

CHOIRBOOK OF THE BURGUNDIAN COURT CHAPEL

BRUSSEL, KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK
MS. 5557

INTRODUCTION
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INTRODUCTION

The manuscript 5557 of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek at Brussels (hereafter BrusBR 5557) is one of the rare extant sources of late fifteenth-century sacred polyphony which have originated in North-Western Europe. It contains central or near-central versions of works by some of the foremost Franco-Flemish composers of the 1460s and 1470s, whose sacred works are otherwise almost exclusively preserved in comparatively late, Italian manuscripts: Guillaume Dufay, Johannes Regis, Johannes Ockeghem, Antoine Busnoys, and Cornelis Heyns. In addition, BrusBR 5557 is the most important source for the Mass music by the English composers Walter Frye, John Plummer and Richard Cox.

BrusBR 5557 is a paper choirbook in folio (27.5-28 x 37.3-37.5 cm) and was very probably compiled over a period of years or decades. It comprises twelve gatherings (see table I, column 1), the first four of which constitute a homogeneous unit, copied at one time. The remainder of the manuscript was probably added gathering by gathering to this original nucleus, for each of the fascicles 5-12 (except 9 and 10, which belong together) forms a separate codicological entity. Since the outer leaves of most of the gatherings or groups of gatherings are more stained and worn than the inner ones, it seems likely that BrusBR 5557 is (at least in part) a compilation of so-called 'fascicle-manuscripts'. This means that the various codicological entities which can be distinguished probably had a separate existence before they were incorporated in the present volume. At some stage in the compilation of the codex a number of motets by Antoine Busnoys were copied as 'fillers', on pages left blank by the original scribes.

The so-called 'original nucleus' (fols. 2-48) contains five Masses by English composers. At the beginning of each Mass there is an illuminated initial, and at least four of these initials make use of conventional heraldic or allegoric symbols, thus providing us with the first clues to the provenance and date of BrusBR 5557. The first initial, on fol. 2v, contains a coat of arms similar to but not identical with the one used by the Burgundian Dukes Philip the Good (r. 1419-67) and Charles the Bold (r. 1467-77). In spite of the differences (the fleurs-de-lis are missing and the diagonal stripes are reversed) it seems very likely that the ducal blazon is in fact intended, since the upper half of the same initial contains the emblem of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, the flint-and-steel. Thus it may be reasonably assumed that the original nucleus of BrusBR 5557 was commissioned for the Burgundian court chapel. The second initial, on fol. 10v, once again features the flint-and-steel, now in combination with a white rose. The rose is almost certainly to be interpreted as the emblem of the House of York with which Burgundy signed a peace treaty in October 1466; the second initial therefore reflects Anglo-Burgundian political relations as they were from 1466 onwards. Other symbolic references in the same initial (the dog, the accepted medieval symbol of marital faith) as well as in the one on fol. 30v (the theme of the lady and the unicorn, symbolising chastity) indicate that the occasion for which the original nucleus was most probably written was the marriage of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York (in Damme and Bruges, on 3 July 1468) which sealed the peace treaty.

The remainder of BrusBR 5557 is closely related to the original nucleus. Firstly, a study of the musical handwriting reveals that gatherings 5 and 9-12 are written in hands which are very similar to that of gatherings 1-4 (see Table I, column 5, in which the different hands are listed A through E). It thus seems likely that at least these nine gatherings were written in one and the same workshop. Secondly, a study of the watermarks shows that gatherings 1-6 and 9-11 are all written on paper bearing the same general type of watermark, *viz.* three fleurs-de-lis on a shield with crown and pendant t (paper-types a, b and c in table I, column 2). This indicates that these gatherings were copied by the same regular customer of one paper manufacturer. The only part of the manuscript which might have been copied elsewhere is gathering 8, which contains Johannes Ockeghem's *Missa Quinti toni*.

Exactly where the various layers of BrusBR 5557 were copied cannot as yet be established with certainty. WegmanND has suggested that the original nucleus (gatherings 1-4) was written in Bruges as part of the preparations for Charles the Bold's marriage, which was celebrated there in the week after 3 July 1468. By implication he assumed that the remainder of the manuscript was largely copied

Table I

1	2	3	4	5
1-4	a	Walter Frye: <i>Missa Summe trinitati</i> John Plummer: <i>Missa</i> (with prosula <i>Omnipotens</i>) Richard Cox: <i>Missa</i> (with prosula <i>Deus creator</i>) Walter Frye: <i>Missa Flos regalis</i> Walter Frye: <i>Missa Nobilis et pulchra</i>	2v-10r 10v-20r 20v-30r 30v-38r 38v-48r	A
		Antoine Busnoys: <i>Anthoni usque limina</i>	48v-50r	B
5	b	Guillaume Dufay: <i>Missa Ecce ancilla Domini</i>	50v-61r	A'
6	ca	anonymous: <i>Magnificat secundi toni</i>	62v-69r	D
		Antoine Busnoys: <i>Noel noel</i>	69v-70r	B
7	d	Antoine Busnoys: <i>Magnificat sexti toni</i>	70v-76r	C
		Antoine Busnoys: <i>Ad cenam agni</i>	76v	B
8	e	Johannes Ockeghem: <i>Missa Quinti toni</i>	77r-83r	E
		Antoine Busnoys: <i>Anima mea liquefacta</i> Antoine Busnoys: <i>Victimae paschali</i> Antoine Busnoys: <i>Regina caeli</i> Antoine Busnoys: <i>Regina caeli</i> Antoine Busnoys: <i>Alleluia verbum caro</i>	83v-84r 84v-86r 86v-88r 88v-89r 89v-90r	B
9-10	cb	anonymous: <i>Missa</i> Cornelius Heyns: <i>Missa Pour quelque paine</i>	90v-99r 99v-109r	A'
11	cb	Guillaume Dufay: <i>Missa Ave regina caelorum</i>	110v-120v	A''
12	f	fragment of anonymous (Regis?): <i>Missa</i> monophonic hymn <i>Vexilla regis</i>	121r	
		Johannes Regis: <i>Missa Ecce ancilla-Ne timeas</i>	121v-136r	A''
		anonymous: <i>O quam glorifica</i> Guillaume Dufay: <i>Kyrie</i>	136v	

in Bruges, too. Several indications support the assumption that BrusBR 5557 was written and used in the Flemish-speaking parts of the Low Countries: the close repertorial connections with the Bruges manuscript Lucca, Archivio di Stato, 238; the presence of a Flemish verse on fol. 120v (see PlanchGD,22); and the fact that paper related to the paper of gathering 12 is found to have been used only in Brabant.

Other indications, however, suggest that BrusBR 5557 was also used in the French-speaking parts of the Burgundian Netherlands, or at least by French-speaking musicians: e.g. the entry 'tourne' ('turn page') on fol. 117v, and the following French verse on fol. 2r:

Dis au roy des fauc[h]eurs qui nuse
du treu dun bonnier de blangy
il trouvera sans point de ruse
quant la ses fran[c]s archers perdy

Tell the king of the mowers, who uses
But a clod of an acre of Blangy,
He will find [it] without even a ruse
When he has lost there his francs-archers.

The precise meaning of this verse is unclear, but it seems likely that it was written by a Walloon referring to the hostilities between Charles the Bold and King Louis XI of France. The *roy des faucheurs* ('king of the mowers') is very probably King Louis, for the latter's troops were known in Hainaut as the *faucheurs* when they pillaged that county in 1477-8.¹ The *bonnier de blangy* (which can be freely translated as 'acre of Blangy') may refer to Blangy-sur-Bresle in Picardy, where Charles the Bold camped in September 1472 during his campaign against Louis XI.² Interestingly, Antoine Busnoys, who is generally believed to have worked with BrusBR 5557 himself, accompanied Charles on this campaign.³ Hainaut connections can be put forward for Busnoys' motet *Anthoni usque limina*, which was very probably written for the Order of St. Antoine-en-Barbefosse, near Havré in Hainaut (Wegman-BA). Finally, the paper used in gathering 8 bears a watermark which is otherwise found only in paper used in northern France; hence it may be assumed that gathering 8 was written somewhere in this area, possibly in Paris.

In view of all this, BrusBR 5557 cannot be assigned to Bruges without qualification: although the manuscript must have drawn much of its repertory from (or by way of) Bruges, and was perhaps even copied in this town, the possibility that it travelled with the Burgundian chapel during Charles the Bold's campaigns must seriously be considered.

Not all layers of BrusBR 5557 have as yet been dated with certainty. It is possible, however, to establish the following rough chronology on the basis of watermark evidence (Table II). Gatherings 1/2/3/4/5, 6/7, 8/9/10 and 11/12 must have been bound in their present order already in the fifteenth century: the original nucleus and gathering 5 are linked to one another by Busnoys' *Anthoni usque limina*. Gatherings 6 and 7, and 8 and 9-10, are likewise connected by later additions of works by Busnoys.⁴ Finally, gatherings 11 and 12 must have been adjacent in the fifteenth century since ink from the monophonic hymn *Vexilla regis*, which was scribbled by a fifteenth-century hand on the first page of gathering 12, has run on the last page of gathering 11. However, it is not certain whether gatherings 5/6, 7/8 and 10/11 have always been contiguous, as they are now. It can be shown that several folios have been removed from the manuscript (e.g. at least three folios between fols. 76 and 77). And there is evidence that before 1852 BrusBR 5557 may have had at least one other gathering, which possibly contained a three-part *Missa Ave regina caelorum* by Johannes Regis (CurtisBR, 53).

Still, in its present form the manuscript BrusBR 5557 is an extremely important anthology, representing two decades of sacred musical practice at the Burgundian court. Its very structure reflects the various chronological stages of the development of sacred polyphony during the 1460s and 1470s.

Table II

Layer of BrusBR 5557	Date
Gathering 5 (Dufay: <i>M. Ecce ancilla Domini</i>)	almost certainly c. 1464-5
Gatherings 1-4 (Masses by Frye, Plummer, Cox)	1468
Busnoys: <i>Anthoni usque limina</i>	after 1468
Gathering 12 (Regis: <i>M. Ecce ancilla-Ne timeas</i>)	late 1460s (?)
Gathering 6 (an.: <i>Magnificat secundi toni</i>)	early 1470s
Gatherings 9-10 (an.: <i>Missa</i> ; Heyns: <i>M. Pour quelque paine</i>)	early 1470s
Gathering 11 (Dufay: <i>M. Ave regina caelorum</i>)	early 1470s
Gathering 8 (Ockeghem: <i>M. Quinti toni</i>)	1476-80
Busnoys motets on fols. 83v-90r	after 1476

The works transmitted in BrusBR 5557 must have been obtained directly or almost directly from the musical centres in which they were composed, and may therefore closely resemble the composers' lost autographs. The manuscript is thus crucial to our understanding of one of the most important phases in the history of Renaissance music.

NOTES

1 G. Sivery, *Structures agraires et vie rurale dans le Hainaut à la fin du Moyen-âge*, Lille 1977, tome ii, p. 550.

2 R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold. The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy*, London 1973, pp. 81-2.

3 P. Higgins, 'In hydraulis Revisited: New Light on the Career of Antoine Busnois', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, xxxix (1986), p. 55. HaggMC (p. 12) suggests that BrusBR 5557 might have been taken along by the Burgundian chapel to Blangy, and that the verse might have been written by Busnoys himself. If the verse was written in Blangy in 1472, it may perhaps be paraphrased thus: 'Tell King Louis, whose possession of Blangy is now reduced to a mere clod, that he needs no stratagem to recover his land: his francs-archers will have taken possession of it when they are slain and buried there.'

4 Since the music of *Anthoni usque limina* shows some extensive reworking in the same handwriting as the remainder of the motet, and since that hand is also recognizable in the other added Busnoys pieces, the copyist might have been Antoine Busnoys himself.

LITERATURE

- BorrenIM C. van den Borren, 'Inventaire des manuscrits de musique polyphonique qui se trouvent en Belgique', *Acta musicologica*, v (1933), pp. 66-9.
- BorrenQS C. van den Borren, *Études sur le XVe siècle musical*, Antwerp 1941, pp. 144-251.
- CurtisBR G.R.K. Curtis, *The English Masses of Brussels BR ms. 5557*, unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manchester 1979.
- CurtisTD G.R.K. Curtis, 'Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS. 5557, and the Texting of Dufay's "Ecce ancilla Domini" and "Ave regina caelorum" Masses', *Acta musicologica*, li (1979), pp. 73-86.
- HagghMC B.H. Haggh, 'Music at the Court of Charles the Bold: Another Look at Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 5557', paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society 1983.
- KenneyBM S. Kenney, 'Origins and Chronology of the Brussels Manuscript 5557 in the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique', *Revue belge de musicologie*, vi (1952), pp. 75-100.
- KenneyWF S. Kenney, *Walter Frye and the Contenance angloise*, New Haven - London 1964, pp. 35-61.
- PlanchGD A.E. Planchart, 'Guillaume Dufay's Masses: Notes and Revisions', *The Musical Quarterly*, lviii (1972), p. 22.
- StaeheVA M. Staehein, 'Möglichkeiten und praktische Anwendung der Verfasserbestimmung an anonym überlieferten Kompositionen der Josquin-Zeit', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, xxxiii (1973), p. 81.
- WarminTB 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.
- WegmanBA R.C. Wegman, 'Busnois's «Anthoni usque limina» and the Order of St. Antoine en Barbefosse in Hainaut', *Studi musicali*, xvi (1988), in progress.
- WegmanND 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. 5-25.
- WegmanTG R.C. Wegman, 'The Twelfth Gathering of Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Manuscript 5557. A New Dufay Concordance', in R.C. Wegman and E. Vetter, eds., *Liber Amicorum Chris Maas. Essays in Musicology in Honour of Chris Maas on his 65th Anniversary*, Amsterdam 1987, pp. 15-25.

GUIDE TO BIBLIOGRAPHY

General descriptions and inventories: BorrenIM; KenneyBM; KenneyWF; CurtisBR, 4-63.

Provenance: KenneyBM, 96-7; KenneyWF, 56-7; WegmanND, 15-6.

Chronology: WegmanND.

Handwriting: KenneyBM, 87; KenneyWF, 47; CurtisBR, 19-31.

Gathering structure: KenneyBM, 78-6; KenneyWF, 38-6; CurtisBR, 8-10; WegmanND, 25.

Paper and watermarks: KenneyBM, 87; KenneyWF 39-47; CurtisBR, 10-8;

CurtisTD, 74-5; WegmanND, 11-4 and 21-5.

Musical fragment on fol. 1r: CurtisBR, 26 and 28.

French verse on fol. 2r: CurtisBR, 58; HagghMC, 12.

Illuminations in original nucleus: CurtisBR, 19-20; WegmanND, 6-11 and plates 1-5.

Nineteenth-century ascription to Binchois on fol. 10v: StaeheVA, 81; CurtisBR, 120ff

Inscription on fol. 11v: BorrenIM, 66; CurtisBR, 58-9.

Needle inscriptions on fol. 18r: WegmanND, 15 and 19.
 Illumination on fol. 48v: WegmanBA.
 Inscription on fol. 79v: CurtisBR, 59.
 Flemish verse on fol. 120v: PlanchGD, 22.
 Musical fragments on fols. 121r and 136v: CurtisBR, 27-30; WegmanTG.

LIST OF CONCORDANCES

Manuscript sigla have been taken from the *Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music 1400-1550* ('Renaissance Manuscript Studies', i), Neuhausen - Stuttgart, 1979.

Works of which no concordances exist have not been included in this list.

- 2v-10r Walter Frye: *Missa Summe trinitati*
 no conc.: the motet *Salve virgo* (TrentC 88, fols. 70v-71r) constitutes a
 Mass-motet cycle with this Mass
- 10v-20r John Plummer: *Missa* (with prosula *Omnipotens*)
 ArunC M543, fols. Ar-Br
- 50v-61r Guillaume Dufay: *Missa Ecce ancilla Domini*
 VatS 14, fols. 76v-86r.
- 70v-76r Antoine Busnoys: *Magnificat sexti toni*
 no conc.: a twin of this Magnificat is found in VatSP B80, fols. 219v-224r; Mild 1, fols.
 17v-20r; and OxfBLL a.6, fols. 109r-v
- 77r-83r Johannes Ockeghem: *Missa Quinti toni*
 VatC 234, fols. 115v-125r
 a twin of this Mass is found in VatSP B80, fols. 21r-25r
- 86v-88r Antoine Busnoys: *Regina caeli*
 VatS 42, fols. 100v-104r
- 99v-109r Cornelius Heyns: *Missa Pour quelque paine*
 LucAS 238, fols. 46bis r-v, 47r-v
 VatS 51, fols. 18v-27r
- 110v-120v Guillaume Dufay, *Missa Ave regina caelorum*
 ModE M.1.13, fols. 159v-175v
 PozU 7022, fols. 1v-2v and 5r-8v of gathering I
 VatSP B80, fols. 9v-20v
- 121r an. (Regis?): *Missa* [fragmentary]
 LinzBS 529
 PozU 7022, fols. 13r-15v, 17r-18v and 21r of gathering I
- 121v-136r Johannes Regis: *Missa Ecce ancilla-Ne timeas*
 VatS 14, fols. 87v-101r
- 136v Guillaume Dufay: *Kyrie*
 AostaS D19, fols. 25r and 49r
 BolC Q15, fols. 164v-165r
 CambraiBM 6, fol. 2r
 CambraiBM 11, fol. 2r
 MunBS Lat. 14274, fol. 31r
 VenBN 7554, fol. 2v