

## I. The Codex San Fedele-Belgioioso

Two bifolios containing previously unattested *Ars nova* polyphony deriving from the same manuscript were recently found in Milan and Pavia, and they include a very intriguing polyphonic *Benedicamus Domino* that is the subject of this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Both the fragments and the *Benedicamus* are rare examples of their kind and they have the potential considerably to deepen our understanding of the musical culture of northern Italy—and particularly Lombardy, around 1400—for which very little evidence currently exists. Following a brief introduction of the new source, we provide a reconstruction of the new *Benedicamus Domino* setting and explore its relationship to other extant polyphonic settings from Trecento Italy.

The two host volumes of the fragments were held in Milanese libraries at least as early as the seventeenth century. The fragment now in Pavia was used as the binding for a printed book published in 1601 and bearing an inscription of ownership by the library of the Jesuits of the professed house of San Fedele in Milan. The Trivulziana host volume, a manuscript dating to c.1500, was part of the library of the noble Milanese Belgioioso

\* The research for this chapter was a collaboration between its two authors. Sections I and II and the Appendix were written by Antonio Calvia and sections III and IV by Anne Stone. We thank the staff of the Biblioteca Trivulziana, especially the Director, Isabella Fiorentini, Loredana Minenna, and Stefano Dalla Via for their assistance. Michael Cuthbert has been characteristically generous with his time and wisdom. The following manuscript sigla are used:

Bologna 2216	Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 2216
Bologna Q15	Bologna, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Q15
Cialini	Perugia, Biblioteca Sala del Dottorato dell'Università degli Studi di Perugia, Inc. 2 ( <i>olim</i> Cas. 3, Incunabolo inv. 15755 N.F.)
Faenza 117	Faenza, Biblioteca Comunale Manfrediana, 117
Florence Ash. 999	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 999
Houghton	Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, Lat 420
Messina O.4.16	Messina, Biblioteca del Seminario Arcivescovile, O.4.16
Mod A	Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, alpha.M.24
Oxford Canon. Misc. 213	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Misc. 213
Oxford Pat. Lat. 229	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Pat. Lat. 229
Parma Archivio F-10	Parma, Archivio Capitolare, F-10
Pav	Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Pergamene sparse, scatola 4, n. 8 ( <i>ex</i> binding of 43 D 3)
Pit	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, italien 568
Reggio Emilia C 408	Reggio Emilia, Biblioteca Municipale, C 408
Seville BCC 5-2-25	Seville, Biblioteca Capitolar y Columbina (housed in the Institución Colombina), 5-2-25
Triv	Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759 (binding)

1 • The fragments Triv and Pav were found on two different occasions in 2019. See Calvia and Saviotti 2023 for a description of Pav, housed in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Pavia; the second fragment, Triv, in the Biblioteca Trivulziana of Milan, is the subject of ongoing work by the present authors and Federico Saviotti.

family.<sup>2</sup> As shown in Table 15.1, the two bifolios contained a combination of liturgical and secular polyphony that was common in manuscripts copied in Italy around the turn of the fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, the two other settings of the *Benedicamus* with which ours is most comparable survive in precisely this kind of manuscript, both copied in scriptoria connected to urban monasteries. The ‘Codex San Fedele-Belgioioso’, as we have named the dismembered manuscript, was exceptionally large in format for a manuscript of polyphony (a single folio of Triv measures approximately 465×313 mm).<sup>4</sup> It was copied by a professional scribe whose *littera textualis* places his training in the later fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup> All told, the two extant bifolios contain twelve anonymous pieces: nine French-texted two-voice rondeaux and virelais; a Credo; a troped Sanctus; and the *Benedicamus Domino* that is the subject of this chapter.

The three liturgical works in our fragments differ markedly in structure and style. The two surviving voices of what must have been a four-voice Credo is a syllabic, homorhythmic setting that conforms to the ‘simultaneous style’ described by Hanna Stäblein-Harder.<sup>6</sup> The troped Sanctus is pan-isorhythmic (as is clear from the three surviving voices) and the *Benedicamus Domino* has a slow-moving, monorhythmic tenor and a highly florid cantus voice whose notational usage connects it more to the secular repertoire of the fragment than to the other liturgical works. The nine French *formes fixes* songs share enough stylistic and notational features to make us fairly confident that at least a majority of them were by a single composer.<sup>7</sup> While we are not quite prepared to say that the same composer is responsible for the *Benedicamus* setting, its style is certainly compatible.

Several factors make us fairly sure that the manuscript from which our fragments derive was copied in Lombardy and contained a musical repertoire that was at least partially, if not completely, composed there. These include linguistic, notational, music-stylistic, and geographical elements: the Franco-Italian cast of the language and the Italian graphic habits found in the French-texted songs; the idiosyncratic features of the musical notation

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2 • See Calvia and Saviotti 2023, 53–54, for a description of the Pav *ex libris*; the Trivulziana manuscript has a bookplate identifying it as part of the library of the noble Milanese Belgioioso family; it came into the possession of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (1839–1902) upon his marriage in 1864 to Giulia Amalia Barbiano di Belgioioso, whose dowry contained more than 25,000 printed books and 634 manuscripts from the Belgioioso library. We note that the two libraries were practically adjacent to one another: the Palazzo Belgioioso stands just north-east of the rear end of the church of San Fedele, and Google Maps estimates a two-minute walk between them.

3 • Column 1 of Table 15.1 gives our provisional page identification, using numbers for Pav and letters for Triv; because of the fragmentary nature of the bifolios, column 5 describes the layout of each composition in terms of the staves it occupies, as well as the clefs of each voice; column 6 indicates which voices bear text. Cuthbert 2006, 28, provides a table of fifteen mostly fragmentary sources that combine liturgical and secular polyphony. Only a few of the sources listed in Cuthbert’s table combine liturgical settings with French-texted works; these are listed in Calvia and Saviotti 2023, 68 n. 37. To this list we can, however, add many manuscripts that survive more or less complete, which contain French- and Italian-texted songs together with liturgical polyphony. These include Mod A; Pit; Bologna Q15; Bologna 2216; and Oxford Canon. Misc. 213.

4 • Due to trimming for reuse, Pav now measures a maximum of 383×259 mm per folio. See Calvia and Saviotti 2023, 55.

5 • *Ibid.*, 64.

6 • See Stäblein-Harder 1962 and see also Calvia and Saviotti 2023, 89 and 89 n. 69.

7 • *Ibid.*, 85–86.

**Table 15.1:** Inventory of the codex San Fedele-Belgioioso

Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Pergamene Sparse, scatola 4, n. 8 (Pav)

Folio	Item no.	Incipit	Genre	Disposition on staves (clefs)	Voices <sup>text</sup>
1r (hair)	1	La nuit que est tant obscure	Virelai	Cantus 1–2 (c2) Tenor 3 (f2)	2 <sup>1</sup>
	2	Se la playsant chiera veoyr poroye	Rondeau	Cantus 4–5 (c2) Tenor 6 (f2/c4) alius Tenor 7 (f3)	2 <sup>1</sup> + alius Tenor
	3	Aves moy passoyt un flour	Rondeau	Cantus 8–9 (c2) Tenor 10 (f2/c4)	2 <sup>1</sup>
	4	Tant yolis et gay sans mele[n]conie	Virelai	Cantus 11–13 (c1) Tenor 14 (f1/c3)	2 <sup>1</sup>
1v (flesh)	5	Factorem/[O]mnipotentem	Credo	Cantus 1–7 ([c1], c1) ?Contatenor 8–14 (f2/c4, [f2/c4])	2 <sup>2</sup> [2 <sup>4</sup> ]
2r		(blank ruled)			
2v		(blank ruled)			

Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759 (Triv)

Folio	Item no.	Incipit	Genre	Disposition on staves (clefs)	Voices <sup>text</sup>
Ar (flesh, quire no. biiij)	6	Sanctus Celeste preconium	Sanctus trope	Cantus[?2] 1–4 (c1) Contratenor 5 (f3) Alius solus Tenor 6 (c4)	2 <sup>1</sup> +alius [?4 <sup>1</sup> + alius Tenor+ Solus Tenor]
	7	Dos ans avoyt la tres douce fieta	Virelai	Cantus 7–10 (c3) Tenor 11 (f3)	2 <sup>1</sup>
	8	Tout ce que vous plet a moy plet	Rondeau	Cantus 12–13 (c2) Tenor 14 (f2/c4)	2 <sup>1</sup>
Av (hair)	9	Povres d'argant	Virelai	Cantus 1–4 Tenor 5	2 <sup>1</sup>
	10	Pour amour pour honor	Virelai	Cantus 6–9 Tenor 10–11	2 <sup>1</sup>
	11	Suy par ma foy	Rondeau	Cantus 12–13 Tenor 14	2 <sup>1</sup>
Br	12	Benedicamus Domino	<i>Benedicamus Domino</i>	Cantus 1–2 Tenor 4	2 <sup>2</sup> [2 <sup>3</sup> ]
Bv		(blank ruled)			

and musical structures; the presence of heraldic texts, and particularly a Visconti motto; and the location of the host volumes in adjacent libraries in central Milan probably as early as the early seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup>

## II. The Reconstruction of the *Benedicamus Domino*

Both surviving bifolios were found largely intact, serving as external covers for their host volumes. After its discovery, the Pavia bifolio was detached from its host volume and restored, whereas at the time of writing the Trivulziana bifolio remains attached to its host volume. As luck would have it, the *Benedicamus Domino* is found on the underside of the back cover of the volume and partially folded under the volume's top edge, posing a challenge to its reconstruction. Figures 15.1a and 15.1b show what can currently be seen of the *Benedicamus Domino* from the back cover of the manuscript to which it is attached: Figure 15.1(a) shows the volume photographed in natural light, while Figure 15.1(b) shows the second stave of the cantus voice, in retrograde inversion, viewed from the inside back cover under UV light. On the fourth stave, the voice marked '[B]enedi[ca]m(us) Tenor' clearly presents the melody 'Flos filius eius', the very common tenor for *Benedicamus Domino* settings taken from the verse of the responsory *Stirps Jesse*.<sup>9</sup> To the naked eye the melody is seen in retrograde; Figure 15.2 presents the mirror image of the view of the tenor from the outside. The rubric 'Tenor' makes clear that this is part of a polyphonic *Benedicamus* setting, and the remaining three syllables of the text ('Do-', 'mi-', '-no') are accurately dispersed, with pen flourishes, under the remainder of the chant, suggesting that this voice was notated for vocal performance. The Tenor is written in black mensural notation, with single notes and ligatures *sine proprietate* and *cum perfectione*. The durations are almost exclusively longae, with two exceptions: two apparent breves within a four-note ligature (circled in Fig. 15.2) that, as argued below, we believe to be an error; and the final ligature, which ends with a maxima.

The first and second staves contain the surviving cantus voice, written in a particular flavour of Franco-Italian notation that we find also in the fragments' French-texted songs. The mensuration is the French imperfect tempus with major prolation, but we also find Italianate dragmas, worth two minims, and a unique figure that we have named *dragma brevis*, a note worth twice as much as the simple dragma, that is, four minims (see Fig. 15.3).<sup>10</sup> The entire text '[B]E-ne-di-ca-mus' is visible when we shine a watermark light through the parchment.

With the help of high-resolution photography by the Arvedi Laboratory of Non-Invasive Diagnostics, we have been able to transcribe the surviving pitches with a fair degree of certainty.<sup>11</sup> The rhythms have proved more challenging because of the difficulty in being

8 • See *ibid.* for the notational, music-stylistic, and linguistic analysis; the history of the host volumes and the heraldic texts will be discussed in forthcoming work.

9 • Catalogued in Huglo 1982 as no. 117 and in Barclay 1977 as no. 32.

10 • See Calvia and Saviotti 2023, 69–74 for a fuller discussion of the *dragma brevis*.

11 • The Arvedi Laboratory is part of the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage of the University of Pavia, in Cremona. The analysis directed by Marco Malagodi was undertaken in collaboration with Marco Gargano (Department of Physics, University of Milan).



Figure 15.1: Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759 (binding): (a) outside back cover, stave numbers annotated and (b) inside back cover, stave number annotated.

Photos by Marco Gargano, © Comune di Milano, all rights reserved

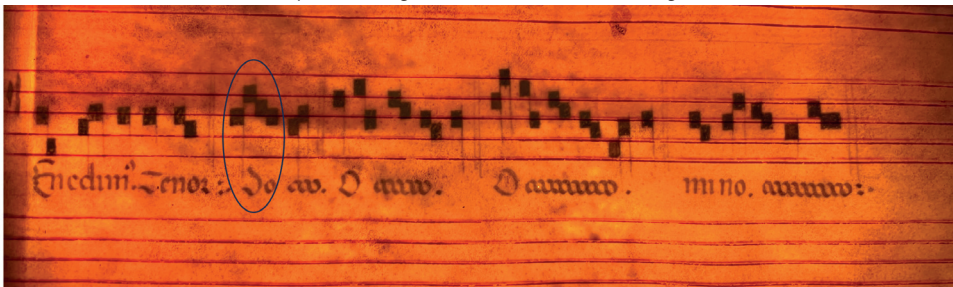


Figure 15.2: Photo of Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759 (binding) tenor, mirror image,

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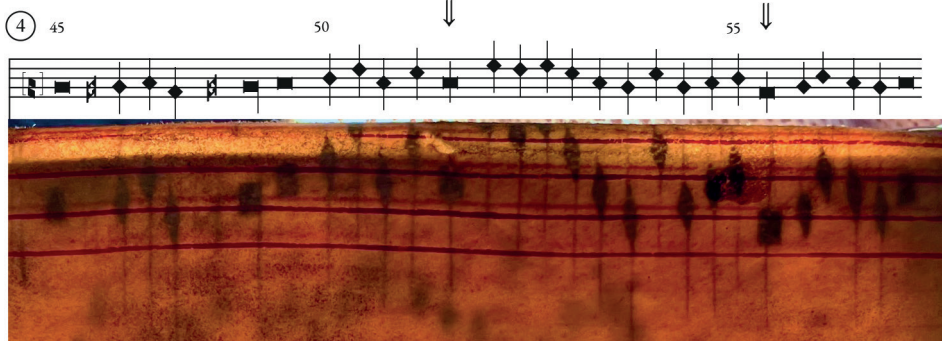


Figure 15.3: Examples of the *dragma brevis* in Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759 (binding),

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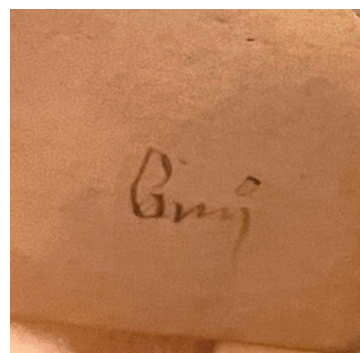
mi no:

Figure 15.4: Paolo da Firenze, three-voice *Benedicamus Domino*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, italien 568, fol. 138r. Reproduced from <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84490281>

sure about the presence or absence of stems. We present our provisional transcription, with a diplomatic rendering of the cantus above the stave, in the Appendix. The transcription facilitated two immediate realisations. First, that the contrapuntal setting is unfinished: the cantus stops at the cadence in bar 66, at the end of the fourth section of the tenor chant. Second, the note and rest alternations in bars 35–42 are clearly remnants of a hocket section, which makes us quite sure that this was a three-voice setting whose copying was arrested before the third voice was added. If we are correct, this setting would join that of Paolo da Firenze found in Pit as the only surviving examples of three-voice polyphonic *Benedicamus Domino* in Italianate mensural notation.<sup>12</sup>

We suspect that had the *Benedicamus Domino* been completely copied, its layout would have been similar to that of Paolo's setting, where a central tenor is flanked by the two cantus voices (see Fig. 15.4). The Trivulziana setting left three staves for the top voice, two of which were filled before the copying stopped; the tenor occupies the fourth stave, and the second voice would probably have been copied below it on two or three staves. This would have left almost an entire half page (five or six staves) for another composition. This hypothesis presumes a process of copying that was not top-down: the tenor seems to have been copied first, with the two cantus voices to follow above and below it. That the tenor was accurately placed on the fourth stave strongly suggests that the scribe was working from an already-formatted exemplar. Although this order of copying might be idiosyncratic and specific to the scribe in question, it is also possible that this half-completed page reveals copying norms for manuscripts of polyphony that are imperceptible in finished manuscripts.<sup>13</sup>

A few clues allow us to speculate about how the two surviving bifolios might have been organised into a single gathering.<sup>14</sup> Notably, the copying of both surviving bifolios was incomplete: the Pavia bifolio has music on the recto and verso of one folio while the second folio is entirely blank; the Trivulziana bifolio's first folio is fully copied on recto and verso, while its second folio contains the incomplete *Benedicamus* on its recto and a blank-ruled folio on its verso. The only material clue to the gathering's original structure is found on Triv, tucked under the bottom right corner of the front of the host volume, where we find the quire number biiij (see Fig. 15.5). Presumably, this indicates that the bifolio in question



**Figure 15.5:** Quire number, Milan, Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana, Cod. Triv. 1759, fol. Ar, © Comune di Milano, all rights reserved

12 • Edited in von Fischer and Gallo 1976, no. 27, 105–06.

13 • There is at least a generous handful of incomplete pages in Italian manuscript anthologies of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but no existing study of them. We note that another closely contemporary half-completed page comparable to Triv is Mod A, fol. 47r, containing only a partially completed cantus voice, lacking any text but already supplied with a rubricated initial D, plus accidental signs.

14 • It is not yet clear whether the proposed San Fedele-Belgioioso codex for which our bifolios were copied was ever completed; it is possible that the project was abandoned or that these bifolios are discards. Sewing holes visible on both bifolios support the idea that they were bound, but our research on these is ongoing.

was the fourth one of the second gathering (the bifolios of the first gathering having been signed ai, aii, and so on). If these gatherings were quaternions, the Trivulziana bifolio would have been the central bifolio of the second gathering of the manuscript. It seems that the copying of the manuscript, or at least of this gathering, broke off in the middle of the *Benedicamus*. In this scenario, it is likely that two bifolios stood between the Trivulziana and Pavia bifolios: the Triv Sanctus must have had two more voices on a facing verso (now lost) and its continuation must have filled an entire second opening. Table 15.2 schematises our hypothetical reconstruction of the presumed quaternion. As discussed further below, this reconstruction has a liturgical logic to it, presenting Credo, Sanctus, and *Benedicamus* in their correct sequence for use in the Mass.

Table 15.2: Hypothetical second gathering of the codex San Fedele-Belgioioso (extant items in bold)

Four French songs (Pav, fol. 1r)	[?bi]
<b>Credo Cantus I/?Contratenor (Pav, fol. 1v) up to <i>non erit finis</i></b>	
[?Credo Cantus II/Tenor, up to <i>non erit finis</i> ]	[?bii]
[?Credo Cantus I/Contratenor, <i>et in spiritum–Amen</i> ]	
[?Credo Cantus II/Tenor <i>et in spiritum–Amen</i> ]	[?biii]
[?1. Sanctus Cantus I/Tenor/Solus Tenor 2. French songs]	
<b>1. Sanctus Cantus II/Contratenor/’Alius solus Tenor’ 2. Two French songs (Triv, fol. 1r)</b>	<b>biiij</b>
<b>Three French songs (Triv, fol. 1v)</b>	
<b>1. <i>Benedicamus Domino</i>: Cantus I [incomplete]/Tenor 2. blank ruled (Triv, fol. 2r)</b>	
<b>Blank ruled (Triv, fol. 2v)</b>	
[?Blank ruled]	
[?Blank ruled]	
[?Blank ruled]	
[?Blank ruled]	
<b>Blank ruled (Pav, fol. 2r)</b>	
<b>Blank ruled (Pav, fol. 2v)</b>	

### III. The *Benedicamus Domino* setting in context

The Triv *Benedicamus Domino* is an example of a curious practice of liturgical polyphony that Michael Scott Cuthbert has called ‘equal-note setting’: a texture in which a liturgical tenor that moves in long notes of equal duration, often notated as if plainchant, is coupled with one or more florid and mensurally-notated cantus voices.<sup>15</sup> The tenor’s melodic

15 • See the extensive discussion in Cuthbert 2006, 365–428. It is hard to tell how widespread this practice was. A search on DIAMM of *Benedicamus Domino* settings (443 in 76 manuscripts, which is not exhaustive but a reasonable corpus) reveals that by the 1430s the majority of polyphonic settings were fully composed in all voices, in the manner of little motets. Two settings by Du Fay in Bologna Q15 (fols. 113v–144r and 169v–170r), probably copied in the 1430s, serve as good examples of this type. Nevertheless, there are sources as late as the turn of the sixteenth century that contain ‘equal-note’ settings of the *Benedicamus*, such as a late fifteenth-century antiphoner copied in Parma Archivio F-10, to

structure governs the phrase structure of the polyphony, and the equal-note motion of the tenor's movement directs the rhythmic and contrapuntal flow. These settings, found in sources from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, occupy a specific, hybrid place in the wide range of polyphonic liturgical practices of the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance that span the spectrum from unwritten to written. Towards the unwritten end of this spectrum are the better-known and more attested cantus planus binatim and cantus fractus settings, which also use equal-note tenors and feature a simple note-against-note texture.<sup>16</sup> At the other end is liturgical polyphony in which the rhythms of all voices are mensural and where the polyphony seems overall more fully composed than the equal-note settings.

That the equal-note setting has close ties to the unwritten tradition seems indisputable when we consider that this texture—equal-note tenor and active, mensurally-notated cantus—is found widely in discant and counterpoint treatises that proceed beyond note-against-note instructions and give examples of florid counterpoint.<sup>17</sup> The link to unwritten practice is further demonstrated by the various ways the tenor can be notated. In some cases the tenor is notated exactly as if it were monophonic chant, and the performer must impose an equal-note performance upon it to fit with the mensurally-notated cantus; a pertinent example is a two-voice *Gaudeamus* setting by Paolo da Firenze copied in 1423.<sup>18</sup> Presumably, the temporal relationship between the two voices was quickly established by trial and error. In other cases, such as the Trivulziana *Benedicamus*, the chant is notated using precise mensural notation that stipulates equal-note performance (all breves or, more rarely, all longs). This range of solutions for the notation of the equal-note settings points

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which was added c.1500 a single four-voice *Benedicamus Domino*. The cantus, altus, and bassus voices are notated in white mensural polyphony and have actively-moving lines in minims and semiminims under cut-C, while the tenor is copied in plainchant notation with the canon 'equali motu et sine pausa' written in the margin. This indicates both that the practice existed as late as c.1500 but also that it was not so ubiquitous that understanding of its notational oddities could be assumed. For a facsimile and discussion, see Massera 1964.

16 • On cantus planus binatim (also called 'primitive' or 'simple' polyphony), see Gallo 1966 and the essays collected in Corsi and Petrobelli 1989; on cantus fractus see Gozzi 2003 and Gozzi 2012.

17 • The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tradition of these is documented in Sachs 1974. Abundant theoretical examples of this texture are provided in, for example, Petrus dictus Palma Ociosa (dated 1336, edited in Wolf 1913–14), and the Berkeley Anonymous (dated 1375, edited in Ellsworth 1989). One example that is particularly close to the Triv *Benedicamus Domino* in date, location, and style is the treatise of Antonius de Leno, thought to date from the first third of the fifteenth century. Leno provides a series of examples of *fiortise*, diminished counterpoint, all in imperfect tempus with major prolation, over an equal-note tenor notated in breves. We note, however, that Leno's use of the dragma differs from that found in Pav and Triv: he assigns the dragma the value of 1.5 minims, while the value of 2 minims he notates with the semibreve caudata. In his examples, however, he uses the dragma only in combination with a semiminim, to produce the effect of a dotted minim, rather than in pairs, to create a 3:2 proportion with the semibreve of major prolation. For an edition of the treatise (with transcriptions of all of the examples), see Seay 1977. For a detailed analysis of the treatise, see Vivarelli 2009 (with a partial facsimile showing the 'equal-note' texture at 528). The Berkeley Anonymous similarly provides a wealth of examples of florid counterpoint using *Ars nova* figures augmented with dragmas and semiminims, and once again the dragma is given the value of 1.5 minims. See Ellsworth 1989, 127 and 136–45. The treatise on note-shapes ('Tractatus figurarum') attributed to Philipoctus Andrea, whose earliest exemplar dates to 1391 in Pavia, does not name the dragma, but describes it as a 'minima caudata superius et inferius', calls it 'common enough', and agrees with Pav and Triv in assigning it the value of two minims; see Schreier 1990, 84.

18 • In Florence Ash. 999. See Cuthbert 2006, 365–67.

again to their origins in unwritten practice; as late as the end of the fifteenth century, Tinctoris's discussion of *cantare super librum* describes a range of activity that correlates well with the diversity of the surviving written record. Tinctoris explains that the performer of the chant can choose from a number of different rhythmic options, including making each note of the chant equal to either a semibreve or a breve; rhythmicising it according to a simple pattern; or treating the chant notation as if it were mensural. Given that there was such a wide spectrum of possibilities for improvised performance, it is not surprising that the written tradition of this practice shows variation and inconsistency.<sup>19</sup>

Table 15.3 lists all the known polyphonic settings of *Benedicamus Domino* notated with Ars nova mensural notation. The Trivulziana setting shares with five of these the equal-note texture and a tenor based on the 'Flos filius' melody.<sup>20</sup> These five have already been discussed as a group at length by Cuthbert, and they are listed in Table 15.3 in ascending

**Table 15.3:** *Benedicamus Domino* settings in Trecento mensural notation

Source	Composer	Voices <sup>text</sup>	Edition
Messina O.4.16, fol. 169r	anon.	2 <sup>1T</sup>	von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 104
Reggio Emilia C 408, fol. 65r	anon.	1 <sup>1</sup>	Gozzi 2007, 98
Houghton, fol. 82v	anon.	1 <sup>1</sup>	—
Cialini, fol. 35v	Magister Johannes de Florentia	2 <sup>2</sup>	Gozzi 2007, 94
Oxford Pat. Lat. 229, fol. 33v	anon.	2 <sup>2</sup>	von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 102–03
Pit, fol. 138r	Paolo da Firenze	3 <sup>3</sup>	von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 105–06
Triv, fol. Br	anon.	2 <sup>2</sup> of 3 <sup>3?</sup>	See Appendix
Faenza 117, fols. 56r–57r	anon.	two-part intabulation	von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 167–69
Faenza 117, fol. 97r–v	anon.	two-part intabulation	von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 185–86

19 • See Sherr 1992, 180–81.

20 • Three settings in the table—Reggio Emilia C 408, Cialini, and Houghton—differ from the five discussed by Cuthbert. The tenor in Johannes de Florentia's setting in Cialini begins as equal-note but gradually becomes more composed; Reggio Emilia C 408 and Houghton each contain only one surviving voice, a florid cantus that seems likely to have been composed to embellish a tenor. Cuthbert 2009, 72–73, signals a 'Flos filius' tenor in Seville BCC 5-2-25, fol. 58r, with a possible cantus adjacent to it. Since the 'terrible clashes' he reports in his transcription leave room for doubt, it is not included here.

order of the degree of elaboration in the cantus voice. The simplest is a two-voice setting copied as an addition to a chant manuscript in Messina. There is a more elaborated anonymous two-voice setting in the Padua fragments (Oxford Pat. Lat. 229, fol. 33v), datable to the first decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The quite spectacular three-voice setting by Paolo da Firenze in Pit (fol. 138r) can be dated roughly to the first decade of the fifteenth century. The most elaborated cantus voices are found in two settings in Faenza 117, which share the contrapuntal texture of the equal-note settings, though their score format and the highly embellished upper voices mark them clearly as instrumental rather than vocal works. Also different in Faenza 117 is the fact that the tenor notes are sometimes rhythmically elaborated as well, so that rather than sustaining a breve for every tenor note, the breve is subdivided into rearticulated shorter note values.<sup>22</sup> The 'Flos filius' melody as transmitted in Triv is identical to that in Oxford Pat. Lat. 229, while the other settings exhibit a variety of small variants.

Tenor	Observations on notation and context
'Flos filius'	Untexted Cantus in Ars nova notation (tempus imperfectum with prolatio maior); Texted tenor in square notation.
not extant	Mensural with no ligatures (facsimile in Gozzi 2007, Fig. 3)
not extant	Italian <i>pontelli</i> , modus signs
freely composed or unidentified	Italian <i>pontelli</i> , <i>divisio</i> letters, quaternaria with modus perfectus Context: Sanctus ([...] de Florentia), Agnus (idem), Agnus (Franciscus de Cumis), Sanctus (Franciscus de Cumis), <i>Benedicamus Domino</i> (Magister Johannes de Florentia)
'Flos filius'	Italian <i>pontelli</i> , <i>divisio</i> letters Context: Sanctus, <i>Benedicamus Domino</i> , Sanctus 'mediolano', Credo, Gloria, Sanctus
'Flos filius'	Italian <i>pontelli</i> , <i>divisio</i> letters, semibreves caudatae; frequent changes of mensuration Context: Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, <i>Benedicamus Domino</i>
'Flos filius'	Ars nova notation, two-minim dragma, four-minim <i>dragma brevis</i> Context: Credo, Sanctus, <i>Benedicamus Domino</i>
'Flos filius' (transposed up a fourth)	Highly decorated cantus voice
'Flos filius' (transposed up a fourth)	Highly decorated cantus voice

21 • Digitised on DIAMM: [https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/505/#/images?p=33v%20\[53v\]](https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/505/#/images?p=33v%20[53v]).

22 • The settings are found on fols. 57r–58r and 97r–v. For a facsimile and study of Faenza 117, see Memelsdorff 2013. Cuthbert 2006, 123, raises the possibility that the Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 cantus might be instrumental, but this hypothesis is challenged by its careful textung. In addition, Faenza 117's cantus parts are much more fast-moving, using a variety of semiminim-type figures against the breve motion in the tenor; a keyboard performance of Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 or of Triv would be rather dull by comparison.

The notation of the tenors in these settings ranges between mensural and non-mensural representation. The Messina *Benedicamus Domino* has a tenor written in non-mensural square notation, and the performer must work out that each note corresponds to a breve of the cantus's mensural notation. The setting by Paolo da Firenze similarly notates most of the tenor in non-mensural plainchant that must be performed as breves against the florid cantus voices, but uses Italian division letters 'o.', 'p.', and 'q.' to indicate changes in the duration of the breve from section to section. In addition, the last two pitches of Paolo's tenor are notated as maximas, each of which appears to require a different interpretation. The final maxima is unmeasured, signifying the end point of the composition. The penultimate note, however, has a tricky relationship with measured time when joined with the cantus, whose penultimate note is a longa. If we assume that the cantus's penultimate longa indicates a precise measurement, the demands of the counterpoint result in the tenor's maxima being held for a nonsensical seven breves of the cantus.<sup>23</sup> If we understand instead that the cantus's longa indicates a slowing down, as if a fermata, then the tenor's penultimate maxima equals six of the cantus's breves, with the last one held a bit longer.

This confusion at the penultimate sonority can be related to other equal-note settings in which Cuthbert observes mensural irregularities at pre-cadential penultimate sonorities. In the equal-note setting of the *Gaudeamus* by Paolo da Firenze mentioned above, the penultimate note in the cantus is a long, against a breve in the tenor.<sup>24</sup> In the *Benedicamus Domino* setting in Oxford Pat. Lat. 229, the tenor is written in longs but in two pre-cadential bars the corresponding cantus is notated as a breve, while in the Messina setting the penultimate sonority features two breves in the cantus against a breve in the tenor. Cuthbert's explanation for these irregularities is that the pre-cadential measures always have a sort of implied fermata, a 'practice of flexible rhythm just before the cadence'.<sup>25</sup> We might go even further and speculate that the equal-note tenor genre has a particularly flexible relationship to mensural notation, since the written exemplars of this genre are surely just a small snapshot of a widespread unwritten practice of florid polyphony built on a tenor moving in isochronous pulses. It was seemingly characteristic of this practice to extend the penultimate sonority of cadences. This practice dates back at least to the late thirteenth century, when it was described by Franco of Cologne in his discussion of the *finis punctorum*: 'Finis punctorum immensurabilis appellatur, nam et ipsa in plana musica reperitur. Haec tantum penultimam notam significat esse longam in quocumque modo e venerit' (The *finis punctorum* is called immeasurable, for it is also found in plainsong. It signifies that the penultimate note is a long in whatever mode it occurs).<sup>26</sup> This forms the basis of a rule governing the performance of organum, which appears later in Franco's treatise: 'Tertia regula est: quicquid accipitur immediate ante pausationem quae finis

23 • This is the solution adopted in von Fischer and Gallo 1976, 106, bars 46–52.

24 • See Cuthbert 2006, 379.

25 • Ibid., 383.

26 • See Reaney and Gilles 1974, 54.

punctorum dicitur, est longum, quia omnis penultima longa est' (The third rule is: any note found immediately before the rest called *finis punctorum* is a long, because every penultimate [note] is a long).<sup>27</sup> While Franco quantifies the penultimate note as a long, it seems likely that this rule describes a practice of lengthening penultimate sonorities that was not necessarily strictly measured. In short, the mensural notations in which these few examples are recorded are clearly subordinate to the embodied knowledge of an established genre. Since it appears to have been generally accepted practice to take time at the penultimate sonorities when performing polyphony, the notation did not have to be perfectly precise.

In both Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 and the Triv *Benedicamus*, the tenor melody is written in what could be described as a kind of mensuralised square notation, as if the scribe translated a plainchant version of the melody into a measured, polyphonic voice in which every note is a long.<sup>28</sup> This act of translation might explain why the Triv scribe appears to have made an error, as can be seen in the circled notes in the Triv tenor in Figure 15.2 above, where the two internal notes of a four-note ligature, normally read as breves, must be read as longs. It is also possible that the apparent error is related to the fact that the two notes in question are a variant reading for the chant: in many transmissions of the plainchant the intervening *E* is not present and the chant skips directly from *F* to *D*. If the scribe knew the chant without the *E*, he might have unwittingly subsumed it into the longa space taken up by the *F*, imagining it as a plica. Whatever the motivation for the exceptional quaternary ligature in the Triv tenor, its normal signification must be overridden in performance, with all the tenor notes sung equally as longs in order to fit with the cantus.

If we now compare the style of the florid cantus voice in Triv with those in Table 15.3, it is apparent that the Triv setting is among the most artfully constructed of the group, that is, it takes full advantage of available notated resources of pitch and rhythm. The Messina cantus is small in range, almost never extending beyond the ambitus of *a–d* and uses a minimal rhythmic palette in *tempus imperfectum cum prolatione maiore*.<sup>29</sup> The Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 setting, in the same mensuration—though notated in its Italian equivalent, *senaria imperfecta*, using *pontelli* (Marchettan dots of division) and *divisio* letters—has a cantus range of a tenth but not much more rhythmic variety than the Messina cantus, and features some awkward intervallic successions (for instance, the tritone leaps in bars 4–5 and 79–80, and the chromatic shift from *g* to *g*<sup>♯</sup> in bars 80–81). Comparing the Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 cantus range with that of Triv reveals significant differences. A number of the vertical intervals found in the Oxford manuscript are never found in the Trivulziana *Benedicamus*, such as the double octave (as at bar 26). In the Triv *Benedicamus* the two extant voices frequently move in thirds (for example, bars 12, 22, 29, 35, and 47–48), while the two voices in Oxford Pat. Lat. 229's *Benedicamus* are never closer than a fifth apart. In fact,

27 • Ibid., 82.

28 • See <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/505/#/>.

29 • For a modern edition, see von Fischer and Gallo 1976, no. 26a, p. 104; for a facsimile see Ziino 1973.

the Triv and Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 voices are almost complementary, and in many passages they could be performed simultaneously over the same tenor. This is not to suggest that they were composed to be performed together—there are too many passages (as at bars 35–42, which requires a corresponding hoquet voice) that are incompatible. Nevertheless, the difference in range between the two cantus parts, and the close proximity between the ambitus of the tenor and that of the Triv cantus suggest that the proposed missing voice in the Triv setting was a triplum that was placed in roughly the same ambitus as the cantus in Oxford Pat. Lat. 229.

Of the three settings in Table 15.3 that do not share the monorhythmic ‘Flos filius tenor’—Reggio Emilia C 408, Cialini, and Houghton—only Cialini’s cantus is directly comparable. Reggio Emilia C 408 and Houghton survive in one voice only, and it is not clear whether these voices are monophonic or whether they were written down to be performed with a tenor that has not survived. Cialini’s tenor is neither monorhythmic nor identifiable as a *Benedicamus Domino* chant; its cantus voice—in *quaternaria* with perfect modus—ranges over an octave, and capitalises on its mensuration by mixing clusters of minims under *quaternaria* with slower passages in breves and longs that articulate the perfect modus. The notation contains unusual features signalled by Marco Gozzi: dotted rhythms are notated with breves and longs followed by a single minim, as if ‘imperfected’ in the French manner. This notational feature is also found in Reggio Emilia C 408.<sup>30</sup>

Comparing the Triv setting to that of Paolo da Firenze in Pit, we find many similarities in approach, if not precisely in style. In addition to the use of two cantus voices above the monorhythmic tenor, both settings use musical texture to differentiate larger compositional sections. The tenors, which in all cases retain the phrase breaks of the original chant, are organised into five discreet sections, and all of the equal-note settings acknowledge these sections with clear cadences. The Triv and Paolo da Firenze settings both underscore the sectional divisions through musical means: Paolo changes mensuration in four of the five sections and uses melodic sequences, hoquet, and increasing speed of subdivision to create variety.<sup>31</sup> In the Triv *Benedicamus*, even the partial transcription in the Appendix reveals that different sections feature different rhythmic techniques: the first section uses pervasive semibreve hemiola; the third section introduces hockets; and the fourth section contains an extended syncopation.

The close affinity of the Triv *Benedicamus* to the anonymous setting in Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 and the setting by Paolo da Firenze in Pit may have implications for its dating, and therefore for the dating of the San Fedele-Belgioioso codex as a whole, although the ques-

30 • Gozzi 2007, 63.

31 • We note as an aside that the four mensuration changes, ‘o,’ ‘s.i,’ ‘p,’ and ‘q,’ are notated in the cantus voices of Paolo’s setting, but the tenor indicates only ‘o,’ ‘p,’ and ‘q.’ A telltale erasure in the tenor voice, though, shows that ‘s.i.’ was written and then erased. The reason for this might be an unwritten but assumed practice of only notating mensural changes when they resulted in a change in the measurement of the breve. Since the change from ‘o,’ to ‘s.i.’ leaves the breve unchanged, to write ‘s.i.’ would be not only unnecessary but perhaps confusing, prompting the performer to assume a change of measure where there was none.

tion of dating is invariably fraught and susceptible to circular logic. Paolo da Firenze's long career as monk, abbot, and rector, as well as composer, is documented from the 1390s until c.1420.<sup>32</sup> The copying of Pit has long been thought to date from after 1406 because it contains Paolo's madrigal *Godi, Firenze*, composed to celebrate the Florentine conquest of Pisa in that year.<sup>33</sup> As for the copying date of Oxford Pat. Lat. 229, one of several manuscripts of polyphony copied at the scriptorium of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Giustina in Padua, its only clue to a possible date of copying is the presence of works by Johannes Ciconia, suggesting a date after 1401, the year the composer arrived in Padua.<sup>34</sup> A date of c.1410 for the Triv *Benedicamus Domino* seems, therefore, perfectly plausible, but a range of ten years either way would not be surprising. Paolo's monorhythmic *Gaudeamus* dated 1423 is also stylistically completely compatible with the Triv setting.

Paolo's *Benedicamus* is copied in Pit as the last liturgical entry of a quasi-cyclic Mass Ordinary (lacking only the Kyrie).<sup>35</sup> This might be suggestive for the position of the *Benedicamus* in the San Fedele-Belgioioso codex: the proposed hypothetical gathering in which this setting appears is similarly arranged as a partial, composite Mass cycle, with Credo, Sanctus, and *Benedicamus Domino* ordered correctly, and interspersed with secular songs as fillers just as in Pit. And just as Paolo's *Benedicamus Domino* is placed by the compilers of Pit to stand next to Mass Ordinary settings by composers of the previous generation—possibly to make a composite polyphonic 'cycle'—so does our *Benedicamus Domino* appear to be the most modern (or the least conservative) of the three settings in the Trivulziana gathering.<sup>36</sup> Francesco Zimei goes so far as to suggest a specific occasion that prompted the creation of the Pit liturgical cycle, namely the opening of the Council of Pisa on 25 March in 1409.<sup>37</sup> While we would hesitate to hypothesise an occasion with such specificity for a San Fedele-Belgioioso Mass cycle, it could plausibly have been assembled for a liturgical event of some particular significance, which could explain some odd features of the Sanctus setting, including its unique form, ill-fitting text underlay, and the use of a trope otherwise unknown in Italy.<sup>38</sup> All of these peculiarities mark our troped Sanctus

32 • See most recently Nadas 2020 for new information about Paolo's early career and a summary of previous scholarship.

33 • See Günther 1967.

34 • For a thorough discussion of the Padua fragments, see Cuthbert 2006, 87–221.

35 • See Zimei 2020, 82, for a detailed scheme of Pit's 'liturgical' gathering; see Nadas 1985, 228–35 for a reconstruction of the whole manuscript.

36 • Attempting to date our fragmentary repertoire is of course hazardous. Nevertheless, we have a good idea of what Matteo da Perugia was composing c.1410: motets and Mass movements with sophisticated diminution schemes and a contrapuntal elegance that is lacking in our Credo or Sanctus, which could easily date from thirty years earlier (although they could equally have been composed much later in a conservative style).

37 • Zimei 2020, 99.

38 • This pan-isorhythmic work has the unusual structure of repeating exactly at its midpoint: that is, just as the A section of a ballade is copied once with double-texted underlay and a repeat sign, so is the troped Sanctus copied in Triv, with the additional ballade-like feature of an ouvert and clos ending written out at its end. Most intriguing of all, this Osanna trope appears to be otherwise unknown in Italy, appearing in liturgical manuscripts almost exclusively from musical centres in the Kingdom of Aragon. The Osanna trope *Caeleste praeconium* takes the form of a rhymed sequence, normally found embellishing the text between the words 'osanna' and 'in excelsis'. In Triv, the text is instead

as a composition for a specific occasion, and possibly also a contrafactum, which perhaps borrowed an existing motet and awkwardly superimposed a new and unusual trope text upon it. It could be, therefore, that the Trivulziana *Benedicamus Domino* was composed for this same, special occasion.<sup>39</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

The Trivulziana fragment's *Benedicamus Domino* setting, incomplete though it is, has the potential to pose and eventually to answer important questions about musical and liturgical practice in northern Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The geographic spread of the two other very similar settings—Paolo's from Florence and the anonymous setting copied in the Paduan Oxford Pat. Lat. 229—suggests that this particular kind of elaborated setting of the *Benedicamus Domino* was practised at least across central and northern Italy. The particularly close relationship between the Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 and Triv tenors—both notated in longs rather than breves and sharing exactly the same version of their 'Flos filius' chant melody—might point to as yet obscure historical connections between the two sources.<sup>40</sup>

The potentially Milanese origin of the Triv *Benedicamus* furthermore encourages us to reconsider Milan as a centre of liturgical polyphonic practice. Padua and Florence have long been known to be important centres of polyphony, thanks to the fortuitous survival of fragments from Santa Giustina for the former, and the significant material evidence from Florence, including both archival materials and music manuscripts. We have long suspected, but have not been able to document, analogous musical activity in Milan, largely because of the extent of the destruction of the Milanese archive in the civil wars of the mid-fifteenth century. Until now, knowledge of liturgical polyphonic practice in Milan was limited to a single figure—Matteo da Perugia, documented at the Milan Duomo between 1402 and 1406 and again 1414–16—and a single manuscript source, Mod A. Nevertheless, Mod A was almost certainly copied outside Milan, probably in Pisa or Bologna in the ambitus of the antipapal court of Alexander V, and represents at best a partial and refracted view of musical activity in Milan.<sup>41</sup> The anthology of sixty-four songs in the manuscript's earlier layer is international in content, and includes a number of widely-circulated French songs, together with a repertoire of songs written by Italian composers from across northern

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intercalated with that of the Sanctus in a prose-like way, rendering invisible its poetic form. The trope is no. 10 in the catalogue in Iverson 1990. See also Iverson 1998. Our survey of the Cantus database and other sources revealed twelve copies, found in manuscripts from Vic, Tortona, Madrid, Toulouse, and Limoges. Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2006 traces the circulation of Iberian Ordinary tropes. The table in Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2006, 420, suggests that *Caeleste praeconium* circulated in Italy, but the author confirmed in private communication (26 January 2024) that this was an error.

39 • We owe the suggestion that the Sanctus might be a contrafact to Pedro Memelsdorff. For a case study of a roughly contemporary contrafacted motet made for a ceremonial occasion, see Thöne 2024, 109–57.

40 • See Plumley and Stone 2022 for the suggestion that Oxford Pat. Lat. 229 might collect repertoire brought to Padua from Milan, such as the 'Sanctus Mediolano', Ciconia's *Sus une fontayne*, and two works of Machaut otherwise unattested outside the Machaut manuscripts.

41 • See Stone 2005.

Italy, with only a handful of works likely to have been composed in the Milanese area, including eight French songs by Antonellus de Caserta, one by Johannes de Janua, and potentially a few anonymous songs.<sup>42</sup> Mod A's liturgical music includes one motet based on an Ambrosian tenor, indicating a certain Milanese origin.<sup>43</sup> It records ten Mass Ordinary settings by Matteo that may have been composed for performance at the Duomo, but also plausibly date from his likely presence at the Council of Pisa in the retinue of Cardinal Pietro Filargo.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast to Mod A, the Trivulziana and Pavia fragments seem very possibly to represent music composed for and circulating in Milan itself, by a composer (or composers) virtually unknown elsewhere. As of this writing, we are actively undertaking further research to discover more about the people and institutions to whose existence these fragments of a possible San Fedele-Belgioioso codex bear witness, and to understand better the broader cultural circumstances that led to the composition of a very distinctive *Benedicamus Domino*.

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42 • See Stone 2005 for Antonellus de Caserta and Johannes de Janua. The Pavian notarial rubric where the name Antonello da Caserta is found has been published in Crotti and Majocchi 2005.

43 • See Maiani 1994.

44 • See Stone 2005 and Maiani 1994.

# APPENDIX

Transcription of *Benedicamus Domino*, Triv, fol. Br

① *\* dotted?* *\* ms. error: ■ instead of ■?*

stave 1

Original notation

E ne

[Cantus]

[B]e ne

Tenor

Be ne

9

di ca mus

di ca mus

di ca mus

17

② (*mm. 17–25: note durations are not fully legible*)

Do

Do-

*\* brevis* *\* brevis*

Do-

25 (3) *stave 2*

O

33

41 \*(a ♦ is missing after the minim?) (4)

49

59

67 <sup>5</sup>  
stave 3

mi - - - no.

77