

MUSICOLOGICAL STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS

12

LUDWIG FINSCHER
LOYSET COMPÈRE
(c. 1450-1518)
LIFE AND WORKS



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LOYSET COMPÈRE
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by LUDWIG FINSCHER

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PREFACE

The present study has grown from my unpublished dissertation *Die Messen und Motetten Loyset Compères* which was accepted by Göttingen university in 1954. In translating it, I have left practically no sentence unchanged, and to make the special study of the composer's sacred works a more usable and fairly comprehensive monograph, I have added a short chapter dealing with Compère's chansons and frottole. In this form the investigation is intended as a first attempt to assemble and list chronologically the composer's complete output, at the same time assessing his historical importance and artistic standing within the Josquin circle. Since our knowledge of this period is, to say the least, still patchy, one can do no more than put forward theories and suggestions, which sometimes may well be more in the nature of questions than answers. Nevertheless, in spite of its imperfections, it is hoped that this study will prove of some value in furthering future studies and in enlarging our knowledge of Josquin's time.

The method of investigation and musical analysis was stringently prescribed by the peculiarity of Compère's works and creative career: by no other method than by the detailed analysis of each single work could be brought to evidence the kaleidoscopic changes of style and technique that so clearly reflect the general stylistic trends and the diversity of simultaneously existent styles in this period. It is obvious that this method with its frequent repetition of one pattern of technical analysis may occasionally make hard reading, but it is hoped that in the end the results may justify the method; and it is furthermore hoped that however dimly from this distance, a picture of the man may emerge from the analysis of his works. Moreover, this analysis has the great advantage of presenting the individual work of art as a manifestation of the individual creative power, as an artistic unit grown out of history, not as material for delineating technical and aesthetic cross-sections in a composer's more or less consistent personal style.

I am fully aware that Compère's work could be used with valuable and interesting results as material for an investigation into the epoch's attitude towards the theory of the church modes or the theory and practice of three- and four-part counterpoint, but I have carefully avoided such an approach

It was pointed out earlier that Compère's name is not missing from Crétin's "Déploration sur le trépas d'Ockeghem"⁴⁴; and the same is true of the "Livre de la Deablerie" of Eloy d'Amerval⁴⁵, which lists many members of the French chapel royal. The catalogue of composers drawn up by Paulus Cortesius⁴⁶ is doubtless arranged to suit the taste of Pope Leo X. After more detailed notices concerning "Juschinus Gallus", "Jacobus and "Herricus Isaac" comes the following:

...nec longo quidem intervallo Alexander Agricola / Antonius
Brunellus / Lodovicus Compater / Io. Spatarius Bononiensis [sic!] ab ea
musica laude absunt: ex quibus quisquis alius alio plus vel artis / vel
suavitatis sit in construendo nactus / sitque alius alio / aut mutuacione /
aut commenti novitate vendibilior / omnes tamen sunt scienter: in hoc
praecentorio genere versati / ex quibus multa ad senatorium usum trasferi
possint . . .

Jean Lemaire de Belges in his "Traicté intitulé la concorde des deux langages" not only praises the "vertus colourés" of Josquin Desprez and Ockeghem's "harmonie très fine" but also "les termes doux de Loiset Compère" — a not unfitting characterisation which, as with Molinet's remarks, is primarily aimed at Compère the songwriter⁴⁷. Among the "memorables", the composer appears again in Pierre Moulu's motet "Mater floreat florescat"⁴⁸:

Mater floreat florescat
modulata musicorum melodie
crescat celebris Du Fay cadentia
prosperetur preclaris
Regis Busnoys Baziron subtiles glorientur
congaudeat Obreth Compere
Eloy⁴⁹ Hayne la Rue memorabiles
Josquin incomparabilis bravium accipiat.
Rutilet delphicus de Langueval . . .

⁴⁴ Cf. note 12.

⁴⁵ Quoted in full in J. Marix, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon*, Strasbourg 1939, 184; the Compère passage also in Reese, *Music in the Renaissance*, 263.

⁴⁶ *De cardinalatu*, In Castro Cortesio [Rome] 1510, liber II, cap. vii, fol. lxxiii. Cf. also A. Pirro, 'Leo X and Music', in MQ XXI (1935), 1 ff.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Hewitt, *Odhecaton*, 66.

⁴⁸ Florence, Biblioteca Olschki. See A. Bonaventura, *Di un codice musicale medico*, Florence 1913, 9. Bonaventura does not give any signature. The manuscript was not available to me, but cf. the recent study by E. E. Lowinsky, 'The Medici Codex' in *Annales Musicologiques* V, 1957, 61 ff.

⁴⁹ Bonaventura's reading "Cloy" is certainly erroneous. Evidently the name should be Eloy d'Amerval, who, like Molinet, was both poet and musician.

		Cort/P No. 35 anonymous F 2442 No.? Gaspart CG, 94'-95' anonymous, text <i>Quam diu che pen messé</i>
12. Faisans boutons	3	F 2794, 68'-69' anonymous P 1597, 42'-43' anonymous P 2245, 22'-23'
13. Garisses moy	3	Od, 63'-64' Form No. 53 anonymous Bol Q 18, 90'-91' anonymous SG 461, 48'-49' Seg, 191' Tor, 13'-14' anonymous
14. Gentil patron	4	F 2442 No. 32
15. In (En) attendant	3	Bol Q 18, 91'-92' anonymous Cop 1848, pag. 356-357 and 449 anonymous F 59, 225'-226' F 178, 18'-19' anonymous Seg, 185' Tor, 13' anonymous Lab, 111'-112' anonymous
16. J'ay un sion sur la porte	4	P 2245, 24'-25'
17. Je ne puis plus	3	Seg, 192 F 178, 54'-55' anonymous, text <i>Je ne puis haver</i>
18. Je suis amie d'un forier	4	Canti B, 14'-15' anonymous Eg I Nr. 21 anonymous, only S Cort/P No. 9 anonymous F 107bis, 11'-12' anonymous F 164-167 No. 64 anonymous CG, 111'-112'
19. L'autre jour	4	Canti C, 64'-65' anonymous F 2442 No. 33
20. La saison en est	3	Cop 1848, pag. 396 Alexandro F 178, 26'-27' textless F 2794, 66'-67' Agricola P 1597, 21'-22' anonymous P 2245, 12'-13' Cas, 59'-60' SG 462, 43' anonymous Lab, 142'-143'

CHAPTER V

THE MOTETTI MISSALES ¹

The famous "Gafurius Codices" of the Milan cathedral, Mil 2267-2269, contain among many other works a number of motets not found in other sources. These motets stand together in cycles with the remark either "motetti missales" or simply "missa" in the original *tabula* (Mil 2269)², or by "loco" designations at the beginning of each motet, indicating parts of the proper and ordinary of the mass which are to be replaced by these works. The normal number of motets in one cycle is eight, in the normal order, corresponding to the mass liturgy, *loco* Introitus - Gloria - Credo - Offertorium - Sanctus - Elevatio (*ad or post Elevationem*) - Agnus Dei and Deo Gratias. Each cycle is furthermore unified by the same tonality and clef combination. Some cycles approach the regular mass structure even more closely by using one cantus firmus or identical initial motives or using motives in cross relations among the several motets; convincing proof that the works were composed in cycles and not compiled from motets written independently and previously.

This so-called substitution mass ("Vertretungsmesse")³ or, better, motet cycle *loco missae*⁴ was apparently rooted in Ambrosian Liturgy. The cycles hitherto mentioned were recorded in the Milan manuscripts written under the supervision of Gafurius and partly even by himself for the Milan cathedral chapel⁵. Two other cycles, the only ones outside the Milan

¹ For a condensed version of this chapter, especially its introductory part, see Vol. II of our *Compère* edition in *CMM*.

² "Salve mater salvatoris gaffori cum tota missa", "Ave dn̄e iesu christe cum reliq̄s toti⁹ misse". In the *tabula* of Mil 2269 the cycles are listed in a separate column headed "Motetti missales consequ." (cf. Jeppesen, 'Die 3 Gafurius-Kodizes der Fabbrica del Duomo Milano' in *AMI* III (1931)).

³ The term was introduced by Jeppesen, 'Die 3 Gafurius-Kodizes...'.¹

⁴ Cf. G. Croll, *Das Motettenwerk Gaspars van Weerbeke*, Göttingen dissertation 1954 (typescript).

⁵ Cf. Jeppesen, 'Die 3 Gafurius-Kodizes...'.¹