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**Venetian-Ottoman Wars**

EDITED BY STATHIS BIRTACHAS



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Direzione, Via Bosco degli Arvali 24, 00148 Roma  
Contatti: [direzione@nam-sigm.org](mailto:direzione@nam-sigm.org) ; [virgilio.ilari@gmail.com](mailto:virgilio.ilari@gmail.com)

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On the cover: lantern of an Ottoman galley captured at Lepanto.  
Venice, Armory rooms of the Council of Ten at the Doge's Palace.  
Topwar.ru website of Vjačeslav Špakovsky.



Venice and the Ottoman Empire as warriors. Source: [Roger PALMER, Earl of Castlemaine], *Das von den Türcken außs äusserst bedrangte, aber: Durch die christliche Waffen der heroischen Republic Venedig außs tapfferst beschützte Candia* [...], Frankfurt, Wilhelm Serlin, 1669.



“Oltremarini” (Overseas) Regiments in Venetian service, nicknamed ‘Schiavoni’  
(Vinkhujzen Collection, NYPL)

# Musical Responses to the Lepanto Victory

## Sources and Interpretations

by VASSILIKI KOUTSOBINA\*

**ABSTRACT:** The present study explores the musical repertory composed immediately following the 1571 Battle of Lepanto, and during the ensuing decades, and places the musical works in the wider context of the festive and commemorative celebrations in praise of the victory. By interpreting the poetic and musical choices of composers who contributed to the Battle repertory under the prism of visual, textual, and symbolic representations of the Battle, the study brings forth the intricate political mechanisms of war- and power-rhetoric, of which Renaissance music was an integral part.

**KEYWORDS:** BATTLE OF LEPANTO, POLYPHONIC MUSIC, VENETIAN–OTTOMAN WARS, SYMBOLISM, ANDREA GABRIELI.

**T**he artistic production that followed the victory of the allied Christian forces against the Ottoman fleet at the 1571 Battle of Lepanto has been without precedent. Magnificent visual representations, portraits of the main agents, engravings of the battle formation and the actual engagement, maps with the topography of the conflict are all familiar to the Lepanto scholar. The monumental narrative paintings by Veronese, Tintoretto, Vincenzio, Vasari, El Greco etc. are replete with symbolisms, whose interpretations have been the subject of multiple studies. Some of the allusions therein are obvious, even if the spectator's gaze requires a few moments to become acquainted with the outburst of colors, objects, figures, and symbols. Others require a greater degree of familiarity with the historical events, the political context, or the circumstances surrounding the commissioning and execution of a work of art.

Literary testimonies memorializing the victory also abound, and their interpretation requires a careful first reading for an initial approach of their mediating mes-

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\* Assistant Professor of Historical Musicology, Department of Italian Language and Literature, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. ORCID: 0000-0003-0198-7217. Email: vkoutsobina@ill.uoa.gr

sages. Within such plethora of written testimonies and visual representations one is left to wonder whether the sounds of music contributed at all to the spectacular celebrations of the Christian victory. The answer seems self-evident: within the rich musical tradition of Renaissance Europe, in general, and Renaissance Italy, in particular, musical creation could not have remained indifferent. To the vast array of celebrations, ranging from triumphal processions, plays, poetry, and orations to paintings, sculptures, commemorative medals and woodcuts, composers throughout Italy, from Spain, and elsewhere contributed with polyphonic works both in the sacred and secular realms.<sup>1</sup> For the music historian, the Battle of Lepanto in fact stands out as one of the few, if not the only military confrontation of the early modern era to which composers responded so widely and unanimously.

Literary sources often refer to the magnificent music that was heard in one or another civic or religious celebration. Immediately after the victorious news reached Venice, Mass was sung in St. Mark with great splendor. Contemporary witness Rocco Benedetti talks about «concerti divinissimi», which combined both church organs along with various other instruments and singing, in an outpouring of divine harmony:

[...] si fecero concerti divinissimi, perché sonandosi quando l'uno, e quando l'altro organo con ogni sorte di stromenti, e di voci, conspiranno ambi a un tempo in un tuono, che veramente pareva, che s'aprissero le cataratte dell'harmonia celeste, & ella diluviasse da i chori angelici.<sup>2</sup>

[...] they made the most divine concerts, as one or the other organ sounded together with all kinds of instruments, and of voices, keeping together the same tempo and the same tone, which truly seemed as if the cataracts of

1 The literature on the festivities and artistic production in response to the Lepanto victory is extensive and growing. I will point out a few comprehensive studies that are pertinent to the present essay: Gino BENZONI (Ed.), *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del '500 alla luce di Lepanto*, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 1974, especially the essays Carlo DIONISOTTI, «Lepanto nella cultura italiana del tempo», pp. 127-151 and Anna ALLUCCHINI, «Echi della battaglia di Lepanto nella pittura veneziana del '500», pp. 279-287; Cecilia GIBELINI, *L'immagine di Lepanto: la celebrazione della vittoria nella letteratura e nell'arte veneziana*, Venice, Marsilio, 2008; Ernst H. GOMBRICH, «Celebrations in Venice of the Holy League and of the Victory of Lepanto», in Michael KITSON and John SHEARMAN (Eds.), *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art presented to Anthony Blunt on his 60th Birthday*, London, Phaidon, 1967, pp. 62-68.

2 Rocco BENEDETTI, *Ragguaglio delle allegrezze, solennità, e feste, fatte in Venetia per la felice vittoria*, Venice, Gratosio Perchacino, 1571, f. A4r. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are the author's.



celestial harmony have opened up, and she [harmony] poured forth from angelic choruses.

The present study places the musical works in response to Lepanto in the wider context of the festive and commemorative celebrations that followed the victory and interprets the poetic and musical choices of composers who contributed to the Battle repertory under the general prism of visual, textual, and symbolic representations of the Battle. Placed in this wider context, the study demonstrates how the common themes that emerged through the panorama of celebratory acts were appropriated and transformed via the medium of polyphonic music. But which were indeed these works, who were the composers involved, and why is the musical perspective so rarely included in modern discussions that tackle the different artistic facets of the victorious commemorations? The answer lies partly on the very nature of musical art and its medium of transmission, the musical score, that does not allow direct access to the final, in this case, acoustic result. In other words, the audience faces an artistic medium which cannot be captured without the specialized understanding of musical notation and, more importantly, without a mediator – the performing body – who will materialize in sound the written record during a live performance or through a recording medium.

In a series of essays published since 1987, Ian Fenlon has offered an overall review of the repertory composed in response to the Lepanto victory.<sup>3</sup> David

3 A selection of Ian FENLON's writings include: «*In destructione Turcharum: The Victory of Lepanto in Sixteenth-Century Music and Letters*», in Francesco DEGRADA (Ed.), *Andrea Gabrieli e il suo tempo: atti del convegno internazionale (Venezia, 16–18 Settembre 1985)*, Studi di musica Veneta, Vol. 11, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, 1987, pp. 293-317; «The Arts of Celebration in Renaissance Venice», *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73 (1987), pp. 201-235, and its reworking in Lepanto: «Music, Ceremony, and Celebration in Counter-Reformation Rome», in *Music and Culture in Late Renaissance Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 139-161; *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007; «Old Testament Motets for the War of Cyprus (1570–71)», in Max DELAERE and Pieter BERGÉ (Eds.), «*Recevez ce mien petit labour*»: *Studies in Renaissance Music in Honour of Ignace Bossuyt*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2008, pp. 71-82; and more recently, «The Memorialization of Lepanto in Music, Liturgy and Art», in Paul BERNJAMIN (Ed.), *Celebrazione e autocritica: la Serenissima e la ricerca dell'identità veneziana nel tardo Cinquecento*, Rome, Viella, 2014, pp. 61-78, and «Music, Ritual, and Festival: The Ceremonial Life of Venice», in Kathelijne SCHILTZ (Ed.), *A Companion to Music in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice*, Leiden, Brill, 2018, pp. 125-148. In a recent article I have discussed in detail the allegorical implications of the Lepanto repertory and have pointed out a few works that are not included in

Bryant has proposed a number of additional polyphonic settings with possible associations to the immediate celebrations or annual commemorations of the Battle.<sup>4</sup> The works securely attributed are either those whose edition or text make explicit reference to the Battle or one of its main figures or those for which external evidence strongly supports their inclusion in the Battle repertory. While this process may seem straightforward, several factors complicate secure attributions. First, a significant number of these works set biblical excerpts or employ allegorical language without direct reference to the event. Devising a Lepanto canon is further complicated by the nature of sixteenth-century musical sources. A brief digression on this issue will point out the obstacles that surviving sources of polyphonic music pose in assembling a corpus of musical works related to Lepanto.

The style of European and Italian art music during this period is that of vocal polyphony, that is, choral music in which multiple simultaneously unfolding melodies sing the same text.<sup>5</sup> Typically, the choruses sung *a cappella*, that is, without any instrumental accompaniment, as was typical in sixteenth-century church practice, especially of this post-Tridentine period to which the Battle belongs. These choruses involved 4–6 different singing lines, which were printed in separate music books (the so-called part-books). Therefore, a complete edition of polyphonic music comprised a set of four or more part-books, one each for the soprano part, the alto, the tenor, etc. Every set was printed in a few hundred copies depending on the popularity of the composers or of the repertory. The loss of a significant number of such sources frequently results in a survival rate of a single copy, which is furthermore often incomplete, missing one or more of the part-books (in a comparison with the visual arts, this equates to a loss of half or more of e.g., Veronese's *Lepanto Allegory*). The immediate consequence is that the reconstruction of the

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Fenlon's writings. See Vassiliki KOUTSOBINA, «Music at the Time of Cervantes: The Musical Imprint of the Battle of Lepanto», in Gerassimos D. PAGRATIS (Ed.), *Πόλεμος, Κράτος και Κοινωνία στο Ιόνιο Πέλαγος (τέλη 14ου–αρχές 19ου αιώνα)*, Athens, Ionian Society for Historian Studies – Erodotos Publishers, 2018, pp. 349–372.

4 David BRYANT's discussions of Lepanto repertory first appeared in his studies: *Liturgy, Ceremonial and Sacred Music in Venice at the Time of the Counter-Reformation*, 2 vols., PhD diss., King's College, University of London, 1981; «Andrea Gabrieli e la 'musica di stato' veneziana», in *Andrea Gabrieli 1585–1985, Catalogo del XLII Festival di Musica Contemporanea*, Venice, Biennale di Venezia, 1985, pp. 29–45.

5 It was not unusual, however, for composers to incorporate two different texts, especially in the genre of the motet.

work is not possible, something that hinders both its musical performance – thus availability to a wider audience – and its musical analysis, a process that can yield important information on how a composer “read” and interpreted through musical means the poetic text depending on the circumstances, the demands of his position, or the political agenda of the patron he was serving. This is particularly important since the humanistic sixteenth century increasingly valued the written word, and composers’ skills were measured according to their ability to project successfully and powerfully the emotions and meanings of the text they set.

From Fenlon’s and Bryant’s research, it becomes obvious that composers whose output is most securely associated with Lepanto were naturally serving within the orbit of the main figures and milieus that were involved in the formation of the Holy League and the execution of its objectives. The main participants of the alliance were the Republic of Venice, the Spanish Crown, the Papal States, the Republic of Genoa, and the Knights of Malta. As composers serving at ecclesiastical institutions were not obliged to compose exclusively sacred or liturgical music, the repertory under scrutiny involves compositions from both the sacred and secular realms. Table 1 presents a list of compositions attributed or attributable to Lepanto, arranged by genre.<sup>6</sup> The main genres of the era – the motet, mass, and madrigal – are all represented in the panorama of Lepanto celebratory polyphony. By the sheer number of motets within the Table, it becomes obvious that composers chose the motet as the genre *par excellence* for their ceremonial compositions. Not restricted by the specific textual limitations of the Mass Ordinary cycle (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei), these Latin poems sung by an ensemble of four, five, six, eight (or even more) singers offered a powerful medium of religious contemplation, replete with symbolic associations. In contrast to the fixed texts of the Mass, motets could borrow inspiration from any event of the Old or New Testament, and their lines could be paraphrased versions of the scriptural texts or entirely new poetic constructs.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, these devotional liturgical or para-liturgical outlets of affective piety offered composers a forum for musical experimentation towards greater text expression, spiritual contemplation, and demonstration of compositional competency.

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6 The list is by no means comprehensive as more works with connections to Lepanto gradually emerge.

7 For the polyphonic mass, composers traditionally chose to set the five texts of the *ordinarium missae* since Guillaume de Machaut’s first such complete cycle in the fourteenth century.

**Table 1** Polyphonic works attributed or attributable to the Lepanto victory<sup>a</sup>

MOTETS	
Andrea Gabrieli	<i>Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth</i> (8) <i>O salutaris hostia</i> (8) <i>Isti sunt triumphatores</i> (6)
Giovanni Croce	<i>Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth</i> (8) <i>Percussit Saul</i> (8)
Giovanni Bassano*	<i>Beato virgo et martyr Iustina</i> (5)
Pietro Vinci	<i>Intret super eos formido: 'In destructione Turcharum'</i> (5)
Jacobus de Kerle	<i>Cantio octo vocum de sacro foedere contra Turcas</i> (8, 4)
Fernando de las Infantas	<i>Cantemus Domino: 'Pro victoria navalli contra Turcas Sacri foederis classe parta. Anno 1571'</i> (5)
MASSES	
Giovanni Croce	<i>Messa sopra la Battaglia</i> (8) <i>Missa Percussit Saul</i> (8)
Costanzo Porta	<i>Missa 'Da pacem'</i> (8)
MADRIGALS	
Andrea Gabrieli	<i>Asia felice – Et io più all'hor felice Affrica – Felice Europa</i> (4) <i>Sento, sento un rumor – Alla battaglia o forti cavalieri</i> (8) [the text does not specify a naval battle]
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina	<i>Saggio Santo Pastor</i> (5) <i>Le selv'havea d'intorn' al lido Eusino</i> (5)
Giovanni Ferretti	<i>Quae pars est, ò Seli Salamelech</i> (6)
Ippolito Baccusi	<i>Fuor, fuori o muse</i> (6) <i>Ai più soavi accenti</i> (5)
Bartolomeo Lombardo	<i>Trionfo de la victoria navale de la Santa Lega</i> (5 and 6 voices, lost)
Joan Brudieu	<i>Oid los que'n la yglesi</i> (4)

<sup>a</sup> Numbers in parentheses denote the number of voices. An asterisk indicates composers active in Venice or the Veneto.

Within the overall range of musical creations, musicians residing in or associated with Venice claim the “lion’s share” in the production of commemorative music. Indeed, by the middle of the sixteenth century the Basilica of St. Mark,

the Doge's private chapel and the principal church of the state, has become the most important center of music-making in Europe. The radiance of the *cappella marciana* was empowered not only by the Doge's political agenda of ensuring civic and religious superiority and control, but also by the city's vibrant trading scene and its flourishing music-printing and instrument-making industry. The position of *maestro di cappella*, held since 1491, acquired special significance and gravity with the successful career of the Flemish composer Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490–1562), who occupied the position from 1527 to 1562. His successor and disciple Gioseffo Zarlino (who served as *maestro di cappella* between 1565 and 1590) was one of the most influential musical figures of the sixteenth century. As the responsibilities of the *cappella* grew steadily with the addition of festal days in the city's calendar, the Procurators of the Basilica deemed necessary to institute another position of importance, that of organist, and, later, the position of *vice-maestro di cappella*. Under Zarlino's direction the organists assumed greater responsibilities as composers for the provision of official music.<sup>8</sup> During the time of Lepanto, the position of organist was held by Andrea Gabrieli (from ca. 1566 to 1585), whose contribution to the Lepanto repertory is explored below.

Studies of the major themes in Venetian commemorative rhetoric of the Battle have demonstrated that the projection of the outcome as a victory of Christ and of Venetians as a Chosen Race – through parallelisms with the Israelites – permeate the celebratory language.<sup>9</sup> This is most explicitly pronounced in the title of Celio Magno's popular 1571 play with music, *Il trionfo di Christo per la vittoria contra Turchi*.<sup>10</sup> The theme of Christ's victory is naturally explored in the polyphonic masses related to Lepanto, but also more implicitly in the texts of the polyphonic motets. From Andrea Gabrieli's pen come the eight-voice motets *Benedictus*

8 Ellen ROSAND, «Music in the Myth of Venice», *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30, 4 (1977), pp. 519-521. Zarlino had established himself as a theorist of distinction with the publication of his treatise *Le istituzioni harmoniche* in 1558, but apparently, he has not been equally interested in composition. Zarlino held the position of *maestro di cappella* during the Lepanto battle.

9 Further on this theme in Staale SINDING-LARSEN, *Christ in the Council Hall: Studies in the Religious Iconography of the Venetian Republic*, Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia, Vol. 5, Rome, "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1974, pp. 139-149.

10 *Il trionfo* was a *sacra rappresentazione* performed in front of Doge Alvise Mocenigo on December 26, 1571. The music is now lost. Magno has also written *La bella e dotta canzone sopra la vittoria dell'armata della santissima Lega, nuovamente seguita contra la turchesca*, n.p., n.d.

*Dominus Deus Sabaoth, O salutaris hostia*, and the six-voice *Isti sunt triumphatores*. Bryant has attributed all three to some Lepanto celebration, although the relationship of *O salutaris hostia* and *Isti sunt triumphatores* still remains more tenuous.<sup>11</sup> Another eight-voice *Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth* with identical text, this time by Giovanni Croce (ca. 1557–1609), appeared in a printed edition of 1594. Croce, a pupil of Zarlino, became *vice-maestro di cappella* at St. Mark's in the early 1590s and secured the position of *maestro* in 1603. His Ordinary cycle *Messa sopra la Battaglia* bears strong ties to Lepanto, while two more works could be Lepanto-associated: the motet *Percussit Saul* and the derivative mass, *Missa Percussit Saul*.<sup>12</sup> The only other extant Mass associated with Lepanto is the eight-voice *Missa 'Da pacem'* of Costanzo Porta (1528–1601), pupil of Willaert and a renowned contrapuntist, who has served briefly in Padua as *maestro di cappella*.<sup>13</sup> While Croce's music appeared in print at quite a chronological distance from the 1571 naval confrontation, Porta's mass must have been composed almost immediately following the victory, as it is preserved in a manuscript dating from ca. 1574–1579.<sup>14</sup> A final composition, a motet for five voices, also stems from Venetian orbit and presents yet another aspect of the impact of the victo-

11 Modern edition in David BRYANT (Ed.), *Concerti di Andrea, et di Gio: Gabrieli organisti della Sereniss. Sig. di Venetia [...] libri primo et secondo (Con privilegio, Venezia, Angelo Gardano 1587)*, Edizione nazionale delle opere di Andrea Gabrieli, Vol. 11, 1, Milano, Ricordi, 1989. The *Concerti* also includes the eight-voice madrigal *Sento, sento un rumor – Alla battaglia, o forti cavalieri*, also attributable to some Lepanto celebration. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

12 Bryant suggested that both *Benedictus Dominus Deus* and the *Messa sopra la Battaglia* were composed for a Lepanto commemoration. BRYANT, *Liturgy, Ceremonial and Sacred Music*, cit., p. 93 and fn. 405. *Benedictus Dominus Deus* appeared in Giovanni CROCE, *Motetti a otto voci [...]*, Venice, Giacomo Vincenti, 1594; the mass appeared two years later in Giovanni CROCE, *Messe a otto voci*, Venice, Giacomo Vincenti, 1596. It is possible that Croce composed the two works as part of his duties after assuming responsibilities as *vice-maestro di cappella* at the Basilica. This later date for the mass indirectly reveals the longevity of Lepanto commemorations in Venice. *Percussit Saul* and the derivative mass have been proposed also by FENLON, «Music, Ritual, and Festival», cit., p. 144.

13 Lilian P. PRUETT, «Porta, Costanzo», in *Oxford Music Online*, last accessed February 5, 2022, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

14 Loreto, Archivio della Santa Casa, Codex 34, ca. 1574–1579, pp. 133–175. This mass was not published with the twelve masses of Costanzo PORTA's, *Missarum liber primus*, Venice, Gardano, 1578. See Lilian P. PRUETT, «Parody Technique in the Masses of Costanzo Porta», in James W. PRUETT (Ed.), *Studies in Musicology: Essays in the History, Style, and Bibliography of Music in Memory of Glen Haydon*, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1976, pp. 212 and 215. Modern edition in Siro CISILINO (Ed.), *Opera omnia*, Vol. 10, Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana, 1964–1970.



1 Icon (egg tempera on wood) of Saints Sergius, Justina and Bacchus, on whose feast day (October 7) the naval Battle of Lepanto took place; by the Cretan painter Michail Damaskenos (1584–1593). The author combined two traditions, depicting on the one hand the military Saints of the Orthodox Church Sergius and Bacchus, and on the other Justina, Saint of the Catholic Church and a patroness of Padua. The icon was transferred from Chandax (Candia) to Corfu after the Cretan War. Courtesy of the Antivouniotissa Museum, Corfu; West Narthex (A.M. 141). © Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture and Sports / Ephorate of Antiquities of Corfu.

ry on the Republic's festal calendar: Giovanni Bassano's *Beato virgo et martyr Iustina*, which however appeared in print much later, in 1598.<sup>15</sup> The motet's text refers to Santa Giustina, whose name became inscribed in Venetian consciousness and memory as inexorably connected to the victorious outcome, since the

15 GIOVANNI BASSANO, *Motetti per concerti ecclesiastici a 5, 6, 7, 8 & 12 voci*, Venice, Giacomo Vincenti, 1598.

Battle took place on the martyr's festal day (October 7) [Fig. 1].

Gabrieli's motet *Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth* provides an excellent example of symbolic synthesis, in which military imagery – and the allusions to the Battle it is able to evoke – is intertwined with the themes of divine intervention and of the Venetians as a Chosen People, within an overall framework of exalting thanksgiving:

Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Benedicti qui pugnat in nomine Domini. Manus enim Domini fortis, et terribilis: manus Domini pugnat pro eis, manus Domini protegit illos. Pugnavit Sanson, pugnavit Gedeon: vicit Sanson, vicit Gedeon. Pugnaverunt nostri in nomine Domini: pugnavit Dominus pro nobis, et vicit Dominus inimicos eius. Laetamini, et exultate, et psallite.

Blessed be the Lord of Hosts. Blessed be those who fight in the name of the Lord. The hand of the Lord is powerful and inexorable: the hand of the Lord fights for them, the hand of the Lord protects them. Samson has fought, Gideon has fought. Samson has won, Gideon has won. Our men fought in the name of the God: the Lord fought for us and won over his enemies. Let us exalt and sing his praise.<sup>16</sup>

The text does not directly derive from the scriptures but is a synthesis of the invocation “Benedictus Dominus Deus Sabaoth,” which directly evokes the “Sanctus-Benedictus” section of the Roman-Catholic Mass, and thus to the Christian ecclesiastical ritual, with the Biblical image of the victories of Samson and Gedeon, both liberators of the Israelites, with the intervention of God's hand. Both men's devotion to God secured them immense physical power through divine Grace. The specific lines set by Gabrieli was not a haphazard choice nor an isolated instance in Lepanto artistic production. In a letter to Ferdinando de' Medici about the sketches of his famous Sala Regia fresco *The Consigning of the Standard*, Giorgio Vasari expressed the wish that Divine Grace, a main figure within his painting, would utter the words “Deus Sabaoth”.<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly,

16 The motet was issued posthumously by Gabrieli's nephew, Giovanni. BRYANT (Ed.), *Concerti di Andrea, et di Gio: Gabrieli*, cit.

17 Vasari's intentions for the *Consigning* fresco were explained in a letter to Ferdinando de' Medici, dated 23 February 1572. The *Consigning of the Standard* was part of the triptych that Vasari was commissioned to execute for the Sala Regia at the Vatican palace. After Pius's death in May 1572, his successor Gregory XIII had the fresco recalled. Christina STRUNCK, «The Barbarous and Noble Enemy: Pictorial Representations of the Battle of



these are the very words which in the Christian Mass invoke God as a supreme general, the Lord of all Powers, who guides the wars against the church's enemies. In the synthesis of the two textual elements, the Christian and the Biblical, Gabrieli transmits the re-iterated idea of a powerful military Venetian Republic as a "messenger of God in the image of Christ."<sup>18</sup> Divine intervention through the image of the powerful hand of God is also a common *topos* in textual and visual representations. Two papal medals struck in 1571 and 1572 also carry the same message: «Dextera Domini Fecit Virtutem» (The right hand of the Lord has shown strength) and «Dextera Tua, Domine, Percussit Inimicum» (Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy, Song of Moses, *Exodus* 15). According to the textual record, the latter motto was inscribed in the façade of Santa Maria in Aracoeli on the occasion of the Thanksgiving Mass that marked the culmination of Marcantonio Colonna's triumphal entry into Rome.<sup>19</sup> Within the many examples in the stock of visual imagery, Vasari's *Battle of Lepanto* fresco (in its top left part) also features Christ hurling the thunderbolt against the Turks (Fig. 2).

The notion of God's hand intervening to crush any resistance has been reiterating in Spanish expressions of divine mediation in support of King Philip II. Fernando de Herrera's *Canción en alabanza de la Divina majestad por la victoria del señor don Juan*, otherwise known as the *Canción a la batalla de Lepanto*, is one of the most popular poetic commemorations of the naval victory in Spanish literature and unequivocally expresses the patriotic and religious spirit of Tridentine Spain.<sup>20</sup> Reference to the power of God's hand therein appears no less than ten times. Fernando de las Infantas's five-voice motet *Cantemus Domino*: 'Pro victoria navalli contra Turcas Sacri foederis classe parta. Anno 1571' (see Table 1) vividly depicts the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians. The motet's text derives from the Song of Moses, *Exodus* 15, and through its Pharaonic reference alludes both to the Spanish king's victory

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Lepanto», in James G. HARPER (Ed.), *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, Farnham, Routledge, 2011, p. 219.

18 BRYANT (Ed.), *Concerti di Andrea, et di Gio: Gabrieli*, cit., p. 17.

19 For this info and for images of the medals see Rick SCORZA, «Vasari's Lepanto Frescoes: 'Apparati', Medals, Prints and the Celebration of Victory», *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 75 (2012), pp. 185-186.

20 The poem appeared at the end of Fernando de HERRERA's prose book, *Relación de la guerra de Chipre, y suceso de la batalla naval de Lepanto*, Seville, Picardo, 1572.

against the Infidels and to his fervent campaign for the defense of Catholicism against the heretical tendencies of the Reformation. The passage could not have been more pertinent in the parallels it draws between the fate of Pharaoh's army and the gruesome reality of the naval warfare: «Electi principes eius submersi sunt in mari rubro, abissi operuerunt eos, descenderunt in profundum quasi lapis» (his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone). In the next line the notion of God's powerful hand appears again: «Dextera tua Domine magnificata est in fortitudine percussit inimicum» (Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy), the same passage that was inscribed on the papal medal above.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of the prevalent symbolic rhetoric that assigns the victory to Christ's divine guidance, it is possible to interpret an inherent musical feature that is present in most of the masses and motets of Table 1. With the exception of Bassano's motet for Santa Giustina and Vinci's *Intret super*, both for five voices, as well as the six-voice *Isti sunt triumphatores*, all other sacred settings employ an eight-voice texture.<sup>22</sup> Such choice undoubtedly reflects the performance practice at St. Mark's, which, since the time of Willaert, has relied on the acoustic splendor produced by the antiphonal singing between divided choirs (the *cori spezzati*) often placed in the different arches and galleries of the Basilica.<sup>23</sup> It

21 Fernando de las Infantas (1534–ca. 1610), Spanish composer and theologian, moved to Rome in 1571 or 1572, with a pension granted by Philip II of Spain. His interventions to the Spanish king delayed the revisions of the Roman *Graduale* entrusted to Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and Annibale Zoilo by Pope Gregory XIII. *Cantemus Dominus* appeared in Fernando de las INFANTAS, *Sacrarum varii styli cantionum [...] liber secundus*, Venice, Scotto, 1578; modern edition in Jorge MARTIN (Ed.), *Fernando de las Infantas, The Complete Motets: Motets for 5 Voices*, n.p., Ars Subtilior, 2017. Translation of this passage based on *The Bible: Authorized Version*, The Bible Societies, 1994. De las Infantas was especially attuned to the military expeditions of Philip II, since he had also composed the motets *Ecce quam bonum*, for the formation of the Sacred Treaty in 1570, and a prayer for the lifting of the 1565 Turkish Siege of Malta, titled *Congregati sunt* and surtitled «In oppressione inimicorum». The latter siege awakened the Christian powers towards the necessity of military unity, which resulted in the formation of the 1570 Sacred League.

22 I have argued elsewhere about the moderate textures of *Isti sunt triumphatores* and *Beato virgo et martyr Iustina*. KOUTSOBINA, «Music at the Time of Cervantes», cit., pp. 363-364.

23 For a study on the performance circumstances and practice of this repertory see David BRYANT, «The 'cori spezzati' of St Mark's: Myth and Reality», *Early Music History*, 1 (1981), pp. 165-186. These are the «concerti divinissimi» that Rocco Benedetti was referring to in the excerpt quoted above (see fn. 2).



2 Giorgio Vasari, *Battle of Lepanto*, Sala Regia, Vatican Palace, photo by Sailko 2017.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

also denotes that these motets and masses were composed for some ceremonial occasion which called for the employment of larger forces, as certainly the commemoration of Lepanto would have been. Within the highly symbolic language of these settings, however, it is also possible that the unanimity in the choice of texture was not coincidental, but aimed at a heightened symbolic, albeit not verbal, representation of the Battle as Christ's victory effected via his divine guidance of the Christian forces.

In the medieval and renaissance Judeo-Christian tradition of Biblical exegesis, number symbolism flourished. Two of the most prominent exponents of this tradition had been St. Augustine and Hugo of St. Victor. Different numerological systems – Pythagoreanism, Neoplatonism, Babylonian astrology, and gematria (the derivation of numbers from letters, according to different number-alphabets) – were often conflated.<sup>24</sup> Number eight has been traditionally associated with the name of Christ and in the Bible with the idea of a new beginning and of regeneration (e.g., God chose to mark the new week on the eighth day). Above all, eight has come to be considered closely tied to the name of Jesus, whose resurrection marked a new beginning and regeneration.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, the victory at Lepanto marked a new beginning and an era of freedom from the Ottoman threat.

Most pronounced towards this interpretation is the choice of eight-voice texture for Jacobus de Kerle's motet *Cantio octo vocum de sacro foedere contra Turcas*. The theological meaning of such choice is thrown into relief, when one considers the context of the publication in which the motet first appeared. The *Cantio* holds a position of prominence as the only composition for eight voices concluding a collection otherwise devoted to five- and six-voice motets. The compilation's title clearly demarcates this setting «quibus addita est recens cantio octo vocum, de sacro foedere contra Turcas» from the rest of «quinis et senis vocibus», while at the same time betrays its last minute addition («recens») to the publication, which apparently was issued immediately after the victory, in 1572 (Fig. 3).<sup>26</sup> Yet, while the motet's expanded texture may be justified by its celebratory character, its verses provide further evidence of the Christological significance embedded in the number of the singing parts. The motet unfolds

24 Modern studies on medieval number symbolism include Vincent F. HOPPER, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence in Thought and Expression*, New York, Columbia University, 1938; rev. ed. Dover, 2000; Christopher BUTLER, *Number Symbolism*, New York, Barnes & Noble, 1970; and George FERGUSON, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961.

25 In Greek gematria, 'Jesus' is represented by the number 888, thus establishing eight as the personal number of Jesus. An overview of musicological approaches to numerology in medieval and renaissance music can be found in Reinhard STROHM, «Numbers, Binchois, and Ockeghem», in Suzannah CLARKE and Elizabeth E. LEACH (Eds.), *Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned*, Rochester, The Boydell Press, 2005, pp. 160-163.

26 Jacobus de KERLE, *Liber modulorum sacrorum, quinis et senis vocibus, quibus addita est recens cantio octo vocum, de sacro foedere contra Turcas*, Munich, A. Berg, 1572. Fenlon does not mention de Kerle's motet, nor Porta's mass discussed above or Lombardo's cycle.



3 Discantus (top-voice) partbook of Jacobus de KERLE, *Liber modulorum sacrorum, quinis et senis vocibus, quibus addita est recens cantio octo vocum, de sacro foedere contra Turcas*, Munich, A. Berg, 1572. Attribution – Non-Commercial – Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.de>. Source: <https://stimmbuecher.digitale-sammlungen.de/view?id=bsb00094023>

in five sections scored for different choir ensembles. The first and last sections, both on the same text («Gaudentes gaudeamus»), are scored for eight voices, while the middle verses are set for four voices in different combinations of register. In contrast to the allusive character of Old Testament themes that prevail in Lepanto-related motet repertory, de Kerle's *Cantio* refers directly to the Holy League and the victory of the Christians not only in its title, but also in the body of the text of its outer movements («foedus Christianorum»), and it is exactly those that employ the full eight-voice ensemble. Even more importantly, de Kerle, a Flemish composer who had spent most of his life serving religious institutions in the north, did not favor eight-voice textures whether in his secular or sacred output throughout his career, and certainly not in the 1570s, when the

*Cantio* was composed.<sup>27</sup> The only eight-voice compositions, aside from *Cantio*, come from much later and were included in a collection of four, five, and eight-voice sacred settings from 1585.<sup>28</sup> This selective approach towards eight-voice texture, even by composers further away from Venetian orbit, such as de Kerle, or its unique presence within Costanzo Porta's canon (in his *Missa da pacem*) is certainly intriguing. Within the symbolic and allegorical richness embodied in the celebratory rhetoric, the numerological interpretative approach is one of the many to be considered, especially since renaissance polyphonic compositions frequently incorporate numeric symbolisms.<sup>29</sup>

Gabrieli's ceremonial motets are not his only contribution to the Lepanto festivities. Apparently, he was summoned to compose for the extravagant *mascherata* that took place during the following Carnival. The *Ordine, et dechiaratione di tutta la mascherata, fatta nella città di Venetia la domenica di Carneuales*, printed in Venice in 1572, provides a detailed account of the event.<sup>30</sup> The spectacle included triumphal chariots (*carrì trionfanti*), Turks disguised as slaves, and music. It required the participation of 340 people, and according to the printer's account 187 of them were the musicians. One of the chariots carried the personified figures of the three continents, who sung to Gabrieli's music. In this musical "triptych" Asia, Africa, and Europe sang each a four-voice chorus. The members of each choir were dressed accordingly to enhance the performance with a visual effect. Four singers in women's costumes "alla Turchesca" represented Asia. The second choir was dressed "alla Moresca" to personify Africa, while Europe was dressed "all'Italiana". In their lyrical, elegant verses all three continents express a "global" sentiment of relief in the aftermath of the enemy's destruction, and bring out a message of hope and brotherhood:

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27 Wilfried BRENNCKE, «Jacobus de Kerle», in *Oxford Music Online*, last accessed February 5, 2022, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

28 Jacobus de KERLE, *Selectiorum aliquot modularum*, Prague, Georg Nigrin, 1585.

29 See fn. 25. An extreme example of the symbolical potential of the number of singing parts in Renaissance music is Thomas Tallis's motet *Spem in alium* scored for 40 voices, divided in eight five-voice ensembles. It was possibly written for the celebration of the 40th birthday of Queen Elizabeth I.

30 *Ordine, et dechiaratione di tutta la mascherata, fatta nella città di Venetia la domenica di Carneuales. M. D. LXXI. Per la gloriosa vittoria contra Turchi*, Venice, Giorgio Angelieri, 1572.

Asia felice hor ben posso chiamarmi,	I can now indeed call myself happy Asia,
Ch'è vint' in mar di me l'empio nemico.	since my wicked enemy is overcome at sea.
Ma più sarò quando con gaudio l'armi	But I shall be happier still when with joy
	the forces
De' figli miei faransi ogn'un amico.	of my sons will make each one their friend.

A brotherhood, however, that is subordinate to the hegemony of Europe and, more importantly, of Catholic faith. In a restrained yet polemical language Europe concludes the madrigal declaring:

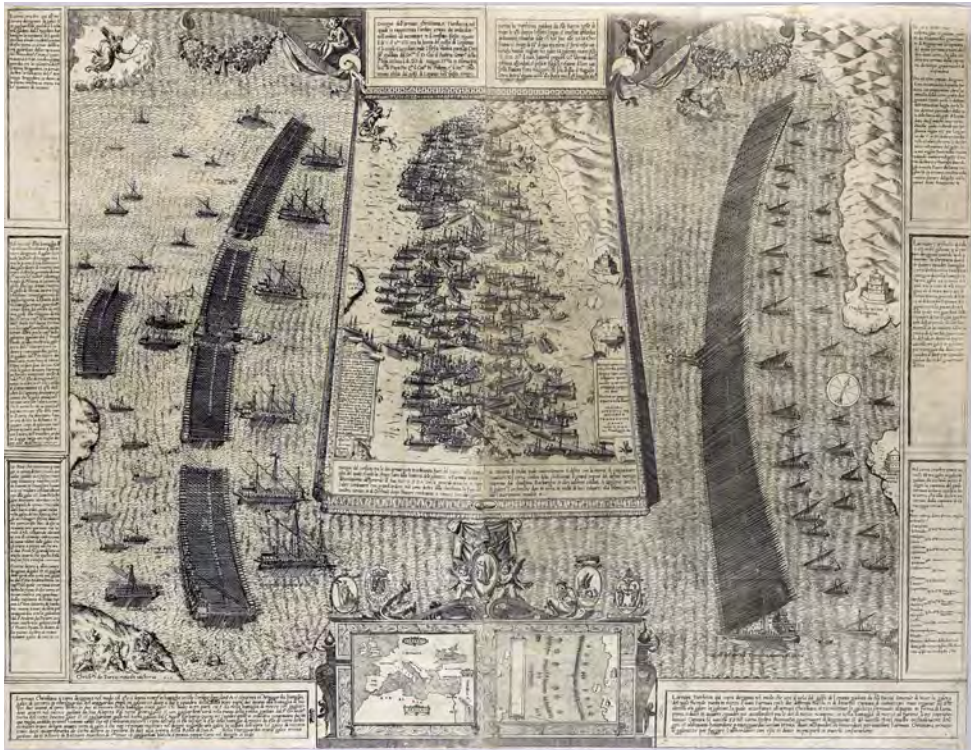
Felice Europa anch'io godo non meno,	And I too, happy Europe, rejoice no less;
Chè più che mai con gloriose prove,	for more than ever, after glorious ordeals,
Hor sotto un vero Dio, non falso Giove,	now <i>under a true God, not a false Jove</i>
	[emphasis mine],
Havrò del mond' un'altra volta il freno.	I shall have the reins of the world again. <sup>31</sup>

In post-Tridentine rhetoric, Catholicism was the sole guarantor of the Christian faith. One is left to wonder about the source of inspiration for this chariot. For a contextual interpretation we would have to turn to one of the most well-documented sources on the Battle's details: the enormous engraving of Michele Tramezzino printed in Rome in 1572 (Fig. 4).<sup>32</sup> Many visual representations rely on the details that Tramezzino provides, and it has been demonstrated that Vasari's triptych at the Sala Regia owes a great deal to it.<sup>33</sup> Amidst the wealth of information, and in the central bottom part of the engraving, Tramezzino includes the arrangement of the three world powers (Fig. 5). Europe represents the united Christian forces, Asia represents the Ottoman world, while Africa stands for the north African pirates, who fought by the Turks' side. While it is certain that Vasari was well acquainted with Tramezzino's engraving, we cannot be equally certain about Gabrieli. Certainly, however, such symbolisms quickly became common

31 All translations from Andrea GABRIELI, *Complete Madrigals*, ed. Arthur T. MERRITT, Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, Vol. 42, Madison, WI, A-R Editions, 1981, p. xiii.

32 *Disegno dell'armate, Christiana, et Turchesca* [...] *nell'andarse ad incontrare et il conflitto*, Rome, Michele Tramezzino, 1572. Digital reproduction in <https://militarymaps.rct.uk/other-16th-century-conflicts/battle-of-lepanto-1571-disegno-dellarmate-christiana>, last accessed February 5, 2022.

33 SCORZA, «Vasari's Lepanto Frescoes», cit., p. 154.



4 *Disegno dell'armate, Christiana, et Turchesca [...] nell'andarse ad incontrare et il conflitto*, Rome, Michele Tramezzino, 1572. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022; free for non-commercial use.

Source: <https://militarymaps.rct.uk/other-16th-century-conflicts/battle-of-lepanto-1571-disegno-dellarmate-christiana>.

stock, and travelled across places, media, and artists.

Given the leading role of Pope Pius V in the formation of the League and his perseverance in pursuing the alliance's objectives, it is indeed surprising that the victory of Lepanto has not left a more distinctive mark on Roman polyphonic repertory, despite the fact that Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (ca. 1525–1594), prominent composer of the Counter-Reformation, was active during this period as *maestro di cappella* of the Cappella Giulia.<sup>34</sup> Although it is known that for Marcantonio Colonna's triumphal entry in Rome, mass was sung by the papal

<sup>34</sup> The Cappella Giulia was instituted by Pope Julius II in 1513 and was responsible for the performance of music in St. Peter. Palestrina has been serving as its *maestro di cappella* since April 1571.





5 *Disegno dell'armate, Christiana, et Turchesca* [...] nell'andarse ad incontrare et il conflitto, Rome, Michele Tramezzino, 1572, detail. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022; free for non-commercial use.

Source: <https://militarymaps.rct.uk/other-16th-century-conflicts/battle-of-lepanto-1571-disegno-dellarmate-christiana>.

chapel – which implies the performance of polyphony – no such Ordinary cycle has been so far identified, leaving yet another lacuna in the ceremonial repertory. In fact, Roman musical responses to the Lepanto victory found expression not in the domain of sacred music, but in the secular genre of the madrigal. Palestrina composed the spiritual madrigals *Saggio Santo Pastor* and *Le selv'havea d'intorn' al lido Eusino* in praise of the Pope's divinely guided maneuvers and Don Juan's bravery, respectively.<sup>35</sup> *Saggio Santo Pastor* extols papal wisdom to which eventually the victory is attributed and, in its intentional historical reference to Constantine, the first Roman emperor, traces the sacred lineage of Rome's spiritual and state leaders. Such imperial references are common within the ceremonial rhetoric surrounding Colonna's *trionfo*. In the context of the historical events, the connection with Constantine was certainly explicit on the standard that the pope entrusted to Colonna to carry to Lepanto, and which bore the motto «In hoc signo vinces».<sup>36</sup> The same motto guided Constantine in his major victories that culminated in the Edict of Milan in 313. Upon Colonna's return, the glorious Roman past was furthermore evoked through the rostral column that Pius awarded to Colonna.<sup>37</sup> A sonnet by Petrarch, adapted to fit the occasion, was summoned to underline this event.<sup>38</sup> The sonnet derives from the *Canzoniere* (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, no. 269), and the first stanza reads as follows:

35 *Le selv'havea d'intorn' al lido Eusino* makes also reference to the War of Cyprus. Both madrigals were issued in the *Quarto libro delle muse a cinque voci composto da diversi eccellentissimi musici* [...], Venice, Gardano, 1574; modern edition in Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA, *Il primo libro dei madrigali spirituali a 5 voci secondo la stampa originale del 1581*, ed. Raffaele CASIMIRI, *Le opere complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, Vol. 9, Rome, Edizione Fratelli Scalera, 1940.

36 SCORZA, «Vasari's Lepanto Frescoes», cit., pp. 147-148. Colonna's standard is now at the Gaeta Cathedral.

37 Rostral columns integrating rams of ships were erected since ancient Greek and Roman times to commemorate a naval victory.

38 Fenlon reports that the sonnet appeared in a broadside bound with Domenico TASSOLO and Baldassarre MARIOTTI, *I trionfi, feste et livree, fatte [...] nella felicissima, & honorata entrata dell'illustrissimo signor Marcantonio Colonna*, Venice, [Domenico Farri], 1571. FENLON, «*In destructione Turcharum*», cit., p. 301, fn. 13. I have not been able to consult this source, but the paraphrased sonnet accompanied by explanatory notes certainly appeared in Luigi Groto's *Trofeo*, one of the most popular Lepanto publications. *Trofeo della Vittoria Sacra, ottenuta dalla Christianiss. Lega contra Turchi nell'anno 1571. Rizzato da i più dotti spiriti de' nostri tempi, nelle più famose lingue d'Italia. Con diverse Rime, raccolte, e tutte insieme disposte da Luigi Groto cieco d'Hadria. Con uno brevissimo Discorso della Giornata*, Venice, Sigismondo Bordogna & Franc. Patriani, [1572], p. 79.

Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro	The high column and the green laurel are broken
Che facean ombra al mio stanco pensiero;	that cast a shade for my weary thoughts:
Perduto ò quel che ritrovar non spero	I have lost what I do not hope to find again
Dal borrea a l'austro, o dal mar indo al mauro.	in north or south wind, from ocean to ocean. <sup>39</sup>

The lines were modified both to change the tone from dark to joyful and to underline the connection to Marcantonio Colonna and the rostral column:

Giusta è l'alta COLONNA, e 'l verde lauro  
 Che fan grand' ombra al mio stanco pensiero;  
 Ritorna hor quel, che ritrovar non spero  
 Dal Borea à l'Austro, ò dal mar' Indo a Mauro.<sup>40</sup>

The text was «accomodato leggiadramente, e cantato sotto l'nome del Senato e Popolo Romano, in lode del Signor Marc'Antonio Colonna, mentre in Roma vittoriosa entra, in modo trionfale». This song, whether sung or recited, is much more pertinent than Fenlon suggests. Petrarch wrote the sonnet in 1348 on the deaths of Giovanni Colonna and of Laura. Giovanni Colonna, a cardinal who favored the return of papacy to Rome, was associated to Petrarch during the latter's exile in Avignon. The multiplicity of allusions across themes and time certainly did not go unnoticed in the context of the celebrations: the ancient roman past evoked through the reference to the rostral column (colonna) and the consequent pun with Colonna's name (inherent in the original poem), the recent Roman past which fought heresy (by reference to Giovanni Colonna), and its continuity in the present effected via Marcantonio Colonna (descendant of the same Colonna family with which Petrarch was associated) and Pope Pius V (in his efforts against Christianity's enemies).

In stark contrast to the language of the motets and madrigals or the Petrarchan sonnet (if it was indeed set to music) stand the popular songs that circulated in pamphlets recounting war events. The language therein becomes sarcastic and disdainful, and directly attacks the enemy. Many of these vernacular songs adopt

<sup>39</sup> Translation in <https://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html?poem=269>, last accessed February 5, 2022.

<sup>40</sup> Reproduced here from FENLON, «*In destructione Turcharum*», cit., p. 301, fn. 13.

the *ottava rima*, eight 11-syllable lines rhyming abababcc, which had become the poetic meter of choice to narrate war poetry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The texts, which were declaimed or sung to simple melodic formulas, are rich in negative, scornful adjectives for the enemy, and graphic descriptions of the realities of war. In contrast to the polyphonic compositions that required a trained chorus, these simple, improvisatory pieces were performed in public spaces and addressed a wider, often less-cultivated audience. A distinct series of texts called “lamenti” recounted the regrets of the enemies to have engaged in the conflict. Amidst the rich repertory of such ephemera emerge the verses of Antonio Molino, whose earlier *greghesco* poems were set to music by the most famous Venetian composers of the time.<sup>41</sup> One of his contributions, for which no music survives, is the *Lamento de Selin* (Selim II), a dialogue of Selin with Molino’s alter ego, Manoli Blessi, also in *greghesco*. Selin laments his inevitable doom:

Se da li Scithi torno, a la mia prola,	If I return to the Turks, to my own home,
no me cognoserà, ma via da drago	My folks will not recognize me but like a dragon
me cacerà da loro in pene e in guai.	Will chase me away to pains and trouble.
<i>Di pitevo</i> [emphasis mine] più mai	I don’t believe I will ever rest.
reposito aver.	

The poet advises Selin to follow the path of redemption:

Tel segnarò mi, stolto:	I will teach you, imbecile:
Returna el terre, e l’stadi, a chi hastu tolto.	Return the lands and countries you have taken.
A chesto modo l’ volto	This way your face
To allegro tornerà, gratioso e humano;	Will become happy, gracious, and humane;
Nol sarasto plio turco, ma christiano.	You will not be a Turk anymore, but a Christian. <sup>42</sup>

41 The multi-faceted talents of Antonio Molino made him a popular figure in Venetian circles. Under the pseudonym Manoli Blessi, he established the genre of the *greghesca*, poetry in an artificial language mixing Venetian dialects and Greek. Andrea Gabrieli contributed seven songs in Antonio MOLINO’S, *Di Manoli Blessi il primo libro delle Greghesche, con la musiccha Disopra, composta da diversi Autori*, Venice, Antonio Gardano, 1564, and dedicated to him his second book of madrigals of 1570. Literature on Molino is growing as he has attracted the attention of music, literature, and history scholars.

42 Text reproduced here from Guido A. QUARTI, *La battaglia di Lepanto nei canti popolari*

The association of the Infidel with the dragon, omnipresent in the popular verses and iconography of the 1570s, had made its appearance in musical sources around the middle of the fifteenth century, as the seminal work of Anne Walters Robertson has demonstrated.<sup>43</sup> The series of *Caput* masses and a *Caput* motet composed in the second half of the fifteenth century emphasized in musical terms the victory of Christ, Mary, or both over sin, a theological notion that had been represented in iconography and literature by the crushing of “the head of the dragon” (*caput draconis*). After 1453, however, the good-evil struggle began to «be allegorized as an apocalyptic battle between Christian West and Islamic East».<sup>44</sup> In music, this change of focus became manifested in the abandonment of the “caput” theme and the emergence of the series of *L’homme armé* masses. In these Ordinary polyphonic cycles, the structural unit around which the polyphony is woven, the *cantus firmus*, becomes the popular melody *L’homme armé*, in which the “armed man” – the soldier of Christ or Christ himself – takes upon himself the defeat of evil, “the dragon”, now personified in the image of the Turk.<sup>45</sup> The decisive moment of the Lepanto battle, in the immediate aftermath of the horrendous events of the War of Cyprus (1570–1571), rendered the allusion redundant.<sup>46</sup>

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*dell’epoca*, Milan, Istituto Editoriale Avio-Navale, 1930, p. 189. The words «di pistevo» show the *greghesco* component.

43 Anne WALTERS ROBERTSON, «The Savior, the Woman, and the Head of the Dragon in the Caput Masses and Motet», *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 59, 3 (2006), pp. 537-630. Attention to the repertory of *Caput* masses was first drawn by Manfred F. BUKOFZER, «Caput: A Liturgico-Musical Study», in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music*, New York, Norton, 1950, pp. 217-310.

44 WALTERS ROBERTSON, «The Savior», cit., p. 603.

45 The bibliography on the tune and its derivative polyphonic settings is extensive. A selection of scholarship regarding its origins and symbolisms include Lewis LOCKWOOD, «Aspects of the *L’homme armé* Tradition», *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 100 (1973–1974), pp. 44-58; Leeman PERKINS, «The *L’homme armé* Masses of Busnois and Okeghem: A Comparison», *Journal of Musicology*, 3, 4 (1984), pp. 363-398; Richard TARUSKIN, «Antoine Busnoys and the *L’homme armé* Tradition», *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 39 (1986), pp. 255-293; Flynn WARMINGTON, «The Ceremony of the Armed Man: The Sword, the Altar, and the *L’homme armé* Mass», in Paula HIGGINS (Ed.), *Antoine Busnoys: Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1999, pp. 88-130; Craig WRIGHT, *The Maze and the Warrior: Symbolism in Architecture, Theology, and Music*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2001; Alejandro E. PLANCHART, «The Origins and Early History of *L’homme armé*», *The Journal of Musicology*, 20, 3 (2003), pp. 305-357. Around 50 masses based on the *L’homme armé* tune have been identified. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

46 In 1570, Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA dedicated a five-voice *L’homme armé* mass

The Turk as dragon is a *topos* omnipresent in the popular verses of the 1570s, yet entirely absent from the polyphonic compositions that paid tribute to the Battle. The *Lamento de Selin* offers a perfect example in which the contrast between the highly abstract and restrained language of the verses set polyphonically and the personal, direct, and insolent style of the popular verses is most pronounced.

In Renaissance Europe, music was mainly commissioned by and intended for courtly patrons. Music resounded in palaces, courts, and academies as well as in cathedrals, convents, and monasteries. The performances ranged from intimate to public, involving mainly invited guests. Occasionally, however, the performance of music took to the streets where listeners came from all walks of life. From the selective survey of music in praise of the Lepanto victory it becomes evident that all types, whether the declamatory singing of the street song, the *mascherata* chorus, the polyphonic mass, or the eight-voice motet, turned away from intimate environments and aimed for larger audiences and public spaces. Poetry, musical texture, medium, and drama were all summoned to create a lasting imprint to the audience. Composers of polyphonic music, who were certainly familiar with the allegorical language of much visual and printed texts, incorporated the symbolisms in subtle and intricate ways, which had more to offer than the “divine sounds” they produced, especially when catered to sophisticated audiences with the skills to unravel their meanings. Vincenzo Borghini, iconographic advisor to Vasari during the preparation of the Sala Regia frescoes, urged the painter to tightly knit verbal and visual puzzles therein, so as to invite the spectator to unveil the painting’s true meaning, its “vero senso”, and thus feel satisfied by the discovery.<sup>47</sup> Unveiling the connections between events, patrons, agents, symbols, works of art, and music creations contributes to a deeper understanding, to a “vero senso”, of the intricate political mechanisms of war- and power-rhetoric, of which Renaissance music was an integral part.

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to Philip II. It was included in his *Missarum liber tertius*, Rome, Valerio e Luigi Dorico, 1570. No such composition, however, is known to have been associated with Lepanto.

47 SCORZA, «Vasari’s Lepanto Frescoes», cit., p. 188.

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Icon of the naval Battle of Curzolari (Echinades in Greek) islands, by the Cretan painter Georgios Klontzas, last decades of the 16th century; one of the most famous depictions of the naval Battle of Lepanto in post-Byzantine art. Courtesy of the National Historical Museum, Athens (cat. n. 3578).

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