

ROB C. WEGMAN

BUSNOYS' « ANTHONI USQUE LIMINA » AND THE ORDER OF
SAINT-ANTOINE-EN-BARBEFOSSE IN HAINAUT *

For musicologists involved in the study of fifteenth-century musical patronage, the numerous lay confraternities and orders of chivalry that were founded in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries still constitute a vast *terra incognita*. Of the orders of chivalry, only the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece is now known to have patronized polyphonic music.¹ It must be assumed, however, that many more orders of chivalry used polyphony during their ceremonies, if only because orders of chivalry were closely related – both judicially and constitutionally – to the lay confraternities,² whose use of polyphonic music is better attested.³ The following text deals with a fifteenth-century association which during its existence was both an order of chivalry and a lay confraternity, the Order of St. Antony in Barbefosse, near Havré in Hainaut; now best-known as the order of chivalry of the Hainaut Counts of the House of Bavaria. It flowered in the first decades of the fifteenth century and counted among its members Guillaume VI of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland (1365-1417), his wife Margaret of Burgundy (1374-1441), and their daughter Jacqueline of Bavaria (1401-1436). However, the order had originally been founded as an illustrious confraternity (i.e. a devotional brotherhood with both

* I am indebted to Jaap van Benthem, Dr. David Fallows, P.C. van der Eerden, Eddie Better and Prof. Chris. Maas for helpful advice.

¹ See: J. MARIX, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens de la cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe le Bon (1420-1467)*, Strasbourg 1939, pp. 32-37; W. F. PRIZER, *Music and Ceremonial in the Low Countries: Philip the Fair and the Order of the Golden Fleece*, « Early Music History », V, 1985, pp. 113-153; W. F. PRIZER, *The Order of the Golden Fleece and Music*, paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, 1985; J. VAN BENTHEM, *A Waif, A Wedding, and a Worshipped Child: Josquin's Ut Phebi radiis and the Order of the Golden Fleece*, « Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis », XXXVII, 1987, pp. 64-81; A. E. PLANCHART, *Dufay's Benefices and his Relationship to the Court of Burgundy* (forthcoming).

² M. KEEN, *Chivalry*, New Haven and London 1984, pp. 181-182.

³ See, for example, A. SMIJERS, *De Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch*, Amsterdam 1932; B. RAJECZKY, *Ein neuer Fund zur mehrstimmigen Praxis Ungarns im 15. Jahrhundert*, « Studia Musicologica », XIV, 1972, pp. 147-168; R. STROHM, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, Oxford 1985, pp. 60-73; K. K. FORNEY, *Music, Ritual and Patronage at the Church of Our Lady, Antwerp*, « Early Music History », VII, 1987, pp. 1-57.

aristocratic and *bourgeois* membership) and it remained closely related to other confraternities dedicated to the saint, especially the illustrious confraternities of St. Anthony in Kleef and Maastricht. Like these, it was part of the broad Antonian movement which spread over Western Europe during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.⁴ The three extant documents of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse, all preserved in sixteenth- or seventeenth-century copies or extracts in heraldic manuscripts, give us no concrete evidence of the cultivation of polyphony. However, there is evidence that Antoine Busnoys composed his motet *Anthoni usque limina* for the order, most probably because he became a member himself. This text will briefly describe the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse, attempt to relate Busnoys' motet to the order, and conclude with a few words on the occasion for which the work may have been written.

Barbefosse is the name of a hollow in the Wood of Havré, about seven kilometers east of Mons, in Hainaut. Tradition has it that a small chapel dedicated to St. Anthony was built here in the thirteenth century by a hermit named Antoine, a gentleman of Hainaut, who had returned from a journey to the Holy Land.⁵ Outbreaks of the dreaded St. Anthony's fire during the following century made the chapel, which by then had become ruinous and deserted, into a very popular centre of pilgrimage. The growing number of pilgrims suffering from the disease who visited Barbefosse at the end of the fourteenth century must have induced Gerard d'Enghien, seigneur of Havré, to ask the permission of Pope Clement VII to rebuild the chapel of St. Anthony. This permission was granted to him on October 30, 1389. Thirteen years later, in 1402, d'Enghien and other knights from the County of Hainaut decided, with approval of Albert of Bavaria (1330-1404), regent of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland, to found the Illustrious Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse. As the monopoly of the cult of St. Anthony in the Christian world was exclusively held by the Order of the Antonians, attempts were soon made by this order to bring the devotion of the saint in Barbefosse under Antonian control. In 1415, a priory and hospital of St. Anthony was built in Barbefosse for pilgrims suffering

⁴ See: P. NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens over broederschappen van S. Antonius*, «Publications de la Société historique et archéologique dans le Limbourg», LXXXV, 1949, pp. 477-499.

⁵ For this and what follows, see: NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., pp. 486-491; L. DEVILLERS, *La chevalerie et le prieuré de Saint-Antoine-en-Barbefosse*, «Annales de l'Académie d'archéologie de Belgique», XXI, ser. 2, tome 1, 1865, pp. 561-573.

from St. Anthony's fire. Visiting patients were given the healing holy water of St. Anthony or had their infected limbs amputated. Barbefosse had now been incorporated as a branch in the vast Antonian network of *commanderies* which had ramified over Europe since the thirteenth century from the motherhouse St. Antoine-en-Viennois of La Motte St. Didier. At the head of the *commanderie* in Barbefosse stood a prior, also called the *praeceptor*.

The original statutes of the Illustrious Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse, which have come down to us in a very succinct eighteenth-century summary,⁶ stipulated that each candidate for admission must be of unblemished noble ancestry, of failing that, that he must have obtained a doctor's degree at a famous university. Members of the confraternity were obliged to protect and to support poor widows and orphans, to uphold the honour of the confraternity, to respect and to honour their fellow-members and not to allow any of them to be wronged or dishonoured.

An amendment of the original statutes, made up on June 11, 1420, has been preserved in full in an early sixteenth-century armorial in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Brussels.⁷ This is a most informative document. The important changes effectuated in it concern the hardening of rules governing admission into the confraternity. Henceforth the privilege was so be limited exclusively to man or women of noble birth (i.e. knights, squires, ladies or damsels): « no other persons, whoever they may be or of whatever estate they may claim to be, will be allowed to enter the order ».⁸ But even noble descent was, by itself, no longer a guarantee for admission. Whereas previously armigerous nobles of good and ancient lineage would have been admitted to the order regardless of their wealth, candidates for admission now had to prove that their incomes were sufficient for maintaining a noble style of life.⁹ These regulations show that by 1420 the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse had been converted into an order of chivalry; this is also apparent from the fact that the brotherhood was now ruled by a

⁶ DEVILLERS, *La chevalerie*, cit., p. 563.

⁷ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Collection Goethals, MS 707, fols. 33r-37v. Transcription in NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., pp. 494-497.

⁸ « [...] a nul autres quels que il soient ne de quel estat il se uoldroient dire yestre li dite ordene ne soit donnee »; Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, fol. 33v.

⁹ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, fol. 35r-v. In the fifteenth century, increasing numbers of lesser nobles had serious financial difficulty in maintaining the style of life consonant with their status; see: KEEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-246.

« King », a « Constable » and a « Marshal »,¹⁰ which was customary for orders of chivalry that were not bound together under the sovereignty of a princely founder and his hereditary successors.

No doubt the initiative for turning the Confraternity of St. Anthony into an order of chivalry had come from Guillaume VI of Bavaria, who was well-known for his fondness of chivalry and tournaments. The main motives behind the conversion, however, were probably of a political nature. It is known that Guillaume VI was very much concerned to unite his territories and to pass them as a single unit to his daughter, Jacqueline of Bavaria. An order of chivalry which would join the nobility of these territories and bind them in personal dependence on the House of Bavaria could be a helpful political asset towards that aim. Apparently in order to create an important role for the House of Bavaria, the history of the confraternity was deliberately rewritten. The story was invented that Guillaume's father, Albert of Bavaria, had founded the Order of the Knights of St. Anthony in 1382, as a sign of gratitude after the passing of an epidemic of St. Anthony's fire. It was also claimed that the Hainaut knights who had gone on a crusade to Prussia in 1386 to assist the Teutonic Knights in their fight against the heathen Lithuanians had done so under the banner of the Order of St. Anthony.¹¹ When Guillaume VI died in 1417, his territories passed to his daughter Jacqueline of Bavaria. No doubt she considered membership of the order as part of her duties as countess of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland: on January 8, 1418, seven months after her father's death, she ordered the payment of 192 francs 28 sols *tournois* for her entry into the order.¹² Her (second) husband, John IV, duke of Brabant and

¹⁰ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, e.g. fol. 34r.

¹¹ NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., pp. 486-487.

¹² L. DEVILLERS, ed., *Cartulaire des comtes de Hainaut*, vol. VI, Brussels 1896, p. 47; see also vol. V, Brussels 1892, p. XLI, notes 4 and 5. After Jacqueline's death, on October 9, 1436, the collar of the order was listed by her executors and was brought back to the chapel in Barbefosse by Floris van Haemstede: « Dair was een gulden oirden van sinte Anthonis tot Haueressch in Henegouwen: die wart dair gesent bij heer Florijs van Haemsteden » (*Codex diplomaticus, verzameling van oorkonden betreffende de vaderlandsche geschiedenis*, series 2, vol. 1, Utrecht 1852, p. 174; the executor's account of Jacqueline of Bavaria is preserved in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague, Archief van de grafelijkheidsrekenkamer, rekeningen, inv.no. 132). The executors' account also contains a few interesting references to music at the court of Jacqueline of Bavaria in the castle of Teylingen near The Hague. One of the rooms in the castle was called « the red room with the organ » (« die rode camer mitten oirgelen », *ibid.*, p. 184). Jacqueline of Bavaria had bequeathed varying sums of money to « those who used to be the discanters of my aforesaid lady » (« Die discantieres mijnre voirseider vrouwen plagen te wesen »; the singers, who are mentioned only by their first names, are called Vrbaen, Cloot and Mol, *ibid.*, p. 223), and also to three pipers and a trumpeter (not mentioned by name, but much better paid, *ibid.*, p. 219). Among the

Limbourg (1403-1427), whom she married two months later, on March 27, 1418, probably became a member in the same year. Although the first letter in which he refers to the payment of the admission charge dates from 1423,¹³ the amendment of June 11, 1420 mentioned above speaks of « no tresredoubte sgr et prince monsgr le ducq de brabant et de lembourcq » as a « confrere de ledite ordene ».¹⁴ Jacqueline of Bavaria is not mentioned in the document: she had deserted her husband precisely two months previously, on April 11, 1420.

Although the Confraternity of St. Anthony had now been converted into an order of chivalry, it appears that many features peculiar to Antonian confraternities were retained. In illustrious confraternities of St. Anthony, for example, new members received during the ceremony of their admission a collar of gold, gilded silver or silver with the emblem of the confraternity appended to it.¹⁵ As special badges and collars were also very popular in orders of chivalry,¹⁶ this practice could easily be retained. The emblem of the order was a tau-cross with pendant bell. No collars of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse have been preserved; however, a number of collars are found depicted in portraits of members, the most famous example being Jan van Eyck's (?) *Man with the Pink*.¹⁷

A membership list of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse has been preserved in the same armorial which contains the amendment of 1420.¹⁸ The list contains the names of 242 of the 376 members who were admitted during the period 1416-1437, 89 of them with coats of

items listed in the executor's account there were moreover three « songbooks of discant » (« drie zancoeken van discant », *ibid.*, p. 182). For music at the court of the counts of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland see: J. MARIX, *Histoire de la musique et des musiciens*, cit.; C. LINGBEEK-SCHALEKAMP, *Overheid en muziek in Holland tot 1672*, Poortugaal (The Netherlands) 1984; A. JANSE, *Het muziekleven aan het hof van Albrecht van Beieren (1385-1404) te Den Haag*, « Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis », XXXVI, 1986, pp. 136-157; F. P. VAN OOSTROM, *Het woord van eer. Literatuur aan het Hollandse hof omstreeks 1400*, Amsterdam 1987, pp. 31, 42 and 87-91.

¹³ DEVILLERS, ed., *Cartulaire des comtes de Hainaut*, cit., vol. IV, Brussels 1889, pp. 330-331.

¹⁴ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, fol. 36v.

¹⁵ P. NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, « Archief voor de geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland », I, 1959, pp. 65 and 103-105.

¹⁶ KEEN, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁷ NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., pp. 488-490; NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., p. 65, and plates 2-7. A drawing not mentioned by Noordeloos is Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 20 674; colour reproduction in W. PREVENIER and W. BLOCKMANS, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, Cambridge 1986, p. 211; see also: A. CHÂTELET, *Early Dutch Painting*, Oxford 1981, p. 197.

¹⁸ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, fols. 39r and ff. See also: NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., p. 489, note 42.

arms. Evidence of later members is to be found only occasionally in passing references; for instance, the last testaments of two canonesses of the Church of Ste. Waudru in Mons, made up in 1470 and 1476, contain clauses regulating the return of their collars to the order in Barbefosse after their death.¹⁹ Significantly, these testaments speak only

¹⁹ L. DEVILLERS, ed., *Chartes du chapitre de Sainte-Waudru de Mons*, Brussels 1908, III, pp. 344 (Marguerite de Roisin, January 1, 1470) and 382-383 (Sebille du Roeculx, dite d'Ecaussines, November 15, 1476); possibly also Isabeau or Elisabeth de Wassenaer, May 15, 1469 (pp. 342-343). Members were obliged to have their collars returned to the order after their death (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, fols. 34r-v, 35r); see, for instance, note 12 above.

Is it possible that Binchois, who was also a canon at Ste. Waudru (from May 17, 1437 onwards), had been a member of the Order of St. Antoine-en-Barbefosse? There is evidence, though it is only circumstantial and inconclusive, which could perhaps support this assumption. Binchois was very probably born, and certainly raised, in Hainaut, and he lived in the county in the last years of his life (in Soignies). If his parents, who are named as Johannes and Johanna de Binche in an obit-book of St. Vincent, Soignies, are to be identified with Jean de Binch (d. 1425?) and his wife Jeanne, née Paulouche (d. 1426?) (E. CLOSSON, *L'origine de Gilles Binchois*, «Revue de musicologie», V, 1924, pp. 149-151), Binchois would have been of rich and respectable descent, and his father's close association with the Hainaut court of Bavaria could have provided him with access to the order. Jean de Binch was a man of some importance: he was councillor to Guillaume VI and, from 1417, to Jacqueline of Bavaria; he built a new chapel for the church of St. Germain and was a councillor to the church of Ste. Waudru in Mons. The family seal was a shield on a band, with three crabs, the legend reading «seel. Jehan de Binche». Although the use of hereditary seals of arms was the privilege of noble families, it is not clear whether Jean de Binch was indeed of noble descent, for he is called «bourgeois de Mons» in documents of the counts of Hainaut (see DEVILLERS, *Cartulaire des comtes de Hainaut*, cit., e.g. vol. IV, p. 82). In any case, if Jean de Binch was noble and if Gilles was his son, the composer could have entered the order as a squire, i.e., as a nobleman not dubbed to knighthood. Ockeghem's *Déploration sur la mort de Binchois* states:

« En sa jeunesse fut soudart
De honnorable mondanite
Puis a esleu la milleur part
Servant Dieu en humilite »

The use of the word «soudart» may indicate that in his youth Binchois had been a mercenary (not a soldier, as has been supposed, for standing armies were introduced only in the second half of the fifteenth century). However, the word «honnorable» has strong chivalrous overtones, and the juxtaposition of «humble service to God» to «honourable worldly» service seems to reflect here the distinction between the ecclesiastical and courtly spheres of medieval society. If in his youth Binchois was professionally involved in warfare, it was probably as a (mounted) member of the lesser nobility rather than as a footman. This is also suggested by the fact that when he died, Binchois left among other things a horse («ung cheual Roan»), essential property for any gentleman wishing to maintain a noble style of life (M. SCHULER, *Neues zur Biographie von Gilles Binchois*, «Archiv für Musikwissenschaft», XXXIII, 1976, p. 74). The composer moreover died a comparatively wealthy man, wealthy enough (by fifteenth-century standards) for him to have been a lesser nobleman (D. FALLOWS, *Dufay*, London 1982, pp. 79-80 and 216). In sum, it seems possible that Binchois met the two requisites for admission into the order as laid down in the amendment of June 11, 1420 (that is, noble descent and sufficient resources for maintaining a noble style of life); it is not likely, in any case, that the two canonesses of Ste. Waudru who were members of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse were very much richer than he was. But is there any direct evidence for Binchois' possible membership?

It is certain that Binchois had contacts with the priory and hospital of St. Antoine-en-Barbefosse, for in the last twelve days of his life, when he was already

of the « frères et religieux » of St. Anthony in connection with the order. Very probably, the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse had by now ceased to be an order of chivalry and had become an illustrious confraternity again, under the supervision of the priory in Barbefosse. The reasons for this apparent reversion are not difficult to imagine: the annexation of Hainaut by Philip the Good in 1428, and the extinction of the Hainaut branch of the House of Bavaria in 1436 (when Jacqueline of Bavaria died childless) had removed the political necessity of a Hainaut order of chivalry, and must have taken from the order its chivalrous *élan* and its prestige. In any case, it can hardly be coincidence that the membership list in the Brussels armorial comes to an end one year after the death of Jacqueline of Bavaria.

A document of the order which must date from after this reversion is the elaborate liturgy for the ceremonial admission of new companions, which has been preserved in a copy in a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century heraldic manuscript in the Bibliothèque municipale in Besançon.²⁰ We learn from this document that the collar of the order was solemnly blessed by a priest and sprinkled with holy water (« aqua benedicta ») before it was handed to the head of the order

seriously ill, he was regularly visited by a friar Melchior of this priory, who examined and treated him (SCHULER, *op. cit.*, p. 72). On the other hand, since Barbefosse is only about 15 kilometers from Soignies, St. Antoine simply may have been the nearest medical centre in the neighbourhood. In the membership list mentioned above (see note 18), no one named Binchois or de Binche is found. It may be that Binchois was one of the 134 members not included in this list, or that he entered the order after 1437, but this, of course, must be speculation.

Only one composition for St. Anthony Abbot by Binchois has been preserved, the antiphon *Vox de celo* (Modena, Biblioteca estense, MS α x.1.11, fol. 54v; edition in J. MARIX, *Les musiciens de la cour de Bourgogne au XV^e siècle*, Paris 1937, p. 231, and A. PARRIS, *The Sacred Works of Gilles Binchois*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College 1965, music vol. 2, pp. 267-268). This antiphon played a prominent part in ceremonies of confraternities and *commanderies* of St. Anthony (NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., e.g. pp. 105-107). In the ceremony of admission into the order in Barbefosse it was sung immediately after the investiture of the new member, before the image of St. Anthony (Besançon, Bibl. mun., Coll. Chifflet, MS 84, fol. 21r: « Postea dic ad imaginem S^{ti} Antonij anām cum oratione. Vox de coelo ad Antonium facta est: quoniam uirilliter dimicasti, ecce ego tecum sum, et faciam te in toto orbe nominari. »). However, Binchois did not need to be a member of the order to compose a motet for its ceremonies; moreover, the assumption that he wrote *Vox de celo* for the Burgundian court chapel (where he was employed from at least 1431 onwards) seems far more plausible, particularly in view of the importance of St. Anthony for the dukes of Burgundy.

Our conclusion must therefore be that, although the possibility that Binchois was a member of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse cannot be ruled out, the evidence in favour of that assumption is for the present too circumstantial and inconclusive to warrant a reasonable suspicion.

²⁰ Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, Collection Chifflet, MS 84, fols. 11r-21v. Transcription and summary in Dutch in NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., pp. 98-103. I am indebted to Mr. L. Lordereau of the Bibliothèque municipale in Besançon for kindly providing me with a microfilm of this manuscript.

(called here « praeceptor ») who then invested the new companion. The ceremony is closely related to that of other confraternities of St. Anthony, and a number of chants and prayers from the ceremony are also to be found in ceremonies carried out in *commanderies* of St. Anthony.²¹ Significantly, the document is devoid of even the barest hints at chivalry. The order is now a « sancta fraternitas »; its head is no longer the « King », but the prior or *praeceptor* of the *commanderie*. Moreover, the justification for the existence of the confraternity given here is that Pope Bonifacius (either VIII or IX) had granted to the abbot of St. Antoine-de-Vienne and to the priors of all *commanderies* of St. Anthony the right to receive in a « specialis fraternitas » noblemen, doctors and « alias graues et notabiles personas, quas uirtutes nobilitate illustrarent ».²² In actual fact, as we have seen, it had been the Hainaut aristocrats who had taken the initiative of founding the illustrious confraternity in 1402; only subsequently did the Antonians become involved.

Of the later history of the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse almost nothing is known.²³ It is possible that for some time it was maintained as a club of wealthy people who wanted to display their devotion and who were willing to pay for the status of belonging to an *élite* brotherhood. Over the years, however, the confraternity must have lapsed into insignificance, and finally, in 1587, the *commanderie* in Barbefosse was taken over by the Jesuits.

Antoine Busnoys' motet *Anthoni usque limina* is preserved on fols. 48v-50r of the Burgundian court manuscript Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 5557 (hereafter BrusBR 5557), which was presumably copied in Bruges.²⁴ The text of the motet, a prayer to St. Anthony in

²¹ NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., pp. 62-63 (ceremony of admission into the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Leith, Scotland), 69-71 and 105-107 (the blessing of the healing holy water and wine of St. Anthony).

²² Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, Collection Chifflet, MS 84, fol 13v.

²³ We learn from a document in the archives of the dukes de Croÿ that in 1486 the *praeceptor* of St. Antoine-en-Barbefosse was a certain Jacques le Petit (G. WYMANS, *Inventaire des archives des ducs de Croÿ*, (« Archives générales du royaume et archives de l'état dans les provinces - archives de l'état à Mons »), Brussels 1977, p. 319).

²⁴ Edition in C. L. WALTHER BOER, *Het Anthonius-motet van Anthonius Busnois*, Amsterdam 1940, appendix (based on an interpretation of the canonic instructions on fols. 48v and 49v which is now generally rejected). The motet is discussed in: W. STEPHAN, *Die burgundisch-niederländische Motette zur Zeit Ockeghems*, Kassel 1937, p. 22; WALTHER BOER, *op. cit.*, *passim*; C. VAN DEN BORREN, *Études sur le XV^e siècle musical*, Antwerp 1941, pp. 238-244; E. H. SPARKS, *The Motets of Antoine Busnois*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », VI, 1953, pp. 225-226; E. H. SPARKS, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet 1420-1520*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1963, pp. 217

Latin, is an octosyllabic poem cast in an *abba/acac* rhyme scheme and was very probably written by Busnoys himself, as it contains his name (« Anthonius Busnoys »), written in red ink in the manuscript (shown in italics in the transcription of the text below). A little verse is appended, instructing the reader to look at the beginning and the end of the work to find the name of the composer.

The fact that *Anthoni usque limina* has a connection with the confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse is indicated by the illumination at the bottom of fol. 48v, which shows the emblem of the tau-cross with pendant bell which was used by the confraternity.²⁵ The bell and tau-cross were, of course, familiar attributes of St. Anthony, as Walther Boer has remarked,²⁶ but it is unlikely that the anonymous illuminator of BrusBR 5557 simply wanted to combine two attributes of St. Anthony in a fanciful way. It appears that holes have been pricked in the paper along the lines of the illumination,²⁷ and this points to a well-known method of tracing in the Middle Ages. The illuminator presumably laid a paper with the model for the illumination over fol. 48v, and pricked the outlines of the model he wanted to copy with a needle through the paper. This indicates that the illuminator was unfamiliar with the emblem whose shape he apparently wanted to reproduce so faithfully. The emblem in BrusBR 5557 is very similar in shape to the emblem of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse as depicted in various paintings and in the membership list in the Brussels armorial.²⁸

and 227-229; F. WARMINGTON, *A Busnois-Fétis Collaboration: The Motet « Anthoni usque limina »*, paper read at the meeting of the American Musicological Society, November 6-9, 1986. For the provenance of BrusBR 5557 see R. C. WEGMAN, *New Data Concerning the Origins and Chronology of Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Manuscript 5557*, « Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis », XXXVI, 1986, pp. 15-16.

²⁵ See the reproduction in M. PICKER, *Busnois, Antoine*, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London 1980, vol. III, p. 506. For the emblem, see: NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., pp. 488-491. Emblems made up of tau-crosses and bells were also used by lesser illustrious confraternities of St. Anthony, for instance those in Maastricht, Kleef and Bailleul (*ibid.*, pp. 485 and 490), but no depictions of the emblems of these confraternities seem to have been preserved. Interestingly, the German doctor, humanist and music connoisseur Hartmann Schedel (1440-1514), whose so-called *Schedel-Liederbuch* of c. 1465 (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Germanicus monacensis 810, *olim* Musica 3232, Cim. 351a) is one of the most important German song collections of the fifteenth century, became a member of the confraternity in Maastricht on July 13, 1468 (NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana* cit., pp. 65 and 103-105).

²⁶ WALTHER BOER, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁷ This observation was kindly pointed out to me by Jaap van Benthem.

²⁸ See note 17 above; for reproductions from Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Coll. Goethals, MS 707, with the emblem of the order, see: NOORDELOOS, *Enige gegevens*, cit., p. 483; C. VAN DEN BERGEN-PANTENS, *De heraldiek in de handschriften voor 1600* (exhibition catalogue Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I), Brussels 1985, ill. cat. 44.

It is possible that Busnoys also referred to « Saint-Antoine-en-Barbefosse » (as it was spelt in French) by using number symbolism.²⁹ If we replace the letters of « Antoine » and « Barbefosse » by the corresponding numbers of the Latin alphabet (A equals 1, B equals 2, I and J each equals 9 and U and V each equals 20), we obtain the following numbers:

$$\text{ANTOINE} = 1 + 13 + 19 + 14 + 9 + 13 + 5 = 74$$

$$\text{BARBEFOSSE} = 2 + 1 + 17 + 2 + 5 + 6 + 14 + 18 + 18 + 5 = 88$$

If we except Flynn Warmington's recent solution of the canonic instructions on fols. 48v and 49v,³⁰ it appears that the two *partes* of the motet contain the following numbers of notes:

Prima pars:

[Superius]	237 notes	
[Bell]	28 notes	
[Contratenor]	222 notes	
Barrivalses	179 notes	
	666 notes	666 = 74 × 9

Secunda pars:

[Superius]	307 notes	
[Bell]	19 notes	
[Contratenor]	250 notes	
Barrivalses	216 notes	
	792 notes	792 = 88 × 9

If the lengths of the two *partes* are counted in *tactus* (i.e. a breve in O2, and a semibreve in O equals one *tactus*), it appears that the *prima pars* has a length of 162 *tactus*, which equals 74 + 88, and that the *secunda pars* has a length of 108 *tactus*, which equals BUSNOYS = 2 + 20 + 18 + 13 + 14 + 23 + 18.

The text of *Anthoni usque limina* points unmistakably to a connection with Antonian confraternities or *commanderies*:

²⁹ For recent studies of number symbolism in fifteenth-century motets, see particularly: J. VAN BENTHEM, *Fortuna in Focus; Concerning 'Conflicting' Progressions in Josquin's Fortuna dum gran tempo*, « Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis », XXX, 1980, pp. 36-39; J. VAN BENTHEM, *Concerning Johannes Tinctoris and the Preparation of the Princess' Chansonier*, « Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis », XXXII, 1982, pp. 24-29.

³⁰ WARMINGTON, *op. cit.*.

<i>Anthoni usque limina</i>	Anthony, who as far as the utmost [limits
Orbis terrarumque maris	Of the earth and the seas,
Et ultra qui uocitaris	And even beyond, proclaimest
Prouidencia diuina	Divine Providence,
Quia demonum agmina	Because thou hast manfully
Superasti uiriliter	Overcome the hosts of demons,
Audi cetum nunc omina	Hear now [this] assembly, which
Psalentem tua dulciter.	Sweetly sings of thy wondrous acts.
Et ne post hoc exilium	And lest after this exile
Nos igneus urat pluto	Fiery Pluto burns us,
Hunc ab orci chorum luto	Bring help, delivering this choir
Eruens fer auxilium	From the mire of the underworld;
Porrigit refrigerium	Let the water of grace
Artubus gracie moys	Offer refreshment to the limbs,
Ut per uerbi misterium	So that the Spirit, through the [Mystery
Fiat in omniBus Noys	Of the Word, may be with us all.

Walther Boer has found several verbal resemblances with this text in the *Vita* of St. Anthony by Athanasius.³¹ Closer resemblances, however, are to be found in the liturgies of confraternities and *commanderies* of St. Anthony. The lines « usque limina orbis terrarumque maris » and « quia demonum agmina superasti uiriliter », for example, remind us of the lines « quia uiriliter dimicasti » and « faciam te in toto orbe nominari » from the antiphon *Vox de celo*, which was sung during ceremonies of admission. This antiphon was also sung during the blessing of the holy water and wine which were used in the treatment of St. Anthony's fire in *commanderies*.³² Prayers said during the latter ceremony have been preserved in a manuscript in the Archives Départementales in Colmar.³³ Comparison with the text of *Anthoni usque limina* reveals in what sense Busnoys meant the phrase « let the water of grace offer refreshment to the limbs » (« porrigat refrigerium artubus gracie moys ») to be understood:³⁴

³¹ WALTHER BOER, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-16. Some of the verbal resemblances found by Walther Boer are a bit stretched; this is particularly obvious in the third line (« et ultra qui uocitaris »), which was misread by him as « stultua qui voritaris » (« who tears the follies ») and which he connected with St. Anthony's struggle against the ferocious animals described in caput 51 ff. of *Anthanasii vita Anthonii* (*ibid.*, p. 14).

³² See note 21 above.

³³ NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., pp. 105-107.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

Oremus. Deus qui concedis obtemptu beati Anthonii confessoris tui morbidem ignem extingui et membris egris refrigeria prestari concede propicius eius meritis et precibus et benedictione aque et vini integros mente et corpore tibi feliciter in gloria presentari. Per Dnm Nrm etc.

Let us pray. God, who grantest, on account of the perseverance of Thy Confessor St. Anthony, *that the morbid fire be extinguished and that refreshment be offered to the infected limbs*, grant benevolently, on account of his merits and prayers and *through the blessing of the water and wine*, that we be presented joyfully, and whole of spirit and body, before Thee in the Glory [of Heaven]. Through our Lord, etc. (italics are mine)

It is clear that by « the water of grace » in *Anthoni usque limina* is meant the holy water of St. Anthony,³⁵ and by « refreshment to the limbs » relief from the terrible burning pains of St. Anthony's fire. This should not necessarily mean that Busnoys' motet has a connection with an outbreak of this disease,³⁶ for the holy water of St. Anthony was also used in the ceremony of admission into the Confraternity in Barbefosse (for the sprinkling of the collar, see above). Moreover, in the prayer which was said after the investiture of the new member we find the line « that refreshment be offered to the infected limbs » again. Here, the idea is linked with the fear of the flames of Hell, in much the same way as Busnoys did in *Anthoni usque limina* (« lest after this exile fiery Pluto burns us »).³⁷

Orão. Deus, qui concedis obtentu beati Antonij morbidum ignem extingui, et membris refrigeria praestari; fac nos propitius ipsius meritis et

³⁵ The word « moys » for water (instead of « aqua ») was obviously chosen because it rhymes with « noys » (line 16). The word must have been familiar to the poet who wrote the text of *Anthoni usque limina* from the traditional medieval etymology of the word « music ». In medieval writings on music theory it was often stated that « musica » was derived from the Greek word « moys » for water. Noel Swerdlow has shown that « moys » is a Latin transliteration of the Greek word « μῶυ », which itself is a transliteration of the Coptic word for water (N. SWERDLOW, « *Musica dicitur a Moys, quod est aqua* », « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XX, 1967, pp. 3-9).

³⁶ In the later Middle Ages, there were very few outbreaks of St. Anthony's fire (NOORDELOOS, *Antoniana*, cit., pp. 72-73). The disease seems to have been caused by ergot in rye that had been stored too long in the winter. If an outbreak of St. Anthony's fire should have occurred during Busnoys' lifetime, the most likely years for this to have happened seem to me 1480-1482. In these years export restrictions in the Baltic countries coincided with the coldest winters in living memory, followed in consequence by bad harvests (Baltic export restrictions: PREVENIER and BLOCKMANS, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; winters of 1480-1482: P. M. KENDALL, *Louis XI*, London 1971, p. 425). The failure of the harvest in 1481 created famine in Europe: in Bruges the price of rye rose to the highest level it ever reached throughout the period 1340-1500 (PREVENIER and BLOCKMANS, *op. cit.*, p. 393). In times of scarcity all grain stores in large towns were sealed, and this may possibly have created favourable conditions for the ergot mould. To my knowledge, however, there is no documented outbreak of St. Anthony's fire in Bruges in the late fifteenth century.

³⁷ Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, Coll. Chifflet, MS 84, fols. 21r-v.

precibus a gehenna incendijs liberatos, integros mente et corpore tibi foelicitate in gloria praesentari. Per Christum dnum nostrum. Amen.

Prayer. God, who grantest, on account of the perseverance of St. Anthony, that the morbid fire be extinguished and that refreshment be offered to the infected limbs, deliver us benevolently, on account of his merits and prayers, from the flames of Hell, [so that we] be presented joyfully, and whole of spirit and body, before Thee in the Glory [of Heaven]. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

That Busnoys was following established Antonian conventions when he wrote the text of *Anthoni usque limina* (if indeed he wrote it), can be surmised from the fact that the idea of « refreshment to the infected limbs » combined with the fear of the terrors of Hell is even found in a fifteenth-century Dutch prayer to St. Anthony, which closely resembles the two prayers cited above:³⁸

O almachtich ewich God die overmids bede ende verdiensten des heilighen vaders ende abts sinte Anthonius die siecten des vuers leschede ende die sieken leden vercoelnis gheveste, wi bidden di dat wi overmids sinen ghebete ende verdiensten verlost worden vanden vuer der hoverdien, der ghiericheit, der onsuverheit, des toerns, des hats ende des nijts ende van allen sonden. Ende dat wi bescermt moeten werden van den pinen der helle ende moeten werden verlost uut der pinen des veghevuers opdat wi salichlike moeten comen totter glorie dijnre verrisenis. [...]

O almighty and eternal God, who on account of the prayer and the merits of the Holy Father and Abbot Saint Anthony alleviates the diseases of the fire and offers refreshment to the infected limbs, we pray that we, on account of his prayer and his merits, be delivered from the fires of pride, avarice, impurity, rage, hate and envy, and from all sins. And that we be protected from the pains of Hell and released from the pains of Purgatory, so that we may blissfully attain to the Glory of Thy Resurrection. [...]

It must be noted, finally, that in the text of *Anthoni usque limina* the prayer is said on behalf of a « cetus », i.e. an assembly or meeting.³⁹ Of course one should not carry the interpretation of individual words too far, particularly not in this rather laboured text, where the poet's choice of words was obviously limited by the rhyme scheme and

³⁸ Haarlem, Bisschoppelijk Museum, MS 55, fol. 211r.

³⁹ The late-medieval meanings of the word « cetus » were: (1) meeting, assembly, council; (2) host, multitude. See: *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, vol. II, issue 5, München 1973, coll. 784-785; J. W. FUCHS, O. WEIJERS and M. GUMBERT, *Lexicon Latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevii - Woordenboek van het Middeleeuws Latijn van de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, vol. II, Leyden 1981, col. C353.

the meter of the lines. But the use of the word «cetus» seems to indicate that *Anthoni usque limina* was not composed in order to be sung as part of the ordinary day-to-day liturgy in the Burgundian court chapel (which its inclusion in BrusBR 5557 would suggest) but was intended for a special meeting or assembly. The Latin verb from which «cetus» is derived, «co-ire», «to come together», would clearly be more appropriate for meetings of confraternities (whose members often lived far apart) than for daily services carried out only by members of the same chapel. This occasional character of Busnoys' motet is also suggested by the fact that the text implores St. Anthony to «hear *now* [this] assembly» («audi cetum nunc»). The emphasis on the here and now indicates that Busnoys' motet was probably not intended to be used again and again (for instance each year on the feast-day of St. Anthony), but only once, on one particular occasion.

On the basis of the evidence gathered above it may be safely concluded that Busnoys wrote the motet *Anthoni usque limina* for performance in a ceremony of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse. This brings us to the question of why he wrote the motet, and when.

As we have stated above, the scribe of *Anthoni usque limina* in BrusBR 5557 took such considerable pains to indicate the name of the composer that not even the dullest could miss it. The motet is attributed to «Busnoys» at the top of fol. 48v. In addition to this, certain syllables of the first and last words, which together make up «Antho-nius Busnoys», are written in red ink; as a final reminder, a little verse is written on fol. 49v, instructing the reader to look both at the beginning and end of the work to find the name of the «maker» («actoris nomen»). The strong emphasis on the name of Busnoys seems to indicate that his motives for composing the work were of a personal nature.⁴⁰ Together with the evidence gathered above, this strongly favours the assumption that Busnoys had been a member of the Order of St. Anthony in Barbefosse, and that he wrote the motet for a

⁴⁰ The assumption that a motet written by Busnoys for personal use could have been copied as a later addition in a manuscript used at the Burgundian court is not as unlikely as it may seem; it has been assumed that the Busnoys motets in BrusBR 5557 were copied under the supervision of their composer, possibly even by Busnoys himself (see: STEPHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 89; SPARKS, *The Motets of Antoine Busnois* *cit.*, p. 217; F. WARMINGTON, «A Very Fine Troop of Bastards?»: *Provenance, Date, and Busnois's Role in Brussels 5557*, paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, 1984). If Busnoys copied the motet, it would be significant, in view of the possible instances of number symbolism described above, that the musical text of the motet was apparently revised in BrusBR 5557; several notes have been wiped out and have been replaced by other notes.

ceremony of the order in which he was personally involved, most probably as a candidate for admission.

If the latter assumption is correct, the course of events could possibly have been as follows. For reasons not known to us, Antoine Busnoys applied (or was nominated) for membership of the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse. When he had received notice that he was granted the privilege of entering the confraternity, Busnoys wrote a special motet for his inauguration, *Anthoni usque limina*. In the text, which was perhaps inspired by parts of the liturgy for the admission of new members, he incorporated his own name, thus showing how honoured he felt to enter the confraternity. It was Busnoys, or one of his fellow-singers in the Burgundian court chapel in Bruges, who then copied the motet on spare pages of a manuscript used there (see below). The emblem of the confraternity was traced on the first page of the work, perhaps from one of the documents of the confraternity which Busnoys had received. Busnoys, and probably a few of his fellow-singers, were then granted three or four days of absence to travel from Bruges to Barbefosse to attend the meeting of the confraternity at which he was to be received into the order. The singers took with them the manuscript now known as BrusBR 5557, and sang from it during the ceremony.

The assumption that Busnoys was a member of the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse is the most convincing explanation for the fact that he made various references to the confraternity in his motet, which is of such an emphatic personal nature. However, it should be stressed that apart from the motet itself there is no biographical or historical evidence to confirm this assumption. Only a few pieces of circumstantial evidence may perhaps add to its plausibility. In the first place, Busnoys had connections with Hainaut which could explain his possible contacts with Barbefosse: until June 4, 1473, he held a benefice in the chapel of St. Silvestre in the castle of the Burgundian dukes at Mons,⁴¹ and this position must at least have required his occasional residence there. In the second place, he met some of the requirements for admission into the order as laid down in the document which contains the liturgy for the ceremonial admission of new members, the original of which presumably dates from after 1436. In this document it is stated that the *praeceptores* of *commanderies* of St. Anthony may receive « in speciali fraternitate sancti Antonij, quoscum-

⁴¹ P. HIGGINS, In *hydraulis Revisited: New Light on the Career of Antoine Busnois*, « Journal of the American Musicological Society », XXXIX, 1986, pp. 51-52.

que dominos, duces, comites et marchiones, Barones, milites, scutiferos, domicellos, nobiles, et doctores, ac alias graues et notabiles personas, quas uirtutes nobilitate illustrarent ».⁴² From 1473 on, the accounts of Charles the Bold's household, where Busnoys was employed, start to name him *Maître*, which almost certainly means that he had obtained a university degree.⁴³ Furthermore, with respect to his lineage it could be possible that Antoine Busnoys was related to « Messire et maître Philippe de Busnes », who in 1499 was priest, dean and canon of the church of Notre Dame in Lens, and who was, according to a nineteenth-century study, a member of the noble family of the *comtes de Busnes*.⁴⁴ If this was the case, Busnoys' noble birth would have made it easily possible for him to enter the order. Finally, Busnoys was described by Charles the Bold as « nostre bien amé chappelain de nostre chappelle domnesticque »,⁴⁵ and was, according to the expert opinion of Johannes Tinctoris, one of the two « most excellent composers I have ever heard ».⁴⁶ These latter qualities alone would certainly have qualified him for membership as an « important and notable person whose virtues testify to his nobility ».

The date of *Anthoni usque limina* is not known, but the datings of the two layers of BrusBR 5557 in which it is copied point to a date somewhere in the 1470s. The motet is copied as a later addition on the adjacent outer pages of the fourth and fifth gatherings of BrusBR 5557 which were left blank by the original scribes. As I have indicated elsewhere, the first four gatherings of BrusBR 5557 were very probably copied in or shortly before 1468, and the fifth gathering presumably dates from the period c. 1462-6.⁴⁷ The *terminus post quem* for the work is therefore 1468. It is unlikely that the motet was entered much later in BrusBR 5557 than c. 1485, for by this time the compilation of the manuscript was almost certainly completed. Stylistically, *Anthoni usque limina* can be seen as slightly more advanced than *In hydraulis* (which must date from 1465-1467), particularly as it introduces points of

⁴² Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, Coll. Chifflet, MS 84, fols. 13r-v.

⁴³ HIGGINS, *op. cit.*, p. 51, n. 67.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71, n. 109. A family « de Busnes » is mentioned among the noble families of the County of Artois in the sixteenth-century armorial Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 18088-18106, fol. 203v.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84, document 11.

⁴⁶ A. SEAY, ed., *Johannes Tinctoris Opera Theoretica*, vol. I (« Corpus scriptorum de musica », 22), American Institute of Musicology 1975, p. 65 (preface of Tinctoris' *Liber de natura et proprietate tonorum* of 1476).

⁴⁷ WEGMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-11 and 13-14.

imitation involving three voices, in a manner reminiscent of Busnoys' *Magnificat sexti toni*, which is also found in BrusBR 5557.⁴⁸

In this paper we have seen that the text and possibly part of the (numerical) structure of Busnoys' motet *Anthoni usque limina* was determined by its connection with the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse. No doubt the motet was an occasional work, specially written for one particular meeting of this confraternity (« hear now [this] assembly »). In connection with this, the strong emphasis on the name of the composer has led to the assumption that the work was composed for Busnoys' possible admission into the confraternity. Although there is no biographical evidence to confirm this assumption, Busnoys did hold a benefice in Mons, about seven kilometers from Barbefosse, and he must have met several of the requirements for admission. The connection with the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Barbefosse may help to explain some of the peculiar features of the text and music of *Anthoni usque limina*. The connection may also throw light upon what significance and influence, if any, the motet might have had in the fifteenth century. If *Anthoni usque limina* was written for Busnoys' possible entrance into the confraternity it would seem most unlikely that a work of such a personal nature was ever among his most widely distributed compositions. In fact, one might wonder whether it was even copied in a source other than BrusBR 5557, the source which the composer probably used himself. So many fifteenth-century compositions have been lost that there is the understandable tendency to ascribe more historical significance to surviving works than they possibly ever had. *Anthoni usque limina* is now a relatively well-known (or at least well-studied) fifteenth-century composition, but it could simply be that it has acquired its present reputation on account of the whim of fate which made this work survive while so many others – including famous works praised by contemporary theorists – were lost. Once again we are reminded that the preserved repertory of fifteenth-century music is little more than a small and random sample, which has been assembled by a series of chance coincidences: in music transmission, Time, like Death, cannot be presumed to show respect for name or rank.

⁴⁸ E. H. SPARKS, *Cantus Firmus in Mass and Motet*, cit., p. 226.