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# Valerio Bona's 'Missa Morir non può 'l mio core' (1611): a further stage in the journey of Nanino's popular madrigal*

## A madrigal's journey

In the 2022 special issue of the journal *Musica Iagellonica*, titled "Travelling Music: Studies in Musical Transformation", dedicated entirely to the field of music reworking,[1] Marina Toffetti presented Giovanni Maria Nanino's madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core* as a case study to examine its reception and the various transformations it underwent.[2] As Toffetti notes, this theme is "by its

* A preliminary version of this article was presented by the author in the paper "Taking Care of Incomplete Music: Valerio Bona's Polychoral Mass (1611) on Giovanni Maria Nanino's Madrigal 'Morir non può 'l mio core' (1579)," in collaboration with Marina Toffetti, at the annual Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference, held at the University of Granada from 6 to 9 July 2024.

[1] *Musica Iagellonica* Vol. 13 (2022), special issue "Travelling Music. Studies in Musical Transformation", edited by Jessie Ann Owens. The issue compiled the written versions of some of papers presented at the Round Table, "Re-textualizing Music: Contrafact as a Complex Cultural Process," held at the University of Padua on 16 November 2021, which, in turn, built upon the discussions from the essay collection *Contrafacta. Modes of Music Re-textualization in the Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, eds. Marina Toffetti and Gabriele Taschetti (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2020).

[2] Marina Toffetti, "Travelling Music: The Madrigal Morir non può 'l mio core by Giovanni Maria Nanino and Its Textual and Musical Transformations", *Musica Iagellonica* Vol. 13 (2022), 7–42: 7. For an edition of the madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core* by Giovanni Maria Nanino see Giovanni Maria Nanino, *Complete madrigals*, Part 1, *Il primo libro de madrigali*

very nature difficult to quantify, [and] lends itself, if anything, to being assessed in its cultural scope, taking into consideration the different elements of its complexity".[3] Building on Toffetti's work tracing the madrigal's journey, this article aims to explore a previously unexamined chapter in its reception: Valerio Bona's sixteen-voice *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* (1611).

The reprints of Giovanni Maria Nanino's first book of madrigals (Venice, 1579, 1582, 1605; the first edition, probably from 1571, is lost), which includes the five-voice madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core*, and the anthologies in which the same madrigal was featured, such as *Musica Divina* (Antwerp, 1583, with seven reprints until 1634) and *Spoglia amorosa* (Venice, 1584, with five reprints until 1607), already ensured the remarkable circulation of this composition.[4] However, the impact of this madrigal goes far beyond its numerous reprints. The composition inspired a series of new works, starting with *Morir può il vostro core*, Nanino's own 'risposta', which appeared in his third book of 1586.[5] In the same year, his pupil Felice Anerio published the four-voice canzonetta *Morir non può 'l mio core*, essentially a four-voice reduction of his teacher's madrigal, with only slight modifications to both the music and text.[6] To these, we can add various reductions for fewer voices, such as the three-voice canzonetta by Ludovico Viadana (Venice, 1588) and the three-voice madrigal by Jan De Castro (Antwerp, 1588), both printed in the same year, as well as the two-voice version by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, which appears in his collection *Rimes*

*a cinque voci*, Christina Boenicke and Anthony Newcomb (eds.) (Middleton, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2012) (Recent researches in the music of the Renaissance, 158). On Giovanni Maria Nanino see the recent volume Maurizio Pastori, *Giovanni Maria Nanino: 'cantor excellentissimus', 'vir honestus et bonae famae'* (Roma: IBIMUS, 2015, 2nd ed. 2020).

[3] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 7. Giovanni Maria Nanino, *Il Primo libro de Madrigali a Cinque voci Nouamente Ristampati* (Venezia: Angelo Gardano, 1579), RISM A/I N 26, last known edition: RISM A/I N 28 (1605); *Musica divina di XIX. autori illustri, a IIII. V. VI. et VII. voci, nuovamente raccolta da Pietro Phalesio, et data in luce. Nella quale si contengono i più excellenti madrigali che hoggidi si cantino* (Antwerp: Pierre Phalèse et Jean Bellère, 1583), RISM B/I 1583/15, last known edition: RISM B/I 1636/6 (1636); *Spoglia amorosa. Madrigali a cinque voci di diversi eccellentissimi musici nuovamente posti in luce* (Venezia: eredi di Girolamo Scotto, 1584), RISM B/I 1584/5, last known edition: RISM B/I 1607/13 (1607).

[4] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 8–11.

[5] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 11–16. Giovanni Maria Nanino, *Il terzo libro de madrigali a cinque voci. Novamente composti, et dati in luce* (Venezia: Angelo Gardano, 1586, RISM A/I N 31).

[6] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 16–19. Felice Anerio, *Canzonette a quattro voci* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, Ricciardo Amadino, 1586), RISM A/I A 1085.

*françoises et italiennes* (Leyden, 1612) along with a two-voice arrangement of *Morir può il vostro core*.[7]

In addition to these examples of circulation and assimilation, the history of this madrigal also intersects with the phenomenon of retextualisation. Notably, there are four known retexted versions: one in English and three in Latin. These include *All yee that ioy in wayling*, found in Thomas Watson's *The first sett of Italian Madrigalls Englished* (London, 1590); *Laetamini in Domino*, included in Ofero Vecchi's *Scielta de madrigali* (Milan, 1604); *Si corpus hoc mortale*, featured in the third book of Michael Herrer's *Hortus Musicalis* (Munich, 1609), whose *secunda pars*, *Nolite contristari*, is a *contrafactum* of *Morir può il vostro core*; and *Dilectus meus mihi*, which appears in Girolamo Cavaglieri's *Madrigali de diversi autori* (Loano, 1616).[8] Felice Anerio's four-voice canzonetta *Morir non può 'l mio core* was also retexted and published as *Pearl, crystal, gold and ruby* in Thomas Morley's anthology *Canzonets or little short songs to foure voices celected out of the best and approved Italian authors* (London, 1597).[9] To these examples from the domain of printed music, we can add numerous manuscript sources that preserve Nanino's madrigal in both its original form and various reworkings—intabulated, reduced, and retexted—currently housed in libraries across England, Italy, and Germany.[10]

Aside from reduced, adapted, and retexted versions, there is another category of works that more implicitly allude to Nanino's madrigal. Among these

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[7] *Fiori musicali di diversi auttori a tre voci. Libro secondo. Nuovamente composti e dati in luce* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1588), RISM B/I 1588/20; Jean De Castro, *Madrigali* [...] *a tre voci* (Antwerp: Pierre Phalèse, Jean Bellère, 1588), RISM A/I C 1479; Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, *Rimes françoises et italiennes, mises en musique, à deux et à trois parties, avec une chanson à quatre* (Leyden: Imprimerie plantinienne de Raphelengius, 1612), RISM A/I S 7246.

[8] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 20–30; transcription at pp. 32–37. *The first sett, of Italian Madrigalls Englished, not to the sense of the originall dittie, but after the affection of the Noate* (London: Thomas East, 1590), RISM B/I 1590/29; *Scielta de madrigali a' cinque voci de diversi eccel. musici, accommodati in motetti da Orfeo Vecchi con la partitura a d'essi motetti* (Milano: erede di Simon Tini, Francesco Lomazzo, 1604), RISM B/I 1604/11; *Hortus Musicalis, variis antea diversorum authorum Italiae floribus consitus, iam vero latinos fructus, mira suavitate et artificio, V, VI, VII, VIII, et pluribus vocibus concinendos* […] *liber tertius* (Münich: Adam Berg, 1609), RISM B/I 1609/15; *Madrigali de diversi auttori, accomodati per concerti spirituali dal R. P. F. Girolamo Cavaglieri* (Loano: Francesco Castello, 1616), RISM B/I 1616/8.

[9] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 27–29; transcription at pp. 38–41. *Canzonets or little short songs to foure voices celected out of the best and approved Italian authors* (London: Peter Short, 1597), RISM A/I M 3710.

[10] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 11.

is the four-voice motet *Pulchrae sunt genae tuae* by Giovanni Ghizzolo from Brescia (c.1580–c.1623), published in his first book of *Concerti all'uso moderno* (Milan, 1611), where the very opening bars contain a quotation from Nanino's madrigal's *exordium* in both the tenor and continuo parts (ex. 1).[11] Ghizzolo's composition, in fact, reveals a more complex web of intertextual connections: the text set to music coincides with that prepared by Aquilino Coppini for his spiritual adaptation of Monteverdi's madrigal *Ferir quel petto, Silvio?*, published in the first book of *Musica tolta da i madrigali di Claudio Monteverde ... e fatta spirituale* (Milan, 1607).[12] A clear allusion to the opening of Nanino's madrigal can also be found in the double-choir motet *Nigra sum sed formosa* with basso continuo by Paolo Quagliati (ex. 2), included in his *Motecta octonis et psalmus Dixit Dominus duodenis vocibus*, printed in Rome in 1612,[13] just a year after Ghizzolo's *Concerti*. Quagliati (c.1555–1628), active in Rome from the mid–1570s until his death, was likely in contact with Giovanni Maria Nanino,[14] a prominent figure in Roman musical life during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[15]

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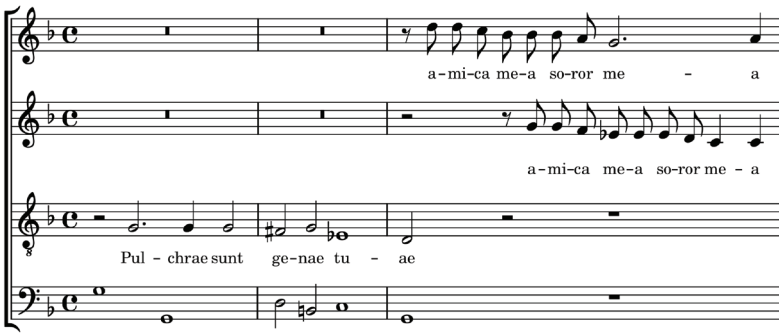
[11] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 19–20.

[12] Michael A. Carlson, *"Musica fatta spirituale": Aquilino Coppini, Claudio Monteverdi, and Madrigal Contrafacts in Early Seventeenth-Century Milani*, PhD. Diss. (Chapel Hill, 2023), 129–130. *Musica tolta da i madrigali di Claudio Monteverde e d'altri autori, a cinque, et a sei voci, e fatta spirituale da Aqulino Coppini* (Milano: Agostino Tradate, 1607), RISM B/I 1607/20. There is more: Ghizzolo's motet is placed first in the collection and is dedicated to the Pavese singer Lorenzo Calvi, who would repay the favour, so to speak, by including no fewer than seven of Ghizzolo's motets in the first two of his renowned sacred music anthologies published in 1621, 1624, 1626, and 1629 (RISM B/I: 1621/4, 1624/2, 1626/3, 1629/5).

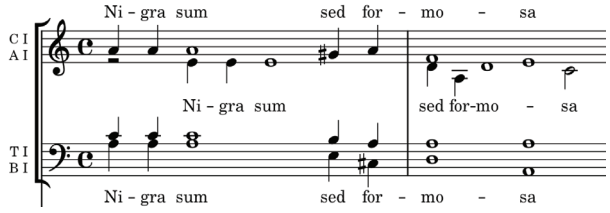
[13] Paolo Quagliati, *Motecta octonis et psalmus Dixit Dns. duodenis vocibus. Una cum basso ad organum* (Roma: Giovanni Battista Robletti, 1612), RISM A/I Q 8.

[14] In the book *Canzonette spirituali de diversi a tre voci* (Venezia: Alessandro Gardano, 1585, RISM B/I 1585/7), which Paolo Quagliati dedicated to Countess Giovanna Gaetana Orsini of Nerola, he included works by prominent Roman musicians such as Giovanni Maria Nanino, Luca Marenzio, and Ruggero Giovannelli alongside his own compositions. Quagliati, along with Giovanni Maria and Bernardino Nanino, Felice Anerio, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Luca Marenzio (to name just a few), and other composers, contributed to the collection of madrigals by musicians associated with the 'Compagnia di Roma' *Le gioie. Madrigali a cinque voci di diversi eccel.mi musici della Compagnia di Roma, novamente posti in luce* (Venezia: Ricciardo Amadino, 1589), RISM B/I 1598/7.

[15] Maurizio Pastori, *Giovanni Maria Nanino*; Anthony Newcomb, "The New Roman Style and Giovanni Maria Nanino", *The Journal of Musicology* 36/2 (Spring 2019): 167–194; Anthony Newcomb, "Giovanni Maria Nanino's Early Patrons in Rome", *The Journal of Musicology* 30/1 (Winter 2013): 103–127.




Example 1. Giovanni Ghizzolo, *Pulchrae sunt genae tuae*, from *Concerti all'uso moderno* (Milano, 1611), bb. 1–3

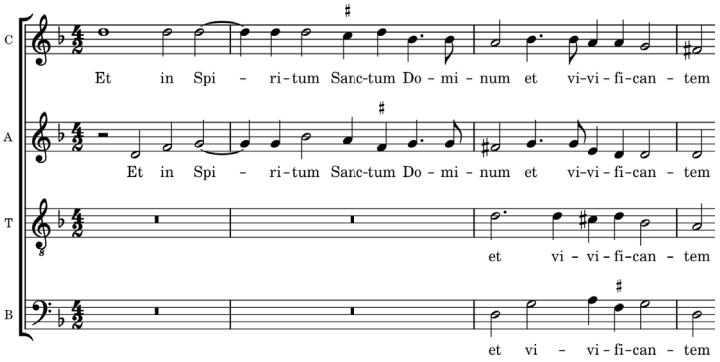



Example 2. Paolo Quagliati, *Nigra sum sed formosa*, from *Motecta octonis et psalmus Dixit Dominus duodenis vocibus* (Roma, 1612), bb. 1–2, only first choir (second choir is silent)

Finally, another category relevant to this discussion—and the primary focus of this article—is polyphony based on pre-existing compositions. There are at least three known works that overtly draw from Giovanni Maria Nanino's madrigal. The first is the *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* for sixteen voices by the Brescian composer Valerio Bona (fl. 1590–1619), featured in his collection *Messa e vespro a quattro chori*, printed in Venice in 1611.[16] The second example is the "Et incarnatus est super Morir non può il mio core" from the *Credo* of the *Missa Vestiva i colli* by the composer Giovanni Battista Sandoli from Trani (ex. 3), published in his first book of masses and motets for four to eight voices

[16] Valerio Bona, *Messa, e vespro a quattro chori, con il partito delli bassi ridotti in un solo basso generale, et doi continuati, per il primo, et secondo, terzo, et quarto choro. Commodi per li organisti, et maestri di capella, nelle occasioni delle loro musiche* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1611), RISM A/I B 3433.

(Napoli, 1613).[17] Lastly, there is an undated five-voice Magnificat "super Morir non puol [!] mio core" by the Dutch composer Jacob Flori (fl. 1571–1599), preserved in a manuscript currently held in Dillingen an der Donau, originating from the nearby abbey of Wettenhausen (ex. 4).[18]




Example 3. Giovanni Battista Sandoli, incipit of *Et in Spiritum super Morir non può il mio core* from the *Credo* of the *Missa Vestiva i colli* (1613)




Example 4. Jakob Flori, *Magnificat super Morir non puol* [sic] *mio core*, D-DI, ms. XV 487, ff. 75r–87r, bb. 1–3

[17] Giovanni Battista Sandoli, *Liber primus muttectorum, et missarum quatuor, quinque*, *sex, septem, et octo vocibus* (Napoli: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino, 1613), RISM A/I S 871. Sandoli's Mass was the subject of the paper "Un 'eccezionale' caso di intertestualità: la Missa ad imitationem Vestiva i colli di Giovanni Battista Sandoli (Napoli, 1613)" presented by Alberto Mammarella at the XXV Annual Meeting of the Società Italiana di Musicologia (SIdM) held in Bolzano from 19 to 21 October 2018.

[18] Dillingen an der Donau, Studienbibliothek (D-DI), manuscript XV 487, ff. 75r–87r. See <https://rism.online/sources/1001009071> accessed on 29/08/2024.

Among the cited examples, Valerio Bona's work stands out for its significant scale, both in terms of its scoring—comprising sixteen voices distributed across four choirs—and length, encompassing all the five parts of the *ordinarium missae*. The main reason for the lack of studies on this Mass is likely due to the collection's incomplete state—only eleven of the original sixteen voices have survived. However, as we will see, this does not prevent a closer examination of this long-forgotten musical gem.

## Valerio Bona (fl. 1590–1619)

The information currently available on Valerio Bona is mainly derived from the title pages of his printed works, which consistently specify his city of origin as Brescia. Born around 1560, he appears to have been a member of the Conventual Franciscans at least from 1590. By 1591, he was active as maestro di cappella at S. Francesco in Vercelli. He held similar positions at S. Francesco in Milan in 1596, in Monferrato in 1599, in Mondovì in 1601, and at S. Francesco in Brescia in 1611. From 1614, he was based at San Fermo Maggiore in Verona, where he served as 'Prefetto della musica' and remained in the city at least until 1619, the year his last work was published.[19] Further confirmation comes from Ottavio Rossi's *Elogi historici di bresciani illustri* (Brescia, 1620), which notes that in 1619 he was living in Verona.[20] There are no records of him beyond this date. The claim about his role as 'primo cantore' at the Basilica of Sant'Antonio in Padua in 1590 was first made by Sigismondo da Venezia in his *Biografia serafica* of 1846.[21] This assertion likely arises from a misreading of

[19] See Franco C. Ricci, "Bona, Valerio", in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (DBI), Vol. 11 (1969), online edn., <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/valerio-bona_(Dizionario-Biografico)>, accessed on 29/08/2024; the unsigned entry "Bona, Valerio (Buona)" in *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti* (DEUMM), diretto da Alberto Basso, serie: *Le biografie*, vol. I: A-Bur (Torino: UTET, 1985), p. 605; Josef-Horst Lederer, "Bona [Buona], Valerio", in *Oxford Music Online* (New Grove), 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.03474>, accessed on 29/08/2024; Id. "Bona, Valerio", in *MGG. Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Personenteil*, vol. 3: Bj-Cal (Kassel: Bärenreiter; Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000), coll. 312–313.

[20] Ottavio Rossi, *Elogi historici di bresciani illustri. Teatro di Ottavio Rossi* (Brescia: Bartolomeo Fontana, 1620), p. 500.

[21] Sigismondo Da Venezia, *Biografia serafica degli uomini illustri che fiorirono nel francescano istituto per santità, dottrina e dignità fino a' nostri giorni* (Venezia: Giovanni Battista Merlo, 1846), 510–511.

the title page of one of Bona's works—published that year in Milan—featuring litanies and other Marian compositions, as well as music for the feast days of St. Francis and St. Anthony (*Litaniae et aliae Laudes B. Mariae Virginis, nec non Divorum Francisci, ac Antonii Patavini*). It may have been further influenced by comments on Bona's singing abilities found in Leonardo Cozzando's *Libreria Bresciana* (Brescia, 1694),[22] and Juan de San Antonio's *Bibliotheca universa franciscana* (Madrid, 1733), which describes him as "Vercellensis Ecclesiae primus Cantor propter vocis dulcedinem in pretio habitus".[23] While this notion persists in modern biographical dictionaries (DBI, DEUMM, MGG),[24] it is not supported by recent research into the personnel of the Paduan chapel, where there is no trace of Valerio Bona's name or any evidence of such a position.[25]

Bona was a prolific composer, having published at least twenty-three individual collections: his op. 22, published in 1616, was the last to carry an opus number, while the last known collection dates from 1619. Of these, eleven sacred music collections survive, dating from 1590 to 1619, including one that only resurfaced in 2017 when it was auctioned.[26] Nine of them have come down to us incomplete. Additionally, three surviving collections of secular music, dating from 1592, 1599, and 1601, have come down to us, along with one collection of instrumental music (1614). Aside from a few compositions included in contemporary anthologies, the rest of his works remain dispersed.

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[22] Leonardo Cozzando, *Libreria bresciana. Prima, e seconda parte* (Brescia: Giovanni Maria Rizzardi, 1694), 199–200.

[23] Juan de San Antonio, *Bibliotheca universa Franciscana, sive alumnorum trium ordinum S.P.N. Francisci*, Vol. 6 (Madrid: Ex-Typographia Causae V. Matris de Agreda, 1733), p. 134.

[24] This detail is absent from the biographical entry in the New Grove Dictionary, despite being included in the MGG entry by the same author. The same information is also found in Andrea Tessier, "Del P. Valerio Bona o Buona e delle sue opere", *Miscellanea Francescana* V (1890): 52–54.

[25] See Maurizio Padoan, "Musici al Santo di Padova negli anni 1565–1600", in *Barocco Padano 7*, Atti del XV Convegno internazionale sulla musica italiana nei secoli XVII-XVIII, Milano, 14–16 luglio 2009, a cura di Alberto Colzani, Andrea Luppi e Maurizio Padoan (Como: A.M.I.S., 2012), 275–376.

[26] Valerio Bona, *Le Lamentationi con l'oratione di Ieremia profeta aggiontovi anco i Benedictus, et falsi bordoni per il Miserere a quattro voci* [...] *accomodate per sonare d'ogni sorte d'instromento musicale* (Venezia: Angelo Gardano, 1591), not listed in RISM. This book was listed as item no. 856 in the "Asta 22. Libri, Manoscritti & Autografi" auction held on 30–31 January 2017 in Florence at the Casa d'Aste Gonnelli, see <https://www.gonnelli.it/it/asta-0022/libri-manoscritti-e-autografi.asp>, accessed on 29/08/2024.

## Valerio Bona's *Messa e vespro a quattro chori* (Venice, 1611)

Valerio Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* is included in his collection *Messa e vespro a quattro chori*, printed in Venice in 1611.[27] The title page informs us that in that year, Bona was serving as maestro di cappella at the Church of S. Francesco in Brescia, the city's monastery of the Minor Conventuals. As the title suggests, the book also contains music for Vespers. The collection is dedicated to Guillaume d'Huges OFM Conv, who was then serving as Minister General, the highest office of the order.[28] In the undated dedicatory letter, written in the customary tone of praise, Bona does not mention any specific musical inclinations of the dedicatee, whom he describes as a "universal prelate by dignity and a protector of exceptional affection and kindness". Bona notes that he has experienced "almost daily" the dedicatee's "great kindness" and declares his obedience "not merely out of duty, but at your slightest nod". It is likely that the two came into contact during d'Huges's tenure as general of the order, a role that included overseeing the order's convents.

The collection includes one Mass, seven Vesper psalms, and two Magnificats, one of which is scored for twenty voices (five per choir). As reported in the index, the ten compositions make varied use of the four choirs (see tab. 1). In the same year, Bona also published a collection of *Dilettevoli introiti* for two choirs (Venice, 1611), which, unfortunately, has also come down to us incomplete.[29]

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[27] A full description of the print is given in Jeffrey Kurtzman – Anne Schnoebelen, *A Catalogue of Motets, Mass, Office, and Holy Week Music Printed in Italy: 1516–1770*, JSCM Instrumenta 2 (2014). See the pdf file 'Bona 1611 B3433', <https://sscm-jscm.org/instrumenta/vol-2/catalogue/Bona%201611%20B3433.pdf>, accessed on 29/08/2024.

[28] "Reverendissimo Patri Magistro Gulielmo Hugo Avinionensi, artium et sacrae theologiae doctori, universi Ordinis Minorum Conuentualium ministro generali". Born around 1564, he served as Minister General of the Conventual Franciscans from 1608 to 1612, the year he was appointed to the episcopal see of Embrun in France, which he held until his death in 1648. See *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi* [...] *ab anno 1198*, 8 vols., vol. IV: *A pontificatu Clementis PP. VIII (1592) usque ad pontificatum Alexandri PP. VII (1667)*, per Patritium Gauchat (Münster: sumpt. et typis Librariae Regensbergianae, 1935), p. 179.

[29] Valerio Bona, *Li dilettevoli introiti della messa a doi chori brevi, facili, et ariosi con il partito delli bassi modernamente composti, per cantare, et sonare in concerto nelle solennità maggiori dell'anno* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1611), RISM A/I B 3432.

Table 1. Contents of Valerio Bona's *Messa e vespro a quattro chori* (Venezia, 1611)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* | a quattro chori insieme |
| *Domine ad adiuvandum me* | a quattro chori insieme |
| *Confitebor tibi domine. Octavi toni* | primo et secondo choro dicono il primo verso in musica [i.e. *canto figurato*]; terzo et quarto choro a falso borsone insieme; *Gloria* a 16 |
| *Beatus vir qui timet Dominum. Quarti toni* | ogni choro canta un falso bordone a 4; il *Gloria Patri* lo dicono insieme a 16 |
| *Laudate pueri Dominum. Sexti toni* | primo et secondo choro cantano un versetto insieme; terzo et quarto cantano l'altro |
| *Lauda Hierusalem. Octavi toni* | a quattro chori, con alcuni falsi bordoni nel mezzo |
| *Magnificat. Primi toni* | a quattro chori |
| *Magnificat. Secundi toni* | a 20, cinque parte per choro |

Only eleven vocal partbooks from this collection survive, held in three different institutions across as many countries: the British Library in London, the Archive of the Cathedral of Segorbe, and the Historic Chapter Archive of Vigevano.[30] As stated on the title page, a partbook was also printed containing the "partito delli bassi ridotti in un solo basso generale, et doi continuati, per il primo, et secondo, terzo, et quarto choro. Commodi per li organisti, et maestri di capella, nelle occasioni delle loro musiche";[31] this, too, has been lost. Based on the description, it likely contained a three-stave score: one stave could have been a basso *seguente*, doubling the lowest note across all four choirs; another may have followed the first two choirs, with rests when they were not singing; and the third likely did the same for the third and fourth choirs. The organists and the maestro di cappella could either purchase additional copies of this partbook or extract the parts they needed by hand.[32]

[30] London, British Library (GB-Lbl), shelfmark C.284.a.: AI, CII, TIV; Segorbe, Catedral, Archivo y Biblioteca (E-SEG), shelfmark 100/6: TI (this partbook is not listed in RISM), TII, BII, TIII, BIII, AIV, BIV; Vigevano, Biblioteca Archivio storico capitolare (I-VIGsa), unknown shelfmark, exemplar unkown to RISM: CI.

[31] "Partito of the basses, reduced to a single general bass and two thorough basses for the first and second, and [for] the third and fourth choir. Convenient for organists and maestri di cappella for their performances".

[32] In his *Messa, Salmi, et Motetti* for eight voices (Venice, 1615), Ottavio Burlini advises the "Virtuosi cantanti" to make additional copies of the basso continuo to accompany the violin

Although the loss of six out of seventeen partbooks, including the 'partito', may seem discouraging, the surviving ones are fortunately almost evenly distributed (see tab. 2). We have three voices per choir, except for the third choir, where only two parts remain, and all voice types are represented: two cantus, two altus, four tenors, and three basses. This distribution provides a solid foundation for examining various aspects of the composition, such as its structure and texture. Moreover, the surviving voices reveal numerous borrowings from the model, offering valuable clues that help us infer how the missing parts might have been conceived, which is essential for both analysis and reconstruction efforts.

Table 2. Surviving vocal partbooks of Valerio Bona's *Messa e vespro a quattro chori* (Venezia, 1611)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st choir | C | A | T | - |
| 2nd choir | C | - | T | B |
| 3rd choir | - | - | T | B |
| 4th choir | - | A | T | B |

Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* is his only known example of what has been called a 'parody Mass' or 'imitation Mass', following Lewis Lockwood's reflections on the topic.[33] More neutrally termed a 'polyphonically derived Mass',[34] this type of composition has recently been referred to as a 'T-Mass' by John Milsom, with the 'T' standing for 'transfer', 'transformation', and

with another instrument other than the organ. See Ottavio Burlini, *Messa, Salmi, et Motetti Concertati a Otto Voci in due Chori col Basso continuo per l'Organo, & una parte per un Violino per chi n'ha commodità* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1615), RISM A/I B 5025. The presence of additional copies of the 'partitura' is documented in inventories and purchase notes from the period. See Gabriele Taschetti, "Libri di musica di alcuni maestri di cappella della Basilica di Sant'Antonio a Padova (c1600–1623)", *Fonti musicali italiane* 29 (2024), in print.

[33] See Lewis Lockwood's discussion on both terms in Lewis Lockwood, "On 'Parody' as Term and Concept in 16th-Century Music", in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, Jan La Rue (ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 560–575.

[34] See how the term is used in David Crook, "The Sacred and the Secular in Post-Tridentine Church Music: De Rore, Lasso, and the Magnificat *Da le belle contrade*", *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 10/1 (2018): 45–72.

'transfusion'.[35] Altogether, these terms highlight the practice of musical borrowing and reworking. However, before delving into a deeper analysis of the Mass itself, it is crucial to have at least a general understanding of its model: Giovanni Maria Nanino's popular madrigal.

## The model

The following lines aim to provide a general overview of the musical material in Giovanni Maria Nanino's madrigal to better understand the relationship between Valerio Bona's Mass and its model. For the sake of clarity and conciseness, the musical examples related to the madrigal include only the voices necessary to convey the basic musical ideas, with key passages (motives or counterpoint) highlighted in red for emphasis.

The madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core* can be divided into seven segments, each representing a distinct musical idea. Some of these segments can be further split into two parts, with the second part typically including the cadential phase. Segments 1 through 4 make up the first part of the madrigal (A), which sets the first four lines of the poetic text to music. The remaining segments, 5 through 7, set the final couplet of the poem and form the second part of the madrigal (B). This B part is then repeated with some variations, resulting in an ABB' structure.

### Segment 1, measures 1–3 (ex. 5.1)

The madrigal opens with a solo entry by the Quinto, singing "Morir non può'l mio core" with a distinctive *soggetto*, featuring a chromatic inflection on the initial note (D - C sharp - D) and a descending semitone interval at the end (B flat - A). The same soggetto is then presented by the Canto at the same pitch (high D), this time supported by the lower voices (as notated in the example 5.1). The bass line accompanying the soggetto, moving in contrary motion and in perfect homorhythm, will be crucial for identifying quotations of segment 1 within Valerio Bona's Mass, especially when the soggetto is not found in any of the surviving voices.

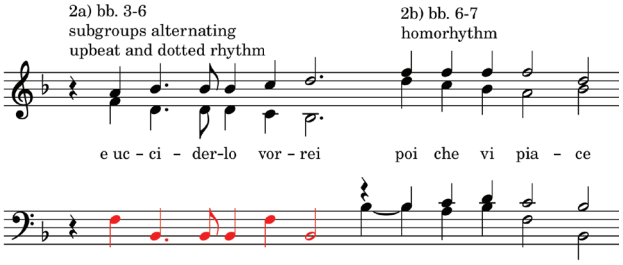
[35] These terms are discussed in John Milsom, "The T-Mass: *quis scrutatur*?", *Early Music* 46/2 (2018), 319–331: 320.




Example 5.1

## Segment 2, measures 3–7 (ex. 5.2)

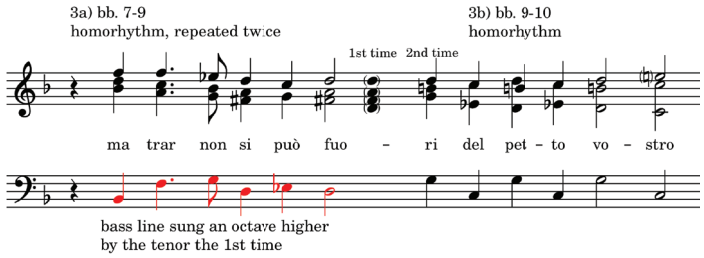
The first part of this segment (2a) introduces a lively off-beat dotted rhythm, with alternating subgroups of two or three voices singing "e ucciderlo vorrei" in homorhythm. The bass presents a *clausula bassizans* twice, each time reaching the same goal tone. This musical idea recurs throughout the Mass, creating moments of lively interplay between the choirs. The second part of the segment (2b) sets the words "poi che vi piace" to music and features the full choir cadence associated with the musical idea from the first part (2a).




Example 5.2

## Segment 3, measures 7–10 (ex. 5.3)

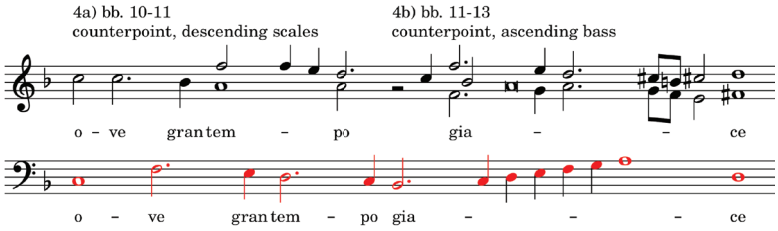
Segment 3 is divided into two parts. Part 3a sets the words "ma trar non si può fuori" to music, with the voices moving in chordal blocks and homorhythm, featuring an off-beat dotted rhythm. This music gesture is presented twice: first without the bass, with the initial repetition ending in a *mi* cadence and the second in an authentic cadence. The repetition is an integral part of this musical idea. Part 3b sets the words "del petto vostro", with its cadential movement connected to the musical idea from part 3a.




Example 5.3

## Segment 4, measures 10–13 (ex. 5.4)

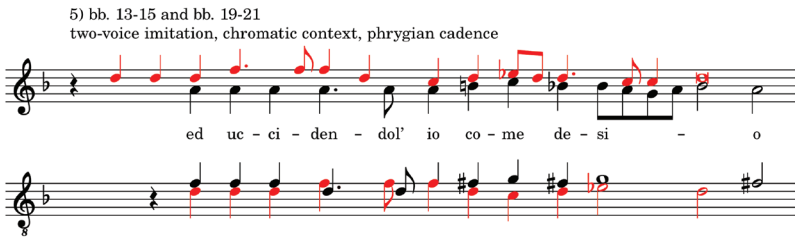
In segment 4, the texture shifts from chordal to contrapuntal. In the first part (4a), the voices introduce descending scalar fragments with the words "ove gran tempo", while in the second part (4b), the bass ascends in a scalar motion leading to a *clausula bassizans* and a cadence in the other voices on the word "giace". This segment concludes the first part of the poetic text, marking the madrigal's first strongly conclusive cadence and the end of section A.




Example 5.4

## Segment 5, measures 13–15 (first time) and 19–21 (second time) (ex. 5.5)

Segment 5 sets the words "ed uccidendol'io" to music and marks the start of section B, corresponding to the final couplet of the poetic text. This four-part passage (with the bass silent) features the lowest voice imitating the highest an octave below and a minim apart. The inner voices follow the rhythm of the lowest voice and incorporate some chromatic movement. The segment concludes with a *mi* cadence on D with suspended third and fifth. Together with segments 6 and 7, this segment is also included in the repetition of section B.




Example 5.5

## Segment 6, measures 15–17 (first time) and 21–24 (second time) (ex. 5.6)

Segment 6 sets to music the words "so che morreste voi" and features a syncopated two-voice counterpoint over a held or repeated note in the lowest voice, functioning like a pedal. The other voices are either free or silent. This module (two-voice syncopated counterpoint over a pedal) is repeated twice at different pitches in measures 15–17: first over a held D, and then a fourth above, over a held G. In the second occurrence of segment 6 (measures 21–24), a third repetition of the module is added at another pitch, over a held C.

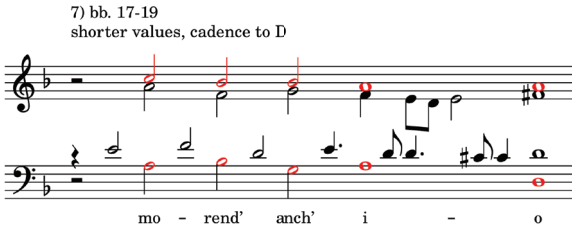



Example 5.6

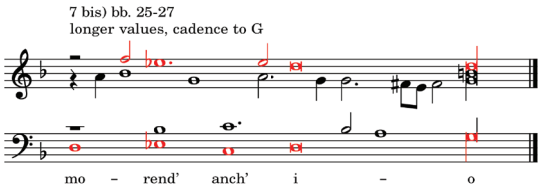
## Segment 7, measures 17–19 (ex. 5.7); Segment 7bis, measures 25–27 (ex. 5.7bis)

Segment 7 sets the final three words of the poetic text, "morend'anch'io". The bass follows the typical motion of ascending by a second and descending by a third, leading to a *bassizans*, while the highest voice features a descending *sol-fa-mi* line (C-B flat-A the first time and F-E flat-D the second time) in counterpoint with the bass, ending a fifth above it. The other voices move within

this framework, freely imitating the 'up a second, down a third' motion. The two repetitions of this segment (bb. 17–19 and bb. 25–27) are distinct enough for the second to labelled 7bis: segment 7 concludes with a cadence on D, while segment 7bis features doubled note values and a cadence on G. According to Anthony Newcomb, the rewriting of the final cadence in this madrigal represents "a fine example of Nanino's bass-driven harmonic control".[36]




Example 5.7




Example 5.7bis

## The Mass

Valerio Bona's Mass *transforms* and *transfers* the musical material of Nanino's madrigal into a completely different medium.[37] Beyond the changes in context, form and lyrics—from a single-movement madrigal with its own poetic text to the five sections of the *ordinarium missae*, each with its own liturgical text—the

[36] Anthony Newcomb, "The New Roman Style", p. 179.

[37] The verbs 'transform' and 'transfer' are used here in reference to John Milsom's discussion on polyphony based on polyphonic models. "As I see it, 'parody Masses' are fundamentally concerned with intentional acts of transferring and transforming text-bearing polyphonic ideas, and usually also with the transfusion of concepts from model to Mass". See Milsom, "T-Mass", p. 320.

major differences include the shift from a five-voice composition to a work for sixteen voices and organ(s) divided into four choirs, with frequent passages for four, eight, and twelve voices. Another significant structural difference lies in the tonal space: the madrigal, which presents the tonal type g2-♭-G, can be interpreted as a composition in the first mode transposed,[38] while the Mass, with the tonal type c1-♮-D, is in the first mode untransposed and occupies a lower and broader range.

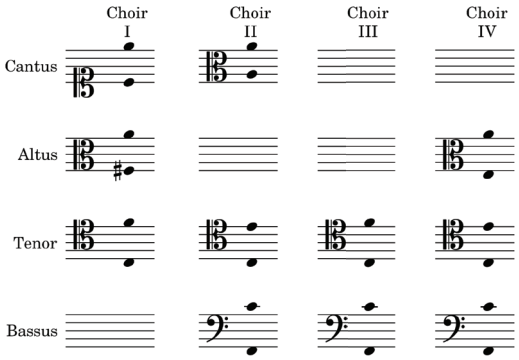


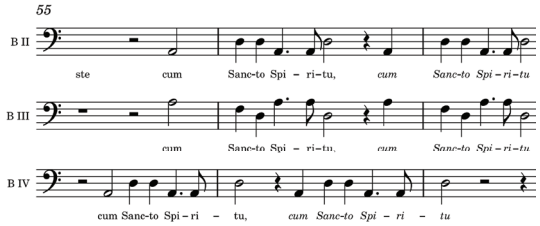

Figure 1. Clefs and ranges in Valerio Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core*

Despite the absence of five voices, the different cleffing of the first and second choirs is still observable: the first choir uses standard clefs, with cantus in C1, while the second features the typical *voci pari* cleffing, with the cantus part in the C3 clef (see fig. 1).[39] The difference in range between the first two cantus parts is also evident, with the second cantus often moving below the first

[38] In addition to the three elements indicated by the tonal type (the high clef system, the soft hexachord, and the *finalis* G), the modal attribution is based on the tenor range G2 - G3 and the frequent cadences to D.

[39] A similar strategy is employed, for example, by another composer from Brescia, Antonio Mortaro. In a collection of masses, psalms, motets, and Magnificats for three choirs, first published in 1599 when he was active in Milan and reprinted in 1608 after his return to Brescia, the title pages of the second choir's vocal partbooks bear the indication "secondo choro, a voci pari". The cantus of the second choir is generally notated in the C3 clef. A more direct comparison can be made with the *Magnificat primi toni* included in Mortaro's collection, which features the following cleffing: choir I (CCTB): C1-C1-C3-C4; choir II (CATB) "a voci pari": C3-C4-C4-F4; choir III (CATB): C1-C3-C4-F4. See Antonio Mortaro, *Messa, salmi, motetti et Magnificat a tre chori* (Milano: erede di Simon Tini e Francesco Besozzi, 1599, RISM A/I M 3741) and its later reprint (Venezia: Ricciardo Amadino, 1608, RISM A/I M 3742).

altus in many passages. If, as it seems, Valerio Bona differentiated the first two choirs, one as a high(er) choir and the other as a low(er) choir, the lack of third and fourth cantus parts makes it difficult to determine whether this distinction extended to the third and fourth choirs. In fact, the four surviving tenor parts have a similar range, with those in the odd-numbered choirs extending only slightly higher. Likewise, the altus in the fourth choir has a range only slightly lower than that of the first choir. The three surviving bass parts share the same range, but in most cadences within polychoral passages, the basses of the second and fourth choirs tend to move in the lower part of the ambitus, while the bass of the third choir generally remains in the upper part (see ex. 6).




Example 6. *Gloria*, bb. 55–57, only the staves of BII, BIII and BIV

The choice of using four choral ensembles, each with its own distinctive timbre quality due to their different ranges and, possibly, different spatial placement, allowed Valerio Bona to fully explore his 'sonic creativity'.[40] This setup enabled him to alternate and combine choirs, assigning various polyphonic textures (e.g., strict or animated homorhythm vs. imitation), giving him the flexibility to either highlight contrasts or create smooth transitions between different overall sonorities. The *Kyrie* is an excellent example of Bona's polychoral technique, showcasing various solutions in both the handling of choral forces and the borrowing of musical material from the pre-existing model.

[40] The concept of 'sonic creativity' ('creatività sonora') in polychoral music is discussed in Daniele Filippi, "Riscritture policorali e creatività sonora in Palestrina e Victoria / Polychoral rewritings and sonic creativity in Palestrina and Victoria", *Polifonie* 8/2–3 (2008): 63–182; Id., "Rome, Madrid, Warsaw: polychorality and sonic creativity in the music of Tomas Luis De Victoria and Giovanni Francesco Anerio", in *La musica policorale in Italia e nell'Europa centro-orientale fra Cinque e Seicento / Polychoral Music in Italy and in Central-Eastern Europe at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century*, Aleksandra Patalas and Marina Toffetti (eds.) (Venezia: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 2012), 229–279 (TRA.D.I.MUS., Studi e monografie, 1).

In the *Kyrie*, the composer gradually introduces the musical forces throughout the three subsections, carefully pacing the entries of the choirs and only bringing in the full sixteen-voice ensemble at the end. Valerio Bona's handling of this build-up is remarkable. The first *Kyrie* is sung by the first choir in four voices, as indicated by the rubric "Primo Choro a 4". The *Christe* expands to eight voices, initially alternating between the third and fourth choirs, which join in the final episode, creating the first true eight-voice passage. Finally, the second *Kyrie*, marked "a 16", showcases a variety of approaches. It begins with alternation between the first and second choirs, then shifts to a dynamic exchange between pairs of choirs (third and fourth vs. first and second), with lively rhythmic interplay. This exchange concludes with an echo-like effect, as the eight-voice cadence of the first and second choirs is repeated in four voices by the third and fourth choirs, gradually thinning the texture and potentially creating a spatial effect. Finally, a sudden, powerful sixteen-voice entrance drives toward the final cadence. The other parts of the Mass also include noteworthy moments of alternation between vocal subgroups and *tutti* sections, but none feature subsections specifically labelled as 'a 4', 'a 8', or 'a 16' as seen in the *Kyrie*.

The *Kyrie* is notable for another reason as well. At the very beginning, it features the only nearly literal quotation of the madrigal. While it is typical for Masses based on pre-existing polyphonic works to include references to the model's *exordium* at the start of the first and even of other subsequent movements (and sometimes subsections), this case stands out since the first eleven measures (out of thirteen) of the first *Kyrie* closely mirror the first eleven measures of the madrigal (segments 1 to 4), incorporating over half of its musical material. Aside from the reduction from five to four voices, the transposition down a fourth, and the text replacement, the quotation shows minimal elaboration and is so precise that, with appropriate adjustments, the missing bass part can be easily reinstated by inserting Nanino's original bass line up to measure 11 (see example 7).[41] For the cadential phase in the final two

[41] In this example, a transposed version of Nanino's original bass part from the madrigal has been used to replace the missing bass in Bona's Mass. The original poetic text has been retained in the bass to highlight the accuracy of the musical quotation. In this and subsequent music examples, the added voice is shown in a lighter grey compared to the surviving parts (in black). Above the staff, boxes indicate the corresponding segments of the madrigal, and notes highlighted in red represent the distinctive musical ideas within each segment.

measures, Bona may have drawn inspiration from segments 7 and 7bis of the madrigal (i.e. the final cadence), as suggested by the presence of the *sol-fa-mi* line (C-B flat-A) in the cantus part.




Example 7. Valerio Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core: Kyrie*, bb. 1–13

The presence of a substantial, almost literal quotation from the model at the very beginning of the *Kyrie*, with the duration and order of the musical ideas unchanged, can be seen both as a homage to Nanino and as a way to present listeners with a clear statement of the madrigal before delving into more complex elaborations.[42] The fact that four lines of the original poetic

[42] From one perspective, this tackles the root of a fundamental issue in the modern performance of these works, as John Milsom also highlighted: "I cannot see the point of performing or recording a T-Mass today without first presenting its model to the listener". See John Milsom, "Attending (to) Masses in the long 16th century", *Early Music* 48/2 (2020), 251–257: 256.

text are replaced with just the two words "Kyrie eleison" makes it unlikely that any "transfusion of concepts from model to Mass" is taking place.[43] Instead, it suggests that the focus is entirely on the music itself. Additionally, the quoted material, which roughly corresponds to part A of the madrigal, plays a significant role in the overall structure of the Mass, while most of the material from part B is cited sparingly, appearing in only in one movement. Hence, this quotation could also be interpreted as a programmatic statement, signalling the musical material that will dominate the Mass. Finally, the fact that this Mass, included in a collection dedicated to the highest authority of the Conventual Franciscans, begins with such a clear and extensive quotation from Giovanni Maria Nanino's madrigal underscores how the practice of composing sacred music based on secular repertoire was accepted, despite the directives introduced by the Council of Trent.[44]

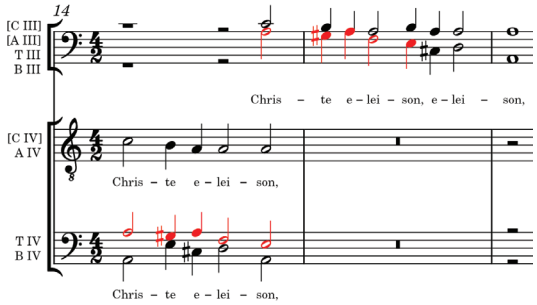
Except for the first *Kyrie*, the model is used in a more reworked fashion throughout the rest of the Mass. The following paragraphs illustrate some examples of how Bona treated this material.[45]

Segment 1, featuring the iconic soggetto "Morir non può 'l mio core", recurs frequently throughout the entire work. At times, the soggetto is presented twice, as in the madrigal—first as a solo, then in counterpoint—while at other times, it is sung directly in a polyphonic context with all the surviving voices of the active choirs in strict or animated homorhythm. A clear example of this occurs in the opening bars of the *Christe*, in a call-and-response between the fourth and third choirs (ex. 8).

[43] Milsom, "T-Mass", p. 320.

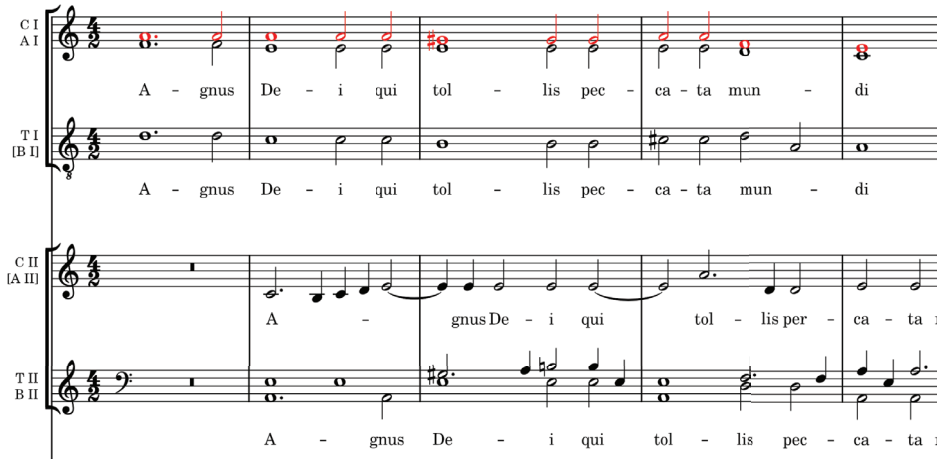
[44] On this topic see Crook, "The Sacred and the Secular"; Jeffrey Kurtzman, "The Effect on Italian Liturgical Music of the Council of Trent (1562), the *Breviarium Romanum* (1568) and the *Caeremoniale episcoporum* (1600)", in Id., *Studies in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Italian Sacred Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), chapter 9 (Variorum Collected Studies Series).

[45] For a brief description of each of the seven segments of the madrigal, see the discussion earlier in this article.




Example 8. *Kyrie*, bb. 14–15

Sometimes the soggetto is stated with longer note values, adding a sense of gravity, as seen at the beginning of the *Agnus Dei* (ex. 9). Other times, it is almost hidden in an inner part, embellished with diminutions, within a full-ensemble passage, as in bars 27–29 of the *Gloria* (ex. 10). Here, the reference to Segment 1 is noticeable more through the harmonic and contrapuntal context, especially as the basses (second and fourth) reproduce the bass line from Nanino's madrigal, rather than the soggetto itself.




Example 9. *Agnus Dei*, bb. 1–5




Example 10. *Gloria*, bb. 27–29, only the staves of TII, BII, BIII and BIV

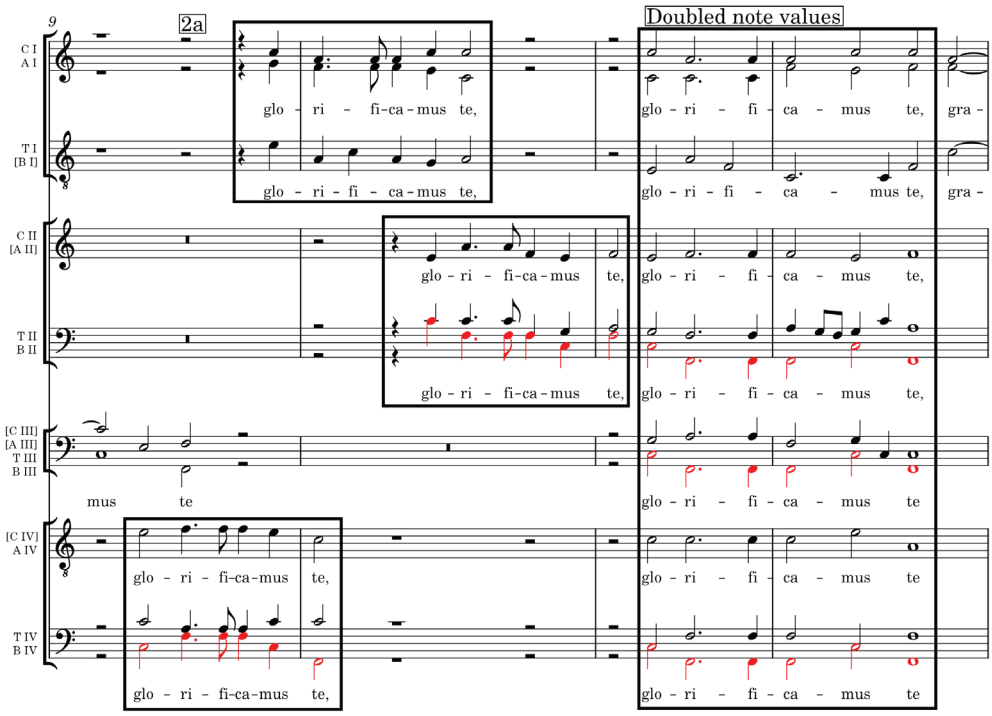
Several occurrences of segment 1 are less evident due to the absence of some voices but can still be identified through the movement of the bass or the overall harmonic context. In such cases, like the four-voice passage in measures 42–44 of the *Credo* (ex. 11), it is likely that one of the missing parts was singing the soggetto (e.g. the reconstructed cantus in the following example).




Example 11. *Credo*, bb. 42–44 (reconstructed parts are shown in grey)

Segment 2, characterised by a lively dotted rhythm, is employed in all the Mass movements except the *Agnus Dei*. Typically, it drives dynamic exchanges between the choirs, as seen in bars 9–10 of the *Gloria*, where three choirs alternate in singing "glorificamus te" (ex. 12). Immediately following this rhythmic exchange, in bars 11–12 the entire ensemble repeats the same rhythmic pattern with doubled note values, emphasising the same words in a triumphant fashion, creating a kind of *amplificatio* (ex. 12). This can be seen as the composer's

attempt to musically express the concept of glory. However, the possibility of a conceptual link between the liturgical text and the original portion of the poetic text associated with this musical gesture in the madrigal, i.e. "e ucciderlo vorrei", seems untenable. A somewhat similar situation occurs in the *Credo*, where the same material is used to set the words "sub Pontio Pilato", creating an unexpected dance-like rhythm. This results in a noticeable disconnect between the concept expressed by the liturgical text and its musical rendering, a topic that will be further explored later. In other contexts, such as at the end of the *Gloria*, the composer employs this harmonic-rhythmic idea at different pitches, without retaining the C-F-C-F bass progression (see previous example 6).




Example 12. *Gloria*, bb. 9–12

The first part of segment 3, which consists of two repetitions of the same series of chordal blocks leading to a phrygian cadence, appears at various points in the Mass. For instance, in bars 15–17 of the *Gloria*, on the words "propter

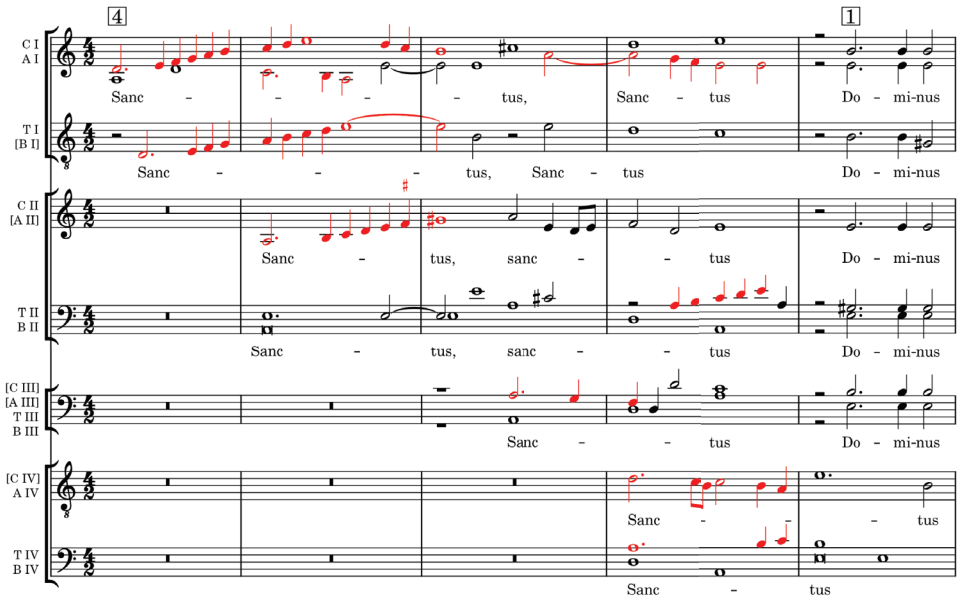
magnam gloriam tuam", the two repetitions are distributed between two choirs (ex. 13). This is followed in the subsequent bars 18–19 by a reference to the second part of segment 3, i.e. the cadential phase (see the G-D-G-D-G motion in the basses), presented with all surviving voices in full homorhythm (ex. 10). The composer also introduces a lively dotted rhythm, similar to that of segment 2 and 3a, possibly creating an internal reference to the "glorificamus te" in the previous bars 11–12 (ex. 12). The reconstruction of the first choir's bass in bars 15–16 (grey notes in ex. 13) draws on both the profile of the second bass one measure later and the bass line from the corresponding segment of the model, illustrating how the process of reconstructing this Mass could rely on a combination of internal and external elements.




Example 13. *Gloria*, bb. 15–19

Segment 4 consists in a contrapuntal texture created by combining ascending and descending scalar fragments. While certain sections of the Mass clearly reference this segment, Valerio Bona also employs similar contrapuntal

devices in ways that diverge from the solutions found in Nanino's madrigal. A prime example is found in the opening four bars of the *Sanctus*, which are infused with scalar fragments as the four choirs enter one by one (ex. 14). At first glance, this might appear to be a display of compositional skill, particularly since it is the only movement in the entire Mass that does not commence with material drawn from segment 1 of the madrigal. However, it aligns with developments that follow a few bars later. Indeed, near the cadence of the first *Osanna* in bars 20–23, we encounter the Mass's sole sixteen-voice reworking of segment 4, highlighted by the unison movement of the three surviving basses (ex. 15). When viewed alongside the clear reference in bars 20–23, the more subtle allusion in the opening episode seems to be part of a deliberate strategy to establish internal coherence within the movement.




Example 14. *Sanctus*, bb. 1–5

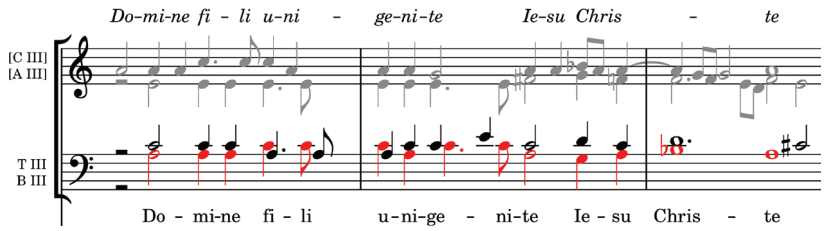



Example 15. *Sanctus*, bb. 20–24

Quotations of segments 5 and 6 of the madrigal appear exclusively within the *Gloria*. The first appearance of segment 5 is somewhat prepared by an orderly sequence of references to segments 2, 3, and 4. However, its use is part of a more complex and intriguing design. The first instance, in bars 24–26, sets the words "Domine fili unigenite Iesu Christe", with the phrygian cadence aligning precisely with "Iesu Christe" (ex. 16). Later, it serves as the incipit of the second part of the movement ("Qui tollis peccata mundi", bars 32–33), followed by references to segments 6 and 7, and is then used to set the words "suscipe deprecationem nostram", with three repetitions across the choirs. It is noteworthy that both "Iesu Christe" and "suscipe deprecationem nostram" are key moments in this section of the *ordinarium*, during which the celebrant is required to bow his head.[46] The composer thus creates a parallel between the

[46] "dicit, si dicendum est, Gloria in excelsis Deo: et prosequitur iunctis manibus: cum dicit Adoramus te, et Iesu Christe, et Suscipe deprecationes, inclinat caput: et in fine dicens Cum sancto spiritu, signat se" ([The celebrant] says, if it is to be said, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*: and continues with hands joined: when saying *Adoramus te*, *Iesu Christe*, and *Suscipe deprecationes*,

musical gesture (segment 5 with its phrygian cadence) and the ritual gesture (head bowing), highlighting the theological significance of the corresponding portions of the liturgical text. Once again, any conceptual link between the original and the new texts, if present, remains of secondary importance at best.




Example 16. *Gloria*, bb. 24–26

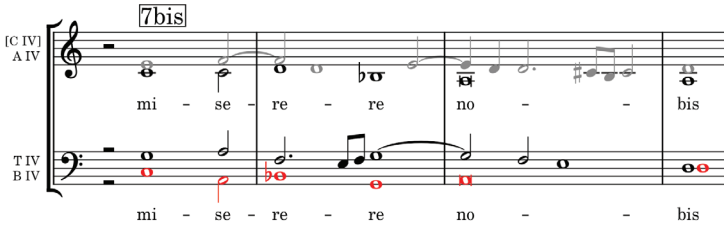
Segment 6, which I could only identify once in the Mass, appears in the second part of the *Gloria*, specifically in bars 34 to 36. It is preceded by a quotation of Segment 5 (bb. 32–33) and followed by a quotation of Segment 7 (bb. 36–38).

Segment 7, along with its variant 7bis—the final episode of the madrigal and its repetition—seems to have been employed with a specific intention. Valerio Bona used this material to set three of the four occurrences of the words "miserere nobis" within the texts of the Mass Ordinary: once in the *Gloria* (ex. 17) and twice in the *Agnus Dei* (ex. 18 and 19).[47] This establishes a connection between the musical gesture and the text that extends beyond the previously noted internal coherence, creating a cross-movement reference

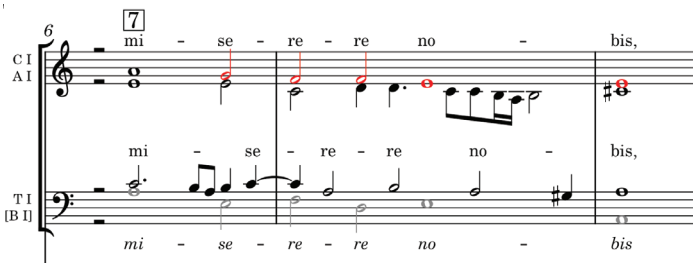
bows the head: and at the end, while saying *Cum sancto spiritu*, makes the sign of the cross). See *Missale Romanum: editio princeps (1570)*, edizione anastatica, introduzione e appendice a cura di Manlio Sodi, Achille Maria Triacca, presentazione di Carlo M. Martini (Città del Vaticano: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1998), p. 295. In the *Gloria* of Bona's Mass, at the words "adoramus te" (bb. 7–9), there are no references to segment 5. Instead, longer note values are used compared to those employed for the other invocations ("laudamus", "benedicimus", and "glorificamus"). One might see a less direct reference to Segment 5 in the second occurrence of the words "Iesu Christe" (bars 52–55): the top part features a similar profile, but at another pitch and with longer note values, syncopated counterpoint against the lower parts, and a cadence that includes a suspended third.

[47] The first occurrence, in bars 34–36 of the *Gloria*, is the only instance where this material was not used. Instead, this passage features material from segment 6, immediately followed by a reference to segment 7. It is also worth noting that the possible borrowing of segment 7 at the end of the first *Kyrie* sets the words "Kyrie eleison", which, in a way, can be seen as analogous to "miserere nobis".

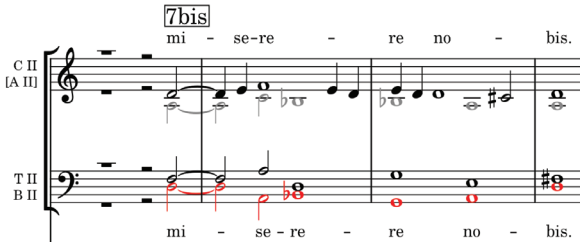
between the *Gloria* and the *Agnus*. All three instances of "miserere nobis" are scored for four voices: in the *Gloria*, by the fourth choir, and in the *Agnus Dei*, by the first and second choirs, respectively. In each instance, the surviving voices either feature the *sol-fa-mi* line or the bass's 'up a second, down a third' movement, which makes them easily identifiable. However, the three episodes sound distinct from one another, as Bona utilises different choirs and alternates between segments 7 and 7bis. Notably, as in the madrigal, only segment 7bis concludes with a cadence on the *finalis*, in this case D, while the goal tone in segment 7 is the *repercussa*, in this case A.




Example 17. *Gloria*, bb. 46–49




Example 18. *Agnus Dei*, bb. 6–8




Example 19. *Agnus Dei*, bb. 12–15

A broad overview of the Mass can help us shed light on some of Valerio Bona's structural choices. Examining the Mass as a whole (see fig. 2), it is evident that Bona consistently incorporates quotations from the first segment of the madrigal at the beginning of each movement, with the exception of the *Sanctus*. Additionally, material from segment 1 is present at the start of all three subsections of the *Kyrie* and at the beginning of the *Crucifixus*, the second subsection of the *Credo*.[48] In contrast, the final segment is notably absent as a concluding element in any of the movements or subsections, with only a subtle reference possibly found at the end of the first *Kyrie*. The last citation of the madrigal within the Mass corresponds to segment 1 and is found in the final part of the *Agnus Dei*, where it sets the words "Dona nobis pacem". It is significant that in this last movement, the composer draws exclusively from segments 1 and 7, effectively combining the opening and closing episodes of the madrigal.

In the scheme shown in figure 2, there are 56 boxes indicating the presence of material derived from the model. Of these, 30—just over half—appear within sequences that maintain the same order as in the madrigal. Some sequences are longer than others, such as those in the first *Kyrie* and the *Crucifixus*, which incorporate the first four segments, or the sequence in the first part of the *Gloria*, which includes segments 2 through 5. Notably, five of these nine sequences conclude with segment 4, which, as previously discussed, corresponds to the end of part A of the madrigal, marked by the first cadence with a strong sense of closure. This further underscores the dominant role that part A plays in the overall structure of the Mass. On the contrary, part B of the madrigal appears in its entirety only in the *Gloria*, where it is used at the beginning of the second part, i.e. "qui tollis peccata mundi".

[48] Even the *Benedictus*, which begins after a general pause (ex. 15), and therefore does not constitute a subsection *de iure*, is based on segment 1.

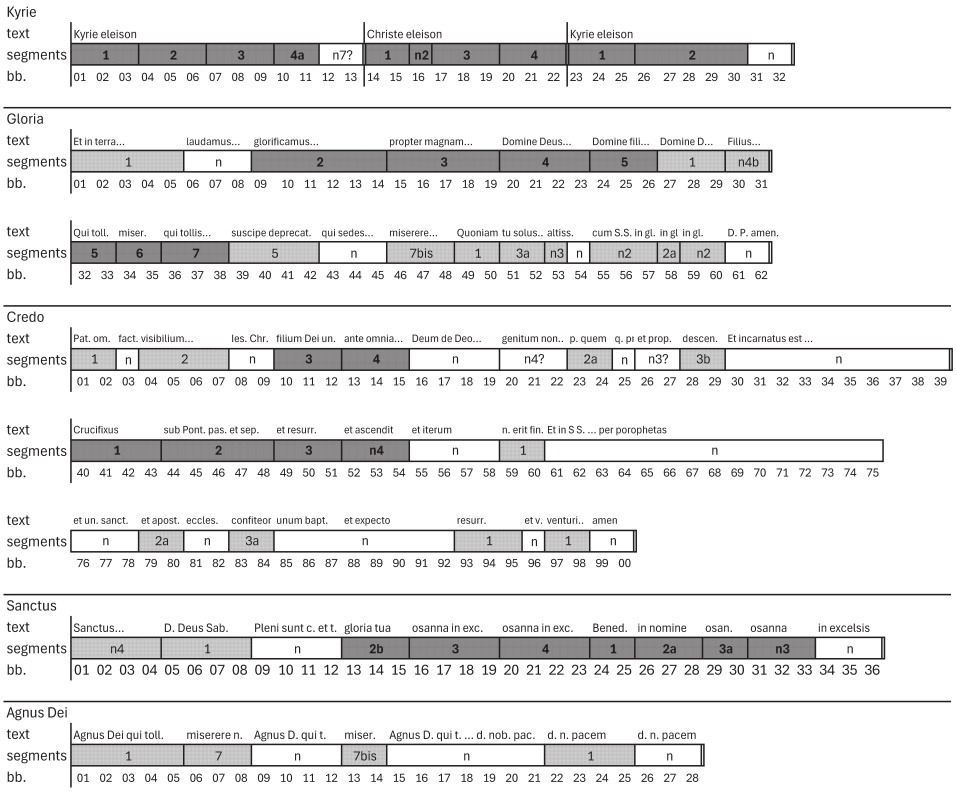



Figure 2. Borrowed and new material in Valerio Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core*

Borrowings are indicated with a light grey background and labelled with the corresponding segment number, or a specific part of it (e.g., 2a). New material, or passages that cannot be definitively linked to any segment of the madrigal, are marked with the letter 'n' (indicating "new" or "not sure") and have a white background. If the reworking renders the material less recognisable, the segment number is preceded by 'n', and if the correspondence is uncertain, it is followed by a question mark. A brief summary of the corresponding text appears above the blocks, while bar numbers are shown below. Dark grey sections highlight passages where the sequence of borrowed material matches the original order in the madrigal.

As indicated by the white boxes in figure 2, the *Credo* features the highest amount of new material. The table below provides details on the number of bars in each movement of the Mass, the percentage of material derived from the model, the percentage of new material, and the number of madrigal segments borrowed out of the seven identified in the present segmentation (tab. 3). Given the absence of some voices, these figures are necessarily partial. For instance, it is particularly surprising that such a key section of the *ordinarium* as the *Et incarnatus*, during which the celebrant was required to kneel,[49] is not marked by any elements derived from the model. Only the resurfacing of the missing partbooks could confirm whether the composer introduced borrowings at this point, particularly at the words "Ex Maria Virgine", where the harmonic and contrapuntal context of the surviving voices could potentially accommodate a quotation of the most significant motive in the entire Mass, namely the soggetto "morir non può 'l mio core" (see [CIII]-[AIII] staff in ex. 20).

Table 3. Percentage of borrowed and new material in Valerio Bona's *Missa morir non può 'l mio core*

| | Overall length (bb.) | Borrowed material (% of the total length) | New material (% of the total length) | Borrowed model's segments (out of 7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyrie | 32 | 88% | 12% | 4 |
| Gloria | 62 | 85% | 15% | 7 |
| Credo | 100 | 42% | 58% | 4 |
| Sanctus | 36 | 81% | 19% | 4 |
| Agnus Dei | 28 | 50% | 50% | 2 |

[49] "Dicit si dicendum est, Credo in unum Deum: et prosequitur iunctis manibus. Quando autem ventum est ad illud, Et incarnatus est, genuflectit usque dum dicitur, Cruficixus etiam pro nobis. In fine ad Et vitam venturi, signat se signo crucis" ([The celebrant] says, if it is to be said, *Credo in unum Deum*: and continues with hands joined. However, when reaching *Et incarnatus est*, genuflects until *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis* is said. At the end, at *Et vitam venturi*, makes the sign of the cross). See *Missale Romanum*, p. 296.




Example 20. *Credo*, bb. 30–35

The fact that more than half of the borrowings retain the same order as in the original model suggests that the composer prioritised musical continuity, adhering to the sequence of the madrigal. Nevertheless, certain points in the Mass hint at an intentional "transfusion of concepts". The most emblematic cases appear in the *Credo*, the section of the ordinary that most prominently displays its own internal narrative. One such instance occurs in bars 13–16 (ex. 21), where the text "ante omnia saecula" ("*eternally* begotten Son" in the English translation) is set to the material from segment 4 of the madrigal, which corresponds to the poetic line "ove gran tempo giace" (where it has lain for a long time). Both texts evoke ideas of something rooted in a distant, even infinite past and a state that has persisted for a long time, two overlapping concepts that are united through the same musical material.




Example 21. *Credo*, bb. 12–16

The second instance occurs at the beginning of the *Crucifixus*, bars 40–51. Here, the first three segments of the madrigal are borrowed in sequence, creating three overlaps between the poetic and liturgical texts. Segment 1 of the madrigal ("Morir non può 'l mio core") is used to set the words "Crucifixus etiam pro nobis"; segment 2 ("e ucciderlo vorrei poi che vi piace") sets the text "sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est"; and segment 3 ("ma trar non si può fuori del petto vostro") is used for the phrase "et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas". The textual elements of the first pair—"crucifixus" and "morir"—both evoke death or, more specifically, the image of dying (see previous ex. 11). Similarly, it is plausible that the composer deliberately associated Pilate with the act of killing ("e ucciderlo vorrei"), which might explain the notably lively rhythm in this otherwise typically grave section of the *Credo* (see ex. 22). Finally, the connection between "et resurrexit tertia die" and "ma trar non si può fuori" could be reinforced by the fact that both involve an element being 'drawn out' from a place or condition: the lover's heart from the beloved's chest, and Christ from the tomb or from death.

On one hand, such associations, whether explicit or more subtle, are likely to emerge in the mind of the ideal listener—someone who can engage in a kind of simultaneous internal hearing of the model while listening to the Mass.[50] On the other hand, themes highlighted by the poetic text, such as death, will

[50] See David Crook, *Orlando di Lasso's imitation Magnificats for Counter-Reformation Munich*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 208. This is what John Milsom describes as a 'gnostic' listening experience. See John Milsom, "Attending (to) Masses", p. 252. Indeed, the entire process of transformation in any imitation Mass involves retextualization, establishing a connection between the two (or more) texts that is akin to what happens in the case of *contrafacta*. See Marina Toffetti, "*Contrafacere*. Retextualizing polyphonic music from the late sixteenth to the seventeenth century", in *Contrafacta. Modes of Music Re-textualization in the*

naturally connect with key elements of the Mass narrative. However, these connections may result from a clearer compositional choice: maintaining the original internal sequence of the madrigal within the Mass. For example, the reference to segment 4 for "ante omnia" comes directly after a borrowing from segment 3. Additionally, starting the *Crucifixus* with a significant citation of the madrigal's first three segments, followed by a more subtle nod to segment 4, creates a logically coherent structure. Overall, while there may be some conceptual similarities, they appear to be secondary to the main focus on maintaining structural coherence in the composition of this Mass.




Example 22. *Credo*, bb. 46–50

*Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, eds. Marina Toffetti and Gabriele Taschetti (Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2020), 9–39.

Aside from the creative way Valerio Bona incorporated Nanino's madrigal into his 'missa super', many other aspects make this work truly remarkable. A particularly striking example is the clever use of word painting in bars 88–91 of the *Credo*. Here, Bona introduces a minim rest between two full-choir declarations of "et expecto", effectively highlighting the sense of waiting and suspension (ex. 23). This subtle technique, along with many other instances of compositional *finesse*, showcases the exceptional quality of this Mass.




Example 23. *Credo*, bb. 88–91

As previously mentioned, only two of Bona's eleven sacred music collections have survived in their entirety,[51] and neither contains a project as ambitious as

[51] Valerio Bona, *Missa, et motecta ternis vocibus* […] *Quibus in fine accesserunt Magnificat sexti toni à 6., et falsi bordoni à 3. omnitonum* (Milano: eredi di Francesco e Simon Tini, 1594), RISM A/I B 3429; Id., *Lamentationi della Settimana Santa con i Benedictus et Miserere per ciascun giorno. Et un motetto del S. Sepolcro co'l versetto et sua oration: commode per le semplici voci, et per li istromenti, Con il basso continuo per il clavicembalo concertate a doi chori uguali* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1616), RISM A/I B 3434.

a set of sixteen-voice works for four choirs. This may explain why no one has ever taken the time to verify Michael Praetorius's claims about Bona's music in the third volume of *Syntagma Musicum* (1619):

> But at the present time I cannot approve of or permit a discant and tenor or an alto and bass in a vocal choir moving together in octaves, despite the fact that Stefano Nascimbeni, Master of the ducal chapel at Mantua, Valerio Bona at Brescia, and others use octaves in the cantus, inner parts, and bass parts without distinction and with no compunction whatsoever. Anyone can find examples in their works and in those of other outstanding composers, whom I do not care to name, in which the inner parts, two of which are to be sung, as indicated there, are set in threefold octaves one above the other for several measures [Tact].[52]

This presents a serious charge against Valerio Bona, who authored two treatises on music theory[53] in which he champions the superiority of the 'compositore' over the 'contrapuntista' or the mere 'cantore', and categorically forbids the use of parallel octaves.[54] Given that Praetorius refers to Bona as maestro di cappella in Brescia—an indication found only on the title pages of his two 1611 collections—'our' collection *Messa e vespro* could be a promising starting point for identifying any potentially incriminating passages.

To tell the truth, within the *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core*, we do find several instances of parallel octaves and fifths, not only between two voices but even among three, some in extreme positions. For instance, in the *Gloria*, bars 27–28, the first cantus moves in parallel octaves with the tenor of the third choir and the alto of the fourth choir (D-C), both of which are in unison and continue to move in parallel for a few more notes (C-A-B), joined by the first tenor (A-B) in a three-fold parallel unison (ex. 24). Then, at bars 28–29, the first cantus is in parallel octaves with the fourth alto alone (E-D-C sharp), and later with the third tenor at measures 29–30 (C sharp-D-A-B). Meanwhile, at measure 27, the second cantus and the fourth tenor move in parallel octaves

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[52] Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, translated and edited by Jeffery T. Kite-Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 109.

[53] Valerio Bona, *Regole del contraponto, et compositione brevemente raccolte da diuersi auttori: Operetta molto facile, et utile, per i scolari principianti* (Casale: Bernardo Grasso, 1595); Id., *Essempi delli passaggi delle consonanze et dissonanze et d'altre cose pertinenti al compositore* (Milano: eredi di Francesco e Simon Tini, 1596). For an overview of Bona's treatises see Maria Teresa Rosa Barezzani, "L'insegnamento della teoria musicale presso i francescani di Brescia (secoli XV-XVI)", *Brixia sacra* ser. 3, vol. 21 (2016), 183–227: 211–217.

[54] Bona, *Regole del contraponto*, 2–3 and p. 9.




Example 24. *Gloria*, bb. 27–31 (parallel notes are in red)

(D-E), and at measure 28, the first alto engages in the *mi-fa* movement with the second cantus and the fourth tenor. However, in defence of the accused, I have not found passages where the *same* three voices (at least in the surviving parts) move in parallel octaves for several measures, except in sections where the surviving three basses move in unison—and the missing bass might well have done likewise. The practice of moving the basses in unison in polychoral composition is encouraged by none other than Gioseffo Zarlino, as well as later theorists, in the *Istitutioni harmoniche* (Venezia, 1558), his most important and widely circulated music treatise.[55] In the same chapter, he also advises that each choir's parts be composed as if for a simple four-voice texture, with-

[55] Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (Venezia: [Pietro da Fino], 1558), p. 268 and the entire chapter 66 *Avertimenti intorno le compositioni che si fanno a più di tre voci*; Id., *L'istituzioni armoniche*, a cura di Silvia Urbani (Treviso: Diastema editrice, 2011), p. 559. This concept is expressed even more explicitly by Zarlino's pupil Giovanni Maria Artusi. See Giovanni Maria Artusi, *Seconda parte dell'arte del contraponto* (Venezia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1589), p. 47 and the entire chapter *Opinione intorno alli conserti musicali*.

out regard for the other choirs.[56] While this does not explicitly allow parallel octaves between different choirs, it does not prohibit them either. Notably, the parallel octaves found in Valerio Bona's Mass occur only between parts of different choirs, never within the same choir.

The contrast between Bona's ease in using cross-choir parallel octaves and Praetorius's almost scandalized reaction suggests that the flexibility of counterpoint rules in actual compositional practice, especially in a polychoral context, may have differed significantly between the northern and southern sides of the Alps.

## Studying incomplete music: cui prodest?

Before taking on the demanding task of consulting all the surviving partbooks scattered across three different countries and dedicating countless hours to transcription, one should first ask, especially in the case of incomplete music, *cui prodest*?—who benefits from this?

Although any analysis of an incomplete composition can only be provisional, and any attempt at reconstruction will inevitably result in a 'fake' version of the music being reconstructed—H. Colin Slim's case is particularly illustrative,[57] and I sincerely hope a similar outcome occurs with Valerio Bona's splendid collection—such efforts allow us to reintroduce these forgotten works into the scholarly discourse. Ignoring them would lead to a partial and, as Toffetti puts it, 'fake' understanding of this repertoire.[58] This is especially crucial in the case of Valerio Bona, as only a minimal portion of his output has survived intact. However, the implications extend beyond individual compositions, such as this remarkable polychoral imitation Mass, or any single collection; they encompass the broader scope of intertextual connections and the surrounding context.

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[56] Zarlino, *Le istitutioni*, p. 268; Id. *L'istituzioni*, S. Urbani (ed.), 560.

[57] In 1972, H. Colin Slim published an edition of the Newberry partbooks with his own reconstruction of the missing Altus part. When the original Altus part was rediscovered four years later, Slim used this opportunity to evaluate the accuracy of his and other reconstructions in a 1978 article. See *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets*, H. Colin Slim (ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); Id., "A Royal Treasure at Sutton Coldfield", *Early Music* 6/1 (1978): 57–74.

[58] Marina Toffetti, "The 'authenticity' of the reconstruction of missing parts? Some reflections on a misplaced problem", *De musica disserenda* 19/2 (2023): 137–152.

Indeed, the *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* not only adds a previously untold chapter to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Giovanni Maria Nanino's madrigal, but it also fits into the wider intertextual chain of works inspired by it. An emblematic case, as others have already noted,[59] is the parallel with Giovanni Ghizzolo's 1611 book of *Concerti*, which includes the motet *Pulchrae sunt*, and was dedicated to Gabriele Carcano, the Provincial Father and General Minister of the Province of Milan of the Conventual Franciscans. Both collections were published in the same year by composers from Brescia who were not only priests but also members of the Conventual Franciscans. Interestingly, each collection is dedicated to a figure of authority within the order, with Bona's work directed to the highest office. In both volumes, the opening notes—Bona's first *Kyrie* and the incipit of Ghizzolo's *Pulchrae sunt*—unequivocally quote Nanino's madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core*. Given the madrigal's well-documented popularity, this association would have been immediately evident to contemporary listeners, especially those with a more educated background. This raises intriguing questions: Why did both Franciscans opt to present music inspired by Nanino's madrigal to their superiors? What insights can this provide into the relationship between the two collections or the composers themselves? Such questions undoubtedly merit further investigation.

In terms of the broader context, the Praetorius vs. Bona diatribe clearly illustrates how neglecting the study of incomplete music can hinder our ability to appreciate the invaluable insights of one of early seventeenth-century Europe's most significant musicians and intellectuals.

In light of all this, the example of Valerio Bona's *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core* underscores the importance of refining our methodological approaches and addressing technical challenges to better appreciate and valorise incomplete repertoires. Such efforts yield significant insights into the complex networks of influence, intellectual exchange, and compositional practices that shaped early seventeenth-century music, as well as earlier and later repertoires.

[59] Toffetti, "Travelling music", 19–20.

**Abstract**

This article retraces the history of the circulation and assimilation of the madrigal *Morir non può 'l mio core* by Giovanni Maria Nanino, highlighting several previously unexplored examples of sacred compositions it inspired. Among these is the *Missa Morir non può 'l mio core*, a sixteen-voice, four-choir work by the Brescian composer Valerio Bona (fl. 1590–1619), which is given particular focus. Like most of Bona's works, this Mass has come down to us incomplete; however, analysis clearly reveals the main formal strategies and techniques of musical borrowing used by the composer. Rather than drawing conceptual parallels between the text of the madrigal and the Mass Ordinary, Bona's attention is directed towards creating structural coherence within each section of the Mass and across the entire cycle.

This case study also provides an opportunity to examine the criticisms made of Bona by Michael Praetorius in the third volume of his *Syntagma Musicum* (1619). Despite its incomplete form, this Mass—and many other incomplete works still awaiting study—offers valuable insights into the networks of influence, intellectual exchange, and compositional practices that shaped early seventeenth-century music.

**Keywords**: Valerio Bona, Giovanni Maria Nanino, imitation Mass, Michael Praetorius, seventeenth-century music