that give meaning to the central events. By changing the frame we can influence how the story is perceived. In this sense a frame may be social, political, a critical point of view, or it may be the ramifications of larger issues to which it relates, such as printing, cantus firmus, canon, or fanfare.

But I like to keep to the psychology of narrative as a way to think about the making of history. We are all familiar with what happens to an event as it evolves in retellings by various persons in a link. At some point the story becomes gossip. This is what the historian strives to avoid in shaping narratives of explanation. But various versions are not necessarily untrue; rather they represent a range of interpretations that have potential to explain an event in more and more meaningful ways. In this sense, history is constantly changing—not necessarily the facts, but how we understand them. And this is precisely what makes it continually captivating to me.

For the general student taking music history courses, I do have a caveat, a warning. Students are often more interested in the interpretation

than the event itself. Facts seem tedious and troublesome, difficult to remember. But the interpretation you learn today will be inadequate tomorrow. Not so for the basic data. I often warn students that history does have content that needs to be mastered. It is all－too－easy to overlook this.

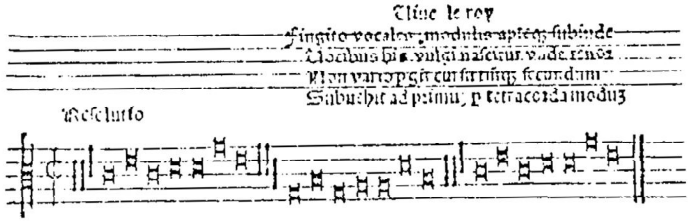
Now let's see if we can make history of it, connecting it to Renaissance stories to which it relates. Why did Josquin write this piece in the way he did at the time he did? What is its purpose? Why was it printed by Petrucci? Why should we care? Let's look at the possible stories. Or should I say, the stories I see? Let me give five: about meaning, virtuosity, social circumstances, political circumstances, and finally criticism. I see these as nested narratives that may be extracted to illumine our understanding of *Vive le roy*.

Cantus firmus, Soggetto cavato, Ostinato: A Narative About Meaning

One clue to why a work was written lies in any special meaning that may be implicit within a work. Here the canon or rule that produces the cantus firmus that is fundamental to the structural logic of this work provides some clues that need to be pursued. Let's look at that canon again. The words that we take to be the title of this work form a heading: "Vive le roy".

This is not incidental. The following instructions must be understood with reference to this specific text.

Ex. 2. "Canon"



Vive le roy

Fingite vocales modulis apteque subinde

vocibis his vulgi nascitur unde tenor.

Non vario pergit cursu tomtumque secundum

subhevit ad primum per tetracorda modum.

The first sentence tells us that the tenor is derived by matching the textual vowels to the corresponding solmization syllables. Once we derive the melody that serves as the cantus firmus, the second sentence tells us how to apply it: it is repeated without any change a fourth lower and then the third iteration returns to the original pitches.

What we have here, then, is literally a subject drawn from the words "Long live the king!" In Latin v's and u's are considered equivalent, and so are i's and y's. So every vowel of the words chosen to be converted into music provides a musical pitch from the corresponding syllable of the six－note scale by which Renaissance musicians learned their music, called the hexachord. The consecutive syllables are familiar to students of sight－singing: UT RE MI FA SOL LA.In order to provide the rest

of the scale above C, the hexachord was diatonically transposed from its natural state on C to its "hard" state on G (so called because the sign of the natural on B was angular like the current natural sign). This provided the B natural to complete the octave from C to C.

"Vive le roy" is an easy series of words from which to carve out a melody. In fact, only two letters—l and r—cannot be converted. This produces the solmization series UT MI UT RE RE SOL MI, which is converted in the natural hexachord (on C) to the pitches C E C D D G E. And placed a fourth lower on the hard hexachord (on G), these syllables produce the notes G B G A A D B.

When I say "carved out" I am borrowing terminology for this technique that was first coined by perhaps the greatest theorist of the renaissance, Gioseffo Zarlino, in his monumental treatise *Le istitutioni harmoniche* of 1558—that is a half century after Josquin used the technique in *Vive le roy*. In discussing it, Zarlino called it a "soggetto cavato dalle parole," literally a subject carved out of the words.

As a special use within the general category of cantus firmus, the soggetto cavato has its own story. Apparently the earliest example was Josquin's own *Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae*, written to honor the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole I d'Este, who held the position from 1471 to 1505. Note that each syllable of the Duke's title converts into an eight-note theme of a notably conjunct nature: RE UT RE UT RE FA MI RE. We cannot date Josquin's mass securely, but I think it belongs to the 1480's. Interestingly, at the very time *Vive le roy* was published, Josquin was in the employ, if ever so briefly, of the Duke of Ferrara. These, then, are the only two examples of the soggetto cavato we have from Josquin, and apparently it was his invention. It might have been considered a

passing anomaly had not several composers taken up the technique after Josquin's death in five different masses, three of them dedicated to Ercole I's namesake, Ercole II, who reigned from 1534 to 1539. The remaining two were written for Emperor Charles V and Emperor Ferdinand of Austria. Two uses in the motet, non－liturgical sacred works, were dedicated to Duke Francesco II Sforza of Milan. Notably, in every surviving case, the use of the soggetto cavato was in association with a work honoring an important personage. In other words, it appears that the soggetto cavato was intended to convey special associative meaning in connection with public figures and presumably state occasions. We shall return to this observation when we explore the work within a political narrative.

The specific story of *Vive le roy*, from the perspective of its cantus firmus, is best understood within the story of the soggetto cavato, which lasted from perhaps the 1480's to the 1560's. This specially derived cantus firmus first arose at the apogee of the cantus firmus as technique and lasted during the sunset years. No more examples are found after strict cantus firmus technique ceased to be a viable option for composers at the end of the century. It was as if Josquin found a way to breathe new life temporarily into the old and rapidly declining cantus firmus.

Perhaps even more resonant in history is the ostinato nature of Josquin's cantus firmus. His instructions specify that the undifferentiated longa note values are to be unchanged rhythmically and intervallicly in its two repetitions. Although the term "ostinato" did not appear in musical discussion until 1687 (in Angelo Berardi's *Documenti armonici*), Zarlino discussed it under "pertinacie". Composers continued to exploit the possibilities of repeating a musical pattern while other musical

elements continually change in a tradition that stretches from the 13th century to the present and embraces such well-known examples as Ravel's *Bolero* and "Mars" from Gustav Holst's *The Planets.*

Ostinato was a way of emphasizing the soggetto for Josquin in *Vive le roy*, but what emerges from this narrative is the strong likelihood that the cantus firmus had a special meaning that pertained to an auspicious state occasion.

Canon: A Narrative About Virtuosity

The triple imitative canon in *Vive le roy* commands attention., and begs the question: how does it fit in the history of this technique? Interestingly enough, the word came to have its modern meaning in the sixteenth century. "Fuga" was the term for this in Josquin's day and continued to be used into the eighteenth century. While the term "canon" can be found in the works of Guillaume Dufay, the most important early Renaissance composer, it was first used in writings about music only after Dufay's death, in Johannes Tinctoris's 1475 dictionary of musical terms, itself the first of its kind. "A canon," he says, "is a rule showing the purpose of the composer behind a certain obscurity." Soon after this other theorists began to talk about the "resolution" of such rules, and in the sixteenth century most treatises had a chapter on canon.

Imitative canons first can be found in the thirteenth century and the earliest use of intervals beyond the unison was in the late 14th century. For instance, Francesco Landini and Johannes Ciconia were among the first to write canons at the fifth. Even if a canon was found on a different interval, all parts had to conform to the same solmization during the first

half of the fifteenth century. Johannes Ockeghem, the most significant composer in the generation following Dufay and possibly Josquin's teacher, was the first to write canons at imperfect intervals (2^{nd}, 3^{rd}, 6^{th}, 7^{th}), which was possible only by ignoring the requirement of identical solemnization.

In the generation after Ockeghem – Josquin's generation – what canon represents is contrapuntal virtuosity, a virtuosity that was not taken up by the next generation of composers active 1520–1550, but which, interestingly, was rejuvenated in the late Renaissance at that hands of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, for instance. Josquin and his contemporaries vied with each other to produce clever canons and to place them in sometimes unexpected places, such as a frivolous chanson.

In this context, we can see that *Vive le roy* marks an important time in the history of canon. The technique calls for the old exact solmization, with the alto leading voice, called the *dux*, duplicated at a fifth below by the bass and a fourth above by the soprano, the following voices called the *comes*. The challenges of a triple canon are staggering enough to make it prudent to confine imitations to perfect intervals, but the extra challenge that brings out virtuosity is making all of this coordinate with the slow moving cantus firmus whose pitches were set by the *soggetto cavato* technique.

Another factor in this triple canon is the close spacing of entries, since they are a beat apart in alla breve meter. This close interval is particularly demanding, and Josquin makes it work by creating a remarkably gapped melody, comprised mainly of falling thirds . In fact, there is only one consecutive interval (mm. 24–25), and that is a passing ornament,

unique in the work. Similarly, the seven－note cantus firmus contains only one conjunct note and that is sandwiched by the prominent thirds of thirds AFDBG, mm 9－12 in the Alto, which coincides with the conjunct cantus firmus notes 3－5; at the analogous place in the second iteration of the cantus firmus, there is a four－note sequence GECA (22－24) with the unique conjunct passing notes, and on the third iteration this is further reduced to a three－note descent AFD (36－37). Is this intentional? It does correspond to the isomelic technique found in isorhythm to mark certain features of the cantus firmus. Use of isorhythm to organize tenors had died out by mid fifteenth century. Would Josquin have even known of these? From this perspective it is interesting to observe that a simple way to reduce complexity would have been to recapitulate the same counterpoint to match the return of the cantus firmus to its original pitches on the third iteration. While there are recognizable similarities, Josquin seems intent on continuing variety and, of course, increasing interest. The result is a through－composed canon brilliantly crafted to vivify a non－descript ostinato cantus firmus. It is a dazzling feat of virtuosity that should have impressed someone. It certainly caught the attention of Petrucci.

Petrucci and Printing: A Social Narrative

The story of *Vive le roy* is nested in the story of Petrucci's historic and monumental project to print polyphonic music from movable type. This was a laborious three－stage process－involving printing first the staves, then the notes, then the text－but it worked. Petrucci's only venture into the international repertory of secular song was his first.

Planned and issued in three volumes between 1501 and 1504—*Odhecaton A, Canti B, and Canti C*—the project concentrated on the popular chanson literature and included some of the finest composers of the late 15th century, and a few of the worst. Josquin's *Vive le roy* is but one of some 286 compositions in this enormous undertaking, dwarfed even among the 136 compositions of *Canti C.*

Petrucci was preceded a half century in printing by Johannes Gutenberg, whose workshop reproduction exudes the seriousness of a business enterprise. And that was first and foremost what Petrucci's project was. Artistry and production innovations aside, it was clearly intended for profit, and that was the biggest challenge he faced because nobody has done it before. Petrucci was not even the first to publish polyphonic music. But the *Odhecaton* volumes marked the effective beginnings of music printing, and for the better part of the decade, he was alone. Gradually others took up the printing business, and before long, he had a keen competitor in Andrea Antico. Nevertheless, no one in the century came close to duplicating the clean elegance of Petrucci's prints. They are marvels of their time and even today. How widespread was the influence of the *Odhecaton* beyond print culture may be indicated by the inclusion of an inscription from one of his prints on a maiolica ceramic dish from Casteldurante (near Fossombrone, where Petrucci had moved after 1511), dating around 1525.

Why do we find *Vive le roy* in Petrucci's collection? It isn't the only canonic work in Canti C. Josquin has four, and there are three others—by the leaders of the generation before Josquin, Johannes Ockeghem and Antoine Busnois, and an unknown, Johannes Japart. Still, its canonic

qualities may account for its placement. Each of Petrucci's volumes opens with a sacred work and closes with a canonic one. Within each collection, four-part works precede those for three parts (a good explanation other than ease of printing has never been advanced). And, again, each of these voice groupings begins with a sacred item and concludes with a canonic one. *Vive le roy* is found as the first of three canonic works concluding the four-voice section. Should we take this as a clue that the significance of *Vive le roy* in Petrucci's eyes lay mainly in its canonic qualities and therefore utility for marking the end of a section?

Since this is a matter of social history, is Josquin's work included in Petrucci's anthology because it is one more chanson, or because it is a purely instrumental composition? For business reasons, did it matter? This question has nagged musicians and scholars, who have declared on both sides of the issue. In the passion of some enthusiasts for a then popular new idea to appropriate as vocal certain works long assumed to be instrumental simply because they lack words in their sources, *Vive le roy* has been drawn in. Reflective of this, the forward of the 1976 edition we have sung contains the following justification:

> *Vive le roy* was, until recently, assumed to be an instrumental fanfare. But there is really no evidence for this assumption. First of all, court trumpeters at this time had a musical life that was quite separated from that of "art" musicians: it is highly unlikely that they could read music. The only combination of brass instruments on which this piece could be performed would be a slide trumpet and three sackbuts, a grouping that is not supported by any iconographical evidence. The main reason that the piece has been thought to be instrumental is that there are

> no words in the single source: but as this is an Italian printed work that does not give any texts (in spite of the fact that most of the music can be shown to be vocal) the argument has no force…

Certainly most of the originally vocal chansons that populate the collection are found untexted in Petrucci, but to argue that they were intended here to be performed vocally is unwarranted. In this respect *Vive le roy* is like most of the other *Odhecaton* items: most readily intended for instrumental performance. Importantly, instrumentalists must have been the intended customers for the first publication of polyphonic secular music. Incidentally, in this respect, itis interesting to note that the fact that Petrucci resolved the canons was taken to indicate a market of amateurs, but it simply be a way of making the music readily available to instrumentalists who don't have to deal with verbal canons. To the above arguments, too, why must we assume a fanfare must be performed by "brass" instruments? The loud consort version we heard previously was perfectly grand and perfectly possible for cornett (not slide trumpet), crumhorn, and sackbut.

Chanson or instrumental piece? It is interesting to observe that when we go the recent *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, the genre classification does not equivocate: instrumental piece. Settled? Only for now.

The *Odhecaton* story is golden: Petrucci's venture sold. And so did *Vive le roy* with it. What did that mean for the life of its music? Considering the fact that we have no other extant copies of the music－surely lost or destroyed－we can credit Petrucci for saving, but even

more, for disseminating it. Petrucci made it possible for this brief piece to have a history. We could say that, for us, it happened to be in the right place at the right time, a particular circumstance that gave it a social history.

Fanfare for Louis XII: A Political Narrative

The textual cue Petrucci provided in his edition of *Vive le roy* makes it one of the most evocative of incipits. "Vive le roy" is a phrase shouted by crowds even today to greet kings. Naturally many have tried to attach the piece to a particular monarch and a particular time, since we have no idea of the date of composition. Unfortunately, there is no evidence for this. Regardless, many recordings have entitled the piece "Fanfare for Louis XII". A French salutation and a reigning French king at the time it was published? Naturally! This most frequent speculation would have it written for the coronation of Louis XII in 1498, a recent and well-known event, and if so, Vive le roy may have one of the hottest items in *Canti C*, the equivalent, perhaps, of the ever-popular fanfare by John Williams for the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. "Olympic Fanfare and Theme," awarded a Grammy in 1985. The popularity of that work led to Williams (b. 1932) being commissioned to compose the official themes for all four Olympic Games held on the North American continent in the last quarter century: "The Olympic Spirit," 1988 Winter Olympics, Calgary; "Summon the Heroes," 1996 Summer Olympics, Atlanta; and "Call of the Champions," 2002 Winter Olympics, Salt Lake City.[3] Was Petrucci capitalizing on that for sale? Or demand? Was its choice a matter of marketing strategy?

Others have pointed to Josquin's possible dealings with the earlier Louis XI and suggested it for him, but surely not his coronation in 1461, which is simply too early for Josquin. Of course, a fanfare need not be written exclusively for a coronation; it could serve for any royal entry. Still, stylistically its imitation would have been ahead of its time during the reign of Louis XI. This narrative is interested in teasing out political ramifications, and for this I choose to focus on popular presumption: Louis XII.

Politics goes to the heart of *Vive le roy*. We can take a cue from the style of the piece, with its boisterous use of dotted rhythms on repeated notes: it simply sounds like a fanfare. Its text is clearly a salutation, a greeting, even a cheer. Further, it is intended for royalty. Most specifically, it is traditionally associated with the kings of France.

But for what occasion would a piece with this text be intended? Surely, at least a royal entry. There is ample documentation of this tradition demonstrating that it was usually well－planned event, including proper commissioning of objects to be viewed and music to be performed. The coronation of Louis XI was in 1461, too early to be covered by Josquin, that of Charles VIII in 1484, and Louis XII in 1498.

The most auspicious event for *Vive le roy* is the coronation of Louis XII on May 27, 1498. It is usually presumed that the musician who wrote pieces for such occasions was actually present, and we cannot definitively place Josquin at the French court after he left the papal chapel around 1495. But very recent research, as yet unpublished, by the leading Josquin biographer Paul Merkley, paper to the American Musicological Society,

3) See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Williams_.

Seattle Washington, November, 2004. lends support to his presence at the French court. Unfortunately we lack specific records for the coronation, but we do know that it did take place at the equivalent of the national cathedral in Reims with full pageantry. At that time, it was no longer necessary to have a coronation, but for Louis XII, ever politically savvy, it was important to settle his right to reign in the face of potential opposition.[4)]

Coronations were elaborate affairs, consuming weeks in preparation. After all, the coronation itself was considered a sacred occasion because of the belief in the divine right of kings. The king did not arrive at Reims until just the day before the event. And the entry of the monarch was considered a great honor to the citizens of Reims, who would spare no luxury for him. In detailed descriptions of previous and subsequent coronations, we know that banners were mounted, quoting classical wisdom, that pageants of various sources were mounted. Louis was particularly fond of horse and hunting, and wished to be remembered on horseback. Some nature of what his entry would have been like can be gained from a painting by court artist Jean Marot depicting his entry into Genoa in 1507. Louis was healthy and handsome, given to jousting and other athletic events. Even in tapestry, he is typically placed outdoors. His elaborate tomb is in St. Denis.

If we cannot know the details of the coronation of Louis XII, in seeking an occasion for *Vive le roy*, we do have a tantalizing detail that relates to Josquin's piece very well: not the coronation on May 27, but the funeral of Charles VIII on May 1, 1498. Louis spent 45,000 francs to

4) Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Louis XII*(New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 61.

ensure one of the most resplendent funerals in monarchal history. Witnesses estimate that some 7,000 officials rode with the body behind 4,000 people carrying torches. At the late afternoon burial in St. Denis, the grand écuyer cried “Le roy est mort!” dipping the royal standard into the tomb, then, quickly raising it, exclaimed “Vive le roy!” This ritual was not only politically correct, it was politically expedient, and some chroniclers say the text more specific: “Mort est le Roy Charles! Vive le Roy Louis!” This would have been dictated by Louis to forestall challenges to the throne. Clearly it was unusual enough for chroniclers to have recorded it.

This is the kind of event that conveniently lines up with information at hand and invites speculation. We must remember that it is a guess, a hypothesis. But it offers a better explanation than any advanced so far and thereby invites refutation. If it provokes a better explanation, it will have contributed to better history. Josquin at court would have had several weeks to prepare his forty-second fanfare, and, having been performed at that moment at the funeral, it would have had powerful associative meanings for performance throughout the coronation that followed, powerful enough to have attracted the attention of Petrucci a few years later.

Reception: A Critical Narrative

The story of *Vive le roy* continues in the present. It embraces innumerable performances, numerous recordings, and several editions. Each of these is a testament of reception—of how the work has become a part of a distinctly different culture than that in which it was conceived.

A mark of our present scholarly culture is how it is understood in scholarly circles within the considerable corpus of current writings about Josquin. The question of how should we appreciate this composition touches on criticism. Is it a good piece of music? Good then, or good now? We can hear readily how the work appeals to the ear and at the same time we have uncovered several aspects of contrapuntal construction that command respect, even awe. These qualities make it as good to us now as then.

What distinguishes our current culture is the large arsenal of analytical perspectives by which we may understand Renaissance music perhaps in ways not known (or at least articulated) at that time. Can new analytical techniques reveal aspects of *Vive le roy* that would have made it especially interesting aesthetically in its own time? So claims Gaston Allaire, who, in an article on what he calls "overlooked modulations" in the works of Josquin, surprisingly cites "the bold and imaginative modulations characteristic of the fanfare *Vive le roy*,"[5] This is surprising because we have heard no bold modulations in the performances we have heard so far. The notation fails to reveal anything harmonically surprising. But Allaire goes on to observe that "only a genuine artisan thoroughly familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the system of hexachords could conceive such a composition."[6] His analysis is based on a currently disputed system he developed that blends hexachord theory with that of modes.[7] By constructing what he calls a hexachordal tree based

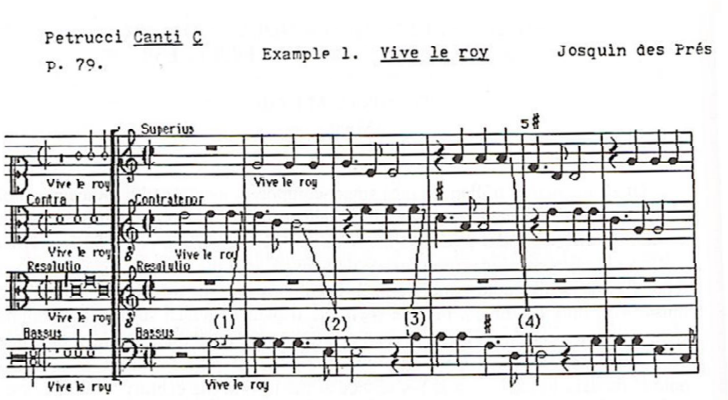
5) Gaston G. Alliare, "Some Overlooked Modulations in the Works of Josquin des Pres?", *Revue belge de Musicologie* 47 (1992): 33.

6) Ibid.

7) Gaston G. Allaire, *The Theory of Hexachords, Solmization and the Modal System:*

on modal octaves, he proposes a new reading of the work, sampled in the opening bars that eliminates minor triads and produces consistent solmization of all the canonic parts by the insertion of sharps that would have been produced by knowledgeable singers/players.

Ex. 3. Opening bars of "Vive le roy"
(*Revue belge de musicolgie 46* (1992): 33-51.)

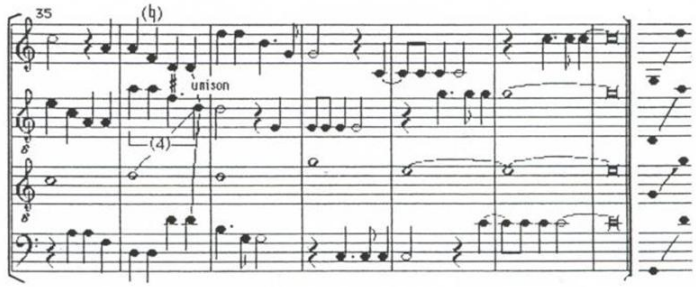


This is possible because of the widely accepted system of *musica ficta* that required performers to provide unspecified accidentals that were considered implicit in the music.

However, one passage at measure 36 becomes jarring with the juxtaposition of cross-relations in Allaire's reading.

A Practical Application, Musicological Studies and Documents 24 (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1972).

Ex. 4. Josquin des Prez, "Vive le roy" 35–40. *Revue belge de musicologie 46*(1992): 33–51. Measure 36: cross–relation



How should we understand this aesthetic effect? Allaire suggests "… here the sounding of an F–sharp immediately following an F–natural suggests a sudden burst of light not unlike the brightly colored uniforms following darker suits in a military parade, not unlike, either, the play of light and shadow seen in the paintings contemporary with Josquin such as *Judith and Holofernes* by Donatello, *Le concert champétre* by Giorgione, *Erasmus* by Holbein, etc. Josquin's composition is extremely clever and is not at all contrary to correct hexachordal theory."[8]

Or should we not accept this as an aesthetic effect at all? Recently the presumptions behind Allaire's theory have been challenged by Stefano Mengozzi, who concludes that Renaissance "singers and listeners in many cases did not and could not have heard music in the same way as they solmized it, nor, vice–versa, solmized it in the same way as they heard it. Consequently it is highly unlikely that Renaissance listeners and singers shared a notion of 'hexachordal space' that governed the very foundations of their music perception, as it is often suggested today."[9]

8) Ibid., 33, 37.

In short, this raises the question that cautions historians whether it is possible to hear and understand music of the past in a historically accurate way. On the positive side, it demonstrates that in the present it may be possible to penetrate the preserved notes of the page and capture the musical imagination of the past and the effort is worth it. Of course, being certain is the challenge.

The Stories of *Vive le roy*

In creating a history of *Vive le roy* by connecting it to the larger stories of which it is part, we have uncovered a rich mine of information. The process of each discovery is itself impressive enough, but the stories each unravels reveal the work in constantly shifting light. It may be exasperating that there seems to be no stability as a result—not one but multiple stories—but that is the nature of history as made by the historian.

We have identified five threads that comprise some of the fabric of the story of one composition. The ostinato cantus firmus seen as a soggetto cavato helps us pinpoint a possible meaning of the work that provides a clue to the occasion and purpose. An examination of the contrapuntal sophistication of the triplecanon framework shows how the work is typical of its time in achieving compositional virtuosity. But it owes its perpetual life to a printing project, the first of its kind by Ottaviano de' Petrucci, and exploration of this provides a social (business) perspective. Seen as a fanfare that serves a political end, we

9) Stefano Mengozzi, "Josquinian Voices and Guidonian Listeners", *Music and Culture in Honor of Herbert Kellman*, ed. Barbara Haggh, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Collection 'Épitome musicale', 279 (Paris: Minerve, 2001).

have tied the work to important events in French history, filling in details that have escaped the notice of political historians. Finally we have seen how new critical perspectives on the work may account for the continued fascination this forty second work has elicited over half a millennium. These are narrative threads that together form the whole cloth of "history" as I have created it. But with continued discovery there is promise that other threads will be uncovered and the whole cloth will be seen in a different light.

We may conclude our case study with the observation that *Vive le roy* does have a story, and for all the reasons that have been enumerated, it is worth telling. For the music historian, in his music, Josquin has something to say. Can we hear it?